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Thanks to Residents, McAllen Shines Bright at The Monitor's Readers' Choice Awards 2026

Seven Community Favorites Recognized Among the Best

The City of McAllen is celebrating seven top honors in *The Monitor's Readers' Choice Awards*, recognizing some of the City's most distinctive destinations, venues, and experiences. The awards highlight the wide range of amenities that make McAllen a destination for residents and visitors alike, from world-class birding and nature experiences to live entertainment, golf, libraries, festivals, and international commerce.

McAllen earned the following best honors:

- **Best Birding/Butterfly Center** – Quinta Mazatlán – McAllen's World Birding Center
- **Best City Festival** – McAllen's Holiday Parade and South Pole of Texas
- **Best Golf Course** – City of McAllen – Champion Lakes Golf Course
- **Best International Bridge** – McAllen-Hidalgo International Bridge
- **Best Library** – McAllen Public Library
- **Best Convention Center** – McAllen Convention Center
- **Best Live Theater** – McAllen Performing Arts Center

For a city approaching 150,000 residents, this recognition reflects the strong connection between McAllen and the people who live, work, and play here. Residents continue to show up, filling theaters, attending festivals, visiting our nature centers and parks, enjoying unique programming offered at the McAllen Public Library, and playing golf at Champion Lakes, making McAllen a regional destination.

"McAllen is a city that continues to grow, and what makes us even more special is that our residents continue to show up and support the places, programs and experiences that make our community unique," said Mayor Javier Villalobos. "These seven awards represent so much of what McAllen has to offer. We are proud of our McAllen Performing Arts Center and Convention Center, where residents and visitors experience outstanding entertainment; our McAllen Public Library, the largest single-story library in the United States and home to the South Texas International Book Festival, which brings authors, readers and literary experiences from around the world to our region each October. And our Holiday Parade and South Pole Illuminated Festival bring families together and create some of our most memorable traditions for families during the holiday season."

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“From the natural beauty and biodiversity of Quinta Mazatlán, which welcomes thousands of visitors each year, to Champion Lakes Golf Course and its nationally recognized opportunities like Drive, Chip & Putt, McAllen offers experiences you simply cannot find everywhere,” said City Manager Isaac J. Tawil. “And our McAllen-Hidalgo International Bridge represents another important part of who we are as a community with deep international connections and a front door to the world. We are grateful to our residents for recognizing these places and, more importantly, for continuing to enjoy and support them.”

The recognition also underscores the City's continued investment in experiences designed to serve residents of all ages while attracting visitors from across the Rio Grande Valley and beyond. The City of McAllen extends its appreciation to everyone who participated in *The Monitor's Readers' Choice Awards* and who continue to support the City's venues, programs, events, and destinations throughout the year. It is because of you that McAllen continues to rank among the nation's best places to live, earning the No. 27 spot in U.S. News & World Report's 2026–2027 Best Places to Live rankings.

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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. 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.