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The national Minority Business Development Agency (MBDA) announced today that the El Paso Hispanic Chamber of Commerce has received the designation of a Minority Business Enterprises Center (MBEC). The designation establishes El Paso as one of 38 Minority Business Enterprise Centers in the United States.

“We are ecstatic about being a Minority Business Enterprise Center. This opportunity showcases the fact that your El Paso Hispanic Chamber of Commerce is the ‘go to’ organization for business growth. Being a Minority Business Enterprise Center means that your El Paso Hispanic Chamber of Commerce will provide key assistance locally with the support and resources of the U.S. Department of Commerce,” said Cindy Ramos-Davidson, El Paso Hispanic Chamber of Commerce CEO.

The MBEC Grant is administered by the Minority Business Development Agency (MBDA), which is a division of the U.S. Department of Commerce and the only federal agency created specifically to foster the establishment and growth of minority-owned businesses in the United States.

The El Paso MBEC will be federally funded by the Minority Business Development Agency and the U.S. Department of Commerce and will locally be administered by your El Paso Hispanic Chamber of Commerce.

The El Paso MBEC program will concentrate in providing additional resources to mid-growth minority business firms with \$500,000 or more in annual revenues that are generating significant employment and long-term economic growth with the national support from the Minority Business Development Agency and resources from the U.S. Department of Commerce.

In order for a mid-growth minority business firms to take advantage of the El Paso MBEC, the organization must meet the guidelines set by the MBDA’s minority standards, be minority-owned by 51 percent or more and have an annual revenue of \$500,000 or more.

“We have been fighting for this designation for six years,” said Congressman Silvestre Reyes. “I am proud of the work the Hispanic Chamber has done to secure this important designation and the funding that goes with it. This will have a tremendous impact on our local minority-owned businesses, and especially those with rapid growth potential,” added Reyes.

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U.S. Senator Kay Bailey Hutchison, who was a key supporter of the El Paso Hispanic Chamber of Commerce in the designation of the MBEC, stated that the grant will help the El Paso Hispanic Chamber of Commerce provide business assistance and direct services to minority-owned businesses. "With this fostering relationship, minority-owned business will continue to flourish in the El Paso region," mentioned Hutchison.

The designation as a Minority Business Enterprise Center comes with \$152,775 in funding for the first year and is part of a three-year grant aimed at helping minority business in El Paso with development assistance to promote growth and competitiveness. Second year funding to operate the center is set at \$203,700.

"Nobody outside of El Paso truly understands the opportunities and potential available here, like fellow El Pasoans. Now as a Minority Business Enterprise Center, the El Paso Business community will be served by an organization that knows and understands El Paso," concluded Ramos-Davidson.

**About the El Paso Hispanic Chamber of Commerce:**

Founded in 1990, The El Paso Hispanic Chamber of Commerce actively promotes the economic growth and development of El Paso's small, minority and women owned businesses and represents the interest of over 1,000 local small businesses. The mission of the El Paso Hispanic Chamber of Commerce is to continue to be the leading advocate in promoting the success of El Paso small business by providing resources, information and education, while promoting the awareness and preservation of the Hispanic culture.

**For More Information, Press Only:**

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Note to editors: If you are interested in viewing additional information about the El Paso Hispanic Chamber of Commerce, please visit the EPHCC Web page at <http://www.ephcc.org>. Web links, telephone numbers and titles were correct at time of release, but may since have changed. For additional assistance, journalists and analysts may contact EPHCC Communications Team or other appropriate contacts listed at (915) 566-4066 or [agonzalez@ephcc.org](mailto:agonzalez@ephcc.org).