

An Apple Store For El Paso

The word is El Paso will get an Apple Store, one of those coveted indicators that a city has finally made it. It means your town has edge and someone out there knows it. Apple wouldn't confirm the move and neither would the city's Office of Planning and Economic Development. But El Paso Inc. has been told that Apple plans to open its first store in West Texas at Cielo Vista Mall, probably in the next few months.

Story From elpasoinc.com



EP economy's growth outpaces most cities!

El Paso's economy continued to grow slowly in the first quarter, but it grew better than the Economies of most other large metro areas in the country, the Brookings Institution's latest MetroMonitor report shows.

El Paso's economic output increased 0.9 percent in the first quarter. That growth rate, the Same rate as in the fourth quarter, ranked 10th among the nation's 100 largest metro areas.

The 100 metro areas had an average economic growth rate of 0.5 percent in the first quarter. The Brookings Institution, a Washington, D.C., think tank, has been tracking metro area's Recovery from the recession since 2009

Story by Vic Kolenc

El Paso Times

www.elpasotimes.com

www.brookings.edu/metro/metromonitor.aspx

El Paso foreclosure filings in May fall 16%

El Paso home foreclosure filings in May declined 16 percent from April and remained virtually unchanged from May 2010, new data show.

El Paso had 42 homes with foreclosure filings in May, a decrease of eight homes from April, and one less than in May 2010, RealtyTrac, a California company that tracks foreclosures nationally reported. Foreclosure filings include defaults notices, scheduled auctions and bank repossessions.

In Texas, 9,055 homes had foreclosure filings in May, down 18.7 percent from May 2010. In the United States, 214,927 homes had foreclosure filings in May, down 33.4 percent from a year ago.

Story by Vic Kolenc.

El Paso Times

Border Security

More positive data have been collected showing U.S. cities along the border with Mexico have some of the lowest crime rates in the nation. It should be used as an impetus for Congress to begin talks on immigration reform because it negates the theories by some highly placed individuals that border security must come first.

Mexico is in the midst of a narco war, but there is no evidence that violence has spilled onto U.S. soil. Data show that clearly.

Meanwhile, two high officials continue to spread myths. As U.S. Rep. Silvestre Reyes, D-El Paso, said, it's just to incite fear, and use that as an excuse to hold off on tackling immigration reform.

Texas Gov. Rick Perry was incorrect in saying "drug cartels have operational control of a substantial amount" of the border.

Perry has also incorrectly stated that a car bomb, tied to the narco violence in Juárez, exploded in Downtown El Paso.

And Speaker of the U.S. House of Representatives John Boehner has been adamant that Congress can't consider reforming the broken immigration system until border violence is under control.

Border violence, on the U.S. side, is virtually non-existent and drug cartels certainly do not control the U.S. side of the border.

Border Security

Meanwhile, Reyes has cleverly pointed out that in Boehner's home state of Ohio crime is significantly higher than in U.S. border cities stretching from San Diego through Texas.

And Reyes points out that in the Texas capital of Austin, where Perry lives, there was a 72-percent increase in homicides in 2010. Austin, with a population of 796,810, had 38 homicides last year. El Paso, with a population of 624,322, had only five. Reyes points out that "the Speaker's own district in Dayton, Ohio, saw more homicides in 2009 and 2010 than Texas' for largest border cities combined" - - and "Dayton's population of 141,500 is only about one-tenth of the size by comparison."

When President Barack Obama visited El Paso early last month, his message -- delivered right on the border -- was that it's time to take up the issue of how to deal with some 11 million undocumented persons living within our border. He echoed the words of Homeland Security Secretary Janet Napolitano, who has oft stated that the U.S. border with Mexico has never been more secure than it is today.

Unfortunately, as Reyes told members of the El Paso Times Editorial Board on Wednesday, he doesn't see this political hot coal being picked up until at least after the 2012 elections. That is unfortunate.

Data are clear. Those against taking up immigration reform have lost the teeth to Boehner's argument that border violence must first be brought under control.

The data speak loudly.

Crime survey

Recent 2010-2011 Crime Rankings Survey data conducted by CQ Press for the six largest cities in Ohio as compared to major cities along the U.S.-Mexico border:

U.S. HIGHEST CRIME RATE (400 total)

Ohio

7. Cleveland

20. Dayton

24. Cincinnati

27. Toledo

37. Canton

47. Akron

49. Columbus

Major border cities

144. Laredo

204. Yuma

221. San Diego

275. El Paso

291. McAllen

304. Brownsville

MURDER RATE (National rate = 5.0 murders per 100,000 population)

Ohio

15. Dayton 25.5

25. Cleveland 20.0

34. Canton 16.6

35. Cincinnati 16.5

69. Toledo 11.3

72 Columbus 10.9

87 Akron 9.7

Major border cities

250 San Diego 3.1

252 McAllen 3.0

292 Brownsville 2.2

292 Yuma 2.2

305 El Paso 1.9

Source: Office of U.S. Congressman
Silvestre Reyes, D-El Paso

Cielo Vista Mall lines up an Apple Store

Apple won't say it, and neither will Simon Properties.

But everyone else is saying it's true -- an Apple Store is coming to El Paso.

To be exact, it is coming to Cielo Vista Mall, Suite E10B, next door to the Coach store. Technically it is already there, according a building permit with the city of El Paso.

Apple spokesman Nick Leahy would say only, "We've made no announcements about a store in that location."

However, a commercial tenant improvement permit on the city website lists the Apple Store as the mall suite's tenant.

In addition, Apple currently has posted 11 job openings for a Cielo Vista Mall store. Job titles include market leader and solution engineer.

The space, formerly a Coldwater Creek store, is now boarded off while a construction crew works on the inside.

The store will be on the first level between Coach and Swarovski Crystals and across from The Limited clothing store.

Several mall employees said they are certain the incoming tenant is the long-awaited Apple electronics store, but they could not officially comment. Speculation on when it might open ranges from September to early 2012.

Richard Dayoub, president and CEO of the Greater El Paso Chamber of Commerce, said an Apple Store would be a "game-changer" for El Paso.

Cielo Vista Mall lines up an Apple Store

"It will drive traffic to that mall," Dayoub said. "And because of Apple's reliability and name recognition, it will stay constantly busy."

Dayoub said local consumers have been asking for more national stores to open in El Paso. And if an Apple Store opens here, it will send a message to other major retail stores that El Paso has potential.

Currently, the closest Apple Store is more than 250 miles away in Albuquerque.

"Everywhere I go in this community it amazes me how consumer hungry we are," Dayoub said. "Everyone wants to be ahead of the curve and have the latest in technology."

He said he expects consumers from Juárez and Chihuahua state to cross the border to shop at the Apple Store.

Last year, Mexican consumers who crossed into El Paso spent \$1.4 billion at local malls, shopping centers and restaurants, said Roberto Coronado, an economist with the Federal Reserve Bank of Dallas in El Paso, during a marketing conference early this month.

"They love coming here to shop, and this only encourages them to come more often," Dayoub said. "They are a major consumer and player for our region."

"They know quality and they will travel to get it. Now they won't have to travel so far."

Daniel Daly, who was shopping Wednesday at Cielo Vista Mall, said that if an Apple Store is coming to the mall, he would "definitely" visit.

"I think it's going to be successful," he said. "I think it will bring a lot of economy to El Paso and to this mall."

The Apple Store would also satisfy a need for more electronics stores, Daly said.

"There are not many establishments with a lot of technology," he said. "But the ones that are here do well. I believe so will an Apple Store."

Right now, the only Apple-certified repair store in El Paso is CheckPoint Services on the West Side. And the only certified Apple dealer is Best Buy, which has three stores in El Paso.

The type of Apple Store opening at Cielo Vista Mall is unknown.

In most cities, Apple Stores carry popular products such as the iMac, iPad, iPhone and iPod. In addition, some stores have Apple-certified technicians to provide support for and repair the company's products.