

Speech for Belden Trail opening on June 25, 2016

Good morning. I would like to thank all of you for coming out to support the opening of the new Belden Trail extension. At the Brownsville Public Utilities Board, I manage the team responsible for the Resaca Restoration Project. While some of you might not immediately link the Belden Trail and resaca restoration, there actually is a strong relationship between the two. Both deal with the health and vitality of our community.

As the city's commitment to healthy living has grown, so has its emphasis on improving resacas. We want the health of our waters to reflect the health of its citizens. The two really go hand in hand. You can't have a truly healthy community without the clean water to support it. Likewise, having a cleaner resaca can give our people a greater incentive to exercise and provide them a way to better appreciate nature and all the native life that the resacas support. Wouldn't you rather run or bike alongside a waterway that supports life?

We want our resacas to not only support life but to enhance it as well. As all of you ride past the Cemetery Resaca, I want you to take a look at all the work that has been done there. 19,528 cubic yards of sediment removed from the water, more than 200 tires taken out. See the water that is now 4 feet deeper than before. And then we have our bank improvements that will help support these things. The rip-rap, or stones, along the bank that will help prevent erosion. The native plants that

are being planted that will act as a natural filter and support wildlife. The stormwater management area that will help keep out trash.

As you see where the Cemetery Resaca is today, I want you to remember what it was like years ago before these efforts started. And I want you to also imagine where you want it to be in the years to come. Maybe more trails, more recreation opportunities, more birds and native vegetation.

There is a lot that has been done and even more to do. I ask all of you to commit with me to make our resacas, such an important part of our culture here in Brownsville, a priority in our lives. Admire them and enjoy them now, and most importantly, let's make a commitment to pass along healthier resacas to the next generation so that they can do the same.

Thank you.