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Pharr Bridge forges ahead in increased trade

By

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Despite it being summertime, which typically slows fresh produce crossings from Mexico, and despite the Coronavirus crisis, which slowed produce crossings from other land ports from Mexico, at the Pharr Bridge, “We have not quieted down at all.”

Luis Bazan, bridge director of the Pharr International Bridge, said the land port had record crossings in August. September was looking like a record when he spoke to *The Produce News* on Sept. 24. “We had a lot more influx for north and southbound traffic. We are very fortunate. At Pharr, we have positioned ourselves to be a full-service commercial bridge. Our produce numbers were up through the summer.” Oil and gas crossings were also up for the Pharr Bridge.

In August 2020, vs. August 2019, northbound trucks at the Pharr International Bridge totaled 59,687 trucks. This was an increase of 4,461 trucks or 8.1 percent.

“There is a very positive outlook for the future of the Pharr Bridge,” Bazan noted.

Under the Covid crisis, Pharr’s business dipped a small amount in late April and early May, and then took off again.

Truck crossings for Pharr were up substantially in March, June, July, and August.

On Oct. 8, the bridge was set to officially celebrate the start of a new Mexican produce import season.

A second Pharr Bridge

Bazan said Pharr Bridge recently broke ground on two major projects, which had been in the planning stage for five years, up until Sept. 10. These projects are two additional northbound commercial entry lanes/booths and two additional northbound commercial exit lanes/booths.

Future plans are to build a second bridge to cross into Pharr from Mexico and vice versa. Engineering started in Mexico in October 2019 and in the U.S. in January 2020. “We’ll have a new four-lane bridge adjacent to the existing bridge.” The construction on the three-mile bridge should be done by Summer 2023. This will expedite commercial trade by increasing truck throughput and reducing wait times, he noted.

Pharr Produce Park

Pharr International Bridge boosted business by developing an industrial park within sight of the bridge. There, produce companies are building refrigerated warehouse to distribute fresh produce.

At the produce park, Bazan said, “We have 13 warehouses now in business, and should have 17 by end of first quarter 2021. By the end of next year, we’re counting on 20, which should put the park at 100 percent capacity on the 100 acre tract.”

Even Pharr’s offices are bigger....

This fall the Pharr Bridge administration building will finalize an entire remodel. Bazan said the construction is on the operation’s original footprint, plus an additional 3,000 square foot extension. The building is literally beside Pharr’s toll gates connecting to Mexico. Bazan said those toll booths have also been remodeled and have new, prominent signage.

He added that his office was relocated to an adjacent mobile trailer over the last year. The liberation from the trailer makes his spacious new office seem a particular luxury.

Bazan has worked for the Pharr International Bridge since 2013.

Photo: VIPs gathered on Oct. 10, 2019 to celebrate the beginning of the 2019-20 Mexican import season at the Pharr International Bridge in Pharr, TX. A similar event was scheduled for Oct. 9 this year.

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