

# BIG BEND Sentinel



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Our 100th Year

Marfa, Texas • TWO DOLLARS



## Anyone up for time travel?

A "tardis"—a Time And Relative Dimension(s) In Space booth for time travel in the sci-fi TV series "Dr. Who"—mysteriously appeared recently near 9 Point Mesa on Highway 118 between Alpine and Study Butte.

## MEXICO WRAPS UP LATEST WATER PAYMENT TO THE US

### Release floated all boats in the river

Paddlers, fishers and farmers have been enjoying a three-week artificial boost in the Rio Grande, thanks to a treaty payment from the government of Mexico. In December, President Claudia Sheinbaum reiterated her commitment to the 1944 treaty between the two governments that regulates water in the Colorado and Rio Grande river basins. "In recent weeks, both countries have worked intensively and in coordination to establish a technical roadmap that improves management of the current cycle and addresses the deficit from the previous cycle," she explained.

The treaty requires the government of Mexico to deliver a third of its water surplus from the six major tributaries of the Rio Grande in five-year cycles. That equates to around 350,000 acre-feet of water per year for a total of 1.75 million acre feet. (An acre-foot is a measurement used in water management equivalent to a football field submerged in

a foot of water.) The treaty has become a touchy political subject in both Mexico and the United States. Politicians on the American right—like Senators John Cornyn and Ted Cruz of Texas—see Mexico's withholding of water as a direct attack on American agriculture.

"Mexico has consistently failed to meet its obligations under the 1944 Water Treaty, cycle after cycle," Sen. Cruz wrote in a press release. "The Mexican government exploits the structure of the treaty to defer and delay its deliveries in each individual year until it becomes impossible for it to meet its overall obligations, and it continues to fail to meet its obligation to deliver water to the United States under the 1944 Water Treaty."

Widespread drought conditions and booming agriculture in the Rio Grande basin over the past few decades have had serious impacts on the river. The non-profit American Rivers estimates that less than a fifth of the river's water reaches the Gulf of Mexico and gave it the dubious honor of the fifth most endangered river in

*Continued on page 8*

## Presidio dark sky law lives on—for now

Council deliberates brighter downtown street lights

By SAM KARAS

Presidio

At Monday night's City Council meeting, Presidio's dark skies ordinance survived a challenge from Councilmember Fernando Juarez mostly intact—meaning that the greater Big Bend region's claim to fame as the world's largest International Dark Sky Reserve lives on too.

The city plans to move forward with a plan hatched in late fall of last year to experiment with new lighting downtown after a number of accidents and close calls on O'Reilly Street. "None of us

are really satisfied with what we have right now," Councilmember Juarez explained.

Communities around the Big Bend have adopted dark sky ordinances in phases since 1976, when the first local ordinance of its kind was passed in Jeff Davis County. The goal is to reduce light pollution around the McDonald Observatory so that the facility's equipment can work under optimal conditions. The observatory's campus in the Davis Mountains is home to some of the largest telescopes in the world, leading cutting edge research into the existence of life outside Earth and of more abstract concepts like dark energy.

In 2011, Gov. Rick Perry signed a bill into law requiring all communities around the McDonald Observatory to adopt dark sky-friendly lighting. Presidio was the last of the pack to pass an ordinance that round, but bounced back in 2021 to be the first to embrace a new series of restrictions.

"Dark sky-friendly" describes lighting that's thoughtfully placed to reduce light pollution. Typically these lights are warmer in temperature and lower-intensity, and are both pointed at the ground and shielded from the sky above. The ordinance caps any lights installed at 2700 Kelvins, which is a scale that measures the color temperature of light.

Public education has been a huge part of the push against light pollution, as they challenge folks' assumptions about how light works—for example, that brighter lights at night are automatically "safer." As anyone who's driven on Highway 67 at night can attest, super bright, cool temperature LED bulbs can be blinding, affecting your ability to see into the shadows.

Without access, livestock could starve or die of thirst, according to the lawsuit filed in June.

### INSIDE



Chinati starts a new year's residencies *Page 10*

Sentinel News Project



## Officials talk about locked gates involved in lawsuit

Two wealthy ranch owners battle over access on roads

By ROB D'AMICO

*Shafter* Cibolo Creek Ranch owner John Poindexter is exploring avenues—other than a current lawsuit—to regain access to La Morita Road in Shafter that he states is crucial for accessing livestock on a tract of his land in eastern Presidio County, according to county officials.

Those avenues include discussions with county officials about the road historically being "common use," meaning various landowners and the public routinely traveled through it with unlocked gates, and Poindexter may even be claiming it was a county road at some point.

When Johnny Weisman bought the 66,000-acre Lely Ranch southeast of Shafter in the fall of 2024, he eventually locked the gates at La Morita Road that provides access to the ranch and several other ranch properties, including Poindexter's Harper Ranch with livestock. Poindexter's attorneys argued that employees at the Cibolo Creek Ranch resort had used La Morita Road as the primary route to the Harper tract and their other resort fort at Cienega (although that resort is accessible as well by Tinaja Road northeast of Shafter).

Without access, livestock could starve or die of thirst, according to the lawsuit filed in June.

*Continued on page 8*



*For years, the Shafter jail—possibly—consisted of two crumbling adobe walls. Recent digging by preservationists has revealed more of the structure.*

## That's a jail?

Questions arise over Shafter adobe walls labeled as 'the jail'

Shafter residents and many of their descendants have traditionally looked at two small crumbling adobe walls off a street behind the town's historic church and were under the impression that it was all that was left of an old county jail used to house troublemakers in the heyday of the nearby silver mine from the early 1900s through the 1930s.

The bustling times when the mine was profitable ballooned the Shafter population into the low thousands at times, but when sil-

ver prices plummeted, residents and mine employees began leaving for other opportunities, and time and weather left hundreds of adobes and rock houses deserted and falling to the earth.

Now, the ghost town of about 25 residents, 40 miles south of Marfa, has new historical restoration underway and it is bringing up the question of whether the walls are in fact the jail. John Poindexter—Cibolo Creek Ranch resort owner—and his nonprofit Tidewater Foundation are restoring, and in some cases doing large-scale reconstruction, of buildings, including a new ice house, cafe and pub, the town's post office, an old general store and gas station, and residences. Plans also call for

an agreement with the Catholic Diocese in El Paso to make much needed repairs to the steepled church, which was built in 1890.

In the past two weeks, crews took to digging around the jail's two adobe walls with the goal of seeing how to stabilize them. The result is more adobe walls, a floor, and steps through an entryway. It gives more form to something that would have been a jail. The problem is it doesn't look big enough, and according to Cibolo Creek Manager Tom Davis, who is leading the restoration projects, he's pretty sure an old photograph shows the structure to be a store. Reviews of photos in Shafter's tiny Memorial Museum

*Continued on page 8*



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East Highway 90 Alpine, TX 7983 or Virtually

**The Texas' Congressional District 23 Democratic Candidates Forum**—organized by State Democratic Executive Committee members and moderated by former Alpine City Councilmember Reagan Stone.

**Candidates attending are:**  
Gretel Enck  
Bruce Richardson  
Santos Limon  
Katy Padilla Stout  
\*listed per the Brewster County primary drawing

**There will be a happy hour after the forum at The Ritchey**  
on Saturday, January 17, at 5 p.m. All candidates have agreed  
to attend both events in-person.

**Facebook event:** <https://bit.ly/3L1cfLG>

**PRESIDIO COUNTY DEMOCRATIC FORUM**

**The Presidio County Democratic Party and Big Bend Sentinel will host a local, county Candidates Forum.**

All are welcome to attend either or both of the two events.  
January 29, 6 - 8 p.m. USO Visitor Center - Marfa  
February 5, 6 - 8 p.m. Presidio Activity Center - Presidio

**Candidate Participation**  
Countywide candidates (Judge, Clerk/District Clerk, Treasurer, County Chair) are encouraged to attend both forums.

**Precinct-based candidates attend only the forum aligned with their precinct:**

**Marfa:** County Commissioner Precinct 4 (Susan Hays), JP1 (Dina Jo Marquez)

**Presidio:** County Commissioner Precinct 2 (Fernando Juárez, Jesús Herrera, Margarito Hernández), JP2 (Angel Miguel Campos, Bianca Martinez Baillon, Jesseca Murillo)

Unopposed candidates may give brief statements but do not participate in debates with other candidates. They can be asked questions. (Susan Hays will be attending the Presidio forum due to a conflict with the first event.)

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## PRESIDIO INTERNATIONAL

### ¿Eso es una cárcel?

**Surgen nuevas preguntas sobre los muros de adobe de Shafter, etiquetados como "la cárcel".**

Los residentes de Shafter y muchos de sus descendientes han considerado tradicionalmente dos pequeños muros de adobe en ruinas, situados en una calle detrás de la histórica iglesia del pueblo, como los restos de una antigua cárcel del condado utilizada para albergar a los alborotadores durante el apogeo de la cercana mina de plata, desde principios de la década de 1900 hasta la de 1930.

En los tiempos de bonanza, cuando la mina era rentable, la población de Shafter llegó a alcanzar varios miles de habitantes, pero cuando los precios de la plata se desplomaron, los residentes y los empleados de la mina comenzaron a marcharse en busca de otras oportunidades, y el paso del tiempo y las inclemencias del clima dejaron cientos de casas de adobe y piedra abandonadas y en ruinas.

Ahora, este pueblo fantasma de unos 25 habitantes, a 64 kilómetros al sur de Marfa, está experimentando una nueva res-

tauración histórica que plantea la pregunta de si esos muros son realmente los de la cárcel. John Poindexter, propietario del complejo turístico Cibolo Creek Ranch, y su fundación sin fines de lucro Tidewater Foundation, están restaurando y, en algunos casos, reconstruyendo a gran escala, varios edificios, incluyendo una nueva cafetería y pub, la oficina de correos del pueblo, una antigua tienda de comestibles y gasolinera, y varias residencias. Los planes también incluyen un acuerdo con la Diócesis Católica de El Paso para realizar las reparaciones necesarias en la iglesia con campanario, construida en 1890.

En las últimas dos semanas, los equipos de trabajo comenzaron a excavar alrededor de los dos muros de adobe de la supuesta cárcel con el objetivo de estabilizarlos. El resultado fue el descubrimiento de más muros de adobe, un piso y escalones que conducen a una entrada. Esto le da más forma a lo que podría haber sido una cárcel. El problema es que no parece lo suficientemente grande y, según Tom Davis, gerente de Cibolo Creek y director de los proyectos de restauración, está bastante seguro de que una fotografía antigua muestra que la estructura era una tienda. La revisión de las fotografías en el pequeño Museo Comemorativo de Shafter no reveló

ninguna imagen de una cárcel. Los documentos del Museo del Condado de Marfa y Presidio tampoco proporcionaron ninguna información, excepto un mapa sin fecha de las estructuras en el centro del pueblo con una pequeña caja y una flecha que indica "Cárcel" donde se encuentra el edificio actual.

Monroe Elms, residente de Shafter y exjuez del condado, cree que existió una cárcel, que estaba hecha de algún tipo de metal, y que el ex sheriff del condado de Presidio, Rick Thompson, la trasladó a Candelaria en algún momento durante sus casi dos décadas en el cargo. Davis también ha oido esa historia.



Durante años, la cárcel de Shafter —posiblemente— consistió en dos muros de adobe en ruinas. Excavaciones recientes realizadas por conservacionistas han revelado más partes de la estructura.

al misterio? Sí, he encontrado otras referencias en tesis sobre Shafter (que curiosamente mencionan la ausencia de una cárcel), y podría haber cientos de pistas en los archivos de la Universidad Estatal de Sul Ross o en el Portal de Historia de Texas de la Universidad del Norte de Texas, pero no he encontrado, a pesar de haber buscado brevemente, ninguna descripción detallada de la cárcel de Shafter. Ahí es donde entran ustedes.

*Envíenme cualquier pista o información que tengan sobre este misterio a [rob@bigbendsentinel.com](mailto:rob@bigbendsentinel.com). —Rob D'Amico*

Entonces, ¿cuál es la respuesta

### DESTACADOS PRINCIPALES

**Los demócratas Talarico y Crockett programan su primer debate**

Abbott, quien busca un cuarto mandato sin precedentes.

Abbott cuenta con 90 millones de dólares en su fondo de campaña y se enfrenta a una oposición simbólica en las primarias de su partido.

Además de Hinojosa, quien ha servido en la Legislatura desde 2017, entre los candidatos también se encuentran Chris Bell, excongresista de Houston y candidato a gobernador, y Bobby Cole, ganadero y bombero jubilado.

White es hijo del exgobernador Mark White. Se postuló para gobernador en 2018, quedando a seis puntos porcentuales de distancia en las primarias demócratas contra la exalguacil del condado de Dallas, Lupe Valdez. Ella perdió por amplio margen ante Abbott ese año en las elecciones generales.

**Niveles de gripe en Texas 'muy altos' con una nueva cepa**

La actividad de la gripe en Texas ha alcanzado un nivel "muy alto", según los Centros para el Control y la Prevención de Enfermedades (CDC por sus siglas en inglés).

El Austin American-Statesman informó que en la última semana de diciembre, el estado registró 25.000 visitas a la sala de emergencias relacionadas con la gripe, y los niños de 5 a 11 años representaron más de una cuarta parte de todas las visitas a la sala de emergencias en todo el estado.

La votación anticipada en las primarias demócratas del 3 de marzo comienza el 17 de febrero.

**White abandona su candidatura para enfrentarse a Abbott**

Andrew White ha abandonado su candidatura a la nominación demócrata para gobernador y ha brindado su apoyo a la representante estatal Gina Hinojosa, demócrata de Austin, quien es ampliamente considerada la favorita, según el Houston Chronicle.

Las concursadas primarias demócratas cuentan con 10 candidatos que compiten para enfrentarse al gobernador Greg

"Ha sido realmente sorprendente", dijo el Dr. Jeff Shilt, presidente del Texas Children's Hospital en Austin. "Lo que más nos sorprende es el número y la gravedad".

El aumento se debe a un subtipo de influenza A, H3N2, que se propaga rápidamente.

Aunque la vacuna contra la gripe ha sido menos efectiva contra esta cepa, los médicos enfatizan que la vacunación aún ayuda a proteger contra enfermedades graves.

Otras enfermedades respiratorias, como el COVID-19 y el VRS, se mantienen en niveles bajos en Texas, según los CDC.



El río Conchos es el afluente más importante del río Grande.

**Por SAM KARAS**  
Remeros, pescadores y agricultores han disfrutado de un aumento artificial del caudal del Río Grande durante tres semanas, gracias a un pago derivado de un tratado por parte del gobierno de México. En diciembre, la presidenta Claudia Sheinbaum reiteró su compromiso con el tratado de 1944 entre ambos gobiernos que regula el agua en las cuencas de los ríos Colorado y Río Grande. "En las últimas semanas, ambos países han trabajado intensamente y de forma coordinada para establecer una hoja de ruta técnica que mejore la gestión del ciclo actual y aborde el déficit del ciclo anterior", explicó.

El tratado exige que el gobierno de México entregue un tercio de su excedente de agua de los seis principales afluentes del Río Grande en ciclos de cinco años. Esto equivale a alrededor de 350.000 acres-pie de agua por año, para un total de 1,75 millones de acres-pie. (Un acre-pie es una medida utilizada en la gestión del agua equivalente a un campo de fútbol sumergido en un pie de agua).

El tratado se ha convertido en un tema político delicado tanto en México como en Estados Unidos. Políticos de la derecha estadounidense, como los senadores John Cornyn y Ted Cruz de Texas, consideran que la retención de agua por parte de México es un ataque directo a la agricultura estadounidense. "México ha incumplido sistemáticamente sus obligaciones en virtud del Tratado de Aguas de 1944, ciclo tras ciclo", escribió el senador Cruz en un comunicado de prensa. "El gobierno mexicano explota la estructura del tratado para aplazar y retrasar sus entregas cada año hasta que le resulta imposible cumplir con sus obligaciones generales, y continúa incumpliendo su obligación de entregar agua a Estados Unidos en virtud del Tratado de Aguas de 1944".

Las condiciones de sequía generalizadas y el auge de la agricultura en la cuenca del Río Grande

Sesenta y cinco mil millones de galones de los 260 mil millones de galones de agua adeudados fueron liberados de la presa Luis León durante la segunda quincena de diciembre, lo que provocó un ligero aumento en los niveles de agua en la región de Big Bend entre el 23 de diciembre y el 12 de enero. Aún no se han anunciado los planes para la próxima liberación de agua.

## La ordenanza sobre la protección del cielo oscuro de Presidio sigue

La ciudad busca más luz sin poner en riesgo el cielo oscuro del Big Bend.

Por SAM KARAS

Presidio

En la reunión del Consejo Municipal del lunes por la noche, la ordenanza de cielo oscuro de Presidio sobrevivió a un desafío del concejal Fernando Juárez, manteniéndose prácticamente intacta, lo que significa que la fama de la región de Big Bend como la Reserva Internacional de Cielo Oscuro más grande del mundo también perdura.

El Ayuntamiento planea seguir adelante con un plan ideado a finales del otoño del año pasado para experimentar con nueva iluminación en el centro de la ciudad después de una serie de accidentes y situaciones de riesgo en la calle O'Reilly. "Ninguno de nosotros está realmente satisfecho con lo que tenemos ahora", explicó el concejal Juárez.

Las comunidades alrededor de Big Bend han adoptado ordenanzas de cielo oscuro por fases desde 1976, cuando se aprobó la primera ordenanza local de este tipo en el condado de Jeff Davis. El objetivo es reducir la contaminación lumínica alrededor del Observatorio McDonald para que el equipo de la instalación pueda funcionar en condiciones óptimas. El campus del observatorio en las montañas Davis alberga algunos de los telescopios más grandes del mundo, lo que permite realizar investigaciones de vanguardia sobre la existencia de vida fuera de la Tierra y sobre conceptos más abstractos como la energía oscura.

Como explicó Stephen Hummel, especialista en cielo oscuro del Observatorio McDonald, a la audiencia del lunes por la noche: "Más iluminación sin una planificación adecuada es menos segura". A lo largo de los años, ha trabajado con empresas como Apache Energy y Exxon, y otras compañías del sector energético, para instalar iluminación en los

lugares de trabajo que reduce la contaminación lumínica y los costos para los empleadores.

Tras la aprobación de la última ordenanza en 2021, la ciudad avanzó en la modernización de la iluminación en toda la localidad con la ayuda de la Big Bend Conservation Alliance. Si bien muchos residentes estaban satisfechos con la iluminación instalada en sus hogares, el consenso general era que la ciudad de Presidio necesitaba más infraestructura de iluminación para eliminar las zonas oscuras. El concejal Juárez señaló que 1992 fue la última vez que se instalaron nuevas luces en la ciudad. "Definitivamente, ya es hora de que instalemos más farolas", afirmó.

Una de las propuestas de Juárez era eliminar la cláusula de la ordenanza que limitaba la iluminación a 2700 Kelvin y, en cambio, aumentar ese número a 6000 Kelvin para permitir una mayor selección por parte de AEP, que finalmente se encargará de pedir e instalar las nuevas luces. Algunos asistentes a la reunión temían que eliminar el límite establecido en 2021 pusiera en peligro la participación de Presidio en la Reserva de Cielo Oscuro. Este estatus representa una importante fuente de ingresos para los funcionarios del condado de Brewster, ya que el astroturismo es una industria en auge y se ha convertido en la principal razón por la que los visitantes eligen Big Bend para sus vacaciones. "Tenemos que pensar en el contexto general", dijo Amber Harrison de Dark Sky International. "Podrían perder esa certificación para toda la región de los tres condados".

Otros concejales se opusieron, y la ordenanza fue aprobada oficialmente con el límite de 2700 Kelvin.

## Funcionarios solicitan opiniones sobre el nuevo sistema de EMS

Se programan reuniones comunitarias en Alpine y Marathon

Por GINA VERA

Alpine

Mientras que la empresa contratista actual de Servicios Médicos de Emergencia (EMS por sus siglas en inglés) se prepara para dejar de prestar el servicio, los funcionarios del condado y la ciudad están animando a los residentes de Alpine y Marathon a asistir a las próximas reuniones comunitarias para informarse sobre la situación y compartir sus inquietudes.

Emergent Air recibió un contrato de tres años en 2022 para administrar el sistema de EMS en el norte del condado de Brewster, incluyendo Alpine y Marathon, dijo el juez del condado de Brewster, Greg Henington, pero decidió no continuar con el contrato cuando finalice en 2025. Querían centrarse en el transporte aéreo, explicó.

Las reuniones comunitarias para discutir nuevas opciones para la gestión de los servicios médicos de emergencia locales están programadas para:

dijo Henington, quien preside el grupo de trabajo que organiza las reuniones comunitarias y lidera el esfuerzo para satisfacer la necesidad de servicios médicos de emergencia en la zona.

"Y luego tendremos una sesión de preguntas y respuestas, así que calculo que, si todo sale bien, podremos terminar en una hora", agregó.

Las reuniones comunitarias continuarán hasta marzo, y se programarán fechas futuras, dijo Henington. "Nuestro objetivo es, para el 1 de marzo, regresar al Concejo Municipal y a la Corte de Comisionados y hacer una recomendación sobre qué debemos hacer en el futuro", dijo Henington.

El grupo de trabajo tiene tres objetivos para las reuniones comunitarias:

Determinar qué quieren/necesitan los residentes en un sistema de servicios médicos de emergencia.

Determinar cuánto costará obtener lo que desean en un sistema de servicios médicos de emergencia.

Determinar cómo operará el sistema de servicios médicos de emergencia.

Si bien los residentes no deben preocuparse por quedarse sin un sistema de servicios médicos de emergencia, Henington los anima a asistir a las reuniones para ayudar a determinar el mejor curso de acción para la zona. A pesar de no querer continuar con sus servicios, Emergent Air accedió a seguir gestionando el sistema de EMS durante un tiempo. "Dijeron: 'Miren, no queremos dejarlos desamparados, no queremos dejarlos sin protección'", dijo

Henington.

Emergent Air ha accedido a permanecer en funciones al menos hasta mayo de 2026 para dar tiempo a la zona a encontrar una alternativa. Sin embargo, se espera que la zona avance rápidamente con un plan de reemplazo.

Emergent Air solo quiere saber que el condado está trabajando en el problema y no los está ignorando, dijo Henington. "Tenemos una tarea por delante. No tenemos una crisis".

Tras enterarse de la decisión de Emergent Air de no renovar su contrato, los funcionarios de la zona acordaron formar un grupo de trabajo, y las reuniones comenzaron en noviembre de 2025.

El grupo de trabajo está compuesto por aproximadamente 15 miembros e incluye a funcionarios municipales y del condado, residentes, personas con conocimientos sobre sistemas de servicios médicos de emergencia y personas que no tienen experiencia en el tema.

"Es un grupo diverso de personas que, en mi opinión, son excelentes ciudadanos y quieren que la comunidad tenga éxito en este esfuerzo", dijo Henington.

Los miembros del grupo de trabajo incluyen a Henington, Catherine Eaves, Adrian Billings M.D., Lynette Brehm, David Dotter, Mark Dwinell, James Etchison, Susan Martin, Mo Morrow, Patty Roach, Mark Rose, Roger Ruckles, Judy Stokes, Vernon Tucker y Jessica Velasco.

Henington fue jefe de bomberos de Terlingua antes de convertirse en juez del condado. Durante ese tiempo, participó en una iniciativa que estableció un Distrito de Servicios de Emergencia para atender la zona sur del condado de Brewster.

21 de enero a las 6 p.m. en el Centro Cívico de Alpine

26 de enero a las 6 p.m. en el Centro Estudiantil Sul Ross en Alpine

31 de enero a las 6 p.m. en el Centro Comunitario de Marathon

"Vamos a abrir la discusión y hablar un poco sobre qué son los servicios médicos de emergencia, luego hablaremos un poco sobre las cifras y después sobre algunas de las soluciones que tenemos",

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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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Zachary Dodson, D.V.M.  
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Alpine, Texas 79830  
432-837-5416  
Mon. - Fri. 7:45 - 12:00 & 1:30 - 5:30  
after hours - emergency 432.837.5416

# Officials seek input on new EMS

Town halls on ambulance service scheduled in Alpine and Marathon

By GINA VERA

Alpine

As the area's current contractor for Emergency Medical Services (EMS) prepares to move out of the business, county and city officials are encouraging Alpine and Marathon residents to attend upcoming town halls to learn about the situation and share their concerns.

Emergent Air was awarded a three-year contract in 2022 to manage the EMS system in northern Brewster County including Alpine and Marathon, Brewster County Judge Greg Henington said, but decided to not continue the contract when it ended in 2025. They wanted to focus on the air transportation side of their business, he said.

Town hall meetings to discuss new options for management of local EMS are scheduled for:

January 21 at 6 p.m. at the Alpine

January 26 at 6 p.m. at the Sul Ross Student Center in Alpine

January 31 at 6 p.m. at the Marathon Community Center in Marathon

"We're going to open it up and talk a little bit about what EMS is, and then we'll talk a little bit about the numbers, and then we'll talk a little bit about some of the solutions that we have," said Henington, who chairs the taskforce organizing the town halls and spearheading the effort to fill the area's need for EMS. "And then we'll have questions and answers, so I figured, if it all goes right, we ought to be able to get that done in just an hour," he added.

The town halls will continue until March, with future dates to be arranged, Henington said. "Our goal is by March 1 to go back to the City Council and the Commissioners Court and make a recommendation on what we should do going forward," Henington said.

The taskforce has three goals for the town hall meetings.

- To determine what residents want/need in an EMS.
- To determine how much it will cost to get what they want in an EMS.
- To determine how the EMS is going to operate.

While residents do not need to be concerned that they will be left without an EMS system, Henington is encouraging them to attend the meetings to help determine the area's best course of action.

Despite not wanting to continue its services, Emergent Air agreed to continue managing the EMS system for a time. "They said, 'Look, we don't want to leave you guys stranded, we don't want to leave you guys unprotected,'" Henington said.

Emergent Air has agreed to stay in place until at least May 2026 to give the area a chance to find an alternative. But the expectation is that the area will move forward quickly with a plan for a replacement.



Emergent Air ambulance  
from the company's Facebook page

Emergent Air just wants to know that the county is working on the issue and not ignoring them, Henington said. "We've got a task. We don't have a crisis."

After learning of Emergent Air's decision not to renew its contract, area officials agreed that a taskforce should be formed and meetings began in November 2025.

The taskforce is made up of about 15 members and includes city and county officials, residents, those who are knowledgeable about EMS systems and those who are new to it.

"It is a scattering of people who I think are great citizens and want to see the community succeed in this effort," Henington said.

Taskforce members include Henington, Catherine Eaves, Adrian Billings M.D., Lynette Brehm, David Dotter, Mark Dwinnell, James Etchison, Susan Martin, Mo Morrow, Patty Roach, Mark Rose, Rober Ruckles, Judy Stokes, Vernon Tucker, Jessica Velasco.

Henington served as Terlingua Fire Chief prior to becoming county judge. During that time, he was part of an effort that established an Emergency Services District to serve the southern area of Brewster County.

## CAPITAL HIGHLIGHTS

### Democrats Talarico, Crockett set debate

The first debate in the state's Democratic primary for U.S. Senate is set for January 24 in Georgetown, The Dallas Morning News reported. U.S. Rep. Jasmine Crockett of Dallas and state Rep. James Talarico of Round Rock are vying for the nomination.

The seat is now held by U.S. Sen. John Cornyn, who faces two major opponents in the GOP primary: Texas Attorney General Ken Paxton and U.S. Rep. Wesley Hunt of Houston. Cornyn is seeking his fifth term.

The Georgetown debate is sponsored by the Texas AFL-CIO. Crockett is stressing her standing as the race's progressive and hopes to inspire left-leaning voters to turn out in November if she wins the nomination. Talarico is emphasizing electability, noting he flipped a Republican district to get elected state representative and saying Democrats need a nominee able to compete statewide.

Early voting in the March 3 Democratic primary begins February 17.

### White drops bid to take on Abbott

Andrew White has dropped his bid for the Democratic nomination for governor and has thrown his support behind state Rep. Gina Hinojosa, D-Austin, who is widely seen as the frontrunner, according to the Houston Chronicle.

The crowded Democratic primary has 10 candidates vying to take on Gov. Greg Abbott, who is seeking an unprecedented fourth term.

Abbott has \$90 million in his campaign war chest and faces only token opposition in his party's primary.

Besides Hinojosa, who has served in the Legislature since 2017, the primary field also includes Chris Bell, a former Houston congressman and gubernatorial nominee, and Bobby Cole, a rancher and retired firefighter.

White is the son of former Gov. Mark White. He ran for governor in 2018, coming up six percentage points short in his Democratic primary race against former Dallas County Sheriff Lupe Valdez. She lost handily to Abbott that year in the general election..

### 500 miles of buoys to be added to Rio Grande

In a move to increase border security, the U.S. Department of Homeland Security plans to add floating buoys along more than 500 miles of the Rio Grande, The Texas Tribune reported. Secretary Kristi Noem announced the deployment last week while visiting Rio Grande Valley.

The state of Texas deployed 1,000 feet of the water barrier along the Rio Grande near Eagle Pass in 2023 and added another 1,000 feet in January 2025.

"Texas finally has a partner in the White House," Andrew Mahaleris, press secretary for Abbott, said in a statement Wednesday. "The floating marine barriers deployed by Texas have been a resounding success, and Gov. Abbott is proud to work with the Trump administration and Border Patrol to expand the program."

Under the Biden administration, the federal government sued Texas over the buoys, citing migrant safety and saying that they violated water treaties between the U.S. and Mexico. That case is still before the courts.

"They'll create a safer environment for agents on patrol, and securing our waterways not only protects Americans, it saves the lives of illegal aliens by deterring them from daring to attempt to cross through this treacherous water," Noem said.

Texas flu levels 'very high' with new strain

Flu activity in Texas has

reached a "very high" level, according to the Centers for Disease Control and Prevention. The Austin American-Statesman reported that in the last week of December, the state recorded 25,000 flu-related emergency room visits, with children ages 5 to 11 accounting for more than a quarter of all ER visits statewide.

"It's been really, really startling," said Dr. Jeff Shilt, president of Texas Children's Hospital in Austin. "What's most startling to us is the number and the severity."

The surge is fueled by a rapidly spreading H3N2 subtype of influenza A. Although the flu vaccine has been less effective against this strain, doctors emphasize that vaccination still helps protect against severe illness.

Other respiratory illnesses, such as COVID-19 and RSV, remain at low levels in Texas, according to the CDC.

### Teachers' union sues TEA over Kirk probes

One of the state's leading teachers unions has sued the Texas Education Agency in an effort to block investigations into public educators who commented negatively about conservative activist Charlie Kirk after his assassination, the Chronicle reported. The lawsuit said the probe has "unleashed a wave of retaliation and disciplinary actions against teachers" by their local school districts.

TEA launched the inquiry last fall and has yet to issue any disciplinary action. The American Federation of Teachers (AFT) represents about 66,000 educators in Texas. The agency said in December that it received more than 350 complaints from the public, of which 95 are "open and undergoing further investigation and review." The remainder have been dismissed.

TEA Commissioner Mike Morath warned soon after Kirk's death that educators who posted or shared "vile content" would be investigated for possibly violating the educator's code of ethics.

At a press conference last week, Randi Weingarten, the president of AFT, called the TEA investigations a "state-sponsored attack on teachers." She noted only Texas and Florida launched probes of this type.

"Mr. Morath decided to exploit the strategy of Mr. Kirk's senseless murder," Weingarten said. "His actions were a transparent effort to smear and shame educators, divide our communities and deny our kids opportunities to learn and thrive."

### Screwworm case reported in Tamaulipas

A new case of New World screwworm was identified in December in a six-day-old calf in the Mexican state of Tamaulipas, less than 200 miles from the border. The Texas Standard reported this is the northernmost active detection of the flesh-eating larval parasite.

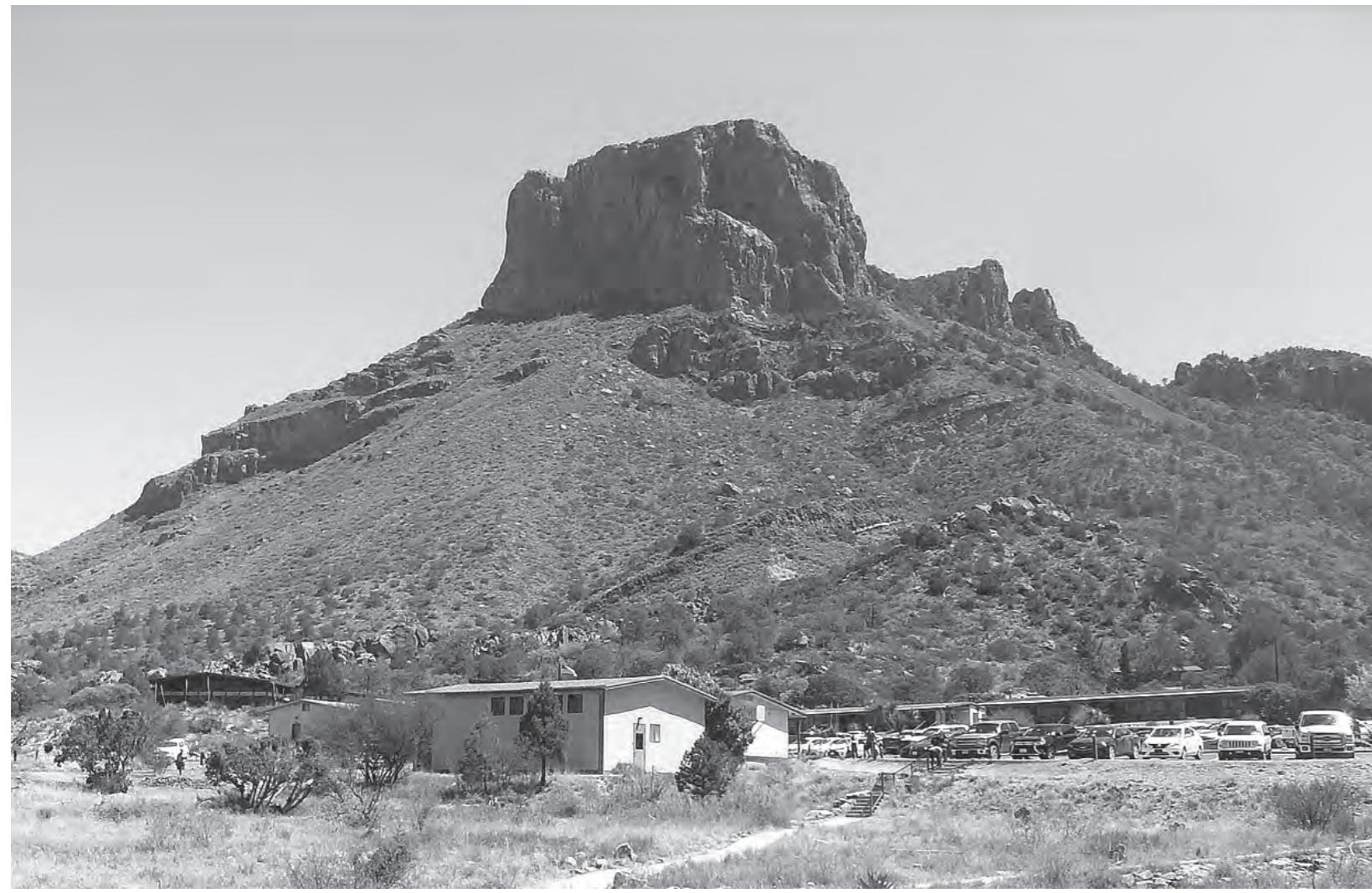
"The continued detections of New World Screwworm near the Texas border are grim reminders of the serious threat this pest poses to our state," Texas Agriculture Commissioner Sid Miller said in a statement.

The U.S. Department of Agriculture has developed a five-point plan to address the issue, including building a sterile fly production facility in Edinburg. The parasite was eliminated from the United States decades ago through similar efforts.

"This proven strategy is key to the long-term eradication of New World Screwworm," Miller said.

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

# Water shutdown in Chisos Basin could close part of the park



Casa Grande Peak towers above the Chisos Basin visitor's center.

JAY GANNETT WIKIMEDIA COMMONS

## Dog owner charged with neglect is out on bond

By KATE BUBACZ

Rique Rivera is out on bond after his January 5 arrest for charges of child endangerment. Rivera was also charged with cruelty to animals and unlawful restraint of a dog. Last week, Rivera was arrested after citizens rescued 37 puppies and 9 adult dogs from filthy conditions at his residence on Terlingua Ranch. Rivera's children were not present at the time, but the condition of the property prompted Brewster County Sheriff Dodson to issue charges against Rivera.

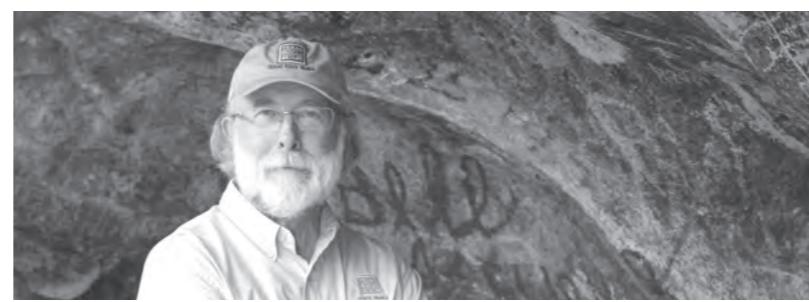
In Texas, child endangerment is a felony offense that carries a possible sentence of six months to 20 years in jail and fines up to \$10,000. Rivera is also facing other, unspecified charges, according to a Facebook post by the Brewster County Sheriff's Office.

It is unclear if Rivera's wife, Ashley Cromarty, is also facing charges. She had previously left



Many of the puppies rescued from Terlingua Ranch have made their way by plane to Chicago.

the state with their children. The sheriff's office did not respond to multiple requests for comment. Following his arrest, Rivera has lost his job at the Longhorn restaurant in Terlingua. With significant help from local volunteers, all of the rescued puppies and dogs have since found foster homes within the community and as far north as Chicago.



Tim Roberts, archeologist, interprets the symbolism of Hopi art.

## Kachinas featured at library

Save the date for a special program, "Art, Archeology, and the American West: The History of Katsina (Kachina) Figures and Considerations for Collecting," planned for Saturday, January 31, at 11 a.m. at the Jeff Davis County Library. Tim Roberts will speak about the importance of katsinas, commonly known as kachinas made by Hopi Indians. Roberts

will bring stunning pieces from his personal collection and invites those attending to bring their own examples.

A retired archeologist and local artist, Roberts brings years of experience interpreting the many forms of ancient symbolism. After 25 years with Texas Parks and Wildlife serving as cultural resources coordinator, Roberts researches topics which span art, archeology, and folk art. He is also an award-winning painter and scratchboard artist.

The program is free, includes light refreshments and is sponsored by Friends of the Jeff Davis County Library. net.

**J**OSHUA AMBROSE BURNS II died in Belen, New Mexico, on November 29, 2025, age 83. An avid birder who moved to Marfa in 2005, he observed, recorded, and shared information on bird activity in Far West Texas for 20 years.

His volunteer work supported colleagues at the Fort Davis Historic Site and the Chihuahuan Desert Research Institute. He contributed his birding records to shared digital databases, including eBird of the Cornell School of Ornithology.

An engineering architect, he graduated from Harvard College in 1964 cum laude and received a Master of Architecture degree from Washington University in 1968. His professional career focused on applying computer processes for energy conservation,

## OBITUARY

### Avid birder contributed recordings to local researchers



especially in schools. He leaves his wife of 57 years, Elizabeth Kates Burns; one daughter, Caitlin Burns Tinker; two grandchildren, Beatrix and Alexander; and a brother, Mark Burns.

Terlingua • Marfa • Presidio • Pecos

WE TAKE CARE OF OUR OWN

## Primary & Immediate Care

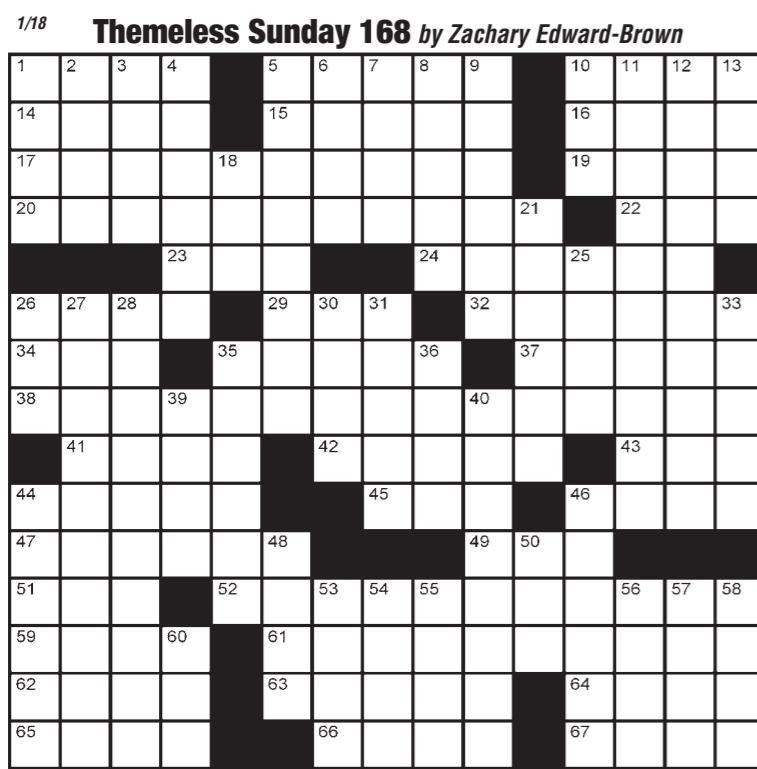
- Appointments Available
- Walk-ins Welcome

For more information visit  
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**PRESIDIO PUBLIC NOTICE****PRESIDIO INDEPENDENT SCHOOL DISTRICT****Exhibit C-3**
**STATEMENT OF REVENUES, EXPENDITURES, AND CHANGES IN FUND BALANCES  
GOVERNMENTAL FUNDS**
**FOR THE YEAR ENDED AUGUST 31, 2025**

Data Control Codes		10	Nonmajor Governmental Funds	98
		General Fund	Total Governmental Funds	
<b>REVENUES:</b>				
5700	Local and Intermediate Sources	\$ 2,907,114	\$ 605,157	\$ 3,512,271
5800	State Program Revenues	13,210,507	457,491	13,667,998
5900	Federal Program Revenues	1,088,481	2,678,353	3,766,834
5020	Total Revenues	\$ 17,206,102	\$ 3,741,001	\$ 20,947,103
<b>EXPENDITURES:</b>				
0011	Instruction	\$ 7,838,648	\$ 669,853	\$ 8,508,501
0012	Instructional Resources and Media Services	138,063		138,063
0013	Curriculum and Instructional Staff Development	15,277	183,341	198,618
0021	Instructional Leadership	224,351	172,639	396,990
0023	School Leadership	680,686	64,431	745,117
0031	Guidance, Counseling, and Evaluation Services	112,488	109,936	222,424
0032	Social Work Services	173,817		173,817
0033	Health Services	185,695		185,695
0034	Student Transportation	505,507		505,507
0035	Food Services	1,183,758		1,183,758
0036	Extracurricular Activities	663,527	89,229	752,756
0041	General Administration	1,009,881		1,009,881
0051	Facilities Maintenance and Operations	1,891,219	200,000	2,091,219
0052	Security and Monitoring Services	413,027	36,937	449,964
0053	Data Processing Services	248,599		248,599
0061	Community Services	52,433	92,886	145,319
0071	Principal on Long-Term Debt		430,122	430,122
0072	Interest on Long-Term Debt		131,328	131,328
0073	Bond Issuance Costs and Fees		275	275
0081	Facilities Acquisition and Construction	337,741	1,404,745	1,742,486
0093	Payments to Shared Service Arrangements	195,700		195,700
0099	Other Intergovernmental Charges	94,427		94,427
6050	Total Expenditures	\$ 15,964,844	\$ 3,585,722	\$ 19,550,566
1100	Excess (Deficiency) of Revenues Over (Under) Expenditures	\$ 1,241,258	\$ 155,279	\$ 1,396,537
<b>OTHER FINANCING SOURCES (USES):</b>				
7912	Sale of Real and Personal Property	\$ 8,000		\$ 8,000
7080	Total Other Financing Sources (Uses)	\$ 8,000	\$ 0	\$ 8,000
1200	Net Change in Fund Balance	\$ 1,249,258	\$ 155,279	\$ 1,404,537
0100	September 1 - Fund Balance	12,642,862	1,582,427	14,225,289
3000	August 31 - Fund Balance	\$ 13,892,120	\$ 1,737,706	\$ 15,629,826

## CROSSWORD



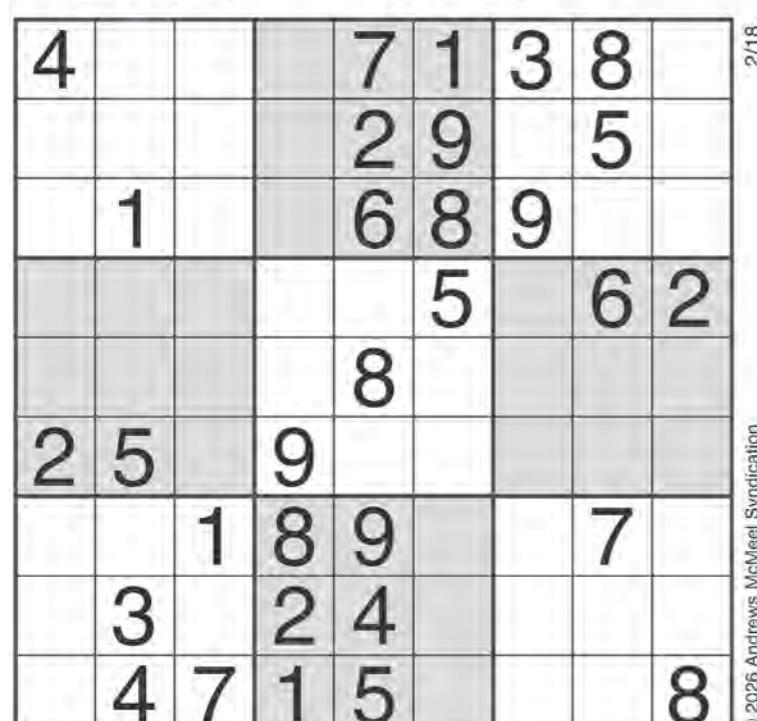
Edited by David Steinberg January 18, 2026

**ACROSS**

- 1 Dorito or Frito
- 5 Cigarettes' ends
- 10 AIDS activist Arthur
- 14 Streaming Stick maker
- 15 Winfrey of "The Color Purple"
- 16 Goal-oriented group?
- 17 Devo hat
- 19 Restaurant handout
- 20 "Mom is going to kill us!"
- 22 Driver's licenses and passports
- 23 Subculture similar to goth
- 24 Graf who married Andre Agassi
- 26 Condition for which fidget spinners can be helpful
- 29 Software problem
- 32 Rock salt
- 34 Con's opposite
- 35 "Beauty and the Beast" princess
- 37 Intel-gathering mission
- 38 Paid time off for pet owners
- 41 Tavern that Bart Simpson often prank-calls
- 42 Irk
- 43 "Losing My Religion" band

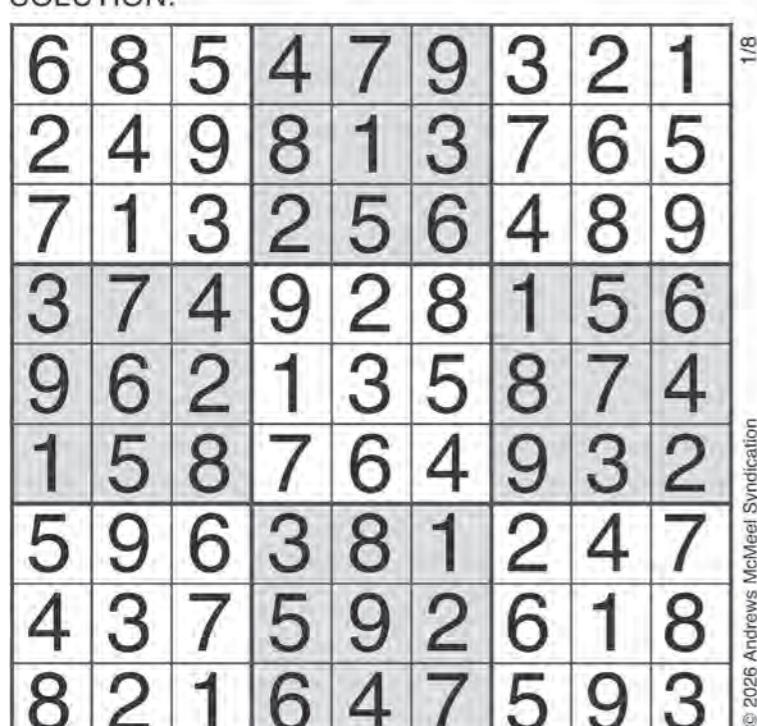
## SUDOKU

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



DIFFICULTY RATING: ★★★☆☆

SOLUTION:



## AROUND THE BIG BEND

Thursday January 15

## Boxing at Maintenat

7:30am-9:00am  
Maintenat, 1825 Rabbits Rd.  
Marfa, TX



## Hike with Homeless Dogs

10:00am-11:00am  
Davis Mountains State Park  
Fort Davis, TX

## Silent Book Club

6:00pm-8:00pm  
Alcove Social, 211 E Holland Ave  
Alpine, TX

## Paint &amp; Sip: Couples Edition

6:00pm-9:00pm  
Alcove Social, 211 E Holland Ave  
Alpine, TX

## Social Dance Class

6:00pm-7:00pm  
La Sala Studio, 207 E Holland Ave  
Alpine, TX

## Eyes on the Sky

7:00pm-8:00pm  
Davis Mountains State Park  
Fort Davis, TX

## Friday January 16

## Indian Lodge Tour

4:00pm-5:00pm  
Davis Mountains State Park  
Fort Davis, TX

## CLASSIFIEDS AND PUBLIC NOTICES

## PUBLIC NOTICE

NOTICE OF INTENT  
TO SEIZE ABANDONED MOTOR  
VEHICLE

Notice is hereby given that the Presidio County Sheriff's Office has taken the following described vehicle into custody pursuant to the authority granted under the Texas Transportation Code, Section 683.011, and/or Section 683.031:

(1) YEAR UNKNOWN 4X8, SINGLE AXLE LIGHT DUTY UTILITY TRAILER WITH RAMP, PARTIAL VIN. Said vehicle is being held for the Presidio County Sheriff's Office at 320 N. Highland, Marfa, Texas 79843, (432) 729-4308.

To the last known registered owner/lien holder of the above-described vehicle: You have the right to reclaim this motor vehicle not later than the 20th day after publication of this notice, on payment of all towing, preservation, and storage charges resulting from placing the vehicle into custody.

Failure to exercise your rights to reclaim the vehicle within the time provided constitutes a waiver of all rights, title, and interest in the vehicle and is a consent to sale of the abandoned motor vehicle at public auction, or use for the Sheriff's Office purposes as provided for by the Texas Transportation Code Section 683.014 or Section 683.016.

CITY OF MARFA  
REQUEST FOR  
PROPOSALS (RFP) FOR  
AMI  
(Advanced Metering  
Infrastructure) SYSTEM

The City of Marfa, Texas is seeking proposals for the procurement of a full Advanced Metering Infrastructure (AMI) System for its water services, including water meters, AMI communications

## Live Music: David Walker

6:30pm-9:30pm  
Alcove Social, 211 E Holland Ave  
Alpine, TX

## Saturday January 17

## Bend &amp; Brunch

10:00am-11:00am  
Alcove Social, 211 E Holland Ave  
Alpine, TX

## Live Music: John Cavender

7:00pm-10:00pm  
Alcove Social, 211 E Holland Ave  
Alpine, TX

## Open Mic Night: Poetry

8:00pm-10:00pm  
Alcove Social, 211 E Holland Ave  
Alpine, TX

## Sunday January 18



## Boxing at Maintenat

9:00am-11:00am  
Maintenat, 1825 Rabbits Rd.  
Marfa, TX

## The Atlatl: A Hurl into the Past

10:00am, Big Bend Ranch State Park  
Terlingua, TX

## Open Mic Night: Music

4:00pm-7:00pm  
Alcove Social, 211 E Holland Ave  
Alpine, TX

WE must never forget that art is not a form of propaganda; it is a form of truth. In free society, art is not a weapon, and it does not belong to the sphere of polemics and ideology.

Artists are not

engineers of the soul.

It may be different elsewhere. But in a democratic society the highest duty of the writer, the composer, the artist is to remain true to himself and to let the chips fall where they may.

In serving his vision of the truth, the artist best serves his nation.

And the nation which disdains the mission of art invites the fate of Robert Frost's hired man, the fate of having "nothing to look backward to with pride, and nothing to look forward to with hope."

—President JOHN F. KENNEDY, October 26, 1963,  
at the groundbreaking for the Robert Frost Library at  
Amherst College in Massachusetts.

*Sentinel* is looking for fine art to help tell the story of the Big Bend and its people. If you would like to contribute, email Rob D'Amico. <editor@bigbendsentinel.com>



*Sentinel*

## Cal Poly professor to work with Marfa High

Marfa Live Arts brings a playwright as a student coach

By JD GARCIA

Marfa Live Arts' collaboration with Marfa ISD has entered its 15th year with playwright and California Polytechnic State University assistant professor of theater Ramón Esquivel guiding students through the playwriting process this week. Esquivel said this will not be his first foray into community-driven student work programs, which includes the Playwriting Program, in which Marfa High School students spend a week with notable playwrights to write their own plays.

"Many of my plays have actually begun from community engagement programs like workshops and story circles. I'm really looking forward to meeting the students and teachers and staff there," Esquivel said. The weeklong program, he added, will challenge the students to unearth their creative sides to create a play that may be produced on stage. "I'm looking forward to helping them believe in their own voices and their own vision to write a play that is meaningful to them as individuals," he said. "I think that's actually how we end up writing an interesting play: we write something that we want to see as individual people, and it ends up having a more universal appeal if it's very specific."

For Esquivel, the program also expands beyond the students themselves, and gives students that may not be well-versed in theater due to a lack of exposure to it a chance to discover it. "I believe that everybody deserves art. I believe everybody deserves theater, access to seeing theater, and certainly access to making theater," he said. "Theater is an ancient art form. People have been making theater and doing ceremony and rituals before buildings even existed. I think an important part of this program is starting with

that as a foundation." Though they may not know the origins of theater, he explained, anyone can break through the walls put up either by themselves or those around them to discover what lies beyond. "Everybody has the capacity to make theater. Right now, with the play, everything starts with the imagination. You hope it might get produced, but I think the real value is just making a theater play itself. Just seeing how one's brain—one's imagination—can create an entire world." The end result, he said, will show the students exactly what they can achieve using their creativity. "Every student in the school will have written a play by the end of the week. And that, in itself, is an achievement," he said. "My hope for this week is to encourage students to dream big and create big. I think the extent of that is giving them an understanding that, whatever resources they have, whatever access they have, they are capable of doing something and asserting themselves. They are capable of bringing their individual gifts to the room. I think that's the kind of longer-lasting impact of this program."

Though this will be his first time visiting Marfa, Esquivel said he has had an interest in the town, especially from having family ties to West Texas. "I've been fascinated by Marfa for a few years," he said. "I learned about this small town in West Texas that has this world-renowned art scene, and I put it on my list of places to go, but who knew when I'd be going to the middle of West Texas. I do have relatives in El Paso, so it seemed feasible, but then this invitation to be guest playwright arrived, I was, like, 'Oh! Perfect.' This is a great opportunity to go to this place I've been curious about and to do something that I really, really love."

Marfa Live Arts, Esquivel added, is doing the kind of outreach he enjoys. "I'm so happy that Marfa Live Arts is connecting with the high school. In other parts of the country there's always



Marfa Live Arts' playwright-in-residence and Cal Poly professor of theater Ramón Esquivel guides Marfa High students through the playwriting process this week.

a danger of arts institutions being separate from the community or only targeting a particular part of it, but I like that Marfa Live Arts is going directly into the schools and bringing artists from around the country," he said. "I'm excited to be part of this arts collaboration between a nonprofit organization and a public school."

Ramon Esquivel is a playwright, director, dramaturg, and educator. His plays have been produced in theatres, universities, and schools across North America and internationally.

### About Esquivel

Recent commissions include Show Me the Gates of Heaven from Thrown Stone Theatre (Norwalk), Fallenstar: The Watchoverers at New Native Theatre (Minneapolis), and Watching for Sasquatch: An Environmental Play of Plays through a grant from Cal Poly. Notable recent productions include Dulce at Scottish Rite Theatre (Austin) and PCPA (Santa Maria), and The Hero Twins: Blood Race at Phoenix College, Magik Theatre (San Antonio), University of Texas at Austin, and Appalachian State University. His play Above Between Below toured Washington and Oregon schools through a

collaboration between Seattle Children's Theatre, Oregon Children's Theatre, and the Kaiser Permanente Educational Theatre Program. Ramon's play Dulce won the AATE Distinguished Play Award and has been featured at the Latinx Theatre Commons Sin Fronteras Festival and the Austin Latinx New Play Festival. ZEQ, a play with music, was created through a ReImagine Grant from Theatre for Young Audiences/USA and Children's Theatre Foundation of America and has been presented at the Austin Latinx New Play Festival and New Plays for Young Audiences at the Provincetown Playhouse, New York University. His play The Shahrazad Society won the Aurand Harris Memorial Playwriting Award from the New England Theatre Conference. He is currently assistant professor of theater, playwriting, at California Polytechnic State University, San Luis Obispo. He received his MFA in creative writing at University of British Columbia, Vancouver, his MA in educational theater at New York University and his BA in history at Yale University.

For more information on Marfa Live Arts programs, please visit [www.marfalivearts.org](http://www.marfalivearts.org).

## Neighbors continue legal fight over gates

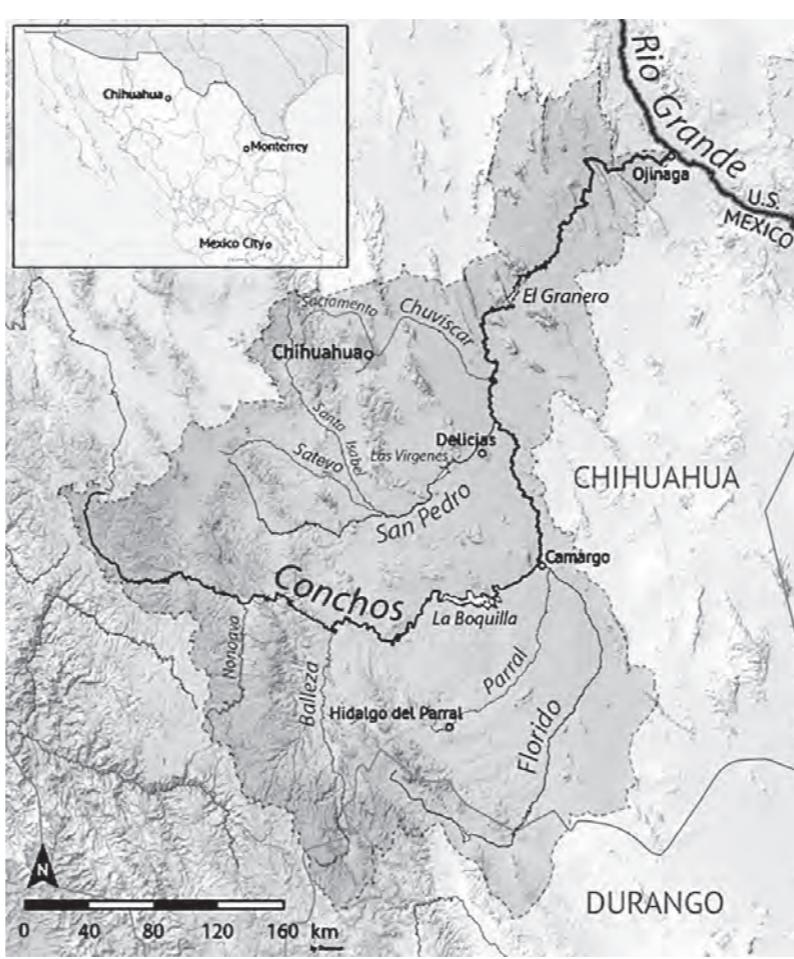
Continued from page 1

The lawsuit is technically being brought by Southwestern Holdings, Inc. (Poindexter's Cibolo Creek Ranch) against Hunter JRW Holdings, LLC (Weisman's ranch, now named Flying W). Cibolo Creek Ranch is just north of Shafter, and Poindexter has been restoring buildings in the town to make it a historical destination. Weisman purchased a home he's renovating in Shafter for occasional getaways from his home in New Braunfels and visits to the Flying W.

Weisman's attorneys argued that access to Harper Ranch is possible from Casa Piedra and Big Bend Ranch State Park and that access to La Morita Road was always by permission only and not by any easements or continual use that could make it subject to ownership through adverse possession. Affidavits from several Shafter residents support the Flying W's position, while affidavits from Cibolo Creek Ranch employees support their position of continual use with open gates.

Both Poindexter and Weisman have made fortunes, the former in heavy trucks and equipment and the latter in state highway construction. So, both have the financial ability to withstand a lengthy legal battle. Currently, the parties are in a discovery phase with no new hearings set.

Presidio County Judge Joe Portillo said Sunday that there were discussions about the historical use that might make the road public, but he said nothing has been placed on a Commissioners Court agenda.



The Rio Conchos is the most significant tributary to the Rio Grande.

## Mexico pays off water

Continued from page 1

United States. President Sheinbaum pushed back against the narrative that her country was withholding water on purpose.

"The Government of Mexico emphasizes that it has not violated any of its provisions," the secretary of foreign affairs wrote in a press release.

"During a period marked by an extraordinary and unprecedented drought that has affected users in both countries, Mexico has made additional deliveries, always in accordance with the

Treaty, water availability, and the operational and infrastructure limitations of the region, without affecting water for human consumption and agricultural production at the border."

Sixty-five of the 260 billion gallons of outstanding water debt were released from the Luis Leon dam over the second half of December, with water levels in the Big Bend region seeing a slight boost from around December 23 to January 12. Plans for the next release have not yet been announced.—SAM KARAS

## Students writing with Marfa Live Arts

This week Marfa Live Arts is back in Marfa Junior High for the 10th Annual Marfa Live Arts Playwriting Preparatory workshop. "It's been 10 years of working with students and fostering their voices through the exploration of writing a play," said Marfa Live Arts workshop instructor Rachel Tate. "I have only been teaching this program for the past four years, but I am so grateful to have something well-loved to step into each January."

The workshop, Tate explained, takes MISD students through a four-day instruction on writing theatrical monologues that will be sent to a panel that will choose selected works to be performed at the Winter Showcase by local actors at Planet Marfa in, what she called, "a celebration with the students, families and members of the community."

Though the performance is a festive affair with many Marfans coming out to support the children, Tate's favorite part of the process is watching the students find their voices as writers. "Each year, I have to remember that to enter as a learner puts me in the same shoes as the students," she said. "They start the week having no clue what a monologue is or how to write one, but ultimately they all do. I believe in the gift of words, and I see power in the process of finding those words and exploring their voices."

The program, she added, has become a beacon of the sense of community that is found in this tiny town in the middle of nowhere. "I say it every year, but I really do believe it is vital that we are listening to and caring for the young voices in this community," she said. "This past year there have been many articles on the state of education in our town with many elder voices being heard, but what about the ones who are in the classroom day in and day out? How many of us actually take the chance to hear them?"

For Tate, seeing the students work in this part of their development as humans is especially poignant. "I love the opportunity to hear how their minds work as they grow in such an odd and wonderful place in their lives: middle school."

I think we all can recall back at least a little to the big feelings in their lives," she explained. "So much is happening in their bodies and in their dynamics, and it's prime content for writing. The monologue is the perfect format to try out their thoughts and see what their voices are really wanting to say. The monologue is one person, one voice."

The workshop also allows the students unbridled access to their creativity, as students are not given prompts, Tate said. "There

is no grown up or other perspective to come in and quiet the thoughts or silence the expression. Here they get full reign. At the end of the day, it might be a reflection on heartbreak or their words through the perspective of a javelina or some other worldly warrior," she said. "The choice is theirs and it's my aim to encourage that choice."

The ability to choose what they want to write is one of the students' favorite parts of the program, according to first-time Marfa Live Arts collaborator and Marfa Junior High English teacher Catherine Gore. "I have heard nothing but positive feedback from students and teachers who have participated in previous years," Ms. Gore said. "This program offers something that feels different from the typical classroom experience. Most of

the time, students are told exactly what to write about and how to write it. This program gives them the freedom to express themselves in creative and individual ways, without fear of getting it 'wrong.' Students get to discover their own voices as writers."

The students themselves have told Ms. Gore so much with conversations she'd had with the children. "My current 8th grade students expressed that they enjoyed the Marfa Live Arts writing experience last year. Lea said that she enjoyed the writing because, 'We got to pick our own topic.' Raivon echoed what Lea said and added that he liked that he was able to type the monologue and use any tools he wanted, and Olivia said that she was one of last year's winners and received a small prize."

For Tate, however, the real prize is seeing what the students are capable of when they are able to explore their creativity without the typical boundaries of the classroom.

"And then here comes the exciting part for all of you," Tate said. "We get to listen. Every single year I leave the Winter Showcase with dewy eyes and a full heart, and it's not just me. There is a power in sharing and even more so in being heard. I would love to see as many folks show up to listen to the children as we do in town hall discussions. It's also just so silly and fun."

Marfa Live Arts, Tate added, is open to hearing from community members of all walks of life to engage and join in on the fun. "If you would like to be considered to perform at the Winter Showcase in March (date to be determined) please reach out to us. We would love to have some new collaborators!"

For more information on Marfa Live Arts program visit [www.marfalivearts.org](http://www.marfalivearts.org).

## Dark sky saved for now

Continued from page 1

As McDonald Observatory Dark Sky Specialist Stephen Hummel explained to Monday night's crowd, "More lighting with less thought is less safe." Over the years, he's worked with companies like Apache Energy and Exxon—and other companies in the energy sector—to install workplace lighting that cuts down on light pollution and costs for employers.

After the latest ordinance was passed in 2021, the city made progress on updating lighting around town with help from the Big Bend Conservation Alliance.

While many folks were happy with the lighting installed at their homes, the general consensus was that the City of Presidio needed more lighting infrastructure to close dark gaps around town. Councilmember Juarez pointed out that 1992 was the last time new lights were installed in town. "It's definitely overdue for us to add additional

streetlights," he said. One of Juarez's proposals was to nix language in the ordinance limiting lighting to 2700 Kelvin and instead increase that number to 6000 Kelvin to allow for greater selection from AEP, which will ultimately order and install the new lights.

Some folks in the audience worried that removing the limit as written in 2021 would jeopardize Presidio's participation in the Dark Sky Reserve. That status has Brewster County officials seeing dollar signs—astrotourism is a booming industry and has come out on top as the No. 1 reason visitors choose Big Bend for their vacations.

"We have to think of the greater context," said Amber Harrison of Dark Sky International. "You stand to lose that certification for everybody in the tri-county."

Other council members pushed back, and the ordinance was officially adopted with the 2700 Kelvin limit.—ROB D'AMICO

## OPINION



## Help wanted

Big Bend Sentinel is looking for administrative and bookkeeping staff. Part-time or full-time. The hours are flexible. Please send a letter expressing interest and a resume to [publisher@bigbendsentinel.com](mailto:publisher@bigbendsentinel.com).

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## LETTER

### Trump needs to stop

**WE** NEED to be strong, courageous and have integrity. The government of the United States is engaging in multiple unconstitutional and illegal acts. As citizens we should not excuse or condone this. We cannot build a good, prosperous and just society by lying to ourselves and allowing the government to lie to us about what it is doing.

Video and eyewitness testimony do not confirm the account of the shooting in Minneapolis put out by DHS head Kristi Noem.

Ms. Noem should have told everyone that her department is committed to finding out what happened and proceeded to do a thorough investigation of the facts. Instead she has come out calling a young mother a domestic terrorist whom agents had to kill in order to protect their own lives.

As the available evidence contradicts this statement, she should not say such things. It is necessary to allow independent state and federal agencies to review the event before making what appears to be a very inflammatory statement not backed by evidence.

Government officials should not lie to the public, nor should they try to inflame an already terrible situation. Americans should not accept this behavior.

Our government is also engaged in grabbing the natural resources of other nations (Venezuela) or threatening to do so (Greenland).

Our officials are saying we will kill and kidnap the leaders of other nations and that we will invade them (Iran, Cuba, Columbia and so on). I am very certain that Mr. Trump spe-

cifically promised he would not engage in foreign invasions, or regime change as these things don't work out and inevitably end in disaster. If you voted for Mr. Trump, we are asking you to let him know you expect him to do what he said he would do. Stop invading, threatening and regime change as world police and get on to helping the businesses and people of the U.S. prosper.

**FRANK McELHANNON**  
**JILL BERKANA**  
Fort Davis

# Maduro raid hits home in Texas

**O**N JANUARY 3, U.S. forces detained Venezuelan President Nicolas Maduro and his wife during a military operation in Venezuela. Just days later, the effects are already reaching Houston. It's home to one of the largest Venezuelan communities in the country.

Houston is the third-largest hub for the Venezuelan diaspora in the United States. That's behind Miami and Orlando. According to recent estimates from the Migration Policy Institute and the Census Bureau, between 80,000 and 120,000 Venezuelans live in Texas, with a significant portion concentrated in the Houston area. Many arrived between 2014 and 2024. They fled hyperinflation and political repression under the Maduro regime.

Most received Temporary Protected Status (TPS), a humanitarian program first given to Venezuelans in 2021 under the Biden administration and extended multiple times.

But things changed in 2025. On Oct. 3, the U.S. Supreme Court allowed the termination of TPS protections for approximately 300,000 to 600,000 Venezuelans. Homeland Security Secretary Kristi Noem later explained it: she said the move stemmed from "national security interests," accusing the Maduro government of encouraging irregular migration.

The TPS revocation took away work authorization and protection from deportation for thousands of Venezuelans in Texas. Texas immigration courts have ranked second in the nation for pending cases for the second straight year. The backlog exceeds 400,000 cases. The TPS termination led to a surge in appeals and new asylum applications, further lengthening delays in hearings.

In November 2025, processing of immigration applications from 19 countries, including Venezuela, was suspended. This

made life even harder for Venezuelan migrants. News of Maduro's capture has triggered varied and sometimes heated responses in Houston's Venezuelan community. Thousands of former TPS holders now fear they could be deported without active protected status, despite ongoing instability back home.

After Noem said Venezuela was "freer today than yesterday" and recommended that migrants pursue asylum instead, immigration advocates argued the guidance overlooked the asylum system's bottlenecks. Asylum requires applicants to prove individual persecution, a process that typically takes four to seven years. Approval rates for Venezuelan cases have recently hovered around 60 percent. Outcomes vary widely, depending on the type of application and judge.

Critics have labeled the approach shortsighted. Miami Mayor Eileen Higgins, a Democrat, called the TPS termination "reckless" and demanded immediate restoration of the status during Venezuela's transitional instability. Human rights groups caution that a surge in asylum claims might overload the immigration courts in southern states.

The operation's long-term effects could reshape U.S. immigration policy. If Venezuela achieves rapid stabilization and a democratic transition, new asylum claims could decrease substantially in the coming months or years.

This could strengthen arguments from immigration hardliners for further tightening of rules and a shift toward case-by-case review rather than broad protected statuses.

This influx of appeals and filings might inflate Texas' court backlog further, increasing pressure on officials for urgent measures, like reinstating TPS or introducing a special legalization program akin to the Cuban Adjustment Act.

**ARTEM KOLISNICHENKO**



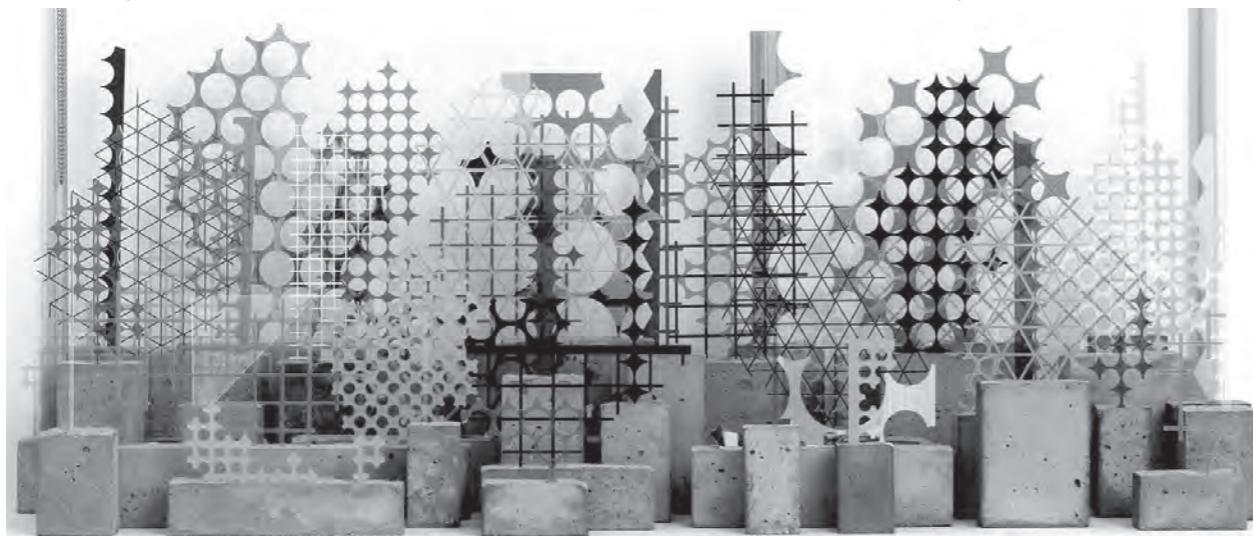
A Venezuelan family attempts to cross the Rio Grande under a bridge in Eagle Pass, Texas.

ROB D'AMICO

# ART

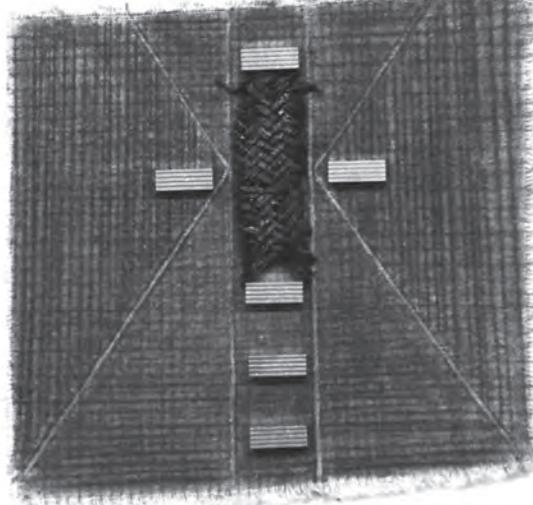
*Sentinel*

## Array of textures offered by Chinati's new artists-in-residence



INSTAGRAM

David Batchelor, "Reef," acrylic and concrete, dimensions variable, 2016.

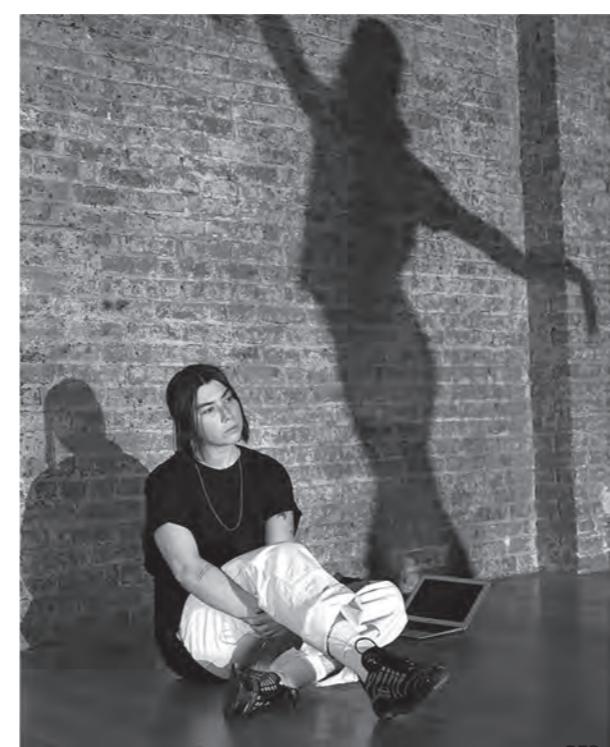


Deondre Davis, (left) "Cuprum (Olea)," pencil, gouache, copper and found material on canvas, 8 x 8, 2024.



DAVID KORDANSKY GALLERY

Will Boone, "No Country State Flag," black metal eagle, animal bone, Texas flag, enamel, and resin on canvas, 75 1/8 x 75 1/8 x 4 1/2, 2022-2023.



Gillian Walsh, New York artist and choreographer.

Sarah Zapata (left), "Upon the divide of vermillion," Art Noir x UBS Art Studios at Art Basel Miami Beach, installation view, 2022-2024.



SoiL Thornton, "The Rest," Galerie Neu, Berlin, Germany, installation view, 2025.

**C**HINATI FOUNDATION has started the 2026 round of artists in residence, their AIR program. Last week the lineup was announced: David Batchelor, Will Boone, Deondre Davis, SoiL Thornton, Gillian Walsh, and Sarah Zapata.

These artists from the United States and Scotland work across a variety of media including performance, sculpture, textiles, printmaking, and painting.

Each artist will spend up to two months living and working, surrounded by the art, architecture, and land at Chinati.

This AIR program was initiated by Donald Judd in 1989. More than 200 artists from over 25 countries have participated in the program, which does not require that artists produce new work but offers time and space for the development of ideas. Many artists conclude their time in Marfa with public open studios, talks, or performances.

Past residents include Farah Al Qasimi (2024), Eric N. Mack (2023), Dionne Lee (2022), Sarah Crownier (2022), Jessi Reaves (2021), Rosy Keyser (2017), Matt Connors (2015), Hernan Bas (2013), Ester Partegàs (2012), Steve Roden (2010), Charline von Heyl (2008), Christopher Wool (2006), Maureen Gallace (2005), Matthew Day Jackson (2004), and Katharina Grosse (1999), among others. Ingólfur Arnarsson (1992) and John Wesley (1989), both of whom have work permanently installed at Chinati, were artists in residence.

The program is supported by the Milton and Sally Avery Arts Foundation and an anonymous donor.

**DAVID BATELOR** (b. 1955, Dundee, Scotland) is an artist and writer based in London. He studied fine art at Trent Polytechnic, Nottingham, and cultural theory at Birmingham University. For over 30 years, Batchelor has been concerned with the experience of color within a modern urban environment and with historical conceptions of color within Western culture. His work comprises sculpture, installation, drawing, painting, photography, printmaking, animation, and textiles. Batchelor has exhibited worldwide, and his work is in the collections of a number of museums, including the Tate, London; the British Council Collection; Buffalo AKG Art Museum, New York; Vorlinden Museum, Wassenaar, Netherlands; São Paulo Museum of Modern Art, Brasil; and Museo de Arte Moderno, Santiago, Chile. Batchelor has also written books and essays on color theory, including Chromophobia (2000); the anthology Colour (2008, editor); and The October Colouring-In Book (2015). He is currently preparing a new book, Chromocopia, to be published in 2026.

**WILL BOONE** (b. 1982, Houston, Texas) makes works whose graphic power is matched by their palpable physicality, generating content from an unlikely array of sources—including music subcultures and the visual vernaculars of cattle ranches and barrooms. His technical processes are informed in equal measure by the DIY ethos of punk and the precision of industrial manufacturing, and give rise to paintings, sculptures, and immersive installations. Boone

pays particular attention to forms that emerge from social contexts with no clear association to art historical narratives. Taken as a whole, his work serves as a repository for archetypal, if fragmentary, expressions of contemporary life. Boone has been the subject of solo exhibitions at David Kordansky Gallery, Los Angeles (2023); Karma, New York (2022); Contemporary Arts Museum Houston (2019); and Rubell Family Collection, Miami (2014). His work is held in the collections of institutions such as the Fundación Baruch Spinoza, Barcelona; the Institute of Contemporary Art, Miami; the Museum Boijmans Van Beuningen, Rotterdam; and the Rubell Family Collection, Miami. Boone lives and works in Houston.

**DEONDRE DAVIS** (b. 1991, Chicago, Illinois) is a Los Angeles-based artist whose work explores material redirection, object-making, and painting through a conceptual lens. Davis' practice examines identity, consumption, and refuse. Recent and forthcoming solo exhibitions include Castle, Los Angeles (2025), and Gordon Robichaux, New York (2024, 2026).

**SOIL THORNTON** (b. 1990), lives and works in Brooklyn, New York) graduated from Cooper Union in 2012. Recent solo institutional exhibitions include Choosing Suitor, Secession, Vienna (2023); Decomposition Evaluation, Kunstverein Bielefeld (2022); and Sir Veil, Buffalo AKG Art Museum, New York (2016). Thornton's work is in the permanent collections of the Buffalo

AKG Art Museum; the Dallas Museum of Art; the Hammer Museum, Los Angeles; the Rubell Family Collection, Miami; the Solomon R. Guggenheim Museum, New York; and the Whitney Museum of American Art, New York, among others.

**GILLIAN WALSH** (born in New York) is an artist and choreographer from New York. Recent works include Fame Notions, Performance Space New York (2019); May, Gropius Bau, Berlin (2022); Wilderness, Danspace Project/New York City Players, New York (2023), and Friday Night Lights, Dia Chelsea, New York (2024).

**SARAH ZAPATA** (b. 1988, Corpus Christi; lives and works in Brooklyn, New York) employs weaving, tufting, and traditional craft techniques to create loud, architecturally responsive installations that traverse themes of gender, colonialism, and fantasy. Zapata's site-specific works reflect her intersecting identities as a queer woman of Peruvian heritage raised in Evangelical Texas and now based in New York. She has held solo exhibitions at the ASU Art Museum, Tempe; Kemper Museum of Contemporary Art, Kansas City; and Museo MATE, Lima; and her work is in the permanent collections of the Stedelijk Museum, Amsterdam; Museo de Arte de Lima, Lima; the Museum of Arts and Design, New York; among others. She has been the recipient of grants from the Dallas Museum of Art, the National Association of Latino Arts and Culture, the Foundation for Contemporary Arts, and the Harpo Foundation.



*The residents: Batchelor, Boone, Davis, Thornton, Walsh and Zapata*