THE BIG BEND
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Alamito Foundation outfitted with new weather, soil monitoring stations

By MARY CANTRELL
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PRESIDIO COUNTY — Twenty miles south of Marfa, on the Alamito Foundation ranch, a new self-contained, solar-powered weather and soil monitoring station is providing real time data on the area's temperature, wind speed, solar radiation and rainfall as well as soil temperature and moisture levels.

The weather and soil monitoring stations were installed by the Texas Water Development Board (TWDB) in late February with the help of locals Ernesto Zubia, Eduardo Ocon and Nevin Nunez along with Alamito Foundation employees Programs Director Caroline Travis and Land Operations Manager Dr. Lynn Loomis.

"It helps [The TWDB] connect the data across the state and helps us because we have live weather updates for the ranch," said Travis.

The newly-established Alamito Foundation, which is awaiting official nonprofit status, is the brainchild of Marfa resident Garey Willbanks, co-founder and principal of Teal System and Republican candidate for Presidio County Commissioner Precinct 4. The foundation's mission is twofold — to improve the lives of Big Bend's youth through educational programs and career preparation and to practice responsible land management by restoring native grasses and protecting watersheds on its 3,400-acre ranch located in the Alamito Valley.

The foundation considered purchasing the whole weather and soil monitoring system themselves, said Travis, which costs around $20,000, but discovered the TWDB would install the equipment for free on behalf of their TexMesonet program, which was established in 2016.

Data collected at the site can help forecast weather and determine when fire and freeze warnings need to be issued, according to the TWDB. For the Alamito Foundation, specific weather data about their property will also be utilized to make decisions about when to perform certain ranch operations, like prescribed burns, which revolve around rainfall and wind data, said Travis.

Travis said by installing the station early on, the foundation will be able to gather data over a longer period of time, helping them notice weather trends and patterns on the property.

"This gives us information from

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Photo by Mary Cantrell

Cody McCollum, founder of Fort Davis-based mushroom farm Big Bend Fungi Company, in the grow room where fruiting blocks are stored to produce mushrooms. The grow room typically maintains 80 to 98 percent relative humidity and temperatures between 50 to 65 degrees. Ultrasonic foggers funnel fog into the grow room and an exhaust system pulls air out to cut down on the amount of spores and carbon dioxide.
READ MORE ON PAGE 5.

The City of Marfa adopts new ordinance regarding regulation of food establishments, issues new permit requirement

By MARY CANTRELL
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MARFA — Food establishments within Marfa city limits — including restaurants, retail food stores, temporary food establishments, mobile food units and roadside food vendors — are now required to obtain a permit from the city in order to operate, with a deadline of March 31.

A new ordinance recently approved by city council adopts Texas' food establishment rules and requires a city-led inspection focusing on adequate grease traps be completed before permits are issued. Establishments which have passed state health inspections should already meet Texas' food establishment rules, said City Manager Mandy Roane.

"The purpose of this ordinance is to protect both public health and the public wastewater system," states the city's website.

Roane said the new process will also allow for the city to regulate all businesses fairly across the board, an issue previously raised as a concern, she said.

"Making sure that all food establishments are being held to the same standards listed in the permit application seems like a reasonable way to do that," said Roane.

The ordinance further outlines various processes regarding food establishments, including a requirement to submit construction plans before work has begun if extensively remodeling or converting an existing structure.

Nonprofit organizations, such as churches, are exempt from the city's new permit requirement, but must still comply with state rules, according to the city. Food establishments without a posted permit will face a $2,000 fine plus court costs. There is no fee to apply for the permit, which holders will need to renew annually.

The one-page permit application, which can be found on the city's website, inquires as to whether at least one employee holds a Texas Food Managers Certification or a Food Protection Manager Certification, whether the facility is outfitted with a grease trap — as required by another city ordinance — and the pound capacity and company name of the grease trap. Copies of a most recent health inspection and Texas sales tax ID permit must also be submitted along with

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Parks and recreation board, citizens select design for Coffield Park gazebo additions

By MARY CANTRELL
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MARFA — Windswept park-goers filtered into the Marfa Activities Center gymnasium last week to shelter from the dust and voice their opinions on the Coffield Park Improvement Project's latest design plans. Those gathered settled on a design that will see separate bathroom and kitchen structures built behind the existing gazebo.

The Marfa Parks and Recreation Board is presently looking to improve the park's amenities while keeping in mind future larger-scale upgrades, dependent upon the MAC feasibility study, which is currently underway, and a forthcoming master plan for the park.

"We are putting the buildings behind the gazebo so that they enhance the gazebo that's there without changing the whole view and feel of the park," said Board President Trey Gerfers.

Other board members present were Councilmember Buck Johnston, Joe Cashiola, Marshall Ramsey and Mayor Pro Tem Irma Salgado.

Robert Meckfessel, president of DSGN Associates, who lives part time in Marfa, led the presentation on two potential design schemes for gazebo additions. Both included new three-stalled restrooms for men and women, a full kitchen complete with stove, refrigerator, sink and counter, plus a storage area.

In keeping with the look of the existing stone gazebo, additional structures would be built from the same materials and include a similar pitch metal roof, said Meckfessel. The concrete plaza will also remain. Facilities will not be air conditioned but will include open air ventilation.

"They're not going to be smelly, grungy restrooms, they are going to be very airy and open — think like a good TxDOT restroom which you might go to," said Meckfessel.

When put up for a vote, meeting attendees unanimously voted for the scheme that involved building separate bathroom and kitchen structures on either side of the gazebo, which would allow for the area directly behind the gazebo to remain open. The less-favored design situated the bathrooms and kitchen in the same building directly behind the gazebo. The two-

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City of Presidio passes hazardous materials ordinance

By SAM KARAS
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PRESIDIO — At Monday night's regular meeting, Presidio City Council passed its first ordinance aimed at restricting the commercial transport of hazardous materials through the city. The ordinance prohibits transloading of hazardous materials over 5,000 gallons within city limits and introduces a legal framework to eventually designate a hazardous materials route for cargo bound for the Presidio International Bridge.

The ordinance was drafted by city council members and their legal advisors in response to a planned diesel transport operation that investors hope will mark the "rebirth of rail" in Presidio. The operation would entail the shipment of diesel to Presidio by rail, where the fuel will be transferred onto tanker trucks through a process called transloading. Seventy-five to 150 trucks a week would then make their way through the heart of Presidio on their journey to the bridge.

Locals have raised numerous health and safety concerns in the months since the plan was revealed, and Presidio county officials have worked to update their emergency response plan to include hazmat-related incidents. The trucking route as proposed by Strobel Energy Group, the company responsible for potentially transloading the fuel, would truck thousands of gallons of hazardous material past the Presidio Elementary School every week, which has been a subject of concern for some officials.

Presidio officials hope to expand business and economic opportunities in the remote border city. The Presidio Port of Entry is classified as a "small" port by Customs and Border Protection, but with quick access to Chihuahua City, there's room to grow. "Big trucks are coming, and they're wanting to go through Presidio," City Administrator Brad Newton told a handful of representatives from state Sen. César Blanco's office on Zoom in February.

Still, locals hope that the inevitable growth can be balanced with care for the health and safety of Presidio residents. "It's a lot of hazmat, and we're not ready for it," Councilmember and former Presidio first responder John Razo said back in January.

Beyond potential threats to human safety, there's the local ecosystem to consider. The transloading and trucking route is located uphill

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In the aftermath of enhanced smuggling charges, Brewster County seeks to expand jail

By SAM KARAS
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ALPINE — In the months after a package of enhanced human smuggling laws were handed down from Governor Greg Abbott's office, Brewster County officials have struggled to keep the county jail under capacity. The jail currently holds 55 people, but Sheriff Ronny Dodson would like to see that number doubled. The county recently applied for $5.9 million in funding through the governor's Operation Lone Star initiative, which funnels money into border counties to beef up law enforcement, in hopes of doubling the size of the facility and making other improvements.

In the past year, Gov. Abbott's office has made a number of changes to state immigration law under Operation Lone Star, the umbrella term for a set of policies to address what Abbott has deemed "a crisis at the southern border." Border counties across the state have received funding for law enforcement — Dodson's department has already netted just under $1 million — but Operation Lone Star also involves a massive deployment of military force to the border and changes to state law that make it easier to arrest people on smuggling charges and hands down enhanced penalties for the crime.

Prior to the new laws, people suspected of smuggling could only be charged by the state if law enforcement was able to prove that they had received money for their services. That proof is no longer needed to charge someone with human smuggling. Abbott's laws also upgrade all smuggling charges to felonies, with extra penalties for trespassing on private land.

Prior to September 1, 2021, those caught transporting migrants in their vehicle would more often than not be let go. Now, they can be charged with felony human smuggling. What the exact punishment should be for transporting migrants has long been subject to debate and controversy in the Big Bend, as smuggling laws can occasionally rope in Good Samaritans trying to help strangers in need. In a press release, Abbott's office specified that the law is intended to target "Mexican cartels and other smugglers," not everyday residents of border counties.

Brewster County has struggled for years with large groups of migrants guided by coyotes, one of a few border terms for smugglers — now, per the new law, those smugglers are getting detained and hit with state felony charges. Dodson says these groups are often apprehended in the county's remote southern reaches. "We're getting hammered," he said. "Between September and today's date, we have filed more felonies than we did all of last year."

In the past seven months, Dodson has had to coordinate moving pieces between state and federal agencies to accommodate the surge in accused smugglers. Border Patrol agents are not peace officers, meaning they do not handle arrests and the filing of charges, so suspected smugglers apprehended by CBP are turned over to the sheriff's office for processing. Officers from the Texas Department of Public Safety (DPS) can arrest suspected smugglers on the new state felony charges; Homeland

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The West Texan Media Group, LLC

Alamito Foundation

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our homes. It's going to be really cool to see over the next 20, 30 years, just the patterns of weather out here and how that affects the land coverage and the land restoration process," said Travis.

The Alamito Foundation's site joins a network of around 88 TWDB data gathering sites around the state, including sites in Jeff Davis, Reeves, Culberson and Pecos counties. By dispersing weather and soil monitoring stations across the vast region of Far West Texas, data can be collected to represent various ecological zones that may differ greatly in conditions.

In Presidio County, another station installed last year collects data in what is considered the hot desert shrub vegetative zone, while weather data collected at the Alamito Foundation ranch helps represent the desert grassland vegetative zone. The Texas Soil Observation Network also operates six stations on Mimms Ranch, north of Marfa, which represent the mixed prairie vegetative zone.



Photo courtesy of the Alamito Foundation

From left, Lauren Bos, Mark Olden, Ernesto Zubia, Eduardo Ocon, Nevin Nunez and Dr. Lynn Loomis, who recently helped install a weather and soil monitoring station on the Alamito Foundation ranch property south of Marfa.

Coffield Park gazebo

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structure scheme was slightly bigger and more expensive than the singular build scheme.

Marfa resident Luis Pippen brought forth the idea to further optimize the chosen design by swapping the locations of kitchen and the bathroom in order to make bathrooms closer for people utilizing the park. Resident PJ Serrano agreed, saying it would be better to have a clear vantage point from the fields and courts to the restrooms so parents could keep a close eye on their children.

Serrano also wondered whether traditional concrete paths connecting the three structures could be expanded to envelop the whole area, offering more space for chairs and tables. Meckfessel suggested decomposed granite might be a more suitable option in order to prevent runoff. Ensuring the gazebo, plaza, bathrooms and kitchen are handicap accessible is also one of the major challenges going forward, said Meckfessel.

A discussion ensued as to what location would allow for optimal handicap parking spots. The idea of a handicap parking spot near the volleyball courts would allow for a straight shot to the gazebo over flat terrain, some said. Gerfers agreed and said the final design will also include an accessible, temporary spot for cars to drop off supplies, whether it be band equipment or coolers, at the facility.

The next steps in fully realizing the designs are to obtain construction drawings, permits and hire a construction crew. Meckfessel said construction would likely take around 6 months to complete.

"This is a pretty simple job," said Meckfessel.

Funding for the project has already been obtained, said Gerfers. But one of his major concerns is finding a construction company that could be made available sooner rather than later, he said.

"Anybody good is gonna be booked," said Gerfers.

With many board members expressing optimism that the straightforward construction could be done in a timely manner, though the exact construction timeline is up in the air, the meeting moved toward discussing the future of the park as a whole. Gerfers said a master plan has yet to be created, and is somewhat hinging on the completion of the MAC feasibility study, which is set to be done in late April. The city and the parks board split the fee to have the feasibility study performed, Gerfers said.

Gerfers insisted meeting attendees there would have many more opportunities for public comment regarding the park's forthcoming master plan design. One of the long-term goals of the parks board is to close West Texas Street, which runs through Coffield Park, in order to decrease traffic, adding parking instead around the park's perimeter. The city has already approved the eventual closure, said Gerfers.



Architectural rendering courtesy DSGN Associates

A preliminary design for two additional structures which will be built to accompany the existing Coffield Park gazebo. At a meeting hosted last week by Marfa's Parks and Recreation Board, members of the public weighed in on two potential designs, voting unanimously for the option with separate kitchen and bathroom facilities.

Gerfers said while it would be the most organic to be able to address the entire park as a whole, bathrooms are badly needed as well as electrical upgrades, and funding is there to fix those issues now.

"We want to do this, so we're gonna make the gazebo amenity now. And then we're going to fold that into whatever other design things we add — a skate park, a tennis court, there's lots of different ideas out there," said Gerfers.

Situated in the center of the MAC building, fields and courts, the gazebo and future accompanying amenities are essentially the heart of the park, said Meckfessel.

"This is the high point of the park, the gazebo sort of sits up there like the Acropolis, it has pretty great views in all directions," said Meckfessel.

Hazardous materials ordinance

(Continued from page 1)

from a number of drainages into the Rio Grande, meaning that any major spill would inevitably end up in the river. Presidio Municipal Development Director Jeran Stephens hired Registered Environmental Manager Andrew Price to survey the groundwater in Presidio, revealing that many of Presidio's wells are just 7 feet below the surface of the ground.

"The hydrology data determines severe risk presented by large volumes of hazardous materials being transloaded and transported in a populated area with shallow groundwater and close proximity to the Rio Grande River," Price's report reads. "It is imperative that such risk not be pursued. This is the equivalent of creating a worst case scenario or the perfect storm."

The ordinance as written originally included language relegating the transport of hazardous materials to a hazardous materials route, but such a route has not yet been designated. The last time the ordinance was discussed at city council, Presidio City Attorney Rod Ponton explained that, while it was common for cities to designate hazardous materials routes, they could not ban hazardous materials from state highways.

Councilmember Arian Velázquez-Ornelas worried that if the language alluding to a hazardous materials route were left unchanged, the city could be vulnerable to legal challenges. "What if somebody comes along and says, 'Well, this ordinance is not legal because there is no route?'"

Ponton agreed. "I would recommend taking out the references to a hazardous material route," he said. "It's illegal for us to do without going through the process [of designating the route]. Instead you could say, 'Commercial motor vehicles transporting hazardous materials shall not depart state highways.'"

City council members adopted the changes and passed the ordinance. While Mayor John Ferguson and City Administrator Brad Newton were absent from the meeting, Mayor Pro Tempore John Razo still had a quorum with Arian Velázquez-Ornelas, Joe Andy Mendoza, Nancy Arevalo and Abel "Billy" Hernandez voting in favor.

The new ordinance's biggest challenge to the proposed diesel transport operation is its outright ban on transloading of hazardous materials over 5,000 gallons within city limits. Transloading, while common along the U.S.-Mexico border, is illegal in Mexico due to corruption and safety concerns.

The quantity specified by the ordinance wouldn't affect transloading of fuel to local gas stations, which are typically served by smaller trucks. Ponton also added language to the ordinance to specify that trucks with hazardous materials heading to a regularly scheduled delivery to a commercial business or on their way for mechanic services would be exempt from the law.

Large tanker trucks, on the other hand, can transport more than 11,000 gallons of fuel at a time, meaning that the ordinance could severely impede investors' ability to make a profit on the project in Presidio. The penalty for exceeding the transloading limit is a misdemeanor.

City officials hope to eventually work together with TxDOT to designate a hazardous materials bypass around the city of Presidio to help accommodate larger volumes of truck traffic headed for the bridge. Because the Presidio International Bridge is the only international bridge in Texas owned by the state, it will likely be a drawn-out, trial-and-error process as the two entities work together to grow international trade.

"Thank you for your patience in this process," Councilmember Arian Velázquez-Ornelas told the crowd assembled at Monday's meeting.

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THE SENTINEL

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PUBLIC NOTICE

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.

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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.

Regulation of food establishments

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the application.

In a city council meeting hosted in early February, council members and Roane discussed establishing stricter guidelines for food establishments and people selling food out of their homes after it was discovered discarded grease was causing issues with the city's wastewater system.

Public Works Supervisor Chuck Salgado and his team were visiting establishments to check for proper grease trap size and maintenance at the time. At the February city council meeting, Roane said the ordinance was meant to ensure anyone selling food was making it in a commercial kitchen so conditions could be properly regulated.

According to Texas' food establishment rules, which the city is adopting, regulations do not apply to foods allowed by Texas cottage food laws — primarily baked goods and other items. Roane said essentially anyone selling food that could spoil depending on time and temperature requirements will need a permit.

The code enforcement department will see the new ordinance is being followed. According to Roane, Salgado and representatives from the code enforcement department are checking in with local establishments this week to make sure they are aware of the new permit requirements. So far, Roane was only aware of two establishments that have submitted permit applications, she said.

The new guidelines and permit requirements could make it difficult for someone making and selling food out of their home to operate legally. During the pandemic, some local citizens began selling food out of their homes for the community after restaurants ceased operations. Local food truck Line Thai got their start delivering food to Marfa residents before scaling up their operation.

Marfa resident Natania Frydman recently began making and selling food out of her home on Monday nights, when most local restaurants are closed, and has consistently received around 20 to 25 customers each week, she said. Frydman is an Ayurvedic health counselor and has plans to open Marfa Health House, a brick and mortar yoga studio, in the near future. She said that she enjoys participating in the holistic health practice of Ayurveda by providing nutritional food for others.

This week at home she was cooking up a large batch of vegan rainbow tabbouleh which consisted of swiss chard, asparagus, roasted almonds, couscous, lemon juice and more and is meant to promote liver health.

"What's the easiest way to allow people to come into health? Through a meal prepared by somebody else with a lot of love, that day. It's super fresh," said Frydman. "My goal is to help people be healthy."

She said she personally takes care to properly prepare ingredients and compost the waste from the meals she makes. Frydman said she finds cooking for others fulfilling and it allows her to make a good chunk of money in the process.

"It's a great way for people to make an income in a way that both serves them and their community," said Frydman.



Photo by Mary Cantrell

Marfa resident Natania Frydman puts the finishing touches on her vegan rainbow tabbouleh in her home kitchen. Frydman has been cooking and selling healthy food on Monday nights for fellow Marfa community members, but a new city ordinance might cause her to cease the practice.

Frydman said she is unsure how the city permitting process will affect her business, but said the level of control and need for regulation is frustrating.

"I'm not gonna get fined for this. I'm not gonna start a rampage," said Frydman. "But I enjoyed it, my customers enjoyed it. And it's a shame."

Marfa resident David Gomez, who used to run Marfa Mystery Wings out of his home, released an episode of his podcast "Just Talk" this week dedicated to his point of view on the city's new food establishment ordinance. He said he understood the reasons for the ordinance, but in the end was mostly against it.

On the podcast, Gomez said when he sold wings it allowed him to make extra money and he believes others should be able to continue to operate home food businesses as long as they have a food handler's permit, as he did while operating Marfa Mystery Wings.

"I just feel that this ordinance in some aspects is bad because it's not letting people make that extra buck," said Gomez in the "Just Talk" episode. "I would start selling again if I could because it was such good money and it was something that this town didn't have, or doesn't have."

He said for individuals who cannot work, selling food out of their homes can help them stay afloat financially. Gomez said he has heard some people argue that homegrown culinary operations take businesses away from traditional restaurants that are struggling to turn a profit. But, he said, the local real estate market in Marfa makes the prospect of opening a formal restaurant inaccessible for many people, and it's nice to have more food options.

"A lot of people in this town support one another. So if somebody is posting that they're selling Mexican plates, like flautas or enchiladas or something, I know I'm going to support them, because they're trying to make a living," said Gomez.

Editor's Note: Natania Frydman works part-time in the coffee shop/ restaurant side of The Sentinel.

Enhanced smuggling charges

(Continued from page 1)

Security Investigations (HSI) is often the agency involved on the federal level.

American citizens charged with human smuggling can be released on bond, but non-citizens need to wait out their indictment and trial in jail, taking up limited space for longer periods of time. To make matters worse, the state court system is so backed up that it could take years before accused smugglers see a jury. "We've been told by the [District Attorney]'s office we're so far behind that we may not see these guys go to trial for two or three years," Dodson explained. (The office of 83rd District Attorney Ori White did not return a request for comment.)

The explosion in smuggling charges isn't just tied to the new penalties. General migrant apprehensions have increased substantially over the past two years — between fiscal years 2020 and 2021, numbers tripled. Both Dodson and Presidio County Sheriff Danny Dominguez pointed fingers at immigration policy changes between the Trump and Biden administrations as a possible driver of activity along the border.

Customs and Border Protection doesn't publicly track data about human smugglers as a specific category, and hard numbers are scant. An investigation by the Texas Tribune cast doubt on numbers reported by the State of Texas used to illustrate that Operation Lone Star was combating crime: in many cases, officials used multiple charges against the same person to inflate statistics and culled arrest data far beyond the border for the same reason.

Anecdotally, law enforcement officials like Dodson have noticed that groups of migrants apprehended along the border are larger than they were in the past, and that the demographics skew younger and male. "The cameras and sensors that we got out there are doing all kinds of good catching these people," Dodson said. "But you got to remember, we're missing some of them. How many do we miss?"

Jails and prisons are reliable revenue streams for public and private entities across Texas, and Brewster County is no exception. Before the new laws, Dodson estimates the county was on track to make around $900,000 from housing federal prisoners for fiscal year 2021, but now the jail is at capacity with people arrested on state felony charges. State prisoners are held at the county's — in other words, the taxpayer's — expense. "It looks like this year, we'll lose about $600,000," Dodson said.

Most of Dodson's overflow ends up in the prison in Sierra Blanca. "We ended up making a deal with Sierra Blanca, so all the DPS arrests through Operation Lonestar — not your local DWIs and stuff — have to go to Sierra Blanca."

In a February interview with The Big Bend Sentinel, Dodson stated that, in the event that the jail space were doubled, the county would avoid putting that cost on local taxpayers. "We'd look for bonds and stuff, so that we wouldn't have to ever burden the taxpayer on it," he said.

Presidio County Attorney Rod Ponton pushed back against the idea that local taxpayers would be directly footing the bill for the increase in state prisoners. "The governor's office has set aside money for border counties for these kinds of situations," he said.

Operation Lone Star funding is finite, though, and Abbott is up for reelection at the end of this year. A statement from Nan Tolson, spokesperson for Gov. Abbott's office, indicated the fate of the jail project was up in the air: "The priority of awards issued in December were for agencies that had not already received an award. Due to the changing operational landscape of Operation Lone Star, the jail construction project is still under review and may be considered for future funding." Dodson himself said he was not optimistic that the funding would come through.

Next door in Presidio County, the situation doesn't seem to be as dire. "We haven't seen as many state charges for smuggling in Presidio County as they have in Brewster County," Ponton explained. "I guess it's mainly geography. I think the smugglers are bringing over a lot of groups to hike into the U.S. through Brewster County and not in Presidio County because of the presence of Border Patrol along the river and in the city of Presidio."

The border along the river in the southern reaches of Presidio County is fairly populated, whereas much of Brewster County's riverfront is located in the extremely remote reaches of Big Bend National Park. Last fall, Customs and Border Protection apprehended a group of 70 Venezuelans on the eastern fringe of the park; the number of large groups discovered on smuggling routes through the desert in the interior of the park appears to be growing.

"We're all good here," said Presidio County Sheriff Danny Dominguez.

Texas Department of Transportation

Notice of Virtual Public Meeting with In-Person Option
Texas Department of Transportation
2023 – 2026 Rural Transportation Improvement Program
El Paso District

The Texas Department of Transportation (TxDOT) – El Paso will conduct an online virtual public meeting with an in-person option for the 2023 – 2026 Rural Transportation Improvement Program (Rural TIP). The purpose of this meeting is to provide information and receive comments on which transportation projects may be coming to your area. The El Paso District includes El Paso County, Hudspeth County, Culberson County, Jeff Davis County, Presidio County, and Brewster County. The Rural TIP includes all added capacity and regionally significant projects to be funded within a TxDOT District during the next four years, including those eligible for federal funding. As such, this meeting offers the public an opportunity to review and comment on the proposed priorities. The Rural TIP is the first step on the road to producing a Statewide Transportation Improvement Program (STIP).

You have two options to participate in the meeting and learn more about projects in Hudspeth County, Culberson County, Jeff Davis County, Presidio County, and Brewster County. Both options will present the same information:

Virtual Option	In-Person Option
Virtual Public Meeting Hudspeth, Culberson, Jeff Davis, Brewster and Presidio Counties Live on Monday, March 28, 2022 at 4 p.m. (CT) until 6 p.m. (CT) via Zoom shorturl.at/dnoJ4 or via telephone (346) 248-7799, webinar ID: 861 8159 1969. Passcode: 032 822 Visit https://www.txdot.gov/inside-txdot/get-involved/about/hearings-meetings.html and look for Hudspeth, Culberson, Jeff Davis, Brewster or Presidio Counties *The recording of the presentation will be available after 9 a.m. (CT) on March 29	Public Open House Hudspeth, Culberson, Jeff Davis, Brewster and Presidio Counties at 4 p.m. (CT) until 6 p.m. (CT) Tuesday, March 29, 2022 Van Horn - Van Horn Convention Center and Visitors Bureau, 1801 A. West Broadway, Van Horn, Texas 79855 Wednesday, March 30, 2022 Alpine - Alpine Civic Center, 100 North 13th Street, Alpine, Texas 79830 Thursday, March 31, 2022 Presidio - Presidio Activity Center, 1400 East O'Reilly Street, Presidio, Texas 79845

The Rural TIP meetings are being held pursuant to *Title 43, Texas Administrative Code, Section 16.102*, which calls for an opportunity for public comment concerning the Rural TIP. The same information including a short presentation, exhibits explaining how the Rural TIP operates, and projects that are included in it will be available to view at each public meeting.

All community members are encouraged to attend any of the meeting options offered and provide written comments on the proposed program. Comments must be postmarked or otherwise received by 04/15/2022 to: TxDOT El Paso District, Attn: Rural TIP; 13301 Gateway Blvd. West, El Paso TX 79928; or by email to Rebecca.Reyes@txdot.gov, Attention: Rural TIP.

Special Accommodations: The virtual public meeting and in-person option will be conducted in English. If you need an interpreter or document translator because English is not your primary language or you have difficulty

TxDOT Rural TIP

Texas Department of Transportation

communicating effectively in English, one will be provided to you. If you have a disability and need assistance, special arrangements can be made to accommodate most needs. If you need interpretation or translation services or you are a person with a disability who requires an accommodation to attend and participate in the virtual public meeting or in-person option, please contact Lauren Macias-Cervantes, El Paso Public Information Officer, at (915) 790-4200 no later than 4 p.m. CT, March 23, 2022. Please be aware that advance notice is required as some services and accommodations may require time for TxDOT to arrange.

TRANSPORTATION IN YOUR COMMUNITY

2023 - 2026 RURAL TRANSPORTATION IMPROVEMENT PROGRAM - Rural TIP

NOTICE OF VIRTUAL PUBLIC MEETING WITH IN-PERSON OPTION

TxDOT El Paso District will conduct an online virtual public meeting with an in-person option to provide information and receive comments on which transportation projects may be coming to your area.

The 2023-2026 Rural TIP includes all added capacity and regionally significant projects to be funded within a TxDOT District during the next four years, including those eligible for federal funding. As such, this meeting offers the public an opportunity to review and comment on the proposed priorities. The Rural TIP is the first step on the road to producing a Statewide Transportation Improvement Program (STIP).

The Rural TIP meetings are being held pursuant to Title 43, Texas Administrative Code, Section 16.102, which calls for an opportunity for public comments concerning the program. The same information including a short presentation, exhibits explaining how the Rural TIP operates, and projects that are included in it will be available to view at each public meeting.

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or by email to Rebecca.Reyes@txdot.gov,
Attention: Rural TIP.

For more information visit www.txdot.gov and search "Hearings and Meetings"

IN-PERSON OPTION
Hudspeth, Culberson, Jeff Davis, Brewster and Presidio Counties
4 to 6 p.m. (CT)
March 29, 2022 – Van Horn
March 30, 2022 – Alpine
March 31, 2022 – Presidio

VIRTUAL OPTION
Available to view
after 9 a.m. March 29, 2022
Visit https://www.txdot.gov/inside-txdot/get-involved/about/hearings-meetings.html and look for Hudspeth, Culberson, Jeff Davis, Brewster and Presidio Counties.

TxDOT Rural TIP

Opinions

From the man in the dumpster in Marfa

As told to (and translated from Spanish by) Debbie Nathan.

Last week, Marfa first responders rushed to the scene of an accident in the alley between the Hotel St. George and Stripes — a Guatemalan migrant, seeking warmth and shelter in a dumpster in the alley, had been seriously injured when the driver of a garbage disposal truck making the rounds unknowingly fed him to the truck's compactor. Afterwards, The Big Bend Sentinel was able to locate the man at the El Paso hospital where he received treatment, and the man was willing to share his story. Nathan interviewed him in the hospital and later in Juarez. His name has been withheld to protect his identity. Nathan has also launched a Gofundme to raise money for the man at https://gofund.me/958be490.

After I got crushed in the trash compactor in Marfa and was moved to the hospital in El Paso, the doctors who operated on me kept saying, "My God, it's a miracle you're alive!"

It was a miracle. But even before the trash compactor, I had moments in the desert when I felt I might not make it.

I'm from a small town in the mountains of western Guatemala. I'm 29 years old and have a wife and four young children. My family grows snow peas and sweet peas. These are not traditional for us. What happened was, an American company came in about ten years ago and started contracting with local farmers to grow these new crops for export to the rest of the world. After a while they gave us a new kind of seed. At first it yielded a good harvest. We are poor people but my mom was able to cover our adobe house with plaster. We live in three bedrooms with three families: my parents, my brother and his wife and two kids, and my wife and four children ages 8, 7, 6 and 1. Even with the improvements to the house, we were still very crowded.

After a couple of years the pea crops seemed to have depleted the land, which was barely producing. We were getting poorer. I was making between $25 and $55 a week, and my parents weren't doing much better. I kept thinking: how am I going to buy land for my children, pay for their schooling, give them enough to eat and help my parents? The last straw came when my dad wanted to buy a baby pig so we could start raising pigs, but realized we couldn't even afford the cement and wood it would take to make a pigpen.

I decided to pay a smuggler and go to the United States.

The smuggler I paid uses a route that goes through Mexico by bus then into the United States on foot from Ojinaga. He charged me 120 thousand quetzals. That's about $17,000 in U.S. dollars. It was a loan and we signed away my father's house and farmland as collateral. The conditions were that if we didn't repay the loan in six months, my dad would forfeit the property. My plan was to go to the San Diego area and start working to pay off the debt in installments.

I got to Ojinaga and we crossed to Texas near Highway 90. It was nighttime, and we were ten migrants including myself. We'd only walked a little way when suddenly we ran into three Border Patrol agents. "Drop your backpacks!" they said. "Hands over your heads!"

I didn't know what to do, but I figured, "If I run, two things can happen. If the agents catch me, then the other nine of us will get away; and if the agents chase the other nine, then I'll be free. As it turned out, they chased me a little but I broke away and they didn't catch me. I think they got the others. But there I was after the chase, all by myself. I hid for a few hours and heard helicopters and drones overhead. I also saw this Border Patrol agent behind some barbed wire, but he didn't see me.

I spent all night like that, hiding under brush. The next day, I walked and hid, walked and hid. I ate the one apple I had with me in my little chest pack, and I drank half of my one bottle of Gatorade. By day two, I'd gone through the second half. I had no food or drink left.

I kept walking at night. I picked out a star in the sky and just tried to follow it. I was getting weak from hunger and dehydrated from no water. I just tried to keep going. I am a Catholic and I take my faith seriously. I spent 24/7 out there in total desert, by myself, singing hymns to God. It was so cold at night — I was freezing! I didn't know if I'd survive. I made a video on my phone for my wife.

Finally, on the third night, I saw lights. I turned on my phone's map function and realized I was outside a town called Marfa. That's where the smuggler's driver was supposed to pick me and the other nine people up. I called the smuggler. "I'm in Marfa!" I said. "Come get me!"

"How many of you are there?"

"Just me. I'm the only one who made it."

"Forget it," he said. "There aren't enough of you to make it worth the risk."

So now I was stuck. All by myself. Exhausted. Thirsty. Starving.

I started circling around the outskirts of Marfa on these little ranches, trying to figure out what to do. I went near town and saw people walking on the street. I was scared of them though. They were all white.

I finally found a faucet outside a hotel or motel, and drank some water. There was a gas station where a Latina woman was selling tacos. I told her "Look, I'm not going to lie. You can tell my situation. I'm starving. Can you please help me? I have no money."

She gave me tacos, and more water. She apologized that she couldn't give me a place to sleep. She said she had children and couldn't risk getting arrested.

On the fifth day I thought to myself, "I'm going to wait one more night to see if the smuggler's driver shows up. If not, tomorrow morning I'll just turn myself in. I saw a dumpster behind the Hotel St. George and decided to sleep in it. This was about 10 p.m. I climbed in and covered myself with boxes. My plan was to sleep there till early morning and leave before I attracted attention.

I had just woken up the next morning when I heard a horrible noise and felt my body being grabbed and crushed by a garbage compactor. I heard the sound of one of my leg bones being pulverized, and felt it crunching. It was the most frightening thing that has ever happened to me. I was certain I was being killed.

I screamed and next thing I knew, the man driving the compactor did something to it and I fell out of the machine. I told him I was okay and wanted to go. He said I needed an ambulance. I argued with him. Then I passed out. When I came to, medical people were working over me. Then I got flown to a hospital in El Paso.

The doctors there put a rod in my left leg. For a couple of days I was in bad pain. I couldn't sleep — every time I closed my eyes I saw the compactor and heard the sound of my leg being crushed. I was also worried that Border Patrol agents would come to the hospital and take me.

My cousin was working in another state and he and his boss drove down to get me. The doctors told me I needed to stay many more days to recover. But the two guys insisted I go with them so I did. They had no idea there were checkpoints on the highways, and we were stopped. I ended up getting expelled from El Paso, back over a bridge to Mexico, on foot—even though I had a walker from the hospital, and everyone could see I could barely move. When I got to Ciudad Juarez, there was no one at the foot of the bridge to help. I was stranded on the street for the rest of the night.

I'm in a hotel now, in bed, trying to recover. My family in Guatemala wants me to come back home, but if we can't pay the smuggler the $17,000 within six months, he'll take our house and farmland. If that happens, I guess we'll live with neighbors or be homeless. I'm still hoping I can get back to the U.S. legally.

I have a lot of intense memories now. The memories of Marfa are mostly terrible. But one good thing I remember is the woman who gave me the tacos. If I could talk to her I would tell her what God says: that the good deeds we humans do once for the least of those among us, He will do the same for us forever, in Eternity.

And to the man who was operating the trash compactor that crushed me: He seemed to feel so guilty about being the driver! I feel bad for his feeling of guilt. I would like to tell this man that it was not his doing. Sir, I have terrible needs in my life. But Sir, my terrible needs are not your fault.





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Community

Big Bend Fungi Company brings gourmet mushrooms to plates across Far West Texas

By MARY CANTRELL
mkcantrell@bigbendsentinel.com



Photo by Mary Cantrell

Cody McCollum holding a clear, lacquer-coated reishi mushroom he grew at his Fort Davis-based mushroom farm, Big Bend Fungi Company, which supplies fresh mushrooms to restaurants across the tri-county area.

FORT DAVIS — Clouds of fine fog begin to clear as mushroom farmer and founder of Big Bend Fungi Company Cody McCollum, in black rubber work boots, steps into his grow room where he harvests fruiting reishi, eryngii, lion's mane, gold, blue and pink oyster mushrooms which he distributes to local farmers markets, restaurants and more.

"Before I had even mastered it, I was like, you know what? I'm going to start a mushroom farm," said McCollum of his company, which has been in operation for less than a year.

McCollum built his mushroom farm and much of the accompanying equipment himself out of a small two-car adobe garage in Fort Davis, where he grew up after relocating from Houston. He holds an Associate of Applied Science degree, with a specialization in heating, ventilation, and air conditioning (HVAC) from Midland College, a bachelor's in psychology from the University of Texas Permian Basin and a master's in Eastern theology from the University of Balamand. He was on track to pursue a PhD when the pandemic hit, and he began growing mushrooms as a hobby.

Out of desire to ensure quality control, gain more autonomy and comprehend the mushroom cultivation process from petri dish to plate, he quickly started acquiring supplies and scaling up his operation with the intention of growing enough mushrooms to turn it into a bonafide, profitable business.

"You just get better mushrooms when you do it all yourself," said McCollum.

McCollum said he was initially drawn to mushrooms due to their appearance, health benefits, and the fact that they are found all over the world. He said because they are relatively inexpensive to grow he also liked the message they sent to the local community, particularly Fort Davis' youth.

"When I was growing up and I looked out, there was nobody who came up on hard work and dedication. It was always tied to money or who they knew or something like that. This is a very poverty stricken community. Mushrooms are the great equalizer on a lot of levels: anybody can grow them," said McCollum.

Fort Davis is transforming to offer more opportunities lately, he said, and he felt Big Bend Fungi Company would coexist well with the town while offering something different from the usual fare.

"I thought about what I wanted to bring to the community of Fort Davis, how it would benefit [the town] — would it be something that's really unique? We have enough barbecue and beer. We need something else," said McCollum.

Big Bend Fungi Company, already a limited liability company (LLC), is now working toward obtaining an agricultural exemption from the state, which allows agricultural landowners to have their property taxes tallied according to agricultural output. McCollum intends to purchase land and construct a fully-functional mushroom farm from scratch in Fort Davis sometime in the future.

His current garage-turned-mushroom-farm consists of a lab and grow room which acts as a separate, fully-contained chamber within the larger structure. Every square inch of the 1,350-square-foot space is being utilized, the garage door just barely clearing the roof of the interior grow room. Wooden walls McCollum put up provide additional insulation. Structures McCollum added to the garage are designed to be taken out and moved for the company's pending expansion, he said.

The lab area is awaiting the installation of a laminar flow cabinet with high efficiency particulate air (HEPA) filters, where McCollum will select cultures and make and pour petri dishes that contain mycelium, a root-like structure from which mushrooms grow. One 15 by 100 millimeter petri dish potentially contains up to a million pounds of mushrooms, said McCollum. Mushroom farmers are sometimes referred to as "mycelium runners" because of their work developing mushroom cultures. McCollum will harvest a piece, or tissue sample, of an idyllic mushroom, about the size of a grain of rice, and place it in a sterilized petri dish with agar, a gelatinized form of seaweed, to inoculate the mycelium.

"As things get bigger, [the lab is] where I'll spend most of my time, because that's what I need to do: find the perfect mushroom, keep that going," said McCollum.

Another central part of the mushroom growing process is the creation and sterilization of vacuum sealed biodegradable bags that contain grain spawn, or substrate, the mushrooms grow on. McCollum built an atmospheric steam sterilizer out of a 55 gallon drum, which works off time and temperature to sterilize the grain, killing off any bacteria before introducing the mycelium. Grain bags typically spend up to 10 hours in the 196 degree sterilizer.

In the grow room McCollum minimizes contamination to the mushrooms by wearing sanitized latex gloves, and to himself by wearing a respirator — the grow room's microclimate is temperature and humidity controlled to the fungi's liking, but too much exposure to the air's high spore count over time can be dangerous for humans. The highly-controlled environment runs off of timers and is complete with an exhaust system that removes excess carbon dioxide and spores from the air.

"This room, it's filled with spores that you can't really see, so they need to be removed from the room," said McCollum. "The cleaner you can keep everything, the less contamination you'll have."

McCollum describes the smell of the grow room as "a whole lot of wet fungus."

Inside the fruiting room's plastic walls are rows of stacked shelves containing mushrooms growing on fruiting blocks of sterilized grain spawn. McCollum carries a small flashlight and ducks into the narrow aisles, illuminating the grow bags, some with freshly-sprouted fungi and others in earlier stages, to check on their progress and look for potential problems.

"Once things go in the grow room, that's it. That's considered the art part of it. We're just throwing all our hard work into that grow room, hoping that the mushrooms do their thing," said McCollum.

He said he confronts the same concerns on a weekly basis: "I hope these mushrooms grow, then I hope I can sell these mushrooms." He's learned it's important to have a constant supply of fungi available. But that level of production requires constant supervision, he said.

"You are bonded to these mushrooms for the first couple years. There's a need to be there every day. That's how you make the money," McCollum said.

McCollum is presently producing anywhere from 60 to 80 pounds of mushrooms a week. His ultimate goal is to reach around 96 pounds a week, to maintain the business's viability. When he started Big Bend Fungi Company he wasn't sure whether people were going to be interested in the mushrooms, but reception has been favorable.

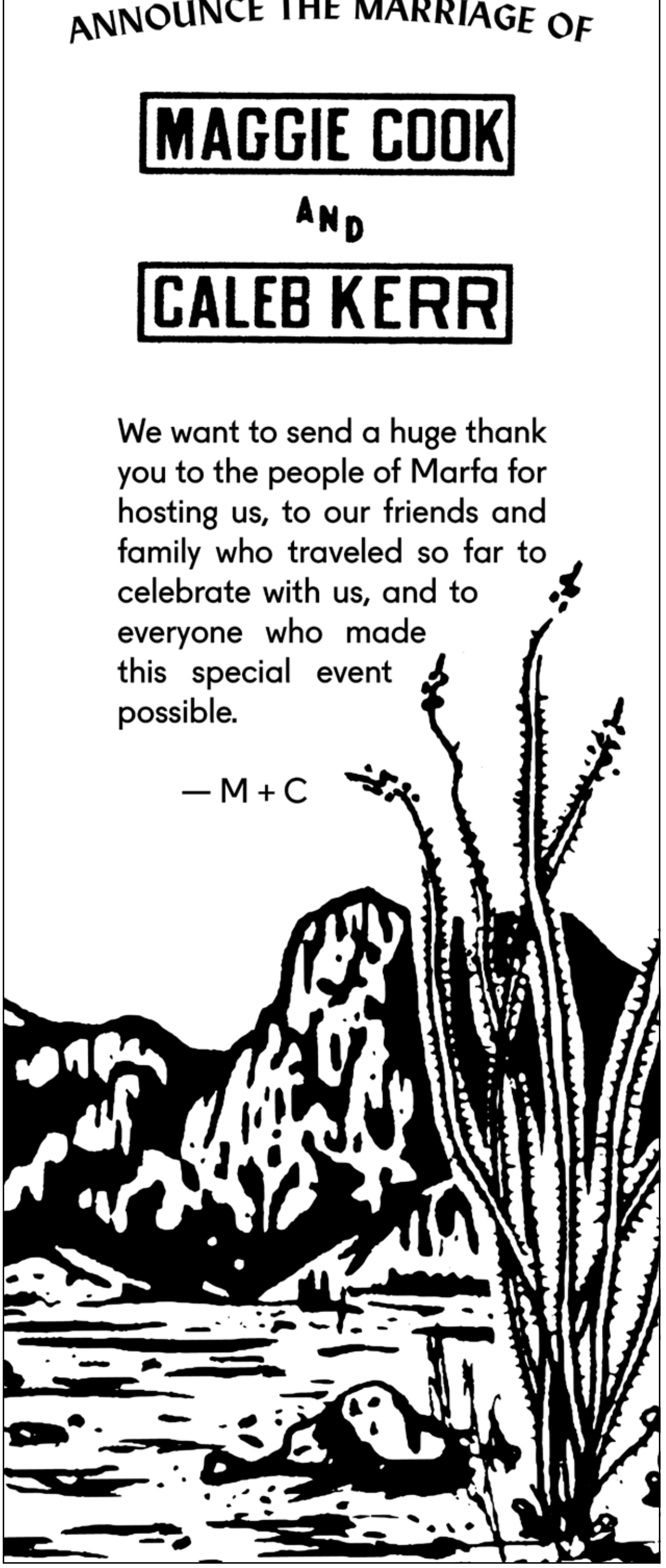
His farmers' market customers are excited to see more options for fresh produce, he said, and enjoy looking at the different varieties of mushrooms McCollum offers, which are beautiful and otherworldly, varying in color, size and shape. He has also been surprised that his medicinal lion's mane mushroom tinctures, which support brain and nerve health, have garnered significant interest.

Cactus Liquors now hosts a cooler supplied with Big Bend Fungi Company mushrooms and restaurants like Blue Mountain Bar and Grill, Cochineal and Aster are regular customers. McCollum has been making all of the deliveries himself and still holds another job in addition to operating the mushroom farm. Fellow mushroom farmers further into their careers told McCollum not to expect a vacation for two to three years and to be ready to cry over the mushrooms at times. He said he was skeptical, but both of those forewarnings have come to fruition and the start-up process has been grinding.

"It's trying to make yourself a farmer," said McCollum. "Most of these people who have farms out here, their grandfather bought the tractor, and their father maintained the tractor. And now because they have the tractor, they're getting into farming, too. Putting yourself in that industry, trying to build all those things, it's just constant uphill work."

While learning how to become a mushroom farmer, McCollum is simultaneously grasping what it means to be a business owner, running his own website, social media and outreach. McCollum donates his discarded fruiting blocks to local gardens, including the Marfa Food Pantry, which use them as fertilizer. In addition to offering area youth hands-on lab experience with Big Bend Fungi Company, he hopes to eventually host lectures, classes and free events.

"I really want to do this and give people opportunities," said McCollum. "I'm gunning for the top. I am going to try and supply the entire Big Bend from Terlingua to Marathon, all over."



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'Texas As Art' to close at the Museum of the Big Bend

ALPINE — A reception to mark the close of the "Texas As Art" exhibition at the Museum of the Big Bend will be held from 5-7 p.m. on Friday, April 1.

The exhibit is the brainchild of Rebecca Dodge, an emeritus geology professor who spent summer holidays at her parents' cabin in the Davis Mountains Resort. She has created digitally-enhanced satellite images that show the various ecoregions of West Texas. Each image's caption has a QR code that viewers can scan with their iPhones to learn more about what they see.

The satellite images are complemented by original oil paintings of West Texas landscapes and flora by Fort Davis artist Liz Bartlett Culp.

The exhibition closes Saturday, April 2, at 4 p.m., following gallery talks by both artists, starting at 1 p.m. The reception and gallery talks are free to members, for nonmembers — $5 for either event.

The Museum of the Big Bend is located on the campus of Sul Ross State University in Alpine.

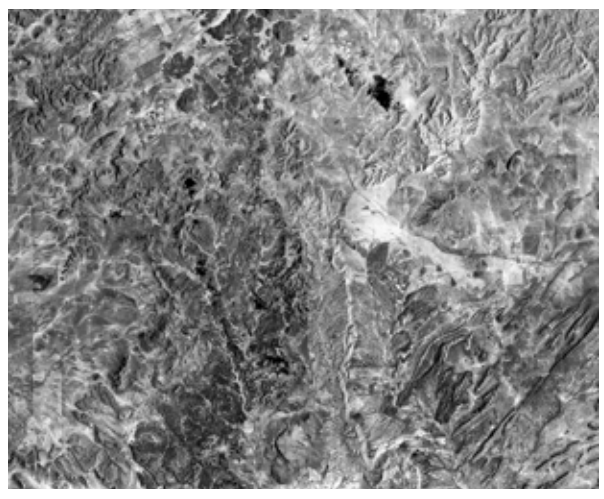


Photo courtesy of Sul Ross State University

A "Texas as Art" piece, produced using satellite imagery.

Friends of the Jeff Davis County Library to host community health fair

FORT DAVIS — Area residents can learn more about health, wellness and related services during a community health fair on Saturday, March 26, from noon until 2 p.m. at the Kelly Pavilion behind the Jeff Davis County Library.

Various organizations will be on hand to discuss their services, including Mobile Comunidad, Food Pantry of Jeff Davis County, Jeff Davis County Indigent Health Care Fund, Mobile Mortician of Texas at The Davis Mountain Funeral Hall, Charlie Cart kids' nutrition education project, and Aliviane Deterra safe drug disposal bags, with more participants being added each day. In addition, brochures and information will be available on topics ranging from managing blood sugar to mindfulness and how to save money on prescriptions and medical and dental care.

Also, during the event, attendees are invited to visit the new Virtual Connection Center inside the library. This private room features special soundproof finishes and secure computer equipment, ideal for private online telehealth appointments and similar individual virtual meetings. The space is now available to be reserved free of charge by calling the library.

Local individuals or organizations offering health and wellness services are invited to join the fair at no charge by emailing admin@friendsjdclibrary.org before Friday.

The Virtual Connection Center was made possible in part by a grant from the Texas State Library and Archives Commission.



Photo courtesy of Sul Ross State University

Sul Ross Theatre Program production of 'The Cake' opens Friday, March 25

ALPINE — When Della, a sweet-natured Christian baker, is asked to make a cake for a gay wedding, she's forced to re-examine her beliefs and definition of love. This is the story of The Cake, a comedy by Bekah Brunstetter, presented by the Sul Ross Theatre Program and opening March 25 in the Studio Theatre.

The Cake opened off-Broadway in 2019 at the Manhattan Theatre Club. Brunstetter, writer and producer of hit NBC show "This is Us" and the Starz series "American Gods," was inspired to write The Cake during the Masterpiece Cakeshop v. Colorado Civil Rights Commission Supreme Court case.

"The Cake deals with issues of religious freedom and same-sex marriage from a very personal perspective," said Director and Associate Professor of Theatre and Communication Marjie Scott. "With news articles and court cases, it's easy to take sides based only on our own beliefs, but when the issue touches us in a personal way, it's a lot more complicated. The play is also hopeful and funny, which is refreshing in these polarized times."

The Cake runs weekends March 25 – April 10 in the Studio Theatre on the Sul Ross Alpine campus. Performances at 7:30 p.m. on Fridays and Saturdays and 2 p.m. on Sundays. Tickets are $12 general admission, $10 for seniors 65+, and free for veterans and active military. The Cake contains mature themes, language and partial nudity, and may not be suitable for children younger than 13. Those interested in purchasing tickets may visit www.bit.ly/sulross-theatre. Those with questions may contact finearts@sulross.edu or call 432-837-8218.

The Cake is directed by Marjie Scott. Set design by Ross Fleming. Costume design by Carolyn Barrientes. Sound design by Corban Buttars (Lamesa) and lighting design by Crysty Graves Herrera (Monahans). Featuring Olivia Pertuso (Alpine), Treasure Blackburn (Houston), Yaritza Corona (El Paso), and Jonathan Fields (Alpine).

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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.

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

3/7

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DIFFICULTY RATING: ★☆☆☆☆

Solution from last week's puzzle:

SOLUTION:

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

3/1

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Universal Crossword

Edited by David Steinberg March 14, 2022

ACROSS
1 Scout's award
6 Innovative spark
10 Use scissors
14 Kagan in the court
15 All over again
16 Aspect of Lao or Thai
17 Brilliant success
18 Types who frequent shopping centers?
20 Arrives at, in a brainstorm
22 Arctic people
23 Race, as an engine
24 Spanish for "for"
26 Parent's snarky reply
27 Colleague's expression of agreement?
31 She/___ pronouns
32 Pita sandwiches
33 Howl toward
36 Rising agent for Adam and Eve?
40 Divide, as a bill
41 Soothing succulents
44 "Quiet!"
47 Online journals about a Mediterranean morsel?
50 ___ catcher (paper fortune-teller)
53 "Gender" lead-in
54 "___ Quixote"
55 Mean critic
56 Infinite ___ (web feature that its inventor apologized for)
59 Sandwich request added on the side in 18-, 27-, 36- and 47-Across?
63 Elite group of colleges
65 Golda who was the first woman to lead Israel
66 Ride-booking app
67 Past or present, in grammar
68 Award for Megan Rapinoe
69 Understands
70 Teen's turmoil

DOWN
1 Spell-off
2 Ancient pseudoscience
3 Labor and ___ (pregnancy pairing)
4 Bug in a swarm
5 Consumes
6 Irritated response to "Are you awake?"
7 Ancestry.com sample
8 Snaky swimmer
9 Leatherworking tool
10 Covered with small rocks
11 "This can wait"
12 Not too late
13 Nag
19 "Elastic Heart" singer
21 Choose
23 Cloth by a sink
25 Like an android
26 Scottish terrier type
28 Denials
29 "This can't wait!"
30 British flying grp.
34 Small amount
35 Bad thing to have in poker
37 Fruit that flavors gin
38 "___ death do us part"
39 Catching catfish bare-handed
42 Beyond humble
43 W-2 digits: Abbr.
44 Conspire
45 Major pranks
46 Piece of inside info
48 Baseball cap parts
49 "Get me out of here!" key
51 ___ cloth (absorbent fabric)
52 Apt name for a retirement planner
57 Actress Moreno
58 Pizza place?
60 Ceramic cup
61 "Honest" prez
62 "That said ..."
64 Like concrete with hardened footprints

PREVIOUS PUZZLE ANSWER

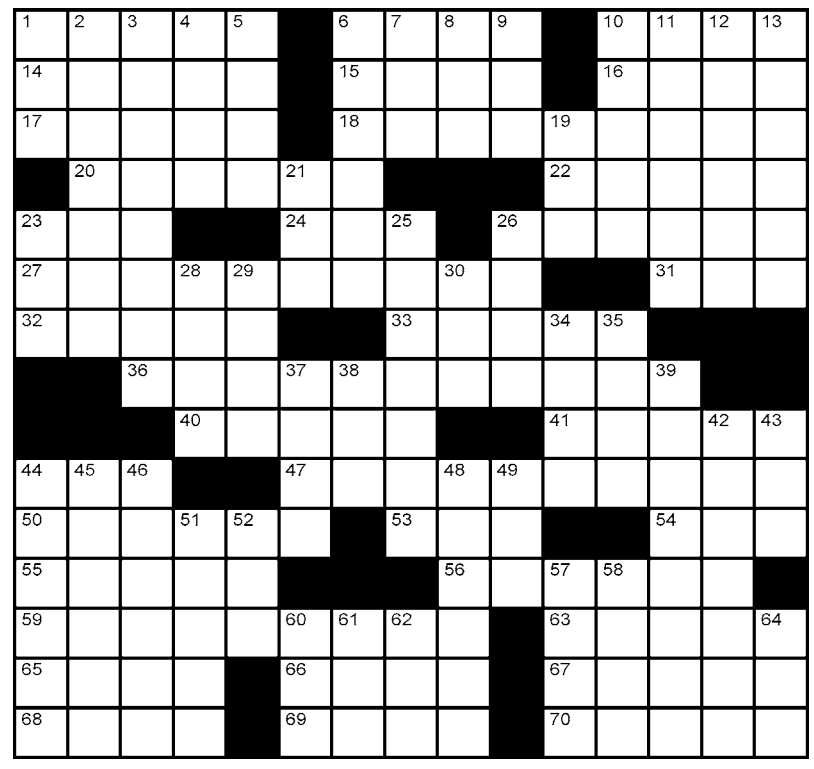
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3/13

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3/14

More, Please! *by Christina Iverson*



☺ MARFA SCHOOL LUNCH MENU ☺

MAR	Thu, Mar 24	Fri, Mar 25	Mon, Mar 28	Tue, Mar 29	Wed, Mar 30
BREAKFAST	BEAKFAST PIZZA	WAFFLES, CHEESE STICKS	BREAKFAST BREAD, YOGURT	BREAKFAST BURRITO	SAUSAGE KOLACHE, CHEESE STICK
LUNCH Menu courtesy of PORTER'S SINCE 1945 Celebrating 70+ years of serving our customers. 432-729-4375 www.myporters.net	BREADED MOZARELLA STICKS, MARINARA SAUCE, TOMATO CUP, GARDEN SALAD, PEARS	PHILLY CHEESESTEAK SANDWICH, CORN, CUCUMBERS, ROSY APPLESAUCE, COOKIE!	BREADED DRUMSTICK, BISCUIT, GARDEN SALAD, SWEET POTATO FRIES, FRUIT	FRITO PIE, BEANS, FRESH VEGGIE CUP, CHILLED PINEAPPLE, COOKIE	LASAGNA, GARLIC BREAD KNOTS, FRESH BROCCOLI FLORETS, MARINARA SAUCE

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councilmemberlara@cityofmarfa.com
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MARFA SHORTHORNS SPORTS CALENDAR

THU, MAR 24: Softball at Ozona, 3:30 pm/5:30 pm
THU, MAR 24: JH Track at Alpine, 3:30 pm
FRI, MAR 25: UIL Academics Meet at Van Horn
SAT, MAR 26: HS District Track Meet at Van Horn
SAT, MAR 26: JH Track Meet at Alpine
TUE, MAR 29: Golf Invitational Tournament at Marfa Municipal

Marfa Live Arts awards winning student playwrights

MARFA — In the week before spring break, all Marfa High School students participated in the 11th annual Marfa Live Arts Playwriting Program. Taught by Juarez-born playwright Georgina Escobar, Escobar shared her thoughts on teaching Marfa's youth:

"I was honored and humbled to return to Marfa High School this spring for their 11th annual playwriting conference. Reading their work — the results of a fast and furious bake-off challenge inspired by place, time and heightened genre — reassured me that the imagination of the Marfa High School students is indeed alive and well. It is incredibly difficult for writers and students to realign themselves creatively after the tumultuous times of a pandemic and all of the real-life consequences that have come from that. We are seeing more and more that isolation went beyond just the pandemic, and theater has always remained a place that can foster community or, at least, drive a conversation towards that end. This is why I decided to do a bake-off challenge with the students where the 'ingredients' that would give their plays a uniformed aesthetic while pushing their creative boundaries varied from a horseshoe to a train whistle and the student-selected ingredient: chicken strips. The purpose of the challenge, inspired by award-winning playwright Paula Vogel, was to try to reinforce the importance of a frontera aesthetic and the unique voices that individuals from this region have."

Escobar continues, "The results were plays that varied in form, genre, and voice. We had plays in Spanish that were poetic and robust and theater-forward, imagining an entire story as told in sign language and with elevated use of theatrical form. Others told the story in the form of dreams, invoking the surreal and provoking realism in a fun and quirky way, or reclaimed a Greek tragedy through a coming-of-age socially relevant narrative, or even reimagined a post-apocalyptic Marfa as seen through a rom-com lens. This year, I was very proud of the students who pushed themselves so fiercely and bravely into this challenge and hope that they come out remembering that the only way to change the things we want to change in the world, our circumstances, or ourselves — is to first engage the process of imagining and of 'What if...'"

Marfa Live Arts is proud to announce the winning 2021 student playwrights. Freshmen: First Place, Zayne by Austin Milligan; Honorable Mention, Sightless by Ashley Certain. Sophomores: First Place, You Can What?! by Tristan Kelly; Honorable Mention, The Topology & Zeitgeist Bake-Off by Zaley Porter. Juniors: First Place, The Gone by Maribel Meraz; Honorable Mention, The Crow's Daughter by Victoria Torres. Seniors: First Place, Margaret, I Think I Love You by Febi Brimhall; Honorable Mention Nadando en las Estrellas (Swimming in the Stars) by Hanna Evangelina Ibarra. The first-place winners will have their works staged and brought to life by community actors at the Crowley Theater in April.



Photo courtesy of Marfa Live Arts

From lower left: 11th annual Marfa Live Arts Playwright Winners: Hanna Evangelina Ibarra, Tristan Kelly, Febi Brimhall, Maribel Meraz, Ashley Certain, Victoria Torres and Zaley Porter. Not pictured Austin Mulligan

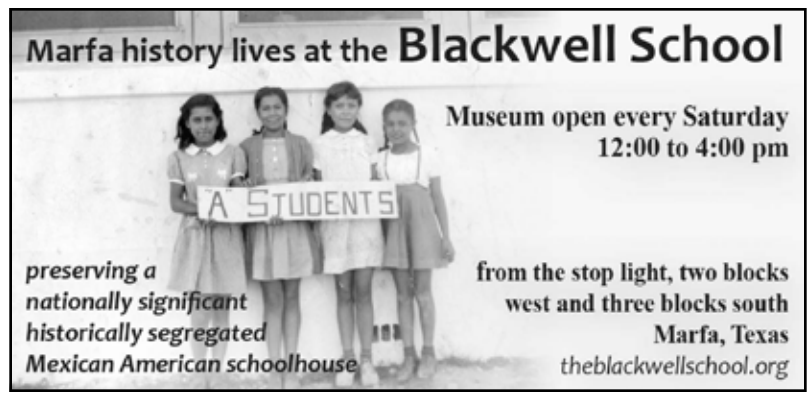
The Playwriting Program is supported by Wyatt Ranches Foundation, Texas Commission on the Arts and Marfa Education Foundation. In its 11th year, the annual Marfa Live Arts program has resulted in over 925 one-act plays written by Marfa students. More information can be found at www.marfalivearts.org.

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the CHINATI foundation
The Chinati Foundation is a contemporary art museum created by the artist Donald Judd.
Open to the public
Thursday – Saturday
Guided Tours of the work of Donald Judd
Outdoor Self-guided Walking Tours
Reservations are required and space is limited.
Tickets are timed.
Experience the connection between art, architecture, and the land unique to Chinati. The hour-long guided tour covers Judd's art and architecture, including the Artillery Sheds. The walking tour path follows along Judd's 15 untitled works in concrete, covers 1.6 miles, takes approximately 1½ hours to complete, and is best enjoyed wearing sturdy shoes.
Chinati follows COVID-19 precautions.
Masks and social distancing are required.
Visit chinati.org for more information and to book reservations.

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Classifieds & public notices

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Applications may be picked up at 1605 N. FT. Davis Hwy Alpine, TX 79830 or call (432) 837-4555.

Please call first before arrival.

Family Health Service of Alpine • 1605 N. FT. Davis Hwy

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la fundación the CHINATI foundation

JOB OPPORTUNITY:
SENIOR ACCOUNTANT

Summary:
Reporting to the Assistant Director of Finance, this role is responsible for data entry, maintenance of the general ledger and payroll processing. Performs accounts receivable and payable functions, records deposits from external sources and reconciles accounts. Ensures that internal controls are maintained at all times and partners with other departments for the continuous improvement of policies, procedures, and system enhancements. Performs analysis of data for monthly financial and budget reporting and actively participates in financial audit and tax preparation.

This is a full-time position based in Marfa, TX. The regular work schedule requires 40 hours per week, Monday through Friday. The Chinati Foundation provides a comprehensive benefits package.

Submit a cover letter and resume via email to jobs@chinati.org.

Visit the Opportunities page of our website at chinati.org for detailed information about the job description and requirements.

The Chinati Foundation is an Equal Opportunity Employer.

ALPINE WINE IS HIRING!

Alpine Wine is an exciting new wine bar and restaurant now open in downtown Alpine.
We offer wine tastings and wine by the glass and bottle, charcuterie and cheese boards, and more.

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JOB OPPORTUNITY

THE CITY OF PRESIDIO IS ACCEPTING APPLICATION FOR THE POSITION DRIVER-COOK WITH THE SENIOR CENTER DEPARTMENT.

THIS IS A PART-TIME POSITION.

THIS POSITION WORKS UNDER THE GENERAL SUPERVISION OF THE SENIOR CENTER DIRECTOR. A DRIVER-COOK PERFORMS VARIOUS WORK ASSIGNMENTS IN THE DEPARTMENT.

CANDIDATES MUST HAVE THE FOLLOWING MINIMUM QUALIFICATIONS:

- MUST BE LEGALLY AUTHORIZED TO WORK IN THE UNITED STATES
- MUST BE AT LEAST 18 YEARS OF AGE
- VALID DRIVER LICENSE WITH A PROVEN CLEAN DRIVING RECORD
- MUST HAVE A CLEAN BACKGROUND CHECK

APPLICATION AND COMPLETE JOB DESCRIPTION AVAILABLE AT CITY HALL. A CITY OF PRESIDIO EMPLOYMENT APPLICATION IS REQUIRED TO BE CONSIDERED FOR THE POSITION.

PLEASE SUBMIT APPLICATIONS TO CITY SECRETARY BRENDA ACUÑA, 507 W OREILLY ST, PRESIDIO, TEXAS.

MAILING ADDRESS:
CITY SECRETARY
PO BOX 1899
PRESIDIO, TX 79845

EMAIL APPLICATION: bornelas@presidiotx.us

THIS POSITION IS OPEN UNTIL FILLED

• JOB OPENING •

BREWSTER COUNTY TOURISM COUNCIL AND VISIT BIG BEND

PUBLIC RELATIONS ASSISTANT JOB DESCRIPTION

The Brewster County Tourism Council/Visit Big Bend is currently accepting applications for a full-time Public Relations Assistant. This position will require 40 hours per week in the BCTC office and will include extensive travel throughout the year including weekends and holidays.

Duties for the position include: attending trade shows representing Visit Big Bend and distributing information on the Big Bend region, overseeing Visit Big Bend's various social media channels, researching new avenues of online marketing, assisting visiting journalists to the area and researching potential journalists for tours as well as providing reports to the Board of Directors of Visit Big Bend along with other duties as assigned.

Applicants must be presentable, enthusiastic, have good communication skills, be a team player, have flexibility in work schedules, be able to travel extensively, have a dependable vehicle, lift at least 50 pounds, be able to lead hikes/tours through Big Bend and be well versed in all components of Microsoft Office with most reports requiring manipulation of Excel spreadsheets. A tourism industry background of some kind is required as well as a good knowledge of all areas and attractions in Brewster County.

Salary is negotiable depending on experience and includes a full County benefit package including paid vacation, sick leave, retirement and health insurance.

Email a resume with 3 references to: JOBS@VISITBIGBEND.COM.

This position will remain open until filled.

Visit Big Bend is an Equal Opportunity Employer

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mayor@cityofmarfa.com
(432) 295-0048
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councilmemberjohnston@cityofmarfa.com
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Eddie Pallarez
councilmemberpallarez@cityofmarfa.com
Yoseff Ben-Yehuda
councilmemberbenyehuda@cityofmarfa.com

Presidio Mayor John Ferguson:
City Hall: (432) 229-3517
Email: jferguson@presidiotx.us

BREWSTER COUNTY
Judge Eleazar Cano:
(432) 837-6200 x 124

Alpine Mayor Andy Ramos:
City Hall: (432) 837-3301
Email: mayor.ramos@ci.alpine.tx.us

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

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

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.

PUBLIC NOTICE
AUCTION AND SALE OF ESTRAY

Pursuant to the authority granted under the Texas Agriculture Code, Section 142.013: and having complied with the notification procedures required in Section 142.009 of this Article, the Sheriff, Presidio County, Marfa, Texas, shall conduct an auction and sale of two estray horses at 10:00 A. M., Saturday, April 2, 2022, at the following location: Presidio County pens at Vizcaino Park in Marfa, TX 79843.

Estray to be sold:

(1) Type of animal: Horse; Breed: Grade; Color: Cremello; Approx. Age: 3 years; Size/Weight: 14.5 to 15 hands, approx. 900-1200 pounds; Markings: N/A; Brand: ELP (unidentified); Other identifying features: Stallion with black halter.

(2) Type of animal: Horse; Breed: Grade; Color: Red Rome; Approx. Age: 18 years; Size/Weight: 14 hands, approx. 900-1200 pounds; Markings: N/A, Brand: N/A; Other identifying features: Gelding with red halter.

Danny Dominguez, Sheriff
Presidio County Sheriff's Office
P.O. Drawer V, Marfa, Texas
(432) 729-4308

NOTICE OF PUBLIC HEARING

The Marfa City Council will hold a Public Hearing on March 31, 2022 at 6:00 p.m. at Marfa City Hall to take public comments on a petition by Conception Campos to close, vacate, abandon, and sell approximately 270 square feet of East Lincoln Street, lying adjacent and to the north of the West One-Half (W/2) of Lot 3 and a portion of Lot 4, Block 41, Original Town of Marfa, Presidio County, Texas.

A small portion of Ms. Campos's house and the entirety of her front porch are encroaching onto East Lincoln, a platted city street. The public purposes of closing and selling this portion of East Lincoln Street would be to solve the encroachment issue, to receive fair market value for the encroachment (with funds to be placed in the city's street improvements account) and to ensure a proper replat of the affected property/properties with all encroachments removed. There are no city utilities on or near the encroachment(s). Because of the width of the street, the flow of traffic on East Lincoln is not affected by the encroachment(s).

The public is invited to attend and provide comments on the proposed closure. After the Public Hearing, the Marfa City Council may vote to close the applicable portion(s) of East Lincoln Street by Ordinance and to approve the conveyance to Ms. Campos for fair market value by Deed Without Warranty.

The Public Hearing will be held at 6:00 p.m. on March 31, 2022 in the Casner Room at Marfa City Hall, located at 113 South Highland Avenue, Marfa, Texas.

Meeting agendas may be found at cityofmarfa.com.

• AUCTION NOTICE •

Marfa Parks Board is auctioning a 2006 Chevrolet 2500 HD regular cab pickup truck, white, with crossover toolbox and trailer hitch.

Minimum bid is $9,000.
Truck currently has 106,000 miles. VIN: 1GCHC24U66E230995.

Details and pictures available by texting Board President Trey Gerfers at 432.295.0891.

Interested parties must email highest bid with contact phone number to trey@stereoluz.net (with "Pickup bid" in the subject line).

Deadline: Thursday, April 7th at 5PM.

LEGAL NOTICES

NOTICE IS HEREBY GIVEN IN ACCORDANCE WITH THE TERMS AND PROVISIONS OF THE TEXAS ALCOHOLIC BEVERAGE CODE THAT STARS AFS, LLC HAS FILED FOR A MIXED BEVERAGE PERMIT AND A FOOD AND BEVERAGE CERTIFICATE, TO BE ISSUED TO PARA LLEVAR, LOCATED AT 113 S. DEAN ST., IN THE CITY OF MARFA, PRESIDIO COUNTY, TX. STARS AFS, LLC. ROWDY L. DUGAN (MANAGER) BECKY D. DUGAN (MANAGER)

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