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New age billboard goes after ultimate captive audience

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A small Las Vegas billboard company is going after the ultimate captive audience: motorists trapped in snaking lines at international bridges.

The company, Border Billboard LLC, is looking for investors to put an 18-by-24-foot video billboard on the Bridge of the Americas northbound lanes. El Paso-Juárez would be the third location for such a billboard after San Diego-Tijuana and Laredo-Nuevo Laredo.

"El Paso is a large (metropolitan area) in the advertising world and a lot of advertising dollars from the Hispanic market get placed there," said Jennifer Keeney, Border Billboard's chief executive officer.

The billboard, which would have an LED ticker display underneath the video screen, could go up on the Mexican side of the bridge by the end of the third quarter this year, Keeney said. No definite site for the sign has been acquired, she said.

The San Diego billboard can be seen by 45 million people a year -- 60 percent of whom are Hispanics -- with each person looking at it for 10 minutes to 2 1/2 hours, Keeney said.

In El Paso, crossing times are considerably shorter, said Roger Maier, spokesman for Customs and Border Protection.

"Most of the time our waits are under 30 minutes and in many cases, drivers don't hit a line until they cross the border and start coming down the hill and hit a queue," Maier said.

The billboard will cost between \$500,000 and \$750,000 in electronics components alone, Keeney said.

The company will charge \$3,500 to \$25,000 for ads. Customers in San Diego include McDonald's, Hummer, Chevrolet, the U.S. Postal Service, Circuit City, Coca-Cola, Coors Light and local attorneys, restaurants and clothing stores.

The billboard in Tijuana is on leased federal land, and the one in Nuevo Laredo is on purchased private land, Keeney said.

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