

## EDITORIAL

### BEXAR COUNTY-BREAKING GROUND INTO COMMUNITIES

February 18, 2010

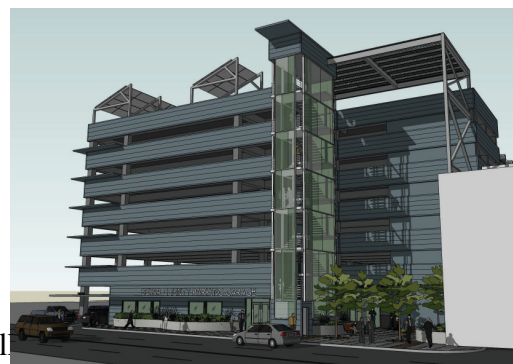
Bexar County continues to strive for ways to improve its community. New buildings, roads, and redeveloped parks improve the look and feel of our neighborhoods and can also be resourceful. The County's efforts were made well known during this past Saturday's ground breaking event for Phase IIA of the River Improvements Project-Mission Reach! The Mission Reach improvements are meant to restore the ecosystem and transform the river in its straightened form to a more natural flow. This River Project serves a dual purpose, to aesthetically beautify the area and maintain flood control. Project partners have also selected a beautiful array of native vegetation to create a wildlife environment for the community to enjoy.

Bexar County and project partners are investing \$271.9 million for the Mission Reach. I feel confident as we continue to work with the City of San Antonio there will be continued betterments to the surrounding residential neighborhood.

The beginning of this next phase of the River Improvements Project and its location directly adjacent to Mission Concepcion are a perfect marriage of history and culture. Bexar County is filled with much history and whether you travel to the downtown area or further south along the Mission Reach to the Missions, there is a story behind every piece of building structure, plant and flower, or portal entrance. More than one million visitors come to Bexar County to visit the Missions National Historic Park and as County Commissioner who represents this historic area I feel it is my duty to share in the original spirit of the Missions when they were founded in the 18<sup>th</sup> century and acculturate visitors to our community through enhancements and connections of our history and culture.



Another exciting ground breaking event Bexar County hosted this week was for the South Flores Parking Garage Expansion Project. As the County moves forward in developing ways to improve its services and accessibility for our residents, a common complaint the County receives is directly related to parking. My office receives complaints from constituents who wish to schedule appointments to meet with me in my office, but they worry about parking costs, distance, and safety in walking to work. When the parking issue brought to the County's attention, the Commissioners Court asked community members and County staff to develop solutions. It was this group effort that led the Commissioners Court to decide to improve its parking.



A long awaited project set to bring convenience and accessibility to downtown County facilities and services was kicked off this past week, as I joined Judge Wolff and the rest of Commissioners Court to celebrate the ground breaking for the South Flores Street Parking Garage Expansion Project. The County is investing \$12.5 million to enhance its accessibility with additional parking spaces and provide office space for County staff. The South Flores Parking Garage will consist of a seven level parking facility to house on the first floor Bexar County offices for Human Resources, Civil Service, the Small Minority and Women Business Enterprise Program, and County maintenance. The remaining levels of the building will provide parking spaces for approximately 500 vehicles to be used by visitors to the downtown area. There will also be state of the art security technology in this parking facility to assist in the protection of visitors. The County hopes this project will be completed in fourteen months to have a grand opening in April 2011.

The grand opening for the new South Flores Parking Garage will occur just after our tentative grand opening for the first time ever, South side Satellite office for Precinct 1. I was happy to share with you a few months ago, that Judge Wolff and my fellow Commissioners Court members supported my persistent efforts to bring convenience and accessibility to the South side. The County should be ready to advertise for bidding on the project in the next few weeks to hopefully be able to get the ground broken on this project by the Summer of 2010. This new office space will bring the Justice of the Peace Courts, County Constables, the Tax Assessor Collector, and my office closer to you! This new building will enhance accessibility for County services and as always, my door will be open to you.