



Column: I want to see more and less of this against Tulsa

SPORTS, 1B



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Kennedy grilled over CDC chaos



Health and Human Services Secretary Robert F. Kennedy Jr. on Sept. 4 criticized former officials at the Centers for Disease Control and Prevention for the agency’s policies during the COVID-19 pandemic, calling them “nonsensical.” JONATHAN ERNST/REUTERS

Parties sharply split on public health approach

Adrianna Rodriguez, Swapna Venugopal Ramaswamy, Jay Stahl and Zac Anderson
USA TODAY

Senators alarmed by chaos at the Centers for Disease Control and Prevention grilled Health and Human Services Secretary Robert F. Kennedy Jr. over what some are calling his politicization of life-saving vaccines and his past promises not to interfere in scientific decisions.

Kennedy, a longtime vaccine skeptic who has promoted misinformation about public health, recently ousted his hand-picked CDC director, Dr. Susan Monarez, with President Donald Trump’s backing in a blowup that saw several top officials quit the agency.

The health secretary said firing the CDC director was “absolutely necessary.”

“These changes were absolutely necessary adjustments to restore the agency to its role as the world’s gold standard public health agency with a central mission of protecting Americans from infectious diseases,” he told senators at the Sept. 4 hearing before the Senate Finance Committee.

Kennedy criticized former CDC officials for the agency’s policies during the COVID-19 pandemic, calling them “nonsensical” and claiming they “destroyed



The Food and Drug Administration approved updated COVID-19 vaccines by Moderna, Pfizer and Novavax in late August, but with new restrictions on who can receive them. JOE RAEDLE/GETTY IMAGES FILE

small businesses” and “violated civil liberties.”

“They did not do their job,” he said.

Kennedy accuses Monarez of lying

Monarez said Kennedy asked her to “pre-approve the recommendations of a vaccine advisory panel newly filled with people who have publicly expressed antivaccine rhetoric” in an opinion article published in the Wall Street Journal on Sept. 4.

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3 U.S. states form vaccine alliance

Terry Collins
USA TODAY

Responding to the federal government’s shifting guidance on vaccines and turmoil at the Centers for Disease Control and Prevention, health officials in California, Oregon and Washington state have formed a new West Coast Health Alliance.

The alliance’s goal is to “ensure residents remain protected by science, not politics,” according to a joint announcement Sept. 3 from California Gov. Gavin Newsom, Oregon Gov. Tina Kotek and Washington Gov. Bob Ferguson.

The three Democratic governors said the alliance will provide recommendations to residents on immunizations and ensure the public gets credible information on vaccine safety and efficacy. The governors called the partnership a unified response to what they called the Trump administration’s “destruction” of the CDC, the federal agency responsible for vaccine guidance.

“President Trump’s mass firing of CDC doctors and scientists – and his blatant politicization of the agency – is

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Ice rink coming to Doña Ana County

Jason Groves
Las Cruces Sun-News
USA TODAY NETWORK – NEW MEXICO

Doña Ana County will have an ice rink - at least temporarily.

The Board of County Commissioners approved a contract with Georgia based Ice Days LLC to provide for the rental, set up, training and day-to-day operations of a portable ice rink inside the livestock barn at the Southern New Mexico State Fairgrounds during the holiday season. The contract is for \$290,000 plus gross receipts tax revenue from the county manager’s general fund.

“There are not a lot of amenities and certainly not things to do around the holidays so this was something that came up very early on and I hope you all are still supportive since we talked about it at the State of the County address,” County Manager Scott Andrews said.

The rink is expected to be open from late November through mid-February with proposed events such as a charity toy drive, skating with Santa Claus events and Friday night events with a DJ and food trucks.

The county will collect revenue generated from skate rentals and potentially from local businesses wishing to advertise at the venue to offset opera-

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COMMISSION Seeks input for proposed data center

Jason Groves
Las Cruces Sun-News
USA TODAY NETWORK – NEW MEXICO

Doña Ana County has scheduled a series of community meetings throughout the county regarding a proposed “Digital Infrastructure Campus” in Santa Teresa.

Austin, Texas-based firm Border-Plex Digital Assets promised jobs and \$5 billion in construction spending over the next 10 years, but opponents have raised environmental concerns centered on the potential impact of the county’s water supply.

The project would be funded through the issuance of \$165 billion in Industrial Revenue Bonds (IRB). The money would finance the construction and installation of a “hyperscale, artificial (AI) data center campus,” called Project Jupiter by the county. At its Aug. 26 meeting, Doña Ana County Commissioners voted 5 to one to publish a notice of intent to issue the

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