# The International
El

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

## TxDOT seeks public input on proposed bike lanes for Presidio and Brewster counties

**By ALLEGRA HOBBS**
***allegra@bigbendsentinel.com***

TRI-COUNTY — The Texas Department of Transportation El Paso District, will be accepting public comments until this Friday, October 13, on two proposed stretches of bike line alongside highways in Presidio and Brewster counties. If all goes according to plan, the projects are slated to begin construction in March of 2024.

One of the proposed bike lanes would span U.S. 67/90 between Marfa, where 67 intersects with State Highway 17, and the Brewster County line, according to presentation materials provided by TxDOT.

That project will consist of 6-inch dedicated bike lanes on both sides of the road within Marfa, until about South Spring Street, according to TxDOT spokesperson Lauren Macias-Cervantes. After Spring Street, "bike accessible shoulders" varying in width from 5 to 10 inches in width will be placed on both sides of the highway, up until the Brewster County line.

That project has an estimated completion date of summer 2024 and will cost approximately $16,394,258.35, according to presentation materials.

The other project would span a stretch of Highway 118 — or Ranch Road 1837 — traveling south into Alpine, ending at Avenue E. It will consist of 5-inch "bike accessible shoulders" on both sides of the highway beginning at the Brewster/Jeff Davis county line up until John West Road in Alpine, said Macias-Cervantes, at which point there will be 5-inch dedicated bike lanes with a 3-inch buffer on both sides of the highway until East Lockhart Avenue. "Share the road signs" will be installed after the bike lanes' termination at Lockhart Ave.

That project is slated for a spring 2026 completion date, and will cost approximately $5,281,658.28.

The bike lanes are part of a broader initiative from TxDOT's El Paso District to introduce more bicycle and pedestrian infrastructure within the district — the Presidio and Brewster County projects are the only components of the plan that fall outside of El Paso County. More information on the project can be found at https://www.txdot.gov/projects/hearings-meetings/el-paso/bike-ped-092823.html.

A public hearing on the project took place on September 28. Citizens who did not attend that meeting may submit their comments by calling 972-560-3029 and leaving a

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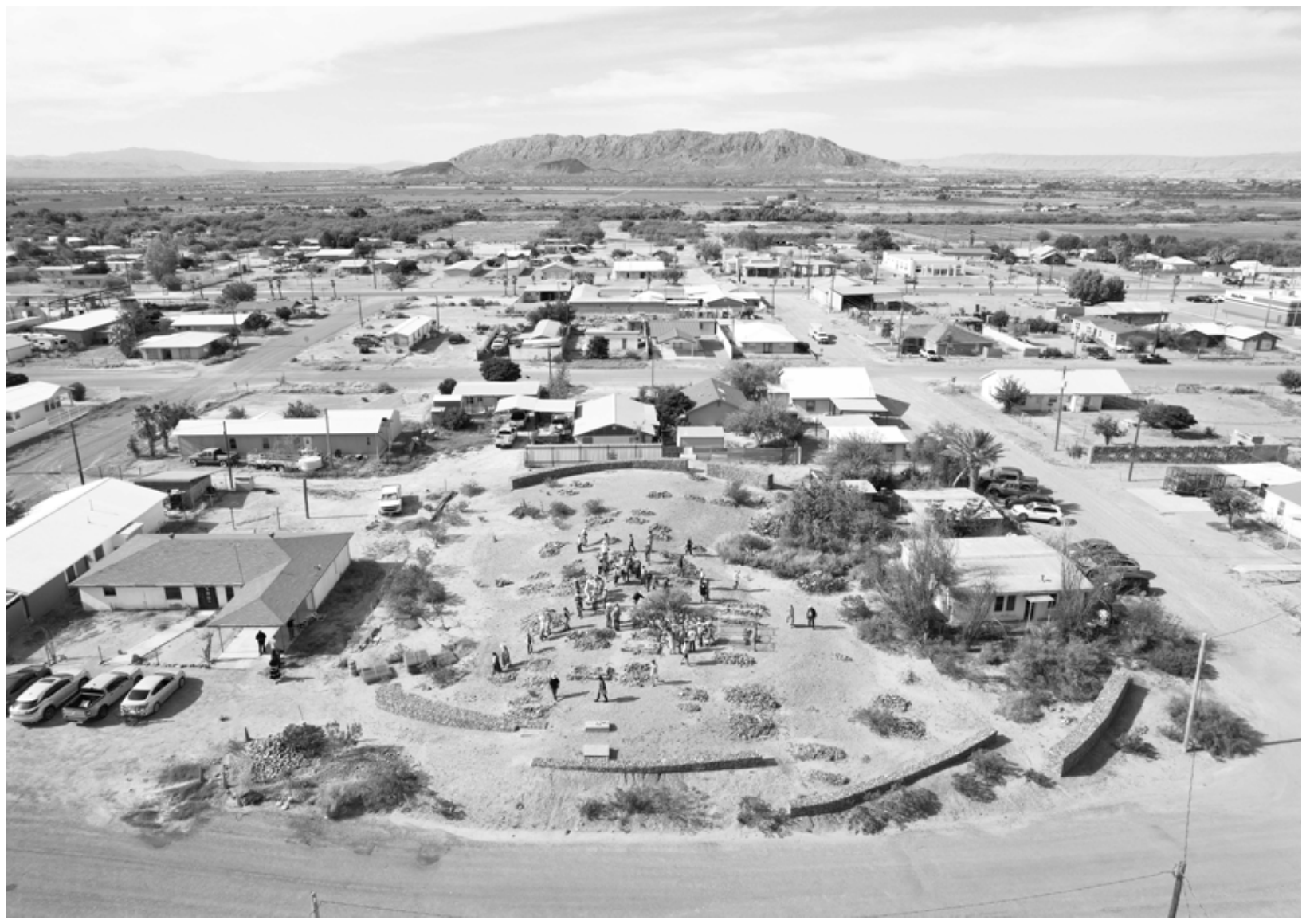


Image courtesy MASS Design Group / Cortesía de MASS Design Group

***Cementerio del Barrio de los Lipanes mid-construction during the architect's walk through of the site at the 2023 Agave Festival.***
***Cementerio del Barrio de los Lipanes en mitad de la construcción durante el recorrido del arquitecto por el sitio en el Festival del Agave 2023.***

## Lipan Apache Cemetery project to be completed with Mellon Foundation grant

**By SAM KARAS**
***sam@bigbendsentinel.com***

PRESIDIO — This Monday, the Big Bend Conservation Alliance announced — in collaboration with the Lipan Apache Tribe of Texas — that the Lipan Apache Cemetery project in Presidio will be completed early next year with the help of funding from the Mellon Foundation. A portion of the $650,000 grant will go to a study that will help local groups identify and prioritize the needs of Indigenous communities in Far West Texas.

The cemetery — located on Market Street in Presidio — was active through the 19th century as the final resting place of local Lipan Apache families. The only family names confirmed at the site come from the Aguilar and Ornelas families, but many more Presidians can probably trace their roots to the small, dusty plot.

Over the years, the cemetery was lost to the city's expansion and to general neglect. A small group of families banded to take care of the site, which was the victim of vandalism and of development on top of the burial mound.

Christina Hernandez — a descendent of the Aguilar family buried at the cemetery — grew up clearing trash from the site and tending to the graves. As she grew older, she became concerned that the cemetery would continue to suffer from incursions from urban development and decided to do something about it.

With the help of the Big Bend Conservation Alliance, Hernandez and her family and friends worked with the Lipan Apache tribe to preserve

*(Continued on page 2)*

## El proyecto del cementerio Lipan Apache se completará con una subvención de la Fundación Mellon

**Por SAM KARAS**
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PRESIDIO – Este lunes, Big Bend Conservation Alliance anunció, en colaboración con la tribu Lipan Apache de Texas, que el proyecto del cementerio Lipan Apache en Presidio se completará a principios del próximo año con la ayuda de fondos de la Fundación Mellon. Una parte de la subvención de $650,000 se destinará a un estudio que ayudará a los grupos locales a identificar y priorizar las necesidades de las comunidades indígenas en el Lejano Oeste de Texas.

El cementerio, ubicado en Market Street en Presidio, estuvo activo durante el siglo XIX como lugar de descanso final de las familias locales Lipan Apache. Los únicos apellidos confirmados en el sitio provienen de las familias Aguilar y Ornelas, pero muchos más Presidianos probablemente puedan rastrear sus raíces en la pequeña y polvorienta parcela.

Con el paso de los años, el cementerio se perdió debido a la expansión de la ciudad y al abandono general. Un pequeño grupo de familias se unió para cuidar el sitio, que fue víctima del vandalismo y del desarrollo sobre el túmulo.

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## County officials approve another 'declaration of local disaster' over 'border crisis' — with toned-down rhetoric

**By ALLEGRA HOBBS**
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MARFA — Presidio County Commissioners on Wednesday approved an "Emergency Declaration of Local Disaster" for the county, citing an influx of undocumented migrants and border-related crimes in other border communities. The action grants County Judge Joe Portillo emergency powers to exercise if he sees fit and will allow the county to file for reimbursement from the state for law enforcement and other emergency-related costs.

"This is strictly proactive, preventative," said Portillo — a point he emphasized repeatedly. He acknowledged that Presidio County has not seen the uptick in migrant crossings seen in Eagle Pass, Del Rio or El Paso, likely due to the inhospitable terrain of the surrounding desert. Still, he pointed to a recent event wherein a group of migrants was left stranded in a Chihuahua City rail yard while attempting to ride atop a train to Ciudad Juárez.

Chihuahua City is mere hours from Presidio, said Portillo, leading him to wonder how the county could respond if a large group of migrants showed up at the Presidio Port of Entry.

"We would be ill-prepared to give them even water, let alone food," said

*(Continued on page 2)*

## Los funcionarios del condado aprueban otra "declaración de desastre local" por la "crisis fronteriza", con una retórica atenuada

**Por ALLEGRA HOBBS**
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MARFA – Los comisionados del condado de Presidio aprobaron el miércoles una "Declaración de emergencia de desastre local" para el condado, citando una afluencia de inmigrantes indocumentados y delitos relacionados con la frontera en otras comunidades fronterizas. La acción otorga al juez del condado Joe Portillo poderes de emergencia para ejercerlos si lo considera conveniente y permitirá que el condado solicite un reembolso del estado por gastos de cumplimiento de la ley y otros costos relacionados con la emergencia.

"Esto es estrictamente proactivo, preventivo", dijo Portillo, un punto que enfatizó repetidamente. Reconoció que el condado de Presidio no ha visto el aumento en los cruces de migrantes observado en Eagle Pass, Del Rio o El Paso, probablemente debido al terreno inhóspito del desierto circundante. Aún así, señaló un evento reciente en el que un grupo de

*(Continued on page 3)*

## TxDOT busca la opinión del público sobre los carriles para bicicletas propuestos para los condados de Presidio y Brewster

**Por ALLEGRA HOBBS**
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TRICONDADOS — El Distrito de El Paso del Departamento de Transporte de Texas aceptará comentarios del público hasta este viernes 13 de octubre sobre dos tramos propuestos de línea para bicicletas a lo largo de las carreteras en los condados de Presidio y Brewster. Si todo va según lo planeado, está previsto que los proyectos comiencen a construirse en marzo de 2024.

Uno de los carriles para bicicletas propuestos abarcaría la carretera U.S. 67/90 entre Marfa, donde la 67 se cruza con la autopista estatal 17, y la línea del condado de Brewster, según los materiales de presentación proporcionados por TxDOT.

Ese proyecto consistirá en carriles exclusivos para bicicletas de 6 pulgadas en ambos lados de la carretera dentro de Marfa, hasta aproximadamente South Spring Street, según la portavoz de TxDOT, Lauren Macias-Cervantes. Después de Spring Street, se colocarán "bordes accesibles para bicicletas" que varían en ancho de 5 a 10 pulgadas de ancho a ambos lados de la carretera, hasta la línea del condado de Brewster.

Ese proyecto tiene una fecha de finalización estimada para el verano de 2024 y costará aproximadamente $16,394,258.35, según los materiales de presentación.

El otro proyecto abarcaría un tramo de la autopista 118, o Ranch Road 1837, viajando hacia el sur hacia Alpine y terminando en Avenue E. Consistirá en "bordes accesibles para bicicletas" de 5 pulgadas en ambos lados de la autopista comenzando en Brewster/Jeff. El condado de Davis se alineará hasta John West Road en Alpine, dijo Macías-Cervantes, en cuyo punto habrá carriles exclusivos para bicicletas de 5 pulgadas con una zona de separación de 3 pulgadas en ambos lados de la carretera hasta East Lockhart Avenue. Las señales de "Compartir la carretera" se instalarán después de la terminación de los carriles para bicicletas en Lockhart Ave.

La fecha de finalización de ese proyecto está prevista para la primavera de 2026 y costará aproximadamente $ 5.281.658,28.

Los carriles para bicicletas son parte de una iniciativa más amplia del Distrito de El Paso de TxDOT para introducir más infraestructura para bicicletas y peatones dentro del distrito; los proyectos de Presidio y el Condado de Brewster son los únicos componentes del plan que quedan fuera del Condado de El Paso. Puede encontrar más información sobre el proyecto en https://www.txdot.gov/projects/hearings-meetings/el-paso/bike-ped-092823.html.

El 28 de septiembre se llevó a

*(Continúa en la página 3)*


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# ENGLISH NEWS

## Lipan Apache Cemetery

*(Continued from page 1)*

the site. The first phase was convincing the city and county to deed the land to the Lipan Apache, and then an extensive design process unfolded.

The Lipan Apache Cemetery project is both a preservation project and an educational initiative. Joseph Kunkel of MASS Design Lab — an Indigenous lead design firm — helped create a master plan with local input.

The design employs gabion wall construction to help stabilize the burial mound and set it apart from the rest of the street. Those walls will create a walking path to help guide visitors respectfully through the site. Interpretive materials along the path will help newcomers engage with Lipan Apache history and culture.

As the driving force behind the project, Hernandez was excited to see the project near completion. "The way we are framing the project is that it's a living history, it's a living culture — we're still here," she said. "While we're commemorating and putting up this memorial to our ancestors, it's really an opportunity to educate."

The grant from the Mellon Foundation will go to reimburse MASS Design Group, the Big Bend Conservation Alliance and other entities who have contributed to the project in-kind. The grant will also help reimburse a land reclamation study — contrary to the name, the research isn't just about returning land to Indigenous people, but identifying needs within these communities to help empower them economically and politically.

Hernandez was thrilled by the local response in Presidio. Folks from across town without personal ties to the cemetery had contributed time, money and good wishes to the effort. "Seeing people willing to give what they have has really been very heartwarming," she said. "It has made me feel like we're really doing something together."

## Declaration of local disaster

*(Continued from page 1)*

Portillo. "This just puts us in a position to act quickly."

The declaration itself, and discussion among commissioners over its passage, were inevitably dogged by the controversial declaration of local disaster passed last year by then-County Judge Cinderela Guevara, which characterized activity at the border as an "invasion" — language strongly condemned by immigrant rights groups for fueling violent extremism. (The white gunman who carried out a mass shooting at an El Paso Wal-Mart in 2019 had cited a "Hispanic invasion of Texas" as a motive.)

In the following months, Commissioner Brenda Bentley said she had received complaints from constituents regarding the "invasion" rhetoric used in the declaration.

The matter was addressed head-on by those present at Wednesday's meeting — Commissioner Bentley said she had met with Judge Portillo to craft the wording, removing the word "invasion" altogether. The new declaration, which was read aloud in court, also does not contain the word "aliens" to describe migrants, as the previous declaration had.

Commissioner David Beebe expressed frustration with how the previous declaration had been handled by the former judge. "I know that was political, but let's be clear: that accomplished what for us, besides hateful language?" he said.

"This issue last year was upsetting, destructive and completely unnecessary," Beebe continued.

Last year's declaration served, in part, as an appeal to Governor Greg Abbott to declare an invasion at the border in order to use state power to expel migrants.

Rather than being in service of the governor's mission, commissioners argued that this new declaration represented the county asserting its local autonomy — it would allow the county to use its own local law enforcement, for instance, and file for reimbursement, rather than relying on state forces.

"I understand we do need to set ourselves up for reimbursements," said Beebe. "Let me also make clear that we are in charge of our own capital. That's why we're trying to assert our independence from the people who want a centralized government in Texas. So I'm good with this. I just want the public to understand that we're actually taking a step back from invasion rhetoric to something more sensible and something more practical and legal, rather than political."

The declaration will remain in place for 30 days only, at which time the county will have to decide whether to renew it. When asked by Commissioner Beebe whether he had any immediate plans to deploy emergency powers during those 30 days, Judge Portillo said he did not, but was in constant contact with Border Patrol and the Port of Entry in Presidio.

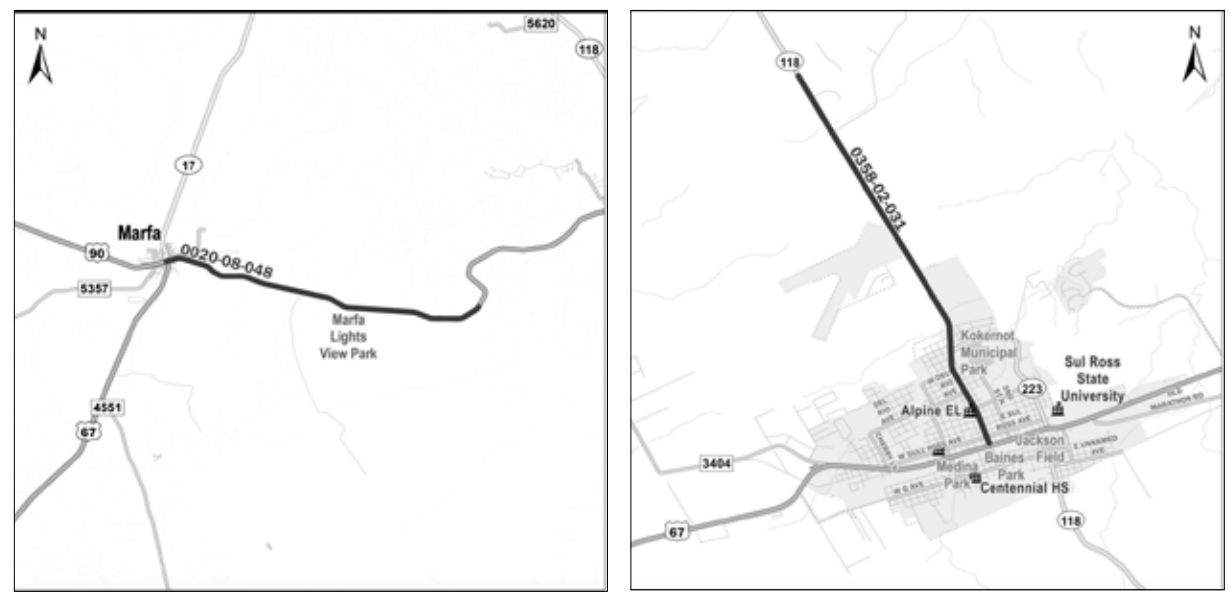
## Bike lanes

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message, emailing TxDOT_ELP_BikePublicHearing@wsp.com, or mailing written comments to the following address: WSP USA, Attn: El Paso Bike Hearing, 3102 Oak Lawn Ave Suite 450, Dallas, TX 75219. Comments should be submitted or postmarked by Friday, October 13.

Citizens with questions regarding the projects are encouraged to contact Adriana Rodriguez at Adriana.Rodriguez@txdot.gov or 915-790-4221.

Any comments made after October 13 "will not be included in the official record but will still be gathered as feedback," said Macias-Cervantes.




Images courtesy of the Texas Department of Transportation

***Left: The path of a proposed bike lane that would span Highway 67 East from Marfa, at the intersection of State Highway 17, to the Brewster County line. Right: The path of a proposed bike lane that would traverse a stretch of Highway 118 heading south into Alpine and terminating at Avenue E.***




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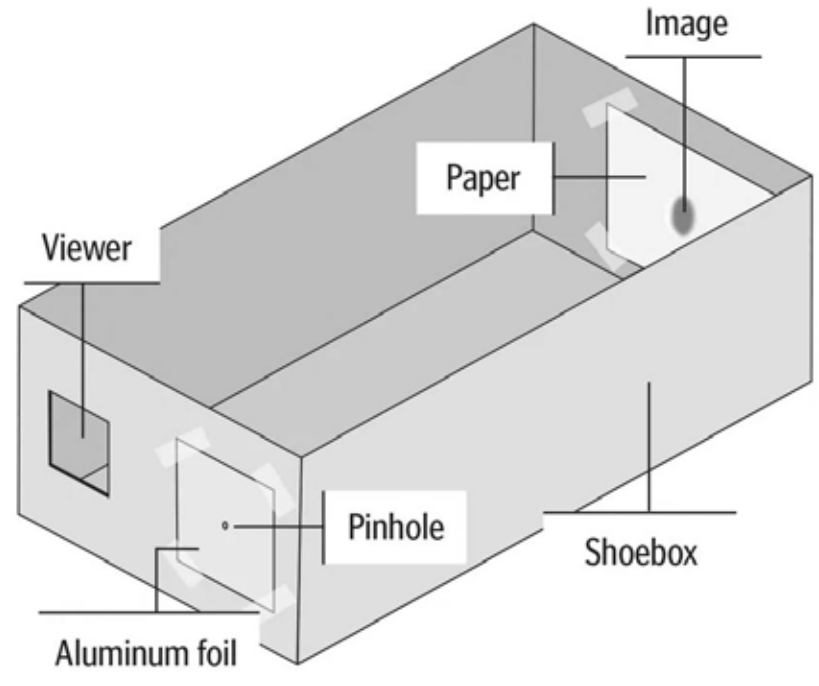
# 2023 ANNULAR ECLIPSE: OCTOBER 14

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• Small square of white paper • Utility knife or hobby knife • Tape • Pin

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2. On one hole, tape a piece of aluminum foil
3. Poke a hole in the foil using a pin
4. Inside the box, tape a piece of white paper
5. Stand with your back to the eclipse, the pinhole aimed at the sun
6. With the shoebox upside-down, see an image of the eclipse through the viewer




This type of viewer is also known as a pinhole projection because the image of the eclipse is projected through the pinhole onto the viewing surface. You will be looking at a projection of the eclipse instead of looking directly at the sun.

### WARNING: DO NOT LOOK DIRECTLY AT THE SUN

# NOTICIAS EN ESPAÑOL

## Cementerio Lipan Apache

*(Continuación de la página 1)*

Christina Hernández, descendiente de la familia Aguilar enterrada en el cementerio, creció limpiando basura del sitio y atendiendo las tumbas. A medida que crecía, le preocupaba que el cementerio siguiera sufriendo las incursiones del desarrollo urbano y decidió hacer algo al respecto.

Con la ayuda de Big Bend Conservation Alliance, Hernández, su familia y amigos trabajaron con la tribu Lipan Apache para preservar el sitio. La primera fase fue convencer a la ciudad y al condado para que cedieran el terreno a los Lipan Apache, y luego se desarrolló un extenso proceso de diseño.

El proyecto del cementerio Lipan Apache es tanto un proyecto de preservación como una iniciativa educativa. Joseph Kunkel de MASS Design Lab, una empresa de diseño líder indígena, ayudó a crear un plan maestro con aportaciones locales.

El diseño emplea la construcción de un muro de gaviones para ayudar a estabilizar el túmulo y diferenciarlo del resto de la calle. Esos muros crearán un sendero para caminar que ayudará a guiar a los visitantes respetuosamente a través del sitio. Los materiales interpretativos a lo largo del camino ayudarán a los recién llegados a involucrarse con la historia y la cultura de Lipan Apache.

Como fuerza impulsora detrás del proyecto, Hernández estaba emocionado de ver el proyecto casi terminado. "La forma en que enmarcamos el proyecto es que es una historia viva, es una cultura viva; todavía estamos aquí", dijo. "Si bien conmemoramos y levantamos este monumento a nuestros antepasados, es realmente una oportunidad para educar".

La subvención de la Fundación Mellon se destinará a reembolsar a MASS Design Group, Big Bend Conservation Alliance y otras entidades que han contribuido en especie al proyecto. La subvención también ayudará a reembolsar un estudio de recuperación de tierras; al contrario de lo que sugiere el nombre, la investigación no se trata solo de devolver tierras a los pueblos indígenas, sino de identificar las necesidades dentro de estas comunidades para ayudarlas a empoderarlas económica y políticamente.

Hernández estaba emocionado por la respuesta local en Presidio. Personas de toda la ciudad sin vínculos personales con el cementerio habían aportado tiempo, dinero y buenos deseos al esfuerzo. “Ver gente dispuesta a dar lo que tiene ha sido realmente muy reconfortante”, afirmó. "Me ha hecho sentir como si realmente estuviéramos haciendo algo juntos".

## Declaración de desastre local

*(Continuación de la página 1)*

migrantes quedó varado en un patio de ferrocarril de la ciudad de Chihuahua mientras intentaba viajar en lo alto de un tren a Ciudad Juárez.

La ciudad de Chihuahua está a pocas horas de Presidio, dijo Portillo, lo que lo llevó a preguntarse cómo podría responder el condado si un gran grupo de migrantes se presentara en el puerto de entrada de Presidio.

“No estaríamos preparados para darles ni siquiera agua, y mucho menos comida”, dijo Portillo. "Esto simplemente nos coloca en condiciones de actuar rápidamente".

La declaración en sí, y la discusión entre los comisionados sobre su aprobación, se vieron inevitablemente afectadas por la controvertida declaración de desastre local aprobada el año pasado por la entonces jueza del condado Cinderela Guevara, que caracterizó la actividad en la frontera como una “invasión”, lenguaje fuertemente condenado por los inmigrantes. grupos de derechos humanos por alimentar el extremismo violento. (El pistolero blanco que llevó a cabo un tiroteo masivo en un Wal-Mart de El Paso en 2019 había citado como motivo una “invasión hispana de Texas”.)

En los meses siguientes, la comisionada Brenda Bentley dijo que había recibido quejas de electores sobre la retórica de “invasión” utilizada en la declaración.

Los presentes en la reunión del miércoles abordaron el asunto de frente: la comisionada Bentley dijo que se había reunido con el juez Portillo para elaborar la redacción, eliminando la palabra “invasión” por completo. La nueva declaración, que fue leída en voz alta ante el tribunal, tampoco contiene la palabra “extranjeros” para describir a los migrantes, como sí lo hacía la declaración anterior.

El comisionado David Beebe expresó su frustración por la forma en que el ex juez había manejado la declaración anterior. “Sé que eso fue político, pero seamos claros: ¿qué logró eso para nosotros, además de un lenguaje de odio?” él dijo.

"Este problema del año pasado fue perturbador, destructivo y completamente innecesario", continuó Beebe.

La declaración del año pasado sirvió, en parte, como un llamado al gobernador Greg Abbott para que declarara una invasión en la frontera con el fin de utilizar el poder estatal para expulsar a los inmigrantes.

En lugar de estar al servicio de la misión del gobernador, los comisionados argumentaron que esta nueva declaración representaba la afirmación del condado de su autonomía local: le permitiría al condado utilizar su propia aplicación de la ley local, por ejemplo, y solicitar un reembolso, en lugar de depender de las autoridades estatales. efectivo.

"Entiendo que necesitamos prepararnos para los reembolsos", dijo Beebe. “Permítanme dejar claro también que estamos a cargo de nuestro propio capital. Por eso estamos tratando de afirmar nuestra independencia de la gente que quiere un gobierno centralizado en Texas. Entonces estoy bien con esto. Sólo quiero que el público entienda que en realidad estamos dando un paso atrás de la retórica de invasión a algo más sensato y más práctico y legal, en lugar de político”.

La declaración permanecerá vigente solo durante 30 días, momento en el cual el condado tendrá que decidir si la renovará. Cuando el comisionado Beebe le preguntó si tenía planes inmediatos para desplegar poderes de emergencia durante esos 30 días, el juez Portillo dijo que no, pero que estaba en contacto constante con la Patrulla Fronteriza y el Puerto de Entrada en Presidio.

## Los carriles para bicicletas

*(Continuación de la página 1)*

cabo una audiencia pública sobre el proyecto. Los ciudadanos que no asistieron a esa reunión pueden enviar sus comentarios llamando al 972-560-3029 y dejando un mensaje, enviando un correo electrónico a TxDOT_ELP_BikePublicHearing@wsp.com, o enviando comentarios escritos a la siguiente dirección. : WSP USA, a la atención de: El Paso Bike Hearing, 3102 Oak Lawn Ave Suite 450, Dallas, TX 75219. Los comentarios deben enviarse o enviarse con matasellos antes del viernes 13 de octubre.

Se anima a los ciudadanos que tengan preguntas sobre los proyectos a comunicarse con Adriana Rodríguez en Adriana.Rodriguez@txdot.gov o al 915-790-4221.

Cualquier comentario realizado después del 13 de octubre “no se incluirá en el registro oficial, pero aun así se recopilará como retroalimentación”, dijo Macías-Cervantes.










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# CLASSIFIED

## Alpine Historical Association hosts first Hispanic Heritage Symposium

**By SAM KARAS**
***sam@bigbendsentinel.com***

ALPINE — On September 29, the Alpine Historical Association — alongside theatre students from Sul Ross's Department of Visual and Performing Arts — hosted their first Hispanic Heritage Symposium at the historic Granada Theatre. The event was an effort to bring voices from Alpine's Mexican American past to a wider audience by bringing folks together across the generational divide.

Sul Ross qualifies as a Designated Hispanic-Serving Institution, a title given to schools with at least a quarter of their student body identifying as Hispanic or Latino. The university's host town of Alpine has also borne witness to a diverse past: in its early days, the town was split racially by the railroad tracks, and the south side was home to its Mexican community.

The south side of town was also home to the Centennial School, a segregated school for Mexican American children in grades one through eight that operated from 1936 to 1969.

Saul Garza — a Sul Ross alumnus and a member of the Alpine Historical Association — had the idea to bring the event to the big stage. His family came to Alpine during the Mexican Revolution — all his life, he had taken an interest in learning about his community's past. "The south side was like a big family," he said.

In order to bring that past alive, Garza — along with fellow historical association members Abbey Branch and Marjie Scott — harnessed the energy and talent of the Sul Ross Theatre Department.

The trio already had experience blending performance and history: in 2021, the historical association launched a series of ghost tours highlighting the Big Bend region's storied history and rich folklore tradition, with proceeds going to fund scholarships for Sul Ross theatre students. "Collaborating with the theatre department made it fun," Garza explained. "We thought: what would attract tourists to learn a little bit more about Alpine?"

They brought the same spirit to the symposium, where Sul Ross theatre students and Mexican American Alpine residents of older generations engaged in a Q&A. Attendees mingled before the event with free refreshments while they were serenaded with traditional Mexican tunes before filing into the theater, where students posed a series of interview questions to the older panelists.

Garza hoped that the event would become an annual fixture, with the goal of supporting Alpine's historic Hispanic past — and its future, by getting students to engage with their school and their community. His philosophy is simple. "No matter what you do, make sure you come back and support where you got your education," he said.

## La Asociación Histórica Alpina organiza el primer Simposio sobre la Herencia Hispana

**Por SAM KARAS**
***sam@bigbendsentinel.com***

ALPINE — El 29 de septiembre, la Asociación Histórica Alpina, junto con estudiantes de teatro del Departamento de Artes Visuales y Escénicas de Sul Ross, organizaron su primer Simposio sobre la Herencia Hispana en el histórico Teatro Granada. El evento fue un esfuerzo por acercar las voces del pasado mexicoamericano de Alpine a una audiencia más amplia al reunir a personas de toda la división generacional.

Sul Ross califica como Institución Designada de Servicio a Hispanos, un título otorgado a las escuelas en las que al menos una cuarta parte de su alumnado se identifica como hispano o latino. La ciudad anfitriona de la universidad, Alpine, también ha sido testigo de un pasado diverso: en sus inicios, la ciudad estaba dividida racialmente por las vías del ferrocarril, y el lado sur era el hogar de su comunidad mexicana.

El lado sur de la ciudad también albergaba la Escuela Centennial, una escuela segregada para niños mexicoamericanos de primero a octavo grado que funcionó desde 1936 hasta 1969.

Saúl Garza, ex alumno de Sul Ross y miembro de la Asociación Histórica Alpina, tuvo la idea de llevar el evento al gran escenario. Su familia llegó a Alpine durante la Revolución Mexicana; toda su vida se había interesado en conocer el pasado de su comunidad. "El lado sur era como una gran familia", dijo.

Para revivir ese pasado, Garza, junto con sus compañeros miembros de la asociación histórica Abbey Branch y Marjie Scott, aprovecharon la energía y el talento del Departamento de Teatro de Sul Ross.

El trío ya tenía experiencia en combinar actuación e historia: en 2021, la asociación histórica lanzó una serie de recorridos de fantasmas que destacan la historia histórica y la rica tradición folclórica de la región de Big Bend, y las ganancias se destinarán a financiar becas para estudiantes de teatro de Sul Ross. "Colaborar con el departamento de teatro lo hizo divertido", explicó Garza. "Pensamos: ¿qué atraería a los turistas a aprender un poco más sobre Alpine?"

Trajeron el mismo espíritu al simposio, donde los estudiantes de teatro de Sul Ross y los residentes alpinos mexicano-estadounidenses de generaciones mayores participaron en una sesión de preguntas y respuestas. Los asistentes se mezclaron antes del evento con refrigerios gratuitos mientras escuchaban serenatas con melodías tradicionales mexicanas antes de ingresar al teatro, donde los estudiantes plantearon una serie de preguntas de la entrevista a los panelistas mayores.

Garza esperaba que el evento se convirtiera en un evento anual, con el objetivo de apoyar el pasado histórico hispano de Alpine y su futuro, logrando que los estudiantes se involucraran con su escuela y su comunidad. Su filosofía es simple. "No importa lo que hagas, asegúrate de regresar y apoyar el lugar donde recibiste tu educación", dijo.

## OUR WATER MATTERS

## Arizona's lax water regulations a boon for Saudi-owned company

**By TREY GERFERS**
***tgerfers@pcuwcd.org***

The Butler Valley is a groundwater basin in western Arizona about 120 miles west of Phoenix. Although groundwater use in urban areas is tightly controlled under Arizona's Groundwater Management Act of 1980, rural areas like the Butler Valley are largely unregulated. According to an investigative report in the *Washington Post* titled "How a Saudi firm tapped a gusher of water in drought-stricken Arizona," the basin is conservatively estimated to hold about 6.5 million acre-feet of groundwater, which is "enough to supply all single-family homes in the Phoenix area for about 14 years." The Butler Valley is also considered critical to meeting future water needs "because it's one of the few basins from which water can be transported to growing urban areas. And … most of the land there is government-owned."

The valley has been in the news a lot lately because of a Saudi-owned company called Fondamonte that is leasing land from the state of Arizona for about $25 per acre, or about $86,000 annually, to pump as much groundwater as it wants. This water is being used to irrigate alfalfa which is then shipped to the parched Arabian Peninsula as feed for cattle there. The value of the water alone has been estimated at several million dollars a year. And this doesn't even account for how old the water is. According to Rob O'Dell, a reporter for the Arizona Republic, "This is ground water that was laid down probably 70,000 to 80,000 years ago." With little natural recharge and scarce precipitation, any groundwater pumped from the Butler Valley is essentially mined and never replaced.

Oddly, Arizona never required Fondamonte to report how much it was pumping until very recently. Based on interviews and documents obtained through public-records requests, the *Washington Post* found that state planners had repeatedly attempted to institute a requirement that leaseholders report their annual pumping volumes. But time and again, these efforts "ran headlong into a view, deeply held in the rural West, that water is private property that comes with access to land, rather than a public resource." This all-too-common conflict — between safeguarding groundwater resources for growing population centers and the conviction that groundwater is the property of individual landowners that should be dedicated to livestock and crops — is not unique to Arizona. But it will ultimately have to be resolved there or Arizonans could likely suffer the very fate that brought the Saudis to their state in the first place.

According to reporting by the Quincy Institute for Responsible Statecraft, "Saudi Arabia has almost completely exhausted its own groundwater through unrestricted pumping." A 2004 investigation revealed "that the kingdom's water sources were nearly depleted because 'wealthy farmers had been allowed to drain the aquifers unchecked for three decades.'" The kingdom was ultimately forced to prohibit alfalfa production in 2016 and Fondamonte's expansion into Arizona is viewed as part of a "strategy for conservation of the kingdom's water resources."

The picture that emerges, according to the *Post*, is that "Arizona's lax regulatory environment and sophisticated lobbying by the Saudi-owned company allowed a scarce American resource to flow unchecked to a foreign corporation." As news of the sweetheart deal made headlines and the drought throughout the region intensified, Fondamonte's leases became a flashpoint in Arizona's 2022 midterm elections. Holly Irwin, a local county supervisor, alleged that "foreign companies have come to take our water because they don't have any left back home." Newly elected Governor Katie Hobbs, a Democrat, has taken a harder line by canceling two of Fondamonte's leases. But the company still controls 32 drilling permits in the state and is estimated to pump about 18,000 acre-feet of water per year.

Kathy Ferris, a water attorney and former director of the Arizona Department of Water Resources, has asserted that Arizona's water issues are bigger than just one company. "The real issue is allowing big industrial agriculture … not just foreign corporations … but American corporations, to move into these unregulated areas and pump as much groundwater as they want." As the state struggles to find a commonsense solution, Arizona Attorney General Kris Mayes has urged all parties to consider the obvious: "We cannot afford to give our water away frankly to anyone."

*Trey Gerfers is a San Antonio native and serves as general manager of the Presidio County Underground Water Conservation District. He is also chairman of the Presidio County Water Infrastructure Steering Committee and president of the Marfa Parks and Recreation Board. Trey has lived in Marfa since 2013.*

## OBITUARY



### *Jimenez*

**Beatriz T. Jimenez** passed away on the evening of October 2, 2023. Jimenez was born on January 6, 1928, in Malaga, New Mexico, and was a lifelong resident of Presidio, Texas.

She is preceded in death by her husband, Jesus Jimenez. She is also preceded in death by one of her four grandchildren, Karime Delgado Jimenez.

She is survived by children Maria Aida Nielsen (husband Paul Nielsen) and Arturo Jimenez (wife Teresa E. Jimenez); grandchildren Jennifer Jimenez, Chris Jimenez and Arturo Jimenez Jr.; seven great-grandchildren and three great-great-grandchildren.

A funeral service will be held in El Paso, Texas, on October 13, 2023, at 10 a.m. at Fort Bliss National Cemetery, located at 5200 Fred Wilson Avenue.

## OBITUARIO



### *Jimenez*

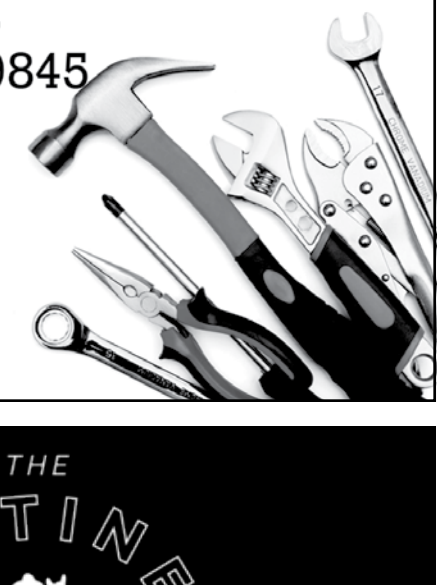
**Beatriz T. Jiménez** falleció la noche del 2 de octubre de 2023. Jiménez nació el 6 de enero de 1928 en Málaga, Nuevo México, y residió toda su vida en Presidio, Texas.

Le precedieron en la muerte su esposo, Jesús Jiménez. También le precedió en la muerte uno de sus cuatro nietos, Karime Delgado Jiménez.

Le sobreviven sus hijos María Aida Nielsen (esposo Paul Nielsen) y Arturo Jiménez (esposa Teresa E. Jiménez); nietos Jennifer Jiménez, Chris Jiménez y Arturo Jiménez Jr.; siete bisnietos y tres tataranietos.

Se llevará a cabo un funeral en El Paso, Texas, el 13 de octubre de 2023, a las 10 a.m. en el Cementerio Nacional de Fort Bliss, ubicado en 5200 Fred Wilson Avenue.

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## PRESIDIO SPORTS CALENDAR

**THU, OCT 12: PHS CC BOYS/GIRLS DISTRICT MEET @ PRESIDIO**

**THU, OCT 12: LRFMS VOLLEYBALL VS KERMIT @ PRESIDIO**

**SAT, OCT 14:LRFMS VOLLEYBALL @ WINK TOURNEY**

**TUE, OCT 17: PHS VOLLEYBALL @ CRANE DISTRICT**

The International / El Internacional

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