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## **City of McAllen, McAllen I.S.D. Partner to Provide Free WiFi Hot Spots in McAllen**

The City of McAllen has recently made free WiFi hot spots available throughout the city of McAllen. The McAllen Independent School District made available equipment necessary for the connection points to provide the WiFi spots. As public schools across the Rio Grande Valley have extended spring breaks through April and tasked their students with virtual learning, many families who do not have internet service in their homes, were struggling to find a way to fulfil these assignments.

"These are just some of the great things that government agencies can do when we work together," said McAllen City Manager Roel "Roy" Rodriguez. "Alone, this project was too cost-prohibitive to make a reality for either the City of McAllen or McAllen I.S.D., but thanks to the great partnership that we have always had with M.I.S.D., we were able to fast-track this project to help all of our students continue with their academic education that is still so vital and necessary."

Echoing this sentiment is McAllen I.S.D. Superintendent Dr. J. A. Gonzalez.

"We have always had an excellent working relationship with the City of McAllen. In our response to COVID-19, we are requiring children remain at home as the learning continues. Many of our families will benefit from access to a hot spot so they can stay in communication with their teacher, turn in work and continue with their education. We appreciate the City of McAllen's help in making this possible," concluded Gonzalez.

The City of McAllen had invested in a fiber optic infrastructure that covers the entire city. Over 60 miles of high quality, high-speed fiber optic cable, capable of delivering internet and other communication service. The cost for such infrastructure was approximately \$2.4 million. McAllen I.S.D. made available the equipment necessary to connect to the fiber optic, to the City of McAllen, to make the connections possible to provide the Wifi service. The project, which had already been in the works, was fast-tracked to help students and families during the school furlough.

City of McAllen Information Technology staff have been busy installing the equipment throughout McAllen and all spots should be operational and available by the end of day today. Please see attached map for locations of the WiFi availability. Many WiFi hot spots are located in McAllen City-School parks across the city. Residents should be aware that all public restrooms in these parks have been locked to public access for health purposes.

**-more-**

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However, officials caution that with an entire nation attempting to access the same internet across the country, delays and lags and service may be possible.

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