

Key Takeaways

Employment

- Non-farm employment increased on a monthly basis across the Paso del Norte region in February, growing by 0.4% in El Paso (1,300 jobs gained), 2.6% in Las Cruces (1,800 jobs gained), and 0.2% in Ciudad Juárez (1,000 jobs gained). In Las Cruces, this was the first month-over-month increase since October.
- The Services sector continued to be the hardest hit sector on a year-over-year basis in El Paso, Las Cruces, and Ciudad Juárez, with decreases in February of 10,800 jobs (-4.8%), 4,400 jobs (-7.7%), and 4,600 jobs (-6.3%), respectively.

Border Encounters

- In 2020, the U.S. Border Patrol reported 508,084 encounters (apprehensions and expulsions) on the southwest border. Of the nine sectors that make up the southwest border, the El Paso Sector ranked 3rd, behind only the Rio Grande and Tucson sectors, with about 67,526 encounters in 2020, of which 82% were of single adults, 9% were of family units, and 9% were of unaccompanied alien children.
- In the January to March 2021 period, U.S. Border Patrol encounters on the southwest border increased by 280% (250,809) compared to the same period in 2020, with the El Paso Sector exhibiting the third largest absolute increase at 32,081 (287%).

Trade

- The top 10 U.S.-Mexico border ports of entry in terms of total trade showed positive signs of recovery in February 2021. Of the top ports, five of them exhibited monthly gains compared to January, led by increases of \$1,173 million (37.7%) at Hidalgo Port of Entry (PoE), \$366 million (23.8%) at Brownsville PoE, and \$99 million (1.5%) at El Paso PoE. Moreover, six of the top ports, including El Paso PoE, exhibited gains in February compared to the same month last year.

Employment

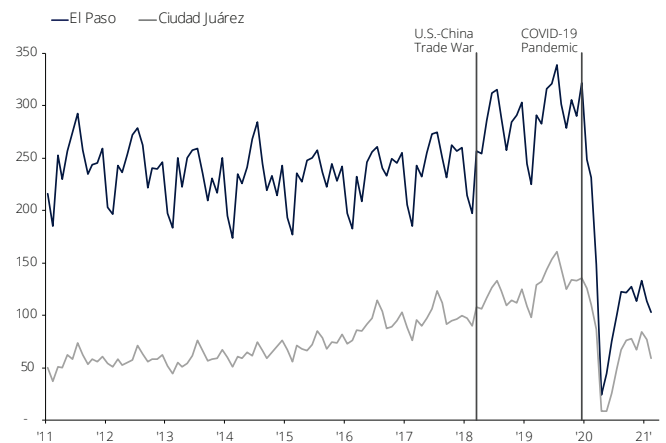
Jobs Show Uptick across Paso del Norte Region

In February, El Paso, Las Cruces, and Ciudad Juárez increased non-farm employment compared to January.

Following a decrease in January, non-farm employment in February increased marginally on a monthly basis in El Paso, increasing by 0.4% (1,300 jobs gained). Las Cruces also exhibited an upturn in non-farm employment in February, increasing by 2.6% (1,800 jobs gained) after previously decreasing for 3 months in a row. Ciudad Juárez observed a minor increase in non-farm employment for the second month in a row, rising 0.2% (1,000 jobs gained) in February compared to January. Nevertheless, non-farm employment decreased in El Paso and Las Cruces on a year-over-basis in February by 3.8% (12,600

Quick-Glance Indicators

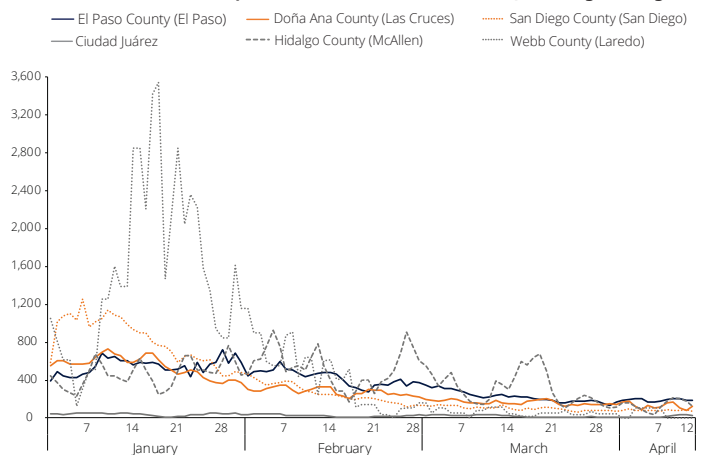
El Paso and Ciudad Juárez Air Passengers, Thousands



Note: Data as of February 2021.

Source: Hunt Institute using El Paso International Airport and Grupo OMA data.

New Coronavirus Cases per 1 Million Inhabitants, 5-Day Moving Average



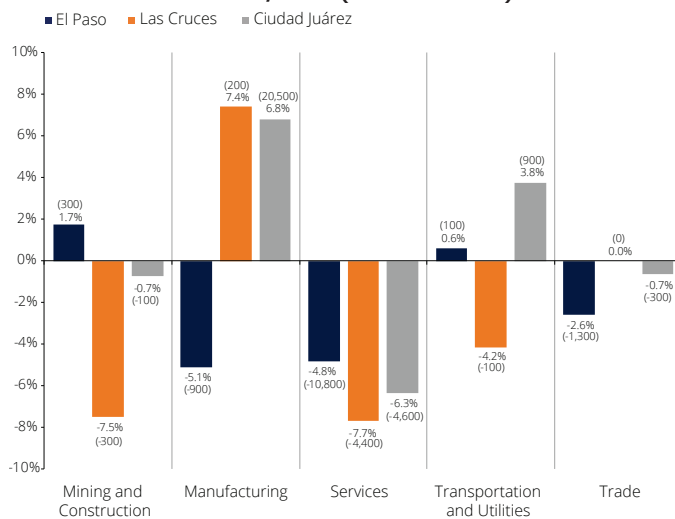
Note: Data as of April 12, 2021.

Source: Hunt Institute calculations using Texas Health and Human Services, New Mexico Department of Health, Secretaría de Salud de Chihuahua, Center for Systems Science and Engineering at Johns Hopkins University, U.S. Census Bureau, and Consejo Nacional de Población data.

jobs lost) and 6.1% (4,600 jobs lost), respectively. Ciudad Juárez, on the other hand, increased on a year-over-year basis for the seventh month in a row in February by 3.6% (16,400 jobs gained). Analyzing five sectors of employment across the Paso del Norte region from January to February, El Paso increased in the Services sector (1,600 jobs gained) and Manufacturing sector (300 jobs gained), while decreasing in the Transportation and Utilities (400 jobs lost) and Trade (200 jobs lost) sectors and exhibiting no growth in the Mining and Construction sector. In Las Cruces, none of the five sectors decreased in February, with the Services (1,600 jobs gained), Trade (100 jobs gained), and Mining and Construction (100 jobs gained) sectors increasing, while the Manufacturing and Transportation and Utilities sectors remained stagnant. In Ciudad Juárez, all sectors except Manufacturing (1,600 jobs lost) increased in February compared to January, with gains led by the Trade sector (1,500 jobs gained) and Services (800 jobs gained) sector.

On a year-over-year basis, the Mining and Construction sector in El Paso, the Manufacturing sector in Las Cruces and Ciudad Juárez, and the Transportation and Utilities sector in El Paso and Ciudad Juárez all increased, while the Trade sector in Las Cruces saw no job growth. The most notable increase was the gain of 20,500 jobs (6.8%) in Manufacturing for Ciudad Juárez, its third month in a row with year-over-year job gains above 20,000. Nonetheless, all of the other sectors exhibited negative growth rates in February. As in previous months, the Services sector recorded the highest over-the-year job losses in absolute terms across the region, with decreases of approximately 10,800 jobs in El Paso, 4,400 jobs in Las Cruces, and 4,600 jobs in Ciudad Juárez.

Paso del Norte Total Non-Farm Employment by Sector, February 2021 (Year-over-Year)



Note: Preliminary data for February 2021. Services exclude Transportation and Utilities and Trade. Numbers are rounded to the nearest hundred.

Source: Hunt Institute calculations using U.S. Bureau of Labor Statistics and Instituto Mexicano del Seguro Social data.

Border Encounters

Apprehensions and Expulsions Up Dramatically in 2021

U.S. Border Patrol encounters on the southwest border went up significantly in the first three months of the year compared to the same period last year.

United States Border Patrol (USBP) encounters consist of Title 8 Apprehensions and Title 42 Expulsions.¹ Title 42 Expulsions were included in the USBP statistics when, beginning March 21, 2020, Title 42 was implemented to prevent the entry of people who may further spread COVID-19. Exceptions to Title 42 include “considerations of law enforcement, officer and public safety, humanitarian, or public health interests.” Thus, although expulsions under Title 42 have only been recorded since March 2020, it is nevertheless still valid to compare total encounters from March 2020 onwards (apprehensions and expulsions) to encounters from previous months and years (then only apprehensions). Although differentiated from one another since March 2020, the sum of these numbers is compared to show the number of times

the U.S. Border Patrol encountered illegal border crossings.

In 2020, the U.S. Border Patrol reported 508,084 encounters (apprehensions and expulsions) on the southwest border, down from the nearly 800,000 in 2019. In 2020, 86% (434,601) of these encounters were single adult encounters, 8% (38,287) were family unit encounters, and 7% (35,196) were unaccompanied alien children encounters. In 2019, on the other hand, 38% (304,039) of these encounters were single adult encounters, 53% (425,217) were family unit encounters, and 9% (70,419) were unaccompanied alien children encounters. As such, the number of single adult encounters increased in 2020, the number of family unit encounters plummeted, and the number of unaccompanied alien children encounters decreased by roughly half. Moreover, family unit encounters went from a majority share in 2019 to a minimal share in 2020, with single adult encounters taking up the overwhelming majority in 2020. Of the nine sectors that make up the southwest border, the El Paso Sector² ranked 3rd in 2020, behind only the Rio Grande and Tucson sectors, with 67,526 apprehensions and expulsions, of which 82% (55,403) were of single adults, 9% (6,339) were of family units, and 9% (5,784) were of unaccompanied alien children. In 2019, El Paso ranked 2nd with 171,912 apprehensions, behind only the Rio Grande Sector. Of these, 21% (36,687) were of single adults, 70% (120,632) were of family units, and 8% (14,593) were of unaccompanied alien children. Thus, along the border and in El Paso Sector in particular, family unit encounters dropped significantly in 2020 compared to 2019, while single adult encounters rose considerably. In addition, family unit encounters in El Paso went from being the predominant majority

U.S. Border Patrol Southwest Border Encounters by Sector

Sector	2020			Total		B-A	B-A (%)
	FMU	UAC	SA	2019 (A)	2020 (B)		
Big Bend	279	658	11,095	9,735	12,032	2,297	24%
Del Rio	6,664	2,820	47,897	60,475	57,381	(3,094)	-5%
El Centro	896	1,750	30,026	31,653	32,672	1,019	3%
El Paso	6,339	5,784	55,403	171,912	67,526	(104,386)	-61%
Laredo	2,488	2,830	61,179	40,492	66,497	26,005	64%
Rio Grande	9,403	12,086	94,735	305,417	116,224	(189,193)	-62%
San Diego	4,472	2,104	58,340	54,845	64,916	10,071	18%
Tucson	5,357	6,423	69,600	67,184	81,380	14,196	21%
Yuma	2,389	741	6,326	57,962	9,456	(48,506)	-84%
Total	38,287	35,196	434,601	799,675	508,084	(291,591)	-36%

Note: Numbers in parenthesis indicate negative numbers. Numbers are by calendar years; USBP reports by fiscal year that goes from October to September. Beginning in March 2020, USBP Encounters statistics include both Title 8 Apprehensions and Title 42 Expulsions. FMU are family unit encounters, UAC are unaccompanied alien children encounters, and SA are single adult encounters. Data to be updated for February and March 2021.

Source: Hunt Institute calculations using data from U.S. Customs and Border Protection.

¹ According to U.S. Customs and Border Protection, expulsions refer to “individuals encountered by USBP and expelled to the country of last transit or home country in the interest of public health under Title 42 U.S.C. 265”, while apprehensions refer to “the physical control or temporary detainment of a person who is not lawfully in the U.S. which may or may not result in an arrest.” <https://www.cbp.gov/newsroom/stats/cbp-enforcement-statistics/title-8-and-title-42-statistics>

² The El Paso Sector covers the entire state of New Mexico and the two western most counties in Texas, Hudspeth and El Paso.

at 70% in 2019 to a much smaller 9% in 2020. Single adult encounters, on the other hand, were the largest by far in 2020 at 82%, up from 21% in 2019.

U.S. Border Patrol Southwest Border Encounters by Sector

Sector	2020	Share (%)	Jan-Mar 2020 (A)	Jan-Mar 2021 (B)	B-A	B-A (%)
Big Bend	12,032	2%	1,841	10,262	8,421	457%
Del Rio	57,381	11%	7,589	42,181	34,592	456%
El Centro	32,672	6%	5,782	12,901	7,119	123%
El Paso	67,526	13%	11,174	43,255	32,081	287%
Laredo	66,497	13%	11,588	28,295	16,707	144%
Rio Grande	116,224	23%	20,390	106,937	86,547	424%
San Diego	64,916	13%	13,587	32,894	19,307	142%
Tucson	81,380	16%	15,447	45,228	29,781	193%
Yuma	9,456	2%	2,274	18,528	16,254	715%
Total	508,084	100%	89,672	340,481	250,809	280%

Note: Numbers are by calendar year and months; USBP reports by fiscal year that goes from October to September. Beginning in March 2020, USBP Encounters statistics include both Title 8 Apprehensions and Title 42 Expulsions. Numbers include family unit encounters, unaccompanied alien children encounters, and single adult encounters. Data to be updated for February and March 2021.

Source: Hunt Institute calculations using data from U.S. Customs and Border Protection.

The El Paso Sector accounted for 13% of all encounters along the southwest border in 2020, while the Rio Grande, Tucson, and Laredo sectors accounted for 23% (116,224 encounters), 16% (81,380 encounters), and 13% (66,497 encounters), respectively. Moreover, in the January to March 2021 period, U.S. Border Patrol encounters on the southwest border increased by 280% (250,809 encounters) compared to the same period in 2020, with the El Paso Sector exhibiting the third largest absolute increase at 32,081 (287%). The largest absolute increases took place at the Rio Grande (86,547 encounters or 424%) and Del Rio (34,592 encounters or 456%) sectors.

U.S. Border Patrol Southwest Border Encounters

Month	Title 42		Title 8		Total
	Expulsions	Share (%)	Apprehensions	Share (%)	
Mar-20	7,081	23%	23,308	77%	30,389
Apr-20	15,003	93%	1,179	7%	16,182
May-20	20,044	93%	1,549	7%	21,593
Jun-20	28,470	92%	2,366	8%	30,836
Jul-20	35,376	92%	3,160	8%	38,536
Aug-20	42,742	90%	4,541	10%	47,283
Sep-20	48,327	88%	6,444	12%	54,771
Oct-20	63,002	91%	6,044	9%	69,046
Nov-20	61,279	89%	7,883	11%	69,162
Dec-20	60,595	85%	10,547	15%	71,142
Jan-21	62,531	83%	12,781	17%	75,312
Feb-21	71,948	74%	25,601	26%	97,549
Mar-21	101,897	61%	66,298	39%	168,195

Note: Numbers are by calendar months; USBP reports by fiscal year that goes from October to September. Numbers include family unit encounters, unaccompanied alien children encounters, and single adult encounters. Data to be updated for February and March 2021.

Source: Hunt Institute calculations using data from U.S. Customs and Border Protection.

Trade

Top Ports Show Increases in Trade

Six of the top ten U.S.-Mexico ports of entry exhibited year-over-year gains in total trade in February.

Following the sharp decreases of 2020, several ports showed signs of improvement in February. Five of the top ten ports exhibited month-over-month gains, led by increases of \$1,173 million (37.7%) at Hidalgo Port of Entry (PoE), \$366 million (23.8%) at Brownsville PoE, and \$99 million (1.5%) at El Paso PoE. The other two ports to increase were Otay Mesa PoE (\$48 million or 1.3%) and Nogales PoE (\$15 million or 0.8%). Laredo PoE, Santa Teresa PoE, and Eagle Pass PoE led the declines on a monthly basis, falling by \$1,348 million (-7.1%), \$452 million (-19.9%), and \$165 million (-6.4%), respectively.

On a year-over-year basis, six of the top ports increased, led in gains by Hidalgo PoE (\$1,343 million or 45.7%), Brownsville PoE (\$282 million or 17.4%), and El Paso PoE (\$174 million or 2.8%). On the other hand, the largest decreases compared to February 2020 were observed at Laredo PoE (-\$1,035 million or -5.6%), Nogales PoE (-\$418 million or -17.8%), and Santa Teresa PoE (-\$301 million or -14.2%). With monthly gains at five ports and year-over-year gains at six ports, the top U.S.-Mexico ports of entry in trade, including El Paso PoE, showed positive signs of recovery in February. Santa Teresa PoE, however, struggled noticeably, with the largest decrease in relative terms (-19.9%) on a monthly basis and the 3rd largest decrease in relative terms (-14.2%) on a year-over-year basis.

Top 10 U.S.-Mexico Border Ports of Entry for Total Trade with World, Million USD

Port of Entry	February 2021	February 2021		February 2021	
		MoM	MoM (%)	YoY	YoY (%)
Laredo, TX	\$17,559	-\$1,348	-7.1%	-\$1,035	-5.6%
El Paso, TX	\$6,510	\$99	1.5%	\$174	2.8%
Otay Mesa, CA	\$3,793	\$48	1.3%	\$18	0.5%
Hidalgo, TX	\$4,282	\$1,173	37.7%	\$1,343	45.7%
Eagle Pass, TX	\$2,413	-\$165	-6.4%	\$17	0.7%
Santa Teresa, NM	\$1,819	-\$452	-19.9%	-\$301	-14.2%
Nogales, AZ	\$1,934	\$15	0.8%	-\$418	-17.8%
Brownsville, TX	\$1,902	\$366	23.8%	\$282	17.4%
Calexico-East, CA	\$1,366	-\$21	-1.5%	\$24	1.8%
Del Rio, TX	\$324	-\$55	-14.5%	-\$94	-22.6%

Note: Top 10 in 2020. El Paso PoE includes Ysleta PoE. YoY denotes year-over-year; MoM denotes month-over-month.

Source: Hunt Institute calculations using U.S. Census Bureau data.

About Hunt Institute for Global Competitiveness

Since 2014, the Hunt Institute for Global Competitiveness at The University of Texas at El Paso has provided economic analysis of the Paso del Norte Region that includes the binational communities of El Paso, Texas; Las Cruces, N.M.; and Ciudad Juárez, Mexico. The mission of the Hunt Institute is to produce high-quality market analysis tools that can strengthen regional and binational cross-border economic and social development.

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