



TEXAS BORDER COALITION ANNUAL REPORT

2015

Helping border communities grow and prosper.

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TO OUR MEMBERS

To Our Members

ABOUT THE TEXAS BORDER COALITION

The Texas Border Coalition (TBC) is the collective voice of border mayors, county judges, and communities on issues that affect border region quality of life. We represent more than 2.5 million people from Brownsville to El Paso.

Our coalition is committed to working to develop innovative policies and legislation at the national and state levels that will help border communities grow and prosper.

While each community has different strategies for pursuing TBC's goals, we all agree that:

- Significant investment in the border region is needed to produce a sound foundation for economic development.
- Our workforce must be educated, skilled and able to carry Texas' economy forward.
- We must improve accessibility to existing programs and develop new creative solutions for health care.
- We must adopt fair and effective immigration reform that strengthens our borders and recognizes the economic contributions immigrants make to the U.S. and Texas economies.
- Our roads and bridges will demand increased attention.

With the 2015 Annual Report, we highlight TBC's work in these and other areas. As always, the report emphasizes the work of TBC's executive committee, whose policy guidance is central to our efforts to help border communities grow and prosper.

Yours Sincerely,

A handwritten signature in black ink, reading "J.D. Salinas III". The signature is written in a cursive style with a large initial "J" and "D".

The Honorable J.D. Salinas III
Chairman

TO OUR MEMBERS

2015 STRATEGIC HIGHLIGHTS

Throughout 2015, TBC was active in promoting its agenda at the state and federal levels. In Washington, TBC testified before the Senate Homeland Security Committee on efforts to strengthen the security of border communities, provided important support to the approval of border-specific provisions creating new programs for expediting freight in the five-year highway bill, and helped secure funding increases for health, workforce development and education programs. We were able preserve funding for programs that facilitate legitimate travel and tourism in the face of congressional frustration over the inability of Customs and Border Protection agencies to fulfill critical hiring.

In the 84th Texas Legislature, TBC again led the successful fight to preserve the *manifesto* export sales tax rebate program, secure approval of a commerce coordinator in the Governor's office or Secretary of State's office, enact a new program to reduce wait times for northbound shippers, facilitate improvements to the University of Texas-Rio Grande Valley, align curricula for career and technical education programs, create new law enforcement/public safety training facilities on the border, facilitate telemedicine reimbursement under Texas Medicaid and secure border school district participation in the JET career training program.

Other TBC accomplishments involved mitigating the damage to programs related to border security and turning border security efforts toward more beneficial outcomes (such as a Department of Public Safety border training facility and crime information center), avoiding the repeal of programs (such as in-state tuition for undocumented students) and working with allies to prevent punishment of so-called "sanctuary cities."

TO OUR MEMBERS

2015 FINANCIAL HIGHLIGHTS

As it has for more than a decade, TBC operated as a financially sound, solvent non-profit organization supported by membership dues.

LOOKING AHEAD

TBC depends on its chairman for leadership; its committees are organizational workhorses where TBC's policy priorities are developed. The current TBC committees, detailed below, are in the process of formulating 2016 strategies on both the federal and state levels.

Economic Development Committee

Carolyn Petty, TaxFree Shopping, Chairwoman

The Economic Development Committee was formed in Fall 2015 to address the border region's economic development opportunities. Committee chairwoman Carolyn Petty travels the world with her family's company, TaxFree Shopping, educating people about Texas as a tourism destination. The committee is developing policy proposals for TBC relating to economic development and trade at the state and national level. TBC has supported the creation of foreign trade zones to facilitate border trade corridors; reducing wait times that choke the economic vitality of cross-border trade; and common-sense reforms to the *manifesto* export sales tax program for tourism shopping, which generates \$24 in Texas economic activity for every dollar invested.

TO OUR MEMBERS

Healthcare Committee

Olga Gabriel, Director, McAllen Campus, Texas A&M Health Science Center, Chairwoman

Olga Gabriel, Director of the McAllen campus of the Texas A&M Health Science Center, chairs the Healthcare Committee, one of TBC's original standing committees. The committee addresses a wide range of public health issues, such as combating the epidemic in childhood obesity and related increased risks of diabetes, asthma, cancer and other diseases; appropriate use of telemedicine and telemonitoring to increase healthcare access in rural and medically underserved areas; remedying the shortage of qualified nurses; and controlling the illegal dumping of used and scrap tires.

Immigration and Border Security Committee

Monica Weisberg Stewart, McAllen Business Leader, Chairwoman

The Immigration and Border Security Committee is chaired by Monica Weisberg Stewart, a McAllen businesswoman and community leader. The committee focuses on supporting legitimate trade and travel at border crossings while keeping communities safe, through engagement on issues such as increased funding to improve technology, infrastructure and staffing at border crossings; creating effective southbound border checkpoints to stem the flow of illegal cash and firearms into Mexico; increasing meaningful oversight of state programs on immigration and refugees; increasing capacity for investigations and prosecutions in border counties; creating law enforcement training facilities in the border region; and improving border law enforcement resources, including interoperable communications equipment and personnel for local, county, state and federal law enforcement agencies along the border. Weisberg Stewart has testified multiple times in Austin and Washington, most recently before the U.S. Senate Committee on Homeland Security in March 2015.

TO OUR MEMBERS

Transportation Committee

Sergio Contreras, Executive Director, Pharr Economic Development Corporation, Chairman

The Transportation Committee is another of TBC's original standing committees, chaired by Sergio Contreras, Executive Director of the Pharr Economic Development Corporation. The committee works to support transportation infrastructure that will enable a free flow of legitimate trade and travel in border trade corridors, energy zones and throughout the region, including infrastructure upgrades to reduce wait times at border crossings; appropriate oversize/overweight vehicles in border trade corridors; equitable financing methods for road repairs associated with energy development; and engagement with USDOT, TxDOT and regional transportation authorities on behalf of regional priority transportation projects.

Workforce Committee

Blas Castaneda, Laredo Business Leader, Chairman

The Workforce Committee is chaired by Blas Castaneda, a Laredo-based expert in workforce training and development. Working with a broad network of educators, industry representatives and community leaders from across the region, the committee is immersed in the ongoing effort to reform and fully fund adult basic education (ABE) programs, including the 2013 relocation of ABE programs to the Texas Workforce Commission. The committee has also opposed efforts to repeal in-state college tuition for undocumented students; supported creation of UT-RGV and expanded higher education opportunities in the border region; and supported efforts to improve connectivity between public education and career training programs, such as aligning public education with curricula for career and technical education programs, and allowing public school districts to partner with community colleges under the JET job training program.

TO OUR MEMBERS

Castaneda was longtime head of external affairs at Laredo Community College and testifies frequently in Austin on workforce and economic development issues.

Communications

Under the leadership of Julie Hillrichs and Adriana Trevino, TBC members are boosting their public relations and social media efforts to communicate the priorities of the border region, with a special emphasis on audiences such as policy-makers and elected officials in the border region, Austin and Washington.

FINANCIAL SUMMARY

Financial Summary

TBC is a non-profit trade association. In 2015, TBC had dues revenue of \$76,964, expenses of \$33,660 and closed the books on 2015 with cash-on-hand of \$64,898.

OFFICERS

Officers

Chairman

J.D. Salinas, III, Chairman

AT&T

Chairman-elect

Mayor Pete Saenz, Chairman Elect

City of Laredo

Vice Chairman

City Commissioner Richard Cortez, Vice Chairman

City of McAllen

Treasurer

Eddie Aldrete, Treasurer

IBC Bank, San Antonio

CONTACT INFORMATION

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