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EL PASO COUNTY

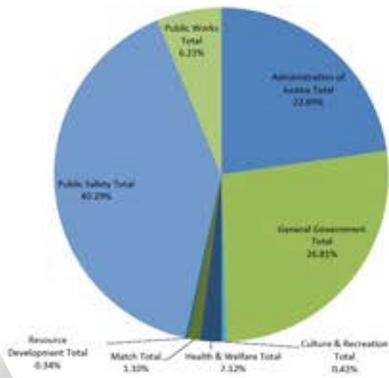
Precinct 2

NEWSLETTER

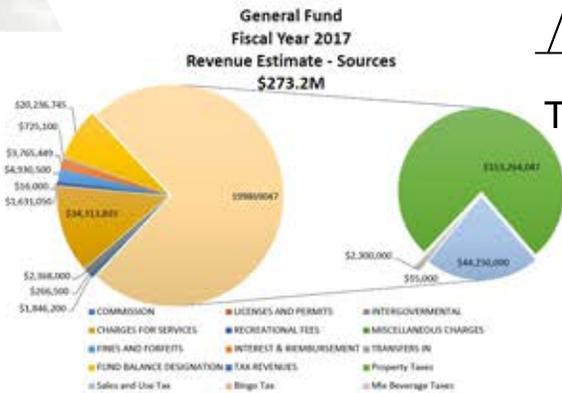
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County Commissioner
DAVID STOUT

GENERAL FUND
FISCAL YEAR 2017 BUDGET BY PROGRAM
\$273,216,554



BUDGET & TAX RATE HEARINGS SET TO BEGIN AT COUNTY



Throughout the first half of the month of August, the Commissioners Court will review and discuss the Fiscal Year 2017 (FY17) budget and tax rate. Budget workshops and hearings will include informative presentations by budget staff and County departments, in which budget requests, revenue and expenditure overviews, and performance measures will be discussed.

The preliminary FY17 General Fund, which is the County's primary operating fund, is \$273,216,140, which, as presented, is a \$10.16 million or 3.86 percent increase over the current General Fund budget. Estimated General Fund revenues total \$252,979,395 or a 1.73 percent increase over the FY16 revenue estimate.

According to our Budget and Fiscal Policy department, most of that revenue change comes from three main sources: property tax valuation increases, sales tax growth, and anticipated increases from our federal prisoner daily rate negotiation.

The preliminary FY17 budget includes expanded and new services as a result of Commissioners Court's strategic planning throughout the past year. These include creating an Economic Development department, funding projects from our technology master plan, and investing more in maintaining our facilities and assets.

Much of our discussions in Court and through strategic planning have focused on greater department performance measures to better track department activities, inputs, and outputs and ensure that the County remains a good steward of public funds.

The tentative budget planning calendar includes budget hearings with Commissioners Court from August 1-12. During the first week of August, the County Tax Assessor-Collector will notify the governing body of the effective tax rate and rollback tax rate, which will be published shortly thereafter.

On or about August 22, the Court will meet to set salaries, expenses, and other allowances for each elected official and precinct officer. Any increase will be published in the newspaper. If the County proposes a tax rate greater than the effective rate or rollback rate, whichever is lower, then two public hearings will take place, one on August 30 and the second the following day on August 31.

The final meeting to adopt a tax rate will likely occur on September 29, following the public hearings.

On October 3, the Commissioners Court will meet to hold a public hearing on the final proposed budget and then vote on that budget following the hearing.



REFINANCING DEAL MAY FUND CAPITAL IMPROVEMENT PROJECTS

A new U.S. Department of the Treasury rule has allowed the County of El Paso to be more proactive when refinancing our debt, saving millions of dollars and paving the way to pay for capital improvement projects at little to no cost to the tax payer.

Our finance team, led by Budget and Fiscal Policy Director Wallace Hardgrove, saved 5.1 percent by leading an effort to refinance nearly \$40 million of tax-exempt debt. Over time, that will amount to nearly \$6 million in savings from those refunds.

As a result of those savings, the Commissioners Court plans to issue certificates of obligation to fund important and necessary capital improvement projects. Those potential projects include improving roofs and other infrastructure improvements, renovations and equipment at County facilities; information technology equipment and related software; improving the County Airport in Fabens; improving our parks, including Ascarate Park; constructing or reconstructing streets, roads, and sidewalks; and improving transit infrastructure.

Many of the improvements we're seeking are critical as aging facilities continue to need maintenance and ongoing upgrades. Our budget and finance team has indicated that these projects can be done without any impact to the tax rate, as a result of the big savings. I commend our finance team for their forward-thinking and for keeping the tax payer in mind at all times.

COUNTY CLOSE TO HIRING ECONOMIC DEVELOPMENT DIRECTOR

Earlier this year, the Commissioners Court adopted a robust economic development action plan aimed at boosting the County's ability to play a larger role in job creation and expansion, while improving the quality of life for residents. One of the goals of this plan was creating a community and economic development department, staffed with professionals who could carry out the Court's policy directives to improve our economic climate.

Currently, our human resources department is in the process of searching for a qualified person to lead that department. This will likely be a small department with large impacts on the community as the County looks towards creative ways at bringing in new jobs and industry, along with expanding existing jobs.

For too long, the County has played a minor role when it comes to economic development and quality of life issues. This Commissioners Court has decided that the County must play a larger role on these matters if our tax base is to grow, high-skill and high-wage jobs are to come to the region, and if we want to improve our sense of place as a community.

Please check back on my social media pages for updates on this important hire.



COUNTY, CITY SIGNAL SUPPORT FOR COMMUNITY IDs

County Commissioners and City Representatives have recently listened to presentations regarding the creation of a Community ID program, with both institutions expressing a willingness to consider such a proposal.

Community IDs are photo identification cards offered to the public by local government. Community IDs would largely serve vulnerable segments of the community – especially for those who face barriers when accessing traditional forms of identification – but are intended to be available to all County residents.

The El Paso City Council listened to a staff presentation on Community IDs during a lengthy special meeting on May 2. Dozens of residents attended the meeting, speaking largely in favor of an ID program. While no vote was taken, City Council gave direction to their staff to begin working with the County and other local political subdivisions on a framework for the program.

Shortly after the meeting at City Hall, the County Commissioners Court voted 4-1 on May 23 to direct County staff to work with the City on researching a joint ID program. Currently, County staff members from our legal, budget, human resources, and tax offices are drafting a proposed outline on how this relationship may look between the County and City.

A tentative timeline includes the draft joint operational agreement to be completed in early July, with a cost analysis and cost-sharing analysis to be complete by the end of July or early August. Those will be followed by actions by both the County and City to commit funds for the fiscal year 2017 budget.

By August, we hope to have the program features complete, after conducting more outreach to community stakeholders. A final draft joint agreement and implementation plan should be completed by September, with a final implementation plan presented to the Commissioners Court and City Council in late October. Final adoption should take place in November.

Let me be clear about one thing: I never have, nor ever will, be disingenuous in my pursuit of policy initiatives. The fact of the matter is, this is a controversial initiative, but for reasons I wholeheartedly reject.

Opponents of this initiative will tell you that there is no need for such an ID program. They will tell you that the state will penalize us. They will tell you that it will encourage illegal immigration to our community. They will recite vociferous language being dangerously used in this election cycle.

But if there's one thing I know about El Pasoans, it is that we don't indulge in sophomoric debates for the sake of scaring those we disagree with. We are a compassionate community, one that cares for our vulnerable and disenfranchised neighbors. And yes, it means we have compassion for the undocumented, for the poor, for the homeless, and for transgender individuals, among others. And we certainly don't let nonexistent policies or threats of punitive action by the state dictate our values.

Because of our geographic isolation from the state, and our unique cultural characteristics, El Paso has always had to put up a fight to get what we have rightfully earned. We know how to stand up to adversity. And we know when to stand on the right side of history. I'm asking you to stand on the right side of history with me.



BUILDING RELATIONSHIPS KEY FOR UMC

University Medical Center of El Paso saw unprecedented growth in the last decade as it sought to increase access to high quality, affordable healthcare to all El Paso County residents. UMC's success has fueled the growth at Texas Tech Health Sciences Center into a four-year medical school, built the foundation of our new El Paso Children's Hospital, and helped re-set El Paso's economy around high paying, quality jobs. UMC is essential to the health and prosperity of this community.

The UMC Board of Managers is in the process of hiring a new CEO, who will face many new challenges.

The most obvious one for me is the need to work collaboratively

with the El Paso Children's Hospital to stabilize and strengthen it under the new governance structure so that it can continue to deliver on its vision of providing hope and healing through unmatched excellence in pediatric patient care, research, and education.

From my own experience working with UMC – as part of the Commissioners Court and in listening to key community partners, the public and UMC employees – I have found that there are other challenges that need be a priority for the new CEO and the Board of Managers. The past

success of the hospital district was made possible because of community support, taxpayer investment, the advocacy of the Commissioners Court, collaboration with key partners - like Texas Tech - and the commitment and dedication of hardworking UMC employees. To maintain the momentum and to continue to grow to meet the demands of a changing healthcare landscape means recommitting the organization to strengthening critical relationships. Because of the bumpy road UMC has faced recently and the way some of those problems were addressed, many relationships have been fractured.

I urge the new CEO to spend time rebuilding relationships with key community partners and the Commissioners Court that have been stressed. Listening, sharing information in a timely manner, and working towards shared solutions is the key. Time must be spent with the public soliciting their ideas and listening to their concerns, and the new administration should talk to patients about improvements they would like to see made in care and responsiveness. Use this input to guide your work.

We all support UMC and want to be part of finding solutions to help it succeed in its mission. This is most true of UMC employees who have dedicated themselves to building the organization despite recent uncertainty and the inability to problem solve collectively with management.

Continued on Next Page...



UMC CONTINUED

I urge the new CEO to prioritize building employee morale and engaging employees in finding solutions for improving UMC. Employees stand ready to help. In the last year, many UMC employees have joined the Service Employees International Union (SEIU) Texas to address such concerns as patient and employee health and safety and competitiveness of salaries. SEIU Texas members want to work with management to find solutions and to build community support of our community hospital. Our new CEO should take advantage of this opportunity.

There is a lot of work ahead and many difficult decisions to be made, but luckily the new CEO will be able to count on many people who will work collaboratively to help the hospital succeed.

**Note: This op-ed appeared in the June 12, 2016 issue of The El Paso Times. It can be viewed online here: <http://www.elpasotimes.com/story/opinion/2016/06/12/stout-building-relationships-key-umc/85782974/>*



EHN OPENS VETERANS ONE STOP CENTER

Emergence Health Network continues to celebrate its 50th anniversary this year with some big news. The center has expanded its Veteran Mental Health Services in El Paso County. The Texas Veterans Commission awarded EHN a \$500,000 Veterans Mental Health Grant for its Military Veterans Peer Network Program (MVPN) to develop the first of its kind "Veterans One Stop Center" in Northeast El Paso. About 10,000 veterans will need mental health service in 2016. The grant will allow EHN to make a difference in services provided to Veterans and their families.

The Veterans One Stop Center will provide services by a licensed mental health professional. These services include clinical counseling, individual sessions, group sessions, Veteran family member counseling, Post-Traumatic Stress (PTS) services, and Certified peer specialties. In addition to these services, the center can accommodate several agencies committed to serving Veterans like the Texas Veterans Commission to assist with job placement and The Veterans Administration for help with Veteran's benefits assistance. Other agencies that will be housed at the center include Veterans Food Pantry, Wounded Warrior Program, and the UTEP Military Student Success Center.

The new One Stop Center is located at 9565 Diana Drive.

FISH STOCKING TAKES PLACE AHEAD OF INDEPENDENCE DAY CELEBRATIONS

For months, the fish population in the lake at Ascarate Park dwindled after a golden algae bloom. The algae decimated the fish, leaving us and the fishing community frustrated as we dealt with the problem.

As a result, and after listening closely to the Ascarate Park and fishing community, the County has put in place efforts to strengthen our relationships and processes with park and lake stakeholders, including the Texas Parks and Wildlife Department and the Ascarate Fishing Club.

And on June 30, a delivery of about 2,000 pounds of catfish from our vendor, Mr. Fish, was stocked in the lake, just in time for the long Independence Day weekend. We're hoping to forge new relationships with other vendors so that fish stockings can be more consistent and without much interruption to activities on the lake.

By focusing on strengthening both protocol and long-standing relationships with important stakeholders, like the fishing club, the County aims to be more informed about the conditions in our parks and the needs of park patrons. While the depletion of the fish was a headache for many, and for which we apologize greatly, I think we learned a lot about the importance of community and government collaboration in working towards an end we all support.



BETSY KELLER NAMED CHIEF ADMINISTRATOR

The County of El Paso entered into a new system of management in 2015 with the creation of the office of the Chief Administrator. This office was created in an attempt to bring professional management of day-to-day operations and to make the County run as efficient as possible. The office oversees eight County departments that include Budget and Fiscal Policy, Public Works, the Domestic Relations Office, Public Defender, Human Resources, Mental Health Support Services, the Medical Examiner's Office, and Community Services.

Commissioners Court worked with the Human Resources department to conduct a nationwide search to select a new Chief Administrator. After several months, the search came down to nine candidates, including Interim Chief Administrator and former Human Resources director, Betsy Keller. The process then came down to two finalists who each met with the members of the Court. On April 19, a Special Commissioners Court meeting was held for several hours to determine the best candidate. Keller was unanimously selected by Commissioners Court to be the new El Paso County Chief Administrator.

Keller has been a public servant for nearly 20 years, serving communities within the region. The first 11 years of her career were in Alamogordo, New Mexico where she worked in city administration and human resources. In 2008, Keller was selected as Human Resources Director for the County of El Paso.

She holds a Bachelor of Science degree in Business Management and Human Resource Management from Park University where she graduated with honors. She is currently working on earning a Credentialed Manager designation through the International City and County Managers Association.

COUNTY EXCELLENCE

MEDICAL EXAMINER’S OFFICE RECEIVES NAME ACCREDITATION

On May 26, 2016, The National Association of Medical Examiners (NAME) accredited the El Paso County Medical Examiner’s Office. This accreditation is conferred for a period of five years. The standards for accreditation are developed and revised by NAME in order to improve the quality of medicolegal investigation of death in the United States. The accreditation only applies to offices and systems and not to individual practitioners. The accreditation standards place an emphasis on policies and procedures. This esteemed honor ensures that the Medical Examiner’s office provides a sufficient environment for the medical examiner to practice in and that the office serves its jurisdiction well. Congratulations to Chief Medical Examiner, Mario A. Rascon and his team for receiving this top notch honor.

*Source: <https://netforum.avectra.com/eweb/DynamicPage.aspx?Site=NAME&WebCode=Accred>

GOVERNMENT FINANCE OFFICERS ASSOCIATION AWARDS BUDGET & FISCAL POLICY DEPARTMENT

On June 7, the Government Finance Officers Association (GFOA) awarded El Paso County’s Budget & Fiscal Policy Department the Distinguished Budget Presentation Award for the current FY 2016 budget, which is the highest form of recognition in governmental budgeting. Along with this prestigious award, a Certificate of Recognition for Budget presentation was presented to Budget Executive Director, Wallace E. Hardgrove. The package submitted for review was compiled by the County’s outstanding Budget team and included information submitted by all County departments. This is possibly the highest rating an El Paso County budget has ever received. One of the raters for the award mentioned that the submission was “one of the best budgeted documents I have seen in the awards program. Each requirement has been met, with several areas rated as outstanding. I struggled with comments of ways to improve.” Congratulations to the Budget & Fiscal Policy team for this significant achievement!

MEET PROJECT FUTURE INTERN, ADRIANA MEZA

For the second year in a row, my office had the honor of participating in The El Paso Women’s Bar Association Project FUTURE in collaboration with the PRIDE Center through the months of June and July. This program is designed to assist youth who have “aged-out” of foster care with their future and get them on a road to success. This year, 10 individuals participated in the program, interning in different departments throughout the county for six weeks.

We had the privilege of having 21 year old Adriana Meza intern in our office. Throughout her internship, Adriana learned how to answer phones, data entry, and work common office software programs. A highlight of Adriana’s experience included a trip to Juarez where she attended a conference on immigration. She also sat in on several behind-the-scenes meetings where she got a chance to see the policy side of County government. Adriana has an interest in working in law enforcement and she hopes to find more internships and jobs guided towards criminal justice.





VOTER INITIATIVES SEEK TO INCREASE TURNOUT

Voter turnout in El Paso County has been significantly low for many years. As of the month of July, there are over 415,000 registered voters in the County. In the March 2016 Primary, there were 400,504 registered voters in this County and only 21.14 %, or 84,666 voters, went out and exercised their right to vote. By May, the amount of registered voters went up to 409,089 and in the May 24 Primary Runoff only 18,616 voters, or 4.55%, cast a ballot. These numbers are extremely low, a reality that is seen across our state and country.

Two important voter awareness and education initiatives set out to change the status quo this summer. The first came together through a collaborative group of people that decided a civic participation initiative was needed in this community to increase citizen involvement. The non-partisan Paleta Power Civic Participation Collaborative came to fruition in order to create more thoughtful approaches and opportunities to engage citizens in the voting process. At the same time, the group would study that participation and search for new solutions to increase voter turnout.

The group sets out to diverse community events around El Paso County with free paletas, or ice lollipops, but there is a catch. The Paleta Power “Paletero” walks up to a group of friends and family and presents them with an array of paleta flavors. The group then votes for their favorite flavor and the majority flavor wins. This illustrates our democracy – people support their favorite candidate, but in the end, the one with the most votes wins. Once everyone receives their paleta and they are enjoying it, participants are asked to fill out a short survey that asks them questions like “What issues would motivate you to vote?” and “You have just been elected Mayor of El Paso. What is the first decision you make?”

This initiative will allow organizers to find out the most important issues to people, give participants an understanding of how they can make a difference, and use the information collected to make it easier for people to participate in the civic process. In addition to this “paleteros” have been registering new voters and answering questions about the election process. The group is also preparing a graphic novel that will be available in the near future. To get involved with the collaborative you can find them on Facebook by searching “Paleta Power.”

The second voter initiative my office has been involved with has been Vote El Paso Vote. The League of Women Voters of El Paso, along with major partnering organizations that include the El Paso County Elections Department, El Paso Republican Party, UTEP College Republicans, El Paso Democratic Party, Greater El Paso Republican Women, West El Paso Republican Women, El Paso High School Republicans, El Paso Tejano Democrats, and Black El Paso Democrats kicked off the 40 day long Vote El Paso Campaign on Flag Day, June 14, 2016. Vote El Paso Vote ended on July 24, 2016. El Paso County Commissioners Court adopted a resolution on June 6, 2016 in recognition of this initiative.

Vote El Paso Vote was a non-partisan, non-campaign related, public awareness campaign that made an effort to target those who vote infrequently and those who have never voted. The initiative set out to provide information about the voting process, motivate new voters, and increase voter participation.

Usually, political campaigns and partisan efforts only target frequent voters. Vote El Paso Vote seeks to change that, for they believe that citizens who do not vote frequently and/or do not identify with a party must be invited and encouraged to participate in the political process.

My office and a few other community members participated in a neighborhood canvassing event during the 40 day initiative. We knocked on over 300 doors in a low voter turnout precinct in Precinct 2. Thanks to all that participated in Vote El Paso Vote this year.



RESOLUTIONS

Recognizing Our Community's culture, efforts, and service

From April to June this year, I have had the honor of sponsoring 12 resolutions recognizing community members and organizations for their efforts to raise awareness of important issues at the local, state, and national level, all of which help place El Paso County on the map for their achievements.

HENDERSON CHESS TEAM

The Henderson Middle School Chess Team honorably represented El Paso County from March 5th and 6th at the Texas Scholastic Chess Championship in Brownsville, Texas. This year's team was composed of 10 students in the Junior Varsity division and 26 in the Novice division. Both teams placed first in their division. On April 4, 2016, I had the pleasure of sponsoring a resolution to recognize the team's extraordinary achievement. The team went on to compete in Louisville, Kentucky in April where they won the National title for the second year in a row. Congratulations to the team, their parents, coaches, and teachers.

JOE OLVERA

On April 4, 2016, the Commissioners Court passed a resolution celebrating the life of Joe Olvera. Mr. Olvera was a journalist and wordsmith, who had a life-long and never ending commitment to social justice, equality, and dignity for his people and community.



GLOBAL YOUTH SERVICE DAYS

Just as last year, I sponsored resolution on April 11, 2016 recognizing April 15 through April 17 as Global Youth Service Days. The Juvenile Justice Center and its Community Involvement Program participated in a weekend of service at Ascarate Park where youth went around beautifying trash receptacles with images portraying wellness and health. The youth also participated in a community health fair.

PALETA POWER CIVIC PARTICIPATION COLLABORATIVE

On May 2, 2016, Commissioners Court voted to adopt a resolution in recognition of Paleta Power. This collaborative is a forward-thinking initiative to increase civic and voter participation in El Paso County to foster greater community integration. Please see the article on Page 9 for more information.

NURSES WEEK

On May 9, 2016, the Commissioners Court adopted a resolution that recognized Nurses Week from May 6 through May 12. There are 2.6 million Registered Nurses in the United States and they represent our nation's largest health care resource. May 6 is "Registered Nurses Recognition Day" and May 12 is Florence Nightingale's birthday, the founder of nursing as a modern profession.

MENTAL HEALTH AWARENESS MONTH

The Commissioners Court recognized the month of May as Mental Health Awareness Month on May 9, 2016. Mental health disorders are the leading cause of disability in North America. The most serious and disabling conditions of mental health affect five to ten million adults and three to five million children between the ages of five to seventeen in the United States.



RESOLUTIONS CONTINUED

HISTORIC PRESERVATION MONTH

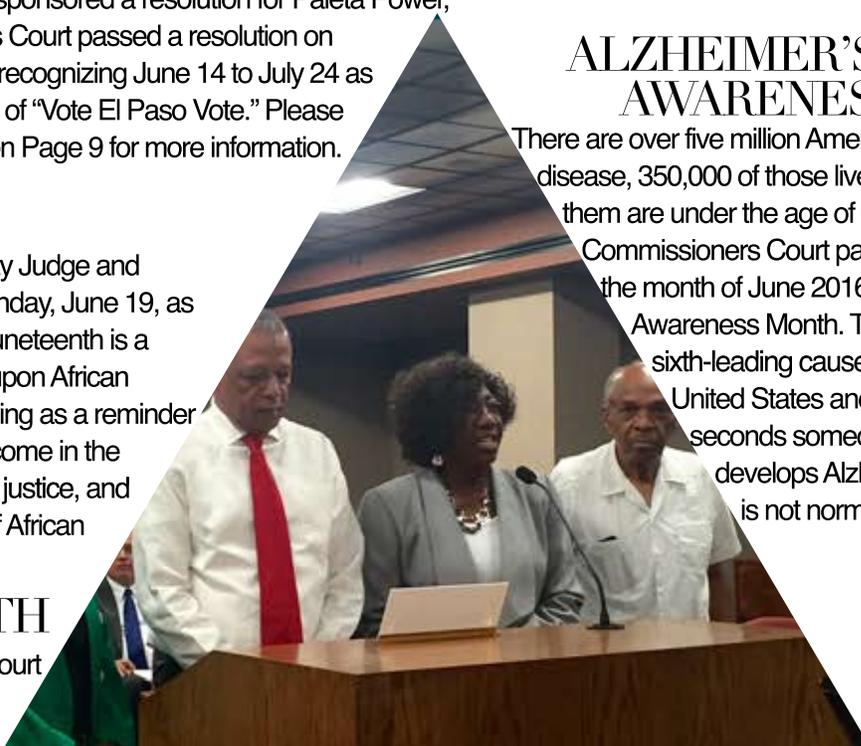
This past May, the United States celebrated the 50th year of Preservation Month, a celebration established by President Lyndon Banes Johnson. On May 9, 2016, The El Paso County Commissioners Court adopted a resolution recognizing the month of May as "Historic Preservation Month." El Paso has rich architectural fabric that range from pit houses to high rises. Some of the most revered architects and builders in their times used their talent to adapt to environmental and cultural needs. The rich heritage and culture of El Paso County has been influenced over many generations from hundreds of countries throughout the world.

VOTE EL PASO VOTE

A month after I sponsored a resolution for Paleta Power, Commissioners Court passed a resolution on June 6, 2016 recognizing June 14 to July 24 as the 40 Days of "Vote El Paso Vote." Please see the article on Page 9 for more information.

ALZHEIMER'S AND BRAIN AWARENESS MONTH

There are over five million Americans living with Alzheimer's disease, 350,000 of those live in Texas, and 57,000 of them are under the age of 65. On June 6, 2016, the Commissioners Court passed a resolution recognizing the month of June 2016 as Alzheimer's & Brain Awareness Month. This disease is the sixth-leading cause of death in the United States and every 66 seconds someone else develops Alzheimer's, which is not normal aging.



JUNETEENTH

On June 13, 2016, the El Paso County Judge and Commissioners Court recognized Sunday, June 19, as Juneteenth Day in El Paso County. Juneteenth is a reminder to all of the horrors inflicted upon African Americans, while simultaneously serving as a reminder of the challenges and obstacles overcome in the fight for civil rights, voting rights, social justice, and the achievements made by millions of African Americans.

HIV TESTING MONTH

On June 13, 2015, Commissioners Court recognized "HIV Testing Month" throughout June 2016.

Representatives from Centro de Salud Familiar La Fe accepted the resolution and held an open house on June 27 to educate the public on preventing HIV and provided free, rapid HIV tests. La Fe Care Center provides free testing at their facilities year round and life saving care is available.



MONICA GAMBOA TEXAS SOCIAL WORKER OF THE YEAR

On June 27, 2016, I had the privilege of sponsoring a resolution in honor of Monica Gamboa, a Social Work Supervisor at the University Medical Center of El Paso. Ms. Gamboa has been at the hospital for 15 years where she has witnessed some of the most heart-wrenching cases families face, but always with a positive mind and presence. She received a top honor when she was selected as the Texas Social Worker of the Year by the Society for Social Work leadership in Health Care. Congratulations to Monica Gamboa for this award and her grace and compassion for families affected by sudden trauma in this community.



The Cardwell Collaborative is a one-building tech park created by the Medical Center of the Americas Foundation to bring researchers, students, and private industry together for medical and healthcare innovation.



UMC held a topping-out ceremony for its Eastside Neighborhood Clinic (above) on April 14, 2016. The future Northwest Clinic held its topping-out ceremony (below) on June 9, 2016. The audience participated in a Pink Gloved Dance video, a breast cancer prevention campaign.



After four years in El Paso, Mexican Consul Jacob Prado has left our region to be the General Director of Consular Protection in Mexico City. I wish him the best and look forward to working with new Consul Marcos Bucio.



Thank you to everyone who made it to the Music & Art Luncheon. Expect another one in the coming months!



On June 30, the County received a \$100,000 General Assistance Grant from the Texas Veterans Commission. The grant will provide utility and rent assistance to Veterans and their families.



COMMISSIONER STOUT IN THE NEWS

MAY 2016

- El Paso's City Council to look for Municipal ID partnership, KVIA, 05-02-16
- Potential municipal IDs require more research, council says, El Paso Times, 05-02-16
- Encuentran poca utilidad a creacion de ID Municipal, El Diario, 05-02-16
- Corte de Comisionados analiza la posibilidad de aprobar programa de ID comunitaria, Univision, 05-23-16
- Community ID cards a step closer to becoming a reality county-wide, CBS4, 05-23-16
- El Condado de El Paso apoya las identificaciones municipales, Telemundo, 05-23-16
- Colaborara condado en proyecto de ID municipal, El Diario, 05-23-16
- EP County will work with city on community ID program, KTSM, 05-23-16

JUNE 2016

- El Paso ID Effort Could Force Local Control Showdown, The Texas Tribune, 06-01-16
- Stout: Building relationships key for UMC, El Paso Times, 06-11-16

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