

## Director's Message



Welcome to the 3rd Quarter Edition of the Economic Times Newsletter!

The Pharr Economic Development Corporation has been busy promoting our city's economic opportunities, celebrating the opening of new businesses, and working with our local, regional, state, and federal partners to advocate for projects and programs that directly impact our region and city.

This quarter, the Pharr EDC held the first-ever International Trucking Expo, worked with the community to host a Disaster Relief Public Forum, and continued our commitment to job growth by hosting the 4th Annual RGV Job Fair and working alongside Topgolf as they prepare to fill 350 new jobs.

These are exciting times in Pharr and we thank you, our industry partners and stakeholders, for your support as we look forward to more growth and partnerships in the future.

Sincerely,

Victor Perez  
Executive Director  
Pharr Economic Development Corporation

## CONTACT

facebook.com/PHARREDC

1215 S. Cage Blvd. Pharr, TX. 78577

pharredc.com

(956) 402-4332

## Pharr Hosts International Trucking Expo



Mayor Ambrosio Hernandez, M.D., discusses transportation issues with representatives from the trucking industry during the expo.

The Pharr International Trucking Expo, the first of its kind in our region, was hosted in the City of Pharr on September 29, 2018. Members of the trucking and transportation industry came together and discussed issues of relevance, displayed their products and services and shared their expertise with the industry-specific target audience. In efforts of highlighting the local and national economic impact the transportation industry holds, this event was tailored to recognize their importance. We would like to thank all participating companies that helped make this event a reality, and to all our patrons, we hope to see you next year. When it comes to keeping our Pharr economy functioning, transportation definitely has NO BOUNDARIES!



Mayor Ambrosio Hernandez, M.D., and Victor Perez, Executive Director of the Pharr EDC are pictured with representatives from TRANCASA.

## Pharr International Bridge Launches New Toll System



Launch of New Toll System (L to R): Juan Guerra, Pharr City Commissioner Eleazar Guajardo, Congressman Vicente Gonzalez (TX-15), Texas State Representative Armando "Mando" Martinez (District 39), Pharr City Commissioner Bobby Carillo, and Pharr Bridge Director Luis Bazan.

The City of Pharr and the Pharr International Bridge celebrated a huge milestone as they became the first and only bridge in the country along the Texas/Mexico Border to offer interoperability with a toll road for its customers. With this unique and innovative system, customers will now be able to download transaction information and keep up-to-date records of all crossings, among many other capabilities. The system will provide customers with complete flexibility and transparency to operate their business more effectively and securely when using the Pharr International Bridge. With the great working partnership alongside CCRMA, essential in creating and developing this first-of-its-kind complete toll system, this project came to fruition.



## Mexico's trade with Pharr increased 9.92% in 2017, to \$32.14 billion.

**Exports:** The leading export, petroleum gases, increased in value by 22.96 percent, to \$1.26 billion. The fastest-growing top 10 export was gasoline and other refined petroleum products, up 79.8 percent over the previous year.

**Imports:** The fastest-growing import among the top 10 was No. 8-ranked laser-based medical equipment and parts, which increased \$257.99 million to \$667.4 million. The top import, TVs and computers monitors increased 10.25 percent in 2017.

**Balance of Trade:** Pharr ran a \$9.09 billion deficit with Mexico in 2017. For every dollar of trade crossing the border, 36 cents was a Pharr export.

**Market Share:** Pharr ranked No. 4 among nation's 475-plus airports, seaports and border crossings for Mexico trade. It accounted for \$5.82 percent of all U.S. trade with Mexico in 2017.

SOURCE: WorldCity analysis of U.S. data

## Pharr Commercial Property Tour September 12, 2018



Guests were treated to an exclusive tour of Topgolf, Pharr's newest entertainment venue.

Various commercial brokers, real estate agents and guests attended the first Pharr Commercial Property tour to receive an insight on available commercial sites. Properties, both vacant and developed throughout the city of Pharr were showcased for potential investment opportunities. The tour ended with an exclusive stop at the acclaimed global sports and entertainment venue, Topgolf, for an opportunity to meet with management and receive finalized project specs. Guests received a complimentary lunch presentation on the benefits of opportunity zone investing sponsored by BBVA Compass, SAMES, Inc., Valley Land Title Co., VTX1, and Credit Solutions.

## Regional Center for Public Safety Excellence – now officially open!



**Regional Center for Public Safety Excellence:** Mayor Ambrosio Hernandez, M.D., City Commissioner Daniel Chavez, City Commissioner Bobby Carillo, City Commissioner Eleazar Guajardo, and EDC Director Victor Perez joined Governor Greg Abbott, local elected officials, dignitaries, and members from South Texas College for a Ribbon Cutting Ceremony.

Texas Governor Greg Abbott delivered the keynote address to patrons attending the grand opening and building dedication ceremony for Phase I of the highly-anticipated Regional Center for Public Excellence. Among local and state representatives, other guests in attendance included local, state, and federal law enforcement professionals.

"Keeping communities safe must be our top priority if we are going to have the safety and security to be able to educate our kids, or safety and security to have the vibrant economy that we have. Combatting dangerous threats like those you have to deal with requires superior training for law enforcement professionals, and it's now more important than it has ever been," Abbott said. "You have to deal with issues like human trafficking, gangs and drug smuggling and to do that, it requires collaboration at all levels of law enforcement as well as first responders. Law enforcement officers, firefighters, public safety professionals are essential to that top priority of ensuring security in our state."



**Regional Center for Public Safety Excellence:** First Responders, Law Enforcement Officials, and students celebrate the grand opening.

Phase Two and Three will include a multi-story fire training structure, two story residential training structure and confined space/search and rescue training area, the EVOC, a covered shooting range with firearm training classroom, a physical plant and expansive growth with new education and student services buildings.

This project would not have been possible without the collaboration and contributions from the City of Pharr, P.S.J.A. ISD, and South Texas College.

## Topgolf begins Mission: Ambition Hiring Event

Topgolf has begun their hiring initiatives to fill the 350 openings for the highly anticipated entertainment venue. Pharr EDC in collaboration with Workforce Solutions have been working alongside Topgolf management to accomplish this goal; and with the positive out-pour from our local qualified labor force, Topgolf is just about bridging the gap on all positions. Their hiring events consist of an interactive Topgolf staff meet and greet, followed by a series of informal group rotations to grasp individual strengths without the usual interview jitters. Employees will receive official Topgolf training in preparation for the grand opening, scheduled mid-November.



**Topgolf Begins Hiring** - Topgolf Pharr recently announced that they have started their Mission: Ambition Hiring Event as they seek to fill 350 new jobs in the City of Pharr.



## SEAL Program – Thank you Allison!

After a five-week internship, it was a bittersweet moment as we said farewell to SEAL participant, Allison Casares. Under the program, Ms. Casares was able to obtain employ-ability skills and experience a real work environment as she assisted administratively with data entry, practiced phone etiquette and customer service. Ms. Casares will begin her post-secondary education at STC this fall under the culinary program. We wish her the best of luck in all her future endeavors, and we know that she has a bright future ahead!



**Disaster Relief Public Forum:** Corey Williams, Public Information Officer for the U.S. Small Business Administration (SBA), discusses opportunities for disaster recovery assistance.

## Disaster Relief Public Forum

The Pharr EDC and the Greater Pharr Chamber of Commerce collaborated to host a Disaster Relief Public Forum in the aftermath of the recent flooding in the area, providing an opportunity for local businesses and residents to receive information on how they can begin the recovery process.

Representatives from FEMA and the Small Business Administration were on site answering questions and providing information on disaster recovery efforts, federal assistance, agency resources, application process, and locations for the disaster recovery centers. Resources and financial aid was available for both residents and businesses in the affected areas.

The Small Business Administration has recently announced that they have approved more than \$25 million in federal disaster loans for Texas businesses and residents. Although the deadline for property damage loans has expired, small businesses and most private nonprofit organizations still have an opportunity to apply for an Economic Injury Disaster Loan aimed towards working capital needs.

## 4th Annual RGV Job Fair July 19, 2018

The Pharr EDC, in conjunction with Workforce Solutions, hosted the 4th Annual RGV Job Fair. The annual public event aimed towards addressing unemployment in the region, brings multiple companies in an array of industries under one location for community accessibility. Through workforce initiatives, targeted industries in the areas of healthcare, education, transportation, retail, sales, banking, and many others were invited to participate. All attending businesses are required to have employment vacancies to provide candidates with and without post-secondary education, an opportunity for job attainment. Over 1,400 job seekers and 70 employers attended this year.



**4th Annual Job Fair (L to R):** Omar Treviño, Deputy Director, Operations & Partnerships, Workforce Solutions; Robert Mora, Business Solutions Representative Workforce Solutions; Victor Perez, Pharr EDC Director, Karina Lopez, Pharr EDC BRE Mgr., Flor Leal, Community Engagement Manager, Workforce Solutions; Jaime Ortiz, Board Chair, Workforce Solutions; Crisanta Garza, Senior Managing Director, Workforce Solutions.

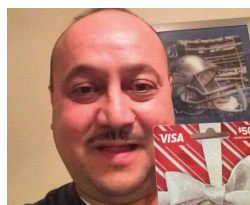
## The Pharr Experience Winners



**JUNE WINNER**  
German Cabello  
Rio Rico, Arizona



**JULY WINNER**  
Sonya Tackett  
Coffeyville, Kansas



**AUGUST WINNER**  
Benjamin Correa  
Dallas, Texas

## City of Pharr earns Scenic City Award



Melanie Cano, Director of Development Services presents the award to Mayor Hernandez and City Commissioners.

The City of Pharr was among 13 Texas cities to earn a Scenic City Certification for 2018. The certification recognizes cities for their commitment to high-quality scenic standards for public roadways and public spaces, which aides in the attraction of new development and improves the quality of life for our community. The recognition exemplifies why Pharr is a great place to live, work, and play.

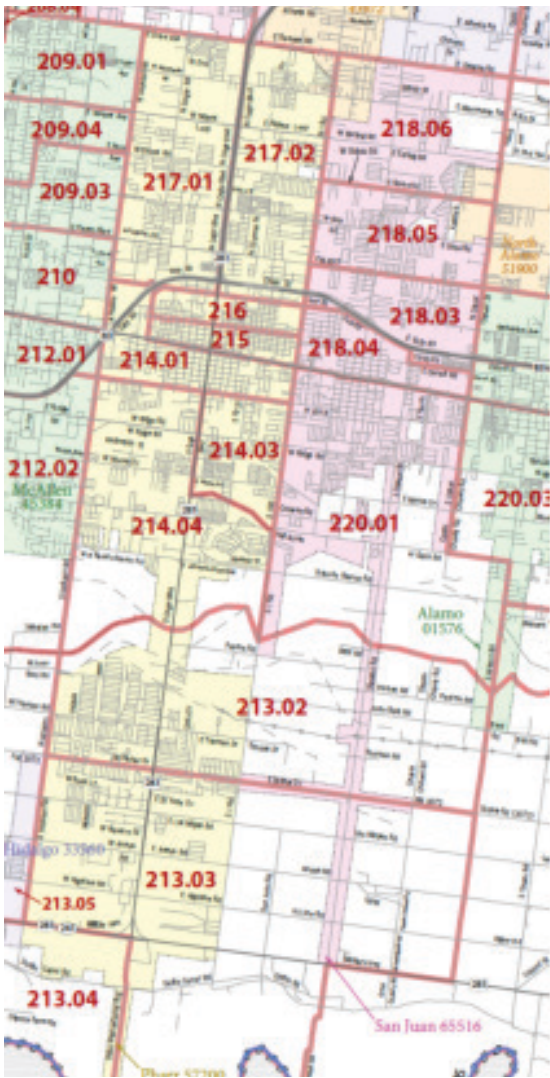
## Summer Social Media Series



**Summer 2018 Social Media Series:** Jesse Brands presents to attendees of the social media series.

Pharr EDC and the Greater Pharr Chamber of Commerce hosted the first Summer 2018 Social Media Series, a set of complimentary courses targeting the major social media marketing platforms in the business world. The courses, offered in both English and Spanish were held every Tuesday throughout the month of July, and presented by local companies Jesse Brands and AR3biz. Presenters provided local businesses and aspiring entrepreneurs' information and steps on how to get the most out of social media marketing, whether at a beginner or advanced level. Platforms discussed included Intro to Social Media, Facebook, Instagram, and LinkedIn.





## Pharr Opportunity Zones

Opportunity Zones are a new community development program established by Congress in the Tax Cuts and Jobs Act of 2017 (TCJA) to encourage long-term investments in low-income urban and rural communities nationwide. The Opportunity Zones program provides a tax incentive for investors to reinvest their unrealized capital gains into Opportunity Funds.

In Hidalgo County, twenty-one census tracts have been designated as qualified opportunity zones, six of these tracts are in Pharr.

Visit: <https://www.irs.gov/newsroom/opportunity-zones-frequently-asked-questions> for more information.

City of Pharr Designated Opportunity Zones Map

## Greater Pharr Chamber of Commerce Ribbon Cuttings



10°F HUT PHARR ROLLING ICE  
500 N. Jackson Rd., Ste K1



IDEA Owassa  
1000 E. Owassa Rd.



Red Nail Salon & Spa  
6101 S. Cage Blvd., Ste 118



Girl Talk Boutique & Spa  
807 S. Jackson Rd., Ste 3



Colonial Manor Celebrates  
One Year Anniversary  
1100 W. Minnesota Rd.

### Upcoming Events

**THURSDAY 4-7pm**  
3:30PM RIBBON CUTTING CEREMONY  
**11.8.2018**

TERRACON PHARR –  
1506 MID CITIES DRIVE, PHARR, TX 78577  
RSVP: [STEPHANIE.RENDON@TERRACON.COM](mailto:STEPHANIE.RENDON@TERRACON.COM) BY 11.1.18

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 The Greater Pharr Chamber of Commerce

2ND ANNUAL WELCOME BACK WINTER TEXANS GOLF TOURNAMENT

Monday, December 10th 2018

REGISTRATION DEADLINE IS MONDAY, DECEMBER 4TH, 2018

CONTACT REBECCA ARIZMENDI TO REGISTER (956) 402-4332

ENTRY  
**\$40**  
Per Person

DOOR PRIZES & RAFFLES!  
BRING YOUR OWN TEAM!

save the date

3<sup>RD</sup> ANNUAL *holiday* TAMALADA

WEDNESDAY, DECEMBER 12, 2018

11 AM - 1 PM

1215 South Cage Blvd. • Pharr, TX 78577