



**(U) Remember the Alamo!**

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*...and don't forget the sunglasses -- Life in the San Antonio area, home to the Medina Regional Security Operations Center (MRSOC)*  
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(U) Today is Valentine's Day! The sun is shining, it is 78 degrees here in San Antonio, the trees are budding and the birds are beginning to sing. Spring planting season will begin soon. My garden is calling to me! Winter is over. Yes, winter is short here in South Texas. It makes me smile to remember all the seemingly endless, icy, snowy days I have spent elsewhere in other Februarys, and I wonder what I did to deserve such beautiful weather in such a gorgeous location!

(U) Weather is not the only thing that is beautiful here in San Antonio! The close proximity of the Riverwalk and all of the wonderful restaurants make it difficult to know how to spend a pleasant evening. Weekends, evenings and days off are filled with entertainment options! There are lots of local fairs, San Antonio Spurs basketball games, picnics in parks at nearby lakes, and all of the activities associated with a large city.



*(U) Riverwalk*

(U) San Antonio competes with Dallas to be recognized as the 8th largest city in the U.S. Last year Dallas won as the 8th largest with San Antonio coming in 9th; perhaps this year San Antonio will again rank 8th. It is a big city, but feels like a small town. San Antonio stands out as the prime vacation spot in Texas. The main attractions, in addition to the famous Riverwalk, include Sea World, Fiesta Texas, a large zoo, water parks with long seasons, the Alamo, and the rodeo with its kick-off Cowboy Breakfast which made the Guinness Book of World Records -- all within a short radius of the city limits.

(U) My family had to be convinced that they were not giving up the fun we had at the ocean by moving to San Antonio. It only took one trip to beautiful South Padre Island on the Gulf of Mexico to win them over. We watched the shrimp boats, enjoyed the sun and the surf on the beaches of the Gulf of Mexico, and sampled the fresh seafood at one of the local restaurants before journeying back home.

(U) Are there negatives to living in Texas? Well...yes. There are some extra hot days in the middle of the summer. You can spend an entire day driving without ever leaving the state or reaching the border. The driving patterns on the roadways are different and require some adjustment before being able to confidently navigate them. Perhaps the biggest change I noticed was the cost of car

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insurance for my teenage son, with a perfect driving record, no tickets, no accidents, and a consistent good student discount! My first car insurance payment almost sent me into sticker shock!

(U) Nevertheless, the positives outweigh the negatives. Housing is extremely economical and very affordable! Large sprawling ranchers, gorgeous two-story homes, or a little house on the prairie on several acres can be purchased for a fraction of the cost of East or West Coast housing. In addition, several accredited universities are located within the local area; local public and private school systems are extremely good, offering many opportunities for their students. Medical facilities are top quality, and there is less traffic congestion.

(U) Did I mention Texas-friendly, and no state income tax? Yes, Texas is still the friendly place that has always been one of its most notable trademarks. If you are looking for a change of pace in a warm, friendly environment we hope that y'all will come down and join us. San Antonio is waiting for you!



*(U) The Alamo*



*(U//FOUO) Aerial view of MRSOC*

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