

THE ECONOMIC IMPACT OF MEXICAN VISITORS TO THE LOWER RIO GRANDE VALLEY 2003



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EXECUTIVE SUMMARY

The Rio Grande Valley, like other areas along the U.S.-Mexico border, receives millions of Mexican visitors every year. While valley residents intuitively realize the importance of these visitors to their economy, no studies have measured the economic impact of Mexican visitors to the area. This study profiles Mexican visitors, measures the magnitude of their annual expenditures, and determines the impact of these expenditures on the economy as a whole. It also provides the results of in-depth interviews of Mexican visitors about their experiences entering the U.S. and their perceptions of the US VISIT program.

Profile of Mexican visitors

Around 1,000 Mexican visitors were surveyed over a 4-day period in December of 2003 at four valley locations: La Plaza Mall (McAllen), Sunrise Mall (Brownsville), Downtown Brownsville, and Downtown Weslaco. The majority of visitors entered by car using a Laser visa (88 percent). Fifty-seven percent of those surveyed were day-trip visitors. McAllen area visitors came primarily from Monterrey (37 percent) and Reynosa (23 percent), while Matamoros was the main source of visitors to the Brownsville area. Progreso accounted for a third of Weslaco visitors. The most frequent visitors were pedestrians averaging more than one trip a week, while air travelers were the least frequent visitors with about five trips a year. Car travelers visited on average twice a month.

Economic impact of Mexican visitors

The expenditures of Mexican visitors varied considerably by mode of travel. A typical car traveler averaged almost \$5,000 a year (\$182 per visit), a plane traveler spent about \$8,000 annually (around \$2,000 per visit), while bus travelers and pedestrians spent approximately \$1,100 a year (\$80 and \$20 per visit, respectively). Given a total number of 22.7 million Mexican crossers, total estimated expenditures by Mexican visitors amounted to \$1.4 billion in 2003.

Using an input-output model, these expenditures generated a total of approximately \$1.7 billion in output (sales), 41,000 jobs, \$560 million in wages, and \$203 million in business taxes. Relative to the economy of the lower Rio Grande Valley, this implies that Mexican visitors' expenditures support 12 percent of total output and 10-15 percent of employment.

US VISIT related findings

Extensive delays (exceeding two hours) to enter the U.S. were generally not tolerated by visitors, and 70 percent of the respondents indicated that delays will cause them to reduce the frequency of their visits. When asked about the US VISIT Program, the majority stated that they were not familiar with the program. Among those who had heard of it, the

general perception was that its implementation would impede the entry of Mexican visitors into the U.S.

To further understand the experiences of visitors entering the U.S. as well as their perceptions on the effect of the US VISIT Program, in-depth interviews of 115 Mexican nationals were held during the months of December 2003 and January 2004. There is a great deal of apprehension about the proposed tracking of the entry/exit of Mexican laser visa holders. Some of the apprehension is caused by misperceptions and incorrect information. It was apparent from these interviews that Mexican nationals are already less likely to visit the U.S. due to a fear of losing their laser visa.

Importance of Mexican visitors to South Padre Island

Surveys were also sent to South Padre Island retailers, hotels and rental agencies. Though the response rate was low, returned surveys indicated that a third of island visitors were Mexican nationals, accounting for at least a third of economic activity. *Semana Santa* in April was the peak visiting time, during which Mexicans constituted around three-quarters of island visitors and accounted for 60+ percent of hotel and condominium rentals. Regarding the US VISIT Program, all respondents, except one, believed that the program's implementation would impact their business on the island through shorter stays and less frequent visits.

CENTER FOR BORDER ECONOMIC STUDIES

The Center for Border Economic Studies (CBEST) at The University of Texas-Pan American is a public policy research unit dedicated to the study of problems unique to the U.S./Mexico border economy.

CBEST-affiliated scholars conduct policy-oriented research in four key areas of importance to the border region:

1. regional economic development and trade;
2. the labor market and immigration;
3. health and environmental policy; and
4. information technology.

Additional information about CBEST is available online at www.c-best.org or can be obtained by contacting CBEST at the University of Texas-Pan American.

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TABLE OF CONTENTS

EXECUTIVE SUMMARY	i
CENTER FOR BORDER ECONOMIC STUDIES	iii
LIST OF TABLES	v
ACKNOWLEDGEMENTS	vi
I. INTRODUCTION	1
II. METHODOLOGY	2
III. PROFILE OF MEXICAN VISITORS.....	3
IV. ECONOMIC IMPACT ANALYSIS	16
V. IMPORTANCE OF MEXICAN VISITORS TO SOUTH PADRE ISLAND	18
VI. US VISIT RELATED FINDINGS	20
VII. CONCLUSION	28
REFERENCES	30
APPENDIX A.....	31
APPENDIX B	32

LIST OF TABLES

1	Sample Size by Location	3
2	Sample Size by Mode of Travel.....	3
3	Mode of Travel by Location	3
4	Type of Visa by Location	4
5	Type of Visa by Mode of Travel.....	4
6	City of Residence by Location.....	5
7	Length of Stay this Trip by Location.....	5
8	Length of Stay this Trip by Mode of Travel.....	6
9	Longest Trip by Location.....	6
10	Longest Trip by Mode of Travel.....	7
11	Accommodations by Location	7
12	Accommodations by Mode of Travel	7
13	Monthly Income by Location.....	8
14	Monthly Income by Mode of Travel.....	8
15	Maquila Employment by Location	9
16	Maquila Employment by Mode of Travel	9
17	Bank Account by Location	9
18	Bank Account by Mode of Travel	9
19	Number of Visits by Location.....	10
20	Number of Visits by Mode of Travel.....	10
21	Mexican Visitor Expenditures by Location	11
22	Mexican Visitor Expenditures by Mode of Travel	12
23	Annual Expenditures in dollars by Monthly Income.....	12
24	Annual Expenditures in dollars by Length of Stay.....	13
25	Maximum Amount of Delay by Location.....	13
26	Maximum Amount of Delay by Mode of Travel.....	13
27	Less Visits by Location.....	14
28	Less Visits by Mode of Travel.....	14
29	Crossing Statistics by Port of Entry and Mode of Travel	15
30	Party Size by Mode of Travel	15
31	Summary of Economic Impacts.....	16
32	Share of Business Attributable to Mexican Nationals (%).....	18
33	Familiarity with US VISIT by Location	21
34	Familiarity with US VISIT by Mode of Travel	21
35	Perceptions of US VISIT	21
36	Estimated Expenditures by Mexican Visitors.....	31

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I. INTRODUCTION

The U.S.-Mexico border extends 1,952 miles (3,141 km). Along this border many cities have prospered sometimes merely as an extension of other cities on the Mexican side. The economies of these cities are dependent to a great extent on the ups and downs of the Mexican economy, as well as regional development through the maquiladora industry and trade treaties between the U.S. and Mexico.

The Lower Rio Grande Valley (LRGV), located at the southernmost tip of Texas, is characterized by a rapidly growing population, an expanding economy and increases in employment, especially in service-related industries. However, as the region's economy has grown, increases in employment and output have not kept pace with the population growth (TCPA, 2002).

Service-providing jobs in Hidalgo and Cameron counties¹ account for about 88 percent of total non-farm employment (BLS, 2004). The retail trade sector, which accounts for about 14 percent of employment in the two-county area, is forecast to add the greatest number of new jobs over the next several years (TCPA, 2002). Growth in the retail sector can be attributed not only to the region's population growth but also to increased cross-border trade. The LRGV, like other areas along the U.S.-Mexico border, receives millions of Mexican visitors every year.

Furthermore, transportation of goods to facilitate cross-border trade is the third fastest growing employment sector of this region's economy as a result of the increased maquiladora manufacturing in Mexico following the implementation of the North American Free Trade Agreement. Clearly the region's economy is reliant on the movement of both goods and trade across the U.S.-Mexico border.

While valley residents intuitively realize the importance of cross-border trade to their economy, no studies have measured the economic impact of Mexican visitors to the area. This study profiles Mexican visitors, measures the magnitude of their annual expenditures, and determines the impact of these expenditures on the economy as a whole. It also provides a picture of the current border-crossing environment garnered from in-depth interviews of Mexican visitors about their experiences entering the U.S. and their perceptions of the US VISIT program to be implemented at LRGV land ports of entry in January 2005.

Any disruption to the orderly flow of people and goods across the border will have a negative impact on a region that is already among the most economically disadvantaged in the country, experiencing one of the nation's highest unemployment rates and lowest levels of income. The regional economy does not have the resilience to absorb significant losses of employment and output resulting from a potential decrease in expenditures from Mexican national visitors or from delays that interfere with the movement of goods across the border.

¹ Hidalgo and Cameron counties are the largest in the LRGV and are the counties utilized in this study

II. METHODOLOGY

The methodology used in this study employs several statistical and econometric techniques. First, a mall-intercept survey was administered to collect data and profile Mexican visitors and their expenditure patterns. Second, an input-output model was employed in order to measure the economic impact of Mexican visitors' expenditures. Finally, in-depth interviews were conducted to place a human face on the issues facing Mexican nationals with Laser visas and to explore their perceptions of the US VISIT Program. Details on survey and interview administration are discussed in the following paragraphs while input-output analysis is elaborated upon in a later section.

Mall-intercept survey

Mexican visitors were surveyed at area malls and downtown shopping areas (La Plaza Mall, McAllen; Sunrise Mall, Brownsville; Downtown Brownsville; and Downtown Weslaco). Surveys were administered by bilingual University of Texas-Pan American students over a four-day period (December 13-16, 2003).

The content of the survey was based on questionnaires utilized by the Center for Tourism Research at the University of Texas-Pan American to profile tourists to the Rio Grande Valley including Winter Texans, Mexican nationals and others (Vincent et al., 2003). Surveys to Mexican visitors conducted by the Economic and Business Research Program at the University of Arizona were also consulted (Charney and Pavlakovich-Kochi, 2002). Several questions related to the wait time at the border, its relation to the frequency of visits to the valley, and perceptions of the US VISIT Program were added to the survey. Copies of the survey in both English and Spanish are included in Appendix B.

In-depth interviews

For the in-depth interviews, we looked for people in a wide variety of situations and places frequented by Mexican visitors and requested an interview. We did not use a questionnaire, but rather a set of general questions designed to get people to discuss their experiences in getting the Laser visa and in crossing the border, their perceptions of what the new US VISIT related regulations were, and their opinions about how these regulations, as they understood them, would affect people like themselves.

III. PROFILE OF MEXICAN VISITORS

Sample size by location and mode of travel

The survey sample size is 1,029 with 80 percent of the surveys administered at La Plaza Mall in McAllen, around 10 percent in Sunrise Mall in Brownsville and the remaining 10 percent split between the downtown areas in Brownsville and Weslaco (7.7 percent and 2.6 percent, respectively) (Table 1). By mode of travel, almost 88 percent of respondents entered the U.S. by car, 6.3 percent by bus, 1.4 percent by air, and 4.6 percent were pedestrians (Table 2). These percentages are relatively representative of the corresponding percentages when considering the total number of people who cross the border on an annual basis. Based on crossing statistics for the fiscal year 2003 provided by the US Customs and Border Protection, car travelers constituted 84.7 percent of the total number of crossers while bus travelers and pedestrians amounted to 2.7 and 12.6 percent, respectively (see Table 29). The reason why pedestrians, in our sample, are underrepresented, while bus travelers are overrepresented may be due to the small sample size in the Downtown areas where the majority of visitors are pedestrian crossers; almost 57 percent of visitors to Downtown Brownsville are pedestrians (Table 3).

Table 1
Sample Size by Location

Location	Number of Surveys	Percentage
La Plaza Mall, McAllen	822	80.0%
Sunrise Mall, Brownsville	101	9.8%
Downtown Brownsville	79	7.7%
Downtown Weslaco	27	2.6%
Total	1,029	100%

Table 2
Sample Size by Mode of Travel

Mode of Travel	Number of Surveys	Percentage
Auto	818	87.7%
Bus	59	6.3%
Air plane	13	1.4%
Pedestrian	43	4.6%
Total	933	100.0%

Table 3
Mode of Travel by Location

	La Plaza Mall McAllen (n = 738)	Sunrise Mall Brownsville (n = 97)	Downtown Brownsville (n = 72)	Downtown Weslaco (n = 26)	Total (n = 933)
Auto	95.4%	73.2%	23.6%	100%	87.7%
Bus	3%	24.7%	18.1%	-	6.3%
Airplane	1.6%	-	1.4%	-	1.4%
Pedestrian	-	2.1%	56.9%	-	4.6%
Total	100%	100%	100%	100%	100%
Missing	10.2%	4%	8.9%	3.7%	9.3%

Type of visa

Tables 4 and 5 report the types of visa used by Mexican visitors to enter the U.S. by location and mode of travel. Laser visa holders account for at least 85 percent across the different locations and various modes of travel, with the exception of air plane travelers (67 percent used laser visas while 33 percent used tourist visas). Tourist visas were used by around 11-12 percent of the sample, while student visas, work visas, and green cards (resident aliens) accounted for less than one percent each.

Table 4
Type of Visa by Location

	La Plaza Mall McAllen (n = 811)	Sunrise Mall Brownsville (n = 99)	Downtown Brownsville (n = 78)	Downtown Weslaco (n = 27)	Total (n = 1015)
Laser visa	84.8%	96%	100%	100%	87.5%
Tourist visa	14.1%	4%	-	-	11.6%
Student visa	.7%	-	-	-	.6%
Work visa (H-1)	.2%	-	-	-	.2%
Resident alien	.1%	-	-	-	.1%
Total	100%	100%	100%	100%	100%
Missing	1.3%	2%	1.3%	-	1.4%

Table 5
Type of Visa by Mode of Travel

	Auto (n = 809)	Bus (n = 57)	Air Plane (n = 12)	Pedestrian (n = 43)	Total (n = 921)
Laser visa	87.9%	84.2%	66.7%	100%	88%
Tourist visa	11.1%	14%	33.3%	-	11.1%
Student visa	.7%	-	-	-	.7%
Work visa (H-1)	.1%	1.8%	-	-	.2%
Resident alien	.1%	-	-	-	.1%
Total	100%	100%	100%	100%	100%
Missing	1.1%	3.4%	7.7%	-	1.3%

City of residence

Table 6 shows that visitors to La Plaza Mall in McAllen came mainly from Monterrey (37.3 percent) and Reynosa (23.1percent). Matamoros was the main source of visitors to Sunrise Mall in Brownsville and the Downtown Brownsville area (62 percent and 79 percent, respectively), while Progreso residents constituted around 33 percent of visitors to Downtown Weslaco.

	La Plaza Mall McAllen (n = 821)	Sunrise Mall Brownsville (n = 100)	Downtown Brownsville (n = 78)	Downtown Weslaco (n = 27)	Total (n = 1026)
Monterrey	37.3%	5%			30.4%
Reynosa	23.1%				18.5%
Matamoros		62%	79%		13.5%
Tampico	4.6%	5%			4.4%
Cd. Victoria		13%			4%
Saltillo	4.4%				
Rio Bravo	4%			7.4%	
Nuevo Progreso				33.3%	
Valle Hermoso			5.1%	7.4%	
Las Flores				7.4%	
Rio Rico				7.4%	
Other	26.6%	15%	15.9%	37.1%	29.2%
Total	100%	100%	100%	100%	100%
Missing	.1%	1%	1.3%	-	.3%

^a Only cities exceeding 4 percent are reported.

Length of Stay on this trip

The number of nights that Mexican visitors spent on this trip is reported in Tables 7 and 8. Respondents were asked to indicate their date of entry into the U.S. and their expected date of exit. The length of stay on this trip (number of nights) was then calculated by subtracting the date of entry from the date of exit. Around half of La Plaza Mall visitors were day-trip visitors, a quarter stayed for one night, and approximately 20 percent stayed for two to three nights. Only five percent of visitors' stays exceeded four nights. Eighty percent of Sunrise Mall visitors entered and returned the same day, while the other 20 percent stayed between one and three nights. On the other hand, almost all of Downtown area visitors were day-trip visitors.

By mode of travel, day-trip travelers were most common among pedestrians (97.5 percent) and bus travelers (70.9 percent) and least common among air travelers (8.3 percent). Around 55 percent of car travelers were day-trip visitors, with the rest staying mainly between one and seven nights.

	La Plaza Mall McAllen (n = 759)	Sunrise Mall Brownsville (n = 98)	Downtown Brownsville (n = 73)	Downtown Weslaco (n = 26)	Total (n = 956)
Zero nights	48.7%	80.6%	95.9%	100%	57%
One night	24.1%	8.2%	1.4%	-	20.1%
Two nights	14.8%	5.1%	1.4%	-	12.3%
Three nights	5.9%	6.1%	-	-	5.3%
Four to seven nights	4.5%	-	-	-	3.6%
Eight to 30 nights	1%	-	1.4%	-	1%
More than 30 nights	.6%	-	-	-	.6%
Total	100%	100%	100%	100%	100%
Missing	7.7%	3%	7.6%	3.7%	7.1%

Table 8
Length of Stay this Trip by Mode of Travel
(number of nights)

	Auto (n = 773)	Bus (n = 55)	Air Plane (n = 12)	Pedestrian (n = 40)	Total (n = 880)
Zero nights	55.4%	70.9%	8.3%	97.5%	57.6%
One night	22%	7.3%	33.3%	-	20.2%
Two nights	13.5%	5.5%	-	2.5%	12.3%
Three nights	5%	7.3%	16.7%	-	5.1%
Four to seven nights	2.8%	7.2%	24.9%	-	3.2%
Eight to 30 nights	.8%	-	16.6%	-	1%
More than 30 nights	.4%	1.8%	-	-	.6%
Total	100%	100%	100%	100%	100%
Missing	5.5%	6.8%	7.7%	7%	5.7%

Longest trip and accommodations

While the majority of visitors did not stay over night on this trip (57 percent), most of these visitors (around 86 percent) had longer stays in the valley on other occasions (Tables 9 and 10). When these visitors stayed for one night or more, the majority of La Plaza Mall visitors (76.5 percent) used a hotel or motel, while the majority of Sunrise Mall (64.2 percent) and Downtown Brownsville visitors (85.3 percent) and all of Weslaco visitors relied on family or friends for their accommodations (Table 11). By mode of travel, car and airplane travelers relied more heavily on the use of hotels/motels (72.9 percent and 59.3 percent, respectively), while bus travelers and pedestrians counted more on their family and friends in the valley for accommodations (55.2 percent and 88.2 percent, respectively) (Table 12).

Table 9
Longest Trip by Location
(number of nights)

	La Plaza Mall McAllen (n = 764)	Sunrise Mall Brownsville (n = 94)	Downtown Brownsville (n = 62)	Downtown Weslaco (n = 27)	Total (n = 947)
Zero nights	6.3%	43.6%	50%	33.3%	13.6%
One night	9.3%	12.8%	9.7%	37%	10.5%
Two nights	14.1%	16%	14.5%	3.7%	14%
Three nights	15.2%	7.4%	8.1%	3.7%	13.6%
Four to seven nights	42.9%	12.8%	12.9%	18.5%	37.1%
Eight to 30 nights	11%	7.6%	3.2%	3.7%	9.8%
More than 30 nights	1.2%	-	1.6%	-	1.1%
Total	100%	100%	100%	100%	100%
Missing	7.1%	6.9%	21.5%	-	8%

Table 10
Longest Trip by Mode of Travel
(number of nights)

	Auto (n = 768)	Bus (n = 53)	Air Plane (n = 13)	Pedestrian (n = 31)	Total (n = 865)
Zero nights	10.9%	43.4%	-	61.3%	14.6%
One night	9.8%	11.3%	-	12.9%	9.8%
Two nights	13.8%	11.3%	15.4%	16.1%	13.8%
Three nights	13.8%	7.5%	15.4%	6.5%	13.2%
Four to seven nights	39.9%	20.8%	30.8%	3.2%	37.3%
Eight to 30 nights	10.5%	3.8%	38.5%	-	10.3%
More than 30 nights	1%	1.9%	-	-	1%
Total	100%	100%	100%	100%	100%
Missing	6.1%	10.2%	-	27.9%	7.3%

Table 11
Accommodations by Location

	La Plaza Mall McAllen (n = 703)	Sunrise Mall Brownsville (n = 53)	Downtown Brownsville (n = 34)	Downtown Weslaco (n = 10)	Total (n = 800)
Family/friends	16.6%	64.2%	85.3%	100%	23.8%
Hotel/motel	76.5%	32.1%	14.7%	-	70%
Rent house	.7%	-	-	-	.6%
Rent apartment/condo	1.1%	1.9%	-	-	1.1%
Own house	3%	1.9%	-	-	2.8%
Own apartment/condo	.7%	-	-	-	.6%
Other	1.3%	-	-	-	1.1%
Total	100%	100%	100%	100%	100%
Missing	14.5%	47.5%	57%	63%	22.3%

Table 12
Accommodations by Mode of Travel

	Auto (n = 672)	Bus (n = 29)	Air Plane (n = 12)	Pedestrian (n = 17)	Total (n = 730)
Family/friends	20.4%	55.2%	25%	88.2%	23.4%
Hotel/motel	72.9%	44.8%	58.3%	5.9%	70%
Rent house	.7%	-	-	-	.7%
Rent apartment/condo	1.3%	-	-	-	1.2%
Own house	2.7%	-	8.3%	5.9%	2.7%
Own apartment/condo	.7%	-	-	-	.7%
Other	1.2%	-	8.3%	-	1.2%
Total	100%	100%	100%	100%	100%
Missing	17.8%	50.8%	7.7%	60.5%	21.8%

Monthly income distribution

Table 13 depicts the monthly income distribution of Mexican visitors by location. The majority of La Plaza Mall visitors (58 percent) falls within the middle monthly income range (12,501 – 50,000 pesos). Visitors to other areas are clustered more within the lower income group. In particular, Downtown Brownsville has 66.7 percent of visitors reporting incomes below 4,000 pesos (\$355) a month. By mode of travel (Table 14), air plane

travelers were the most well to do, while pedestrians were the least well to do. Half of air plane travelers had incomes exceeding 50,000 pesos (\$4,444) per month. In contrast, 90 percent of pedestrians reported monthly household incomes below 8,000 pesos (\$711).

Table 13
Monthly Income by Location
(in pesos²)

	La Plaza Mall McAllen (n = 462)	Sunrise Mall Brownsville (n = 94)	Downtown Brownsville (n = 75)	Downtown Weslaco (n = 27)	Total (n = 658)
<i>Under 2000</i>	6%	11.7%	32%	-	5.8%
<i>2,001 – 4,000</i>	3.2%	12.8%	34.7%	3.7%	8.2%
<i>4,001 – 8,000</i>	4.3%	13.8%	14.7%	22.2%	7.6%
<i>8,001 – 10,000</i>	3%	6.4%	2.7%	11.1%	3.8%
<i>10,000 – 12,500</i>	5%	20.2%	4%	25.9%	7.9%
<i>12,501 – 15,000</i>	5.8%	8.5%	-	11.1%	5.8%
<i>15,001 – 20,000</i>	11%	7.4%	1.3%	14.8%	9.6%
<i>20,001 – 30,000</i>	13%	8.5%	-	11.1%	10.8%
<i>30,001 – 40,000</i>	14.9%	2.1%	1.3%	-	10.9%
<i>40,001 – 50,000</i>	13%	3.2%	1.3%	-	9.7%
<i>50,001 – 75,000</i>	9.7%	-	1.3%	-	7%
<i>75,001 – 100,000</i>	7.1%	3.2%	1.3%	-	5.6%
<i>More than 100,000</i>	5.4%	-	-	-	3.8%
Not applicable	3.7%	2.1%	5.3%	-	3.5%
Total	100%	100%	100%	100%	100%
Missing	43.8%	6.9%	5.1%	-	36.1%

Table 14
Monthly Income by Mode of Travel
(in pesos)

	Auto (n = 521)	Bus (n = 53)	Air Plane (n = 10)	Pedestrian (n = 40)	Total (n = 624)
<i>Under 2000</i>	1.7%	15.1%	-	40%	5.3%
<i>2,001 – 4,000</i>	5.2%	17%	-	35%	8%
<i>4,001 – 8,000</i>	6.9%	13.2%	-	15%	7.9%
<i>8,001 – 10,000</i>	3.6%	7.5%	-	-	3.7%
<i>10,000 – 12,500</i>	8.3%	11.3%	10%	5%	8.3%
<i>12,501 – 15,000</i>	6.7%	3.8%	-	-	5.9%
<i>15,001 – 20,000</i>	10.2%	7.5%	30%	-	9.6%
<i>20,001 – 30,000</i>	11.5%	11.3%	10%	-	10.7%
<i>30,001 – 40,000</i>	13.4%	1.9%	-	-	11.4%
<i>40,001 – 50,000</i>	11.1%	1.9%	-	-	9.5%
<i>50,001 – 75,000</i>	8.3%	-	20%	-	7.2%
<i>75,001 – 100,000</i>	6.3%	-	10%	2.5%	5.6%
<i>More than 100,000</i>	3.6%	-	20%	-	3.4%
Not applicable	3.1%	9.4%	-	2.5%	3.5%
Total	100%	100%	100%	100%	100%
Missing	36.3%	10.2%	23.1%	7%	33.1%

² Exchange rate at the time of the survey was 11.25 pesos per US dollar.

Maquila employment

Visitors who work at maquiladoras across the U.S. border mainly visit Downtown areas; thirty seven percent of Downtown Brownsville’s visitors are employed by a maquiladora (Table 15). They also tend to cross on foot rather than by other modes of travel; forty four percent of pedestrians are maquila employees (Table 16).

Table 15
Maquila Employment by Location

	La Plaza Mall McAllen (n = 371)	Sunrise Mall Brownsville (n = 89)	Downtown Brownsville (n = 64)	Downtown Weslaco (n = 27)	Total (n = 551)
Yes	7.5%	22.5%	37.5%	3.7%	13.2%
No	92.5%	77.5%	62.5%	96.3%	86.8%
Total	100%	100%	100%	100%	100%
Missing	54.9%	11.9%	19%	-	46.5%

Table 16
Maquila Employment by Mode of Travel

	Auto (n = 449)	Bus (n = 44)	Air Plane (n = 8)	Pedestrian (n = 36)	Total (n = 537)
Yes	10%	22.7%	-	44.4%	13.2%
No	90%	77.3%	100%	55.6%	86.8%
Total	100%	100%	100%	100%	100%
Missing	45.1%	25.4%	38.5%	16.3%	42.4%

Bank Account

Around 20 percent of the respondents have bank accounts at a valley financial institution. However, this percent is attributable mainly to visitors to La Plaza Mall in McAllen (Table 17) and those who enter the U.S. via car or plane (Table 18).

Table 17
Bank Account by Location

	La Plaza Mall McAllen (n = 746)	Sunrise Mall Brownsville (n = 87)	Downtown Brownsville (n = 58)	Downtown Weslaco (n = 21)	Total (n = 912)
Yes	23.6%	4.6%	-	-	19.7%
No	76.4%	95.4%	100%	100%	80.3%
Total	100%	100%	100%	100%	100%
Missing	9.2%	13.9%	26.6%	22.2%	11.4%

Table 18
Bank Account by Mode of Travel

	Auto (n = 745)	Bus (n = 54)	Air Plane (n = 10)	Pedestrian (n = 30)	Total (n = 839)
Yes	21.2%	1.9%	30%	-	19.3%
No	78.8%	98.1%	70%	100%	80.7%
Total	100%	100%	100%	100%	100%
Missing	8.9%	8.5%	23.1%	30.2%	10.1%

Number of visits

A Mexican visitor to the valley averaged around 28 visits a year. This number was generally the same for 2002 and 2003. The most frequent visitors were visitors to the Downtown area in Brownsville averaging around a visit a week. The least frequent visitors were La Plaza shoppers who crossed to the U.S. on average twice a month (Table 19). By mode of travel, pedestrians were the most frequent visitors averaging more than a visit per week, while air travelers were the least frequent visitors making around 5 trips a year (Table 20).

Table 19
Number of Visits by Location

	La Plaza Mall McAllen		Sunrise Mall Brownsville		Downtown Brownsville		Downtown Weslaco		Total	
	N	Mean	N	Mean	N	Mean	N	Mean	N	Mean
Visits in 2002	447	24	97	33	70	56	27	28	641	29
Visits in 2003	814	24	101	32	79	49	27	27	1021	27

Table 20
Number of Visits by Mode of Travel

	Auto		Bus		Air Plane		Pedestrian		Total	
	N	Mean	N	Mean	N	Mean	N	Mean	N	Mean
Visits in 2002	509	28	48	14	8	6	40	63	605	29
Visits in 2003	813	27	58	14	13	4	43	57	927	28

Mexican Visitor Expenditures

Table 21 breaks down the expenditures of Mexican visitors by category. La Plaza Mall visitors were by far the biggest spenders averaging around \$1,000 on this trip. Expenditures by visitors to other locations ranged from \$168 to \$337. Though this trip's expenditures in other locations constituted 16 percent to 30 percent of La Plaza Mall visitors' expenditures, annual expenditures at these locations averaged 30 to 53 percent of La Plaza Mall visitors' annual expenditures. This is primarily due to a higher frequency of visits by non-La Plaza Mall visitors.

Given that survey administration was limited to the month of December, per visit expenditures could not be derived directly from this trip's data. Mexican visitors in general are expected to spend more on a December visit than on other visits during the year. Thus, mean annual expenditures in each category were divided by the mean number of visits during 2003 for every location and mode of transportation to arrive at an average expenditures per visit figure. On average, a La Plaza Mall visitor spent around \$200 per visit to the valley, a Sunrise Mall visitor around \$85. A visitor to Downtown Brownsville spent on average \$31 a visit while a Downtown Weslaco visitor spent \$73 per visit.

Table 21
Mexican Visitor Expenditures by Location

	La Plaza Mall McAllen		Sunrise Mall Brownsville		Downtown Brownsville		Downtown Weslaco		Total	
<i>Expenditures on this trip</i>	N	Mean	N	Mean	N	Mean	N	Mean	N	Mean
Groceries	814	\$44	91	\$31	65	\$14	27	\$64	997	\$41
Dining out	814	\$91	91	\$31	65	\$20	27	\$14	997	\$78
Clothes	812	\$613	91	\$235	65	\$83	27	\$159	995	\$532
Appliances	813	\$120	91	\$27	65	\$34	27	\$30	996	\$103
Hotel	812	\$72	90	\$12	65	\$1.4	27	\$0	994	\$60
Medical	812	\$1.6	90	\$0	65	\$0	27	\$0	994	\$1.3
Other	811	\$133	91	\$21	65	\$13	27	\$3	994	\$111
Total	815	\$1,060	100	\$337	76	\$168	27	\$269	1018	\$901
<i>Annual Expenditures</i>										
	817	\$5,100	100	\$2,727	77	\$1,532	27	\$1,978	1021	\$4,516
<i>Average expenditures per visit^a</i>										
		\$213		\$85		\$31		\$73		\$167

^a Average expenditures per visit were calculated as the mean of annual expenditures divided by the average number of visits in 2003 (Table 19).

By mode of travel (Table 22), expenditures on this trip ranged from \$2,451 for air travelers to \$73 for pedestrians, with car and bus travelers spending around \$966 and \$284, respectively. On an annual basis, air travelers were still the biggest spenders averaging around \$8,000 a year, while bus travelers spent the least (\$1,117 a year). Per visit expenditures were by far higher for air travelers (\$2,038) than for those using other modes of travel. Visitors entering the valley by car spent on average \$182 per visit, those entering by bus spent \$80 a visit, while pedestrians averaged around \$20.

Analyzing expenditure patterns across locations and modes of travel reveals that clothing items constituted the largest portion of Mexican shoppers' spending, averaging more than half of total expenditures. Medical expenses, on the other hand, comprised the least portion of expenditures on this visit. Pedestrians and Downtown Weslaco visitors spent the most on groceries. Air plane travelers, as expected, spent the most on hotels and dining out. Appliances and electronics represented around 10 percent of expenditures among all groups.

Table 23 reports annual expenditures broken down by the different income groups. As expected, lower income groups spend less than higher income groups. Individuals whose household income is less than 2,000 pesos/month spend on average around \$1,200 per year, while those whose household incomes exceed 100,000 pesos/month spend around \$14,000 on an annual basis.

	Auto		Bus		Air Plane		Pedestrian		Total	
<i>Expenditures on this trip</i>										
	N	Mean	N	Mean	N	Mean	N	Mean	N	Mean
Groceries	801	\$47	52	\$22	13	\$8	38	\$10	904	\$43
Dining out	801	\$81	52	\$27	13	\$339	38	\$9	904	\$78
Clothes	800	\$557	52	\$180	13	\$1,508	38	\$37	903	\$527
Appliances	800	\$115	52	\$26	13	\$238	38	\$9	903	\$107
Hotel	799	\$62	51	\$14	13	\$269	38	\$0	901	\$59
Medical	799	\$1	51	\$10	13	\$0	38	\$0	901	\$1.4
Other	800	\$128	51	\$15	13	\$88	38	\$11	902	\$116
Total	811	\$966	59	\$284	13	\$2,451	41	\$73	924	\$904
<i>Annual Expenditures</i>										
	813	\$4,915	59	\$1,117	13	\$8,151	42	\$1,132	927	\$4,547
<i>Average expenditures per visit^a</i>										
		\$182		\$80		\$2,038		\$20		\$162

^a Average expenditures per visit were calculated as the mean of annual expenditures divided by the average number of visits in 2003 (Table 20).

	Mean	N
Under 2,000 pesos	\$1,181	38
2,001 – 4,000 pesos	\$1,621	54
4,001 – 8,000 pesos	\$1,761	49
8,001 – 10,000 pesos	\$1,622	24
10,000 – 12,500 pesos	\$2,262	52
12,501 – 15,000 pesos	\$2,577	38
15,001 – 20,000 pesos	\$2,774	63
20,001 – 30,000 pesos	\$4,542	71
30,001 – 40,000 pesos	\$4,761	72
40,001 – 50,000 pesos	\$6,159	64
50,001 – 75,000 pesos	\$10,931	45
75,001 – 100,000 pesos	\$9,977	37
More than 100,000 pesos	\$14,372	25
Not applicable	\$1,537	23
Total	\$4,524	655
Missing		374

By length of stay on this trip (Table 24), the biggest spenders are those who stay eight to 30 nights averaging \$15,000 a year, while those staying more than a month spent the least per year (around \$2,000). Day-trip visitors on this trip averaged around \$3,700 annually.

Table 24
Annual Expenditures in dollars by Length of Stay

	Mean	N
Zero nights	\$3,663	542
One night	\$4,110	189
Two nights	\$7,071	118
Three nights	\$7,863	49
Four to seven nights	\$5,516	34
Eight to 30 nights	\$14,950	10
More than 30 nights	\$2,108	6
Total	\$4,569	948
Missing		81

Questions related to border delays

Tables 25 and 26 report Mexican visitors' responses to the maximum amount of delays they are willing to accept when entering the U.S. More than half the respondents (57 percent) were not willing to wait more than an hour, with another third not willing to wait more than two hours. Across locations and modes of travel, 92 to 100 percent of the respondents indicated that the maximum amount of acceptable delay was between a few minutes and up to 2 hours.

Table 25
Maximum Amount of Delay by Location

Wait Time	La Plaza Mall McAllen (n = 818)	Sunrise Mall Brownsville (n = 101)	Downtown Brownsville (n = 78)	Downtown Weslaco (n = 27)	Total (n = 1024)
	Less than one hour	52.3%	75.2%	71.8%	96.3%
1-2 hours	40.1%	22.8%	26.9%	3.7%	36.4%
2-3 hours	5.6%	1%	1.3%	-	4.7%
3-4 hours	.7%	-	-	-	.6%
More than 4 hours	1.2%	1%	-	-	1.1%
Total	100%	100%	100%	100%	100%
Missing	.5%	-	1.3%	-	.5%

Table 26
Maximum Amount of Delay by Mode of Travel

Wait Time	Auto (n = 815)	Bus (n = 59)	Air Plane (n = 13)	Pedestrian (n = 43)	Total (n = 930)
	Less than one hour	56%	52.5%	69.2%	76.7%
1-2 hours	37.2%	40.7%	23.1%	20.9%	36.5%
2-3 hours	5%	6.8%	7.7%	2.3%	5.1%
3-4 hours	.6%	-	-	-	.5%
More than 4 hours	1.2%	-	-	-	1.1%
Total	100%	100%	100%	100%	100%
Missing	.4%	-	-	-	.2%

Tables 27 and 28 describe whether longer delays would translate into a lower number of visits. Almost three quarters of Mexican visitors indicated that longer delays at the border would make them less likely to visit the valley. Those most affected by delays were Downtown Weslaco visitors who unanimously indicated that longer delays would make them visit less frequently. Bus travelers' decision to visit was least affected by the amount of delay; forty four percent stated that longer waits will not reduce the frequency of their visits.

Table 27
Less Visits by Location

	La Plaza Mall McAllen (n = 814)	Sunrise Mall Brownsville (n = 100)	Downtown Brownsville (n = 77)	Downtown Weslaco (n = 27)	Total (n = 1018)
Less visits					
Yes	69.9%	78%	71.4%	100%	71.6%
No	30.1%	22%	28.6%	-	28.4%
Total	100%	100%	100%	100%	100%
Missing	1%	1%	2.5%	-	1.1%

Table 28
Less Visits by Mode of Travel

	Auto (n = 813)	Bus (n = 59)	Air Plane (n = 13)	Pedestrian (n = 41)	Total (n = 926)
Less visits					
Yes	72.7%	55.9%	84.6%	78%	72%
No	27.3%	44.1%	15.4%	22%	28%
Total	100%	100%	100%	100%	100%
Missing	.6%	-	-	4.7%	.8%

Number of Mexican visitors

The United States Customs and Border Protection, Department of Homeland Security was the main source of crossing statistics for the fiscal year 2003. Table 29 reports the number of northbound traffic (buses, privately owned vehicles, and pedestrians) for ports of entry along the lower Rio Grande Valley. The table also provides estimates of the total number of individual crossers based on the assumption that there are 2.5 passengers per vehicle and 30 passengers per bus. Of these, the US Customs and Border Protection estimates that 43 percent are Mexican visa holders. Thus, there were 22,716,080 crossings by Mexican visa holders in fiscal year 2003, with 84.7 percent of crossers entering via privately owned vehicles, 12.6 percent on foot, and 2.7 percent by bus.

Port of Entry	Crossing	Buses		POVs^b		Pedestrians	
Brownsville	Gateway Bridge		508		2,286,188		2,674,965
Brownsville	B&M Bridge		0		2,255,665		154,240
Brownsville	Los Indios		102		762,931		4,449
Brownsville	Los Tomates Bridge		11,879		2,092,813		109,138
Brownsville	Los Tomates Import Lot		0		0		0
Total Crossers^c - Brownsville			374,670		18,493,993		2,942,792
Mexican Visa Holders^d - Brownsville			161,108		7,952,417		1,265,401
Hidalgo	Hidalgo		31,692		5,156,387		2,069,885
Hidalgo	Pharr		846		2,188,233		46,807
Total Crossers - Hidalgo			976,140		18,361,550		2,116,692
Mexican Visa Holders - Hidalgo			419,740		7,895,467		910,178
Rio Grande City	Rio Grande City		0		676,259		20,531
Rio Grande City	Los Ebanos		0		34,196		101,448
Total Crossers - Rio Grande City			0		1,776,138		121,979
Mexican Visa Holders - Rio Grande City			0		763,739		52,451
Progreso	Progreso		786		1,137,654		1,252,888
Total Crossers - Progreso			23,580		2,844,135		1,252,888
Mexican Visa Holders - Progreso			10,139		1,222,978		538,742
Roma	Roma		2,244		1,137,865		233,580
Roma	Falcon Dam		13		159,034		0
Total Crossers - Roma			67,710		3,242,248		233,580
Mexican Visa Holders - Roma			29,115		1,394,166		100,439
Total number of Mexican Visa holders			620,103		19,228,767		2,867,210
			(2.7%)		(84.7%)		(12.6%)

^a United States Customs and Border Protection, Unpublished Data.

^b Privately owned vehicles.

^c Authors' calculations based on the assumption that there are 2.5 passengers³ per vehicle and 30 passengers per bus.

^d Authors' calculations based on US Customs and Border Protection unpublished data indicating that around 43 percent of total people crossing are Mexican visa holders. An inherent assumption in the calculations is that the 43 percent is the same across all modes of travel.

Party size based on our sample data is reported in Table 30.

	Auto		Bus		Air Plane		Pedestrian		Total	
	N	Mean	N	Mean	N	Mean	N	Mean	N	Mean
Adults	702	2.86	54	2.04	12	3.92	32	1.75	800	2.84
Children	303	1.46	14	1.57	1	1	7	1.86	325	1.47

³ Survey results show that there are 2.86 adults per auto party (Table 30). Since our survey administration was limited to the month of December, the 2.5 party size figure was used based on a review of similar studies (Vincent et al., 2003; Charney and Pavlakovich-Kochi, 2002).

IV. ECONOMIC IMPACT ANALYSIS

Input-output models are among the most common methods of measuring changes in regional economic activity based on changes in consumption. An input-output model depicts inter-industry relationships within an economy and is used to estimate the response of an economy to a change in demand or production. Based on monetary transaction flows, both between businesses and between businesses and final consumers, the model estimates a series of impacts (direct, indirect, and induced) to a regional economy. In this study, the 1999 IMPLAN (Impact Analysis for PLANning) model is used to measure the economic impact of Mexican visitors to the Rio Grande valley.

Economic impacts refer to the output, jobs, wages and tax revenues generated in the local economy as a result of Mexican visitors' expenditures. Direct, indirect, induced and total effects are reported in Table 31. The direct effects are output (sales), income, and employment generated directly by the dollars spent by Mexican visitors. The indirect effects are due to inter-business purchases in response to direct expenditures. The induced effects are the result of households increasing their expenditures when receiving income through the direct and indirect expenditures. Total effects are the sum of all three effects.

Mexican visitor spending of almost \$1.4 billion⁴ creates directly 37,000 jobs and generates \$488 million in wages (employee compensation) and \$186 million in business taxes. This spending triggers around \$116 million dollars in inter-business transactions producing in the process almost 1500 jobs. Income increases for households in turn induce an additional \$157 million in output and 2,500 jobs. In total, Mexican visitor spending has an output impact of approximately \$1.7 billion, employment impact of 41,000 jobs, wage impact of \$560 million, and tax impact of \$203 million.

Table 31
Summary of Economic Impacts

	Output Impact	Employment Impact (jobs)	Employee Compensation	Indirect Business Taxes
Direct effects	\$1,397,514,609	37,065	\$487,604,326	\$186,053,504
Indirect effects	\$115,868,962	1,462	\$28,509,182	\$5,722,256
Induced effects	\$157,231,196	2,522	\$44,548,333	\$11,066,010
Total effects	\$1,670,614,767	41,049	\$560,661,841	\$202,841,770

To put the numbers in perspective, the Texas Comptroller of Public Accounts website was consulted. Gross sales figures for the retail trade sector in 2002⁵ were retrieved. For Cameron and Hidalgo counties, the gross sales figure stood at around \$6 billion. Adding up Mexican visitors expenditures for the "clothing", "appliances" and "other" categories amounted to approximately \$1.1 billion. Thus, considering only direct expenditures,

⁴ It is worth noting that an extremely conservative approach at all levels was adopted when estimating expenditures.

⁵ Though the 2003 figures are a better benchmark to use, the Texas Comptroller of Public Accounts only had data for the first three quarters of 2003 at the time of release of this report.

Mexican visitors account for at least 18 percent of the retail sector in the lower Rio Grande valley.

In terms of employment, IMPLAN reports that employment in Cameron and Hidalgo counties was 333,866 in 1999. Assuming a four percent increase in employment over the 1999-2003 period, employment in the two-county area would amount to approximately 390,000⁶. Hence, Mexican expenditures support more than 10 percent of the employment level in the region. Taking into account only non-farm employment for the McAllen-Edinburg-Mission and Brownsville-Harlingen-San Benito metropolitan statistical areas (289,800 jobs in 2003, BLS), the figure rises to 14 percent.

At the output level, total personal income⁷ for the two counties was \$13.5 billion in 2001 (Bureau of Economic Accounts). Assuming a four percent growth rate, total output in 2003 would equal \$14.6 billion. Consequently, the total effect of Mexican expenditures constitutes around 12 percent of area output.

⁶ The Bureau of Labor Statistics (BLS) reports employment at 281,982 in 1999 for the McAllen-Edinburg-Mission and Brownsville-Harlingen-San Benito metropolitan statistical areas (MSAs). Growth rates in employment average 3.85 percent per year over the period 1999-2002.

⁷ Total personal income is an output measure utilizing the income approach.

V. IMPORTANCE OF MEXICAN VISITORS TO SOUTH PADRE ISLAND

South Padre Island is a resort community at the southernmost tip of Padre Island. The mainstay of the island's economy is tourism. Clientele include Mexican nationals, local valley residents, winter Texans and spring breakers. Most of the businesses are related to the tourism industry: hotels, restaurants, condominiums, and gift shops.

Among Mexican nationals from northern Mexico, South Padre Island is a favorite vacationing spot. Around half the respondents of our mall survey indicated that they had visited the island in the past year staying on average 3.7 nights.

To further investigate the importance of Mexican visitors on the island's economy, surveys were sent to island hotels, retailers, and rental agencies. Though the total number of returned surveys was relatively small, the answers confirmed that Mexican visitors were an essential constituent of island tourism.

Based on six retail, four hotel, and two rental agency surveys, the following could be observed:

- A third of island visitors (approximately 70,000 in 2003⁸) are from Mexico.
- The months of April, July and August are the peak vacationing months for Mexican visitors. In April (*Semana Santa*), Mexican nationals constitute more than three quarters of island visitors and account for 60+ percent of hotel and condominium rentals. During the months of July and August, around half of island visitors are from Mexico with approximately 40 percent of hotel and condominium rentals attributable to them (Table 32).

	Jan	Feb	Mar	Apr	May	Jun	Jul	Aug	Sep	Oct	Nov	Dec
Hotels	11	15	22	43	32	37	45	38	37	25	11	15
Condo Rentals	8	8	13	80	20	30	35	40	5	8	8	15

- All retailers, except one, indicated that a third of their sales is generated by Mexican nationals. The exception, an interior home décor store, attributed three quarters of its business activity to Mexican visitors.
- One of the managers of rental agencies indicated that of the condominium units that his agency manages, Mexican ownership stood at 40 percent (40 of 100 units) and house ownership at 12.5 percent (10 of 80 houses). The other manager stated that condominium ownership by Mexicans constituted nine percent (20 of 220 condominiums) with no Mexican house ownership among the property his/her agency managed. Property values ranged from \$250,000 to \$300,000.
- All respondents were familiar with the US VISIT Program. All, except one retailer, felt that the program would impact their business on the island through shorter and less frequent visits.

⁸ Based on Randall Travel's 2000 survey and growth estimates provided by local business people.

- Seven of the twelve respondents had heard complaints/remarks from Mexican nationals about
 - the unfairness of their treatment relative to Canadians,
 - their reluctance to invest in real estate and their consideration of other vacationing options if the length of their stays is curtailed.

VI. US VISIT RELATED FINDINGS

The United States Visitor and Immigrant Status Indicator Technology (US VISIT) program is an automated entry/exit system designed to collect information on foreign nationals traveling to the United States with visas. It collects biometric identifiers (two finger scans and a digital photograph) to verify a visitor's identity and to update his/her travel records. Among the objectives of the program is the enhancement of security, the facilitation of legitimate travel and trade, and ensuring the integrity of the immigration system. Program entry capabilities have been in place since Jan. 5th, 2004 at 115 airports and 14 seaports. At land ports of entry, capabilities will be put into place at the 50 busiest land borders by the end of 2004. Exit capabilities are projected to be ready by the end of 2005.

There is a great deal of apprehension about the proposed implementation of fingerprinting and other requirements related to the US VISIT Program within local communities on both sides of the border. Some of the apprehension is caused by misperceptions and incorrect information. Most of it, however, is caused by previous experiences with U.S. officials at the bridges. Mexicans who come to shop, do business, engage in tourism, purchase real estate, visit family, or to utilize specialized services (such as medical care) almost always have personal stories about difficulties they have had upon entering the United States. From these experiences, almost all anticipate that these negatives will be greatly magnified under the proposed changes. To understand the perceptions and concerns of visitors, a section of our survey had questions related to the US VISIT Program. We then followed through with 115 in-depth interviews detailing the concerns of Mexican nationals and the possible effects program implementation will have on people who visit the U.S. using Laser visas.

Survey results

Several questions were included in the survey to gauge the level of familiarity of Mexican visitors with the US Visit Program. Tables 33 and 34 indicate that the majority of respondents (85 percent) have not heard of the program. This result, however, varies considerably between locations and across modes of travel. Brownsville visitors, especially those in the Downtown area, seem to have a higher level of awareness of the program than McAllen visitors; sixty two percent of Downtown Brownsville visitors and 46 percent of Sunrise Mall visitors stated that they were familiar with the program. This is in contrast with only eight percent of La Plaza Mall visitors. Across modes of travel, the majority of pedestrians (67 percent) were familiar with the program, while only 33 percent of bus travelers, 12 percent of car travelers and eight percent of plane travelers knew about it.

To explore the perceptions Mexican visitors have of the US VISIT Program, respondents familiar with the program were presented with several statements and were asked to indicate their agreement or disagreement (Table 35). In general, those surveyed felt that implementation of the program will impede the entry of Mexican nationals into the U.S. Nearly two thirds thought that the US VISIT will affect the holders of Laser visas, with

42 percent believing that a Laser visa holder will not be able to enter the U.S. if the program is implemented. A whopping 83 percent agreed with the statement that the program will make it hard for Mexican nationals to cross the border. Ninety four percent correctly concurred that the program will monitor the length of stay of visa holders, and more than 80 percent felt that implementation of the US VISIT will result in delays upon entering and exiting the U.S. Finally, almost three quarters of those respondents said that they will be less likely to visit if the program is implemented.

Table 33
Familiarity with US VISIT by Location

	La Plaza Mall McAllen (n = 817)	Sunrise Mall Brownsville (n = 81)	Downtown Brownsville (n = 52)	Downtown Weslaco (n = 27)	Total (n = 977)
Yes	7.8%	45.7%	61.5%	25.9%	14.3%
No	92.2%	54.3%	38.5%	74.1%	85.7%
Total	100%	100%	100%	100%	100%
Missing	.6%	19.8%	34.2%	-	5.1%

Table 34
Familiarity with US VISIT by Mode of Travel

	Auto (n = 795)	Bus (n = 55)	Air Plane (n = 13)	Pedestrian (n = 27)	Total (n = 890)
Yes	11.9%	32.7%	7.7%	66.7%	14.8%
No	88.1%	67.3%	92.3%	33.3%	85.2%
Total	100.0%	100.0%	100.0%	100.0%	100.0%
Missing	2.8%	6.8%	-	37.2%	4.6%

Table 35
Perceptions of US VISIT

<i>Statement</i>	<i>Agree</i>	<i>Disagree</i>	<i>Not sure</i>	<i>N</i>
The US VIST Program will not affect holders of Laser visas.	31.1%	61.5%	7.4%	122
If the US VISIT Program is implemented, Laser visa holders will not be able to enter the US.	42.4%	44.0%	13.6%	125
The US VISIT Program will make it hard for Mexican nationals to enter the US.	83.0%	13.3%	3.7%	135
The US VISIT Program will monitor the length of stay of visa holders.	94.2%	4.4%	1.5%	137
The US VISIT Program will result in additional delays upon entering the US.	87.6%	8.0%	4.4%	137
The US VISIT Program will result in additional delays upon exiting the US.	81.0%	12.4%	6.6%	137
	<i>More likely</i>	<i>Less likely</i>	<i>Same</i>	<i>N</i>
Likelihood of visiting if program is implemented	1.4%	73.2%	25.4%	138

Summary of in-depth interviews

Problems

Almost everyone we interviewed believed that the new requirements will drastically worsen an already difficult crossing experience. Visitors complained that U.S. officials seemed to pay little attention to how long the lines back up in Mexico before they open additional lanes. One man from Zacatecas, for example, comes once or twice a month to buy clothing for resale in Mexico. “In December,” he says, “I had to wait in line for more than an hour and a half. That tells me that with the new system I might take even longer getting across and then have to worry about spending just as much time getting back into Mexico. Even if they only run the card through a scanner, I will probably have to get out of my car, especially if there are several of us traveling together.”

Another woman states, “I’ve never had any really bad experiences while crossing, but the time we have to wait for them to check our papers is always frustrating. I would think that such a technologically advanced country could find ways to improve their inspection process to make it much faster.” A young couple agreed. “With this program,” said the wife, “I don’t even want to imagine how long it will take to cross. If we’re in a van with eight persons, for example, how long will it take to check everyone’s fingerprints? I think most of us would rather not even try to cross.”

The fear of what will happen when several people come in one car is a major concern. One couple who own a business in Mexico live in a nice residential area in Mission. “A lot of people that come from Mexico,” explains the wife, “travel in only one car in order to save gas. Sometimes, there are 4 or 5 friends in the same car. If they change the requirements, we will not be able to travel together because if they do not let one of us cross, we would all have to go back. This happened one time with one of my friends. We needed to get to the airport in McAllen to catch a flight to Miami. They wouldn’t let one of us cross. We all had to go back because she had no other way to get back home.”

One woman from Reynosa explained one of the problems for those who cross the bridge on foot. “When we cross,” she says, “we are out in the open in long lines. When it is hot and very sunny, there is no way to protect ourselves. Imagine what it will be like if they take even longer to inspect us. Someone could get very sick waiting in lines like that.”

This same woman described other difficulties of the inspection process. “Sometimes they say, ‘you crossed yesterday. Why do you need to cross again today?’ When they asked me that, I had to explain that my husband had pawned a bracelet that I needed to get back. It’s embarrassing and frightening. I try to cross with my sons so they can help me with all the explaining. The officers sometimes check every little detail. I understand what the Americans have gone through with the terrorists and that they have a right to be strict, but I come just for shopping and they make me afraid they will take away my visa.”

Perhaps an even greater frustration among the 115 people we interviewed was the constant atmosphere of suspicion. One Reynosa resident, for example, said, “It was very

difficult to get our laser visa. My sister has still not been able to get hers. She has a good job in Mexico and that it is what they said she needed. She and her son have a retail business. She has spent a lot of money on applications and they have denied her three times.” Another man agreed. “It was very difficult to get my laser visa,” he said. “They made me show a lot of papers and then they turned me down. I lost everything I had paid and then I had to start all over again. I have it now, but every time I cross, I’m really afraid they’ll take it away. Sometimes, when I come to shop, they make me show how much money I have.”

Many of our subjects dislike the inconsistency they experience with U.S. immigration officers. One resident of a very upscale neighborhood in the Valley, for example, said, “One day we went to get a permit for a relative to go North of the Border Patrol checkpoint at Falfurrias. They asked him if he had more than \$500 in cash. He told them he didn’t carry that much cash but that he had credit cards. They were not going to give him a permit until he finally showed all his electricity bills, and every other receipt he had. Sometimes, it is humiliating to even go to ask for a permit. Most officers ask for nothing and treat you very well. Others demand all kinds of paperwork--things that are not on any list of what is required. We never know what to expect.”

Several of the people we interviewed were frustrated by having to constantly show proof that they intended to live in Mexico. “We had to bring all kinds of papers and documents to get the visa,” said one. “Why should we have to keep bringing all those papers when we present our laser visa at the border?”

This resentment of the distrustful attitude was reflected by another woman from Veracruz. She said, “Sometimes they think our cards are fake. We know people who have had their cards taken away just because the officer doesn’t believe them. Some of the officers do not seem well trained. They seem to have a very narrow view of Mexicans. They think we are coming to see what we can get from them. Most of us come here to buy things. Many of us even pay taxes in the U.S. Why can’t they treat us more like the Canadians who can come for six months? They only give us three days!”

This fear is not just imagined. Several of the people we interviewed knew someone who has had their visa taken away, with no chance to appeal the officer’s decision. One man from Reynosa said, “They took my brother’s visa away when he was crossing. They told him he would not be able to get another laser visa for five years. They said he had been crossing too often, mostly in the mornings, so he must be coming to a job in the United States. He didn’t have a job here. He was coming over on a frequent basis to buy things to resell in Mexico. That makes all of us afraid of what will happen when they start taking finger prints and knowing with their computers how often we come. Some people have been banned from having a laser visa for 10 years or even an indefinite time.”

Some times the resentment arises from cultural misunderstandings. One older woman from Reynosa, for example, complained about the rude treatment she gets from immigration officers. “They talk to me in a bad way,” she says. “When I drive up in my car, they talk to me using the familiar (tú) form saying ‘¿cómo estás?’ or ‘¿de dónde

vienes? (where are you from).’ That is very rude when talking to a person of my age.⁹ They need more training.”

The apparent insensitivity of some officers was reflected in other interviews. One woman from Reynosa described the experience of her daughter who applied for a visa to go to Louisiana. “She was going to visit her boyfriend who is in jail there,” she says. “The immigration officer asked her why she would want to see a man who is not good for her. They have no right to interfere in something that is none of their business.”

Effects

As Mexican laser visa holders spoke with us about the implementation of finger printing and computerized entry and exit, almost all believed it would have a strong negative impact on life on both sides of the border. One couple from Matamoros, for example, comes to the U.S. two or three times a week to make purchases and visit family. “We usually like to spend our vacations together,” they said. “If they start enforcing the 72 hour requirement, that won’t be enough time. We just won’t come. It would be better to have our family from the U.S. go to Mexico to visit us.”

One very popular destination for Mexican tourists is South Padre Island. Large numbers of Mexicans with laser visas go there for week-long vacations. One 74 year old woman who was interviewed with her daughter said, “I have three sisters who live in Weslaco. I regularly go with my sons to their house or to South Padre Island when they are on vacation. This change will affect us because we can’t do in 72 hours what we are used to doing in a week or more.”

Many border residents are fearful of what the long lines and tougher inspections will do to their visits in the interior of the United States. Most drive to the McAllen airport for flights to other parts of the U.S. “Three years ago,” says one, “I was going to New York. They stopped me at the border for a more detailed inspection. I told them I would miss my plane, and there was someone waiting for me in the airport in New York. It made no difference to the officer. I missed my flight. Everything depends on which officer inspects you.”

Many laser visa holders from Monterrey are very well to do. Several we talked to expressed similar concerns. “We like to come to McAllen for week-long shopping and tourism,” said one. “Seventy-two hours is just not enough time. It just wouldn’t be worth the trip.”

Antonio, one Mexican who has a business in McAllen described a probable effect of the new regulations. “Many people from Monterrey,” he said, “will start flying into San Antonio. The officials at the airports treat them much better¹⁰, so they will spend their money up there and we will lose their business here on the border.”

⁹ In much of the Spanish-speaking world, it is a sign of disrespect to use the familiar form with an older person.

¹⁰ Many of the people we interviewed who had crossed into the U.S. by land and by air said they are treated much better by immigration officers at U.S. airports. The INS attitude at border ports of entry seems to be

Though wealthy people from Monterrey do contribute substantially to the economy of South Texas, a great deal of the cross-border commerce is from shoppers of more modest incomes. One 53 year-old woman from Reynosa, for example, comes about once a week to buy groceries for herself and for friends who do not have laser visas. “If they implement this program,” she says, “I would come much less often because it took me too long to get the visa and I can’t risk having them take it away from me. It was a great sacrifice for me to get the visa and no one else in my family could get one. I come to buy groceries because everything is cheaper here. Every time I come and make large purchases, I also run the risk that the Mexican officials will take everything away when I cross back into Mexico.¹¹”

Though the effect of the proposed changes on cross-border shopping will likely be substantial, other business on both sides of the border will also be greatly affected. One man who works for a Mexican company as a truck driver describes a recent problem. “The last time I drove my truck across the border,” he says, “the U.S. officers did not let me enter because they found I had a laser visa. They sent me back to Mexico. My boss was upset, but not at me because he knew it was not my fault. I think things will only get worse with the long lines and the confusion about what visa we can have.”

Many Mexicans with laser visas like to come to the U.S. to buy used items at flea markets and other outlets for discontinued or used items. Many of them fear what will happen to them when US Customs and Border Protection is able to see that they cross frequently. One man crosses at least twenty times a month to take items to Mexico. “One time I was crossing every day for more than a week,” he says, “and the immigration officers asked me why I was crossing so often. I explained I was from Zacatecas and I liked to come to the flea market and to other places to buy many things. After I have made many trips back and forth across the border, I take the merchandise to Zacatecas. One time I asked the officer why he checked me so thoroughly every time I crossed. He jokingly said it was my fault for having a suspicious face.”

One man who buys more expensive items for resale says the proposed changes will make it very difficult for him. “Many times,” he says, “I have to carefully choose my merchandise. Sometimes I can do it in three days, but if they do not have an item, I have to order it and it may take more time to get it from Houston. With the new regulations, I may have to leave before something comes in or risk losing my visa.”

Many of the people we spoke with also believed the proposed changes would have a major impact on the local real estate market. One woman, for example, said, “We have family from Monterrey. They have a condominium at South Padre Island. If they can spend just 72 hours before having to return, it will be a big problem. They are used to coming and staying up to a month during their vacation times.”

that their function is mainly law enforcement. The US Customs and Border Protection attitude at airports, in contrast, appears to be closer to the idea of providing a service.

¹¹ The limits that the Mexican government puts on cross-border shoppers, with the attendant risks of having some purchases confiscated, was a commonly expressed concern.

One person who owns a home in Cimarron (an upscale neighborhood near the border) says that a lot of people from Mexico who live there are planning to put their homes up for sale. "Here in Cimarron," she says, "more than 50 houses are owned by people from Mexico. Many of them are retired people and they bought the home to come and stay whatever they wanted. They are getting discouraged and are thinking of selling because the strict enforcement of the 72 hour limitation will be just too much trouble."

Many laser visa holders also worry about the effects on their cross-border family relations. One woman says, for example, "I have relatives who come to visit me using their laser visas. Sometimes, they are treated very badly at the border. Mostly, though, they just don't know what to expect. I don't think they will come as often if they can only stay 3 days when they are used to staying one or two weeks. They have told me they are thinking they will not come anymore because it's too far to stay for only three days."

Many people in this situation believe the U.S. officials do not understand the importance of strong family relations for people from Mexico. One woman we talked to is a resident alien, residing legally in the United States. Previously, she had a laser visa. "I had a lot of problems then," she says. "When I would come for family visits, I was afraid to say I was coming to see family, so I would say I came for shopping. Then they asked me to show them my money. I did not have much and sometimes they did not let me cross."

Although there are visas for individuals wanting to visit family in the United States, they are hard to get for many people. One woman who has been a legal resident for 7 years has two sons living in Mexico. "When they come for visits or vacations," she says, "they have always been able to use their laser visas and have stayed their whole vacation period. My grandchildren like to stay here with their grandma. It's the same at Christmas. We always spend Christmas together. If I tell my relatives they will need new visas, they are going to ask me if they will be as hard to get as their laser visas. I don't think they could do it, especially if they have to pay again. All these visas are just too hard to get and too expensive for large families."

Some of our interviewees felt that the new requirements would also impact their children attending private schools on this side of the border. One man, for example, said, "If the time to cross gets any longer, I just couldn't do it on a daily basis."

Others believe the new regulations will create problems for people on both sides of the border who have medical needs. One woman from Mexico, for example, says that her daughter, a U.S. resident, often needs her to come stay with the baby. "When she had her first baby," she says, "I was with her for more than a month. I did go back to Mexico on weekends because I do not like living in the US. It's going to be hard to help her when she has a doctor's appointment or needs help for something more serious."

One couple who have laser visas discovered another problem. "One time they stopped us," says the husband, "because my wife was pregnant. They did not let us cross because they thought we were bringing her over here to have her baby, even though she was only

six months pregnant. I had to leave her at the border because I had some urgent things to take care of. She had to walk back to Mexico. I hurried and managed to get back to pick her up in 45 minutes. They told us if she wanted to cross again while she was pregnant, she would have to have a letter from her doctor in Mexico. We couldn't do that, though, because everything in Mexico is handled by the hospital."

Another man describes a related problem. "At this moment," he says, "my mother is in the hospital in McAllen. She came to visit an uncle. While she was here she got sick and had to go to the hospital. She has been there since last Sunday and needs dialysis. She is worried that they will take her laser visa away if they find out that she did not return in three days. I think that what they are proposing to do with the laser visa is not good."

VII. CONCLUSION

Mexican visitors are an important contributor to the economic viability of the Lower Rio Grande Valley. Their annual expenditures help support at least 10 percent of the area's economy and employment. This report focused on their impact within the retail sector. There are many other areas where their contribution is as important. The real estate market and the banking sector are two examples worth further exploration and analysis. Any disruption to Mexican visiting patterns, whether in the form of economic downturns, policy changes, etc., has serious consequences on the economy of the region.

The US VISIT Program may be one example of an event that may seriously discourage Mexican visitors from crossing into the U.S. Several steps, however, can be taken to ensure that the implementation of the Program interferes minimally with the livelihood of businesses and society along the border.

Adequate Infrastructure and Technology

Delays are a serious deterrent to the frequency of visits. Based on our findings, 70 percent of respondents indicated that they would reduce the frequency of their visits if confronted with long lines and excessive waits. For this reason, it is essential that the government ensures that adequate infrastructure (lanes, personnel, etc.) and technology are in place before the initiation of the program at land ports of entry. The current facilities are already lacking and over stretched, and, in many cases, cannot meet the current needs of an efficient and fast crossing experience¹².

Proper Training

Our in-depth interviews revealed various incidents of unprofessional and non-courteous interaction between Department of Homeland Security (DHS) officials and Mexican visitors. This has created feelings of frustration and resentment and, in some cases, has led people to re-evaluate their decisions to visit the U.S. It is important that the personnel in charge of our borders be trained to respect people legally seeking admission into the country. Extensive background and security checks are conducted prior to the issuance of a laser visa. There is no need to duplicate the process and to interrogate individuals holding these visas at land ports of entry.

Education

There are some misconceptions among visitors as to what the US VISIT truly entails. For this reason, local communities and the government through its consulates in Mexico should engage in educational campaigns aimed at clarifying any questions and ambiguities surrounding the program.

72-hour limit

With the proposed tracking of visitors upon exiting the U.S., it is important that policy makers revisit the 72-hour limit of Laser visas. While a lot of visitors abide by this limit,

¹² For an excellent exposition of the infrastructure status at land ports of entry, see the DMIA Task Force Second Annual Report to Congress, available online at: <http://uscis.gov/graphics/shared/lawenfor/bmgmt/inspect/DMIAConReport2.pdf>

the economic and social reality of border life dictates that such a stringent rule be revised to facilitate legal and legitimate travel along the border area.

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APPENDIX A

Table 36
Estimated Expenditures by Mexican Visitors

<i>Mode of Travel^a</i>		<i>Groceries</i>	<i>Dining out</i>	<i>Clothes</i>	<i>Appliances</i>	<i>Hotel</i>	<i>Medical</i>	<i>Other</i>	<i>Total</i>
Auto	Mean	\$46.66	\$80.79	\$556.99	\$114.57	\$61.52	\$.96	\$127.77	\$989.27
	% of Total	4.7%	8.2%	56.3%	11.6%	6.2%	.1%	12.9%	100%
	Average spending/visit/party ^b	\$8.58	\$14.86	\$102.47	\$21.08	\$11.32	\$0.18	\$23.51	\$182
	Total estimated spending by auto parties^c	\$66,023,052	\$114,320,947	\$788,169,271	\$162,126,975	\$28,597,975^d	\$1,363,685	\$180,794,067	\$1,341,395,972
Bus	Mean	\$22.27	\$27.35	\$180.46	\$26.27	\$13.53	\$10.49	\$15.49	\$295.86
	% of Total	7.5%	9.2%	61%	8.9%	4.6%	3.6%	5.2%	100%
	Average spending/visit/party ^b	\$6.02	\$7.39	\$48.8	\$7.1	\$3.66	\$2.84	\$4.19	\$80
	Total estimated spending by bus parties^e	\$1,830,386	\$2,247,676	\$14,832,763	\$2,159,160	\$145,120^f	\$862,226	\$1,273,193	\$23,350,523
Pedestrian	Mean	\$9.74	\$9.34	\$36.61	\$8.68	\$0	\$0	\$10.92	\$75.29
	% of Total	12.9%	12.4%	48.6%	11.5%	0%	0%	14.5%	100%
	Average spending/visit/party ^b	\$2.59	\$2.48	\$9.72	\$2.31	\$0	\$0	\$2.9	\$20
	Total estimated spending by pedestrian parties^g	\$4,237,750	\$4,065,949	\$15,931,649	\$3,779,615	\$0	\$0	\$4,753,152	32,768,114
Total	Mean	\$43.14	\$78.43	\$527.10	\$106.82	\$59.21	\$1.45	\$115.93	\$932.07
	% of Total	4.6%	8.4%	56.6%	11.5%	6.4%	.2%	12.4%	100%
	Total estimated spending by all parties	\$72,091,188	\$120,634,572	\$818,933,683	\$168,065,749	\$28,743,095	\$2,225,911	\$186,820,412	1,397,514,609

^a Air travelers were not included since no information was available on the total annual number of Mexican air plane visitors. This omission, if anything, will underestimate the total economic impact of Mexican visitors.

^b Calculated as the percentage of each category multiplied by average expenditures per visit from Table 22. An underlying assumption is that the percentage distribution of expenditures of this visit will hold for the average expenditure per visit for each category.

^c Total number of auto crossers = 19,228,767 (Table 29); one party = 2.5 persons.

^d Forty five percent of car travelers stayed for more than one night and 73 percent indicated the use of hotels for their accommodations.

^e Total number of bus crossers = 620,103 (Table 29); one party = 2.04 persons.

^f Twenty nine percent of bus travelers stayed for more than one night and 45 percent indicated the use of hotels for their accommodations.

^g Total number of pedestrian crossers = 19,228,767 (Table 29); one party = 1.75 persons.

APPENDIX B
Survey Instrument

Study of Mexican Visitors to the Valley
(Mall/Store Survey)

Good (morning, afternoon, evening). My name is _____ and I am a student at the University of Texas-Pan American. We are doing a study about the Mexican visitors to the Valley. This information is completely confidential. We do not collect any names and we are NOT related to any border agency of the United States or Mexico. Do you mind telling me:

1. Are you a Mexican national?
Yes No

2. What is the purpose of your visit to the valley? (Circle the main reason)
Is there any other reason? (Check those that apply)
Shopping
Medical reasons
Visit friends/family
Restaurants
Business
Tourism (site seeing)
Other (specify)

3. What type of visa did you use to enter the United States?
Laser visa (border crossing card, mica)
Tourist visa
Student visa
H-visa (work visa)
Green card (resident alien)

4. Where is your hometown? City: _____ State: _____

5. Have you made a purchase or will you make a purchase on this trip to the mall/store.
Yes No Maybe

6. When and where did you enter into the U.S.? Date: _____ Place: _____
When are you planning to return to Mexico? Date: _____

In the following questions, the valley refers to the area from Brownsville to McAllen/Mission including South Padre Island.

7. How many trips did you make to the valley in 2002? _____ # trips (estimate)

8. How many trips did you make to the valley in 2003? _____ # trips

9. What is the duration of your longest trip during the past year? _____ # nights
Did you visit other cities in Texas, outside the valley, on that trip? Yes No

10. If you stay "overnight", what type of accommodation do you use in the valley?
Stay with friends/relatives
Rent: Hotel/motel House Apartment/Condo RV/MH
Own: House Apartment/Condo Other (specify) _____

11. How did you travel to the valley this trip?
Auto Bus Air Plane Pedestrian Other (specify)

12. How many are in your traveling party? _____ # adults _____ # children
13. Which of the following valley attractions have you visited within the past year? (Check all that apply).
- Beach/SPI Stores Zoo Historical sites
 Travel Agency Tours Wildlife/Nature Refuges Museums
 Festivals Libraries Other (specify) _____
14. If you have visited South Padre Island within the past year, what was the duration of your visit?
 _____ # nights.
15. Demographics
- a. Gender: Male Female
- b. How old were you on your last birthday? _____ Years
- c. Are you? Married Single Widowed Divorced/separated
- d. What is the occupation of the head of the household? _____
- e. Do you or the head of the household work at a maquiladora? Yes No
- f. How many years of education have you completed? _____ # Years
- g. How are you spending your money on this visit to the Valley? If no expenditure, please enter 0

	Estimated Amount (in US dollars)
Groceries	\$
Dining out	\$
Clothes	\$
Appliances (TV, radio, electronics)	\$
Hotel/motel	\$
Medical	\$
Other (specify)	\$

- h. How much do you estimate you spend per year in the valley? \$ _____ or Pesos _____
- i. Do you have a bank account in a valley bank? Yes No
- j. Please indicate which of these categories represents your household monthly income in pesos:

Under 2000	2,001 – 4,000	4,001 – 8,000	8,001 – 10,000
10,001 – 12,500	12,501 -15,000	15,001 – 20,000	20,001 – 30,000
30,001 – 40,000	40,001 – 50,000	50,001 – 75,000	75,001 – 100,000
More than 100,000	Not applicable		

16. What is the maximum amount of delay that you are willing to accept at the border when entering the U.S.?
- Less than one hour
 1-2 hours
 2-3 hours
 3-4 hours
 More than 4 hours

17. Would longer delays make you less likely to visit the valley? Yes No

18. Are you familiar with the US VISIT Program? Yes No

If your answer is yes, please proceed to question 19. If no, thank you for your participation.

19. Please read each of the following statements and indicate your agreement, disagreement or whether you're not sure.

Statement	Agree	Disagree	Not Sure
The US VISIT Program will not affect holders of Laser visas.			
If the US VISIT Program is implemented, Laser visa holders will not be able to enter the US.			
The US VISIT Program will make it hard for Mexican nationals to enter the U.S.			
The US VISIT Program will monitor the length of stay of visa holders.			
The US VISIT Program will result in additional delays upon entering the U.S.			
The US VISIT Program will result in delays upon exiting the U.S.			

20. If the US VISIT Program is implemented, are you more likely, less likely or as likely to visit the valley?

- More likely
- Less likely
- Same

21. Do you own a home in the valley?

- No Yes City: _____

22. If the US VISIT Program is implemented, will you consider selling your home in the valley?

- Yes No Maybe

Thank you very much for your cooperation in this very important survey. Have a nice day!

For control purposes only

Name of Field Researcher: _____ Date: _____ Time: _____ City: _____
Mall/Store: _____

**Estudio de Visitantes Mexicanos al Valle de Texas
(Encuesta Mall/Tienda)**

Buenos (días, tardes). Mi nombre es _____ y soy un estudiante de la Universidad de Texas-Pan American. Estamos haciendo una encuesta acerca de los visitantes mexicanos al valle de Texas. La información recabada es totalmente confidencial. No se preguntaran datos personales como nombre y NO estamos de ninguna manera ligados a agencias gubernamentales o fronteras en México o Estados Unidos. Podría decirme:

1. Es usted (ciudadano) Mexicano ?
Si No

2. Cual es el motivo de su visita al Valle de Texas? (Circule la razón principal)
Por cual otra razón(es) visita el Valle de Texas? (marque todos los que apliquen)
Compras
Razones Médicas
Visitar familiares/amigos
Comer
Negocios
Turismo (visita lugares)
Otro (por favor especifique) _____

3. Que tipo de visa utilizó para internarse a los Estados Unidos?
Visa láser (Border Crossing Card, Mica)
Visa de turista
Visa de estudiante
Visa H (visa de trabajo)
Residencia Permanente (Tarjeta Verde)

4. Cual es su ciudad de residencia? Ciudad: _____ Estado: _____

5. Ha hecho o hará alguna compra en esta visita al mall/tienda?
Si No Tal Vez

6. Cuando y por cual puerto de entrada entro a los Estados Unidos? Fecha: _____
Lugar: _____ Cuando planea regresar a México. Fecha: _____

- En las siguientes preguntas, el Valle del Río Grande (VRG) se refiere al área comprendida entre las ciudades de Brownsville y McAllen/Mission incluyendo la Isla del Padre.*

7. Cuantas veces visitó el VRG durante el 2002? _____ # visitas (aproximadamente)

8. Cuantas veces visitó el VRG durante el 2003? _____ # visitas

9. Cual fue la duración de su visita mas larga el año anterior? _____ # noches
Visitó alguna otra ciudad en Texas (fuera del valle) en ese viaje? Si No

10. Si se queda más de un día, donde se aloja durante su visita al VRG?
Familia/Amigos
Alquila: Hotel/motel Casa Departamento/condominio
Posee: Casa Departamento/condominio
Otro (especifique) _____

11. Que tipo de transporte utilizó para venir al VRG?
 Automóvil Autobús Avión Peatón Otro (especifique) _____

12. Cuantas personas viajaron en su grupo? _____ # adultos _____ # niños

13. Cuales de las siguientes atracciones del VRG visito el año pasado? (marque los que apliquen).
 Playa/Isla del Padre Las Tiendas Zoológico Sitios históricos
 Tour-Agencia de Viajes Refugios naturales Museo
 Festivales Bibliotecas Otro (especifique) _____

14. Si visitó la Isla del Padre durante el ultimo año, cual fue la duración de su visita _____ # noches.

15. Características Demográficas:

- a. Sexo: Hombre Mujer
- b. Cuantos años cumplidos tiene? _____ Años
- c. Estado Civil: Casado Soltero Viudo(a) Divorciado/separado
- d. Cual es la ocupación del jefe de hogar? _____
- e. Usted o el jefe de hogar trabajan en una maquiladora? Si No
- f. Cual es el último grado escolar aprobado? _____ Grado
- g. De que manera ha gastado o espera gastar su dinero durante ESTA VISITA al VRG? Si no hizo gastos, por favor responda 0.

	Cantidad Estimada (en Dólares Americanos)
Despensa	\$
Comida (fuera de casa)	\$
Ropa	\$
Aparatos Electrónicos (TV, radio, etc.)	\$
Hotel/motel (hospedaje)	\$
Gastos Médicos	\$
Otros (especifique)	\$

h. Cuanto estima que gasta por año durante sus visitas al VRG? \$ _____ o Pesos _____

i. Tiene cuentas bancarias en alguna institución del VRG? Si No

j. Por favor indique la categoría que mejor describa el ingreso mensual de su hogar en pesos:

Menos de 2000	2,001 – 4,000	4,001 – 8,000	8,001 – 10,000
10,001 – 12,500	12,501 -15,000	15,001 – 20,000	20,001 – 30,000
30,001 – 40,000	40,001 – 50,000	50,001 – 75,000	75,001 – 100,000
Mas de 100,000	No aplica		

16. Cual es el tiempo máximo al que esta dispuesto a esperar para poder internarse en los Estados Unidos?

- Menos de una hora
- 1-2 horas
- 2-3 horas
- 3-4 horas
- Más de 4 horas

17. Mas tiempo de espera haría menos frecuente sus visitas al VRG? Si No

18. Esta familiarizado con el programa US-VISIT? Si No

Si su respuesta es si, por favor prosiga a la pregunta 19. Si no, le agradecemos su participación.

19. Por favor lea cada uno de las siguientes oraciones e indique si esta de acuerdo, desacuerdo o si no esta seguro.

	De Acuerdo	Desacuerdo	No Estoy Seguro/ No Sé
El Programa US VISIT no afectara a personas con Visa Láser			
Si el Programa US VISIT es implementado, personas que tienen Visa Láser no podrán internarse en los EU.			
El Programa US VISIT hará más difícil la entrada de Mexicanos a EU.			
El Programa US VISIT monitoreara el periodo de estadía de personas que se introducen por medio de Visas.			
El Programa US VISIT aumentara el tiempo de espera para entrar a EU.			
El Programa US VISIT aumentara el tiempo de espera para salir de EU.			

20. Si el Programa US VISIT es implementado, seria más probable, menos probable o igual de probable que usted visite el VRG?

- Más Probable
- Menos Probable
- Igual

21. Es usted dueño de una casa en el VRG?

- Si
- No
- Cuidad: _____

22. Si el Programa US VISIT es implementado, pensaría vender su casa en el VRG

- Si
- No
- Tal Vez

*Agradecemos su tiempo y cooperación para la realización de esta encuesta.
Gracias y que tenga un excelente Día!*

For control purposes only

Name of Field Researcher: _____ Date: _____ Time: _____ City: _____
Mall/Store: _____