



KIMBERLY RYAN/NEWS-SUN

Putty in their hands

Participants at a Center for the Arts class demonstrate various ways to shape clay, including, top, Alex Wooten, above left, Jonathen Van Burskirk and Lizzy Johnson.

Record-setting New Mexico wildfire spreading in all directions

RESERVE (AP) — A massive wildfire in the New Mexico wilderness that already is the largest in state history spread in all directions Thursday, and experts say it's likely a preview of things to come as states across the West contend with a dangerous recipe of wind, low humidity and tinder-dry fuels.

The erratic Gila National Forest blaze grew overnight to more than 190,000 acres, or nearly 300 square miles, as it raced across the area's steep, ponderosa pine-covered hills and through its rugged canyons.

More than 1,200 firefighters are at the massive blaze near the Arizona border, which has destroyed a dozen cabins and eight outbuildings, fire information officer Iris Estes said.

Experts say persistent drought, climate change and shifts in land use and firefighting strategies mean other western states likely will see similar giant fires this season.

"We've been in a long drought cycle for the last 20 years, and conditions now are great for these type of fires," said Steve Pyne, author of "Tending Fire. Coping with America's Wildland Fires" and a life science professor at Arizona State University. "Everything is in line."

Agencies in New Mexico, Colorado, Arizona and other western states are bracing for the worst. Many counties have established emergency telephone and email notification systems to warn of wildfires, and most states have enlisted crews from nearby states to be ready when the big ones come.

"It's highly likely that these fires are going to get so big that states are going to need outside resources to fight them," said Jeremy Sullens, a wildland fire analyst at the National Interagency Fire Center.

According to the National Weather Service, a dry climate is expected to prolong drought conditions across the Great Basin and central Rockies during the fire season. Large portions of Nevada, Arizona, Utah, Colorado and New Mexico will remain under severe drought conditions.

"We're transitioning from La Nina to El Nino so we have no guidance to what's going to happen, like if we will get more rain or less rain," said Ed Polasko, a National Weather Service meteorologist.

And it's unclear what type of relief will come from monsoon season, which starts in mid-July, since experts say it's difficult to predict what areas in the West will benefit, Sullens said.

A lack of moisture means fewer fuels to burn in some areas, but unburned vegetation elsewhere could pose a problem since states received no sustained snow or rain this winter and spring.

That's what happened in New Mexico's Gila Wilderness, where a lack of snow failed to push down grass, which worsened the fire danger, Sullens said.

Typically fires in the area don't cross the middle fork of the Gila River, said Danny Montoya, a member of the fire's incident command team.

"This year, it did get across," Montoya said. "We're getting humidity levels during the day about 2 to 3 percent. Normally, during summer you'd see 5 to 12 percent."

The two-week-old Gila forest fire is the largest wildfire burning in the country. Its size this week surpassed New Mexico's last record fire, a blaze last year that charred 156,593 acres and threatened the Los Alamos National Laboratory, the

nation's premier nuclear facility.

Officials on Thursday closed the Gila Cliff Dwellings National Monument due to smoke generated from the fire. The National Park Service said the closure would remain in effect until conditions improve.

ALL SHOWS BEFORE 6 PM (\$6.50) EXCEPT 3D

1609 JOE HARVEY BLVD.

*SNOW WHITE & THE HUNTSMAN (11:30 2:45) 6:15 9:20

*THE AVENGERS 3D (11:30) 6:05 9:10

THE AVENGERS 2D (2:40)

*MEN IN BLACK 3D (11:20 1:45) 7:10 9:40

*MEN IN BLACK 2D (4:25)

WHAT TO EXPECT WHEN YOU'RE EXPECTING (11:20 2:00 4:30) 7:15 9:45

BATTLESHIP (11:20 3:00) 6:20 9:25

DARK SHADOWS (11:15 1:55 4:30) 7:10 9:45

*CHERNOBYL DIARIES (11:30 2:30 4:45) 7:30 9:30

ALL 3D MOVIES MATINEE ALL SEATS \$8.50 EVENING \$8.50 CHILD \$10.50 ADULT

No Pass, Discount or Gift Tickets on * Movies

Mark the date

TODAY

Brown Bag Series

The Western Heritage Museum hosts a Brown Bag Lunch series at 11:30 a.m. at the museum. Topic discussion will be "The Energy Pioneers."

Downtown Sounds

The Downtown Sounds Concert Series begins with Triple L Band at 7 p.m. Triple L Band offers traditional bluegrass show with a tight family harmonies. Shows are free and bring a lawn chair to the

Shipp Street Plaza. Refreshments will be available for purchase.

SATURDAY

Lea County Dance

The Lea County Dance at the VFW in Lovinton, one mile north of Lovington on the Tatum Highway, will be from 7-9:30 p.m. Cost is \$5 per person with potluck refreshments. Shinery Brothers will play.

Friends of Library

Patrons of the Hobbs Public Library

are invited to support the Library through membership in the Friends nonprofit organization. Volunteers will be at the Library from 10:30 a.m. to 4:30 p.m. to renew current memberships and to sign up new members.

SUNDAY

Anniversary service

Ebenezer Missionary Baptist Church will celebrate its 82nd anniversary service at 3 p.m. The anniversary theme is "Whatever Ye Do, Do All To The Glory Of God" I Corinthians 10-31. Special guest will be Elder Dylan Barry and the El Bethel COGIC.

Drug Coalition hoping federal government bans synthetic drugs

BETH HAHN NEWS-SUN

This summer, the Community Drug Coalition of Lea County is hoping local and federal initiatives will slow the popularity of synthetic drugs.

Darlene Tafoya, executive director of the CDC, said the federal government recently passed a bill that will ban the sale of synthetic drugs across the country.

Hobbs already enacted a similar ban last year, and Tafoya said Jal is seeking a similar ordinance.

"(The CDC) is very concerned about the impact synthetic marijuana is having and could have on our community," she said.

Synthetic marijuana, often called K2 or Spice, is labeled as "herbal incense" and sold in packets over the Internet, in head shops, tobacco and smoke shops, drug paraphernalia shops and gas stations.

Tafoya said it is made of herbs treated with chemicals that mimic THC, the active substance in marijuana that gives users a high.

The federal ban also applies to bath salts, sold in the same shops, which mimic cocaine.

Tafoya said despite arguments claiming the herbs and salts are not harmful, new stories are broadcast on news and Internet daily about the harmful side effects of the substances.

"With chemicals, you never really know what you're getting," she said.

Tafoya related a story she recently read of a teenager who smoked Spice and ended up with chemical burns on his lungs.

"He needed a double-lung transplant," she said. "He actually died as a result of the burns on his lungs."

One problem the government is facing is wording in state and local ordinances that specifies chemical compounds on the herbs and bath salts.

Tafoya said to get around the bans, suppliers use different chemicals.

"It's a moving target," she said.

The federal ban on selling synthetic drugs should be on President Barack Obama's desk by July 4, according to a press release from New York Sen. Charles Schumer.

If Obama signs the bill, selling synthetic drugs could land offenders behind bars for 20 years for a first offense or 30 years for second or subsequent offenses.

A national survey indicated one in nine high school seniors has smoked synthetic marijuana in the last year.

That statistic probably holds true for Lea County, Tafoya said.

Surveys in Lea County, called Youth Risk and Resilience, have not included synthetic drugs.

The most recent data available, from the 2009 survey, did not ask about Spice or bath salts, Tafoya said.

"It wasn't an issue then," she said.

Along with growing use among students, many employers are seeing workers use the substances, Tafoya said.

"We get calls from businesses all the time, asking what they can do about employees smoking Spice on the job," she said.

The CDC, in partnership with the Hobbs Chamber of Commerce and City of Hobbs, will host a workshop on drug use in the workplace for employers on July 11. A time and location have not been set as of Thursday.

JUDGE LISA RILEY
Fifth Judicial District Court

EXPERIENCED AND QUALIFIED!

VOTE TO KEEP THE GOVERNOR'S CHOICE,
VOTE TO KEEP DISTRICT JUDGE LISA RILEY

Last year Governor Martinez was faced with the task of appointing a new District Judge for our area. Nominees included Lisa Riley and Les Williams who now face each other in the June 5 primary.

After extensive face to face interviews and a lengthy vetting process, the governor made her decision. Through a press release, Gov. Martinez said these words:

"Lisa Riley's wealth of legal experience in both public and private practice makes her highly qualified to serve the people of Eddy, Chaves, and Lea Counties."

When Governor Martinez appointed Lisa Riley as judge, she became the FIRST REPUBLICAN WOMAN JUDGE to sit on the 5th Judicial District bench!

Judge Lisa Riley has 19 years as an attorney in Eddy, Chaves, and Lea Counties. She is the only candidate with judicial experience. As Domestic Violence Commissioner for 8 years, Judge Riley held over 4500 hearings, ruling from the bench in each of those cases. She also served as prosecutor for the City of Artesia for 4 years.

Judge Riley has proven her commitment to maintaining the integrity of the court system, both in how she manages her courtroom, as well as the way in which she conducts her personal life.

On June 5th, you will be faced with the same decision as Gov. Martinez. Vote For Lisa Riley Don't settle for less!

PAID FOR BY THE COMMITTEE TO KEEP JUDGE RILEY, PHELPS ANDERSON, TREASURER

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Twin \$427⁹⁹
Full \$559⁹⁹
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