



Happy 4th of July



THE GATESVILLE MESSENGER

SATURDAY | June 29, 2024

\$1.00

SERVING CORYELL COUNTY SINCE 1881 | VOLUME 122, No. 32, ISSN No. 0894-4954



ANOTHER CHAPTER FOR DIXIE NEEL



DAVID SCOTT | THE GATESVILLE MESSENGER

Gatesville resident, Dixie Neel, recently celebrated her 93rd birthday. Neel, who is known as an avid reader, visits the Gatesville Public Library every week and collects two bags of books, which she reads and then returns to the library the following week for two new bags. Neel could be considered one of the library's best customers or patrons. At 93, the love of reading continues to be a joy in her life. Pictured left to right are GPL Director Shea Harp, library employee Adara Fincher, Dixie Neel, and library employee Becky Jones.

FEMA assistance still available

Staff Reports

Although the Coryell County Disaster Recovery Center closed on June 26, residents impacted by recent storms between April 26 and June 5 can still apply for disaster assistance until July 16.

To apply for disaster assistance online or by phone, visit the following resources:

- Go online to disaster-assistance.gov/
Download the FEMA App for mobile devices: https://www.fema.gov/about/news-multimedia/mobile-products.
Call the FEMA helpline at 800-621-3362 between 6 a.m. and 10 p.m.

For other Disaster Recovery Center locations, go online to fema.gov/drc.

For the latest information on Texas disaster recovery, visit fema.gov/disaster/4781

Disaster assistance for private roads and bridges

FEMA may also provide funds to repair privately-owned access roads and bridges that were

damaged by the storms, according to a media advisory distributed by FEMA. To qualify, residents must be the owner, and the home must serve as the primary residence.

A FEMA inspection is required to determine if repairs are necessary for a vehicle to access the property. In addition, property owners must meet at least one of the following conditions:

- The road and/or bridge is the only access to the property.
No one can access the home due to damaged infrastructure.
The homeowner is responsible (or shares responsibility with other homeowners) for maintaining the privately-owned access route.

The safety of the home's occupants could be adversely affected, because emergency services vehicles, such as an ambulance or fire truck, cannot reach the residence. However, this will only be

PLEASE SEE FEMA | A2

'Topping out' celebration held at new district court site

BY KAYLEE DUSANG Staff Writer

Subcontractors and representatives from the county were served a barbecue lunch on Thursday, June 20, to celebrate the progress of the new building.

The purpose of a "topping out" ceremony is to honor a project's milestone. According to Miron Construction, the ceremony is a construction tradition that occurs when the final structural beam is raised into place, completing the building's frame.

Also called the Leon Street Annex, the building is scheduled to be completed by January 2025. It will house the 440th District Court, justice-of-the-peace courts, constables for Precincts 3 and 4, and Texas Game Wardens.



KAYLEE DUSANG | THE GATESVILLE MESSENGER

Butler-Cohen, one of Coryell County's contractors for the development of a new district court in downtown Gatesville, held a topping out ceremony for the project's construction team.



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# Celebrate July 4th with these local patriotic events

BY KAYLEE DUSANG  
Staff Writer

U.S. Independence Day is just around the corner, and there are plenty of opportunities to catch a firework show, parade, or festival in Central Texas.

The following local events offer plenty of opportunities to celebrate the Fourth of July and create memories with family and friends:

### Gatesville City Fireworks Show

Gatesville's annual firework show will take place on July 4, starting approximately at 9 p.m. The fireworks will set off in the field behind McKamie Stadium on S. 27th Street.

Viewers can sit in the vicinity of Gatesville ISD campuses, such as setting up chairs in parking lots or setting down blankets and chairs in grassy areas.

This year's show is sponsored by the City of Gatesville with a generous donation from H-E-B.

### Grace Bible Church July 4th Celebration

The community is welcome to join Grace Bible Church for their annual Independence Day celebration on July 4 from 5:30 p.m.-8:30 p.m.

The event includes a variety of free food and activities, including barbeque sandwiches and hot dogs, train rides, music, bingo,

inflatables, and more. Food is served until 8 p.m.

Grace Bible Church is located at 4012 U.S. Highway 84 in Gatesville.

### Copperas Cove 4th of July Celebration

LaunchPoint Community Church is hosting its fourth annual Copperas Cove 4th of July Celebration at Ogletree Gap on July 4.

The festival includes food trucks, live entertainment, local market vendors, rides, inflatables, a firework show, and more.

Gates for the event open at 3 p.m. The cost to enter is \$5 for parking. Ogletree Gap is located at 1878 Post Office Road, Copperas Cove, TX.

### Belton's 4th of July Celebration

The Belton Area Chamber of Commerce will kick off its weeklong 4th of July Celebration with a downtown street party on Saturday, June 29. The event will feature live music, food trucks, craft beer and wine, activities and games, and more.

This family-friendly event is open to the public at no charge in downtown Belton.

Live musical entertainment will be performed on the Vista Real Estate & Cory Herring Homes Stage in front of the Historic Bell County Courthouse. The street party starts at 5:30

p.m. with live music starting at 6:30 p.m.

Belton will also hold its Fantastic Patriotic Parade on July 4. The Patriotic Program will start at 8 a.m. and the parade will begin at 9 a.m.

This year's theme is "100 Years of Rodeo." The parade begins at Main Street (FM317) from the University of Mary Hardin-Baylor south to the Bell County Courthouse, then east on Central Avenue and north on Birdwell to the Belton Police Memorial.

### Fourth of July Fun Fest & Fireworks Show in Temple

Celebrate Independence Day at the 26th Annual H-E-B Fourth of July Fireworks Show at Crossroads Park in Temple on July 4. Park guests are encouraged to bring lawn chairs, picnic baskets, and blankets.

Admission is free and open to the public. The park opens at 6 p.m., and the firework show will start at 9:30 p.m. with a new Drone Show introduction provided by Texell Credit Union.

Crossroads Park is located at 1020 Research Parkway.

### Red, White & Blue Music Festival in Killeen

The Red, White & Blue Music Festival will take place in historic downtown Killeen at 200 East Avenue

D on July 6 from 6-10 p.m. The festival will include fireworks, food trucks, live entertainment, and a Jeep Jam.

The firework show begins at 9:30 p.m. The event is free, and lawn chairs are welcome.

### Fourth on the Brazos in Waco

The annual Fourth on the Brazos celebration in Waco will take place on July 4 at Touchdown Alley next to Baylor University's McLane Stadium, located at 1001 S. MLK Blvd. Gates will open at 6 p.m.

The event will feature food, drinks, and live music and entertainment from DJ Eddie Rose, former Journey lead vocalist Steve Augeri, a patriotic ceremony by the Waco Community Band, and HEB fireworks. The fireworks will be shot above the river between Touchdown Alley and the Ferrell Center and will be visible along both sides of the river, the Ferrell Center, and from areas around the Baylor campus.

Admission is free. For more information about parking or the event, visit <https://www.brazosnight-swaco.com/fourth-on-the-brazos>

**Schedule of events:**  
· 6:30 p.m. - DJ Eddie Rose  
· 7:30 p.m. - Former

Journey lead vocalist Steve Augeri  
· 9:10 p.m. - Patriotic Ceremony by the Waco

Community Band  
· 9:15 p.m. - H-E-B Fireworks Extravaganza



JANICE VELASQUEZ | THE GATESVILLE MESSENGER

A photo taken from last year's fireworks display hosted by the City of Gatesville.

## FEMA

FROM PAGE A1

considered if access was available before the disaster occurred.

When multiple households share a privately-owned access route, assistance is shared among applicants, requiring ad-

ditional coordination and documentation between FEMA and each applicant.

The U.S. Small Business Administration (SBA), FEMA's federal partner in disaster recovery, may also help provide financial

assistance to repair private roads and bridges. Homeowners who share private access roads and bridges with other homeowners may be eligible for SBA disaster loans. Agricultural property is not eligible,

but a private access road to the farmer's residence and personal contents may be eligible under disaster home loan criteria.

Learn more about SBA Disaster Loans by calling customer service at 800-

659-2955. For those who are deaf, hard of hearing, or have a speech disability, please dial 7-1-1 to access telecommunications relay services or email DisasterCustomerService@sba.gov. For information on agri-

cultural property, please contact the local Farm Service Agency through the USDA Service Center Locator: <https://offices.sc.egov.usda.gov/locator/app?state=tx&agency=fsa>

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**Thursday, July 4, 2024**  
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The fireworks will be set off in the vicinity of Gatesville I.S.D. and will be visible from multiple parking areas.

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## FROM MY FRONT PORCH

# Are times tough, or are expectations out of control?



BY SAM HOUSTON

Sam Houston is a syndicated columnist and newspaper executive. He is also an author, playwright, actor, and entertainment producer/promoter.

Over the course of the past year, Taylor Swift has been performing concerts around the country and around the world.

She is a phenomenon, an icon, and an entertainer whose success is truly not comparable to those who came before her. Since her entrance into show business in 2006, she has been nothing short of a musical comet soaring across the heavens with an intensity never previously experienced.

She is the first performer whose wealth comes primarily from music, who

can genuinely be classified as a billionaire. She sold over 200 million records by 2019!

This past year Taylor began her "Eras Tour," and tickets were priced at a ridiculously high amount. But no one ever experienced the sticker shock Swift fans received once her April 19 album was released. Once her new music was introduced, her remaining nine U.S. tour shows had an aver-

age, just-to-get-in-the-door, price of \$2,600 a ticket! No, that is not a misprint; I am not hallucinating: according to Billboard Magazine, it is a fact. This means for two 16-year-olds to go to a concert in New Orleans or Indianapolis, the cost would be over \$5,000! What does it say that the shows were sold out?

Here are some numbers that will shock you. According to Billboard, if, instead of going to the concert in New Orleans, a "Swiftie" would travel to Paris to see the same show, the base ticket price was 87% less! This literally means two people could buy concert tickets for a Paris show, fly there, stay in a nice hotel, experience Paris and return home, and still be money ahead. Why were tickets cheaper in Europe? There was still a large demand, and the shows sold out, but Europeans would simply not pay like Americans, and the promoters knew that. I am not going to chal-

lenge the affection fans have for Taylor Swift. They adore her, and there is nothing wrong with that. Just two weeks ago someone who I musically admire, George Strait, had the largest ticketed event in the history of North America. Over 110,000 fans attended the show with the host, Texas A&M, setting prices from \$59 to \$3,000 per ticket. Remember, 110,000 people were at this single show. Clearly, paying huge numbers for a concert ticket is not limited to young teenage girls; it crosses all demographics.

The thought that runs through my mind is: how many people who went to those shows were late making their car payment, ran up the balance on a credit card that was already too big, or failed to meet some other financial obligation because they went to the show? I am afraid to learn the answer.

Personally, I have a hard time trying to imagine

spending this kind of money for a couple of hours of entertainment. These are not people saving their lunch money and doing without because they want to go to the concert next weekend. These are people spending three or four months' worth of groceries to go to a show, maybe even the cost of several months' worth of house payments! Their priority was not on the amount of the expenditure, but what they wanted to do in the instant. Not only do they want to do whatever they wish, but they also seem to feel like they are entitled to it.

Have I ever spent money foolishly? I guess that would be a matter of opinion and I am sure I have demonstrated poor judgment a time or two. But what happened to meeting obligations first and then spending what is left over on fun and frivolity? I keep hearing people complain about how families are struggling, how inflation

is robbing them, and how it is tougher to get by. I think some of that may be true, but at the same time it is a lot tougher when people spend money they don't need at a time when they shouldn't be spending at all. Life never told you that you were entitled to something just because you desired it. There once was a time when folks knew that and practiced it.

At the end of the day, I'm not sure the folks who go about seeking the instant gratification they cannot afford are any happier than their counterparts — they are just poorer.

Thought for the day: I want my children to acquire all the things I could never afford; then I am going to move in with them!

Until next time...I will keep ridin' the storm out!



KAYLEE DUSANG | THE GATESVILLE MESSENGER

Interim City Manager Brad Hunt presented several City of Gatesville staff members with Meritorious Service Awards for their efforts in responding to severe weather that hit the area in May.

## Gatesville first responders, staff honored for service during Temple storms

BY KAYLEE DUSANG  
Staff Writer

After two tornadoes hit the Temple area on May 22 and caused destruction to several businesses and homes, first responders and staff from Gatesville went out of their way to help their neighboring communities.

Interim City Manager Brad Hunt recognized several individuals for their service, including members from the City's Water Office, Street Department, and the Gatesville Fire Department. They were presented with Meritorious Service Awards at a Gatesville City Council meeting on Tuesday.

Hunt said the City of Gatesville responded to the emergency in two ways.

First, three crews set out to assist in the search and rescue efforts in Temple on the night the storm hit. Water Distribution Superintendent Chad Newman, Street Department Supervi-

sor Brent Kirchmeier, and Fire Chief Billy Vaden answered the call and quickly gathered the crews and the heavy equipment that they needed.

"Those crews then worked through the night, into the morning of May 23, in Temple, providing crucial support to the efforts there," Hunt said.

According to the National Weather Service, an EF1 tornado and an EF2 tornado touched down in the Temple area. The EF2 tornado had winds of up to 120 miles per hour and traveled for three miles on the evening of May 22. The area also received damage from straight-line winds.

Several local broadcast channels reported that at least 30 people were injured during the storms.

Due to the severe weather, the Water Intake Plant on Belton Lake lost electricity and caused hundreds of power outages, including

in Gatesville. The damage in West Temple directly affected Oncor's service to the intake plant, because it receives electricity via a line across the lake, Hunt explains.

Water Production Supervisor Zeb Veazy and his crew, along with Newman and his crew, worked throughout the night to maintain water production and ensure that water storage tanks would not run empty before power was restored.

"Throughout the night and into the day on May 23, we became aware that it could take an extended time to restore electricity to the intake plant," Hunt said. "While working to address this emergency, your city staff faced extreme challenges with continuing severe weather, sleep deprivation, flooded roadways to the intake plant, and a non-functional back-up generator." Hunt adds that Oncor

was able to restore power about an hour before the water storage tanks ran dry, and a water emergency was averted.

**The service awards were presented to the following staff:**

- Water Production Supervisor Zeb Veazy and crew, including Andrew Cullar, Bodie James, Chris Barr, and Matt Hlavinka
- Water Distribution Superintendent Chad Newman and crew, including Crew Supervisor Dale Allen, and Water Maintenance Operator Nic Ortega
- Street Department Supervisor Brent Kirchmeier and crew, including Equipment Operator Garrison Shaffer, and Street Maintenance Operator Steven Mitchell
- Fire Department Chief Billy Vaden and crew, including Firefighter Phil Gregory and Lieutenant Sam Hendricks

## Folks around town



COURTESY PHOTO

WENDY COLE

### Say hello to our neighbor, Wendy Cole!

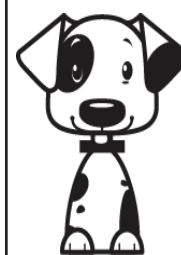
Wendy has served as the City Secretary for the City of Gatesville for 13 years and has been employed with the city for over 30 years. She enjoys supporting the City Council and city staff with city projects and continuing efforts to make Gatesville an excellent place to live and work. She has lived in Gatesville since 1977. When asked what her favorite thing about Gatesville is, she said, "That we are able to live the slower-paced life, neighbors know one another and we recognize each other when we are out and about in town, and we look out for one another, and work together."

Wendy likes to read The Gatesville Messenger and said, "We can read about what is happening in our town and the surrounding communities - local news and activities our citizens really want to know and need to be informed about including city and county activities, school and sports highlights, healthcare updates, and church activities. It's great to have a hometown newspaper that highlights and makes us aware of who's doing great things for our community and lets us learn about local businesses, fundraisers, and events that matter so much to all of us!"

If you happen to see Wendy around town, say hello. She is one of us!

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ad2@gatesvillemessenger.com**DEADLINES:**

Submit all news articles, classifieds and display advertising by 10am Tuesday for the Saturday issue. Articles about events that have occurred 30 days prior to submission

will not be accepted. However, they will be accepted as paid advertisements.

All articles and advertisements must meet our standards and newspaper format as determined by management.

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**OUR MISSION:** The Gatesville Messenger shall provide news and insights to our readers through the independent and impartial presentation of information that educates, enriches and entertains. We are proud to be a community newspaper committed to the people we serve.



KAYLEE DUSANG | THE GATESVILLE MESSENGER

Representatives from Coryell County, the Texas General Land Office, Texas A&M AgriLife Blackland Research & Extension Center, American Conservation Foundation, and other local agencies, cities, and counties joined together on Tuesday at Commissioners Court to announce a nearly \$2.5 million study on flood prevention for the county.

# Coryell County to become center of \$2.5 million flood mitigation study

BY KAYLEE DUSANG  
Staff Writer

Coryell County has experienced significant flooding over the years, including recent damage in the spring that caused people to lose homes, livestock, and more. As a result, the county will receive a nearly \$2.5 million drainage study to help prevent and plan for future flood events.

The Texas General Land Office (GLO) awarded the funds to Texas A&M AgriLife Blackland Research & Extension Center in Temple who will lead the study alongside the American Conservation Foundation (ACF). The project will focus on the Leon River and Cowhouse Creek Watersheds - areas prone to flash flooding that impacts the county and its surrounding communities.

The GLO announced the grant money at a Coryell County Commissioners Court meeting on Tuesday.

"The whole intent from our viewpoint is to model the two rivers - the Cowhouse Creek and the Leon - and then suggest ways to build structures that might help with flood mitigation. Not just flood control, but also water storage and water management," said Jet Hayes, the Deputy Director of Integration at the Texas General Land Office.

The study is the begin-

ning of several projects that will focus on developing solutions to flood problems within the county.

"Coryell County is uniquely situated near the center to the lower end of the Cowhouse Creek and Leon River Watersheds, but just above Lake Belton Dam, creating a situation that is prone to flooding," said David Jones with Natural Resources Solutions (NRS), a consulting firm working with ACF on the project. "During the last 10 years, Coryell County has experienced several flood-related disasters, which has prompted state and local officials to review and address flood problems in Coryell County."

The study will help the research groups plan an automatic flood warning system that will alert local officials and citizens of roadway flooding in real-time. Jones said Coryell County will monitor and receive notifications from the flood alert system once it is implemented.

"This will alert roadway users in real-time of life-threatening flood hazards, and it will alert officials of incoming flood events, including the locations, extent, and duration of each event," Jones said. "Additionally, this data will be used by state agencies as part of a state-wide monitoring and information system."

The study will also help develop surface and groundwater models that will use local data on lakes, creeks, and underground water sources like aquifers to help predict current and future flood events. The models will also be used to build the flood warning system.

"Texas A&M and our group will work together over the next two years to build a flood model, and then we are going to build a flood warning system over that model - so that people don't get stuck like they did a few weeks ago, and school buses aren't driving through the water and that kind of thing," NRS President Steve Manning said.

Last week, NRS distributed a survey on behalf of Coryell County that asked residents about how flooding has affected their home and community. Jones said the data from the survey is an integral part of the information they are collecting for the overall flood project.

"We felt it was important to capture the public's flood event concerns as close as possible to an actual flood event, so we rolled the public survey out as soon as we could," Jones said.

The research groups will eventually use the findings to develop a comprehensive flood mitigation program for the

two watersheds, which will allow the county to apply for funds to help protect citizens from future flooding, such as adding bridges to low water crossings.

Following recent population growth and severe drought conditions, short-ages from local water sources, such as Belton Lake, are also a concern. June Wolfe, a research scientist with the Texas A&M Blackland Research Center, said the flood models will also help the county plan and search for alternate forms of water supply.

"The models have multiple applications, not just for flood mitigation, but also for planning for future water supply for local citizens," Wolfe said.

The flood study is a joint effort between several government agencies and regional organizations. The Leon River Watershed covers more than 1,300 miles across Central Texas, and the Cowhouse Creek Watershed mainly affects areas within Fort Cavazos.

"This truly is, and I hope everyone appreciates what a collective and team effort this has been," County Judge Roger Miller said. "This is not just a Coryell County thing. This is a regional impact. It goes beyond borders."

# Fundraiser set to benefit Jessica Blanchard

Submitted item

A Barrel & Pole Jackpot Benefit will be held on Friday, July 12, for Jessica Blanchard. The event will be hosted by the National Timed Pattern Racing Association and will be held at 301 Veterans Memorial Drive in Gatesville. Sign ups open at 5:30 p.m., and there will be no late fee or dress code.

Fees will include \$20 Barrel Entry, \$15 Pole Entry; \$15 Office Fee; \$5 per Exhibition; and Barrels and Poles are each \$100 added.

National Timed Pattern Racing Association - Current Coggins Texas is

required. The office opens at 5:30 p.m. Entries will be open until the last runner. Draw will be announced, and you can check your draw number on draw/results board at the bottom of the announcer's stand. Exhibitions are run before each event. Exhibitions will be offered for 30 minutes or until completed. Barrel Jackpot starts at 7 p.m. Pole Bending exhibitions and Jackpot will follow immediately after barrel race.

Pre-entries are now open. Contact Kaitlin at 254-223-9123 for more information or to pre-enter.

## SUDOKU

Puzzle answers from the June 22, 2024 issue.

5	9	6	4	3	2	8	1	7
1	4	2	7	6	8	5	9	3
7	3	8	1	9	5	6	2	4
6	1	4	9	7	3	2	8	5
2	5	9	8	4	1	3	7	6
8	7	3	2	5	6	1	4	9
3	2	7	6	1	9	4	5	8
9	8	5	3	2	4	7	6	1
4	6	1	5	8	7	9	3	2

Puzzle by websudoku.com

	7	1	2		8			
8					4			
3	2		7				4	5
2	5		6				8	
		7				9		
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5	3				9		6	8
			3					7
			8		5	3	9	

Puzzle by websudoku.com

# Marshall Brown to present CCGS Program

Submitted Item

Marshall Brown, Sons of the Republic of Texas lecturer, will be the speaker at the July 9, 2024 meeting of the Coryell County Genealogical Society. Mr. Brown is a Coryell County

native, who is descended from the Nimrod Brown family.

"San Jacinto" is the topic for Mr. Brown's program. San Jacinto is associated with several famous events in Texas history, including the Run

Away Scrape that preceded the decisive Battle of San Jacinto.

Genealogists use history to enhance their understanding of their ancestors' lives, and the study of our colorful Texas history can uncover

some interesting family information.

The public is welcome to attend the 6 p.m. meeting at the Gatesville Public Library located at 111 N. 8th Street.

# Whatever happened to ...

**20 YEARS AGO (2004)**  
Main Street manager Jenny Mabry was hired by the City of Gatesville and would serve as a communications director.

The Gatesville City Council was developing an ordinance to require residents to take responsibility for keeping structures and yards clean, sanitary, and safe.

The Gatesville Independ-

dent School District was expected to receive more money from the state after trustees designated hazardous routes to the school.

The American Legion Post 42 presented two new flags to Coryell County Judge John Hull.

Counselor II Ronnie East was named the May "employee of the month" for the Gateway Foundation.

**30 YEARS AGO (1994)**

Former President George W. Bush was set to visit Gatesville in July.

A new county map was finished for the 911 address plan.

The Red Barn Restaurant in Jonesboro advertised catering services.

The Coryell County Museum had copies of its 1994 Cookbook for sale.

A man was stabbed at Smitty's Bar.

**40 YEARS AGO (1984)**

William Electric and Supply Company opened at 116 State School Road on N. Highway 36.

Gatesville City workers began laying 6" pipes to improve water service to residents along College Street.

The overpass that would carry Highway 36 loop traffic over Highway 84 in East Gatesville began to take

shape.

Texas Governor Mark White filed a formal request that Coryell County be declared a disaster area due to drought conditions and the previous winter's freeze.

Unemployment continued to decline in Coryell and Bell counties.

**50 YEARS AGO (1974)**

Robert M. Scott resigned as city judge.

Dr. Stephen Eeds an-

nounced his intentions to leave Gatesville.

Coryell County decided to wait to re-roof the county courthouse.

A completely remodeled Dairy Queen was set to have its grand opening.

Sure-Save Food Store advertised ice cream for 69 cents per 1/2 gallon.

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401-500 lb.	270-325	401-500 lb.	265-317
501-600 lb.	265-313	501-600 lb.	250-277
601-700 lb.	245-287	600-700 lb.	225-243

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# City of Gatesville to conduct chlorine burn during July

BY ALEXANDRA MEELBUSCH  
Staff Writer

The City of Gatesville has announced that they will conduct a free chlorine burn during the month of July.

Free chlorine burns, also known as a free chlorine conversion, occur when a water system typically uses chloramine. The free chlorine burn removes ammonia that is needed to form chloramine from the treatment process and disinfects the water with only chlorine.

The chlorine burn is a common practice by many public water systems throughout the country to reduce the number of bacte-

ria, so that a satisfactory disinfectant residual can be maintained throughout the distribution system.

The process can also be used as a preventative strategy or to stop nitrification, which is a microbial process that converts ammonia and similar nitrogen compounds into nitrite, and nitrate and diminishes water quality.

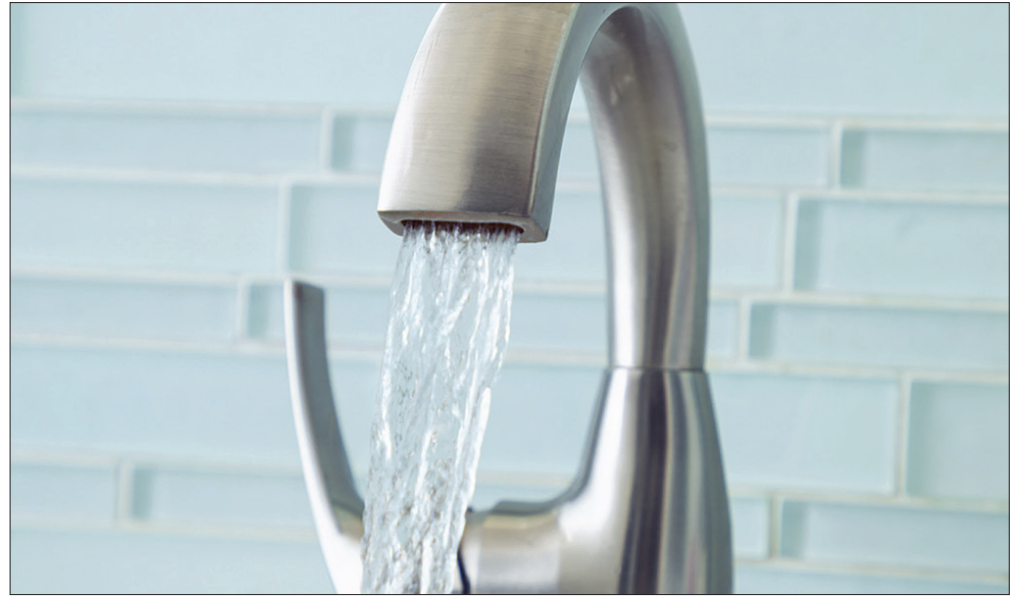
According to a 2016 EPA survey, 25-40% of the utilities that use chloramine reported using free chlorine burns to control nitrification.

Prior to the free chlorine burn process, it is important to know that when a proper conversion is con-

ducted it can often cause the water to have a different taste and odor than when using chloramine for disinfection.

According to the Texas Commission on Environmental Quality, there are no health effects associated with the change of taste and odor. Once the water system returns to using chloramine as a disinfectant, the taste and odor will return to normal.

For further details, contact the City of Gatesville at 254-865-8951.



COURTESY PHOTO

City of Gatesville residents may notice a difference in the smell and taste of water during July.

## PEARL NEWS

### Pearl Church of Christ Revival set for July 6 and 7



BY BETSY CLARK

Pearl News Correspondent

Future dates for Bookstore and Pearl Bluegrass days are July 6, Aug. 3, Sept. 14 (second Saturday due to a longstanding booking for a reunion), Oct. 5, Nov. 2, and Dec. 7. Mark your calendars.

Kay and Corlisa will love seeing you, so stop by and visit and enjoy a

shopping adventure. Also, the Pearl Bluegrass event is a great opportunity for

nursing homes, retirement homes, and assisted living residents to get out and enjoy a day of music and fun for free. There is no admission to sit in the auditorium to listen to the various bands that come to play on the stage. The stage show begins at 1 p.m. and usually goes on until about 5 p.m. Besides listening to the bands, visiting and just being out in the country in Pearl is refreshing and delightful. Truly, there's no place like Pearl! Please let your activity directors in the various area senior settings know all about Pearl. They'll love you for it.

The Pearl Church of Christ will hold its annual Revival on July 6 and 7,

with an ice cream supper following the service on the 7th. The church service will begin at 7 p.m., with the ice cream fellowship immediately following. The Sunday morning church service begins at 10:30 a.m. Everyone is invited to attend and to bring friends, family, and people you just met with you.

Two of our Pearl superstars are shining again. Cooper received fourth in 4H State Animal Science Education, and Riley placed first in the 12/13 age group in discus at Crawford. We are so proud of these kiddos. The future of Pearl is looking bright indeed!

This week's Bible verse comes from Psalm 46: God

is our refuge and strength, a very ready help in trouble. Therefore, we will not fear, though the earth shakes, and the mountains slip into the heart of the sea; though its waters roar and foam, though the mountains quake at its swelling pride. There is a river whose streams make the city of God happy, the holy dwelling places of the Most High. God is in the midst of her, she will not be moved; God will help her when morning dawns. The nations made an uproar, the kingdoms tottered; He raised His voice, the earth quaked. The Lord of armies is with us; the God of Jacob is our stronghold. Come, behold the works of the Lord, who

has inflicted horrific events on the earth. He makes wars to cease to the end of the earth; He breaks the bow and cuts the spear in two; He burns the chariots with fire. "Stop striving and know that I am God; I will be exalted among the nations, I will be exalted on the earth." The Lord of armies is with us; The God of Jacob is our stronghold. NASB

Be sure and like the Pearl Community Center, Texas Facebook page, and the Pearl Cottage Bookstore and Resale Shop Facebook page. Please submit any Pearl news to [betsyclark47@yahoo.com](mailto:betsyclark47@yahoo.com)

## Senior Center to host program on scams against seniors

Staff Reports

The Gatesville Senior Center will host a 'Seniors Against Scams' presentation on Wednesday, July 17, at 10 a.m.

Coryell Health Rehabilitation at the Meadows Administrator, Maranda May, will be the guest speaker and

will discuss various topics regarding how to keep senior citizens safe from scams.

According to ncoa.org, "Internet scams targeting older adults are on the rise. In fact, in 2023, most internet fraud complaints were filed by adults ages 60 plus

with losses in that group reaching a staggering \$3.4 billion."

For further information regarding 'Seniors Against Scams,' contact 254-404-2501.

The Gatesville Senior Center is located at 208 North Lutterloh.

## Exploration walks at Mother Neff

Staff Reports

Mother Neff State Park has announced that it will host a walk to explore the Civilian Conservation Corp (CCC) and natural history of the park on Saturday, June 29, and on Saturday, July 13.

The walk will begin at 9 a.m., so be sure to arrive early to check-in. The

check-in will be held by the bathrooms in the campground.

The walk will last for about one-and-a-half hours and will be a one-mile round trip. Those attending the walk will visit the CCC cabin area, the Rock Tower, and other CCC sites along the way, while also experiencing the biology, geology, and human impact in the

park.

There is no cost to participate in the walk, but there will be a park entrance fee of two dollars per person and 12 and under get in free.

Be sure to wear the appropriate clothing and footwear for the weather and terrain. Sunscreen, a hat, and insect repellent, is recommended.

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MOUND NEWS

# Students received TMEA awards



BY BARBARA HOPSON

Mound News Correspondent

Several people of Mound attended the TMEA, Texas Music Scholar Award, which was bestowed at the Choir Banquet April 27.

The recipients were sophomores Eli Alvarez, Nahdiah Appleton, Nevin Benning, Roman Wallace, and Paisley Wells; juniors Devyn Ayala, Raynyah Garraway, Katie Hopson, Memphis Wells; and senior Anna Phillips. They were all nominated by their directors, Cherith Wells and

Tim Klingler, but the award was given by the Texas Music Educators. This award is given to students who exhibit outstanding qualities for the school year.

Sue Jones visited Monday afternoon in Gatesville with Kay Branham. Holly Jones and Sue Jones attended Braydie

Barnard and Zane Beaty's wedding Saturday evening in Axtell.

Jerry and Brenda Helms, Carolyn and Emma Blakeley, and Neil and Christy Helms, attended a Texas Rangers baseball game in Arlington on Sunday.

Those who had birthdays this month were Tracy Carothers, Chuck Porter, Tammy Lawhorn, Pat Pruet, Max McClellan, Loyd Hopson, Jeremy Dossey, Emily Coward, Neva Hopson Groat, Cherie Tatum, Hal Hopson, Anna Baldock, Slayton Fisher, Beverly Pena, Holly Bryant, Andrew Eberlein, Lisa Gallaway, Mark McPherson, Chad Poynter, Billy Hopson, Christine Hernandez, Susie Hopson, Kimberly Biggs, and Pam Hopson.

HAPPY ANNIVERSARY to Paul and Rachel Hopson.

Barbara's Notes: HAPPY 4TH OF JULY, EVERYBODY!

# The history of telephones in Coryell County, part 3

Pearl Telephones and Kay Pruet --Part I  
By Jann Dworsky

Mr. Charles Freeman wrote "History of Pearl, Texas" in 1969, and it includes many delightful stories. Mr. Freeman was born Nov. 29, 1903, four miles east of Pearl. He spent his entire life with the people and soil he loved. Below are some delightful excerpts from his book about life in Pearl, Texas. The next two articles also include much information from his book. His daughter, Mrs. Inez Arnold, remembers her father traveling many miles, working to collect the photographs, genealogy and stories for this book. She also was born and raised in Pearl and attended 11 grades there.

Amazingly, telephones came to Pearl about 1908 or 1909, and Mr. Freeman was instrumental in its organization. The system was soon a non-profit rural telephone company. There were directors elected by the people who owned telephones. The people had to buy their own telephone boxes, wire, and post. They erected their own service lines and kept them repaired, and the directors would employ someone to operate the switchboard. Mrs. Susie Smith operated the switchboard for about 24 years. At one time, the regular phone bill was 40 cents per month. Later, it went to 75 cents and then to \$1.25 plus a few cents tax.

The people depended on the operator to be their "information bureau." If your clock stopped, all you had to do was call the operator for the time of day, or, if someone was sick or had died in the community, all the details could be learned by calling "central." At one time, Pearl Telephone Company had direct lines to Purmela, Izoro, Evant, King, and Lampasas, and all the calls that were put through these central stations were free because they were all rural free telephone systems.

The Pearl Telephone Company was one of the last old-time rural telephone systems in Texas to go out of business. In 1964, a modern dial system was built into the community from Gatesville, and the Pearl



Telephone Company faded away.

Mrs. Kay Pruet is also a long-time resident of Pearl and writes the articles, "News from Around Pearl," which I enjoy very much. She was kind enough to agree to an interview. It was delightful to meet her and hear her stories about Pearl today and long ago. Her parents were Henry Glenn and Laveail Ballard Hermann. Kay was born right in the middle of World War II, and gasoline was scarce. Dr. Kermit Jones was coming from Gatesville on a horse to help with her birth. It had rained the night before, and the creek was full and running fast. Dr. Jones hung on to his bag and let the horse swim the creek. He made it just in time for the delivery.

Kay told me that she was born at home in a small barn wood-type frame house just east of the King community. Her mother had attended Pearl School in 1928-1929. After the Pearl School closed in 1958, some of the old records remained in a tiny superintendent's office just outside the auditorium. Pearl folks were working to clean up the building in the early 1990's, and a report card for Kay's mother was found and brought to her sister, who gave it to her. It is a wonderful treasure for her family. The subjects taught were spelling, writing, math, geography, history, and English, and, of course, her mother made good grades.

Her father was a farmer,

and carpenter. At the time she was born, he was working cutting wood all day long for 75 cents a day and the use of the little gray house. Later, they moved wherever he worked on ranches in west Texas as well as in the oil fields. When Fort Hood offered employment, they moved back to Pearl, and Kay started Pearl School in Mrs. Mamie Keeton's second grade. Kay's parents bought a farm in Pearl and lived there until their deaths in 1997 and 2001.

For 25 years, Kay worked at a motor freight company in Dallas for a nice employer and his family until she retired in 1987. She moved back to Coryell County and still lives there today.

Pearl is the location of the famous Pearl Bluegrass Festivals and the Pearl Book Cottage. Kay and her longtime friend, Linda Ray, are partners and founding members of the Pearl Book Cottage where they raise money for charity. Linda Ray has compiled four books, The Pleasure and Profit Club (a women's quilting club), The Pearl House Book (2 volumes), Pictures of Pearl, and The Little Girl from Pearl by Doris Preston Queener. These are for sale at the Pearl Book Cottage on the first weekend of the month at the Pearl Bluegrass Festival.

The Pearl School was built about 1917 when voters passed a \$4,000 bond to build the rock building. On November 20, 1941, the Pearl School burned and was rebuilt. The rock front and some of the interior cement walls remained and the new building was built around them. In 1958 it was consolidated with the Evant School, and the building became the very active Pearl Community Center, which is the location of the Pearl Bluegrass Festival. There are two nice photos of the Pearl School at Coryell Museum in the Schoolroom Exhibit: One is of the building used in 1930, and the other is of the building used until 1958.

Coryell Museum and Historical Center is open Tuesday through Saturday, as is our gift shop. Yearly Coryell Museum memberships are \$20 for singles, \$30 for families, and \$40 for businesses and include free admission to the museum, plus 4 newsletters. Of course, large and small donations are welcome at all times.

Coryell Museum offers area schools and tour groups a delightful, guided tour through the museum with docents at many exhibits. Call the museum at 254-865-5007 to plan a visit.

Pearl Post Office is located in the Back Room near the Log Jail.

Photos of the Pearl School are in the Schoolroom Exhibit.

Gatesville Telephones and Switchboard are in the Pat Neff Hall.

# Bronstad attends Momentum conference in Florida

Submitted Item

Local Edward Jones Financial Advisor, Bryan Bronstad, recently qualified for the firm's invitation-only Momentum conference in Orlando, FL, which recognizes financial advisors based on the success of their practices and client feedback.

Out of the firm's more than 19,000 financial advisors, only 819 who met specific milestones were invited.

The conference is designed to recognize some of the firm's high-achieving financial advi-

sors who have embraced the momentum it takes to build and sustain a successful practice through leadership, service, advice, and guidance.

Attendees were immersed in learning opportunities and a collaborative environment designed to propel them to even greater heights.

Bronstad is a Clifton native who began his career with the Fortune 500 company in 2018 after 21 years in education. His office is located at 701 East Main Street on the square in Gatesville.



COURTESY PHOTO

Bryan Bronstad, Edward Jones Financial Advisor

# Turnersville Baptist Church presents VBS June 29

Staff Reports

Turnersville Baptist Church will hold its Vacation Bible School (VBS) on Saturday, June 29, from 9 a.m.-3 p.m.

This year's theme is "The Great Jungle Journey: An Epic Cruise from Genesis to Revelation." The VBS event is for ages four years old to fifth grade.

A lunch and snacks will be provided for the youth. For further details, contact 254-421-3974.



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Her father was a farmer,

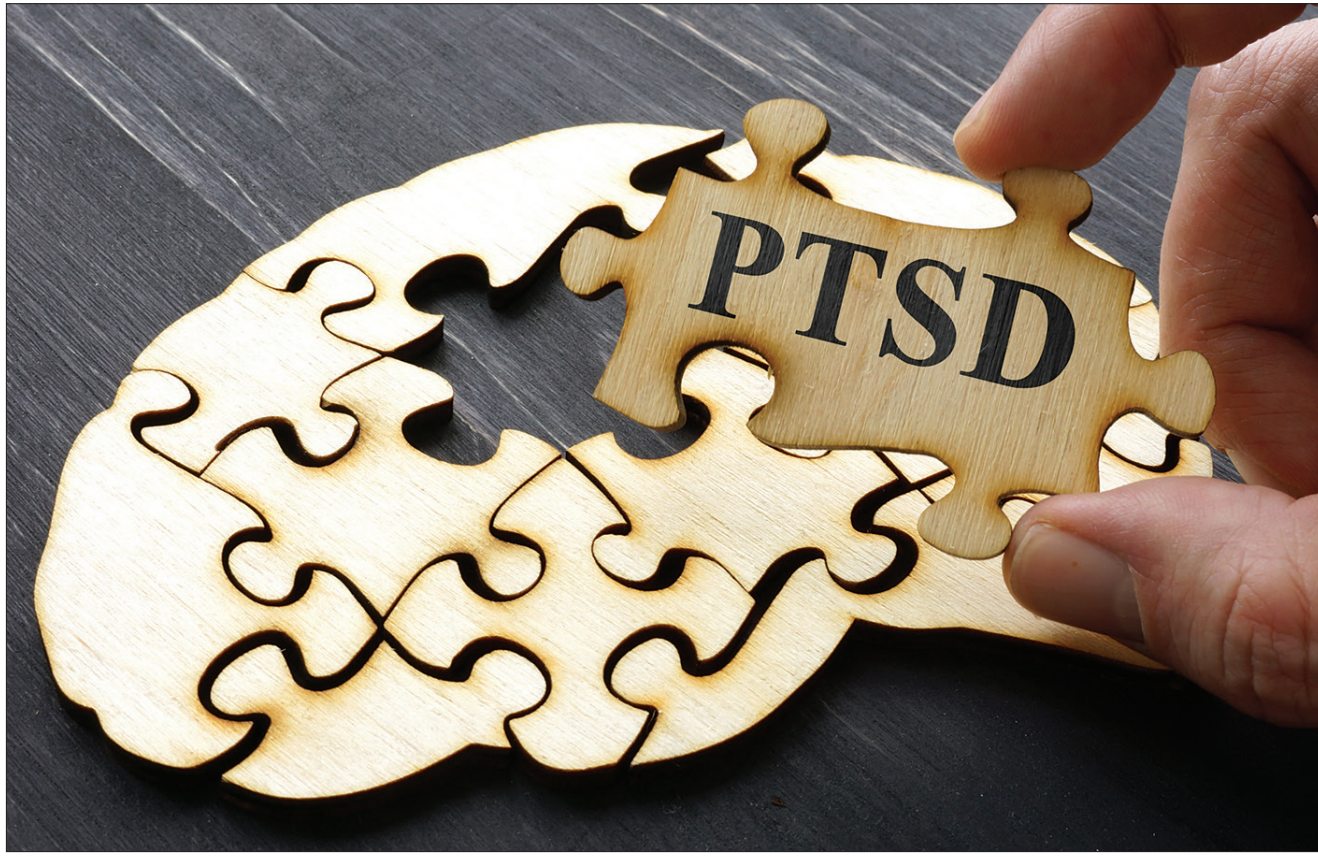


PHOTO COURTESY OF METRO CREATIVE GRAPHICS

June is designated as PTSD Awareness Month.

# PTSD awareness observed annually in month of June

## Staff Reports

Each year, the month of June is recognized as Post-Traumatic Stress Disorder (PTSD) Awareness Month.

According to the National Institute of Mental Health, an estimated 3.6 percent of adults in the United States had PTSD within the past year.

Post-traumatic stress disorder can develop after exposure to a potential traumatic event that is beyond a typical stressor. Individuals who experience PTSD may have persistent, frightening thoughts and memories of a specific event, experience sleep

problems, feel detached or numb, or may easily be startled. In severe forms, PTSD can significantly impair a person's ability to function at work, at home, and socially.

Anyone can develop PTSD; personal factors such as previous traumatic exposure, age, and gender can affect whether a person will develop the disorder.

PTSD symptoms usually start soon after the traumatic event, but they may not appear until months or years later and could also come and go over many years.

Within the disorder,

there are four types of symptoms, and to be diagnosed you need to have each type.

### The four symptoms include

- Reliving the event, which is also referred to as re-experiencing symptoms.
- Avoiding things that remind you of the event.
- Having more negative thoughts and feelings than before the event.
- Feeling on edge or keyed up, which is also called hyperarousal.

The National Institute of Mental Health suggests that you should talk to a doctor or mental health care provider if your symptoms last longer than a

month, are very upsetting, or disrupt your daily life.

Post-traumatic stress disorder treatment can help you regain a sense of control over your life. The Mayo Clinic states in an online article, "The primary treatment is psychotherapy but can also include medication."

The different types of therapy include psychotherapy, cognitive therapy, exposure therapy, and eye movement desensitization and reprocessing (EMDR).

All these approaches can help you gain control of lasting fear after a traumatic event.

For further information, visit [nimh.nih.gov](http://nimh.nih.gov) or [mayo-clinic.org](http://mayo-clinic.org).

# City Pool, Splash Park open on July Fourth

## Staff Reports

For those wanting to hang out by the water for Independence Day, the Gatesville City Pool will remain open on July 4 from noon-6 p.m.

The pool includes a one-meter diving board, six swimming lanes, and three children's slides. Amenities include restrooms, showers, a baby pool, patio furniture, shaded areas, and concessions stand.

Normal hours of operation are Tuesdays from noon-8 p.m., Wednesdays from noon-6 p.m., Thurs-

days from noon-8 p.m., Fridays from noon-6 p.m., Saturdays from noon-6 p.m., and Sundays from 1-6 p.m. The pool is closed on Mondays.

The City Pool is located at 300 S. 8th Street.

### Splash Park

Another way to cool down this summer is at The Gatesville Splash Pad at Raby Park, which is open as of May 1, 2024.

Raby Park is located at 910 Bridge Street. Operating hours are 9 a.m. to 9 p.m. every day. Admission is free.

# Fourth of July holiday closures announced

## Staff Reports

Businesses and governmental offices across Coryell County will join the rest of the nation on Thursday, July 4 in celebration of Independence Day.

Closures for the surrounding area include:

### GOVERNMENT

The City of Gatesville and the City of Evant will be closed on Thursday. The City of Oglesby will be closed on Thursday, July 4, and on Friday, July 5. The Coryell County Courthouse and the Farm Service Agency will be closed on Thursday.

### FINANCIAL INSTITUTIONS

Extraco Bank, Cadence Bank, Educator's Credit Union, and the First National Bank of Gatesville, Evant, and Oglesby, will be

closed on Thursday.

### POST OFFICES

All local post offices will be closed on Thursday.

### LIBRARY

The Gatesville Public Library will be closed on Thursday.

### SENIOR CENTER

The Gatesville Senior and Multi-Service Center will be closed on Thursday, July 4, and will close at noon on Friday, July 5.

### MUSEUM

The Coryell County Museum and Historical Center will be closed on Thursday.

### NEWSPAPER

The Gatesville Messenger will be closed on Thursday, July 4, and on Friday, July 5. The office will reopen on Monday, July 8.



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## Two are better than one

BY DAVID SCOTT  
Staff Writer

While most campuses in Gatesville ISD employ one principal at each of their five campuses, it was recently decided by the Oglesby Independent School District to hire an additional principal to help with the growing student body.

According to Oglesby ISD Superintendent Shane Webb, "Our primary goal is to enhance the educational experience and support for all students and staff. By creating two distinct roles, we can ensure that the unique needs of both our elementary and secondary students are met with dedicated attention and expertise."

### Casey Melton

Casey Melton, who served her first year as principal at Oglesby ISD from 2023 until 2024, said that "In the spring semester, the decision was to implement a second full-time administrator. It just made sense to split the roles by campuses, allowing each person to take a primary focus on either elementary or secondary components."

Melton continued, "We are able to center our work around the diverse needs of the students at each level. I am excited to continue building those relationships and hone in on the specific needs

in the secondary grades, while still being a part of the growth and learning taking place at the elementary level."

Casey Melton, who served as the Oglesby ISD principal grades Pre-K through 12th grade, is a 2007 graduate of Tarleton State University and started her career at Killeen ISD. In August of 2014, she was employed at the Gatesville ISD Elementary School as a third-grade teacher. During that time, she received her Master of Education degree in Educational Administration in 2019 and worked as assistant principal at Gatesville Intermediate from 2021-2023 before becoming principal at Oglesby ISD.

Melton reflected about her first year as principal for Pre-K through 12th grade, "Being in Oglesby, working with 4-year-olds to teenagers in single day, and seeing how a child starts their academic career with Pre-K and advances to the moment of high school graduation is an experience that I will forever cherish from my first year here at OISD."

### Keegan Webb

At present, Keegan Webb will serve as the elementary principal, serving Pre-K through 5th grade while Melton will take the lead as

principal in grades from 6th to 12th.

Webb became the principal at Gatesville Elementary School in the 2019-20 school year. She served five years as the principal of the elementary school and assistant principal four years prior to that. Webb, a 2000 graduate of Gatesville High School, received her bachelor's degree from Abilene Christian University and her master's degree from the University of North Texas.

Webb previously taught for Midlothian and Duncanville ISD's before returning home to Gatesville where she taught elementary music, middle school choir, third grade, served as ESL Coordinator, Special Programs Coordinator, and as an assistant principal. In a past comment, Webb said her favorite thing about being the principal of Gatesville Elementary "are the amazing students, staff, and parents I get to work with each day."

Upon leaving Gatesville Elementary, Webb said, "I learned so many things from my time at Gatesville Elementary from curriculum to instructional strategies, how to build school structure and relationships, but mostly I believe it's where I learned to be a leader."

Gatesville ISD Superinten-



COURTESY PHOTO

Casey Melton, pictured left, will serve as the secondary principal for grades 6-12 in the 2024-25 school year, while Keegan Webb will serve as the elementary principal for Pre-K through 5th grade.

dent, Dr. Barrett Pollard said, "Keegan was a real fixture at GISD and Gatesville Elementary. She was very high performing and well-liked by everyone. She is also becoming a presence at the state level by presenting at TEPSA and serving in different capacities in that organization. We're really going to miss her, but it'll be great for the Webb family to be together again in Oglesby."

Webb's decision to move to Oglesby ISD was made with a lot of thought and prayer from her family. "The decision to leave a place you love is difficult, and change is

hard, but we are so excited for this next chapter and what God has in store for us."

Working together as principals, Webb and Melton both share a great number of ambitions and desires. "Casey and I have a long working history when we worked side by side as principal and instructional coach in Gatesville. I am so excited to jump back in with her. She has a passion and enthusiasm that I am excited to be a part of," Webb said.

Melton responded by saying, "Keegan and I have started our journey for the

upcoming school year by collaborating and brainstorming ideas for the 2024-25 school year. With the recent administrative changes of having two campus administrators and having Keegan on board, we knew there would be tasks that would require our attention, but most of our prep so far has been geared toward the campus as a whole and our plans for building onto the great things already in place at Oglesby ISD."

## Work continues during the summer break at GISD

BY DAVID SCOTT  
Staff Writer

During the summer months, work may cease for students, teachers, and staff, but that is not the case for the maintenance and custodial crews at the five campuses of Gatesville Independent School District. Maintenance crews are busy year-round keeping campuses in tip-top shape.

GISD Superintendent Dr. Barrett Pollard said, "The maintenance department works extremely hard during the summer. Not only do they have to keep up with general maintenance, but also the mowing and weed-eating responsibilities are huge. Plus, keeping all the HVAC units working in this heat is very time consuming. In addition, they complete special projects during the summer that they could not otherwise complete when students are in session."

GISD Maintenance Director Toby Williams said, "The only three windows we have to do our work is during spring break, the Christmas break, and the summer break. However, these windows of opportunity are getting smaller every year because of camps and summer school. Basically, it's just July that you have a window to do a lot of work, because there's

still a lot going on in June."

During the summer months, Williams said, "There's a lot more to do, and it works out where we can get the most work done, because we don't have the teachers and students, and you can get into the classrooms and do what needs to be done. Summer months give you more time."

In addition to the maintenance crew, the custodial workers stay busy during the summer, which affords them the opportunity to deep clean the classrooms, offices, open areas, cafeterias, and gymnasiums.

Custodial workers are often responsible for moving classrooms when a teacher is reassigned to a different grade or room. The custodians must move classroom furniture, school supplies, books, and other objects.

In addition to sanitizing each campus, they must address cleaning desks and chairs, walls, and any other surface a child or adult may have touched that could potentially contain germs. These dedicated crews often have a very short time during the summer to perform this major task.

The maintenance crew has been staying busy the last few weeks on remodeling the

bathrooms at the GHS baseball field, along with changing all the AC filters and adding a few offices on various campuses where they are needed. "We're building a few walls and knocking down a few and installing a few doors," Williams said.

As far as grounds maintenance, Williams said, "Mowing is non-stop, especially with all the rain we've had - it's kind of hard to stay ahead of it. We've got a crew that works on it every day. You could have a ten-guy crew working on the grounds most of the time, but it has been hard to maintain with the way the rain has been lately."

The maintenance workers are currently preparing for a project to change out a few air conditioning units on the roofs of the junior high and high school. "We'll have to use a crane for that, and that will happen in the next couple of months," Williams said.

During the summer months, the GISD maintenance crew works from 6 a.m.-4:30 p.m. Monday through Thursday. "We beat the heat a little bit, and everyone likes a three-day weekend," Williams said.



DAVID SCOTT | THE GATESVILLE MESSENGER

GISD Maintenance Director Toby Williams inspects a new and wider doorway that is being created in the cafeteria at Gatesville Intermediate School to accommodate new kitchen equipment.

## Bay announced as GHS' new horticulture teacher

BY ALEXANDRA MEELBUSCH  
Staff Writer

Gatesville Independent School District has announced that local Santana Bay will take on the role as horticulture teacher at Gatesville High School.

"I accepted the position to be the new horticulture teacher because of my passion for growing and caring for plants," Bay said. "I get to combine my love of plants with the knowledge I have gained over my lifetime and

pass it on to a new generation, hopefully inspiring a newfound appreciation of horticulture with our high school students."

Bay is originally from Shiner and graduated high school in 2003. Following gradua-

tion, she spent four years at Texas A&M in College Station to obtain her bachelor's degree in agricultural economics with a minor in economics.

After college graduation in May of 2007, she later moved

to Gatesville, and in 2010 she and her husband Ryan built a home in Mound where they currently reside.

Bay and her husband have two sons, Greyson and Graham, who are both in the Gatesville ISD school sys-

tem. She might also be recognized as a familiar face in town since her husband's family owns Coryell Feed and Supply. She has been

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# BAY

FROM PAGE B1

employed with the family-owned business for over 17 years now.

"While I may not have an official teaching degree, I have spent the last 17 years answering hundreds of questions daily from customers, educating them on plants, chemicals, animals, gardens, insects, yard care, and anything else they may have problems with or questions about," she said. "I use my own life experiences to help others with their current situation and formulate a plan to best address their needs."

She expressed that she has been teaching people of all ages about plants for years and being able to talk

to her customers one on one has helped her connect with them on a more personal level.

"I am able to find out their needs and then prepare solutions that are applicable to their situation," she said. "My time with Coryell Feed has shown me to how build strong connections with people, which I will carry over to the students of Gatesville High School."

Bay said that she is excited to be the new horticulture teacher because she will get to provide students with numerous chances to be hands-on in and out of the classroom. She is eager to share with students how horticultural

can lead them into many different career options.

"I hope to show the students that learning horticulture can give them a sense of fulfillment and purpose," she said.

When asked what her goals consist of for the upcoming school year, she mentioned that she would like to see the students have as many hands-on opportunities as possible.

"I think we all learn better when we can be totally immersed in the subject matter at hand so I would love to expose them to as many horticultural practices as I can during the school year," she said.

She expressed that she truly loves learning and is always looking for opportunities to become more knowledgeable in different subjects, and she wants to use that knowledge to motivate and empower her students to reach their full potential as human beings.

"I want to inspire the students to pursue their goals and develop a lifelong love of learning," she said. "I want to create a supportive learning environment that pushes their creativity, inspires them to go further, and dream bigger."



Santanna Bay

COURTESY PHOTO



COURTESY PHOTO

Gatesville High School Choir TMEA award recipients are pictured, left to right: Devyn Ayala, Memphis Wells, Nahdiah Appleton, Eli Alvarez, Roman Wallace, Paisley Wells, Ranyah Garraway, Katie Hopson, and Anna Phillips.

## GHS Choir receives TMEA awards

### Submitted item

Gatesville High School Choir is proud to announce their ten recipients of the TMEA Texas Music Scholar award, which was bestowed at the Choir Banquet on April 27th.

The recipients were sophomores Eli Alvarez, Nahdiah Appleton, Nevin Benning, Roman Wallace and Paisley Wells; juniors Devyn Ayala, Ranyah Garraway, Katie Hopson, and Memphis Wells; and senior Anna Phillips.

The students were nominated by their Directors Cherith Wells and Tim Klingler, but the award was given

by the Texas Music Educators Association. This award is given to students who exhibit outstanding qualities in scholastic merit, musicianship, and citizenship by competing in the TMEA All-State process and UIL Solo & Ensemble, participating in numerous choral activities, as well as maintaining an overall A average for the school year.

These students are to be commended on their high level of achievement, as well as their consistent dedication to the Choir Program in Gatesville.

## OISD now offering dual enrollment opportunities

### Staff Reports

Oglesby Independent School District has announced that in the beginning of the 2024-2025 school year, dual enrollment opportunities will be offered in collaboration with Tarleton Today.

The affordable program is for Texas high school students who seek to challenge themselves and accelerate their college preparation. Oglesby ISD staff will be responsible for teaching the courses and will receive professional learning and development to deepen their classroom impact.

Starting this upcoming school year, the campus will offer Composition I, American Literature, College Algebra, and United States His-

tory classes.

Along with offering dual enrollment with Tarleton Today, the campus is also working with Temple College and their Texas Bioscience Institute (TBI) Middle College Program.

The TBI program will give students the opportunity to earn up to 60 college credit hours in a STEM-focused foundational curriculum such as science, technology, and engineering.

Many students participating in this program obtain an associate degree from Temple College before they even graduate from high school.

For further information regarding Tarleton Today or the TBI Middle College Program at Temple College, contact Oglesby ISD at 254-456-2271.

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# TARLETON STATE UNIVERSITY™

## Dr. J. Michael Leger named dean of Tarleton State School of Nursing



PHOTO COURTESY OF TARLETON STATE UNIVERSITY

Dr. J. (John) Michael Leger

### Tarleton State University

STEPHENVILLE — Tarleton State University has named Dr. J. "John" Michael Leger its dean of nursing, effective July 1.

In this role, Leger will manage the administrative functions of the School of Nursing and focus on the plans and initiatives that support Tarleton Forward 2030: Our Future-Focused Strategic Plan.

He comes to Tarleton State after spending the past 10 years at The University of Texas Medical Branch (UTMB) at Galveston. At UTMB, he has served as a professor, track coordinator for the Master of Science in Nursing (MSN) executive nurse leadership track, and the inaugural interim track coordinator for the nursing

PhD program.

"Dr. Leger is well-equipped to lead our School of Nursing, having over 20 years of experience as a healthcare executive, including roles such as chief nursing officer, vice president of nursing, and hospital CEO," said Dr. Ramona Parker, associate vice president and executive dean for the College of Health Sciences. "I am excited about the opportunities that lie ahead and am confident that, under his leadership, we will continue to advance and strengthen our program."

During his time at UTMB, Leger taught primarily in graduate-level programs and served as an adviser to special initiatives in the undergraduate programs. He also designed, developed and initiated an on-

line orientation program in 2015 called CORE, which improved the preparation of incoming MSN students for the realities and expectations of online education. Through the program, the university saw improved on-time graduation rates and lower attrition rates in participants.

Additionally, he assisted in creating a similar program to include RN-BSN students, which later expanded to include doctoral programs.

"Visiting the campus and the people I met during my interviews only reassured me that I had made the right decision to pursue this position," said Leger. "The pride of the faculty, staff and students in Tarleton State University is evident in how they speak about the culture

and the excitement for the future. I see nothing but opportunity at Tarleton State, and particularly the future of the School of Nursing. I look forward to working with Dr. Ramona Parker and the faculty, staff and students at the university."

In 2024, Leger received the UTMB School of Nursing Alumni Association Hall of Fame Award. He was also the UTMB Academy of Master Teachers Faculty of the Month recipient in February 2023. A registered nurse, he holds a doctorate in nursing research and education from UTMB and a master's degree in business and healthcare administration from Our Lady of the Lake University in Houston. He earned his bachelor's degree in nursing from UTMB.

## Online student harnesses prior coursework, experience to expedite degree

### Tarleton State University

STEPHENVILLE — Amber Taylor doesn't have time to spare. As a single parent of a busy teenager and a full-time worker looking to advance in her field, she was drawn to Tarleton State University Online's flexible route to a bachelor's degree. Now, just over two years later, Taylor is graduating with a Bachelor of Applied Arts and Sciences degree in information technology with an undergraduate certificate in cybersecurity.

"Having a degree from Tarleton State will open so many doors for my future," said Taylor. "I know this is what I want to do, and as a nontraditional student turning 37 the week before graduation, I have life experience on top of proving that I can be knowledgeable and dedicated."

Taylor had attended Tarleton State after high school, but life challenges caused her to drop out to work full time. She eventually earned an associate degree elsewhere and worked in banking and then information technology jobs. She currently works for an IT support company.

"I knew I wanted to stay in this field, and to do so I would need to have a degree to advance or obtain other jobs," Taylor said. "Since I have always loved Tarleton State, I started researching and found online degree plans." Her adviser reviewed her transcripts and suggested the BAAS program, in which she could apply previous course credits as well as work experience to complete her degree faster and more efficiently.

The Bachelor of Applied Arts and Sciences (BAAS) degree from the Dr. Sam Pack College of Business utilizes prior business-related technical or vocational coursework, documented employer training records, continuing education credits or certifications as sources of credit. The program is intended to allow students seeking a bachelor's degree to complete coursework quickly.

"This was a huge help financially and timewise," said Taylor. "I had such amazing help and advising from start to finish that ensured I was able to utilize my previous credits and what degree plan would work best for me. It was hard at times, manag-

ing working full time, having an active high schooler and managing being a full-time student. But I did it!"

Her daughter was a major influence in her decision to move forward with her degree, Taylor said.

"She was in middle school when I decided to go back to college. That age is so impressive, and I wanted her to know that no matter what happens, if you really want something and are willing to work hard, you can achieve your goals. "I am a single mom, and to give her what she deserves I have to put in the work. I try to go to as many of her events, games, etc. as possible," Taylor added. "Online learning was the only option for me and discovering that Tarleton State could help me with that, it was not a hard decision to make."

She said the experience also helped her learn to trust herself to self-manage and prioritize her classes on top of her job and parenting roles.

"It has helped me learn my strengths and weaknesses and shown me that I can handle stressful times with a lot going on." It can be dif-



PHOTO COURTESY OF TARLETON STATE UNIVERSITY

Amber Taylor, right, with her daughter, Mattisyn. Taylor said Mattisyn strongly influenced her decision to move forward with her degree through Tarleton State University Online.

ficult to teach yourself, she said, but her professors were helpful and she experienced good communication. She would recommend Tarleton State Online to anyone wanting to continue their education.

"There is such a wide variety of degree plans to explore and find what is right for you. It is never too late to go back to school."

Tarleton State University's

online option offers more than 20 undergraduate completion programs and 22 graduate degrees, all designed for ultimate flexibility and affordability to empower busy adults, working professionals and lifelong learners to unlock their potential.

In addition, 10 unique professional completion degrees allow students to convert experience into credit by recognizing the value of

existing knowledge gained through professional training, certifications and technical coursework, accelerating their degree path.

To learn more about Tarleton State Online, visit <https://www.tarleton.edu/online/>.

To learn more about the BAAS options at Tarleton State, visit <https://www.tarleton.edu/degrees/business-baas/>.

## Tarleton State's Rachael Capua featured on Fort Worth Newsmakers list

### Tarleton State University

STEPHENVILLE — Dr. Rachael Capua, dean of Tarleton State University Fort Worth and vice president for external operations, has been honored as one of 27 individuals highlighted in the Dallas Business Journal's first ever Fort Worth Newsmakers list.

Fort Worth is now the 12th largest city in the country and the fastest-growing big city in Texas. The Newsmakers list is com-

prised of business, government and education leaders who are making decisions that will have direct impact on the economy, housing market and workforce for years to come.

Capua plays a key role in the growth trajectory of Tarleton State's Fort Worth campus, where 24 new undergraduate programs will begin serving first- and second-year students this fall. To accommodate new and existing areas of study, a best-in-class

Interprofessional Education Building is nearing completion and will add 102,000 square feet of classroom, laboratory and collaboration spaces aimed to increase access to quality healthcare and education in the region and beyond.

In addition to Fort Worth, Capua is responsible for Tarleton State's outreach locations in Waco, Bryan and online, including community college relations statewide. Effective July 1, the division of external operations will

also oversee extended education and lifelong learning programs for the university, providing flexible and cost-effective options for personal and professional development including industry specific upskilling through self-paced eLearning courses and non-credit bearing certification programs.

"I am deeply honored to be recognized alongside this list of Fort Worth leaders, all of whom I have great respect and appreciation for," said Capua. "Each of these indi-

viduals has an unwavering commitment to our community and its growth. Believing in the power of partnership, I look forward to continuing our work together."

Enrollment projections at Tarleton State Fort Worth are expected to reach up to 10,000 students within the next six years, in line with Tarleton Forward 2030: Our Future-Focused Strategic Plan.

A second-generation Mexican-American and former community college

transfer student, Capua graduated magna cum laude with a bachelor's degree in advertising and public relations from TCU as a Chancellor's Scholar. She earned a master's degree in higher education from the University of Oklahoma and a doctorate in higher education from SMU.

To learn more about Tarleton State Fort Worth, visit [www.tarleton.edu/fortworth/](http://www.tarleton.edu/fortworth/).



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## CHEER BAKE SALE



COURTESY PHOTO

Gatesville High School mascot Kari Dudik is pictured at the cheer bake sale that was held on Saturday, June 22, at the Salty Senorita. The high school cheer program is currently in the process of raising funds for a new one-of-a-kind BUZZ mascot uniform. After hosting various events and bake sales, the program currently needs \$1,300 left to purchase the uniform. To donate to the cheer program, contact acolson@gatesvilleisd.org.

## CHOIR BAKE SALE



ALEXANDRA MEELBUSCH | THE GATESVILLE MESSENGER

The Gatesville High School Choir program recently held a bake sale on Friday, June 21, at the Salty Senorita. A plethora of choir students, along with director Cherith Wells, came together to raise funds for the program by hosting the sale. Baked goods included cakes, cupcakes, cookies, and brownies, as well as having Bryson's Sno Dizzle present for snow cones.

## GISD summer camps continue

### Staff Reports

Gatesville Independent School District will host various sports camps throughout the summer.

Each camp will be directed by a high school or junior high coach and will be assisted by high school varsity athletes.

There will be opportunities to learn fundamentals and techniques, as well as Hornet schemes and terminology.

A concession stand will be available during practices.

### 2024 SUMMER CAMPS

**Volleyball:** Monday, July 8 to Wednesday, July 10 will be from 8:30 -11:30 a.m. and will be for first

through ninth grade student-athletes. The cost will be \$40 per person.

**Wrestling:** Monday, July 15 to Friday, July 19, will be from 8:30-9:30 a.m. and will be for first through ninth grade. The cost will be \$40 per athlete.

**Football:** Monday, July 29 to Wednesday, July 31, will be from 7:30-10:30 a.m. and will be for seventh through ninth grade. The cost will be \$40 per athlete.

**Soccer:** The date is TBA (to be announced) as well as the cost. First through sixth grade will be in the spring and fall, and seventh through twelfth grade will be on Sunday after-

noons during September and October.

### Hornet SWARM speed strength and condition sessions

SWARM camp for seventh and eighth grade athletes began on Wednesday, June 3 and will continue through Thursday, July 25. The sessions will be from 8:15-9:15 a.m., and the cost is free for all athletes.

SWARM camp for ninth through twelfth grade athletes began on Wednesday, June 3 and will continue through Thursday, July 25. It will be from 7-8 a.m., and the cost is free for all athletes.

For further details, contact Gatesville High School at 254-865-8281.

## Fundraiser softball tournament Aug. 10

### Staff Reports

Righteous Roots recently announced that they will host a softball tournament on Saturday, Aug. 10, for the community. This will be the first of a few upcoming fundraisers that Righteous Roots will be hosting.

The tournament is designed for individuals 18

years or older. There will be a five-dollar gate fee to enter the ballpark, and it will cost \$20 per umpire and \$200 per team.

The tournament will feature a homerun derby for \$20, closest to the pin for \$20, and a homerun band for \$20. It will be five dollars per home run and for each out taken.

Vendor booths will be

available as well for \$40 per booth. To sign up to be a vendor, contact 254-223-0608.

Registration is available now and will end on Thursday, Aug. 1. To register, contact Payton George at 254-223-0207.

For further details, contact Righteous Roots at 254-651-3600.

## Youth golf camp slated in July

### Staff Reports

A youth golf camp will be held in July for all incoming first through ninth graders. The camp will be held at the Gatesville Golf Course from 8:30-11:30 a.m., from Monday, July 22, to Wednesday, July 24.

The camp will be hosted by Gatesville Golf Course Pro Ray Feight and Gatesville High School Alumni and Collegiate Golfer Kaylan Summers.

During the first day of camp on Monday, there will be an introduction to the game covering club

types, grip techniques, and swing fundamentals. On Tuesday, the group will work on refining skills and preparing kids for the drive, chip, and putt contest. It will conclude with oncourse practicing. On Wednesday, there will be a competitive drive, chip, and putt contest for each age division and will be open for parents to attend.

There will be an award ceremony to conclude the camp on Wednesday, July 24, at 11 a.m. and it will be located under the pavilion at the golf course.

A limited number of

clubs will be provided for those who need them. There will also be drinks and snacks available for purchase.

Be sure to bring sunscreen, a hat, a cooling towel, a water jug, and bug spray.

The registration fee will be \$40-per-child. The camp will only be taking the first 50 paid kids.

To register, contact Kaylan Summers at 254-654-1611.

The Gatesville Country Club is located at 1308 Golf Course Road.

**INTERNATIONAL FISHING DAY**  
June 29, 2024

*How they SAY that in...*

**ENGLISH:** Fish  
**SPANISH:** Pescado  
**ITALIAN:** Pesce  
**FRENCH:** Poisson  
**GERMAN:** Fisch

**Did You Know?**

READING, TRAVELING AND FISHING ARE SOME OF THE MOST POPULAR HOBBIES AROUND THE WORLD.

**International Fishing Day**, observed on June 29th, casts a line of excitement for kids to explore the world of angling and appreciate the joys of fishing. It's a day that celebrates the timeless connection between humans and water, fostering an appreciation for nature, patience, and the thrill of catching a fish.

For children, International Fishing Day offers a unique opportunity to learn the art of fishing. Whether they are beginners or experienced young anglers, families can plan a fishing trip to local lakes or rivers. This provides kids with the chance to cast their lines, feel the anticipation of a bite, and experience the wonders of the great outdoors.

Parents and mentors play a crucial role on International Fishing Day by sharing fishing tips and techniques. Kids can learn about setting up tackle, identifying different fish species, and understanding the significance of responsible fishing practices. This includes learning catch-and-release techniques and respecting fishing regulations to help preserve the delicate balance within aquatic ecosystems.

International Fishing Day isn't just about catching fish; it's an opportunity for kids to connect with nature. Families can spend the day by the water, appreciating the tranquility and beauty of natural landscapes. Fishing teaches children patience, focus, and an understanding of the delicate balance within aquatic ecosystems.

Children can document their fishing adventures through drawings or storytelling, creating lasting memories of the day spent by the water. It's also a chance for families to share stories about the cultural significance of fishing and its role in communities around the world.

Through International Fishing Day, kids can develop a lifelong love for the outdoors and gain a deeper understanding of the interconnectedness between people and water. Whether it's the thrill of a catch, the serenity of a lakeside retreat, or the camaraderie with family and friends, this day celebrates the joy and traditions of fishing.

**COLOR Time**

To sponsor the Coryell Kids pages, call Kaitlyn at 254-865-5212.





# JHS softball selected to THSCA Super Elite Team

## Staff Reports

After a season of making history and winning a state championship title, the Jonesboro High School Lady Eagles softball team is still rising to the top, being selected to the 2023-2024 THSCA Super Elite Team. The THSCA Super Elite

Team consists of high school players nominated by current professional members of the Texas High School Coaches Association.

### The four athletes chosen include:

Catcher of the Year (COTY) Emily Turner, Adalya Andrade, Leighla

Hernandez, and Kyleigh Walker.

The players must meet the THSCA award criteria to be nominated.

### The criteria includes:

- Be of good moral character.
- Varsity sports only.
- Have been a member of the team in good standing

at the time of nomination.

· Players have excelled as elite members in their respective sport.

The award recognizes student athletes across the state of Texas for their exemplary athletic achievement in their specific sport.

# Children from GPL take field trip to Mother Neff

BY BECKY JONES  
Gatesville Public Library

“Adventure Begins at Your Library” is the summer reading theme at the Gatesville Public Library, and participating children and their families recently experienced adventure at Mother Neff State Park.

To learn about Mother Neff State Park, the children first began work on their Junior Ranger Journals. Activities were completed at the library during summer Story Time, so that kiddos could earn Junior Ranger badges. Then, staff and volunteers from the park came to the library and taught over 100 library visitors about proper camping practices at Mother Neff, how to act in a state park, and common birds that can be seen there.

Finally, 79 folks went to Mother Neff State Park for a visit. Park staff and volunteers set up different stations, so visitors could learn about park mammals, hummingbirds, camping,



After visiting several stations at the park, children received Junior Ranger badges from park superintendent Melissa Chadwick.

and bird watching. Everyone enjoyed hiking to the tower and the cave, and then the new Junior Rangers were sworn in and received their badges. As icing on the cake, each new Junior Ranger also received

\$10 from the Friends of the Library to spend at the Mother Neff State Park Gift Shop.

The group of park explorers expressed their appreciation to park Superintendent Melissa Chadwick as

well as her staff and volunteers. They also extended a special thank you to the Friends of the Library for helping make the summer reading program such a success.



DeMarcus Acoff (left) is pictured with Garrett Young after playing in the TSMCA All-Star Game.

# Acoff, Young compete in TSMCA All-Star Game

## Staff Reports

This past week, two Jonesboro High School football players, DeMarcus Acoff and Garrett Young, played in the Texas Six Man Coaches Association (TSMCA) All-Star Game where they represented their district.

Not only did both

student-athletes compete well, but Acoff was also named as the Defensive MVP and earned one of the scholarships that were awarded by the coach's association.

For further details, visit <https://texasixmancoachesassociation.godaddysites.com/>.



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# Happy JULY 4th

**P**icture it. It's July 4, 1776, and after months of heated battle, the Continental Congress endorses the Declaration of Independence written by Thomas Jefferson. Although the American Revolution would continue for another seven years, the official endorsement of the Declaration of Independence would be a turning point in the conflict for many. In fact, the first Independence Day celebration would take place on July 4 of the following year. By the early 1800s, Fourth of July celebrations would be common in areas across the country and several traditions would emerge, including parades, picnics and fireworks. Please join us in paying tribute to the individuals who fought so hard to obtain our independence and all of the individuals in the years since who have worked to preserve it.

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