



Harlingen Area Chamber of Commerce | 311 E. Tyler | Harlingen, TX 78550 | 956.423.5440

FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE  
July 3, 2014

## FIRST BALE OF COTTON IN THE NATION

HARLINGEN – The official certified First Bale of cotton in the United States was delivered to Ed Landry of the La Feria Co-Op gin by Sam and Josh Ruiz, of Mid Valley Ag on Thursday, July 3, 2014 at 5:15 p.m. The seed cotton weighed in at 1,580 pounds and was picked entirely by hand at their farm located near La Feria. This will be the first time for the Ruiz brothers to win this contest, sponsored by the Harlingen Cotton Committee, and they will receive a reward of \$3,000. Once ginned, the bale of cotton will be delivered to the Harlingen Area Chamber of Commerce.

Since 1953 Harlingen has auctioned the first bale of cotton grown in the United States and this year will be no different. Harlingen Cotton Committee of the Harlingen Area Chamber of Commerce, which for more than 61 years has verified that the nation's First Bale of cotton was grown in the Rio Grande Valley, celebrates the 2014 cotton crop with a First Bale Auction and Scholarship Fundraiser set for Thursday, August 14, 2014.

“This event has grown tremendously over the years, and our goal is to continue to serve the agricultural community of the Rio Grande Valley and support and inspire students to take an active role in this field,” said Harlingen Cotton Committee Chairman Brady Taubert.

“Agriculture is about one quarter of the area’s economy, so the industry is not only important to the actual farmers but to consumers as well. Cotton grown in the Rio Grande Valley gets shipped all over Texas and the U.S. and is transported to many countries overseas. Without the American farmer, we would be a nation with no clothing or food,” Taubert continued.

Along with auctioning off the First Bale, the Harlingen Cotton Committee will be awarding \$5,000 in scholarship money to students attending Texas State Technical College. TSTC Lozano Long Opportunity Scholarship will match those funds bringing the total scholarship to \$10,000 to support agriculture students in the Rio Grande Valley.

In conjunction with the First Bale Auction and Scholarship Fundraiser, the Algodon Club will hold a silent auction to raise funds for additional scholarships given away each year to graduating high school students in Cameron, Hidalgo and Willacy County. The students are required to actively be pursuing enrollment in a college or university for the upcoming school year and planning to pursue a degree in an agricultural-related field.

For more information contact Chris Gonzales, President and CEO at [cgonzales@harlingen.com](mailto:cgonzales@harlingen.com) or Sarah Trolinger, Governmental Affairs Manager at [strolinger@harlingen.com](mailto:strolinger@harlingen.com), or call the Harlingen Area Chamber of Commerce at 956.423.5440.