



# MISS WESLACO 2011

by: Terri Sanchez

The crowd erupted into cheers and screams of congratulations, as our new queen, Sarah Neal, was crowned the winner of the Miss Weslaco 2011 competition. With poise and grace, she walked the stage, waving to her supporters while beaming in the spotlight. The journey to that very moment began 4 months prior, with title hopefuls registering, writing their biographies, taking headshots, and going to meetings. For many, it was an experience of a lifetime, and one that they will carry with them for many years to come.

The Weslaco Area Chamber of Commerce and J. Nava Studios produced the highly anticipated and traditional event which now spans almost six decades. Young ladies between the ages of 16 to 18 from the Mid-Valley, are encouraged to vie for the title of Miss Weslaco by competing in areas that include a one-on-one interview with each of the judges, on-stage introduction, evening wear, and on-stage questions. Online voting, as well as, ad and ticket sales were also included in the final count. Additionally, the Miss Weslaco pageant is held in conjunction with the Annual Texas Onion Fest which encourages young ladies in the Mid-Valley to participate for one of three titles, including: Springsweet Miss (ages

10-11), Miss Onion Blossom (ages 12-13), and Miss Onion Fest (ages 14-15). Local businesses, groups, or family and friends, sponsor the contestants on their journey's to the title.

This year's theme, Mardi Gras Mambo, was the setting for a night of colorful masks and the upbeat sounds of the traditional New Orleans festivities also taking place in March. The girls waited anxiously to answer questions and walk the stage in their beautiful gowns. The competition was highlighted by performances from the Burton School of Dance, the TRS Posh Models, and Dance Time Studios. In the end, the last three hopefuls standing were, Weslaco HS junior, Laura Zepeda, Weslaco HS senior, Alyssa Serna, and Weslaco HS junior, Sarah Neal. The final moments revealed the third runner up as Alyssa Serna, and second runner up as Laura Zepeda. Miss Weslaco 2010, Vivian Yvette Reyes provided some final words of wisdom to Weslaco's new queen, stating, "Get ready to have the time of your life....many opportunities will come your way, take advantage of them!" Congratulations, Sarah Neal from all of us at The Rising Star magazine!