



FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE

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Real Stories. Meaningful Conversations. Real Impact.
A series sharing personal stories, valuable resources, and voices that inspire

The City of McAllen's Office of Communications, alongside Mayor Javier Villalobos, proudly presents *Real Conversations*, a video series that highlights the people, ideas and experiences shaping our community. Through authentic conversations, the series connects residents with valuable information, local resources and perspectives that inform, educate and inspire.

Featuring local leaders, professionals, educators, advocates and residents with unique life experiences, each episode explores topics that impact everyday life, including health, education, civic initiatives and personal journeys of resilience and success.

"*Real Conversations* gives us the opportunity to hear directly from the people whose experiences, accomplishments and service help define McAllen," said Mayor Javier Villalobos. "By sharing these stories, we recognize the dedication of those who make a difference and remind residents of the many ways we can learn from one another."

While *Real Conversations* provides a platform for meaningful discussions on topics that impact everyday life, it is just one of many programs produced by the City of McAllen's Office of Communications through the McAllen Cable Network (MCN).

Available on **Spectrum Channel 1300** and the City's **YouTube channel**, MCN delivers original programming that informs, educates, and connects residents with their local government and community. Programming includes in-depth interviews with community leaders and subject matter experts, resident spotlights featuring local businesses, volunteers, and inspiring neighbors, coverage of high school sporting events, live and recorded City Commission meetings and town halls, as well as cultural festivals, community celebrations, and special events that showcase the people, places, and traditions that make McAllen unique.

"Our responsibility extends beyond sharing announcements, we're here to tell the stories that matter to our community," said Director of Communications Irma Chapa. "Whether it's helping someone better understand an important health topic, highlighting a local business, celebrating student-athletes, or bringing residents inside City Hall, our goal is to provide meaningful content that informs, inspires, and strengthens the connection between residents and their city."

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Featured episodes can be found on the City of McAllen YouTube:

- *A Candid Discussion with Professional Golfer Abraham Ancer*
- *Texas A&M University at McAllen: Building Futures, Shaping Care*
- *Finding Purpose After the Unthinkable with Mercedes Ramirez Johnson*
- *From McAllen to the Stars with Debbie Korth*
- *Lung Cancer Awareness & What You Need to Know*
- *Breaking The Silence on Colonoscopies with Dr. Valeska Balderas*

The latest episode highlights the importance of lifesaving preventive screenings through Mayor Javier Villalobos' decision to publicly share his own colonoscopy experience. After being encouraged to undergo the routine screening at age 60, the mayor was surprised to learn that doctors had discovered three polyps.

Joining the conversation is Dr. Valeska Balderas, a McAllen native whose journey began at Memorial High School before earning her degree from UTPA and completing her medical training at UTMB and UT Southwestern Medical Center. Now serving the community that helped shape her, Dr. Balderas offers expert insight into the importance of screening and encourages residents to prioritize their health.

There's always another story waiting to be told, and we invite residents to tune in, share their favorite episodes, and discover the stories, experiences and voices that continue to make our community stronger. Residents are also encouraged to submit story ideas to be featured in future episodes by emailing mediarelations@mcallen.net.

To watch the latest episodes of *Real Conversations*, visit the City of McAllen's official YouTube channel and follow the City of McAllen on Instagram and Facebook for new episode updates.

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About the City of McAllen

Founded in 1904 and incorporated in 1911, the City of McAllen has grown from a small agricultural community into one of the most vibrant and fastest-growing cities along the U.S.–Mexico border. Known as the “City of Palms,” McAllen serves as a hub for international trade, retail, tourism, and culture in the Rio Grande Valley. Today, the city employs more than 2,600 dedicated public servants across 41 departments, delivering essential services to a community of more than 150,000 residents. McAllen city leaders remain committed to transparent governance, fiscal responsibility, and enhancing quality of life through innovation, infrastructure, and community engagement. For more information, visit www.mcallen.net and follow us on social media @cityofmcallen