

THE RIO REVIEW

VOLUME THREE • EDITION ONE • JANUARY 2023

**NEW
LOOK**



**A LOOK BACK AT THE BIGGEST
STORIES OF 2022**



EXPLORE OUR BEAUTIFUL CITY

The mission of the City of Rio Grande City is to provide quality municipal services in partnership with our citizens to build a progressive city and to provide a better quality of life for all our residents. Rio Grande City is rich in history and honors traditions. Come and explore a multitude of historical sites, take a walk run or bike ride through our Fordyce Trails, and enjoy our many festivals.

www.cityofrgc.com

THE RIO REVIEW

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MISS FREEDOM FEST COURT 2022 - The City of Rio Grande City thanks the entire 2022 Miss Fest Court for the year of service and dedication to our community.

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"THANK YOU TO THE STAFF OF GREAT CITY OF RIO GRANDE CITY FOR HELPING MAKE 2022 ONE OF THE MOST SIGNIFICANT YEARS IN THE HISTORY OF OUR GREAT CITY"

RGC MAYOR JOEL VILLARREAL

RIO GRANDE CITY HALL

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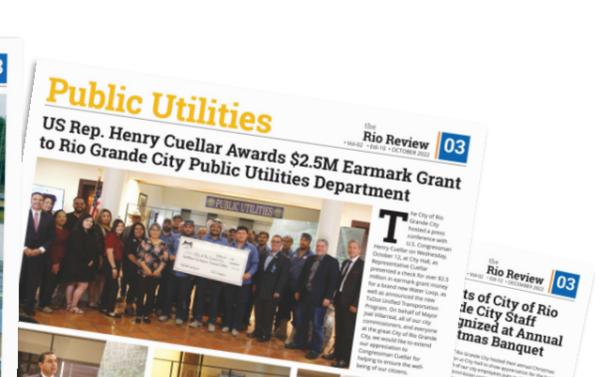
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THE WAY OF WATER

"In 2022 we not only successfully navigated a drought, but we were also able to implement massive infrastructure improvements including upgrading the Garcia Street water tower, installing new liftstations, and upgrading our sewer plant. We also received a \$2.5 million dollar earmark grant for our department thanks to the efforts of Congressman Henry Cuellar."

*- Elisa Beas
RGC Public Utilities Dir.*



A

BOOMING

ECONOMY



"2022 was an exciting year for the Rio Grande City EDC. Here's a look back at some of our proudest achievements."

*- Dalinda Guillen
RGCEDC Executive Dir.*



■ Fireworks display at the 2022 Rio Grande City Freedom Fest celebration courtesy of RGCEDC.

SALES TAX

Rio Grande City experienced a surge in economic growth for 2022. In the past five years, sales tax revenues rose to 34% and continue to climb with a 7% increase for 2022.

Major national retailers as well as small businesses opened their doors in 2022

Rio Grande City is gaining traction for economic growth in Starr County and the Rio Grande Valley. Several major national retailers opened their doors in 2022. These include: Starbucks, Stripes, Chick-fil-A, Marshalls, Buffalo Wings & Rings and a second Dollar Tree location on FM 3167. Small businesses also impacted Rio Grande City's economic growth with over 10 new entrepreneurial endeavors throughout the city.

Major project announced creating a catalyst for economic development for Rio Grande City.

On June 30th, a groundbreaking ceremony took place for an upcoming state-of-the-art medical development that will provide the necessary facilities enabling patients to stay within the county to access specialized healthcare.

Rio Grande City is connected and growing and we are excited our collaboration with DHR Health, City of Rio Grande City, Texas, Starr County Texas, Starr County Industrial Foundation, and Starr County Memorial Hospital will bring high quality healthcare close to home for Rio Grande City and the communities of Starr County.

Rio Grande City EDC presents a successful commercial investment tour to a large group of real estate agents, developers and investors.

The Rio Grande City EDC and Rio Grande Valley Partnership co-hosted the Rio Grande City EDC Commercial & Investment Tour at UTRGV Starr Campus on Wednesday, December 7, 2022.

Dalinda Guillen, Executive Director of the Rio Grande City Economic Development corporation gave updates on the City's anticipated upcoming projects. These include a Public Fire Safety Building & Emergency Shelter, upgrades to the newly acquired Fort Ringgold Park, and private sector projects such as the RCGCISD Performing Arts Center, and DHR Medical Plaza in the works across from Starr County Memorial Hospital.

Rose Benavidez, President of the Starr County Industrial Foundation spoke on plans of a cold storage warehousing project taking place in proximity to the Starr Camargo Bridge, Rio Grande City's port of entry and the continued growth of Starr County. After the presentation, guests were invited to take a tour of the City on the Bessie III Trolley and see firsthand the activity in Rio Grande City. The Rio Grande Valley

Partnership Commercial & Investment Tours are held monthly throughout the Valley and are open to real estate agents, land developers, and investors to learn about retail and industrial opportunities of the host city.

Rio Grande City hosts annual Job Fair

The Rio Grande City Economic Development Corporation held its sixth Rio Grande City Employer Expo and Job Fair in Rio Grande City. This event was organized by the Rio Grande City EDC in collaboration with Workforce Solutions, Rio Grande City Public Library and UTRGV at Starr County Campus to bring together employers and jobseekers in Rio Grande City with career opportunities. The two-day event began on February 2, with three free workshops hosted by the Rio Grande City Public Library. These activities led up to the Employer Expo and Job Fair on February 3, 2022. Over 20 employers such as the IOC Company, Idea Public Schools, The City of Rio Grande City and U.S Customs and Border Protection, and many others were present and looking to fill positions in the event. As a key tool to promote employment by matching employers with job seekers and to drive down unemployment rates, the Rio Grande City EDC initiated its annual Rio Grande City Employer Expo & Job Fair in 2016.

Local business woman receives Small Business Administration award.

Small businesses are the backbone of our nation and the driving force of our Lindo Rio Grande.

We were honored to support Marisela Salinas of Principesa Hair Studio located in the heart of our very own Rio Grande City Downtown Historic District for receiving the 2022 District Director Award from the U.S. Small Business Administration at the SBA Awards Recognition Luncheon hosted by the Rio Grande Valley Partnership.

Unified Transportation Program

Key projects slated for Starr County affecting Rio Grande City's transportation infrastructure include widening the road to a four-lane divided highway between Starr/Zapata County Line to north of Loma Blanca and Rio Grande City/Roma Relief Route Phases 1 and 2 of State Loop 195.

TxDOT's 10-year plan, the Unified Transportation Program (UTP), guides the development of projects around Texas and the 2023 UTP reflects an unprecedented level of projected transportation funding at a record \$85 billion dedicated to improving transportation safety, addressing congestion and rural connectivity.

Rio Grande City EDC launches redesigned website with extensive site selection features

The redesign offers an enhanced user-friendly experience with improved navigation and functionality while allowing visitors to search for resources and information.

The website provides data including, but not limited to, commercial site availability, demographics, retail demand, labor force, economic indicators and a multitude of business resources.

Powered by GIS Web Tech Guru and ESRI, leaders in geographic information system (GIS) software, location intelligence and mapping, site selection data is designed to assist businesses, organizations and site selectors by providing key data that enables them to make strategic decisions.

Rio Grande City EDC recognized for Main Street Program accreditation

For the sixth consecutive year, the Rio Grande City Main Street has been designated as an Accredited Main Street America program for meeting rigorous performance standards set by the National Main Street Center.

"As a project of the Rio Grande City EDC, our Main Street program reinforces our mission to spur economic vitality in our historic downtown," said Mayor Villarreal. "We are extremely proud of Rio Grande City Main Street's national accreditation and the work our Main Street Advisory Board and volunteers have achieved this past year."

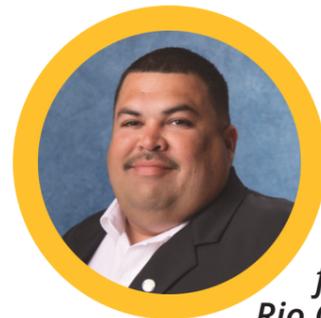
The Rio Grande City Main Street Program provides several services and assistance available to Main Street businesses including: Design Assistance from the Texas Historical Commission and much more. Rio Grande City Main Street also hosts a variety of special events throughout the year.

Fort Ringgold Park clean up

With the City's newly acquired Fort Ringgold Park (Fort Ringgold County Park), the Rio Grande City EDC facilitated clean-up efforts for future planned renovations. The City plans include several major features such as: renovation of the current three baseball diamonds, renovation of basketball courts, the addition of volleyball courts, a soccer field and a food truck park.



FOR LOVE OF The Game



"In 2022 we continued our efforts to provide athletic opportunities for children in Rio Grande City such as our Basketball, Track & Field, and Flag Football Programs. We also worked with local fitness professionals to help provide health and wellness opportunities to Rio Grande City residents".

*- Frank Eguia
RGC Parks & Rec. Dir.*

- Eric Escamilla, Jesus Adame and Frank Eguia attended a 3 day course of CPTED & Maintenance Action Institute.
- Rio Grande City Parks & Recreation Maintenance helped in building a Bessie Bass Boat for city parade.
- Rio grande city Parks & Recreation Maintenance crew clean up Ringgold Park on cutting down trees, maintaining grass ,clean out the concession stand and restrooms ,baseball fields and basketball courts.
- Rio Grande City Parks & Recreation maintenance crew learned how to change electric valves in Basilio Villarreal Park, Miriam Vale Park and Ringgold Park. Also learned how to change the oil and blades on riding tractors.
- Parks & Recreation Track & Field Athletes Serena Ramirez and Alessando Diaz made to Track & Field State Event. Serena Ramirez participate in discus and shotput and Alessando Daiz participate in rally, long jump, 100 meter dash and 200 meter dash.

ONLY THE BRAVE



"This past year the Rio Grande City Fire Dept. faced the significant threat of drought driven fires head-on with both newly acquired equipment and staff. We also continued to promote overall public safety by participating in several community events and educational programs."

*- Manuel Miniz
RGC Fire Chief*

RGC PD 2022



"In 2022 the Rio Grande City Police Department implimented major changes from the ground up, starting with new high-tech uniforms designed not only for comfort but for protection from the South Texas elements. The department also took on new responsibilities such as animal control. New officers joined the team and we continued with our tireless community service efforts"

- Noe Castillo
RGC Police Chief
RGC Deputy City Manager.

The Never Ending Story



"The Rio Grande City Public Library continues with our never-ending efforts to provide valuable services for our patrons. Here is a list of our favorite activities of 2022".

*- Norma Fultz
RGC Public Library Dir.*

Rio Grande City Employer Expo + Job Fair

Workshops held the day before event at the library on Resume Writing, Interviewing Skills and Dress for Success.

Día del Niño - May 5, 2022, Basilio Villarreal Park

Día del Niño was held on May 5th every child received a FREE book! Featuring our new StoryWalk. We will have games and entertainment. Reigning Star Athletics LLC, Kari Ely Dance Studio, D.J. Pato Mix, RGC High School Mariachi Cascabel. City of Rio Grande City, Texas A & M AgriLife Extension Service - Starr County, Working on Wellness Environments - Texas A&M AgriLife Extension, and Driscoll Health Plan.

Youth & Teen Programs

Summer Reading Program, Storytime, Grab & Go craft kits. Beanstack Online Reading Challenges
Rio Grande City Public Library's StoryWalk™ is a fun way for families to combine health and literacy, encouraging both reading and outdoor exercise in an engaging way. In a collaborative effort with the Texas A&M AgriLife Extension, Rio Grande City Public Library, Working on Working on Wellness Environments (WoW-E), Starr County, Healthy Nation in Parks: Creating a More Active America, Together and community leaders.

Fun Friday Program

Keepin' It Rio Art Show

Adult & Crafts / Health & Nutrition

Anna's Water Color, A New Healthier You, Garden Class,

Outreach - Career Days, Parent Meetings,

Awareness events

Veteran's Appreciation Drive-Thru Lunch

StoryBook Christmas/ Holiday Fun Coloring Contest

Achievement of Library Excellence Award

Rio Grande City Public Library received the 2021 Achievement of Library Excellence Award from the Texas Municipal Library Directors Association (TMLDA). The TMLDA, an affiliate of the Texas Municipal League, recognizes Texas libraries that meet a high level of excellence in programming and services while contributing educational opportunities to the community.



MAIN STREET

2022 HIGHLIGHTS

- We promoted the City of Rio Grande City and attended the Winter Texan Expo at McAllen Convention Ctr. (Jan. 18-19, 2022)
- We worked with the EDC to create our "Meet Me Downtown" promotional videos. (Feb. 8, 2022)
- Hosted and MCed at the annual Historical Preservation Dinner at Tijerina Courtyard. (May 17, 2022)
- Participated in the "Imagine the Possibilities" tour. (May 18, 2022)
- Hosted and MCed the Fallen Heroes Ceremony at the historical Kiosko on Britton Ave. (May 27, 2022)
- We worked with the Main Street Advisory Board to get bike and scooter donations for giveaway at Freedom Fest (July 2022)
- Attended the Main Street Retreat in Victoria, Texas. (Aug. 9-12, 2022)
- Participated in National Night Out at Basilio Villarreal Park. (Sept. 27, 2022)
- The RGC Main Street office along with the Main Street Advisory Board set up the Pumpkin Patch outside of the RGC Fire Station. (Sept. 2022)
- We hosted several Market Day events throughout the Main Street area where local business set up shop for our community. (Oct. 15, Nov. 26, Dec. 17)
- Our Main Street Coordinator, Mrs. Cathy Rubio, attended the Texas Downtown Conference in San Marcos, TX. (Nov. 1-4, 2022)
- We worked with the Main Street Advisory Board to decorate the Christmas tree and surrounding area of Kiosko for the official Tree Lighting Ceremony. (Nov. 16-22, 2022)
- We also worked with the Main Street Advisory Board to decorate Christmas Photo-Stop at RGC Fire Dept. (Nov. 28-29, 2022)
- The RGC Main Street Office hosted the annual Lighting of the Christmas Tree in historical Britton Avenue. (Nov. 30, 2022)

PRESERVING OUR HERITAGE



"Rio Grande City's Main Street saw its share of activity in 2022. Several events were held in our historic downtown, and our museum hosted multiple cultural events. We look forward to continuing to preserve our town's cultural heritage now, and for generations to come."

*- Cathy Rubio
Main Street & Kelsey Bass Museum Coordinator*

KELSEY-BASS MUSEUM 2022 HIGHLIGHTS

- The Kelsey Bass Museum hosted a viewing of the feature film Viva Zapata to commemorate the 70th Anniversary of the premiere of this film which was partially filmed in Rio Grande City.
- KB Museum Coordinator, Mrs. Cathy Rubio, organized and hosted the Miss Freedom Fest Pageant at the Fort Ringgold Auditorium.
- We volunteered and helped Miss Freedom Fest Royal Court with Duties at the annual Freedom Fest held at Basilio Villarreal Park.
- The KB Museum hosted Grito en el Kiosko, jointly with the RGC Public Library, to celebrate Hispanic Heritage Month.
- We held History After Hours which was an extension of our hours for the museum with wine and appetizers.
- Mrs. Cathy Rubio, KB Museum Coordinator, MC for Henry Cuellar check presentation at City Hall.
- Trunk or Treat We volunteered and passed out candy as well as helped Miss Freedom Fest with various duties at the Trunk or Treat event at the Basilio Villarreal Park.
- The Public Library along with the KB Museum hosted the Veteran's Day Drive-Thru Luncheon to celebrate our local veterans in honor of Veteran's Day.
- We MC the Lighted Christmas Parade and hosted the judges deliberation room.
- All of our amazing KB Museum GUESTS!



GOOD WORKS



"We are proud to say that in 2022 the Rio Grande City Public Works Dept. doubled down on city maintenance and street paving projects, making last year one of our most productive ever."

*- Hector Barrera
RGC Public Works Dir.*

IN 2022 THE PUBLIC WORKS DEPT...

- Helped clear out areas at Rattler Drive for new Business
- We completed road projects like Garcia Street, Britton Avenue, Encino Street, and Robles Street
- We have started new road projects on Columbus Street
- Our Public Works crewmen also helped put up Christmas decorations and lights around town, as well as the Christmas Tree on Britton Avenue
- We had a great turnout for the monthly City Wide Clean-Up days at the 14-Acres. Citizens took advantage of the opportunity to clean up and throw out trash or unwanted items for FREE.
- The Britton Avenue, Tejerina Courtyard, RGC Police Department, and Kelsey Bass Museum parking lots got new paint stripping
- The Public Works crewmen fixed multiple street signs that were missing, or damaged due to weather
- Our crewmen help maintain our city, and keep it as clean as possible. As well as help with parades and events held throughout the year
- Cleared out a reservation pond behind City Hall and Inwood Apartments in order to prevent flooding.



A CITY ON THE GROW



"Rio Grande City experienced an explosion of growth in 2022"

- Gilbert Millan
RGC Planning & Zoning Dir.



PLANNING DEPARTMENT 2022 ACCOMPLISHMENTS

- The Planning Department has approved building permit applications that have totaled more than 41 million dollars worth of investment in our community in all of 2022 (All permits). Over 21 million dollars in commercial projects and over 13 million dollars in residential construction. This is building construction only.
- The total square footage of improvements totals over 894,817 of improvements within the City!
- Twelve (12) new commercial and residential subdivisions were submitted to the Planning Department.
- The Planning Department, with the help from the Economic Development Commission, has continued with the plan to clean downtown. Several weeded lots have been cleaned throughout town and dilapidated houses have been abated on Main St and the original town site. This has not only achieved a cleaner downtown, but also promoted the investment of new businesses downtown.
- Over 173 Health Inspections were performed throughout the City. This includes any and all food establishments and some mobile ones. Inspectors work throughout the City and even after hours so that the people of Rio Grande and visitors enjoy cleaner and safer food.
- The Texas Department of State Health Services has sent reports of the Mosquito tests performed by the Planning Department in different areas of the City and has shown negative results for Zika, West Nile Virus, and Dengue among others.
- The City of Rio Grande City has been re-certified as a Certified Local Government after this years review of actions taken by the Planning Department and the Local Historic Preservation Commission. This accreditation comes from the United States Department of the Interior on the National Historic Preservation Act of 1966 and the Texas Historical Commission.
- The Planning Department has received new personnel certifications. Marco De Leon has received the Vector Control Pesticide Applicator License from the US Department of Agriculture, Antonio Cantu has received the license as a Stormwater Inspector from TCEQ and Gilbert Millan has completed the Certified Public Manager (CPM) course from the National Certified Public Manager Consortium and the University of Texas Rio Grande Valley.





HAPPY NEW YEAR 2023

From all of us at the GREAT CITY OF RIO GRANDE CITY
We are thankful for the year behind and
enthusiastic for the year ahead!

COMMISSIONER PLACE 4

Alberto Escobedo

COMMISSIONER PLACE 3

Regelio Olivarez Jr.

Joel Villarreal
MAYOR

MAYOR PRO-TEM

Rey Ramirez

COMMISSIONER PLACE 1

Ben De Leon