PORTS-TO-PLAINS ALLIANCE ANNUAL CONFERENCE · DEL RIO, TEXAS · SEPTEMBER 10, 2026

Which Ports-to-Plains border gateway grew its truck traffic fastest in the past 12 months?

The one you are sitting in.

+20.5%

DEL RIO

93,031 trucks · 12 months to July 2026

+0.8%

EAGLE PASS

−0.8%

LAREDO

- Del Rio handled **93,031 truck crossings** in the 12 months to July 2026, up 20.5%, the fastest of the corridor's three Texas gateways.
- Eagle Pass was essentially flat over the same period at +0.8%, and Laredo was −0.8%.

PORTS TO PLAINS ALLIANCE

USMCA and the Corridor Economy
Moving Trade from Border to Market

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The next 30 minutes.

01

What actually crosses here

Del Rio's own trade and crossing numbers, and what they say about Acuña.

02

The rules changed on July 1

USMCA now runs on an annual clock, and the corridor runs on a twenty-year one.

01

What actually crosses here

US CENSUS BUREAU · PORT OF DEL RIO · TRADE WITH MEXICO · 12 MONTHS TO JULY 2026

More than $6 billion a year moves through this port.

$6.06B

TOTAL TRADE

Up 12.7% on the year before

- **$6.06 billion** in two-way trade with Mexico crossed at Del Rio in the 12 months to July 2026, an increase of 12.7%.
- Imports rose 19.4% while exports rose 1.8%. Northbound finished goods are growing far faster than the southbound inputs that cross at this same port.
- US Census Bureau, port 2302. Truck counts from the Bureau of Transportation Statistics. Retrieved September 2026.

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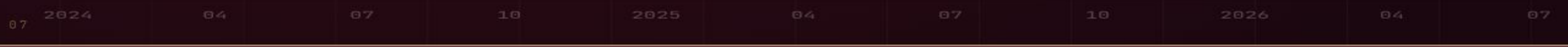
TRUCKS ENTERING THE US AT DEL RIO · EVERY MONTH · BUREAU OF TRANSPORTATION STATISTICS

Five straight months at an all-time high.



- Monthly truck crossings at Del Rio, January 2024 through July 2026.
- March through July 2026 each set an all-time monthly record for this crossing, closing at 9,015 in July.

TRUCKS ENTERING THE US AT DEL RIO · 12 MONTHS TO JULY, EACH YEAR

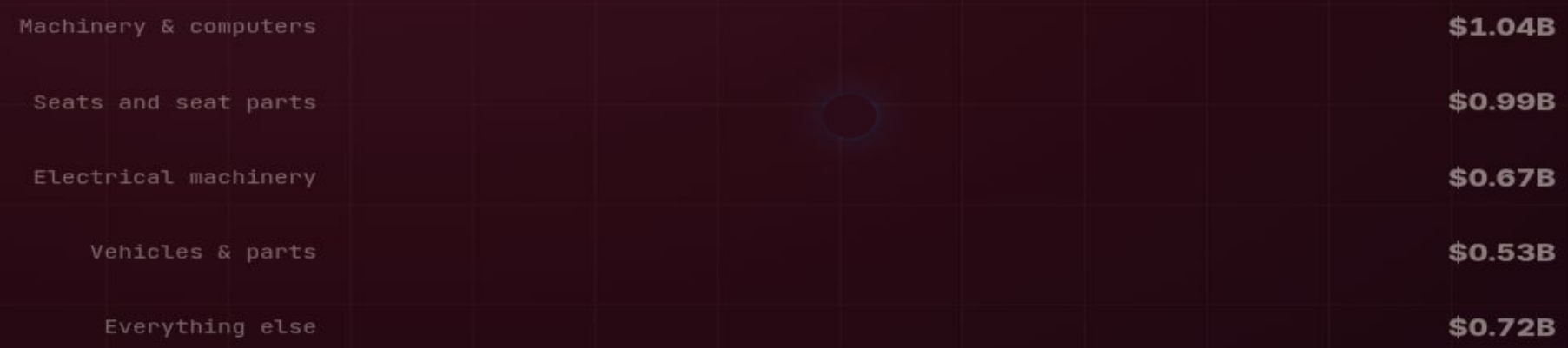
This crossing has never handled this many trucks.

08

- Between 2016 and 2025 the rolling 12-month total held within a narrow band of roughly 68,000 to 79,000 trucks.
- The 12 months to July 2026 reached 93,031, about 15,800 more crossings than the year before and the highest on record for this port.
- All of it crosses one bridge. A TTI driver survey here found 81% of northbound trucks carrying maquiladora freight, the highest of the seven Texas crossings surveyed, against 38% at Laredo (TTI, 1992).

DEL RIO IMPORTS FROM MEXICO · 12 MONTHS TO JULY 2026 · US CENSUS BUREAU

Four categories move 82% of what comes north.



09

- Machinery and computers (26%), seats and seat parts (25%), electrical machinery (17%) and vehicle parts (14%) together account for 82% of Del Rio's imports from Mexico.
- Ciudad Acuña, directly across the bridge, has 52 IMMEX manufacturing establishments employing 35,858 people (INEGI, June 2026). That base is what moves through this crossing.

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CHANGE IN DEL RIO IMPORTS, 12 MONTHS TO JULY 2026 VS THE YEAR BEFORE

One product line explains more than half the increase.

PARTS OF SEATS · HS 940199

Up 66% in one year. The largest of Del Rio's 602 six-digit import subheadings, and about 56% of the port's total import growth

- A single HS subheading, parts of seats (HS 940199), rose about $365 million in twelve months, from about $553M to $918M.
- That is about 56% of the port's roughly $650 million increase in imports, and it is the largest of Del Rio's 602 six-digit import subheadings.
- Nine identified seating establishments operate in Ciudad Acuña, including Adient and Magna. That cluster is a likely production base for this flow, an interpretation consistent with the port data, though the port data alone cannot establish the producing plants.

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DEL RIO'S LARGEST EXPORT TO MEXICO · 12 MONTHS TO JULY 2026

$513 million

of aircraft and aircraft parts. A quarter of everything this port sends south.

- Aircraft and aircraft parts are Del Rio's **largest export** to Mexico at $521 million, 24.9% of everything the port sends south.
- **Howmet Aerospace operates on both sides of this port**, running engine products and fastening systems in Ciudad Acuña and engine products in Del Rio.
- An aerospace supply chain already runs through this crossing in both directions.

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TOTAL TRADE WITH MEXICO · 12 MONTHS TO JULY 2026

Del Rio is small, and that is why this decision matters.

- Del Rio's $6.06 billion is about 1.6% of Laredo's $374 billion. The two ports are not competing for the same freight.
- Del Rio's growth is happening at the scale where port capacity, bridge hours and corridor access are still the binding constraints.

02

The rules changed on July 1

On July 1, the United States declined to renew USMCA in its current form.

WHAT DID NOT HAPPEN

USMCA did not end

The agreement stays in force. Mexico and Canada both backed a clean 16-year term.

Two clocks that do not line up.

10 to 20 years

THE CORRIDOR CLOCK

Designation, environmental review, design, right of way, funding cycles, construction.

12 months

THE RULES CLOCK

Every year to 2036, the terms that decide what crosses this border are back on the table.

WHAT AN ANNUAL REVIEW ACTUALLY COSTS

The precarity premium

Capital does not leave. It gets more expensive, shorter, and slower to commit.

- Sustained policy uncertainty raises required returns, shortens contracts, and pushes firms toward dual sourcing and higher inventory.
- Freight keeps moving. What weakens is the long-term commitment a corridor business case depends on.

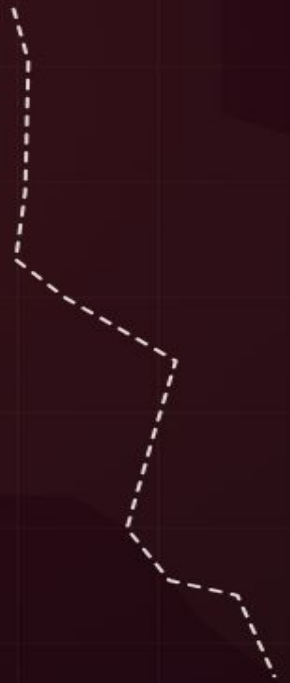
03

Why this corridor wins anyway

- Under annual review, the advantages that compound are proximity, redundancy and short supply lines. This corridor supplies all three.

I-27 SYSTEM IN TEXAS · FUTURE INTERSTATE DESIGNATION, 2022

963 miles, and Del Rio is one of three border gateways.



- The I-27 System covers **963 miles across 26 Texas counties**, from the Laredo, Eagle Pass and Del Rio gateways north toward Canada.
- 124 miles are signed as I-27 today, Amarillo to Lubbock. **The rest of the system carries the Future Interstate designation but not yet the highway.**

THE FIRST-TOUCH ADVANTAGE

Sorting at the border saves 560 miles to San Antonio.

First touch is where a load gets sorted and put on its final leg. Do that at the border and the freight never doubles back.

- Preliminary TCBEED analysis, northbound movements only. Routing through a Dallas distribution center adds 560 miles to San Antonio, 445 to El Paso and Phoenix, 400 to Austin and 360 to Houston.
- For eastern destinations the difference is negligible: 40 miles to Atlanta, and 5 fewer to Chicago. The inland-hub advantage does not extend west.

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Proximity is the hedge against an annual review.

PROXIMITY

The corridor already points at the market

A load leaving one of Acuña's 52 export plants crosses at Del Rio already aimed at Texas and the mountain west. Ports-to-Plains runs north and south, which is the direction that freight is going.

SHORT SUPPLY LINES

Short beats optimal

When the policy quest[illegible] come back every 12 months, the supply chains that survive are the ones a plant can re-plan inside a year. Short and close wins that race.

- A north-south corridor serves the Texas and western markets where sorting at the border saves the most miles.
- Del Rio and Eagle Pass add capacity and redundancy alongside Laredo, which handled 2.95 million truck crossings last year.

Three things I would do with this.

01

Build for the freight you actually have

Four manufacturing categories are 82% of northbound import value here. That should drive bridge hours, inspection capacity and truck parking, not a generic corridor spec.

02

Make the case in review terms

There is a USMCA revi every year to 2036. This corridor should sho up in every one of them with its own freight numbers, not just in a highway bill.

- Specify the corridor for the manufacturing freight that actually crosses it, carry it into each annual USMCA review with current figures, and publish port-level data monthly.

What gets negotiated in Washington gets tested here first.

Borders are often called the scars of history. With a review every year, this one is closer to a laboratory, the place where a new rule meets actual freight before anyone knows whether it holds.

- A trade agreement is written nationally. Its operating reality is local, at the crossings that have to run it.
- Under annual review, showing what works becomes a standing job for the communities on this border.

Last year this port grew 20% on its own.

Imagine what it does with a corridor behind it.

- Del Rio's growth came from thousands of individual routing decisions rather than a coordinated plan. The corridor is the chance to add one.
- Texas Center for Border Economic and Enterprise Development · Texas A&M International University · drdanielcovarrubias.com