



Photo by Laura L. Brewer

Workers apply plastic pieces to downtown Second Street pavement showing highway numbers.



Photo by Tim Keller

Nathaniel Franklin poses in front of his Studio C poster image.

Downtown Second Street receives new look

By LAURA L. BREWER
The Chronicle-News

San Bar Construction Corp, Albuquerque, has been busy this week applying highway numbers and lines to downtown Second Street in Raton using a plastic material that fits together like

pieces of a puzzle. Once in place, the surface signage, which is a durable, long-lasting material, is melted onto the pavement with a high-temperature roller. According to Steven Gallegos, with Flint Trading, Thomasville, NC, the producers of the thermoplastic material, this type of PreMark surface signage is used by many State

Departments of Transportation in order to help make "travel safer and more defined for drivers on busy highways." Another benefit to using this type of signage is that it will last up to five years, whereas normal lines and signs that are painted on pavement may last only a few months.

Horse virus causes some cancellations at NM rodeo

FARMINGTON, N.M. (AP) — A recent outbreak of a horse virus in New Mexico has caused some contestants in a Farmington rodeo to pull out, with others seriously considering doing the same.

Because of the virus, the Breeds and Industry Division of Equine Canada are restricting horses from returning to the country after being in New Mexico, unless they are quarantined in another state for three weeks.

Canadian equine officials strongly recommend that horse owners refrain from traveling to or going through New Mexico with their horses.

As a result, many of the Canadian contestants in the National High School Finals

Rodeo are not willing to bring down their horses and are debating whether they can come to the rodeo, which runs from July 19 to 25.

The virus is vesicular stomatitis, a disease that causes outbreaks in cattle, horses, donkeys, mules and pigs. It causes painful blisters on the lips and tongue, and animals may not eat for a day or two.

This year's team from Manitoba, Canada dwindled from 16 to five or six contestants.

The situation is causing rodeo officials to seek additional people to lease performance horses.

"We always have to find horses to lease for contestants from Australia and Hawaii, but this is creating more of a need this

year," said Beth Utley, executive director of The Tres Rios High School Rodeo Association.

There are 17 performance horses listed for lease, but more are needed.

Many rodeo officials are upset by the quarantine.

"This is a gross overreaction by bureaucrats," said Joe Quintana, a veterinarian at the Animal Haven Clinic.

He said only two cases of the virus were in Debaca County, which is about 150 miles southeast of Santa Fe, and that he knows of no long-term effects from the virus.

Information from: the Farmington Daily Times, <http://www.daily-times.com>

Some border residents get new shot at passport

CHRISTOPHER SHERMAN
Associated Press Writer

McALLEN, Texas (AP) — Hundreds of citizens along the U.S.-Mexico border whose applications for passports were banished to a bureaucratic black hole because their births were attended by midwives will be able to reapply.

The State Department settled a class-action lawsuit brought by the American Civil Liberties Union and immigration attorneys representing citizens whose passport applications were filed away without further action because the government suspected Texas midwives may have fraudulently registered Mexican births in the U.S.

The settlement, announced by the ACLU on Friday, awaits court approval.

Immigration attorneys, particularly in South Texas, began seeing a steady stream of cases where residents were asked to dig up all sorts of additional proof as passport authorities questioned their citizenship. The applicants ranged from senior citizens to children and even included employees of federal agencies.

Residents along the border were rushing to get passports for the first time in their lives to comply with a June 1 deadline requiring a passport or passport card rather than a driver's license to re-enter the country.

In a region where border crossing is

a part of daily life, the lack of a passport threatened to separate families, take away jobs and end that way of life.

Since 1960, 75 Texas midwives have been convicted of fraudulently registering Mexican-born babies as American. At one point, the government assembled a list of nearly 250 "suspicious" midwives but never explained what made them suspicious.

Under the terms of the settlement, which both parties have signed, the State Department will have to come up with a legal justification for each midwife it puts on the list. Passport applicants delivered by those midwives may still be asked to present additional evidence of their citizenship, but there will be clearer guidelines.

"I think it's a very good and strong victory for a fairly small percentage of the people who are having problems," said South Texas immigration attorney Lisa Brodyaga, who filed the lawsuit.

While hundreds figure to be directly impacted by the settlement, many more who received outright denial letters are still struggling to get passports, Brodyaga said. She hopes that the new training for those reviewing passports will give those who were denied a better shot the second time around.

As the lawsuit progressed and gained class-action status, many whose applications had stalled quickly received their passports without presenting fur-

ther evidence.

"It highlighted to us the arbitrariness of the system," said Vanita Gupta, staff attorney with the ACLU Racial Justice Program.

Those who received letters stating their applications would be closed without further action will be able to reapply without a fee. Those who received outright denials can still reapply, but they will have to pay the fee.

The State Department also agreed to open mobile application centers at several locations along the border to make it easier for the applicants.

Brenda Sprague, deputy assistant secretary for Passport Services at the State Department, said that special teams would be handling the new applications from people qualified as members of the settlement "because some of these people have been waiting a long time."

The agency has been working for some time to prepare the process for these cases, Sprague said. Once the court approves the settlement, it could be a matter of weeks or months before qualified applicants receive their passports.

Artist Nathaniel Franklin opens show at Studio C

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they'll be on display outdoors. Moving day will be a chore; in fact, Franklin's not worried about them being stolen. "It'd almost be worth it just to be able to watch someone try to move it." The pieces are heavy, tall, and sprawling. Besides, he points out that some of them stood outside a downtown Santa Fe gallery for weeks without incident.

This is Franklin's fourth summer living outside Des Moines - he married Amanda Jeffers - where he's grown to be in high demand for his handy and creative skills in construction, tree trimming ("arbor work" - he made the front page of The Chronicle-News in May, dangling with a chain saw from a Des Moines School elm tree), guiding game hunts, and installing solar energy systems (including the heating system at Studio C).

Nathaniel Franklin Green was delivered by his father, according to plan, in Grand Lake, Colorado, in 1977. His dad wasn't a doctor. "No, they were just a couple of hippies, very anti-establishment. He did read an EMT manual." The son is known by friends and neighbors as Nathan Green, but he uses Nathaniel Franklin as his nom de art.

After some drifting years in Illinois, Missouri, and Oregon, Franklin's family settled in Denver in the mid-1980s and he grew up there. He graduated from high school in Longmont and went straight to work doing construction. Though he'd discovered a childhood knack for drawing and painting, he didn't take it seriously. Surprisingly, it was his construction work that led him to become an artist.

"I was helping my friend Kyle make some renovations on his house in Longmont five or six years ago," he recalls. "We had met when I bought a guitar from him at a garage sale. We started hanging out. Playing guitar seemed to trigger something in me. Some of the renovation on his house was creative work. He told me that I should be making art."

"I started with functional work, in steel but more creative." Entirely self-taught, Franklin bought himself a welder and learned to use it. "I did some fancy railings for a guy, things like that. I've probably gotten away from function-

ality now, more pure art just to please the eye."

As for Franklin's painting, "That just came along; I had never done that. For my 30th birthday I went out to the wine country with my whole family. They gave me an artist's kit of brushes and oil paints. It was probably my sister Eleasha's idea: she's an artist." Another sister is an accomplished writer; he also has an older brother.

"My first painting was 2" square. The second was 2"x6". But I went to big canvases real quickly. Now I average 2"x3'. My largest is 4'x8'. If I had the space for it, they'd be bigger." Indeed, Studio C's poster image for Franklin's show comes from a huge flame-red canvas that will not hang in the show because it doesn't fit on Studio C's gallery wall.

Studio C has had some permanent Nathaniel Franklin art since last fall: the concrete heat sinks of his solar heating installation draw comment and admiration from many patrons. Like much of his work, they are creative and unique. "I wouldn't know how to describe it, but I like it," is a typical comment.

"Right now, I haven't swung a hammer in a long time," Franklin remarks. "And that's alright. I get bored kinda easy. I do something for a week or two, then on to the next." He and his wife run "Hunting the Hi-Lo Country" outfitting and guide service, helping hunters find elk, mountain lion, bear, antelope, deer, and wild turkey. Franklin just bought a backhoe. He's just signed on as a sales associate with Energy Concepts out of Las Vegas, NM, selling and installing wind and solar energy products. He still hangs from tall elm trees with his chain saw.

But at the moment he's immersed in his barn-sized workshop, creating huge sculptures of reclaimed steel, cutting up old tents and applying oil paints, figuring out how he's going to get it all over to Studio C.

Franklin's show opens Thursday, July 2, 2009, at Studio C, 517 Broadway (Highway 64/87), Des Moines, NM. Studio C's phone number is 575-278-2040. The show will be up throughout July and August, with an artist's reception planned for Saturday, August 8.