

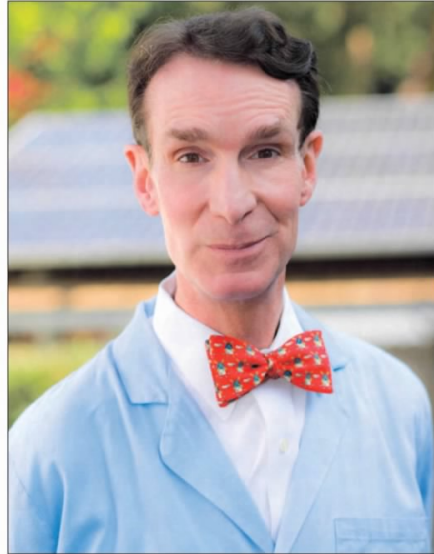
THE MONITOR

TUESDAY, APRIL 1, 2014

SERVING THE RIO GRANDE VALLEY SINCE 1909

75 CENTS DAILY

'Science guy' talks Mars, NASA



Bill Nye is seen at his home in Studio City, California.

Courtesy photo

"There are two deep questions that all of us have asked at some point in our lives ... Where did we come from? Are we alone? And if you want to answer those two questions, you have to explore space. Space exploration brings out the best in us."

Bill Nye

Bill Nye set to speak at UTPA tonight

By Amy Nichol Smith
The Monitor

Bill Nye — "the Science Guy" as so many know him — may have big news to share soon.

The scientist, engineer and entertainer who brought science to the small screen in the '90s with his popular, award-winning television show *Bill Nye the Science Guy* may be returning to TV.

"What we would do is a grown-up version of the show," the 38-year-old

said in a recent phone interview.

Nye will be speaking at 7:30 p.m. today at the University of Texas-Pan American as part of the Edinburg campus' Distinguished Speaker Series.

"I admit I think about it often," he said of rebooting his show.

With the help of Peacock Productions, Nye created a sizzle reel, or demo reel, to shop around to interested networks.

Nye always seems to dream big and shoot for the stars.

Long before he took on Ken Ham in a highly publicized creationism vs. evolution debate, before he earned seven Emmy awards, before he won a Steve Martin lookalike contest, before he worked for Boeing, he developed a fascination with his bicycle. His interest in how it worked led him to a career as a mechanical engineer.

Now the scientist has an even bigger goal: to inspire America to innovate. So, what should young minds be focused on?

"Electric power generation, storage and transmission," he said. "There's enough wind power in North Dakota to power North America five times over, and that's just an example — Iowa, Kansas, Nebraska, Colorado (are) extraordinary wind resources."

However, we do not have the means, Nye said, to capture, store and relocate the power across the continent.

"If we did, it would

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AP sources: Healthcare law sign-ups on track to hit 7M

By Josh Lederman and
Ricardo Alonso-Zaldívar
The Associated Press

WASHINGTON — Beating expectations, President Barack Obama's healthcare overhaul was on track to sign up more than 7 million Americans for health insurance on deadline day Monday, government officials told The Associated Press.

The 7 million target, thought to be out of reach by most experts, was in sight on a day that saw surging consumer interest as well as vexing computer glitches that slowed sign-ups on the HealthCare.gov website.

Two government officials confirmed the milestone, speaking on condition of anonymity because they were not authorized to discuss the matter ahead of an official announcement.

Seven million was the original target set by the Congressional Budget Office for enrollment in taxpayer-subsidized private health insurance through new online markets created under Obama's signature legislation.

That was scaled back to 6 million after the disastrous launch of HealthCare.gov last fall. Several state-run websites also had crippling problems.

Americans who rushed to apply for health insurance Monday faced long, frustrating waits and a new spate of website

ills on deadline day.

"This is like trying to find a parking spot at Wal-Mart on Dec. 23," said Jason Stevenson, working with a Utah nonprofit group helping people enroll.

IN THE VALLEY

For Christian Muñoz, director for open enrollment at Nuestra Clínica del Valle in San Juan, the final day for Affordable Care Act enrollment was complicated by system errors. He said that the system had been experiencing problems for the majority of the day since 9 a.m.

"We didn't do as much as we could have done today," he said late Monday afternoon. "We did not exceed our potential."

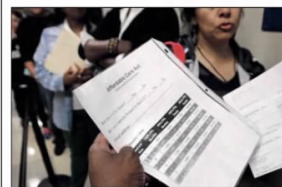
Reviewing the day at 10:30 p.m., he described it as having gone "all right."

"It was still a productive day," he said. "It went pretty well."

All told, across its five locations Monday, Nuestra Clínica was able to enroll 55 people. Without the problems with the system that plagued their work, Muñoz said that his team "probably could have doubled that."

Overall, Muñoz was

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LM Otero | The Associated Press

Parkland Hospital financial counselor Ricky Spain answers questions Monday for people waiting to sign up for health insurance at the business office of Parkland Hospital in Dallas.

Abbott: Tie additional pre-K funding to academic outcomes

Attorney General Greg Abbott waves Monday at students as he enters Sam Houston Elementary School in Weslaco.



By Alexa Ura
The Texas Tribune

Announcing the first of his education policy proposals Monday, Republican gubernatorial candidate Greg Abbott called for reforming pre-kindergarten programs before expanding access, saying that additional funding should be tied to academic outcomes.

Abbott's plan, which was unveiled in Weslaco, proposes providing an additional \$1,500 per student on top of the funding

the state already provides for half-day pre-K programs if the program meets performance requirements set by the state.

"Expanding the population of students served by existing state-funded programs without addressing the quality of existing prekindergarten instruction or how it is being delivered would be an act of negligence and waste," Abbott's policy proposal reads.

Abbott's proposal comes with a \$118 million price tag in the 2016-17 biennium and includes

a focus on annual reviews for children beginning school in 2016.

His pre-K proposal flies in the face of state Sen. Wendy Davis' proposal for increased access to full-day pre-kindergarten programs in February.

The Democratic gubernatorial contender's plan, which proposes that school districts across the state offer full-day pre-K programs beyond the three hours per day the state

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