

For Immediate Release

October 10, 2022

Local leaders convene in Sabinal, TX to discuss rural economic development

(October 10, 2023) Last month, business and community leaders from Sabinal and across the rural Hill Country gathered for a Rural Roundup Event in Sabinal focused on creating homegrown economic opportunities in Hill Country towns. The event was co-organized by the Hill Country Alliance and H.E. Butt Foundation, and featured a mix of presentations, discussions, and on-site visits, all aimed at fostering positive change and growth in Sabinal, Texas and other small communities looking to address local economic challenges.

The day kicked off with a welcome from Sabinal Mayor Charles D. Story at the Sabinal Public Library and was followed by a walking tour of downtown Sabinal to look at some of Sabinal's biggest opportunities for growth. The agenda continued at Nora's Tacos with a keynote address by Monte Anderson, President & Owner of Options Real Estate Investments and Co-Managing Partner of Neighborhood Evolution. Anderson discussed the "12 Steps to Town Making" and shared valuable insights on community development through locally-led real estate investments.

Afterward, a panel featuring Steve Alvarado and Warren Beard from Sabinal ISD, and Kristel Gonzalez de Sanchez from Southwest Texas Junior College discussed strategies for cultivating the right workforce for the town's present and future needs. The last panel, moderated by CEO of the Great Springs Project, and former Real County Judge, Garry Merritt, focused on the relationship between housing and business development. The panelists, which included Monte Anderson, Art Crawford of Silver Sage Hill Country Resource Center, Roy Kothman of the First State Bank of Uvalde, and Regina Santos-Aviles, staffer for Congressman Tony Gonzalez, agreed that meeting existing housing needs was a priority, and that housing and business or economic development could be developed in tandem.

The event concluded with closing remarks by Sabinal Municipal Judge Cynthia N. Casburn and Mayor Story, who highlighted the importance of local residents investing in their community's wellbeing—and working together to achieve economic development. We are excited to see how the energy and connections made at this event carry forward and ripple outward in both Sabinal and beyond.

The Rural Roundup is a traveling series focused on unique programs, challenges, and lessons learned in the rural Hill Country and presented by H. E. Butt Foundation and Hill Country Alliance. Topics have ranged from local education opportunities to maintaining community character, from Junction to Bandera. The series will conclude on November 18 with a one-day symposium in Leakey, TX. Learn more at <https://bit.ly/LRHC2023>.

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Local leaders convene in Sabin, TX to discuss rural economic development. Photo courtesy of Hill Country Alliance.



During the event, local leaders went on a walking tour of downtown and discussed opportunities. Photo courtesy of Hill Country Alliance.



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