



2019-20 BOARD OF DIRECTORS:

Juan "JJ" Serrano, Jr.
President
Facility Leader - HEB
Weslaco Retail Support Center

Benita R. Valadez
Vice President
Owner, American Financial Bureau

Steven Charlton
Treasurer
Charlton CPA

Cynthia Cabaza
Secretary
Shepard, Walton, King, Ins.

Diana Fuentes Aguilar
Board Member
Attorney

Sonjia de la Fuente
Board Member
Owner
Skin Sense Beauty Studio

Fred Perez
Board Member
Owner - King Carries, LLC

**For Immediate Release
January 27, 2020**

The Economic Development Corporation of Weslaco begins 2020 with a revamped board under new leadership and with two new members.

Juan "J.J." Serrano Jr., is the new board president with Benita R. Valadez serving as vice president. In his time on the board in 2019, Serrano brought experience in warehousing and distribution with his background as the facility leader of H-E-B's 408,000-square-foot Retail Support Center in Weslaco. Valadez is the owner of the American Financial Bureau and has a long history of community and volunteer service in Weslaco.

"Weslaco has been my home for my entire life and I am honored and humbled at the opportunity to represent the EDC of Weslaco in this role as president," Serrano said. "The EDCW Board looks forward to the challenge of not only increasing jobs in Weslaco, but attracting businesses that pay higher wages."

The new board president said the economic development corporation will continue its support of existing business while focusing on key sectors of the local economy.

"We will have a dual focus on increasing our retail presence and adding more manufacturing, warehousing and distribution type businesses to our Industrial Park," Serrano said.

The two new board members, as appointed by the Weslaco City Commission, are Sonjia de la Fuente and Fred Perez. Both of the new members have a range of experiences in business and management in bringing additional insights to the board.

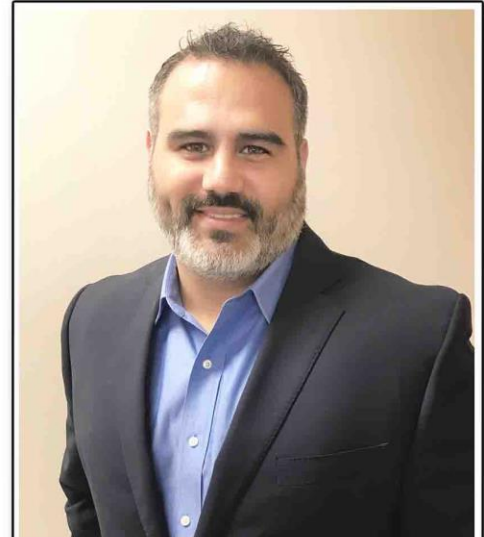
Serrano praised de la Fuente and Perez as leaders in their field who will make contributions to the board.

De la Fuente is a lifelong Weslaco resident and a small business owner in the city. Skin Sense Beauty Studio is the business she owns and runs and De la Fuente said she is anxious to get started as an EDC board member.

"It's because of the EDC that Weslaco has done so well," De la Fuente said. "I'm hoping to learn all I can in serving on the board and bring the ideas I have in helping Weslaco to continue its growth."

Perez moved to Weslaco as a youth and has deep experience in transportation and property development. He currently owns and manages a transportation company that operates 100 trucks and 250 trailers with offices in Weslaco, Donna and Laredo. He has also developed subdivisions in Weslaco and Donna and been involved with commercial property development in the Rio Grande Valley and other parts of Texas.

The Economic Development Corporation of Weslaco (EDC's) role is to influence the process for the benefit of the community through diversification of the economy, expanding job opportunities, and expanding the tax base. Over the last three years, the Weslaco Economic Development Corporation has worked to implement 54 projects with \$54.4 million in investments and the addition of 698 jobs to the city.



Juan Jose "JJ" Serrano
New Board Member - EDC of Weslaco



Benita R. Valadez
Vice President - EDC of Weslaco

Continued

“My goals are to collaborate with the rest of the EDC board members as well as other city of Weslaco departments to achieve a builder friendly Weslaco,” Perez said.

He wants a city where the building process is seamless and speedy and that will sustain and attract new businesses to Weslaco. Perez currently serves on the city’s drainage committee and is an active member of the Weslaco Rotary Club.

“With the diversity of the Board members, the EDC will make progress in the right direction and Weslaco will advance and improve,” said Marie McDermott, the executive director of the Weslaco Economic Development Council.

The new board members join a Weslaco EDC that saw strong performance in 2019. The EDC was instrumental in bringing the Kapal Cabinet House to Weslaco in filling a new 80,000-square-foot facility that makes turn-key cabinets that serve hotels throughout the United States. The Weslaco EDC also worked closely with Commodities Integrated Logistics, (CiL), in fast tracking the permitting process in building and opening over 280,000 square feet of warehousing in the distribution of American-grown cotton to Mexico and around the world.

The full EDC board is made up of Serrano, Valadez, Perez, de la Fuente, Stephen Charlton, Cynthia Cabaza, and Diana Fuentes-Aguilar.

