

Welcome to the land of good stories

□ Eastern New Mexico home to historic figures, modern lifestyle and some pretty good music, too.

By David Stevens
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Maybe you're new to eastern New Mexico. But it's a good bet you've heard stories about us, no matter where you come from.

Billy the Kid. Buddy Holly. Clovis man. That guy from the dueling banjos scene in the movie "Deliverance." They all have close ties to Clovis, Portales, Fort Sumner, and/or other small communities around here.

Let's start with the music.

Holly recorded all of his legendary music from the 1950s at Norman Petty Studios on Clovis' West Seventh Street. The studio is still there and a focal point of the community's annual Music Festival each spring.

They're 70 years old now, but it's still hard to get those rockin' lyrics out of your head.

"All of my love ... All of my kissing ... You don't know what you've been a-missing ... Oh boy."

And

"You say you're gonna leave ... You know it's a lie ... 'Cause that'll be the day-ay-ay ... When I die."

Musician David Bigham played with Holly and other rock legends in the 1950s and spent decades after that sharing their stories during studio tours. He said he used to ride motorcycles with Holly's bandmates, the Crickets, but Holly would never go with them because he was too busy perfecting his sound in the editing room with Petty. We lost Bigham at age 84 in 2021, but memorabilia from those glory days of rock and roll remains a prominent



(Courtesy photo)

Gin Blossoms front man Robin Wilson and drummer Scott Hessel entertained music fans at the 2024 Clovis Music Festival.

part of the recording studio.

Ronny Cox, the actor who played the ill-fated businessman Drew Ballinger in "Deliverance," has played dozens of other characters in movies and TV shows you know, from "Beverly Hills Cop" to "Law and Order" and "Desperate Housewives."

Cox also has written dozens of songs, including one about Portales, where he graduated from high school and Eastern New Mexico University.

It's called "Life in Portales," and one stanza goes like this:

"I was there buying beer. She was picking up some cheese. And while the cashier was engaged in higher mathematics, we began to shoot the breeze." Lines also include, "That's life in Portales. The only place we're better than is Dallas."

Hank Williams Jr. passed through Clovis in the mid-1970s and wrote a

song about a girl he met called "That Girl Down in Clovis:"

"We ate tacos and talked and then we took a walk in the clean Southwestern air ..." Then they ran off together.

In addition to the music people, we come from a long line of outlaws and woolly-mammoth slayers.

We've got the Kid

Everyone knows the infamous outlaw Billy the Kid was killed and buried in Fort Sumner – the gravesite is there to prove it. Not as many people know he was also a frequent visitor to the Portales area around 1880.

Portales Springs is dry now, but was once a major watering hole along the trail that connected Fort Sumner to the Texas Panhandle. It's located a few miles south of Portales



(Courtesy photo)

David Bigham sang with Roy Orbison, Buddy Holly and Buddy Knox on multiple records recorded at Norman Petty Studio in Clovis. The studio is still operating on West Seventh Street, but we lost Bigham in 2021.

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WELCOME



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The EASTERN NEW MEXICO NEWS

WELCOME

from Page 1

on private property.

The Kid and his friend Charlie Bowdre were known to run horses on ranchland near the springs. Historians believe the horses were usually stolen.

To be fair, the Kid denied he was a horse thief.

In a Dec. 12, 1880, letter to New Mexico territorial Gov. Lew Wallace, he wrote that the Las Vegas Gazette newspaper had called him a "Captain of a Band of Outlaws who hold Forth at the Portales."

"There is no such organization in existence," the Kid wrote to the governor. "So the Gentlemen must

have drawn very heavily on his imagination."

In a jailhouse interview with the Las Vegas newspaper on Dec. 27, 1880, the Kid offered details.

"About that Portales business," he told the reporter. "I owned the ranch with Charlie Bowdre. I took it up and was holding it because I knew that sometime a stage would run by there and I wanted to keep it for a station."

But the Kid said he had to leave Portales because "certain men ... wouldn't let me live in the country."

He told the newspaper he made his living as a gambler.

We go w-a-a-a-y back.

Most of our incorporated townsites are officially a little more than a century old. But there is evidence

people have been hanging out around here for 13,000 years.

Anthropologists today call those people Clovis Man.

In 1929, Ridge Whiteman was a 19-year-old arrowhead hunter. In February of that year, he wrote a letter to the Smithsonian Institute reporting he'd found an arrow point with elephant bones at the site northwest of Portales now known as Blackwater Draw.

Anthropologists and archaeologists soon realized the discovery was proof that man was living in North America much earlier than many had believed.

Roughly 7,000 years before Columbus discovered America, the spring-fed lake at Blackwater Draw was a watering hole for Colombian mammoth and ancient bison, which attracted roving hunters.

Radiocarbon dating of spear points place hunter-gatherers at Blackwater Draw 5,000 years before that, which was shortly after the Ice Age.

The lake, which dried up about 8,000 years ago, was among a series of bodies of water that stretched to modern-day Lubbock.

Some say we're kind of complicated and still connected to our colorful roots.

We won't dispute it.

There's a sign that welcomes visitors to Portales, claiming 17,000 friendly people and three or four old grouches live there. That's probably a fair way to look at all the communities in eastern New Mexico. But you can decide for yourself.

Welcome.



Photo by Betty Williamson

Our majestic sunsets wrap up most days around here.



(Courtesy photo)

Truth is, the old grouches are some of our favorite people.



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Clovis, Portales have life after night falls

By Grant McGee

THE STAFF OF THE NEWS
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To be sure, both Clovis and Portales have night life.

Comments on social media these days point to an uptick in activity in downtown Clovis.

If there's one person who knows about downtown Clovis it's Clovis MainStreet Executive Director Lisa Pelligrino-Spear.

"Bandolero, Red Door on Main and The Rails on First Street regularly host live music from local and regional musicians as well as themed events," Pelligrino-Spear said.

Michelli Rocha, local Better Homes and Gardens Realtor and entrepreneur has an Instagram page, "Discover Clovis NM," showing her involvement and interest in Clovis as well as the city's night life.

"I feel like downtown has been given a boost with Red Door and their live bands," Rocha said.

Rocha said downtown attendance got a boost from the apparent temporary closure of one of the city's "watering holes" on Prince Street.

"Downtown is big because it's the only place to go to at night," Rocha said.

Rocha pointed out other things to do beside the bars.



(Courtesy photo)

Red Arrow Entertainment building located in Clovis, NM.

"There's the bowling alley, Hook's Alley, has live bands as well as bowling," Rocha said.

Rocha noted some people like to go to Caliber's shooting range near the Cannon Air Force Base main entrance.

"It's another option for night life. They also have ax throwing along with food and drink as well," Rocha said.

Rocha noted Clovis' cineplex, North Plains Cinema 7.

"I like the Tuesday \$5 movies they offer," Rocha said.

Rocha offered details about her Instagram page.

"I post about local restaurants, local events, Clovis night life, just really all the happenings in Clovis," Rocha said.

Rocky Benard, owner of Red Arrow Entertainment, says his business is the best around for "family fun."

"Start your night out with great food. We have The Salty Mermaid with Cajun seafood boil and hamburgers."

Benard has a second restaurant at Red Arrow, "Another Pluckin' Chicken Joint" with "chicken served

fresh, never frozen."

"Both restaurants serve your favorite beers," Benard said.

Benard went on to detail Red Arrow has a 64-game modern arcade room including a virtual reality game.

"We offer Bingo and cash-generating video machines," Benard said.

Red Arrow also has an 18-hole blacklight mini-golf "and a three level, 5,500 square foot lazer tag arena."

"Before the end of 2024 we look to have indoor carnival rides and 14

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lanes of bowling,” Benard said.

Red Arrow is air conditioned and seven days a week, according to Benard.

Portales resident and local radio personality Seth Daniell talked about Portales night life.

“Terri Chavez and I host the Mix 107.5 Morning Show,” Daniell said.

The man with a family admits he doesn’t get out much at night.

“My night life consists of watering the garden and checking on the chickens. But a lot of my friends do the night life,” Daniell said.

Two Portales places of note Daniell pointed out are Uncle Mike’s and Enchanted Vineyards.

“It’s Uncle Mike’s if you want live music and a great sense of community.

That’s the place with their open mic and live performances. And it’s super family friendly too,” Daniell said.

Daniell pointed out Enchantment Vineyards has a different vibe.

“For adult night life, if you want to go out with your friends and enjoy a glass of wine, that’s the place,” Daniell said.

Daniell pointed out Portales has a place for a family night out.

“It’s Portales Fun Center for family fun. They have bowling, an arcade, roller skating, pool tables, Dickey’s Barbecue,” Daniell said.

Daniell suggested folks keep a look out for a local band for entertainment.

“It’s Rock of Ages. Their lead singer is the zookeeper at Hillcrest Park Zoo in Clovis, Stephanie Chavez. She’s my favorite zookeeper,” Daniell said.



Photo by Correspondent Gwyn Del Toro

Hundreds of drivers made their way up and down Main Street during the Saturday Night Cruise for Draggin’ Main 2024.



(Courtesy photo)

Bowling for Soup lead singer Jarret Reddick performs at the Curry County Events Center during the April 2024 Clovis Music Festival.

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Airport director: Facility is top notch

By Grant McGee
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Amanda Brungart is the airport director for Clovis Regional Airport.

She is a newcomer to Clovis, arriving in early 2023 with her husband and son from Durango, Colo.

Brungart has held a pilot's license since she was 17.

For those who fly frequently, Brungart outlines air service from the area.

Q: What do you do at the airport? Describe your job.

A: I am the airport director. I oversee the airport operations, staffing, and Fixed Base Operator at Clovis Regional Airport.

I ensure the overall safety and efficiency of the airport as well as the operations including commercial and private traffic.

The Clovis airport is in the process of initiating the construction of a new terminal, which will allow for increased space and passenger comfort.

My position oversees the funding, planning, and safety of this project, along with many other projects for the airport.

Aviation has always been a passion of mine, and this position allows me to not only oversee the operations but to be involved in daily operations, such as fueling aircraft and working on the ramp.

Q: You've been to other airports. What do you like about the Clovis Regional Airport?

A: The Clovis airport is unique in that it is a laid-back airport that is growing.



(Courtesy photo)

Clovis Regional Airport Director Amanda Brungart on the job.

With all the security and airline operations a large airport provides, Clovis provides our passengers with the same amenities with much less stress.

Free parking is also a significant benefit of our airport.

For passengers flying commercially at Clovis Airport the Transportation Safety Administration lines are much shorter, and specialized care for those with specialized needs is much easier to obtain.

Q: With the Clovis airport you can fly ... where?

A: Clovis Regional Airport and Denver Air Connection provide flights to Denver and Dallas.

Denver Air Connection also has interline agreements with United, American, and now Delta, which allows passengers to connect a flight from Clovis to anywhere in the world.

Q: What is your recommended method for flying out of the Clovis airport, i.e. time to arrive, what to expect and such.

A: With wait times much shorter, the typically recommended two to three hours before departure is unnecessary at Clovis.

We recommend arriving an hour-and-a-half before departure to allow for TSA screening and check-in processing.

Q: If you could talk to people who have just moved here, people for whom flying is a regular feature of their life, what would you say to them to reassure them they've made a good choice in being in the Clovis/Portales area in regards to having the Clovis airport?

A: As someone who was not a native of Clovis, I can say this area and airport are unique.

The Clovis airport is a growing and expanding airport that we are very excited about.

As we build our new terminal, the opportunities for additional routes and airlines are endless.

The city of Clovis and Portales strive to provide the best experience to its citizens and visitors as possible.

Denver Air Connections interline agreement allows its passengers to connect worldwide, in turn connecting Clovis, and Clovis Regional Airport to the world.

A chat with a lifelong resident

By Grant McGee
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Kim Tipton is the events and membership coordinator for the Clovis-Curry County Chamber of Commerce.

The mother of three grown sons was born in Clovis to a mechanic father and nurse mother.

"I'm the baby of three girls and a boy," Tipton said.

Tipton loves all kinds of sports and likes to play softball and volleyball.

She also wants to be sure people know she loves Mickey Mouse.

Q: You were born here, grew up here and stayed. Tell us why.

A: I absolutely love this community.

The people here are so friendly and always willing to lend a hand whenever you need it.

Q: You've been to other cities, weren't you tempted to move? Why not?

A: I was tempted at one point, but when it took me over an hour to travel just 10 miles, I realized it wasn't the place for me.

Plus, I love being close to my family.

Q: What did you like about growing up here?

A: I loved the sense of community and the close-knit feel of the town.

Everyone knows each other, and there was always someone around to lend a hand or share a friendly smile.

Growing up here made me feel safe and connected, and it's something I still appreciate to this day.

Q: You went away for a year to go to college. Where was that? What did you think of that experience?

A: I attended college in Colorado, and it was a great experience.

It was my first time being away from home for more than two weeks without my parents, and I learned how to take care of myself.

Q: What's good for recreation in the area?

A: There's always something to keep you engaged here — you just have to get out and explore.

Whether you're into outdoor activities or prefer indoor hobbies, we've got you covered.

Enjoy the extensive riding and hiking trails at Ned Houk Park or take a stroll along the walking trails around town. If sports aren't your thing, there are plenty of other options like painting, crafting, or even volunteering at local events.

Q: Do you have favorite places to eat?

A: Yes — there are so many great spots, it's hard to pick just a few.

But honestly, nothing beats a home-cooked meal.

Eating at home is my favorite.

Q: If you could talk to people who have moved here what would you say to them to reassure them they've made a good choice in moving to the Clovis/Portales area?

A: I'd tell them they've made a fantastic choice.



(Courtesy photo)

Kim Tipton loves playing softball and volleyball but says these days she's more of a scorekeeper.

The Clovis/Portales area is a welcoming and supportive community where people truly care about one another.

You'll find a strong sense of belonging here, with plenty of opportunities to get involved and make meaningful connections.

Whether you're looking for a peaceful place to settle or a community that feels like family, this area offers the best of both worlds.

Eastern NM a great area for business

By Grant McGee

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Sandra Taylor-Sawyer was born and raised in Clovis.

She's the director of the area Small Business Development Center.

Taylor-Sawyer's husband is Donald, a retired master sergeant with the U. S. Air Force.

Together they have five children and 11 grandchildren.

"I love Clovis because it is a quiet, great, comfortable place for me to grow spiritually, mentally and physically and help others to do the same," Taylor-Sawyer said.



(Courtesy photo)

Sandra Taylor-Sawyer once gave life in Hobbs a try. But she came back to Clovis.

Our goal is to work with business owners in making their dreams become a reality.

Q: So you grew up here. Have you stayed or did you go somewhere and return to Clovis/Portales?

A: I attended my freshman year of college at New Mexico State University in Las Cruces and lived in Hobbs for a short period of time. While finishing my bachelor's degree I lived in Portales.

Overall, I have been in the area the majority of my life.

Q: To you, how is the Clovis/Portales area different than other areas?

A: I travel quite often. It is always great to get back to the area.

I appreciate the slower pace, but not too slow.

People are willing to help one another, and it is genuine. The microplex is small enough to get things accomplished quickly and yet large enough or near other areas to meet needs.

Q: If you could talk to people who are starting a business/locating a business here what would you say to them to reassure them they've made a good choice in being in the Clovis/Portales area?

A: With any decision and especially starting a business, due diligence is important.

As a professional consultant it is the SBDC's job to provide the pros and cons of having a business.

Armed with the purpose of the business, goals, core values and what they determine is a strong business, then I will use those elements to remind them of what they defined as a "strong business."

Which relates to why they decided to place their business roots in the area.

Q: Why is this area great for business?

A: The Clovis/Portales microplex has needs just like any other community.

When a need is explored, a solution is matched to that need, and there are enough people that are willing to pay for it; a great business is born.

From side-hustles to multi-billion-dollar enterprises the people of the microplex make this a great area to do business.

The area allows a business owner to personalize service, which is important to customers, and to build stronger relationships with their clientele.

When done right, starting and running a business can be easier than other areas. This is a main reason to seek professional advice from the SBDC before spending any money to start a business.

Having a loyal customer base is great for a business.

It is often someone knows someone and the personal connections will lead to referrals and repeat business.

Having a unique niche catering to specific needs is also a competitive advantage for the area.

Q: What is the Small Business Development Center?

A: The Small Business Development Center is the first step for individuals wanting to start a business and for current business owners who desire to move their business to the next level.

Our mission is to develop skilled entrepreneurs and strong businesses.

Q: What goes on at the SBDC?

A: We provide one on one confidential professional consulting on an unlimited basis to startup and existing business.

We also offer trainings that are tailored to meet the needs of small businesses to help build skilled entrepreneurs.



(Courtesy photo)

Hillcrest Park Zoo Director Stephanie Chavez this year with "Eliza Camelton," a new arrival. The camel's name came from a naming contest.

Zookeeper talks up the zoo

By Grant McGee

THE STAFF OF THE NEWS
gmcgee@thenews.email

Stephanie Chavez, director of Clovis' Hillcrest Park Zoo, is a newcomer to the area herself.

Chavez moved from El Paso to Clovis to work for the zoo in April 2023.

Q: What makes this zoo the best in the region?

A: It's our staff.

I have never met a better team of zookeepers and maintenance staff. They care so much about these animals and want only the best for them.

Q: What should we notice when we come to the zoo?

A: You should notice how well the animals are taken care of.

We strive to provide environments that meet their physical, social, and behavioral needs.

Observe the dedication and passion of our staff, from zookeepers to our maintenance staff taking care of zoo grounds.

Q: You have a number of people who support the zoo. What's the story there?

A: As zoo director, I am incredibly grateful for the diverse and passionate support we receive from our community.

Our supporters come from all

walks of life, and each has their own unique story.

We get donors, sponsors, volunteers, corporate partners, zoo enthusiasts, and of course our local community.

Each supporter brings their own story and motivation, but they all share a common goal: to help us create a better world for wildlife.

Q: What are your plans for the zoo's future?

A: I have many plans for the zoo's future, which include animal welfare and habitat improvements, conservation initiatives, creating education programs, more community engagement, and innovative exhibits.

Our ultimate goal is to create a zoo that not only provides exceptional care for the animals, but also serves as a beacon for conservation and education.

Q: What do you have to say to area newcomers?

A: I am delighted to extend a warm invitation to newcomers to visit the Hillcrest Park Zoo and experience all that we have to offer.

We have over 100 animals, including reptiles, mammals, and birds.

We do behind-the-scenes experiences and are the number one stop for school trips. We hope to see you soon.

County fairs a staple of life in eastern NM

By Grant McGee
THE STAFF OF THE NEWS
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Newcomers might enjoy the fact both Curry and Roosevelt counties have annual community fairs in August.

“We are one of the longest running fairs in the state. This is the largest and friendliest community event that happens during the year. There is something for everyone,” Sheila Hays said.

Hays has been on the Roosevelt County Fair Board for 20 years. She handles public relations for the event.

“We as fair board members help do all the tasks from cleaning up the grounds to putting on the livestock shows, finding superintendents over all the entries. We search for great entertainment and a carnival,” Hays said.

Hays noted the people in the community are heavily rooted in agriculture and “are the friendliest down to earth people you run across.”

Hays detailed some of the highlights of the Roosevelt County Fair.

“For the animal lovers we offer livestock shows, team roping on Wednesday night, barrel racing on Friday, and a triathlon with the (Eastern New Mexico University)

rodeo team Saturday night,” Hays said.

The carnival company that sets up at the fair is Sun Valley Rides & Amusement from Phoenix, according to Hays.

“They bring a carnival with rides for all ages and thrill seekers beginning Wednesday afternoon,” Hays said.

There’s plenty of “fair food” according to Hays.

“We have a large variety of fair food vendors to fill appetites,” Hays said.

Hays pointed out the merchants building is where fairgoers may find information of all kinds about the area and businesses.

Hays noted each night of the fair ends with concerts and dancing on “the slab’ under the stars.”

“Come check out our fair and enjoy the fun times here at Roosevelt County Fair,” Hays said.

Curry County Fairgrounds and Events Center General Manager K. C. Messick recently wrapped up overseeing the 2024 Curry County Fair.

“Preliminary estimated attendance numbers showed there were just over 27,000 attendees,” Messick said.

Messick said he got a lot of positive feedback about the Curry County Fairgrounds new Livestock Pavilion, opened just in time for the 2024 fair



Photo by Correspondent Gwyn Del Toro

Ronnie "Papi" Eaton raises the arms of Avalon Mathews, 7, after the two successfully balanced their antique Ford tractor during warm-ups for a tractor balance-beam event at the 2024 Roosevelt County Fair.

in August.

“The new Livestock Pavilion was a huge success. People were just absolutely amazed,” Messick said.

Curry County Commissioner Bradley Bender sees the fair as a part of what makes Curry County “a wonderful county.”

“(The county) is full of amazing people, coming together to have a great time,” Bender said.

Bender added the biggest key is “the entertainment and joy in the children.”

“It’s all about the kids,” Bender said.

Curry County Commissioner Dusty

Leatherwood sees the annual event as a positive activity for the community.

“If you get kids involved in 4-H and FFA, there’s something there for everybody,” Leatherwood said.

Leatherwood believes 4-H is way underappreciated.

“It teaches people skills,” Leatherwood said.

Leatherwood sees growth in fair participation and hopes it grows more.

“We had more entries this year than last,” Leatherwood said. Newcomers might enjoy the fact both Curry and Roosevelt counties have annual community fairs in August.

“We are one of the longest running

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Photo by Correspondent Gwyn Del Toro

Ethan McDonald, 13, enjoys a turkey leg at a 2024 fair.

fairs in the state. This is the largest and friendliest community event that happens during the year. There is something for everyone," Sheila Hays said.

Hays has been on the Roosevelt County Fair Board for 20 years. She handles public relations for the event.

"We as fair board members help do all the tasks from cleaning up the grounds to putting on the livestock shows, finding superintendents over all the entries. We search for great entertainment and a carnival," Hays said.

Hays noted the people in the community are heavily rooted in agriculture and "are the friendliest down to earth people you run across."

Hays detailed some of the highlights of the Roosevelt County Fair.

"For the animal lovers we offer livestock shows, team roping on Wednesday night, barrel racing on

Friday, and a triathlon with the (Eastern New Mexico University) rodeo team Saturday night," Hays said.

The carnival company that sets up at the fair is Sun Valley Rides & Amusement from Phoenix, according to Hays.

"They bring a carnival with rides for all ages and thrill seekers beginning Wednesday afternoon," Hays said.

There's plenty of "fair food" according to Hays.

"We have a large variety of fair food vendors to fill appetites," Hays said.

Hays pointed out the merchants building is where fairgoers may find information of all kinds about the area and businesses.

Hays noted each night of the fair ends with concerts and dancing on "the slab" under the stars."

"Come check out our fair and enjoy the fun times here at Roosevelt County Fair," Hays said.

Curry County Fairgrounds and Events Center General Manager K. C. Messick recently wrapped up overseeing the 2024 Curry County Fair.

"Preliminary estimated attendance numbers showed there were just over 27,000 attendees," Messick said.

Messick said he got a lot of positive feedback about the Curry County Fairgrounds new Livestock Pavilion, opened just in time for the 2024 fair in August.

"The new Livestock Pavilion was a huge success. People were just absolutely amazed," Messick said.

Curry County Commissioner

Bradley Bender sees the fair as a part of what makes Curry County "a wonderful county."

"(The county) is full of amazing people, coming together to have a great time," Bender said.

Bender added the biggest key is "the entertainment and joy in the children."

"It's all about the kids," Bender said.

Curry County Commissioner Dusty Leatherwood sees the annual event as a positive activity for the community.

"If you get kids involved in 4-H and FFA, there's something there for everybody," Leatherwood said.

Leatherwood believes 4-H is way underappreciated.

"It teaches people skills," Leatherwood said.

Leatherwood sees growth in fair participation and hopes it grows more.

"We had more entries this year than last," Leatherwood said.



Photo by Correspondent Gwyn Del Toro

Peyton Anthony, 4, pushes ahead of Little Buckaroo Rodeo Queen Sophia Hogg, 13, during stick horse racing.



Photo by Correspondent Gwyn Del Toro

Curry County fairgoers react with mixed emotions as they ride The Avalanche, one of the many rides found on the fairgrounds' Midway.

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Options nearby for higher education

By Grant McGee

THE STAFF OF THE NEWS
gmcgee@thenews.email

Higher education opportunities are close at hand in the Clovis and Portales area with Eastern New Mexico University and Clovis Community College.

According to a description on the ENMU website, “Eastern New Mexico University is a public, four-year college in Portales, with additional locations in Roswell and Ruidoso.

“ENMU is the largest regional comprehensive university in New Mexico and a member of the Hispanic Association of Colleges and Universities.

“The main campus supports nearly 6,000 students with a student/faculty ratio of 19 to 1.

“ENMU offers over 60 bachelor’s, master’s, and associate’s degrees, and has evening and online courses.”

Clovis Community College, a public community college, was once a part of Eastern New Mexico University.

In 1990, Clovis area voters opted to make CCC independent of ENMU.

According to online information, due to close proximity and past connections, both CCC and ENMU work independently as well as closely together to provide area residents with educational opportunities.

The top administrators of both campuses are newcomers to the area themselves: ENMU Chancellor James Johnston arriving in early 2023 and CCC President Jonathan Fuentes moving to Clovis in summer 2024.

Both men had statements exclusively for readers of The News’ “Newcomer’s Guide.”

ENMU’s Johnston wrote:

Eastern New Mexico University welcomes you and your family to the High Plains of Eastern New Mexico.

You will find us to be a welcoming, family oriented community.

As New Mexico’s largest regional comprehensive university, we also extend an invitation to our beautiful campus and all that we offer.

ENMU provides the region, the state, the nation and the world with access to high-quality education at an affordable cost.



(Courtesy photo)

Eastern New Mexico University Chancellor James Johnston.

We are also a source of culture and entertainment for the residents of our community.

ENMU offers something for everyone outside the classrooms.

From our high-quality fine arts performances and exhibitions to our nationally competitive athletics teams to the community-wide events we host on our campus and in our community, we offer you the opportunity to engage with us and experience the ENMU family.

ENMU has opportunities to attend live theater, music, choir, and art exhibitions annually.

Our programs and performances in these areas have a long history of exceptional presentations.

ENMU also fields highly competitive athletics programs with a great history of success. From winning national championships to highly competitive Lone Star Conference championships, there is something for everyone to enjoy.

ENMU strives to be a great community partner



(Courtesy photo by ENMU)

Administration (ADM Building) at Eastern New Mexico University.



enmu.edu



**We welcome you to our campus!
Enjoy fine arts, athletics, or
come visit for all of your higher
education needs.**

with many different outdoor activities on our campus. We have a new outdoor fitness center as well as pickleball, tennis and basketball courts and an outdoor track for you and your family to enjoy.

ENMU also has the Golden Student Success Center, a full-service library, that community members are welcome to utilize but it is so much more.

The ENMU GSSC houses the third largest science fiction collection in the collegiate world.

There are many fascinating items in the special collections to discover and enjoy.

While you are there take time to walk through the Runnells Art Gallery.

If you want to step back in time, ENMU offers opportunities to go back 10,000 years to the time of “Clovis Man” at both Blackwater Draw Historic Site and Blackwater Draw Museum.

Blackwater Draw Historic Site is an active research and education site located about 10 minutes from our campus.

The site houses a bone bed with 10,000-year-old mammoth bones and much more.

The museum displays numerous artifacts as well as bones from mammoth and saber-toothed cats among others.

The ENMU campus also houses three other museums for guests to visit, including the Roosevelt

County Historical Museum, the Miles Mineral Museum, and the Gennaro Natural History Museum.

We invite you to bring your family and explore the history of Roosevelt County and this region.

Finally, I would be remiss if I did not invite you to pursue your higher education goals while you make your home here on the High Plains.

ENMU offers a wide range of degrees and programs.

CCC’s Fuentes wrote:

Welcome to Clovis. I am a newcomer to Clovis myself, but in the two months that I have already been here, I want you to know that I have found the friendliest, most caring people here.



(Courtesy photo)
Clovis Community College
President Jonathan
Fuentes.

People are proud to be from Clovis and work hard every day to make this a better place. I am already proud to live here, too.

At Clovis Community College, we see ourselves as an integral part of the community.

CCC provides affordable, quality



(Courtesy photo by CCC)

education; workforce and economic development; personal enrichment; short-term trainings; transfer programs; community events; and so much more to our region.

We truly have programs for everyone.

And we are not done.

We want to be a catalyst in our community, innovating in and leading our community into the future.

We want to make this region the best place to live, learn, work, and play.

Join us in this movement.

Note to new arrivals: Local food is great

By Grant McGee

THE STAFF OF THE NEWS
gmcgee@thenews.email

Clovis native Clay Syxay’s “day job” is in real estate. He is with Better Homes and Gardens Real Estate in Clovis.

But Clay will tell you he’s a “foodie,” by Wikipedia definition: “A person who has an ardent or refined interest in food, who eats food not only out of hunger but also as a hobby.”

Q: What makes you a foodie?
A: My love for food. I am not afraid to try new foods and step out of my comfort zone.

Anytime I plan a vacation or short trip, the first thing on my mind is where and what I’m going to eat.

Q: What would you say to other foodies who find themselves here, about why Clovis/Portales is a good place to be?

A: Because of how many locally owned food businesses we have here.

The food made at these businesses comes from family recipes and all have their unique flavor.

Not to mention we have Hatch green chile.

Q: What are five of your favorite Clovis/Portales eateries and why?

A: Good Eatz in Clovis. It’s the only place in town you can get soul food and authentic Mexican food under one roof.

Then there’s Hong Kong Buffet in Portales.

I say they have the best Chinese food



(Courtesy photo)

Clay Syxay is a High Plains foodie. He began a YouTube channel in August.

buffet for both Portales and Clovis.

The food is always fresh and has really great flavor.

Another favorite is Mi Cocina in Clovis. True New Mexican flavor that’s not mixed with Tex Mex.

Another favorite in Portales is The Courthouse Café.

They have some of the best sandwiches and burgers with unique names.

I love their homemade potato chip fries and potato salad.

There’s La Fiesta Restaurant in Clovis.

They have great customer service. They’re always kind and make the customer satisfied.

My favorite thing about La Fiesta is they serve breakfast all day.

Q: But truth be told, you do drop in on other nearby cities. What regional cities do you travel to for your “foodie fix” and what makes those cities worth traveling to?

A: If you are into aliens, head on down to Roswell and tour the downtown.

Afterwards go check out Portifinos Italian Restaurant.

That would be my mother’s and my favorite spot to go to when visiting there.

If you are on route 66 you need to go check out Route 66 Buffet in Amarillo. Imagine if Golden Corral and Furr’s cafeteria had a baby. That baby would be this buffet.

While in Amarillo, check out Cadillac Ranch. Also nearby is Palo Duro Canyon.

Q: Tell us about your cooking skills.

A: My cooking style is unique. I hear from a lot of people who say they love my cooking.

I am a foodie, so I love to experiment with food. A lot of my dishes are Asian and Mexican infused. I learned to

cook from many people, from family members to friends .

Q: If you could talk to people who have moved here what would you say to them to reassure them they’ve made a good choice in locating to the Clovis/Portales area?

A: Clovis and Portales are places that are actually growing now.

We are in an upward trend with the revitalization of downtown Clovis.

New stores coming soon to the North Plains Mall.

Money is being put back to our streets and public places like the park.

We are not too far from bigger hubs like Amarillo and Lubbock.

If you feel spontaneous, you can always grab a plane ticket and head to Denver or Dallas with our airport services.

Not a lot of small towns have that ability to provide that.

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