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BURN BAN IN EFFECT, NO GROUND FIRES

by order of Presidio County

Presidio ready to welcome back Mexican shoppers as border restrictions ease

By SAM KARAS
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PRESIDIO — Business owners and city officials alike have been waiting since the start of the pandemic for the return of one of the most significant forces in Presidio's economy: shoppers from Mexico. Back in March 2020, the Department of Homeland Security closed land borders to "nonessential" travel, dealing a devastating blow to border towns who depend on cross-border visitors.

"First couple of years the Dollar Tree was open, you'd go in and half the license plates would be from Mexico and the other half would be from Texas," said City Administrator Brad Newton. "Now you very rarely see a Mexican license plate anywhere."

Newton stressed that local businesses aren't just feeling the burn — the city is too. "In 2009, about 70% of our sales tax came from Mexican customers. Now most of our sales tax comes from the increased cost of gasoline," he explained.

For every gallon of gasoline sold in Presidio, the city earns two cents. "That's why we like to have tourists, and we like to have people shop at home," he said.

Newton and other Presidio residents are quick to remind visitors that Presidio and Ojinaga are virtually one and the same. For most people, the restrictions haven't torn families apart — they've just put the burden on people from the U.S. side to cross, resulting in long waits in line on the bridge.

For Presidio-based businesses, though, the Title-19 restrictions have been devastating. Azucena Romero, who manages the Dollar General with a view of the Presidio International Bridge, estimates that before the pandemic, about 70% of her business came from Mexico. There are two Dollar Generals in town, and hers gets the bulk of the international shoppers.

"I know our sales are going to be like they used to [when the border reopens]," she said. "We are all going to benefit from it."

Many of Romero's Mexican customers are people who own small businesses and vending stands who rely on her store to restock snacks and basic food staples. She has also noticed the absence of the Mennonite community, who once regularly crossed from their farming cooperative outside of Ojinaga into Presidio for a day of shopping and good food.

Harper Hardware's José Saenz has owned his business since 1971,

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Photo by Hannah Gentiles for Presidio International

Judge Cinderela Guevara, Dr. Christie Alexander and Alicia "Monik" Ortiz dance to Mariachi Santa Cruz during a Community Day event at the El Corazón Sagrado de la Iglesia de Jesús, hosted by the Friends of the Ruidosa Church on Saturday.
La jueza Cinderela Guevara, la Dra. Christie Alexander y Alicia "Monik" Ortiz bailan al Mariachi Santa Cruz durante un evento del Día de la Comunidad en El Corazón Sagrado de la Iglesia de Jesús, organizado por los Amigos de la Iglesia de Ruidosa el sábado.

Ruidosa church open house event brings food, fun and family back to town

By SAM KARAS
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RUIDOSA — The last people to be married in the church were the Nuñezes. That was in 1959. Then no one got married or held Mass in the church anymore. The roof caved in and the floorboards went missing. The glass from the windows disappeared, then the bell.

Alfredo Salgado knows who took the bell, but won't say who, even after all these years.

Salgado was one of more than 150 people who made the trek out to Ruidosa last weekend for the Friends of the Ruidosa Church open house. He was born a few miles away on the other side of the river in a place called Chivarrias, but was so young when his family crossed he doesn't remember it. He worked hard jobs all his life, running cattle and doing seasonal labor in the rough country between Ruidosa and Shafter. "It was a hard life, but I loved it," he said.

The Salgados made the trip out from Pecos, where they have lived since 2000. Other Salgados came too, and Fuenteses and Prietos. According to Friends of the Ruidosa Church Boardmember Clara Bensen, roughly half of those in attendance were from Ruidosa or connected to Ruidosa by ancestry.

For the first time in over 60 years, the smell of tamales and the sound of

(Continued on page 2)

Presidio County Medical Clinic celebrates new pharmacist Andrea Perez

By SAM KARAS
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PRESIDIO — Last Friday, there was something unusual in the waiting room at the Presidio County Medical Clinic: a party. Hector and Sonia Armendariz of the Bean Café catered a COVID-conscious bash following a ribbon-cutting ceremony where staff of the PCMC welcomed their new colleague, pharmacist Andrea Perez.

For many Presidio residents, Perez is not a new face. She grew up in Ojinaga and is a graduate of Presidio High School. "For me, coming back to Presidio is coming back home," she said.

"She's a ray of light just out of school," said Presidio County Medical Clinic Chief Operations Officer Cynthia Esquivel.

Esquivel explained that the building currently housing the clinic at 1501 Erma Ave was designed to have a pharmacy, but staffing and stocking that pharmacy has been a challenge over the years. Before Perez's arrival, medications would come from the pharmacies in Alpine twice a week on the TRAX bus.

Prescriptions could take 3 to 5 days to fill or longer, depending on the weather. Many Presidio residents found prescriptions they depended on snagged up in snowstorms and road construction. If an emergency happened to fall on a Friday, that patient might not get relief until the following Tuesday.

PCMC, a clinic run by the regional provider Preventative Care Health

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El evento de puertas abiertas de la iglesia Ruidosa detrae comida, diversión y familia de regreso a la ciudad

Por SAM KARAS
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RUIDOSA — Las últimas personas que se casaron en la iglesia fueron los Nuñez. Eso fue en 1959. Desde entonces nadie se casó ni celebró misa en la iglesia. El techo se derrumbó y las tablas del suelo desaparecieron. El vidrio de las ventanas desapareció, luego el timbre.

Alfredo Salgado sabe quién tomó la campana, pero no dirá quién, incluso después de todos estos años.

Salgado fue una de las más de 150 personas que hicieron la caminata a Ruidosa el fin de semana pasado para la jornada de puertas abiertas de Amigos de la Iglesia de Ruidosa. Nació a unos kilómetros al otro lado del río en un lugar llamado Chivarrias, pero era tan joven cuando su familia lo cruzó que no lo recuerda. Trabajó duro toda su vida, criando ganado y haciendo labores de temporada en el accidentado campo entre Ruidosa y Shafter. "Fue una vida difícil, pero me encantó", dijo.

Los Salgados hicieron el viaje desde Pecos, donde viven desde el año 2000. También vinieron otros Salgados, Fuenteses y Prietos. Según Clara

(Continúa en la página 3)

La Clínica Médica del Condado de Presidio celebra a la nueva farmacéutica Andrea Perez

Por SAM KARAS
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PRESIDIO — El viernes pasado, hubo algo inusual en la sala de espera de la Clínica Médica del Condado de Presidio: una fiesta. Héctor y Sonia Armendáriz del Bean Café organizaron una fiesta consciente de COVID luego de una ceremonia de corte de cinta donde el personal del PCMC dio la bienvenida a su nueva colega, la farmacéutica Andrea Pérez.

Para muchos residentes de Presidio, Pérez no es una cara nueva. Creció en Ojinaga y se graduó de Presidio High School. "Para mí, volver a Presidio es volver a casa", dijo.

"Es un rayo de luz recién salido de la escuela", dijo Cynthia Esquivel, directora de operaciones de la Clínica Médica del Condado de Presidio.

Esquivel explicó que el edificio que actualmente alberga la clínica en 1501 Erma Ave fue diseñado para tener una farmacia, pero la dotación de personal y el abastecimiento de esa farmacia ha sido un desafío a lo largo de los años. Antes de la llegada de Pérez, los medicamentos llegaban de las farmacias de Alpine dos veces por semana en el autobús TRAX.

Las recetas pueden tardar de 3 a 5 días en surtirse o más, según el clima.

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POR ORDEN DEL CONDADO DE PRESIDIO ENTRA EN VIGOR UNA PROHIBICIÓN SOBRE EL USO DEL FUEGO, NO SE PUEDE HACER FUEGO SOBRE LOS TERRENOS

Presidio listo para dar la bienvenida a los compradores mexicanos a medida que se alivian las restricciones fronterizas

Por SAM KARAS
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PRESIDIO — Los dueños de negocios y los funcionarios de la ciudad han estado esperando desde el comienzo de la pandemia el regreso de una de las fuerzas más importantes en la economía de Presidio : compradores de México. En marzo de 2020, el Departamento de Seguridad Nacional cerró las fronteras terrestres a los viajes "no esenciales", lo que supuso un golpe devastador para las ciudades fronterizas que dependen de los visitantes transfronterizos.

"Los primeros años que el Dollar Tree estuvo abierto, entraría y la mitad de las placas serían de México y la otra mitad sería de Texas", dijo el administrador de la ciudad Brad Newton. "Ahora es muy raro ver una matrícula mexicana en cualquier lugar".

Newton hizo hincapié en que las empresas locales no solo están sintiendo el fuego, la ciudad también lo está. "En 2009, alrededor del 70% de nuestro impuesto sobre las ventas provino de clientes mexicanos. Ahora la mayor parte de nuestro impuesto sobre las ventas proviene del aumento del costo de la gasolina ", explicó.

Por cada galón de gasolina vendido en Presidio, la ciudad gana dos centavos. "Por eso nos gusta tener turistas y nos gusta que la gente compre en casa", dijo.

Newton y otros residentes de Presidio recuerdan rápidamente a los visitantes que Presidio y Ojinaga son prácticamente lo mismo. Para la mayoría de las personas, las restricciones no han desgarrado a las familias, simplemente han puesto la carga sobre las personas del lado estadounidense para que crucen, lo que ha resultado en largas colas en el puente.

Sin embargo, para las empresas con sede en Presidio, las restricciones del Título 19 han sido devastadoras. Azucena Romero, quien administra el Dollar General con vista al Puente Internacional Presidio, estima que antes de la pandemia, alrededor del 70% de su negocio provenía de México. Hay dos Dollar Generals en la ciudad, y el de ella recibe la mayor parte de los compradores internacionales.

"Sé que nuestras ventas van a ser como solían hacerlo [cuando se reabra la frontera]", dijo. "Todos nos vamos a beneficiar".

Muchos de los clientes mexicanos de Romero son personas que poseen pequeñas empresas y puestos de venta que dependen de su tienda para reabastecerse de bocadillos y alimentos básicos. También ha notado la ausencia de la comunidad menonita, que una vez cruzó regularmente desde su cooperativa agrícola en las afueras de Ojinaga a

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ENGLISH NEWS

Border restrictions

(Continued from page 1)

offering him a front row seat to ups and downs in Presidio's economy through many eras of border policy. "Years and years ago, our business from Mexico was probably 90%," he said.

Fluctuations in the peso and drastic restrictions imposed after 9/11 changed all of that. In the latest wave of border closures due to COVID-19, he estimates he lost about 10% of his current customer base. "They come here for what they can't find over there — quality, U.S.-made [tools and materials]," he said. "I'm not one to complain, though. There will be more business and we will get some."

The border is set to partially re-open on November 8, according to the Department of Homeland Security. Travelers from Mexico will be required to provide proof of vaccination, but it's unclear exactly what that process will look like. "We're still awaiting specifics from DHS," said Roger Maier, public relations specialist for Customs and Border Protection in El Paso.

The lifted restrictions mirror an easing of COVID-19 policies across the river in Ojinaga. City administration recently extended the hours bars and restaurants are allowed to be open until 2 a.m. The state of Chihuahua is still "code yellow" in its pandemic crisis response, with 1,330 confirmed cases in Ojinaga and 79 in San Carlos.

Regardless of the reality of the pandemic on either side of the border, Presidio is ready for cross-border shoppers to return. "Presidio is not in this alone — every border community has suffered," Newton said. "The Mexican shoppers are vital to border communities. We've been treading water and praying for their return. We are ready for our friends from Mexico to come back to Presidio."

New pharmacist

(Continued from page 1)

Services, tried renting the space to a for-profit company, but because the clinic strives to offer low-cost services — most notably, special pricing on prescriptions through the 340B program serving low-income rural communities — they didn't stick around for long. Presidio residents were back to waiting on their twice-weekly shipments.

Even when the shipments came on time, a bigger problem remained: there was no one available to answer questions about how to take them. According to Perez, many patients were getting their medications, but they weren't taking them correctly because they weren't getting them from a pharmacist. They'd neglect refills or forget to schedule follow-up appointments to check on their progress.

Perez hopes all that will change under her watch.

"I'm available all the time," she said. "At least when we're open five days a week, I'm there. You don't have to make an appointment to talk to me or ask me any questions."

Perez is excited about the possibility of an infusion of healthcare funding in Presidio. The Big Bend Sentinel recently reported on the prospect of $8.2 million in grant money that would expand healthcare offerings at PCMC, including extended hours, access to specialists via telemedicine and enhanced emergency services.

"If more money becomes available to improve access to healthcare here in Presidio, I hope we can use it to bring healthcare providers here. We do have infrastructure, we do have buildings, but we don't have the workforce," she said. "It doesn't matter if we have all these beautiful buildings if we don't have the right providers."

Perez recognizes that attracting new healthcare professionals to rural Presidio poses challenges, but for her, it's personal. "I was gone for 10 years when I went to college and pharmacy school, so after all those years, coming back home feels good. I feel like I belong here, and I'm really happy to be back."

Ruidosa church

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music filled the air of El Corazón Sagrado de la Iglesia de Jesus (Sacred Heart Church of Jesus). "The best thing is seeing people you haven't seen in years," said Maria Salgado, Alfredo's wife.

Most of the festivities took place outside the church. Boardmember Mike Green led tours inside, inviting guests to imagine the possibilities for the future of the structure. What about musical performances, community celebrations, fancy fundraising dinners?

"We're trying to get this structure activated with community as soon as possible, but we have to make this site safe," Green said. "We're very remote here and we can't afford injuries."

The group's vision was illustrated in part with help from the Color Condition, an art duo based in Dallas. The artists hung strips of textiles from the ceiling inside the church and from the outside of the fallen belltower, outlining — in vibrant, fluttering relief — which parts of the church will be restored.

Green has a background in architecture, and for him, the arches that hold up the middle of the church are its most impressive aspect. "Man, I don't know who built that, but I'd like to know who," he said. The arches are the largest made of adobe in Texas that the group is aware of.

The church is essentially a scaled-down, frontier model of a traditional Catholic church. Its intricacy — and the pieces that have stood for so long without consistent maintenance — are a testament to the skill and care that went into its construction over 100 years ago. "This was a labor of love," Green said. "The church gave them very little money to do it."

Historian David Keller, who is leading the adobe restoration effort, estimates that it took four to seven months just to make the adobes, all by people who worked tough day jobs like cattle ranching and onion farming.

After the church shuttered in the late 1950s, Salgado explained that different members of the community took turns caring for the church. They'd watch over the place for a year or two, then pass it on. Nobody had the money to fully restore it; it was a tough time for the town. By 1964, there were no businesses reported in Ruidosa.

Even in a state of disrepair, the church — an imposing structure 60 miles from Marfa and 40 from Presidio — makes an impression on those who pass by. Eventually the diocese of El Paso granted permission to restore the church to the Chinati Foundation, helmed by Pinto Canyon local Donald Judd.

In a statement accompanying a 1989 architecture exhibition in Münster, Germany, Judd wrote of the church: "My intention was to have the adobe made in Ruidosa and of course the work done by the people there — work and money for a dying town which needs these. And work for an institution which is theirs. This didn't happen, but could still happen."

It's happening now — or at least, that's what the Friends of the Ruidosa Church hope. "It won't come cheap," Green said. "It could come close to $1.4 million. This is meticulous, careful work, and it has to be done by the qualified people."

Why restore something that — by its guardians' own admission — is dangerous, expensive and in the middle of nowhere?

"Precisely part of the richness of the experience is this remoteness and its beauty. Part of the experience is the journey," Green said. "Everytime I drive here, I see something new. You don't know what will be blooming, what will be flowing, what animal you're gonna see."

Green and his fellow board members hope that the church will soon be a site for community-based workshops on adobe-making and the history of the area, drawing in both outsiders and people with ties to Ruidosa.

For Salgado, who was pushed out of his property in 2000 by rising property taxes, it's an opportunity to return to a place that over the course of his life has all but disappeared. "It was a different time, but I still got the memories," he said. "I really love it. I wish I could come back."

FDA panel recommends approval of the Pfizer vaccine for kids ages 5-11. Here's what that means for Texans.

By KAREN BROOKS HARPER and BRIAN LOPEZ
The Texas Tribune

TEXAS — An advisory panel of the U.S. Food and Drug Administration recommended Tuesday that the agency authorize the Pfizer-BioNTech COVID-19 vaccine for use on children ages 5 to 11.

There are about 2.9 million Texas children who are in this age group — which is more than 10% of the national population of children who are ages 5 to 11.

The panel's 17-0 vote, with one member abstaining, in favor of emergency use authorization for that age group opens the door for formal approval by the FDA, which could come as early as Wednesday.

Rules for administering the vaccine to children from the U.S. Centers for Disease Control and Prevention could follow as early as next week. Once the CDC's guidance is released, shots could be going into the arms of younger kids in Texas by the first weekend in November, state health officials say.

What happened Tuesday

The 18-member Vaccines and Related Biological Products Advisory Committee, a panel of experts connected to the FDA, was asked to vote yes or no on whether members believed the vaccine was safe and effective for children ages 5-11 based on the data presented to them by Pfizer, as well as the FDA and the CDC, during the nearly nine-hour meeting.

Several members expressed concern that they couldn't give a more nuanced answer to the yes-or-no question they were being asked to vote on: Whether the vaccine is safe and effective for all kids ages 5 to 11. Some wanted the option to vote that it should just be used in high-risk children.

Officials with the FDA and the CDC told panel members that as long as they determine that it's safe for use in the 5-11 age group, it's up to the CDC next week to determine who it should be given to — be it high-risk children or any other subset.

Some members also pointed out that the emergency authorization was temporary and could change or end depending on how the pandemic goes on in the future.

Dr. Cody Meissner, a professor of pediatrics at Tufts University School of Medicine, said he worried some states would respond with mandates, which he doesn't support.

"I agree with what everyone else is saying here. We're in a very difficult decision-making process," Meissner said.

Committee member Dr. James E.K. Hildreth said he was "having some challenges with this one," although he believes children who are high risk need to be vaccinated.

But there were too few children of color involved in the trials, given that they were disproportionately affected by the virus, said Hildreth, president and chief executive officer of Meharry Medical College, the nation's largest private, independent historically black academic health sciences center.

And he pointed to remarks from an FDA health official during the hearing that suggested some 40% of children had already been exposed to the disease, questioning why they would need it if they had natural immunity.

"It seems to me that in some ways, we're inoculating children to protect the adults, and it should be the other way around," Hildreth said. "If 30 million children already have some form of immunity, they've made their contributions to herd immunity, and we should get the adults vaccinated to protect the children."

But other members, including the panel chair, said that voting down the vaccine for kids would remove the choice for parents who are afraid to send their healthy children to school because they worry about them contracting the virus.

"To me, the question is pretty clear," said Dr. Amanda Cohn, a panel member and health officer at the CDC. "We don't want children to be dying of COVID, even if it is far fewer children than adults, and we don't want them in the ICU."

The details — cost, safety, effectiveness, dosage

Only the Pfizer-BioNTech vaccine has been recommended for use in minors, including the 5-11 age group. Moderna and Johnson & Johnson are still authorized for use only in adults.

The child-sized version of the Pfizer vaccine is one-third of the amount given to people ages 12 and up. But Pfizer officials say it still offers the same level of antibody response that is found in 18- to 24-year-olds. The Pfizer data is based on a test sample of about 2,200 children.

Pfizer told panel members both in remarks Tuesday and in briefing documents that its vaccine is 91% effective in preventing symptomatic transmission in kids.

The test group showed no new side effects — nothing worse than had been seen in older groups — and no incidents of myocarditis, a rare heart inflammation that occurred in some male adolescents and young adults after taking one of the mRNA vaccines.

Any side effects were described by Pfizer as "mild to moderate" and typical of those experienced by children after common childhood vaccines. If symptoms appeared, they arose in the first two days and went away quickly. Most common among them was pain at the injection site, while other reactions sometimes included fatigue, headache, muscle pain and chills.

The shot is free and requires two doses to be fully effective. Providers will be strictly prohibited against administering diluted adult-sized doses to children. The kid doses are being packaged differently, with smaller needles, orange packaging and the smaller dosage. Providers who violate these instructions could have their COVID-19 vaccine provider authorization pulled.

Where to find it

The state has been allocated 1.3 million initial doses of the vaccine by the federal government.

The doses will start arriving in Texas this week after the expected FDA authorization but may not be administered until after the CDC issues its guidelines some time next week.

Of those, 260,000 doses have been requested by some 700 pharmacies across the state. Another 404,000 doses were preordered by more than 800 Texas providers in 120 counties, officials at the Texas Department of State Health Services said.

The state will continue to receive additional doses, and supply isn't expected to be a problem.

Shots may be given at the offices of pediatricians and family-practice doctors, pharmacies, school and rural health clinics and federally qualified health centers.

Because not all counties have easy access to providers, Texas public health regions will help cover those areas with mobile clinics and regional events. When there are no existing providers to help, DSHS regional staff will provide vaccination services. New storage and handling requirements make it easier for the Pfizer vaccine to be used in more rural areas now than early on in the rollout.

Will schools be involved as vaccination sites?

School districts cannot require children to get the vaccine, but some will make it easy for children to get vaccinated.

The Austin Independent School District will host vaccine clinics just as it did when COVID-19 vaccines were first approved for children over the age of 12 at the beginning of summer. Since then, these clinics have vaccinated more than 9,000 children.

In Texas, the Legislature determines which vaccines are mandatory for school, not the state health agency.

There is no indication that Republican lawmakers and state leaders, who have adamantly opposed all COVID-19 vaccine mandates, will require a COVID-19 vaccination to attend school in the state. After the vaccine was approved for children 12 to 15 earlier this year, there were no moves to immediately require it at middle or high schools.

Texas already requires some vaccines — such as hepatitis C, polio and measles — for children attending school but has many exceptions for parents who wish to opt out.

In guidelines it issued to states last week, the CDC acknowledged the option of vaccination clinics at schools but stopped short of endorsing that as a primary way to get kids vaccinated mainly because parents may prefer a more traditional medical setting.

How high is the risk of young children catching COVID-19?

While DSHS maintains unreliable information on age breakdowns of positive COVID-19 cases, schools have regularly reported infections on campus and can offer an idea of the spread among minors.

Three months into this school year, the number of total cases reported among students surpassed the total from the entire 2020-21 school year. As of Oct. 17, there were 202,186 total student cases reported, or 3.8% of students, since the beginning of this semester.

After reaching their highest hospitalization numbers of the entire pandemic earlier this summer, the number of kids showing up at hospitals with COVID-19 is starting to decrease. But kids still account for nearly 25% of cases, experts say, and the numbers are not going down as fast as those in the adult population.

As of October 22, 31 out of nearly 69,000 reported Texas COVID-19 deaths were children younger than 10 — a very small fraction of the statewide death toll — according to DSHS.

According to the Pfizer brief filed with the FDA, there was a 419% increase in COVID-19 cases among children younger than 18 in the United States in August and September 2021 compared to June and July 2021. COVID-19 was among the top 10 leading causes of death for children 5 to 14 years of age nationwide between January and May 2021, according to the CDC, although the mortality rate from COVID for that age group remains small.

Among children 5 to 11 years old nationally, there have been nearly 2 million confirmed and reported COVID-19 cases and at least 143 COVID-19-related deaths.

Unvaccinated populations are also reservoirs for the virus to grow and mutate, risking new variants that could overpower the current vaccines.

What's next?

Moderna and Johnson & Johnson are conducting their trials for the same age group but have not yet released data. Pfizer is already doing trials for two younger age groups: 6 months to 2 years, and 2 to 5 years. The data on the older segment is expected after the first of the year.

Mandi Cai contributed to this report. This article originally appeared in The Texas Tribune *at https://www.texastribune.org/2021/10/26/texas-covid-vaccine-kids-fda/. T*he Texas Tribune *is a member-supported, nonpartisan newsroom informing and engaging Texans on state politics and policy. Learn more at texastribune.org. This story has been edited for length.*

Presidio boys cross-country heads to state to defend their title

LUBBOCK — The Presidio High School varsity boys and girls put in a great effort at regionals this week in Lubbock, competing among the Region 1-3A teams on Monday, October 25.

When the races had been run and the dust had settled, the Blue Devils' varsity boys team earned their third consecutive trip to the state meet by finishing in the runner-up position. They will look to defend their 2020 state title at the state meet.

The varsity girls finished in 13th place with 357 points. This was the 5th straight year in which the Lady Devils made the trip to the regional meet. It was a great team effort by the girls. The girls made a significant improvement on their time on this course, which they ran back in September. It was a great season for the varsity girls team.

The boys have been improving every week, according to Coach Alonzo Samaniego, and they will need to continue improving as the state course is a faster course.

The varsity boys will run on Friday, November 5, at 10:30 a.m. The race will be held at the Old Settler's Park in Round Rock.

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NOTICIAS EN ESPAÑOL

Las restricciones fronterizas

(Continuación de la página 1)

Presidio para un día de compras y buena comida.

José Saenz de Harper Hardware ha sido dueño de su negocio desde 1971, ofreciéndole un asiento de primera fila para los altibajos en la economía de Presidio a través de muchas épocas de política fronteriza. “Hace años y años, nuestro negocio en México era probablemente del 90%”, dijo.

Las fluctuaciones del peso y las drásticas restricciones impuestas después del 11 de septiembre cambiaron todo eso. En la última ola de cierres de fronteras debido a COVID-19, estima que perdió alrededor del 10% de su base de clientes actual. “Vienen aquí por lo que no pueden encontrar allí: [herramientas y materiales] de calidad fabricados en Estados Unidos”, dijo. Sin embargo, no soy de los que se quejan. Habrá más negocios y obtendremos algunos”.

La frontera se reabrirá parcialmente el 8 de noviembre, según el Departamento de Seguridad Nacional. Los viajeros de México deberán proporcionar prueba de vacunación, pero no está claro exactamente cómo será ese proceso. “Todavía estamos esperando información específica del DHS”, dijo Roger Maier, especialista en relaciones públicas de Aduanas y Protección Fronteriza en El Paso.

Las restricciones levantadas reflejan una flexibilización de las políticas de COVID-19 al otro lado del río en Ojinaga. La administración de la ciudad extendió recientemente el horario en que los bares y restaurantes pueden estar abiertos hasta las 2 am. El estado de Chihuahua todavía tiene un “código amarillo” en su respuesta a la crisis pandémica, con1.330 casos confirmados en Ojinaga y 79 en San Carlos.

Independientemente de la realidad de la pandemia a ambos lados de la frontera, Presidio está listo para que regresen los compradores transfronterizos. “Presidio no está solo en esto, todas las comunidades fronterizas han sufrido”, dijo Newton. “Los compradores mexicanos son vitales para las comunidades fronterizas. Hemos estado flotando en el agua y rezando por su regreso. Estamos listos para que nuestros amigos de México regresen a Presidio ”.

La nueva farmacéutica

(Continuación de la página 1)

Muchos residentes de Presidio encontraron recetas de las que dependían atrapadas en tormentas de nieve y construcción de carreteras. Si ocurriera una emergencia un viernes, es posible que ese paciente no obtenga alivio hasta el martes siguiente.

PCMC, una clínica administrada por el proveedor regional Preventative Care Health Services, intentó alquilar el espacio a una empresa con fines de lucro, pero debido a que la clínica se esfuerza por ofrecer servicios de bajo costo, más notablemente, precios especiales en recetas a través del programa 340B que atiende comunidades rurales de bajos ingresos - no se quedaron por mucho tiempo. Los residentes de Presidio volvieron a esperar sus envíos dos veces por semana.

Incluso cuando los envíos llegaban a tiempo, seguía existiendo un problema mayor: no había nadie disponible para responder preguntas sobre cómo llevarlos. Según Pérez, muchos pacientes estaban recibiendo sus medicamentos, pero no los estaban tomando correctamente porque no los obtenían de un farmacéutico. Descuidaban los reabastecimientos o se olvidaban de programar citas de seguimiento para verificar su progreso.

Pérez espera que todo eso cambie bajo su supervisión. “Estoy disponible todo el tiempo”, dijo. “Al menos cuando estamos abiertos cinco días a la semana, estoy allí. No es necesario concertar una cita para hablar conmigo o hacerme preguntas “.

Pérez está entusiasmado con la posibilidad de una infusión de fondos para la atención médica en Presidio. El Big Bend Sentinel informó recientemente sobre la perspectiva de $ 8.2 millones en fondos de subvención que expandirían las ofertas de atención médica en PCMC, incluido el horario extendido, el acceso a especialistas a través de telemedicina y servicios de emergencia mejorados.

“Si hay más dinero disponible para mejorar el acceso a la atención médica aquí en Presidio, espero que podamos usarlo para traer proveedores de atención médica aquí. Tenemos infraestructura, tenemos edificios, pero no tenemos la fuerza laboral ”, dijo. “No importa si tenemos todos estos hermosos edificios si no tenemos los proveedores adecuados”.

Pérez reconoce que atraer nuevos profesionales de la salud a las zonas rurales de Presidio plantea desafíos, pero para ella, es algo personal. “Estuve fuera por 10 años cuando fui a la universidad y a la escuela de farmacia, así que después de todos esos años, volver a casa se siente bien. Siento que pertenezco aquí y estoy muy feliz de estar de regreso”.

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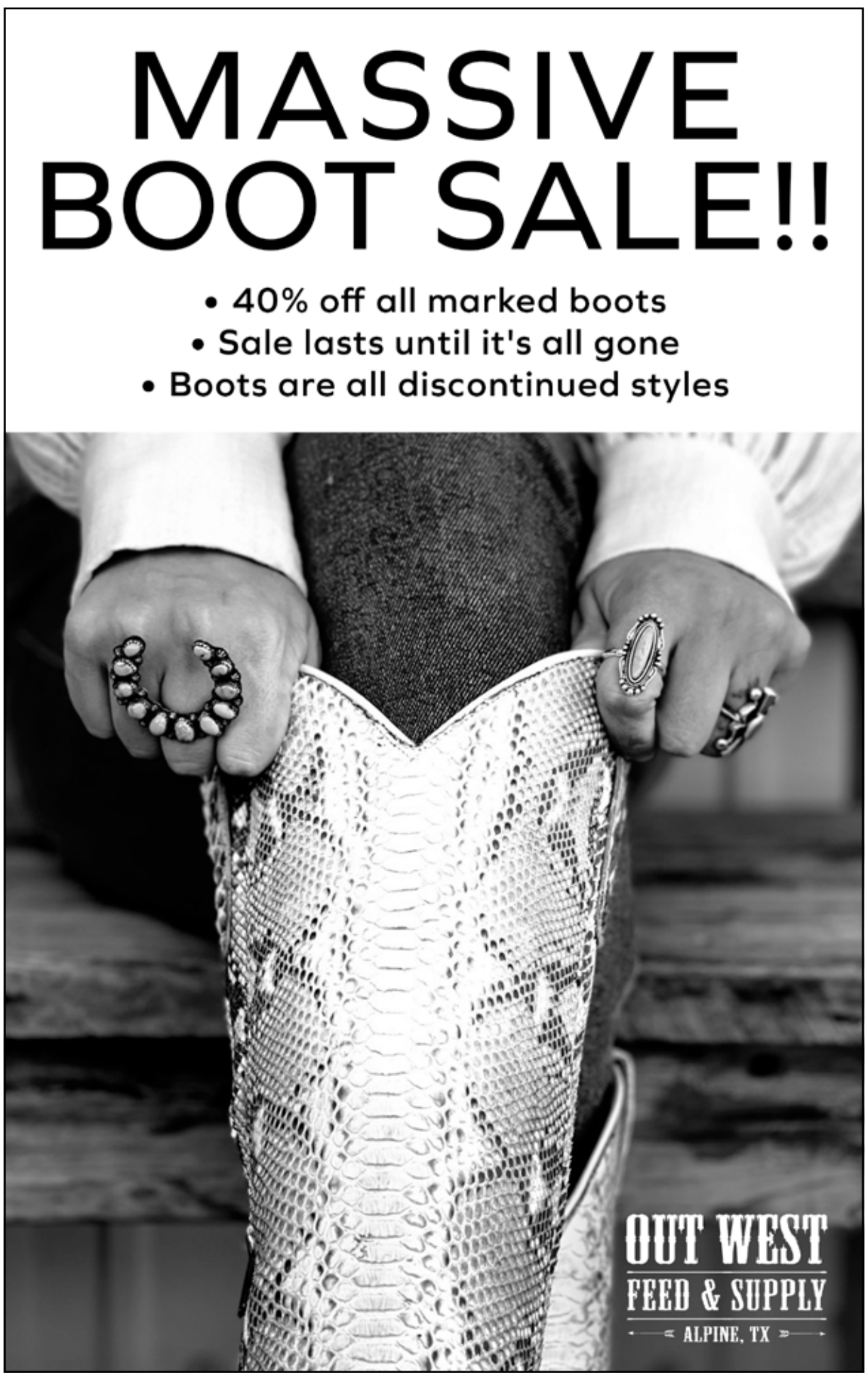




Foto por Hannah Gentiles para Presidio International

Amigos de la Iglesia de Ruidosa dieron la bienvenida a los visitantes para la celebración del Día de la Comunidad el sábado. Dentro de la iglesia de adobe de la ciudad, la banda de Presidio Mariachi Santa Cruz actuó y los invitados bailaron. Serpentinas del dúo de artistas The Color Condition soplaron la brisa bajo el techo del edificio y completaron el contorno del campanario derrumbado que se reconstruirá en el futuro con fondos recaudados por el grupo Friends.

La iglesia Ruidosa

(Continuación de la página 1)

Bensen, miembro de la junta de Amigos de la Iglesia de Ruidosa, aproximadamente la mitad de los asistentes eran o estaban conectados a Ruidosa por ascendencia.

Por primera vez en más de 60 años, el olor de los tamales y el sonido de la música llenaron el aire de El Corazón Sagrado de la Iglesia de Jesús. “Lo mejor es ver a gente que no has visto en años”, dijo María Salgado, esposa de Alfredo.

La mayoría de las festividades tuvieron lugar fuera de la iglesia. El miembro de la junta Mike Green dirigió recorridos al interior, invitando a los huéspedes a imaginar las posibilidades para el futuro de la estructura. ¿Qué pasa con las actuaciones musicales, las celebraciones comunitarias, las cenas de recaudación de fondos de lujo?

“Estamos tratando de activar esta estructura con la comunidad lo antes posible, pero tenemos que hacer que este sitio sea seguro”, dijo Green. “Estamos muy lejos aquí y no podemos permitirnos las lesiones”.

La visión del grupo se ilustró en parte con la ayuda de Color Condition, un dúo artístico con sede en Dallas. Los artistas colgaron tiras de textiles del techo dentro de la iglesia y del exterior del campanario caído, delineando — en un relieve vibrante y ondulante– qué partes de la iglesia serán restauradas.

Green tiene experiencia en arquitectura, y para él, los arcos que sostienen el centro de la iglesia son su aspecto más impresionante. “Hombre, no sé quién construyó eso, pero me gustaría saber quién”, dijo. Los arcos son los más grandes hechos de adobe en Texas que el grupo conoce.

La iglesia es esencialmente un modelo fronterizo reducido de una iglesia católica tradicional. Su complejidad, y las piezas que han permanecido durante tanto tiempo sin un mantenimiento constante, son un testimonio de la habilidad y el cuidado que se puso en su construcción hace más de 100 años. “Este fue un trabajo de amor”, dijo Green. “La iglesia les dio muy poco dinero para hacerlo”.

El historiador David Keller, quien lidera el esfuerzo de restauración del adobe, estima que se necesitaron de cuatro a siete meses solo para hacer los adobes, todo por personas que trabajaron en trabajos duros como la cría de ganado y el cultivo de cebollas.

Después de que la iglesia cerró a fines de la década de 1950, Salgado explicó que diferentes miembros de la comunidad se turnaron para cuidar de la iglesia. Vigilarían el lugar durante uno o dos años y luego lo pasarían. Nadie tenía el dinero para restaurarlo por completo; fue un momento difícil para el pueblo. Para 1964, no se reportaron negocios en Ruidosa.

Incluso en un estado de deterioro, la iglesia, una estructura imponente a 60 millas de Marfa y 40 de Presidio, impresiona a los que pasan. Finalmente, la diócesis de El Paso otorgó permiso para restaurar la iglesia a la Fundación Chinati, dirigida por Donald Judd, local de Pinto Canyon.

En una declaración que acompañaba a una exposición de arquitectura de 1989 en Münster, Alemania, Judd escribió sobre la iglesia: “Mi intención era hacer el adobe en Ruidosa y, por supuesto, el trabajo realizado por la gente de allí - trabajo y dinero para un ciudad moribunda que los necesita. Y trabajar para una institución que es de ellos. Esto no sucedió, pero aún podría suceder “.

Está sucediendo ahora, o al menos, eso es lo que esperan los Amigos de la Iglesia de Ruidosa. “No será barato”, dijo Green. “Podría acercarse a 1,4 millones de dólares. Este es un trabajo meticuloso y cuidadoso, y debe ser realizado por personas calificadas ”.

¿Por qué restaurar algo que, según la propia admisión de sus guardianes, es peligroso, caro y está en medio de la nada?

“Precisamente parte de la riqueza de la experiencia es esta lejanía y su belleza. Parte de la experiencia es el viaje ”, dijo Green. “Cada vez que conduzco aquí, veo algo nuevo. No sabes qué florecerá, qué fluirá, qué animal verás “.

Green y sus compañeros miembros de la junta esperan que la iglesia pronto sea un sitio para talleres comunitarios sobre la fabricación de adobe y la historia del área, atrayendo tanto a forasteros como a personas vinculadas a Ruidosa.

Para Salgado, quien fue expulsado de su propiedad en 2000 por el aumento de los impuestos a la propiedad, es una oportunidad de regresar a un lugar que a lo largo de su vida casi ha desaparecido. “Era un momento diferente, pero todavía tengo los recuerdos”, dijo. “Me encanta de verdad. Ojalá pudiera volver “.

Los corredores de campo traviesa de Presidio llegan a la competencia estatal



Foto cortesía de PISD

Eduardo “Eddie” Flores estaba al frente del grupo de Presidio, terminando la carrera con un tiempo de 17: 55.9 y ayudando a impulsar a los muchachos de Presidio Varsity a campo traviesa a un segundo lugar que los llevará al estado.

LUBBOCK — La Escuela Secundaria Presidio niños y niñas varsity pusieron en un gran esfuerzo en los regionales de esta semana en Lubbock, compitiendo entre los equipos Región 1-3A el lunes, octubre 25.

Cuando las carreras había corrido y el polvo se había asentado, el equipo varsity varsity de los Blue Devils ganó su tercer viaje consecutivo al encuentro estatal al terminar en la posición de subcampeón. Buscarán defender su título estatal de 2020 en la competencia estatal.

Las chicas del equipo universitario terminaron en el puesto 13 con 357 puntos. Este fue el quinto año consecutivo en el que las Lady Devils hicieron el viaje al encuentro regional. Fue un gran esfuerzo de equipo por parte de las chicas. Las niñas mejoraron significativamente su tiempo en este curso que realizaron en septiembre. Fue una gran temporada para el equipo de chicas universitarias.

Los chicos han ido mejorando cada semana, según el entrenador Alonzo Samaniego, y deberán seguir mejorando ya que el curso estatal es un curso más rápido.

Los chicos varsity correrán el viernes 5 de noviembre a las 10:30 am. La carrera se llevará a cabo en el Old Settler’s Park en Round Rock.

CLASSIFIED

Desert bighorn sheep survey to begin



Photo by National Parks Service

Big Bend National Park is home to a small population of native desert bighorn sheep. This week, the populations of bighorns and non-native aoudad (barbary sheep) will be surveyed by helicopter so that the park can gather information and shape future population control efforts.

BIG BEND NATIONAL PARK — This week, Texas Parks and Wildlife Department will be surveying bighorn sheep and aoudads (barbary sheep) in Big Bend National Park. TPWD staff will be using a helicopter in the park to survey bighorn and aoudad. This year there will be no lethal control of aoudad and all areas of the park will remain open. The surveys will be conducted in the Persimmon Gap area, the Deadhorse Mountains, Boquillas Canyon and the Mesa de Anguilla. These surveys will be split into two days. There will be no park closures during these aerial surveys.

Barbary sheep have been in the park for the past three decades and have increased significantly in recent years. Hundreds of barbary sheep inhabit the park, but the park has only one very small known population of native desert bighorn sheep. Barbary sheep are non-native and control is necessary as they compete with native species — including preventing desert bighorn from accessing water — threaten biodiversity and impair park visitors' ability to experience natural conditions and scenery. Although there will be no lethal control this year, the information gained from these surveys will help direct future control efforts.

This effort is part of Big Bend's long term, integrated approach to control exotic animals and protect park resources. Management of aoudad is in keeping with the Big Bend Exotic Animal Management Plan and Environmental Assessment, finalized in June 2018.

To see this plan, visit www.parkplanning.nps.gov/bibe.

OP-ED

Analysis: A quick turn on property taxes with the long game in mind

By ROSS RAMSEY
The Texas Tribune

Property taxes are higher in Texas than in all but a handful of other states. Voters know that, and when voters are interested, so are the people who depend on those voters for political survival.

That's why, in less than six hours on Monday, Texas legislators went all the way from a blank piece of paper to unanimous support for a constitutional amendment that would increase the size of the homeowner's exemption on property taxes to $40,000 from the current $25,000.

It won't move the state lower on the overall list — only five other states have higher property taxes than we do, according to the Tax Foundation. That stat doesn't get a lot of attention from Texas officials, who are busy telling corporate executives in California and other states about the benefits of living in a state that doesn't have a personal income tax.

That's enticing, and one reason Texas is a magnet right now for personal and corporate relocations. It's also why property taxes are so high and why the state has the 14th-highest state and local sales taxes in the U.S., according to the Tax Foundation.

But the homeowner's exemption increase is expensive: It would cost the state almost $2 billion over the next five years. That's big in the state's eye, but it would put an average of only $176 back in the pocket of the average homeowner each year. It would reduce what local school property taxes would collect for public education and assumes, but does not guarantee, that the state will make up what the school districts lose with other taxes collected by the state.

Even with those caveats, here's betting that, in political advertising next year, some lawmakers will be touting the "billions of dollars of property tax breaks" they put in place in this most recent legislative session.

It's a straight-up bid for homeowners who vote. It doesn't do anything for renters or for commercial and industrial property owners in the way that a cut in property tax rates would be. A broader cut would affect all property owners — and, if you're a real optimist, might also trickle down to the people who rent from them — but spreading the cut to more owners would also cut the size each owner gets.

If voters approve this constitutional amendment next year, homeowners will each get an average of $14.67 a month, and that's assuming that it's even visible to those taxpayers in a time of rising property values and steadily increasing tax bills.

It's probably good for political ads, but that monthly total won't buy lunch for a family of four.

The legislation flew through the Legislature, after the House and Senate had approved very different property tax breaks earlier in the third special session. On Monday morning, this was just an idea. By Monday evening, it was on its way to the May ballot, where voters will decide whether it belongs in the state Constitution or the scrap heap.

That's a testament to the political clout of property taxes. It's one of those issues of interest to regular voters — the ones who don't pay attention to the everyday barking of partisan officeholders and their underlings. And it got some recent notice from pollsters at the University of Texas at Austin, who wrote about its persistence as a sore spot for the state's voters. (Their earlier polling also holds a caution for legislators: Small tax cuts like this one, they wrote, aren't enough to make a difference to most families.)

Four years ago, Texas voters were clear enough about their displeasure over high property taxes that several safe statewide incumbents — including the lieutenant governor, the attorney general and the agriculture commissioner — just got by on Election Day. And in the legislative session that followed in 2019, state leaders set aside culture issues that enliven political activists in favor of school finance and property tax cuts.

They were scared, and it showed.

This year, the Legislature zipped through a long conservative wish list, adding new laws allowing most adults to carry guns without licenses, banning abortions after the first five or six weeks of pregnancy, restricting election practices that made voting easier during the pandemic, preventing transgender athletes in public schools from competing on teams that match their gender identities, and so on.

Those were wins for Republicans, but they wanted to touch one more base on the way out, blowing homeowners a kiss and hoping that was enough to keep the property tax rebellion at bay.

This article originally appeared in The Texas Tribune *at https://www.texastribune.org/2021/10/22/texas-property-taxes/.* The Texas Tribune *is a member-supported, nonpartisan newsroom informing and engaging Texans on state politics and policy. Learn more at texastribune.org.*

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PRESIDIO SPORTS CALENDAR

SATURDAY, OCTOBER 30:
PCH Band at New Mexico
TUESDAY, NOVEMBER 2:
PHS Volleyball Playoff Game ayt Monahans, 6:00 pm
WEDNESDAY, NOVEMBER 3:
PHS Cross Country Boys/Girls at Round Rock State Meet
THURSDAY, NOVEMBER 4:
PHS Cross Country Boys/Girls at Round Rock State Meet



JOBS

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Presidio County is accepting applications for the position of Justice of the Peace, Precinct One. The following are the requirements and qualifications necessary to be considered for appointment in the existing unexpired term of office which ends 12-31-2022.

Justice of the Peace Requirements
Justices of the peace are required to obtain 80 hours of continuing education during their first year in office and 20 hours annually thereafter.

County Justice of the Peace Qualifications[10]
•A Justice of the Peace must meet the following qualifications at the time of appointment or election:
•U.S. Citizen
•Resident of Texas for at least 12 consecutive months
•Resident of the precinct for at least six consecutive months
•Registered to vote in the precinct
•At least 18 years of age
•Not have been finally convicted of a felony from which they have not been pardoned or otherwise released from the resulting disabilities
•Not have been determined by a court with probate jurisdiction to be totally mentally incapacitated or partially mentally incapacitated without the right to vote

Candidates for this office generally must meet the above qualifications at the time of filing. Legal source: Government Code, Section 27.005

[10]Vernon's Ann. Texas Const. Art. 5, §18; V.T.C.A., Election Code §141.001

For more information on duties and responsibilities of Justice of the Peace see the "2018 Guide to Texas Laws for County Officials."

Applications may be picked up at the County Judges Office and must be turned in no later than **Friday, November 5, 2021 at 12:00 p.m.** to the County Judges Office. Presidio County is an Equal Opportunity Employer.

Marfa PUBLIC RADIO

For Día de los Muertos, Marfa Public Radio is asking listeners to share remembrances of loved ones that have died.

Do you have a dedication you want to share? If you do, call 432-242-1896 and leave a voicemail with your name, your remembrance, and a song request that reminds you of your loved one.
You can also e-mail us at love@marfapublicradio.org.

On Monday, Nov. 1 we'll air your dedications.

¿Quieres recordar a alguien este Dia de los Muertos? Dejanos saber.

Tienes una dedicación que quieres compartir? Llama al 432-242-1896 y dejanos un mensaje de voz con tu nombre, recuerdo y si hay una canción que te recuerde a tu ser amado. También puedes mandarnos un correo electrónico a love@marfapublicradio.org.

La estación transmitirá sus dedicaciones y recuerdos el primero de noviembre.

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