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BURN BAN IN EFFECT, NO GROUND FIRES
by order of Presidio County

Grant program could bring aerospace training centers to Alpine, Van Horn

By ALLEGRA HOBBS
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WEST TEXAS — A coalition of El Paso entities is vying for a federal grant program to support an aerospace and defense project for the region — which could bring training centers to Van Horn and to Alpine's Sul Ross State University with the goal of training locals to take on jobs in the growing industry.

El Paso Makes, a partnership that includes the El Paso Chamber and The University of Texas at El Paso W.M Keck Center for 3D Innovation and Aerospace Center, helps comprise a new coalition called the West Texas Aerospace and Defense Manufacturing Coalition – a coalition whose proposed project was named in December as a finalist in the U.S. Economic Development Administration's $1 billion "Build Back Better Regional Challenge."

The project, titled "Reclaiming Aerospace and Defense Manufacturing Dominance through Frontier Technologies," puts forth a plan to reinvigorate economic growth and job opportunities, not only in El Paso but throughout West Texas. A project summary available through the EDA says the grant would "jumpstart our efforts to tackle the enduring challenges in our region of lagging incomes, brain drain and the hollowing out of a once vibrant manufacturing base."

The project identifies low wages and a dearth of STEM occupations as problems plaguing the region, and notes economic setbacks have been worsened by the pandemic; it also identifies the booming aerospace and defense industry as a potential source of growth. West Texas is not only a manufacturing hub and close to a number of military bases, the coalition says, but is also home to the spaceport of Blue Origin, the aerospace company founded by billionaire Jeff Bezos. In July of last year, the company's first manned flight took place at the launch site in Culberson County, just outside of Van Horn.

In addition to a proposed 250-acre site near the El Paso International Airport that would house manufacturers, design centers and a training center, the project pitches a plan for supporting facilities in surrounding rural areas, which includes "Satellite Centers for Aerospace and Defense Supply Chain Innovation Network for

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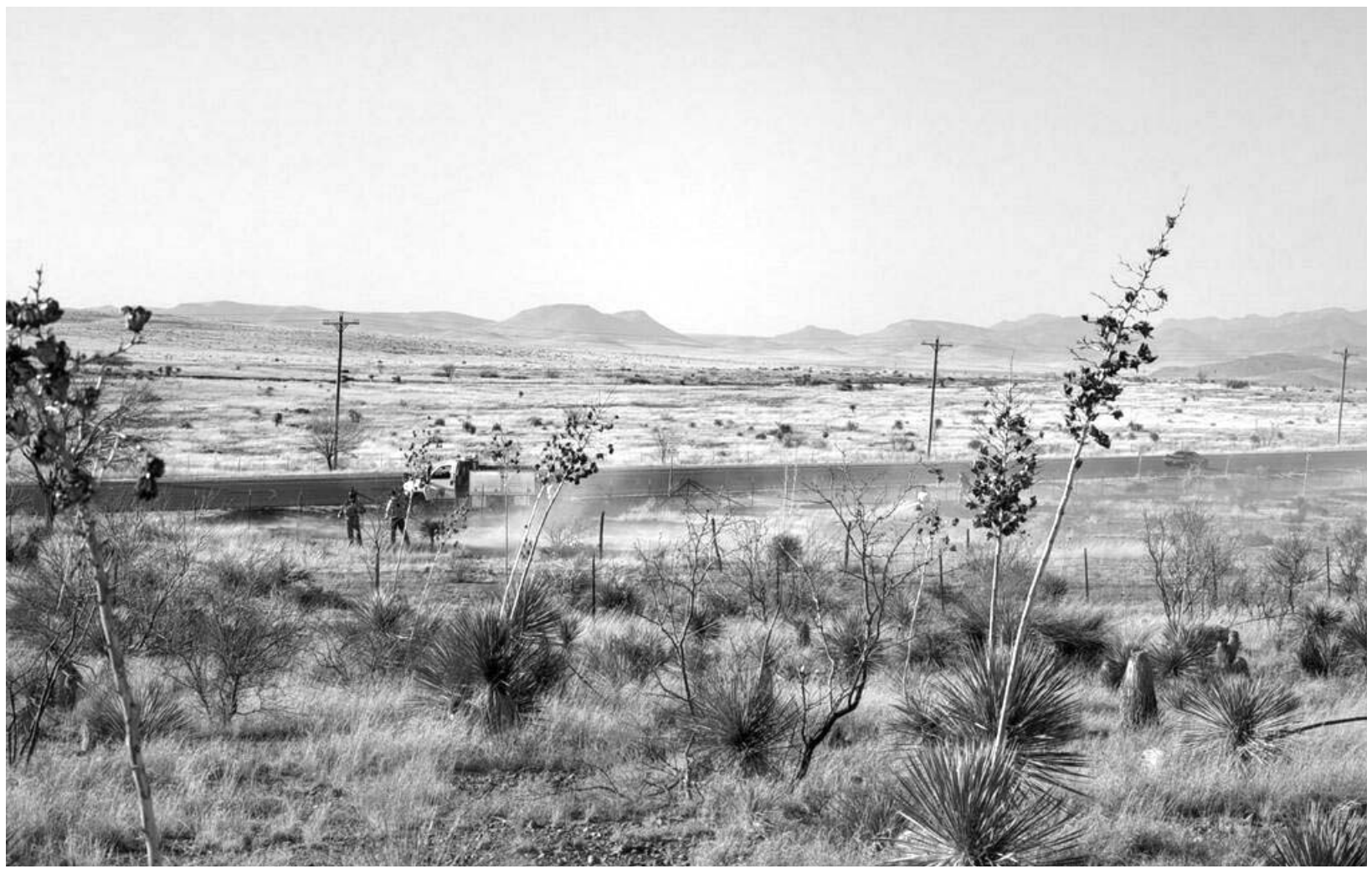


Photo courtesy of Carolyn Macartney

A small wildfire broke out alongside Texas Highway 17-North on Sunday evening around 5:30 p.m., scorching a swath of grass between a half-acre and an acre in length.

Small wildfire breaks out north of town as fire chief warns of 'extreme conditions'

By ALLEGRA HOBBS
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MARFA — The Marfa Volunteer Fire Department responded on Sunday to a small wildfire burning just outside the city limits along Texas State Highway 17-North, which left an expanse of grass between a half-acre and acre in size singed black.

The fire was prevented from spreading too far due to bare patches that acted as natural fire breaks, according to Marfa Fire Chief Gary Mitschke, and the remaining flames were quickly brought under control by the volunteer firefighters who responded to a call around 5:30 p.m. Given the low humidity and high winds that permeated the region on Sunday, noted Mitschke, the incident could have been much worse had those bare patches not been present.

"On Sunday we were under extreme wildfire conditions, so we were lucky on this one," said Mitschke. "It kind of ran out of fuel there — that helped a lot. Otherwise it would have been much bigger than it was."

Much of West Texas, including the Marfa area, was under a Red Flag Warning — meaning extreme fire weather conditions — beginning Sunday morning and into mid-evening that day. But the abundance of dry grass, which acts as fuel for wildfires, plus low humidity and high winds remain a source of concern, said Mitschke, creating conditions such that the tiniest spark could ignite a bigger problem.

As for Sunday's fire, Mitschke said he wasn't sure what had caused it — it very well could have been a cigarette tossed out of someone's car window, he said, or a vehicle muffler or a chain dragging on the ground.

"It's a good indicator of where we're at with the dry fuels in the county," said Mitschke. "We're to the point where just about anything's going to start a fire, so it's pretty bad."

Local painter and designer Carolyn Macartney, who lives on the far north side of town, was on a walk Sunday evening when she saw "a whole bunch of smoke" — she walked over the hill to see its source, and saw that the fire department was already on the scene extinguishing the flames.

"It was very alarming," said Macartney. "I live in that neighborhood and the wind was very, very strong, and if they hadn't gotten there it would have gone straight up the hill. It would have been devastating."

The fire serves as a reminder to observe the burn ban currently in effect in Presidio County,

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Brewster County hears EMS vendor proposals, tables decision as deadline looms

By MARY CANTRELL
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BREWSTER COUNTY — Brewster County Commissioners Court held a special meeting last Friday to hear citizen comments and presentations from three privately-run emergency medical services providers vying for the contract to respond to the area's 911 calls.

North Brewster County was suddenly left without an EMS provider this past December after Michael Scudder, who operated the area's ambulances since 1985, passed away unexpectedly. Terlingua Fire and EMS has stepped in to fill the service gap with an impending deadline of April 30, while the county and city decide the future of the area's emergency services. County commissioners, the City of Alpine, and an EMS task force are working together to select a new service provider.

Interested vendors include American Medical Response (AMR), Emergent Air and City Ambulance Service. All have existing ties to West Texas and a desire to expand their services to the area.

"First and foremost, we want a service that will respond to emergencies quickly with a well-trained and professional crew. In my opinion, each of the three vendors is well established and capable of running the EMS service," said Big Bend Regional Hospital District Executive Director J.D. Newsom, who is a member of the EMS taskforce. "I think the decision will come down to which of the vendors will be the best partner and fit with the community."

All three vendors agreed to operate North Brewster County EMS services on pre-existing subsidies previously provided to Scudder by the county and city — $13,397.75 a month from the city and $15,000 a month from the county, adding up to a total of $336,000 a year.

In previous meetings, county commissioners, Judge Eleazar Cano, and Terlingua Fire and EMS' Greg Hennington expressed doubt that any private EMS provider would take on the project, citing a lack of profitability due to the vast rural area and low call volumes. In 2021, Alpine EMS responded to a total of 1,200 calls.

A Big Bend Regional Medical Center-run EMS was on the table as of early February, but that option has since been dropped in lieu of a private vendor, said Newsom. While a county-run EMS option has not been officially ruled out, Newsom indicated that an outside vendor now seems most likely, given the time crunch.

The City of Alpine put out a request for qualifications (RFQ) for EMS providers

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City council reviews new website, Marfa and Presidio County Museum restoration, tourism marketing

By MARY CANTRELL
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MARFA — This week's regular city council meeting kicked off with a preview of the city's new website on the big screen.

Mayor Manny Baeza and all council members were present. City Manager Mandy Roane led the tour of the new and improved website, which is not yet live. The site is fitted with Google translator assistance, a search bar where city ordinances can be discovered, and easily accessible buttons featuring the most clicked-on topics — council agendas and minutes, forms and permits, bill pay, and the calendar.

"Everything you can find in more than one place, so it's a little more intuitive," said Roane.

On web browsers, aerial photographs showcasing the town's landscape head pages; on mobile devices, things are paired down for easy access. One of the goals of the new site is to help make the city administration office more accessible and tech savvy by offering ways for citizens to pay Airbnb or hotel occupancy tax (HOT) fees online and access documents like food establishment permits without coming into City Hall.

The site also offers greater transparency and accessibility, and will include staff photos, a contact directory, and be fully ADA accessible. The "visit" button will automatically launch users into a new tab in order to prevent tourists from getting lost on the city's website. The current site, visitmarfa.com, will be redirected to the new site. The utilities side of the site where locals go to pay bills is also being upgraded.

Roane said they are still tweaking the website's content and flow but it should be done soon, with the utilities upgrade following sometime later.

The next substantial topic discussed by council was whether or not to consider establishing a long-term lease for The Marfa and Presidio County Museum in order to make them eligible to receive franchise tax credits for renovations. Downtown Marfa is in the process of becoming a nationally-recognized Central Historic District, which would allow for buildings that are a part of the register to receive tax credits from the state for historic restorations — those credits can often cover 20 to 40 percent of construction budgets. But city-owned buildings do not qualify, thus the reason for the lease.

"I just think it's such a good program that this project is 100 percent going to qualify [for]. And it would boost that budget by at least $40,000," said Councilmember Yoseff Ben-Yehuda.

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Migrant from Guatemala injured in accident involving garbage truck

By SAM KARAS
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MARFA — Around 8 a.m. on Monday, Marfa first responders were called to the scene of an accident in the alley between the Hotel St. George and Stripes. A garbage disposal truck was making its regular weekly rounds when the driver heard screaming and rushed to stop the automated compactor system. Those gathered at the scene were horrified to find a man inside who had sustained serious injuries to both of his legs.

"The driver could hear screaming ut didn't know where it was coming from," explained Marfa Police Chief Estevan Marquez. "He was looking at the sides of the vehicle first, but ended up looking into the camera that gives him a visual of what's going in the back. That's when he saw the individual's face."

Marquez, whose office is steps away from the dumpster involved in the accident, was first on the scene. Despite the fact that the man was in a tremendous amount of pain, he was able to answer basic questions: he had been traveling from Guatemala with a group of other migrants and was somehow separated from them. He had stopped in the alley to rest when the temperature dropped to just above freezing. The man crawled into the dumpster and covered himself in debris to keep warm.

"We could tell just by looking at him that he looked very weak," Marquez said. "He was telling us he hadn't eaten in a couple of days either, and that was all he could tell us before he started showing signs of going into shock."

Around 8:10 a.m., Marfa EMS director Bert Lagarde received a call from dispatch, and he quickly reported to the scene. Lagarde had to climb into the truck to assess the man's injuries. "It was a very confined space," Lagarde remembered. "There were three or four firefighters down in there with me, plus the patient."

The first responders worked quickly to package the patient and carefully lift him up and out of the garbage truck using a litter called a Stokes basket. "We had to package the patient into the basket and safely get him out of the garbage truck onto the roof, then off the roof of the garbage truck and into the ambulance," Lagarde said. "It took some time."

The patient was transported to Big Bend Regional Medical Center. The driver of the garbage truck could not be identified by press time. The City of Marfa does not operate its own garbage service, and contracts with Republic Services to empty local dumpsters.

"We've had information passed to us [from Border Patrol] that this is not the first time that we've had individuals hiding in a dumpster," Marquez explained. "Luckily, those individuals were able to get out. This individual was suffering from some kind of fatigue. He simply told us he just wasn't strong enough or fast enough to get out of the dumpster in time."

The incident required cooperation from City Hall, Marfa PD, Marfa EMS and the Marfa Fire Department, alongside other individuals who helped that morning with patient transport, translation and coordinating all of the first responders. "We work well with other agencies," Lagarde said.

Marquez agreed. "It was a good team effort."

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The West Texan Media Group, LLC

EMS vendor proposals

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February 1 and received applications from AMR and City Ambulance Services. Emergent Air was received by Brewster County directly, said City Secretary Geoffrey Calderon.

Judge Cano previously stated he hoped a transition of the new EMS provider would be underway by now, but the commissioners court ultimately voted to table a decision on the matter both in Friday's special meeting and this Tuesday's regular meeting in order to give Alpine City Council more time to review vendor proposals. The council will hear the providers' presentations this week, and the commissioners court will then meet again on March 24.

Authorities will select an EMS provider by March 30, said Judge Cano.

Present at Friday's special meeting to hear EMS-provider presentations were Judge Cano, all commissioners with the exception of Ruben Ortega, as well as many city council members, city administrators and members of the public. One resident who spoke at the start of the meeting advocated for a locally-run EMS, and another urged the importance of citizen feedback.

Presentations focused on 911 ground services, but all vendors have the capacity to provide emergency air services as well.

Potential EMS providers

Lee King, principal of Emergent Air, a company based out of El Paso, was first up to present to the commissioners court. Emergent offers air ambulances as well as ground services. King said Emergent is experienced in flying into the area and is already in discussions with the hospital regarding an interfacility truck. Emergent currently services El Paso, McAllen and Roswell, New Mexico.

King promised flexibility and offered to act temporarily should a county-run EMS eventually materialize. Without robust data on the previous EMS, King said it was hard to gauge the scope of services, but Emergent would work closely with the county going forward to assess needs. As for staffing and equipment, he said they could pull staff from El Paso, provide training and utilize used ambulances for the time being. King said renting the fire station, where EMS is currently dispatched from, for their operation would also be a possibility.

King said that Emergent was up for the challenge of providing emergency services in a sprawling region full of unpaved, rural roads. Commissioner Sara Colando said whatever entity is chosen to take on EMS for Brewster County will have to be aware of long drive times and accidents in remote areas making them unavailable for 911 calls that might come in elsewhere. King said they would likely pursue mutual aid agreements to help in those situations.

Hennington asked if Emergent would be open to adding a local physician to their medical advisory group and join the Texas "J" Regional Advisory Council (JRAC), a local trauma system network, to which King was amenable.

Next up was City Ambulance Service, represented by four staff members. City Ambulance is the third largest private ambulance company based out of Texas, with over 100 trucks across the state. They currently run EMS in Crane County and Upton County's emergency services district, both located in the West Texas region. The company also has an existing relationship with the Big Bend Regional Medical Center, where they assist with discharges and interfacility transfers.

Their ambulances are fit to a mobile intensive care unit level and can accommodate behavioral health issues, said Richard Trevino, vice president of business development at City Ambulance Service. He said the company would hire locals whenever possible and seek to be a part of the community.

"We like to hire locals because those local medics, they know the area, they know what's going on, they know the community, they know the service that's required," said Trevino.

On the subject of community involvement, City Ambulance often gives tours of their ambulances to schools and churches, said Trevino, and performs educational outreach in the form of CPR and Stop the Bleed training.

Trevino said they intend to allocate an ambulance to cover civic events, like football games, while ensuring another ambulance is available for emergencies elsewhere. City Ambulance stations their crews in hotels to funnel money back into the local economy, they said.

Representatives said they offer competitive pay, and are already a part of JRAC. Judge Cano brought up a potential dispatch system, and City Ambulance representatives said, as with other counties they service, they would likely use the sheriff's department dispatch system.

Trevino assured commissioners the company will work to have a local face on the operational side. Trevino said they can start in 30 days and would like to be able to continue to utilize the fire department building.

Last to present was Randy Wideman, regional director for American Medical Response. Wideman said AMR has been serving the area for 34 years, with EMS in Pecos and Aerocare, their air ambulance service, in Fort Stockton. AMR currently operates in 42 states, said Wideman, and provides ground ambulance services for 40 Texas counties.

AMR is the main contractor working with the Federal Emergency Management Agency to provide ground and air ambulance services in emergency situations. Their office of emergency management is based out of Dallas, said Wideman, where 911 calls would be routed.

AMR operates a registered nurse line, which can help cut down on ambulance needs, said Wideman. Commissioner Mike Pallanez inquired whether AMR would have bilingual staff available, to which Wideman assured him the company did.

AMR also pays EMTs to go to school in order to become paramedics and prioritizes training, said Wideman. The company would strive to hire locally and would have a local medical director.

As for community involvement, AMR would host Stop the Bleed and CPR training for local citizens, would provide an ambulance for large civic events, and consider using the fire department for operations, said Wideman.

After the presentations, Vernon Tucker, a local EMT who previously worked with Alpine EMS and is now commuting to Pecos, said if a private vendor was chosen an anonymous platform operated by the county for citizens to rate services and provide feedback would be paramount.

As an EMT with 12 years of experience locally, Tucker expressed a desire to serve his local community and work with a local supervisor. Tucker encouraged the commissioners to review potential EMS providers' Glassdoor pages, where employees leave anonymous reviews of their employment experiences.

"There are quite a few negative employee reviews for some of the services that were here today," said Tucker. "I'm looking at that, and I'm going, that's a nice paycheck. But is it worth the stress for me and my family?"

County-run EMS

Hennington, who has been working closely with the county throughout the new EMS planning process, discussed a county-run EMS option. The proposed budget was based on three people on duty at all times, performing a three days on, four days off schedule. Hennington voiced concerns about acquiring new ambulances in a timely manner and said it would take the remainder of the year to get a county-run system up and running.

Hennington said if Terlingua Fire and EMS were to extend help past the original April 30 deadline, they would need staffing assistance.

Commissioner Sara Colando asked Hennington, who previously argued a public-run EMS would have the best staying power for constituents, why he seemed to now be favoring a private vendor route — Hennington clarified he would still be on board with a public option.

"I mean, if you guys decided you want to go the county route, I still like the idea, I think there's still a romanticism to building us a really first class [service] — you get it in Terlingua, you could do it here," said Hennington.

But South County is a designated emergency services district, which allows them to funnel sales tax revenue into emergency services — in North County a different funding model would have to be established.

Colando said because they solicited proposals from companies with the understanding that the subsidies would not increase, she expressed concerns that the companies would end up saddling customers calling 911 with higher prices.

"The people who call 911 are going to be paying for this service, and — whether their money stays in Brewster County with a public run entity or whether it goes out to an international, national or a statewide company — what is going to get them the most bang for their buck?" said Colando.

Discussions around the selection of a provider continued at Tuesday's regular commissioners court meeting, where officials tackled criticism of the process. Some citizens had expressed concerns regarding the transparency of the EMS task force meetings and the level of involvement on the city-level.

"I am a little bit taken back by the comments, 'We're having secret meetings,' and 'We're conspiring.' We're trying to figure this thing out folks — that's it," said Cano.

Commissioner Jim Westermann, who represents Precinct 1, said his constituents were reaching out to inquire why the court was delaying in voting on the EMS providers and to express frustrations regarding meeting upon meeting without a decision. He expressed frustration with the process but acknowledged procedural setbacks and an unexpected recent increase in city involvement.

"The city was involved in all this. They had representatives the whole time. And so here we are, six weeks out from our self imposed deadline, and we want to revisit everything again. I have no answers for my constituents other than to say: stay tuned," said Westermann. "But this is a rather unfortunate development right at the end."

Judge Cano rebutted, stating majority votes were needed in both commissioners court and city council in order to approve a new EMS provider, because they each hold separate contracts with the provider.

"We are winding down versus picking up again," said Cano. "We would like to reach a consensus as [soon] as possible."

EMS provider proposals for AMR and City Ambulance can be found online on the City of Alpine's website: https://bit.ly/3KytQWS, starting on Page 35, and Emergent's Air's proposal can be found: https://bit.ly/3Kx7IME.

Aerospace training

(Continued from page 1)

Manufacturers," which will host training centers, both in Van Horn and at Sul Ross State University in Alpine.

"Blue Origin's spaceport investment in Culberson County should be matched with public investment that provides area residents a pathway to jobs at Blue Origin and provides area manufacturers new business opportunities," reads the project summary.

Those involved in the project have also been seeking the support of surrounding communities, beyond Alpine and Van Horn — including Marfa. The Rio Grande Council of Governments (RioCOG), the association of local governments which includes Presidio, Brewster and Jeff Davis counties, has helped facilitate community outreach during the application process, said RioCOG Executive Director Annette Gutierrez.

RioCOG brought the project, along with a request for a show of support, to Marfa City Council, which on Tuesday night passed a motion signaling support for the project — the city had been asked to show their commitment via a concrete offer of some kind, whether through an offering of physical space, employees' time or promotion via social media. Council members discussed the possibility of offering space in the Marfa Activities Center (MAC) building or at the landfill, and of offering promotion efforts. Ultimately, a motion was passed authorizing City Manager Mandy Roane to continue conversations with RioCOG and to offer those amenities as they see fit.

The phase 2 applications are due on March 15. The grants will be awarded in September, according to Gutierrez, who estimated that the facilities could be up and running by the last quarter of fiscal year 2023.

Small wildfire

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which prohibits actions such as smoking without using an ashtray, driving or parking in tall, dead grass, lighting campfires, and welding in grassy areas.

The spring can be an especially hazardous season, said Mitschke, as March and April bring high winds and "dry lightning," or lightning without accompanying rain to alleviate the dry conditions.

"All indications are that the conditions that we're in right now are very similar to what we had back in 2011, and that's when we had the big wildfire outbreaks, not just here in Presidio County but also over the whole state," said the fire chief. In April of 2011, an outbreak of wildfires scorched swathes of West Texas, including Fort Davis and Marfa.

"Everybody needs to be aware of the extreme conditions we're under and be very careful," said Mitschke.

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Want your own police car? Need a tractor? Do you desire a dually? The City of Alpine is holding a public auction on Saturday, April 9, 2022 at 9am. Vehicles from every department will be available for bidding "AS IS". We are advertising the auction from El Paso to Presidio so don't miss your chance to bid on dozens of City surplus vehicles.

And the good news gets better because after you buy your vehicle(s) at auction, the City of Alpine will gladly leave you to your new purchase without further ado.

We'll see you out at the Alpine Recycle Center - "15" Acres on Saturday, April 9, 2022 at 9am:

2705 Cemetery Road
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Vehicle makers available for auction include Chevrolet, Dodge, Ford and GMC, visit www.cityofalpine.com/auction closer to the date for year, make and model details.

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The Rio Grande Area Agency on Aging announces the closure of its satellite office in Marfa, TX effective February 2022

The main office located in El Paso, TX remains open and committed to serving older adults and family caregivers who reside in our service region

The Area Agency on Aging serves as a resource that promotes older adult independence and assists family caregivers in their tasks of caring for their loved ones

If you need assistance, we encourage you to contact us now at

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The Rio Grande Area Agency on Aging is a division of the Rio Grande Council of Governments and serves persons 60 years of age and older and their families that reside in El Paso, Hudspeth, Culberson, Jeff Davis, Brewster and Presidio Counties. It is funded by the Older Americans Act through the Texas Health and Human Services Commission

City council

(Continued from page 1)

The city recently released an RFP for engineering services for the museum and will likely go out for a construction bid after they discover more about the building's integrity and establish priorities.

Councilmember Ben-Yehuda said the process typically involves starting on a project and submitting documentation before the state approves the franchise tax credits. Franchise tax credits received must then be sold, sometimes with the help of a broker, to receive cash. It would be the museum's responsibility to sell the tax credits, said Ben-Yehuda. A project must still be under construction and not completely finished in order to qualify for the tax credits, he said.

"I still think it's a good enough chunk of money. And if we're committed to doing more work on this building, I think it's a really good program for us to be aware of and understand to be able to reap the benefits," said Ben-Yehuda.

Councilmember Ben-Yehuda said he spoke with the same consultant the Judd and Chinati foundations are working with and they were open to assisting with the museum project. The city budgeted $218,556.51 for museum repairs this fiscal year and intends to spend that money on the project, but a lease may complicate things, said council members.

Most were interested in the prospect, and City Attorney Teresa Todd was directed to work on a draft lease, which has to be at least 39 years to qualify for the tax credit program. Todd said she has a lot on her plate and may not be able to get to the lease for a couple of months. Ben-Yehuda is to keep fact-finding. A few council members also expressed interest in talking to the Marfa and Presidio County Museum Board, to which council plans to reach out.

Next, Director of Tourism Abby Boyd took the floor to seek council approval to hire two new advertising-related vendors. She was joined by guests zooming in, Julie Kunkle of data company Zartico, and representatives of marketing company Theory Practice.

Boyd started her presentation by explaining how one of her long-term goals is to better control Marfa's narrative through city-produced advertising rather than by relying on whatever social media influencers or mainstream magazines are saying about the town.

"Marfa didn't have much of a voice in the story of why people should come here, what they should do while they're here, what our values are and what we think they should know before they come," said Boyd.

Zartico, a data collection company, would provide a digital dashboard, utilizing anonymized data collected from people's cellular devices, including the Apple weather application, to help Boyd better understand Marfa's visitors, she said. Metrics like where people are visiting from, where they are staying, how long they stay, what other adjacent towns or attractions they visit, and an average spend-amount would help the city do more targeted advertising and appeal to more niche groups other than just the art crowd, said Boyd.

The effort is in partnership with the City of Alpine, and each city will pay $10,000 for a year's worth of tourism data. Boyd argued the service is a smart use of HOT funds — $10,000 can be the cost of one billboard.

The marketing company Boyd is in conversation with, Theory Practice, would help use the data collected by Zartico to create digital marketing materials, perform a brand review, update written collateral and create design templates for a total of $12,000. Boyd said it is important for the city to update with digital marketing versus solely regional print advertising.

When asked by Councilmember Buck Johnston what Boyd's ultimate goal was for these new initiatives, she responded that it was for Marfa locals to be the author of Marfa's story.

"This is not about trying to bring everybody back to Marfa or saturate us with visitors. This is about herding the cat that's already out of the bag and advertising to an audience of people who are knowledgeable about Marfa and encouraging return trips," said Boyd.

Boyd said the town has a lot to offer in addition to the arts scene, and at the visitor's center she has conversations with visitors frequently about the military history, dark skies and natural landscape, for example. Ben-Yehuda said he liked the overall direction of reclaiming Marfa's story and thought these two marketing projects would be a good use of HOT funds.

"I think you make a really convincing point about us delivering and owning our identity a little bit more than we have in the past — more consistently, more professionally. And hopefully, more authentically," said Ben-Yehuda.

Mayor Baeza chimed in, inquiring to the heart of the matter, "What is our identity?"

Boyd said she has begun crafting the narrative in forthcoming ads which focus on border culture and the town's history, not just the legacy of Donald Judd.

Councilmember Raul Lara was for the proposals, and suggested trying it for a year to see how it goes. Ultimately, the council unanimously approved Boyd's requests to hire the two vendors.

The council concluded by hearing the city manager and police chief reports and council member announcements. Roane reported the ambulance remount was yet again being pushed back to March 17, but that EMS Director Bert Lagarde was closely following the issue. Roane said the city's food establishment permit application is now online, and code compliance and public works would be going out soon to check on grease traps.

Regarding staff updates, she said Utilities Clerk Lori Flores is training on the new payment software and the city is hoping to hire a new bookkeeper by the end of the week. Roane also thanked first responders, City Secretary Kelly Perez, and the local fire department for assisting with the accident on Monday, in which an undocumented migrant was injured by a garbage truck in a dumpster nearby.

"You expect from first responders, but you don't expect your city secretary and your street supervisor to always do that, so I just want to say thank you to everyone," said Roane.

Councilmember Johnston wanted to thank city staff for their hard work submitting a grant application to the Texas Water Development Board, in which the city requested $3 million for 25 projects in Presidio County, many within Marfa city limits. Johnston said she would continue to help with the effort after leaving council, and is hopeful the city will qualify for the funding.

Presidio bridge construction waiting for governor's approval

By SAM KARAS
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PRESIDIO — At last week's city council meeting, Mayor John Ferguson addressed a stewing source of frustration in town: stalled construction on the American side of the Presidio International Bridge. The binational effort recently ground to a halt on the southbound Texas side, requiring customs agents on the busy bridge to continue direct traffic through a one-lane stretch.

Local and state officials started talking about expanding the bridge around 2011. Though the Presidio Port of Entry is categorized as a "small" crossing by U.S. Customs and Border Protection, it's steadily growing. The Texas Department of Transportation's U.S. 67 Master Plan, compiled in 2020, noted that at peak traffic times, southbound bridge traffic could back up four miles on the highway.

With news of a prospective diesel transport operation coming to Presidio and pre-existing frustrations about the opening of a route for transmigrantes, opening up two southbound lanes to assist freight vehicles crossing into Mexico is a top priority. Much of the hold-up is due to confusion about which agency is responsible for which aspect of the project. Most international bridges — like the port of entry in Laredo, which sees around 5.1 million personal vehicles back and forth across the bridge each year — are owned and administered by a private interest group or by the city they're located in.

That's not the case in Presidio, where the southbound lanes of the bridge are owned by the state of Texas. It's the only bridge of its kind in the state — as Presidio City Administrator Brad Newton is fond of explaining, Presidio is "TxDOT's only child" when it comes to border crossings. The northbound lanes are administered by Mexico's Caminos y Puentes Federales, an agency whose name translates to "International Roads and Bridges."

Yet another pair of federal entities administer customs operations on the bridge. On the Mexican side, that's the Servicio de Administración Tributara, which can best be described as the Mexican version of the Internal Revenue Service. U.S. Customs and Border Protection oversees northbound operations on the Presidio bridge, and is primarily responsible for directing traffic through the one-lane stretch of bridge. Over the past decade, it was decided that construction costs and logistics should be the Americans' responsibility on the southbound side of the bridge, and the Mexicans' on the northbound stretch.

With so many stakeholders and so many moving parts, it's no surprise that there have been delays in the process of expanding the bridge to include two lanes on each side. Eleven years later, though, officials, shipping companies and private citizens have started to wonder: what's the hold-up?

Port Director Jesus Luis Chavez, who has held his post for about 10 months, has repeatedly expressed frustration about the delays. While trying to settle into his new position, he's frequently approached by Presidio officials and residents alike who want to complain about long waits on the bridge. "Regarding those three- to seven- to ten-hour waits that we have on the bridge — I don't want to hear it," he said at a city meeting back in January. "Because why? Because you guys never finished the bridge. How can you help me help you?"

Despite feeling exasperated, he expressed his appreciation for the community. "Let's all do this together and help each other out. I love this place. It's great. But we're not helping each other out here."

At Monday's meeting, Presidio Mayor John Ferguson reported that bridge expansion had been stalled by TxDOT for over a year, and that Mexico "had substantially finished their half" of the project. "I've heard lots of various versions of what's going on," he said, and decided to reach out to TxDOT for an official update. Ferguson read aloud an email he received in response from Blanca Serrano-Rivera of TxDOT's regional office in El Paso.

"I understand you have some questions regarding the continuation of construction on the U.S. side of the Presidio Port of Entry," reads the email. "The district is currently in coordination with TxDOT divisions to finalize the Memo of Understanding for the bridge. The Memo of Understanding requires signatures from the Governor so that bridge construction may continue. We are hopeful that we will have final approval for signatures in the next couple of months, so that we may re-initiate construction. Once we have approval of the Memo of Understanding, construction should be initiated within 45 to 60 days after that, which is two more months and concluded approximately four months from initiation. So we're talking eight months there."

City Attorney Rod Ponton had reached out to Caroline Mays, head of international affairs for TxDOT, and had received a slightly different answer: "It's waiting on the governor's desk — it's really just been sitting around for a long time," he reported.

Presidio City Council decided to draft a letter together to Governor Abbott's office, hoping that the extra push would help fast-track the needed signature. With a potential eight month process for full operation on the bridge, time is of the essence — port officials would like to see everything completed by November and December, when Día de los Muertos and the Christmas holidays create record-smashing wait times on the bridge. "If we do it right, if it gets done this year, your traffic will be a lot better," Port Director Chavez said.

Neither the governor's office nor TxDOT responded to requests for comment by press time.



THANK YOU VOTERS!

I want to thank all of the Presidio County voters who supported me in the March 1 Democratic primary.

I am both overwhelmed and humbled.

Between now and November, I intend to reach out and speak with residents about your concerns, share our ideas and how you would like to see Presidio County improve.

Together we can grow Presidio County in a forward and positive direction.

FROM,
JOSE AND LAURA
PORTILLO

★ ★ ★ ★ ★ ★ ★

POL. ADV. PAID FOR BY JOSE PORTILLO



GSA Property CASH SALE AUCTION – Auction started Monday, February 14, 2022!

304 North Bagley Avenue Presidio, Texas 79845 is 1,150 +/- gross square feet. The home is on approximately .23 acres (10,018 sq. ft.) and is improved with one (1) story, 3 bedrooms, 2 bathrooms, & a 2 car carport.

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Questions about the auction…
contact Dorothy Adidas, GSA Realty Specialist
Phone: (817) 223-9358 OR Email dorothy.adidas@gsa.gov



Opinions

LETTER TO THE EDITOR

Dear Editor,

Gov. Abbott directed Texas Department of Family and Protective Services (TDFP) to investigate families of transgender children. He cited Attorney General Paxton's misbegotten opinion that "giving transgender children puberty blockers and hormone therapy could "legally constitute child abuse."

Proponents have no shame. Not surprisingly, carnage that kills children and requires active shooter drills isn't a Second Amendment political priority.

What's next? Big Brother taking children and separating families?

Republicans already weaponized Trump's "zero tolerance" southern border strategy for political gain. Likewise, their transgender agenda is driven by an engine intentionally fueled by cruelty.

The state's approach to gender identification is unsound. Children have a difficult enough time adjusting to who they are. Pandering to fear-based ignorance makes things worse for those targeted.

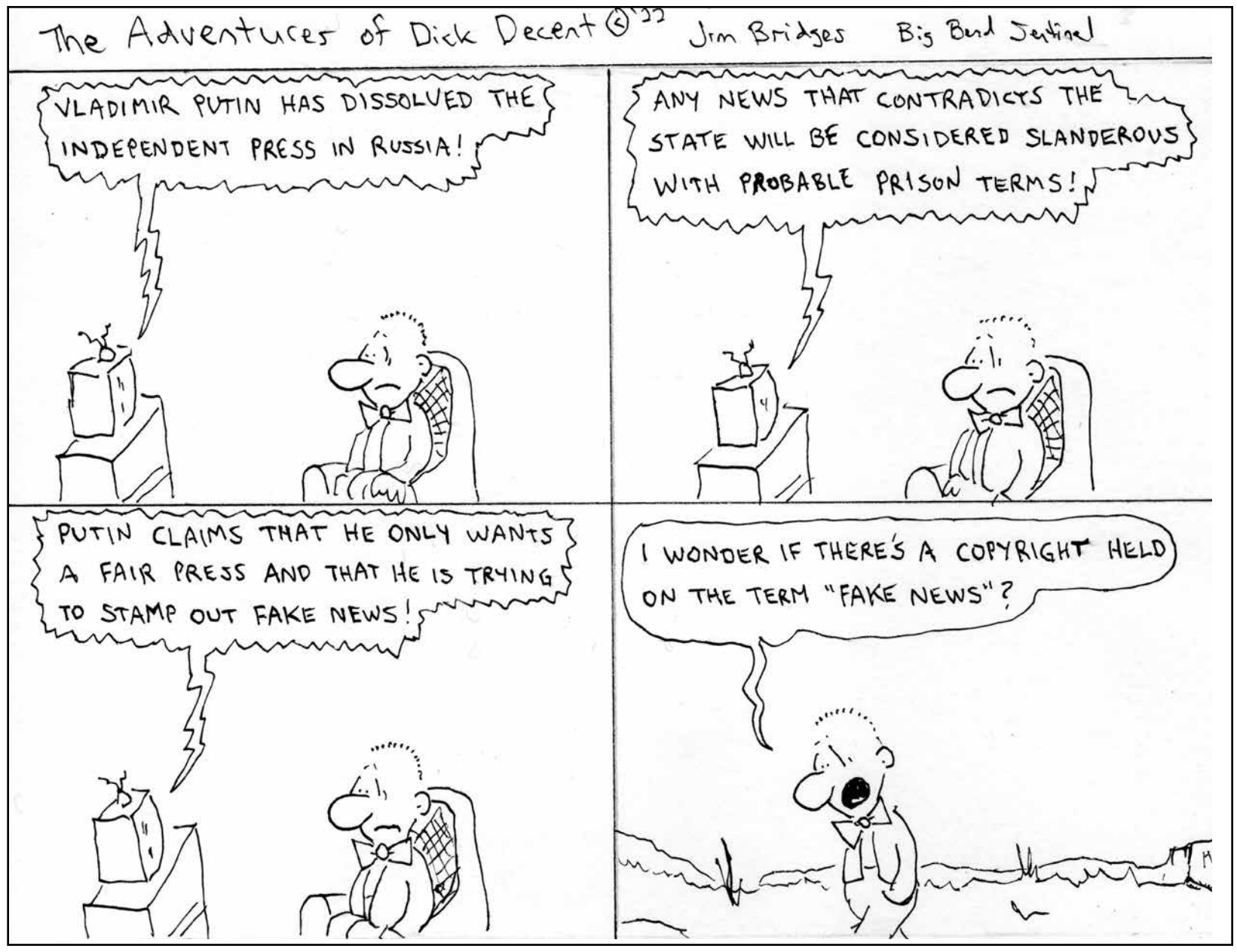
Officialdom perpetrates child abuse, not parents of children needing understanding. That would be a healthier means of expressing concern than TDFP investigations.

Rev. Barry Abraham Zavah
Alpine

We want to hear from YOU!

- Letters should be sent to editor@bigbendsentinel.com, and must provide the writer's full name, city of residence and an email or phone number, so that we may follow up and verify information as needed.
- Your letters may be edited for clarity and brevity. While opinions of all kinds are welcome, when it comes to claims of fact, we strive to only publish what is verifiable.
- We have limited staff capacity to fact check unsubstantiated claims, so letters that include those may be held or remain unpublished if information is not easily verifiable.
- We may reach out to ask questions and verify the identity of the sender. We do not run letters anonymously unless the sender is privately identified and has a reasonable claim to anonymity.
- We reserve the right to hold or refrain from publishing a letter for any reason and we thank you for always sharing your letters with us.

- ***The Big Bend Sentinel Editorial Staff***



TEXAS ENVIRONMENTAL NEWS

Russia, radioactive waste, Musk and more

By RICHARD MARK GLOVER

Exxon-Mobil exiting Russia operations

Dallas-based Exxon-Mobil said it will begin a phase out of their Russian operations in light of Putin's attack on Ukraine. Their biggest project, a 30 percent share of Sakhalin Island 1 offshore, with a reported 2.3 billion barrels of oil and 17.1 trillion cubic feet of gas reserves, will allegedly be forfeited. The joint-venture with Rosneft, the Russian state oil company, and two Japanese corporations did not receive approval from the Obama administration in 2013 because of alleged Russian misconduct and environmental concerns. Rex Tillerson, former CEO of Exxon, became President Trump's secretary of state in 2016 and the project was green-lit. Joe Romm, of YearsofLivingDangerously.com suggests that the $500 billion project was plenty of incentive to push Russia to Trump's side in the 2016 elections, assisting the billionaire through epistemological de-construction via the use of sham internet platforms.

Radioactive waste

Nuclear power, the nearly carbon-free mega generator of electricity and now endorsed by James Hansen as the only way to fill the gap in the transition to sustainable green power, still has one big problem — what to do with the radioactive waste. Burying it in the Permian Basin seems to be the solution front runner as the federal government has approved a nuclear waste facility for spent uranium fuel rods near Andrews. Texas Governor Gregory Abbott has lent his name to a big-oil led petition asking the Fifth Circuit of Appeals Court in New Orleans to vacate the permit as fears of radio-active leakage would keep oil workers out of the oil fields. Others suggest sending the radioactive waste into outer space. The risk of rocket failure, the issue of colliding with space debris and the incredible cost puts the space-solution somewhere beyond the stars. CNN reports 90,000 tons of radioactive waste has no home and is stored temporarily at nuke plants across America. Germany will decommission its last operating nuclear power plant next year while France is building more.

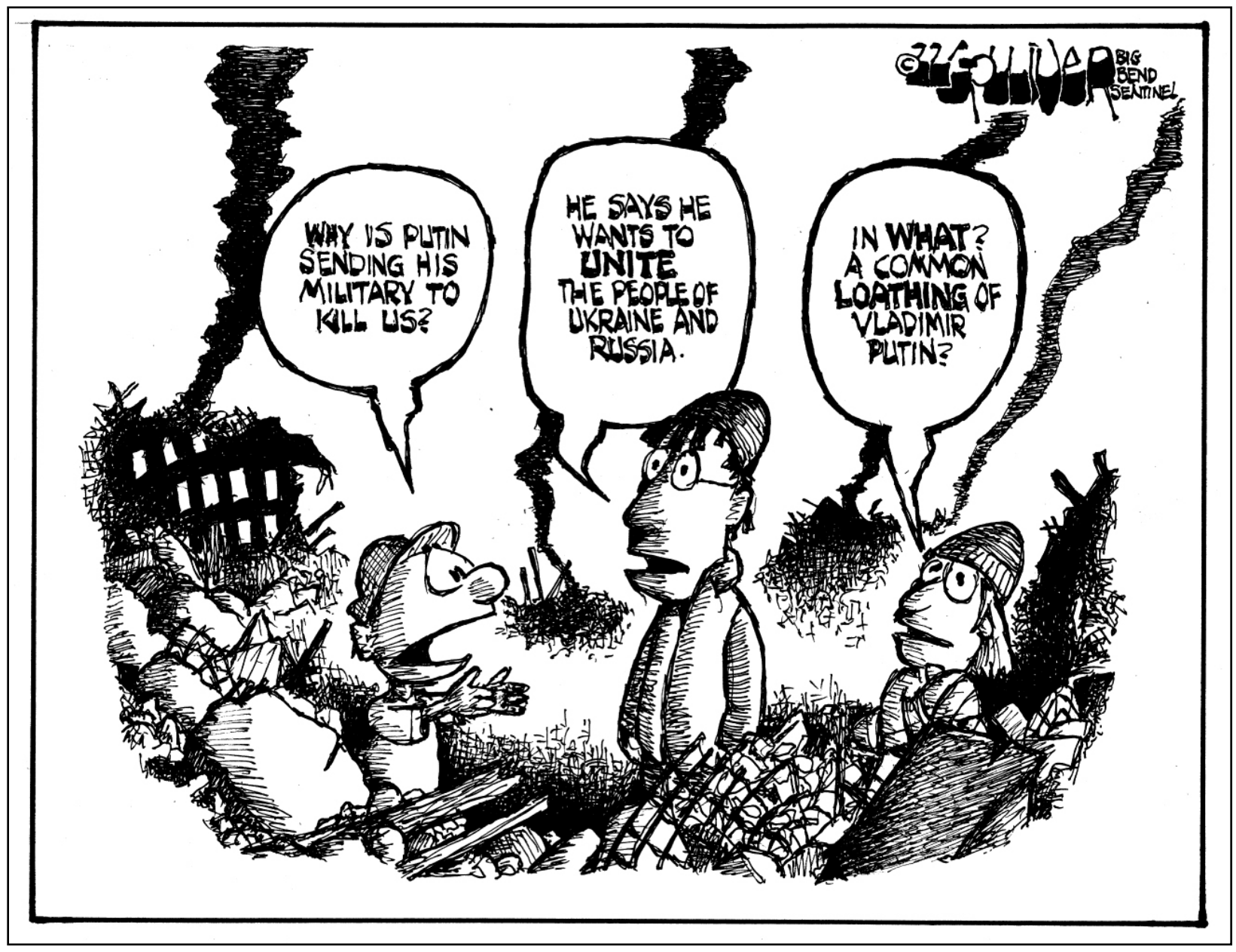
Salty crude

The federal government approved this week the release of 30 million barrels of crude oil from the Strategic Petroleum Supply stored in salt domes in Texas and Louisiana to supply Europe with energy. Russia, the largest crude oil exporter in the world, directs some 60 percent of its oil to Europe. With the Russian supply to Europe now in question due to the Ukrainian invasion, Republican senators in Washington are pushing for increased fossil fuel production in the U.S. Meantime a bill to outlaw Russian crude oil imports to the U.S. (about 1 percent of Russian exports) has been announced. White House Press Secretary Jen Psaki said, "Today's announcement is another example of partners around the world condemning Russia's unprovoked and unjustified invasion of Ukraine and working together to address the impact of President Putin's war of choice."

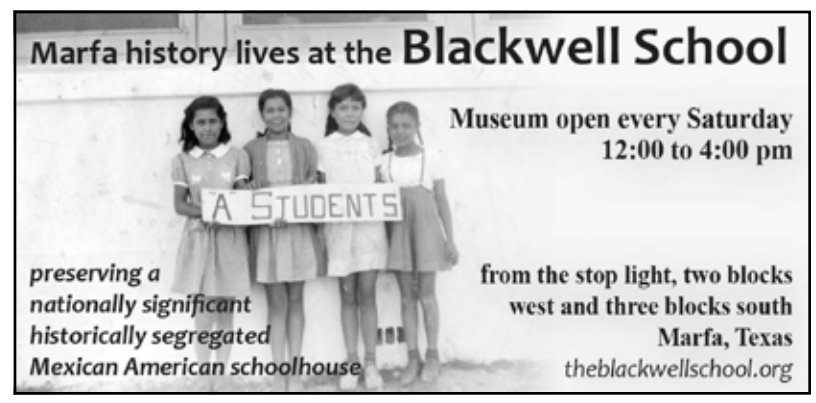
Space manna

A proponent of Elon Musk's SpaceX Station adjacent to the Boca Chica State Park near Brownsville got lit on Facebook concerning the arrest of a local activist. Becca Hinojosa was arrested on a misdemeanor charge at her home by four Brownsville police officers last week. The crime: allegedly painting graffiti under a Musk-sponsored mural in downtown Brownsville. Hinojosa spent the next 24 hours in jail. That same day, Brownsville Mayor Trey Mendez, a big time supporter of Musk and his SpaceX center, posted her mug, full name and the picture of her alleged graffiti on his official Facebook page. The Texas Observer reports that backlash was quick. "You don't make posts like this for every person that gets arrested so this seems personal and really unprofessional," one post read. Former State Representative Arturo Alonzo said regarding the mural itself, painted by a California artist, "We should charge the artist … for the damn mural without history, without culture." The Observer reported they found no similar Facebook posts by the mayor for misdemeanor arrests. SpaceX Brownsville has been highly criticized for disturbing wildlife including sea turtles and whooping cranes in the area with 24/7 lights, crowding a finite area at the mouth of the Rio Grande River, and space manna from exploding rockets.

Richard Mark Glover lives in the Chama Valley of New Mexico with his wife Lorretta and two children after many years in West Texas. He is an award-winning journalist and author



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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.

Portraits from the Big Bend: Glenn Moreland, champion of chuck wagons

By MARY CANTRELL
mkcantrell@bigbendsentinel.com

FORT DAVIS — Glenn Moreland of Fort Davis' Texas Cowboy Outfitters first became fascinated with old chuck wagons while working as a cattle inspector in Fort Bend County near Houston.

"They were all just junk," Glenn said of the deteriorating wagons he often encountered on ranches.

Glenn began to make deals with landowners to haul off the iconic symbols of the American West, which had been languishing in various states of disrepair, and a collection started to form.

"He came home with all these wagons he paid like $45 for, $15 for, and all of a sudden I had a bunch of wagons … in his parents' yard and then in my yard," said his wife Patty, who runs the business side of Texas Cowboy Outfitters — a part blacksmith, part wagon shop and catering venture the couple established in the early 1990s.

Glenn's wagon shop, which was constructed using materials collected from an old barn in Fort Davis, is well-kempt and showcases a completely-restored chuck wagon as well as one undergoing repairs. The shop was once home to a set of 115-year-old salvaged wooden doors, now installed in the couple's Fort Davis home. The doors showcase branding irons Glenn fabricated for clients all over the county — before shipment, he would test out the irons on the doors. Each brand tells a unique story, said Patty.

Hailing from generations of blacksmiths, and with years of carpentry experience under his belt building houses, Glenn has found the practice of restoring antique wagons suited to his skillset, he said. The practice also involves materials he likes working with — wood and metal. Glenn still has the first chuck wagon he ever built, which the couple used for parades and showcasing art — Glenn makes wood carvings and plays music, and Patty, too, is an artist.

The duo used to run the Fort Davis Drug Store in the early '70s. The idea to do a chuck wagon cooking and catering company evolved over time, said Glenn.

"'Course everything out here is sparse, so you have to do a lot of things to make a living sometimes," said Glenn.

Since its inception, Texas Cowboy Outfitters has catered events all over the Southwest, serving up chicken fried steak and beans for hungry customers. Glenn began competing in chuck wagon cooking competitions in the late '80s to help promote the business. While the cuisine they cook for customers isn't always historically accurate, the chuck wagon cooking competitions involve cooking with trail-drive-era dutch ovens, skillets, spices and ingredients.

Glenn is a member of the American Chuck Wagon Association, a nonprofit organization which seeks to preserve the heritage of the chuck wagon and outlines suggested rules for keeping chuck wagon competitions authentic. Glenn has been the recipient of numerous awards for his chuck wagon cooking and restorations.

A range of people are fascinated by chuck wagons, said Patty — they offer a sense of what life was like during cattle drives, which primarily took place in the American West from the mid-1800s to the early 1900s.

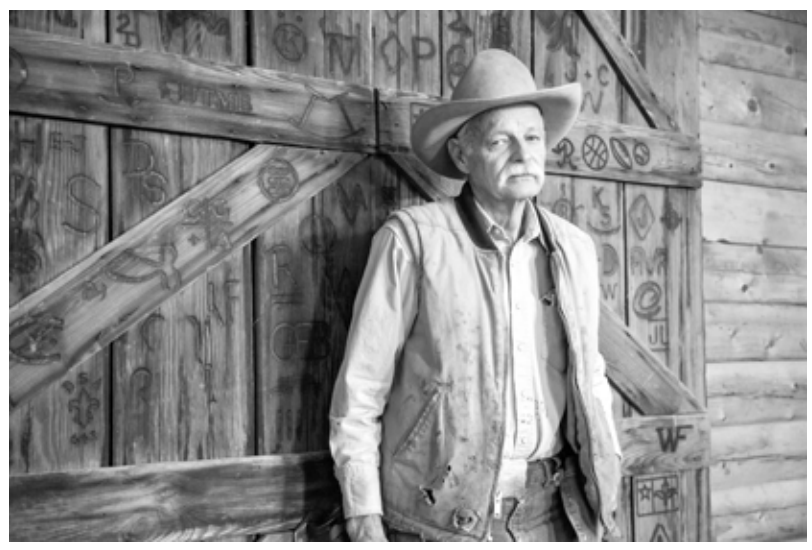


Photo by Mary Cantrell

Glenn Moreland, Fort Davis resident and chuck wagon restoration expert, in his home where 115-year-old doors that used to hang in his workshop are now installed. The blacksmith fabricated branding irons for clients all over the country and used the salvaged wooden doors to test them out.

"They're either interested in history or they're fascinated by the old westerns, the western culture, and they just want to enjoy it and have an experience," said Patty.

In addition to providing chuck wagon cooking at tri-county events, including last month's Lonestar Cowboy Poetry gathering in Alpine, Texas Cowboy Outfitters also cooks for round ups on area ranches and caters parties of all sorts. Glenn boasts a notable client list, having fabricated or repaired historically accurate wagons and carts for Disney World, actor Tommy Lee Jones, and Angel Stadium in California, as well as local entities Marfa and Presidio County Museum and Museum of the Big Bend.

Glenn went through a lot of trial and error in learning how to restore and fabricate authentic chuck wagons, he said, utilizing a thick old book featuring articles and notes on blacksmithing and carriage building. The internet has also proved to be a useful resource, said Glenn, who watches Youtube videos to learn new tricks and searches for images of wagons to determine original paint schemes.

"They didn't have a stencil, they would hand draw. You'd have artists sitting there doing all the scrollwork and stuff on the side of these wagons that were gorgeous, but it's hard to do," said Patty.

Patty said the hours the couple has poured into researching chuck wagons helps inform decisions in the wagon and blacksmith shop, and there's a real dedication to honoring how things were done in the past. When Glenn is unable to fabricate an item himself he often orders parts from Amish wagon builders, whom he has visited with numerous times in the past.

"The Amish have always done it. Those craftsmen are still around," said Patty.

Glenn said he is entering into his next phase as a chuck wagon connoisseur by no longer selling his projects after they are complete. Instead, he will build another barn on their property to house his collection.

"It hurt me to build some and then sell them. [I've thought,] 'I wish I could have kept that one,'" said Glenn.

Among his collection are a John Deere chuck wagon, Peter Shutler chuck wagon — "the Cadillac of the wagons back in the day" — and a Charter Oak wagon that was prominently displayed in his freshly swept-out shop.

The Charter Oak wagon is primarily painted dark green with orange wheels and white accents. In addition to performing structural repairs and constructions, Glenn sees to every detail of a chuck wagon restoration project, he said, including making sure newly-painted wheels have the right aesthetic.

"I painted it, then I sanded it down and made wear marks where it would have been naturally worn and then stained it sort of antiquey so that it doesn't look like it was freshly painted," said Glenn.

Glenn said people who purchase his chuck wagons often use them on ranches for entertaining or in chuck wagon competitions, where everything down to the rivets and screws must be historically accurate.

Most wagons that are still around today are from the early 1900s, Glenn said. Wagons from up north tend to be better maintained because they were stored away in the winter compared to wagons down south that were left outside year round, he said.

Glenn is currently working on a project to repair a chuck wagon that belonged to a client's grandfather — once it has been restored, the client intends to put the newly functional wagon to work by pulling it with a team of mules. Fully restored wagons can cost up to $14,000, a price that has gone up significantly since Glenn started the business, he said, due to wagons becoming more scarce and costs of materials increasing.

Glenn's wagon shop consists of heirloom tools and equipment passed down to him from his grandfather. He and Patty said some younger generations are taking interest in the craft of chuck wagons, including their 13-year-old grandson, who likes to cook on the wagon with Glenn and has vowed to take over his grandfather's blacksmithing one day. But the future of Texas Cowboy Outfitters is ultimately up in the air, Glenn said, although he has no plans to give up the trade anytime soon.

"When I get too old to do this, I'm gonna be out there working on it. As long as I can crawl out there and do something, I'm gonna be working on it," said Glenn. "I'll let the kids decide whether to disperse the tools or use them, if they want to keep it and just want to pick it up later on. But I can't picture myself selling anything."

Crowley Theater screening to raise money for Ukraine

MARFA — The Crowley Theater will host a screening next week of a new film from a Ukrainian filmmaker, with proceeds going towards Ukrainian charities.

Natalya Vorozhbit's Bad Roads tells four stories set in the Russian-dominated Donbass in eastern Ukraine and depicts the pressures that Russia's presence places on the lives of Ukrainians. It will be screened at the Crowley Theater on March 16 at 7:30 p.m. as part of the "in front of us" film series, which celebrates women filmmakers.

Vorozhbit, along with producer Dimitriy Minzyanov, is currently in Ukraine and had four days of filming left for her second film when the bombs first dropped. When asked whether Bad Roads could be screened in Marfa, they answered, "Yes, but please make it a fundraiser for Ukraine. We need your support." The filmmakers supplied a list of Ukrainian charities.

The film will be preceded by animated short film, "Heartbeat," by Marfa High School student Aubrie Aguilar — the film recently placed fourth in the state semifinals of the University Interscholastic League.

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Public Open House Notice
TxDOT 2023 – 2026
Rural Statewide Transportation Improvement Program (RSTIP)

The Texas Department of Transportation (TxDOT) El Paso District will conduct three public open houses and one virtual meeting for the TxDOT 2023-2026 Rural Statewide Transportation Improvement Program (RSTIP). The District planning and programming territory is about 21,700 square miles covering six counties in the state of Texas including El Paso County, Hudspeth County, Culberson County, Jeff Davis County, Presidio County, and Brewster County. The RSTIP is a short-range program of projects developed by the District in cooperation with rural planning organizations (RPO) that covers a four-year period. The District Rural TIP for the Spring 2022 Quarterly STIP revision contains a prioritized listing of all projects including regionally significant projects proposed for state, federal, and local funding in all areas of the TxDOT El Paso District outside the El Paso Metropolitan Planning Organization boundaries.

The public open houses will be held at the following locations (**all open houses will have the same information**):

- **Virtual Public Meeting – Monday, March 28**, 2022 from 4:00/3:00 p.m. (CDT/MDT) until 6:00/5:00 p.m. (CDT/MDT). Participants can join:
  - via Zoom shorturl.at/dnoJ4
  - via telephone **(346) 248-7799**, webinar ID: 861 8159 1969. Passcode: 032 822

  ** This virtual meeting will be recorded and posted to TxDOT.gov for two weeks until Friday, April 15, 2022.
- **Van Horn - Tuesday, March 29**, 2022 from 4:00/3:00 p.m. (CDT/MDT) until 6:00/5:00 p.m. (CDT/MDT), at the Van Horn Convention Center and Visitors Bureau, 1801 A. West Broadway, Van Horn, Texas 79855
- **Alpine - Wednesday, March 30**, 2022 from 4:00/3:00 p.m. (CDT/MDT) until 6:00/5:00 p.m. (CDT/MDT), at the Alpine Civic Center, 100 North 13th Street, Alpine, Texas 79830
- **Presidio - Thursday, March 31**, 2022 from 4:00/3:00 p.m. (CDT/MDT) until 6:00/5:00 p.m. (CDT/MDT), at the Presidio Activity Center, 1400 East O'Reilly Street, Presidio, Texas 79845

All interested community members are encouraged to attend the public open house and provide feedback to the 2021-2024 RSTIP. The open house will be conducted in English. Some printed materials may be provided in Spanish. Persons interested in attending the meeting who have special communication or accommodation needs, or need an interpreter, are encouraged to contact Lauren Macias-Cervantes (915) 790-4200 or via email at Lauren.MaciasCervantes@txdot.gov. Requests should be made no later than five (5) working days prior to the public open house. TxDOT will make every reasonable effort to accommodate these needs.

Information about the RSTIP is available for review at www.txdot.gov (keyword El Paso Rural STIP), at the public meeting, and/or a copy may be obtained at various TxDOT locations, including: the **El Paso District Headquarters office** located at 13301 Gateway Boulevard West in El Paso, the **Alpine Area Office** located at 2400 North Highway 118 (Fort Davis Highway) in Alpine; and the **TxDOT Maintenance offices: Dell City** on FM 1437; **Sierra Blanca** at 700 FM 1111; **Van Horn** at 2001 Van Horn Drive (US 90), 1.5 miles south of town; **Fort Davis** at 104 Musquiz Drive (SH 118); **Marfa** at 809 West San Antonio (US 90); and **Presidio** on East FM 170.

For additional information about the public meeting, project documentation, or for any other project related questions, please contact Rebecca Reyes at (915) 790-4200 or Rebecca.Reyes@txdot.gov. Public comments, both verbal and written, may be submitted at the scheduled public open house(s). After the public open houses, written comments may be mailed to the Texas Department of Transportation - El Paso, Attention: Rebecca Reyes RE: 2023-2026 RSTIP, 13301 Gateway Blvd. West, El Paso TX 79928 or emailed to Rebecca.Reyes@txdot.gov. Written comments must be submitted and/or postmarked by **Friday April 15, 2022** to be part of the official record.

The environmental review, consultation, and other actions required by applicable federal environmental laws for this project are being, or have been, carried out by TxDOT pursuant to 23 U.S.C. 327 and a Memorandum of Understanding dated December 9, 2019 and executed by FHWA and TxDOT.

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Aviso Público de Casa Abierta
TxDOT 2023 – 2026
Programa de Mejora de Transporte Rural a Nivel Estatal (RSTIP)

El Departamento de Transporte de Texas (TxDOT) El Distrito de El Paso llevarán a cabo tres jornadas públicas de puertas abiertas para TxDOT 2023-2026 Programa de Mejora del Transporte Rural en todo el Estado (RSTIP). El territorio de planificación y programación del distrito es de 21,700 millas cuadradas que cubren seis condados en el estado de Texas, incluido el Condado de El Paso, Condado de Hudspeth, Condado de Culberson, Condado de Jeff Davis, Condado de Presidio, y Condado de Brewster. El RSTIP es un programa de proyectos de corto alcance desarrollado por el distrito en cooperación con las organizaciones de planificación rural (RPO) que cubre un período de cuatro años. El TIP rural del distrito para la revisión trimestral del STIP de la primavera de 2022 contiene una lista priorizada de todos los proyectos, incluidos los proyectos regionalmente significativos propuestos para financiamiento estatal, federal, y financiamiento local en todas las áreas del distrito TxDOT de El Paso fuera de los límites de la Organización de Planificación Metropolitana de El Paso.

Las jornadas de puertas abiertas públicas se realizarán en las siguientes ubicaciones (**todas las puertas abiertas tendrán la misma información**):

- **Reunión pública virtual - lunes 28 de marzo de 2022** de 4:00/3:00 p.m. (CDT/MDT) hasta las 6:00/5:00 p.m. (CDT/MDT)
  - a través de Zoom shorturl.at/dnoJ4
  - por teléfono **(346) 248-7799**, ID de seminario web: 861 8159 1969. Código de acceso: 032 822

  **Esta reunión virtual se grabará y se publicará en TxDOT.gov durante dos semanas hasta el viernes 15 de abril de 2022.
- **Van Horn - martes, 29 de marzo de 2022** de 4:00/3:00 p.m. (CDT/MDT) hasta las 6:00/5:00 p.m. (CDT/MDT), en el Centro de Convenciones y Oficina de Visitantes de Van Horn, ubicado en 1801 A. West Broadway, Van Horn, Texas 79855
- **Alpine - miércoles, 30 de marzo de 2022** de 4:00/3:00 p.m. (CDT/MDT) hasta las 6:00/5:00 p.m. (CDT/MDT), en el Centro Cívico de Alpine, ubicado en 100 North 13th Street, Alpine, Texas 79830
- **Presidio - jueves, 31 de marzo** de 2022 de 4:00/3:00 p.m. (CDT/MDT) hasta las 6:00/5:00 p.m. (CDT/MDT), en el Centro de Actividades de Presidio, ubicado en 1400 East O'Reilly Street, Presidio, Texas 79845

Se alienta a todos los miembros de la comunidad interesados a asistir a la jornada de puertas abiertas y proporcionar comentarios sobre el RSTIP 2021-2024. La jornada de puertas abiertas se llevará a cabo en inglés. Algunos materiales impresos pueden ser proporcionados en español. Se recomienda a las personas interesadas en asistir a la reunión que tengan necesidades especiales de comunicación, necesidades de alojamiento o que necesiten un intérprete, que se comuniquen con Lauren Macias-Cervantes (915) 790 -4200 o por correo electrónico a Lauren.MaciasCervantes@txdot.gov. Las solicitudes deben hacerse a más tardar cinco (5) días hábiles antes de la casa abierta al público. TxDOT hará todos los esfuerzos razonables para satisfacer estas necesidades.

Para obtener información adicional sobre la reunión pública, la documentación del proyecto o cualquier otra pregunta relacionada con el proyecto, por favor comuníquese con Rebecca Reyes al (915)790-4200 o por correo electrónico a Rebecca.Reyes@txdot.gov. Los comentarios públicos, tanto verbales como escritos, pueden presentarse en el horario de puertas abiertas al público. Después de la jornada de puertas abiertas, los comentarios escritos pueden enviarse por correo al Departamento de Transporte de Texas- El Paso, atención a Rebecca Reyes RE: 2021-2024 RSTIP, 13301 Gateway Blvd. West, El Paso Tx 79928 o por correo electrónico a Rebecca.Reyes@txdot.gov Los comentarios escritos deben enviarse por correo antes del viernes 10 de Abril, 2020 para formar parte del registro oficial.

TxDOT está llevando a cabo o ha llevado a cabo la revisión ambiental, la consulta y otras acciones requeridas por las leyes federales aplicables el medio ambiente para este Proyecto 23 U.S.C. 327 y un Memorandum de Entendimiento del 09 de Diciembre, 2019, y ejecutado por FHWA y TxDOT.and TxDOT.

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Community

Juarez-born playwright Georgina Escobar returns to Marfa Live Arts' Playwright Workshop this week

By JD GARCIA

MARFA – Marfa Live Arts' Playwright Workshop returns to Marfa High School this week with special guest playwright Georgina Escobar returning to the classroom to help Marfa students write their own plays. The workshop, which marks Marfa Live Arts' 11th year, will culminate in the popular yearly-staged production of young Marfa playwrights' works.

"We're very thankful for the opportunity to keep going," said Marfa High School English teacher Linda Ojeda, who has also been a part of the workshop since its inception, noting that students that have participated in the workshop have seen success following their high school years. "So far, I've seen that the kids we've worked with and who have been a part of the workshop have seen success academically. It's good for them to have this opportunity to do something academically in a competitive nature."

The return of Escobar, who is currently developing a 10-episode science fiction audio series called Sonoro, is a cause for excitement. "I think that, last time [Escobar] was here, the kids were really able to collaborate with her because she has the same background as a lot of them, with a bilingual border background," Ojeda said of the Juarez-born playwright. "Last time she was here, we had a strong academic graduate class, and she had helped the students really find their voice in writing plays." The workshop, she added, helped the students understand that writing doesn't always have to follow strict structures. "They were just used to writing for standardized tests and they learned that they could write in their own language," she said.

Escobar's initial residency at Marfa Live Arts took place in 2017. "At the time, I was workshopping a new play called 'Penny Pinball Presents The Beacons,' and I can say that my week in Marfa as a resident playwright for Marfa Live Arts was invaluable," she said. "Aside from that tremendous gift, I was honored and humbled to also teach the workshop at Marfa High School, and one particular highlight of that week was going to see the softball team play on my last day there. The ladies killed it! I was just so impressed by the work that I saw from the students that year, leading towards our joy and not necessarily writing about our traumas."

When asked about Ojeda's statement that Escobar's background helped the students relate more, and thus allowing them to explore writing further, Escobar agreed.

"Yes, perhaps this is true. I grew up in Mexico, and Spanish is my first language. Like many of the Marfa students, I didn't learn English until my teens, so I particularly remember connecting with a couple of kids who had just moved to Marfa from various parts of Chihuahua and who only spoke Spanish," she explained. "It was great to offer them the same workshop and also invite them to write in Spanish, since I could read it.



Photo courtesy of Marfa Live Arts

Georgina Escobar

I think for those of us who are immigrants to this country, seeing another person 'like us' is very important for our growth and development as artists. I honor all of the ones that participated, but I recall the winner — a savvy little piece about our nation told through satire, puppetry and wit."

Escobar's latest play is titled "Stone Heart" and was a part of Kilroy's List – a prestigious American theater industry honor for female and trans playwrights – in 2019. "I feel it's as close to historical fiction as I'll ever get to details from my family legacy in Ciudad Juarez," she said.

The Marfa Live Arts Playwright Workshop is supported by Wyatt Ranches Foundation, Texas Commission for the Arts and Marfa Education Foundation. More information on Escobar's work can be found at www.georginaescobar.com, and more information on Marfa Live Arts can be found at www.marfalivearts.com.

Marfa Parks and Recreation
invites you
Thursday March 17 6 pm
MAC Building Gym



Presentation of preliminary concepts
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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.

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

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DIFFICULTY RATING: ★★☆☆☆

Solution from last week's puzzle:

SOLUTION:

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

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Universal Crossword

Edited by David Steinberg February 21, 2022

ACROSS
1 Serious movie genre
6 Common number of weeks given for notice
9 What a snooze button pauses
14 Protector for waves
15 Play it by ___
16 Grill brand
17 Colorful fish
18 "You ___ So Beautiful"
19 Expresses speechlessness
20 *Feminist slogan coined in the '90s
23 Grilled sandwich
26 Kermit creator Jim
30 Ma's ma, maybe
31 "The final frontier"
35 National sport of Japan
36 SAT alternative
37 Flavoring from the ocean
39 Floating leaf of a lily
40 *Math whiz
43 Like some plant-based diets
44 Bay Area airport code
45 It goes with "neither"
46 "Shabbat ___"
49 Candy with white nonpareils
52 Payment for canceling an accepted manuscript
54 (More information elsewhere)
55 North Pole worker
56 *Outfielder's catch
58 Great Basin native
59 Town NNE of Santa Fe
61 6-Across, in cards
62 Libra's birthstone, often
63 Boast
64 Mopes
65 Knee bend in ballet
66 Jekyll's alter ego
67 "Finding Your Roots" network
68 See to, as a bar

DOWN
1 Banned pesticide
2 Feel remorse over
3 It may be abstract
4 Place for a teacher's comments
5 "Here we go ___!"
6 Blue-green
7 Bend out of shape
8 "Milk's favorite cookie"
9 "You're making me blush!"
10 Takes in, as information
11 Six-pack contents?
12 Public image, briefly
13 ___ Fields cookies
21 Out of bed
22 Pup
23 Org. for Tiger Woods
24 Curved landmark at Washington Square Park
25 *It may be free of additives
27 Jay-Z and Beyonce, for one ... or a hint to what can precede both words of each starred clue's answer
28 Epps of "House"
29 Silent approval
32 Grps. that fund campaigns
33 Starting on
34 G.I.'s garb
37 Remove, like a branch
38 Method of escape in "The Great Escape"
41 Shopping center
42 Mickey Mouse or Scooby-Doo
46 Humorous segment of "In Living Color"
47 Actress Swank
48 Blends together
49 Tennis champ Monica
50 Achieve
51 Removed the rind from
53 Give a once-over
54 Burlap bags
57 Onion, e.g.
60 Stockholm's country: Abbr.
62 Choose

PREVIOUS PUZZLE ANSWER

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

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☺MARFA SCHOOL LUNCH MENU☺

MAR	Thu, Mar 10	Fri, Mar 11	Mon, Mar 14	Tue, Mar 15	Wed, Mar 16
BREAKFAST	BREAKFAST BURRITO	FRENCH TOAST, YOGURT	SPRING BREAK!	SPRING BREAK!	SPRING BREAK!
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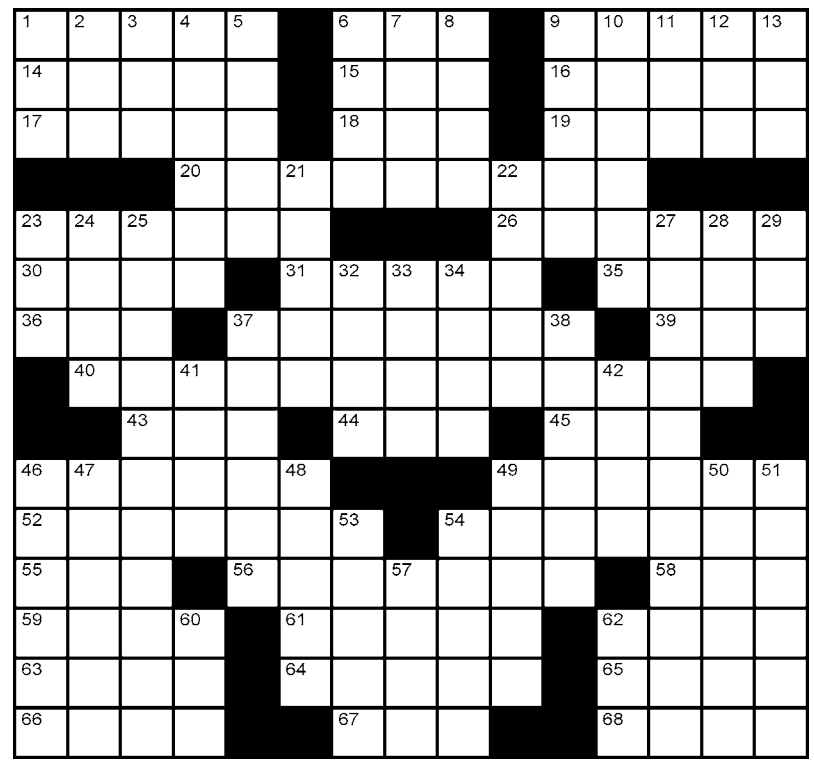
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MARFA SHORTHORNS SPORTS CALENDAR

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FRI, MAR 11: Softball at TBD
SAT, MAR 12: Softball at Crane, V at 12:00 pm, JV at 2:00 pm

2/21 **Fabulous Firsts** *by Beth Rubin and Christina Iverson*



Webb Gallery purchases historic Masonic lodge in Fort Davis

By MARY CANTRELL
mkcantrell@bigbendsentinel.com

FORT DAVIS — Julie and Bruce Webb, owners of Waxahachie's Webb Gallery, which exhibits historic and contemporary Texas folk art and antiques, first saw Fort Davis' abandoned Masonic lodge in 2016 while on a driving tour led by the late historian and writer Lonn Taylor, with whom they were acquainted.

"He said, 'You guys need this building.' He had seen our building in Waxahachie, which is historic from 1902, and he knew about our interest in fraternal artwork. And we said, 'Yes we do,'" said Julie.

The Webbs kept a close eye on the building from that day forward and finally got their chance to become its owners when Jeff Davis County, who used to own the structure, opened it up for sealed bids last year. The Webbs bid as much as they could possibly afford, they said, and made the seller aware of their experience restoring historic buildings and vision for the space.

After some time they learned they were chosen for the sale and recently came into town from Waxahachie — a day's drive — to sign paperwork at the county courthouse and to start clearing out the space, which has been largely inactive since the 1980s.

"We're just gonna keep working on the building and let the plan unfold and try to pay attention to what the building tells us more than what we're going to tell it," Julie laughs. "It's older than we are, it's got a lot more wisdom."

The history of Masonic and Odd Fellows organizations in Texas can be traced back to the 1830s. Due to an aging constituency and decline in active members, smaller Masonic lodges, like the ones in Fort Davis and Marfa, eventually began to merge with larger branches, like Alpine's, which is still in existence today. Under the Webbs' ownership, the historic Fort Davis Masonic lodge will be restored to serve as a gallery space and museum for the couple's collection of artwork and artifacts of fraternal secret societies.

"The lodge hall upstairs will serve as a fraternal museum and library, and downstairs we will have an extension of Webb Gallery from Waxahachie with artwork, antiques and books," said Julie.

The couple began the restoration process by removing office cubicles that were installed years earlier. They intend to create big, flowing open spaces that better reflect the building's history and integrity, said Julie. They are also going to restore all the windows and work from historic photographs when possible.

"We like the structure to tell the story, and a lot of times in historic preservation it's [about] what not to do," said Julie.

The two-story pink limestone landmark was constructed in 1906 and is situated in downtown Fort Davis along the historic San Antonio–El Paso Road, or Overland Trail, a trade route between San Antonio and El Paso utilized from the mid- to late 1800s.

The structure, after initially serving as a drug store, acted as Jeff Davis Masonic Lodge No. 896 from the 1920s to the mid-1970s. The second story was added on to the structure in 1928 in order to serve as the masons' lodge hall and meeting space. It is one of few two-story structures in town. Triangular lintels top the building's entrance and large front-facing windows. A still visible Freemason symbol — a builder's square joined by a compass — near the structure's peak reveals its past.

Immediately next to the old lodge is the "Scobee Adobe," an 1884-built adobe home where newspaper man and pulp fiction writer Barry Scobee, for whom Scobee Mountain is named, lived. "The bard of the Big Bend" wrote a number of books on the area in addition to contributing to Weird Tales and other pulp magazines. Bruce said they have been successful in purchasing Scobee material on eBay.

Their Instagram announcement about the acquisition received over 1,000 likes and 89 comments from Webb Gallery followers and well-known Texas artists showing support and excitement for the forthcoming project. Similar to their Waxahachie location, which has been operating for 34 years, the Fort Davis gallery will host four rotating exhibitions a year and likely invite in visiting artists. Julie said while plans will continue to unfold, they are looking forward to the opportunity to create



Photo courtesy of the Texas Historical Commission

The Fort Davis Masonic Lodge in May 1978.

a new spin on what they do.

"There are people, who we love their artwork and we don't necessarily show in Waxahachie, that might fit this landscape better. So it's definitely an extension of what we do, but it will be reflected by the landscape here as well," said Julie.

The duo's collection of Masonic and Odd Fellows folk art and artifacts consists of items from all over the country purchased from defunct lodges. In addition to traveling to antique fairs around the U.S., the Webbs ran ads in Antique Trader for "old lodge items." Bruce, who is also an artist, recalled one of their first acquisitions: an assortment of old costumes, robes, hats and tunics fit with the emblem of the all seeing eye. He said they were attracted to the "old ritualistic feel" of the items. Bruce is also the co-author of As Above So Below, Art of the American Fraternal Society, 1850-1930, which came out shortly before the couple was introduced to the Fort Davis lodge.

The Webbs were mostly unaware of any others building similar collections, but a current exhibition on view at Austin's Bob Bullock Museum proves they aren't the only ones with an interest in the folk art of secret fraternal societies.

In addition to having existing connections to West Texas and an appreciation for its landscape, history and architecture, Bruce has been a member of the Freemasons since he joined the Waxahachie lodge at age 21. Bruce has even met with a previous Fort Davis lodge member, he said.

The Webbs were motivated, in part, to purchase the old Fort Davis Masonic lodge after reassessing their priorities in life in the wake of the pandemic and some recent familial losses, said Julie.

The two will continue to run their Waxahachie space but will make regular trips to West Texas and update their website accordingly, they said. The Webbs hope to help preserve the spirit of timelessness in Fort Davis and foresee their improvements to the building turning it into a welcoming space again.

"I think that we will be bringing [the town] a new exciting slice of humanity and art," said Julie.

As fraternal lodges once acted as shared community spaces, the Webbs hope to reestablish the building as a gathering space for locals and visitors, they said. In recent days, curious citizens have been stopping by to meet Julie and Bruce, sharing advice and expressing interest in their plans for the historic structure.

"We started out in a small town. And we know what that means to be different in a small town community. We're not entering into that one blindly," said Julie. "We've always just done our own thing and love what we do and love sharing it with the community."

OBITUARY



Acosta

Siria Acosta Toscano entered eternal rest on February 19, 2022, but her love of life didn't come to an end with her death. She was surrounded by loved ones who will continue to honor her legacy by living life to the fullest. She was born to the late Rodolfo and Elodia Acosta on February 15, 1958.

Siria, also known as Sid Vicious, was raised on Catholic values and rock 'n' roll tendencies. She lived an exciting life filled with adventure, laughter and love. She was passionate about music and her beloved Marfa. She was always willing to help anyone in need, even before herself, and impacted many people's lives throughout the years.

She was a strong supporter of the community, whether it be school fundraisers, church bazaars or benefit concerts. She leaves to cherish her memories: her two sons, Jaime Acosta and husband Todd, Alex Acosta and wife Mandy; grandchildren Jacob, Conrad, Aubrey and Dominic; one great-granddaughter, Veronica; sisters Mary Jimenez, Betty Acosta, Pricy Renteria, JoAnn Acosta, Debbie Acosta; also numerous nephews, nieces, cousins, family and friends — all who loved her dearly and will never forget her tenacity, wit, charm and undying love and caring for them.

Rosary will be at St. Mary's Catholic Church on April 2 at 9:30 a.m., followed by a funeral Mass. The family is asking for donations in lieu of flowers at this time.

• • •



Donley

Ken Donley passed away on February 14, 2022, after a courageous battle with cancer. He was born in Hexham, England, on July 23, 1953, to William and Heather Donley.

He attended Eastcliffe Grammar School and then graduated from Newcastle University in 1975, with a degree in art and design. After graduating, he utilized his degree by going to work for a local high-end fashion store and jean manufacturer.

In 1982, he married Nancy Fowlkes from Marfa, Texas. Ken and Nancy lived in England until 1983, when they moved to San Antonio. After moving to San Antonio, he spent several years in retail working for Foley's and Macy's. In 1998, he moved into the banking industry, working as a commercial banker for NationsBank, Bank of America, Compass and TexStar National Bank. In 2009, he decided to go into ranching full time in Bandera County, where he ran a successful cow-calf operation for the last 13 years. Ken was never happier than when he was working with his cattle. When he wasn't working, he really enjoyed fishing the tanks and streams around Bandera. He loved soccer, and as a young man was recruited by the Newcastle United Football Club to be a part of their developmental program. He was active in the San Antonio Youth Soccer community and coached many youth teams over the years. He was an artist, and his family proudly displays his paintings done in oils and watercolors. He loved to sit with his grandsons and draw pictures for them. He attended and was a member of St. George Episcopal Church for over 35 years. He was a kind and cheerful man, and a friend to many in the San Antonio and Bandera communities. He was deeply loved by his family and friends and will forever be missed.

Ken was preceded in death by his parents, Heather and Bill Donley; and grandparents, Mary and George Bell, Katy and Wilfred Donley. He is survived by his wife, Nancy Anne Donley; sons Stephen William Donley, Stewart Charlton Donley and wife Kallie Elizabeth Donley; proud grandad to grandsons Jaxon Stewart and Samuel Rial Donley; his sister Elizabeth Price of Halifax, England; nephew Christopher McGill; niece Jenna McGill; grandnieces Isobel and Sienna McGill; grandnephews Alfie and Mason McGill.

Service will be Sunday, March 13 at 3 p.m., at St. George Episcopal Church, 6904 West Avenue, 78213 in San Antonio. Reverend Ram Lopez officiating. Reception to follow in the church parish hall. Charitable contributions may be made to the San Antonio Stock Show & Rodeo Youth Scholarship Fund over the phone at 210-225-0575, or a check may be sent to San Antonio Livestock Expo Inc., Po Box 200230, SA, TX 78220 in memory of Ken Donley. Flowers can be sent to St. George Episcopal Church.

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JUDD
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Advance reservations are required and are only available online. For the safety of everyone, masks and social distancing are required. Group capacity is limited.
La Mansana de Chinati/The Block
Thursday–Sunday
11:00am–12:45pm
4:30–6:15pm
Guided visits begin at the gated entrance at 400 West El Paso Street.
The Studios
Friday and Saturday
2:00–3:45pm
Guided visits begin at the Architecture Studio, the former Marfa National Bank, at 101 North Highland Avenue.
Visit juddfoundation.org for more information and to book reservations.

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Classifieds & public notices

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.

Now Accepting HOT Grant Applications

The City of Marfa is accepting HOT grant applications for events occurring April 1 - September 30, 2022.

Applications are due by 5 pm on March 14, 2022.

Visit www.cityofmarfa.org/hot-tax for more information and to download an application.

Questions can be sent to hotgrants@cityofmarfa.com.

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THE PRESIDIO COUNTY APPRAISAL DISTRICT OFFICE
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DUE TO FIELDWORK

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WE WILL OPEN ON THE FOLLOWING MONDAY AT 8:00 A.M.

THANK YOU
PRESIDIO CAD

PUBLIC NOTICE

The Marfa City Council has passed Ordinance No. 2022-03, which adopts the state rules known as the Texas Food Establishment Rules and makes them enforceable within the city limits of Marfa.

Beginning on March 31, 2022, all food establishments including food service establishments, retail food stores, temporary food establishments, mobile food units, and roadside food vendors within the city limits will be required to have a permit posted on site to operate. Permits must be renewed annually. There is currently **no fee** for permits.

The purpose of this ordinance is to protect both public health and the public wastewater system. Provisions regarding permit applications, inspections, suspensions, and revocations are contained in the ordinance.

Non-profit organizations are exempt from permitting requirements, but must comply with state rules. Beginning March 31, 2022, no food establishments may operate without a permit. Upon conviction, violators may be fined up to $2,000.00 plus costs of court.

Ordinance No. 2022-03 and the Food Establishment Permit Application may be found in its entirety at www.cityofmarfa.com.

PUBLIC NOTICE

The City of Marfa is seeking RFQ's for work on the Marfa and Presidio County Museum building.

Deadline is March 28, 2022.

For more details visit www.cityofmarfa.com

PUBLIC NOTICE

Brief Explanatory Statements of Proposed Constitutional Amendments Special Election, May 7, 2022

Proposition Number 1
(SJR 2)

SJR 2 proposes a constitutional amendment authorizing the legislature to provide for the reduction of the amount of a limitation on the total amount of property taxes that may be imposed for general elementary and secondary public school purposes on the residence homestead of a person who is elderly or disabled in order to reflect any statutory reduction in the maximum compressed rate of the maintenance and operations taxes imposed for those purposes on the person's homestead from the preceding tax year.

The proposed amendment will appear on the ballot as follows: **"The constitutional amendment authorizing the legislature to provide for the reduction of the amount of a limitation on the total amount of ad valorem taxes that may be imposed for general elementary and secondary public school purposes on the residence homestead of a person who is elderly or disabled to reflect any statutory reduction from the preceding tax year in the maximum compressed rate of the maintenance and operations taxes imposed for those purposes on the homestead."**

Proposition Number 2
(SJR 2)

SJR 2 proposes a constitutional amendment increasing the amount of the residence homestead exemption from property taxes for public school purposes from $25,000 to $40,000.

The proposed amendment will appear on the ballot as follows: **"The constitutional amendment increasing the amount of the residence homestead exemption from ad valorem taxation for public school purposes from $25,000 to $40,000."**

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