



# ARTESIA DAILY PRESS

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TUESDAY

## Texas man killed in four-wheeler wreck at Hackberry

CARLSBAD -- A Texas man was killed Sunday evening in an off-highway vehicle wreck in Eddy County. The New Mexico State Police (NMSP) were dispatched around 9:30 p.m. Sunday to the Hackberry Lake Recreation Area, around 20 miles northeast of Carlsbad, in reference to the accident. Initial investigation indicates a 2009 Suzuki four-wheeler, driven by Angel Vargas, 33, of Dumas, Texas, was travelling northeast along a trail when, for reasons unknown, the Suzuki left the trail and wrecked. Vargas suffered fatal injuries and was pronounced dead at the scene. The NMSP say Vargas was not utilizing a helmet at the time of the wreck, which remains under investigation.

## New Mexicans ages 6 months and up now eligible for vaccines

SANTA FE — The New Mexico Department of Health (NMDOH) has announced that young children aged 6 months through 4 years are now eligible to receive the COVID-19 vaccination, following approvals from the Food and Drug Administration (FDA) and Centers for Disease Control and Prevention (CDC) this week. Pre-ordered doses of Moderna (two-dose primary series) and Pfizer (three-dose primary series) vaccines began arriving in New Mexico on Monday to clinics throughout the state, with more than 2,200 appointments statewide currently available to schedule online through the Department of Health website: VaccineNM.org. "After holding our collective breath for more than two years, we are thrilled to reach the milestone of vaccine eligibility for the littlest members of our families! As I've often said, vaccinating everyone provides the best defense against serious outcomes related to COVID-19," said NMDOH Acting Cabinet Secretary Dr. David R. Scrase, M.D. "I am enormously relieved to offer my grandchildren this critical tool, and no doubt join so many others in celebrating this long-awaited day." Providers, including some pharmacies, are continually signing up and creating additional appointment availability as their requested vaccine allotment arrives. Approximately 5,000 to 7,500 vaccine doses are expected to arrive by June 27 with a steady flow to follow, ensuring a sufficient quantity for all who are eligible. "In addition to protecting those in child care and pre-K settings, vaccines for children under age five will also benefit working parents, employers, and child care providers by lessening disruptions caused by classrooms that are forced to shut down due to close contacts," said Early Childhood Education and Care Department Secretary Elizabeth Groginsky. Changes in this age group's vaccine roll-out include a shift from pharmacies to providers. While pharmacies performed the majority of COVID-19 vaccinations for the rest of the population, many don't often serve younger age groups. Additionally, locations vary on which age groups they will vaccinate, with some accepting only children aged three and up. As a result, the NMDOH estimates about 75% of the under-5 vaccines will be given by practitioners or primary care providers. Parents and caregivers can register their children or dependents for vaccination by scheduling online at VaccineNM.org and adding them to their own vaccine profile. Parents and caregivers can also call their provider/pharmacy to check for appointments. Vaccinations are free. No identification is required to be vaccinated, and vaccines are available to New Mexicans regardless of immigration status. More information on COVID-19 testing, treatment, and resources is available on the NMDOH website. For those without internet access, the hotline can be reached at: 855-600-3453 (Option 3 for English, Option 9 for Spanish).

State agencies launch digital platform to help New Mexico families find formula

SANTA FE — The state has launched a digital platform dedicated to help New Mexico families find infant formula. The formula shortage began after a major production plant was shut down earlier this year when the FDA began investigating bacterial infections in four babies who were fed the formula. At NMformula.org, New Mexico families can learn about community resources and find information that can help and support them during this formula shortage. The site is a comprehensive tool for families which includes resources and guidance to help families find where infant formula may be available. "The infant formula shortage has caused worry and ... (See FORMULA, Page 5)

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## Local Weather

### Forecast

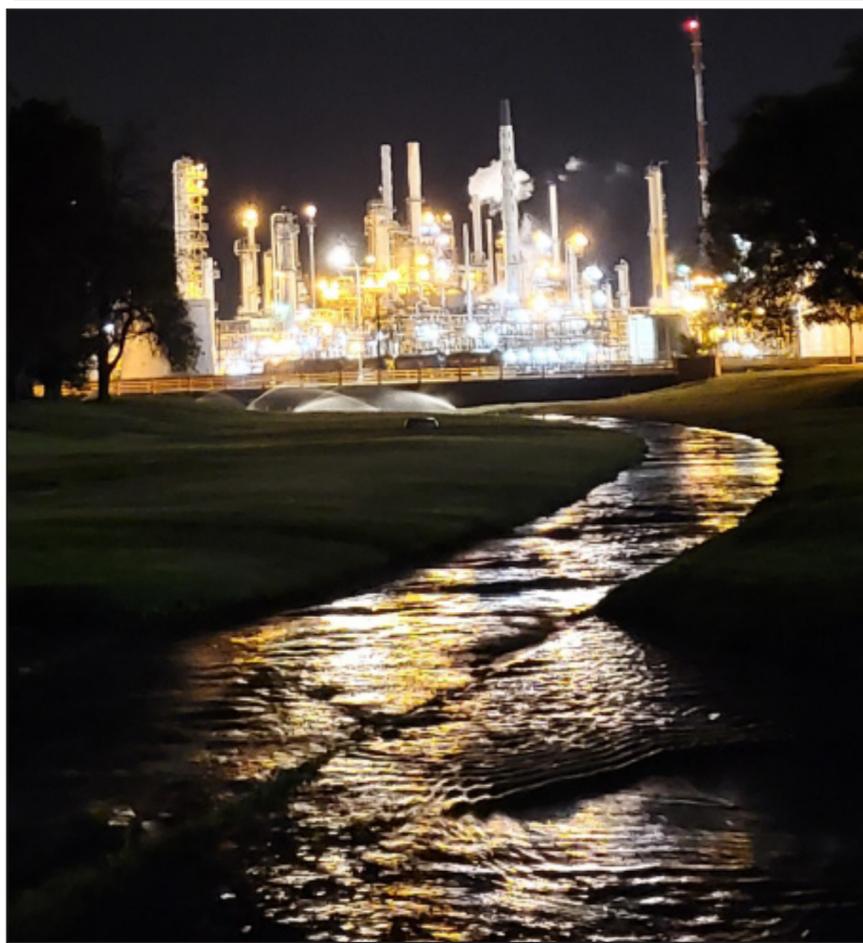
Tonight, scattered showers and thunderstorms, mainly before 9 p.m. Mostly cloudy with a low around 66. North winds 10 to 15 mph. Chance of precipitation 30 percent.  
Wednesday, mostly sunny with a high near 92. Northwest winds 10 to 15 mph, becoming southeast in the afternoon.

### Weather Report

The New Mexico State University Ag Science Center south of Artesia reported the high Monday was 89 degrees, while the 24-hour low reached 66. It was 68 degrees at 7 a.m. today. One year ago today, the high was 106 degrees and the low was 70.  
The minimum 10-inch soil temperature is 75 degrees.  
The Ag Science Center also recorded .09 inches of precipitation. Total precipitation total from the weekend, as reported by the National Weather Service, was .32 inches.

## USFS admits to multiple errors leading to New Mexico blaze

ALBUQUERQUE (AP) — U.S. Forest Service employees made multiple miscalculations, used inaccurate models, and underestimated how dry conditions were in the Southwest, causing a planned burn to reduce the threat of wildfires to explode into the largest blaze in New Mexico's recorded history, the agency said Tuesday. The agency quietly posted an 80-page review that details the planning missteps and the conditions on the ground as crews ignited the prescribed fire in early April. The report states officials who planned the operation underestimated the amount of timber and vegetation that was available to fuel the flames, the exceptional dry conditions and the rural villages and water supplies that would be threatened if things went awry. Within hours of declaring the test fire a success that day, multiple spot fires were reported outside containment lines and there were not enough resources or water to rein them in. "The devastating impact of this fire to the communities and livelihoods of those affected in New Mexico demanded this level of review to ensure we understand how this tragic event unfolded," U.S. Forest Chief Randy Moore wrote. "I cannot overstate how heartbreaking these impacts are on communities and individuals." As of Tuesday, the blaze had charred more than 533 square miles (1,380 square kilometers), making it the largest fire to have burned this spring in the U.S. It comes during a particularly ferocious season in which fire danger in overgrown forests around the West has reached historic levels due to decades of drought and warmer weather brought on by climate change. In a statement issued Tuesday, Gov. Michelle Lujan Grisham "I am deeply frustrated by the numerous missteps within the Las Dispensas burn identified by this review," the governor said. "It is very difficult to understand how a plan crafted several years ago could be repeatedly re-approved without adjustments or considerations for updated drought conditions, as well as how that plan could be put into place without any immediate data for weather conditions during what New Mexicans know to be a particularly windy time of the year. In addition, it does not appear that anyone involved in this burn was held to account for the significant mistakes made during this burn. "It is critical that, moving forward, the U.S. Forest Service takes every ... (See BLAZE, Page 5)



## Rain weekend in Artesia

Rainwater flows along Eagle Draw toward Navajo Refining Co. Sunday evening following thunderstorms that dropped intermittent heavy rains in the Artesia area as a significant lightning show lit the sky. The National Weather Service reported a total of .32 inches of precipitation over the course of the past three days, with a 30-percent chance of rain forecast for this evening. As an added bonus, the moisture resulted in temperatures in the 70s today, the Summer Solstice and the longest day of the year.

Brienne Green - Daily Press

## Texas top cop: Uvalde police could've ended rampage within three minutes

AUSTIN, Texas (AP) — Police had enough officers and firepower on the scene of the Uvalde school massacre to have stopped the gunman three minutes after he entered the building, and they would have found the door to the classroom where he was holed up unlocked if they had bothered to check it, the head of the Texas state police testified Tuesday, pronouncing the law enforcement response an "abject failure." Officers with rifles instead stood in a hallway for over an hour, waiting in part for more weapons and gear, before they finally stormed the classroom and killed the gunman, putting an end to the May 24 attack that left 19 children and two teachers dead. "I don't care if you have on flip-flops and Bermuda shorts, you go in," Col. Steve McCraw, director of the Texas Department of Public Safety, said in blistering testimony at a state Senate hearing. The classroom door, it turned out, could not ... (See UVALDE, Page 8)

## Roswell man leads police on high-speed chase to Tatum

ROSWELL -- A Roswell man is facing numerous charges following a Monday-afternoon incident that began with a carjacking and kidnapping in Roswell and ended in a vehicle roll-over in Tatum. The carjacking that initiated Monday's string of events occurred around 4:20 p.m. in the parking lot of the Allsup's in the 2200 block of South Sunset Avenue. A man later identified as 27-year-old Joel Omar Contreras allegedly approached a GMC Denali pickup truck, forced the male driver out of the truck with a gun, and stole the pickup. Roswell Police Department (RPD) officers and Chaves County Sheriff's Office (CCSO) deputies began searching for the vehicle, but before they could locate it, Contreras had driven to Loveless Park in the 1200 block of North Atkinson Avenue, where he allegedly pointed a gun at three males and a 23-year-old female. Contreras then forced the female to enter the truck and took her phone away from her when she attempted to call for help. The truck was spotted soon after by law enforcement, and a pursuit with RPD and CCSO



victim, who grabbed the wheel and swerved the truck. Around 5:35 p.m., as Contreras approached Tatum, law enforcement was able to utilize spike strips on the truck's tires. Contreras continued into Tatum on rims, and the truck subsequently flipped onto its driver's side, at which time Contreras was taken into custody. Both Contreras and his kidnapping victim were treated at separate hospitals for minor injuries. The pursuit, which also included the assistance of the Lea County Sheriff's Office, did not result in any accidents with unrelated vehicles, and no injuries were reported to other motorists, civilians, or law-enforcement personnel. Contreras was arrested on RPD charges of armed robbery, four counts of aggravated assault with a deadly weapon, kidnapping, aggravated fleeing of a law enforcement officer, false imprisonment, being a felon in possession of a firearm, interference with communications, and aggravated assault upon a peace officer. He is being held without bond at the Chaves County Detention Center.

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