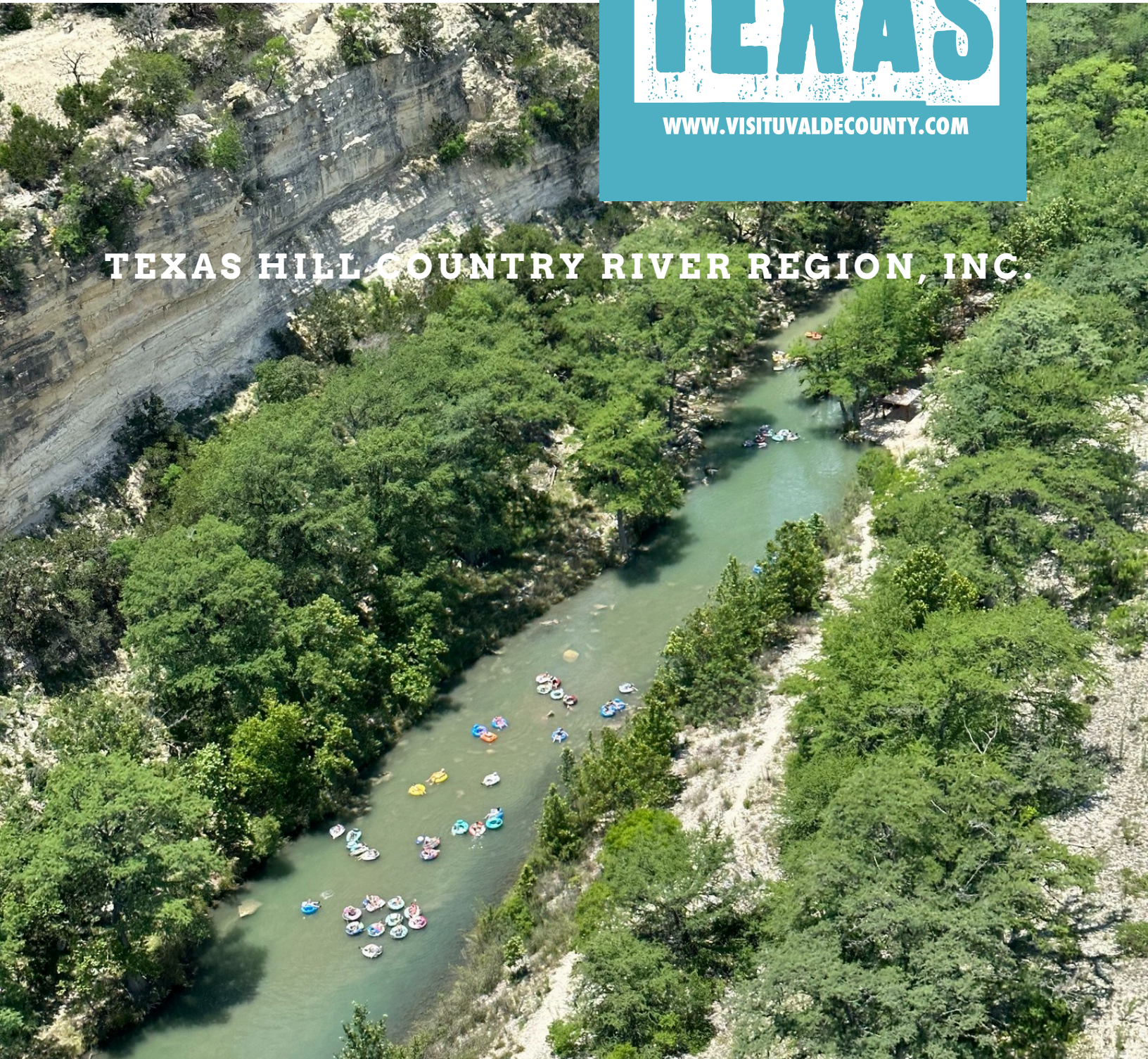


**2023
ANNUAL
REPORT**

**UVALDE
COUNTY
TEXAS**

WWW.VISITUVALDECOUNTY.COM

TEXAS HILL COUNTRY RIVER REGION, INC.



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ABOUT THCRR

Texas Hill Country River Region is a not-for-profit 501(c)6 corporation that was created solely for the purpose of promoting tourism in Uvalde County. Formed in 1998, THCRR is experienced in the promotion of Uvalde County as a tourism destination. In the past five years, THCRR has implemented new leadership and a reenergized focus on its mission to promote the Texas Hill Country River Region as an overnight year-round tourism destination and to increase off-season occupancy in the region's accommodations.

In addition to tourism promotion, THCRR manages the Uvalde County River Cleanup Program, "Don't Trash Where You Splash." This program includes volunteer efforts, a litter education campaign, management of waste maintenance contracts and supplemental cleanup contracts, and providing complimentary UP2U bags to businesses and individuals within Uvalde County, all of which help keep litter out of the rivers, and our destination a beautiful place to live and visit.

FUNDING SOURCE & CONTRACT

THCRR is funded by a contract with Uvalde County to manage a portion of the hotel occupancy tax revenue collected by the Uvalde County Tax Assessor. In previous years, the contract has designated 74% of total HOT revenue to be managed by THCRR for tourism promotion.

In response to a change in the way the HOT funds would be administered by the County in 2018, THCRR proposed an amended agreement that would direct 99% of total gross hotel occupancy taxes collected by the County to be allocated to THCRR to manage using 74% for tourism promotion and 25% for river cleanup efforts. On Nov. 13, 2018, Uvalde County Commissioners Court voted unanimously to adopt the proposed amended agreement.

BOARD OF DIRECTORS

Jamie Holmes, President
Melissa Bates, Vice President
Wendi Hightower, Secretary
Lauren Diver, Treasurer
Steven McNew, Member
Dwynette Meadows, Member
Chase Roosa, Member

STAFF

Erica Sagebiel, Director
Erica@visitualdecountry.com
Office: 830-232-4310

Hailey Conrad, River Cleanup & Social Media Manager
Hailey@visitualdecountry.com
Office: 830-232-4310

OFFICE HOURS

Monday - Saturday
9:00 AM - 5:00 PM

2023 IN REVIEW

Throughout 2023, THCRR experienced a year of growth, community engagement, and successful events. In January, Hailey Conrad joined as Social Media Manager and River Cleanup Coordinator, continuing the organization's outreach and environmental initiatives and taking an active role in solar eclipse planning. Planning efforts for the annular and total solar eclipses saturated THCRR resources as we took a lead role in Uvalde County with the endorsement of Uvalde County leadership by establishing a framework for planning for both 2023 and 2024 eclipses. This included engaging a Consultant, establishing planning Task Forces, distributing solar eclipse glasses, and ultimately holding an initial round table for the community. These efforts continued throughout 2023.

Free digital marketing classes resumed in February, and the balance of the Spring brought additional improvements:

- Erica Sagebiel was hired as Director,
- the River Clean Up dumpster service contract was awarded to a new vendor, which brought decreased pricing and improved service,
- THCRR launches a partnership with Bandwango for a tourism-boosting online passport,
- No Limits Landscaping was awarded the River Cleanup Contract after a sealed competitive bidding process,
- multiple volunteer river cleanups were coordinated, emphasizing environmental stewardship and
- a competition was launched amongst the Uvalde County ag-mech programs to design a river clean-up bag dispenser. The Knippa ISD Ag program received this award, and we thank them for their support of our efforts to keep our rivers clean.

The THCRR team traveled to Albuquerque to attend and present at the American Astronomical Association (AAS) Eclipse Planning Workshop in June, where they were able to not only learn best practices on planning for the event but also to market Uvalde County as a destination for the Total Eclipse in 2024.

With the help of landowners, Judge Mitchel, Texas Hotel & Lodging Association (THLA), THCRR drafted House Bill 3055, which was ultimately sponsored by State Representative Tracy O. King. This bill would have aligned the very unique Uvalde County HOT tax code with other tourist areas in our state. This bill was not passed in the Senate but THCRR is thankful for the efforts of Rep. King, Judge Mitchell, and all of our landowners that supported these efforts.

The summer months showed a slight decrease over the previous years' in terms of lodging receipts. This most likely is a carry-over from the 2022 drought and water shortage in the Concan area. August tourism has significantly decreased with most Texas schools starting two weeks earlier than normal, with some larger school districts starting as early as the first week.

The summer months and on-going river clean up activities proceeded smoothly, focusing on community and tourist engagement. These activities included solar eclipse planning, Star Parties focusing on educating our community and tourists on our night skies, and kids' craft Thursdays. THCRR elevated efforts to educate our youngest visitors on the importance of protecting Texas rivers by launching a coloring book that includes coloring and activity pages. These coloring books were distributed not only by THCRR, but by lodging partners and area businesses. The feedback from our tourists (young and old) was wonderful and this effort will continue.

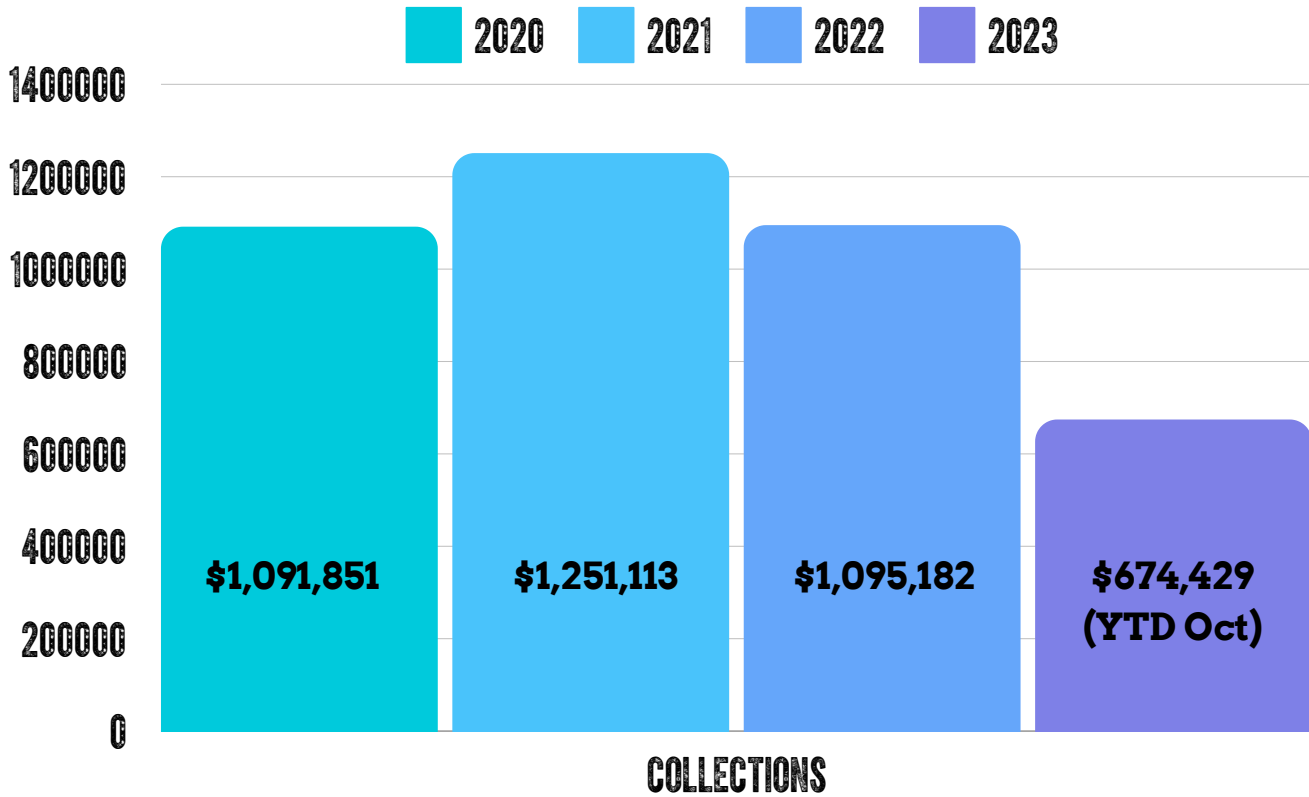
THCRR coordinated efforts between our new river clean up contractor, the solid waste contractor, our landowners along the river, and businesses, which ultimately led to a clean and 'uneventful' season which was concluded in September with a 'soon to be Annual' Trash Bash, celebrating all of the stewards of Uvalde County's clean rivers. Nearly \$4,000 was donated to non-profits with over 80 volunteers participating,

The October Annular Eclipse required some planning on the part of THCRR, Garner State Park and the Uvalde County Fairplex, as this is an event where eclipse enthusiasts make last minute decisions based on weather and more specifically, cloud cover. Uvalde County was well-prepared and THCRR funded events and concerts at the Uvalde County Fairplex, in Concan, as well as an informational program at Garner State Park. Although this did not prove to be a well-attended event by tourists to our area, it was an excellent exercise for local and state emergency response personnel, as well as county and state management.

Fall and Winter activities also included:

- a Fall THCRR Board Retreat, where the board collaborated with Visit Fredricksburg and Texas Hotel & Lodging Association, and participated in a facilitated strategic planning session,
- Eclipse Planning Workshop in San Antonio, where THCRR was able to strengthen relationships with the technical community and market Uvalde County as a destination of choice,
- Jingle & Mingle (a shop local event), a community holiday gathering at the Visitor's Center, and the THCRR Christmas Party.

HOT REVENUE TRENDS



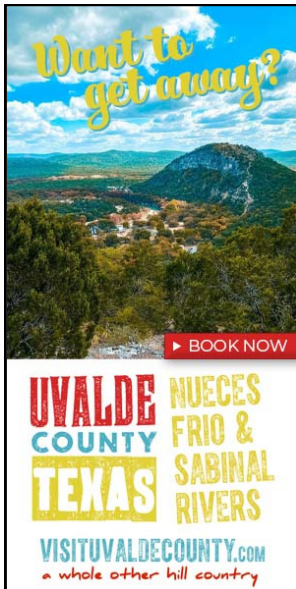
Hot Revenue Trends 2020-2023

2022 collections decreased 13% vs 2021, signaling challenges experienced with both the river level and drinking water availability in the Concan Water Supply. While 2023's data extends only through Q3, preliminary forecasts indicate further decline (15%), emphasizing the need for increased strategic planning to provide non-river centric activities, as well as a water supply that can support the peak-season occupancy.

ADVERTISEMENTS

2023 Advertisements

We initiated a six-month budget plan from July 2023 onwards to establish creative strategies for promoting our region, partnering with a new agency. Together, we developed a captivating 30-second commercial showcasing the diverse recreational activities available in our area, which was broadcasted on cable and digital platforms across targeted Texas markets. Our emphasis was on building our brand image, supported by digital banner ads featuring QR codes linking to our website. Furthermore, we launched print and television campaigns under the theme "Need A Break?" or "Ready for a Break?" to attract visitors. Additionally, for the Eclipse event last fall, we collaborated with the agency to distribute press materials and update our website with event information, enhancing our visibility.



SOCIAL MEDIA

Facebook: 709,764 (Up 120%)

Reach

Instagram: 228,058 (Up 178%)

Facebook: 26,570 (Up 385%)

Visits

Instagram: 13,670 (Up 234%)

Facebook: New: 1,086, Total: 98,680

Likes or Follows

Instagram: New: 2,083, Total: 12,480

Paid Reach: 307,076 (Up 100%)

Ad Trends

Paid Impressions: 773, 524 (Up 100%)

Facebook reach with ads increased 162%.

There were 376 posts on Facebook which is 87% more than the prior year.

RIVER CLEANUP / CONTRACTOR

Uvalde County River Cleanup Recap of Summer 2023

215 Volunteers

Cleaned for

60.5 Hours

Benefitting

13 Non-Profits

Cleaning up

3,272 Pounds of Trash

Using

19 Dumpsters

Donating

\$9,000.00+

This is an ongoing program funded by the Uvalde County Hotel/Motel Tax. If you are interested in volunteering, please reach out to Hailey Hart.
Email: Hailey@VisitUvaldeCounty.com
Office: 830-232-4310

Thanks to:

Earl Warren High School Astronomy Club
Team Sailing dba Great Clips
Sabinal High School Girls Athletics
San Marcos River Foundation
Leakey ISD Varsity Cheer
HEB #671
Uvalde Classical Academy
OMNIA Athletics
Church of Jesus Christ of Latter-Day Saints
Uvalde HEB
John Blanton II, Children of the Republic of Texas

Donations made to:

Friends of Garner
Under WLM Pink Party
Sabinal ISD
San Marcos River Foundation
Leakey Cheer
Uvalde Classical Academy
St. Donivan Autism Foundation
OMNIA Athletics
The Eyes of the San Marcos River
The Church of Jesus Christ of Latter-Day Saints
Briscoe Animal Resource Center
Uvalde Food Pantry*
John Blanton II, CRT Chapter
Friends of Garner*
*Waiting for follow-up to send the check.



River Volunteer Cleanup

The volunteer river cleanup turnout this year was outstanding, surpassing all expectations. With over 200 enthusiastic volunteers, our efforts made a significant impact on preserving the beauty of the Uvalde County Rivers. We also contributed over \$9,000 to various non-profit organizations. Additionally, our Annual Frio River Trash Bash saw an impressive participation of over 80 volunteers, demonstrating a strong commitment to keeping our natural resources clean. Through this event, we were able to donate almost \$4,000 to non-profits.

River Cleanup Contractor

In 2023, THCRP received sealed bids for the river cleanup contract for Uvalde County Rivers. No Limits Landscape was selected and began their efforts in May. The No Limits team in their inaugural year was quick to respond to problem areas, provided regular feedback and updates to the River Cleanup Coordinator, and partnered with THCRP to identify and address potential troublesome areas. Throughout the year, they managed to collect over 5,000 pounds of trash, significantly enhancing the environmental quality of our beloved rivers. Moreover, No Limits distributed over 70,000 UP2U Yellow Bags which facilitated community involvement, encouraging residents and visitors alike to actively participate in keeping our waterways clean and beautiful.

Uvalde County River Contractor Recap of Summer 2023

Memorial Day - Labor Day

Number of cleans
Nueces(122)

19 Mile Bridge - 30
Chalk Bluff - 30
Cooksie Park Dam - 30
County Road 408 - 16
County Road 410 - 4
County Road 412 - 4
County Road 414 - 4
County Road 416 - 4

Frio(116)

1050 Crossing - 18
Magers - 18
7 Bluffs - 25
Comanche - 20
Neal's - 20

County Line to Happy Hollow - 3
7 Bluffs to Kenneth Arthur - 6
Kenneth Arthur to Neal's - 6

Sabinal(3)
Utopia Park - 3

Problem Areas:
19 Mile, Chalk Bluff,
County Road 408

Minimal Trash Areas:
Utopia Park &
Happy Hollow

Employees:
May - July 7th: 4
July 10th - August 18th: 3
August 21st - Present: 2

Most Picked up:
Canopies, Diapers, Twisted
Tea Cans, Michelob Ultra
Cans & Tubes



5,000+
pounds of trash
picked up

1,000+
Yellow bags were
handed out while
cleaning

70,000+
Yellow bags
distributed to local
businesses



****Canopies were a problem everywhere****

We will still continue to clean on a call-out basis during the off-season.

ANNULAR SOLAR ECLIPSE

Events

The weekend commenced with a kickoff at the Uvalde County Fairplex, and live music by Kaitlin Butts at House Pasture in Concan.

The Annular Eclipse was center state on Saturday. All three locations hosted viewing parties complete with food, guided observations, and entertainment. The day concluded with live performances by Erick Y Su Grupo Massore at the Fairplex and Clay Walker at House Pasture.

Sunday marked the festival's final day, wrapping up the weekend at Garner State Park with the Solar Eclipse Village, offering insights into what the Total Solar Eclipse has in store.

THE PRE-PARTY

UVALDE COUNTY STELLAR FEST

"In the Eclipse Crossroads"

OCTOBER 13-15TH

ANNULAR SOLAR ECLIPSE ON THE 14TH FROM 10:20 AM - 1:30 PM

CONCAN	UVALDE	GARNER STATE PARK
Friday: 10.13 <ul style="list-style-type: none"> DJ Vendors Cornhole Bounce Houses Velvet Rodeo Concert Kaitlin Butts Concert Saturday: 10.14 <ul style="list-style-type: none"> Golf Tournament DJ Mariachi Las Alterías Carlos Koehl Jerry Almaraz Velvet Rodeo Concert Clay Walker Concert 	Friday: 10.13 <ul style="list-style-type: none"> Food Truck Party DJ Kid Zone Events Dueling Pianos Free Pumpkins & Kites Welcome by Dr. Kate Russo Presentation by The National Solar Observatory Saturday: 10.14 <ul style="list-style-type: none"> Out of This World Car Show & Raffle DJ Food Trucks & Vendors, Kid Zone Events Mariachi Group Folklorico Dancers Eztillo Concert Erick y Su Grupo Massore Concert 	Saturday: 10.14 <ul style="list-style-type: none"> Solar Eclipse Village Garner Glow Dance Sunday: 10.15 <ul style="list-style-type: none"> Solar Eclipse Village 2024 Total Solar Eclipse Showcase

WUECES FRIO & SABINAL RIVERS

VISITUVALDECOUNTY.COM

All events are free to the public except for the golf tournament & Clay Walker. Go to our website to book your stay & tickets.

UvaldeCountySolarEclipse.com



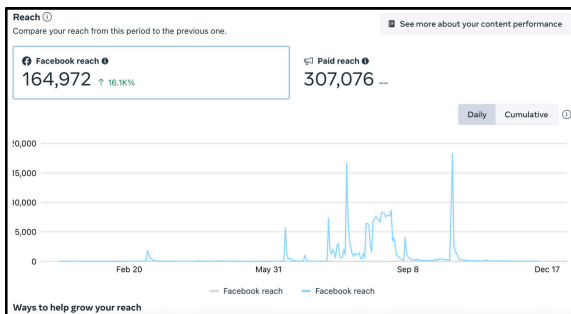
Website

Website & Social Media

Website: Garnering over 27,000 views, the website experienced a notable surge in mid-September, reaching its pinnacle on Eclipse Day, October 14th.

Facebook: The Facebook page achieved a reach of over 164,000 people, while paid reach through advertising extended to over 307,000 people. Notably, there was a boost in page reach from mid-summer through Eclipse Day, October 14th.

Facebook



LOOKING AHEAD TO 2024

THCRR initially purchased RentalScapes in the latter part of 2023 as part of an effort to have more accurate reporting tools for short-term rental activities in Uvalde County. However, RentalScapes is also recognized by the THLA as an approved technology that Uvalde County could use to accept online HOT Tax payments. Currently, Uvalde County Payors utilize online payment systems for the balance of their tax obligations with the State of Texas. THCRR is working with the Tax Assessor to determine if this is a potential in Uvalde County. According to the THLA and the State, the software can be funded with HOT Tax collections.

Placer.ai is another tool that is being utilized by THCRR to provide insight into the visitors or 'foot traffic' in our area - allowing very targeted marketing as well as post-season or post-event data. The goal is to be able to more efficiently market, expanding Uvalde County's year-round tourism economy.

THCRR is now accepting applications for the Executive Director position. Erica Sagebiel resigned in February and has moved out of state. We wish her well.

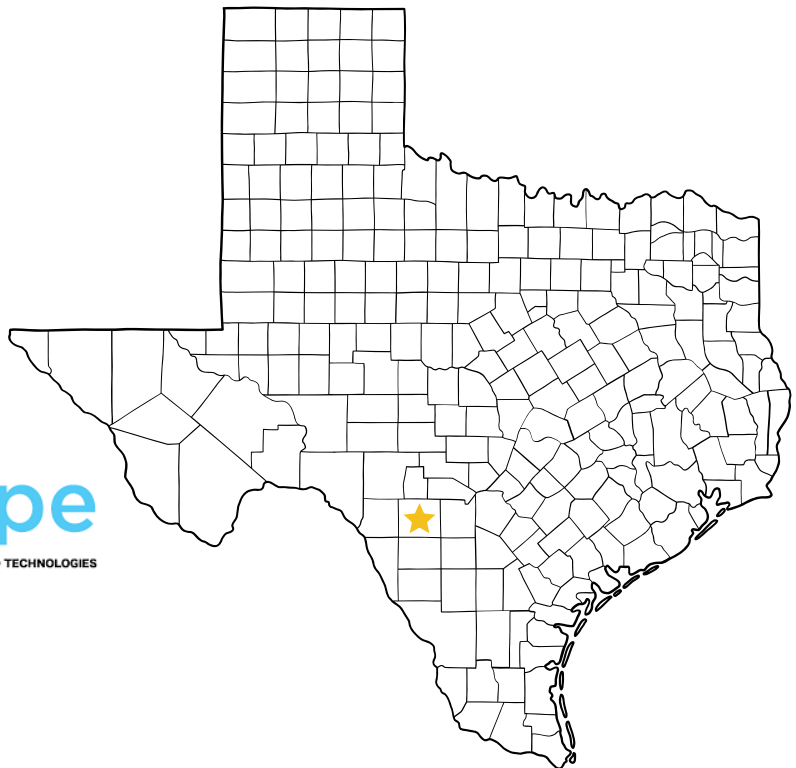


Placer.ai



rentalscape

BY DECKARD TECHNOLOGIES



LOOKING AHEAD TO 2024 CONTINUED

The Frio River Music Fest (Spring Break) is poised to be another high point on the calendar, featuring a special performance by the renowned Ryan Bingham. THCRR continues to prepare for the Total Eclipse in April and has made a purposeful decision not to try to provide our visitors with a full agenda outside of the celestial event. Nearby municipalities like Eagle Pass and Kerrville have invested heavily in entertainment and a 'festival-like' environment. Knowing that many tourists are looking for a simple and natural experience, THCRR will focus our resources on providing porta-potties, emergency, and logistical support.

THCRR continues its tradition of hosting Summer Star Parties in June and July and is changing the venue to the golf course at Frio Valley Ranch. This change should provide our guests with less light pollution and traffic noise. The Star Parties, featuring stargazing sessions, informative talks, and engaging activities, provide a unique opportunity for the community and visitors to connect with the cosmos.



Frio River Music Fest
March 14-16th

THURSDAY: PAT GREEN
FRIDAY: RYAN BINGHAM
SATURDAY: JOSH ABBOT
CARSON JEFFREY || DYLAN MARLOWE | THE DROPTINES

UVALDE COUNTY TEXAS

House Pasture

Book Your Stay Now!

HousePasture.com

LOOKING AHEAD TO 2024 CONTINUED

THCRR collaborated with the Nueces River Authority (NRA) in 2023 to offer a traveling educational experience to fifth and seventh-grade students in Uvalde County. Their journey has already taken them to Knippa ISD, with plans to visit additional schools in the near future. The program features an aquifer model provided by NRA, showcasing how pollution infiltrates groundwater. Using food coloring and spray bottles filled with clear water to simulate rain, students gain insight into this vital environmental process.

THCRR has partnered with a fresh River Trash Bag Vendor, presenting an exciting opportunity. The newly onboarded vendor bags are priced at nearly half the cost compared to our previous supplier. With the new vendor, we now have the advantage of incorporating vibrant, full-color messaging on both sides of the bag, aligning perfectly with our specific branding and communication needs. THCRR intends to exhaust our existing bag inventory before seamlessly transitioning to the new ones, with the rollout anticipated for mid-summer.



LOOKING AHEAD TO 2024 CONTINUED

Looking forward, THCRR recognizes the importance of strategic marketing to draw people to the area. Efforts will be intensified to showcase the region's natural beauty, vibrant culture, and exciting events, positioning Uvalde County as a must-visit destination. The organization remains dedicated to fostering economic growth by attracting tourists and supporting local businesses.

Continued planning for off-season events underscores THCRR's commitment to providing year-round engagement for the community. By diversifying the event calendar, the organization aims to cater to varied interests, ensuring there are exciting activities for residents and visitors during all seasons.

Support for ongoing and new events remains a priority, with THCRR actively collaborating with local partners and stakeholders. Whether it's environmental initiatives, cultural celebrations, or community-focused gatherings, the organization is poised to contribute to the success and vibrancy of the region.

