



# THE GATESVILLE MESSENGER

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## GISD hopes to save via fuel co-op

BY JEFF OSBORNE  
SENIOR WRITER & EDITOR

The Gatesville Independent School District is hoping to reap significant savings on fuel costs by participating in the Texas Association of School Board's energy cooperative.

Darrell Frazier, chief financial officer for the district, presented details of the plan during the March 21 meeting of the Gatesville ISD Board of Trustees.

Frazier said TASB is in the process of building the fuel pool at a fixed rate for both die-

sel and unleaded fuel that could substantially reduce the fuel bills of participating school districts.

"Have y'all been to the pump lately?" Frazier asked the school board. "You know what the prices are doing. Diesel was at \$5 (per gallon) and regular (unleaded) was around \$4."

Under the fuel co-op, the district would commit to purchasing 36,000 gallons of diesel and 9,000 gallons of unleaded fuel. The diesel would be discounted to \$2.81 per gallon with unleaded costing \$2.68.

"This would be a big thing for us - it would really help out a lot with expenses," Frazier said.

Following board approval, the district committed to purchase \$125,280 worth of fuel at those discounted prices from June 1 of this year through Aug. 31, 2023.

"The savings could be pretty substantial," Frazier said. "This would help protect the school district in terms of costs."

Board Vice President Charles Alderson asked if the prices could change.

"No," Frazier said, adding that the bigger

question is if the fuel co-op would be able to be established.

"Will TASB be able to do this? I don't know," Frazier said. He added that he has contacted a TASB representative about the fuel co-op who said he is still hopeful.

"It's a really good rate, no doubt, if we can get it for that," Alderson said.

Board member Mary Anne Leib asked what if fuel costs dropped down to \$1.50 per gallon.

"You'd hear me hoot and holler," Alderson said.

## GJH library named for former principal

BY DAVID SCOTT  
STAFF WRITER

For someone who was labeled a "life-long book lover," it was more than appropriate when the library at the Gatesville Junior High was formally dedicated and named the "Cindy Ament Venable Library." In June 2021, the Gatesville Independent School District Board of Trustees unanimously approved the naming of the school's library in Venable's honor. Upon hearing the news, Venable said, "I am so humbled, thankful and so grateful for everything the district has done for me and continues to do. Thank you so much."

After more than 25 years of battling a slow-moving but aggressive form of cancer, Venable passed away on August 3, 2021. Her relentless fight against the disease inspired many Gatesville residents and in the surrounding areas. Venable encouraged and inspired people who were battling cancer, or family members of those who were suffering from cancer, to join in the community's annual "Relay for Life" benefit, which she strongly supported.

Venable was a proud native of Gatesville - she grew up here and graduated from Gatesville High School in 1985. Following high school, she attended McLennan Community College and Central Texas College. She later transferred to Tarleton State University where she graduated magna cum laude with a degree in interdisciplinary studies and a minor in English. After becoming a teacher at GISD, she earned her master's degree in educational administration from Tarleton State University.

Venable first came to work full-time at GISD as a third-grade teacher in 1998. By 2010, she was named assistant principal at Gatesville Junior High and later became the lead principal at the campus in 2012 - a position she would hold until a medical retirement in spring 2021, after a 24-year career with GISD.

"She loved books. She loved literacy. She loved everything about English and so I'm glad this is a perfect tribute for her," GISD superintendent Barrett Pollard said. "This will now, and forever be known as the Cindy Ament Venable Library."

Attending the dedication was a mixture



Wyllis and Linda Sue Ament stand next to a photo of their daughter, Cindy Venable, for whom the Gatesville Junior High Library was named.

of family, friends, colleagues and students - including her parents, Wyllis and Linda Sue Ament. "I would like to say on behalf of the

family that we do appreciate this. She was very, very proud of this library and she was very proud of the school," Wyllis Ament said.

DAVID SCOTT | THE GATESVILLE MESSENGER

## House rehab plan pending

BY JEFF OSBORNE  
SENIOR WRITER & EDITOR

A house at 2006 Bridge Street that the Gatesville City Council ruled as substandard and which faced possible demolition has a new lease on life after the structure's new owner presented a house renovation plan to the Council on March 22.

City Manager Bill Parry told the Council that Josiah Wilson had purchased the house unaware that a demolition order had been issued on Jan. 25.

Wilson attended the March 22 Council meeting and asked for more time to rehabilitate the house.

"I brought a layout, scope of work and examples of other properties I have renovated, and I'm working on getting bids," Wilson told the Council. "I have a rough estimate of what it will take to bring the property back to life."

The 1,164 square foot home currently has two bedrooms and one bath, and Wilson said he plans to add one bedroom and one bathroom.

Councilwoman Barbara Burrow asked Wilson if he planned to sell or rent the house once the work was done, and Wilson said he will sell the house after repairs are made.

Wilson said one of the issues is that a load-bearing wall was torn down, and this will be among the repairs made.

Mayor Pro Tem Meredith Rainer asked how long Wilson thought he would need to renovate the property.

"It's a 6-8 week project once a qualified contractor is selected," Wilson said. "I have three or four contractors working on different projects, including one in McGregor. The issue is finding materials."

"Personally, I'd rather see the house get back on the market than demolished," Mayor Gary Chumley said.

Parry asked Wilson when permits would be pulled. He told the Council that an extension should only be granted once the Council has seen a plan for renovations and agrees with the plan.

Wilson said he hoped to pull the permits soon, and that he could present a renovation plan to the Council at its next meeting on April 12. The Council could decide to grant the extension at that point.

## County leaders mull construction priorities

BY JEFF OSBORNE  
SENIOR WRITER & EDITOR

Taking the next step in what a Coryell County facilities committee has deemed "dire needs" for some county offices, the Coryell County Commissioners Court set its top priorities for upcoming projects during a workshop on March 22. However, there were differing views on how to meet construction goals.

County Judge Roger Miller and commissioners Ray Ashby Jr., Ryan Basham and Kyle Matthews agreed that getting justices of the peace and their employees out of the dilapidated old jail facility, building a multipurpose courtroom and find-

ing a new office for the Texas Department of Public Safety were key areas of concern to be addressed.

"We've been contemplating this going on two years now and, at this point, we need to talk about what to include in construction projects, the cost and if we're going to move forward or not," Miller said. "We have recommendations from the facilities advisory committee and realistic finance numbers."

The commissioners court had designs from an architectural firm for a building that was to also include a 9-1-1 call center, emergency management office and early voting site, but those items were taken out to produce a streamlined facility with an estimated price tag of \$5.5

million.

"I'd like the court to consider adding those items into the concept," Miller said. "We have \$5.9 million budgeted for capital improvements this year, and money from taxes allocated for capital improvements."

Miller said because of rising property values, the amount of tax revenue has steadily increased and continues to do so, meaning there is more money available for capital improvements. That revenue amounted to \$243,381 in 2017, was \$331,469 for 2020 and was expected to rise to \$351,071 by 2024 and \$441,300 by 2027.

"Right now, we have no bond debt, and bond debt is not neces-

sarily a bad thing," he said.

He suggested bumping the total project cost from \$6 million to \$8 million to cover the facilities needs, saying a five-year bond would be less than \$400,000.

"This would have no impact on the tax rate at all," Miller said. "Then look at 2024 and we could have two projects on independent properties under one bond."

He said those properties could include a new courthouse annex building and a 150- to 160-bed jail, "using the best numbers available and using \$33 million as a total base number. That would have the least impact on taxpayers as we can

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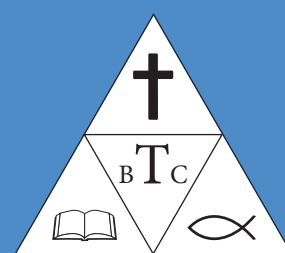


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## HONORING GISD STAFF & STUDENT TRAINERS



Gatesville athletic trainer Tim Toker and his student trainers; including freshman Serenity Morrall; freshman Emilie Moore and junior Hayleigh Wilson; standing with Gatesville ISD Superintendent Barrett Pollard; were recognized for their dedication during the March 21 school board meeting. Toker has been a part of the GISD staff for more than 20 years, and between high school and junior high programs, he works with 28 teams and nearly 700 student athletes.

JEFF OSBORNE | THE GATESVILLE MESSENGER

## COUNTY

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can and would give us two simultaneous projects at \$33 million - that's 6.6 cents on a 30-year bond."

Based on growth trends for Coryell County, Miller said additional revenues can be expected to help pay for construction costs.

"There are plats (for new housing) in Jonesboro, Oglesby and across the county," he said. "I think it's time this court starts doing projects to get where most of us would like to be. We could package those two projects and I think we'll get voter buy-in and meet the goals the facilities committee has set."

Miller said the first thing to address is "the immediate needs project. It triggers what we can or cannot do in the next couple of years ... this would take advantage of tax gains and we've already taken a step in that direction."

Commissioner Matthews asked for clarification.

"What are we looking at today - I'm a little bit confused," he said. "I don't think we can afford the Heffelfinger design (produced for the county previously). I like the design and the purpose of it. But I don't know how we can justify the cost going into it."

"I know we need JP space,

but I think we ought to take baby steps moving forward and then plan what we're going to do. I don't see spending \$6 million on that lot for that building. But there's no doubt there's a need for those three items (justice of the peace space, a multipurpose courtroom and DPS space).

One person attending the workshop asked, "What's it going to take to get all five of y'all (county commissioners and judge) on board (with a construction option)?"

"We've definitely got to do something for the JPs - that's the bottom line," said Commissioner Basham.

Commissioner Ashby suggested looking at cheaper options.

"I think what's most important - we need to get going and get some momentum to get the confidence of the county as a whole," said Fred Chavez, a Copperas Cove City Council member who served on the facilities committee. "If we're going to lower the price, what can we take out? We can't keep pushing this down the road. Let's cut the things out that we can do without and move forward, or it hurts our credibility."

One person attending the workshop noted that the longer the county delays taking action, the higher the cost, which eventually will be when construction is finally

approved.

"My point is why would you spend \$6 million if you can get it for \$3 million and get the same product," Matthews said. He noted that the road and bridge department is constructing a new facility for \$82 per square foot.

"I can't in my right mind sell you a soda pop for \$18 when it's only worth a buck," Matthews said.

Miller said the two components to be considered are functionality and cost, "if someone comes in and can build something that fits all our priorities for \$6 million ..."

Matthews said he thought a building should be constructed for closer to \$3.5 million.

"We budgeted \$6 million," Miller said. "Why would we go down to \$3.5 million?"

"The cost was too much," Matthews said. "I think we need to take baby steps - fix the most pressing needs. The JPs and DPS need an office, and they need a courtroom."

Miller said he would like to see a server room on site to house the computer servers rather than having that facility based in Waco.

Going around the room, one thing the commissioners and Miller agreed on was that the office for justices of the peace, the multipurpose courtroom and the DPS office were top priorities.

"I think the 9-1-1 call cen-

ter would need to go somewhere else," Ashby said.

Matthews asked if the property near the Extraco bank and across from the post office which is currently being used for the commissioners court meeting space,

the early voting site, and emergency management office was something the county was planning to continue using.

"I don't think it's in the long-term plan," Miller said.

"I think we ought to keep it

and continue using it," Matthews said. "It's the cheapest route and being a good steward of taxpayer money."

The commissioners court will follow up on the workshop and address facilities needs at a future meeting.

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# Lady Hornets fall in close game to Lampasas, 7-6

BY TRISTON MCGEHEE  
STAFF WRITER

A hard-fought seventh inning in Gatesville's District 6-4A softball opener did not go the Lady Hornets' way on Tuesday, as they fell to Lampasas 7-6 at the GHS softball field.

The Lady Hornets never gained a lead in the game but did put together a rally in the seventh inning. Gatesville was down 7-2 in that frame, but runs early in the inning by Cera Touchet and Riann Tippit, off a double by Kallie Featherston, put life into the Lady Hornets in that final inning.

Featherston arrived at second base after hitting her double, and Kayla Vega entered the game as a pinch-runner for Featherston. Kalli Robinette hit a double, advancing Vega to third. Raylee Glover hit a single but advanced to second on the throw, bringing Vega and Robinette home.

"They never give up," GHS softball coach Andrea Holdbrook said. "They're always going to fight."

Holdbrook was proud of the girls' comeback effort even though they came up short. She hopes that they can be more aggressive at the plate early and prevent simple mistakes

from occurring.

Last week, the Lady Hornets traveled to West High School on March 15, and lost to the Lady Trojans 10-0. On March 16 the Lady Hornets lost 3-2 to the Waco Connally Lady Cadets.

Gatesville's season record dropped to 6-13-2, and they are 0-1 in district.

The Lady Hornets are scheduled to play the Hillsboro Eagles in a non-district game at home and then will jump back into district play as they are slated to take on the Brownwood Lady Lions on Tuesday, March 29 at 7 p.m. in Brownwood.



TRISTON MCGEHEE | THE GATESVILLE MESSENGER

Kallie Featherston pitches for the Lady Hornets on March 22 vs. Lampasas.



TRISTON MCGEHEE | THE GATESVILLE MESSENGER

Gatesville's Kalli Robinette battles for home plate in a tight contest against Lampasas on March 22.



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## Yellow Jackets top Hornets in baseball clash

BY TRISTON MCGEHEE  
STAFF WRITER

The Gatesville Hornets baseball team was toppled 12-1 in a mercy-rule loss to their District 6-4A opponent, 15th-ranked Stephenville on Tuesday at Danny Loerwald Field at Ryan Powell Memorial Ballpark.

Camden Galindo was the lone runner that crossed home plate in the fifth inning for the Hornets.

The Yellow Jackets' offense was difficult to stop because they were hitting the ball efficiently. The third inning was a backbreaker for the Hornets, as they were already down 5-0 to start the inning, but the Yellow Jackets would round the bases seven more times to make the lead insurmountable.

GHS head coach Chase Smith knew the game was going to be tough but is hoping to rebound on Friday against their next district opponent, Glen Rose.

"We got to be ready and play better defense Friday," Smith

said.

The Hornets dropped to 6-9 overall and 1-2 in district play.

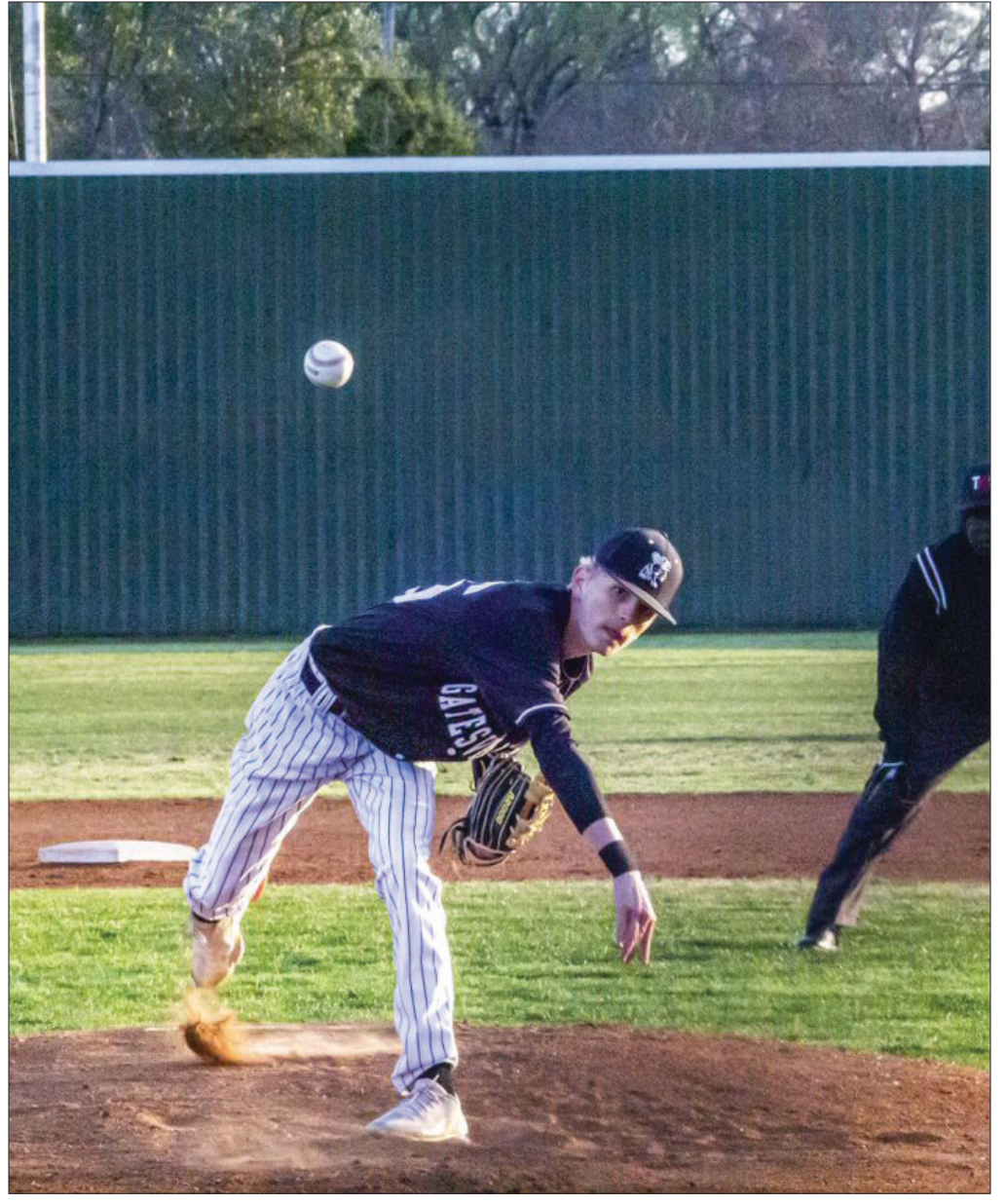
Smith said that if the Hornets win Friday, they will be "in the fight" for second place in the district and back in the playoff picture.

The Hornets' game against Glen Rose was set for March 25, on the road.



TRISTON MCGEHEE | THE GATESVILLE MESSENGER

Gatesville catcher James Hamilton warms up during the Hornets' March 22 baseball game against the Stephenville Yellow Jackets.



TRISTON MCGEHEE | THE GATESVILLE MESSENGER

Justin Johnson delivers a pitch for the Hornets in Gatesville's March 22 district home baseball game against Stephenville.

### AREA FISHING REPORT

#### Belton

GOOD. Water lightly stained; 65 degrees; 3.33 feet low. The fish are less lethargic as the days increase and water warms. Check the wind forecast before heading out. Search in deeper water using deep topographic features for white bass. Success in 20 feet of water casting MAL Heavy Lures with silver blades and chartreuse tails while the light level was low just before, during and after sunrise. As the clouds thin and the skies brighten, fish deeper water using white, 5/8-ounce Bladed Hazy Eye Slabs vertically. This slab is attractive to white bass because it is the same size, color, and shape as the threadfin shad which make up the vast majority of the white bass diet. Next, the distinguishing feature of this lure, the small, spinning willowleaf blade attached to the treble hook, puts off flash and vibration. Finally, the stinger hook ups the catch rate on this lure by placing a hook at the head of the lure in addition to the standard placement of the treble hook at the tail end of the lure. Report by Bob Maindelle, Holding the Line Guide Service. Crappie and white bass continue to be excellent in the Leon River and Cowhouse Creek biting ATX Lure Company plastics. Report by Zach Minnix, Jig N' Jerk Guide Service.

#### Stillhouse Hollow

GOOD. Water lightly stained; 51 degrees; 3.30 feet low. The fish are less lethargic as the days increase and water warms. White bass are hit-or-miss with small, nomadic groups milling around both upstream and downstream of the Lampasas River mouth. With a near total lack of current to draw these fish upstream to spawn, the fishing is not as consistent as it could be this time of year. Success horizontal casting with MAL Heavy Lures cast cross-wind. Report by Bob Maindelle, Holding the Line Guide Service.

#### Waco

GOOD. Water stained; 58-60 degrees; 4.68 feet low. Mornings start slow, but as the water warms the bite improves. Black bass are good in the creeks and coves around the lakes casting and flipping spinnerbaits, swim jigs, and RatLTraps. There still has not been a large wave of fish to come shallow and stay shallow, but it is coming soon. White bass are good in the rivers biting on road runners and RatLTraps. The bite should improve to great after the recent rain. Crappie are good starting to move shallow, but still on brush in the 10-20 feet of water. If you catch a couple 60 degree nights in a row you can usually count on there being a good shallow crappie bite on Waco. Report by Justin Prisock, Prisock's Fishing Guide Service. Catfish are good with a few yellow catfish mixed in biting on fresh shad and carp. Report by Jason "SPUD" Barton, Cattin' Around Adventure's Professional Guide Service. Crappie and white bass continue to be excellent in North and South Bosque biting ATX Lure Company plastics. Report by Zach Minnix, Jig N' Jerk Guide Service.

#### Whitney

GOOD. Water lightly stained; 64 degrees; 2.51 feet low. Striped bass are great schooling midlake in 20-40 feet of water. Success with live bait, or drifting to locate feeding schools of fish. Report by Blake Stritz, Fellowship Fishing Guide Service. Striped bass are good in 20-60 feet of water using soft plastics with a heavy weight to help sink it lower seems to do the trick while slow trolling at 1-1.8 mph in the main river channel. Fish are scattered throughout the reservoir from the dam all the way to the river. These fish are holding deep so deadsticking with white or chartreuse will work as well along with slabs. Look for fish suspended off the bottom as those are the ones that are feeding more actively. Report provided by Kraig Sexton, Sexton's Guide Service LLC.

#### Proctor

FAIR. Water clear; 56 degrees; 1.96 feet low. Fishing is improving as the weather warms. Crappie are fair in 12-15 feet of water on minnows. Sand bass are fair on slabs. Hybrid stripers are slow. Black bass are slow. Catfish are fair in the Rush Creek area.

#### Brownwood

SLOW. Water stained; 53-56 degrees; 2.29 feet low. Black bass are slow with catches up to 5.5 pounds in the main lake in 8-10 feet of water in the bushes on crankbaits, and in 2-7 feet of water in bushes on spinnerbaits, and spinnerbaits or senkos up the rivers. White bass are slow on Lit'l Fishies and crankbaits in 12-16 feet of water, and minnow or jigs under the lights. Crappie are good with catches up to 1.5 pounds in 8-14 feet of water using minnow, and black/chartreuse or red/white jigs. Channel catfish are slow with 3-5 pounds catches coming with cut shad jugs and trotlines. Yellow catfish are slow on trotlines baited with perch and Goldfish. Blue catfish are good with catches up 8 pounds using cut perch or Shad on jug lines.

#### Buchanan

FAIR. Water lightly stained; 54 degrees; 4.92 feet low. Largemouth bass are good near rock piles and spawning flats are starting to turn on with some good bites using shaky heads, jugs, worms or crankbaits and spinnerbaits bouncing off or running through rocks. Shallow crankbaits and plastics worked around the flats full of trees are working as well for largemouth. Crappie are showing up around shallow flats with trees and around docks now as well. White bass and stripers are good using your electronics to find them piled up deeper and dropping jigging spoons on them. Report provided by Bryan Cotter, Texas Hawgs Bass Fishing Guide Service. Crappie are good in 4-12 feet of water biting on chartreuse/black jigs. Report by Jess Rotherham.

#### Travis

GOOD. Stained; 55 degrees; 21.17 feet low. Crappie are good in 6-15 feet of water biting on chartreuse jigs. Bass fishing is slow after the cold snap and gusty winds.

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