



Forecaster **Maria Torres** presents information on hurricane preparedness, the 2012 season forecast, and NWS information sources at the U.S. Consulate General Principal Officer's residence in Matamoros, Tamaulipas, Mexico.

Hurricane Awareness, South of the Border

NWS Brownsville/RGV Discusses the 2012 Season at U.S. Consulate General

At the invitation of the U.S. Consulate General (a part of the U.S. Department of State) in Matamoros, Tamaulipas, Mexico – the city of more than 400,000 persons adjacent to Brownsville – National Weather Service staff attended a “Hurricane Happy Hour” at the Principal Officer’s residence on May 31st as part of awareness and preparedness activities during Hurricane Preparedness Week, 2012. Forecaster Maria Torres, a native of Puerto Rico fluent in Latin American Spanish, spoke to more than 30 invited guests. Guests included a diverse mix of Consulate staff, Matamoros/Tamaulipas emergency management personnel, and nearly all of the on-air weather broadcasters from Televisa Noreste’s XHAB Canal 7, one of the higher rated stations in the Rio Grande Valley. Also attending were Meteorologist-in-Charge Steve Drillette, Warning Coordination Meteorologist Barry Goldsmith, and Science and Operations Officer Douglas Butts.

The presentation included sections on hurricane preparedness, the 2012 seasonal forecast, the hurricane as impacts beyond the wind category, and information from the National Weather Service. One highlight that drew interest was the “Go Tapeless” (“Sin cinta adhesiva!”) campaign; a [survey](#) conducted after Hurricane Dolly in 2008 indicated that more than 40 percent of Matamoros residents or U.S. residents who spoke mainly Spanish believed tape (cinta) to be an effective means of protecting windows from hurricane force winds.

The event allowed NWS Brownsville/Rio Grande Valley to build or strengthen partnerships with important members of the Rio Grande Valley decision support community in Tamaulipas, where more than 1 million residents are within range of National Weather Service data, including Doppler Radar and NOAA Weather Radio. Also served are tens of thousands of persons that cross the border daily or weekly to work in the maquiladoras. A maquiladora is a Mexican corporation operating under a special customs regime which allows the corporation to temporarily import duty-free raw materials, equipment, etc. into Mexico for the assembly or manufacture of finished goods for subsequent export¹. Increased awareness of the National Weather Service in Brownsville through social media, combined with advanced communication technology, will allow these partnerships to grow and flourish even during difficult travel times in Mexico.

The National Weather Service in Brownsville thanks the U.S. Consulate General for the opportunity to attend and present at such an important meeting. We hope can be a springboard to the growth of relationships on both sides of the border in the Rio Grande Valley.

¹Maquiladoras: Frequently Asked Questions, section 1, Export.gov