

National Weather Service Impact-Based Decision Support Services in the El Paso/Ciudad Juarez Region of the U.S. – Mexico Border: Challenges and Success Stories

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The cultural and economic composition of the population base served by the NWS office in Santa Teresa, New Mexico presents challenges that require an approach to the completion of the NWS mission that differs significantly from peer offices that serve areas not inclusive of the U.S. - Mexico border zone. Within this geographical area of responsibility is one of the largest U.S. – Mexico bi-national metropolitan areas: El Paso, Texas/Ciudad Juarez, Chihuahua, Mexico. Combined, these cities are home to approximately 2.7 million people, making it the second largest such metropolitan area along the U.S. – Mexico border.

The population of this bi-national metropolitan area has numerous options at its disposal for weather information, emanating from either the U.S. or Mexico, in English and Spanish. Thousands of American citizens have a vested interest in the Maquiladora industry which is widespread in northern Mexico and serves as a launching point for trade considerations that have a considerable economic impact on both sides of the border. Socio-economic ties across the region are vast and not always easily-understood.

Effectively communicating life-saving weather information in this type of environment is challenging, but the NWS office for the El Paso Area has experienced successful collaboration with its American and Mexican partners in a manner that effectively bridges the gaps presented by culture and language. Some of these success stories will be shared during this presentation. Challenges to this process will also be shared, as they offer opportunities for the weather enterprise to better understand the people that are served in these socio-economically complex regions.

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