

BURN BAN IN EFFECT, NO GROUND FIRES

by order of Presidio County

Big Bend reps vote against bill to make illegal entry into the US a state crime

By SAM KARAS
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AUSTIN — Last Wednesday, controversial immigration bill SB 4 passed the Texas House and headed for the governor’s desk. For the first time, the bill makes illegal entry into the U.S. — a federal crime enforced by federal immigration authorities — a state-level crime, enforceable by agencies like local sheriff’s departments and the Texas Department of Public Safety.

Top state Republicans applauded the bill, arguing that such measures were necessary because the federal government was not doing enough to address a “crisis” at the U.S.-Mexico border. “SB 4 is the strongest border security bill Texas has ever passed,” Lieutenant Governor Dan Patrick wrote in a press release.

SB 4 was part of a suite of immigration laws Republicans hoped to pass in the multiple special legislative sessions called by Governor Greg Abbott this year. Contentious debate over the state’s power to enforce immigration killed numerous bills along the way, triggering more and more special sessions and turning Texas’s part-time Legislature into an all-year affair.

The *Texas Tribune* reported that four special sessions are “unusual but not unheard of” — though a governor had never before called a fourth special session in the same year as a regular session. After a similarly controversial school voucher bill failed, speculation swirled around whether or not lawmakers might see a fifth session this year.

SB 4 creates a new state crime for entering the United States anywhere except through a port of entry. If a person charged with the crime doesn’t have a criminal history and agrees to the order, the state may choose not to prosecute the case and instead order that individual to return to Mexico.

Penalties for violations of the law are tiered. A person with no criminal history can be charged with a class B misdemeanor — if that person has been deported or “excluded” from the country before, that charge can be enhanced to a class A.

Felony-level charges apply for individuals with criminal histories: a third degree felony applies under SB 4 if the person has a record of two or more drug-related offenses or “crimes against a person.” Second-degree felony charges can be brought if the individual has a prior felony conviction in the United States.

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Staff photo by Sam Karas / Foto por Sam Karas

The adobe ruins of a cavalry post on The Local Chapter’s property. The company gated and fenced off the ruin shortly after purchasing the land in 2019.

Las ruinas de adobe de un puesto de caballería en propiedad del Capítulo Local. La empresa cerró y cercó las ruinas poco después de comprar el terreno en 2019.

Memorial to Esequiel Hernandez sparks legal battle

By SAM KARAS
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REDFORD — Since the end of August, two Redford landowners — Dallas-based The Local Chapter LLC and Pecos-based attorney Bill Weinacht — have been locked in a suit and countersuit over a slice of the quiet farming community. The contested property measures just under two acres and has nothing on it but creosote, a crumbling ruin and a white steel cross.

Depending on how the courts untangle a messy 75-year web of documentation, a property assessed by Presidio County at \$1,800 could pull a settlement of up to \$250,000.

According to Weinacht, the hefty potential price tag indicates the emotional, historical and political weight of the contested property. The white cross marks the place where Esequiel Hernandez Jr., a Presidio High School student, was killed by a United States Marine in 1997.

The ruin and cross are located on the western end of El Polvo Road, which makes a horseshoe along FM 170 just east of town. Originally, the ruin served as the officers’ quarters for a Mexican-Revolutionary cavalry post across the street — rumor has it that General Patton stayed there during his time in what was then known as “the Bloody Bend.”

The military returned to these ruins in the late ‘90s, when then-President Bill Clinton sent troops to Presidio County to combat a perceived rise in violence and drug trafficking. “The simple fact is that we must not and

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Presidio dentists hope to bring free screenings to school district

By SAM KARAS
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PRESIDIO — At last Wednesday’s school board meeting, Manuela Avila and Jeremy Velasquez of the Preventative Care Health Services (PCHS) dental clinic presented a plan to offer free screenings to Presidio ISD students. The plan does not cover extensive procedures, but would offer basic services like x-rays and cleanings on campus during the school day.

Avila and Velasquez explained that their mission was to make dental care available to all Presidio kids without worrying about the cost or logistics of going to the clinic. In the long run, they hoped catching health issues before they spiraled into emergencies would also help kids get the most out of their education. “If they’re in pain, how can they focus in school?” Velasquez asked.

They said that they were partly inspired by kids in remote Candelaria, who are bused a hundred miles round trip each day to attend Presidio schools. They felt that these kids deserved dental care without the considerable cost and time required to bring them into the clinic.

In order to receive the free screenings, kids would have to be established “patients of record” at the clinic or have their parents fill out waivers. They anticipated that most families would be enthusiastic about the service, given the difficulty of having to schedule appointments around school hours.

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Memorial a Esequiel Hernández desata batalla legal

Por SAM KARAS
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REDFORD – Desde finales de agosto, dos propietarios de tierras de Redford, The Local Chapter LLC, con sede en Dallas, y el abogado Bill Weinacht, con sede en Pecos, se han visto envueltos en una demanda y contrademanda por una parte de la tranquila comunidad agrícola. La propiedad en disputa mide poco menos de dos acres y no tiene nada más que creosota, una ruina que se desmorona y una cruz de acero blanca.

Dependiendo de cómo los tribunales desenredar una complicada red de documentación de 75 años, una propiedad tasada por el condado de Presidio en \$1,800 podría lograr un acuerdo de hasta \$250,000.

Según Weinacht, el elevado precio potencial indica el peso emocional, histórico y político de la propiedad en disputa. La cruz blanca marca el lugar donde Esequiel Hernández Jr., un estudiante de la escuela secundaria Presidio, fue asesinado por un infante de marina de los Estados Unidos en 1997.

La ruina y la cruz están ubicadas en el extremo occidental de El Polvo Road, que forma una herradura a lo largo de la FM 170, justo al este de la ciudad. Originalmente, las ruinas sirvieron como alojamiento de oficiales para un puesto de caballería revolucionario mexicano al otro lado de la calle; se rumorea que el general Patton permaneció allí durante su estancia en lo que entonces se conocía como “la Curva Sangrienta”.

Los militares regresaron a estas ruinas a finales de los años 90, cuando

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Los dentistas de Presidio esperan llevar exámenes de detección gratuitos al distrito escolar

Por SAM KARAS
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PRESIDIO — En la reunión de la junta escolar del miércoles pasado, Manuela Ávila y Jeremy Velásquez de la clínica dental de Servicios de Salud de Atención Preventiva (PCHS) presentaron un plan para ofrecer exámenes de detección gratuitos a los estudiantes de Presidio ISD. El plan no cubre procedimientos extensos, pero ofrecería servicios básicos como radiografías y limpiezas en el campus durante la jornada escolar.

Ávila y Velásquez explicaron que su misión era hacer que la atención dental estuviera disponible para todos los niños del Presidio sin preocuparse por el costo o la logística de ir a la clínica. A largo plazo, esperaban que detectar problemas de salud antes de que se convirtieran en emergencias también ayudaría a los niños a aprovechar al máximo su educación. “Si sienten dolor, ¿cómo pueden concentrarse en la escuela?” Preguntó Velásquez.

Dijeron que eran inspirados en parte por los niños de la remota Candelaria, que viajan en autobús cien millas de ida y vuelta cada día para asistir a las escuelas de Presidio. Sintieron que estos niños merecían atención dental sin el considerable costo y tiempo requerido para llevarlos a la clínica.

Para recibir los exámenes gratuitos, los niños tendrían que ser establecidos

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Los representantes de Big Bend votan en contra del proyecto de ley que convertiría la entrada ilegal a los EE. UU. en un delito estatal

Por SAM KARAS
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AUSTIN – El Miércoles pasado, el controvertido proyecto de ley de inmigración SB 4 fue aprobado por la Cámara de Representantes de Texas y se dirigió al escritorio del gobernador. Por primera vez, el proyecto de ley convierte la entrada ilegal a Estados Unidos –un delito federal aplicado por las autoridades federales de inmigración– en un delito a nivel estatal, ejecutable por agencias como los departamentos del sheriff local y el Departamento de Seguridad Pública de Texas.

Los principales republicanos estatales aplaudieron el proyecto de ley, argumentando que tales medidas eran necesarias porque el gobierno federal no estaba haciendo lo suficiente para abordar una “crisis” en la frontera entre Estados Unidos y México. “La SB 4 es el proyecto de ley de seguridad fronteriza más sólido que Texas haya aprobado jamás”, escribió el vicegobernador Dan Patrick en un comunicado de prensa.

La SB 4 era parte de un conjunto de leyes de inmigración que los republicanos esperaban aprobar en las múltiples sesiones legislativas especiales convocadas por el gobernador Greg Abbott este año. El polémico debate sobre el poder del estado para hacer cumplir la inmigración acabó con numerosos proyectos de ley en el camino, provocando más y más sesiones especiales y convirtiendo la Legislatura de Texas a tiempo parcial en un asunto de todo el año.

El Tribunal de Texas informó que cuatro sesiones especiales son “inusuales pero no inauditas”, aunque un gobernador nunca antes había convocado una cuarta sesión especial en el mismo año que una sesión ordinaria. Después de que fracasara un proyecto de ley de vales escolares igualmente controvertido, surgieron especulaciones sobre si los legisladores podrían celebrar una quinta sesión este año.

La SB 4 crea un nuevo delito estatal por ingresar a los Estados Unidos por cualquier lugar excepto a través de un puerto de entrada. Si una persona acusada del delito no tiene antecedentes penales y acepta la orden, el estado puede optar por no procesar el caso y en su lugar ordenarle a esa persona que regrese a México.

Las sanciones por violaciones de la ley están escalonadas. Una persona sin antecedentes penales puede ser acusada de un delito menor de clase B: si esa persona ha sido deportada o “excluida” del país anteriormente, ese cargo puede elevarse a un delito menor.

Se aplican cargos a nivel de delito grave a personas con antecedentes penales: se aplica un delito grave de tercer grado según la SB 4 si la persona tiene antecedentes de dos o más delitos relacionados con drogas o “delitos contra una persona”. Se pueden presentar cargos por delitos graves de segundo grado si el individuo tiene una condena previa por un delito grave en los Estados

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ENGLISH NEWS

Esequiel Hernandez

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we will not surrender our borders to those who wish to exploit our history of compassion and justice,” President Clinton said of his decision to militarize the border.

On May 20, 1997, Corporal Clemente Banuelos — clad in a ghillie suit — shot 18-year-old Esequiel Hernandez in the shadow of the house on the contested property. Hernandez stumbled and collapsed against the wall of a well a few yards away, where he died 18 minutes later. That spot is now marked by the white metal cross.

Hernandez’s story was picked up by newswires worldwide and eventually became the subject of documentaries, films and songs. Though criminal charges against Banuelos were dropped, the Hernandez family was awarded just under \$2 million in damages from the United States — thanks to their legal counsel, the same Bill Weinacht implicated in the current-day suit.

Since 2005, Weinacht and the Hernandez family have maintained the property as a memorial to Esequiel — one of a very few U.S. citizens killed by the U.S. military on American soil. No formal memorials through agencies like the National Historic Register or the Texas State Historical Association have been erected in Redford.

Back in August, The Local Chapter filed a suit in district court against Weinacht for “trespass to try title and quiet title” over the two-acre parcel, which they say is an island within their property lines. Their legal counsel — W. Ross Forbes Jr. and Sarah Starr — alleges that a foreclosure document from 1954 invalidates Weinacht’s claim to the land.

The deed in question spurs from Weinacht’s purchase of the land in 2005. After Hernandez’s death in 1997, the cross on the property — allegedly owned by a man named Trinidad Grado Jr. — attracted streams of mourners, journalists and other visitors.

Eventually, Grado demanded that the Hernandez family paid him rent. “Naturally, people were upset,” Weinacht wrote in his answer and countersuit.

Once Grado started complaining that locals were firing shots at the house in retaliation, Weinacht stepped in. He purchased the just-under-2-acre lot around the ruin and cross from Grado for \$4,000, in lieu of the Hernandezes paying rent in perpetuity.

The controversy over the cross died down for 14 years, until The Local Chapter — a Dallas-based company that owns a yurt “glamping” compound overlooking Big Bend National Park in Terlingua — bought a 474-acre tract of land along the Rio Grande in Redford on the eastern edge of El Polvo Road.

Fences make good neighbors

Much of the east side of the road is fenced off and marked with The Local Chapter’s logo. Behind the fence are the ruins of a military post staffed by the U.S. Cavalry during the Mexican Revolution, standing proud on a bluff over the river.

The crumbling adobe structure is part of a dramatic panorama: lush fields, rolling hills and the mighty Sierra Rica, higher than any peak on the Texas side of the border. For Baxter Box — who runs the company alongside his wife, Amber — it was love at first sight.

The Dallas-based tech entrepreneurs renowned in the industry for launching RewardStyle in 2011. The software company is widely credited for launching the influencer movement by monetizing bloggers’ links to products.

Despite a reputation for being plugged in, their young family started taking trips to the Big Bend parks a little over a decade ago to get away from screens and busy city life. They became enthralled with the area. “It felt like the raw Texas that used to be — a true frontier,” Box said.

As soon as they had the money together, they purchased a property between Study Butte and the entrance to Big Bend National Park. The couple became interested in their signature yurts after a vacation in Colorado. They appreciated how the tent-like structures could hold up to the weather but were fairly easy to disassemble. “We felt like it was going to have the lowest footprint,” he said. “It was a low-cost way for our growing family to have a place to go and spend time down there.”

The Local Chapter was initially just a retreat for friends and family, but opened to guests in 2017. Trendsetters took note — a headline in *D Magazine* in 2020 described the operation as a “posh desert oasis.” *PaperCity* lauded the Box’s aesthetic sensibilities, delighting in the contrast between the rustic yurts and their luxury accouterments from brands like Croft House and CB2.

The Boxes were quickly faced with a harsh South Brewster County reality: it gets very, very hot in land-locked Terlingua during the summer. They started looking for another place to relax, this time closer to the river.

As self-proclaimed Texas history buffs, they were delighted when they heard that there might be a property in Redford that checked all the boxes: scenic views, river access and plenty of history. The couple snapped up the Polvo Road property, alternating summertime family swims with dreaming about how to restore the historic buildings on their land.

A survey commissioned by The Local Chapter in 2019 outlines a sprawling property from the Rio Grande to the edge of Big Bend Ranch State Park, roughly in the shape of the number 1.

The survey also revealed that there were overlaps with surveys commissioned by other landowners over the years. The Boxes were now faced with another harsh desert truth: in what may be the continent’s oldest farming community, record-keeping about land passed down through generations is scant or non-existent.

Box said that he was shocked by the complexity of establishing land ownership in South Presidio County. “It’s messy down there,” he said. “Deeds just show up out of nowhere.”

The Boxes and their legal counsel started diving into county records. They discovered something alarming: there were numerous other families who thought they owned small chunks of the land they’d just purchased.

The trouble started in 1949, when Trinidad Grado Sr. — the father of the man who sold the Hernandez memorial site to Weinacht — purchased his land from W.A. Glasscock.

Over the next few years, the Grados discovered that Glasscock sold off small parcels in Polvo on land he had not yet fully paid off. Glasscock defaulted on his loan to a man named George Pugh, and in the process of foreclosure the Presidio County Sheriff’s Office issued a title for the land back to Pugh in 1954. (Despite the financial drama, the Grados never vacated the property.)

Box feels that the “Sheriff’s deed” described in the lawsuit is his smoking gun. The deeds to any of the foreclosed land were rendered null, and the families who continued occupying and passing on that land from generation to generation had no legal claim to the land, which The Local Chapter had purchased from the family of J.T. Paulsel, the man Pugh sold the land to in 1959.

He explained that his deep-dive into county records was simply so he could start stabilizing and preserving the property’s historic adobe structures. He decided to put off these projects until he could clearly delineate what was his. “I want to get to the point of being able to invest in it, and I can’t really do that if someone else thinks they own it,” he said.

The Boxes put up fences around their property, hoping to prevent vandalism and looting targeting the archaeological sites under their care. “They say fences make good neighbors,” he said. “I don’t like fences, but when people have different ideas of where their boundaries are, it’s a challenge.”

“We still believe it was stolen”

In 2020, The Local Chapter filed a suit against Benny Carrasco, Elva Reza and Susan Rodriguez for small slices of the 474-acre parcel they had purchased the year prior, citing the “Sheriff’s deed” invalidated these families’ chains of title. The parties ended up settling out of court for a modest payout. “It was amicable,” Box said.

According to Priscilla Carrasco — wife of Benny Carrasco — their family’s legal battle was anything but amicable. She says that roughly a year and a half of formal litigation wrecked her family’s health and finances and put strain on a happy marriage of almost

four decades. “There was a lot of heartache,” she said.

The Local Chapter sued her husband over a 10-acre plot on El Polvo Road. The riverfront property is also home to a ruin with a dirt floor, where Benny’s grandfather once raised 10 children. County records show a deed written out to the senior Carrasco in 1949, who purchased the land from Glasscock.

With generations of ties to the land, the Carrascos were shocked to be served with legal documents claiming they were trespassing on their own property. Benny works for TXDOT and Priscilla is a schoolteacher. “We’re just your average Joe,” she said. “We make an honest living, and we’ve never been in any type of trouble.”

The family’s own records show tax receipts dating back to the 1950s, but other records are scant. Priscilla says that The Local Chapter’s attorneys wanted pictures of the family in the house to substantiate their claims — something that a humble family from Redford wouldn’t have had access to. “We just had the memories,” she said.

Though the Redford Carrascos eventually relocated to the Permian Basin, she and her husband and kids returned often and made memories of their own — spending afternoons tubing on the river and having picnics in Big Bend Ranch State Park. “That was going to be our retirement,” she said. “We wanted to go out there several months out of the year and relax. It’s beautiful country out there.”

In the original answer to the suit, Carrasco’s argument against The Local Chapter was on the grounds that the conflict “could not be reasonably foreseen by the defendant.” When his father passed down the land in 2006, Benny was not aware of a 50-year-old foreclosure document between three people who had no relationship to his family — particularly one that never resulted in anyone vacating their land or ceasing to pay taxes on it.

The litigation quickly drained the family’s finances. Benny took out money from his 401(k). It got to the point that their only option left was to put their house up as collateral. Over the course of 14 grueling months, the couple’s retirement dream started to corrode their ability to retire in the first place.

With heavy hearts, the Carrascos decided to settle. They walked away without their family’s land and with little faith in the legal system. “What I learned through this whole ordeal — I’d never been through a lawsuit before — is that in a case like that, the person who wins is the one who has the most money,” Priscilla said.

After the suit was settled, the Carrascos said that The Local Chapter tore into the property, cutting trails and digging up native plants. “They started excavating right away,” she said. (Box said that the only excavation he had done was to cut a pad for a cabin, so that the family would one day have a more permanent place to stay the night.)

Priscilla Carrasco still thinks about the property all the time, wondering what could have been. “We still believe it was stolen,” she said. “I know it was settled, and that’s what’s on paper, but we feel that in our hearts it was stolen.”

The perfect hunting ground

Weinacht was all too aware of the Carrasco’s saga when he responded to the suit in early October. Over the course of 30 years tragically embedded with native Redford families, he anticipated that the community’s old-world way of handling real estate transactions would leave them vulnerable to outsiders.

In his answer to The Local Chapter suit, Weinacht explains that the first people to be granted formal deeds to properties in Redford were from poor Mexican and Mexican American families without extensive knowledge of the American legal system. In many cases, landowners also lacked the ability to read or write in English.

Redford plots were also small, cheap and remote. Even those with more courthouse savvy often didn’t see the value in investing in expensive surveys. “This is how Redford became the perfect hunting ground for the Box’s [sic],” Weinacht wrote. “There is nothing local about The Local Chapter.”

His argument against The Local Chapter’s claim to his land — and the defendants in the 2020 suit — hinge

on the law of adverse possession.

Adverse possession laws apply to people who own land that can also be claimed by someone else. Adverse possession claims — and how they’re adjudicated — hinge on proving that the claimant “uses or enjoys” the property in question “peaceably” with no interference from the other party.

In Texas, these laws follow tiered statutes of limitation. The process of fighting a claim gets more complex the longer the property has been “used or enjoyed” by any one party, but after 25 years a suit cannot be filed to determine the property’s ownership.

Weinacht explains in his response that Trinidad Grado Sr. — who owned land implicated in the infamous “Sheriff’s deed” — passed the property along to his son. Both Grado men owned the property for 25 years or more. By the law of adverse possession, Weinacht argues, Grado Jr. had every right to sell the land to someone else, and the chain of title was clear.

He also explained that in the criminal and civil proceedings after Hernandez’s death, establishing exactly who owned the land where Esequiel died and where the fatal shot was fired became a recurring theme — in the hopes of proving that Banuelos was a trespasser as well as an alleged murderer.

The petition belies a deep distrust of the Box family. “They bought a large tract with defects they knew about ... with the real intention of buying up the property at a discounted price using the threat of litigation,” he writes.

He expressed zero faith in The Local Chapter’s claim that they had no commercial interest in the property, taking a shot at Amber Box as an “Instagram Queen” whose family made their wealth from warping reality on the internet. He suspected the couple was only interested in “selling a night’s stay in their yurt next to the place where Esequiel Hernandez Jr. was shot and killed.”

He wanted to keep the Box family far, far away from any engagement with the community’s world-famous pain and grief. “The Hernandez family will not be humiliated by their Instagram poses,” Weinacht wrote.

If The Local Chapter was able to take possession, Weinacht argued, the future of the memorial was at stake. “In the event the Box’s [sic] are successful in their Pac-Man feeding frenzy and take the property, the cross will be removed,” he wrote.

Baxter Box denied having any plans for commercial development in Redford and said that Weinacht’s claims disappointed him. He felt that the attorney’s descriptions of his intentions and character were complete mischaracterizations.

He also said he had offered numerous olive branches to Weinacht, promising to keep the cross in place and to add a plaque that would commemorate the site and Weinacht’s contributions to the Hernandez family’s fight for justice.

Box was not aware of the story of Esequiel Hernandez when he purchased his tract, but said that he had come to understand the weight of the event. “If restoration is really important to [Weinacht], it’s really important to me — we should be completely on the same page,” he said.

He also felt that Weinacht had not demonstrated any interest in the property since the tract’s 2019 purchase. “It looks like if he thought he owned it, he hasn’t done anything with it,” Box said.

In response, Weinacht said he has made around \$18,000 in improvements to the property over the past four years — hooking up electric and water to make the restoration process easier, as well as cordoning off the memorial site.

If the courts settle in Weinacht’s favor, he wants to reopen the property to people outside the Hernandez family who want to contemplate its historic gravity. Mostly, he just wants to stabilize the adobe and preserve it as it was on that tragic day in 1997. “I don’t want to have it fenced, honestly,” he said.

Regardless of Box’s insistence that the two parties have the same goals in mind, Weinacht remains steadfast in his claim to the land. “The property is not for sale at any price,” he said.

Houston woman found alive after being lost in Big Bend National Park for over a week

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BIG BEND NATIONAL PARK — On Friday, search and rescue personnel found a woman who had gone missing from the Lost Mine Trail on November 9. Twenty-five-year-old Christy Perry of Houston was found “awake and talking” about a quarter mile below the end of the trail, surviving just over a week in the rugged Chisos Mountains.

Early in the search, park personnel had little information to go on. Perry picked up a rental car in Midland on November 9 and headed toward the park. Her vehicle was last seen at the trailhead later that day, but she never showed up for her nearby camping reservation that evening.

After the weekend came and went, Perry’s family notified the park that she had never returned from her trip. A formal search was initiated on Wednesday, November 15, and park officials closed the trail to the public while they worked.

Last week’s search and rescue personnel spanned multiple agencies: the National Park Service, U.S. Customs and Border Protection, Texas Parks and Wildlife and the Texas Department of Public Safety. Los Diablos fire crew — made up of Mexican nationals from the small villages bordering the park — also lent their strength and expertise.

On Friday, Perry was found alive around 9:30 a.m. Rescuers helped her down the trail and to a helicopter,

where she was transported to a hospital in Odessa for medical treatment. At press time, it was unclear whether or not she had returned home.

The Lost Mine Trail is one of the national park’s most popular hikes. The roughly 5-mile out-and-back route rises 1,100 feet through the thick juniper and piñon forest of the Chisos Mountains, offering visitors some of the best views in the park.

Though the trail is well-marked and well-traveled, conditions were wet and extremely foggy in the Chisos on the day Perry went missing. The Park Service said that she survived on rainwater and had no food with her when she left the trail.

Tom Vandenberg, the park’s chief of interpretation, said that injuries along the trail were far more common than cases like Perry’s. “Surprisingly, Big Bend doesn’t have too many actual missing hikers,” he said.

Search and rescue teams are deployed a few times a year to help locate missing and injured hikers. Vandenberg said that the last major multi-day search and rescue effort the park undertook was the disappearance of Hector Flores and his daughter in 2022, which spanned nine days before the pair were found alive.

Vandenberg said that the park offers lots of materials to visitors online and in person to help them safely enjoy their time in Big Bend. His top tip was to let friends and family know about your plans before visiting the park or taking a hike. “Notify someone when you head out,” he said. “Let them know where you’re going and when you expect to return.”

Presidio dentists

(Continued from page 1)

The couple insisted that they would not be paid by the school district because their positions at the PCHS clinic are salaried. The clinic would not be costly to PCHS either, given that the majority of students within the district qualify for Medicaid.

To make their dreams reality, there were a few more hoops that they would have to jump through — mainly working out schedules, equipment and drawing up

Big Bend reps

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The bill also protects law enforcement from litigation, making them “immune from liability for damages” incurred over the course of legal action triggered by their enforcement of the new law. The only places they are explicitly prohibited from enforcing the law are in schools, places of worship, healthcare facilities and facilities serving survivors of sexual assault.

The bill also requires collecting extensive information about individuals returned to Mexico under the law, including “all available biographical information” and “applicable photographic or biometric measures.”

Neither of the Big Bend’s representatives in the Legislature voted in favor of the bill.

State Senator César Blanco pointed out that existing federal immigration laws did not deter people from seeking entry into the United States. On a more practical level, he felt that it was a waste of taxpayer money for both the state and federal governments to assume the same responsibilities.

He also worried that the new law would instead cast unfair fear and suspicion on people from border communities — potentially leading to violence like the racially-motivated El Paso shooting that devastated his

contracts between the clinic and the school district. If everything goes smoothly, they hope to get the program up and running in January.

Board Vice President Marco Lujan expressed support for the project, remembering a similar service at Presidio ISD when he was in school. “Those were some of the only times I would see the dentist,” he said.

hometown in 2019. “We need to stop criminalizing and dehumanizing immigrants,” he wrote in a statement. “That attitude is extremely dangerous to our border communities and has extreme consequences.”

State Representative Eddie Morales was concerned that the bill would tie up even more of the state’s funding in the courts — some policy experts believe the law won’t survive in the wake of *Arizona v. USA*, a 2012 Supreme Court decision that shot down a similar law that would have superseded federal immigration authority.

Morales echoed Blanco’s sentiments that the new penalties would not deter migrants. “Migrants decided the moment they left their friends, family, and homeland they were willing to risk the dangers of dehydration, abduction, and murder—a prison sentence that accompanies 3 warm meals a day, a roof over their head, and bed to sleep in is not going to deter them,” he wrote to The Big Bend Sentinel. “SB 4 will not work and only waste taxpayer dollars on incarcerating migrants who wanted nothing more than to live the American Dream and provide for their families.”

HAPPY THANKSGIVING!

CLASSIFIED

Mujer de Houston encontrada viva después de estar perdida en el Parque Nacional Big Bend durante más de una semana

Por SAM KARAS
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PARQUE NACIONAL BIG BEND – El viernes, el personal de búsqueda y rescate encontró a una mujer que había desaparecido del Lost Mine Trail el 9 de noviembre. Christy Perry, de Houston, de veinticinco años, fue encontrada “despierta y hablando” aproximadamente a un cuarto de milla. debajo del final del sendero, sobreviviendo poco más de una semana en las escarpadas montañas Chisos.

Al principio de la búsqueda, el personal del parque tenía poca información para continuar. Perry recogió un coche de alquiler en Midland el 9 de noviembre y se dirigió hacia el parque. Su vehículo fue visto por última vez en el comienzo del sendero ese mismo día, pero esa noche nunca se presentó en su reserva de campamento cercana.

Después de que pasó el fin de semana, la familia de Perry notificó al parque que ella nunca había regresado de su viaje. El miércoles 15 de noviembre se inició una búsqueda formal y los funcionarios del parque cerraron el sendero al público mientras trabajaban.

El personal de búsqueda y rescate de la semana pasada abarcó varias agencias: el Servicio de Parques Nacionales, la Oficina de Aduanas y Protección Fronteriza de Estados Unidos, Parques y Vida Silvestre de Texas y el Departamento de Seguridad Pública de Texas. El equipo de bomberos de Los Diablos, compuesto por ciudadanos mexicanos de los pequeños pueblos aledaños al parque, también aportó su fuerza y experiencia.

El viernes, Perry fue encontrado con vida alrededor de las 9:30 a.m. Los rescatistas la ayudaron por el sendero hasta un helicóptero, donde fue

transportada a un hospital en Odessa para recibir tratamiento médico. Al cierre de esta edición, no estaba claro si había regresado a casa.

El Lost Mine Trail es una de las caminatas más populares del parque nacional. La ruta de ida y vuelta de aproximadamente 5 millas se eleva 1,100 pies a través del espeso bosque de enebros y piñones de las montañas Chisos, ofreciendo a los visitantes algunas de las mejores vistas del parque.

Aunque el sendero está bien marcado y es muy transitado, las condiciones eran húmedas y extremadamente brumosas en Chisos el día que Perry desapareció. El Servicio de Parques dijo que sobrevivió gracias al agua de lluvia y que no llevaba comida cuando abandonó el sendero.

Tom VandenBerg, jefe de interpretación del parque, dijo que las lesiones a lo largo del sendero eran mucho más comunes que casos como el de Perry. "Sorprendentemente, en Big Bend no hay muchos excursionistas desaparecidos", dijo.

Varias veces al año se despliegan equipos de búsqueda y rescate para ayudar a localizar a los excursionistas desaparecidos y heridos. VandenBerg dijo que el último gran esfuerzo de búsqueda y rescate de varios días que llevó a cabo el parque fue la desaparición de Héctor Flores y su hija en 2022, que duró nueve días antes de que la pareja fuera encontrada con vida.

VandenBerg dijo que el parque ofrece muchos materiales a los visitantes. en línea y en persona para ayudarlos a disfrutar de manera segura su tiempo en Big Bend. Su principal consejo fue informar a sus amigos y familiares sobre sus planes antes de visitar el parque o realizar una caminata. “Avisé a alguien cuando salga”, dijo. “Hágales saber adónde va y cuándo espera regresar”.

LETTER TO THE EDITOR

Editor:

While it has been a privilege and honor to serve this beautiful county, it is with a heavy heart that I announce I will not be seeking a third term as Presidio County commissioner, Precinct 1, at this time. Some of you know that I have been dealing with some medical issues, and I need to focus on that and getting myself better. By the end of my term, I will have served Presidio County for just over 18 years in some capacity. My time with the county came with many lessons and challenges, but the overall experience has been a great one.

There were some hard times that really broke my spirit, such as the lawsuit that we faced when the four commissioners, including myself, decided to abolish a financial department. While I was not permitted to speak during that debacle, I can now say that I was NOT lobbied or asked to do that in retaliation for anyone. What happened between the two parties involved was none of my concern. If my friendship gave the impression of something underhanded going on, that was absolutely NOT the case! It was only the continuance of a friendship that had been established many years prior and was not changed by any circumstances that were going on at the county. I didn't feel that my right to continue a friendship should be paused because it might be questioned by someone who might have had ulterior motives. Although the outcome wasn't in our favor, I still stand by that decision today and WOULD NOT change my vote. The decision was mine, and I take full responsibility for making it. My only regret is that someone else got caught up in it, and that person WAS NOT in control of that decision or any other decision that I ever made. Also, for the record, it cost the county less than \$1,000 to resolve that case, as we are members of the Texas Association of Counties and insured through their risk pool. The Texas Association of Counties paid \$700,000 not the county.

If you know me well, you know that I am a strong-minded individual and make decisions of my own accord; I don't rely on the persuasion or coaxing of anyone. I have often voted alone at the table and will continue to do so when I feel it's necessary. I will let my background on the court speak for itself!

During my second term, we dealt with the COVID Pandemic. While there was a lot of political controversy around it, I think we did a good job of trying to keep the public safe and informed. We had amazing numbers of vaccines

that were given to people at that time, some of the highest in the nation. I believe that helped keep some people alive during this scary time. I believe many great things were accomplished during my tenure. We contracted a company that has successfully sold trust properties for us that had been off of the tax rolls for many years, adopted a Dark Skies ordinance to save our beautiful West Texas skies, and adopted a thorough mass gathering permit that could aid in protecting the health and safety of our residents and environment. We transferred a sacred burial ground back to the Lipan Tribe and their loved ones, where it belonged. We added to Redford's water improvements and placed arsenic removal equipment in Candelaria for their water system. We successfully applied for millions of dollars for new water infrastructure in Las Pampas, Shafter and Marfa's Ft. DA Russell and East Heights, and we're not done yet, there's still opportunities for us to do more! We also held a successful election establishing the very important Presidio Underground Water District as its own taxing entity to ensure its continuance for the security and safety of our water. Most recently, we saw the long-awaited completion of the Presidio International Bridge, and so much more that I didn't even touch on! I wholeheartedly plan to continue to serve my constituents until my term is officially over at the end of December 2024. Don't count me completely out though, if my health gets better, I could be back at some point!

A huge appreciation goes out to my county family both in Marfa and Presidio, you guys are great teammates and friends. Thanks for all the times you motivated me and shared your trust in me. I feel so fortunate that I got the opportunity to work with each of you. You guys are a huge reason for my own success. You believed in what I stood for and trusted me throughout. You all will forever be my other family! To my actual family, especially my husband, Joel, and my kids, Bryanna, Andru and Mikayla, thank you all for being my happiness and strength in some of my hardest times. You always have my back, and believe in me wholeheartedly! Lastly, my constituents and residents of beautiful Presidio County, so many of you have reached out to me and let me know how much confidence you have in me and how I represent you all with my decisions at the table. That is the biggest and most important part of what I have done for Presidio County. I am not someone who is going to allow frivolous spending of tax dollars that belong to all of you. I am humbled by your continued support and confidence in me!

Representing Presidio County has been my greatest privilege and honor!

Brenda Silva Bentley
Presidio County Commissioner, Pct. 1
Marfa

con vida a algunas personas durante este momento aterrador. Creo que se lograron muchas cosas maravillosas durante mi mandato. Contratamos a una empresa que nos vendió exitosamente propiedades fiduciarias que habían estado fuera de las listas de impuestos durante muchos años, adoptamos una ordenanza de Cielos Oscuros para salvar nuestros hermosos cielos del oeste de Texas y adoptamos un permiso completo de reunión masiva que podría ayudar a proteger el salud y seguridad de nuestros residentes y el medio ambiente. Transferimos un cementerio sagrado a la tribu Lipan y a sus seres queridos, a donde pertenecía. Agregamos mejoras al agua de Redford y colocamos equipos de eliminación de arsénico en Candelaria para su sistema de agua. Solicitamos con éxito millones de dólares para nueva infraestructura hídrica en Las Pampas, Shafter y Marfa's Ft. DA Russell y East Heights, y aún no hemos terminado, ¡todavía tenemos oportunidades de hacer más! También celebramos una elección exitosa que estableció el importante Distrito de Agua Subterránea de Presidio como su propia entidad tributaria para garantizar su continuidad para la seguridad de nuestra agua. Más recientemente, vimos la tan esperada finalización del Puente Internacional de Presidio, ¡y mucho más que ni siquiera mencioné! Planeo de todo corazón continuar sirviendo a mis electores hasta que mi mandato finalice oficialmente a fines de diciembre de 2024. Sin embargo, no me descarten por completo, si mi salud mejora, ¡podría regresar en algún momento!

Un gran agradecimiento a la familia de mi condado, tanto en Marfa como en Presidio, ustedes son excelentes compañeros de equipo y amigos. Gracias por todas las veces que me motivaste y compartiste tu confianza en mí. Me siento muy afortunada de haber tenido la oportunidad de trabajar con cada uno de ustedes. Ustedes son una gran razón para mi propio éxito. Creíste en lo que yo representaba y confiaste en mí en todo momento. ¡Todos ustedes siempre serán mi otra familia! A mi familia actual, especialmente a mi esposo Joel y mis hijos Bryanna, Andru y Mikayla, gracias a todos por ser mi felicidad y fortaleza en algunos de mis momentos más difíciles. ¡Siempre me respaldas y crees en mí de todo corazón! Por último, mis electores y residentes del hermoso condado de Presidio, muchos de ustedes se han acercado a mí y me han hecho saber cuánta confianza tienen en mí y cómo lo represento a todos con mis decisiones en la mesa. Esa es la parte más grande e importante de lo que he hecho por el Condado de Presidio. No soy alguien que vaya a permitir el gasto frívolo del dinero de los impuestos que les pertenece a todos ustedes. ¡Me siento honrada por su continuo apoyo y confianza en mí!

¡Representar al condado de Presidio ha sido mi mayor privilegio y honor!

Brenda Silva Bentley
Comisionado del Condado de Presidio, PCT. 1
Marfa

PUBLIC NOTICES

The City of Presidio offices will close for the Thanksgiving Holiday on Wednesday, November 22 at 12:00PM and will remain closed all day on Thursday, November 23 and Friday, November 24.

We will resume normal business hours on Monday, November 27 at 8:00AM.

HAPPY THANKSGIVING FROM
THE CITY OF PRESIDIO TO YOU ALL!

RIO GRANGE WRECKER SERVICE
406 E COMMERCE ST PO BOX 628
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SECOND NOTICE

Notice by Publication provided under section 2303.152 www.tdlr.texas.gov notice to owners and lien holders. This vehicle is located and be claimed at our storage yard facility,

Year- 2007, Make- Toyota, Model- Yaris, License Plate- No Tags, State- California, owed for Unit #1 as of 11-03-23 is \$150.00. Storage accruing daily at \$20.00 + 8.25% pre day. This unit was picked up in Presidio County per order of the Presidio Police Department, storage fees accruing daily. The failure of the owner or lien holder the Unit #1 to claim the vehicle before the 30th day from which this notice is published is a waiver by that person of all right, title and interest in the vehicle at public sale.

Year- 2006, Make- Jeep, Model- Liberty, License Plate- EA-W020A, State- Chihuahua, owed for Unit #2 as of 11-04-23 is \$150.00. Storage accruing daily at \$20.00 + 8.25% pre day. This unit was picked up in Presidio County per order of the Presidio Police Department, storage fees accruing daily. The failure of the owner or lien holder the Unit #1 to claim the vehicle before the 30th day from which this notice is published is a waiver by that person of all right, title and interest in the vehicle at public sale.

Rio Grande Wrecker Service
Osvaldo Acosta
406 E Commerce St.
Presidio, TX 79845
Phone: (432) 229-3312

THE CITY OF PRESIDIO CHRISTMAS TREE LIGHTING

Parade starts at the Presidio Elementary at
6:30 p.m. followed by the Lighting of the
Tree at Saint Francis Park

Friday, December 1, 2023

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