

A Legacy Local Monthly Publication

July 2026

The Historic

Mesilla Valley



**NEXT GEN
CRUCES**
gives all kids
'a chance to play'

From the
Publisher's
Desk

Calendar
of Events

Inflation's
impact on the
state economy

Fire update in
New Mexico

Tips from a
Socialite: Curating
a unique space

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“Table of contents”

5 From the Publisher's Desk

6 Calendar of Events

8 Inflation's impact on the state economy

10 cover story Next Gen Cruces gives all kids 'a chance to play'

12 Fire update in New Mexico

13 Tips from a Socialite: Curating a unique space

14 recipe & cocktails



Featured on the Cover:
Next Gen Cruces Co-founder,
Devin Perez, with his wife and child

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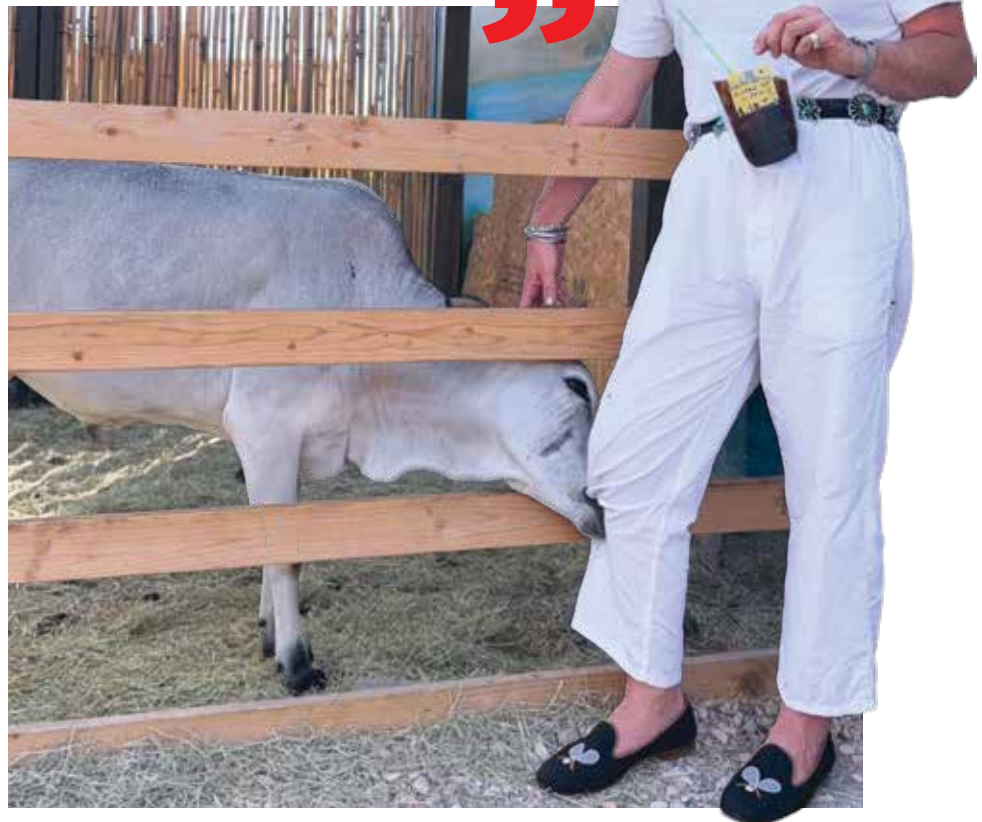


**FROM
THE**

publisher's desk

Welcome to our July issue, where we highlight the economy, design tips, a new local nonprofit, and the state of fires in New Mexico. We know inflation and the cost of living are high, but you can still get out and salvage summer.

Check out various state park websites and see which upcoming weekends New Mexico residents can get free entry. We hope you had a lovely Fourth of July!



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Calendar of events

WEEKLY, MONDAY

– Women’s group: Casa De Mi Alma is hosting a women’s group every Monday called Café Con Chisme. This group is for women to come together as a community to share their stories, discuss various topics, and more. No registration is required and drop-ins are welcome. Free. 5-6 p.m. 920 N Alameda Blvd., Las Cruces.

WEEKLY, TUESDAY

– Group run: Bluebird Running Company presents a weekly all levels group run. This downtown run begins at Bluebird Running Company, down Water Street to Bowman, to Church Street, through the roundabout, and back down to Water Street. Runners can run as many loops as they want and at their own pace. Water is provided. Free. 6-7 p.m. 136 S Water St., Las Cruces.

WEEKLY, FRIDAY

– Mahjong: Looking to add a new activity to your weekly routine? Thomas Branigan Memorial Library hosts weekly Mahjong games on Friday afternoons. All skill levels are welcome, whether you are a Mahjong expert or have never played before. Free. 1 p.m. 200 E Picacho Ave., Las Cruces.

WEEKLY, SATURDAY

– Yoga: Looking for an accessible way to improve your mental health? Join this family-friendly yoga class at the El Paso Museum of History with instructor

Erica Marin. Yoga helps with flexibility, strength, and balance. Whether you are new to yoga or looking for a beginner-level workout, this class is supportive and inclusive. Free. 1-2 p.m. 510 N Santa Fe St., El Paso, Texas.

JULY 10–11

– Marketplace: Desert Bloom Festival is a free community celebration of local business and culture in southern New Mexico. Hosted at TheBank, Desert Bloom brings together local artists, vendors, food trucks, live entertainment, and family-friendly activities. Free. Friday 6-10 p.m. and Saturday 10 a.m.-4 p.m. 250 W Amador Ave., Las Cruces.

JULY 11

– Exhibit: Los Portales Museum is hosting the opening of their new exhibit, “From Stone to Table: Molcajete and Metate”, with music and a salsa tasting. The museum is located 30 minutes outside of El Paso. Guests can vote for the best and spiciest salsa. Free. 4-8 p.m. 1521 San Elizario Rd., San Elizario, Texas.

JULY 23

– Tasting: Join Salud! de Mesilla for their Rosé Tapas & Tasting event. Guests will enjoy four tapas courses, each paired with rosé from around the world. Throughout the evening, their wine expert will guide guests through each pairing, tell stories, and give commentary on the regions and tasting notes. Seatings are every 30 minutes

from 5:30-7 p.m. Seats are limited and reservations are required. \$45 per person. 5:30-8:30 p.m. 1800 Avenida de Mesilla, Suite B, Las Cruces.

JULY 24

– Workshop: Curious about using a molcajete for food? In this workshop at the Los Portales Museum, guests will receive guided instructions on how to cure a molcajete to ensure food made in it is safe and clean. Tickets include a brand new 7” molcajete, materials, and instructions. Reservations are required as seats are limited. \$30 per person. 5-7 p.m. 1521 San Elizario Rd., San Elizario, Texas.

JULY 25

– Boots & Brands: An Old West Family Day is a family-friendly event that allows visitors to step back in time to experience frontier life. Hosted at the Wingfield Heritage House Museum, the events include hands-on activities like gold panning, cattle branding crafts, leatherworking, and more. Free. 10 a.m.-12 p.m. 2813 Sudderth Dr., Ruidoso, New Mexico.

AUG. 1

– Fashion Show: The Grapevine Plaza is hosting Fashion Fur Hearts 2026. The fundraising show benefits the Animal Services Center of The Mesilla Valley and will feature adoptable dogs with models on the runway. \$16.26. 4-7 p.m. 3900 W Picacho Ave., Las Cruces.

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Ingredients

- 2 10-inch flour tortillas
- $\frac{3}{4}$ cup Asadero cheese*
- 2 tsp vegetable oil
- $\frac{3}{4}$ cup shredded cheddar cheese
- $\frac{1}{4}$ cup La Posta Hatch Green Chile Cherry Chipotle Salsa
- 2 green onions (mostly green ends), finely chopped
- 8 oz precooked rotisserie chicken, skinned and shredded**

Directions

(1) In a small bowl, combine grated cheese. Mix well and set aside.

(2) In a large skillet, heat 1 tsp of the oil over medium-high heat. Brush to coat pan evenly with oil. Place one tortilla in the skillet and cook until air bubbles begin to form, about 1 minute.

(3) Reduce heat to medium and carefully spread half of the salsa evenly over the tortilla to the edges. Top with half of the cheese mixture, and cook until the cheese starts to melt, about 1 minute.

(4) Top one side of the tortilla with half of the green onions and shredded chicken, spreading to the edges of the tortilla.

(5) Gently fold the tortilla in half to create a half-moon shape, covering the onions and chicken. Cook for 1 minute, then flip folded tortilla over and cook until tortilla is lightly toasted and cheese filling is completely melted, about 1 to 2 minutes. Transfer quesadilla to a cutting board.

(6) Add remaining oil to skillet and repeat with second tortilla. Cut each quesadilla into 3 wedges and serve immediately.

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A perfect blend of sweet & spicy, this zesty salsa combines sweet black cherries and dried tart cherries, with the subtle smokiness and heat of chipotle chile.

Notes: *Mexican cheeses are rich and flavorful. You can typically find them in your local or specialty markets. Asadero cheese has a smooth texture, is yellow in color and has a tangy yet mild flavor. Queso Blanco is mild in flavor and white in color. Manchego is a buttery yellow cheese with a salty, nutty flavor. Mix them with cheeses you are familiar with such as cheddar, Monterey jack, pepper jack, and gruyere cheese for a delightful treat! **For a Beefy Sweet & Savory Chipotle Quesadilla, substitute 8 oz of precooked seasoned and grilled skirt steak for chicken. Follow steps 1 – 6.



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INFLATION'S IMPACT

on the state economy

By G. Buck



We are about six weeks into our state's peak tourist season, but many national and local factors have lowered our economic stimulation this summer. About an hour north of Las Cruces is Elephant Butte, less than 3.2% full. The lake has seen a severely low turnout – even during busy holidays, with Memorial Day suffering a 40% drop. However, a bar at Marina Del Sur recently opened called Brew Lab 101, which the state park hopes will entice more people to get out onto the water – or at least, the dock. While the Butte still has some water, there are hazards that exist, and precautions should be taken. However, remember you can still enjoy hot springs and the golf club at Turtleback Mountain outside of water recreation.

Ruidoso is grappling with another season of impact this year, aside from fires and floods. The racetrack is officially closed, meaning a primary driver of international tourism is out of network. The state's racing commission has approved a new development for racing near the airport. Of course, one can enjoy the multitude of regional outdoor recreation activities and midtown shopping, where mountain life can truly be found in the "land of Texans". Last season, I spent a weekend at a friend's beautiful home. Our first night, we went to a fundraiser that benefitted flood victims at one of my favorite spots. Sacred Grounds is a longstanding staple in the community, located on the river

high above the flood plain. Racing is a small part of what makes this area special. Importantly, it's a lot cooler than our southern valley counterpart.

As I write about encouraging everyone to try and get out amid a tight bill fold time, I'm in Santa Fe overseeing a job site, and the economy here is also slow. Typically, from Santa Fe up to Chama is busy, but sadly, the rush doesn't currently exist. There should be cars lining the lights to the plaza, but that absence marks a struggle for our state and the local businesses that sustain us. Gas has now declined to \$3.85/gallon while mid-grade rests at \$4.35. While this is a reduction, prices are still up and corporate greed has their teeth dug in.

One way to get out while saving some money is to monitor state park websites to see when they are waiving fees on certain weekends. While this may seem marginal, every extra penny is needed. Inflation is up to 4.2% while the APR on a 30-year fixed mortgage is 6.23-6.75%. Experts say it is still a good time to buy, as it gives the buyer additional leverage to lower the price by using a days on market approach.

Our national economy largely effects New Mexicans, as many of our highest paying jobs are linked to out-of-state corporations. We are a state with major volatility, between high rates of poverty and subsidy. Major economic recourse is needed to secure a safety net for people needing sustainable employment. We must create a multi-faceted economic

portfolio with a multi-layered income sheet, where wages are structured both hourly and salary based. As the Rio Grande settlement takes effect, southern New Mexico may begin to feel the largest effects due to its agricultural dependency.

A year after data centers secured land in the southern district of Doña Ana County, officials have began asking for transparency after lengthy anti-development efforts from both sides of the aisle. This labyrinth of clandestine details accompanied by generous philanthropic endeavors has seemingly bought off officials and left the public concerned for our future. We have senators' spouses lobbying on contract with Project Jupiter and city councilors opening "businesses" as contractors with them. Are these secretive harmful investments the future of our lagging economy? We don't have the framework in our current educational structure to effectively teach or retain these complex roles.

Our cumulative hardship as a state remains front and center. How do we manage our capricious economy or fix it for long-term growth? Increasing commodities are affecting tourism and rising poverty. The only positive outcome that has followed the risen energy sector is a surplus in remunerative intake for our state budget. Now we need to know if we can overcome our maudlin summer season and pull through a major drought.

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“cover story”



NEXT GEN CRUCES

gives all kids
‘a chance to play’

By Sylvia Quintanilla

Youth sports can have lasting positive effects on children, instilling discipline, teamwork, and goal setting. Next Gen Cruces was founded earlier this year and operates under the administrative sponsorship of the Community Foundation of Southern New Mexico. Through this partnership, athletes, coaches, and teams can transform youth sports in Las Cruces.

“Next Gen Cruces began in January of this year when a small group of us got together with one simple goal: to find a meaningful way to give back to the city that has given so much to us,” said Devin Perez, President and Co-Founder of Next Gen Cruces. “We didn’t meet with the intention of starting a fund—we met because we all saw challenges facing our community and wanted to be part of the solution.”

The officer team with Next Gen Cruces includes Vice President Christopher Love, Treasurer Andy Zapien, Community Development Director Nathan Paz, and Secretary Nate Dorado. Along with Perez, they are all co-founders of Next Gen Cruces.

“We’re all former athletes and many of us are now parents, educators, business owners, and law enforcement,” Perez explained. “Sports

NEXT GEN CRUCES CO-FOUNDER, NATHAN PAZ



**NEXT GEN CRUCES CO-FOUNDER,
ANDREW ZAPIEN**



**NEXT GEN CRUCES CO-FOUNDER,
CHRISTOPHER LOVE**



**NEXT GEN CRUCES CO-FOUNDER,
NATHAN DORADO**

played an important role in shaping who we became, and we wanted today's kids to have those same opportunities.”

As the members of Next Gen Cruces began to talk with families, coaches, and community members, Perez said one issue kept rising to the top: too many children who want to play sports are being held back by financial barriers. Those barriers include registration fees, equipment, uniforms, and other participation costs that have made it increasingly difficult for many families to get their children involved.

Next Gen Cruces is not a league, meaning they do not operate teams, so they are able to support athletes in various sports. Whether a child is passionate about baseball, basketball, soccer, football, volleyball, wrestling, gymnastics, track and field, or another recreational activity, they want to help.

“The need became clear almost immediately,” Perez explained. “As we’ve begun talking with parents, coaches, league organizers, and [Las Cruces] Parks & Recreation officials, we’ve consistently heard many of the same concerns. Families are struggling with the increasing costs associated with youth sports. Some children are being waitlisted because programs have reached capacity. Organizations continue working incredibly hard, but many face challenges with volunteer coaches, facilities, and resources.”

The growing shortage of volunteer coaches is a significant obstacle ahead of youth sports. Perez noted that many organizations have more children interested in participating than they have coaches available to lead teams, which can result in waitlists and missed opportunities for young athletes.

While the initial focus of Next Gen Cruces is helping families overcome financial barriers, the group hopes that as they expand, they will see more community members step into coaching and mentorship roles.

“A great coach can have a lasting impact that extends far beyond wins and losses,” Perez said. “Coaches teach confidence, discipline, teamwork, resilience, and leadership, and for many young people, they become trusted mentors during some of the most

important years of their lives. We believe supporting both athletes and coaches will strengthen youth sports across our community.”

Perez said Next Gen Cruces has seen an outpour of community support. Businesses want to invest in local kids. Parents want opportunities for their children. Coaches want more kids on their teams. The group’s goal is to bring all those people together. Community members can support Next Gen Cruces by sponsoring a child, making a donation, partnering with them, volunteering, coaching, or simply helping spread awareness about their mission.

The Community Foundation of Southern New Mexico’s support of Next Gen Cruces has assisted the organization in hitting the ground running.

“The Community Foundation has been an incredible partner for us. As a newly formed fund, they’re providing fiscal sponsorship, mentorship, and guidance while we build the organization,” Perez said. “They’ve given us access to resources and expertise that would have taken years to develop on our own. More importantly, they’ve helped us build the organization the right way — with accountability, transparency, and long-term sustainability in mind. We’re extremely grateful for their confidence in our mission and look forward to growing alongside them.”

Parents, coaches, or community members who want to make an impact on the city’s youth and help this organization succeed are encouraged to contact Next Gen Cruces. The vision of Next Gen Cruces is to build a community movement that removes barriers and creates opportunities for the next generation.

“I want people to know that this organization belongs to the community,” Perez emphasized. “It’s about making sure every child has the opportunity to experience the lessons that sports teach — teamwork, perseverance, accountability, confidence, and leadership. We believe investing in kids today strengthens our entire community tomorrow. Our mission is simple: give every kid in our community a chance to play.”



FIRE UPDATE

in New Mexico

By G. Buck

The Beehive Fire in the Carson National Forest burned nearly 5,000 acres, but is now almost fully contained. Exacerbated by 40 mph winds fanning the flames, the fire led to heavy smoke flooding the Colorado-New Mexico border near Tres Piedras.

The McCauley Springs Fire, east of Battleship Rock, is now over 90% contained and totaled 712 acres. Highway 4 through Santa Fe National Forest has now reopened, but still has some delays due to limited traffic flow. Smoke can still be seen from Jemez Springs, surrounding communities, and Albuquerque.





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Tips

from a Socialite: Curating a unique space

What happened to the art of curating, where sets of flanking sculptures or crystal settings encapsulated a space? Our homes have become full of grays, tans, whites, and quick or trendy purchases. Design reflects your personality – not a textile puzzle found in repetition.

I often consult with people about the need to spend months or sometimes up to a year outfitting a space with proper art, furniture, accessories, and finishing textiles. Many things don't have to be new, and if they are, they can be curated utilizing worldly access, via online purchases or traveling. Previously collected knick-knacks can find a home in built-ins, on end tables, or woven in with family photos.

Using light clusters and lamps as sculptures elevate a space. Contrast in wall color and settees warms the space while acting as functional art. Using vignettes in a large room gives an illusion of multiple rooms, while allowing for a larger entertaining area. Proper fitting couches should draw you in while layered rugs play on the depth of space. Use layers to bring a space to life.

Remember, when building rooms are back in, the days of the 1,200 square foot open concept are over. Open concept was born from the use of luxury modernism in large expansive spaces, but rooms still existed and were found in other areas of the contemporary layout.

“recipe”



EASY ON- THE-GO Power Protein

By G. Buck

INGREDIENTS:

¾-1 cup organic nonfat plain Greek yogurt
15 black cherries, pitted and roughly chopped OR 1-2 peaches, pitted and roughly chopped
1-2 tbsp honey or Stevia; adjust for preferred sweetness

DIRECTIONS:

Combine the fruit and yogurt in a to-go container. Allow to sit in the fridge overnight and add sweetener the following day. Enjoy!



cocktails

By Melissa Martinez Jones, Mixologist at Hacienda de Mesilla



Cucumber Mint Lemonade

1 ½ oz Effen Cucumber Vodka
½ oz orange liqueur
5 oz lemonade
½ oz fresh lemon juice
¼ oz simple syrup (optional)
5 mint leaves
2 cucumber slices
Tajín rim (optional)
Collins glass

Rim the Collins glass with lime and Tajín and set aside. In a shaker, combine mint, cucumber slices, and lemon juice.

Muddle until the mixture becomes aromatic. Add remaining ingredients and ice into the shaker. Shake about five times and strain into the glass. Add fresh ice and garnish with a cucumber wheel and a few mint leaves.



Adult Cherry Limeade

2 oz cherry vodka
1 oz fresh lime juice
¾ oz grenadine
Sprite
Pint glass

In a shaker, combine all ingredients except Sprite. Strain into the glass. Add ice and finish off with Sprite. Garnish with a lime wedge and a few maraschino cherries.



Watermelon Basil Lemon Drop Martini

1 ½ oz watermelon vodka
½ oz Cointreau
1 basil leaf
1 oz fresh lemon juice
½ oz simple syrup
Coarse sugar
Lemon slice

Martini or coupe glass

Rim the glass with lemon and sugar and set aside. In a shaker, add lemon juice and basil. Muddle until aromatic. Add the remaining ingredients and ice and shake well. Strain into the sugar-rimmed glass. Garnish with a watermelon wedge and basil leaf.



Spicy Mango Paloma

2 oz Tepozán tequila
2-3 chunks of mango
¾ oz fresh lime juice
2 jalapeño slices
4 oz grapefruit soda
Salt or Tajín
Lime wedge

Highball or Collins glass

Rim the glass with lime and salt or Tajín. In a shaker, combine jalapeño and mango and muddle. Add the remaining ingredients except grapefruit soda. Add ice and shake 5-6 times. Strain into the rimmed glass. Add grapefruit soda and top with ice. Garnish with a lime wheel and jalapeño slice.





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