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by order of Presidio County

Fort Davis ISD names Ralph Traynham interim superintendent

FORT DAVIS — The Fort Davis ISD School Board voted Monday to hire a new interim superintendent but left the former interim superintendent — Graydon Hicks — in limbo on paid administrative leave.

The board named Ralph Traynham, a former Fort Stockton ISD superintendent, to the post for the interim. No action was taken regarding Hicks on paid administrative leave.

Hicks said Wednesday that he is still in the dark about the exact reason for his removal on March 9 and that he did not attend the Monday meeting after hearing from his attorney that the district said he was not welcome. Hicks previously said the placement on paid administrative leave was related to him refusing to follow a board directive that would break the law. At the meeting this week the board also met in executive session with Michelle Hartmann — a deputy superintendent who heads the district’s program that partners with early childhood private schools to enroll their students for additional state funding.

In a March 28 special board meeting, trustees met in a lengthy executive session and returned to take no action, but released a statement saying that Hicks had been removed because of his inability to work with the board in three closed sessions. “Based on his continuing unwillingness to work in good faith with the board, we placed him on administrative leave,” the statement said in part. The statement also said, “We want to be clear as well that at this time the board has no knowledge of any illegal activities.”

A law firm representing the district then issued an April 9 statement, which included: “The Board has and will continue to try and work with Mr. Hicks, through his legal representatives, but in response to the requests from Mr. Hicks himself to give some answers, the Board provided the public statement at the end of the [March 28] board meeting. Since that time, Mr. Hicks had made allegations that the Board has engaged in illegal activity in both their actions and in asking Mr. Hicks to do illegal acts. The Board already stated that, at this time, the Board is unaware of any illegal activities engaged in by Mr. Hicks. Based on allegations since the meeting, the Board categorically denies that it has engaged in any illegal activities, nor has it made any requests of Mr. Hicks to do so; and as counsel for the District, we are unaware of any illegal activity requested or engaged in.”

Hicks said he still can’t do anything about his situation because he can’t break the confidentiality of executive session discussions, and the board told him he was not allowed to speak about the subject or he would be terminated. Hicks previously said the

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Illustration by crowcrumbs

A national push to develop more data centers — energy and water-intensive operations — to meet the growing demand for artificial intelligence could impact Presidio County, if a preliminary proposal for an AI data center southeast of Marfa advances.

AI data center could be coming to Marfa

Local officials are privy to the proposal but lack details on key factors like water use

By Mary Cantrell
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PRESIDIO COUNTY — Marfa grasslands, long inhabited by grazing cattle, could soon be the site of a multi-million dollar data center established to meet the growing demand for artificial intelligence if preliminary plans progress. Presidio County and City of Marfa officials have recently gleaned project details from Open Origin, the energy generation and distribution company developing the proposal.

The potential location for the large-scale operation is 80,000

acres southeast of Marfa on land containing the historic MacGuire and Antelope Springs ranches, currently owned by Texas Mountain Cattle Company, Brad Kelley’s LLC. The land sale has yet to be finalized.

Open Origin — who declined an interview request but provided a statement from CEO Wesley Powell — said it is in the “early stages” of exploring a potential data center project in Presidio County.

“While details are still emerging, our priority is to work closely with local stakeholders to ensure the project reflects community needs and values,” Powell wrote. “We

appreciate the community’s interest and look forward to engaging with the public as a next step in the process.”

An AI data center in Presidio County could have broad reaching economic, cultural and environmental implications, chief among the latter being groundwater extraction.

Open Origin is one of many companies responding to a Request for Proposals (RFP) put out by The Stargate Project, a private joint venture led by OpenAI, SoftBank and Oracle that plans to invest \$500 billion in AI infrastructure over the next four years. The ambitious

initiative to build 20 new data centers in the U.S. was announced by President Trump on his second day in office.

The widespread use of AI is increasing the nation’s electrical appetite — an AI internet search requires 10 times the amount of energy used in a traditional internet search — with some companies like Open Origin turning to renewable energy as a solution.

According to county officials, Open Origin intends to produce all of the power needed to run the AI data center on site with renewable

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City Hall shake up: Marfa city manager axed

By Mary Cantrell
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MARFA — Marfa City Council members voted to terminate City Manager Andrea Walter at a special council meeting held on Tuesday at noon, effective immediately.

Walter was given an hour to collect her things and will receive severance pay for three months. It was not immediately clear why Walter was fired. Mayor Manny Baeza declined to provide further details, stating that “we don’t discuss personnel issues.” Walter declined to comment.

Walter, Baeza, Mayor Pro Tem

Raul Lara and City Council members Eddie Pallarez, Mark Morrison and Mark Cash were present at the meeting. Councilmember Travis Acreman was absent. Council members and the mayor met with Walter in executive session, then announced she was terminated in open session.

Walter started in the city manager role on March 3, just over a month ago. She previously lived in Corpus Christi as a business manager for an architectural firm. Council voted to hire her in December 2024 after the resignation of previous City Manager Mandy Roane. Kelly

Perez, city secretary, was filling in as interim city manager and was also being considered for the role.

Baeza said council members will discuss next steps regarding the now-vacant position at their next regular City Council meeting on April 24. No interim city manager will be filling in at this time, Baeza said. But the mayor will fill in as needed.

Council also voted to make the city receptionist a full-time position and to instruct the city attorney to “clean up the language of the contract and job description for the city manager position and police

department.” Council members had first discussed the agenda item, referred to as “memo received from city attorney,” in executive session.

Baeza said, per legal advice from the city’s attorney Sylvia Firth, council voted to “clean up” outdated contract language that explains the hierarchical relationship between the city manager and the police department.

“We, in error, had the chief of police reporting to her, not reporting to her, but she could fire his employees,” Baeza said. “But in other words, it’s never been allowed,

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AEP proposes new substation on Oak Street, prompting resident backlash

By Mary Cantrell
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MARFA — American Electric Power (AEP) is proposing to build a new, much larger, substation on Oak Street, catty-corner to the existing substation’s current location, and is seeking a rezone in the process, prompting backlash from neighborhood residents who oppose the industrialization of residential property.

The project was the subject of a public hearing — the second of two

planned hearings — on Tuesday evening, where locals gathered with the city’s Planning and Zoning Commission and AEP External Affairs Manager Fred Guerrero.

Guerrero said AEP has been aware of the need for a new substation for some time and has been looking for the right piece of property to build it for a couple of years, a statement backed up by realtor Kathleen Walstrom who is representing the seller of the property and who works with AEP’s real estate representative. The substation in

question supplies the City of Marfa with power.

The existing substation’s capacity is 5 MVA (megavolt-amperes,) but it is routinely over capacity operating at 7 MVA during the peak of summer and winter, a 40% overload, according to Guerrero. No concrete data on usage was presented. In January, during an extended cold snap, Presidio County officials called on Marfa’s residents to conserve electricity to avoid blackouts.

“It’s not good for a transformer,”

Guerrero said. “You continually overload it, it degrades it, and then eventually it’s gonna go bad.”

The proposed site for the new substation — which will cost AEP, specifically its Texas ratepayers, around \$7 to \$10 million — is a four-acre residential lot on the East Side of town, at the corner of Oak and Aparejo streets just before the bridge over Alamito Creek. The estimated footprint of the new substation is 250 feet by 250 feet with a 30-foot-high bay — eight

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Early voting starts next week

TRI-COUNTY — Early voting for the May 3 General Election begins next week on Tuesday, April 22, and runs through Tuesday, April 29.

The Marfa election was canceled due to only incumbents filing to keep their seats on the Marfa City Council and Marfa ISD School Board. In Alpine, the only eligible voters will be Ward 1 residents who will elect a new city council representative — the only contested race in the city election. The Alpine ISD School Board election was canceled due to no contested races. Both city council and school board elections, as well as a \$9 million school bond proposal, will take place in Presidio.

The U.S. House recently passed a bill — the Safeguard American Voter Eligibility Act, commonly referred to as the SAVE Act — requiring proof of citizenship to vote in federal elections, which now heads to the Senate for consideration. On April 1 the Texas Senate voted to approve a similar proposal for local, state and presidential elections. That bill, if approved by the House, would not take effect until September.

To view current voter ID requirements and check your voter eligibility, visit the Texas Secretary of State’s website. The last day to register to vote was April 3.

City of Alpine

Early voting will take place on weekdays from 8 a.m. to 5 p.m. April 22 through April 29 in the city council chambers, 803 W. Holland Avenue, Alpine, Texas, 79830. To view a sample ballot, visit the city’s website.

City council seats for Wards 1 and 3 were up for election, but only the Ward 1 race saw enough candidates file to appear on the ballot. Vying for the Ward 1 city council seat are candidates Austin Smith, Andy Ramos and Richard Portillo. Voters will be instructed to vote for none or one of the candidates.

The Ward 3 city council seat saw only one candidate file — previous building official Robert Rückes. Because he is running unopposed for the position, he was officially declared elected and the election was canceled.

Alpine ISD School Board

The Alpine ISD School Board trustee election was canceled due to a lack of opposed races. Haley Babb, representing District 5, filed for reelection, and Josh Cross, representing District 7, filed unopposed to fill in the seat of Mary McCallister, who decided not to seek reelection.

Presidio Joint Election

Early voting for the joint City Council and School Board election will take place on weekdays from 8 a.m. to 5 p.m. April 22 through April 29 at the City of Presidio Activities Center, 1200 E. O’Reilly Street, Presidio, Texas. Extended voting hours will take place from 7 a.m. to 7 p.m. on Tuesday, April 29. To view sample ballots, visit the city’s website and the school board’s website.

City of Presidio

Current Mayor John Ferguson is running unopposed but will appear on the ballot. Voters will be instructed to vote for no more than two candidates for full term council seats. Those running for full term council seats include Bianca Martinez-Bailon, Arian Velazquez-Ornelas, Silverio Escontrias, Abel “Billy” Hernandez and Jose “Pepe” Acosta.

For the unexpired term council seat, voters will be instructed to vote for no more than one person. Alondra Flores and Juan Saenz are running for the unexpired term.

Presidio ISD School Board + bond election

Three seats are up for election for the Presidio ISD School Board. The top three vote getters for the at-large

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AI data center

(Continued from page 1)

energy, as opposed to using the existing power grid. Acres upon acres of solar panels, cleaned by robots, will likely be installed. The company may also pursue the creation of a “green ammonia” plant, a carbon-neutral fuel, and utilize the property’s existing South Orient Rail Line for exports, according to County Commissioner David Beebe. It is not clear how the company plans to manage the intermittency of solar power and whether the green ammonia operation is related.

Sources familiar with Open Origin’s plans that spoke to *The Big Bend Sentinel* indicated that the operation could likely not be visible from any public roads and could be tucked back into the expansive ranch, potentially somewhere off of Nopal Road.

Brian Korgel, director of the University of Texas Energy Institute, said the current industry trend is for data centers to be built close to energy resources, making West Texas an appealing region due to its natural resources, access to natural gas pipelines, cheap land and more.

“Out in West Texas, there’s a lot of sun, a lot of wind and land, and also a lot of natural gas. The challenge is connecting the data centers with those energy resources right now in Texas,” Korgel said. “There are a lot of data center build-outs in West Texas being announced, and that’s the reason, partly.”

One natural resource in short supply in the desert — that data centers require a considerable amount of to cool down heat-generating computer systems — is water.

A county official who met with Open Origin said they intend to pump 800 acre feet of groundwater annually for their operation, which equates to about 714,000 gallons of water a day. By comparison, the City of Marfa pumps 550 acre feet a year, and Village Farms tomato growers — the largest operating permit holder in Presidio County — pumps 400 acre feet a year.

According to a report by the Texas Water Development Board, total pumping for the Igneous Aquifer, which supplies much of the tri-county region’s water supply, ranged from 8,000 to 4,000 acre-feet per year from 1980 to 2020, meaning an additional 800 acre feet could amount to a 10 to 20 percent increase in pumping annually.

But the company may be considering water reuse, according to Beebe. The property does contain the City of Marfa wastewater treatment plant that lies across from El Cosmico off of Highway 67. The wastewater is currently lightly treated then pumped to ponds where it is left to evaporate, meaning there may be an opportunity to upgrade that facility and reuse the wastewater.

It is unclear what year Open Origin was founded. The company’s website states that they operate a Salinas Puros, New Mexico, green ammonia plant, which would appear to be south of Albuquerque, with plans for another plant in Maharashtra, India, in development.

Beebe said he met with a handful of individuals from the company on Zoom, one of which was Powell. In a video on their website Open Origin Chief Vision Officer Indrani Pal-Chaudhuri states that the company’s strategy is to work in “remote areas where we can really benefit local communities.”

Beebe said company representatives told him the new AI data center could create 900 to 1,100 new jobs in the Marfa area. Questions regarding whether those will be local hires, whether workers will be brought in, whether they will seek housing locally, or build their own campus, are still up in the air. Concerns over the Marfa Lights viewshed and dark skies have also been voiced by local officials.

Data centers have made national headlines as of late for touting local economic booms yet generating fewer jobs than promised. There are not currently any jobs posted on Open Origin’s website. But, for a small town like Marfa, whose population is around 1,700 people and where spring break crowds result in hours-long wait times for local restaurants, 200 new residents would be easier to absorb than 1,000 plus.

There is an incentive for Presidio County officials to support the potential AI data center given the border county’s dire financial straits. It is limited to a maximum 3.5% property tax increase every year — which, because property taxes drive the county budget, means commissioners are limited to a maximum 3.5% budget increase every year. However, new property added to the tax rolls, like a high-dollar data center, does not count towards the 3.5% budget increase limit for one year.

Last year, the county only added .05% of new property to its tax rolls. Growth, specifically in the form of entirely new builds, is the key to raising revenue and getting ahead of inflation, according to Beebe.

“It would be, in my opinion, a good economic opportunity for Marfa and Presidio County,” County Judge Joe Portillo said. “I think it would generate some very high paying jobs. It’s an investment. It’s using state of the art technology and state of the art solar, state of the art energy production.”

Beebe said the one “tool” in the county’s “quiver” they could consider is offering Open Origin tax abatements as an incentive to conserve water use. For example, if Open Origin comes in and drops “a billion worth of

infrastructure in a year,” the county could give them a 10% tax abatement contingent on the company not exceeding a certain amount of water usage a month.

“Texas counties don’t really have a way to control private property outside of cities, other than we have tried to empower our underground water conservation district to have some say in what they call in California the biggest straw problem,” Beebe said.

Longevity of the potential AI data center — regarding the AI and green energy markets — is also of concern. Korgel said the economics of these projects are, in part, driven by the 2022 Inflation Reduction Act which provides tax credits for green initiatives like solar. But, given the policy and regulatory uncertainty of renewables under the current federal administration it is unclear whether some projects may be derailed.

In the meantime, data center companies are “absorbing a premium” on power and electricity. “Those companies are just trying to build the data centers, and they’re paying premiums for all kinds of things just because they need it,” Korgel said. “At some point people have to sort of get real about the finances.”

Texas’ energy demand could more than double by 2031, according to a report released this month by the nonprofit corporation that operates the state’s power grid, The Electric Reliability Council of Texas (ERCOT). “You can’t pick technology winners and losers and meet that need,” Korgel said.

Beebe said the AI data center has the potential to bring about lasting change to the region in the wake of the economic collapse of the cattle ranching industry, but ongoing projects like the international bridge are also paramount, and could result in more long-term economic growth for Presidio County. He said he’s wary, given the rapid advance of technology, that a potential data center could culminate in obsolete Central Processing Units (CPUs), deserted concrete slabs, falling down buildings and a subdivision of the property.

“What happens then?” Beebe said. “Because if we’re going to get a tax benefit over this, that’s great and all, and we need it. But I don’t want to ruin this piece of paradise just to have it be used for five years. If we’re going to do this, we need a 20- to 30-year project so that we can really, honestly benefit from it.”

The Sentinel will continue to cover this story as more details become available.

City manager

(Continued from page 1)

so it was just a technical error. We’re just doing cleanup.” When asked whether Walter had attempted to fire a police officer, Baeza said no.

Walter did come under fire from the mayor at a council meeting in late March when he publicly criticized her for seeking a change to municipal

court’s operating hours without first consulting the municipal court clerk. At that time he stated that city employees were also not made aware of Walter’s initiative to update city hall hours until after council members had already approved the change. Walter previously told *The Sentinel* that she

was attempting to make “everything open to the public as much as possible.” When asked whether those incidents were related to her termination, Baeza said, “I have no idea.”

Early voting

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board will be elected. The candidates include incumbents Iris S. Galindo and Tino Martinez as well as four new candidates: Josefina Burrola, Maria Loyola Montoya, Jose A. Padilla and Jeremy Velasquez. Voters will be instructed to

choose up to three candidates.

Voters will also choose whether they are for or against a \$9,900,000 bond proposal for “school facilities, and the purchase of new school buses, and

the levy of taxes sufficient to pay the principal of and interest on the bonds.” The bond will result in a property tax increase. For more details on the school bond election see page 4 in this week’s issue.

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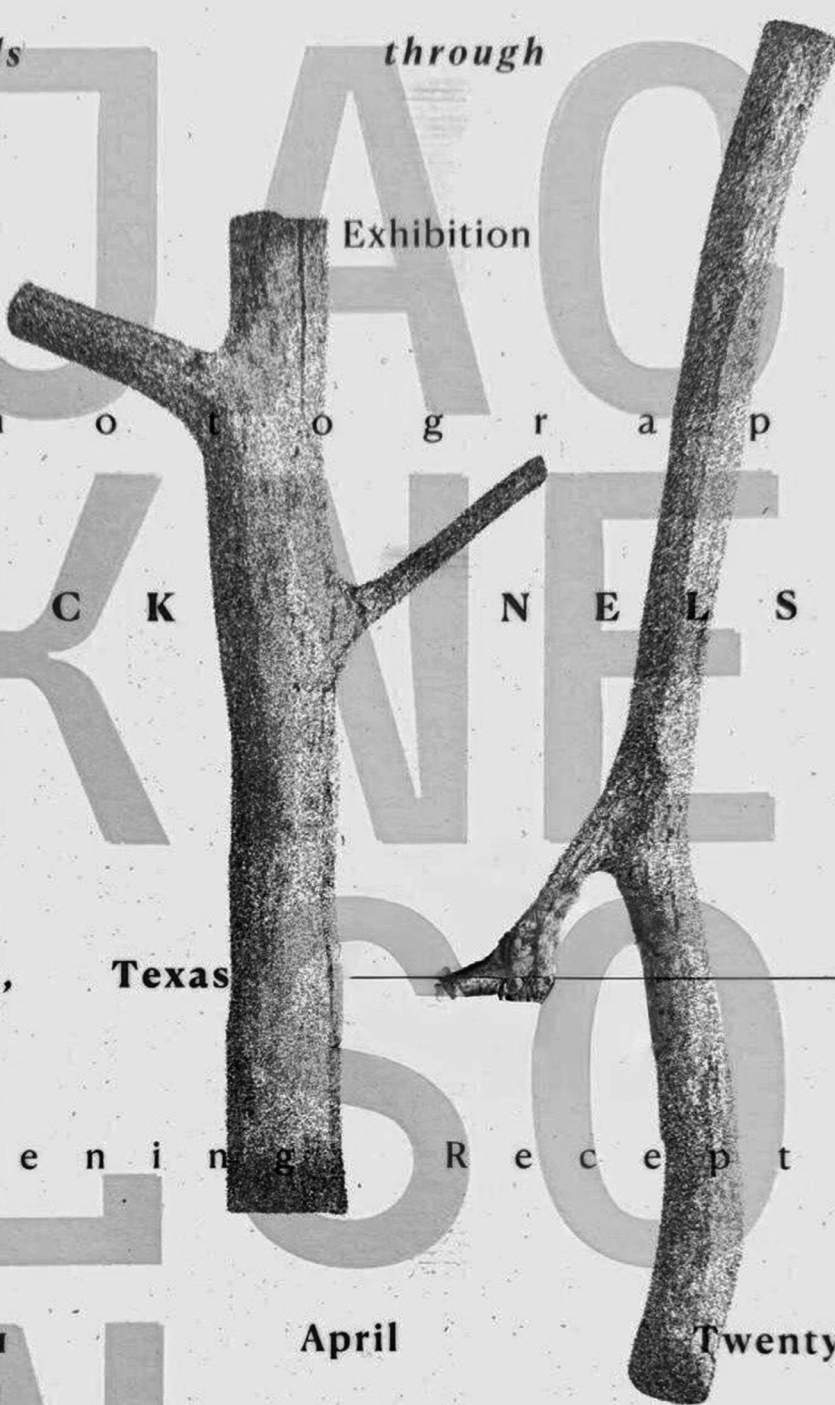
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CELEBRATE THE DEPTH & BEAUTY
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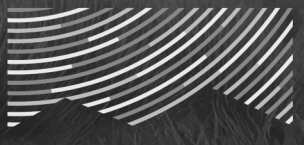
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AEP substation

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times larger than the current substation, according to neighborhood resident Ginger Griffice.

“This is a much bigger ask than to just rezone a piece of property,” Griffice said. “This would alter the entire east side. The city notified people within 200 feet of the zoning request, but in actuality, the whole town needs to be aware of this.”

Guerrero explained that the purpose of the new larger substation is to “increase the capacity and reliability of the system,” and to “increase capacity for future growth.”

According to city employee Ann Dunlap, who was present at the meeting, 14 homeowners fell within the “magic circle,” 200 feet around the proposed substation site, and public notices about the zoning change hearings were posted for three weeks in the newspaper. The first public hearing was on March 18. Notices ran in *The Big Bend Sentinel* about the first and second public hearings on February 27 and March 6. A notice about the second public hearing ran on April 3. While the postings meet legal requirements, they did use “AEP” abbreviated, instead of American Electric Power, and there is no mention of a "substation," which drew criticism from one resident.

Several residents who received the letters were present at Tuesday's meeting, including P&Z Chairman Stephen “Chick” Rabourn, who disclosed that he lives in the affected area. Also present were several Sal Si Puedes residents that live around the Alamito Creek substation, which is also in a residential area and has been upgraded, increasing its footprint, in the past. The Alamito Creek station connects to Fort Davis, Presidio, Alpine and more.

Marfa residents that spoke out against the new substation expressed an understanding that reliable power is needed, and that AEP is a company

town with good local relations, but ultimately disagreed with the proposed location of the infrastructure.

Sara Melancon Bingham, who owns a house across the street from the proposed substation location, said she doesn’t want to see a quiet neighborhood of modest family homes disrupted by the industrial infrastructure of the substation, including fencing, electrical hum and lights.

“Rezoning that land from residential to industrial is not only going to be a huge bummer for me and all of my neighbors, it's going to fundamentally change the character of that neighborhood, not just for a year or two, but permanently,” Bingham said. “It sends a message that our quiet residential spaces can be reshaped for corporate convenience.”

Several residents, including Bingham and Griffice, stated that the new substation will negatively impact the value of their homes that they have worked hard to improve — a trend that could disappear if a substation were added to the area. “I invested in this neighborhood with the assurance that the area is zoned residential. Would I have purchased it if I knew there was a transmission station there? No,” Griffice said. “We're putting properties back on the tax rolls. No one will do that next to a substation. So it affects all of town, not just this neighborhood, in terms of future development and economic health.”

Multiple residents asked Guerrero why alternative sites — like land in the county further outside of town or within city limits in existing semi-industrial areas — were not presented or were not pursued. Guerrero explained that AEP struggled to locate the lot they are pursuing and there really are no other feasible options. He said that AEP’s current policy requires a minimum of 3.5 acres to build a new substation, and the company wants to build it in city limits so it can bolster tax revenue for the

city and the school district. It also saves money and prevents disruption to utilize existing lines and keep things efficient, he said.

"If we increase costs, and then we also increase our footprint by adding more distribution lines, well then we're creating more disruption, with a greater footprint, with our poles in the area, and then also we're increasing the cost and which is going to get passed on to the ratepayer,” Guerrero said.

A few residents also spoke in favor of the new substation location, in addition to County Commissioner Deirdre Hisler, who voiced David Beebe’s support on his behalf. Several mentioned the importance of reliable electricity regarding elders and those with medical devices that rely on the resource.

Agustin Gonzalez, speaking in his capacity as a Sal Si Puedes resident whose home abuts the Alamito Creek substation, didn’t express whether he was for or against the project, but stated that at the end of the day, the new substation has to go somewhere, and the further away from the current site the more complex the project.

“It doesn't matter where in town we put this substation that's needed. It doesn't matter if it's the north end of the town, south end of town, east end of the town, there's gonna be an argument against it,” Gonzalez said. “We're gonna be in here who knows how many times, the same situation, the same question.”

The final design of the new substation will not be complete until a zoning change is approved and the land sale is finalized. P&Z members will now prepare a report on their recommendations for the rezone, including resident feedback, and will present their findings to the City Council, which will decide whether or not to approve it based on the report.

FDISD superintendent

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board, however, violated the law in the March 28 meeting with their statement by releasing information about their closed session discussions with him.

Hicks told *The Sentinel* that there was some confusion around the role of a consultant hired at the March 28 meeting — J&P Advisory Group — and its principal Jim McClellan, who supposedly communicated publicly that

he was the new superintendent. The board approved a contract with the firm at the March 28 meeting but did not offer the public any written or verbal information on what it entails. The contract was not immediately available from Fort Davis ISD, and *The Sentinel* filed an open records request seeking the documents.

Board President James Weaver did not reply to a request for comment on Traynham’s hiring and Hicks’ leave status. Traynham could not be reached for comment; he is not scheduled to start at the district until next week, according to the FDISD superintendent secretary.

City of Presidio toasts good FY24 audit

By Sam Karas
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PRESIDIO — At Tuesday night’s meeting, the Presidio City Council celebrated another round of positive audit results. State law requires local governments to hire independent auditors, whose reports act like a credit score — without good audits, they can get turned down for grants and other opportunities.

Certified Public Accountant Preston Singleton of Singleton and Clark gave a brief presentation on his findings, which did not include any major red flags. Singleton said that this year’s audit went so smoothly that he even had time at the end of his fieldwork to visit Mexico for the first time for lunch. “This is a great audit, and you should be applauded for it,” he said.

A few years ago, not even the best tacos in Ojinaga could have won over

a visiting auditor. In 2018, the city received an adverse audit after lapsing on the responsibility of soliciting and filing them since 2012. Three years later, that auditor quit, citing concern about the state of the city’s books. “In the first few years that I was mayor, nobody would touch Presidio to perform an audit,” said Mayor John Ferguson. “Now we’ve gone 180 degrees to where our staff are able to fiscally manage our city to come out with an audit that’s basically perfect.”

While the city has been making financial progress, a good audit is a reflection of the city’s financial recordkeeping — not the overall strength of the city’s economy. Singleton said that there was lots of room for growth, but that the challenges Presidio faces aren’t uncommon among other small cities. Most years, in order for the city to balance its budget, it must make large transfers from the landfill fund — in other words, the revenue from the Presidio Landfill — into the general fund, which absorbs most of the

day-to-day transactions that keep the city running.

In FY24 the city took in about \$2.7 million in revenues and spent \$3.4 million. The difference between those two figures was once again pulled from the landfill — though a small victory was declared because the transfer was smaller than last year’s. “It’s not uncommon for cities to have their utility funds subsidize their general fund to some degree,” Singleton explained. “But your general fund is not self-sufficient, and I’m hoping you can improve that.”

In order to pass muster, expenditures must also be close to what was forecast in the city’s budget. Last year, the municipal court and the police department both went over budget, but Singleton said that’s relatively normal for certain city services. “I don’t think that was intentional, it’s just not easy projecting how the final expenditures are going to turn out by the end of the year,” he said.

Trump teases expanded military power on the Texas-Mexico border

By Sam Karas
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WASHINGTON, D.C. — On Friday, the Trump administration released a memo regarding the “Military Mission for Sealing the Southern Border,” which included the transfer of a narrow federally-owned strip of land along the border from Las Cruces to San Diego from the Department of the Interior into the hands of the Department of Defense (DOD). “Our southern border is under attack from a variety of threats,” the president’s memo reads. “The complexity of the current situation requires that our military take a more direct role in securing our southern border than in the recent past.”

At a press conference on Tuesday, White House Press Secretary Karoline Leavitt announced that the order could soon expand. “In the coming weeks, this administration will add more than 90 miles in the state of Texas,” she explained. “This national defense area will enhance the ability to detect, interdict and prosecute illegal aliens, criminal gangs and terrorists who were able to invade our country without consequence for the past four years.”

The 60-foot-wide strip of land referred to in the memo is called the “Roosevelt Reservation.” It was originally acquired by the government under Theodore Roosevelt’s administration as “a protection against the smuggling of goods.”

The Trump administration has run a version of this play before — in 2019, the government put the Roosevelt Reservation under DOD control to



Staff photo by Sam Karas

expedite the process of constructing a border wall. Friday’s proclamation will mark the first time that the DOD will take over the strip in the interest of law enforcement.

Some experts are alarmed by the move, which appears to be an effort

to skirt the Posse Comitatus Act, which prohibits the military from enforcing domestic law. Over the past few months, nearly 10,000 troops have been deployed to the Southwest border — while dozens of National Guardsmen have been deputized for law enforcement, the vast majority of DOD personnel on the ground in the region are instead involved in detection and surveillance.

If the plan outlined in the memo sticks, folks who cross the border illegally in California, Arizona and New Mexico could be charged with trespassing on federal property in addition to the typical misdemeanor charge for crossing outside a port of entry. "It's a quantum leap, because the original designation of the land did not come along with militarizing the zone and sort of bootstrapping a way for soldiers to arrest migrants or to enforce drug trafficking laws at the border," Elizabeth Goitein, senior director of the Brennan Center’s Liberty and National Security Program, told Military.com in an interview.

At press time, there were few details available about the expansion of the federal “national defense area” into the state of Texas. Most of the state’s border with Mexico is privately owned — with the exception of Big Bend National Park, which protects 118 miles of wilderness along the Rio Grande.

Representatives for Big Bend National Park declined to comment on whether the press secretary’s “over 90 miles in Texas” overlapped with the park. A spokesperson for the Office of the Secretary of Defense said that the DOD takeover of land in Texas was “pre-decisional” and that the details were still in flux.

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Opinion & News

I understand the Office of Management and Budget, at the direction of DOGE, plans drastic cuts at NOAA (National Oceanic & Atmospheric Agency). This is an open letter to U.S. Senator Ted Cruz:

"Senator Cruz, I live in Texas. The cuts to NOAA — and its research branch OAR (Oceanic and Atmospheric Research) scheduled to be cut by 75% — would be catastrophic! OAR scientists are world-class researchers studying the atmosphere and oceans. They provide to NOAA's National Weather Service crucial information for severe weather predictions that allow Texans to prepare for our increasing hazardous weather events: floods, droughts, wildfires, tornadoes, and hurricanes. You should be concerned about Texas residents being adversely impacted — resulting in loss of lives and millions if not billions of dollars in damage.

Senator Cruz — as Chairman of the Commerce, Science & Transportation Committee in the U.S. Senate, you have POWER to ADVOCATE and to PUSH BACK against dangerous cuts to NOAA! I'm asking you, Senator Cruz, to step up and fulfill your elected role in our federal government. Please, it's YOUR job in Congress to appropriate federal dollars and to direct spending levels — not DOGE's job! Senator Cruz, you represent the people of Texas. The better the weather predictions, the fewer people die and less government dollars spent on the recovery. Tell DOGE to back off & leave the decisions TO CONGRESS about what programs to fund. Do not let DOGE gut NOAA and OAR. Thank you, sir, for standing up for Texas and our safety!"

Fellow citizens, if you live in Texas, please call Senator Ted Cruz's offices. (Washington DC office 202-224-5922; Austin office 512-916-5834; Dallas office 214-599-8749; Houston office 713-718-3057) Every phone call is logged — make your voice heard!! Ted Cruz is Chairman of the Senate Committee that oversees NOAA, so he is likely in a better position than anyone to effectively push back against the plan to kill NOAA. Please make your calls soon, as the decision will be made this week.

Signed,
Donna and Barry Smith
Fort Davis

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DISTILLERY TOURS • DREAMY COCKTAILS • GIFTY THINGS

The Adventures of Dick Deceit ©'25 Jim Bridger Big Bend Sentinel

MR. PRESIDENT, MANY PEOPLE ARE WATCHING THEIR RETIREMENT FUNDS MELT DUE TO THE TRADE WARS YOU LAUNCHED!

MANY OF THEM ARE SENIOR CITIZENS!

I'M TOUCHED BY YOUR CONCERNS!

YOU DON'T NEED TO WORRY ABOUT ME! I'LL BE FINE!

BESIDES, I KNOW WHEN THE MARKETS WILL RISE AND FALL SO I CAN ADJUST PROPERLY!

I CAN DESTROY PEOPLE'S PENSIONS ON FIFTH AVENUE IN BROAD DAYLIGHT AND MY SUPPORTERS WILL STILL LOVE ME!

WHAT BOTHERS ME THE MOST IS KNOWING HE'S RIGHT!

Presidio ISD to host Q&A session about school bond

By Sam Karas
sam@bigbendsentinel.com

PRESIDIO — This upcoming Wednesday, April 23, Presidio ISD will host a Q&A session about the \$9.9 million school bond that will appear on the May 3 ballot. The bond would translate to about 18 cents per \$100 of property value for property owners within the district and would go to address an array of improvements across the three campuses.

Potential projects that could be paid for by the bond include upgrades to the playgrounds and daycare at Presidio Elementary, expansion of the cafeteria at Lucy Rede Franco Middle School, and upgrades to the high school's career and technical education facilities. The list was developed by a staff survey distributed at the beginning of the school year. If the bond passes, the district will then determine a definite list of projects and rank them by priority.

Other local school districts have had mixed results pursuing bonds. In 2022, a \$57 million bond was rejected by voters that would have built a new K-12 campus for Marfa ISD. Alpine ISD had to try the issue three times before voters approved an over \$22.5 million bond in 2018.

If passed, the new bond is not projected to make a big difference in local property tax bills. The district is on the cusp of paying off an approximately \$4.5 million bond passed in 1998 that also carried an 18 cent per \$100 cost. The law, however, requires the ballot to say that bonds increase property taxes. "Passage of the bond will not result in an increase in the property tax rate, despite the ballot language," explained Superintendent Carmen Rubner.

If the bond does not pass, the tax rate will drop to its maintenance and operations rate of around 80 cents per \$100 of valuation.

For more information, community members can attend the district's informational session on Wednesday, April 23, at the Presidio Activity Center from 6 p.m. to 8 p.m. Questions and comments can be left ahead of the session at surveymonkey.com/r/PISDBond25.

Sul Ross Skyline places first at TPIA

From Sul Ross State University

ALPINE — The Sul Ross Skyline, the student newspaper at Sul Ross State University, received three first place awards at the Texas Intercollegiate Press Association (TIPA) conference in San Marcos April 10-12.

Alyn Covington won for Editorial Cartoons, Maya Tinajero placed for Editorials and Dawon Beard and Brooke Manuel were awarded for Web Design.

Skyline Adviser Sid Balman led a panel discussion on Freedom of the Press along with Eliya Alvidrez, its editor, and colleagues from Baylor University. "We are punching above our weight for the fourth year in a row," said Balman. "This is the largest organization of its kind in Texas."

TIPA hosts a three-day convention each spring at locations around the state. The convention attracts anywhere from 300 to 600 students and faculty advisers and features more than 40 workshops and presentations by advisers and media professionals from around the country. The convention also features 30 on-site live contests for the student journalists to showcase their skills under deadline situations and in practical-oriented situations such as covering a fire.

For more information, visit www.sulrossskyline.com or www.texasipa.org.

Sul Ross students host mock trial at Brewster County Courthouse

The Sul Ross State University Department of Homeland Security and Criminal Justice hosted its first-ever mock trial Friday, April 11, at the Brewster County Courthouse District Courtroom.

Students took on key roles as attorneys, witnesses and more with 394th District Judge Monty Kimball presiding in a realistic and engaging courtroom setting. They included Isabela Holguin, Tannah Routledge, Saul Barrientes, Michelle Olivas, Angel Soto, Laila Salido, Melissa Fierro, Jasmine Garcia and Joseph Roberts. "The students put on an incredible performance that was well-attended by both community members and legal professionals," said Dr.

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OBITUARIES



Terry

Deirdre (née Hammett) Blinka Terry left the challenges of failing health behind on April 1, 2025, on her own terms, when she was ready, at the age of 92, in her home in Alpine, Texas. Her mind, ever sharp and seeking, and her spirit, always engaged and loving, will continue to inspire and comfort all who knew her as well as all those she

served with wisdom and care. Deirdre, known by most in Waco as Dee Blinka, was born to Irene and Edward “Ted” Hammett on January 10, 1933 in England. Six years later, World War II began. Her childhood was marked by trauma and the uncertainties of war and separation from family. She recounted how, as children, they were sent to the Yorkshire countryside to avoid bombing raids on Plymouth. Dee’s commitment to peace and to serving others was forged in the fires of war.

Deirdre (“Dee”) was the wife of Martin Terry, her treasured friend and partner in life, service and research. She was a lifelong scholar practitioner. She read constantly to satisfy her desire to learn and engaged in research and deep thinking about mental health and peace and justice for all. Dee’s colleagues remember her as a legendary therapist, a professional guiding light, and a truly

positive resource in her field with a talent for communicating complex concepts with depth and ease. Dee was the proud mother of two children, Mary Stanley Renouf, an attorney in Dallas, Texas; and Simon Stanley, a retired engineer and attorney.

She was a loving mother-in-law and friend to Beth Mahoney Stanley, with whom she had a strong bond. She loved the way that her son-in-law, Jerry Renouf, takes care of Mary.

Dee spent 38 years with her husband Wayne Blinka in Waco, where she gained her reputation as a therapist in her private practice. They remained friends. During their marriage, they enjoyed going to their retreat near Big Bend National Park.

Dee earned an MA from Oxford, followed by a masters in psychiatric social work from University of Bristol in 1957. It was there that her passion for Botswana began when she met a

student from Botswana (Dr. Gaositwe Chiepe, MBE) who became a lifelong friend. Dee’s journey of social work practice spanned from building community and relationships in Botswana to providing healing insight and love to broken hearts and spirits in Central Texas. Her deep investment in physical, mental and emotional health for others informed her practice as a therapist to hundreds of clients across the years. Dee was an advocate for accessible mental health services for people in Waco and surrounding communities. She understood the needs and advocated for cutting edge treatment for adolescents and all persons.

Clients and community professionals appreciated Dee’s commitment to the latest research on human behavior and on best practices in therapy. Notably, she provided EMDR therapy and fostered the advancement of it before

“it was cool” or accepted. Dee was the recipient of the prestigious EMDRIA Francine Shapiro Award in 2017.

Dee and her husband of the last 10 years, Martin Terry, engaged in research together on the latest and best evidence-based treatment for those whose lives were upended with illness and trauma. She volunteered grief support for hospice staff and advocated with legislators for mental health services in the community.

Dee is also survived by Martin’s daughters, Tammy Terry and Hannah Bott, who have loved the opportunity to develop deep and meaningful relationships with Dee over the past decade and are grateful to her for her eternal optimism and inspiration as a champion for many important causes.

Special thanks to Heather and Kevin Bishop for their loving care of Dee and Martin and their support of the family. Heather and Kevin’s almost

round-the-clock care of Dee and Martin elevated their quality of life and gave their family peace of mind, knowing that they were in good hands. Much gratitude also goes to Brian Penick for his assistance wherever needed, including driving Dee and Martin to the desert research station that they dreamt of and completed for future graduate students. Heartfelt thanks also go to all Dee’s friends she knew and loved over the years as well as to Angel’s Care Hospice for their services during Dee’s last days at home.

A memorial service for Dee will be led by Reverend Doctor Leslie King at 11 a.m. on April 24, 2025, at Waco’s First Presbyterian Church located at 1100 Austin Ave., Waco, Texas.

Thornton Wilder said: “The highest tribute to the dead is not grief but gratitude.” Even as we grieve, we remember Dee Blinka Terry’s life of service with deep gratitude.



Martinez

Catarina Acosta Martinez, born on April 14, 1940, in Marfa, Texas, passed away peacefully on April 13, 2025, in Alpine, Texas, just one day shy of her 85th birthday. A devoted mother, grandmother, sister and friend, Catarina’s life was a tapestry of love woven with threads of faith, generosity and compassion.

Catarina graduated from Marfa High School and dedicated much of her professional life to serving her community. She worked at the Presidio County Courthouse and later at the Texas Department of Health and Human Services, where she made lasting impacts on those she encountered. Her career was a testament to her commitment to the well-being of those around her.

Known for her nurturing spirit, Catarina welcomed all into her home. Her door was always open, and her generous heart was a sanctuary for family and friends alike. She found joy in the simplest moments spent with her sons and grandchildren, creating countless cherished memories. Catarina’s strong faith in God guided her through life’s uncertainties and illuminated the path for those who were fortunate enough to know her.

Her unwavering commitment

to her church was evident through her volunteer work at St. Mary’s Catholic Church in Marfa and her active participation in various church activities. As a member of the Catholic Daughters organization, Catarina embodied the ideals of charity and service, making a significant difference in her community.

Catarina is remembered with great love by her surviving family: her sons Ruben Ervey Martinez and his wife Rosa Maria Martinez, and Mark Adam Martinez and his wife Rosie Webster Martinez; her granddaughters, Raven Martinez and Sienna Martinez; her grandson, Alan Granados; her brother Saul Acosta and his wife Rita Acosta; her sister Abigail Acosta; and numerous nieces and nephews who will forever treasure her memory.

Preceding Catarina in death is a beautifully woven tapestry of loved

ones she now joins in peace: her beloved son Frank Jacob Martinez; her father, Tiburcio Acosta; her mother, Hermina Acosta; her brothers Antonio Acosta and Tiburcio Acosta Jr.; and her sister Teresa Acosta.

As we celebrate the life of Catarina Acosta Martinez, we remember a life full of love, faith and unwavering devotion to family and community. Her spirit lives on in the hearts of those she touched, and her legacy will forever be cherished by all who were fortunate enough to call her family and a friend.

Services took place at St. Mary’s Catholic Church in Marfa, Texas, with interment at Cementerio de la Merced.

Services were entrusted to Alpine Memorial Funeral Home in Alpine, Texas and gifts and condolences may be left by visiting www.alpinememorialfuneralhome.com.



Naegele

Henry Naegele Jr. of Marfa, Texas, passed away unexpectedly on Friday April 4, 2025, in Marfa at the age of 82. The family is deeply saddened and shocked by his sudden death. Henry was born on January 15, 1943.

Henry is survived by his wife of 64 years, Lorina Naegele, and his six children, Henry Saiz, Joe Naegele,

Luis Naegele, Cindy Toscano, Laura Brugette and Henry Otto Naegele.

His memory lives on with his many grandchildren and great-grandchildren, nieces and nephews.

Henry was a shining light in the lives of all who had the privilege of knowing him. He always looked out for others and no one was ever a stranger. His passing has left a void in the hearts of his family, friends, and many more whose lives were touched by him. We ask that you remember him not for the way his life ended but for the way it was lived and for the profound impact it had on the lives of those who had the pleasure of knowing him.

The celebration of life will be held on a later date. May his memory be a blessing, and may we carry his legacy of love and compassion in all that we do.

Dark Skies events held throughout the Big Bend next week

From the McDonald Observatory

THE BIG BEND — In celebration of International Dark Sky Week, locations throughout the Big Bend region will be holding special events from April 22-27 that showcase our famous night skies.

Events will take place at McDonald Observatory and locations around Fort Davis, Alpine, Marfa, and Terlingua. Highlights include Star Parties throughout the region; special talks and tours at McDonald Observatory; a guided nighttime hike at the Fort Davis National Historic Site; constellation journaling at Davis Mountains State Park; and more.

Many, though not all, events are free. Additional information and a full schedule are available on the McDonald Observatory website at mcdonaldobservatory.org/dark-skies-festival.

FULL SCHEDULE OF EVENTS

Tuesday, April 22

- 8 p.m. - Special Talk: Dark for the Park Alliance: Collaborating to Improve Lighting in the Permian Basin at McDonald Observatory (event included with purchase of a ticket to the evening's Star Party)
- 9:15 p.m. - Star Party at McDonald Observatory (\$5-25)

Wednesday, April 23

- 9 p.m. - Star Party at the Far Flung Outdoor Center in Terlingua (free)
- 9 p.m. - Star Party at the Ballroom Marfa Stone Circle (directions) (free)

Thursday, April 24

- 12:30 p.m. - Behind the scenes tour of McDonald Observatory's Hobby-Eberly Telescope (\$10)

Friday, April 25

- 11 a.m. - Special Talk: Bugs that Go Bump in the Night at Fort Davis National Historic Site (free for visitors with site entry passes)
- 12:30 p.m. - Behind the scenes tour of McDonald Observatory's Hobby-Eberly Telescope (\$10)
- 2 p.m. - Constellation Journaling at Davis Mountains State Park (free for campers or day users w/permit - daily entrance fee is \$6/adult)
- 2 p.m. - Special Talk: How to Make an Apple Pie from Scratch: History of the Universe at Fort Davis National Historic Site (free for visitors with site entry passes)
- 8 p.m. - Special Talk: Celebration of the Dark: Earth's Night Sky and Artificial Lighting at McDonald Observatory (event included with purchase of a ticket to the evening's Star Party)
- 8:30 p.m. - Park After Dark guided night hike at the Fort Davis National Historic Site (free for visitors with site entry passes)
- 9 p.m. - Miles of Stars Star Party at Davis Mountains State Park (free for campers or day users w/permit - daily entrance fee is \$6/adult)
- 9:15 p.m. - Star Party at McDonald Observatory (\$5-25)

Saturday, April 26

- 9 a.m.-noon - Outreach Activities at the Alpine Farmers Market (free)
- 11 a.m. - Special Talk: Bugs that Go Bump in the Night at Fort Davis National Historic Site (free for visitors with site entry passes)
- 2 p.m. - Astrophotography Talk: Empowering Wounded Veterans to Heal Through Photography at the Alpine Public Library (free)
- 2 p.m. - Special Talk: How to Make an Apple Pie from Scratch: History of the Universe at Fort Davis National Historic Site (free for visitors with site entry passes)
- 4 p.m. - Astrophotography Talk: Empowering Wounded Veterans to Heal Through Photography at McDonald Observatory (free)

- 8 p.m. - Special Talk: How COMPASSE Helps Preserve Dark and Radio-Quiet Skies at McDonald Observatory (event included with purchase of a ticket to the evening's Star Party at McDonald Observatory)
- 9 p.m. - Star Party at Kokernot Park Soccer Field in Alpine (free)
- 9:15 p.m. - Star Party at McDonald Observatory (\$5-25)

Sunday, April 27

- 11 a.m. - Special Talk: Bugs that Go Bump in the Night at Fort Davis National Historic Site (free for visitors with site entry passes)
- 2 p.m. - Special Talk: How to Make an Apple Pie from Scratch: History of the Universe at Fort Davis National Historic Site (free for visitors with site entry passes)

Free events at McDonald Observatory

Visitors to the Observatory receive free general admission all week, Tuesday-Saturday, 12-5 p.m. Discount code DarkSky will extend this offer to online purchases.

Residents of Brewster, Culberson, Jeff Davis, Hudspeth, Pecos, Reeves and Presidio counties get free McDonald Observatory Star Party passes using discount code Local25 at checkout.

Events at McDonald Observatory are in addition to its regular public programming.

What makes our dark skies so special?

Through the support of local governments, businesses, and property owners, the Big Bend region features some of the darkest night skies in the continental United States. An important driver of this accomplishment is the widespread adoption of nighttime lighting that keeps light on the ground and out of the sky.

To recognize and protect the exceptional quality of our night skies, the Greater Big Bend International Dark Sky Reserve was established in 2022. It covers over 15,000 square miles, making it the largest Dark Sky Reserve in the world.

Blackwell School National Historic Site

National Park Service
U.S. Department of the Interior

KICK OFF NATIONAL PARK WEEK

Join us for a special viewing of the film **Deep in the Heart** directed and written by Ben Masters. Followed by a Q&A with film producer Katy Baldock.

April 19th @7pm

Location: Blackwell School National Historic Site
501 S. Abbott Street
Marfa, TX 79843

Deep in the Heart is a visually stunning celebration of Texas' diverse landscapes and remarkable wildlife found nowhere else. Narrated by Matthew McConaughey, the film aims to conserve our remaining wild places, to show the connectivity of water and wildlife, and to recognize Texas' conservation importance on a continental scale.

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Annual Gem and Mineral Show will honor local ‘rockhound’

From the Chihuahuan Desert Gem & Mineral Club

ALPINE — The Alpine Gem and Mineral Show at the Alpine Civic Center will celebrate the life of a special local rockhound who hunted the elusive agates and “thunder eggs” of Marfa, Terlingua, and Alpine areas. Gordon (Gordie) Sanborn, of The Daily Grind in Alpine, Texas, passed away in 2021 but left behind friends and family who learned from him.

Gordie was an adventurer whose journey led him in the summers to Alaska where he fished commercially, and in the winter, he used his extraordinary carpentry skills, leaving his mark on many a building in Ninilchik, his home for many years. He loved rocks. Agates brought him to Texas, but Martha (Scott), a local artist, is why he stayed. When they met, she admired a beautifully wrapped stone, an Owhyee Jasper. The bolo, which he gifted to

her, became a prized possession and she became his beloved wife. She still wears it around her neck.

When camping at the famed Woodward Agate Ranch, he collected rocks for many weeks. He apparently found the diversity and color of agate to exceed what he had experienced at other collecting sites because he took up residence at the ranch, which was located 17 miles south of Alpine on Hwy 118 (rockhounding is no longer allowed at this private ranch).

A highly talented lapidarist, he ground rocks to sell, but he mostly liked to make rocks shiny! Gordie could spend days cutting open new rocks to be the first ever to discover their beauty within. A friend, who recalls that Gordie did not have a formal education, says, “Instead, he explored the world and learned from it. And learn he did! He was a true artist with an enormous amount of creativity!” This creativity resulted in Gordie developing skills

as diverse as boat building, flint knapping, and lapidary.

Be sure to talk with the over 40 vendors at the FREE show April 18-20 in Alpine — 9 a.m. to 6 p.m. on Friday and Saturday and 9 a.m. to 4 p.m. on Sunday.

Some vendors will bend your ear about how Gordie could bend wire around a small cabochon resulting in an outstanding necklace or earrings. Thanks to one of his sons, Todd Sanborn, and Todd’s wife, Lisa Nix, the famous homemade “Daily Grind” cart will be making the rounds with some of Gordie’s collection at the show. One grandmother says, “Every year I bring my grandchildren and we crack open a geode ... it is the BEST!” This free, annual three-day gem and mineral show features rocks, rough and finished stones, beads and tools, plus door prizes and a spinning wheel. Bring a rock to identify; come for the weekend!

Automatic water meters pilot kicks off amidst customer complaints

By Gina Vera
For The Big Bend Sentinel

ALPINE — Following approval of a new utility billing software in March, the Alpine City Council took an initial look at updating city water meters during its Tuesday meeting with the hopes of improving the efficiency of meter readings and assuring customers of their accuracy.

During the meeting, council members heard City Manager Megan Antrim describe a project that would update current meters with equipment that would link to a base station to read meters without actual home visits. It also would allow city water users to access an online portal with information regarding their water usage.

Antrim proposed to council that the city begin a pilot test of the equipment. The test would call for the construction of one base station and updating a mixture of

50 residential and commercial meters that would include those of council members. The cost of the pilot project would be about \$27,795, said Antrim.

Responding to questions from councilmembers Reagan Stone and Darin Nance regarding why council members were being included over city residents and the cost of the project, Antrim said that including council members would enable them to gather the information they would need to make future decisions regarding the project and that the city budget has \$150,000 set aside for the project.

Antrim estimated the cost of updating meters throughout the city would be about \$1 million if the pilot project was found to be successful and the City Council voted to move forward.

The hope is that the pilot program will be successful and that, along with the new utilities billing software approved by the council in March, residents will see more

accurate billing and increased accessibility to information regarding charges, said Utility Billing Supervisor Carmen Rodriguez in an interview.

These actions come as some Alpine residents are using local Facebook groups to complain about sudden, unexplained increases in their bills and repeat billing for the same water usage. “I hold my breath every single month in fear of that bill jumping to the outrageous amounts that I have seen and heard about,” wrote one site member.

While her department has received some complaints this year, the number has not been more than past years or what could be considered normal, said Rodriguez. “We have encountered some complaints regarding high water bills but not out of the normal,” she said.

According to Rodriguez, those complaints were investigated according to city procedure, and in some

cases, leaks were found. “We start every single situation that we encounter by issuing a special read. Then, once that comes back, based on what that says, we move forward with a meter test. The meter test is the one that helps us. It could determine whether they have a water leak or if the meter is at fault,” Rodriguez said.

According to previous reporting by *The Big Bend Sentinel*, the city of Marfa recently approved a project to update its water meters. The Marfa project was estimated to run about \$800,000. Marfa is still studying how to fund the project, and it’s likely that no significant action will be taken on the plan until a new city manager is hired and budget discussions begin for next fiscal year, according to Marfa City Secretary Kelly Perez.

In looking at the project, Marfa leaders said they hoped it would free city workers from the time it took to read the meters and improve accuracy of billing.

Come worship with us



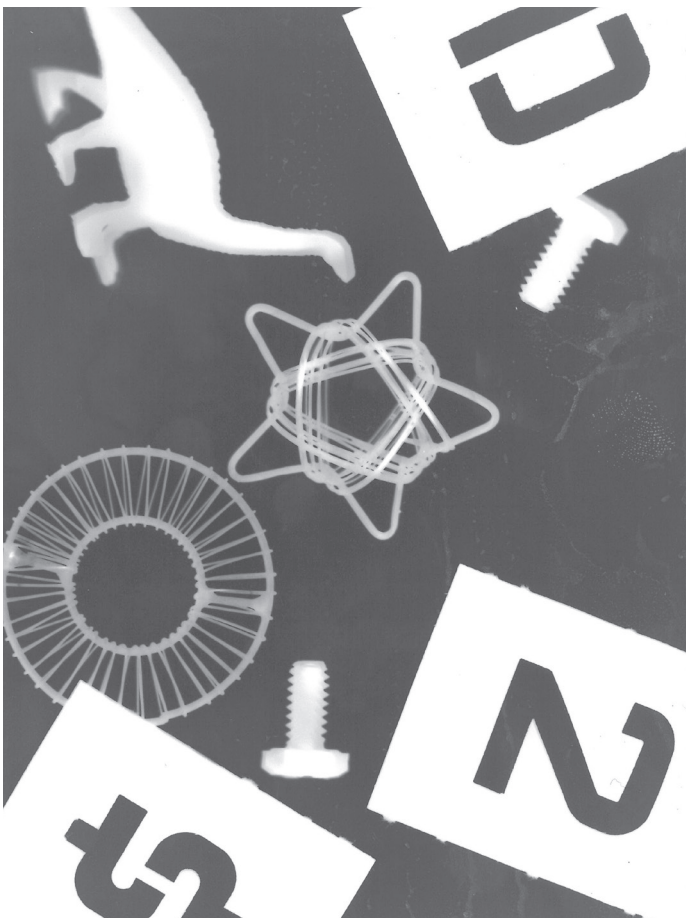
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*Do not fear, for I am with you,
do not be afraid,
for I am your God;
I will strengthen you,
I will help you,
I will uphold you with my
victorious right hand.*
Isaiah 41:10

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DRAWING OF THE WEEK



Fatima Floresvillar
6th grade - Photogram

Sudoku & Crossword puzzles:

UNIVERSAL Sudoku Puzzle

Complete the grid so that every row, column and 3x3 box contains every digit from 1 to 9 inclusively.

		5			3			
4			2	1				9
			8	7		2		
9			4	2				1
	1			5	6			
7				3	6			2
		4		9	1			
	3			8	2			4
			3			8		

DIFFICULTY RATING: ★★☆☆☆

Solution from last week's puzzle:

SOLUTION:

3	6	8	7	5	9	4	2	1
5	7	9	4	1	2	6	3	8
1	4	2	6	8	3	9	5	7
8	5	7	1	2	4	3	9	6
4	9	3	8	7	6	2	1	5
2	1	6	9	3	5	8	7	4
7	2	4	3	6	1	5	8	9
6	8	5	2	9	7	1	4	3
9	3	1	5	4	8	7	6	2

☺ MARFA SCHOOL LUNCH MENU ☺

MAY	Thu, April 17	Fri, April 18	Mon, April 21	Tue, April 22	Wed, April 23
BREAKFAST	DONUT HOLES, SAUSAGE, JUICE, FRUIT, MILK	PANCAKES, BACON, JUICE, FRUIT, MILK	NO SCHOOL	FRENCH TOAST, SAUSAGE, JUICE, FRUIT, MILK	POWER BREAKFAST, JUICE, FRUIT, MILK
LUNCH	BONELESS CHICKEN WINGS, CHIPS, CELERY, CARROTS, MIXED FRUIT FROZEEN YOGURT	TEX-MEX, CORN, GREEN BEANS, PEACHES	NO SCHOOL	CORN DOG, POTATOES, TOMATO CUP, FRUIT	NACHOGRANDE, SALSA, BEANS, CUCUMBERS, APRICOTS, ICE CREAM

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MARFA SHORTHORNS SPORTS CALENDAR

17th: JH Softball in Van Horn
17th - 20th: Regional Track in Abilene

Universal Crossword

Edited by David Steinberg April 19, 2025

ACROSS

1 Museum excursions, perhaps

11 Fancy German cars

15 Place that often has shoddy cell service

16 French for “milk”

17 He plays many instruments simultaneously

18 Monster in fairy tales

19 People pulling the strings of a racket?

20 “In my ...” (“As I see it ...”)

21 Was dishonest

22 System of morality

24 Kick back after a long day

27 By mouth

28 “Little old me?!”

29 Portable tracking device

33 Horse ridden at a fair

35 Sheltered from the sun

36 Ostrich relatives

38 They’re tapped at frat parties

40 Opposite of post-

41 “Will you let me?”

42 Cold comfort?

45 On ____ of (representing)

47 Herb used in some tea and toothpaste

48 D.C. insiders

49 Symbol at a communion table

54 Jackie Robinson’s Golden State sch.

55 Location of the ski resort Serre Chevalier

56 Don’t fall for it!

57 “Tread carefully”

58 Roll call response

59 Breathable bottoms

DOWN

1 Gator’s kin

2 Jay who hosted “The Tonight Show”

3 “PREACH!”

4 Mogadishu resident

5 Be the headliner of

6 Covered, as an outdoor wedding

7 Like ardent fans

8 Roths and others

9 Five-in-a-row board game

10 Sorrowful saga

11 Speak pompously

12 Genies’ homes

13 Current conductors

14 Slow-cooked dish such as tagine

23 Gender-affirming treatment, for short

24 Ballpark bigwig

25 Inexperienced gamer

26 Underground spot for a cab?

29 “... ____ loves me not”

30 People or Time, briefly

31 Parts of a Super Bowl broadcast

32 Hindu spiritual guide

34 “Me, too”

35 Adept

37 “Catch my drift?”

39 Stranded messenger?

42 One end of a playground “telephone”

43 Climb slowly

44 Levels of society

45 Ball game played on lawns

46 Source of the word “bazaar”

47 Chop into bits

48 Propel a grocery cart

50 Snowboarder Chloe Kim, at the time of her first Olympic gold medal

51 “Chocolat” actress Lena

52 Small stain

53 Nine-digit IDs

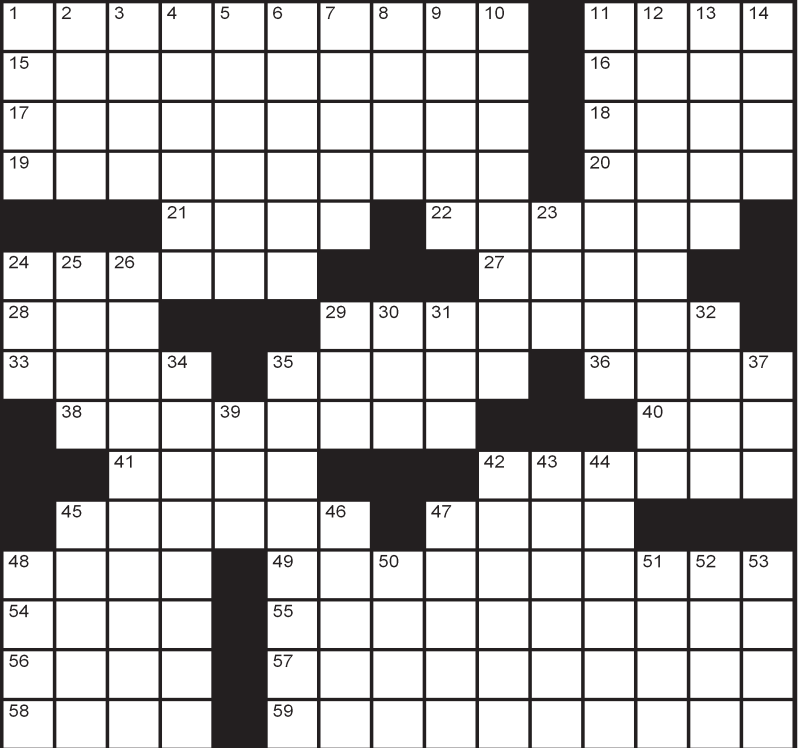
PREVIOUS PUZZLE ANSWER

F	A	M	E	F	E	M	A	L	P	A	C	A
L	I	A	M	B	O	O	C	A	R	B	O	N
E	N	D	P	O	I	N	T	A	B	O	U	N
A	T	E	A	T	S	I	T	C	O	M		
			T	O	O	F	A	I	R	P	L	A
I	T	S	H	E	R	E	S	A	D	T	A	L
S	H	E	S	E	R	I	K	A	S	T	I	C
R	E	N	G	O	O	D	B	O	Y	D	O	S
A	R	D	O	R	T	O	A	D	D	O	V	E
E	M	I	R	A	T	I	R	E	F	I	N	E
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G	R	A	C	I	E		R	E	D	G	A	P

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Universal Freestyle 169 by Adrian Johnson



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Marfa ISD sports report

By Linda Ojeda

Maryfer Martinez qualifies for state golf tournament

The Lady Horns golf team turned in one of its strongest performances in recent years at the regional tournament held this week at the Maxwell Course in Abilene, finishing 8th overall with a team total score of 869. Leading the charge was senior Maryfer Martinez, who earned an individual berth to the UIL State Golf Championships and will proudly represent Marfa at this year’s state tournament. Martinez, who has consistently been the team’s top performer throughout the season, shot an 89 in Round 1 and a 95 in Round 2, finishing with a combined score of 184 to secure her medalist qualification for state.

Teammates Loretta Rivera (217), Ava Flores (225), Amaya Gomez (243), and Dariela Munoz (285) also contributed solid scores, helping the Lady Horns earn a top-10 finish in a highly competitive regional field.

Under the leadership of head coach Curtis Pittman, the Marfa golf program has made remarkable progress, with Martinez becoming the third player to qualify for state during Pittman’s five-year tenure. Coach Pittman expressed pride in Martinez’s achievement, as well as in the efforts of seniors Loretta Rivera and Diego Jurado, recognizing their four years of hard work and dedication to the sport.

“What’s truly inspiring about Maryfer and Loretta’s accomplishments is that they didn’t grow up around the game or have regular access to golf facilities,” Pittman said. “Oftentimes the sport is learned from friends and family. These young ladies didn’t have that background when they entered the sport they developed their skills through sheer determination, perseverance, and a desire to learn and that has led to the opportunity to compete at the state championship. That kind of commitment is rare and deserves to be celebrated.”

Martinez will now set her sights on the UIL State Tournament, scheduled for April 28–29, 2025, in Leander, Texas. A practice round will be held on April 27, with official tee times to be announced soon.

Marfa track & field heads to regionals with state hopes in sight

Marfa High School’s track team is gearing up for regionals this week, with several standout athletes and relay teams eyeing a spot at the UIL state track meet. After a season of hard work, grit, and steady improvement, the Shorthorns are ready to make their mark on the big stage.

The Lady Horns relay squads continue to impress, taking 1st place in both the 4x200m (Itzel Urrutia, Madison Cash, Raven Martinez, and Zoey Salgado) and 4x400m relays (Itzel Urrutia, Madison Cash, Ava Flores, and Zoey Salgado), and earning 2nd place in the 4x100m (Itzel Urrutia, Madison Cash, Ava Flores, and Zoey Salgado) at the area meet. Their consistent dominance has made them a force to watch going into regionals.

On the boys side, the 4x400m relay team (Austin McGary, Alex Rodriguez,



Photo courtesy of Linda Ojeda

The Lady Horns golf team attended the Regional Tournament this week in Abilene finishing eighth overall.

Abelardo Marquez, and JoSaul Baeza) has qualified for regionals for the first time since 2015 — a huge accomplishment and a testament to their dedication and teamwork.

Francisco Rosas, building on his success from last season, advanced once again after placing 2nd in both the 1600m and 3200m. With state within reach, Rosas is preparing to leave it all on the track in his final year.

Ayden Alvarez has been hitting new personal records each week. He placed 2nd in both shot put and discus at area and is currently ranked 3rd in the region for shot put, putting him firmly in contention for a state appearance.

Freshman Alyssa Harden has also shown tremendous potential, placing 4th in the 1600m and advancing to regionals in her first year of competition — a promising start to what looks like a bright future.

Head track coach Aaron Luna said in a recent interview, “I’m incredibly proud of these athletes. They’ve worked so hard all season and trusted the process. It’s exciting to watch them compete at this level, and I’m hopeful that some will make it all the way to state. No matter the outcome, their effort, attitude, and dedication have already made this a season to remember.”

The regional meet is the final step before the state championships, and Marfa’s track athletes are ready to rise to the challenge. The regional track meet schedule on MISD’s social media and website.

Junior High softball and baseball teams will host Van Horn and Fort Davis Thursday at 4 and 5:30 p.m. at Coffield Park.

FROM THE ARCHIVES

January 14, 1928

W. H. CARDWELL: 70 YEAR OLD COWBOY

Cora Melton Cross in the Farm News, after paying a glowing tribute to the many known virtues of this veteran cowman, a former prominent citizen of Marfa, tells us briefly, in Mr. Cardwell's own words, a sketch of his life:

I was born in Gonzales County in 1857. My father was a pioneer stock man of the early fifties, and my mother, both idealistic and practical, a fitting mate for a Texas frontiersman.

The Mexican War was ancient history when I was born, but the aftermath, a seething unrest possessed the settlers partly because of the inability of human beings to readily adapt themselves to changed conditions and again because of the time required by nature to overcome the effect of the horrors of war, together with the realization that such upheavals invariably entrain change of people and pursuits, things were in a state of chaos.

The pioneers who had even a limited amount of money when they came West had invested in cattle and the small surplus remaining after this was done had vanished with the turmoil of war.

This scarcity of dollars continued until news came, by passing from lip to lip, that if Texas cattle could be driven to Kansas they could be sold. The urge was so great that not even a secondary thought was given at the time to hardship and physical sufferings involved. Nothing was considered, excepting a using knowledge of the Chisholm Trail. Needless to say that I at once decided for trail driving when father would permit it. Those days children awaited the consent of the parents for any proposed venture, and I was 21 years old before I realised this one. Even then it was curtailed, for I never did make a full trail drive, although I got in readiness many herds and drove them part of the way up.

Father in the meantime had moved to Caldwell County, where the opportunity came for me to try my hand at working up trail herds for the noted George W. Littlefield. After doing this for some time, and making the short drives to get them started, I decided that drifting along behind a herd was too tame for me and did not fit in with my idea of rapid riding. But I liked rounding up, cutting cattle, and above all, roping and branding, particularly the former. There was a sort of satisfaction in getting together the nucleus for a trill herd, then adding to it until it was complete and ready for starting.

I continued in this line of work until it became necessary for me to go back home and manage the ranch and farm for my parents; this I did until my younger brother was capable of handling it, at which time I turned it over to him, and with the aid I could give him he did it successfully until father and mother died, the one at the age of 85, and the other at 76.

I became fairly expert with the rope and gloried in branding time, when I could try my skill to the utmost. That I have not in the passing years entirely lost the art was demonstrated at the Gonzales Fair last fall, when I won first prize on the second day and third money the third day of the contest. I also roped and successfully tied my calf at the recent contest for old-time cowboys, held during the Old Trail Drivers' reunion at an Antonio, but lost out on time. No other pastime has ever sent rigors of excitement chasing up and down my spinal column like riding a good roping horse full speed and dropping the lop over the head of a steer. A bucking bronco isn't in the same class.

Getting back to the old days. I moved from Caldwell County back to Gonzales and combined real estate with my cattle business. These interests prospered for me, and I have nothing to complain of. Of course, I have made mistakes, that is but human, I suppose, but in a way have been successful; and above all I have these many years enjoyed and retained good-fellowship with the cowmen whom it has been my privilege to know and work with. After some pleasurable and profitable years in Gonzales I moved to Marfa, where I entered into like business and continued there for ten years.

AROUND THE BIG BEND

Thur
April
17

Hike with Homeless Dogs

10am - 11am at Davis Mountains State Park
Help a homeless dog have a great time on the trail!

Righteous Intonation

7pm - 9pm at The Ritchey
Come watch Righteous Intonation play at The Ritchey, no cover!

Starry Night Stories

9pm - 10pm at Davis Mountains State Park
Enjoy an evening of constellation viewing and storytelling.

Monthly Distribution Day

4pm at Marfa Food Pantry
Marfa Food Pantry distributes food on the third Thursday of the month.

Fri
April
18

Alpine Gem & Mineral Show

9am - 6pm at Alpine Civic Center
The Alpine Gem and Mineral Show returns April 18th-20th at the Alpine Civic Center. This FREE Annual three day gem and mineral show features rocks, rough & finished stones, beads and tools

Cottonwood Canopy Tour

9am - 10:30am at Davis Mountains State Park
Explore the Cottonwood trees along Limpia Creek and learn why they are an important desert species.

Tom Griffith

7pm - 9pm at The Ritchey
Come watch Righteous Intonation play at The Ritchey, no cover!

Sat
April
19

Alpine Gem & Mineral Show

9am - 6pm at Alpine Civic Center

Art in the Park

2pm - 3:30pm at Davis Mountains State Park
Join us for an all-ages & all-ability levels arts & crafts workshop.

Easter Egg Hunt

10am at Kokernot Park - Alpine
Kiwanis Club of Alpine hosts their annual Easter Egg Hunt on Saturday, April 19th at 10:00 am SHARP at Kokernot Park.

Anna Maria Rosales

7pm - 9pm at The Ritchey
Come watch Anna Maria Rosales play at The Ritchey, no cover!

Sun
April
20

Alpine Gem & Mineral Show

9am - 4pm at Alpine Civic Center

Easter Social & Fundraiser

3pm - 6pm at Big Bend Jeeps in Terlingua
Come join us for a Community Easter Social helping raise money for our Big Bend Public Library!

Tue
April
22

Marfa Live Arts hosts: Acting Studio Workshops

6pm - 8:30pm at Crowley Theater
Come work on improv, scene work, character development, and more. Join our theater troupe! Free to attend, no experience necessary.

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

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Tuesdays at 12pm at Marfa Public Library

Free Meditation Classes

Tuesday & Thursday at 6:00pm 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 - 12:00pm at Alpine Visitor Center

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



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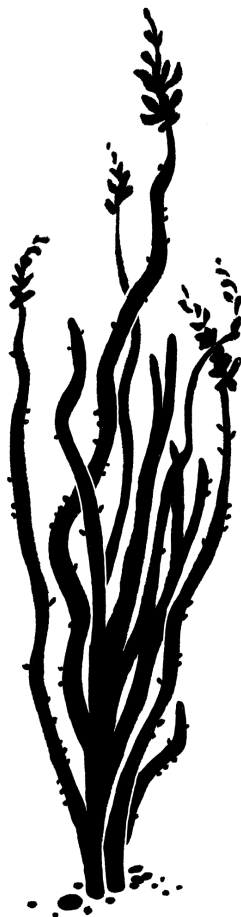
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To apply, please email your resume and a letter of interest to lgordon@cdri.org.

Request for Proposals

Green Infrastructure Engineering Request for Proposals Big Bend Conservation Alliance (BBCA), in partnership with the City of Presidio, invites proposals from qualified landscape engineering firms or interdisciplinary teams to lead a green infrastructure initiative funded through a U.S. Environmental Protection Agency (EPA) grant. Learn more here: www.bigbendconservationalliance.org Deadline to submit proposals is May 9, 2025 at 11:59p CT

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For more information and to book reservations please visit juddfoundation.org or call 432 729 4406.

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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.





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The Big Bend Sentinel (ISSN 1076-1004 USPS 055-800) is published weekly, on Thursdays, 50 times a year by West Texan Media Group LLC, Drawer P, Marfa, TX 79843. Annual subscription rates are \$50 in Presidio, Brewster & Jeff Davis counties, and \$60 elsewhere in Texas and the United States. Special rates apply abroad. Periodicals class postage paid at Marfa, Texas 79843.
Postmaster: Send address changes to Drawer P, Marfa, TX 79843.