

# Nielsen visits Texas border after second child's death

ASSOCIATED PRESS

EL PASO, Texas—Homeland Security Secretary Kirstjen Nielsen on Friday visited the Texas border city where an 8-year-old Guatemalan boy was detained with his father before dying in government custody.

DHS spokeswoman Katie Waldman said earlier in

the week that Nielsen was scheduled to tour multiple stations and substations, and was also scheduled to meet with emergency medical technicians and medical professionals, as well as local officials.

Nielsen then was scheduled to visit Yuma on Saturday.

DHS did not immediately release more details on the

trip or who Nielsen met, saying it was closed to the press. Late Friday, El Paso Mayor Dee Margo confirmed he was among those who met with Nielsen, saying they discussed "our immigration needs on the border." The statement from Margo, a Republican, did not mention the boy's death or whether it was discussed.

The trip came four days after the death of 8-year-old Felipe Gomez Alonzo. Felipe was the second Guatemalan child to die in government custody in three weeks.

Nielsen has called the death "deeply concerning and heartbreaking" and requested medical help from other government agencies, including the U.S.

Coast Guard. As Nielsen made the trip to Texas, New Mexico's Democratic senators, Tom Udall and Martin Heinrich, sent her a letter Friday seeking answers about the boy's death.

"The timeline, action and factors that led to Felipe's death are still developing, but the information that has become public so far is alarming and demands im-

mediate attention and investigation," the letter says.

Felipe and his father, Agustin Gomez, were apprehended on Dec. 18, according to U.S. Customs and Border Protection.

New Mexico authorities said late Thursday that an autopsy shows Felipe had the flu, but more tests need to be done before a cause of death can be determined.

## Bomb strikes tourist bus near Giza Pyramids, kills 4

ASSOCIATED PRESS

CAIRO — A roadside bomb hit a tourist bus on Friday near the Giza Pyramids, killing three Vietnamese tourists and their Egyptian guide, officials said.

The bus was traveling in the Marioutiyah area near the pyramids when the crude roadside bomb, concealed by a wall, went off, Egypt's chief prosecutor Nabil Sadeq said in a statement. The blast wounded 11 other Vietnamese tourists as well as the Egyptian driver.

The bus was carrying a

total of 15 Vietnamese tourists, according to Vietnam's Ministry of Foreign Affairs. It said that 10 were seriously injured.

Vietnamese Ambassador to Egypt Tran Thanh Cong visited the scene of the attack and Al Haram Hospital, where the victims were being treated, the ministry said.

Egypt has battled Islamic militants for years in the Sinai Peninsula in an insurgency that has occasionally spilled over to the mainland, hitting minority Christians or tourists.

## SOMERTON

FROM PAGE A1

Street. It is the fifth in what city officials foresee as a network of andadors that will criss-cross Somerton.

It is lined with outdoor lamps, benches, trash receptacles, landscaping and lighting so it can be used day and night. Exercise equipment, some of it ADA compatible, also line the pathway. Anaya said the intent is to add to the trail every year until it loops around the entire city.

Somerton continued working on a street project started 10 years ago. Most streets have now been reconstructed and meet ADA standards, according to Anaya. Water and sewer lines have been replaced. The plan is to finish off the undone pockets and then focus on pavement preservation.

"I can say we have the best infrastructure in Yuma County," Anaya said.

McGaughey, who took the helm as city manager on April 30, recalled that the city's infrastructure impressed him during a visit to Somerton. He noticed the "great downtown, the streets, the gutters, the sidewalks, the curbs, they were in great condition. That's a sign of a quality city."

City Hall underwent a reshuffling aimed at better serving both city employees' needs and economic development efforts. The goal was to improve customer service. "That's why we're here, to serve residents and give answers," McGaughey said.

Started last month and officially unveiled during the Tamale Festival earlier this month, the city's push for outside dining at local restaurants has been a hit, Anaya said. As an incentive to participate in the program, the city assisted restaurants with the cost of facade construction. The overall vision is a downtown, pedestrian-friendly entertainment district.

It's part of a broader economic strategy to attract new businesses and bolster those already here, McGaughey said. "The city is diligent in supporting local businesses."

The city has already experienced a slew of new restaurant openings, including Burger King, Coffeeon Coffeehouse and Crepes, 85350 Sports Bar and Pizzeria and Cielito Lindo Birrieria.

The city wants to bolster economic development along both the east and west sides of the Highway 95 corridor by prioritizing construction of facilities. The east, in particular, is primed for commercial development.

The city has also been entering into "outside the box" partnerships with organizations, including SMTNews, Regional Center for Border Health and Copacah Tribe.

The council has also focused on investing in police officer training and technology, such as body cameras. In addition, the Police Department revived the Bicycle Brigade to pro-



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TRAFFIC MAKES ITS way along tree-lined Main Street in Somerton.

vide interaction with the community and acquired its first K9 service dog.

The Somerton Copacah Fire Department obtained a grant that enabled the department to add paramedics and emergency medical technicians, allowing a second ambulance to go into service "100 percent of the time so we don't have to rely on San Luis, Yuma or Rural/Metro (fire departments)," McGaughey said.

Although Somerton experienced many highlights, the city also faced some challenges, including exploring ways to fix a deficit of water and sewer funds, which officials are still doing.

Construction of a high school, which would be the first in Somerton, hit a snag when the owners of nearby farmland declined to sign an agreement restricting pesticide use. Owners of the neighboring parcels must sign the agreement in order for the Yuma Union High School District to begin building the school at a site on the city's west side.

McGaughey said both the district and the city are looking at options. "The school is a priority, no question. Somerton has never had a high school," he noted.

In the meantime, both Anaya and McGaughey are pleased with the city's progress during the past year. It's become a city where people want to live, Anaya said. The population doubled in the last 15 years, with 17,403 people now living in the city, according to Anaya. "And it's growing," he noted.

They believe the growth is due to several factors, such as consistently being named one of the safest cities in Arizona and the city's location, which is 12 miles from Yuma and 12 miles from the border.

However, there's a low inventory of residential-ready development, although the city just recently approved two new subdivisions. The challenge is that land, most of it premium farmland, is expensive. "It's a challenge,

but it's good people want to move into the city," Anaya said.

The officials also believe Somerton's many "great" events, such as the Tamale Festival, Corn Fest, Greater Days, Fourth of July and Petalooza, bring in many people from outside the city and are helping to transform Somerton's image.

"Somerton has become known in the area as the city that likes to have fun," McGaughey said.

Still working on making sure Somerton is the "small little city in Arizona" is the council's goal for the new year. "We didn't just say it, we're working towards it," Anaya said.

McGaughey feels the city is moving in the right direction. "I've been here seven, eight months, and I honestly feel Somerton is a city on the rise. I feel good about it," he said.

"The best is yet to come," Anaya added.

Reporter Cesar Neyoy contributed to this story.

## SURPRISE

FROM PAGE A1

ful and follow the process, they could end up sharply cutting their liability with no obligation to pay the balance.

At the heart of the issue is how hospitals operate.

It used to be that a patient would simply ask his or her insurer which hospitals were considered "in-network" where their procedure would be covered. That pretty much guaranteed that the costs would be picked up, leaving the patient only the normal copay or deductible.

Now, however, hospitals often contract with outside doctors who are not their employees. That, said Briggs, can lead to surprises.

"A mother goes in to have a child, in-network facility, everything is pre-approved," he said.

"A couple of months after the birth of their child they receive a few-thousand dollar bill from an anesthesiologist or some specialist that didn't happen to be in-network," Briggs said. "And now that patient, that enrollee, is now getting a surprise bill."

More to the point, it's a bill the insurer won't cover that could run into the tens of thousands of dollars.

Until now there has been no legal remedy for patients.

Under the new law, a patient can submit a request through the Department of Insurance for dispute resolution. While the state agency itself does not get involved in resolving who is correct, it can at least screen the complaint to determine if the invoice at issue qualifies under the law as a surprise out-of-network bill which can be disputed.

If the invoice qualifies, the department will help set up an informal telephonic settlement conference involving the insurer,

the medical provider and the patient.

"The intent behind this was to see if we can't get the insurance company and the doctor, the provider, to agree on a cost," Briggs said.

If that produces no resolution, the issue goes to arbitration.

But here's the key point of the measure: No matter what is decided there, the patient's maximum liability is what he or she would have otherwise paid had the procedure been covered. That means simply any copay, deductible and any other cost-sharing requirements under the patient's insurance policy.

Still, there are some significant exceptions.

First, the disputed bill must be at least \$1,000.

Second, the law does not apply to anyone enrolled in a health-maintenance organization. Briggs said this is based on the premise that once an HMO has approved some pre-scheduled procedure it has declared that it will pay for the expenses.

But the most significant is that patients can dispute a charge only if they have not been informed, ahead of time and in writing, that certain specific services will be provided by an out-of-network doctor and an estimate of the total costs to be billed. If they have been told and they go ahead with the procedure, they're on the hook for the bills.

That, however, does not apply if the hospitalization was the result of an emergency, even if the patient was given the notice but did not have a reasonable amount of time to review it.

Still Briggs said that, even with the new law, patients considering elective procedures should probably do some research on their own, ahead of the hospital stay, to ensure that all the medical care they expect to get is from in-network providers and will be covered by their insurance.

## FUNERAL NOTICE

### Jose Manuel Sandate

Jose Manuel Sandate, 57, of Yuma, died Dec. 11, 2018, at Yuma Regional Medical Center.

Born Aug. 19, 1961, in Long Beach, Calif., he was a transportation technician.

Yuma Mortuary and Crematory is handling arrangements.

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