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THE MONITOR

SUNDAY, SEPTEMBER 13, 2015 SERVING THE RIO GRANDE VALLEY SINCE 1909 \$1.50 SUNDAYS



Taking to the field
See the results of RGV high school football games rescheduled after Friday's storms.
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Taking wing
Bird-watching aficionados flock to Hummingbird Days at Quinta Mazatlán.
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Willing and able
Local American Ninja Warrior finalist encourages holistic health ahead of episode airing.
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A border boost
Editorial: Texas' economy will benefit from better relations between U.S., Mexico.
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After mine spill, work suspended
Site investigations and some cleanup work at 10 polluted mining complexes have been halted because of conditions similar to wastewater blowout.
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'Not my finale'
As independent gas station empire shrinks, owners look to new chapter for Aziz Quick Stop

BY KRISTEN MOSBRUCHER
STAFF WRITER

Dagoberto Treviño Sr., right, talks with Rafael Pacheco Sr. inside Treviño's Aziz Quick Stop location Thursday in Pahrump. Treviño has closed 27 of 28 of his locations after filing for bankruptcy in 2014.



Workers remove the Aziz sign Aug. 13 from the front of an Aziz Quick Stop in Pahrump. The only store that will remain open is on U.S. 83 and Benton Palm Road. See **AZIZ** | 12A

monitornews.com
Read the bankruptcy filing.

HIDALGO COUNTY
Budget

Hiring requests swell as trimming begins

Proposed unassigned fund balance could drop below 10 percent

BY KRISTEN MOSBRUCHER
STAFF WRITER

EDINBURG — Hidalgo County commissioners continue to trek through the process to adopt the annual budget and last week held its fifth workshop — but commissioners didn't seem pleased with the latest bottom line presented.

"This is going to get changed," said Precinct 2 Commissioner Eddie Canus, waving the budget workshop packet in his hand on Thursday morning.

The proposed budget requests had swelled to the point that the county's unassigned fund balance dropped below 10 percent to 9.87 percent. This was after new requests for funding — mostly for new staff members, but also for a cost of living adjustment had been factored in.

See **BUDGET** | 11A

monitornews.com
Read the workshop packet.
Read the auditor's report.
Read the 2014 film report.
See the fund balance report.

Fewer babies being born to women in US illegally

Study: Downward trend echoes overall drop in illegal immigration

BY KATE LINTHICUM
LOS ANGELES TIMES

for 1 percent of total U.S. births in 2013, according to the nonpartisan Pew Research Center. The issue has been in the spotlight in recent months, with Donald Trump and other Republican candidates for president calling such children "anchor babies," a term considered derogatory, and calling for an end to automatic citizenship for children born to immigrants.

A new report says the number of babies born to women in the United States illegally is falling. Such births accounted from a peak of 370,000 in 2007. The downward trend echoes the overall drop in illegal immigration in recent years, which has been driven largely by a decrease in the number of immigrants illegally crossing the border from Mexico.

The population of immigrants illegally in the country dropped about 1 million during the 2007-09 recession and has remained stable since.

"When the population went down, the births went down," said D'Vera Cohn, a co-author of the Pew report.

The high birth rate to immigrants can be explained by the differing demographics of the American-born and the foreign-born populations, Cohn said.

See **BABES** | 11A

Looking for a new vehicle? **Think Bert Ogden**



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12A
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Photos by Nathan Lambrecht | nlanbrecht@themonitor.com
Fernando Hernandez places food in a warming tray while getting the counter ready for customers Thursday in Palmview.

AZIZ

From Page 1A

Now, the family who had developed a fiercely loyal customer base, looks for a second chance after it was forced to sell 27 of its 28 stores that dominated in Hidalgo County for years.

Treviño's first station was along Highway 83 in La Joya, where he had pull-out coolers with glass bottle sodas for sale and a few small pumps. Each weekday morning he'd rise before the sun to feed hungry bus drivers.

"If they wanted to come at 5 a.m., I'd be in at 4 a.m.," said the 64-year-old about the crowds of four burritos with eggs and chorizo that he'd help make by hand each morning and then set inside a handmade glass case with warmers underneath.

"It was a big taco, not something small, not like other places," he said in Spanish, cupping his hands. The family operation bears the name of one of the younger sons—Aziz—which means "dear or precious."

"Many people think I'm an *otra raza* (different ethnicity)," Treviño Sr. said. "Like Middle Eastern,"

pipied in his son, Dagoberto Treviño Jr. "But I'm Mexican," he said.

He's a native of San Miguel de Camargo (now called Diaz, Oaxaca) across the Rio Grande from Llanos in the Mexican state of Tamaulipas.

When he first crossed the Rio Grande armed with a sixth-grade education at 14 years old, he traveled to California and was a migrant farmworker in the fields there for about a decade.

"I learned a little bit of English in the process. I am very good with numbers, and good at business," he said.

Many of his old neighbors later trekked into the United States decades ago, too, and now reside in the Sullivan City, La Joya and Palmview area. Those people tend to be his most loyal customers, he said.

There I have lots of friends, family and neighbors from my little village that live here now—all the people," he said—then passed on those memories seemed to overcome him. "All those people came in my stores."

It's the reason why, out of all the stores he once controlled, there's still one left on Bertness Palm Road just off Expressway 83. While some



Food lines the shelves of the Aziz Quick Stop as a customer pays for his goods Thursday in Palmview.

shoppers may regularly hunt for only the cheapest and closest pump, others supported the independent owner.

"They keep shopping at our stores because they remember him as a little kid in Mexico," his son, Treviño Jr. said. "They respect him and know him—they are loyal and would look for an Aziz."

But now, Treviño said, he's recovering from the pain of watching pressed wood panels cover the doors and windows of his Spanish-style store with modern brown stucco roofs and signature arches.

The company filed for bankruptcy in 2014.

BANKRUPTCY

Treviño said he had built good relationships with local banks and had a steady credit line for years since he ran a home building company, too.

"Every year I was building one or two stores and building homes for subdivisions," he said. But the 2008 recession hit him hard. "The times were very difficult for everybody."

First National Bank in Edinburg had financed the Aziz store expansion for years, but in 2013, it was shut down by the Office of the Comptroller of the Currency, which appointed the Federal Deposit Insurance Corporation to oversee its operations.

First National Bank was sold to Plains Capital Bank and when the new bank came to collect its debts, Aziz defaulted in the summer of 2014.

First National had lent \$27.6 million that was backed by the stores, inventory and working capital. Plains Capital Bank tried to foreclose on the stores last August, but the bankruptcy petition stopped that.

At the time of the bankruptcy filing, in August 2014, Aziz listed \$34 million in assets and \$39.7 million worth of liabilities, court documents show.

In Hidalgo County, about a dozen of the stores have slowly re-opened bearing the Stripes name the, selling signature tires and Sunoco-branded gasoline.

Aziz was purchased by Sussex Petroleum Property in 2014, but that company was snarled by oil and gas giant Sunoco, a Philadelphia-based firm with refineries in Pennsylvania, through its parent company—Energy Transfer Partners LP, a Fortune 500 firm.

At the end of July, the bankruptcy court judge approved a \$41.6 million sale of the Aziz gas stations to Sussex. Other bidders included Circle K Stores Inc., which had offered \$41.5 million. There was also a third, unnamed bidder in the auction.

As part of the new deal, Aziz was required to use some of the sale profits to



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Aziz Quick Stop bankruptcy

- 28 stores across Hidalgo County since 1984
- More than 1,750 employees
- Sold for \$41.6 million to Sussex Petroleum Property LLC, also Stripes, in 2014
- Sunoco purchased Stripes LLC, which includes Aziz properties in larger \$1.8B deal with 630 stores

gas costs about 3 cents less per gallon to sell. Aziz Quick Stop grew to be one of the largest unbranded gas station chains in the country.

"In volume, I sold 2 million gallons a month. It was a river of gas," Treviño Sr. said across his 28 stores.

But as competition grew in the Valley, the volume of gas he sold dropped. At one point, with only about 15 stores, Treviño said he was regularly selling about 3 million gallons of gasoline each month.

The Treviño family acknowledged their emergence from bankruptcy was unusual.

"Most companies aren't this lucky. Many don't come out of bankruptcy," his son, Treviño Jr. said.

Treviño Jr. said he remembers standing on wooden milk crates at 10 years old so he could see above the counter and help work the cash register inside the Aziz stores.

It was a tough sell for the family he said, especially since the son that shares his name wants to continue the family business.

"It was good for the whole family. I paid the bank and it left some money for expenses—but this is not my final," Treviño Sr. said. "I feel much stronger now because I have more experience."

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