

2000 Annual Report Executive Summary

FUTURO Enterprise Community

Families United To Utilize Regional Opportunities, (FUTURO) is a five county Enterprise Community located on the U.S./Mexico border in the Middle Rio Grande Border Region of Texas. The five counties include, Dimmit, LaSalle, Maverick, Uvalde and Zavala. Year 2000 has been one of the region's most successful periods in terms of growth. With the border regions finally drawing long-awaited and desperately needed attention, FUTURO's location has allowed the organization to capitalize on programs aimed at long-term investment. Such programs include the EPI Center to be located in Eagle Pass and funded in part by the U.S. Department of Commerce and the City of Eagle Pass, that will provide international business opportunities and serve as a business incubator and "Keeping the Doors Open," a program funded in part by the U.S. Department of Education and the U.S. Department of Labor through the local workforce board and aimed at narrowing the "digital divide" that exists in the FUTURO region – a region that is comprised of a majority Hispanic population that meets its challenge of grinding and pervasive poverty head-on.

FUTURO faces many challenges in the years to come, especially with the economic revolution that can be attributed to the North American Free Trade Agreement that is currently underway in all of North America and particularly here along the U.S./Mexico border. The challenge for the FUTURO region will lie not only in its ability to stimulate a burst of economic activity, but to maintain the activity and provide the necessary services that will lead to sustainable growth. While NAFTA and its related challenges may seem like obstacles for some, the residents of the FUTURO region view its border location as an opportunity.

One opportunity for FUTURO is its vast and available workforce. As one of the fastest growing areas in the U.S., the FUTURO region's goal for 2001 is to increase strategies aimed at drawing industry that matches the region's workforce. As well as being blessed with a resplendent and willing workforce, the Region boasts an informed, supportive, and active local leadership that includes many community-based organizations, regional partners and elected officials. And while no strategy can be complete without education and skills development, 2001 will see added investments and incentives focused on transforming the educational process, with a deeper and more intense mindset on regionalism.