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Decision on water park funding angers some

By **THOMAS JENKINS**
 Staff Writer

Despite some rather adversarial comments from a pair of residents, the Big Spring City Council unanimously approved the issuance of certificates of obligation Monday totaling \$4.2 million to fund a

new municipal aquatics center in Comanche Trail Park.

The council — with Mayor Russ McEwen, one of the proposed center's biggest proponents, absent — gave the go ahead for the sale of the certificates within the fiscal market, moving forward with a plan that will replace the ex-

isting municipal swimming pool with a multi-million dollar aquatics center.

The council had given the order not to open the existing swimming pool at the end of the school year in May 2009 after city officials learned the facility failed to meet federal requirements laid out in the

Virginia Graeme Baker Act, as well as ADA (Americans with Disabilities Act) requirements.

Monday's council decision didn't sit well with a pair of local residents — both of whom are political hopefuls heading into the May election — however.

"It's not bad, but it's certainly not an AAA rating," said local resident Tommy Duncan, who has spoken against the construction of an aquatics center in the past and is currently running for mayor. "We are required to buy

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Felony robbery reaps 25 years for local man

By **THOMAS JENKINS**
 Staff Writer

A Big Spring man was found guilty of first-degree felony robbery Monday in 118th District Court and sentenced to 25 years in prison.

Michael Lee Munoz, 26, currently being held in the Howard County Jail and formerly of 904 Abrams, was found guilty by 118th District Judge Robert H. Moore III follow-

ing a bench trial for his part in the Dec. 18 robbery of the Exxon gas station on N. Highway 87.

Munoz was indicted on the charge — along with 40-year-old Enrique "Ricky" Sabedra Jr., formerly of 1509 Sycamore — by a Howard County grand jury in mid-January. Sabedra accepted a plea agreement last week that will have him

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Sexual assault trial to begin in 118th court

By **THOMAS JENKINS**
 Staff Writer

Jury selection in the aggravated sexual assault trial of a 29-year-old Big Spring man began in 118th District Court today.

Jacob Andrew Ferro was released by the state facility and immediately taken into custody by officials from the HCSO and transported back to Howard County, according to information released by Sheriff Stan Parker shortly after Ferro's arrest.

Ferro was arrested Jan. 30 by the HCSO on charges of assault causing bodily injury,

possession of a controlled substance and aggravated sexual assault (two counts), according to county jail records.

The trial was scheduled to begin at approximately 1 p.m. today and will continue, if necessary, at 9 a.m. Wednesday.

Attempts to reach the Howard County District Attorney's office for comment Tuesday morning were unsuccessful.

Contact Staff Writer Thomas Jenkins at 263-7331 ext. 232 or by e-mail at citydesk@big-springherald.com



Work crews set up a crane outside the Settles Hotel building this morning. The crane will be used to hoist elevators to the top of the building.

HERALD photo/Steve Reagan

Big Day for Big Spring ISD

Students take home top honors at regional science fair

By **STEVE REAGAN**
 Staff Writer

Several Big Spring Independent School District students took top honors at the University of Texas Permian Basin Regional Science Fair, held this past weekend in Odessa.

Twenty-six student projects were deemed worthy of advancing to the next round of competition in the Intel-spon-

sored International Science and Engineering Fair. State-level competition is next on the students' slate and is scheduled for April 9 through April 12 in San Antonio.

According to Darrell Ryan, director of federal programs at BSISD, it was Big Spring day at the regional fair.

"The kids just went out there and dominated," Ryan

said. "We had the most entries we've ever had before and the quality of their work was just excellent — and the results show that."

At Saturday's regional meet, students placing first through third on their respective projects in the senior or intermediate levels qualified for the state science fair, to be held in the Albert Gonzales

Center in San Antonio. Students from the junior (elementary) level competed in the regional fair, but their projects were not eligible to advance to state competition.

Results from Saturday's Regional Science Fair at UTPB were:

Senior Division
 • Physics/Astronomy —

Destiny Curry, first place plus scholarship.

• Team project — Julian

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