

Research Applied Technology Education Service



Andrew N.S. Ernest, Ph.D., P.E., BCEE, D.WRE
President & CEO

Javier Guerrero, E.I.T., M.S.
Stormwater Task Force, CEO

William Kirkey, Ph.D.
Chief Research Officer

Christopher Fuller, Ph.D.
Chief Operations Officer

Benjamin Vondrak
Project Comptroller

About RATES

Turning research and technology into community resilience



History/ Background

1974

Winter Water Sampling



1991

Andy Ernest's Ph.D. Completion
-Water Quality Modeling and Parameter Estimation

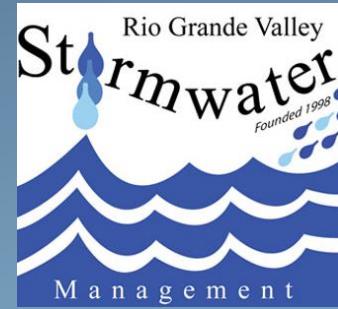


1994

Opportunities in Texas

1996-1998

Stormwater TaskForce



- The Task Force was established in 1998.
- As of June 2023, the Task Force has been established as a 501(c)3.
- We currently have 33 members within our coalition.



Community Outreach & Visibility –
Participate in coordinated school presentations, public outreach campaigns, and regional events that fulfill MS4 requirements while elevating your organization's presence in the community.



Regional Collaboration & Support –
Gain access to technical experts, shared training, permit compliance resources, and partnership opportunities that strengthen stormwater management and funding capacity.

2007

Creation of RATES
and REON

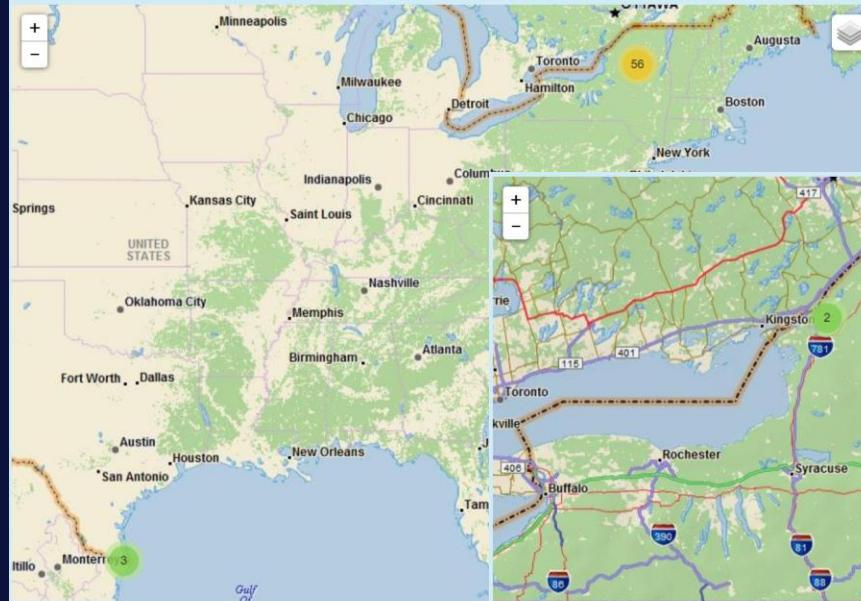
2011

Chris Fuller's Ph.D completion
-Oil Spill Toxicology and Detection

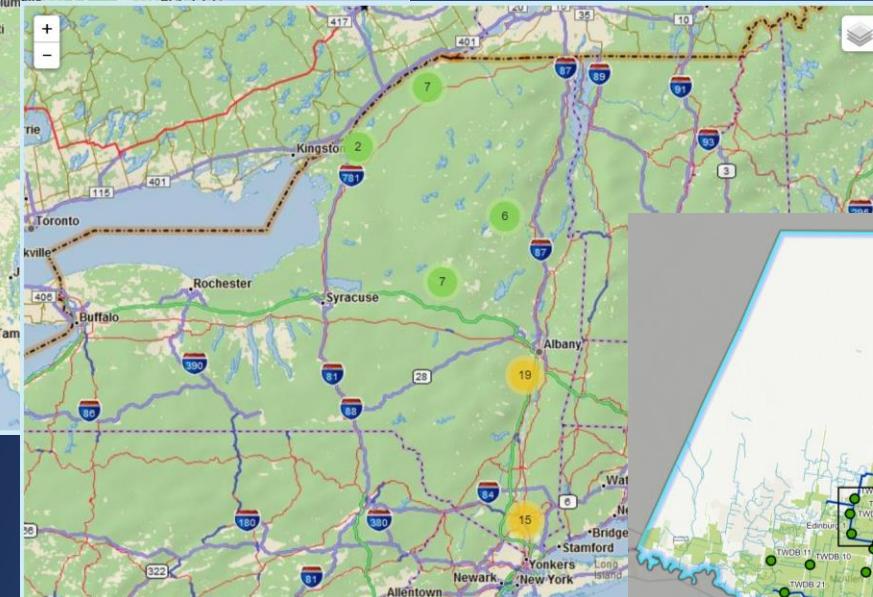
2019

Bill Kirkey's Ph.D completion
-Low-Cost, High Fidelity Sensor
Technology Development

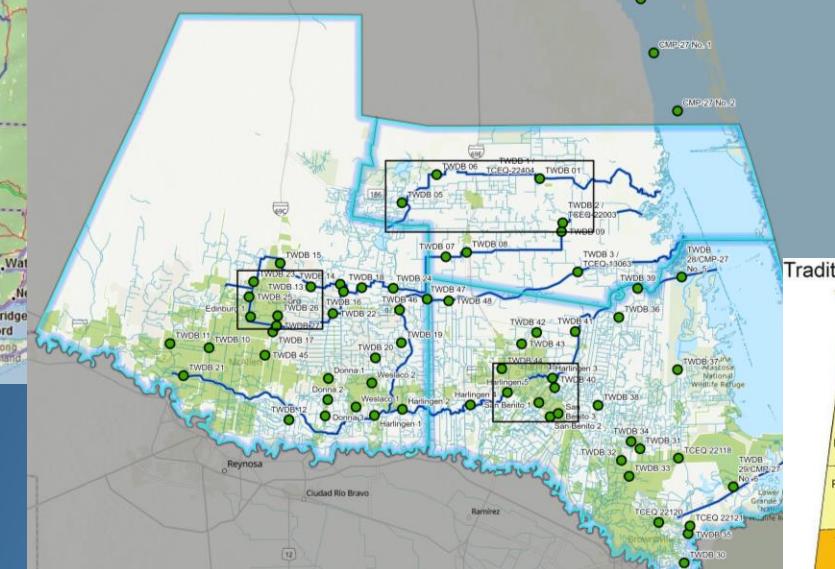
National: 138 (and counting)



New York (66)



South Texas (67)



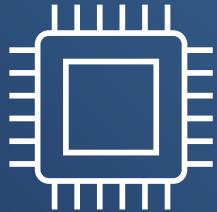
Alabama (5)



The Growing REON Network

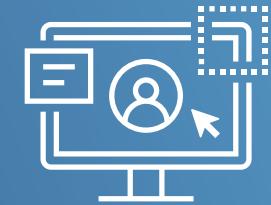
Monitoring System Components

- Sensors
- Hardware
- Power
- Telemetry
- Data Management / Dissemination / Application
- Processes (Deployment, Maintenance, Quality Assurance, etc.)



Balancing Commercial Offerings with User Designs

- Historically: User-Integrated
- Today: Commercial Subsystems Available



RATES Approach: Use both

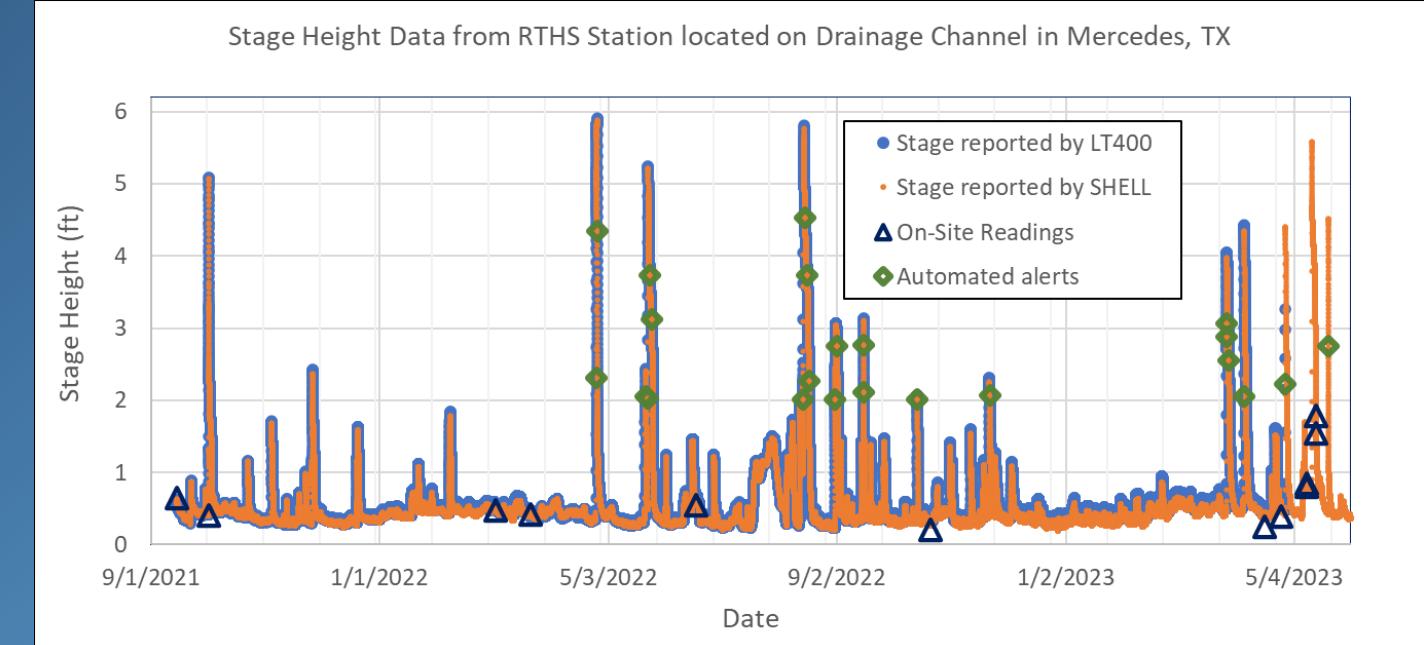
Need to balance: Meeting pressing needs v. Long-term cost-effectiveness



- Example Development: Water Level Sensing
 - Needed (2019): Robust water level sensor for LRGV deployments
 - Parallel tracks:
 - 1) Integrate commercial sensor into RTHS for immediate deployment
 - 2) Design and develop custom sensor
- 2021 – 2023: Side-by-side testing:

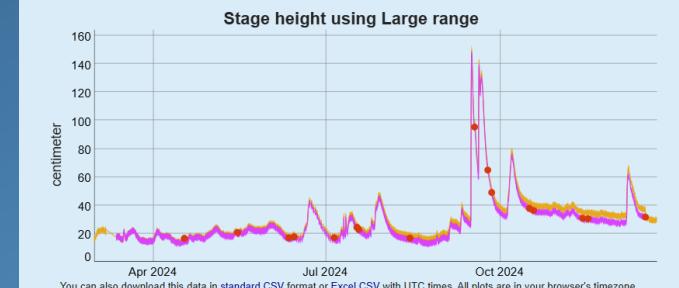
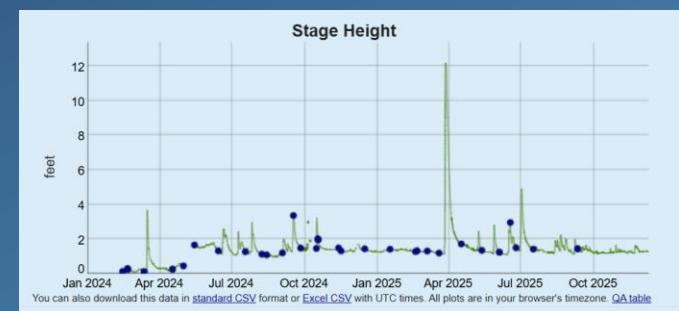
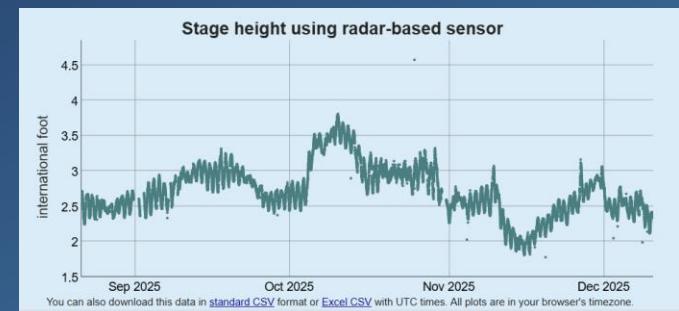
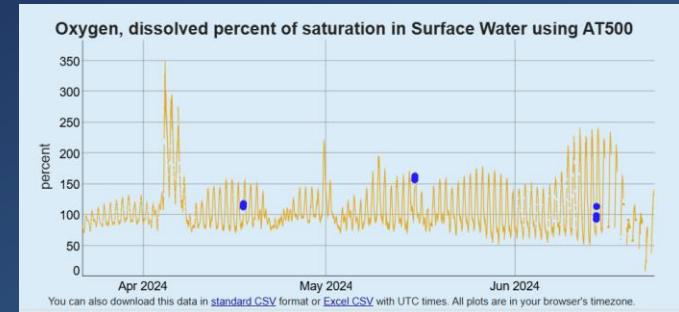


Date	9/14/2021	10/1/2021	3/3/2022	3/22/2022	6/18/2022	10/21/2022	4/17/2023	4/26/2023	5/10/2023	5/15/2023
On-site readings (ft)	0.64	0.40	0.48	0.42	0.55	0.21	0.25	0.39	0.80	1.79
SHELL-reported (ft)	0.64	0.42	0.51	0.43	0.60	0.27	0.37	0.52	0.91	1.91
LT400-reported (ft)	0.64	0.43	0.54	0.42	0.63	0.33	0.46	0.60	None	None

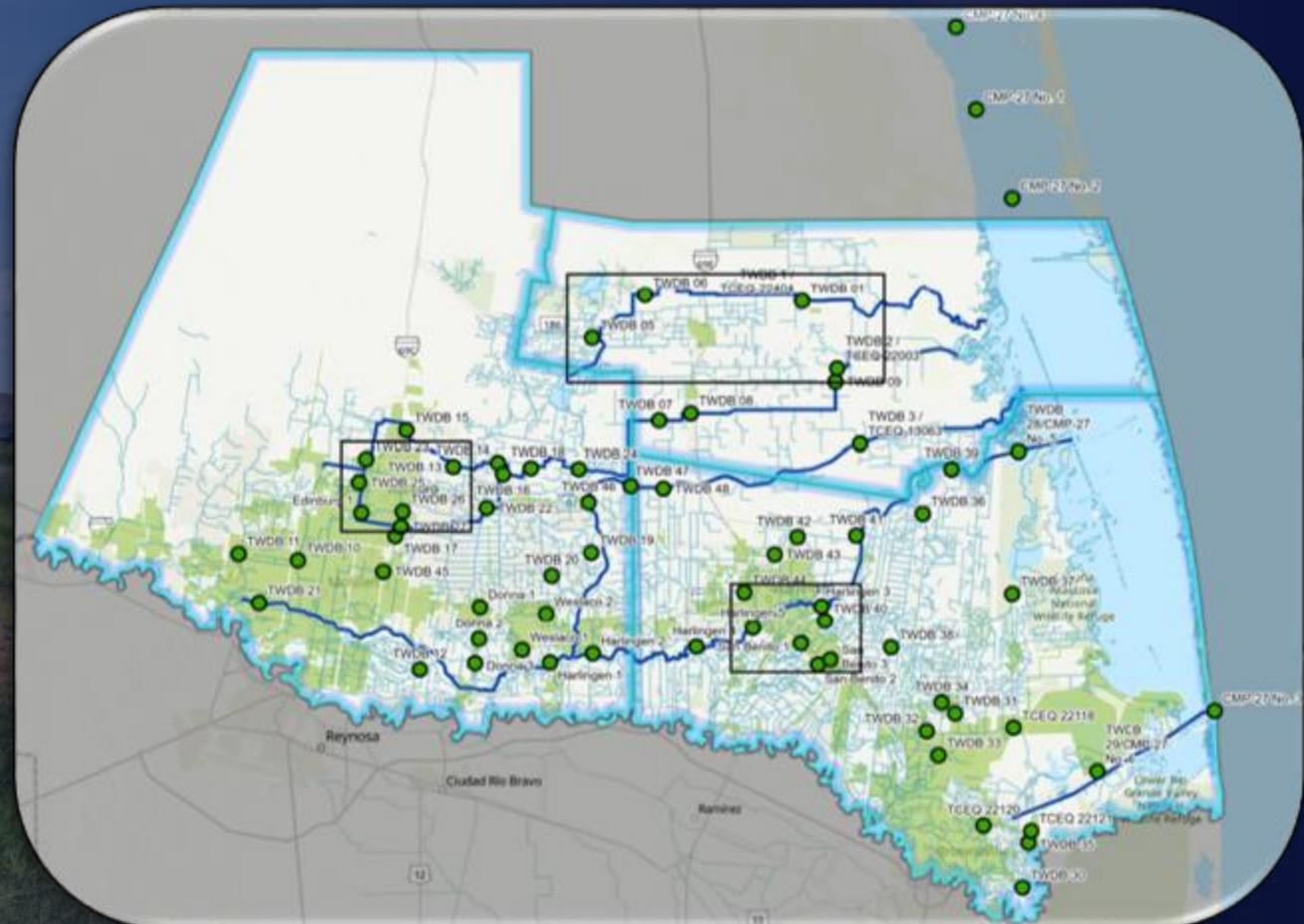


Ongoing Developments

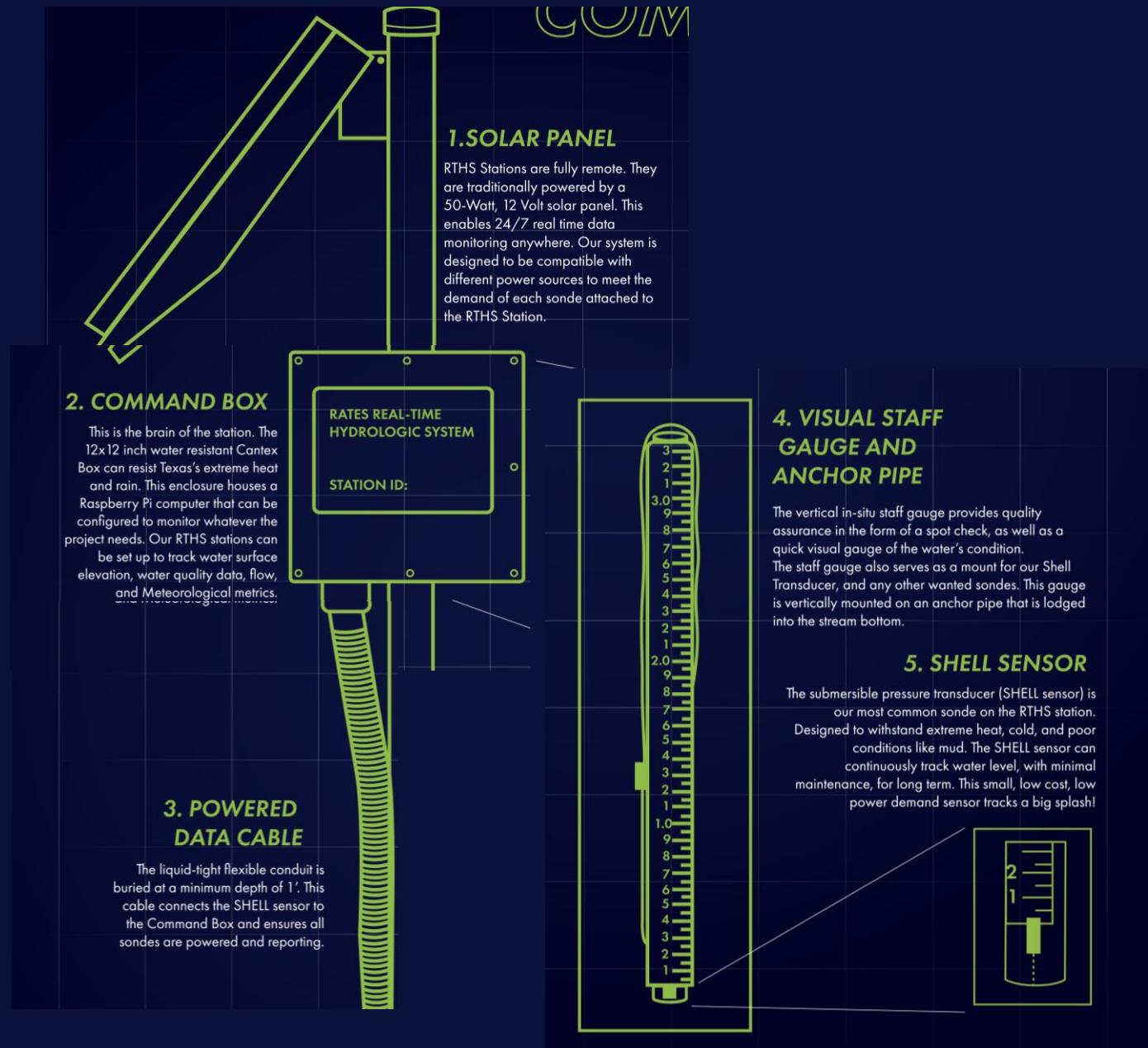
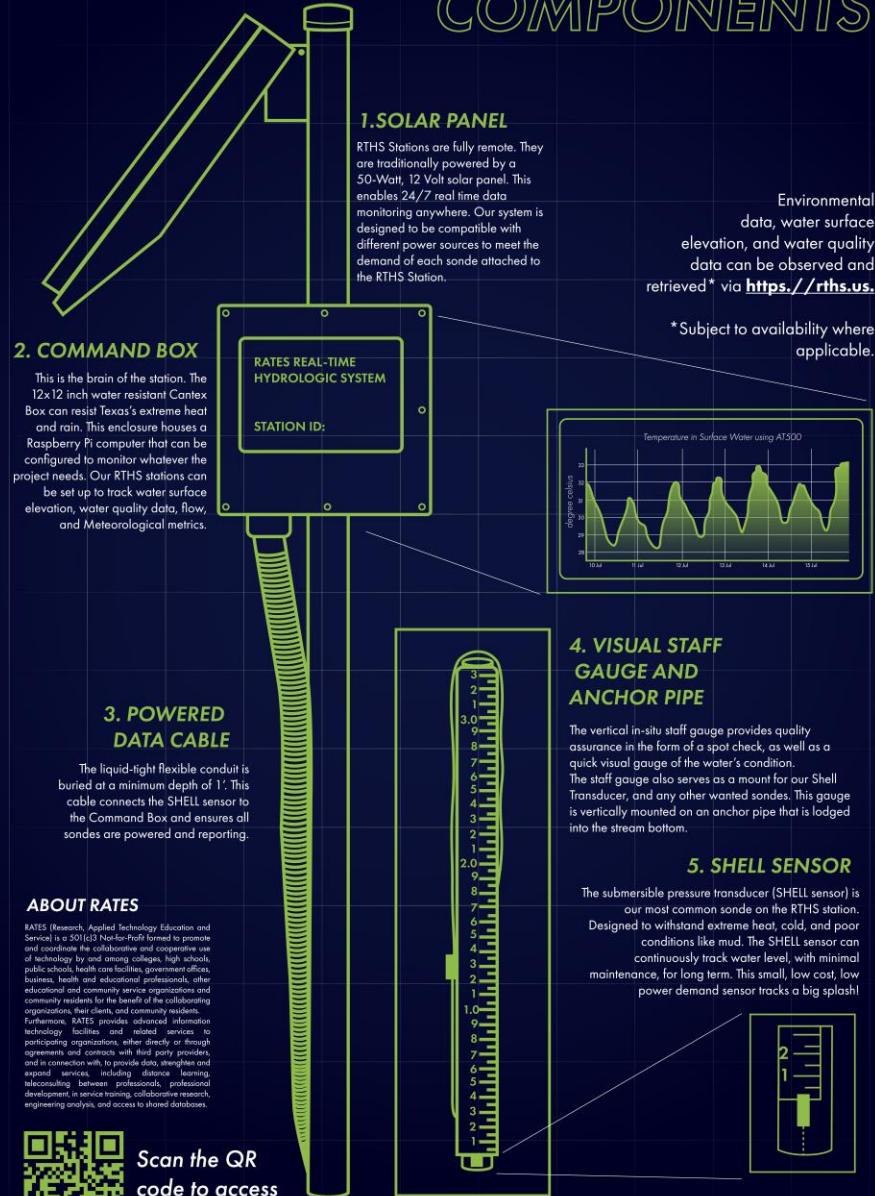
- Integration of additional sensors:
 - Water quality sondes
 - Precipitation gauges
 - Doppler flowmeters
- Integration of data from independent CI platforms
- Water surface elevation above sea level
- QA spot check data integration w/ continuous data
- Drift adjustments
- 60-minute → 5-minute data blocks
- Partnerships for station operations:
 - Local partner handles on-site activities
 - RATES provides materials, support, cyberinfrastructure



REON RGV



RTHS STATIONS COMPONENTS



Where are we now?

- FIF Project of 44 RTHS stations
- Over 15 other privately funded RTHS Sites
- North and Central Phase I and II
- NOAA GCOOS:
 - HF Radar
 - CMP-27
 - REON

Road Map

- Department Specialization
 - Dumble Drain
 - Open Environment
 - Open Engineering
 - LEAS Solution
- Stormwater Taskforce
 - RATES

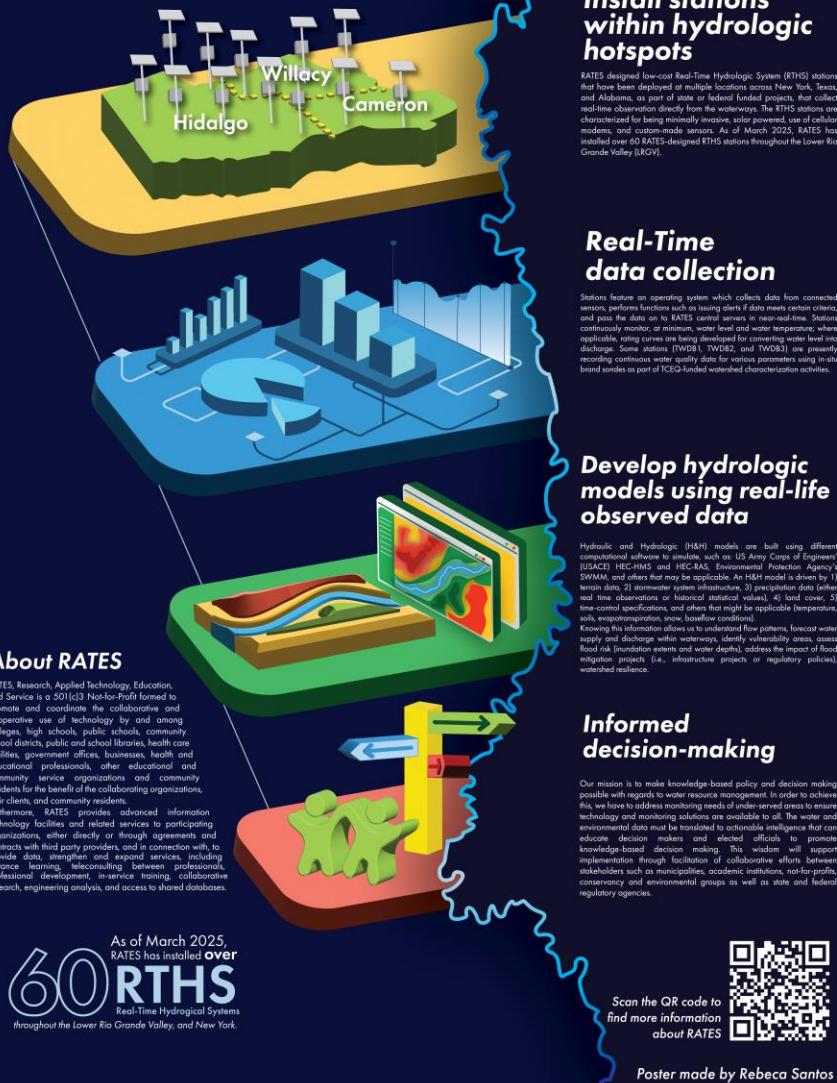
Collaboration

- Flood Resiliency
- Alert-based app
 - FEWS
 - TX Expansion
 - AI Forecasting
- Real-Time Modeling
- Strategic Partnerships





SMART WATERSHED PHASES: THE FUTURE OF THE LRGV



Democratizing Water Knowledge-Enabled Policy and Decision Making

DATA

Address monitoring needs of under-served areas to ensure technology and monitoring solutions are available to all

INFORMATION

Translate water & environmental data into actionable intelligence

KNOWLEDGE

Educate decision makers and elected officials to promote knowledge-based decision making

WISDOM

Support implementation through facilitation of collaborative efforts between stakeholders such as municipalities, academic institutions, not-for-profits, conservancy & environmental groups as well as state and federal regulatory agencies

The RGV. It's flat!



Flat, engineered watershed

Extremely low slopes, poor soil permeability, and highly modified drains/canals means water doesn't follow neat, natural basins. Instead, it ponds, backs up, and crosses jurisdictional lines.



Cross-county dependence, unequal capacity

Much of the region's runoff must move through resource limited Willacy County, while Hidalgo and Cameron have in-house engineering, creating built in equity and coordination challenges.



Patchwork to partnership

With no historic regional water forum, RWAC and RATES were created to provide a neutral watershed coordinator and turn fragmented projects and studies into a unified, regional approach to flood and water management.

Projects in Texas



TWDB LRGV

- Flood Infrastructure Fund (FIF)
- FWF



TCEQ

- TCEQ 319
- North and Central WPP
- Lower Laguna Madre-Brownsville Ship Channel



TXGLO

CMP-27 Lower Laguna Madre



NOAA GCOOS

HF Radar



City of Harlingen
Hydrologic Unit Code 10
Flood Protection Plan
Study

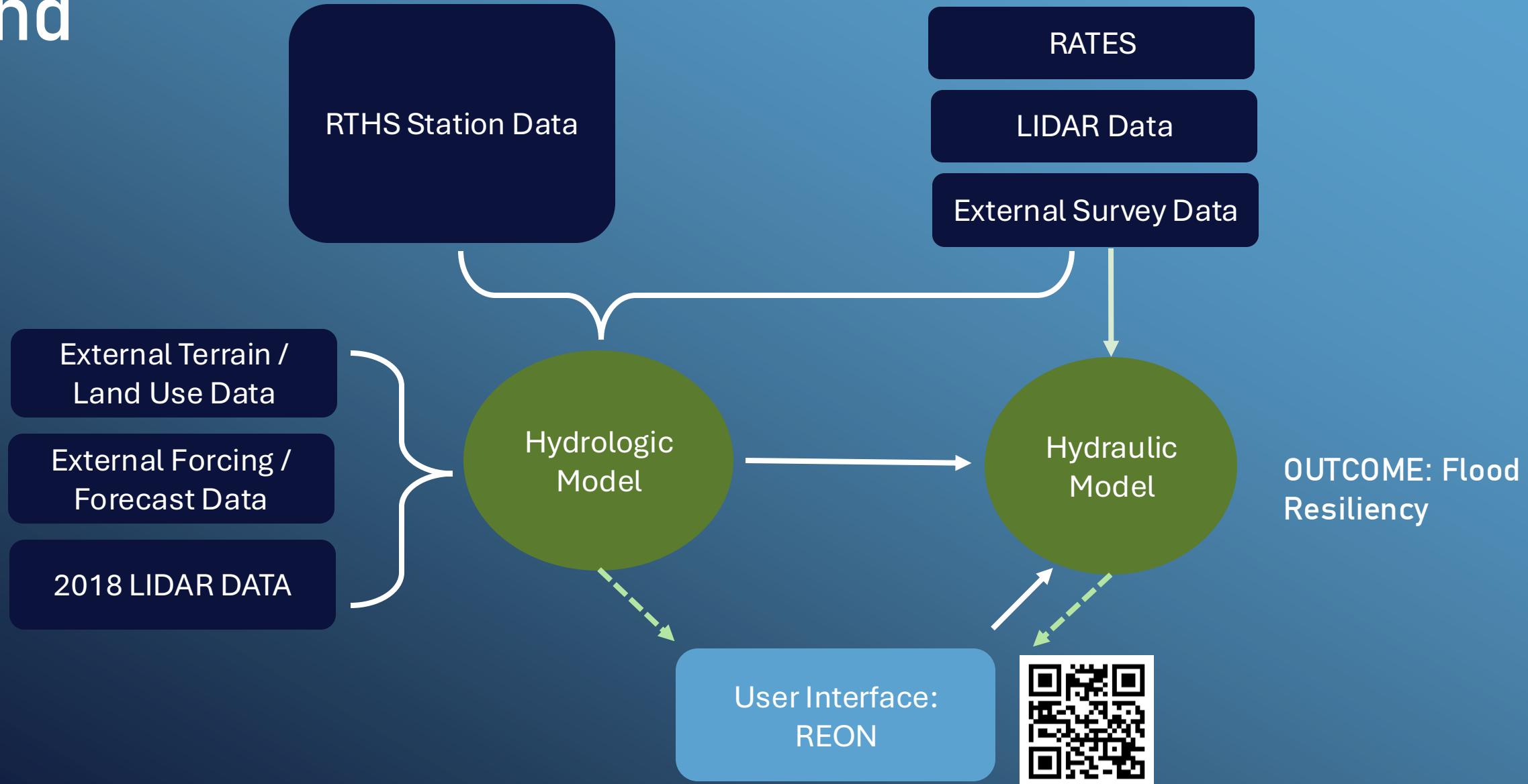


Enhancing Hydrologic
Forecasting in the Rio
Grande Basin



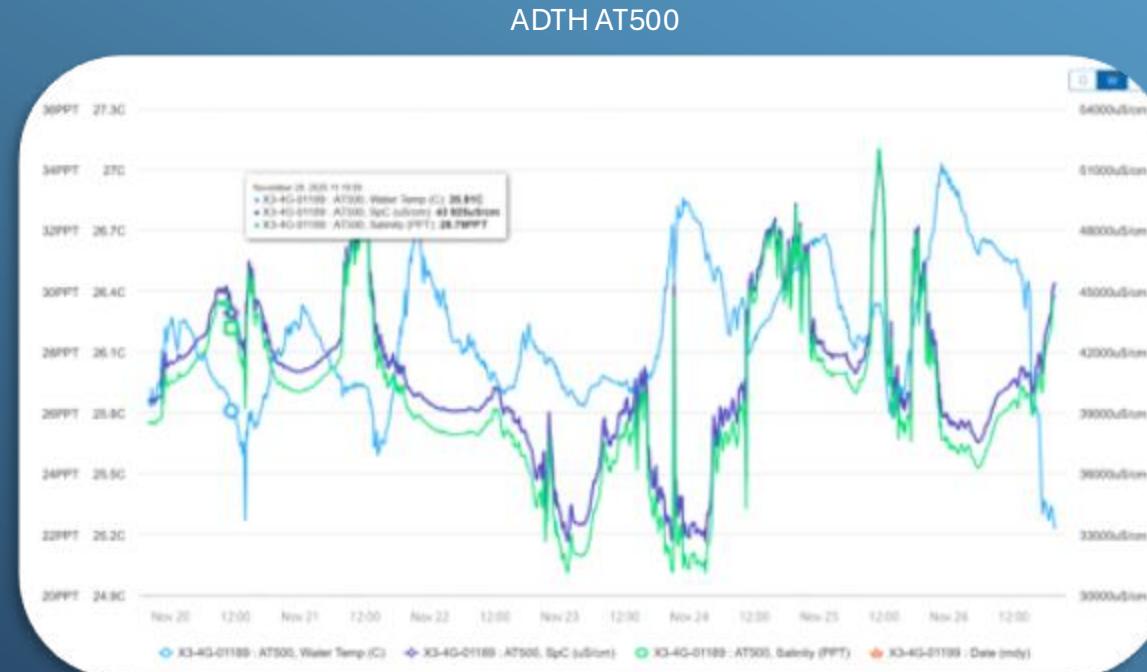
City-funded
projects

TWDB LRGV Flood Infrastructure Fund



TGLO CMP-27 Lower Laguna Madre Hydrodynamic Characterization

- **PROJECT LEAD:** Cameron County
- Proposal developed in collaboration with TWDB and USACE
- **TOTAL BUDGET:** \$852, 254
- **PROJECT DURATION:** 24 months



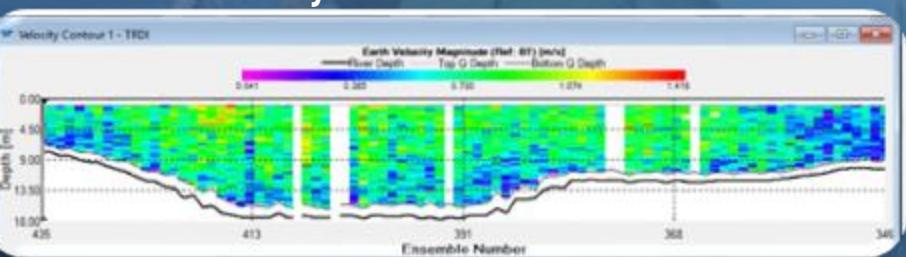
Deploy an integrated hydrodynamic and water-quality monitoring program at six Lower Laguna Madre sites, using existing NOAA CO-OPS infrastructure and two new RTHS stations equipped with continuous CTD and ADCP sensors. The resulting datasets will improve multi-agency models of freshwater inflow, storm surge, oil-spill movement, and non-point-source pollutant transport.

CMP-27 Overview



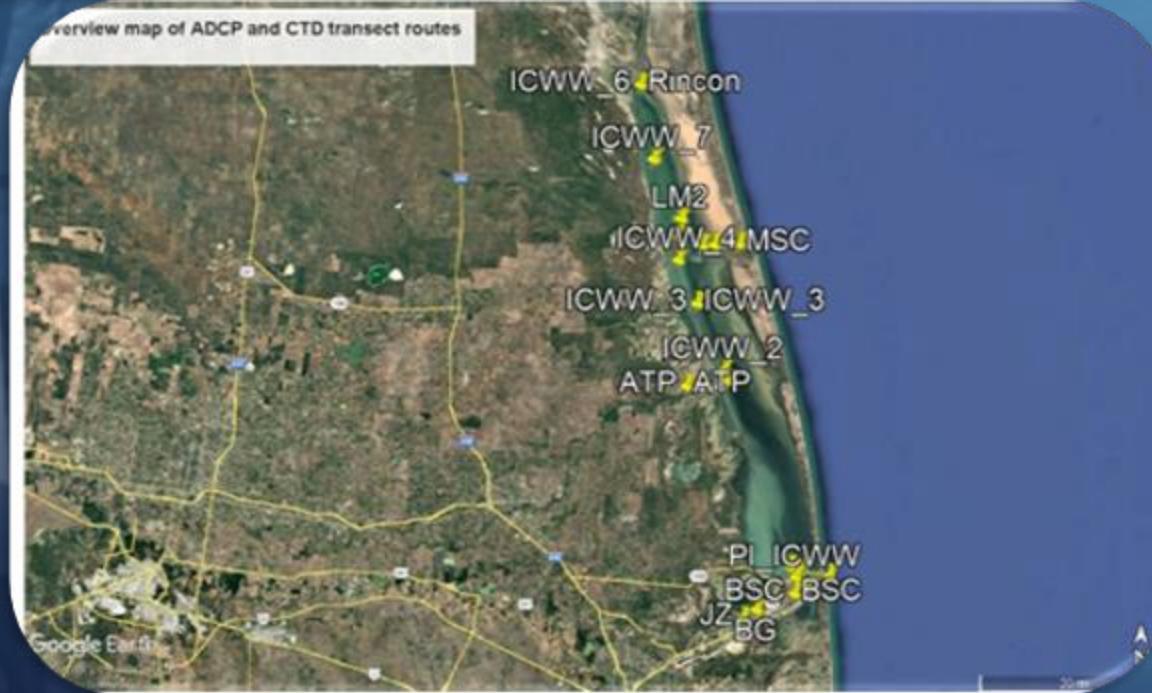
Data Collection

- Continuous-5 stations
- Quarterly-23 station



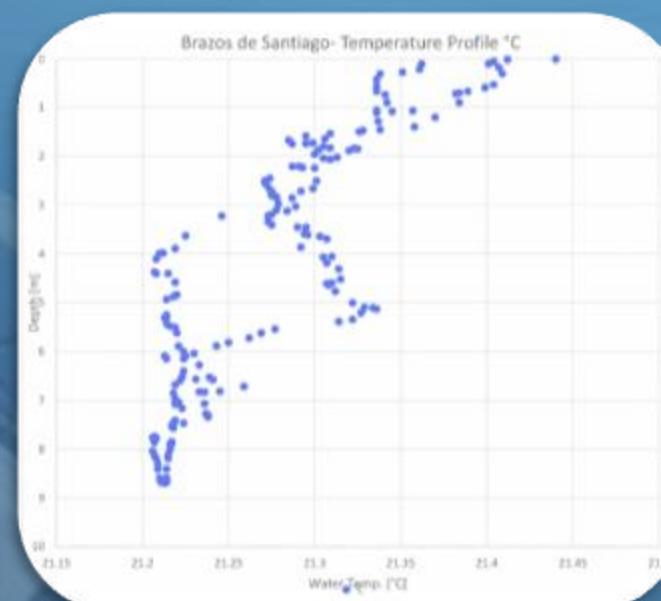
Applications

- Coastal flood, estuarine water quality, coastal infrastructure design



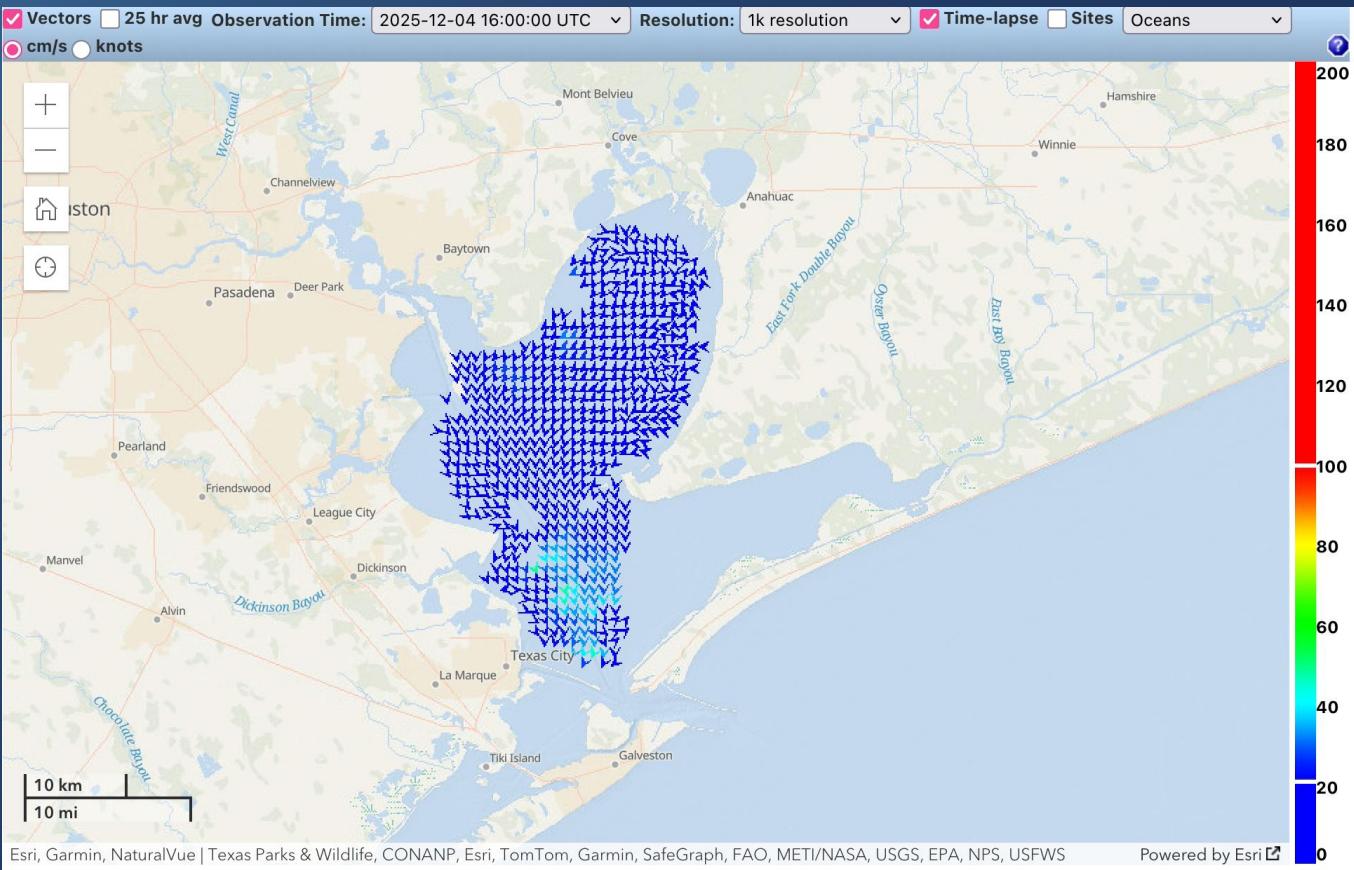
Stakeholders

- TWDB, USACE, USACE, Research

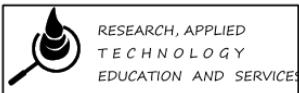


NOAA GCOOS: HF Radar

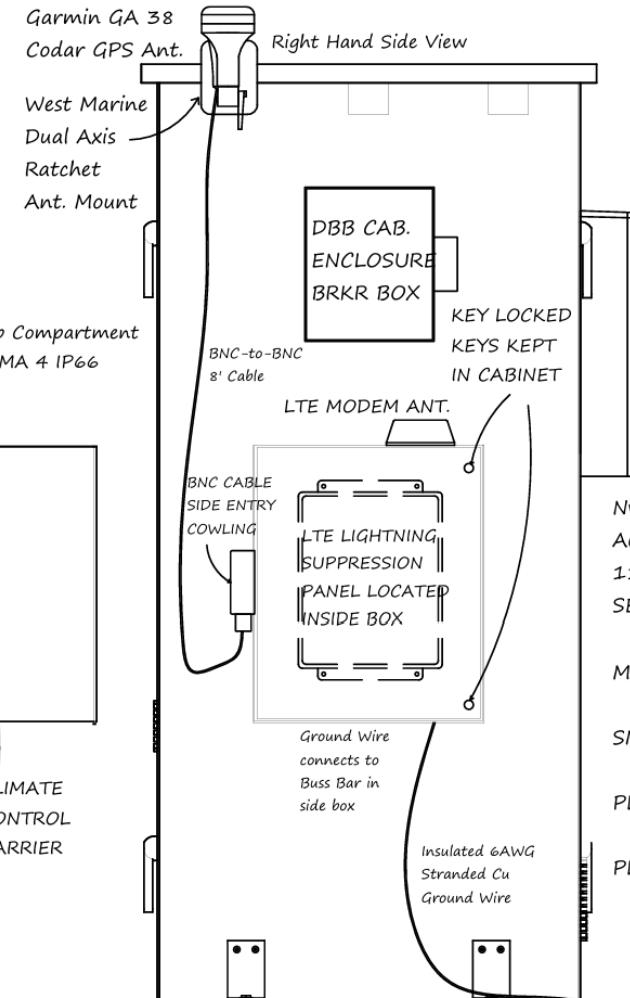
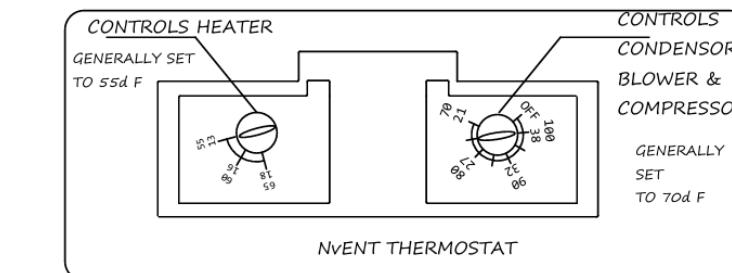
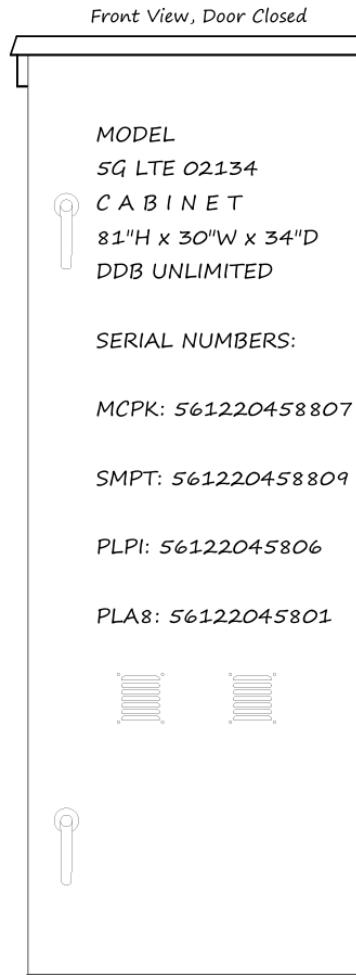
- Pass through entity: TAMU
- Total: \$650,000
- Sept 2024-Aug 2029
- O&M Funding of assets originally commissioned under TGLO CMP-26 PSM
 - Galveston Bay
 - Sabine Lake
 - Asset value: \$1.5-million
- Near real-time surface currents and waves (H , t , direction)
- Applications:
 - Coastal and combined flood modeling
 - Oil spill and contaminant transport modeling
 - Coastal hydrodynamic characterization and modeling
 - Damage assessment
 - Maritime safety
 - Search and Rescue Operation



SCAN TO OPEN NOAA



CODAR CABINET OVERVIEW MCPK, SMPT, PLPI, AND PLA8



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CMP-26
RATES.org
HF Radar
Texas Bays

C O D A R
Five Station
Drawing Set

East
Galveston
Bay and
Sabine
Lake

Illustrations
reflect status
as of one year
operational
January 2024

RATES RGV
P.O. Box 697
Edinburg, TX
78540

www2.ratesresearch.org
Rev B Drawing Set
Illustrator: Mitch S.





City of Harlingen HUC 10 Flood Protection Plan Study

- **PROJECT LEAD:** City of Harlingen
- **SCOPE:** 5 RTHS Stations upgraded to monitor precipitation and other meteorological parameters along the Arroyo Colorado. Transects and discharge measurements to follow.
- Precipitation Density data gap

TIFF and RATES



Observations & Monitoring Fill Priority Gaps

Waves and nearshoring conditions

Bathymetry / Topobathy refresh

CMP-27 Transects from Costal RTH Stations

NOAA GCOOS
HF Radar
FIF Task I
ADVs
CMP-27

Keep data sets findable and consistent

Catalog & API's

USGS TIF Coastal Data Surfer (CDS)

LONG TERM
Texas Flood Hazard
Q3
FEMA Estimated Base
Flood Elevation
FEMA National Flood
Hazard Layer
Flood Facts 1

SHORT TERM
TxGis Flood Viewer
TMD8 TexMesonet
Flood Decision Support
Toolbox
USGS Texas Water Dashboard

FIF GIS Data Hub
ROV Flood Water Wizard
WQ2 Data Live
Integration
Scada integration
Del Rio
REON

NOAA GCOOS
HF Radar
CMP-27WQ
Data Live



Data Management, Standards and Discoverability

Waves and nearshoring conditions

Keep data sets findable and consistent

Bathymetry/Topobathy refresh

SHORT TERM
TxGlo Flood Viewer
TWDB TexMesonet
Flood Decision
Support Toolbox
USGS Texas Water Dashboard

Catalog & API's



USGS TIFF
Coastal Data Surfer (CDS)

LONG TERM
Texas Flood Hazard
Quaternary
FEMA Estimated Base Flood Elevation
FEMA National Flood Insurance Program Flood Factor

CMP-27 work/
Transect

FIF GIS Data Hub
RGV Flood
Water Wizard
WQ2 Data Live
Integration
TDIS
REON

NOAA GOOS HF Radar
FIF Task I ADV
CMP-27

NOAA GOOS
HF Radar
CMP-27 WQ Data Live



Science and Tools Library

Waves and
nearshore
conditions

Keep data
sets
findable
and
consisten
t

Bathymetry/
Topobathy
refresh

FIF GIS Data Hub
RGV Flood
Water Wizard
WQ2 Data Live
Integration
Scada integration Del
Rio
REON

NOAA GCOOS HF
Radar
FIF Task I ADV
CMP-27

SHORT TERM

- TxGIO Flood Viewer
- TWDB TexMesonet
 - Flood Decision Support Toolbox
- USGS Texas Water Dashboard

LONG TERM

- Texas Flood Hazard Quilt
- FEMA Estimated Base Flood Elevation
- FEMA National Flood Hazard Layer
- Flood Factor

- NOAA GCOOS HF Radar
- CMP-27 WQ Data Live
- Water Wizard
- REON



UzSGS
TIFF
Coastal
Data
Surfer
(CDS)

Catalog
& APIs

CMP-27 work/
Transect

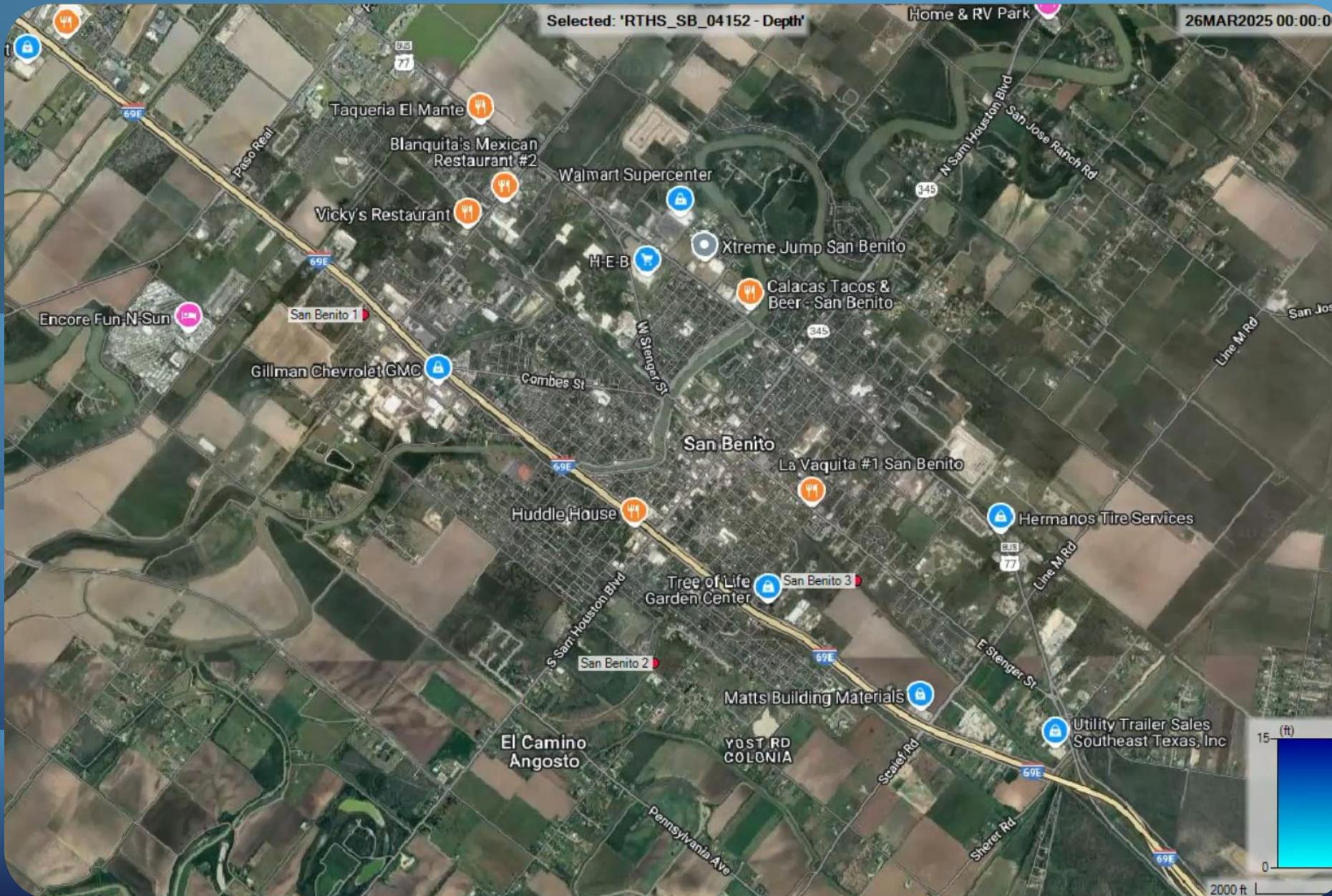


- AI
- Open-Source Community
- Commercialization
- TDIS
- Research Partnerships
- ...



Where do we want to go?

FLOOD MITIGATION PROJECT DEVELOPMENT



WATER WIZARD



Home

Total Sites: 172

- NY: 101
- NJ: 2
- TX: 68

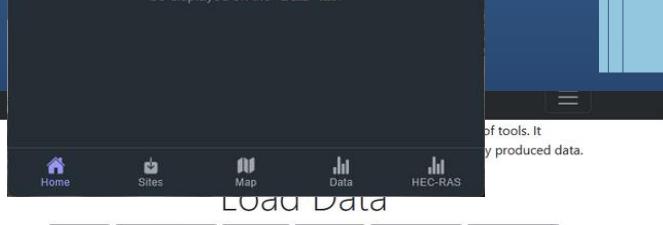


Welcome

River and Estuary

v0.9.1

Please visit "Map" and select sites. Data for sites with infowindows open will be displayed on the "Data" tab.



Data Table

Sites Units Methods Variables

REST API

Sites Units Methods Variables

Progress

2652819 of 4497813 processes

RGVFlood

A community network of real-time data providers and users committed to the philosophy of enabling local and regional resource management through sharing of water data and exchange of water information.

All resources Datasets Maps Documents GeoStories Dashboards

About English

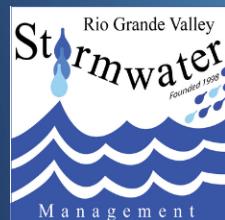


Tier II Model

Bay View



- **Project file.** Contains current plan files, units and project description.
- **Geometry file.** Cross-sectional data, hydraulic structures and modeling approach data are stored here.
- **Steady Flow file.** Profile information, flow data and boundary conditions written in this file.
- **Plan file.** Contains a list of the associated input files, and all simulation options.



Network AI

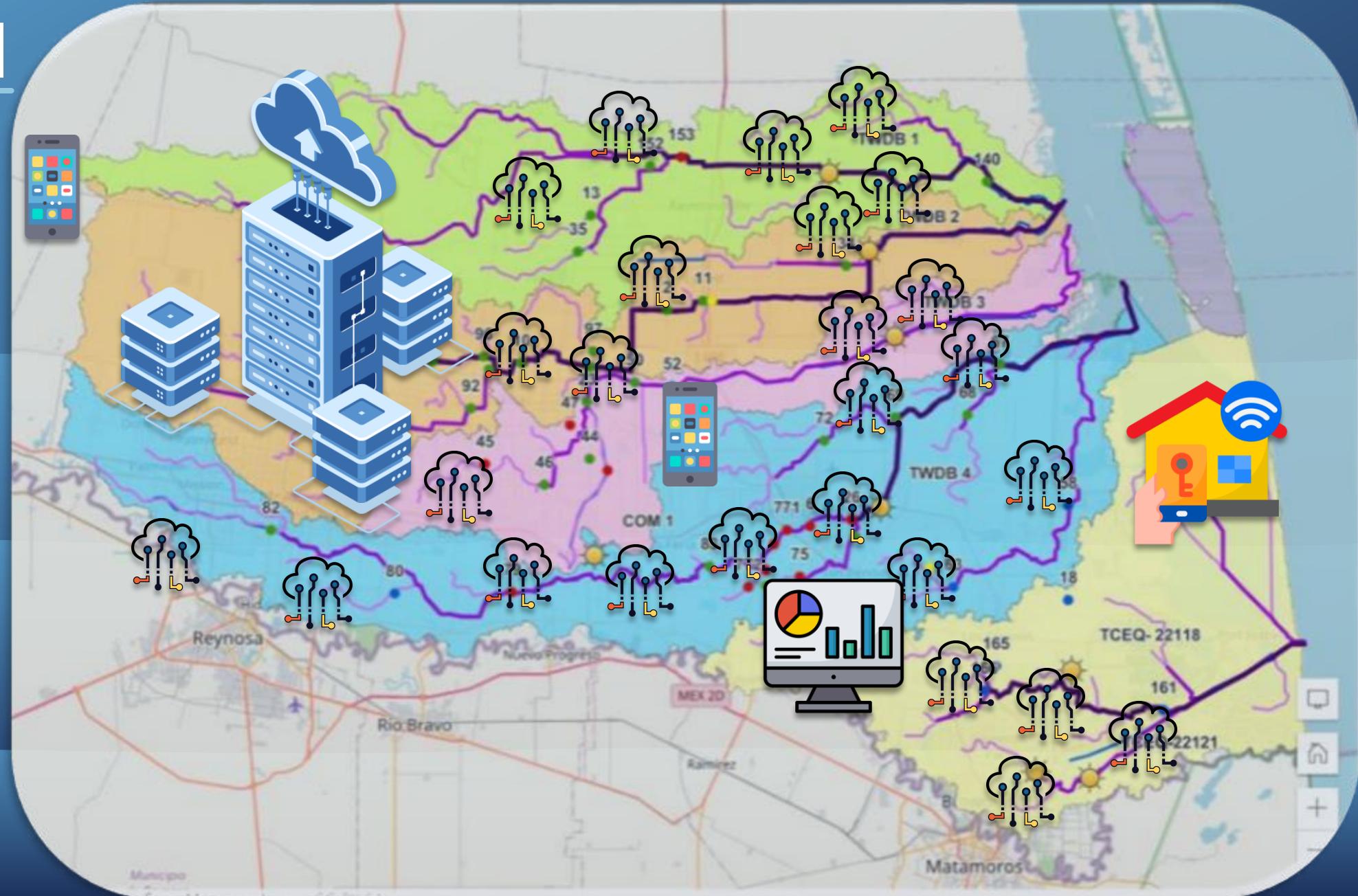
A True Intelligent Watershed



Data Center HPC
Regional Intelligence



Intelligent RTHS
Local Intelligence



Pending FMS Application: LRGV Regional Flood Early Warning System (FEWS)

Application Development

Based on \$5M Cameron County FEWS included in 2024 State Flood Plan

RATES:

- Proposed to Cameron County: Leverage existing RTHS network for FEWS Purposes
 - Expand scope to include Hidalgo and Willacy Counties
 - Reduce budget to \$3M
- Worked with Task Force to promote regional coordination
- Worked with Cameron County to develop applications
 - Abridged Application: April 2024; Full Application: November 2024

Project Scope

- Stakeholder Engagement on FEWS Implementation Design
 - Focus: First Responders, Public Works Personnel
- RTHS Siting/Installation/Commissioning
 - Not-yet-monitored sites for which data would be impactful
 - Transition station “ownership” to local stakeholders
- Cyberinfrastructure Development
 - Back-End: Implementation and testing of FEWS capabilities on FEWS-focused implementation of existing CI
 - Automated validation of alert conditions using data from multiple stations
 - Front-End: Delivery of FEWS alerts/information to Target Users
- Long-Term Sustainability: Develop platforms and documentation facilitating O&M of stations by local stakeholders

Pending FME Application: Developing a Regional Master Drainage Plan for Cameron and Hidalgo County

**Abridged FME Application submitted April 2024
(FIF SFY 2024-2025 funding cycle)**

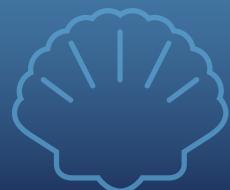
- Basis: Cameron County Holistic HUC Flood Protection Study from 2024 State Flood Plan
- RATES:
 - Recommended inclusion of Hidalgo Co.
 - Worked with Cameron County on application development
 - Worked with Task Force to engage communities
- Budget: \$13M
- TWDB prioritization (Feb. 2025): #6/203 statewide FMEs

Project Goals

- Holistic Data-Driven Analysis for Every Community
- Systematic Flood Risk Mapping and Capital Improvement Planning
- Implementing a Coordinated, System-Based Approach for Maximum Regional Benefit

What do we need?

- Investment
- Transferability
- Sustainability
 - Partnerships
 - Commercialization
- ...

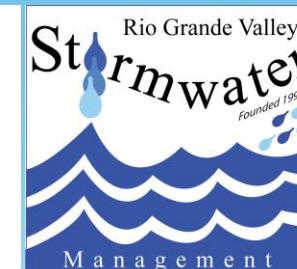


Cameron County proposes:

ACWIRRED

An Institute for

**Applied Coastal Water Intelligence for
Regional Resilience and Economic
Development**

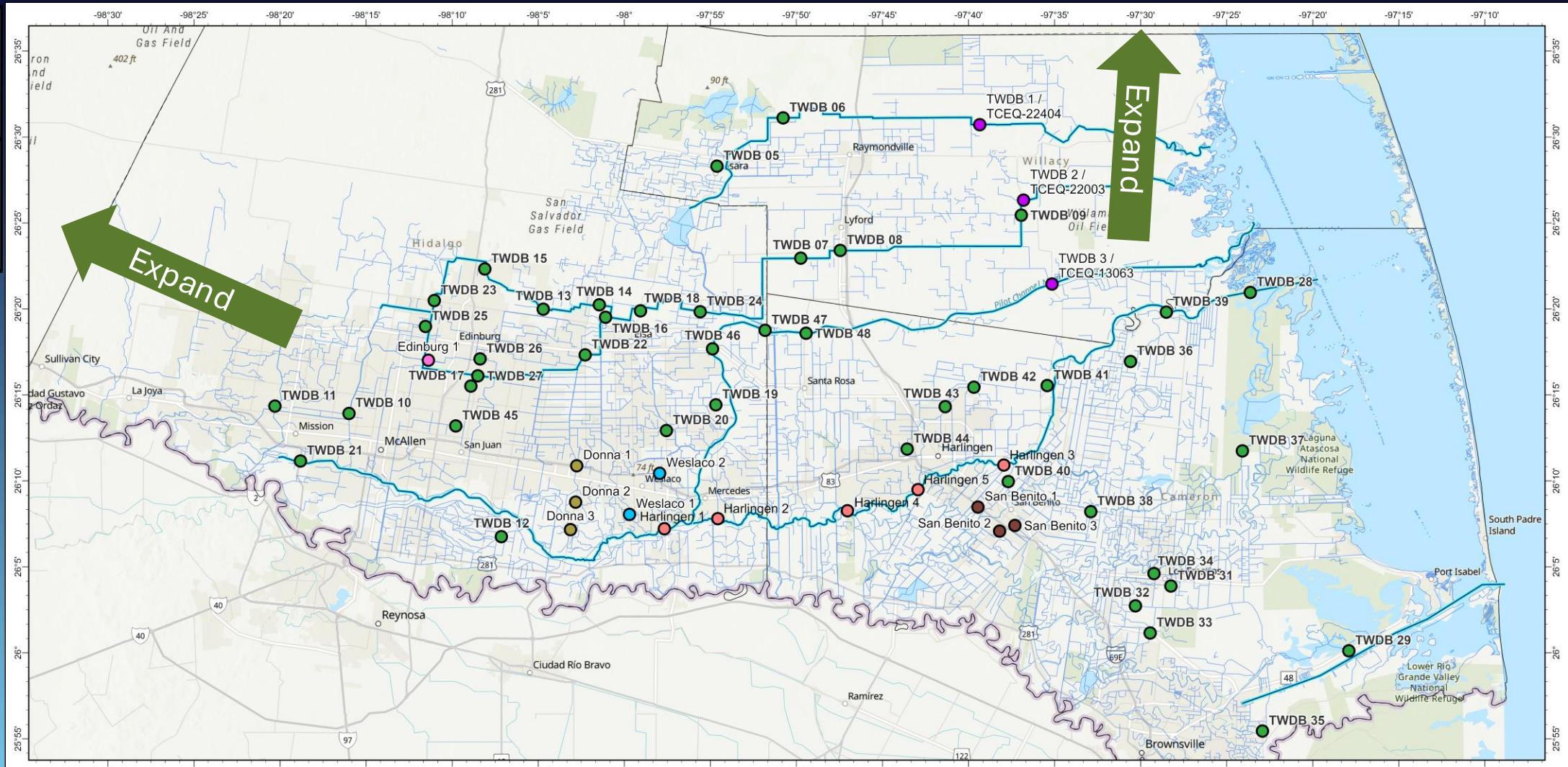


R
E
O
N

RGV

Coastal

Rio Grande
Basin



TITLE:
Real-Time Hydrologic System (RTHS)
Stations in the Rio Grande Valley

PRODUCED BY:

RESEARCH, APPLIED
TECHNOLOGY
EDUCATION AND SERVICE
Rio Grande Valley

SYMBOLS

- CSE
- FIF
- City of Donna
- City of San Benito
- City of Weslaco
- City of Edinburg
- North & Central Phase 2
- Major Waterways
- LRGV Counties
- Streams

DETAILS

RTHS stations distributed in the Rio Grande Valley:

- CSE: 5 stations
- FIF: 44 stations
- Donna: 3 stations
- San Benito: 3 stations
- Weslaco: 2 stations
- Edinburg: 1 station
- N&C Phase II: 3 stations

GRAPHIC SCALE:
0 3.5 7 14 Miles

SCALE:
1 : 390,000



Value Proposition

Applied Research

- The Need:

Workforce Development



Industry Recruitment

- The Niche:

Embrace the 4th Industrial Revolution

- The Engine:

Institute for Regional Resilience & Economic Development



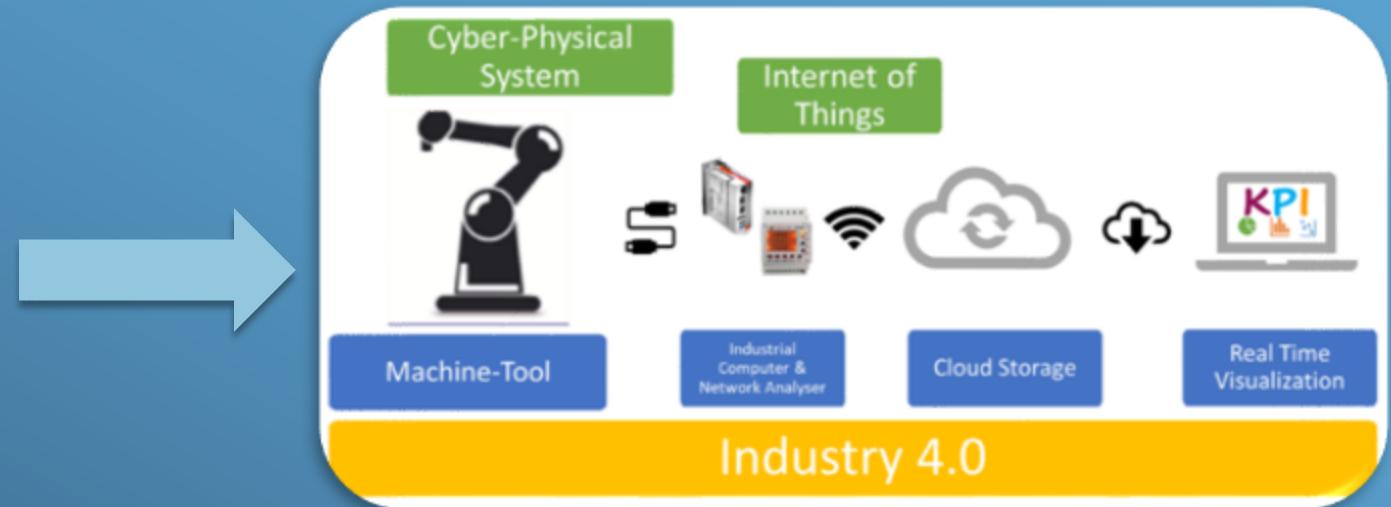
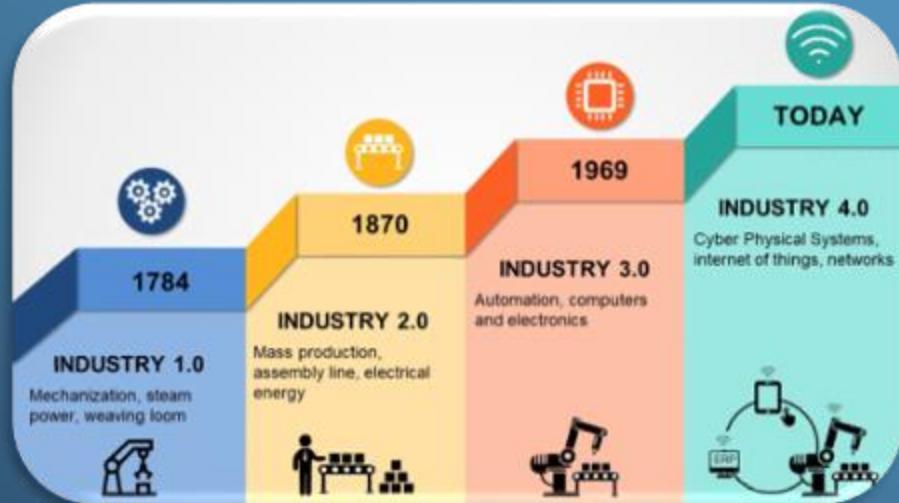
Academy



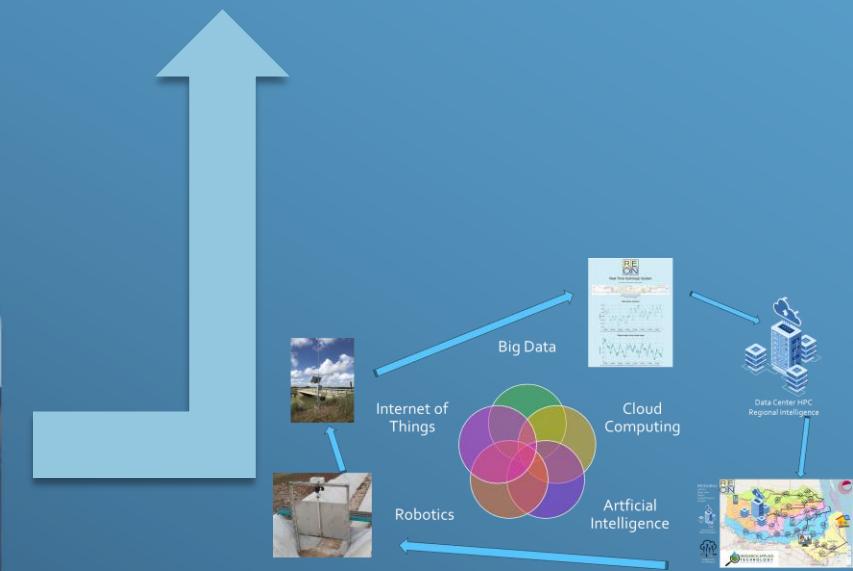
Accelerator



Extension



A screenshot of the U.S. National Science Foundation (NSF) website, specifically the page for Cyber-Physical Systems (CPS) funding. The page features a search bar and navigation links for funding, awards, focus areas, news, and about. A large image of a woman's face is on the right, and a banner at the bottom left reads "Cyber-Physical Systems (CPS)". A call-to-action button says "View guidelines NSF 24-581".



ACWIRRED

Cyber-Physical Systems



Big Data



Data Center HPC
Regional Intelligence



Internet of
Things



Cloud
Computing

Artificial
Intelligence



Robotics



REON/RGV
LRGV's
Next-Gen
Water
CyberPhysical
System

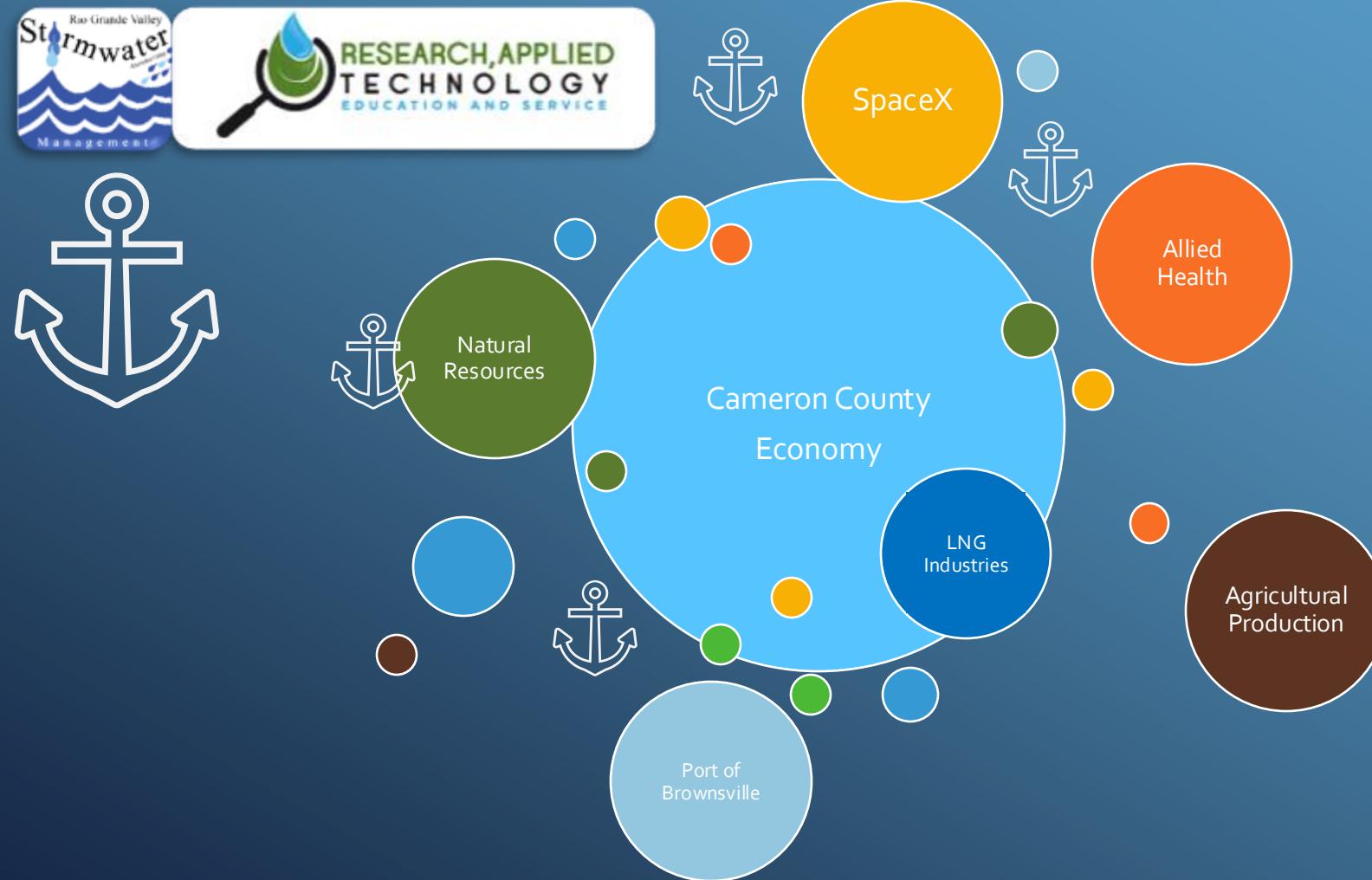
Data Center HPC
Regional Intelligence

Intelligent BTHS
Local Intelligence



RESEARCH, APPLIED
TECHNOLOGY
EDUCATION AND SERVICE

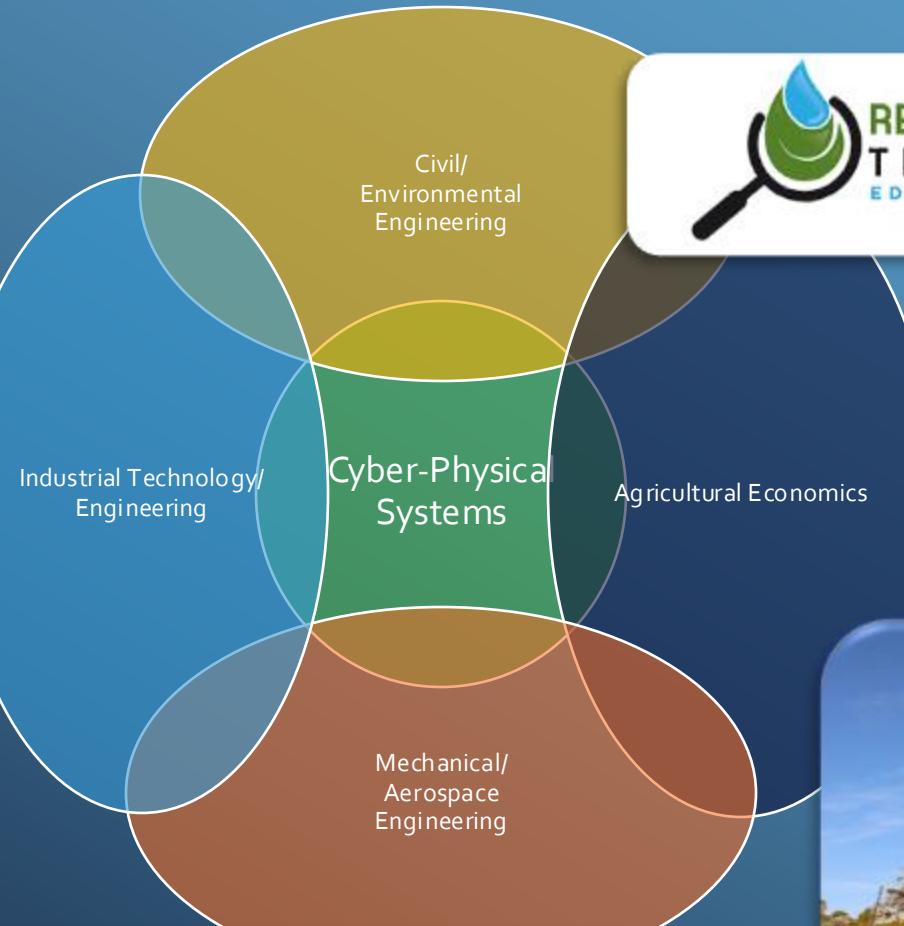
Key County Economic Drivers



Workforce Needs



Industrial
Development



Resource Resiliency



Academic Model . . .

Circa 1990's
TGLO-TAMUS Ph.D. Pipeline
Oil Spill

Ph.D. {Cyber-Physical}
TAMU / UT

M.S.
Cyber-Physical
[2+3]

M.S.
Cyber-Physical
[4+1]

TSTC

TSC

SCI

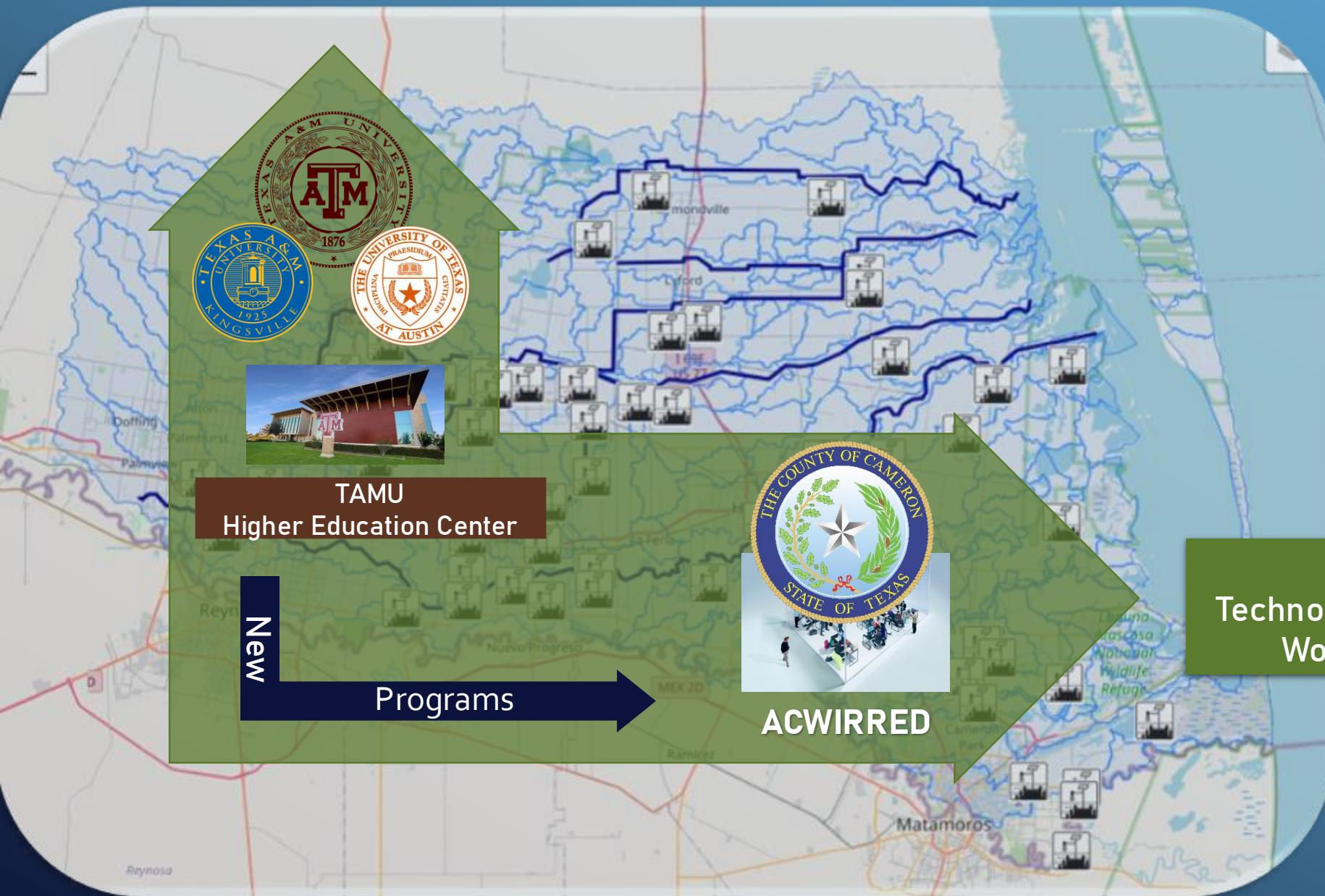
TAMU/HEC

UTRGV

TAMUK

New Program

Leveraging REON/RGV



Economic Consequences of Coastal Storm Surge



Agriculture



Industry

New
Students

Technology
Need

Theses
Dissertations

Innovation

Engaged
Workforce

Industry
Professors of
Practice



Institute Acceleration Model



CYBER-PHYSICAL SYSTEM FOR REGIONAL FLOOD MANAGEMENT



LEAS Solutions, LLC

Contact

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**William Kirkey, Ph.D.
Chief Research Officer**
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RATES website



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Assorted Publications

IEEE SENSORS JOURNAL, VOL. 18, NO. 22, NOVEMBER 15, 2018

9151

Low-Cost Submersible Turbidity Sensors Using Low-Frequency Source Light Modulation

William D. Kirkey, *Graduate Student Member, IEEE*, James S. Bonner, and Christopher B. Fuller

ENVIRONMENTAL ENGINEERING SCIENCE
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Impacts of an Extreme Weather-Related Episodic Event on the Hudson River and Estuary

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River & Estuary Observation Network: Refinement of Stage Height Sensor Subsystem for Low Cost and High Reliability

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A Fixed Robotic Profiler System to Sense Real-Time Episodic Pulses in Corpus Christi Bay

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Discover Water

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Long-term coastal observatory-high frequency radar: site selection study and considerations

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Estimating Colloidal Concentration Using Acoustic Backscatter

Christopher B. Fuller, James S. Bonner, Mohammad S. Islam, Temitope Ojo, Cheryl A. Page, and William D. Kirkey