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APRIL 18, 2024

## County Fire Chief Submits Plan to Improve Response Times

By Jesse Jones, Sandoval Signpost

Honors and annual reports were on the table at the Sandoval County Commission meeting on April 10.

Sandoval County Sheriff Jesse James Casaus and Chief Deputy Officer Allen Mills took the lead at the meeting by handing out awards and promotions to law enforcement personnel and presenting their 2023 annual report to the commission.

Highlights from the ceremony included Deputy AJ Noriega being named Deputy of the Year for 2023. Sergeant Rene Alvarado also received the Life-Saving Award for using the Heimlich maneuver to save a young girl who was choking on food.

### Increasing response times

Fire Chief Eric Masterson submitted a plan to commissioners for approval of a Federal Emergency Management Agency Staffing for Adequate Fire and Emergency Response (SAFER) grant.

According to Masterson, the SAFER grant was intended to cover firefighter personnel costs for three years. For the past four years, the county has not been successful in securing the grant due to intense competition and limited federal funding.

— See RESPONSE on page 3

## Placitas Residents Concerned Over Proposed Forest Service Plan



(Courtesy Santa Fe National Forest)

By Jesse Jones, Sandoval Signpost

A proposed plan by the Forest Service to mitigate fire risks in the Sandia Ranger District has sparked concerns among residents and stakeholders in the Placitas Canyon.

Jon Couch, who serves as the Commissioner of the Los Huertas Community Ditch and is an Associate Supervisor for the Coronado Soil and Water Conservation District (CSWCD), strongly supports the reduction of fire hazards in the nearly 3,000 acres of Sandia Ranger District.

What the citizens do not support, is the proposal by the Cibola National Forest and the National Grasslands division to include prescribed burning in Las Huertas Canyon as part of the North Sandia Fuels Reduction Project.

“There’s just a whole lot of people that are pretty much freaked out about the possibility of burning down the canyon and then the fire working its way down to our homes,” said Couch.

Earlier this month, the *Signpost* reported the Forest Service plans to restore, maintain and enhance forested conditions across about 2,956 acres in the Sandia Ranger District, spanning Sandoval and

Bernalillo counties and encompassing the Sandia Mountain communities located north of I-40. The plan aims to mitigate the risk of catastrophic fires by employing hand and mechanical treatments and prescribed fires across the entire area.

Couch, along with Susan Harrelson, a retired Forest Service silviculturist, proposed an alternative plan that does not involve prescribed burning.

He said the biggest concern with the Forest Service’s plan is the terrain’s steepness and the vegetation’s density. If they thin and cut down trees, turning them into slash, they intend to pile them within 300 feet of the road for burning. It would make it problematic due to the steep terrain. There is a risk of embers being ejected from the fires, which could spread to areas that are not intended for fuel treatment, such as the wilderness area or other parts of the canyon.

“A lot of people are upset about this say they’re aware of the controlled burn that got out of hand up north and they don’t really have much faith in the Forest Service’s ability to contain a controlled burn,” said Couch. “Their main concern is that once they start a prescribed fire, they

can’t put it out.”

Couch, a former firefighter in New Mexico and California noted that in his experience, the largest fires he battled often originated as controlled burns. Incidents like the Calf Canyon/ Hermit’s Peak Fire which burned 341,735 acres near Las Vegas are not isolated incidents, frequently prescribed fires get out of hand.

Couch and Harrison’s plan proposed thinning trees, cutting them into manageable pieces and dragging them to Highway 165 for the public to harvest for firewood. The remaining slash would be chipped and removed from the area. Chipping the slash in the forest doesn’t eliminate fuel.

If the alternative plan is implemented, Couch said a contractor would likely be needed for the forest thinning process, requiring funding secured through a federal grant.

### Get involved

He said the group is working on organizing a community meeting involving the Forest Service and all stakeholders in the canyon and inviting the public. They are also inviting the two senators to attend the meeting. The group is awaiting confirmation from the Forest Service before they announce a date and location.

Maps for the North Sandia Fuels Reduction Project can be found on the Cibola National Forest & National Grasslands project page at [fs.usda.gov/project/cibola/?project=65654](https://fs.usda.gov/project/cibola/?project=65654)

Forest Service officials are asking the public to submit their comments on the proposed plan. All comments are due no later than May 3 at 5 p.m.

Written comments must be submitted to District Ranger Crystal Powell, ATTN: North Sandia Fuels Reduction Project, Sandia Ranger District, 11776 HWY 337, Tijeras, New Mexico 87059.

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# Placitas Studio Tour Features 79 Artists, 61 Studios and 7 Neighborhoods

*‘The Studio Tour has become a way of seeing the art world of Placitas grow, bloom and flourish’*

Rebecca Cohen, Placitas Studio Tour

Why don't they call the Placitas Studio Tour (PST) “Made in Placitas?” The local focus is what distinguishes this annual Mother's Day weekend event from other New Mexico studio tours. No interlopers! Fortunately, within the confines of tiny Placitas, there is no lack of artistic talent and no need (or desire) to jury artists who wish to participate. Rather, the PST is an inclusive opportunity for all artists who live in or maintain a studio in Placitas to share their work with friends, neighbors and, amazingly, visitors from all over the US who find their way annually to this creative community. In past years three to four thousand people have been welcomed during the free, two-day exhibit and sale now in its 27th year. The 2024 tour will occur on Saturday and Sunday, May 11 and 12 from 10:00 am to 5:00 p.m. and promises myriad opportunities to see and purchase great art.

All that is required of participating artists is an entry fee to help defray costs and a willingness to help this amazing all-volunteer-run organization promote, present, and dismantle the tour each year. Whether this means placing those familiar yellow and blue signs throughout the community and returning them to the storage facility, selling advertising for the brochures and distributing them, promoting the tour on individual websites, or, most recently, assisting with the PST preview exhibition at the Placitas Community Library, opportunities are available so that all artists have a sense of ownership of the event. They benefit from exposure to, interaction with, and feedback from potential collectors. “Each year the Studio Tour has become a way of seeing the art world of Placitas grow, bloom and flourish,” says artist Lisa Chernoff.

“For us,” says Mary Hofmann speaking for herself and husband Karl, both ceramicists, “the best part of the tour is being part of the community. We enjoy getting to see and visit with people who come every year.” The Hofmanns as well as Chernoff and Bunny Bowen have opened their studios every year since the tour began. Bowen, who just stepped down from the PST board and remains a participating artist, was honored for her service by having her work featured on the cover of the



(Courtesy Placitas Studio Tour)

2024 brochure. She says, “It has been inspiring to see how the tour has brought us all together, as we connect with each other as volunteers.”

“The PST is a community cornerstone,” says Nancy Holley, current president of the 7-member PST board. She stresses that, with the help of participating artists, the tour gives back to the entire community through partnerships such as the ones with the Placitas Elementary School Art Department and the Placitas Community Library. During the month of April, select artists participating in the tour have work in the display case on the bottom level of the Albuquerque Sunport. Local vendors Placitas Pizza and Chicky's Coffee will sell food and drinks at La Estrella Event Center (664 Hwy 165 adjacent to the Placitas Post Office) during the event, and they and all sponsors receive exposure throughout the year when the brochure is included in welcome packets distributed to promote life in Placitas.

The event has come a long way since Riha Rothberg and a small group of Placitas artists organized the first tour 27 years ago. In its first year, 36 artists showed their work in 26 different studios. This year's tour features more than twice that number. A total of 79 artists employing paint, glass, steel, wood, fiber, photography, clay, mixed media, etc. will be displaying their work in 61 individual studios in seven designated Placitas neighborhoods. Eighteen artists are first-timers.

The tour is divided into seven, color-coded neighborhoods to help visitors locate the studios they want to visit. The tour map is posted online

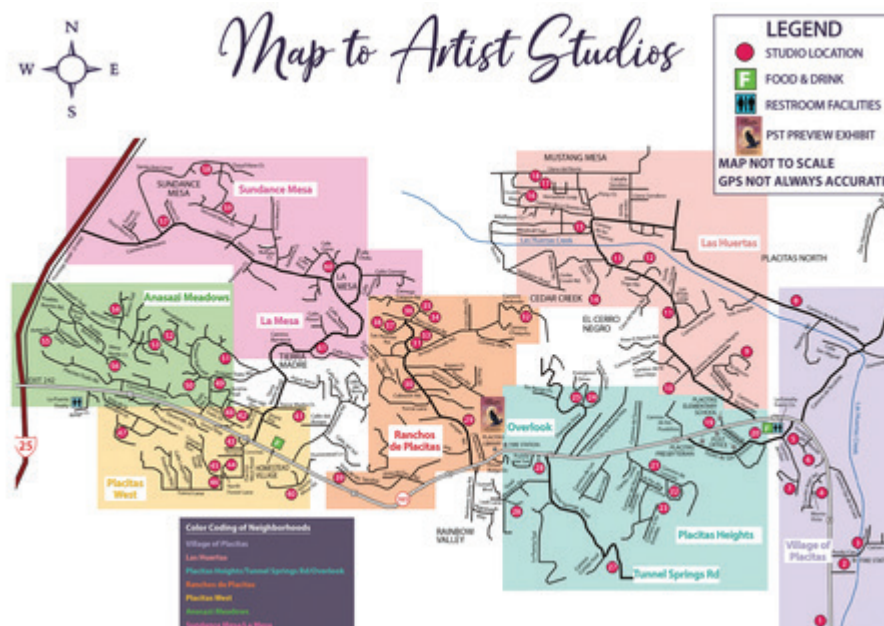
(placitastudiotour.org) as well as in brochures available in advance of the tour at select locations including La Puerta Real Estate, Homestead Village and all studio locations. Maps on the Placitas Studio Tour website offer the added advantage of being able to click on individual neighborhoods and from there access links to the artist or artists in each area whose work is of interest. The PST Facebook pages are filled with additional in-studio photos of artists on the tour and samples of their work that supplement the individual examples in the brochure and on the tour poster.

Helping visitors to take in as much as possible of the breadth of the tour would be a logistical nightmare for less dedicated volunteers. While visitors' efforts to take in every stop on the 2-day tour would otherwise be

daunting—likely impossible!—tour organizers have made every effort to help refine their search for the art they absolutely don't want to miss. The process began with “Taste of the Tour—Meet and Greet” in February, a public event at La Estrella Event Center where samples of work by participating artists were exhibited and a raffle raised \$600 that was gifted to the Placitas Elementary School Art Department.

But perhaps the best way to consider the seemingly endless possibilities is to visit the Placitas Studio Tour Preview Exhibit hosted by the Placitas Community Library beginning April 20 through May 12 where one work by each of the artists on the tour will be exhibited. The work will be organized by neighborhoods so people can chart a logical course after noting the studios they don't want to miss. Works exhibited in the library, which will be open during tour hours both Saturday and Sunday, may be purchased at the library and will benefit the artist as if purchased in an individual studio.

The only downside for artists on the tour is their inability to leave their own studios to compare notes and see what other artists are up to. But worry not. The PST board has also taken this into account and organized both a preview of the library exhibition exclusively for artists and an after-tour that allows artists who sign up to survey a sampling of other studios. What will they think of next?





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Sandoval County Sheriff doles out deputy's awards. (Credit Jesse Jones)

He said the grant would fund 12 firefighter positions in the northwest region of the county, which currently relies solely on volunteers. The result is an extended response time due to distance.

Masterson said the county adheres to the National Fire Protection Association 1720 guidelines, which requires six firefighters on the scene within 14 minutes of a structure fire 80 percent of the time, the current response time in that region of the county is 25 minutes. Safety personnel only reach the 14-minute response time 40 percent of the time. The American Heart Association recommends having a paramedic on the scene within eight minutes, but Masterson says the county's Emergency Medical Services response time is 17 minutes.

The additional staff would supplement volunteers, improve response times and enhance emergency services coverage across the 1,500 square mile area. The county will apply for 12 full-time staff positions initially, with three shifts of four staff members working per day.

New landfill fees

Commissioners approved a new rate schedule for the Sandoval County Landfill.

The current rate is \$30 per ton will increase to \$33 per ton starting July 1. An additional \$1 increase will happen July 1, 2025. The rate increase will cover closure and post-closure care, equipment replacement and future capital project costs.

Improvement agreements

The commission also approved agreements with companies to design the Sandoval County Judicial Complex expansion and the Hidden Valley Road bridge project in Jemez Springs.

Huitt-Zollars Inc. has been contracted to design the Judicial Complex expansion for \$2,509,169.25. This design project will be financed through contributions from the Administrative Office of the Courts, American Rescue Plan Act funds and allocations from the state Legislature.

The county has contracted Vital Consulting Group LLC for the Hidden Valley Road Bridge Project in Jemez Springs for \$1,826,724.32. Funding for this project will primarily come from the New Mexico Department of Transportation, providing \$1.3 million, with the remaining amount sourced from capital outlay.

Get involved

The next Sandoval County Commission meeting will be at 6 p.m. on April 24 at the Sandoval County Administrative Building Commission Chambers, 1500 Idalia Road, Building D, in Bernalillo.

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# New Mexico is Jump Starting 2026 “Mother Road” Centennial

## Get your kicks on Route 66 as it turns 100!

By Gwynne Ann Unruh,  
Sandoval Signpost

When New Mexico was made a state in 1912, there were only 28 miles of paved roads. Once completed, Route 66 became New Mexico’s first fully paved highway.

Nicknamed the “Mother Road” by John Steinbeck in his book “The Grapes of Wrath,” Route 66 symbolized the freedom of the open road and the “road to opportunity” for people migrating to California to escape the Dust Bowl despair of the 1930s.

Across the state and nationally, work has already begun to commemorate the scenic byway; a unique blend of old and new. Here’s a look at some of the efforts.

### The Centennial

New Mexico’s Route 66 Centennial Coordination Group held its first meeting in Tucumcari on Feb. 29. They are seeking input from New Mexico residents on special events, marketing and promotion, product development and infrastructure for the celebration.



In February, the City of Albuquerque awarded \$432,000 in improvement grants to 14 historic Route 66 signs along Central Avenue. In 2003, nine vintage Route 66 neon signs were restored to their previous brilliance.

Parts of New Mexico’s Historic Route 66 are pre-1938 and some are post-1938. In 1926, Route 66 passed through Sandoval County from Santa Fe through Algodones, the Santa Ana Pueblo, Bernalillo and Sandia Pueblo to 4th Street in Albuquerque. The road descended through hairpin turns to Albuquerque and by 1938 it had been rerouted and straightened,

heading directly from Santa Rosa to Albuquerque.

There’s a backstory to the rerouting, giving rise to “Retribution Road” as another nickname for Route 66. It comes from the exploits of New Mexico Gov. A.T. Hannett in the late 1920s. After losing re-election, he took revenge on Santa Fe by building the Albuquerque to Santa Rosa route, bypassing the capital with the new alignment that took 90 miles off the journey to Albuquerque.

Loose Rooster Films in Bernalillo is in the preproduction phase of “Ramblin’ Down Rt. 66.” The series is designed to be an ongoing PBS project on the original 66 (pre-1937 alignment) that runs through Bernalillo past the historic Silva Saloon. The film company is owned by the show’s producer Bernalillo resident Brock T Fuller, and Carlsbad’s Stacy Dean Campbell – [Nashville Fame- PBS Bronco Roads Emmy award winner]

“From our past relationships with the PBS, they’re interested in the project,” Fuller told the Signpost. He explained the series initially follows the Mother Road from Santa Rosa

along the Santa Fe Loop circling back to Hannett’s newly designed “Retribution Road.” The series also focuses specifically on Bernalillo and Sandoval County and then south to the intersection of 4th St. and Central Ave. Along the way, they will visit numerous historic businesses and venues on and adjacent to the route – intertwining interviews, music, literature, and photography.

The series will explore the Dust Bowl and the Santa Fe Railroad which paralleled the Mother Road for many miles through the New Mexico plains. Loose Rooster Films is actively seeking sponsorship from corporations or individuals to fund the series.

On a national level the National U.S. Route 66 Centennial Commission, is calling for submissions for national, multi-state, or single-state activities, projects, events, or programs. After vetting, the commission will submit its recommendations to Congress.

National Geographic’s Best of the World 2024 list included a road trip along Route 66 through New Mexico as one of the top 20 travel experiences in the world.

### Paid Advertisement

## Ask the Experts: Upgrading Your Swamp Cooler to Cool A/C For Hotter Summers

Sponsored by Kidzz  
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It is the time of year when many Albuquerque homeowners begin the arduous task of opening up their swamp cooler and wondering if this is the year they should finally convert to A/C.

To learn what the process really looks like, and how new financing options help homeowners manage, we asked Chad Redford, CEO at **Kidzz Mechanical**, an Albuquerque-based HVAC firm with more than 200 5-Star reviews on Google about today’s conversion process.

**Chad, a lot of homes around Albuquerque were built with swamp coolers, but those don’t seem to work as well as they used to. Why is that?**

The biggest issue with swamp coolers in our climate is that 10 or 20 years ago our monsoon season occurred in late August/early September. Now in recent years we get our monsoon season in early/mid July.

When the rains come the relative humidity increases from our usual 5-10% humidity to 25-35% relative

humidity. When the relative humidity increases to over 20% a swamp cooler only has the ability to change the temperature or air by 6-7°.

This change in climate has encouraged many people to convert to refrigerated air so that they have the ability to stay comfortable during the hottest days of the year.

And, we all know that swamp coolers can lower inside temperatures by up to 20-degrees. On our hottest days, inside temps can still be unbearable. The National Weather Service shows us that ABQ is seeing more high temperature days each year.

**How long does it take to upgrade or install a new air conditioner?**

In most cases we can install a new air conditioning system in one day.

**Many people think they can’t afford an upgrade, but you have lots of reviews online from customers who did. What financing is available now?**

At one time, homeowners had to pay the full cost before installing or upgrading to a new unit. But we’ve made upgrading more accessible.



(Credit Kidzz Mechanical)

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get it operating properly and heating or cooling your house like it should. We offer very affordable maintenance packages and repair options.

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# Laguna Burger Has Successful Rio Rancho Opening



World Famous Laguna Burger opened their latest location Rio Rancho Tuesday morning during a ribbon cutting event. Pictured is Nick Hibner serving the first burgers to invited guests. Laguna Burger is located at 2401 Rio Rancho Blvd. Photo by Roberto E. Rosales/City Desk Abq.

## Sandoval Signpost staff

The grand opening of the Rio Rancho location of Laguna Burger was a smash success. Several hundred people showed up throughout the day to get a taste of the infamous sandwich.

According to Skip Sayre, former chief of sales for Laguna Corporation, which owns the franchise, it's another milestone for one of the most successful Native American companies in the U.S.

The new 3,000-square-foot

restaurant will feature seating for 55 patrons inside and patio seating for 50. Hours of operation will be Sunday – Thursday 11 a.m. to 9:00 p.m. Friday and Saturday 11 a.m. to 10 p.m. This will be the 5th Laguna Burger location since the concept was originally introduced in the Pueblo of Laguna in 2007.

**For details on each location and the weekly Laguna Burger Food Truck locations, visit [thelagunaburger.com](http://thelagunaburger.com)**



Former Chief of Sales for Laguna Corp., Skip Sayre at the World Famous Laguna Burger opened their latest location Rio Rancho Tuesday morning during a ribbon cutting event. Pictured is Skip Sayre of Skip Sayre Marketing LLC speaking to attendees during the opening. Photo by Roberto E. Rosales/City Desk Abq.

## Rio Rancho City Manager's Recommended Budget Includes Beefed-Up Public Safety and a Water Rate Hike

*Community improvement funds come from cannabis sales*

By Jesse Jones, Sandoval Signpost

“This action will help ensure that the utility does not lose ground in its efforts to maintain and improve the water and wastewater system for the City’s residents and businesses,” wrote Geisel.

The proposed water rate adjustment will raise the average monthly customer bill by about 94 cents, leading to an estimated \$443,000 in additional revenue for the Utility through a 1.75% adjustment.

### Cannabis Fund

The Cannabis Fund is responsible for collecting taxes on the sales of recreational cannabis within Rio Rancho. It is projected to generate \$400,000 in revenue for the 2025 fiscal year. The funds will be used to finance improvements to the community center building.

\$1,252,000 will be allocated to the City Facilities Improvements/Replacement Fund 313 to finance the projects.

I don’t think you need to list these all out below. You could include a sentence to say pools, community and sports centers.

- Star Heights Recreation Center improvements (\$555,000) comprised of emergency lighting and exit sign replacement (\$55,000); partial roof and skylight replacement (\$150,000); HVAC replacement (\$60,000); HVAC evaluation, testing, and upgrade (\$160,000); and fire alarm upgrade (\$130,000).

- Rainbow Pool improvements (\$90,000 total) comprised of emergency lighting and exit sign replacement (\$10,000); HVAC evaluation, testing, and upgrade (\$40,000); and fire alarm upgrades (40,000).

- Aquatic Center improvements (\$350,000) including water softener replacement/upgrade (\$60,000); HVAC upgrade (\$160,000); replacement of pool deck lighting (\$50,000); and fire alarm upgrades (\$80,000).

- Animal Resource Center HVAC replacement (\$120,000).

- Sabana Grande Community Center HVAC replacement (\$35,000).

- Sports Complex South HVAC replacement (\$12,000).

- Cabezon Community Center fire alarm upgrade (\$30,000).

- Haynes Community Center fire alarm upgrade (60,000).

“The City’s financial outlook is positive... the U.S. economy defies expectations: monthly employment gains remain robust; GDP growth is more substantial than expected; inflation has moderated some and surprisingly, consumer confidence

seems to improve. This last point is perhaps the most surprising given persistent inflation and high-interest rates,” Geisel said in his letter to the governing body.

### How to Participate

The Governing Body will review the proposed budget at a budget hearing on Thursday, April 25, from 2 p.m. to 5 p.m. The hearing will take place at City Hall, 3200 Civic Center Circle.

The hearing will be streamed live and archived on the City’s website.

The Governing Body will take public comments on the recommended budget during its regular monthly meetings at City Hall on May 9 and May 23, starting at 6 p.m. The vote to adopt a budget for FY 25 will take place during the Governing Body’s May 23 meeting. The full Recommended Budget can be viewed here.



# Cuba High School Students Get Reality Check With Mock Car Crash

By Michael Hodock, Sandoval Signpost

Cuba volunteer firefighters and emergency personnel conducted a mock car crash at Cuba High School last Friday. The dramatic recreation was held prior to the Cuba High School prom and serves as an end-of-the-school-year reminder of the consequences of unsafe driving.

Participating agencies include the Village of Cuba Fire Department, PMS Ambulance, New Mexico State Police, Sandoval County Fire Department, Classic Air Medical, and Cuba High School student interns.

In a press release, Cuba Volunteer Fire Department Chief Rick Romero said, “Mock crashes are a dramatic presentation to educate teenagers about the true consequences of poor driving decisions. When students see their friends and peers carried out in body bags, and another being handcuffed, it hits home. It’s a strong message that aims to influence their driving choices, especially at such a potentially dangerous time on the road.”

Romero encouraged parents to talk

with their kids about safe driving practices.

“Just because a teen has their license does not mean they are experienced, safe drivers. Parents must stay involved with a teen’s driving just as they do with their grades, athletics and other activities,” Romero said.

Romero knows first-hand the terrible effect that fatal car crashes have on the community. He was the first responder to the scene of a wreck in February in which his stepdaughter, 44-year-old Tonya Sanchez was killed. Sanchez, a mother of four, had her 18-year-old daughter Oceanus in the vehicle during the crash. Oceanus was hospitalized and underwent multiple surgeries.

According to Romero, “40% of fatal car crashes in New Mexico in 2022 [involved] drugs or alcohol. It’s not just alcohol anymore. We’re talking about this major influx of fentanyl and other drugs in our communities, and I’ve got to say that it is leading to a lot of crashes.”



(Credit uatp2 from Getty Images)

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# American Global Resolve is Shaky

Speaker of the House Mike Johnson, trying to simultaneously do the right thing, not trigger former President/current GOP presidential candidate Donald Trump, and keep Congressional howler monkey Marjorie Taylor Greene from formally moving to remove him as Speaker (a “motion to vacate”), announced on April 15 his intent to split the Senate foreign aid package into four separate bills.

Johnson proposes a bill for aid to Israel and is silent about whether that will include humanitarian aid for Gaza. A separate bill would provide aid to Ukraine. The remaining two bills would be for aid to Taiwan and a bill comprised of several measures, including seizure of Russian assets and banning TikTok. Border security measures could be added to this last mop-up bill.

There are many obstacles to this legislative package. First is time. Johnson says he will honor the 72-hour rule allowing introduced legislation to be read before going for a vote. The earliest legislation could be drafted is the 16th. Problem is, Congress is supposed to recess on the

Commentary



Merritt Hamilton Allen

18th for a week. (Until the 15th the agenda was tied up with Appliance Week...where such gripping legislation as the Hands Off Our Home Appliances Act, Liberty in Laundry Act, Clothes Dryers Reliability Act, Refrigerator Freedom Act, Affordable Air Conditioning Act, and Stop Unaffordable Dishwasher Standards Act stood ready for action. I am not making this up. There was so much ridicule over Appliance Week that the caucus hastily scrapped the plan.)

Then, there is the howler monkey caucus on the right and progressives on the left. The former group bizarrely doesn't want aid for Ukraine. The latter group doesn't want aid for Israel. Meanwhile, House Democrats are collecting signatures on a discharge petition that would trigger a floor vote without leadership approval on the original Senate bill where all the aid is combined. As of this writing, it has 195 signatures, one of them Republican.

And the rest of the world watches. In Southwest Asia, where Iran launched a massive but largely failed missile and drone strike on Israel, regional powers are being forced to choose sides. Saudi Arabia and the United Arab Emirates shared intelligence with Israel and its allies,

including the U.S., that assisted with the hugely successful defensive response that resulted in most of the incoming strike being destroyed in air. Yet the Saudis and Emiratis denied the U.S. and Israel the use of their airspace to intercept missiles and drones.

The Gaza war has thrown the entire region into turmoil; this is complicated by a perception among the Gulf states that the U.S. has forsaken many of its previous defense guarantees over the past decade. This makes those nations more hesitant to openly support U.S. interests and slows progress in improvement of relationships with Israel. Both of these developments are beneficial to Iran.

Last year, China brokered a deal to re-establish relations between Saudi Arabia and Iran. It's the Saudis who are offering investments in Iran to deter wider involvement in the Gaza war. When the U.S. had a preeminent role in the defense of the Gulf states, Iran remained an isolated rogue state with little influence. Now China has a seat at the table and is cutting deals. This is not beneficial to U.S. interests and it imperils Israel.

The lack of resolve of the last three administrations with regard to Iran has eroded our influence in

Southwest Asia and our over-cautious response to the Iran-backed Houthis attacks in the Red Sea haven't helped. There should be no reason why the U.S. cannot wipe the Houthis off the map. The Gulf States know this. The fact that the Houthis still have the capacity to threaten commerce may well indicate that Iran is becoming as strong a superpower in the region as the U.S. The Gulf States cannot ignore this.

Iran's missile and drone attack on Israel involved Russian weapons. Russia remains a threat to global security outside Eastern Europe. Yet the U.S. fails month after month to pass a meaningful aid package to halt Russian advances in Ukraine.

Sadly, this also-ran status in Southwest Asia is one our country will have to become accustomed to for the next few years. Former UN Ambassador and National Security Advisory John Bolton slammed both Trump and Biden on the Sunday talk shows immediately following the Iranian attack.

View the full commentary at [sandovalsignpost.com](https://sandovalsignpost.com)



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VENUES: : Albuquerque Museum | National Hispanic Cultural Center | Outpost Performance Space | South Broadway Cultural Center | Three Sisters Kitchen | Valle de Oro National Wildlife Refuge

"Thorns and Blooms" by Lauryn Mills-Bohannon, featured courtesy of Bold Futures.



# A Medical Cost You Didn't Know About

Most of us have never heard of independent medical examinations. We might need to know a little more about them.

**Triple Spaced Again**



**Merilee Dannemann**

An independent medical examination (IME) is an exam performed when there is litigation related to a sick or injured person's medical condition that requires more than the opinion of the treating physician. A doctor is hired – or, if necessary, a few doctors with different specialties – to give an unbiased opinion.

New Mexico workers' compensation has an unusual system for IMEs. If the parties can't agree to an IME physician and the judge has to select one, the judge may only pick from a list of doctors approved annually by a committee. The committee members are selected by the Workers' Compensation Advisory Council. Ironically, selecting these committee members is the only actual power the Advisory Council

has; everything else it does is advisory only. The IME Committee, however, has real power, for just this one thing.

The Advisory Council has been mostly following the Open Meetings Act, in part because I helped set it up years ago when I worked there. But until now, the IME Committee has been closed. That is about to change.

Here's the origin of this odd process. Prior to the 1990 workers' compensation reform, any doctor could do IMEs, but some doctors were regarded as biased and were deeply distrusted by either the insurance community or plaintiff attorneys. The committee was established as part of the reform, to screen out the biased doctors. Physicians who wanted to be eligible for IMEs ordered by a judge had to apply to the committee.

After a few years most doctors stopped applying, and for a while there were not enough to meet the demand. I think there has been considerable increase in IME activity, and that would be useful information for public policy, but it's not being

tracked in any publicly available statistics.

New Mexico workers' compensation has a medical fee schedule, which is supposed to limit what doctors charge, but IME charges are not regulated.

The list of IME approved providers is public, accessible on the website of the Workers' Compensation Administration. But the committee meetings have always been secret. After wondering why for several years, I realized there was no good reason, so I asked the Workers' Compensation Administration about it and asked the Foundation for Open Government for a little help. We now have assurance that the meetings will be open.

You might be asking why this is of any importance. Here's why.

First, the IME committee does the public's business. Indirectly, it has the power to shape the outcomes of lawsuits that affect seriously injured workers. And it affects an insurance system that we all pay for. So it should be transparent.

Second, medical malpractice

and personal injury litigation also use IMEs. Those systems are far less regulated than workers' compensation and we are all paying for them, partly through government and partly through our own insurance.

Finally, medical-related litigation will be a factor when New Mexico eventually passes a paid family and medical leave law. There is no getting around that. Issues will arise that lead to litigation and add costs.

Right now among policy makers there is a quiet but furious dispute going on about the next round of legislation on paid family and medical leave. Some issues in that system will be comparable to issues in workers' compensation. New Mexico did an imperfect but thorough job addressing those issues in our reform 33 years ago, and it should serve as a model. The bill drafters for this new system should study it.

Contact Merilee Dannemann through [www.triplespacedagain.com](http://www.triplespacedagain.com).





The Weekly Crossword

by Margie E. Burke

ACROSS

1

Go to and fro

5

Ski slope

10

Witch's blemish

14

Matinee \_\_\_\_

15

Hepburn film, "Wait \_\_\_\_ Dark"

16

Word after rush or happy

17

PBS science series

18

English rock group?

20

Ditchdigger

22

Italian city NW of Milan

23

Brawl

24

Wee-hours flight

26

Justice's garb

28

To the degree that

32

Chemical reaction phenomenon

36

Jazz singer Simone

37

NAFTA signer

38

Progress delayer

41

Rock's Bon Jovi

42

Cocktail garnish

44

Bringing from abroad

46

Adopts, as a stray

49

Like some excuses

50

Thin, silky fabric

52

Schnozzes

56

Perfect pass

59

Outgoing officeholder

61

Nobel Prize category

63

Painter of melting watches

1

2

3

4

5

6

7

8

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64

Puts to work

65

Enlarge, as a road

66

"The Blackboard Jungle" author Hunter

67

NFC West team

68

Bird feeder fill

69

Brooklyn five

8

Pewter component

9

"Stranger Things" girl

10

Atop which

11

First-rate

12

Hairpieces

13

Grove growth

19

Robert of "Airplane!"

21

Adds ice, maybe

25

Went missing

27

"Gotta run!"

29

Pacific island nation

30

Auth. unknown

31

Summoned, as a butler

32

Short

33

Home to the Himalayas

34

Armored vehicle

35

PC maker

39

Dove's sound

40

Danish currency

43

Dishearten

45

Walked-over

47

Fly like an eagle

48

Spouse's family

51

Give the slip to

53

Smooth-tongued

54

Showy display

55

Trapper's wares

56

Disparage

57

Galileo's birthplace

58

"Time" anagram

60

Department store department

62

Father's Day gift

DOWN

1

Pub servings

2

Love lots

3

Really, really want

4

Hyundai model

5

It may come to shove

6

Arousing attention

7

Mall component

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# Meetings Schedule

## SANDOVAL COUNTY

To view the agendas for upcoming meetings and read past meeting minutes, visit [sandovalcountynm.gov/commission/sccmeetings/](https://sandovalcountynm.gov/commission/sccmeetings/)

Sandoval County Investment Committee  
Apr. 23, 3 p.m.  
Sandoval County Chambers  
1500 Idalia Rd., Building D

Sandoval County Commission  
Apr. 24, 6 p.m.  
Sandoval County Chambers  
1500 Idalia Rd., Building D

## RIO RANCHO

To view the agendas for upcoming meetings and read past meeting minutes, visit [rrnm.gov/2303/Watch-and-Download-City-Meetings](https://rrnm.gov/2303/Watch-and-Download-City-Meetings)

Planning & Zoning Board  
Apr. 23, 6 p.m.  
Rio Rancho City Hall

Public Infrastructure Advisory Board  
Apr. 23, 6 p.m.  
Rio Rancho City Hall

Governing Body  
Apr. 25, 6 p.m.  
Rio Rancho City Hall

## BERNALILLO

To view the agendas for upcoming meetings and read past meeting minutes, visit [tobnm.gov/government/town\\_council/agendas\\_and\\_minutes.php](https://tobnm.gov/government/town_council/agendas_and_minutes.php)

Town Council  
Apr. 22, 6:30 p.m.,  
Bernalillo Town Hall

Planning & Zoning  
May 7, 6 p.m.  
Bernalillo Town Hall

## VILLAGE OF JEMEZ SPRINGS

To view the agendas for upcoming meetings and read past meeting minutes, visit [jemezsprings-nm.gov/meetings/](https://jemezsprings-nm.gov/meetings/)

Lodgers’ Tax Advisory Board  
May 1, 9 a.m.

Village Council  
May 15, 6 p.m.

## FRIDAY, APRIL 19

### Art Openings

Photography Artist Dana Patterson Roth: “Layers of Memory” All Day  
Wild Hearts Gallery 221 B Hwy. 165, Placitas

### Comedy

Joey Medina \$30-\$40 9:30-11 pm  
Quezada’s Comedy Club at Santa Ana Star 54 Jemez Canyon Dam Road, Santa Ana Pueblo, Santa Ana Pueblo, 004

Joey Medina \$30-\$40 7-8:30 pm  
Quezada’s Comedy Club at Santa Ana Star 54 Jemez Canyon Dam Road, Santa Ana Pueblo, Santa Ana Pueblo, 004

### Dance

The Desert Darlings 7:30-9 pm  
Kaktus Brewing Co. 471 South Hill, Bernalillo

### Food

Four Year Anniversary and Ribbon Cutting 11 am-6 pm Corrales Teas & Chocolates 3923 Corrales Rd. Suite B, Corrales

### Music

Bluehouse 7:30-9:30 pm Casa Vieja Brewery 4541 Corrales Rd, Corrales

Callaita Fridays: A Reggaeton Experience \$5 9 pm-1 am The Salt Yard - West 3700 Ellison Drive Northwest, Albuquerque

Crazy Bird 6-9 pm Tractor Brewing Westside 5720 McMahon Blvd NW bldg 5 ste a, Albuquerque

Kaktus Kats 7-9 pm The Range Cafe 925 S Camino Del Pueblo, Bernalillo

Stratus Phear 6-9 pm Boxing Bear Brewing Company Corrales Taproom 10200 Corrales Rd., Albuquerque

## SATURDAY, APRIL 20

### Art

“Art in the Library” reception for Elzbieta Kaleta 10 am-12 pm Corrales Community Library 84 W. La Entrada, Corrales

### Comedy

Joey Medina \$30-\$40 9:30-11 pm  
Quezada’s Comedy Club at Santa Ana Star 54 Jemez Canyon Dam Road, Santa Ana Pueblo, Santa Ana Pueblo, 004

# EVENTS

Joey Medina \$30-\$40 7-8:30 pm  
Quezada’s Comedy Club at Santa Ana Star 54 Jemez Canyon Dam Road, Santa Ana Pueblo, Santa Ana Pueblo, 004

### Community

Mudding Day and Spring Cleaning 9 am-3 pm Old San Ysidro Church 966 Old Church Rd, Corrales

Sacred Circle Saturday 4-6 pm Circle Round Boutique 4486 Corrales Road, Corrales

### Family/Kids

Ranger Read and Learn 10 am-12 pm Martha Liebert Public Library 124 Calle Malinche, Bernalillo

### Literature/Poetry

Tubbables book launch with John Roche 2-4 pm Jules’ Poetry Playhouse 11 Homestead Ln., Placitas

### Markets

Cabazon Park’s Shop Local Market 10 am-3 pm Cabazon Community Center and Park 2307 Cabazon Blvd. SE, Rio Rancho

### Miscellaneous

E-Recycle Event 9 am-3 pm Santa Ana Star Casino Hotel 54 Jemez Canyon Dam Rd, Santa Ana Pueblo

### Music

Joe Daddy Warner & Friends 12-3 pm Kaktus Brewing Co. 471 South Hill, Bernalillo

Rock Zone 7-9 pm The Range Cafe 925 S Camino Del Pueblo, Bernalillo

Saturday Night Barn Dance w/ The Dust Devils 6-9 pm Kaktus Brewing Co. 471 South Hill, Bernalillo

The March Divide 7-9 pm Tractor Brewing Westside 5720 McMahon Blvd NW bldg 5 ste a, Albuquerque

### Outdoors

Earth Day Hike at Jemez Historic Site 10 am-1 pm Jemez Historic Site 18160 Hwy. 4, Jemez Springs

## SUNDAY, APRIL 21

### Class / Workshop

Paint Party \$35 1-4 pm Corrales Teas & Chocolates 3923 Corrales Rd. Suite B, Corrales

### Community

Funday at Gisewa \$7 11 am-2 pm Jemez Historic Site 18160 Hwy. 4, Jemez Springs

### Exhibit

Visions & Voices: Art and Poetry from Jemez Valley 2:00 p.m. Sandoval County Historical Society

& Museum 161 Homestead Lane, Bernalillo

### Music

Kaktus Kats Blues Jam 2-5 pm Kaktus Brewing Co. 471 South Hill, Bernalillo

Kaktus Kats Presents Michael Matison f/ Ryan Montano 2-5 pm Kaktus Brewing Co. 471 South Hill, Bernalillo

## MONDAY, APRIL 22

### Art

Adult Coloring Night 5-9 pm Tractor Brewing Westside 5720 McMahon Blvd NW bldg 5 ste a, Albuquerque

### Games

Singo Music Bingo 7-9 pm Brew Lab 101 3301 Southern Blvd. SE, Rio Rancho

Trivia! With Trivia Mafia 6-9 pm Ex Novo Brewing 4895 Corrales Rd, Corrales

## TUESDAY, APRIL 23

### Class / Workshop

Tuesday Tech Classes 1-3 pm Corrales Community Library 84 W. La Entrada, Corrales

### Exhibit

Sandoval Country Historical Society and Museum Open 9 am-12 pm Sandoval County Historical Society & Museum 161 Homestead Lane, Bernalillo

### Games

Chess Club 6-7 pm Corrales Community Library 84 W. La Entrada, Corrales

### Music

Jaeden Huenemann 6-8 pm Ex Novo Brewing 4895 Corrales Rd, Corrales

## WEDNESDAY, APRIL 24

### Games

Geeks Who Drink 7-9 pm Tractor Brewing Westside 5720 McMahon Blvd NW bldg 5 ste a, Albuquerque

### Music

Kaktus Jazz Jam 6-9 pm Kaktus Brewing Co. 471 South Hill, Bernalillo

Kaktus Kats Jazz Jam 6-9 pm Kaktus Brewing Co. 471 South Hill, Bernalillo



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# "SHE SAVED MY LIFE"

Albuquerque resident Dawn R. had been experiencing the painful side effects of Peripheral Neuropathy. **"My feet and legs were extremely painful and my doctor told me there was nothing they could do. That I would have to take Gabapentin for the rest of my life."**

Then she met Albuquerque's very own Dr. Andrea Brogdon

Peripheral Neuropathy is the pain, discomfort and numbness caused by nerve damage of the peripheral nervous system. Dawn explained that daily tasks like opening doors and using the bathroom were overwhelmingly painful. "How can you live for the next 30 years when you don't even want to get out of bed to do simple things?"

She was experiencing the burning, numbness, tingling and sharp pains that those suffering with neuropathy often describe. "The way that I would describe it, it's equivalent to walking on glass." Dawn hadn't worn socks in five years and was wearing shoes two sizes too big so that nothing would 'touch' her feet.

**Unfortunately Dawn's story is all too familiar for over 3 million people in the U.S. suffering from Peripheral Neuropathy.**

If you're unfortunate enough to be facing the same disheartening prognosis you're not sleeping at night because of the burning in your feet. You have difficulty walking, shopping or doing any activity for more than 30 minutes because of the pain. You're struggling with balance and living in fear that you might fall. Your doctor told you to 'just live with the pain' and you're taking medications that aren't working or have uncomfortable side effects.

Fortunately, four months ago Dawn read an article about Dr. Andrea Brogdon and the work she was doing to treat those suffering from

Peripheral Neuropathy, without invasive surgeries or medications.

Dr. Brogdon, founder of AAIM | Albuquerque Acupuncture & Integrative Medicine, is using the tested science of acupuncture and a technology originally developed by NASA that assists in increasing blood flow and expediting recovery and healing to treat this debilitating disease.

**"Now when I go to bed at night I don't have those shooting pains. I don't have that burning sensation. I don't have pain coming up my legs," Dawn enthusiastically describes life after receiving Dr. Brogdon's treatments. "I can wear socks and shoes!"**

Dawn and her sister now operate a successful dog walking business, sometimes covering up to 5 miles a day.

**"It's life altering. As far as I'm concerned Dr. Brogdon saved my life!"**

Dr. Brogdon is helping the senior community using the most cutting edge and innovative integrative medicine. Specializing in chronic pain cases, specifically those that have been deemed 'hopeless' or 'untreatable', she consistently generates unparalleled results.

What was once a missing link in senior healthcare is now easily accessible to the residents of Albuquerque.

If you've missed too many tee times because of pain or you've passed on dancing because you're afraid of falling, it's time to call Dr. Brogdon and the staff at AAIM.

**It's time you let your golden years BE GOLDEN!**

Dr. Brogdon is now accepting new patients but only for a limited time. In an effort to protect her patients, both current and future, she has made the difficult decision to limit the number of patients seen in her clinic. Only 10 new neuropathy patients will be accepted before the end of June so call (505) 355-1984 now to schedule a consultation.



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