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**LAREDO IS FIRST SITE CHOSEN TO HOST
STUNNING PHOTO EXHIBIT OF
CAMINO REAL DE LOS TEJAS NATIONAL HISTORIC TRAIL**

Laredo, Tex. – The Webb County Heritage Foundation, along with the National Trails Intermountain Region office of the National Park Service, in cooperation with Stephen F. Austin State University is happy to present a photographic exhibit on El Camino Real de los Tejas National Historic Trail. Laredo is the first site to host the exhibit which will debut with an opening reception on Thursday, August 19 at 6 p.m. at the Villa Antigua Border Heritage Museum at 810 Zaragoza St.

The exhibit, on display throughout the months of August and September, showcases breathtaking images that offer a glimpse of the significance and beauty of the historic resources associated with El Camino Real de los Tejas National Historic Trail. Professor Christopher Talbot of Stephen F. Austin State University's School of Art is the photographer who captured outstanding images of trail swales, *acequias*, river crossings, forts, missions, *presidios*, and other original remnants along the old route. His work is supported by Stephen F. Austin University and the National Trails Intermountain Region's Challenge Cost Share Program. The public is invited to meet the photographer at the opening reception.

El Camino Real de los Tejas National Historic Trail was designated by Congress in 2004 to commemorate the significant historic routes extending from the international border at the Rio Grande to the easternmost section of the Spanish province of Texas in Natchitoches Parish, Louisiana.

The trail long pre-dates the establishment of the United States. In the 1680s when the Spanish began to travel regularly into Texas and western Louisiana, they followed already existing American Indian trails. The Spanish used these paths to reach areas where they established missions and *presidios*. Eventually, armies and immigrants followed these routes which led to Euro-American settlements across the two states. Many of these roads continued to be used and became part of modern highway systems. In many places, Spanish names for roads and landscape features have been retained. Physical remains of the trail are testimony of a rich heritage and to the significant events that occurred along the trail.

The traveling photo exhibit begins a one-year tour across Texas and Louisiana through September of 2011.

The public is invited to attend the opening reception or view the exhibit at the Villa Antigua Border Heritage Museum, 810 Zaragoza St. from Tuesday – Saturday, 9 a.m. – 4 p.m. For more information, please contact the Webb County Heritage Foundation at (956) 727-0977 or heritage@webbheritage.org.