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## **Regional Leaders Convene for 15th Annual TML Region 12 Workshop**

***Conference highlights collaboration, innovation, and the election of McAllen's  
Pepe Cabeza de Vaca as new Region 12 Board President***

The Texas Municipal League (TML) Region 12 hosted its 15th Annual Training Workshop on May 14-15, 2026, bringing together elected officials, city managers, municipal staff, and regional leaders from Hidalgo, Cameron, Willacy, Starr, and Brooks Counties for two days of professional development, collaboration, and leadership training. Held at the Isla Grand Beach Resort, the workshop featured sessions focused on leadership, public finance, municipal operations, emergency management, media relations, ethics, legislative updates, grant compliance, cybersecurity, open government, and community risk reduction.

Conference topics included:

- Crisis communication and emergency response coordination
- Flood recovery and disaster response strategies
- Open meetings and public information laws
- Web accessibility and digital government services
- Municipal court processes and procedures
- Legislative updates impacting Texas cities
- Community fire and life safety education
- Leadership and collaboration among regional municipalities

A featured highlight of the conference was keynote speaker Debbie Korth, Deputy Program Manager for NASA's Orion Program and a proud McAllen native. Korth serves in a leadership role overseeing the design, development, production, and operations of NASA's Orion spacecraft for Artemis missions. Her keynote focused on future economic impact, innovation, leadership, and opportunities connected to the aerospace industry. Hosting Ms. Korth was considered a tremendous honor for the City of McAllen and the Rio Grande Valley, highlighting local talent making a global impact in science, technology, and space exploration.

During the conference business meeting, attendees also voted in a new Region 12 Board President. Pepe Cabeza de Vaca was elected to serve as Board President. "Regionalism is no longer just an idea. It is how we move forward.

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When our cities focus on collaboration rather than competition, we position the entire Rio Grande Valley to make its mark across Texas and beyond. I am proud to help lead that effort and represent as we continue building a stronger, more connected future for the communities we serve,” said Pepe Cabeza de Vaca, President, Texas Municipal League Region 12.

Richard F. Cortez, who participated as a conference speaker, emphasized the importance of regional collaboration during his remarks. “Thank you to TML Region 12 for the invitation to be part of this year’s conference program and for the opportunity to speak on a topic that is so important to the future of our communities,” said Cortez. “My session, ‘Working Together to Reach Our Full Potential,’ focused on the importance of regionalization, alignment, and collaboration among leaders dedicated to strengthening the communities we serve.”

The Texas Municipal League hosts 15 regional meetings and various specialized conferences across the state, rather than a single series of regional conferences. News releases, regional officer contacts, and event calendars are available directly on the Texas Municipal League website: <https://www.tml.org/>

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### **About the City of McAllen**

Founded in 1904 and incorporated in 1911, the City of McAllen has grown from a small agricultural community into one of the most vibrant and fastest-growing cities along the U.S.–Mexico border. Known as the “City of Palms,” McAllen serves as a hub for international trade, retail, tourism, and culture in the Rio Grande Valley. Today, the city employs more than 2,600 dedicated public servants across 41 departments, delivering essential services to a community of more than 150,000 residents. McAllen city leaders remain committed to transparent governance, fiscal responsibility, and enhancing quality of life through innovation, infrastructure, and community engagement. For more information, visit [www.mcallen.net](http://www.mcallen.net) and follow us on social media @cityofmcallen