

<a href="#">Online</a>	<a href="#">Subscribe</a>	<a href="#">Contact Us</a>	<a href="#">Feedback</a>	<a href="#">El Nuevo Herald</a>	<a href="#">RGV Sports</a>
------------------------	---------------------------	----------------------------	--------------------------	---------------------------------	----------------------------

## Top Local Stories

- [Sports](#)
- [Scoop](#)
- [Education](#)
- [Newspaper in Education](#)
- [Community](#)
- [Viewpoints](#)
- [Life & Arts](#)
- [Events](#)
- [Classifieds](#)
- [Valleywide Classifieds](#)
- [Obituaries](#)
- [Weather](#)
- [Contact Us](#)
- [E-mail Us](#)
- [Home](#)

## TOP STORIES

< < [Harlingen couple owes 25 percent of county's back taxes](#) | [Main](#) | [NEW: El Rancho Grande sold](#) > >

### Legislators push for more park funding



BRAD DOHERTY/The Brownsville Herald

By Elizabeth Pierson  
The Brownsville Herald

February 1, 2007 — AUSTIN — The playground where your kids capture ladybugs and caterpillars, and play tag with their friends could also bring jobs to your town.

Local parks pump nearly \$105 million annually into the Rio Grande Valley economy and are responsible for 827 jobs, according to a report released today by a group asking the Legislature to better fund parks in Texas.

The Texas Parks and Recreation Foundation commissioned the study by Texas economist Ray Perryman and is using his findings — that parks pump \$5.5 billion a year into the state's economy and create 38,000 jobs — to convince the Legislature to increase park funding by \$90 million.

"Unlike a lot of government spending, this does generate some direct, measurable economic benefits, in addition to the quality of life," Perryman said.

The study, called Sunshine, Soccer and Success, looked at how much money municipal parks and recreation facilities generated. Perryman said the study included net dollars from park-related tourism and sports tournaments, but did not include secondary money visitors spent at restaurants.

That means the cost a visitor paid to attend a tournament was included in the study, but the money the visitor spent for lunch at the nearby Jack in the Box, for example, was not.

## AP Headlines

- [Casey: Only Half of Troop Boost Needed](#)
- [2006 Personal Savings Fall to 74-Yr. Low](#)
- [Suicide Bombers Kill 45 in Iraqi Market](#)
- [Exxon Mobil Posts Record Annual Profit](#)
- [2 Men Held on Bond in Boston Hoax Case](#)
- [Official: Boy Guarded Other Teen](#)
- [Humans 'Very Likely' Making Earth Warmer](#)
- [Final Harry Potter Book Due Out in July](#)
- [Big Baby Causes Sensation in Cancun](#)
- [2 Milwaukee Schools Punished After Brawl](#)

[Advanced search](#)

JOIN OUR MAILING LIST FOR DAILY HEADLINES!

The report did not include federal or state parks such as the World Birding Center.

In the McAllen-Edinburg-Pharr metro area, local parks add \$64.3 million to the economy and 516 jobs. In Brownsville-Harlingen, they bring in \$40.6 million and 311 jobs, according to the report.

In 1993, the Legislature designated a portion of sales tax from the sale of sporting goods to pay for state and local parks. The tax brings in more than \$100 million annually, but parks receive just \$20.5 million per year because the Legislature appropriated only that much in 2005.

Even if the Legislature wanted to use all the tax for parks it couldn't, because it has capped the amount that can be spent on parks from the tax at \$32 million per year, regardless of how much the tax raises.

As a result, state parks are falling into disrepair and have seen cutbacks. There even have been some partial closures. Local parks have suffered, too, since they receive grant money from the fund.

On Wednesday Sen. Craig Estes, R-Wichita Falls, and Rep. Harvey Hilderbran, R-Kerrville, said they are sponsoring legislation to lift the cap, improve access to parks for those in urban areas and dedicate more money to repairing parks.

The bills would add \$90 million per year to parks funding, including \$20 million for state parks.

Hilderbran said he has assurances of support for the bills from 95 of the 150 House members and expects to have full support from the Senate and Gov. Rick Perry.

"The objective of this bill is to restore excellence to our state and local parks system in the state of Texas," he said. "It's also to improve management practices and increase opportunities for local parks grants."

The bills filed are House Bill 6 and Senate Bill 252. To view them, visit [http:// www.capitol.state.tx.us/](http://www.capitol.state.tx.us/)

[epierson@link.freedom.com](mailto:epierson@link.freedom.com)

Posted on Feb 01, 07 | 12:08 am

[Printer Friendly Version](#) | [Email Article](#)

---

## COMMENTS

**name**

**Email**

**Location**

Show email ☐ Remember me ☐

Notify me when someone replies to this post? ☐

Submit the word you see below:

hear57

The Brownsville Herald  
1135 E. Van Buren St.  
Brownsville, TX 78520

956-542-4301  
1-800-488-4301

**Note:** [Click Here](#)To subscribe to [The Brownsville Herald Newspaper](#).

### [Business Profiles](#)

The contents of this website may not be reproduced without written permission from The Brownsville Herald. All rights reserved.

© 2007 The Brownsville Herald