

Officials: Search may last 6 months

Kerr County recovery could take years, commissioner 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 daunt-

ing 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 com-

missioners 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 County on Monday, county officials paused the search operations about midday. “Due to the incoming threatening weather, all volunteers should vacate the river area, and MOVE TO HIGHER GROUND for their safety,” officials posted on the Kerr County Facebook page. “Only teams

Search continues on A13



Sam Owens/San Antonio Express-News

Firefighters from Ciudad Acuña, Mexico, search the river. Kerr County officials met Monday for the first time since the floods.

HILL COUNTRY FLOODS

Kerrville memorial draws visitors from near and far



Sam Owens/San Antonio Express-News

Caroline Scott of Missouri, from left, Mikayla Glosson, 14, of Boerne, and her mother, Sarah Quye, also of Boerne, attend a vigil on Friday in front of a growing memorial for flood victims in downtown Kerrville. About 300 mourners attended.

Downtown site a focal point for community after Fourth of July tragedy

By Megan Rodriguez  
STAFF WRITER

KERRVILLE — Marissa Martinez spent Saturday evening holding back tears at a downtown Kerrville memorial for Fourth of July flood victims.

The Houston resident, 37, left

a green sticky note on a picture of Molly DeWitt, a 9-year-old who died when Camp Mystic was overtaken by surging Guadalupe River floodwaters.

“Prayers for everyone. Texas strong,” the note said.

The memorial — a collection of flowers, photos and personal

notes like Martinez’s — has become a focal point for the community since deadly flash flooding devastated Kerr County on Independence Day. More than 100 people have been confirmed dead, and Gov. Greg Abbott said recently that as many as 161 were still unaccounted for.

Martinez said she hadn’t been able to stop thinking about DeWitt since learning after the tragedy that they’d attended the same Houston church.

“It’s heartbreaking,” she said, looking toward the flowers and photos attached to the

Memorial continues on A13

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 appears 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

Map continues on A13



Evan Vucci/Associated Press

President Donald Trump announced on Monday a rejuvenated pipeline for American weapons to reach Ukraine.

Trump threatens Russia with tariffs and boosts U.S. weapons for Ukraine

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 details on

Ukraine continues on A7



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