

## 4 Sign Up For Open School Board Position

By Frances Luna  
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The school board has four qualified candidates to make their selection from. Letters of intent from those four were filed with the municipal schools for the full school board will discuss and consider. The position will be vacated by Crystal Diamond, effective January 1 as she takes up her duties as state senator.

The school board will make the selection and the new board member will be installed to fill the position until the November elections. At that time the successful candidate and any other seeking the position can run for a full term on the board.

Those seeking the position are:

- Mark Hedge, of Elephant Butte, retired in August from his position at Hot Springs High School, where he taught biology for 29 years, heading the department and receiving many awards as well as leading the Envirothon team to seven state championships.

- Christine LaFont, of Elephant Butte, has been a substitute teacher in the district for seven years and has three children who attend district schools. She has an extensive background volunteering and organizing both school and community functions and activities.

- Helen Langham, of Truth or Consequences, taught in New York and Michigan before moving here 14 years ago. She has for the last 3 years worked in the Foster Grandparent's Program at T-or-C Elementary School with third graders where she gained a deep appreciation for the students and staff of the schools.

- Jamie Sweeney of T-or-C, currently the safety manager for the City of Truth or Consequences. She also served the city as a law enforcement officer and as a detention officer for Sierra County for many years after moving here from Missouri.

## 2021 Government Objectives In Review

By Chuck Wentworth  
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Within the coming week, all of Sierra County's municipalities will be holding their final regular meetings for the calendar year. While 2020 has delivered multiple hurdles and many disruptions in operational activities for each, numerous initiatives have nonetheless been advanced over the past several months, and a variety of community improvement projects are lined up to be realized in 2021.

Agendas for the coming week's line up of year-ending municipal sessions, as of this article, are still being finalized. However, it is likely area leaders will all be including action items to complete mid-Fiscal Year (FY) necessities and to review present operational concerns, as well as attending to other important issues lined up for the coming year's calendars.

In looking ahead this past week, municipal administrators offered brief summaries of their respective priorities and objectives for the coming calendar year.

### SIERRA COUNTY

Several important projects and issues have already begun, or will soon be engaged by the Sierra County Commission and administrative authorities in the week's ahead.

With necessary demolition completed and initial construction already underway, the development of Sierra County's new administrative office complex at 1712 North Date Street will no doubt be followed with keen interest. Present goals would see the fa-

cility completed at some point in September 2021, with the long-anticipated consolidation of county offices to follow.

Aside from this major endeavor, county manager Bruce Swingle said he would be placing primary importance on the continued expansion of Broadband services. This initiative is now focused on installation throughout southern areas of the county and will be extended to other rural quadrants of the community in 2021.

A similar priority will be targeted toward implementation of a recently completed drainage and flood mitigation plan, which provided commissioners numerous recommendations. Swingle said he anticipated near-term action to begin addressing identified concerns and indicated a measure relating to the selection of specific target projects could be included on the commission's December 15 meeting agenda.

Also at the top of the county commission's to-do list for 2021 will be a number of initiatives aimed at bolstering local and regional economic development. County leaders will further be advancing efforts to halt/reverse/mitigate a variety of federal/state initiatives such as the wolf reintroduction program, wild and scenic rivers act, and similar measures deemed to be encroaching upon traditional access and uses of public lands.

### CITY OF TRUTH OR CONSEQUENCES

As city parks department crews are presently tending to final grading work on a planned parking area and giving the new sod at Ralph Edwards Park

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## Way Cleared For New County Offices



(SENTINEL Photos/Chuck Wentworth)



Having already completed necessary interior demolition and preparations, contractors with SmithCo Construction were moving forward with development of Sierra County's new administrative office building earlier this week. Located at 1712 North Date Street, the new facility will house most of Sierra County's administrative offices and will provide citizens one-stop access to a majority of available services. As crews were addressing initial plumbing work near the facility's entrance Tuesday morning, December 8, a supervised peek inside the former Amin's Furniture store revealed a truly expansive space. Over the coming months, interior construction will be proceeding toward a projected completion in September. Although ongoing health restrictions and other unforeseen hurdles could very well arise to hinder plans, both contractors and county officials are maintaining a positive approach and if at all possible, the new spaces will be green-lighted for occupation before 2022 arrives.

## New City Brand Under Development

By Sandra Whitehead  
Mayor, Truth or Consequences

Earlier this year, the city of Truth or Consequences approved for some local organizations to begin developing our city's "place brand". Representatives of the Chamber of Commerce, Visitor Center, Arts Council, Lodger's Tax Board, healing arts community, MainStreet T-or-C, local businesses, the city, and local musicians have met repeatedly and are getting closer to having something to share.

This process is being facilitated by New Mexico MainStreet, as a service that is being provided for free to the city of Truth or Consequences. Like the statewide "NM True" logo and brand, this is a city-level effort to create an authentic identity with staying power for Truth or Consequences that captures the town's sense of place. New Mexico MainStreet has successfully led other cities, including Raton, and Tucumcari, through this process using their time-tested method.

So far, the process has included collecting public

input and compiling data from the community to find common identifiers that make Truth or Consequences so unique. The community coalition has gathered input from local folks through surveys and focus groups. From that, the group developed a statement that captures the authentic nature and quality that will make the brand unique, compelling, and meaningful to the target market.

The last meeting of the group saw the participants meeting with graphic designers to get ideas about logo elements. Soon, the graphic designers will present what they have developed for the group to review, and then the city and Lodger's Tax Board will approve the final identity and start sharing it with businesses and organizations for their use.

In 2021, we hope all of our tourism and economic development efforts will be improved through adoption of the branding elements co-created by this coalition of community groups and been for the city of Truth or Consequences what the "NM True" brand has been for the state.

## Spreading Christmas Spirit

By Chuck Wentworth  
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As now recognized, the COVID-19 health emergency and ongoing restrictions on group assemblies will force the cancellation of most of Sierra County's traditional Christmas celebrations and events. However, numerous initiatives, holiday lighting contests and special viewing opportunities are being planned to help keep the spirit of Christmas alive and cheerful for all community residents.

- Planning for this year's traditional tree-lighting ceremonies in the City of Truth or Consequences (T-or-C) and the City of Elephant Butte have been in flux as health restrictions have been changing. As of press time, planning regarding these events was ongoing. Further details about this year's modifications may be obtained by contacting the T-or-C City Clerk's Office, 894-6673, and/or the Elephant Butte Chamber of Commerce, 744-4708.

- In response to the uncertainty surrounding this year's celebration, business owners in T-or-C's downtown business district will be assembling lighting displays for Christmas Eve. Participants will be inviting area residents to drive by from 6-to-8 pm December 24, to take in the displays and share in this small offering of Christmas cheer.

- The Sierra County Sentinel is once again inviting area residents and business owners to participate in our annual Myrna's Christmas Lighting Contest. There is no fee to enter, but participants must register by phoning the Sentinel at 894-3088, or 894-2400 before Friday, Decem-

(SPIRIT Continued On Page A2)

**Weather**  
Sierra County

**Lake Levels**  
Lake Elevation  
(12-9-20):  
4,298.50 ft.  
(1 Year ago):  
4,342.52 ft.

SOURCE: National Weather Service

	HIGH	LOW
December 4	56	30
December 5	60	30
December 6	61	31
December 7	61	33
December 8	61	35
December 9	64	37
December 10	61	36

**Extended Forecast**

- Friday, December 11  
Sunny - high 59, low 31
- Saturday, December 12  
Mostly Sunny - high 61, low 35
- Sunday, December 13  
Sunny - high 53, low 27
- Monday, December 14  
Mostly Sunny - high 59, low 34
- Tuesday, December 15  
Partly Cloudy - high 59, low 29
- Wednesday, December 16  
Sunny - high 57, low 29
- Thursday, December 17  
Sunny - high 56, low 32
- Friday, December 18  
Mostly Sunny - high 60, low 32

**QUIET MOMENTS**

Heavenly Father, Have mercy on us. We know our actions of impatience reveal sin and disbelief in our soul that we have not dealt with. Help us to see and understand who You are. You are a God who always exhibits patience and grace. Help us to understand the great depths of love and mercy that You have poured out on us because of Your Son. Forgive us for forgetting so quickly, the patience that You provide as we grow and mature as a disciple of Christ. Let us never take it for granted but let us treasure You all the days of our life. Amen

- Essential businesses (non-retail): No capacity restrictions but must limit operations to only those absolutely necessary to carry out essential functions
- Essential retail spaces: 25% of maximum capacity or 75 customers at one time, whichever is smaller
- Food and drink establishments: No indoor dining permitted; 25% of maximum capacity for outdoor dining; any establishment serving alcohol must close by 9 p.m. each night
- Close-contact businesses: 25% of maximum capacity or 10 customers at one time, whichever is smaller
- Outdoor recreational facilities: 25% of maximum capacity (unless required to have less capacity under the state's COVID-Safe Practices)
- Close-contact recreational facilities: Remain closed
- All other businesses: 25% of maximum capacity or 75 customers at one time, whichever is smaller
- Houses of worship: May hold religious services, indoors or outdoors, or provide services through audiovisual means, but may not exceed 25% of the maximum capacity of any enclosed space on the premises
- Places of lodging: 40% of maximum occupancy for those that have complete NM Safe Certified training; 25% of maximum occupancy for all others; 5 guests maximum for vacation rentals
- Mass gatherings limit: 5 persons, 10 vehicles

**State To Release New Color 12.16.20 & Effective 12.19.20**

SIERRA COUNTY SENTINEL

DEADLINE CHANGES FOR THE HOLIDAYS

Officed Closed: 12.24.20 - 1.3.21

Material Deadline	Distribution Date
Christmas Issue	Dec. 18th
New Years Issue	Dec. 22nd
	Dec. 29th