Why Some Taps Kept Running During the City-Wide Shutoff

Many residents observed that not all homes and businesses lost water or pressure during Monday's city-wide shutoff, and this is an important part of how a municipal water system functions. When the source is turned off, the system does not empty instantly — large mains, service lines, and elevated areas hold substantial volumes of water, and pressure declines gradually as those lines drain. Properties at higher elevations or farther from the tanks may lose pressure sooner, while others continue to see flow for several hours. This can create confusion for those expecting an immediate, uniform outage, but it is a normal and predictable part of water distribution mechanics. In the upper zone, two storage tanks — one approximately 45 feet tall and the other 30 feet — operate in unison, filling and depleting together. When the pump at Well #6 failed over the weekend, the system could no longer replenish those tanks, causing levels to drop sharply and reducing the buffer that normally maintains consistent pressure across the zone. These factors combined to produce the uneven pressure loss residents experienced.

City Advances Street Improvements

The City is preparing to rework several residential streets, beginning with Arrowhead Lane, where the waterline has been replaced and the roadway will be repaved, and Cherry Lane, which will receive a mix of new overlay and reshaping to a 28-foot width with a three-inch concave surface designed to shed water. Approximately $1.8 million has been allocated for the Marie Street project, which will begin once the engineering contract is finalized, and Bartoo Sand & Gravel has been selected to supply road materials. These efforts reflect a continued shift toward neighborhood street improvements, following recent progress such as the opening of Foch Street and the additional block completed on Daniels between Broadway and McAdoo.

Jornada RC&D and City to Enhance Turtleback Trails Network

The Jornada Resource Conservation and Development Council delivered a detailed update on the Turtleback Trails Network during the August 28 City Commission meeting, highlighting a trail plan six years in the making. The multi-use route follows the Rio Grande along County and City Road A005 and will feature interpretive panels placed every mile. Two aging signs will be replaced, and three new trailhead signs are planned, with installation expected in December. The group is also coordinating with the Bureau of Land Management to shift a portion of the trail near the wastewater treatment plant away from the roadway, creating a more elevated and scenic experience. The network currently includes seven color-coded turtle-logo signs, each representing a different theme such as agriculture or local history. In related business, Public Service Director O.J. Hechler—who serves on the Turtleback Trails Network—presented a Memorandum of Understanding between the City and Sierra County supporting a proposed Rio Grande Riverwalk Trail at Ralph Edwards Park. The agreement strengthens the City's grant application to develop trail connections, wildlife viewing areas, educational signage, and improved access to the Rio Grande.