

BURN BAN IN EFFECT, NO GROUND FIRES

by order of Presidio County

Capital Highlights

Abbott: Flooding death toll now at 135

Gov. Greg Abbott said late last week that the statewide death toll from the catastrophic flooding in the Hill Country stands at 135, and the number of persons missing has dropped to three.

The July 4 flooding began when the storm stalled over what is known as “Flash Flood Alley,” *The Dallas Morning News* reported.

The death toll in the Kerrville area now stands at 116, including 27 children and counselors who were at Camp Mystic, an all-girls camp.

Abbott has declared a state disaster in 26 counties across Central Texas, the Hill Country and South Texas, which allows those areas to seek federal aid.

The legislative special session, which began on Monday, aims to create new laws that provide relief funding, enhance disaster preparedness and streamline government responses to disasters.

Abbott said he is seeking legislation “that will make preparation for these types of events better, make response to these types of events better to make sure that we leave this disaster in a way that puts Texas in a better position going forward than we were before this devastating storm hit our state.”

Residents in the six counties already eligible for aid via the Federal Emergency Management Agency have already filed more than 2,000 applications for assistance, according to the San Antonio Express-News.

18 items on special session agenda so far

Besides dealing with the aftermath of the July 4 flooding, Abbott has called for lawmakers to redraw congressional districts in response to a notification from the Justice Department that four seats now held by Democrats might violate the law, *The News* reported.

While Republicans hope to gain seats at the expense of Democrats, some political experts say any alteration of the map could hurt GOP incumbents.

The department raised concerns over the legality of four districts in Houston and the Dallas area that have non-white majority populations.

Lawmakers also will consider regulating THC products derived from hemp after Abbott vetoed an outright ban on the products that passed during the regular session. He has also called on them to address abortion and “protecting women’s privacy in sex-segregated spaces.”

Only the governor can list agenda items for a special session, which lasts 30 days. There is no limit to the number of special sessions he can call between biennial regular sessions.

Fully funding State Flood Plan would cost \$54 billion

The State Flood Plan, released in December by the Texas Water Development Board, would cost the state \$54 billion if fully implemented, according to the Texas Standard.

If every flood threat were eliminated, it would involve removing more than 840,000 people

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The West Texan Media Group, LLC



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Drone photo by Brent Ellis

Around 60 people participated in a protest on the Presidio County courthouse lawn last Thursday night as part of the nationwide “Good Trouble Lives On National Day of Action,” which recognized the late civil rights activist and Congressman John Lewis. At the end of the event, many of the attendees posed in the shape of a peace sign.

LULAC celebrates Big Bend launch

By Sam Karas
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MARFA — On Friday night, the brand-new Big Bend chapter of the League of United Latin American Citizens (LULAC) celebrated its launch in the community room of the Marfa Public Library. Attendees enjoyed fresh popcorn and lemonade as they swapped stories with experienced organizers hoping to lend some of their expertise to the newest generation of Latino leadership in Far West Texas.

Per the organization’s website, “The mission of the League of United Latin American Citizens is to advance the economic condition, educational attainment, political

influence, housing, health and civil rights of the Hispanic population of the United States.”

LULAC is the oldest and biggest Latino civil rights organization in the United States and boasts over 325,000 active members. It was founded in 1929 and was originally created to serve Hispanic servicemembers returning from WWI who faced discrimination and unfair treatment on the home front. The organization serves Latinos from all ethnic backgrounds through 535 local councils scattered across the United States and Puerto Rico and has been instrumental in a number of causes from school desegregation to immigration reform.

The effort to establish a local

LULAC chapter was spearheaded by Ramon Rodriguez Aranda and Hilary Scruggs Beebe, both of whom are leaders in the Presidio County Democrats. They hoped to take advantage of LULAC’s nationwide network to help connect remote Presidio County with people power across the country.

Friday night’s program began with a moving presentation by Tori Santos and Olivia Ortiz of Tejanas Defend Democracy, a “woman-led collective rooted in the power of art, politics and fashion as tools of resistance,” per their social media. “We exist to protect democracy, honor our cultural legacy, and amplify Tejana voices through bold visual storytelling and unified public action.”

Santos spoke about her mother’s legacy of service and activism, and Ortiz reflected on the power of protest. “They want us to believe we are the conquered, but may we always remember we are the warriors,” Ortiz said. “We are the daughters of resistance and the mothers of revolution ... we know historically that women are creators of change.”

LULAC Texas State Director Gabriel Rosales had the last word and used it to reflect on his own family’s legacy of revolutionary thinking. He reminded the fledgling Latino community leaders in the room that there’s strength in numbers — nationwide, Latinos have a purchasing power greater than some

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City plans no changes to hiring process after biased remarks

Experts warn of legal liability, recommend next steps

By Mary Cantrell
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MARFA — After three Marfa City Council members were caught on tape discussing the need to hire a male for the available city administrator position, prompting citizen outrage, employment lawyers contacted by *The Big Bend Sentinel* are weighing in on the legality of the exchange and what it may mean for the hiring process moving forward.

Council members Eddie Pallarez, Mark Morrison and Raul Lara spoke openly in a public meeting on July 3 about their intent to focus

on male candidates in the ongoing city administrator search. Morrison and Lara have since apologized for participating in the exchange, with Morrison, who is on the hiring committee, stating it was an inappropriate joke and he does not actually intend to discriminate against any candidates based on sex.

Whether or not it was truly said in jest, legal experts said the conversation is evidence of illegal conduct and could open the city up to legal liability.

Kyla Cole, president of the Texas Employment Lawyers Association, a group of independent employment

lawyers who primarily represent employees in legal cases, said deciding whether or not to hire someone based on their sex is “completely illegal,” and the council members’ statements are evidence of discriminatory bias.

“You should never make an employment decision based upon one of the protected characteristics — race, sex, age, disability or national origin,” Cole said. “It violates multiple federal laws as well as Texas Chapter 21 under the labor code.”

Matt Bachop, a partner at Deats Durst & Owen P.L.L.C, an Austin-based law firm specializing in

employment and civil rights law, agreed that while the conversation itself is not necessarily illegal, it is evidence of illegal conduct. Both lawyers said it is rare to have such an exchange captured on a public audio recording, due to the fact that these types of conversations typically occur in private.

“It’s not illegal to make bigoted, ignorant comments. I do think the discussion is strong evidence of illegal conduct, which would be making employment decisions because of sex. It’s the kind of direct and smoking gun type evidence that

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Big Bend students to participate in inaugural career program this fall

By Mary Cantrell
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TRI-COUNTY — High school students from Alpine, Marathon and Marfa ISDs will participate in a new collaborative career training program, coined the Big Bend Rural Initiative for Success in Education (BBRISE), starting this coming school year.

Through the new program students from all three districts will be able to participate in Alpine ISD’s preexisting nursing science “pathway” and Marathon ISD’s new business, finance and marketing pathway. Each will culminate in students earning 15 hours of dual credit and Industry

Based Certifications.

BBRISE is a “Rural Pathway Excellence Program” (RPEP), a Texas Education Agency designation that allows neighboring districts to share career training resources while earning additional state dollars — around \$3,000 to \$4,500 — per each student that participates in the initiative.

BBRISE Regional Director Jarrett Vickers, who works for all three districts in addition to the Education Partnership of the Permian Basin, said the number of RPEPs across Texas has recently increased from three to 10, and the program has garnered bipartisan support in the

Legislature, resulting in an increase in funding from \$5 to \$25 million.

“I think you’re going to look up in about three or four years and there’s going to be 40, 50, 60, of these across the state because it’s a model that works,” Vickers said. “It’s shared resources, and schools are able to access funding from the state that they wouldn’t otherwise be able to access.”

Vickers has been traveling to each district to meet with incoming high school students, parents and school boards to get the word out about BBRISE, which has been in the works since the fall of 2024. The program — because it is tiered and requires

years of classes to earn college credit and certifications — is primarily open to only freshman this year, who will go on to level two, three and four courses in the coming years. The exception is Alpine ISD’s certified nursing assistant (CNA) program, which has been around for years and has upperclassmen enrolled.

This year, eight Marfa freshman, four Marathon freshman — the entire class — and 25 Alpine freshman will participate in BBRISE, in addition to 25 Alpine upperclassmen in the CNA track.

Marathon will be offering a course titled “principals of business,

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Presidio to pursue financing for equipment, property

City greenlights debt as opposition to county bond mounts

By Sam Karas
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PRESIDIO — At a special meeting on Monday night, Presidio’s City Council voted to pursue certificates of obligation to fund badly-needed maintenance equipment and property investments. Per the notice published on page 8, the city intends to seek financing up to \$1.98 million for “vehicles and equipment ... for the public works department” and property acquisitions that would expand City Hall and provide a new home for Presidio’s first responders. The legal notice also includes “the payment of contractual obligations for professional services” to consultants advising on the projects.

The council’s decision to take on debt marks a shift in the way the city of Presidio views its finances. For more than a decade, the city’s books were in crisis — it took time, money and grit to correct course after a series of failed and incomplete audits.

Now that the city is back on track, local leaders have an opportunity to think outside the box. “Oddly enough, having debt in a city is not actually a bad thing — it’s not like credit card debt,” Mayor John Ferguson explained at a council meeting last week. “This is very different, and having debt actually gives us the flexibility to set our tax rate where we need it.”

Each summer, municipalities, school boards and other local governments sit down to set their budget for the upcoming year. In order to finance that budget, they must also set tax rates, which have a few moving parts: there’s a maintenance and operations rate, which governs the day-to-day ins and outs from the city’s accounts, and the interest and sinking rate, which includes debt payments.

In a city like Presidio, where money is tight, there isn’t a lot of flexibility on the maintenance and operations side. Ferguson gave the example of the EMS department’s community paramedicine program, which offers a suite of home medical services to Presidio’s most vulnerable residents. The program has proven to be an overwhelming success story, and is beloved among its clients, but required the city to put up a large chunk of change in matching funds up front. “This past year, we had obligated \$150,000 towards the program, and that was \$150,000 that came straight out of the budget for one activity,” Ferguson explained. “That kind of money — when you’re looking at the picture of our whole budget — that’s a pretty big bite.”

Monday night’s vote simply authorized City Council to formally announce that they were going to seek certificates of obligation for certain projects, but the final amount and exact purchases have yet to be set in stone. Upgrades for the public works department could include new dump trucks, a grappler truck and a vacuum trailer; property investments could expand the footprint of City Hall and finally seal the deal on a long-discussed move for the city’s first responders and municipal court.

The final price tag for any of these investments could vary — advisor Thomas Lastrapes of Tijerina Financial Consulting provided mock-ups of a few different scenarios to city council, adjusting the potential bill if the city were to opt for used equipment instead of new or wanted to pursue plans with shorter-term payoffs. The \$1.98 million figure quoted in the legal notice is the “most expensive scenario,” but could be

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Capital Highlights

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and 214,000 buildings from 100-year floodplains.

To date, the state has committed \$669 million through the Flood Infrastructure Fund, which is approximately 1% of the total required.

“That is a drop in the bucket in a lot of ways,” said Derek Boese, general manager of the San Antonio River Authority and chair of the planning group that covers 2.2 million people across 16 counties. “But it’s more than we’ve seen in the past.”

The most significant chunk of the \$54 billion would go toward storm surge protection for Galveston Bay at a cost of \$24 billion.

Approximately five million Texans reside in areas vulnerable to flooding. The State Flood Plan was developed in response to Hurricane Harvey in August 2017.

Vigilance urged after 4 children die in parked vehicles

Four children have died in hot automobiles in a two-week period, and the Texas Department of State Health Services is urging vigilance. The deaths surpass the three hot car deaths recorded in all of 2024 in Texas.

“The temperature inside a vehicle can rise nearly 20 degrees in 10 minutes, and heatstroke will occur when a child’s body can’t cool itself quickly enough. Children — and pets — should never be left in the car for any length of time,” DSHS Commissioner Jennifer A. Shuford said.

Suffering heatstroke in a parked car is the second-leading cause of vehicle-

related deaths in children under 15, behind car crashes.

DSHS recommends never leaving a child alone in a vehicle, even if the car and air conditioner are running. Always check the back seat before getting out of the car and call 911 immediately if you see a child alone in a vehicle.

Court orders Uvalde officials to release shooting records

A San Antonio state appeals court has ordered Uvalde County and the Uvalde school district to release records relating to the 2022 mass shooting at Robb Elementary, the Express-News reported. The records include unseen body camera footage from responding officers, radio communications, internal emails and text messages.

The county and district repeatedly have denied Public Information Act requests from a coalition of local and national news outlets.

In a 22-page ruling, Justice Velia Meza wrote the county and district did not provide a valid legal or factual justification for withholding public information.

“Exceptions to disclosure cannot be used to justify blanket secrecy over government actions; rather, they must be specifically authorized by law and supported by evidence,” Meza wrote.

It is unclear if the county and district plan to appeal the ruling to the Texas Supreme Court.

Big money shaping GOP statewide primaries

The two open races for attorney general and comptroller are sure to bring in millions of dollars in campaign funds in the GOP primary races, The Texas Tribune noted.

In the attorney general’s race, former U.S. Justice Department lawyer Aaron Reitz raised \$2.1 million in the first three weeks of his campaign. State Sen. Mayes Middleton of Galveston has kicked in \$10 million of his own money, while state Sen. Joan Huffman of Houston has \$3 million in her campaign account.

In the comptroller’s race, Texas Railroad Commission Chair Christi Craddick outraised interim comptroller Kelly Hancock by almost \$1.5 million. A third contender, former state senator Don Huffines reported raising \$15 million, with two-thirds of that coming from a personal loan.

Former comptroller Glenn Hegar was named chancellor of the Texas A&M University System and left his post on July 1. Hancock, a former state senator, was named acting comptroller. Attorney General Ken Paxton is not seeking reelection in order to challenge U.S. Sen. John Cornyn in the primary.

Gary Borders is a veteran award-winning Texas journalist. He published a number of community newspapers in Texas during a 30-year span, including in Longview, Fort Stockton, Nacogdoches, Lufkin, and Cedar Park. Email:gborders@texaspress.com

Marfa City Council

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we almost never have in employment cases.” Bachop said. “Almost all [of the time] we’re making these cases based on circumstantial evidence, but here you’ve got decision makers stating pretty clearly the intent to make these decisions based on sex.”

The city’s top administrative role has been vacant since last October barring the one-and-a-half month stint the city’s initial hire, Andrea Walter, served before being fired this April. One council member alleged she was terminated after discovering hundreds of inoperable water meters across the city, while others stated her personality wasn’t a good fit with existing staff and council. The July 3 discussion indicated that some council members believe a male city manager will be better at managing “all these women” at City Hall.

Cole argued that if there’s something wrong with the city’s culture, it should not be a hiring factor, and even if it was, gender should not be the characteristic that hiring decisions are based on. “There’s men and women that could figure out how to make a better and more inclusive culture at their City Hall,” Cole said. “Maybe concentrating on finding a candidate who’s a uniter.”

“It’s certainly something that every city and county in rural Texas has to deal with is: how do you find somebody who’s qualified and can bring innovative ideas but also understands the culture and can build a bridge?” she added.

Cole and Bachop said qualified city administrator applicants that are not male-identifying could have a

legal case — referred to as a failure to hire claim — against the city based on the July 3 discussion if they are not interviewed or hired. A woman could present a “prima facie” case using the recording as evidence to support the claim that she was not hired based on her gender, at which point the burden would shift to the city to prove there was a legitimate business reason for their decision to hire a male candidate.

“Any woman who applies and is not hired would be able to make out their prima facie case, and then it’s going to come down to the candidates,” Cole said. “On paper, whoever they hire, if that person is truly, obviously more qualified than the female applicant, then I think the city wins. If it’s very close or the female looks to be more qualified, then I think it could certainly open the city up to legal liability.”

Even if the discussion had taken place in closed, rather than in open, session council members should not have made the discriminatory remarks that they did, Cole said, but now that it’s out there the situation should be addressed in order to regain public trust.

“The thing about it happening in the public forum is everyone knows and this is now something that has to be dealt with, whereas often these types of employment discriminatory decisions and biases happen behind closed doors,” Cole said. “It makes it very, very hard for an applicant or an employee to prove that discrimination was the motivating factor, whereas now, it’s going to put it on the city to prove that they would have made the

same decision anyway, regardless of their stated bias.”

Cole suggested removing the three council members involved in conversation from the hiring process entirely in order to protect the city from any potential claims; Bachop agreed that would be the bare minimum and hiring a third party search firm may even be a better route.

“I think it’s going to be difficult for them to come up with a process to make this decision in a way that’s not tainted by this discussion, even if all three recuse themselves from taking any part in it,” Bachop said.

Several citizens spoke out against the three council members’ actions and called for them to resign in a July 8 council meeting, stating that their positions of power to represent the interest of Marfa’s citizens had been compromised.

But council members involved in the conversation have yet to resign or recuse themselves from the city administrator hiring process, according to Interim City Administrator Kelly Perez and Council Member Travis Acreman, who initially called for the resignations of his fellow council members in the wake of the July 3 meeting.

“My understanding is that no one on the council currently perceives that there is a need to change — either the composition of the hiring committee or the council or refusal from this specific decision that we’re going to have to make,” Acreman said. “So, unfortunately, at this point I don’t see that anything

is likely to change. We just have to run the rest of this process as best we can, and we’ll have to look to the people of our community to hold the council to account as we make these decisions.”

Perez confirmed this week that the city intends to carry on with the hiring process as planned and is not currently considering reposting the job and starting anew or hiring an outside firm. All 14 applicants — four of which are women — are still being considered for the job, she said.

The planned process involves the hiring committee, established on July 3, of Baeza, Morrison and Acreman reviewing all 14 applicants and calling references before bringing five to six top candidates back to the full council at a later meeting. At that point, the full council has the choice to accept the recommendations of the hiring committee or move in another direction, Perez said.

Acreman said he appreciated that Morrison and Lara apologized to the community for their part in the conversation, stating that their acknowledgement puts everyone on “a path to healing,” but Pallarez’s refusal to admit to any wrongdoing is still a concern.

“Council Member Pallarez knows what he said was wrong, otherwise he wouldn’t have framed it as a secret ‘between us men.’” His unwillingness to apologize for the damage he caused is troubling and amplifies doubts about the council’s judgement,” Acreman said. “I hope that he will set aside his bias, if he can, and step down if he can’t.”

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Inaugural career program

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marketing and finance,” the first class for students embarking on that pathway. BBRISE hired an outside firm to conduct a labor market analysis to help determine the high-wage, high-demand jobs in the area where the program should focus its training. Vickers said it made sense to house the business, marketing and finance track in Marathon due to the presence of the Gage Hotel, which has agreed to work with students on internship requirements.

Marathon ISD Superintendent Keith Kimbrough — who is brand new to the role having moved from East Texas where he previously worked as a district principal for Martinsville ISD, a 1A school just outside of Nacogdoches — said the Mustangs are excited to be offering the new Career Technical Education (CTE) program.

“To be able to expand the possibilities for our students by partnering with these other small districts, it’s just phenomenal for our students,” Kimbrough said. “We’re gonna be working with businesses in the area, plus partnering with some universities ... So they’ll actually start earning some college credits toward this pathway, toward business and marketing.”

This coming year, BBRISE will be a hybrid program with both virtual

and in person instruction. Technology upgrades, including the introduction of Owl cameras which make virtual learning “way more interactive,” are being made to classrooms, Vickers said.

“There’s going to be a certain number of days where those kids are going to travel to Marathon and attend that class in person, but there’s going to be a certain number of days where those kids stay at their home district and basically attend class virtually,” Vickers said.

The nursing program, which involves internships at the Big Bend Regional Hospital District, will continue to be based out of Alpine ISD.

Because the number of students participating in BBRISE next year is small, the districts will use Suburbans for transportation and will not yet require buses, Vickers said, but that could change in the coming years, especially when students are in more advanced classes and need to travel more often.

Conversations about adding additional pathways in Alpine and Marfa ISDs for the 2026-27 school year are likely to begin this coming fall, he said. It is possible that an existing CTE pathway can be added to BBRISE or a new one can be created and added. Right now Marfa’s only CTE pathway is welding.

“We’re gonna re-look at that labor market analysis and maybe get an updated one, and see what has changed and what makes sense for Marfa to add, what’s their little piece of the pie,” Vickers said. “So in the year ‘26, ‘27 you’re going to have Marfa, Alpine and Marathon kids potentially going to Marfa, Alpine and Marathon all at the same time.”

For now, BBRISE is primarily being sustained by grants — including a half a million dollar Texas Regional Pathways Network grant — and philanthropy before state funds, which are on a two-year lag, can be obtained. Vickers said so far support for the initiative has been robust, and a key point he likes to touch on is that BBRISE is not about consolidation but about collaborating to present the best opportunities for area students.

“One thing we wanted to keep very, very clear when we communicated to the community and the school boards: this is not an Alpine thing, this is a Big Bend students thing,” Vickers said. “We just want to make sure that those kids aren’t losing their identity, but we’re also maximizing our resources here in the Big Bend.”

For more information, visit <https://educatepb.org/>

City debt

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whittled down if the city is able to strike deals along the way. “We tend to be conservative, so that’s what our scenarios are based on,” Lastrapes explained. “You could realistically buy all of your [items] new, pay for the bonds and remain under that ‘not-to-exceed’ amount.”

Council members will meet on Tuesday, September 16, to cast their final votes on the certificates of obligation. The vote will take place over the

course of a regular City Council meeting, held at 6 p.m. at the Presidio Activities Center.

The announcement that the city intends to take on debt comes hot on the heels of an outcry against the county doing the same. At last week’s meeting, Council Member Fernando Juarez confirmed that a petition he’d circulated protesting the county’s intent to seek certificates of obligation for courthouse

renovations and new equipment for the county’s road and bridge department had garnered enough support to trigger an election. (Details about that vote are forthcoming.)

Lastrapes said that Monday night’s vote was just the first step of many. “This is just the step to issue the Notice of Intent so we can get the ball rolling for y’all,” he explained.

CBP makes more port-of-entry busts

Officers stop internal carrier smuggling fentanyl

EL PASO — U.S. Customs and Border Protection officers working at the Bridge of the Americas international port of entry seized 132.4 grams of fentanyl July 18. The drugs were concealed in the rectum of a 56-year-old male U.S. citizen.

“Smuggling fentanyl internally is exceptionally dangerous, and we would advise anyone considering this to think twice and not risk their life or liberty,” said CBP El Paso Port Director Ray Provencio. “CBP has multiple layers of enforcement to identify and stop these smuggling attempts.”

The seizure was made shortly before 4 a.m. when the man presented himself for inspection at the BOTA pedestrian area. A CBP canine officer performing a sweep of arriving people received a positive alert for the presence of narcotics when his dog searched the man.

An initial exam indicated that the man could be

concealing drugs internally. The man was transported to a local medical facility for an exam, which confirmed the presence of foreign objects in his rectum.

About 90 minutes after the confirmation, the man passed two condom-wrapped bundles. One contained a white powder which tested positive for fentanyl. The weight was 81.6 grams. A second bundle contained blue pills which also tested positive for fentanyl. The weight was 50.8 grams.

CBP officers arrested the driver. He was turned over to Homeland Security Investigations to face charges associated with the failed smuggling attempt.

Officers seize cocaine load at Ysleta port

YSLETA — U.S. Customs and Border Protection officers working at the Ysleta international port of entry seized 42 pounds of cocaine July 20. The drugs were concealed in a vehicle being driven by a 21-year-old female U.S. citizen.

“Homeland security is our primary mission; but the tools and techniques we employ often help us stop drug smugglers in their tracks,” said CBP Ysleta Port Director Arnie Gomez. “This is yet another example of how the work performed by CBP helps keep our communities safe.”

The seizure was made shortly before 4 p.m. when a 2001 Ford Explorer with a single female occupant arrived from Mexico. CBP officers selected the vehicle for a secondary exam after a low energy portal scan identified anomalies in the appearance of the SUV.

A CBP drug sniffing dog searched the vehicle and alerted the officers to the presence of narcotics. CBP officers continued their exam and located a hidden compartment below the rear seat containing 10 bundles. The contents of the packages tested positive for cocaine.

CBP officers arrested the driver. She was turned over to Homeland Security Investigations to face charges associated with the failed smuggling attempt.



Photo courtesy of U.S. Customs and Border Protection
Fentanyl confiscated at the Bridge of the Americas international port of entry.

LULAC

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countries’ economies. “If you’ve got economic power, you’ve got power,” he said.

Rosales talked about the importance of leading a movement that has a place for everyone, regardless of race, gender, class, disability or sexual orientation. He urged respect for the history of civil rights struggles big

and small, but cautioned against getting stuck in the past. Instead, activists needed to be ready for whatever challenges the state and federal government might throw their way. “This is the time when true courage stands up,” Rosales said.

Bodycam videos released in Flash detainment

The Big Bend Sentinel previously reported on Publisher David Flash — who runs the Big Bend Times and Texas Reporter sites and social media — being detained at a Jeff Davis County Commissioners Court meeting on June 27.

Jeff Davis County officials alleged that Flash was being disruptive in his movements to take photos for a story he said he was working on — as well as with requests to take photos of Sheriff Lopez and Chief Deputy Adriana Ruiloba in the courtroom — while the meeting was in progress. Ruiloba — at the direction of County Judge Curtis Evans — eventually went to remove Flash from the meeting, said he was resisting and then took him down to the ground by his arms, as bodycam video shows. Flash said he was “tackled.”

Flash was cuffed and taken to the justice of the peace’s office, where Lopez and Ruiloba questioned him for more than 45 minutes. The judge then directed the officers to cite Flash for disorderly conduct and release him. While Flash’s video camera caught much of the incident, the moment he went to the ground was out of frame. The Sentinel filed an open request with Jeff Davis County to obtain bodycam videos from Lopez, Ruiloba and Deputy Joe Griesbrecht, who also was in the courtroom.

While the county likely could have withheld the videos as part of an active investigation, Jeff Davis officials decided to release them to The Sentinel to give the public a better view of what happened. The videos are posted at youtube.com/@TheBigBendSentinel.



Jeff Davis County Sheriff Victor Lopez leads publisher David Flash out of a Commissioners Court meeting on June 27 after officers said he was disrupting the meeting.

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Opinion

Dear Editors,

Re: Sam Karas’ article, “Is Presidio County ready for the ‘big one’?”

I was born in Austin and our family spent sixteen summers on the Guadalupe River in a cabin close to Kerrville.

My sister and I coached hundreds of children who attended the summer camps in that area. We watched the news on July 4th with the usual level of horror associated with natural disasters. This one was closer to home.

After scanning the news for days and then weeks, perhaps we all became a bit numb. The flood began to fall off above-the-fold headlines.

To read Ms. Karas’ article was, how do I say this, with a weighted sense of gratitude. She stands out in *The Sentinel* for her deep dives — historical documentation from multiple counties and libraries, archival photos, tireless diligence.

I cried through most of the article. It was educational, respectful and written in such thoughtful language.

Lest we forget — there is a psychic toll on a journalist who is willing to report on epic loss of life and land.

Feeling very grateful for *The Sentinel*’s top tier reporting on local issues, and for Ms. Karas’ contributions.

With my warm regards,
Bridget Weiss
Marfa

...

I wanted to take a moment to thank the Marfa EMS team for their care and compassion during my father, Dave Howard's, recent passing.

Specifically, Chase Bruttomesso - paramedic, Jessie Peña - paramedic, Coy Dominguez - advanced EMT, and Samuel Nicholas - EMT basic, were amazing throughout the last couple of months of my father's life. This included rushing him to Big Bend Regional Medical Center one evening, spending approximately 3 hours at our home on the night of Wednesday, June 4, and into the early morning hours of June 5, and then back on the night of June 7 when he passed.

Their engagement was professional, thoughtful, and they exhibited extreme care for my father and his family throughout — keeping us informed and consoling us in the end. We cannot thank these young men enough — Marfa is lucky to have you!

As a side note, I want to call out what a pity it is that Marfa does not have access to hospice. As a reminder, hospice provides compassionate care and support to individuals facing life-limiting illnesses and their families. This is something I hope will be rectified at some point in the future.

Sincerely,
Scott Howard
The Woodlands, Texas

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Rick McIvor
Owner / Operator

325-812-5541
RickMcIvor7@gmail.com
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Letters to the editor should be sent to
editor@bigbendsentinel.com, and must provide the writer’s
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that we may follow up and verify information as needed.

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JUDD



OUR WATER MATTERS

Update on Presidio County’s EDAP projects

By Trey Gerfers
tgerfers@pcuwcd.org

Back in January of 2024, Presidio County hired engineering firm Brock & Bustillos out of El Paso as well as Becky Brewster as grant administrator and myself as program manager to advance several water and wastewater projects funded by the Economically Distressed Areas Program (EDAP) of the Texas Water Development Board (TWDB). The projects include a new sewer system for Fort D.A. Russell in Marfa, a new water and wastewater system for East Heights in Marfa, as well as the planning, acquisition and design of new water systems for Las Pampas and Shafter. The financing for the projects was partially structured in the form of around \$3 million in grant funding from the TWDB. The county had to raise another \$1.6 million in match funding through the issuance of certificates of obligation, which the TWDB purchased. The matching funds are essentially a loan, which the county will be paying back to the TWDB over the next 20 years.

Sergio Adame heads the county’s engineering team from Brock & Bustillos. Adame has worked on a variety of projects including “utilities improvements, water pump stations, wastewater lift stations ... [and] water and wastewater treatment plants.” According to Adame, the TWDB’s process for EDAP projects involves four aspects: Category A, which is an eligibility assessment to determine economic and residency eligibility; Category B, which assesses existing facilities and documents any problems; Category C, which identifies, develops, and analyzes alternatives in order to ultimately develop a preferred solution; and Category D, in which the project’s implementation plan is finalized.

At this point, all of the projects except for Shafter have completed Category B. The Fort D.A. Russell project will involve the construction of a new sewer line under the alley that runs behind the residences along Officers Row as well as other lines under the streets to the north of the Chinati Foundation that will link to an existing manhole under Madrid Street near the Border Patrol facility. The project will also include a line under the main road into the Chinati Foundation and a lift station to be sited to the south of the sheds there. This lift station is necessary in order to move the waste from lower elevations to the city’s existing sewer line.

The new water and wastewater system for East Heights has also been approved up to Category B. This project will involve construction of new water and wastewater lines under El Paso Street from the west end of the neighborhood to the Tumble In RV Park. The lines will also cross under the railroad track to the north of the area and link to existing water supply lines and manholes

along Oak Street.

The new water system for Las Pampas has also crossed the Category B hurdle. This system entails a water line to be constructed in the existing easement along Highway 67 that will run from the Junta de los Rios water tower across from Presidio-Lely Airport to a site at the top of Las Pampas. This line will have two pump stations to push the water uphill to Las Pampas as well as a storage tank at the top of the line to hold the water that will supply the surrounding residences by gravity. The City of Presidio will supply the water to this system from its production wells east of the city.

The new water system for Shafter has proven to be the trickiest of the projects “due to the uncertainty” of the groundwater supply and the “difficulty in obtaining and determining property ownership” within the town, according to Adame. This has greatly slowed the process of identifying an “adequate location for the needed pump station and elevated water storage tank.”

Shafter’s current water system, which is operated by the mining company, pulls groundwater from the Mina Grande Aquifer. According to a hydrology report prepared for the county by John Shomaker & Associates out of Albuquerque, there is some risk that the water level in a new supply well drilled into this same aquifer could drop dramatically if the mine were to restart operations and dewater its mine shafts. Since the Mina Grande Aquifer is separated from the Igneous Aquifer by the Mina Grande Fault to the northwest of Shafter, the report identified a site on neighboring Cibolo Creek Ranch as the best location for Shafter’s new supply well along with about two miles of pipeline to carry the water to the town. But this solution would have involved crossing the Trans-Pecos Pipeline easement and other difficulties, and negotiations with Cibolo Creek Ranch ultimately failed to produce an agreement. As a result, the county’s team is now seeking to identify owners of parcels for a supply well to be drilled inside the town of Shafter at a depth sufficient to preclude any negative impacts from future dewatering of the mine shafts.

While the process has been slow and difficult, it has not been without its rewards. According to Becky Brewster, administrator for the county’s EDAP grant, “Water and sewer projects often involve complex challenges that require creative and strategic thinking. It has been rewarding to work with the project team to address these challenges and see the project come together. It is also rewarding to know you have played a small part in long-term improvements that will improve the quality of life for the residents of the community and last for years to come.”

Trey Gerfers serves as general manager of the Presidio County Underground Water Conservation District. A San Antonio native, he has lived in Marfa since 2013.

“The new water system for Las Pampas...entails a water line to be constructed in the existing easement along Highway 67”

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‘Blackwell Blueprint’ to drive growth for Blackwell School

MARFA — The National Parks Conservation Association (NPCA) is proud to unveil a brand-new “Blackwell Blueprint,” in partnership with the Blackwell School Alliance and Visit Marfa. This groundbreaking plan sets the stage for the future of Blackwell School National Historic Site in Marfa, which is the second national park site in the country dedicated to contemporary Latino history. NPCA, the Blackwell School Alliance, and Visit Marfa celebrated this visionary new plan at a community gathering at the historic USO Building in Marfa on Friday, July 19.

The Blackwell Blueprint is the product of community collaboration, informed by a three-day workshop at Blackwell School in October 2024. The purpose of this workshop was to engage in discussions with architects, planners, historians and community members about enhancing the necessary visitor improvements while using this new national park to advance important community development goals. About 40 people from Marfa and throughout Texas participated in the workshop in person at Blackwell School. In addition, the project team conducted more than two dozen interviews to capture all the ideas people were willing to offer. Visitors to the national historic site also happened by during the workshop — including several Blackwell alumni — and offered their ideas, experiences and thoughts.

The Blackwell Blueprint identifies park needs and offers key recommendations that will help this new national park site and the community thrive together, as well as an action plan for how to make those recommendations a reality. Some key findings include (but are not limited to):

- There is a need to “create a sense of place,” for park visitors to Blackwell. To accomplish this, the community must work with the National Park Service to repair, restore, and interpret the Blackwell School building, grounds and campus. This includes fortifying the existing original 1909 schoolhouse as well as designing new signage, walkways and interpretive displays that tell more stories on the playground or other school grounds.
- Most urgently, Blackwell School National Historic Site needs full-time National Park Service staff, a fair budget, and more resources. Without more federal resources, Blackwell will not be able to connect visitors to Latino history in Texas and across the country, and many priceless stories could be lost forever.
- Blackwell School history is closely intertwined with Latino history and culture in Marfa, a booming tourist destination in West Texas that forms the gateway to Big Bend National Park. The Blackwell Blueprint recommends steps to better connect downtown Marfa’s vibrant arts district, local hotels, and other points of interest



Drawing courtesy of the National Park Service

An architectural rendering shows how Blackwell School Improvements could look.

to Blackwell. This could include new bike paths, signage, and partnership opportunities.

The report also includes high-resolution imagery, from architectural renderings of what improvements could look like at this park site to detailed maps and diagrams of the town of Marfa.

In communities across the Southwest, school districts once enforced “de facto segregation,” forcing Mexican American children to attend separate schools from their white peers. The Blackwell School was one such institution. Mexican American children at Blackwell were given outdated textbooks and shoddy equipment and in many cases were punished for speaking in their native language.

But despite those painful memories, many Blackwell alumni retain a mix of positive and negative sentiment for their experiences at the school. Many former students proudly recall their time in the marching band and on the football team, viewing the school as a flawed institution that nonetheless had a powerful impact on their lives.

That’s why in 2006, alumni rallied to save Blackwell School from possible destruction. They founded the Blackwell School Alliance, arranging for the school to be turned into a local museum and landmark. Beginning in 2018, the Alliance partnered with the National Parks Conservation Association for a public, grassroots campaign to obtain National Park Service protection and recognition for the school.

Following extensive advocacy by the Blackwell School Alliance, NPCA, and park advocates in Texas and around the country, President Biden signed the Blackwell School National Historic Site Act into law in 2022. This bipartisan bill was originally

introduced by former Congressmen Will Hurd and Filemón Vela of Texas. Rep. Tony Gonzales, Sen. John Cornyn of Texas and Sen. Alex Padilla of California brought the bill across the finish line. The park was formally dedicated in 2024, with a special ribbon cutting presided over by then-Secretary of the Interior Deb Haaland.

Cristóbal López, Texas field representative for the National Parks Conservation Association, said: “The Blackwell Blueprint was a true labor of love. Together, we listened to Blackwell alumni, hearing their stories of hardship, discrimination, hope, and resolve. Our project team spent days poring over city documents, meeting with architects, planners, and historians. We were united under the common cause of protecting and interpreting Latino history for generations to come. We are grateful to everyone who raised their hand to help create this visionary plan for the little park that could, the Blackwell National Historic Site.”

“In order to fulfill our mission, enact the blueprint’s recommendations and build a better Blackwell together, we are going to need people.” Lopez continued. “Since January, the Trump administration has taken steps to gut the National Park Service, freezing funding and discarding its talented staff. In the last seven months, nearly one in four National Park Service staff have departed the agency under duress. This is completely unacceptable. We need these talented staff and these invaluable resources to protect our parks, and in the case of Blackwell, help this park thrive. The Blackwell Blueprint is a rallying cry for the Park Service, one we hope that the administration takes to heart. Support the Park Service, and help our country’s national parks flourish for future generations.”

Universal Crossword

Edited by David Steinberg July 9, 2025

ACROSS

- 1 Book part
5 Brand of pet food
9 Cause trouble
14 Shredded side dish at a deli
15 Spell of the flu
16 Children's book author Eric
17 Not much
18 Ethnicity prevalent in South America
20 Casual shirt
21 Starter follower
22 Wood for outdoor furniture
23 Medal metal
25 “Humble” places to live
27 Despite that
29 Embassy employee
31 Container whose name consists of two containers
32 Swim team's event
33 Wager
36 Corrosive chemical
37 1996 musical movie starring Madonna
39 Links shout
40 Visualize
41 Correct, as copy
42 ___ Sheen, or Dean ___

DOWN

- 1 “You there!”
2 Balm ingredient
3 *NES cheat cartridge
4 Lamb's mom
5 *One has no crew
6 Upper room
7 Contented feline's sound
8 Great Plains native
9 Fed. health law
10 Rubber mouse, say

ACROSS

- 11 Had a go
12 Forearm bones
13 Etna and Everest
19 *Answering machine's request
21 “Frozen” snow queen
24 How music was often sold in the '90s
26 Spam generator
27 JFK listings
28 Opposite of virtue
29 Sends forth
30 Not gross
33 Suppressed ... or like the ends of the starred clues' answers, perhaps?
34 Pennsylvania city on a lake
35 Take care of

DOWN

- 38 Compete (for)
39 German Mrs.
41 Corner key
43 Plenty
44 This instant
46 Epic stories
47 ___ by fire
48 Start of Caesar's boast, in English
52 Job for Holmes
53 Rustic hotels
54 Dutch cheese
56 Casino city near Tahoe
57 Compass point
59 Toy that's one letter different from “toy”
60 Org. that issues tax refunds

PREVIOUS PUZZLE ANSWER

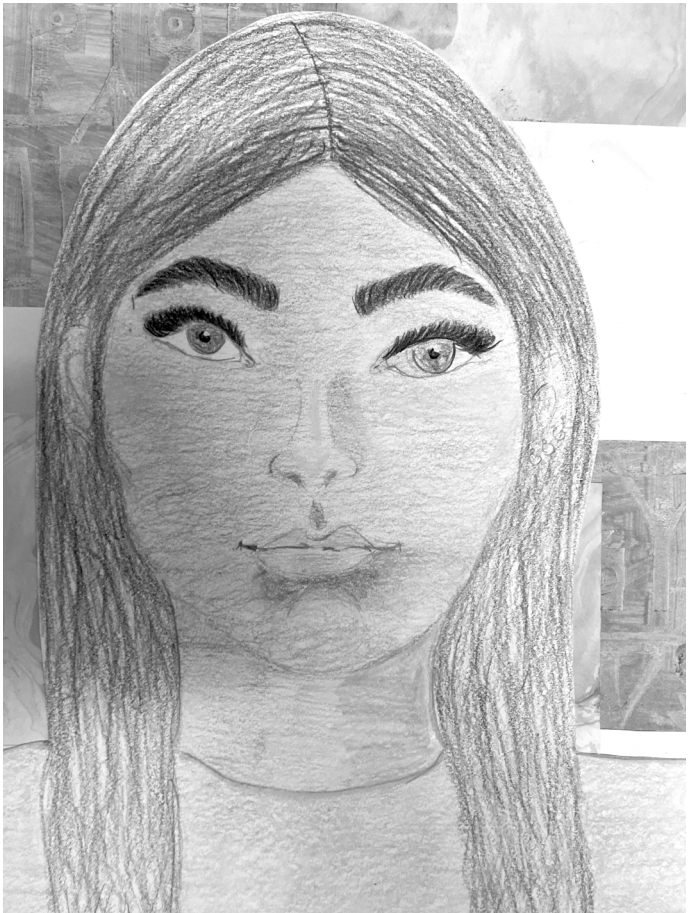
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Keep It Inside by Prasanna Keshava

1	2	3	4		5	6	7	8		9	10	11	12	13
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27	28							29	30					
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40														
46	47	48												
50														
58														
61														
64														

DRAWING OF THE WEEK



Natasha Labrado
9th grade - Colored pencil & collage

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.

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

DIFFICULTY RATING: ★★★★★ ☆

Solution from last week's puzzle:

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

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Downtown Alpine hosts ‘Big Bend Black Bears Weekend’ Aug. 1-2

ALPINE — Downtown Alpine will celebrate the region’s iconic black bears through art, education and conservation awareness during a “Big Bend Black Bears Weekend” on August 1-2. The two-day event brings together wildlife art, scientific research and practical conservation education to foster deeper appreciation for these remarkable animals.

Friday, August 1: Art reception at 5th Street Gallery

The weekend begins with an art reception from 5-7 p.m. on Friday, featuring the work of Chris Ruggia, an Alpine-based wildlife artist and 2024 Artist in Residence at Big Bend National Park. Ruggia will showcase paintings and drawings inspired by Big Bend’s black bear population, created through collaboration with researchers from the Borderlands Research Institute (BRI) at Sul Ross State University.

“Working with the generous help of BRI graduate assistants Nicole Dickan and Matthew Hewitt gave me incredible insights into bear behavior and ecology that directly shaped and informed these pieces,” Ruggia said.

During the reception, Ruggia will announce the winner of a special contest featuring prizes including the first print from a limited edition of his latest bear painting and a complete collection of seven 8x10 prints of black bear drawings. Contest entries are accepted at chrisruggia.com, with the winner revealed at 7 p.m.

Saturday, August 2: Research and live art at Front Street Books

Researcher panel discussion (1-2 p.m.)

A conversation with Chris Ruggia and three current BRI researchers — Caitlin Camp, Jesse Ellgren, and Matthew Hewitt — will explore how scientific research translates into public understanding of wildlife

conservation.

Texas Parks and Wildlife (TPW) will enhance the educational component through their BearWise program, designed to help West Texas residents learn strategies to safely coexist with growing bear populations. TPW wildlife biologist Krysta Demere will be available following the panel to answer questions and provide practical BearWise guidance.

Live drawing session (2-4 p.m.)

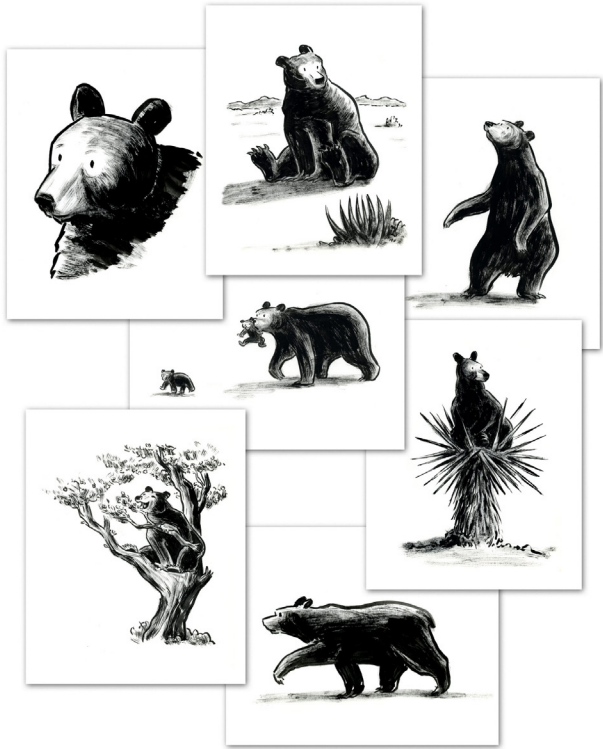
The weekend concludes with Ruggia’s popular 5-minute animal drawings, where participants select animals and watch custom artwork come to life. Known for his spontaneous style using large brushes, Ruggia creates charming pieces that sometimes feature “wonky” proportions that add to their appeal. Due to high demand, early sign-up is strongly recommended.

Conservation through art

The “Big Bend Black Bears Weekend” exemplifies the powerful intersection of art, science and conservation. By making scientific research accessible through artistic expression, the event encourages deeper wildlife appreciation and supports ongoing conservation efforts.

The weekend highlights successful partnerships between artists, scientific institutions like the Borderlands Research Institute, and conservation organizations such as Texas Parks and Wildlife — demonstrating how creative collaboration can advance wildlife conservation in the Big Bend region.

About the Borderlands Research Institute: Housed at Sul Ross State University, BRI is dedicated to conserving the natural resources of the Chihuahuan Desert through research, education and outreach.



Chris Ruggia’s art often depicts his fascination with the black bears of the Big Bend.

Viva Big Bend features new venues in 14th year

By Jennifer Pittinger
For The Big Bend Sentinel

The *Big Bend Sentinel* sat down on Tuesday with Stewart Ramser, the producer of Viva Big Bend, to ask him about this year’s music festival, which started yesterday and runs through Sunday.

Ramser, a Fort Worth native who now lives in Austin and part time in Alpine, talked about how much the festival has grown since its humble origins 13 years ago with the first event in 2012.

What’s new and exciting this year?

We’ve got a bunch of new venues this year that should provide a lot of fun — the pool at the Saint George in Marfa, Casa Agave in Presidio, The Desert Ghost Distillery and Ritchey Brothers in Marathon, Skelton’s Runway, the 5th Street Gallery and The Ritchey in Alpine and the Rendezvous in Fort Davis.

What year was your favorite year to date and why?

The first year in 2012. I remember walking around that year and telling people it would still be fun but low attendance. I was surprised by the end of the week, though. People turned up in the last week and it was a huge success. Every year it just gets bigger and better.

What are you looking forward to the most this year?

The reaction from the fans ... and well, Bob Schneider, who did the first festival in 2012 and is back again this year.

How do you select the bands?

I have a grid of local bands and popular bands. I try to match the bands with the venues — what band fits best with the local venue. I look for bands that have fun with the crowds, that interact with festival goers.

How do you select the art for the theme or the poster?

Our artist David Loyola has done several years of art for

us. We have had other artists over the years, but David has done the last 4 or 5 years of art for Viva. He’s done an amazing job at capturing the spirit of Far West Texas in his work.

What should newbies to the festival know?

There are also free shows in every town hosting events this year, for those on a budget. Everyone should be able to enjoy Viva Big Bend!

Don’t forget to check out the free ukulele class with Kevin Carrol at Planet Marfa on Saturday, July 26, from 2-3 p.m.

For box office locations and hours please go to VivaBigBend.com for more info on tickets, venues, events and a full schedule.

Photo right: Stewart Ramser gets ready to shepherd the Viva Big Bend music festival again this year.

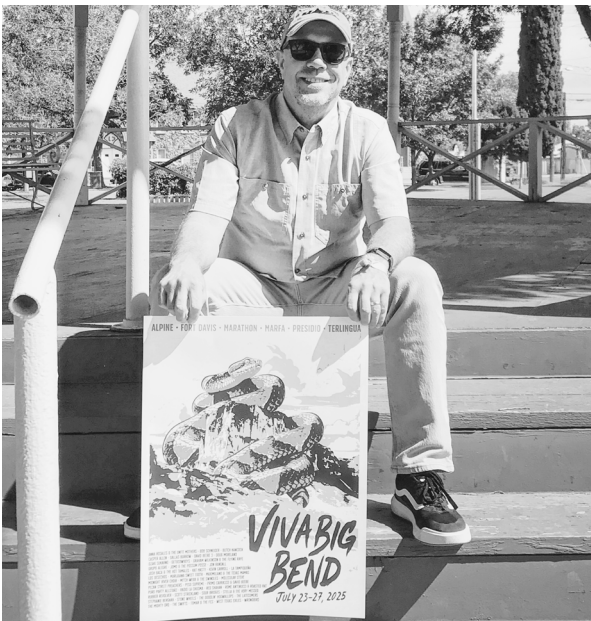


Photo By Jennifer Pittinger

AROUND THE BIG BEND

Thur
July
24

Paint & Sip - Couples edition

6 - 9pm at Alcove Social
No experience necessary – just relax, create, and enjoy some drinks while we guide you through a featured painting!

Viva Big Bend Welcome Party

6 - 9pm at The Ritchey
Viva Big Bend Welcome Party is at The Ritchey on Thursday, July 24th. Music by Marijuana Sweet Tooth Family Band. For more events visit: vivabigbend.com.

Hike with Homeless Dogs

9-10am Davis Mountain State Park
Help a homeless dog have a great time on the trail!

Fri
July
25

Open Studio - Afternoon sessions

2:30 - 5:30pm at USO Building
This performance lab is a rigorous investigation of the relationship between the self and the group in an art-making context.

Viva Big Bend - BBT BBQ & Tailgate

4:30 - 7pm at Murphy Street
Big Bend Telephone is hosting their annual costumer appreciation, Viva Big Bend Tailgate Party Friday July 25th. Everyone is Welcome for free food and fun with music by Mitch Webb & the Swindles.

Travel Talk

7 - 9pm at Alpine Public Library
Take a trip to Kenya is this months Travel Talk! The free presentation starts at 7pm, Friday at Alpine Public Library.

06 Cowboys Baseball

6 - 9pm at Kokernot Field
3 game series against Roswell.

Sat
July
26

Rule Gallery: Deals All Day Mo Eldridge and Matt Scobey - Opening Reception

6 - 9pm at RULE Gallery
Rule Gallery is pleased to present Deals All Day, a duo exhibition featuring Marfa artists Mo Eldridge and Matt Scobey.

Fort Davis Ranger Talk - Summer Program Series

6 - 7pm at Davis Mountain State Park
Enjoy an evening program with interpreters from Fort Davis National Historic Site. A variety of topics will be covered every Saturday through early August.

Sun
July
27

Viva Big Bend
July 23rd - 27th
vivabigbend.com

Peak Preparedness - Trail Safety Tips

10am - 11am at Davis Mountains State Park
Want to explore our desert trails? Park host Terry will cover the basics to ensure you have what it takes to stay safe.

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Yin Yoga

Tuesdays at 12pm at Marfa Public Library

Free Meditation Classes

Tuesday & Thursday at 6pm at Marfa Public Library

AA (online & sometimes in-person)

Saturday at 12pm at <https://tinyurl.com/y686nnw2> and sometimes in-person at Marfa Public Library

AA (in-person)

Monday & Wednesday at 6pm at St. Paul’s Episcopal Church

The Alpine Farmers Market

Saturday at 9am - 12pm at Alpine Visitor Center

Free Boxing at MAINTENANT

Thursdays at 9am
Sundays at 10am

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

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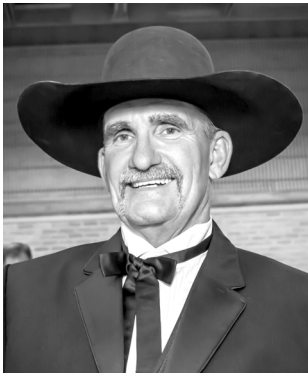
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OBITUARIES



SULLIVAN
Mark Wayne Sullivan was

born July 11, 1954, to Wayne and Chestal Sullivan of Bardwell, Texas. Being the prized only son amongst five girls, he would forever be affectionately known by the family as “The Boy.” Growing up on the Sullivan farm in Ellis County was formative in who Mark became. He always knew he wanted to be a cowboy. By the time he was in high school, he found adventure riding bulls in local rodeos. His first job was cowboying on the Hunt Ranch in Terrell, Texas. Mark later found a career working at Flood Plains

Data Company in Austin, Texas, where he met his wife-to-be, Terry Traynor. While it was important work, Mark was never satisfied in an office job. When he saw the opportunity to work with Richard Nunley at the Black Mesa Ranch outside of Alpine, he jumped at the chance. Working and living as ranch manager on the Black Mesa, a part of the Borderlands Research Institute Stewardship Program, brought Mark the fulfillment and satisfaction he had always dreamed of. While Mark was a rough and tough cowboy, he was the kindest

and most gentle of souls; he was beloved by everyone who knew him. Mark passed away peacefully in his favorite easy chair early Thursday morning with his wife and his dog by his side. He leaves a hole in the hearts of all of us lucky enough to have had him in our lives. Mark was preceded in death by both of his parents and his oldest sister, Judith Sullivan Clay. Surviving Mark are his wife, Terry; and his four remaining sisters, Jan, Rebecca, Sarah, and Susan; as well as cousins, nieces, and nephews.



WILLIAMS

Darryl Andrea Williams, born on January 25, 1963, in Sumter, South Carolina, passed away on July 13, 2025. He is remembered for his deep love of God, his passion for playing poker, and his ability to enjoy life to the fullest. Darryl was a devoted son and brother, leaving behind his beloved sister, Lajuan Williams Bass (Kevin), his cherished son, DeAndre' Williams (Jamie), eight grandchildren and five nephews. Darryl honorably served his

country in the United States Air Force, embodying the values of service and dedication. Following his time in the military, he pursued an associate’s degree, further showcasing his commitment to continuous growth and development. Residing in Terlingua, Texas, he was a revered member of his community, where his vibrant personality and infectious laughter often brought people together. A memorial service was held on July 23 at noon at American Legion

Post #653 located at 51470 Highway TX-118, Alpine, TX 79830, where family and friends gathered to celebrate Darryl's life and the many memories shared. His legacy of joy, faith, and camaraderie will continue to resonate in the hearts of all who had the privilege of knowing him. Darryl was preceded in death by his parents, Morris Williams Sr. and Willie Faye Williams, and brothers, David Williams and Morris (Moy) Williams Jr.



BROWN
David L. “Red” Brown, 81, of Valentine, Texas, passed away peacefully at home on July 16, 2025, surrounded by his beloved family. He was born on June 20, 1944, in Marfa, Texas, to W. A. “Slim” Brown and Rosamond Amelia “Flaxie” Lee Brown. Red grew up in Valentine and graduated from Valentine High School in 1962. A standout student-athlete, he qualified for the state meet in the 880-yard run in 1960 and earned a basketball scholarship

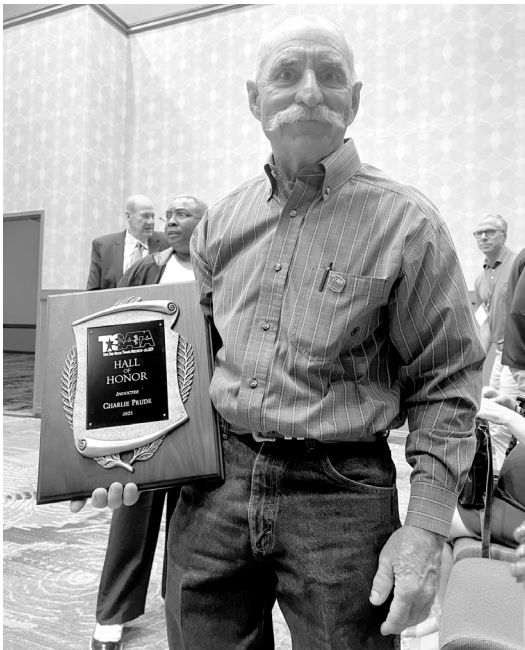
to Cisco Junior College. But Red’s heart belonged to the open road. Even as a teenager, he was behind the wheel. He hauled cattle and sheep after school, on weekends, and during the summer. His first long-haul solo trip at the age of 14 took him all the way to Montana with a truckload of sheep. Red joined his father in the family business, Brown Trucking Company, which was established in 1946, and in 1974, he founded his own operation, B & H Trucking. He took a 20-year detour into the produce business, hauling from California to the San Antonio produce market, before returning to cattle hauling in 1992. For over six decades he hauled cattle, feed, and produce across the country. He estimated he drove approximately 8 million miles over his career. Known for his fleet of classy, powerful trucks, Red was a legend among truckers. His knowledge of the West Texas ranches was unparalleled — if you needed directions to a shipping

pen, Red could get you there with explicit details about Y’s in the roads, cattleguards and other landmarks. Red married LaNell Kelley on December 30, 1967, and together they shared 57 years of love and partnership. He was a devoted husband, father, and grandfather, and his family meant the world to him. He was also deeply involved in the Valentine community. Red served 29 years on the Valentine ISD School Board and was a member of both the Lions Club and Valentine Volunteer Fire Department. Red was preceded in death by his parents, Slim and Flaxie Brown, and his brothers, Freddie Clayton “Bebo” Brown and Alton Dodson Brown. He is survived by his wife, LaNell; daughters Kelley Carmen Brown and Wendy Nell Brown; grandson Kutter Baeza, all of Alpine; sister Carmen “Smokey” Hall Perez of Valentine; and numerous cousins, nieces, and nephews. Honorary pall bearers are Kirby Flippen, Roy Torres, J. E. White III,

Jim Dyer, Bill Max Robison, Arvin West, James Stradley, Tim Roberts, Clayton Hall, Gary Morton, Lonnie Flippen, Randy Farris, and Chuchi Baeza. Red’s faith in the Lord was strong. He leaves this message for all from Joshua 1:9: “Be strong and courageous; do not be afraid; do not be discouraged, for the Lord your God will be with you wherever you go.” Red Brown lived big, drove far, and loved deeply. His legacy will live on in the lives he touched and the roads he paved. A memorial service will be held at 10 a.m. on August 2, 2025, at Valentine Community Church, followed by a Celebration of Life at The Mercantile in Valentine, Texas. In lieu of flowers, please donate to St. Jude’s Children’s Hospital, Texans on Mission — www.texansonmission.org/hill-country-flooding/, Valentine Community Church, or the charity of your choice.

Fort Davis athletic trainer, educator inducted into hall of fame

FORT DAVIS — On July 16, longtime Fort Davis resident Charles Prude was recognized by the Texas State Athletic Trainers Association by being inducted in the association’s Hall Of Honor after decades of dedication to the field of sports medicine and athletic training. Charles David Prude, a native of West Texas, graduated from Fort Davis High School before attending Southwest Texas State University (now Texas State University) to pursue tertiary education in athletic training. As a Bobcat, he worked with the NCAA Division II National Championship football team. After graduating with a B.S. in athletic training in 1983, Charles worked as an LAT/ATC at public high schools in Del Rio and Fort Stockton, Texas. He and his family moved back to Fort Davis where he pursued master’s degrees at Sul Ross State University in Alpine. He earned an M.Ed. in public school administration in 1998 and an M.Ed. in kinesiology and exercise science in 2002. He served as the head athletic trainer and an academic lecturer at SRSU till 2015 when he retired from public schools. Throughout his 46-year career, in athletic training and into his retirement, Prude was an active member of



Charles Prude
SWATA/NATA, was named as distinguished alumnus from Southwest Texas State University,

American Southwest Conference Athletic Training Staff Of The Year, treated countless high school and NCAA athletes, and mentored numerous student athletic trainers in their own pursuit of knowledge and careers. Outside of the training room, he has periodically volunteered his time with high school and college rodeo athletes and professional bull riders and athletes in the rural communities where full time Athletic Trainers were not available in the school system. According to their website, The Texas State Athletic Trainers Association “was created to own, operate, and maintain an association exclusive to the promotion, enhancement, and advancement of the athletic training profession and of the association’s members. The TSATA is ‘by Texas athletic trainers, about Texas athletic trainers, and for Texas athletic trainers’ and strives to serve as the voice of athletic trainers in Texas.” Charles Prude was nominated by his peers and colleagues as well-deserved recognition for his years in service to young athletes, Texas public schools, and aspiring student trainers throughout West and Southwest Texas and was honored in a ceremony in Frisco, Texas.

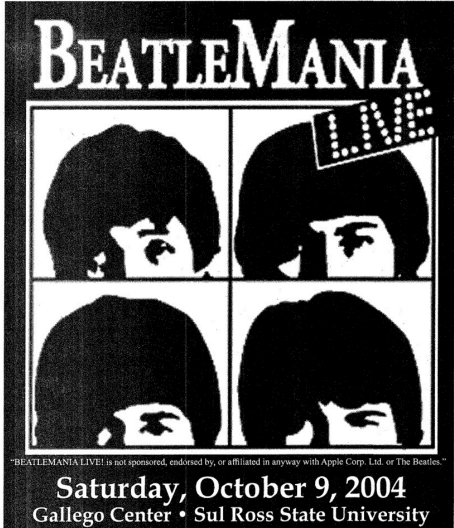
FROM THE ARCHIVES

September 30, 2004

Couple rescued in Davis Mountains as 4 inches of rain inundate area

By John Flournoy

FAR WEST TEXAS — Like the U.S. Postal Service, the rain brings many things. This week, about four inches of rain brought some life, some destruction, a few major flood warnings, and a helicopter rescue. Houston couple Grant and Sheri Roane became stranded at their Davis Mountains home on Saturday night and were rescued by a Border Patrol pilot and helicopter on Monday. Grant is a real estate developer, and Sheri markets the Houston and Palm Beach polo clubs. “It was a scary deal — you never appreciate the power of Mother Nature until it’s seven feet high and thundering in one of those creeks,” said Grant. The house is 17 miles up Short Canyon and is crossed nine times by the creek. The couple arrived on Saturday when the water was only a foot deep, and after spending some time in the house became alarmed at the sound of rushing water. They attempted to cross back mid-afternoon, but already the water was too high. “So we tried to wait it out, but it just kept going up,” said Grant. The couple called the Fort Davis Volunteer Fire Department when they realized they were stuck. Captain Rick McIvor tried twice to get overland to the Roanes, but when he finally made it, standing within feet of them across the creek, he had to give them the “no go” sign — the creek was just too high and fast. “We didn’t have any food, only well water, and we were stuck in this house with no furniture. My wife had a sprained ankle and fresh root canal, and she had run out of pain pills. I was hungry the second day but on the third, the hunger had passed. So we lost a little weight,” said Grant, who was in good spirits. “Waking up on Monday morning, there were deer in the valley. Everything was beautiful except the roaring of the creek.” On Monday the creek was still impassible, so the fire department decided to ask for a little help from the Border Patrol. The pilot, copilot and agent swooped in, picked up the Roanes and set them down gently on the other side of the creek where friend David Hedges was waiting with coffee and doughnuts. “Anywhere you go in West Texas, you ought to take some food and water,” said Kelly Bryan, the Fort Davis fire chief.



Catholics set West Texas Jubilee Encounter

TRI-COUNTY — All children, teens and young adults of Catholic parishes in the tri-county area are invited to attend the “West Texas Youth Jubilee Encounter” on Saturday, August 2, from 9 a.m. to 3 p.m. Lunch will be provided, and it is a free event called “Pilgrims of Hope” — to take place in Alpine at Our Lady of Peace Catholic Church. (Churches include St. Joseph Church in Fort Davis, St. Mary’s in Marfa, Our Lady of Peace in Alpine, Sacred Heart Mission in Valentine, St. Mary’s Mission in Marathon, St. Agnes in Terlingua, etc.) For questions call 432-837-3304.

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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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Classifieds & public notices

Help Marfa students succeed with school supply donations

MARFA — You can help students in Marfa ISD by giving them the tools they need to succeed. St. Paul’s Episcopal Church is collecting school supplies for Marfa students in pre-K through high school.

There is a donation box at the Dollar General store on Hwy 90 East. School supplies may also be dropped off at St. Paul’s Church, the rock church behind the courthouse. Cash donations are also appreciated. Last year the church ran out of everything, so it is raising money to increase the supplies this year.

You may donate online at stpaulsmarfa.org, by mail at PO Box 175, Marfa, TX 79843, or leave your donation at the church.

Backpacks stuffed with school supplies will be given away at St. Paul’s on Saturday, August 2, beginning at 10 a.m. Our annual Ice Cream Social will be combined with the giveaway. Both are free and everyone is invited.

Literacy is one of the most important skills needed to succeed in our society. This year’s give away is especially important to families who have been affected by job loss and budget

cuts. Providing school supplies for children in our town reduces a major barrier to learning AND makes you feel great about contributing to help children start the school year with the tools they need!

Should you have questions, please email stpaulsmarfatx@gmail.com or call 432-386-2433 or 214-862-7292. Thank you for your contribution and mark your calendar for School Supplies and Ice Cream Giveaway on August 2 at 10 a.m. at St. Paul’s Episcopal Church. Everyone is welcome.

Stowaway bat returns home

FORT DAVIS — On Friday, July 25, representatives from Austin Bat Refuge in Austin, Texas, will be onsite at McDonald Observatory in Fort Davis, Texas, to release a big free-tailed bat back into the wild. Named Hubble after the famous astronomer, he is thought to have accidentally hitched a ride from the observatory to Austin in some astronomy gear. Big free-tailed bats do not live in Central Texas but are a common sight in the Big Bend region, where the observatory is located.

Hubble was found, with thumb claws worn down to the nub, in UT Austin’s Physics, Math, and Astronomy Building in November 2024. From there, he was taken to Austin Bat Refuge, where



Photo courtesy of Amanda L. Stronza, Austin Bat Refuge

Hubble, the bat who unwittingly made its way to Austin, will be released back home at the McDonald Observatory Friday.

he was nursed back to health. Now that his thumb claws have regrown — and he has been cleared for travel by the Texas Department of State Health Services — representatives from the nonprofit will return him to his native habitat.

The bat release will take place during one of McDonald Observatory’s evening Star Parties, which feature constellation tours and telescope viewings. When it’s time for Hubble to return to the sky — anticipated around 10:30 p.m. — his handlers will choose a place with a clear pathway for flight that allows him to avoid any crowds. Bat experts will be available to answer any questions about Hubble and other big free-tailed bats. Tickets for the July 25 Star Party are sold out.

Volunteers needed for the Manning Pollinator Garden workday

ALPINE — The Native Plant Society of Texas is planning a workday on Saturday, July 26, from 8:30 a.m. to noon at the Alpine Public Library to clear organic material, break the topsoil, mix in amendments and move some buffalo grass, among other tasks.

Please bring gloves, a shovel, rake, pick, hat and plenty of water. Several

volunteers with rototillers are needed to help break the top soil and mix in the amendments. If you cannot attend but have a tiller to lend, please let them know. Please reply to Tom Kennedy tkennedy071@gmail.com if you can attend.

A public hearing will be held regarding the proposed City of Marfa Ordinance described below as part of the City Council Meeting to be held on Tuesday August 5, 2025, at 6:00 pm at 113 Highland Ave. Marfa, Texas 79843.

AN ORDINANCE ADOPTING A ZONING CHANGE WITHIN THE MUNICIPAL LIMITS OF MARFA, TEXAS; REZONING THREE CONTIGUOUS PARCELS FROM RESIDENTIAL (R-1) TO INDUSTRIAL (I); CONTAINING APPROXIMATELY 4.0388 ACRES; LOCATED AT 102, 104 APEREJO ST. MARFA, TEXAS 79843, LEGALLY DESCRIBED AS

PARCEL 1: S1/2 BLOCK 103, ORIGINAL TOWNSITE OF MARFA, PRESIDIO COUNTY TEXAS; PARCEL 2: N1/2 OF BLOCK 103, ORIGINAL TOWNSITE OF MARFA, PREDIO COUNTY, TEXAS; PARCEL 3: A 3.57-ACRE TRACT, MORE OR LESS, OUT OF 6.71 ACRE TRACT IN SECTION 244, BLOCK 8, G.H. & S.A. RY. CO. SURVEY, CITY OF MARFA, PRESIDIO COUNTY, STATE OF TEXAS

AUTHORIZING THE NOTATION OF THE CHANGE ON THE OFFICIAL ZONING MAP OF THE CITY; PROVIDING FOR THE FOLLOWING: FINDINGS OF FACT; REPEALER; SEVERABILITY; AND PROPER NOTICE AND HEARING.



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JOB OPENING

The Presidio County Appraisal District is seeking a full-time Data Processor Clerk for our Marfa office. Bi-lingual preferred. Must be able to work M-F,

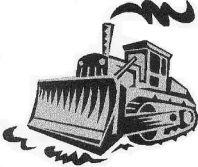
8:00 am- 5:00 pm. High School/GED required. Please submit applications/resume to the Presidio CAD Office, P O Box 879, Marfa, Texas 79843 or by email cramirez@presidiocad.org . . All applications must be submitted by August 1, 2025 . The Presidio CAD is an equal opportunity employer.

07/03,07/10,07/17,07/24-2025

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



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NOTICE TO CREDITORS

Notice is hereby given that original Letters Testamentary for the Estate of ROBERT DAVID BIGGERSTAFF, deceased were issued on July 14, 2025, in Cause No. PR03216, pending in the County Court of Brewster County, Texas, to: RHETT BIGGERSTAFF.

All persons having claims against this Estate which is currently being administered are required to present them to the undersigned within the time and in the manner prescribed by law.

c/o: ZOLLIE C. STEAKLEY
Attorney at Law
101 East Third Street
Sweetwater, Texas 79556
DATED the 15th day of July, 2025

ZOLLIE C. STEAKLEY, P.L.L.C.
101 East Third Street
Sweetwater, Texas 79556
Telephone: (325) 235-8700
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By:
Zollie C. Steakley
ZOLLIE C. STEAKLEY Attorney for
Rhett Biggerstaff
State Bar No: 19091100
E-mail: zollie@steakleylaw.com

GOVERNMENT CONTACTS

PRESIDIO COUNTY
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(432) 729-4452

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

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councilmemberacreman@cityofmarfa.com

BREWSTER COUNTY
Main Number: 432-837-6200
Judge Greg Henington:
(432) 837-6200 Ext. 200
Alpine Mayor Catherine Eaves:
City Hall: (432) 837-3301
Email: mayor.eaves@ci.alpine.tx.us

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

FEDERAL:
U.S. Sen. John Cornyn:
(202) 224-2934 (D.C. office)
U.S. Sen. Ted Cruz:
(202) 224-5922 (D.C. office)



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