

RIO GRANDE VALLEY

County attorney arrested on drunk and disorderly charge

BY SERGIO CHAPA
THE BROWNSVILLE HERALD

Cameron County attorney Douglas Wright was arrested on South Padre Island early Saturday on public intoxication and disorderly conduct charges by exposing his genitals, Cameron County District Attorney Armando Villalobos confirmed Monday.

Under state law, both offenses are considered misdemeanor crimes. Villalobos said the case remains under review.

"We need to review witness statements to determine what level of charges will be filed," he said.

Police reports were not available Monday evening. South Padre Island Police Chief Robert Rodriguez confirmed Wright's arrest over the weekend.

It is the second time Wright has been arrested this year. According to *Brownsville Herald* archives, Wright is serving a

six-month deferred adjudication sentence issued in March for duty upon striking a fixed object.

The charge stemmed from a Nov. 20 incident in which Wright was returning to his South Padre Island home and hit a street sign at the foot of the Queen Isabella Memorial Bridge.

Following the accident, South Padre Island police charged Wright with DWI, duty upon striking a fixed object and unlawful carrying a weapon after police found a handgun inside his vehicle. County Court-at-Law No. 3 Judge Dan Robles acquitted Wright of the DWI and unlawful carrying a weapon charges in March after the county attorney pleaded no contest to all three charges.

Villalobos said it was not clear on Monday how the weekend arrest would affect Wright's deferred adjudication. "We'll determine if we need to adjudicate or revoke his probation," he said.

But Villalobos said his office filed an appeal on the unlawfully carrying a weapon charge shortly after Robles' decision. A hearing on the appeal is expected this morning before County Court-at-Law No. 2 Judge Elia Cornejo Lopez.

Cameron County Judge Gilberto Hinojosa said Wright was arrested sometime late Friday night or early Saturday morning, but could not confirm if the county attorney came to work on Monday.

Hinojosa said he has not spoken to Wright or officials from the Island police department but had received a report from the district attorney's office.

The county judge said the county commissioner's court would most likely address Wright's arrest at its regular meeting next week. "We're still waiting to hear what this is about," he said.

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BISD expected to make zoning changes

BY KEVIN GARCIA
THE BROWNSVILLE HERALD

Zoning changes could be in store for the district when the Brownsville Independent School District board meets tonight.

The regular meeting, which begins at 5:30 p.m. at the BISD Administration Building, 1900 Price Road, addresses largely routine issues, including construction approvals, budget change orders and approving \$43,272.48 in property tax refunds.

Trustees will also be asked to approve a zoning change — focused primarily on new subdivisions between Perez and Egly elementaries. Area Superintendent Susan Fox said children from most of the new homes had been zoned to Egly, rather than Perez, which is within walking distance of the neighborhood.

"We're making minor changes to get students closer to their new home," she said.

During closed session the board will also undergo a self-evaluation.

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More information

What: BISD board Meeting
When: 5:30 p.m. today
Where: BISD board room, 1900 Price Road

"That's when we police each other," board President Pat Lehmann said. "I'm requesting that because there are some issues that need to be resolved. By policy we do that once a year but sometimes issues arise that the board needs to address because we need to keep harmony."

Because the evaluation could deal with personal issues between board members, it is in the closed portion of the meeting.

Among the change orders

up for review by the board is one dealing with \$47,133.30 for construction at Vermillion and Putegnat elementaries.

Board member Eliceo Muñoz said modifications that reduced the scope of a paving project at Vermillion should have reduced the construction cost.

"As I understand it, on the recommendation of the principal one of the parking lots was deemed larger than was necessary," he said. "We're due some money back because the contract price was reduced."

Anyone wishing to speak during public comments should notify district officials before the meeting starts.

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Fifth victim of train-tanker crash buried

BY TONY VINDELL
VALLEY MORNING STAR

LUCIO BLANCO, Mexico — More than 50 people gathered Monday to console the family of 33-year-old Daniel Arriaga as he was buried.

The mourners were assembled in a small frame house a couple of blocks east of the site where a tandem-tanker truck and train collided last week, leaving a path of destruction on both sides of State Highway 2.

Arriaga was the fifth victim of the Aug. 11 accident that destroyed scores of roadside shops, houses and vehicles, and shook the small farming community.

A sixth victim, identified as Rodolfo Briceño, 38, was scheduled to arrive later and was to be buried next to his

sister Reyna, whose body is yet to arrive.

"I am waiting for them," Juan Briceño, brother of Rodolfo and Reyna, said as he stood on the side of the highway late Monday morning. "I helped them to get out of the *taqueria* (after the explosion) and took them to Matamoros. My brother's last words were: 'Don't leave me. Don't leave me.'"

Juan Briceño said that their bodies seemed to be smoldering when he pulled them from the *taqueria* and figured then that they were not going to make it.

"They worked at the *taqueria* less than a block from the railroad tracks," he said, adding that "they were making an honest living."

Outside Arriaga's home, mourners drove in a funeral

procession.

The victim's parents, sisters, a brother and other relatives walked behind the hearse to the cemetery in the town of Control Ramirez.

They walked — escorted by local police — for about two miles in a light rain.

A white cross, placed on one side of the grave where Arriaga was buried, had his name, birth date and the date he died.

His father, Andres, and a sister, Leticia, said Daniel worked tinting car windows on the side of the road by the railroad tracks.

"He supported his way through technical school doing that," Leticia Arriaga said. "He could have done other jobs, but that is what he chose to do."

His father said that Daniel

Arriaga was always determined to support his family.

"He worked hard," he said. "He was very outgoing and would go out of his way to help a friend in need."

The Arriagas, Briceños and others affected by the explosion said they have no idea if they would ever get help either from the government or from the company that owns the truck.

Jorge Valenzuela, director of the municipal police in Control, said the Third District's Office in Matamoros is handling the case.

"What we need now are new signs at this railroad crossing," he said as clean-up crews were removing debris from the affected area. "We have trains and a lot of trucks going by here."



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Federal Employee Union Leader And Civic Activist Awarded High National Honor
Hidalgo—A long-time local leader of the nation's largest independent union of federal workers has been awarded one of his union's highest honors for exemplary service both to his union and to the Customs and Border Protection (CBP) employees he represents. David Atkinson, a civic activist and president of Chapter 149 of the National Treasury Employees Union (NTEU), was presented the award by NTEU National President Colleen M. Kelley at the union's 50th National Convention last week in San Diego, California. Atkinson is also Chairperson of the NTEU Laredo District Joint Council, representing CBP employees in the Department of Homeland Security from Del Rio to Brownsville, Texas. Atkinson is widely-known and respected for his work as Chapter 149 president, and in particular for his continuing efforts to guard the due process and contractual rights of those represented by the chapter. He is an experienced bargainer at both the local and national levels; an effective organizer who maintains a high membership within the Chapter 149 bargaining unit; and leads a solid political action program for the chapter. The union honor, known as the Philip D. O'Rourke Memorial Award, is presented at NTEU's biennial convention to recognize chapter presidents who have shown exceptional leadership skills. It is named for an NTEU staff member who was killed in a 1967 plane crash while on NTEU business. The plaque presented to Atkinson by NTEU President Kelly reads: "In recognition of your commitment of time and energy on behalf of your fellow federal employees, your dedication to the goals and objectives to NTEU and your self-sacrifice which emulates the ideas, courage and understanding exemplified in life by the man in whose memory this award is given." As the largest independent federal union, NTEU represents some 150,000 employees in 30 agencies and departments, including about 14,000 in CBP.

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