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BROWNSVILLE AND THE RIO GRANDE VALLEY

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AROUND THE VALLEY

Hinojosa pleads guilty to laundering

► BROWNSVILLE — A Mercedes man has pleaded guilty to laundering proceeds of an investment fraud scheme causing a loss to investors of more than \$3.5 million, the U.S. Attorney's Office announced Friday.

Carlos Jorge Hinojosa, 59, pleaded guilty Friday to one count of a 45-count indictment, U.S. Attorney Chuck Rosenberg, chief federal prosecutor for South Texas, said in a statement.

Hinojosa, brother of U.S. Rep. Ruben Hinojosa, D-Mercedes, faces up to 20 years in prison and a fine of up to \$16 million, according to the statement.

Sentencing has been set for Nov. 14. Trial on the remaining 44 counts, including conspiracy, securities fraud, wire fraud and mail fraud, will be postponed pending sentencing, Rosenberg said.

The indictment accused Hinojosa of collecting more than \$7 million from more than 300 investors between December 1997 and November 1998 through companies he used.

Hinojosa allegedly distributed pamphlets and other materials containing misrepresentations and lied at investment seminars he conducted in Weslaco.

He promised to invest the money in lucrative offshore debenture trading programs, according to prosecutors.

Hinojosa acknowledged in court that he used later investors' money to pay what appeared to be profits to earlier investors, Rosenberg said.

Palmhurst opens doors to police department

► PALMHURST — This small city's first police department opened its doors to the public Friday morning with much applause, congratulations and promises of cooperation from area law enforcement officials.

Hundreds turned out to the picturesque green City Hall building on north Shary Road to witness the police department's first bit of history. Four police officers and a municipal court judge took their oaths of office, two new police cars were unveiled and the new police station — for now, a blue mobile home located next to City Hall — was unlocked.

LOTTO

► TEXAS LOTTERY RESULTS

Winning numbers, Friday, August 20:
Mega Millions: 2-13-18-36-46
MB 36 Megaplier: 3
Cash Five: 9-22-29-31-37
Pick Three: 5-7-1(day)6-1-8(night)

Find past winning numbers at www.t.lottery.org

GETTING IT RIGHT

► CORRECTIONS/CLARIFICATIONS

It is the policy of *The Brownsville Herald* to correct errors in a timely manner. Corrections and clarifications will be published in this space. To inquire about corrections, readers may call an editor.

982-6610 | 982-6681
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or E-mail us at

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Eagle Academy of Brownsville finds new home

BY ANA MCKENZIE
 SPECIAL TO THE HERALD

Eagle Academy students in Brownsville will start the new school year Monday in a bigger, better building down the street from their original location.

The Eagle Academy, a charter school that offers an alternative to traditional education in Brownsville, moved to 955 Paredes Line Rd. in July. The building formerly housed the Stuart Title Company and offers more room for the growing academy.

"Excuse the mess," principal Norma Sorola said during a tour of the new building Tuesday. "We've still got so much unpacking to do."

The move from 142 Paredes Line Rd., where the school operated since it opened in 1998, was motivated by increased interest in its program.

Sixty students were enrolled in the 2004-05 school year, Sorola said Tuesday. This year, 130 have signed up, including 90 that signed a contract agreeing to attend every day of school, honor the dress code and rules of conduct.

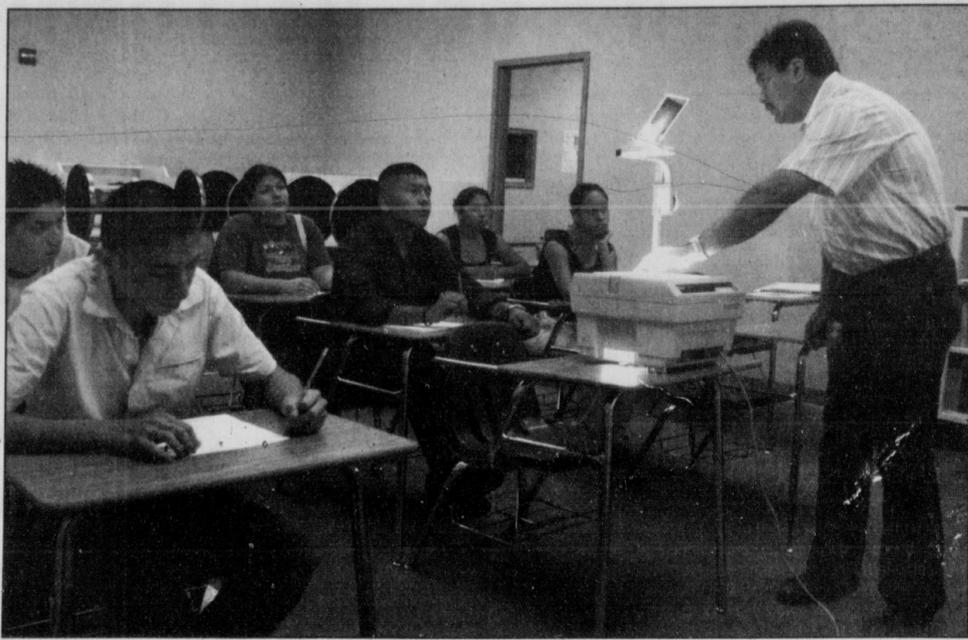
Students with signed contracts are expelled for violating its terms.

"We are attempting to make a stricter environment that models the environment of an ISD (Independent School District) public school," Sorola said.

The concept of charter schools is to encourage more group-activity and a more personal teacher/student relationship, according to the Texas Classroom Teachers Association Web site, tcta.org.

Eagle Academy looks to distinguish itself from traditional classroom settings by following that formula.

"Most of the kids that come here have become disillusioned by the public school system," Sorola said. "They do not



BRAD DOHERTY/THE BROWNSVILLE HERALD

Math instructor, Jose Navarro, uses an over head projector Academy. The school relocated to 955 Parades Line Rd. in to go over a lesson Friday with students at the Eagle July.

respond well to the sometimes impersonal environment which is why we offer more one-on-one attention. We have teachers design graduation plans for each individual student and they make sure they do all in their power to help the students achieve that goal."

Fifty-one students enrolled last year graduated from the program.

Funding for charter schools is decided by a formula based on average daily attendance. Schools with higher attendance rates receive more funding from the state.

In 1995 the Texas Legislature granted the State Board of Education authority to establish

20 open-enrollment charter schools and by 1997 had granted the authority to open 100 additional schools.

The Eagle Academy is open to anyone between the ages 12 and 20. Students can enroll in a charter school program and graduate with a state diploma often in less time than public school programs, Sorola said. The program offers an option for graduation to students with a large number of absences or behavioral problems.

Sorola hopes that the improved building will bring more advantages to the students.

"There are more classrooms which have given us the opportunity divide the grade levels and control the students behavior

more thoroughly and more teachers to interact with students on a more personal level," she said.

This year, Eagle Academy will offer five state-approved Title I teachers which promises federal funding for, among other things, textbooks, "which will we now have room to accommodate," Sorola said.

"The new location has provided us with room for libraries, storage spaces for textbooks, computer labs and teachers' offices, which were not available at the former building," she said.

"I'm just thrilled. This place was made for us."

For more information about the Eagle Academy, call (956) 550-0084.

La Joya residents protest hiring of middle school teacher Friday

Instructor arrested on intoxication manslaughter charges

BY DANIEL PERRY
 THE MONITOR

LA JOYA — Jessica Sanchez would have begun her senior year at Mission High School Monday.

But she will not be sitting in class when the first bell rings — and her family and friends want people to realize that.

More than 20 people gathered outside Cesar E. Chavez Middle School on Showers Road in La Joya Friday morning to protest seventh-grade social studies teacher Fidel Parra's

employment with the school district. Mission police arrested Parra in late May on intoxication manslaughter charges he ran into the vehicle Sanchez was riding in on Farm-to-Market Road 1016. Sanchez, 17 at the time, died at the scene. She was a junior at Eagle Academy, a charter school in Mission.

"We trust these teachers to educate kids every single day for 12 years, to prepare them for life and what will go on for the future," said the victim's mother, Lydia Sanchez. "We don't expect them to take life."

The protestors stood on the sidewalk in front of the school, and across the road, holding homemade posters. Some people wore black T-shirts with a picture of the victim's face.

"Whatever reason they had to be there, as long as they are not interfering with the school process with the students and staff and since they weren't on school property, there's no response from the district," said La Joya public information specialist Naida Roble.

A school employee answering the telephone Friday afternoon said Parra was not working but would be in his classroom next week. He has taught at Chavez for six years and is a graduate of Mission High School and the University of Texas — Pan American, according to information posted on the school's Web site. He was 33 at the time of the accident. He could not be reached for comment Friday.

Estranged couple arrested after knifepoint spat

BY SERGIO CHAPA
 THE BROWNSVILLE HERALD

Police arrested a man and his ex-wife Thursday after he reportedly tried to run her over and she tried to stab him with a knife.

According to police reports, Roberto Velasquez, 29, arrived at his ex-wife Juana Velasquez's house Thursday morning and picked up their two children despite a custody agreement that he only see them on Friday.

According to police reports, Roberto Velasquez tried to run over the woman as he left with the children. Records show that the man then came back to the house, sat on the couch and would not leave.

Juana Velasquez, 24, allegedly used a knife to puncture a tire on his 1997 Pontiac Grand Am.

Roberto Velasquez told police that she tried to stab him with the knife and scratched his stomach with it three times.

Police arrested the man and

charged him with aggravated assault with a motor vehicle, criminal trespass and assault.

They arrested his ex-wife and charged her with aggravated assault with a deadly weapon and criminal mischief. The two were out on bond at press time Friday.

Their children were left with a friend who lived near the family's home.

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Last day for immunizations at BCHC

THE BROWNSVILLE HERALD

The Brownsville Community Health Clinic is bracing itself for a last minute rush of children who need to be immunized before Monday's first day of class.

The BCHC will have a last minute immunization clinic from 8:30 a.m. to noon today, at 2137 East 22nd St.

Parents must accompany the children or students to the clinic and have their immunization card available.

State law requires the following immunizations by the start of school: diphtheria, pertussis, tetanus, polio, measles, mumps, rubella, haemophilus influenza Type B, varicella, hepatitis A and B, and invasive pneumococcal.

Immunization requirements vary per age and health officials urge parents to contact their child's physician, nurse or the district for specific information.

More information

What: Immunization clinic
Where: 2137 East 22nd St.
When: 8:30 a.m. to noon today

The Brownsville Herald

HOW TO REACH US

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Delivery Concerns: 982-6662, 982-6664.

6:30-10:30 a.m. Saturday & Sunday

6:30 a.m.-3:30 p.m. Monday-Friday

Home Delivery Rates

By Carrier: \$8.25 per month

Single Copy Rates

50 cents Monday-Saturday; \$1.25 Sunday

Mail subscriptions available

► The Brownsville Herald (UPS 067-960) is published Sunday through Saturday mornings.

Second class postage paid at Brownsville, Texas

78520

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Noticias en Español

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DON PEDRO SAYS

"Judge Dan Robles says he acquitted Doug Wright in March on charges he pleaded no contest to because he thought Wright didn't know any better," Don Pedro said as he entered the newsroom.

"That's what he said," the city editor said. "So Wright's the county attorney and he doesn't know the law," The Don noted. "You know the worst part of all this?"

"No," was the reply.

"That none of this surprises anybody anymore," Don Pedro said. And out he went.