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The Laredo Fire Department fights a fire early Wednesday, Oct. 7, 2026, at the DoubleTree by Hilton hotel at 800 Garden St.

Three-alarm fire rips through Laredo’s DoubleTree Hotel

By Jose De La Rosa
STAFF WRITER

An overnight fire at the DoubleTree Hotel Wednesday sent multiple people to local hospitals, left the 14-story building structurally unsafe, prompted the evacuation of more than 100 guests and required more than 90 first responders on scene.

The Laredo Fire Department received the initial call at about 12:52 a.m. Oct. 7.

First-arriving emergency responders immediately began rescue operations, and the fire quickly became a three-alarm response, with 85 firefighters as well as 12 police officers responding to the hotel in the 800

Fire continues on A2



Firefighters respond to a structure fire at the DoubleTree by Hilton early Wednesday, Oct. 7, 2026, in Laredo. The blaze prompted the evacuation of 94 guests, sent four people to the hospital for smoke inhalation and led to road closures around the hotel.

UN health agency wants more details from Russia on suspected pneumonic plague case

By Jamey Keaten
ASSOCIATED PRESS

GENEVA — A top official with the World Health Organization said Wednesday it doesn’t know how a lab worker in Siberia died, and she urged Russia to provide more information about a case that prompted global concerns about suspected pneumonic plague.

Maria Van Kerkhove, WHO director of Epidemic and Pandemic Management, said the

U.N. health agency doesn’t know what the “causative agent” was behind the woman’s Oct. 2 death, which unconfirmed reports in Russia blamed on pneumonic plague — a less common but severe form of plague that can spread from person to person.

In its tersely worded statements, Russia’s public health watchdog, Rospotrebnadzor, does not link the case to pneumonic plague, saying only that the lab worker had contracted pneumonia of “unknown” origin and that “extensive” testing found no evidence her illness was caused by any of the pathogens she worked with at the Irkutsk Anti-Plague Research Institute of Siberia and the Far East.

“We don’t understand how she was infected,” Van Kerkhove said. “We need information in a timely way. We need regular information. We need answers to the follow up of the questions that we have asked.”

Plague continues on A5

District VI candidates discuss roads, water and growth

By David Gomez Jr.
STAFF WRITER

District VI Councilmember Dr. Tyler King and challenger Ubaldo “Baldo” Granados debated the incumbent’s first-term record and how District

VI resources should be spent during a city-hosted candidate forum.

The first forum of the night in the city’s planned three-day series remained focused on policy and accomplishments

Debate continues on A3



District VI candidate Ubaldo “Baldo” Granados and District VI Councilmember Dr. Tyler King sit on a makeshift stage inside the council chambers on Oct. 6, 2026, at City Hall.

Gonzalez emphasizes water and public safety in forum

By David Gomez Jr.
STAFF WRITER

District I Councilmember Gilbert Gonzalez highlighted water, public safety and continued development during a city-hosted candidate forum, where he was the only candidate to participate. Guadalupe “Lupe” De Leon Jr., Gonzalez’s opponent in the District I race, did not attend.

Gonzalez said a secondary water source is a top priority as south Laredo continues to grow. He also pointed to ongoing projects, including Fire Station 16, the planned south Laredo police station and the south Laredo animal shelter.

Gonzalez cited efforts to address aging water infrastructure and reduce shots-fired incidents in south Laredo hot-

Forum continues on A3



District I Councilmember and Mayor Pro Tem Gilbert Gonzalez sits alone on stage during a two-person candidate forum on Oct. 6, 2026, at City Hall.

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