

Business & Industry

My Degree Counts Initiative

News Release
Saturday, June 29, 2013

HOUSTON –Mayor Lewis Rosen on Wednesday, announced a partnership between the City of Galveston, the Galveston Economic Development Partnership, the Galveston Chamber of Commerce, and the Center for Houston's Future to increase two-and four-year college graduation rates in the region through the My Degree Counts initiative.



The press conference was held in the Galveston Chamber of Commerce Board Room. Leaders of local colleges and universities were present, including Rear Admiral Robert Smith III, President and CEO of Texas A&M University at Galveston, and W. Myles Shelton, President of Galveston College. Shrub Kempner, of the Galveston Economic Development Partnership, spoke for UTMB President Dr. David Callendar who could not attend. Gina Spagnola, President of the Galveston Chamber, and Sharon Gillins, Education Co-Chair of the Galveston Chamber also participated in the news conference.

My Degree Counts is a regional public engagement campaign and collaborative of colleges, businesses, and nonprofits working together to increase the number of college degrees and thereby improve the economy of the eight-county Houston region. As part of a national competition to advance degree completion, My Degree Counts has recently posted promising interim results: Houston is performing better than 45 of the 57 competing cities, with the overall degree attainment up by 4.68% (accounting for a 2.3 population increase in 2010-2011). Center for Houston's Future CEO and President, Catherine C. Mosbacher explained, "We spearheaded this initiative because we know that the key to success – for Houston and for Galveston – is education. While the idea of actually winning is great, it's the real impact on our community that is truly exciting."

Approximately 28.4% in the region have a four-year degree and 6% have a two-year degree; with these college attainment rates, Houston, the fourth largest city in the United States, ranks 34th among the 50 largest Metropolitan Statistical Areas. My Degree Counts was launched by Center for Houston's Future in April 2012 to improve that ranking. The economic benefit of raising post-secondary graduation rates in the region is significant: each 1% increase in four-year degrees would result in an additional \$5 billion for the local economy.

More information about the Center for Houston's Future and My Degree Counts is available at www.futurehouston.org

Center for Houston's Future, The Region's Think Tank, is a 501 c(3) non-profit organization that works to solve our region's toughest problems by providing meaningful research, defining innovative strategies, and engaging diverse leaders.