

Director's Message



Welcome to the 4th Quarter Edition of the Economic Times Newsletter!

As we prepare to begin a new year, we would like to thank you, our business community, and regional partners for your support and commitment to our great City of Pharr and the Pharr EDC.

This quarter the Pharr EDC celebrated our annual Manufacturing Month, welcomed the Rio Grande Valley's first Topgolf to Pharr, partnered to provide resources and supplies to the victims of the devastating California Wildfire, and celebrated the ribbon cutting and grand opening of several new businesses.

The City of Pharr continues to grow and as we do, our EDC doors are always open to discuss new business ventures, partnerships, programs and help our Pharr community in any way we can. On behalf of the Pharr EDC, we thank you for your business and we wish you a Merry Christmas and Happy New Year!

Sincerely,

Victor Perez

Victor Perez
Executive Director
Pharr Economic Development Corporation

Pharr Joins Regional Foreign Trade Zone



Hidalgo County Officials Announce Regional Foreign Trade Zone (L to R): Donna Mayor Rick Morales, Weslaco Mayor David Suarez, Hidalgo County Judge Ramon Garcia, and Pharr Mayor Ambrosio Hernandez, M.D.

Mayor Ambrosio Hernandez, M.D. joined Hidalgo County Judge Ramon Garcia, Weslaco Mayor David Suarez, and Donna Mayor Rick Morales to formally establish the Hidalgo County Regional Foreign Trade Zone.

The City of Weslaco was originally granted authority for a General-Purpose Zone in the 1980's. Earlier this year, the city submitted a request to reissue the grant of authority to become part of the Hidalgo County Regional Foreign Trade Zone. The cities of Pharr, Weslaco, Donna, and Edinburg worked with Hidalgo County to establish the formation of the intercity partnership, the Hidalgo County Regional Foreign Trade Zone.

"International trade and commerce are vital to our national economy, and as leaders of border communities, we recognize the tremendous impact that our area can have, given the right tools, resources and opportunities for growth," Mayor Hernandez stated. "By having the foresight to join forces and shift our focus to a regional perspective, we are taking the necessary steps for our communities to remain competitive in a global market," he continued. "This Regional Foreign Trade Zone will provide numerous opportunities for economic development and investment in our communities, benefiting the entire region as a whole," Hernandez added.

The zone will promote activities involving domestic operations, facilitate and expedite trade, retain and create jobs, encourage investment, and boost international commerce. With this new foreign trade zone, the member communities will be able to use the regional FTZ designation as an economic development tool within their respective cities while reaping the benefits of administration under the oversight of Hidalgo County.

October 2018 Proclaimed as Manufacturing Month



Hidalgo County Proclaims October as Manufacturing Month (L to R): Mike Willis, Executive Director of the South Texas Manufacturers Association, Commissioner Joe Flores, Commissioner Eddie Cantu, Commissioner David Fuentes, Karina Lopez, Pharr EDC, Victor Perez, Pharr EDC Executive Director, and Mario Lizzcano, Pharr Greater Chamber of Commerce.



Pharr Proclaims October as Manufacturing Month (L to R): Commissioner Ramiro Caballero, Ed Wylie, Mayor Ambrosio Hernandez, M.D., Mike Willis, Executive Director of the South Texas Manufacturers Association, Karina Lopez, Pharr EDC, Victor Perez, Pharr EDC Executive Director, Commissioner Mario Bracamontes, Commissioner Ricardo Medina, and Commissioner Daniel Chavez.

The month of October was designated as "National Manufacturing Month" and the Pharr Economic Development Corporation, South Texas Manufacturers Association, and PSJA ISD representatives were present at the Hidalgo County Commissioners Court as well as at the City of Pharr's City Commission Meeting to receive the proclamations. Events throughout the month highlighted the valuable contributions that manufacturing companies and their employees provide to our communities.

For generations, manufacturing has played a critical role in Texas' diverse economy. Texas is home to approximately 17,500 manufacturing firms, 80 of which are located in Hidalgo County. Manufacturers in Texas employ 6.9 percent of the workforce, an estimated 875,000 manufacturing employees, including 7,200 in Hidalgo County, 427 in Pharr --- augmented by 52,800 in Hidalgo Co. & 1,800 in Pharr working in Transportation & Warehousing. Manufacturing in Reynosa, Mexico provides for over \$23 billion usd. of goods crossed through the Pharr International Bridge, comprising 76% of the value of total trade.

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Pharr Ranked First in RGV for Sales Tax Activity in October



PHARR RANKS #1 IN RGV SALES TAX GROWTH FOR OCTOBER 2018



SHOP. EAT. PLAY.

Interim City Manager Ed Wylie announced that the City of Pharr ranked first among Rio Grande Valley cities in sales tax growth for the month of October 2018 with a total of \$1,565,305 for the first month of the city's 2018-2019 fiscal year.

This amount represents sales tax activity in Pharr for the month of August 2018, and reflects a significant increase of 13.89% in sales tax activity as compared to the same reporting period last year. The City of Pharr is also ranked first among Rio Grande Valley cities in sales tax collections year-to-date.

"Our city continues to expand in options for citizens and visitors to enjoy entertainment, retail, dining, and other activities that contribute significantly to the positive growth and development of Pharr," said Mayor Ambrosio Hernandez, M.D.

Caminata de la Paz



Members from the Pharr EDC joined Sister Norma and the community in the annual Caminata de la Paz, a walk for peace and acceptance held annually at the Basilica of San Juan.

On December 15th, the Pharr Caminata de la Paz took place as patrons and families from various religious sectors walked reciting prayers and hymns in celebration of peace and acceptance. The walk began at local church, St. Jude Catholic Church and ended at the widely recognized Basilica of Our Lady of San Juan Del Valle. Enthusiasts were invited to attend a spiritual mass afterwards, which emphasized their efforts in working towards justice amongst all. This annual event is held with the purpose of promoting harmony and bringing our community together.

Manufacturing Day with PSJA ISD



Pharr EDC Hosts Manufacturing Day: Students participate in a panel and discussion with local manufacturing industry leaders at the Pharr Research and Development Center.



Pharr EDC Hosts Manufacturing Day: Myrta Tijerina, Pharr EDC Tourism and Events Manager joins PSJA ISD students on a site visit in Pharr.

Manufacturing Day is an annual national celebration executed the first Friday in October at the local level supported by thousands of manufacturers as they host students, teachers, parents, job seekers and other local community members at open houses, plant tours and presentations designed to showcase modern manufacturing technology and careers. The Pharr EDC and PSJA ISD hosted over 130 PSJA students in celebration of Manufacturing Day to give them a personal insight on manufacturing as industry speakers touched on the critical role modern manufacturing plays in our diverse economy. Topics of discussion included current and future trends of advanced manufacturing, potential manufacturing career pathways, and how to move forward under the advanced manufacturing technology program through South Texas College' dual enrollment program. Students received an industry testimonial by a PSJA student panel currently undergoing the program who provided feedback on the multiple advantages the program provides. Additionally, participants were granted access to tour multiple industry locations that highlighted the different facets within the industry, such as production, manufacturing, and logistics.

National Disability Employment Awareness Month



Pharr Recognizes October as National Disability Employment Month - Mayor Ambrosio Hernandez, M.D. and Pharr City Commissioners are pictured with members of the Pharr EDC, Veronica Quintana, Pathways Toward Independent Program Director at Pharr-San Juan-Alamo ISD and students from the program who accepted the proclamation.

The City of Pharr and the Pharr Economic Development Corporation joined the nation in recognizing October as "National Disability Employment Awareness Month", a month focused on increasing the public's awareness of the contributions and skills of American workers with disabilities.

Through a working collaboration alongside the Texas Workforce Commission and Workforce Solutions, we are proud supporters of such initiatives for inclusion and applaud programs such as PSJA Pathways Toward Independence/LIFE Program for their efforts.

As a participating organization, we thank all the employers who also hosted recent graduates from PSJA ISD and allowed them the opportunity to gain real work experience for an easier and faster transition to post-secondary school and future employment through S.E.A.L. (Summer Earn and Learn Program).

Pharr Celebrates Grand Opening of Topgolf



Pharr Celebrates Topgolf Grand Opening (L to R) - Commissioner Ricardo Medina, Commissioner Bobby Carillo, Commissioner Eleazar Guajardo, Cliff Twiggs, Topgolf Pharr Director of Operations, Mayor Ambrosio Hernandez, M.D., and Victor Perez, Pharr EDC Executive Director.

City of Pharr officials and the Greater Pharr Chamber of Commerce recently held a Grand Opening and Ribbon Cutting Ceremony for the highly-anticipated, global sports entertainment venue, Topgolf.

"It is such a privilege to open Topgolf's 50th worldwide venue right here in the Rio Grande Valley," said Topgolf Pharr Director of Operations Cliff Twiggs. "We are incredibly excited to finally open our doors to provide year-round entertainment to the local community here in Pharr."

The new three-level 55,000-square-foot venue has been completed a month in advance of its projected completion date. As promised, the company has hired more than 350 full- and part-time associates, bringing new economic opportunities for Pharr and the surrounding areas.

"We are thrilled to celebrate the grand opening of Topgolf, and we look forward to the economic impact, opportunity, and entertainment value it will bring to our community," said Mayor Ambrosio Hernandez, M.D.

Pharr and RGV College Celebrate New Associate's Degree in Nursing and LVN to RN Program



Mayor Ambrosio Hernandez, M.D. and Dr. Annabelle Palomo celebrate alongside current RGV College nursing students.

The City of Pharr and Rio Grande Valley College (RGV College) hosted a special announcement in celebration of achieving another great milestone, opening opportunities to our future healthcare professionals by providing accessibility to receive an Associate's Degree in Nursing and an LVN to RN Bridge program. "RGV College has been a great partner to the City of Pharr, and we look forward to working with them as they continue to expand educational opportunities and programs for our residents," said Mayor Ambrosio Hernandez, M.D. "We are excited about this announcement that will offer students more opportunities to seek healthcare careers right here in the Rio Grande Valley," he continued. Programs currently offered at RGV College include Vocational Nursing, Nurse's Aide, Pharmacy Technician, Medical Assistant, and Medical Billing & Coding Specialist. The Vocational Nursing Program boasts a 98% passing rate and the college, as a whole, has maintained the highest NCLEX pass rate in the Rio Grande Valley for the past three years.

The Pharr Experience Winners



SEPTEMBER
DERRICK SMITH
San Antonio, TX

OCTOBER
SANDRA THANNON
Houston, TX

NOVEMBER
CHARLEE TIJERINA
Robstown, TX

DECEMBER
JACQUELINE GARCIA
Pecos, TX

City of Pharr Welcomes New City Manager Alex Meade



Alex Meade, Pharr City Manager

Pharr has selected Alejandro "Alex" Meade as its new city manager. Meade carries a wealth of government and managerial experience, most notably serving as the first CEO for Mission Economic Development Corporation (EDC) where he helped attract projects that offered significant job creation and capital investment in excess of \$300 million and more than 1,000 jobs.

Meade also worked with communities, local officials, and business and industry leaders to develop strategies to create partnerships and helped organizations access and negotiate funding from federal, state and local agencies.

With two master's degrees and certifications as an Economic Development Finance Professional (EDFP) and as a Public Manager (CPM), Meade plans to utilize the combination of financial expertise and public governance experience to help meet Pharr's vision for responsible management and high-quality delivery of government services.

Pharr Celebrates Start of the 2018 Produce Season



Pharr Celebrates the Start of the Produce Season (L to R): Luiz Bazan, Pharr Bridge Director, Juan Guerra, Pharr City Manager, Sid Miller, Texas Agriculture Commissioner, Mayor Ambrosio Hernandez, M.D., and Ramiro Caballero, Pharr City Commissioner.

Amid a backdrop of vibrantly colored fruits and vegetables, the Pharr International Bridge held a special event to commemorate the start of the 2018-2019 produce season, celebrating the occasion alongside produce growers, importers, distributors, consumers, dignitaries from Mexico and the United States, and special guest Texas Agriculture Commissioner Sid Miller.

Pharr EDC Collaborates in Education Workforce

Pharr EDC Recognized by WFS for Externship Program

Pharr EDC was recognized by Workforce Solutions as a proud supporter and host of the RGV Externship for teachers program. The program allows educators an opportunity to work alongside business professionals in high demand industries to receive first-hand experience of the world of work and apply it within their classroom. Great collaborations alongside Workforce Solutions and RGVLEAD (Rio Grande Valley Linking Economic and Academic Development) in aligning business and education!



Pharr EDC Recognized by WFS - Karina Lopez, Pharr EDC Business Retention and Expansion Manager accepts a recognition from Workforce Solutions.

2018 PSJA ISD Entrepreneur Conference

The Pharr EDC took part in PSJA ISD's Annual Young Entrepreneur Conference's Pitch Tank Competition. Students pitched their business ideas to representatives from local economic developments for an opportunity to be awarded first place, which included prize money for future business investment. Presentations included products, marketing strategies, brand and financial projections. Congratulations Ingrid Valdez, PSJA Southwest alumni, for winning 1st place with her pitch "Black Crayon", a fashion and art business brand that allows customers to submit their art for display as well as customize their clothing.



2018 PSJA ISD Young Entrepreneur Conference - Karina Lopez, Pharr EDC Business Retention and Expansion Manager participated as a judge at this year's event.

Topgolf, Pharr EDC, and City of Pharr Partner for Wildfire Disaster Relief

Topgolf, Pharr EDC, and the City of Pharr came together to assist victims and pets who lost their homes and personal belongings in the midst of the recent California wildfires. A quick disaster relief initiative was organized to gather supplies in highest demand for transport to those affected. "This whole community comes together when it comes to anything so we said, 'hey, let's go ahead, let's ask the city. TopGolf Pharr contributed more items than the seven previous venues combined,'" said Cliff Twiggs, Director of Operations for Topgolf Pharr. "It's great for them to know that South Texas and the city of Pharr are concerned and will try to do everything possible to help out; we extend our appreciation and gratitude to all those who contributed to such a great cause," said Victor Perez, Executive Director of Pharr Economic Development Corporation.



Topgolf, Pharr EDC, and City of Pharr officials partnered to gather supplies for victims of the devastating California Wildfires.

3rd Annual Holiday Tamalada



Thank you for joining us at our 3rd Annual Holiday Tamalada! This event is hosted annually in appreciation of all our business partners and colleagues who collaborate and work diligently with our organization and the city of Pharr throughout the year for the enhancement of our region's education, workforce, infrastructure and business development. Happy Holidays from our family to yours!

Greater Pharr Chamber of Commerce Ribbon Cuttings



Topgolf
1901 W. Interstate 2, Pharr, TX



Smokin' Moon BBQ & Beer Garden
1617 W. Polk Ave., Pharr, TX



Terracon
1506 Mid Cities Drive, Pharr, TX



Royal Education Center
2001 S. Jackson Rd, Pharr, TX

Upcoming Events

The City of Pharr
cordially invites you to the

2019 State of the City

THURSDAY
JAN. 17, 2019
11:00 AM - 1:00 PM

PHARR EVENTS CENTER
3000 N. CAGE • PHARR, TX 78577

For information about sponsorship opportunities, please call
(956) 402-4332.



Coming Soon to Pharr



Victor Garcia Skate Park



Pharr Public Safety Communications Building



Regional (Precinct 2) Hike and Bike Trail



City of Pharr Downtown Park