

**FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE**

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## **Mercado Delta Groundbreaking Set for February 2008.**

*Unique Market for Greater activity and economic prosperity for the Delta Region*

Delta Region residents will soon have a new attraction to look forward to in efforts to help develop the economy of the region. The Delta Region Revitalization Corporation (DRRC) will host the groundbreaking for the upcoming Mercado Delta on February 23, 2008. The ceremony will be held at 10:30 a.m. on the site directly south of the Edcouch-Elsa Fine Arts Building on Mile 4 West (Yellowjacket Drive) and North of State Highway 107.

The \$3.1 million project is a unique, multi-purpose, public market where entrepreneurs, farmers, and artisans can sell their goods and services. Phase 1 of the Mercado Delta will consist of an area of approximately 48,000 square feet and will have its entrance facing Yellow jacket Drive. Half Associates designed the project and is being managed by Terry Morales – Best with MB ARC. The general contractor is to be selected in the near future.

The construction is being financed through a grant awarded to the DRRC by the Economic Development Administration and the U.S. Department of Commerce. The project is scheduled for completion in by early Fall 2008, with the official opening immediately after ribbon cutting.

"I'm very excited to be a part of such a unique project," said Hector Landez, executive director for the DRRC

Dr. Ricardo Gonzalez, board chair of the DRRC, said local residents are excited to have this facility built in the Delta Region and believe it will help the area come together as a community.

"Mercado Delta will provide great opportunities to the residents of the region. For some, the Mercado will be a means to augment their family's income by providing them the ability to become vendors & entrepreneurs. For others, the Mercado will allow them to buy locally-grown fruits and vegetables and shop for other arts, crafts and others goods without having to leave the Delta Region," said Gonzalez. "It is our hope that having Mercado Delta in the area will serve as a catalyst that will help provide the key elements necessary to begin improving the economic development of the region."



Congressman Ruben Hinojosa, who will attend the groundbreaking, said "This historic project reflects the hard work of so many community members and sends a powerful example of what we can accomplish when we work together to improve the future of our region," said Hinojosa. "It has been a long road but I'm thrilled that we are finally breaking ground on a visionary effort that will transform the Delta's economy and the lives of its residents. Once finished, the Delta Mercado will lead to a boom in development, more jobs, and increased overall opportunity so that this community can grow and prosper for years to come."

The centerpiece of the market is a 30,000-square-foot plaza. To promote a greater sense of community, the farmer's market, shops, public market, and administrative offices all surround the central plaza.

The first phase of the market will include 4 buildings for local anchor vendors, a covered, open-air pavilion fitting 24 drive-up slots and 12 aisle booths for the farmer's market section and 110 10'x10' spaces for public market vendors. An administration

building, public restrooms, and 115 parking spaces will also be part of phase one construction.

The second phase will add an additional 18,000 square feet consisting of 8 more local anchor vendors and additional parking.

Highlights of the Mercado Delta design include a water feature running through the middle of the plaza and two bell towers at the entrance of the market.

The courtyard of the Mercado Delta will be used for special events such as festivals, concerts, performances, etc.

The Administration Building will serve as the main office of the DRRC which will manage the daily operations for the Mercado Delta. It will also be used as a center to run the Micro-Entrepreneur Development Program created by UTPA's CoServe that will be offered free of charge. The center serves as a resource center for entrepreneurs and those seeking to further build new business in the area. It supports and encourages entrepreneurship and by assisting residents in the Delta Region through outreach and education offered by UTPA's CoServe and the Southwest Community Investment Corporation (SCIC). In addition to this training, free business development, homeownership education and money management counseling will be offered by the SCIC.

After Mercado Delta is constructed, its operations will be managed through the Delta Region Revitalization Corporation. Mercado Delta came from a strategic plan, which came as result of Congressman Ruben Hinojosa's leading initiative to do a regional plan for economic growth.

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