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El Paso Times

MONDAY, AUGUST 18, 2025 | ELPASOTIMES.COM

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Martin Armendariz Jr. serves up a plate of oysters on the half shell in his new Pearl Divers Oyster Bar in Downtown El Paso on Aug. 5. Martin Armendariz Jr. is the owner of now two neighboring restaurants in Downtown El Paso.
PHOTOS BY ABRIELLE KATE MADDISON/EL PASO TIMES

Pearl Divers Oyster Bar opens Downtown

Maria Cortes Gonzalez
El Paso Times
USA TODAY NETWORK – TEXAS

After five years of running the Tiki Room, Martin Armendariz Jr. and his wife, Noelle Coley, are adding to their business acumen with a new restaurant, Pearl Divers Oyster Bar.

The oyster bar, located next door to the Tiki Room at 115 S. Durango St., serves as a complementary hangout for customers of both businesses. The name of the oyster bar is inspired by a popular cocktail in Tiki bars, an escapist atmosphere and a popular vibe that started in the 1930s.

Both Armendariz and his wife have been in the industry for several years. Armendariz was the chef at Aurellia's Bottle Shop & Brewhouse when it opened and made avocado fries a thing, and has also worked at Black Bird and had a food truck. His wife founded Pur Cold Pressed Juice and sold it in 2020.

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The new Pearl Divers Oyster Bar is now open in Downtown El Paso on Aug. 5. Pictured are freshly made oyster shots.

Ysleta del Sur Pueblo mourns death of Tigua leader

Daniel Borunda
El Paso Times
USA TODAY NETWORK – TEXAS

The El Paso community is mourning Ysleta del Sur Pueblo Cacique José Sierra Sr., whose death was announced on Saturday, Aug. 16, by the tribal community in the Lower Valley.

Sierra had served as cacique, or chief, of the pueblo since his appointment in 2017. The cacique is the Tigua tribe's spiritual leader and serves life-long terms on the pueblo's tribal and traditional councils.

"We join together in honoring his life and legacy during this difficult time. Please join us in prayer for our beloved Cacique and his family," Speaking Rock Entertainment Center said in a statement.

Ysleta del Sur Pueblo facilities and Speaking Rock Entertainment Center have been closed until further notice during this time of mourning. The TLC concert that had been scheduled for Saturday at Speaking Rock casino was canceled.

The tribe's Speaking Rock Entertainment Center over the decades has become a popular attraction featuring a casino and concerts.

A 'time of sorrow'

El Paso County Judge Ricardo Samaniego in a social media post said that the community was "profoundly saddened" by the passing of Sierra, whom he describes as a friend to El Paso County.

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Jose Sierra Sr. was cacique, or chief, of the Ysleta del Sur Pueblo. He is seen in this photo from 2017, when he was appointed caqique.
PROVIDED BY THE YSLETA DEL SUR PUEBLO

Dallas developer sells 7 El Paso industrial buildings for \$124M

Vic Kolenc
El Paso Times
USA TODAY NETWORK – TEXAS

One of the big players in El Paso's industrial real estate market has sold seven buildings in East El Paso for \$124 million to an investment fund.

The El Paso portfolio was one of 13 sale transactions that Stonelake Capital Partners competed for \$920 million in the first half of 2025 in six markets, four

of which were in Texas, the Dallas company announced in July.

The sale comes as the El Paso area's industrial property vacancy rate increased to 10.7% in the second quarter of this year, compared to 5.7% in the same quarter in 2024, reported real estate services firm CBRE Group.

The vacancy rate, which had been steadily increasing in recent months, slowed in the second quarter thanks to strong leasing activity, CBRE reported.

However, three large speculative buildings coming on the market without tenants boosted the vacancy rate, CBRE reported.

Industrial space construction stays strong in El Paso

The vacancy rate has been increasing since hitting a record low of 0.6% at the end of 2022 as construction of warehousing/distribution centers boomed to

meet demand from manufacturers across the U.S.-Mexico border in Juárez.

Construction of new industrial buildings remains strong in El Paso, CBRE reported, even as President Donald Trump's threats of higher tariffs against Mexico add uncertainty in the manufacturing industry in Mexico and the logistics/warehousing sector in El Paso that supports it.

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