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## NEWS RELEASE

FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE

### **'Tejano' Corpus Christi**

#### ***Arts, Cuisine, Culture & History Reflect Hispanic Ties***

CORPUS CHRISTI, TX – Corpus Christi may be famous for its hundreds of miles of pristine natural beaches, but even if the sandy shores could talk they would tell the tales of silver and gold left behind by Spanish galleons lost at sea or the legends of gems and treasure buried deep in the sands of Padre Island. History-buffs and visitors alike will find that even the name of this seaside destination dates back to the discovery of the Texas Coast in 1519 by the Spaniards on Roman Catholic Feast Day. And in honor of this great finding, Spanish explorer Alonzo Alvarez de Pineda named the discovery Corpus Christi, translated as 'The Body of Christ'.

Today the Spanish influences still linger and are mixed with the Texan cultures and native ties to Mexico, providing an eclectic 'Tejano' mix to the area that can be seen in the local art, cuisine and annual celebrations. Corpus Christi is now the largest coastal city in the Lone Star State, nestled on a bay within the Gulf of Mexico and surrounded by barrier islands at the northern tip of the Padre Island. This slice of paradise is situated between Houston and the US/Mexico border attracting hundreds of thousands of visitors each year with an average of 288 sun-filled days and endless recreational opportunities.

With a close proximity to the border, it's no wonder guests find the local menu somewhat adventurous. Most local eateries dish up a zesty taste-filled blend of fresh seafood and Mexican food, including seafood enchiladas, shrimp tacos and even sushi with a jalapeño kick. And while trying to control that good ol' , messy guacamole burger, you can enjoy a local salsa band at the Havana Club or catch a Texas music rising-star at Executive Surf Club or Brewster Street Icehouse.

When taking a stroll along the downtown Corpus Christi Marina on Shoreline Boulevard, it's not unusual to see dozens of visitors at a time paying tribute to acclaimed Corpus Christi Tejano singer, Selena Quintanilla-Perez at the *Selena Memorial*. Wade Hopkins Tatum's larger-than-life replica in bronze celebrates the life of this Corpus Christi native who was on the verge of achieving international stardom when she was shot to death in 1995. Visitors can also find a bronze statue honoring the 500<sup>th</sup> Anniversary of Christopher Columbus' voyage of 1492 at the Port of Corpus Christi, giving credit to the explorations of Columbus that eventually lead to the discovery of Corpus Christi. In fact, the government of Spain gave their three reproductions of the Nina, Pinta and Santa Maria to the City of Corpus Christi that was constructed to commemorate the 500<sup>th</sup> Anniversary. The fleet embarked on a voyage across the Mediterranean & Atlantic similar to Columbus and are now located at the Corpus Christi Museum of Science & History for visitors to tour year round. Museum staff in period costumes provide guided tours several times each day, giving guests a feel for what it was like daily as a crew member.

The cultural traditions that are still alive run deep in the annual celebrations that draw hundreds of thousands to experience this seaside “caliente” lifestyle year around. Visitors will have plenty of “fiestas and pachangas” to choose from year round. The longest-running festival in Corpus Christi, Buccaneer Days, along the downtown seawall celebrates the Spanish discovery of Corpus Christi. What started as a three-day celebration some 70 years ago has now become a 12 day fiesta in late-April including a PRCA Rodeo with the biggest prize purse in Texas. The festivities also include an illuminated parade through the downtown area and bayfront, a carnival with gut-wrenching rides, lots of zesty native food, a variety of concerts and a Folklorico dance contest at the historic Selena Auditorium.

Often the sounds of the accordion, Spanish lyrics and the smells of fajitas fill the air drawing large crowds each year for the Cinco de Mayo Festival in May. A local Tejano music radio station hosts the event each year, providing guests with an impressive line-up of live entertainment. The successful event that has grown over the years has evolved into a three-day event and provides participants the opportunity to remember their family ties to Mexico, while celebrating their pride for Texas.

Often visitors will find a world-renowned mariachi group scheduled to appear at one of Corpus Christi’s spectacular performing arts venues, but for music-lovers March is the time to enjoy the Coastal Bend Area Mariachi Festival that is a celebration of Mexican cultural arts through world-class mariachi music. Not only does the festival bring acclaimed groups to Corpus Christi, it also features some 35 competing ensembles from across the country and over 40 vocalists. Student mariachis participate in Dia del Mariachi workshops during the event and compete for a chance to be a part of the opening act for the concert.

With 64 percent of the population in the Corpus Christi area having Hispanic heritage , it’s not surprising to know that Corpus Christi hosts one of the largest Diez y Seis de Septiembre celebrations. The annual event commemorates Mexico’s independence from Spain in 1810 and features a colorful parade along the streets of downtown with folklorico dancers, marching bands, drill teams and mariachi bands. This celebration also marks the end of traditional summer for South Texas and includes several events at the historical Heritage Park with live performances, assorted vendors and native food.

For more information on these events and to plan your trip to Corpus Christi, visit [www.corpuschristicvb.com](http://www.corpuschristicvb.com) or call 1-800-678-6232. The Corpus Christi Convention and Visitors Bureau’s mission is “to drive overnight visitor\$ to the Corpus Christi Area.”

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