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BURN BAN IN EFFECT, NO GROUND FIRES

by order of Presidio County

Presidio City Council seeks legal advice on potential game room ordinance

By SAM KARAS
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PRESIDIO — At last week's meeting, Presidio City Council took another step toward drafting an ordinance regulating game rooms. A first reading of the potential ordinance was supposed to take place that night, but city officials decided to revisit some of the nuances of their drafted ordinance after detailed legal counsel.

Gambling is officially illegal in Texas, but game rooms have popped up across the state to simulate some of the fun of gambling while operating within the letter of the law. Presidio currently has two game rooms — since the issue was first discussed at City Council in November, both have become more visible with updated signage and posted hours of operation.

The City of Presidio decided to address the issue after an ordinance in Odessa was passed that prevented renewals of game room permits at the end of December 2022. Presidio's game rooms popped up in part as a response to the new laws in the Permian Basin — owners Flor Montoya and Oscar Garcia told city officials that they had moved their businesses to Presidio in an attempt to skirt what they felt was a legal overreaction.

Proponents of game rooms say that it's good clean fun — in a city with few public gathering spaces, they fulfill a need for community and a diversion from the stress of everyday life. In an interview with the *Presidio Internationa*l, Montoya compared her game room to the way others might scroll on their phones. "At the end of the day, instead of going home or going somewhere else, I go to the game room and relax — I lose myself on the machine," said Montoya.

Some council members were concerned about the potential negative effects of game rooms. City officials in Odessa decided to crack down after law enforcement officials and community members complained of crimes clustering around the establishments. There were 32 game rooms within city limits before an ordinance was passed that prohibited game room owners from applying for new permits.

Harris County Commissioners Court adopted similar regulations back in 2013. The number of game rooms has since plummeted — 10 years later, there are only five within Houston city limits. Many of these gaming parlors had been offering cash prizes — illegal in Texas if exceeding $5 — and were associated with a number of shootings, stabbings and DWIs.

Some council members in Presidio held the same concerns.

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Staff photo by Sam Karas / Foto por Sam Karas

Blan Scott and Pete Westfall helped ring in last weekend's Rio Bravo Unplugged Festival. READ MORE ON PAGE 2.
Blan Scott y Pete Westfall ayudaron a sonar en el Rio Bravo Unplugged Festival del fin de semana pasado.. LEER MÁS EN LA PÁGINA 3.

Presidio Dragstrip gets initial green light for electronic upgrades

By SAM KARAS
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PRESIDIO — At last Wednesday's meeting, the Presidio Convention and Visitors Bureau (CVB) gave an initial green light to the Presidio Dragstrip for a new light bar and overdue computer upgrades. The funding will also have to be approved by City Council, but the CVB board felt it was a good investment in growing local tourism.

Robert Romero and Alex Jimenez of Presidio Drag Racing came to the meeting to make their pitch. They felt the strip was overdue for a new light bar — which signals to the drivers when to start their engines — and a computer that runs the whole system, which has depended on the same software since the first drag races took place in 2013.

Romero and Jimenez felt they could attract more out-of-town racing teams with a more sophisticated, bug-free setup. The organizers have been diligently working to expand the racetrack itself, but felt the electronic system was a priority. "We gotta fix what we have going first," Romero said.

The group had originally applied for funding through the Presidio Municipal Development District, but the proposition was never brought to a vote — and an ensuing conflict with former Executive Director Jeran Stephens over the status of the track's liability insurance left the organization's 2022 schedule in question.

Presidio Drag Racing ultimately addressed Stephens' concerns and

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Daly Park project awarded grant extension to finish upgrades

By SAM KARAS
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PRESIDIO — At last Thursday's meeting, Patricia Runyan and Public Works Director Cesar Leyva gave the Presidio Municipal Development District (PMDD) an update on ongoing construction at Daly Park. Construction had originally been slated to end in December, but the AARP Foundation — which selected Presidio as a grant recipient — allowed a six-month extension to finish the project.

The park's transformation was originally the brainchild of former PMDD Executive Director Jeran Stephens, who envisioned a future for the space as a cultural hub. "It's a family oriented space — it should be better and more accessible," she said at a meeting in June of last year.

Presidio was awarded a grant of $31,075 to the park's upgrades, which included a revamped band shell, new playground equipment, a workout space for adults and a mural by artist Ramon Deanda. Stephens had hoped that the improved musical space and dancefloor would attract more musical programming — including a slot for Presidio during the annual Viva Big Bend Festival.

As of last week's meeting, there was a balance of $8,000 yet to be spent. Runyan — who had been tapped to oversee the project as a grant administrator — helped guide a discussion about how the money should

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Presidio Dragstrip obtiene luz verde inicial para actualizaciones electrónicas

Por SAM KARAS
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PRESIDIO — En la reunión del miércoles pasado, la Oficina de Visitantes y Convenciones de Presidio (CVB, por sus siglas en inglés) dio luz verde inicial a Presidio Dragstrip para una nueva barra de luces y actualizaciones de computadoras atrasadas. La financiación también tendrá que ser aprobada por el Concejo Municipal, pero la junta de CVB consideró que era una buena inversión en el crecimiento del turismo local.

Robert Romero y Alex Jiménez de Presidio Drag Racing vinieron a la reunión para hacer su presentación. Sintieron que la tira estaba atrasada para una nueva barra de luces, que indica a los conductores cuándo encender sus motores, y una computadora que ejecuta todo el sistema, que ha dependido del mismo software desde que se llevaron a cabo las primeras carreras de resistencia en 2013.

Romero y Jiménez sintieron que podrían atraer más equipos de carreras fuera de la ciudad con una configuración más sofisticada y libre de errores. Los organizadores han estado trabajando diligentemente para expandir la pista de carreras, pero sintieron que el sistema electrónico era una prioridad. "Primero tenemos que arreglar lo que tenemos en marcha", dijo Romero.

El grupo originalmente solicitó financiamiento a través del Distrito de Desarrollo Municipal de Presidio, pero la propuesta nunca se sometió a

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El proyecto de Daly Park recibió una extensión de la subvención para terminar las actualizaciones

Por SAM KARAS
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PRESIDIO — En la reunión del jueves pasado, Patricia Runyan y el Director de Obras Públicas, César Leyva, informaron al Distrito de Desarrollo Municipal de Presidio (PMDD) sobre la construcción en curso en Daly Park. Originalmente, la construcción estaba programada para terminar en diciembre, pero la Fundación AARP, que seleccionó a Presidio como receptor de la subvención, permitió una extensión de seis meses para terminar el proyecto.

La transformación del parque fue originalmente una creación del exdirector ejecutivo del PMDD, Jeran Stephens, quien imaginó un futuro para el espacio como un centro cultural. "Es un espacio orientado a la familia, debería ser mejor y más accesible", dijo en una reunión en junio del año pasado.

Presidio recibió una subvención de $31,075 para las mejoras del parque, que incluyeron una estructura de banda renovada, nuevo equipo de juegos, un espacio de entrenamiento para adultos y un mural del artista Ramón Deanda. Stephens esperaba que el espacio musical mejorado y la pista de

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El Ayuntamiento de Presidio busca asesoramiento legal sobre la posible ordenanza de la sala de juegos

Por SAM KARAS
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PRESIDIO — En la reunión de la semana pasada, el Concejo Municipal de Presidio dio otro paso hacia la redacción de una ordenanza que regula las salas de juegos. Se suponía que se llevaría a cabo una primera lectura de la ordenanza potencial esa noche, pero los funcionarios de la ciudad decidieron revisar algunos de los matices de su ordenanza redactada después de un asesoramiento legal detallado.

Los juegos de azar son oficialmente ilegales en Texas, pero han aparecido salas de juegos en todo el estado para simular parte de la diversión de los juegos de azar mientras operan dentro de la letra de la ley. Actualmente, Presidio tiene dos salas de juegos; desde que el tema se discutió por primera vez en el Concejo Municipal en noviembre, ambas se han vuelto más visibles con letreros actualizados y horarios de atención publicados.

La ciudad de Presidio decidió abordar el problema después de que se aprobara una ordenanza en Odessa que impedía la renovación de los permisos de las salas de juegos a fines de diciembre de 2022. Las salas de juegos de Presidio surgieron en parte como respuesta a las nuevas leyes en la cuenca del Pérmico: los propietarios Flor Montoya y Oscar García dijeron a los funcionarios de la ciudad que habían trasladado sus negocios a Presidio en un intento de eludir lo que consideraban una reacción legal exagerada.

Los defensores de las salas de juegos dicen que es una buena diversión limpia: en una ciudad con pocos espacios públicos de reunión, satisfacen una necesidad de comunidad y una distracción del estrés de la vida cotidiana. En una entrevista con Presidio International, Montoya comparó su sala de juegos con la forma en que otros pueden desplazarse en sus teléfonos. "Al final del día, en lugar de ir a casa o ir a otro lado, voy a la sala de juegos y me relajo, me pierdo en la máquina", dijo Montoya.

Algunos miembros del consejo estaban preocupados por los posibles efectos negativos de las salas de juegos. Los funcionarios de la ciudad de Odessa decidieron tomar medidas enérgicas después de que los funcionarios encargados de hacer cumplir la ley y los miembros de la comunidad se quejaran de los delitos que se acumulaban alrededor de los establecimientos. Había 32 salas de juegos dentro de los límites de la ciudad antes de que se aprobara una ordenanza que prohibía a los propietarios de salas de juegos solicitar nuevos permisos.

El Tribunal de Comisionados del Condado de Harris adoptó regulaciones similares en 2013. Desde entonces, la cantidad de salas de juego se ha desplomado: 10 años después, solo hay cinco dentro de los límites de la ciudad de Houston. Muchos de estos salones de juego habían estado ofreciendo premios en efectivo (ilegales en Texas si superaban los $5) y estaban

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ENGLISH NEWS

Presidio Dragstrip

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purchased insurance for the event weeks — rather than days — in advance. With the new system up and running, they're hoping to add even more dates to the calendar this year. "We make a profit, but everything comes out of our pockets up front," Romero explained.

Romero and the other drag race organizers are hoping to eventually make the organization a nonprofit, running community events and charity races — and perhaps even funding in-house internships for future mechanics and tradespeople. "We do good things for this community," Jimenez said.

This year, they decided to reapply for funding through the Convention and Visitors Bureau, which deliberates on how to spend Presidio's hotel occupancy tax (HOT). HOT runs on the motto "heads in beds" — encouraging the growth of the tourism industry by putting money into initiatives that will bring visitors to stay in town and boost the local economy.

The drag race organizers felt that by drawing from the HOT pool in advance, they'd be able to make the money back for the city this year — and ultimately grow the program's mone-making potential. The drag races already bring hundreds of people to town for each event and consistently draw racing teams from Mexico and all over the Southwest.

They also felt that Presidians had come to enjoy the event as well, and looked forward to each race as a new town tradition. "Every event we have, we get this town rocking and rolling," said Romero.

The CVB board ultimately decided to approve the funding to the tune of $16,000. The final authorization to spend the money will have to come from Presidio City Council because it exceeds the CVB's budget — the budget is approved annually, but the HOT fund that fulfills the budget is assessed quarterly and frequently exceeds expectations.

Everyone in the room felt that the Presidio Dragstrip was a sure bet — and the organizers were grateful. "It's a big gorilla off my back and a blessing," said Romero.

Funding for the Presidio Dragstrip will be discussed and approved at an upcoming City Council meeting, date to be determined. Presidians interested in offering feedback are encouraged to check future agendas online at the city secretary's website: https://presidiotx.us/?page_id=63.

Daly Park project

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be disbursed.

She cautioned the PMDD board to not stray too far from the original grant application, which focused on improving the park experience for seniors and children. "[AARP] would prefer that the remaining money be spent in the original spirit of the work," she said. "Go over to the park, pretend you're 10 years old and imagine what the best use of that money would be."

Runyan took an interest in the project because of her heritage as a fourth-generation Presidian and a direct descendent of the park's namesake, Fernando Daly — the first Presidian to serve in the United States military. Both the park and a nearby street bear his name, honoring his service as a cavalryman in France during World War I.

Because of the hard work of Public Works Director Cesar Leyva and his crew, no outside contractors were needed to finish the project. Help from the City of Presidio helped stretch the grant's budget to address as many concerns as possible.

One of their biggest challenges has been making the park more accessible to people with disabilities — including a swing that can accommodate users in wheelchairs. Despite the high price tag, Leyva and Runyan felt that those upgrades were worth it in the spirit of inclusivity. "For anyone that can use that, it will be an extraordinary opportunity," Runyan said.

An important next step in the process will include gathering community feedback. The group agreed to meet privately to tour the park and to set up a town hall where community members can make suggestions about what they would like to see the remaining grant money go toward — and what their visions for the space will be.

As someone whose own memories of the park span generations, Runyan felt passionately about planning for the park's long-term future. "A master plan is essential," she said. "What is the park going to need to be truly viable?"

Game room ordinance

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Steve Alvarez worried about the impact on the community's seniors, who have few other opportunities for recreation. "Many of them are getting addicted to gambling — and they're on fixed incomes," he said.

City Administrator Pablo Rodriguez sent a draft of the proposed ordinance to Marianella Joseph of Bojorquez Law Firm, the city's official legal counsel. Joseph provided some insight into how the potential ordinance would be curtailed by state law — including appropriate permit fees, zoning restrictions and penalties for not abiding by said ordinance.

The current draft of Presidio's ordinance focuses on the permitting process — business owners must pay a one-time fee of $1,000 and pass a safety inspection, as well as a licensing fee for each machine in the establishment. Subsequent renewals cost $100 a year, so long as the owner hasn't violated the stipulations detailed in their permit.

Questions about additional regulations remained. Presidio's draft requires that game rooms can only open on property zoned commercial — but many cities regulate how far away they can be located from a church or a school. Council members also wanted to put limitations on the legal age of game room patrons. "I don't think we want minors in these types of places," Rodriguez said.

Council members also wondered if they could put any limitations on the number of game rooms within city limits — the City of Alpine only allows four to operate simultaneously. Rodriguez expressed hesitation about putting that kind of limitation in writing. "If it's a legal business, then why would we limit [the number of] legal businesses?" he said.

Rodriguez also pulled up a number of case studies that might incentivize the city to be more lenient in their regulations. The estimated revenue on licenses and permits costs the city of Odessa $810,000 annually. The City of Laredo has raked in millions of dollars on game rooms since hiking up their fees. "[Laredo] was able to balance their budget," Rodriguez said.

Council members ultimately agreed that more time was needed before presenting another draft of the ordinance to the public. "We have to balance as best we can while keeping the community's health in mind," said Councilmember Arian Velázquez-Ornelas. "I'm not saying it's bad — but we have to look at all the sides."



Staff photo by Sam Karas

The City of Presidio is in the process of drafting an ordinance regulating local game rooms.

Rio Bravo Ranch wraps up 2nd annual songwriters festival

By SAM KARAS
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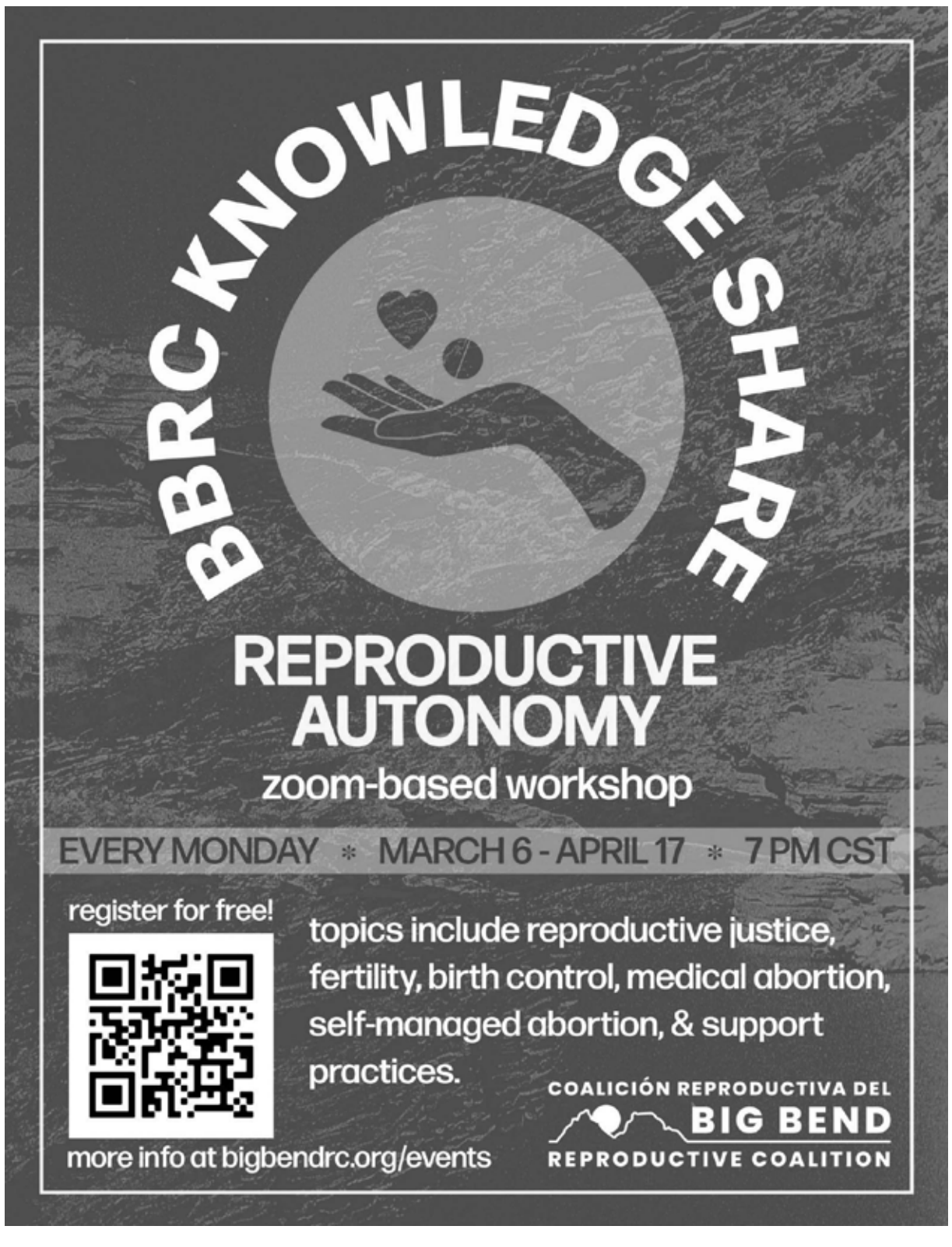
PRESIDIO — Last weekend, Rio Bravo Ranch wrapped up their second annual songwriters festival, celebrating acoustic tunes in a jaw-dropping setting along the Rio Grande. People across the region made the trek to Presidio for the event, and locals served up top-notch food, drink and outdoor experiences for the attendees.

Festival organizer Lauren Cecil — who runs Rio Bravo Ranch along with her husband Charlie and their daughters — said that she envisioned the festival as "a miniature Woodstock." This year's festival lived up to expectations with a variety of intimate acoustic sets under the West Texas stars.

The festival was headlined by Mike McClure, a legendary singer-songwriter from Oklahoma who was a founding member of The Great Divide. McClure performed alongside Chrislyn Rose on Saturday night. The night before, Blan Scott and Drew Cooper performed country-infused tunes.

Local vendors included Hiram Carerra of the Presidio Trading Post & Cantina, the Pink Flamingo, Mayahuel Ojinaga and Marfa Spirit Co. The Presidio American Legion pitched in to lend chairs and tables, and Watson Vineyard Wine of Coleman and Tall City Brewing Company of Midland also made the trek to offer refreshments.

The Rio Bravo Ranch crew was very pleased with how the event unfolded — and to see the generosity of their guests, who pitched into a raffle benefiting local first responders at the Presidio Volunteer Fire Department. "Rio Bravo Unplugged was amazing and even more amazing was that everyone there helped raise money," said Cecil.



Presidio High School celebrates new National Honor Society members

PRESIDIO — Last Wednesday, Presidio High School held a special ceremony to honor three new inductees. Ilianna Morales, Luis Sanchez and Karla Valdivia were invited to join the prestigious organization which focuses on academic excellence and community service.

Over one million students around the world are members of the National Honors Society. To become a member, students must adhere to the "four pillars": service, character, scholarship and citizenship.

The average NHS chapter completes a collective 1,000 hours of community service, and Presidio's members have been doing their part by participating in initiatives like volunteering at the recycling center and planting trees around town.

Presidio High School's chapter members include Mayte Flotte, Robert Loya and Clarisa Villagran. Ramon Rodriguez serves as chapter president and Valerie Armendariz as the vice president. Natalia Sanchez is the secretary and Daisy Flores is the treasurer. The student's faculty advisor is Angelica Aguilar.



Photo courtesy of Presidio High School NHS

Three new Presidio High School students were inducted into the National Honors Society last week. From left to right: Ramon Rodriguez, Luis Sanchez, Natalia Sanchez, Clarisa Villagran, Karla Valdivia, Ilianna Morales, Valerie Armendariz, Mayte Flotte, Daisy Flores, Robert Loya, and Angelica Aguilar.

Presidio Public Library to celebrate Dr. Suess Day

PRESIDIO — This Thursday, the Presidio Public Library will be hosting a Dr. Suess Day celebration in honor of the acclaimed author's 119th birthday. Seuss fans young and old are invited to attend for refreshments and fun.

Theodore "Seuss" Geisel was born on March 2, 1904, in Springfield, Massachusetts. Early on, he discovered a knack for drawing and poetry — he adopted the pen name "Dr. Seuss" in college as he started to publish work.

Geisel's first children's book, *And to Think That I Saw It on Mulberry Street*, was published in 1937. Over the course of his life, he published more than 60 books, many of which became the most popular childrens' books of all time.

Some of Geisel's most famous books include *The Grinch Who Stole Christmas, The Cat in the Hat, The Lorax,* and *Oh, the Places You'll Go*. His books have been translated into over 20 languages and many of them have been adapted for film and television.

The event will kick off at the library at 5 p.m. Presidio's celebration will feature a reading of *Green Eggs and Ham*, another children's classic.

The Presidio Public Library is located at 1200 E O'Reilly Street.

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NOTICIAS EN ESPAÑOL

Presidio Dragstrip

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votación, y un conflicto posterior con el exdirector ejecutivo Jeran Stephens sobre el estado del seguro de responsabilidad civil de la pista dejó en duda el calendario de la organización para 2022.

Presidio Drag Racing finalmente abordó las preocupaciones de Stephens y compró un seguro para el evento con semanas, en lugar de días, por adelantado. Con el nuevo sistema en funcionamiento, esperan agregar aún más fechas al calendario este año. "Obtenemos ganancias, pero todo sale de nuestros bolsillos por adelantado", explicó Romero.

Romero y los otros organizadores de carreras de resistencia esperan eventualmente convertir a la organización en una organización sin fines de lucro, organizando eventos comunitarios y carreras benéficas, y tal vez incluso financiando pasantías internas para futuros mecánicos y comerciantes. "Hacemos cosas buenas por esta comunidad", dijo Jiménez.

Este año, decidieron volver a solicitar fondos a través de la Oficina de Visitantes y Convenciones, que delibera sobre cómo gastar el impuesto de ocupación hotelera (HOT) de Presidio. HOT se basa en el lema "cabezas en las camas": fomenta el crecimiento de la industria del turismo al invertir dinero en iniciativas que atraerán a los visitantes a quedarse en la ciudad e impulsarán la economía local.

Los organizadores de la carrera de resistencia sintieron que al sacar dinero del grupo HOT por adelantado, podrían recuperar el dinero para la ciudad este año y, en última instancia, aumentar el potencial de generación de dinero del programa. Las carreras de resistencia ya atraen a cientos de personas a la ciudad para cada evento y constantemente atraen a equipos de carreras de México y de todo el suroeste.

También sintieron que los presidentes también habían venido a disfrutar del evento y esperaban cada carrera como una nueva tradición de la ciudad. "Cada evento que tenemos, hacemos que esta ciudad se mueva y se mueva", dijo Romero.

La junta de CVB finalmente decidió aprobar la financiación por una suma de $ 16,000. La autorización final para gastar el dinero deberá provenir del Concejo Municipal de Presidio porque excede el presupuesto de CVB: el presupuesto se aprueba anualmente, pero el fondo HOT que cumple con el presupuesto se evalúa trimestralmente y con frecuencia supera las expectativas.

Todos en la sala sintieron que Presidio Dragstrip era una apuesta segura, y los organizadores estaban agradecidos. "Es un gran gorila fuera de mi espalda y una bendición", dijo Romero.

La financiación de Presidio Dragstrip se discutirá y aprobará en una próxima reunión del Concejo Municipal, fecha por determinar. Se alienta a los presidentes interesados en ofrecer comentarios a consultar las agendas futuras en línea en el sitio web del secretario de la ciudad: https://presidiotx.us/?page_id=63.

El proyecto de Daly Park

(Continuación de la página 1)

baile atrajeran más programación musical, incluido un espacio para Presidio durante el Festival anual Viva Big Bend.

A partir de la reunión de la semana pasada, había un saldo de $8,000 aún por gastar. Runyan, quien había sido designado para supervisar el proyecto como administrador de subvenciones, ayudó a guiar una discusión sobre cómo se debería desembolsar el dinero.

Advirtió a la junta de PMDD que no se desviara demasiado de la solicitud de subvención original, que se enfocaba en mejorar la experiencia del parque para personas mayores y niños. "[AARP] preferiría que el dinero restante se gastara en el espíritu original del trabajo", dijo. "Ve al parque, finge que tienes 10 años e imagina cuál sería el mejor uso de ese dinero".

Runyan se interesó en el proyecto debido a su herencia como presidente de cuarta generación y descendiente directo del homónimo del parque, Fernando Daly, el primer presidente en servir en el ejército de los Estados Unidos. Tanto el parque como una calle cercana llevan su nombre, en honor a su servicio como soldado de caballería en Francia durante la Primera Guerra Mundial.

Gracias al arduo trabajo del Director de Obras Públicas, César Leyva, y su equipo, no se necesitaron contratistas externos para terminar el proyecto. La ayuda de la Ciudad de Presidio ayudó a estirar el presupuesto de la subvención para abordar la mayor cantidad de inquietudes posible.

Uno de sus mayores desafíos ha sido hacer que el parque sea más accesible para las personas con discapacidades, incluido un columpio que puede acomodar a los usuarios en sillas de ruedas. A pesar del alto precio, Leyva y Runyan sintieron que esas actualizaciones valieron la pena en el espíritu de inclusión. "Para cualquiera que pueda usar eso, será una oportunidad extraordinaria", dijo Runyan.

Un próximo paso importante en el proceso incluirá la recopilación de comentarios de la comunidad. El grupo acordó reunirse en privado para recorrer el parque y establecer un ayuntamiento donde los miembros de la comunidad puedan hacer sugerencias sobre a qué les gustaría que se destinara el dinero restante de la subvención, y cuáles serán sus visiones para el espacio.

Como alguien cuyos propios recuerdos del parque abarcan generaciones, a Runyan le apasionaba planificar el futuro a largo plazo del parque. "Un plan maestro es esencial", dijo. "¿Qué va a necesitar el parque para ser verdaderamente viable?"



Staff photo by Sam Karas

El patio de recreo en Daly Park recibió un cambio de imagen gracias al Distrito de Desarrollo Municipal de Presidio y una subvención de la Fundación AARP.
The playground at Daly Park received a makeover thanks to the Presidio Municipal Development District and a grant from the AARP Foundation.

Ordenanza de la sala de juegos

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asociados con varios tiroteos, apuñalamientos y DWI.

Algunos miembros del consejo en Presidio tenían las mismas preocupaciones. Steve Alvarez estaba preocupado por el impacto en las personas mayores de la comunidad, que tienen pocas oportunidades de recreación. "Muchos de ellos se están volviendo adictos al juego, y tienen ingresos fijos", dijo.

El administrador de la ciudad, Pablo Rodríguez, envió un borrador de la ordenanza propuesta a Marianella Joseph de Bojorquez Law Firm, la asesora legal oficial de la ciudad. Joseph proporcionó una idea de cómo la ordenanza potencial sería restringida por la ley estatal, incluidas las tarifas de permisos apropiadas, las restricciones de zonificación y las sanciones por no cumplir con dicha ordenanza.

El borrador actual de la ordenanza de Presidio se enfoca en el proceso de permisos: los dueños de negocios deben pagar una tarifa única de $1,000 y pasar una inspección de seguridad, así como una tarifa de licencia para cada máquina en el establecimiento. Las renovaciones posteriores cuestan $100 al año, siempre que el propietario no haya violado las estipulaciones detalladas en su permiso.

Quedaban preguntas sobre regulaciones adicionales. El borrador de Presidio requiere que las salas de juegos solo puedan abrir en propiedades zonificadas comerciales, pero muchas ciudades regulan qué tan lejos pueden ubicarse de una iglesia o una escuela. Los miembros del consejo también querían poner límites a la edad legal de los clientes de la sala de juegos. "No creo que queramos menores en este tipo de lugares", dijo Rodríguez.

Los miembros del consejo también se preguntaron si podrían poner algún límite en la cantidad de salas de juego dentro de los límites de la ciudad: la ciudad de Alpine solo permite que cuatro operen simultáneamente. Rodríguez expresó sus dudas acerca de poner ese tipo de limitación por escrito. "Si se trata de un negocio legal, ¿por qué limitaríamos [la cantidad de] negocios legales?" él dijo.

Rodríguez también sacó una serie de estudios de casos que podrían incentivar a la ciudad a ser más indulgente con sus regulaciones. Los ingresos estimados por licencias y permisos le cuestan a la ciudad de Odessa $810,000 al año. La ciudad de Laredo ha recaudado millones de dólares en salas de juegos desde que aumentó sus tarifas. "[Laredo] pudo equilibrar su presupuesto", dijo Rodríguez.

Los miembros del consejo finalmente acordaron que se necesitaba más tiempo antes de presentar otro borrador de la ordenanza al público. "Tenemos que equilibrar lo mejor que podamos teniendo en cuenta la salud de la comunidad", dijo el concejal Arian Velázquez-Ornelas. "No digo que sea malo, pero tenemos que mirar todos los lados".

Rio Bravo Ranch concluye segundo festival anual de compositores

Por SAM KARAS
sam@bigbendsentinel.com

PRESIDIO — El fin de semana pasado, Rio Bravo Ranch concluyó su segundo festival anual de compositores, celebrando melodías acústicas en un entorno asombroso a lo largo del Río Grande. Personas de toda la región viajaron a Presidio para el evento, y los lugareños sirvieron comidas, bebidas y experiencias al aire libre de primer nivel para los asistentes.

La organizadora del festival Lauren Cecil, quien dirige Rio Bravo Ranch junto con su esposo Charlie y sus hijas, dijo que imaginó el festival como "un Woodstock en miniatura". El festival de este año estuvo a la altura de las expectativas con una variedad de sets acústicos íntimos bajo las estrellas del oeste de Texas.

El festival estuvo encabezado por Mike McClure, un legendario cantautor de Oklahoma que fue miembro fundador de The Great Divide. McClure actuó junto a Chrislyn Rose el sábado por la noche. La noche anterior, Blan Scott y Drew Cooper interpretaron melodías country.

Los vendedores locales incluyeron a Hiram Carerra de Presidio Trading Post & Cantina, Pink Flamingo, Mayahuel Ojinaga y Marfa Spirit Co. Presidio American Legion ayudó a prestar sillas y mesas, y Watson Vineyard Wine de Coleman y Tall City Brewing Company de Midland también Hizo la caminata para ofrecer refrigerios.

El equipo de Rio Bravo Ranch estuvo muy complacido con el desarrollo del evento y con la generosidad de sus invitados, quienes participaron en una rifa en beneficio de los socorristas locales del Departamento de Bomberos Voluntarios de Presidio. "Rio Bravo Unplugged fue increíble y aún más sorprendente fue que todos allí ayudaron a recaudar dinero", dijo Cecil.

Biblioteca Pública de Presidio para celebrar el Día del Dr. Suess

PRESIDIO — Este jueves, la Biblioteca Pública de Presidio organizará una celebración del Día del Dr. Suess en honor al 119 cumpleaños del aclamado autor. Los fanáticos de Seuss, jóvenes y mayores, están invitados a asistir para disfrutar de refrigerios y diversión.

Theodore "Seuss" Geisel nació el 2 de marzo de 1904 en Springfield, Massachusetts. Al principio, descubrió una habilidad especial para el dibujo y la poesía: adoptó el seudónimo de "Dr. Seuss" en la universidad cuando comenzó a publicar trabajos.

El primer libro infantil de Geisel, *Y pensar que lo vi en Mulberry Street*, se publicó en 1937. A lo largo de su vida, publicó más de 60 libros, muchos de los cuales se convirtieron en los libros infantiles más populares de todos los tiempos.

Algunos de los libros más famosos de Geisel incluyen *The Grinch Who Stole Christmas, The Cat in the Hat, The Lorax* y *Oh, the Places You'll Go*. Sus libros han sido traducidos a más de 20 idiomas y muchos de ellos han sido adaptados para cine y televisión.

El evento comenzará en la biblioteca a las 5 p.m. La celebración de Presidio contará con una lectura de *Green Eggs and Ham*, otro clásico infantil.

La Biblioteca Pública de Presidio está ubicada en 1200 E O'Reilly Street.

Presidio High School celebra a los nuevos miembros de la Sociedad Nacional de Honor

PRESIDIO — El miércoles pasado, la Escuela Secundaria Presidio realizó una ceremonia especial para honrar a tres nuevos miembros. Ilianna Morales, Luis Sánchez y Karla Valdivia fueron invitados a unirse a la prestigiosa organización que se enfoca en la excelencia académica y el servicio comunitario.

Más de un millón de estudiantes de todo el mundo son miembros de la Sociedad Nacional de Honores. Para convertirse en miembro, los estudiantes deben adherirse a los "cuatro pilares": servicio, carácter, erudición y ciudadanía.

El capítulo promedio del NHS completa un total de 1000 horas de servicio comunitario, y los miembros de Presidio han estado haciendo su parte al participar en iniciativas como ser voluntarios en el centro de reciclaje y plantar árboles en la ciudad.

Los miembros del capítulo de Presidio High School incluyen a Mayte Flotte, Robert Loya y Clarisa Villagran. Ramón Rodríguez se desempeña como presidente del capítulo y Valerie Armendáriz como vicepresidenta. Natalia Sánchez es la secretaria y Daisy Flores es la tesorera. La consejera de la facultad del estudiante es Angélica Aguilar.

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CLASSIFIED

Solar Park Fire partially contained on day 4 as crews plan for extreme winds

By MARY CANTRELL
mkcantrell@bigbendsentintel.com

JEFF DAVIS COUNTY — A wildfire being referred to as the Solar Park Fire, which broke out in the Davis Mountains due to a downed powerline this past Sunday during high winds, was still burning as of Wednesday afternoon, having grown to encompass 2,816 acres.

As of press time, the fire was 50% contained and not actively expanding, said Jim Fowler, a spokesperson for the Fort Davis Fire Department. But both local volunteers as well as Texas A&M Forest Service (TFS) firefighting crews were remaining diligent as gusts up to 70 mph in the area coming from the southwest could result in fire spread over the next couple of days.

Fowler said the Solar Park Fire arrived early in the fire season and has presented challenges to firefighters due to high winds. Crews will continue to work for however long it takes to see the fire fully extinguished, he said.

"It's the most severe fire we've had since the start a COVID," said Fowler. "This is the first big event. It is early in the season, which is kind of a surprise — we don't usually have large fires in February. This is not a particularly large fire, but because of the high winds, TFS and Fort Davis have put a lot of resources on it to try and get out before the winds pick up again."

While the fire was not actively burning around the perimeter, as of press time, interior hotspots still posed a potential threat, said Fowler. For the most part, the fire — primarily on ungrazed ranchlands — was still burning in "rugged mountainous terrain," of grasses, shrubs and yucca, said Fowler, but crews would be dispatched to protect the nearby community of Limpia Crossing if needed.

"There's a lot of green — what we call unburned fuel — in the interior of the fire perimeter," said Fowler. "Those boundaries between the burned area and the unburned area are of concern because they could throw sparks and embers across the fire line and potentially start another fire outside of the one we're working right now."

A combination of high winds, higher temperatures than usual for the season, and low humidity have resulted in extreme fire danger conditions, according to the National Weather Service office out of Midland.

Firefighters are prepared to shift their approach depending on wind behaviors. If the wind stays relatively subdued, crews will continue to "mop up" the Solar Park Fire, said Fowler. But if high winds present additional threats, TFS crews, which arrived to help fight the fire on Monday, will be pulled off of the high mountain tops where they are working and dispatched to protect the community of Limpia Crossing.

"One [task force] will be deployed on the southern edge of the fire to do structure protection and work the drainages near Limpia Crossing. The other task force will be an initial attack and will support the volunteer firefighters if they need it for any additional fires that may start," said Fowler.

TFS crews will remain in the area at least until Thursday, said Fowler, but may stay longer depending on the situation. "If we don't have any breakouts or additional fires that we need to work on, we will probably start mobilizing folks on Friday. That's the current plan that may change," he said.

American Electric Power (AEP) has since repaired the downed powerline which caused the Solar Park Fire to break out, located near Gazebo Park on Highway 118. A smaller fire that broke out on Sunday near the Point of Rocks parking area on Highway 166, caused by a downed line that has been repaired, was put out swiftly and is no longer of concern.

"We diverted one of our trucks that was just leaving the station from the Solar Park to the Point of Rocks fire. They rather quickly got it out. They had quite a bit of help from the locals," said Fowler.

Edna Queen, Davis Mountains Resort Volunteer Fire Department chief, said that her crew began by tackling the Point of Rocks fire on Sunday before moving on to Solar Park — for some on her team, it was their first grassland fire, and she was proud of how her firefighters rose to the challenge.

"We were told by [Fort Davis Fire Chief Pat] Olivas to hold that line and not let the fire cross the dirt road where our trucks were parked," said Queen, who also managed to take some photos of the crew in action. "Two teams of three rookie firemen, and we did! I am so proud."



Photo by Edna Queen

Firefighters Aaron Rasbach and Jan Van Liere of the Davis Mountain Resort Volunteer Fire Department battle the Solar Park Fire.

Fort Davis Fire Department and DMR volunteer crews were originally dispatched to the scene of the Solar Park Fire on Sunday afternoon, when they worked from 4 p.m. to midnight to subdue the flames before around 50 TFS crew members arrived the following day. Crews got an early start Monday at 7 a.m. and fought the fire until 7 p.m., returning Tuesday from 8 a.m. to 5 p.m. to continue to put out the fire.

Firefighters are typically pulled off the line at night when temperatures cool down, said Fowler.

"We try to get the firefighters, if we can, out of there after dark just because it's not safe to go jumping around the mountains in the dark," said Fowler. "We also need to let them get rested up and fed and prepared for the next day."

Around 20 firefighting vehicles arrived on scene to assist with the fire in addition to Texas Department of Public Safety helicopters, which helped map the fire from above. Fowler said because it is early on in the fire season, an aviation company the fire department would typically contract to assist with water drops and more has yet to be hired. But, because DPS helicopters are able to fly slower, they often assist in mapping fires regardless.

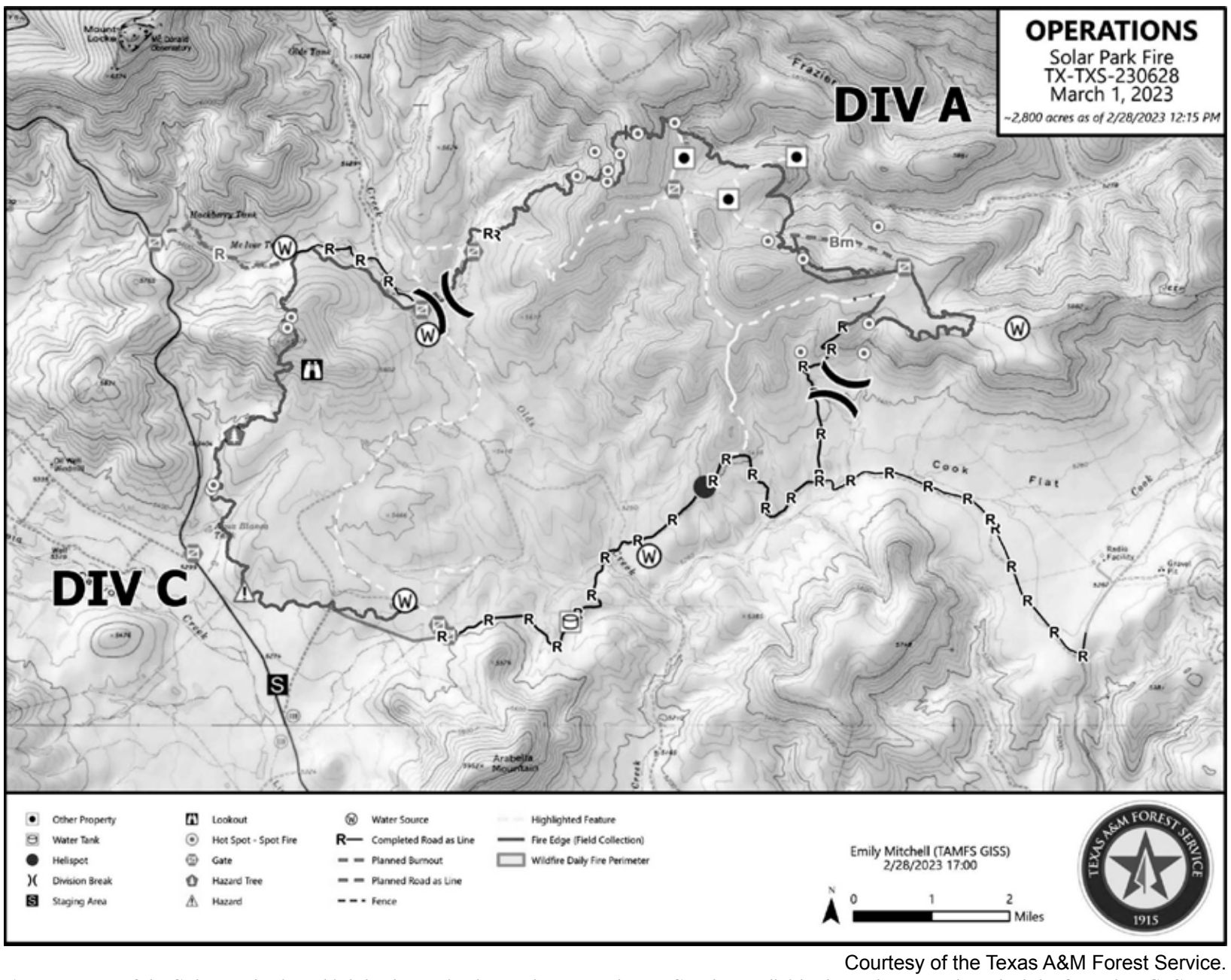
TFS tracks financial logistics that go into fighting such a fire, said Fowler, including firefighter hours, what types of equipment are utilized and more in order to receive reimbursement from the state. Jeff Davis County is not responsible for the TFS costs that go into fighting the fire.

The Solar Park Fire is so named because the location where the fire broke out once served as a solar panel installation put in by West Texas Utility a couple of decades ago. When AEP purchased the company, they turned the land over to TxDOT so it could serve as a park — AEP was not pursuing alternative energy at the time and removed the solar panels. While there are no solar panels remaining in the area today, Fowler said it's still how longtime locals refer to the place.

"It's a small town, so we all talk about things that used to be here, and of course all the new residents have no clue what we're talking about," said Fowler.

Fowler said the department was grateful for the local community's support, stating they were appreciative of food donations from locals Rusty Wofford, Patrick Olivas and more.

For more information, follow the Fort Davis Fire Department on Facebook: https://www.facebook.com/FortDavisFireDepartment



Courtesy of the Texas A&M Forest Service.

A recent map of the Solar Park Fire which broke out in the Davis Mountains on Sunday. Individuals on the ground tracked the fire using GPS coordinates which were then consolidated to make an accurate map which shows the fire spread to encompass 2,816 acres in total.



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PHS Baseball Varsity @ Sonora Tourney
PHS Baseball JV @ Pecos Tourney

THURSDAY, MARCH 2:
LRFMS Track Boys/Girls @ Sanderson

MONDAY, MARCH 6:
PHS Basketball Boys & Girls Recognition, 6:30pm

TUESDAY, MARCH 7:
PHS Softball Var/JV vs Midland Lee @ Presidio
Varsity @ 5:00pm, JV @ 6:30pm
PHS Baseball JV/Var @ Ft. Stockton
JV @ 4:00pm, Varsity @ 7:00pm

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