

BURN BAN IN EFFECT, NO GROUND FIRES

by order of Presidio County

BBNP prepares for major Chisos Basin closures during lodge construction

By SAM KARAS
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TERLINGUA — On Monday evening, Big Bend National Park employees and Terlingua residents gathered at the Red Pattillo Community Center for a presentation about major changes coming to the Chisos Basin in May 2025. Acting Superintendent Chad Tinney led the discussion, hoping to help both community members and contractors prepare for closures while the Chisos Basin Lodge and the adjacent water system are overhauled over an estimated two-year period.

Last spring, the park announced that the lodge — a retro mid-century structure with a gift shop and restaurant overlooking the famous Window — would eventually be demolished. Because it was built on unstable soils, the necessary renovations would be less cost-effective than tearing the old structure down and replacing it with a new one. (The motel and historic “Eisenhower Cabins” attached to the lodge have not been slated for renovations, but park officials say they may be tackled on to future projects.)

The lodge has a significant place in many visitors’ memories of the park, but as visitation grows, park officials felt that the Basin needed a fresh start. When the lodge was built, the park had a sixth of the annual visitors it has now and has become a major cash cow, earning third place in the rankings of top Brewster County hotel occupancy (HOT) tax contributors.

Next year’s construction in the Basin won’t be limited to just the lodge: the Basin’s aging spring-fed water system will also see a major overhaul. Around \$16 million in federal grant money will go to replacing sections of line and putting in new pumps and water tanks. “The two projects are married together,” Acting Superintendent Tinney explained.

To accommodate construction vehicles, the vast majority of what the park calls the “Lower Basin” — where the lodge, visitors center, convenience store and parking lot currently sit — will be entirely closed off, and visitor activity will shift up the road to the group campground. “The campground will now be a hub of activity and temporary structures,” he said.

Tinney said that the park has been “doing a lot of math” to figure out how to accommodate as

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The West Texan Media Group, LLC



Illustration by crowcrumbs

With grant support from The Presidio County Community Fund, The Big Bend Sentinel is publishing a series of articles on mental healthcare in the tri-county area, along with challenges faced by providers, law enforcement, educators and public officials trying to encourage more professionals to relocate to the area. Please see page 5 for a list of available resources in the tri-county area.

Big Bend’s isolation creates challenges to addressing mental health

Many providers offer counseling referrals, but region still in dire need of mental healthcare professionals

By ROB D’AMICO
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TRI-COUNTY — Brian Enlow is much different than his brother Greg was. Greg embraced an artistic world, immersed himself in music and lived off the beaten path. Brian is three years older, more grounded, and as they grew up together in Tyler, Texas, those differences started becoming more and more profound.

“I ended up working for corporate finance, was pretty boring, had a suburban house and three kids kind of life,” Brian said. Meanwhile, Greg left East Texas at 18, took to Bob Dylan songs

and started playing guitar in Austin bands. Apart from the rave reviews he got for his mastery of guitar in rock bands like The Strange Boys, he was well-known and loved for his craftsmanship in building and repairing guitars at a shop he owned in Austin.

Greg found his way to Marfa in 2016 at age 29, after Brian said he started noticing all the changes in the “Keep Austin Weird” city, which was maturing into a large, metropolitan area. “Greg was always sort of cutting edge, even in an exodus from Austin,” Brian said. “He knew that he needed a change since he had probably rung every bit of light he could out of Austin.”

In addition to playing with numerous bands, and sitting in with many more in Marfa, Greg worked at El Cosmico doing pretty much everything that needed to be done for the campground hotel and its events. Even though most people know almost everyone else in a small town like Marfa, Greg’s lean figure, big blue eyes and boyish good looks made him even more recognizable. “I know it’s cliché, but he did have a magnetic personality, and people were drawn to him,” Brian said. “And people genuinely loved him. His friendships were rarely, if at all, topical, surface level. All of his connections were very deep-rooted.”

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Community gathers for official opening ceremony at Cementerio del Barrio de los Lipanes

By SAM KARAS
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PRESIDIO — Last Saturday morning, a crowd of around 75 people assembled for performances, speeches and prayers in honor of the official opening of el Cementerio del Barrio de los Lipanes, a Lipan Apache cemetery nestled in the heart of Presidio. Folks came from around the tri-county to celebrate, as well as representatives from the Lipan Apache tribe in McAllen and descendants from as far away as Oregon.

The cemetery dates back to the 18th century, when the Spanish struck a diplomatic deal with

the Prairie Grass band of the Lipan Apache, or Lipanes, to settle down in what’s now Presidio. Three hundred years later, as the city began to sprawl, it gradually swallowed the cemetery, razing graves to build roads and water lines.

The project to protect and stabilize the cemetery has been three years in the making but was inspired by decades of family members protecting the cemetery on their own time. Descendant Christina Hernandez, who served as an official spokesperson for the interred families throughout the process, estimates that there are at least 500 Presidians who have a relative buried in the cemetery.

Hospital district, Big Bend National Park explore addition of mental healthcare providers

By MARY CANTRELL
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BREWSTER COUNTY — The Big Bend region’s dire need for more mental health resources was central to discussion among local political and medical leaders at a hospital district meeting last week.

The Big Bend Regional Hospital District (BBRHD) Board heard a proposal from Dr. Adrian Billings — chief medical officer for Preventative Care Health Services (PCHS) and associate dean of rural and community engagement at the Texas Tech Health Science Center — regarding the creation of a new mental health fellowship, one

funded and shaped by the BBRHD.

Thanks to federal grant funding and a partnership with Texas Tech, PCHS clinics are already hosting mental health fellows, licensed professional counselor (LPC) program graduates, called associates, from Sul Ross State University and The University of El Paso for their required 3,000 hours of supervised training.

The hope is that by supporting their continuing education, fellows may opt to stay and practice in the area once fully-licensed. “Many of these students, it’s their only exposure to rural medicine, which is really important because the second biggest predictor of future rural practice is rural medicine exposure,” Billings said.

The potential BBRHD mental health fellow would work anywhere from 18 to 24 months and be offered a \$60,000 annual salary, Billings said. In order to make the position more competitive, the hospital district may also consider providing free housing and mileage for travel. Tech would help identify candidates and supervise the fellow, Billings said, but the scope of work would be up to the hospital district — a taxing entity that helps provide health services for low and mid income residents in Brewster and Presidio counties.

BBRHD Executive Director J.D. Newsom said the approximate \$120,000 expense for a two-year fellow seemed reasonable, and the district could

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Marfa residents face drug charges, Alpine police called to stabbing and gun standoff

By ROB D’AMICO
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MARFA AND ALPINE — Two Marfa residents were arrested last week on warrants for possession and “manufacture or delivery” of drugs, while the City of Alpine Police arrested individuals in a stabbing incident and a gun standoff last week.

Last Thursday, March 21, Marfa police arrested Brenda Jo Garcia of Marfa on warrants for possession and manufacture or delivery of cocaine, both felonies. She was released from Presidio County Jail on Friday with bonds totaling \$55,000. On Friday, police arrested Chantella Brimhall of Marfa on warrants for possession of and manufacture or delivery of methamphetamine. The possession charges for Brimhall were for a “drug-free zone,” within 1,000 feet of a playground. Brimhall was being held in Presidio County Jail as of Wednesday afternoon on bonds totaling \$70,000.

All charges were announced in a press release on the Marfa Police Department’s Facebook page, which also carried the following statement: “The Marfa Police Department would like to express to the community that the use and or delivery of narcotics is not welcome in this community.”

Marfa Police Chief Gilberto Carrillo said Wednesday that the arrests were not connected, but that both were the result of months-long investigations. Search warrants of the individual’s houses resulted in the discovery of the actual drugs, which were in significant enough quantities to substantiate a charge with intent to deliver, he said.

Carrillo added that he wants Marfa residents to know that they can come to the police department at any time with information on drug distribution and their identities will remain anonymous.

Early Wednesday morning, March 20, Alpine Police Department officers responded to a call at the 400 block of West Sul Ross Avenue where they found 27-year-old, Alvaro H. Luna, 27 of Alpine, with two stab wounds, according to Alpine Police Captain Felipe Fierro Jr. He was treated at the scene, transported to Big Bend Regional Medical Center and airlifted to another hospital.

Fierro said the victim identified the attackers and police located them at a residence in the 600 block of West Sul Ross Avenue. There police arrested Alpine residents Alex Almada, 31, and his mother, Jeanne Lewis, 56, for aggravated assault with a deadly weapon, a second-degree felony. Lewis was held in Brewster County Jail on a \$20,000 bond before being released Wednesday on a personal recognizance bond, and Almada was released on a personal recognizance bond.

Last Thursday evening, March 21, 2024, at approximately 9:17 pm, Alpine Police Department officers responded to a call of possible shots fired around the 1300 block of W. Murphy Street, Fierro said. Contact was made with a suspect — Jose Angel Rodriguez of Alpine — who “became uncooperative” with officers and then “brandished a firearm and retreated into his residence,” he said.

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Cemetario del Barrio de los Lipanes

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Photo by Hannah Gentiles

Several people participated in the Sunrise Prayer Community Walk at the Presidio Sandhills on Saturday. They followed along the designated paths through the steep sand mounds as the sun began to rise, giving gratitude for the day. The prayer walk, hosted by The People of La Junta for Preservation was held before the Cementerio del Barrio de Los Lipanes Blessing Ceremony celebration that occurred later that same morning.

Court about transferring ownership of the land to streamline construction and ongoing stewardship. The lots underneath the cemetery had been owned by the city and county since the 1990s, but the burgeoning coalition believed they would be best managed by the descendants, via the Lipan Apache Tribe of Texas.

Hernandez has been taking care of the cemetery since she was a toddler, working with family to clean up the burial mound and leave ceremonial offerings. But there was a limit to how much they could do to protect the land, which was being paved over by the city and gradually eroding without a fence. Neighbors had also started picking up sentinelas — or sentinel stones, which are traditionally arranged on top of individual graves — to use in landscaping projects. “We weren’t able to make improvements because the city and county-owned that land,” she explained.

In October of that year, the land was finally transferred to the Lipan Apache Tribe of Texas. Chairman Bernard Bercena and Vice Chairman Robert Soto traveled to Presidio with a number of other Lipanes based in South Texas to mark the occasion.

As part of that ceremony, descendants were invited to repatriate rocks that had been returned to the site from neighboring properties. The City of Presidio and Big Bend Conservation Alliance led the charge, leading a door-knocking campaign to educate homeowners and encourage them to return the rocks to the cemetery, no questions asked.

The construction project began soon after, prefaced

by a long period of preparation to avoid damaging the sensitive site. The coalition wanted every step of the process to be Indigenous-led — and local, if possible.

Selina Martinez, a Pascua Yaqui architect from Arizona, kicked off the effort by conducting a ground-penetrating radar survey of the site. Her work confirmed what the descendants and their supporters already knew: that the mound had once been much larger and that more graves were located under the street and beneath neighboring structures.

After descendants gave feedback that they didn’t want to completely wall off the mound from the street, architect Joseph Kunkel of Indigenous-led firm MASS Design Group struck a compromise, building a walking path through the site hemmed by gabion walls — which are essentially baskets full of rocks, in a symbolic nod to the sentinela stones within the site.

The construction project was finally completed with the help of a \$650,000 grant from the Mellon Foundation, which reimbursed in-kind contributions from MASS Design Group, the Big Bend Conservation Alliance and other organizations that had donated to the effort. In the end, the project required nearly \$1 million to complete — a far cry from the \$40,000 to \$60,000 price tag envisioned at the start of the project.

The coalition hopes that the funding will stretch beyond stabilizing the ceremony for future generations. The walking path includes interpretive materials that welcome visitors, inviting visitors to interact with the site in a respectful and thoughtful way. An innovative

lighting design by artist Hisa Ota plays off of Presidio’s dramatic sunsets, creating a unique viewing experience for visitors from dusk till dawn.

The Mellon Foundation grant will also fund a study that will help local groups identify the needs of Indigenous groups across Far West Texas, hopefully inspiring other Native-led projects around the region.

Lucy Rede Franco Middle School students were the first to tour the site after a few weeks of programming across the district teaching students about Presidio’s Indigenous past. Sixth-grader Estela Merlin was moved by her visit, which included informational talks about the cemetery’s history. “The path to go see loved ones is very beautiful, and I really liked the caretakers that were telling the stories about the cemetery,” she said.

Saturday’s celebration of the monumental project began with a prayer walk led by Nakaya and Cristabell Flotte of People of La Junta for Preservation. A small group gathered in the Presidio Sandhills for the ceremony, followed by a “run/march” through the desert.

Anthropologist Nakaya Flotte has been working over the past few years to revitalize the Lipan Apache language, which was gradually whittled away by colonization and cultural assimilation. Using oral histories collected by anthropologists in the early 20th century, she has been able to piece together fragments of speech, ranging from everyday terms to ceremonial recitations. “I was the first to pray in

the language in hundreds of years,” she explained to *The Big Bend Sentinel*. “We lost our language. But spirituality involves language — you can’t learn about our spirituality without learning the language.”

The group then headed down to Market Street for the official ceremony, which included remarks, prayers and songs by descendants and representatives from the Lipan Apache tribal council. Many attendees wore ribbons distributed on invitations by Presidio ISD students — the red, yellow, white and blue design honors Indigenous prisoners of war who were held in Oklahoma during the 19th century. “The elders would look west and remember that their homeland was where the sun set,” the postcard explains.

Chairman Bernard Bercena remembered visiting the site around 2013 when it was threatened by a paving project. “In the condition that I saw this place, I could hear the ancestors weeping,” he said. “They were saying, ‘Do something.’”

A decade later, those in attendance agreed that the ancestors would be happy with all that has been done. Oscar Rodriguez, a historian and Big Bend Conservation Alliance board member, said that the repatriation and restoration of the cemetery were beyond his wildest expectations. “This is perhaps bigger than anything in my generation, the generation before us, maybe two or three generations back,” he said. “We’re very proud of this — it is a very significant milestone.”

BBNP

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many people as possible. Around 1,000 people drive through the Basin on the park’s busiest days; Chief of Interpretation Tom VandenBerg estimated that 60-70% of total visitors to the park make a pit stop at some point during their visit.

The real number crunch is parking. The Basin will lose 178 parking spaces during construction, and park staff will have to implement major restrictions: no more bicycles, pedestrian traffic or oversized vehicles (defined as anything larger than a Sprinter van) will be allowed down the road for the duration.

The new rules will be enforced by a staffed gate. Overnight campers, licensed park contractors and authorized day users will be allowed to enter and exit the park from 6 a.m. to 10 p.m. While those staying in the Basin can leave anytime, they will only be allowed to re-enter during open hours.

To accommodate some day users, the park plans to make 45 no-cost permits available on a first-come, first-serve basis. Interested visitors can drop by the Panther Junction Visitors Center to ask for a day-use permit, which they can use the following day anytime after 6 a.m.

Terlingua resident Brynn Moore, who owns the Leapin’ Lizard Guest House in Terlingua, was concerned that most of her guests wouldn’t be able to take advantage of the day permit process. Guests staying for two nights typically check in around late afternoon, making it difficult for them to get permits at the visitor center during their regular 8:30 a.m. to 5 p.m. schedule.

Tinney explained that the park wanted to implement next-day passes to accommodate people on longer day

hikes and backpacking trips who wanted to hit the trail early before the visitor center opens. “That’s one of the things we’re still talking about,” he said.

The biggest unknown is whether or not the park will also implement a shuttle service to accommodate visitors beyond the lucky 45 day-pass holders. The shuttle — a service that would be contracted out to a private company — would ideally have stops in Study Butte and within the park, allowing near-normal levels of visitation to the Basin. “This could be the one piece that falls off,” Tinney cautioned.

Terlingua residents and business owners raised a number of concerns: how would cuts to Basin visitation affect short-term rentals in the area? Would limited access during peak season push more visitors to come in the summer? If someone failed to show up for their shuttle or hand in their pass, how would the park handle that? And where would the contractors be taking their construction-related trash?

Tinney didn’t have all the answers but anticipated that the park would have more information once the project officially goes out for bid in December of this year. The goal was to gradually roll out the changes after next year’s spring break, giving visitors and staff time to adjust during the slow season.

Erin Little of Big Bend Boating and Hiking Company — a commercial outfitter that runs day hiking and backpacking trips in the Basin — was encouraged by the presentation. “When I first heard of this project some time ago, I heard that they’d just close it down completely,” she said. “To have access to this point is stunning — I’m so excited to keep it open for the businesses and for the community.”

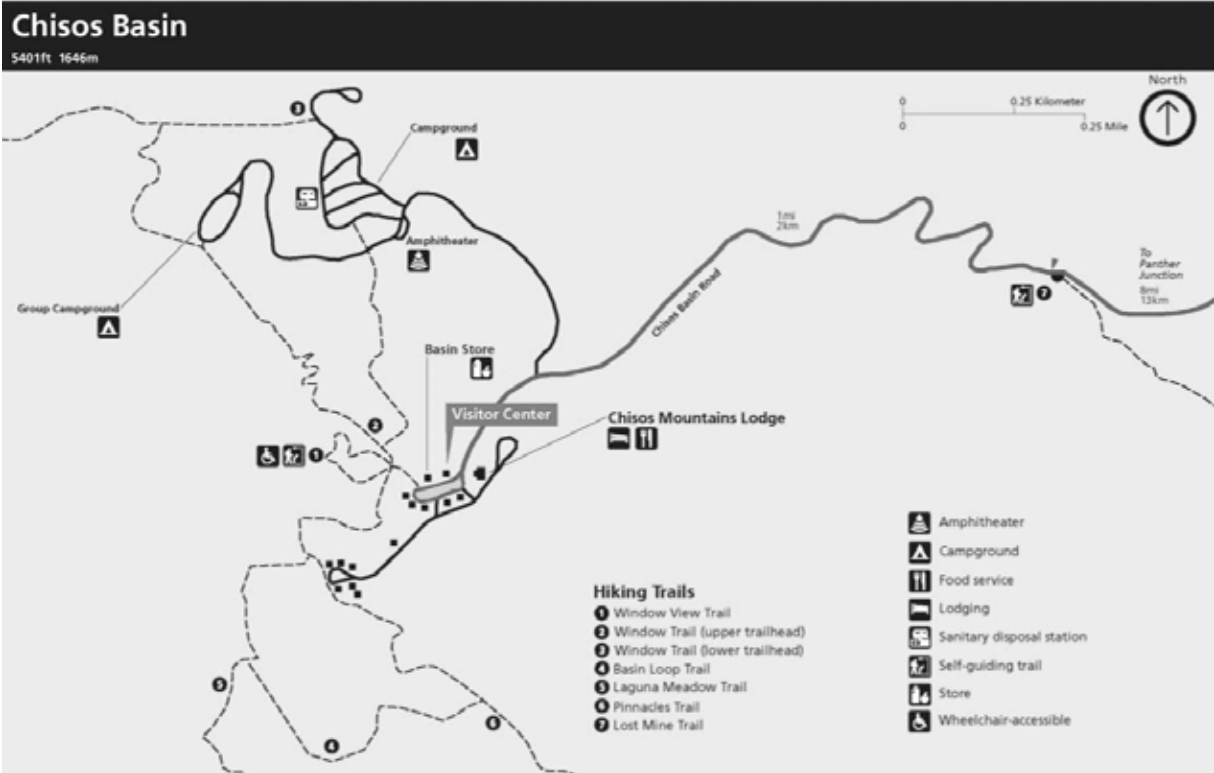


Photo courtesy of the National Park Service

A map of the Chisos Basin. During the closures, all services will be shifted to the group campground, but guests will still be able to access the entire trail system.

Hospital district

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offer either totally free or sliding scale appointments. “This is an area where [the board] can have a pretty cost effective immediate impact to our communities,” Newsom said.

The BBRHD could embed the fellow into one of their provider offices, like the Alpine, Presidio or Marfa PCHS clinics or the Big Bend Regional Medical Center. There is also the need for a mental health professional to visit local jails, where those experiencing crises may be held. The possibilities are endless, Newsom said. “One day a week they go to Brewster County Jail, the next day they go to Presidio County Jail, they’re doing a rotation in Presidio, a rotation in Terlingua.” Newsom said. “I think there’s a lot of ways we can directly impact these individuals.”

BBRHD Board Member Angela Juett asked if it was appropriate to expect a counselor in training to travel such vast distances every day or every other day. “There is so much need,” Billings said, agreeing it was a big ask.

He said he is in talks to expand Texas Tech’s mental health fellowship to include social work and psychology graduates, who also require 3,000 worth of training hours.

Previous Brewster County Judge Eleazar Cano said he is already stretched as one of two LPCs supervising fellows at PCHS, but “the more resources we have, the better.” He said he particularly supported the focus on recruiting graduates from local colleges, who may be from the area therefore more likely to stick around long term. “Being from Alpine, this is my home,” Cano said. “We have a lot of homegrown folks here, and we want to take care of our own.”

BBRHD Board Chairman Buddy Cavness and Board Member Reagen Reed said they were in support of the

initiative. Reed, the board’s treasurer, said they first need to make sure they can afford to support a fellow. Newsom said he will work with Texas Tech Health Science Center to create a proposal for the new mental health fellow, including cost and scope of work, for presentation to the board by the next regular meeting.

Also being pursued is a mental health professional to help serve Big Bend National Park employees and South Brewster County more broadly. Speaking to the “very critical need” at the hospital district meeting was Rick Gupman, Big Bend National Park deputy superintendent.

Gupman explained that just the day before, on March 20, an 80-year-old man from Alpine drove down to the park and committed suicide on Grapevine Hills Road. He expressed sympathy and sadness over the tragic event, which he said also took a toll on first responders' mental health.

“We literally have someone in crisis here in Alpine that came down to Big Bend National Park, took their life,” Gupman said. “We spent our entire day yesterday dealing with that, and today we're dealing with the mental health of those officers and individuals who went out on that scene.” He said the park has existing partnerships with organizations that allow them to get emergency assistance for employees, but there are no long-term mental health opportunities.

The remote national park is home to around 250 individuals, around half of which work for concessionaire Aramark. The employees — some of which are international — are picked up at the airport and immediately transported to the national park, meaning most do not have their own vehicles, Gupman said.

The closest mental health resources are located in Alpine, nearly two hours away, or online. But Gupman

is pushing for an in-person counselor, which he argued would allow South County residents to develop a more meaningful, lasting relationship with a therapist they can connect with face to face, as opposed to a series of brief online sessions. “We provide six sessions and that's it, you're literally done and you're not passed off to another healthcare professional,” Gupman said. “Your therapy is over.”

Gupman said beyond what is included with employee insurance, the federal park service is not likely to funnel additional resources into mental health services for park employees, and that is why he is seeking outside help. “Officially, the answer for the National Park Service is we provide mental health services through the employee assistance program, so we don't expend any additional dollars on that,” Gupman said.

BBRHD Board Member Valynda Henington asked whether Aramark had been contacted regarding a potential collaboration, to which Gupman said no. In a follow up with The Big Bend Sentinel, Gupman clarified that Aramark employees are not eligible for the same employee benefits as federal parks staff, and he was not sure what their employee assistance program was like.

Aramark did not respond to a request for comment about mental healthcare coverage for its Big Bend National Park employees.

Gupman said ideally any new mental health services would be offered for free for the greater park community, which includes family members and employees of NPS, Aramark, Border Patrol, San Vicente ISD, Big Bend Natural History Association and the U.S. Postal Service, as well as the surrounding areas of Terlingua, Lajitas, Big Bend Ranch State Park and more.

Dr. Barbara Tucker, dean of college education and professional studies at Sul Ross State University, said

the need for mental health resources in the national park is “significant and immediate” and seems like a separate role in addition to a mental health fellow for the BBRHD.

She located an LPC colleague from the Dallas area willing to offer telehealth and some “intermittent, occasional in-person” services for national park employees. The candidate is Donna Wallace, a Sul Ross graduate who used to live in the park and is familiar with the area, traveling back often.

Two potential new mental healthcare providers for the region aside, Brewster County Judge Greg Henington wondered whether leaders “ought to dream a little bigger” pooling together resources and searching for ways to create an endowment for a more robust, permanent mental health entity.

PCHS Chief Executive Officer Linda Molinar said one of the issues she deals with is the fact that insurance companies will not pay for patients to see LPCs in training unless an LPC supervisor is in the room.

Marfa resident David Marwitz recommended local political leaders approach state representatives for support on mental healthcare initiatives, stating any potential new bills could require insurance companies to pay for LPCA visits in counties with populations less than 10,000.

Presidio County Judge Joe Portillo expressed excitement about increasing mental health services, which he noted were particularly needed in Presidio with military and Border Patrol veterans. He said he is hopeful they can win support from state legislators. “For the first time in probably the last two sessions I’ve seen them have more of an appetite for mental health,” Portillo said. “I’ve started to see them make investments.”

Crime

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Fierro said the situation was tense for about 10 minutes in a standoff between officers and Rodríguez, who refused to come out, but officers eventually were able to take him into custody. He was booked on

charges of aggravated assault with a deadly weapon, a second-degree felony, and terroristic threat towards a peace officer, a state-jail felony, and was being held in Brewster County Jail as of Wednesday afternoon on \$20,000 in bonds.

Search for new Marfa School Board member wraps with one applicant

By MARY CANTRELL
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MARFA — The search for a new Marfa ISD School Board member, following the resignation of Ernie Villarreal, wrapped last week with one applicant stepping forth, Genie Wright.

The Monday school board meeting where trustees were slated to review board applicants and fill the position was canceled. A rescheduled date has yet to be announced.

Wright told *The Big Bend Sentinel* she had not yet been contracted by the district regarding her letter of

interest. She said her qualifications include a bachelor’s and master’s degree in education, a law degree, teaching experience and Spanish fluency.

Wright used to work as a sitting judge in Bexar County and now acts as a visiting judge. She said she has been a full-time Marfa resident for the past four years and decided to apply to join the board because she thinks, with her experience, she could be an asset.

“I think I have a skillset that I can offer them,” Wright said. “I’m not here to tell everybody to change or tell them what to do. I'm here to work with them. I'm here to provide my expertise on certain matters.”

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Addressing mental health

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Brian noted how he still can't shake how different he is than the brother he loved so much. "I still joke to this day, if I died tomorrow, the only people five years from now that will be talking about me are my immediate family. I've got some buddies here and there, don't get me wrong. But I certainly have not had the same impact on the world as my little brother did."

But Brian, now 41, is remembering Greg fondly today. Greg is gone.

like Marfa with only 1,800 people. "Every single one of those people were people who were known to other people, had families and friends," he said.

A greater need

It's long been recognized that the isolation of many communities in the Big Bend — while providing beauty and sometimes peaceful living — comes with a drawback of limited resources for healthcare. With a hospital district and new

Forbes magazine ranked Texas as the worst state in the nation for mental health services. Much of the problem stems from not only limited access to services and a shortage of providers, but the cost to individuals for services in a state that leads the nation for the uninsured. With the Texas Legislature repeatedly rejecting Medicaid expansion, it has turned its head to billions of dollars that would go to medical and mental health treatment for low-income Texans.

Newsom said the importance of mental health services has gotten significantly more attention in recent years because of mass shootings, which have provided the impetus for more state funding and nonprofit grants. "Since the shootings in Uvalde, there has been a greater focus figuring out how to improve access to mental health resources."

Mental health is often connected to substance abuse. The *Journal of the American Medical Association* reports that 37% alcohol abusers and 53% of drug abusers also have at least one serious mental illness. "If you have substance abuse in the Big Bend, there are some Alcoholics Anonymous or Narcotics Anonymous groups," Newsom said. "But there are no inpatient treatment centers. It's a real challenge." He noted that the tri-county area is part of Region 10 for the state Outreach, Screening, Assessment, Referral (OSAR) program (located in El Paso), which provides free screening to those in need of help with dependency issues, including referrals to rehabilitation center and detox facilities.

While the Legislature has rejected Medicare expansion, it has devoted more resources for mental health as a reaction to mass shootings in Texas, with a record \$11 billion in spending on mental and behavioral health programs, a 30% increase from the previous biennium. However, many school-related mental healthcare initiatives were left unpassed in favor of funding for beefing up school security. The emphasis on mental health is seen by many critics of Gov. Greg Abbott and Republican state leaders as a way to steer the conversation away from gun-access legislation and red-flag laws, which would allow law enforcement to petition judges to take away guns from those they consider a risk to themselves or others.

While suicides, mass shootings, and severe mental illness often are the tragic face of mental health, lack of treatment fuels a variety of issues — substance abuse, unemployment, school dropouts, domestic abuse and incarceration — that are costly to individuals, families and local governments.

Tri-county struggles with mental healthcare services

The tri-county area of Presidio, Brewster and Jeff Davis counties are classified as "underserved" for health services overall, meaning there aren't enough medical providers for the population. The same is true for mental health providers.

The federal Health Resources and Administration agency scores counties on a variety of attributes for several health-related services. For mental health, all three counties are each classified as a Health Professional Shortage Area (HPSA). While that signals that the counties need significant improvements in providing mental healthcare, it also allows the region to apply for financial assistance and participate in programs that intend to recruit more mental healthcare providers to the area.

Counties are scored for HPSA on mental health from 1 to 25, with the higher the number indicating the greater need for providers. The scores are 17 for Presidio, 11 for Brewster, and 9 for Jeff Davis. The scores are based on the ratio of providers to the population, federal poverty levels, and the time needed to access care outside of the area. Lack of providers isn't unique to the Big Bend — 98% of Texas' 254 counties have designations as "mental health

professional shortage areas" — but the region's distance from major urban areas makes it a challenge to attract new professionals to the area.

Tri-county patient services

Access to mental and behavioral health services for the tri-county region consists of several entities — all of which assess clients for mental health needs and do referrals to licensed professional counselors (LPCs) serving the Big Bend.

PermiaCare, which started out of Midland-Odessa in 1969 as the local authority for the Texas Department of Mental Health and Mental Retardation, has since grown to serve a wide swath of counties in the Permian Basin and throughout Far West Texas. Ruiz, the Alpine PermiaCare supervisor, said clinics in Alpine and Presidio assess clients on a wide spectrum of health needs and then refer them to appropriate providers. PermiaCare relies heavily on telehealth but offers those services in their clinics and has nurse practitioners and other health professionals ready to supplement the remote consultations and work to fill prescriptions if needed.

PermiaCare has a 24-hour "Crisis Intervention/Suicide Prevention Hotline" (844-420-3964) for those "experiencing emotional crisis situations, including possible suicide." The hotline is answered by staff trained in crisis assistance, and "staff is available to provide face-to-face intervention including mobile assessments by our Mobile Crisis Outreach Teams (MCOT) and emergency hospitalization."

PermiaCare started a new initiative this summer to help coordinate resources for dependency. "We are the link for those needing help with substance abuse, whether it's alcohol or narcotics or illegal drugs," said Ruby Losoya, the Alpine Rural Border Intervention team lead for PermiaCare. "If it's stemming from maybe a mental issue, we can do a referral to try to get them some help [for what] may be causing them to lean more towards substance abuse. There's always a route to address the problem, and we want to help them find it."

Preventative Health Care Services (PCHS) is a federally funded nonprofit that concentrates on preventative care, but provides a variety of other services — maintaining clinics in Marfa, Presidio and Alpine. Three years ago, PCHS began a Behavioral Health Program, and it now refers adult and children clients to two LPCs that provide in-person and remote services at those clinics. PCHS is designed to never turn anyone away for lack of money and accepts Medicaid and Medicare along with sliding-scale fees for those not covered under those programs.

Marfa Country Clinic founder Dr. Don Culbertson started a new partnership in November with **Agno Health**, which promotes a "collaborative care model" that seeks to close the gap between healthcare providers and mental healthcare practitioners. "Primary care providers are usually their first front line mental healthcare," said Dr. Jane Himmelvo, Agno Health founder and chief executive. "Patients are sitting there talking to their doctor who is asking, 'How are you eating? how you doing?'" The doctor can then ask about everything from anxiety and depression to eating disorders and work with Agno Health to find the right person to help them — whether that's a counselor or psychiatrist or other mental healthcare specialist, she said.

Himmelvo said the idea is then to break down any walls between mental and physical healthcare so that the doctor is in constant communication about their patients' mental health treatment and any medications they may be taking. Marfa Country Clinic also makes a space available for remote counseling. She said Agno Health also has a poster advertising the services at the Marfa Public

Library and that a sliding scale flat fee is available for those who face financial hardships.

The Family Crisis Center of the Big Bend refers clients to two LPCs under contract to provide free in-person and remote services, although the number of sessions is limited to 12 to 15 before the center refers the clients to PermiaCare. The center's mission is to empower people traumatized by abuse and provide safety for those who have suffered domestic violence, sexual assault, violent crime and dating violence, and it provides walk-in and scheduled services along with two emergency shelters.

"With abuse, especially emotional and psychological abuse, the whole point of it is to wear down a person's self esteem," said Gina Wilcox, a center program director based in Alpine. Wilcox said they refer clients to LPCs to teach clients "healthy coping skills to deal with trauma, grief and loss and to regain a positive sense of self esteem and self worth. "And most of our clients need that rebuilding of their self esteem. Because it's just been destroyed, and they don't believe they're good for anything or anybody. They need help getting out of that hole."

Wilcox said providing mental health services to Terlingua continues to be a challenge for the center because it has no LPC providers in the area and its facility is limited for remote sessions because it lacks privacy. Trying to find time for their contracted LPCs to help clients has been a continuing problem, she said, and the center is looking to contract another provider.

The Marathon Health Center is a good example of how telehealth can work to provide remote mental health therapy that goes beyond someone simply trying to access a provider through their phone or computer. "We have a dedicated room in the health center here that we call the 'Zoom Room,'" said Daniel Gallo, the center's manager. "It's available for community members

because there's such a need for mental healthcare providers that I just couldn't say 'no' to a request to do some in-person work here." Hanesworth volunteers for in-person counseling one day a week at the Marathon Health Clinic. "I have someone from Fort Davis, someone from Alpine, and a few people from Marathon Center that come and see me there."

The Big Bend does not have any inpatient facilities, which are needed for more significant treatment for patients with psychosis, those at risk for suicide, and other situations that require individuals to be treated in a safe, secure environment. Those patients are usually placed in El Paso, Midland-Odessa, Big Spring, San Angelo and other larger cities throughout West Texas, depending on availability. However, grants from the Permian Strategic Partnership and other foundations, along with state money, have funded a new Permian Basin Behavioral Health Center in Midland-Odessa — with more than 100 beds — planned to open in 2025. The facility will accept patients from the Big Bend if space is available.

Professionals needed

While the isolation many suffered through in the pandemic was a root cause of many more people needing mental health services, it also spurred an incredible growth in online opportunities for therapy and treatment. But there's still a huge need for professionals to staff those online services, and remote sessions don't work well for some people, so even more providers are needed on the ground in shortage areas.

After PCHS began its Behavioral Health Care program, it began looking for ways to increase the number of mental health professionals in the Big Bend, said Dr. Adrian Billings, who serves as the chief medical officer for PCHS and an associate dean of rural and community engagement at the Texas Tech Health Science Center. Billings

“He was starting to read. He was starting to meditate. All great things, but all individual activities that don't involve vulnerability, that don't involve communicating your feelings and what's going on.”

who do remote counseling if they want to have a space where they're not at home. They can come and log in and link up with their personal therapist or other providers. It's free of charge."

Jeff Davis County may have more services available soon if it gets the \$6.5 million in funding it's seeking from a federal grant for a local "federally qualified health center" in Fort Davis. Although primarily a preventative care clinic, officials said they also would look at providing mental healthcare services.

Private practice

Only a handful of private LPC providers work out of the Big Bend, with most offering only online sessions. (Note that providers are often licensed with other designations, such as licensed chemical dependency counselor and licensed clinical social worker, as well as specialties like marriage counseling, grief counseling and family therapy.)

Carolyn Hanesworth and her husband moved to Alpine last year after living in New York City the past 15 years. As a licensed clinical social worker, she consults remotely on homeless issues and provides online therapy. "But when I got here, I knew that I'd want to contribute to the community in some way," she said. "And I thought I'd volunteer,

helped launch a collaborative partnership with master's degree programs for LPCs at Sul Ross State University and University of Texas at El Paso. The partners then won a four-year Behavioral Health Workforce Education Training (BHWET) grant from the federal government. The grant, which is renewable, pays a stipend to 24 student "fellows" seeking a master's degree in licensed professional counseling who will then work in areas from El Paso to the Big Bend, including possible placement at the PCHS clinics in Alpine, Marfa and Presidio. (See page 1 for more on a new mental health fellow for the hospital district and provider for south brewster county.)

Billings said the students work alongside the clinic primary care providers in the beginning. "When these LPC students graduate, they're almost like a medical student. They have to do 3,000 hours under supervision." While under supervision, they are called LPC associates, and "once they're done with these 3,000 hours of supervision, which usually takes 18 to 24 months, then they are completely independent. And so the whole idea of this kind of pathway is to bring these students in when they're students and support them with a BHWET grant, and then

(Continued on page 5)



Illustration by Crowcrumbs

Greg Enlow

He was found dead at age 33 at his Marfa home in March of 2019, a victim of suicide.

As a Marfa musician, Presidio County Commissioner David Beebe — who served as justice of the peace at the time — knew Greg from playing with him at music events around town and said he was heartbroken to have to handle his official duties at the scene of his death. "It just caught everybody by surprise," Beebe said, not because there were no warning signs from Greg, he said, but because suicide is fairly uncommon in Presidio County and can have a more profound impact on small communities.

Brian said Greg had ongoing mental health issues, including depression and suicidal thoughts at times, and he struggled with substance abuse at several points in his life and had undergone a variety of both medical treatments and counseling. Greg eventually experienced severe emotional distress in Marfa and was trying to find ways to cope with it, he said.

Most anguishing for Brian is that he believes that creative people like Greg are more prone to suicide because of the intensity of the emotion they put into their work. Studies vary in the likelihood of suicide for artists, but many do note a much higher rate than the general public. Greg's charm and likability also may have masked his troubles to others, he said.

Beebe said he wondered if Greg, despite his natural way of connecting with people, may have felt isolated, like so many others feel out here in a small town, perhaps not knowing where to get help or feeling lost. "I don't know for sure," he said, "but I do want to make sure that people know help is available."

The suicide rate for the U.S. hovered around 14 per 100,000 individuals from 2015-2022 (as did the rate in Texas), and Presidio County averaged under 10 suicides per 100,000. Texas Department of Health and Human Services does not report data on suicides for counties if the number is below 10 per year for privacy reasons, and the tri-county area falls in that category. Beebe said, in his experience, most of the suicide deaths he encountered were with people who had been known to have significant mental health issues and often related substance abuse problems.

Beebe said statistics don't reveal the impact of suicides, where even one seems devastating in a town

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when they graduate, we bring them on board as a mental health fellow from Texas Tech and then when they finish that supervision, we then retain them in these underserved areas."

Another significant benefit of the grant program, Billings said, is integrating the LPC students with the health clinics to help identify patients — who while seeking physical health care — may need mental health services. A PCHS federal grant for indigent care requires that the clinics do depression and anxiety screening periodically for all patients. “They come to see you because they have a cold or they have hypertension, but they also have comorbidities of behavioral health issues that if you don’t ask about it, they often don’t bring it up. So, it’s so important to screen for it. And then from the provider perspective, it’s nice to have another healthcare professional on your team like a licensed professional counselor that can help with the behavioral health issues.”

“One of the things we learned from the pandemic is the impact of social isolation on the need for mental health resources.”

The Texas Legislature passed a bill last spring that provides repayment of school loans for students who become mental health professionals and meet certain requirements — such as working in a Health Professional Shortage Area.

While it’s clear that building a significant workforce of mental health professionals in the Big Bend will be a long-term process, the recent grant funding and additional initiatives launched by local healthcare organizations and the Legislature are providing a more solid foundation for progress.

Despite the opportunities developing for more mental

healthcare professionals and resources in the Big Bend, that current situation is still unacceptable to providers like Wilcox at the Family Crisis Center. Currently there are numerous entryways for people to get referrals for help, but a bottleneck when they actually try to get that help — especially clients needing bilingual services. “We desperately need more Spanish-speaking counselors,” she said. “And sometimes no one is available or it’s hard to find a time with someone.”

There’s also a gap, she said, between people that qualify for free or sliding-scale care at area services and those that don’t qualify but can’t afford counseling. “Counselors are expensive,” she said. “If you don’t have an insurance plan that includes counseling, it’s out of reach for a lot of people.”

Encouraging those struggling to reach out

All of the area providers noted that outreach to the community is critical regardless of how many resources are available, since many people struggling with mental health need encouragement to get the help they need.

Brian Enlow said his brother Greg did reach out to him in the weeks before his suicide, but he wasn’t sure if he sought any other help when he encouraged him to do so. Brian said Greg realized things were “spiraling out of control” in his life and that he needed to work on his wellness, which included cutting back or quitting drinking. “He was starting to read,” Brian said. “He was starting to meditate. All great things, but all individual activities that don’t involve vulnerability, that don’t involve communicating your feelings and what’s going on. I encouraged him to continue doing all of those things. But if he had a chance, find a group, regardless of the type of group, and try to use that as much as you can.”

Brian said Greg seemed to be on the right track, but in hindsight, he wasn’t. “He was doing all the things that people who are in severe distress should do, and it would probably be enough for most people. But in the severe distress that he was in, it obviously wasn’t enough.”

Note: This is the first in a series of articles on mental healthcare funded by the Presidio County Community Fund. Check back next issue for more articles.

Mental Health Resources

Big Bend Regional Medical Center in Alpine — Senior Solutions

432-837-0455

The hospital contracts with the Senior Life Solutions program that offers psychiatry sessions and remote counseling for seniors as part of an overall wellness program.

The Big Bend Regional Hospital District

432-837-7051

The district, which primarily is intended to provide healthcare to indigent and low-income residents, also refers patients to mental health counseling services to eligible clients through its Big Bend Health Medical Program, and it administers the Presidio-Brewster County Indigent Healthcare Program.

The Family Crisis Center of the Big Bend

Alpine: 432-837-7254
Presidio 432-229-4297
Terlingua 432-371-3147

The Crisis Center refers clients to two LPCs under contract to provide free in-person and remote services.

Marathon Health Center

432-244-8446

The Marathon Health Clinic’s “Zoom Room” is available for community members who do remote counseling if they want to have a space where they’re not at home.

PermiaCare

Alpine and Presidio
844-420-3964

PermiaCare assess clients on a wide spectrum of health needs for referrals to appropriate providers.

PermiaCare is available to host a free “mental health first aid” training course for school districts, law enforcement, medical providers and other private entities. For more information, visit permiaicare.org/mental-health-first-aid-training/

Preventive Care Health Services (PCHS)

Family Health Services of Alpine: 432-837-4555
Marfa Community Health Clinic: 432-729-1800
Presidio County Medical Clinic: 432-229-3030

PCHS is a federally-funded nonprofit that concentrates on preventative care, but provides a variety of other services such as a Behavioral Health Program, and it now refers adult and children clients to two licensed professional counselors. PCHS is designed to never turn anyone away for lack of money and accepts Medicaid and Medicare along with sliding-scale fees for those not covered under those programs.

Substance Abuse: Outreach, Screening, Assessment Referral program (OSAR)

(Contact PermiaCare: 844-420-3964)

Free screening to those in need of help with dependency issues, including referrals to rehabilitation centers and detox facilities.

Border Network for Human Rights hosts emergency presentation on SB 4

By SAM KARAS
sam@bigbendsentinel.com

PRESIDIO — Last Saturday, the Border Network for Human Rights (BNHR) — an El Paso-based nonprofit with an office in Presidio — hosted an emergency session to update the community on the controversial immigration law SB 4. The law remains temporarily blocked and can’t be enforced by the state, but Executive Director Fernando Garcia booked a last-minute trip to the Big Bend to try to educate as many community members as possible.

SB 4 is currently the subject of a lawsuit between the United States and the state of Texas. The law would make it a state crime to enter the United States illegally — a provision that the Department of Justice argues unconstitutionally disrupts the balance of power between the state and the federal government, which has traditionally enforced immigration law.

The law was originally set to take effect on March 5, but the law was blocked by District Judge David Ezra, who described it as “a slap in the face” to federal immigration policy — but correctly predicted that the case would eventually make it to the U.S. Supreme Court.

Sure enough, the case bounced from the Fifth Circuit Court of Appeals to the Supreme Court, where a series of stays issued by Justice Samuel Alito blocked the law until last Tuesday. In a whiplash-inducing series of events, the Supreme Court ruled to allow the law to take effect — citing sloppy work on the part of the Fifth Circuit — only for it to be blocked again as the lower court rushed to reenter proceedings.

Gov. Greg Abbott initially celebrated the Supreme Court ruling, but the celebration was short-lived. Still, he remained resolute in his commitment to supporting the law. “We continue to redouble and reinforce our efforts,” he tweeted. “Texas will keep taking historic action to protect our state—and our nation—from

Biden’s disastrous open border policies.”

About a month ago, BNHR held a protest in Presidio. The organization’s official stance — mirroring that of the ACLU of Texas, Las Americas Immigrant Advocacy Center and American Gateways, who are also parties in the lawsuit — is that the law is unconstitutional and unfairly targets Mexican Americans and immigrants from Latin America.

Garcia booked his trip to Presidio to help clear up some of the confusion surrounding the lawsuit and to continue educating as many people as possible about their rights under the law.

One of Garcia’s primary concerns is that SB 4 will be carried out by local law enforcement agencies and court systems that have no experience in immigration law. “They might only get one minute of training,” he said.

He was concerned that that lack of training would lead to racial profiling, especially in counties where law enforcement officers aren’t familiar with working in minority communities. Police can make arrests if they suspect that someone has crossed the border illegally — a suspicion he said won’t extend to white Texans.

Referring to an infamous comment by former President Donald Trump, he said a lot of local police officers and sheriffs have their minds made up about Mexican Americans. “Under the law, we are all criminals and rapists,” he said.

Garcia warned the Presidians in attendance that they could be arrested for human smuggling if they were simply riding in a car with an undocumented person, whether they were aware of that person’s immigration status or not.

He encouraged everyone to study up on their constitutional rights: regardless of immigration status, everyone has the right to remain silent and the right to an attorney. Drivers are not obligated to provide any information beyond license and insurance, and passengers are not legally required to identify



Staf photo by Sam Karas

Last weekend, Fernando Garcia of the Border Network for Human Rights rushed to Presidio for an emergency session on SB 4.

themselves or provide immigration documents, Garcia said.

The law will remain blocked at least until April 3, when lawyers for the federal and state governments will

head to New Orleans for oral arguments. Until then, Garcia made his opinion on the lawsuit clear. “Texas cannot have its own immigration system — that’s illegal,” he said.

Presidio County Sheriff’s Office to pursue improvements to cybersecurity, communications

By SAM KARAS
sam@bigbendsentinel.com

PRESIDIO COUNTY — At the past two meetings of the Presidio County Commissioners Court, representatives from the sheriff’s office have pushed for a number of grants that would help beef up the county’s cybersecurity and communications systems. Officials hope that the improvements will benefit the county across the board, rather than favoring any one department.

The push for enhanced measures comes on the heels of a cybersecurity scandal faced by Brooks County — another small county near the border facing many of the same budget constraints. Brooks County was the target of a ransomware scam — a type of digital virus that required officials to pony up \$250,000 to regain access

to their online data.

Data security breaches could affect any governmental department but are particularly sensitive for offices that handle sensitive personal information — namely the justices of the peace, the sheriff’s office and to some degree, the county clerk. Online scams can also target financial departments with bank statements and other information that could leave the county’s finances vulnerable.

Mark Hannan of Nectar Computers, a company based out of Alpine, serves as official tech support for the Presidio County Sheriff’s Office, which he said has the most computers and tech equipment of any department in the county. He warned that potential cyber criminals are always a few steps ahead of even the best repair services. “You could spend millions and millions of dollars on security, but it comes down to knowing,

implementing and reacting,” he said.

Presidio County Sheriff’s Office Executive Assistant Shanna Elmore explained that she had been especially concerned about the state of the department’s tech resources since an outage over last summer’s busy Fourth of July holiday, which left the department unable to operate the county jail — among numerous other issues.

The department is in the process of drafting a grant application with an outside consultant to help fill some of those gaps.

Another technological issue the sheriff’s office has been working to rectify is radio communication between officers on patrol in the county’s most remote corners. Two radio repeaters — one on Chinati Peak and another along the river on FM 170 — have not been operational for years.

The department has been working to fulfill requirements for a grant from the state that would net \$283,000 to revamp the system. The towers will also benefit the Texas Department of Public Safety and Texas Parks and Wildlife, who will be able to share frequencies and communicate with local patrols.

These towers will serve primarily to allow state and county-level officers to communicate with each other — Customs and Border Protection operates its own system. Big Bend Sector Assistant Chief Patrol Officer Jaime Castillo explained that sheriff’s office staff can currently use Border Patrol frequencies to communicate during emergencies. “This capability is paramount in our collaborative efforts to help our local partners keep our communities safe,” he said.

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Opinion

Judd Foundation

Experience Donald Judd's art as installed within his former living and working spaces in downtown Marfa. These spaces, including his libraries and studios, allow visitors to consider his ideas for the permanent installation of art in historic buildings.

Judd Foundation is open Tuesday through Sunday and offers two distinct guided visits. For the current schedule and to book reservations please visit juddfoundation.org/marfa.

For more information please email our office at marfa@juddfoundation.org or call 432 729 4406.

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THANK YOU

I want to take this time to say thank you to everyone who helped and supported me during my campaign. I want to thank Natalia Williams, my supervisor, for believing in me for this position. I am very thankful for all of my supporters, friends, family, the whole county of presidio, and to my colleagues. I would like to thank everyone who donated to my campaign, making calls and bringing in people who needed a ride to come and vote. I am very blessed to have a special friend that drove a long way to support me with her vote while she was away for work. A big thank you to my family, whom I love so much for being at my side till the end.

Thank you Deirdre Hisler for keeping me on the right track. I am wishing you the best of luck in the runoff for Commissioner Pct. 1 (Marfa) and Pct. 2 (Presidio).

With all my love, God bless each and every one of you and thank you for your support.

Norma Valenzuela

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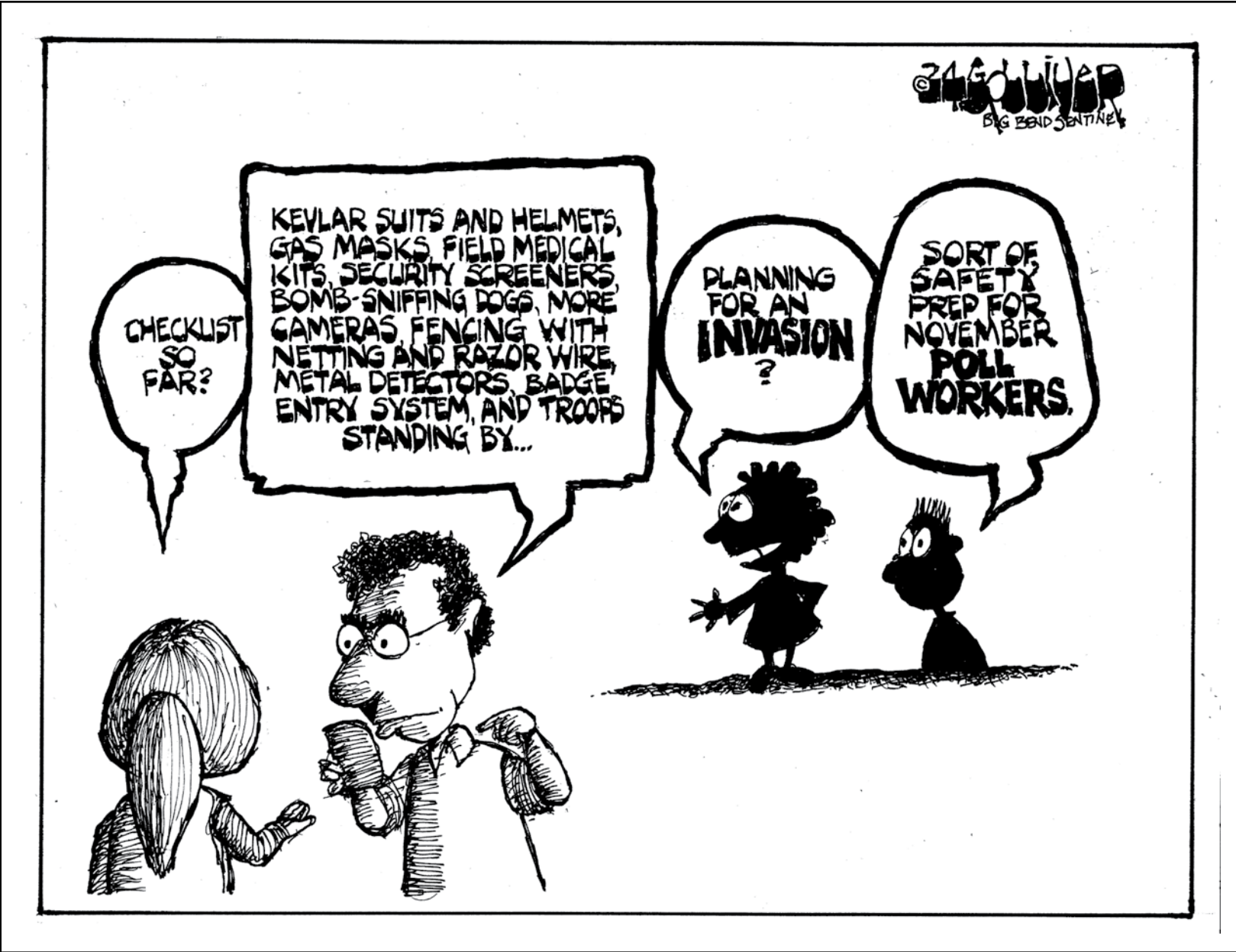
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Chinati is an art foundation created by Donald Judd and opened to the public in 1986.

Chinati is open Wednesday through Sunday. Office hours and guided tour times are seasonal. For details and reservations, please come to the Visitor Center (1 Cavalry Row) or go to chinati.org/visit.

Free entrance is available for residents of Presidio, Brewster, and Jeff Davis counties.



Community

‘Guitar in the Big Bend’ to host free concerts, classes and workshops

TRI-COUNTY — “Guitar in the Big Bend” kicks off in April featuring a free series of classical guitar concerts in Alpine and Marfa, a masterclass at Sul Ross State University and a workshop at Far West Guitars. The events occur the weekend of April 12, 13 and 14.

The featured concert artist for this year is Dragos Ilie of Romania. Concerts will also include performances by Jeremy Waldrip of Memphis, Tennessee, and Nicolas Hurt of Marfa. Ilie has performed all over the world and has won an impressive number of grand prizes in international guitar competitions (Koblenz International Festival, the Tokyo International Guitar Competition, and the Texas A&M Guitar Competition). The programs will include an eclectic section of classical guitar music from all over the world, including Alpine.

At an early age, Ilie fell in love with the instrument after listening to his father play. Soon he enrolled at the Popular School of Arts and later the National College of Arts in his native city, Iasi, Romania, with professor Marius Timpau. His dedication to the art led him to receive numerous grants for competing, performing and studying in his home country and abroad. Ilie began his studies in the United States at the Schwob School of Music at Columbus State University in the studio of composer and pedagogue Andrew Zohn. He has performed, taught masterclasses, and led workshops across the United States and Europe. He has been featured in Classical Guitar Magazine, Gendai Magazine, and Acoustic Guitar Magazine. Ilie is currently completing his doctoral studies at the University of Texas at Austin with the renowned performer, recording artist and teacher Adam Holzman.

Jeremy Waldrip, a native of Memphis, Tennessee, is an accomplished classical guitarist currently pursuing his doctoral studies under the guidance of Professor Adam Holzman at the University of Texas at Austin. Waldrip earned his Master of Music degree from the same institution in 2021, following his undergraduate studies with Dr. Stephen Mattingly at the University of Louisville. Waldrip’s international musical journey includes a transformative experience at the Accademia Musicale Chigiana in Siena, Italy, where he honed his skills in a series of masterclasses led by the esteemed Maestro Oscar Ghiglia. Waldrip's musical prowess has graced stages worldwide; he participated in a captivating tour of France with the U.S. Guitar Orchestra and performed at the esteemed Guitar Art Festival in Belgrade, Serbia, as part of the World Guitar Orchestra.

Waldrip has earned accolades in over 20 competitions, securing prestigious prizes at notable events such as the Southern Guitar Festival, Florida Guitar Festival, Denver Guitar Festival, and the CSU Guitar Symposium. His musical journey has been enriched by interactions with esteemed artists, having participated in masterclasses with luminaries such as Christopher Parkening, Sergio Assad, David Russell, Roland Dyens, Lily Afshar, and other renowned musicians.

Nicolas Hurt was born and raised in Austin. Hurt began his study of music in the Austin tradition of electric blues guitar à la Stevie Ray Vaughn and T-Bone Walker. In his teens, Hurt began to study the classical guitar with Dr. Kim Perlak and Dr. Klondike Steadman. In 2006 Hurt was accepted into the renowned pedagogue professor Adam Holzman’s studio at the University of Texas at Austin. During his studies at the University of Texas, Hurt performed at festivals in Cervo, Italy (2007) and Morelia, Mexico (2008). Hurt also performed and taught at the National Guitar Workshop in New Milford, Connecticut, for several years and received a certificate for the Teacher Training Program in 2008. In 2008 Hurt began a teaching studio at the Orpheus Academy of Music in Austin.

Along with his wife, artist Janelle Borsberry, Hurt moved to Marfa, Texas, in 2017. In Marfa, Hurt began a teaching studio and a radio show called “In Tune” on Marfa Public Radio, West Texas’ source for NPR. In 2022 Hurt released a performance video of Heitor Villa-Lobo’s “Five Preludes”



Photo by Candice Ghai

Dragos Ilie

that was featured in the Fretboard Journal. In 2022 Hurt commissioned new works for the solo guitar from friends and composers in Austin. The resulting performance documentary short film, *Serenade I Miss You*, premiered in April of 2023 at the Rosette through Austin Classical Guitar.

Guitar in the Big Bend events (all free):

Friday, April 12
Welcome Reception and Workshop
Far West Guitars, 6 p.m.

Saturday, April 13
Dragos Ilie Masterclass
Sul Ross State University
FAB 200 (Fine Arts Building), Noon to 2 p.m.

Alpine Concert: Dragos Ilie, Nicolas Hurt
Museum of the Big Bend, 6 p.m.

Sunday, April 14
Marfa Concert: Dragos Ilie, Jeremy Waldrip
First Presbyterian Church, 7 p.m.

More information about all the performers can be found at: <https://visitalpinetx.com/guitar-in-the-big-bend/>



Photo by Photo by Wil Kelly

Nicolas Hurt



Photo by Candice Ghai

Jeremy Waldrip

FROM THE ARCHIVES



Photo by and courtesy of Albert Miller

Kirby Flippen and Red Brown were on hand Sunday to watch the Valentine twister as it appeared between the Clay Miller Ranch and U.S. 90, south toward the Sierra Vieja.

Tornados touch down in Jeff Davis County on Sunday

By MEGAN WILDE
May 3, 2007

Note: This story has been edited for length.

FAR WEST TEXAS — A weekend rain storm brought at least two tornados through Jeff Davis County on Sunday.

The first tornado hit ground at 11:30 a.m. about three miles west of Valentine, according to rancher and Jeff Davis County Commissioner Albert Miller. Miller and some other men were working inside a shop on the west side of town when they heard a roaring sound outside. "It sounded much like a train, way in the distance, that you could just barely hear on a good still day," Miller said.

They went outside and saw a funnel cloud south of Highway 90. "We went out the back door, and saw it almost due west of Valentine. It was very distinct," he said. The twister caused minimal damage during the 10 to 15 minutes it was on the ground.

"It picked up a bush and weeds and hung them on our telephone line," Miller said. "But it didn't tear anything up as far as I know." When the funnel disintegrated, Miller said the cloud above moved on to the northeast.

Minutes later, at 11:39 a.m., another tornado was spotted just southwest of Fort Davis, near the intersection of highways 17 and 166. Jeff Davis County Fire Chief Kelly Bryan first saw the twister when it was already fully formed over Dolores Mountain. "I thought it was moving straight into town," he said. He went into Pop's Grill to alert the lunch crowd. "They were all sitting there nonchalantly," he said, and everyone was surprised when he told them a tornado was outside.

Presidio County Emergency Management Coordinator Nancy Francis watched the tornado from outside the Village Farms greenhouse south of Fort Davis. "It was awesome. We've never seen anything like that," she said. "Then as it was getting closer to us we were like, 'Oh no, there's glass all over here.'"

From the restaurant parking lot, the fire chief saw the funnel move northwest across Highway 17 and along the western side of Jeff Davis County Park, behind Fort Davis Veterinary Services. The funnel then appeared to break up at the edge of Davis Mountains State Park. "Once it got into the foothills, it never could get reorganized," he said. "If it had stayed in the flats, I think we could have been in trou-ble."

At 11:50 a.m., Bryan called Davis Mountains State Park Complex Manager David Bischofhausen to tell him there was a tornado approaching the park. Bischofhausen was at his park residence near Highway 118 at the time. "I never heard the train sound, but I heard a very large wind sound," said the park manager, who now estimates the twister came within 80 yards of his house. Lightning had knocked out their radio tower earlier in the day, so park communication was limited. "We notified the lodge and notified our customers and park hosts," he said. "We only had just a couple of minutes."

Rebecca Gould with the National Weather Service Forecast Office in Midland said the tornado appeared to be several hundred yards wide in one image. "It was a pretty good sized tornado," she said.

Jeff Davis County Emergency Management Coordinator Mike Ward said the tornado was not as powerful as it looked. "I've seen dust devils that had more power than these tornadoes," he said. "With all the moisture in the air, it made them look really menacing, but they weren't."

The tornado was still strong enough to uproot large juniper trees at the state park, Bischofhausen said



Photo by Village Farms Employee Jose Cruz

Village Farms employees watch one of several tornados that were spotted in the Fort Davis, Valentine area Sunday

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PAPER

THE MARFA CHAMBER OF
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EGG
HUNT**

**SUNDAY
MARCH 31, 2024
12PM-2:30PM**

JOIN US FOR A
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EGG HUNT AND
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ENJOY A VISIT WITH
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SEE YOU THERE!

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Marfa ISD christens new track and field facilities
Photos by Dariela Munoz, Giselle Torres and Kily Ortiz



Josaul Baeza



Natasha Labrado



Maryfer Martinez and coach Priscilla Serrano



Austin McGary and Tayvian Valenzuela



Lucinda Ontiveros, Glenn Ontiveros and Sara Ontiveros



From right, Alyssa Harden, Liliana Zubia and Alberto Salgado



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Benefits Counseling Program

The Rio Grande Area Agency on Aging provides certified Benefits Counselors to answer questions about Medicare, eligibility criteria and application assistance for public entitlements. This program serves Medicare beneficiaries of any age.

Whether you are new to Medicare or not, we know that Medicare can be complicated. The State Health Insurance Assistance Programs (SHIPs) provide local, in-depth, and objective insurance counseling and assistance to Medicare eligible individuals, their families and caregivers.



Benefits Counselors of the Rio Grande Area Agency on Aging, a division of the Rio Grande Council of Governments, are certified under the Health Information Counseling Advocacy Program (HICAP) and the State Health Insurance Assistance Program (SHIP) of Texas in order to provide unbiased information to help Medicare Beneficiaries make an informed decision about their health coverage.

Call us at
(915) 533-0998 or Toll Free at 1-800-333-7082

Don't forget to ask us about the Medicare Savings Program and the Low-Income Subsidy Assistance Program. If eligible, these programs can help to lower your out-of-pocket Medicare costs.



NOTICE OF RATE CHANGE REQUEST

AEP Texas Inc. (AEP Texas) publishes this notice that on February 29, 2024, AEP Texas filed with the Public Utility Commission of Texas (Commission) its Petition and Statement of Intent to Change Rates (the Petition), a copy of which is kept at AEP Texas’ office at 400 W. 15th Street, Suite 1500, Austin, Texas, 78701. The Petition has been assigned Docket No. 56165. This notice is being published in accordance with 16 Tex. Admin. Code § 22.51(a)(1).

AEP Texas’ Petition is based on the system-wide financial results for a 12-month test year ending on September 30, 2023, adjusted for known and measurable changes. Related to its distribution cost of service, the Company requests a rate increase of approximately \$100.4 million over its adjusted test year revenues. This net change is a 13.1% increase over net present distribution revenues. When expected annualized Transmission Cost Recovery Factor revenues are included in the comparison to present revenues, the net increase to distribution cost-of-service is 8.4%. Related to its transmission cost of service, the Company requests a rate increase of \$63.1 million above its adjusted test year revenues, an increase of 9.29%.

In addition to new rates, AEP Texas requests a prudence determination on all capital investment made to its system for the period from January 1, 2019, through September 30, 2023.

AEP Texas’ Petition requests Commission approval to continue its offering of facilities rental services, as described in tariff schedules 6.1.2.3.6, 6.1.3.3.6, and 6.1.4.3.6, and a good-cause exception to the Commission’s rule requiring AEP Texas to obtain the Commission’s approval to provide these services every three years. If approved, the requested good-cause exception will allow the Company to extend the effective date of its existing tariff schedules through the effective date of the tariffs approved in its next comprehensive rate case.

Finally, AEP Texas requests recovery of its reasonable rate-case expenses associated with this proceeding and certain prior rate proceedings, including those expenses paid to reimburse municipalities for their participation.

If approved, the increased rates will be charged to AEP Texas’ direct customers, all retail electric providers (REPs) in AEP Texas’ service area, as well as the retail electric customers of those REPs. The extent to which the REPs pass along to their customers the increased retail rates is a function of the competitive market. In addition, AEP Texas’ petition affects customers taking service under the Company’s wholesale transmission rates.

AEP Texas has requested its proposed rate change become effective 35 days after the filing its Petition.

Persons who wish to intervene in or comment upon these proceedings, in Docket No. 56165, *Application of AEP Texas Inc. for Authority to Change Rates*, should notify the Commission as soon as possible, as an intervention deadline will be imposed. A request to intervene or for further information should be mailed to the Public Utility Commission of Texas, P. O. Box 13326, Austin, Texas 78711-3326. Further information may also be obtained by calling the Commission at (512) 936-7120 or (888) 782-8477. Hearing- and speech-impaired individuals with text telephones (TTY) may contact the Commission at (512) 936-7136. The deadline for intervention in the proceeding is 45 days after the date the Petition was filed with the Commission.

AVISO DE MODIFICACIÓN DE TARIFA

AEP Texas Inc. (AEP Texas) publica este aviso de que el 29 de febrero de 2024, AEP Texas presentó ante la Comisión de Servicios Públicos de Texas (Comisión) su Petición y Declaración de Intención de Cambiar las Tarifas (la Petición), una copia de la cual se encuentra en la oficina de AEP Texas en 400 W. 15th Street, Suite 1500, Austin, Texas, 78701. A la Petición se le ha asignado el Número de Expediente 56165. Este aviso se publica de conformidad con 16 Tex. Admin. Code § 22.51(a)(1).

La Petición de AEP Texas se basa en los resultados financieros de todo el sistema para un año de prueba de 12 meses que finaliza el 30 de septiembre de 2023, ajustados por cambios conocidos y medibles. En relación con su coste de servicio de distribución, la Compañía solicita un aumento de tarifas de aproximadamente \$100.4 millones de dólares sobre sus ingresos ajustados del año de prueba. Este cambio neto supone un incremento del 13.1% sobre los ingresos netos actuales de distribución. Si se incluyen los ingresos anualizados previstos del Factor de Recuperación de Costes de Transmisión en la comparación con los ingresos actuales, el aumento neto del coste del servicio de distribución es del 8,4%. En relación con el coste del servicio de transporte, la Compañía solicita una subida de tarifas de 63,1 millones de dólares por encima de los ingresos ajustados del año de referencia, lo que supone un incremento del 9,29%.

Además de las nuevas tarifas, AEP Texas solicita una determinación de prudencia sobre toda la inversión de capital realizada en su sistema para el periodo comprendido entre el 1 de enero de 2019 y el 30 de septiembre de 2023.

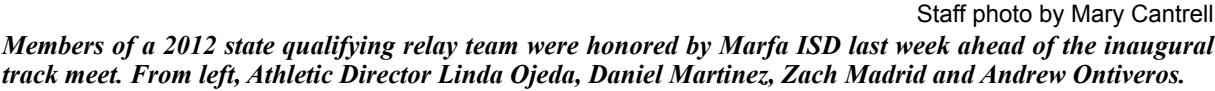
La Petición de AEP Texas solicita la aprobación de la Comisión para continuar con su oferta de servicios de alquiler de instalaciones, tal y como se describe en los programas de tarifas 6.1.2.3.6, 6.1.3.3.6 y 6.1.4.3.6, y una excepción de causa justificada a la norma de la Comisión que exige a AEP Texas obtener la aprobación de la Comisión para prestar estos servicios cada tres años. Si se aprueba, la excepción de causa justificada solicitada permitirá a la Compañía ampliar la fecha de entrada en vigor de sus programas de tarifas existentes hasta la fecha de entrada en vigor de las tarifas aprobadas en su próximo caso tarifario global.

Por último, AEP Texas solicita la recuperación de sus gastos razonables relacionados con este procedimiento y algunos procedimientos tarifarios anteriores, incluidos los gastos pagados para reembolsar a los municipios por su participación.

Si se aprueban, las tarifas incrementadas se cobrarán a los clientes directos de AEP Texas, a todos los proveedores minoristas de electricidad (REP) en el área de servicio de AEP Texas, así como a los clientes minoristas de electricidad de esos REP. La medida en que los REP repercutan a sus clientes el aumento de las tarifas minoristas depende del mercado competitivo. Además, la petición de AEP Texas afecta a los clientes que contratan el servicio según las tarifas de transmisión al por mayor de la empresa.

AEP Texas ha solicitado que el cambio de tarifa propuesta entre en vigor 35 días después de la presentación de su Petición.

Las personas que deseen intervenir o hacer comentarios sobre este procedimiento, en el expediente N° 56165, *Aplicación de AEP Texas Inc. de Autoridad para Cambiar las Tarifas*, deben notificarlo a la Comisión lo antes posible, ya que se impondrá un plazo de intervención. Las solicitudes de intervención o de información adicional deben enviarse por correo a Public Utility Commission of Texas, P. O. Box 13326, Austin, Texas 78711-3326. También puede obtenerse más información llamando a la Comisión al (512) 936-7120 o al (888) 782-8477. Las personas con discapacidad auditiva o del habla que dispongan de teléfonos de texto (TTY) pueden ponerse en contacto con la Comisión en el número (512) 936-7136. El plazo para intervenir en el procedimiento es de 45 días a partir de la fecha de presentación de la petición a la Comisión.



By MARY CANTRELL
mkcantrell@bigbendsentinel.com

“Although these five young men did not have an actual track — they ran on asphalt on a daily basis and did not have the facilities to adequately train — they made do with what they had and they still made it to the UIL state championships in Austin,” Ojeda said.

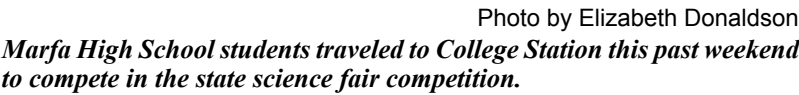
She said they continue to make the Shorthorn community proud for the tenacity they showed as high school seniors competing in track and field, but also for the prosperous lives they now lead as adults. “The men that you have become today, outstanding fathers,

He encouraged current students to keep up the hard work in athletics, one-act play competitions and take advantage of new opportunities they've been presented with. "There's something special about being here. A lot of blood, sweat and tears have been spilled on this track and on this field over the years," Madrid said. "It's exciting to see this beautiful new track and it sounds like y'all are keeping up the tradition of success."

Ojeda presented the state qualifying banners — which will hang in a place of honor in the gym as a reminder of their accomplishments as forever Shorthorns — to applause from the crowd. "These letters will be displayed in recognition of your achievements and serve as a reminder to our Shorthorns now and in the future about the history of excellence at Marfa ISD," Ojeda said.

By MARY CANTRELL
mkcantrell@bigbendsentinel.com

Though none of the teams will advance to the International Science and Engineering Fair being held in May in Los Angeles, Donaldson said she is still "so impressed with these students and how much work they put into their projects" and is proud of the way they conducted themselves at the fair.



products on pond life, said it was her first time competing in a state science fair competition, and she enjoyed the variety of projects on display and meeting other students from around the state. "Seeing all of these amazing projects really made me more interested in the sciences and motivated me," Hinojos said. "I loved meeting people from all over the state who go to private schools and live totally different lives than us. And they were all flipping nerds."

Davila said he gained experience answering questions on the fly about his solar-powered desalination project for the judges,

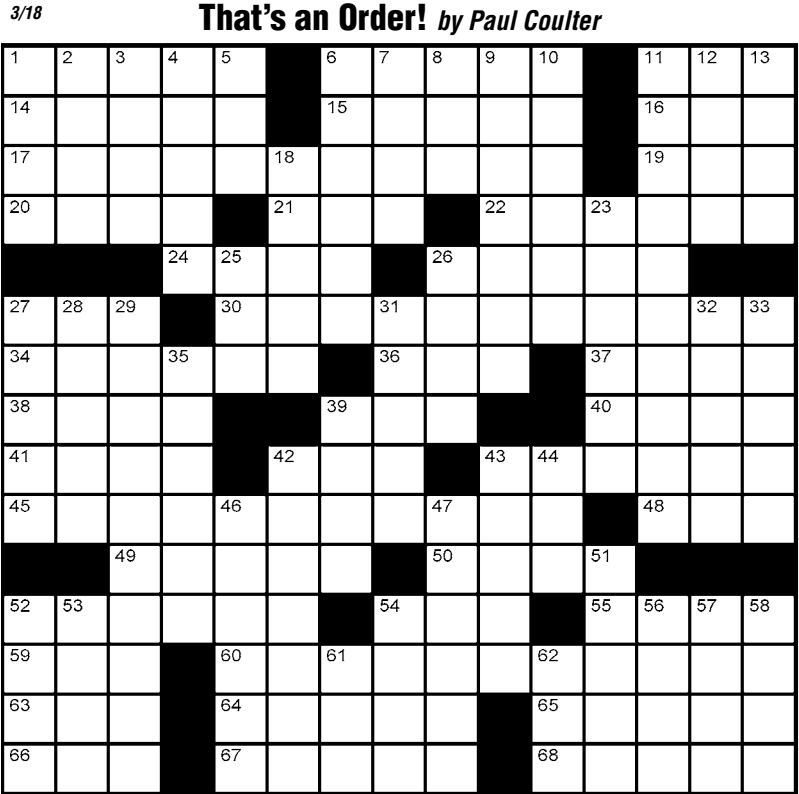
and hatched ideas for how to improve his project visually in the future. "I'm kinda disappointed that the trip is over, but I learned how I should improve my board," Davila said.

Campos said competing in the state science fair was a great learning experience and a good time with friends. He, Pippen and Huerta explored the relationship between starlight intensity and distance in their project. "I had a really fun time at the state science fair even though we couldn't make it farther," Campos said. "Okay because now we have a good idea of what to expect next year."

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FRI, MAR 30: Marfa High School Prom
TUE, APR 2: JH District Track Meet in Van Horn
WED, APR 3: HS Boys/Girls Golf, Marfa Invitational

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Rio Grande Council of Governments partners with Workforce Solutions Borderplex to launch home-based childcare program

PRESIDIO COUNTY — Rio Grande Council of Governments, in collaboration with Workforce Solutions Borderplex, is excited to announce the launch of a new initiative aimed at fostering entrepreneurship and addressing the critical need for affordable childcare options in the community.

The home-based childcare program has been specifically tailored to meet the growing demand for accessible childcare services, particularly within low- to moderate-income neighborhoods in Presidio County. By empowering individuals to start their own home-based childcare businesses, this program not only creates entrepreneurial opportunities but also serves as a vital resource in bridging the childcare gap.

"We recognize the pressing need for affordable childcare solutions in our community," said Peggy O'Brien, local governments manager at Rio Grande Council of Governments. "Through this partnership with Workforce Solutions Borderplex, we are proud to offer a comprehensive program that not only supports budding entrepreneurs but also addresses the crucial childcare needs of working parents."

The program offers participants a range of essential services, including:

- Family childcare and entrepreneurial development training
 - Assistance in navigating the licensing process and qualifying for state and county childcare reimbursement
 - Ongoing technical support and guidance
- Key resources provided through the program include access to Texas Health and Human Services, Texas State Minimum Standards for Child Care Licensing, Childcare.Texas.gov, and Workforce Solutions.
- "We believe that investing in home-based childcare providers not only benefits individual entrepreneurs but also strengthens our community as a whole," remarked Frank Leal, project specialist II at Workforce Solutions Borderplex. "By equipping individuals with the necessary tools and resources, we are not only fostering economic empowerment but also enhancing access to quality childcare services."

For more information about the home-based childcare program and how to get involved, please contact Presidio Outreach Specialist Areli Perez-Carrasco at (915) 264 5307 or arelip@riocog.org.

‘Hand to God’ opens March 29 at SRSU

ALPINE — The Sul Ross Theatre Program presents “Hand to God,” a Tony Award-nominated play by Robert Askins, opening Friday, March 29, in the Studio Theatre.

Jason is a shy teenager grieving his father’s recent death. At the request of Pastor Greg, Jason’s mother starts a Christian Puppet Ministry in their small town of Cyprus, Texas. Things go awry when Tyrone, Jason’s hand puppet, mysteriously takes on an unexpectedly shocking and foul-mouthed personality. “Hand to God” is a fast-paced, dark comedy about a puppet who teaches the humans around him what can happen when they suppress their deepest desires.

“Hand to God” premiered off-Broadway in 2011 at the Ensemble Studio Theatre before moving to Broadway in 2015, garnering multiple Tony Award nominations including Best Play, Best Director and Best Actress in a Leading Role.

“This play is about shame, desire and the importance of telling the truth no matter how painful,” said Director and Associate Professor of Communication Bret Scott. “When people lie, bad things happen. When we suppress our desires and emotions, eventually they’ll find a way out, in this case, through a puppet. In the months we’ve spent working on this show, I’ve laughed until I hurt at every rehearsal.”

“Hand to God” runs weekends March 29 to April 14 in the François Fine Arts Building Studio Theatre (room 105) on the Sul Ross campus in Alpine. Performances start Fridays and Saturdays at 7:30 p.m. and Sundays at 2 p.m. There will be no performance on Easter Sunday, March 31. General admission is \$15 and \$10 for seniors age 65 and older. Admission is free for all SRSU students, faculty and staff with valid I.D. and for all U.S. veterans.

“Hand to God” contains depictions of violence, sexual situations, strong language and mature themes that are not suitable for children under 14 years of age. Parental discretion is strongly advised.

The creative team includes Bret Scott (director/fight coordinator), Ross Fleming (scenic designer/lighting designer/technical director), Carolyn Barrientes (costume designer), Marjie Scott (producer and intimacy coordinator). “Hand to God” features Garrison Rutledge, Jenna Reyes, Cristian Sanchez, Justin Hinton and Yaritza Corona. The stage manager is Olivia Pertuso.

For tickets, visit www.bit.ly/sulross-theatre. Reservations are recommended. For more information, please call 432-837-8218.

OBITUARIES



Finley

John Howard Finley of Alpine, Texas, passed away Monday, March 25, in El Paso, Texas, at 87 years old. John was born on December 12, 1936, in Marfa, Texas, to Mae Howard and Merrit Finley. He will be forever remembered as a great husband, father, grandfather, uncle and friend.

Recalling his childhood, he described it as wild and free. He was full of stories of mischief. He often told his grandsons of days filled with horseback riding along the river near Presidio and swimming the day away — he said back then he stayed as bare-backed as his horse in case the opportunity to jump in presented itself. He recalled riding his donkey all over Marfa and later on racing cars and chasing rabbits with his friends. He got himself in plenty of trouble but somehow avoided even more. He said there were only two rules you absolutely didn't break and that was to not be late for dinner and don't sass your momma.

On January 13, 1957, he married the love of his life, Ethelene Roberts, and they embarked on a whole new adventure. Together they built a family and a legacy to be proud of. John was just as loyal to his career as he was to his family,

working for Southwestern Bell telephone and retiring after 42 years of dedicated service. He was a very outgoing man who was always glad you got to see him. He was an avid sportsman known for participating in Mountain Man Rendezvous and contest, hiking, fishing and hunting. He was heavily involved in the annual Bloys Camp Meeting and was overjoyed to share that love with his grandkids and great-grandkids.

John was very passionate and outspoken about his faith in Jesus Christ, he never missed a chance to bring a friend or family member to a prayer meeting. He and his wife were members of Grace Christian Fellowship Church in Alpine, Texas. He was preceded in death by both of his parents, his sister Marzee Mickelson, and his grandson Justin Walker.

He is survived by his wife of 67 years, Ethelene Finley; his oldest son John Finley Jr. and wife Nell of Alpine, Texas; his son James Finley and partner John Sternlicht of Anacortes, Washington; his son Ronnie Finley and wife Colleen of Nampa, Idaho; and daughter Tammy Walker of Alpine, Texas.

He had 14 grandchildren: Carlton Finley, Jeremy Sternlicht, David Sternlicht, Miles Walker, Alex Bustilos, Leslie Robinson, Naomi McElroy, Penny Walker, David Finley, Clayton Walker, Rachel Finley, Rebecca Finley, John Walker and Daniel Finley, along with their husbands, wives and children, including 19 great-grandchildren and one great-great-grandchild.

Funeral services will be held at Grace Christian Fellowship church in Alpine, Texas on March 30, 2024, at 10 a.m.

AROUND THE BIG BEND

Thu
Mar
28

Hike with a Homeless Dog

10:00am - 11:00am at Davis Mountains State Park in Fort Davis
Help a homeless dog have a great time on the trail! Join our pack at the Interpretive Center and give a rescue dog from Grand Companions of Fort Davis a fun morning on the trail. Maybe you'll find your new forever friend! More info at <https://tpwd.texas.gov/calendar/davis-mountains/hike-with-a-homeless-dog/2024-01-18>

Thursday Night Social Ride

6:00pm - 8:00pm starting at the Alpine's Visitor Center in Alpine
Join a FREE community bicycle ride! You ride at your own risk. The ride ends with a social gathering bar stop if you want to hang out post ride. Bicycle rentals are available for purchase. Please coordinate rentals by noon on the day of the event by contacting <https://stateofmindtexas.com/activities-and-adventure>.

Fri
Mar
29

Travel Talk

7:00pm - 8:30pm at the Alpine Public Library in Alpine
Teresa Ritter will talk about her seven years in South Korea working as an work as a ESL teacher. She will share her experiences of learning to live in another culture. Topics will include daily life, special events, foods, and urban design.

Hand To God Opening Night

Weekends through 4/14, Saturdays at 7:30pm and Sundays at 2:00pm at SRSU Studio Theatre in Alpine
Come see this Tony Award-nominated play by Robert Askins! For tickets, visit www.bit.ly/sulross-theatre. Reservations are recommended. For more information, please call 432-837-8218.

Sat
Mar
30

Birding for Beginners

9:00am - 10:30am at Davis Mountains State Park in Fort Davis
Come learn some basic skills for birding, then put them to use at our bird blind. More info at <https://tpwd.texas.gov/calendar/davis-mountains/birding-walk-1>

Community Adobe Making Day

10:00am - 4:00pm at the Ruidosa Church site
Friends of the Ruidosa Church is hosting a community adobe making day in Ruidosa. All are welcome. Lunch and drinks will be provided. All bricks made will go to the church restoration. Instagram: @ruidosachurch

Sun
Mar
31

Marfa Chamber of Commerce Easter Egg Hunt

12:00pm - 2:30pm on the Courthouse Lawn in Marfa
Join us for a community Easter egg hunt and cake walk! Enjoy a visit with the Easter Bunny, music, food, and face painting. See you there!

Ongoing
Weekly
Events &
Classes

Free Zumba Classes

Monday & Wednesday at 6:30pm at Marfa Public Library

Free Meditation Classes

Tuesday & Thursday at 6:00pm at Marfa Public Library

Storytime

Wednesday at 11:00am at Marfa Public Library

AA (online & sometimes in-person)
Saturday at 12:00pm at <https://tinyurl.com/y686nnw2> & sometimes in-person at Marfa Public Library

AA (in-person)

Monday & Wednesday at 6:00 p.m. at St. Paul's Episcopal Church

The Alpine Farmers Market

Saturday at 9:00am on historic Murphy Street in Alpine

Free Boxing Practice

Sunday at 10:00am at MAINTENANT in Marfa - www.maintenantmarfa.com/boxingmarfa

Note: Schedules are subject to change. Please call or visit business websites to confirm that event is happening.

Have an upcoming or weekly event?

Please submit a two sentence maximum description of your weekly event including who, what, when, and where by Tuesday at 10 am to ads@bigbendsentinel.com

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Please join us to celebrate Dave's life at
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SATURDAY APRIL 6, 2024
2-4PM
LIGHT REFRESHMENTS

Classifieds & public notices

PUBLIC NOTICES

The Marfa Parks and Recreation Board meets every third Thursday of the month at 6:00pm in the Casner Room at City Hall. The public is invited to attend.



DESTRUCTION OF SPECIAL EDUCATION RECORDS

In accordance with applicable state and federal regulations, the 588 Educational Cooperative does hereby notify you of its intent to destroy student special education records. All special education records, prior to **July 1, 2017**, will be destroyed. The 588 Educational Cooperative will destroy special education records for the following school districts:

- Alpine Independent School District
- Balmorhea Independent School District
- Culberson County-Allamore Independent School District
- Fort Davis Independent School District
- Marathon Independent School District
- Marfa Independent School District
- Presidio Independent School District
- Terlingua Common School District
- Terrell County Independent School District
- San Vicente Independent School District
- Sierra Blanca Independent School District
- Valentine Independent School District

If you would like to be provided with a copy of the records to be destroyed, please contact the 588 Educational Cooperative by telephone at 432-837-3315, by fax at 432-837-3573, or via mail at 704 W. Sul Ross Ave, Alpine, Texas, 79830.

Records will be destroyed within 90 days of the date of this notice.

JOBS

VILLAGE FARMS EMPLOYMENT OPPORTUNITY
SHIPPING / RECEIVING CLERK

Village Farms is seeking a detailed oriented individual to join our team as Shipping/Receiving Clerk for our Marfa 2 location.

Responsibilities include loading and unloading, forklift operation, preparation of shipping documents, verify deliveries, maintain warehouse and other general duties.

Requirements: Must be willing to work flexible hours including evenings, weekends and holidays, ability to work independently, verbal, and written communication skills, working knowledge of computers and forklift experience preferred. Must be able to pass a pre-employment drug screen.

Interested candidates should call (432)729-3071 Ext. 607 or fax resume to (432)375-6241.

Applications are also available at Village Farms Security Stations 3 Miles N. Hwy 17 Marfa, TX or 3 Miles S. Hwy 17 FT. Davis, TX.

PREVENTATIVE CARE HEALTH SERVICES
JOB OPPORTUNITIES
NURSING STAFF (MA, CNA) FULL TIME

Please call Sarah at 432-837-4812 for more information.

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

Please call first before arrival.



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PRESIDIO COUNTY
Judge Jose Portillo:
(432) 729-4452

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mayor@cityofmarfa.com
(432) 295-0048
Raúl Lara, Mayor Pro Tem
councilmemberlara@cityofmarfa.com
Mark Cash
councilmembercash@cityofmarfa.com
Eddie Pallarez
councilmemberpallarez@cityofmarfa.com
Mark Morrison
councilmembermorrison@cityofmarfa.com
Travis Acreman
councilmemberacreman@cityofmarfa.com

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

BREWSTER COUNTY
Judge Greg Henington:
(432) 837-2412

Alpine Mayor Catherine Eaves:
City Hall: (432) 837-3301
Email: mayor.eaves@ci.alpine.tx.us

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

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

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



Notice:

Dr. Mark Dwinell's last day of seeing patients at Preventative Care Health Services (dba) Presidio County Health Services, Inc. is April 17, 2024

His patients may:

- Remain as a patient at PCHS and be referred to another practicing provider at this clinic. Make an appointment with Dr. Patrick Daly, Dr. Emily Sliz, Tyler Zher, PA William Mason-FNP and Jose Soto-FNP today.
- Obtain your medical records from this office.
- Request a medical records transfer release to another health care provider.

Aviso:

El último día de el Dr. Mark Dwinell's de ver a los pacientes en Preventative Care Health Services (dba) Presidio County Health Services, Inc. es 17 de abril de 2024

Sus pacientes pueden:

- Permanecer como paciente en PCHS y ser cita con otro proveedor practicante en esta clínica. Haga una cita con el Dr. Patrick Daly, la Dr. Emily Sliz, Tyler Zher, PA William Mason-FNP y Jose Soto-FNP hoy.
- Obtenga sus registros médicos de esta oficina.
- Solicitar una liberación de transferencia de registros médicos a otro proveedor de atención médica.

MACHINERY MAINTENANCE MECHANIC/ WINCH OPERATOR

C Speed, LLC has an immediate opening at the CBP Marfa Aerostat Site.

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Minimum Qualifications.
Education: High school graduate.
Experience: 5 years' Diesel – Hydraulic mechanical maintenance experience.

Please contact: Cristian Montoya (432) 385-4474 or cristian.montoya@us.qinetiq.com



Share Your Thoughts About **REPRODUCTIVE HEALTH NEEDS** in the Big Bend Area

REGIONAL SURVEY

Big Bend Reproductive Coalition wants to know your opinion about reproductive health needs in the Big Bend Region. Participation in this anonymous digital survey will help to inform the services that we provide to our communities. Your voice matters, and your experience matters to us.

Use the QR Code to right or follow the link below to access the **BBRC Community Needs Assessment Survey:**

bit.ly/BBRC-Survey



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