

The Bandera PROPHECY

March 3, 2023

Briefings from Commissioners Court

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The Bandera Prophet

Bill Taber, owner and CEO of Biker Rallies of Texas, has submitted his proposal to lease Mansfield Park during the 2024 solar eclipse, which on April 8, 2024, will carve a path across 13 U.S. states - and Bandera is the bullseye.

Proposing a five-day music fest, Taber touted a family-friendly event with car and motorcycle shows, kids' games, a kids' zone, a petting zoo, full Saturday rodeo, and music featuring national, regional and local bands playing country, classic rock, tejano and other genres.

"It's something for everybody," Taber told commissioners during their regular Feb. 23 court session. "It'll be very family friendly."

Even more convenient, Taber said the eclipse will be one week after the Thunder in the Hill Country biker rally event, so his infrastructure would already be in place. Taber proposed \$10,000 total to rent the park from Thursday, April, 4, at noon, to Tuesday, April 9, at noon. The county's standard rental fee for Mansfield Park, which includes the arena, blue rec hall, front pavilion and RV area is \$1,900 per day.

Taber was one of two applicants, and the only to speak. Commissioners will weigh the proposals before announcing their choice. There were no responses for the Oct. 14 annular eclipse, when the sun will surround the moon and align with Earth, creating a "ring of fire."

During the 2024 total eclipse, the centerline will enter Texas as it crosses the Rio Grande River at the Mexico/U.S. border at about 12:10 p.m.

Totality will begin in Bandera at 1:31 p.m., with a duration of four minutes and 3.8 seconds - the longest in the country.

~ In other business, commissioners approved 3-1 an agreement for architectural and professional services with Fisher Heck Architects for the Bandera County Visitors Center. The lone nay vote was Pct. 4 Commissioner Jody Rutherford, who said he would vote yes only when the Bandera County Historical Commission takes over restoration of the building.

~ Commissioners approved an agreement with Adopt-A-Highway volunteers to do litter pick-up on county-maintained roads.

“Today, something is really moving forward,” Don’t Mess with Bandera Volunteer Mike Stiborik said. “Certain roads are just nasty...waiting a year in between [clean-ups] just doesn’t work.”

Stiborik said 29 volunteers recently cleaned Wharton’s Dock Road, filling up 62 42-gallon bags of trash. He thanked Rutherford, Pct. 1 Commissioner Bruce Elikor and Road & Bridge Superintendent John Andrade for their help and contributions.

“I don’t know where people get all this trash,” Stiborik said. “We find needles, we find God knows what.”

~ In his monthly report, Bandera County Sheriff Dan Butts said during January, dispatchers responded to 560 calls, and received 1,093 incoming 911 calls. Deputies traveled 23,247 miles, with an average response time of 15.9 minutes. Seven felony and 10 misdemeanor arrests were made; 26 property crimes and 43 crimes against a person were investigated. Bandera County responded to 15 calls inside city limits as the primary responder. Authorities served 62 warrants; booked 43 people into the county jail; and transported 12 out-of-county inmates. The average inmate population was 65, five of whom were contract inmates from other counties.

Dispatchers received 142 animal related calls; 24 dogs were picked up by animal control, and zero cats; the average dog population was 17. In his annual racial profiling report, mandated by the state, Butts said deputies made 412 traffic stops during 2022; 134 were female drivers; 278 were male drivers; one Asian; 14 black; 319 white; 78 Hispanic. A

search was conducted 78 times; zero incidents of physical force were reported.

EMS Director Shannon Griffin said in January, EMTs responded to 265 calls for service, traveled 13,659 miles, and had an average tone to on scene time of 10.33 minutes.