

MISD board member discusses suit

Calls for judge to resign grow louder after resident’s personal info published online

By Luke Dias
STAFF WRITER

Calls for Midland County Judge Terry Johnson to resign have grown louder after he allegedly unlawfully published a Midland resident’s personal identifying information. The Reporter-Telegram sat down with Brandon W. Hodges, a Midland ISD board member who filed a petition in state court seeking pre-suit discovery

against Johnson relating to the published information, to discuss his perspective. The interview took place Wednesday, July 22, several days before Hodges filed the lawsuit. As previously reported, the newspaper has learned that the Midland resident whose information Johnson posted was Christino “Nino” Rodriquez, a far-right social media influencer in Midland. The animosity between John-



Hodges

son and Rodriquez spilled onto social media and eventually prompted Johnson to post on his personal Facebook page an old arrest warrant for Rodriquez. The document, which Johnson captioned, “Convicted felon trying to be a player,” showed a mug shot of Rodriquez along with his full name, date of birth, Social Security number, driver’s license number, state identification number and identifying tat-

toos, among other unredacted personal information. Rodriquez filed a federal civil rights lawsuit against Johnson last week regarding Johnson’s posting of the information. Rodriquez’s complaint states that the charges arising from that warrant were subsequently dismissed and he was not convicted of any crime. The post has since been deleted. However, Hodges obtained a screenshot and posted the image on his own Facebook page after fully redacting the personal information. “On Saturday (July 18), someone from Midland County sent

me a copy of it,” Hodges recalled. “I saw it and redacted all of it because I didn’t feel correct about it.” By his own admission, Hodges has frequently criticized Johnson. Throughout the interview, he consistently referred to him as “Corrupt Midland County Judge Terry Johnson.” According to Hodges, two pieces of information were redacted from what was posted on Johnson’s Facebook page: Rodriquez’s home address and phone number. “I couldn’t figure out why *Lawsuit continues on A2*



Atlas Energy Solutions and Kodiak AI have announced plans to deploy 100 driverless trucks by the middle of 2027.

Driverless truck fleet growing in Permian Basin

Atlas, Kodiak plan to have 100 of the vehicles, public road operations by next year

By Mella McEwen
EDITOR

Permian Basin drivers can expect to see more driverless trucks on the road in the near future. Autonomous trucking company Kodiak AI and oilfield logistics provider Atlas Energy Solutions are expanding their deployment of autonomous trucks. The expansion includes a second autonomous operating depot, with Atlas now operating autonomous trucks from two load-out locations about 90 minutes apart along its 42-mile Dune Express

sand conveyor system. The two companies also have updated their fleet deployment timelines, agreeing on a delivery schedule that expands the fleet from 28 to 100 driverless trucks by mid-2027. “Atlas’ deployment of driverless autonomous trucks is on track with our original plan announced in 2024. Our collaboration with Kodiak has been methodical, ensuring the autonomous solution was reliable and met our performance expectations. We have steadily scaled our deployments over the past few quarters. Our mid-2027 target puts us in a great position both in terms of capacity and reach,” Bill

Morrison, director of marketing at Atlas, told the Reporter-Telegram. Atlas has seen steady demand this year, Morrison said. He said customers have expressed increased interest in autonomous deliveries because of greater efficiency and more frequent loads. Customers also have shown greater interest in the company’s well-site logistics tools, including PropFlow and Everest, he said. As of March 31, 2026, Atlas operated 28 driverless trucks across 15 distinct routes, which together have carried about 7,000 loads and hauled more than 450,000 tons *Driverless continues on A2*

Out West adds 7 Midland shows to ’26 lineup

Music, combat sports, costume party slated

By B. Kay Richter
STAFF WRITER

Out West has expanded its 2026 event lineup with the announcement of seven new shows. According to a news release, the expanded schedule includes nationally recognized country artists, hip-hop legends, live entertainment and combat sports. Tickets for all events are on sale through Out West’s website and official ticketing partner, TIXR. Here’s the expanded schedule:

Dueling Pianos
Dueling Pianos will take place Friday, Aug. 7. The indoor event is open to ages 16 and older. The show will feature a high-energy, interactive night of live music as Dueling Pianos returns to Midland. Audience song requests, singalongs and crowd participation make every performance unique, creating a lively night out with friends.

Josh Abbott Band at Midland County Fair
Josh Abbott Band will perform Saturday, Aug. 22. The outdoor event is open to all ages. Texas country favorite Josh Abbott will headline the Midland County Fair, with Mike Ryan also performing. This concert is all ages and outdoors.

Pat Green — Best of the West Benefit Concert
Pat Green will perform Saturday, Sept. 19. The indoor event is open to all ages. Texas music icon Pat Green returns to Midland with special guest Django Walker for the annual Best of the West Benefit Concert. The event will benefit the RacFit Foundation.

Randy Rogers Band
Randy Rogers Band will perform Friday, Sept. 25. The indoor event is open to ages 16 and older. One of the most influential bands in Texas country, the Randy Rogers Band will return to Midland with a catalog of fan favorites including “Kiss Me in the Dark,” “Buy Myself a Chance” and “In My Arms Instead.” The concert will benefit the Midland Rape Crisis & Children’s Advocacy Center.

XKO Fight Night
XKO Fight Night will take place Saturday, Sept. 26. The indoor event is open to ages 16 and older. XKO Fight Night returns to *Out West continues on A2*

Texas lawmakers urge delay of proposed road over Big Bend’s Mariscal Mountain

By B. Kay Richter
STAFF WRITER

BIG BEND NATIONAL PARK — Texas members of Congress and U.S. Rep. Jared Huffman, ranking member of the House Natural Resources Committee, urged Trump administration officials to delay work on a proposed road across and over Big Bend National Park’s Mariscal Mountain. The members of Congress are asking the federal government to release specific details about the project and answer questions about the potential irreparable damage it could cause in the national park. “The potential destruction from road construction over the rugged terrain of Mariscal Mountain is extreme,” U.S. Rep. Lloyd Doggett said in a news release. “Tons of rock blasted



Lawmakers say the proposed Mariscal Canyon route would cause irreversible damage and add little border-security value.

away could end up impacting Mariscal Canyon, the Rio Grande, and Mexico.” Doggett added that survey work had already begun in the national park and that groundbreaking could be imminent. “It’s urgent that there is broad public understanding of CBP (U.S. Customs and Border Protection) overall plans for the park, including Mariscal Mountain and its immediate surroundings — before irreversible damage is inflicted on one of the most significant places in all of Texas,” he said. Lawmakers also raised concerns about the proposed patrol road’s location on Mariscal Mountain. “It is hard to understand the added value of a patrol road across Mariscal Mountain. The existing road just north of the *Mountain continues on A2*



MOUNTAIN

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mountain is regularly patrolled and sufficient for Border Patrol operations,” said the news release. “This new, proposed road would sit 1,700 feet above the border in one of the least trafficked stretches of the entire southern border, where anyone crossing would first climb 1,400-foot cliffs to approach the road. This poses no benefit to border security and would only cause irrevocable damage to the mountain.”

The letter, sent by Texas members of Congress, is addressed to Secretary of State Marco Rubio, Homeland Security Secretary Markwayne Mullin, CBP Commissioner Rodney S. Scott and W.C. “Chad” McIntosh, commissioner of the U.S. Section of the International Boundary and Water Commission.

Texas lawmakers said CBP has not released details about the proposed road beyond a small-scale map showing the proposed alignment and indicating the road would be 24 feet wide. The Texas letter to federal authorities asks for road design and engineering details, spoil disposal plans and line items for rock excavation, controlled blasting, drilling and shooting, vibration monitoring or embankment placement.

Texas lawmakers said federal law authorizes waivers to set aside existing regulatory require-



Bob Krumenaker

Texas lawmakers want the Trump administration to delay a proposed Big Bend road, citing damage risks to Mariscal Mountain and the Rio Grande. This is an image of the proposed route over the mountain.

ments for border wall construction but does not apply to U.S.-Mexico treaty obligations. The letter seeks confirmation that the U.S. acknowledges that distinction. In addition, it asks the IBWC U.S. Section whether it has received any notice from the U.S. of the Mariscal Mountain alignment and whether the Mexican Section has been fully notified.

“Mariscal Mountain is one of the most remote areas inside Big Bend National Park,” said Bob Krumenaker, the national park’s former superintendent and spokesperson for

Keep Big Bend Wild. Keep Big Bend Wild is a nonpartisan effort to ensure that Big Bend National Park will continue to thrive.

“Mariscal Canyon, the wildest and most remote of the three major canyons the Rio Grande flows through bounding the park, cuts through the mountain,” he said in a news release. “The planned patrol road over the mountain is not just highly destructive, but it serves no security purpose, as the existing unpaved NPS ‘River Road’ just north of the mountain is already patrolled regu-

larly by the Border Patrol, and considering the terrain the new route will cross, likely faster travel from one side of the mountain to the other.”

Law enforcement officials in the Big Bend region expressed similar concerns. In a signed statement dated March 9, county sheriffs Arvin West, Danny Dominguez, Oscar Carrillo and Ronny Dodson said they share a commitment to strong, effective border security while serving the Big Bend region of Texas.

“Steep mountain ranges, deep canyons, expan-

sive desert landscapes and the Rio Grande itself create formidable natural barriers that significantly limit large-scale movement,” said the sheriffs of Hudspeth, Presidio, Culberson and Brewster counties in a signed statement. “These realities must be considered when evaluating appropriate enforcement strategies.”

The statement said that while protecting communities and supporting federal partners are central to the sheriffs’ work, they do not support a border wall in the region.

Keep Big Bend Wild

said sources told the group that CBP contractor Southwest Valley Constructors will begin clearing activity this week inside the national park in order to install concrete survey markers.

“This starts real groundbreaking and additional construction is likely imminent,” said the nonprofit.

Additionally, Keep Big Bend Wild and other conservation groups have said illegal border crossing activity inside Big Bend National Park accounts for less than 0.05% of such activity along the entire border.

“For this, we are spending \$1.7 billion of taxpayer money and irreparably damaging one of the nation’s crown jewel national parks,” said Keep Big Bend Wild.

On July 31, Texas Land Commissioner Dawn Buckingham sent a cease-and-desist letter to U.S. Customs and Border Protection and Barnard Construction after her office said it found that a federal contractor illegally cleared more than a mile of state land in Presidio County.

Buckingham said Texas General Land Office leases do not allow any land modifications, excavations or construction without the GLO’s written consent.

“Significant grazing acreage was disrupted by this unauthorized activity that has devalued our lease and diminished our ability to generate future revenue for the schoolchildren of Texas,” Buckingham said.

DRIVERLESS

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of sand. The fleet also completed more than 23,500 driverless hours of operation in the first quarter of 2026. On July 20, Kodiak-powered trucks delivered 176 loads of sand, the highest daily total in 18 months of driverless deployments with Atlas in the Permian Basin.

Atlas and Kodiak are also preparing for public highway operations, with Atlas trucks expected to operate on public roads next year. The public-road plan follows Kodiak’s expected launch of driver-

less highway operations by the end of this year.

“The first and most critical requirement for paved road usage with autonomous trucks is, of course, safety. Paved roads are a very different driving environment from dirt lease roads and require new safety evidence and engineering. Smooth, well-marked roads make some aspects of driving easier, while factors like increased speeds add some complexity. An autonomous driving platform can only operate without a human once the company can demonstrate consistent and reliable safe performance,” Morrison said.



Atlas Energy Solutions

Atlas Energy Solutions and Kodiak AI are preparing for public highway operations. Kodiak expects to launch driverless highway operations by the end of this year, and Atlas expects to operate on public roads next year.

LAWSUIT

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(these two identifiers were redacted, so) I went and looked up (Texas’) doxxing law,” Hodges said. “And the Texas state law for doxxing is, if you publicly release someone’s phone number or address to harm them, it’s a Class B misdemeanor for doxxing.”

As of publication, the Reporter-Telegram could not verify who redacted those two identifiers. Rodriguez’s subsequent lawsuit claims that the redactions show Johnson was aware that the document contained personal identifiers but published the remainder of it without redactions.

“Whoever prepared the Facebook post appears to have blacked out Plaintiff’s home address and telephone number from the warrant image, yet left Plaintiff’s full Social Security number and driver’s license number visible,” the lawsuit alleges. “This selective redaction supports



Johnson

a strong inference that the poster was aware the posted information was sensitive and dangerous, and that the decision to leave the Social Security number and driver’s license number exposed was intentional rather than inadvertent.”

Rodriguez’s complaint further alleged: “Multiple Facebook users and commentators warned Defendant Johnson in real time — while the post remained publicly visible—that posting Plaintiff’s full personal identifying information was improper, dangerous, and potentially unlawful. These individuals observed the post live before it was removed. Defendant Johnson disregarded these warnings for a period of time before ultimately deleting the post.”

Online harassment

Despite his distaste for Johnson, Hodges said he understands the frustra-

tion Johnson and other elected officials can experience when dealing with public criticism.

He recalled how he and his colleagues have faced death threats and other verbal abuse during MISD meetings and through private channels such as phone calls. He said his wife and some of his colleagues have had to change their phone numbers to avoid continued abuse.

One of the most disturbing examples involved his friend Kristen Vazquez, who worked on the 2024 reelection campaigns of MISD board President Josh Guinn and City Councilwoman-at-Large Robin Poole. The Reporter-Telegram independently verified the account with Vazquez.

“She got (threatening) phone calls for four months,” Hodges recalled. “Somebody would call her at 10 o’clock at night using a voice distorter (and) a Google number and say the most audacious and cruel things, saying, ‘Hey, I’m going to kill your family’ (and) ‘The last thing you

will see before I kill you is me raping your daughter’ — the most vile, unbelievably terrible things you could say to someone, especially a female, and she has all that recorded.”

“Most of the time (when this happens), what goes through your head is, ‘I don’t even know this person, this person doesn’t know me, they’ve never reached out to me to have a conversation on this, and here they are attacking someone they don’t know,’” he continued. “They’re going for ad hominem attacks, which is a logical fallacy. They’re making it a personal attack, instead of actually arguing the policy.”

Midland City Council members have cited Rodriguez and his followers for being disruptive, agitative and disrespectful. Hodges said he is aware of Rodriguez’s behavior at local government meetings but has never been personally targeted by him.

The two met at a fundraiser for Texas attorney general candidate Mayes Middleton.

Ultimately, Hodges said that no matter the level of criticism, it does not justify Johnson retaliating against a citizen by publishing his personal information.

“Just because you’re an elected official doesn’t, doesn’t remove First Amendment rights,” Hodges said. “If you’re going to go on to what is essentially a public utility now, the public square of social media — on the biggest platform, Facebook — and argue with people (there), then you have to realize that if you’re getting into a football game. You’re probably going to get hit and you on your own accord knowingly are doing that. You can’t go, ‘Oh, he hurt my feelings.’”

‘I’ve never lost’

Since Hodges’ initial letter calling for Johnson’s resignation, Hodges and Rodriguez have jointly filed a petition in state court seeking pre-suit discovery against Johnson relating to Johnson’s Facebook post and are represented by Houston-based lawyer Gregory Degeyter.

This means they have petitioned the court for permission to obtain documents and witness statements before officially filing a lawsuit. Rodriguez is represented in his federal lawsuit by James E. Trainor III, a partner with the Dhillion Law Group.

“I’m bringing in a law firm to make sure this is handled (properly),” Hodges said. “It’s coming 100%. I don’t lose lawsuits. I’ve never lost, (and) I’ve sued the state.”

Johnson told the Reporter-Telegram that he intends to release a formal statement about the situation.

No statement had been released as of publication.

When asked by NewsWest 9, however, Johnson said he has no intention of resigning.

Johnson lost his reelection bid after failing to advance from the March 3 primary runoff. If he does not resign, his term will end in early 2027, when election winner Jay Marquez is set to assume the Midland County judge’s office.

OUT WEST

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Midland County Horseshoe with an evening featuring professional MMA and Muay Thai bouts. Fans can expect nonstop action as fighters compete inside the cage.

Hudson Westbrook

Hudson Westbrook will perform Friday, Oct.

16. The indoor event is open to ages 16 and older.

Hudson Westbrook brings his “Hits Me” tour to Midland after earning millions of streams and building a rapidly growing fan base.

T.I. with special guest Waka Flocka Flame

T.I. and Waka Flocka Flame will perform Friday, Oct. 30. The indoor event is open to ages 16 and

older.

Hip-hop legends T.I. and Waka Flocka Flame are bringing a Halloween party to Midland County Horseshoe. The event will include chart-topping hits, anthems and a Halloween costume contest with thousands of dollars in cash prizes.

Tickets, VIP tables and event information are available at outwestmidland.com.

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A single cloud can weigh over one million pounds (about 500,000 kilograms), yet it floats effortlessly in the sky because it is spread out over a huge space and is less dense than the warm air around it.