

BURN BAN IN EFFECT, NO GROUND FIRES

by order of Presidio County

Marfa goes dark after mobile substation fails

By BECK ANDREW SALGADO  
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MARFA — At around 10:30 p.m. last Wednesday night, the streets of Marfa were suddenly flooded with darkness. This darkness stemmed from a citywide power outage that lasted until 1 a.m., when the city was finally able to get the electricity back up and running.

According to George Salgado with AEP, the power outage was caused by a mobile substation failing before it was even put on line. Additionally, the mobile substation that they were working on was old, and Salgado and AEP were unable to find the parts necessary to fix it.

After the initial power outage, some Marfa residents experienced a resurgence of electricity that was only able to provide dimmed or less than full lighting. Salgado said this was because when the mobile substation that caused the power outage failed, they opened up “just one fuse and left the other ones closed,” which led to the dimmed lighting in houses.

Salgado said houses connected to the main line were the ones that experienced the dimmed lighting due to the small amount of power reaching them.

The City of Marfa announced that residents were to expect scheduled power outages on July 21 and 22, starting at 8:30 a.m. and lasting about 1-2 hours. These planned outages were later postponed to August, but Salgado said that the purpose of the planned outages was to allow for AEP to hook up the new mobile substation.

Salgado said there are times when mobile substations can be replaced “hot” — or while electricity is running — but because the original mobile substation failed, it would not be safe to do so now. The planned outages are intended to create a safer environment for the electrical workers that will be hooking up the new substation.

The original planned outages have been postponed because Salgado and his team were unsuccessful in finding the parts needed to fix the damaged substation.

As far as any additional electrical damage, Salgado said that, beyond the substation that failed, no other aspects of the electrical system were harmed. He said once a breaker connected to the substation is compromised, the electricity will stop there, likening it to “regular breakers you have in your house,” when explaining the nature of the electrical system.

Salgado said the reason a mobile substation is even being used in Marfa is because there are “broken switches at the station,” and to be able to work on those broken switches, they need to funnel the energy through the mobile substation.

According to Mayor Manny Baeza, Marfa residents should expect those postponed planned power outages to be put into action sometime in early August. This is also the same time Salgado said the new mobile substation should be coming in.

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The West Texan Media Group, LLC



Mimi Simpson sees travelers from across the Big Bend and beyond at her job at Uncle’s, a gas station and convenience store in Marfa. With employer-provided masks, protective plexiglass and customers wearing masks more often than not, Simpson said she feels safe from the virus.

Photo by Abbie Perrault

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After conflicting reports from state, Marfa likely to get contact tracers

By STEPHEN PAULSEN  
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MARFA — Marfa may be getting a contact tracing program after all.

Last week, *The Big Bend Sentinel* reported that local officials wanted to set up their own contact tracing program after hearing mixed reviews of state efforts. That push prompted a disagreement among local officials, which mostly broke down along city and county lines.

Some county officials said such a program wouldn’t be legally or logistically feasible. They cited conversations with officials at agencies like Texas Department of State Health Services, which oversees contact tracing. They also said there were ethical and logistical problems around sharing confidential state health data with local contact investigators, as well as asking Marfans to contact trace their own friends and neighbors. City officials weren’t so sure, though. They

pointed to other Texas cities that had set up local contact tracing efforts, like Corpus Christi and Houston. The analogy wasn’t perfect: Big cities like Houston have their own health departments, whereas the sparsely populated tri-county region relies on the regional DSHS office of Region 9/10.

Still, while county officials were getting a clear “no” from state-level officials, some in Marfa city government said they were hearing otherwise. Some of the strongest evidence came from Marfa City Councilmember Buck Johnston, who sought out an opinion from a member of Governor Greg Abbott’s coronavirus task force.

That task force member, Dallas-based Dr. John Carlo, told Johnston that he didn’t see why Marfa couldn’t hire contact tracers. Instead, he wrote in an email that Presidio County would simply need a sworn health authority — which it has in the form of Dr. John Paul “J.P.” Schwartz. It appears Johnston and others were right

after all. Last week, city officials were also in conversations with the office of State Senator José Rodríguez. And like Dr. Carlo, staff members believed there were no legal reasons to deny Marfa such a program.

Chief among them were Sushma Smith, Senator Rodríguez’s chief of staff and legislative director. “It is possible for the city to collaborate with the state on contact tracing,” she wrote in an email to *The Big Bend Sentinel*. “The next step,” she added, would be determining the “legal requirements and logistics needed for the city to access Texas Health Trace,” the state program into which all contact tracing efforts are aggregated.

“They’re not gonna toot their own horn about this, but Senator Rodríguez’s office — and specifically Sushma Smith — facilitated this entire thing,” Teresa Todd, the Marfa city

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West Texas mobile testing goes private with bumpy start

By STEPHEN PAULSEN  
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TRI-COUNTY — Texas is privatizing its testing efforts as the Texas Division of Emergency Management delegates the task of taking and processing tests to private companies. It mirrors the approach Texas has taken with contact tracing, where a subcontractor in May won a \$295 million contract to help those efforts.

The National Guard has been running mobile testing sites since April and needed a break, said Seth Christensen, a TDEM spokesperson. And with hurricane season here and at least three storms now brewing in the Gulf of Mexico, they were also needed back in their communities.

“The National Guard has been out there, doing a tremendous job,” Christensen said. “Moving towards the private sector will hopefully make [the process] more efficient.”

Texas’ privatized testing push started as early as

May and has recently sped up. Curative Inc., the company that previously helped set up an online testing portal for Texas tests, has been running oral-swab tests in prisons, *The Texas Tribune* reported, and possibly also in other places. In an email Monday, a company spokesperson said Curative was “running software at 21 facilities” but declined to offer more details, instead deferring to TDEM.

In West Texas, the most obvious change will be the mobile testing sites. In place of the National Guard, the sites will now be staffed by employees and/or subcontractors of a Washington State-based company called Honu Management Group.

Texas is currently paying the company around \$97 for each test it runs, Christensen said. TDEM will also put out requests for proposals for bigger testing initiatives for private companies to bid, though the details of those are not yet public.

Honu ran its first tri-county testing site in Alpine on Saturday, followed by two more in

Marfa on Sunday and Monday. And so far, local officials have been mostly happy with the results.

Testing in Alpine on Saturday was “really smooth,” said Stephanie Elmore, emergency management coordinator for Brewster County. More than 150 people got tested in a single day, she said.

“Pretty smooth,” agreed Gary Mitschke, emergency management coordinator for Presidio County. But he added that Marfa turnout numbers were “a little disappointing,” with just around 90 people tested on Sunday.

On Monday, this reporter went to get tested. The process took about 15 minutes and involved filling out a pre-registration form on-site.

Christensen, the TDEM spokesperson, said Honu was aiming for a test turnaround of around 48 to 72 hours and usually had results within 96. At press time

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Positive test results for Marfa police officer show effect of virus on frontline workers

By STEPHEN PAULSEN  
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MARFA — In late June, Marfa Police Lieutenant Gilberto Carrillo got a runny nose. There was a testing site in Marfa, and he decided to get tested just to be safe.

The results for that test ultimately came back negative — but a couple days later, he lost his sense of taste and smell. “That’s what started to get my attention,” he said. He drove to El Paso, where he lives part time with his family, and took another test.

What followed was a surreal week-and-a-half for Carrillo. Over the course of about 11 days, he received two more negative test results, developed a fever so bad it left him “soaking wet,” and was diagnosed with pneumonia. He went to the hospital, where doctors took X-rays of his chest

and told him to take pneumonia medication.

A couple days later, he went back for a follow-up appointment. After he left, he got a call from an El Paso health worker.

His fourth tests results were in — and he was positive. “I was like, ‘Wait a minute, I tested negative three times,’” he recalled in a phone interview last week. “And now you’re telling me I’m positive?”

In its twists and turns, Carrillo’s story may be unique. But his situation represents the confusion and worry many Americans are dealing with right now, as even trained medical experts race to understand and treat SARS-CoV-2, a relatively new strain of coronavirus that claimed its first casualty in January.

Almost every week, a new possible symptom seems to emerge, from strokes and “COVID toe” blisters to aftereffects of burning sensations. Even

more worryingly, some people spread the disease without ever showing symptoms at all.

Carrillo’s wife has asthma, a risk factor for complications from coronavirus — and yet unlike Carrillo, she never had symptoms despite testing positive. Their son, meanwhile, tested negative and also didn’t experience symptoms.

Then there’s testing, which researchers rely on to understand the scope of the virus but which they admit is far from perfect. Experts peg the average accuracy rate of viral coronavirus testing at around 70%, while others argue there are too many factors to even accurately gauge that.

There are also antibody tests — the ones that use blood to look for virus antibodies rather than mouth or nose swabs to look for the live virus. An antibody test was one of Carrillo’s four tests, and

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FACE COVERING ORDINANCE IN EFFECT

by order of the State of Texas

Winner of TX-23 Republican race still undetermined

By ABBIE PERRAULT  
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TX-23 — It was a nail-biting election night on July 14 when Tony Gonzales edged out Raul Reyes by a mere seven votes, leaving the race for the Republican candidacy for TX-23 too close to call. By today at the latest, the 29 Republican party chairs in the counties that lie fully or partially within the bounds of Texas’ 23rd Congressional District must complete their canvassing — counting and confirming the final vote counts.

According to election code, a local canvass is finalized when the county chair digitally certifies the canvass report on the secretary of state’s website. From there, those counts are reported to the state party chair, who has until no later than Saturday, August 1 to sign and certify the canvasses. For Gonzales and Reyes, only after the certification of the canvass can whoever ends up on the bottom request an official recount.

Gonzales was quick to declare “Victory for Team Tony” when the preliminary votes were announced July 14. “With 100% reporting, the Texas Secretary of State’s office is showing that we won the primary runoff by seven (7) votes. We will be working to protect the integrity of every legal vote until the canvass is complete over the next week,” his campaign wrote.

This week, as the larger counties began entering their completed canvass counts ahead of the July 23 deadline, Gonzales’ vote count grew slightly, reaching a 23 vote lead. As provisional, mail in, overseas and military ballots were all being accounted for in such a narrow race, the seven vote election night lead was likely to change.

Gonzales’ campaign spokesperson, Matt Mackowiak declared that the will of Republican voters was clear from the 23 vote lead, and turned his attention to the general election’s Democratic candidate Gina Ortiz Jones, who he called a “puppet” of House Majority Leader Nancy Pelosi and a “socialist.”

Ortiz Jones already considered Gonzales her likely opponent by July 3, when President Donald Trump endorsed him, replying on social media, “I’m a proud first-gen American, daughter of a single mom, and Iraq and Air Force veteran. And unlike him, I’m running in #TX23 to fight for affordable health care, good jobs, and an economy that works for everyone.”

Reyes was not so quick to throw in the towel on the primary race though. “We’re pretty convinced that when all those provisional, mail in ballots come in, overseas, military come in, we’re going to be on top, so we’re looking forward to that as well,” Reyes said on a conservative talk show program on Saturday.

Both Gonzales and Reyes are military veterans, as Reyes served in the Air Force as an officer and Gonzales was a cryptologist in the Navy.

After the count is certified on August 1, it is possible that the trailing candidate will request a recount, where vote totals will be recertified and a Republican primary victor may finally be determined.



*Faith leaders and food banks pitch in with help and prizes for completing the Census*

PRESIDIO COUNTY — At the next food bank distribution on July 23 in Marfa, and on July 24 in Presidio, you will be able to respond online, and there will be assistance if needed. If you respond then, you will be entered into a drawing to win prizes from local vendors.

Also on Friday, July 24, the U.S. Census Bureau, in partnership with Presidio, Marfa and Alpine faith community leaders, will host call-in questionnaire assistance from 3 p.m. to 6 p.m. The call-in number is 432-999-1848, where a Census Response Representative (CRR) will be available to assist residents who have not responded to the 2020 Census questionnaire or have questions concerning their forms.

All community members who have not completed their census questionnaires, regardless of how or where they worship, are encouraged to call. CRRs will help callers complete the questionnaire, answer questions, and provide language assistance in Spanish if needed.

Remember: an accurate census count will ensure funds for medical, food assistance, education and more. Everyone Counts!

*Se rifaron premios para quienes completan el Censo en los bancos de alimentos locales esta semana*

PRESIDIO COUNTY — Los cuestionarios del Censo se han entregado a las residencias en el área de los tres condados. Por favor responda con el Número de identificación: por internet en my2020census.gov, por teléfono o por correo.

En la próxima distribución de Alimentos el 23 de julio en Marfa y el 24 de julio en Presidio, usted podrá responder por internet, habrá asistencia si es necesario.

Si responde se le ingresara en un sorteo para ganar premios de proveedores locales.

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By **ABBIE PERRAULT**  
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THE BIG BEND – Run into five Big Bend residents on the street these days and chances are pretty good that all of them are wearing a mask, according to a new data set by Dynata, a global data and surveying firm, commissioned by the *New York Times*.

While parts of Texas have struggled to rise to the occasion of combatting the viral coronavirus pandemic, the Big Bend appears on the data map as a dark purple hot spot of mask-wearing. Come across a Marfan or Presidian lately? There’s a 78% chance that person is “always” wearing a mask in public when they expect to come within six feet of another person.

“We are not defenseless against COVID-19,” the CDC Director Dr. Robert R. Redfield said recently. “Cloth face coverings are one of the most powerful weapons we have to slow and stop the spread of the virus – particularly when used universally within a community setting. All Americans have a responsibility to protect themselves, their families, and their communities.”

Across the Big Bend, residents are ready to protect themselves and each other, and have stepped up to the challenge. From restaurants and recreation to feed stores and a saddlery, those living, working and adventuring in the Big Bend are putting on protective face coverings as mandated by Governor Greg Abbott.

In Presidio, Guadalupe Hernandez wears a floral embroidered mask as she serves up hot, fresh pastries at the shop that still sees lots of daily visitors. In Marfa, Livingston Ranch Supplies has signage with bandana-wearing

*Big Bend residents get into the mask-wearing groove*

cowboy imagery that asks patrons to “cowboy up!!!” and “cowboy distance.”

The Big Bend is lucky to have plenty of space to distance, but when its residents do encounter each other in Presidio County, there’s a 75% chance that in five random encounters with your neighbors, every single one of them is wearing a mask.

Marfa resident Mimi Simpson sees travelers all day, every day during her shifts at the Uncle’s gas station and convenience store in the heart of Marfa. Customers come from across the Big Bend, Midland-Odessa, Chihuahua and even farther to fuel up and get snacks as they make their treks through the area. “For the most part, everyone pretty much follows the guidelines,” Simpson said, and when they don’t, she asks them to cover up.

Simpson herself has been wearing a mask since the city of Marfa issued an ordinance that local businesses must require employees and customers to wear masks, and Uncle’s instituted a company policy. The company provides masks for employees like Simpson, and she said she usually feels safe from the illness.

Signs at the counter ask customers to help maintain six feet of social distance and Uncle’s has added plexiglass shields around the cashiers to stop the saliva droplets that scientists have shown travel feet through the air, especially without the help of a face covering to stop them.

In an area like Presidio County, where residents are 82% Hispanic or Latino according to census data, mask wearing can be a life or death issue. Recent data has shown Latinos are four times more likely to experience COVID-19 hospitalizations than their white counterparts.

Next door in Jeff Davis County, the mask-wearing numbers are almost as good as Presidio County, with a 70% chance all five of any given strangers you encounter will be masked. But Brewster County has the lowest incidence of mask-wearing in the tri-county according to the data, lagging behind its tri-county neighbors. The area has only a 61% chance that all five strangers you encounter would be wearing a mask; that is still higher than much of West Texas, where numbers near Midland show only a 32% chance of all five people encountered having masks on.

In south Brewster County, Big Bend Ranch State Park rangers and patrons were wearing bandanas over their mouths and noses this weekend – sporting the traditional West Texas look while also, as an added benefit, combatting the desert dust.

In north Brewster County, Betty Charlton, an employee at the Big Bend Saddlery, said that from the wide array of guests who visit the saddlery, it seems to be young people who wear masks the least. To her, it seems like there is a “mindset that everything is bulletproof and nothing can get them,” she said of her encounters with young folks coming in to shop.

“I’ve been wearing a mask since March,” Charlton said, a decision she credits to having two daughters in Austin, where coronavirus hit well before it reached the Big Bend. It made her take earlier precautions.

And as a retail worker on the frontlines, she feels the risk, though less so as long as people adhere to the mask rules. “If they don’t have a mask, I’ll step back from them. I have COPD and asthma, so it gives me a higher risk,” she said. “Plus I’m old,” she laughed.

For Charlton, the threat of the virus has

*As Democrats eye Texas, Marfa takes a front seat*

By **STEPHEN PAULSEN**  
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MARFA — Joe Biden’s presidential campaign has started running its first general election television ads in Texas, and Presidio County plays a starring role.

One of the first ads, released earlier this month, opens with a scenic shot of Marfa. And as coronavirus cases climb across the state, it’s part political ad, part public health advisory.

“The virus is tough, but Texas is tougher,” Biden says in the ad, entitled “Tough.” “We can stop the spread, and it’s up to all of us to do it.”

He goes on to lay out precautions against the coronavirus, including social distancing and regular handwashing. Another Texas version of the ad, released just days later, includes much of the same stock imagery but instead opens with a shot of an 18-wheeler on a highway.

The Biden campaign did not respond to multiple requests for comment about the ads, including where the ads will be run or why the campaign chose to feature Marfa. But CNN reported the ads are part of a six-figure ad blitz in Republican-leaning and swing states with climbing coronavirus case counts, including Florida, North Carolina and Arizona.

Those ads, which are also called “Tough,” offer the same health guidance and the reassuring message that “we’re all in this together.” The campaign is airing them in “top markets,” a spokesperson told CNN, including online and with subtitled versions on Spanish-language stations like Univision.

The ads come as voter opinion shifts on several aspects of the Donald Trump presidency, including its coronavirus

response and confrontational approach to protests over police brutality.

At press time, more than 141,000 Americans have died of the disease — a figure far higher than any other country. Meanwhile, national outlets reported last week that unmarked federal agents were using rental cars to abduct Portland protesters. Faced with such scenes of death and civil unrest, Trump’s support has started to slip even among key supportive demographics, including evangelicals and the elderly.

Likewise, Texas has long been a key part of the Republican coalition. Republicans control all three branches of state government, and Trump beat Democratic candidate Hillary Clinton by nine percentage points in 2016.

For years, mostly liberal outside observers have hoped that Texas would soon turn purple and have put money in Texas Democratic races with little success thus far. Take pro-choice advocate Wendy’s Davis’ 2014 gubernatorial campaign, or Beto O’Rourke’s nail-biting Senate campaign in 2018 against Republican incumbent Ted Cruz. O’Rourke ultimately lost in that race by just around 2 percentage points.

Still, there are signs that, for Texas Democrats, tides could shift in 2020. For months, Biden has been virtually tied with Trump in Texas polls, including a University of Texas at Tyler poll that showed Biden leading by five points and another last week that showed Trump leading by just two percentage points. That latter poll was sponsored by the rightwing news outlet One America News Network.

And while Democrats so far haven’t had much luck breaking into state-level Texas politics, they have gained footing at local levels. For example, the 2018 midterm elections in



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## Contact tracers

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attorney, said. “We didn’t even have contacts at the state level in [DSHS].”

Marfa’s efforts gained speed on Friday, when officials from Marfa and Presidio County attended a virtual meeting with Rodriguez’s staff and a handful of DSHS officials. Present at the meeting were Johnston and Todd, who helped spearhead the effort, as well as Don Culberston and Presidio County Health Authority Schwartz, who — as medical professionals — will help facilitate Marfa’s contact tracing.

“We’re moving forward,” an excited Todd said after the meeting — noting that the city was likely “forging new territory” as it tries to set up contact tracing not as a large metropolitan area, but as a small town.

The meeting was “very collaborative,” she added, with both DSHS and Marfa officials providing insights for how they could help. For example, while DSHS can offer critical health data, Marfa city officials can help contact tracers reach locals and sort out addresses. “At city hall, we pretty much know where everyone lives,” she said.

Johnston was happy with the outcome of the meeting too, describing it as “really positive” and “very productive.” And from the DSHS officials at the meeting, she got the impression that state officials had “no resistance to us doing our thing.”

She was also pleased that DSHS — in addition to offering data — had volunteered to help with local efforts. The state agency has resources Marfa doesn’t, she said, including for counseling and mental health services after someone tests positive.

As Johnston saw it, the confusion from the state level was a result of Marfa’s unique position: not only as a very small town, but as one with people who had taken training in contact tracing from Johns Hopkins University.

What exactly will Marfa’s contact tracing program look like? Those details will likely be ironed out at the next Marfa City Council meeting, Johnston said. The next regular meeting is Thursday, July 30, though officials have said they might also call an emergency meeting.

City leaders are planning to hire one or two contact tracers, including Culbertson. They believe they can fully finance the project using emergency funds from the Texas Division of Emergency Management. But some other big questions remain, including: Will Culbertson and any other contact investigators be

employees of Marfa or Presidio County? How should contact investigators identify themselves, and what’s the best way to contact patients to ensure they answer the phone?

As a county health authority, Schwartz already has access to the confidential health information necessary to do contact tracing. Now that local officials have started ironing out logistics and legalities with DSHS, it will just be a matter of Schwartz passing that information onto the tracers. But that raises another question: Will Marfa handle contact tracing solo, or will it try to work with the whole tri-county?

Schwartz has proposed that the state treat the tri-county as a “single health zone.” Doing so, he said, would improve time-sensitive communications between officials in a region where people often live, work and shop in multiple counties.

City officials aren’t opposed to the idea — but at least for now, they’re wary of doing anything that could slow down the process.

“We just felt like opening it up more would defeat the purpose of trying to do this as quickly and efficiently as possible,” Todd said. Instead, she described Marfa’s new contact tracing efforts as something of a “pilot” program.

“Everyone came away very happy,” said Schwartz, who also attended the meeting. DSHS, he said, was thrilled to learn that Marfa had people lined up like Culbertson, who is already trained as a contact tracer.

Schwartz pointed to a patient who recently tested positive for coronavirus, but had not yet been contacted by investigators. It was case-in-point, he said, for why Marfa needed to help take a lead on these efforts.

Schwartz said he trusted Culbertson to handle contact tracing and would likely take a “low-key” approach towards monitoring the local case-investigators. “I’m confident they will do their job,” he said. Still, as the public health authority — and therefore the person with access to critical health information — he did expect he would be bothering the DSHS more frequently, as the agency has sometimes struggled to provide timely information on the county level.

As Schwartz saw it, the confusion around Marfa’s contact tracing push was part of a larger trend in Texas, where local leaders have often struggled to get information they need from the state.

Officials in Marfa and Presidio County have had “utterly no guidance” from the state, he said — or at very least, “no useful guidance.” And worse, he said, state and federal leaders were turning coronavirus “into a political issue,” with Americans now divided on partisan lines about the dangers of coronavirus.

## Testing goes private

(Continued from page 1)

around 55 hours later, test results were still pending.

Despite the praises from local officials, Honu testing got off to a bumpy start. When the company first started taking over mobile testing sites on Thursday in El Paso, there was “a hiccup in terms of how they were going to transition,” said Laura Cruz-Acosta, a city spokesperson in El Paso. She said she believed Honu needed more time to train contractors, citing conversations with health officials.

Those problems continued in the tri-county — where on Friday, a scheduled testing date in Alpine got called off.

“They weren’t prepared,” said Elmore, the Brewster County emergency management coordinator. But she stressed that testing went well after the company got situated on Saturday.

And for a company that could soon become a household name in parts of Texas, Honu’s public presence is still strikingly barebones. Reached for comment on Monday, its main number offered no way to contact the company’s main office, with a computerized voice stressing that “pressing zero is not an option.”

On its website, Honu describes itself as a “healthcare entity” that specializes in “ancillary revenue and management services.” But a link for information on coronavirus test sites was broken, returning an online 404 error rather than another webpage.

In a lengthy email to *The Big Bend Sentinel*, Devin Thornton, the CEO of Honu, outlined the company’s work for the state, including “providing on-site staffing,” offering “telehealth services post-testing” and an ability to communicate with patients in more than 20 languages. Christensen, the TDEM spokesperson, acknowledged there “might have been some initial bumps” as Honu got started but deferred to the company for more details.

In a follow-up email, Thornton said that as El Paso

became a hotspot, there was an “unexpected increase in testing needs,” which contributed to delays there on Thursday. He also cited issues with “traffic flow, safety and equipment set-up.”

As Honu sets up shop in the region, the real test of its abilities will come in test results. The state has sometimes struggled to quickly return results, especially in rural regions, and there’s often been variations in turnaround times for different patients, even for the same testing site. But whereas Texas had been contracted with a variety of labs through its military testing sites, Honu will also handle lab processing, according to TDEM.

On that front, at least, Honu does appear to be battling above average. After testing in Alpine on Saturday, residents on Monday evening started getting results, Elmore said.

At press time, Elmore wasn’t sure how many tests Honu had so far processed — but she stressed that the average turnaround so far seemed faster than the National Guard-run sites, in which contracted labs had a waiting time of five to seven days and sometimes left residents waiting 10 or more, she said.

Going forward with Honu, local officials will still go through the same process to set up new testing sites, said Christensen, the TDEM spokesperson. TDEM is organizing the sites, while Honu will work something like an event planner, he said.

“Our partnership with local officials is key,” he said, adding that TDEM will work with local officials to determine where there is a testing need while also making sure that “resources aren’t sitting out there, not being utilized.” So if tri-county residents want testing sites to continue, they had better keep utilizing them. In other words, as Presidio County Emergency Management Coordinator Gary Mitschke put it, testing sites will keep coming, so long as “TDEM’s not discouraged with the numbers.”

“I don’t really care who does it,” Mitschke said of which precise entities were handling testing sites. “As long as we get tested, tests come in, we get results and it works — that’s my concern.”



Top photo by Brad McGuire, bottom two photos courtesy of Brewster County Sheriff’s Office

### An emergency plane landing turned Highway 67 from roadway to runway

ALPINE — Highway 67 transformed into a landing strip last Friday morning, when a pilot set course for an emergency stop on the rural road between Fort Stockton and Alpine.

The single engine Cessna was running out of fuel, and the pilot determined an emergency landing was necessary. The plane touched down 22 miles north of Alpine, and Brewster County sheriff deputies and

Department of Public Safety state troopers came together to secure the area, making sure the roadway was safe for drivers and the plane.

The emergency landing was a success, with no damage to the aircraft. After a quick trip to get fuel at the Alpine-Casparis Municipal Airport, the Cessna was refueled, and the pilot took off to the skies once more.

## A remote fire burns on at Big Bend National Park

By BECK ANDREW SALGADO  
beck@bigbendsentinel.com

BIG BEND — Last Friday afternoon, as a thunderstorm rolled over the mountains of Big Bend National Park, a lighting strike caused a fire near the Dead Horse mountains, located east of the main park complex.

After a flyover, it was determined the fire, which is about 40 acres in mass, is moving towards the eastern boundary of Big Bend National Park and is currently in an isolated mountain range with little to no trees in its path.

D.W. Ivans, fire management officer at Big Bend National Park, said that currently the fire is confined to a certain area of the park that does not impose any kind of threat to anyone. He also explained that because of that, and because of the convenient natural obstacles

currently in front of the fire, the plan is to let the fire burn until it goes out.

Ivans explained that it would not make sense to use expensive resources like fire retardant due to the isolated nature of the fire and its current size. He reiterated that the fire is not a cause for concern and that it could die any day as it burns through fuel on the remote acreage. The flames are especially likely to extinguish themselves because August marks the back end of fire season, and increased rains coming to the park lately should help moisten the ground and extinguish the remaining fire.

Ivans said that after the most recent flyover it was determined that the fire had been shrunk down to just three acres in size. Additionally, with no visible smoke as of Wednesday morning, as well as recent rains, it can be assumed that the fire is either already out or close to it.

## Police officer

(Continued from page 1)

one of his three negatives.

Antibody testing could be far more accurate, with U.K. researchers this month determining that some antibody tests have a 98.6% accuracy rate. But there’s still much to be learned about both tests, including which factors — like the testing method or the duration of an infection — make them more or less effective. In an effort to get more tests to the public, the U.S. Food and Drug Administration in March suspended rules that would have put the tests through a lengthy review.

Last but not least, there are the simple facts of who gets sick. Latino people are around four times more likely to be hospitalized for coronavirus than white people, while Black and Native American people are even more likely to be hospitalized.

There are lots of factors behind those numbers, including national economic and health disparities — but it’s also simply a question of who gets put on the front lines. All of the Marfa Police Department is Latino, as are many of the frontline workers at stores like Stripes and the Marfa Porter’s.

“We can do everything by the book,” said Marfa Police Chief Steve Marquez, “but we’re just as vulnerable as everyone else.” He commended Carrillo for how he’d handled his symptoms, saying he “protected everyone in Marfa and protected his teammates” at Marfa PD.

Carrillo’s situation also demonstrates some of the problems Texas has faced in trying to get a handle on surging coronavirus case numbers. Since he has a home in El Paso and was tested there, he says his case was included in El Paso numbers — even though as a part-time resident and full-time employee in Marfa, his infection likely started here.

Likewise, Carrillo was contacted by contact tracers in El Paso. But with those resources overwhelmed and Carrillo having lots of regular contacts as a police officer, that investigation produced no solid leads.

In the end, Carrillo said, contact tracers simply designated his case

as “community related.” “We don’t have a way to track it,” he recalled health workers telling him.

Carrillo, for his part, also isn’t sure how he got coronavirus. He normally plays football on the weekends in El Paso, but those games had been canceled due to the pandemic. Work aside, like much of the country, he’d mostly just been staying put.

Carrillo did eat with his family at a BBQ chain in El Paso in June shortly before his runny nose started. But “we were the only ones in the dining area,” he said. And with restaurant staff apparently taking precautions, neither he nor his family members noticed any red flags.

Finally, there was his family’s own restaurant: Doña Lupita Tamales in El Paso. But while Carrillo owns it, his wife mostly runs it, and Carrillo hadn’t been in recently. Besides, he said, the restaurant was only offering take-out. (They ended up temporarily closing altogether after Carrillo’s positive results, as a precaution.)

Running through the options in his mind — and checking his credit card statements to jog his memory — Carrillo could only come up with one possibility. But it’s not much more satisfying than what contact tracers uncovered.

“Maybe it came from a traffic stop,” he said. “That’s what I’m

thinking.”

“I’m feeling great now,” said Carrillo, who has apparently made a full recovery. And after hearing horror stories of other people’s battles with coronavirus, he feels lucky to have just had pneumonia and a fever. “I’m glad I didn’t go through the experience that other people did,” he said.

Besides, his quarantine wasn’t so bad. “It sucks to eat without tasting food,” he said, but “other than that, my life was normal.”

“I did enjoy my 10 days in the house,” he added.

Carrillo returned to work at Marfa Police Department with a night shift on Sunday. By Tuesday, he was back to his normal rounds, working during the day.

“I missed being out here,” he said in a follow-up phone call on Tuesday. He felt as healthy as ever. Or as he put it: “Everything’s still the same.”

*The coronavirus is impacting the Big Bend in a variety of ways, be it grieving for loved ones, struggling with a lost job or mounting bills, experiencing coronavirus or those like Carrillo who are grappling with uncertainty around tests and contact tracing. Every story is different — and we want to hear yours. If you feel like sharing, you can contact us at editor@bigbendsentinel.com.*

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# Opinions

## LETTER TO THE EDITOR

Dear Editor,

In March 1945, as Allied forces advanced into Germany, Hitler issued an order that became known as the Nero Decree. The Nero Decree ordered the destruction of all German infrastructure that might be of use to Allied forces, but also guaranteed the citizens of Germany the virtually impossible task of rebuilding the country with no place to even begin. Simply put, Hitler’s intention was to destroy what remained of Germany.

Today we sit around and watch as our president is destroying America through his incompetence in dealing with the coronavirus. What I can’t decide is whether it is intentional incompetence or if Trump is too mentally impaired – or stupid – to understand that the economy, indeed the country, will never be normal as long as a highly infectious virus is killing thousands and sickening millions more. Thankfully, recent polls indicate that a solid majority of Americans have also come to a similar conclusion.

As much as I hate to say it, though, Trump is not entirely the blame. Equal blame goes to every – every! – Republican in Congress for their complicity in Trump’s policies and/or their betrayal of their oaths of office, and those who voted for them, by not standing up to our incompetent liar-in-chief and doing what they know is right. (Note: Senators Cornyn and Cruz of Texas.)

Blame also can be attributed to the dozen or so Republican governors who allowed and are continuing to allow the virus to escalate exponentially in their respective states. The most despicable and arrogant of that bunch are Kemp of Georgia and DeSantis of Florida, followed closely by Abbott of Texas (for not ceding mayors and county judges the authority to enact restrictive prevention measures) and Ducey of Arizona who is simply a toady for Trump.

Some people like to regurgitate Trump’s words and proclaim “the virus will just go away” or “we will have a vaccination soon,” as if either would solve the immediate problem. The immediate problem is we desperately need a drastic reduction of new cases and associated deaths, and there is absolutely no political will nationally or in many states to take the actions necessary. And remember, it’s not rocket science, all they (we) have to do is what they did in Italy, France and Spain and in New York and New Jersey and other places where the virus is under control. Reinventing the wheel is not necessary, only the courage to do the right thing is necessary.

Unfortunately our president doesn’t have that courage, nor do a dozen or so Republican governors, nor does any Republican member of Congress. For the sake of those who may become infected with the virus and those who may die, I hope I’m wrong, but I don’t believe there will be any major progress in controlling this thing until January 20, 2021 when a new administration takes over and takes responsibility, something Trump will never do.

Fred Gossien  
Terlingua

...

We want to hear from YOU! Write a letter to the editor at [editor@bigbendsentinel.com](mailto:editor@bigbendsentinel.com)

## FROM THERE TO HERE

### Rule of Law-breaking Despots

By REVEREND BARRY ZAVAH

Oregon’s governor and Portland’s mayor are outraged over illegal round-ups by the Department of Homeland Security (DHS)/Immigration and Customs Enforcement (ICE) kidnapping private citizens off the streets of Portland. Their concerns follow similar misconduct – although escalating the severity and scope – from a month before in Washington, D.C. that facilitated President Trump’s staged photo-op outside a church.

The courts and voting are the key to the freedom of staying out of unmarked cars, kidnapped, driven around and intimidated, lest exercising legitimate rights is their excuse to put us into an isolated gulag when and for however long they want!

At the core of our Constitution’s “Due process (fundamental fairness)” values is the “Rule of Law,” defined in Encyclopedia Britannica as, “The mechanism, process, institution, practice, or norm that supports the equality of all citizens before the law, secures a non arbitrary form of government, and more generally prevents the arbitrary use of power. Arbitrariness is typical of various forms of despotism, absolutism, authoritarianism, and totalitarianism.”

From Huffpost.com:

“DHS acting Secretary Chad Wolf announced July 1 that a new task force would be formed to enforce President Donald Trump’s executive order on protecting monuments and all federal property, signed in late June. The taskforce — comprising officers from agencies including Customs and Border Protection and the U.S. Marshals Service — is conducting ‘ongoing assessments of potential civil unrest or destruction’ so that it can ‘allocate resources to protect people and property.’”

AKA: ‘From graffiti.’ They’ve sent the goons out to what ... shred the Constitution over graffiti? No, that’s the gaslighting part. It’s being shredded for much less noble purposes!

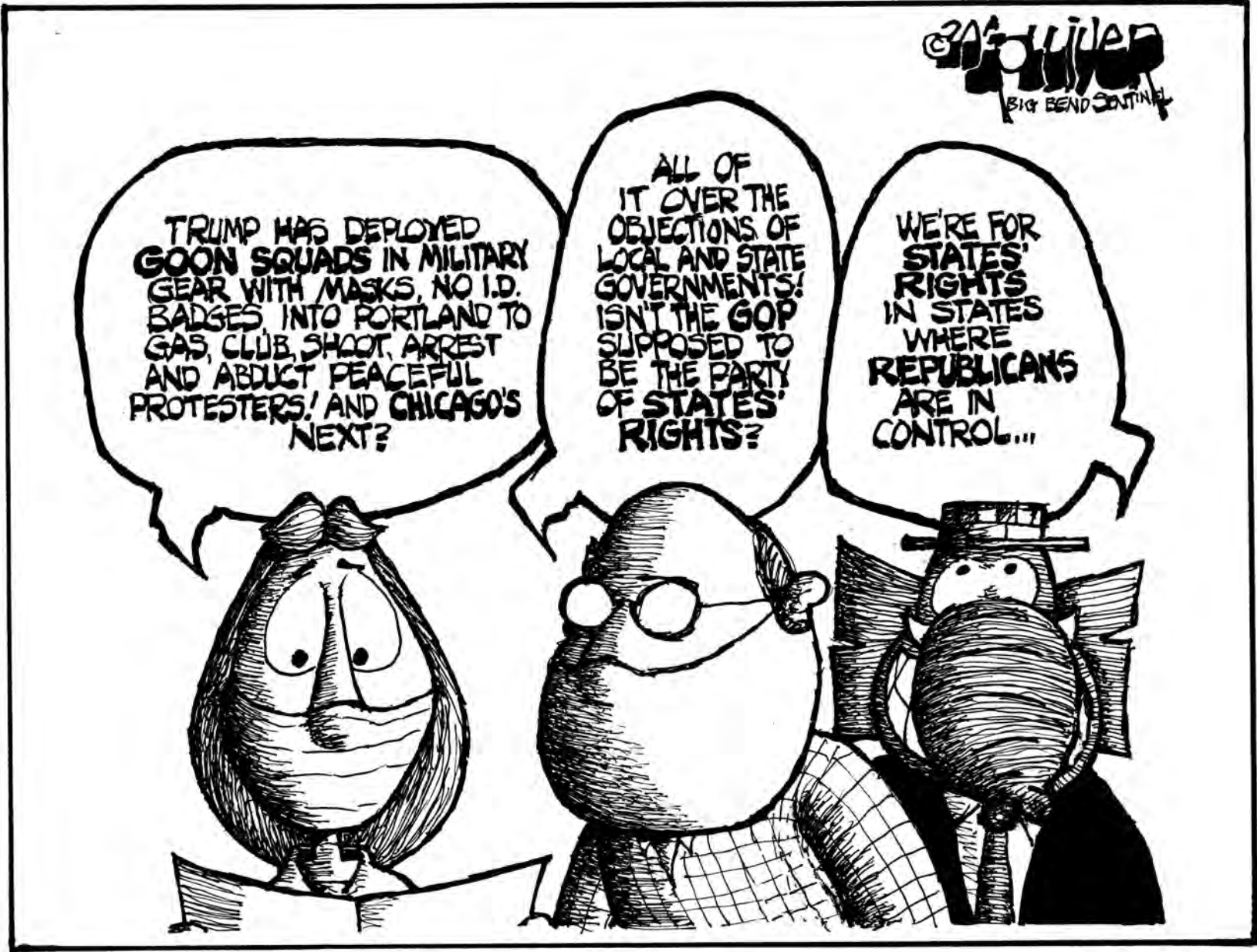
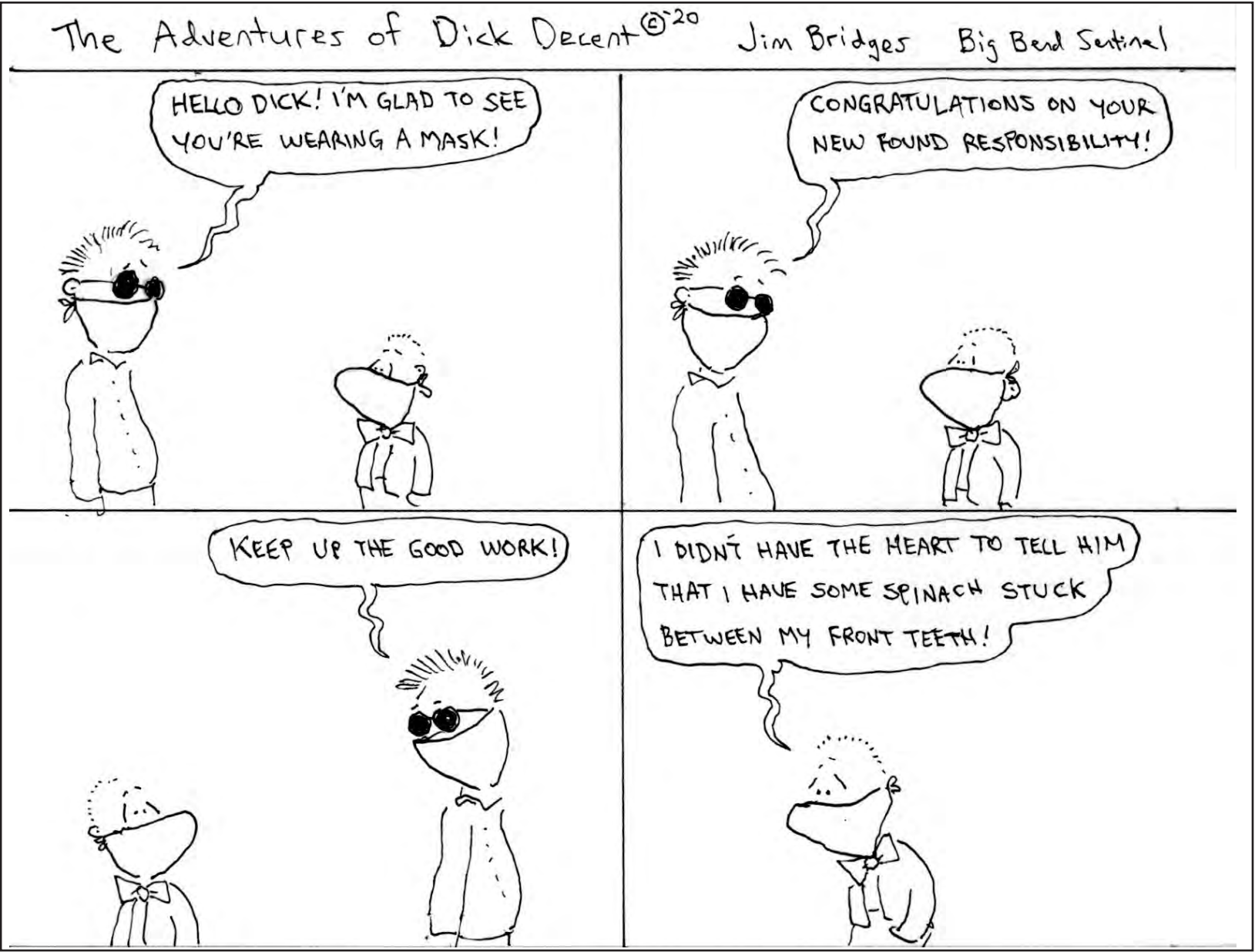
Grasp exactly what is being said in the agency officials’ bureau-talk, double-speak. They’re really saying “Screw you, screw the Constitution and EVERYTHING you ever thought was good and different and decent about America from the gulag-filling authoritarian regimes of history. We’re one of them now! So, screw you, screw ALL of you!” That friends, is the antithesis of “Rule of Law”!

Trump and his administration’s credibility are long-past shot, with rubber bullets and tear gas canisters fired-off, injuring and/or blinding others! Accepting anything from them is like walking on landmines buried in hot coals. No, it never ends well.

To our nation’s undoing, D.C. and Portland federal government tactics are closer to Mein Kampf (and Hitler’s use of Brown Shirts and Nazi Germany as its inglorious stain on human rights) than the U.S. Constitution and blessings of liberty provided by our Founding Fathers! That is not how America is defined – notwithstanding Trump’s, Adviser Stephen Miller’s, AG Barr’s and present DHS/ICE’s authoritarian predilections.

Regardless of party affiliation, this coming November, vote the homegrown, “Rule of Law-breaking” despots out ... and into their criminal arrest warranted mugshots!

Reverend Barry Zavah is an Alpine, TX resident. Born and raised in Buffalo, NY, he is a retired career prosecutor for the Erie County District Attorney’s Office and an ordained minister. He has written for the Sierra Club Big Bend Chapter, Border Hotline News, La Voz, Alpine Daily Planet, Alpine “o6” Cowboys and the Pecos League of Professional Baseball, and has had stories published in various journals and anthologies. He enjoys RV travels.



## PATRIOTIC MILLIONAIRES

### Unemployment benefits saved our economy — don’t let them expire

By RICHARD BOBERG

As COVID-19 infections surge across the U.S. while falling almost everywhere else in the world, our lawmakers seem intent on acting like this pandemic is simply over. Right now, congressional Republicans are plowing ahead with plans to let the additional \$600-dollar boost to state unemployment benefits expire at the end of July. If we allow this crucial aid to expire, we will be dooming millions of vulnerable workers and our economy to financial ruin.

The weekly \$600-dollar bonus to unemployment insurance has been one of the most progressive and crucial benefits to come out of the congressional CARES stimulus package. The cash infusion was designed to supplement 100 percent of the wages of unemployed Americans, unlike the baseline unemployment benefits that are designed to provide subsistence funds and little more. In some cases, two-thirds of eligible workers essentially received a raise, as their benefits surpassed their previous income.

Alas, nothing keeps a conservative awake at night like the thought of a poor person collecting one more penny from the government than they think they deserve. The belief that direct payments are “preventing people from returning to work” is why Mitch McConnell and the rest of the GOP are fully intent on letting the unemployment boosts expire at the end of July, rather than renewing them in the forthcoming congressional aid package. Yet, the evidence from the aftermath of the Great Recession reveals that extended UI benefits had little or no effect on whether a worker found a job — meaning it wasn’t UI benefits that were keeping workers out of work — it was a lack of demand for workers.

The extra \$600 has been by far the most effective part of our economic policy response to the coronavirus shock. It is likely improving — not degrading — labor market efficiency, and we should build on it. The reason for this program’s success is exactly the reason it’s drawn such ire from conservatives — for the first time in decades, millions of Americans are no longer making poverty-level wages and are able to afford necessities and a bit more.

If it wasn’t for these payments, we would be in far worse shape as a country than we currently are. Our economy is no longer on a trajectory toward total ruin, but it is still a long way from a total recovery. Unemployment has begun to slightly decrease, although it’s much slower for people of color, and while coronavirus cases are falling in the Northeast, they are skyrocketing across the Sunbelt. The cash infusions allowed people to keep spending, even if moderately, to avoid defaulting on major bills like utilities, rent and groceries. If we were to suddenly pull the rug out from underneath millions of workers across the nation, the results would be catastrophic. The extra \$600 has been instrumental in preventing this catastrophe.

Our economy runs on consumer spending, and if the majority of consumers fall into poverty because of the absence of additional aid, then our economy will likely plummet. This means everyone would suffer, from those at the top like me, to the working poor who are currently living on the edge. We need to continue these benefits until the economy begins to recover in earnest, ensuring people have enough money to infuse their local restaurants and other small businesses with the cash they desperately need to keep their doors open. Giving money directly to those who need it is the easiest and most efficient way to deliver aid across our economy.

Around the world, the countries that are successfully beating COVID-19 have two things in common: they closed all nonessential businesses and fully compensated workers to stay in their homes. We did the opposite. We hastily reopened our economy and forced workers into the horrible dilemma of either returning to work during a global pandemic or allowing unemployment benefits to lapse.

Now, cases are rising again, and the only way forward is clear, government aid that goes directly into the hands of the consumers that drive our economy forward. Anything less and we risk total disaster for our economy and our citizens. I ask that Congress make the right choice in the coming negotiations and fund our recovery, not ensure our downfall.

Rich Boberg is a retired tech entrepreneur and investor from Silicon Valley and a member of the Patriotic Millionaires.

Proud “traitors to their class,” members of the Patriotic Millionaires are high-net-worth Americans, business leaders and investors who are united in their concern about the destabilizing concentration of wealth and power in America. The mission of The Patriotic Millionaires organization is to build a more stable, prosperous and inclusive nation by promoting public policies based on the “first principles” of equal political representation, a guaranteed living wage for all working citizens and a fair tax system.

# Community

## Upcoming school year at SRSU to look much different amid COVID-19 pandemic

By BECK ANDREW SALGADO  
beck@bigbendsentinel.com

ALPINE — If this were a normal year, Sul Ross State University students would be eagerly anticipating a return to campus where they would expect to enjoy another year filled with friends, sports, parties and, of course, the occasional studying; but 2020 has not been a normal year and the reality of what school may look like this fall will be much different than years past.

Like many other universities across the country, SRSU is moving fast to put together a return plan for the fall semester that will allow its students to both stay safe and experience an on-campus education at the university. Mike Pacheco, chief of staff at SRSU, said that the university is aiming to take all the necessary precautions, and this has included ordering large amounts of masks, sneeze guards and hand sanitizer.

As far as testing, Pacheco said that everyday testing may not be a reality for a university the size of SRSU. He did say that the university is trying to team up with county and city officials to create a testing plan that he hopes to be somewhere in between everyday testing and the two-week cycle that has been very common in counties in West Texas. This would most likely be accomplished by the university sending students to clinics in Alpine to get tested.

As far as what classrooms will look like, Pacheco said SRSU has modified classrooms to promote distancing and is planning to conduct “hybrid” classes that will be partially in-person and partially online. He did say that the extent of how much in-person schooling one gets is “dependent on their major, as some classes just require more of a hands-on experience,” while others are more equipped to go fully online.

SRSU will also see changes to the academic calendar as classes will start on August 24 — a week earlier than originally set. In addition to this, students will remain on campus until Thanksgiving break, after which they will simply remain at home for the rest of the fall semester. The idea behind this is so the university does

not have to worry about students coming back to campus after having traveled home for break.

Brandy Snyder, associate dean of students at SRSU, provided more information on what things like move-in will look like. For example, each student who is living in the dorms will receive a date and time that is designated just for them to move in and is designed to limit the amount of people moving to campus at once.

Furthermore, Snyder said that SRSU is working with the tech department to design a “drive-in check-in” process that will eliminate the possibility of lines forming while students move into their dorms. Snyder also added that students will only be allowed to have a maximum of two people helping them move in.

As for once the students are moved into their dorms, Snyder said there will be restrictions set in place as far as visitation goes in the dorms. SRSU will implement a system where students may only enter the dorm they live in.

“If they (students) want to visit with friends otherwise, our recommendation is that they do so outside or at off-campus locations,” said Snyder.

Dining halls will also look different this year; they have already been modified to promote distancing. Snyder described what this looks like, saying, “They have left the furniture in its original place but have wrapped it so it cannot be used, and that way it is a physical boundary to remind people that we should not be that close.”

If a student becomes ill with COVID-19, Snyder has said that there are “prepared spaces for potential quarantine or isolation,” if needed. She has also said there has not been a decision made on what number of cases it would take to potentially compel the school to shut down the campus again.

Sonrisa Natividad, a junior at SRSU, said that she would just prefer classes to go fully online once they start this fall.

“I don’t want to go all the way to Alpine just to live a mediocre, substandard lifestyle, when I could just be living at home fine,” said Natividad.

She also suggested that it doesn’t make financial sense to pay for a dorm or for dining knowing

there is a possibility she may get sent home early. It’s another reason she prefers for classes to fully go online.

As for how Natividad feels about the safety precautions, she said that she trusts herself to do the right things in regards to COVID-19, but she does find herself worried about other people not being as vigilant or mindful.

“If you are doing everything you can to keep us safe, then why are you making us go out there in the first place?” said Natividad frustratedly, adding that “the decision (to come back to campus or not) will be made regardless of what the students want.”

Natividad finished by saying that if classes, at any point, were to go online full time, she believes tuition should be lowered and housing payments should be refunded to some extent. She justified this by saying that the online experience is not the same and is not worth the same as an in-person education.

Pete Gallego, president of SRSU, said that he and his team are doing everything to keep the “Sul Ross family as safe as possible,” and admitted that a large part of the return plan is predicated upon flexibility. Gallego explained that “a virus is a virus” and when working with so many unknowns, you have to be able to adapt quickly.

Gallego said that SRSU has cut their operating budget by 5% for the upcoming school year due to COVID-19. Though it has not yet meant that layoffs have happened for staff at the university, some positions have had to go unfilled.

As far as enrollment, which Gallego says makes up a large portion of the school’s revenue, there has not yet been a noticeable hit. In fact, there has actually been a slight increase in enrollees to the university for this upcoming year.

When asked about tuition, Gallego said that SRSU has been a pioneer for online learning, and he feels that if they were to have to go fully online again, like they did last spring, the online experience they can provide will be able to justify the current price of tuition, and so it will most likely stay the same.

## Farmers market will make its return to Presidio as part of cultural district

By BECK ANDREW SALGADO  
beck@bigbendsentinel.com



Illustration by Diana Abi Khalil

PRESIDIO — For Presidio residents, there will soon be one more thing to look forward to on the weekends as the city’s cultural district has announced it will be bringing back a weekly farmers market aimed to be opened to the public this September.

The new farmers market is going to be located in the area between city hall and St. Francis park, and was yet another project proposed by the new cultural district and approved by the city council.

Adele Jancovici, founder of the Presidio cultural district and owner of the art gallery Wet Dream, said that she wants to bring things to Presidio that will make it “happy and alive,” and she feels a farmers market is a good step in that direction.

Jancovici also acknowledged the fact that there previously was a farmers market in Presidio, established through a Transforming Texas grant, and she feels now is a good time to bring back a farmers market to the people of Presidio.

Elvira Hermosilla, who was in charge of the vendors at the old farmers market and will also be involved in the new market, said she feels the farmers market will help make Presidio “a little more lively.” She characterized Presidio as being “a little bit dead” as of late, citing a lack of things to do in town.

As far as what Hermosilla would like to see with the new market, she said that bringing in more customers is always a goal and being able to bring in and retain vendors is something she would like to do. At the top of the list is securing a produce vendor, because she feels providing local produce to the community through the markets would be nice.

Hermosilla said she is more optimistic about the new market’s ability to stick around, stating, “It has been a few years (since the closure of the past market) and we are coming back to the idea with a fresh perspective.” Her

experience and new perspective, paired with community buy in, is what Hermosilla hopes will result in a successful farmers market for Presidio.

City officials seemed to agree with Jancovici’s vision, as both Joe Portillo, Presidio city administrator, and Brad Newton, Presidio Municipal Development District executive director, approved the farmers market, as it is consistent with what they would like Presidio to look like, according to Jancovici.

Jancovici said that she envisions things like meats, vegetables, crafts and even live music to be available at the farmers markets and wants it to be a place where the community can come and enjoy themselves. Jancovici also stressed the importance of consistency. “Even if a lot of people do not come at first, to be able to come back each week and see that it is still there is important,” she said, adding that with that consistency, she believes an increase in customers will follow.

Matt Stevens, husband of Jancovici and co-founder of the cultural district, said he thinks a farmers market is an important thing for a community to have, not just because of the products, but because it provides Presidio a place where people can get to know each other and share their talents.

Stevens also said that sign up for the farmers market will be free for the vendors and that, as of now, the plan is to have the market meet once a week, every Saturday from 8 a.m. to 2 p.m. If you are interested in participating in the Presidio farmers market or reserving a space to sell your goods, you can email [pcdatx@gmail.com](mailto:pcdatx@gmail.com) with a description of how you would like to contribute.

## 4-H food drive to help hard-hit food pantries in Presidio County

PRESIDIO COUNTY — The COVID-19 pandemic and the accompanying economic hardships have more area residents relying on food pantries. To help meet the community needs, Presidio County 4-H and the AgriLife Extension are working to collect donations and get more food to families who need it.

In Marfa, residents can get food at the Marfa Food Pantry, while in Presidio, residents rely on mobile distributions from the West Texas Food Bank. Donations requested are canned goods, dry goods, non-perishables and toiletries.

To join the 4-H Food drive, first, take a picture with you or your family with the donations and email it, along with the number of donations to [matlin.sain@ag.tamu.edu](mailto:matlin.sain@ag.tamu.edu). Your picture will be featured on the Presidio County 4-H Facebook Page and Marfa Group with your permission. If you do not want your picture posted, you still need to email the number of items donated, so County Extension Agent Matlin Sain can report that number to Texas A&M.

Then, have only one person, wearing a mask, drop off canned goods in the gray bin labeled Presidio County 4-H at the Marfa Food Pantry.

Due to the COVID-19 pandemic, Texas food banks are serving 88% more clients than this time last year. Feeding Texas reports that food donations are down at a time when demand at food pantries and food banks has exploded as people have lost jobs and income.

The number of volunteers at food banks and pantries has also declined by more than 70% causing some food pantries to close due to inability to serve clients. Others are closing due to lack of food available to distribute. Food

banks have increased the number of mobile distributions due to the closure of some food pantries.

Unfortunately, they have had to turn people away from these mobile distribution sites, because they handed out all the food they brought before they ran out of people to serve. Food shortages at food pantries and food banks have been reported at the State Operations Center.

As a result, AgriLife Extension has been asked to sponsor and organize food drives at the county level to benefit local food pantries or the food bank serving that county when no local food pantry is available or currently open.

If you have questions about Marfa Food Pantry or need assistance with your donation please contact Genevieve Bassham at (432) 295-1447 or Sain at [matlin.sain@ag.tamu.edu](mailto:matlin.sain@ag.tamu.edu).

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| HUDSPETH: 18.7%  | PRESIDIO: 21.6%   |
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# Community

## DRAWING OF THE WEEK



Self Portrait by Tayvian  
3rd Grade  
Marfa Elementary School

## School supplies giveaway and ice cream to go on Sunday

MARFA — St. Paul’s Episcopal Church will have a drive-up school supplies giveaway and ice cream to-go event on Sunday, July 26 from 1 p.m. to 4 p.m. This year the event will be contact-free.

Literacy is one of the most important life skills a person can learn, and access to school materials can be a challenge for some families. Providing school supplies for children in our town helps to reduce a major barrier to learning and makes you feel great about ensuring that children start the school year – whatever shape that takes - with the tools they need!

If you would like to contribute, there is a donation box at the Dollar General store on Hwy 90 East. Supplies may also be dropped off at St. Paul’s Church, just north of the courthouse on the corner of Washington and Highland Avenue. Cash donations are also welcome. Please mail a check to PO Box 175, Marfa, TX 79843.

Please come by St. Paul’s, the rock church behind the Marfa Courthouse, where volunteers will be handing out packages of school supplies, plus frozen treats, Sunday afternoon. Even if you’re not a student, don’t need supplies or it’s just a hot afternoon, please come by and get an ice cream. Everyone is welcome!

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## Acosta Eats is a new local eatery with an old Marfa flavor



Left to right:  
Zandralina and her father, Saul, outside the new Acosta Eats

The Acosta family outside Acosta Grocery

A childhood photo of Zandralina's father, Saul Lino Acosta

Photos courtesy of Zandralina Acosta

By **ABBIE PERRAULT**  
[abbie@bigbendsentinel.com](mailto:abbie@bigbendsentinel.com)

MARFA — Over 70 years ago, Erminia Carrasco Acosta ran a general store on East Dallas Street in Marfa, selling everything from milk and supplies to beautiful dresses. In the years after the Great Depression, Erminia realized some Marfa residents were struggling, and gave credit to families that couldn’t afford milk, tortillas and eggs, letting them pay her back when their paychecks came later.

Meanwhile, the widowed matriarch raised six kids, eventually sending all of them to college. One was Saul Acosta, who went on to

raise his own children, including Zandralina Acosta.

Today, Zandralina has reopened the old general store building for a new purpose under similarly difficult conditions. The new restaurateur has created Acosta Eats, which serves up plates of Mexican food for hungry patrons.

Zandralina had been between jobs during coronavirus, and though she has a degree and career in mathematics and statistics, she started looking for something new to do. While back in Marfa to help her sister who has a newborn, Zandralina saw the opportunity to cook and serve some of her favorite family meals. “It’s hard to get a job,

but I always like to stay moving and stay active,” she said.

And so Acosta Eats was born. Plates are affordable, the menu is short and changes frequently, and the restaurant is usually open Tuesdays and Fridays only. This Friday she’ll be selling rice and tostadas – plain or with chicken.

Growing up, Zandralina would visit her tia Catarina’s house in town, “and she would always have breakfast, lunch and dinner ready for us,” she said. “Now I feel grateful that I’m able to switch those roles and am cooking and am able to bring my aunt something for breakfast, lunch and dinner.”

Even though Zandralina never got

to meet her grandmother, she feels connected to her, especially running a business in the former general store. After all that her grandmother lived through, “she still managed to stay positive,” Zandralina reflected. “The way my dad talks about her really makes me understand how he raised us, because it’s exactly how she raised him.”

On her first day running Acosta Eats, “I ran across people who were really supportive with me, and I could see how Marfa supports one another, how all the local businesses support each other, and that’s something that reminded me of how my dad explained how it was back then.”

## City of Alpine presents the 2020 #AlpineTXPhoto Contest

FAR WEST TEXAS — Break out those cameras! The City of Alpine is pleased to present the 2020 #AlpineTXPhoto Contest through September 30, 2020. This is the tenth year for the annual contest, named for the #AlpineTXPhoto hashtag which can be used to browse hundreds of previous contest photos on Facebook, Twitter and Instagram.

Far West Texas residents and visitors are invited to participate and submit their photographs of Alpine, Texas. Local community members from the area are strongly encouraged to enter for a chance to showcase their talent and help in the promotional efforts of the City of Alpine. Online contest entry is already underway.

Entrants are asked to capture the city of Alpine in a personal, reflective way, bringing out the personality of the town.

“This year is obviously different in many ways, given the global public health emergency,” said Chris Ruggia, Alpine’s director of tourism. “So we have decided to adjust our contest a bit. To celebrate 10 years of the #AlpineTXPhoto Contest, and also to require less travel during the pandemic, the contest will welcome resubmitting

of previous entries for the first time as a sort of ‘Best of the Decade.’”

“Acknowledging the financial difficulties many of us are facing now, we also have increased our prize levels just for this special contest.” The contest offers five cash awards, with the top prize increased this year to \$750.

“The contest has been a great promotional tool for the City of Alpine over the years,” said Ruggia. “It gives us access to an amazing array of photos that we can share with potential visitors.

“We have always offered a significant cash award to the winner to make it worth the photographers’ efforts, and even with the increased prize levels, the cost is very reasonable for the quality of images we receive that will help bring visitors here in the future. When it makes sense again to more actively promote visitation, this will help us to be ready.”

The photo contest will be judged this year by David Winslow. For the past 30 years, David has been photographing in Texas, Mexico, Guatemala and the southwestern U.S. He has exhibited his work at galleries in Mexico and Texas. After living in Mexico for 14 years, he



Photo by Carolyn Morehead  
Courtesy of City of Alpine

“Ranch Team Work” by Carolyn Morehead, 2019 #AlpineTXPhoto Contest prize winner

currently resides in Alpine, Texas, where he has owned and operated [Galeria Mañana](#) since 2017.

The 2020 #AlpineTXPhoto Contest is free and open to the public. Entries will be accepted online until September 30, 2020. Those interested are invited to go to [visitalpinetx.com/photocontest](http://visitalpinetx.com/photocontest) for more information, rules and details on entering the contest.

## King Crossword

**ACROSS**  
1 Fleet from faraway?  
5 "— Impossible"  
8 Get a look at  
12 Strict disciplinarian  
14 Small grimace  
15 Geometric curve  
16 Former European capital  
17 Can metal  
18 "Gracias"  
20 Orbital point  
23 Affair of honor  
24 Coalition  
25 New Jersey borough  
28 Coquettish  
29 Parking lot structure  
30 Bigwig, for short  
32 "Semper —" (Coast Guard motto)  
34 Toy block name  
35 Thing  
36 Angle  
37 Destroyer  
40 Pod occupant  
41 Chimney  
42 Irrational fear  
47 Lip

|    |    |    |   |  |    |    |    |    |    |    |    |    |    |
|----|----|----|---|--|----|----|----|----|----|----|----|----|----|
| 1  | 2  | 3  | 4 |  | 5  | 6  | 7  |    | 8  | 9  | 10 | 11 |    |
| 12 |    |    |   |  | 13 |    |    |    |    | 14 |    |    |    |
| 15 |    |    |   |  |    |    |    |    |    | 16 |    |    |    |
|    |    |    |   |  | 17 |    |    |    | 18 | 19 |    |    |    |
| 20 | 21 | 22 |   |  |    | 23 |    |    |    |    |    |    |    |
| 24 |    |    |   |  | 25 |    |    |    |    | 26 | 27 |    |    |
| 28 |    |    |   |  | 29 |    |    |    |    | 30 |    | 31 |    |
|    |    |    |   |  |    |    |    |    |    | 32 |    |    |    |
|    |    |    |   |  | 33 |    |    |    |    | 34 |    |    |    |
|    |    |    |   |  | 35 |    |    |    | 36 |    |    |    |    |
| 37 | 38 | 39 |   |  |    |    | 40 |    |    |    |    |    |    |
| 41 |    |    |   |  |    |    | 42 | 43 |    |    | 44 | 45 | 46 |
| 47 |    |    |   |  |    |    | 48 |    |    |    |    |    |    |
| 49 |    |    |   |  |    |    | 50 |    |    |    | 51 |    |    |

48 Fluidless barometers  
49 Act  
50 Siesta  
51 Feed the hogs

**DOWN**  
1 Ref  
2 Sky safety org.  
3 Bobby of hockey  
4 Radio interference  
5 A party to  
6 Aviv lead-in  
7 Heights  
8 Mummify, maybe

9 Any time now  
10 Play a prank on (Sl.)  
11 Longings  
13 Sacred wading bird  
19 Listen to  
20 Kimmel's network  
21 Fall into a beanbag chair  
22 Sauce source  
23 Piece of information  
25 Jif rival  
26 Eye layer  
27 Portent  
29 Partner  
31 Cauldron

33 Disturbed the peace  
34 Argentine grasslands  
36 Burn something  
37 Secondhand  
38 Protuberance  
39 Venetian magistrate  
40 Get ready, for short  
43 Literary collection  
44 Lubricate  
45 Wedding utterance  
46 Venomous viper

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### Puzzle solutions for last week's issue

**King Crossword**  
Answers  
Solution time: 24 mins.

|   |   |   |   |   |   |   |   |   |   |   |   |   |
|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|
| C | A | R | E |   | C | H | I | T |   | H | A | J |
| A | R | I | D |   | A | O | N | E |   | A | L | A |
| L | I | N | D |   | R | U | L | E |   | R | O | Z |
| M | A | G | I |   | B | R | A |   | J | E | E | Z |
|   |   |   |   |   | E | G | O |   | W | H | O |   |
| S | U | M | M | O | N |   | S | A | H | A | R | A |
| A | R | B | O | R |   |   |   |   | U | N | B | A |
| C | L | A | N | G | S |   | I | N | N | A | T | E |
|   |   |   |   |   | E | E | C |   | S | T |   |   |
| U | G | L | Y |   | A | W | L |   | C | U | R | D |
| S | U | E |   | A | R | E | A |   | A | V | I | D |
| E | R | A |   | S | C | A | N |   | S | E | T | A |
| D | U | N |   | H | E | R | D |   | H | A | Z | Y |

**Weekly SUDOKU**  
Answer

|   |   |   |   |   |   |   |   |   |
|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|
| 1 | 4 | 6 | 7 | 3 | 2 | 9 | 8 | 5 |
| 2 | 7 | 8 | 9 | 1 | 5 | 4 | 3 | 6 |
| 3 | 9 | 5 | 4 | 6 | 8 | 2 | 1 | 7 |
| 5 | 8 | 7 | 2 | 4 | 9 | 1 | 6 | 3 |
| 4 | 2 | 3 | 1 | 5 | 6 | 8 | 7 | 9 |
| 9 | 6 | 1 | 8 | 7 | 3 | 5 | 2 | 4 |
| 8 | 3 | 2 | 5 | 9 | 7 | 6 | 4 | 1 |
| 7 | 1 | 9 | 6 | 8 | 4 | 3 | 5 | 2 |
| 6 | 5 | 4 | 3 | 2 | 1 | 7 | 9 | 8 |

**DIFFICULTY THIS WEEK: ♦♦**

♦ Moderate ♦♦ Challenging  
♦♦♦ HOO BOY!

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## OBITUARIES



### Aufdengarten

**Ellery Pat Aufdengarten, “Elrod”**, 62, died at the ranch south of Marfa in the saddle on July 17, 2020. It was his dream to be a rancher. He lived and died that dream. It rained that afternoon, a good day.

A graveside service was held at 10 a.m. on Wednesday, July 22, 2020 at the Marfa Cemetery under the direction of family friend Joni Powers and the Alpine Memorial Funeral Home. He would need a much bigger casket to make room for all the pallbearers: Lee Whitlock, Randy O’Mara, Mac White, Gary Lewis, Alan Thompson, Harvey Marrow, Dennis Rose, Ryan Wash, Steve Boziden, Tim Leary, Randy

Glover, Chris Foote, Bob Anderson, and Kirk and Allen Swanson. Ellery loved and was beloved by so many people.

Ellery Pat Aufdengarten was born March 17, 1958 to Gerald “Spec” Aufdengarten and Lola Swanson Aufdengarten in Ogallala, Nebraska. He grew up in the village of Arthur, rodeoing and raising Cain. He got to Texas as quick as he could. When Lee Whitlock invited Ellery to come down and cowboy, he and a handful of buddies hit the road. A rodeo scholarship to Sul Ross kept Ellery in Alpine, then, having fallen in love with a local girl, he made Marfa his home.

Ellery and Debbie Mitchell were married December 5, 1980. Soon after, he went to work for his father-in-law, William Hayes Mitchell Jr. Ellery and Hayes were just what the other needed, and they worked cattle together until Hayes’s retirement.

Together, Ellery and Debbie had three children: Kaki, Mitch and Gerry. He was an endlessly devoted husband, son, uncle, father, grandfather and friend. He never met a stranger and was always quick to laugh. He loved playing cards, riding horses, and what he called bird watching. He was always on the phone, calling cousins in Arthur,

visiting with his sister Peg – always checking in on family. He adored and kept close all of his nieces and nephews.

He is survived by his bride, Debbie; father-in-law, William Hayes Mitchell Jr. and his partner, Marie Claire Kyle; his daughter, Kaki Aufdengarten-Scott and husband Mark; his sons, Mitchell Ellery Aufdengarten and his wife Austin, and Gerald Hayes Aufdengarten and his wife Jordan; and his grandchildren, Kaelyn Rayne Cash, Mitchell Asa Aufdengarten, and soon little Hayes William Aufdengarten. Missing him in Nebraska is his sister, Peggy Aufdengarten Simpson; her children, Wade Simpson, Shannon Allard, Wyatt Simpson and Mathew Simpson; and in Colorado, his nephews Shane and Stu Nielson and niece Stacy Nielson; and in Arthur, his cousins, Kirk Swanson and wife Becky, and Allen Swanson and wife Joy, and all of their children.

In lieu of flowers, donations may be made to SamaritansPurse.org, one of Ellery’s favorite charities.

Alpine Memorial Funeral Home has been entrusted with his services. Online condolences may be left at [www.alpinememorialfuneralhome.com](http://www.alpinememorialfuneralhome.com).

Carol and stepchildren, Jimmy and Nadine Anderson; as well as his brothers, Braulio Milan (Gloria) from Riverside, California, Oscar Gaspar (Sylvia) and Hector Gaspar from Odessa; sisters Elvira G. Sanchez and Rosa G. Garza, also from Odessa; and numerous uncles, aunts, nieces and nephews and cousins.

Tony will be laid to rest, with full military honors, at Riverside National Cemetery, 22495 Van Buren Blvd. in Riverside, California 92518, on July 29, 2020, at 2 p.m.

Tony will be greatly missed by his family and many friends. He never forgot Marfa and his old classmates, and would often call, always concerned about their welfare and well-being and ready to lend a helping hand if needed. Tony is a true hero to all who knew him. He survived the Vietnam War, and lived each day with a positive attitude with a ready and energetic laughter that none of us will ever forget.

The family would like to extend heartfelt thanks to Tony’s fellow California veterans and dearest friends, Val Benavides, who summoned the Fire Department and got Tony to the hospital, and lifelong friend, Tony Zapata, who maintained a close vigil on him and kept the family updated on his medical status.

Last, but not least, Tony’s nieces, Jessica Milan and Christina Gaspar, who have been invaluable and a true Godsend to Carol in helping with the funeral arrangements.

Thank you and God bless you.



### Madrid

**Lydia Rede Madrid**, 70, beloved sister, cousin, friend, artist and professor passed away on June 20, 2020. She was born August 24, 1949 in Marfa to Enrique Sr. and Lucia Rede Madrid. She was preceded in death by both of her parents; brother, Father Jaime Madrid; and cousin, Carlos Calderón, who lived with the family when his mother, María Luisa “Licha,” passed away. She is survived by her brother, Enrique Rede Madrid Jr., and his wife, Ruby, of Redford, Texas. She is also survived by many cousins: Yvonne Hinojos, Carmelina Holloway, Rede Franco, René Franco, Martín Rede, Marta Rede, Nicole Rede, Edina González, Edmundo Rede Jr., Rubén Rede, Hector Rede, Denise Chávez, Margo Chávez Charles, and their spouses and children on her maternal side, and cousins Diana Madrid Muller, Orlando Madrid, James Madrid, Arthur Madrid and Elvira Madrid, on her paternal side. Her first cousin, Edward Madrid, recently passed away.

To know Lydia was to love and appreciate her roots in Far West Texas, and the small town of Redford, where she was born. Her ancestors were settlers who crossed the Río Grande to live in what was called El Polvo “The Dust,” Texas, located across from Ojinaga, México.

This harsh and beautiful landscape is at the entrance to the Big Bend National Park, the largest state park in Texas, a protected wilderness that is legendary to many and was the

lifeblood and inspiration of much of Lydia’s artwork. She was surrounded by this scenic wilderness and this was incorporated into her spirit. There is an expansive panorama that we see in her art that emanated from this sacred and remote space. Lydia’s father owned the Madrid Grocery Store and her mother, Lucia “Chita,” was a teacher in the Redford School, which was across the road from their combined home and store. Chita was one of eight children and, along with her siblings, one of the first Mexican-American graduates of Sul Ross University in Alpine. Lydia’s grandfather Eusebio Rede’s cattle brand is honored on a wall on that campus. Her mother started a lending library in the grocery store that served families and children both of the U.S. and Mexican border that was honored by various presidents, and her aunt, Lucy Franco, was twice Texas Mother of the Year. Lydia came from a long line of teachers, and it is not surprising she excelled in her profession.

Lydia Madrid was an artist complete and lived for her art and for her work with her students. She was an excellent teacher, a dear friend to so many of her colleagues, and a role model and mentor to those students who had the fortune to work with her.

Lydia leaves a legacy of the highest order, with her battalions of friends and grateful graduate and undergraduate students. Several former students have credited their success in school and career to the supportive guidance they received from Lydia Madrid. Those who knew her benefitted from her charm, sense of humor and frequent pranks.

Lydia studied at the University of Texas at El Paso, transferring to the University of New Mexico, where she received a Bachelor of Fine Arts. She went on to earn a Master of Fine Arts from Indiana University in 1981. She taught at Baldwin-Wallace College in Ohio, and for the University of Georgia in Cortona, Italy, before

returning to New Mexico as a professor of printmaking at the University of New Mexico from the 1980s to 2009. She retired as an associate professor.

An acclaimed artist, Lydia’s work has been exhibited internationally as well as nationally. Her artwork proclaimed her Chicano/a roots in El Grito Magazine, “Chicanas En La Literatura y El Arte,” which featured her artwork in that special issue. Upon retiring, she had a one-woman exhibit at Magnifico! on Central Avenue in Albuquerque. Lydia continued to live in Albuquerque until her death. She loved New Mexico and her friends were her deepest joy. She was also a child of the Borderland, una Hija del Desierto — A Child of the Desert. This connection to her landscape, its merciful and blinding beauty, was something that she infused into her art with its swirling vortex and layers of meaning and spirit. She was successful in incorporating her Indigenous roots with a striking and magical contemporary vision.

Lydia’s family had Jumano Apache blood as well as Sephardic Jewish roots in Delicias, Chihuahua, México, and this contributed as well to the depth of her work. Her life was a Mestisaje, a blending of many cultures and traditions, which found fruition in her art.

We, who loved her, will never forget her. Lydia Madrid’s art and unbroken spirit will be remembered as well as her beauty, grace, wit and tremendous talent.

Lydia Madrid. ¡Presente!

The Madrid family would like to start an Indigenous/Mexican-American Diabetes fund at the University of New Mexico for those afflicted by diabetes, and her brother, Enrique Madrid, is spearheading the creation of a Jumano Apache Cultural Center in collaboration with Jumano Chief, Gabriel Carrasco, in what was the old Redford School. In addition, a Printmaking Scholarship in Lydia Madrid’s honor is being set up at The University of New Mexico.



### Gaspar

**Antonio “Tony” Gaspar**, 75, a resident of Laughlin, Nevada, and formerly of Marfa, Texas, passed away on July 10, 2020 after a short illness with his wife Carol at his side.

Tony was born to Maria and Ricardo Gaspar on May 10, 1945. He grew up in Marfa, Texas in a house directly across the street from Blackwell Elementary School, where he could make a mad dash to class whenever he was late. He would often speak fondly of all his teachers — his favorite, Mrs. Mildred Shannon, and the strict, but always encouraging, Ms. Evelyn Davis. He was and remained a staunch supporter of his dear friend Jose Cabezuela’s Blackwell Elementary School museum project. He wanted to help, to not only preserve the old buildings, but endeavor to pay homage to his hometown and the many teachers he so much admired.

At Marfa High School, 1960-1964, Tony remained an ardent student, particularly in math. His cousin, Eddie Hernandez, remembers that Tony’s thirst for learning math was insatiable. Whether it was trigonometry, calculus or slide rule, he enjoyed the challenge of studying and mastering them all. It was with this same enthusiasm that he also participated and excelled in sports — football, basketball and track, yet he always found the time to make sure that Eddie, whom he looked upon as a brother, did his homework and encouraged him in sports as well.

Soon after graduation, on January 3, 1966, Tony joined the United States Marines and did a tour of duty in Vietnam. He was honorably discharged on Dec. 6, 1967 as an E-4 and was awarded the Vietnam Service Medal with 2 Stars, National Defense Medal and Good Conduct Medal. He moved to California where he subsequently retired from an air conditioning installation company. Tony had also joined and become an active and zealous member of the Veterans of Foreign Wars, Post #4696, befriending everyone he met. After retirement he and Carol moved to Laughlin, Nevada.

He was preceded in death by his parents, Ricardo and Maria H. Gaspar; his maternal grandparents, Tomas and Francisca Hernandez; many beloved aunts and uncles; and Carol’s daughter, Emily Anderson.

Those left to honor and cherish his memory are his devoted wife



### Rudder

**Charles “Chuck” Rudder**, 54, from Alpine, Texas, passed away unexpectedly on June 29, 2020. Chuck was born and raised in Alpine. He lived most of his life there and loved to spend most of his time down south. He was a hard worker and loved his job at the McDonald Observatory, where he worked for many years. Chuck is preceded in death by his parents,

eternal rest on July 13, 2020.

Bahola was born September 1, 1943 in Ojinaga, Mexico, to Dominga Aguilar Molinar and Conardo Molinar. She is preceded in death by her husband of 32 years, Enrique “Solo” Solorzano.

She is survived by their three children, Nora Linda Arias (Ricardo), Gabriel Carrasco (Valerie), Noel Carrasco (April); eight grandchildren and 10 great-grandchildren; and her three siblings, Maria Valenzuela, Paula Sotelo and Sofia Payan.

Visitation will be held on Friday July 17, 2020 from 9 a.m. to 11 a.m. at Funeraria Del Angel Evergreen

Earl and Gracie (Nell) Rudder, and one brother, Bill Witcher. Chuck is survived by his wife Shari; two stepdaughters, Monica Skinner and husband Thomas, and Tasha Carrasco; four grandchildren; two sisters, Gail Turner and Lea Anne Rudder; three brothers, Joe Rudder and wife Cathy, twin brother Lloyd Rudder, and David Rudder; and many nieces and nephews he loved very much. There will be a memorial honoring Chuck at a later date.

East Funeral Home, 12400 Montana Ave in El Paso, with a graveside service and interment to follow at 11:30 a.m. at Evergreen Cemetery East, where she will be laid to rest.

Bahola truly loved life to the fullest through simple pleasures: love of gardening, cooking for friends and family, and spending time with all. Bahola always expressed in her actions and words the importance of family and friends and being together.

We miss you mom. We love you mom. You are and forever will be our hero. God loved you and now you’re home. We will see you again someday.

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*Do not fear, for I am with you,  
do not be afraid,  
for I am your God;  
I will strengthen you,  
I will help you,  
I will uphold you with my  
victorious right hand.*  
Isaiah 41:10

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# Classifieds & public notices

## Lost, injured hiker drank river water to survive 106 degree heat in Big Bend Ranch State Park

PRESIDIO COUNTY — A Big Bend Ranch State Park police officer and a Presidio County game warden were patrolling River Road at night through Big Bend Ranch State Park when the officers noticed a car parked in the Closed Canyon Trail parking lot after the park closed. In the car, they saw a park pass for that day, a car rental agreement, and a jug of water and snacks, but the driver was nowhere to be found.

The Closed Canyon Trail is short and stops at the Rio Grande after several steep pour offs. The last pour off is about 60-feet tall. The officers hiked the trail in the dark and far as they could safely go and called out for anyone still down there with no luck.

The next morning, another park police officer was informed about a possible lost hiker. He checked the parking lot and saw that the car was still parked there undisturbed. The three officers headed back to the Closed Canyon Trail that afternoon with rappelling equipment to search farther down the trail.

When they reached the first of the three steep pour offs, the officer called out for the hiker who excitedly responded for help. The park police officer was able to rappel down to the hiker who had descended all the pour offs and was at the riverbank. When they reached him, the hiker was dehydrated, exhausted and had injured his ankle.

The hiker told the officers that he had gone down the trail alone in the afternoon, fell into a deep-water hole and was unable to climb out. Panicked, he decided to continue down the trail thinking it would lead him back to the parking lot. Temperatures that day were around 106 degrees and he drank river water to try to keep hydrated. He hiked along the riverbank but was unable to navigate the steep canyon walls of Colorado Canyon.

The officers requested a helicopter to help extract the hiker, but due to bad weather it wasn't available until the next morning. So, with the help of an additional game warden, two state park rangers, a U.S. Border Patrol agent and a Presidio County sheriff's deputy, the team of officers were able to assist the hiker to climb back over the pour offs and navigate the rest of the trail back to his car.

Presidio and Terlingua Emergency Medical Services arrived and gave the hiker medical care and he was then taken to the local hospital for further treatment.

**MARFA 12 STEP MEETINGS ONLINE**

Go to zoom.us or download the app:

**ACA - Thursday 5:30 PM**  
<https://tinyurl.com/y7qyghga>

**Al Anon. - Sunday 2:00 PM**  
<https://tinyurl.com/yd78lsa6>

**AA - Monday, Tuesday, Wednesday, Friday 6:00 PM**  
<https://tinyurl.com/y7uxgrcy>

**AA - Saturday 12:00 Noon**  
<https://tinyurl.com/yafles7y>

## FOR RENT

**DOWNTOWN MARFA RETAIL FOR RENT**

Located in a newly remodeled historic adobe building on the corner of Highland Avenue and Texas Street across from The Paisano Hotel. Building faces Highland Avenue, lots of foot traffic.

Available Aug. 1.

For information email:  
[thecornerbuilding125@gmail.com](mailto:thecornerbuilding125@gmail.com)

## JOBS

**PERMIACARE**  
**Mental Health Case Worker**

PermiaCare is looking to employ a full-time Mental Health Caseworker to serve Brewster County. Ideal applicants should display good writing skills, have good interpersonal skills, and be detail oriented. This position is responsible for providing skills training, and case management services to chronically mentally ill adults and children in Brewster County. This position is based out of the Alpine office. Successful candidates may commute from surrounding counties. A Bachelor's degree in Psychology, Social Work or similarly related field is required.

All Full Time positions have a full benefit package consisting of excellent health coverage, retirement, life insurance, scheduled pay increases, optional cafeteria coverage and paid leave up to 28 days per year after 5 years of employment. All applicants must have a valid Texas Driver's License, proof of auto liability insurance coverage, and will be subject to a criminal history background check. For additional information and qualifications for all positions, see our electronic application and current job listing available at [www.permiacare.org](http://www.permiacare.org). For questions, contact the Human Resources Department at 432-570-3322. **Sign on bonus included**

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## ‘Unprecedented uncertainty’ leads Texas Comptroller Glenn Hegar to revise 2021 revenue estimate to a shortfall of \$4.6 Billion

AUSTIN — Texas Comptroller Glenn Hegar revised the Certification Revenue Estimate (CRE) and now projects a fiscal 2021 ending shortfall of \$4.58 billion. The shortfall, which Hegar attributed to the COVID-19 pandemic and recent volatility in oil prices, is a decrease from the \$2.89 billion positive year-end balance originally projected in the October 2019 CRE.

In a July 20 letter to state leadership, Hegar said the state will have \$110.19 billion in general revenue-related (GR-R) funds available for general-purpose spending for the 2020-21 biennium, down from a projected \$121.76 billion in the October 2019 CRE.

The ending balance does not include the impact of instructions from state leadership directing most agencies to reduce their spending by 5% of 2020-21 GR-R appropriations. Any of these savings will reduce the projected shortfall. Similarly, the balance also does not assume any further financial assistance from the federal government, as both the prospect and nature of such assistance remain uncertain.

*“Consumers and businesses must be confident the virus is controlled before economic output, employment and revenues return to pre-pandemic levels.”*

“The economic contraction associated with COVID-19 has resulted in revenue collections this fiscal year that are much lower than our earlier CRE projections,” Hegar said. “It’s important to note that this revised estimate carries unprecedented uncertainty. We’re assuming the state will effectively manage the outbreak and that infection rates won’t overwhelm our health care system. This estimate also assumes that restrictions on businesses and individuals will be lifted before the end of this calendar year and that economic activity will strengthen but not return to pre-pandemic levels by the end of this biennium.”

The pandemic hit tax revenues hard across the board, particularly hotel, motor vehicle sales, severance and mixed beverage taxes. The state’s sales tax, its largest source of tax revenue, has held up better than some taxes, but still has fallen significantly. Fiscal 2020’s sales tax revenues, buoyed by strong collections in the first half of the year, are expected to finish about 1% below fiscal 2019 totals, followed by a drop of more than 4% in fiscal 2021.

The Economic Stabilization Fund (ESF, or the state’s “Rainy Day Fund”) and the State Highway Fund (SHF) both receive funding from oil and natural gas severance taxes. In fiscal 2021, the ESF and SHF each will receive \$1.1 billion in transfers from the General Revenue Fund for severance taxes collected in fiscal 2020. Severance tax collections in fiscal 2021 are expected to drop significantly from fiscal 2020, resulting in smaller fiscal 2022 transfers to the ESF and SHF of about \$620 million each.

After accounting for appropriations and investment and interest earnings, this estimate projects an ESF fiscal 2021 ending balance of \$8.79 billion.

Proposition 7, an amendment to the Texas Constitution approved by Texas voters in 2015, requires the first \$2.5 billion in sales tax collections exceeding \$28 billion in any fiscal year to be deposited to the SHF. The SHF will receive \$2.5 billion from sales taxes collected in each year of the biennium, although the final transfer from fiscal 2021 collections will not occur until September 2021, the first month of fiscal 2022.

“In the coming months, some economic indicators will establish new records for rates of growth, but those records will be on the back of this year’s unprecedented declines,” Hegar said. “The rebound will leave many measures of economic health below pre-pandemic levels. Consumers and businesses must be confident the virus is controlled before economic output, employment and revenues return to pre-pandemic levels.”

There are substantial risks to this forecast on both the upside and downside. If the spread of the virus slows or stops sooner than anticipated, if consumers and businesses return to pre-pandemic levels of economic activity more readily than assumed, or if the federal government provides more aid, Texas may finish the 2020-21 biennium with more revenue than projected today. On the other hand, if COVID-19 case counts continue to increase or accelerate, if there is a substantial new wave of infections nationally or in Texas in the fall or winter, or if consumers and businesses are slower to resume economic activity than assumed, revenue collected this biennium could fall short, perhaps far short, of this updated forecast.

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**la fundación the CHINATI foundation**

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The Chinati Foundation is a contemporary art museum founded by the artist Donald Judd. The collection includes work by thirteen artists and focuses on permanent, large-scale installations emphasizing the relationship between art, architecture, and the surrounding landscape.

### CHINATI CLOSED UNTIL FURTHER NOTICE

At the Chinati Foundation, the safety and well-being of our visitors and staff are among our highest priorities. We are aware of the health concerns surrounding the coronavirus (COVID-19), and upon the recommendation of local West Texas health officials, Chinati has been advised to close to the public until further notice. The tri-county region has limited health resources, so to be a good partner to our local community and community of visitors, we are taking the recommendation seriously.

Thank you for supporting the Chinati Foundation. As a public institution, we both rely on the public for support and believe it is our responsibility to be a good public partner in return. We apologize for any inconvenience this may cause and we look forward to welcoming you to Chinati in the future.

Visit [Chinati.org](http://Chinati.org) for more information and to join the mailing list, or follow Chinati on Facebook and Instagram.

## REQUEST FOR PROPOSAL

**CITY OF MARFA REQUEST FOR PROPOSALS (RFP)  
FOR INFORMATION TECHNOLOGY SERVICES**

The City of Marfa, Texas will consider proposals for Information Technologies Services (“IT Services”). Information, instructions, and specifications relative to the submittal of proposals for the IT Services requested are available at the City of Marfa website [www.cityofmarfa.com](http://www.cityofmarfa.com) under the “Doing Business with the City” tab.

Please send one (1) original and three (3) copies of the proposal, along with one electronic copy on a thumb drive. Proposals need to be received at the following address no later than 4:00 pm CDT on July 27, 2020:

City of Marfa  
RFP IT Services  
Attn: Mandy Roane  
113 S. Highland Avenue (FedEx address)  
P.O. Box 787 (USPS address)  
Marfa, TX 79843

The City of Marfa reserves the right to reject any or all proposals, and to waive any irregularities contained in the proposal(s) or the process. The proposal deemed most advantageous and in the best interest of the City shall be selected.

Any proposal received after 4:00 p.m. Central Daylight Time (CDT) on Friday, July 27, 2020, will be automatically rejected and returned to the proposer unopened. The City of Marfa will not accept faxed or emailed proposals.

The City of Marfa will not be responsible in the event that the U.S. Postal Service or any other carrier system fails to deliver the sealed proposal to the City by the given deadline above.

**THE BIG BEND Sentinel**

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