

NOTICIAS EN ESPAÑOL



La votación temprana terminará el jueves

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On-campus sexual assault case under investigation



Omar E. Zapata/THE RIDER

Brigitte Ortiz
THE RIDER

After a sexual assault was reported on campus last week, UTRGV Police Chief Adan Cruz told The Rider officers will be spending more time patrolling the residence halls.

At 3:26 a.m. Feb. 14, a female student reported being sexually assaulted by a male student at Unity Hall on the Edinburg campus.

Cruz said the case is under investigation.

In a phone interview last Thursday, the police chief told The Rider that he could not discuss the case further at the time.

"The case, I'm not free to discuss right now," Cruz said. "... I'm very limited about what I can talk about there because of the situation. And then, it's still under investigation, except for what's just under

the admin report."

The Rider sent Cruz follow-up questions via email regarding the case, including whether an arrest has been made and about the status of the two sexual assault and multiple assault-by-contact cases that occurred between August and November of last year.

As of press time Friday, the police chief had not replied. See INVESTIGATION, Page 3

44 POSITIVE COVID CASES ON CAMPUS

New testing site in Edinburg

Natalie Lapsley
THE RIDER

UTRGV reported 44 new COVID-19 cases between Feb. 4 and 10, according to a university official.

Doug Arney, vice president for Administrative Support Services and chair of the Infectious Disease Committee at UTRGV, said among the 44 were 15 students, 25 staff and four faculty members.

UTRGV updates the number of cases reported for campus individuals weekly through the Confirmed Cases Dashboard. The university COVID-19 Response Team provides the numbers on its website.

Arney said none of the 15 students were in on-campus isolation housing the week of Feb. 4 to 10.

In Hidalgo and Cameron counties, COVID-19 cases continue to increase.

Hidalgo County reported 2,354 cases between Feb. 11 and 17, raising its total to

See COVID, Page 2

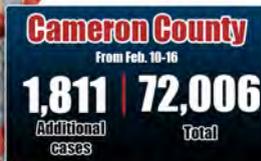
HOMECOMING '22



Diana Alvarez-Tovar/THE RIDER

Kevin Garza, housing coordinator, and Jessica Vallejo, assistant director of Residence Life, participate in the Homecoming Victory Trail last Wednesday on the Edinburg campus. The parade departed from the UREC and ended at the Fieldhouse.

COVID-19 CASES UPDATE



Roxanna Miranda/THE RIDER GRAPHIC

Early voting to end Friday

Brigitte Ortiz
THE RIDER

Early voting for the March 1 primaries continues through Friday, as voters decide who will be their party's nominees for Texas governor, lieutenant governor, attorney general, U.S. and state representatives as well as dozens of local officials.

Early voting started Feb. 14 at 18 polling locations in Cameron County and 28 in

Hidalgo County, including the UTRGV Edinburg and Brownsville campuses.

As of last Thursday, 6,850 had voted in Cameron County and 14,160 in Hidalgo County.

Remi Garza, Cameron County elections administrator, said there was an interesting first-day turnout. A total of 1,369 Democrats had voted, which was higher than the number of first-day voters in the 2018 primary.

See VOTING, Page 3



Citlalli Torres/THE RIDER

THE RIDER

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ANNOUNCEMENTS



Today Affinity Space

The Council for Cultural Activities and Center for Student

Involvement will host an **affinity space for Black students** from 6 to 7 p.m. in University Center 205 on the Edinburg campus and from 1 to 2 p.m. in Music, Science and Learning Center Room 1.105 on the Brownsville campus. Affinity spaces are dedicated to bring people who share similar identities together. The spaces on campus are hosted for students to connect and build community. There will be activities, music and food.

Tuesday Boots to the Ballot

The **Civic Engagement Alliance** will host **Boots to the Ballot** from 11:30 a.m. to 1 p.m. on the Student Union lawn. The event will kick start **early voting** for the Texas primary election. There will be free food, games and activities.

InqSpot Book Alliance

The **Student Union** will host a **book discussion** of “**Parable of the Sower**” by **Octavia E. Butler**

from 12:30 to 1:45 p.m. in the Student Union’s La Sala on the Brownsville campus and at the same time Thursday in the Student Union Loft on the Edinburg campus. The **first 25 people to RSVP** through V Link will receive a **free download link for the book.**

Wednesday Charreada

Student Activities and the **Campus Activities Board** will host **Charreada** from 3 to 5 p.m. on the Student Union lawn on the Brownsville campus. The event will have activities, such as tote bag and T-shirt screen printing, *aguas frescas*, a best dressed contest and performances.

Thursday ‘Selma’ Movie Screening

The **Center for Student Involvement** and **Council for Cultural Activities** will host a screening of “**Selma**” from 5 to 7 p.m. in Music, Science and Learning Center Room 1.105 on the Brownsville campus and from 7 to 9 p.m. in Student Academic Center Room 1.112 on the Edinburg campus. “Selma” tells the story of how Martin Luther King Jr. and his brothers and sisters in the movement forever altered history. The event is part of **Black**

History Month celebrations.

Stress Workshop

The **Student Leadership Academy** will host a **Mind Over Mood/Stress Workshop** from noon to 1 p.m. in the University Center Bronc Room on the Edinburg campus and from 4 to 5 p.m. in Music, Science and Learning Center Room 1.112. A professional speaker will lecture about mood and stress.

Cards for Senior Citizens

The **Civic Engagement Alliance** will host **Lots of Love** from 11 a.m. to 1 p.m. at the Student Union Commons on the Edinburg campus and at the same time in El Comedor on the Brownsville campus. Students will make **Valentine’s cards for senior citizens** in the community.

Friday SFAC Meeting

The **Student Fee Advisory Committee** will meet online to review **Fiscal Year 2023 budget proposals** from 1 to 4:30 p.m. The committee will also meet online March 4 from 1 to 4:30 p.m. Contact the Office of the Dean of Students at dos@utrgv.edu or call 665-2260 to RSVP and/or request accommodations.

--Compiled by Diana Alvarez-Tovar

POLICE REPORTS



The following are among the incidents reported to University Police between Feb. 10 and 14.

Feb. 10

4:06 p.m.: A staff member working at the University Financial Services building in Edinburg reported

the bank had flagged a check bearing the university account information as fraudulent. There was no monetary loss to the university. The case is under investigation.

9:08 p.m.: Officers assisted the Edinburg Police Department in searching for a fleeing suspect in a hit-and-run accident that had occurred at an off-campus location. The officers were able to locate the non-affiliated male suspect in the grassy area south of the University Soccer Complex. The man was subsequently detained and released to the custody of Edinburg police.

Feb. 11

9:28 a.m.: A staff member reported that on Feb. 10, while at the Main Building in Brownsville, she saw

two men, dressed in camouflage and carrying rifles on campus. The staff member reported the men took pictures with a promotional vehicle that was on campus and left the area. A report was generated for documentation purposes.

4:46 p.m.: An officer observed a man with an active criminal trespass warning walking through Lot E-8. The officer confirmed the criminal trespass warning was active and placed the man under arrest for criminal trespass. The man was then transported to the Edinburg Municipal Jail for booking procedures.

Feb. 12

1:52 a.m.: The Edinburg Fire Department and an officer responded to the Village Apartments in reference to an active fire alarm. The fire department concluded the fire alarm pull station had a malfunction that caused the alarm to activate. The fire department reset the fire panel and deemed the area safe for reentry. A work order was placed for the fire

alarm pull station.

Feb. 14

3:26 a.m.: A female student reported being sexually assaulted by a male student at Unity Hall in Edinburg. The case is under investigation.

11:14 a.m.: A staff member on the Brownsville campus reported an employee had not been at work and was concerned due to there being no communication from the employee. An officer contacted the employee and confirmed he was OK. A report was generated for documentation purposes.

1:52 p.m.: An officer responded to an off-campus location near the Texas Southmost College Performing Arts Center in Brownsville in reference to a non-affiliated unconscious woman. Emergency medical services and an officer with the Brownsville Police Department also arrived at the location. The woman regained consciousness and was transported to Valley Baptist Medical Center for further evaluation.

--Compiled by Alejandra Yañez

COVID

Continued from Page 1

162,246, according to its website.

The county reported 59 deaths between Feb. 11 and 17, raising its death toll to 3,741.

Hidalgo County’s Federal Emergency Management Agency-sponsored testing site at Municipal Park in McAllen will close today.

Carlos Sanchez, director of Public Affairs for Hidalgo County, said free PCR testing services will be available from 8 a.m. to 5 p.m. Mondays, Wednesdays and Fridays at the Precinct 4 Endowment Center located at 107 N. Sunflower Road in Edinburg.

Sanchez said Hidalgo County’s hospitalization rate was 25.14% as of last Thursday, and that anything over 15% is considered to be a high hospitalization rate.

“Obviously, it fluctuates,” Sanchez said in an interview with The Rider last Thursday. “This number today represents a very slight decrease over the day before and what we’re finding is, as we get towards the end of the week, the hospitalization rate decreases slightly.”

He said hospitals release patients toward the end of the week to increase capacity during the weekend, when the hospitalization rate “jumps up again.”

“We continue to see an upswing in the number of positive cases,” Sanchez said. “At one point, that was kind of the primary barometer for measuring how [COVID-19] was affecting Hidalgo County. What we’re looking at now as our primary barometer is the hospitalization.”

He said hospitalization rates are a “reflection of the sickest of the sick” and, while the Omicron variant is highly contagious, it has not been as dangerous as the Delta variant, especially for those who are vaccinated.

“I think the fatality numbers today reflect, kind of, an ongoing trend that those who tend to die, by large, are unvaccinated,” Sanchez said. “Those who die and have been vaccinated, it is, almost without any kind of exception, because these people had other illnesses at work. ... [COVID-19], ultimately, is what is responsible for their death, but had they not had these comorbidities, they probably would have survived.”

He said 99.99% of Hidalgo County residents age 5 and older have received at least one vaccine and 80.58% have received a second dose.

For updates about county vaccination rates, visit dshs.texas.gov.

Cameron County reported 1,811 cases between Feb. 10 and 16, raising

its total to 72,006 cases, according to its website.

The county reported 20 deaths between Feb. 10 and 16, raising the county’s death toll to 2,131.

Cameron County’s FEMA-sponsored testing site will remain open through Tuesday.

Free testing services will be available from 8 a.m. to 6 p.m. today and Tuesday at the Sports Park, located at 1000 Sports Park Blvd. in Brownsville.

Individuals must follow instructions provided by onsite signage and personnel. Test results will be available within three to five business days.

Esmeralda Guajardo, health administrator for Cameron County, said the county is asking residents to continue to report at-home test results.

“What I’m hoping is that people are starting to receive their at-home testing kits and they start utilizing that as an option,” Guajardo said. “The demand for testing has decreased as a whole, and, so, it’s kind of difficult to continue to maintain these testing sites with minimal number of people showing up.”

Residents of Cameron County can report both negative and positive test results at cameroncountytx.gov.

Clarification

In an article headlined “New perspective: from Italy to the RGV” and published Feb. 7, The Rider paraphrased a quote by Romeo Di Loreto about disposal of chemicals in the photography area. To clarify, UTRGV does not throw chemicals down the drain. The university’s Environmental Health, Safety & Risk Management department properly disposes of chemicals used in the art building via a system of chemical waste, Di Loreto said in an email after publication of the article.

INVESTIGATION
Continued from Page 1

The Rider also filed a public information request Thursday, asking to inspect and obtain copies of public records, specifically the police report, supplemental report and any law enforcement narratives regarding

the case.

During the interview, Cruz said the UTRGV Police Department has increased foot patrols.

"We've scheduled extra patrols and talked to our officers about spending more time on foot in the residence halls," he said.

"Also, we'd like to encourage

VOTING
Continued from Page 1

In the Republican primary, 460 people voted on the first day, which, according to Garza, was a significant increase from the 200 voters in the last gubernatorial race.

"So, you know, there's a lot of interest," he said. "We're not sure if that's going to hold throughout the rest of the early voting period and through Election Day, but it certainly is encouraging. We have had a significant increase in registrations since then. So, there are a lot more people who are eligible to vote, but we've seen that trend happening each election cycle. We're getting more and more people to vote."

A total of 3,869 people cast a ballot Feb. 14 in Hidalgo County, according to Hilda Salinas, assistant director of the Hidalgo County Elections Department.

"Compared to previous gubernatorial elections, we did have about 6,000, so it is a little bit less," Salinas said. "But, you know, we encourage people to get out and vote."

While polling sites have been offered on the UTRGV Edinburg campus in previous elections, the Brownsville campus recently regained its polling site in the Interdisciplinary Academic Building after the university advocated to have it in this election cycle.

Lauren Contreras, assistant director for Student Activities, said the Civic Engagement Alliance is doing its part to promote student voting by hanging posters on campus, posting

on social media and participating in involvement fairs.

This week, the CEA will host a Boots to the Ballot event on the Edinburg and Brownsville campuses to encourage students to vote as part of its Get Out the Vote Rally.

"We are also hosting a Meet the Candidate series where we're bringing as many gubernatorial candidates as accept our invitation to come to the campus," Contreras said.

The CEA hosted Democratic gubernatorial hopefuls Joy Diaz on Feb. 8 and Beto O'Rourke last Friday on the Edinburg campus. The organization recently confirmed that Republican Delilah Barrios, also a candidate for governor, will speak from 12:30 to 1:30 p.m. Friday at the Student Union PlainsCapital Bank Theater on the Edinburg campus, with a live stream available in Student Union's Sal6n Gardenia on the Brownville campus.

Registered voters may cast a ballot in person at early voting sites or by mail. On Election Day March 1, voters must go to their respective precinct to vote.

On Sept. 5, 2021, Gov. Greg Abbott signed into law Senate Bill 1, which states that 24-hour polling, drive-thru voting and early voting on Sundays would be cut. The law also decreased the number of polling sites for counties.

Garza said voters who applied for a ballot by mail had to go through additional steps before the application was accepted. The deadline to submit

everyone to make use of our CampusShield app," he said. "That's a big thing, you know ... because you can do a safe walk, you can do CampusShield. Any number of things you can do that can get a response from PD just at the push of a button."

To report any potential violations of

an absentee ballot application was last Friday.

"We encourage everybody to read the instructions that are provided as carefully as they can to prevent any sort of delays in the acceptance of the return," Garza said. "And I think it's caused some confusion because, you know, information came out late from the state for us to make sure we were complying with the code and then our interpretation of the changes was correct."

He said Cameron County set up a process to help voters secure their ballot in case they made any mistakes.

Salinas said there are changes to curbside voting. Poll watchers now have the authority to view the voter's ballot when the voter is being assisted by an election worker.

Voters must take one of seven forms of identification: a Texas driver's license, Texas election ID certificate, Texas handgun license, U.S. citizenship certificate with a photo, Texas personal ID card, U.S. military ID with photo or U.S. passport.

Salinas said because Hidalgo County had electronic voting machines, the county had to retrofit the voting machines to a "paper-based system" because of Senate Bill 598, which went into effect Sept. 1, 2021.

"We are now a Hart [InterCivic] Verity Duo hybrid voting machine," she said. "So, you do make your selections

the Student Code of Conduct, student behavior or a complaint, call Student Rights and Responsibilities at 665-5375 in Edinburg or 882-5141 in Brownsville, or email srr@utrgv.edu. For campus emergencies, call 882-4911.

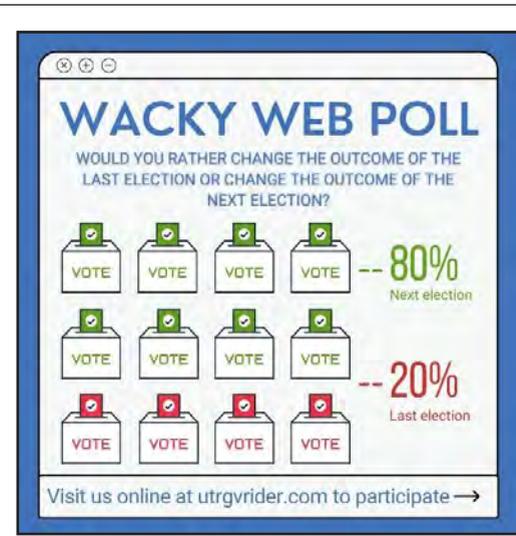
--Alejandra Yañez contributed to this report.

digitally and you insert a blank paper ballot. Once you are done and have completed your voting process, it will then print your selections on a paper ballot. Then, you will take that paper ballot and enter it into a scanner, where your selections will be tabulated."

This is the first time Hidalgo County implements voting machines. Salinas asks that voters be patient as the process will take time.

"Again, knowing what you're going to be selecting, you know, informing yourself on what your ballot would look like, using our sample ballot lookup tool, will help speed up the process in regards to that," she said.

--Rider Sports Reporter Omar E. Zapata and Online Editor Alejandra Yañez contributed to this report.



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NFTs

On Feb. 15, The Rider conducted a poll on social media asking students, "What is your stance on NFTs?" The results are shown below.

facebook

They're overrated 71%

They're whatever 13%

I'm unfamiliar with it 9%

They're cool 7%

twitter

40% They're overrated

40% They're cool

20% I'm unfamiliar with it

Instagram

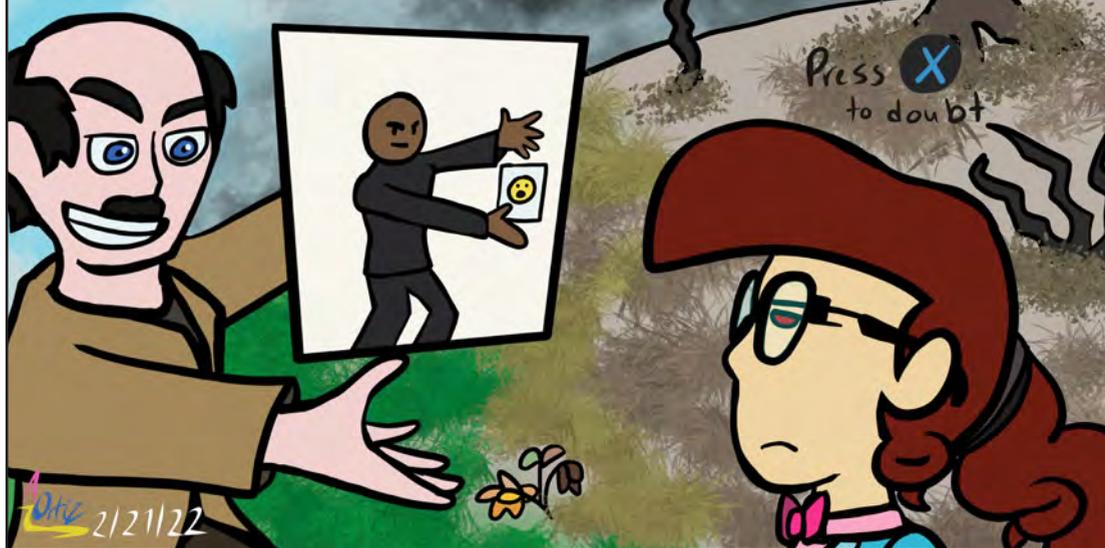
They're overrated 49%

I'm unfamiliar with it 26%

They're whatever 13%

They're cool 11%

Non fungible ecosystem



Just another form of cryptocurrency



Natalie Lapsley
THE RIDER

I enjoy art. I enjoy making art. I am not just talking about painting on canvas, but movies, music, typography, digital art, photography and architecture.

In my family, my siblings and I are known for our collective love of creating, but there is just one problem.

Recently, family members and friends have all discovered this great opportunity for us. People are making thousands; no, people are making millions.

Suddenly, my brother and I "should really look into NFTs."

Non fungible tokens, or NFTs, are non-replaceable digital tokens and, despite a few outliers, the internet is going crazy over them.

I am not trying to blindly hate something just for kicks, so let us get one thing straight.

My biggest issue with NFTs and cryptocurrency is the impact it has on the environment.

I know--a lot of people bring this up, but they hardly ever explain further. You might be wondering, "What environmental impact?"

NFTs and cryptocurrency use tons of energy and create a considerable carbon footprint.

"Bitcoin 'mining' already

generates 38 million tons of CO2 per year," according to brightly.eco.

For reference, the country of Slovakia had a footprint of 26.4 million tons of carbon dioxide in 2020.

"Bitcoin mining is the process of creating new bitcoins by solving extremely complicated math problems that verify transactions in the currency," according to bankrate.com. "When a bitcoin is successfully mined, the miner receives a predetermined amount of bitcoin."

NFTs create a similar impact due to the energy-intensive computer

prints.

So, if we are talking about art, I understand the appeal to a degree. New technology allows people to distinguish between the original and a copy. Blockchain is a permanent digital record that makes it possible to authenticate a file as the original.

People can now collect original digital art and there is excitement in that.

But NFTs are more than just original artworks. It also comes in the form of music, videos and GIFs. A video of LeBron James delivering a slam dunk sold for \$208,000 last year.

With that said, do you really need to own a digital certificate representing someone else's song, video or outfit?

Are you really going to spend thousands on a small icon just so you can say you did?

Everyone else can still watch that video, listen to that song or look at that photo. I mean this in the nicest way possible, but all the owner really has is bragging rights, although, personally, I wonder if it is anything to really brag about.

NFTs are just another form of cryptocurrency.

Bitcoin alone has an annual carbon footprint of 97.14 megatons of carbon dioxide, according to digiconomist.net.

Between the negative effects on our planet and the weird obsession with ownership, I would rather steer clear.

"Even if there were no negative environmental impacts, why is everyone so obsessed with owning everything?"

transactions needed to sell, store and authenticate each token.

That impact does not include the production of the hardware needed to make those transactions or the specialized computers used for "mining."

What if we set all that aside for a moment?

Even if there were no negative environmental impacts, why is everyone so obsessed with owning everything?

To be clear, I understand the appeal of art collecting. After all, there is only one original "Mona Lisa," despite tons of copies and

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La votación temprana terminará el viernes



Citlalli Torres/THE RIDER

Los residentes del condado de Cameron podrán emitir su voto en el *Interdisciplinary Academic Building* en el campus de Brownsville. La votación anticipada estará disponible desde Feb. 14 al 25. Las elecciones primarias se llevarán a cabo el 1 de marzo en diferentes ubicaciones alrededor del condado.

Brigitte Ortiz THE RIDER

La votación temprana para las primarias del 1 de marzo continúa hasta el viernes, mientras los votantes deciden quiénes serán los candidatos de su partido para gobernador, vicegobernador, fiscal general, representantes estatales y de EE.UU., así como docenas de funcionarios locales.

La votación temprana comenzó el 14 de febrero en 18 lugares de votación en el condado de Cameron y 28 en el condado de Hidalgo, incluidos los campus de UTRGV en Edinburg y Brownsville.

Hasta el jueves pasado, habían votado 6,850 en el condado de Cameron y 14,160 en el condado de Hidalgo.

Remi Garza, administrador de

elecciones del condado de Cameron, dijo que hubo una participación interesante el primer día. Un total de 1,369 demócratas habían votado, más que el número de votantes del primer día en las primarias de 2018.

En las primarias republicanas, 460 personas votaron el primer día, lo que, según Garza, fue un aumento significativo de los 200 votantes en la última carrera para gobernador.

“Entonces, ya sabes, hay mucho interés”, dijo. “No estamos seguros de si eso se mantendrá durante el resto del período de votación anticipada y hasta el día de las elecciones, pero ciertamente es alentador. Hemos tenido un aumento significativo en los registros desde entonces. Entonces, hay muchas más personas que son elegibles para votar, pero hemos visto esa tendencia en cada

ciclo electoral. Estamos logrando que más y más personas voten”.

Un total de 3,869 personas votaron el 14 de febrero en el condado de Hidalgo, según Hilda Salinas, subdirectora del Departamento de Elecciones del condado.

“En comparación con las elecciones para gobernador anteriores, tuvimos alrededor de 6,000, por lo que es un poco menos”, dijo Salinas. “Pero, ya sabes, animamos a la gente a salir y votar”.

Si bien se han ofrecido lugares de votación en el campus de Edinburg de UTRGV en elecciones anteriores, el campus de Brownsville recuperó recientemente su lugar de votación en el Edificio Académico Interdisciplinario después de que la universidad abogó por tenerlo en este ciclo electoral.

Lauren Contreras, subdirectora de Actividades Estudiantiles, dijo que la Alianza de Participación Cívica está haciendo de su parte para promover el voto de los estudiantes colgando carteles en el campus, publicando en las redes sociales y participando en ferias de participación.

Esta semana, la CEA (por sus siglas en inglés) organizará el evento *Botas a la Boleta (Boots to the Ballot)* en los campus de Edinburg y Brownsville para alentar a los estudiantes a votar como parte de la Reunión Sacar el Voto (*Get Out the Vote Rally*).

“También estamos organizando una serie de *Conozca al Candidato* donde traeremos candidatos a gobernador como acepten nuestra invitación para venir al campus”, dijo Contreras.

La CEA recibió a los aspirantes a gobernadores demócratas Joy Díaz el 8 de febrero y a Beto O'Rourke el viernes pasado en el campus de Edinburg. La organización confirmó recientemente

que la republicana Dalila Barrios, también candidata a gobernadora, hablará de 12:30 a 1:30 p.m. el viernes en el *Student Union PlainsCapital Bank Theatre* en el campus de Edinburg, con una transmisión en vivo disponible en el Salón Gardenia de *Student Union* en el campus de Brownsville.

Los votantes registrados pueden emitir su voto en persona en los sitios de votación anticipada o por correo. El día de las elecciones, 1 de marzo, los electores deben acudir a su respectivo precinto para votar.

El 5 de septiembre del 2021, el gobernador Greg Abbott promulgó el proyecto de ley 1 del Senado, que establece que se eliminarían las votaciones de 24 horas, la votación desde el automóvil y la votación temprana los domingos. La ley también redujo el número de sitios de votación para los condados.

Garza dijo que los votantes que solicitaron una boleta por correo tuvieron que pasar por pasos adicionales antes de que se aceptara la solicitud. La fecha límite para presentar una solicitud de boleta de voto en ausencia fue el viernes pasado.

“Animamos a todos a leer las instrucciones que se proporcionan con el mayor cuidado posible para evitar cualquier tipo de retraso en la aceptación de la devolución”, dijo Garza. “Y creo que ha causado cierta confusión porque, ya sabes, la información del estado salió tarde para asegurarnos de que estábamos cumpliendo con el código y luego nuestra interpretación de los cambios fue correcta”.

Dijo que el condado de Cameron estableció un proceso para ayudar a los votantes a asegurar su boleta en caso de que cometieran algún error.

Vea VOTACIÓN, Página 11

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HOMECOMING



Students form a bigger crowd as they get pulled onto the floor by their friends and DJ at the V My Valentine's Day dance hosted last Thursday by the Student Union on the Brownsville campus.

Citlalli Torres/THE RIDER



History senior Estephanie Gonzalez snaps a photo of theatre freshman Clarissa Gonzales in front of a valentine backdrop during the V My Valentine Dance Feb. 14 at the University Ballroom on the Edinburg campus.

Diana Alvarez-Tovar/THE RIDER



Students enjoy the annual V My Valentine Dance Feb. 14 at the University Ballroom on the Edinburg campus. The event is part of Homecoming week.

Diana Alvarez-Tovar/THE RIDER

2022

UTRGV campus community members line up to receive the official Homecoming 2022 T-shirt last Wednesday during Orange Fest. The event took place at the Casa Bella Apartments on the Brownsville campus after the Victory Trail.

Roxanna Miranda/The Rider



Graphic design freshman Ana Shamatava makes a s'more last Wednesday during Orange Fest. Before the event, she participated in the Victory Trail on the Brownsville campus.

Roxanna Miranda/The Rider

Sergio Martinez, director of Housing and Residence Life, leads this year's Homecoming Victory Trail last Wednesday on the Brownsville campus. The event was part of a three-part celebration of UTRGV Homecoming. Students, staff and faculty were welcomed to participate.

Roxanna Miranda/The Rider



Kevin Garza and Jessica Vallejo, of UTRGV Housing and Residence Life, carry UTRGV flags during the Homecoming Victory Trail parade last Wednesday on the Edinburg campus.

Diana Alvarez-Tovar/THE RIDER

Astrology Rider: Weekly Horoscopes

Danielle Perez
SOCIAL MEDIA EDITOR

Aries-The money you have been waiting for is finally coming. Take it as motivation to treat yourself and your family, perhaps with a nice gesture to express appreciation. However, be sure to make a savings account and avoid making irrational purchases.

Leo-The plans you had for yourself may be put on pause due to visitors at home. Do not be upset by this. Instead, think about where you could go to spend some alone time. This pause gives you time to reflect on your plans and decide if you would like to move forward with them.

Sagittarius-Positive changes are now coming to life after all the hard work you have been putting in. Expect big ideas and appreciation to be shown this week at your workplace. Stay humble, Sagittarius. You are slowly leveling up.

Libra-A new creative energy is starting to approach and you have never been more excited. Take advantage of the momentum and finish any ongoing projects. Balance out this energy by incorporating it in your other daily tasks. Keep your creativity open and express yourself.

Gemini-Instead of spending your time reading books, try to socialize and take different approaches to spending your alone time. Catch up on errands you have been meaning to do or go grocery shopping. Maybe you will run into an old friend with exciting news.

Aquarius-Having self-love is important, especially when you outdo yourself often, Aquarius. Remind yourself to stay grounded and have a little more self-care in your life. Make a trip to one of your favorite places and enjoy yourself.

Scorpio-Soon you will be recognized and perhaps even promoted. Whichever it may be, enjoy the spotlight and be ready for your next task. Pressure may arise; therefore, try to express yourself through some kind of outlet. Remember to put one foot in front of the other.

Pisces-Although you may be going through a tough time. Do not overcomplicate things for yourself. It is important to take care of your emotional and mental health at this time. Try developing a routine of meditation or yoga to calm yourself.

Cancer-Trusting your intuition is something you need to start doing more often. Spirit is trying to guide you toward the right path and if you refuse to listen, you will end up getting hurt. Spend some time reflecting on what your heart truly desires and let your sixth sense lead you there.

Taurus-If you want to succeed and achieve your goals, you need to look at the whole picture. Before making any sort of decision, make a list of pros and cons. Making unreasonable choices could lead you down the wrong path. Stay focused, Taurus. Think about your future wisely.

Virgo-This week will bring you self-reflection and relaxation. Find a way to work smarter and not harder. Think about what is helping you grow and what is bringing you down. Do not burn yourself out, Virgo. Give yourself time to breathe.

Capricorn-New information about the past is finally revealing itself and it is making a positive change on you. The unknown was making you feel anxious and preventing you from moving on. Take this insight and break free from old cycles.

War and power

Shakespearean production in the works



Diana Alvarez-Tovar/THE RIDER

Theatre senior Luis Macias (center), as Coriolanus, and mass communication senior Diego Ramirez Meda, as Menenius, rehearse last Wednesday for the upcoming play "Coriolanus," which will open Friday in the Albert L. Jeffers Theatre on the Edinburg campus. Also shown are theatre senior Elias Garcia (left), who plays Second Citizen, and John Medrano (background), who plays Third Roman Citizen.

Brigitte Ortiz THE RIDER

The UTRGV Theatre Department will perform "Coriolanus," a Shakespearean tragedy about a military leader turned politician, from March 25-27 and April 1-3 in the Albert L. Jeffers Theatre in Edinburg.

Director Brian Warren, an associate professor in the Theatre Department, said this is an interesting play and lesser known among William Shakespeare's works.

He said the title character, Coriolanus, is not suited for his political appointment and the tragedy happens from there.

Warren said politics and the military are two different worlds. He said Shakespeare was writing about a topic that often happens throughout the years.

"His works have been made into all these different movies," Warren said. "So if people have a memory of any of those, like 'Romeo and Juliet' ... it's a chance to see, well, what other plays are out there from the 37 that he has written, you know? ... We're all about educating people, so maybe it'll give them a chance to see another Shakespeare

open to the public. Facial covering and social distancing restrictions will be set in place for the play.

Jennifer Saxton, an associate professor in theatre and costume designer, said "Coriolanus" is shockingly modern.

"It feels really topical," Saxton said. "It feels like it's about what's going on right now in the world, which is

interesting. So, I think, that's kind of a compelling story, you know, but not just the politics, but also the people. He's kind of got a strange relationship with his family ... trying to meet

the needs of his family, but he's not the only person with ambition. ... He's like this great general, right. He's making the leap into politics, but then we've also got other people in his family who are, you know, kind of pushing, too."

"Every play has something to take away from it, like a message, and I think it's very relevant with the political climate lately. So, I mean, people will probably catch on to that with the play."

**--Luis Macias
theatre performance senior**

that they may not have heard of."

On March 25 and 26 and April 1 and 2, the play will begin at 7:30 p.m. and at 2 p.m. on March 27 and April 3. An ASL interpretation of the play will be provided on March 26.

Admission is free and

See THEATRE, Page 11

Daily Musings by Ariael Ortiz



Sudoku



Last week's puzzle answer key:

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

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

Athlete of the Week: Chris Mondesi



Chris Mondesi
Ailed Montague/THE RIDER

Chris Mondesi grew up in Brooklyn, New York, and is playing his first season for the UTRGV Baseball Team as an infielder, according to goutrgv.com. He is a junior and the nephew of former Major League outfielder Raul Mondesi, who played for the Los Angeles Dodgers, the New York Yankees and others.

Q: What has inspired you to become a baseball player?

A: "It's been in my family DNA. It's just been something I was born into. The first thing I did was pick up a baseball."

Q: What is a song that hypes up the baseball team before a game, and why?

A: "There's a lot of them, but right now, it's 'City of Gods' by Kanye West and Alicia Keys. It's a song that we all like and we all listen to it in the locker room and play it about 10 times a day."

Q: What is your favorite aspect about baseball?

A: "Favorite aspect is that you're not always going to succeed, but you have to try and maximize the opportunities that you do succeed in and just enjoy the game and have fun with it."

Q: What is the most memorable game you have played?

A: "That's a tough one. I would have to say my first game ever. I still remember it vividly. My dad had asked me if I was nervous, and I said, 'I am not nervous.' I remember my first pair of spikes I wore to the game. I just remember having fun and being a kid."

Q: Besides baseball, what are your favorite sports and favorite teams?

A: "My favorite sport, besides baseball, would have to be football. My favorite pro football team would have to be the Giants, since I'm from New York and that's where I grew up."

Q: Who is your favorite famous athlete?

A: "[Former eight-division world boxing champion and current Philippines Sen.] Manny Pacquiao and [Los Angeles Rams wide receiver] Odell Beckham Jr."

Q: What is a random fact about yourself?

A: "I grew up in New York, but I also went to high school in Florida, as well."

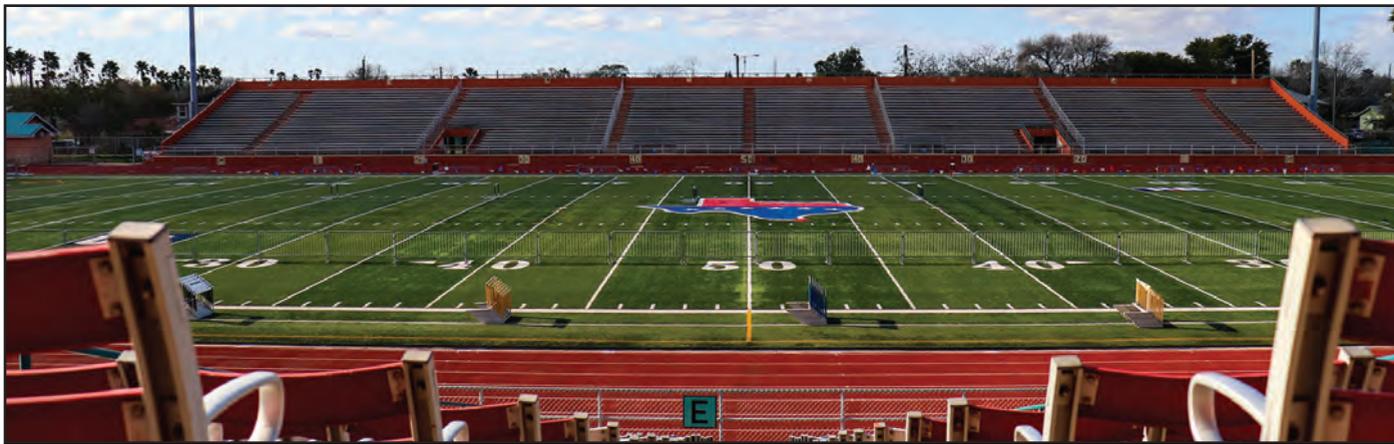
--Compiled by Ailed Montague

A GLIMPSE INTO FOOTBALL GAME DAYS



Diana Alvarez-Tovar/THE RIDER

H-E-B Park serves as the home of the Rio Grande Valley FC Toros of the USL championship. The park opened in March 2017 and holds several events for the community. The outdoor stadium is located in Edinburg. The facility is one of the stadiums discussed as a prospective site for the Division 1 football program at UTRGV.



Roxanna Miranda/THE RIDER

Initial possible venues discussed for the Division 1 football program at UTRGV include Sams Memorial Stadium in Brownsville. According to TexasBob.com, the stadium's capacity is 10,300. This is one of the two facilities the Brownsville Independent School District varsity football teams play in for home games.

Omar E. Zapata

SPORTS REPORTER

As UTRGV gets closer to the proposed 2025 inaugural season for the NCAA Division 1 football program, Sams Memorial Stadium and H-E-B Park are prospective stadiums the team will play in, university officials say.

In a referendum last November, the UTRGV student body approved increasing the Athletics Fee by \$11.25 per credit hour, capped at 12 hours, to establish a football program, women's swimming and diving teams, two marching bands and two spirit programs. The increase will take effect in Fall 2022. Currently, the fee is \$15 per credit hour. With the rate increase, it will total \$26.25 per credit hour.

The next step is getting approval by the University of Texas System Board of Regents during its next meeting Tuesday and Wednesday in Austin.

Chasse Conque, UTRGV vice president and director of Athletics, told The Rider that he feels optimistic about what the board will decide.

"At the same time, really proud of what we're going to be able to share with the regents, with the really strong showing of students that voted in a referendum," Conque said. "...

I feel like we've done our part as an institution and that's not just on the administrative side but about the students."

He said the proposed starts for swimming and diving in 2024 and football in 2025 may seem a long time from now, but there is a lot of work to be done before then.

Anticipating the football program to kick off for the 2025 season, Conque said the plan is to build a practice field

Since UTRGV will compete in the Football Championship Subdivision (FCS), as opposed to the Football Bowl Subdivision (FBS), it will not be required to build a separate football stadium.

H-E-B Park in Edinburg and Sams Memorial Stadium in Brownsville are the stadiums that are being discussed as possible home-game sites for the football program.

H-E-B Park seats about 9,700 people, according to the park's Facebook page. It is also home to the Rio Grande Valley FC Toros of the USL, the second level of the U.S./Canadian professional soccer pyramid. The park also hosts various concerts and events, such as *Fiesta* in Edinburg, which will take place later this month.

Conque said the university is only in preliminary discussions with H-E-B Park, but that one does not have to think too hard to imagine what it would look like if it were a Division 1 college football stadium.

"It's a beautiful facility," he said. "It's one of the crown jewels of sports facilities in the entire region. ... It has premium seating options and press box capabilities ... locker room situations that can accommodate a college football game."

H-E-B Park has a full-service restaurant, executive lounges, a sports bar and 33 suites. The park also includes soccer practice fields, various bench

See FOOTBALL, Page 11

"We don't want them to think that, you know, that they're just a visitor here. We want them to feel comfortable and know that 'Hey, anytime that you have a football game available, that the stadium will always be available for them.'"

**--Gilbert Leal
BISD athletics director**

and locker rooms by 2024, not just for football players to use but those from other sports as well.

A proposed location for these new facilities would be north of the UTRGV Baseball Stadium.

"So, one scenario is placing that practice field, practice facility, north of the baseball stadium," he said. "That seems to be a good location for us to look at and it keeps our athletics footprint fairly tight, right? We've got baseball there. And so, putting it near that would make a lot of sense."

THIS WEEK IN SPORTS

WOMEN'S BASKETBALL
7 P.M. THURSDAY VS.
TARLETON STATE UNIVERSITY
[CONFERENCE, HOME]

WOMEN'S TENNIS
10 A.M. SATURDAY VS.
UNIVERSITY OF THE INCARNATE WORD
[HOME]

1 P.M. SUNDAY VS.
TEXAS A&M UNIVERSITY-KINGSVILLE
[HOME]

CHARREADA

¡Viva la Fiesta!

Wednesday, Feb. 23rd

3 PM - 5 PM

BROWNSVILLE
STUDENT UNION LAWN

Join us for performances, alpacas, jalapeno eating contests and more!

RSVP on V-Link today!



For accommodations and more information, contact
Student Activities at studentactivities@utrgv.edu



VOTACIÓN
Continuación de Página 5

Salinas dijo que hay cambios en la votación en la acera. Los observadores electorales ahora tienen la autoridad para ver la boleta del votante cuando el votante está siendo asistido por un trabajador electoral.

Los votantes deben presentar una de las siete formas de identificación: una licencia de conducir de Texas, un certificado de identificación electoral de Texas, una licencia de armas de fuego

de Texas, un certificado de ciudadanía de EE.UU. con foto, una tarjeta de identificación personal de Texas, una identificación militar de EE.UU. con foto o un pasaporte de EE.UU.

Salinas dijo que debido a que el condado de Hidalgo tenía máquinas de votación electrónicas, el condado tuvo que adaptar las máquinas de votación a un "sistema basado en papel" debido al Proyecto de Ley del Senado 598, que entró en vigencia el 1 de septiembre del 2021.

"Ahora somos una máquina de votación híbrida [InterCivic] Dúo de Verdad", dijo. "Entonces, hace sus selecciones digitalmente e inserta una boleta de papel en blanco. Una vez que haya terminado y haya completado su proceso de votación, imprimirá sus selecciones en una boleta de papel. Luego, tomará esa boleta de papel y la ingresará en un escáner, donde se evaluarán sus selecciones".

Esta es la primera vez que el condado de Hidalgo implementa máquinas de

votación. Salinas pide a los votantes que sean pacientes ya que el proceso llevará tiempo.

"Una vez más, saber lo que va a seleccionar, informarse sobre cómo se vería su boleta, utilizando nuestra herramienta de búsqueda de boletas de muestra, ayudará a acelerar el proceso con respecto a eso", dijo.

--El reportero deportivo Omar E. Zapata y la editora en línea Alejandra Yáñez contribuyeron a este reporte.

--Traducido por Fatima Gamez Lopez

THEATRE
Continued from Page 8

Saxton said the costumes for this play are contemporary.

"[I did] a lot of research and then a lot of conversations with the director about his concept," she said. "So he had this idea for the show. It was exciting because it's sort of, you know, exactly the way I saw the show, too, you know. So, we have this kind of modern idea

of it, and then I start drawing. So, it's like really knowing the show, really knowing the script, talking with the director, understanding his production concept for the show, and then I get to work."

Luis Macias, a theatre performance senior, will portray Caius Martius Coriolanus, a Roman soldier.

Other members of the cast include Diego Ramirez Meda, as Menenius, a

father figure and friend; Ceilia Loreda, as Coriolanus' wife; and Frank Zamora, as Tullus Aufidius, Coriolanus' enemy.

Macias said his character is hotheaded.

"I think the challenge with this one is finding the complexity of him as a person, not just a character in the play," he said.

Macias said Shakespeare can be easily dismissed as boring because of

its outdated language.

"The content of the play, it's still very relevant," Macias said. "You know, once we get past the outdated language with good actors ... I think it's really enjoyable. Every play has something to take away from it, like a message, and I think it's very relevant with the political climate lately. So, I mean, people will probably catch on to that with the play."

FOOTBALL
Continued from Page 9

areas, picnic tables, a playground and an amphitheater with a capacity for over 2,000 individuals.

Conque said all of these things could give UTRGV a great Saturday home game feel.

Leading up to the referendum vote, the university promised to have at least one home game in Cameron County to accommodate students based on the Brownsville campus.

Sams Memorial Stadium in Brownsville is a possible site in which the football program would play future home games. The stadium, built in 1952, holds a capacity of 10,300 people, according to Texasbob.com. The stadium is home to all six Brownsville Independent School District high school varsity football teams.

"It's a neat stadium, and it's going to

provide us, of course, an opportunity to be in Cameron County, as we talked about rallying the Valley," Conque said. "That was important to us, playing in two locations."

Gilbert Leal, BISD athletic director, told The Rider that Sams Memorial Stadium holds a lot of rich history and has the ability to host UTRGV football games.

"We're actually right in the middle of a face-lift here at Sams Stadium," Leal said. "We're improving the parking on the south side of the stadium, new concessions, restrooms and a new parking lot just south of the stadium."

These renovations to Sams Stadium are projected to be completed by December 2022, according to Leal.

The athletic director said it is one of the few "old-school" concrete-based stadiums left in the Valley and the people of Brownsville are very proud of the facility.

In 2018, the school district added a

\$1.4 million, 65-foot scoreboard to the stadium, making it one of the largest scoreboards in the Valley.

Leal, who coached football for 25 years before taking his current position in 2018 and played quarterback at the University of Texas at El Paso from 1988 to 1990, said bringing a Division 1 football program to the Valley, and especially Brownsville, will have an immediate impact.

"It's going to be able to provide, instantly, a home base for UTRGV to be able to create a, you know, a dedicated fan base," Leal said. "The second thing is it allows our Brownsville student athletes ... for the first time, really, Valleywide ... gives an opportunity for these student athletes to be able to see firsthand how big and how fast and how technical Division 1 college football is."

The athletic director said with many student athletes having travel restraints, they will be able to watch

firsthand some of the best athletes the Western Athletic Conference has to offer.

Leal said with BISD and UTRGV working closely already in academics, the school district wants it to be the same for athletics.

"We don't want them to think that, you know, that they're just a visitor here," he said. "We want them to feel comfortable and know that 'Hey, anytime that you have a football game available, that the stadium will always be available for them.'"

With both of these stadiums only in preliminary talks to host UTRGV football games, Conque said the Intercollegiate Athletics department is waiting for the UT System Board of Regents approval for those discussions to substantially pick up.

"We haven't gotten to that point, yet," he said. "... We're really waiting for that board approval and we don't want to put the cart before the horse."



SGA CONSTITUTIONAL AMENDMENTS

STUDENT ELECTION

February 28 - March 2

TOWNHALL EVENT

Tuesday, February 22 at 6:00 P.M.

BMSLC 1.105 or via SGA Facebook Live

Students are invited to learn about the constitutional amendments that propose changes to student representation.

For more information or accommodations contact SGA at 956-665-2517 or sga@utrgv.edu.

ELECT JUDGE
NORMA
 RAMIREZ FOR COUNTY JUDGE 2022



Hidalgo County is my priority.

As a child who grew up without a mother by age 3, Norma picked cotton to survive. Judge Norma Ramirez, a true Democrat, served 4 years as the Hidalgo County Democratic Party Chairwoman, ensuring that our County stayed blue and all our candidates re-elected.

Founder and owner of a multimillion dollar company, Norma currently serves as municipal Judge for the city of Granjeno and Board member for Access Esperanza, helping ensure that Hidalgo county women have access to affordable healthcare.

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 COUNTY**

- **LOWER** property taxes
- **SOLVE** our countywide flooding problems
- **CREATE** good paying jobs that support working families
- **INCREASE** access to affordable healthcare
- **ADVOCATE** for Democratic values across Hidalgo County
- **BUILD** more public housing and infrastructure for a growing community
- **INCREASE** the number of women in County jobs and contracts



VOTE EARLY FEBRUARY 14 - 25 | ELECTION DAY MARCH 1, 2022