

THE RIO REVIEW

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**RIO GRANDE CITY
RATTTLERS**

HOMETOWN PRIDE

**Rio Grande City's Iconic Water Tank
Mural Now Complete**

**Rio Grande City's
Ringgold Park
Renovations Nearing
Completion**

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Officers Attend Active
Shooter Training**

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Police and
Fire Departments**

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Library Earns
Presitgious Award**

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RGC PR Specialists Foster Regional Collaboration at Rio Grande Valley PIO Meeting

Public Relations Specialist for the City of Rio Grande City, Becky Rubio, and Melinda Gomez, Communications Coordinator for the RGC Economic Development Corporation, recently participated in the Rio Grande Valley Public Information Officer (PIO) quarterly meeting hosted by the City of Brownsville Communications & Marketing Department. The meeting served as a platform for PIOs from various municipalities across the Rio Grande Valley to collaborate, share ideas, and strengthen relationships, fostering a regional approach to industry communication.

The quarterly gathering provided an invaluable opportunity for Rubio and Gomez to engage with fellow PIOs and exchange insights on best practices in public relations and communications strategies. With representatives from cities, counties, and organizations across the Rio Grande Valley in attendance, the meeting facilitated a dynamic exchange of ideas aimed at enhancing community engagement and promoting regional development initiatives.

RGC City Secretary Angela Solis Named Vice-President of Prominent RGV Association

Rio Grande City City-Secretary Angela Solis was recently sworn in as Vice president of the Lower Rio Grande Valley City Secretaries/Clerks chapter.

“On behalf of the City of Rio Grande City we would like to

RGC Mayor, Commissioners Attend South Texas Community Summit



In the spirit of regional collaboration and engagement, Mayor Joel Villarreal, accompanied by several members of the City Commission, recently traveled to the Texas State Capitol to participate in the South Texas Community Summit alongside members of the Texas House of Representatives. This gathering provided a unique opportunity for the Mayor and Commissioners to engage in meaningful discussions on a variety of topics relevant to the South Texas region as well as the incredible growth our city has seen over the past few years and push for an increase in safety for our community. Also discussed were relevant issues from economic development initiatives to community-centric policies.



wish a heartfelt congratulations to our City Secretary, Angela Solis, on her recent appointment as Vice-President to the Lower Rio Grande Valley Clerks Association,” declared Rio Grande City Mayor Joel Villarreal. “This is indeed a testament to your dedication and leadership within our city.”

The LRGVCS/C chapter is made up of City Clerks and City Secretaries who regularly come together to explore various city-related topics. Their discussions encompass essential subjects like Time Management, Public Information, Open Meetings Act, TABC compliance, and other matters crucial to their roles in serving the community.

City of Rio Grande City Employees Receive Distracted Driving Training

Employees of the City of Rio Grande City participated in a Distracted Driving Training session held on Monday, February 5th, at City Hall. This mandatory training was for all city employees who operate City vehicles regularly. The training aimed to raise awareness about the dangers of distracted driving and equip participants with the necessary skills to mitigate risks on the road.

Led by expert instructors, the training covered a wide range of topics, including the types and consequences of distracted driving, as well as strategies for prevention. Participants engaged in interactive discussions highlighting the importance of maintaining focus and attention while behind the wheel.



EXPLORE OUR BEAUTIFUL CITY

The mission of the City of Rio Grande City is to provide quality municipal services in partnership with our citizens to build a progressive city and to provide a better quality of life for all our residents. Rio Grande City is rich in history and honors traditions. Come and explore a multitude of historical sites, take a walk run or bike ride through our Fordyce Trails, and enjoy our many festivals.

www.cityofrgc.com

RIO GRANDE CITY HALL

5332 E. Highway 83, Rio Grande City, TX 78582

Phone No.: 956-487-0672

Website: www.cityofrgc.com

Hours of Operation: Mon-Friday 8:00 am - 5:00 pm

Closed: Saturday - Sunday

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Overflow of Success

Rio Grande City's Iconic Water Tank Mural Now Complete

A mural featuring the Rio Grande City Rattler mascot is now on display on the city's iconic Water Tank, concluding restoration efforts by the RGC Public Utilities Dept.

"We are excited to announce the completion of the Rio Grande City Rattler mural on the Water Tank at the Old Water Plant," declared RGC Public Utilities Director Eric Flores. "We would like to thank the City Commission for initiating this design upgrade and keeping our Rattler Pride alive."

Rio Grande City Honors Long-Serving Public Servant at Retirement Celebration

The City of Rio Grande City recently came together to celebrate the retirement of Mr. Jose Enrique Cantu, a dedicated employee of the Rio Grande City Public Utilities Department for over 21 years. Mr. Cantu's invaluable contributions and unwavering commitment to the city were recognized and celebrated during a heartfelt retirement party, where he was honored by colleagues, friends, and city officials.

Mr. Cantu's remarkable tenure with the Rio Grande City Public Utilities Department exemplifies his dedication to serving the community and ensuring the efficient operation of essential municipal services. Throughout his more than two decades of service, Mr. Cantu has been a trusted and reliable member of the city's workforce, earning the respect and admiration of his peers.

RGC Public Utilities Department Upgrades Manhole Covers

The Rio Grande City Public Utilities Department has embarked on a crucial infrastructure improvement initiative aimed at replacing manhole covers throughout the city. This proactive effort underscores the city's commitment to enhancing the safety and efficiency of its utility systems and

ensuring the well-being of residents.

The replacement of aging manhole covers is part of a comprehensive strategy to modernize and maintain the city's infrastructure. Over time, wear and tear can compromise the integrity of manhole covers, posing safety risks and potentially leading to infrastructure failures. By proactively replacing these covers, the Rio Grande City Public Utilities Department aims to mitigate such risks and prolong the lifespan of essential utility assets.

City officials emphasized the importance of investing in infrastructure upgrades to meet the growing needs of the community. "The replacement of manhole covers is an essential component of our ongoing efforts to enhance the reliability and resilience of our utility systems," stated RGC PUD director Eric Flores. "By upgrading infrastructure components, we are better positioned to meet the needs of residents and businesses and ensure the continued delivery of high-quality utility services."

Rio Grande City Public Utility Crewmen Assist in Repairing Water Leaks Across Starr County

The Rio Grande City Public Utilities Department recently lent their expertise to assist crewmen from the Starr County Housing Authority in repairing water leaks. Additionally, the RGC crewmen extended their support to aid crewmen from the RGC Grulla Independent School District (ISD) in repairing leaks at one of their campuses. This display of collaboration highlights the commitment of local agencies to ensuring the well-being of the community.

Following reports of water leaks at properties managed by the Starr County Housing Authority, the RGCPUD Crewmen promptly responded to the call for assistance. With their specialized skills and equipment, the crewmen teamed up with their counterparts from the Housing Authority to identify



and repair the leaks, preventing further damage and inconvenience to residents.

Simultaneously, RGCPUD crewmen extended their assistance to crewmen from the Rio Grande City Grulla ISD, who were grappling with similar issues at one of their campuses. Working together, the crews tackled the leaks efficiently, demonstrating the effectiveness of interagency cooperation in addressing common challenges.

RGCPUD Celebrates Valentine's Day at Fresenius Kidney Care Clinic

The City of Rio Grande City Public Utilities Department embraced the spirit of Valentine's Day by spreading love and cheer to the patients at Fresenius Kidney Care Clinic. In a heartwarming gesture, representatives from the department visited the clinic to bring smiles and Valentine's Day joy to patients undergoing treatment.

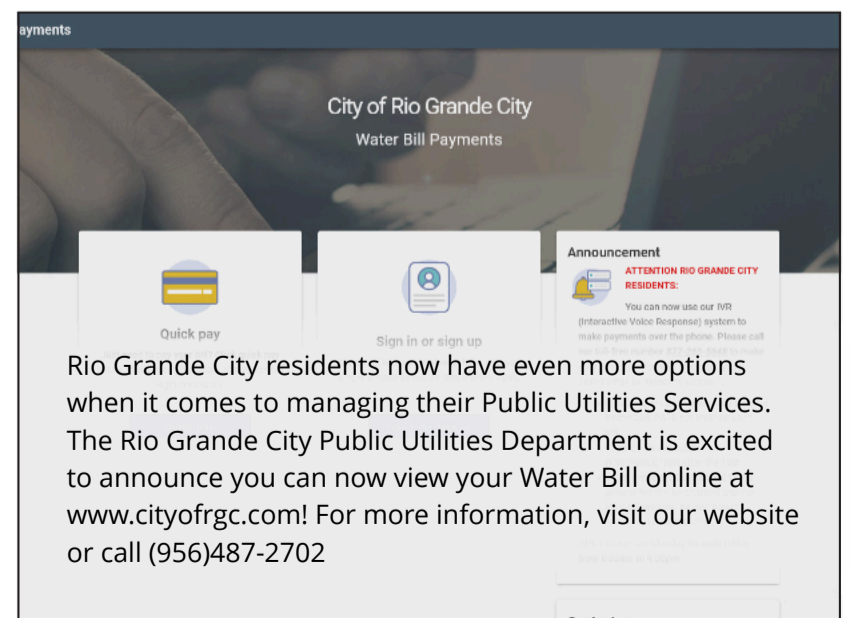
Thanks to Clinical Manager

Sue Ellen Alvarez, Biomedical Technician II Albino Bazan, and Janie Garza, the visit to Fresenius Kidney Care Clinic was a special opportunity to connect with patients and show support for their health journey.

"We are grateful to Fresenius Kidney Care for welcoming us into their clinic to celebrate Valentine's Day with their patients," stated Rio Grande City Public Utilities Department director Eric Flores.

"It was an honor to spend time with the patients and bring a little extra love and encouragement to brighten their day."

During the visit, patients were treated to Valentine's Day gift baskets, bringing smiles and joy to their faces. Among the recipients were Laura Salazar and Zenon Garza, who were congratulated for winning the Valentine's Day gift baskets. The gesture was met with appreciation and gratitude from patients and staff alike.



Now Open for Business



Recent Rio Grande City Ribbon Cutting Ceremonies.



Rio Grande City Main Street and Economic Development Corp. Staff attend 2024 Winter Texan Expo. In McAllen.

THE NEW AND THE IMPROVED

Rio Grande City's Ringgold Park Renovations Nearing Completion

Phase 1 of the highly anticipated renovations to Ringgold Park approaches completion. The city has invested significant resources in updating the park's facilities, including basketball courts, soccer fields, and the pavilion area, in preparation for its reopening to the public in Spring of 2024.

Phase 1 of the Ringgold Park renovations focuses on enhancing recreational amenities to better serve the needs of the community. The city has revamped the basketball courts and soccer fields, installing modern equipment to ensure a top-notch experience for sports enthusiasts of all ages.

In addition to the athletic facilities, the city has also paid special attention to the pavilion area, a popular venue for community events and gatherings. The pavilion has been repainted and revitalized, providing an inviting space for outdoor festivities, picnics, and rentals for private functions.

"The revitalization of Ringgold Park is a testament to our commitment to providing quality recreational spaces for our residents," stated Mayor Rio Grande City Mayor Joel Villarreal. "We are thrilled to see Phase 1 nearing completion and look forward to welcoming the community back to this cherished park."

City officials anticipate that the reopening of Ringgold Park will not only promote physical activity and healthy living but also foster a sense of community among residents. With its updated amenities and refreshed appearance, the park is poised to become a vibrant hub of activity for families and individuals alike.

Registration Now Open for City of RGC Men's Basketball League

Registration is now open for the Rio Grande City Parks and Recreation Department's Adult Men's Basketball League. The league is open to men 18 years of age, or older, and the registration fee is \$40 per player. RGC residents interested in participating can call (956) 488-8728.

"The goal of the Rio Grande

City Parks and Recreation Department is to offer many opportunities to the community at large," declared Rio Grande City Parks & Rec. Director Frank Eguia. "Leagues like these are another way for individuals to engage in regular physical activity, promoting a healthy lifestyle and overall well-being."

Registration for RGC's Youth Basketball League Now Open, Coaches Needed

Registration for the upcoming season of Rio Grande City's Youth Basketball opens today, January 3rd. The league is open to 2nd through 6th grade athletes, with a registration fee of only \$40.

"Register today for the RGC Youth Basketball League," said Rio Grande City Parks & Rec. Director Frank Eguia Jr. "Athletes must have a completed physical prior to registration. We are also looking for volunteer coaches."

Former volunteer coaches of Rio Grande City Parks and Recreation sport leagues have described volunteering as a uniquely rewarding experience. Coaching offers a multitude of benefits such as the joy of witnessing the growth and success of athletes. Coaching also cultivates a diverse skill set, including leadership, communication, and problem-solving, enhancing not only coaching abilities but also overall professional and personal competencies.

For more information residents are encouraged to call Eric Escamilla or Frank Eguia at the RGC Parks and Recreation Department (956)488-8728.

RGC's Fordyce Nature Trails Feature New Rest Area, Signage Thanks to Boy Scout Troop 93

The popular Rio Grande City's Fordyce Nature and Hiking trails now feature a new rest area, and way finding sign thanks to the efforts of Eagle Scout Mr. Omar Mendoza and Boy Scout Troop 93 who selected the trails for a special project.

"Thank you Mr. Omar Mendoza, and everyone involved with the Boy Scout Troop program project. We couldn't be prouder to highlight these beautiful additions to our trails," stated Rio Grande City



Mayor Joel Villarreal. "Your work provides a lasting positive experience for our youth and shares the importance of giving back."

Hiking offers many physical, mental, and emotional benefits, making it a popular outdoor activity for individuals of all ages in Rio Grande City. From the physical standpoint, hiking is an excellent form of cardiovascular exercise, promoting heart health, and improving overall fitness levels. The varying terrains encountered during a hike at the Fordyce Nature Trails engage different muscle groups, contributing to enhanced strength and endurance.

Beyond the physical aspects, hiking provides a natural setting for mental rejuvenation. Spending time in nature has been linked to reduced stress levels, improved mood, and increased focus. Hiking also offers an opportunity for individuals to disconnect from the demands of modern life, promoting mental clarity and relaxation.

RGC Football Championships

The Rio Grande City Parks & Recreation Department hosted a Flag Football Championship and a Tackle Football Champi-

onship at the Rio Grande City High School Football field. During the Flag Football Championship, it was a close game between the Rio Grande City Diamondbacks and the La Grulla Stingers, and at the end the RGC Diamondbacks took the win 41 to 26. The RGC Diamondbacks are coached by

Hugo Garcia and Danny Rodriguez. During the Tackle Football Game, the Rio Grande City Bengals went head to head with the Roma Wolverines and after a nail-biting game the Roma Wolverines took the win 14 to 7. The RGC Bengals are coached by several members of the RGC Fire Department.

FREE FAMILY FUN
EASTER at the PARK
Basilio Villarreal Park
1473 Stephen Saenz
SATURDAY MARCH 23RD
10 AM - 12 PM
All ages welcome | BYO Baskets



Rio Grande City Acquires New Fleet of Vehicles for Police and Fire Departments

The City of Rio Grande City is proud to announce the acquisition of a new fleet of vehicles for the RGC Police Department and RGC Fire Department & Emergency Management, made possible through a Public Safety grant awarded by the U.S. Department of Agriculture. This significant investment in public safety infrastructure will bolster the capabilities of first responders and enhance their ability to serve and protect the community.

The grant funding, provided by the U.S. Department of Agriculture, has enabled the City of Rio Grande City to procure a fleet of modern vehicles equipped with state-of-the-art technology and safety features. These vehicles will be instrumental in supporting the operations of both the Rio Grande City Police Department and RGC Fire Department & Emergency Management, allowing them to respond effectively to emergencies and fulfill their critical roles in ensuring public safety.

Mayor Joel Villarreal, and the City Commission expressed gratitude to Congressman Henry Cuéllar and the U.S. Department of Agriculture for their support in securing the grant funding. "We are im-

mensely grateful to Congressman Henry Cuéllar and the U.S. Department of Agriculture for their unwavering commitment to public safety in our community," stated Mayor Villarreal. "Their investment in this new fleet of vehicles will significantly enhance the capabilities of our first responders and enable them to better serve and protect our residents."

The new fleet of vehicles will enable the Rio Grande City Police Department and RGC Fire Department & Emergency Management to improve response times, enhance communication capabilities, and ensure the safety of first responders and the community at large. With these modernized resources at their disposal, Rio Grande City's first responders are better equipped than ever to address emergencies and protect the lives and property of residents.

Construction of New RGC Public Safety Building Continues on Schedule

Construction on the new Public Safety Building is continuing on schedule, with most of the significant phases of the project nearing completion.

"We are pleased to report that the progress of the new Public Safety Building is moving at an excellent pace," declared Rio Grande City Mayor Joel Villarreal. "The outer structure



has been completed as well as the inner mapping of offices. This new Public Safety Building will house our RGC Fire Department and RGC Police Department and we are excited for this project to be completed soon."

RGC Fire Dept. Welcomes New Volunteer Fire Fighters

RGC Fire Department & Emergency Management Chief Manuel Muniz and Assistant Chief Martin Galvan introduced four of our volunteer firefighters at the City Commission Meeting on January 16th.

"These four volunteers are the newest members of our Fire Department who will be attending the La Casita Fire Academy, stated Fire Chief Manuel Muniz. "Cadets Liana Rios, Cesar Hernandez, Deavan Diaz, and Arturo Martinez are grateful for this opportunity to serve their community, and are excited to get started at the academy."



Rio Grande City Firefighters Welcome New Life in Dramatic Emergency childbirth

In a heartwarming and unexpected turn of events this Monday morning, January 22, a group of Rio Grande City firefighters demonstrated not only their bravery but also their compassion as they assisted a woman who didn't make it to the hospital in delivering her baby just outside their fire station. Acting swiftly in response to the urgent situation, Lieutenant Jesus Rivas, Captain Pedro Morin, and Hector Escoto utilized their training and skills to ensure a safe delivery.

The fire station, usually a hub for emergency response, became an impromptu birthing suite as the firefighters worked together seamlessly to support the mother through the childbirth process. This remarkable instance showcases the dedication and versatility of these heroes, whose commitment to



saving lives extends beyond traditional emergency scenarios to the joyous occasion of welcoming a new life into the world.

"The RGC Fire Department & Emergency Management witnessed the miracle of life, firsthand, today," declared RGC Fire Chief Manuel Muniz. "A woman headed to the hospital made an emergency stop at the RGC Fire Station because her baby was ready to enter the world. Our firefighters jumped into action and welcomed the newest citizen to the great City of Rio Grande City."

"On behalf of the City Commission of RGC, we are extremely proud of the work our firefighters do every single day for our community," stated RGC Mayor Joel Villarreal after being informed of the incident. "We would like to congratulate the newest mother in our city on her bundle of joy."

TO SERVE AND PROTECT

Rio Grande City Police Officers Attend Active Shooter Training

The Rio Grande City Police Department recently took part in a comprehensive 2-day Active Shooter Training, generously hosted by the RGC Grulla Independent School District at RGC High School.

This vital training initiative brought together Rio Grande City Police officers alongside representatives from various law enforcement agencies. The focus of the training was to provide officers with essential updates on protocols and procedures specifically tailored to address the complexities of an active shooter situation.

By fostering collaboration and coordination among multiple agencies, the goal of the training was clear: to ensure a unified and effective response in safeguarding the students and the broader community. The commitment to staying well-prepared and proactive in the face of potential threats underscores the dedication of the Rio Grande City Police Department to the safety and security of the local residents.

Rio Grande City PD Welcomes New Officer

Newly hired Police Officer Juan Islas has been officially sworn into the Rio Grande City Police Department.

"Welcome to our family in blue," said Rio Grande City Police Chief Noe Castillo to Officer Islas immediately after he was sworn in.

According to the Texas Constitution, all elected and appointed officers, including police officers, must take an official oath of office before they enter upon the duties of their offices.

The oath includes a promise to faithfully execute the duties of the office and to preserve, protect, and defend the Constitution and laws of the United States and of Texas.

The purpose of the oath is to ensure that police officers are committed to upholding the law and protecting the rights of citizens. By taking the oath, police officers are held accountable for their actions and are expected to act with integrity and professionalism.

Rio Grande City PD Engages Students at RGCGISD Career Day

The Rio Grande City Police Department recently took part in the Rio Grande City Grulla Independent School District's Career Day, offering students a unique opportunity to gain insight into the daily operations of law enforcement professionals. This collaborative event served as an invaluable platform for students to explore potential career paths and learn firsthand about the responsibilities and challenges faced by members of the police department.

During the Career Day event, representatives from the Rio Grande City Police Department engaged with students in interactive sessions, providing them with a comprehensive overview of the department's functions and responsibilities. Students had the chance to learn about various aspects of police work, including patrol duties, criminal investigations, community outreach initiatives, and specialized units.

"Events like Career Day offer us an opportunity to connect with students and inspire them to consider careers in law enforcement," stated Rio Grande City Police Dept. Chief Noe Castillo. "By providing students with a glimpse into our daily work, we hope to cultivate a sense of trust and understanding between the police department and the community we serve."

The Rio Grande City Police Department remains dedicated to engaging with the community and inspiring the next generation of law enforcement professionals. Through initiatives like Career Day, the department continues to foster positive relationships and promote career awareness among students in the Rio Grande City Grulla ISD.

RGCPD 'Cupid Cops' to Spread Love in the Community

The Rio Grande City Police Department embarked on a heartwarming initiative to spread love and goodwill throughout the community with its Valentine's Day 'Cupid Cops' campaign. This program



aimed to foster positive relationships between law enforcement and residents while spreading joy during the Valentine's season.

On Valentine's Day, officers from the Rio Grande City Police Department visited local nursing homes to deliver nearly 250 carnations to residents. The gesture brought smiles to the faces of elderly residents, and served as a symbol of love and appreciation, brightening the spirits of those receiving them.

Following the nursing home visits, the 'Cupid Cops' took to the streets to spread love in a different way. Officers conducted traffic stops throughout the city, but instead of issuing citations, they surprised drivers who obeyed all traffic laws with Valentine's Day gifts. These unexpected acts of kindness left drivers pleasantly surprised and served as a reminder of the importance of safe driving practices.

"The 'Cupid Cops' initiative is about more than just spreading love; it's about building trust and strengthening relationships between law enforcement and the community we serve," stated Rio Grande City Police Chief Noe Castillo. "Small gestures like delivering flowers and rewarding safe driving behaviors can have a big impact on fostering positive interactions and building a sense of unity."

Rio Grande City Public Library Earns Prestigious Award

The City of Rio Grande City Public Library was recently awarded a Collections Improvement Grant from the Texas Book Festival. The \$2500 grant will establish the creation of the new Rio Grande Valley Borderlands Collection which is the first special collection devoted purely to the Rio Grande Valley's history and culture. This collection will only be available to the public at the RGC Public Library.

"We are proud to announce that our very own Rio Grande City Public Library was recently awarded a Collections Improvement Grant from the Texas Book Festival," declared RGC Library Director Norma Fultz. "Our library was one of 40 public libraries in the state of Texas selected for this honor, and the only library in the Rio Grande Valley to win this award. The new Rio Grande Valley Borderlands Collection includes over 100 new books that explore the history and heritage of the people of the Rio Grande Valley."

"On behalf of the City Commission of Rio Grande City, we would like to congratulate RGC Public Library Director, Norma Fultz, and her amazing library staff for this incredible distinction," declared Rio Grande City Mayor Joel Villarreal.

According to its official website, Texas Book Festival connects authors and readers through experiences that celebrate the culture of literacy, ideas, and imagination. The first Festival took place in November 1996 and is now one of the nation's premier annual literary events, featuring 300 authors of the year's best books and drawing 50,000

book lovers.

City of RGC Thanks United Way of South Texas for Generous Donation

In an outstanding demonstration of community support, the United Way of South Texas recently contributed a generous donation of \$2500 to both the Rio Grande City Public Library and the RGC Parks and Recreation Department. This gesture aimed to facilitate the acquisition of new equipment, enhancing the resources available for the community.

"On behalf of the City of Rio Grande City we would like to thank United Way of South Texas for their generous donation to our Departments," stated RGC Deputy City Manager Noe Castillo. "This is the 5th year Rio Grande City has been an honored recipient of these funds from United Way of South Texas, an organization that strives to improve the lives of communities by using caring power to advance the common good. Thank you for everything you do for our city."

The Rio Grande City Public Library is poised to benefit from updated materials, fostering a culture of learning and knowledge-sharing, while the Parks and Recreation Department can use the funds to acquire modern amenities that contribute to the well-being and recreational activities of local residents.

The United Way of South Texas' commitment to investing in the community's cultural and recreational infrastructure underscores their dedication to improving the overall quality of life for the residents of Rio Grande City.



RIO GRANDE CITY EMPLOYER EXPO + JOB FAIR

FEBRUARY 29, 2024 9AM-12PM

South Texas College - Starr County Campus
142 FM 3167
Building H • Student Activities Center

**FREE PROFESSIONAL HEADSHOTS, HAIR CUTS,
MAKEUP CONSULTATIONS & MORE!**

Jump start your career or find a career that's right for you TODAY!

CAREER SUCCESS WORKSHOPS

at Rio Grande City Public Library
591 East 3rd St

FEB 28TH / 9AM-11AM

Resume Writing,
Interviewing Skills
& Dressing for the Workplace

FOR THE LOVE OF READING

February 1-29, 2024

Join us for this 4-week online reading challenge, earn badges by logging books, minutes and completing activities along the way. Complete your badges and get a special prize at the end of your completion.

For more information, call the Rio Grande City EDC at (956) 487- 3476

EQUAL OPPORTUNITY IS THE LAW
Lower Rio Grande Valley Workforce Development DBA Workforce Solutions is an equal opportunity employer/program and auxiliary aids and services are available upon request to individuals with disabilities. TTY/TDD via RELAY Texas service at 711 or (TDD) 1-800-735-2989/1-800-735-2988 (voice). This project is wholly funded with Federal Workforce Development funds.
Este documento contiene información importante sobre los requisitos, los derechos, las determinaciones y las responsabilidades del acceso a los servicios del sistema de la fuerza laboral. Hay disponibles servicios de idioma, incluida la interpretación y la traducción de documentos, sin ningún costo y a solicitud.

FOUNDER'S DAY



Rio Grande City Celebrates Inaugural Founder's Day Ceremony

The City of Rio Grande City marked a significant milestone in its history as it hosted the inaugural Founder's Day Ceremony on Saturday, February 10th, at the historic Britton Avenue Kiosko. This special event paid tribute to the birth of the city and honored its esteemed founders, Henry Clay Davis and his wife Maria Hilaria de la Garza Davis, whose vision and contributions laid the foundation for the vibrant community we know today.

Local historian RC Salinas spoke at the ceremony, offering attendees a glimpse into the early beginnings of Rio Grande City. He recounted the rich history and cultural heritage of the area, highlighting the pivotal role played by Henry Clay Davis and Maria Hilaria de la Garza Davis in shaping the foundation of the city.

Commissioner Alberto Escobedo showcased his musical talents as he serenaded the audience with his rendition of "Mi Lindo Rio Grande," a heartfelt tribute to the beauty and charm of the Rio Grande City region. Mayor Joel Villarreal followed with the official proclamation, underscoring the significance of the occasion and reaffirming the city's commitment to honoring its heritage and preserving its legacy for future generations.

A special guest to the event was Lloyd Michael Davis, the great-great-grandson of Henry Clay Davis, who took the stage to share his reflections and memories of growing up in Rio Grande City. With a

sense of pride and nostalgia, Davis recounted stories passed down through generations, offering a personal connection to the city's founding pioneers.

The Founder's Day Ceremony brought together residents, community leaders, and descendants of the city's founders in a celebration of unity and gratitude. Mayor Joel Villarreal expressed his appreciation for the turnout and the opportunity to honor the city's founders. "Today, we pay tribute to the visionaries who laid the groundwork for our beloved Rio Grande City," stated Mayor Villarreal. "Their legacy lives on in the spirit of our community, and it is fitting that we come together to celebrate their contributions."

What a Story

The Kelsey Bass Museum was honored to have Bett Rodriguez, author of *De la Codependencia a la Autosuficiencia-8 Estrategias Para Lograrlo*, give an in-depth presentation of her book. Afterwards, guests were invited to ask questions, share comments, and offer observations. Overall, the evening was a great success, and the author agreed to return to give a book talk on her soon-to-be published, sequel. Great Things Are Happening at YOUR Kelsey Bass Museum!

A Lesson Learned

Kelsey Bass Museum staff member, Cathy Rubio gave a presentation for students and staff of the RGCGISD DAEP Center. Mrs. Rubio shared a brief history of our city and some of our historical buildings and shared a

power-point on some of the many exhibits at the museum. After the presentation, Mrs. Rubio answered questions from students and staff members alike. The Kelsey Bass Museum would like to thank Mr. Orlando Guerra for the invitation to speak and share a bit of our city's history with our city's future!

Thanks for the Visit

The Kelsey Bass Museum has seen a boom in visitors these first two months of 2024, and museum staff member, Cathy Rubio is happy to share the stories of the wonderful exhibits on display. Make plans for a visit because there's so much to see at YOUR Kelsey Bass Museum.

Helping Hands

The Miss RGC Freedom Fest Royal Court has been busy lending a helping hand in our city and surrounding communities. These beautiful young ladies are always ready to take part in the many ceremonies and events hosted by our city and community organizations; however, these young ladies have also been working hard to provide necessary items for those in need. These beauties have collected heaters and blankets to give out during the recent cold spell, and they collected a basket load of household and personal items to give to our local domestic violence shelter. Thank you to these young ladies whose beauty is only surpassed by the size of their hearts.



The Rio Grande City Public Works Department and the RGC Parks and Recreation Department are joining forces to ensure that the soccer fields at Ringgold Park are in prime condition for the community. With a wave of renovations underway at Ringgold Park, the collaboration between these departments underscores their dedication to enhancing recreational facilities and providing residents with top-notch amenities.

The concerted efforts of the Public Works and Parks and Recreation crewmen highlight the city's commitment to creating welcoming spaces for residents to enjoy outdoor activities. As part of the renovation project at Ringgold Park, the soccer fields are receiving special attention to ensure they meet the standards of safety and quality expected by the community.

"Our collaboration with the Parks and Recreation Department is essential in ensuring that Ringgold Park is ready to welcome residents for soccer games and other recreational activities," stated Rio Grande City Public Works Department director Hector Barrera. "Our crewmen are working diligently to prepare the soccer fields, ensuring that they are in optimal condition for the upcoming season."

The teamwork between the Public Works and Parks and Recreation departments is a testament to the city's proactive approach to maintaining and improving its recreational infrastructure. By pooling their resources and expertise, these departments are able to maximize efficiency and deliver high-quality results that benefit the entire community.

"The soccer fields at Ringgold Park are a beloved recreational asset for our community, and we are committed to ensuring that they are well-maintained and accessible to all residents," said RGC Parks and Recreation Department director Frank Eguia. "Through our collaboration with the Public Works Department, we are able to leverage our strengths and resources to provide an exceptional experience for soccer players and spectators alike."



The preparations underway at Ringgold Park are part of a broader initiative to revitalize the park and enhance its appeal to residents of all ages. With new renovations in progress, including upgrades to basketball courts, pavilion areas, and more, Ringgold Park is poised to become a premier destination for outdoor recreation and community gatherings.

As the Public Works and Parks and Recreation crewmen work tirelessly to prepare the soccer fields, residents eagerly anticipate the opportunity to enjoy the improved amenities at Ringgold Park. The collaboration between these departments exemplifies the city's dedication to providing residents with well-maintained parks and recreational facilities that contribute to the overall health and vitality of the community.

Texas Municipal League Provides Safety Training for Rio Grande City Public Works Department Crew

The Texas Municipal League (TML) recently hosted a crucial meeting for the Rio Grande City Public Works Department, focusing on the importance of mowing safety and best practices for operating mowers. Johnny Vera of TML conducted a comprehensive train-

ing session for all crew members responsible for operating mowers, emphasizing the significance of safety protocols to protect the well-being of department personnel.

The meeting, organized by TML, served as a valuable opportunity for the Rio Grande City Public Works Department to enhance its safety procedures and ensure that crew members are equipped with the knowledge and skills necessary to operate mowers safely and effectively. Johnny Vera's expertise and guidance provided invaluable insights into the proper techniques and precautions to minimize the risk of accidents and injuries.

"We are grateful to Johnny Vera and the Texas Municipal League for their commitment to promoting safety and providing valuable training opportunities for our Public Works Department," stated Rio Grande City Public Works Department director Hector Barrera. "The safety of our crew members is paramount, and the insights shared during the meeting will help us reinforce our safety protocols and prioritize the well-being of our team."



Rio Grande City Public Works Department Crews continue cleanup efforts around the City.



Long-Serving Code Enforcement Agent, Mr. Benavidez, Retires

After a distinguished 12-year tenure as a code enforcement agent with the Rio Grande City Planning and Zoning Department, Mr. Rolando Benavidez has decided to embark on a well-deserved retirement. Throughout his dedicated service, Mr. Benavidez played an important role in upholding and enforcing zoning codes, ensuring the orderly and safe development of the city.

His attention to detail and commitment to maintaining community standards have earned him the respect and admiration of both colleagues and residents alike. Mr. Benavidez's contributions have significantly contributed to the enhancement of Rio Grande City's urban environment, leaving behind a legacy of diligence and professionalism. "As he enters this new chapter in life, the community expresses gratitude for his firm dedication to the principles of code enforcement and wishes him a fulfilling and enjoyable retirement," stated RGC P&Z Director Gilbert Millan.

On behalf of the City of Rio Grande City we would like to wish Mr. Rolando Benavidez a very happy retirement," added RGC Deputy City Manager Noe Castillo. "He will be greatly missed by everyone at the City of Rio Grande City. We would like to thank Mr. Benavidez for his time with us and we wish him the best of luck in all his future endeavors."

Rio Grande City's P&Z Director Recognized by State Environmental Health Association



The City of RGC Planning and Zoning Department attended the Texas Environmental Health Association (TEHA) 20th Annual Conference 2023 from December 6th to the 8th, at South Padre Island, Texas.

During this conference, participants not only collected the required continuing education hours (CEU's) for the respective licenses, but also learned new methods and legislative updates on Emergency Management, Food Establishments, Vector Control, Animal Control, Code Enforcement and Environmental Health. "We would also like to congratulate Gilbert Millan, City of RGC Planning and Code Enforcement Director, for receiving an award of recognition from TEHA for dedication and commitment to the cause," declared Rio Grande City Mayor Joel Villarreal.

The Texas Environmental Health Association is a community of environmental health professionals that work for the betterment of the health and welfare of people through the improvement of the environment. TEHA connects these professionals to the resources, education, peer networking and community they need to succeed.



Rio Grande City Planning & Zoning Crews continue cleanup efforts around the City.

COMMUNITY NEWS



Local Veteran Honored for Commitment to Alzheimer's Research

On Thursday, February 1, El Faro Health and Therapeutics played host to a heartfelt Citizen Scientist Award ceremony, honoring Mr. Martin Carrion for his exemplary dedication and advocacy in the realm of Alzheimer's research.

Mr. Carrion's contributions have not only been commendable but have also left an indelible impact. The ceremony served as a recognition of his unwavering commitment to citizen science and the pursuit of knowledge that could potentially transform the landscape of Alzheimer's treatment and care.

"Mr. Carrion's dedication is a testament to his dedication to his community, declared Rio Grande City Economic Development Corp. Executive Dir.

Dalinda Guillen, who attended the ceremony. "The Citizen Scientist Awards celebrate Alzheimer's and Parkinson's disease clinical trial participants. The only way to find treatments and cures for these diseases is through clinical trials, and the volunteers make this research possible."

The Global Alzheimer's Platform (GAP) is a patient-centric, non-profit organization dedicated to speeding the delivery of innovative therapies to

those living with Alzheimer's and Parkinson's by reducing the time and cost of Alzheimer's disease and Parkinson's disease clinical trials. For more information, visit globalalzplatform.org.

RGC Mayor, Int. Business Ambassador Discuss Vital Infrastructure Project at Expo

Rio Grande City Mayor Joel Villarreal and International Business Ambassador Ruben Islas were recently honored with invitations to participate in the prestigious 2024 Primer Expo Congreso de Comercio Exterior y Aduanas held in Nuevo Laredo, Tamaulipas.

This event provided a unique platform for leaders like Mayor Villarreal and Ambassador Islas to engage in discussions about crucial regional projects. A focal point of the meetings was the comprehensive deliberation on the Route 54/2/83 project, a significant infrastructure initiative set to traverse Starr County.

The project is poised to play a pivotal role in enhancing the economic landscape and fostering growth in Rio Grande City, aligning with the shared goals of both nations to strengthen cross-border partnerships and promote regional development. The participation of Mayor Villarreal and Ambassador Islas underscored the

commitment to collaborative efforts that transcend borders for the betterment of local communities and the broader region.

City of Rio Grande Staff Wear Red in Observance of American Heart Month

Several City of Rio Grande City Staff wore red in recognition of February being American Heart Month. The dedicated staff at the City of Rio Grande City is fervently encouraging everyone to prioritize their cardiovascular health by staying active and maintaining routine checkups with medical professionals.

Highlighting the fact that cardiovascular disease stands as the leading health threat for women, the city emphasizes the importance of awareness and proactive health measures. To promote heart health, the community is urged to incorporate simple yet impactful habits into their daily lives, such as taking a brisk 15-minute walk.

Additionally, making conscious and healthy food choices is advocated as a key component in fostering overall well-being. The collective effort of the City of Rio Grande City aims to empower individuals to take charge of their heart health, fostering a community-wide commitment to prevent-

ive care and a heart-healthy lifestyle.

Mayor Villarreal, Mr. Islas Attend Annual FERIA de Tamal in Miguel Alemán

Mayor Joel Villarreal and International Business Ambassador Ruben Islas attended the 3rd Annual FERIA de Tamal event in Ciudad Miguel Alemán, Tamaulipas hosted by Mayor Ramiro Cortez Barrera.

During this event, people all over the community are encouraged to participate by making different and unique tamales and salsas. This year, there were over 15 different varieties of tamales including sweet, savory, and colorful. "On behalf of the City of RGC we would like to thank the city of Miguel Alemán for welcoming myself and Mr. Islas to this wonderful event," stated Mayor Villarreal.

A tamale is a traditional Hispanic dish made of masa, which is a dough made from hominy, and filled with various ingredients such as meats, cheeses, fruits, chilies, or other flavors. The masa is typically wrapped in a corn husk and then steamed or boiled.

During the holiday season, especially around Christmas, tamales are a popular and festive dish in many Latin American communities. They are often prepared in large batches

and shared with family and friends.

RGC Officially Recognizes Royal Court

The City Commission of Rio Grande City officially welcomed the 2024 Miss Rio Grande City Victoria Salinas, and the 2024 Little Miss Rio Grande City Kendra Gomez, during the regular Commission Meeting on Tuesday, January 16th, at City Hall.

Both queens thanked the commission and are excited to represent our city with confidence and grace. "On behalf of the City Commission of Rio Grande City we would like to congratulate each of our 2024 queens," stated RGC Mayor Joel Villarreal.

The Miss Starr County and Miss Rio Grande City Dual Pageant was held at the Rio Grande City GISD Auditorium on Saturday, November 18.

According to a press release from the district, the objective of the pageant is to help empower young girls by providing a platform where they can build confidence, poise, leadership and social skills. It is also an opportunity to serve as role models in our community and portray a positive image for the youth today.