

THE MONITOR
SERVING THE RIO GRANDE VALLEY SINCE 1909

COACH RESIGNS
Hidalgo's Robin Kirk steps down after 3 seasons.
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DOCTORS' DOUBTS
New research faults a popular treatment for mastectomies in breast cancer patients.
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A DAY TO REMEMBER
Local survivors recall Pearl Harbor on the 70th anniversary of the attack.
Valley & State | 1B

WEDNESDAY, DECEMBER 7, 2011 | WWW.THEMONITOR.COM | 75 CENTS DAILY

Rio Home Care raided in Alamo

>> FBI officials provide few details on seizing items from the business.

By JARED TAYLOR
TWITTER: @JAREDNTAYLOR

ALAMO — FBI agents raided a home healthcare agency Tuesday morning, but would not provide specific details about the nature of their search.

Agents were seen at Rio Home Care, 1003 Expressway 83, shortly after 9 a.m. Tuesday, where television foot-

age showed them removing computers and other materials from the home healthcare business.

FBI spokesman Erik Vaisys confirmed agents executed a search warrant at the business, but would not provide further details because of the pending investigation.

No unsealed criminal complaints, warrants or other court documents de-

tail the company or its president, Richard Troy Nelson, had been filed in U.S. District Court in McAllen on Tuesday.

Nelson declined to comment, referring questions to Van Hilley, his San Antonio-based attorney. Hilley did not respond to a request for comment Tuesday afternoon.

Such searches at home healthcare companies typically involve healthcare fraud investigations involving Medicaid and Medicare, the federal insurance programs that

provide coverage to low-income and elderly residents.

Several other local home healthcare companies have faced federal scrutiny for insurance scams that billed millions in extra reimbursement cash from the federal government.

The case could lead to charges against employees at Rio Home Care, including Nelson, the embattled former owner of the Rio Grande Valley Killer Bees hockey team.

A federal agent closes the tailgate of a van Tuesday morning during an FBI raid of Rio Home Care in Alamo.

See RAID | 9A

YULETIDE YUMMIES
There is something special about Christmas treats. They are festive, filling, fattening and almost impossible to resist. Check out a list of sweets that are sure to create a sensation at your holiday events.
Valley Life | 1D

ANIMAL ABUSE
While the Valley is rife with rampant abuse of animals, the area is also filled with numerous organizations that work to improve the lives of pets. Various facilities shelter the animals to nurse them back to health.
Inside | 8A

deal of the day
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A Freedom Newspaper
Vol. 103, No. 133
42 Pages, 5 Sections

TODAY'S WEATHER | 10B
Mostly sunny
HIGH 60
LOW 36

6 38091 00003 8

12 DAYS OF Christmas DAY 1

Looking for a place to call their own

ROBERTO DE LA CERDA, 17, a senior at Juarez-Lincoln High School, sits on a bed where his mother and two sisters sleep inside a two-bedroom mobile home in north Palmview.

>> Adequate shelter and sustenance elude a family amid unemployment.

By AMY NICHOL SMITH
TWITTER: @AMYNICHOLSMITH

An orange mobile home on a rural road hides the small storage shed where Javier De La Cerda sleeps alone.

There's no room for Javier in the mobile home, so he sacrifices his comfort for his wife Graciela and their children. After losing jobs as ranch hands two months ago, the couple and their four youngest children and one grandchild who live

with them suddenly found themselves homeless.

So the family of seven moved in with the eldest daughter, Adriana Padron, who is married with one child, and another on the way.

Padron tried to make room for her parents and siblings, but the two-bedroom-one-bath mobile home is too small for 10 people.

The De La Cerda family stacked all of their worldly possessions in a pile behind the home and moved in.

There is no heating or air-conditioning system, and the home lacks a water heater.

"We put the water on the fire (outside) and heat it," Graciela said in Spanish.

See 12 DAYS | 9A

De La Cerda Family

United Way of South Texas
Serving Hidalgo & Starr Counties

THE MONITOR

How to help:

The United Way is accepting volunteers and donations — including, but not limited to, clothing, food, furniture, toys and money — for the families of this series. To donate, call (956) 279-9050, (956) 279-9051 or (956) 279-9052 or mail donations to P.O. Box 187, McAllen, TX, 78505. The United Way of South Texas is located at 1200 E. Hackberry, Suite F in McAllen.

You can also make an online donation on the United Way of South Texas website at www.unitedwayofstx.org. The Monitor is not accepting donations.

PSJA trustee's brother admits to forgery

>> The sibling of the school board's VP says he tricked a nonprofit group to get back money.

By ELIZABETH FINDELL AND NEAL MORTON
TWITTER: @EFINDELL AND @NEALMORTON

PHARR — A Pharr-San Juan-Alamo school trustee's brother admitted he forged his brother's signature to trick a nonprofit group — that he said "betrayed" him — into paying for use of a school stadium.

Tony Rodriguez, brother to PSJA school board Vice President Bobby Rodriguez, told *The Monitor* that he took full responsibility for a letter demanding a \$500 reimbursement after the district permitted the stadium's use for free in 2010.

Tony Rodriguez refused to identify the nonprofit group. But he admitted to inappropriately using his brother's identity to get money back from the organization, which he said had taken advantage of his local youth football league.

"I never meant for this to get this far," he said. "All this was done with good intentions in the hope that it would benefit the kids."

"Bobby had nothing to do with this. It was all me and I'm sorry," Bobby Rodriguez, who also serves as San Juan's city secretary, said he felt victimized by the whole affair.

See BROTHER | 8A

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