



NEWSBRIEFS

Early publication

The *West Texas County Courier* will go to press early on two upcoming issues on the dates of Sept. 30 and Oct. 7. Advertising copy, news releases and other material to be published in those two issues should be submitted to the *Courier* no later than Friday, Sept. 24. The *Courier* business office will be closed Sept. 27 through Oct. 11. For more information call 852-3235.

AISD clarification

To clarify last week's story on financial issues in the Anthony ISD, the administration presented a balanced budget for the 2004-05 school year for approval by the board of trustees without using money from the general fund. Board president Rick Villarreal had said Monday that approximately \$600,000 was taken from the general fund to provide necessary operating funds to support the 2003-04 district budget.

Horizon tax rate

During the regularly scheduled City Council meeting on Tuesday, Sept. 14 Horizon City Council approved the same tax rate as last year's. It will remain at .2875 cents per \$100 property valuation, but due to the average valuation increase from the Central Appraisal District, homeowners will be experiencing an average increase of about \$8.81. In other business, City Council approved the position of Code Enforcement Officer, a newly created position for Horizon City, which will work two days a week.

In other news

■ The three-day San Miguel Fiesta will be held at the Socorro Mission "La Purisima" at 328 S. Nevarez Rd. in Socorro Sept. 24-26. The historic mission, circa 1843, is the site of this annual event beginning at 3 p.m. on Friday, Sept. 24. Saturday hours are 6 p.m. to midnight and Sunday, 1 p.m. to 10 p.m. A mass will be held at 5 p.m. Saturday with a procession around the cemetery with the statue of St. Michael accompanied by matachine dancers. The preservation project of the mission is nearing completion, with nearly 20,000 sundried adobe bricks having been made on-site and used to repair deteriorated walls. Project supervision and fundraising has been provided by Cornerstones Community Partnerships of Santa Fe, N.M. and Historic Missions Restoration Inc. of El Paso. For more information call 858-4655 or visit <http://www.cstones.org>.

■ Canutillo ISD invites interested individuals to participate in the School Health Advisory Council (SHAC) to ensure that local community values are reflected in

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It's pretty hard to make a fellow see that his bad judgment wasn't just bad luck.

— Quips & Quotes

Vinton village council suffers three resignations in one month

By Don Woodyard
Courier Staff Writer

VINTON — Recent resignations have ravaged the ranks of the Vinton Village Council.

Citing difficulty in working with Mayor Juvencia Rios-Ontiveros, three council members have resigned within the past month. They include Mayor Pro-tem Jose Alarcon; Dolores Diaz, position five; and Yassu Grier, position one.

The three resignations had temporarily reduced the number of council members to only two, one less than the three required for a quorum to conduct village business. The remaining council members are Patsy Leos and Margarita Payan.

Grier was the first to resign, turning in his letter on Aug. 26. Grier said he was unaware

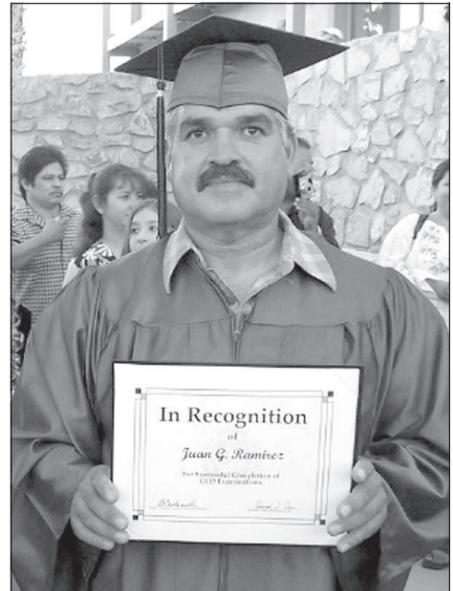
that similar actions were being contemplated by Alarcon and Diaz. Diaz said she and Alarcon turned in their resignations a week later on Sept. 3.

Realizing that grants for important village projects were at risk without an official council to act, Grier verbally asked to have his resignation lifted for one day after consulting with the council's attorney, Shane English. With a quorum, the then-three-member council could meet and take action. It met on Sept. 13 and approved the mayor's nomination of Cesar Gonzalez to replace Diaz.

On Sept. 14, the council approved Victor Carrejo, the second choice of Rios-Ontiveros for a position on the council. Carrejo replaces Grier.

The Vinton Village Council, the mayor said,

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FRAME IT — Juan G. Ramirez and 54 other students gathered to receive their GED certificates from Socorro ISD last week.

70 graduate from GED program

EAST EL PASO COUNTY — "I need it for my work, for my job" says City of El Paso Solid Waste Management employee Juan G. Ramirez, and the smile says it all.

Surrounded by his family, this was one day Ramirez will remember — the day his success in starting his education was recognized — as the Socorro ISD celebrated a graduating class Sept. 16 when 55 of 70 graduates were on hand to receive their General Educational Development (GED) certificates during a poolside ceremony. The annual event took place at the district's Aquatics Center, 1300 Joe Battle Boulevard.

The GED is a certificate of high school equivalency, and is a milestone in the lives of many of its recipients.

Martha Serna is director of the district's Community Services education Program.

"We have 55 graduates here tonight who chose to participate, out of a total of 70," she says. "For a lot of them, the certificate allows them to retain their jobs because more employers are asking for at least a GED for employees who have not graduated from high school. Some of them have actually enrolled in El Paso Community College. The certificate gives them more self-esteem, and they become an example for their children."

District 75 State Representative Inocente "Chente" Quintanilla, a former assistant superintendent of the Socorro schools, was the keynote speaker. He encouraged the graduates to continue their education.

"When you acquire a high-school certificate, you make double the amount of money that any person that does not have a high school certificate makes. And if you get a college degree, you will again double your money. Think about the doors that can be opened to you when you acquire an education."

Graduates were from various SISD Community Services programs such as Job Retraining, Adult Basic Education and Family Literacy. Many of the graduates were night students, which means they earned their certificate in the evenings that after holding down a full time job during the day. The graduates ranged from 20 - 55 years of age. Several students earned their diplomas while their children were also attending classes in SISD schools, thus serving as role models to each other.

Teamwork tops flag memorial



LONG MAY IT WAVE — SISD students raise the flag during the dedication of the District's Freedom Flag Memorial Sept. 10.

EAST EL PASO COUNTY — Eighth-grader Dorian Lucero says he has clear memories of Sept. 11. Thanks to television, he was there.

"We were in math class, I think, and then the TV came on and showed the Twin Towers collapsing," he said. Today, Lucero is proud to have been one of 66 Socorro ISD students who helped to raise the giant U.S. flag during the District's Freedom Flag Memorial at the Student Activities Complex.

The 38x20-foot banner was raised slowly to the top of a 100-foot pole to mark the completed memorial, which includes two black granite pillars, two semi-circle walls with plaques mounted on them and benches in a landscaped area.

A band of 250 musicians combined from Socorro's four high schools played for the 9 a.m. ceremony as the District welcomed special guests.

The memorial was designed by Operational Services Victor Gonzalez, and includes two black towers behind the flag pole. Brick pavers are set in a pentagonal form round the pole,

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San Eli counselor helping open doors to Ivy League schools

By Phillip Cortez
Special to the Courier

SAN ELIZARIO — Irene Rodriguez, a counselor at San Elizario High School, took full advantage of her summer vacation. While many had the opportunity to rest and relax, Rodriguez spent a week learning new ways that will improve the chances of San Elizario High School graduates getting into college.

Not just any college, though. Rodriguez spent a week in June at Harvard University, taking part in its Summer Institute of College Admissions, where she was able to hear firsthand from the Deans of Admission of some of the top Ivy League schools in the country, including Yale, Columbia, Harvard and MIT. Officials from Stanford University were also in attendance, all willing to offer their own insights as to how students can improve their



Irene Rodriguez

chances of gaining acceptance.

"It opened up my eyes to what the competition is out there," Rodriguez said. "There's an enormous amount of prep schools that feed into the Ivy League."

"Right now these colleges are looking for

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One perspective

By Francis Shrum

An American parking lot

I knew I was in trouble when the digital lights on the radio didn't come on when I turned the key. A second later the motor died with a sad sounding sigh.

So here I am, sitting in an Eastside parking lot, feeling extremely grateful. Odd reaction, I admit, considering this is one of my busiest days and that this little problem is going to cost at least an hour's time not just for me but for others in my family.

The reason I'm grateful is because I've just driven about 15 minutes in heavy freeway traffic getting to my present location, not to mention multiple stoplights surrounded by thousands of tons of hurtling automobiles. I don't relish the thought of my attempting to get out of rushing traffic into a safe location with no power to push with.

My battery could have given out earlier this morning when the car was still full of the thriving young minds and bodies I transport regularly, geared up for the day and wanting to arrive at their destination in a timely fashion for football practice, to check out uniforms for the evening's volleyball game, to spend a few minutes in meaningless conversation with their friends — which magically transforms the discourse into something meaningful.

As it is, everybody has been safely delivered to their appointed destinations — except me, of course.

Glad I remembered to grab a cell phone this morning. Appropriate calls made, I settle in to wait. I can't play the radio and since I had just enough battery power to roll down the windows before the lights went totally out, I can't leave the car. But even knowing how far behind I'm going to

be because of this delay, I'm finding the respite strangely refreshing.

American parking lots are not places people tend to spend a lot of leisure time. Maybe our cars spend time there but we mostly see them as a blur as we come and go.

I gradually become aware of subtle changes going on around me that I would otherwise never see. The school area clears out as the kids go in to class. There is a custodial team cleaning the parking lot, pushing their wheeled trash can along, lost in conversation as they gather aluminum cans and other litter along the curb.

The Mexican restaurant nearby is really gearing up for the day and their tantalizing aromas are blowing through my window, reminding of the breakfast I didn't have before leaving the house.

Most Americans rush through parking lots but there always seems to be one or two people who are simply there. Who knows why. This morning, there is a man seated cross-legged under a tree. A teenager is loitering in front of the cleaners at the end of the strip. They don't seem to be doing anything, going anywhere, looking for anyone.

From somewhere in the back of my mind comes a refrain from the old Beatles' song: "Ah, look at all the lonely people. Where do they all come from? Where do they all belong?"

Maybe they are wondering about me, too, sitting here so obviously unoccupied on this warm fall morning.

It is along about now that I notice the massive sign declaring the name of the shopping strip and all the shops

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Por la Gente By State Rep. Chente Quintanilla

School finance plan needed

I must say that I feel a deep sense of gratification with State

Judge John Dietz's decision to proclaim the current school funding plan in Texas as "unconstitutional." I've known this for many years, as my career as a Superintendent for the Socorro Independent School District proved to me that disparities in Texas education have been with us for many decades.

I know that border community and rural children in our schools have always received short shrift in the state providing money for their education. The reality is that Texas schools have done a very poor job of funding schools that are predominantly Mexican American or African American.

For example, a predominantly border community property-poor school district is awarded a total of about \$6,000 per child. A property-rich school district, on the other hand, can expect to receive about \$12,000 per child. Is this fair? Of course not. I believe that every child, no matter his or her ethnicity, is the same and I believe that every Texas child should re-

ceive an equitable amount of money designated for his or her education.

I know that some school districts are poorer than others but whose fault is that? This issue of so-called "separate but equal" schools has not done well by El Paso county youngsters, because the system has been anything but "equal."

Just take a look at the deplorable state of the schools in our border and rural communities. To say that such children receive an education equal to what white children receive in Texas' wealthier districts is to deny reality.

Although the issue of funding our schools should be non-partisan, it hasn't turned out that way. Partisanship has reared its ugly head and has helped to keep border and rural community students from achieving their full potential. The judge's decision, while a good one, will not happen automatically. Republican elected officials are planning to appeal the judge's decision by taking their case to the Texas Supreme Court.

I'm confident, however, that even the State's highest court will see things our way. We lawmakers now have until Oct. 1, 2005 to find a so-

lution to this dilemma. Can we do it? That's a good question, because we have been fighting this battle since 1989.

Let me give you a quick chronology: In 1989, the Texas Supreme Court found what it called "glaring disparities" between rich and poor school districts and eliminated the state's then-school funding mechanism. Thanks to San Antonio's property-poor school district, Edgewood, the battle was brought to the front lines.

In 1993 the Legislature passed what became known as "Robin Hood" because it would force wealthy school districts to share their largess. At that time our schools were almost shut down completely. In 1995, the state again upheld as constitutional the Robin Hood Law. Since then, poor school districts have relied on this distribution of wealth.

Now, however, wealthy school districts are complaining that Robin Hood is not a fair system, and they want it changed. The problem is how to change and still maintain fairness to both poor and rich school districts.

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WEST TEXAS COUNTY COURIER

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Bringing common sense back to our legal system

Whether you realize it or not, frivolous lawsuits have touched your life. Maybe you've never sued or been sued, but it is estimated that each and

every one of us pays at least a thousand dollars a year in higher prices directly related to lawsuits.

Lawsuits have become very popu-

lar in modern America. In the last three decades, the number of federal lawsuits have nearly tripled. It's hard to believe some of the lawsuits are

real. For instance, a New York woman was using a knife to separate a package of frozen hors d'oeuvres she bought at the grocery store. The knife slipped and she cut her hand. With the help of a trial lawyer, she sued. She sued the grocery store, she sued the knife manufacturer, she sued the packager.

Or take the man who, after enjoying a few drinks at a Colorado wedding reception, went to use a pay phone outside. While on the phone, he lost his balance, fell over a railing and landed in the stairwell below. He broke his neck and is now paralyzed. Guess who he sued? Was it the hotel where the reception was located? No. Was it the host of the reception? No. He sued the phone company and actually won more than a million dollars.

Trial lawyers will tell you that they are there to protect the little guy from big, rich, evil corporations. They tell you that businesses can afford to pay millions of dollars in punitive damages, even if they were not directly at fault for someone's misfortune.

The truth is that million-dollar awards come out of your pocket in the form of higher prices. The truth is that most of those million-dollar awards go into the pockets of trial lawyers.

Just the threat of frivolous lawsuits means higher prices for just about everything. As much as \$500 may be added to the price of your new car because of litigation costs. Add \$20 on the price of a step ladder. If you have a baby, you can figure about \$500 will be added to your hospital bill to pay for liability costs. This is the real problem of lawsuit abuse.

There is good news: The House of Representatives passed legislation this month to curb frivolous lawsuits. The legislation will make it harder to file the frivolous lawsuits and will make it harder on attorneys who file the suits. This will encourage people to pursue lawsuits only when they have a legitimate case.

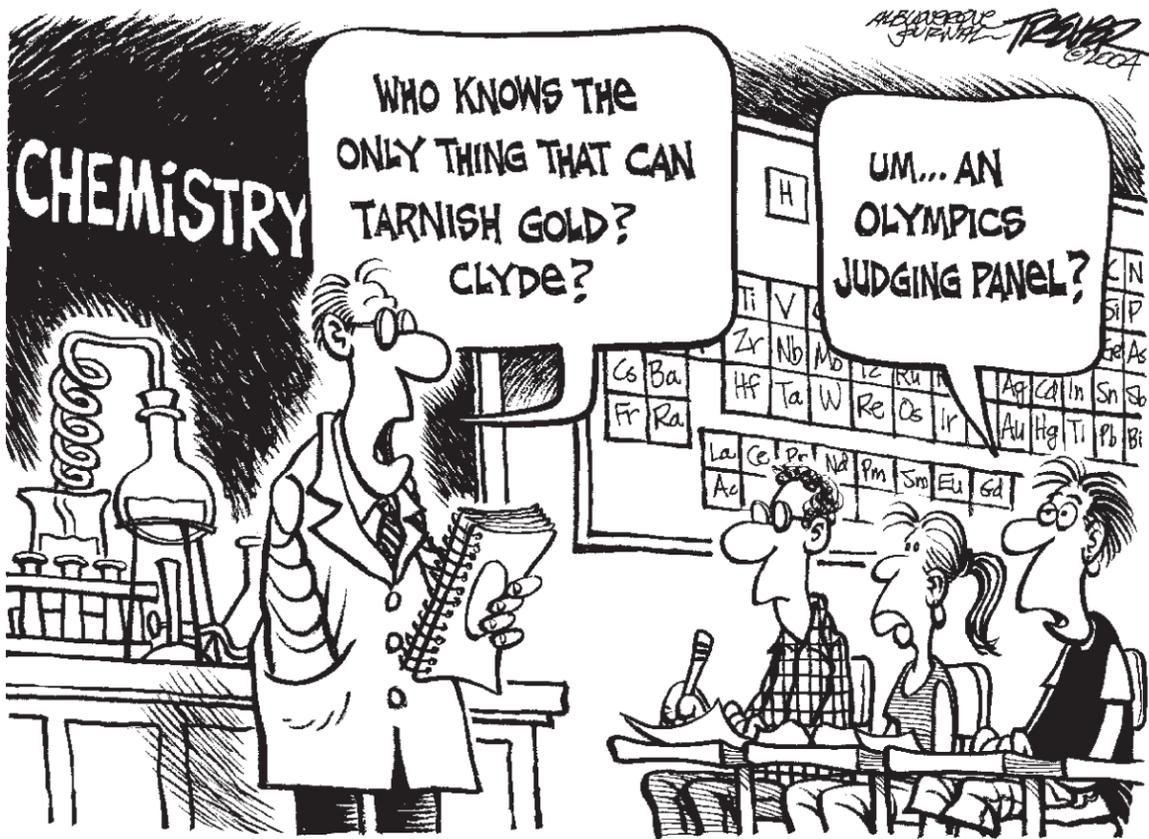
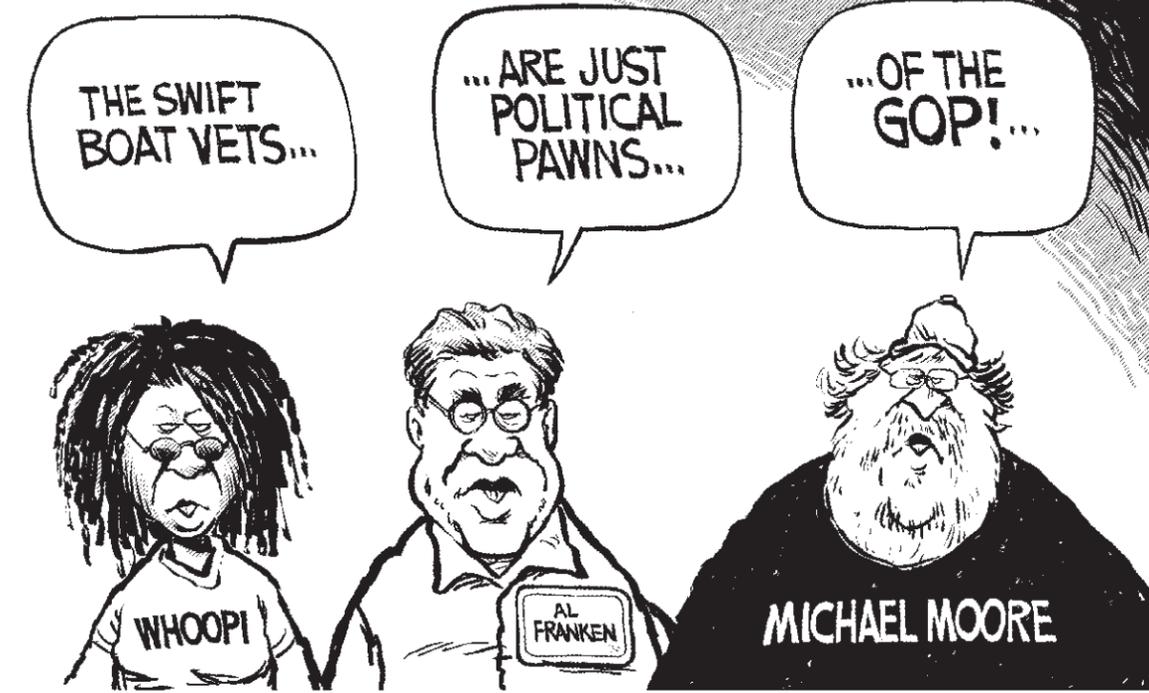
The legal reforms the House passed are designed to unclog our judicial system so it serves the right people. Our judicial system should serve the citizens, not the trial lawyers.



By U.S. Rep. Henry Bonilla

Eye on D.C.

BROOKINGS RICHMOND TIMES DISPATCH



Reyes Reports By U.S. Rep. Silvestre Reyes

Home sales boost El Paso's economy

Current reports of strong home sales in El Paso are good news for our community. Not only are more El Pasoans able to participate in the American Dream of owning a home, more families are investing in our community and gaining the opportunity to build wealth and savings for future generations.

The National Association of Home Builders (NAHB) recently stated that housing accounts for 32 percent of household wealth in the nation and that home owners have a total of about \$8 trillion in home equity, which is often used as a nest egg for retirement or to cover college expenses.

For many first-time home buyers in El Paso, the opportunity to build

this type of financial security is unprecedented. Families who might not have utilized banks or credit unions in the past open accounts to save money, earn interest and build upon their assets. In addition, home equity earned as a result of purchasing allows for opportunities to borrow and the investment into a home can lead to profits when reselling.

I am working in Washington, DC to ensure that El Pasoans will have the opportunity to enjoy the benefits of homeownership. Many families need assistance with their mortgages. According to the NAHB, America's families will need 125 million mortgage loans — an average of \$3 trillion annually — over the next decade for home purchases and refinancings.

To help finance these loans, governmental organizations such as Fannie Mae, Freddie Mac and the Federal Home Loan banks must be

empowered to ensure an affordable flow of capital to mortgage lenders in El Paso and across the country. I will fight to ensure these organizations have the capacity to provide El Pasoans with sufficient assistance to purchase their homes.

I am also working with my colleagues to establish the National Affordable Housing Trust Fund, which would provide communities with funds to build, rehabilitate, and preserve affordable and safe low-income housing. We need to make sure everyone — especially those such as seniors on fixed incomes or low-income families — have a secure place to live.

Through our efforts both here in El Paso and in Washington we will provide affordable, quality housing for all El Pasoans — and empower our community to build a financially secure future of their own.

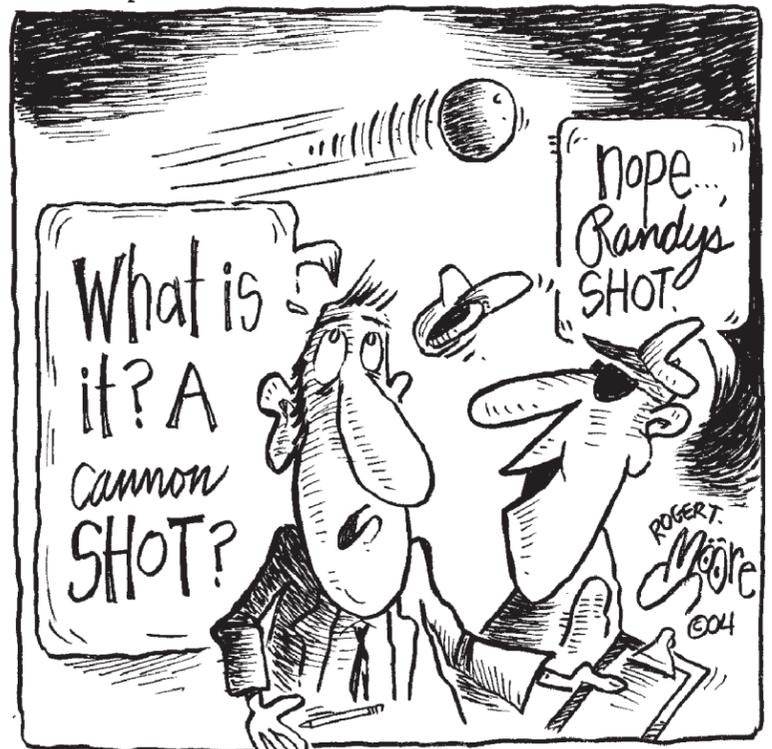
OUR HUMBLE APOLOGIES...

...IF you have tried to reach the West Texas County Courier by phone and failed. Four out of six business days, our phone has been down. The trouble began Tuesday of last week (09/14/04) and was resolved, hopefully, this past Tuesday (09/21/04).

A SBC technician informed the Courier that its phone service, as well as others in Horizon, had been interrupted due to the heavy rain getting into a 30-year-old transmission line.

Also, the Courier will close for two weeks starting September 27. There is a full notice in this week's paper explaining those dates.

TRUE TEXAS FACTS by Roger T. Moore, Texan and Olympian
Randy Matson was the first to break the 70 ft. barrier in the shot put.





WINDOW ON THE WORLD — Elias Torrez, Tigua Community Health Representative, speaks to Tornillo Junior High Students about the Tigua Nation.

Learning a way of life unlike our own

By Rudy Barreda
Special to the Courier

TORNILLO — Many students in small rural towns like Tornillo have limited opportunities to learn about things outside the confines of the classroom. Thanks to the teachers at Tornillo Junior High School, this lack is about to change.

Blending a bit of real life with history, Peter Anguiano, 7th grade Texas History, and John Hunter, 8th grade U. S. History teacher, have taken the initiative to make learning more interesting.

These teachers collaborated by inviting representatives from the Tigua Nation to come to TJH and teach the students about the customs, culture and ways of life of a fascinating people.

On the afternoon of Aug. 30 and the morning of Aug. 31, Luis Nunez and Elias Torrez, representing the Tigua Na-

tion, regaled the students at Tornillo Jr. High with accounts of life and government within the Tigua Nation, located within the Ysleta Mission area of the Mission Valley.

Vivid descriptions were included about other native people of North America as well.

The teachers at TJH wanted to show the students that there are many venues for learning, not just through books.

Nunez, Director of Education for the Tigua Nation and Torrez, Community Health Representative, used the combination of real life and research to pique the interest of the students, who heard and saw first-hand accounts represented through stories, pictures, videos, and props such as drums, clothing, and food.

Slider teacher heads north to Alaska

EAST EL PASO COUNTY — Socorro science teacher Sharon Mitchell is getting the opportunity to learn about the environment in a place where there's lots of it: Alaska.

Mitchell, in cooperation with the UTEP's Department of Geological Sciences, traveled to Anchorage

Sept. 21 for the International Geosciences and Remote Sensing Symposium.

Mitchell is involved with UTEP's Global Learning and Observations to Benefit the Environment, or GLOBE program which introduces students to the basic concepts of remote sensing.

"We'll be able to show how students used these maps to measure urban sprawl in the El Paso-Canutillo area during the years 1988, 1991, 1994, 1997 and 2001," Mitchell says, "and show how we taught students to do this."

She'll be traveling with UTEP's Dr. Robin Hoffer and others to present the findings of their classroom studies to the symposium participants.

Mitchell, who teaches science classes at SISD's William D. Slider Middle School, uses satellite photographs from the University's Pan American Center for Environmental Studies, or PACES, to help her students measure El Paso's urban sprawl. The photos were taken by the LANDSAT satellite, a project of the United States Geological Survey and the National Aeronautics and Space Administration.

Parking

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therein. It's not the sign that I find interesting, though, it's the group of pigeons who have taken up residence somewhere inside of it. They keep entering and exiting the top so I can't see their nests from below but they are busily living their little pigeon lives, unconcerned by the human bustle below.

The bustle gets busier as the first class period ends. The students move along the sidewalk at a varied pace, some intent on getting to class on time, others simply intent on getting their hands on one another. I feel like hollering at them that it hasn't been

Chente

From Page 2

The problem is that border and rural community children — many of them coming from poor homes and with a limited English-speaking ability — are being made the scapegoats in this battle.

The state of Texas must do every-

Vinton

From Page 1

was to take action at its Sept. 21 meeting on filling the third position, that of Jose Alarcon, former mayor pro-tem.

The reasons for the resignations, as stated by the ex-council members, differ from what Rios-Ontiveros said Monday.

"They were unable to make a decision on the suspension with pay of Village Clerk Camille Castillo even though there were some serious concerns and discrepancies toward her," the mayor said.

She explained that it was a "priority" of the council "to take care of the community" and to uphold (the laws) and be held accountable. "In this case (regarding Castillo), it was not being upheld, but instead (there was) the allegiance toward the village clerk — protecting her from wrong-doing even though there are witnesses and paperwork to this fact."

Issues of failed working relationships largely triggered the actions of the Grier, Diaz and Alarcon.

"I had a hard time working with her (Rios-Ontiveros)," Grier said. "I felt she was moving in the wrong direction. We spent more time arguing with each other.

"She was very dictative," he added. "I could go on all day about how things had to be done her way. There was continuous fighting and bickering and downgrading of other council members."

Diaz says, "She was really negative — wants to do everything herself. It was hard to work with her. Things have to go through her. She was power hungry," she concluded.

Alarcon stressed his concerns about keeping avenues of financing for village projects open. He spoke of his frustration in working with Rios-Ontiveros.

"She was not receptive to ideas on financing. There were areas where she would create obstacles," he said.

all that long since they last laid eyes on one another — not nearly long enough of an absence to make their hearts that fond.

Some are neat and well-groomed, others have untucked shirts and slouching stride. I wonder about their home lives, their families, their futures. Their faces are a mirror of their mindset.

The hustle wanes, then ebbs away entirely. It gets quiet again except for the truck delivering drinks to the convenience store facing the street.

Meanwhile, patrons of the Mexican restaurant keep coming and going, good smells wafting along with them. My stomach is beginning to rumble and my hand is on the door handle...

Oh, wait, there's my ride.

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Counselor

From Page 1

diversity, under-represented minorities.”

In San Elizario, Rodriguez and the rest of the counseling staff see nothing but potential in the students they serve being able to attend such prestigious institutions if they desire to do so. Dean Whitla, the director of the summer institute and a Harvard professor, also heads the National Campus Diversity Project, one of the main reasons Rodriguez was interested in attending the institute.

“He was very impressed with the advancements that have taken place in the school district within the last seven years,” Rodriguez said.

Among some of the more noticeable changes, according to Rodriguez and Dickey Garza, lead counselor at the high school, is the numbers of student

taking assessment tests in order to take their education to the next level.

Four years ago, 35 students took the PSAT exam compared to the 190 students who took it last school year, for example. More kids are leaving Texas and the San Elizario community to attend school.

One student example Rodriguez offers as a result of this positive change occurring in San Elizario hallways is Obed Lira, a 2003 San Elizario graduate who now studies at Boston University.

“He started as an ESL (English as a Second Language) student and by the time he graduated, he was taking AP classes and ranked third in the class,” she said.

At the summer institute, Rodriguez was reminded of just how important it is for high school counselors to focus on the college admissions process with their students. The importance of the counselor’s role was also stressed, according to Rodriguez, as

well as teacher recommendations.

“They are looking more at the context in these teacher letters of recommendation,” she said. “Instead of saying that the student is poor, teachers need to write that the student is disadvantaged and has been successful as a result of change” in the academic focus of the school.

“More colleges are looking closer at the essay in their admissions policies,” Rodriguez added.

With the institute over, Rodriguez will most certainly share with students the expectations that Ivy League schools have in their applicants. But Harvard is not a thing of the past for Rodriguez. She plans on writing a 35-page paper as a result of her renewed interest in serving kids in socio-economic backgrounds. The focus of her paper will concentrate on the effects that socio-economic backgrounds have on high school SAT scores and will earn her two graduate credits from Harvard.

Canutillo ISD declines county’s offer to hand over Gallegos Park

By Don Woodyard
Courier Staff Writer

CANUTILLO — The board of trustees of the Canutillo ISD declined an offer made recently by El Paso County Commissioner Dan Haggerty for the school district to take over operation of Gallegos Park. Action came at the Sept. 14 board meeting.

In a move to save the county money, Haggerty had made the offer to Superintendent Charles Hart at an Aug. 19 meeting. To make the proposed deal more enticing, Haggerty said the county would throw in \$1.8 million — \$1.3 million in quality of life bond issue money plus \$500,000 of state grant money.

It was subsequently pointed out

that running the park, its staffing and maintenance, would be a costly, long-term venture once the initial \$1.8 million has been used up. Also it was brought up that operating a park goes beyond the scope of the district’s primary function of educating the youth of the community.

Haggerty had frankly admitted that El Paso County needed to shed some of the \$26 million in non-mandated projects such as park operations.

In other business, board member Raphael Reyes raised the possibility of having the Canutillo High football team use the new stadium a year earlier than planned. He pointed out that the new high school is scheduled for completion and ready for occupancy

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Briefs

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the district’s health education programs. SHAC reviews and provides recommendations on CISD health education curriculum and programs. The group advises the school board on instructional matters including obesity prevention, cardiovascular disease, Type II diabetes, illicit drugs and tobacco use prevention, and human sexuality. Persons interested in volunteering can obtain applications at any of CISD’s six campuses. For information, call 877-7583 or 877-7455.

■ The Mission Valley’s Hueco Elementary School, 300 Old Hueco Tanks Road hopes to repeat the success of last year’s Harvest Festival Oct. 29. So the school is taking vendor reservations for the annual carnival, scheduled for 6-8 p.m.. “Our carnival last year was packed and there was no room to move,” said festival coordinator Ruth Harris. “We’re planning fun and game booths, and two Haunted Houses one with cute cartoon characters for the younger children, and a scary one for the older kids.” Vendor tables are \$25 each, and can be reserved by calling Harris, 937-7600.

■ Fall brings the season of outdoor celebrations and Ernesto Serna School is planning its annual Oktoberfest for 4 - 8 p.m. Oct. 22 at the campus, 11471 Alameda Avenue. The festival will feature food and games for sale, plus a talent show. Arts and crafts vendors can now rent tables at \$10 each. To reserve a table and for more information, call Becky Alejo, 937-4805 or Lucy Guzman, 937-4804.

■ Socorro ISD’S National Collegiate Forum featuring Texas schools is planned for 6:30 - 8:30 p.m. Oct. 18 in the Montwood High School Commons area, 12000 Montwood Drive. Representatives of Texas Tech University, Texas A&M University, Rice University and the University of Texas at Austin will be available

to answer questions from students and parents. For more information, call the District’s Counseling and Guidance office, 937-0320.

■ Canutillo Elementary School’s Physical Education Department will host a Worldwide Day of Let’s Just Play, 10 a.m. to 1 p.m., Saturday, Oct. 2, at CES campus, 651 Canutillo Avenue, according to district spokesman Kim Guzman. Sponsored by Nickelodeon, the day points up the importance of a child’s right to play. It is intended for people to stop what they are doing and just play, said Lura Beets, CES physical education teacher and co-coordinator of the event. CES physical education instructors, Kenny Cooper, and Martin Carrillo will assist. The free event, which includes refreshments, is open to the public. Participants will include the community, district staff, parents, and children. Numerous activities in a casual and fun setting are planned for the Saturday morning event. Parents also will have events to choose from. For more information, call Coach Cooper, Beets, or Carrillo at 877-2836 or 877-7600.

■ The Oz Glaze Senior Center in Horizon City will host a fundraising Bazaar and Flea Market on Oct. 9 from 8 a.m. to noon. Anyone wanting to sell items should contact the Center, cost per table is \$10. Call 852-0062.

■ A “Critter Mass,” hosted by St. Brendan’s Episcopal Church, will be held Sunday, Oct. 3 in the Horizon City Park on Rodman St. at 10 a.m. A Holy Eucharist with blessing will be offered and a St. Francis of Assisi medal given each pet. Refreshments for pets and owners will be served. For more information call 852-4171.

■ Students in SISD’s Gifted and Talented programs are scheduled to compete in teams for the Team Quest academic competition this fall. Team Quest is an academic competition designed to teach the importance of teamwork. Teams of four students each work together to complete projects and these sessions mark the fourth year of competition in SISD. This year’s Teen Quest programs will be located at

the Eastside’s Vista del Sol Conference Center, 11189 Rojas Drive, between Lomaland Drive and Lee Trevino Boulevard. Major competitions are Sept. 24 for middle schools and Oct. 11-18 for high schools.

■ Denise Martinez of Fabens was recently selected to participate in Nationals’ 2004 Miss Jr. Teen El Paso pageant competition on Oct. 9. Denise made application and was interviewed by Patty Neidert, El Paso Pageant Coordinator, and notified of her acceptance this week. Denise will compete for her share of over \$20,000 in scholarships and prizes. Denise will display her personality and interviewing skills — personality is the number one aspect that each contestant is judged on — and hopes to represent the El Paso area at the Cities Of America National Competition in Orlando, Florida. Community businesses, organizations, and private individuals are assisting Denise and those interested in becoming a sponsor may contact Patty Neidert at 1-800-569-2487.

■ The Mission Valley Toy Drive Dance is Friday, Sept. 24 at the Mission Valley Ballroom, 10600 North Loop, from 8 p.m. to 1 a.m. to collect new toys for the children attending the Second Annual Christmas Tree Lighting on Nov. 26. Admission is a new toy valued between \$7 to \$10. Information: 859-6424.

■ Socorro ISD has school menus online. Parents and students can long on at www.sisd.net and select “For Students.” Menus for all district campuses are now posted.

■ Montwood High School’s Emerald Players are sponsoring the second Annual Children’s Theatre Camp Sept. 27-Oct. 1, the first week of the next intersession break, at the Montwood High School Theatre, 12000 Montwood. Children ages 6-12 years are invited to learn every aspect of the theatre from acting to makeup. Cost is \$65 per child for materials, snacks and t-shirt. Registration is first day of camp. Call Jaime Barba, 937-2464.

Notice of Public Hearing to Discuss Tornillo Independent School District’s State Financial Accountability Rating

Tornillo ISD will hold a public hearing at 6:00 P.M., Wednesday, September 29, 2004, in the Board Meeting Room (Red Brick Building), at 19200 Cobb Street, Tornillo, Texas 79853.

The purpose of this hearing is to discuss Tornillo ISD’s rating on the state’s financial accountability system.

WTCC: 09/23/04

Public Notice TO ALL INTERESTED PERSONS AND PARTIES:

The *West Texas County Courier* will publish two editions early. The September 30 and October 7, 2004 issues will go to press on Monday, September 27, 2004.

All material for these publications must be submitted to the *West Texas County Courier* no later than Friday, September 24, 2004.

The *West Texas County Courier* office will close beginning Monday, September 27, 2004. The office will open again on Tuesday, October 12, 2004.

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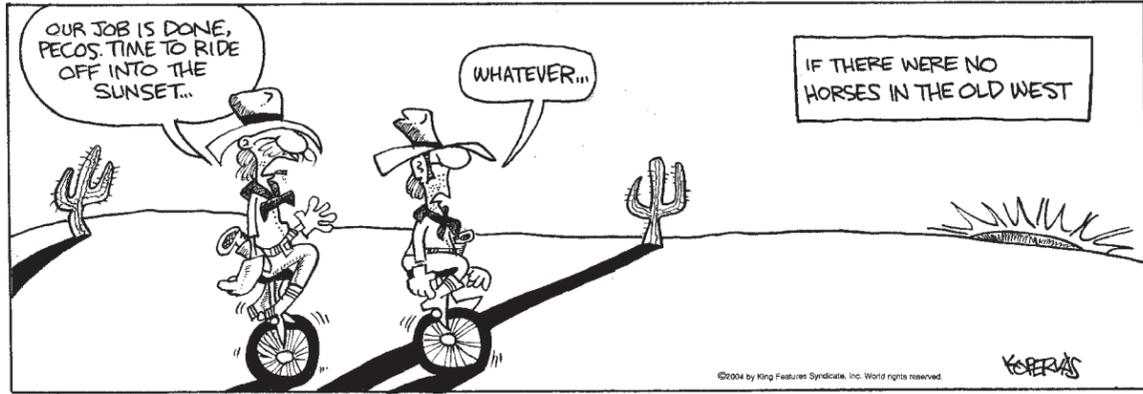
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Comix

OUT ON A LIMB By Gary Kopervas



AMBER WAVES By Dave T. Phipps



THE SPATS By Jeff Pickering



R.F.D. By Mike Marland



Trip fulfills Olympic dream – sort of

By Don Flood

As a youth, I would have qualified for the Olympics except for one minor technicality — the games did not, for some reason, include pinball.

In fact, I think I would have been pretty competitive in a modern pentathlon that included pinball, Skee Ball, darts, pool and Ping Pong. All that practice gone to waste!

But at least now I can say I went to the Olympics, though in my case the qualifying round meant buying tickets for myself and my family.

Nowadays the Olympics pretty much has everything, including competitive stamp collecting, which has taken a cue from the wildly popular Beach Volleyball.

Stamp collecting — now referred to correctly as Beach Stamp Collecting — includes a lot of young women in bikinis jumping up and down and is expected to be one of “hot tickets” in Beijing, along with Beach Archery, Beach Badminton and Beach Fencing. (Ouch!)

NBC officials, who have a newfound and extraordinary reverence for the history of the games, point out that the ancient athletes competed naked and that to honor that heritage modern athletes should wear as little as possible.

“We feel that, historically speaking, this is the right thing to do, even though it might harm our ratings,” said an unnamed network official with a long and oddly growing nose.

But of more interest than even the Beach Volleyball contest was the question: “Would the Greeks be finished in time?”

This was a valid concern, since in the case of the 14,000-seat basketball venue, for example, the

Greeks started on the stadium a little less three hours before the first game.

They had hoped to have a full three hours, but some of the guys stopped for coffee.

No matter. They completed the building in time to break for lunch with the help of the Hephaestus, the ancient Greek craftsman god who came out of retirement to get things moving.

Zeus also lent a hand, hurling a few well-placed thunderbolts at the backsides of the slower workers.

But however they did it, the Greeks got it done, and the various venues were even more spectacular than they appeared on TV.

In addition to the some of the events, we visited the Acropolis, site of the Parthenon.

Walking around the ruins of ancient Athens helped put 2,500 years history of Western Civilization into perspective, especially when one realizes he is walking in the footsteps of Katie Couric herself.

Katie, unfortunately, was nowhere to be found, so we went shopping on our own.

We found the shopkeepers somewhat aggressive, in the sense that the Atlantic Ocean is somewhat wet.

Walking by one store, we were lured in by the shopkeeper who promised that “everything” in the store was 50 percent off.

My wife picked up a small dish. Wouldn't you know it? That was the one item that wasn't 50 percent off. It was full price. Amazing.

And so was the whole trip. I just wish I could have gotten there on my pinball skills — but there's always Beijing.

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Persons who have a problem with alcohol are offered a free source of help locally. Alcoholics Anonymous - call 562-4081 for information.

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Flag

From Page 1

and the number “93” is set on the western side of the memorial's semi-circular wall, representing United's Flight 93. The plane bound for San Francisco from Newark, New Jersey was the only flight of the four that did not reach its target, which was believed to be Camp David. Construction on SISD's Freedom Flag Memorial was supervised by Assistant Superintendent for Operational Services Thomas Eyeington.

Socorro Superintendent Dr. Robert J. Durón and Board President Brenda Castaneda hosted the dedication Ceremony. Dr. Durón called the memorial a tribute to police, firefighters and other first responders along with U.S. servicemen who

protect and serve the country. “On a personal note, I was in New York during the Labor Day weekend. I was in a building half the size of either one of the Twin Towers. In that whole building, there were over 8,000 employees. When you think about every maintenance and operations employee, every teacher, every worker in our cafeterias and food service that amounts to right at 5,000 employees... It's important that Socorro ISD do something like this to remind us of the people whose lives were lost but also to remind us of the individuals who sacrificed their lives to save lives.”

Former SISD board trustee and member of the Freedom Flag Memorial Committee Jamie Cardwell had suggested the idea of a giant U.S. flag to former Superintendent Dr. Don P. Schulte after the 9/11 tragedies. “I'm thinking about the pride I have with the results of this. I'm very proud to

stand here and watch the children of the District raise this flag.”

The events of Sept. 11, 2001 encouraged the project, which was built with donated funds. Special guests included Cardwell, District 75 State Representative Innocent “Chente” Quintanilla, Staff Sgt. Frank Hernandez of Fort Bliss, who said the memorial is for all veterans of the country's wars. “I think the American people learned that after Viet Nam,” Hernandez says, adding that it's important to appreciate what any service personnel do while on duty and after they leave the service.

There was a less sober side to the morning's events. Rebeca Gimbel of William D. Slider Middle School was one of the students holding the flag before it was raised.

“It's pretty light with everybody holding it,” reflected the seventh-grader. “It's teamwork.”

Canutillo

From Page 6

Board president Joe Villarreal pressed the contractor and the archi-

tectural firm that everything is in order, that necessary paperwork is taken care of regarding the cost-splitting agreement for building Education Boulevard between the new high school and the Northwest campus of El Paso Community College.

In his report, Hart said he had received an informational packet from state Sen. Elliot Shapleigh regarding funding sources for public schools. He said the senator is vigorously promoting a state income tax proposal which he termed a “hot topic.”



Social Security Q&A By Ray Vigil

Q: My 87-year-old father is very ill and is not expected to live much longer. Will my 85-year-old mother have to apply for widow's benefits after his death? Or is that process done automatically?

A: When your father passes away, your mother should notify Social Security. If your mother is receiving spouse's benefits based on your father's work record, and if they were living at the same address, we should be able to switch her to widow's ben-

efits automatically, and also pay the death benefit. Otherwise, she may have to complete a few forms before she could receive benefits.

Q: A woman whom I used to work with says she has carpal tunnel syndrome and is going to apply for Social Security disability benefits. Will that disability qualify her for benefit payments?

A: She will qualify for disability benefits if she has any impairment, or

any combination of impairments, that are so severe that they will keep her from doing any substantial work for at least a year, or that are expected to result in her death.

Q: I have been doing heavy construction work for all of my life. But recurring back problems have become so bad that I cannot do this job any longer. Can I apply for Social Security disability benefits?

A: Yes. But while you can apply for benefits, you also should know that under Social Security, your disability must be so severe that it prevents

you from doing any kind of work for which you are qualified. So if there is other work that you can do, your claim might not be approved.

Q: I get Supplemental Security Income (SSI) for a physical disability. I would like to try going to work. Am I allowed to get a part time job without risking loss of benefits?

A: Yes. Social Security encourages recipients with disabilities to try working. For example, if your only income is SSI and you start to work, only a small portion of your income is used in recalculating

your monthly benefit amount. Also, in most cases you are able to keep your medical coverage. Social Security has a number of work incentives to help you attempt working without taking away the security net of your benefits.

For more information visit your local Security office, see www.ssa.gov or call us at 1-800-772-1213. If you have any questions that you would like to have answered, please mail them to the Social Security Office, 1111 Gateway West, Attn: Ray Vigil, El Paso, Texas 79935.

WEATHER

AccuWeather.com

SEVEN-DAY FORECAST FOR EL PASO

THURSDAY	THUR. NIGHT	FRIDAY	SATURDAY	SUNDAY	MONDAY	TUESDAY	WEDNESDAY
Partly sunny; a p.m. t-storm in spots. ▲ 84°	Some clouds. ▼ 61°	Some sun; a spotty t-storm possible in the p.m. ▲ 82° ▼ 60°	Sun and some clouds; chance for a p.m. t-storm. ▲ 82° ▼ 59°	Chance for a shower and t-storm. ▲ 82° ▼ 60°	Partly sunny; a p.m. t-storm possible in spots. ▲ 84° ▼ 57°	Some sun; chance for a spotty p.m. t-storm. ▲ 84° ▼ 56°	Sun and some clouds; possible p.m. spotty t-storm. ▲ 84° ▼ 52°

UV INDEX Statistics for noon.

The higher the UV Index, the greater the need for eye and skin protection.

Thursday	9	Very High
Friday	7	High
Saturday	6	Moderate
Sunday	6	Moderate
Monday	8	High
Tuesday	8	High
Wednesday	7	High

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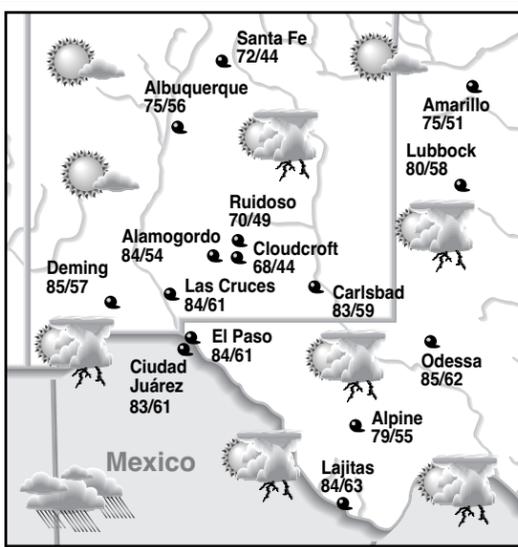
The exclusive AccuWeather composite index of effective temperature based on eight weather factors.

Thursday	82°
Friday	83°
Saturday	81°
Sunday	81°
Monday	83°
Tuesday	84°
Wednesday	84°

TEXAS WEATHER

Anthony	84	62
Canutillo	84	62
Clint	83	61
E. Montana	84	61
Fabens	83	61
Horizon	84	62
San Elizario	81	59
Socorro	83	60
Tornillo	83	61
Vinton	84	62

Shown is Thursday's weather. Temperatures are Thursday's highs and Thursday night's lows.



TRAVELERS CITIES

City	Thur. Hi/Lo/W	Fri. Hi/Lo/W	Sat. Hi/Lo/W	Sun. Hi/Lo/W	Mon. Hi/Lo/W
Albuquerque	75/56/pc	75/54/t	76/54/t	76/54/c	76/48/r
Atlanta	84/64/s	86/64/s	84/64/pc	80/62/t	78/60/pc
Atlantic City	82/61/s	81/61/s	80/57/s	74/51/pc	73/49/s
Austin/San Antonio	88/65/s	89/66/t	87/62/t	87/62/pc	87/63/s
Baltimore	82/62/s	82/62/s	80/60/sh	76/54/pc	73/50/s
Boston	74/62/s	76/62/s	76/58/pc	72/55/pc	68/51/s
Chicago	84/60/s	76/54/t	72/50/pc	72/50/s	71/49/s
Dallas/Ft. Worth	89/67/t	87/66/t	87/63/pc	87/63/s	84/63/s
Denver	67/46/pc	75/48/s	78/48/s	75/45/pc	75/44/s
Flagstaff	69/34/s	71/39/s	71/39/s	70/39/c	69/38/t
Houston	88/72/t	86/72/t	87/72/t	88/68/t	90/68/pc
Kansas City	80/57/t	76/53/pc	76/53/pc	77/52/s	77/52/s
Las Vegas	87/63/s	90/64/s	92/67/s	90/67/s	90/69/s
Miami	88/76/t	88/74/t	90/74/t	88/76/t	88/76/t
Minneapolis	72/51/sh	69/52/pc	71/54/s	73/51/pc	69/50/s
New Orleans	85/73/t	87/70/t	90/70/pc	85/69/t	84/69/pc
New York City	79/66/s	80/66/s	77/62/pc	73/60/pc	71/56/s
Philadelphia	82/64/s	84/66/s	80/64/pc	74/56/pc	74/54/s
Phoenix	93/71/s	97/73/s	99/75/s	96/74/t	95/72/s
Portland	76/54/pc	78/54/s	76/54/pc	72/52/sh	76/52/s
San Francisco	74/56/s	72/56/s	70/56/pc	72/56/pc	71/56/s
Seattle	68/52/pc	70/52/s	68/52/pc	66/50/sh	67/50/pc
Tucson	93/62/s	93/67/s	93/67/s	91/67/t	89/65/pc
Washington, DC	80/66/s	84/66/s	84/66/sh	76/58/pc	73/55/pc

Weather (W): s-sunny, pc-partly cloudy, c-cloudy, sh-showers, t-thunderstorms, r-rain, sf-snow flurries, sn-snow, i-ice.

AGRICULTURE

The combination of moisture streaming in from the south and daytime heating will trigger spotty afternoon thunderstorms each day into early next week. Rainfall will vary, but will average 0.05-0.15 of an inch each day. Winds Thursday southeast at 6-12 mph with 6-8 hours of sunshine and an average relative humidity of 55 percent.

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