

RIO GRANDE VALLEY

Court to discuss status of legal counsel today

BY EMMA PEREZ-TREVIÑO
THE BROWNSVILLE HERALD

The employment status of legal counsel Doug Wright tops the Cameron County Commissioners Court agenda today. The court will meet in an executive session to discuss Wright's evaluation, reassignment, duties, discipline or dismissal following his recent arrest on South Padre Island.

Possible action could follow, according to the county agenda.

The commissioners will be in a special workshop at 8:15 a.m. to discuss the budget and will then meet at 9:30 a.m. for the regular commission meeting on the fourth floor of the Cameron County Courthouse on Harrison Street.

Wright, 56, is charged with public intoxication and disorderly conduct after Island police said he was exposing himself on a public beach on Aug. 13. A county judge issued an arrest warrant

More information

WHAT: Cameron County Commissioners Court workshop and regular meeting.
WHEN: Today at 8:15 a.m. and 9:30 a.m. respectively.
WHERE: Cameron County Courthouse, fourth floor, Harrison Street.

Friday on a motion to revoke his probation from a previous offense.

He is expected to turn himself in to police authorities today, according to Cameron County District Attorney Armando Villalobos.

Wright is currently serving a six-month probation from a November arrest after he drove into a traffic sign and a fence at South Padre Island. He was also charged and acquitted of driving while intoxicated and unlawfully carrying a weapon, according to court records.

In other agenda items:

> The commissioners will discuss the proposed compensation for elected officials.

> District Judge Menton Murray will appear before the court, asking for an increase to the pay of defense attorneys who represent defendants that cannot afford to pay legal fees.

> Also for discussion will be the proposed expansion of the district attorney's office on the first floor of the judicial building.

> The court additionally will discuss allowing the division of emergency response and preparedness to purchase law enforcement and fire marshal equipment from funds received from the Emergency Services District.

> And, commissioners could take action to solicit proposals for the management of the county's indigent healthcare program and infirmary services at the jails.

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Judges nominate two for magistrate positions

BY EMMA PEREZ-TREVIÑO
THE BROWNSVILLE HERALD

District and county judges have nominated Luis V. Saenz and Patricia Hernandez Edelstein to be the county's newest magistrates.

Commissioners Court today is will discuss and approve the annual salaries of Saenz and Edelstein for a \$40,000 each. If approved, both will start their magistrate duties Sept. 1.

The positions are also known as hearing officers, who have the same authority as a justice of the peace.

At the request of Commissioners Court, the Legislature approved the positions earlier this year.

Prior to legislative approval, Tony Torres, long-time former justice of the peace, held the post. He resigned when the Legislature required that hearing officers be attorneys.

Saenz and Edelstein, both lawyers, will be able to continue practicing private law. Saenz was the county's district

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attorney in the early and mid-1990s.

Applicants who were also considered for the posts include John L. Shergold, Carlos H. Cisneros, Peter C. Gilman, Jacqueline Reynolds, Dolores G. Zarate, Joe Krippel and Adela Kowalski-Garza, according to court records.

Saenz was not among the personnel department's list but Saenz, as well as other applicants, went directly to the district judges with their applications, said Manuel Villarreal, the county's personnel director.

Neither presiding District

Judge Ben Euresti nor Saenz was available for comment.

"They (judges) reviewed the applications that were submitted and Judge (Gilberto) Hinojosa said that he is not in the position to second-guess their choice," said Remi Garza, the county's spokesman.

He noted the Commissioners Court's role is to approve the payments to both magistrates.

Saenz's history with the county includes a 1997 incident when Commissioners Court approved a \$25,000 settlement in a sexual harassment lawsuit that Saenz' former secretary Mary Lou Munivez filed against him, Herald archives show.

This capped more than a year of controversy and several grand jury investigations involving Saenz's office leading to indictments against two employees and others for allegedly received bribes in exchange for fixing traffic tickets.

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United Way helping with new Medicare enrollment

Prescription benefit registration is Nov. 15

BY LAURA B. MARTINEZ
THE BROWNSVILLE HERALD

The United Way of Southern Cameron County will host a community forum Thursday in Harlingen to help people enroll in the national Medicare prescription drug plan. The deadline to register is Nov. 15.

The forum begins at 11:30 a.m. at the Harlingen

Chamber of Commerce, 311 E. Tyler Ave.

The guest speaker will be James Kendall, senior director for Pfizer, the pharmaceutical company co-sponsoring the event. Lunch will be provided. Participants are encouraged to register early, said Traci Wickett, president of United Way of Southern Cameron County. Walk ins are also accepted.

The drug prescription benefits take effect Jan. 1, and officials want to ensure those who qualify be familiar with the new program.

The Medicare Prescription Drug, Improvement and Modernization Act of 2003 allows insurance companies and other corporations to work with Medicare to offer prescription drug plans to senior citizens.

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Students injured in Donna school bus accident

BY TRAVIS M. WHITEHEAD
THE MONITOR

DONNA — One child's shoulder was dislocated and several other students were placed in neck braces after a school bus accident Monday morning.

The accident occurred at about 7 a.m. as the Donna school district bus carrying 16 students was traveling south on FM 493, said Trooper Donnie Pacheco, Texas Department of Public Safety. Pacheco said Carlos Hernandez, 22, was driving a 2001 Dodge Pickup east on Mile 11 North Road and collided with the bus in which both middle school and high school students were riding.

The bus veered into a field, plowed through two wire property fences, crossed a driveway and finally came to

a stop in a stand of mesquite. "He said he didn't see the stop sign," Pacheco said. "There's a little bit of that shrubbery. When you're going down a caliche road, an unimproved road, and you come to a paved road, you are still required to yield right of way."

Pacheco said officers had not yet determined how fast Hernandez was traveling, but he was definitely "moving along. He didn't even apply his brakes."

Pacheco said all 16 students were taken to Knapp Medical Center in Weslaco.

Five students were placed on backboards by medical personnel; one complained of shoulder pain, the other four of back pain. The bus driver, Guadalupe Alvarado, was also put on a backboard after complaining of neck and back

pain and taken to the hospital. Two passengers from the pickup were also taken to KMC, along with Hernandez. There were four people in the truck. Juan Rivera, house supervisor for KMC, said all the victims in the accident had been treated and released by Monday evening.

Donna schools Superintendent Joe D. Gonzalez commended bus driver Guadalupe Alvarado for the way he handled the situation.

"He never lost control," Gonzalez said. "He maintained control until he brought it to a stop in the middle of the field. He did a tremendous job."

It was the first day of school in the district.

Gonzales said the parents of all the children were notified "immediately."

Man faces intoxication assault charges

BY SERGIO CHAPA
THE BROWNSVILLE HERALD

Police arrested a 20-year-old man early Saturday morning on intoxication assault charges after he allegedly chased a couple in his truck and caused a single-vehicle accident that sent his two passengers to the hospital.

According to a Brownsville police report, Jeremias Hector Faulkenberry used his gray 2005 Chevrolet Silverado truck to chase a man and his girlfriend in their car as they drove north on Old Port Isabel Road at 2:45 a.m. Saturday.

Although no motive for

the chase was given, Faulkenberry allegedly threw a beer can at the man's car hitting his girlfriend in the chest and passed the couple somewhere between Price and Coffeeport roads.

Witnesses told police that Faulkenberry was driving in the wrong lane, sticking his head out the window and looking back at the couple's car the when he lost control of his truck hitting a tree.

Passengers Alfredo Torres, 22, and Robert Perez, 19, reportedly received injuries that required hospitalization.

Witnesses told police that Faulkenberry took a

drink of beer after the accident, threw the rest away and called his mother before fleeing the scene.

An officer spotted Faulkenberry getting into the bed of his mother's truck on Meadow Glen Drive.

Faulkenberry fought with the officer and was charged with resisting arrest, evading arrest and intoxication assault.

According to a police report, Faulkenberry's mother Augustina was charged with hindering the apprehension of her son.

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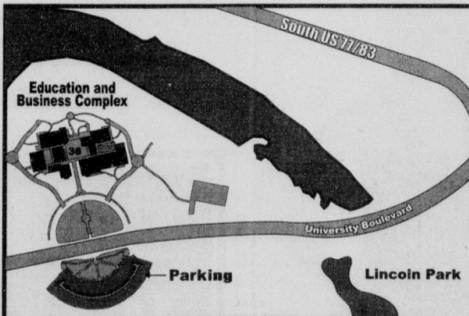
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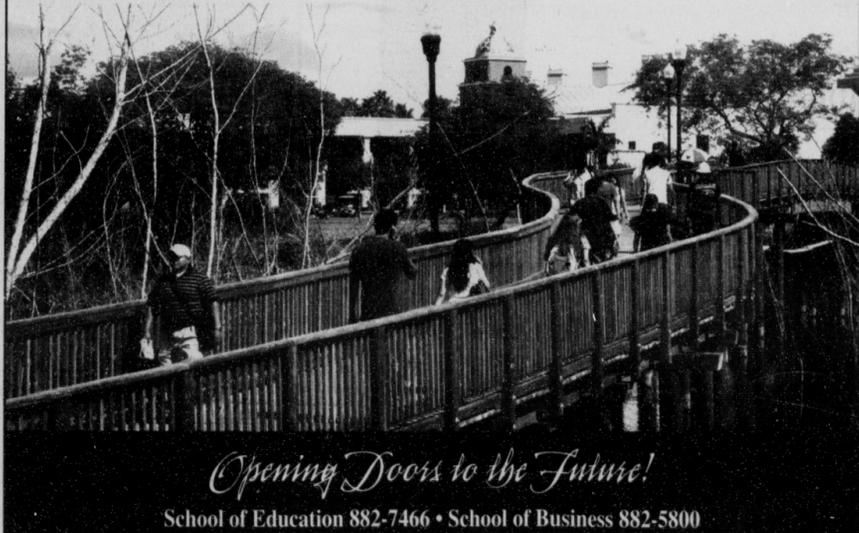
If your course schedule lists a classroom in "EDBC", then it will be located in the new Education and Business Complex.

When driving to the building, take U.S. 77/83 south to the University Boulevard exit. Turn right onto University Boulevard.

The building will be on your right, and parking is on the left, directly across the street from the building. There is also a pedestrian bridge behind the Student Union, linking the new building to the rest of the campus.



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