

NUECES COUNTY CHALLENGES AND LESSONS LEARNED FROM HURRICANES

Judge Samuel L. Neal, County Judge

Nueces County
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Nueces County Judge Samuel Loyd Neal will address *challenges and lessons learned from previous hurricanes* with an economic perspective focusing on continuity of government.

Nueces County is the second fastest growing county located on the Texas Gulf Coast. The county's location increases the potential for a hurricane and wide spread devastation. Elected officials are continuously preparing for the onset of a category 1-5 hurricane to hit our shores with continuity of government as a key component.

Nueces County's major producing natural resources include agriculture, petrochemical, and tourism industries. Sixty one to seventy one percent of Nueces County's land is considered prime farmland. The total agriculture income for Nueces County in 2008 was 143.3 million dollars which results in an economical impact to the agricultural industry of 309 million dollars. The Port Industries of Corpus Christi located in Nueces County, is the 5th largest port in the nation. Products manufactured by the port include electricity, ethylene, alumina propylene, butadiene, benzene, gasoline, methanol, jet fuel, reformulated gasoline, oxygenates and diesel. The port purchases over \$1.4 million in goods and services and spends approximately \$500 million in annual payrolls. Nueces County provides a premier destination location for tourism with a variety of activities including 321 miles of coastline, fishing, and many other attractions. According to the Texas Department of Economic Development and Tourism over 8 million people visit Nueces County spending over \$1 billion a year. In the event of a natural catastrophe, any interruption in government could pose a threat to the economic strength of the county and ultimately, affect the State of Texas

The ability for government to mitigate, prepare and respond to a potential threat in the gulf is vital to protect loss of life, property and the financial welfare of the industries in the county. The effort to retrieve an expedient recovery focuses on the counties ability to plan, prepare, mitigate and continue normal operations. The county faces many challenges in restoring the community in the aftermath of a catastrophic event and with review of previous lessons learned, those challenge can be lessened.