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**FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE**

## **POINT ISABEL ISD, THE CITY OF SOUTH PADRE ISLAND, AND THE CITY OF PORT ISABEL TO CONNECT THE COAST**

The City of South Padre Island, Point Isabel Independent School District and the City of Port Isabel in talks to provide free broadband to students, residents and municipalities.

**South Padre Island, TX - February 27, 2015:** Spearheaded by Point Isabel School District Superintendent Dr. Lisa Garcia the ConnectedCoast Project is an initiative to provide free broadband connectivity to students, communities, and municipalities of South Padre Island, Port Isabel and Laguna Vista.



PISD Superintendent Garcia, PISD Chief Information Officer D.J. Canales, City of SPI City Manager William DiLibero, City of SPI Technology Director Paul Holthusen, City of SPI Public Information Officer Adrian Rodriguez, City of SPI Police Chief Randy Smith, City of SPI Police Lieutenant Claudine O'Carroll, Convention & Visitors Bureau Advisory Board Member Sean Till, City of Port Isabel Technology Director Frankie Garza, and City of Port Isabel Police Lieutenant Omar Olguin attended a meeting Thursday, February 26<sup>th</sup>, 2015, at the Hilton Garden Inn on South Padre Island, Texas to discuss the project.

The project will allow all students the ability to connect to their school network and ultimately their classroom regardless of income level, living conditions, or location. By placing Wi-Fi equipment throughout each of the communities involved South Padre Island, Port Isabel, and Laguna Vista will also provide services to police, first responders, public works, and city offices. The network will provide unfettered Wi-Fi communication across the ConnectedCoast communities for all parties involved and expand the classroom which often times goes beyond the walls of schools. ConnectedCoast would merge the classroom, communities, and the coast to allow everyone equal access to education. Eventually the project might also serve SpaceX and UTRGV.



Drew Lentz of Frontera Consulting moderated presentations regarding the overall project. Special guest Libbey Scheible, formerly with Connected Texas, now CEO of Connected Rural presented a series on best practices, a



guide to building the action plan for the network, as well as funding opportunities to build this network.

Ruckus Wireless, the sole vendor to show support for the project, presented the actual hardware that will make this Wi-Fi possible to the group. Ben Moebes of Ruckus Wireless, an architect of smart cities around the world began the presentation by speaking about the advantages of smart cities and community collaboration. This type of endeavor would make South Padre Island, Port Isabel, and Laguna Vista smart cities. Ruckus Director Erik Heinrich, formerly the Chief Technology Officer of



(Libbey Scheible)

the San Francisco United School District, followed with specific examples of how other communities and school districts such as San Francisco and San Francisco United, are using this type of technology in highly diverse and economically challenged areas to level the playing field for students regardless of age, gender, living conditions, and income level. Ruckus Channel Sales Engineer Heather Williams, a certified wireless network engineer concluded the presentation by passing hardware around the room and giving a hands-on look at the physical components that make up the equipment that will be used.

From schools to law enforcement and homeland security, the benefits of a regional wireless data communications network provide safety, security, emergency disaster recovery, education, visitor engagement and more. By involving as many agencies as possible in the fundamental design of this network this endeavor might also benefit water districts, universities, and the tourism industry prevalent in this area while helping students and communities.

Anyone interested in this project is urged to contact: Drew Lentz, Frontera Consulting at [drew@gofrontera.com](mailto:drew@gofrontera.com) or (956) 607-5850.

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For more information on this topic, or to schedule an interview with Adrian Rodriguez, City of South Padre Island Public Information Officer, please call: (956) 761-8110 or email: [ARodriguez@MySPI.org](mailto:ARodriguez@MySPI.org)