

# News-Sun

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TUESDAY, FEBRUARY 9, 2016

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## Community News

A quorum of the **HOBBS CITY COMMISSION** may occur Wednesday while commission members attend a public hearing to discuss senior needs and concerns at the City of Hobbs Senior Center, 200 E. Park. City policy is not expected to be formulated by commission members and no official vote or other action is expected to occur.

The Lea County Cooperative Extension Service will be providing a workshop on **MASTER MIXES**, Feb. 19 from 10 a.m.-noon. Participants in this workshop will learn how to make various baking mixes, seasonings, drink mixes, soup mixes, and more. The workshop is free but space is limited. Participants will not need any supplies, however, 575-396-2819 by Feb. 16.

Hobbs Police is hosting the **CITIZEN'S POLICE ACADEMY** on Tuesdays from 6-9 p.m. beginning March 1 and lasting 10 weeks. The academy is open to any citizen over the age of 18 who would like to learn about police operations, law, firearms, illegal drugs, search and seizure, crime scene investigations, SWAT, K-9, criminal investigations, as well as several other subjects. Students are required to participate in ride-alongs with on duty officers. For an application, visit [www.hobbspd.com](http://www.hobbspd.com) and click on either of the Citizens' Police Academy links on the homepage or contact Officer Mike Stone at 575-397-9381.

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### Oil Prices

West Texas Intermediate	
Spot.....	\$26.69 ..-1.20
Posted..	\$26.50 ..-.75
Sour.....	\$23.30 ..-.75
N. Gas..	\$2.140 ..+.077



KIMBERLY RYAN/NEWS-SUN

Husky pups were recently transported to Denver from the Hobbs Animal Adoption Center.

## In need of wheels

Center looking for vehicle to transport animals to rescue groups

CHARLIE BENTON  
NEWS-SUN

The Hobbs Animal Adoption Center and Lea County Humane Society are in need of a set of wheels.

The organizations are looking for a vehicle to take animals to various rescue organizations in Colorado so the shelter can euthanize fewer animals. The organizations have been transporting animals to Colorado since July 2015 using rented vans. At least four trips are made every month.

The vans are driven by volunteers and the total cost

of one journey is around \$600 for a monthly average of \$2,400 and an annual average of more than \$35,000.

"We started transporting animals from Hobbs on our own in July of last year," said Missy Funk, manager of the Hobbs Animal Adoption Center. "We rent a vehicle from Enterprise, but what we're looking at with the Lea County Humane Society and our volunteers is purchasing a vehicle so we can have something bigger, so that the animals can have more room, have more space.

SEE ANIMALS, Page 5



## Flexible job training

Jeffery Reyes climbs aboard the New Mexico Junior College CDL training truck Monday during a CDL training program offered in both English and Spanish.

KIMBERLY RYAN/NEWS-SUN

## CDL program takes a student's experience into account

DOROTHY N. FOWLER  
NEWS-SUN

More than a year ago, the New Mexico Junior College's Training and Outreach (T&O) staff thought it would be a good idea to expand an already successful program by adding a new option. That option would allow people who already had some proficiency driving big trucks to earn a certificate of completion that would allow them to take the commercial driver's license test. Their idea was to add a one week training program

Their idea has paid off in a big way for the college, students who have taken the course and the southeastern New Mexico area. Not only has the program benefited dozens of people who needed jobs, University of New Mexico has contacted NMJC about the possibility of replicating the program in Albuquerque.

Ramon Lopez, one of the trainers in the CDL program, said Monday that as candidates for the standard three-week driving program were interviewed, it became

### 'We quickly realized

that there was a need for more training opportunities to better accommodate drivers with varying levels of truck driving skills and experiences.'

Luisa Ruiz  
NMJC director of transportation

apparent that some of them already knew how to drive a truck. "They had been driving for the companies they worked for or they had driven on farms or ranches," he said. "Some of them had had a CDL in the past and had let it go and needed a refresher."

As people came in for interviews, it

SEE CDL, Page 5



Raul Dominguez backs up a CDL training truck Monday during a training exercise at NMJC.

## Gallagher adds troubled Sunland Park as a client

Jal city manager to spend 2 weeks a month as interim Sunland chief

TODD BAILEY  
NEWS-SUN

Jal Interim City Manager Bob Gallagher has another hat to wear.

The former Hobbs City Manager and New Mexico Oil and Gas Association president was named interim city manager of the troubled New Mexico community of Sunland Park. Officials of the border city are working to put its past scandals behind it while two councilors face legal problems.

The Sunland Park City Council voted 4-3 during a heated meeting to hire Gallagher, also former New Mexico State University regent, to a \$56,000 six-month contract, KVIA-TV in El Paso reports. Under the terms of the deal, Gallagher will work two weeks per month.

Gallagher, is president of RMG Consulting, LLC., which he states is a full-service consulting firm.

"I've done work in five different states," Gallagher said. "I have had clients in oil and gas; city and county government; renewable, solar and wind energies, major food processing, distribution and health care."

SEE GALLAGHER, Page 5



Gallagher

## LRMC lab receives Gold Seal after inspection



CURTIS C. WYNNE  
NEWS-SUN

The medical laboratory at Lea Regional Medical Center recently earned the Joint Commission's Gold Seal of Approval® for Laboratory Services Accreditation.

Successfully completing an unannounced three-day inspection and survey in November, the laboratory demonstrated continuous compliance with the commission's performance standards, according to Nancy

Nix, LRMC laboratory director.

"We have such a huge impact on the patient's diagnosis," she said. "There are so many things we do that help the physician diagnose the patients."

For that reason, she explained, laboratories are accredited separately from the hospital itself, every two years for the labs and every three years for the hospital.

The Gold Seal of Approval® is a symbol of quality that reflects an organization's commitment to providing safe and effective patient care.

Nix said the Joint Commission survey-

or looked at pre-analytical, analytical and post-analytical aspects of the lab, as well as interaction with others in the hospital, such as nurses and physicians.

"All the way from drawing or obtaining the specimen, to actually running it, to reporting it to the physician," she said.

With about 20 employees, the lab consists of a variety of departments and a complex collection of activities.

"We don't just run tests, we have to make sure the results we're reporting out are accurate, so we do a quality control," Nix explained.

SEE LAB, Page 5

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# CDL

from PAGE 1

became apparent that in addition to the three-week classes for novices and the one-week classes for more advanced drivers, there was a need for classes for intermediate drivers. Those were the people who were past the novice stage, but not quite ready for a commercial driver's license.

Lopez said after the interview with office staff, prospective drivers drove one of NMJC's three trucks while he watched. "I had the final say as to how long they needed to train," he said.

Jeffrey Reyes, who is in the two-week program, said he could have taken the one-week course, but thought he would learn more if he completed two weeks of training. "There are more job opportunities for people with a CDL," he said. "When I get my license, I would like to drive for an oilfield company or do long-haul shipments across country."

Valentin Villanueva, who was practicing backing a box trailer into space bordered by two red tracks, said he is already working. "My company is paying for the training," he said. "I'm going to be driving between here and Jal carrying equipment for rig support."

Lopez said that the people who are admitted to the classes must have a clean driving record. "We don't want to turn people who can't handle passenger car loose in a truck," he said.

One-week CDL training was made possible by a \$2.5 million Trade Adjustment Assistance Community College and Career Training (TAACCT) grant from the United States Department of Labor. The target clientele included unemployed people, veterans, including members of the National Guard, ethnic minorities and women. NMJC's driving program has also included some people who are trying to get back into society after having been in prison.

A major purpose of the grant was to develop several short-term workforce training opportunities to meet industry employment demands. Grant team members and Luisa Ruiz, director of transportation at NMJC, launched the one-week CDL training program in February 2015.

"We quickly realized that there was a need for more training opportunities to better accommodate drivers with varying levels of truck driving skills and experiences," said Ruiz.

Since the inaugural training Ruiz and Alejandro Ojeda, one-week CDL instructor, have held 20 training sessions and 58 trainees have gone through the program. More than 91 percent of students who completed the one-week training have received their CDLs.

According to Rachel Gallagher, career support technician, only one person failed the test on the first attempt and four others found other jobs

and never took the test.

"It has been a great privilege to meet and teach the wonderful people of Hobbs and the surrounding area," said Ojeda. "I sincerely hope to have many more great years with NMJC and help expand the exciting programs we have created to help enrich people's lives that desire to improve their future."

Ruiz and T&O staff did not stop there. In July, they unveiled the two-week CDL training for intermediate-level drivers. The one- and two-week programs increased CDL training output for training and outreach.

"The addition of the one- and two-week trainings allow us to respond better to the needs and experiences of our students and to more effectively reach them," said Ruiz.

Staff with the T&O Division specialize in offering workforce development and customized training for the region's industries. While training for jobs in the oil and gas training has been a large part of the workforce training at NMJC, T&O staff have developed several training programs that include other industries.

Gallagher said her office is "in constant motion. We go out and talk to businesses and find out what skills their workers will need and then we start a program to teach those skills."

One of the areas the college is developing involves control systems and maintenance of those systems, Gallagher said.

The downturn in the oil industry has not had a disastrous effect on the CDL program, Gallagher said. "Demand has remained constant. Instead of a three month waiting list, there is now a one month wait, but the classes are always full."

Ruiz said that in the downturn several years ago, demand went almost to zero. "But it has remained constant this time. People come in here and want to learn the skills that will help them get a job and feed their families," she said.

Ruiz said that NMJC is one of five CDL testing sites in New Mexico. It also operates a testing site in Seminole. The people who give the tests are employees of the junior college who have been certified by the state. Trainers cannot give the qualifying tests for the CDL, she said.

Ruiz, Gallagher, Ojeda and Reyes agreed that NMJC is on the cutting edge of developing courses for workers who want to develop new skills or upgrade skills they already have. "The one-week CDL training is one of them," Gallagher said.

**Dorothy N. Fowler** can be reached at 575-391-5446 or [education@hobbsnews.com](mailto:education@hobbsnews.com).

# Lab

from PAGE 1

They (the surveyors) are looking to make sure we do everything properly."

She said the laboratory at LRMC is open 24/7 in case an emergency room doctor or patient needs lab services.

"There's somebody here all the time to either draw the blood or run the analysis," she said.

Having held the director position for the last dozen years, Nix lauded her staff, most of whom have four-year degrees and years of experience. They don't need to prepare for an unannounced survey.

"They do the right thing every day," she said. "I am very proud of the laboratory staff. They're very dedicated. They truly care about the patients, so they do an excellent job."

# Animals

from PAGE 1

Then we can transport more animals than what we're able to right now in a cargo van."

The vehicle is needed to provide animals more space on the journey and to meet the Colorado Professional Animal Care Facility Act standards which were recently updated.

Funk said the vehicle is expected to cost around \$35,000. A GoFundMe account has been set up for the fundraising efforts, and some have donated to the cause at the center itself or through the mail. The funds raised with the Hobbs Firefighter 2016 calendars has also gone toward the cause. So far about \$5,000 has been raised.

"The need is definitely there, and we need it pretty quick," Funk said. "We're trying to raise the funds as fast as we can."

"We still definitely have a ways to go," she added.

Reliability is another merit that a new vehicle will have.

# Gallagher

from PAGE 1

Gallagher, who celebrated six years of RMG Consulting, LLC., is the lone person in the company.

"The New Mexico Municipal League reached out to me about Sunland Park," Gallagher said. "They are under some restrictions since the New Mexico Finance Authority took over there. They don't have anyone with a lot of experience. A (league official) reached out to me and asked if I was interested and I told them I was."

It's not the first time that Gallagher has had more than one client at the same time. He became Jal's interim city manager in January 2014, then in August of that year, he took over as the county manager in Cibola County for one year. His contract with Jal has him working for \$7,000 a month, plus \$500 in expenses and he is in the City of Jal on the second and fourth weeks of the month. He then would work in Cibola County on the first and third weeks of the month.

Now Sunland Park is contracted to have Gallagher in its city during the first and third weeks of the month.

"Is it unconventional?" Gallagher said. "Sure it is! Is it expensive? Yes. But where are you going to find people with experience on an interim basis?"

Gallagher said that three months into his time in Jal, the city council members voted to stop its search for a city manager since they are happy with Gallagher's work.

Of course, taking on another client is in no way going to affect his job in Jal.

"My contract in Jal runs through every June 30," he said. "I am very, very happy with how things are going in Jal and everyone involved wants to keep it going. We have a lot to work on, including the \$10 million water project that we have planned. It's all in an effort to improve the quality of life in Jal."

Improving Sunland Park's way of life is also his goal, although he may have to roll up his sleeves some.

Gallagher's hiring comes as two Sunland Park city council-

LRMC CEO Tim Thornell agreed.

"Lea Regional is pleased to receive accreditation from The Joint Commission, the premier health care quality improvement and accrediting body in the nation," he said. "Pathologists and other laboratory staff continue to work together to develop and implement approaches and strategies that have the potential to improve care for the patients in our community."

**Curtis Wynne** may be contacted at 391-5436 or [reporter3@hobbsnews.com](mailto:reporter3@hobbsnews.com).

**Page 1 photo: Kevin Wilson, technologist at LRMC, examines a specimen at the LRMC lab.**

"The more you spend, the less you're going to have to spend on maintenance," said Pat Huntley, a Lea County Humane Society member and the owner of Crazy Dog Lady Pet Rescue in Hobbs.

"We have several different rescues and animal facilities in Colorado that take in dogs from us," Funk said. "They see them over the Facebook page or through a weekly email. The rescues will tag from there based on what we have available and what people are looking for from their organizations."

To donate to the transport fund visit the GoFundMe page. Donations can also be made at or mailed to the center, 700 N. Grimes St., in Hobbs. The animal adoption center and humane society can be contacted at 575-397-9323.

**Charlie Benton** can be reached at 575-391-5434 or [reporter1@hobbsnews.com](mailto:reporter1@hobbsnews.com).

# Mark the date

## TODAY

### Lea Planning, Zoning

The Lea County Planning and Zoning Board will hold its regular meeting at 9:30 a.m. in the Lea County Commission Chambers, Lea County Courthouse, 100 N. Main St., Lovington. For information, call 396-8610.

### Lea Fair Board

The Lea County Fair and Rodeo Board will meet at 6 p.m. at the Lea County Fairgrounds, 101 S. Commercial St., Lovington.

### Pancake supper

The Shrove Tuesday Pancake Supper is from 5-7 p.m. at St. Christopher's Episcopal Church, 207 E. Permian. The All You Can Eat meal consists of pancakes, sausage, orange juice and waffles for the cost of \$5. For more information, call 392-0835.

### Lovington Planning, Zoning

The Lovington Planning and Zoning Board will hold its regular meeting 4 p.m. at 214 South Love St., Lovington. For more information, call 396-2884.

### Eunice City Council

The Eunice City Council will hold its regular meeting at 6 p.m. in the council chambers in the city hall, 1106 Avenue J.

### NMJC board meeting

The New Mexico Junior College board will hold a meeting at 9 a.m. in the Zia board room in

Pannell Library on the NMJC campus. For more information, call 392-5018.

### EnergyPlex Toastmasters

The EnergyPlex Toastmasters will meet at 6:30 p.m. at the Agnes Kastner Head Community Center, 200 E. Park. Everyone 18 years old or older are welcome. For more information, call 392-3711.

## WEDNESDAY

### Coffee with Cops

The Hobbs Police Department hosts its Coffee with Cops event from 7-9 a.m. at the HPD classroom on the north entrance of the building, 300 N. Turner. For more information, call 397-9284.

### NMJC board meeting

The New Mexico Junior College board will hold a meeting at 9 a.m. in the Zia board room in Pannell Library on the NMJC campus. For more information, call 392-5018. St. Christopher's Episcopal Church

### St. Christopher's Ash Wednesday service

An Ash Wednesday service will be held from 12-1 p.m. at St. Christopher's Episcopal Church, 207 E. Permian Dr. From 1-6 p.m., the pastor will meet people near the church office to impose ashes in a program she calls Ashes to Go.

## THURSDAY

### Nana's Naughty Knickers

The Community Players Inc. presents "Nana's Naughty Knickers" at 8 p.m. Admission is \$10 and reservations can be made at [www.community-playersofhobbs.com](http://www.community-playersofhobbs.com).

### Hobbs Community Band

The Hobbs Community Band practices for its March 17 concert each Thursday from 7-8:30 p.m. at the Western Heritage Museum on the NMJC campus. The concert is for any community resident who would like to play an instrument in the band. For more information, call 318-4256.

### Lea Urgent Care Clinic ribbon cutting

The Lea County Urgent Care Clinic, 1900 N. Dal Paso, hosts a reception and ribbon cutting honoring Dr. Paul Bubliss from 3-5 p.m. For more information, call 492-5102.

### Hobbs Library donations

The Friends of the Library are accepting donations of items that have been "gently loved": hardback and paperback books, games, cards, puzzles, children's educational toys, plush animals, and seasonal items related to spring and summer, from 10:30 a.m.-2:30 p.m., in the Fellowship Hall of First Christian Church, 305 W. Alston. Enter through the Northwest door. For more information, call 399-3644 or 964-8242.


# Grass fires near Tatum extinguished

NEWS-SUN STAFF REPORT

Two roadside grass fires around Tatum shortly after noon Monday were extinguished by the Tatum and Lovington fire departments.

Lea County Deputy Fire Marshall Jeff Broom said the fires were started accidentally by people driving down Highway 380 west of Tatum and Highway 206 south of Tatum.

He estimated two to three acres of grassland were burned. Neither fire threatened any structures.



**2016 Black History Month Celebration**

Saturday, February 20, 2016  
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