



NEWSBRIEFS



— Photo courtesy Fabens ISD

Aide Polanco

Polanco is new Fabens HR head

The Fabens Independent School District (FISD) Board of Trustees approved the hiring of Aide Polanco as the new Director of Human Resources during the July 19 regular meeting. Polanco brings a wealth of expertise in the field of human resources. Prior to joining Fabens ISD, she served as Director of Administration and Finance for the Child Crisis Center of El Paso. “I am delighted to join the Wildcat family! I look forward to serving our teachers and staff, who do the very best for our students and their families,” said Polanco. Her first day with Fabens ISD was August 14, 2023.

— Sofia Maciel

Living conditions

With around 8.6% of Americans having moved last year, slightly more than the previous year, but still below pre-pandemic levels, the personal-finance website WalletHub has released its report on 2023’s *Best States to Live In*, as well as expert commentary. To help Americans settle down in the best and most affordable place possible, WalletHub compared the 50 states across 51 key indicators of livability.

See BRIEFS, Page 4

Every year the cars get lower and wider, while the payments get longer and higher.

— Quips & Quotes



— Photo by Alfredo Vasquez

MONEY – The U.S. government recently started sending emails to hundreds of thousands of federal loan borrowers to let them know that their student loans have been forgiven. The notices are part of President Joe Biden administration’s efforts to cancel the debt of students who received student loans to pay for their college education. Shown in photo above is financial aid office at the University of Texas at El Paso.

Student loan forgiveness plan back on track

By Alfredo Vasquez
Special to the Courier

EL PASO COUNTY – Over 800,000 student loan borrowers qualify for relief under their initial repayment plan agreements, but because of administrative snafus they haven’t yet received it, according to federal government officials.

To address this, the government recently started sending correspondence to hundreds of thousands of federal loan borrowers to let them know that their student loans have been forgiven. The notices are part of President Joe Biden administration’s previously announced efforts to cancel the debt.

It’s expected that all 800,000-plus borrowers will be notified of some relief in the coming weeks. The Department of Education estimated that it had already cleared the debt of more than 200,000 individuals, and about 614,000 persons are expected to have their entire student loan debts canceled. Other borrowers might have remaining loans that they took out at different times.

The relief is targeted at people who enrolled in income-driven repayment (IDR) plans, which allow student loan debts to be forgiven by the federal government once payments have been made for 20 or 25 years, depending on the plan. But because of well-documented errors in tracking payments, many borrowers enrolled in IDR plans have been left paying well beyond their payment end dates, with no forgiveness in sight, according to

recent government reports.

President Biden heralded the beginning of these account adjustments as a step toward fixing what he called the broken student loan system. “Under the new plan, if a borrower makes 20 or 25 years’ worth of payments, they get the remaining balances of their loans forgiven. But because of errors and administrative failures of the student loan system that started long before I took office, over 804,000 borrowers never got the credit they earned, and never saw the forgiveness they were promised—even after making payments for decades. I was determined to right this wrong,” the president stated.

Federal officials explained that borrowers with IDR plans should expect to receive emails from their loan servicers with the subject line “Your student loans have been forgiven” and a message of “Congratulations! The Biden-Harris Administration has forgiven your federal student loan(s) listed below with [servicer name] in full.”

Officials said that the process for distributing the student loan relief should be completed in the coming weeks. However, there is still the potential for lawsuits to interrupt the debt discharges, officials warned.

Although, a recent lawsuit – which argued that the Department of Education was going beyond its authority – was dismissed by a U.S. district court judge in Michigan. The suit was filed by the New Civil Liberties Alliance on behalf of the Cato Institute and the Mackinac Center for Public Policy.

“We are standing up for borrowers who did everything right, but whose progress toward forgiveness went uncounted due to past administrative failures that the Biden-Harris team has worked tirelessly to correct,” Secretary of Education Miguel Cardona said in a recent statement.

In total, the fixes to the IDR plans being made by the Department of Education will result in \$39 billion of automatic debt relief, according to news reports.

“The Biden Administration kept its latest promise to 800,000 people who were repeatedly failed by the broken student loan system. For these borrowers, the prospect of delayed justice will be life changing,” said Persis Yu, deputy executive director and managing counsel for the Student Borrower Protection Center.

The effort is part of a wave of changes to federal loan programs that officials have said weren’t ultimately holding up their end of the deal. That includes \$45 billion in forgiveness to people enrolled in Public Service Loan Forgiveness who weren’t getting the debt relief they were promised and \$22 billion to borrowers who were defrauded by for-profit colleges.

In all, the debt relief announced by the Biden administration so far totals \$116.6 billion for more than 3.4 million borrowers, according to the Department of Education.

Biden’s original program to cancel student loan debt on a massive scale was rejected by the Supreme Court in

See LOANS, Page 2

The joy of minor league baseball

The Portland Sea Dogs won, but that’s not why, fundamentally, the fans went home happy.

The Double-A minor league affiliate of the Boston Red Sox, the Sea Dogs play in a cozy ballpark in Portland, Maine, and are having a pretty good year – their 2-1 victory over the Binghamton Rumble Ponies was their fourth in a row and they’re in first place in the Northeast Division of the Eastern League.

I attended the Sunday afternoon ballgame during a summer stay in Maine, and I, too, went home satisfied, even though I have no rooting interest in the Sea Dogs, the Rumble Ponies, or any other Eastern League team, not even the Akron RubberDucks.

No, I was content to bask in the glow of minor league baseball, one of the glories of an American summer. The mascots loom large, the between-

innings entertainment is amusingly inventive, the scores don’t matter (much), and everything is geared to creating warm memories around the game that may not be the national pastime anymore, but still occupies an outsized place in the national consciousness.

At its best, minor league baseball combines the feel of a small-town parade and a meeting of the local Rotary Club, with nine innings of baseball interspersed.

The level of competition is, obviously, nothing like the majors; there’s no Shohei Ohtani on the field. On the other side of the coin, there’s usually no insane traffic and hassle, no highway-robbery prices (a hot dog at a Baltimore Orioles game costs \$8.25), and no jerks cursing at the top of their lungs.

You can get general admission tickets for a Portland

Sea Dog games for a whopping \$11.

The allure of minor league baseball in the ordinary course of things isn’t a high-stakes series against a bitter rival or a particular star. (The title of one book about the minors is “Where Nobody Knows Your Name.”) Rather, it’s the experience; everything is smaller scale and friendlier.

In Portland, the ballpark staff is so cheerful and solicitous you almost wouldn’t be surprised if they invited you to come by their place for a clambake after the game.

On this afternoon, the team was honoring Special Olympians from Maine. A number of the athletes



See LOWRY, Page 7

Licon to participate in TASB program

By Jeannie Meza-Chavez
Special to the Courier



– Photo courtesy San Elizario ISD

Sandra Licon

SAN ELIZARIO – Sandra Licon, Board Trustee Secretary of the San Elizario Independent School District (SEISD), has been chosen by the Texas Association of School Boards (TASB) to be a member of the Leadership TASB Class of 2024.

A letter from Dan Troxell, Executive Director of TASB, and Debbie Gillespie, President of the Board of Directors, states, “Leadership TASB was developed and designed for school board members by school board members in 1993 as part of TASB’s ongoing commitment to provide visionary leadership to Texas school boards.”

Licon is excited about serving. “I set a goal for myself years ago to participate in a Leadership TASB class, and seeing it come to fruition is humbling. I’m grateful for the opportunity to embark on this journey, align myself with

other Trustees from different Regions throughout the state of Texas with diverse demographics, district sizes, and needs, and sit-down converse, learn, and grow in leadership and governance in support of all our students and public schools,” she said

According to the Leadership TASB website, participants will visit “successful schools and investigate innovative programs and have the opportunity to listen to nationally known speakers and experts in education and business.”

Licon has served on the SEISD Board of Trustees since November of 2016. In her almost seven years of service she has held the offices of Board President (2019-23), Board Vice President (2018-19), and Board Secretary (2023). She also serves on the Mexican American School Board Association (MASBA) Board of Directors, representing the SEISD and Region 19 (El Paso County area).

“Sharing insight, networking, and showcasing our district and Region 19 schools is beneficial. I also want to bring back the knowledge gained and put it to use in service for our students and district. We always need to sharpen our tools,” Licon said. She adds a quote from Gloria Anzaldua, a famous Tejana, “I change myself; I change the world.”

In a recent SEISD Board Meeting, Board President Eduardo Chavez told Licon, “Thank you, because you have been a great leader, ma’am... I think it will be important that you participate in Leadership TASB and come back with many new ideas, so hopefully, we can move forward with that.”

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Loans

From Page 1

June, with a majority of justices ruling that he had exceeded his power.

That program would have canceled between \$10,000 and \$20,000 in federal loans for people making below a certain income.

Since then, the White House announced a new IDR plan that will lower monthly payments to 5 percent of a person’s discretionary income, down from 10 percent, and decrease the timeline for forgiveness down to 10 years of payments, from 20 or 25, if the initial loan was less than \$12,000.

The Department of Education is also looking into another rules process that would again allow debt forgiveness through a different law, the Higher Education Act. But it is likely that this attempt will also face legal challenges. Nonetheless, for the time being the Department of Education is moving forward with the plan to discharge debt for borrowers who qualify.



**Moments
in time**
THE HISTORY CHANNEL

- On Aug. 21, 1888, American inventor and former bank clerk William Seward Burroughs patented the adding machine. Two years earlier, Burroughs had co-founded the American Arithmometer Company to produce and sell the device, but the early models had to be recalled since he was the only person who could actually operate them.
- On Aug. 22, 1849, the first-ever air raid took place when Austria launched 200 unpiloted hot-air balloons carrying timed-release bombs against enemy defenses in Venice, Italy. Few casualties resulted, however, due to the unpredictable wind currents.
- On Aug. 23, 1990, Chancellor Helmut Kohl decided to prosecute women seeking abortions in East Germany. While the procedure was only carried out if the mother’s life was endangered in West Germany, it had been considered a reproductive right in East Germany and could be performed on anyone after the 12th week of pregnancy.
- On Aug. 24, 2013, Broadway actress Julie Harris died at age 87. The winner of several Emmy Awards, Harris was also one of the record-holders for most Tony Awards and was

known for her roles in movie and television productions, including “East of Eden” and the series “Knot’s Landing.”

- On Aug. 25, 1985, 13-year-old Samantha Smith, dubbed an “ambassador” to the Soviet Union, died in a plane crash. Samantha had achieved notoriety by penning a letter to Soviet leader Yuri Andropov in 1982 expressing her worry about the possibility of nuclear war between his country and the U.S., and by visiting the Soviet Union as his guest the following year.
- On Aug. 26, 1794, President George Washington decided it was necessary to subdue the Whiskey Rebellion, an insurrection of 6,000 men in a field near Pittsburgh that originated from the resentment of grain farmers after a federal tax was attached to their distillery products. While he originally led the responding procession of 13,000-plus soldiers, mastermind Alexander Hamilton took over early on.
- On Aug. 27, 1934, thousands of Chicago teachers finally received their back pay after working with no wages for long periods because the city did not have the funds to compensate them. Many lined up outside the bank well before it opened, with most teachers receiving more than \$1,000.

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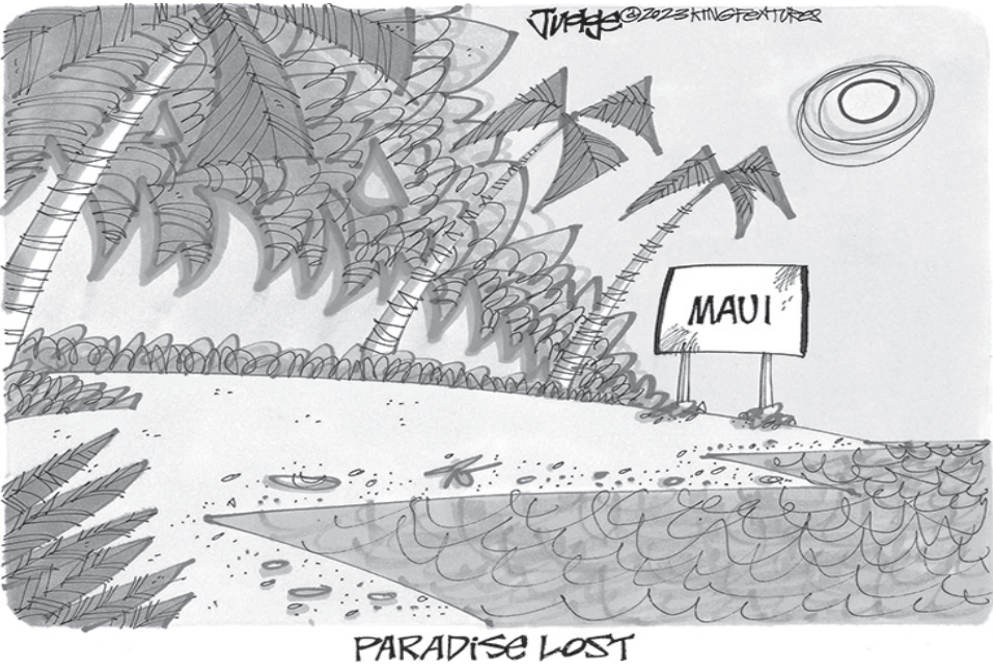
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Tornillo Independent School District
Notice of Public Meeting to Discuss
Budget and Proposed Tax Rate
– DATE CHANGE –

The Tornillo Independent School District published its Notice of Public Meeting to Discuss Budget and Proposed Tax Rate in full in the August 17, 2023 issue of the *West Texas County Courier*. All of the figures in the notice were and are correct. If you did not see the notice, a copy is available on line at www.wtxcc.com in the 2023 archive folder (08-17-23.pdf) or at www.tisd.us, the District’s website.

Due to a scheduling conflict the meeting scheduled for 5:30 P.M. on Wednesday, August 30, 2023 in the W.E. Neill Service Center, 19210 Cobb Avenue,Tornillo, Texas 79853 will be postponed until **5:30 P.M. on Thursday, August 31, 2023** at the same location. All agenda items that were scheduled for Wednesday, August 30, 2023, including the Public Meeting to Discuss Budget and Proposed Tax Rate, will be heard during a Special Board of Trustees Meeting on **5:30 P.M. on Thursday, August 31, 2023**.

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Haciendas del Norte
Water Improvement District
Notice of Public Hearing
on Tax Rate

The Haciendas Del Norte Water Improvement District will hold a public hearing on a proposed tax rate for the tax year 2023 on September 5, 2023 at 13931 Sagebrush Circle, El Paso, Texas 79938 at 7:30 pm. Your individual taxes may increase at a greater or lesser rate, or even decrease, depending on the tax rate that is adopted and on the change in the taxable value of your property in relation to the change in taxable of all other property. The change in the taxable value of your property in relation to the change in the taxable value of all other property determines the distribution of the tax burden among all property owners.

Visit Texas.gov/PropertyTaxes to find a link to your local property tax database on which you can easily access information regarding your property taxes, including information about proposed tax rates and scheduled public hearings of each entity that taxes your property.

- FOR** the proposal: Joseph McCandless Daniel Diaz
Michael Spicer
- AGAINST** the proposal: NONE
- PRESENT** and not voting: NONE
- ABSENT:** Ed Brown and George Gibson

The following table compares taxes on an average residence homestead in this taxing unit last year to taxes proposed on the average residence homestead this year.

| | Last Year | This Year |
|---|------------------|------------------|
| Total tax rate (per \$100 value) | \$0.175894/\$100 | \$0.047549/\$100 |
| | Adopted | Proposed |
| Difference in rates per \$100 of value | | \$ -0.128345 |
| Percentage increase / decrease in rates (+/-) | | -72.967% |
| Average appraised value | \$ 281,242 | \$ 305,988 |
| General homestead exemptions available (excluding 65 years of age or older or disabled person’s exemptions) | \$ – | \$ – |
| Average residence homestead taxable value | \$ 281,242 | \$ 305,988 |
| Tax on average residence homestead | \$ 494.68 | \$ 145.50 |
| Annual increase / decrease in taxes if proposed tax rate is adopted (+/-) | | – \$ 349.18 |
| and percentage of increase (+/-) | | – 70.59% |

NOTICE OF VOTE ON TAX RATE

If the district adopts a combined debt service, operation and maintenance and contract tax rate that would result in the taxes on the average residence homestead increasing by more than 3.5 percent, an election must be held to determine whether to approve the operation and maintenance tax rate under Section 49.23602, Water Code.

The 86th Texas Legislature modified the manner in which the voter-approval tax rate is calculated to limit the rate of growth of property taxes in the state.

Ramirez named Borrego ES assistant principal

By Jeannie Meza-Chavez
Special to the Courier

SAN ELIZARIO – Isabel Ramirez has been named the new assistant principal at Borrego Elementary School in the San Elizario Independent School District (SEISD). Ramirez has eighteen years of experience in education. She holds a Master of Arts in Education/Educational Administration and a Bachelor of Interdisciplinary Studies with a certification as a 4-8th generalist from the University of Texas at El Paso.

Borrego Elementary School’s new principal,

Martha Santana-Garcia, said, “Ms. Isabel Ramirez comes to us with a strong knowledge base in curriculum, instruction, and assessment. She will be a great asset in enhancing our PLC process.”

Ramirez served as an Intervention Coach in the Socorro Independent School District. She has experience as a middle school and AVID site teacher, a science fair coordinator, and a former 2012-2013 Campus Teacher of the Year at Spc. Rafael Hernando Middle School.

“As assistant principal, I hope to build a collaborative culture that ensures all students learn at high levels.

I will work to build strong relationships that inspire those around me to be the best version of themselves and instill the champion mentality in all. We will continue to make people, passion, and purpose our priority. Because we are A Proud Community of Champions – Soaring to Excellence,” said Ramirez.

Santana-Garcia and Ramirez will begin their first year as the campus administration of Borrego Elementary School and San Elizario ISD. Borrego Elementary School serves 3rd through 6th-grade students with an enrollment of 498. Santana-Garcia said of Ramirez, “I admire her



– Photo courtesy San Elizario ISD
Isabel Ramirez
confidence and obvious passion for our profession.”

Strange BUT TRUE

By Lucie Winborne

• In 2018, Nataraj Karate set a new Guinness World Record by stuffing 650 drinking straws in his mouth at once. He had to keep them there for at least 10 seconds to break the previous record

• Human blood cells have different lifespans.

• Dollar bills weren’t always green. Colonial money, for example, was tan with black or red ink. The Civil War government began using green ink to print paper money because it didn’t fade or easily decompose, which protected against counterfeiting.

• Auto manufacturer Volkswagen makes not just vehicles, but currywurst sausages.

• Following his successful bladder stone surgery, the relieved English diarist Samuel Pepys celebrated the anniversary of the event every year after.

• The first hot-air balloon flight, in 1783, took off with a sheep, a duck and a rooster on board, as it was unknown how the human body would react to flying at high altitudes. (They landed safely.)

• A company in Poland makes dinnerware out of wheat bran.

• Queen Elizabeth II visited the set of the TV series “Game of Thrones” but couldn’t be seated on the throne due to an old rule that “the ruling monarch can’t sit on a foreign throne.”

• While it’s not the longest word in the English language, a study of 1.7 million samples of everyday English found that the longest word you’re likely to encounter on a daily basis is “uncharacteristically.”

• Ants leave pheromone trails when they walk that serve as maps for other ants.

• Although Saturn is the second-largest planet in our solar system, it’s also the lightest, and could float in water because it’s basically a giant gas ball – if we had a bathtub big enough to hold it.

Thought for the Day: “Laws control the lesser man. Right conduct controls the greater one.”

– Chinese proverb

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Briefs

From Page 1

They range from housing costs and income growth to the education rate and quality of hospitals. Texas was rated 37th in the report, ranking (1-Best; 25-Avg.):

- 24th – Housing Costs;
- 45th – Homeownership Rate;
- 40th – % of Population in Poverty;
- 31st – Income Growth;
- 50th – % of Insured Population;
- 40th – % of Adults in Fair or Poor

Health;

- 49th – Avg. Weekly Work Hours; and
 - 1st – Restaurants per Capita.
- Visit <https://wallethub.com/edu/best-states-to-live-in/62617> for the full report.

– Diana Polk

Hyena paddle

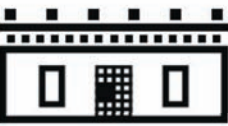
Hyenas look a lot like a dog but they are not canines; they are of a species all their own, known as Hyaenidae. You can find lots of them on a visit to Kruger National Park, in South

Africa. All you have to do is to stand by a waterhole and you are likely to see a hyena waiting for prey. That’s what tourist Lambert Fourie did and, sure enough, a hyena appeared. But it wasn’t there to hunt; it was there to swim. In fact, as Fourie put it, “I could hardly believe my eyes as the hyena proceeded to perform what could only be described as a backstroke. All four paws in the air, he was splashing about without a care in the world.” He caught it on tape, a video that has gone viral on the internet.

– John Grimaldi



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SEPTEMBER

Sept 6th: Water Wednesday 6 - 7 pm

Sept 8th: Bee Real Festival 6 - 8 pm

Sept 15th - 17th: San Elizario Fiestas

Sept. 23rd: Founders Luncheon



OCTOBER

Oct 15th: Dia De Los Muertos Exhibit Opening

Oct 28th: Trunk or Treat



WWW.SANELIZARIOGENEALOGY.ORG

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CryptoQuip Answer

Game-filled campus hangout that’s always kept in a state of disarray: The wreck hall.

Paseo del Este Municipal
Utility District No. 10
of El Paso County

Notice of Public Hearing on Tax Rate

The Paseo Del Este Municipal Utility District No. 10 of El Paso County will hold a public hearing on a proposed tax rate for the tax year 2023 on Thursday, September 7 , 2023, at 12:00 p.m., in person at the offices of Inframark, LLC, 13034 Eastlake Boulevard, Suites D-E, El Paso, Texas 79928; via means of a toll-free conference number 1 (888) 599-1357; Access Code: 8529; and via Zoom videoconference Meeting ID: 863 2064 8054; Passcode: 260902. Your individual taxes may increase at a greater or lesser rate, or even decrease, depending on the tax rate that is adopted and on the change in the taxable value of your property in relation to the change in taxable value of all other property. The change in the taxable value of your property in relation to the change in the taxable value of all other property determines the distribution of the tax burden among all property owners.

Visit Texas.gov/PropertyTaxes to find a link to your local property tax database on which you can easily access information regarding your property taxes, including information about proposed tax rates and scheduled public hearings of each entity that taxes your property.

- FOR the proposal:

Directors Luis Ortega, Ysrael Valencia and George Mendez
- AGAINST the proposal:

NONE
- PRESENT and not voting:

NONE
- ABSENT:

Direcor Spence

The following table compares taxes on an average residence homestead in this taxing unit last year to taxes proposed on the average residence homestead this year.

| | Last Year | This Year |
|---|--------------|--------------|
| Total tax rate (per \$100 value) | 0.6947/\$100 | 0.6810/\$100 |
| | Adopted | Proposed |
| Difference in rates per \$100 of value | \$ (0.0137) | |
| Percentage increase / decrease in rates (+/–) | – % | |
| Average appraised value | \$ 258,819 | \$ 285,153 |
| General exemptions available (excluding 65 years of age or older or disabled person’s exemptions) | \$ – | \$ – |
| Average residence homestead taxable value | \$ 258,819 | \$ 285,153 |
| Tax on average residence homestead | \$ 1,798.02 | \$ 1,941.89 |
| Annual increase / decrease in taxes if proposed tax rate is adopted (+/–) | + \$143.88 | |
| and percentage of increase (+/–) | + 8.00% | |

NOTICE OF TAXPAYERS’ RIGHT TO ELECTION TO REDUCE TAX RATE

If the District adopts a combined debt service, operation and maintenance, and contract tax rate that would result in the taxes on the average residence homestead increasing by more than eight percent, the qualified voters of the district by petition may require that an election be held to determine whether to reduce the operation and maintenance tax rate to the voter-approval tax rate under Section 49.23603, Water Code.

The 86th Texas Legislature modified the manner in which the voter-approval tax rate is calculated to limit the rate of growth of property taxes in the state.

Paseo del Este Municipal
Utility District No. 11
of El Paso County

Notice of Public Hearing on Tax Rate

The Paseo Del Este Municipal Utility District No. 11 of El Paso County will hold a public hearing on a proposed tax rate for the tax year 2023 on Thursday, September 14, 2023, at 11:30 a.m., in person at the offices of TRE & Associates, LLC, 110 Mesa Park Drive, Suite 200, El Paso, Texas 79912; via means of a toll-free conference number 1 (888) 599-1357; Access Code: 8529; and via Zoom videoconference Meeting ID: 897 8913 5942; Passcode: 363902. Your individual taxes may increase at a greater or lesser rate, or even decrease, depending on the tax rate that is adopted and on the change in the taxable value of your property in relation to the change in taxable value of all other property. The change in the taxable value of your property in relation to the change in the taxable value of all other property determines the distribution of the tax burden among all property owners.

Visit Texas.gov/PropertyTaxes to find a link to your local property tax database on which you can easily access information regarding your property taxes, including information about proposed tax rates and scheduled public hearings of each entity that taxes your property.

- FOR the proposal:

Directors Jose R. Soto, Cynthia Ruiz, Alexandra Treviño, Jon Muir and Marcela Quintana
- AGAINST the proposal:

NONE
- PRESENT and not voting:

NONE
- ABSENT:

NONE

The following table compares taxes on an average residence homestead in this taxing unit last year to taxes proposed on the average residence homestead this year.

| | Last Year | This Year |
|---|--------------|--------------|
| Total tax rate (per \$100 value) | 0.7496/\$100 | 0.7387/\$100 |
| | Adopted | Proposed |
| Difference in rates per \$100 of value | \$ (0.01) | |
| Percentage increase / decrease in rates (+/–) | – % | |
| Average appraised value | \$ 189,108 | \$ 207,246 |
| General exemptions available (excluding 65 years of age or older or disabled person’s exemptions) | \$ – | \$ – |
| Average residence homestead taxable value | \$ 189,108 | \$ 207,246 |
| Tax on average residence homestead | \$ 1,417.55 | \$ 1,530.93 |
| Annual increase / decrease in taxes if proposed tax rate is adopted (+/–) | + \$ 113.37 | |
| and percentage of increase (+/–) | + 8.00% | |

NOTICE OF TAXPAYERS’ RIGHT TO ELECTION TO REDUCE TAX RATE

If the District adopts a combined debt service, operation and maintenance, and contract tax rate that would result in the taxes on the average residence homestead increasing by more than eight percent, the qualified voters of the district by petition may require that an election be held to determine whether to reduce the operation and maintenance tax rate to the voter-approval tax rate under Section 49.23603, Water Code.

The 86th Texas Legislature modified the manner in which the voter-approval tax rate is calculated to limit the rate of growth of property taxes in the state.

Comix

OUT ON A LIMB

By Gary Kopervas



AMBER WAVES

By Dave T. Phipps



THE SPATS

By Jeff Pickering



TIGER

By Bud Blake



Lowry

From Page 2

were part of a group that threw out first pitches, and one sang the national anthem, in a particularly heartfelt and moving rendition.

Meanwhile, the team's mascot, Slugger, who looks like a dog but is supposed to be a harbor seal, performed in skits between innings, including his tradition of losing a race with a kid around the bases. (His entry in the Mascot Hall of Fame puts his lifetime record in these races at 0-1,928.)

It all happens at Hadlock Field, considered one of the best of the minor league parks. It opened in 1994 but feels like more of a throwback. It is nestled among the city's streets, the way the classic major league ballparks once were. Railroad tracks run behind left field and an old brick exhibition center abuts the right-field line.

With a capacity of about 7,000, there isn't a bad seat in the place. Balls fouled back

behind home plate routinely leave the facility entirely. In a homage to the Green Monster in Fenway Park, left field has a 37-foot-high green fence topped by a Citgo sign and giant Coke bottle.

On Sundays, the Sea Dogs let kids under age 16 run the bases after games. Given the number of families in attendance, it's tantamount to inviting half the ballpark to file onto the well-manicured field. Hundreds of kids make the circuit around first and to home – where just minutes before the professionals were playing – at top speed. Pure. Joy.

And, oh, yeah, Portland starting pitcher Isaac Coffey struck out nine, and catcher Nathan Hickey hit a two-run homer in the victory.

It's always one, two, three strikes, you're out, at the old ball game, but the minor leagues offer a particularly charming version of the timeless game.

Rich Lowry is editor of the National Review. (c) 2023 by King Features Synd., Inc.

Signs that can indicate COPD

DEAR DR. ROACH: What signs and/or symptoms do you need for a doctor to determine whether you have chronic obstructive pulmonary disease (COPD)? – R.K.



The diagnosis of COPD is suspected in people who are at risk for the disease and note one of two cardinal symptoms: cough or dyspnea. (A “symptom” is what a patient identifies by history, while a “sign” is noted on a physical exam. A cough can be both a symptom and a sign.) Dyspnea is usually described as shortness of breath, a sensation that a person can’t get enough air, like they have just run very fast. Some people with COPD may have very subtle symptoms.

Smoking is the biggest risk factor for COPD, but there are other causes, including other chemical exposures (industrial exposures and home cooking fires are less common now, but are historically important causes of COPD); scarring lung disease; and a genetic cause, a condition called alpha-1 antitrypsin deficiency.

The diagnosis is confirmed most often by tests of lung function, which are breathing tests to look at the physiology of the lung and its ability to exchange oxygen and carbon dioxide. Sometimes the diagnosis can be supported by an X-ray or CT scan, but pulmonary function testing is the best way to determine the severity of COPD.

We do have ways of slowing down lung decline in COPD, one way being smoking cessation for current smokers, but some of the medications we use also help reduce ongoing damage.

DEAR DR. ROACH: Please help! Is it true that Trulicity may cause serious side effects, including thyroid tumors and cancer, as well as pancreatitis? – J.R.

Dulaglutide (Trulicity), like semaglutide (Ozembic) and liraglutide (Victoza), are in a class of drugs called GLP-1 receptor agonists, which have several actions, such as increasing insulin release by the pancreas in response to meals. Initial studies on laboratory rats did show an increase in an unusual type of thyroid cancer, but studies have not yet shown an increased rate in humans. Still, people at an increased risk for this type of thyroid cancer (having a family history of medullary thyroid cancer or of multiple endocrine neoplasia, type 2A or 2B) are not recommended to take this medication.

Similarly, there are reports of pancreatitis in people taking this medication, but it isn't clear whether the medicine is responsible for the pancreatitis. It's unwise to use this class of medication in people with a history of pancreatitis.

DEAR DR. ROACH: I am 93 and in excellent health. I am taking atorvastatin daily. My cholesterol results are excellent. I am wondering if I should continue the statin. – B.F.

If you were started on a statin because of blockages in the arteries, especially if you had a heart attack or stroke, I recommend continuing it. If you have been on the medication to prevent a heart attack or stroke, I say it is up to you. If the medication is causing side effects, or if it really bothers you to take it, you can certainly stop.

However, I believe the atorvastatin continues to reduce your risk of heart attack and still gives you some benefit. There is no need to stop it simply because of your age.

Remember, your cholesterol results are excellent on the medicine and aren't going to be as good if you stop it.

Dr. Roach regrets that he is unable to answer individual questions, but will incorporate them in the column whenever possible. Readers may email questions to ToYourGoodHealth@med.cornell.edu. (c) 2023 North America Synd., Inc. All Rights Reserved.



Moore Texas by Roger Moore
August 24, 1917: Gov. Jim Ferguson is impeached. His fatal mistake was vetoing funding for UT and angering powerful UT alumni.

CryptoQuip

This is a simple substitution cipher in which each letter used stands for another. If you think that X equals O, it will equal O throughout the puzzle. Solution is accomplished by trial and error.

Clue: M equals H

HXRK-EOAAKJ VXRZTP
MXDHQTL LMXL'P XAFXWP
SKZL OD X PLXLK QE
JOPXBBXW: LMK FBKVS MXAA.

Answer Page 4

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Weekly SUDOKU

by Linda Thistle

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

Place a number in the empty boxes in such a way that each row across, each column down and each small 9-box square contains all of the numbers from one to nine.

DIFFICULTY THIS WEEK: ♦♦

♦ Moderate ♦♦ Challenging

Answer Page 2

♦♦♦ HOO BOY!

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How can scams go on this long?



by Freddy Groves

A grandson collected his grandmother’s survivor benefits for 30 years after her death.

How, one wonders, can that happen? Is no one checking to be sure those who receive benefits are still living?

In this case the survivor benefits, based on the woman’s marriage to a veteran, kept going to her bank account. And the grandson kept spending the money, \$1,100 per month for 30 years. He pleaded guilty, as he should have, but was only charged with one count of stealing government property in a plea deal. For that he could get 10 years.

Then there was the woman who kept a scam going for 48 years after her mother died. Apparently no one at the Department of Veterans Affairs did the math and calculated how old the woman was. The daughter

just kept signing checks and sending handwritten letters asking for address changes and saying she was unable to find her mother’s Social Security number. She’ll be required to pay back over \$400,000, but there’s no jail sentence in this case. The daughter is now 76 years old.

If you want to do the right thing, after the death of a veteran or someone receiving survivor benefits, call the VA. Just call 800-827-1000. You might be eligible to receive benefits yourself, depending on the relationship. Or, if you delay and benefits have been sent out already, you’ll need to make arrangements to send the money back. In the case of a disabled veteran, you also might be asked to return any equipment issued by the VA, such as wheelchairs.

It’s the same with Social Security. Call them at 800-772-1213 to stop the payments.

Do the right thing... before the authorities come knocking at your door. One thing to keep in mind: Even if the amount of money you

steal is less than \$100, you could still go to jail for a year.

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• “To help our children learn the placement of states, we glued a map to a piece of cardboard, then used a razor knife to cut each state out along its lines. This created a puzzle. It made learning the states fun, and we wrote the capitals on the backs, so we learned those, too.” – M.A. in Georgia

• Keep extra magazines in the car to read when you have to wait or while sitting in line at the bank or fast-food drive-through.

• “I love self-sticking notes to stay organized. I use them on my bathroom vanity mirror so that I can preplan my day in my head while getting ready.” – E.T. in Georgia

• “I purchased extra-large safety pins and used scraps of fabric to designate towels for family members. I wrote each of our names in washable ink on several ‘tags,’ which are then attached to our bathing towel. I can tell in an instant who has left his or her towel on the floor/bed/etc. And I am washing a lot less towels now.” – D.L. in Ohio

• “If you have trouble with your pantyhose, give them a spray with an anti-static spray first. Then put them on. They seem to slide up better, and it’s much easier to get a grip on them. Also, it seems to keep them from running as easily.” – D.V. in Washington

• “I had a few old mouse pads that were lying around. I used embroidery floss to stitch a few together, and I use them as a knee pad in the garden. The bonus is that it rolls up for storage!” – A.C. in New Mexico

• Keep and wash thoroughly any vegetable or meat trays (discard broken ones or pierced ones). They can be used as paint tray for small projects around the house, or for the children.

Send your tips to Now Here’s a Tip, 628 Virginia Drive, Orlando, FL 32803. (c) 2023 King Features Synd., Inc.

GO FIGURE! by Linda Thistle

The idea of Go Figure is to arrive at the figures given at the bottom and right-hand columns of the diagram by following the arithmetic signs in the order they are given (that is, from left to right and top to bottom). Use only the numbers below the diagram to complete its blank squares and use each of the nine numbers only once.

DIFFICULTY: ★

★ Moderate ★★ Difficult

★★★ GO FIGURE!

Answer Page 4

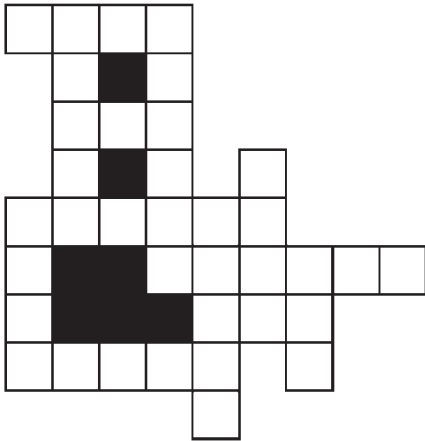
| | | | | | | |
|----|---|----|---|----|--|----|
| | × | | - | | | 33 |
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| 18 | | 25 | | 30 | | |

2 3 4 5 5 6 7 8 9

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EDZ
TCZNIH
LEMPI
HDAC
NARIZE
♥ISP
ENGE
ENDCU
ISD
OHLTEC
ZEHLA
CZNI



Answer Page 4

Unscramble these twelve letter strings to form each into an ordinary word (ex. HAGNEC becomes CHANGE). Prepare to use only ONE word from any marked (♥) letter string as each unscrambles into more than one word (ex. ♥RATHE becomes HATER or EARTH or HEART). Fit each string’s word either across or down to knot all twelve strings together.

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