



Thursday, May 20, 2021

The Springtown Epigraph

FM 51 update Progress continues as weather permits

BY SUSAN McFARLAND
sptreporter@azlenews.net

Construction on the Square and FM 51 is continuing to progress, with contractors working on paving the northbound lane.

"The subgrade has been completed and now they are working to lay the HMA (hot mix asphalt) layer prior to the concrete pours which, weather depending, will likely begin in early June," said Christina Derr, city of Springtown administrative specialist.

Bethany Kurtz, Texas Department of Transportation public information officer, said the construction on the Square is substantially complete, with concrete paving and sidewalks finished in

both directions. The western half of the road on FM 51 north of Second Street to Pojo Road is complete with the eastern half being prepared for paving.

"Once this work begins, FM 51 traffic will be detoured to Texas Drive/Old Springtown Road as the project improves the new roadway by raising it approximately 5 feet and out of the 100-year floodplain," Kurtz said.

Kurtz said work on the Walnut Creek bridge continues with retaining walls, bridge columns and caps in place.

Derr said planning is underway for Phase 3 – the intersection of FM 51 and Hwy. 199 – with work expected to begin this summer.

2021 NHS students honored during induction ceremony



Correction: Springtown High School's 2021 National Honor Society students were honored during an induction ceremony May 11 at the SHS Auditorium. The photo of the inductees in the May 13 edition of the *Epigraph* was incorrect. We regret the error.

Photo by Tootie Hall

Hall, Davis named top SHS honor graduates

BY SUSAN McFARLAND
sptreporter@azlenews.net

Ranked first in his class all through high school, Brendan Hall is this year's valedictorian for Springtown High School. The 2021 salutatorian, Julia Davis, held the No. 2 spot since the end of her junior year. Neither student focuses on rankings; instead they just put in the work and try to do the best they can, something that is paying off for both.

BRENDAN HALL

Hall is the son of Jessica Hall and has one sister, Corinne Hall. He said during his freshman year he was told that he ranked No. 1 in his class, so after that, he strived to continue making good grades. Hall's GPA is 106.417.

"I never focused on what my rank was, I just worked on getting all As," Hall said. "But of course,

being first is a good accomplishment."

This week, he has been studying for AP tests in government, English and calculus. His speech for the big night is written and submitted for approval.

Hall participated in National Honor Society (NHS), varsity basketball, varsity track, varsity football and choir, winning the Choral Excellence Award.

His most memorable experience was during a football playoff game his sophomore year.

"I had to kick a field goal with 3 seconds left on the clock to tie the game," Hall said. "It was a 49-yard field goal, and I made it right down the middle."

Hall said the team went into overtime and he made another field goal. Ultimately, the team did not take the win but that 49-yard

SEE VAL AND SAL, PAGE 2A.

Summerfest returns to the Square

BY SUSAN McFARLAND
sptreporter@azlenews.net

Summerfest on the Square is back with family-friendly fun including a car show, local food vendors, snow cones, live Texas country music, face painting, raffles and giveaways.

The event will be from 10 a.m. to 4 p.m., Saturday, May 29 on the Springtown Square. Registration for the car show, which is sponsored by Parker County Cruisers, is from 10 a.m. to 12:30 p.m. Free face painting is from 11 a.m. to 1 p.m.

Freebies from businesses on the Square include a disc golf clinic by Elevate Disc Golf, house-brewed coffee by Pojo Coffee Shoppe, bottled water by AV Ranch and On the Square Guns and Ammo, and brewed tea by Maddie Lou's Bar & Grill.

"This is our way of giving back to the community and all of the businesses on the Springtown Square," said Sweedee Sweets' Christopher Herrin. "Come bring your family and friends to kick off your summer and celebrate—we look forward to seeing you! Be sure to share, invite others, and spread the word."

The event, sponsored by the city of Springtown and businesses on the Square, was first held in 2019 but the pandemic delayed its 2020 recurrence.

For attendees craving Mexican food, Corn Fed Catering will be selling fajita tacos, quesadillas, nachos and street corn. Maddie Lou's Bar & Grill will selling hamburg-



A disc golf clinic presented by Elevate Disc Golf will return to Summerfest 2021



Registration for the car show, which is sponsored by Parker County Cruisers, is from 10 a.m. to 12:30 p.m.

Photos courtesy Christopher Herrin

ers and hot dogs and Summerfest on the Square shirts will be available for purchase.

Live music will be performed

by the Jeremiah Herrin Band, September Moon, Madison Rodges, Christopher Watson and Rod Nelson duo, and Buck Fuffalo.

Volume 58,
Number 7

\$1.00

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VAL AND SAL, CONTINUED FROM PAGE 1A.

kick for the tie topped it all, win or not.

His most valuable lesson learned during high school is how dedication pays off.

“Have dedication, and not just one year or two years but the whole time and with everything that you do,” he said.

That determination got him through classes, such as his most challenging—AP physics.

Hall’s favorite class was chemistry.

“It was just interesting to me. A lot of things we did in there was fun and interactive,” he said.

Hall said his biggest accomplishment during school was becoming valedictorian and getting a full scholarship to Southern Methodist University, where he will play football and study mechanical engineering.

During his down time, Hall enjoys spending time with friends, working out, practicing kicks and watching movies.

Hall said his mentor is his mother.

“She steered me in the right direction and helped keep me focused,” he said.

JULIA DAVIS

Davis is the daughter of Saskia and Carl Hornback, and Dean Davis. She has three siblings—Kylie Hornback, Bryce Hornback, and Rayleigh Davis. Her GPA is 104.667.

Davis said she is very excited to learn of her salutatorian title, something she feels honored to receive.

Students begin receiving their ranking at the end of their freshman year and during their senior year, they get ranked twice.

At the end of her junior year, Davis was No. 2 and held that rank during her entire senior year. At the end

of her freshman and sophomore year she was ranked fourth.

“When I was fourth I was excited, but I decided no matter how I ranked, I would just work hard and do my best,” she said.

With most of her dual (college credit) classes behind her, this week Davis is working on her graduation speech.

During her time at SHS, Davis had perfect attendance. She participated in tennis, University Interscholastic League journalism, Spanish Club and was vice president, National FFA Organization, Texas Association of Future Educators, yearbook and NHS.

One of her most memorable experiences was being honored as salutatorian. The most valuable lesson she learned during high school was that hard work comes with rewards.

“Working hard is really important and it will pay off eventually,” Davis said.

Hard work and determination helped get her through math, classes she says are her most challenging.

During her down time, Davis likes spending time with family, biking, and kayaking. She also enjoys visiting coffee shops with her friends, and learning new languages. Besides Spanish, she is learning French and Korean.

Davis said her mentor is her mother, a science teacher at SHS, who “is a big influence in my life.”

Another mentor is SHS Spanish teacher Erin Lance, who was a role model and “helped shape what I want to do with my life.”

After graduation Davis plans to attend Tarleton State University and become a Spanish teacher.

Stolen property, drugs found during search in Azle, Springtown

Parker County Sheriff’s Criminal Investigations Division and Sheriff’s Special Crimes Unit investigators executed three warrants simultaneously May 14 stemming from a theft investigation.

Parker County Sheriff Russ Authier said the warrants were executed in the 500 block of South Main Street in Springtown; in the 100 block of Conway Lane in Azle; and in the 1000 block of Midway Drive in Springtown.

“Our investigators were seeking the recovery of stolen tools and auto parts,”

Authier said. “They recovered an estimated

\$5,000 worth of stolen property and a burn barrel containing the license plate of one of the stolen trucks.”

Investigators also seized about one gram of methamphetamine at one of the residences.

The case originated May 2, where deputies were dispatched to the 100 block of Land of Goshen Drive in Springtown at an oil field equipment company regarding the initial theft investigation.

A business representative reported a fence on the property was damaged, appearing as if a company vehicle had been driven

through it.

Sheriff’s deputies reported a gate lock had been tampered with, the building had been forcibly opened and a company truck had damage consistent with being driven through a fence. Deputies also observed another company truck had been used to drag oil field equipment from the building during the commission of the theft.

Two additional company trucks, which had been stolen during the incident, were later located behind an abandoned building in the 3300 block of East Highway 199 in Springtown.

Authier said the suspects

removed the rear bumper, battery and wheels from one of the trucks, and equipment from both toolboxes. Employees estimated the equipment for each truck valued at \$30,000. Business employees reported the value of the stolen trucks totaled \$108,742.

Authier said the investigation led Criminal Investigations Division and Special Crimes Unit investigators to the three addresses where the stolen property was recovered.

The investigation is ongoing and several arrests are pending the outcome of the investigation, the sheriff said.

PARKER COUNTY INDICTMENTS

Five locals indicted by Parker County jury

On charges of DWI, assault, drug possession



Christopher Bolton



Tony Byas



Larry Martin



Caden Fry



Benito Garcia-Aguilar

Parker County Grand Jury indicted the following residents on May 7.

Christopher Bolton, 49, was indicted on charges of assaulting a household or family member impeding breath or circulation, a third-degree felony.

Tony Ray Byas, 52, was

indicted on charges of driving while intoxicated third or more, a third-degree felony.

Larry Dean Martin, 51, was indicted on charges of possession of a controlled substance less than 1 gram in Penalty Group 1, a state-jail felony; unlawful pos-

session of a firearm by a felon, a third-degree felony; and possession of a prohibited weapon, a third-degree felony.

Caden Dalton Lee Fry, 17, was indicted on charges of possession of a controlled substance less than

1 gram in Penalty Group 2 in a drug-free zone, a third-degree felony.

Benito Garcia-Aguilar, 30, was indicted on charges of possession of a controlled substance less than 1 gram in Penalty Group 2, a state-jail felony.



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SHS choirs finish strong

BY SUSAN McFARLAND
sptreporter@azlenews.net

Springtown High School choirs all received superior ratings at the University Interscholastic League Concert and Sight-Reading in April.

The women's choir received a 1st Division (superior) rating, and the varsity choir and men's choir received a Sweepstakes (1st Division rating in both Concert and Sight-Reading).

Choir teacher Holly Owen said she is "so proud of all of our singers!"

"In a challenging year, our choir students have worked and improved so much," Owen said. "They have made great achievements in performances and competitions."

Choir students celebrated their success during the annual awards banquet May 14. The biggest award of the night, the Choral Excellence Award, went to Brendan

Hall. "It is awarded to one student a year who has shown dedication and leadership in the organization," Owen said.

The Sight-Reading King and Queen award is voted by students and goes to students they feel show leadership when reading new music. The winners were Ava Guerra, Hailey Hughes, Grady O'Dell, Brendan Hall and Skyla Hayes.



SHS Men's Choir

Photo courtesy SHS



SHS Varsity Choir

Photo courtesy SHS



SHS Women's Choir

Photo courtesy SHS



(l-r) Sight-Reading King and Queen award winners Grady O'Dell, Ava Guerra and Hailey Hughes. Brendan Hall and Skyla Hayes (not pictured) were also winners of this award.

Photo courtesy SHS

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Published weekly at 109 First Street, Springtown, Texas by Azle Tri-County Advertiser, Inc. Periodicals class postage paid at Springtown, Texas, 76082. Postmaster: Send address changes to P.O. Box 557, Springtown, Texas 76082

USPS No. 964-220
Annual subscription rates: \$40.00 in Parker, Wise, Tarrant counties (\$36.50 60 and older); \$46.50 elsewhere within and outside Texas.
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New degree plans in the works at WC

BY SUSAN McFARLAND
sptreporter@azlenews.net

Weatherford College could soon offer a Bachelor's of Applied Technology (BAT) in Medical and Health Services Management degree, pending approval from the Texas Higher Education Coordinating Board (THECB). The announcement was made to WC board members during the May 13 meeting.

The proposal is progressing through the review process, with a start goal in the fall of 2022, said Michael Endy, vice president of instruction and

student services.

The BAT is designed to serve those with an Associate of Applied Science (AAS) degree in healthcare fields such as radiologic technology, respiratory care, physical therapy assistant, occupational therapy assistant and sonography. It is also designed for those who wish to pursue career advancement through the management of a healthcare organization.

"The medical and health services management field is listed among high-demand occupations region-

ally and nationally. We anticipate the greatest demand for graduates in our suburban and rural areas," Endy said. "The WC program will focus a good deal of attention on healthcare management's legal and financial aspects. The program will point students toward completion of nationally recognized examinations in the field, thereby demonstrating the quality of the graduates."

The coursework is being developed so it can be offered online and will be open to WC graduates in

these fields and those from other higher education institutions. Program costs will be comparable to those of other AAS programs at WC.

In the works, AAS and certificate programs in Cybersecurity, with proposals soon to be sent to the THECB and pending approval, coursework could be offered as early as the fall of 2021.

"The cybersecurity field was growing before the COVID-19 pandemic. Demand for individuals skilled in managing digital assets and minimizing risks to those assets is increasing," Endy

said. "We anticipate students earning credentials that will make them employable within and well beyond our service region."

These programs come on the heels of other new degree plans offered by WC. The Bachelor's of Applied Science in Nursing began fall 2021. The program, largely online, is open to all students who have completed the AAS in nursing and are currently licensed registered nurses. It can be completed in two years or less and tuition and fees are comparable to the associate

degree in nursing program.

WC will also offer a Bachelor of Applied Arts and Sciences in Organizational Leadership, slated to begin this fall. The program accepts applications from students who have completed the AAS in public safety (fire, EMS, law enforcement), business, accounting, or information technology.

Like the BSN, the organizational leadership program can be mostly completed online with tuition and fees set at the same rates as the AAS. For more information, go to <https://www.wc.edu/>.

Twin Points

Kicking off the summer season May 29

BY JESSICA MCKINNEY
azlereporter@azlenews.net

Opening day at Twin Points Park is Saturday, May 29, and the beach park is ready to welcome visitors back at full capacity this summer.

The beach will be bringing back some summertime favorites, including Trinity Paddle Co. for paddleboard rentals, beach volleyball, and the floating swim platform.

This year, instructor Lauren Bailey will be offering Yoga on the Beach Tuesdays starting June 1 at 10:30 a.m. If you prefer to wind down at the end of the day, Yoga on the Beach will be offered every other Monday evening starting June 14 at 6:30 p.m. There is no additional cost for

Yoga on the Beach. Just pay for parking and bring your mat and water bottle.

Parking at Twin Points is limited to 400 vehicles. Beach parking permits must be purchased online in advance at <https://www.twinpointspark.com/>.

Parking permits are \$10 per car Monday through Thursday and \$20 per car Friday through Sunday. On Memorial Day, Fourth of July, and Labor Day, parking permits will be \$25.

Pavilions are available to rent at Twin Points throughout the season, a great option for family gatherings and parties. Small pavilions can be rented for \$25 for a half-day, and \$50 for a full-day. Large pavilions are \$50 for a half-day, \$100 for the full day.

At the end of opening

day, park visitors get to enjoy a fireworks display that will wrap up a fun-filled day at the beach. Fireworks will start at sundown and the beach will close following the show.

"We are really excited to get this season going," said Tina Nikolic of Tarrant Regional Water District. "We're bringing back the swim platform that everyone missed last season. Trinity Paddle Co. is coming back with a whole new fleet of boards (last season wore their previous fleet out!), and of course we will end the night with a fireworks display."

"Thankfully this rain is giving us a full lake at the start of the season. Visitors won't be disappointed!"

LOCAL ARRESTS

The following individuals were arrested by Springtown Police Department or list addresses in Springtown and were arrested by various law enforcement agencies on felony and/or DWI charges May 11-May 15.

Alan Becerra, was arrested May 11 for obstructing a police officer, a third-degree felony.

Christopher Michael Sutton, 30, was arrested May 13 for possession of a controlled substance less than 1 gram in Penalty

Group 2, a state-fail felony.

Machiel Lynn Graham, 45, was arrested May 13 for possession of a controlled substance less than 1 gram in Penalty Group 1, a state-jail felony; and for tampering or fabricating with physical evidence, a third-degree felony.

Rachel Ann Pineda, 30, was arrested May 14 for possession of a controlled substance less than 1 gram in Penalty Group 1, a state-jail felony.

Brandi Lynn Sage, 34,

was arrested May 14 for unlawful possession of a firearm by a felon, a third-degree felony.

Kristin Renea Ross, 30, was arrested May 15 for manufacturing/delivering a controlled substance between 4 and 200 grams in Penalty Group 1, a first-degree felony.

Cody Caleb Stout, 36, was arrested May 15 for possession of a controlled substance between 4 and 200 grams in Penalty Group 1, a first-degree felony.

Taste of Parker County delayed one week

In light of the rainy weather, the Weatherford College Foundation rescheduled Taste of Parker County for Thursday, May 27. The event was originally scheduled for May 20.

The event will be held from 5 to 8 p.m. at Heritage Park, 317 Santa Fe Drive, in Weatherford, and will feature about 30 food and beverage vendors—an event record. A complete list of vendors is available at www.wc.edu/taste. All tickets sold for the original date will be honored

at the gate on May 27.

Proceeds from Taste of Parker County benefit the Weatherford College Foundation, which funds scholarships and provides other support for the college and its students.

After seeing how COVID-19 affected WC students working in the local service industry, the foundation decided that a portion of this year's proceeds will go toward a scholarship for WC students working in area restaurants.

This event is made possible thanks to the following sponsors: Charlie Gilchrist's Southwest Autogroup, Mike's Westside Rental, Plains Capital Bank, Medical City Weatherford, First Bank Texas and H-E-B. The event is a partnership between the WC Foundation and the city of Weatherford.

Tickets are \$35 in advance or \$40 at the door. Purchase tickets online at wc.edu/taste or contact Jaci Trotter at jtrotter@wc.edu or 817-598-6272.



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Deaths of unbuckled Texans spike

The number of traffic accidents decreased in 2020, but the number of Texans killed while not wearing a seat belt increased by 16%, according to the Texas Department of Transportation.

In 2020, 1,073 fatalities were attributed to not wearing seat belts, up from 926 fatalities in 2019. Buckling up reduces the risk of dying in a traffic accident by 45% for people in the front seat of passenger cars and 60% for people in pickups, according to TxDOT.

"This past year we have all been reminded of the simple acts we can take to protect our lives and those of our loved ones," said TxDOT Executive Director James Bass.

"Wearing a seat belt is the most important step we can take to protect ourselves from serious injury or even death in a traffic crash. Instead of putting yourself and others in danger, remember: buckle up day and night, every rider, every ride."

Texas officers will step up enforcement of the state's seat belt and child car seat laws May 24 through June 6. Fines for not having everyone properly secured range up to \$250.

OVER HALF OF ELIGIBLE TEXANS VACCINATED

More than 20 million doses of COVID-19 vaccine have been administered in Texas as of last week, fully covering more than half of eligible Texans 12 and older. Gov Gregg Abbott hailed the effort.

"Vaccines are the most effective defense against the spread of COVID-19, and I continue to urge all eligible Texans to get the vaccine," Abbott said. "The COVID-19 vaccine will always remain voluntary and never forced in Texas, but it is up to all of us to ensure that we defeat this virus — which is why it is so important for Texans to seek out these safe and effective shots."

The Texas Department of State Health Services announced last week that the Pfizer vaccine is now authorized for anyone 12 years and older. Also last week, the federal Centers for Disease Control announced that fully vaccinated people can resume activities without wearing a mask or physical distancing.

Local businesses still have the option of requiring em-



STATE CAPITOL HIGHLIGHTS

By Gary Borders

Gary Borders is a veteran award-winning Texas journalist. He published a number of community newspapers in Texas during a 30-year span, including in Longview, Fort Stockton, Nacogdoches and Cedar Park. Email: gborders@texaspress.com.

ployees and patrons to wear masks while inside their establishments.

The number of new COVID-19 cases in Texas last week dropped to 14,909, down 17% from the previous week and down 90% from the record high in mid-January, according to the Coronavirus Resource Center at Johns Hopkins University. Hospitalization of lab-confirmed COVID-19 patients in Texas stood at 2,199 last week, down slightly from the previous week.

WHOLESALE ELECTRICITY PLANS TO BE BANNED

With time running out in the legislative session, which ends May 31, just one bill addressing the blackouts during February's winter storm has made it to the governor's desk thus far.

House Bill 16 bans residents or small businesses from signing up for the type of electricity plans that allow wholesale electricity prices to be passed to customers. Those plans resulted in huge electric bills for some customers after the power outage, in some cases more than \$15,000.

Griddy, the main company offering such service to about 29,000 Texas customers, has filed for bankruptcy and ceased operations.

Meanwhile, the interim CEO of the Electric Reliability Council of Texas testified before a Texas Senate committee that ERCOT overrode its protocols in deciding to set prices for wholesale electricity at the highest level, according to the San Antonio Express-News.

Brad Jones said that "market rules were not followed." The maximum price

of \$9,000 per megawatt hour was held for 32 hours, far longer than normal intervals of 15 minutes or so. The move cost Texas utilities billions of dollars.

Brazos Electric Power Cooperative filed for Chapter 11 bankruptcy after being billed \$1.8 billion by ERCOT. The cooperative's 16 members serve 68 counties from the Panhandle to Houston.

BILL TO INSTALL AC IN PRISONS PASSES HOUSE

The Texas House on Friday voted to require the state prison system to install air conditioning in state-operated prisons and jails, according to The Dallas Morning News. The measure now heads to the Texas Senate.

If the measure passes and is signed into law, its implementation would be dependent on the state providing funding.

"This is the right thing to do. It's the humane thing to do," bill sponsor Terry Canales, D-Edinburg, said. "The reality is in Texas, we are cooking people in prison."

According to the Prison Policy Initiative website, only 30 of the state's 109 prisons have air conditioning in all in-

mate housing areas.

NOMINEES SOUGHT FOR HEROES FOR CHILDREN AWARD

Do you know an outstanding volunteer spending time in one of the state's more than 8,000 schools? The State Board of Education is seeking nominees for its annual Heroes for Children Award for each of the 15 SBOE districts in Texas.

Examples of the volunteer services provided by past recipients include mentoring students, providing meals and spearheading fundraisers. Award recipients are honored with a plaque at the September SBOE meeting. The nomination form can be found at this link: <https://tinyurl.com/a22mw34f>.

CORRECTION

Last week's Capital Highlights column contained a mathematical error, stating that almost two-thirds of Texans of all ages had been vaccinated as of that time. The actual number of all Texans who have received at least one dose of the COVID-19 vaccine as of Sunday account for about 40% of residents. We regret the error.

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Paislee, design inspiration and 'top model' for the Punchy Leopard designer.

The Punchy Leopard

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Looking for that special piece that you just can't get anywhere else? Then you need the Punchy Leopard!

Madison Lindsey, owner, designs unique children's wear and can create pieces for women with special orders.

Stop in and check out what's new at Punchy Leopard, and see Madison and her assistants hard at work. Part of the team is three-year-old Paislee, design inspiration and "top model" for the Punchy Leopard designer. Any and all complaints will be handled by five-month old Oakleigh Rae.

They have a full line of children's clothing and accessories, including boots, purses, jewelry and coolers for moms and kids. Many of the designs are one-of-a-kind!

Punchy Leopard opened three months ago

and they already have a dedicated following online. Sign up on their VIP page and private group sales pages. They hold live sales online; you don't want to miss them!

They have weekly drop sales. Check out their Facebook page, <https://www.facebook.com/thepunchyleopard>, for their special promotions.

"My family is a huge reason why I'm able to do this business," said Madison. "Without mom, grandmother, and dad and my husband, my storefront wouldn't even be possible."

Visit Punchy Leopard from 10 a.m. to 4:30 p.m. Tuesday through Saturday. They're located at 518 SH 199 in Springtown, in front of Springtown Storage.

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Obituaries

Melton Harms

1944- 2021

Melton Harms was born July 31, 1944 in Borger, Texas and went to be with his Lord on May 10, 2021, surrounded by family.

Services were held at 2 p.m. Friday, May 14, 2021 at White's Funeral Home in Springtown. 401 N. Main, 76082. Visitation was held from 1 p.m. to service time Friday at the Funeral Home. Interment was in Springtown Cemetery.

He was the fourth generation of Harms' to make their living from agriculture, dating back some 115 plus years. Melton's family moved east of Springtown in 1947 to what is now the family farm. The Harms family was involved in dairy, beef and pork production, and row crop farming. Melton was very proud to be a steward of the land.

Melton has always been a passionate agriculturist, an advocate of livestock production, and farming as a whole and satisfying way of life. While growing up on his family's successful dairy farm, Melton was President of both his FFA Chapter and of his Senior Class.

After working off the farm for a short while, Melton and Mary returned home to the farm in 1969. They bought their first set of Duroc hogs in 1970 and continued in the dairy business until 1987. The following year they incorporated Beefmaster cattle into the swine and farming operation. During this time Melton served as a 4-H leader, a board member on the Springtown School Board, and as President of the Parker County Dairy Producers.

Melton was also a member of the First United Methodist Church of Springtown. There he served as the Lord's Acre fund drive Financial Chairman and displayed his many talents as he served the Lord.

Melton used his positive attitude and down-to-earth demeanor to bring people together and promote constructive contributions to agriculture 4-H and FFA programs.

Most recently, Melton saw a need to have more water available for youth at the Parker County Livestock Show because a new barn had been built. His idea was to collect rainwater as a solution and brought the idea to the Upper Trinity Groundwater Conservation District. Melton said that it made sense to catch water and use it for a later date. Working with the Upper Trinity, a new 65,000 gallon



water tank was built to serve the youth. The project was ultimately recognized by the Texas Water Development Board and received a 2020 Texas Rain Catcher Award.

Melton dedicated his life to the betterment of livestock, efficiency of farming, and general welfare of the rural population. His journey put him in many leadership positions. He served as President of the North Texas Pork Producers, President of Texas Pork Producers, Federation Council of National Pork Producer Council, Swine and Dairy Superintendent of the PCLIA, and Parker County Soil and Water Conservation District Chairman.

Melton has also been part of some amazing honors, including being recognized, along with his family, by the PCLIA for showing livestock for 50 years. Together with his wife Mary, Melton was also inducted into the Texas Pork Hall of Honor by the Texas Pork Producers, where the honor is on display at Texas A&M University. Also, there are many All Americans, Grand Champions, belt buckles, banners, and picture-worthy hand-shaking moments too numerous to list.

Melton Harms is preceded in death by his mother and father, W.C. and Alma Ruth Harms; and brother, Wendell Harms.

Melton is survived by his loving partner of 60 years, Mary Woody Harms; daughter, Alicia Harms Ellis and Randy Ellis; son, Ronnie Harms and Tara Harms; brother, Dennie Harms, grandchildren Jocelyn Harms and David Greider, Chase and Lauren Harms, Cherie Ellis Ortega and Noel Ortega, Mandy Ellis Irizarry and Rudy Irizarry, Lukas Ellis and Melanie Eischeid; great grandchildren, Eliana, Kai, Adelyn, Zeke, Aiden, and Tucker; plus many nieces, nephews and friends.

Melton Harms – a man with integrity, longevity, a stockman, a man to depend on, a friend to all.

*The Springtown Epigraph
May 20, 2021 Edition*

Glenda Lee Fagg

1953- 2021

Glenda Lee (Conner) Fagg, 67, of Springtown Texas walked into the light May 10, 2021.

Born on Christmas day 1953, Glenda was loved by many and her generous spirit, witty sense of humor and her compassionate nature will be carried on by family and friends in the form of joyful memories.

She is survived by her husband Thomas Fagg; daughter Lacy Varner and husband Jimmy; granddaughter Paige Varner; brother Neal Conner wife Rita; and dog Tulla.

A celebration of life will



be held in the fall. Information will be posted on social media.

*The Springtown Epigraph
May 20, 2021 Edition*

Norma Pettigrew

1942- 2021

Norma Sue McGlasson Pettigrew, 78, of Springtown, a loving mother, sister and grandmother passed away, Friday, May 14, 2021 in Azle.

Funeral was at 1 p.m. Wednesday at Alexander's Midway, Springtown. Visitation was from 6-8 p.m., Tuesday at the funeral home. Burial at 3 p.m., Thursday at Carselowey Cemetery, Ketchum, Oklahoma.

She was born November 16, 1942 in Vinta, Oklahoma to Cecil and Allie Mae (Walls) McGlasson. They both preceded her in death along with her sisters, Betty Marquis and Judy McGlasson.

She is survived by her children, Kristi Smith, Ron Pettigrew and wife, Holly and Clay Pettigrew and



wife, Sabrina; brothers, Tom McGlasson and wife, Mary, Wesley McGlasson and wife, Susan and Johnny McGlasson and wife, Debra; grandchildren, Robert, Trenton, Kourtney, Kassie, Cassi, Caleb, Jon, Alex and Austin. Great grandchildren, Elias, and Colton.

*The Springtown Epigraph
May 20, 2021 Edition*

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- **Our House** (Old Reno Hardware)
1530 East Reno Road Thursdays 5 p.m. to 7 p.m.
- **Positive Impact Ministries**
1300 Liberty School Rd., Pelican Bay meals and food boxes Weds and Sat 4 p.m.
- **Blessing Boxes**
(Take what you need, leave what you can)
- One Azle Building at 412 Commerce Street, Azle
- First Baptist Church of Castle Hills at 401 Beverly Road, Azle
- Neal Legal at 1005 SE Parkway, Azle
- Brace Chiropractic at 237 W. Main Street, Azle
- Azle Christian Church at 117 Church Street, Azle
- The Church at Azle 1801 S. Stewart Street, Azle
- Café 10:31 404 Main Street, Azle
- La Junta Fire Department
4480 E. Hwy 199, Springtown
- Positive Impact Ministries
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- Community Ministry at Nine Mile
7240 Nine Mile Bridge Road, Fort Worth
- Dan's Smokehouse 2521 Harwell Road, Weatherford
- Alvin Ord's Sandwich Shop at 400A E. Hwy 199, Springtown
- Rayl Park 3402 Pueblo Trail, Lake Worth

UPCOMING FOOD PANTRIES

- **Thursday, May 20**
First Baptist Church Castle Hills
401 Beverly Rd., Azle 8 a.m. to noon
- **Saturday, May 22**
The Edge Church
1313 SE Parkway, Azle, 4 to 6 p.m.
- **Tuesday, May 25**
Tarrant Area Food Bank Azle Mobile Pantry
133 E. Main Street, 4 to 6 p.m.
- **Tuesday, May 25**
Tarrant Area Food Bank
Springtown Area Community Connection
316 Church Street, 3 to 5 p.m.

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FFA and 4H Participation Pays Dividends

For the last two weeks we have talked about the nation's premier Agricultural youth organizations, the FFA and the 4H. We are talking about millions of young people being affected each year by these two organizations which are led by tens of thousands of high school Agriculture teachers, county Agricultural extension agents and adult volunteers.



AG 101
By Jack DeShazo

Jack DeShazo has decades of experience in the agriculture field.

I thought it would be interesting to list just a few prominent former members who have gone on to be leaders in many professions. Please note that I did not list many leaders in Agriculture, those are a given; former FFA and 4H members are leaders in all facets of Agriculture. So, listed below are just a few of the prominent ones who can be found beyond our local towns and communities.

NAME	TITLE/RESPONSIBILITY	STATE MEMBER
Taylor Brown	Owner Northern Ag Network	Montana
Tim Kimura	Professional Equine Trail Course Designer	California
Tom McKittrick	Gen. Manager World Dairy Expo	Wisconsin
Orion Samuelson	Agribusiness Director WGN Radio	Wisconsin
Steve Doocy	Co-anchor Fox & Friends, Fox News	Kansas
Jimmy & Roslyn Carter	U.S. President & First Lady	Georgia
Gen. Creighton Abrams	Fmr. Chief of Staff U. S. Army	Massachusetts
Lt. Gen. Russell Honoré	Fmr. Commanding Gen. U.S. First Army	Louisiana
General Hugh Shelton	Fmr. U.S. Army/Chair, Joint Chiefs of Staff	N. Carolina
Chris Kyle	Fmr. U.S. Navy Seal	Texas
Alan Shepard	First U.S. Astronaut in Space	N. Hampshire
Ellison Onizuka	Fmr. NASA Astronaut	Hawaii
Tim McGraw	Musician and Recording Artist	Louisiana
Taylor Swift	Musician and Recording Artist	Tennessee
Trace Adkins	Musician and Recording Artist	Louisiana
Lyle Lovett	Musician and Recording Artist	Texas
Don Henley	Rock Music entertainer & Recording Artist	Texas
Johnny Cash	Musician and Recording Artist	Arkansas
Willie Nelson	Musician and Recording Artist	Texas
Tom Wopat	Recording Artist and Actor	Wisconsin
George Strait	Musician and Recording Artist	Texas
Baxter Black	Veterinarian and Celebrity Cowboy Poet	New Mexico
Bo Jackson	Heisman Trophy Winner & NFL Player	Alabama
Herschel Walker	Heisman Trophy Winner/NFL Player	Georgia
Jordy Nelson	NFL Player	Kansas
Johnny Bench	Professional Baseball Player	Oklahoma
Herbert Perry	Professional Baseball Player	Florida
"Big Country" Reeves	Professional Basketball Player	Oklahoma
Sterling Martin	Two-time Daytona 500 Winner	Tennessee
Rulon Gardner	2000 Olympic Gold Medalist G-R Wrestling	Wyoming
Peg Armstrong-Gustafson	Owner & Founder Amson Technology	Iowa
Dan Bartlett	Exec. VP Corporate Affairs Wal-Mart	Texas
William T. Boehm	Former Sr. VP The Kroger Company	Wisconsin
Jim Davis	Creator of Garfield comic strip	Indiana
Morris Dees	Founder Southern Poverty Law Center	Alabama
Elizabeth Hund	Sr. VP- Food Industries, US Bank	Kansas
Chris Johns	Editor in Chief, National Geographic Mag.	Oregon
Nicholas Kristof	NY Times columnist, Pulitzer Prize winner	Oregon
J. Wilson McCallister	Fmr. Assoc. Gen. Counsel, Deere & Co.	Florida
Fred McClure	Fmr. Aide to Pres. Reagan & G. H. W. Bush	Texas
James E. Newsome	Fmr. Pres. NY Mercantile Exchange	Florida
James E. Oesterreicher	Fmr. CEO & Board Chairman JC Penney	Florida
Richard Posthumus	Pres. and CEO Compatico	Michigan
Bill Sarpalius	Pres. & CEO Advantage Assoc. International	Michigan
Jeffery Simmons	Pres, Elanco Animal Health, Eli Lilly & Co.	Texas
Javier Moreno	Sr. Manager Toyota North America	New York
Charles Stenholm	Sr. policy advisor, OFW Law	Puerto Rico
Rick Perry	Fmr. U.S. Sec. of Energy, Texas Governor	Texas
Raymond N. DuBois	Dean College of Medicine, Univ. S. Carolina	Texas
Janice C. Eberly	Distinguished Prof., N'western University	California

If your thoughts are along the line of who are some former FFA and 4H members that you probably know on a first name basis, they are all around you. Look to the local farmers, ranchers, florists, landscapers, horsemen

and horsewomen, veterinarians, ministers, bankers, doctors, artists, firefighters, law enforcement officers, pharmacists, lawyers, business leaders, local newspaper folks, local political leaders, public school teachers

& leaders, college instructors/professors and leaders, military members & leaders, etc., etc. Hmm, do you think there is a direct correlation between FFA and 4H participation and successful leaders? 'til next week!

He's a Minis-ter Society

Please forgive my bad headline pun as I tell you about my friend, Gerre.



BE AMAZING
By Gerry Lewis

Azle resident Dr. Gerry Lewis guides explorers to discover their AMAZING. He is an author, musician, and speaker, and a coach-sultant for individuals, churches, and organizations. More at www.discoveryouramazing.com.

In my post last week I talked about saying affirming things about people while they are still around to hear them and I mentioned that I would be doing so over the next few weeks.

I met Gerre when I started my current job as Executive Director/Lead Strategist of Harvest Baptist Association in 2008.

This tall, lanky smile-in-cowboy-boots-and-Wranglers dropped by my office to say hi and get acquainted. At that time, he was serving as the interim music minister in one of the association churches.

I immediately liked him. (How could I not like a fellow "G")?

Fast forward about three years and he was serving as the interim music minister in another of our churches—the one to which I had just moved my church membership. Due to the nature of my job, I don't have many Sundays at my "home church," so I mostly went on Wednesday evenings on my way home from my office in Decatur.

It was during those few months of his interim there that we really became friends. I got to see how he interacted with people besides me.

It was a little disappointing to find out that he really didn't like me better than anyone else.

Here's the thing I have said many times about Gerre over the years that I have known him:

He has the unique gift of being able to make every person in the room feel like the most important person in the room.

It is because of that gift that he is legendary in Decatur and Wise County.

Now, he is a gifted singer and worship leader. He's friendly, funny, tells a great story, and never takes himself seriously. He's been head-over-heals in love with his dear wife for 52 years this month. He's a model dad and grandpa.

But make no mistake—

the character quality that puts him in a category by himself is the way he genuinely loves people and lets them know it.

There are so many "Gerre quotes" I could share, but the one that stands out above all others is, "I love the fire out of you. And I'm not kidding this time."

I discovered a few years ago that it is next to impossible to have a lunch conversation with Gerre in a public place in Decatur because everybody in town is so happy to see him walk in the door.

A handful of people who read this will know Gerre and understand what I'm talking about.

But for everyone else, here's the lesson for today.

For Gerre, "minister" is not a title or occupation; it is an all-consuming identity. When he looks at the world, he sees needs that can be met and people who must be loved. And it has absolutely nothing to do with their church membership, politics, or anything else.

He just sees people and loves and serves them (the most basic definition of *ministry*) with all his heart.

When I grow up, I'd like to be that kind of Gerry.

And there is no greater aspiration for any of our names.

Be amazing today, my friend.



The Springtown Epigraph

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Porcupines fall in area round to Graham



In the top of the seventh, SHS gave up five additional runs and Graham put the game out of reach.

Photo by Quinton Lilley

BY QUINTON LILLEY
editor@azlenews.net

The ultimate goal going into every season is to win a state championship.

While some teams view that as a reality only a select few get the chance to live out that goal.

Unfortunately for the Springtown baseball team, their state title dreams came to an end this past weekend when they lost in the UIL Class 4A area round to Graham in a two-game sweep.

SHS lost game one at home on Friday 12-2 and lost game two on Saturday in Graham 6-3.

Springtown coach Josh Ward said he thought his team made the most of its' potential.

"Overall, I thought this team more than exceeded expectations. Going into the season, we were picked to finish fifth in district and not make the playoffs. But

to finish as district runners up shows the hard work and fight of our kids really paying off."

SHS came into their series with Graham having won their last three consecutive games and also held a win over the Steers in the season opener back in February.

Nonetheless, Graham's quality hitting, and strong pitching proved to be the difference in the matchup.

"This past weekend we just didn't play our best. We weren't at our best on the mound and they really took advantage of our mistakes. Costly errors at some critical times of the game came back to hurt us. We also didn't adjust very well to what their pitchers were doing to us," Ward said.

In game one, Graham took an early 1-0 lead in the top of the first.

However, SHS was able to respond with a run of their own as Tristian Press-

ley stole home while the Steers had Cristian Hernandez caught between first and second.

Graham scored another run in the second inning but held Springtown scoreless in the bottom of the frame.

The third inning proved to be a game-changer for the Steers as they scored four runs pushing their lead up to 6-1.

The runs came on a sacrifice fly and two doubles as Hernandez tried to fight off the Steers' momentum at the plate.

SHS was unable to score for two more innings until Seth Lopez hit a ground ball that allowed Aiden Vickers to score from third.

That score made it a 7-2 game and the Porcupines needed a big inning to get back into it.

But in the top of the seventh, SHS gave up five additional runs and Graham put the game out of reach win-



Cristian Hernandez tried to fight off the Steers' momentum at the plate.

Photo by Quinton Lilley



Looking ahead to next season for SHS, they'll need to replace three senior starters in shortstop Tristian Pressley, pitcher Landon Foster, and catcher Cade Jordan all of which played major roles in the success of the 2021 season.

Photo by Quinton Lilley

ning 12-2.

Springtown had four hits and two runs in the game but committed four costly errors.

Pressley, Vickers, Lopez, and Scout Richards each had a hit in the contest for SHS, but Springtown's defense gave up 10 hits and 12 runs that were too much to overcome.

In game two, Springtown got off to a strong start taking a 1-0 lead in the first inning thanks to a single by William Gleason that drove in Hernandez.

SHS added to their lead in the third inning when Hernandez hit a ground ball and Pressley scored from third.

But Graham came out of their scoring slump in the fourth inning taking a 3-2 lead. The Steers went on to add two more runs in the fifth and another in the sixth.

SHS did score one more run in the fifth inning but the effort came up short as they lost 6-3.

Springtown got a hit from five different batters but had just two RBIs on the day (Hernandez and Gleason).

With the Porcupines loss, Graham moves on to the regional quarterfinals as they'll face Stephenville.

That series begins Thursday at Weatherford High.

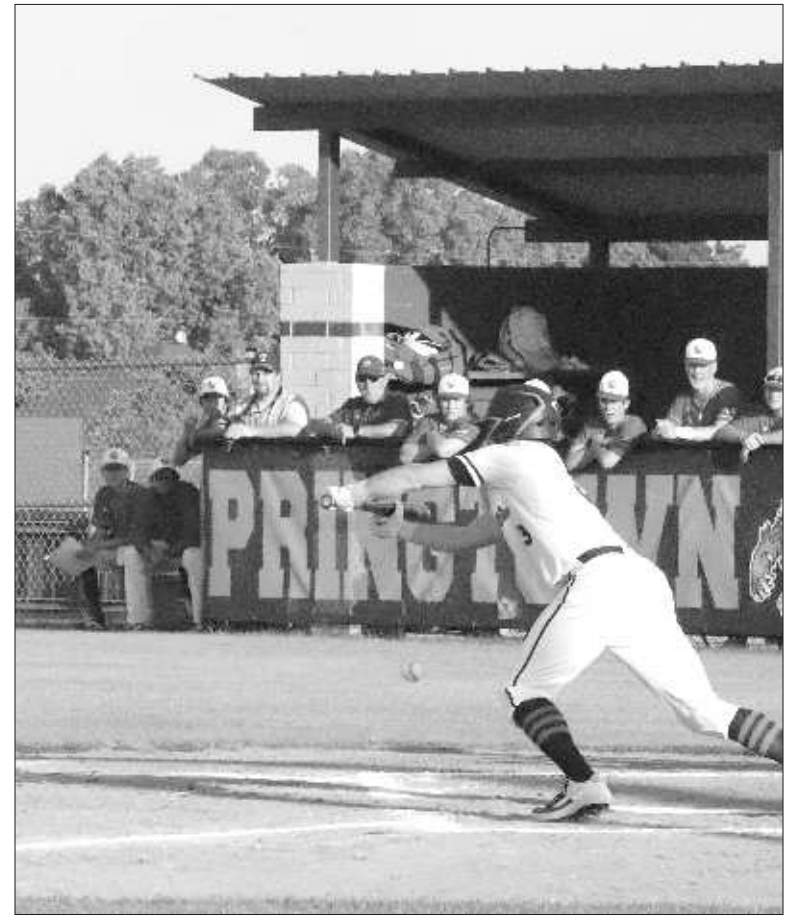
Looking ahead to next season for SHS, they'll need to replace three senior starters in shortstop Tristian Pressley, pitcher Landon Foster, and catcher Cade Jordan all of which played major roles in the success of the 2021 season.

Ward said his senior class was one he won't forget.

"All three of these guys will be hard to replace. I want to thank them for a great year and for all their hard work. They will be missed greatly but they've helped lay a good foundation for Porcupine baseball to build upon."

SHS finishes the 2021 season 23-11 overall.

Congrats to the Springtown baseball team for a spectacular season!



The Springtown High baseball team state title dreams came to an end this past weekend when they lost in the UIL Class 4A area round to Graham in a two-game sweep. They finished the season as district runners up, exceeding expectations. PHOTOS BY QUINTON LILLEY



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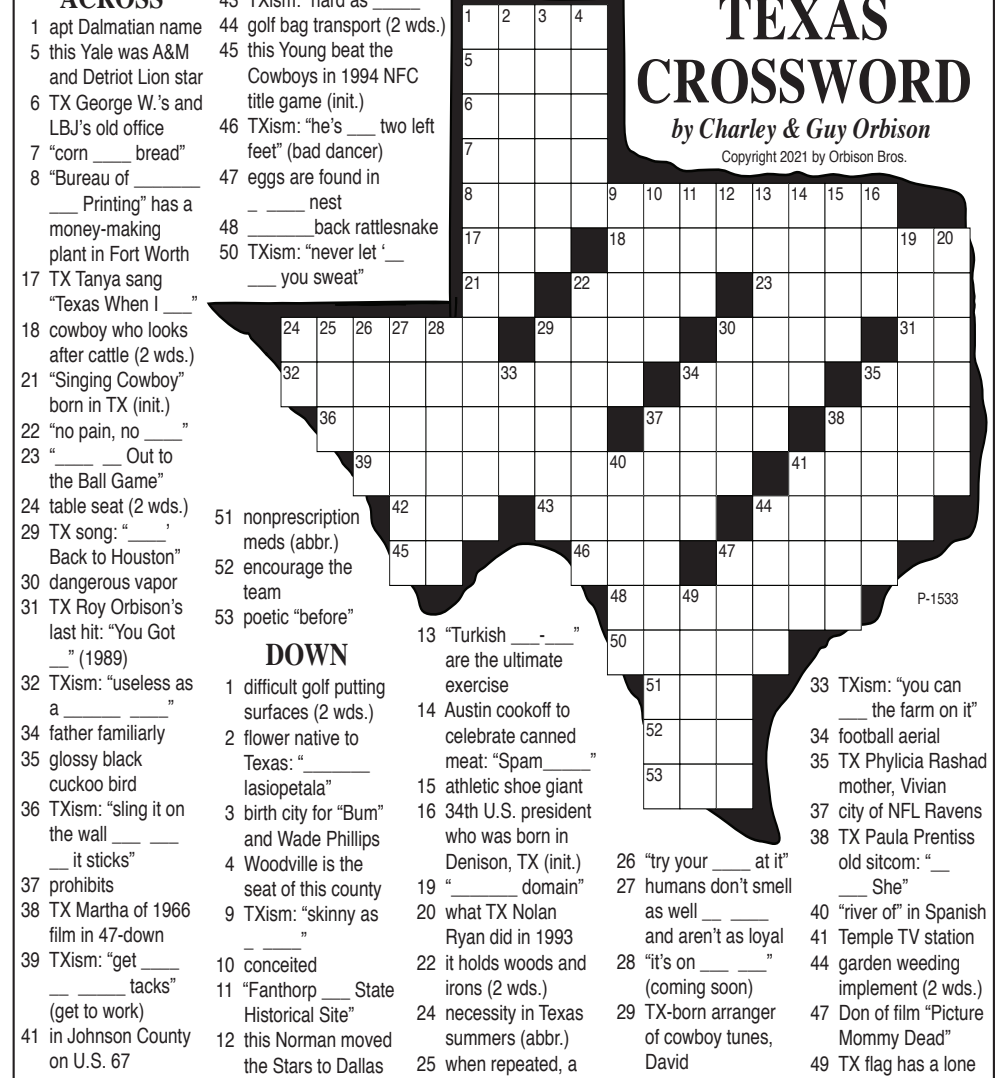
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ACROSS

- 1 apt Dalmatian name
- 5 this Yale was A&M and Detroit Lion star
- 6 TX George W.'s and LBJ's old office
- 7 "corn ___ bread"
- 8 "Bureau of ___ Printing" has a money-making plant in Fort Worth
- 17 TX Tanya sang "Texas When I ___"
- 18 cowboy who looks after cattle (2 wds.)
- 21 "Singing Cowboy" born in TX (init.)
- 22 "no pain, no ___"
- 23 "___ Out to the Ball Game"
- 24 table seat (2 wds.)
- 29 TX song: "___ Back to Houston"
- 30 dangerous vapor
- 31 TX Roy Orbison's last hit: "You Got ___" (1989)
- 32 TXism: "useless as a ___"
- 34 father familiarly
- 35 glossy black cuckoo bird
- 36 TXism: "sling it on the wall ___ it sticks"
- 37 prohibits
- 38 TX Martha of 1966 film in 47-down
- 39 TXism: "get ___ tacks" (get to work)
- 41 in Johnson County on U.S. 67
- 42 car fuel

DOWN

- 1 difficult golf putting surfaces (2 wds.)
- 2 flower native to Texas: "___ lasiopetala"
- 3 birth city for "Bum" and Wade Phillips
- 4 Woodville is the seat of this county
- 9 TXism: "skinny as ___"
- 10 conceited
- 11 "Fanthorp ___ State Historical Site"
- 12 this Norman moved the Stars to Dallas in 1993 (init.)
- 13 "Turkish ___" are the ultimate exercise
- 14 Austin cookoff to celebrate canned meat: "Spam ___"
- 15 athletic shoe giant
- 16 34th U.S. president who was born in Denison, TX (init.)
- 19 "___ domain"
- 20 what TX Nolan Ryan did in 1993
- 22 it holds woods and irons (2 wds.)
- 24 necessity in Texas summers (abbr.)
- 25 when repeated, a Cuban dance
- 26 "try your ___ at it"
- 27 humans don't smell as well ___ and aren't as loyal
- 28 "it's on ___" (coming soon)
- 29 TX-born arranger of cowboy tunes, David
- 30 Cowboys zealots
- 33 TXism: "you can ___ the farm on it"
- 34 football aerial
- 35 TX Phylcia Rashad mother, Vivian
- 37 city of NFL Ravens
- 38 TX Paula Prentiss old sitcom: "___ She"
- 40 "river of" in Spanish
- 41 Temple TV station
- 44 garden weeding implement (2 wds.)
- 47 Don of film "Picture Mommy Dead"
- 49 TX flag has a lone one (2 wds.)

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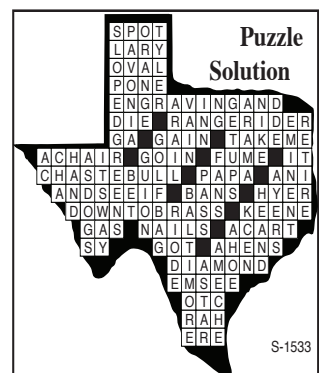
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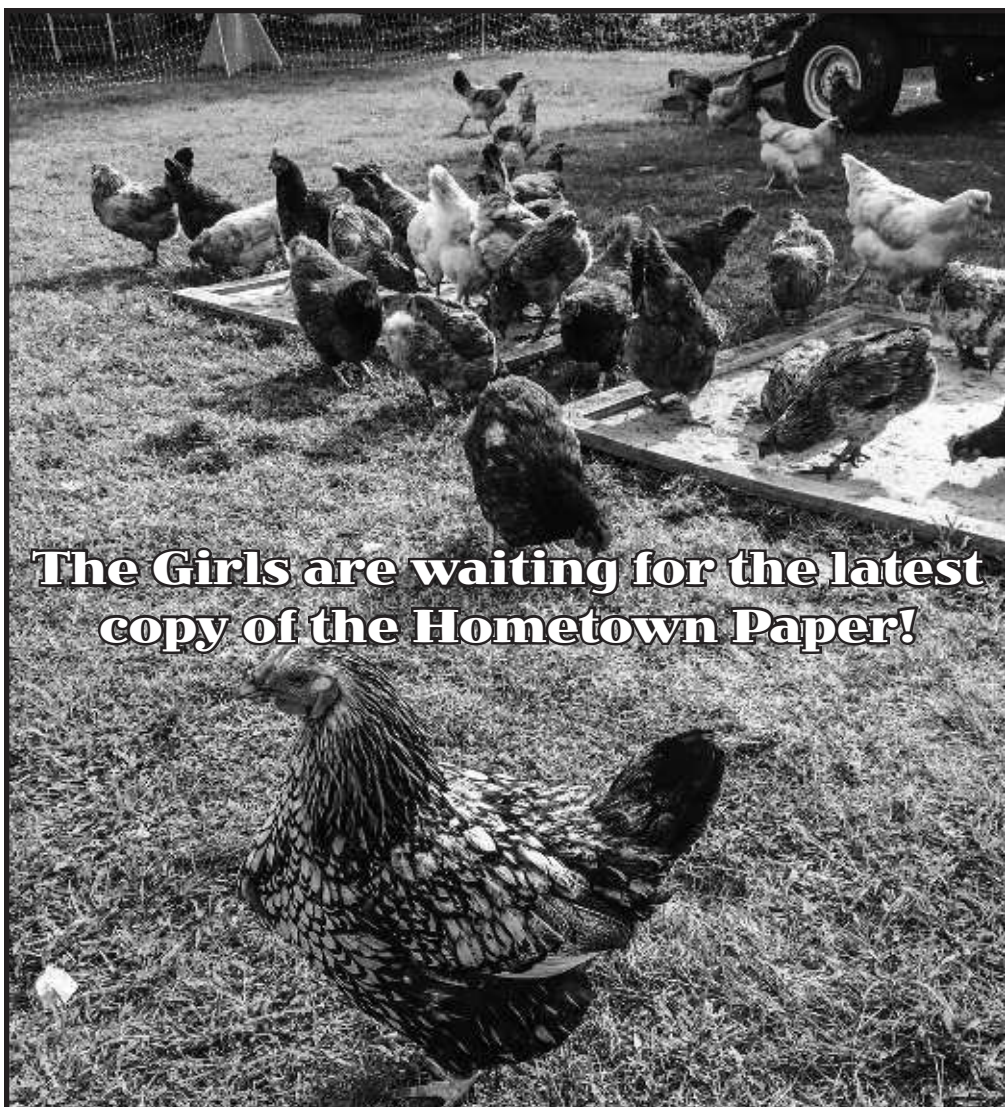
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The Woman in the Window

Watching is like nature photography: You don't interfere with the wildlife.

"The Woman in the Window" is a slow-burning psychological thriller based on the novel of the same name by A.J. Finn. It was adapted for the screen by writer Tracy Letts and is directed by Joe Wright ("Atonement").

Starring Amy Adams ("American Hustle"), Gary Oldman ("Dracula"), Fred Hechinger ("News of the World"), and Julianne Moore ("Still Alice"), the film takes viewers on a ride through the twists and turns of a mind dealing with trauma.

THE PLOT

Anna Fox (Adams) hasn't left her home in nearly a year. Once a well-respected child psychologist, now Anna spends her days watching her neighbors from the safety of her empty New York brownstone.

The Russell family moves in across the street, with a teenage son named Ethan (Hechinger) who seems harmless enough as he tries to make friendly overtures

The Woman in the Window

6

2021

R

1 hour 40 minutes

Starring: Amy Adams, Gary Oldman, Fred Hechinger, Anthony Mackie, Julianne Moore, Wyatt Russell



toward Anna. One night, a woman introduces herself as Ethan's mother (Moore), and Anna is able to find connection with someone.

Then one night, as she's watching through the window, Anna sees Ethan's mother murdered in the house across the street. But is what she saw real, or just something her mind has made her see?

WHAT WORKED

The cast is, of course, phenomenal. Adams, Oldman, Moore, and Hechinger come together to bring a bit of

suspense with a touch of the noir films constantly playing in the background of Anna's living room.

WHAT DIDN'T WORK

The fight at the end seemed a bit over-choreographed, similar to what you would see on a stage rather than a screen.

SUMMING IT UP

Having read the book, there were no surprises here for me. But to anyone who hasn't read the A.J. Finn novel first, you are in for a ride.



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SPRINGTOWN AREA CHAMBER OF COMMERCE
HOMETOWN HEROES

Community still coming to terms with loss of beloved pastor

BY SUSAN MCFARLAND
sptreporter@azlenews.net

Darrell Mathis was a hero, a courageous warrior, and someone his community admired, according to those who knew him.

Mathis, senior pastor at Hilltop Family Church, died Dec. 17 following a courageous battle with COVID-19 at age 61.

On May 6, Mathis was honored during the Springtown Area Chamber of Commerce awards banquet for being a Hometown Hero.

Springtown Independent

dent School District Superintendent Mike Kelley presented the award to the Mathis family.

“Very few are recognized as a Hometown Hero,” Kelley said. “Darrell Mathis really left an impression on his community.”

Hilltop Family Church Pastor Brent Coplen, who was a personal friend and worked with Mathis for 17 years in ministry, said he was “the real deal.”

“He liked preaching, he liked to talk. He knew how to deal with people, and was not afraid to do things

he was called to do. He was very heroic,” Coplen said.

Mathis attended SISD for all 12 years and graduated in 1977. After working at his family owned radio station, he went on staff at Hilltop Family Church in 2004. Roles there included children’s ministry, administrator, associate pastor and then senior pastor in January 2015.

He was involved in many community functions in Springtown such as the Springtown Ministerial group, Lions Club, SISD

School Board, Neighbor-to-Neighbors, Springtown Athletic Booster Club and most recently, Springtown Area Community Connection.

Those he left behind have a void in their life that is hard to fill.

His wife Sheri Mathis said the family takes things “day by day.”

“The church family is doing well but their hearts still hurt,” she said.

Mathis said church



Darrell Mathis, senior pastor at Hilltop Family Church, passed away on December 17.. PHOTO COURTESY MATHIS FAMILY

Hometown Heroes
CONTINUED PAGE 4

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SPRINGTOWN AREA CHAMBER OF COMMERCE

ALVIN ORD'S**Alvin Ord's blessing the community**BY QUINTON LILLEY
editor@azlenews.net

When Mistie Rivera took over as owner of Alvin Ord's Sandwich Shop in March of 2017, she knew she would have a chance to affect the community through service.

What she didn't know was that an opportunity would arise to give back to others through blessing boxes.

Back when the pandemic began in March of 2020 multiple businesses began shutting down, schools closed, sports were canceled and people needed support as money became hard to come by.

One of the few restaurants that were able to stay open throughout the year was Alvin Ord's and Rivera says she and her staff did as much as they could



Mistie Rivera was presented the Spirit of Springtown award at the Chamber banquet. PHOTO BY JESSICA MCKINNEY

to serve the community in their time of need.

"We began using blessing boxes where we would give

donations to people in the

Alvin Ord's
CONTINUED PAGE 5

Hometown Heroes CONTINUED FROM PAGE 2

Members of Darrell Mathis' family were presented the Hometown Hero award at the Chamber banquet. PHOTO BY JESSICA MCKINNEY

members have been a blessing, are "still very supportive and check in often" to make sure the family is doing ok.

"God is still working. Brent Copeland is senior pastor, there are newcomers in the church every Sunday, baptisms are up ... and life still goes on," she tearfully said.

Mathis said since her husband's death a lot of money has been donated in his memory. Those funds were used for a new

playground.

"They are still getting the grass and the fence up, the kids are real excited," she said. "It's awesome how the community stepped up and helped."

Mathis said losing her husband to Covid-19 was hard to grasp. And then the winter storm hit, which added to the grief. Fortunately, her home was not damaged but it was an emotional time for her.

"I went downhill, it was a tender moment," she said.

She missed her husband's presence, and imagined what he would be doing to help not just his family, but the whole community.

Mathis said her parents as well as her late husband's mom, all in their 80s, are still trying to cope with the loss but know after this, they can survive anything else.

"This is so hard to understand," she said. "Derrell loved people. His family loved him. We all miss him. He was our rock."

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SPRINGTOWN AREA CHAMBER OF COMMERCE

BROOKSHIRE'S GROCERY

Brookshire's Grocery recognized for extra hours and service

BY QUINTON LILLEY
editor@azlenews.net

The last year has been a difficult one for many people across the world.

But here in Springtown specifically Brookshire's Grocery did their part to help the community keep some sort of normalcy not only through a global pandemic but also through a record-breaking snowstorm.

Under the leadership



Brookshire's Grocery was presented the Spirit of Springtown award at the Chamber banquet.

PHOTO BY JESSICA MCKINNEY

Brookshire's
CONTINUED PAGE 7

Alvin Ord's CONTINUED FROM PAGE 4

community, whether it was basic goods like flour, groceries, or canned food we did what we could."

Alvin Ord's also donated packs of water to local residents when the winter storm hit in February this year something Rivera said she was happy to do.

"Because we order all our food and goods from an industrial company we had access to water and flour and other things that other people couldn't find at times in stores. So donating those things to people was a true honor."

Through their donations as well as staying open for business through the pandemic and winter storms, Alvin Ord's also allowed locals to use their wifi from the parking lot.

"When people's power went out we were lucky enough to keep ours on, so we allowed locals to

come park in the parking lot and use our Wi-Fi free of charge for whatever they need. Many people were still working from home so the internet access came in handy."

Because of these additional efforts made by Alvin Ord's the Springtown Chamber of Commerce recognized the sandwich shop with an award at a recent banquet held at the Covered Bridge on May 6.

"It's really exciting when your community recognizes you for the work you've done. As the owner of my own business, I take pride in earning a great reputation and serving the great community of Springtown."

Rivera also added that since the pandemic has subsided she's been overwhelmed and honored by the support and thanks she's received.

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SPRINGTOWN AREA CHAMBER OF COMMERCE

CHADWELL & SON GAS CO.**Family run business
treating others like family**BY QUINTON LILLEY
editor@azlenews.net

Chadwell & Son Gas Co. is a family-run business like any others in Springtown.

They serve the community with quality service and provide motor fuel, propane tanks, and clean air-fuel.

But during the pandemic and especially during the winter storms in February Chadwell and Son made sure they did their part to assist locals in need.

Store manager Kerry

Chadwell is the son of owner Kenneth Chadwell and the two have worked together in their family business for nearly 15 years.

During the winter storms that hit Texas in February both Kerry and Kenneth agree to help fill locals RV bottles, never changed their prices on propane tanks even as demand roses, and made sure to keep their store open for business like normal.

“The winter storm was tough because we had no electricity inside the store

and could only take cash payments, but we kept our doors open and served the people outside even though it was really cold.”

Kerry also said that his 11 employees would rotate shifts so each person wasn't working outside too long but made sure that people who were looking for heating sources could find them at Chadwell and Son.

“It was really tough times for many people including our employees, but we did what we felt was right.”

Based on the outstand-

ing service they gave to the community the Springtown Chamber of Commerce recognized Chadwell and Son at a recent award banquet.

When asked what receiving this award means to their family Kerry said, “Our community has shown its thankfulness for what we did, and that makes us feel good. We appreciate all our customers and this community very much; it's been an honor to serve the people who need us most. It's truly an honor to be appreciated.”



Kenneth Chadwell at the banquet.

PHOTO BY JESSICA MCKINNEY

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SPRINGTOWN AREA CHAMBER OF COMMERCE
**THE SPRINGTOWN
 BREAD LADY**

Giving the bread of life

BY JESSICA MCKINNEY
 azlereporter@azlenews.net

Jennifer Lanham comes from a family that is dedicated to simple living. They are entrepreneurs with a focus on the community around them.

When the pandemic forced Lanham to close down her massage business, By Faith Massage Therapy, Lanham soon found a new calling.

She had been baking bread for her church, and taking what she had left over to the parking lot of Brookshire's to pass out to those in need. Soon, that need for bread grew, and from that The Springtown Bread Lady was born.

People would line up, hoping to get a homemade, handmade loaf of fresh bread, and words of



Jennifer Lanham received an award from the Springtown Area Chamber of Commerce.

encouragement and faith from Lanham when most residents in Springtown were feeling at their lowest.

Throughout the pandemic, Lanham made and

distributed thousands of loaves of bread, nourishing her community both phys-

Bread Lady
 CONTINUED PAGE 8

Brookshire's Grocery CONTINUED FROM PAGE 5

of Store Director, Wes Richardson Brookshire's began giving seniors over the age of 65 discounts and their own independent shopping hours every day starting in March of 2020.

"We previously had senior shopping hours on Tuesdays only, but with restaurants closing down; there was a higher demand for groceries in the area so we opened those senior shopping hours up to a few hours each day. So that older folks could get what they needed while our supplies were available."

Not only did the store allow seniors to have their own designated time to shop, but the store also gave five-percent discounts to shoppers as well.

"While five percent doesn't seem like much, once the winter storm came in February a lot of people didn't have extra money coming in, so we figured any little bit of saving could help."

Richardson also mentioned that his staff would close slightly earlier in the evening to restock each night, something they typically do once every few days.

And for this extra effort, the Springtown Chamber of Commerce recognized Brookshire's for their tremendous work.

Richardson received the honor but credited his staff for what they did as well.

"Our staff throughout the last year has been under a lot of stress, with people losing their

jobs, water damages and power outages from the storm its been tough on a lot of us. But my staff is amazing. They've always done their best to serve our community with honor and in the best way they could. Receiving recognition for what we've done here in Springtown is a special feeling."

Even more impressive than the efforts previously mentioned Brookshire's also gave discounts to first responder and military members all year long in 2020.

"As the only grocery store in town we take pride in serving the Springtown community, and when there's a need, we want our customers to know we're there for them. That's what it's all about"



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Bread Lady

CONTINUED FROM PAGE 7

ically and spiritually.

She was one of several community members who were honored during the Celebrate Springtown awards banquet.

"It's just such an honor to be recognized in this way and with some of the biggest people in our community," she said upon receiving her award.

Lanham believes that everyone should take every opportunity to help your community, whenever one presents itself.

"When you have an idea, do it. When you hear the Lord, obey him. We have a community of amazing people. There are so many opportunities to help."

SPRINGTOWN AREA CHAMBER OF COMMERCE
CITY OF SPRINGTOWN

The community coming together during a crisis

BY SUSAN MCFARLAND
sptreporter@azlenews.net

Providing services to a city during a global pandemic was challenging for city of Springtown employees. But they figured it out, helped each other and found a way to make it work safely and efficiently. About when they had that situation under control, the winter storm hit, throwing many more challenges their way.

Christina Derr, administrative specialist, said during the pandemic, staff faced a lot of the same challenges everyone else did, and the blessing in disguise is that everyone

was trying to combat the same issues.

"I think that helps people be more patient and understanding," Derr said. "It made me realize how tight-knit the community is."

The pandemic changed the way city staff operated. In March, they started holding city council meetings virtually, something not allowed pre-pandemic.

Once things opened up, they had limit the number of people in the council chamber.

From a staff perspective,

**City of Springtown**

CONTINUED PAGE 10

The City of Springtown was honored for the work it has done for its citizens with the Spirit of Springtown award at the banquet.

PHOTO BY JESSICA MCKINNEY

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SPRINGTOWN AREA CHAMBER OF COMMERCE

PARKER COUNTY ESD1

ESD1 continuing to serve locals



Representatives from Parker County ESD #1 accepted the Spirit of Springtown award at the Chamber banquet.
 PHOTO BY JESSICA MCKINNEY

BY QUINTON LILLEY
 editor@azlenews.net

The Parker County Services District 1 is no stranger to stressful situations that happen at a moment's notice and their high-quality training is what allowed them to function in impressive fashion all of 2020.

At a recent Springtown Chamber of Commerce Award banquet, the Parker Co. ESD1 was honored for their tremendous work in the Springtown community during both the COVID-19 outbreak last spring and the record-breaking winter storms that came through Texas in February.

ESD1 is led by Fire Chief Stephen Watson who said receiving recognition for the work his staff does is a great honor.

"This past calendar year has been really stressful for a lot of people, but the work is always worth it. Being recognized for the fantastic work we did was a great honor and something all our staff should be proud of. We put in a lot of long hours and we're grateful our sacrifices didn't go unnoticed."

ESD1 is the primary emergency response company in Parker County and serves the communities of Aledo, Peaster, Poolville, La Junta, and Springtown just to name a few.

Some of the efforts made by ESD1 during the pandemic and winter storm including handling nearly a 50-percent increase in emergency calls, 11 fires during the winter storm that lasted just over a week,

helping fix home water leaks, and giving oxygen tanks to those who needed them most.

"During the pandemic, one of our biggest concerns was trying to keep enough staff healthy and working. With the increased amount of calls coming in we had more people working than usual so it was great that we figured it out and did so successfully."

When asked how he felt the community received his staff's extra efforts during the past year Watson said the response had been overwhelmingly positive.

"We've received lots of thanks you notes, thoughtful gestures and that means a lot. We love this community and we will continue to do our best to serve them."

SPRINGTOWN AREA CHAMBER OF COMMERCE

CORN FED CATERING

Serving the community, one meal at a time

BY JESSICA MCKINNEY
azlereporter@azlenews.net

Less than one month after embarking full-time on the dream of running their own business, Corn Fed Catering, the pandemic threw a big wrench in the plans of Trent and Jennifer Shaw. Catering jobs that were lined up were canceled; Jennifer, who had quit her job as a dental practice manager to focus on the business, was now unemployed.

The Shaws got creative. They began offering family style takeout meals, offered holiday meal specials. When

they found people in need, they prepared free meals for them. Whatever they could do to keep their business going, they did it.

By June, they were finally able to reopen their event venue, and in November Trent found it necessary to leave his corporate job to focus on their growing business. The catering jobs were coming in, thanks to partnerships within the community.

Then in February, Springtown, like much of Texas, was hit hard by an unprecedented winter storm that left thousands of local families without water, electricity, or both.

Events and catering jobs were canceled once again.

Trent and Jennifer recognized an immediate need within their community and knew they could help. Instead of sitting on stores of food that would have gone to waste, they decided to take that food to the venue and get cooking. Surprisingly, the venue had not lost power or water.

They looked through their storage of non-perishable foods from a previous job at a movie shoot – sodas, coffee, tea, granola bars, fruit, and candy. They invited others to help open the venue to distribute what they had

to the community, free of charge.

“We recognize how fortunate we are to have opened a small business in the food service industry, and that we were able to survive the hardships over the past year. There is no explanation for the success other than hard work, a supportive community, and God’s Grace.”

The focus of Corn Fed will continue to be serving delicious food, giving back to the community that has been welcoming, and repaying kindness with kindness whenever the opportunity presents itself.



Corn Fed Catering was presented the Spirit of Springtown award at the Chamber banquet.

PHOTO BY JESSICA MCKINNEY

City of Springtown CONTINUED FROM PAGE 8

they wore multiple hats, working in other departments as other staff members were quarantined.

“It really made us realize we are a cohesive unit and support each other in our day to day functions,” Derr said. “I really think that helped lessen the potential impact on the services we provide.”

Before the storm hit, city officials held emergency management meetings to prepare.

“What nobody prepared for and nobody expected was a three-day power outage. We were prepared for short term outages; we have reserves when it comes to water,” she said.

Derr said crews worked round the clock trying to make the situation better.

“Everyone stepped up from warming centers to sharing food and water,” Derr said. “That was a community-wide effort.

During the crisis everyone came together to make the situation as best as it could be.”

Just a few days before the storm, Joseph McCanless was named Springtown’s public works superintendent, which proved quite the test for the new super as he led his team through hour after hour of water main breaks and other issues.

“I couldn’t have done it without my guys, if anything’s going to show you what your team is made of, it’s a once-in-a-lifetime weather event,” McCanless said. “We always want to do our best, but it hits home. Our families were also without heat and water. It’s a helpless feeling when you’re doing everything you can do and it’s not enough.”

During the storm, Derr kept residents informed via Facebook about water

main breaks, power outages, boil water notices, and where to find help.

McCanless said Derr spent most of the week at the police station getting updates.

City Administrator David Miller said the staff truly appreciates receiving the Judy Smerud Spirit of Springtown award.

“I know the staff has worked tirelessly to adapt throughout the COVID-19 pandemic and ensure that we were able to provide the highest level of service possible to our residents while keeping the health, safety, and well-being of everyone in mind,” Miller said. “This same level of dedication was shown through February’s winter storm when staff members worked for nearly a week straight to maintain and restore critical services to our residents.”

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SPRINGTOWN AREA CHAMBER OF COMMERCE
SPRINGTOWN ISD

Learning as we go

BY JESSICA MCKINNEY
 azlereporter@azlenews.net

When students left for spring break back in March 2020, no one knew what changes were coming.

That one week of spring break soon extended into two, and then the decision was made to keep students at home, learning virtually for the remainder of the school year.

This unexpected change left faculty and staff at Springtown Independent School District scrambling to learn a new way of teaching students. In addition to the learning aspect, the district needed to find ways to get meals to students for the rest of the school year, through the summer, and into the start of the new year.

Bus drivers were set on routes to deliver meals. Chromebooks and Wi-Fi hotspots were distributed to students at home for the venture into a whole new learning platform.

When things returned to a little more normalcy later into the 2020-2021 school year, SISD was hit by winter storm Uri, leaving students and their families without water and electricity for days while below-freezing temperatures and icy conditions kept everyone at home.

Pipes in the schools burst, boilers leaked, and water lines broke. Boil water notices were spread across the district for those who had access to it. It seemed like one thing after another was hitting Springtown.

The school district came together to repair damages, to assist families in whatever way they could, and soon students were welcomed back to campus to resume learning.

The last year has been difficult for Springtown students and their families. SISD worked to ensure that the students were given the tools to learn, although it was a hard adjustment for everyone. Teachers have had to juggle between their virtual and in-person students, learn new techniques for helping their students learn both in the classroom and at home.

The nutritional staff in the district stepped up in a big way to make sure their students were provided with breakfast and lunch to keep them nourished



Springtown ISD overcame many obstacles over the last year, and were recognized by the Chamber for their hard work. PHOTO BY JESSICA MCKINNEY

while they learn. It is amazing to see the resilience of faculty, stu-

dents and staff throughout the district, who faced out these challenges over the last year and have come out successful.

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SPRINGTOWN AREA CHAMBER OF COMMERCE

SPRINGTOWN FAMILY HEALTH

McDaniel paves the way during the pandemic

BY SUSAN MCFARLAND
sptreporter@azlenews.net

Dr. Gene McDaniel knew Covid-19 was going to be a life-changing event. In January, a few months before the shutdown, he started trying to get personal protective equipment but it was unavailable. He then turned to the health department and to FEMA for supplies.

“At the very beginning

when it first started, there were no set guidelines ... so you were on your own as to what to do to see patients,” McDaniel said. “I spoke to other physicians, and made my own way to navigate during the pandemic.”

Through McDaniel’s efforts and figuring out how to get people tested in the community, they started to get supplies.

“We were only clinic on

this side of the county to do testing,” he said. “Instead of sending people to the hospital or to the health clinic, we were able to help people here.”

The clinic also faced challenges with social distancing, but began telemedicine visits and opted for Covid-19 testing in the parking lot so patients would not expose staff.

“It was frustrating for patients not to be able to walk in, but it only takes one sick person to expose everybody else,” he said. “It was a necessity at the time, now we’re open.”

Another accomplishment was getting a machine that provided Covid-19 test results. With test results in hand, the doctor and his staff could follow up with patients and keep in touch with them until their virus went away, to make sure they got better.



The staff at Springtown Family Health were honored to be recognized with the Spirit of Springtown award at the Chamber banquet.
PHOTO BY JESSICA MCKINNEY

“At some points during the peak season, we were calling more than 30 per day,” he said.

McDaniel also played a role in getting the com-

munity vaccinated and when they were first released, he applied to give the vaccines at the clinic.

At that time, there were only two clinics in Parker

County with vaccines, so having another one in Springtown was very helpful. His staff also held a clinic to give first-responders vaccines.

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SPRINGTOWN AREA CHAMBER OF COMMERCE

SPRINGTOWN POLICE DEPARTMENT

Working round the clock, to protect and serve in any situation

BY SUSAN MCFARLAND
sptreporter@azlenews.net

Between the pandemic and the winter storm, law enforcement officers have been put to the test this past year.

Responding to calls with potentially Covid-19 infected people is one risk. While most people were social distancing, police officers had to re-think how to effectively do their job.

Along with the potential hazards related to contracting the virus, officers experienced stress from obligations outside of work with possibilities of exposing family members, or having a loved one sick with the virus. Many officers had to work long shifts, as others had to be quarantined.

After almost a year of those issues, Winter Storm Uri added to their stress. While most people were trying to stay warm inside their homes during the winter storm, Springtown officers were on slick, icy roadways taking service calls.



Chief Salazar of the Springtown Police Department accepted the Chamber's award during the Thursday night event. PHOTO BY JESSICA MCKINNEY

Some were for animals left out in the cold with no shelter during the snowstorm. Many others were for vehicle crashes.

Others included a criminal mischief call at Inheritance Estates, where someone cut the water valves to new houses dur-

ing freezing weather; a welfare concern about a toddler in a yard wearing only a hoodie and saggy diaper, and someone cut the lock to a business after the city's power went out and then tried pulling out the power meter to cut off the alarm.

In between calls, officers helped pass out water and assisted other agencies with needs they had, working round the clock to protect and serve the community.

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SPRINGTOWN AREA CHAMBER OF COMMERCE

TEXAS HEALTH AZLE

Supporting the health of Springtown

BY JESSICA MCKINNEY
azlereporter@azlenews.net

The healthcare system has been on the front lines over the past year, and Texas Health Harris Azle supported the health of the citizens of Springtown and surrounding areas through it all.

The local hospital did not close its doors to those needing care. They found a way to keep patients safe, whether they were coming in for emergency services or being treated within the hospital for other issues.

Doctors, nurses, and support staff at Texas Health Azle worked around the clock to ensure quality care for each person who walked through their doors.

The COVID-19 pandemic has been scary for many in the area. A lot of

loved ones were treated for coronavirus at the hospital, and it was hard on their families to know that they could not be with them while they were inside the hospital. But the nurses made sure that those patients did not feel alone while they were receiving care.

The biggest concern at Texas Health Azle was not the need for personal protective equipment or ventilators. It was for the workforce of caregivers that spent months on the frontline of the fight over the past year. But with the support of the team at the hospital, the staff was able to push through and fight to support their patients in the community, helping them weather the storm of the pandemic, and they will continue to do so until the fight is won.

SPRINGTOWN AREA CHAMBER OF COMMERCE

TRI-COUNTY ELECTRIC

Together we fight

BY JESSICA MCKINNEY
azlereporter@azlenews.net

As one of the essential businesses that serve the community of Springtown, Tri-County Electric Cooperative strived to provide service and meet the needs of its member owners throughout the pandemic and Winter Storm Uri.

Throughout the pandemic, the company found ways to cut operating costs and manage their capital expenditures to not raise member rates, and they did not have to lay off a single employee.

They created the internal slogan "Together We Fight" to represent the cohesiveness of the co-op family.

"During the pandemic, our employees worked from the office so we could take care of our members as a team. Our linemen are not able to maintain our lines from home, so all employees came in."

They worked to implement many safety proto-



Representatives from Tri-County Electric were presented the Spirit of Springtown award at the Chamber banquet.

PHOTO BY JESSICA MCKINNEY

cols both in the office and in the field to ensure employees and member owners were safe. They learned how to adapt in a COVID environment to serve members and the community.

When the winter storm came through the area causing a grid crisis hoped to be a once-in-a-lifetime event, Texans entered uncharted waters. Tri-County employees were in those same waters alongside their fellow Texans.

Employees were working in three shifts through-

out the storm and grid crisis to make sure members were being taken care of and power being restored as quickly as possible. Linemen and field service workers were out in the subzero temperatures, snow and ice to bring power and warmth back to Springtown residents.

Many residents were concerned about how they were going to be able to pay their bills, whether it was due to reduced incomes because of the pandemic or high usage bills due to the week-long below-freezing

temperatures.

"We postponed disconnects and our member services team worked with members to set up payment arrangements."

Concern for Community is a core value at Tri-County. The community affairs team worked with area nonprofits to provide grants, which included \$7,500 to charities in Parker County. The Tri-County CARES employee beneficiary committee raises money for employees and members in times of need. During the pandemic, the committee voted to help members pay their bills by donating more than \$3,100.

During the rolling blackouts, Darryl Schriver, President and CEO, worked to make sure members were aware of when those blackouts would be happening through Facebook Live updates and posts on the Tri-County website.

The last year has been a difficult for many Springtown residents, but with the support of Tri-County Electric, the community has held together, and will continue on, stronger, because together we fight.



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SPRINGTOWN AREA CHAMBER OF COMMERCE
TUSCANY'S ITALIAN RESTAURANT

Tuscany's bringing not only quality food, but a family environment

BY QUINTON LILLEY
 editor@azlenews.net

If you ask around many people would say that Tuscany's Italian Restaurant is one of the best local Italian restaurants in the county.

But it wasn't until 2020 when the restaurant received an even better review from customers after all the extra work they did to help the community in its time of need.

Besnick Ibishi has been the owner of Tuscany's since Oct. of 2019, and just five months into running his new business was shocked to find out that the global pandemic would likely shut down his business as he knew it.

"There was a lot of uncertainty around the COVID-19 virus and how we would survive. But thanks to God we made a way when we had to. While I knew our business would struggle I also knew others would struggle too so I decided to give back to them

as well."

Tuscany went on to donate pizzas to the local police department and firefighters as well as EMT workers and first responders who were working around the clock in local hospitals.

Ibishi manages nearly 20 employees and each of them he says played a vital role in keeping the restaurant open for business.

"I have to thank all my workers for their efforts. Without them, my family's business would not survive. And with their help, we were able to give back to those who need it."

Then when the winter storm came to Texas in February Tuscany's lost all electrical power but still persevered.

While many people needed food to eat with their power out Ibishi began cooking pizzas in the dark.

"We would be up every morning during the winter storm cooking pizzas in the dark using just our



Besnick Ibishi and Amy Walker
 PHOTO BY JESSICA MCKINNEY

phones for light in the store. We wanted everyone who needed food to have it and we did that with the grace of God on our side."

Ibishi was recognized last week at the Springtown Chamber of Commerce award banquet for his efforts and the Ibishi family says they are very thankful.

"I did this not because I wanted credit from others, I did it because I wanted God and my family to be pleased with me and my deeds. I love helping people and this was a way for me to do that. Thanks to all for their continued support of my business."

SPRINGTOWN AREA CHAMBER OF COMMERCE
WALNUT CREEK SUD

Crews brave historic temperatures

BY SUSAN MCFARLAND
 sptreporter@azlenews.net

With summer approaching, some North Texans may have forgotten how miserable they were just a few months ago. Winter Storm Uri left millions with no electricity and many with no running water during ice, subzero temperatures and dangerously low wind chills.

Steve Harris will never forget it. The general manager of Walnut Creek Special Utility District said during the historic storm his crew put in 475 hours of overtime, trying to repair and maintain 500 miles of water main. Harris received more than 650 emails and received hundreds of calls.

Harris said during the storm, 40 million gallons of water was used, two and a half times the normal usage for that time of the year.

Walnut Creek SUD kept the community informed of their progress through their alert system. With the rolling blackouts, it limited the ability to pump water and the water usage was more

than could be supplied.

Much of the communications involved pleading with residents to limit water usage, boil water, check for leaks, and "turn off water or get them fixed to preserve what water we can pump."

"I worked 24 hours a day for five days, and so did several of my people," Harris said. "Some had to rotate out, to go tend to livestock. The whole week seems like a blur looking back."

While people were cold in their homes, Harris and his crew were colder—outside trying to help the situation, which to some was not appreciated.

"I got called every name in the book" he said. "People complained that we did not answer the phone. But we weren't there ... we were out



Amy Walker and Steve Harris
 PHOTO BY JESSICA MCKINNEY

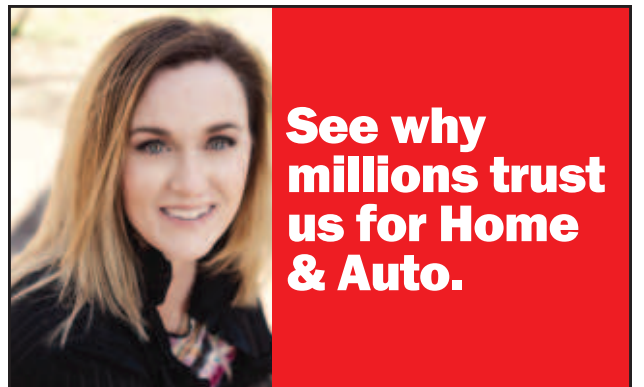
working."

Some folks, however, thanked the crews; some people even brought coffee.

"I never thought I would have to deal with a crisis like that," he said. "Some of our crew has been here 30 years. We have never been without water system-wide before."

Harris said lessons were learned that will be useful in the future.

"We learned a few things, if this happens again, we may know some better ways of rerouting water faster than we did," he said. "But during a crisis like that, it's not the time to experiment."



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SPRINGTOWN AREA CHAMBER OF COMMERCE

UMBRA WINERY**The heart of a community**BY JESSICA MCKINNEY
azlereporter@azlenews.net

Event venues and any business classified as a “bar” were hit hard at the start of the pandemic. Couples who had planned weddings months in advance had to cancel and businesses that had alcohol sales at their core were forced to shut down.

Umbra Winery was no exception, but one year later they have managed to keep their business going, and have become an integral community partner to the residents of Springtown.

Throughout the pandemic, John and Debbie Wilson worked with couples who had lost jobs, had reduced earnings, even illness. They offered extended payment

terms, reworked agreements, and even helped one couple who were displaced by their original venue when it went bankrupt.

They got creative and offered Micro Wedding and Elopement packages to meet the changing needs of prospective brides.

Just as things were beginning to open back up in Texas, the winter storms hit in February, leaving many without water and electricity. The bills that residents were facing were exorbitant, and many feared they would be cut off from necessary utilities if they couldn't pay.

Umbra Winery was without water, endured damage to pipes in the venue and production facility, and could not operate for two

weeks following the storms. They struggled to get things back to pre-storm operation levels.

In the meantime, Debbie saw post after post on Springtown social media boards of people who were desperate. They had no heat, no water. Basic needs that no one in the area was prepared to do without. Their neighbors were going to be out of work until businesses could become operational again. How could they afford the high electric and water bills that were sure to follow? How would they pay for food and shelter?

Debbie reached out to the community, wanting to have a fundraiser to help their Springtown neigh-

bors who needed help during this difficult time. Soon, she found out that Center of Hope in Weatherford was looking to open a satellite location in Springtown, an organization that offered assistance with utility bills, food, daycare, job placement assistance and training. She knew that this was the perfect recipient for any funds they would be able to raise.

Many community members joined with Umbra Winery to hold a live and online auction, many businesses offering their services

as items for the auction. Within a few weeks, they raised \$5,500 for Center of Hope.

“Area businesses, our neighbors, personal friends and vendor network were so amazingly generous,” said Debbie. “It was truly heartwarming to see what a great community we have here both in Springtown and in the wedding industry. It says so much about the ‘heart’ of people, that after a tumultuous year or more, we can still count on one another to help us get through even the toughest of times.”



Debbie Wilson with Amy Walker at the banquet.

PHOTO BY JESSICA MCKINNEY

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