

**SPORTS**



The Women's Tennis Team will face off against two teams on Saturday. **Page 9**

**ESPAÑOL**



Estudio de UTRGV muestra beneficios de pasos de fauna **Página 5**

**ON CAMPUS**



Three students in the MSA high school program at UTRGV have been accepted to top universities. **Page 3**

## COMING SOON?



Amanda Vela/THE RIDER

UTRGV students push for more athletic events to take place on the Brownsville campus. Oggy Martinez, a Brownsville student and criminal justice senior said, "Everybody would probably get excited to go."

### Plans to bring athletic events to Brownsville in the works

**Maleny Ortega and Angel De La Cruz**  
THE RIDER

The UTRGV Athletics Department and Brownsville city officials met in December to discuss

plans to bring more university athletic events to the city's campus, including summer camps, exhibition matches and tailgating parties.

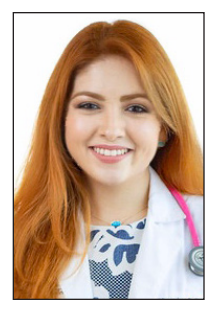
District 1 Commissioner Nurith Galonsky told The Rider in a phone interview

Tuesday that the idea came from a focus group meeting she had with several students on Oct. 23. One of the concerns to come out of the meeting was the lack of college life

See ATHLETICS, Page 11

## School of Medicine milestone

**Victor G. Ramirez**  
EDITOR-IN-CHIEF



Veronica Treviño

At the end of the spring semester, Veronica Treviño will be one of 39 medical students who will be the first graduating

class from the UTRGV School of Medicine.

"It's incredibly exciting," Treviño said. "I'm from the [Rio Grande] Valley and I went to [the University of Texas-Pan American] ... and then graduated from UTRGV. So, when I started this process, I'd always wanted to be a doctor. ... I thought I was going to have to go to medical school somewhere else."

Treviño, who graduated in Spring 2016 from UTRGV, majored in biology while minoring in chemistry and Spanish medical terminology.

Betty Monfort, senior assistant dean for admissions

See MEDICINE, Page 11

# Students show their Vaquero pride

**Hania Rocio**  
THE RIDER

The first week back to school was filled with music, free food, organization booths and activities for new incoming students to enjoy.

To welcome new UTRGV students to a new year, UTRGV's Student Activities, along with other organizations, hosted the Week of Welcome. The week offered various events that ranged from informative info depots to activities such as *lotería* at Viva Vaqueros.

On Wednesday at the Edinburg campus, Viva Vaqueros took place. This event also happened on the Brownsville campus Jan. 13 on the Library lawn.

Viva Vaqueros is a brand-new event that provides students the opportunity to meet representatives from different student organizations such as the Chess Club or the Delta Psi Alpha Fraternity. Students participated in games such as *lotería*, Twister and the ringtoss and were served free popcorn,

water and *mangonadas*.

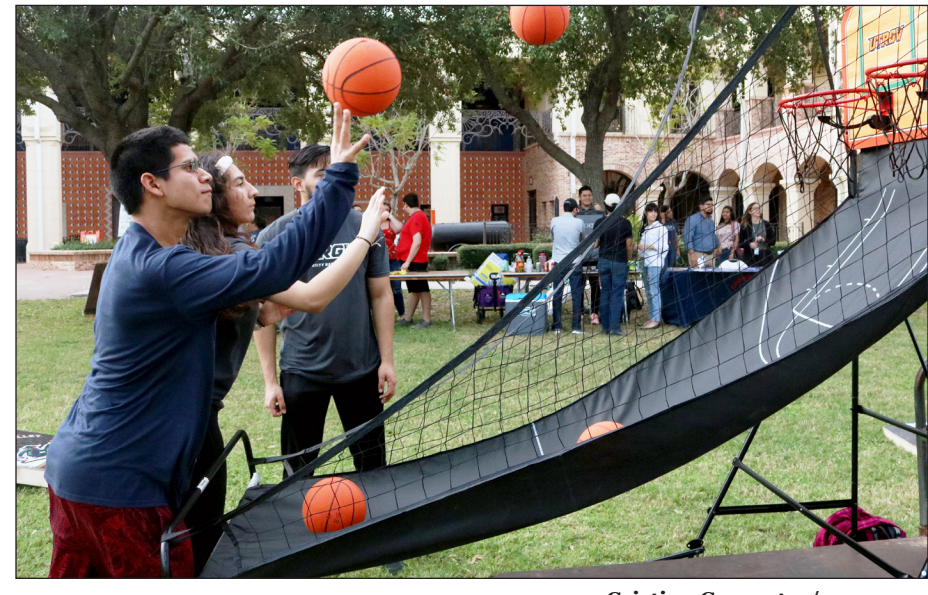
Justin Alvarado, a finance junior, strives to have more Vaquero pride and is excited to see how much more he will have in the fall.

"Free water, free drinks, free food ... a lot of cool activities," Alvarado said about Viva Vaqueros. "It's cool that there's a lot of events, it's not only in one spot, it's all throughout the campus."

On the same day, The Rumble prepared students for Thursday's basketball game as The Herd, UTRGV's official student section of UTRGV Athletics, taught them how to cheer for their team. This event happened at the Vaquero Village on the Edinburg campus.

Rie Gardner, a freshman anthropology major, showed off her Vaquero pride at The Rumble and said she is a committed Vaquero fan.

See WOW, Page 2



Cristian Cervantes/THE RIDER

Marine biology sophomore Gaspar Najera and psychology sophomore Kimberly Fernandez play basketball at the Back to School Bash last Tuesday on the Student Union lawn in Brownsville.

See Page 6 for photo gallery.

**MARCH 3 PRIMARY VOTER REGISTRATION COUNTDOWN: 14 DAYS DEADLINE FEB. 3**



# THE RIDER

The Rider is the official, award-winning student newspaper of the University of Texas Rio Grande Valley. The newspaper is widely distributed on and off campus in Brownsville and Edinburg, Texas. Views presented are those of the writers and do not reflect those of the newspaper or university.

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# ANNOUNCEMENTS



**Tuesday UNO Tournament**  
An UNO tournament will

take place at 12:30 p.m. in the Game Room on the Edinburg campus. The last three finalists will be awarded **VBucks**.

### Camp Cooking 101

The Student Union will have **s'mores** and **backpacking meal samples** for students starting at noon on the Student Union veranda on the Brownsville campus and at the same time Wednesday on the Chapel lawn on the Edinburg campus.

### Hasta La Vista 2019

Students can create **positive messages** for 2020 and **meet the Counseling**

**Center staff** from 11:30 a.m. to 1 p.m. in the Student Union on the Edinburg campus.

### Wednesday

#### Census Roll Call Day

Students can learn **census facts** and play **spin-the-wheel** to win prizes starting at noon at El Comedor on the Brownsville campus.

### Refill

The Counseling Center will host a group session focused on **self-care** from 10 to 10:50 a.m. in Student Union 1.20 on the Brownsville campus. For questions or accommodations, email maria.mazariegos@utrgv.edu.

### Thursday

#### Super Smash Bros. Tournament

The Student Union will host a **Super Smash Bros. tournament** at

12:30 p.m. in the Game Room on the Brownsville and Edinburg campus. The top three finalists will be awarded **VBucks**.

### Spanish Night: Flamenco!

The Center for Latin American Arts will host **flamenco night** at 7:30 p.m. in the Performing Arts Complex on the Edinburg campus. Students receive a ticket discount with a valid UTRGV ID.

### Friday

#### Civilian Response to Active Shooter

The UTRGV Police will host a **free classroom training course** for faculty, staff and students on civilian response to an active shooter from 9 to 11:30 a.m. in the Schilling Room on the Edinburg campus. Registration is online at [www.utrgv.edu/training](http://www.utrgv.edu/training).

--Compiled by Brigitte Ortiz

# POLICE REPORTS

The following are among the incidents reported to University Police between Jan. 7 and 15.



## Jan. 7

**9:18 a.m.:** A former student was unable to receive an official transcript due to monies owed to the University. She said she never enrolled in online classes in 2019 due to the transcript hold. She requested the incident to be documented.

## Jan. 8

**3:19 p.m.:** A faculty member lost two university keys at an unknown location.

**4:31 p.m.:** A faculty member lost two university keys at an unknown location.

## Jan. 10

**2:51 p.m.:** A faculty member lost a university-issued credit card and access key.

**4:01 p.m.:** A faculty member lost her UTRGV identification card in San Marcos. The card had access to the School of Medicine and Research Education Building.

**5:44 p.m.:** A non-affiliated man was arrested and charged with public intoxication in Brownsville. An officer had been waved down by a citizen regarding the man, who had been yelling at a female driver on Washington Street.

**10:11 p.m.:** Four individuals from Mexico were detained by U.S. Border Patrol after a UTRGV Police communications operator noticed them on the border cameras. They had been crossing on the south side of the fence by River Levee Road, near the Brownsville campus.

## Jan. 11

**12:56 p.m.:** An operator left the scene after driving a vehicle over the median curb and collided with a palm tree at the 2200 block of West University Boulevard in Brownsville. The vehicle and palm tree were damaged. An officer arrived at the scene after being waved down by a non-affiliated man. The case is under investigation.

## Jan. 12

**12:05 p.m.:** An officer noticed the interior of a double-pane glass window at Sabal Hall on the Brownsville campus was cracked. There was no broken glass in the immediate area. It is unknown how the crack was made. A work order was placed with Facilities to replace the glass.

## Jan. 13

**8:12 a.m.:** A staff member lost three university-issued keys.

**3:05 p.m.:** A non-affiliated man was detained by a UTRGV Officer after discovering the man had active traffic warrants for his arrest for unpaid citations from the City of Edinburg. The officer had been conducting a traffic stop in parking Lot E-32 on the Edinburg campus. After receiving a written warning for the violation, the man was released to an Edinburg officer.

**3:20 p.m.:** A faculty member lost a university-issued key.

**4:03 p.m.:** A non-affiliated man was arrested on a charge of public intoxication. The man had been yelling obscenities at a staff member in the Cueto Building's parking lot in Brownsville. Officers were dispatched and located the man at the corner of 14th and Monroe streets. He was booked into the Brownsville City Jail and was issued a criminal trespass warning. Charges were not filed by the reporting party for the disorderly conduct.

**6:42 p.m.:** Three students were involved in a three-vehicle minor accident that occurred off campus. An officer was dispatched to the incident. Edinburg Police Department arrived at the scene and generated the initial accident report.

**7:01 p.m.:** A man from Mexico was detained by U.S. Border Patrol and a UTRGV police officer. A UTRGV Police communications operator had observed the man on the border cameras on the south side of the fence.

**7:49 p.m.:** The Lucena House, located on the Brownsville campus, was tagged with graffiti on the east side exterior wall. It was discovered by an officer

conducting a building check.

## Jan. 14

**9:22 a.m.:** A staff member lost her university issued keys after last seeing them Dec. 12, 2019. She had been working an event at the Community Engagement & Student Success Building in Edinburg.

**1:16 p.m.:** A faculty member lost her university-issued key at an off-campus location.

**1:40 p.m.:** A faculty member lost her university-issued keys at an off-campus location.

**5:28 p.m.:** A male student was involved in an off-campus auto-pedestrian accident. No injuries were reported. The Edinburg Police Department arrived at the scene and filed the initial accident report.

**7:23 p.m.:** A motor vehicle accident involving a university shuttle bus occurred on Ed Carey Drive and North Frontage Road in Harlingen. No students were riding the bus at the time, and no injuries were reported. The bus sustained minor damage to the rear bumper. After arriving at the scene, the Harlingen Police Department generated the initial accident report.

## Jan. 15

**8:09 a.m.:** On Jan. 14, a faculty member's vehicle was struck in Lot B-6 on the Brownsville campus. The left rear bumper of the vehicle was damaged. The vehicle had been parked and unattended. The case is under investigation.

**12:52 p.m.:** A male faculty member suffered a seizure in the Medical Education building on the Edinburg campus. When a responding officer arrived, the seizure had passed and the faculty member was going to a clinic to seek treatment.

**7:31 p.m.:** A vehicle may have been damaged while parked in Lot E-16 on the Edinburg campus. The vehicle belonged to a female student who noticed the damage after leaving campus.

--Compiled by Sol Garcia

# MORE THAN A NEWSPAPER



## WOW

Continued from Page 1

"I like to go to different events that are going on throughout the school so I can meet new people," Gardner said. "I have a lot of spirit. ... I think we could have more pride by bringing out more events. ... College is a great experience to meet new people, make new friends."

The Back to School Bash took place at the Vaquero Village on the Edinburg campus. Students enjoyed free s'mores, popcorn, hot Cheetos and cheese. Music blasted through the

speakers, making the atmosphere vivid for everyone. Student organizations greeted the students as they passed by their booths and invited them to join their club. Inflatables were also available for students to enjoy. They could play soccer or baseball games with their friends. This event also took place on the Brownsville campus last Tuesday on the Student Union lawn.

Info depots were also part of the Week of Welcome. With various locations across both Edinburg and Brownsville campuses. These booths helped students with any questions they had for their first two days of

school. They also offered drinks and *pan dulce*.

The Week of Welcome ended with two women's basketball games, one taking place last Thursday night after the Back to School Bash and another last Saturday night on the Edinburg campus.

"I think it's a great turnout," said Lauren Contreras, assistant director for Student Activities. "We are seeing a lot of students who don't normally come to our events. We are really excited and we hope the students enjoy the event."



# New name for radio station

**Victor G. Ramirez**

EDITOR-IN-CHIEF

With the new year upon us, the radio program at UTRGV has changed its name from UTRGV Radio to Vaquero Radio to establish itself as an independent news outlet, according to a university official.

“Well, we had asked the radio program to change its name to, kind of, strengthen their role as a news outlet,” said Patrick Gonzales, associate vice president for University Marketing & Communications and university spokesman. “We felt, like, from the beginning, The Rider was a perfect example of a good name for a

university news outlet, because, you know, the university was nowhere mentioned in The Rider.”

Robert Velez, Vaquero Radio adviser and a political science lecturer, said the radio program tried to push back on the decision of changing the program’s name.

“We’ve been UTRGV Radio for five years and, you know, it takes a long time to build a brand and we don’t have the kind of institutional support that [UTRGV Athletics] has,” Velez said. “When they make a change, they can, you know, they have lots of money to promote their new brand and we just don’t have that in radio, or in Student Media more generally.”

Natalie Zarate, Vaquero Radio station

manager, said the new change has given the program a new image.

“It’s kind of like a breath of fresh air,” Zarate said. “It does allow us to grow from what [I] learned in the first three semesters. ... And with new staff, new people, it’s an opportunity for growth.”

Velez said the radio program is hoping to develop its own app to make it easier for the university community to “tune in.”

“We don’t have an enormous listenership right now, but, you know, we’re hoping that other programs would be willing to grow with us,” Velez said.

For more information on Vaquero Radio, visit [utrgvradio.com](http://utrgvradio.com).



Fernando Ramirez/THE RIDER

Vaquero Radio sports reporter Luis Rubio and news director Samantha Garza DJ are shown at the Viva Vaqueros event last Wednesday outside the Vaquero Village on the Edinburg campus. The student station, formerly known as UTRGV Radio since 2015, has officially changed its name to Vaquero Radio as of Spring 2020.

# Chess team fails to qualify for Final Four



COURTESY PHOTO

Computer science graduate student Ulvi Bajarani (from left), computer science graduate student Carlos Hevia, economics and finance junior Felix Ynojosa and computer engineering senior Yannick Kambrath participate in the 2019 Pan American Intercollegiate Chess Tournament last month in Charlotte, North Carolina. Both Team A and B failed to qualify for the Final Four and lost their championship title after placing first the last two years.

**Alejandra Yañez**

THE RIDER

The UTRGV Chess Team fell short of qualifying for the Final Four this year after placing fifth in the 2019 Pan American Intercollegiate Chess Tournament held Dec. 27-30 in

Charlotte, North Carolina.

For the last three years, the team has made it to the championship tournament, placing first the last two years. However, the back-to-back champions will not be defending their title this year. Both A and B teams did not qualify for finals and placed fifth overall in the Pan American

tournament.

Sixty-three teams from across the nation and Toronto, Canada competed in the tournament. UTRGV sent the A and B teams and four teams from the Chess Club at UTRGV to the competition.

Chess Program Manager Alex Mista said the “top four colleges qualify for the tournament and we took the fifth position.”

“So, we were very close and one game decided at the end,” Mista said.

He said the team had “decent” chances to win the last match and drew against a strong team from Webster University, but it was not enough to qualify.

Grandmaster Kamil Dragun, a finance junior, and International Master Irakli Beradze, a computer science freshman, both competed for Team A.

Dragun said he knew after the fifth round that Team A was not going to qualify, but Team B continued fighting in the last round against a strong team and he knew the team didn’t have the best chances.

“But Team B was doing extremely good and they were very, very close to qualifying,” he said. “The competition is growing. Every year, it’s more and more difficult to qualify because there are more teams. They invite more international students. They are just getting better and better.”

Beradze said he wanted to qualify because it was his first year attending the tournament with UTRGV.

Asked how he felt about the loss, he replied, “It’s normal in chess. Sometimes, the tournaments, like that, it’s about luck so you can never predict. OK, we wanted to qualify, but it’s hard to predict and like I said, it’s about luck and pairings. ... So, it’s OK. ... We will try [again] next year.”

Apart from the team results in the Pan American tournament, there were also individual classifications in which three UTRGV students were awarded with plaques and medals.

“They were the leaders of their teams and thanks to them we had other chances to qualify,” Mista said. “Of course, other players were trying to support, but it’s sports. Sometimes you win, sometimes you lose. You cannot win all the time, unfortunately.”

International Master Yannick Kambrath, a computer engineering senior, received first place in the individual classification. Grandmaster Carlos Hevia, a graduate computer science student, took second and Beradze placed third.

The Chess Team’s next tournament will take place Feb. 1 at the Texas Individual Championship on the UT Dallas campus in the Dallas suburb of Richardson.

# 3 MSA students accepted into top universities

**Hania Rocio**

THE RIDER

Three students in the Mathematics and Science Academy high school program at UTRGV have been accepted into Ivy League and private universities.

The Mathematics and Science Academy (MSA) is a program that strives to enhance high school students’ talents in mathematics and science and exceed their limits.

“We are very fortunate to have the academy at UTRGV,” said Wilma Smetter, principal of the Mathematics and Science Academy. “We have graduated over 500 kids in our program. They all have gone to continue with their degrees.

... We have students who have gone to be lawyers and doctors and just successful people in their communities.”

With the support of university staff and UTRGV President Guy Bailey, three students at MSA received full-ride scholarships for the four years of their academic life.

Juan Manuel Treviño, 17, is a senior and said his experience with MSA has been amazing as he was able to challenge himself and always received the resources he needed.

Juan Manuel was accepted into Columbia University in New York, where he plans to study computer engineering next spring. His goal for the

future is to lead a research team within a company. Columbia is among the eight Ivy League schools.

“I was actually in physics class and I opened up the form that said where I was going to

California. Romeo described the MSA program as a life-changing experience, and he is thankful for the people he has met in the institution.

Romeo plans to attend Stanford next fall semester and will study biomechanical engineering. Even though he is aware of the importance of education, He advises high school students to focus on self-growth.

“I just want to let [high school students] know that it is not impossible,” Romeo said. “It doesn’t really matter what college you get into. You need to define yourself. The school doesn’t define you. You don’t want to strive to get into college, you want to strive to

become the best person you can be.”

Senior Ian Guajardo, 17, was accepted into the University of Notre Dame in Indiana.

The acceptance rate at Notre Dame is low. According to the university’s admissions page, 3,515 students were accepted out of 22,199 applications received for 2019.

Ian plans to attend Notre Dame next spring to study mechanical engineering, but he is also considering studying aerospace engineering.

“I was super excited,” he said about getting the letter of acceptance. “I opened it and I freaked out. It’s awesome. Notre Dame is a really good university. ... It’s super exciting.”



**For more information about the MSA program, email [msa@utrgv.edu](mailto:msa@utrgv.edu)**

go next year,” he said. “I was really excited. I stepped out of the classroom and called my mom. ... It was, honestly, a really nice moment.”

Romeo Garcia Jr., 18, also a senior, was admitted into Stanford University in



# VAQUERO VOICE



## AUSTRALIAN WILDFIRES



"I mean, the wildfires, it's pretty bad. It's one of the worst we've seen in history. I think it's a devastation that almost a billion animals have been lost and that we can't even calm it down because it's so dry over there. I think that the state of the world, it's in a crisis and we can't do anything about it. I mean, we can, but people just don't. It's so easy to recycle, it's so easy to just, like, not throw your trash, like, outside but we just don't do it. I feel like we're just kind of being lazy at this point. We can do so much to prevent any of this, more wildfires, more people being hurt, losing their homes because of it and if we just put in the effort, we can actually help the Earth not be in a crisis like this and danger like this."

**Kaylee Lara**  
Psychology sophomore

"I think it's a tragedy, but I mean in regards to the state of the world, I don't know, I feel like that's just something that's going to always happen, you know? I think it can be prevented and I think that's what our goal should be, working to prevent stuff like that. But, you know, as it happens now, I think the best we can do is just take it a little bit at a time and just try and help with what we can."



**Aidan Guetzow**  
Rehabilitation services junior



*"Pues he estado viendo mucho el tema de lo que ha estado pasando en Australia y ... primero que nada, siento que es algo triste que nuestro planeta esté pasando por este tipo de cosas y que mucha gente a veces no pone atención en lo que está pasando. Ni siquiera porque las noticias están todo el tiempo aquí y en otros países. En las redes sociales como Facebook e Instagram, están publicaciones sobre esto y mucha gente todavía no sabe. Es algo triste que no cuidemos lo poco que tenemos. El planeta es lo único que tenemos donde podemos vivir y estar bien y es triste que la gente no tenga la conciencia a veces de que tirar un papel, basura o un bote va a tener repercusiones en lo que es el ambiente y en lo que vivimos."*

**Jose Hernandez**  
Estudiante de segundo año en comunicación

*"Es muy importante que la gente se haga consciente de que sí es importante ayudar arreglar el calentamiento global para que ya no sigan ocurriendo los incendios y también para prevenir lo que puede venir en el futuro"*



**Ana Laura**  
Estudiante de tercer año en licenciatura en laboratorio clínico

--Compiled by Eduardo Galindo and Aaliyah Garza



## More than thoughts and prayers



**Elizabeth Mendoza**  
THE RIDER

"Something must be done about it," I tell myself as I scroll through a sea of articles and videos about the devastation of the Australian bushfires.

Since late July 2019, Australia has been fighting the spread of bushfires. Residents and animals are attempting to escape the burning lands to safety.

So far, published reports state there have been 28 confirmed human deaths and an estimated 10 million hectares of bush, forests and parks across Australia have burned.

Moreover, an estimated half-billion animals have perished in the flames, according to World Wildlife Fund Australia.

Luckily, there have been individuals, such as content creators and celebrities, lending a hand to Australia through donations to organizations to help victims in need. For example, Kaylen Ward, who refers to herself as the "Naked Philanthropist," is a 20-year-old American model who raised more than \$700,000 for the victims of the bushfires by offering nude

photographs in exchange for donations to Australia's relief funds.

Her actions have inspired others to join the cause.

Be aware that Australia will take some time to recover from the damages since not all the fires have been put out yet. While there are various charity organizations that can be found online, there are few

**Individuals can do more than just post their "thoughts and prayers" on social media. The best way to make sure this devastation doesn't become "old news" is to give donations to any nonprofit organization or pay the word forward, such as informing other individuals so that they may pass on the information.**

announcements about them.

Individuals can do more than just post their "thoughts and prayers" on social media. The best way to make sure this devastation doesn't become "old news" is to give donations to any nonprofit organization or pay the word forward, such as informing other individuals so that they may pass on the information.

Here are some are some

of the organizations that are accepting donations to fight the bushfires, according to cbsnews.com:

**Donations to help animals:**

- WIRES (Wildlife Information Rescue and Education Services) at wires.org.au
- Royal Society for the Prevention of Cruelty to Animals of New South Wales at rspca.org.au
- Vets Beyond Borders at vetsbeyondborders.org
- the Port Macquarie Koala Hospital at koalahospital.org.au
- World Wildlife Fund at worldwildlife.org

**Donations to help fire survivors:**

- Australian Red Cross at redcross.org.au
- The Salvation Army of Australia at salvationarmy.org.au
- St. Vincent de Paul Society of Australia at donate.vinnies.org.au

**Donations to help firefighters**

- Country Fire Authority at cfa.vic.gov.au
- New South Wales Rural Fire Services and Brigades Donation Fund at rfs.nsw.gov.au

Don't feel bad if you can't donate right now. It is just as helpful to spread the information about the Australian bushfires and provide tips to where you can donate.

## Submit a Letter to the Editor

*The Rider encourages letters but does not guarantee publication. We reserve the right to edit letters for grammar and content. Letters for The Rider may be sent to therider@utrgv.edu. All letters must be typed and no longer than 400 words. Letters must include the name, classification and phone number of letter's author or the letter cannot be published. Opinions expressed in The Rider are those of the writers and do not necessarily reflect the views of The Rider or UTRGV administrators.*



# Preservando la vida salvaje

## Estudio de UTRGV muestra beneficios de pasos de fauna

**Maleny Ortega**  
THE RIDER

Según un estudio realizado por UTRGV que proporcionará datos a las agencias estatales y federales, alrededor de 6,000 animales han utilizado cruces de vida silvestre en la Autopista estatal 100 en lugar de cruzar la carretera.

En 2014, el Departamento de Transporte de Texas (TxDOT por sus siglas en inglés) comenzó un proyecto de \$5 millones que implementó cinco cruces de vida silvestre en SH100 con el propósito de evitar que el ocelote en peligro de extinción muera en el camino.

Texas State Highway 100 va desde la autopista US 77/83 y termina en Queen Isabella Memorial Causeway en Puerto Isabel.

Dos años más tarde, UTRGV comenzó un estudio de los cruces de vida silvestre con el fin de recopilar los números y datos necesarios para que TxDOT justifique su proyecto. El estudio finalizará en 2020.

“El Servicio de Pesca y Vida Silvestre de los Estados Unidos necesita un informe sobre como ha sido el comportamiento al usar los cruces, y la experiencia de UTRGV ha sido la que ha ayudado, al menos a formular y mantener estos estudios a lo largo de los corredores”, dijo Octavio Saenz, un funcionario público oficial de información para TxDOT.

Sáenz dijo que los cruces mantienen la vida silvestre viva y fuera del camino y, por lo tanto, ayudan a mantener la seguridad.

Los animales que han usado los cruces incluyen gatos monteses,



FOTO DE CORTESÍA

Un gato montés carga su cría mientras cruza a través de la estructura 3A en la carretera estatal 100. UTRGV comenzó un estudio de cinco cruces de vida silvestre instalados por el Departamento de Transporte de Texas para recopilar los números y datos necesarios para que el departamento justifique su proyecto. Según Richard Kline, profesor de la Facultad de Ciencias de la Tierra, el Medio Ambiente y Ciencia Marina, alrededor de 6,000 animales han utilizado cruces de vida silvestre a lo largo de la Carretera Estatal 100 en lugar de cruzar la carretera.

mapaches, zarigüeyas, comadrejas, zorros, conejos, tortugas y serpientes.

Richard Kline, profesor de la Facultad de Ciencias de la Tierra, del Medio Ambiente y Ciencia Marina, dijo que hay varias estructuras de cruce diferentes. Un tipo son los caminos subterráneos de animales.

“Los animales en realidad se dirigen hacia estos pasos subterráneos y caminan por debajo de la barandilla”, dijo Kline.

Otro tipo es el cercado de barrera

a lo largo de SH100 que evita que los animales entren en el camino.

“También tenemos guardias de vida silvestre del ganado, que en realidad evitan que los animales caminen hacia la carretera”, dijo Kline. “Y, recientemente también se instalaron salidas de animales para que cualquier animal pequeño que salga a la carretera pueda tener una salida para salir a través de estas estructuras de canal de embudo que habían instalado”.

El dijo que a más de 10,000 animales

se les impidió salir a la carretera.

Los cruces también brindan seguridad a los conductores al evitar que los animales crucen la carretera y causen accidentes de tránsito.

El estudio de UTRGV también beneficia a los estudiantes.

Kline dijo que habrá siete estudiantes totalmente financiados, lo que significa que recibirán un salario mensual suficiente para cubrir los gastos de vivienda y la matrícula en el programa de maestría, para completar su tesis sobre el proyecto. Se contrataron cinco estudiantes universitarios para trabajar en diferentes aspectos del proyecto.

Cuando se le pidió un consejo para los estudiantes que quieran participar en proyectos similares, Kline respondió: “Deben estar listos para trabajar en condiciones realmente cálidas y húmedas, saber cómo es una serpiente de cascabel y también tener un interés en participar en la conservación animal”.

Sáenz dijo que los cruces han tenido tanto éxito que se instalarán 12 cruces más en Farm-to-Market Road 106.

Los fondos para los cruces provienen de fondos asignados al proyecto del distrito.

Taylor Hopkins, un asistente del proyecto de investigación y estudiante graduado en biología, se enteró del proyecto a través de anuncio de empleos.

Hopkins asegura que se recopilan los datos necesarios para cumplir con su concesión. También está trabajando en su tesis y observando el área que rodea

Vea **ESTUDIO**, Página 9

## El equipo de ajedrez no califica en los últimos cuatro



FOTO DE CORTESÍA

Miembros del equipo de ajedrez de UTRGV compiten en el Torneo Intercolegial de Ajedrez Panamericano 2019 que se realizó del 27 al 30 de diciembre en Charlotte, Carolina del Norte. En representación del Equipo A (desde la izquierda) están el estudiante de tercer año en contabilidad Kamil Dragun, el estudiante graduado en matemáticas Andrey Stukopin, estudiante de último año en contabilidad Vladimir Belous y el estudiante de primer año en ingeniería informática Irakli Beradze.

**Alejandra Yañez**  
THE RIDER

El equipo de ajedrez de UTRGV no logró clasificarse para la Final Four este año después de colocarse en quinto lugar en el Torneo Intercolegial de Ajedrez Panamericano 2019 que tomó lugar del 27 al 30 de diciembre en Charlotte, Carolina del

Norte.

Durante los últimos tres años, el equipo llegó al torneo de campeonato, quedando en primer lugar en los últimos dos años. Sin embargo, los campeones consecutivos no defenderán su título este año. Los equipos A y B no se clasificaron para la final y quedaron en quinto lugar en el torneo panamericano.

Sesenta y tres equipos de todo el país y de Toronto, Canadá, compitieron en el torneo. UTRGV envió a los equipos A y B y cuatro equipos del club de ajedrez en UTRGV a la competencia.

El gerente del programa de ajedrez Alex Mista dijo que “las cuatro mejores universidades califican para el torneo y tomamos la quinta

posición”.

“Así que, estábamos muy cerca y un juego decidió al final”, dijo Mista.

El dijo que el equipo tenía posibilidades “decentes” de ganar el último partido y empató contra un equipo fuerte de la Universidad Webster, pero no fue suficiente para calificar.

El gran maestro Kamil Dragun, estudiante de tercer año en finanzas, y el maestro internacional Irakli Beradze, estudiante de primer año en ciencias de la computación, compitieron por el equipo A.

Dragun dijo que sabía que después de la quinta ronda que el Equipo A no iba a clasificar, pero el Equipo B continuó luchando en la última ronda contra un equipo fuerte y sabía que el equipo no tenía las mejores oportunidades.

“Pero al Equipo B le fue extremadamente bien y estuvieron muy, muy cerca de calificar”, dijo él. “La competencia está creciendo. Cada año, es cada vez más difícil calificar porque hay más equipos. Invitan a más estudiantes internacionales. Simplemente están mejorando cada vez más”.

Beradze dijo que quería clasificarse porque era su primer año asistiendo al torneo con UTRGV.

Cuando se le preguntó cómo se sentía acerca de la pérdida, respondió: “Es normal en el ajedrez. A veces, los torneos

como este, se trata de suerte, por lo que nunca puedes predecir. OK, queríamos calificar, pero es difícil de predecir y, como dije, se trata de suerte y emparejamientos. ... Entonces, está bien. ... Lo intentaremos [de nuevo] el año que viene”.

Además de los resultados del equipo en el torneo Panamericano, también hubo clasificaciones individuales en las que tres estudiantes de UTRGV fueron premiados con placas y medallas.

“Eran los líderes de sus equipos y gracias a ellos tuvimos otras oportunidades para clasificar”, dijo Mista. “Por supuesto, otros jugadores estaban tratando de apoyar, pero son deportes. A veces ganas, a veces pierdes. No se puede ganar todo el tiempo, desafortunadamente”.

El maestro internacional Yannick Kambrath, estudiante de último año en ingeniería informática, recibió el primer lugar en la clasificación individual. El gran maestro Carlos Hevia, un estudiante graduado en ciencias de la computación, ocupó el segundo lugar y Beradze quedó en tercero.

El próximo torneo del equipo de ajedrez tendrá lugar el 1 de febrero en el Texas Individual Championship en el campus de UT Dallas en Richardson, un suburbio de Dallas.



# Week of Welcome



**Cristian Cervantes**/THE RIDER

Civil engineering sophomore Karina Leos plays cornhole at the Back to School Bash last Tuesday on the Student Union lawn on the Brownsville campus.



**Eduardo Galindo**/THE RIDER

Interdisciplinary studies sophomore Jose Mendoza stops by an Info Depot table to get help from Game Room Attendant Jaqueline Garcia Jan. 13 on the Student Union lawn in Brownsville. Information tables were set up on both campuses as part of Week of Welcome and provided free food and snacks to all campus community members.



**Amanda Vela**/THE RIDER

Engineering junior Romeo Chapa attempts to hit the floating ball last Thursday during the Back to School Bash on the Edinburg campus. UTRGV's Back to School Bash included free games, rides and s'mores for attendees and was hosted by Student Activities.



**Fernando Ramirez**/THE RIDER

Students pose at a photo booth during the Viva Vaqueros event from last Wednesday outside the Fieldhouse on the Edinburg campus. Shown are (from left) mechanical engineering senior and The Herd President Rodrigo Barrera III, biology senior Yamileth Téllez and psychology freshman Karine Lozano. Viva Vaqueros was part of UTRGV's Week of Welcome festivities.



**Fernando Ramirez**/THE RIDER

Book club representative Priscilla Ramirez, a mass communication senior, helps Ana Gregg, a computer engineering junior, find the Academic Services building Jan. 13 on the Edinburg campus.



**Danielle Perez**/THE RIDER

Cindy Saucedo, a biomedical sciences freshman, tosses a ring toward an inflatable cactus as part of the "Lasso up" game at the Viva Vaqueros event Jan. 13 on the University Library lawn on the Brownsville campus. Also shown is Rodrigo Chapa, a business freshman.



# The curtain opens-- it's showtime

**Paulina Longoria**

A&E REPORTER

Waking up early to get ready for the show. Dressing up in a beautiful, blue skintight dress, ready to portray elegance along with black heels to zapatear to the rhythm of live Spanish music.

Placing red and white flowers in your low bun coupled with silver earrings as your accessories. Then, accentuating all your facial features to demonstrate your exuberance with flamboyant red lips.

This is psychology and dance senior Elizabeth Stamatío's routine as she prepares for the most passionate moment of her life as a Flamenco dancer.

Stamatío has been a Flamenco dancer in the Ballet Español at UTRGV since she first joined in 2016 as a freshman. At 2 years old, she started lessons at La Escala dance studio in Reynosa, Tamaulipas, Mexico, where she learned jazz, hip hop and ballet, among others. She had never danced Flamenco before coming to UTRGV.

Stamatío said that in the Ballet Español company, they practice different Spanish dances of Flamenco infused with ballet. These dances involve a lot of footwork, or zapateado. They must control upper body movements, count steps and concentrate on the music.

The Ballet Español will have four performances Thursday

through Saturday in the Performing Arts Complex on the Edinburg campus. The company has been preparing the presentation since last semester, incorporating dances such as "La Boda de Luis Alonso," "Bulerías," and the classic "Sevillanas."

In "La Boda de Luis Alonso," or "The Wedding of Luis Alonso," Stamatío will portray the bride. She will wear a white dress while the bridesmaids will dress in sleeveless gold-and-black dresses.

"In the [Ballet Español] company, she plays a lot of main roles because of her technique and because she has the leadership to go ahead and do, like, solo events or pieces," said mathematics and dance senior Eduardo Flores.

Flores will portray the groom in "La Boda."

Stamatío described what a performance day is like. They have two performances: one is for children in which they conduct a question-and-answer session and get asked about their costumes and their motivation to dance Flamenco.

"Normally, I would wake up super early like at 7, 6:30 [a.m.]," she said. "I would take a shower [and] do my hair. It's easier to do my hair and then I would head up to the [Performing Arts Complex]."

She arrives at the Performing Arts Complex for their 9 a.m. call and continues to put on her makeup and

warms up with the team before the show starts at 10 a.m.

"We try to hype up each other a lot [because] there's a point where we're, like, super tired but we know, like, 'it's showtime,'" Stamatío said, adding that it helps calm their nerves before the show.

The second performance is later in the evening. Their call is at 5 p.m. to have enough time before the show starts at 7:30 p.m.

"I've been dancing my whole life, but it still feels like before that curtain opens and you're, like, there on stage and they're calling, like, 'Dancers ready, dancers ready!' but I'm, like, 'No, wait! I'm not ready,'" Stamatío said, adding that she always feels butterflies since she has always been passionate about dance. "The curtain opens up and it's like you transform, like you enter a whole different zone."

She tries not to make eye contact with the public, especially her family, to avoid feeling more nervous. Instead, she looks to the lights and always wears a big and blissful smile on her face.

"For those three minutes, four minutes, five minutes, it's just about the dance, it's just about your body, it's just about doing that moment in space, like, with the music, with yourself, with your partner, with your group," she said about how liberating it feels to dance and forget about



Aaliyah Garza/THE RIDER PHOTOS

Elizabeth Stamatío, a psychology and dance senior, and Eduardo Flores, a mathematics and dance senior practice for the Flamenco Concert Series scheduled Thursday through Saturday in the Performance Arts Complex on the Edinburg campus.



The Ballet Español at UTRGV is a dance company directed by dance Lecturer Sonia Chapa. Members are (from left) Erik Mireles, Edith Camacho, Daniel Garcia, Tirzah Claus, Odalys Villagran, Sharon Caballero, Analyssa Castañeda, Jennifer Ledezma, Priscilla Chavira, Marisol Abascal, Katzin Garcia, Jennifer Jimenez, Elizabeth Stamatío and Eduardo Flores.

everything else. "For me, it's just, like, I guess, sharing the passion with someone else and like being free together, like doing what we love, that's just, like, the best thing."

After they finish their performance, the Ballet Español begins preparing for the next semester's show. By then, Stamatío will have to learn all the dances, footwork, handwork and formations, as she is the rehearsal assistant to Ballet Español's Director Sonia Chapa.

"I selected her because she always does everything to the best of her ability and tries to perfect herself and everything she learns," Chapa said. "Seeing her passion and her dedication, I decided to have

her as my rehearsal assistant."

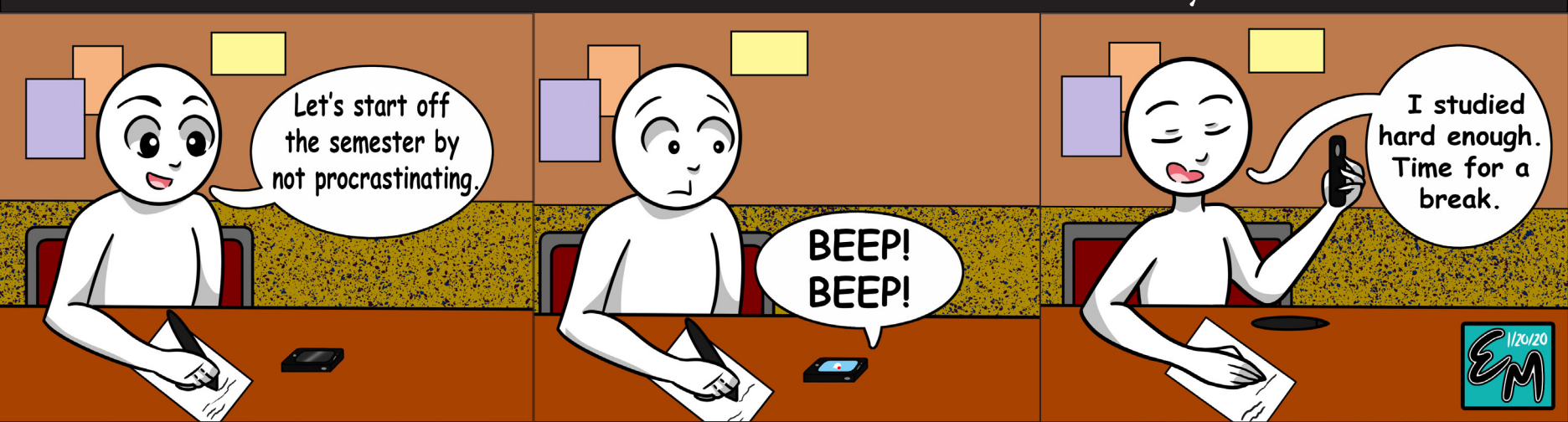
She founded the Ballet Español company in 2014. The company now has 16 members, 12 women and 4 men. She is in the process of creating a Flamenco studies minor at UTRGV.

Ballet Español will perform for the public at 7:30 p.m. Thursday and at 2 and 7:30 p.m. Saturday. It will perform at 10 a.m. Friday for public schools. All performances will be held in the UTRGV Performing Art Complex on the Edinburg campus.

For tickets to the Thursday and Saturday performances, call 665-2230. Admission is \$8 for adults, \$5 for senior citizens, children and UTRGV students with a valid ID.

## The Doodler

By Elizabeth Mendoza





# Cameron County hopes for increase in turnout

**Maleny Ortega**

THE RIDER

State representatives and senators and the Cameron County sheriff are among the highly contested positions in the March 3 presidential primary elections, according to an election official.

Remi Garza, Cameron County elections administrator, said voter turnout for presidential primary elections range from 24,000 to 45,000 people.

The last day to register to vote is Feb. 3 and early voting begins Feb. 18 and ends 28.

Garza said voter turnout among Cameron and Hidalgo counties is similar during primary elections, but Hidalgo County is higher during general elections.

Mark Kaswan, a political science associate professor, said it is important to vote in county elections because local government has the greatest impact on people's day-to-day life.

"In terms of the day-to-day things that people care about, you know, trash pickup ... streets, you know, where the stop signs are, how the playgrounds are lit at night, you know, those kinds of things that are in people's every day. ... Those are all local elections," Kaswan said.

The professor said in the eight years he has lived in Cameron County, voter turnout

has never been close to 50%.

"People should go to the polls and cast a ballot, even if they don't cast a vote," he said. "Even if it's a blank ballot because they don't like anybody. Still, go and cast a ballot. Politicians care about two things. They care about money for their campaign and they care about votes. And, people in the [Rio Grande] Valley, we're poor. We don't have money and we don't vote. So why would any politician give a hoot about Cameron County? ... If we want to get a little bit more love from our legislators, we need to vote."

Asked why it is important for young people to be involved in the election process, Garza replied that it is easy to think that issues being discussed do not impact their lives.

"I think people have to realize that, you know, governments take time to develop and move projects, so the sooner you get involved, the sooner your influence will be felt and your voice will be heard," he said. "Also, historically, the sooner you start voting the more you're going to vote, so it's always good to start that habit while you're young."

Although Kaswan does not believe Texas will become a blue state in November, there could be a possibility.

"If you look at heavily Republican-leaning counties, their voter turnout rates are



Roxanna Miranda/THE RIDER

Voter registration for the March 3 primary elections will end Feb.3. Some of the most highly contested positions include District 37 state representative in which Democrat Alex Dominguez is the incumbent; District 27 state senator, in which Democratic incumbent Eddie Lucio Jr. has three opponents; Cameron County sheriff, in which incumbent Omar Lucio has two Democratic challengers.

way up," he said. "I mean, they're at 70, 80%. ... They have no more room for growth. The Rio Grande Valley, San Antonio, Houston, places like that, have voter turnout rates in the 40 and 50%. Lots of room for growth."

Kaswan said that if it can get communicated that votes make a difference, it is possible that Texas can become a blue state.

He advises voters to prepare for Election Day by making a plan of when and where

they will vote, schedule it on a calendar and search online for candidate information.

"Early voting is a lot easier ... than voting on Election Day because early voting, you can go to any polling place in the county where you're registered and cast your ballot," Kaswan said.

Garza advises students to make sure they are registered to vote and keep up with election deadlines.

Felisia Mercado, a history

sophomore, believes it is important for young people to be aware of local elections because it helps to know who to vote for.

"If you have a problem with, like, the streets ... if you want to make a letter to address that, you need to know to who to send it [to]," Mercado said.

Aylin Esparza, a freshman, will be voting in the primary elections.

See CAMERON, Page 12

# UTRGV professor urges students to get informed

**Omar E. Zapata**

THE RIDER

The Texas Primary Election is set for March 3, and in Hidalgo County, voters will elect a sheriff, District 20 state senator and U.S. representative for Districts 15 and 28, among many others.

"Every election is always the most important election that's happening in our lifetime," said Robert Velez, a political science lecturer with a specialization in U.S. government and politics. "I just encourage people to register and vote; however you decide to vote, it's not as important as being involved in the process. I think the more people that are involved the better, the more representative it is."

Velez encourages students to get information from multiple sources and not rely on just one when it comes to getting information and news about the upcoming elections and candidates.

"Decide what issues are important to you," he said. "You don't have to be an expert on everything. If you're a student, it's not unusual for you to be interested in tuition and financial aid and things like that. So, find a couple of issues that are important to you and focus on those."

Velez suggests students should not wait to get registered but to do it as soon as possible.

"If you're a student in Edinburg and you live in Edinburg, even if you're not from here, you can still register here," he said. "So, if you're from somewhere else in Texas but you're going to school [at UTRGV] as a student, you're allowed to register where you go to school."

Denise Palacios, a political science senior and campus organizer for Texas Rising, said it's sad when someone has

IMPORTANT 2020 ELECTION DATES	
LAST DAY TO REGISTER TO VOTE	MONDAY, FEB. 3
FIRST DAY OF EARLY VOTING	TUESDAY, FEB. 18
LAST DAY TO APPLY FOR BALLOT BY MAIL	FRIDAY, FEB. 21
LAST DAY OF EARLY VOTING	FRIDAY, FEB. 28
ELECTION DAY: TUESDAY, MARCH 3	

FOR MORE INFORMATION AND POLLING LOCATIONS, VISIT [WWW.HIDALGOCOUNTY.US/105/ELECTIONS-DEPARTMENT](http://WWW.HIDALGOCOUNTY.US/105/ELECTIONS-DEPARTMENT)

Amanda Vela/THE RIDER GRAPHIC

the privilege to vote and does not use it.

"Our [Texas Rising] purpose is to involve young people, especially, like, minorities, people of color, women, LGBTQ+ communities, communities that are usually disenfranchised and we register people to vote because in the [Rio Grande] Valley what we see is that only two out of 10 people who are registered to vote, go out to vote," Palacios said. "So, many of us that are not voting but are affected by the policies that are enacted by our state and federal governments ... voting is our opportunity to change that and that's where Texas Rising comes in."

If you aren't registered to vote yet, Palacios encourages students to find Texas Rising on campus or to reach out to them on social media.

"We're on campus literally every day and you can find us on Twitter or send us a message on Instagram @txrisingutrgv, and we'll send someone

to go register you to vote," she said.

"Voting affects literally everything, it affects how much money the university gets, whether or not you're going to have enough grants for the year, when your car is breaking down because of potholes and your suspension sucks," Palacios said. "That's because your local officials and your county officials are not doing what they're supposed to be doing, so you need to vote them out and vote for people who will be working for you."

Fatima Garza, an anthropology sophomore, is excited to be voting and thinks voting is one of the most important things that citizens can do.

"I'm hoping for adequate city representation and adequate state representation and I think it all starts there and I'm really hopeful that we can get somebody that will truly represent our communities, especially here in the RGV," Garza said.

She wants her fellow UTRGV students to be informed about who they're going to vote for and to vote for people who truly want to represent them.

"We don't have control over many things but there's one thing we have a slight control over and that's voting," Garza said. "I feel like if we collectively decide to participate in this way, then we'll get something going."

The last day to register to vote is Feb. 3.

Palacios said getting information about candidates in Texas is a bit tough but by going on Texasvote.gov, voters can find out who is in office and who is up for re-election and who their opponents are.

She said in California, the state distributes pamphlets with information on candidates.

"California has these pamphlets where they give information on the candidates, but Texas says it's too expensive to inform people on how to vote and what candidates stand for," Palacios said.

Early voting starts Feb. 18 and ends Feb. 28. Election Day is March 3. UTRGV will be a polling site.

Republican and Democratic voters will choose nominees for elective offices, including president of the United States. The winners in each primary will face off in the November General Election.

The following are among the positions on the ballot:

**Federal Positions**

--U. S. Representative District 15. Incumbent Vicente Gonzalez is running unopposed in the Democratic primary. Monica De La Cruz Hernandez, Ryan Krause and Tim Westley are seeking the Republican nomination;

See HIDALGO, Page 11



# Rallying back to back

**Aldo Nava**  
SPORTS REPORTER

The UTRGV Women's Tennis Team will hit the road to compete against Sam Houston State University on Friday and Stephen F. Austin State University on Saturday.

These matches will both be held away from UTRGV's home court and will show how the team fares with competing back-to-back for the first time this spring season.

Head Coach West Nott said the team has prepared to play against the Bearcats and Ladyjacks the following day.

"I think it's super tough but that's why we've been training all year to prepare for situations like this," Nott said. "But, hopefully, we get stronger. Especially on the second day, I think that's what you'd like to see from the team. Have a good start and actually just improve the quality of the tennis over the two days."

UTRGV will compete against Sam Houston, a school it last met in October at the Bearkat Invitational, an event held by the opposing team, to close out the fall season.

Sophomore Sandra Putz, who won The Flight C Singles Championship at the invitational, said she plans to keep the momentum going in the spring season.

"I just want to use the win from the fall ... build up confidence and, like, just learning from my matches and just continue doing the same," Putz said.

Coach Nott said he has high hopes for the first match.

"Yeah, [Sam Houston is] very good," he said. "I would say an older team than us, and we're a little bit inexperienced. But I think there's no reason we can't make the necessary adjustments to, hopefully, make it a little tougher this time and maybe even sneak out a win, you never know."

As for Stephen F. Austin, UTRGV has not faced off against the university one-on-one since 2010. The universities were scheduled to play last April but the match was canceled due to inclement weather.

They will play in Huntsville against Sam Houston and in Nacogdoches against Stephen F. Austin.

For more information about the team, visit [goutrgv.com](http://goutrgv.com) or download the GoUTRGV app.



Aldo Nava/THE RIDER

Sophomore Sandra Putz prepares to hit a forehand during practice last Thursday at the Orville Cox Tennis Center in Edinburg. The Women's Tennis Team will face off against Sam Houston State University on Friday and Stephen F. Austin State University on Saturday.

# The art of shooting a 3-pointer



Amanda Vela/THE RIDER

Freshman guard Sara Bershers warms up before last Thursday's game against the Seattle University Redhawks by shooting 3-point shots. For women's basketball, the 3-point arc sits at 20 feet, 9 inches from the hoop. Successful completion of a 3-point shot includes strength, agility and good form.

**Angel De La Cruz**  
SPORTS REPORTER

UTRGV's The Rider took on a mission this week to better help students understand the art of shooting a 3-point shot.

As stated by the National Collegiate Athletic Association website, NCAA.org, the new 3-point line for men is at the international basketball distance of 22 feet, 1 3/4 inches.

However, for women the 3-point arc sits at 20 feet, 9 inches.

Redshirt junior guard Amara Graham explained some of the challenges athletes face when it comes to shooting a 3-pointer.

"One challenge I always say is, I mean, on a pass out from the middle going out to the 3-point line is always gonna be players running out at you," Graham said. "So, I mean if you feel like they're closer to you, you might not be able to get the shot off just because you think they might be able to block it. So, at that point you might have to pump fake and take a side step. That's an even harder 3-point shot coming off on one dribble. So, I think that's a challenge, the defense running out at you to defend a 3-point shot."

Nevertheless, she was able to provide The Rider with some tips on how to properly

convert a 3-point shot from that distance.

"A 3-point shot in a game of basketball for women's right now is a 20 feet, 9 inches shot away from the basket," Graham said. "It's a jump shot. Again, both feet have to be behind the line. It's a little harder just 'cause of the length away."

She also mentioned how the new distance might affect the shot.

"It might be a little harder to make just because it's further, but I think since it's further [it] also spaces out the court. So, a defense would have to either, if they stay on, I think it's a little easier shot actually, because you might get it off quicker than a layup usually 'cause there's defense on you already."

The Rider asked how Graham would explain that answer for someone who is just beginning to play basketball.

"It all starts with your form," Graham replied. "That's any shot on the court. I also think, if you're just starting, then you should probably start in a little closer, just because, again, being that far from the basket is gonna be harder to get it in the target. So, I think if you perfect your closer shots first, I think the 3-point line, once you are able to move back ... [it is] easier for you to

shoot it."

UTRGV Men's Basketball Head Coach Lew Hill understands the importance of scoring a 3-pointer.

"We like to shoot threes," Hill said. "We work on threes. That's part of our culture. That's part of our DNA and that's what we wanna do. A game we try to shoot 35 percent and above and just play freely."

The Rider finished with its mission asking Graham about any specific 3-point shots she remembers throughout her trajectory as a basketball athlete.

"Yeah, one of our home games this year the shot clock was running down," Graham replied. "It's, like, three on the shot clock and I get a pass out from the middle of the key, but all the way out and I'm like at the volleyball line on our court and I had to shoot it. I mean, it went in, I don't know, but it was a pretty far shot. I remember that one."

She said how the game of basketball is changing.

"Before it was like, 'Get to the rim. Get to the rim.' But now, the 3-point shot is actually a really big part of our game," Graham said. "If you would like to be a good basketball player, I feel like the 3-point shot, if you're a guard at any point, it's really crucial to be on the court."

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los cruces de vida silvestre.

"Hay una gran y hermosa variedad de especies de vida silvestre aquí en el sur de Texas, que por lo que he notado hablando con personas en el Valle, las personas realmente no saben mucho sobre lo que realmente creo que deberían", dijo él. "Muchas de las especies aquí son muy únicas para esta área y son exclusivas de

solo [esta] parte de los Estados Unidos".

Dijo que proyectos como los cruces de vida silvestre SH 100 son extremadamente importantes, pero no están bien documentados y entendidos por científicos y el público.

"A medida que más personas los noten y se concentren en ellos y se den cuenta de todo lo que los proyectos de ecología vial realmente están haciendo, tanto para los ecosistemas como para las personas, así, las personas se interesarán

mucho más en lo que realmente está sucediendo", dijo Hopkins.

Thomas Yamashita, un estudiante graduado en la división de Ciencias de la Sostenibilidad Ambiental Agrícola (ACE por sus siglas en inglés) y asistente de investigación, también escuchó sobre el proyecto a través de anuncios de empleo.

Yamashita lidera el aspecto de mortalidad vial del proyecto, analiza los datos recopilados y trabaja en trampas para cámaras.

El dijo que los cruces son importantes tanto para los conductores como para los animales porque evitan colisiones.

"Las colisiones pueden ser perjudiciales para los conductores y causar accidentes, pero incluso los accidentes sin colisiones pueden causar accidentes porque los conductores tratan de evitar al animal y terminan desviándose hacia otro carril o fuera de la carretera", dijo Yamashita.

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# Raising awareness of ethics

**Sol Garcia**  
THE RIDER

On Jan. 25 and 26, the UTRGV School of Medicine will host the Inaugural Clinical Bioethics Symposium to explore questions regarding ethics in health care.

Rabbi Claudio Kogan, the director of the UTRGV Institute of Bioethics and Social Institute, said the symposium will discuss ethics in the medical field, as it plays a strong role in this field. He gave the example of professionals needing to use ethics properly when delivering negative news.

Kogan, who also is a medical doctor, describes ethics as “kind of a balance ... and that’s one of the purposes of the symposium, to bring awareness of that.”

Among the 10 speakers are Dr. James Castillo II, of Doctors Hospital at Renaissance; Deepu George, an assistant professor; Dr. Alice Marcee, senior associate vice president for Business and Program Development in the School of Medicine; and Dr. Henry Weisman, a professor of

psychiatry in the School of Medicine.

Registration for health care professionals interested in attending is \$200. UTRGV medical students and residents are invited to attend at no cost. All attendees must have pre-registered through ePay before Jan. 16.

Brayden Chamberlain, a sophomore medical student, believes the symposium is necessary.

“There is issues we need to address,” Chamberlain said regarding the health care system.

Before the two-day conference, there will be a pre-symposium activity on Friday, honoring the 75th anniversary of the liberation of the Auschwitz Extermination Camp. The pre-symposium, which is open to the public, will take place from 2 to 3:30 p.m. in the School of Medicine Auditorium, located at 1210 W. Schunior St. in Edinburg.

The goal of this activity is to educate on the Holocaust and raise awareness to ensure it is never repeated. Dr. Matthew Wynia, director of the Colorado Center of Bioethics and



*Exploring ethical questions and concerns in health care*

Amanda Vela/THE RIDER GRAPHIC

Kogan will lead the presentation.

Jaylin Aleman, a psychology freshman, said it is important to learn about the Holocaust.

“It’s our history, and we don’t know much about it, unless, like, we hear

about it one-on-one,” Aleman said.

The symposium will also take place in the School of Medicine auditorium, from 7 to 9:45 p.m. Jan. 25 and 7 a.m. to 5:30 p.m. Jan. 26.

# UTRGV study shows benefits of animal crossings

**Maleny Ortega**  
THE RIDER

About 6,000 animals have used wildlife crossings throughout State Highway 100 instead of crossing the road, according to a study being conducted by UTRGV that will provide data to state and federal agencies.

In 2014, the Texas Department of Transportation (TxDOT) began a \$5 million project that implemented five wildlife crossings on SH 100 with the purpose of preventing the endangered ocelot from being killed on the road.

Texas State Highway 100 runs from U.S. Highway 77/83 and ends at the Queen Isabella Memorial Causeway in Port Isabel.

Two years later, UTRGV began a study of the wildlife crossings in order to collect numbers and data that are necessary for TxDOT to justify its project. The study will end in 2020.

“The U.S. Fish and Wildlife needs a report on how the behavior has occurred when using the crossings and the expertise of UTRGV has been the one that has helped, at least formulate and maintain these studies along the corridors,” said Octavio Saenz, a public information officer for TxDOT.

Saenz said the crossings keep wildlife alive and off the road and therefore, help maintain safety.

Animals that have used the crossings include bobcats, raccoons, opossums, weasels, foxes, rabbits, turtles and snakes.

Richard Kline, an associate professor for the School of Earth, Environmental and Marine Sciences, said there are several different crossing structures. One type are



COURTESY PHOTO

A white-tailed deer fawn (*Odocoileus virginianus*) at wildlife crossing structure 3A.

animal underpasses.

“The animals are actually directed towards these underpasses and they walk through underneath the railing,” Kline said.

Another type is barrier fencing along SH 100 that prevents animals from getting on the road.

“We also have cattle wildlife guards, which actually prevent the animals from walking onto the road,” Kline said. “And, just recently, animal exits were also installed so that any small animals that get on the road can actually have an exit to get off through these funnel chute structures that they had installed.”

He said over 10,000 animals have been prevented from getting on the road.

The crossings also provide safety for drivers by preventing animals from

crossing the road and causing traffic accidents.

UTRGV’s study benefits students as well.

Kline said there will be seven students fully funded, which means they will receive a monthly stipend sufficient to cover living expenses and tuition in the master’s program, to complete their thesis on the project. Five undergraduate students were hired to work on different aspects of the project.

Asked for advice to students who would want to participate in similar projects, Kline replied: “You need to be ready to work in really hot and humid conditions, know what a rattlesnake looks like and also have a, you know, an interest in trying to participate in animal conservation.”

Saenz said the crossings have been so successful that

12 more crossings will be installed on Farm-to-Market Road 106.

Funding for crossings comes from allocated funds given to the district project.

Taylor Hopkins, a graduate research assistant for the project and biology graduate student, found out about the project through a job board.

Hopkins ensures that data needed to fulfill their grant is collected. He is also working on his thesis and looking at the area surrounding wildlife crossings.

“There is a large, beautiful array of wildlife species here in South Texas that, from what I’ve noticed talking to people in the Valley, people don’t really know much about as I really think they should,” he said. “A lot of the species here are very unique for this area and are unique to only

[this] part of the United States.”

He said projects like the SH 100 wildlife crossings are extremely important but not well documented and understood by scientists and the public.

“As more people notice them and focus on them and realize everything that road ecology projects are actually doing, both for the ecosystems around and people, people are going to get a lot more interested on what’s actually going on,” Hopkins said.

Thomas Yamashita, a graduate student in the ACE (Agricultural Environmental Sustainability Sciences division) and a research assistant, also heard about the project through a job board.

Yamashita leads the road mortality aspect of the project, analyzes the data gathered and works on camera traps.

He said the crossings are important for drivers as well as animals because it prevents collisions.

“Collisions can be harmful for drivers and cause accidents, but even non-collisions can cause accidents because drivers try to avoid the animal and they end up swerving onto another lane or off the road,” Yamashita said.

He said projects, such as the crossings, are important for conservation purposes and the mitigation structures reduce human impact on wildlife.

“When you’re out on the roadway, look to your right and left and see all of these great things that Texas Department of Transportation is putting up trying to preserve these animals and wildlife,” Kline said.

Saenz encourages people to visit [www.txdot.gov](http://www.txdot.gov) to see more information on wildlife crossings.



**MEDICINE**  
*Continued from Page 1*

and student services for the School of Medicine, followed the medical students' journey throughout the years.

"I was looking at their admissions pictures, the ones they sent with their applications, the other day, and some of them now even have gray hair," Monfort said. "Some of them don't even have hair. They have matured. This first class is the class, to me, that took a risk. They were pioneers. It was a new school, new university. But these kids knew that they wanted medicine and they have heart. These are the most altruistic kids that I've seen in over 33 years of doing this."

Treviño is seeking a pediatrics residency and hopes in five years to

come back to the Valley to open her own private practice.

Monfort said on March 20 the medical school will find out where the students will be completing their residency during Match Day.

"So, they learn exactly where they're going to be working and we're going to have a big, big celebration here," she said. "It's done all over the United States at the same time. So, for the medical schools in the [Eastern Time Zone], it starts at 12 p.m. We open up the letters at 11 a.m., then [Mountain Time Zone], then over on the [Pacific Standard Time] at 9 a.m."

Dr. Leon Vela, senior associate dean for education, said the medical students will pursue various residencies where they will train and specialize in their chosen areas in medicine.

The medical students can pursue

various specialties, such as family medicine, pediatrics, internal medicine, surgery, obstetrics, gynecology, psychiatry and emergency medicine, according to Vela.

The class originally started with 50 students.

"Right now, we have 39 and that's because some along the way have had, you know, maternity leaves or have gone to [pursue] master's in public health or have done research," Monfort said.

As previously reported by The Rider on Oct. 26, 2015, the Liaison Committee on Medical Education (LCME) granting preliminary accreditation is a step in the development for the UTRGV School of Medicine. LCME had a scheduled visit in 2019 but was rescheduled for February 2020.

"What this committee does, the LCME, they assess how the program is going,"

Monfort said. "How the students are doing. [Are] our facilities adequate? Do we have enough faculty? Do we have enough clinical sites? They do an assessment and they do this for every single medical school. The new medical schools get more visits. The older medical schools get visits every four to seven years. So, that's [why] they're coming again. It's now the next step in February."

Vela said the May graduation will be a great day for UTRGV.

"A day of great celebration for the university to be ushering in this era of medical education," he said. "I think for the university, a great, great sense of pride, seeing these students graduate and pursue their dreams of being physicians [who] are going to serve patients and impact the lives of patients and families in their professional careers."

**ATHLETICS**  
*Continued from Page 1*

on the Brownsville campus compared to the Edinburg campus.

"One of the big things was the sports," Galonsky said. "Something even as small as a tailgating party, which I think they used to do but now they didn't, or maybe if they could bring some events. ... They had brought the new athletics director to introduce himself to the city commission, but then after that they said, 'Well, you know, he's new and he's trying to create a program that incorporates both campuses.'"

At the December meeting, Athletics Director Chasse Conque, other administrators from the department and five head coaches saw the opportunity to engage not only with the students but also the entire community.

"We met with the leadership in Brownsville and had a really good meeting," Conque said. "We discovered a variety of things and I think the feedback was very good and candid about the student leadership in Brownsville. They really gave us good direction on how we'll move forward starting in the spring."

"Really looking at creative ways that we can engage the Brownsville community and then also continue our efforts to engage our students in the Brownsville campus."

Among the items proposed during the meeting were summer workshops or classes for Brownsville Independent School District students.

"As far as the camps and clinics go, we're leaning on [the Parks and Recreation Department] there," Conque said. "Those conversations are ongoing. We're leaning on them to help us with the location for those types of community events."

He said the university is considering a couple of youth

clinics and camps that would be open to the public in Brownsville.

"I think with the camps and the clinics that we want to do, that's where we'll really be able to include a number of our different programs," Conque said.

During the meeting he also mentioned future sporting events happening this upcoming year and other sports further ahead.

Conque said tennis matches are scheduled April 3 and 15 in the Brownsville Tennis Center.

"In the fall, we're actually gonna have at least two soccer matches down there, and not just exhibition," Conque said. "We're also looking at moving one or two of our regular season games to Brownsville. So, really a lot of exciting work came from that meeting and I think we'll see some things come to fruition here in the next few months."

The Rider asked the director if any other sports would be played in Brownsville.

"We had discussions around baseball, looking at some of our fall intrasquad scrimmages," Conque said. "The big key that we have to make sure is in play are good facilities that can host a Division I athletic event and so wherever there is a building that fits that bill, we will definitely make something work with our athletic program."

Galonsky said one of the problems with bringing more athletic events to Brownsville is facilities.

"Soccer, they normally play only on grass fields and so, we don't really have a grass field here in Brownsville," she said. "The [Brownsville] Sports Park may have the turf and so that's why it could be hard to have, like, an exhibition game or some sort of game here because we don't have the adequate facilities. For tennis,

tennis might be fine. ... We need to work together with UTRGV and find out what are the requirements."

However, Conque said the Brownsville Sports Park soccer complex is a "great facility."

"That's a place that we feel can host Division I athletic events and then you got the tennis center there in Brownsville and we've actually hosted the WAC Championship there twice now, so it's a facility that we are familiar with," he said.

Before the opening of UTRGV in 2015, legacy institution University of Texas at Brownsville men's and women's soccer teams hosted games at the Brownsville Sports Park from 2007 to 2014.

UTB was a member of the National Association of Intercollegiate Athletics and competed not only in soccer but also in volleyball, men's and women's golf, men's and women's cross-country and men's and women's track and field.

Conque said bringing UTRGV Athletics to Brownsville takes commitment from both sides.

"That was the point of the meeting with city leadership," he said. "It was really to ask for their help and to lean on them, and I was really appreciative of the folks they brought to the table because there was people that can help us, and partner with us to start doing some of these things."

Galonsky said the purpose of the meeting was to show UTRGV that the city is interested.

"We had to start somewhere," Conque said. "And, I think [Brownsville city commissioners are] really appreciative of our athletic program, our coaching, especially tennis. Right out of the gate, we're gonna have two regular season matches

in Brownsville this spring, so I think it's about partnership, and a group of people coming together that wanna see Division I athletics be part of their community. ... I really think this is the first step in creating some synergy between UTRGV athletics and Brownsville."

Galonsky said money is tight but the more the city engages in conversation and shows interest, the better it will be.

"It's not just about talking and going to the table," Galonsky said. "We need to now start putting money to help them ... to seriously consider doing this."

She said sports is an important factor of education and notices a genuine effort from UTRGV administration to listen to complaints from students during her focus group meeting.

Conque said the mission is two-fold.

"It's one, to engage our students on campus, and we will continue to do our caravans with our coaches and student athletes this spring semester," he said. "But the student engagement is one thing and the other is really pointing Division I athletics to the community at large, so we think this is a really good next step for us to be able to do that."

The commissioner said they are trying to meet on a regular basis to develop more ideas.

"I'm really looking forward to it," Galonsky said. "The athletics director seems very receptive and I think he's genuine about wanting to be more here in Brownsville. We need to give him a bit of time to work out the plan and to execute but I'm pretty confident that we'll see something for the summer. ... I'll try and make sure that the city also, to make sure that it's not just talk and that we actually deliver."

Oggy Martinez, a criminal justice senior, said it would be nice to see sports on the Brownsville campus.

"It would be nice to see the basketball games and I know a few people would want to see the soccer games as well but that's the thing," Martinez said. "They probably see it as, what fields to use or what courts to use. ... It would be nice to have those games down here in the [Rio Grande] Valley, well, in Brownsville."

He said university athletic events would increase school spirit if there is enough awareness.

"Everybody would probably get excited to go if they were interested ... but it all depends," Martinez said. "They need to come down here first, test it out to see how it goes. But, not just one game, I mean, not everyone is going to go after one game. They need to have a couple of games and see where it goes from there. And, if they don't get the result they were looking for then, I mean, keep all their games up in Edinburg."

Henry Ray Olvera Jr., a history sophomore, said that there is not much school spirit on the Brownsville campus due to the lack of athletic events.

"Usually, when it comes to universities you hear about, like, these university football teams and there's, like, a lot of spirit revolving around that," Olvera said. "It just feels like the lack of athletics definitely contributes to this ... lack of pride or spirit in the university."

He believes it would be great to have a football team because it would attract more students.

"There's a lot of people that go to university based on, like, football, how they're good at it," Olvera said. "A lot of the universities' school spirits come from the football teams, at least from what I can see."

**ESTUDIO**  
*Continuación de Página 5*

El dijo que los proyectos, como los cruces, son importantes para fines de conservación y que las estructuras de mitigación reducen el impacto humano en la vida silvestre.

"Cuando estés en la carretera, mira a tu derecha e izquierda y ve todas estas cosas maravillosas que el Departamento de Transporte de Texas está tratando de preservar, estos animales y vida silvestre", dijo Kline.

Sáenz alienta a las personas a visitar [www.txdot.gov](http://www.txdot.gov) para ver más información sobre los cruces de vida silvestre.

**HIDALGO**  
*Continued from Page 8*

--U.S. Representative District 28. Henry Cuellar is the Democratic incumbent and is being challenged by Democrat Jessica Cisneros. Sandra Whitten is seeking the Republican nomination.

**State Positions**

--State Senator District 20. Incumbent Juan "Chuy" Hinojosa is unopposed in the Democratic primary. Judy Cutright is seeking the Republican nomination; --Supreme Court Justice, Place 7. Republican Jeff Boyd is the incumbent. Brandy Voss and Staci Williams are

seeking the Democratic nomination; --State Representative District 35. Oscar Longoria is the Democratic incumbent and has no challenger; --State Representative District 36. Sergio Munoz Jr. is the Democratic incumbent and is being challenged by fellow Democrat Abraham Padron; --State Representative District 39. Armando "Mando" Martinez is the Democratic incumbent and is running unopposed; --State Representative District 40. Terry Canales is the Democratic incumbent and is running unopposed; --State Representative District 41. Bobby Guerra is the Democratic

incumbent and is being challenged by fellow Democrat Richard Gonzales; --Justice for the 13th Court of Appeals District, Place 6. There is no incumbent. Democrat Nereida Lopez Singletery and Republican Clarissa Silva are seeking the nomination in their respective parties; --92nd Judicial District, District Judge. Luis Manuel Singletery (D) is the incumbent and running unopposed; --93rd Judicial District, District Judge. Fernando Mancias (D) is the incumbent and running unopposed; --139th Judicial District, District



**CAMERON**  
*Continued from Page 8*

Esparza believes it is important to be involved and know who you're electing. "Just to be more knowledgeable and if we can help others by voting, I think we should," Esparza said.

Republican and Democratic voters will choose nominees for elective offices, including president of the United States. The winners in each primary will face off in the November General Election.

The most highly contested positions include:

- State Rep. for District 37. Democrat Alex Dominguez has held the position since 2018. Challenging him for the position is Democrat Amber Medina;
- State Rep. for District 38. Democrat Eddie Lucio III has held the position since 2007. Challenging him for the position is Democrat Erin Gamez;
- State Sen. for District 27. Democrat

Eddie Lucio Jr. has held the position since 1991. Challenging him for the position are fellow Democrats Sara Stapleton Barrera and Ruben Cortez. Vanessa Tijerina is seeking the Republican nomination;

--Cameron County Sheriff. Democrat Omar Lucio has held the position since 1997. Challenging him for the position are fellow Democrats Michael R. Galvan and Eric Garza. John Chambers is seeking the Republican nomination;

--Justice of the Peace Precinct 2, Place 1. Democratic incumbent Linda Salazar has been in office since 2005. Challenging her are fellow Democrats Fred Arias and Cyndi Hinojosa;

--Justice of the Peace Precinct 5, Place 1. Democrat Dora (Sallie) Gonzalez has been in office since 1993. Charles "Chuck" Vieh is seeking the Republican nomination; and

--Justice of the Peace Precinct 5, Place 3. Democrat Mike Trejo has been the

incumbent since 2013. Challenging him is fellow Democrat Janie Jaimez.

Other positions include:  
--State District Court Judge 138. There is no incumbent. Democrats Helen Delgadillo, Gabriela Gabby Garcia and Myles R. Garza are seeking the nomination;

--State District Court Judge 404. There is no incumbent. Democrats Ricardo M. Adobbati and Louis Sorola are seeking the nomination;

--State District Court Judge 444. Incumbent Democrat David A. Sanchez is running unopposed;

--State District Court Judge 445. Incumbent Democrat Gloria M. Rincones is running unopposed;

--County Commissioner Precinct 1. Incumbent Democrat Sofia Benavides is being challenged by fellow Democrat Donald (Don) Clupper;

--County Commissioner Precinct 3. Incumbent Democrat David A. Garza is

running unopposed;

--County Constable Precinct 1. Incumbent Democrat Daniel Holland is running unopposed;

--County Constable Precinct 2. Incumbent Democrat Abelardo "Abel" Gomez Jr. is being challenged by fellow Democrat Silverio "Silver" Cisneros;

--County Constable Precinct 3. Incumbent Democrat Adrian Gonzalez is being challenged by fellow Democrat Roel Cavazos;

--County Constable Precinct 4. Incumbent Democrat Merced Burnias Jr. is running unopposed;

--County Constable Precinct 5. Incumbent Democrat Eddie Solis is being challenged by fellow Democrats Don Duncan, Javier "JJ" Gutierrez Fred Peña and Johnny Ramirez; and

--District Clerk. There is no incumbent. Democrats Diego Alonzo Hernandez and Laura Perez-Reyes are seeking the nomination.

**HIDALGO**  
*Continued from Page 11*

Judge. J.R. "Bobby" Flores (D) is the incumbent and running unopposed;

--332nd Judicial District, District Judge. Mario Ramirez Jr. (D) is the incumbent and running unopposed;

--389th Judicial District, District Judge. Leticia Lopez (D) is the incumbent and running unopposed;

--398th Judicial District, District Judge. Keno Vasquez Jr. (D) is the incumbent and running unopposed;

--430th Judicial District, District Judge. Israel Ramon Jr. (D) is the incumbent and running unopposed;

--449th Judicial District, District Judge. Renee Rodriguez Betancourt (D) is the incumbent and running unopposed;

--464th Judicial District, District Judge. Republican Ysmael Fonseca is the incumbent. Joe Ramirez is seeking the Democratic nomination.

**Hidalgo County Positions:**

--Hidalgo County Sheriff. Jose Guerra (D) is the incumbent and is being challenged by fellow Democrats Frank Guerrero and Raul Salinas. Ezequiel (Zeik) Jurado is seeking the Republican nomination;

--County Court at Law No. 7. Incumbent Sergio J. Valdez (D) is running unopposed;

--County Court at Law No. 9. There is no incumbent. Abiel Flores and Patricia Olivarez are seeking the Democratic nomination;

--County Court at Law No. 10. Incumbent Armando Marroquin (D) is

running unopposed;

--County Tax Assessor-Collector. Incumbent Pablo "Paul" Villarreal Jr. (D) is running unopposed;

--County Commissioner Precinct 1. Democratic incumbent David L. Fuentes is being challenged by fellow Democrat Olga Noriega;

--County Commissioner Precinct 3. Democratic incumbent Joe Flores is challenged by fellow Democrat Everardo Villarreal;

--Justice of the Peace Precinct 1, Place 1. Democratic incumbent Gilberto Saenz is being challenged by fellow Democrat Juan Ramos Jr.;

--Justice of the Peace Precinct 2, Place 1. Democratic incumbent Robert M. "Bobby" Contreras is running unopposed;

--Justice of the Peace Precinct 3, Place 1. There is no incumbent. Seeking the nomination are Democrats Marco De Luna and Sonia Treviño;

--Justice of the Peace Precinct 4, Place 1. Incumbent Democrat Charlie Espinoza is being challenged by fellow Democrats Jamie Rene Chavana and Orlando Jimenez;

--County Constable Precinct 1. Democratic incumbent Celestino Avila Jr. is running unopposed;

--County Constable Precinct 2. Democratic incumbent Martin "Marty" Cantu is running unopposed;

--County Constable Precinct 3. Democratic incumbent Larry Gallardo Jr. is being challenged by fellow Democrat Miguel Flores;

--County Constable Precinct 4. Atanacio "JR" Gaitan Jr. (D) is the incumbent. Challenging him are Democrats Eddie Badillo and Elias Mora.



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