



City of San Benito

# Profile



**VISION**  
Planning for the future.

20/20 Vision used in planning  
San Benito's future



SAN BENITO

the  
resaca  
city

# Ready To Meet The Challenge

With an eye to future strategic development and opportunity, the City of San Benito is ready to meet the challenge of the next decade.

City leaders visualize this community's progress and are focusing on solid economic growth, the environment, quality of life amenities and infrastructure improvements as we head into 2020.

Cognizant of the community's many assets, ranging from its winding resaca to its geographic location, officials here are seeing a vibrant and progressive community taking shape, thanks to actions taken over the past two years.

San Benito, known also as the Resaca City, is located at the tip of Texas in the center of Cameron County. The City is located in the Rio Grande Valley and enjoys a strategic location in Cameron County via Interstate 69E that runs

north and south, providing a direct connection between Harlingen, Brownsville, the International Free Trade Bridge at Los Indios, and access to South Padre Island.

The City's moniker comes thanks to the picturesque waterway through this rich historic community. The resaca is fed by the Rio Grande and serves as the primary irrigation, residential and commercial water supply for the City.

Climate and location are factors in the City's success. Mild winters and close proximity to Mexico and the Gulf of Mexico attract visitors who are eager to share the area's rich cultural and environmental beauty.

The City of San Benito was incorporated on July 29, 1911. The City operates under a Home Rule Charter, which was adopted on July 30, 1920.



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*San Benito Municipal Building, 401 N. Sam Houston Blvd.*

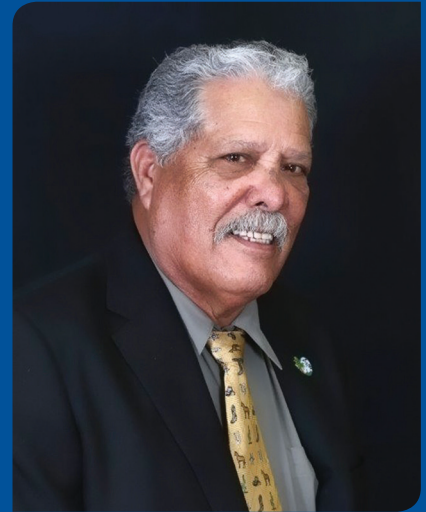
CITY OF SAN BENITO  
MAYOR / COMMISSIONERS /CITY MANAGER



**Benjamin "Ben" Gomez**  
City Mayor



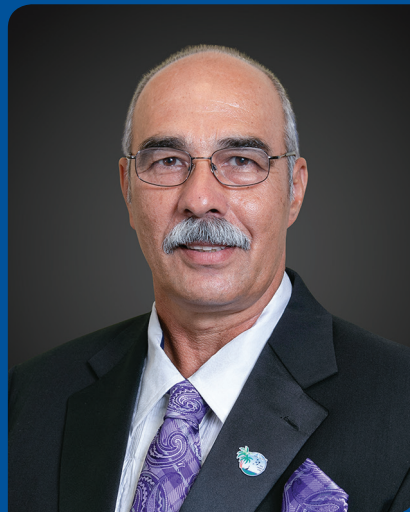
**Mayor Pro Tem Carol Lynn Sanchez**  
Commissioner, Place 4



**Antonio Gonzales**  
Commissioner, Place 1



**Rene Villafranco**  
Commissioner, Place 2



**Ricardo "Rick" Guerra**  
Commissioner, Place 3



**Manuel De La Rosa**  
City Manager





# Discover your business potential... in San Benito

Located in Deep South Texas, near the Gulf of Mexico, this region is among the fastest growing areas in the United States.

## **WE OFFER:**

- Warm Climate
- Sound Economy
- Available Workforce
- Abundant Land & Resources
- Quality Educational Facilities
- Strategic Location

## **CLOSE PROXIMITY TO:**

- Air Service
- Deepwater Ports
- Rail & Bus Transport
- International Crossings
- Space X Launch Site
- Major Freight Companies
- Major Interstate Highways



**SAN BENITO**

**956-361-3800**

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

# Growth and Development

The City of San Benito has been blessed over the past years in realizing steady growth and development. In the past year alone, the City has strategically gained a foothold in the areas of transportation planning and governmental legislation, both vitally significant in drawing in outside dollars to pave the way for realistic improvements, growth and prosperity.

The creation of a unified Rio Grande Valley Metropolitan Planning Organization, which evolved from the merger of three major political entities in the Rio Grande Valley, will help San Benito as well as other areas, realize additional funds for transportation projects locally. The City of San Benito played an important role in the merger, agreeing that the Harlingen-San Benito MPO would support the joint venture. City officials were firm in holding on to its seat at the table in order to maintain a voice in the new Rio Grande Valley MPO. The unification merger will allow the Valley to receive five percent of designated federal funds, equal to about \$620 million over the next 10 years.

Texas Governor Greg Abbott signed the merger agreement on June 14, 2019.

The Rio Grande Valley MPO is expected to bring about regional planning under one voice while providing the greatest transportation benefit for the region. Other goals include: supporting economic vitality, making transportation safer, providing greater access to mobility options, protecting the environment while promoting energy conservation, improving connectivity of the current transportation system, and preserving existing transportation infrastructure.

Also, recently approved by the 86th Legislature are measures designed to spur the creation of new retail developments, add more jobs and increase tax revenue to fund yet still other improvements in San Benito. The City-driven legislation promises to show a surge in construction, jobs and an improved



State legislators Senator Eddie Lucio, Jr. (left) and Representative Eddie Lucio, III (right) were instrumental in modifying the tax law to benefit the City of San Benito in proposed development of infrastructure that will facilitate the growth and development of the City. Shown center is Mayor Benjamin Gomez.

overall quality of life. Utilizing the services of a legislative consultant, the City – along with the able leadership of State Senator Eddie Lucio, Jr. and State Representative Eddie Lucio, III -- will benefit greatly from the measure. The new laws allow San Benito to develop a sports facility, hotels and ancillary businesses by using hotel tax revenue, and permits the City to qualify for a convention center and hotel rebates.

The City of San Benito is the third largest city within Cameron County. The City's economy is positively impacted by the growth of manufacturing plants and the shipping industry of fruits and vegetables via the Free Trade International Bridge.

San Benito is just minutes from the Bridge at Los Indios, which it partially owns. The bridge is among the most modern ports of entry in South Texas, and provides a quick route to the Mexican border cities of Matamoros, Reynosa and Valle Hermoso, as well as the interior industrial city of Monterrey.

The city is in close proximity to air service, deep water ports, rail and bus transport and the Space X launch site.

## RGV MPO

# Destination City Concept Taking Root



*South Texas Music Festival is growing in popularity, bringing more visitors to City of San Benito.*



*San Benito's Cultural Heritage Museum is showcasing quality exhibits that depict the history of the area through art.*



*Festivals including ResacaFest, Hog Waddle Country Concert and Cook-off and the South Texas Music Festival are attracting music lovers to the Resaca City.*

San Benito is building upon its identity as a Destination City in order to attract more visitors, growth and development. The undertaking is an avenue toward greater economic development for the City with long-term benefits.

Establishing the name recognition needed for public support, San Benito's three major events, the Hog Waddle Country Concert & Cook-off, ResacaFest and the South Texas Music Festival are on the road to relevance. With every succeeding year, identity, and significance, of the concerts is enhanced.

As a Destination City, San Benito also is expanding offerings centered around culture, aesthetics, food, museums, entertainment and festivals. The City is giving the public throughout South Texas a greater reason to travel to this culturally-rich community. Officials are fully aware that studies show that tourism and hospitality are among the facets of creating solid economic development.

The San Benito Cultural Heritage Museum plays an integral role in drawing visitors to the City. With its rotating art exhibits featuring colorful and stimulating works from international artists, Conjunto music presentations, receptions, foods, Gallery Talk discussions and social events, the museum is drawing visitors from neighboring cities, states and countries.

The facility is the flagship designed to cultivate San Benito into a true Destination City. Recent events include the dedication of a new bronze bust of City founder Col. Sam Robertson and a Valley schools' Conjunto music competition, as well as changing exhibits in the museum.

The events contribute to the area's economic development by raising revenue for continued cultural events, attracting outside dollars, instilling San Benito Pride in the community and enhancing quality of life for residents.

Exhibitions featured to-date include:

- La Frontera a Través del Ojo de las Mujeres (The Border Through the Eyes of Women), sponsored in partnership with the Mexican Consulate of Brownsville, featuring the work of Pu Chen, Brenda Bazan and Veronica Cardenas.
- Barrio POP by Cande Aguilar
- Naturalesas/Exprecciones by Primo Vega
- Handsome Pepper by the late Carlos Gomez
- Sacred Wisdom by Jessica Monroe

Exhibits scheduled for early 2020 are Castillian Roses, an exhibit in honor of Our Lady of Guadalupe; Indigenous Warriors by Andy Villarreal and Conjunto in Our Back Yard, a showcase of Conjunto music and art.

# Three Quality School Districts

San Benito is home to three separate, quality-oriented independent school districts.

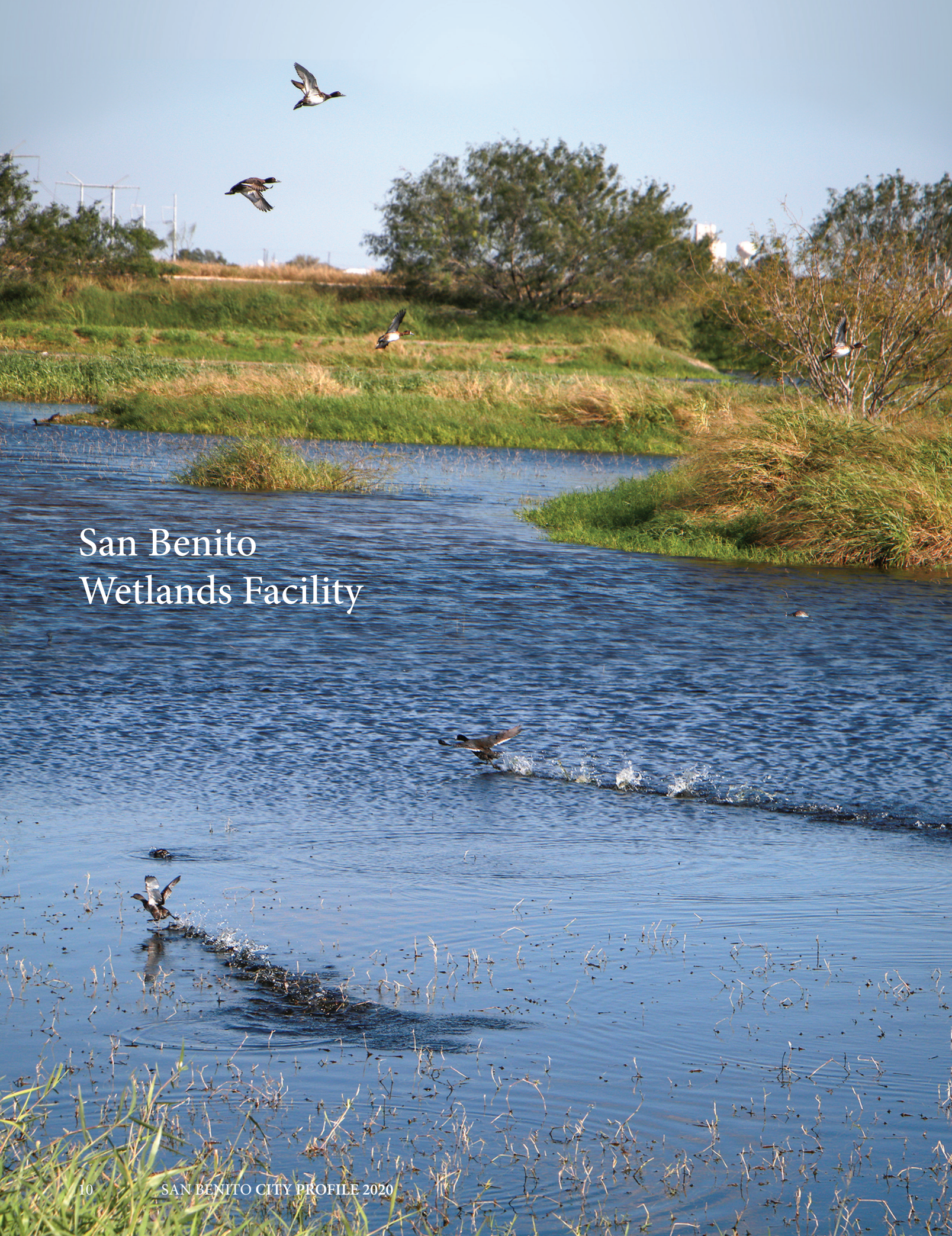


San Benito Consolidated Independent School District, has created a district culture that promotes and emphasizes the importance of academic preparedness and supports the belief that a post-secondary education is critical and attainable for all students.

IDEA Public School: Since its first graduating class in 2007, 100% of its seniors have been accepted to colleges and universities nationwide.



Rising Scholars Academy cultivates a powerful learning environment that inspires its students to impact their communities through stewardship and leadership. It is part of the South Texas Independent School District.



# San Benito Wetlands Facility

# Ecological Wetlands Project

The City has experienced transition in many aspects that include ecological areas. Several components of its Comprehensive Plan dictate a roadmap for the City’s future development.

The City is in the third phase of construction of an ecological wetlands project that hosts a wide variety of birds and other flora and fauna. The region’s subtropical climate, winter visitor facilities, promotion of healthy lifestyles, proximity to the Mexican border, and wide-open, undeveloped land suitable for manufacturing, retail and industry also contribute to San Benito’s desirability as a Destination City. With these plans firmly in-hand, City administration is targeting new revenue streams for the community in order to attract new dollars for continued growth and prosperity.

San Benito Wetlands facility will boost eco-tourism, while also enhancing the ecological effectiveness of wastewater treatment. An existing pier was refurbished and will provide access to the waterfront and facilitate environmental education. Interpretive signage was installed along the pier site to provide information about the project, on-site amenities, native wildlife and coastal resources as well as stewardship. A walking-jogging trail surrounds the lush wetlands, lending a health and wellness aspect to the facility.

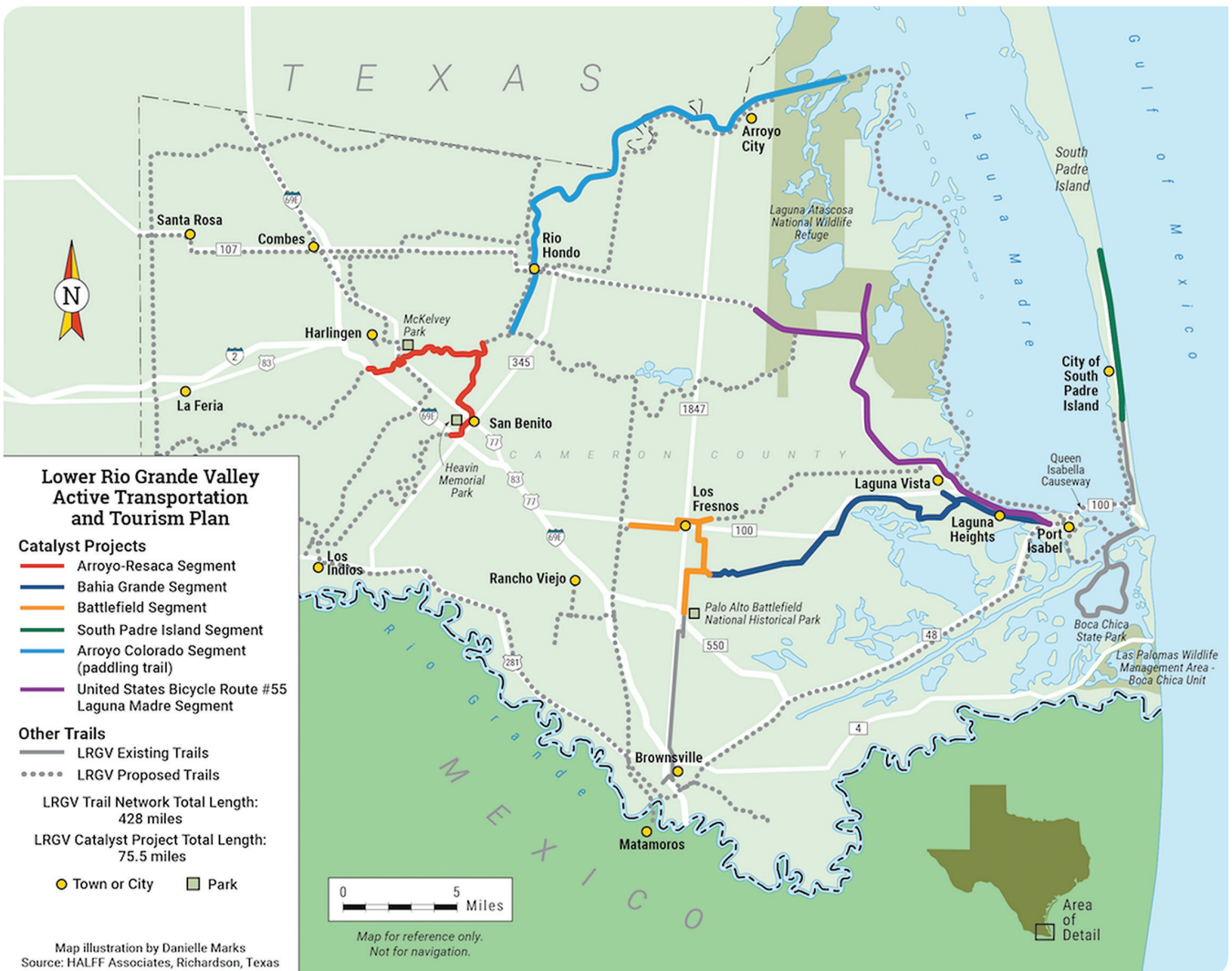
Currently under development, the facility is not yet open to the public.



# Rails To Trails-Active Tourism Plan



The City is an active member of the Lower Rio Grande Valley / Active Transportation and Tourism Planning Committee. The plan is both a transportation plan and an economic development plan. It is designed to tap into the rapidly expanded market for “Active Tourism” which is a segment of the leisure and travel industry involving physical activity that combines elements of adventure, nature and culture. Tourism and visitor spending within the LRGV accounted for 3.9 million annual tourists’ visits and annual spending of more than \$800 million in 2017.





# Events, Music & Culture



**MARCH 2020**

**Happy Birthday TexasFest**

Regional South Texas Celebration

[www.happybirthdaytexas.com](http://www.happybirthdaytexas.com)

956.245.6980

956.367.3448



**APRIL, MAY, JULY, SEPTEMBER**

**San Benito Music Festivals**

Featuring the Best of Country & Tejano Music

Facebook: San Benito Cultural Heritage Museum

[www.sanbenitoevents.com](http://www.sanbenitoevents.com)



**OPEN TO THE PUBLIC**

**San Benito Cultural Heritage Museum**

Traveling Art Exhibits, Squeezebox Contests,  
New Programming, Cook-Offs & Live Music

Facebook: San Benito Cultural Heritage Museum

956.281.0810



**YEAR 'ROUND EVENTS**

**San Benito: A CULTURAL HERITAGE CITY**

956.361.3800

[www.cityofsanbenito.com](http://www.cityofsanbenito.com)

Facebook: San Benito City Hall



# South Texas Music Festival

# Recreation & Fitness

The City of San Benito's Parks & Recreation Department strives to provide quality of life services for the citizens of San Benito. The following programs highlight successful services by the City's Parks & Recreation Department. Youth Sport Leagues, Adult Sport Leagues, Family Programs/Events, NFL Flag Football, Co-Ed Kickball, Movies at the Park, Youth Soccer, Adult Flag Football, Community Gardens, Jr. High 7on7 Football, Adopt-A-Park, Community Clean-Up, Nutritional Classes, Health Fairs, Adult Programs, Youth Programs, Zumba, Summer Beautification Program, Strength and Toning, Summer Football & Soccer Camps, Fitness Zone, Fishing Camps, Fitness Boot Camp, Walking Club, and Yoga.



*Construction is underway at Southside Park, the City's newest recreational facility.*

# Construction And Growth Underway

The City of San Benito is entering an era of new job development, retail facilities, entertainment venues and long-term sustainable growth with the construction of several major projects undertaken by private firms and corporations.

## NEW LEGISLATION

And, it all stems from an idea that emerged into actual legislation. “It took a lot of hard work, thought and maneuvering to get it done,” according to City Manager Manuel De La Rosa.

“We have something of real value in the legislation that was recently enacted,” Mayor Ben Gomez said referring to Texas House Bills 2199 and 4347 that are designed to provide financial incentives for potential developers at no direct cost to the City.

A Texas-based developer conceptualized and produced a version of what realistically could become San Benito’s destiny, De La Rosa said. However, since the legislation was enacted and word spread, additional developers have inquired about locating in San Benito as well, he said.

## GEOGRAPHY

But what makes San Benito so attractive is its geographical attributes of location and open land suitable for the future growth and development of this Cameron County community.

Solid progress in new commercial growth and development today is being seen locally.



## RESACA VILLAGE

Construction and development of Resaca Village, a mixed-use commercial facility that will house retail shops, restaurants and office space is currently underway.

Projected to cost between \$5 million and \$7 million in construction alone, the waterfront project will consist of between 40,000 and 50,000 square feet of leaseable space to be developed over the next two to three years.

The land for the project is on 10 acres of City property fronting Business 77 across from Heavin Resaca Trail and Amphitheater.

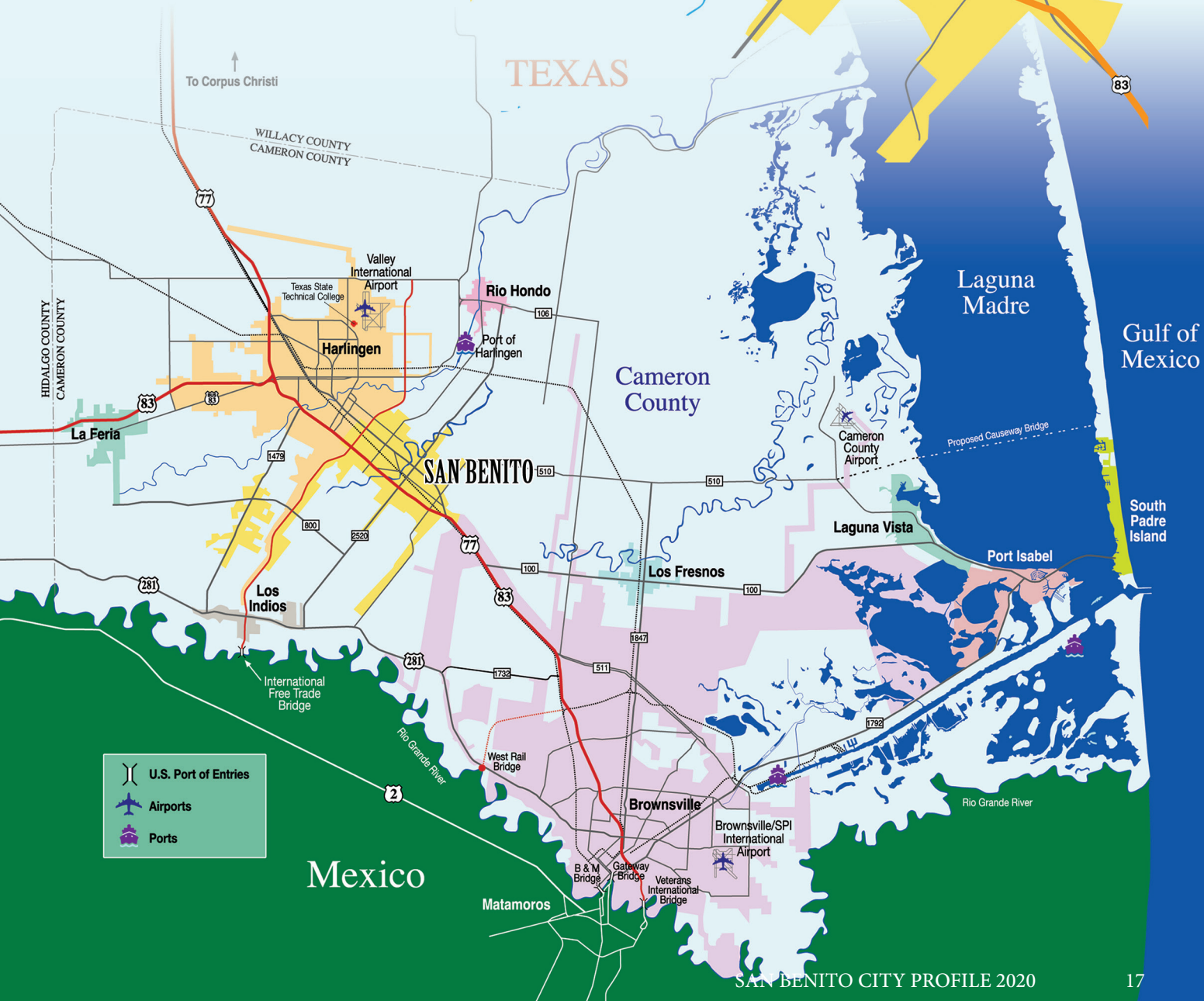
Carlos E. Varela, partner of Varco Real Estate, noted in his proposal to the City that from an economic standpoint and based on their most recent projects, he anticipates this development will provide 300 full and part-time time jobs, approximately \$7 million in improvement value, and \$10 million in annual sales.

The project is scheduled to bring in 20 new tenants as well as a number of professional offices, suites and potentially a new financial service company.

In a statement to the City, Varela said the project’s design would focus on attracting more people to the area and to ensure the improvements complement the development his architectural firm is providing to assist with the design of this space.



*Continued on Page 18*



- U.S. Port of Entries
- Airports
- Ports

Work on the project commenced in March 2019 and is projected for completion in early 2020.

## NEW CONSTRUCTION

Another Business 77 development underway is Dale Shine Express Car Wash, valued at \$1 million. Construction is anticipated for completion prior to the year's end.

Additionally, the new \$23 million AEP Texas Service Center measures 88,000-square feet, and employing some 110 workers, is up-and-running.

San Benito was selected over local cities for the new electric center to serve the eastern region of the Rio Grande Valley. The new center allows for the consolidation of five different work locations in the mid and lower Rio Grande Valley.

Tom Coad, AEP Texas Vice President of Distribution Operations, said the new facility will not only be a "significant upgrade" for the company, but will also have a significant impact the eastern end of the Valley.

"In addition to having a site that provides multiple entry points to our service center property, the site meets all our construction requirements and offers 15 extra acres compared to our existing property," Coad said.

"This will be extremely valuable for storm restoration purposes while offering the possibility of future expansion as the Valley grows," Coad added.

## BORDER FACILITIES

A new \$500,000 Cold Storage Facility at the Free Trade Bridge at Los Indios is up-and-running as well. The facility preserves both fresh and frozen produce for shippers awaiting federal inspection by US Customs and Border Protection officers. It is located within the CBP and General Services Administration installations.

The cities of San Benito and Harlingen each own 25 percent of the Free Trade Bridge with each owner profiting from the revenues generated at the bridge and from truckers' use of the cold storage facility.



*AEP Texas Service Center Facility, San Benito, Texas*

# Strong Financial Standing

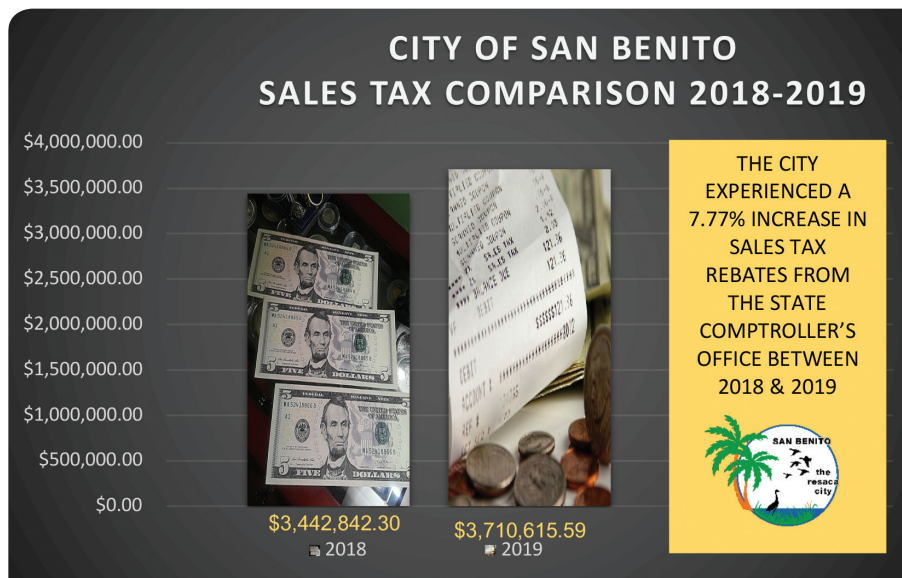
Other indicators pointing to a healthy financial standing in San Benito are the steady increases in sales tax which is up by 7 percent, and a 20 percent increase in business permits. The City is seeing steady growth, and is on track to experience even greater economic wellbeing into the future.

Greater governmental transparency was ensured with the adoption of an ethics ordinance, live-streaming City meetings and posting more financial data on the City's social media sites. The City has maintained a respectable bond rating at A+ with Standard & Poors, including the increase in operating reserve funds from 110 days to 120 days. With a more determined focus

in FY 2018-2019 on continued growth and development, the City of San Benito is looking for its greatest days in its future.

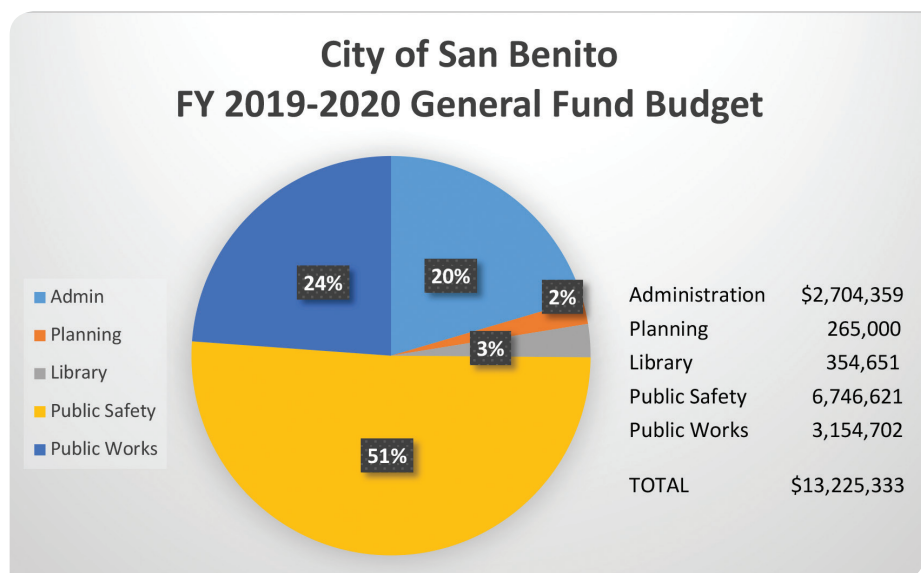
Economic restructuring has occurred through the opening of new business establishments such as a traditional antique operation, art galleries and curio and novelty shops. The financial investment and renovation plans of one of San Benito's iconic and historic locations was initiated with a renovation project scheduled to start next fiscal year. The departments' goals and objectives are to facilitate the creation of a healthy marketplace through the development of a team effort with the business community, political leaders and the general public.

The City of San Benito's comprehensive annual financial report for the year ended September 30, 2013, was awarded the Certificate of Achievement for Excellence in Financial Reporting by the Government Finance Officers' Association of the United States and Canada (GFOA). The Certificate of Achievement is the highest form of recognition for excellence in state and local government financial reporting. In order to be awarded a Certificate of Achievement, a government must publish an easily readable and efficiently organized comprehensive annual financial report. This report must satisfy both generally accepted accounting principles and applicable legal requirements.



**PRINCIPAL EMPLOYERS IN SAN BENITO**

San Benito CISD	1,634
Southwest Key	367
Wal-Mart	268
City of San Benito	200
HEB	167
Cameron County Annex	151
Niños	137
IDEA School	128
Gillman Dealership	85
SB Medical Associates	65





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