

BURN BAN IN
EFFECT, NO
GROUND FIRES

by order of Presidio County

Border
Patrol
agents carry
out cold
weather
rescue
in Sierra
Blanca

By SAM KARAS
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SIERRA BLANCA — On the morning of January 5, Border Patrol agents recovered 25 undocumented migrants, the victims of a presumed human smuggling operation, from a locked trailer “with no means of escape and no heat,” Customs and Border Protection reported in a press release. “They’re a real concern for us,” spokesman Greg Davis said of the high incidence of cold weather rescues throughout the Big Bend Sector’s harsh winters.

“There have been significant rescues as of late by our agents where individuals were left in hazardous conditions and required immediate medical attention,” said Big Bend Sector Chief Patrol Agent Sean L. McGoffin. “Transnational criminal organizations have no concern for humanity, they continually place lives in danger.”

The agency has shifted some of its resources in recent years toward rescue and recovery of migrants, who are often unprepared for the harsh, mountainous terrain on this side of the border. As the Big Bend Sentinel previously reported, Customs and Border Protection rolled out a series of 30 rescue beacons to be located in remote reaches of the Big Bend Sector in 2021.

The brightly-colored beacons have a flashing light to guide migrants at night and a mirror that reflects light during the day. When activated, the beacons alert 911 that assistance is requested. Border Patrol and local emergency services respond when the beacons are activated, but Big Bend Sector Border Patrol recognizes the limitations of local medical care. “Not every agent is also an EMT, but we do try to send EMT-trained agents to respond to these types of events,” Davis said. “They triage patients all the time and sometimes make a life-saving call.”

Davis explained that the agency always puts medical care first before initiating the process by which undocumented migrants are processed for expulsion from the U.S. “Life and limb, that is our main priority,” he said. “We will take care of the law enforcement and immigration aspect later.”



Photo by Mary Cantrell

Neta Rhyne, an activist advocating for the preservation of San Solomon Springs, reviews letters she’s written over the past seven years to the Texas Railroad Commission protesting the establishment of more deep injection wells in Reeves County.

Rise in earthquakes prompts local concern
over health of water resources

By MARY CANTRELL
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FAR WEST TEXAS — A recent increase in earthquake frequency recorded by the United States Geological Survey in Culberson and Reeves counties has some local citizens concerned about whether seismic activity could negatively impact groundwater quality and the flow of San Solomon Springs.

The basis of activists’ concerns is that an earthquake could lessen or stop spring flow entirely as well as contaminate fresh potable water if it were to come in contact with fracking-produced wastewater, which is pumped into the ground using a technique called deep well injection.

“If these springs disappear, it could possibly be forever,” said Neta Rhyne, a local activist who fights the establishment of more deep injection wells in Reeves County by filing protest letters

with the Texas Railroad Commission (RRC), which regulates the state’s oil and gas industry.

Deep well injection is known to cause earthquakes due to the depths of the wells and their connectivity to fault lines, according to the USGS. Whether or not an earthquake could impact spring flow depends on the magnitude and location of the event, said Andrew Keese, spokesperson for the RRC.

A 2021 study done in conjunction with the Big Bend Conservation Alliance and the Southwest Research Institute concluded that the origins to all six springs in the San Solomon Springs system are located west and northwest of San Solomon Springs — an area with frequent seismic activity, according to the USGS’ earthquake monitoring program.

The world’s largest spring-fed pool, Balmorhea State Park in Toyahvale, is supplied with water by San Solomon Springs, the largest of several springs in the area, formed by subsurface

geologic faults. More than 15 million gallons of fresh water flow from the spring a day. In addition to providing a recreational oasis in the desert — Balmorhea attracts thousands of visitors each year — the springs are home to species of endangered fish and help sustain local wildlife.

The springs have been used for farming irrigation as early as the 1870s, and an active canal system allows local farmers to grow alfalfa, cotton and more. The Civilian Conservation Corporation built the pool in the 1930s, and it opened its doors to the public in 1968. The San Solomon Springs are located in the Davis Mountains range, a historically seismically active area, originally formed by volcanic activity millions of years ago.

On December 27, 2021, a magnitude 4.5 earthquake occurred in Martin County, 27 miles northeast of Midland — it was powerful enough to be felt across Texas and New Mexico. While

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Diesel transport operation coming to Presidio,
reopening rail commerce

By SAM KARAS
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PRESIDIO — City officials are moving forward with a plan to transport large shipments of diesel fuel through Presidio and into Chihuahua City — an operation that would require the introduction of hazmat protocols to the border town, prompting safety concerns about the transportation of the hazardous material in such a remote area.

Representatives from the Presidio Port of Entry, the City of Presidio and Presidio emergency services met on January 5 for the second in a series of meetings to discuss the hazmat protocols necessary to host the operation, which would see hundreds of thousands of gallons of diesel move through the city each week. If the plan comes to fruition, diesel refined in Houston will be sent by pipeline to the Fort Worth area, where contractor

Strobel Energy Group will load it onto rail cars bound for San Angelo. Once the fuel arrives in the Permian Basin, railroad company Texas Pacifico Transportation will oversee its 400-mile journey to Presidio, where the diesel will be offloaded into tanker trucks. A still-unnamed trucking company would then drive the diesel across the bridge into Ojinaga, then follow the Highway 67 cargo route to Chihuahua City.

The plan is being touted as a way to reopen Presidio to rail commerce, which has been dormant since a series of fires ravaged the Presidio-Ojinaga International Rail Bridge in 2008 and 2009. The ongoing reconstruction of the bridge cleared its latest hurdle in November, when the Texas Department of Transportation allocated \$33 million toward the construction of a permanent customs facility. Despite the financial boost, there’s no clear timeline yet for

how long it will take for the rail bridge to be fully operational. Until the diesel can be transported into Mexico by rail, it will need to be offloaded onto trucks in Presidio.

“This is the beginning of the rebirth of rail in Presidio,” said Stan Meador, vice president of sales and marketing for Texas Pacifico. “What we didn’t anticipate is that the first thing we’d be doing is stopping in Presidio. We had been thinking more in terms of going across the bridge.”

The Presidio Port of Entry is not currently certified as a hazmat facility and very few of Presidio’s first responders have hazmat certifications. As a part of TxDOT’s 2021 Texas-Mexico Border Transportation Master Plan, “enhanc[ing] the safe and secure transport of hazardous materials” is a priority for the agency.

(Continued on page 2)

Federal judge rules against Gage Hotel owner in
lawsuit over early-pandemic closure

By MARY CANTRELL
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BREWSTER COUNTY — A federal judge has ruled in favor of Brewster County Judge Eleazar Cano in a lengthy legal battle between the local official and Gage Hotel owner J.P. Bryan, who claimed Cano’s early-pandemic decision to shutter hotels violated his constitutional rights.

In the December 15 ruling, U.S. District Judge David Counts declared that Cano had a “rational basis” for ordering the closure of hotels and short-term rentals in response to the COVID-19 pandemic and was within his right to do so, rejecting Bryan’s claims that Cano’s actions were unjustified and unconstitutional.

“While there is more than one reasonable way

to respond to the COVID-19 outbreak, Judge Cano’s orders and declarations have at least a real and substantial relation to protecting public health,” said the ruling.

Bryan, a Houston businessman and preservationist who operates the Marathon establishment, first sued a number of Brewster County officials, including Cano, in March 2020, claiming county leaders had not identified an “emergency or urgent public necessity” that justified the shuttering of hotels. Bryan soon withdrew that lawsuit, but filed a new one solely targeting Cano in April of that year. The suit argued Cano’s actions violated the Fourth Amendment of the Constitution because the shutdown amounted to the unreasonable seizure of property, and the Fourteenth Amendment —

or “equal protection” clause — because other businesses were allowed to continue operating.

Bryan and his attorneys also claimed Cano did not have adequate cause to shut down hotels, because at the time of the closures there were no reported cases of COVID-19 in the tri-county region.

Cano testified that at the time he was in communication with a local coronavirus management team and, given what was known about the spread of the virus, the area’s tourist-friendly economy, and limited medical resources in the region, acted to mitigate the effects of the virus in the area. Cano did not respond to requests for comment for this story.

In addition to rejecting Bryan’s claims that his

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17 Marfa
ISD students
and staff
test positive,
school
closed
through
Monday

By ALLEGRA HOBBS
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MARFA — Marfa Independent School District has temporarily closed its campus due to a rise in COVID infections among students and staff. Classes are expected to resume Tuesday of next week.

All classes at both the elementary school and the junior/senior high school are canceled Thursday, January 11 through Monday, January 17, according to Marfa Junior/Senior High School Principal Allison Ryan Scott.

“We are looking out for the safety of our students and staff, and this is one way we can do that,” said Marfa ISD Superintendent Oscar Agüero.

As of press time, 13 students and four staff members across the campus had tested positive for the virus, said Scott. The outbreak has left the school district without enough teachers to keep classes open.

Most of the students who tested positive have not been on campus since winter break, per Agüero, leading him to believe a five-day hiatus will be sufficient.

COVID testing will be available to students and staff on Monday from 9 a.m. to noon at the elementary school. The school is encouraging students to wear masks and limit social gatherings.

Marfa ISD is unable to implement a mask mandate for students and staff due to an executive order from Governor Greg Abbott. In August of last year, the Marfa ISD Board decided the superintendent would have the authority to require masks in the event of a school closure due to COVID; but Abbott’s order, though temporarily barred by a federal judge, is back in place as of November following a federal appeals court ruling.

COVID cases have been spiking in the tri-county region, according to local doctors, though dwindling testing supplies have left clinics and pharmacies struggling to keep up with the surge. Though doctors have been unable to verify which variant of the virus their patients test positive for, the omicron variant is currently spreading rapidly throughout the United States. Dr. Christie Alexander of the Marfa Country Clinic told The Big Bend Sentinel last week that she has seen trademark omicron symptoms in her recent patients. Omicron symptoms include sneezing, coughing, runny nose and fatigue.



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Diesel transport

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In a place as remote as Presidio, that’s a much more complicated process than at ports like El Paso and Laredo, which see high volumes of fuel transport but are also closer to emergency services and have the budget for proper hazmat facilities. In Laredo, the construction of a hazmat lane on the World Trade Bridge and a hazmat containment facility cost \$2.7 million dollars. Laredo is one of the busiest ports of entry in the U.S., so it’s not yet clear if the upgrades in Presidio, classified by Customs and Border Protection as a “small” crossing, will be similarly invasive. Smaller ports of entry on the northern border with Canada have used a hazmat escort service to create a buffer between hazmat vehicles and non-commercial traffic.

“We don’t have any of that equipment, and right now I don’t have any estimates of what that would cost,” said Presidio Fire Chief Saul Pardo Jr. As part of expanding their business in Presidio, Strobel Energy Group will offer the requisite hazmat training to local first responders and potential new Strobel employees. “I have 90 officers and trust me, you’re going to have your classes full because I want to make sure that my folks know what’s going on,” Port Director Jesus Luis Chavez said. The next step will be developing a county-wide emergency response plan with the help of Marfa Fire Chief Gary Mitschke, who also serves as the county’s emergency coordinator. Assistant Port Director Michelle Power, who presided over the meeting and invited local officials, pledged to extend an invitation to Mitschke for the next installment.

Chavez stressed the need for coordination between all of the state, local, and federal agencies involved. “We all need to be on the same sheet of music so that if something happens, we all know how to respond,” he said. “We opened that bridge back up on November 8 [after 20 months of closures due to COVID-19] and traffic has not stopped. People are coming in and people are going. But we want to show that the safety of the city is what matters.” Presidio Municipal Development District Executive Director Jeran Stephens raised numerous health and safety concerns, mainly aimed at protecting Presidio’s fragile groundwater ecosystems and the Rio Grande. She tasked registered Environmental Manager Andrew Price with conducting a hydrology study that revealed many of Presidio’s dozens of privately-owned wells are just 7 feet below the surface of the ground. Several of the wells are located “down gradient” between the transloading facility and the river, meaning that in the event of a spill, the diesel will pass by on its way to the Rio Grande. “It wouldn’t take much to poison multiple private wells,” she said.

Diesel fuel is categorized by the Occupational Health and Safety Administration as a hazardous material, or hazmat. Diesel is highly flammable and can cause skin irritation and corrosion, in addition to being

“toxic to aquatic life with long-lasting effects” if introduced into local waterways.

Scott Vincent of Strobel Energy Group explained that the company’s transloaders are equipped with aluminum spill pans and containment bladders in the event of an emergency at the facility, where the fuel transfer will happen over a track mat. “It’s made out of polyester-based material that has an affinity for hydrocarbons and lets water run through it,” he explained. Stephens then asked what would happen in the event of a spill from one of the dozens of trucks that would be leaving Strobel’s facility each week. Vincent explained that his company’s responsibility for spills ends when the diesel leaves the facility.

“We can offer our expertise to the local emergency responders,” he said, but ultimately the liability will rest with the environmental insurance held by the shipper. “It’s the same at your local Valero station today — if they have a spill, they carry the insurance to make sure that’s cleaned up. They may hire response contractors, but it’s paid for by the insurance premiums on those trucks.” Currently, diesel shipments to the Chihuahua state capitol are routed through El Paso, but investors are hoping to slash truckers’ drive time in half by offloading the diesel in Presidio. With the exception of Texas Pacifico’s own supply cars for railroad repair and construction, a train hasn’t stopped in Presidio in 13 years. In order to reopen service, a minimum of 25 cars a week will need to be sent to Presidio, and investors hope that the 25-car shipment will grow to twice a week. Each rail car full of diesel fuel holds 28,500 gallons, putting the minimum weekly traffic through Presidio around 712,500 gallons, with the potential to grow to 1.5 million gallons. “The more weight that you can move in each [shipment], the more fuel efficient it is, the smaller your carbon footprint is,” Meador explained. “Bigger is better in rail.”

At the January 5 meeting, Vincent gave a presentation on the technology Strobel will be using to move fuel between modes of transportation. Strobel will be responsible for transferring the diesel from the pipeline onto rail cars in the Fort Worth area and then transferring that diesel again from rail to truck in Presidio using a transloader. The transloader is a mobile device that can be towed to the railroad site and offloads each rail car from the bottom. Vincent likened the process to how fuel is offloaded from tanker trucks at gas stations. “We do the same operation here with our transloader in 17 minutes,” he explained. “It’s very quick.”

Representatives for the City of Presidio, Texas Pacifico and Strobel were unable to name the trucking company that will service the Presidio-to-Chihuahua route. Individual tanker trucks vary in capacity, but Presidio residents can expect around 75 to 150 trucks a week to make their way

Gage Hotel lawsuit

(Continued from page 1)

rights were violated by Cano, Counts dismissed the hotelier’s claim that he was owed monetary damages to compensate him for business lost during the month-long closure .

While Bryan claims the shut down resulted in a revenue loss of \$438,202 (a figure Cano’s lawyers have disputed), according to court documents, Counts concluded Cano could not be sued for monetary damages because he is protected in his role as a state official and was simply acting on behalf of the state to protect citizens of the county from the virus. “Plaintiffs ignore the likelihood that the restrictions that were put in place postponed any outbreak in Brewster County or at least flattened the curve by reducing the number of deaths in the short term to avoid overwhelming the hospital system,” said the ruling. “Plaintiffs also ignore that the outbreak originated in China and spread quickly across the world, primarily through travel-related cases.” Cano’s original disaster proclamation, issued in March of 2020, required the closure of all county hotels and short-term rentals; a few days later, he issued an amended order allowing hotel stays for emergency

workers, military personnel and law enforcement or those using rentals as long-term residences. The order ended in early May when Governor Greg Abbott allowed a statewide mandate to expire and declared the move to reopen would supersede local orders. Other area county judges issued shelter-in-place orders and limitations on nonessential businesses similar to Abbott’s statewide mandates, including Cano, Presidio County Judge Cinderela Guevara and Jeff Davis County Judge Kerith Hurley. Only Brewster and Presidio counties ordered the suspension of hotel and short-term rental operations. Bryan and his attorneys, who did not respond to requests for comment for this story, are within the appeal window for the case, which extends 30 days after the judge issued his final ruling. If Bryan decides to appeal the judge’s decision, the case will be brought before the Fifth Circuit Court of Appeals. Other businesses and entrepreneurs across the country are seeking to recuperate revenue losses brought by the coronavirus pandemic. Some, including Terry Black’s Barbecue with locations in Austin and Dallas, have sued their liability insurance providers for monetary damages, but have met little success.



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Earthquakes

(Continued from page 1)

it did not cause major damage, it was one of the strongest recorded in West Texas in the past decade. Just before the significant earthquake, the RRC ordered an indefinite suspension of deep well injection disposal effective Dec. 31 for four counties near Midland-Odessa. While the ban did not apply to Culberson or Reeves counties, activists, including Rhyne, said the ban was a step in the right direction toward lessening the impacts of fracking in the region.

Brewster, Culberson, Hudspeth and Reeves counties all lie within the oil-rich Permian basin in a subregion called the southern Delaware Basin. According to the RRC, there are a total of 89 deep injection wells, or saltwater disposal wells, in the Northern Culberson-Reeves Seismic Response Area — a designation established by the RRC which allows them to coordinate with the local oil and gas industry to “reduce seismic hazard.”

There has been an increase in seismicity in this response area since 2009, said Dr. Alexandros Savvaidis, research scientist with the Bureau of Economic Geology and leader of the TexNet Seismic Observatory and the Center for Integrated Seismicity Research. TexNet operates a number of earthquake monitoring stations in West Texas in Brewster, Culberson and Reeves counties, including a station installed at Balmorhea State Park. Savvaidis said he was unaware of any peer review publications studying potential earthquake impacts on San Solomon Springs.

From 1931 to 2008, only one earthquake occurred with a magnitude of 4.0 or greater in the area. From December 2020 to the present, there have been 13 earthquakes of 4.0 magnitude or greater, said Savvaidis. Six of these 4.0 magnitude or greater earthquakes were experienced in a one-month period from September to October 2021, “an unprecedented frequency of significant earthquakes in a localized area of Texas,” according to the RRC.

“The RRC staff’s analysis of available information has determined that [saltwater disposal] well injection is likely contributing to seismic activity in this area,” says their website.

Rhyne, who has been concerned about the seismic activity for years, has been a Toyahvale resident since 1984. She co-owns Funky Little Dive Shop and Toyahvale Desert Oasis with her husband Darrel, who served as the superintendent of Balmorhea State Park for a number of years. They live on 400 acres adjacent to the park; Rhyne jokes she’s so close she can throw a rock in the pool from her front yard.

Both of Rhyne’s businesses are located across the road from the pool, and have been economically affected by the park’s closures in the past. A 1996 earthquake originating in Marathon, the first in West Texas in 64 years, had a 5.6 magnitude and damaged their buildings. The pool was closed because it turned murky white, she said.

“I’m just an individual who’s experiencing the harm that all this is causing and trying to protect our livelihood,” said Rhyne.

Her close ties to the park, where all three of her kids learned to swim in the pool, led her to begin seriously protesting fracking wastewater disposal wells in 2016 out of a desire to preserve the precious natural resource. Rhyne reviews pending disposal well permits, which are published in her local paper the Pecos Enterprise, and files protest letters to the RRC when she believes a proposed well is too close to San Solomon Springs. She has

been met with a lot of pushback from the RRC and attorneys of oil and gas companies, she said.

“When I first started protesting this, I’m labeled a troublemaker, tree hugger, water protector. Don’t we all need to be tree huggers and water protectors? I mean, we can’t exist without water,” said Rhyne.

Rhyne has driven to Austin to attend RRC preliminary hearings on proposed disposal wells, but said the legal, regulatory environment is intimidating, and she has continually been dismissed as “not an affected person,” which effectively tosses out her protest. The RRC defines an “affected person” as “a person who has suffered or will suffer actual injury or economic damage other than as a member of the general public or a competitor.” Affected persons may also include adjacent property owners, county and city clerks.

In a 2019 letter addressed to the RRC protesting the establishment of a disposal well by High Roller Wells LLC, Rhyne wrote about the pool’s 2018 structural failure, arguing the damage could be a result of cumulative structural damage caused by low-level quakes, despite Texas Parks and Wildlife’s insistence that was not the case. TPWD later announced, after months of geotechnical evaluation, the damage was caused by decades of erosion from spring flow.

Rhyne and Gibson said they have been successful half a dozen times in protesting potential disposal wells, but most of the time permits are granted. Once, when Rhyne recruited friends in Saragosa and launched a grassroots effort to gather 300 letters protesting a disposal well, the application for the well was withdrawn. But for the most part, said Rhyne, she hasn’t had much luck mobilizing her community.

“A lot of people are concerned, but they won’t voice their concerns,” said Rhyne. “You have to stop and think in these small communities, these oil companies bring in jobs. You don’t want to jeopardize who’s putting food on your table.”

Coyne Gibson, an independent researcher in the area with a background in the oil and gas industry, has been monitoring deep injection wells for the past seven years and attending railroad commission meetings with other concerned citizen scientists. Gibson monitors seismic activity using USGS data, reviews permits being issued from the Texas Railroad Commission and files protests whenever he feels a well is proposed in an area where it may cause environmental harm, like Rhyne.

He said he has directly witnessed increased seismic activity in the region as a result of fracking and fracking-related operations. If earthquakes were to continue on their current trend, it could result in significant impacts for area springs, he said.

“As these seismic events occur, particularly as they get larger in magnitude, the risk of disrupting the deep fracture systems that feed aquifer water to the spring systems can be impacted,” said Gibson. “The most extreme case would be that an event occurred with sufficient energy to disrupt spring flow to San Solomon springs.”

Without the draw of Balmorhea State Park, area businesses would likely be negatively affected, causing ripple effects in the local economy.

“If something were to happen, such that San Solomon Spring stopped flowing, you have the loss of that oasis and then the corresponding cascade

of economic impact,” said Gibson.

There are also concerns of potential water contamination and structural damage, said Gibson.

“You can feel these [earthquakes] as far south as into the Davis Mountains,” said Gibson. “It’s not necessarily that there’s a huge earthquake and something falls down. It can be the case that over a sufficient period of time, through a series of small magnitude events, it creates cumulative damage in the structure.”

Saltwater disposal wells are run by a range of operators, from independent contractors to publicly traded companies. Landowners can even repurpose a well on their property and turn it into a saltwater disposal well by buying up cheap used equipment and going through a simple permitting process, said Gibson. There are a number of brokers that put independent contractors in touch with operators looking for disposal sites. Gibson is advocating for better oversight and tighter regulatory processes with respect to permitting and monitoring of fracking operations and deep injection wells, he said.

In October 2021, the RRC announced it would work with oil and gas companies to reduce the frequency of earthquakes in the Northern Culberson Reeves Seismic Response Area and come up with a seismic response action plan. The plan, they said, would result in no more 3.5 magnitude or greater earthquakes within 18 months of implementation. The RRC said its staff would review earthquake frequency, magnitude and disposal volume in the area.

“An industry group is currently developing an operator-led response plan. The RRC hopes to have an agreed plan of action in place soon,” said Andrew Keese, spokesperson with the Railroad Commission of Texas.

Because injected fluid is sometimes hydraulically connected to faults, causing induced earthquakes, the many faults in the Northern Culberson Reeves Seismic Response Area and surrounding areas could affect the flow of San Solomon Springs if they were to shift.

Dr. Savvaidis said based on the current seismicity, the primary area of concern is the Grisham Fault zone, which runs through Reeves County. The significant length of the fault can equate to a high magnitude earthquake if the fault slips all at once versus in smaller parts.

Using a sophisticated network of fault maps, the USGS is able to model potential outcomes of seismic events in order to help communities plan for emergencies. In an earthquake scenario mapped by the USGS the West Lobo fault, located in Jeff Davis County, is the epicenter of a theoretical 7.2 magnitude quake, with a high probability for structural damage in the county and surrounding areas.

County lines are arbitrary compared to the large-scale forces like a region’s geology and hydrology, said Gibson. And while the Delaware Basin is rich in hydrocarbon shales, the processes used to extract hydrocarbons is water-intensive, and competes for water resources with populations using it for agriculture, he said. On average, for every one barrel of crude oil extracted, about seven to 10 barrels, or 280 to 400 gallons, of wastewater are produced, according to the U.S. Department of the Interior Bureau of Reclamation.

“That’s a pretty insidious loop, especially in a landscape that is a transitional desert,” said Gibson.



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Opinions

OP-ED

Supporting our teachers

By STATE SENATOR CÉSAR BLANCO

Teachers are the backbone of our society. They offer guidance, instill moral values, and provide the tools and inspiration our kids need to be their best selves. Teachers dedicate their careers to making a difference in the lives of their students, and they deserve to be recognized and rewarded for their hard work. They shape the next generation of leaders. As a state, we have to do better to support our teachers, school staff, and retired educators. The COVID-19 pandemic continues to have an immense impact on our educators. Many are spread thin by the demands of remote learning, face constant health concerns and are experiencing an increase in workload. Despite the difficult circumstances, our teachers continue to provide crucial services to students and their families. For the last two years, educators have risked their health to ensure our children continue receiving a good education. That is why I made it a priority to provide Texas teachers with greater support and resources.

During the 87th Legislature, I co-authored Senate Bill 8 to allocate \$286 million in federal funding to TRS to ensure that health insurance premiums for retired teachers' plans do not increase as a result of COVID-19 costs. SB 8 will help ensure that retired teachers can continue to afford their health insurance, reducing their chance of receiving hefty medical bills. I also co-authored and helped pass Senate Bill 2081 to limit pre-kindergarten classes to 22 students, ensuring safer and higher-quality education environments for both teachers and children. Additionally, I have supported teachers' calls to require masks in schools and requiring families to be notified when students test positive for COVID-19 to reduce the risk of disease to teachers in their place of work.

In addition to providing educators support throughout the pandemic, we need to provide them with necessary financial resources. With stagnant salaries, rising insurance costs and record inflation rates, many Texas teachers have second jobs or live paycheck to paycheck. Additionally, nearly a quarter of a million retired teachers earn less than \$2,000 per month under the Teacher Retirement System of Texas (TRS), and a vast majority do not have social security benefits on which to rely. Our teachers deserve better. That is why I co-authored and supported the passage of Senate Bill 7 during the 87th Legislature to make a one-time supplemental payment of a retirement or death benefit to retirees. This "13th check" enabled by SB 7 will be issued on January 14, 2022, providing around 426,000 eligible retired teachers and other school employees up to \$2,400 to help them pay their bills and the ring cost of living. This will be the second 13th check in three years for most TRS retirees and is a significant boost to their benefits.

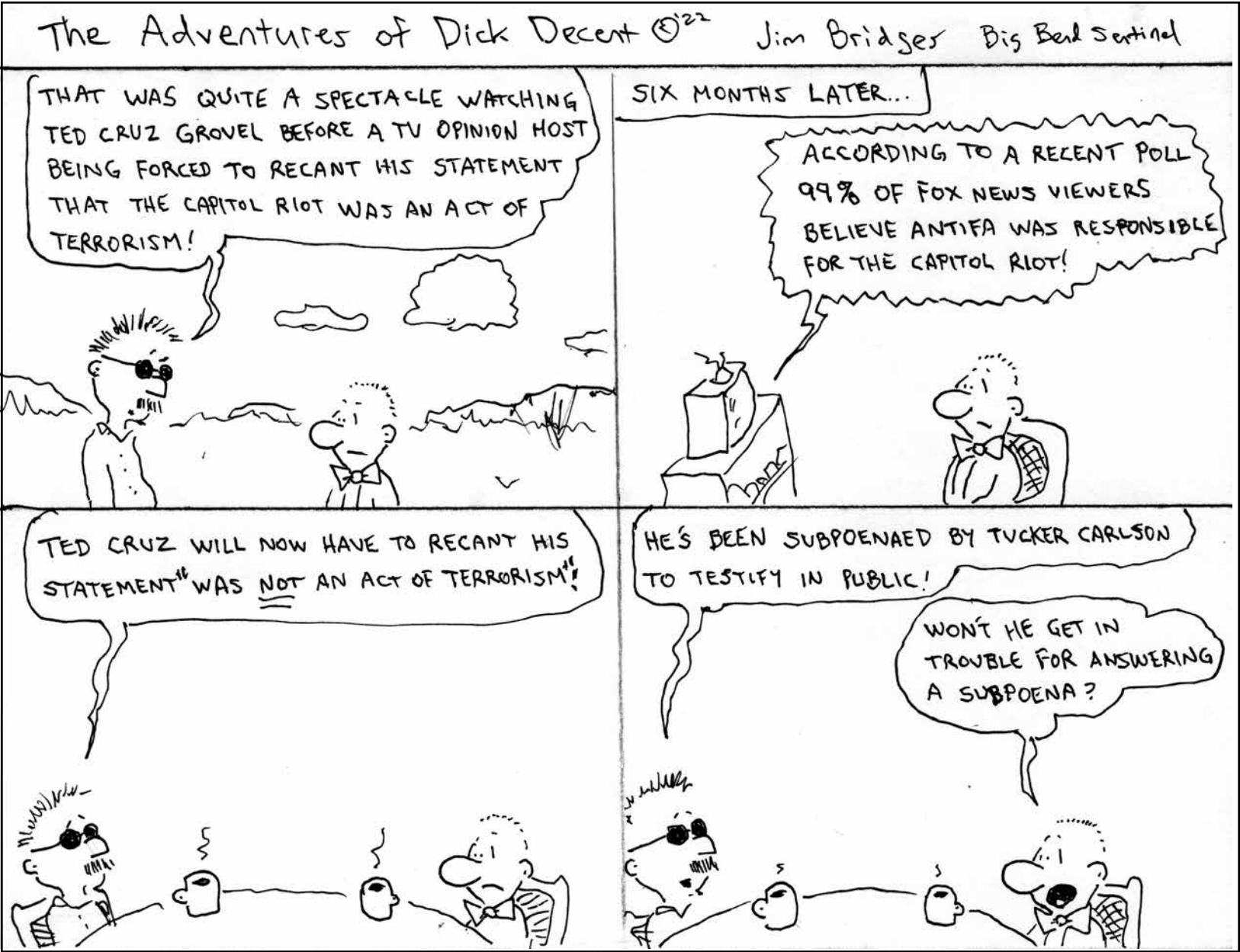
During the 87th Legislature, I also authored and passed Senate Bill 168 to require school districts to adopt trauma-informed policies regarding active shooter drills before conducting a drill. Evidence suggests that active shooter drills are associated with increases in depression, stress and anxiety, and physiological health problems for school staff and students. SB 168 reduces the risk of active shooter drills for staff and children, while also preparing them to stay safe during an emergency. Additionally, during the 86th legislative session, I co-authored House Bill 3 to reverse the trend of declining state support for public education funding and unleashed over \$2 billion in dynamic pay raises for teachers and other school employees.

Teachers will be vital to addressing learning loss caused by the COVID-19 pandemic, and we need to retain and attract more quality teachers to help our students catch up. I agree with teacher groups that enhanced pay and training are crucial to retaining and attracting high-quality teachers in Texas. Ultimately, what we really need is a higher base pay for educators that is comparable to jobs requiring similar skills, along with the resources necessary for schools and teachers to address students' needs.

We must ensure that our public education employees do not have to choose between food or healthcare, and that they have the resources they need to stay healthy throughout the pandemic. As your state Senator, I will continue to advocate for our public educators and support legislation that recognizes their hard work, keeps them safe, and allows them to thrive in and out of the classroom.

Senator César J. Blanco proudly represents the people of Culberson, El Paso, Hudspeth, Jeff Davis and Presidio counties in the Texas Senate.

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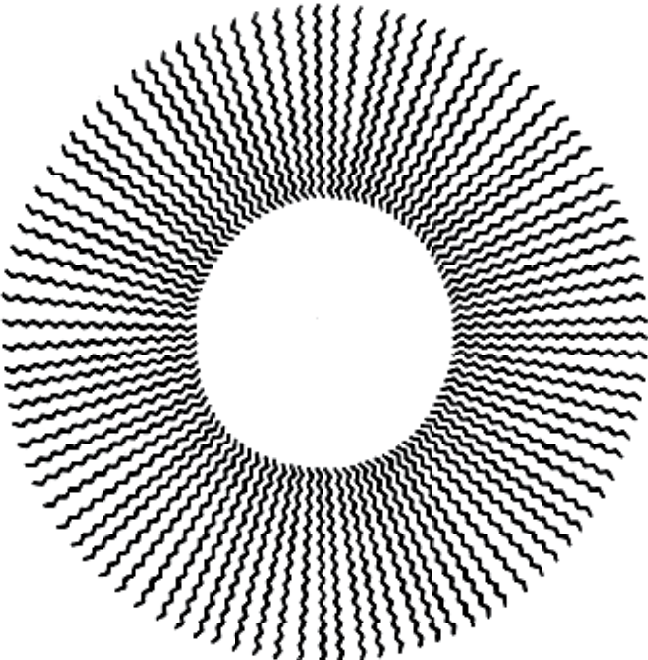


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Chinati follows COVID-19 precautions.
Masks and social distancing are required.

Visit chinati.org for more information and to book reservations.

Calais Winery purchases land in Davis Mountains for future vineyard

By MARY CANTRELL
mkcantrell@bigbendsentinel.com

FORT DAVIS — The burgeoning viticultural scene in the Davis Mountains recently welcomed winemaker Benjamin Calais, owner of two other established vineyards, Calais Winery and French Connection Wines, both located in Hye, Texas, east of Fredericksburg.

Calais is the latest in a string of newcomers to the area establishing vineyards and wineries, attracted to the Davis Mountains for its nutrient rich soil, water availability, cool temperatures and wondrous mountain vistas. The superior grape-growing conditions have earned the area official “American Viticultural Area” or AVA status, one of only eight regions in the state.

Calais intends to fill his newly-purchased 60-acre spread with Bordeaux grape varieties and shares a love of viniculture with neighboring vineyards Alta Marfa and Chateau Wright. Calais is also the winemaking partner of Maura and Dan Sharp of Sharp Vineyards, which also lies within the Davis Mountains AVA, in close proximity to his new property.

After a long negotiation process, Calais finally closed on the site of the future vineyard in December 2021. The spot will serve as one of two estate vineyards for Calais Winery, meaning wine produced there will be exclusively made up of grapes grown on the property and be aged and bottled on site. By spending time learning from preexisting vineyards about the area’s specific challenges, Calais said he knew what to look for in selecting a vineyard property.

“We know the water scenario on this property, we know the neighboring wells, it’s an area that we scouted pretty heavily,” he said. “It was a perfect spot for what we want to be doing, which is high in Bordeaux varieties and pretty sizable planting.”

Originally from France, Calais moved to Texas over a decade ago and began putting aside his career as a software engineer to focus on winemaking full time. He developed software which helps him predict spring frost, ripening season temperatures and total growing degree days, a method of predicting vine development, utilizing data from NASA’s Climate Data Services. He uses the data points to determine the most favorable climates for grape growing in Texas.

The software pointed him to the Davis Mountains where he has been

searching for the ideal property for around 13 to 14 years, he said. But the region, despite its promise, will still present some challenges.

“We recognize the really high risk of weather events that you get in the area — winter damage, spring frost, hailstorms,” said Calais. “I was in the area in October last year when it dropped to 18 degrees and ice. We know we won’t get to make wine every year when working at such high elevation due to all those factors.”

The winemaker currently sources grapes for his existing wineries in Hye from various areas throughout Texas, including Cathedral Mountain and Mile High vineyards in Alpine and Chateau Wright in the Davis Mountains. As Calais Winery is already a recognized entity in the Texas wine industry, the focus of their new venture will be to cultivate a productive vineyard to supply grapes to their existing wineries.

Of the property’s 60 acres, not all will be plantable, said Calais, but they are hoping to establish a roughly 40-acre vineyard. A wet weather creek flows through the middle of the property, and they intend to drill a well soon which will provide them with more information about their water availability and capacity for vine planting. Calais is in no rush, though, and said they will start small in order to avoid large-scale mistakes.

“It doesn’t matter how much modeling you do, how many consultants you have, and how much money you invest in it,” said Calais. “Your first planning is never the best planting. We will plant at a slow pace over a period of time.”

While Calais’ other vineyards in Hye double as wineries with tasting rooms and hospitality staff, his property in the Davis Mountains will serve solely as a vineyard, for now.

“We were not planning at the moment to go that route,” he said. “We have the ability to go that route, but I just don’t think that it’s going to be part of our plan.”

The acreage and scale of the operation should lend itself to a few full-time or close to full-time employees, though Calais expressed concern that finding skilled vineyard workers in the area could be an issue.

While Calais no longer has much time for computer science, he said it is a fair tradeoff and his life as a full-time winemaker fulfills him.

“I enjoy the fact that I’m on a tractor one day and bottling wine the next. We’re racking barrels and we’re doing all those different things,” said Calais. “It’s not a monotonous life.”

DRAWING OF THE WEEK



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Marfa, Texas

Universal Crossword

Edited by Amanda Rafkin December 27, 2021

ACROSS

- 1 Flex-able muscle
6 Morsels
10 Congregation destination
14 Praise for a diva
15 Tweak
16 Succulent in some juices
17 Holders of briefs or books
18 Rough cut
19 What is this?
20 Q: What carrier with a kangaroo logo is headquartered in New South Wales?
A: _____
23 Bit of ink
24 Doe or roe, e.g.
25 “Hard pass”
28 “Gimme a sec,” in a text
30 Gin go-with
34 Anger
35 Garlicky mayo
38 Grandma
39 Q: Ideologically, the authors of the book “Be Gay Do Crime” are what? A: _____
43 Skillfully
44 Sleepy marsupial
45 OG couples’ cruise?
46 More sordid
48 “Little Birds” writer Anais
49 _____ Estados Unidos

- 50 Machine parts seen on steam-punk jewelry and Labor Party flags
53 Portland’s airport code
55 Q: What trees have the scientific name Populus tremuloides? A: _____
61 Something taken in a Scabble match
62 Enthusiasm
63 Unsuitable
65 Pay attention to
66 Like a show about a show
67 Edible ice cream holders
68 _____bitsy
69 Miner’s finds
70 “_____ on wood!”

DOWN

- 1 English channel
2 Country whose flag features the takbir
3 Spanish for “house”
4 Gig for a planner
5 Buffet area with pesto sauce
6 Places to go out?
7 Brainchild
8 Fearful
9 Shopper’s destination
10 Food favored by preschool jewelers

- 11 Person who’s on your side
12 Lead-in to “chef” or “vide”
13 “Get it?”
21 Upper heart chambers
22 Lead-in to “market” or “blanket”
25 Face-covering garment
26 Island that celebrates Betico Croes Day
27 Stilettoes, e.g.
29 Sound of a hit on the head
31 All stuvved up
32 Lead-in
33 Barrels of wine
36 Southeast Asian language
37 “Rooftops of Tehran” setting
40 Pleasing images
41 Segments of reels
42 Personally select
47 Seoul’s country: Abbr.
51 Gadget
52 Contemptuous look
54 Element before ytterbium, alphabetically
55 Say “Take this job and shove it!”
56 Caterer’s dispensers
57 Hinged part of a fence
58 “Tis a bummer”
59 Prefix for “technology”
60 Design detail, for short
61 “Next time, spare me the details”
64 Scolding syllable

PREVIOUS PUZZLE ANSWER

S	A	L	A	D	S	D	E	R	N	A	B	A
I	T	O	N	Y	A	O	X	E	N	F	E	N
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P	O	S	S	U	M	G	R	E	E	N	T	E
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A	R	M	O	R	S	E	T	A	T	E	E	
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C	A	S	T	P	L	A	N	O	A	H	I	
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L	E	E	I	S	I	T	M	U	L	L	E	T
F	D	R	Z	H	A	O	S	T	Y	L	E	S

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www.upuzzles.com

Q&A by Jinghua Qian and Erik Agard

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Sudoku & Crossword puzzles:
UNIVERSAL Sudoku Puzzle
Complete the grid so that every row, column and 3x3 box contains every digit from 1 to 9 inclusively.
DIFFICULTY RATING: ★★☆☆☆
Solution from last week's puzzle:
SOLUTION:
7 4 5 3 9 8 2 6 1
8 6 9 5 1 2 3 4 7
2 3 1 6 4 7 9 5 8
3 2 7 9 6 4 1 8 5
4 1 8 2 5 3 7 9 6
9 5 6 7 8 1 4 3 2
1 8 2 4 3 6 5 7 9
5 7 3 8 2 9 6 1 4
6 9 4 1 7 5 8 2 3

JAN	Thu, Jan 13	Fri, Jan 14	Mon, Jan 17	Tue, Jan 18	Wed, Jan 19
BREAKFAST	BREAKFAST BURRITO	MUFFIN, YOGURT	PANCAKE WRAP, YOGURT	BREAKFAST PIZZA	WAFFLES, CHEESE STICK
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FRI, JAN 14: HS Basketball vs Van Horn in Van Horn
MON, JAN 17: JH Boys Basketball vs Dell City in Marfa, 5:00 PM
TUE, JAN 18: HS Basketball vs Fort Davis in Marfa

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Community

OBITUARIES



Cook

Chance Daniel Cook, 32, of Wimberley, passed away on November 21, 2021, as a result of unexpected complications from a previous illness. He was born August 15, 1989, in San Marcos, the son of Perry and Rebecca Cook.

...



Downing

Patrick Andrew Downing, 47, passed away November 23, 2021, in Fort Davis, Texas. He was born to Stephen Downing (deceased) and Dianne (Manson Downing) Collicott on January 2, 1974. He attended Sacred Heart Junior/Senior High School in Salina, Kansas, and graduated in 1992. He attended Pratt Junior College with a track scholarship

He attended St. Stephens Episcopal School in Wimberley and St. Andrew’s Episcopal High School in Austin where he excelled in sports, music, and film. He loved music. He attended the radio television and film program at UT Austin. His experimental and documentary film style gained him accolades in student showcases at SXSW and UT Film School.

Chance worked as a singer, guitarist, pianist and writer in various bands. He was a unique voice in the arts, creating music, performance art, visual art and film throughout his life with a focus on loving exploration of outsiders in our society. He excelled at sports, notably as a D1 soccer goalie, wakeboarder and skateboarder. He was kind, creative, genius, hilarious and so cool.

and then Kansas State University and graduated with a degree in construction engineering in 1999. Patrick was a project manager for Wright Companies in El Paso, Texas, for many years. Most recently, he worked for Bloys Camp Meeting in Fort Davis, Texas.

Patrick had three children, Henry (16), Sawyer (14) and Brenna (12). They were the loves of his life. He enjoyed all of their activities, especially sports. The outdoors was his passion, including hunting, fishing, hiking and kayaking. He was very skilled and could build or make about anything. Among his many tributes, Patrick was a strong, loving, compassionate father, son, brother and true friend.

He fought a courageous battle with cancer. Patrick had so much life to live, but so little time to live it.

He was preceded in death by his

Chance is survived by his mother, Rebecca Cook; and his sister, Sarah. He also leaves his maternal nana, Marie Cooper; aunt Janet; uncle John; and two cousins, Paige and Addie. He also leaves countless friends and chosen family.

A celebration of life was held in Chance’s honor at the family home, Sacred Passages at 1218 Oakwood Loop in San Marcos. The service was held on December 12, 2021, from 3-6 p.m. In lieu of flowers, donations can be made to the Chance Cook memorial fund benefiting Courageous Changes. This will assist individuals in early recovery from alcohol or chemical dependence to participate in this supportive recovery residence program. Donations can be made on Venmo (@chancememorial).

father, Stephen, and grandparents David and Ruby Downing and Henry and MaryAnn Manson. He is survived by his mother, Dianne Collicott (Olin) of Salina, Kansas; a sister, Jennifer Downing of San Diego, California; and children Henry, Sawyer and Brenna of Fort Davis, Texas; as well as several uncles, aunts, cousins and dear friends.

In lieu of flowers, memorials may be made to Fort Davis Indians Booster Club, P.O. Box 1631, Fort Davis, Texas 79734. A celebration of life was held December 11, 2021, at 1 p.m. at Fort Davis United Methodist Church Fellowship Hall, 200 Front Street, Fort Davis, Texas. A service was led by dear friend, Deacon Kelly Duke, and Pastor Bryan Wardroup. A Funeral Mass was held at St. Elizabeth Ann Seton Catholic Church in Salina, Kansas, December 18, 2021, at 10 a.m.



Escobedo

Larry Escobedo gained his heavenly wings on December 9, 2021. Larry was born on February 20, 1958, in Big Spring, Texas, to Francisco and Alicia Escobedo. He grew up in Kent, Texas, where he worked with his dad on the ranch. He attended school in Van Horn, Texas, where he was an outstanding football player. He would often say,



Llenez

Patricia Garcia Llenez of Alpine, Texas, passed away on November 12, 2021, in Odessa, Texas.

A memorial vigil will be held on Saturday, January 15, 2022, at 10 a.m. at Memorial Chapel at Alpine Memorial Funeral Home with Father Victorino serving as vigil celebrant. Inurnment will be held at Holy Angels Cemetery in Alpine, Texas.

Patricia Garcia Llenez was born on August 25, 1942, in Marathon, Texas, to Antonio and Elfidia Garcia. In May 1958, she married Refugio H. Llenez in Alpine, Texas. Patricia and Refugio went on to have six children, Alicia Muniz, Rogelio Llenez, Diania G. Llenez, Oscar G. Llenez, Carmel B. Duarte and Jeannie A. Llenez.

Patricia Garcia Llenez is preceded in death by daughter Diania G. Llenez and parents Antonio and Elfidia Garcia.

Patricia Garcia Llenez is survived by her husband, Refugio H. Llenez, five children, 19 grandchildren and 21 great-grandchildren.

Online condolences may be left at: www.alpinememorialfuneralhome.com

Services have been entrusted to Alpine Memorial Funeral Home in Alpine, Texas.



“Never forget #66.” He graduated in the Class of 1977.

As a kid, Larry wanted to become a truck driver, so he began his trucking journey in 1979 at the age of 21. Larry married Jessica Lynn Escobedo of Fort Davis on Valentine’s Day 1987 and later welcomed three daughters, LauRese, Brittany and Paityn. They were married for 34 years.

Larry and Jessica owned and ran the Indian Emily Café from 1995 to 2000. Larry continued trucking from coast to coast, hauling across the country. While on the road, he loved talking to people and making friends or even just talking about Jesus out on the road. He touched many lives anywhere he went.

Even though Larry worked out of town making a living for his family, his heart always wanted to be at home with his family in Fort Davis. You would catch Larry at

...



Jackson

Randy Jackson, born in Corpus Christi on May 18, 1946, passed away in Alpine, Texas, December 21, 2021.

Randy is survived by his wife, Sherry Anne Jackson, residing in Alpine since April 9, 2011.

Randy and Sherry are both Sul Ross State University grads. Randy’s commitment to the success of Sul Ross never wavered.

Their story began in 2007 at a Baby Boomers Alumni Reunion. Marriage and a move back to Alpine followed.

Randy enjoyed a distinguished career in the entertainment industry representing all genres. His last date of his career filled a venue with a Christmas show. It is said in the entertainment biz, you are only as good as your last show. Randy is 100 percent.

...

Peru

Olivia Lugo Peru, 73, of Greeley, Colorado, passed away on December 16, 2021, in Marfa, Texas.

Olivia was born in Guaymas, Sonora, Mexico, to Francisco and Cristina Lugo on May 18, 1948.

She worked as a lab tech for Colorado Serum.

She is preceded in death by her parents, Francisco and Cristina.

She is survived by her sons, Richard and Eddie Joe; daughter Irma; sisters Isabel, Nancy, Judy, Darlene, Patricia, Martha, Guadalupe, Aurora and Maria; brothers, Frank and Barney; special friend Carlos; eight grandchildren, eight great-grandchildren, and eight great-great grandchildren; numerous nieces and nephews.

Services are pending at this time.

Stone Village having coffee, having breakfast at Lupita’s Place or working on his truck at home.

Larry had a huge heart, helping others out when he could and would give you the shirt off his back. Larry was loved by so many, a friend to many, and so many were touched by his loving and caring heart. He will always be remembered. He is survived by his loving wife of 36 years Jessica Escobedo, daughters LauRese Gretchen of Fort Davis, Brittany Escobedo, Paityn Escobedo and six grandchildren, Riley, Presley, Trinity, Rhys, Jessany and Zeppelin. He is also survived by his sister Mary Alice Escobedo of Amarillo, Texas. He is preceded in death by his father, Francisco Escobedo, and his mother, Alicia Escobedo. Memorial services will be held in Fort Davis on February 19, 2022, at the pavilion behind the library at 10:30 a.m.



Gomez Pena-Alfaro

Tomasa “Tommie” Pena-Alfaro, age 75, passed away on December 25, 2021, after a four-year battle with cancer. She was born and raised in Marfa, Texas. Survivors include her three children: Sylvia, Gloria and Lando; daughter-in-law Valerie; grandchildren Nathan, Michelle, Avery and Gavin; and great-grandchildren Analy and Mia. She was loved so much and will be sorely missed. Services were held on January 7 in Austin.

NOTICE OF DEFAULT AND FORECLOSURE SALE

WHEREAS, on March 27, 2006, a certain Adjustable Rate Home Equity Conversion Deed of Trust (“Reverse Mortgage”) was executed by MAISIE LEE, as mortgagor in favor of WELLS FARGO BANK N.A., as mortgagee and ROBERT K. FOWLER, as trustee, and was recorded on May 9, 2006 under Clerk’s Instrument Number 74956, Book 198, Page 117 in the real property records of Brewster, Texas.

WHEREAS, the Reverse Mortgage was insured by the United States Secretary of Housing and Urban Development (the “Secretary”) pursuant to the National Housing Act for the purpose of providing single family housing; and

WHEREAS, the beneficial interest in the Reverse Mortgage is now owned by the Secretary, pursuant to an assignment dated June 24, 2010, and recorded on July 20, 2010, under Book 261, Page 22 in the real property records of Brewster County, Texas; and

WHEREAS, a default has been made in the covenants and conditions of the Reverse Mortgage in that the Mortgagors are now deceased; and

WHEREAS, the entire amount delinquent as of February 1, 2022 is \$238,822.85; and

WHEREAS, by virtue of the default, the Secretary has declared the entire amount of the indebtedness secured by the Reverse Mortgage to be immediately due and payable;

NOW THEREFORE, pursuant to powers vested in me by the Single Family Mortgage Foreclosure Act of 1994, 12 U.S.C. 3751 et seq., by 24 CFR part 27, subpart B, and by the Secretary’s designation of me as Foreclosure Commissioner, recorded on October 15, 2007 in Dallas County under Clerk’s File Number 20070369306, notice is hereby given that on February 1, 2022, at 01:00 PM local time or no later than three hours thereafter, all real and personal property at or used in connection with the following described premises (“Property”) will be sold at public auction to the highest bidder:

ALL OF LOTS ONE (1) AND TWO (2) AND THE NORTH FIVE FEET (N. 5 FEET) OF LOT THREE (3), BLOCK THIRTY-EIGHT (38), ANDERSON ADDITION TO THE TOWN OF MARATHON, BREWSTER COUNTY, TEXAS, AS THE SAME APPEARS IN THE MAP OR PLAT ON FILE WITH THE COUNTY CLERK OF BREWSTER COUNTY, TEXAS.

Commonly known as: 201 LEE STREET, MARATHON, TX 79842.

The sale will be held in Brewster County, Texas at the following location: THE EAST DOOR OF THE COURTHOUSE OR AS DESIGNATED BY THE COUNTY COMMISSIONER’S OFFICE or as designated by the County Commissioners Court.

The Secretary of Housing and Urban Development will bid \$238,822.85.

There will be no proration of taxes, rents or other income or liabilities, except that the purchaser will pay, at or before closing, his prorate share of any real estate taxes that have been paid by the Secretary to the date of the foreclosure sale.

When making their bids, all bidders except the Secretary must submit a deposit totaling \$23,882.29 in the form of a certified check or cashier’s check made out to the Secretary of HUD. A deposit need not accompany each oral bid. If the successful bid is oral, a deposit of \$23,882.29 must be presented before the bidding is closed. The deposit is nonrefundable. The remainder of the purchase price must be delivered within 30 days of the sale or at such other time as the Secretary may determine for good cause shown, time being of the essence. This amount, like the bid deposits, must be delivered in the form of a certified or cashier’s check. If the Secretary is the highest bidder, he need not pay the bid amount in cash. The successful bidder will pay all conveying fees, all real estate and other taxes that are due on or after the delivery date of the remainder of the payment and all other costs associated with the transfer of title. At the conclusion of the sale, the deposits of the unsuccessful bidders will be returned to them.

The Secretary may grant an extension of time within which to deliver the remainder of the payment. All extensions will be for 15-day increments for a fee of \$500.00, paid in advance. The extension fee shall be in the form of a certified or cashier’s check made payable to the Secretary of HUD. If the high bidder closes the sale prior to the expiration of any extension period, the unused portion of the extension fee shall be applied toward the amount due.

If the high bidder is unable to close the sale within the required period, or within any extension of time granted by the Secretary, the high bidder may be required to forfeit the cash deposit or, at the election of the foreclosure commissioner after consultation with the HUD representative, will be liable to HUD for any costs incurred as a result of such failure. The Commissioner may, at the direction of the HUD representative, offer the property to the second highest bidder for an amount equal to the highest price offered by that bidder.

There is no right of redemption, or right of possession based upon a right of redemption, in the mortgagor or others subsequent to a foreclosure completed pursuant to the Act. Therefore, the Foreclosure Commissioner will issue a Deed to the purchaser(s) upon receipt of the entire purchase price in accordance with the terms of the sale as provided herein. HUD does not guarantee that the property will be vacant.

The scheduled foreclosure sale shall be cancelled or adjourned if it is established, by documented written application of the mortgagor to the Foreclosure Commissioner not less than 3 days before the date of sale, or otherwise, that the default or defaults upon which the foreclosure is based did not exist at the time of service of this notice of default and foreclosure sale, or all amounts due under the mortgage agreement are tendered to the Foreclosure Commissioner, in the form of a certified or cashier’s check payable to the Secretary of HUD, before public auction of the property is completed.

The amount that must be paid if the mortgage is to be paid in full prior the scheduled sale is \$238,822.85, plus all other amounts that would be due under the mortgage agreement if payments under the mortgage had not been accelerated, advertising costs and postage expenses incurred in giving notice, mileage by the most reasonable road distance for posting notices and for the Foreclosure Commissioner’s attendance at the sale, reasonable and customary costs incurred for title and lien record searches, the necessary out-of-pocket costs incurred by the Foreclosure Commissioner for recording documents, a commission for the Foreclosure Commissioner, and all other costs incurred in connection with the foreclosure prior to reinstatement.

Tender of payment by certified or cashier’s check or application for cancellation of the foreclosure sale shall be submitted to the address of the Foreclosure Commissioner provided below.

Date: January 3, 2022

L. Keller Mackie
Foreclosure Commissioner
Mackie Wolf Zientz & Mann, P.C.
Parkway Office Center, Suite 900
14160 Dallas Parkway
Dallas, TX 75254
(214) 635-2650
(214) 635-2686 Fax

MAY 7, 2022 CITY OF MARFA GENERAL ELECTION

CITY OF MARFA WILL BE ACCEPTING APPLICATIONS TO FILE FOR A PLACE ON THE MAY 7, 2022 GENERAL ELECTION BALLOT.

- JANUARY 19, 2022 - FIRST DAY TO FILE APPLICATION
- FEBRUARY 18, 2022 - LAST DAY TO FILE APPLICATION
- OPEN ELECTED POSITIONS: THREE AT-LARGE CITY COUNCIL MEMBERS
- APPLICATIONS CAN BE OBTAINED IN PERSON AT MARFA CITY HALL OR ONLINE AT [HTTPS://CITYOFMARFA.COM/ELECTIONS](https://cityofmarfa.com/elections)
- APPLICATIONS CAN BE SUBMITTED BY THE FOLLOWING:
 - IN PERSON TO MARFA CITY HALL
 - VIA MAIL TO P.O BOX 787 MARFA, TEXAS 79843
- ALL APPLICATIONS MUST BE DELIVERED BY 5PM FEBRUARY 18, 2022.
- IF YOU HAVE ANY QUESTIONS OR REQUIRE ANY ADDITIONAL INFORMATION PLEASE CONTACT KELLY PEREZ AT SECRETARY@CITYOFMARFA.COM OR AT 432-729-4315.

MARFA CITY HALL

MONDAY-FRIDAY 8AM-12PM ; 1PM-4PM
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First United Methodist Church

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
Sundays 9 am
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OBITUARIES



Grubb

The Honorable Judge George Emmitt Grubb Jr. left this earth on January 4, 2022, at the age of 79. He was born to Vivian Edna Bloys Grubb and George Emmitt Grubb Sr. on July 7, 1942. He lived on various ranches until 1959. The family moved to Fort Davis after drought shut down many ranches. He lived in Fort Davis until he graduated from high school in 1960. He went to New Mexico State in the fall of 1960 on a tennis scholarship. He came home after two semesters and went to work at McDonald Observatory as a runner. He then enrolled in the Industrial Technology program at Sul Ross State University and graduated with a major in industrial arts and a minor in business administration. He worked hard at both school and his job and excelled in both. Soon he was physical plant supervisor at McDonald Observatory where he was employed for 35 years. He then became Jeff Davis County justice of the peace for four years. After his time as justice of the peace, he was elected county judge and served that position for 14 years. Being county judge was his dream. He loved that job more than any other.

He married Linda Jean Roach in 1962. They were blessed with two daughters, Tamara Lea and Lana Renè. He later married the love of his life, Patricia McChristian, on August 24, 1990. He gained three bonus children Dawna, Dana and Clay. Pat and George were happily married for 31 years until his death.

George was athletic. He participated in all sports through junior high and high school, but he excelled in tennis. He even received a scholarship for tennis to New Mexico State. As an adult, he won many tournaments —his most noteworthy being the Police Olympics Champion in singles and doubles. When he couldn’t participate in a sport, he was officiating it.

He loved guns! He repaired them, studied them and built them. He hated kits! He would cut the stock and bore and blue the barrels. He liked the artistic side of engraving the stocks and locks. Each one had

a name and a story. You could see the respect he had for them when he would shoot. He was always an advocate for gun safety and education. He was a dead eye – so there was no sense in running! George was a founding member of the Davis Mountain Brigade Muzzleloading Club. He built flintlocks and percussions, all of them precise and bullseye ready.

His industrial technology degree allowed him to be good at many things. He liked working in the machine shop, fixing cars, building things, working with his hands and problem solving. These talents made him the perfect fit for McDonald Observatory. He and his crew gave back to the community by building Bart Coan Field, fixing the score boards, fixing the town clock and building fences at both schools.

One thing he loved as much as his God and family was Jeff Davis County. He never entertained leaving Fort Davis. He was committed to making a difference, whether it was as a volunteer, school related, police officer, first responder, political office or just because he could. George cared deeply about leaving a place better than he found it. His integrity and character was well known and respected throughout many areas of Texas. He was a man of few words (unless he was spinning a tale), but you needed to listen if he spoke. He never made a decision concerning anything that he didn’t weigh, study and pray about any of it until he was ready to move forward. He had many hours of training for all the positions he held. He had certificates in brush, residential, commercial and automotive firefighting from Texas A&M — more than many fire chiefs in big cities. He started fire schools for volunteers both at McDonald Observatory and in Fort Davis. George also received a Peace Officers Masters Certificate in law enforcement. Just another example of his dedication to his role.

He was dedicated to so many associations and organizations. I am sure we have missed many but here is a list of those we know of: He served as a deputy sheriff from 1974 to 2002; Rio Grande Council of Governments president in 2010; Big Bend Community Action Board of Directors president in 2009; member of the Fort Davis Volunteer Fire Department from 1997 to present; Jeff Davis County fire marshal from 1976 to 1999; McDonald Observatory fire chief from 1962 to 1997; emergency services EMT; Fort Davis School board member from 1975 to 1992, holding president and vice president positions; volunteer at the Fort Davis National Historic Site; member of the Texas Army;

Jeff Davis Historical Commission member from 2014 to present; Fort Davis Lions Club/Member Lions International as president, board of directors, secretary and District 3T vice president; and Big Bend Area Law Enforcement Officers Association, holding positions as president, vice president, secretary, and member of the board of directors.

He was not one to boast or thump religion. He was a man that believed God was everywhere. He did serve the church his great-grandfather built as a church elder and trustee for the Fort Davis Presbyterian Church but communed with God in nature and on his own terms. He instilled the importance of faith by his actions and leadership both in his family and community.

George was preceded in death by his parents, George and Vivian Grubb, and a brother Otis LeRoy.

George was survived by his wife, Patricia Grubb, who followed him in death just days later. He is survived by daughter Dr. Tamara L. Grubb and her husband Dr. Bill Meyers of Uniontown, Washington; daughter Lana R. Hickok and her husband Ray of Crawford, Texas; daughter Dawna M. Fretwell and her husband Charles of Maysville, Oklahoma; daughter Dana D. Ohlsen and her husband Jeremy of Fort Davis, Texas; son Clay McChristian and his wife Christy of Graham, Texas. He was blessed with grandchildren — Kelsey Hickok, Evan Hickok, Trevor Hickok, Brendan Hickok, Jacob Headrick, Hayden Headrick, Regan Headrick, Adam Fretwell, Bryan Fretwell, Allyn Sanchez, Alyssa Sanchez Stewart and Rylee McChristian. He loved his six great-grandchildren: Jaxyn, Analie, Cambree, Garrett, Sadie and Peyton.

George was honored at a celebration of life services at the Fort Davis High School Auditorium on Wednesday, January 12, 2022, at 2 p.m. Burial took place immediately after the service at Hillcrest Cemetery in Fort Davis. The family received family and friends at Nana’s house for a reception of coffee/tea and cookies in honor of George’s love of his afternoon coffee, but more importantly the stories shared among friends.

Alpine Memorial Funeral home is entrusted with his services. Online condolences may be left at: www.alpinememorialfuneralhome.com. The family asks for memorials to be sent to the Fort Davis Volunteer Fire Department, PO Box 811, Ford Davis, TX 79734 or Bloys Campmeeting, PO Box 34, Valentine, TX 79854. To send flowers to the family in memory of George E. Grubb, please visit <https://www.doubleflowersandgifts.net/>.



Grubb

Patricia “Pat” Maureen (Cunningham) Grubb left this earth on Sunday, January 9, 2022. She was born to William H. and Rose M. (Thissen) Cunningham on December 25, 1946, in Nashville, Kansas. She was raised in Zenda, Kansas, and attended grade school through high school and graduated in 1964.

In her early years, she and her siblings helped her parents on their small family farm where she learned hard work and determination. The Cunninghams were known for their athleticism with basketball, and Pat was no exception! After high school she moved to Larned, Kansas, where she worked at several establishments. She married Dennis Dee McCammond on December 2, 1967, and they were blessed with two daughters, Dawna Maureen and Dana Dee. Dennis died on December 31, 1969. Patricia had to go right to work as a dental assistant to support her two little girls. Patricia later married Douglas Clark McChristian and they were blessed with a boy, David Clay McChristian. Patricia lived in Fort Davis, Texas; Torrington, Wyoming; Santa Fe, New Mexico; and back to Fort Davis. During this time Patricia was an amazing stay-at-home mom who volunteered with the school, was a member of the Beta Sigma Phi, Brownie troop leader, played on numerous softball teams as the

catcher, a member of the PTA, Friends of the Library member and member of the First Presbyterian Church in Fort Davis. She was quiet in her faith and always prayed for those that needed it. She was the sweetest most loving person who would do anything for you. She kept busy with making sure she attended all her kids’ sporting events and with her hobby of sewing clothes for her family or making beautiful Victorian-style dresses.

When Patricia moved back to Fort Davis, she worked part-time for Robert (Mac) Sproul’s Accounting. Doug and Patricia later divorced, and she worked for the sheriff’s department and later went to work for Harvard University Radio Astronomy Station at the Sproul Ranch. She worked for Harvard for several years and was even given a Harvard Chair (which is only given to those that retire) before Harvard moved the station to New Mexico.

She married the love of her life George Emmitt Grubb on August 24, 1990, and became a bonus mom to Tammy and Lana Grubb. She went to work for Fort Davis junior and senior high schools as the school secretary, a job she loved. She became a “mom” to several of her kids. She loved making a difference in their lives and always loving them where they were. When George became ill and needed a kidney, Patricia retired from the school and spent the remaining years devoted to taking care of her husband. She was there for him till the very end. They were inseparable during this time and she always made sure she was his number one supporter when he ran for justice of the peace and county judge. No one loved him more besides his kids and his county. She was the absolute best wife and faithful to always making sure he had his coffee each morning and whatever else he needed.

Without her joy she was lost, and her heart longed to be with him. She died of a broken heart that is

now full of all the love they shared. Patricia and George were happily married for 31 years until his death.

Pat was preceded in death by her parents, Wilma and Rose Cunningham; her sisters, Dorothy, Joan, Eileen, Mary; and her husband, Dennis Dee McCammond; and her beloved husband George Grubb Jr.

She is survived by her children, Tammy Grubb (Bill), Lana Hickok (Ray), Dawna Fretwell (Charles), Dana Ohlsen (Jeremy), and Clay McChristian (Christy); her grandchildren Kelsey Hickok, Evan Hickok, Trevor Hickok, Brendan Headrick, Regan Headrick, Rylee McChristian, Allyn Sanchez, Alyssa Sanchez Stewart (Zach), Adam Fretwell (Stephanie) and Bryan Fretwell; six great-grandchildren Jaxyn Sanchez, Analie Sanchez, Cambree Sanchez, Garrett Fretwell, Sadie Fretwell and Peyton Fretwell; siblings Kathleen Ziegler (Lester), Jean Cunningham, Judith Cunningham, Jimmy Cunningham (Gladys), and Alicia Bixby; and numerous nieces and nephews.

Pat was honored at a celebration of life service at the Fort Davis High School Auditorium on Wednesday, January 12, 2022, at 2 p.m. Burial took place immediately after the service at Hillcrest Cemetery in Fort Davis. The family received family and friends at Nana’s house for a reception and coffee/tea cookies but more importantly to honor two people who were loved by this town, county, state and country.

Alpine Memorial Funeral home is entrusted with her services. Online condolences may be left at: www.alpinememorialfuneralhome.com. The family asks for memorials to be sent to the Fort Davis Volunteer Fire Department, PO Box 811, Ford Davis, TX 79734 or Bloys Campmeeting, PO Box 34, Valentine, TX 79854. To send flowers to the family in memory of Patricia Grubb, please visit <https://www.doubleflowersandgifts.net/>.

Alpine Memorial FUNERAL HOME

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Classifieds & public notices

JOB

Job Announcement

JOB DESCRIPTION
Administrative Assistant to Presidio County Attorney

DEPARTMENT
Presidio County Attorney
300 North Highland
Marfa, Texas 79843

POSITION SUMMARY
Work under the direction of the County Attorney by performing administrative legal support with regard to criminal prosecution activities

ESSENTIAL DUTIES & RESPONSIBILITIES

- Respond to inquiries from public, both in person and by telephone
- Prepare and process criminal case files
- Arrange for court appearances of law enforcement officers and civilians
- Effective and respectful communication and interactions with other county employees
- Maintain positive professional working relationships with all staff levels, other jurisdictions and outside agencies and, the general public
- Perform other related functions as needed or assigned

REQUIRED KNOWLEDGE AND ABILITIES

- Proficient in operation of personal computer and other office equipment
- Effectively and efficiently utilize word processor to obtain, manipulate and process data
- Use computer technology, including the internet, to effectively conduct research
- Ability to handle inquiries from the general public in a friendly and courteous manner
- Possess basic knowledge as to the structure and operation of the criminal courts
- Ability to organize and coordinate various assignments, and establish priorities to effectively work under pressure with minimal or no direct supervision.
- Ability to compose clear and grammatically correct correspondence.
- Ability to communicate effectively and tactfully both orally and in writing.
- Ability to be detail oriented and follow through with tasks.
- Perform administrative duties by drafting and preparing legal and general correspondence, processing case files and dispositions, and providing assistance to the public, prepare court docket, answering the phone, and filing, copying, and maintaining case files

EDUCATION

- High school graduate
- Some college

Competitive pay, and full county benefits package, including healthcare and retirement.

Applications may be downloaded from: Presidio County, Texas website, or Mail Resume to Presidio County Attorney, P.O. Drawer M, Marfa, Texas 79843 or email to pontonrod@gmail.com

Presidio County is an equal opportunity employer that is committed to diversity and inclusion in the workplace. We prohibit discrimination and harassment of any kind based on race, color, sex, religion, sexual orientation, national origin, disability, genetic information, pregnancy, or any other protected characteristic as outlined by federal, state, or local laws.

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PUBLIC NOTICES

The Marfa Parks and Recreation Board meets every third Thursday of the month at 6:00pm in the Casner Room at City Hall. The public is invited to attend.

REQUEST FOR PROPOSALS
PLAYGROUND SHADE STRUCTURE WITH RAIN WATER CATCHMENT AND UNDERGROUND COLLECTION TANK
RFQ #2022-01PMDD

Effective January 7, 2022
The Presidio Municipal Development District requests submissions of proposals for evaluation, construction, and completion of a permanent shade structure to be installed over the existing Swimming Pool Complex Playground. This project is to include two benches for seating and a gutter-based water catchment system to collect rain water in underground storage tanks.

The estimated measurement for the playground perimeter is 150 feet x 46 feet. All proposals should assume to provide shade for the entire area of playground equipment being used by children throughout the normal daytime hours. Materials should be evaluated for longevity in an extreme UV light exposure and high heat environment. Where possible, construction materials made from recycled materials should be specified – recycled plastic bottles or tires for example.

Bids are to be submitted no later than February 7, 2022 in writing with an itemized cost list. A contractor will be chosen and notified by February 28, 2022. Project start date is anticipated to be no sooner than March 7, 2022 with a requested completion date of May 15, 2022 or sooner. Contractor will provide all materials, all labor, all tools and equipment to complete the project and an industry standard warranty for labor and installed materials.

Submit written bids to:
PRESIDIO MUNICIPAL DEVELOPMENT DISTRICT
“Playground Shade Structure”
P.O. Box 3329
PRESIDIO, TEXAS 79845

Questions may be submitted via email to JeranStephens@gmail.com

NOTICE

Intermountain Slurry Seal, Inc. has contracted with FHWA to perform asphalt repairs and resurfacing on various routes throughout Big Bend National Park.

The project is set to start January 18, 2022 and will continue to June 16, 2022.

During construction there will be possible delays and minor closures in parking and camp areas.

Working hours will be Monday thru Friday 7:00 AM to 7:00 PM.

Daily work schedules will be issued to the park and posted.

Please follow the direction of the traffic control and construction workers, to insure safe passage to your destination.

For questions please call Nathan Niemann 469-416-0242

NOTICE OF APPLICATION FOR A SAND AND GRAVEL PERMIT

The Rivers Program at Texas Parks and Wildlife Department has applied to the Texas Parks and Wildlife Department (TPWD) for a General Permit pursuant to Texas Parks and Wildlife Code chapter 86 to remove or disturb 88 cubic yards of sedimentary material within Alamito Creek in Presidio County. The purpose is to improve and begin to restore stream habitat in Alamito Creek. The location is approximately 2.5 miles upstream of Highway 169. Notice is being published and mailed pursuant to Title 31 Texas Administrative Code section 69.105(b).

Within 30 days of the receipt of an administratively complete application, TPWD will publish notice of a public comment hearing regarding the application in the Texas Register at least 20 days prior to the date of the public comment hearing. The hearing is not a contested case hearing under the Texas Administrative Procedure Act. Oral and written public comment will be accepted at the hearing.

Written comments may also be submitted directly to TPWD and must be received no later than 30 days after the date of newspaper publication of this notice or the Texas Register notice publication, whichever is later. Submit written comments, questions, or requests to review the application to: Tom Heger, TPWD, by mail: 4200 Smith School Road, Austin, TX 78744; fax 512-389-4405; or e-mail tom.heger@tpwd.texas.gov.

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GOVERNMENT CONTACTS

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Judge Cinderela Guevara:
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mayer@cityofmarfa.com
(432) 295-0048
Irma Salgado, Mayor Pro Tem
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councilmemberbenyehuda@cityofmarfa.com

BREWSTER COUNTY
Judge Eleazar Cano:
(432) 837-6200 x 124
Alpine Mayor Andy Ramos:
City Hall: (432) 837-3301
Email: mayer.amos@ci.alpine.tx.us

JEFF DAVIS COUNTY
Judge Curtis Evans: (432) 426-3968

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(202) 224-2934 (D.C. office)
U.S. Sen. Ted Cruz:
(202) 224-5922 (D.C. office)



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