

SILVER CITY DAILY PRESS

AND INDEPENDENT

Gila Regional to expand services in Lordsburg

By JUNO OGLE
Daily Press Staff

Gila Regional Medical Center plans to expand services at its outreach clinic in Lordsburg, CEO Robert Whitaker told the Grant County-owned hospital's board of trustees at their meeting Wednesday.

The clinic, which operates in space leased from Hidalgo Medical Services, has offered visits with a cardiologist two or three times a month since 2023. Soon, Gila Regional plans to add orthopedics, general surgery consultation, urology and podiatry, Whitaker said.

"This is a great opportunity for us to help in our mission of reaching people that can't necessarily always make it into Silver [City] that need care," he said.

Whitaker said patients from Lordsburg have sometimes had to cancel appointments in Silver City because of lack of transportation.

"If we can be a good partner with that community and have some surgical specialists rotating through down there, I think it's a win-win situation," he said.

The different specialties will be at the clinic on different days, so space won't be an issue, Whitaker said.

HMS has an X-ray unit at the clinic and employs a technician to operate it, he said, but the hospital might need to transport some other diagnostic equipment to Lordsburg. He

plans to purchase a van for that.

"We'll build it out so that it'll be easy to transport things that we need to do," he said.

Whitaker didn't give a start date for the expanded services, but said the hospital wants to do so soon.

"We're kind of running on the principle of don't wait for the perfect plan to start, because you'll never start," he said. "Let's get going, and then we'll course-correct and add to and improve along the way."

Trustees Secretary/Treasurer Patricia McIntire said the clinic expansion will benefit not just Lordsburg but all of Hidalgo County, saying that when she was a nurse practitioner, patients would have to make the two-hour drive to

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SWEET VOLUNTEERS

*Chocolate Fantasia
chocolatiers crave
annual challenge*

By MARCELA JOHNSON
Daily Press Staff

This year's Chocolate Fantasia will feature chocolate desserts created by a whole range of volunteer chocolatiers — including Ashley Cooper, owner of Breadbox Bakery, and Laura Aubry, owner of June June's.

Cooper and Aubry have both lived in Silver City for more than 10 years, and got involved with the festival after being invited by an event organizer.

Cooper said she has made desserts for the chocolate walk for the past five years, and has been baking for the community for 10. Her Breadbox Bakery on Texas Street between Yankie Street and Broadway is going on its second year in business.

Aubry started participating in the chocolate walk out



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(Press Staff Photo by Marcela Johnson)

Breadbox Bakery owner and chocolatier Ashley Cooper hand dips chocolate eclairs behind the counter of Breadbox Bakery. This is Cooper's fifth year participating in Chocolate Fantasia, which benefits the youth programs of the Mimbres Region Arts Council.

NM House Finance Chair: Rural needs 'integrated' in state budget

By MIKAELA JOHNSON
Daily Press
Correspondent

SANTA FE — Members of the New Mexico House Appropriations and Finance Committee held a news conference Wednesday morning to discuss the state's \$11.1 bil-

lion budget, which has already passed the House. Rural needs were said to be among the top priorities for bill-makers.

Throughout the past year, the committee traveled across the state to gauge community needs and better understand how to allocate funds.

"At each stop, it's been about listening to New Mexicans to understand the challenges they face and the opportunities we have together," said Rep. Nathan Small, a Las Cruces Democrat.

Small, the chairman of the committee, led the conference

and outlined the intended impacts of House Bill 2. With a 2.7 percent increase in recurring funds from last year, bill-makers categorized the budget as a responsible, realistic increase that will manage the state well

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