

BURN BAN IN EFFECT, NO GROUND FIRES

by order of Presidio County

Area races on the ballot Saturday

TRI-COUNTY — The May 3 local election covering some tri-county posts kicks off Saturday morning at 7 a.m. and runs until 7 p.m.

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.

To view current voter ID requirements and check your voter eligibility, visit the Texas Secretary of State's website.

Presidio joint election

Voting is from 7 a.m. to 7 p.m. at the Presidio Activities Center, 1200 E. O'Reilly in Presidio. To view sample ballots, visit the city's website at presidiotx.us and the school board's website at presidiotx.us.

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 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." See page 1 for more information on the bond.

City of Alpine

Voting is from 7 a.m. to 7 p.m. at 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 Ruckes. Because he is running unopposed for the position, he was officially declared elected and the election was canceled.

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Photo by Geoff Winningham / Foto de Geoff Winningham

A trail of marigold petals is laid out for el Dia de los Muertos (the Day of the Dead), leading to the door of a home in Zinacapan, Puebla. Read more on page 4.

Un sendero de pétalos de cempasúchil se extiende para el Día de los Muertos, hasta la puerta de una casa en Zinacapan, Puebla. Leer más en la página 3.

Presidio ISD board addresses taxpayer questions ahead of school bond election

By Sam Karas sam@bigbendsentinel.com

PRESIDIO — Last Wednesday, around 30 Presidio ISD parents and staff members gathered to discuss a \$9.9 million bond for district improvements that will appear on the ballot this Saturday. School board members Perla Natividad, Jaime Sanchez and Brenda Witte moderated the discussion, fielding questions about school finance and the potential projects that could be funded with the bond.

Superintendent Carmen Rubner was also a part of the presentation. Under Texas electioneering law, she is prohibited from making statements for or against the measure, but was able to give background information about the district's resources. (School board members, on the other hand, have more freedom to publicly advocate for its adoption.)

A bond is one of the few tools that school districts can use to make large-dollar improvements without the limitations ascribed to state and federal funding. "A school bond is like a home mortgage," Rubner explained. "Almost all school districts in Texas utilize voted bonds to fi-

(Continued on page 2)

Terlingua microclinic celebrates first 2 weeks, confirms Marfa and Presidio clinic details

By Sam Karas sam@bigbendsentinel.com

PRESIDIO — At last Thursday's meeting, the Big Bend Regional Hospital District (BBRHD) toasted a successful first two weeks of Bravo Health Terlingua, the region's new "microclinic." Billed as an innovative project to transform rural healthcare, the small building — staffed in-person by local nurse Ashley Grover — blends a traditional office visit with cutting-edge telemedicine.

Ashish Gupta, a Houston-based doctor who interacts with patients in Terlingua from behind a screen, gave a report from his first two weeks at the new location. So far, he'd seen 57 unique patients and had gotten mostly positive feedback from South Brewster County residents excited about the service. "We're seeing a lot of cool stuff and having a lot of fun," he said. The small clinic building, located on Rex Ivey Road, has two clinic rooms for patient privacy and comfort. Nurse Grover performs most of the functions of a normal checkup — the difference here is that Gupta, from a desk 650 miles away, can see through the specially-rigged scopes and ask Grover to perform additional exams on-demand.

Of the 57 patients, there were a few high-stakes visits — one patient

(Continued on page 2)

La junta del Distrito Escolar Independiente de Presidio aborda las preguntas de los contribuyentes antes de la elección de bonos escolares

Por Sam Karas sam@bigbendsentinel.com

PRESIDIO — El miércoles pasado, alrededor de 30 padres y miembros del personal del Distrito Escolar Independiente de Presidio se reunieron para discutir un bono de \$9.9 millones para mejoras del distrito, que se incluirá en la boleta electoral este sábado. Los miembros de la junta escolar Perla Natividad, Jaime Sánchez y Brenda Witte moderaron el debate, respondiendo preguntas sobre la financiación escolar y los posibles proyectos que podrían financiarse con el bono.

La superintendente Carmen Rubner también participó en la presentación.

(Continúa en la página 3)

Microclínica de Terlingua celebra sus primeras dos semanas y confirma detalles de la clínica de Marfa y Presidio

Por Sam Karas sam@bigbendsentinel.com

PRESIDIO — En la reunión del jueves pasado, el Distrito Hospitalario Regional de Big Bend (BBRHD por sus siglas en inglés) celebró el éxito de las dos primeras semanas de Bravo Health Terlingua, la nueva "micro-clínica" de la región. Considerada un proyecto innovador para transformar la atención médica rural, la pequeña clínica, atendida en persona por la enfermera local Ashley Grover, combina la consulta tradicional con la tele-medicina de vanguardia.

Ashish Gupta, médico residente en Houston que interactúa con pacientes en Terlingua tras una pantalla, presentó un informe de sus dos primeras semanas en la nueva ubicación. Hasta el momento, ha atendido a 57 pacientes y ha recibido comentarios mayoritariamente positivos de los residentes del sur del condado de Brewster, quienes están entusiasmados con el servicio. "Estamos viendo muchas cosas interesantes y nos estamos divirtiendo mucho", dijo. El pequeño edificio de la clínica, ubicado en Rex Ivey Road,

(Continúa en la página 3)

Contiendas locales en la boleta electoral del sábado

TRI-COUNTY — Las elecciones locales del 3 de mayo, que abarcan algunas contiendas en los tres condados, comienzan el sábado a las 7 a. m. y se extienden hasta las 7 p. m.

Las elecciones de Marfa se cancelaron debido a que solo los titulares de cargos presentaron candidaturas para conservar sus escaños en el Ayuntamiento de Marfa y la Junta Escolar del Distrito Escolar Independiente de Marfa. En Alpine, los únicos votantes elegibles serán los residentes del Distrito 1, quienes elegirán a un nuevo representante para el ayuntamiento, la única contienda electoral disputada en las elecciones municipales. Las elecciones para la Junta Escolar del Distrito Escolar Independiente de Alpine se cancelaron debido a que no hubo contiendas disputadas. Las elecciones para el ayuntamiento y la junta escolar, así como la propuesta de un bono escolar de \$9 millones, se llevarán a cabo en Presidio.

Para consultar los requisitos actuales de identificación de votantes y verificar su elegibilidad, visite el sitio web de la Secretaría de Estado de Texas.

Elección conjunta en Presidio

La votación es de 7:00 a. m. a 7:00 p. m. en el Centro de Actividades de Presidio, ubicado en 1200 E. O'Reilly, Presidio. Para ver boletas de muestra, visite el sitio web de la ciudad en presidiotx.us y el sitio web de la junta escolar en presidiotx.us.

Ciudad de Presidio

El actual alcalde John Ferguson se postula sin oposición, pero aparecerá en la boleta electoral. Se les indicará a los votantes que voten por no más de dos candidatos para los puestos del consejo de mandato completo. Entre quienes se postulan para los puestos del consejo de mandato completo se encuentran Bianca Martínez-Bailón, Arian Velázquez-Ornelas, Silverio Escontrías, Abel "Billy" Hernández y José "Pepe" Acosta.

Para el puesto del consejo con mandato pendiente, se les indicará a los votantes que voten por no más de una persona. Alondra Flores y Juan Sáenz se postulan para el mandato pendiente.

Junta Escolar del Distrito Escolar Independiente de Presidio + elección de bonos

Tres puestos están en juego para la Junta Escolar del Distrito Escolar Independiente de Presidio. Se elegirán los tres candidatos con mayor número de votos para la junta general. Los candidatos incluyen a los titulares Iris S. Galindo y Tino Martínez, así como cuatro nuevos candidatos: Josefina Burrola, María Loyola Montoya, José A. Padilla y Jeremy Velázquez.

Se les pedirá a los votantes que elijan hasta tres candidatos. También podrán elegir si están a favor o en contra de una propuesta de emisión de bonos por \$9,900,000 para "instalaciones escolares, la compra de nuevos autobuses escolares y la imposición de impuestos suficientes para pagar el capital y los intereses de los bonos". Consulte la página 1 para obtener más información sobre el bono.

Ciudad de Alpine

La votación es de 7 a. m. a 7 p. m. En 803 W. Holland Avenue, Alpine, Texas, 79830. Para ver una boleta de muestra, visite el sitio

(Continúa en la página 3)

Presidio ISD bonds

(Continued from page 1)

nance new facilities and major renovation projects.”

If approved, this year’s bond will take the place of an 18 cent per \$100 of valuation charge on property tax bills from a prior bond passed in 1998 to build the middle school. The package was designed to make it possible for the district to make capital improvements without taking a big bite out of local families’ finances. “The \$9.9 million that is being proposed was carefully considered with the taxpayer burden in mind,” Natividad said.

The state still requires ballot language that describes the bond as a “tax increase,” though property owners will experience no change if the bond passes. (If it fails, bills will go down.)

Other school districts in the region have had mixed success with going out for bonds. A \$57 million bond for Marfa ISD was shot down by voters in 2022, and in 2018 Alpine ISD voters approved a \$22.5 million bond — but only on the district’s third try. “Could we have proposed more? We didn’t want to do that to the taxpayer,” Natividad continued. “The common trend is to request bonds that are really, really high. \$9.9 [million] was the most conservative figure that we thought would be pretty comfortable for the community to make an informed decision with.”

Natividad and the other board members explained that the package was designed with the help of the district’s bond attorneys. Priorities for how it would be spent aren’t set in stone, but a list of potential projects

was generated by surveying staff members about their needs.

Any money the district receives from the state and federal government comes with lots of stipulations about how that money can be spent. The laws about how bonds can be used are also complex but give the district the ability to address material needs within the district before they become emergencies and require immediate budget transfers. “The money that we generate with local tax doesn’t get us very far,” Natividad said, explaining that the state affords each district a “basic allotment” per student that hasn’t changed since 2019. “We’re trying to keep our budget as conservative as possible.”

To make matters more complicated, the state has also required safety upgrades at a rapid pace, but districts are often left to foot the bill. The district has tried to make the most of the new requirements — for example, making a pricey wall around the elementary school also function as a space to display student art — but it’s difficult to plan ahead for these expenses in the ever-evolving landscape of school security.

While the list of projects pitched by the district is long, a few earned special mention during last Wednesday’s session: renovating the elementary school gym was a top priority for some, with potential safety issues hindering its use as a multipurpose space. Buses were another hot topic, as well as science lab upgrades, facilities for programs like band and

welding, and cafeteria space. Finishing the multipurpose building — the facility going up across the street from the high school — was also a priority.

Natividad explained that some of these ideas might sound like luxuries but have trickle down effects to the long-term health of the district, from teacher recruitment and retention to student safety. She gave the example of bleacher replacements at the district’s fields — she’s heard folks from out of town complain about coming to Presidio for home games. “That’s hindering their decision to come over and visit our town,” she said. “We have to be able to attract.”

Local business owner Ariel Lara said he could see the logic in tending to some of these issues right away, particularly when it came to big ticket machines and appliances on their last legs. “If you get new equipment that functions, I think there will also be an energy savings component that will lower your [maintenance and operation] expenses,” he said.

The measure will be up for a vote this Saturday [POLL INFORMATION JUMP]. For more information about the bond — and to see more of the district’s financial documents — please visit presidio-isd.net or visit the district’s official page on Facebook.

Mario Leyva contributed reporting to this story.

Microclinic

(Continued from page 1)

came in with a severe laceration, and two others were treated with dangerous complications from alcohol abuse. Another patient with blood in their urine was subjected to a screening that revealed a mass on their kidney.

Part of Gupta’s survey included asking patients what would have happened if the clinic was not available. Five responded that they would have stayed home and two responded that they would have gone to the emergency room. All patients surveyed said that they weren’t phased by the telemedicine technology used at the clinic.

The report also included a “net promoter score,” which measures general patient satisfaction. Gupta said that primary care practices typically receive scores in the 60s, but the fledgling Terlingua clinic was already

boasting 93%. “We’re really happy with those numbers,” he said.

Hamilton Health Box — the company that runs Bravo Health Terlingua — will soon have a presence in other communities. This week, they’ll take over the lease on O’Reilly Street in Presidio for a former Big Bend Regional Medical Center clinic that shuttered in February, in hopes of opening the clinic back up to the public in June. (The company plans to purchase some of the equipment from the clinic from the hospital, and hopes to keep the ultrasound machine provided by Texas Tech University in place if possible.)

The company has also stepped in to revamp Marfa Country Clinic, which will keep its name but will operate officially under the Hamilton Health Box umbrella on May 5. A clinic in Pecos could be next, adding to

Hamilton’s regional reach.

Attendees at the meeting raised a few concerns, namely access to Spanish-language translation services and securing TRICARE coverage for veterans and service members. (Interpretation services are available, and the company is working to ensure that providers can accept TRICARE insurance.) “We hit the ground running, and I think from Dr. Gupta’s results you can see that we are already making an impact,” said Chris King, chief development officer at Hamilton Health Box. “We hope to address the concerns that we’ve heard from the community here today — and we really can’t wait to become a part of the community.”

The Texas House wants voters to approve billions to save the state’s water supply

By Jayme Lozano Carver
The Texas Tribune

LUBBOCK — The Texas House on Tuesday approved a key piece of legislation that brings Texas one step closer to investing \$1 billion annually to address the state’s water shortage.

House Joint Resolution 7, led by state Rep. Cody Harris, R-Palestine, was overwhelmingly approved by the lower chamber, 138-6. Tuesday’s vote sets the proposal on a path to voters. If the Senate also approves it, voters will be asked in November to approve the spending, which comes from the state’s sales tax.

The Senate has a similar proposal, asking voters for dedicated funding. However, it spells out how the money is to be used. Written by state Sen. Charles Perry, R-Lubbock, Senate Joint Resolution 66 calls for 80% of the \$1 billion to go toward projects that create new water supply, such as desalination or produced water treatment plants. The remaining 20% would be split among several programs that address other needs, including infrastructure upgrades for aging pipes, drinking water and wastewater treatment plants.

Harris’ House resolution does not specify how the billions should be spent. The Texas Water Development Board, the state agency that helps manage the state’s water, would determine how the money is allocated. Harris told lawmakers the Legislature will work with the board on those decisions, but the board will decide. He also presented an amendment that protects existing groundwater supply, stating the new water supply fund

could not be used for groundwater projects unless it’s brackish groundwater.

On the House floor Tuesday, Harris said the Legislature has the opportunity to address Texas’ growing water needs by passing the resolution.

“This is an incredible opportunity for us to tackle this issue,” Harris said.

Texas water supply faces several threats, including a growing population, climate change and leaking infrastructure. Texas does not have enough water to meet demand in the case of a historic drought, according to state data. The situation will become dire if the hundreds of projects detailed in the state water plan are not completed.

Another piece of sweeping legislation, Senate Bill 7, is making its way through the legislative process. Also written by Perry, it covers a wide range of water needs and issues. The Senate unanimously approved it earlier this month. However, Harris made changes to the bill while it was in a House committee. The changes were celebrated by the state’s water community. If the House approves the bill, the two chambers will have to reconcile the differences to pass the legislation forward.

During a debate on the House Floor, state Rep. Brian Harrison, R-Midlothian, objected to dedicated funding for water needs. Harrison argued the money should be going to property tax relief. Harris disagreed and argued that securing the state’s water supply was an economic imperative.

“The Texas economy will come to a screeching halt,” Harris said, evoking the link between the state’s water supply and economy that fuels the state’s budget.

Members of the state’s water community celebrated the bill’s passage.

Jennifer Walker, director of the Texas Coast and Water program for the National Wildlife Federation, called it a historic win for Texas.

“Having sustained investments is going to be a huge help,” Walker said. “This allows flexibility for the water board to utilize all the programs at their disposal to best meet the needs of Texas communities.”

Perry Fowler, executive director of the Texas Water Infrastructure Network, said it was encouraging to see bipartisan support for the bill.

“We’re optimistic that a reasonable and balanced funding approach will prevail,” Fowler said. “One that empowers the Texas Water Development Board to support the full range of vital programs eligible.”

According to Texas 2036, Texas needs to invest at least \$154 billion over the next 50 years on water supply projects and infrastructure upgrades. While there are other state and federal programs to fund water needs, there is still a projected shortfall in funding of \$112 billion.

Water needs have become a focal point for Texas lawmakers in recent years. In 2023, the Texas Legislature allocated a one-time investment of \$1 billion to create the Texas Water Fund, with approval from voters.

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By Berenice Garcia
The Texas Tribune

MISSION — Mexico has agreed to deliver more water to the U.S. in an effort to pay off its increasing water debt, however, the water deliveries would still fall short of the total amount owed under a 1944 treaty.

Mexico will send up to 420,000 acre feet of water to the Rio Grande Valley by October, a deadline set in the original treaty. The U.S. State Department first announced the agreement Monday.

U.S. Rep. Monica De La Cruz, a Republican from Edinburg, laid out additional details of the agreement at a news conference Tuesday.

"Today we have made a big, big step in the right direction," De La Cruz said, praising President Donald Trump and his administration for pressuring Mexico on water. "This is just the first step, it is not the last. This fight affects every South Texas family because every one of us needs water."

This week’s announcement is the latest development in a years-long push by Texas farmers and elected leaders to force Mexico to deliver water to their parched land. Producers all over the region have had to scale back dramatically. And in some instances, entire industries have collapsed. Meanwhile, Mexican officials cited their own issues with water scarcity for their inability to meet their treaty obligations.

As part of the 1944 water treaty, Mexico must deliver 1,750,000 acre-feet of water to the U.S. from six tributaries every five years. That averages to 350,000 acre-feet every year. With more than four years into the current cycle, which ends in October, Mexico has delivered less than 600,000 acre-feet.

If Mexico is able to deliver the proposed maximum of 420,000 acre-feet under the new agreement, its total deliveries for the current five-year cycle would reach 950,000 acre-feet.

To address the more than 800,000 acre-feet that would still be owed, Mexico agreed to an immediate transfer of 56,750 acre-feet of water at the Amistad Reservoir, which is jointly managed by the U.S. and Mexico. They also agreed to make monthly transfers at both Amistad and the Falcon reservoirs.

Mexico also agreed to increase the share of water that the U.S. gets from the six tributaries managed by the treaty. As part of the 1944 treaty, the U.S. gets a third of water from six tributaries, but in this agreement, Mexico will allow the U.S. to receive half of that water.

Additionally, Mexico will deliver more water from the Rio San Juan, a flow not managed by the treaty and which



Photo by Carlos Kosienski/Sipa USA via REUTERS

The U.S. and Mexico governments agreed to an updated water agreement to help South Texas farmers.

cannot be stored at the reservoirs, when it can be beneficial for the U.S.

The two countries plan to meet in July to assess the hydrology conditions and evaluate the actions taken thus far. They also intend to hold ongoing meetings to formulate a plan for Mexico to make dependable deliveries during the next five-year cycle.

In November, the federal agency tasked with overseeing the treaty, reached an agreement with Mexico to amend the treaty. Similarly to the new agreement, the treaty amendment allows Mexico to transfer water stored at the two reservoirs to the U.S. and allows Mexico to deliver water it doesn’t need from the San Juan and Alamo rivers, both of which were not included in the original treaty as acceptable sources of water deliveries.

De La Cruz said the new agreement, unlike the amendment, will come with consequences and that the next step will be to make it part of the United States-Mexico-Canada Agreement, a trade agreement signed by Trump in 2020.

U.S. Sen. John Cornyn, who has also led efforts to pressure Mexico to make more water deliveries, thanked the Trump administration for obtaining a commitment from Mexico and accused the Biden administration of “sitting on its hands and letting Texans suffer.”

“South Texas has been devastated by Mexico’s repeated refusal to deliver the water it has owed the United States for far too long, and I commend the Trump administration for securing this critical deal for Mexico to finally send water to the region,” Cornyn said in a news release.

Last year, Cornyn led a letter to Senate and House appropriations committees asking them to withhold funds from Mexico until they agreed to provide more water.

“I will continue working alongside President Trump and his administration to push Mexico for consistent, annual deliveries to live up to its obligations under the 1944 Water Treaty and ensure our South Texas agriculture community has the resources needed to thrive,” Cornyn added.

U.S. Rep. Vicente Gonzalez, a Democrat from McAl-

len joined Cornyn’s letter, welcomed the new agreement but insisted that any water from Mexico must be met with increased federal funding to improve the local infrastructure.

“We lose 40% of the Mexican water payments to evaporation and seepage,” Gonzalez said. “If we don’t get our infrastructure in order, we will never be out of the woods.”

Aiming to invest in other solutions for water, De La Cruz formed the South Texas Water Working Group in August which focuses on developing water infrastructure to enable the region to be self-sustaining when it comes to water.

Hidalgo County Judge Richard F. Cortez noted the agreement would only provide short-term stability and lamented the irreversible losses experienced by the region due to a shortage of water.

Last year, Rio Grande Valley Sugar Growers, the last sugar mill in the state, announced their closure after 51 years in operation due to the lack of water. As drought conditions persisted, limiting the amount of water that could be used to irrigate crops, the agriculture community grew concerned that the citrus industry could be next.

The Texas Farm Bureau expressed appreciation for the deal and for the critical relief it will bring to farmers over the next six months.

“The recovery of Rio Grande Valley agriculture will take time after years of hardship,” said Russell Boening, president of the Texas Farm Bureau. “Mexico must make good on its new promise to deliver water.”

To provide some financial relief to the farmers who have been unable to plant their crops, De La Cruz, along with the Texas’ congressional delegation, secured \$280 million in disaster assistance.

"I've been working on this problem for over 25 years," said Dale Murden, president of Texas Citrus Mutual. "We have never had this taken to a level this high where we've finally seen some action."

"This is going to help citrus get through the summer, and it's going to help produce have a fall."

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Bonos del Distrito Escolar Independiente de Presidio

(Continuación de la página 1)

Según la ley electoral de Texas, tiene prohibido hacer declaraciones a favor o en contra de la medida, pero pudo proporcionar información general sobre los recursos del distrito. (Los miembros de la junta escolar, por otro lado, tienen mayor libertad para abogar públicamente por su adopción).

Un bono es una de las pocas herramientas que los distritos escolares pueden utilizar para realizar mejoras de gran envergadura sin las limitaciones de los fondos estatales y federales. "Un bono escolar es como una hipoteca", explicó Rubner. Casi todos los distritos escolares de Texas utilizan bonos con voto para financiar nuevas instalaciones y proyectos importantes de renovación.

De aprobarse, el bono de este año reemplazará el cargo de 18 centavos por cada \$100 de tasación en las facturas de impuestos prediales de un bono anterior, aprobado en 1998, para la construcción de la escuela secundaria. El paquete se diseñó para que el distrito pudiera realizar mejoras de capital sin afectar significativamente las finanzas de las familias locales. "Los \$9.9 millones propuestos se consideraron cuidadosamente teniendo en cuenta la carga fiscal del contribuyente", dijo Natividad.

El estado aún exige que la boleta electoral incluya un texto que describa el bono como un "aumento de impuestos", aunque los propietarios no experimentarán cambios si se aprueba. (Si no se aprueba, las facturas se reducirán).

Otros distritos escolares de la región han tenido resultados dispares con la solicitud de bonos. Un bono de \$57 millones para el Distrito Escolar Independiente de Marfa fue rechazado por los votantes en 2022, y en 2018, los votantes del Distrito Escolar Independiente de Alpine aprobaron un bono de \$22.5 millones, pero solo en el tercer intento del distrito. "¿Podríamos

haber propuesto más? No queríamos perjudicar al contribuyente", continuó Natividad. "La tendencia común es solicitar bonos muy, muy altos. \$9.9 [millones] fue la cifra más conservadora que consideramos que sería bastante cómoda para que la comunidad tomara una decisión informada".

Natividad y los demás miembros de la junta explicaron que el paquete se diseñó con la ayuda de los abogados de bonos del distrito. Las prioridades sobre cómo se gastaría no son definitivas, pero se generó una lista de posibles proyectos consultando al personal sobre sus necesidades.

Todo el dinero que el distrito recibe del gobierno estatal y federal viene con muchas estipulaciones sobre cómo se puede gastar. Las leyes sobre el uso de los bonos también son complejas, pero otorgan al distrito la capacidad de abordar las necesidades materiales antes de que se conviertan en emergencias y requieran transferencias presupuestarias inmediatas. "El dinero que generamos con los impuestos locales no nos alcanza para mucho", dijo Natividad, explicando que el estado otorga a cada distrito una "asignación básica" por estudiante que no ha cambiado desde 2019. "Intentamos mantener nuestro presupuesto lo más conservador posible".

Para complicar aún más las cosas, el estado también ha exigido mejoras de seguridad rápidamente, pero a menudo los distritos tienen que asumir los gastos. El distrito ha intentado aprovechar al máximo los nuevos requisitos —por ejemplo, haciendo que un costoso muro alrededor de la escuela primaria también funcione como un espacio para exhibir arte estudiantil—, pero es difícil planificar con antelación estos gastos en el panorama en constante evolución de la seguridad escolar. Si bien la lista de proyectos presentados por el distrito es larga, algunos se destacaron especialmente durante la sesión del miércoles pasado: la renovación del gimnasio de la

escuela primaria fue una prioridad para algunos, ya que posibles problemas de seguridad dificultaban su uso como espacio multiusos. Los autobuses fueron otro tema candente, así como las mejoras al laboratorio de ciencias, las instalaciones para programas como la banda y la soldadura, y el espacio para la cafetería. La finalización del edificio multiusos (el que se construirá frente a la escuela preparatoria) también fue una prioridad.

Natividad explicó que algunas de estas ideas podrían parecer lujos, pero tienen efectos colaterales en la salud a largo plazo del distrito, desde la contratación y retención de docentes hasta la seguridad estudiantil. Puso como ejemplo la sustitución de las gradas en los campos del distrito: ha escuchado a gente de fuera quejarse de venir a Presidio para los partidos locales. "Eso les dificulta la decisión de venir a visitar nuestra ciudad", dijo. "Tenemos que ser atractivos".

El empresario local, Ariel Lara, comentó que veía la lógica de abordar algunos de estos problemas de inmediato, especialmente en lo que respecta a las máquinas expendedoras de alto precio y los electrodomésticos en declive. "Si se consiguen equipos nuevos que funcionen, creo que también habrá un componente de ahorro energético que reducirá los gastos de mantenimiento y operación", dijo.

La medida se someterá a votación este sábado [INFORMACIÓN DE LA ENCUESTA]. Para obtener más información sobre el bono y para ver más documentos financieros del distrito, visite presidio-isd.net o visite la página oficial del distrito en Facebook.

Mario Leyva colaboró con este reportaje.

Microclínica

(Continuación de la página 1)

cuenta con dos salas para la privacidad y comodidad de los pacientes. La enfermera Grover realiza la mayoría de las funciones de un chequeo médico normal; la diferencia radica en que Gupta, desde un escritorio a 1047 kilómetros de distancia, puede ver a través de los endoscopios especialmente diseñados y solicitarle a Grover que realice exámenes adicionales a demanda.

De los 57 pacientes, hubo algunas visitas cruciales: un paciente ingresó con una laceración grave y otros dos fueron tratados con complicaciones graves por abuso de alcohol. Otro paciente con sangre en la orina se sometió a una prueba que reveló una masa en el riñón.

Parte de la encuesta de Gupta incluyó preguntar a los pacientes qué habría sucedido si la clínica no hubiera estado disponible. Cinco respondieron que se habrían quedado en casa y dos que habrían ido a urgencias. Todos los pacientes encuestados afirmaron no haberse sentido

afectados por la tecnología de telemedicina utilizada en la clínica.

El informe también incluyó un "índice de satisfacción del paciente", que mide la satisfacción general del paciente. Gupta afirmó que las consultas de atención primaria suelen recibir puntuaciones de alrededor de 60, pero la incipiente clínica de Terlingua ya contaba con un 93%. "Estamos muy contentos con esas cifras", afirmó.

Hamilton Health Box, la empresa que gestiona Bravo Health Terlingua, pronto tendrá presencia en otras comunidades. Esta semana, asumirá el contrato de arrendamiento en la calle O'Reilly, en Presidio, de una antigua clínica del Centro Médico Regional Big Bend que cerró en febrero, con la esperanza de reabrirlo al público en junio. (La empresa planea comprar parte del equipo de la clínica al hospital y, de ser posible, conservar el ecógrafo proporcionado por la Universidad Tecnológica de Texas).

La empresa también ha intervenido para renovar la Clínica Marfa Country, que conservará su nombre, pero operará oficialmente bajo el paraguas de Hamilton Health Box a partir del 5 de mayo. Una clínica en Pecos podría ser la próxima en abrirse, lo que ampliaría el alcance regional de Hamilton. Los asistentes a la reunión plantearon algunas inquietudes, como el acceso a servicios de traducción al español y la obtención de la cobertura de TRICARE para veteranos y militares. (Hay servicios de interpretación disponibles, y la compañía está trabajando para garantizar que los proveedores acepten el seguro de TRICARE). "Comenzamos con buen pie, y creo que, a juzgar por los resultados del Dr. Gupta, ya estamos generando un impacto", declaró Chris King, director de desarrollo de Hamilton Health Box. "Esperamos abordar las inquietudes que hemos escuchado hoy de la comunidad, y estamos deseando formar parte de ella".

Votaciones de área

(Continuación de la página 1)

web de la ciudad.

Los escaños del concejo municipal para los distritos 1 y 3 estaban en votación, pero solo la contienda por el distrito 1 tuvo suficientes candidatos para aparecer en la boleta. Los candidatos Austin Smith, Andy

Ramos y Richard Portillo compiten por el escaño del concejo municipal del distrito 1. Se les indicará a los votantes que voten por ninguno o por uno de los candidatos.

Para el escaño del concejo municipal del distrito 3 solo se presentó un

candidato: el anterior funcionario de construcción, Robert Rückes. Debido a que se presentó sin oposición para el cargo, fue declarado oficialmente electo y la elección se canceló.

NOTICIAS BREVES

El Distrito Hospitalario Regional de Big Bend recibirá fondos para la reducción de opioides

TRI-COUNTY — El alivio para las personas que sufren de abuso de opioides podría estar llegando al Big Bend en forma de pagos en efectivo del estado de Texas. El Distrito Hospitalario Regional de Big Bend (BBRHD por sus siglas en inglés) anunció en su reunión de la junta de abril que la entidad crearía un "fondo para la reducción de opioides" que se utilizará para el tratamiento, la prevención y la educación sobre el abuso de sustancias.

En los últimos años, empresas como CVS y Walgreens han llegado a acuerdos en demandas masivas por su papel en lo que estas demandas alegan como un papel en la epidemia de opioides. El estado de Texas ha creado una división especial de la oficina del contralor para determinar la mejor manera de distribuir los fondos de estas demandas para beneficiar a los tejanos afectados por estos medicamentos y su comercialización.

BBRHD recibirá un pago inicial de \$75,000 para el condado de Presidio y alrededor de \$56,000 para el condado de Brewster. La junta deberá unirse para crear programas que se ajusten a las especificaciones estatales, pero abastecer a las fuerzas del orden locales con Narcan (el medicamento utilizado para revertir una sobredosis de opioides) y asociarse con Aliviane, una organización de recuperación con sede en El Paso, fueron mencionados como posibles puntos de partida. "Estamos entusiasmados con este dinero y vamos a darle un buen uso", declaró la directora ejecutiva Lynette Brehm.

The Nature Conservancy adquiere el Rancho Heath Canyon

CONDADO DE BREWSTER — The Nature Conservancy cerró recientemente la adquisición del Rancho Heath Canyon de 671 acres, ubicado como un punto estratégico de propiedad y acceso al río dentro de Black Gap y a lo largo del Río Grande, Salvaje y Escénico, frente al puente La



Fotografía de Laurence Parent

La compra del Heath Canyon Ranch de 671 acres por parte de Nature Conservancy proporcionará un punto de acceso estratégico al río para el público.

Linea.

Este proyecto fue diseñado y facilitado por King Land & Water, en colaboración con Texas Ranch Sales, la familia Andy Kurie, The Nature Conservancy, Parques y Vida Silvestre de Texas, el Parque Nacional Big Bend y varios donantes generosos.

La propiedad será una donación de The Nature Conservancy a Parques y Vida Silvestre de Texas y se administrará como una adición al Área de Manejo de Vida Silvestre de Black Gap. "El Cañón Heath es una salida clave para el Cañón Boquillas y un punto de entrada para los Cañones Inferiores, y esta compra garantizará el acceso público para las futuras generaciones", dijo James King de King Land & Water.

Programa de camellos para niños llega a Fort Davis

FORT DAVIS — ¿Conoce el Experimento con Camellos del Ejército de los EE. UU. en la década de 1850 en Fort Davis? El miércoles 14 de mayo será una doble sorpresa para los niños del condado: visitarán a Doug Baum y sus camellos en el Sitio Histórico Nacional de Fort Davis y escucharán más sobre ellos de la mano de Kathi Appelt, autora de Érase una vez un camello, de College Station.

Los niños de la Escuela Primaria Dirks-Anderson tendrán una asamblea a las 9:00 a. m. ese día, donde Appelt dará una presentación, seguida de un programa adicional en la Biblioteca del Condado Jeff Davis a las 11:00 a. m. para los estudiantes de la Escuela Primaria Valentine, junto con los estudiantes que estudian en casa. Se exhibirán obras de arte infantiles que representan camellos en el espacio comunitario principal de la biblioteca. Se entregarán a los estudiantes marcapáginas gratuitos y un folleto titulado "Datos curiosos sobre los camellos" para que se los lleven a casa.

En colaboración con el personal del Servicio Nacional de Salud de Fort Davis, Baum ofrecerá presentaciones de historia viva los días 14 y 15 de mayo en el fuerte para que los visitantes tengan más tiempo. Appelt organizará un evento de "Conozca y salude a la autora" en Front Street Books, en Alpine, el 12 de mayo, para presentar su libro infantil, "Érase una vez un camello". Todos están invitados a asistir.

El Centro de Crisis Familiar de Big Bend anuncia su horario en Marfa

MARFA — El Centro de Crisis Familiar de Big Bend (FCCBB) recuerda a los residentes de la zona que ofrece intervenciones gratuitas en casos de crisis (servicios confidenciales para todos los sobrevivientes de abuso y violencia) y que no se necesitan citas; se aceptan visitas sin cita previa.

El FCCBB, ubicado en 1412 West Berlin, Marfa, abre el primer y tercer viernes de cada mes de 9:00 a. m. a 3:00 p. m. (a menos que se especifique lo contrario o se deba a un día festivo). Para más información, visite fcbb.org o llame al 432-837-7254. También dispone de una línea directa disponible las 24 horas, los 7 días de la semana, al 800-834-0654.

‘Fiestas Mexicanas’ exhibirá crónicas fotográficas de la cultura y la tradición mexicanas

MARFA — A partir del 5 de mayo, el Museo de Marfa y el Condado de Presidio presentará "Fiestas Mexicanas", una exposición itinerante de Humanities Texas, creada en colaboración con el fotógrafo de Houston Geoff Winningham. La inauguración de la exposición será una celebración comunitaria del Cinco de Mayo con música, comida y bebida, de 18:00 a 20:00 h, en el Museo de Marfa y el Condado de Presidio, ubicado en 110 W. San Antonio, Marfa.

Con impactantes imágenes de Winningham, la exposición presenta una vívida crónica de las históricas y diversas tradiciones de las festividades mexicanas, expresiones profundamente arraigadas del patrimonio religioso y cultural del país. Desde su primer viaje al estado de Michoacán para el Día de los Muertos, la obra de Winningham abarca décadas, documentando

una amplia gama de tradiciones festivas en pueblos de todo México, destacando cómo estas celebraciones unen a las comunidades a través de tradiciones centenarias de arte, música, danza y culto. La exposición estará abierta al público del 5 de mayo al 15 de junio. Para más información sobre el horario de visita o para concertar visitas de grupo, contacte con el museo en info@marfamuseum.org.

Esta exposición es posible gracias al generoso apoyo de Visit Marfa y Humanities Texas. Humanities Texas es la filial estatal del Fondo Nacional para las Humanidades. Su misión es impulsar la educación mediante programas que mejoran la calidad de la enseñanza en el aula, apoyan bibliotecas y museos, y crean oportunidades de aprendizaje permanente para todos los tejanos.



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‘Mexican Fiestas’ to display photographer’s chronicles of Mexican culture and tradition

MARFA — Beginning May 5, the Marfa & Presidio County Museum will present Mexican Fiestas, a traveling exhibition by Humanities Texas created in collaboration with Houston photographer Geoff Winningham. The exhibition opening will be a community Cinco de Mayo celebration with music, food and drink from 6 to 8 p.m. at the Marfa & Presidio County Museum located at 110 W. San Antonio in Marfa.

Featuring striking images by Winningham, the exhibition presents a vivid chronicle of the historic and diverse traditions of Mexican festivals — deeply rooted expressions of the country’s religious and cultural heritage. Beginning with his first trip to the state of Michoacán for Dia de los Muertos, Winningham’s work spans decades, documenting a wide array of festive traditions in

villages throughout Mexico, highlighting how these celebrations unite communities through centuries-old traditions of art, music, dance and worship.

The exhibition will be available to the public from May 5 to June 15. For more information about viewing hours or to arrange group visits, contact the museum at info@marfamuseum.org.

This exhibit is made possible by the generous support of Visit Marfa and Humanities Texas. Humanities Texas is the state affiliate of the National Endowment for the Humanities. Its mission is to advance education through programs that improve the quality of classroom teaching, support libraries and museums, and create opportunities for lifelong learning for all Texans.



Photo by Geoff Winningham
Both horses and riders are elaborately costumed for the fiesta of Santiago (Saint James) in Tingambato, Michoacán.

Now is not the time to cut food benefits

By Libby Stephens and Celia Cole

It’s not just the price of eggs putting the squeeze on household budgets. Families across Texas are struggling to find affordable food and healthcare, pay their rent, and put gas in the car.

For the food banks in the Feeding Texas network, including the West Texas Food Bank, which serves Presidio and 18 other counties in the region, this means more people needing emergency food assistance. Across the state, we are witnessing demand we have not seen since the height of the pandemic. From seniors living on fixed incomes, to veterans unable to find work, to families with children juggling a tight budget, too many Texans are hurting.

Unfortunately, it’s not over. Rising prices and slower economic growth have led financial analysts at JP Morgan to calculate a 60% likelihood of an economic recession within the year.

With all these flashing red lights, why is Congress contemplating cuts that will take away food from millions of vulnerable Texans?

We’re talking about SNAP, the Supplemental Nutrition Assistance Program, which provides a grocery benefit to eligible Texas families living in or near poverty. SNAP is designed to combat recessions by stabilizing family budgets, food retailers, and the farm economy alike. And it currently helps 3.5 million Texans contend with the rising cost of food — most of them kids, seniors, and people with disabilities.

Though you won’t find an overt reference to SNAP cuts in the budget bill that passed in Congress, you will see an agreement to eliminate \$230 billion from agricultural and nutrition programs. SNAP represents three-quarters of the funding under that knife, making massive cuts inevitable.

You will hear these cuts framed as a way to rein in government waste or abuse. Thoughtful efficiency is a good thing in any program, and Texas is a leader in fraud prevention, detection, and enforcement. But you simply can’t make large cuts to SNAP without hurting people.

To achieve that massive \$230 billion cut, the only ways to make the math work are to reduce the number of people SNAP helps, or reduce the amount of help they receive. With the average SNAP benefit just \$2 per meal, any reduction in food assistance — particularly when grocery prices remain high — will lead to more families facing hunger. Now is simply not the time to take food away from seniors, children, and veterans.

Recent reports suggest Congress is considering a third option — forcing states to make impossible decisions about what and whom to cut. By requiring states to pay for a portion of SNAP benefits, Congress could move this cost off their books. The need wouldn’t go away — like squeezing a balloon, the pressure would land on state legislatures to either make up the gap or take the blame for increasing hunger. With this unfunded mandate, the federal government would quietly pass the buck to Texas officials, forcing them to make un-

popular and harmful cuts affecting millions of Texans.

We estimate that if Texas was required to cover just 10% of SNAP benefits starting next year, state legislators would need to find \$717 million in new revenue to keep the program whole. If they opted not to, 267 million meals would disappear from the tables of low-income Texans.

Offloading the cost of SNAP onto states abandons a 50-year national commitment to assist families with affording an adequate diet, no matter where they live. If enacted, this budgetary sleight-of-hand would fundamentally alter the structure of a popular program, eroding its ability to guarantee a basic need during natural and economic disasters.

The knock-on effects would also be disastrous. Schools would have a reduced capacity to provide free meals to students in need. Texas farmers and food retailers would see lower sales, potentially worsening any recession. And food banks would not be able to keep up with the increased needs of families who will lose their access to SNAP.

SNAP is more than a nutrition program, it is a smart investment in our local, state and national economies. The program has a high return on investment that fuels economic activity across the nation. According to USDA’s SNAP Multiplier report, \$1 billion in SNAP benefits generates around \$1.54 billion in gross domestic product (GDP) — a 54% return on investment. This supports 13,560 new jobs — including \$32 million in added income going to agricultural industries that support 480 agricultural jobs.

In the 2024 calendar year, SNAP payments generated an estimated \$10.73 billion in economic activity for Texas. SNAP is also responsible for supporting more than 94,000 jobs in Texas and more than 2 billion meals for Texas families in need in 2024.

If current proposals move forward, hungry families will suffer, food businesses will suffer, and our overall economy will be weaker. But it’s not too late. While Congress’ recent actions portend serious cuts to SNAP, legislators can demand that the program be held harmless in any final bill.

SNAP is our nation’s first line of defense against hunger. If we weaken the program, hunger will persist and grow, becoming an even more costly problem to be addressed in the future.

Texas leaders should make their stance clear: we should not take food assistance away from millions of Americans. Instead, we should pass a strong farm bill that strengthens our economy and our nation’s ability to feed itself.

Libby Stephens is the CEO of West Texas Food Bank. The West Texas Food Bank serves 19 counties, including Andrews, Borden, Brewster, Crane, Dawson, Ector, Glasscock, Howard, Jeff Davis, Loving, Martin, Midland, Pecos, Presidio, Reeves, Terrell, Upton, Ward, and Winkler with food and resources.

Celia Cole is the CEO of Feeding Texas, a statewide network of food banks leading a unified effort to end hunger in Texas.

The Nature Conservancy purchases Heath Canyon Ranch

BREWSTER COUNTY — The Nature Conservancy recently closed on the 671-acre Heath Canyon Ranch, located as a strategic inholding and river access point within Black Gap and along the Rio Grande Wild and Scenic River across from the La Linda bridge.

This project was designed and facilitated by King Land & Water working with Texas Ranch Sales, the Andy Kurie family, The Nature Conservancy, Tex-

as Parks and Wildlife, Big Bend National Park, and several generous donors.

The property will be a gift to Texas Parks and Wildlife by The Nature Conservancy and managed as an addition to Black Gap Wildlife Management Area.

“Heath Canyon is a key take-out for Boquillas Canyon and put-in for the Lower Canyons, and this purchase will assure public access for future generations to come,” said James King of King Land & Water.

Construction

Advertisement and Invitation for Bids

The City of Presidio will receive bids for furnishing all labor, materials, and equipment and performing all work required for the Water Wells 6 & 8 Rehabilitation, TxCDBG, CDV23-0300, until 4:00 P.M., C.S.T. on Friday, May 16, 2025 at the City Hall 507 W. O’ Reilly Street, Presidio, Texas 79845 (P.O. Box 1899, Presidio, Texas, 79845) after which the bids will be publicly opened and read aloud.

Bid/Contract Documents, including Drawings and Technical Specifications are on file at the City Hall 507 W. O’Reilly Street, Presidio, TX, 79845, or may be purchased for \$150.00 for each set from Kleinman Consultants, P.O. Box 1175, Presidio, Texas 79845, (432) 664-9057 (telephone). No refunds will be made. Digital copies of the Contract Documents and plans may be requested at no charge by email at ramon@kleinmanconsultants.com.

A bid bond in the amount of 5 percent of the bid issued by an acceptable surety shall be submitted with each bid. A certified check or bank draft payable to the City of Presidio or negotiable U.S. Government Bonds (as par value) may be submitted in lieu of the Bid Bond.

Attention is called to the fact that not less than, the federally determined prevailing (Davis-Bacon and Related Acts) wage rate, as issued by the US Department of Labor and contained in the contract documents, must be paid on this project. In addition, the successful bidder must ensure that employees and applicants for employment are not discriminated against because of race, color, religion, sex, sexual identity, gender identity, or national origin.

City of Presidio reserves the right to reject any or all bids or to waive any informalities in the bidding. Bids may be held by City of Presidio for a period not to exceed 60 days from the date of the bid opening for the purpose of reviewing the bids and investigating the bidder’s qualifications prior to the contract award.

City of Presidio does not discriminate based on race, color, religion, sex, national, origin, familiar status or disability. City of Presidio is an affirmative action/equal opportunity employer & encourages participation by Section 3 residents and businesses.

Funding for this project is covered under Section 3 of the Housing and Urban Development Act of 1968. All eligible bidders must comply with Section 3 requirements in regard to meeting or exceeding the required objectives for both hiring and subcontracting. In accordance with these objectives, Contractors are required to direct their newly created employment and/or subcontracting opportunities to Section 3 Residents and Business Concerns.

City of Presidio

Brenda Ornelas, City Secretary

4/29/2025

All contractors/subcontractors that are debarred, suspended or otherwise excluded from or ineligible for participation on federal assistance programs may not undertake any activity in part or in full under this project.

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The City of Presidio is giving notice of the city’s intent to submit a Texas Community Development Block Grant Program grant application for a Rural Economic Development Fund grant request of \$1,000,000.00 for downtown revitalization/economic development improvements in the City of Presidio. The application will be available for review at City Hall during regular business hours beginning Monday, April 21, 2025. Para obtener una copia en espanol, comuniquese con Pablo Rodriguez al 432-229-3517.

AN ORDINANCE OF THE CITY OF PRESIDIO REPEALING ORDINANCE NO. 2001-02 IN ITS ENTIRETY; ADOPTING REGULATIONS REGARDING ANIMAL CONTROL IN THE CITY OF PRESIDIO; ADOPTING REGULATIONS REGARDING THE STANDARD OF CARE OF ANIMALS, PROHIBITING ANIMAL ABANDONMENT; ADOPTING, REQUIRING REGISTRATION AND ACCINATION OF ANIMALS, PROHIBITING ANIMALS RUNNING AT LARGE, IMPOUNDMENT, QUARANTINE AND FEES; PROVIDING FOR ENFORCEMENT AUTHORITY AND AUTHORIZING A FINE FOR VIOLATIONS IN AN AMOUNT OF NOT MORE THAN \$500.00 PER VIOLATION; AND PROVIDING FOR THE FOLLOWING: FINDINGS OF FACT, ADOPTION AND ENACTMENT, REPEALER, SEVERABILITY, PROPER NOTICE AND MEETING, AND EFFECTIVE DATE.

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