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by order of Presidio County

In the wake of budget shortfall, Presidio County explores possibility of charging sales tax

By SAM KARAS
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MARFA — At last week’s meeting, the Presidio County Commissioners Court discussed the possibility of charging a county-wide sales tax to help fill a chronic budget shortfall. The county currently brings in the majority of its revenue from property tax — but during public comment, a concerned former county resident raised the possibility of also charging a county-wide sales tax.

Former longtime Presidio County business owner Daniel Browning brought the issue to the attention of commissioners last Wednesday after following the latest in a series of tense budget seasons. “In one way or another, the county’s budget shortfall is always in the news, and no real progress has been made toward a solution,” he said.

Browning explained that the state of Texas allows cities and counties to charge up to 8.25% sales tax on local purchases. That leaves 2% to be divvied up between local taxing entities — the city of Marfa currently charges a 1.75% sales tax, leaving .25% potentially up for grabs.

(Browning submitted a text version of his comments to the Sentinel as a letter to the editor, which can be read in its entirety in this issue’s opinion section.)

County Attorney Rod Ponton said that Presidio County was one of a few counties that did not have their own sales tax, and that the small margin left to raise tax rates in Marfa presented a very unique opportunity. “Almost everyone uses [the maximum tax rate] up — it’s ‘use it or lose it,’” he said.

If the county did not take steps to negotiate for that .25%, Ponton explained, the county might be “forever barred” from the prospect of taking in any revenue from sales tax.

The city of Presidio, on the other hand, presents a much different challenge. The city is home to an additional taxing entity — the Presidio Municipal Development District (PMDD) — which skims .5% from sales tax for its budget.

As a result, Presidio residents pay the maximum 8.25% in sales tax: the city collects 1.5% and PMDD collects .5%.

PMDD is a “special purpose district” created by the Texas State Legislature in 2013 with the goal of growing local business in Presidio. The board’s leadership is appointed by Presidio City Council. While the organization has suffered from heavy turnover, recent successful PMDD projects have included the

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Staff photo by Sam Karas / Foto por Sam Karas

Manuela Pando joined the annual “River Run to the Post” motorcycle rally on Saturday.

Manuela Pando participó en el rally de motocicletas anual “River Run to the Post” el sábado pasado.

Annual ‘River Run’ motorcycle rally cruises down FM 170

By SAM KARAS
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PRESIDIO — On Saturday, the Presidio Trading Post kicked off their eighth year in business with their annual “River Run” motorcycle rally. Around two dozen bikers participated, taking in the breathtaking scenery of the road between Presidio and Terlingua — as well as a fiesta and a spread of home cooking to cap off an epic day.

The rally is a triple threat: a celebration of local bike culture, the Post’s loyal customers, and of Mexican Independence Day, which fell on a Saturday this year. The ride itself is also called the “Poker Run” by its participants — riders can register before the event to take part in a game of poker, which plays out stop by stop along the scenic route.

The River Run has been an annual event since 2016 — a handful of the Post’s first customers were avid bikers, and owner Rafa Carrera had recently gotten into the wild world of motorcycles as well. For their grand opening event, Carrera and his friends decided to celebrate by cruising to Terlingua and back — the rest is history.

While around half of the crew consisted of full-time locals, the event also draws riders from all over the region. Nellie and Raul Pando, who have roots in Ojinaga and Presidio, came all the way from Midland to take part.

For the Pandos, the scenery along the open road is just part of what makes biking so magical. “It’s about the people,” Raul said. “And, also, making

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Ruidosa Church undergoes bell tower restoration in 1st nonprofit-led effort

By MARY CANTRELL
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RUIDOSA — Long-drawn-out efforts to restore a historic adobe church in the remote, near-abandoned border town of Ruidosa saw progress this month with the partial repair of one of the church’s bell towers.

El Corazon Sagrado de la Iglesia de Jesus, the Sacred Heart Church of Jesus, was established by the Catholic Diocese of El Paso over a century ago, and most recently taken over by the Friends of the Ruidosa Church, a nonprofit which intends to properly restore, preserve and share the site with the broader West Texas community.

Save for the demo saw, which crews used to custom cut each new adobe brick, it was an uncommonly quiet construction site on the final work day last week.

Three adobe masons, Rosalio Sanchez, Enrique Garcia and Mauricio Elizarez ducked beneath custom scaffolding — designed for safety — while adeptly applying keying and dry-packing techniques to the adobe walls.

The intent is to form a monolithic earthen wall, seamlessly connecting new to old — the old being a severely eroded bell tower corner, which saw up to 11 of its 20-foot height rebuilt by the end of the three-week intensive.

While only the beginning of a costly, years-long endeavor, David Keller, a local archeologist and historian involved with the project, said the bell tower stabilization was “epic,” the result of conversations dating back 13 years. “Now, we own the church, the scaffolding is being used, and we got that corner built up to 11 feet,” said Keller. “That is monumental.”

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El rally anual de motocicletas 'River Run' recorre la FM 170

Por SAM KARAS
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PRESIDIO – El sábado, Presidio Trading Post inició su octavo año en el negocio con su rally anual de motocicletas “River Run”. Participaron alrededor de dos docenas de ciclistas, disfrutando del impresionante paisaje de la carretera entre Presidio y Terlingua, así como de una fiesta y una variedad de comida casera para culminar un día épico.

La manifestación es una triple amenaza: una celebración de la cultura ciclista local, los clientes leales del Post y el Día de la Independencia de México, que este año cayó en sábado. Los participantes también llaman a la atracción en sí “Poker Run”: los pasajeros pueden registrarse antes del evento para participar en un juego de póquer, que se desarrolla parada tras parada a lo largo de la ruta escénica.

River Run ha sido un evento anual desde 2016: algunos de los primeros clientes del Post eran ávidos ciclistas, y el propietario Rafa Carrera también se había adentrado recientemente en el salvaje mundo de las motocicletas. Para su gran evento de inauguración, Carrera y sus amigos decidieron celebrar viajando a Terlingua y regresando; el resto es historia.

Si bien aproximadamente la mitad del equipo estaba formado por locales a tiempo completo, el evento también atrae a ciclistas de toda la región. Nellie y Raúl Pando, quienes tienen raíces en Ojinaga y Presidio, vinieron

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La iglesia de Ruidosa se somete a restauración del campanario en el primer esfuerzo liderado por una organización sin fines de lucro

Por MARY CANTRELL
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RUIDOSA — Los prolongados esfuerzos para restaurar una histórica iglesia de adobe en la remota y casi abandonada ciudad fronteriza de Ruidosa lograron avances este mes con la reparación parcial de uno de los campanarios de la iglesia.

El Corazón Sagrado de la Iglesia de Jesús, fue establecida por la Diócesis Católica de El Paso hace más de un siglo, y más recientemente asumida por los Amigos de la Iglesia Ruidosa, una organización sin fines de lucro que pretende restaurar adecuadamente , preservar y compartir el sitio con la comunidad más amplia del oeste de Texas.

Salvo por la sierra de demostración, que los equipos utilizaron para cortar a medida cada nuevo ladrillo de adobe, el último día de trabajo de la semana pasada era un sitio de construcción inusualmente tranquilo.

Tres albañiles de adobe, Rosalío Sánchez, Enrique García y Mauricio Elizarez, se agacharon debajo de andamios personalizados —diseñados para la seguridad— mientras aplicaban hábilmente técnicas de incrustación

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A raíz del déficit presupuestario, el condado de Presidio explora la posibilidad de cobrar impuestos sobre las ventas

Por SAM KARAS
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MARFA — En la reunión de la semana pasada, el Tribunal de Comisionados del Condado de Presidio discutió la posibilidad de cobrar un impuesto sobre las ventas en todo el condado para ayudar a cubrir un déficit presupuestario crónico. Actualmente, el condado obtiene la mayor parte de sus ingresos del impuesto a la propiedad, pero durante el comentario público, un ex residente del condado preocupado planteó la posibilidad de cobrar también un impuesto a las ventas en todo el condado.

Daniel Browning, ex propietario de negocios del condado de Presidio desde hace mucho tiempo, llamó la atención de los comisionados sobre el tema el miércoles pasado después de la última de una serie de temporadas presupuestarias tensas. “De una forma u otra, el déficit presupuestario del condado siempre es noticia y no se ha logrado ningún progreso real hacia una solución”, dijo.

Browning explicó que el estado de Texas permite a las ciudades y condados cobrar hasta un 8,25% de impuesto sobre las ventas en las compras locales. Eso deja un 2% para dividir entre las entidades tributarias locales: la ciudad de Marfa actualmente cobra un impuesto sobre las ventas del 1,75%, lo que deja un 0,25% potencialmente en juego.

(Browning envió una versión de texto de sus comentarios al Sentinel como una carta al editor, que se puede leer en su totalidad en la sección de opinión de este número.)

El fiscal del condado, Rod Ponton, dijo que el condado de Presidio era uno de los pocos condados que no tenía su propio impuesto sobre las ventas y que el pequeño margen que quedaba para aumentar las tasas impositivas en Marfa presentaba una oportunidad única. “Casi todo el mundo utiliza [la tasa impositiva máxima]; es ‘úsalo o piérdelo””, dijo.

Si el condado no tomaba medidas para negociar ese 0,25%, explicó Ponton, el condado podría quedar “prohibido para siempre” de la perspectiva de recibir ingresos del impuesto sobre las ventas.

La ciudad de Presidio, por otro lado, presenta un desafío muy diferente. La ciudad alberga una entidad tributaria adicional, el Distrito de Desarrollo Municipal de Presidio (PMDD), que desvía el 0,5% del impuesto sobre las ventas para su presupuesto.

Como resultado, los residentes de Presidio pagan el máximo del 8,25% en impuestos sobre las ventas: la ciudad recauda el 1,5% y el PMDD recauda el 0,5%.

PMDD es un “distrito de compras especiales” creado por la Legislatura del Estado de Texas en 2013 con el objetivo de hacer crecer los negocios locales en Presidio. El liderazgo de la junta es designado por el Concejo Municipal de Presidio. Si bien la organización ha sufrido una gran rotación, los recientes proyectos exitosos del PMDD han incluido la apertura de una operación agrícola, la rehabilitación de parques públicos y la financiación de la guardería

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ENGLISH NEWS

River Run

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new friends.”

Lalo Valles and Betty Lara came all the way from Camargo — about two hours south of Chihuahua City — to become part of the River Run family.

Getting to ride has been a longtime dream of Valles, who picked up the hobby four years ago. That hobby quickly spiraled into a full-time obsession. Just before the River Run, Lara and Valles had just gotten off a 15-day trip to Phoenix to see a Metallica concert, covering over 300 miles across Northern Mexico and the American Southwest.

Riding that many miles in a short span of time takes a toll on the body, but Valles said the sense of freedom

Presidio County

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opening of a farming operation, rehabilitation of public parks and funding for the local daycare center — all which strive to support the city’s workforce.

Presidio Mayor John Ferguson said that the odds the city would give up any of its sales tax to the county were slim to none. He said that while the city has been making strides toward cleaning up its budget and working toward a consistent surplus, there’s still a long way to go. “From the city perspective, we’re razor thin,” he said.

In his comments, Browning had pointed out that the cities of Marfa and Presidio have a revenue stream that the county doesn’t: utilities. Both cities collect water, sewer and waste disposal services, and Presidio also makes money from its landfill.

Ferguson explained that the situation wasn’t that simple. While these utilities do ensure a steady stream of income, their upkeep eats up a lot of that revenue — he pointed toward the city’s water service, which has been plagued in the past few years by chronic leaks and meter issues and is in need of a massive overhaul.

While the city has managed to secure federal grant money to address some of these issues, grants aren’t a blank check — they require up-front matching funds from the city and can only address specific issues. “We’ve got a skeleton crew here,” Ferguson said. “That

Big Bend Ranch State Park to host river cleanup and celebration of National Public Lands Day

By SAM KARAS
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BIG BEND RANCH STATE PARK — This Saturday, Big Bend Ranch State Park will host a river cleanup and volunteer appreciation cookout in observance of National Public Lands Day, the largest single-day volunteer event in parks, nature preserves and other publicly-accessible outdoor spaces around the country.

Just 1.77% of land in Texas is publicly accessible. At 300,000 acres, Big Bend Ranch State park is the largest and most remote state park in the Texas Parks and Wildlife system.

This year’s “Cleanup on the Río” is the first volunteer event of its kind since the pandemic and will focus on the river corridor between La Cuesta Campground and Lajitas. Volunteers will meet up at La Cuesta at 8 a.m. on Saturday morning to hear a brief presentation on the importance of public lands and some basic safety information.

The volunteers will then spread out on foot or by boat to patrol the river corridor for trash. Around 1:30 p.m.

and the sights along the way made being a little saddle sore worth it.

He’s also quickly learned that being a biker means having to be self-sufficient — to have all the tools and the knowledge to make repairs by the side of the road. Working on motorcycles is a skill of its own, even for those handy under the hood of a car. “It has all of the same parts but in a very small space,” he said.

Valles said that he goes to rallies in his native Mexico, but that the scenery is what makes the River Run — particularly the big climb up Santana Mesa halfway through the route — stand out from the rest. “It’s a very, very nice road,” he said.

story’s not going to change. We’re going to need to hang on to any sources of revenue that we have.”

County Judge Joe Portillo said that he was excited by Browning’s enthusiasm about the topic — and had done a lot of thinking himself about how to increase the county’s tax revenue, especially compared to neighboring Brewster County, which takes in around a million dollars a year from county sales tax.

He also knew that the differences between Presidio County and other other counties throughout Far West Texas are structural — there aren’t a lot of businesses operating outside of Marfa and Presidio city limits, and there aren’t big box stores and car dealerships where taxing entities can take in money from “big ticket” purchases.

Portillo stressed — while he would continue to explore the idea — it wasn’t a new revenue stream. “All you’re really doing is taking money out of somebody that doesn’t have any money and putting it in somebody else’s pocket who doesn’t have it,” he said.

Browning was sympathetic to that line of reasoning — to a point. “A failure to take action on investigating this potential income source is a direct willingness to put the individual cities before the needs of the county and its residents as a whole,” he told commissioners. “This [attitude] will continue year after year to cause budget shortfalls.”

that afternoon, the park will host a cookout at the Lajitas Boat Launch. During lunch, park employees will collect entries for a very serious competition — to determine which volunteer collected the most interesting piece of litter.

No registration for the event is necessary, but calling the park ahead of time will help the team plan for an ample amount of hot dogs. Volunteers only need to bring gloves, water and sensible clothes for a morning outside — no experience is needed and all are welcome.

Park Superintendent Laura Jennings was hopeful that the event would draw new visitors from around the region — volunteers will be given a free pass to the park and the opportunity to meet park employees in a relaxed, celebratory setting. “It should be a fun day and get everyone involved with cleaning up the park and recognizing public lands in Texas, which are very limited,” she said.

La Cuesta Campground is located just west of the “Big Hill” on FM 170 between Presidio and Lajitas.

Ruidosa Church

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The bell tower reconstruction marks the first work done to the building since 2010, and is the first renovation campaign under its new caretakers. Earlier attempts to revitalize the structure led by the Presidio County Historic Commission and Texas Historic Commission failed due to issues with hired contractors. The church then sat empty, subject to further erosion and vandalism.

Because the church has not been properly maintained and its adobe bricks were never plastered over, the structure experienced detrimental exposure to the elements, causing the walls to erode anywhere from 6 to 18 inches.

The newly-rehabbed bell tower is the most well preserved piece of the church, and therefore the most challenging to repair. As opposed to the other bell tower, which collapsed in the nineties and will involve a more simple rebuild, the more intact tower posed a greater risk of injury.

“How do you work on something that’s a 20-foot tall wall that’s missing 75% of its structure, that could collapse at any time and not kill anybody?” asked Joey Benton, whose Marfa-based company Silla is performing bell tower repairs.

The solution? A structural shoring system that supports the tower’s roof and holds up the walls inside of the bell tower, aided by additional exterior paneling.

There’s also the matter of time. While new adobe construction involves laying 200 to 250 bricks a day, restoration work moves at a significantly slower pace, at around 20 to 25 bricks a day, Benton said. In order to connect new horizontal and vertical layers to existing ones, masons remove parts of the existing wall every three to five bricks and fill them in with new bricks via dry packing — which prevents shrinkage, then cracking, caused by gravity.

The adobe bricks used for the bell tower repair were made last fall on site. Keller, who took 20 samples of clay from various locales around the church and sent them off for testing, is still tweaking the brick recipe, made up of locally-sourced clay and aggregate, attempting to mimic the recipe used for the old bricks.

The varied, slow, deliberate aspects of the work harken back to the church’s beginnings in 1915, where local Catholic men, under the leadership of the town’s priest, Father Mariano, were required to make adobe bricks for the building. For Keller, the still-manual process is part of what makes working with adobe so rewarding.

“Now that everything is mass produced and machine made, when you see something that’s a little faulty because it was made by human hand, you learn to appreciate that,” said Keller. “That is adobe to me. So much of it has to be hand done, especially with the repair work, they will never be able to automate repairs.”

The families that helped build the church, who originally settled in the area to farm, have long departed after the erection of the Elephant Butte dam upstream in New Mexico caused the Rio Grande to significantly decline, according to Keller. The town dwindled from around 200 residents in the 1920s to few remaining by the mid-20th century.

Now, the church remains one of the only relics of Ruidosa not lost to history, its symmetrical design a simplistic, rudimentary version of a Catholic Church.

“The fact that it is just raw adobe, it’s so earthy, it’s so rustic, it feels like such an icon of the frontier, and a bygone era,” said Keller. “It’s very representative of a certain type of architecture. It’s also representative of a certain type of community that existed in the Big Bend region.”

Back in the nineties when the diocese announced plans to demolish the crumbling house of worship, local citizens, including Donald Judd who wanted to see the site preserved, protested, causing the entity to reverse their decision. “I think that was kind of the beginning of a recognition of its significance,” said Keller.

While the exposed adobe bricks give the church its signature, raw look, in order to protect the new work being done it is likely the friends group will choose to mud plaster the walls once finished. The sacristy, an area used by the priest, doors and windows will also need to be rebuilt. As the friends group possesses no photographs of the interior of the church, there are few details to go off of, said Keller, other than tid-bits from oral histories which revealed that the church had a wood floor.

The restoration of the Ruidosa Church is part of a larger movement happening across far West Texas to protect the region’s vernacular architecture. Adobe restoration projects and workshops, some of which have been led by Benton and Keller, are happening across the region from Fort Davis to Fort Leaton to Big Bend National Park, as well as in people’s backyards.

While the legacy of adobe has been complicated by the real estate market of Marfa, where out-of-town buyers have driven up demand, and subsequently taxes, on the modestly-built buildings, a collective recognition that the architecture needs to be preserved is forming, said Keller, and excitement is being generated around Indigenous materials and methods.

“I think we’ve got a moment in time where we have enough people that understand the concepts and have the skills where we can really go to town for the first time in a lot of ways to protect some of these structures that I think everybody agrees are worth saving,” said Keller.

The friends group paid \$30,000 to Silla, who also donated some metal work, time and labor, to finish the partial reconstruction of the right bell tower. Now, an additional \$150,000 is needed to complete the work to the front of the church, according to Board Member Mike Green.

“We just really need money. It is expensive. It just costs a lot. A lot of that is because it’s so far out here,” said Keller. “It’s very detailed work, you can’t just put anybody on it. It takes specialized skill.”

In addition to donations, Keller urged those with memories, photographs or stories about the church to reach out. “This would be a terrible time to drop the ball,” said Keller. “If we can keep this momentum, we have the knowledge, we have the energy. I don’t want to lose that.”

Friends of the Ruidosa Church can be visited online at their website ruidosachurch.org/ on Instagram @ruidosachurch and on Facebook @Friends of the Ruidosa Church.

Redford man arrested for alleged sexual abuse of a child

By SAM KARAS
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REDFORD — Last Tuesday, Ariel Salazar Armendariz of Redford was taken into custody for alleged continuous sexual abuse of a young child and child grooming, two separate felony charges that Salazar will face in district court.

Salazar, described in the arrest report as a 23-year-old man who works in construction, was arrested after a Presidio ISD student claimed that they had been sexually abused by him over the course of nearly 11 years. Authorities have declined to identify the victim because the victim is a minor.

Continuous sexual abuse of a young child is a first-



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EXPLANATORY STATEMENTS FOR THE NOVEMBER 7, 2023 CONSTITUTIONAL AMENDMENT ELECTION

Proposition Number 1
(HJR 126)

HJR 126 proposes a constitutional amendment to protect a person’s right to engage in generally accepted farm, ranch, timber production, horticulture, or wildlife management practices on real property that the person owns or leases. The proposed amendment would not affect the authority of the legislature to authorize the regulation of these practices by: (1) a state agency or political subdivision as necessary to protect the public health and safety from imminent danger; (2) a state agency to prevent a danger to animal health or crop production; or (3) a state agency or political subdivision to preserve or conserve the natural resources of the state under the Texas Constitution. Additionally, the proposed amendment would not affect the legislature’s authority to authorize the use or acquisition of property for a public use, including the development of natural resources under the Texas Constitution.

The proposed amendment will appear on the ballot as follows: **“The constitutional amendment protecting the right to engage in farming, ranching, timber production, horticulture, and wildlife management.”**

Proposition Number 2
(SJR 64)

SJR 64 proposes a constitutional amendment to allow the governing body of a county or municipality to exempt from property taxation all or part of the appraised value of real property used to operate a child-care facility. The proposed amendment would authorize the governing body to adopt the exemption as a percentage of the appraised value of the property, but that percentage could not be less than 50% of the appraised value of the property. The proposed amendment also would allow the legislature to define the term “child-care facility” and to establish additional eligibility requirements to receive the property tax exemption.

The proposed amendment will appear on the ballot as follows: **“The constitutional amendment authorizing a local option exemption from ad valorem taxation by a county or municipality of all or part of the appraised value of real property used to operate a child-care facility.”**

Proposition Number 3
(HJR 132)

HJR 132 proposes a constitutional amendment to prohibit the legislature from imposing a tax based on the wealth or net worth of an individual or family. The proposed amendment also would prohibit the legislature from imposing a tax based on the difference between the assets and liabilities of an individual or family.

The proposed amendment will appear on the ballot as follows: **“The constitutional amendment prohibiting the imposition of an individual wealth or net worth tax, including a tax on the difference between the assets and liabilities of an individual or family.”**

Proposition Number 4
(HJR 2- Second Special Session)

HJR 2 proposes a constitutional amendment to modify certain provisions of the Texas Constitution related to property taxes. The proposed amendment would authorize the legislature to temporarily limit the maximum appraised value of real property for property tax purposes in a tax year. The proposed amendment also would increase the mandatory homestead exemption for school district property taxation from \$40,000 to \$100,000. The proposed amendment would require the legislature to provide for a reduction in the amount of the limitation on school district property taxes imposed on the residence homestead of the elderly or disabled. Additionally, the amendment would exempt appropriations not dedicated by the Texas Constitution and used for property tax relief from being considered as appropriations when determining whether the rate of growth of appropriations in a biennium has exceeded the constitutional tax spending limit. The proposed amendment would further authorize the legislature to provide that members serving on an appraisal board in a county with a population of at least 75,000 serve terms not to exceed four years.

The proposed amendment will appear on the ballot as follows: **“The constitutional amendment to authorize the legislature to establish a temporary limit on the maximum appraised value of real property other than a residence homestead for ad valorem tax**

purposes; to increase the amount of the exemption from ad valorem taxation by a school district applicable to residence homesteads from \$40,000 to \$100,000; to adjust the amount of the limitation on school district ad valorem taxes imposed on the residence homesteads of the elderly or disabled to reflect increases in certain exemption amounts; to except certain appropriations to pay for ad valorem tax relief from the constitutional limitation on the rate of growth of appropriations; and to authorize the legislature to provide for a four-year term of office for a member of the board of directors of certain appraisal districts.”

Proposition Number 5
(HJR 3)

HJR 3 proposes a constitutional amendment to redesignate the national research university fund as the Texas University Fund (TUF), and to appropriate funds from the economic stabilization fund to the TUF. The proposed amendment would appropriate to the TUF an amount equal to the interest income, dividends, and investment earnings attributable to the economic stabilization fund for the preceding state fiscal year. The appropriation amount could not exceed \$100 million for the state fiscal year beginning September 1, 2023, or an amount adjusted for the increase in the general price index, not to exceed two percent, in subsequent state fiscal years. The proposed amendment also would prohibit any state university that is entitled to participate in dedicated funding provided by Article VII, Section 18 of the Texas Constitution from receiving money from the TUF.

The proposed amendment will appear on the ballot as follows: **“The constitutional amendment relating to the Texas University Fund, which provides funding to certain institutions of higher education to achieve national prominence as major research universities and drive the state economy.”**

Proposition Number 6
(SJR 75)

SJR 75 proposes a constitutional amendment to create the Texas water fund. The Texas water fund would be a special fund in the state treasury outside the general revenue fund, administered by the Texas Water Development Board (TWDB) or its successor to assist in financing water projects in the state. The proposed amendment would direct the Texas water fund administrator to use the fund only to transfer money to other TWDB funds or accounts. The proposed amendment would authorize the legislature to appropriate money for deposit to the water fund to be available for permitted transfers. No further legislative appropriation would be required for the water fund administrator to transfer money from or restore money to the fund, including the transfer of money to or the restoration of money from certain designated TWDB funds and accounts. The water fund would consist of: (1) money transferred or deposited to the fund by general law; (2) other revenue that the legislature by statute dedicates for deposit to the fund; (3) investment earnings and interest earned on amounts credited to the fund; (4) money from gifts, grants, and donations to the fund; and (5) money returned from any authorized transfer. The proposed amendment would require the legislature, by general law, to provide for the manner in which money from the Texas water fund may be used. The proposed amendment also would require that at least 25% of the money initially appropriated to the Texas water fund be transferred to the New Water Supply for Texas Fund.

The proposed amendment will appear on the ballot as follows: **“The constitutional amendment creating the Texas water fund to assist in financing water projects in this state.”**

Proposition Number 7
(SJR 93)

SJR 93 proposes a constitutional amendment to establish the Texas energy fund. The Texas energy fund would be a special fund in the state treasury outside the general revenue fund, administered by the Public Utility Commission of Texas (PUC) or its successor. Money in the Texas energy fund could be used, without further appropriation, only by PUC or its successor to provide loans and grants to finance or incentivize the construction, maintenance, modernization, and operation of electric generating facilities necessary to ensure the reliability or adequacy of an electric power grid in the state. The proposed amendment

would require PUC to allocate money from the fund for loans and grants to eligible projects for electric generating facilities that serve as backup power sources and in each region of the state that is part of an electric power grid in proportion to that region’s load share. The Texas energy fund would consist of: (1) money credited, appropriated, or transferred to the fund by or as authorized by the legislature; (2) revenue that the legislature dedicates for deposit to the fund; (3) the returns received from the investment of the money in the fund; and (4) gifts, grants, and donations contributed to the fund.

The proposed amendment will appear on the ballot as follows: **“The constitutional amendment providing for the creation of the Texas energy fund to support the construction, maintenance, modernization, and operation of electric generating facilities.”**

Proposition Number 8
(HJR 125)

HJR 125 proposes a constitutional amendment to create the broadband infrastructure fund. The broadband infrastructure fund would be a special fund in the state treasury outside the general revenue fund, administered by the Texas Comptroller of Public Accounts (Comptroller). Money from the fund could be used, without further appropriation, only for the expansion of access to and adoption of broadband and telecommunications services. The broadband infrastructure fund would consist of: (1) money transferred or deposited to the fund by the Texas Constitution, general law, or the General Appropriations Act; (2) revenue that the legislature by general law dedicates for deposit to the fund; (3) investment earnings and interest earned on money in the fund; and (4) gifts, grants, and donations to the fund. The proposed amendment would authorize the Comptroller to transfer money from the broadband infrastructure fund to another fund as provided by general law, and the state agency that administers the fund to which any money is transferred could use the money without further appropriation only for the expansion of access to and adoption of broadband and telecommunications services. The broadband infrastructure fund would expire on September 1, 2035, unless extended by adoption of a joint resolution of the legislature. Immediately before the expiration of the fund, the Comptroller would be required to transfer any unexpended and unobligated balance remaining in the broadband infrastructure fund to the general revenue fund.

The proposed amendment will appear on the ballot as follows: **“The constitutional amendment creating the broadband infrastructure fund to expand high-speed broadband access and assist in the financing of connectivity projects.”**

Proposition Number 9
(HJR 2)

HJR 2 proposes a constitutional amendment to authorize the legislature to provide a cost-of-living adjustment to eligible annuitants of the Teacher Retirement System of Texas (TRS). The proposed amendment also would authorize the legislature to appropriate money from the general revenue fund to the Texas Comptroller of Public Accounts to pay the cost-of-living adjustment.

The proposed amendment will appear on the ballot as follows: **“The constitutional amendment authorizing the 88th Legislature to provide a cost-of-living adjustment to certain annuitants of the Teacher Retirement System of Texas.”**

Proposition Number 10
(SJR 87)

SJR 87 proposes a constitutional amendment to allow the legislature to exempt from property taxation tangible personal property held by a medical or biomedical manufacturer as a finished good or used in the manufacturing or processing of medical or biomedical products.

The proposed amendment will appear on the ballot as follows: **“The constitutional amendment to authorize the legislature to exempt from ad valorem taxation equipment or inventory held by a manufacturer of medical or biomedical products to protect the Texas healthcare network and strengthen our medical supply chain.”**

Proposition Number 11
(SJR 32)

SJR 32 proposes a constitutional amendment to expand the authority of the legislature with

regard to conservation and reclamation districts in El Paso County. The Texas Constitution permits conservation and reclamation districts in certain counties across the state to issue bonds to fund the development and maintenance of parks and recreational facilities but does not currently provide this authority to El Paso County. The proposed amendment would add conservation and reclamation districts in El Paso County to those districts currently allowed, if authorized by general law, to issue bonds supported by property taxes to fund the development and maintenance of parks and recreational facilities. The proposed amendment would not limit the powers of the legislature or of a conservation and reclamation district with respect to parks and recreational facilities as those powers currently exist.

The proposed amendment will appear on the ballot as follows: **“The constitutional amendment authorizing the legislature to permit conservation and reclamation districts in El Paso County to issue bonds supported by ad valorem taxes to fund the development and maintenance of parks and recreational facilities.”**

Proposition Number 12
(HJR 134)

HJR 134 proposes a constitutional amendment to abolish the office of County Treasurer in Galveston County. The amendment would authorize the Galveston County Commissioners Court to employ or contract with a qualified person or designate another county officer to perform any functions that would have been performed by the County Treasurer. The proposed amendment would take effect only if a majority of the voters of Galveston County voting on the proposition favor the amendment.

The proposed amendment will appear on the ballot as follows: **“The constitutional amendment providing for the abolition of the office of county treasurer in Galveston County.”**

Proposition Number 13
(HJR 107)

HJR 107 proposes a constitutional amendment to increase the mandatory retirement age for state justices and judges. Currently, the Texas Constitution establishes that justices and judges of the appellate courts, district courts, and criminal district courts must retire on the expiration of the term during which they reach the age of 75 years or an earlier age, not less than 70 years, as the legislature may prescribe. The proposed amendment would change the mandatory retirement age for justices and judges of the appellate courts, district courts, and criminal district courts to 79 years or an earlier age, not less than 75 years, as the legislature may prescribe. The proposed amendment also would remove the provision stating that justices and judges may only serve until December 31 of their fourth year in office if they reach the age of 75 years in the first four years of a six-year term.

The proposed amendment will appear on the ballot as follows: **“The constitutional amendment to increase the mandatory age of retirement for state justices and judges.”**

Proposition Number 14
(SJR 74)

SJR 74 proposes a constitutional amendment to establish the centennial parks conservation fund as a trust fund outside the state treasury. The fund could be used, in accordance with general law, only for the creation and improvement of state parks. The centennial parks conservation fund would consist of: (1) money appropriated, credited, or transferred to the fund by the legislature; (2) gifts, grants, and donations received by the Texas Parks and Wildlife Department (TPWD) or its successor for a purpose for which money in the fund may be used; and (3) investment earnings and interest earned on amounts credited to the fund. The proposed amendment would authorize the legislature to appropriate money from the centennial parks conservation fund to TPWD or its successor for the creation and improvement of state parks.

The proposed amendment will appear on the ballot as follows: **“The constitutional amendment providing for the creation of the centennial parks conservation fund to be used for the creation and improvement of state parks.”**

NOTICIAS EN ESPAÑOL / CLASSIFIED

River Run

(Continuación de la página 1)

desde Midland para participar.

Para los Pando, el paisaje a lo largo de la carretera abierta es sólo una parte de lo que hace que andar en bicicleta sea tan mágico. “Se trata de la gente”, dijo Raúl. “Y, también, hacer nuevos amigos”.

Lalo Valles y Betty Lara vinieron desde Camargo, unas dos horas al sur de la ciudad de Chihuahua, para formar parte de la familia River Run.

La iglesia de Ruidosa

(Continuación de la página 1)

y embalaje en seco a las paredes de adobe.

La intención es formar un muro de tierra monolítico, que conecte perfectamente lo nuevo con lo viejo; lo viejo es una esquina de un campanario severamente erosionada, que vio reconstruidos hasta 11 de sus 20 pies de altura al final de las tres semanas intensivas.

Si bien solo es el comienzo de un esfuerzo costoso que duró años, David Keller, un arqueólogo e historiador local involucrado en el proyecto, dijo que la estabilización del campanario fue "épica", el resultado de conversaciones que se remontan a 13 años. “Ahora somos dueños de la iglesia, se están utilizando los andamios y conseguimos construir esa esquina hasta 11 pies”, dijo Keller. "Eso es monumental".

La reconstrucción del campanario marca el primer trabajo realizado en el edificio desde 2010 y es la primera campaña de renovación bajo la dirección de sus nuevos cuidadores. Los intentos anteriores de revitalizar la estructura liderados por la Comisión Histórica del Condado de Presidio y la Comisión Histórica de Texas fracasaron debido a problemas con los contratistas contratados. Luego, la iglesia quedó vacía, sujeta a una mayor erosión y vandalismo.

Debido a que la iglesia no recibió el mantenimiento adecuado y sus ladrillos de adobe nunca fueron enlucidos, la estructura experimentó una exposición perjudicial a los elementos, lo que provocó que las paredes se erosionaran entre 6 y 18 pulgadas.

El campanario recientemente rehabilitado es la pieza mejor conservada de la iglesia y, por lo tanto, la más difícil de reparar. A diferencia del otro campanario, que se derrumbó en los años noventa y que requerirá una reconstrucción más sencilla, la torre, que estaba más intacta, presentaba un mayor riesgo de sufrir lesiones.

"¿Cómo se trabaja en algo que es un muro de 20 pies de alto al que le falta el 75% de su estructura, que podría colapsar en cualquier momento y no matar a nadie?" preguntó Joey Benton, cuya empresa Silla, con sede en Marfa, está realizando reparaciones de campanarios.

¿La solución? Un sistema de apuntalamiento estructural que sostiene el techo de la torre y sostiene las paredes dentro del campanario, con la ayuda de paneles exteriores adicionales.

También está la cuestión del tiempo. Mientras que la nueva construcción de adobe implica colocar de 200 a 250 ladrillos por día, los trabajos de restauración avanzan a un ritmo significativamente más lento, alrededor de 20 a 25 ladrillos por día, dijo Benton. Para conectar nuevas capas horizontales y verticales a las existentes, los albañiles retiran partes de la pared existente cada tres o cinco ladrillos y las rellenan con ladrillos nuevos mediante embalaje seco, lo que evita la contracción y luego el agrietamiento causado por la gravedad.

Los ladrillos de adobe utilizados para la reparación del campanario se

Montar ha sido un sueño desde hace mucho tiempo para Valles, quien comenzó a practicar este pasatiempo hace cuatro años. Ese pasatiempo rápidamente se convirtió en una obsesión a tiempo completo. Justo antes del River Run, Lara y Valles acababan de realizar un viaje de 15 días a Phoenix para ver un concierto de Metallica, que recorrió más de 300 millas a lo largo del norte de México y el suroeste de Estados Unidos.

Recorrer tantas millas en un corto lapso de tiempo afecta el cuerpo, pero Valles dijo que la sensación de libertad y las vistas a lo largo del camino hicieron que valiera la pena sentir un poco de dolor de silla.

También aprendió rápidamente que ser motociclista significa tener que

fabricaron el otoño pasado en el lugar. Keller, que tomó 20 muestras de arcilla de varios lugares alrededor de la iglesia y las envió para realizar pruebas, todavía está modificando la receta del ladrillo, compuesta de arcilla y agregados de origen local, intentando imitar la receta utilizada para los ladrillos viejos.

Los aspectos variados, lentos y deliberados del trabajo se remontan a los inicios de la iglesia en 1915, cuando se pidió a hombres católicos locales, bajo el liderazgo del sacerdote de la ciudad, el padre Mariano, que fabricaran ladrillos de adobe para el edificio. Para Keller, el proceso aún manual es parte de lo que hace que trabajar con Adobe sea tan gratificante.

"Ahora que todo se produce en masa y a máquina, cuando ves algo que está un poco defectuoso porque fue hecho por mano humana, aprendes a apreciarlo", dijo Keller. “Eso es adobe para mí. Gran parte tiene que hacerse a mano, especialmente en el trabajo de reparación, y nunca podrán automatizar las reparaciones”.

Las familias que ayudaron a construir la iglesia, que originalmente se establecieron en el área para cultivar, se fueron hace mucho tiempo después de que la construcción de la presa Elephant Butte río arriba en Nuevo México provocó una disminución significativa del Río Grande, según Keller. La ciudad disminuyó de unos 200 residentes en la década de 1920 a unos pocos que quedaban a mediados del siglo XX.

Ahora, la iglesia sigue siendo una de las únicas reliquias de Ruidosa que no se pierde en la historia; su diseño simétrico es una versión simplista y rudimentaria de una Iglesia católica.

“El hecho de que sea simplemente adobe en bruto, que sea tan terroso, tan rústico, se siente como un icono de la frontera y de una época pasada”, dijo Keller. Es muy representativo de cierto tipo de arquitectura. También es representativo de cierto tipo de comunidad que existía en la región de Big Bend”.

En los años noventa, cuando la diócesis anunció planes para demoler la casa de culto en ruinas, los ciudadanos locales, incluido Donald Judd, que quería que se preservara el sitio, protestaron, lo que provocó que la entidad revocara su decisión. "Creo que fue una especie de comienzo del reconocimiento de su importancia", dijo Keller.

Si bien los ladrillos de adobe expuestos le dan a la iglesia su aspecto característico y crudo, para proteger el nuevo trabajo que se está realizando, es probable que el grupo de amigos opte por revocar las paredes con barro una vez terminadas. También será necesario reconstruir la sacristía, zona utilizada por el sacerdote, puertas y ventanas. Como el grupo de amigos no posee fotografías del interior de la iglesia, hay pocos detalles de los que hablar, dijo Keller, aparte de fragmentos de historias orales que revelaron que la iglesia tenía un piso de madera.

La restauración de la Iglesia Ruidosa es parte de un movimiento más amplio que se está produciendo en todo el oeste de Texas para proteger la arquitectura vernácula de la región. Proyectos y talleres de restauración de adobe, algunos de los cuales han sido dirigidos por Benton y Keller, se están llevando a cabo en toda la región, desde Fort Davis hasta Fort

pueden abordar cuestiones específicas. "Tenemos un equipo mínimo aquí", dijo Ferguson. “Esa historia no va a cambiar. Tendremos que aferrarnos a cualquier fuente de ingresos que tengamos”.

El juez del condado Joe Portillo dijo que estaba emocionado por el entusiasmo de Browning sobre el tema y que había pensado mucho en cómo aumentar los ingresos fiscales del condado, especialmente en comparación con el vecino condado de Brewster, que recibe alrededor de un millón de dólares al año de impuesto sobre las ventas del condado.

También sabía que las diferencias entre el condado de Presidio y otros condados en el Lejano Oeste de Texas son estructurales: no hay muchas empresas operando fuera de los límites de las ciudades de Marfa y Presidio, y no hay grandes tiendas ni concesionarios de automóviles donde pagar impuestos. las entidades pueden recibir dinero de compras “grandes”.

Portillo enfatizó que, si bien continuaría explorando la idea, no se trataba de una nueva fuente de ingresos. "Todo lo que realmente estás haciendo es quitarle dinero a alguien que no tiene dinero y ponérselo en el bolsillo de otra persona que no lo tiene", dijo.

Browning simpatizaba con esa línea de razonamiento... hasta cierto punto. “No tomar medidas para investigar esta posible fuente de ingresos es una voluntad directa de anteponer las ciudades individuales a las necesidades del condado y sus residentes. En su conjunto”, dijo a los comisionados. "Esta [actitud] continuará año tras año provocando déficits presupuestarios".

El Parque Estatal Big Bend Ranch albergará la limpieza del río y la celebración del Día Nacional de las Tierras Públicas

Por SAM KARAS

sam@bigbendsentinel.com

PARQUE ESTATAL BIG BEND RANCH — Este sábado, el Parque Estatal Big Bend Ranch organizará una limpieza del río y una comida al aire libre de agradecimiento a los voluntarios en conmemoración del Día Nacional de las Tierras Públicas, el evento de voluntariado de un solo día más grande en parques, reservas naturales y otros espacios al aire libre de acceso público. alrededor del país.

Sólo el 1,77% de la tierra en Texas es de acceso público. Con 300,000 acres, el parque estatal Big Bend Ranch es el parque estatal más grande y remoto del sistema de Parques y Vida Silvestre de Texas.

La “Limpieza en el Río” de este año es el primer evento voluntario de este tipo desde la pandemia y se centrará en el corredor fluvial entre La Cuesta Campground y Lajitas. Los voluntarios se reunirán en La Cuesta a las 8 a.m. el sábado por la mañana para escuchar una breve presentación sobre la importancia de las tierras públicas y alguna información básica de seguridad.

Luego, los voluntarios se distribuirán a pie o en bote para patrullar el corredor del río en busca de basura. Alrededor de las 13:30 horas. Esa tarde,

el parque albergará una comida al aire libre en Lajitas Boat Launch. Durante el almuerzo, los empleados del parque recogerán las inscripciones para un concurso muy serio: para determinar qué voluntario recogió la basura más interesante.

No es necesario registrarse para el evento, pero llamar al parque con anticipación ayudará al equipo a planificar una gran cantidad de hot dogs. Los voluntarios solo necesitan traer guantes, agua y ropa cómoda para pasar la mañana fuera del tablero, no se necesita experiencia y todos son bienvenidos.

La superintendente del parque, Laura Jennings, tenía la esperanza de que el evento atrajera nuevos visitantes de toda la región: los voluntarios recibirán un pase gratuito para el parque y la oportunidad de conocer a los empleados del parque en un ambiente relajado y de celebración. “Debería ser un día divertido e involucrar a todos en la limpieza del parque y el reconocimiento de las tierras públicas en Texas, que son muy limitadas”, dijo.

El campamento La Cuesta está ubicado justo al oeste de “Big Hill” en FM 170 entre Presidio y Lajitas.

Hombre de Redford arrestado por presunto abuso sexual de un niño

Por SAM KARAS

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REDFORD – El martes pasado, Ariel Salazar Armendáriz de Redford fue detenido por presunto abuso sexual continuo de un niño pequeño y acicalamiento infantil, dos cargos de delitos graves separados que Salazar enfrentará en un tribunal de distrito.

Salazar, descrito en el informe de arresto como un hombre de 23 años que trabaja en la construcción, fue arrestado después de que una estudiante de Presidio ISD afirmó que había sido abusada sexualmente por él durante casi 11 años. Las autoridades se han negado a identificar a la víctima porque es menor de edad.

El abuso sexual continuo de un niño pequeño es un delito grave de primer

grado cometido por un abusador mayor de 17 años contra una víctima menor de 14 años durante un periodo de 30 días o más. Incluso para un delincuente por primera vez, una condena conlleva una pena mínima de prisión de 25 años.

Los cargos por manipulación infantil fueron mejorados durante la sesión legislativa de este año para convertirse en cargos por delitos graves de tercer grado. Según la ley de Texas, el acicalamiento se define como “un acto de establecer deliberadamente una conexión con un niño en un intento de someterlo a abuso sexual o trata de personas”.

Al momento de escribir esta edición, Salazar estaba detenido con una fianza fijada en \$50,000 por abuso sexual continuo de un niño pequeño y \$30,000 por aseo infantil y aún no se había reunido con representación legal.

ser autosuficiente: tener todas las herramientas y el conocimiento para hacer reparaciones al costado de la carretera. Trabajar en motocicletas es una habilidad en sí misma, incluso para aquellos que tienen habilidad bajo el capó de un automóvil. "Tiene todas las mismas piezas pero en un espacio muy pequeño", dijo.

Valles dijo que va a mítines en su México natal, pero que el paisaje es lo que hace que River Run, particularmente la gran subida a Santana Mesa a mitad de la ruta, se destaque del resto. "Es un camino muy, muy bonito", dijo.

Leaton y el Parque Nacional Big Bend, así como en los patios traseros de las personas.

Si bien el legado del adobe se ha visto complicado por el mercado inmobiliario de Marfa, donde los compradores de fuera de la ciudad han aumentado la demanda, y posteriormente los impuestos, sobre los edificios de construcción modesta, existe un reconocimiento colectivo de que es necesario preservar la arquitectura. Se está formando, dijo Keller, y se está generando entusiasmo en torno a los materiales y métodos indígenas.

“Creo que hemos llegado a un momento en el que tenemos suficientes personas que entienden los conceptos y tienen las habilidades en las que realmente podemos ir a la ciudad por primera vez de muchas maneras para proteger algunas de estas estructuras que creo que todos vale la pena salvar los acuerdos”, dijo Keller.

El grupo de amigos pagó \$30,000 a Silla, quien también donó algo de metal, tiempo y mano de obra, para terminar la reconstrucción parcial del campanario derecho. Ahora, se necesitan \$150,000 adicionales para completar el trabajo en el frente de la iglesia, según el miembro de la junta Mike Green.

“Realmente necesitamos dinero. Es caro. Simplemente cuesta mucho. Mucho de esto se debe a que está muy lejos”, dijo Keller. “Es un trabajo muy detallado, no puedes encargarle a nadie. Se necesita habilidad especializada”.

Además de las donaciones, Keller instó a quienes tengan recuerdos, fotografías o historias sobre la iglesia a que se comuniquen. "Este sería un momento terrible para dejar caer la pelota", dijo Keller. “Si podemos mantener este impulso, tenemos el conocimiento y la energía. No quiero perder eso”.

Se puede visitar a los Amigos de la Iglesia Ruidosa en línea en su sitio web ruidosachurch.org/ en Instagram @ruidosachurch y en Facebook @ Friends of the Ruidosa Church.

PUBLIC NOTICES

Public Notice

The Presidio County Appraisal District is seeking proposals for Bank Financial Depository for 2024-2025 fiscal years. Any and all interested Financial Institutions, please submit Depository Collateral Agreement Proposals to the Presidio CAD office at 107 E. Texas, P O Box 879 , Marfa, Texas, (432)729-3431. All proposals must be received by October 13, 2023. The Board of Directors of the Presidio CAD reserves the right to accept or reject any proposal.

Public Notice

The Presidio County Appraisal District is seeking proposals for Financial Auditor for year ending December 2023. Any and all proposals to be submitted to the Presidio CAD office at 107 E. Texas, P O Box 879, Marfa, Texas, (432)729-3431, email cramirez@presidiocad.org. All proposals must be received by October 1, 2023. The Board of Directors of the Presidio CAD reserves the right to accept or reject any proposal.

09/14/23, 09/21/23, 09/28/23

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PRESIDIO SPORTS CALENDAR



THU, SEP 21: LRFMS VOLLEYBALL @ ALPINE

SAT, SEP 23: PHS VOLLEYBALL @ KERMIT DISTRICT

SAT, SEP 23: PHS CC BOYS/GIRLS @ LUBBOCK

MON, SEP 25: LRFMS VOLLEYBALL @ KERMIT

TUE, SEP 26: PHS VOLLEYBALL VS CRANE @ PRESIDIO DISTRICT

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