



**Hundreds of people enter the new City Hall** for the first time Monday during the hall's grand opening ceremony. Entertainment and refreshments were served and people could now take care of business at the new facility, located next to Thomas Branigan Memorial Library along Main Street.

# City

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With a population now more than 90,000 and a city government housed in a city hall that local leaders have acknowledged was too small decades ago, the new municipal building is more than three times the size of the one used for 42 years.

"Residents will now have a chance to learn about the people in your City Hall," City Manager Terrence Moore said.

Mayor Ken Miyagishima added, "We have a new building that embodies what we are about as a community. We have a building that has become a reality because of the involvement of

Sun-News photo by Norm Dentliff

# Financial crisis panel turns to risky mortgage

By Daniel Wagner

Associated Press

WASHINGTON — A panel investigating the roots of the financial crisis will press current and former executives of Citigroup Inc. at hearings this week about the bank's role in spreading trillions of dollars in risky mortgage debt through the banking system.

The hearings are the first by the Financial Crisis Inquiry Commission to focus on a single company. Witnesses include former Citigroup CEO Chuck Prince and former Chairman Robert Rubin, who was Treasury secretary during the Clinton administration.

The panel also will hear from former Federal Reserve Chairman Alan Greenspan, a former risk officer with failed subprime lender New Century Financial Corp., and former executives and regulators from government-backed mortgage giant Fannie Mae. The three days of testimony are designed to provide a firsthand accounting of decisions that inflated a mortgage bubble and triggered the financial crisis.

Much of the tension at hearings Wednesday and Thursday will come as the bipartisan commissioners examine Citi's role in financing, packaging and selling risky mortgage loans.

Citi was a major subprime lender through its subsidiary Citifinancial. The bank pooled those loans and loans purchased from other mort-

my. Congress created the FCIC last year to examine the causes of that crisis. It structured like the 9/11 panel that examined intelligence failures preceding the terrorist attacks of Sept. 11, 2001.

Like that panel, the commission has authority to issue subpoenas to companies to testify or force witnesses to turn over documents. The commission is charged with examining 20 topics — from executive compensation to tax policy — in a report it must issue Dec. 15.

The hearing comes less than a month after fresh questions arose about political fundraising by commission chairman and former California Treasurer Phil Angelides.

During his 2002 reelection campaign, Angelides solicited donations from a top executive with JPMorgan Chase & Co., according to a report issued March 18 by the Securities and Exchange Commission. JP-Morgan is paid by California to underwrite billions of dollars in municipal bonds annually.

The executive later sent a note to other key executives and a bank lobbyist calling Angelides "an important client" and asking them to help raise \$10,000, the SEC report says. The executive oversaw the part of the company that includes the municipal bond business. The SEC report does not address Angelides' role in





Sun-News photo by Norm Dettliff

**Darcie Stern-Fraembs, great-granddaughter of E.J. Stern, the man who donated the lion sculptures to the city in 1968, speaks Monday before the lions are unveiled for their rededication at the new City Hall.**

**Now open**

- ▶ The new City Hall is at 700 N. Main St., five blocks north and one block west of the old city hall, 200 N. Church St.
- ▶ City Hall is open to residents from 8 a.m. until 5 p.m. weekdays unless a meeting or other public event is conducted in the evening.
- ▶ Residents can pay bills and conduct other business on the first floor of City Hall. People can pay their monthly utility bills with cashiers located in the east wing of the first floor of City Hall.

Permits, through the city's Community Development Department, can be obtained in the north wing of the first floor. Information: (575) 541-2000.

**Did you know?**

- ▶ The new City Hall is just east of the Acequia Madre, the first ditch that provided water to Las Cruces during its early years. An access point to the historic ditch is near the main entrance to City Hall.
- ▶ The property City Hall sits on was purchased by the city in the late 1980s for \$1.6 million. Herculano Ferralez was the mayor at the time, and the city paid cash for the property.
- ▶ Before it ever became City Hall, a super market, gas station and even a drive-in restaurant — The Shamrock — were on the property.
- ▶ Monday's grand opening ceremony began with a bang — literally. Moments after the ceremony began, with the unwilling of two lion statues, a car crashed into the rear of pickup truck. Both vehicles were traveling north on Main Street at the time of the crash, and startled many of those who attended the ceremony.
- ▶ Until moving into the new City Hall, some employees didn't know what kind of day it was outside. Some city employees worked in the basements of the old City Hall and the City Office Center, at 575 S. Alameda Blvd. Since those offices were below ground, those employees obviously didn't have windows. Some of those employees not only have windows now, but spectacular views of the Organ Mountains.

**IN THEIR OWN WORDS**

*"The sound in this building is terrible, terrible. It's not nearly as good as the old building. I can't understand hardly anything that's being said."*

—Dan Jett, Las Cruces resident, to city officials at Monday's first council meeting.

*"Why wasn't the building designed to have a drive-through window?"*

—Ryan Dailey, Las Cruces resident, to city officials, wondering why the new City Hall doesn't include a drive-up facility for residents to pay their utility bills.

Thursday will come as the 10 bipartisan commissioners examine Citi's role in financing, packaging and selling risky mortgage loans.

Citi was a major subprime lender through its subsidiary Citifinancial. The bank pooled those loans and loans purchased from other mortgage companies and sold the income streams to investors. As borrowers defaulted, Citi absorbed losses on mortgage-related investments it held on and off its books.

Mortgage troubles at Citi, defunct investment bank Bear Stearns and elsewhere exposed cracks in the financial system. In late 2007 and throughout 2008, those fissures grew into a full-fledged credit crisis that crippled the global economy.

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The SEC report does not address Angelides' role. Instead, it deals with a rule that bars banks from underwriting bonds for governments within two years after a bank executive donates to an official in that government.

Greenspan's testimony Wednesday will open the hearings. Critics say his policy at the Fed of keeping interest rates low encouraged lending to borrowers who had little or no chance of repaying.

**Officer testifies about death of cop killer**

**The Associated Press**

SEATTLE — A Seattle policeman testified Monday that in scant seconds and at barely more than arm's length, he recognized the man who had killed four police officers and sworn to die to the same anyone who tried to arrest him.

In a calm, even voice, Officer Benjamin L. Kelly told a six-member inquest jury about how he was alone in his patrol car when Maurice Clemmons approached him on a dark south Seattle street early on Dec. 1. The confrontation ended with Kelly killing the man who had been sought in a massive manhunt since ambushing the Lakewood officers two days earlier at a coffee shop south of Tacoma.

"I thought I could be dead in a matter of seconds," said Kelly, 39, in his first public account of Clemmons' death. He said he and his fellow officers were warned that Maurice Clemmons was likely in the Seattle area, was armed and wounded, and had told relatives and acquaintances he would kill more police and would not be taken alive.

Kelly, a five-year Seattle police veteran, testified that he stopped to check on a stolen

vehicle that had been left with its engine running and hood up. As he radioed in a report, a man in a hooded sweat shirt walked into the street behind the squad car and headed toward its driver's side.

Kelly said he stepped out of the squad car as the man approached and quickly recognized Clemmons by his size and a prominent mole on his cheek.

"He gave me an 'Oh, crap' look," Kelly said. He added, "The first thing that came into my mind is 'OK, I'm kind of in trouble here, and I better do something.'"

When Clemmons was about 4 feet away, Kelly pulled out his service pistol and yelled at the man to show his hands. But Clemmons turned from him and reached for his waist. So Kelly said he fired seven shots, wounding Clemmons. Clemmons then ran to a high hedge at a nearby house. Kelly said he tried three times to radio for help but his calls wouldn't go through. He then grabbed his shotgun from the squad car and started looking for where Clemmons might be hiding.

"I knew that my initial rounds had hit him, and he was hit critically," Kelly said.



Employees appear to have adapted well to their new workplace and he's noticed changes for the better.

"I can see improvement in employees' morale. All I have to do is just look into their eyes," Cordova said. "And productivity is better. Now that we've gone to a workplace where a lot of people have cubicles I've seen where productivity has gotten even higher.

But to be expected with any new facility, there are a few glitches that have to be worked out. There were echoes inside of Council Chambers during Monday's City Council meeting and that riled some residents.

"The sound in this building is terrible, terrible," said Dan Jett, who regularly attends council meetings. "It's not nearly as good as the old building. I can't understand hardly anything that's being said."

But city officials pointed out that acoustical tiles that are supposed to suppress some echoes haven't arrived yet.

When resident George Pearson noticed that bicycle racks in front of City Hall were not in compliance with city design standards, and told the City Council about it, city Facilities Director Brian DeMark said Jaynes Construction Corp., contractors for the project, will be required to replace the bike racks with those that meet city standards.

But despite its alleged shortcomings, residents said City Hall will be a special place for years to come.

"Thank you for getting it right," said resident Russ Warner, to City Council members and city adminis-

trators at Monday's council meeting. "You got it right because you just didn't build it for today. You did it for future generations, and I hope those future generations are going to say thank you, too."

and started many of those who attended the ceremony.

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*"The new Las Cruces City Hall is a catalytic project. It's completion will facilitate the re-growth and re-development of downtown Las Cruces. It will be the basis of continued downtown revitalization."*

— City Manager Terrence Moore

*"This wonderful building is certainly well-deserved for the city after many, many years."*

— Ben Woods, senior vice president for planning, physical resources, and university relations, New Mexico State University

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The settlement, announced March 29, also requires that the county change its policies to improve the reporting and investigation of complaints about discrimination and that the police are made available to Spanish-speaking employees, according to the Justice Department. In addition, it must make sure all employees receive anti-discrimination training.

The women alleged that rights guaranteed under the Title VII of the Civil Rights Act of 1964 were violated.

## County

CONTINUED FROM PAGE 1A

torney for the Justice Department's civil rights division, in a statement.

The complaints were brought by employees Sally Ramirez, Graciela Chavez, Priscilla Lujan, Priscilla Salazar and Maria Isabel Morales. Ramirez and Morales no longer work for the county.

According to a position roster provided Monday by the county, Gomez, hired in December 2004, is still employed in the facilities depart-

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## Sound Off!

Let's admit there will be no Level I Trauma Center in Las Cruces. Not enough insured people to make a trauma center any money. The ER is a black hole of expenses. Nobody cares enough to provide it.

Citizens in Arizona want to put a "Ban Photo Radar" initiative on the ballot for voters to decide. So they want to vote on what's legal and illegal. What's next: banning by public ballot laws or rules on speeding, seat belt usage, noise ordinances, etc.?

At 12:30 p.m. Saturday, I was astounded to see many vendors' vehicles plowing through the crowd after the farmers market. Do the vendors have insurance or is the city responsible for the accident that is sure to happen?

I don't understand how Susana Martinez can justify everything a cop does when she's never on the scene.

So now they want to keep the findings of the shooting secret. Sounds to me it's time to get the ACLU involved. What is it that someone does not want the public to see?

What are our law enforcement officers supposed to do when some criminal threatens their lives? Give them milk and cookies?

I read in Sound Off where somebody asked when the police are going

## Members adopt rates for different age groups, uses

By Steve Ramirez

Sun-News reporter

LAS CRUCES — Corey Dominguez and his 12-year-old sister, Loreta, said Monday they're eager for Las Cruces' Regional Recreation and Aquatics Center to open, regardless of what it might cost them.

But fortunately for them, the Las Cruces City Council intends to keep the daily cost to swim at the new facility affordable.

"Three bucks to swim there every day, that's not too bad, not bad at all," said Dominguez, 14, of the daily price unanimously approved Monday by the seven-member council. "I go to Frenger (Pool) as much as I can because it's indoors and you don't have

## Making a splash

► Fees to use the Regional Recreation and Aquatics Center were unanimously approved Monday by City Council.

► The facility, at the northeast corner of Solano Drive and Hadley Avenue, is expected to open in July.

► Daily fees to use the indoor swimming and therapy pools will be: \$2 for newborns to 2-year-olds; \$3 for youths ages 3 to 17 years old; \$5 for adults ages 18 to 60; and \$4 for senior citizens ages 61 and older.

► Rates to use showers and rent towels and lockers at the facility were also established.

to worry about the weather. But I think it's cleaner and a little nicer than some of the other (outdoor) pools I've been to. If this place turns out to be anything like they've said it'll be, I'll probably be going there a lot."

That could mean that Dominguez might want to consider buying a punch card for multiple admis-

sions to the Regional Recreation and Aquatics Center. The council also adopted monthly rates and rental fees for parties and other special events.

The facility will include a zero-depth entrance, lap lanes, a water slide, splash-park features, and a therapy pool.

"I want something more that's going to be fun,"

## ONLINE EXTRA

www.lsun-news.com

► View a copy of the Regional Recreation and Aquatics Center fees resolution by clicking on the link at the top of this story at [www.lsun-news.com](http://www.lsun-news.com).

Loreta Dominguez said, "It gets kind of boring just swimming laps and stuff like that. A water slide and stuff like that sounds really cool."

Based on public recommendations made last month to the city's Parks and Recreation Advisory Board, the fees will be: \$2 a day for infants from newborn to 2 years old; \$3 for youth 3 to 17 years old; \$5 for adults from 18 to 60; and \$4 for senior citizens 61 years old and older. A \$1 fee will be charged to use showers at the facility or to

rent a towel; 50 cents for daily locker rental; \$2.50 for weekly locker rental; \$10 for monthly locker use; and \$120 to rent a locker for a year.

Different rates for different age groups have also been proposed to purchase a 30-admission punch card. Rates have also been determined for swimming lessons, rentals for private parties and events, and separate fees to rent therapy pools.

"I plan to go there to use the therapy pool," said Tina Paredes, a retired secretary.

"I broke my leg four years ago and arthritis has started setting in. My doctor told me whirlpools would help, and I should try to do some pool walking, too. Since I'm retired and on a fixed income, keeping the cost low is really important to me."

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## A MARATHON OF POETRY READING





...also involved. What is it that someone does not want the public to see?

What are our law enforcement officers supposed to do when some criminal threatens their lives? Give them milk and cookies?

I read in Sound Off where somebody asked when the police are going to stop killing people. Well, probably at the same time people quit killing innocent people.

Any person with an IQ of 10 can understand why there are so many police-involved-shootings here in the county. There is a total lack of confidence and total disrespect for the law enforcement community, which they themselves have imposed.

To the person or persons who stole my little dog off Sixth Street wearing a little camouflage sweater, I really want my dog back. There's a \$50 reward, no questions asked.

With this new health-care bill pushed through, people with pre-existing conditions can not be denied health insurance, but what was not mentioned is how much will this health insurance cost?

In 2002, Cardinal Ratzinger, now Pope Benedict XVI, issued rules saying it will use secret ecclesiastical courts to try priests accused of sexually abusing children and will oversee the cases directly from Rome. So what happened?

## ONLINE EXTRA

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Call the Las Cruces Sun-News Sound Off line 24 hours a day at (575) 541-5466 or e-mail us at [soundoff@icsun-news.com](mailto:soundoff@icsun-news.com). Please



**Oniate High English teacher** Tim Staley reads a poem Monday to students in the school library. He and students were reading original poems and songs and quotes from others for the entire school day. It was a poetry marathon to celebrate the written art, said English teacher John Narducci. The marathon had "poetry filling the library all day," Staley said.

Sun-News photo by Norm Dettlaff

## NMSU departments asked to identify ways to cut costs

**By Diana M. Alba**  
Sun-News reporter

LAS CRUCES — Academic journals might not sound very exciting to the average Joe or Jane.

But to university students and researchers, they're the lifeblood because they contain the most up-to-date knowledge about a given subject, said Joan Crowley, a professor in New Mexico State University's criminal justice



**Barbara Couture**

to higher education, she said. Couture said there won't be a single "across-the-board"

ways to trim 2 percent, 6 percent and 10 percent of their spending.

The largest proposal is in case the state Legislature convenes later this year to call for further cuts.

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## On the Web

▶ NMSU budget process: <http://budgetupdate.nmsu.edu>

and looking for other ways to save money and has been successful in cutting utilities costs. She said she's committed to maintaining academic quality.

"If we're proposing cuts, we'll not do it on the backs of the students," she said.

But some faculty and department questioned whether the departments, if their bud-

## Man sought in Sunday stabbing

Sun-News report

LAS CRUCES — Las Cruces police are seeking your help in locating the suspect in a stabbing

that occurred Sunday evening. Jesse Israel, Du-rael Du-



## Tips

▶ Anyone with information on the whereabouts of Jesse Israel Duran is asked to call Las Cruces Crime Stoppers at (800) 222-TIPS (8477) or send a tip by text



sexually abusing children and will oversee the cases directly from Rome. So what happened?

### ONLINEEXTRA

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Call the Las Cruces Sun-News Sound Off! line 24 hours a day at (575) 541-5466 or e-mail us at [sound-off@lcsun-news.com](mailto:sound-off@lcsun-news.com). Please keep your remarks brief. For information on submitting a letter to the editor, see our Opinion page.

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## to identify ways to cut costs

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But to university students and researchers, they're the lifeblood because they contain the most up-to-date knowledge about a given subject, said Joan Crowley, a professor in New Mexico State University's criminal justice department.

Crowley said she recently fielded an e-mail asking her to vote for her top publication choices. Apparently, one proposal for helping to deal with NMSU's impending budget cut entails reducing the number of journal subscriptions.

"If I have the students do papers and I want them to look up stuff immediately, that affects their ability," she said. Still, Crowley, who attended a budget presentation Monday by President Barbara Couture, readily acknowledged the university is facing "tough times."

Couture told a sizable crowd of mostly faculty and staff that the university has yet to decide for sure how it will distribute the budget cuts that will be needed to start the July 1 fiscal year. But she's asking that departments generate three proposals, identifying



**Barbara Couture**

to higher education, she said. Couture said there won't be a single "across-the-board" cut among departments.

"Some units will receive lesser reductions; some units will receive greater reductions," she said.

Departments must submit their proposed cuts to top administrators by April 30, who'll forward them to the university budget committee by May 12.

Because of cuts by state lawmakers, NMSU was facing about a \$12.3 million cut to its instruction and general spending — roughly an 11 percent decline over this year's budget. Then university regents last week OK'd tuition hikes. And NMSU officials factored in some other new savings and revenues — such as an expected increase in enrollment — which decreased the gap to about \$5 million, or 4 percent.

Couture said NMSU is making operations more efficient

ways to trim 2 percent, 6 percent and 10 percent of their spending. The largest proposal is in case the state Legislature reconvenes later this year to call for further cuts.

But some faculty and department questioned whether the departments, if their budgets are cut, will be able to offer all of the classes that students need.

Crowley said she's expecting that departments may cut tenure-track positions, through attrition, and won't hire any new personnel.

One faculty member suggested a plan to re-landscape the university in a more eco-friendly way, something he believes would save as much as \$1 million annually.

Asked her thoughts on the presentation, Crowley said she thought Couture was "amazingly open compared to previous presidents."

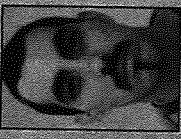
"We'll have to see what she actually does, but from everything I've heard, her emphasis on maintaining academic quality at NMSU is really sincere."

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# Sunday stabbing

Sun-News report

LAS CRUCES — Las Cruces police are seeking your help in locating the suspect in a stabbing that occurred Sunday evening.



**Jesse Israel Duran**

Jesse Israel Duran, 34, of the 500 block of South Mesquite Street, is being sought by police in connection with a stabbing that took place sometime after 7 p.m. Sunday.

An arrest warrant has been issued for Duran, who is charged with one count of aggravated battery causing great bodily harm.

The 33-year-old victim was airlifted to University Medical Center of El Paso in serious condition. His injuries did not appear to be life-threatening.

Shortly before 7:30 p.m. Sunday, Las Cruces police were called to the 500 block of South Mesquite Street, where officers found the victim

### Tips

► Anyone with information on the whereabouts of Jesse Israel Duran is asked to call Las Cruces Crime Stoppers at (800) 222-TIPS (8477) or send a tip by text message to LCTIPS (528477).

on the sidewalk, with a stab wound to his torso. Detectives were told that an ongoing disagreement between neighbors led to a physical confrontation and Duran stabbing the victim once in his chest.

Duran then fled the area and has not been seen since.

Duran is described as Hispanic, standing 5 feet 9 inches tall and weighing around 130 pounds. He has brown eyes, short brown hair, a mustache and goatee.

Las Cruces Crime Stoppers is offering a reward of up to \$1,000 for information that leads to the arrest of Duran.