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Exclusive: Texas plants first rare-earth mining district in Hudspeth County

September 22, 2026 | Paris Apodaca (<https://www.bizpacreview.com/author/paris-apodaca/>)

 **DAILY CALLER NEWS FOUNDATION** (<https://dailycallernewsfoundation.org>)

Texas is moving toward establishing its first dedicated rare earth mining district after the state entered into two new mineral leases in the western part of the state, the Texas General Land Office (GLO) announced.

The GLO entered into two hard mineral leases with El Paso Minerals Corp. covering more than 1,000 acres in Hudspeth County, a rural county with a population of just over 3,000. The agreements expand critical mineral development around the Round Top project, located on GLO-managed state land approximately 90 miles east of El Paso.

“It’ll be literally transformational, not just for Texas, but for our country,” Republican Texas Land Commissioner Dawn Buckingham told the Daily Caller News Foundation.

The leases generated more than \$500,000 in immediate revenue for the Permanent School Fund, Texas’ public education endowment, with additional royalties expected as development progresses, according to the GLO.

El Paso Minerals CEO Cesar Gonzalez said decades of research from the University of Texas at El Paso and the University of Texas at Austin’s Bureau of Economic Geology have identified heavy rare earth and other critical mineral potential across the Sierra

Blanca district.

The company's existing private leases combined with the new GLO leases give El Paso Minerals what Gonzalez described as the largest land position in the district. The company is now preparing to drill its primary target.

"Our biggest roadblock is just the processing of these minerals because we want to do it in an environmentally responsible way," Buckingham said.

The new leases expand critical mineral development already underway at Round Top Mountain. The GLO said the project has attracted substantial federal and private investment, with USA Rare Earth developing the Round Top deposit and a domestic supply chain extending from mineral extraction to finished magnets.

"They're especially important magnets because they do well under heat. They're not changed by magnetic or electrical forces around them. That's why they're so critical for jet supply and things like that," Buckingham said. "I think it's gonna attract tremendous industries because these rare earth minerals are literally a part of our lives. And so I think it's just gonna be the gift of Thanksgiving, and I think innovation is gonna follow."

The projects will form the foundation of Texas' first dedicated rare earth mining district, designed to support the extraction and processing of rare earth elements and other critical minerals used in national defense, advanced manufacturing and energy technologies, according to the press release.

USA Rare Earth finalized agreements unlocking up to \$1.6 billion to accelerate development of the Round Top deposit and its domestic mine-to-magnet supply chain,

according (<https://www.nist.gov/news-events/news/2026/06/departments-commerce-chips-program-finalizes-definitive-agreement-usa-rare>) to a June Department of Commerce announcement.

The West Texas district as part of a broader effort to develop domestic critical mineral supplies and reduce U.S. reliance on foreign sources, GLO described the push.

“The General Land Office is the agency that rolls up our sleeves every day and makes Texas lives better. Most people didn’t even know we exist. So we’re doing great things for Texas and really for the entire country as well,” Buckingham said.

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