

# Marfa THE BIG BEND Sentinel



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Marfa, Presidio County, Texas

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## News Notes

### Four more file for city council

By JOHN DANIEL GARCIA  
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MARFA – The May 6 Marfa City Council election is heating up, with the field of candidates expanding from one to five Marfa residents having now filed for office.

Alberto Garcia Jr., Buck Johnston, Mary Lou Saxon, and Raul Lara have filed their paperwork to be included on the ballot alongside Saarin Keck, who was the first candidate to file.

Current council members Mark Scott and Manny Baeza, whose seats are up for election, have both stated they are undecided on running to keep their seats.

Outgoing council member Gen-

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### County candidates file campaign finance reports

By JOHN DANIEL GARCIA  
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PRESIDIO COUNTY - A majority of candidates for Presidio County offices are now current on campaign finance reports.

County judge candidates Cinderela Guevara and Dina Jo Losoya, Pct. 2 commissioner incumbent Eloy Aranda, Pct. 1 Justice of the Peace candidates David Beebe and Hester Ann White, county treasurer candidates Frances Garcia and Katie Sanchez, Pct. 4 commissioner incumbent Loretto Vasquez, unopposed district clerk incumbent Virginia Pallares, and Pct. 2 Justice of the Peace Juanita Bishop have each filed reports due 30 days before the March 6 primary election.

Candidates who did not file campaign finance reports include county judge candidate John Ferguson, all three pct. 3 commissioner candidates - Edgar Ramirez, Presidio police officer Jose Cabezuola, and retired educator Roberto Lujan, pct. 2 commissioner candidate Margarito

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### Presidio County candidate forum is February 19

MARFA – The Presidio County Democratic Party will host a candidate forum, chairman Max Kabat said.

The forum is set for 7pm Monday February 19 – Presidents Day – at the Crowley Theater.

### Brewster County candidate forum is Saturday

ALPINE – The Brewster County Democratic Party Executive Committee will host a candidate forum for the public to meet and hear from Brewster County candidates running in the March 6 Democratic Party Election.

John Waters, publisher of the Big Bend Gazette, will moderate the forum.

The forum will take place at 2pm this Saturday at the Alpine Independent School District Auditorium at 704 West Sul Ross Avenue in Alpine.

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## Construction crews ready to build Presidio-Ojinaga vehicle bridge

PRESIDIO – Construction crews at the Presidio International Port of Entry are gearing up to begin work on the vehicle bridge expansion project, with equipment arriving at the site along the Rio Grande.

According to Presidio International Port Authority Executive Director Jake Geisbrecht, construction on the bridge expansion will begin in March, with 260 days allowed for construction of the United State's side of the bridge.

The U.S. will be responsible for about 75% of the bridge, and Mexico will construct the portion south of the demarcation line.

Along with the construction of the “two-lane twin

bridge southbound structure,” the expansion will include the widening of pedestrian sidewalks along the bridge and into Presidio, leading up to the Presidio Visitor Center.

According to a letter from Texas Department of Transportation area engineer Chris Weber, the cost of construction is \$6,854,362.

Earth Builders, inc. of Decatur, Texas has been contracted to construct the bridge.

A future project, Geisbrecht added, will be the reconstruction of the current international bridge, which he says currently has “maintenance issues.”

TXDoT, he added, will fund the future project.



(photo by and courtesy of ROD PONTON)

Equipment lining up in Presidio to construct the new bridge to Ojinaga.

## ROMP celebrates decade of responsible pet ownership

By JOHN DANIEL GARCIA  
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MARFA – Responsible Ownership of Marfa Pets (ROMP) will reach a milestone this year as the organization celebrates a decade of working to eradicate Marfa's homeless pet population through their Stop Pet Overpopulation Today (SPOT) program and their Marfa Community Cats program.

According to ROMP Executive Director Kathy Compton, the organization sprung from a group of about 15 Marfa citizens who were concerned with the booming feral cat and homeless dog population in the city of Marfa.

The initial idea, she said, was to host fundraisers for the Jeff Davis County Humane Society (now known as Grand Companions) in Fort Davis.

“Back then, they weren't accepting animals at the City of Marfa shelter, so we thought we could raise funds for them and they could accept Marfa animals if they had more resources,” Compton told the Big Bend Sentinel. “But what we wound up doing was focus on needs not being met by other organizations in the area, which is a spay and neuter program. Right now, ROMP is the only organization in the TransPecos, other than El Paso, that is dedicated to spay and neuter services.”

ROMP, she explained, offers vouchers for sterilization services through area veterinarians, who normally charge around \$200 for the procedures.

Though such services in cities run between \$25 - \$50 in areas with a large population, Compton explained, spay/neuter charges in rural regions

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(photo by VASHTI ARMENDARIZ)

Two young boys participate in the Alpine March for Life this past Saturday.

## Faithful defend life in Alpine march

By VASHTI ARMENDARIZ

ALPINE - Church hymns filled the street on Saturday as dozens of Alpine residents took part in the sixth annual pro-life march, advocating the defend life movement that began in 1973.

According to Our Lady of Peace Catholic Church Deacon Paul Lister, the march is in response to Roe vs. Wade, the landmark Texas case decided by the Supreme Court that recognized a woman's constitutional right to abortion.

The march, hosted by the Knights of Columbus, began with an opening prayer on the Brewster County courthouse lawn, continued along Fifth Avenue, and concluded with a speech from Bishop Ray Sutton at the Catholic church.

Sutton is Bishop Coadjutor in the Diocese of Mid America of the Reformed Episcopal Church and is Rector of the Church of the Holy Communion in Dallas.

Coinciding with his pastoral visit, Sutton agreed to be a speaker and share some of his wisdom and biblical knowledge.

“Let love be without hypocrisy, abhor what is evil and cling to what is good,” the Bishop said. He noted that evil hurts people, and abortion stands as proof because it “takes the most innocent life, the unborn child.”

“Science has now caught up with what God has said all along,” Sutton reasoned, “the reality of life in the womb.”

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## Valentine student's 'Love Station' stamp seen by thousands

By JIM STREET

VALENTINE – A seventh grader at Valentine Junior High School designed this year's “Love Station” special postmark stamp for the Valentine Post Office.

Isabel Guillory designed the stamp, which will be canceled and sent out to mail recipients literally around the world.

Valentine Postmaster Leslie Williams said Isabel's design will be seen by several thousand mail customers. She added that at the end of the school year, she normally presents the winning designer with a plaque with the canceled stamp and saying how many countries the stamp reached.

She said last year, the post office canceled and sent out nearly 13,000 special canceled stamps and the number has been as high as 30,000.

The new stamp features a railroad track at the bottom with lettering proclaiming “Valentine 79854 February 14, 2018 Love Station.”

It includes mountains and the sun.

The Valentine Post Office has already received Valentine cards requesting the cancellation stamp, which has become world famous.



The 2018 Valentine Love Station cancellation stamp.

Thousands of customers each year send their cards to Valentine to get the special stamp and the Valentine cancellation and the Valentine City Council selects the stamp each year from entries designed by Valentine ISD junior high and high school students.

Isabel said she is “excited about winning the contest. I really am.”

The daughter of Veronica and Cruz Mendez, she said this is her first year in Valentine, having moved from Van Horn.

“I really like it here,” she said. “It is so much better than Van Horn.”

Beyond school, about the only thing Isabel has decided is that she will go to college.

“My mom didn't give me a choice for that,” she said. She was asked what it is like knowing her art work will be seen around the world.

“That's what intrigues me the most,” she said.

To have the special stamp on your Valentine's Day cards, mail your addressed and stamped card inside

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The Marfa train depot in 1907.

## All aboard!

## Amtrak considering Marfa stop

By JOHN DANIEL GARCIA  
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MARFA – Thanks to a letter writing campaign from San Antonio resident and Marfa fan Bruce Flohr, Amtrak officials have begun to discuss the possibility of moving a Sunset Limited stop from Sanderson to Marfa.

According to Flohr, a former Southern Pacific administrator, his campaign to bring a stop to Marfa began after taking a train to Alpine from San Antonio.

Upon arrival, he said, he and his wife were given a ride to Marfa from Marfa Visitor Center director Minerva Lopez, who told the Flohrs of the time there was a stop in Marfa.

“From what [Lopez] said, she believed the reason there isn't an Amtrak stop in Marfa is because Union Pacific said Amtrak was going to be defunded,” he said. “That didn't sit well with me.”

During his trip, Flohr began his research and spent time at the Sanderson stop to see the platform at the stop.

“Nobody got on or off in Sanderson. The stop lasted for around 28 seconds,” he explained. “There's also no platform, no building, no outdoor lighting, nor is it in compliance with the [American Disability Act]. There would definitely be a demand for a stop in Marfa. It's not that complex of an issue.”

Flohr received his first letter back from Amtrak Long Distance Service Line Vice President Bob Dorsch, which said the company would look into the issue in its long-term plan, with no decision to be made for between

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