

Rancho Anapra & Border Wall

Just west of El Paso the train passes very close to the Mexican border, and within view of the community of Rancho Anapra...providing an opportunity to consider the real-life complexities of immigration issues.

The city of Juarez, Mexico has seen a remarkable growth in population since many U.S. companies moved their manufacturing plants just south of the U.S.-Mexico border. Juarez purchased ranchland to sell, at very reasonable costs, to people moving to the area in hopes of finding work in the U.S.-owned factories. This was the beginning of Rancho Anapra. Electricity, water and sewers were installed, but few people are able to afford much in the way of building materials. Even from the train, you may be able to see that many homes along the dirt roads combine wood pallets, concrete block, and plastic tarps, while the more established homes are made of adobe.

Rancho Anapra's residents can easily see wealthier communities across the border in the United States, and they also have a view of the huge wall running the length of the border. The border wall was started in 2002, and when finished, will consist of a variety of fencing and barriers. In urban areas the wall is up to 18 feet high with 24 hour per day lighting. Smaller fencing is used in unpopulated desert areas which see a lower incidence of illegal border crossings.

The U.S. Border Patrol asserts that the wall is necessary to curb illegal immigration, and in a 2008 poll, the majority of Texans were in support of its construction. Many are strongly opposed, however, for multiple reasons. In 2005 Mexican President Vicente Fox denounced plans for the wall as "disgraceful and shameful," and many Americans are concerned with international ill-will. Environmental organizations have decried the clearing and destruction of fragile ecosystems and animal habitat, and the disruption of migratory wildlife patterns. For indigenous peoples like the Ysleta del Sur Pueblo of Texas, the wall is an intrusion on land used for sacred rituals. Immigrant advocates expect that many people will persevere in their quest for a better life in the U.S., but the wall will force them to take more dangerous routes. The high costs of construction and long-term maintenance are also of concern.

The Amtrak route hugs the southern U.S. border for many miles in New Mexico and Texas, giving you a chance to view the wall, consider what life is like in a border community, and reflect on the challenges that face the region.

Source(s):

<http://laprensa-sandiego.org/archieve/2008/september26-08/march.092608.htm>

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http://www.usborderpatrol.com/Border_Patrol1301.htm

<http://www.csmonitor.com/2009/0919/p02s09-usgn.html>

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