

## **FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE**

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### **Citibank and Texas A&M University Announce the First Annual Brazos Valley Worldfest** *Festival to Celebrate Region's International Diversity*

(Bryan, TX) Citibank and Texas A&M University, along with many community organizations, announced today plans for the first annual Brazos Valley Worldfest on Saturday, November 17 in downtown Bryan. Citibank is the presenting sponsor of the event. The festival is a unique international opportunity to celebrate and bring awareness to the diversity of Brazos Valley.

“We live in a very culturally diverse region,” said Clay Riebe, Citibank Market President. “This is a wonderful opportunity to experience how our neighbors live, their music and cuisine, and the traditions they’ve passed down to their children. We invite others to join us in what is sure to grow into the premier, international event in Brazos Valley.”

Dr. Emily Ashworth, associate vice president for International Programs at Texas A&M said she is pleased with the support of Citibank, The Eagle, KBTX and Clear Channel Radio as well as the many other sponsors who see the Worldfest as a tremendous opportunity for the community.

“Texas A&M has seen the rich cultures our international students bring to our campus and the local community,” Ashworth said. “This festival is another opportunity for our international students, faculty and scholars to share their diverse culture with friends and neighbors in the community.”

Texas A&M has more than 3,700 international students from 128 different countries. According to the *Open Doors Survey* conducted by NAFSA: the Association of International Educators, these students alone bring about \$50 million in revenue to Bryan and College Station. The University is also host to some 600 international faculty and scholars who often bring families with them and whose children attend the local schools. There are no statistics available regarding the revenue this group brings to the community.

“We know that this community has many other foreign nationals who come to Bryan-College Station to live, work and build businesses,” said Royce Hickman, CEO and President of the Bryan College Station Chamber of Commerce. “In terms of diversity, this community has a wealth of culture to share and the Worldfest is the perfect opportunity to see it.”

Participants from many different backgrounds and heritages will be represented at the festival. Plans include street vendors, country and culture display booths, international foods, musical performances, international arts and crafts and many other educational and entertaining activities for all ages. Vendor and country booths will be located along Main Street and adjacent to the Bryan Public Library and the Children's Museum of the Brazos Valley.

The festival has been in the planning stages since early 2006 and will be held in conjunction with the Department of State’s International Education Week program and Citibank’s Global Community Day.

John Hendry, executive director for the Downtown Bryan Economic Development Association (DBEDA) and Brazos Valley Worldfest committee member sees the festival as a positive for downtown Bryan and the community as a whole.

“DBEDA is excited to see the Brazos Valley Worldfest bring an international festival to historic Downtown Bryan this fall,” Hendry said. “We see Downtown as an ideal gathering place to celebrate arts and culture which represent our colorful and rich diversity.”

The mission of Brazos Valley Worldfest is to promote and celebrate the international diversity of the Brazos Valley. The festival activities are free and open to all residents of the Brazos Valley.

For more information on sponsoring this effort, participating in the planning of Brazos Valley Worldfest, or learning more about its activities, go to <http://www.brazosvalleyworldfest.org> or call Festival Coordinator, Kim Fox at 979-862-6700.