

BURN BAN IN EFFECT, NO GROUND FIRES
by order of Presidio County

How will Trump's megabill affect Texas

By Gabby Birenbaum and Owen Dahlkamp
The Texas Tribune

After months of intense back-and-forth negotiations, on-the-floor haggling and threats to tank the legislation, Republicans’ massive tax and spending bill is heading to President Donald Trump’s desk to become law.

The wide-ranging megabill is the vehicle for much of Trump’s domestic policy agenda for his second term in the White House, with major changes in health care, immigration and tax policy that are sure to touch nearly every American. Here are the major ways Texas will be affected.

ACA and Medicaid

Over 300,000 Texans could lose their health insurance once the Medicaid changes passed by Congress take effect in 2027.

Medicaid, a federal-state health insurance program for low-income and disabled people, insures over 4 million Texans. The federal government paid for nearly two-thirds of the program’s \$57 billion costs in Texas during the 2023 fiscal year, according to KFF, a nonprofit health policy organization. Using estimates from the nonpartisan Congressional Budget Office, KFF projects that Texas stands to lose 10% of its federal Medicaid funds over the next decade, or \$39 billion.

The cuts could be particularly potent in the Rio Grande Valley, which has an outsized number of Medicaid recipients, and in rural areas, where hospitals rely on Medicaid payments. Texas already has the highest uninsured rate in the nation.

Beyond Medicaid, the bill makes it harder to enroll in coverage through Affordable Care Act marketplaces and allows for the expiration of Biden-era enhanced premium tax credits that lower out-of-pocket costs for people with ACA marketplace coverage. Because Texas is among the 10 states that have never expanded Medicaid under the ACA, its residents rely heavily on marketplace coverage and the soon-to-expire tax credits.

Taken together, KFF estimates that the megabill’s provisions will lead to 1.7 million Texans losing their coverage, adding to the nearly 5 million children and adults under 65 who currently lack health insurance.

The GOP megabill also imposes nationwide work requirements on Medicaid for the first time in the program’s history. Recipients between the ages of 19 and 64 — except for those with disabilities or with dependent children under 14 — will have to prove they are working or in school for 80 hours per month. In states that implemented work requirements under a program from Trump’s first term, enrollment dropped precipitously, including among people who were working or qualified for an exception but struggled to document it. Texas Health and Human Services will be responsible for designing and enforcing work requirements that comply with the new federal law.

Before the Senate passed the bill this

INSIDE

NEWS P. 1 - 8
OPINION P. 4
CLASSIFIEDS P. 8

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Staff Photo by Mary Cantrell

Fort Davis residents Fonda Ghiardi and Karen Little tour the behavioral health side of the new local clinic, which is decked out in western decor.

New shipping container clinic comes to Jeff Davis County

By Mary Cantrell
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FORT DAVIS — A 40-foot shipping container is the unlikely home of a new medical clinic in Fort Davis, where county officials, citizens and representatives from two Texas universities gathered to celebrate its opening last Friday. Proponents of the clinic hope it will bring critical medical services to Jeff Davis County, where the ratio of providers to residents is 1 to 2,000, prompting many to travel elsewhere for help or to delay care.

The clinic is located behind the emergency services building west of the county courthouse. Raiders and Aggies milled about under the hot sun last week, listening to remarks from several speakers before the ribbon was cut and clinic tours began. Texas A&M BUILD, a student-led organization which has constructed several shipping

container clinics across the state and the world, recently put up the structure — the first of its kind due to a collaboration between A&M and Texas Tech University’s Health Sciences Center (TTUHSC.)

“The clinic will be equipped with telehealth and tele-counseling capabilities, offering convenient access to healthcare provided by both universities’ health science centers,” university representatives wrote in a press release. “Licensed professionals from the Texas A&M Health Telehealth Institute will provide tele-counseling services, while TTUHSC family medicine doctors and medical residents based at Texas Tech Physicians in Odessa will provide telemedicine services.”

As is customary for A&M’s shipping container clinics, the Fort Davis site is dedicated to a fallen Aggie veteran — Airman 1st Class James “Adam” Lassiter, who died in 2012 while on active duty with the

U.S. Air Force. Several members of the Lassiter family were present for the clinic’s unveiling. Doug Moreland carved a sculpture of Lassiter out of wood, which greets patients outside of the door.

County Judge Curtis Evans, who has been pursuing increased medical care for the county for sometime, said the clinic opening is “a relief.” “There is a place where people can get help,” Evans said. “We can test these kids if they’re sick; mom and dad can afford to come here. That’s my goal, is for them to be able to get their kids help, get their families help, get the medical attention they’re going to need.”

Evans said foundations contributed funds towards the new clinic, though he did not respond to a request for specifics by press time. The Texas Tech and Texas A&M medical centers are using their own budgets to help support the operation for now.

The county is also working to hire

a telemedicine assistant — who will help take vital signs and perform other basic functions — to staff the clinic, which may be paid for with grant funds, he said. The county intends to post on social media and distribute fliers to get the word out about the new micro facility, he said.

A handful of local residents that spoke to *The Big Bend Sentinel* at the ribbon-cutting were still a little confused about how the clinic is going to work after the remarks and walk through, but they were interested to see how it was going to evolve and generally grateful for more medical care options.

Dr. Adrian Billings of Alpine, associate academic dean of the Rural and Community Engagement Division in the School of Medicine at TTUHSC, offered some clarity in a follow up conversation with *The Sentinel*. He explained that the

Legit property developments or AI slop?

Two entrepreneurs answer questions about their area plans

By Mary Cantrell
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MARFA — AI-generated images of desert dwellings recently advertised by companies Makin.ai and OJR Marfa have locals wondering if the content represents real property developments or if it’s just more AI slop overwhelming the internet and attempting to capitalize on the town’s popular name.

The Big Bend Sentinel got in touch with the people behind the Makin.ai website — which lists its headquarters in Antelope Hills — and Instagram account @OJRMarfa, advertised as a Valentine-based real estate company, to learn more about their plans. Since *The Sentinel* initially reached out, the two men behind the entities have also announced a collaboration called SHAIPEs.ai, billed as “the future of affordable housing” in Marfa.

Makin.ai is owned by New Zealand-native Shaun Lamont who is building a home for Marfa resident George Hinkley in Antelope Hills. OJR Marfa, which stands for Old Jackson Road, is a newly-formed LLC started by Dallas lawyer Clay Jackson, who owns a swath of land outside of Valentine he plans to develop. In both cases, AI-generated images were a fast, easy way to advertise their planned projects, they said.

“I did the whole website in less than two hours for \$17, so that’s really hard to compete against,” Lamont said. When asked if the prices advertised — \$350,000 to \$530,000 per home — were accurate, Lamont said no, explaining that AI just “threw numbers up,” and he could build houses for a “much more affordable” price somewhere in the \$180,000 range for an 800-square-foot space.

Jackson said he received “push back and

skepticism” on Instagram for posting images of ranch-set cabins and little adobe homes with kiva fireplaces that were generated by ChatGPT. He sees the images as “proof of concept,” he said, and professional 3D models made by people are forthcoming.

“I’ve engaged with people in comments and tried to make that clear,” Jackson said. “I probably could have done a better job by labeling the post explicitly as, ‘This is AI generated.’”

“I don’t want to be the AI guy,” he added.

But Lamont is also using the technology to build. He has owned a swimming pool company since 2022, but the Hinkley home in Antelope Hills — which is set to be completed soon — is his first ever home construction. Lamont has an Austin-based factory equipped with computer numerical

(Continued on page 3)

Legislature sets committee on emergency preparedness

AUSTIN — Last week, Lt. Gov. Dan Patrick and Speaker Dustin Burrows created the Select Committees on Disaster Preparedness and Flooding, which will meet jointly.

“The creation of both the House and Senate’s Select Committees on Disaster Preparedness and Flooding is just the beginning of the Legislature looking at every aspect of this tragic event,” Patrick said. “Right now, we must focus on the recovery of those still missing, then rebuilding communities in flooded areas. In the coming year, and into the next regular legislative session, we will gather all the facts and answer the many questions to which the public demands answers.”

“Our hearts are with the families across Texas who lost loved ones or saw their homes and livelihoods swept away in the recent, catastrophic floods. In the face of such devastation, Texans deserve swift, united action,” said Burrows said. “I’m grateful to Lt. Gov. Patrick and the Senate for partnering with the House in this effort, ensuring both chambers move in lockstep from day one of the special session. With only 30 days to act, we must make every moment count. This effort is about moving quickly to help Texans recover and laying the foundation to better protect our communities—and our children—from future disasters.”

Both chambers’ Select Committees on Disaster Preparedness and Flooding will examine the following items on the governor’s special session call, which begins in less than two weeks:

- Flood warning systems
- Flood emergency communications
- Relief funding for Hill Country floods
- Natural disaster preparation and recovery

The first hearing will take place at the Capitol on July 23. The second hearing will take place the following week in Kerrville to give residents an opportunity to have their voices heard. The date of that hearing will be announced soon.

The lieutenant and the speaker each appointed nine members to their chambers’ select committee. Senators chosen were:

- Sen. Charles Perry, R-Lubbock, Chairman
- Sen. Pete Flores, R-Pleasanton, Vice Chair
- Sen. Paul Bettencourt, R-Houston
- Sen. César Blanco, D-El Paso
- Sen. Donna Campbell, R-New Braunfels
- Sen. Adam Hinojosa, R-Corpus Christi
- Sen. Lois Kolkhorst, R-Brenham
- Sen. José Menéndez, D-San Antonio
- Sen. Charles Schwertner, R-Georgetown

House members chosen were:

(Continued on page 7)

Is Presidio County ready for 'the big one?'

As the Hill Country mourns, local officials take stock of flood protocols

By SAM KARAS
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PRESIDIO COUNTY — Since the morning of July 4, all eyes have been on Kerr County in the Hill Country of Central Texas. That morning, a wall of water cresting around 185,000 cubic feet per second — nearly double the flow of Niagara Falls — tore through the idyllic, cypress-lined Guadalupe River, taking with it over 134 lives and leaving an estimated \$18 to \$22 billion in property damage.

Big Bend locals immediately

kicked into high gear, donating time and money to the search and rescue effort. Last Friday, deputies from the Brewster County Sheriff’s Department dropped off a truckload of supplies like ropes, chainsaws and fuel canisters to support the army of volunteers on the ground.

But as the waters recede, shock and grief has turned into anger for many folks questioning why — and if — so many had to die. As of Tuesday, over 100 people are still missing, and no one has been found alive since the day of the flood. (It’s

important to note that the widely-reported “missing” figures apply to people who are residents of Kerr County; an accurate count of the dead including tourists in town for the holiday weekend may never surface.)

There are plenty of kinship and friendship ties reaching from the Rio Grande to the Guadalupe, but Kerr and Presidio Counties have a lot in common on paper — they’re both small, rural counties who depend on local natural beauty to drive tourism. Kerr County is home

(Continued on page 2)



Photo from the September 28, 2008, pages of the Big Bend Sentinel.

During the flood of 2008, the river came close to inundating Presidio High School.

Clinic opens

(Continued from page 1)

operation of the Fort Davis clinic will somewhat mirror the Marathon Health Center, another telehealth clinic partnering with Texas Tech that has added more services and hours overtime.

“The evolution of these telehealth clinics when they begin is they start at one level and then with time they work towards becoming more of a full service clinic with the capabilities of any other walk-in clinic that you go to,” Billings said. “But oftentimes they start with just the telehealth camera.”

Billings said the Fort Davis clinic is set to officially open to patients sometime in August once a telehealth coordinator is in place. The “Davis Mountain Clinic,” as it has been coined, will initially be open two days a week, with the goal of expanding to Monday through Friday 8 a.m. to 5 p.m. The clinic will accommodate Spanish speakers.

For now, patients will need to schedule visits in advance. The clinic will charge a \$30 flat fee per visit and is not yet able to bill insurance due to complications

that are still being worked out, Billings said. The clinic will be able to fulfill prescriptions, but will not yet offer lab testing for things like strep throat, COVID, and tests associated with chronic conditions like diabetes. Billings said there are future plans to purchase equipment that will make data and testing available so that patients can get treated faster.

He said Tech and A&M are hoping to eventually demonstrate the effectiveness of their collaborative new model, in order to gain legislative funding to open similar clinics in other rural parts of the state. “Each of our institutions recognizes that the rural healthcare crisis is larger than either of us can impact on our own, but we can certainly be more impactful working together,” Billings said. “That’s really the spirit of this collaborative effort — to work together to really improve access to rural healthcare.”

To make an appointment at the Davis Mountain Clinic, call 432-426-0012.

Emergency preparedness

(Continued from page 1)

to around 53,000 people and is about an hour and a half from downtown San Antonio, but windy roads and spotty cell service give the illusion that it’s a world apart from the city.

In the more remote reaches of Kerr County — just like in south Presidio County — flash flooding is part of the rhythm of life. There are dozens of low water crossings that cut across the Guadalupe, and “turn around, don’t drown” is more of a suggestion than a hard-and-fast rule. Major flood events have become rarer and rarer as the region suffers drought alongside most of the state, but many old-timers remember a flood in 1987 that resulted in the deaths of several campers caught as they tried to evacuate.

Last weekend, a bleary-eyed Judge Rob Kelly addressed the media alone, just hours after the flood devastated his own property. “We get floods all the time,” he told a reporter who became agitated after deflecting a question about why a string of summer camps along the South Fork were not evacuated. “We had no reason to believe that this was going to be any different.”

When disaster strikes, who’s in charge?

Precinct 4 Commissioner David Beebe expressed sympathy for Judge Kelly at last week’s meeting of the Presidio County Commissioners Court. During the flood, he was actually staying along the Guadalupe River in a family vacation home — an ordeal hauntingly recounted by his wife, Hilary Scruggs Beebe, in last week’s *Sentinel*. “Those county officials do a good job and are responsible to their people, but they were caught in a bad situation,” he said.

Beebe stressed the importance of designating a public information officer for emergencies to help coordinate media response and of keeping the county website updated regularly. Right now, the sheriff’s office does the bulk of issuing community alerts and advisories — but does so via their Facebook page, a social media network that not everyone can or wants to sign up for.

As the days since the tragedy in the Hill Country have turned into weeks, fingers have been pointed in every direction. Local officials initially declared they didn’t have an emergency warning system in place, then state



Staff Photo by Mary Cantrell

A new telehealth clinic, in the form of a fully-outfitted shipping container, is expected to officially open to patients next month in Jeff Davis County.

leaders blamed bad forecasts by the National Weather Service. Others blamed the Trump administration for cutting funding for weather forecasting and research. An even smaller fringe claimed that the flood had been engineered by humans through cloud seeding.

During an extreme weather event, it’s up to county or city governments to help coordinate a response. The National Weather Service provides the forecast as best they can and maycan issue warnings of its own in the form of radio alerts or push notifications to cell phones in a specific area, but more complex, on-the-ground operations — like evacuation orders — have to come from local officials.

One emerging theme from the media deconstruction of what went wrong in Kerr County is a breakdown in communication between state, local and federal authorities. The Texas Department of Emergency Management (TDEM) was concerned enough about the forecast provided by the NWS that they started staging resources for a potential flash flood emergency in Kerr County on July 2, but local officials — including Kerrville Mayor Joe Herring — were not aware of the extent of these operations.

Last Friday, the firefighter’s union in Austin issued a vote of “no confidence” in Chief Joel Baker for not deploying rescue teams as early as the Wednesday before the flood, suggesting that multiple agencies in Austin were advised of the threat but were not communicating that threat adequately with Kerr County or the city of Kerrville itself.

Judge Kelly initially said that the county “does not have a warning system in place,” but that’s not entirely true. Kerr County uses CodeRED, a cell phone alert system that residents can opt in to for regionally-specific emergencies.

On the morning of July 4 around 4:20 a.m., a firefighter in Ingram noticed that the waters had risen enough to cover a sign on the highway and requested that an alert be put out to residents in neighboring Hunt to warn them that the waters were rising. The firefighter was informed that a supervisor needed to sign off on the alert; it wasn’t issued for another hour and a half, when the death toll had already begun to climb.

Presidio County Emergency Management Coordinator Gary Mitschke said that the process of sending out an alert isn’t instantaneous. In his experience, it takes at least 20 minutes to verify information and get everything ready to go. Sending out alerts too hastily can make a bad situation worse. “You can do as much harm with a false alarm as you can without any alarm at all,” he said.

Presidio County uses a similar program called Hyper-Reach, a “reverse 911” system that allows the county government to send alerts directly to residents’ phones. The system has been in place since 2020, and Mitschke says that they’ve luckily only needed to use it a few times.

Like Kerr County’s CodeRED, it can be toggled to hit specific areas to help circumvent a phenomenon called “alert fatigue” — when people receive too many notifications, they tend to start disregarding them.

This phenomenon is especially pronounced in Texas, which sends out dozens of statewide alerts per year. In 2024, cell phone users in Texas received as many as 47 Amber Alerts for missing or abducted children, many triggered by events on opposite ends of the Lower 48’s biggest state.

As the emergency in Kerr County was unfolding, cell users across the state received repeated push notifications for a shooting at an ICE detention facility in Alvarado, on the outskirts of the DFW metroplex. During the thick of search and rescue operations, while lives hung in the balance, everyone’s phone was pulsing with updates about a targeted political shooting four and a half hours away.

Since the flood, some Kerr County locals have expressed that flash flood alerts are so numerous they’ve stopped paying attention to them. Part of the issue is education — many people aren’t aware of the distance of watches and warnings. Watches are very frequent in many parts of the state, while warnings — even if they don’t feel like it — are statistically rare.

Many meteorologists use the “taco analogy” to teach folks about the difference between watches and warnings. Watches are issued whenever there are all the right atmospheric conditions for a weather event to occur; warnings are issued when they’re actually happening. In the taco analogy, having meat, cheese and tortillas in the fridge is a taco watch; a taco fully assembled on your plate is a taco warning.

Figuring out how to tailor alerts to communicate the severity of emergencies is an ongoing struggle for first responders, but that’s where a well-coordinated local response on the ground is key. Ultimately, it’s up to the county judge — the county’s official emergency management director — to make the final call.

While Texas has some of the most sophisticated emergency response infrastructure in the country, the response is only as strong as its weakest link. “We shouldn’t always depend on the state or federal government,” said Mitschke. “We should be able to help ourselves.”

Uncharted waters

Another major issue being revealed in the wake of the

July 4 floods is that many people may be at elevated risk of flooding and not even realize it. One in six Texans live in areas susceptible to flooding — but that figure could prove to be higher, as many parts of the state determine their flood risk by out-of-date maps.

A large cluster of deaths in the flood occurred at Camp Mystic, a Christian summer camp for girls that has served elite Texas families for 99 years. The parents who paid over \$4,000 per session were likely unaware that much of the camp was located in a flood plain — on three separate occasions, the camp appealed to FEMA to remove buildings from its flood map.

Part of FEMA’s job as a federal agency is to map flood risk. In an effort to get people to build outside of flood zones, FEMA’s maps give insurance agencies an overview of what kind of flood risks affect certain properties, hiking premiums for homes and businesses located in harm’s way.

Independent analysis of Camp Mystic by the *New York Times* revealed that the camp was not just located in a flood plain, where water pools when the river seeps over its banks. The buildings designated for the youngest campers were built in something called a floodway, which is where particularly fast currents rip during flooding. The buildings were also located at the junction of a creek and the Guadalupe River, creating ferocious eddies if both waterways spilled over at once.

While FEMA’s data for Kerr County is complete and easily accessible on the web, other areas of the state are a patchwork. Presidio County appears blank on the agency’s online system — it’s been mapped, but it was last mapped in 1985.

A lot has changed since 1985: our climate is drier, the river channel has shifted and the population in the southern half of the county has doubled. The region has also experienced a major flood — in 2008, the river swelled for weeks, maxing out at a flow of around 50,000 cubic feet per second.

The water was so high that the U.S. Customs Facility at the international bridge had to be evacuated, and lower-lying parts of town near the river were underwater. “It was a sight to behold,” said Presidio Mayor John Ferguson, who remembered former coworkers at the high school taking shelter in his living room as they waited for the flood to crest.

After the waters receded, city leaders got together to try to revise FEMA’s data, having observed what impact 30 years of climate change and development had on the path of floodwater. Those efforts fizzled out eventually, and the maps remain painfully out of date. “Nobody’s grabbed that torch and run with it,” said current County Judge and former City of Presidio Administrator Joe Portillo.

Nearly counties could provide an example to follow. The Texas Water Development board is currently working with Hudspeth County — just one of two counties statewide selected for a pilot program — to help collect more accurate flood data.

In contrast with the July 4 floods in Kerr County, classified as an extreme flash flood, Presidio had plenty of warning before total inundation in 2008. The water had been rising steadily from heavy rain, and once reservoirs along the Conchos River in Mexico were maxed out, officials sent a warning that water would have to be released to keep each dam at a safe level.

Presidio was spared a lot of the property damage suffered by its sister city of Ojinaga, thanks to a system of levees near the town’s most populated areas. That system was put in place by the Army Corps of Engineers in the 1970s, but has had relatively few opportunities to test its strength. (Judge Portillo said that the levee was recently inspected, but The *Sentinel* did not have time to review the agency’s report before publication of this article.)

While Ferguson agreed that flood preparedness was a major issue for Presidio, he cautioned that locals should be prepared for a wide range of natural disasters — strong winds, dust storms and other hazards can pop up quickly and threaten lives. “We’ve seen it all down here,” Ferguson said.

Around the riverbend

While Kerr and Presidio Counties have a lot in common, the starkest divide might be money — Kerr County’s annual budget is around nine and a half times bigger than Presidio County’s, which usually hovers around \$4 million.

Much hay has been made in the national media over the fact that Kerr County lacks river gauges above Hunt and does not have flood sirens. In Comfort, Texas, about 20 twenty miles downstream from Kerrville, there were no fatalities — folks heard their local sirens and voluntarily evacuated.

In 2016, Kerr County footed the bill for a study to help them modernize their flood warning system, which commissioners described at the time as an informal system of neighbors calling neighbors as waters rose — a system that may have worked during the 1987 flood, but as the population balloons and tourism booms, many longterm residents have found themselves living among more strangers than neighbors.

The county was turned down by the state twice for \$1

(Continued on page 5)

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New development

(Continued from page 1)

control (CNC) machines where he and a team produce thick EPS (expanded polystyrene) panels, a foam product often used as an insulator, wrapped in a “special cement” coating that they are using to construct the home. Hinkley’s 1,500-square-foot home is made up of 189 panels hauled from Austin to Marfa on trucks, Lamont said.

“If you imagine the houses are rather like a LEGO; they’re big panels, 8 by 4 panels,” Lamont said. “Windows cut out, doors cut out, everything’s ready to go.”

Local construction teams helped pour the home’s concrete slab and are assisting with electrical, plumbing and erecting the structure, he said, but there are “no screws, no nails.” Lamont estimated that he and his team — who he refers to as “shape makers” rather than traditional home builders — can produce the panels and construct a house in as little as four months. While there are no building permits or regulations required due to the home’s location outside of city limits, Lamont said the house will be built to International Code Council



Photo courtesy of Shaun Lamont

The house Lamont and team are constructing for Hinkley out of expanded polystyrene (EPS) panels.

(ICC) standards so that it is insurable and sellable.

Lamont said he’s used AI software to generate hundreds of different designs for homes, and the fact that AI is not a professional architect with “traditional constraints on materials” — which often leads to wonky, unrealistic renditions — is, in his mind, an advantage, leading to more creative shapes the CNC machine can print. “Its ignorance is bliss,” Lamont said.

“Knowing that I can get my AI design into my CAD (computer aided design) system and my CAD system can speak to my CNC system, that means that my AI house of any particular shape can be cut out by my robot with no more effort than it would be to have a traditional four-sided house with a gable roof, doesn’t make any difference,” he added.

He said his company has “a proprietary work pipeline [to] help the transposing system to go from 2D to 3D to construction plans,” but humans still have to sign off on critical points.

For Lamont’s client Hinkley, who’s also a friend, it’s been exciting to see the home they’ve worked on together “now actually materializing.” Lamont has meticulously documented every step of the construction process; a suite of photographs reveals images of EPS panels strapped to a truck flying down the highway, a dusty day on the work site, local Brian Moody on a tractor and shots of Lamont’s BMW Z3 coupe.

Hinkley has been living in an Airstream on his Antelope Hills property for years and, once fully complete, envisions a two-bed, two-bath house with a covered porch and a roof deck on his property. He said Marfa “has this reputation as a place to showcase innovative building technology,” and the EPS panels — the building blocks of his home — result in an energy efficient space that can be constructed at scale, with fewer trades. It’s similar to 3D printing, but

adobe-like structure, simple lines, maximizing the views, a lot of glass,” he said.

Lamont, who has a background in 3D imaging and data processing, supplied Hinkley with a virtual reality headset to walk around his house with so he could see the CAD model for himself, noting where the water and electrical lines are. “It was useful,” Hinkley said. “I was like, ‘Oh, wait a minute, my elbow is too close to this wall when I’m opening up the refrigerator. Let’s move the door over here.’”

For now, Hinkley’s home is Lamont’s only project in Marfa, but he is in contact with at least one other landowner in Antelope Hills who might be interested in working with him, he said. Clay Jackson of OJR Marfa is also in discussions with Lamont about launching a new company together and building affordable housing on his Valentine ranch.

Lamont said, “We are all looking at El Cosmico,” whose new hotel site is in view of Hinkley’s property, recognizing that ICON will soon be 3D printing a variety of structures on previously open land. He said he thinks “speculative” developers and builders are here and will continue to keep coming.

“People don’t want to live in cities because they’re volatile and they’re super expensive, and when you add all these things up, a brand like Marfa becomes a very effective proposition for people to land in,” Lamont said. “I think that the rise of that should not be underestimated.”

Jackson agrees West Texas has a “gravitational pull,” one that has led to a boom in the real estate market and lack of affordable housing for locals — a longstanding, complex issue not entirely unique to Marfa that he said he wants to help solve. As a potential buyer, he said he found Marfa’s housing prices “absurd,” and “offensive,” often comparable to prices in larger cities with more resources.

He said he is striving to create a real estate company that “doesn’t suck,” and is “outwardly mission based,” having been involved with property developers in the past in his role as a lawyer. Jackson’s land holdings are not in Marfa as his company’s name would suggest, but are in Valentine — off of FM 1077, bordered by 96 Ranch — and near Van Horn totaling nearly 100 acres, he said.

On Instagram, @OJRMarfa states that a portion of its profits will be donated to “nonprofit initiatives rooted in justice, inclusion and access” like “legal aid for immigrants, LGBTQ+ Texans and working creatives.” When asked how Jackson will ensure transparency about the donations, he said the company will open itself up to be audited and produce an annual public report stating what

(Continued on page 5)



Photo courtesy of Shaun Lamont

Shaun Lamont poses for a photo at the build site in Antelope Hills.

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Pilates Mat Class - August 5th - 7th 9:00-9:50 am / Open Studio - August 5th - 8th, 10-12:30 pm, 2:30-5:30 pm
Working Works Performance - August 6th, 7:00 pm / Ensemble Thinking Performance - August 8th, 7:00 pm

performance featuring: Dianne Brevard, Andrew Wass, Adele Nickel, Gwen Ritchie, Sierra Megas, Sofie Cardinal, Angela Jean, Ethan Guillen, Brittany Tokumoto, Heidi James, Mikey Sherrod, Halley Wilcox, Hallie Dalsimer, Hales Wilson, Kelly Dalrymple-Wass, Melissa Sanderson, Melissa Brading, Bonnie Simoa, Don Culberson, Ginger McGilvray, Nina Martin, Tana Vargas, Caroline Caswell, Kirsche Dickson, Sarah Gamblin, Leslie Scates, Katherine Vaughn, Katerina Soricelli, Mo Eldridge, Z Taylor

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Opinion and News

Dear friends,

Join us for our next Tri-County Unified Demonstration on Thursday, July 17, at 6 p.m. on the Marfa courthouse lawn as we honor the legacy of Congressman John Lewis and continue the fight for voting rights. Please sign up using the link below:
<https://www.mobilize.us/john-lewis-actions/event/813910>

We'll gather at the courthouse lawn with our signs, where there will be water available and a lineup of inspiring guest speakers. Afterward, we'll march together as a community over to Planet Marfa, where folks are invited to grab some food, socialize, and stick around if they'd like — live music by Tasche de La Rocha begins at 8 p.m. It's a chance to unwind and connect after making our voices heard, and people are welcome to stay as long as they'd like or head out when they need to.

This demonstration is part of our ongoing regional effort to build power, visibility and solidarity across Presidio, Jeff Davis and Brewster counties. For this gathering, we'll come together in Marfa — each event has its place, its purpose, and its voice.

The more of us who show up, the louder our message will be. Let's make some good trouble — together.

Sincerely,
Presidio County Democratic Party

Dear Editor,

In last week's edition of *The Sentinel*, Marfa City Councilmember and ASMR misogynist Eddie Pallarez took aim at my husband Travis Acreman, calling him an "idiot."

Councilmember Pallarez, while I understand you're under a lot of pressure because of your actions, I encourage you to devote your energy to self-betterment and making amends in your community rather than trying to make excuses for your bad behavior. As a husband, I naturally take issue with you having called Trav an idiot; after all, at least he knows how a tape recorder works.

As to the charge you made against Travis where you claim he is just throwing spaghetti at the wall to see what sticks ... my suggestion to you is to stop leaving so many plates of proverbial spaghetti laying around and there will be nothing to throw.

Sincerely,
Tony Georges
Marfa

Dear Editor,

I'd like to give recognition to Dr. Mark Morrison (Marfa City Council member), Dr. Patrick Daly, the Marfa Volunteer Fire Department, and the Marfa EMS for making themselves available last week at the Marfa Airport. I was required to perform a precautionary landing because of what turned out to be a failed cockpit landing gear indicator; and all turned out well.

Mark rapidly responded to the airport, reported his visual findings to me as I flew over; then notified the emergency staff and capably directed them to appropriate locations along the runway access sites.

Thanks to all involved.
Dave Taylor
Fort Davis



Rio Grande Valley's biggest free health clinic event of the year is canceled due to federal cuts

It's the first time Operation Border Health has canceled in 26 years. More than 6,600 people received services last year.

McALLEN — Every year since 1999, the Rio Grande Valley has hosted a massive five-day event to offer free health services across several counties.

More than 6,600 people received services from the event last year. People lined up as early as 4 a.m. to access physician check-ups, immunizations, sports physicals, screenings for diabetes, dental services, eye exams and prescription glasses.

The event, called Operation Border Health, was scheduled to take place next week at five locations across the Rio Grande Valley and Laredo. But health officials abruptly announced the event's cancellation last week, marking the first time the event will not be held in 26 years.

Local county health departments said the event was canceled because of cuts to the Texas Department of State Health Services' federal funding.

This fiscal year, which started on July 1, the Centers for Disease Control and Prevention only gave Texas about 72% of the base funding the state received last year for its Public Health Emergency Preparedness program, Imelda Garcia, the state health agency's chief deputy commissioner, told county leaders earlier this month. The program helps communities prepare for infectious diseases, natural disasters and other health threats.

The notice came after Garcia warned local public health departments in June of potential federal cuts. CDC



Photo by Jason Garza for The Texas Tribune.

Pedestrians walk in downtown McAllen on Oct. 31, 2021. Federal funding cuts led to the cancellation of this year's Operation Border Health, a multi-county free health clinic event.

officials could not immediately be reached for comment.

In Cameron County, funding was cut by about \$100,000, which meant losing two employees on the health department's preparedness team, said Esmeralda Guajardo, the county health administrator. That was in addition to 10 health department employees — including two on the preparedness team — she lost in March after the federal government told Texas officials it was cutting back \$700 million in COVID-19 pandemic relief funding.

The cuts brought Guajardo's preparedness team down to six employees, which she said made running Operation Border Health this year unmanageable. The preparedness team, which is comprised of several epidemiologists, is usually responsible for conducting contact investigations for diseases in

the community.

Guajardo said the workload is heavy — especially for a short-staffed team — and she couldn't afford to leave those responsibilities unattended while her staff handled Operation Border Health.

"I have a real hard time asking my employees, that I've lost 40% of, to go out and oversee Operation Border Health, knowing that when they come back, they're going to have this workload to attend to," Guajardo said.

Meanwhile, the federal cuts meant Hidalgo County lost more than \$165,000 in emergency preparedness funds, prompting the county to terminate a vacant emergency preparedness coordinator position.

The county said the cuts impacted temporary and permanent staff involved in the event, but declined to provide specifics on the impact of

those cuts.

Losing Operation Border Health is a blow to a region that consistently ranks among the highest in the state without health insurance.

In 2023, the rate of Rio Grande Valley residents who were uninsured was between 27% and 31%.

Ivan Melendez, the Hidalgo County health authority — who is independent of the county health department — said he's concerned about the elimination of health efforts meant to benefit a community that ranks high in poverty, obesity, hypertension, diabetes, end-stage renal disease and hemodialysis.

"Then you throw into it the closure of such safety nets, it becomes a very, very big issue for us," Melendez said.

A handful of clinics in the county offer health services at free or reduced cost, but their resources are strained, Melendez said.

Operation Border Health, a bilingual program, offered a way for people to access those services during the summer, which could be especially useful for students in need of new glasses or sports physicals ahead of the school year.

Melendez said he and the county hope to create new resources to fill the void by partnering with school districts and universities to host clinics. However, he would prefer Operation Border Health to resume.

"We're deeply disappointed that we can't do it," he said. "Our hope is that this is short-lived and that we can return back to this program as soon as possible."

This article was first published in the Texas Tribune on July 16. Reporting in the Rio Grande Valley is supported in part by the Methodist Healthcare Ministries of South Texas,

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New development

(Continued from page 3)



Photo courtesy of Shaun Lamont

Hinkley's customized island.

percentage of nightly stays go to which organizations.
Up until recently, when he met

Lamont, Jackson intended to pursue the addition of campsites and short-term rentals on his Valentine ranch in

order to raise capital for an affordable housing initiative, he said. But after being introduced to Lamont and the Antelope Hills home project, which Jackson referred to as “profound,” he is going all in on partnering with Lamont to establish “affordable houses for people in West Texas within the year” — under \$200,000.

“It was an obvious decision to partner with him, because he can not only build anything you can dream, literally anything, any structure, any shape, he can do it, but he can do it faster than anyone that's around,” Jackson said.

Next up is to pursue a construction loan and determine how many structures they are going to build, he said. Eventually, the duo is hoping that construction companies will

adopt Lamont’s techniques. “We don't want to be home builders,” Jackson said. “What we wanted to do is connect people who build homes — construction companies — with the proprietary technology that Shaun has developed.”

Jackson recognized that there’s “a lot of infrastructure that needs to catch up.” Valentine lacks a gas station, for example, but he still thinks people will be drawn to buy new homes in the remote outpost.

“I think Valentine's the type of place where if people can afford to buy a home for \$200,000, \$250,000 — considerably less than anything that's available around Marfa and Presidio County — I think that people will come,” he said.

Emergency preparedness

(Continued from page 2)

million toward a more sophisticated warning system. Kerr County did receive American Rescue Plan Act funds — money that some residents urged their leaders to return because it was “communist” — but chose to spend the bulk of that money on the Sheriff’s Department instead.

Emergency Management Coordinator Mitschke has been privy to conversations about how to fund Presidio County’s emergency systems for years. He knows that a county as poor as Presidio can’t afford to be choosy, but also cautioned that grant funding isn’t a panacea. For one, most grants have a match requirement — in other words, they’re not free, and can require small governments to cough up large sums of cash on demand to unlock funds. “I have mixed feelings about grants,” he said. “I think they’re good if you have a specific purpose or goal, but if you’re going to rely on grants year after year after year, it’s not the way to go.”

One of the ways that the county can grow its budget is by inviting economic development. The city of Presidio is also trying to hit its stride economically, and has been exploring options for growing business at the port of entry. At Tuesday night’s meeting, the Presidio City Council signed off on a resolution expressing

support for a HAZMAT certification for the international bridge, in hopes of swaying Mexican officials who still need to lend their signatures to the project.

Judge Portillo said that the HAZMAT certification opens the city up to a world of risk all its own, but believes it's necessary to growing business — Presidio is the only port of entry in Texas without one, and materials that seem relatively benign to laypeople like charcoal can also be certified as hazardous material. He said that the city might have to explore having a staffed fire department instead of a volunteer operation. “You really need somebody with expertise and training who has a love for the job,” he said.

While HAZMAT might be inevitable for Presidio’s auto and rail bridges, in Portillo’s view, disaster doesn’t have to be. The county has been preparing for potential HAZMAT emergencies since 2022, and has integrated that risk into its emergency management plan. Across the board, the county has been working to offer training opportunities for first responders looking to learn new skills. “We have extreme heat, we have extreme drought, we have flash flooding,” Portillo said. “You can’t prepare for

everything, but if you can prepare 80%, wouldn’t that be wonderful?”

In an era where “drought” is a buzzword in every newscast and photos of the dried-up Rio Grande have taken social media by storm, it might seem foolish to worry about flooding. The Rio Grande was dammed in 1916 — the biggest flood ever recorded took place in September 1904, and these events seem to be growing rarer and rarer.

Still, the river wakes up every now and again — at the same time as Kerr County went underwater, portions of Big Bend National Park closed and campers had to be evacuated due to flooding.

Experts warn that while our overall weather is trending drier, extreme rain events are becoming more frequent. 10 to 12 inches of rain fell across Kerr County in a matter of hours right before the flooding — around 100 billion gallons of rainwater, with nowhere to go but downhill. “The rapid onset of disruptive climate change — driven by the burning of oil, gasoline and coal — is making disasters like this one more common, more deadly and far more costly to Americans, even as the federal government is running away from the policies and research that might begin to address it,” Abrahm Lustgarten

wrote in an article on the Central Texas floods for *ProPublica*.

No matter what’s next for the area’s weather trends, Presidio County, Mitschke said that it's important to harness any positive momentum toward beefing up emergency protocols. “Out here, so little means so much,” he said of the county’s slim budget. “We’ve got to maintain what we have the best we can.”

On Monday, representatives will reconvene in Austin for a special session of the Legislature. Originally called to tackle unfinished business in the knock-down-drag-out fight over THC legalization, the focus is now on flooding, with a newly-minted state flood plan calling for \$54 billion in upgrades.

Big Bend Representative César Blanco will be serving on the Senate’s new Committee on Disaster Preparedness and Flooding. “The recent flooding in Kerrville and across the Hill Country has taken lives, destroyed homes, and shaken entire communities,” he wrote to the Sentinel. “Events like these are a stark reminder that we can’t afford to wait until the next disaster to act.”

To sign up for alerts from *Presidio County*, please visit <https://tinyurl.com/29pjhdv3>. The service is free of charge and could save your life.

Universal Crossword

Edited by David Steinberg June 24, 2025

ACROSS

- Squads of benchwarmers
- “_____ the season”
- Geopolitical conflict
- Brass band sound
- Daddy, in Spanish
- Green prefix
- Overachievement for a college student, say
- Apprehend
- 25-Down occupants, allegedly
- New Mexico art haven
- Snow monsters
- Poi ingredient
- Visitor
- In days of yore
- “And that’s that”
- Made amends
- Aussie hoppers
- Media icon
- Charlamagne _____ God
- Welcome, as a visitor
- Distinguished individual, briefly
- Onetime
- Apple laptop
- Spanish aunt
- Speed contest
- NFL players in Cleveland
- “This is our last chance”
- Hermit’s favorite number?

- Centers of eggs
- Totes or satchels
- Emulate an angry bear
- “A _____ coincidence!”
- College app datum
- Negative start?
- What to do after entering a house ... and a hint to a sequence in 16-, 28- and 44-Across
- Device outside a bank
- Charged particles
- In working order
- lty-bitty
- Keanu in “The Matrix”
- They’ll make your wishes come true!

- Steals from
- Faux _____ (mistake)
- Celestial night-light
- Superlative ending
- “Beloved” author
- Slime, e.g.
- Strange sight in the sky, for short
- Took a spill
- “I’m just learning”
- Toweled (off)
- French river
- Talks and talks
- Italian wine region
- Signs up for, as a class
- Pre-Roku devices
- Jeers from the bleachers
- Fine and dandy

- Greeting between long-lost friends, say
- _____ Jones average
- “Su-u-ure”
- Ganders’ mates
- Aggravate constantly, with “at”
- Repetitive type of learning
- Rockies or Alps: Abbr.
- Cold Asian desert
- Firefighter’s way down
- Militant
- Greek god
- Tool for breaking up soil
- Game with 108 cards
- Funnyman
- Aykroyd

DOWN

- Portend
- Sound from a train whistle
- Flightless Australian birds
- PD alert
- Mediterranean island nation
- Clipped wool off of
- _____ Mahal
- Wall St. debut
- Private line?
- Indulged oneself excessively
- Purple smoothie berry

PREVIOUS PUZZLE ANSWER

F	I	T	C	H	E	C	K				I	T	M	E
A	S	O	N	E	D	O	E	S			I	M	H	O
S	T	O	N	E	W	A	L	L			T	E	A	M
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				P	E	R	S	I	M	M	O	N	S	
		S	H	A	R	D			D	O	N	T	A	S
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K	I	L	T	S		H	E	N		B	O	R	N	E
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G	O	F	O	R		I	G	O	R			S	R	A
A	D	A	P	T		Z	E	N	M	A	S	T	E	R
L	I	M	E	S		E	N	D	O	F	R	A	N	T
S	E	E	R			T	A	N	L	I	N	E	S	

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www.upuzzles.com

6/24

Closing Time by Drew Schmenner

1	2	3	4	5	6			7	8	9		10	11	12
13							14					15		
16							17					18		
19					20					21	22			
			23					24	25					
	26	27			28		29					30	31	
32					33		34				35			
36						37				38	39			
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44				45					46			47		
		48						49		50				
51	52						53					54	55	56
57					58	59	60				61			
62					63					64				
65					66					67				

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Price reduced on two (2) adobe homes on two lots in west central Marfa. Nicely updated main home with new paint, flooring, fixtures, lighting and windows. The other home is an older adobe and is structurally sound but has not been occupied in many years. This property offers many options.

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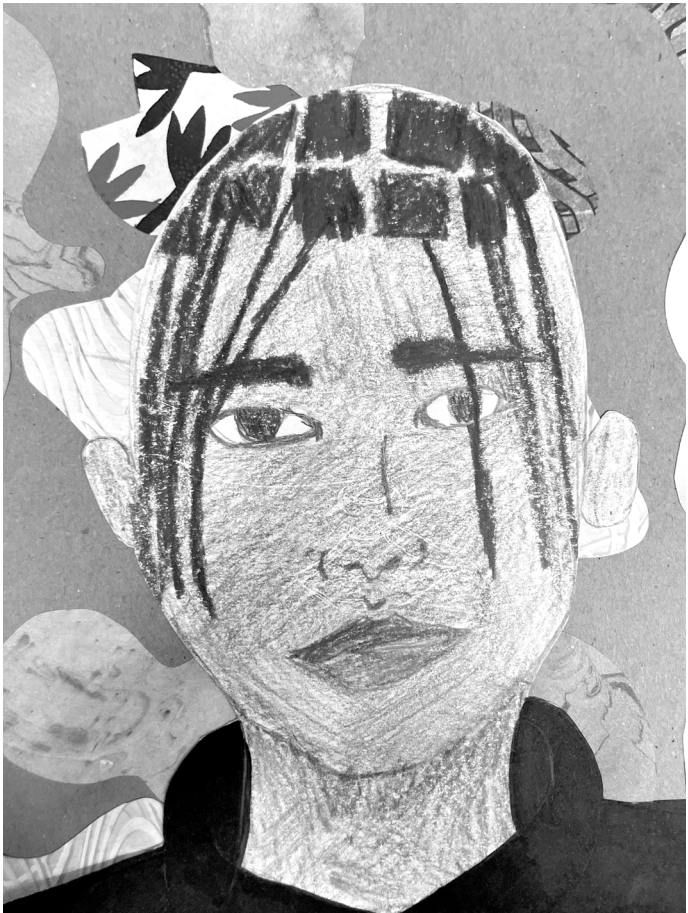
Free for residents of Presidio, Brewster, and Jeff Davis counties.

Judd Foundation is open Tuesday through Sunday and offers two distinct guided visits. Please visit our office, 104 South Highland Avenue, or website for the current schedule.

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

JUDD

DRAWING OF THE WEEK



Abelardo Marquez
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.

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

DIFFICULTY RATING: ★★★★★★

Solution from last week's puzzle:

SOLUTION:

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

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MARFA SHORTHORNS SPORTS CALENDAR

SUMMER BREAK



Photo courtesy of @marathonpubliclibrary

Marathon Public Library awarded Texas Book Festival Grant

MARATHON — Marathon Public Library has been awarded a 2025 Texas Book Festival Library Grant, which will fund the addition of more than 100 new books to its collection — primarily focused on updating and expanding nonfiction offerings for both children and adults. This year’s grant comes at a crucial moment, as the library opens its newly expanded facility.

The ongoing Heart of Marathon capital campaign has enabled MPL to quadruple in size, creating designated areas for children, teens and adults. With this additional space, the library can now house a broader, more inclusive collection that reflects the growing demand from both residents and the many visitors who come to Marathon each year.

“This grant helps us do more than just add books to shelves, it helps us build a collection that reflects the needs and aspirations of a growing, diverse community,” said Dara Cavness, library director. “With our new space, we can finally give nonfiction the focus it deserves.”

Nonfiction materials, ranging from history and science to memoir and social issues, are constantly evolving. The grant will allow the library to offer more current, relevant, and thought-provoking books that support lifelong learning and engagement. These resources will benefit students, families, seniors and tourists alike.

The Texas Book Festival Library Grant program plays a vital role in supporting public libraries across the state, especially in rural areas where funding for new materials can be extremely limited. Since 1995, the program has awarded more than \$3.7 million to Texas libraries. Marathon Public Library is proud to be one of just 50 Texas libraries selected for this year’s award.

Since 2018, the Texas Book Festival has awarded MPL a total of \$13,500 to strengthen its collection.

The library is deeply grateful for this ongoing partnership, which directly supports its efforts to foster literacy, expand access to knowledge, and strengthen community connection.

It's a bumper crop!

By Mary Etherington
The Big Bend Sentinel

A friend suggested the “rain gods” must have read my recent story on the drought, the deleterious effect on our trees, and the importance of long, slow soaks to save them, because within days, rains came.

The rain was welcome, any amount of rain. It may not have been enough to reach and soak the roots of trees, however it was definitely enough to supercharge every dormant goathead. The crop is banging. Everywhere. There are clumps growing upward into shrubs, giant flat spreads, and I’m convinced there will be actual hedges if we get more rain.

Years ago I moved into a house in Marfa with an impressive crop of goatheads (who doesn’t?); this one was particularly challenging. I spent endless hours, plus a self-imposed 30-minute daily minimum, convinced that by pulling up the plants I could emerge the winner in this very serious battle.

Flip-flops were employed for passive collection. I kept a bucket by the back door for them. I would lean my head against the back of the house in the hot sun while I picked out each and every goathead, questioning all my life choices. One particularly discouraging hot afternoon as I squatted over a splayed out plant with a circumference of about 5 feet I swore in disgust and professed these plants must be good for something. I kicked off the flip-flops at the back door, marched inside and began my research.

Ground goatheads, the actual seedpods, have traditionally been

used in Chinese herbal medicine to treat blood pressure, libido, kidneys, heart and circulation. I also saw a reference to companies that actually buy goatheads, although I was never able to find one willing to pay for my freshly harvested crop. My change of attitude was immediate. I started pulling up plants, pulling off the thorny bits, and hanging the rest of the plant to dry. These dried bundles hanging all over my kitchen became my newfound love, goathead leaf tea.

Much enthused by this new endeavor I borrowed a collection of teapots from friends and served the tea in my gallery that Chinati Weekend. While every other establishment was serving tequila shots and the like, I had tiny tea cups with a taste profile reminiscent of many herb teas of mild dirt and grass, with high notes of something quite other and hard to pin down.

One gentleman did inquire months later and ask if I had more of that tea that could be shipped to him, so there’s one convert. Goatheads, *Tribulus terrestris* or puncture vine, are not native to this desert. They arrived in the fleece of sheep from Greece, brought here as breeding stock, although they are pretty much worldwide at this point because they can survive in hostile climates, like here.

The fruit of the plant, the actual goatheads, can survive years in a dormant state, then spring back to life with the requisite amount of rain. That’s what we have going on here. They are definitely impressive right now, and now is the perfect time to pull up the plants, with their tiny yellow flowers, if you plan to make



Photo by Harry Rose

Goatheads: *Tribulus terrestris*

tea or just want them the hell out of your yard and existence.

One priceless comment: “I’m going to plant this in my neighbor’s yard who has kids.” Hahahahaha. Please don’t be that person, even though I admire their understanding of the consequences of what this company’s selling. Outsmarting goatheads makes for a great superpower. May we all be winners in this contest.

Stop the Rezoning of Our Neighborhood!

Sign the petition to stop the rezoning of a neighborhood property to build a new AEP substation.



Tell City Council members to reject this bad idea that will ruin Marfa's character and go against our comprehensive plan.

Click the QR Code or visit <https://tinyurl.com/3nudptbc> to signe the petition.

AROUND THE BIG BEND

Thur
July
17

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

Calamity Creek
6 - 9pm at The Ritchey
Enjoy live music from Calamity Creek, at The Ritchey. No cover.

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

Fri
July
18

Chasen Wayne Honky Tonk Machine
6 - 9pm at The Ritchey
Enjoy live music from Chasen Wayne Honky Tonk Machine, at The Ritchey. No cover.

Tom Griffith
7 - 9pm at Alcove Social
Enjoy live music from Tom Griffith, at Alcove Social.

LULAC Meeting
6-8pm at Marfa Public Library Community Room
The Big Bend Regional League of United Latin American Citizens (LULAC) Council is inviting all to attend its inaugural meeting. Complimentary snacks and drinks will be provided. Can't attend in person? Watch live on Facebook.

Park Preparedness - Safety Tips
7 - 8 p.m. Davis Mountain 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.

Sat
July
19

Birding on the Wild Side
9-10:30am Davis Mountain State Park
Explore the park's primitive side on a guided bird walk.

Open Mic Night
8-10pm Alcove Social in Alpine
Let your talent shine.

Sun
July
20

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.

Looking to submit an event?
Scan our QR code here:



Ongoing Weekly Events & Classes

Xbox Monday
Mondays (all day) at Marfa Public Library

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> & 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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Competitive pay, excellent benefits to include health/dental/vision insurance, paid time off, 401K matching, etc.

Please express interest and include resume via email to wrice@fmmep.com

OBITUARIES



VALENZUELA

Alan Valenzuela, 20, of Presidio, Texas, passed away on July 6, 2025, in Presidio. A Rosary will was held at 7 p.m. on Sunday, July 13, at Santa Teresa de Jesus Catholic Church. Funeral services were held at 10 a.m. on Monday, July 14, also at Santa Teresa de Jesus Catholic Church, with Father Miguel Alcuino



BRITO

Lupe Soza Brito, 88, a lifetime resident of Presidio, Texas, passed away at home on Saturday, July 5, 2025. A memorial service will be held at a later time at Santa Teresa Catholic



LUJAN

Bibiana Vasquez Lujan, 90 from Marfa, Texas died on Saturday, July 12, 2025, at home. She was born on January 10, 1935, in Marfa, Texas and was a devoted Catholic. Bibiana married Eduardo Lujan on January 15, 1949, and had seven children. Affectionately known for her loving nature and calming energy, Bibiana was a shining light in all the lives who had the privilege of knowing her. She always greeted you with a loving smile and at your departure, with a warm embrace and a blessing of the Sign of the Cross. Her funny nature, quick wit and laughter will always be remembered, it was absolutely infectious. She was devoted to her husband, children, and especially her grandchildren. She was a housewife that loved to cook, bake and watch Sabado Gigante and her novelas.

Legislative committee

(Continued from page 1)

- Rep. Ken King, R-Canadian, Chairman
- Rep. Armando Martinez, D-Weslaco, Vice-Chair
- Rep. Greg Bonnen, R-Friendswood
- Rep. Drew Darby, R-San Angelo
- Rep. Ann Johnson, D-Houston

officiating. Alan will be laid to rest at Tierras Nuevas Cemetery in Ojinaga, Chihuahua. Arrangements are under the care of Eternity Funeral Home. Alan was born on May 27, 2005, in Alpine, Texas, to Aaron and Norma Valenzuela. He was raised in Presidio and graduated from Presidio High School. He went on to attend Odessa College, where he earned a certificate in automotive technology. Most recently, Alan joined Jacam Catalyst, where he began building his professional career. Alan was a young man who truly lived life to the fullest. Hardworking, strong in his faith, and always ready to lend a helping hand, he touched countless lives with his kind heart and uplifting spirit. Driven and determined, Alan achieved many milestones early in life — most notably becoming a

Church in Presidio. Lupe was born on April 14, 1937, in Presidio to Fernando Soza and Sabina Amada Herrera. After graduating from Presidio High School, she worked at local stores. Lupita, as she was lovingly known, worked 20 years as clerical administrator for West Texas Utilities until her retirement. Her work ethic excelled as she served her community. Lupe is preceded by her parents, Fernando and Sabina Soza, and her loving and only sister, Maria Dolores Urias. Lupe is survived by her son, Jose Antonio (Joe) and wife Margie Brito, from Seagoville, Texas, nieces and nephews.

She was preceded in death by her husband, Eduardo Lujan, her parents, sister Emma and her great grandsons Andrew Madrid and Joey Edwards. Survivors include her three sons Ernest Lujan, Ismael Lujan and wife Felita, Eddie Lujan and wife Diana, four daughters — Delia Piñeda, Betty Salas and husband Pablo, Martha Segura and husband Philip and Linda Aguilar and husband Freddy. Bibiana was also fortunate to be blessed with 23 grandchildren, 61 great grandchildren and 10 great-great grandchildren. Pallbearers will be Kevin Salas, Ronnie Martinez, Jonathon Lujan, Freddy Aguilar Jr., Nathan Muhle and Jonathan Muhle. Honorary pallbearers are Jeremy Retana, Abe Lujan, Sergio Sanchez, and Abel Lugo. Services for Bibiana are as follows: St. Mary's Catholic Church located at 211 W. San Antonio Street in Marfa, Texas on Saturday, July 19, 2025, with the recitation of the most Holy Rosary at 9:30 AM, and funeral Mass at 10:00 AM with interment to follow at Cementerio de la Merced. Services have been entrusted to Alpine Memorial Funeral Home in Alpine, Texas and condolences and gifts may be left by visiting www.alpinememorialfuneralhome.com.

homeowner at just 20 years old. He had many dreams and aspirations, and though his journey was tragically cut short, the impact he made in his time with us is immeasurable. Above all else, Alan's greatest love was for his family. He was the proud son of devoted parents, and a beloved brother to his sister and brother. To them, he was the greatest of sons and the best of brothers — bringing laughter, joy, and sometimes frustration, but always showing unwavering love. There are not enough words to fully capture the incredible young man Alan was. But those who knew him will forever carry his memory, his smile, and his light in their hearts. Alan will be sorely missed here on Earth, but we find comfort in knowing he now soars above watching over his cherished family with love.



Volunteers help distribute fans to seniors in Alpine last week.

Sen. Blanco hosts 'Beat the Heat' fan giveaway

ALPINE — Last Thursday, Texas State Sen. César J. Blanco hosted a “Beat the Heat” Senior Box Fan Giveaway at the Lions Club in Alpine, where 54 box fans were distributed to economically disadvantaged senior citizens and families. With high temperatures during the summer months, this initiative aims to assist economically disadvantaged seniors and families in keeping their homes cool and help reduce their electric bills. Bringing this effort to a rural community like Alpine is essential, as residents in remote areas often face greater barriers to accessing resources and support during extreme weather. According to Harvard Medical School, more than 80% of the estimated 12,000 individuals in the United States who succumb to heat-related causes annually are aged 60 and above. Because older people tend to have more chronic conditions like diabetes and heart disease, elevated

temperatures make it harder to cool off the body. Medicines that many older people use to treat chronic ailments, such as diuretics for high blood pressure, can also make them more vulnerable to the heat. “Helping disadvantaged families and senior citizens stay safe and save money during the extreme summer heat is a top priority,” Blanco said. “For many living on fixed incomes, high electricity bills can be a serious burden. This fan giveaway is about easing that financial strain, giving the community a way to stay cool without having to worry about rising energy costs.” “In rural communities like Alpine, where access to resources can be more limited, it’s especially important to bring this kind of support directly to those who need it most,” Blanco said. “I’m proud to continue this annual tradition and to work with our local partners to provide real, practical support for our community’s most vulnerable residents,” Blanco added.

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FROM THE ARCHIVES

August 16, 2001

Obscure dam north of town protects city

By DAN KEANE

MARFA — When the sudden summer thunderstorms hit Marfa, we all scurry out in the rain to roll up the windows on our pickup trucks. Once we've spared the truck seats from the deluge, we'll stand in the cover of a doorway to marvel at the water falling from the sky, all the while wondering whether we've left the windows open back at the house. Big rainstorms used to cause local residents more to fret about than just their trucks. For much of Marfa's history, a couple days of heavy rain could put a good portion of town underwater. Even in this dry country, occasional floods are a part of life. The danger of flooding has largely passed, thanks to a dam constructed just north of town in 1961. Despite its vital role in keeping Marfa dry, the dam is often forgotten in town. "Most people don't know we've got a dam," said City Administrator Curtis Schrader. It is a large hunk of earth to be unaware of. The dam is basically a symmetrical man-made hill about a half-mile long, and 40 feet high at its tallest point. Constructed from dirt gathered near the city's old landfill, the dam is sprinkled with fragments of decades-old Coke bottles, rusted flatware, and shards of antique dinner plates: The broken pieces sparkle in the bright sun, and make the dam seem eerily like a ceremonial mound left by an ancient, soda pop-swilling civilization.

In response to the creek's repeated floods, the Army Corps of Engineers and the U.S. Department of Agriculture (USDA) began construction on the dam in late 1960, finishing early the following year, "Where they build these things is based on historical food data," Schrader said. Before starting the project, the agencies had to acquire an easement from the Mimms family, which owned the ranch on which the dam was located. Today, Jack and Terry Saunders own the ranch. Despite the dam's size, it handles only a small portion of the runoff from the Maria Plateau. "The watershed for this is very small," Schrader said. The dam collects runoff from an area running north about as far as the Marfa Airport, beyond which point most of the water ends up in Alamito Creek, he said.

The dam runs east to west across a gap between two gently sloping hills. It melts seamlessly into the high country at each end, allowing a person to walk out on its crest without climbing up its steep, grass-covered slopes. At the midpoint of the dam, on its southern, or downstream side, a large concrete drainage pipe juts out of the base. Any water held behind the dam would be released through this pipe and meander southward across a wide, flat field towards town. After about a mile, the runoff would gather in Mimms Draw Creek, also known as Marfa Creek, and flow through town. On the upstream side, the drainage pipe begins with a concrete box that houses the release valve. The only access to the valve is through a door in the side of the box, only a few feet above the very bottom of the dam. "You've got to come out here before the water gets that high, and make sure it's already open," Schrader said. Schrader has seen the dam save the town from flooding before. In the early 1990s, during his previous tenure as city administrator, a series of big rains created a 15-foot-deep lake behind the dam. The city waited in suspense to see if the dam would hold. "We had people out here all night long," Schrader remembered. "I had to make the call if it was time for evacuation." Thankfully, city employees had opened the release valve before the water got too deep. The lake drained slowly over the next few days, with runoff constantly pouring out of the drainage pipe into the creek, Schrader said. The dam is managed under an agreement between the USDA Natural Resources Conservation Service, Highland Soil and Water Conservation District, Presidio County, and the City of Marfa. As chief beneficiary of the dam's protection, the city is largely responsible for the dam's regular maintenance. USDA inspector Alfredo Brijalba recently toured the dam with Schrader, giving the earthworks their annual checkup. While pointing out a few small items that required upkeep, Brijalba overall gave the dam a passing grade. Gopher holes burrowed in the side of the embankment must be filled, the inspector said. "If you get too many of those burrowing holes you can really weaken the dam," he said, adding that if left unchecked, a network of such holes could make the dam nothing more than "a bunch of Swiss cheese."

Ant colonies, too, need to be destroyed. Ants also weaken the dam with their burrowing, Schrader said. To demonstrate, he dug the heel of his boot deep into an old ant's nest at the east end of the dam. The nest crumbled easily under his foot. Ant nests further encourage erosion by preventing grass from growing, Schrader said, adding that grass is the best shield for the dam's precious dirt. Schrader said that the inspector had pointed out a number of less helpful plants that should be removed, including a few prickly pear cacti that had sprung up on the slopes of the dam, and a gourd vine that sprawled over the dam's crest. Neither of these plants hold soil in place nearly as well as the grass, Schrader said. The city administrator stressed that by keeping a vigilant eye over these seemingly small threats to the dam's stability, the city can expect the dam to protect it from floods far into the future. "As long as you do the small things, and take care of them on an annual basis, it'll be fine," Schrader said. "If you wait five or ten years, then they can cause bigger problems."

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Faith organizations, nonprofits face threats, loss of funding

By Adelina Romero and Rebecca Raghunath
Puente News Collaborative

EL PASO — Seven months into President Donald Trump’s second term, sweeping changes to federal immigration policy have escalated deportations, cut millions of dollars in federal funding to nonprofits providing legal aid for immigrants, and revoked protections for sensitive spaces, including churches.

Here in El Paso, faith leaders and organizations that have long provided resources for migrants are raising alarms over new policies they say are instilling fear and undermining humanitarian efforts.

“People are afraid to go out for groceries. They’re afraid to go to church,” said El Paso’s Catholic Bishop Mark Seitz. “I really don’t believe fear adequately describes it. It’s terror.”

The polarizing issue of immigration has morphed into mass protests in Los Angeles and multiple cities across the country against sweeping ICE raids that include work sites and other locations. At least one person was on church property when they were picked up by agents, according to reports.

Pope Leo XIV, a Chicago native and a descendant of Sicilian immigrants, has called for the protection of immigrants, the poor, and the most vulnerable, following the legacy of his predecessor, Pope Francis.

“No one is exempt from ensuring the dignity of every person,” the pontiff said. “From the unborn to the elderly, from the sick to the unemployed, citizens and immigrants alike.”

In rescinding the policy, a spokesperson for the U.S. The Department of Homeland Security said, “The Trump

would leave — to appeal to those who don’t want anybody in this country except people that look like them,” Seitz said. “You have to be constantly worried. Constantly on guard.”

In October of 2021, the Biden administration expanded the definition of sensitive locations to “protected areas” that imposed greater restrictions for ICE to enter spaces such as, schools, healthcare facilities, social services establishments, disaster relief centers, and places of worship. Now, no space is off-limits.

On his first day in office, President Trump rolled back the nonpartisan “sensitive locations” policy, dating back to the Clinton administration which encouraged immigration and customs agents to use “good judgement” to engage in enforcement in sensitive areas.

The policy reversal has sparked multiple lawsuits from faith groups across the country, including the Quakers in Maryland and in Oregon, arguing that the new policies violate the Religious Freedom Restoration Act and the First Amendment.

In January, a federal judge in Maryland blocked parts of Trump’s executive order. U.S. District Judge Theodore D. Chuang ruled that the policy imposed a “real and substantial burden” on religious organizations that historically aid migrants.

“The burden imposed by the policy is far from speculative,” Chuang wrote in his opinion. “It is already happening.”

In the border city El Paso, one of the largest binational communities in the country, the immigration crackdown has sowed fear among many people of color, generating multiple protests. More than 80% of El Paso’s population is Hispanic.



Photo by Aaron Montes/Puente News Collective

Indigenous dancers perform during an interfaith migrant solidarity march led by Bishop Mark J. Seitz on March 24, 2025, in El Paso.

Administration will not tie the hands of our brave law enforcement and instead trusts them to use common sense.”

Sensitive locations

For Bishop Seitz, the diocese’s mission to protect the vulnerable has never been clearer as the Trump administration carries out what critics, including Seitz, have called mass deportations based on racial profiling. “It was the intention of the administration so that people

“A moment of hopeful resistance”

This spring, Bishop Seitz led a candlelight vigil through downtown El Paso to Sacred Heart Church, which served as a shelter for migrant families during a large influx of migrants seeking asylum in 2022. He was joined by faith leaders from across the U.S., Mexico, Central America, and the Vatican.

“It was a moment of creative, hopeful resistance,” said Dylan Corbett, executive director of the Hope Border Institute. “The testimony of people affected by these

Megabill

(Continued from page 1)

week, Sen. John Cornyn, R-Texas, said in a floor speech that the work requirements would strengthen Medicaid for its intended recipients — children, the disabled and pregnant women.

“It’s not fair to the taxpayer to have them subsidize people sitting on the couch playing video games all day when they can contribute to their community and their family,” he said.

Texas Democrats have homed in on Medicaid cuts as the most devastating portion of the bill.

“You’re talking about a health care disaster that is going to take place — not just in the Dallas-Fort Worth area, but in every major metropolitan area in the state,” said Rep. Marc Veasey, D-Fort Worth. “When you add that on top of the rural hospitals that are going to close and the smaller areas in Texas, it’s going to create a health care nightmare scenario.”

SNAP

The Republican bill also includes deep cuts to the Supplemental Nutrition Assistance Program, previously known as food stamps.

But the size of Texas’ SNAP cut is up in the air, dependent on how often the state errs in over- or underpaying benefit recipients.

Under the bill, states will have to cover a portion of SNAP benefits — which are currently paid for by the federal government in full — based on the percentage of erroneous payments made. States with an error rate under 6% will not have to share the cost, while states above that will be on the hook for escalating costs tied to their error rate.

Texas logged an error rate of 8.3%



Photo by Aaron Montes/Puente News Collective

El Paso Bishop Mark Seitz greets Guatemalan migrant Wilson Juarez during a migrant solidarity vigil March 24, 2025, at Sacred Heart Church in El Paso, Texas. Photo by Aaron Montes/Puente News Collaborative.

At right: Catholic bishops, led by El Paso Bishop Mark Seitz (center), march in solidarity with migrants March 24, 2025, in downtown El Paso, Texas. Photo by Andres Leighton/AP Photo.

policies has to be at the center of our response.”

That resistance comes with growing risks, as faith-based nonprofits fear they could be swept up in a crackdown. Operation Lone Star, Texas Gov. Greg Abbot’s border enforcement initiative included deployment of 10,000 National Guard troops and Texas state troopers along the U.S.-Mexico border. Faith-based nonprofit organizations fear they could face consequences for providing humanitarian aid to undocumented migrants.

“We’ve got a target on our back now,” Corbett said. “They may go after us for smuggling or trafficking charges.”

That threat became real last June when Texas Attorney General Ken Paxton attempted to shut down Annunciation House, which provides temporary shelter to migrants in El Paso. Paxton called the Catholic organization a “stash house” and requested records detailing those who received services. Annunciation House pushed back, arguing that disclosing those records, which include medical files and sensitive personal information would violate clients’ privacy rights and the organization’s religious freedom.

In late May, the Texas Supreme Court ruled unanimously that Paxton has the authority to demand records needed to proceed with his lawsuit targeting the migrant shelter. The court, however, did not weigh in on the merits of the case.

Meanwhile, advocates say that some immigrants, including asylum seekers with pending cases, are increasingly choosing to go back to their home countries rather than risk arrest.

“What they are returning to may be worse in terms of the actual danger to their lives, but somehow to be in a place like the United States today feels more dangerous,” said Seitz.

As the threat of mass deportation looms, Corbett’s Hope Border Institute has pivoted to help migrants plan voluntary returns to their home countries.

“We helped a family get back to Venezuela safely,” said Corbett, the group’s executive director. “That’s where we are now, not just defending people’s right to stay, but helping them leave with dignity when they no longer feel safe here.”

Legal aid in crisis

Estrella del Paso, the legal aid ministry of the Catholic



Diocese, holds “know-your-rights” workshops that are now treated with caution since many migrants are afraid to attend in person.

“If people need know-your-rights presentations remotely, or they need to do a consultation remotely because they’re scared, we can make those accommodations,” said Melissa Lopez, executive director of Estrella del Paso.

At a time when their services are in high demand, the nonprofit organization lost \$5 million in federal funding and had to furlough nearly half its staff.

“We were a team of 78,” Lopez said. “Now, 30 of those positions are on furlough.”

In early May, the organization received a \$25,000 emergency grant from the Border Refugee Assistance Fund, a joint initiative of Bishop Seitz and the Hope Border Institute, to help sustain workshops and pay for legal representation for asylum seekers.

“This grant is a lifeline — not just for our organization, but for the thousands of vulnerable people we serve,” said Lopez in announcing the funding.

Calling this an urgent time of unprecedented demand for legal representation, Seitz said the gospel challenges the faithful to “stand with the vulnerable and ensure that hope and justice remain alive at our border.”

“I don’t think I’m speaking about politics. I’m speaking about faith. Politicians are messing with my faith,” the Bishop said.

This story was co-published with Puente News Collaborative, KTEP public radio in partnership with the Craig Newmark Graduate School of Journalism at the City University of New York (CUNY). Puente News Collaborative is a bilingual nonprofit newsroom, convener, and funder dedicated to high-quality, fact-based

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Council #22562

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Classifieds & Public Notices

Megabill

(Continued from page 9)

Biden administration. That money is now poised to flow to Texas after making it into the bill’s final draft. Gov. Greg Abbott, who spearheaded the state’s multibillion-dollar border security program known as Operation Lone Star, has been lobbying Trump and lawmakers for federal dollars since Biden left office in January. Texas’ GOP delegation at first pushed congressional leaders to include \$12 billion in reimbursements for states that spent money on border enforcement. Cornyn secured an additional \$1.5 billion in the Senate version, upping the available grants to \$13.5 billion. The rules for this pot of money ensure that Texas has the largest claim to the funds of any state. Apart from these grants, GOP lawmakers gave U.S. Immigration and Customs Enforcement nearly \$30 billion to revamp its workforce and equipment, with the goal of speeding the agency’s rate of deportations — a hallmark Trump campaign pledge. The reconciliation bill also puts billions into new surveillance technology and construction of a wall along the southern border.

Clean energy

The bill rolled back several key provisions of former President Joe Biden’s landmark Inflation Reduction Act, which created tax credits for clean energy projects to spur industry investment. Those subsidies will be phased out under a provision that reserves the tax credits only for solar and wind projects that are up and running by the end of 2027. Projects that start construction within a year of the law’s enactment — including those that become operational post-2027 — also will remain eligible. Several Republicans, including U.S. Rep. Chip Roy of Austin, wanted to see the credits abolished immediately. Roy claimed that clean energy cannot reliably power Texas’ grid, as some energy generators, such as solar panels and wind turbines, can only produce electricity in favorable weather conditions. He also said the credits subsidize foreign manufacturers whose renewable energy products dominate the American market. Clean energy advocates say any cuts are bound to hamper the Texas labor market, as workers on renewable projects could be fired as their employers’ tax incentives disappear. With Texans’ energy demand expected to skyrocket in the next decade, supporters say clean energy could quickly and cheaply fill in the gaps. Tax cuts The centerpiece of the Republican megabill is the extension of an array of income tax cuts from the 2017 tax-cut package Trump signed into law during his first term. Set to expire at the end of the year, the cuts were permanently enshrined in the bill, allowing most Americans to continue benefiting. Republicans on the tax-writing House Ways and Means Committee estimate that a family of four earning the median income in Texas — \$75,780 — would have seen its tax bill rise by \$1,550 if the 2017 cuts had expired and tax rates had reverted to their Obama-era levels.

Independent analyses of the bill have found that its benefits will mostly flow to the wealthy, while tax savings for the lowest earners will be largely offset by benefit cuts. A state-by-state analysis by the Institute of Taxation and Economic Policy, a left-leaning think tank, found that the top 1% of Texans — or those making over \$806,800 — will see the biggest share of the tax cuts. Those top earners will save 3.4%, or an average of \$114,680 per year, on their federal income tax due to the passage of the bill. The richest Texans will receive a larger average tax cut than their top one percent counterparts in all but two other states, according to the ITEP analysis. Though the bill’s tax-cut provisions largely focused on preserving existing cuts, Republicans also created a host of new temporary tax relief programs aimed at workers and seniors. Texans who work in roles that traditionally receive tips will get to claim a deduction of up to \$25,000 — a priority of Sen. Ted Cruz — through 2028. Those earning overtime can deduct up to \$12,500 through the same time period, with lesser deductions for high earners. And seniors can add \$6,000 to their standard deduction, also through the 2028 tax year. Trump accounts Born out of a late-night poker game last year, Cruz championed the idea of “Trump accounts,” a provision included in the bill that will seed \$1,000 in a tax-deferred investment account for nearly every child born in America in 2025 and beyond. As each recipient ages into adulthood, family, friends and nonprofits will be able to contribute up to \$5,000 annually. Once they reach 18, the beneficiaries will be able to access half the funds for limited purposes — such as educational expenses, starting a small business or placing a down payment on a home. They can withdraw the rest once they reach age 31. To accrue wealth, the account will be pegged to a broad stock index that has yet to be determined. Assuming an average market growth of 7% per year, the accounts will be worth anywhere from \$3,500 to \$170,000 after 18 years, depending on yearly contribution amounts. Children born between 2025 and 2028 will be automatically enrolled in the program via their parents’ tax returns as part of the initiative’s pilot program. It is set to cost about \$3 billion a year. Cruz views the new accounts as a way to sell the next generation of American children on the free-market system. “It gives every kid some skin in the game,” he said in an interview with The Texas Tribune earlier this month. Pell Grant program The megabill narrowly avoided cuts to the Pell Grant that would have devastated nearly half a million Texas students who depend on the aid to pay for college. The House initially proposed stricter requirements to qualify for the Pell Grant, which helps cover costs for low-income students and is the largest source of grant aid in Texas. Students would have had to take more college credits each semester to get the full award, and students who are enrolled less than half-time would have lost access to the aid entirely. In the end, the Senate stripped those changes after college access advocates sounded alarms about the educational barriers they would have raised.

The bill does prevent students from qualifying for the Pell Grant if their college already covers the full cost of attendance. Many schools across Texas offer so-called “promise programs” that cover tuition and fees after the Pell Grant kicks in. Republicans on Capitol Hill also extended Pell Grants to short-term workforce training programs, which can last just eight to 15 weeks. Some GOP members tried to make unaccredited training programs eligible for the aid, but the proposal was quashed by the Senate parliamentarian.

Incentives for K-12 scholarships

The legislation also includes one of Cruz’s priorities: annual tax credits for people who donate to nonprofits that give scholarships to elementary and secondary school students — a framework supporters call “school choice” and that is similar to private school vouchers. To comply with Senate parliamentary rules, Cruz’s original proposal was scaled back so it could pass the chamber with a simple majority rather than the typical 60-vote threshold needed to overcome a filibuster. Under the provision, donors will receive a tax break equal to the amount they give to K-12 scholarship-granting organizations, including those that help students pay to attend private schools. The credit will max out at \$1,700 annually, down from an earlier cap of 10% of the donor’s income, and states will get to opt in, meaning Democratic-controlled states could decline to participate. This caveat, which was added in Senate negotiations, almost certainly sets the stage for another round of political fights in states wary of incentivizing private school attendance with public dollars. Despite the trepidation, Cruz touted the measure repeatedly, calling school choice the “civil rights issue of the 21st century.”

Moving the Space Shuttle Discovery

Another provision secured by Cornyn requires the NASA administrator to consider moving the Space Shuttle Discovery from its current home in Virginia to the Johnson Space Center in Houston. In 2010, the NASA Authorization Act mandated the four now-retired space shuttles be gifted to cities with ties to their orbital missions. None were allocated to Houston in what Cornyn called a political stunt by the Obama administration. Given the city’s central role in space exploration and coordinating each of the shuttle flights, Cornyn called Houston “the cornerstone of our nation’s human space exploration program” and said it would right an “egregious wrong” to move the shuttle to Texas. The senior Texas senator also secured an additional \$10 billion in funding to support programs at the Houston space center and more money for the International Space Station and NASA’s Moon and Mars exploration program, known as Artemis. This article was first published in The Texas Tribune on July 3, 2025. Disclosure: Feeding Texas has been a financial supporter of The Texas Tribune, a nonprofit, nonpartisan news organization that is funded in part by donations from members, foundations and corporate sponsors.

ADVERTISEMENT FOR BIDS
CITY OF MARFA, TEXAS
STREET IMPROVEMENTS

Separate sealed bids for the construction of **Street Improvements** will be received by the **City of Marfa, Texas**, until **2:00 PM**, on **July 29, 2025**, at **Marfa City Hall 113 S. Highland Ave., Marfa, TX 79843**, and then at said location publicly opened and read aloud. This project consists of the removal and replacement of approximately 5,755 LF of base material and road surface for five streets in the City of Marfa. Streets to be replaced include (1) Russell Street from US 90 north to Columbia Street (estimated 2,190 ft); (2) Mesa Street from US 90 north to Lincoln Street (estimated 1,210 ft); (3) North Gonzales Street from Columbia Street north to 3rd Street (estimated 1,010 ft); (4) East Galveston Street from US 67 east to South Dean Street (estimated 435 ft); (5) 3rd Street from SH 17 west to Austin Street (estimated 910 ft).

The Contract Documents, consisting of Advertisement for Bids, Information for Bidders, Bid Proposal, Bid Bond, Agreement, Performance and Payment Bonds, General Conditions, Notice of Award, Notice to Proceed, Plans, and Specifications, may be examined at the following location:

Jacob & Martin, LLC
3465 Curry Lane, Abilene, Texas 79606

The Owner reserves the right to waive any informalities and to reject any or all bids. Bids may be held by the Owner for a period not to exceed 60 days from the date of bid opening for the purpose of reviewing the bids and investigating the qualifications of Bidders prior to awarding of the contract.

Copies of the CONTRACT DOCUMENTS must be ordered online at www.jacobmartin.com. Orders for CONTRACT DOCUMENTS may include hard copies for pick up, mail out or digital download via www.jacobmartin.com. Upon verification of online payment, hard copies may be picked up at Jacob & Martin, LLC, located at 3465 Curry Lane, Abilene, TX 79606. Cost for hard copies of the CONTRACT DOCUMENTS will be **\$100.00** for 11x17 plans. Cost for digital download of CONTRACT DOCUMENTS will be **\$0.00**. Contractors must purchase a set of CONTRACT DOCUMENTS to be considered a registered plan holder eligible to bid the project.

Bid Bond: A certified check or bank draft, payable to the order of the **City of Marfa**, negotiable U.S. Government bonds (at par value) or a satisfactory Bid Bond executed by the Bidder and an acceptable surety in an amount equal to five percent (5%) of the total bid shall be submitted with each bid.

City of MarfaManuel Baeza, Mayor
June 26th and July 3rd, 10th, 17th, 2025

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

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Alpine Mayor Catherine Eaves:
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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)

BBT

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Mitch Webb & The Swindles

JULY 25

Friday, July 25

4:30–7:00 PM

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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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