THE BIG BEND Sentinel

Vol. 94 No. 49 • October 29, 2026 Marfa, Presidio County, Texas www.bigbendsentinel.com • **$2**

Vulgar contractor video prompts anger from activists

Questions arise over sheriff's deputies' actions

By Rob D'Amico

This story is an update to a Saturday article posted online

TERLINGUA — A video from a Brewster County sheriff's deputy is raising alarm among anti-wall activists and women who live in the Big Bend for capturing a group of wall contractors making vulgar comments about a woman who had filed complaints that they were trespassing on her land — with another deputy participating in the riff.

The video was from a bodycam, obtained in an open records request, worn by one deputy. It was made in August after a conflict between the workers and a Terlingua woman who says they crossed onto her land while building a fence at a man camp, taunted her and "menaced" her and a friend. The Big Bend Sentinel is not naming the woman, at her request, because of the threat of sexual violence, and she fears she will be targeted for retaliation.

After the confrontation, deputies then questioned the group of men at a different location. "Where's she at?" one of the workers asks.

"I already told you you should have tried to f- - - her. It's not too late now," says a contractor, Jason Dupuis Shaffer, on the video, surrounded by seven other men in work clothes. They all laugh.

"I mean, you still can as long as you stay on your side of the property," says Brewster County Deputy Preston Bolton moments later, just off camera, spurring more laughter.

What follows is more lewd commentary and laughter among the group, along with the deputies outlining what happens with the criminal trespass notices they were writing up for a few of the men involved in the initial encounter; the notices state that they will be charged with a Class B misdemeanor if they enter the woman's property again.

Sheriff Ronny Dodson said he talked to Deputy Bolton about the incident. "And when I talked to him about it, he was trying to deescalate it to say something like, 'Well, you should've just brought her wine.'" Bolton did make a similar comment on the video. Dodson said Bolton told him his follow up comment about contractors staying on their side of the fence was in reference to the wine, not sex. "He didn't mean to be derogatory," he said.

Dodson said he sent out memos to his officers about being professional and remembering that their actions are going to be on camera. He added that he is not hesitant to punish officers for improper actions and gave an example of recently removing a deputy from duty for two weeks with no pay.

The incident took place at the man camp being built by a Louisiana-based Cartesian Company on Highway 118 north of Terlingua, in service of a larger construction project being led by Southwest Valley Constructors, a subsidiary of Kiewit. (Kiewit has several subcontractors working at the site, and a Kiewit spokesperson wrote in a comment that they are not Kiewit employees.) Shaffer and his employer, Cartesian Company, did respond to requests for comment.

Police reports on the incident with the fence include accusations on both sides, with cursing alleged on both sides and the woman telling police she felt threatened, including by some men who identified themselves as security and carried guns. The woman said contractors tore down her "no trespassing" signs and used physical intimidation, telling her they would do what they needed to do to build their fence regardless of what she told them.

Deputies initially issued several workers criminal trespass warnings to stay off the woman's land, but they were retracted in a dispute over whether the woman owned the land. (She eventually proved she had a legal right to the land to prevent trespassing and file complaints.)In one incident, man camp security personnel told a friend of the woman to stay put on her land near the fence — and he

Continued on page 2

HANNAH GENTILES

A costumed crusader readies to whack a piñata at Marfa Public Library's costume contest in 2024. The library will host this year's contest and festivities on Saturday at 4 p.m.

Marfa ISD receives 'Excellence' nominations, new dress code for staff

Redford deal finalized

By Ariele Gentiles

MARFA — The Marfa ISD School Board met at a regular meeting Monday night to hear updates — including nominations for H-E-B's teacher awards. Other actions included a new staff grooming and dress code, sign off on a teacher certification waiver and a new, much anticipated memorandum of understanding between Marfa ISD and Presidio ISD concerning Redford students.

Trustees Paul Salgado, Jay Foster, Rene Gonzales, Jonathan Lockett and Board President Teresa Nunez were present.

In September, Marfa schools leadership sought to codify the employee dress code, something the district lacked. They invited teachers to sit on a dress code committee and work with the administration to come up with an appropriate rubric for dress and grooming. Seven teachers volunteered for the committee and presented their code to the board Monday. New regulations include restrictions against snug, saggy and sheer clothing; T-shirts and sweatshirts representing schools, colleges, or U.S. military forces are allowed on Thursdays and Fridays.

Teacher Adele Powers, who served as the committee's spokesperson in the meeting, said of the presented code, "I think it's pretty good and leaves a lot of room for interpretation." The committee was careful to take into consideration what specific needs teachers in special education or other special population areas required and "dressing for the assignment." Before the board's vote, both Nunez and Gonzales thanked the committee for their assiduous care in developing a comprehensive and responsible dress code for the district.

The code was unanimously approved by the board, and Superintendent Stephen McCanless said it would soon be added to the employed handbook and uploaded to the district website.

The superintendent also brought a request before the board to approve an individual teacher certification waiver in order to hire a welding teacher for the school. When the district lost their welding teacher at the beginning of last school year, eventually a local welder was hired to help teach the students — but that instructor did not have a state certification to teach, nor did the district apply for a waiver, thus losing the essential career and technical education (CTE) funding.

"Last year we did not have this waiver in place, so we were not able to get CTE credit. If you're not able to check that box in there, the district gets no funding. The students can get their welding education, their knowledge, but we need to follow this waiver to get this done correctly," McCanless told the board.

McCanless aims to correct the situation by proving to the state that the district advertised the position to certified teachers across the state before considering a local professionally certified welder without the necessary teaching certification.

The waiver will be submitted for the individual chosen to be hired; the district currently has at least one candidate for the position. McCanless stressed they will be held to the same standards as other teachers. "Right now many of [our students] are on a Chromebook doing welding virtually.

Continued on page 2

Early voting ends tomorrow

Early voting for the November 3 General Election ends tomorrow, Friday, October 30, at the following times and locations.

Presidio County

Early voting

Voters from any precinct may cast their ballots at either location.

USO Visitors Center, 302 S.Highland Avenue, Marfa.
Presidio County Annex Building B, 300 O'Reilly Street, Presidio

Monday, October 19 through 23, 8 a.m. to 5 p.m.
Saturday, October 24, 7 a.m. to 7 p.m.
Sunday, October 25, 9 a.m. to 3 p.m.
October 26-30, 7 a.m. to 7 p.m.

Tuesday, November 3, Election Day

7 a.m. to 7 p.m. Voters must vote at their precinct location — the USO Building or the Presidio County Annex Building B. For more information, call: 432-837-6200

Local contested races

Precinct 4 County Commissioner
Susan Hays (Democratic nominee)
Ida Dominguez (write-in)

Precinct 2 Justice of the Peace
Amabilia "Amy" Galindo (Republican nominee)
Bianca Martinez Bailon (Democratic nominee)

Brewster County

Early voting

Voters from any precinct may cast their ballots at this location: Judge Val Clark Beard Complex, 203 North 7th Street, Alpine

Monday, October 19, through Friday, October 23, 8 a.m. to 5 p.m.
Saturday, October 24, 7 a.m. to 7 p.m.
Sunday, October 25, 1 p.m. to 7 p.m.
Monday through Friday, October

Continued on page 2

Photos from security camera from the Valentine School

Legal deadline for wall

U.S. Supreme Court Justice Samuel Alito set a deadline for today, October 29, for plaintiffs in a lawsuit against the border wall in the Big Bend region to respond to the Trump Administration's emergency application to the court to allow wall construction to resume after a federal district judge halted it in September.

On October 2, the U.S. District Court for the Western District of Texas issued a preliminary injunction halting the federal government's ability to proceed with border-wall construction in the Big Bend Sector.

In its initial attempt to convince the district judge to allow construction to resume, the government filed a brief that included two Presidio County incidents to argue that the wall was needed for security reasons.

It included the May 4 shooting of Mexican national Alejandro Huerta-Salinas, who had stolen a car in Presidio, drove to Valentine and broke into a home of a Valentine woman before unsuccessfully to enter the school there armed with a rifle.

Jeff Davis County Sheriff Victor Lopez fatally shot Huerta-Salinas after a car chase and an exchange of gunfire.

8 04879 36235 7

An idea for a border wall anthem turned into a love song for the Big Bend

West Texas Exiles and Jimmie Dale Gilmore song benefits The Big Bend Sentinel

By Rob D'Amico

Austin writer Glenn Smith thinks a lot about the Big Bend, which he's grown to love over the years, and he's researched and written about the border wall fight.

It's why an idea sprung in his head on a long drive. "So Big Bend was on my mind still, and I'm driving along the highway and I'm thinking, 'You know, the movement needs an anthem. You know, they really need a song, not necessarily a protest song.' So anyway, I'm having that thought going, 'What kind of song would be a good one?'"

When he arrived home, the phone rang. It was a longtime Houston friend. "My son has written a song," he tells Smith. "I want you to hear it." The song — written by Houston songwriter Christian Staehely — was perfect for what he was thinking of.

Smith and another musician/producer, Eric Harrison, started coordinating musicians, and the production of the piece came together with the combo of the West Texas Exiles — an Austin band — and sometimes Terlingua resident, Jimmie Dale Gilmore, titled "Big Bend, Take Me In."

VIDEO STILL COURTESY OF WEST TEXAS EXILES

West Texas Exiles' Marco Gutierrez works on "Big Bend, Take Me In."

"The main thing that I love about it was it came from an unexpected direction," Gilmore says. "Christian Staheli is a friend of ours that we don't really see that often. But, his dad, Al Staheli, sent us that song, and it was just the timing of it was so perfect, and the song was so good. It was kind of like a little treasure fell into our hands, you know? Like finding a wonderful arrowhead out in the Big Bend or something."

The song doesn't directly speak to the border wall issue and instead is a melodic piece that ponders the wide open spaces that offer the opportunity to reflect on life.

It's rare these days
To hear nothing at all
No station to find
No one to call
Just a whole lotta nothing
That makes me feel something
What does a man really know?

"The song turned out to be so good because it's a love song rather than a criticism song," Gilmore says.

Continued on page 2

Voting times and locations

Continued from page 1

Tuesday, November 3, Election Day

7 a.m. to 7 p.m. Voters must vote at their precinct location

Precincts 1, 2: Judge Val Clark Beard Complex, 203 North 7th Street, Alpine
Precinct 3: Marathon Community Center, 2nd and Ave E, Marathon
Precinct 4, 8: Alpine Civic Center, 801 W. Holland Avenue, Alpine
Precincts 5, 6, 7: JW "Red" Pattillo Community Center, 201 Rex Ivey Road, Study Butte

Local Contest Races

Precinct 1 Justice of the Peace
Felipe Fierro (Democratic nominee)
Mickey Cox (write-in candidate)

Precinct 3 Justice of the Peace
Susana Gonzales (Democratic nominee)
Mike Johnson (Republican nominee)

Jeff Davis County

Early voting

Voters from any precinct may cast their ballots at this location: Jeff Davis County, District and County Clerk's Office, 111 N. Street (double green doors).

Monday, October 19, through Friday, October 23, 8 a.m. to 5 p.m.
Saturday, October 24, 7 a.m. to 7 p.m.
Sunday, October 25, 7 a.m. to 1 p.m.
Monday, October 26, through Friday, October, from 7 a.m. to 7 p.m.

Tuesday, November 3, Election Day

Precinct 1, 2 & 3: Jeff Davis County Community Center, 601 Cemetery Road, Fort Davis
Precinct 4: Valentine Community Building, North Main & Eighth St., Valentine
Precint 5: DMPOA Community Center, 101 Yellowknife Trail, Fort Davis
For more information, contact: 432-426-3251

Local contested races

County Judge
Buster Mills (Republican nominee)
Sandra Chambers (write-in)

Contractor Jason Shaffer and workers make lewd comments about Terlingua woman.

Video spurs fear in area women

Continued from page 1

felt intimidated as if he was being held prisoner — until deputies arrived, according to bodycam video and incident reports.

The video was part of scores of sheriff's reports, messages in a group text among deputies, and bodycam videos released to a Terlingua woman who obtained them in a Public Information request. Those records reveal that the Brewster County Sheriff's Office has made coordinated efforts to send additional officers to the South County Terlingua area to look for potential problems with wall activists. Additionally, one report said Deputy Bolton was assigned to a security detail at the camp. Dodson said he knows Bolton was working at least one day for the contractors but was not sure which company.

When the video was posted on Instagram accounts, it drew hundreds of comments, numerous calling the men's actions gross and questioning the one deputy's participation, and many women wrote that they now feel threatened by the presence of contractors.

Over the past few months, numerous local women have brought up concerns for their safety in response to plans for border-wall man camps being built around the region, citing statistics about a rise in gender-based violence correlated with the construction of temporary worker housing in remote communities. "I've been warning everybody about this for quite a while," said Yolanda Alvardo, an anti-wall activist whose family owns a ranch on the river in Presidio County.

Alvarado said she was invited by Culberson County Sheriff Oscar Carrillo in the spring to speak on potential problems with man camps. "That's one of the reasons we have been raising such awareness to this issue, because our rural communities cannot handle this type of workforce," she said. "It's not safe."

"I find it very concerning that people are coming into our small, safe community and making comments that basically imply that they would rape somebody just because they're a neighbor that filed a trespassing complaint after her property got destroyed, and that our local law enforcement has nothing to say to them about that," said Jenna Cantrell, a Terlingua resident.

Cantrell said law enforcement should have made an effort to stop the crude comments and should have made a stronger statement about them after it happened. "By not saying anything or playing along with the joking like that it makes it so it's okay for them to make comments like that," she said. "That's what that standard is. It's okay and our law enforcement is just going to stand by while these men are joking about [rape]."

"I'm very concerned about safety issues with the man camps in Terlingua," Crystal Albright told Brewster County Commissioners in public comments at a Tuesday meeting. "Because the young ladies that I talk to say they are scared. They travel in pairs and lock their doors, which we haven't had to do in the past." With regard to the video, Albright told the court, "I don't feel that our deputies handled it very well."

Dodson said he's concerned that this incident occurred with just the small number of construction workers at the man camp site, which hasn't yet seen the arrival

Welding instructor sought by MISD

Continued from page 1

If anyone knows anything about welding, we need hands on," McCanless told the board before they approved the motion unanimously.

Also of note, last month McCanless informed the board that he had come to a solution for a longstanding headache for the district, the problem of educating Redford students who, though technically within Marfa's district, live some 75 miles away near the border. For the past couple decades, Marfa has paid Presidio ISD, about 16 miles northwest of Redford, transportation and tuition costs to matriculate the students. As McCanless discovered — and the Marfa ISD School Board has been deliberating for years — Presidio received the average daily attendance (ADA) funding for the state as well as MISD's tuition for those students. In a conversation with Presidio ISD Superintendent Carmen Rubner, McCanless worked out a new agreement in which Marfa ISD will continue to pay transportation costs to bus the students to Presidio, but will no longer pay tuition. Presidio's School Board accepted the new MOU last month, but Marfa school board formally accepted it Monday, to exhales of relief from the board.

Former board member Rene Gonzales said, "I'm just glad this is fixed — the tuition part. Man, it was killing me; it didn't make sense."

Before the vote, Nunez also offered her thanks to the superintendent, while also offering gratitude to Presidio ISD. "Mr. McCanless, thank you for really getting into this and talking and getting it hashed out. And Presidio has done a great job helping us and educating our students," she said.

In other district news, McCanless and Donel Hartnett have received nominations for the H-E-B Excellence in Education Awards in the principal and teacher categories, respectively.Hartnett teaches junior high and high school English and has helped revitalize the school's UIL one-act play program. McCanless stepped into the role of district superintendent in August and also serves as the JH/HS principal.

In a statement to The Big Bend Sentinel, the district said, "Even though this is an early step in the awards process, these nominations are meaningful recognition of the impact both educators are making in our district.

These nominations are a big reflection of what Ms. Hartnett and Mr. McCanless bring to the district: dedication to students, a commitment to growth, and a willingness to go above and beyond for Marfa ISD. We are proud to see their work recognized."

The H-E-B Excellence in Education Awards are designed to honor outstanding public school professionals and to thank them for their dedication and commitment.

You can learn more about them at heblovesteachers.com.

VIDEO STILL COURTESY OF WEST TEXAS EXILES

Jimmie Dale Gilmore spends a good deal of time in Terlingua.

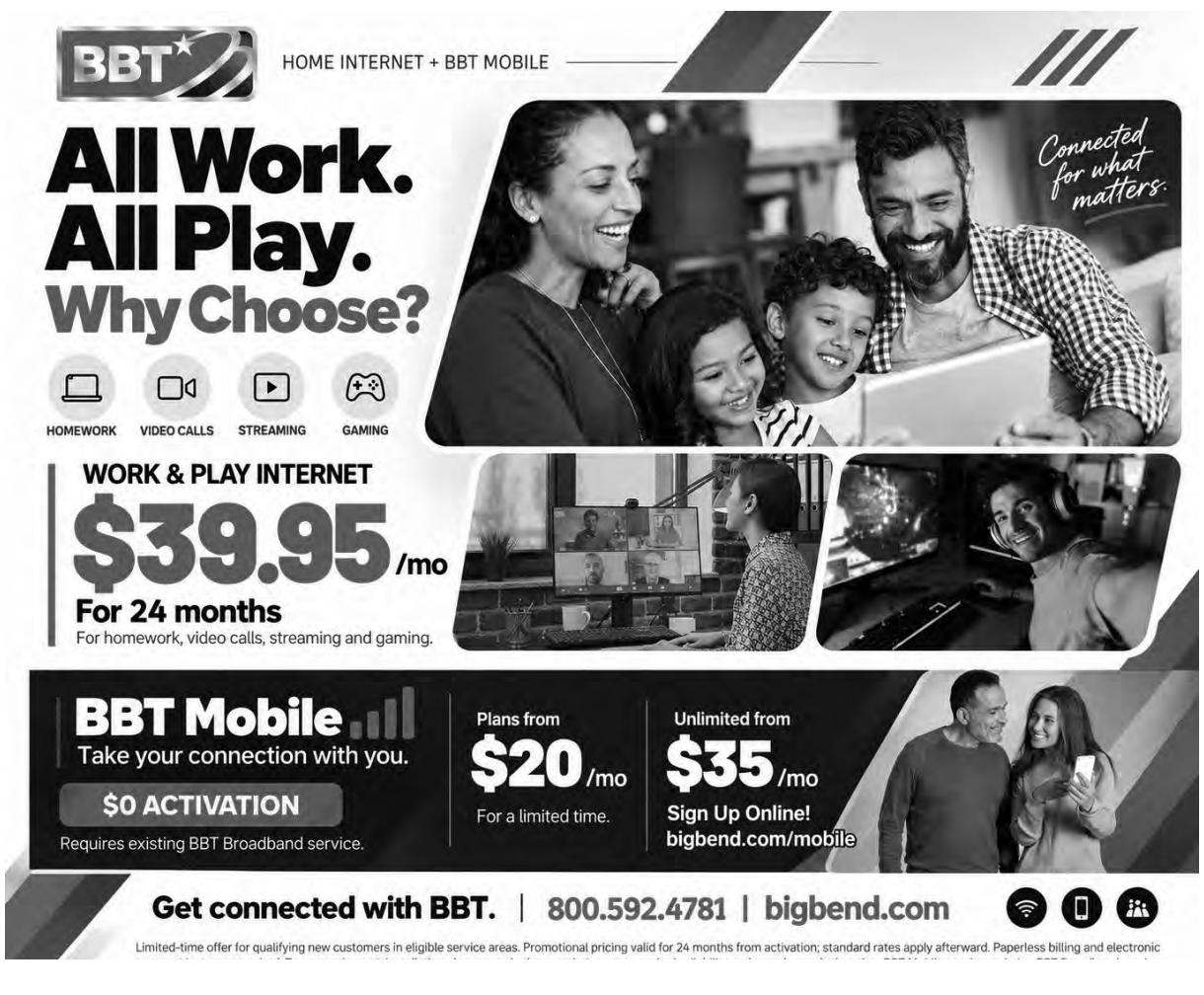
Song speaks to the isolation, beauty of Big Bend

Continued from page 1

But the wall did play a part, in that Smith felt it important for the song to serve as a vehicle for supporting efforts to inform people about the threat of the construction planned for the border. "I'm in Terlingua now, looking out over the mountains as I write," Smith penned on his Substack. "I think the song will speak to many who have a special love for a special place. America's national parks and unique, tender landscapes find themselves under assault these days. I imagine a song like this could be written about all of them."

Smith decided to donate all proceeds from the download of the song on Bandcamp to The Big Bend Sentinel for the role it has played in covering the border wall. The song will then be released on November 20 to other platforms.

To download the song, visit westtexasexiles.bandcamp.com/track/big-bend-take-me-in.



Opposition forms to Alpine data center proposal

By Rob D'Amico

TERLINGUA — Organized opposition has formed against a proposed data center north of Alpine, and opponents said they are ramping up their efforts to inform Brewster County residents about the detrimental effects the facility would have on the area.

In addition to advertising in local newspapers and a website (nobigbenddc.org), the ad hoc group has started posting flyers around Alpine listing what it believes will be the harmful impacts, including air and noise pollution, increased water use and the visual harm of a 3,000 to 4,000-acre industrial complex with a powerplant nestled against the Glass Mountains on an 8,400-acre ranch owned by real estate developer James Ahern. The property is known as the Little Suzy Properties, Ltd. Surrounding ranchers are key opponents of the proposal, which would be developed by Pacifico Energy.

"They have ranches because they enjoy the pristine environment of that area that would be lost forever with the power plants and the data centers," said local attorney Rod Ponton, who is helping coordinate the effort. "And that's one set of opposition. The other set of opposition is the same people that are opposed to the wall. They wanna preserve Big Bend. Big Bend is worth preserving at the south end with no wall, and Big Bend is worth preserving at the north end with no data centers and smokestacks."

Opponents are using statistics from another Pacifico facility in Pecos County — the 7.65 gigawatt GW Ranch, now owned by Amazon — to look at possible impacts.

That facility is planned to start providing power by spring of next year. It is one of the largest planned natural gas power plants in the county and received approval from the Texas Commission on Environmental Quality (TCEQ) for the largest air pollution permit in the country. The TCEQ permit allows for the release of 12,000 tons of pollutants, including carbon dioxide, soot, ammonia and volatile organic compounds.

The size and exact operations of the Alpine plant and data center are not yet determined, according to Pacifico representatives who addressed a special meeting of the Brewster County Commissioners Court on September 15.

Those representatives said they are in the first phase if the project, reaching out to local officials to try to develop relationships with them and try to answer any questions. The company did state the plans include a closed-coolant system to minimize the need for water. Such systems have developed technically to give them several years before they need to be refilled. Gas, at an undetermined amount, would be supplied by pipeline.

For opponents, including several anti-border-wall activists who spoke at the meeting, the common answer from representatives of "it depends" when asked questions about the scale of the project didn't sit well, as they decried any industrial development in the Big Bend as unwanted.

Ahern, who bought his ranch in 2004 and has lived here since, said he understands the concerns, but countered that the project would be a huge economic boon for Brewster County with up to $200 million pumped into the local economies, some 10 times all the local government budgets combined. "It's an enormous impact for our schools, for our county, for our roads … so the economic benefit is massive."

A real estate developer, Ahern said he came to the realization that the project fits because the stretch of Highway 67 heading north to Fort Stockton is headed for massive power production infrastructure with the arrival of the Howard-Soltice transmission line near Fort Stockton. "The thing they could worry about more than my tiny little project right now is that there's planned 1,000 wind towers on both sides on both sides of 67 … So basically, everything from Fort Stockton to close to Alpine in the next 10 years is going to be solar panels, wind towers, battery stations. And most of those leases and purchases are already in place. So my project will be the smallest but will have the most [beneficial] impact. It will be the least intrusive."

Ponton said Pecos County officials largely kept the public in the dark and shepherded approval quickly for GW Ranch, something he and other opponents vow not to happen in Brewster County. Ponton said he's fine with such developments north of Interstate 10 in the Permian Basin, which is better equipped to handle the needs for the thousands of workers needed for construction and already is saturated with oil and gas facilities. Those thousands of workers are also of concern to area residents who fear accompanying man camps and a massive temporary population that would strain local resources.

Ahern said the project could permanently employ 200 people with many salaries around $100,000, what he called another immense benefit to the Alpine economy.

According to the Texas Tribune, Texas has 11 power plant projects in construction, 102 in preconstruction and another 28 announced projects. That number has likely ballooned since the article was written. And TCEQ has fast-tracked permits for the plants and data centers. Gov. Greg Abbott formerly touted Texas as a leader in technology developments.

But as data centers became a hotbed of controversy in the past few months, including among Republican voters, the governor has stepped back from cheerleading them and instead used an executive order to put a pause on any data center permitting on September 21 until several state regulatory agencies could conduct audits to gauge their impacts.

"Governor Abbott's position is clear: Texans come first. Data centers must pay their own way, protect our grid and water, and complete the TCEQ, ERCOT and TWDB reviews," Andrew Mahaleris, the governor's press secretary, wrote in a statement to The Big Bend Sentinel. "Until they do, no state agency issues permits related to data center projects. The Governor will work with the legislature next session to eliminate any financial incentives for data centers."

State Sen. Roland Guitierrez speaks to a crowd of about 50 people who gathered in Alpine Monday to discuss the data center proposal

However, Inside Climate News reported last weekon a FracTracker and Public Citizen report outlining that the governor's action didn't stop regulatory actions for numerous projects to move forward. "Our research uncovered glaring inconsistencies between regulatory actions and Governor Abbott's directives," Sam Law, manager of communications at FracTracker Alliance and author of the report, told Inside Climate News. "We need an actual pause to study the threats posed to the land, water and livelihoods of Texans."

The publication reported that Mahaleris told it that the pause applied to approval, not processing, of permits. "No permits have been approved," Mahaleris said in a statement to Inside Climate News. "In line with the Governor's directive, TCEQ has not taken and will not take any proactive actions related to the approval of data center permits."

The Big Bend Sentinel obtained two emails from staff members at the Governor's Office of Economic Development & Tourism introducing Ahern, the landowner for the Alpine proposal, to Brewster County Judge Greg Henington with language that indicated the office was supportive of the project.

"I hope you are having a great start of the week!" wrote one staffer. "On behalf of the Office of the Governor in Economic Development & Tourism division, I'd like to introduce you to Mr. James Ahern, owner of Little Suzy Properties, Ltd. He found a suitable project to be developed in Brewster County and had reach [sic] out to our office to learn more about how our State Incentives work. This project entails building a power generation plant." It's unclear when that email was written.

"I'm jumping in to let you know that I am the project coordinator assigned to this impactful project," another staff member wrote in an August 31 email to Ahern and Henington. "We have code named it project coded: Yellow Stone. I'd like to suggest that I set up a Teams meeting in the next week or two."

Henington told the September 15 meeting attendees that the concerns over impacts were obvious, but that he thought it would be best to listen to the developers to hear what they had to say.

Mahaleris told *The Big Bend Sentinel* those emails were sent before the governor's directive on the data centers, and it's part of that office's mission to help coordinate economic development of all types between companies and local officials.

The project code name, he wrote, was simply a standard practice to let the office continue to discuss business projects that may require confidentiality.

Capital Highlights: State has record number of registered voters

By Gary Borders

With early voting ending Friday, October 30, Texas Secretary of State Robert Howden announced the state has 19 million registered voters — a record number ahead of the Nov. 3 election.

"Texas continues to see strong voter registration numbers, and we want every eligible Texan to be prepared to participate in the upcoming election," Howden said.

As of Friday, October 23, more than 2.7 million Texans had voted early, and the final early voting tally appears likely to set a record.

Voters who did not cast early ballots can find their polling place for the November 3 election by visiting votetexas.gov, a nonpartisan site operated by the secretary of state's office.

Abbott, Hinojosa trade jabs in tight governor's race

Gov. Greg Abbott, seeking an unprecedented fourth term, told Republican voters that the state faces a choice between "common sense and crazy" in a race that appears far closer than originally expected, The Dallas Morning News reported. He faces Democrat Gina Hinojosa, an Austin state representative.

Hinojosa responded that Abbott is using culture wars to distract from his record on school vouchers, data centers and property taxes.

"After 12 years, Texans are ready for a governor who will put the people — not billionaires — first," she said in a statement. She announced last week that she has sued Abbott seeking the release of unredacted emails between the governor's office and billionaire Elon Musk, who is spending heavily on behalf of GOP candidates in Texas.

Is it now Talarico vs. Musk in Senate race?

Senate candidate James Talarico, the Democratic nominee, faces record spending by Musk, who has already spent $150 million supporting Texas Attorney General Ken Paxton, the Republican nominee. Musk — who has received millions in state contracts and tax incentives for his companies, including SpaceX and Tesla, both with headquarters in Texas — has been active on social media, attacking Talarico. Musk has called Talarico a "creep" who "hates Texas," according to the Houston Chronicle.

Talarico has vowed to take on billionaires in his campaign and pushed back against Musk in speeches last week.

"In all likelihood, if you have seen an attack ad on your TV, that was Elon," Talarico said last week. "If you've gotten lies in your mailbox, that was Elon. If you've received a text message saying scary things about me, that was Elon, too. Ken Paxton is funded by one dude."

Most polls show Talarico with a slight lead, generally within the margin of error. Texas has not elected a Democrat to a statewide office since 1994.

State still processing data center permits

Despite Abbott's order last month to pause data center projects in Texas, state regulators are still processing permits, the Texas Standard reported. On September 21, Abbott directed the Texas Commission on Environmental Quality to "halt all permits sought by data centers."

However, the oil and gas watchdog group Frac Tracker, along with Public Citizen, identified 35 permitting actions taken by TCEQ since that order was given.

"TCEQ has continued reviewing applications and issuing approvals that allow data center development to proceed," the groups said. "These actions do not signal an agency trying to pause."

Abbott's press secretary Andrew Mahaleris said the pause applies to approval, not processing, of permits.

"No permits have been approved," he said in a statement. "In line with the governor's directive, TCEQ has not taken and will not take any proactive actions related to the approval of data center permits."

Since the directive from Abbott, the TCEQ has fast-tracked or assigned engineers to 14 permits, approved stormwater coverage for 11, certified emissions estimates for seven, and issued public notices for three, according to permitting documents collected by the watchdog groups

"We need an actual pause to study the threats posed to the land, water and livelihoods of Texans," Sam Law, author of the report, said.

Voucher spending on private schools kept secret

State Comptroller Don Huffines has refused to answer public information requests about how millions of dollars in state funds have been distributed to private schools and vendors under the $1 billion school voucher program, the Austin American-Statesman reported.

Huffines' office has said concerns about student privacy and the state's history of not providing information on private schools justify keeping the voucher spending secret.

The comptroller's office released a list of more than 2,700 schools approved to participate in the voucher program and a list of nearly 2,200 approved vendors, but it did not disclose how much money each has received. The office said that releasing the amount of money spent could be considered a student record used to identify an individual student, which is prohibited by federal law.

"We've tried to take a conservative approach," the comptroller's office said. "When something's out, you can't take it back."

His Democratic opponent, state Sen. Sarah Eckhardt, D-Austin, has vowed to audit the program if elected.

"If we really, really, really think vouchers are going to improve the educational outcome of the children who get them, then we need transparency and honesty about it," Eckhardt said.

Supreme Court asked to rule on Big Bend border wall

The Trump administration last week asked the Supreme Court to allow it to resume building a border wall through the Big Bend region, The Texas Tribune reported. A lower court halted construction after a coalition of ranchers, residents, business owners and environmentalists successfully argued that the projects are a waste of money in a region with low illegal immigration and that construction would harm the region's scenic landscapes.

The government filed an emergency appeal asking the high court to lift the lower court decision.

U.S. District Judge Kathleen Cardone in early October ordered the government to halt construction of the roughly 500-mile project while the case winds its way through the courts.

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.

Get a mail subscription to The Big Bend Sentinel and support community journalism!

MNB
THE MARFA NATIONAL BANK
24 Hour ATM
Loans
Personal Banking
Business Banking
301 S. Highland Ave. - Marfa
432-729-4344 or 877-729-4344 *www.marfanb.com*

MOONLIGHT GEMSTONES
Paul Graybeal, Owner
Ben Toro, Associate
432-729-4526
pgagates@gmail.com
moonlightgemstones.com
P.O. Box 1220
1001 W. San Antonio St.
Marfa, Texas 79843
Mon-Sat, 10-5pm
Sunday by Appt
Lapidary • Silversmith • Custom Jewelry • Rocks • Fossils • Minerals

LIVINGSTON
INSURANCE AGENCY
IRAM MARQUEZ
903 W SAN ANTONIO-PO BOX 965-MARFA, TX 79843
OFFICE - (432) 729-4306 FAX - (432) 729-4305
Iram@MarfaInsurance.com
www.marfainsurance.com

KING
LAND & WATER
Protecting Clients. Conserving the Land.

NOTICE OF PUBLIC HEARING ON PROPOSED AMENDMENTS TO THE MARFA PLANNING AND ZONING ORDINANCE

The City Council of the City of Marfa will conduct a public hearing on the 9th of November, 2026 at 6:00 PM in the Casner Room at City Hall: This is a public hearing for information and comments regarding a series of proposed amendments to the City of Marfa Planning and Zoning Ordinance 02-04 for the purpose of combatting the housing affordability crisis and increasing housing opportunities as follows:

Remove the mixed-use prohibition (Article 1, Section 5)

Introduce elements of form-based area regulations for dwellings in districts other than the (R-1) Single Family Residential District (Articles 3 and 4)

Relax street frontage requirements for dwellings in Commercial and Industrial districts (Article 4)

Require all dwelling units to have one or more off-street parking spaces (Article 4).

Residents and property owners are encouraged to participate. Comments may be presented at the hearing or submitted in writing to asalgado@cityofmarfa.com. The full text of the Proposed Amendments and Recommendation Report of the Marfa Planning & Zoning Commission may be found on the city's website at cityofmarfa.com.

PUBLIC NOTICE INVITATION FOR SEALED BID

October 22, 2026-October 29, 2026, 107 E Texas St, Marfa, Texas 79843

The PRESIDIO COUNTY APPRAISAL DISTRICT is soliciting bids on surplus vehicle located at 107 East Texas Street, Marfa, Texas 79843: 2003 Chevrolet Silverado Pickup.

All sealed bids must be mailed to the Presidio County Appraisal District, P O Box 879, Marfa, Texas 79843

All sealed bids must be received by Friday, October 30, 2026.

To inspect vehicle please contact Chief Appraiser, Cynthia Ramirez at the Presidio CAD (432)729-3431, email cramirez@presidiocad.org

PUBLIC NOTICE

The Presidio County Appraisal District is seeking proposals for Financial Auditor for year ending December 2026. Any and all proposals to be submitted to the Presidio CAD office at 107 E. Texas,

P O Box 879, Marfa, Texas, (432)729-3431, email cramirez@presidiocad.org. All proposals must be received by October 30, 2026. The Board of Directors of the Presidio CAD reserves the right to accept or reject any proposal.

10/22,10/30

LEGAL NOTICE

Greetings Community Partner,

PermiaCare is seeking eligible organizations to provide treatment services to behavioral health patients in our service area as a part of PermiaCare's provider network. Interested organizations must be able to offer service arrays that comprise full levels of care as indicated in the Texas Utilization Management Guidelines & Manual. For more information, please see the Mental Health Services Request for Interested Parties form on the PermiaCare website. This form can be found in the Local Plan section under the Information tab on the website. www.permiacare.org.

PermiaCare's evaluation of the potential for provider network expansion will end on 11/16/2026. Please feel free to forward this to any other provider that you feel might be interested.

For more information or for questions, please contact Todd Luzadder at todd.luzadder@permiacare.org or by phone at 432-570-3333. Thank you."

CITATION BY PUBLICATION

IN THE ESTATE OF: MARCEL DE VAAL CAUSE: 2086

TO ALL PERSONS INTERESTED IN THE ESTATE OF MARCEL DE VAAL, Deceased.

Docket No. 2086, County Court, Presidio County, Texas APPLICATION TO DECLARE HEIRSHIP. filed in the County Court of Presidio County, Texas, on October 8, 2026

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 10 days from the 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 if they or their attorney fail to file a written answer with the clerk who issued this citation by 10 A.M. on the Monday next filing after 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 is the 08 day of October 2026.

Carolina A. Catano
Clerk of the County Court, Presidio County, Texas
By Melissa DeRonde
Deputy
Clerk's Address: P.O. Box 789
Marfa, Texas 79843

PUBLIC NOTICE

Far West Texas Water Planning Group – Region E

Pre-Planning Meeting for the Development of the 2031 Regional Water Plan

Notice is hereby given that Far West Texas Water Planning Group – Region E will hold a pre-planning meeting seeking public input and comments on issues that should be addressed or provisions that should be included in the 2031 Region E Regional Water Plan and the 2032 State Water Plan. Discussion will also be held to consider the potential process for conducting interregional coordination regarding water management strategies for the seventh cycle of regional water planning.

The Far West Texas Water Planning Group – Region E includes the following Texas Counties: Brewster, Culberson, El Paso, Hudspeth, Jeff Davis, Presidio.

The Pre-Planning Public Meeting will be held at 12:00 p.m. MST on Thursday, November 5, 2026, followed by the Region E Planning Group Meeting on Thursday, November 5, 2026, at 1:30 p.m. MST, at the Rio Grande Council of Governments, 8037 Lockhead DR, Suite 100, El Paso, Texas 79925. Written comments will be accepted from October 1, 2026, through November 5, 2026, and can be mailed to Ms. Annette Gutierrez, Executive Director, Rio Grande Council of Governments, 8037 Lockhead DR, Suite 100, El Paso, Texas 79925 or emailed to annetteg@riocog.org

ADDITIONAL INFORMATION

For additional information or to be notified of future Planning Group meetings, please contact Region E Planning Group Sponsor, Annette Gutierrez, at: 915-533-4688, annetteg@riocog.org, or Rio Grande Council of Governments: Region E Regional Water Planning Group Sponsor, 8037 Lockheed, Suite 100, El Paso, Texas, 79925. If you wish to provide written comments prior to the meeting, please email your comments to annetteg@riocog.org and include "Region E Water Planning Group Meeting" in the subject line of the email.

CLASSIFIEDS: HELP WANTED

The City of Presidio is accepting applications for the position of two utility workers with the Public Works Department. These are two-time positions. This position works under the general supervision of the Public Works Director.A utility worker performs various work assignments in the department. Candidates must have the following minimum qualifications:Must be legal to work in the US Must be at least 18 years of age Valid Commercial Driver License with a proven good driving record Must have a high school diploma or equivalent Application and complete job description available at City Hall. Applications available online at www.presidiotx.us.

A City of Presidio employment application is required to be considered for the position.

Please submit your application to the address below:

City of Presidio City Secretary

P.O. Box 1899
Presidio, TX 79845
Physical Address: 507 W. O'Reilly St., Presidio, Texas

THE CITY OF PRESIDIO IS AN AFFIRMATIVE ACTION/ EQUAL OPPORTUNITY EMPLOYER. THIS POSITION IS OPEN UNTIL FILLED

Job Advertisement: Marfa Parks Board Treasurer

Municipality: Marfa Parks and Recreation Development Corporation, Marfa, Texas

Classification: Part-Time

Salary Range: Competitive / Dependent on Qualifications (DOQ)

Closing Date: Open Until November 15, 2026

Position Summary

The Board is seeking a qualified person to serve as its next Treasurer. The Treasurer is responsible for stewarding the organization's resources, and ensures records are maintained, reviews and prepares financial reports for the Board, and interacts with accountants and auditors to help keep the Board informed of financial matters.

Essential Duties and Responsibilities

Understanding of financial accounting for nonprofit organizations

Knowledge of financial reports and the organization's record-keeping and accounting systems (Quickbooks)

Ability and willingness to work with the Board and auditors as necessary

Ability to attend every Board Meeting (Third Thursday of every month)

Ability to receive training from the previous Treasurer in the months of November and December.

Minimum Qualifications

Education: Bachelor's degree from an accredited college or university.

Experience: Experience preferred but not required.

How to Apply Interested candidates should submit a letter of interest to:

Michael Camacho, Marfa Parks Board President

Email: michael.camachito@gmail.com

Mailing Address: Marfa Parks Board, PO Box 386 Marfa, Texas, 79843

The Marfa Parks and Recreation Development Corporation is an Equal Opportunity Employer"

HOME FOR SALE

Historic Alpine Home, 606 West Sul Ross. 2 Bedroom, 1 Bath, Cellar , Garage and fenced yard. $195,000. Text 210-218-9933 for pictures and details.

Rental Wanted: December–May

Hello, I'm seeking an apartment, casita, or similar rental. Responsible, tidy, respectful, non-smoker, and committed to caring for the property. References available. If you have a rental available or know someone who does, please text 802-484-9990 or stonewallzzz@comcast.net Here's a link to my website: https://www.hectorsantos.com/

TO GIVE AWAY: FREE GOLDEN RETRIEVER PUPPIES

To Forever Homes due to relocating: 1 Male, 1 Female, Preferably email me first at: stephaniechristensen59@gmail.com before Text (352) 533-2411.

Job Advertisement: City Administrator Municipality: City of Presidio

Texas Classification: Full-Time, Exempt

Salary Range: Competitive / Dependent on Qualifications (DOQ) Closing Date: Open Until Filled

Position Summary

The City is seeking a visionary, strategic, and highly qualified professional to serve as its next City Administrator. Operating under the statutory guidelines of a Texas General Law Type-A Municipality (Texas Local Government Code Chapter 22), the City Administrator serves as the chief administrative officer of the city. This position is responsible for directing, coordinating, and managing the daily operations of all municipal departments, executing policies established by the Mayor and City Council, and ensuring the sound financial and administrative health of the community.

Essential Duties and Responsibilities

Administrative Oversight: Direct the daily operations of all city departments, including administration, finance, public works, utilities, public safety, and community services.

Council-Staff Relations: Act as the primary liaison between the Mayor, City Council, and municipal staff; prepare comprehensive agenda materials, policy briefs, and administrative reports.

Fiscal Management: Oversee the development, implementation, and monitoring of the municipal budget; ensure strict compliance with Texas municipal audit and financial disclosure laws.

Grants & Intergovernmental Relations: Supervise the administration of state and federal grants; maintain active partnerships with county, state, and federal agencies.

Personnel Leadership: Appoint, manage, evaluate, and discipline municipal personnel in strict accordance with the City's Personnel Policies and Procedures.

Public Relations: Represent the municipality professionally in public forums, media inquiries, and community engagement initiatives.

Minimum Qualifications

Experience: Experience preferred but not required; progressive municipal management experience, ideally as a City Administrator, Assistant City Administrator, or department head.

Statutory Knowledge: Thorough operational knowledge of the Texas Local Government Code, Texas Open Meetings Act, Public Information Act (PIA) requests, and municipal budgeting processes.

Language Skills: Bilingual proficiency (English and Spanish) is highly encouraged and preferred to effectively serve our diverse community.

Licenses: Must possess a valid Texas Driver's License (or have the ability to obtain one within 30 days of hire) and maintain an acceptable driving record.

Key Core Competencies

Demonstrated expertise in human resource management, staff development, and maintaining high workforce morale.

Exceptional written and oral communication skills; capability to draft formal municipal correspondence, grant proposals, and public notices.

Uncompromising ethical standards, emotional intelligence, and professional transparency.

The City offers a competitive benefits package including:

Participation in the Texas Municipal Retirement System (TMRS)

Comprehensive health insurance, other benefits

Paid vacation, sick leave, and holidays

Professional development and certification support

How to Apply

Interested candidates should submit a professional cover letter, a comprehensive resume, and a list of five professional references to: Human Resources / City Secretary's Office

Email: bornelas@presidiotx.us

Mailing Address: City of Presidio / City Secretary's Office 507 W O'Reilly Street

PO Box 1899

Presidio, TX 79845

The City of Presidio is an Equal Opportunity Employer

Support our efforts to provide sustainable local news. Donate today!

SUDUKO

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

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

10/29

© 2026 Andrews McMeel Syndication

DIFFICULTY RATING: ★★★★☆

SOLUTION:

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

10/29

© 2026 Andrews McMeel Syndication

CROSSWORD

Edited by David Steinberg October 29, 2026

ACROSS
1 Bond villain's hideout
5 Baseball hats
9 22-Down, in Germany
13 Snowballs, say
14 Ice Cube's first name
16 Trucks with big loads
17 Long-term genetic storage process (In this answer, note letters 2-6, minus letter 4)
19 Jennifer Lawrence played it in her school band
20 Protect
21 Japanese sport
23 That, in Spanish
24 "Listen up!" (... letters 3-8, minus letter 7)
30 Total hoot
32 Birth control option: Abbr.
33 Caught 40 winks
34 Vaccine pioneer Jonas
35 Kaitlan Collins' channel
36 Like dental exams
37 Kid on "The Andy Griffith Show" (... letters 2-6, minus letter 4)
42 "Neato!"
45 Key next to F1
46 Daytime TV melodrama
47 Kauai greeting
49 Awards for athletes
51 Coke can color
54 '80s supermodel (... letters 3-7, minus letter 6)
56 "That's not good"
58 Give off
59 Chalkboard material
61 Stand up
62 Bed that may have wheels
63 Bottoms with wide bottoms (... letters 3-8, minus letter 6. Bonus: Note what the excluded letters spell!)
65 Kerfuffle
66 Caterpillar, e.g.
67 Fencing blades
68 Hi-___ image
69 First occurrence
70 ___ cloth

DOWN
1 They're bad luck to walk under
2 Memory loss
3 "Silly me!"
4 Spa cover-up
5 Residence in a building
6 Interrogate, say
7 ___ Beta Kappa
8 Had a feeling
9 Piece of cereal for Toucan Sam
10 Gently tease
11 Before now
12 Utilize
15 Water, in Spanish
18 Raggedy Andy's sibling
22 "___ Robinson"
25 Where waiters find cabs?
26 Look for treasure
27 German mister
28 Hoppy brew
29 Gateway Arch's home, briefly
31 Bout result, for short
35 Not trans
38 Ring, as church bells
39 Viper by the Nile
40 Swung between two extremes
41 Eyelid hair
42 F1 vehicle
43 Served with a scoop
44 Flavored chip brand
48 Scorching
50 "Feed a cold, ___ a fever"
51 "When Harry Met Sally..." director Rob
52 Occasion for egg decorating
53 Like gala attire
55 Narnia's lion king
57 Curtain
60 Suckler's target
63 Gecko : Geico :: ___ : Progressive
64 Snoopy, to Charlie Brown

PREVIOUS PUZZLE ANSWER

A	B	L	E		D	I	R	T			A	R	C	
C	O	I	N		O	N	I	O	N		G	A	L	
L	A	S	S	I	E	C	O	M	E	H	O	M	E	
		T	U	M	S			E	W	E		P	A	O
S	L	E	E	P		W	H	I	T	E	F	A	N	G
T	A	N	D	O	O	R	I			L	A	G	E	R
P	B	S		S	P	O	T	M	E		W	E	R	E
			B	E	E	T	H	O	V	E	N			
C	A	P	O		R	E	E	L	E	D		G	O	B
F	L	A	N					R	A	N	G	T	R	U	E
O	L	D	Y	E	L	L	E	R		A	W	A	R	D
S	I	T		G	E	O			E	R	I	N		
	S	H	A	G	G	Y	D	O	G	S	T	O	R	Y
	O	A	R		S	A	Y	N	O		C	L	U	E
	N	I	T			L	E	E	S		H	A	T	S

10/15

© 2026 Andrews McMeel Universal
www.upuzzles.com

10/29

Any Way You Slice It *by Drew Schmenner*

Abrazo en la Frontera

RUIDOSA CHURCH COMMUNITY DAY

Enduring Adobe: Findings from the Ruidosa Church Historic Structure Report
Thursday, November 12
Crowley Theater | Marfa, TX | 6 - 9PM

Annual Community Day
Saturday, November 14
Ruidosa Church | Ruidosa, TX | 1 - 6PM

Abrazo en la Frontera Showcase
Thursday, November 19
Do Right Hall | Marfa, TX | 7 - 9PM

Visit www.ruidosachurch.org for event details

Obituary: Henry Cornelio 'Indio' Ramirez

Henry Cornelio "Indio" Ramirez, 69, of Alpine, Texas, passed away peacefully on October 11, 2026, while surrounded by his loving family.

Henry was born on October 1, 1957, in Alpine, Texas, to Cornelio C. and Cecilia Ramos Ramirez and was the first baby to be born at the newly opened Brewster County Memorial Hospital in Alpine.

Henry graduated from Alpine High School in 1976, and then proudly served his country in the United States Marine Corps as a mortarman and rose to the rank of corporal during his military career. While in the military, he was deployed to several countries, such as the Philippines, Korea, Japan, and South America to name a few. Following his military service, he worked as a cable lineman for several years before retiring.

Henry was preceded in death by his parents, Cornelio C. and Cecilia Ramos Ramirez and his stepmother, Yolanda H. Ramirez; his paternal grandparents, Pedro A. and Anita C. Ramirez; and his maternal grandparents, Herminio and Elena Ramos.

He leaves behind to cherish his loving memory his long-time girlfriend, Shirley Dudley, and his siblings, Bonnie (Mike) Heinen; Anita (Dewey) Mitchell; Dena (Arnulfo) Lujan; Robby (Karen) Ramirez; Pete (Karen) Ramirez; several nieces and nephews; two aunts, one uncle; and several cousins.

Henry loved performing on stage or at small gatherings with family and friends, playing his guitar and singing.

In addition, he relished riding horses, spending time with his beloved dogs, and practicing martial arts. He also enjoyed camping and being outdoors and was fond of Western novels and old cowboy movies.

Recitation of the Holy Rosary for Henry will take place on Friday, October 23, 2026, at 7 p.m. at the Alpine Memorial Funeral Home chapel and the funeral Mass will be held on Saturday, October 24, at 10 a.m. at Our Lady of Peace Catholic Church. Interment will take place after the Mass at Holy Angels Cemetery with military funeral honors.

A funeral meal will be provided after the burial at the OLP Parish Hall. Pallbearers will be Joey Hoyer, Adam Lujan, John Mitchell, Justin Mitchell, Jason Ramirez, and Jared Mitchell. Honorary Pallbearers will be Edward Lujan, Lucas Ramirez, and Kevin Ramirez.

Henry leaves behind a lifetime of memories, a family who loved him deeply, and a legacy shaped by service. He will be remembered as a proud veteran, son, brother, uncle, and friend.

Services are entrusted to Alpine Memorial Funeral Home and flowers, gifts and condolences may be purchased and left by visiting www.alpinememorialfuneralhome.com.

Obituary: John William 'Bill' Matthews

Reverend John William "Bill" Matthews died on October 11, 2026, at 93 years.

Born in Marathon, Texas (Brewster County), on February 2, 1933, son of the late educators Clarence Garrett "CG" and Myrtle Martha Ing Matthews, Bill Matthews grew up in Marathon, Fort Davis, Ysleta, and Marfa, Texas; he graduated Marfa High School in 1950 with wife-to-be Norma Alma Tevis, whose family had recently moved from New Jersey that year.

Bill married Norma in 1954 and graduated with a BA in radio-speech and music from Texas Christian University in 1955. Ordained in 1956 in the Methodist Church, Central Texas Conference, he served churches in Christian education and music ministries in Fort Worth; Las Cruces, New Mexico; Dallas; and Sherman, Texas. He completed his Bachelor of Divinity at Perkins School of Theology (SMU).

Appointed by the United Methodist Board of Global Ministries as missionaries in 1964, he, Norma and four daughters moved to Manila, Philippines, from 1965-69.

He served as DZCH program director, then executive director of Mass Media for the National Council of Churches in the Philippines. Making global connections, he served as delegate to the 1967 and 1968 conferences of the East Asia Conference (Korea), the World Association of Christian Communications (Norway), and the World Council of Churches (Sweden).

During a year of furlough, Bill and Norma each completed MA degrees at University of Texas Austin, his in communication theories, hers in foreign language education in 1970. He was appointed to affiliation with the Pacific Conference of Churches based in Suva, Fiji, South Pacific in 1970, and after language school in Le Chambon sur Lignon, France, he served as a broadcast and media consultant to Pacific Island countries from 1971-73, traveling frequently and sharing his talents in communications and music in the numerous places.

Upon return to the U.S. in 1973, he came home to an appointment at University Park United Methodist Church, Dallas, then to the Methodist Mission Home in San Antonio (1975-1979), then director of Perkins Relations at Perkins School of Theology, SMU (1979-90), the North Texas Conference staff (1990-93), and Highland Park UMC (1993-97).

After retirement from church appointments, he continued his mission of ecumenical, interfaith, and global connections. He worked with the Greater Dallas Community of Churches and the United Methodist Russia Initiative (part of the Library of Congress Russia Leadership Program) leading citizen diplomacy trips to the Russian Federation and arranging U.S. hosts for Russian visitors. He and Norma found great meaning in using their cross-cultural experiences to invite others to build bridges.

He was honored with lifetime achievement awards by the United Methodist Association of Communicators, the Dallas Peace Center, and with wife Norma, the Goodman Award by United Nations Association USA.

He served as board president of the Dallas Peace Center, Interfaith Council of Thanks-Giving Foundation, and United Nations Association of the USA, as president of the Dallas chapter, Texas division and regional representative to the UNA USA steering committee from 2000 to 2015. He and Norma co-authored a history of the Dallas chapter of the United Nations Association titled Hope Over Fear (2017).

A talented musician with a beautiful voice, Bill shared his gift with generosity as a soloist in church choirs, principle in musical theater, around social gatherings, and as lead singer in the family troupe. Norma, as his number one pianist, and the family used music throughout his life to connect with people all over the world. The University Park United Methodist Church commissioned an anthem "To Build a Bridge" (Mark A. Miller and Lindy Thompson, 2025) to honor Bill and Norma Matthews for their work promoting justice, peace, and reconciliation around the world. As a final tribute to the couple, it premiered at the church in Dallas on March 1, 2026.

Bill is survived by his beloved wife of 72 years, Norma Alma Tevis Matthews, daughters Debra Susan (Daniel Shrader), Nancy (Lisa Frohmann), Rebecca (Perry Taylor), and Mary Beth Matthews; grandchildren, Sean Taylor, Paul David Shrader, Justin Taylor (Diana Taylor), Jesse Shrader, Jamie Graham, Travis Taylor (Minjung Kim), and Eli Frohmann-Matthews; and great-grandchildren Jade, Isaiah, Shusha, Deckard, Carter, and Gizelle

Bill and Norma have resided at Juliette Fowler Communities in an apartment for the past 10 years. They have faithfully shared their musical talents, with Norma playing the piano and Bill singing and occasionally speaking at the Fowler Chapel.

Memorial services will be held on November 13, 2026, at 11 a.m., at the University Park United Methodist Church, 4024 Caruth Blvd., Dallas, TX 75225.

Donations in memory of John William Matthews can be made to University Park United Methodist Church, Dallas, Texas.

Experience came with age. My fighting spirit comes naturally.

AS AN ATTORNEY,
for more than 30 years now,
I've drafted bills that became law and challenged laws that never should have passed. And today, I'm running for County Commissioner because I believe we can create economic development that doesn't sell out and destroy what makes our home beautiful.

I've been proud to volunteer for No Big Bend Wall's legal and governmental relations committees, working with the talented people of the Big Bend who share one thing in common: *we bend the knee to no one.*

That's me in a nutshell: a bit rebellious but always collaborative, eager to solve problems and do it with integrity. It would be an honor to serve you.

Susan Hays

SUSAN HAYS
FOR PRESIDIO COUNTY COMMISSIONER
PRECINCT 4

WHERE & WHEN TO VOTE:
★ MARFA VISITOR'S CENTER
302 S. HIGHLAND AVE.
★ FRI. OCT. 23
LAST DAY FOR THE ELECTIONS OFFICE TO RECEIVE AN APPLICATION TO VOTE BY MAIL
(SEND IT SOONER TO GIVE TIME FOR MAILING!)
★ MON. OCT. 19 - FRI. OCT 30
EARLY VOTING
★ TUES. NOV. 3
ELECTION DAY

Pol. Adv. paid for by the Susan Hays Campaign

Train tests begin in Presidio

By Kate Bubacz

The first commercial freight on the line is expected in 2027.

PRESIDIO — The long awaited train has finally come through Presidio, and a short line of five cars now runs down a few hundred yards of track.

This new phase allows the capabilities of a customs screening facility to be tested before commercial traffic resumes.

The first commercial freight is expected to roll through in early 2027, serving trains in each direction, running between Dallas/Fort Worth and Chihuahua.

The Presidio County sheriff posted a notice on Facebook last week reminding residents to be careful at newly active rail crossings.

"It's going to be a crawl, and then walk, and then run," says Stan Meador, a senior vice president at Texas Pacifico, the rail company running the line. "We're starting from zero. We need to get good at just moving first."

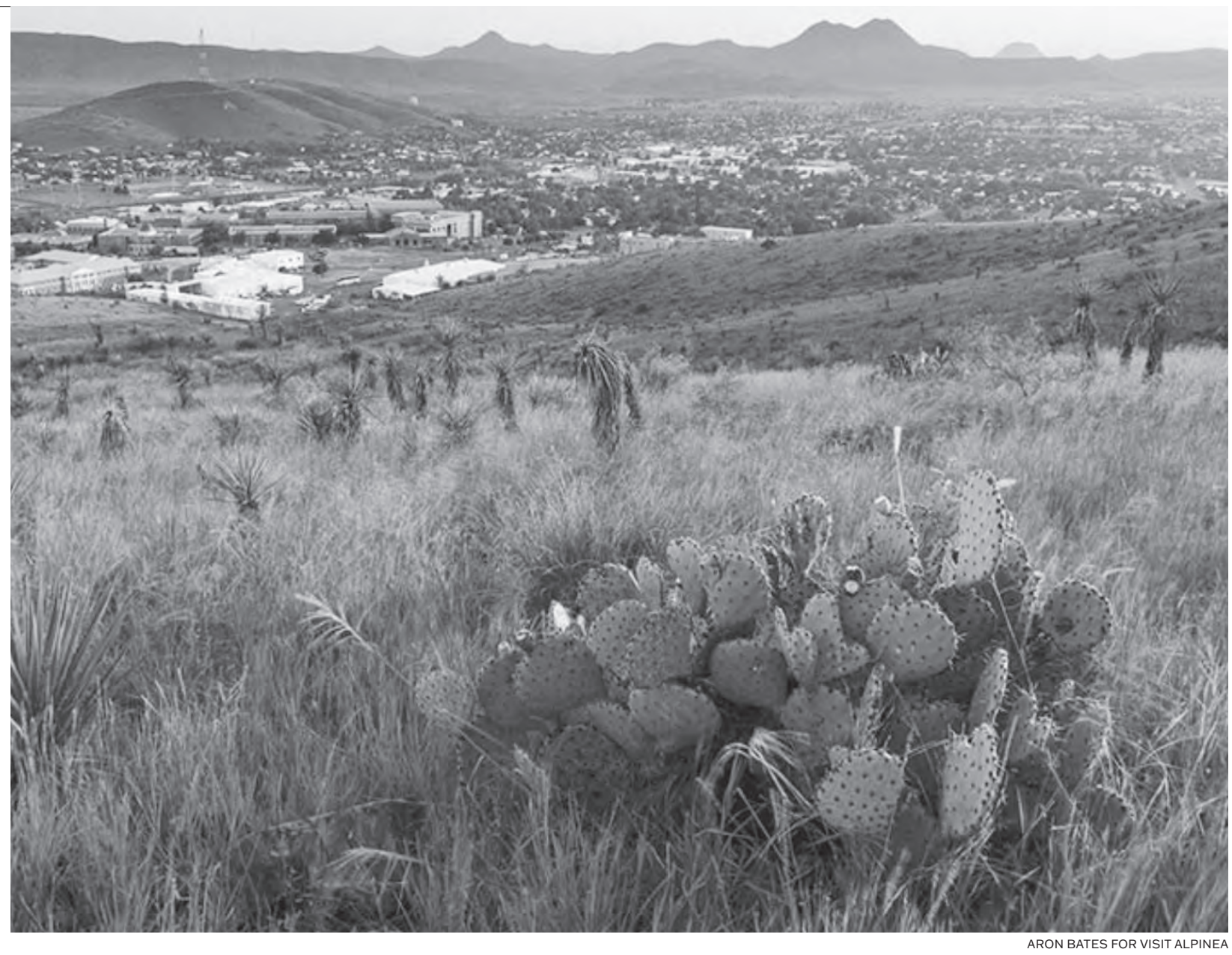
The Presidio railyard has been idle for over two decades. Restarting the train has been a project that has been beset by delays, including reopening the train bridge in 2024 and building a multimillion dollar noninvasive customs screening facility. The facility was specially built by Texas Department of Transportation Railway Division and will be operationally handed off to Customs and Border Patrol once testing is complete. It will allow trains to run through for inspection without being fully unloaded.

A single rail car can carry four to five truckloads of goods, making it well suited for heavy materials such as steel and consumer goods. The Presidio railyard will focus on nonperishable items while it restarts train service, with unclear economic impact to the town itself. Commercial freight has been a lucrative addition to other border towns, where it often shifts from rail to interstate travel by truck.

Newspapers, including this one, have been heralding the arrival of the train as a renaissance opportunity for Presidio.

It will be one of just eight rail crossings on the U.S.-Mexico border, which saw nearly $95 billion in rail freight traffic in 2025 according to the Bureau of Transportation.

Alpine charm shines with fall events



ARON BATES FOR VISIT ALPINEA

ALPINE, TX — Fall arrives early in the Big Bend, and it arrives in style. While summer heat hangs on across much of Texas, Alpine sits at nearly 4,500 feet in the high desert, where the season turns weeks ahead of the rest of the state. The result is the best weather of the year, clear blue skies, afternoons in the 70s, low humidity, and mornings cool enough for a jacket and a cup of coffee on the porch. It is the kind of weather that makes it easy to fall in love with fall all over again, and it is exactly why the Big Love for Big Bend campaign is inviting travelers to come out and see the region at its finest, from the long golden days of early fall straight through the holidays.

Weather made for being outside

Fall is when the Big Bend practically begs you to get outside. There's no wrong way to drive in, and every route is scenic, with sweeping views of the Davis Mountains, the Chisos, and wide-open desert that stretches to the horizon. Cool mornings and mild afternoons make this the ideal time to hike in Alpine, Big Bend National Park, and the Davis Mountains, with trails that are comfortable from first light to sunset. Whether it's a summit, a scenic drive, or a slow walk-through town, the weather is doing half the planning for you.

Artwalk: one of the biggest weekends of the year

The season builds to Artwalk, one of Alpine's largest events of the year. Each November, artists, galleries, musicians, and visitors fill downtown for a weekend celebration of the creative spirit that makes this corner of West Texas unlike anywhere else. It is the perfect excuse to plan a fall getaway, and mild November weather makes it a pleasure to wander from gallery to gallery late into the evening.

An open-air art gallery, right downtown

Comfortable fall days are made for exploring Alpine on foot, and downtown rewards every step. The heart of town doubles as an open-air art gallery, with dozens of murals and public art pieces covering building walls, painted utility poles, sculptures, and surprises around nearly every corner. Local shops and galleries offer specialty curated pieces, making it easy to take a piece of Big Bend Country home with you.

A town that sounds as good as it looks

Fall in Alpine means live music nearly every night of the week, with local musicians and traveling troubadours playing venues all over town. Chief among them is The Ritchey, recently named Best Small Venue in Texas for Live Music, and reason enough on its own for a road trip.

Some of the darkest skies in the country

Cool, dry fall air makes for some of the clearest nights of the year. As part of one of the largest dark sky reserves in the world, Alpine offers stargazing that's hard to find almost anywhere else, a fall night sky worth planning a trip around.

Holidays straight out of a Hallmark movie

As fall gives way to the holidays, Alpine and the surrounding mountain towns take on a storybook glow. Thanksgiving and Christmas events fill the calendar, with twinkling lights on historic storefronts, crisp mountain air, and the kind of small-town warmth that makes the whole region feel like the set of a Hallmark movie. The highlight of the season is Alpine's hometown Christmas parade, an annual tradition that brings the whole community downtown and gives visitors a front-row seat to the Big Bend at its most magical.

The real draw: nowhere to be

More than any single event, what defines a Big Bend fall is the pace. This is a place to unplug, slow down, and actually relax, with long drives and no traffic, quiet trails, live music with no cover charge, and skies without a single glow of city light. Pack a light jacket, bring your walking shoes, and come show some Big Love for Big Bend. Out here, falling in love with fall comes naturally.

LIEUTENANT GOVERNOR DAN PATRICK IS FIGHTING TO KEEP RURAL TEXAS STRONG

"We cannot let 3 Austin Democrats turn Texas into a High Tax, Defund the Police, Extremist Travis County."

- Lt. Governor Dan Patrick

Protecting Communities:
Two years ago, Dan Patrick sounded the alarm on rural data centers. They should not get any tax incentives and, if built, must follow strong guardrails and get local community approval.

Halting 765-kv Power Lines:
Dan Patrick has made clear that massive 765-kv power lines should go over roadway easements wherever possible, not over homes, ranches, and farms. He will form a commission to oversee the routing process, including current maps.

Cutting Property Taxes:
Dan Patrick increased the homestead exemption from $15,000 to $200,000, virtually eliminating school property taxes for the average senior, and will eliminate school property taxes for all homeowners by increasing the homestead exemption again.

Stopping Hostile Foreign Ownership of Texas Lands:
Dan Patrick led the effort to stop hostile foreign interests from buying Texas land, including agricultural land, water rights, and land near military bases.

No Boys in Girls Sports:
Dan Patrick wrote the bill stopping boys from playing girls' sports and men from going into ladies' restrooms.

Funding Rural Law Enforcement:
Dan Patrick wrote the bill to create the first-ever state fund to pay competitive salaries for rural law enforcement. He funded new ambulances and invested a historic $2.5 billion to build five new rural mental healthcare hospitals.

We need a historic rural voter turnout to stop the socialists and keep Texas Red. Without a strong rural Texas vote, Republicans cannot defeat the big blue counties. Every single vote counts in 2026.

Early Voting: October 19-30 ★ Election Day: November 3

Pd Pol Ad - Texans For Dan Patrick

Letters to the Editor

Justice Samuel Alito, who gets the first look at all applications from Texas for Supreme Court action, has given the plaintiffs until this Thursday, October 29, to submit a brief in opposition to the government's request that SCOTUS stay or overturn the preliminary injunction preventing any groundbreaking activity for border construction in the Big Bend Sector. This is an encouraging sign — Alito is not acting quickly or unilaterally, apparently wanting to thoroughly understand the arguments on all sides. The justices meet in conference next week to discuss cases, so it's also possible that he will bump this to the entire court for consideration.

So the injunction holds at least until late Thursday, and possibly much longer. Or he could just be delaying until after the midterms — we simply don't know.

Have you seen this frightening article in the NY Times this week, about AI surveillance towers? Here is a gift link: bit.ly/4z58jPl. (It may require registration, but there's no actual paywall.) This is a stark reminder that when DHS or CBP say they are "considering" alternative plans for the Big Bend area that will have lesser impact, and when some well-meaning folks in our area say that technology is the answer rather than barriers, all technological solutions are not the same. We NEED to continue to DEMAND transparency from the government and see their entire plan, including all the towers, roads, power and communications cables, man camps, wells, staging areas, etc. Their arrogant responses to the court suggests that they continue, despite almost universal opposition, to assert that they alone can solve the problem, and they alone can define what that problem actually is.

This government overreach appalls people across the political spectrum, which is why Keep Big Bend Wild, a nonpartisan organization, strongly believes that a bipartisan legislative solution in the next Congress is the necessary resolution to the current situation for the entire Big Bend region.

So do the folks at LetTexansDoTexas.Org (LTDT), a new politically-savvy Texas-based organization that has emerged from within the midst of this fight. LTDT is advocating for a redirection of federal border infrastructure money to a trust fund that Texans control, as we know best what is really needed in the Big Bend to assure a secure border AND the protection of our environment, economy, livelihoods, and quality of life. Cordial discussions are ongoing between KBBW and LTDT, as we share a commitment to establishing wilderness at Big Bend National Park as part of the legislative strategy — see www.lettexansdotexas.org/the-solution.

We probably don't need to remind folks that your vote really counts this time, more than ever.

Bob Krumenaker
Chair, Keep Big Bend Wild
www.keepbigbendwild.org

In your October 20 story on a proposed data center in Brewster County, landowner James Ahern said the stretch from Fort Stockton toward Alpine is headed for massive power development anyway, and that his "tiny little project" would be the smallest and least intrusive part of it. As a neighboring landowner, I see it the other way around. His project is what would bring that development south.

The Howard–Solstice transmission line ends at the Solstice substation on I-10. It never enters Brewster County. At the September 15 Commissioners Court meeting, Pacifico Energy's own representative said, "There's no wires anywhere near" the site, which sits about 28 miles south of that substation at the far end of Hovey Road. Power projects go where the wires are, and today the wires stop at the interstate.

A multi-billion-dollar gas plant at the south end of Hovey Road would change that. It brings a new gas pipeline, heavy-haul roads and a permanent industrial anchor. Pacifico plans to start off the grid, which lets it skip the years-long wait to connect to the state grid. But its representative also told the court that supplying power to the grid later could be possible. Once a plant that size exists, connecting it is the obvious next step, and the land between it and I-10 becomes the natural route for new lines, solar, batteries and the next project. Nor would it have to stop at the ranch fence. Pacifico said it isn't sure Mr. Ahern's land is the only parcel it will use. Every step south brings it closer to Alpine, Marathon and the Big Bend. Continuing south with new data center and power plant developments along the Trans-Pecos Pipeline could be expected.

And "tiny" is not what Pacifico described. Asked about cost, it gave a range of $5 billion to $60 billion and pointed to its GW Ranch project in Pecos County as "kind of the scale." GW Ranch holds what Pacifico called the largest air pollution permit ever issued in the U.S. Pacifico's representative said GW Ranch came about when the company decided to build a large facility, that larger off-grid plants are more reliable, and that "we look for large developments." A footprint like GW Ranch's, 3,000 to 4,000 acres, would cover up to half of the roughly 7,800-acre Ahern Ranch.

Our family has stewarded our land next to this ranch for almost 100 years. The Ferguson and Mills families have worked hard to protect this country, its quiet, its dark skies, its water and its open range, this way of life. A massive gas plant and its stacks against the Glass Mountains would not be the end of that change. It would be the beginning. I respect Mr. Ahern's right to his land. But this decision belongs to all of us. I urge Judge Henington and the Commissioners Court to say no to industrial-scale data centers in Brewster County.

Druanne Mills
Alpine

THE BIG BEND Sentinel

Editor	**Rob D'Amico** *rob@bigbendsentinel.com*
Reporter	**Sam Karas** *sam@bigbendsentinel.com*
Copy Editor/Reporter	**Ariele Gentiles** *ariele@bigbendsentinel.com*
Advertising	**Kate Bubacz** *kate@bigbendsentinel.com*
Sports Reporter	**Roxye Lara**
Distribution	**Rene Gonzales**

Big Bend Sentinel
www.bigbendsentinel.com
Published Weekly on Thursdays 50 times a year by
The Big Bend Reporting Project,: A Texas non-profit organization.

Executive Director	**Kate Bubacz** *kate@bigbendsentinel.com*
Director	**Fernanda Camarena**
Director	**Billy Arnold**
Director	**Hilary Beebe**
Director	**Kate Bubacz**
Office	209½ W. El Paso St., Marfa, Texas
Mailing address	Drawer P, Marfa, TX 79843
Telephone	(432) 729-4342
Contact	editor@bigbendsentinel.com
Advertising	ads@bigbendsentinel.com

Annual subscription rates are $50 in Presidio, Brewster and Jeff Davis counties, and $60 elsewhere in and the United States. Special rates apply abroad.
Periodicals class postage paid at Marfa, Texas 79843.
Postmaster: Send address changes to Drawer P, Marfa, TX 79843
© Copyright 2025 The Big Bend Reporting Project. All rights reserved.

I'm proud of the effect this event has had on the people of my community. I am so appreciative of all the kind words my neighbors and friends have shared with me over the last several weeks.

Pride Marfa could've never come to fruition if it weren't for the many friends and neighbors that have helped me along the way. Here's an inevitably incomplete list of thank yous:

To Abby Boyd: Your support over the past few years has shaped me and Pride Marfa tremendously. I'm so grateful to have learned from you.

To Christine Jackson: Your creativity is unmatched. Thank you for making Pride Marfa look so beautiful.

To Michael Carnes: You always know the right thing to say. Thank you for making Pride Marfa sound so eloquent.

To Haley Levin: Thank you for sticking with me these past few years. I appreciate your help and your friendship so much.

To Zade Williamson: You always who up with so much care and patience. Thank you sp much for taking care of the art.

To Carlos Morales: Thank you so much for being such an awesome friend, confidant, errand-runner and more. I owe you a mountain of gratitude.

To Justin Delgado: Thank you for your generosity, your kindness, and, of course, the shade. Pride Marfa wouldn't have happened without you.

To Will G Floyd: Thank you so much for your unwavering support, patience, friendship — and, of course, making all the music sound so good.

To the Pride Marfa cast — Circe, HYPERFEMME, jewels, p1nkstar, XQZ ME, Amina Cruz, BabiDoll, Khloe Kaliente, Amarji King, Salem Doll, Diego Mireles Duran, and Louisianna Purchase: being in your company and witnessing your work was awe-inspiring. Thank you for trusting me to bring you and your talent to Marfa.

To all the artists who submitted to the open call: thank you so much for sharing your work. You make the American Southwest so vibrant.

Many thanks are also owed to Kathryn Davis, Laura Price, Colby Martin, Jam Martin, Rhonda Manley, Jeff Matheis, Sabrina L., Lisa Chesnut, Justin Almquist, Tim Johnson, Greg Butcher, Romi Gold, Trish, Angela and Mark Walley, Alberto DeLeon, Ray Smith, Augustine García, Des Espada, Veronica Gomez, Rowdy Dugan, Mateo Galindo, Abel Rodgers, Emily Kolb, Maud, Mark So, Laura Buckshaw, Maritza Bautista, Kirish Dirkson, Manny Ontiveros, Arlene Acosta, and Ian Rundell — and the staffs of Planet Marfa, the Capri, The Pool, Mutual Friends Coffee, the Chinati Foundation, Marfa Public Library, Rule Gallery, and BOXES

A special thanks to our sponsors for ensuring that Pride Marfa has been able to come to life every year: Jota Living, Pure for Men, Neil Subin, The City of Marfa, Clara Bensen, Planet Marfa, Marfa Vacation Rentals, Travis Cosban, Vance Knowles, Shane O'Neal, Ballroom Marfa, Art Blocks, the Chinati Foundation, Marfa Mood Mercantile, Angela DeLaRosa & Christina Hernandez, Travis Acreman, Thunderbird Marfa, First Presbyterian Church of Marfa, and Carter Dickson.

Con amor,
Prepney

Dear Sheriff Dodson,

My name is Jamie Flack, and I am a local business owner, a community member, and an ally alongside my neighbors in defending the place we call home against the impacts of border infrastructure, both here in Brewster County and throughout the greater Big Bend region. I believe in working collaboratively with our elected officials and law enforcement to protect our community, preserve what makes this region special, and ensure that the people who live, work, and visit here can do so safely.

I am also a woman, a wife, and a mother. The safety concerns raised by this incident are not abstract or political to me. They are deeply personal. I have a responsibility to consider my own safety, the safety of my family and children, the safety of the guests who trust my businesses with their visits to our region, and the safety of the broader community we all share. Like many residents, I want to have confidence that the law enforcement agency we elect, fund, and depend upon will protect us impartially, respect our rights, and take our concerns seriously. That confidence is essential to our families, our livelihoods, our tourism-based economy, and our ability to live peacefully in our own community.

It is from this position of personal responsibility, community commitment, and a genuine desire for accountability and cooperation that I am writing to you.

I am writing to express my deep concern and disappointment regarding the conduct of deputies involved in the Agua Fria man camp trespassing incident, as documented in records obtained through a Texas Public Information Act request and in the associated body-camera footage. I am also writing to request a clear explanation of your department's actions, the decisions made by its personnel, and the steps you intend to take to restore public confidence.

I want to begin by emphasizing that I believe respectful communication and cooperation between our community and the Sheriff's Office are essential. We live in a region facing significant challenges, and we need our elected officials and law enforcement officers to work with residents to protect public safety. That is precisely why the information that has come to light is so troubling. What the released records and recordings show is in stark contrast to the commitments you made directly to our community at the August meeting held in Study Butte at the Red Patillo Center.

You asked us to hold you accountable. We are doing exactly that.

At that meeting, you asked community members to do everything in our power to encourage tourism and assure visitors that they are safe in Brewster County. You also acknowledged that residents had legitimate concerns and emphasized that we should continue working together, even where we disagreed on controversial issues affecting our region. Members of the community specifically stated that, while we hoped to remain united in our concerns about border barrier construction, we would continue to hold you and your department accountable for your conduct and decisions. You said you were counting on us to do exactly that. That is why I am speaking up now.

Public safety must mean protecting every resident equally

The one major priority expressed by our community at the August meeting was safety. Everyone deserves to feel safe in their home, on their property, and in their community. That protection cannot depend on whether a resident's interests align with those of a construction company, a contractor, or a private security firm.

The released records and body-camera footage corroborate several key elements of the property owner's account of the Agua Fria incident. The fence crew acknowledged on camera that its work was on or at the property line. Rather than simply ensuring that the property owner's rights were respected and preventing further conflict, a deputy pressed her to allow the crew to finish its work from her side of the property. Her requests for no-trespass service went unanswered for days. When a revised notice was prepared, the deputy added the camp's security company, Vision Quest Solutions, to it.

The footage also raises serious questions about the handling of her request to keep her home address confidential from the camp. When she expressed this concern, the deputy described a companywide notice as something new to him and suggested a formal letter instead. This is particularly alarming given the potential safety implications for the woman and her family.

The property owner also expressed concern about her ability to press trespassing charges. That concern directly contradicts the guidance you provided to residents at the August meeting, when you explained how to report trespassing, assured us that complaints would be taken seriously at any hour, and described your commitment to enforcing the law through citations and arrests when warranted.

You made it clear that residents could rely on your office for assistance. The footage raises serious questions about whether that commitment was honored here.

The woman involved has stated that she did not feel protected. The records and footage give the public substantial reason to question whether her concerns were handled with the seriousness they deserved. If a resident cannot reasonably expect the Sheriff's Office to respond impartially when her property rights and personal safety are at stake, how can the rest of the community have confidence that we will receive the protection we need?

We should not have to ask whether law enforcement is serving the public interest or accommodating the interests of a private construction operation. Our deputies are entrusted with protecting the public, enforcing the law fairly, and preventing conflict—not encouraging residents to tolerate potential trespassing because it is more convenient for a contractor.

The recorded sexual harassment and racist remarks are unacceptable

Perhaps the most disturbing aspect of this incident is the recorded conversation between camp personnel and deputies.

The footage captures men making graphic sexual remarks about the woman seeking assistance, including statements such as:

"I already told you you should have tried to fuck her. It's not too late now."

"She's against it. Before she's against us."

"She's my bitch."

In response to the men's vulgar remarks, Deputy Preston Bolton is heard saying, "Next time bring a bottle of wine." He is seen laughing during the exchange and later adds, "You still can as long as you stay on this side of the property."

This was not an appropriate response from a law enforcement officer who was present in connection with a trespassing dispute involving the very woman being discussed. In that context, the remark about wine cannot reasonably be evaluated in isolation from the sexually explicit comments surrounding it. The recorded exchange raises serious concerns about the deputy's judgment, professionalism, and attitude toward a resident seeking protection.

Your public response is especially disappointing. The recording provides the context necessary to understand why the interaction was so troubling. Minimizing the exchange to a single remark does not address the behavior captured on camera or the impact that behavior has on public trust.

The conversation subsequently includes racist comments and jokes concerning the genital size of the only man of color on the crew, as well as comments about his safety in Terlingua as a man of color. Such remarks are degrading and wholly incompatible with the standards of professionalism and impartiality expected of our law enforcement officers.

The men also make disturbing comments about retaliation against the woman, including "payback is a bitch." The response captured from Deputy George Valenzuela —"we don't need anymore headaches"— is equally concerning. A resident seeking assistance with an alleged trespass should never be characterized as a headache for the department. Her request for help is precisely the kind of situation the Sheriff's Office is expected to address.

These exchanges raise questions that go far beyond a single poor choice of words. They concern whether deputies maintained appropriate professional boundaries, whether they took the woman's safety seriously, and whether their conduct reinforced or undermined the perception that the camp's personnel were being treated as allies while the property owner was treated as an inconvenience.

I ask you to reconsider your public characterization of this incident in light of the full recording. The community deserves an assessment that acknowledges the complete context, the seriousness of the conduct, and the standards to which your department holds its personnel.

The incident report contains another troubling disclosure: Deputy Preston Bolton was described as being "assigned to security detail at the camp."

The available information does not establish whether this assignment was performed on duty, off duty, or under a private compensation arrangement.

Our community is not asking for special treatment. We are asking for the same impartial protection, professional conduct, and transparent administration that every resident should expect from the Sheriff's Office.

We can disagree about other regional issues while still agreeing that no private company should receive preferential treatment from law enforcement, that no resident should be ridiculed for requesting protection, and that no deputy should participate in degrading or racist banter about members of the public.

Requested actions

I respectfully request a written response addressing the concerns outlined above and a commitment to the following actions:

Acknowledge the full context of the recorded conduct. Reassess your public response in light of the complete footage, including the sexual remarks, racist comments, references to retaliation, and deputies' participation or response.

Conduct a thorough, impartial review. Explain what supervisory or independent review has taken place concerning the deputies' conduct, the handling of the trespassing complaints, the delayed incident report, and the omissions identified above.

Clarify the camp security assignment. Provide a documented explanation of who authorized the assignment, its terms, whether it was on duty or off duty, who paid for it, and how conflicts of interest were addressed.

Protect residents' privacy and safety. Explain the department's policies regarding the sharing of surveillance information and the protection of personal information, particularly where a resident has explicitly expressed concerns about disclosure to parties involved in a dispute.

Clarify the handling of the no-trespass request. Explain why the property owner's requests were not addressed promptly, what guidance deputies received regarding her.

Provide meaningful community communication. Follow through on the commitment made at the August meeting to keep residents informed. Establish a clear process for communicating with the community about relevant meetings, law enforcement staffing, and policies affecting residents' safety.

Implement appropriate corrective measures. Where the review identifies misconduct, policy violations, or failures in judgment, take appropriate action and explain what steps will be taken to restore public confidence.

Conclusion

Sheriff Dodson, I want to believe that we can address these concerns constructively and restore a working relationship between the community and the Sheriff's Office. That will require more than assurances. It will require an honest acknowledgment of what the recordings show, direct answers to legitimate questions, and actions that demonstrate that every resident's safety and dignity matter equally.

At the August meeting, you asked us to encourage visitors to come to Brewster County and assure them that they would be safe here. You also asked us to hold you accountable. Those two requests are inseparable.

How can we confidently tell visitors that they are safe if a woman seeking protection for her property is met with delayed service, apparent pressure to accommodate the people she is reporting, and recorded sexual comments about her that a deputy joins in? How can residents feel secure if they cannot trust that their personal information will be protected or that their complaints will be handled impartially? How can we trust that our limited law enforcement resources are being used to serve the public when a deputy is reportedly assigned to security detail at a controversial construction camp without a clear explanation of the arrangement?

Our community's commitment to safety should not be confused with a willingness to remain silent when that safety is called into question. Speaking up is not an act of hostility toward law enforcement. It is an act of civic responsibility, and it is precisely what you asked us to do.

I hope you will approach this matter with the seriousness it deserves and respond in a manner that demonstrates accountability, professionalism, and a renewed commitment to serving all members of our community fairly.

Respectfully,
Jamie Flack
Terlingua

Presido raises water, landfill rates

By Kate Bubacz

PRESIDIO — The Presidio City Council voted to increase rates on water and landfill usage in an ongoing bid to raise revenue. All water and landfill base rates will increase by 2%. Customers who use more than 2,000 gallons a month will see their usage rate increase to $3.75 per thousand gallons, a $0.25 increase.

"A small increase is fair to the city, and it won't hit the citizens that hard," said Mayor Ferguson. The council deliberated a larger increase, but decided that a smaller increase made more sense, along with repairing water meters and exploring how this impacts customers.

Similar caution was extended to the landfill ordinance, which passed with a caveat to explore how the Presidio landfill rate compares with others. The new rate will be $72 per ton, or $3.48 per 100 lbs. The recycling center in Presidio has a separate rate for cardboard.

The council also voted to allow game rooms within the city regulated by a variety of provisions in a city ordinance and to move forward with the interview process for two candidates for city administrator.

Library's costume contest rises from the grave

MARFA — Marfa Public Library's annual Halloween costume contest and party creeps back from the dead on Saturday, October 31, in the library courtyard.

Expect spine-chilling tunes, ghoulish games, a haunted piñata, and frightfully good snacks (including lots and lots of pizza). Registration opens at 4 p.m,, and the costume contest, which is open to all ages, begins promptly at 4:30 p.m.

A supernatural panel of judges — Robert Silva, Coach McWilliams and Caitlin Murray — will crown the funniest, scariest and best homemade costumes in each age group: 0 to 4, 5 to 8, 9 to 12, 13+, and Group Costume. Every contestant gets a goody bag, and winners will earn prizes that are simply to die for.

Halloween legend Carlos Morales presides over the festivities. The party ends by 6 p.m., so all can head to the courthouse — and beyond — for Trunk or Treating.

Free and open to all!

AROUND THE BIG BEND

Friday, Oct. 30

• Dia de Los Muertos Open House, 8 a.m. to 5 p.m., Mexican Consulate, Presidio

Saturday, Oct. 31:

• Heidi Holton show, Valentine Texas Bar, Valentine
• Wagon Wheel Harvest Party, 10 a.m. to 1 p.m., Marfa Pumpkin Patch, Marfa
• Marfa ISD Fall Festival, noon to 3 p.m., Hibbitts Gym, Marfa
• Annual Costume Party, 4 p.m. to 6 p.m., Marfa Public Library, Marfa

Sunday, November 1

• Día de los Muertos Open House, 8 a.m. to 5 p.m., Mexican Consulate, Presidio
• Día de los Muertos Community Altar, 9 a.m. to noon, Chinati Foundation, Marfa
• Día de los Muertos de Macatos, One Tail at a Time West Texas benefit, noon to 6 p.m., Pet Marfa, 107 S. Dean

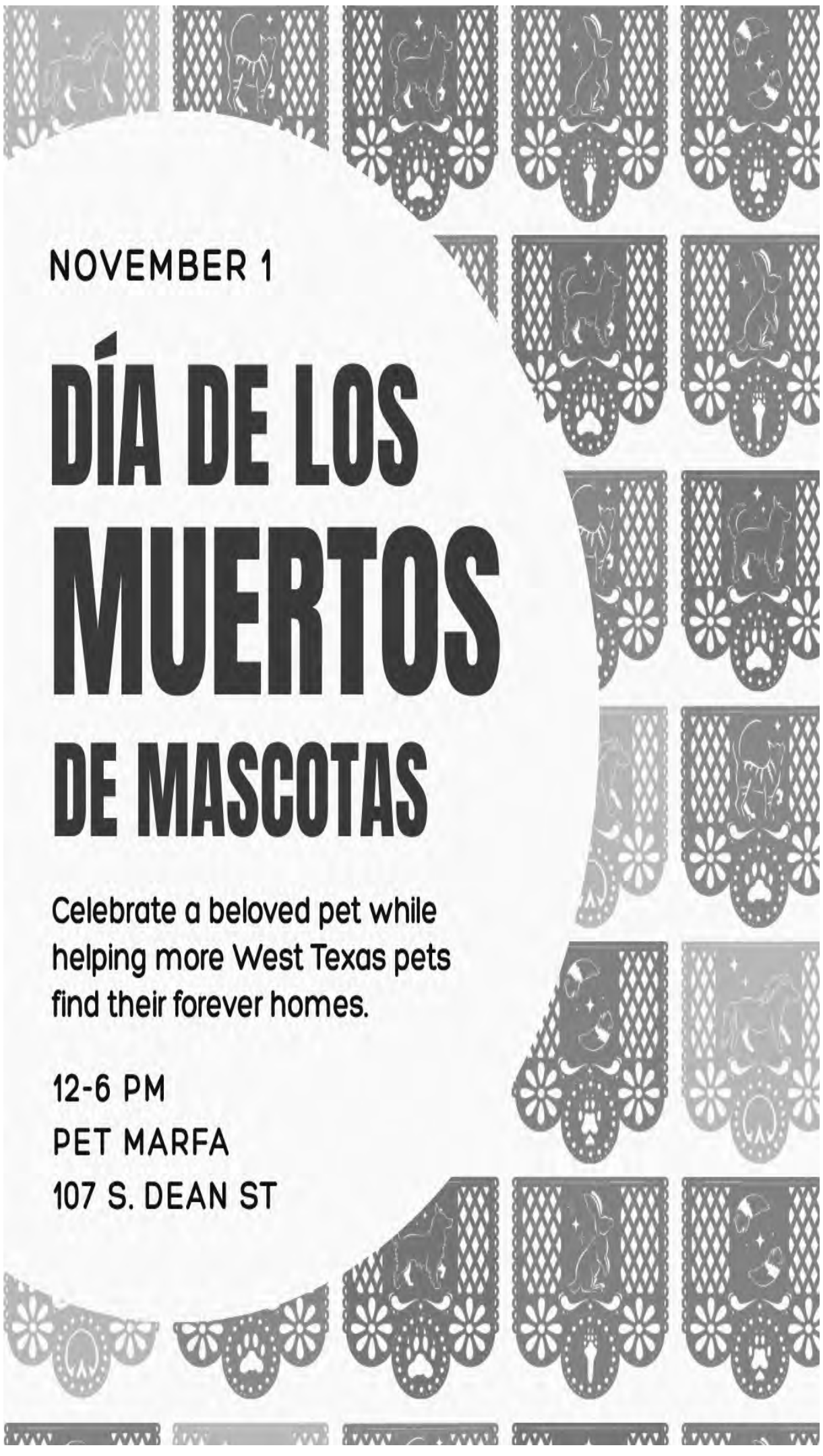
Tuesday, Nov. 3

• Election Day

Thursday, Nov. 5

• Flying Island Music Festival. Local discounts! Runs through Nov. 8, flyingislandmarfa.com

Send your obituaries (always free) and letters to the
to the editor to editor@bigbendsentinel.com)
Subscription questions? Email billing@bigbendsentinel.com
Advertisig inquiries to ads@bigbendsentinel.com

Bull-It likes books

On October 21, Marfa ISD launched a BOOK BLAST book drive to get free books to Marfa students and build their home libraries to promote reading. Mascot Bull-It and Bryanna Bentley dress in carnival costumes greeting students at breakfast to promotel the drive.