

Public grills council on AEP permit

Marfa City Council members could soon decide the fate of the much-debated AEP electrical substation, and they held a public hearing on the issue on Tuesday—although with the back and forth the project has gone through for more than a year, nothing is certain. At the Tuesday meeting, the council heard from several speakers, the majority objecting to the AEP plan, although a handful supported it.

The council took no action on approving a special use permit needed by AEP to build the substation on land zoned residential.

The Planning and Zoning Commission met on April 7 for a final public hearing on the project. The P&Z voted 4-1 to deny recommending approval of the permit, but the council has the final say on the matter.

P&Z Member Lee Mediano was the lone vote against the motion to recommend that the City Council deny the permit. He said that in his conversations with Marfa residents, 80% were for approving the substation location, although he acknowledged that 80% of the people who showed up to the commission's meetings were against it. "We just spent 18 months on endless meetings," he said. "We could have had this project up and functioning. So that's my big frustration right there."

The chief concerns from residents opposing the project are the precedent it would set for rezoning residential land (or allowing special uses on it), the impacts to property values for landowners adjacent to the site and possible noise and environmental impacts. Also frustrating residents is what they view as an inadequate effort for the power company to locate an alternative site.

AEP's proposal involves purchasing an approximately four-acre lot at the corner of Oak and Aparejo streets and erecting a new substation—eight times larger than the existing Oak Street station near Sal Si Puedes and triple the capacity,

Continued on page 2

INSIDE

Cardboard Zoo Collective jumps into the Rio Grande



JENNIFER PITTINGER—SENTINEL

Art—Page 8

Sentinel News Project



HANNAH GENTILES—SENTINEL

Citizens applaud opponents to the border wall at an April 8 Presidio County Commissioners Court meeting.

Challengers seek new leadership on council

Incumbents say they want to complete projects

Marfa

Four new challengers are hoping to grab at least one of the three seats up for this year's City Council election on May 2.

Marfa's elections are run by plurality, meaning the all seats are at-large and the top three vote-getters are elected to three seats. All seats carry two-year terms. Early voting runs Monday, April 20, through Friday April 24, and Monday and Tuesday, April 27 and 28. All early voting is from 8 a.m. to 5 p.m. at the Casner Room, City Hall, 113 S Highland Ave in Marfa.

Incumbents up for election are Mark Cash, Mark Morrison and Eddie Pallarez. Challengers are Christopher Johnson, Emily Kolb, Katy Kowal and Sal Tornabene. Johnson is a microbiologist; Kolb runs Mutual Friends Marfa, a coffee/bakery shop; Kowal is a baker with Dirty Water Bagels and Mutual Friends Marfa; and Tornabene runs Raba Marfa, a vintage and designer-item store.

For Johnson, the mere fact that last year's elections were canceled was a key reason he stepped up to run. "I think the best governments are those where citizens are involved," he said. "And there

hadn't been an election for City Council in a while because no one ran against the incumbents. And so I think at the very least, I wanted there to be an election."

Johnson, who has lived in Marfa since 2021 and works remotely for the National Laboratory of the Rockies in Colorado, said he feels new leadership would offer a more open and inclusive process for decision-making.

Kowal, who has lived in Marfa since last June, said she recently met with Johnson and Tornabene to go over the city budget with a focus on trying to better understand how decisions were made on a \$5 million loan the city took out for street construction and smart water meter installations.

"I want to understand [the loan] better," Johnson said.

Kowal said she would like future councils to do a better job outlining to the public the major financial decisions that have been made, particularly when it took a 72% tax increase to address street repairs and water meters. "With the tax increase approved ... there should be somewhere written down a breakdown of how that was supposed to work and what the costs were," she said.

Kowal said she agreed with Johnson about the importance of having new people run for city office because it signals someone is paying attention. "It's important that people are looking at the

budget," she said. "It's important that people are looking at what's going on and caring. And I think that when decision-makers know that someone's looking, they act differently."

Johnson said he would like the city to also "modernize" and get up to speed to improve the information available to the public, such as an updated, functioning website and a calendar that can synchronize properly with people's personal calendars.

He also took issue with the level of police enforcement. "The police department has taken Stonegarden and Operation Lone Star funding, and I think in a lot of ways that's a very good thing and appropriate," Jonson said. "But it also feels like there's been a little bit of a creep toward increased enforcement that I'm not entirely comfortable with. And that I don't think that is necessarily appropriate for the size of the town that we're in."

Johnson also recently questioned the need for the new police K-9 unit. "The dog was another thing that honestly, I was disappointed," he said. "I came to that meeting. And that was a City Council meeting where they were also discussing the substation. And so, there were other things that were more pressing. But there were three of us that spoke out saying, 'I don't think we need a K-9 unit.' And with

Continued on page 2

PROTESTORS SLAM WALL CONTRACTORS

Hundreds pack county meetings on border wall

By SAM KARAS

Border wall protestors packed two recent county meetings to object to county commissioners allowing a wall contractor to make improvements to a remote road that would facilitate the construction of steel barriers along the Rio Grande. More than 150 people showed up to a Presidio County Commissioners Court meeting to voice opposition on April 8.

"I haven't seen that many people at a public meeting, ever—even before I was a commissioner," Presidio County Deirdre Hisler said of the meeting. Commissioners took no action on the item, which would have given approval or denial for contractors to reconstruct Chispa Road, a rugged stretch that winds from Highway 90 west of Valentine down to Candelaria on the border. The contractors need the improvements to move heavy construction machinery to the border.

The next morning, the crowd reassembled at the Jeff Davis County Courthouse, ready to offer their thoughts the prospect of commissioners approving a "gift from Bar-

nard construction to reconstruct Chispa Road from FM 2017 to the Jeff Davis and Presidio County line," a span of about 11 miles.

Jeff Davis County commissioners opted to table the acceptance of that "gift" from border wall contractor Barnard Construction in the form of road improvements. An attempt to discuss the issue again on Tuesday morning was canceled after an error was discovered in the meeting agenda.

Commissioners were expected to take no action on the item even if they did meet, since the contractor had failed to follow up with more information on their plans for the road.

Barnard Construction is based in Bozeman, Montana, and specializes in large civil engineering projects like dams and spillways. During the second Trump administration, the company has made a large amount of money on border wall contracts. In Texas alone, the company has been allocated \$1.26 billion for construction in Hudspeth County, \$960 million for a project mostly located in Presidio County, \$600 million for a project in the Del Rio area and \$369 million for the Rio Grande Valley.

Big Bend residents were poised to have their first face-to-face meetings with Barnard last week,

Continued on page 2

City moves to repair and improve pool, park



VISIT ALPINE

Alpine residents will continue to keep their cool this summer after pool repairs.

Concern voiced over debt, finances

By GINA VERA

Alpine

With a vote of three to two, the Alpine City Council took on \$927,000 of city debt to move two city projects forward, and the only water project on the list is the city pool.

The money is set to pay for repairing the city pool and for improvements at Kokernot Park, including lighting at the sports fields and walkways, the scoreboard, and the lodge adjacent to the amphitheater.

The project at Kokernot Park will be done in partnership with the Alpine Independent School District, which will pay for half of the softball field improvements. Work on the city pool is expect-

ed to begin within weeks and be completed by Memorial Day, said Alpine Mayor Catherine Eaves and Alpine City Manager Henry Arredondo. The city pool is currently closed due to a leak of more than 20,000 gallons each day and other issues. The pool will get a new liner that should last 10 years, new tile at the edge, a chair for people with disabilities to use, and other new equipment, Arredondo said.

The vote came at the April 7 City Council meeting, with Councilmembers Richard Portillo, Eva Martinez and Lucy Escovedo voting to take on the debt and projects. Councilmembers Robert Rückes and Rick Stephens voted against the effort.

While the Alpine Mayor does not vote, Eaves expressed strong support for passing the motion to take on the debt and moving forward with the projects. "It's a

Continued on page 2

Sentinel joins investigative news unit

ProPublica, Texas Tribune launch a year-long investigative news program

ProPublica and The Texas Tribune have selected five new partner organizations in Texas to participate in the second year of a local investigative initiative that supports accountability journalism in newsrooms across the state.

Over the next year, five newsrooms—Big Bend Sentinel, the Houston Chronicle, KRIS 6 News in Corpus Christi, KXAN Investigates in Austin and the Texas

Observer—will report on state and federal efforts to restrict local control, in collaboration with the Texas investigative unit housed at ProPublica and the Tribune.

In the first year partners:

- Campaigned to overhaul Dallas city government and the growing political power of a North Texas church called Mercy Culture
- Examined one of the state's most influential lobbying groups
- Broke down El Paso's struggles to build its aerospace industry

New partners, The Texas Newsroom and the Houston Chronicle, collaborated to reveal efforts by Musk's The Boring Company to build a flood tunnel in Houston with the help of an area congressman.

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Alpine council and school district hope to partner on improvements

Continued from page 1
matter of quality of life,” Eaves said during the meeting.

Stephens and Rückes also expressed support for the projects. However, they ultimately voted against the motion, saying they could not support it while the city was still behind in its financial audits and did not know exactly how much was in the city’s fund balance.

Answering a question from Stephens regarding when the audits would be completed or when information on the funds balance would be available, Arredondo said, “I can’t give you a date. When we are done, I will get it to you.”

Arredondo and an Alpine financial consultant did, however, assure council members that the city’s fund balance is strong, that the city has very low debt, and that it has the ability to pay the debt within its seven-year term, and possibly ahead of schedule.

Following the council meeting and vote, Eaves pointed to Arredondo’s knowledge and experience as a reason for her confidence in his plans. “We hired him for his expertise, and he had no problem with it,” she said.

“He hasn’t even blinked twice, thinking about us doing this, and he’s the expert. So, when he gave his thumbs up and said that if he were sitting in my chair, he would vote for it, and our financial advisor did the same ... They said, ‘This is what we need to do.’”

Rückes remained concerned following the meeting, including why the city was taking out a loan to pay for the pool repairs when it has the cash to pay for them and whether its priorities were in the right place when the city ran a deficit last year and does not know the exact amount in its fund balance.

“So in our last budget cycle, we passed a budget that was in a deficit,” he said. “We’re behind on audits, so we can’t go out for new revenues yet ... Then you saw how Mr. Stephens had asked when we would have our fund balance. Our city manager couldn’t tell us. So my assumption is he probably can’t tell us when our audits would be caught up as well,” Rückes said.

“We are coming up on a new budget cycle. We have a utilities department that’s in a deficit, which is borrowing from our fund balance,” Rückes said. “We have our general

fund that’s in a deficit, borrowing from our fund balance. We don’t know when we’re gonna be able to go out for new revenue ... Not that I’m in favor of increasing our tax rate to begin with unless it’s a one hundred percent necessity ... So just with all that, you know, my hesitation is why are we going to add.”

Texas law does not allow cities to increase their tax rates if their financial audits are not up to date.

Eaves addressed Rückes’ concerns, saying that the funds that had been set aside for the pool would be used in the park project and that it was important to move now to take advantage of the school district’s offer to pay for half and to act on a previous memorandum of understanding with Sul Ross University for the use of the amphitheater.

The school district has said that if the city cannot act to improve the softball field this summer, it will use its funds at another field.

The hope is that improvements to the softball field will bring tournaments to the city and summer concerts can be held at the amphitheater, both of which will increase business in the city, Eaves said.

Council has final say on special use permit

Continued from page 1
increasing from 5 MVA to 15 MVA (megavolt-amperes)—an estimated \$7 million to \$10 million endeavor. The increase in capacity is cited by the company as crucial to meeting both existing and future needs for Marfa’s electricity usage. Critics said the utility did not explore options for the substation farther out of town. AEP said it looked at alternatives and none met the criteria it needed for both logistics and cost.

Since the land is zoned residential, AEP initially applied for a rezoning to industrial to proceed with the purchase of the property to build the substation. After that rezoning was tabled by the City Council, AEP complied with a request from council members to get a special use permit to build and operate the substation under residential zoning.

That new AEP application does provide considerably more detail on the project, and P&Z members have walked through questions about the project one by one.

For an in-depth look at the history of the rezoning, see bigbendsentinel.aep-rezone.

Early voting starts Monday for contested races

Continued from page 1
the City Council, there wasn’t even any discussion. They just voted for it.” He added that there were also concerns over a recently purchased license plate reader. “I don’t think those things are making people feel safer living here,” he said. “If anything, I feel like they could be eroding the sense of safety and peace of mind that people have living here.”

The incumbents all agreed on one thing—they wanted to continue on the council to finish crucial projects already in the works.

“There’s a few things that we’ve, well actually there’s probably a lot of things that we’ve done, like some of the street projects that we have started and some other stuff that I’d like to see through,” said Cash, a Marfa native vying for a third term after an initial one-year stint on the council. “I’d like to see them get completed and I’m sure they will get completed with or without me, but since I was there when it started, I’d like to see them through.”

“There are a few things that are not done yet that I have some institutional knowledge that I think will be helpful, and one is helping along the El Cosmico utilities extension project,” said Morrison, now in his third year on the council. “Because I’m the one that’s been working with their staff, their engineers, and our engineers,” he said. El Cosmico, a mixture of funky trailers and glamping that has been a mainstay of Marfa tourism since 2009, closed its original location on Highway 67 last summer to launch a new location, complete with 3-D printed “Sunday Houses” and guest accommoda-

tions northeast of Marfa. The city is required to supply water to the development—in the initial phases of construction—but the resort has agreed to pay for the extensions of water lines needed.

“I have good historical knowledge about that,” Morrison said. “I would like to see that through to make it as efficient as possible for the city to get that done. There’s also the development on the west side of town that I’m involved in that I would like to continue and see it through as efficiently as possible with the utilities extension on Quatro [White’s] property Because we don’t have a city administrator, I am doing more of that than a normal council member would, but luckily, I have the time to do that.”

Morrison said he wouldn’t be hurt if someone won his seat, but that he would only feel comfortable with a loss if his replacement was ready to do serious work outside of just attending meetings and “raising their hand” for a vote.

“There are so many projects that we haven’t completed yet,” said Pallarez, a Marfa native running for a third term. “We’re still in the middle of negotiations with El Cosmico for the utilities. There’s still a lot of things that need to be completed,” he said. “There are certain guidelines they have to meet. We have to do a cost analysis to see if they want to pursue this thing because basically, they cover 100% of the cost to provide service to them.”

“And of course, we have the [smart water] meter project that I wanna see completed,” Pallarez added.

Cash said that the criticism about not getting more information to the public can be traced to

the city being without a city secretary and city administrator for months. (The city recently hired a new secretary.) “You, you don’t have the resources that we used to have when the city [administrator] was there,” he said.

AEP substation spurs challenges

Johnson and Kowal acknowledge that the proposed AEP electrical substation—and their opposition to it—played a factor in their decision to run. Kolb and Tornabene did not respond to requests for comment for this story. Pallarez has come out in total support for the substation, noting that it was crucial for Marfa’s future electric demand. He added that he also did not want it in an area outside the city limits because it would generate about \$38,825 in tax revenue for the city and \$171,332 to all local taxing entities.

Critics of the substation have called for Pallarez to recuse himself from voting on the substation since he is a former AEP employee with a company pension. He has refused and is adamant that he is working for the best interest of Marfa residents.

Cash said he doesn’t put much weight into substation critics who say AEP hasn’t made a real effort to find alternative sites. “What I heard a lot was people saying, ‘Why aren’t you looking at other places?’” he said. “I mean, it’s kind of like when you go look at a home, why would you go look elsewhere if you’ve already found one you like and you got a price for it. So why would you go shop? I’m sure it costs some money every time [AEP has to] go research other properties.”

Morrison noted that the additional detail AEP provided and

its discussions with P&Z made the plans better with a more favorable number and alignment of transmission poles. He also said that he kept count of the comments from everyone he has talked to about the issue, with 54 people in favor of the location and 28 opposed.

With three of the five council members leaning toward approval of the substation (the mayor, an AEP employee has recused himself from the process), it’s clear that for at least two of the challengers, the issue was an impetus to run—even if the decision was made before they ever took office if elected.

“You set a precedent when you rezone a property like that,” Johnson said, adding that it brings up all kinds of issues around visual aesthetics, property values and future development lost, development that could have been more beneficial to the community. He also said that AEP should have taken alternative sites more seriously, and that they stated they could not do so without having their application for the current property denied first. “And so the process, in my opinion, the next step then is to deny it and see what next property AEP would like to evaluate?”

Kowal agreed with the need to deny the permit application to spur another review on location. “That’s [AEP’s] policy. It’s not like a legal policy,” she said. “You know that they could certainly change that. I would never make a decision as a business owner without knowing all of the information. What would be the best environment? When companies make hasty decisions based on cost, they’re choosing to overlook an area that could be a better place for this.”

Contractors not providing information to counties

Continued from page 1
after a dust-up on Chispa Road. After locals spotted a crew from Frontier Development staging heavy equipment in a remote corner of Presidio and Jeff Davis counties on April 1, Jeff Davis County Judge Curtis Evans and Precinct 4 Commissioner Albert Miller personally drove out to ask the crews to halt construction, and Presidio County Precinct 1 Commissioner Deirdre Hisler tried to arrange an informational presentation from a Barnard representative to keep locals and stakeholders in the loop. Contractors had told observers and county officials that the road work was intended to facilitate construction of a border wall along the Rio Grande.

Reached by phone, Judge Ev-

ans explained to the *Sentinel* that his county only intersects with the road at a point, but the contractors would need to improve the condition of the road to safely get crews and equipment closer to the river. He said he hadn’t seen any formal plans in writing, but that they’d talked about widening the road by a few inches and potentially adding culverts and other drainage features. “Our budget is very limited,” he said of his county, which does not have a designated road and bridge crew and has to contract any improvements with out-of-towners. “We can only afford to blade it a couple times a year.”

The public commenters at last Thursday’s meeting were united in their conviction that the county should not accept any services

from Barnard. “I think this ‘gift’ is a Trojan horse,” said Scott Whitener, a former Texas Parks and Wildlife ranger who owns property in Jeff Davis County.

Mandy Roane, who attended the meeting on behalf of county landowners Baxter and Amber Box, explained that what seemed like a great deal could leave the county saddled with maintenance costs down the road. “There’s no such thing as a free lunch,” she said. “Jeff Davis County will ultimately be the ones paying for this free road work, whether through long-term maintenance costs or increased strain on the county budget.”

Caiti Jackson of Terlingua was one of a handful of non-Jeff Davis County residents who made a long

trek to attend the meeting out of concern that the “gift” could become a curse for residents of other communities in the Big Bend by facilitating a border wall. She was also frustrated by the lack of official confirmation from Washington about the exact details of the project. “It seems ridiculous that the contractors know more information than the residents of this county—is keeping residents in the dark a way of fast-tracking this unpopular project?” she wondered aloud. “As far as I’m concerned, if they’re going to build [the wall] against our will, they can do it commuting back and forth on our crappy dirt roads like the rest of us.”

Barnard Construction did not return a request for comment for this story.

PRESIDIO INTERNATIONAL

MANIFESTANTES CRITICAN EL “REGALO” DE LOS CONTRATISTAS DEL MURO

Cientos de personas abarrotan las reuniones del condado sobre el muro fronterizo

Por SAM KARAS

Los manifestantes contra el muro fronterizo llenaron dos recientes reuniones del condado para oponerse a que los comisionados del condado autorizaran a un contratista a realizar mejoras en un camino remoto que facilitarían la construcción de barreras de acero a lo largo del Río Grande. Más de 150 personas se presentaron en una reunión de la Corte de Comisionados del Condado de Presidio para expresar su oposición el 8 de abril.

“Nunca había visto tanta gente en una reunión pública, ni siquiera antes de ser comisionada”, dijo Deirdre Hisler, del Condado de

Presidio, sobre la reunión. Los comisionados no tomaron ninguna decisión sobre el punto, que habría aprobado o denegado la reconstrucción de Chispa Road, un tramo accidentado que serpentea desde la Carretera 90 al oeste de Valentine hasta Candelaria, en la frontera. Los contratistas necesitan las mejoras para transportar maquinaria pesada de construcción hasta la frontera.

A la mañana siguiente, la multitud se reunió nuevamente en el Palacio de Justicia del Condado de Jeff Davis, lista para expresar su opinión sobre la posibilidad de que los comisionados aprobaran un “regalo de Barnard Construcción para reconstruir la carretera Chispa desde la FM 2017 hasta el límite entre los condados de Jeff Davis y Presidio”, un tramo de aproximadamente 11 millas.

Los comisionados del Condado de Jeff Davis optaron por aplazar la aceptación de dicho “regalo” de Barnard Construction, la empresa

constructora del muro fronterizo, en forma de mejoras viales. El intento de volver a discutir el tema el martes por la mañana se canceló tras descubrirse un error en el orden del día de la reunión.

Se esperaba que los comisionados no tomaran ninguna decisión al respecto, incluso si se hubieran reunido, ya que la empresa constructora no había proporcionado más información sobre sus planes para la carretera.

Barnard Construction tiene su sede en Bozeman, Montana, y se especializa en grandes proyectos de ingeniería civil, como presas y aliviaderos. Durante la segunda administración Trump, la empresa obtuvo grandes ganancias con contratos para la construcción del muro fronterizo. Solo en Texas, la empresa recibió una asignación de 1260 millones de dólares para la construcción en el condado de Hudspeth, 960 millones para un proyecto ubicado principalmente en el condado de Presidio, 600

millones para un proyecto en la zona de Del Río y 369 millones para el Valle del Río Grande.

Los residentes de Big Bend se preparaban para sus primeras reuniones presenciales con Barnard la semana pasada, tras un altercado en Chispa Road. Después de que los lugareños vieran a un equipo de Frontier Development instalando maquinaria pesada en una zona remota de los condados de Presidio y Jeff Davis el 1 de abril, el juez del condado de Jeff Davis, Curtis Evans, y el comisionado del Precinto 4, Albert Miller, se desplazaron personalmente al lugar para pedirles a los trabajadores que detuvieran la construcción. La comisionada del Precinto 1 del condado de Presidio, Deirdre Hisler, intentó organizar una presentación informativa con un representante de Barnard para mantener informados a los residentes y a las partes interesadas. Los contratistas habían dicho a los observadores

y a los funcionarios del condado que las obras viales tenían como objetivo facilitar la construcción de un muro fronterizo a lo largo del Río Grande.

En una conversación telefónica con el *Sentinel*, el juez Evans explicó que su condado solo tiene una intersección con la carretera en un punto, pero que los contratistas tendrían que mejorar el estado de la carretera para que los equipos y la maquinaria pudieran acercarse al río de forma segura. Dijo que no había visto ningún plan formal por escrito, pero que habían hablado de ensanchar la carretera unos centímetros y posiblemente añadir alcantarillas y otros sistemas de drenaje. “Nuestro presupuesto es muy limitado”, dijo refiriéndose a su condado, que no cuenta con un equipo propio para carreteras y puentes y tiene que subcontratar cualquier mejora a empresas de fuera. “Solo podemos permitirnos nivelarla un par de veces al año”.

Los ciudadanos que intervinieron en la reunión del jueves pasado coincidieron en que el condado no debería aceptar ningún servicio de Barnard. «Creo que este “regalo” es un caballo de Troya», dijo Scott Whitener, un antiguo guardaparques del Departamento de Parques y Vida Silvestre de Texas, propietario de una finca en el condado de Jeff Davis. Mandy Roane, quien asistió a la reunión en representación de los propietarios de terrenos del condado, Baxter y Amber Box, explicó que lo que parecía un gran negocio podría generar costos de mantenimiento a largo plazo para el condado. “Nada es gratis”, afirmó. “El condado de Jeff Davis será quien, en última instancia, pague por esta obra vial gratuita, ya sea mediante costos de mantenimiento a largo plazo o una mayor presión sobre el presupuesto del condado”.

Barnard Construction no respondió a la solicitud de comentarios para este artículo.

Nuestras comunidades no son un asunto secundario

Por JOHN T. KENNEDY

En septiembre de 2008, el Río Grande alcanzó niveles sin precedentes en la memoria reciente de Presidio. El Río Conchos multiplicó su caudal y generó una pared de agua que arrasó el valle, desbordando nuestro sistema de diques, inundando viviendas, destruyendo granjas y obligando a una respuesta de emergencia binacional.

Mientras las autoridades evaluaban los daños desde el aire, ocurrió una tragedia. Los comisionados de Estados Unidos y México de la Comisión Internacional de Límites y Aguas fallecieron en un accidente aéreo en las montañas a las afueras de Presidio, junto con el director ejecutivo del Consejo de Gobiernos del Río Grande. Su propósito era comprender un río que no perdona las suposiciones erróneas.

A esto le siguió un esfuerzo federal de reconstrucción que duró años. Estados Unidos reconstruyó aproximadamente 24 kilómetros de dique de ingeniería, construido originalmente en 1975, con un costo de más de 14 millones de dólares. Hoy, ese sistema, con un valor de reemplazo cercano a los 100 millones de dólares, se interpone entre nuestra comunidad de 4000 habitantes y uno de los tramos más inestables hidrológicamente del Río Grande. No es una abstracción. Es la razón por

la que Presidio existe como un pueblo funcional.

Ahora, el mismo gobierno federal que reconstruyó ese dique propone construir un muro fronterizo encima. No al lado, sino sobre él. En una carta recibida el 3 de abril, la Oficina de Aduanas y Protección Fronteriza de EE. UU. describió un plan para un muro de dique de hormigón armado con bolardos de acero de 9 metros instalados encima, afirmando que el proyecto mejoraría tanto la seguridad como la protección contra inundaciones.

No se proporcionó ningún análisis de ingeniería que respaldara esa afirmación.

No nos oponemos a la seguridad fronteriza. Presidio está en la frontera. Entendemos su realidad mejor que cualquiera que redacte exenciones en Washington. Pero una exención diseñada para la seguridad fronteriza no anula las leyes de la física. El agua no lee el Registro Federal. A los Río Conchos no les importa qué leyes se hayan suspendido. Si se construye sobre un dique sin la debida revisión de ingeniería, la inundación llegará hasta el muro, y el muro llegará hasta la ciudad.

Esto no es hipotético. En 2019, cuando Fisher Industries construyó una valla de bolardos en la llanura aluvial del Río Grande, cerca de Mission, Texas, sin la debida autorización, el Departamento de



Presidio y Ojinaga quedaron bajo el agua durante la inundación de 2008.

Justicia intervino. La postura del gobierno fue clara: la construcción en una llanura aluvial sin la revisión adecuada amenaza vidas y propiedades aguas abajo. A ese mismo contratista se le ha adjudicado ahora un contrato de 1200 millones de dólares para construir en la zona. El principio no ha cambiado, solo el constructor.

Quizás hayan oído que el parque nacional se ha descartado. Los mapas han cambiado. Pero Big Bend no es solo el límite de un parque. Es una región: comunidades, infraestructura, tierras de cultivo y personas. A lo largo de aproximadamente 280 kilómetros de esta región, los impactos reales siguen estando muy presentes. Cuando la atención se centra en lo

que se salvó, puede ocultar lo que aún está en riesgo.

En Presidio, CBP ha confirmado que ha identificado parcelas en su área de servicio para su posible adquisición y acceso. Somos una subdivisión política del estado de Texas con activos de desarrollo económico. Estos incluyen un proyecto de energía geotérmica, un parque industrial planificado, una iniciativa de revitalización del centro de la ciudad y una conexión directa con el cruce ferroviario internacional Presidio-Ojinaga, uno de los cinco únicos en Texas. Se han invertido decenas de millones de dólares públicos en dicho cruce, incluyendo una nueva instalación de inspección de 33 millones de dólares. El puente ferroviario fue re-

construido según el perfil del dique que ahora se propone modificar. No se trata de problemas aislados. Son la misma llanura aluvial, vista desde diferentes perspectivas.

Y no estamos solos. En el condado de Zapata, los comisionados han contratado expertos para evaluar el impacto de las inundaciones relacionadas con la construcción de muros. En Valentine, una multitud se congregó para abordar las implicaciones de alojar a cientos de trabajadores de la construcción temporales en una comunidad abastecida por un solo pozo. En toda la región, desde Candelaria hasta Laredo, las comunidades se hacen las mismas preguntas y reciben la misma falta de respuestas claras.

Los funcionarios locales han solicitado ser consultados antes de tomar decisiones. Nosotros también. El 4 de marzo, el Distrito de Desarrollo Municipal de Presidio aprobó por unanimidad una resolución y envió cartas formales a la CBP, al Cuerpo de Ingenieros del Ejército y a la Comisión Internacional de Límites y Aguas (IBWC por sus siglas en inglés). Hicimos preguntas directas sobre la revisión de ingeniería, los impactos de las inundaciones y el riesgo para la infraestructura. La CBP reconoció nuestras preocupaciones, pero no proporcionó respuestas sustanciales. El Cuerpo de Ingenieros no

ha respondido. La IBWC acusó recibo, pero guardó silencio.

Hicimos esto porque es lo que debe hacer un gobierno local. Cuando la acción federal amenaza la seguridad y el futuro económico de su comunidad, usted plantea el problema públicamente e insiste en obtener una respuesta. Si no la obtiene, preserva sus derechos y se prepara para lo que venga.

Presidio ha soportado inundaciones, incendios y un siglo de abandono hasta que algo salió mal. Nos reconstruimos después de 2008. Invertimos en infraestructura. Planificamos un futuro que incluyera energía, comercio y oportunidades. Hicimos el trabajo que se espera de las pequeñas comunidades para sobrevivir y crecer.

No somos una ocurrencia tardía. Y no pedimos un trato especial. Pedimos algo mucho más básico: que el gobierno federal cumpla con sus propias leyes, respete la realidad de este paisaje y demuestre, antes de que comience la construcción, que lo propuesto no pondrá en riesgo a la población de esta región por un río que conocemos demasiado bien.

John T. Kennedy es el director ejecutivo del Distrito de Desarrollo Municipal de Presidio, una subdivisión política del estado de Texas establecida por elección local en 2012.

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PAYPAL

VENMO



Community Day set for Chinati

The Chinati Foundation will hold another Community Day on Sunday, April 26, for a day celebrating the tri-county community.

This year's Community Day activities include open viewing of Chinati's collection and the Judd Foundation's Ranch Office, an exhibition of artwork by Marfa and Presidio ISD students, free dinner and refreshments, a student poetry reading, plus workshops, folklorico, mariachi and more. The events are free and open to all.

Historical Commission recognizes excellence in historic preservation

Austin

The Texas Historical Commission (THC) honored nine individuals or organizations for their contributions to historic preservation during an awards banquet on Thursday, April 9, during its 10th annual Real Places conference.

The THC Awards Banquet honors recipients of the 2025 Preservation Awards, which recognize worthy accomplishments and exemplary leadership in the preservation of Texas' heritage. The following awards were presented:

Curtis D. Tunnell Lifetime Achievement Award in Archeology—Tom Hester

Anice B. Read Award of Excellence in Community Heritage Development—Sauer-Beckmann Living History Farm at Lyndon B. Johnson State Park & Historic Site

Texas Historical Commission Award of Excellence in Preserving History—Shumla Archaeological Research and Education Center

Texas Historical Commission Award of Excellence in Historic Architecture—Mission San José Rehabilitation Project

Texas Historical Commission Award of Excellence in Media Achievement—Olive Talley

John Ben Shepperd County Historical Commission Leadership Award—Paula Ross

George Christian Outstanding Volunteer of the Year Award—

Steph McDougal

John L. Nau, III Award of Excellence in Museums—Buffalo Soldiers National Museum

Ruth Lester Lifetime Achievement Award—Bill Warren

About Real Places

Presented by the Friends of the Texas Historical Commission in partnership with Phoenix 1 Restoration and Construction, LLC, Real Places is a historic preservation and heritage tourism event. It offers sessions, workshops, tours, special events, entertainment, and networking activities, while bringing together many different audiences under the banners of history, heritage, and preservation.

QR CODE

FOOD PANTRY

NEIGHBORS FEEDING NEIGHBORS

KEEP US ON THE ROAD. SPRING 2026

Donate now to help us reach our goal for the 2026 Spring \$20,000 Produce Match Challenge.

Join us for the Harvest Bowl on Saturday, April 18, from 5 to 7:30 pm at the Jeff Davis County Community Center.

Learn more at www.foodpantry-jdc.org or scan the QR code for details.

HARVEST BOWL

SATURDAY, APRIL 18, 5-7:30pm • JEFF DAVIS COUNTY COMMUNITY CENTER

School board mulls new superintendent

Marfa

A recent School Board agenda item indicates the district may be seeking a new superintendent, but confirmation on that move was unavailable as of *Big Bend Sentinel's* press time.

The March 30 meeting agenda item for a closed-door session read: "Consultation Regarding Legal Issues Related to Employment of New Superintendent and Employment Matters," followed by "Discussion and Consideration of the Superintendent Evaluation/Contract."

Board President Philip Boyd said that in the closed session, board members authorized him to have discussions with others on

Interim Superintendent Arturo Alferez speaks at a recent community meeting.

a matter, but he said he could not give details on those discussions. However Boyd said an agenda due out this week for another meeting next week would make everything clearer for the public. That agenda was expected to be

posted Wednesday after *Sentinel* press time.

Since board members are not allowed to divulge what is said in closed session, no members would comment on the matter.

The current interim superintendent, Arturo Alferez, has been on an "administrator contract," since he has not completed his superintendent's certification. The board hired him as interim superintendent in the Summer of 2023. Alferez did not respond to requests for comment.

The usual next step for school boards is to hire a search firm for superintendent candidates, which would eventually require a public School Board vote in open session.

la fundación the CHINATI foundation

Visit the Chinati Foundation, an artist-created, artist-centered museum in Marfa, Texas.

Open Wednesday–Sunday.

Book your guided tour at chinati.org/visit

Image of a person looking at a large artwork in a gallery.

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Image of a family (mother, father, and two daughters) looking at a laptop together.

CAPITOL HIGHLIGHTS

Patrick warns GOP could lose state House majority

Lt. Gov. Dan Patrick warned last week that the GOP risks losing its majority in the state House this November and urged party unity behind the winner of the May run-off between U.S. Sen. John Cornyn and Attorney General Ken Paxton.

Without that unity, Patrick said that state Rep. James Talarico, the Democratic nominee, could win, *The Dallas Morning News* reported.

House Speaker Justin Burrows said he believes the GOP will keep its majority in the chamber but agreed unity is critical.

“We’ve got to be on the same page,” Burrows said. “We’ve got to be working and rowing in the same direction.”

Democrats, who have not held a majority in either chamber in more than 20 years, would have to flip 14 Republican seats to achieve a majority in the 150-member House.

Data centers set to get billions in tax breaks

An exemption for the state’s booming data center industry means Texas will lose \$3.2 billion in sales tax revenue over the next two years, *The Texas Tribune* reported.

Lawmakers say they will consider proposals to either limit the tax break or eliminate it altogether when they meet in January for the next legislative session.

“These new numbers are extremely concerning, and I will say they’re unsustainable,” said state Sen. Joan Huffman, chair of the Senate Committee on Finance. “I plan to look at filing legislation to either repeal the exemption or take a very close look at it and see.”

The tax break was approved by lawmakers in 2014, when there were far fewer data centers and

they were much smaller. If nothing changes, exemptions could reach \$1.75 billion annually by 2030.

The state already has more than 300 active data centers, with more than 100 additional projects either under development or planned.

Texas could face \$700 million in SNAP penalties

New federal rules designed to cut waste in the nation’s food stamp program means Texas taxpayers will have to pay \$700 million more each year to participate in the Supplemental Nutrition Assistance Program, or SNAP, *The Texas Tribune* reported. Officials with Texas Health and Human Services disclosed this to lawmakers at a recent committee hearing.

Almost 9% of the state’s SNAP payments had an error, slightly better than the national rate of 11%. Texas has until October 2027 to bring the error rate down below 6%. The error rate is based on unintentional mistakes by either the agency or the client receiving the benefits that result in an overpayment or underpayment

Nearly one-fourth of the state’s population gets some type of assistance from Texas Health and Human Services.

“We are dealing today with a health care epidemic, but not from a disease or virus,” said Sen. Lois Kolkhorst, R-Brenham, the committee chair. “With scandals in places like Minnesota and California drawing national attention, we, as Texans, must examine our own system and see how we measure up to other states.”

Court pauses smokable cannabis ban, higher fees

A Travis County district judge has temporarily lifted a statewide

ban on the sale of smokeable hemp products, *The Texas Tribune* reported. The temporary restraining order is in effect until at least April 23, when another hearing is scheduled.

Texas hemp companies sued to block new state rules that have wiped out a huge portion of the legal cannabis market, the Texas Standard reported. The rules took effect March 31 and prevented stores from selling smokable hemp products and vastly increased licensing fees. Smokable products make up the vast majority of hemp sales in the state.

“I estimated that flower is about half the market and smokable products put together including vapes are about two-thirds of the market,” said Robin Goldstein, a University of California economist who researches cannabis markets. He said the Texas market had about \$4 billion in retail sales annually.

The plaintiffs are also suing over a jump in annual licensing fees for manufacturers from \$250 to \$10,000. Retailers must now pay \$5,000 per store, up from \$150.

“These provisions function not merely as regulatory tools, but as significant economic barriers not authorized by statute,” the lawsuit contends.

The suit was filed by the Texas Hemp Business Council, the Hemp Industry and Farmers of America, and eight Texas-based hemp companies.

State to launch statewide food permit July 1

The Department of State Health Services will begin offering statewide operating permits for food trucks in Texas beginning July 1, the *Austin American-Statesman* reported. Food truck owners currently must pay each city’s permitting fees to operate there, which discourages them from traveling to other places to sell their food.

“It’s a hassle to take time off to go and do that where we have to stop what we’re doing and lose money that day,” food truck owner Eloisa Schessler, of Dallas, said.

Some cities opposed the new law, fearing they may lose control of how mobile food trucks operate in their jurisdictions. They will still be able to control where and when food trucks operate, but they will not be able to collect permit and inspection fees.

Texas’ job growth continues to outpace national rate

Texas added 40,100 non-farm jobs in January to reach 14,379,500 positions, outpacing the national growth rate by 0.6 percentage points, according to the Texas Workforce Commission.

“Texas employers continue to spur our state’s economic momentum, adding more than 40,000 jobs across a wide range of major industries,” said TWG Chairman Joe Esparza. “TWC remains committed to supporting Texas’ pro-growth policies and world-class talent pipeline that make Texas the best place to do business.”

The seasonally adjusted unemployment rate in the state remained at 4.3%, which is below the national jobless rate of 4.7%.

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.

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Pride Marfa sets sights on 5th annual celebration this fall



Pride attendees mingle at a 2023 Welcome Mixer.

Pride Marfa returns to the high desert for its fifth annual celebration of the LGBTQ+ community, creativity, and inclusivity. The event brings a weekend of art, performance, and connection to one of the most distinctive cultural landscapes of the Chihuahuan Desert region. Pride Marfa will take place September 11 through 13, 2026, when the desert climate softens and the afternoons stretch comfortably into the night.

The timing further continues the momentum of LGBTQ+ cel-

ebrations across Texas following Austin Pride in August, extending the season of Pride deeper into the fall. Organized by a grassroots collective of friends and neighbors, Pride Marfa has grown into a unique celebration where queer culture shapes a vibrant weekend of contemporary art, film screenings, drag performances, and dance parties.

“In a time when the world feels heavy and uncertain, it’s more important than ever to come together and create a space that

amplifies queer voices, celebrates our culture, our joy, and our freedom of expression,” said the event’s organizer, Prepney. “This year, we continue our legacy of inviting locals and visitors alike to gather in celebration of visibility, resilience, and the enduring power of community.”

“This festival brings together people from the surrounding region that spans hundreds of miles, creating a safe space for people of all backgrounds to come together in the historical

landscape that is Far West Texas,” Prepney added.

Pride Marfa is currently seeking sponsorships and donations to support this year’s programming to ensure the continued growth and impact of this regional event. Artists and programming will be announced in the weeks leading up to the event. See @pridemarfa on Instagram for the latest updates. Email info@pridemarfa.org for more information regarding sponsorship opportunities.



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Go to bigbendsentinel.com/donate

AROUND
THE BIG BEND

Thursday April 16

Hike with Homeless Dogs
10:00am-11:00am
Davis Mountains State Park
Fort Davis, TX

Meditation Classes
6:00pm
Free and open to all
Marfa Public Library
Community Room
Marfa, TX



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

Miles of Stars
9:00pm-10:00pm
Davis Mountains State Park
Fort Davis, TX

Friday April 17

Birding For Beginners
9:00am-10:30am
Davis Mountains State Park
Fort Davis, TX



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

Live Music:
Steven Bennack
6:30pm-9:30pm
Alcove Social, 211 E Holland Ave
Alpine, TX

Saturday April 18

West Texas Wingwatch
7:30am-11:30am
Marathon Texas, 109 NE 1st St
Marathon, TX



**Lady Bird Johnson
Wildflower Center Talk**
11:00am-12:00pm
Alpine Public Library
805 W. Avenue E
Alpine, TX

Art in the Park
2:00pm-3:30pm
Davis Mountains State Park
Fort Davis, TX

**Doug Moreland's
Family Barn Dance**
7:00pm-10:00pm
Kelly Outdoor Pavilion
100 Memorial Square
Fort Davis, TX

Sunday April 19

Boxing at Maintenant
9:00am-11:00am
Maintenant, 825 Rabbits Rd.
Marfa, TX



Open Mic Night: Music
5:00pm-8:00pm
Alcove Social, 211 E Holland Ave
Alpine, TX

Tuesday April 21

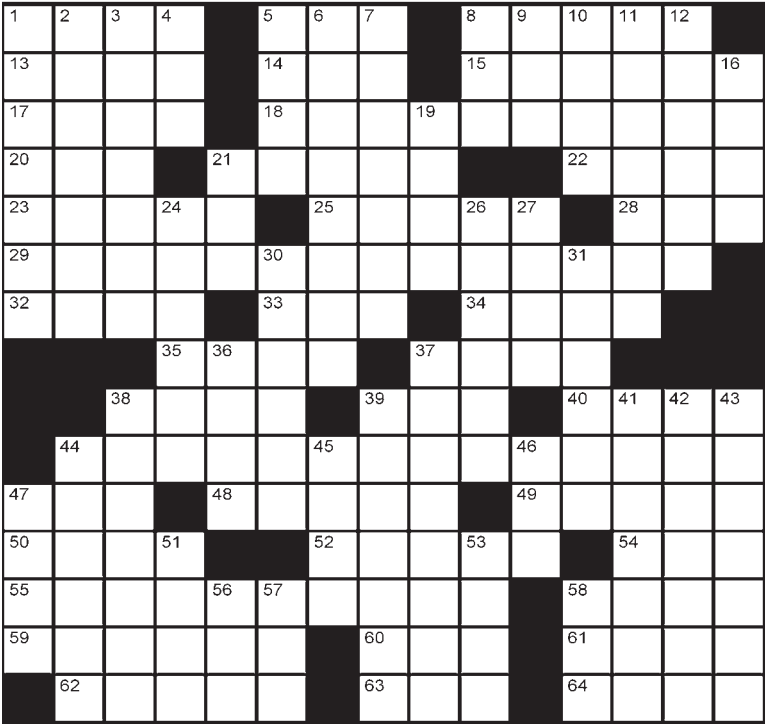
Meditation Classes
6:00pm, Free and open to all
Marfa Public Library
Community Room
Marfa, TX

CROSSWORD

I Hate This Crossword!

By Jack Scherban

4/16



Edited by David Steinberg

ACROSS

1 Hundred Wood (setting for "Winnie-the-Pooh")
5 Big biblical boat
8 How a storybook may be read
13 Best, in modern lingo ... or a farm animal
14 Horseshoe-shaped letter
15 Midsections of bodies
17 Gear for a rock band
18 This sucks!
20 Microsoft Teams communications, briefly
21 ____, The Creator
22 Herb in essential oils
23 Bonkers
25 Deliver a speech
28 Falsehood
29 This bites!
32 Name hidden in "late riser"
33 Actress Susan of "L.A. Law"
34 Buggy
35 "____ mio!"
37 "Clair de ____" (Debussy song)
38 Apt letters to be missing from ____ ation

DOWN

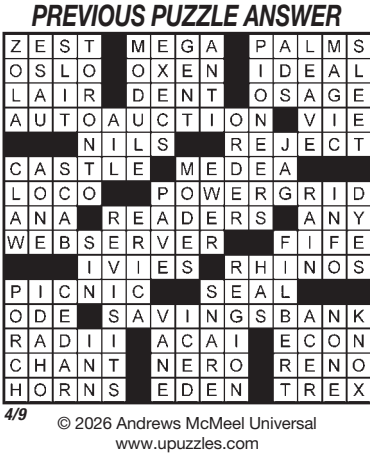
39 Chat room pioneer
40 Cocktail at a taqueria, informally
44 This blows!
47 Channel with famous "unplugged" performances
48 Car parts that can be popped
49 Crunchy corn chip
50 Tons
52 Mopes around
54 Word after "hot" or "open"
55 This stinks!
58 Skeleton material
59 Break free
60 Electronic composer Brian
61 Slightly open
62 Curt
63 Do stitchwork
64 Insult

PREVIOUS PUZZLE ANSWER

9 Mauna ____ (Hawaiian volcano)
10 Baddies in "The Lord of the Rings"
11 For the most part
12 Dance popular in the early 2010s
16 Hook's sidekick "Shoot"
19 Best
24 Web developer?
26 Commotion
27 Actress Moriarty of "The Boys"
30 "Same for me!"
31 Sign of an earthquake
36 Ruler unit
37 Superman's love
38 Split with a legal process

LEGAL NOTICE

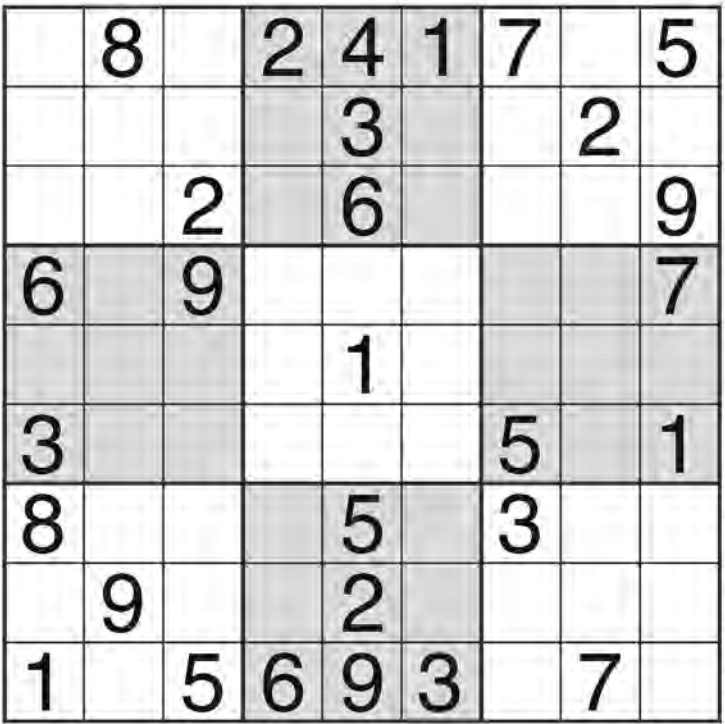
41 Apple avatar that tracks your facial expressions
42 Eye parts scanned for identification
43 Food merchants grows
44 "Finally"
45 Pinocchio's grows
46 No ____, ands or buts
47 Spell caster
51 Ski lift with letter-shaped parts
53 Be sure of
56 College-level courses, familiarly
57 "Gosh!"
58 Like this puzzle's theme?



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www.upuzzles.com

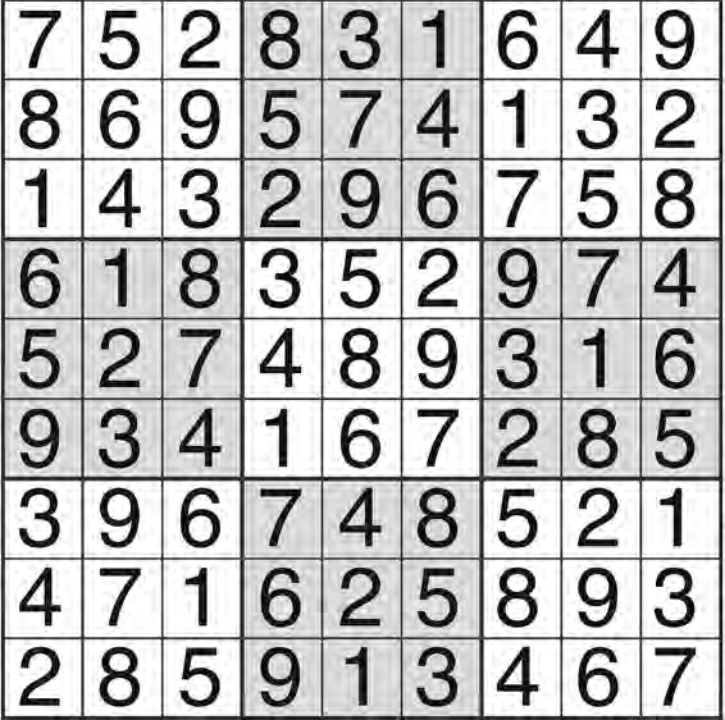
SUDUKO

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



DIFFICULTY RATING: ★★★★★☆

SOLUTION:



OBITUARY



Fort Davis woman
cherished her family

LYNDA J. GEORGE, aged 84, passed away on March 23, 2026, in Fort Davis, Texas. Born on March 15, 1942, Lynda's life was marked by her devotion to her family and her quiet presence in her community. Lynda is survived by her

loving spouse, Frank; daughter, Terri; stepson, Sean; and her cherished feline, Shadow. She was preceded in death by her father, Anton Veik; mother, Cecilia; and brother, Harold. Her family and friends will remember her fondly, and she will be missed by all who knew her.

CLASSIFIEDS AND PUBLIC NOTICES

LEGAL NOTICE

Application has been made with the Texas Alcoholic Beverage Commission for a new Mixed Beverage Permit by MARFA COUNTRY CLUB LLC, doing business as THE MARFA CAPRI, to be located at 603 W. San Antonio Street, Marfa, Presidio County, Texas 79843. Officers of said limited liability company are Kirish Allen-Lee Dirkson, Managing Member.

LEGAL NOTICE

REQUEST FOR PROPOSAL FOR CONSTRUCTION
Big Bend Presidio Health Center
Big Bend Regional Hospital District, is requesting competitive sealed proposals for the construction of Big Bend Presidio Health Center. The Request for Proposal document is included in the Project Manual. The Project Manual and the Project Drawings may be electronically obtained at the following address: Wilson & Company, Inc. Planroom https://www.wilsoncoplanroom.com/ Project Name: Big Bend Presidio Health Center A 'Mandatory' Pre-Proposal Conference will be held on Wednesday, April 22, 2026, 3:00 PM (CST), at Presidio Activity Center; 1200 East O'Reilly Street, Presidio, Texas 79845.

Proposals shall be received no later than Friday, May 8, 2026 at the following address: If mailed by USPS: Lynette Brehm, Executive Director PO Box 3044 Presidio, Texas 79845 If mailed by UPS or FedEx: Lynette Brehm, Executive Director 602 W O'Reilly Street Presidio, Texas 79845

It is the responsibility of the Offeror to deliver the proposal to the appointed date, time, and location stated herein. Late proposals will not be accepted. The Big Bend Regional Hospital District reserves the right to reject any and all proposals and/or cancel this RFP in its entirety.

NOTICE OF
SHERIFF'S SALE

By virtue of Tax Warrant issued out of the 394th District Court of Presidio County, Texas in Cause No. 5339-A and 5340-A on the 2nd day of April, 2026 by the Clerk thereof, and to me as Sheriff, directed and delivered, I will proceed to sell at 10:00 a.m. on the 5th day of May, 2026 at the South Door of the Presidio County Courthouse, in Marfa, Texas, the properties described below: CAUSE NO 5339-A STYLING City of Presidio, et al vs. Owners of Various Properties Located Within the City Limits of Presidio, Texas LEGAL DESCRIPTION Tract 1: Lot 1, Block 8, Bellevue Addn.; SAVE & EXCEPT all minerals, R280 Tract 2: Lots 4, 5, and 6, Block 7, Bellevue Addn., R274 Tract 3: East Five Feet of Lot 5, Block 2, Dupuy's First Addn., R724 Tract 4: Lots 21 through 31, Block 5, Dupuy's First Addn., R744 Tract 5: Lots 1 through 12, Block 4, Dupuy's First Addn., R736 Tract 6: Lots 12, 13, and 14, Block 2, Dupuy's First Addn., R726 Tract 7: Lots 25 and 26, Block 1, Dupuy's First Addn., R720 Tract 8: Lots 1 through 5, Block 1, Dupuy's First Addn., R717 Tract 9: Lots 4 through 10, Block 1, Kleinman Addn., R1176 Tract 11: West Half of Lot Six A, Block 1, Cartwright Addn., R515 Tract 12: Lots 11, 12, and 13, Block 27, Millington Addn., R20120 Tract 13: Lots 9 and 10, Block 65, Millington Addn., R1453 Tract 14: A tract of land 0.37 acres, more or less, out of the North Part of Tract 16, and part of Survey 5, J.W. Spencer, in Vol.145 and Pg. 134. R2064 Tract 16: Lots 1 and 2, Block 15, Sunset Addn., R2415 Tract 17: Lots 17 and 18, Block 1, Millington Addn., surface interest only R1204

Tract 18: Lots 3, 4, 5, and 6, Block 17, Sunset Addn., R20247 Tract 19: Lots 1 through 8, Block 14, Millington Addn., surface interest only, R4731 CAUSE NO 5340-A STYLING Presidio County, et al vs. Owners of Various Properties Located Within Presidio County, Texas LEGAL DESCRIPTION Tract 1: Northwest Quarter of the Southwest Quarter of the Southeast Quarter and the Northeast Quarter of the Southwest Quarter of the Southeast Quarter and the Southeast Quarter of the Southwest Quarter of the Southeast Quarter and the Southwest Quarter of the Southwest Quarter of the Southeast Quarter and the Northwest Quarter of the Southeast Quarter and the Northeast Quarter of the Northwest Quarter of the Southeast Quarter and the Southwest Quarter of the Northwest Quarter of the Southeast Quarter and the Southeast Quarter of the Northwest Quarter of the Southeast Quarter, Survey 175, Block 1, D & P Ry. Co., in Vol. 254 and Pg. 685, R8370 Tract 2: North Half of the Southwest Quarter of the Northeast Quarter of the Northeast Quarter, T & P Ry Co., Section 5, Block 1, Abstract 1822, Subject to a 30' Easement, in Vol.232 and Pg. 211, R9556 Tract 3: Northwest Quarter of the Northwest Quarter, Survey 41, Block 312, G.G. & S.F. Ry. Survey, in Vol.145 and Pg. 145, R14854 Tract 4: Lot 22 out of the T & P Ry. Co., Section 18, Block 5, Subject to a 20' Easement, in Vol.345 and Pg. 1, R22213 Tract 5: Lots 21 and 25 out of the T & P Ry. Co., Section 18, Block 5, Subject to a 20' Easement, in Vol.344 and Pg. 315 and Vol.344 and Pg. 319, R22179 Tract 6: Lot 14, out of the T & P Ry. Co., Section 5, Block G-25, Subject to a 20' Easement, in Vol.357 and Pg. 210, R22772 Tract 7: Lot 56, out of the T & P Ry. Co., Section 8, Block 5, Subject to a 20' Easement, in Vol.357 and Pg. 214, R22248 Tract 8: Lot 10, out of the T & P Ry. Co., Section 18, Block 5, Subject to a 20' Easement, in Vol.357 and Pg. 218, R22773 Tract 9: Southwest Quarter of the Southwest Quarter of the Northeast Quarter of the Northeast Quarter, T & P Ry. Co., Section 5, Block 1, Abstract 1822, in Vol.250 and Pg. 612, R9505 Tract 10: South Half of the Northwest Quarter of the Northwest Quarter of the Northeast Quarter and the South Half of the Northeast Quarter of the Northwest Quarter of the Northeast Quarter, of the T & P Ry. Co., Section 11, Block 1, Abstract 1825, Subject to a 30' Easement, in Vol.250 and Pg. s 613 and Pg. 614, R9675 Tract 11: South Half of the Southeast Quarter of the Northeast Quarter of the T & P Ry. Co., Section 13, Block 1, Abstract 1826, Presidio County, Texas, Reserving the Northern and Southern most 30' for roadway and utility purposes; reserving all mineral rights, in Vol.250 and Pg. 615, R9742

Tract 12: Lots 20 through 24, Block 12, Rio Grande Addn.; minerals reserved to State, in Vol.79 and Pg. 312, 6405 Tract 13: Lots 1 through 5, Block 35, Rio Grande Addn.; 1/16 minerals reserved, in Vol.91 and Pg. 7, R6579 Tract 14: Lots 8 through 12, Block 35, Rio Grande Addn.; 1/16 minerals reserved, in Vol.91 and Pg. 7, R6582 Tract 15: Lots 19 through 24, Block 35, Rio Grande Addn.; 1/16 minerals reserved, in Vol.91 and Pg. 7, R6585 Tract 16: Lots 1 and 2, Block 13, Valley View Addn. No. 1; 1/16 minerals reserved, in Vol.85 and Pg. 11, R6974 Tract 17: Lots 15 and 16, Block 13, Valley View Addn. No. 1; 1/16 minerals reserved, in Vol.85 and Pg. 11, R6977 Tract 18: Lots 1 through 9, Block 16, Valley View Addn. No. 1; 1/16 minerals reserved, in Vol.85 and Pg. 23, R7073 Tract 19: Lots 12 through 20, Block 16, Valley View Addn. No. 2, described by the Presidio County Tax Office, R7075 Tract 20: Tract 5 out of Survey 155, Block 3, D & P Ry. Co., Abstract 2788, in Vol.351 and Pg. 618, R22508 Tract 21: Tract 4 out of Survey 155, Block 3, D & P Ry. Co., Abstract 2788, in Vol.358 and Pg. 197, R22957 Tract 22: Lot 7, Block 11, Rio Grande Addn.; 1/16 minerals reserved, in Vol.85 and Pg. 88, R6383 Tract 23: Lots 1 and 2, Block 17, Valley View Addn. No. 2; 1/16 minerals reserved, in Vol.90 and Pg. 471, R7076 ALL BIDDERS MUST NOW DISPLAY PROOF OF COMPLIANCE WITH SECTION 34.015 OF THE TEXAS PROPERTY TAX CODE.

LEVIED ON the 2nd day of April 2026, as the property of those persons listed above to satisfy taxes, penalties, and interest and all costs of seizure and sale against those persons listed in said Warrant and any other unknown owners in favor of the Taxing Units listed in said Tax Warrants. GIVEN UNDER MY HAND THIS THE 2ND DAY OF APRIL 2026. Danny Dominguez Sheriff, Presidio County, Texas

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THE STATE OF TEXAS	COUNTY COURT
COUNTY OF PRESIDIO	
CITATION BY PUBLICATION	
IN THE ESTATE OF: JOSE A. RODRIGUEZ CAUSE: 2070	
TO ALL PERSONS INTERESTED IN THE ESTATE OF <u>JOSE A. RODRIGUEZ, Deceased</u> , Docket No. <u>2070</u> , County Court, Presidio County, Texas <u>APPLICATION TO DETERMINE HEIRSHIP AND APPLICATION FOR DEPENDENT ADMINISTRATION AND LETTERS OF ADMINISTRATION</u> filed in the County Court of Presidio County, Texas, on the <u>16th</u> day of <u>September, 2025</u> .	
Said application may be heard and acted on by said Court at 10 o'clock A.M. on the first Monday next after the expiration of ten days from date of publishing this citation, at the County Courthouse in Marfa. Texas.	
All persons interested in said estate are hereby cited to appear before said Honorable Court by filing a written answer contesting such application should they desire to do so.	
All interested persons are further advised that they have the right to employ an attorney and that if they or their attorney fail to file a written answer with the clerk who issued this citation by 10:00 a.m. on the Monday next following the expiration of ten days after the publishing of this citation, the court may enter orders with binding effects upon said persons.	
GIVEN UNDER MY HAND AND SEAL OF SAID COURT at office in Marfa, Texas, this the <u>19th</u> day of <u>March, 2026</u>	Carolina A. Catano Clerk of the County Court, Presidio County, Texas By: <u>Melissa DeRonde</u> Deputy Clerk's Address: P.O. Box 789 Marfa, Texas 79843

OPINION

LETTER

Our communities are not afterthoughts

IN SEPTEMBER 2008, the Rio Grande rose beyond anything Presidio had seen in living memory. The Rio Conchos multiplied its flow and sent a wall of water through the valley that overwhelmed our levee system, flooding homes, destroying farms, and forcing a binational emergency response.

As officials surveyed the damage from the air, tragedy struck. The U.S. and Mexican commissioners of the International Boundary and Water Commission were killed in a plane crash in the mountains outside Presidio, along with the executive director of the Rio Grande Council of Governments. They were there for one reason: to understand a river that does not forgive bad assumptions.

What followed was a years-long federal reconstruction effort. The United States rebuilt roughly 15 miles of engineered levee, originally constructed in 1975, at a cost of more than \$14 million. Today, that system, with a replacement value approaching \$100 million, stands between our community of 4,000 people and one of the most hydrologically volatile stretches of the Rio Grande. It is not an abstraction. It is the reason Presidio exists as a functioning town.

Now the same federal government that rebuilt that levee proposes to build a border wall on top of it. Not beside it—on it. In a letter received April 3, U.S. Customs and Border Protection outlined a plan for a reinforced concrete levee wall with 30-foot steel bollards installed above it, asserting that the project would enhance both security and flood protection.

No engineering analysis was provided to support that claim.

A waiver designed for border security does not waive the laws of physics. Water does not read the Federal Register. The Rio Conchos does not care what statutes have been suspended. If you build on a levee without proper engineering review, the flood will find the wall, and the wall will find the town.

This is not hypothetical. In 2019, when Fisher Industries built bollard fencing in the Rio Grande floodplain near Mission, Texas, without proper authorization, the Department of Justice intervened. The government's position was clear: construction in a floodplain without adequate review threatens lives and property downstream. That same contractor has now been awarded a \$1.2 billion contract to build here.



U.S ARMY

Ojinaga during the 2008 flood of the Rio Grande and Concho rivers

Big Bend is not just the park

YOU MAY have heard that the national park has been taken off the table. The maps changed. But Big Bend is not just a park boundary. It is a region: communities, infrastructure, working land, and people. Across roughly 175 miles of this region, real impacts remain very much on the table. When attention narrows to what was spared, it can obscure what is still at risk.

In Presidio, CBP has confirmed that it has identified parcels in our service area for potential acquisition and access. We are a political subdivision of the state of Texas with active economic development assets. These include a geothermal energy project, a master-planned industrial park, a downtown revitalization initiative, and a direct interface with the Presidio-Ojinaga International Rail Crossing, one of only five in Texas. Tens of millions of public dollars have been invested in that crossing, including a new \$33 million inspection facility. The rail bridge itself was rebuilt to the profile of the levee now proposed for modification. These are not separate issues. They are the same floodplain, viewed from different angles.

In Valentine, a standing-room-only crowd gathered to confront the implications of housing hundreds of transient construction workers in a community served by a single well. Across the region, from Candelaria to Laredo, communities are asking the same questions and receiving the same lack of clear answers.

Local officials have asked to be consulted before decisions are made. So have we. On March 4, the Presidio Municipal Development District unanimously adopted a resolution and sent formal letters to CBP, the Army Corps of Engineers, and the International Boundary and Water Commission. We asked straightforward

questions about engineering review, flood impacts, and infrastructure risk. CBP acknowledged our concerns but provided no substantive answers. The Corps has not responded. The IBWC acknowledged receipt and went silent.

When federal action threatens the safety and economic future of your community, you raise the issue on the record and insist on an answer. If the answer does not come, you preserve your rights and prepare for what comes next.

Presidio has endured floods, fires, and a century of being overlooked until something goes wrong. We rebuilt after 2008. We invested in infrastructure. We planned for a future that includes energy, trade, and opportunity. We did the work small communities are expected to do when they want to survive and grow.

We are not afterthoughts. And we are not asking for special treatment. We are asking for something far more basic: that the federal government follow its own laws, respect the realities of this landscape, and demonstrate, before construction begins, that what is proposed will not put the people of this region at risk from a river we know all too well.

—JOHN T. KENNEDY

John T. Kennedy is the executive director of the Presidio Municipal Development District.

AS I WRITE this I am looking out the window a few miles from Big Bend National Park and surrounded by Big Bend Ranch State Park. I can see the Rio Grande and the mountains in Mexico. My family has been coming here for over 50 years, and this is home for all of us. We have hiked the trails both in and out of the parks and viewed 1,000-foot walls and scenery that you can't see anywhere else in Texas.

We've been to Presidio and across the border to Ojinaga where we buy a special cheese and Mexican pastries. And we enjoy dining in the restaurants. We have been up river to a unique campground called Chinati Hot Springs and old ruins in Ruidosa, Texas. We have been on thrilling raft trips on the Rio Grande through Santa Elena Canyon where the boulders are as big as houses and up river canoeing through Colorado Canyon rapids in the state park.

You may have heard on the news that they won't put a physical wall through the parks. That may or may not be true, but IT'S NOT OVER. They may put up technology in the parks that will require construction of roads and structures. That will disturb the ecosystem, interfere with habitat and damage the unique bio systems. If they put up lights, there will be no more Dark Skies, which is one of the reasons many people come to this area and may adversely affect the work of the McDonald Observatory in Ft. Davis. There are valuable archaeological sites, bird sanctuaries and migration patterns of bears, mountain lions, and other animals up and down the river that will be damaged or destroyed.

Up river and downriver from the parks in Presidio and Hudspeth counties they are still planning a physical wall and/or concertina wire and large buoys in the river. There is no reason for a wall or any other disturbance on the river. The landscape is so

ugged and the weather so extreme that this area sees very little illegal crossing. In the past the government understood that and did not institute plans for a wall anywhere in the Big Bend. I believe that those who want to build a wall have not witnessed the magnificent scene that I can see out my window.

To get a sense of what could be lost forever, watch the feature length documentary available online called *The River And The Wall*. Then call or write to Sens. Cruz and Cornyn and Gov. Abbott and tell them to “Stop The Wall” and any constructed barriers anywhere on the river, up and down the Big Bend area and contiguous areas. Watch for accurate information at nobigbendwall.org.

Texans know the Rio Grande isn't just a line on a map. It's where cultures meet, where wild-life roams, and where the land still feels free and wild in a way that's getting harder to find. And the night skies are breathtaking. The stars really are big and bright in Texas.

That's why the idea of building a wall along large stretches of the Rio Grande is getting a lot of angry push back from all Americans. This angry opposition includes Democrats and Republicans, and local Texas officials, like sheriffs and county judges. In the Big Bend country, the river winds through some of the most beautiful scenery in Texas. Big Bend is home to black bears, mountain lions, javelinas, and hundreds of bird species.

According to the National Park Service, the region supports over 1,200 kinds of plants and hundreds of animal species. What makes that possible is movement—animals crossing back and forth along the river, just like they've done for generations. A wall will have devastating consequences for the ecosystems in the area.

Building a wall in this kind of terrain isn't simple. It means bulldozers, new roads, and tearing up land that's been largely untouched.

Along with lots of dust and noise. In some places, existing sections of wall have actually made flooding worse by trapping debris during heavy rains.

Building a border wall near Big Bend National Park could significantly harm tourism in the Big Bend region. A wall would disrupt Big Bend's defining features, replacing natural scenery with a stark, artificial barrier. Visitors seeking solitude and wilderness would be discouraged, leading to fewer tourists and significantly reduced revenue for local businesses. Tourism in Big Bend depends not only on the land itself but on the sense of openness and remoteness.

Data from the Department of Homeland Security show that a large share of the illegal immigrant population, often cited as over 40%, comes from people entering legally and overstaying visas. A wall doesn't address that.

The proposals to build a massive border wall project enormous expenditures of taxpayer money. Depending on the location, building a border wall has cost-projections anywhere from \$15 million to \$30 million per mile, with total spending reaching into the billions. And that's just construction. Maintenance is ongoing—storms, erosion, and simple wear and tear don't stop at the border.

Technology like cameras, sensors, and drones can monitor large areas without tearing up the land.

It's past time for our Texas state leaders to speak up, to show they care more about what's good for Texans than what the Washington politicians want. Good leadership means standing up for what's right, protecting the land, respecting taxpayers, and thinking about what we leave behind for our children and grandchildren. I hope our state leaders will step up and forcefully and loudly say to the Washington mob, "Don't mess with Texas!"

—BILL AND JUDY BALCH
Lajitas

BIG BEND *Sentinel*™

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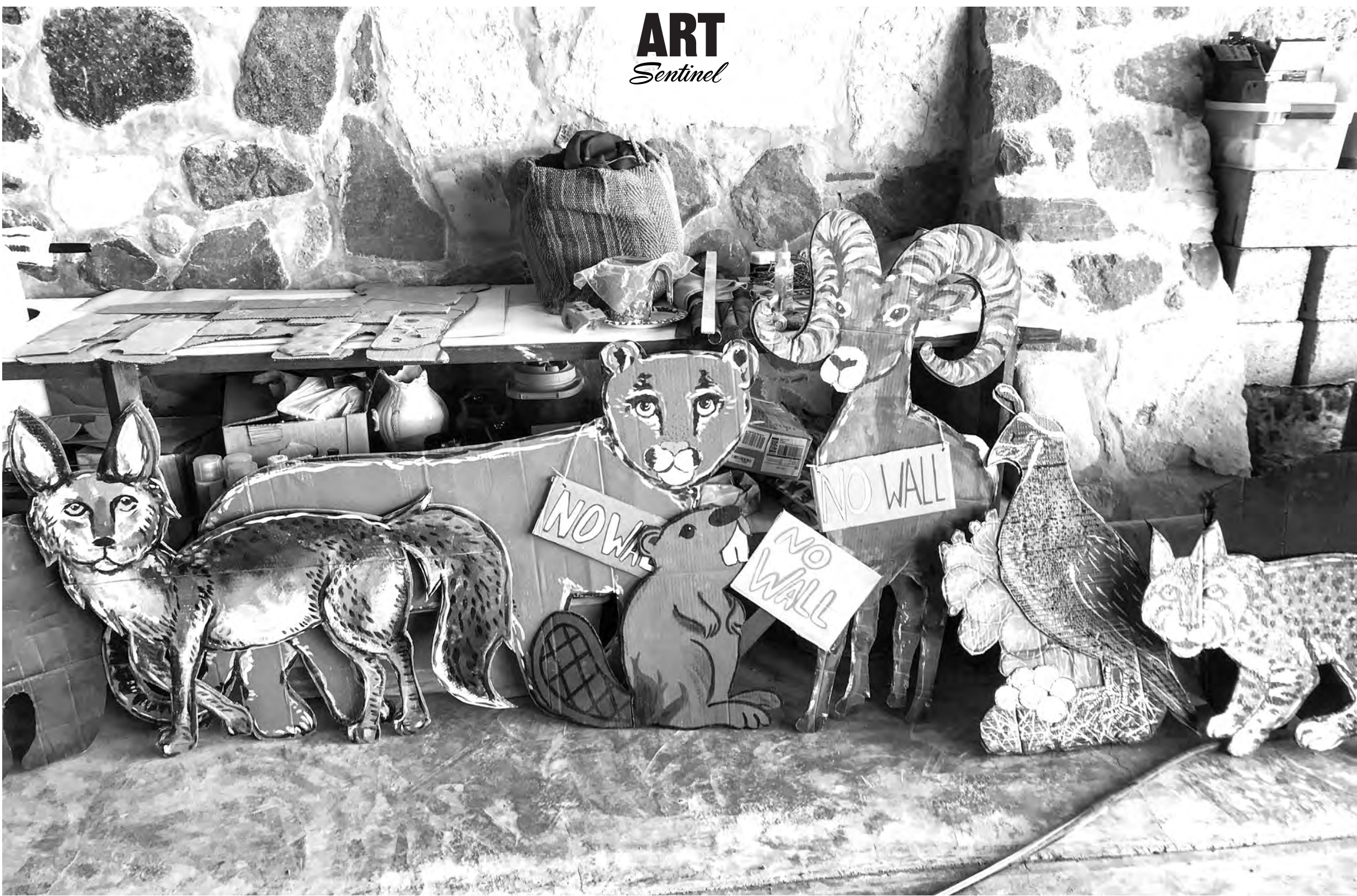
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Ashley Mahaney, Mike Ryan and C.R. Farmer help organize the Zoo Collective's painting days in Terlingua.

Cardboard Zoo Collective adds critters to wall protests

Photographs and text by JENNIFER PITTINGER

A MASSIVE JOINT protest took place in Austin at the state Capitol on April 4, along with a floating protest on the Rio Grande at Santa Elena Canyon in Big Bend National Park. Well-known locals and longtime river outfitters came out in force.

At one point during the demonstration in the Big Bend, several individuals gathered in the middle of the river and held painted cardboard cut-outs of area animals brandishing "No Wall" signs around their necks. Their vibrant coloring and painted lines were brilliantly illustrative, and I fell in love with them right away. A whole set of these wonderful cardboard animal cutouts even traveled to the Austin protest at the Capitol.

Every one of those animals represented will be cut off from the river and their main water source if the border wall is built.

I spoke with Ashley Mahaney of Terlingua that day, and she invited me, along with anyone else who wanted to help, to come visit the "Cardboard Zoo Collective" in Terlingua and help build these beautiful river creatures. She also generously gave me a beaver and a baby javelina to take with me.

On Friday, I took off with another photographer, Victor Kulagin of Alpine, at first light and headed south to Terlingua. We were both excited to finally put some of our angst regarding this whole border wall plan to good use and make some cool protest



signs. We arrived at a massive, stone airplane hangar behind Bee Mountain and were blown away at this tiny-but-mighty setup for artistic protest. For weeks, Mahaney and her friend C.R. Farmer, along with a few others, have been working overtime to build their creations.

The atmosphere was electric—dogs running

around stepping on freshly painted signs, to which the girls would just laugh and say, "It is the Zoo Collective, after all." Several others, like retired Big Bend National Park Ranger Mike Ryan, showed up as well, bringing supplies like cardboard, plywood, beer and water for the hot day. My colleague, Kulagin, made three different animals, and he didn't want to stop! The girls stated that this was the biggest gathering so far for building animals.

Both Mahaney and Farmer are active in their Terlingua community. The girls are both part of the Terlingua Burlesque Troo, which hosts local events and fundraisers. Another troop member, lifelong local Brittany Lowe, has also helped with building protest signs. Lowe's family has been influential in the Terlingua community for decades. These ladies are literally fighting for their back-yards to remain open and free spaces.

Farmer also volunteers at a local nonprofit, One Tail at a Time West Texas. She has been fostering pets for the last few years. I asked her how the animal sign project started. "We were just talking to each other in a group chat one day. We wanted to make a difference, that's all," she says. "We were in-spired to build the animals from a recent burlesque show the Terlingua troop had put on called 'Our Desert After Dark.'"

Farmer also fought hard against the new Dollar General Store in Study Butte. She wants to see this area have the lightest building footprint possible. "The allure and magic of the Big Bend is its wild-ness," Farmer says.

"These types of wild and free places where people can escape from the noise and overdevelopment of their gridlocked lives to reconnect with their peace and the primal heartbeat of Mother Nature are critically endangered. The spiritual privilege of being able to paddle the river and spend time in those holy cathedrals that are the remote canyons along the Rio Grande is a type of freedom and soul-rejuvenation that everyone deserves to experience in this life. A wall is a direct affront to the life-force and liberty of the American people as well as a death sentence to the many beloved animals here who rely on the river to survive."

Mahaney got her B.A. in fine arts and studio art from the University of Texas. Her skills in illustrative art are what have been bringing these animal cardboard cut-outs to life. She has been surprised by all the attention they are receiving. "I'm fighting for my neighbors, the donkeys, coyotes and all the animals we share this ecosystem with," she says. "We all came to this beautiful place for nature, and it's worth protecting even if it's not popular with the politicians."

I can't wait to go back and help build more animal protest signs. Both women welcome anyone to join future sign-making meetings. They feel it's a great way to help with the stress and uncertainty we are all coping with during this tension-filled time. "Our communities have the fight of our lives on our hands, but there is hope that if we stick together and remain community strong, we can beat this wall," Ryan says.