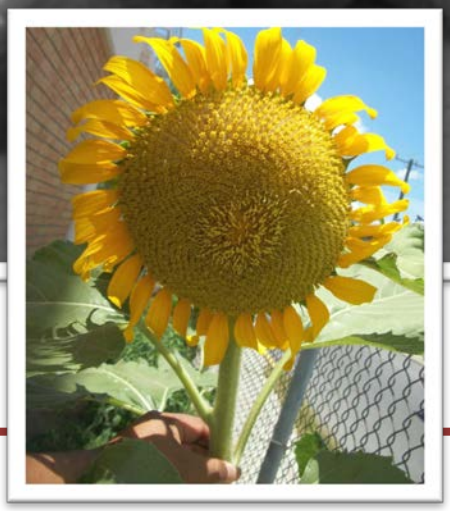
US-MEXICO BORDER 2012

Activities Completed in 2011 and 2012 For the TX-COAH-NL-TAMP Regional Workgroup



August 2012

Amistad Task Force
Activities Completed in 2011 and 2012

Environmental Health

"Healthy Homes" Training for Promotoras in Eagle Pass and Piedras Negras

Implementing entity: U.S. EPA/R6 Children's Health
Contact name: Paula Selzer
Telephone: 214-665-6663
E-mail address: Selzer.paula@epa.gov
Other collaborating entities: National Health Homes Training Center and Network

Activity:
The U.S. EPA, in conjunction with the National Healthy Homes Training Center and Network, organized a class in May 2011 on cost-effective methods for making homes healthier. The training focused on pest management to reduce health hazards in homes. Kickapoo Tribe officials hosted the workshop at a site on its reservation and invited public health officials from Eagle Pass, Maverick County, and the sister city of Piedras Negras to the training.

Approximately 40 promotoras from the city, county, and the tribe, as well as six health care providers from Piedras Negras, attended. Participants received continuing education credit hours for attending the course.

Results and Outcomes:
Promotoras have begun using what they learned at the workshop in their outreach to colonia residents, in an effort to reduce exposure to chemicals that are linked to asthma and cancer-related illnesses.

Waste

Management of Used Electronics in Eagle Pass and Piedras Negras

Implementing entity: City of Eagle Pass, Public Works Department
Contact name: Hector Chavez
Telephone: 830-773-9408
E-mail address: hchavez@eaglepasstx.us
Other collaborating entities: Border Environment Cooperation Commission

Activity:

With assistance from an EPA Border 2012 grant of $30,000, the City of Eagle Pass collaborated with its sister city of Piedras Negras, Coahuila on a recycling project aimed at used electronic products. The project was implemented from April 2010 to June 2011. Eagle Pass incorporated electronics collection into its existing municipal recycling center. Piedras Negras established new collection centers. The cities contracted with a Piedras Negras environmental group to manage an education program in schools regarding health risks associated with improper disposal. An Eagle Pass recycling company disassembled the equipment and determined where to ship the constituents. The educational component reached more than 4,900 students in 77 schools.

Results and Outcomes:
The project increased public awareness of the health risks posed by used electronic products and established a system for recycling and proper disposal in the two sister cities. More than 165 tons of used electronics products were processed by the two cities.

Falcon Task Force
Activities Completed in 2011 and 2012

Emergency Response

HAZMAT Training for First Responders in Nuevo Laredo

Implementing entity: Protección Civil de Nuevo Laredo
Contact name: Lic. Juan E. Rivera
Telephone: 867-713-62-30
E-mail address: proteccioncivil@nuevolaredo.gob.mx

Activity:
The U.S. Department of Defense's Northern Command Unit donated hazardous equipment to Nuevo Laredo firefighters and emergency response staff in mid-2011, and then EPA followed up with training on the use of the equipment during response drills as well as hazardous materials management courses. The training was held at the Laredo Fire Department's Law Enforcement Training Center in August 2011.

Results and Outcomes:
More than 30 Nuevo Laredo responders received the training and were given HAZMAT training certifications by the Northern Command Unit. Now the municipality of Nuevo Laredo is better

prepared and equipped to respond to chemical spills, thus protecting natural resources and enhancing public safety.

Waste

Household Hazardous Waste Collection in Colonias in Webb County

Implementing entity: City of Laredo, Department of Environmental Services
Contact name: Ivan Santoyo
Telephone: 956-794-1650
E-mail address: isantoyo@ci.laredo.tx.us
Other collaborating entities: Webb County, City of Rio Bravo, ity of El Cenizo, and Texas Secretary of State's Colonias Initiative Program

Activity:
With a $45,000 grant from EPA, in the spring of 2010 the City of Laredo initiated a two-year project focused on organizing events to collect household hazardous wastes and used electronic products in each of four colonias near Laredo. City staff developed and used TV and radio advertisements. The city also prepared printed pamphlets that county commissioners at first agreed to have delivered door-to-door by county staff, but this commitment was downgraded to putting stacks of pamphlets in county offices after a city-county disagreement related to access to the city's landfill.

The first collection event failed to attract any colonia residents, indicating that TV and radio were not sufficient. Person-to-person outreach was added. At the second and third events, a total of 42 residents of the respective colonias brought in materials, including 4,600 pounds of paint and nearly 1,900 pounds of used electronic products. Results from the last collection event in June 2012 are not yet available.

Results and Outcomes:
Organizers learned lessons about outreach and intergovernmental cooperation. The city hopes to repeat such events in future years.

Scrap-Tire Cleanup Campaign and Enforcement Plan in Laredo and Webb County

Implementing entity: City of Laredo, Health Department
Contact name: Jean Carmona
Telephone: 956-712-6018
E-mail address: jcarmona@ci.laredo.tx.us

Activity:
In 2010-2011 the Laredo Health Department implemented a scrap-tire cleanup and enforcement strategy to prevent illegal dumping and the accumulation of tires. The project was assisted by an EPA Border 2012 grant of $40,000. The city organized a scrap-tire collection event in September 2010 and then a binational workshop in 2011, which addressed relevant issues and especially the development of markets, as well as considered strategies to reduce

the flow of scrap tires to Mexico. City officials also began drafting a new ordinance to reduce illegal dumping.

Results and Outcomes:
The collection event garnered 10,000 scrap tires that were subsequently disposed of properly at a landfill. Through the activity's publicity, residents learned about the health risks pose by scrap tires, and how to mitigate the threat of illness caused by vectors that proliferate in tire piles.

Cleanup of Chacon Creek

Implementing entity:	City of Laredo Utilities Department
Contact name:	Karla Robles
Telephone:	956-721-2000
E-mail address:	krobles@ci.laredo.tx.us
Other collaborating entities:	Rio Grande International Study Center (RGISC), Laredo Solid Waste Services

Activity:
Chacon Creek is a stream located in east Laredo that flows to the Rio Grande. Illegal dumping of trash and bulk items is prevalent along its banks due to a dense population nearby. Because of concern about waste seepage and other types of pollutants discharging into the Rio Grande, the Rio Grande International Study Center (RGISC) partnered with the Texas National Guard to conduct a cleanup event on the banks of Chacon Creek.

Results and Outcomes:
More than 100 volunteers participated in the clean up, picking up more than three tons of trash and debris, as well as at least 10 scrap tires. The City of Laredo's Solid Waste Services Department provided containers in which to place the trash and scrap tires. The collected wastes were sent to the city's landfill for proper disposal.

Technical Assistance to Nuevo León on the Use of Waste Materials in Road Construction

Implementing entity:	TCEQ, Border Affairs Team
Contact name:	Eddie Moderow
Telephone:	512-239-0218
E-mail address:	eddie.moderow@tceq.texas.gov

Activity:
In July 2011 the Texas Commission on Environmental Quality hosted a group of officials from the state of Nuevo León for two days of presentations related to the potential use of selected waste streams in road-building. Items like scrap tires, recycled plastics, fly ash, and recycled concrete and asphalt were discussed in visits to two universities, state agencies, and research laboratories. The visitors included the Nuevo León Secretary of Sustainable Development, who oversees not only environmental issues but also road construction. Hurricane Alex in 2010 had destroyed many roads in Monterrey. This activity was undertaken under a memorandum of

cooperation between the TCEQ and the Nuevo León agency.

Results and Outcomes:
Nuevo León officials are exploring how they can put to use the information and practices they learned during the visit.

Keep Laredo Beautiful's "Waste in Place" Curriculum Training

Implementing entity:	City of Laredo, Department of Environmental Services
Contact name:	Ivan Santoyo
Telephone:	956-794-1650
E-mail address:	isantoyo@ci.laredo.tx.us
Other collaborating entities:	Gateway Rotary Club, Keep American Beautiful, United Independent School District, Laredo Independent School District

Activity:
Keep Laredo Beautiful and the Gateway Rotary Club provided funds for a workshop for teachers on curriculum related to recycling and litter prevention. Keep America Beautiful (a national organization) already had the curriculum available. Teachers from the two school districts in Laredo—the United Independent School District and the Laredo Independent School District—were invited and also participated in hands-on waste management training through a tour of the landfill, seeing a demonstration of how paper is recycled, and education in other waste-to-energy concepts.

Results and Outcomes:
Sixty teachers participated and will be able to integrate the concepts and strategies they learned into their classrooms, allowing children to learn about environmental and sustainable practices that they can apply in their community.

Cleanup of Muller Park

Implementing entity:	Rio Grande International Study Center
Contact name:	Tricia Cortez
Telephone:	956-721-5392
E-mail address:	RGISC@laredo.edu
Other collaborating entities:	Keep Laredo Beautiful, Laredo Parks and Recreation, Laredo Code Enforcement Department, and Texas National Guard

Activity:
In July 2012 the Rio Grande International Study Center (RGISC) and Keep Laredo Beautiful (KLB) collaborated with the Texas National Guard, the city's Code Enforcement Department, and other volunteers to pick up trash and debris from Muller Park, which is a park/pond area located in northwest Laredo.

Results and Outcomes:
More than 64 volunteers participated in the clean-up and picked up approximately 30 tons of trash/debris. A boat crew will be returning to the pond area in August to pick up trash from the stormwater inlets that feed the pond.

Management of Scrap Tires in Nuevo León

Implementing entity:	Sustainable Development Secretariat of Nuevo León
Contact name:	Norma A. Rangel S.
Telephone:	81-2020-6735
E-mail address:	norma.rangel@nuevoleon.gob.mx, normaarangel@gmail.com
Other collaborating entities:	SIMEPRODE (a quasi-governmental, regional entity managing solid waste)

Activity:
In fulfillment of a commitment made in a declaration of the Border Governors Conference, the state of Nuevo León bought a scrap-tire shredder to assist with ongoing efforts to reduce the tire piles that have accumulated in small rural municipalities.

Results and Outcomes:
As of July 2012, Nuevo León had removed over 20,000 scrap tires. With the expected acquisition of a second shredder in the fall, SIMEPRODE will be able to address all of the tires that have accumulated in the targeted areas and to deal with new piles as they appear and before they become potentially dangerous.

Water

Expansion of Wastewater Treatment Plant in Laredo

Implementing entity:	City of Laredo Utilities Department
Contact name:	Karla Robles
Telephone:	956-721-2000
E-mail address:	krobles@ci.laredo.tx.us

Activity:
Through the use of $13 million city bond issue, the City of Laredo completed the expansion of a wastewater treatment plant in North Laredo. The plant increased its treatment capacity from 926,000 gallons per day to 3 million gallons per day and now has an activated sludge treatment process, a lift station, two oxidation ditches, and a BIO REM odor-control system.

Results and Outcomes:
Approximately 2,000 residents from the north area will benefit from fresher air due to the greater capacity of the plant and the technology used to destroy odor-causing compounds. The effluent will be used to irrigate golf courses in the area.

Gulf Task Force
Activities Completed in 2011 and 2012

Emergency Response

Binational Mega-Drill Exercise for Selected Cities in the Lower Rio Grande Valley

Implementing entity: City of Brownsville, Texas -- Fire Department
Contact name: Leonardo Perez
Telephone: 956-546-8539
E-mail address: lenperez@cob.us
Other collaborating entities: Protección Civil in the Municipios of Matamoros, Rio Bravo, and Reynosa

Activity:
In April 2011 the cities of Brownsville and San Benito in Texas cooperated with the Tamaulipas municipalities of Matamoros, Rio Bravo, and Reynosa in "Operation Amigo," a binational simulation exercise in emergency response. The exercise involved a simulated spill of multiple hazardous materials near the middle of a port-of-entry bridge. Participants included personnel from fire departments, EMS, emergency management, law enforcement, hospitals with response and rescue equipment, ambulances services, an incident command system, and communications equipment from both sides of the border. Participants worked as a team to assess the situation, respond with the appropriate equipment and personnel, decontaminate the victims, and get victims treated at hospitals.

Results and Outcomes:
Seven hundred persons participated. Officials learned and improved on communications strategies and protocols, and practiced the incident command system and response and recovery activities.

HAZMAT Training for First Responders in Reynosa and Matamoros

Implementing entity: EPA Region 6 and U.S. Northern Command
Contact name: Paige Delgado
Telephone: (214) 665-2724
E-mail address: delgado.paige@epa.gov

Activity:
In August 2011, after the U.S. Department of Defense's Northern Command Unit transferred HAZMAT emergency response equipment and supplies valued at $100,000 to Reynosa and Matamoros firefighters and emergency response staff, EPA followed up with a five-day training course. The course addressed the use of the equipment and the management of hazardous materials, culminating with a full-scale exercise to enable the first responders to practice

the skills they had learned. The training was held at the McAllen and Brownsville Fire Departments.

Results and Outcomes:
More than 50 Reynosa and Matamoros first responders received the training and were given HAZMAT training certifications. Now these municipalities are better prepared and equipped to respond to chemical spills, thus protecting natural resources and enhancing public safety.

Binational Drill and Tabletop Exercise in Brownsville and Matamoros

Implementing entity:	Fire Departments of the City of Brownsville, Texas and the Municipio of Matamoros, Tamaulipas
Contact name:	Leonardo Perez, Miguel Treviño
Telephone:	956-546-8539
E-mail address:	lenperez@cob.us mtrevino@mexichem.com
Other collaborating entities:	Protección Civil in the Municipio of Matamoros, MEXCHEM, Cameron County LEPC, CBP-DHS, local hospitals

Activity:
In July 2012 U.S. and Mexican federal, state, and local emergency management officials took part in a binational hazardous materials drill in Matamoros, Tamaulipas and Brownsville, Texas.

The goal of the exercise was to practice emergency communications and share critical information between Mexico and the United States, and simulated a toxic anhydrous ammonia cloud drifting across the border from Matamoros. Emergency preparedness professionals from Matamoros chose the chemical because it is transported on a regular basis to be used as fertilizer for farms.

The exercise complemented a current effort to update the Matamoros-Brownsville Joint Contingency Plan, which had first been signed in 1998 and then updated in 2002.

Environmental Health

Colonias Sanas y Seguras

Implementing entity:	City of Alton, Texas
Contact name:	Jorge Arcaute
Telephone:	956-432-0760
E-mail address:	jorge.arcaute@alton-tx.gov
Other collaborating entities	Texas A&M School of Rural Public Health's Center for Community Health Development

Activity:
Assisted by an EPA Environmental Justice Grant of $20,000, in 2011 the City of Alton partnered with the Texas A&M School of Rural Public Health's Center for Community Health Development

to improve the public/environmental health outreach program of promotoras in colonias. Colonias often lack one or more important services such as connections to a drinking water system or sewer collection system, or trash pickups. The objectives were to develop the bilingual materials, train the promotoras, and then implement the community outreach.

Two modules, one on safe drinking water and one on waste disposal, were developed by lead promotoras, tested, and revised. Then all Alton-area promotoras were trained, and they in turn initiated community outreach. The goal was to improve health status and reduce exposure to environmental risks and diseases.

Results and Outcomes:
The project trained 142 promotoras, and the initial outreach went to 231 colonia residents. Both figures exceeded original expectations.

Municipal Vector Patrol in Brownsville

Implementing entity:	City of Brownsville, Texas -- Health Department
Contact name:	Arturo Rodriguez
Telephone:	956-542-3437
E-mail address:	art.rodriguez@cob.us
Other collaborating entities:	Texas Department of State Health Services

Activity:
With funding from EPA, the overall goal of this pilot project was to reduce the incidence of mosquito-borne illnesses (especially West Nile virus and dengue fever) by reducing the population of mosquitoes in targeted areas of the sister cities of Brownsville and Matamoros by 50 percent. An important component of the strategy was to decrease the conditions that create breeding grounds.

The original intention was for Brownsville officials, with funding from EPA, to work in selected neighborhoods on both sides of the border, but security concerns on the Mexican side led to a limitation of the project to the U.S. side.

The target neighborhood was Colonia Galaxia, near Brownsville. The primary tasks undertaken were (1) pre- and post-intervention mosquito surveillances; (2) presentations to students about mosquito-borne diseases, mosquito life cycles, and city ordinances related to illegal dumping; (3) publicity through the city's television station and through church bulletins; and (4) adulticiding and larviciding.

Results and Outcomes:
Because the results of the pre-intervention mosquito surveillance came back negative with regard to any arboviral threat, the project could not show a reduction in that measure. City officials claim to have observed a reduction in mosquito-breeding sites in the target neighborhood. The city will continue to run on the city TV channel the video that was developed, and decided to expand the adulticiding and larviciding efforts city-wide.

Waste

Operation Clean Sweep, Phases I-V

Implementing entity: City of Pharr, Texas
Contact name: Grace Segovia
Telephone: 956-223-2580
E-mail address: grace.segovia@pharr-tx.gov

Operation Clean Sweep was a phased effort begun by the City of Pharr in April 2010 to clean up 12 different areas of the city using volunteers. Each phase involves one day dedicated to a segment; city staff solicit volunteers from the community.

Results and Outcomes:
Phase I (April 2010): 100 persons collected 24 tons of trash and 800 scrap tires in South Pharr.

Phase II (October 2010): 200 persons collected more than one ton of trash and 492 scrap tires in Central Pharr.

Phase III (April 2011): 200 volunteers collected 24 tons of trash and 817 tires in East Pharr.

Phase IV (August 2011): 150 volunteers collected 12 tons of trash in an area along Old Highway 88 in Central Pharr.

Phase V (September 2011): 100 volunteers collected 24 tons of trash and 1,060 scrap tires in West Pharr.

Reduction of Scrap-Tire Inventory in Matamoros

Implementing entity: Municipio de Matamoros, Tamaulipas - Control Ambiental
Contact name: Ing. Rusvelt Rocha
Telephone: 868 810 8000 ext 1587
E-mail address: rusveltrocha@hotmail.com

Activity:
With a $30,000 grant from EPA's Border 2012 grant program, in 2011 the Municipio of Matamoros was able to resume its efforts to reduce its inventory of stored scrap tires.

Results and Outcomes:
After beginning the year with more than two million tires on hand, the city transported 30,000 of them to a cement kiln in Monterrey, Nuevo León.

Capacity Building for Hazardous Waste Management in Matamoros

Implementing entity: Municipio de Matamoros, Tamaulipas - Control Ambiental
Contact name: Ing. Rusvelt Rocha
Telephone: 868 810 8000 ext 1587
E-mail address: rusveltrocha@hotmail.com

Activity:
With $30,000 from EPA's Border 2012 grant program, the Municipio of Matamoros, Tamaulipas continued its on-going efforts to establish temporary collection sites in the city area to collect and properly dispose of household hazardous waste.

Tire Incentive Pilot Program (TIPP)

Implementing entity: City of Pharr, Texas
Contact name: Grace Segovia
Telephone: 956-223-2580
E-mail address: grace.segovia@pharr-tx.gov

Activity:
The City of Pharr organized an 11-day Tire Incentive Pilot Program (TIPP) that was held in July 2011, in an effort to rid the city's streets and alleys of illegally dumped materials, including scrap tires. City residents were paid 50 cents per tire to bring tires from their neighborhoods.

Results and Outcomes:
The city hopes to repeat the program at least once every quarter, and has applied for a grant that would assist in establishing continuity.

Remediation of Sites Contaminated With Tires

Implementing entity: Municipio of Matamoros, Tamaulipas
Contact name: Ing. Rusvelt Rocha
Telephone: 868 810 8000 ext 1587
E-mail address: rusveltrocha@hotmail.com

Activity:
In 2010 and 2011 SEMARNAT supported Matamoros with $200,000 in mexican pesos for transportation of the municipio's tires to a cement plant in Monterrey for use as fuel.

Results and Outcomes:
More than 150,000 tires were sent to Monterrey.

Make a Difference! Cash for Bulk

Implementing entity: City of Brownsville, Health Department
Contact name: Arturo Rodriguez
Telephone: 956-542-3437
E-mail address: art.rodriguez@cob.us

Activity:
In mid-August 2011, the City of Brownsville sponsored a collection day for residents to bring in bulk items—discarded couches, mattresses, tables, dressers, television sets, washer/dryers, boats, water heaters, air conditioners, and refrigerators. The city offered a weight-based monetary incentive, funded in part by the $1 provision fee from the city's plastic bag ordinance.

Results and Outcomes:
The city collected over 26 tons of unwanted and discarded items from 144 residents, equal to about 20 percent of average daily waste pick-up. These items disappeared from lots and alleys, and in exchange participants took home $6,655.

Water

Maintenance of Drainage Canals in Matamoros

Implementing entity: Municipio of Matamoros, Tamaulipas -- Junta de Aguas y Drenaje (JAD)
Contact name: Ing. Jorge Leal
E-mail address: jorgesiesleal@gmail.com

Activity:
With $60,000 of funding from EPA's Border 2012 grant program, the Matamoros Water and Wastewaster Utility (Junta de Aguas y Drenaje, or JAD) launched a program in mid-2009 to address the problem of illegal dumping in drainage canals. These discarded items can block water flow, create breeding grounds for mosquitoes, and cause flooding and contamination.

The utility leased equipment such as trucks with roll-off containers and excavating machines. Using the eight sectors of the city, the utility organized an educational outreach campaign to residents and engaged volunteers living in each sector who assisted with clean-up and the reforestation program to protect the banks of the canals from erosion.

Results and Outcomes:
JAD staff and volunteers cleaned up 32,092 linear meters of canals, collecting 3,341,190 kilograms of trash and 1,426 scrap tires. The drainage canals look much better to nearby residents, and both breeding grounds for mosquitoes and flooding have been reduced. Also, there is increased awareness among citizens of the potential problems and the need to dispose of materials appropriately.

Maintenance of Drainage Canals in Reynosa

Implementing entity: Municipio of Reynosa, Tamaulipas
Contact name: Ing. Delfino Ramírez
Telephone: 834 318 5250, ext 35236
E-mail address: delfino.ramirez@tamaulipas.semarnat.gob.mx

Activity:
SEMARNAT financed and organized a project that provided 200 temporary employment positions for the purpose cleaning 4 km of canals/drains in Reynosa in October 2011.

Results and Outcomes:
Tons of debris were removed from the canals, providing the same environmental benefits as in a similar project in Matamoros, as well as reducing the risk to citizens of being attacked by robbers who used the trashed areas as hiding places. Locals thanked SEMARNAT for the project and asked for cleanup at other canals to be considered next year.

Household Hazardous Waste Collection in Brownsville

Implementing entity: City of Brownsville, Public Works Department
Contact name: Joe Hinojosa
Telephone: 956-838-6253
E-mail address: johino@cob.us

Activity:
Assisted by an EPA Border 2012 grant of $30,000, the City of Brownsville held three workshops to provide citizens with information on proper disposal of this household hazardous haste (HHW). Following one of the workshops, citizens were directed to two Home Depot stores where HHW collection events were being held.

Results and Outcomes:
The collection events attracted 30 volunteers to help, including local ham radio operators and university science students. The events collected 279 paint containers (3-5 gal), and 228 of those containers were used in a city program to paint over graffiti. The events also collected 85 dry cell batteries , 54 pesticide containers, and an additional 20 miscellaneous items.

This collection reduced home health risks to city residents and also prevented these items from being disposed of in a way that could results in toxics migrating to waterways.

Training Operators at Wastewater Facilities in Tamaulipas

Implementing entity: North American Development Bank
Contact name: Jorge Silva
Telephone: 210-231-8000
E-mail address: JSilva@nadb.org

Activity:
With a grant from the U.S. EPA, the North American Development Bank has contracted with the Centro de Diseño Avanzado at the Instituto Tecnología y de Estudios Superiores de Monterrey to design and carry out a series of two-day training courses for operators at wastewater treatment plants along the border region. To date, a total of 234 operators have participated in the training sessions.

Results and Outcomes:
Project still in progress.

Environmental Education in Tamaulipas

Implementing entity: SEMARNAT Tamaulipas
Contact name: Ing. Delfino Ramírez
Telephone : 834 318 5250 , ext. 35236
E-mail address: delfino.ramirez@tamaulipas.semarnat.gob.mx
Activity:
In 2011 and the first half of 2012, Mexico's Federal Green School Program certified 43 schools in Tamaulipas–seven in Nuevo Laredo and three in Reynosa.

Results and Outcomes:
The program exposes thousands of children to environmental information and gives the schools an opportunity to adopt recycling and energy efficiency programs. Plans are underway to introduce this program to more border Mexican schools.

For more information contact:
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