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Border Patrol Apprehensions Increase

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April 17, 2006 -- Border Patrol officials say apprehensions of undocumented immigrants have increased by almost 30 percent in the last six months in the El Paso sector.

Officials tell KFOX the increase is due to technology, infrastructure and manpower. The agency has recently acquired more technology such as night vision goggles and cameras. It also has better infrastructure including better lighting and vehicle barriers. On top of those factors, manpower has also increased.

"I think Border Patrol in 2006 is much more efficient," said El Paso sector Border Patrol spokesman Doug Mosier.

But in the last year, there's also been the presence of organizations like the Minutemen monitoring the borders.

"Definitely more eyes will help. We try to help them," said Texas Minutemen President Shannon McGauley.

Members of the Minutemen have been monitoring the border along the El Paso sector for more than a year, conducting several missions. In that year they've called in hundreds of reports.

"We have received calls from various organizations. We don't always know who is giving us information or tips, but we follow them," said Mosier.

Border Patrol officials say some information has led them to arrests. Minutemen members say they're glad to help but their mission is the bigger picture.

"We're just here for border security. If the people trying to get over here is the affect of securing the border and preventing terrorist from coming in then that's just the way it has to be," said McGauley.

The El Paso sector of the Border Patrol now has more than 1,300 agents. They're expecting 500 more by next fiscal year.