

Commission **Takes Action on Cuba Water Emergency**

Residents facing water-pressure issues for weeks

By Jesse Jones, Sandoval Signpost

The Sandoval County Commission I on May 8 approved an emergency/disaster declaration to address a water supply crisis in the Village of Cuba.

The emergency item was added to the agenda due to an ongoing situation in Cuba where residents were without water and had been facing low water pressure for three weeks.

"By doing this declaration, we can forward it up to the state, we can forward it up to the Governor's Office and the governor can do an executive order, basically a state declaration for this," said emergency manager Dan Heerding while presenting to the commission.

According to Cuba Mayor Denny Herrera, a village infrastructure problem persisted for nearly three weeks before the commission meeting. The affected area includes homes around Highway 126, Nacimiento Road and Southern All Around Road.

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Community Mourns the Sudden Death of Placitas Elementary Principal



(Source: Bernalillo Public Schools)

By Jesse Jones, Sandoval Signpost

The community of Placitas was devastated by the news of the death of Joe Lepre, Placitas Elementary School principal, on April 30.

Bernalillo Public Schools provided support to families and staff by offering access to counselors for discussions and assistance.

Lepre, a 48-year-old husband and father of two, graduated from Bernalillo High School and earned his bachelor's degree in elementary education from New Mexico State University and his master's in educational leadership from New Mexico Highlands University. He gained experience in various schools across the district before

finding his place in Placitas.

During his three-year tenure at the elementary school, he started teaching fifth-grade before earning a promotion to principal, a position he dedicated himself to for the following two years.

"His legacy is that he put it all out on the table for the people he served," Superintendent of Bernalillo Schools Matthew Montaño said. "He believed that education was a game changer for our students and I think he lived that as an example of his profession."

According to Montaño, after assuming the role of principal, Lepre's primary focus was on revitalizing the school's enrollment numbers following the pandemic. Through his efforts, he successfully

increased the student count from 91 to 127. In 2023, the elementary school expanded to include sixth grade.

Lepre helped start the Placitas Elementary Garden, an after-school program that has since been taken over by the Sandoval Extension Master Gardeners. The initiative was designed to offer students additional activities and opportunities after school hours.

Montaño said Jennifer Trujillo, the district's assessment coordinator, has stepped in as the interim principal for the last month of school.

Lepre's family has directed contributions to an education account for his children at gofund.me/72b687a9.

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- WATER from page 1

Herrera said the problem water lines are around 40 years old and there have been water pressure issues in the area for about 10 years. The water comes from a tank near the high school, a booster pump is needed halfway up the water line to ensure residents at higher elevations receive water, with gravity assisting the flow back down to lower areas like County Road 11 and the park.

"This time of the year, people start using water for different uses and it just kills the pressure everywhere," Herrera said. "People expect to have water and have water pressure at all times, you can't plan to take a bath around somebody else's watering schedule."

Herrera said village officials went house to house in the affected area, distributing water from the 2022 water emergency and arranging hotel accommodations for residents if needed.

At the commission meeting, Heerding noted the village had been working with contractors attempting to resolve the issue before the emergency declaration without success.

Herrera said a crew found an obstruction in the line on May 9 and they were going to drain the line to do a pressure test to help with the pressure.

"Hopefully that will be like a bandaid, like the rest of our water system in Cuba," Herrera said.

The Fix

According to Herrera, Cuba will receive capital outlay money to work on the problem, although it won't entirely resolve the problem. He said the village runs a deficit in the water department each year, necessitating an increase in water rates which have remained unchanged for about 15 years.

Once the village has a positive cash flow in the water department, they can pursue United States Department of Agriculture funding. Most major grants required for large projects have matching grant conditions, making it necessary to stabilize the water department financially before undertaking significant debt service.

The village will have to replace the two-inch water line with either fouror six-inch lines. Hererra said the village received initial estimates from an engineering firm and is waiting on others. The estimated cost for a twoinch line replacement is \$2.6 million.

He said if the line does not get replaced, the village will be in the same boat this summer when it gets hot.



(Source: Sandoval County)



\$25M Available to Help Rural First Responders *Much-needed money comes during an especially dry year*

By Michael Hodock, Sandoval Signpost

The New Mexico Department of Finance and Administration (DFA) urges local fire departments to apply for a share of \$25 million in grants that is available to help increase the number of paid first responders across the state.

According to a recent DFA press release, state and local fire departments can apply for the grants between May 15 and June 15, and the DFA will host a webinar at 2 p.m. May 14 on the Microsoft Teams app for any departments interested in applying.

These grants can be especially helpful to understaffed fire departments and emergency medical services workers in rural areas like Sandoval and Torrance counties, and for smaller towns where fire departments are staffed by volunteers. The DFA said that one of the goals of the program is to help transition volunteer firefighters to full-time paid positions, which will "improve response times, department capacity, and Insurance Services



Sandoval County Fire and Rescue train for wildfire season. (Source: Sandoval County Fire)

Office ratings."

"Historically, rural and remote areas of our state struggle with fire and emergency medical responses due to extended response times, large response areas, a lack of firefighters and EMTs, and other challenges in these regions," Sandoval County Fire Chief Eric Masterson said in a recent press release. "This initiative will dramatically help these communities by increasing the number of first responders available so we can ensure that every corner of our state, no matter how remote, has the support and resources needed when someone picks up the phone and calls for help." The City of Moriarty is one of the rural areas that relies on volunteer firefighters to combat what has already been a hectic 2024 fire season. According to Moriarty Fire Chief Todd Hart, the department currently has eight full-time firefighters, one part-time firefighter and 29 volunteers. They respond to over 1,000 calls a year and 90% of the calls are medical.

Hart said that Moriarty Fire will be applying for the grants and that, "When we get a vacancy, we usually try to promote from within, with our volunteers."

"We do have a good volunteer base. But these people have other jobs themselves and usually come [when] they can on their time off to just help the community. Sometimes it's like 3 o'clock in the morning. We'll have volunteers coming to a structure fire," Hart said. "We could definitely use more people to mitigate the problem. I don't know that there's a fire department across the country that wouldn't want more paid personnel." Fire departments and local governments interested in attending the DFA webinar can email Firefighter.fund@dfa.nm.gov.

Wildfire Potential 'Above Normal' Through Much of NM's Central Mountains This Summer

Drought conditions expected to continue until July



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By Patrick Lohmann, Source NM

Forecasters with the National Interagency Fire Center are expecting wildfire risk to be above normal for much of the state this summer, citing ongoing drought and a potential transition this summer from El Niño to La Niña conditions.

Significant wildfires are burning in Mexico and Canada. Several small fires have started and burned so far this year in New Mexico, though fire activity is far less active than this time two years ago.

Two years ago today, the Black Fire started in the Gila Wilderness before

going on to become the secondbiggest wildfire in New Mexico history. The biggest-ever state fire, the Hermits-Peak Calf Canyon Fire, also started two years ago in April.

A forecast released earlier this month shows fire risk to steadily increase throughout July, with New Mexico the potential hotspot throughout the Southwest for wildfires.

The elevated fire risk will cover much of New Mexico's central mountain chain by June and then increase across most of the state by July, according to risk maps produced by the National Interagency Fire Center.

Forecasters there said drought conditions in New Mexico are expected to persist at least through the end of July, which heightens the risk. Another factor is that April precipitation varied between 0% and 70% of normal across the state, according to the forecast. One wildcard that could make



The Black Fire began two years ago today and grew into the state's second-biggest fire. (Source: Public domain photo via the National Wildfire Coordinating Group)

conditions in New Mexico even more ripe for wildfire is a potential transition from El Niño to La Niña later this summer, which would mean a higher likelihood of warmer, drier weather patterns across the Southwest.

Forecasters with the Climate Prediction Center say there's a 60% chance of La Niña being in full swing between June and August this summer.

Researchers found a history of cooler temperatures and more

precipitation in seasons where the transition between El Niño and La Niña occurred, especially in the northwestern part of the Southwest.

That finding could mean some areas of the Southwest – excluding the central mountains of New Mexico and southern deserts of Arizona – are at normal fire risk throughout the summer, according to the forecast.

Read the forecast at nifc.gov/niccfiles/predictive/outlooks/monthly_ seasonal_outlook.pdf

WANTED: Hundreds of Instructors to Help New Mexico Kids Read, Pay Starts at \$35 Per Hour

Teachers needed for six weeks

SNM

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supported by grants and a coalition of donors as a 501c(3) public charity. Source New Mexico maintains editorial independence. Read more at sourcenm. com

By Austin Fisher, Source NM

S tate officials are looking to hire workers — teachers and nonteachers alike — to teach elementary and middle school students how to read this summer.

The New Mexico Summer Reading Program will provide reading instruction in small group, fourhour classes of children ranging in age from those becoming kindergarteners to ninth graders.

People hired to help children read will start the program in June and continue for four to six weeks through July, according to a news release. The deadline to apply is May 24; however, the state is encouraging people to apply by May 17 so they can start in June.

More information and the application can be found at literacy. nm.gov. The program's website shows 42 summer reading locations across New Mexico.

Three state agencies, the New Mexico Public Education Department, the Higher Education Department and the Early Childhood Education and Care Department said Monday they need "hundreds of additional instructors" for the program, which has a goal to serve 10,000 students.

"You do not need to be a licensed teacher to become a literacy instructor, but we encourage retired educators and educators on summer break to consider joining this historic statewide literacy effort," said Public Education Secretary Arsenio Romero.

Summer reading instructors would make \$35 per hour, according to the news release. That's significantly



(Source: Pexels)

higher than the median hourly wage in New Mexico of \$20 per hour. People would have to commit to

working for at least 25 hours per week.

The weeklong training will be paid at the same rate \$35 per hour rate.The specialized training will be done by literacy experts prior to the program, at the end of May or the beginning of June.

New Mexico ranks 50th in literacy with 79% of fourth grade students reading below grade level, according to the children's literacy nonprofit Reading is Fundamental.

This year, we are adding education along with inspiration to the Garden Tour. Master Gardeners and other presenters will give guests insight on sustainable gardening practices, successful gardening tips for our high desert climate and other helpful resources. You'll also have a chance to visit with our pet mayor, Wendell the Goat!

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2024 ELECTION GUIDE

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How to Get an Absentee Ballot for the Primary

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See Where to Vote Early in Sandoval County

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VOTE

SCAN HERI

How to Vote Answers to some FAQs about voting in NM

The content on this page is provided courtesy of the New Mexico secretary of state.

Do I need to present identification when I vote?

You do not have to present identification to vote in a statewide election. When registering for the first time in New Mexico, you must submit a copy of (1) a current and valid photo identification; or (2) a current utility bill, bank statement, government check, paycheck, student identification card or other government document, including identification issued by an Indian nation, tribe or pueblo that shows your name and current address. If you do not submit the required identification with your mailed-in, first time registration, then you will be required to present one of the forms of identification when voting in person or absentee.

Some municipal jurisdictions in New Mexico have ordinances in place that require voter ID be presented to vote in city elections. This includes the City of Rio Rancho.

What identification do I need to provide when I vote?

A physical form of identification is only required for first-time New Mexico voters who registered by mail and did not include identification with their voter registration application form.

Otherwise, you will be asked to provide a verbal or written statement of identification including your name, year of birth, and registered address.

Can I vote if my status is "inactive"?

Yes, an "inactive" status does not prohibit any registered voter to vote. You will vote like usual and your status will return to "active."

How can military and overseas voters participate in voting in an election?

Information, deadlines and eligibility requirements for military and overseas voters can be found sos. nm.gov.



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How much does it cost to mail my absenteeballot?

Return postage is pre-paid.

The outer envelope of my Absentee Ballot requests an AV Register Number. Do I fill this out?

You can leave that information blank. This information is for internal use only.

Can others find out how I voted?

By law, your ballot is secret and no one can find out how you voted. Certain portions of your voter registration record, including party affiliation and whether or not you vote in a particular election, is public record and may be requested. Voter registration record information is most often requested by political parties and candidates.



If I am unable to mail my absentee ballot, who is allowed to drop it off and where?

Pursuant to NMSA 1978, Section 1-6-10.1, a voter, caregiver to that voter or member of that voter's "immediate family" defined as a person's spouse, children, parents, brothers and sisters may deliver a voter's absentee ballot to the county clerk in person or by mail.

How do I correctly write-in a candidate on my ballot?

When casting the write-in vote, fill in the oval and write the name of the declared write-in candidate. Unless both of these requirements are fulfilled, the vote will not be counted.

Secretary of State Opens Online Absentee Ballot Requests and Permanent Absentee List Sign-Up for Primary Election

The content on this page is provided courtesy of the New Mexico secretary of state.

SANTA FE – Registered voters in New Mexico can now request an absentee ballot for the 2024 Primary Election at nmvote.org, the secretary of state's voter information portal. All registered voters in New Mexico can apply for, receive, and vote with an absentee ballot.

This year, voters can also voluntarily opt-in to be part of the permanent absentee list when requesting their absentee ballot. When a voter chooses this option they will receive an absentee ballot in the mail for every subsequent election. Voters can remove themselves from the permanent absentee list at any time.

"Voting by absentee ballot is a secure and efficient way to make your voice heard and the new permanent absentee list option for voters is yet another way we've increased the convenience of voting in New Mexico," said Secretary of State Maggie Toulouse Oliver. "One of the best parts about our elections in New Mexico are the many ways voters can cast their ballot – whether by mailing their absentee ballot, dropping their completed absentee ballot off with their county clerk or at a designated ballot drop box, or by voting in-person during Early Voting or on Election Day."

The deadline to request an absentee ballot for the Primary Election is Tuesday, May 21.

If mailing back an absentee ballot, voters should allow 7-10 days for their ballot to be delivered back to their county clerk's office.

Primary Election Day is June 4.

To request an absentee ballot online visit NMVote.org

The Hot Ticket Seat

State Senate District 9 is a highly sought-after seat for Dems and GOP alike

By Tierna Unruh-Enos, Sandoval Signpost

In Senate District 9, four candidates are looking to replace the currentsitting Democratic state Sen Brenda McKenna. Democrats Heather Balas and Cindy Nava filed to run, as did Republicans Frida "Susana" Vasquez and Audrey Trujillo.

District 9 encompasses two counties and part of the Sandia Pueblo. The district spans Albuquerque's Westside, Corrales, Placitas, Bernalillo, Algodones, Sandia Pueblo and eastern Rio Rancho.



Heather Balas

Heather Balas announced her candidacy following the announcement that McKenna would not seek re-election.

Balas is best known for serving for over a decade as president and executive director of New Mexico First. This statewide public policy organization advances positive change in New Mexico, co-founded by former U.S. Sens. Jeff Bingaman and Pete Domenici.



Cindy Nava Just a day after McKenna's announcement, Bernalillo resident Cindy Nava announced that she was

seeking the seat. Nava, a formerly undocumented resident of New Mexico and DACA recipient, is no stranger to the state Legislature. As a young organizer, she worked on the staff of Democratic leaders in the state house before joining the office of U.S. Sen. Ben Ray Lujan, and eventually being appointed by President Joe Biden to serve as a policy advisor with the U.S. Department of Housing and Urban Development — all while working towards her U.S. citizenship.



Audrey Trujillo

Audrey Trujillo, the former Republican candidate for New Mexico secretary of state is a Corrales resident throwing her hat in the ring for the senate seat. She has campaigned heavily for gun rights and while running for the SOS seat, for election transparency issues.



Frida "Susana" Vasquez Frida "Susana" Vasquez, a small business owner from Rio Rancho is also running for the Republican nod for District 9.

Your 2024 Primary Election Guide

Find information on who's running to represent you

E arly voting for the 2024 primary election is already open. We want to make sure you're fully informed before you go fill out those ballot bubbles, so here's a list of candidates running for office in Sandoval County.

State Senate

DISTRICT 9 Heather Balas (D) heatherfornewmexico.org DISTRICT 9 Cindy Nava (D) cindynavafornewmexico.com DISTRICT 9 Audrey Trujillo (R) audreytrujillo4nm.com DISTRICT 9 Frida "Susana" Vasquez (R) susanaforsenate.com DISTRICT 12 Jay C Block (R) blockforsenate.com DISTRICT 12 Candace Gould (R) gouldfornmstatesenate.com DISTRICT 12 Phillip Ramirez (D) DISTRICT 22 Benny Shendo Jr. (D) DISTRICT 40 Amina Everett (D) everett4senate40.org DISTRICT 40 Craig Brandt (R) craigbrandt.us

State Representative

DISTRICT 23 Frank Smith Jr. (D) vote4franksmith.org DISTRICT 23 Alan Martinez (R) alanmartinezforhousedistrict23.com DISTRICT 44 Kathleen Cates (D) kathleencates.com DISTRICT 44 Leticia Munoz-Kaminiski (R) DISTRICT 57 Michelle Sandoval (D) DISTRICT 57 John D'Antonio (D) dantonioforstaterep.com DISTRICT 57 Corinne Rios (R) riosfornewmexico.com DISTRICT 57 Catherine Cullen (R) cullen4nm.com DISTRICT 57 Catherine Cullen (R) cullen4nm.com DISTRICT 60 Luke Jungmann (D) lukefornm.com DISTRICT 65 Derek Lente (D) derekjlente.com DISTRICT 4 Rebekka Burt (D)

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Candidate list continued from p.9

District Attorney

13TH JUDICIAL DISTRICT Barbara Romo (D)

County Clerk

COUNTY CLERK Anne Brady Romero (D) anne4clerk.com COUNTY CLERK Tanya Watkins (R)

County Commission

DISTRICT 2 Beau Sandoval (D) sandoval4sandoval.com DISTRICT 2 Jon Herr (R) herrforcommissioner.com DISTRICT 4 Madigan Ray (D) madiganfornm.com DISTRICT 4 Jordan Juarez (R) jordanjuarez4nm.com DISTRICT 5 Joshua Jones (D) joshjonesfornm.com DISTRICT 5 Justin Garcia (R)

County Treasurer

COUNTY TREASURER Jennifer Taylor (D) jennietaylor4treasurer.com COUNTY TREASURER Richard Shanks (R)

Sandoval County Early Voting Locations

Sovereign Pueblos in Sandoval County

Cochiti Pueblo Hahn Center 90 Cochiti St., Cochiti Pueblo

San Felipe Pueblo Head Start 10 Meadow View Rd., San Felipe Pueblo

Zia Pueblo Community Center 135 Capital Square Dr., Zia Pueblo

Santa Ana Pueblo Wellness Center 225 Ranchitos Rd., Santa Ana Pueblo Sandia Pueblo Community Center

481 Sandia Loop, Sandia Pueblo

Jemez Community Resource Center 129 Canal St., Jemez Pueblo

San Ysidro

San Ysidro Public Safety Room *372 Hwy 4*

Navajo Nation Counselors Chapter House 9828 Chapter House Rd. 14

Ojo Encino Chapter House *1434 Starlake Rd*.

Corrales

Corrales Community Center 4326 Corrales Road

Cuba Sandoval County Fair Grounds 37 Rodeo Rd.

Rio Rancho

Broadmoor Senior Center 3241 Broadmoor Blvd. NE

Community of Joy Lutheran Church *841 Saratoga Dr. NE*

Our Lady Queen of Angels *1701 Tulip Rd. SE*

Plaza @ Unser Marketplace 701 Unser Blvd. SE A12

Rio West Business Center 103 Rio Rancho Blvd. SE Ste. B1

Sagebrush Plaza 7555 Enchanted Hills Blvd. SE

St. Francis Episcopal Church 2903 Cabezon Blvd. SE

Bernalillo

Bernalillo High School 148 Spartan Alley

El Zocalo 264 S. Camino del Pueblo

Sandoval County Admin Building 1500 Idalia Rd.

Placitas Placitas Community Library 453 Hwy 165

For a full list of Early Voting and Election Day polling sites, visit

sandovalcountynm.gov/countyclerk and enter your location.

To find out your legislative districts, visit

nmlegis.gov/Members/Find_By_ Address_Redistrict and type in your address.

Marjorie Taylor Greene jumps the shark

Commentary

May 8 could have been another low point for U.S. House Republicans. Rep. Marjorie Taylor Greene (R-Ga.), after weeks of threats, finally pulled the pin on the grenade she'd been carrying around since March and officially filed her motion for Speaker Mike Johnson to vacate his leadership position, forcing a vote on the measure.

May 16, 2024

Greene was booed on the House floor. By her own party. 196 of 217 Republicans voted to table her motion, along with 163 Democrats. Most of the Freedom Caucus did not back her. Matt Gaetz didn't support her. Neither did Jim Jordan. Frenemy and fellow Congressional howler monkey Lauren Boebert voted to table the motion.

"Jumping the shark" is an idiom that refers to a moment when a pop culture phenomenon reaches a point when its core intent is exhausted by the introduction of new ideas that are so discordant to the original premise that the premise and core intent are no longer compelling or even usable in future content.

In 1977, in the fifth season of the TV sitcom "Happy Days," motorcycle-riding tough guy Arthur "Fonzie" Fonzarelli jumped over a live shark on water skis. The show was never as good after that episode which itself was fairly awful. You know that thing

when you're watching TV and you get embarrassed for the actors? That was Fonzie jumping the shark.

On May 8, Greene jumped the shark. After more than three years of performance politics, rants, screeds and abysmal spelling on X, Greene brought her water skis to the House floor. Essentially she got so carried away with BrandMarjorie she forgot the 400 or so other people in the building.

Greene may have permanently eroded her relevance in the Capitol but it's unlikely she has damaged her odds of re-election. She is unopposed in her heavily Republican district and has

already raised more than \$5 million. Her most successful Democratic challenger has barely topped \$350,000 in fundraising in a four-way primary.

Greene wasn't the only Gen X MAGA heroine to break her brand this month. South Dakota governor Kristi Noem torpedoed her vicepresidential hopes when her memoir dropped and revealed she not only "hated" a family dog, she took it to the gravel pit and shot it in the head. She then recounted heading back to the house when she realized she also hated a family goat, so she went back and shot it, too.

Noem's euthanasia-by-rifle account is proving to have far longer legs than Greene being booed on the House floor. Just this week I saw a second round of anti-Noem editorials, led by one in The Washington Post entitled, I kid you not, "Don't Forget Kristi Noem's Goat." In a country where pharmaceuticals for pets are advertised on TV primetime, national political figures just can't go around

shooting the family dog (Or goat! I won't forget the goat!).

I can't believe I just wrote that. That should be, you know, self-evident.

Back to the House GOP. Merritt Hamilton Allen More than a score of GOP representatives announced

their retirement in 2024 and five quit before the election, frustrated at the inability to move any policy agenda forward. Last week felt like an exhale in the Capitol. The most extreme members of both caucuses voted against the measure to table Greene's motion: 21 votes. The overwhelming majority of Congress, including House Republicans, realize the nation's and their voters' work has to be done.

As of this writing, the Presidential election polls are deadlocked, as are the Congressional polls. Whichever party takes control of the House and

Senate, the minority leaders will have outsize power, just as Hakeem Jeffries (D-N.Y.) in the House and Mitch McConnell (R-Ky.) in the Senate do now.

In national voter registration, the major parties are only about 3% apart in total voter registration numbers. It makes sense that Congress would be similarly narrowly divided. Congress represents us, after all.

What we learned from the motion to vacate vote on the 8th is that nothing could really happen without opposition support. This was also the case on the long-awaited foreign aid bill. While some may look at the razor thin margins in the House and the Senate and worry about continued gridlock, I look at last week's big exhale around the ultimate rejection of Greene's silliness and a break in stasis.

The Senate has figured how to move legislation with the tightest of partisan margins. The House may finally be catching up.

Merritt Hamilton Allen is a PR executive and former Navy officer. She appeared regularly as a panelist on NM PBS and is a frequent guest on News Radio KKOB. A Republican, she lives amicably with her Democratic husband north of I-40 where they run one head of dog, and two of cat. She can be reached at news.ind.merritt@gmail.com.

Lawmakers Should Weigh Burdens to Smallest Businesses

The man was said to be the only electrician in Mora, and my agency forced him out of business.

This was around 20 years ago. I learned about it in a staff meeting. The assistant general counsel who told us about it had tears in her eyes and a quiver in her voice, but she did it anyway.

My concern wasn't just about the electrician. It was about all the people in an economically distressed county who might have needed his services and now would not have them.

The assistant general counsel said the electrician was semiretired but wanted to keep his license to do occasional odd jobs. But we - the Workers' Compensation Administration – required him to buy a minimum premium workers' compensation insurance policy, and he would not make enough money to justify the cost. So he was forced out of business.

The requirement is in paragraph 52-1-6 of the New Mexico statute, and if I try to explain it here I won't get to my main point. I will simply

say that in my opinion this was regulatory overreach based on the interpretation of one word. Nobody in the agency agreed with me, but I was not surprised that this happened. There were probably many similar stories that we never knew about.

That's what happens when people who write a

law neglect the little guy. The little guys, very small

business owners, are never at the table when laws are being drafted. They don't participate, maybe because Merilee Dannemann that cut her funding, which they don't know how, maybe because they are too busy.

Very small businesses are one group that concerns me in relation to the current push to enact a paid family and medical leave law in New Mexico. This year's bill was voted down, but we know it's coming back.

Another vulnerable group is social-service nonprofits, including those that provide services like adoption, foster care and personal service to elderly clients or those with disabilities. Many of these nonprofits

Triple Spaced Again necessarily increase what it

government. Here's an unpleasant little secret: When the state enacts laws that directly increase the costs of paying employees, those laws apply to nonprofits as well as for-profit businesses, but the state does not

work under contract to state

pays to those nonprofits.

I watched this for years with a friend who ran a nonprofit agency. Every few years she would tell me the state had made a change forced her to eliminate

something. The myth was that there were always inefficiencies that could be cut. But that was possible only for the first couple of cuts. After that the cuts were to real services affecting real people - the clients.

Rep. Marian Matthews has raised this issue. Matthews, D-Albuquerque, introduced a moderate and less costly alternative to the family and medical leave bill. Matthews' bill was tabled in its first committee. She had been talking specifically about the severe

costs to families when caregiver services are cut.

Our Legislature has been generous to employees in the last few years. We've increased the minimum wage from \$7.50 an hour in 2018 to \$12 an hour in 2023. Our paid sick leave law, enacted in 2022, requires employers to pay for up to 64 hours per year of sick leave. The employer also faces the cost of finding and paying for a replacement worker or going without whatever service the worker was providing.

Both the minimum wage and the sick leave program are meritorious, but legislators should be asking, before enacting another new employer responsibility, whether the administrative requirements of the sick leave program are reasonable or excessively burdensome.

And we should be making sure that employers at all levels, including the little guys, are being heard.*Contact* Merilee Dannemann through www. triplespacedagain.com.



www.sandovalsignpost.com

Affordable Internet Access is a Critical Election Year Issue

In the digital age, access to reliable internet is no longer a luxury; it's a necessity. This truth has become even more evident as we've navigated through recent global challenges that pushed us towards remote work, online schooling, and telehealth services. Yet, for many in rural New Mexico, high-speed internet remains out of reach due to the cost barrier—a critical issue that the federal Affordable Connectivity Program (ACP) seeks to address.

The ACP, run by the FCC, has helped ensure that households can afford the broadband they need for work, school, healthcare and more. The benefit provides a discount of up to \$30 per month toward internet service for eligible households and up to \$75 per month for households on qualifying Tribal lands.

However, the ACP is running out of money. The program stopped accepting new applications on Feb. 7. The last fully funded month of the program was April. Congress originally made available \$14.2 billion, and unless Congress approves new funding, the program will end this month. In another election year, the importance of continued funding for the ACP cannot be overstated, not just for the sake of connectivity, but for the broader implications it has on education, healthcare, and economic opportunities in our communities.

For rural New Mexicans, the marked digital divide is a stark reality. we're reader of accessing the same resources and opportunities that are for Pete's Sake

readily available in more urban areas. The ACP, by offering financial assistance to low-income families for

internet services, has played a pivotal role in bridging this divide. Its

impact goes beyond just providing a financial lifeline; it's about ensuring equitable access to information, enabling remote education, and opening doors to telehealth services, which have become indispensable, especially in areas where medical facilities are scarce.

The significance of the ACP extends into the realm of economic

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empowerment and job creation. In today's economy, many job opportunities, as well as essential job-seeking resources, are found online. Without access to reliable internet, rural residents are at a significant disadvantage in the job market. By supporting the ACP, we're not just funding a program; we're investing in the economic

> vitality of our rural communities and leveling the playing field for all New Mexicans.

In light of these considerations, it's clear that the ACP is much more than a subsidy program; it's a critical infrastructure investment in the future of New Mexico. However, its

success and continuation hinge on the support of policymakers and the acknowledgment of its importance by voters. As we move toward the polls, it's imperative that we advocate for and prioritize continued funding for the ACP. This is not just a call to action for those directly affected by the digital divide but for all New Mexicans who believe in equitable access to opportunities and the importance of connectivity in the modern world.

Policymakers must recognize that funding the ACP is not merely a budgetary decision but a commitment to the future of our state—a future where every New Mexican, regardless of where they live, has the tools and resources to thrive in the 21st century.

As we approach this year's election, we urge our elected leaders in Washington to continue funding the Affordable Connectivity Program. It's not just a matter of maintaining the status quo but a crucial step towards building a more connected, informed, and economically vibrant state.

The benefits of the ACP extend far beyond individual households it has the potential to transform entire communities. Therefore, it's incumbent upon voters, policymakers, and community leaders to champion the cause of digital equity and ensure that the ACP remains a priority in the political discourse. The future of New Mexico depends on it.

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

Peter St. Cyr

Sponsored by Kidzz Mechanical

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 $6-7^{\circ}$.

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



(Credit Kiddz Mechanical)

made upgrading more accessible.

We have worked with Wells Fargo to provide hundreds of our customers with many different rate plans that accommodate their budget. Wells Fargo offers many different options based on your credit.

If I'm not ready for an upgrade yet, do you handle smaller jobs like opening my swamp cooler?

If you're not ready to upgrade your system yet, we have some of the best service technicians in the state. Sometimes your system just needs a tune up and some maintenance to 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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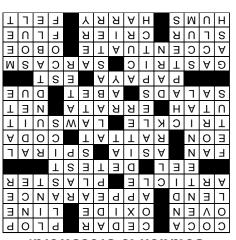
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The Weekly Crossword by Margie E. Burke ACROSS 1 Cola opener 5 Fragrant wood 10 Alka-Seltzer sound? 14 Place to broil 15 Iron ____ (rust) 16 Palmist's concern 17 Extend credit 18 Outward show 20 Periodical piece 22 Wall coating 42 23 Sushi bar order 46 24 More than dislike 26 Bleachers denizen 28 Calcutta's continent 30 Slinky shape 64 34 Anagram for "one' 35 Drumming sounds Copyright 2024 by The Puzzle Syndi 37 Musical close 7 Party bowlful 38 Thin, slow flow 65 News source 33 Starbucks item 40 Plaintiff's filing 8 Skilled 36 Sculptor's of yore 42 Provo's state 66 Chimney duct 9 Home business? medium 10 Synthetic 39 Book sections 43 Printing goofs 67 Sings without 45 Fishing gear singing materials 41 2017 film, "The 46 Waldorf and 68 Fictional Potter 11 Fuzz Shape of 69 Fedora fabric 12 Previously 44 Bit of sunlight Caesar 13 Social equal 47 "Shucks!" 48 Help in holding DOWN 19 Coarse file 51 Honda's luxury up 49 Word on a bill 1 Bubbly drink 21 Hollywood's line **50** Tropical fruit 2 Head-heels Gable 53 Speak derisively 52 Repair shop fig. connector 25 Partake of 54 Cut 54 Stomach-related 26 Former embryo 55 Rights grp. 3 State: 27 Largest artery 56 Pond gunk 57 Caustic wit Colorado 61 Emphasize 58 Lofty nest (var.) 4 Actress 29 Vendor's spiel 63 Slender MacDowell 31 Camelot meeting 59 Motown genre instrument 5 Locomotive fuel 60 Come together spot

64 Putdown



6 Logistics worker



62 Televise

32 It may be bid

Solution to Crossword:



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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/

Sandoval County Commission May 22, 6pm 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

> Parks & Recreation May 20, 6pm Rio Rancho City Hall

City Council Regular Meeting May 23, 6 pm

BERNALILLO

To view the agendas for upcoming meetings and read past meeting minutes, visit tobnm. gov/government/town_council/agendas_ and_minutes.php

> Town Council May 27, 6:30 pm Bernalillo Town Hall

VILLAGE OF JEMEZ SPRINGS

To view the agendas for upcoming meetings and read past meeting minutes, visit jemezsprings-nm.gov/meetings/

> Village Council May 21, 6pm

FRIDAY, MAY 17

Comedy

Monique Marvez \$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

Monique Marvez \$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

Exhibit

Charcoal, Pen & Ink and Painting Artist Alan Charlee: "Remembering Grandfather" All Day Wild Hearts Gallery 221 B Hwy. 165, Placitas

Music

Black Smoke Blues Band 7:30-9:30 pm Casa Vieja Brewery 4541 Corrales Rd, Corrales

DJ Wae Fonkey 6-9 pm Tractor Brewing Westside 5720 McMahon Blvd NW bldg 5 ste a, Albuquerque

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

SATURDAY, MAY 18

Art

Art in the Library Series: Reception for Betsy Kuhn 10 am-12 pm Corrales Community Library 84 W. La Entrada, Corrales

Comedy

Monique Marvez \$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

Monique Marvez \$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

Discussion / Lecture

Adapting Your Garden to Climate Change 10 am-12 pm Loma Colorado Main Library 755 Loma Colorado Blvd. NE, Rio Rancho

EVENTS

Drink

United in Beer Collaboration Festival \$50 1-5 pm Ex Novo Brewing 4895 Corrales Rd, Corrales

Family/Kids

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

Corrales Tractor Club Annual Antique Tractor Show 9 am-4 pm Corrales Rec Center 500 Jones Road, Corrales

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

Festival

San Ysidro Fiesta 10 am-8 pm San Ysidro Catholic Church 5105 Corrales Rd, Corrales

Markets

Rio Rancho's Biggest Yard Sale 8 am-2 pm Cabezon Community Center and Park 2307 Cabezon Blvd. SE, Rio Rancho

Miscellaneous

Sandoval County Animal Services Adoption Event 4-8 am Bernalillo Feed & Chevron 656 S. Camino Del Pueblo, Bernalillo

Music

Chasing Adequate 7-9 pm Tractor Brewing Westside 5720 McMahon Blvd NW bldg 5 ste a, Albuquerque

Jazz to Go 7-9 pm The Range Cafe 925 S Camino Del Pueblo, Bernalillo

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

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

Time Travelers Band 7:30-9:30 pm Casa Vieja Brewery 4541 Corrales Rd, Corrales

SUNDAY, MAY 19

Food

Corrales Growers' Market 9:30 am-12 pm Corrales Parks & Recreation 500 Jones Rd., Corrales

Miscellaneous

Knights of Columbus Blood Drive 2:30-6 am Our Lady of Sorrows Catholic Church 301 S. Camino Del Pueblo, Bernalillo

Music

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

Kaktus Kats Presents Chris Dracup 2-5 pm Kaktus Brewing Co. 471 South Hill, Bernalillo

MONDAY, MAY 20

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, MAY 21

Class / Workshop

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

Games

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

Sports

2024 GRAD walk and kickball tournament 12-2:30 pm Corrales Elementary 200 Target Rd, Corrales

WEDNESDAY, MAY 22

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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"PERIPHERAL NEUROPATHY RELIEF!"

Bernalillo resident Maria R had been experiencing the debilitating side effects of Peripheral Neuropathy. "I was beginning to have other health issues due to the lack of sleep. I needed help just standing up and when I was standing I was afraid I would fall because I had no feeling in my feet. My life felt like a nightmare."Then she met Albuquerque's very own Dr. Andrea Brogdon

"I was so desperate to the point of giving up" exclaimed Maria R. from Bernalillo. "I was in so much discomfort due to the numbness, tingling, and burning on the back of both legs and in my feet."

Maria R had been diagnosed with peripheral neuropathy and had seen a neurologist with no relief. To complicate things further, Maria had been diagnosed with two fractured discs in her back that were causing her severe pain. "I was no longer able to do surgery and all other treatments didn't work. I was starting to feel hopeless."

Maria is one of 3 million people in the United States suffering from peripheral neuropathy, a degenerative disease of the peripheral nervous system. "Those with peripheral neuropathy experience numbness, tingling, burning and even severe cramping due to the dying off of the peripheral nerves," explains Dr. Andrea Brogdon of Albuquerque Acupuncture & Integrative Medicine. "These nerves continue to die off until they have completely expired leaving sufferers with numbness and debilitating balance issues. Patients come to see me after having seen many other doctors with no relief. They have been told that there is nothing they can do or that they just have to live with it."

"I was beginning to have other health issues due to the lack of sleep. I needed help just standing up and when I was standing I was afraid I would fall because I had no feeling in my feet. My life felt like a nightmare," says Maria. "I learned about Dr. Andrea Brogdon from an article I read and learned that she helped others like me, experiencing the same symptoms.

I made an appointment hoping she was going to be able to help me. It was my last resort."

Dr. Andrea Brogdon has helped thousands of patients get their life back after being diagnosed with peripheral neuropathy and living with the debilitating effects of the disease. How does she get such amazing results? "Acupuncture has been used for centuries to improve circulation but the real magic happens when I integrate ATP Resonance BioTherapy[™]." By using modern technological advancements alongside the time tested science of acupuncture, Dr. Brogdon is able to reverse the effects of this degenerative disease, regardless of its origin.

"Early detection is key when it comes to improving your chances of a full recovery," explains Dr. Brogdon. Which is why she starts every patient with an initial consultation during which a sensory exam is performed. "This helps to determine just how much nerve damage has occurred," tells the doctor. "This is important because if the patient has suffered more than 95% sensory loss there is very little I can do at that point."

PERIPHERAL NEUROPATHY? Call (505) 355-1984 to schedule a consultation! "After several treatments, I experienced tremendous relief. Life is good! I have seen a huge improvement in my walking, I sleep better, even my mood is better! I am so grateful I never stopped searching!" exclaims Maria.

If you or a loved one are living a life of suffering due to peripheral neuropathy and your pain has prevented you from doing the things you love with the people you love, it's time to call Dr. Brogdon and the staff at AAIM.

Call (505) 355-1984 today to schedule an initial consultation or visit AAIM-ABQ.com to read more incredible success stories.



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