

ANNUAL REPORT

Calendar 2023



FROM THE DESK OF THE EXECUTIVE DIRECTOR

As we reflect on the year 2023, we continue to be both grateful and inspired by the kind of growth we've witnessed in Weslaco. While I continue to credit "regional growth" as one of the leading contributors to Weslaco's surge in all sectors of our economy, it's not without first acknowledging the hard work from the EDC staff, guidance and directives from our EDC Board of Directors and the leadership of our City Mayor and Commission.

Let's go back and look at some of the highlights. The year 2023 allowed us to earn a greater return on our EDC finances as a result of improved interest rates. Interest gains in our new CD's helped offset some of our construction costs as we invested in Weslaco's second industrial park, the new Mid Valley International Industrial Park (MVIIIP).

The opening of the MVIIIP in January 2024, give us bragging rights to two impressive tenants including Glazer's Beer & Beverage, and a leading global shipping and logistics company. Additionally, all commercial lots fronting FM 1015 are under contract with closing dates in January & February 2024.

The EDC team ventured south of our border to Monterrey, Mexico for the first time in 2023 and began the process of building relationships with companies benefitting from the nearshoring phenomenon. Teaming up with CIL and their familiarity of the region provided us with a sense of confidence and security.

We continue to see our downtown district thrive with the arrival of Casa Kevin, Buzzed Bull Creamery, and the opening of Oak Texas Bar & Grill. We learned of the new owners of the Villa de Cortez and the Well's store and their exciting plans for both buildings. The Alfresco Weslaco, Music & Art on the Street Festival is the largest it's ever been, having grown within this year from 90 to 135 vendors.

The directive from our EDC Board to create learning opportunities from the different modes of transportation took us to the Port of Brownsville and a presentation from Rio Valley Switching. As the region continues to grow, learning more about these industries will help us identify more business opportunities for Weslaco.

We also continued developing our workforce through our annual middle and high school counselor's tours, visiting both health and safety organizations such as the Weslaco Police and Fire, Border Patrol Weslaco Sector and Knapp Medical Center.

Now in its fourth year, our partnership with South Texas College enables the EDC to participate in funding the training of potential truck drivers through a CDL driving initiative.



CONTINUED...

For the first time ever, the EDC was in the news every month of the year 2023. This type of regional news coverage does not happen by accident. Through strategic selection of topics and subsequent press releases, timing of events, coverage of speaking engagements and relationships built with media representatives, 35 articles circulated media platforms in the state and region.

I often compare our professional lives to the sport of fishing. We've got to drop a lot of hooks in the water to catch a big fish. We're baiting our hooks, casting our lines, watching closely for the float to bob in the water, and ready to reel the line showing the most pull. While these may be traits of a fisherman, they relate directly to our jobs, to a work ethic that requires patience, hope, and consistency, casting our message of Weslaco out to open waters every day with the hope that others will see what we see.

So, as we celebrate the year 2023, we believe that our successes will propel us into the year 2024 with greater motivation, greater pride and most certainly, greater goals in surpassing our performance from the previous year. We thank all those that contributed to our success and look forward to future partnerships in making Weslaco the best place to start and expand a business.

Steven M. Valdez

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TABLE OF CONTENTS

From the Desk of the Executive Director.....	Pg. 01
EDCW Board of Directors and Staff.....	Pg. 02
TEDC Workforce Excellence Award.....	Pg. 03
Groundbreakings.....	Pg. 04
Beautifying the entire City of Weslaco.....	Pg. 06
Bus Tours.....	Pg. 07
Annual Counselor's Tour.....	Pg. 08
Downtown District Growth.....	Pg. 08
Venturing Across the Border	Pg. 08
Holiday Mixer.....	Pg. 09
Making Our Presence Known.....	Pg. 10
In the Media.....	Pg. 11

BOARD OF DIRECTORS

Calendar Year 2023



Juan J. "JJ" Serrano
Board President



Jerry Gonzalez
Board Vice President



Benita R. Valadez
Board Secretary



Sandra Charlton
Board Treasurer



Fred Perez
Board Member



Joe Olivares
Board Member



Kristopher Garcia
Board Member

STAFF

From left to right: Maria Cisneros, Manager, Retail Recruitment & Commercial real Estate; April Castañeda, Director of Business Development; Steven M. Valdez, Executive Director, Michelle V. Garcia, Manager, Community Development and Marketing; Jorge Lozano, Accountant



TEDC WORKFORCE EXCELLENCE AWARD



The Texas Economic Development Council (TEDC) awarded the Economic Development Corporation of Weslaco (EDCW) as the 2023 Workforce Excellence Award Recipients in the population category ranging from 40,001 to 100,000. The award was presented during the TEDC's 2023 Mid-Year Conference in Allen, Texas on Thursday, June 22, 2023.



The award recognizes the EDCW for its partnership and collaboration with South Texas College and the successful implementation of its Job Training Program, which offers a variety of skill development training for currently employed workers within the jurisdictional boundaries of the City of Weslaco.



"This award is a validation for the work that is being done in our local community through the intergovernmental relationship between the EDCW, the City of Weslaco, and South Texas College," says Steven M. Valdez, EDCW Executive Director.



Through this initiative, the EDCW awards a \$75,000 grant annually to South Texas College to provide valuable training and upskilling opportunities to businesses seeking to enhance their employee's skills, ultimately supporting the growth and development of the workforce talent in the community.



Through this partnership and its success, the EDCW and South Texas College have been able to provide training to roughly six hundred and forty (640) employees within the calendar year of 2022.

"This partnership has greatly benefited local businesses by providing skilled workers to meet their demands," said Juan J. "JJ" Serrano, EDCW Board President, "and the award recognizes the dedication and effort put forth by all parties involved to strengthen the workforce in the community."

"Our TEDC's Workforce Excellence Award is one of the ways in which our organization honors the outstanding work done by our communities and regions, their leaders, and their economic development professionals in the area of workforce development," noted Carlton Schwab, President/CEO of the TEDC.





MORE COFFEE, MORE PROGRESS

Dutch Bros Coffee Groundbreaking

The EDC of Weslaco (EDCW) announced the groundbreaking ceremony for the Dutch Bros Coffee, on Friday, May 12, 2023. Dutch Bros Coffee will be located at Shops at Westgate, a 7 acre tract – where the coffee company will construct their building on roughly 1 acre. This will be the second development project in Weslaco for the Garansuay Group, the first being the Shops at N Bridge.

“We believe that public-private partnerships, like those promoted by EDCW, play a crucial role in stimulating economic growth and stability in communities,” said Craig Garansuay, Developer, “Working together, businesses and local government can identify opportunities for investment and growth by developing strategies that benefit the public.”



Dutch Bros Coffee has been in business since 1992 serving a variety of caffeinated beverages from classic coffee to energy drinks. As of 2021, they started serving the southeast region of Oklahoma and Texas. Weslaco will mark its 5th location in the Rio Grande Valley.

“What’s great about this new company coming to Weslaco,” says Steven M. Valdez, Executive Director of the EDC, “is this exact location (Westgate Dr.). It’s not off the expressway, it doesn’t rely on highway traffic visibility, but it recognizes the value of our neighborhood growing off the mainstream. Dutch Bros owners selected Weslaco with the confidence that our own set of community values will make their store profitable.”



GLAZER'S BEER & BEVERAGE

Groundbreaking

Glazer's Beer & Beverage, a leading malt beverage distribution, sales, and marketing organization, broke ground on a new 253,200 SF beverage distributorship. A groundbreaking ceremony took place on Thursday, May 18, 2023. The project is located at 3311 Development Drive, Weslaco, Texas, 78599, at the Mid Valley International Industrial Park.

"Glazer's Beer & Beverage is thrilled to bring this new distributorship to Weslaco as we continue to expand our presence in South Texas," said Matt Swilling, Vice President of Operations for Glazer's Beer & Beverage.

The state-of-the-art facility will feature an insulated concrete tilt-up exterior and a conventional steel structure with over 210,000 SF of temperature-controlled space and 36' clear height. The facility will also house roughly 25,000 SF of office space, 27 dock positions, and 40 battery charging stations.

"Having Glazer's Beer & Beverage construct a facility of this magnitude in Weslaco, is truly momentous," said JJ Serrano, EDCW Board President, "and not to mention the economic impact it will have on the city and the families in our area."

This new facility exemplifies Glazer's Beer & Beverage's commitment to the Rio Grande Valley. "We are excited to partner with Glazer's Beer & Beverage on another state-of-the-art beer distribution center," said Mark Turney, ARCO National Construction Beverage Group Vice President. "They truly are one of the best in the business."



BEAUTIFYING THE ENTIRE CITY OF WESLACO

One Grant at a Time

On November 1, 2023, the EDC of Weslaco (EDCW) announced that the Façade Renovations and Improvements Grant will now be broadened to include businesses within the entire city limits of Weslaco. Since its inception, the Grant solely aimed at supporting businesses situated within the primary stretch of Texas Blvd. and a section of Old Business 83.

"With a vibrant and established downtown area, the EDCW Board of Directors decided it was time to expand the Grant to include businesses within the entire city limits," said Juan J. Serrano, EDCW Board President.

The Façade Renovations and Improvements Grant offered by EDCW is a 50/50 match that aims to beautify and enhance the visual appeal of buildings by providing financial support to business owners who undertake restoration and improvements to their retail and commercial operations.

"First impressions are at the core of the Façade Grant in Weslaco," says Steven Valdez, Executive Director for the EDC of Weslaco. "When you're impressed with what you see on the outside, you're more likely to go inside and shop."



Before Photo



After Photo



Before Photo



After Photo



Before Photo



After Photo



THE WHEELS ON THE BUS GO ROUND AND ROUND

Bus Tours Around Weslaco



Selling the RGV by REMAX Platinum

June 15, 2023

The Weslaco EDC took two different relator groups on a *Bus Tour* around Weslaco to show them firsthand the developments on commercial, industrial, and residential sectors. The *Bus Tour* was a success as realtors witnessed the actual growth in our community. With their deep networks and knowledge, realtors are vital partners in driving economic progress for communities.

Greater McAllen Association of REALTORS

June 26, 2023



ANNUAL COUNSELORS TOUR

Going on the third (3rd) year, the EDCW hosted the annual Weslaco ISD Counselor's Tour, on November 7, 2023, for middle and high school counselor's. The tours provide the counselors with a learning opportunity from different sectors which helps them prepare and provide better guidance/counseling services to WISD students and parents.

This year the focus was on the medical and law enforcement sector and visited the Weslaco Police Department, Border Patrol Weslaco Station, Valley Baptist Micro Hospital, and the Knapp Medical Center.



DOWNTOWN DISTRICT GROWTH

The EDCW is witnessing a hike in the Historic Downtown district of Weslaco. The Weslaco Downtown area encompasses Texas Blvd. between Pike Blvd. and Sixth Street, while the Historic Downtown district is comprised only of the establishments south of Old Business 83.

A total of 164 buildings are located along the entire Downtown district [Pike to Sixth], with a tenant occupancy rate of 87%. The more concentrated Historic Downtown district of Weslaco [Old Business 83 to Sixth] boasts an impressive 90% tenant occupancy rate.

The blending and variety of retailers provide shoppers with a true "destination experience," ranging from high-end apparel, elegant and refined jewelry, antiques, collectibles, five-and-dime products and accessories, and now nighttime entertainment (barhopping, restaurant, and food truck dining). Thus, cultivating the energetic vibe and keeping Historic Downtown alive. Some of the recent acquisitions and arrivals are Casa Kevin, Buzz Bull Creamery, and Oak Texas Bar & Grill.



VENTURING ACROSS THE BORDER

For the first time in EDCW history, the team ventured into Mexico on June 2023. The purpose of the trip was to establish connections with companies taking advantage of nearshoring opportunities. By initiating this process of building relationships, the EDCW sought to understand the benefits and potential partnerships that could arise from this growing phenomenon.



HOLIDAY MIXER

A “mistle-toast” to the Holiday Season

The Weslaco EDC hosted the inaugural Holiday Mixer on December 15, 2023 as a way to honor our local business owners and community leaders that continue to influence and contribute to growth and success in Weslaco.



MAKING OUR PRESENCE KNOWN

Presentations and Investment Tours



South Texas College
Workforce Summit Presentation



Selling the RGV by REMAX
Platinum Bus Tour



Weslaco ISD Counselors
Bus Tour



Leadership Mid Valley Class 17
Presentation



Office of Governor of Texas
Texas Economic Development & Tourism



Weslaco Area Chamber of
Commerce Presentation



Knapp Community Care
Foundation Presentation



Industrial Warehouse Summit
Presentation



South Texas College Dual
Credit Programs Presentation



COSTEP
Familiarization Tour



Payne Auto Talk
Podcast



Greater McAllen Association
of REALTORS Bus Tour

IN THE MEDIA

"The region is growing around us. It's really exciting. We're feeding off that regional growth."

- **Valley Business Report**, Growth Shows Weslaco's Time Has Arrived, 06/01/2023

"Something that makes Weslaco more attractive is their predominant sectors, that include health and education. These two industries combined make up approximately 35 to 40% of the workforce population in Weslaco."

- **COSTEP**, Cities in Rio South Texas Region Offer an Amazing Investment Opportunity, 02/06/2023

"Our Weslaco store is conveniently located in this growing area, giving customers access to an in-store shopping experience closer to their homes. We are happy to bring a storefront to this welcoming community known for its natural beauty in our state."

- **Yahoo News!**, James Avery Artisan Jewelry Opens New Store in Weslaco, Texas, 06/21/2023

"More Coffee, More Progress - Dutch Bros Coffee coming to Weslaco"

- **Valley Central**, Groundbreaking for new Weslaco Dutch Bros Coffee, 05/08/2023

"These businesses elected to set up shop off the 'beaten path, and this really means that they truly recognize that they do not need high traffic to be sustainable and prosperous. And over the last couple of years, steadfast to the city slogan, Weslaco has truly positioned itself as the "City on the Grow".

- **Texas Border Business**, Weslaco Historic Downtown Experience 90% Occupancy Rate, 10/25/2023

"With a vibrant and established downtown area, the EDCW Board of Directors decided it was time to expand the Grant to include businesses within the entire city limits," said Juan J. "JJ" Serrano, EDCW Board President.

- **KRGV TV Channel 5**, Weslaco expands grant program to beautify storefronts, 11/04/2023

"As the city continues to develop, with construction sites dotting the landscape, it's clear that Weslaco's strategic growth and the city's vision are propelling Weslaco into a new era of economic prosperity.

- **Texas Border Business**, Weslaco's Economic Resurgence, 12/06/2023

"We are excited that a store like Casa Kevin chose to be strategically located in Weslaco's Historic Downtown, this speaks volumes to the growth of our downtown area and the potential that business owners see within our community and do not rely on heavy traffic areas."

- **Texas Border Business**, Downtown Weslaco Welcomes Casa Kevin, 08/21/2023

"Texas Roadhouse among these 10 businesses opening in Weslaco"

- **Valley Central**, 01/13/2023

"We learned really two important lessons from that planning exercise. The first is that this is an amazing place to do business. There is a lot of growth in this area. It's a vibrant economy, and it is a great place to sell beer. The second thing we learned, is that you can't go forward looking in the rearview mirror. You have to take some risks, and you have to take some steps on faith."

- **Rio Grande Guardian**, Why Glazer's Beer & Beverage is Moving from McAllen to Weslaco Sooner Than Planned, 05/21/2023



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