



Eric Herr, a volunteer with Search and Support San Antonio, works last week along the Guadalupe River in Ingram. Photos by Jay Janner/Austin American-Statesman

Officials: Search may last 6 months

County’s flood recovery may take years, one leader says

By Ricardo Delgado
STAFF WRITER

KERRVILLE — It could take six months to find the bodies of all the people swept away in the July 4 floods in Kerr County, and it could take years for the region to fully recover from the disaster, county officials said Monday.

Meeting for the first time since the flooding, the Kerr County Commissioners Court received a briefing on the progress of the search operations and acknowledged the daunting cleanup and rebuilding process the county faces.

The Kerr County death toll from the Guadalupe River flooding is now at 106 — 70 adults and 36 children — and Gov. Greg Abbott said last week that as many as 161 people remain unaccounted for.

Crews have been searching for victims along the Guadalupe River since July 4, and state and local officials have repeatedly said the searches will continue until every missing person is found. Kerr County Sheriff Larry Leitha told commissioners on Monday it could take six months. He said more than 2,200 people have been deployed to assist with the search.

With heavy rains falling and a flash flood warning issued for parts of Kerr

Search continues on A2

Options limited on development rules

Experts fear local governments can’t guard against future tragedy

By Maryam Ahmed
STAFF WRITER

After devastating flash floods across Central Texas this month flattened homes and commercial properties along roaring rivers, resulting in more than 130 deaths, experts warn that cities and counties are limited in how they can regulate development across the state’s flood plains.

With many residents who lost their homes in the July Fourth weekend floods seeking to rebuild, there are concerns about whether local governments can adequately protect people from future extreme weather.

The most effective way to guard against flood risks is to not build within Texas flood plains, or land that’s susceptible to being inundated by floodwater. About 5.2 million Texans, or 17% of the state’s population, live in flood plains, according to the

Rebuilding continues on A3



A house on the banks of Big Sandy Creek near Leander sits heavily damaged from Fourth of July weekend flooding. Seventeen percent of Texas’ population lives in flood plains, according to state officials.

Trump eyes high tariffs on Russia to end war

New pipeline for weapons for Ukraine announced

By Chris Megerian and Illia Novikov
ASSOCIATED PRESS

WASHINGTON — President Donald Trump on Monday threatened Russia with steep tariffs and announced a rejuvenated pipeline for American weapons to reach Ukraine, hardening his stance toward Moscow after months of frustration about unsuccessful negotiations for ending the war.

The latest steps reflect an evolving approach from the Republican president, who promised to swiftly resolve the war started by Russian President Vladimir Putin when he invaded Ukraine three years ago. Trump once focused his criticism on Ukrainian President Volodymyr Zelenskyy, whom he described as unwilling to compromise, but more recently has expressed growing irritation toward Putin.

“My conversations with him are very pleasant, and then the missiles go off at night,” Trump said. He complained that “it just keeps going on and on and on.”

Trump said he would implement “severe tariffs” unless a peace deal is reached within 50 days. He provided few

Russia continues on A5

Texas GOP plans to redraw vote map

By John C. Moritz and Taylor Goldenstein
AUSTIN BUREAU

Texas Republicans are planning a White House-driven redrawing of the state’s congressional map this summer, saying the districts they crafted just four years ago are constitutionally flawed.

The effort could be critical for the GOP maintaining control of Congress next year. But it may also leave incumbent GOP members more vulnerable to Democratic challenges in 2026 and the next presidential election cycle, in 2028. The party’s rationale for the move also ap-

pears to contradict its own arguments for how it drew the existing maps.

State Sen. Joan Huffman, R-Houston, testified in a federal lawsuit challenging the 2021 maps that they were drawn “race-blind.”

But when Gov. Greg Abbott ordered the new redistricting effort in a special legislative session that opens July 21, he leaned into a letter from the Trump administration’s Justice Department saying that race was illegally used as a factor in deciding the makeup of at least four majority-minority districts represented by Democrats, almost all of them in the Houston area.

“It is the position of this Justice Department that several Texas Congressional Districts constitute unconstitutional racial gerrymanders,” the DOJ letter sent this week to Abbott and Texas Attorney General Paxton states.

Lawyers for the plaintiffs challenging the 2021 maps used the DOJ letter to ask the court to reopen testimony in light of the Justice Department’s assertions. Attorney Chad Dunn, who is representing a group of plaintiffs in the lawsuit, said the dichotomy is evidence of political opportunism.

“The state has consistently argued

Map continues on A2

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