



THE GATESVILLE MESSENGER

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Early day actor visited Gatesville

BY DAVID SCOTT
Staff Writer

In a display hanging in the Coryell County Courthouse Annex is a photo of a man seated on a horse in front of the Cotton Belt Railroad Depot. The photo is identified as being of Yakima Canutt. It is unknown why and when Canutt visited Gatesville... but just who was Yakima Canutt?

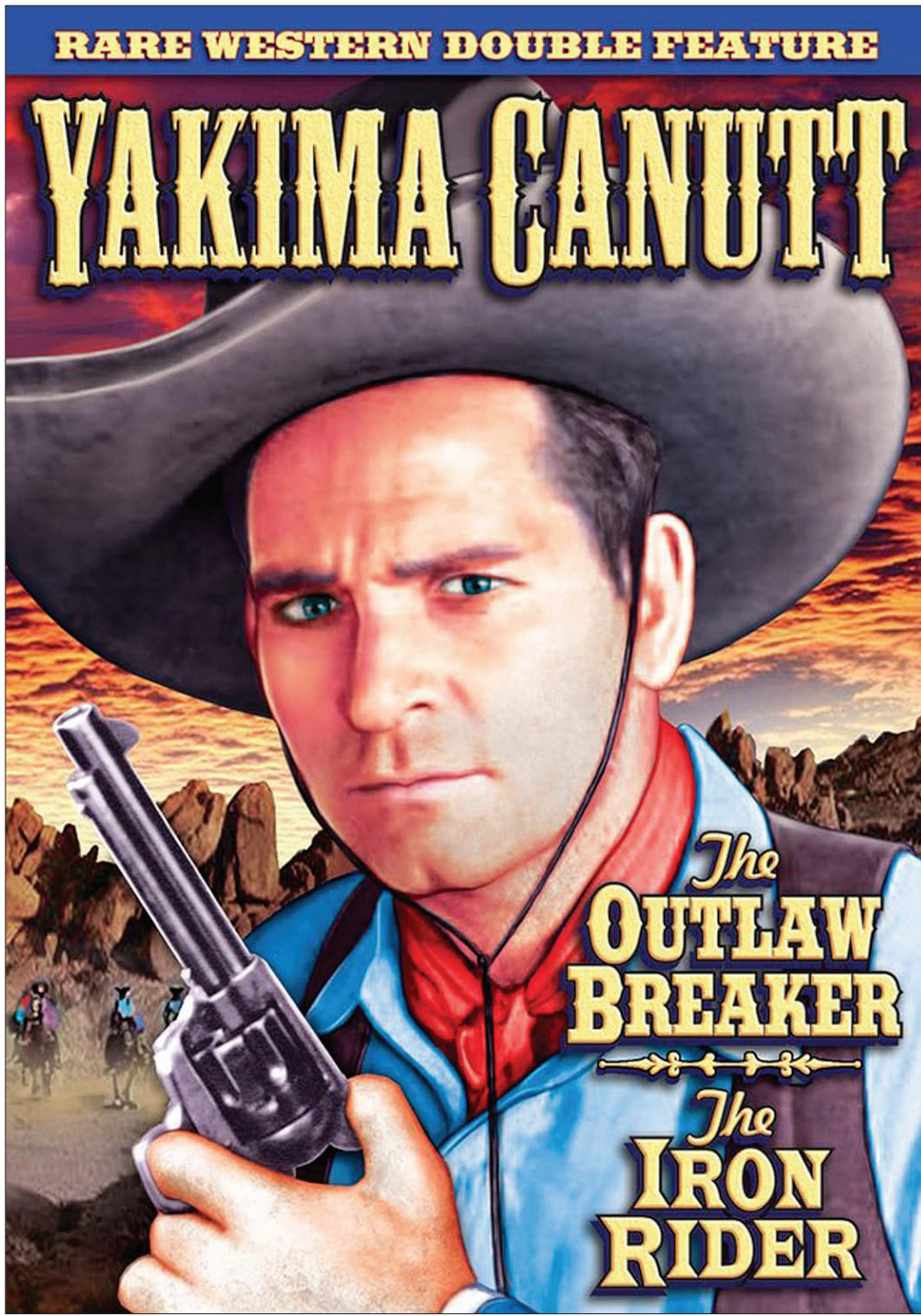
Canutt became very well-known in California as a rodeo rider, actor, stuntman, and movie director.

He was born in 1895 in Colifax, Washington under the original name of Enos Edward Canutt. He began breaking wild broncos at the age of eleven and eventually gained a reputation as a bronc rider, bulldogger, and all-around cowboy.

It was at the Pendleton Round-Up that he got the name of "Yakima," when a newspaper caption misidentified him stating, "Yakima Canutt may be the most famous person NOT from Yakima, Washington."

Canutt was once quoted as saying, "I started in major rodeos in 1914 and went through 1923. There was quite a crop of us travelling together, and we would have special railroad cars and cars for the horses. We'd play anywhere from three, six, to eight, ten-day shows - Bronc riding, bulldogging, and roping."

He won his first world championship at the Olympics of the West in 1917 and won more championships in the years following.



COURTESY PHOTO

Many of Yakima's early films are now available on DVD.

County commissioners address impacts on proposed budget

BY KAYLEE DUSANG
Staff Writer

In midst of preparing for the upcoming fiscal year, Coryell County Commissioners held a special meeting on Monday to preview the county's proposed annual operating budget for 2025.

The lengthy session led to a discussion on top factors in the county's proposed budget and tax rate increase, salary raises for clerical workers, as well as the adoption of a new health insurance plan for employees.

PROPOSED BUDGET

The county's proposed budget will raise more revenue from property taxes by \$4.3 million, which is about a 33.24% increase from last year, according to the budget filed on August 15.

Last week, the commissioners court approved a proposed tax rate of .4737 cents per \$100 of valuation. This would be a 26.9% increase compared to last year's tax rate of .37328 cents per \$100.

Commissioner Kyle Matthews explains that one of the largest factors in the proposed budget increase is the county not planning for the depletion of around \$14 million in American Rescue

Plan Act (ARPA) funds that were distributed to counties by the federal government following the outbreak of COVID-19.

"Just like anybody, when someone gives you \$14 million and says, 'go spend it' and you build a lifestyle out of it, and when that \$14 million is gone you cannot sustain that lifestyle anymore," Matthews said.

The act was signed by President Joe Biden in 2021 to combat the pandemic along with public health and economic impacts, according to the National Association of Counties. The package provided \$65.1 billion in direct aid to state and local governments.

Matthews said the ARPA funds were used in previous years for the county's Road and Bridge Department, the capital improvement fund, collecting data for grant support, the Mental Health Deputy Program, among others. He said the balance of the ARPA funds was around \$600,000 in 2024, but the majority of it was used over the last three years.

"If you give raises from the ARPA money, or you purchase things that you finance from ARPA mon-

PLEASE SEE **BUDGET** | A2

City's proposed budget raises incentive pay for volunteer firefighters

BY KAYLEE DUSANG
Staff Writer

In an effort to help boost volunteerism at the Gatesville Fire Department, the City of Gatesville is proposing to raise the incentive pay budget for volunteer firefighters from \$25,000 to \$50,000 per year.

Introduced to the fire department five or six years ago, the goal of the incentive pay

is to help support volunteer firefighters who often need to respond to weekend and after-hours night calls. The total incentive pay - currently \$25,000 - is split between the volunteers based on the number of calls they can respond to.

"They don't get very much at \$25,000," Gatesville Fire Chief Billy Vaden

PLEASE SEE **FIREFIGHTERS** | A2



KAYLEE DUSANG | THE GATESVILLE MESSENGER

From left to right, volunteer firefighters Willie Taylor, Teristin Byrd, and Robert Ferguson stand in front of Engine 2 at the Gatesville Fire Department.

Texas DPS confirm five killed in Lampasas County crash

BY KAYLEE DUSANG
Staff Writer

A fatal two-vehicle wreck in Lampasas County on Aug. 14 has left five people dead - two from Copperas Cove and a family of three from Leander, according to the Texas Department of Public Safety.

Texas DPS Troopers responded to the incident at 5:45 a.m. on U.S. Highway

281. According to a Texas DPS crash report, a 2004 Cadillac CTS, driven by 31-year-old Jacinto Gudino Duran, of Copperas Cove, was traveling southbound on U.S. 281 at milepost 406. The vehicle also contained 23-year-old Yosilu Gasman Martinez-Lopez, of Copperas Cove.

At the same time, a 2024

Kia Telluride, driven by 45-year-old Arvind Mani of Leander, was traveling northbound on U.S. 281. The two passengers of the Kia were identified as 40-year-old Pradeepa Arvind and 17-year-old Andril Arvind.

According to the investigating trooper, evidence at the scene revealed that the rear right tire of the Cadillac

had a blowout. Witness accounts reported that the Cadillac had passed them at a "very high rate of speed," the report states.

The blowout caused the Cadillac to lose control, enter a side skid, and cross into the northbound lanes and into the path of the Kia. The Kia then collided into the passenger side of the Cadillac in the inside

northbound lane, causing extensive damage to both vehicles.

Texas DPS confirmed that all passengers and drivers in both vehicles were pronounced dead at the scene. The next of kin have been notified.

According to a report by the Austin-American Statesman, the occupants of the Kia left one surviving

immediate family member, 14-year-old Adiryan Arvind, who was not in the vehicle with them at the time of the crash.

A GoFundMe page has been created for Adiryan following the loss of his family, which has raised over \$800,000.



Trinity Baptist Church

Bro. Sam Crosby, Pastor

Bible Study at 9:45 a.m.
Worship:
First service at 8:15 a.m.
Second service at 11:00 a.m.

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Church 865-8495
Pre-school 248-0041

Mission Statement:

"For the glory of God, we exist to make fully devoted followers of Jesus Christ by every means possible."

BUDGET

FROM PAGE A1

ey and you don't plan for that future - that expense continues," Matthews said.

Commissioner Scott Weddle noted that accommodating for an overspend in the jail's prisoner board budget and recent county-wide flooding in May and June also heavily impacted the budget in 2024.

Most of the expenses for the flood recovery came out of the county's Road and Bridge Department, which had to identify, close, and repair several damaged roads and crossings.

"If you will, we almost started out at almost \$2 million in the hole that we're trying to catch up on with the extra expenditures with Road and Bridge and the jail boarding," Weddle said.

Although the county has applied for a FEMA public assistance grant to help offset the costs of flood repairs, it is still unknown when they will receive the funds.

"They (Road and Bridge) probably expensed at least \$1.5 million either with the

repairs or clean up," Matthews said. "But when do you get that money back? It may be in 2025 (or) it might be in 2027."

Despite the increase, Matthews said that he believes the county could cut the proposed tax rate by up to two cents, which would require cutting around \$2 million from the proposed budget.

"I've already worked through it, but it takes a cooperative effort from the entire court to go through and agree that this needs to be cut," he said. "If we can cut it to .45 cents versus (.4737 cents), well that's only an 8% increase instead of a little over a (10% increase)."

A public hearing on the proposed tax rate is set for Sept. 5 at 9 a.m. in the Commissioners Courtroom at 800 E. Main Street.

HEALTH INSURANCE

During a regular meeting on Tuesday, Aug. 13, the commissioners court approved a major adjustment to the county's employee health plan but rescinded the vote at Monday's meeting.

The vote on August 13 adopted a new coinsurance

plan through Baylor Scott & White. County employees expressed concern over the change, as it would include a deductible and a larger out-of-pocket expense for employees on family or dependent plans.

"I don't know what that means in dollars, but it's going to be a major change for my employees to go from what they currently have as a benefit to what you're about to give them with no warning," Coryell County Tax Assessor Collector Justin Carothers said at the August 13 meeting.

The county's current health insurance plan covers a single employee at no cost but covers 60% for those on a family or dependent plans. It does not include a deductible and has a smaller out-of-pocket pay.

On Monday, county commissioners rescinded the coinsurance plan and instead opted to renew the current health insurance with a lower plan, dropping it from 60% to 50% coverage.

County Treasurer Randi McFarlin said she did not have enough time to study how the coinsurance plan would have fully affected

the employees ahead of open enrollment for the upcoming year, so she recommended that the county renew the current health plan at the lower rate.

"Now, it's back to what we currently know and what we've had for the past few years," McFarlin said. "They've taken that high option away, which was just a broader range of doctors that we could see."

The adjustment comes after an initial 19% increase to the renewal of the county's health insurance. During Monday's vote, Weddle said the county found a way to drop the increase by 15% as well as find cuts in other areas of the budget to cover the additional expense.

"There were some pretty heavy negotiations going on, and I think everybody in this room knows that we're in some very strange times here with rising costs," Weddle said.

SALARY INCREASES

If approved, the county's proposed budget would also give clerical positions in the county an approximately 16% salary increase, Matthews said. Clerical positions include county clerks and executive

assistants across various departments.

The raises mainly target the base pay of the positions for new hires, but current employees will also see an increase. For example, some of the clerks could receive a raise from \$25,800 to \$31,000.

"Anytime we raise our salary schedule, that is going to positively impact our existing employees, because they get the difference between what was on the old salary schedule and what is on the new schedule. That's the base pay," Weddle said.

However, County Attorney Brandon Belt said he doesn't believe the adjustments fully match current market values.

"If ya'll think that less than \$16 an hour is going to attract folks to put in applications for a clerk's position in Coryell County, I'm afraid y'all are a touch detached in the current market," Belt said.

Weddle responded that the court has had to raise salaries gradually to avoid raising the tax rate even further.

"This county rock and rolled along for many, many years at a pretty low pay, so we've been really trying to

get up," Weddle said. "We know that the market has gone crazy, but the fact is we have to do this incrementally."

Matthews said the salary increases for clerical positions make up less than 1% of the county's overall budget.

According to a public notice filed by the county, the proposed budget also contains salary increases for the county's elected officials, ranging from \$3,000 to \$15,000.

The total cost for the elected officials would come out around a total of \$70,000 if approved.

The court will address employee salary schedules again at its next meeting on August 27.

The \$3,000 would go to the salaries of the county commissioners, justices of the peace, and constables. Carothers, McFarlin, the District Clerk, and County Clerk will also receive \$3,000.

County Judge Roger Miller will receive a raise of \$7,000, and Belt will receive a \$15,000 increase.

FIREFIIGHTERS

FROM PAGE A1

said. "There are a few who make the majority of all the calls - 75% to 85% of the calls - and they get quite a bit. But the guys who work during the day out of town, and are just available for night calls, they end up not getting a lot."

The raise in the incentive pay was brought to light during a reading of the city's proposed budget at a Gatesville City Council

meeting on Tuesday, Aug. 13. It is part of the fire department's annual operating budget from the city, which is proposed at nearly \$373,000 for 2025.

The fire department currently boasts around 36 volunteer firefighters, but only a small majority can show up at every call since many of them also hold full-time jobs or work outside of the county. Vaden hopes the incentive pay will encourage a larger group to show up for minor calls that often occur in the middle of night.

"If we could just double

our participation at night, we would be in really good shape," he said.

The fire department normally gives incentive pay to firefighters twice a year, Vaden explains. Each volunteer is required to make at least 15% of the calls to receive the pay. At \$25,000, he said most firefighters receive around \$500 each per year, while those who make the majority of the calls receive up to \$2,000 each. With the proposed increase to \$50,000, their incentive pay could double for the year.

"It gives them something to look forward to, a little extra money," Vaden said.

Interim City Manager Brad Hunt said the incentive pay is a way for the city to help support the volunteer model.

"We understand the vital role these volunteers play in keeping our city and the surrounding communities safe," Hunt said in an email. "We encourage volunteerism and hope this increase will help Chief Vaden continue to meet his emergency response needs and goals in the coming

year."

The fire department makes about 800 calls per year, an average of around two to three calls a day. Vaden told the city council that the calls have steadily increased over the years, therefore, requiring volunteers to put in more time to respond to emergencies.

"They have to balance their home life with fire department life. It is what it is," Vaden said. "Anything we could do to encourage them to be here - that's what we're going to have to do. If you don't, you're

going to have to hire a fire department."

The Gatesville Fire Department saves the city approximately \$2 million each year by remaining as a volunteer department.

The station covers approximately 287 square miles of Coryell County. It also receives help from partnerships with other county volunteer fire departments and the paid fire department in Copperas Cove.

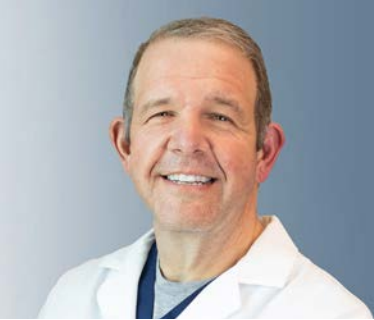
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Russell to be recognized with dedication Aug. 30

Staff Reports

A dedication will be held on Friday, Aug. 30 to recognize Ronnie Russell at the Gatesville Independent School District transportation office. The service will begin at 2 p.m.

Ronnie Russell graduated from Jonesboro High School in 1967 and attended Howard Payne University on a baseball scholarship. He played semi-pro baseball even after his college graduation.

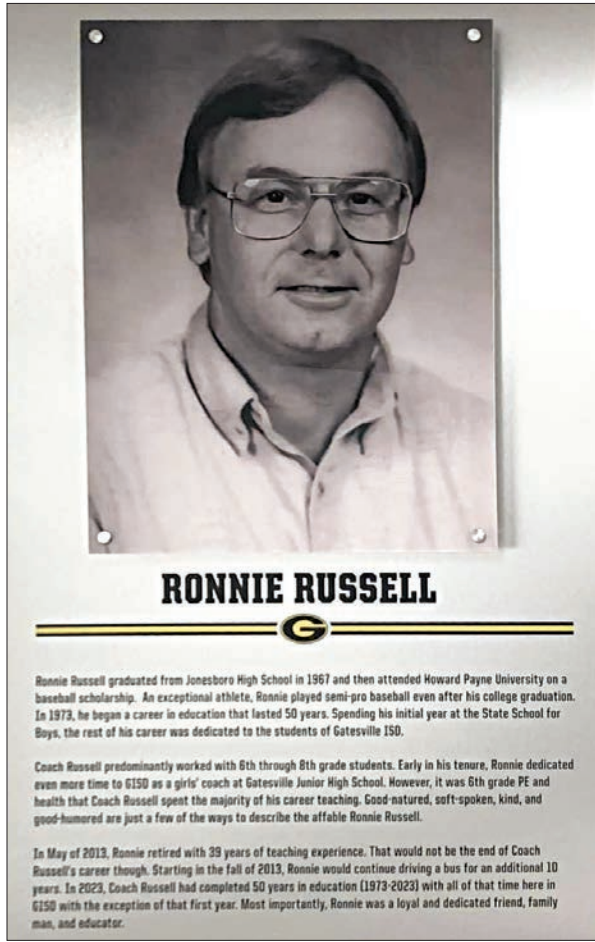
In 1973, he began a career in education, which lasted 50 years. He spent his initial year at the State School for Boys, while the rest of his career was dedicated to the students at Gatesville Inde-

pendent School District.

Coach Russell predominantly worked with sixth through eighth grade students. Early in his tenure, he dedicated his time as a girls coach at Gatesville Junior High School. However, it was sixth grade P.E. and health where he spent the majority of his career teaching.

In May of 2013, he retired with 39 years of teaching experience. Although, this would not be the end of his career since he continued driving a bus for an additional 10 years.

In 2023, Coach Russell completed 50 years in education with all his time served at Gatesville ISD.



COURTESY PHOTO

Ronnie Russell's plaque is displayed in the GISD transportation office.

PEARL NEWS

Dr. Patterson to speak at fundraiser



BY BETSY CLARK

Pearl News Correspondent

The annual Pearl Church of Christ Atchley Fish Fry and Silent Auction benefiting His Kids of Lampasas will be held on Sunday, Sept. 1.

Beginning at 10:30 a.m., the speaker will be Dr. Charles Patterson, former Superintendent of Killeen ISD and a Hamilton native. After the church service, you can enjoy a free fish dinner with all the trimmings. Feel free to bring your favorite dessert or side if you wish. The closing of the auction takes place after lunch. Bidding is now open at the church, so go by and peruse the many, many items and place your bids on the accompanying bid sheets. Be sure and check out the pictures of the available auction items on the Pearl Church of Christ Facebook page. Your generosity is greatly appreciated as all proceeds go toward scholarships and the summer Christian camp program for the kiddos. Be sure and let your Killeen friends know that Dr. Patterson will be in Pearl that day. Everyone is invited to attend. Visitors are always welcome at Pearl Church of Christ.

I was so blessed to enjoy a wonderful birthday weekend last week. Of course, too much great food was enjoyed by all. However, the best part was spending time with family and friends. One of the best parts of this year's celebration is that I found out that I'm a year younger than I thought. For most of this past year, I thought I was hitting a huge milestone before a major milestone. I've dreaded that. As it turns out, I should have been more worried about my ability to do math.

Actually, I'm just glad that I'm a retired teacher now as teaching math might not be one of my strong suits any longer. Please tell me it's not all downhill from here!

I hear that Kay is enjoying weekly outings with friends and that their favorite thing to do is to meet at a local restaurant to enjoy time together. She will never want to leave the big city to go back to country living after all the fun she's been having. (Okay, to us Pearlites, Gatesville is the big city.) However, I have also heard that Kay and her companions have come close to being evicted from the premises due to their raucous behavior. How can sweet little ladies in the 30+ age range (or thereabouts) cause such a commotion, and what in the world is so funny? The locals say that the giggling rattles windows and nearly bursts eardrums! If they don't watch it, they are going to get a reputation ... and they will all want one of those itty bitsy, teeny weeny, turquoise greeny, stringy bikinis just like Kay's!

This week's Bible verse comes from Mark 8:36—What good is it for someone to gain the whole world, yet forfeit their soul? NIV

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

Form 50-876

Statements required in notice if the proposed tax rate exceeds the no-new-revenue tax rate but does not exceed the voter-approval tax rate, as prescribed by Tax Code §26.06(b-2).

NOTICE OF PUBLIC HEARING ON TAX INCREASE

This notice only applies to a taxing unit other than a special taxing unit or municipality with a population of less than 30,000, regardless of whether it is a special taxing unit.

PROPOSED TAX RATE	\$	0.560000	per \$100
NO-NEW-REVENUE TAX RATE	\$	0.539678	per \$100
VOTER-APPROVAL TAX RATE	\$	0.563779	per \$100

The no-new-revenue tax rate is the tax rate for the 2024 tax year that will raise the same amount of property tax revenue for CITY OF GATESVILLE from the same properties in both the 2023 tax year and the 2024 tax year.

The voter-approval tax rate is the highest tax rate that CITY OF GATESVILLE may adopt without holding an election to seek voter approval of the rate.

The proposed tax rate is greater than the no-new-revenue tax rate. This means that CITY OF GATESVILLE is proposing to increase property taxes for the 2024 tax year.

A PUBLIC HEARING ON THE PROPOSED TAX RATE WILL BE HELD ON 09/10/2024 05:30 PM at City Council Chambers, 110 N. 8th St., Gatesville, TX.

The proposed tax rate is not greater than the voter-approval tax rate. As a result, CITY OF GATESVILLE is not required to hold an election at which voters may accept or reject the proposed tax rate. However, you may express your support for or opposition to the proposed tax rate by contacting the members of the City of Gatesville of CITY OF GATESVILLE at their offices or by attending the public hearing mentioned above.

YOUR TAXES OWED UNDER ANY OF THE TAX RATES MENTIONED ABOVE CAN BE CALCULATED AS FOLLOWS:

$$\text{Property tax amount} = (\text{tax rate}) \times (\text{taxable value of your property}) / 100$$

(List names of all members of the governing body below, showing how each voted on the proposal to consider the tax increase or, if one or more were absent, indicating absences.)

FOR the proposal: Aaron Smith, Barbara Burrow, Meredith Rainer, Greg Casey, John Westbrook

AGAINST the proposal: _____

PRESENT and not voting: Gary Chumley

ABSENT: Joe Patterson

Visit Texas.gov/PropertyTaxes to find a link to your local property tax database on which you can easily access information regarding your property taxes, including information about proposed tax rates and scheduled public hearings of each entity that taxes your property.

The 86th Texas Legislature modified the manner in which the voter-approval tax rate is calculated to limit the rate of growth of property taxes in the state.

The following table compares the taxes imposed on the average residence homestead by CITY OF GATESVILLE last year to the taxes proposed to be imposed on the average residence homestead by CITY OF GATESVILLE this year.

	2023	2024	Change
Total tax rate (per \$100 of value)	\$0.560000	\$0.560000	0% increase
Average homestead taxable value	\$160,269.00	\$174,767.00	9.04% increase
Tax on average homestead	\$897.50	\$978.69	9.04% increase
Total tax levy on all properties	\$3,035,173.00	\$3,193,400.38	5.21% increase

For assistance with tax calculations, please contact the Tax Assessor for the City of Gatesville at 254-248-3152 or tac@coryelltax.com, or visit www.coryellcountytx.com

MOUND NEWS

Welcome, babies!



BY BARBARA HOPSON

Mound News Correspondent

Mrs. Annalee Eberlein Terrell announced the arrival of their son, Hank Thomas Terrell, on July 25. Annalee and her husband, Caleb, live in Grapevine.

Andrew and Alexandra Eberlein live in McKinney, and they announced the arrival of their twin girls on Thursday, August 15. The babies' names are Maeve Connor and Nora Day Eberlein.

These are Christopher and Jennifer Eberlein's very first grandchildren. All three grandchildren are thriving.

Mr. Jackson Tippit has started his senior year at Oglesby High School and played in his first football scrimmage of this year on Friday against Aquilla.

Valerie Ferrell and Carolyn Blakley had lunch together in Gatesville on Friday.

Emma Blakley visited Sun-

day in Pearl with Mrs. Bettie Blakley.

Robert and Carolyn Blakley had lunch in Waco on Sunday and while there they did some shopping.

Martha Lawhorn was a Friday lunch guest in Gatesville with Mrs. Doris Hoff.

Ray, John, and Melba Stephens attended Rick Stephens birthday party in Southlake on Saturday.

Mrs. Melba Stephens is spending a few days with Ray and John Stephens.

Those who have birthdays this coming weekend are Mrs. Eric (Liz) McCorkle and Elizabeth Schoenewolf, and also a Happy Anniversary to Eric and Liz McCorkle.

Coryell County United Prayer Day to be held Sept. 7

Submitted by Joyce Talbott

There will be a United Prayer Day from Sept. 7 at 6 a.m. to Sept. 8 at 6 a.m. throughout Coryell County. Prayer vigils are being organized in area churches, but all are encouraged to join from wherever you are. Spread the word.

PRAY THE WORD

John 1:1: "In the beginning was the Word, and the Word was with God, and the Word was God."

Harness the power of prayer to address our nation's spiritual challenges, particularly as we approach the upcoming elections. True change will

come not from election results, but from a spiritual revival.

PRAY - SHINE THE LIGHT INTO DARKNESS

John 1:5: "The light shines in the darkness, and the darkness has not overcome it."

As we navigate the troubling issues of this election cycle, we must pray for our own discernment, for truth to be revealed, and for the knowledge of God's will. Our spiritual foundations are under threat, making prayer more urgent than ever. The word "community" contains "unity," which is precisely what we need now.

PRAY WITHOUT CEASING

1 Thess. 5:16-18 "Rejoice always, pray continually, give thanks in all circumstances; for this is God's will for you in Christ Jesus."

United Prayer Day is Sept. 7 at 6 a.m. to Sept. 8, 6 a.m., but we encourage all to pray scripture up to this date and beyond. Text PRAY-GOV to 833-259-8648 for daily prayer prompts.

Those desiring more information can contact Debbie Martin at 254-216-0907 or Joyce Talbott at 254-223-0030 or by email at cjtalbott304@gmail.com.



PHOTO COURTESY OF JOYCE TALBOTT
 Cutline: Children are pictured at the FMC during Vacation Bible School while reading the Gospel of John using flashlights.

First Baptist Church offers Wednesday youth programs

Submitted Item

The First Baptist Church of Gatesville would like to inform the public of their youth and children's programs on Wednesday evenings.

The youth program is a growing and vibrant group dedicated to discovering their identity in Christ through guidance of the

Holy Spirit in God's Holy Word. They enjoy good friends and have fun playing games, worshipping through music, and diving deep into God's Word.

The children's group, the "Kidz" Club, also meets to spend time learning about how to share God's love with others through Bible stories and fun learning activities. Their study for

this school year is called "Walk This Way."

Wednesday nights for each group will begin with supper at 5:30 p.m. and will conclude at 7 p.m.

For more information, call the First Baptist Church of Gatesville at 254-865-2014.

OBITUARIES

Joe Hal Carothers

March 31, 1943 - Aug. 11, 2024

Joe Hal Carothers, age 81, of Kempner, passed away Sunday, Aug. 11, 2024, at his home.

Joe was born March 31, 1943, in Big Springs to Joseph William and Sarah Carothers. His family later moved to Coryell County where he grew up on the family farm with his three siblings, Bobby, Carol Ann, and Gary.

Joe was a gifted athlete at Gatesville High School. He was named Most Valuable Back, 2nd team all-state quarterback, and 3rd team all-state defensive back for football in 1960. In the regional finals playoff game against Taylor, Joe earned the nickname "Golden Toe Joe" after kicking the game winning field goal with time expired. Joe and the entire 1960 football team were inducted into the Gatesville Hall of Fame in 2021.

He graduated from Gatesville High School with the Class of 1961. After High School, Joe attended Texas Christian University on a football scholarship later transferring to Tarleton State University in Stephenville and then to Baylor Law School where he received his Juris Doctorate in May of 1972.

Joe opened his first law practice in Kingsland in 1973. He moved his firm to the Copperas Cove area in 1974 where Land Exchange Abstract & Title and his law practice have served the area for the past 50 years. In 1981, Joe opened Land Exchange Abstract & Title in Killeen venturing into the Bell County market. Joe valued and appreciated his customers, the realtor community, and the homebuilders he was able to serve over the years.

Joe was an exceptional leader for all his employees; he loved and appreciated their dedication and commitment.

Joe was also a home-builder and land developer in the Central Texas area.

Joe served as the president of the Central Texas

Homebuilder's Association in 1979 where he also served on the board of directors. He also served as the secretary for the Copperas Cove Industrial Foundation and as a board member for 20 Years.

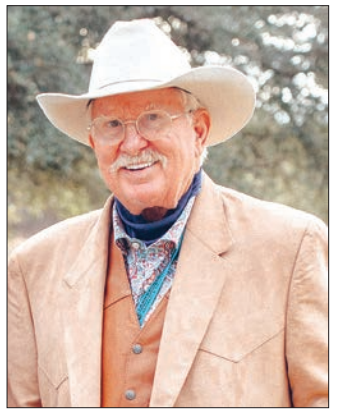
He was a lifelong outdoorsman who loved hunting, boating, and fishing. He tried his hand at many things in life, including riding bulls at the age of 17. In his younger years, Joe traveled to Colorado and broke horses. His love of equine continued throughout his life on the Oakalla ranch. He was a lifetime member of the Texas Thoroughbred Association and the American Quarter Horse Association. He spent many years perfecting his thoroughbred breeding program where he produced many championship bloodlines.

He was a published poet and a member of the Academy of American Poets. He had an extensive library where he researched some of his favorite topics such as ancient history, gemology, and herbology. He also enjoyed having fun with his family, playing shuffleboard, listening to music, and dancing with his wife, Nancy, in the ranch game room. Joe could really "cut a rug" and have a good time, earning him the title of "Cocktail Mixologist Extraordinaire" from friends.

On July 2, 1998, Joe married the love of his life, Nancy Sisco. This union blended their families into a beautiful new chapter. His role expanded from father of six to "Papa" of nine grandchildren that he adored.

His parents; a son, Joshua H. Carothers and a sister, Carol Ann Dillard, preceded Joe in death.

He leaves behind to cherish his memory his wife Nancy Sisco-Carothers, of Kempner; two sons, Joe Keith Carothers and his wife, Nicole, of Kempner; Jason Hedlund and wife, Tara, of Austin; three daughters, Tanya McMil-



lan and husband, Mark, of Kempner; Kristin Williams and her husband, James, of Lampasas; and Kara Hedlund and her husband, Kevin Wilson, of Austin; two brothers, Bobby Carothers and his wife, Nelda, of Gatesville, and Gary Carothers of Washington State; nine grandchildren, Tiffani Walthrop, Xander Walthrop, Bella Grasso, Colton Carothers, Gia Grasso, Luca Grasso, Sovi Williams, Finn Hedlund, and Freyja Hedlund.

Funeral services were held at 11 a.m. on Monday, Aug. 19, in the Chapel of Crawford-Bowers Funeral Home in Copperas Cove. Joe was laid to rest on the family ranch in Kempner.

Serving as pallbearers were Xander Walthrop, Colton Carothers, Skyler Carothers, Canyon Carothers, Connor Carothers, Jason Hedlund, Mark McMillan, and James Williams. Honorary pallbearers were Finn Hedlund and Luca Grasso.

For those that desire, the family respectfully requests that memorial contributions be given to the Copperas Cove Education Foundation in memory of Joe H. Carothers, P.O. Box 943, Copperas Cove, TX 76522.

Words of Comfort may be shared with the family at www.crawfordbowers-funeralhomecopperascove.com.

Funeral arrangements were entrusted to the care of Crawford-Bowers Funeral Home in Copperas Cove.

Elsie Schuster Hornung

March 21, 1944 - Aug. 17, 2024

Elsie Ann Schuster Hornung, age 80, of Gatesville, passed away on Aug. 17, 2024.

Funeral services will be held at 3 p.m. on Saturday, Aug. 24, at St. John Lutheran Church in Marion, Texas with Pastor Bryan Dziadik-Willingham officiating. Burial will follow at

St. John Lutheran Church Cemetery.

Elsie Ann Schuster Hornung was born Tuesday, March 21, 1944, in Converse, Texas to the late Norma and Albin Schuster. Elsie was raised on a small family farm just outside of Converse when the world was going through many



changes including the cold war, man's first step into space, and the birth of rock and roll. Rock and roll and baseball, which Elsie played in school, were two of her biggest loves in life. Elsie was a child of God and lived life on her terms, never allowing anything to lessen the experience.

She was preceded in death by her parents, Norma and Albin Schuster, and brother, John Schuster.

Elsie is survived by her two sons, Herbert and Ronald Hornung; brothers, Ernie and Larry Schuster; grandchildren, Cory and Shelby Hornung; nephews, Ricky, Jeff, Chris, Michael, and Curtis; nieces, Jeanie and Cindy; and many friends who loved her.

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 500-600 lb. 250-290
 600-700 lb. 230-260
 700-800 lb. 220-235

No. 1 Heifers
 under 300 lb. 300-365
 300-400 lb. 285-350
 400-500 lb. 240-285
 500-600 lb. 225-265
 600-700 lb. 210-245
 700-800 lb. 195-225

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Jansky presented with Entertainer of the Year award

BY DAVID SCOTT
Staff Writer

On Friday, Aug. 16, country music artist Clifton Jansky was awarded with the honor of "Entertainer of the Year" during his performance on stage at the Gatesville Country Music Hall of Fame at the City Auditorium.

Jansky commented, "The first time I performed in Gatesville was when I was inducted into the Gatesville Country Music Hall of Fame in 2012."

Coming back to Gatesville to perform, he said, "It's just awesome."

Jansky said that he's been performing for at least 61 years.

"From Amarillo by Morning to Amazing Grace" is not just one of Jansky's single releases in Christian country music, but it is his life story. One of the lines in the song says, "Little did I know, God had a plan that was bigger than Tennessee."

As a young boy growing up in South Texas, Jansky's dream was to stand on the stage of the Grand Ole Opry with the big boys and sing. He had his first band at the age of eleven and recorded his first record at the age of seventeen. He was so successful in South Texas that country music was his sole source of income for 22 years. As a

mainstream country artist, he had twelve records on country radio including a regional hit on "Amarillo by Morning" four years before George Strait.

Jansky has opened shows for Gary Morris, Lee Greenwood, Tanya Tucker, Eddie Rabbitt, Willie Nelson, Randy Travis, Ricky Skaggs, Sara Evans and the Oak Ridge Boys. It seemed as if he was one song away from really hitting the big times but, in reality, he was one prayer away from changing his life and his dreams forever.

Though Jansky has been singing and entertaining all of his life, he is a new-

comer to Christian country music. He released his first single "Heart Transplant" to Christian country radio in Aug. 2000, and it became his first #1 Song. In November 2001, Clifton stood and sang on the stage of the Ryman Auditorium at the Christian Country Music Association Awards Show in Nashville. God fulfilled his dream as a six-year-old boy to sing on that stage and a few minutes later, he was awarded with the 2001 CCMA New Artist of the Year. Clifton has since been awarded 2002 CCMA Male Vocalist of the Year, 2004 CCMA Entertainer of the Year as well as 2005 CCMA Songwriter of the Year. He has had six number one singles in Christian country music and looks at the success as a door that God has opened to allow his mes-

sage and music to be heard by a large number of radio listeners across the country and around the world through the internet.

Jansky is on the road and in the air for Jesus. He sings and speaks wherever God rings his phone to go. He has traveled overseas with International Evangelist Sammy Tippit to England, Macedonia, Siberia, and Scotland and has also sung in three different languages in stadium crusades in Romania and the former Soviet Union. He has ministered for 22 years in the prisons and jails of this land with Bill Glass Ministries, as well as doing revivals, concerts, banquets, and rodeos for everyone who rings his phone. Jansky stated, "I am now doing what God created me to do. My heart is to go where the

people are and share God's love through my music and my life so that they can take the ride From Amarillo by Morning to Amazing Grace just like me."

Jansky continues to reside in San Antonio. He has been in full-time ministry for over 28 years now and has committed his life to going where the people are and giving them the opportunity to give their lives to the Jesus who has totally and dramatically changed his life.

Since he first started in the music industry, when asked if his music has changed over the years, Jansky responds, "Everybody's music changes, but I'm still a classic country guy and now I do Christian and country music as well."



Clifton Jansky poses next to the certificate presented to him as Entertainer of the Year by the Gatesville Country Music Hall of Fame.

DAVID SCOTT | THE GATESVILLE MESSENGER

The DISPATCH

The following is a breakdown of activity reported through dispatchers during the period of Aug. 14 - Aug. 20. While there were many calls to the dispatcher, this is a partial list of more significant activity. People are reminded that only emergency calls should be made to 9-1-1, while all other calls to the police department should be made to 865-2226 or to the Sheriff's office at 865-7201.

CITY OF GATESVILLE POLICE DEPARTMENT

- Aug. 14**
1:43 a.m., suspicious activity was reported in the 2800 block of S. State Highway 36.
2:54 a.m., a burglary was reported in the 3400 block of Jewell Drive.
3:22 p.m., a disturbance was reported in the 600 block of Park Street.
8:24 p.m., a threat was reported in the 400 block of N. 14th Street.
- Aug. 15**
10 a.m., a disturbance was reported in the 600 block of State School Road.
12:13 p.m., criminal trespass was reported in the 2200 block of Bridge Street.
5:48 p.m., a threat was reported in the 600 block of Lover's Lane.
- Aug. 16**
12:23 a.m., a theft was reported in the 2300 block of Business Highway 36.
1:25 a.m., suspicious activity was reported in the 2000 block of Saunders Street.
5:10 p.m., a threat was reported in the 3400 block of E. Main Street.
8:47 p.m., criminal trespass was reported in the 2500 block of Business Highway 36.
- Aug. 17**
12:43 a.m., suspicious activity was reported in the 2000 block of E. Main Street.
1:52 p.m., a disturbance was reported in the 2400 block of E. Main Street.
2:35 p.m., a structure fire was reported in the 10,000 block of S. State Highway 36.
6:05 p.m., criminal trespass was reported in the 2300 block of E. Main Street.
- Aug. 18**
10:08 a.m., a theft was reported in the 2800 block of S. State Highway 36.
12:10 p.m., criminal trespass was reported in the 100 block of Surrey Lane.

- 1:50 p.m., a threat was reported in the 100 block of N. 27th Street.
10:49 p.m., harassment was reported in the 2400 block of E. Main Street.
- Aug. 19**
10:10 a.m., criminal trespass was reported in the 2900 block of E. Main Street.
11:52 a.m., harassment was reported in the 600 block of Park Street.
12:09 p.m., an armed suspect was reported in the 100 block of Petsick Drive.
1:47 p.m., criminal trespass was reported in the 100 block of N. 27th Street.
- Aug. 20**
9:15 a.m., criminal trespass was reported in the 1600 block of W. Main Street.
9:28 a.m., suspicious activity was reported in the 500 block of Bridge Street.
10:18 a.m., a structure fire was reported in the 200 block of S. Lover's Lane.
4:14 p.m., criminal trespass was reported in the 1600 block of W. Main Street.
- Aug. 15**
6:04 a.m., suspicious persons were reported in the 200 block of Hempel Drive.
8:26 a.m., a theft was reported in the 4200 block of E. Highway 84.
11:33 a.m., a scam was reported in the 1200 block of Collins Avenue.
1:03 p.m., a neighbor dispute was reported in the 400 block of County Road 56.

- Aug. 16**
1:58 a.m., suspicious activity was reported in the 1900 block of S. Highway 281.
5:15 a.m., stolen vehicle was reported on McKelvain Street and Boone Avenue.
12:16 p.m., criminal mischief was reported on County Road 226 just off FM 215.
7:52 p.m., harassment was reported in the 4400 block of FM 1113.
- Aug. 17**
9:17 a.m., road blocked was reported in the 4500 block of County Road 224.
9:48 a.m., harassment was reported in the 700 block of Winter Road.
1 p.m., a fire call was reported in the 7100 block of Harmon Road.
2:36 p.m., a structure fire was reported in the 9700 block of S. Highway 36.
- Aug. 18**
6:56 a.m., illegal dumping was reported in the 2000 block of Bald Knob Road.
1:44 p.m., a threat was reported in the 2600 block of Arrowhead Drive.
4:31 p.m., a reckless driver was reported on FM 1783 and County Road.
- Aug. 19**
3:21 a.m., a theft was reported in the 5500 block of FM 1829.
1:17 p.m., criminal trespass was reported at 1st National Bank of Evant.
4:37 p.m., a theft was reported in the 1100 block of Lutheran Church Road.
4:45 p.m., harassment was reported in the 1100 block of E. Omaha Street.
- Aug. 20**
8:45 a.m., a livestock complaint was reported in the 1100 block of Slatter Road.
3:07 p.m., a fire call was reported in the 1200 block of County Road 311.
7:54 p.m., a stolen vehicle was reported in the 200 block of County Road 330.
10:03 p.m., harassment was reported in the 4200 block of County Road 107.

Form 50-876
Statements required in notice if the proposed tax rate exceeds the no-new-revenue tax rate but does not exceed the voter-approval tax rate, as prescribed by Tax Code §26.06(b-2).

NOTICE OF PUBLIC HEARING ON TAX INCREASE

This notice only applies to a taxing unit other than a special taxing unit or municipality with a population of less than 30,000, regardless of whether it is a special taxing unit.

PROPOSED TAX RATE	\$ 0.47370	per \$100
NO-NEW-REVENUE TAX RATE	\$ 0.36525	per \$100
VOTER-APPROVAL TAX RATE	\$ 0.47376	per \$100

The no-new-revenue tax rate is the tax rate for the 2024 tax year that will raise the same amount of property tax revenue for CORYELL COUNTY from the same properties in both the 2023 tax year and the 2024 tax year.

The voter-approval tax rate is the highest tax rate that CORYELL COUNTY may adopt without holding an election to seek voter approval of the rate.

The proposed tax rate is greater than the no-new-revenue tax rate. This means that CORYELL COUNTY is proposing to increase property taxes for the 2024 tax year.

A PUBLIC HEARING ON THE PROPOSED TAX RATE WILL BE HELD ON 09/05/2024 09:00 AM at Commissioners Courtroom, 800 E. Main St., Suite A, Gatesville, TX

The proposed tax rate is not greater than the voter-approval tax rate. As a result, CORYELL COUNTY is not required to hold an election at which voters may accept or reject the proposed tax rate. However, you may express your support for or opposition to the proposed tax rate by contacting the members of the Coryell County of CORYELL COUNTY at their offices or by attending the public hearing mentioned above.

The 86th Texas Legislature modified the manner in which the voter-approval tax rate is calculated to limit the rate of growth of property taxes. THE TAXES IMPOSED UNDER ANY OF THE TAX RATES MENTIONED ABOVE CAN BE CALCULATED AS FOLLOWS:

The following table compares the taxes imposed on the average resident homestead property in CORYELL COUNTY last year to the taxes proposed to be imposed on the average resident homestead property this year.

	2023	2024	Change
Total tax rate (per \$100 of value)			
AGAINST the proposal:	\$0.37328	Commissioners Scott Weddle & Kyle Matthews \$0.47370	26.9% increase
PRESENT and not voting:			
ABSENT:			
Average homestead taxable value	\$187,212	\$210,375	12.37% increase
Tax on average homestead	\$698	\$996	42.6% increase
Total tax levy on all properties	\$14,039,207	\$18,707,140	33.24% increase

(Include the following text if these no-new-revenue maintenance and operations rate adjustments apply for the taxing unit)

No-New-Revenue Maintenance and Operations Rate Adjustments

State Criminal Justice Mandate (counties)
The Coryell County Auditor certifies that Coryell County has spent \$304,070 in the previous 12 months for the maintenance and operations cost of keeping inmates sentenced to the Texas Department of Criminal Justice. Coryell County Sheriff has provided Coryell County information on these costs, minus the state revenues received for the reimbursement of such costs.
This increased the no-new-revenue maintenance and operations rate by 0.00518 /\$100.

Indigent Health Care Compensation Expenditures (counties)
The CORYELL COUNTY spent \$340,224 from July 1, 2023 to June 30, 2024 on indigent health care compensation procedures at the increased minimum eligibility standards, less the amount of state assistance.
For current tax year, the amount of increase above last year's enhanced indigent health care expenditures is \$-117,522.
This increased the no-new-revenue maintenance and operations rate by 0.00000 /\$100.

Indigent Defense Compensation Expenditures (counties)
The CORYELL COUNTY spent \$816,768 from July 1, 2023 to June 30, 2024 to provide appointed counsel for indigent individuals in criminal or civil proceedings in accordance with the schedule of fees adopted under Article 26.05, Code of Criminal Procedure, and to fund the operations of a public defender's office under Article 26.044, Code of Criminal Procedure, less the amount of any state grants received. For current tax year, the amount of increase above last year's enhanced indigent defense compensation expenditures is \$248,805.
This increased the no-new-revenue maintenance and operations rate by 0.00073 /\$100.

Eligible County Hospital Expenditures (cities and counties)
The spent \$ from July 1, 2023 to June 30, 2024 on expenditures to maintain and operate an eligible county hospital.
For current tax year, the amount of increase above last year's eligible county hospital expenditures is \$-117,522.
This increased the no-new revenue maintenance and operations rate by /\$100.

(If the tax assessor for the taxing unit maintains an internet website)
For assistance with tax calculations, please contact the tax assessor for CORYELL COUNTY at (254) 248-3152 or tac@coryelltax.com, or visit www.coryellcountytax.com/#propertycalcul for more information.

(If the tax assessor for the taxing unit does not maintain an internet website)
For assistance with tax calculations, please contact the tax assessor for at (telephone number) or (email address).

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| Best Attorney | Best Insurance Agent |
| Best Bank Teller (Include Bank Name) | Best Law Enforcement Officer |
| Best Barber | Best Massage Therapist |
| Best Builder/Developer | Best Mechanic |
| Best Car Salesperson | Best Optometrist/Ophthalmologist |
| Best Coach | Best Photographer |
| Best Chiropractor | Best Real Estate Agent |
| Best Dentist | Best Teacher/Educator |
| Best Doctor | Best Veterinarian |
| Best Financial Advisor | Best Waiter/Waitress |



Readers choice:
The Best of Gatesville is a consumer promotion sponsored by the Gatesville Messenger. Ballots will be published until Aug. 24 for you the reader to cast your vote, telling us what you think are the "Best of" in Gatesville.

Contest Rules:
1. One entry per person. Entries must be on original newspaper ballots, no machine copies will be counted. Ballots must be at least 50% completed. Name, address and phone number must be filled in to be counted. Multiple ballots that appear to be from the same person will not be counted.
2. Final decisions on ballots, categories and winning entries will be made by the Gatesville Messenger.
3. All entries must be received by 5:00 p.m., Monday, Sept. 2, 2024. (A random drawing of entries will determine the \$50 winner.)

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|------------------|--------------------------|-------------------|----------------|
| Best Appetizers | Best Chicken | Best Happy Hour | Best Sandwich |
| Best Baked Goods | Best Chicken Fried Steak | Best Ice Cream | Best Shrimp |
| Best Bar | Best Chicken Wings | Best Margarita | Best Snow Cone |
| Best BBQ | Best Coffee | Best Mexican Food | Best Steak |
| Best Breakfast | Best Desserts | Best Pasta | Best Sweet Tea |
| Best Burger | Best Drinks | Best Pizza | Best Tacos |
| Best Catering | Best Donuts | Best Salad | |
| Best Catfish | Best Food Truck | Best Salsa | |

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| Best Assisted Living Facility | Best Feed Store | Best Live Music Venue | Best Rehabilitation Center |
| Best Auto Dealership | Best Fitness Facility | Best Manicure/Pedicure | Best Resale Shop |
| Best Auto Repair Shop | Best Flooring Company | Best Mattress Store | Best Roofing Company |
| Best Bank | Best Furniture Store | Best Meat Market | Best School Campus |
| Best Barber Shop | Best Grocery Store | Best Medical Clinic | Best Spa |
| Best Bed and Breakfast | Best Gun Dealer | Best Music Lessons | Best Tanning Salon |
| Best Boutique/Retail Store | Best Hair Salon | Best Non-Profit Organization | Best Tire Store |
| Best Car Wash/Detail | Best Hardware/Building Store | Best Nursing Home | Best Title Company |
| Best Carpet Cleaning Service | Best Home Decor | Best Oil Change | Best Tractor/Lawn Equipment |
| Best Civic Organization | Best Home Health Agency | Best Pest Control | Best Veterinary Clinic |
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HURRY, ENTRIES MUST BE RECEIVED BY 5:00 P.M. MONDAY, SEPTEMBER 2, 2024

MUSEUM SPOTLIGHT

Mammoth fossils on display at Coryell Museum

BY DAVID SCOTT
Staff Writer

Approximately 65,000 years ago, Coryell County was home to Columbian Mammoths like those found in recent years near Waco. Columbian Mammoths roamed through Central Texas until they went extinct around 10,000 years ago.

Standing as tall as 14 feet and weighing 20,000 pounds, they are often referred to as "ice age giants." The Mammoths were large, hairy mammals that

were part of the elephant family and had long, curved tusks. They were similar to elephants in their eating habits and had ridged molars for grazing on grasses.

It is thought that the Mammoths disappeared due to a combination of factors, including climate change and/or disease.

In nearby Waco, a fossilized nursery herd of Mammoths was discovered, which prompted the creation of the Waco Mammoth Site that opened to the public in 2009. Six years later,

in 2015, President Barack Obama signed an executive order creating Waco Mammoth National Monument.

The Coryell Museum and Historical Center has many fossils on display in two second floor display cabinets. Included among the fossils is part of a Mammoth tusk, which was found in the Leon River near Mound. On display with the tusk is a fossilized Mammoth tooth, which contains evidence of striated roots. The tooth weighs a whopping 5 pounds.

Visitors to the museum can view the Mammoth tusk and tooth along with several other unique fossils, which were all located in Coryell County when it was once part of a vast inland sea, which contained marine life.

Visitors are welcome to drop by the museum located at 718 E. Main to view

the massive spur collection. Coryell Museum and Historical Center is open Tuesday through Saturday, as is the gift shop. Yearly, Coryell Museum memberships are \$20 for singles, \$30 for families, and \$40 for businesses, which includes free admission to the museum, plus four 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.



DAVID SCOTT | THE GATESVILLE MESSENGER

On display at the Coryell Museum and Historical Center are a prehistoric mammoth tusk found in the Leon River as well as a mammoth tooth.

SPURFEST RAFFLE AT CORYELL MUSEUM



DAVID SCOTT | THE GATESVILLE MESSENGER

Coryell Museum board members Jann Dworsky and Hal Davidson display the prizes that will be raffled off on Sept. 21st during Spurfest, which include an Austin, Texas motif quilt created by Grace Dallimore and two matted and framed pointillism prints featuring the Coryell County Courthouse and Fort Gates by Jon Brown. Tickets will be sold at \$20 each. Each ticket will give the purchaser three chances to win. Tickets can be purchased from museum board members, at the Coryell Museum, or at The Gatesville Messenger. Any volunteers interested in selling tickets can contact Catherine Fulton at 254-223-0014.



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“The Poison Lady” and her nation-wide notoriety

BY DAVID SCOTT
Staff Writer

Luci Zahray, a retired pharmacist with a master's degree in toxicology from Texas A&M, has earned the reputation as “The Poison Lady” and seems to enjoy her title.

Zahray, who was born in San Antonio, moved to Gatesville with her parents when she was in fifth grade and spent the rest of her childhood in the community until graduating from Gatesville High School in 1974.

She said she didn't know what she wanted to do after graduation from high school. She went to Baylor University to start off and soon came home after her freshman year and told her parents she wanted to study genetics. According to Zahray, her parents told her that no one had heard of genetics, and she would never be able to get a job. “They desperately wanted me to go to pharmacy school, because you could always get a job - there was an extreme shortage [of pharmacists] when I graduated.”

She continued, “They really wanted that for me, because my mother grew up in the late 1940's and early 1950's when women could only be a schoolteacher, nurse, or secretary, so she wanted that for me.”

“When I was in pharmaceutical school, there were only three women - the school was still very dominated as a male profession,” she said.

Zahray graduated from the University of Houston with a degree in Pharmacy and later received her master's degree in toxicology from Texas A&M. “I enjoyed my years at A&M,” she said. “I had a blast.”

She would use her degree wisely and worked as a

licensed pharmacist for 40 years until her retirement.

Her interest in poisons and mystery stories began when she was about seven years of age when her grandmother gave her a book about Sherlock Holmes. “It was a complete Sherlock Holmes, and I read it through pretty fast. It was a Christmas present.

Zahray continued, “I loved to read, and my grandmother knew I read above my grade level and she thought that would be just the ticket. We lived here in Gatesville, and I had ready everything at the library and I was inspired to go to bookstores and find books on more topics.”

“My mother thought I was strange. About the time I was graduating from high school, Sherlock Holmes became somewhat of a big national thing, and, eventually, my mother looked at me and said, ‘I guess you weren't as weird as I thought you were.’”

Years later, she began speaking at mystery authors' conventions about poisons. At one such convention, the lady in charge couldn't remember Zahray's name and started referring

to her as “The Poison Lady,” and the name stuck. “Then everybody started calling me that, and it spread rapidly. That became so much my name that I answered to it,” she said.

Zahray receives emails, phone calls, and text messages from mystery authors from all across the United States and abroad to tap into her knowledge about poisons and murder methods that can be used in their books. She has also been consulted by researchers in Hollywood.

These days, she heads up the Mystery Book Club at the Gatesville Public Library. The club meets on the first Tuesday of each month to discuss mystery books and to have Zoom meetings with mystery authors across the United States.

Recently, Zahray had to erect a tombstone for her departed mother. While completing that task, she decided to have a tombstone installed for herself. “On mine it says ‘The Poison Lady.’ A hundred years from now, people are going to be looking at it and saying, ‘there's got to be a story there.’”



DAVID SCOTT | THE GATESVILLE MESSENGER

“The Poison Lady,” Luci Zahray, holding a book by well-known mystery author, Agatha Christie, which deals with poisons and is titled “Sparkling Cyanide.”



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Returning players, talented newcomers leave Coach Hunter optimistic

BY CHRIS ALLMAN
Contributing Writer

Fresh off a bi-district title in 2023, Gatesville head coach Aaron Hunter is pretty candid about his 2024 Hornet football team. He doesn't sound like a guy who is trying to hide his own expectations or lower the expectations of others.

"This is by far the best team we have had top-to-bottom since I have been here. We have pieces we have not had in a long time, and we have a bunch of do-right guys who just do their job," he said.

For Hunter, there is plenty of reason for the optimism and confidence. A combination of elite returning players, a slew of talented but not-yet-known newcomers, and the best fall camp they've had in three years, has meant good vibes at McKamie stadium since practice started in early August.

When talking about elite, the list begins in Gatesville with senior Rayshon Smith and junior Amos Phillips.

Smith and Phillips were first-team all-district picks in 2023 and were both named to the Waco-Tribune Herald's Super Centex team follow-

ing last year's bi-district title winning season.

"Those two are bell cows for sure," said Hunter.

After running for 1092 yards as a sophomore in 2022, Smith picked up 1680 yards on the ground in 2023. He's scored 28 touchdowns over his two seasons in the backfield and could top the 4000-yard mark for his career in 2024.

"Rayshon, he runs with a different engine," said Hunter. "He's grown up so much, and his offseason set him apart this year. His confidence level is good, and he knows that this is his time to shine."

Phillips, arguably the best athlete currently walking the halls of Gatesville High School, had 152 tackles (10 for a loss) and six sacks in 2023 on defense. He also led the team in receiving with four touchdown catches while averaging 12.8 yards per catch.

"Amos is Amos. He is so athletic, but his ball skills are unbelievable. He has size. He has mass. And he's explosive and athletic. But he's also a competitor. He's mild-mannered but he has the "it" factor," said Hunter.

Phillips' "it" factor will be

what's counted on to replace Lawson Mooney - Gatesville's two-time all-state safety and all-time leading tackler - as the leader on the defensive side. But he is far from the only returner who will lead a defense that Hunter considers a clear strength.

"We are really athletic and really fast back there. Our linebackers are fast, and our d-line is explosive and fast as well," he said. "This is their third year in the defense and that continuity matters."

Zavier Clater and Logan Morgan return for the Hornets at linebacker and are joined by seniors Cam Hendrix and junior Larry Schwertner while senior Dutch Nielsen and junior Kaden Coffman are back anchoring the defensive line. Nielsen had five sacks in 2023 to go along with six tackles for a loss. Senior Brayden Mills, junior Grayson Eggeling, and sophomore Brody Brown will make up the rest of the Gatesville defensive front.

Gatesville also brings back their top cover man in Logan Biggs (ten pass break-ups, 1 interception in 2023) and he will lead a secondary filled with fresh faces such as juniors Dylan Watt, Clark Allman, Colt Heath, and fresh-

man Grady Keeton.

Coffman, Eggeling, Watt, Allman, Heath, Schwertner, Cy Burns, and Gehrig Keeton are part of a junior class that helped lead the Gatesville junior varsity to a 10-0 record and a district title in 2023.

"The JV and their success last year and the junior class's cohesion is huge. You can see how close those guys are," Hunter said. "That junior class just knows how to play. They know how to play together, and they are going to show up every day and work hard. The grind doesn't get to them."

Keeton will take over the reins as the Hornet quarterback on Friday nights.

"Gehrig is just a grinder. He is the kind of kid you want as quarterback," Hunter said. "He gets up here when no one is here and just works. He will only get better, and he will help us win big games. He just needs to get the ball to our weapons."

Those weapons include a receiving corp of Phillips, Daniel Gonzalez, Jack Erwin, and West Allman. Gonzalez will stretch defenses with his speed, and Allman caught a pair of touchdown passes in Gatesville's scrimmage against Lampasas. Erwin

shined in Gatesville's 7-on-7 season and has continued to improve and produce this fall according to Hunter.

In 2023, Gatesville leaned on an experienced offensive line and racked up 501 rushing attempts on the season. Only Gabe Pollard returns from that unit with Jarret Burks taking over the center spot.

"Pollard is a three-year starter that is really strong and powerful. He's such a solid guy and never gets too high or too low. That's what allowed him to have so much success for three seasons," Hunter said. "Burks at center is a smaller guy who's not as powerful as others but he is so smart. He gets guys on the same page ever play and he anchors it all."

The rebuilt offensive line and senior fullback Brayden Saunders (six touchdowns in 2023) will be tasked with opening holes for Smith and Burns, who offer two different styles of runner. While Smith runs to and through contact, Burns offers more burst through the front line of the defense.

"The good thing about this year is that now we have big play potential all the time. Cy is probably more explosive

than Ray - just not as big and strong. They are going to be a great duo," said Hunter.

Hunter noted his excitement about his team's versatility on offense. He believes that they can win games on the ground or in the air.

"It will be game-by-game. If we can line up and run the ball, we will. Whatever we need to do to win we will do. But the thing is we have to execute. That is what we are trying to get our guys to understand."

UIL realignment has put Gatesville back with old district mates Waco La Vega, China Spring, Robinson, Lorena, and Waco Connally. Before the Hornets start their district schedule, they will play Taylor, Glen Rose, Mexia, McGregor, and Burnet in non-district.

Hunter has said that the fall has prepared them to hit the ground running and be good from the first snap of the season.

"It's probably been our best fall camp to be honest. Our practices have been great. We have more installed than we have in the past. We have got to be ready to play week one."

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COURTESY PHOTO

BY JOHN ENGLISH
Contributing Writer

JONESBORO REACHES GOLD BRACKET AT MERIDIAN

The Jonesboro volleyball team advanced to the gold bracket of the Meridian Tournament this past weekend, with 2-0 victories over Gustine and Zephyr. The Eagles came up short against Valor Prep (2-0), the eventual champion, and lost a close match to Evant (2-1) to finish 2-2 overall for the competition.

The tournament gave coach Tori Holt the opportunity to see what she's working with this season.

"Senior Emily Turner (our team captain) is great about keeping up morale and motivating her team," Holt said.

"Emily and Sophomore Ally Thorman are definitely our power hitters. Freshman Landri McFarlin is young but knows volleyball and reads the court very well."

The competition came on the heels of a victory over Strawn last Tuesday to open the season.

LADY HORNETS HOLD THEIR OWN IN TOUGH TOURNEY

The Gatesville volleyball team won three games in the Jason Landers Invitational this past weekend, defeating Rivera, St. Andrews, and McCallum High School.

The Lady Hornets ranked 15th out of the 37 teams competing in the tournament, most of which were 5A and 6A programs. Coach Janey Weber said

the effort her players put forth in the tournament makes her hopeful for the teams' chances this coming season.

"We met a lot of good competition at the Jason Landers Invitational," Weber said. "Our team learned what we are able to do, and how we can go compete...I am so proud of the way the girls played this past weekend and am looking forward to this season."

EVANT RALLIES TO WIN TOURNAMENT RUNNER-UP

The Evant volleyball team bounced back from an early loss to Lipan last week to take second place in the Meridian Tournament.

Coach JoAnna Vaden said her team showed great per-

severance throughout the competition.

"They lost the first match to Lipan," Vaden said. "But fought extremely hard to come back and compete in the championship."

One of the victories to reach the championship game came in a rematch with Lipan.

In the rematch, Bree Ramirez led the team in scoring with 13 points, while Harley Weeks added 15 assists.

Molly Waldrum picked up 11 kills in the game, and Ramirez also had 11 digs.

OGLESBY EARNS TWO WINS IN COVINGTON TOURNAMENT

The Oglesby volleyball team defeated Iredell and Coolidge last week to take

two wins from the Covington Tournament.

Covington was good preparation for the coming district season, and coach Amanda Martin said it was a promising effort from her team.

"The girls had a great first tournament and we are excited for the upcoming season," Martin said.

In the 2-0 victory over Coolidge, Andrea Licea Perez finished with 15 assists and 1 ace, while Caitlyn Battreal had 9 kills for the Lady Tiggers.

Against Iredell, a match Oglesby also won 2-0, Licea-Perez - 2 aces and 10 assists.

Jonesboro Looking to Pick Up Where it Left Off The Jonesboro

football team wrapped up a 2023 campaign that saw the Eagles reach the state semi-finals before losing to the eventual state champion Gordon Longhorns.

Jonesboro finished 4-0 in district and 12-2 overall on the season, and coach Eddie Gallegos said that things are shaping up well for the coming season.

"We feel good about this group, a good strong senior class with a quality junior class sprinkled in," Gallegos said. "We are still looking to see where kids will fit in, but they do bring back a lot of experience in big games. We feel there is a lot of versatility with this group."

The Eagles return two of-

PLEASE SEE **ROUNDUP** | B4



HORNETS NEST

GATESVILLE HIGH SCHOOL

Editors note: Rickey Phillips is the Athletic Director for Gatesville Independent School District. He was the volleyball head coach from 2001-2019, became interim athletic director in 2019, and assumed the athletic director's position full-time in spring 2020. He is a native of Gatesville and a 1980 graduate of Gatesville High School. His wife, Charlotte and their three daughters, Caitlin, Kelsey, and Janey are all educators as well. Rickey will be writing a weekly column reporting on Gatesville ISD sports.



RICKEY PHILLIPS
GISD Athletic Director

Fall sports update

...GHS Cross Country has had a couple of outings so far this fall, one coming at Caldwell's Mud, Sweat & Cheers event last Saturday. The team of Justin Muegge, Cameron Thompson, Malachi Olvera, and Charles McCleod won bronze in the 4 x 2400 meter race. GHS teams will compete at Brownwood next Wednesday.

...GHS Football has had a couple of scrimmages and now sets its sights on the 2024 season opener. The Hornet Varsity will travel to Taylor on August 30 to kick off the 2024 season. The Hornets will also face Glen Rose, McGregor, Mexia, and Burnet in non-district before navigating the treacherous waters of District 12-4A starting in early October.

...GHS Team Tennis is now less than two weeks from the start of District 7-4A play. Varsity will host Waco University on Tuesday, then face Stephenville in the league opener Sept. 3. GHS has been a fall playoff qualifier for seven consecutive seasons.

...GHS Volleyball wraps up its annual invitational tournament today, then completes the first 3-week tournament trifecta at Athens next week. Varsity recently finished 15th in the 37-team field at the Austin ISD, facing a slate of 5A-6A foes in every outing. The Hornets will host McGregor here Tuesday night.

Notes and notes

...On the radar: GHS senior Vania Martinez has the chance to become GHS' first four-time individual state qualifier in cross country. The senior multi-sport standout has been a fixture at the state meet in Round Rock in each of her first three seasons donning the Black & Gold.

...GHS senior Jack Armstrong has always been involved, and this year he's taking it to the extreme. Jack will compete in six sports during the 2024-2025 school year - cross country, football, team tennis, soccer, spring tennis, and track.

...There are 730+ students participating in high school and junior high athletics right now, which represents 62% of the student enrollment of those two campuses.

GHS Exes at the next level

Four recently-graduated GHS exes set their sights on collegiate careers this fall - Barrett Boyd (track, U.S. Air Force Academy), Lawson Mooney (track, Dallas Baptist University), Laura Trejo (volleyball, Arlington Baptist University) and Bralen Veazey (baseball, Temple College).

In a recent conversation with Boyd, she mentioned how "the accountability and high standards of GHS Athletics helped prepare me for the demands and rigorous training at the Air Force Academy." Our coaches work hard to prepare our student-athletes for life outside the walls of Gatesville High School.

We wish the best of luck to all four of these ex-Hornets and to all of the other GHS ex-athletes still competing at the collegiate level. You can check out that list at www.gatesvilleathletics.com, click on We are, GATESVILLE.

Upcoming schedule

- Aug. 26 - Volleyball JH vs. Connally
- Aug. 27 - Tennis Varsity vs. University
- Aug. 27 - Volleyball HS vs. McGregor
- Aug. 28 - Cross Country HS-JH at Brownwood
- Aug. 29 - Football JV-9th vs. Taylor
- Aug. 29 - Football JV-W at Lake Belton
- Aug. 29 - Tennis JV vs. Waco High
- Aug. 29 - Volleyball Varsity in Athens tourney
- Aug. 30 - Football Varsity at Taylor
- Aug. 31 - Volleyball Varsity in Athens tourney

Live-stream of home games

GISD Athletics will again offer live-streaming of numerous home events during the 2024-2025 school year.

All home football and soccer games will be live-streamed, as well home volleyball and basketball games played in the GHS Sidney L. Pruitt Gym or GJHS Mary Bishop Gym.

I also want to mention that Hornet Radio will also be providing live-stream audio and video of numerous Hornet competitions as well. We appreciate Lee Jaynes for continuing to make this available to our athletic program and Hornet Nation fans.

Follow us on social media

Besides being heavily promoted within the pages of The Messenger each week, you can also follow GISD Athletics via these threads:

- Facebook - Gatesville Hornet Athletics
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- Web - www.gatesvilleathletics.com

Hornet Fight Never Dies!



AVERY MEELBUSCH | THE GATESVILLE MESSENGER

The Jonesboro Eagles kicked off their 2024-25 football season with a scrimmage against Blum on Aug. 15 followed by another scrimmage Aug. 22 against Abbott. The Eagles will fly into game action starting Aug. 30 in Abilene against the Abilene Christian Panthers.



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ROUNDUP

FROM PAGE B2

fensive starters and three defensive starters, and players to watch for the Eagles this season include Layden Nichols, Austin Massingill, Luke Stephenson, Eric Thorman and Truett Foote

The Eagles rank fourth in the state according to Dave Campbell's Texas Football headed into the season, and Gallegos said to have a successful season, it boils down to continually improving execution.

"I think we just need to get better every rep every day at practice," Gallegos said.

Jonesboro will open the season at 7 p.m. on Aug. 30 at Abilene Christian.

ELKS LOOKING TO BOUNCE BACK

For the Evant football team, the only way is up, and 2024 should be a better season for the Elks.

Coach Brandon Young said he is optimistic about how his team is progressing so far.

"I feel good about where we are," Young said. "We are young with a lot of inexperience, but it's coming together."

Players to watch for Evant include Dylan Price, Wyatt Hitt and Cam McGilvray.

To have a successful season, Young said his team will need to stay healthy and be able to adapt.

"We have to stay injury-free," Young said. "As of right now, we have a few more players than in the past. That is crucial in keeping our kids healthy throughout the year. That means our young guys we have coming out this year will have to fill some big roles and learn quickly in order to do that."

Evant opens the season at 7:30 p.m. on Aug. 30 at Three Way.

TIGERS HAVE UNFINISHED BUSINESS

The Oglesby football team finished 13-1 and reached the state championship last season before coming up short in the state championship game.

The Tigers are looking to get back to state this season and finish the deal.

Oglesby returns running back Kyler Fossett, who rushed for 2,857 yards and 56 touchdowns last season to lead the way offensively for the Tigers.

Other players to keep an eye on include Jakson Tippit, Hunter Ewing, Jack Hendricks, E.J. Aviles and Alex Castillo.

The Tigers return four offensive and four defensive starters this season, and host Abbott at 7 p.m. on Aug. 30 in its season opener.

GATESVILLE HAS SOME

SHOES TO FILL

The Hornets football team reached the post-season in 2023 and won a play-off game, but coach Aaron Hunter lost four starters on his offensive line and will be looking for younger players to step up to fill those roles and have an impact.

Gatesville finished 7-5 overall last season and defeated Gonzales by a score of 34-31 in the bi-district round of the playoffs.

Hunter said his team is

starting to click early on and said enthusiasm is high.

"I think we've had the best practices we have had since I got here," Hunter said. "The guys are doing really well, and we're excited."

The Hornets return five offensive starters and six defensive starters and Hunter said he has several other players returning with significant game experience from last year.

Among the players to watch for Gatesville this

season are Rayshon Smith, Amos Phillips, Dutch Nielsen, Gabriel Pollard and Logan Biggs.

To pick up where they left off last season, the Hornets will need to focus on a few different facets of the game.

"We just need to continue to work on the little things," Hunter said. "We need to play our standard of football and practice the right way. We need to handle ourselves in the classroom and on the field. Doing things the right

way is going to allow us to put ourselves in a position to be successful. We have some tough opponents, but we can't worry about that. We have to worry about us—to trust in our schemes and trust in our process and find a way to have one more point than they do at the end of the night. That's the goal."

Gatesville will open the regular season at 7:30 p.m. on Aug. 30 at Taylor.



COURTESY PHOTO

Pictured are the Jonesboro Lady Eagles Varsity volleyball team.

Jonesboro Lady Eagles ready to soar through the season

BY ALEXANDRA MEELBUSCH
Staff Writer

Jonesboro High School is

home to its Lady Eagle Varsity volleyball team, which is led by coaches Tori Smith

and James Turner.

At the moment, the Varsity team has seven play-

ers, with six of the seven athletes being returning starters. Turner expressed that he believes there will be a couple more girls who will step up to help fill in some roles.

"We are looking forward to a great year," Smith said. "We are competitive and have a lot of potential to make some dynamic moves on the court."

Smith expressed that the Lady Eagles have several power hitters, which include Senior Emily Turner and Sophomore Ally Thorman.

"I feel really good about this year's team," Turner said. "We have a solid core group that work hard at getting better each and every day; couldn't ask for a better group of girls."

Lynlee Deats will be the returning libero this year. "She reads the floor very well and can adapt when we need her to," Smith said. "She is an all-around great athlete."

Smith also mentioned that Landri McFarlin, freshman,

PLEASE SEE JONESBORO | B8

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Gatesville High School Marching Band. Ready for the 2024-25 season.

Gatesville High School Marching Band tunes up for the new school year

BY DAVID SCOTT
Staff Writer

Jose Sanchez, who is in his ninth year of Director of Bands at Gatesville Independent School District, is also celebrating his 16th year of band directing in the Central Texas area. This school year, with 105 students participating in band, Sanchez reported that the number has increased from last year due to a great freshman class and a stellar senior class. With the beginning of the new school year, Sanchez was asked about his goals for the new students entering the band program. He replied, "As always, we want our students to give their best for every performance. The students have set their own goals for this year, and they are posted throughout the band hall." He continued, "As a competitive band, we want to be at the top of our

class for every contest. Our goals are to top the last two years of historic runs. We, as directors, feel that it is important to make each performance better than the last. The rest will take of itself." When asked about his expectations for the new students, he replied, "We expect our current students to welcome new friends into the band with open arms and help get them up to speed with our procedures and expectations of operations. We ask that new members simply try their best and approach each and every day with a positive attitude. This process and approach continues to set students up for a successful and rewarding first year of marching band." Realizing the importance of rehearsals, Sanchez said, "Once the school year begins, our students have

rehearsals about 40 minutes before the first period of class in addition to one rehearsal on Monday night from 6 p.m. until 9 p.m. Returning as assistant directors this school year include Michael Hamilton, who has been at GISD since 2021; Corbin Myers, who has been at GISD since 2022; and Johanna Reynolds, who has been with GISD since 2023. Sanchez reported that the new addition this year to the band staff will be Alexa Sanchez. Considering how well the band did during competitions last year, he said, "We want to continue to push the envelope with our expectations. We hope to win our area this year and make school history and make finals at the State Marching Contest." Sanchez reported that their competition season begins on Sept. 21st in Round Rock and will hopefully conclude in San

Antonio at the UIL State Marching Contest finals. About working at Gatesville ISD, Sanchez related, "Gatesville is a very special place. We have started to develop the direction of the marching band as well as achieve lots of success through the entire program 6th through 12th grade." Last year, Sanchez commented, "The music chosen each year is selected directly after the end of the previous marching season. "We listen to hours of music and talk through the strengths and weaknesses of the anticipated members of the band as well as what we want to convey to our audience." "The support from the community and the administration has been fantastic, which has made all the difference in the world," Sanchez said.

GHS Cheer is ready to power through the school year

BY ALEXANDRA MEELBUSCH
Staff Writer

The Gatesville High School cheerleading program is ready to begin a new season with both its varsity and junior varsity (JV) teams. "I am really excited for this year's groups; they have all worked extremely hard in previous years to prepare for this season," Varsity Cheer Coach Amber Colson said. "We have nine seniors who are a huge asset to the team; they show great leadership qualities and have a tremendous work ethic. They are really wanting to go out with a bang and leave their mark on the program to help it continue to be successful in years to come." Both squads attended cheer camp over the summer and performed extremely well. "They overcame many obstacles both physically and mentally to come out and perform some really great routines on the final day," Colson said. "I have already witnessed them grow in so many ways and I know they are going to accomplish great things." Junior Varsity Cheer Coach Cassie Perez said that both squads learned too many dances to count, and that they each have several cheers and chants to use at the game. The varsity squad also has a variety of different band dances that they will perform when the band is playing their stand tunes. Varsity will also perform five different routines, one for each pep rally, that will include tumbling, dance,

and various levels of stunting. "We were the smallest team at camp," she said. "That did not stop them from going all out during each session. We had to make some adjustments while at camp, and they handled that extremely well." Perez expressed that the junior varsity team has also been preparing for the season by doing heat acclimation practices after school and our normal practices in the mornings before school starts. "Our JV team is small this year, but they have done an amazing job so far. I tell them all the time they may be small, but they are mighty," she said. "They are willing to try new stunts and have learned to trust one another. I am excited to see them grow throughout the year and to help get them ready for Varsity cheerleading." Since camp, junior varsity has been working on getting ideas and plans in place for pep rallies. Mascot Kari Dudik practices with the team to learn their cheers, chants, dances, and routines, but is able to add her own "Buzz" personality to it. The cheer program will attend all varsity football games. They will also be attending the home district volleyball games on Tuesday nights, home district basketball games for both boys' and girls' varsity teams, and compete in at least three cheer competitions.

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Lady Elks begin successful season with a 6-2 record

BY ALEXANDRA MEELBUSCH
Staff Writer

The Evant High School varsity volleyball team has begun their season under the guidance of coach JoAnna Vaden. This will be her fourth year at Evant Independent School District.

"I am very excited for this year with this group of girls; they had a great season last year," Vaden said. "We are all working hard to repeat and improve on last year's accomplishments."

Last year, the team was comprised of 10 ladies, and this year there are nine returners.

"I have had the privilege and opportunity to coach this year's seniors since they were freshmen on varsity," Vaden said. "I love the sport and enjoy watching girls who participate in the sport learn the skills it takes to compete and, hopefully, they will fall in love with the sport as well."

Vaden expressed that the girls reached the regional semifinals last year, and that the team is working to get to that point again this year to exceed that goal as well.

The Lady Elks recently played in a tournament held at Meridian Independent School District last Thursday, Aug. 15.

During the tournament, the team defeated Gustine 25-12, 25-14.

The stats include: Harley Weeks, six aces, 19 assists, and two digs; Jolyce Acosta, two aces, 1 kill, and three digs; Molly Waldrum, six aces, 11 kills, and one dig; Bree Ramirez, two kills, one assist, and three digs; Luwi Rodriguez, four kills and seven digs; Izzy Gandy, one ace, four kills, and two digs.

The Lady Elks also defeated Jonesboro 25-20, 25-18.

The stats include: Harley Weeks, one ace, six kills, 16

assists, and five digs; Jolyce Acosta, one ace and four digs; Molly Waldrum, three aces, nine kills, and nine digs; Bree Ramirez, one ace, three kills, one assist, and seven digs; Luwi Rodriguez, one kill, one assist, and 10 digs; Izzy Gandy, two aces, five kills, and four digs.

In the last game of the Meridian tournament, the ladies defeated Zephyr 25-15, 25-18.

The stats include: Harley Weeks, four kills, 13 assists, and seven digs; Jolyce Acosta, one ace and three digs; Molly Waldrum, five aces, four kills, one assist, three digs, and one block; Bree Ramirez, six aces, six kills, one assist, and five digs; Luwi Rodriguez, one kill, two assists, and eight digs; Izzy Gandy, five kills and nine digs.

On day two, the Lady Elks lost their first game to Lipan 16-25, 21-25. Regarding day two of the tournament,

Head Volleyball Coach JoAnna Vaden expressed, "The girls lost the first match of the day but worked extremely hard and made their way back into the championship game."

The team came back and defeated Jonesboro 18-25, 25-20, 15-11.

The stats include: Harley Weeks, 11 points, four aces, two kills, and four digs; Jolyce Acosta, nine points, three aces, and 12 digs; Molly Waldrum, nine points, four aces, 14 kills, and nine digs; Bree Ramirez, two points, two aces, three kills, and seven digs; Daritza Escamilla, one point and four digs; Izzy Gandy, five points, six kills, and 13 digs.

The ladies also defeated Lipan 25-16, 25-20 and lost to Valor Prep 16-25, 21-25.

Both junior varsity and varsity volleyball competed in Waco at Bishop Reicher on Tuesday, Aug. 20.

Junior varsity lost to Bishop Reicher 17-25, 12-25.

The stats include: Maya Reynolds, one ace, one kill, one assist, and two digs; Lexis King, one kill and three digs; Bella Kolajo, two digs; Eloisa Garza, four aces, one kill, and two digs; Madison Barron, one ace, one kill, one assist, and one dig; Daisy Morales, two aces and two digs.

The varsity Lady Elks won against Bishop Reicher 25-13, 25-15, 25-15.

The stats include: Harley Weeks, six points, one ace, three kills, 21 assists, and six digs; Jolyce Acosta, 13 points, two aces, one kill, and seven digs; Molly Waldrum, eight points, five aces, 14 kills, five digs, and one block; Bree Ramirez, seven points, six kills, three assists, and eight digs; Luwi Rodriguez, three points, two aces, two kills, one assist, and 17 digs; Izzy Gandy, five points, one

ace, six kills, and 16 digs; Daritza Escamilla, one dig.

Varsity will travel for a tournament which will be held in Moody from Thursday, Aug. 22 through Saturday, Aug. 24. To date, the varsity record for the Lady Elks is 6-2.

The Lady Elks will attend practices four to five days a week, depending on tournaments and how many games are played during that time.

"I believe that they can learn so many things from volleyball that they can use their entire life," Vaden said. "Hard work, sportsmanship, teamwork, dedication, and commitment are all qualities that we strive to develop and achieve in our program."

The Lady Elks have set the tone for their season with a 6-2 record and will play in a tournament held in Moody from Aug. 22 to Aug. 24.

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STEPHENVILLE — Tarleton State University will celebrate 125 Years of Excellence Sept. 3 with a commemorative ceremony followed by an anniversary celebration from 5 to 7 p.m. in Heritage Park.

The public is invited to join in the family-friendly campus festivities in Heritage Park and the O.A. Grant

Green Space, which will feature inflatables, games, food trucks and cupcakes.

The celebration kicks off a season of activities honoring the history and cherished traditions of the university and its esteemed visionary, John Tarleton, who founded the institution in 1899. Upcoming events include the football home opener against McNeese

State at 2:30 p.m. Saturday, Family Weekend Sept. 27-28 and Homecoming Week Oct. 6-12. The anniversary celebration aligns with the first year of NCAA Division I championship eligibility as well as the 89th Texas Legislative Session.

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For more information, visit <https://www.tarleton.edu/125years/>.

Students return to Tarleton State with array of events

Tarleton State University

STEPHENVILLE — Tarleton State University welcomed students back to campus with more than 10 days of food, music and events during Transition Week (T-Week) Aug. 18-21, with Week of Welcome (WOW) running Aug. 22-29.

"It's an exciting time to be a Texan," said Lathes Towns, executive director of campus life and family engagement as a part of the division of student engagement and success. "As we start the school year with enthusiasm and curiosity, each day is a new opportunity for growth. Together, we create a community for students and families, fostering a supportive and nurturing environ-

ment where every student can thrive, and student support staff can connect."

New students begin their college experience during T-Week with various events and activities to help learn and adopt the traditions of Tarleton State. From rallies on Rudder Way to lighting their candle at Convocation, new Texans were welcomed to campus in a way designed to form memories and connections that last.

WOW Week began Thursday, Aug. 22, the first day of school. Information tents are stationed around campus to help students find their way, and an involvement fair will take place where students can discover organizations and resources available to them.

A concert with performances by DJ Quan, Josh Abbott Band and Roger Creager took place Friday, Aug. 23.

The Texan football team then hosts McNeese State Saturday, Aug. 24. Kickoff is slated for 2:30 p.m. from Memorial Stadium, with the contest airing live nationally on ESPN2.

Other events throughout the week include DJ on the Lawn, The Big Feed, Black Student Union Cookout, Sundae on Sunday, Meet the Greeks, Texan Bingo and Splash Bash.

The fun is not confined to Stephenville, with several WOW Week events taking place at the Tarleton State campuses in Fort Worth, Waco and Bryan.



PHOTO COURTESY OF TARLETON STATE UNIVERSITY

Tarleton State University welcomed students back to campus with more than 10 days of food, music and events

Tarleton Soccer earns second draw of season to end opening road trip



PHOTO COURTESY OF TARLETON STATE UNIVERSITY

Tarleton State earned its second draw on the season, a scoreless 0-0 tie at Texas A&M-Corpus Christi Aug 18 at the Dugan Soccer & Track Stadium.

Tarleton State University

CORPUS CHRISTI — Tarleton State earned its second draw on the season, a scoreless 0-0 tie at Texas A&M-Corpus Christi Aug 18 at the Dugan Soccer & Track Stadium.

With the draw the Texans (0-0-2) and Islanders (0-0-2) both start out their 2024 slate with a pair of draws.

Reegan Wagg led the Purple and White with three shots, two on goal. Nicole Fels drew a pair of shots. Goalkeeper Mikayla Kendall earned six saves to improve her season total to 10.

Neither team was able to push across anything in the first half. The Texans led the way with five shots and three on goal. Tarleton's Wagg had the best scoring chance

of the half firing back-to-back point-blank shots at Islanders' keeper Zoe Theriot. She took the original shot from the side close to the benches and followed up for the kick back finding the chest of Theriot for the second consecutive time in the 33rd minute.

In the second half, the Islanders took control of the momentum firing three shots on goal, but none past Tarleton goalie Kendall. None of the Texans' three shots fell on goal, other than a Jessica Baires near-goal in the 67th minute which was disallowed after a Texan foul.

In the final 15 minutes of play, the Islanders executed one of their best scoring chances of the night. After a

long ball in toward the goal, Kendall leaped up drawing contact to swat the ball away and keep the game scoreless heading into the final 10 minutes of play.

Neither team was able put any shots on goal in the final 10 minutes. Jenaya Brown found the ball on her foot with five minutes remaining off a corner, but connected high and wide right, leaving the game tied at 0.

The Islanders were given a trio of yellow cards in the contest despite the Texans committing 16 fouls to TAMU-CC's eight fouls.

Tarleton out-shot the Islanders, 8-7 with the Islanders holding the advantage on goal, 6-3. The Texans kicked six corner kicks to the home team's four.



COURTESY PHOTO

Pictured is the Gatesville High School Varsity cheer squad.

CHEER

FROM PAGE B5

"We are also hoping to branch out and support more programs from Gatesville High School," Colson said. "Our goals are to attend a marching contest, district cross country, and even a couple of games for soccer, baseball, softball, tennis, and the track meet."

She explained that the program really wants to help establish a true home field/court advantage for all our programs and increase crowd engagement.

"As far as our team goals, we are working hard to ensure a successful competition season with the hopes of being the first GHS cheer team to reach the state finals," she said. "We also want to leave a positive impact on the school and community, so the Gatesville cheer program continues to grow and thrive in the future."

Perez expressed that she is very excited to work with

Buzz, Kari Dudik, this year.

"She is an All-American mascot with amazing energy, skills, and experience. Although she is our only mascot, she is a huge part of the Varsity team," she said. "We were also able to get her a brand new, custom mascot costume that matches our logo with the help and generosity of our community and local businesses. We are so excited for Hornet Nation to see her in action."

"Coach Amber and I have huge expectations for our program this year; we have a lot of talent and experience, as well as a lot of kids willing to work hard to reach their goals," she said.

She said that although she and Colson both have high expectations, they want both teams to have fun and enjoy their time in the GHS Cheer Program.

"They invest a lot of time and money to be a part

of the program, and we want it to be memorable for them," she said. "I have really enjoyed getting to know the cheerleaders from the JV and Varsity teams. Being a counselor and former teacher, building relationships with students is my favorite part of being in education. It's been a lot of fun learning their strengths and helping them work through challenges. I also love coaching with Amber; she has been a great mentor to me, and I am excited to be in this with her."

"I have been with some of the cheerleaders multiple years, and it has been extremely rewarding to watch them grow both in and out of the cheer world," Colson said. "Gatesville is truly blessed with some of the best kids around, and I am so thankful that I get to experience that firsthand."

GHS Dazzlers are ready to kick off the season

BY ALEXANDRA MEELBUSCH
Staff Writer

Gatesville High School is home to a dance team known as the Dazzlers and is under the guidance of Director Helen Gonzales, who began her journey with the Dazzlers 11 years ago and has continued to transform the team in many ways.

Gonzales teaches the Dazzlers very early on that wearing the uniform is a personal time and energy investment as well as a privilege that carries a great deal of responsibility.

"Our uniform is a great source of pride for every member of the team," she said.

There are currently 13 members on the team this year with three seniors, five sophomores, and five freshmen. There is no preset number, so team size varies from year to year.

"This year's team is very young and inexperienced but extremely eager to learn and excited to be a part of the Dazzlers," Gonzales said. "Their enthusiasm is something that gets me excited for this year."

The process to become a Dazzler entails a two-week training period that is hosted by current members hoping to gain an officer position. Tryouts are held annually in the spring, during the end of the school year with judges from different areas.

Once the team is selected, season preparations will begin. In July, the Dazzlers began their season with an Encore Team Camp held at the high school. The team worked

hard during multiple days of intense workouts that included stretching, conditioning, dance and kick technique, team bonding activities, and four dances.

"My goal every year is to provide the girls with an opportunity to be part of a team that they take great pride in and to guide them toward our common goal of producing great halftime and pep rally entertainment for our school and community," Gonzales said.

In the beginning of June, Gonzales took two Dazzler officers to an Encore Officer camp in Frisco. The ladies spent over four days learning two full routines, participated in technique workshops, attended Master Dance Classes, worked in leadership sessions, and were evaluated and given verbal critiques on both dances learned at camp.

On July 1-2, Encore sent two staff members, who are both former Kilgore College Rangerettes, to host a private camp for the Dazzlers.

Encore has been a key part in halftime performances for the Dazzlers each year since Gonzales has been with the team.

"Over those two days, we learned one pep rally and three field routines that we will be doing for game day performances this season," she said. "I select music, and they choreograph custom dances specifically for us."

Since July 8, the Dazzlers have been practicing and will continue learning more dances under the leadership of their officers.

"By the time we start on Aug. 30, we will have learned a total of nine dances to use throughout the season. We will be doing Jazz, High Kick, Pom, Stylized Country Western, and Hip Hop. We will use both streamers and large hoops," she said. "Our goal is always to present a precision performance where the group of 13 dances as one. My favorite part of directing the team is working them toward that goal."

A typical football season practice schedule includes morning marching practice and a Monday night marching rehearsal on the football field. Dazzler practices are held three days a week along with "run through" practices after school on Fridays before football games.

When football season concludes, the Dazzlers will perform at the Christmas parades in Gatesville and Salado. During the spring, the team will travel and compete with surrounding high school dance teams in several competitions.

"I do hope to take the team into contest season this year. Dance competitions run from the last week of January through the month of February," she expressed. "In order to compete, we will need to have three competition routines learned and ready to work on, clean, and get competitive before Thanksgiving."

After the February competition season, the Dazzlers immediately begin

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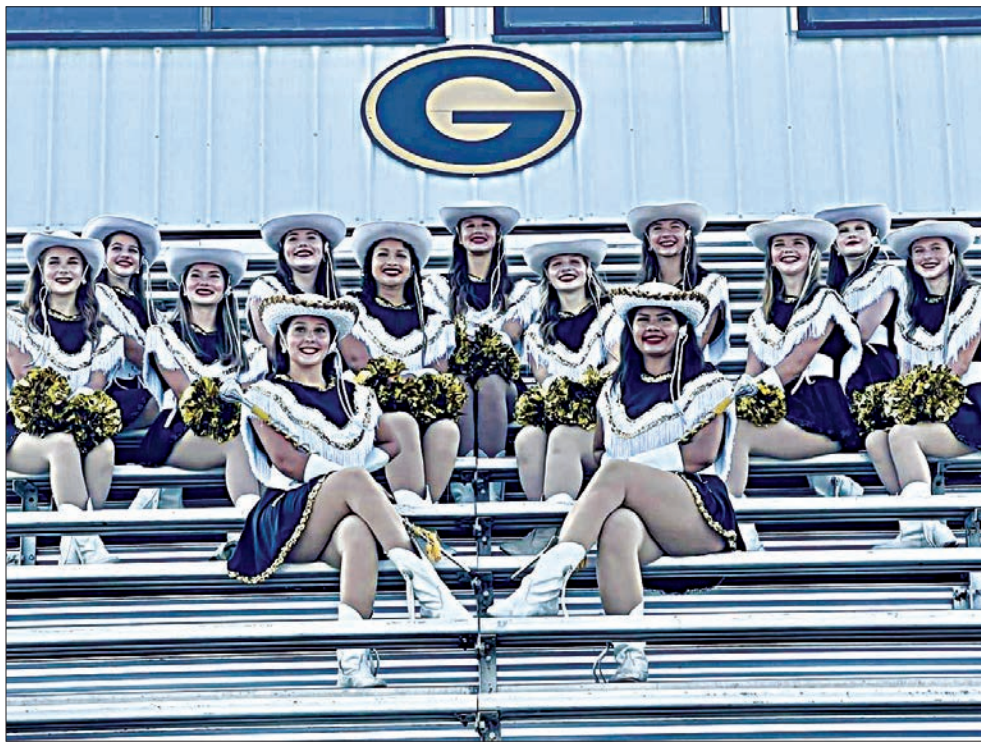
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Pictured are the Gatesville High School Dazzlers.

COURTESY PHOTO

DAZZLERS

FROM PAGE B7

the tryout process to choose a team for the next year.

"I strive to make this a confidence- and character-building organization

where responsibility for themselves and to their team is a character trait learned quickly and becomes second nature," she said. "I expect a great deal

from every member of the team, and we get to create high school memories they carry with them for a lifetime."

JONESBORO

FROM PAGE B4

is no stranger to the court and will help the team out a lot this year.

"Overall, our seniors, Kyleigh Walker, Emily Turner, and Julie Henderson have stepped up and helped build moral for the younger athletes," Smith said.

Turner mentioned that as far as practicing goes, the team is limited to three good days during the week due to a lot of traveling early in the season.

"The game was overwhelming to them at times last year, and I've seen a major change in the mental

aspect of the game," Turner said. "Learning to play together as a team and not trying to do to much as individuals."

"I think the main goal in any sport would be to win a state championship," Turner said. "The other goals would be to improve each and every week and win district and make the playoffs. We are not satisfied with last year's results and plan on doing everything possible to have a successful season with a playoff run."



The Jonesboro Lady Eagles are scheduled to play in their next game on Tuesday, Aug. 27 in an away game against Coolidge at 5 p.m.

EVANT HIGH SCHOOL CHEERLEADERS



The Evant High School 2024-2025 Varsity cheerleading team, pictured from left to right is Daritza Escamilla, Mariela Zarate, Bella Kolajo, Maya Reynolds, Brinlea Bates, and Adriana Garcia. Reynolds was selected as the varsity cheer captain and Zarate was chosen as the mascot. The Lady Elks are led by cheer director Destiny Shuler.

COURTESY PHOTO

OGLESBY HIGH SCHOOL CHEERLEADERS



The Oglesby Lady Tiger cheerleading team pictured from left to right is Zarah Wiseheart, Caitlyn Battreal, Autumn Meyers, Marlee Henderson, Taetym Sanders, Kelsey Ritchie, Gracee Isaacks, Maddison Smith, and Delany Mafra. Sanders was chosen as the 2024-2025 Varsity cheerleading captain. The team is led by cheer director Cassie Meyers.

COURTESY PHOTO

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