



THE HONDO ECONOMIC DEVELOPMENT CORPORATION, (HEDC) Meeting Minutes

Type of Meeting: Regular Meeting
Date and Time: Thursday, June 19th, 2025 7:00 a.m.
Location: South Texas Regional Airport Board Room
700 Vandenberg Road, Hondo, TX 78861

1. Determination of Quorum

1.1 Call to Order

Chair J. Gruber, Vice-Chair Ronnie Miller, Treasurer Brett Riff, Secretary Ashley Lowe, Rachel Ramirez, Roger Hernandez & Rose Mary Mares.

Absent: None

“President J. Gruber called the meeting to order at 7:01 a.m.”

2. Public Forum: Upon recognition by the Chair, persons desiring to address the Board may speak on any topic not to exceed three (3) minutes in length. Board Members are prohibited from deliberating on any item presented but may recommend placement on a future agenda for discussion.

No comments were made by a visitor.

3. Consent Agenda: All consent items are considered to be routine and will be enacted by one motion. If requested by a Board Member, any item may be taken off the Consent Agenda by the Chair for individual consideration.

3.1 Approval of May 15th, 2025 regular meeting minutes.

3.2 Approval of Q1 2025 financials

“Ronnie Miller made the motion to approve the consent agenda items. Brett Riff seconded the motion. Motion carried 6-0”

4. Consider Items: Consider and take any action necessary

4.1 Approval of expenditure of \$29,442 INT PMT on STRA Sign (Sean Patty – Director HEDC)

Sean Patty introduced the item, referencing materials included in the board packet that provided a visual rendering of the proposed South Texas Regional Airport (STRA) Industrial Park sign. He noted that board members may have observed recent progress on the stone and masonry work at the Castro Avenue entrance. The funds under consideration—totaling \$29,442—represent a one-time interest payment from the existing STRA loan, which would be contributed by the HEDC to support completion of the signage project.

It was also noted that this commitment originated under previous HEDC leadership (Doug Dowler), and while discussed previously, the Board had not formally approved the contribution. The current action was to formally authorize the expenditure as a one-time, designated support



for improving the visibility and branding of the industrial park, which currently lacks an adequate entrance sign.

Sean reiterated that the total cost of the sign exceeds the proposed contribution, and that the HEDC's share would be a portion of the overall project. The Board agreed that the sign was a necessary improvement to the STRA Industrial Park and recognized their prior verbal commitment to the initiative.

Resolution:

Resolution No. ED-4-25 – *A resolution authorizing the expenditure of funds by the City of Hondo Economic Development Corporation in the amount of \$29,442 to support signage improvements at the South Texas Regional Airport Industrial Park.*

“Ronnie Miller made the motion to approve the expenditure of funds of \$29,442 to support signage improvements at the STRA Industrial Park. Ashley Lowe seconded the motion. Motion carried 6-0.”

4.2 Presentation The Future of Hondo Aviation – (Jon Maynard – President of Marketing Alliance)

Sean Patty, Executive Director of HEDC, introduced Jon Maynard of Marketing Alliance, who joined the meeting virtually from Mississippi. Sean reminded the board that Jon had previously participated in the HEDC strategic planning workshop held in April 2024. He highlighted that this presentation would center around a key component of the HEDC's marketing strategy for the coming year: promoting the South Texas Regional Airport (STRA) in Hondo as a hub for innovation in aviation.

Jon Maynard quickly transitioned into the topic of **Advanced Air Mobility (AAM)**, particularly **vertical takeoff and landing (VTOL)** aircraft. He emphasized that the Hondo airport's legacy as a former military airbase—with four runways, 600+ acres of land, and uncongested airspace—makes it a rare and highly attractive site for emerging aviation technologies.

Key Points of Presentation:

- **Strategic Assets:** Hondo's airport features ideal infrastructure for small aviation firms needing ample airspace, runway access, and flexible facilities—not large hangars but test space and light industrial capabilities.
- **Industry Demand:** Maynard shared a conversation with a former Army aviator now involved in ISR (Intelligence, Surveillance, Reconnaissance) platform development. The contact expressed strong interest in finding low-traffic, accessible runway space to test UAVs and ISR systems—validating Hondo's potential for R&D activity.
- **Emerging Aviation Trends:**
 - Drone-based delivery of medical supplies
 - Electrified short-range aircraft
 - Personal flight vehicles (Jetsons-style concepts) in development by numerous companies

- **Marketing Approach:**

- Develop a **digital campaign** focused on aviation innovation
- Create materials that highlight Hondo's airspace, acreage, and infrastructure
- **Targeted outreach** to specific aviation and tech companies, using curated industry lists and direct marketing
- Avoid oversaturated venues like the Paris Air Show; instead, focus on niche, innovation-driven aviation conferences

Jon emphasized that Marketing Alliance would incorporate this targeted aviation focus within the **existing \$50,000 HEDC marketing budget**—not as an additional expenditure. He noted that the strategic shift to include aviation as a higher-priority industry within the overall marketing plan came as the potential of the AAM sector became clearer.

Sean Patty confirmed this pivot aligns with the strategic plan. He also noted that Director of Aviation Ryan Elder, through the Airport Advisory Board, is working with the City of Hondo on a **formal resolution to support Advanced Air Mobility**, which is expected to go before City Council shortly. This resolution would publicly affirm the City's support for welcoming and exploring growth in next-generation aviation sectors.

Board Discussion:

- Board members inquired about budget implications and were assured that all campaign costs fit within the current Marketing Alliance allocation.
- The consensus was that this aviation-focused strategy represents a timely and promising opportunity to leverage a unique community asset—the STRA airport—to recruit innovative, future-focused companies.

"No action was taken."

4.3 2025-2026 Budget Public Hearing (J. Gruber – Chair of HEDC Board)

"The Board opened the public hearing at 7:38 a.m."

"No comments were received from the public"

"The Board closed the public hearing at 7:39 a.m."

5. **Discussion Items: Discuss with no formal action to be taken**

5.1 A Vision for Hondo Entrepreneurs – INCubatoredu (Sean Patty – Director HEDC)

Sean Patty introduced a new initiative for potential collaboration between HEDC and Hondo ISD centered on youth entrepreneurship. He presented the **INCubatoredu** program, developed by



Uncharted Learning, a national nonprofit organization offering entrepreneurship education programs for high school students.

Sean shared that he learned about INCubatoredu through a conversation with Justin McKenzie, who described its successful implementation at Boerne Champions High School. The program culminates in student-led startup pitches, with real-world funding opportunities. After watching a student testimonial video with the Board, Sean noted the INCubatoredu model equips students with valuable skills including **public speaking, teamwork, resilience, business strategy, and critical thinking.**

Key Points from the Presentation:

- **Program Overview:**
 - INCubatoredu is a year-long entrepreneurship curriculum for high school juniors and seniors.
 - Students form teams, identify problems, develop business solutions, and ultimately pitch for funding in a real-world setting.
 - The program includes mentorship, professional development for teachers, and structured curriculum units covering everything from ideation to legal structures and product marketing.
- **National Presence:**
 - The program is currently active in numerous Texas high schools, including upcoming launches in communities such as Kerrville.
 - A sample list included in the meeting packet showed the widespread use across the state.
- **Local Possibilities:**
 - Sean shared that conversations have already started with Hondo ISD leadership, including Superintendent Rosemary and the new principal of Hondo High School.
 - The new principal is described as “visionary” and supportive of expanding opportunities for students, including entrepreneurship education.
 - The timing for immediate implementation is not feasible due to scheduling constraints and the need to establish course pathways, but it may be viable as early as the 2026–2027 school year.
- **Role of HEDC:**
 - While Hondo ISD would lead the program, HEDC could serve as a **community sponsor** to help fund startup costs and recruit mentors from the local business community.
 - The program aligns with HEDC’s mission by fostering an entrepreneurial ecosystem and building long-term workforce capacity.

Board Discussion:

- Several board members voiced strong enthusiasm for the program, emphasizing the value of giving students tangible, real-world experiences.
- Questions were raised about the potential for piloting the program or offering smaller components earlier, though it was confirmed that full implementation would require developing a formal academic pathway within the district.
- The board also noted potential alignment with other EDC efforts to build a stronger business culture in Hondo and make Hondo ISD more attractive to prospective families.

“No action was taken by the Board.”

6. Standing Reports

6.1 Budget Report (Sales Tax)

Executive Director Sean Patty presented the monthly update on sales tax revenue. The May 2025 sales tax payment to the City of Hondo totaled **\$190,000**. He noted that this figure continues to **trend slightly below last year's performance**, with year-over-year collections currently down approximately **1%**.

He also presented a report on Hondo's **Top 10 sales tax contributors**, noting that while specific taxpayer information remains confidential, the data shows a mix of flat and growing performance among the leading businesses.

In comparison to nearby communities, Hondo's slight decline is consistent with broader market fluctuations observed across the region. Sean acknowledged that the **current economic environment remains complex** and continues to evolve.

6.2 Executive Director Report

Sean Patty provided the Board with several updates covering communications, platform development, and business recruitment efforts.

1. Social Media Growth

Sean reported that HEDC's **Facebook presence has experienced significant growth**, with follower count approaching 1,000 since launching in January 2024. He credited **Kaitlynn** for her excellent work managing social media content..

- **LinkedIn** growth has been more modest, reflecting the platform's different engagement style. However, the team continues to test and adapt content for professional audiences.
- Upcoming events such as the **Boise Cascade ribbon cutting** in August are expected to generate increased visibility and engagement.

2. Newsletter

Sean praised **Kaitlynn's efforts** in developing the monthly newsletter, which is slowly building its subscriber base. He encouraged Board members to review the newsletter, noting its quality content and relevance to both business and community stakeholders.

3. Connect Platform Update

Sean provided an update on the **Connect platform**, approved by the Board earlier in the year. Due to development delays and product readiness concerns, the platform has been **placed on pause**.

- HEDC is currently **not expending any funds** on the project.

- The platform, under development by a group in Houston, is still maturing and does not yet meet expectations.
- HEDC will revisit the opportunity in a year, once the product is more fully developed.

4. Project Lucky Prime – RFP Submittal

Sean shared that an RFP is being submitted today for Project Lucky Prime, a 50-acre manufacturing prospect focused on roofing material production with rail access requirements.

- HEDC collaborated with Pinsky Railroad (Hondo Rail) and Marketing Alliance to prepare a comprehensive submittal package.
- The site meets all criteria, including proximity to rail, available land, and potential for spur expansion.
- If successful, the project would bring significant job creation and capital investment to the area.

7. Topics for Future Meetings: Board/Staff discussion

“No topics were requested for future discussion at this time.”

8. **Executive Session:** *As authorized by the Texas Open Meetings Act, Texas Government Code Section 551.001, the Board may enter into a closed Executive Session at any time concerning any and all subjects and for any and all purposes permitted by the Act, including, but not limited to, the following:*

- 8.1 Section 551.071 - Consultation with the Board’s attorney
- 8.2 Section 551.072 - Deliberation regarding the purchase, exchange, lease or value of real property
- 8.3 Section 551.074 - Deliberation on personnel matters
- 8.4 Section 551.087 - Deliberation regarding economic development negotiations

9. Actions Resulting from Executive Session

“The Board did not enter into Executive Session.”

10. Adjournment

“The meeting was adjourned at 8:00 a.m.”

ATTEST:



Ashley Lowe, Board Secretary

On 7/17/25