

Sierra Vista at a Glance

Located 75 miles southeast of Tucson, Sierra Vista (Spanish for "Mountain View") is a thriving community of approximately 45,000 people and serves as the main commercial, cultural, and recreational hub of Cochise County. The city is easily accessible via Interstate 10 and State Highway 90. The city is surrounded by the unique beauty of the Huachuca, Dragoon, and Mule Mountains and is bordered on the east by the San Pedro River, one of the premier bird-watching destinations in the country. At an elevation of 4,600 feet, Sierra Vista not only boasts magnificent mountain views, but also a temperate year-round climate, abundant sunshine, and clean, fresh air.

History

The history of Sierra Vista began with the establishment of Fort Huachuca in 1877. As a camp, and later a fort, the post was the home base of the famed "Buffalo Soldiers" of the 9th and 10th Cavalry, U.S. Army. The missions of the post at that time were to secure the southern borders of the expanding United States and to protect settlers from Indian attack. Several major commands now operate on Fort Huachuca, including the Army Intelligence Center and School, the U.S. Army Network Enterprise Technology Command/9th Army Signal Command, and the Electronic Proving Grounds.

Initially, the areas around Fort Huachuca were virtually unpopulated except for a few small ranches spread along the San Pedro River and close to the mountain foothills. A small community gradually began to grow east of the fort. In 1956, this community was incorporated as Sierra Vista. Fort Huachuca was annexed by the city in 1971. Since its incorporation, Sierra Vista has steadily grown to encompass more than 130 square miles.

Services

The City of Sierra Vista is a council-manager municipality. The City Council sets public policy while a professional City Manager implements policy and oversees the day-to-day operation of the city. Over the years, Sierra Vista has received numerous awards at state, regional, and national levels for excellence in all areas of operations, from budgeting to water conservation. Sierra Vista offers many amenities to its residents and visitors alike. The Cove, the City's indoor aquatic center, features wave, competition, wading, therapy, and dive pools; two tube water slides; sun deck; lounge; and concession areas. Two modern community centers are the home for senior activities and other community programs. A beautiful 31,000 square foot public library is well equipped to serve the community's information needs.

The Sierra Vista Regional Health Center (SVRHC) and the Raymond W. Bliss Army Health Center serve the community's health care needs. Medical personnel of all major specialties are available in the area. The SVRHC recently completed a new Ambulatory Surgery Center on Highway 90. A medical office building will be added later at the 80-acre site.

The local public school system includes a high school, two middle schools, and six elementary schools. There are also several charter and private education opportunities. Higher education is available through the University of Arizona South, Cochise Community College, University of Phoenix, Wayland Baptist University, Western International University, and Chapman University.

Sierra Vista is the commercial center for Cochise County and parts of northern Mexico. The Mall at Sierra Vista is a 400,000 square foot mall anchored by Dillards and Sears. Retailers such as Lowe's, Home Depot, K-Mart, Wal-Mart, Target, and Marshalls are located in the community, along with three major supermarkets and dozens of smaller specialty shops. Fine dining is available throughout the area.

A ten-screen movie theater at the mall and a three-screen movie theater offer the latest in cinematic entertainment. Over 70 television channels are available through Cox Communications, the area's cable provider, and local AM and FM radio stations broadcast a variety of formats. Newspapers, including a daily and several weeklies, cover the area's news.

Activities and Attractions

Sierra Vista offers a variety of cultural and family-oriented activities throughout the year. Some of the major events include the Cochise Cowboy Poetry and Music Gathering in February, the Festival of the Southwest in the spring, a spectacular celebration of Independence Day, a birder's delight with the South West Wings Festival in August, the Festival of Color Hot Air Balloon Rally in the fall, and Arizona's longest-running holiday parade in December. Throughout the year, the Art Discovery Series presents plays, concerts, and musicals, and in the summer, there are regular band concerts in the park, as well as many activities at the Sierra Vista Public Library such as a film series, lectures, readings, and other programs for children and adults alike.

Recreational facilities include two championship golf courses, public and private tennis courts, a firearms range, numerous ballparks and neighborhood parks, 22 miles of multi-use paths, and several sports clubs. Major service clubs, veterans groups, and fraternal organizations are active in the city, and there are more than 30 places of worship.

Nicknamed the "Hummingbird Capital of the United States," bird watchers from all over the world flock to the nearby Ramsey Canyon Preserve and other local canyons to observe and photograph hundreds of different bird species. Other outdoor sightseeing and recreational opportunities abound at the San Pedro Riparian National Conservation Area, the Coronado National Memorial in the Huachuca Mountains, Cochise Stronghold in the Dragoon Mountains, Chiricahua National Monument, Madera Canyon, and the spectacular Kartchner Caverns State Park.