

## Director's Message



We are halfway through 2018, and our economy in Pharr continues to thrive. Our focus this quarter has been working on economic development projects of regional significance, welcoming many new businesses to our area, and continuing to support efforts to promote workforce development and job readiness. These major activities, and more, work to promote economic prosperity among our citizens.

Highlights this quarter also include activities that promote our city on an international scope. Pharr continues to be a leading driver of economic growth as we focus on attracting and retaining companies and employers that appreciate Pharr's proximity to the U. S. – Mexico border, its quality of life and variety of amenities, and its business-friendly and supportive environment.

We continue to enjoy sharing our news and accomplishments with our industry partners and stakeholders, and as always, we thank you for your continued support.

Sincerely,

**Victor Perez**

Executive Director

Pharr Economic Development Corporation

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## Texas Tropical Trail Region Tour

The Greater Pharr Chamber of Commerce welcomed the Texas Tropical Trail Region to the City of Pharr during the month of April. The group serves a 20 county region by identifying, preserving, and promoting the natural, historic, and cultural resources of South Texas under the direction of Executive Director Nancy Deviney.

To kick off the tour, Chamber President Rebecca Arizmendi, Chamber Chairman Mario Lizcano, and City Commissioner Eleazar Guajardo gave a brief welcome alongside a light breakfast. Guests boarded city trolleys and made several stops to include the Santa Ana National Wildlife Refuge and the Pharr International Bridge. "It was impressive to hear about bridge operations and the efficiency in which the trade traffic is handled." stated Pino Shah, a world heritage photographer.

The tour continued with a hosted lunch at Junction Café followed by a visit to the Pharr Memorial Library for presentations from Kay Wolf, Executive Director of Texas Festivals & Events Association, and Roseann Bacha-Garza, UTRGV and CHAPS (Community Historical Archeology Program with Schools) Program Manager. The tour concluded with a personal viewing of the wall mural painted by artists Jose Arturo Ramos Pinedo and Imuris Aram Ramos Pinedo from Zacatecas, Mexico.



Texas Tropical Trail Region guests pictured at the Greater Pharr Chamber of Commerce after a breakfast welcome reception.

## April 29-May 5 Proclaimed as National Small Business Week

In celebration of our small businesses, Pharr EDC, San Juan EDC, and Alamo EDC alongside the U.S. Small Business Administration proclaimed April 29th through May 5th as National Small Business Week. "Small businesses employ nearly half of our country's workforce and help ensure that our communities remain vibrant." Through collaborative efforts from the area economic development agencies and the P.S.J.A. Independent School District, we are developing a pipeline and ecosystem to inspire entrepreneurship," stated Angela Burton, U.S. Small Business Administration district director. "We are grateful for our local business community and celebrate their efforts, as they are essential in strengthening our region's economic growth and ensuring the City of Pharr continues to be a great place to live, work, and play," stated Victor Perez, Pharr EDC Executive Director.



Small Business Week Proclamation (L to R): Sergio Contreras, Karina Lopez, Belinda Vargas, Pharr EDC Executive Director Victor Perez, U.S. Small Business Administration district director Angela Burton, Rafael Tapia (Alamo EDC), Martha Patterson (San Juan EDC), Griselda Quintanilla, Stephanie Mendez, and Jesse Vela.

## Summer Earn & Learn Employer Training

Pharr EDC joined the Texas Workforce Commission and Workforce Solutions in their efforts to bring awareness and encourage work-based learning opportunities for students with disabilities through their statewide initiative, Summer Earn and Learn (SEAL). The Pharr EDC hosted the “Summer Earn & Learn Program employer training” for local business partner participants. Employers were trained on how to prepare and provide students the experience of a real work environment and assist them with necessary tools to learn employ-ability skills for a successful transition to post-secondary education and employment.



Summer Earn and Learn Training (L to R): Rolando Perez, Business Service Mgr, Karina Lopez, Lorissa Luna, Robert Mora, Business Solutions Rep., Diego Garcia, Business Solutions Rep., Karina Perez, Business Solutions Rep., and Santiago Jimmy Lopez, Business Solutions Rep.

## Welcome Allison Casares

As a participating employer in the statewide initiative Summer Earn and Learn, we welcomed Allison Casares to our Pharr EDC team. Allison, a recent graduate from PSJA ISD Southwest High School, will spend five weeks obtaining employability skills and hands on experience for a smooth transition into her post-secondary education and future employment. For more information on this initiative, visit: <https://dfwjobs.com/summer-earn-learn-program>.



Allison Casares Begins Summer Earn and Learn at the Pharr EDC (L to R): Executive Director Victor Perez, Lorissa Luna, Allison Casares, Amber Alvarez, Karina Lopez, and Robert Mora.

## I-2 and I-69 Interchange Public Meeting

On June 14, 2018, TxDOT hosted a public hearing to inform the public on the upcoming plans for the Pharr Interchange reconstruction which is set to begin in 2020.



As per TxDOT, the following has been confirmed: The project will provide 7.8 miles of non-tolled improvements along U.S. 83 from just west of 2nd Street to just east of Farm-to-Market 2557 (S. Stewart Road) and U.S. 281 from Nolana Loop to Interstate 2 in McAllen, Pharr and San Juan. The Pharr Interchange will include two-lane direct connectors in all four directions. The U.S. 83 general purpose lanes will be reconstructed and/or widened from six to eight general purpose lanes (four in each direction) from 2nd Street to the U.S. 83/U.S. 281 interchange.

Operational improvements include approaches and departures to and from the direct connectors and the reconfiguration of main lane ramps.

## City of Pharr Hosts Discussion on NAFTA



DISCUSSION ON NAFTA - Pictured are : Pharr Mayor Ambrosio Hernandez, M.D., delegates from Mexico, regional city leaders, and members of the Rio Grande Valley and Mexican business community.

The city of Pharr, in partnership with the Consulate of Mexico in McAllen, hosted a seminar on the current discussions surrounding NAFTA. The goal of the discussions was to create a competitive dialogue amongst the panels. This meeting brought all affected stakeholders together to discuss the impacts and possible outcomes changing NAFTA will have in the Rio Grande Valley

and Mexico. “Pharr, the Rio Grande Valley, and Mexico provide vital economic exports and imports that impact our local, state, national, and international economy,” said Pharr Mayor Ambrosio Hernandez, M.D. “Together we must advocate on behalf of our region, especially with the upcoming federal discussions and legislative actions that will take place regarding NAFTA,” he continued. “NAFTA has made a significant impact in making our region a leader in trade. We need to ensure that our voices are heard when decisions are made in Washington, as any changes made to the agreement will directly impact our operations,” Hernandez added.

## Texas Senate Committee on Intergovernmental Relations Public Hearing

The City of Pharr hosted the Texas Senate Committee on Intergovernmental Relations, chaired by State Senator Eddie Lucio, at the Pharr Events Center in May. The Committee heard testimony by invited and public guests on issues impacting housing affordability, including the effect of local government taxes, fees, and mandates; and evaluating the cost of purchasing a single-family residence in different parts of the state, factoring in the impact of local rules and regulations, to identify matters of policy with the greatest influence, and identify ways to increase transparency and awareness prior to the adoption of costly local ordinances or orders. Among invited panelists, Pharr Mayor Hernandez offered testimony regarding the challenges to affordable housing for Pharr families, as well as opportunities for affordable housing options in Pharr provided by the City. “I am honored that Senator Lucio and the Committee looked to Pharr for ideas regarding housing affordability,” Hernandez commented. “Through innovative partnerships and programs, we strive to offer our Pharr families pathways and opportunities for homeownership that meets their needs and budgetary constraints,” he added.





Guests unite in prayer at the Pharr Events Center during the city's 2018 National Day of Prayer.

## National Day of Prayer

In observance of National Day of Prayer, the Greater Pharr Chamber of Commerce celebrated by hosting a prayer luncheon with special guests followed by afternoon prayers from city and community leaders. The theme for this year's celebration was "Pray for America – UNITY, based upon

Ephesians 4:3 which challenges us to mobilize unified public prayer for America, "Making every effort to keep the unity of the Spirit through the bond of peace." We were honored to have Senator Lucio Jr., Rabbi Claudio Kogan, Father Amador Garza, and numerous pastors from different denominations pray for the nation, our families, government, businesses, media, and our youth. Through the leadership of our Mayor, Dr. Ambrosio Hernandez, and City Commissioners, the City of Pharr strives to take pride in being a city of inclusion, diversity, peace and unity.

## 2018 Texas Chamber of Commerce Conference

The Texas Chamber of Commerce Executives held their annual conference in Grapevine, Texas to provide chamber professionals with valuable resources, tools, educational courses, and networking opportunities. Rebecca Arizmendi, President of the Greater Pharr Chamber of Commerce, had the pleasure of attending for the first time and met with various chamber executives throughout the state. "Meeting other executives in this profession is something that I valued the most while being there, you realize that there are so many other professionals that are experiencing the same challenges and accomplishments as you are," Arizmendi stated. Also in attendance were chambers of commerce from throughout the Rio Grande Valley with representation from Mission, Weslaco, Edinburg, Brownsville, McAllen, and South Padre Island. We are proud to announce that The Texas Chamber of Commerce Executives decided to hold this state conference in South Padre Island in the year 2020! We look forward to working with South Padre Island and neighboring chambers to make this event a huge success.



2018 Chamber Conference RGV Attendees - Rebecca Arizmendi, President of the Greater Pharr Chamber of Commerce alongside chamber representatives from the Rio Grande Valley.



## RGV to D.C.

Representatives from the City of Pharr, Pharr EDC, and Greater Pharr Chamber of Commerce were present during the 2018 RGV to D.C. trip organized by the Rio Grande Valley Partnership. The partnership worked diligently with surrounding cities to ensure priorities were

voiced collectively as a group representing the Rio Grande Valley. The delegation met daily with various members of Congress and staff to discuss the concerns and issues relevant to our area. With the rapid growth of the Rio Grande Valley, we need to ensure our federal priorities are advocated for future growth and development.

## Economic Indicators: Did you know?

Pharr International Bridge in 2017 had \$33 Billion USD in total trade

#1 Land port of entry for fresh fruits and vegetables

4th largest U.S. port of entry with Mexico

6th of all Border Crossings

## Walk of Faith

Following the National Day of prayer celebration, City of Pharr community members and city leaders gathered in the evening for the annual "Walk of Faith". This yearly event brings families, youth, and community together in the spirit of UNITY with prayer and hymns.



Walk of Faith - Pharr community members came together in unity for the Walk of Faith for the National Day of Prayer.

## Hampton Inn & Suites Social Mixer

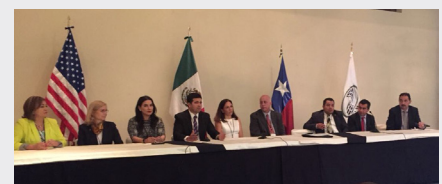
In the month of April, the Pharr EDC and the Greater Pharr Chamber of Commerce hosted a Social Mixer at the Hampton Inn & Suites Pharr to continue promoting the local lodging industry as well as offer networking opportunities for our business community and entrepreneurs in the region.



Pharr EDC and Greater Pharr Chamber of Commerce staff network with business and community partners.

## Mexico - United States Sister Cities Summit

Myrta Turgeon, Events and Tourism Manager, attended the 2018 CDMC International Trade and Investment Show in Mexico City alongside representatives from the Texas region to increase awareness on the impact and benefits of international trade. The attraction of foreign investment is impactful and generates employment and economic growth in our area.



## Board Appreciation Week

The Pharr Economic Development Corporation is dedicated to promoting economic opportunities in the City of Pharr through the attraction of new businesses, industries, and the retention of existing businesses. By working together with our community, we continue to provide resources that enable development and growth, while advancing the quality of life for all Pharr residents.

Our Pharr EDC Board of Directors are: Mayor Ambrosio Hernandez, M.D., President, Commissioner Eleazar Guajardo, Vice-President, Mario Lizcano, Treasurer, Commissioner Ricardo Medina, Secretary, Commissioner Ramiro Caballero, MD, Board Member, Reynaldo Perez, Board Member, and Jaime "Jerry" Muñoz, Board Member.

In appreciation of their diligent efforts, Executive Director Victor Perez and staff recognized the Pharr EDC Board Members and their continued service, time and commitment to the City of Pharr by declaring the week of May 7-11 as Board Appreciation Week. "We appreciate your passion and thank you for your insight, knowledge, and leadership in continuing to move our organization forward," stated Perez.



## Upcoming Events

### Summer 2018 Social Media Series

**SUMMER 2018**  
SOCIAL MEDIA SERIES

INTRO TO SOCIAL MEDIA | FACEBOOK™ MARKETING | INSTAGRAM™ MARKETING | LINKEDIN™ MARKETING

JULY 10, 2018 | JULY 17, 2018 | JULY 24, 2018 | JULY 31, 2018  
ENGLISH: 10AM-12PM | ENGLISH: 10AM-12PM | ENGLISH: 10AM-12PM | ENGLISH: 10AM-12PM  
SPANISH: 2PM-4PM | SPANISH: 2PM-4PM | SPANISH: 2PM-4PM | SPANISH: 2PM-4PM

FOR MORE INFORMATION CALL: (512) 545-3583

PHARR MEMORIAL LIBRARY  
NORTH STAR ROOM, 2ND FLOOR 1211 E. CHEROKEE AVE., PHARR, TEXAS 78577

The Greater Pharr Chamber of Commerce | JESSEBRANDS | ar3biz | Pharr Economic Development Corporation

The Pharr EDC and the Greater Pharr Chamber of Commerce bring you the Summer 2018 Social Media Series, presented by Jesse Brands and AR3biz. Courses are free and offered in both English and Spanish; reserve your seat today.

RSVP to [karina.lopez@pharr-tx.gov](mailto:karina.lopez@pharr-tx.gov) or [rebecca.arizmendi@pharr-tx.gov](mailto:rebecca.arizmendi@pharr-tx.gov).

### 4th Annual RGV Job Fair

Need a job? Companies are hiring!  
¿Buscas empleo?  
¡Compañías estarán contratando!

Join us for the 4th Annual  
**RGV Job Fair**

Thursday, July 19, 2018  
9:00 a.m. - 1:00 p.m.

Pharr Events Center  
3000 N. Cage Blvd.  
Pharr, TX 78577

Register Online  
[rgvjobfair2018.eventbrite.com](http://rgvjobfair2018.eventbrite.com)

For more information

Job Seekers: Contact Workforce Solutions  
☎ (956) 350-0508

Employers: Contact Robert Mora  
☎ (956) 467-9814

Brought to you by:  
Pharr Economic Development Corporation | workforce SOLUTIONS

This year's 4th annual RGV Job Fair is underway! Local companies will be seeking qualified candidates for vacancies in the following industries; Banking, healthcare, education, government, retail, and more.

### Pharr International Trucking Expo

The Pharr EDC and the Greater Pharr Chamber of Commerce bring you the first Pharr International Trucking Expo. Exhibitors representing trailer, truck, component and parts manufacturers are some of the many in attendance. The expo is tailored to our trucking industry in the region. Sponsorship and exhibitor spots available.

Pharr Economic Development Corporation | The Greater Pharr Chamber of Commerce

**PHARR INTERNATIONAL TRUCKING EXPO**  
WHERE TRANSPORTATION HAS NO BOUNDARIES.

SAVE THE DATE  
**SEPTEMBER 29TH**  
FROM 9AM - 7PM  
Pharr Events Center  
3000 N. Cage Blvd., Pharr, TX 78577

## Greater Pharr Chamber of Commerce Ribbon Cuttings

### Crunch Fitness



### Burger IM



### Lucy's Creations



### Eddy's



### Stefano's Pizza Express



### One-Year Anniversary - Big River Brewery

