

Silva: International Bridge is helping sales tax revenues soar in Donna

By **Steve Taylor** - December 23, 2016

DONNA, RGV – The City of Donna continues to pull in more sales tax revenues thanks to its international bridge, says consultant Ernesto Silva.

The latest sales tax figures released by the Texas Comptroller’s Office shows Donna posting a 16.40 percent increase year-on-year. The increase is the highest recorded among the large to medium size cities in the Rio Grande Valley.

The figures contrast the November 30, 2014, to October 31, 2015, period with November 30, 2015, to October 31, 2016 period.

“We are extremely happy our community continues to lead the Rio Grande Valley in the percentage growth of sales tax over the last two years. This year’s report of a 14 percent-plus increase over last year is a clear indication our community continues on its path to economic recovery,” Silva said.

“For many years, the City of Donna was viewed as bedroom community with not much growth, but since 2010 after the opening of the Donna-Rio Bravo International Bridge, the City has exploded with new business and Mexican tourists coming to shop.”

In an exclusive interview with the *Rio Grande Guardian*, Silva said it was important to pay tribute to Mexican visitors. He also alluded to more economic development activity in the months ahead.

“We are extremely grateful to our Mexican friends who visit our community. We encourage them to visit our local shops and restaurants and look forward to the opening of new retailers and restaurants in the near future for them to shop. We have initiated construction on the utilities and look forward to announcing the retailers and shops after the new year.”

There is another spinoff from having more visitors from Mexico, Silva said, besides increased sales tax revenues.

“For our community, the international bridge has not only helped our community by increasing sales tax, but it has also allowed us to reduce our property taxes from \$1.25 (the highest in the State of Texas at that time) to 0.88. We are working to reduce it even further this next fiscal year to 80 cents or less, along with reducing water and sewer rates after the new year. Not to mention investing in the City’s infrastructure such as; park improvements, replacing all water meters, street paving, drainage,

water/sewer line upgrades, a new 1 million-gallon elevated storage tank and upgrading our water and sewer treatment plants.”

Latest sales tax figures

Year on year, the latest sales tax revenues in Cameron County show:

Brownsville UP 1.58 percent; Harlingen UP 2.23 percent; Los Fresnos UP 24.22 percent; Port Isabel UP 1.35 percent; San Benito UP 1.95 percent; South Padre Island DOWN 1.69 percent;

Year on year, the latest sales tax revenues in Hidalgo County show:

Alamo UP 0.61 percent; Alton UP 8.28 percent; Donna UP 16.40 percent; Edinburg UP 4.57 percent; McAllen DOWN 3.95 percent; Mercedes DOWN 3.61 percent; Mission UP 0.03 percent; Palmview UP 14.30 percent; Pharr UP 3.00 percent; San Juan UP 0.02 percent; Weslaco DOWN 0.18 percent.