



Tourism and Shopping Initiative: Border Crossing Card Zone

- Every year, thousands of frequent, low-risk, short-term visitors travel from Mexico into Arizona to conduct business, visit with family and friends, or shop at local stores—spending billions of dollars. Although these visitors have been pre-cleared through thorough background checks for frequent travel into the U.S., their U.S.-issued border crossing cards (BCCs) limit their travel in Arizona to 75 miles entering through Arizona's land ports of entry—allowing these visitors to travel about as far as the city of Tucson, with the exception of a 25-mile limit for visitors entering through the San Luis port of entry (Yuma region).
- Expanding the border zone for Mexican visitors with BCCs requires administrative action by the U.S. Department of Homeland Security. **In 2016, two bipartisan letters of support from the majority of Arizona's House of Representatives delegation were sent to the U.S. Customs and Border Protection requesting a rule-making process to expand the BCC zone statewide in Arizona.**
- In 2015, the Maricopa Association of Governments (MAG) requested that the University of Arizona conduct an economic impact analysis of potential Mexican spending resulting from expanding the border zone to the entire state of Arizona, which identified that expanding a zone for tourism and shopping statewide could **generate up to \$181 million in annual estimated spending (2016), bringing the total projected spending of Mexican visitors to Arizona to nearly \$3.1 billion and a total jobs impact of 31,766.** These numbers would be expected to increase each year thereafter.
- Expansion of a tourism and shopping zone is currently being supported by a number of organizations and entities throughout Arizona, including MAG, the Arizona Chamber of Commerce, as well as the Intertribal Council of Arizona and the city of Nogales, Arizona.
- Tourism is Arizona's largest sector with 171,500 jobs statewide, generating \$20.9 billion in total direct travel spending in 2015. Tourism, retail and chamber representatives throughout Arizona are expressing great interest in the zone's expansion to facilitate seamless and expanded spending opportunities in all corners of Arizona.
- The most recent zone expansion occurred in 2013 in the state of New Mexico, which extended it from 25 miles to 55 miles. Analysis of tourism crossings right after the extension indicates crossings (including through the El Paso port of entry) were 4.2 percent higher during the year after the expansion than the year prior to the expansion.
- Applicants for BCCs must provide fingerprints, photography, employment information, a security background check and in-person interview. The BCC is a B-1/B-2 visa issued exclusively to Mexican citizens by the U.S. State Department and includes an RFID chip. Holders of these cards also must demonstrate that they have ties to Mexico that would compel them to return after a temporary stay in the U.S. Penalties for abusing the visa include revocation of the BCC with a fee as well as losing privilege for future visa application.
- For more information, please contact Nathan Pryor, Government Relations Manager, MAG, at npryor@azmag.gov or (602) 254-6300.