

NEWSBRIEFS

Business symposium

The El Paso Community College (EPCC) Contract Opportunities Center will hold its 14th Annual Procurement and Contracting Symposium next week on Tuesday, May 8 from 8:00 a.m. to 4:00 p.m. The symposium provides the opportunity for business owners to meet one-on-one with federal, state and local government agencies and prime contractors. The symposium will be held at the Centennial Banquet & Conference Center, 11199 Sergeant E. Churchill, Fort Bliss, TX. There will also be presentations, displays, interviews with participants, vendors and speakers during the symposium. EPCC is committed to increasing business and community partnerships to meet regional educational, economic and workforce demands. Registration information at www.elpasococ-events.org.

— Jim Heiney

Hispanic business

With National Small Business Week here and the U.S. census projecting Hispanics to be over 25% of the population by 2050, the personal-finance website WalletHub has released its report on 2018's Best Cities for Hispanic Entrepreneurs. To help Hispanic entrepreneurs find the most fertile ground for their enterprises, WalletHub compared more than 180 U.S. cities across 23 key metrics. The data set ranges from Hispanic entrepreneurship rate to Hispanic income growth to share of Hispanic-owned businesses. El Paso ranked 19 in the study. Others stats:

- Hialeah, FL has the highest share of Hispanic residents, 96.26 percent, which is 72.9 times higher than in Jackson, MS, the city with the lowest at 1.32 percent.
- Fargo, ND, has one of the lowest Hispanic unemployment rate, 0.90 percent, which is 18.8 times lower than in Rochester, NY, the city with the highest at 16.90 percent.
- Charleston, WV, has the highest entrepreneurship rate among the Hispanic population, 3.15 percent, which is 28.6 times higher than in Toledo, OH, the city with the lowest at 0.11 percent.

Visit <https://wallethub.com/edu/best-and-worst-cities-for-hispanic-entrepreneurs/6491/> to see the full report.

— Diana Popa

You may outdistance, outmaneuver, and out brag the other driver, but the question is, will you outlive him?

— Quips & Quotes

San Eli boys reclaim soccer title



— Photo courtesy San Elizario ISD

GREAT FOOTWORK – The San Elizario High School boys soccer team is state champion for a second time in three years. The team played against Palestine High School in the UIL 4A Boys State Soccer Championship and won with a final score of 1-0. Sophomore Martin Rodriguez scored the only goal in the entire game giving the Eagles the victory. Rodriguez was named the MVP of the state tournament for his achievements. The team first became 4A state champions back in 2015.

— Hector Gonzalez

Students get second chance at diploma

New pathway available for students unable to pass TAKS from 2003-2013

By Alfredo Vasquez
Special to the Courier

TEXAS – Texas State Senator José Rodríguez, who represents District 29 that includes El Paso County, is trying to get the word out to young adults who did not pass the Texas Assessment of Knowledge and Skills (TAKS) standardized tests used in high schools as part of the state's graduation requirements from 2003 to 2013 that they will now have a new opportunity to obtain that long-sought after high school diploma.

Rodríguez announced recently that the Texas Education Agency (TEA) has completed its guidance for district implementation, and starting this summer, eligible students will be able to take this new path to a diploma.

According to numbers compiled by local education officials, there were about 19,000 students in El Paso County alone who were unable to successfully complete the TAKS tests from 2003-2013.

"Students might have mastered the classroom material but experienced test anxiety, were sick that day, or had a poor night's rest; students might have performed poorly for reasons that have nothing to do with content knowledge or academic ability," Rodríguez noted.

For whatever justifiable reason, these individuals will get a second chance to earn a diploma, but this new opportunity is only in place until 2019; and there is no requirement that schools locate eligible students before



José Rodríguez

it expires.

Therefore, Rodríguez stated that his office will work with State Board of Education's (SBOE) El Paso area representative Georgina Perez, the Region 18 and 19 Service Centers, and all school district administrators in Senate District 29 to make sure that every eligible young adult knows about this opportunity.

"After years of frustration with the state's focus on high-stakes standardized testing that culminated in 15 exams required to get a high school diploma

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SISD earns music award

2018 NAMM award honors SISD's commitment to music education

By Christy Flores-Jones
Special to the Courier

EL PASO COUNTY – The Socorro Independent School District (SISD) has won its second consecutive Best Communities for Music Education Award by the National Association of Music Merchants (NAMM). The prestigious honor recognizes SISD's superb commitment to comprehensive music education for all students.

SISD is the only NAMM honoree in the Region 19 area and one of 583 recipients in the nation to be recognized. SISD is among only four percent of school districts in the nation to earn the distinction.

"I'm very excited about this second year honor for our teachers," said Janet Lynch, instrumental music specialist in SISD. "Being a music teacher is not an easy job. Our teachers devote a lot of extra time and build relationships with our students. This is a well deserved honor, they work very hard for our students."

SISD qualified for the music education award based on funding, graduation requirements, music class participation, instruction time, facilities, support for the music program, and community music-making programs.

Students in community music programs achieve life-long academic success, including higher high school graduation rates and college attendance, according

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