



NEWS RELEASE:

ECONOMIC DEVELOPMENT

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Smithsonian Traveling Exhibition Highlighting Changing Landscape of Rural America Coming to San Elizario

EL PASO, TX - El Paso County and the Los Portales Museum in San Elizario are proud to welcome the Smithsonian Institution's "Crossroads: Change in Rural America" exhibition, opening with a community celebration on Saturday, May 3, from 3 p.m. to 5 p.m. The exhibit will remain on view through June 15, 2025, and kicks off six weeks of free public programs and cultural events.

Presented in cooperation with the Texas Historical Commission, "Crossroads" is part of the Museum on Main Street (MoMS) initiative - a national collaboration between the Smithsonian Institution Traveling Exhibition Service (SITES), state humanities councils, and local communities. San Elizario is one of only seven Texas towns selected to host the exhibition through a competitive statewide application process.

"Crossroads" explores the profound transformation of rural America over the 20th century, when the population living in rural areas dropped from 60% to just 17%. Despite economic and demographic shifts, rural towns remain hubs of creativity, resilience, and cultural heritage. San Elizario, situated at the intersection of local, national, and international histories, is uniquely positioned to tell this story.

"Crossroads allows us to reflect on San Elizario's history, present and future and we are excited to explore what the future may hold for our community," said Ari Velez, the Los Portales Museum Director. "We want to convene conversations about what makes our community unique and have developed local exhibitions and public programs to complement the Smithsonian exhibition."

Los Portales Museum has curated a robust schedule of complementary events to spark community dialogue. Highlights include a speaker series, hands-on workshops in adobe brick-making and metal embossing, culinary tours at Sara Farm, live performances, and a historical conference hosted by the San Elizario Genealogy and Historical Society (SEGHS). Visitors can also participate in the Texas Archive of the Moving Image digitization event and enjoy a screening of Fandango, filmed in San Elizario.

The Smithsonian exhibition is made possible through support from the U.S. Congress. Local programming is presented by El Paso County, San Elizario Genealogy and Historical Society, and regional partners. To learn more, visit www.museumonmainstreet.org, www.sites.si.edu, or explore Texas history at www.texasimetravel.com.

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