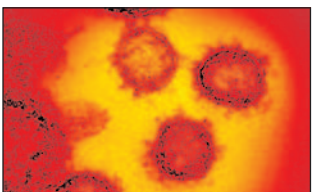


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LOCAL



RECYCLE  
REUSE

Hundreds of tires were taken to several spots across the Rio Grande Valley as part of the "Road to Recycling-Tire Disposal" event on Saturday morning that collected the tires delivered by the community to later take them to the landfill where they will be recycled.

➤ PAGE A3

POPULAR  
ON THE WEB


ARTISTIC

The Brownsville Museum of Fine Art has reopened its doors to the public, after more than two months of being shut down due to the COVID-19 pandemic

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Good Morning!  
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# Code Switch

## Professors work to document blend of languages



PHOTOS BY MIGUEL ROBERTS/THE BROWNSVILLE HERALD


**Above:** Signage in Spanish and English is seen at a store in downtown Brownsville. Bilingual signs are a common sight at the stores. **Below:** People shop at a store in downtown Brownsville.

BY ERIN SHERIDAN  
STAFF WRITER

**L**ast week the University of Texas Rio Grande Valley announced that two linguists on staff at the school's Edinburg campus won a federal grant to expand their work documenting the unique blend of languages spoken across the Rio Grande Valley.

Code switching, the professors explained, is a sophisticated process demonstrating high linguistic ability in bilingual individuals. Their research highlights the Valley's relationship to language, the way bilingualism is viewed locally, and seeks to engage the community in that process.

PLEASE SEE **CODE, A4**



# Vela introduces Biden at Texas Dem convention


BY STEVE CLARK  
STAFF WRITER

U.S. Rep. Filemon Vela was chosen to introduce former Vice President Joe Biden, the presumptive Democratic nominee in this year's presidential election, for Biden's headlining speech to the Texas Democratic Convention on Saturday.

The June 1-6 convention took place entirely online in light of the COVID-19 pandemic. Noting that the nation is


experiencing difficult times in the form of "darkness, hate and division," Vela during his two-minute introduction praised Biden as someone who has spent his career fighting for those who have not received a fair shot, who endure discrimination or are treated as if they're invisible, who struggle financially and "can't quite tell their kids that everything's going to be OK."

PLEASE SEE **BIDEN, A4**



From left, in a photograph taken in Nevada in February, former Vice President Joe Biden thanks U.S. Rep. Tony Cardenas (D-Calif.) and U.S. Rep. Filemon Vela for their help in Biden's presidential campaign.

COURTESY PHOTO

Abby.....	B3	Comics.....	D7	Nation.....	A5	Sports.....	B1	High 98°
Amusements.....	B3	Editorial.....	C6	Obituaries.....	C2	Weather.....	B4	Low 77°
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BIDEN

FROM PAGE A1

“Joe will never stop fighting for those families no matter the color of their skin, their zip code, income, what God they pray to or who they love, and now he has vowed to make this an era of action to reverse systemic racism and oppression in our country,” Vela said.

He predicted that Biden would unite Texas and the rest of the country before introducing him as “the next president of the United States.”

Vela said earlier in the

week that he expected Biden to stick to themes he’s been talking about in recent speeches, and that he thinks he was tapped for the honor of introducing the candidate because of his long involvement with his campaign.

“I think it was a combination of the campaign and the state party,” Vela said. “I was one of the first members to endorse him, so I’ve been involved with the campaign from the very beginning. I was with him in Iowa. I was with him in Nevada (where Biden lost the Democratic caucus to Bernie Sanders). ... I’ve just been very active in the campaign.”

Texas cities lift curfews instituted after violent protests

THE ASSOCIATED PRESS

DALLAS — Officials in Dallas and San Antonio on Saturday lifted nighttime curfews that had been put in place after several days of demonstrations that saw multiple eruptions of violence and vandalism.

In Dallas, the curfew was lifted after consultation with police Chief U. Renee Hall and the City Council, said City Manager T.C. Broadnax.

“We’ve seen many moving and peaceful protests over the last few days, some of which I joined,” Broadnax said in a statement. “We heard feedback from residents ready to open and conduct business in central Dallas

and we agree it’s time. The city of Dallas and the Dallas Police Department continue to respect and protect the rights of peaceful demonstrators.”

Broadnax said Dallas residents were safer staying at home due to the ongoing coronavirus pandemic.

The curfew had been announced May 31 by Hall after violent protests took place in downtown Dallas and other areas over the death of George Floyd and the treatment of black people by police.

In San Antonio, Mayor Ron Nirenberg rescinded the curfew in the downtown business district, which had been put in place on Wednesday.

Top U.S. military officer reaches out to Capitol Hill leaders

BY LISA MASCARO  
THE ASSOCIATED PRESS

WASHINGTON — The nation’s top military officer, Gen. Mark Milley, spoke privately with congressional leaders and many other lawmakers as Pentagon officials came under fire for the military’s role in containing protests following the police killing of George Floyd.

House Speaker Nancy Pelosi, D-Calif., called Milley, chairman of the Joint Chiefs of Staff, to express her concerns on Tuesday, according to two people who were not authorized to publicly discuss the private conversations and were granted anonymity. That was the day after authorities cleared protesters near the White House so President Donald Trump

could hold a photo opportunity at a nearby church. Milley and Defense Secretary Mark Esper were sharply criticized for accompanying Trump and thereby giving the impression of endorsing a politicization of the military.

Milley also reached out Tuesday to Senate Democratic leader Chuck Schumer of New York, said another person granted anonymity to discuss the situation. A third official said Milley had spoke with perhaps 20 or more members of Congress in the days following Monday’s photo op and Trump’s implicit threat to invoke the Insurrection Act to permit him to use federal troops in a law enforcement role in the nation’s capital and in other cities.

CODE

FROM PAGE A1

“It has been 50 plus years that linguists have documented how code switching is a really sophisticated process. It’s patterned; there are very specific ways that people will or won’t switch between languages, and that gives us insight into language and how our brains work with language,” said Dr. Katherine Christoffersen, one of the two grantees.

Christoffersen is the project director and principal investigator on the grant, together with Dr. Ryan Bessett and Dr. Ana Carvalho (based at the University of Arizona). Carvalho’s work creating a corpus documenting the language of Southern Arizona inspired Christoffersen and Bessett to initiate a similar project in the Valley upon relocating to teach at UTRGV.

The \$60,000 Humanities Collections and References Resource grant for the project, Bilingual Voices in the U.S./Mexico Borderlands, funded through the National Endowment for the Humanities (neh.gov) will be used to expand two online collections of community interviews called Corpus Bilingüe del Valle (CoBiVa) and Corpus de Español del Sur de Arizona (CESA). It is funded through the National Endowment for the Humanities.

Funding will be used to initiate student participation in the research and will test methods of transcription. Researchers hope that it will become a valuable resource for the community to study the blend of language spoken across our communities. Ultimately, they want the corpus to be used in the classroom to include the local dialect in the teaching of subjects like Spanish grammar.

Through this process, students learn that language is constantly devel-



MIGUEL ROBERTS/THE BROWNSVILLE HERALD

A view of a downtown Brownsville jewelry store sign using both English and Spanish languages.

oping and that stigmas attached to bilingual speakers in border communities have nothing to do with their linguistic ability. “It’s showing the students that their way of speaking is a legitimate way of speaking and that it has value in higher education,” said Bessett. “If they see their own Spanish being used as a model in class when we talk about grammar — that really brings prestige to that local dialect.”

A collection of research and interviews like a corpus can be an integral part of recording a community’s history and culture so that those means of expression can be referenced and understood across future generations. Christoffersen specified that every person speaks numerous dialects and has multiple ways of

speaking with others.

“We’re creating this collection of sociolinguistic interviews from the Valley so we can learn more about Mexican-American English as well as local practices of speaking Spanish,” she said.

“I always tell my students that we need to stop thinking of bilinguals as two monolinguals. Being bilingual is such a different and unique experience. Bilinguals have really enhanced abilities as far as metalinguistic skills and an understanding about languages and the way they work. If you’re speaking to someone who’s bilingual, why wouldn’t you use two languages?”

Researchers look at things like age, attitude towards language, and where code switching is used in sentence structure. In the Valley, Bessett

has encountered students who feel they don’t speak Spanish despite growing up with a solid foundation in the language.

He recalled meeting with a student after class who felt like she couldn’t keep up with bilingual conversation between Bessett and students, as he teaches in a mixture of the languages. They held an entire conversation in Spanish. “She said, ‘I don’t speak Spanish, I speak pocho’. It’s this internalization that whatever they speak — they know it might not be English, but they don’t feel like it’s Spanish, which it actually is.”

The integration of English words into the Spanish spoken in border communities — referred to as borrowings — is common in entirely different contexts, and even in monolingual communities, like in Spain. “In Spain, they don’t say ‘toci-no’, they say ‘bacon,’” Bessett explained.

“It shows us that the reason people have negative attitudes towards borrowings doesn’t have anything to do with the linguistic part — it has to do with who these people are. In the Valley, people come from the bilingual setting, they come from a place where they didn’t take classes in Spanish. Why is it that a monolingual speaker can borrow words and that’s seen as sophisticated and worldly yet we have bilingual speakers here borrowing words and they’re being told they don’t know Spanish?”

The researchers hope to engage the community through events and presentations featuring the developing corpora in the future. The collected interviews are conversational and personal in order to tease out natural, interesting language patterns.

The Valley’s corpus can be accessed here: <https://www.utrgv.edu/cobiva/>.

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TRAILS

FROM PAGE A1

The feasibility study will analyze potential routes for 21.5 miles of a multi-use trail, evaluate improvements to existing trail sections and identify ways to fund completion of the trail’s design and construction. The estimated \$500,000 cost of the study, which includes preliminary engineering, is being covered by the Texas

Federal Lands Access Program with a match from the Valley Baptist Legacy Foundation. The projected cost of developing the Bahia Grande segment is between \$11.4 million and \$15.5 million.

Dr. Rose M.Z. Gowen, city commissioner and a driving force behind Caracara Trails, formerly the Active Transportation and Tourism Plan, said she’s excited to see what’s possible with a Bahia Grande Trail, which she said would “benefit our city and our region in some many ways.”

“Not only will it connect Brownsville to our neighbors in the Lower Rio Grande Valley, but also promote healthier lifestyles for our residents, provide a safe space for recreation, support job creation, attract more tourist spending to the area and generate a sense of community pride,” Gowen said.

The Caracara Trails

plan envisions 428 miles of trails, including 230 miles of multiuse trails, 120 miles of bicycle routes and 78 miles of paddling trails. The Bahia Grande piece is one of the six catalyst projects in phase one. Development of the trail network is being done through partnerships with VBLF, the national Rails-to-Trails Conservancy, UTHealth, Brownsville, Harlingen, Combes, Laguna Vista, Los Fresnos, Los Indios, Port Isabel, Rancho Viejo, Rio Hondo, San Benito, South Padre Island and various nonprofits and public agencies.

Eva Garcia, RTC project manager for Caracara Trails, described the plans as a “bold vision for the future of our region” that can help create “healthy, thriving communities.” Caracara Trails is one of six RTC TrailNation projects, a trail-network building program meant to show-

case the impact of “connect(ing) people and places by trail across geographies,” according to RTC.

Boyd Blihovde, LANWR manager, who brainstormed the Bahia Grande trail idea along with former Palo Alto Superintendent Mark Spier, said linking the battlefield park with the Bahia Grande seemed like a great idea for multiple reasons. One is the benefit to the public, which would be able to see beautifully preserved wildlife habitat, Blihovde said. Another is that building a trail may afford an opportunity to protect an addition stretch of land between Bahia Grande and Palo Alto that is still in private hands, and permission would have to be secured in order to build a trail across it, he said.

“It’s probably only about a quarter-mile stretch where we need that done, but it could still be a barrier,” Blihovde said. “If the trail is built, maybe one day the public would be interested in protecting that corridor.”

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