

MAY 2024

# VBR

# Viva Vaqueros



**Brownsville Rich  
Mission Momentum  
The Weslaco Way**

For the latest in RGV news across the web, find us online!  
[www.ValleyBusinessReport.com](http://www.ValleyBusinessReport.com)



**REGISTER TODAY!**

**VBR E-BRIEF**

**[www.valleybusinessreport.com](http://www.valleybusinessreport.com)**

Visit our site and click on the button.  
It takes seconds to register and it's free!

**VBR**



**[info@valleybusinessreport.com](mailto:info@valleybusinessreport.com) • [www.valleybusinessreport.com](http://www.valleybusinessreport.com)**

# Drafting Dependable Delegates

By Todd Breland

Putting together the right team ranks high on our list of responsibilities, quite possibly the most important. Hiring the most qualified persons for applicable jobs is a tedious and necessary art. If it were a science, oh how the process would be less stressful.

Surrounding ourselves with those at the top of their game and who fit into a particular system must be well researched and selected at the right time. What are the positions' duties? Which applicants best suit the needed roles? How assertive yet trainable are the persons we are pursuing? Many factors steer our decisions on selecting the right candidates.

After numerous questions are answered by the applications, resumes and one-on-one interviews, combined with input from the executive team, offers are made. Sometimes, negotiations and Q&A are added stages before kickoff/go time.

Since the entire process consumes many resources, bringing on board the right delegates who will fulfill possibly exceed expectations defines how well we do our jobs.

Especially during the economic

challenges we're all facing, the right hires are necessary to win the championship. Mediocrity is not an option. Getting only to the playoffs is never enough. We are Team Rio Grande Valley, and We. Will. Win.



## Making the Switch is Easy, So Come Experience the Difference.



### You Take Care of Business, We Bring the Bank to You!

LSNB offers a range of services for personal accounts, small business, corporations, and commercial loans.

Personalized service, when you call you will never speak to a robot.

You work hard for your money, your goals are our motivation, we will work hard to make your financial goals successful.

**Too busy, we'll bring you lunch. Call us today!**



Member FDIC | (1) Third party fees for internet, messaging, or data plans may apply.



1-800-580-0322 [www.lonestarnationalbank.com](http://www.lonestarnationalbank.com)

## Table Of Contents

Executive Summary	3
Gear Up With Pride	5
Mid-Valley Win	8
Farm Rich	10
From X-rays To Art	12
Long-Term Connections	15
Surging Growth	17

## VBR Staff

General Manager  
Todd Breland  
todd@valleybusinessreport.com

Content Editor  
Ricardo D. Cavazos  
ricardo@valleybusinessreport.com

Online Editor, VBR e-Brief  
Angey Murray  
angey@valleybusinessreport.com

Writer  
Chris Ardis

Design Director  
John M. Hazlett  
john@valleybusinessreport.com

Production - Daniel's Printing Place

**IT'S TIME TO  
COMPLETE  
YOUR  
DEGREE**

**FINISH WHAT YOU STARTED**

**REGISTER NOW**

[southtexascollege.edu](http://southtexascollege.edu)



**SOUTH TEXAS  
COLLEGE**

# New Fan Store Touts UTRGV Pride

By Ricardo D. Cavazos, *Content Editor*

Alisa Gonzalez and her husband Benjamin took their recent high school graduate to get settled at Texas A&M University last fall and made a poignant observation.

College Station has fan stores a many featuring all sorts of A&M Aggies gear, be it t-shirts, caps, sweatshirts or bumper stickers. The Edinburg couple thought of their university back home. They knew it had nothing comparable to promote the Vaqueros of the University of Texas Rio Grande Valley.

“We thought there was a lack of options for students, alumni and the Valley to show their pride,” Gonzalez said of UTRGV, which she called, “a great thing we have in our backyard.”

Going about doing something about that led the couple to plan their own version of a fan shop. It would be a store supporting all things of the orange-themed Vaqueros. In addition to UTRGV’s sports teams, items support many of the university’s departments and institutions, like the medical school. After months of planning and building up sufficient inventory, the Vaquero Outfitters store opened on March 8 to much fanfare in Edinburg. The city’s mayor was there, as were UTRGV cheerleaders and administrators from the university’s athletic department.

“We want to put the orange out in the community,” Alisa Gonzalez said of UTRGV’s primary school color.

## Excitement Building

The store appears to be off to a good start, judging by the merchandise variety and the volume of customers.

Gonzalez’s store is well-decorated and arranged with a wide variety of shirts hanging on the racks by the hundreds. Orange and white caps and other products tout pride in the Valley’s 956 phone area code. The first wave of sports-themed merchandise promotes the current UTRGV baseball season and its local team. There’s also drinking glasses and coffee mugs as well as the ubiquitous outsized foam fingers to hold up at games.

For now, the store’s focus is apparel and products of general appeal and not sports specific other than baseball. The



Alisa Gonzalez and her husband, Benjamin, own and operate the Vaquero Outfitters store. (VBR)

university’s distinctive orange V logo with a green star in its midst (to honor its Pan American University heritage) is everywhere at Vaquero Outfitters. The UTRGV Edinburg campus is across University Drive from the store’s location in a busy plaza behind a Pizza Hut.

“We’re seeing a lot of excitement from fans and students,” said Gonzalez, a graduate of UTRGV’s predecessor – UT Pan American.

**Football Is Coming**

The excitement Gonzalez describes is sure to grow over the next year and beyond.

UTRGV will celebrate its inaugural football season in fall 2025. The university’s nascent football program has been much in the news recently with the announcement of a former soccer stadium in Edinburg being designated as the Vaqueros’ primary football home. The university’s leadership also recently



*Vaquero Outfitters will begin stocking up on football gear with the inaugural UTRGV football season coming in 2025. (VBR)*



*956 pride runs deep at the Vaquero Outfitters store in Edinburg. (VBR)*

announced its athletic programs are leaving the Western Athletic Conference to join the Southland Conference. The new conference will include more natural rivalries such as Texas A&M-Corpus Christi and Incarnate Word University of San Antonio.

“We knew football was coming,” Gonzalez said. “Yes, football is big here, and there’s lots of excitement about having a football team, but the university has done such a great job of moving forward with lots of other things, like the medical school.”

Gonzalez is a former educator, which included eight years as an administrator. Her husband also owns a separate business in Weslaco. She has found the organizational skills she honed as a teacher and assistant principal have served her well in setting up Vaquero Outfitter. Experience in working through processes comes in handy since all of the merchandise in Gonzalez’s store must go through a multistep process that involves designs being approved by UTRGV and the University of Texas System.

It’s all worth it, she says, to “get the orange out there.”



*Vaquero Outfitters is the area’s first exclusive UTRGV-themed fan store. (VBR)*



*Baseball merchandise is the first sports theme merchandise at the Vaquero Outfitters. (VBR)*

# Glazer's Anchors Weslaco Industrial Park

By Ricardo D. Cavazos, *Content Editor*

Weslaco's city leadership in recent years has honed in on a consistent message amid the community's growth across several key economic sectors.

The days of local residents having to go to McAllen to shop and dine are over, they say.

"We don't have to leave Weslaco anymore," said Steven Valdez, the executive director of the Weslaco Economic Development Corporation. "We can stay home."

A business and commerce identity independent of McAllen were among the factors that convinced Matt Swilling of Glazer's Beer & Beverages to make the move to Weslaco as the location for the company's new 255,000-square-foot distribution facility.

"It made too much sense not to be here," Swilling said of moving Glazer's Rio Grande Valley operations from McAllen to Weslaco. "The Mid-Valley is the next big retail area of the Rio Grande Valley."

A middle-of-the-Valley location coupled with access to Expressway 83 and a prime location at Weslaco's new Mid Valley International Industrial Park were among the key selling points Valdez and the city made to Swilling. Initially, Swilling, a vice president of operations and sales for Glazer, admits looking elsewhere before turning his attention to Weslaco.

"We had to make sure we were in the right place to best serve our customers and suppliers," Swilling said during a commercial and investment tour organized by the Rio Grande Valley Partnership, which was held in late March at Glazer's new facility. "We looked at multiple cities and Weslaco turned out to be the perfect match."

## Need For Expansion

Glazer's is one of the nation's leading beverage distributors with most of its regional operations being located in Texas, Louisiana and Arkansas.

The closest Glazer's distribution facilities to the Valley are in San Antonio and Victoria. For many years, the company's RGV facility was in McAllen after Glazer's purchased Valley Beverage in 2005. The McAllen Redbud Avenue location near Bicentennial Boulevard and Nolana Avenue became, in Swilling's description, a landlocked site with no room for expansion as Glazer's business grew across its South Texas footprint.

"We ran out of space," he said of the McAllen location. "We kept adding on and adding on and we were in a position that we couldn't continue to grow our business from where we were."

The search for a new location began about five years ago. Weslaco got in the running as did several other Valley cities. Cities courting new businesses the size of Glazer's will typically offer incentives such as tax credits, rebates and grants to gain the prize of landing a large manufacturing or distribution facility. Weslaco offered its share of such incentives

to Glazer's. Company executives like the ones running Glazer's also take into account the quality of reception they get from local community leaders along with the necessity of access to major highways.

On both of the latter points, Weslaco scored high with Swilling and Glazer's as did a new industrial park that offers lots of land and space for expansion as the company's regional business grows. The EDC's Valdez called it a game changer when Weslaco announced last year that it had landed Glazer's relocation from McAllen. City



*The new Glazer's Beer & Beverages Weslaco facility is in the city's new international industrial park on north FM 1015. (VBR)*



leaders see the new Glazer facility as the spark that will lead to other companies coming to Weslaco’s second industrial park.

**Win For Mid-Valley**

“This is a huge capital investment for us,” Swilling said of Glazer’s spending over \$30 million to build its new Weslaco facility.

It’s located on 25 acres of land in the northeastern portion of Weslaco’s

international industrial park. Full operations in the new facility began in early April. Glazer’s Weslaco location now serves as its staging point to distribute a wide variety of alcoholic and non-alcoholic beverages across the four Valley counties and northward to Brooks and Kenedy counties.

For Weslaco it means a gain of 200 jobs in its market and a further injection of

growth that has seen a surge of residential and retail development in the community over the last five years. The city’s mayor, Adrian Gonzalez, describes Glazer’s relocation to Weslaco as a win for the area beyond his community.

“In the Mid-Valley, if we continue to help each other, we will all grow,” Gonzalez said. “By working together, we will be able to sustain our growth.”



Glazer’s distributes a wide variety of alcoholic and non-alcoholic products in six South Texas counties. (Courtesy)



Full operations began in early April at Glazer’s new facility in Weslaco. (Courtesy)

**Plans starting at \$59.<sup>99</sup>**  
For 300Mbps fiber

**VTX1 Internet**

**UNLOCK THE POWER OF CONNECTIVITY WITH VTX1 INTERNET!**

**1.844.GET.VTX1**      **WWW.VTX1.NET**

# Brownsville Plant Expanding & Adding Jobs

By Ricardo D. Cavazos, *Content Editor*

Rey Esquibel has worked his way up to the top leadership post at the Rich's frozen foods manufacturing plant in Brownsville.

Esquibel says his "fingerprints are all over" the 130,000-square-foot facility on east 14th Street. His work ethic matches that of the 400 employees who work at the facility. Rich's Brownsville plant is located just blocks away from what is known in the city as the four corners intersection where Boca Chica and International boulevards meet.

The Buffalo-based frozen foods manufacturer has been in Brownsville for six decades. In that time, the company has developed employees like Esquibel, who started at Rich's nearly 25 years ago. His first job was working a night shift, then becoming a line supervisor on his way to being promoted to being a products and operations manager. Five months ago, he rose to the top spot at the Brownsville facility – plant manager.

"We have so much pride in our products," Esquibel said. "It's amazing to see all that we do here every day, and then going to a Wal-Mart or a Sam's, seeing our products and knowing they were made in Brownsville."

It is a plant whose mozzarella cheese sticks and popcorn shrimp products have seen such a growth in customer demand that a \$17.5 million investment is now underway that will more than double the size of the Brownsville plant and add more than 100 new jobs to the local economy.

## Adding Cold Storage

"We bread it, fry it, freeze it and pack it," is how Esquibel describes the daily operations at Rich's Brownsville plant.

It's a seven-day-a-week manufacturing operation. The Brownsville plant receives raw materials such as shrimp from Central American countries and then goes about a multi-step process to prepare and produce hundreds of boxes daily bearing the SeaPak and Farm Rich brand names. They're all part of Rich's extensive list of products that includes biscuits and bagels, cookies and donuts, and in Brownsville's case, seafood and appetizers.

Rich's Brownsville operations currently do not include the cold storage of what

the local plant produces. In 2025, that will change with addition of a whole new wing now under construction directly behind the Brownsville plant. Esquibel says the new cold storage space will greatly increase the Brownsville plant's footprint and allow it to store what's produced locally before it's shipped via truck to markets around the country.

"We'll be adding so much more capacity," Esquibel said. "It's exciting times for us here in Brownsville."

## Capital Investments

The plant's expansion in Brownsville comes as the result of a \$17.5 million investment that utilizes capital from a

program administered by the U.S. Treasury Department.

The investment group National New Markets Fund of Los Angeles is the recipient of tax credit allocations from the treasury. New Markets then sold a portion of these allocations to another investment group, Dudley Ventures. The latter group is using the capital from its purchase to invest in Rich's Brownsville plant to expand operations in providing economic development in a community with a poverty rate above national averages.

The \$17.5 million investment will fund the acquisition of new equipment as part of the Brownsville plant's 150,000-square-foot expansion to add cold storage



*Rey Esquibel, a 24-year Rich's employee, is the manager of the company's plant in Brownsville. (VBR)*

capabilities on the facility's current site of operations. It's estimated the investment and subsequent expansion will result in 132 new full-time jobs at Rich's Brownsville plant.

For Esquibel, the plant manager, it all reflects the quality of work done by Rich's employees in Brownsville, of which many have worked in the plant for over 10 years.

"They're the ones who make it happen," he said. "It's their work ethic and the pride they take in their work. We're so proud of all they do to make us successful."



*Rich's employees at its Brownsville plant produce the company's appetizer products that are commonly found in Wal-Mart and Sam's Club stores across the country. (VBR)*



*Rich's Farm Rich products are taken from raw product to packaged boxes at the company's plant in Brownsville. (VBR)*



*Rich's has been a manufacturing mainstay in Brownsville for 60 years. (VBR)*

## U.S. Customs Broker Ocean Freight Forwarders

We know the rules to move your goods to Mexico and the World. Automatic electronic communication gives you up-to-date status of shipments. A full service company providing solutions to your logistics needs. ISO 9001 Certified 2008 Standards.



**PARKER & COMPANY**  
WORLDWIDE

U.S. Customs Brokers • In-House Mexican Brokers • International Forwarders Warehouse & Distribution • Truckers • Custom Consulting • Agent Network Worldwide

Brownsville (956) 831-2000 • McAllen/Hidalgo/Pharr (956) 843-8989 • Laredo (956) 728-9000 • Corpus Christi 1-888-831-4130 • Monterrey, Mexico (52) 81-8320-6163  
[www.parkerandcompany.com](http://www.parkerandcompany.com)

# Photographer Reaches For The Sky

By Ricardo D. Cavazos, *Content Editor*

Jackie Valdez's photographs feature the faces of the Rio Grande Valley.

There are teenage girls wearing cowboy hats enjoying the sights and sounds of the Rio Grande Livestock Show in Mercedes. High school bands marching down streets in parades and across football fields make up another colorful portion of her South Texas portfolio. Freshly graduated students in portraits look hopeful and happy in Valdez's portrait work as they look off into their futures.

Beyond the quality of each one of her

photos, Valdez's work has another common denominator running across her photography. Nearly everything she does is shot outside. Angles and skies are key creative elements Valdez explores in her photographs. Natural light, the open and always changing variations of South Texas skies are the visual backdrops of many of her photos.

"Have camera, will travel" may be a sort of unofficial motto fueling Valdez's work and her ambitions.

"My goal is to be a travel photographer," said Valdez, who is based in Mercedes. "I

want people to call me from different parts of the country to do work for them."

## The Great Outdoors

The X-ray technician-turned-photographer in her own words had "no training, no classes" when embarking on making her longtime hobby a full-time job.

Valdez did have some natural talents and a great eye to frame and visualize images in utilizing outdoor backgrounds to enhance her photography. Those traits are on display in one photo where a teenage girl in western

*Quinceanera beauty and a setting sun are among the creative elements featured in one of Jackie Valdez's photos. (Courtesy)*



wear at the livestock show is kissing her cow at night with a Ferris wheel turning behind her. Another photo features a young man sitting on a park bench in Brownsville with the city's historic Market Square serving as a sweeping background.

Valdez is open to the possibility of establishing a storefront studio in the downtown area of Mercedes from which she can reach both ends of the Valley from a regional midpoint. Her overarching goal, however, is to work outdoors in the creative spaces of sky and natural light, honing in on faces that tell stories.

"My goal is to reach people outdoors," Valdez said.

**Gratitude & Faith**

One key mentor in her photographic pursuits is Rick Davila, a professional photographer in Dallas.

An admirer of Davila's work, Valdez signed up for one of his workshops, thinking she would have no chance of getting a spot in one of his highly sought after sessions. When Davila learned that Valdez was willing to



*A Mercedes Tiger football player looks ready for the upcoming season in one of Jackie Valdez' photographs. (Courtesy)*



*Love is in the air for a couple photographed by Jackie Valdez near the floodway in Mercedes. (Courtesy)*

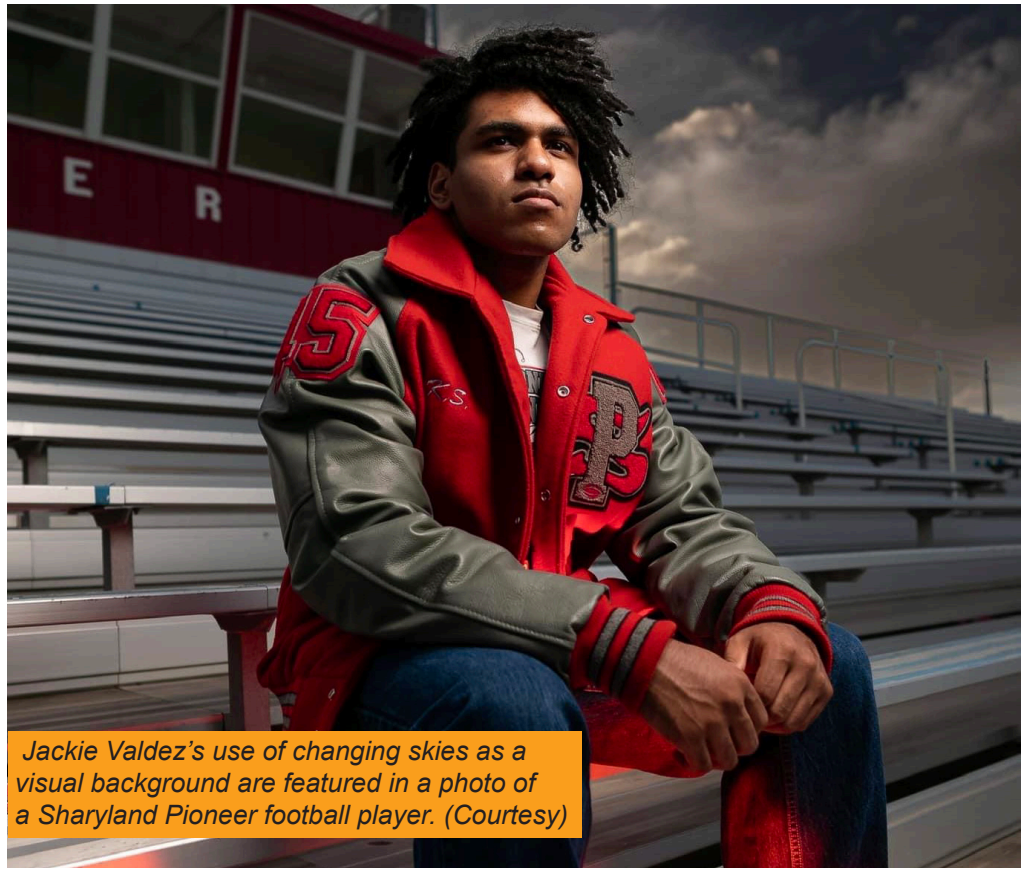
drive nine hours for a two hour workshop in Dallas, he not only slotted her in but did so at no charge for the aspiring photographer.

Since then, Davila has encouraged Valdez's work and her progression and improvement in the field. Photo shoots in the Valley make up the majority of her work, but she has traveled to San Antonio and San Marcos for clients seeking her artistic talents with a camera. Valdez has been recognized at the local level with an award from the Mercedes Chamber of Commerce for her contributions to the arts.

Valdez relishes the flexibility of time that being a photographer gives her. She can set her own schedule in making sure to attend important events relating to her children's school activities. Valdez expressed gratitude for being engaged in work she loves doing and cites her faith and family as inspirations.

"I'm going to keep getting my name out there," she said.

For more information, go to [jackievaldezphotography.com](http://jackievaldezphotography.com), with galleries of her work available on Jackie Valdez Photography on Facebook, and on Instagram at [jackievaldez\\_photo](https://www.instagram.com/jackievaldez_photo).



Jackie Valdez's use of changing skies as a visual background are featured in a photo of a Sharyland Pioneer football player. (Courtesy)



Ferris wheels at the Rio Grande Valley Livestock Show spin round-and-round in one of Jackie Valdez's photos featuring a teenage girl and her cow. (Courtesy)

**YOUR MISSION STARTS HERE**

801 N BRYAN RD.  
MISSION, TX 78572

956-585-0040

[WWW.MISSIONEDC.COM](http://WWW.MISSIONEDC.COM)

INDUSTRY      WORKFORCE      COMMUNITY

# Rio Grande LNG Reaching Out To Community

Rene Rodriguez’s students are huddled around representatives of Rio Grande LNG, a bit wide-eyed and asking plenty of questions.

Rodriguez is an instructor with the building construction technology program at Texas State Technical College in Harlingen. Rio Grande LNG representatives had just concluded a presentation on campus regarding their facility, which is currently under construction at the Port of Brownsville. The first phase of the \$18 billion-plus liquefied natural gas plant will be completed in 2027.

Its construction is being overseen by Bechtel Energy, the firm contracted to build the Brownsville LNG plant. Welders, electricians, plumbers and pipefitters will be among those needed to get the plant built on a nearly 1,000-acre site within view from state Highway 48. Thus far, 800 workers have been hired by Bechtel, with 70 percent of those onsite being from the Rio Grande Valley. It’s anticipated that up to 5,000 construction-related jobs will ultimately be created before the first phase of the LNG plant is completed in three years.

When fully operational, the LNG plant will have at least 400 permanent workers to produce a product that will be shipped to European and Asian markets by ship from the Port of Brownsville. Rodriguez’s students at TSTC are interested in the Bechtel jobs currently offered and the ones up ahead in the development of Rio Grande LNG. Couple those jobs with the ones being provided by SpaceX on Boca Chica Beach, and Rodriguez said the TSTC students are seeing a whole new field of possibilities.

“There’s lots of opportunities coming up,” Rodriguez said of the new industrial jobs being offered locally by SpaceX and NextDecade, the parent company of Rio Grande LNG. “I tell my students you’ve got to start somewhere and you have to be willing to work your way up. These new companies are opening up a lot of opportunities here.”

## ‘Here For Long-Term’

Rio Grande LNG representatives have been busy with community presentations since construction of the plant began in the summer of 2023.

The recent presentation at TSTC was not only for the benefit of college-age students. A much younger set of pupils from IDEA Public Schools were also on the Harlingen campus. Visuals included PowerPoint slides highlighting the safety precautions taken at LNG plants and on ships transporting product. Student volunteers assisted an LNG expert in quick chemistry lab-like demonstrations explaining the basics of liquefied natural gas creation.

The presentations are meant to demystify the LNG process and to introduce the Houston-based NextDecade to Valley communities as it builds its sprawling facility at the Port of Brownsville. Environmental organizations staunchly opposed the construction of Rio Grande LNG at the port and continue to voice their objections even as the project moves forward. NextDecade met all of the federal regulatory requirements in a years-long approval process. The company continues to tout the safety of liquefied natural gas production as it builds ties to Valley communities.

“We’re here for the long-term,” said Susan



Rio Grande LNG representatives emphasized the safety aspects of their plant being built at the Port of Brownsville during a recent event on the TSTC campus in Harlingen. (VBR)



A Rio Grande LNG representative gives students from IDEA Public Schools an overview of their facility now under construction at the Port of Brownsville. (VBR)

Richardson, the senior director of corporate communications for NextDecade. “We view ourselves as being a partner with the Rio Grande Valley.”

**Connecting With Students**

Richardson reported that the Rio Grande LNG construction site had recently completed its first concrete pour in laying down the foundation for the plant to come.

Construction is thus far on schedule and in some areas ahead of projections, Richardson said. Visiting colleges and universities is an important element of building relationships with Valley communities, she said.

“We’re here to talk to the generation that’s here and looking for work today along with the younger generation that will work for us in the future,” Richardson said at the TSTC event. “By exposing them to what LNG is about and hearing about the opportunities, we find that’s a really great way for them to understand the possibilities.”

For the students of TSTC instructor Rodriguez the possibilities sought are in the here and now. He cited a recent graduate hired by SpaceX at its Starbase at Boca Chica. The student started as part of a construction crew and worked his way up to a manager’s position.

“That’s what I tell my students,” Rodriguez said. “Don’t expect because you have a degree that they’re going to put you up there. What we’re seeing and hearing today with this presentation is that the opportunities are there. Get started and work your way up.”



An IDEA School student joins a Rio Grande LNG representative for a demonstration during a recent event at TSTC in Harlingen. (VBR)

**EDINBURG**  
Economic Development Corporation

**FIND EVERYTHING IN  
EDINBURG**

**BERT OGDEN ARENA**

**EDINBURG  
ace**

**RAUDEL GARZA** | raudel@edinburgedc.com  
Executive Director (956) 388-8914

**EDINBURGEDC.COM**



# New Retailing Highlights Mission's Growth

By Chris Ardis

Murdoch's Ranch and Home Supply held a grand opening at its first site in the Rio Grande Valley in early April.

Nearly 2,000 miles from its flagship store in Bozeman, Mont., this Murdoch's is at the corner of Expressway 83 and Bryan Road in Mission, a location next to a Burlington store in a new retail development area.

"It's a perfect retail outlet that fits well with the city of Mission and our culture," said Mission Mayor Norie Gonzalez Garza. "The whole community was anticipating its

opening. It was like Christmas in April."

The Mission Economic Development Corporation refers to this area as the Bryan corridor in anticipation of more growth along that stretch of the expressway. The Mission Gateway shopping center where the new stores sit is well positioned in this corridor. It's fewer than 10 miles from the Anzalduas International Bridge.

Anzalduas is currently open to personal-vehicle traffic and empty cargo trucks traveling into Mexico. The bridge will expand to fully

loaded cargo trucks by late 2024 or early 2025, opening up a new world of possibilities for Mission. The bridge for years was restricted to what it could do with commercial traffic. City leaders expect the expanded bridge operations to bring increased traffic, job opportunities and an economy growing even more briskly in a city that's already prospering.

"When they vet the City of Mission, other retailers look at our sales tax," Mayor Gonzalez Garza said of 16 percent growth over the last year in those tax revenues.

*Murdoch's Ranch and Home Supply and Burlington take up the largest sites in NewQuest Properties' Mission Gateway on the corner of Expressway 83 and Bryan Road. (Courtesy)*



**Growth Surging**

Another new development in Mission is Shops at 495 on north Conway Avenue.

It's a busy area for restaurants and shops in the city. Lines of vehicles form daily at a Starbuck's. Shops at 495 also houses Wing Daddy's, which features wings and burgers. Fork To Fit, a local meal-prep business, recently opened a new location at the Shops. Another restaurant coming soon is El Portón, where foodies are drawn to authentic Mexican cuisine.

Just over a mile east on FM 495 is The Loretto, a popular bistro. Loretto Plaza will soon complement the bistro, offering retail and office space. The city of Mission and the Mission EDC recognize the impact of small business. The chief operating officer for the EDC, Belen Guerrero-Aguirre, points out that Mission does not have a traditional mall.

"Our small businesses really push 'shop local,'" Guerrero-Aguirre said.

Mission's newly hired city manager, Mike Perez, said retail isn't the only sector developing in the city.

"At our recent City Council meeting, we approved approximately 1,000 new residential



*Shops on 495 in Mission is filling up fast. A sign in front builds anticipation for the future site of El Patrón. (Courtesy)*

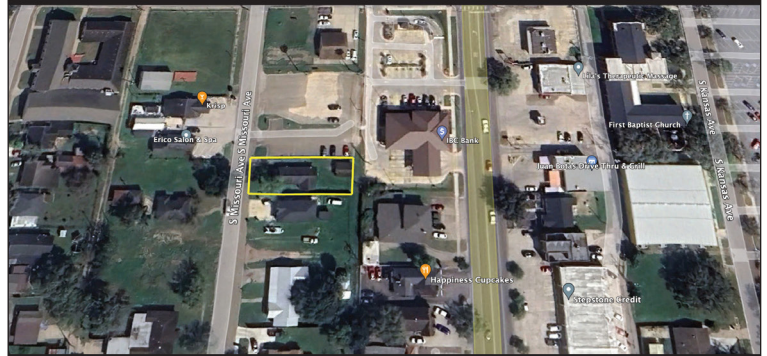


**ORDERS TO GO (956) 294-1171**

7013 W EXPY 83 SUITE I | MERCEDES, TX 78570 | OPEN 11:00 AM - 10:00 PM

**DAVIS EQUITY REALTY**

**INVESTMENT/DEVELOPMENT LOT**



6,000 (50' x 120') sf lot in Weslaco Texas. Lot is zoned for commercial use. Improvements sold "as-is where is" or to be removed at Buyer's expense. Lot is ideal for a duplex/4-plex, office, or eatery.

- Prime location on South Missouri Avenue
- High visibility and traffic
- Zoned for commercial use

SALE PRICE: \$99,900 • LOT SIZE: 6000 SF  
LOCATION: 611 South Missouri Avenue, Weslaco

2300 W. PIKE BLVD. SUITE 101 • Weslaco, TX 78596  
info@davisequity.com • www.DavisEquity.com  
(956) 969-8648

lots,” he said. “The more rooftops you have, the more people you have living and working there. And where you have rooftops, restaurants and other retail will follow.”

It’s all part of market analysis when developers and business owners seek to find new locations. A drive around Mission highlights the new residential and retail developments happening throughout the city,

“Mission is growing,” Guerrero-Aguirre said. “And we’re ready for more investments and more firsts.”

*This much-anticipated Olive Garden is scheduled to open mid-summer 2024 in front of Murdaugh’s on Expressway 83 and Bryan Road in Mission. (Courtesy)*



*The Loretto will soon have a retail and office plaza located immediately west of the popular Mission bistro. (Courtesy)*



*On the opposite end of Starbucks at Shops on 495 in Mission sits Wing Daddy’s, where guests will find more than wings and burgers. They’ll find fried gator, too. (Courtesy)*



# VBR



[info@valleybusinessreport.com](mailto:info@valleybusinessreport.com) • [www.valleybusinessreport.com](http://www.valleybusinessreport.com)

**INQUIRE TODAY ABOUT 2024  
MULTIMEDIA ADVERTISING CAMPAIGNS.**

*Point your browser to [www.valleybusinessreport.com](http://www.valleybusinessreport.com)  
to subscribe to VBR e-Brief!*

[todd@valleybusinessreport.com](mailto:todd@valleybusinessreport.com)  
[www.valleybusinessreport.com](http://www.valleybusinessreport.com)

**“Your Pro-RGV News”**