



ARTESIA DAILY PRESS

VOLUME 68 — NUMBER 36 © 2021 JULY 21, 2021 Published Online Sunday, Tuesday Through Friday PRICE: Thursday \$1.00

WEDNESDAY

Temporary assistance work requirement to be reinstated

SANTA FE -- The New Mexico Human Services Department (NMHSD) Income Support Division (ISD) is reinstating the work requirement for recipients of the Temporary Assistance for the Needy Families (TANF) program, effective Aug. 1.

To assist with this effort, the NMHSD is partnering with the New Mexico Department of Workforce Solution (NMDWS) in promoting the Ready New Mexico Campaign. The NMDWS' Ready New Mexico campaign provides easy, consolidated access to training, education and employment resources for New Mexicans.

Ready New Mexico can assist TANF customers with gaining the skills, experience and resources needed to help improve the family's financial stability and enable them to find employment and receive living wages or close to living wages. The opportunities that are available to the NMHSD's TANF customers are unlimited from educational opportunities to a career pathway which leads to employment. The following are a few programs available to participants:

- Job readiness
- Wage subsidy
- Career Link
- Community service
- Work experience
- High school diploma or equivalency
- On-the-job training
- Education Works program
- Vocational training

During the State's Public Health Emergency, the ISD suspended the TANF work requirement to help mitigate the spread of COVID-19. As New Mexico is re-opening, TANF customers may take advantage of the services offered through Ready New Mexico. TANF customers will receive a notice and text message regarding the reinstatement of the work requirements on July 25.

Contact your NMW Provider or your local Income Support Division for more information at 800-283-4465.

Second arrest made in Roswell homicide

ROSWELL -- A second arrest has been made in connection with a homicide that occurred this month in Roswell.

Just before 4:30 a.m. July 8, Roswell Police Department (RPD) officers were dispatched to the 1100 block of East Poe Street in reference to a shooting. There, they found 30-year-old Robert Lollis dead on the front porch of a residence. Lollis had suffered multiple gunshot wounds.

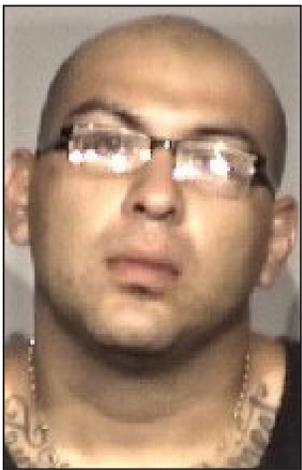
On July 9, the RPD arrested Robert Avila, 25, after taking him into custody on the afternoon of the shooting. He was charged with first-degree murder, kidnapping, battery upon a household member, and conspiracy to commit tampering with evidence.

Around 12:30 p.m. today, officers arrested 25-year-old Andrew Cylvino Cobos at the Chaves County Detention Center, where he was already serving time in an unrelated case.

Cobos was charged with conspiracy to commit murder, accessory to murder, tampering with evidence, conspiracy to commit tampering with evidence, and being a felon in possession of a firearm in connection with the murder of Lollis.

Cobos is accused of driving Avila -- while aware of Avila's intentions to shoot Lollis -- to the home where the crime occurred. He is also accused of hiding the murder weapon after the shooting.

Cobos is being held without bond at the Chaves County Detention Center.



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Local Weather

Forecast

Tonight, partly cloudy with a low around 66. South winds 5 to 10 mph.

Thursday, mostly sunny with a high near 89. South winds 10 to 15 mph.

Weather Report

The New Mexico State University Ag Science Center south of Artesia reported the high Tuesday was 88 degrees, while the 24-hour low reached 63. It was 65 degrees at 7 a.m. today. One year ago today, the high was 97 degrees and the low was 67.

The minimum 10-inch soil temperature is 74 degrees.

Is Thursday the new Monday? Flexible working is in flux

NEW YORK (AP) — Last year, companies around the U.S. scrambled to figure out how to shut down their offices and set up their employees for remote work as the COVID-19 virus suddenly bore down on the world.

Now, in a mirror image, they are scrambling to figure out how to bring many of those employees back.

Most companies are proceeding cautiously, trying to navigate declining COVID-19 infections against a potential backlash by workers who are not ready to return.

Tensions have spilled into the public at a few companies where some staff have organized petitions or even walkouts to protest being recalled to the office. Many workers in high demand fields, such as tech or customer service, have options amid a rise in job postings promising "remote work" — an alluring prospect for people who moved during the pandemic to be closer to family or in search of more affordable cities.

"A lot of people have relocated and don't

want to come back," said Chris Riccobono, the CEO of Untuckit LLC, a casual men's clothing company. "There's a lot of crazy stuff that is a big day-to-day pain point."

Riccobono said he can't wait to get his 100 corporate staffers back to the office in Manhattan's Soho neighborhood because he believes that productivity and morale are higher that way. Starting in September, the company will require those employees to report to the office Mondays, Wednesdays and Thursdays on the hope that the flexibility of a "hybrid" schedule will keep everyone happy.

Many others are similarly introducing a gradual return. Companies like Amazon and automakers Ford and General Motors have promised to adopt a hybrid approach permanently for their office staff, responding to internal and public surveys showing an overwhelming preference for work-from-home options.

But implementing a hybrid workplace can be a headache, from identifying which

roles are most conducive to remote work to deciding which days of the week employees need to be in the office. There are client meetings to consider. And some business leaders argue newer employees need more face-time as they begin their careers or start new at a company.

"Thursday is the new Monday," according to Salesforce, a San Francisco-based technology firm, which found that Thursday was the most popular day for employees to report to the office when the company reopened its Sydney offices back in August.

Riccobono, on the other hand, insists employees show up on Mondays to get organized and set the tone for the week. Like many employers, however, he acknowledges he is still figuring things out as he navigates uncharted territory.

"We will revisit in January," he said. "We will see how it works."

(See FLEXIBLE, Page 8)

NMSU professors study technology's role on the hospitality workforce

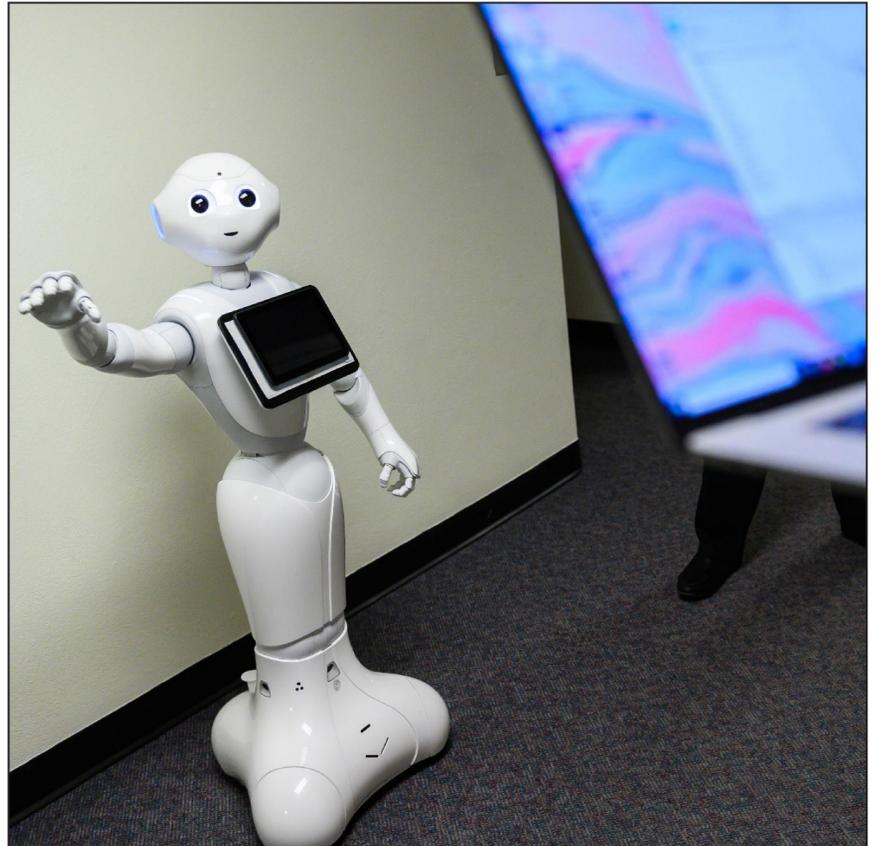
By CARLOS ANDRES LOPEZ
NMSU

Pepper is just under four feet tall, but he has no trouble interacting with people who tower over him. He proved as much in fall 2020 when he made his debut at New Mexico State University's student-run 100 West Café, working as a host — although he raised a few eyebrows.

That's because Pepper is the world's first humanoid robot programmed to recognize human emotion and engage with people through conversation and a touch screen. He was part of an exploratory study at NMSU to evaluate robot interactions with humans, a collaboration between Betsy Stringam of the School of Hotel, Restaurant and Tourism Management and Marlena Fraune of the Department of Psychology. Their research team also included two graduate students, Rebecca Skulsky and Harrison Preusse.

"Almost since 'The Jetsons,' we've been able to do things automatically or automated. In the hospitality industry, customers have to accept it as a level of service," Stringam said. "With this study, we wanted to see how Pepper interfaced with people and if consumers were willing to accept service from a robot."

As a host, Pepper checked in customers for the dining ...
(See NMSU, Page 5)



Josh Bachman - NMSU

Pepper the robot was part of a study at New Mexico State University to evaluate robot interactions with humans. Last fall, Pepper could be found greeting guests at NMSU's student-run restaurant, 100 West Café. The study was a collaboration between the School of Hotel, Restaurant and Tourism Management and the Department of Psychology.

BlueHalo selects New Mexico for new complex

ALBUQUERQUE — BlueHalo, an integrated national security and technology company, has chosen the MaxQ site in Albuquerque for a new state-of-the-art campus to facilitate BlueHalo's acceleration into production and its long-term commitment to investing in New Mexico and creating high-wage manufacturing jobs, the company, Gov. Michelle Lujan Grisham, and Mayor Tim Keller announced today.

The Max Q location, at Gibson and Carlisle Blvd SE, Albuquerque, N.M. 87117, was selected as the site for the company's new 200,000-square-foot New Mexico campus. The development will bring hundreds of BlueHalo's Albuquerque-based employees into a consolidated ecosystem. Its decision to expand in New Mexico over other locations preserves the existing 260 New Mexico jobs and creates an additional 64 jobs with an average salary of \$90,000.

The total economic impact for the project with existing and expanded operations is \$3.2 billion over the next 10 years.

"High-quality and good-paying careers, a massive economic impact for our state and the metro area, a significant capital investment -- this is the kind of economic expansion and partnership that New Mexicans can get excited about," Gov. Michelle Lujan Grisham said. "Improved economic security and expanded opportunity for New Mexicans is what this administration will continue to promote, and BlueHalo represents an excellent investment in our ongoing efforts to diversify and accelerate our economy."



"BlueHalo's new, state-of-the-art technology campus will host the type of innovation that we do so well in New Mexico. Throughout my years in both the House of Representatives and the Senate, I've been proud

to support New Mexico's growing role as a leader in emerging defense and space technologies—and the new careers that brings to our state," U.S. Senator Martin Heinrich said. "The ecosystem we have created, both inside and outside the fence line at Kirtland Air Force Base, has become the ideal location for leading innovators like BlueHalo to put down roots."

"We are excited about the selection of the MaxQ site for our new franchise technology campus in Albuquerque," Blue-

Halo Chief Executive Officer, Jonathan Moneymaker, said. "This site represents BlueHalo's long-term commitment to New Mexico and will not only enhance the company's ability to support current and future programs at Kirtland Air Force Base, but will also serve as one of the major hubs across the BlueHalo Labs national infrastructure designed to fuel future innovations to solve some of the most complex technology problems and transition those to full production, getting real capability into the hands of those who need it most."

The new space includes an office complex, laboratories, manufacturing facilities, test areas, and secure spaces. BlueHalo will manufacture several critical products at the new facility in support of space, directed energy, and air and missile defense for the government and commercial customers.

(See COMPLEX, Page 8)

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