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El Paso Times

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Day trips made simple



Ana Valdez, owner and tour guide of Valdez Southwest Travel, poses for a portrait with the company van at McKelligon Canyon in El Paso on Sept. 24. PHOTOS BY GABY VELASQUEZ/EL PASO TIMES

El Paso company links Borderland community to area attractions

Gaby Velasquez
El Paso Times
USA TODAY NETWORK – TEXAS

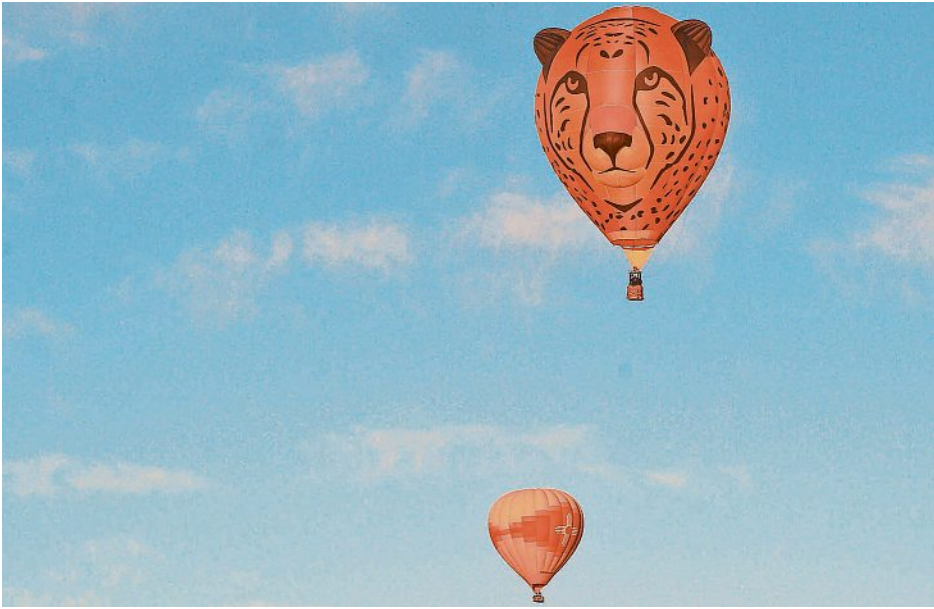
Ana Valdez is no stranger to change or adventure. Born in Ciudad Juárez, she grew up in North Carolina, moved often within the state because of her father’s job and later worked as an immigration paralegal for five years in Washington, D.C.

After years of living away, her parents chose to return to the Borderland to be closer to family, and Valdez decided to come back with them.

Once she settled in El Paso, Valdez often heard El Pasoans say the city was boring and there was nothing to do. She disagreed.

“I think El Paso is an interesting place on the map, where it’s kind of isolated from some of the major cities in Texas, like Dallas and Houston, are not exactly a few hours away. You got to take a 10-12-hour drive to reach those cities,” Valdez explained. “And we have some beautiful landscapes here, beautiful nature that people in other cities would love to have in their backyard.”

Surrounded by the natural beauty of the Southwest, she saw endless opportunities for adventure, but also realized



Balloons take flight at the Albuquerque International Balloon Fiesta on Oct. 12, 2019. KEVIN LYTLE/THE COLORADOAN

many people lacked the transportation to get out and explore. That’s when she decided to start Valdez Southwest Travel.

“I wanted to share all the beautiful landscapes that we have in the surrounding area in the Southwest with

people that maybe don’t have access to travel as easily.”

Valdez Southwest Travel is a bilingual van tour service connecting the border community to nearby natural

See **TRIPS**, Page 7A

BRIEFS

Buddy Walk fundraiser is Saturday

Daniel Borunda
El Paso Times
USA TODAY NETWORK – TEXAS

About 600 walkers and “buddies” are expected to participate in the 15th El Paso Buddy Walk at El Paso Community College Valle Verde campus this weekend.

The walk raises funds for projects of the Down Syndrome Coalition for El Paso and the EPCC Buddy Walk scholarship for students with disabilities, stated a news announcement by Beau Bagley, associate director of EPCC marketing and community relations.

The event begins at 9 a.m. with the walk starting at 10 a.m. on Saturday, Oct. 4, at the Americana Village at EPCC Valle Verde, 919 Hunter Drive.

Registration is \$20; online registration is available until noon on Friday, Oct. 3, at www.epbuddywalk.org. Walk-up registration is available on the day of the event.

El Paso Police Department graduates 38 new officers

The El Paso Police Department celebrated the addition of 38 new officers during a police academy graduation ceremony on Monday, Sept. 29, at the Starlight Event Center.

The 138th El Paso police academy graduating class, comprising eight women and 30 men, will continue their training on the streets of their respective police regional commands.

Information: joineppd.com

El Paso County Sportspark starts \$1.2 million lights upgrade

The light system modernization at El Paso County Sportspark is underway and is expected to be completed in December, county officials said.

The park is receiving new energy-efficient LED lighting for all 10 baseball fields and new ball-tracking technology, which will reduce energy costs, improve visibility, and enhance the game experience for athletes, fans, and visitors, according to a county news release.

Baseball, softball and T-ball leagues of all ages utilize the 45-acre regional park at 1780 N. Zaragoza Road in far East El Paso.

The \$1.2 million Sportspark lighting modernization is the first of 19 county parks and recreation projects part of the voter-approved 2024 Capital Improvement Bond, which will dedicate \$95.6 million for park improvements.

Moody: Texas redistricting suppressed Hispanic voting rights

Aaron Martinez
El Paso Times
USA TODAY NETWORK – TEXAS

Texas Sen. Carol Alvarado testified she believed Texas leaders and the Trump administration were illegally targeting Hispanic and other communities during redistricting efforts to win Republicans more seats in Texas.

Alvarado was the first witness to

take the stand in a key redistricting federal lawsuit questioning the legality of the state’s effort to change five Democratic-voting districts to Republican by diluting the votes of minority Texans.

The hearing began on Wednesday, Oct. 1, at the Albert Armendariz Sr. U.S. Courthouse in Downtown El Paso. It is scheduled to continue until Oct. 10. A three-judge panel will make a ruling on

the lawsuit.

The panel is made of Senior U.S. District Judge David C. Guaderrama of the Western District of Texas, 5th Circuit Court of Appeals Judge Jerry E. Smith and U.S. District Judge Jeffrey Brown of the Southern District of Texas.

The outcome could decide what congressional district boundaries are used in the upcoming midterm 2026 elections.

‘The map existed before the process’

Texas Rep. Joe Moody, D-El Paso, later testified he was angry at the process and felt a decision on the redistricting map had been made before discussion was even held in the Texas House of Representatives and Senate.

See **REDISTRICTING**, Page 2A

