The Coastal Bend region is located on the Gulf Coastal Plain of Texas. This 11-county region in South Texas covers slightly more than 10,000 square miles of land, an area larger than the Houston metro area and five states, including Vermont, but just slightly smaller than Massachusetts.

The coastal counties are Aransas, Kleberg, Nueces, Refugio, and San Patricio, all of which are separated from the Gulf of Mexico by barrier islands. The inland counties are Bee, Brooks, Duval, Jim Wells, and Live Oak.

Near the center of this region is the Corpus Christi metro area, which comprises Aransas, Nueces, and San Patricio counties. Aransas is the smallest county within the Coastal Bend by area size.

The total population of the region is currently roughly 607,000. With more than 460,000 residents, the Corpus Christi metro area accounts for more than three-quarters (76 percent) of the regional population. With slightly less than 338,000, the city of Corpus Christi is the most populous area in the Coastal Bend.

For the Coastal Bend as a whole, the largest private-sector employer is the healthcare sector. With nearly 30,000 employees and self-employed, the size of the construction sector is more than twice as large in this region as elsewhere in the nation.

The local economies of the Coastal Bend are diverse. Oil and gas related industries play a key role in Corpus Christi. In the coastal communities, particularly Port Aransas and Rockport, tourism is the key economic engine, fueled by mostly small businesses.

The Port of Corpus Christi is the nation’s fifth largest port by tonnage. Since the 40-year ban on U.S. crude oil exports was lifted in December 2015, the Port has emerged as the No. 1 U.S. port for crude oil exports. Its various logistical attributes have also helped attract more than $50 billion in capital investments from companies around the world, including Europe and Asia.

Data compiled by the South Texas Economic Development Center in collaboration with the United Corpus Christi Chamber of Commerce; Data current as of August 1, 2018.
THE STORM

- On August 25, 2017, Hurricane Harvey made landfall at San Jose Island near Rockport, Texas, as a Category 4 storm with sustained winds over 130 miles per hour and a storm surge over six feet.

- Harvey was the first Category 4 hurricane to make landfall along the Texas coast since Carla in 1961. It was also the first major hurricane to make landfall in the Coastal Bend since Celia in 1970.

- After initial impact, Harvey’s wind speed decreased, but due to two high-pressure systems to the east and west, it stalled over the Texas coast for the next 4 days. The storm eventually generated a record rainfall totaling 34 trillion gallons and as much as 60 inches in areas near the Houston metro area within a 5-day period.

- After devastating much of Houston, Harvey made a second landfall near the cities of Orange, Beaumont and Port Arthur on August 29, causing widespread flooding in southeast Texas and western Louisiana.

- The land mass impacted by Harvey was larger than 41,000 square miles, larger than Connecticut, Massachusetts, New Hampshire, Rhode Island, and Vermont combined.

IMMEDIATE IMPACTS

- Harvey caused about 100 confirmed deaths in the United States. According to the National Weather Service’s estimates, Harvey directly caused 0 fatalities in the Coastal Bend, although 3 indirect fatalities and 50 to 100 injuries were related to the storm.

- Harvey shut down ports, oil and gas production and refineries, and businesses across most of the Texas coast for about a week and, in some areas, much longer. In the Coastal Bend, the Corpus Christi Ship Channel was closed for a record six-day period, while most local refinery facilities remained idle.

- Harvey’s impacts were immediately felt across the United States, with gas prices surging more than 33 cents a gallon (or 15 percent) in the weeks following the storm.

- More than 8 million Texans live in the Harvey impacted communities, making up about 30 percent of the state’s population.

- According to the Texas General Land Office, the state spent more than $1.1 billion on response and recovery.

- Harvey damaged an estimated total of 230,000 homes across Texas. In Aransas County, about 75 percent of homes were damaged, and about 25% of homes sustained at least 50% damage or total loss.

- FEMA designated 41 Texas counties as the Harvey Disaster Region (DR-4332) for Individual Assistance. In the Coastal Bend, the federally declared areas are Aransas, Bee, Nueces, San Patricio, and Refugio counties.
RESPONSE & RECOVERY

- FEMA has received nearly **900,000 applications for Individual Assistance**. More than 373,000 applicants have been verified for real or personal property damage. The total amount of federal funds given to affected individuals in Texas has exceeded **$13.8 billion**. In the Coastal Bend, roughly 24,000 individuals from the five declared counties have collectively received about **$360 million** in Individual Assistance.

- The Small Business Administration (SBA) has approved more than **43,000 Disaster Loans** across Texas for a total amount of **$3.37 billion**. In the Coastal Bend, 3,860 SBA Disaster Loans have been approved for a total of **$210 million**. More than 1,300 SBA loans have been made in Aransas County for a total of **$104 million**.

- More than **74,000 claims** have been filed with the Texas Windstorm Insurance Association (TWIA) for property damage from Harvey. Nearly 25,000, or 34 percent, of those claims were filed in Nueces County, mostly in Port Aransas. The highest payments for claims were found in Aransas County, with an average of **$68,149** per claim.

- The FEMA National Flood Insurance Program (NFIP) has received 91,000 claims from Texas and more than **$8.8 billion** has been paid. In the Coastal Bend, nearly **$95 million** in NFIP payments has been made to over 6,000 claims.

- Due to damage from Harvey, insurance companies have made **$4.5 billion in payments** for a total of 670,000 claims.

- In response to Harvey, the Department of Housing and Urban Development (HUD) has allocated more than **$5 billion** in Community Development Block Grant Disaster Recovery (CDBG-DR) funds to the state of Texas. Within the Coastal Bend, HUD identified Aransas, Nueces, San Patricio Counties, and the city of Refugio as the “most impacted and distressed” areas in the Federal Register notice, and it required that at least 80 percent of the total allocation must address unmet needs within these areas.

- In addition to responses from a multitude of individual volunteers and non-governmental organizations, including the American Red Cross and Salvation Army, Harvey was such an event that has heightened regional partnerships in support of relief and rebuilding efforts in the affected communities. The United Corpus Christi Chamber of Commerce has distributed **$783,000** to impacted businesses through collaborative efforts with the Rebuild Texas Fund, Port of Corpus Christi, Corpus Christi Convention & Visitors Bureau, Corpus Christi Regional Economic Development Corporation, San Patricio Economic Development Corporation, and local chambers of commerce in Aransas Pass, Ingleside, Port Aransas, Portland, and Rockport-Fulton.

- The Rebuild Texas Fund, created by the Michael & Susan Dell Foundation in collaboration with the OneStar Foundation, has raised nearly **$95 million for recovery** from Harvey. By July 2018, the fund has deployed more than $37 million to Harvey impacted communities. In the Coastal Bend, Santos McBain Management & Planning has organized five Take Action Now events in partnership with LiftFund and about 20 local stakeholders, such as chambers of commerce, to assist a total of 159 impacted businesses and distribute over **$400,000 in business loans**.

- Harvey impacted Texas infrastructure all along the Gulf Coast through damage to roadways, bridges, and parts of the coastline. A total of **$61 billion in projects** have been identified by affected communities for FEMA assistance. Over 60 percent of these projects were for future flood control.

- The impacted communities across Texas have removed a total of **12 million cubic yards** of debris on the heels of Harvey. Aransas County alone has picked up 4 million cubic yards of storm debris.
**ECONOMIC IMPACT**

- Hurricane Harvey was one of the costliest natural disasters in U.S. history, second only to Hurricane Katrina of 2005. Although it will take years to determine the storm’s total economic toll, preliminary estimates range from about $80 billion (Moody’s Analytics) to $125 billion (NOAA).

- Harvey’s economic costs included damage to homes, personal properties, businesses and infrastructure, as well as lost economic activity measured by reductions in employment and production. In Aransas County, unemployment doubled to **above 10 percent** in the month immediately following Harvey’s landfall, while more than 80 percent of businesses were shut down.

- The Texas Comptroller estimated a loss of **$16.8 billion in economic activity directly** attributable to Harvey. This loss would be partially offset by subsequent rebuilding efforts and increased construction activity, so the net loss during the first year of the storm was an estimated $3.8 billion in gross state product.

- According to the Texas Department of Public Safety, Harvey damaged more than **290,000 homes**, with nearly **17,000 being destroyed**. The National Weather Service estimated that Harvey damaged a total of 41,000 structures in the Coastal Bend, with more than 15,000 properties being destroyed or uninhabitable. The total amount of property losses equaled $4.6 billion, with $4 billion from wind damage and $0.5 billion from flood damage. The storm also caused an estimated $65 million in agricultural losses.

- Harvey impacted about **4,800 businesses** in Coastal Bend’s hard-hit communities with a total of $2.6 billion in pre-Harvey annual business revenues. As of July 2018, nearly one year after Harvey, the share of closed businesses was about 40 percent in Port Aransas, 20 percent in Rockport-Fulton, and 10 percent in Refugio.

**DATA SOURCES**


Data compiled by South Texas Economic Development Center in collaboration with the United Corpus Christi Chamber of Commerce.