



Laredo Morning Times

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A question of deception?

South Laredo land deal leaves officials looking for answers

BY TRICIA CORTEZ
Times staff writer

In an effort to buy time on the sale of a \$42,000 piece of land in South Laredo — valued at \$754,940 — Webb County officials asked the Webb County Appraisal District Review Board to table an item Thursday regarding a possible correction of the appraised value.

The five-member review board voted unanimously to table the item for March 31, to ensure that all three entities involved in the dispute are provided the required 15-day notice.

Two of the three taxing entities, United Independent School District and the city of Laredo, issued motions Wednesday to place the item on the Thursday agenda. They also waived (See *OFFICIALS Page 17A)



Times staff photo by CUATE SANTOS

SALE CONTROVERSY: UISD Tax Attorney Ricardo De Anda, left, with his co-counsel, Laura Gomez, look over papers as Jaime Flores, center and County Attorney Homero Ramirez talk outside the meeting room of the Webb County Appraisal Review Board.

Jury finds Laredoan guilty in BP assault

BY LAUREL ALMADA
Times staff writer

After about three and one-half hours of deliberation Thursday, a five-woman, seven-man jury found a Laredo man charged with the attempted murder of two U.S. Border Patrol agents guilty of lesser offenses.

They convicted Jesus Arias Jr., 18, on two counts of aggravated assault with a deadly weapon — both second-degree felony offenses.

He is now facing between two and 20 years in prison, with a possible option of probation, for the offenses stemming from the April 27, 2003, shooting incident that injured agents Mark De Marco and Jose A. Garza II.

The jury's findings followed two days of testimony in the case being heard in the 341st District Court.

Prior to the jury's retiring to deliberate as to Arias' guilt or innocence, the attorneys gave their closing arguments.

Arias' attorney, Rogelio Rios, said his client is young and from the barrio.

"I know what happens there," he said, explaining that if a person does not belong to a gang, "things happen to you."

Prior testimony indicated that Arias is a former member of the gang La Movida, and was involved in a shooting incident with a rival gang, Los Sieteros, just prior to the U.S. Border Patrol agent shooting.

Even Arias' mother, Mary, said things got so bad she moved with her children to Utah the year prior, Rios said. Arias, however, returned to Laredo to be with his girlfriend, he added.

(See *JURY Page 18A)

TERRORIST ATTACK



AP Photo/Peter Dejong

Rescue workers are seen inside a train at the Atocha train station following a blast that rocked three stations in Madrid Thursday. The blasts killed more than 190 rush-hour commuters and wounded more than 500 in Spain's worst terrorist attack ever.

Terrorist strike trains in Spain

BY MAR ROMAN
Associated Press Writer

MADRID, Spain — A series of bombs hidden in backpacks exploded in quick succession Thursday, blowing apart four commuter trains and killing at least 192 people and wounding 1,200. Spain blamed Basque separatists but a shadowy group claimed responsibility in the name of al-Qaida for the worst terrorist attack in Spain's history.

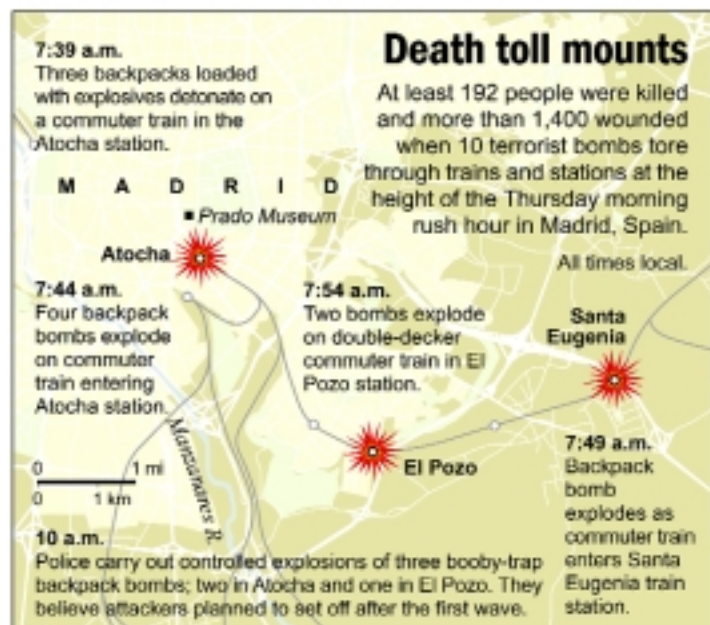
Panicked commuters trampled on each other, abandoning their bags and shoes, after two of the bombs went off in one train in the Atocha station in the heart of Madrid. Train cars were turned into twisted wrecks and platforms were strewn with corpses. Cell phones rang unanswered on the bodies of the dead as frantic relatives tried to call them.

(See *SPAIN Page 18A)



AP Photo/Jose Huesca/EFE

INJURED: Two people injured by an explosion in a train wait for aid outside the train station of Atocha in Madrid, Spain, Thursday.



AP Photo/Peter Dejong

DEAD: Rescue workers remove victims from the Atocha train station following an attack at three railway stations in Madrid Thursday.

CHAMPION HOG

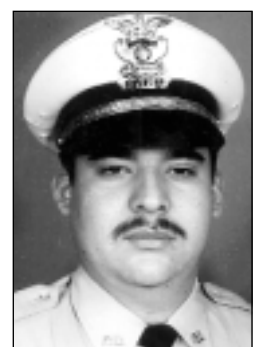


Times staff photo by GUILLERMO SOSA

Jacob Chapa and 2004 Life Queen Melissa Martin pose with the Swine Show Grand Champion Market Hog at the Laredo International Fair and Exposition Thursday. Chapa named his hog 'Penny.'

Laredo police officer is first donor of 2004

BY CELINA ALVARADO
Times staff writer



ALFREDO GUTIERREZ

A Laredo Police officer continues his plight to protect and to serve, even after death.

Laredo born Alfredo Gutierrez Jr., 39-year-old, passed away Tuesday, March 9 surrounded by his family.

However, a part of him will continue to live on in the bodies of four other people in South and Central Texas.

Gutierrez was the first recorded organ donor in Laredo this year.

Mari Stradford from the San Antonio Texas Organ Sharing Alliance explained that in order to fully understand the significance of a donor, one must be aware of the need.

As of January 1, 2004, the state of Texas had a recorded 5,431 patients currently waiting for a transplant (2,056 reside in South and Central Texas alone).

When it comes to donor patients in the area, patients far outweigh donors willing to donate their organs, said Stradford.

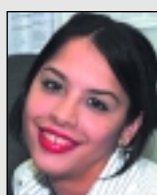
Last year there were a recorded 109 donors in the state of Texas.

Laredo produced only two of those donors, as was recorded in 2003. The low numbers in Laredo matched the 2002 numbers as well, records showed.

Gutierrez is the first and only donor recorded in Laredo (See *DONOR Page 17A)

DO YOU KNOW

CAROLINA BARRERA?
An inventory control assistant at Sames, she enjoys reading books and going out.



TODAY'S TIMES

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SPORTS	B	WEATHER	6B	THEATERS	D
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