

## Parker County Appraisal District reappraising all properties in county

### STAFF REPORTS

The Parker County Appraisal District is conducting a full reappraisal of all properties in Parker County, according to a news release from the district.

The appraisal district mailed more than 85,000

value notices on April 14.

The reappraisal cycle coincides with an audit the Texas Comptroller's Property Tax Assistance Division conducts called the School District Property Value Study, which is an independent estimate mandated

by the Texas Legislature to ensure that property values are at or near 100% market value for equitable distribution of state funding for public education. The appraisal district is required by law to reappraise property at market value. Being below mar-

ket value would violate the law, and therefore, the local school districts would lose state funding, according to the news release.

Instead of reappraising every year, the Parker County Appraisal District reappraises every other year to coin-

cide with the School District Property Value Study, and any value increase for this year is over a two-year period. According to the news release, the state of Texas has experienced historic price increases during that two-year period. The median home price in

Parker County has increased 32%, according to data from the Texas A&M Real Estate Center. The median home price in Parker County is now more than \$430,000 compared to 10 years ago when it

PLEASE SEE APPRAISAL | A9

# SHS One-Act Play company defies expectations by advancing to area contest

*'The Code Breaker' cast and crew reviews competition season, gets ready for public performances*

### MADELYN EDWARDS

madelyn@azlenews.net

The show must go on. And it did because Springtown High School theater students and staff made sure of it despite facing multiple difficulties.

This year's One-Act Play company carried their production of "The Code Breaker" to the area competition. Though they didn't advance as far as last year's company, the cast and crew said this achievement speaks to their resilience in the face of hardship.

"We've gone through a lot this year," SHS junior and One-Act Play cast member Nova Gould said, adding that the fact that they made it to area "is insanely good for how much we've had to work this year."

Gould said expectations for the cast and crew were just to be able to perform at the district competition. Instead, the team advanced to the bi-district competition and then to area.

One of the factors that made this year's competitive season unusual was a change in leadership.

The 2021-22 season director left SHS at the end of last school year, and a new teacher led the theater department throughout the fall. Then, that new teacher left, and Josh Sexton, who has been an assistant director for the past few years, stepped in to lead the students through competition. He was aided by Springtown Middle School theater teacher Aubyn Wood as well as his wife and SHS teacher Lilly Sexton.

In addition to the director change-up, the cast and crew had to manage through two relocations of performances. They also kept running over their time limits and had to keep cutting scenes.

Despite the challenges, the theater students surpassed expectations by advancing to area and bringing home individual awards.

"They just went with the storm and did fantastic,"



MADELYN EDWARDS | THE SPRINGTOWN EPIGRAPH

PLEASE SEE PLAY | A9 SHS junior Nova Gould practices a serious moment for her character during a rehearsal for "The Code Breaker."

## Parker County ESD 1 firefighters pinned



PHOTO COURTESY OF MADISON PAIGE

Parker County ESD 1 firefighters were sworn in during a badge pinning ceremony on April 21.

## A family business

*Dr. Robert Moss, family move physical therapy center to new location*

### MADELYN EDWARDS

madelyn@azlenews.net

Sydney Moss basically grew up at her father Dr. Robert Moss's physical therapy center.

The college student was about 2½ years old when Moss Rehabilitation Center opened on Old Springtown Road on May 1, 2006. As a young'un, she said she played patient at the center, and then as a teenager, she helped in the office. Last October, she started working at the center, and she coaches patients through their exercises.

"I've always loved being up at the clinic because the people are always so nice, and you can tell that my dad has really made an impact in Springtown just in the lives of these people," Sydney Moss said.

April 17 marked the beginning of a new chapter for Moss Rehabilitation Center. The Moss family, patients and rehabilitation center staff bid farewell to the center's former location on Old Springtown Road as the business reopened at a new location at 101 Highland Road on State Highway 199. Robert Moss purchased the land

there to build the new center.

Sydney Moss helped create the design of the new center and has enjoyed watching it come to fruition. Still, she described moving from the old location as "bittersweet."

"It didn't hit me until I looked back, and the space was empty," she said.

Sydney Moss and her father recognized that the move was necessary because the business had outgrown its former space.

"As far as the space size, we had outgrown that probably two years ago," Robert

PLEASE SEE MOSS | A7



Shaye Hogle

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VOLUME 60, NUMBER 4

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# Parker County ESD 1 hosts badge pinning ceremony for personnel



PHOTO COURTESY OF MADISON PAIGE

Parker County Emergency Services District 1 hosted a badge pinning ceremony for 17 suppression personnel and administered their oath of office on April 21. They have completed training and assessment to advance in their roles.



PHOTO COURTESY OF MADISON PAIGE

ESD 1 engineer Spencer Urbanowski smiled while being pinned at a ceremony last week.



PHOTO COURTESY OF MADISON PAIGE

Five ESD 1 engineers were sworn in on April 21, including Ismael Quintero.

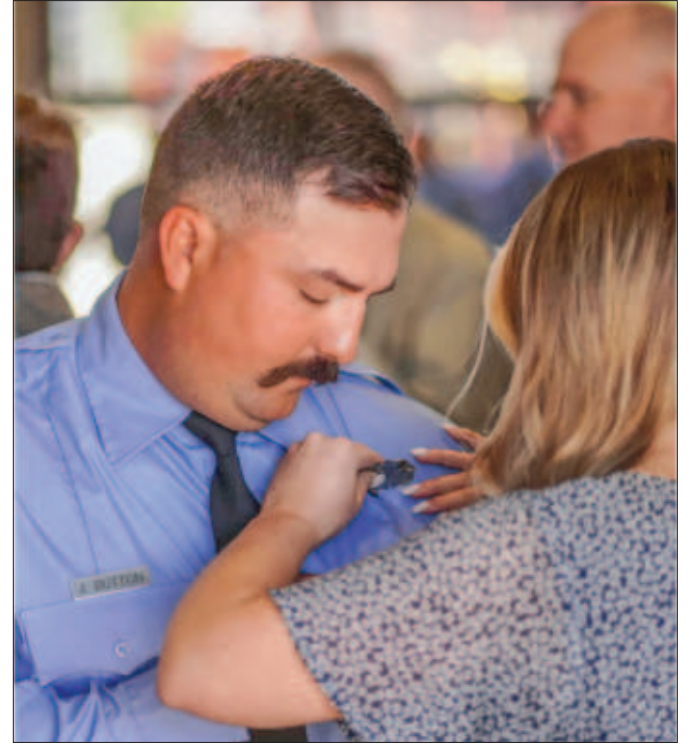


PHOTO COURTESY OF MADISON PAIGE

Eight ESD 1 firefighters were pinned at a ceremony last week, including John Button.

**JIM STEVENS**  
PHOTOGRAPHY

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# When is it okay to hate?

## 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](http://www.discoveryouramazing.com).

I'm doing something different with this week's post. I'm writing the introduction before an experience and the end afterwards.

Have you ever had an experience that you were both looking forward to and dreading? At the same time?

That's where I am today.

In about an hour I'll be touring Auschwitz.

When I travel, I try to take advantage of any opportunity to visit civil rights museums or holocaust museums.

They are always deeply sobering as I'm reminded of the unspeakable evil that human beings can perpetrate against one another.

I'm expecting the notorious death camp about which I have only heard and read will be exponentially more so.

When my daughter visited Poland in 2008, she said the worst part of the trip was Auschwitz. She also said that a visitor to Poland who could only visit one place should visit Auschwitz.

We're on the bus right now and I'm already feeling this sense of dreaded anticipation.

It would be easy to bypass

this experience and relegate it to the past—to focus on the positive strides that have been made.

It would be even easier to bypass it because I have no Jewish ancestry—I'm not personally affected.

But neither of those options is viable for me.

I need this experience—perhaps BECAUSE I'm not personally affected.

(Pause for tour)

Back on the bus. How do I reflect on this?

When you see thousands of pounds of human hair ... rooms full of shoes, crutches, eyeglasses ... piles of canisters that held the deadly pesticide that was released into the gas chambers ... the crematorium where prisoners carried the corpses from the gas chambers to be burned ...

I chose to limit my photography during this tour—partly because I knew I wouldn't spend a lot of time sharing the photos and partly because I knew how easy it would be to put extra distance between myself and the harsh realities of the full experience. (As if a 6' 2", 240-pound man could be

shielded by an iPhone).

1.1 million people were exterminated during a 5-year period within the Auschwitz-Birkenau complex because the seed of an evil idea was allowed to germinate and grow—an idea that an identifiable people group should not be allowed to exist because of the threat that their impurity posed to the purity of the dominant people group.

I HATE what was done here and in other places in the world where fear has turned to hatred and death.

Here's what frightens me most: that any dominant group can become fearful enough of losing their dominance that they choose a path of marginalizing, then suppressing, then oppressing a group of people they deem inferior—all in the name of the greater good.

As a person who has lived as a member of the dominant people group, I must maintain an insatiable desire for what is right for all people—a passion for hating and resisting the evil that is possible when we see people as anything less than God's beloved image-bearers.

I know the evil we're capable of — Auschwitz reminded me.

And I know the amazing we're called to—Jesus reminds me.

Be amazing today, my friend.



## Birth Announcement

JOSEPHINE SUSANNAH BYRD

Keyante and Rebecca Byrd of Springtown welcomed a baby girl, Josephine Susannah Byrd, on April 9, 2023. She joins her three siblings, Shaun, Kendall, and Aubrianna. Grandparents are Danny and Susan Meyers and Chermaine Byrd.

## Sudoku

APRIL 27, 2023

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

## Solution to last week's puzzle

APRIL 27, 2023

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

Puzzle by websudoku.com

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## LEGAL PUBLIC NOTICES

### NOTICE OF PUBLIC HEARING

On May 9, 2023, at 7 p.m., the City of Springtown City Council acting as the Zoning Board of Adjustments will hold a public hearing and consider a request for variance from the sign ordinance for 305 W. Hwy. 199, Springtown, Parker County Texas also known as Lot 1R2, Wit Haven Addition, being an addition to the City of Springtown, Parker County, Texas. The meeting will take place in the Council Chambers and the Municipal Annex Building located at 200 North Main Street, Springtown, Texas 76082.

### NOTICE OF PUBLIC SALE

Storage Bright will hold a public auction to satisfy Storage Bright's lien(pursuant to Title 5, Liens, Chapter 59, Sec. 59.044), by selling personal property described below belonging to those individuals listed below at the locations indicated: All spaces contain household goods unless otherwise noted. Storage Bright Springtown Central, 1220 Hwy 199 East, Springtown, TX. 76082. (817) 587-8802. David Hicks. Storage Bright Springtown North, 1715 N Hwy 51, Springtown, TX. 76082 (817) 409-8886. Kimy Piland. Renee Williams. May 15, 2023, 10:00AM.. The auction will be listed and advertised on [www.storage-treasures.com](http://www.storage-treasures.com). Purchases must be made with card and paid to the above referenced facility in order to complete the transaction. Storage Bright may refuse any bid and may rescind any purchase up until the winning bidder takes possession of the personal property.

## SPRINGTOWN SCHOOL MENU

May 1-5, 2023  
PK through 12th Grade

\*Menus are subject to change.



BREAKFAST PRICES	
EC-12th Grade	\$1.75
EC-12th Reduced	\$0.30
Adult	\$2.25
LUNCH PRICES	
PK-4th Grade	\$3.00
5th-8th Grade	\$3.25
High School	\$3.00
Reduced	\$0.40
Adult	\$4.25

*Students may prepay for their meals.*

**PK - 12th Breakfast** **BREAKFAST: Everyday** - Various Juices & Cereals, Toast, Milk Variety, Fruit, Jelly Assortment, Buttermilk Biscuit, Variety of milk is offered every day for breakfast and lunch.

**Mon** Mini Pancakes, Applesauce **Tues** Chicken Biscuit, Pears **Weds** EggStravaganza, Blueberries **Thurs** Breakfast Pizza, Apple Slices **Fri** Strawberry, Vanilla Yogurt, Banana Muffin, Strawberries

**K - 4th Lunch** **Lunch: Everyday** - Choice of one meat, two vegetables, and one grain/bread with milk. Variety of milk is offered every day for breakfast and lunch.

**Mon** Mac & Cheese, Steakfingers, Chili Style Beans, Roll, Garden Salad, Blueberries **Tues** Lasagna W/ Garlic Toast, Corn Dog, Cucumber & Tomato Cup, Broccoli, Applesauce **Weds** Chicken & Waffles, Fiesta Sticks, Tator Tots, Strawberries **Thurs** TBeef Enchilada Bake, Hot Dog, Spanish Rice, Rancho Beans, Fresh Broccoli **Fri** Pepperoni Pizza, Popcorn Chicken w/ Roll, Green Beans, Fresh Carrots, Banana

**5th - 12th Lunch** **Lunch: Everyday** - Choice of one meat, two vegetables, and one grain/bread with milk. Variety of milk is offered every day for breakfast and lunch.

**Mon** Popcorn Chicken, Steakfingers, Roll, Mashed Potatoes, Corn, Blueberries, Apple **Tues** Chicken Alfredo with a Twist, Roll Ck Fried Steak Sandwich, Fresh Broccoli, Carrots, Strawberry Applesauce, Grapes **Weds** Cheeseburger, Hamburger, French Fries, Broccoli Salad, Orange, Strawberries **Thurs** Beef Tamales, Chili Tots, Rancho Beans, Roll, Spanish Rice, Garden Salad, Baby Carrots, Apple Slices, Blueberries **Fri** Pepperoni Pizza, Corn Dog, Baked Potato Basket, Green Beans, Baby Carrots, Baked Beans, Banana

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# Senate, House begin budget reconciliation process; Medicaid expansion for new moms possible

## SENATE, HOUSE BEGIN BUDGET RECONCILIATION PROCESS

The Texas Senate unanimously approved a \$308 billion two-year budget last week, the Austin American-Statesman reported. The next step is to reconcile that budget with one passed earlier by the Texas House.

The Senate's budget funds \$10 billion in electric grid reforms, provides pay raises to state employees, and devotes more than half of its budget to funding education.

"Over the next few weeks, I will be working with my colleagues in the Senate and the House to reach a consensus on the differences between the two chambers, and I look forward to sending the final appropriations bill to Gov. (Greg) Abbott before the legislative session ends," state Sen. Joan Huffman, R-Houston said in a statement. Huffman chairs the finance committee.

The main difference in



## CAPITAL 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. gborders@texaspress.com.

the two budgets is in how to provide property tax relief. The House version dedicates \$17.3 billion to cutting the annual amount a home's appraisal can increase, from 10% to 5%. The Senate budget allocates \$16.5 billion for property tax relief by increasing the homestead exemption from \$40,000 to \$70,000, with added breaks for homeowners 65 and older.

## MEDICAID EXPANSION FOR NEW MOMS POSSIBLE

The Texas House has passed a bill that allows low-income moms to stay on Medicaid for a full year after childbirth.

The Texas Tribune reported that is a marked increase

from current practice, in which postpartum Medicaid expires two months after birth in Texas.

The bill has widespread support, including from Gov Greg Abbott and more than 170 groups in the state across the political spectrum. However, Lt. Gov. Dan Patrick, who presides over the Senate, has not publicly stated his position on the measure.

Texas has the largest uninsured population in the country, with nearly 1 in 5 Texans lacking health insurance, the Tribune reported.

"As I have said before, it is essential that the Texas House makes meaningful progress this year on better

supporting mothers and children in the state — and that starts with extending health coverage for new moms to a full year," House Speaker Dade Phelan, R-Beaumont, said previously when outlining his priorities for the legislative session.

## BILL BANS 'SEXUALLY EXPLICIT' BOOKS IN SCHOOL LIBRARIES

The Texas House last week passed a preliminary measure that requires vendors to assign a rating to books with sexual content before selling them to school districts, The Dallas Morning News reported. The measure requires one more vote in the House before heading to the Senate, where it is likely to pass.

"This bill is about radically sexual content in the hands of unaccompanied children in public school libraries," state Rep. Jared Patterson, R-Frisco, the bill's sponsor, said from the House floor Thursday.

Opponents to the measure

are concerned it would lead to books about LGBTQ people being banned from libraries. About a dozen people with the Texas Freedom Network held a read-in on the Capitol rotunda's floor as the bill was being debated.

State Rep. Venton Jones, D-Dallas, is one of eight openly LGBTQ legislators. He said the bill would hurt children who grow up feeling out of place because of their sexual orientation.

"I remember going to my school library looking for books when healthy conversations with my loved ones were not always available or always comfortable," Jones said. "What I was looking for was materials that spoke to me and for stories of the people who came before me."

## BILLIONS MORE FOR UNIVERSITY RESEARCH LIKELY

Billions of dollars for higher education research appear likely as two bills have passed the House, the Statesman re-

ported. One measure changes the name of the National Research University Fund to the Texas University Fund, while another proposes a constitutional amendment to enact the bill and allocate \$3.5 billion to the fund.

Both bills were filed by state Rep. Greg Bonnen, R-Friendswood.

"This is a transformative piece of legislation that will allow Texas for generations to come to be the intellectual capital of the world," Bonnen said last week. "It changes the eligibility requirements for access to this fund, and it does so in a merit-based approach and in an approach that, as other universities grow and enhance their research performance, they will be able to access this fund and not dilute the ones that are currently in the fund."

Similar measures have already passed the Senate, though that body allocated \$1 billion less than the House measure.

# Reno police arrest unregistered sex offender

## MADELYN EDWARDS

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Reno police officers arrested a man who was previously convicted of aggravated sexual assault of a child in Dallas.

According to a Reno Police Department news release, Dusty Ray Milligan — who was living in the 600 block of Miller Road with a friend — had an active felony warrant for his arrest for violating his parole.

Reno Police Deputy Chief Nathan Stringer said once Milligan was released from

a prison a few years ago, Milligan was supposed to register as a sex offender but didn't, which violated his parole.

Stringer said Milligan has resided in Reno occasionally for some time, most recently staying there for a few weeks when he was arrested.

Milligan also did not register as a sex offender in Reno, which resulted in additional charges that he will have to face, according to the news release.

"If you live in Reno and you're a sex offender, you're

required to register with the city of Reno," Stringer said. "We didn't know he was there, which is of course a violation of law."

The police department's news release reported that after receiving a tip on April 12, three officers confronted Milligan, who then fled. Stringer said Milligan tried to escape through a back window at the residence, and officers chased him 10-15 yards, not letting him out of their sight until they caught him.

During the arrest, Milligan

fought the police officers, who responded by using a Taser. Police took Milligan to a hospital before taking him to jail, which Stringer said is standard protocol when a Taser is deployed. The Reno police officers sustained multiple minor injuries from the fight.

Milligan was booked into the Parker County Jail on April 15, according to the county's jail records.

Milligan is facing felony charges of three counts of aggravated assault against a public servant and one

count of failing to register as a sex offender. He is also facing misdemeanor charges of evading arrest/detention, failing to identify fugitive intent to give false information and resisting arrest, search, or transport.

Stringer also said Milligan will be subject to consequences imposed by the Texas Board of Pardons and Paroles.

The deputy chief said Reno officers did an "excellent job" in their arrest of Milligan.

The Epigraph requested to interview Milligan while he

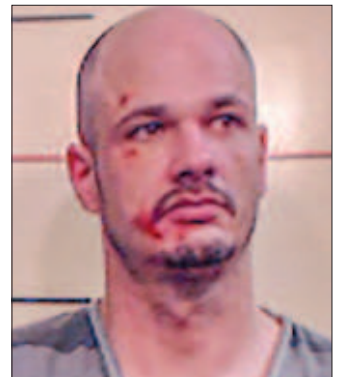


PHOTO COURTESY PCSO

Dusty Ray Milligan

was in jail but did not receive a response before press time.

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Less than 10% of school districts in Texas are growing faster than Springtown ISD

<https://tea.texas.gov/media/document/323011>

SISD's existing campuses were built in 1959 (Lipstreu/SES), 1968 (Hinkle/SES), 1977 (SIS), 1986 (SMS), 1999 (RES), 2000 (SHS), and 2008 (GCES). Each campus is already at or near maximum capacity.

Voter approval of Springtown ISD's proposed bond will allow the District to accommodate new and future growth while preserving our Maintenance & Operations funds (M&O) to maintain the existing facilities (some of which are more than 50 years old), improve safety & security, and recruit/retain a great staff.

If approved, the bond will provide Interest and Sinking funds (I&S) to construct a new middle school for students in 6<sup>th</sup> through 8<sup>th</sup> grade.

The current Intermediate School will be repurposed to become a fourth elementary school (all of which will then house students from Pre-K through 5<sup>th</sup> grade).

The current Middle School will be repurposed to become a 9<sup>th</sup> Grade Center (alleviating some of the overcrowding at Springtown High School).

**VOTE FOR OUR KIDS, SCHOOLS, COMMUNITY, AND FOR OUR FUTURE!**

<https://www.springtownisdbond2023.com>

# Reno Council approves bid for water disinfection systems project

**MADELYN EDWARDS**  
madelyn@azlenews.net

The project to convert the city of Reno's water disinfection systems - which is expected to prevent the need for water boil notices resulting from mixing waters - is moving forward after last week's council meeting.

Reno City Council unanimously accepted the \$273,000-bid from Environmental Improvements, Inc., for equipment purchase and delivery at the meeting on April 17.

The original plan was to hire a contractor to complete this project, but when those bids came in over budget, city leaders decided to buy

## Project to eliminate need to boil water after mixing with other entities

the materials and have water department workers install them, said Brian Schrader, who chairs the Planning and Zoning Commission and serves on the city's Water Task Force, during the meeting.

Converting the disinfection systems will allow Reno to be compatible with water systems in Azle, Springtown and Walnut Creek Special Utility District by using the same chemical mixture as those entities, Public Works Director Chris Albright said during the council meeting.

This means Reno can get water from these entities without asking residents to boil their water.

"If we get into a bind like we did last summer with our water, we can open the valve to Azle with no repercussions from (Texas Commission on Environmental Quality)," Albright said.

This project to replace the chlorine disinfection systems with chloramine ones at all well sites is covered in a Texas Department of Agriculture grant for

\$500,000, which the city matched with \$636,000. The disinfection systems conversion was also listed as a priority in a 2019 capital improvement plan study.

Another report related to Reno's water system from 2021 stated that Reno needs to contract with nearby entities and use their water supplies to meet the minimum requirements of TCEQ.

During the meeting, council member Shelli Swift asked if a decision on this contract could be tabled because of uncertainty on the

city's budget, but Albright insisted that council members needed to take action soon. Albright also said the price of equipment could increase if the council waited any longer.

"This is not a new request, nor a surprise expense," Schrader said during the meeting. "This has been anticipated since the first report from (engineering firm) CobbFendley. This disinfection system will provide a water system that is directly compatible with Azle. This will allow the city of Reno to sign a contract with Azle, Springtown or Walnut Creek that can satisfy the minimum flow per connection that TCEQ has found the city to be in violation (of) since

2019."

Some residents at the council meeting expressed support for this project, including one person who urged the council to "approve it and let's move on." Audience members applauded when the council voted to accept the bid.

Albright said during the meeting that he expects the new system to be installed and working before the end of the year. The equipment is expected to arrive in three to four months, and it will take at least two weeks per water plant site to install the new systems.

"The city needs this and I'm glad (council) finally approved it," Albright said.

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Owner Gretchen Kirchem Egger has worked with furniture all her life. She is joined by her family at the shop each day - "Paw" Jerry Kirchem, "Maw" Beverly Kirchem, and son Jeremy, and Connie and Trish

Gretchen opened the furniture store at the beginning of January for her dad, who had spent his whole life working with furniture. He developed Alzheimer's and every day

he still wants to get up and go to work. So, she created a place where he can go and work every day.

The atmosphere at Kirchem's is warm, inviting and fun. Customers are invited to come in to shop and sit down with Gretchen and the rest of the family for some good coffee and conversation.

Kirchem's Furniture Consignment is located at 3001 E. Hwy. 199, Ste. 100/101 in Springtown, and they are open Tuesday through Friday, 10 a.m. to 6 p.m. and Saturday 9 a.m. to 3 p.m.

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# OBITUARIES

## Jimmy Stewart 1946-2023

Jimmy Brian Stewart, 76 years old, passed away, Monday, April 17, 2023, after a brief illness, in Fort Worth.

He was born June 10, 1946, in Fort Worth, Texas, to Joseph Riley Stewart and Nola Faye Hunt. He lived a blessed life because he had family who loved him.

Jimmy was preceded in death by his parents, and brother, Bobby Stewart.

He is survived by his sisters, Janice Bobo, and husband Greg; Debbie Reimer, and husband Tim; and numerous nieces and nephews.

Jimmy was loved and will be missed and remem-



bered by all the relatives and friends who knew him.

*The Springtown Epigraph, April 27, 2023 Edition*

## Gary Forbes 1944-2023

Gary Douglas Forbes, 78, went to be with the Lord, Monday, April 24, 2023 at home.

The funeral is 11 a.m., Friday at Alexander's Midway, Springtown. Visitation is 6-8 p.m. Thursday at the funeral home. Burial at Springtown Cemetery.

He was born June 3, 1944, in Houston to Charles Douglas and Pauline (Gould) Forbes.

They both preceded him in death along with a brother, Billy, and sister-in-law, Edith and husband, Jerry. Survivors include wife, Connie; son, Matt; brother, Robert (Cheryl); sister, Kathryn; sisters-in-law, Rhonda (Doug)



and Darla (Andy); numerous nieces, nephews, extended family and friends.

*The Springtown Epigraph, April 27, 2023 Edition*

## Norma Lutzer 1928-2023

Norma E. Roesicke Lutzer, 95, was called home by her Lord and Savior Wednesday, April 19, 2023, while surrounded by her loved ones.

Funeral service was 9:30 a.m. Monday, April 24, 2023, in Greenwood Chapel. Interment at Shannon Rose Hill Cemetery.

Norma was a member of Hilltop Family Church, Springtown, Texas. Her husband Ed and her enjoyed volunteering in the Fort Worth East Side Code Blue. They owned and operated "Norma's Cop Shop" in Fort Worth for many years, and Wingard Container, Inc. She was an emergency dispatcher for 10-plus years and enjoyed holding benefit functions for emergency services in Tarrant and Parker Counties.

Norma was a very talented seamstress and enjoyed crafting also winning awards for her ceramic dolls she made. Norma was past Matron of Eastern Star North Fort Worth Chapter #684. She was preceded in death



by the love of her life, her husband, Ed Lutzer; her parents; and several siblings.

She is survived by two sons, Al Harris and Bill Roesicke and wife, Lee, all of Springtown, Texas; grandchildren, Wayne, Candi, Clint (Melissa), Tisha (James) and Amanda (Justin); along with 12 great-grandchildren; six great-great-grandchildren; numerous other family members; as well as her caregivers, Robin and Beth.

*The Springtown Epigraph, April 27, 2023 Edition*

## APPRAISAL FROM PAGE A1

was \$167,500. Prices are established through real estate transactions.

The Texas Legislature is currently in session, and both the state Senate and the state House of Representatives have passed proposals for major property tax reform, including increasing the homestead exemption, lowering the appraisal cap, and compressing tax rates, according to the news release.

Homeowners with a home-

stead exemption benefit from a 10% appraisal cap in the second year of qualification. It's free to file for a homestead exemption with the appraisal district's office.

Property owners have the right to file a protest, and they can do so online at parkercad.org, in person from 8 a.m. to 5 p.m. Monday through Friday or by mail at 1108 Santa Fe Drive, Weatherford, TX 76086. Mailed protests must have a postmark date on or before the deadline. For most, the deadline to file a protest is May 15.

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## TO ALL INTERESTED PERSONS AND PARTIES:

Ingram Concrete, LLC, has applied to the Texas Commission on Environmental Quality (TCEQ) for renewal of Air Quality Permit No. 6148B, which would authorize continued operation of a Concrete Batch Plant located at 1655 East Highway 199, Springtown, Parker County, Texas 76082. Additional information concerning this application is contained in the public notice section of this newspaper.

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**A church alive is worth the drive! For more information or rates on listing your church, call Jessica at 817-270-3340**

# MOSS

FROM PAGE A1

Moss said, adding that building the new center would've happened earlier, but the COVID-19 pandemic slowed that process down.

The new Moss Rehabilitation Center is 4,000 square feet, which is 1,500 square feet bigger than the space on Old Springtown Road, Robert Moss said. Another reason for the move is that the new building and land is owned while the former one was leased.

Robert Moss started practicing physical therapy in 1998. While working in Decatur, Moss would receive patient referrals from local

doctors, and he noticed that physical therapy care was a need in Springtown. The goal is to provide quality physical therapy care for people in Springtown and surrounding areas locally, so they won't have to travel far to find that service, he said.

Providing quality service to patients and ensuring that they have a good experience is important to Robert Moss. He said staff members at the center work well with the patients, get to know them more personally and try to make the time at the center enjoyable for them while they're receiving care. Moss sets individualized plans for the patients to be able to meet their goals.

"When I examine a patient or treat them, I have a very systematic way that I go

through the process to make sure, one, that I'm not missing something, but two, that we're uncovering all the problems that they have, and then we can develop a plan for them to help them get where they need to go," Robert Moss said. "That's ultimately what it's about. Each patient becomes a unique little jigsaw puzzle that I have to then master these pieces and put them back together for them."

As much as Robert Moss and his team try to help patients, those seeking care must be committed to feeling better and have a positive mindset. Without having a good attitude and putting in the footwork at the center as well as at home, the patients may not get the results they want, Moss said.



MADELYN EDWARDS | THE SPRINGTOWN EPIGRAPH

Moss Rehabilitation Center moved from its former location on Old Springtown Road to a new location at 101 Highland Road.



MADELYN EDWARDS | THE SPRINGTOWN EPIGRAPH

Physical therapist Dr. Robert Moss takes a picture with some equipment at his physical therapy center near State Highway 199.

"They think that it's like a magic pill, and it's not," he said. "They have to be an active participant in their health."

Robert Moss is driven and dedicated to his work, but he also must make sure he has enough energy left for his family, which can be a challenge in his career.

"I take what I do in my job and my business extremely seriously," he said. "I lay so much out and then when I go home, sometimes I feel like I've given too much. My patients matter, but my family matters more."

Sydney Moss, who is going to college for business and marketing management so that she can be more involved at the center if needed, gushed over her dad's abilities as a physical therapist.

"He is such a sponge of information," she said about her dad. "He continues to learn and to better himself so that he's always positive his patients are getting the best possible care that he can provide. I'm really proud of him, and I hope he's proud of himself, too."



MADELYN EDWARDS | THE SPRINGTOWN EPIGRAPH

Dr. Robert Moss's daughter, Sydney Moss, also works at Moss Rehabilitation Center and is very proud of her dad.

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# Elementary water main Walnut Creek SUD switches to new contractor

MADelyn EDWARDS

madelyn@azlenews.net

Walnut Creek Special Utility District is switching contractors on the project to install a 10-inch water main for the new Azle ISD elementary school.

In a special meeting on April 20, the SUD board of directors unanimously approved revoking the project award from CHM Construction, which was originally awarded in December, and instead accepted the bid from Oklahoma-based Timco Services for \$979,310. Timco's bid is just short of \$200,000 more than CHM's bid.

During the board's regular meeting on April 17, SUD general manager Doug Carothers said CHM Construction couldn't provide the required performance bonds within the timeframe needed.

Performance bonds are issued by financial institutions to ensure the completion of a contract.

Carothers said this project

is now expected to be completed by mid-July, a month later than the district's goal of mid-June.

The new elementary school, Hilltop Elementary, will be located at South Stewart Street and Farm-to-Market Road 730 South and is expected to open in August.

"It was quite a hard thing to have to switch companies," Carothers said during the regular meeting. "It was heart wrenching."

Bill Lohrke, senior project manager at E.S. & C.M., Inc., said during the regular meeting that notice was sent to the low bidder CHM Construction about the bonds needed. Performance bonds and payment bonds are needed when working with Texas political entities, he said.

"The low bidder is a good contractor. He's worked out here locally for many years, but he's done the type of work that didn't require a bond," Lohrke said.

Lohrke added that the contractor at CHM Construction tried to secure the bonds but

couldn't, at least in part because of the effect that financial stress in the construction industry has had on bonding companies.

The project to get the water main constructed for the new school is time sensitive, and Carothers and Lohrke indicated that the project couldn't be stalled any longer.

"We just can't put this school into jeopardy by going further," Carothers said. "We have so tried to keep that business with CHM."

Lohrke said Timco Services had "excellent references." He also said the construction route for this project is expected to change to go through an open field instead of down Veal Station Road. This would make the distance shorter and therefore may eliminate increased costs and be quicker to complete.

"He should be able to really expedite production," Lohrke said. "Perhaps we can get the thing finished by the first of July, not the middle of July."

# Workforce Solutions launches initiatives to aid second chance employment

STAFF REPORTS

Workforce Solutions for North Central Texas recently announced a series of partnerships and pathways that remove barriers to employment for people who have been incarcerated or otherwise involved with the criminal justice system, according to a Workforce Solutions news release.

According to the Texas Department of Criminal Justice, more than 1 million people are processed in local jails each year. As of July 2022, a combined total of approximately 403,387 individuals in Texas were on probation, parole or in prison. Data indicates that 75% of formerly incarcerated people remain unemployed one year after their release.

"Millions of Texans have an arrest or conviction record that can prevent them from obtaining an in-demand job that provides a livable wage and a pathway for career growth," Executive Director of Workforce Solutions for

North Central Texas Phedra Redifer said in the news release. "We know that joblessness is a top predictor of recidivism; we are creating job training opportunities - both pre-release and post-release - that will provide a clear path to sustainable employment and economic mobility."

Workforce Solutions for North Central Texas - which serves 14 counties, including Parker County - launched new second chance initiatives to help this population make a career comeback from previous setbacks. Initiatives include a partnership with Bridgeport Correctional Facility and Weatherford College to administer a certified logistics technician training program inside the facility for those being released within six months. Successful graduates of the program will receive a certified logistics technician certification and be connected with second chance employers who are hiring for those occupations. A referral program with the

Greenville District Parole Office has also been established to connect new parolees with Workforce Solutions' Greenville Workforce Center immediately upon release. These individuals will receive customized career services and resources to aid their successful reentry into their communities.

Employers can ease concerns about hiring second chance individuals by participating in the Texas Workforce Commission's Fidelity Bonding Program. Texas Workforce Commission and Workforce Solutions for North Central Texas work together to offer free fidelity bonding services for job applicants who cannot be bonded through other sources.

Visit [www.careercomeback.work](http://www.careercomeback.work) online for more information about Workforce Solutions for North Central Texas' second chance initiatives, training programs and other services for career seekers and employers.

## TEXAS COMMISSION ON ENVIRONMENTAL QUALITY



### NOTICE OF RECEIPT OF APPLICATION AND INTENT TO OBTAIN AIR PERMIT (NORI) RENEWAL

PERMIT NUMBER 6148B

**APPLICATION.** Ingram Concrete, LLC, has applied to the Texas Commission on Environmental Quality (TCEQ) for renewal of Air Quality Permit Number 6148B, which would authorize continued operation of a Concrete Batch Plant located at 1655 East Highway 199, Springtown, Parker County, Texas 76082. **AVISO DE IDIOMA ALTERNATIVO.** El aviso de idioma alternativo en español está disponible en <https://www.tceq.texas.gov/permitting/air/newsourcereview/airpermits-pendingpermit-apps>. This link to an electronic map of the site or facility's general location is provided as a public courtesy and not part of the application or notice. For exact location, refer to application. <https://gisweb.tceq.texas.gov/LocationMapper/?marker=-97.64778,32.94639&level=13>. The existing facility is authorized to emit the following air contaminants: particulate matter including particulate matter with diameters of 10 microns or less and 2.5 microns or less.

This application was submitted to the TCEQ on April 3, 2023. The application will be available for viewing and copying at the TCEQ central office, TCEQ Dallas/Fort Worth regional office, and the Springtown Public Library, 333 West Main Street, Azle, Parker County, Texas beginning the first day of publication of this notice. The facility's compliance file, if any exists, is available for public review in the Dallas/Fort Worth regional office of the TCEQ.

The executive director has determined the application is administratively complete and will conduct a technical review of the application. Information in the application indicates that this permit renewal would not result in an increase in allowable emissions and would not result in the emission of an air contaminant not previously emitted. **The TCEQ may act on this application without seeking further public comment or providing an opportunity for a contested case hearing if certain criteria are met.**

**PUBLIC COMMENT.** You may submit public comments to the Office of the Chief Clerk at the address below. The TCEQ will consider all public comments in developing a final decision on the application and the executive director will prepare a response those comments. Issues such as property values, noise, traffic safety, and zoning are outside of the TCEQ's jurisdiction to address in the permit process.

**OPPORTUNITY FOR A CONTESTED CASE HEARING.** You may request a contested case hearing if you are a person who may be affected by emissions of air contaminants from the facility. If requesting a contested case hearing, you must submit the following: (1) your name (or for a group or association, an official representative), mailing address, daytime phone number; (2) applicant's name and permit number; (3) the statement "[I/we] request a contested case hearing;" (4) a specific description of how you would be adversely affected by the application and air emissions from the facility in a way not common to the general public; (5) the location and distance of your property relative to the facility; (6) a description of how you use the property which may be impacted by the facility; and (7) a list of all disputed issues of fact that you submit during the comment period. If the request is made by a group or association, one or more members who have standing to request a hearing must be identified by name and physical address. The interests the group or association seeks to protect must also be identified. You may also submit your proposed adjustments to the application/permit which would satisfy your concerns.

**The deadline to submit a request for a contested case hearing is 15 days after newspaper notice is published. If a request is timely filed, the deadline for requesting a contested case hearing will be extended to 30 days after mailing of the response to comments.**

If any requests for a contested case hearing are timely filed, the Executive Director will forward the application and any requests for a contested case hearing to the Commissioners for their consideration at a scheduled Commission meeting. Unless the application is directly referred to a contested case hearing, the executive director will mail the response to comments along with notification of Commission meeting to everyone who submitted comments or is on the mailing list for this application. The Commission may only grant a request for a contested case hearing on issues the requestor submitted in their timely comments that were not subsequently withdrawn. **If a hearing is granted, the subject of a hearing will be limited to disputed issues of fact or mixed questions of fact and law relating to relevant and material air quality concerns submitted during the comment period.** Issues such as property values, noise, traffic safety, and zoning are outside of the Commission's jurisdiction to address in this proceeding.

**MAILING LIST.** In addition to submitting public comments, you may ask to be placed on a mailing list for this application by sending a request to the Office of the Chief Clerk at the address below. Those on the mailing list will receive copies of future public notices (if any) mailed by the Office of the Chief Clerk for this application.

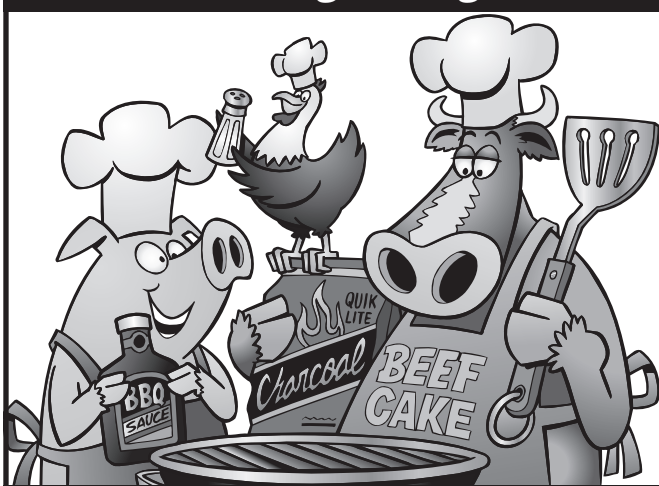
**AGENCY CONTACTS AND INFORMATION.** Public comments and requests must be submitted either electronically at [www14.tceq.texas.gov/epic/eComment/](http://www14.tceq.texas.gov/epic/eComment/), or in writing to the Texas Commission on Environmental Quality, Office of the Chief Clerk, MC-105, P.O. Box 13087, Austin, Texas 78711-3087. Please be aware that any contact information you provide, including your name, phone number, email address and physical address will become part of the agency's public record. For more information about this permit application or the permitting process, please call the Public Education Program toll free at 18006874040. Si desea información en Español, puede llamar al 1-800-687-4040.

Further information may also be obtained from Ingram Concrete, LLC, 331 North Main Street, Euless, Texas 76039-3636 or by calling Mrs. Melissa Fitts, Vice President, Westward Environmental, Inc., at (830) 249-8284.

Notice Issuance Date: April 14, 2023

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COURTESY PHOTO

Despite significant difficulties, SHS's One-Act Play company defied expectations by advancing to the area competition.

## PLAY

FROM PAGE A1

Josh Sexton said. Actors Gould, Jason Patterson, Malia Vincent-Wilson and Carolina Williams earned accolades at the contests. Stage technicians Lex Teague, Lerin Aquino and Bernard Bast were also honored for their work.

Gould participated in the One-Act Play contest last year and won only one award. This year, she was consistently praised.

"This year I was able to get an award at every contest," she said, naming off the honors she received, "which really made me feel appreciated and seen for what I've put into my shows and my work, so I can't wait to do it again next year."

At the area competition, the SHS company finished behind Decatur. For some, this was a welcome defeat since their former director from last year's season — Rebecca Phillips — helmed the Decatur team this year.

"When we found out that we didn't advance, I think everybody kind of just

hoped and prayed that it was Decatur who went on because Ms. Phillips — especially for those of us who were here last year — is very dear to our hearts, and so we really hoped that she was able to move on," Gould said.

But the students' warm feelings for Phillips don't negate their appreciation for this year's directors.

"We're also all really grateful to Mr. Sexton and Mrs. Sexton and Ms. Wood," said Aquino, a junior and stage technician. "They didn't have to come in and help us when they did, and they didn't have to stay with us through everything. Like, they had a choice, and they chose to stay with us."

Josh Sexton, who some students hope will be able to stick around for next year's season, praised the One-Act Play company's dedication.

"I'm just extremely proud of their commitment to this program," he said. "It has been an adventurous year for sure."

Aquino's takeaway from the season is that the cast and crew needed to work together as a team and help each other.

"If our company wasn't



MADELYN EDWARDS | THE SPRINGTOWN EPIGRAPH

SHS sophomore Aiden Perrotta, sophomore Dominique Tamaoki, freshman Sarah Grazer and junior Nova Gould rehearse for the public performances of their one-act play "The Code Breaker."

as strong as it was, I don't think we would have gotten through what we went through, like losing a teacher and getting a new director," she said. "I feel like having a close company who gets along with each other is really important."

### 'THE CODE BREAKER'

Last year's One-Act Play company members worked hard to make their performances — of a grieving family and a woman whose life was saved by a heart transplant — as authentic as possible.

In contrast, Gould said this year's play, a dystopian science fiction tale, provokes viewers to question what is and isn't real.

"The Code Breaker" follows a group of teenagers who grow up under the supervision of Ruby, a computer system. The teens experience life in isolation before one of them discovers the outside world.

"Ruby is not that great of a mom," freshman Sarah Grazer said, prompting some of her peers to burst into laughter. "I'm Ruby's understudy, and she's a very manipulative character who starts off where you think that she's a very good guide for them and then you realize that her intentions are not in the best place."

Josh Sexton, who didn't pick the play but inherited it from the previous director, anticipated that parts of a science fiction world may be difficult for some viewers to understand, so he led students to concentrate on the more realistic parts of story.

"We still have the sci-fi aspect to it, but we really wanted to focus on the story itself, which is four teenagers growing up," he said.

Theater students interviewed by the Epigraph said they liked "The Code Breaker" and being able to add their interpretations of it to the performances.

"It leaves a lot of creativity open to our actors and our technicians and aspects of the show that usually we aren't given creativity to," sophomore and stage technician Bernard Bast said.

"Usually a set, it's very defined on how the set is, but in this show we're able to experiment with our set, the layout of the set and how we get it interpreted, so I like its creativity that we can use with it and our freedom of experimentation with the set."

### INTO THE SPOTLIGHT

Being an understudy, Grazer didn't get to perform during the One-Act Play competitive performances, but she'll get that chance during the public performances on Friday and Saturday.

Grazer has performed as Ruby once before at an open rehearsal when the lead actor wasn't available, and she enjoyed that experience for the most part. Gould chimed in to say that Grazer "did really good" at that time.

"I honestly felt like that was probably my best run-through of it because I feel like whenever you perform, for me at least, I get the pressure of it, and then I do even better than I would practice," Grazer said.

Grazer said she can't exactly relate to her artificial intelligence character, but she understands how Ruby relates to the world currently where technology is a big part of people's lives.

Despite the challenge of bringing life to the controlling computer character, Grazer said she has had fun with the role.

"It's so different from being a human. It's basically like all day I'm Sarah and I have my Sarah world, and then I get here and I'm a completely different person," she said. "I don't want to be mean in real life, so then I get on the stage, and I'm a whole new person who's like, 'You do this, and you do this, and now I'm breaking down because I'm a computer.' It's just a very fun, different role to play."

The last chances for the Springtown community to watch performances of "The Code Breaker" — which will include additional scenes that were cut from competition — will be at 6 p.m. Friday, April 28 and 6 p.m. Saturday, April 29 in the SHS auditorium.



MADELYN EDWARDS | THE SPRINGTOWN EPIGRAPH

SHS one-act play director Josh Sexton coaches students during rehearsal.



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# Super pets come out to play

## Springtown hosts Super Steps for Super Pets event



MADELYN EDWARDS | THE SPRINGTOWN EPIGRAPH

Some dogs at the city of Springtown's Super Steps for Super Pets 5K and silent auction on April 22 were dressed in costume, such as super mini-Aussie dog Hayes Jo Carl Andreason III. Also pictured are Hunter Andreason, 9, and Karrah Cooper.



MADELYN EDWARDS | THE SPRINGTOWN EPIGRAPH

Fawn Carter of VCA Lakeside Animal Hospital and chihuahua-mix Bubbles attended the city of Springtown's Super Steps for Super Pets 5K and silent auction benefiting Springtown's animal shelter on Saturday.



MADELYN EDWARDS | THE SPRINGTOWN EPIGRAPH

Kaela Kocke takes a picture with Foxy, a shepherd mix dog wearing a hamburger costume. Kocke took part in the city of Springtown's Super Steps for Super Pets 5K and silent auction benefiting the animal shelter on Saturday at Newby Pavilion.

### PORCUPINE Pals

# EARTH DAY

**Earth Day**  
This is a day for us to think about all the things we can do to help protect our environment. Our environment includes clean air, water, and soil.

You can help with small things each day.

- Don't waste water
- Recycle your glass, paper, and plastics
- Drink water from a reusable bottle instead of plastic bottles.

**Recycling can make a difference!**

- In the United States, we use over 2.5 million plastic bottles every hour!
- Over 24 TRILLION styrofoam coffee cups are thrown away each year!
- The amount of paper and wood that is thrown away could heat 50 million homes for 20 years!

**REDUCE • REUSE • RECYCLE**

EVERY APRIL PEOPLE ACROSS THE GLOBE SPREAD AWARENESS ABOUT THE ENVIRONMENT, CONSERVATION AND OTHER ECO-FRIENDLY TOPICS. THE ENTIRE MONTH IS CALLED THIS.

ANSWER: EARTH MONTH

**ECOLOGY**  
the study of organisms and their relationship to the environment

EARTH DAY OCCURS EVERY YEAR ON APRIL 22. IN 2020, THE WORLD CELEBRATED THE 50TH ANNIVERSARY OF EARTH DAY.

### GET THE PICTURE?

Can you guess what the bigger picture is?

ANSWER: EARTH

**Crossword Puzzle**

1	2					3
4						
5		6				
7					8	

**ACROSS**

1. Warm coverings

4. Provides shade

6. Surface of Earth

7. Upper layer of soil

8. Grass used as fodder

**DOWN**

2. Patches of grass

3. Weekend day

5. Trim

1. Lawns

3. Saturday

5. Cut

8. Hay

1. Blankets

4. Awning

6. Ground

7. Turf

Answers:

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## Almost state

*Springtown tracksters qualify for regional meet in Lubbock*

**JEFF PRINCE**  
jeff@azlenews.net

The 800-meter run was about to begin at the area track meet, and proud mom Callie Tice was ready.

She leaned against the cyclone fence that surrounds the track at Porcupine Stadium, aiming her camera at son Xander Tice, who was crouching nearby, placing his feet in the starting blocks to begin the race.

"He was real nervous" prior to the race, she said. "He is a great runner. He has a love-hate relationship with it, but he's good at it."

Mom was "super impressed" with his ability to run such difficult races.

Xander Tice runs cross-country and the mile and two-mile races. He agreed to try the 800-meter event about midway through the track season and performed well. He placed high enough at meets to earn a trip to the UIL District 7 & 8 4A area track meet held April 19 at Porcupine Stadium.

The top 4 finishers at the area meet would qualify to compete at the UIL 4A Track & Field Regional Championship on April 28-29 in Lubbock. The best athletes at regionals will advance to the state meet on May 11-13 in Austin.

The 800-meter event can be challenging for long distance runners accustomed to pac-

ing themselves. The race is short enough to require runners to move fast but long enough to exhaust them in the process.

"Especially on the start of that second lap - that's when everybody just speeds up," Tice said, breathing hard after the race. "Everyone out here is so fast, it's like a sprint pace for the rest of the second lap."

His legs were "burning" once the race ended.

The best runners push through pain to keep moving during a race.

"That's all it really is," he said. "Mind over matter. I just go, and if I start to slow down, I just tell myself to go again."

Tice ran a solid race but finished just out of the top 4. His track season was finished. Still, he was happy that he qualified for the area meet, something few athletes accomplish.

His track goals for the future are simple: "Just work hard, be faster, and come back next year," the sophomore said.

### HOP, SKIP, JUMP TO LUBBOCK

Mackenzie Flaughter, a sophomore, was the most talked about triple jumper at the area meet. Last year, as a freshman, she made it all the way to state and has improved her jumps since then.



JEFF PRINCE | SPRINGTOWN EPIGRAPH

PLEASE SEE **TRACK** | B4 Riley Jackson crosses the finish line in second place while running the last leg in the 4x100-meter relay.



JEFF PRINCE | SPRINGTOWN EPIGRAPH  
Karley Haynes warms up before the Bridgeport game and Senior Night.

## Springtown softball to face Sanger in bi-district championship

**JEFF PRINCE**  
jeff@azlenews.net

The Springtown Lady Porcupines earned third-seed placement in the play-

offs and will face Sanger in the bi-district championship.

The teams will play a best-of-three series. The first game is at 5 p.m. on Thursday, April 27. The sec-

ond game will be played 30 minutes after the first game ends.

The third game, if neces-

PLEASE SEE **SOFTBALL** | B4

## Mentoring Mancía

*Springtown track phenomenon runs to ease stress, feel good*

**JEFF PRINCE**  
jeff@azlenews.net

The death of her father shook Alejandra Mancía's world when she was 8.

Four years later, her beloved grandfather died.

Mancía was 12 and draped in a dark cloud when she started the seventh grade at Springtown Middle School in 2021.

"It was a really sad time, but I went through it," Mancía said. "School really helped me a lot."

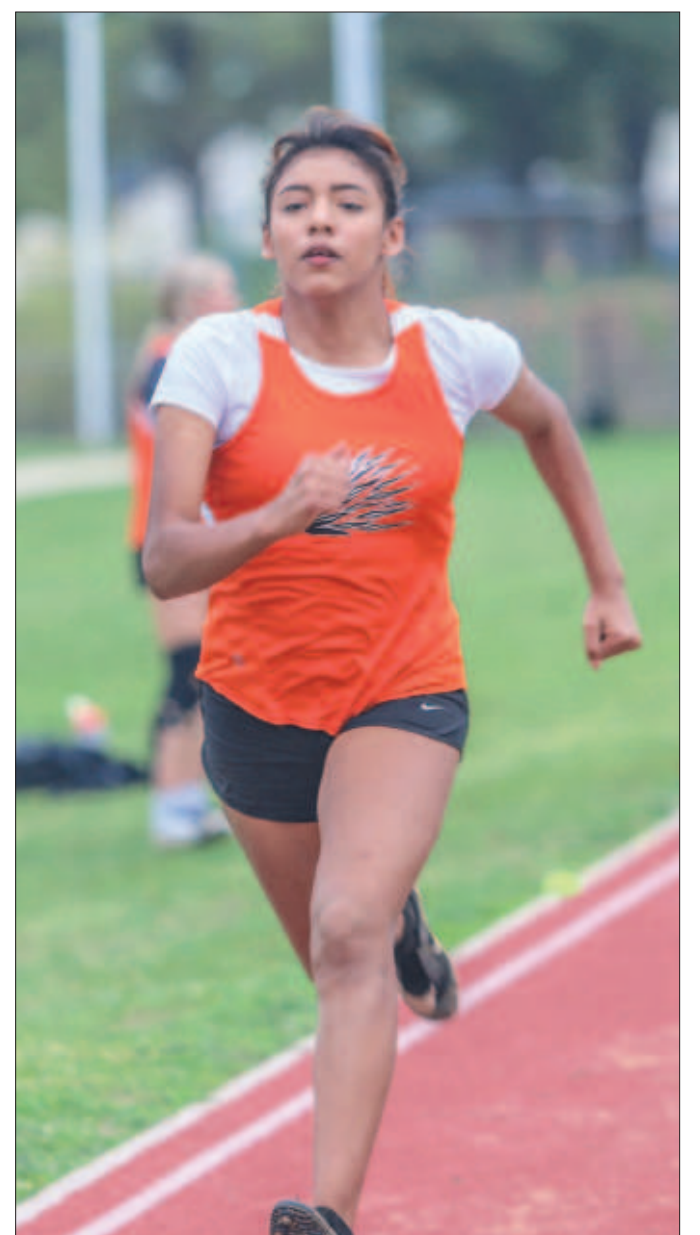
During her physical education class, Mancía enjoyed the days spent running. She could run faster than her peers, and the process made the sad feelings fade.

Her physical education coach, Baylee Nelson, noticed her skills and encouraged her to try out for the track team.

"She convinced me to move to athletics," Mancía said. "I really didn't want to because I felt like I was going to do bad or something like that, but I ended up moving to athletics."

Mancía ran cross-country and won first place at a race and second place at another. Nelson pushed her to try out for the track team. Mancía could run fast in the shorter sprints and sail through the air in jumping events, as well.

Track "makes me forget everything," Mancía said. "I



JEFF PRINCE | SPRINGTOWN EPIGRAPH

PLEASE SEE **MANCIA** | B2 Running has been an elixir for Alejandra Mancía in recent years.

# MANCIA

FROM PAGE B1

really love it now.”

On April 12-13, she competed at the District 8-4A championship and won first place in triple jump, second place in the 100-meter dash, second place in long jump, and third place in the 200-meter and 4x200-meter races.

By Friday, April 14, she was back at Taco Time Mexican Grill at the Kwik Stop on Main Street, where she works in the kitchen from 4-8 p.m. after school when she doesn't have track meets. She also helps with cleaning and cooking at home and looking after her younger siblings. She has two sisters and five brothers, and she is in the middle of the pack.

“I try to help my mom with everything,” said Mancía, now 14. “She always supports me in all my decisions for track or for anything I try to do.”

Mancía appreciates her Springtown coaches and the attention they have given her this year.

“They understand me,” she said. “It's really awesome having them in my life.”

Track coach Kyle Sivadon appreciates Mancía's work ethic and versatility.

“Alejandra does a great job in any event she is put in,” Sivadon said. “She works really hard and is really talented. We can move her around to different events. She has won in so many events, so we can put her in anything, and it is going to help out the team. She does fantastic on her relays and has a whole lot of speed and is a fantastic jumper, too.”

Springtown High School athletic coordinator Tye Adams said Mancía is blessed with natural ability and a strong work ethic. Add those traits together, and special athletes blossom.

“She has learned over the last couple years how to work and get better with that natural ability,” Adams said. “This past year, since she's become an eighth grader, she's really done a good job of working to get better.”

Mancía has failed at competitions at times. Instead

of becoming frustrated and quitting, she showed up for practice intent on improving her skills and finishing higher in events.

“She worked on the things that she needed to work on with the sprints and the jumps,” the coach said. “We've been really proud of what she has done.”

Adams is looking forward to see what Mancía will do as a freshman at Springtown High School.

“I'm hoping she can contribute to the varsity team as a freshman,” Adams said.

Mancía appreciates hearing her Springtown coaches applaud her efforts. Feeling appreciated by them motivates her to do better. Her only regret was losing touch with Nelson, her former PE teacher.

Nelson left Springtown Middle School at the end of last year. Mancía didn't know where her old coach landed, but she missed her.

“Coach Nelson was the one who convinced me to do track,” she said. “If not, I would have never done it.”

She hoped Coach Nelson understood what a huge impact she'd made on the girl. Mancía wanted to tell Nelson but didn't know how to reach her.

“I hope Coach Nelson gets to see this,” she said. “I'd like to tell her I'm still running for her, and I'm trying to do my best for her.”

## MENTOR REMEMBERS

Nelson is a coach and teacher about to complete her first year at V.R. Eaton High School in Fort Worth.

When asked about Mancía, Nelson was thrilled. She remembered meeting her in seventh grade and noting her sadness, although Mancía offered no details about what was troubling her.

Nelson recalled steering the girl toward running and encouraging her to join the athletic program.

“Every time we did a running workout, Alejandra got so excited and would just lap everyone and looked like she enjoyed it,” Nelson said. “I brought up the idea of her joining cross-country because it was about to start.”

Mancía wasn't sure she could participate since she worked after school. Nelson



JEFF PRINCE | SPRINGTOWN EPIGRAPH

Alejandra Mancía will attend Springtown High School as a freshman in August.

talked to other coaches about Mancía's running abilities.

They encouraged Mancía to buckle down on her studies and to seek a physical examination from a doctor for medical clearance.

“She joined and had a great cross-country season,” Nelson recalled. “I think it was the first time she'd been told, ‘You are really, really talented at this.’”

When track and field practices began later that year, Mancía worked on triple jump and relay events, which

had been Nelson's events when she ran track.

In the early 2010s, Nelson was a standout track member at Northwest High School in Justin. By the time she graduated in 2015, she had qualified for regionals in cross-country three times, was a district champion in multiple track events, set numerous school records, and made all-state. She continued her track career for several more years at the University of North Texas.

Mancía showed natural



JEFF PRINCE | SPRINGTOWN EPIGRAPH

Alejandra Mancía works in the kitchen at Taco Time Mexican Grill when not running track after school.



Alejandra Mancía competes in the triple jump at the middle school district meet.

JEFF PRINCE | SPRINGTOWN EPIGRAPH

ability at triple jump.

“She tried out and was phenomenal,” Nelson said. “That's an event that you have to learn the technique, and she picked up on it very quickly.”

Track coaches knew Mancía worked after school at the family business, and they wondered whether she might miss practices and meets. Mancía proved any doubters wrong.

“Any chance she got to practice was a really good experience for her to get away from whatever she was going through,” Nelson said. “She never brought up specific details about what she was going through.”

Hearing that Mancía remembered her and credited her as a special mentor made Nelson feel warm and emotional. The coach was happy to know Mancía was thriving at track still.

“I was so excited that she is still involved and doing very well,” Nelson said. “I'm happy I was able to instill something in her that she could then carry on without me. Ultimately, that's the goal. I don't want athletes that are super reliant

on me for their success. It's planting something in them where they will rely on themselves internally for their own success. That's really cool to see.”

Learning about the success of her former student came at a good time. Nelson is finishing her first year as the head cross-country coach and assistant track coach at a much larger high school. The year has been hectic, and Nelson felt the pressure from several fronts.

Hearing of Mancía's successes reminded Nelson why she pursued teaching.

“This is why I do this,” she said. “I was that kid one time with my coach. My coach is now my athletic director. I'm seeing it come full circle. I'm actually the person that my coach was for me, who made a big impression in my life. It's really cool to see the full circle come back around.”

That's why I said I would start coaching. If I can impact one of these kids the way my coach impacted me, I'm happy. The fact that it happened my first year is really good affirmation that I'm in the right place.”

# Springtown baseball polishes chops for postseason

**JEFF PRINCE**  
jeff@azlenews.net

The last time Todd Smith pitched in a baseball game was in third grade. Yet, there he was on April 22, standing on the mound for the Springtown Porcupines and hurling fastballs toward the plate during a game with Paradise. During warmups, catcher Layton Murrell asked Smith to throw something with some bend in it. Smith laughed. He doesn't have a curveball. "Fastballs are all I had," he said. His goal was to throw blazers in the strike zone and hope for the best. "I left it up to my defense," he said. "I trust those guys. They are always out there putting in the work, and I knew they would be there to back me up." The night before, on April 21, Springtown beat Bridgeport 12-7 in the last District 8-4A game of the season. The victory clinched the district championship for the Pines for what is believed to be the first time in school

history. "It was a special moment for us," head coach Colin Crawford said. The next day's scrimmage with Paradise was approached with lighthearted fun and a heavy reliance on backups, which could explain Springtown's 10-6 loss to a 3A team. That's also how Smith and Scout Richards found themselves in the unfamiliar position of pitching. Caleb Elmore pitched the first five innings. Richards and Smith had expressed interest in pitching, and Crawford figured he would let them have fun. "We got what we needed out of Elmore," he said. Smith retired all three batters he faced. "He's a senior and one of the best teammates you could ever ask for," Crawford said. "It was a fun moment for him to go out there and throw a scoreless seventh inning for us." The Pines are feeling loose and confident heading into the postseason. Starting pitcher Brayden Fox had a feeling the team would end up as district champs despite

losing most of last year's starting squad to graduation. "Everyone thought it would be a building year for us," he said. "We have been surprising everyone." Richards takes pride in his team earning the first district title. Last year's team won an area championship and went farther in the playoffs than any other baseball team in school history, but even that team didn't win a district title. "It feels good to do it for the first time in school history," Richards said. "I knew we had it from the first week of district against Lake Worth. We started off strong. I feel like we have a pretty good chance of going pretty deep and making school history again." Going farther than last year's team in the playoffs - and setting a new school record - will require winning a regional quarterfinal championship and making it to the semi-finals. In other words, the Pines must win at least three playoff games. Crawford likes the team's chances. "We've got better baseball in us than we've shown in



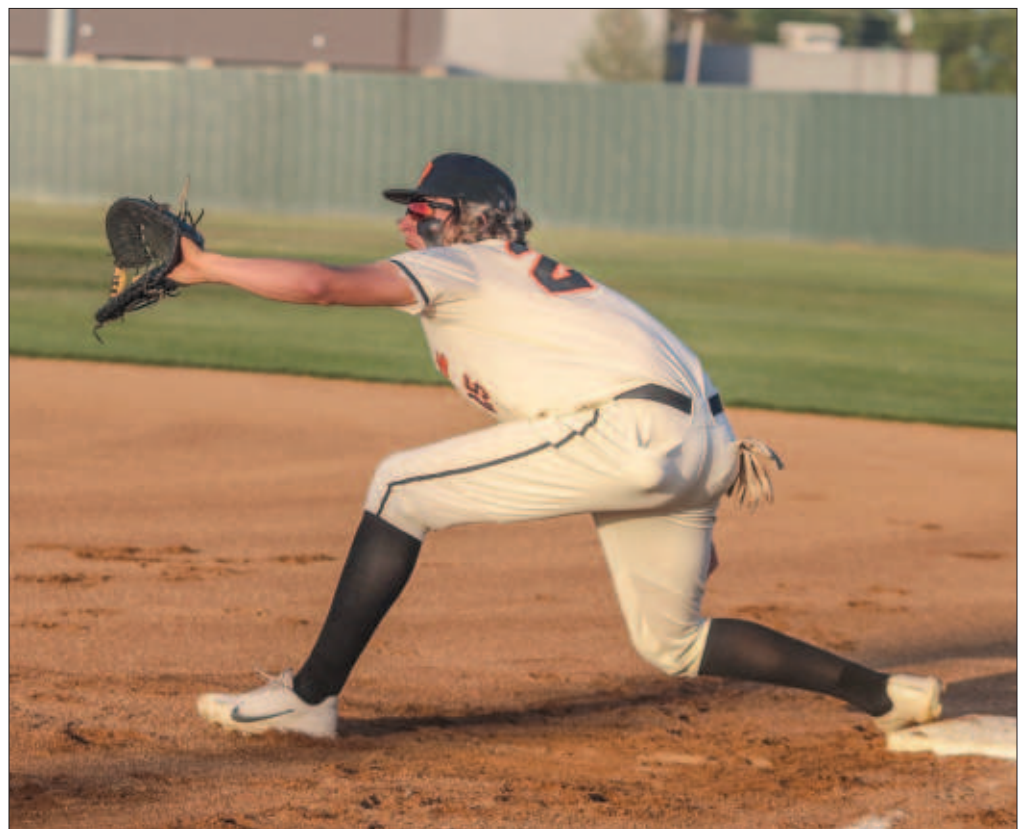
JEFF PRINCE | SPRINGTOWN EPIGRAPH

Todd Smith makes a rare appearance on the pitcher's mound against Paradise.



JEFF PRINCE | SPRINGTOWN EPIGRAPH

Scout Richards threw an inning's worth of pitches against Paradise.



JEFF PRINCE | SPRINGTOWN EPIGRAPH

The tall, lanky Trenton Solis can stretch a long way at first base.

the past couple of weeks," he said. "We are playing really hard. We're competitive. We've got to be better on the mound and more consistent at the plate." The team benefits from having a first baseman who stands 6 feet 5 inches and can stretch a long way for balls while keeping a foot planted on base.

"It helps me not have to get off the bag," said Trenton Solis. "I can stretch a little bit longer. My teammates say it does help them a little bit and gives them a bit more comfort room." Solis hit a growth spurt at 12 and surpassed 6 feet during his freshman year. He has been "growing ever since," the sophomore said.

The team also benefits from having Richards and Smith serving as vocal leaders, although their pitching days are over most likely. Still, Smith kept the ball that he tossed during the final inning of the Paradise game. "It's going to go on the shelf," he said. "I will always remember this day."

# Springtown eyes last rodeo of regular season, top 10 finish

**JEFF PRINCE**  
jeff@azlenews.net

Springtown cowboys and cowgirls are preparing for the last rodeo this weekend before the finals begin in May. On April 21, the team competed at the North Texas High School Rodeo Association Arena in Saginaw, and several team members earned medals. Springtown has earned enough points this year to assure themselves a top 10 finish. A handful of team members are qualified currently for the finals. About 70 teams compete in the rodeo association. In walkup goats, Shaye

Winford earned ninth place, followed by Makayla Ballard (11), Delaney Harris (14), and Kallie Gray (19). In ride-up goats, Winford earned sixth place, and Harris won 11th. In barrels, London Smith placed highest for Springtown at 20th, followed by Winford (27), Gray (29), Addyson Norris (38), Styles (39), and Kaylee Buchanan (40). Stephanie Heil earned 14th place in poles. The last rodeo of the regular season is April 28-29 at the NTHSRA Arena in Saginaw. The finals will be held May 19-20.



PHOTO COURTESY GATEMAN PHOTOGRAPHY  
Faith Styles and the Springtown rodeo club will participate in the final rodeo of the regular season on April 28-29 in Saginaw.

# TRACK

FROM PAGE B1

She lived up to the hype, winning first place after jumping 38 feet 5 inches – more than 2 feet further than her closest competitor. Her jump qualified her for regionals and set a new personal record and school record.

She thanked coach Tye Adams for telling her to focus on her left knee, since she had been struggling to push off correctly during jumps.

“Coach Adams reminded me every time before I jumped,” she said.

She planned to run the 4x200-meter relay and 4x400-meter relay later that afternoon.

“It’s very exciting,” she said.

She nailed those events, as well, qualifying for regionals in both.

Hudson Hulett will make the trip to Lubbock after placing second in discus. A week earlier, he placed second at the district meet.

“The same thing happened

last week,” he said. “I was winning the whole time until the second to the last throw.”

Hulett tossed the discus 132 feet to beat his personal record of 130 feet, which he set a week earlier at district. He hopes to set a new PR at regionals in Lubbock.

“I’m trying to inch it up every week,” he said. “Practicing and competing with the other guys from Springtown helps a lot.”

Advancing to regionals means the competition keeps becoming tougher, but Hulett is game for the challenge.

“I don’t know if I will make it out of there, but it will be a fun experience,” he said.

Also heading to regionals is Brayden Fox, the ace baseball pitcher who decided to run track this year despite overlapping seasons and schedules. He qualified in the 4x100-meter and 4x200-meter relays.

“I feel pretty good,” he said. “Our goal was to make it to the next round. Each week, we’ve gotten faster.”



Hudson Hulett tosses this discus 132 feet to set a personal record and qualify for regionals.

JEFF PRINCE | SPRINGTOWN EPIGRAPH



## GIRLS BOUND FOR LUBBOCK

The following Springtown Lady Porcupines qualified to compete at the regional meet:

High jump – Ashlynn Dickey and Brinklee Dauenhauer.

Triple jump – Mackenzie Flaughner and Brinklee Dauenhauer.

Long jump – Skyler Tyree. Shot put – Desrae Robinson and Natal De Valle Gonzalez.

Girls 4x100-meter relay – Dickey, Dauenhauer, Tyree, and Shayne Greenwood.

Girls 4x200-meter relay – Dauenhauer, Flaughner, Brooklyn Quintanilla, and Brianna Shreeves.

Girls 4x400-meter relay – Dickey, Flaughner, Greenwood, and Peyton Reynolds.

## BOYS BOUND FOR LUBBOCK

The following Springtown Porcupines qualified to compete at the regional meet:

Long jump – Riley Jackson and Brayden Florence.

Discus – Hudson Hulett. 110-meter hurdles – Dylan Mann and Darren Sweely.

300-meter hurdles – Sweely. Boys 1,600-meter run – Wesley Payne.

Boys 3,200-meter run – Payne.

Boys 4x100-meter relay – Jackson, Brayden Fox, Braydon Butler, and Connor King.

Boys 4x200-meter relay – Fox, Butler, King, and Jackson.

Boys 4x400-meter relay – Sweely, King, Jackson, and Caden Rogers.

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Xander Tice competes in the 800-meter run at the area track meet.

# SOFTBALL

FROM PAGE B1

sary, is at 6 p.m. on Monday, May 1.

All three games will be played at Chisholm Trail High School, 3100 NW College Dr., in Fort Worth.

## SENIOR NIGHT CELEBRATION

On April 21, the Lady Pines celebrated Senior Night before playing their final regular season game against Bridgeport at Porcupine Stadium. The Pines won 12-2 to end the season at 6-4 and in sole possession of third place in District 8-4A.

The team’s seniors include players Lauren Brandt, Noelle Fernandez, Karley Haynes, Megan Sanderson, and Harley Smythe, and manager Evelyn Brown.

Brandt, the dependable shortstop with an upbeat personality, played varsity softball for three years and played 14 years overall. She thanked her parents Jason and Kelly Brandt for supporting her and putting in the time and money so she could do what she loves.

“Thank you for inspiring me and showing me that I can

accomplish anything I put my mind to,” Brandt said.

She thanked her teammates for showing “true friendships, teamwork, and all the amazing memories.”

Her future plans include attending Vernon Junior College in the fall and playing softball while earning a license as a dental hygienist.

Haynes is another 14-year softball veteran with three years on varsity. She thanked mom Lacy for “being there for everything that has happened the past 14 years of my softball career” and said she appreciated her “more than you will ever know.”

She thanked her coaches for giving her knowledge of the game and helping her become a better player, and she embraced her teammates for knowing “how to care for each other.”

Haynes plans to continue playing softball at Vernon College while pursuing a degree in the medical field.

Fernandez began playing softball at 5, took on select ball at 9, and was highly skilled when she and her family moved to Springtown two years ago.

She praised parents Oscar and Stacey Fernandez for



The Lady Porcupines celebrate six girls on Senior Night: Clockwise from top left, Evelyn Brown, Harley Smythe, Noelle Fernandez, Megan Sanderson, Lauren Brandt, and Karley Haynes.

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always believing in her and taking her to tournaments, camps, and lessons. Her coaches believed in her and allowed her to “be me on the field.” And her teammates

have become her best friends that she will love forever because they were “so welcoming when I moved here.”

Sanderson took on softball in the fifth grade and played

many positions while growing up but focused on first base and pitching during her years at SHS.

She thanked dad Virgle Sanderson and pawpaw Virgil Sanderson for convincing her to leave cheerleading and discover the joy of softball. She thanked mom April Sanderson for “believing in everything that I do.” And she gave kudos to “bonus dad” Dan Meader for “making me and my mom happy and giving us a home and open arms as well as giving us lots of jokes, laughter, and love.”

Sanderson plans to attend Tarleton State University to study pre-veterinary animal science and play softball in recreational sports while working to become a veterinarian.

Smythe donned her first softball uniform in first grade and has played ever since. She thanked parents Randi and Erick Smythe and sister Kristi Poyner for “pushing me to do my best and for all the miles they put on their cars from the endless practices, games, and tournaments.”

Smythe plays clarinet in the school band and alto saxo-

phone in jazz band and has competed with the Sound of Springtown marching band for three years in a row at the state competition.

The future includes attending Weatherford College in the fall and possibly trying out for the softball team. She plans to major in secondary education.

Brown, a two-year regional qualifier in wrestling, served as manager for the Lady Pines this season. Her parents Jeremiah and Victoria Brown escorted her on the field. Brown thanked her teammates for their support and said she plans to play travel ball this summer and “hopefully getting a scholarship to wrestle.”

Head coach Scott Mann, speaking on behalf of the staff, booster club and athletic program, told the seniors they had worn their Springtown jerseys with pride.

“We are grateful for your effort, commitment to the team, and the lessons we’ve learned along the way,” he said. “We encourage you to continue to always do your very best, wherever life takes you.”



In center, Megan Sanderson accepts a jar filled with infield dirt from Porcupine Stadium, along with a handwritten note by head coach Scott Mann.

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| 18 ..... Catering          | 42 ..... House Cleaning         | 64..... Photography                    |
| 19..... Cement Work        | 43..... Hunting                 | 65..... Printing                       |
| 20..... Demolition         | 44..... Janitorial Service      | 66..... Roofing                        |
| 21..... Child Care         | 45..... Job Wanted              | 67..... Recycling                      |
| 22..... Cosmetics          |                                 | 68..... Storage                        |
| 23..... Computers/Services |                                 | 69..... Sand/Gravel                    |
|                            |                                 | 70..... Septic Tanks                   |
|                            |                                 | 71..... Sewing/Alterations             |
|                            |                                 | 72..... Sewer Service                  |
|                            |                                 | 73..... TV/Radio                       |
|                            |                                 | 74..... Tractor Service                |
|                            |                                 | 75..... Upholstery                     |
|                            |                                 | 76..... Vacuum Cleaners                |
|                            |                                 | 77..... Wanted                         |
|                            |                                 | 78..... Well Drilling                  |
|                            |                                 | 79..... Welding                        |
|                            |                                 | 80..... Lots/Acreage                   |
|                            |                                 | 81..... Business & Commercial Property |
|                            |                                 | 82..... RV's for Rent                  |
|                            |                                 | 83..... Houses for Sale                |
|                            |                                 | 84..... Mobile Homes for Rent          |
|                            |                                 | 85..... Mobile Homes for Sale          |
|                            |                                 | 86..... Mobile Home/RV Lots            |
|                            |                                 | 87..... Rent Furnished                 |
|                            |                                 | 88..... Rent Unfurnished               |
|                            |                                 | 89 ..... Wanted to Rent                |

### RATES

*16 Words or Less:*  
**Combo (Azle & Springtown)  
Only \$10.00 per week!**

Over 16 words, add 20 cents per word

**Extras such as Bold, Center & Border are available for a small fee**

**Classified boxed display ads also available for \$9.00 per column inch**

**(All ads must be paid in advance unless you have previously established credit)**

### CLASSIFIED AD DEADLINE: 1:00 PM FRIDAY

Most ads require payment in advance, but we do accept VISA, MASTERCARD, DISCOVER OR AMERICAN EXPRESS by phone.



Reach more than 8,000 households with combo advertising in the Azle News and the Springtown Epigraph.

*Nobody does it better!*

#### 006 Asphalt Paving

**BYRUM CONSTRUCTION**  
Asphalt Paving  
•Driveways •Parking Lots  
•Asphalt Repairs & Sealcoating  
•Asphalt Millings •Gravel  
Bruce Byrum  
Azle, Texas **817-690-2429**

#### 029 Fencing

**BOBBY'S FENCE.** All types, Free Estimates, Over 26 years experience. 817-444-3213.  
  
KILEY CHESNEY CONSTRUCTION  
All Types Fences - Tractor Work  
817-846-6645

#### 035 Garden/Mowing Service

Tony's Tree Service  
Removal, trimming & stump grinding. Senior & Veteran discounts. Fully insured. Call or text for free estimate 817-266-4603.

### Advertising Works!

**Chad's Tree Service**  
Trimming • Removals • Stump Grinding  
Systemic Feeding • Brush Chipping • Cable Bracing  
**817-221-2201 • 817-246-5943**  
**817-800-6059** CELL   
*Insured for your protection*

#### 039 Help Wanted

General Manager  
Community Water Supply Corporation The Non Profit Rural Community Water Supply Corporation, near Azle-Briar, Texas, is seeking a General Manager to lead, motivate, manage, and supervise the Corporation. This General Manager serves as the chief executive officer of the Corporation under the direction of the Board of Directors. The General Manager is responsible for all aspects of the efficient and cost effective operation of the Corporation. In accordance with the Corporation Policy Guidelines and consistent with the Federal and State regulations, the General Manager plans, implements, and directs the operations of the water system in a manner that insures service to customers, ongoing maintenance of systems and equipment, and sound development for the future. Essential duties and responsibilities include but are not limited to: assume safety responsibility for personnel and the safety of water delivery; evaluate, select, and motivate personnel; provide sound advice and counsel to the Board of Directors in relation to projects, developments, and improving the water system functions, is responsible for developing, preparing, and recommending a comprehensive budget, possess the ability to analyze and evaluate rate structures and serves as a liaison and advisor for the corporation with consulting engineers, government agencies, developers and any others as the need arises. Applicant will be responsible for establishing a high level of customer service and maintaining quality contacts with the public, customers and the board. Salary: Compensation package will include competitive salary based on education and experience, paid vacation and sick leave, health insurance for the employee, and 401k opportunities. Desired Qualifications and skills: A minimum of five (5) years of personnel management experience in a Water Utility At least 5 years of responsible experience involving the management of materials and facilities Have technical proficiency with computers and Software. The successful applicant Will be required to provide verification of qualifications, pass a drug and alcohol screen, and complete a background check prior to beginning work. A cover letter is required for consideration for this position and should be attached as the first page of the resume. The cover letter should address your specific interest in the position and outline skills and experience that directly relate to the position. Please e-mail a resume and cover letter to Diane Edwards at cwsc@wccs.net and copy Bill Rachel at bnrachel@aol.com.

#### 039 Help Wanted

**Eagle Crest VILLA SENIOR LIVING COMMUNITY**  
**NOW HIRING**  
**6A-2P SHIFT**  
**Full Time Personal Care Attendant**  
  
New Pay Scale, Health, Dental, Vision and Life Insurance. 401k and PTO.  
**Come by and apply in person: 113 Denver Trail Azle.**

#### 014 Campers & Trailers

Private family looking to buy a Travel Trailer, RV, or a Pop-Up Camper. Needs to be in decent shape, will pay cash. Please call 940-577-3770.

#### LEON'S FENCING

**Cedar • Iron • Pipe Barbed Wire**  
**817-371-8597**

#### YARD SERVICES

**SKID STEER  
SOD INSTALLATION  
FENCING  
STUMP GRINDING**  
**817-371-8597**

#### 039 Help Wanted

Custom Iron Works, Inc. Azle TX 76020 is accepting application for the following positions experienced welders, metal fabricators and structural iron workers, must have a valid driver's license and dependable transportation. Please call 817-270-3405.

#### 019 Cement Work

**Allen Chesney Concrete**  
All Types of Concrete Work  
Residential - Commercial  
Foundations, driveways, sand, gravel, demolition, haul-off, retaining walls  
817-271-4541

#### 032 For Sale



**2001 American Iron Horse Ranger. 113 cubic inch S&S Engine. Lots of extras. \$9,500 Negotiable. Call Leslie 682-552-9711 or 817-703-5347**

#### STUMP GRINDING

**Don't dig it! Grind it!**  
1 or 100 - We can do it.  
\$85 minimum within 5 mi.  
**817-237-5592**

#### PUBLISHER'S NOTICE

All real estate advertising in this newspaper is subject to the Fair Housing Act which makes it illegal to advertise "any preference, limitation or discrimination based on race, color, religion, sex, handicap, familial status or national origin, or an intention, to make any such preference, limitation or discrimination." Familial status includes children under the age of 18 living with parents or legal custodians, pregnant women and people securing custody of children under 18.  
**This newspaper will not knowingly accept any advertising for real estate which is in violation of the law. Our readers are hereby informed that all dwellings advertised in this newspaper are available on an equal opportunity basis. To complain of discrimination call HUD tollfree at 1-800-669-9777. The toll-free telephone number for the hearing impaired is 1-800-927-9275.**

#### 020 Demolition

**MCNEELY'S DEMOLITION & CLEAN UP SERVICE**  
*We Create Vacancy*

- Tear Down
- Removal
- Haul Off
- Mobile Homes
- Garages
- Barns
- Houses
- Bobcat Service
- Dirt/Gravel
- Spreading

**FREE ESTIMATES**  
**817-996-7887**  
253 Eagles Way, Springtown

#### 034 Garage & Estate Sales

Multi Family Yard Sale  
28th-29th 8am-3pm  
832 Emily Trail, Azle.

#### LEON'S TREE SERVICE

Expert take downs  
Stump Grinding  
Residential/Commercial  
Licensed & Insured • Free Estimates  
**817-371-8597**

#### IRRIGATION REPAIR

Residential/Commercial  
License# LI007825  
\$85 Service Call

#### OUTDOOR SCENE

**682-553-1560**

#### 024 Electrician

**BULLDAWG ELECTRIC CO.**  
All types of electrical services and MH hook-ups.  
Free Estimates. 817-675-4921  
www.bulldawgelectric.com.  
TECL#25253.

#### 035 Garden/Mowing Service

Need your lawn mowed, trimmed or cleaned up? Need your trees trimmed or cut? Any job big or small give Scooter a call. Free Estimates. 817-766-3834.

#### 039 Help Wanted

Springtown ISD is accepting applications for Bus Drivers and Monitors. Training available. Contact the Transportation Dept. 817-220-1418.

MAINSTREAM group homes are hiring for FT/PT direct care staff. Weekday 3:30pm-8:30am shifts as well as 24-hour weekend shifts. Work 2 days a week, get paid to sleep, and have a full-time job! Paid training, benefits, bonuses, and OT opportunities. Start \$9.00/hr with quick advancement possible. Call 817-270-2747, Monday-Friday, 9am-3pm.

**E-Conn Electric**  
Service, Remodel, New Construction  
Insured/BBB Accredited  
**817-615-7164**  
*Customer Satisfaction is our Goal!*  
C/C ACCEPTED TECL20470

**ADS Steel Services**  
Now Hiring  
Experienced Fitters,  
Installers & Shop Labor  
Competitive Wages  
Health Insurance  
Paid Holidays & Vacations  
apply in person at  
7461 W Vickery Blvd  
Ft Worth, TX 76116  
817-763-8223

#### 026 Excavating

**REED EXCAVATING**  
• SITE PREPARATION  
• LOT CLEARING  
• LEVELING  
• FINAL GRADE  
• LAND EROSION  
• GRAVEL ROADS  
• PARKING LOTS  
• DEMOLITION  
• STOCK TANKS  
Dump Truck Hauling **817-919-3696**

#### 035 Garden/Mowing Service

**COWBOY LAWN CARE.**  
Residential, farm, gardens, landscaping, tree trimming. Free Estimates. 817-271-0450. Spring Specials.

**PLACE AN AD IN THE CLASSIFIEDS TODAY!**  
**817-270-3340**

**GARAGE SALE**  
**16 words for only \$10**  
*A great way to raise extra money!*  
Call today for more info.  
Azle News  
817-270-3340  
Springtown Epigraph  
817-220-7217

**Eagle Crest VILLA SENIOR LIVING COMMUNITY**  
**Now Hiring Part-time Cook**  
Paid on-the-job training.  
Potential for Full-time  
**Apply in person: 113 Denver Trail, Azle.**

**www.azlenews.net**  
**www.springtown-epigraph.net**

**SELL IT IN THE CLASSIFIEDS!**

McDowell Lawn Service  
Mowing, edging, flower beds, fertilizer, tree trimming, residential or business. Weekly or bi-weekly. 817-437-9100

**Don't Break The Poor Little Piggy!**  
*Find the money you need in our Classified Section today!*  
**16 words for \$10**



**817-270-3340 - AZLE**  
**817-220-7217 - SPRINGTOWN**

Deadline:  
 1:00 PM FRIDAY

# Classifieds

**039** **Help Wanted**



**KARL KLEMENT**

**Lube Tech**  
 Experience a plus, but willing to train the right person. Must have valid TXDL with acceptable driving record. Must be responsible and dependable. Monday thru Friday work week  
**\*\*\* \$1,000 SIGN ON BONUS\*\*\***

**Service Technicians**  
**HIRING BONUS** available for all skill levels! Seeking **ALL LEVEL** of Service Technicians; Lube Tech's to Master! Be part of our **GROWING TEAM** and advance within our Service Department as we offer a Competitive Salary with a full line of Benefits, including 401K. Mon-Fri, 5-day work week with paid vacation, training & holidays!  
**\*\*\*Up To \$5,000 Hiring Bonus for Skilled Technicians!\*\*\***

**Service Porter**  
 Come join our Growing Team as a Service Porter! Duties included, but are not limited to cleaning vehicles, running errands and test-driving vehicles. Monday to Friday work week.

**Custodian**  
 Performs custodial tasks throughout the building. Position can be full-time or part-time.

For consideration of all positions apply in person:  
 605 N. Business 287, Suite 102, Decatur, Texas  
 OR CALL Human Resources Dept:  
 Lara Lancaster  
 @ 940-627-6362 | hr.info@klementford.com

All full-time positions offer growth opportunities & a full benefits package including Medical, Dental, Vision, Life, 401(k) & more. EEOC

**062** **Plumbing**

**LANDERS Plumbing Co.**  
 940-233-2862  
M-10078

PLACE AN AD IN THE CLASSIFIEDS TODAY!  
**817-270-3340**

**066** **Roofing**

**DIAMOND ROOFING & CONSTRUCTION**

**Commercial & Residential**

- Roofing
- Metal Roofing
- Carports
- Metal Buildings
- All General Contracting

**417 N. MAIN ST • SPRINGTOWN**  
**817-523-4137**  
 Here Before The Storm. Here Long After.

**EXPERIENCED ROOFING SPECIALIST**  
**FREE ROOF INSPECTIONS**  
*Insurance Claims, Licensed Local Business 34 Yrs*  
**ECE CONSTRUCTION LLC**  
 cell 817-615-7164 | office 817-831-2600

**Electrician/Electrician Helper**  
 Ready to hire full-time experienced or licensed electrician and electrician helpers. Must be able to Install, Test, and Maintain electrical systems; equipment; fixtures; and/or devices. Ability to diagnose and determine insufficiencies using test equipment and hand tools.

**HVAC Technician/Helper**  
 Ready to hire full-time skilled HVAC Technicians & Apprentices. Must be able to perform troubleshooting and routine general maintenance repairs & replacements for residential/commercial heating, ventilation, and A/C equipment and more.

**Staff Accountant**  
**Full or Part Time Position**  
 The position of Staff Accountant is primarily responsible for ensuring the financial integrity of the Company's books for various product lines. This position is an integral part of our practice and business and will provide a variety of duties. This position is responsible for: Entry, analysis, and reconciliation of financial transactions as well as Preparation of financial and other pertinent reports.

**KLEMENT DISTRIBUTION, INC.**  
 (Hershey Ice Cream Distributor)  
 No Positions Available at this Time

*We offer Career Advancement Opportunities with Competitive Pay with full Benefits Package, including 401K and paid vacation, training and holidays!*

**AT HOME ROOFING & METAL BUILDINGS**  
**817-304-4224**  
 Tired of always replacing your roof? Call us for a metal roof quote.  
*We'll be here after the storm.*

**079** **Welding**

owner Rodney Vick  
 817-220-3044  
 fax 817-523-7639  
 cell 817-253-1614

**R & E Construction**  
**Metal Building Specialist**

- Weld Ups/ Bolt Ups
- Pipe Fencing
- Concrete
- Horse Barns
- All Types Fencing
- Metal Roofs

Compare Pricing  
**NO JOB TOO SMALL**

**068** **Storage**

**INNERSPACE STORAGE.** Hwy 199, Springtown. Now renting all unit sizes, 24-hour access. 682-842-1414.

**STORAGE SPECIAL**  
 10X10 \$60/MONTH-NO DEPOSIT  
 1350 LIBERTY SCHOOL RD, AZLE  
 5X10 \$45/MONTH \$20/DEPOSIT  
**817-246-4646**

**Ash Creek Storage**  
*Convenient Location*  
 Corner of Main St. & Locust • Azle  
**817-444-3292**

**LINDSEY STATE JAIL CURRENT OPENINGS**  
**Correctional Officers • Assistant Foodservice Manager**  
**Education Counselor • Academic Instructor**  
**Human Resource Supervisor**  
**Assistant Maintenance Supervisor - Electrician**  
 PLEASE CHECK THE WEBSITE FOR JOB QUALIFICATIONS.  
 A New Correctional Officer Pay Increase will be as follows - Starting pay will be \$18.00 dollars per hour. After Six months\* there will be a pay increase to \$19.00 per hour and at one year there will be another pay increase to \$20.00 per hour. Must have HS Diploma or equivalent, be able to pass a drug screen, have a clean background, and valid driver's license to be considered for a Correctional Officer.  
**Apply online at www.mtctrains.com or call 940-567-2272 and ask for the HR Department.**  
Management & Training Corporation is an Equal Opportunity Employer: Minority/Female/Veteran/Disabled

**046** **Looking to Buy**

**LOCAL RESIDENT**

**Buying used or in need of repair**

- Campers
- Motorhomes
- Farm Equipment
- Boats
- Pickups, Cars & Trailers

**817-629-7531**

**049** **Masonry/Stonework**

**Silva Masonry, L.L.C.**  
 AZLE, TX  
**CONCRETE**  
**COMMERCIAL • RESIDENTIAL**  
 Landscape Designs, Outdoor Kitchens  
 Patios, Retaining Walls, Mailboxes  
 All Types Stone & Brick Work Free  
 New Construction • Remodels Estimates  
**817-308-6512**  
 email alvarosilva@verizon.net

**WEATHERFORD Healthcare Center**

**Sign on Bonus offered - 2-10PM RN/LVN**  
**Double Weekend & 10P-6A CNAs**  
 Apply in person at 521 W. 7th St.  
 Or call 817-594-8713 or  
 Email resume to [HR.Weatherford@Summittc.com](mailto:HR.Weatherford@Summittc.com)  
 EOE

**052** **Movers**

U.S. Army Retired-but not tired!  
 Careful moving-Cheap.  
 Call Big Jim @ 817-237-5151.

**057** **Pets/Livestock**

Will pay top dollar for grazing and hay leases. Call 940-389-1936.

**040** **Home Improvement**

**BILL ROSSER PAINTING & REMODELING.** Big Savings: \$100 off any job of \$1,000 or more. Painting, Carpentry, Tape & Bed, Texture, Popcorn Ceilings. FREE ESTIMATES. Call 817-304-9974; 866-374-3559.

**PYRAMID REMODELING.** PAINTING: Interior, Exterior, Tape & Bed, Texture, Popcorn Ceilings. FREE ESTIMATES. 817-944-7658.

**BOBBY MCWILLIAMS PAINTING** 817-821-6377.  
 Interior/Exterior Painting Residential & New Homes. 50 years experience.

Rescue your Ballerina from the Shelter and give her a Forever Home



**040** **Home Improvement**

**Devin's Handyman Service**

- Carpentry
- Cement
- Rock
- Granite
- Tile
- Painting
- Siding
- Insulation
- Kitchen/Bath
- Roof & Gutters
- Powerwashing
- Decks

**SPRING SPECIAL 20% OFF with this ad!**

**Call Devin at 817-629-9608**

Find that Perfect Vehicle for you and your buddy in the Classifieds.  
 OR  
 You can Sell your Auto in the same section.  
 Call 817-270-3340 for more info on our  
**3-Month Special Only \$29.95!**



**HORSE SALE**  
 May 5th, 2023  
**Tack Sale Begins at 6:00 PM**  
 Horses Follow  
 Stephenville Cattle Co.  
 Highway 281 North • Stephenville, TX  
 Troy 254-967-1950 • Barn 254-968-4844

**062** **Plumbing**

**GRAHAM PLUMBING CO.**



Commercial-Residential Serving Springtown, Azle, Boyd, Weatherford Area  
 M#15899  
**817-220-2469**  
[grahamplumbingco.com](http://grahamplumbingco.com)

**069** **Sand/Gravel**

**HALL'S SAND, DIRT & GRAVEL**  
 Quality Family Business Since 1938  
 CALL Cliff Hall  
**(817) 221-2681**  
 We go the extra mile to ensure you get more for your \$. On House Pads, Driveways, Lot Clearing & Tractor Work, Etc.

**069** **Sand/Gravel**



Need to sell your ATV? Call today and ask about our (\$29.95) 3-MONTH SPECIAL!  
 Azle News 817-270-3340  
 Springtown Epigraph 817-220-7217

**079** **Welding**

**WDC WELD-DONE CONSTRUCTION LTD.**  
**Metal Building Erectors**  
 • Pre-engineered Weld-up  
 • Barns/Shops  
 • Arenas/Hangars  
 • Fencing  
 1220 E. Hwy. 199 • Springtown  
**817-220-2150**  
[www.weld-done.net](http://www.weld-done.net)

**THANKS FOR SHOPPING & DINING LOCALLY!**

**817-270-3340 - AZLE**  
**817-220-7217 - SPRINGTOWN**

Deadline:  
 1:00 PM FRIDAY

# Classifieds


**079 Welding**



**SOLID STEEL SOLUTIONS**

- Metal Buildings
- Steel Components
- Welding Supplies
- Concrete Supplies
- Fabrication Supplies
- Pipe Fencing
- Deer Blinds
- Deer Feeders

**8894 W Hwy 199 • Springtown**  
**817-220-0008**  
**www.SolidSS.com** **Open to the Public**



**Find Your New Best Friend in the Classifieds!**

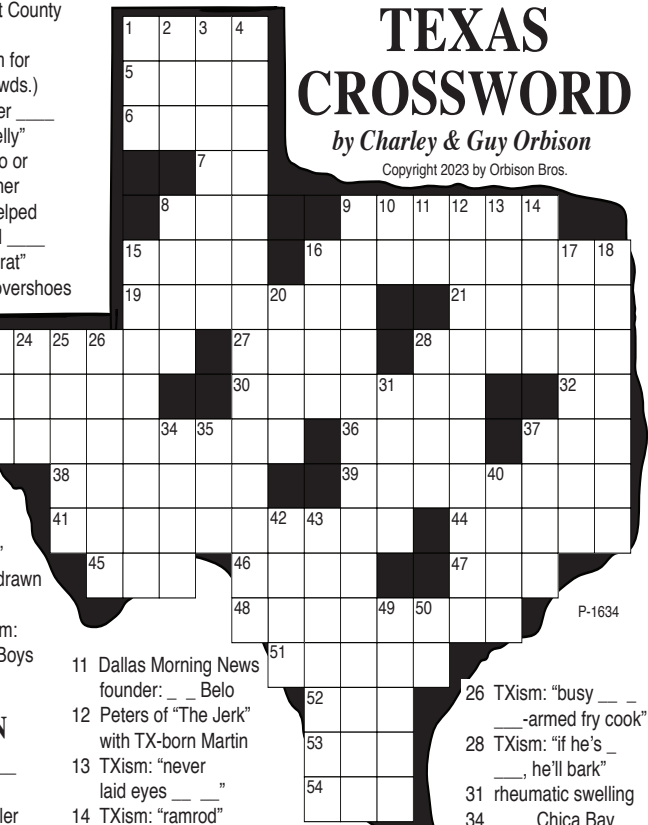
**ACROSS**

- Gulf waves
- TXism: "put \_\_\_ shut up"
- TXism: "Lord willing and the creek don't \_\_\_"
- actor Begley in film "Lone Star" (1952)
- actor Vigoda
- TXism: "thing- \_\_\_" (gadget)
- film "\_\_\_ for Texas"
- TXism: "plain \_\_\_ on your face"
- birth state of Texas outlaw Sam Bass
- TXism: "cream \_\_\_ to the top"
- car dealer objective: "close \_\_\_"
- east Texas reptile, for short
- TXism: "as welcome as \_\_\_ a picnic"
- what many Texans fought against in early 1940s
- TXism: "goes together like a \_\_\_ candy store"
- this Teddy trained "Rough Riders" in San Antonio (init.)
- you can pull these out of Lake Fork (2 wds.)
- TXism: "larrupin' \_\_\_" (tasty)
- Texas' flag, 1861-1865 (abbr.)
- TXism: "from womb \_\_\_" (lifetime)
- in Van Zandt County on U.S. 80
- Billy Graham for 50 years (3 wds.)
- TXism: "lower \_\_\_ snake's belly"
- stat. for Astro or Ranger pitcher
- TX Nimitz helped set up Naval
- TXism: "rug rat"
- waterproof overshoes
- TX actress Prentiss
- Texas store: "Stop . . ."
- beer that is drawn is "on \_\_\_"
- 51-across film: "Where the Boys \_\_\_" (1960)

**DOWN**

- Ysleta del \_\_\_ Pueblo tribe
- news wrangler (abbr.)
- in Falls County on U.S. 77
- seat of Gillespie County
- TXism: "busy as \_\_\_-armed paper hanger"
- TXism: "mean \_\_\_"
- \_\_\_ Vernon, TX
- Dallas Morning News founder: \_\_\_ Belo
- Peters of "The Jerk" with TX-born Martin
- TXism: "never laid eyes \_\_\_"
- TXism: "ramrod"
- TX Joan Crawford, e.g. (2 wds.)
- head gesture of agreement (2 wds.)
- football fans try to get \_\_\_ the 50-yard line
- Erik of "Honeyboy" with TX Fairchild
- Greek team of ex-Mav Roy Tarpley
- TXism: "busy \_\_\_-armed fry cook"
- TXism: "if he's \_\_\_ he'll bark"
- rheumatic swelling
- \_\_\_ Chica Bay
- former parent co. of American Airlines
- winter garment
- TX Helmond show: "\_\_\_ the Boss?"
- "Dallas" was a prime time \_\_\_ opera
- in Cass County on U.S. 59
- ski incline
- laugh word

**TEXAS CROSSWORD**  
 by Charley & Guy Orbison  
 Copyright 2023 by Orbison Bros.



P-1634

**081 Business/Commercial**

40x50 building For Rent, 3 miles west of Springtown. 817-713-7495.

**082 RV's for Rent**

Nice 1BR RV in adult RV park. Great for older person on limited income. Starts at \$550/mo. All Bills Paid. Heritage RV Park 817-444-3760.

**084 Mobile Homes for Rent**

2-2 Mobile Home \$950/mo \$950/dep firm, no pets. 817-220-4095.

**088 Rent Unfurnished**

2 BDRM 1 Bath upstairs Apartment in Boyd. Non-smoking, no pets, 1 year lease. \$850/mo \$850/dep. 940-390-1164 leave a message.

3-2 Duplex, quiet location, nice & clean, newly refurbished, no pets. \$1450.00/mo. 817-444-3636.

New 3-2 Duplex with a 2 car carport with an attached 10x20 storage, fenced backyard, Azle schools. Requirements are credit/background check, proof of income and rental history. \$1,600/mo \$1,600/dep. 817-980-3066.

1912 PELICAN DR. N.  
 3-2-1 \$1,395.MO.\$1,000 DEP.  
 1520 CORAL CUT-OFF  
 2-1-1 \$1,295.MO.\$1,000 DEP.  
 1831 PELICAN OVAL  
 2-2-1 \$1,335.MO.\$1,000 DEP.  
 Gene Thompson & Associates  
 817-246-4646 gtatx.com

**GENE THOMPSON & ASSOCIATES HOMES AND MOBILE HOMES FOR RENT**  
 gtatx.com  
**817-246-4646**

**AZLE OAKS APARTMENT**  
 700 JARVIS • AZLE  
 817-444-1712

**1 & 2 Bedroom Unfurnished**  
 Accepting Applications  
 Rent based on income  
 TDD: 800-735-2989  
 This institution is an equal opportunity provider and employer.

**088 Rent Unfurnished**

**Gateway Apartments**  
 313 Gateway · Azle · 817-444-0882  
 TDD 800-760-1997

**Energy Efficient · Central Heat/Air  
 Off Street Parking · Water Paid  
 Fully Equipped Laundry**

**ONE & TWO BEDROOMS**

**Rent Based On Income For Qualified Applicants**

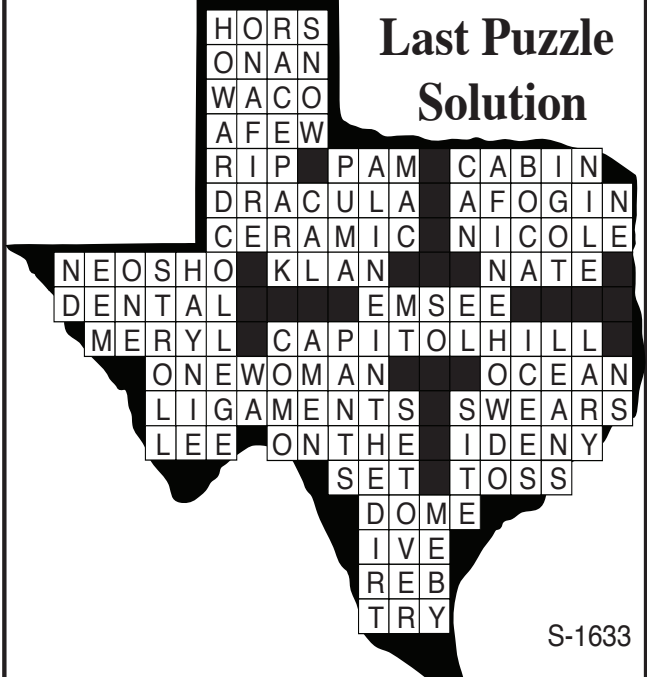
62 years of age or older, handicap/disabled, regardless of age



*This institution is an equal opportunity provider and employer*



**Last Puzzle Solution**



S-1633

**Save a Shelter Animal. Find your furever Friend**



**HOME IMPROVEMENT**



**Check out the Home Improvement Specialists in the Classifieds for help with your next project!**

**GARAGE SALE**

16 words for only \$10.  
 A great way to raise extra money!  
 Call today for more info.  
 Azle News 817-270-3340  
 Springtown Epigraph  
 817-220-7217

**TEXAS STATEWIDE CLASSIFIED ADVERTISING NETWORK**

**TexSCAN**

**TexSCAN Week of April 23-29, 2023**

**ACREAGE**

**LAND FOR SALE.** Hunting, recreational, retirement. Hill Country, Trans Pecos regions in South Texas. 30-year fixed rate, owner financing, 5% down. www.ranchenterprisesltd.com. 800-876-9720.

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## Budget-friendly ways to freshen up your home's exterior

As any homeowner knows, renovation projects tend to cost a lot of money. The average cost of a home renovation is difficult to gauge, as such endeavors run the gamut from complex projects like a kitchen overhaul to simpler ones like painting a room inside a home. Indeed, the National Association of the Remodeling Industry notes that scope is what drives the cost of a renovation project.

Though there might not be an 'average cost' of a renovation project, homeowners can expect to spend thousands of dollars on projects that are not very small in scale. Navigating such an expense at a time when inflation remains high might be difficult for some homeowners looking to maintain the appearance of their home exteriors. However, there are many budget-friendly ways homeowners can tend to the exterior of their properties.

• **Power washing:** Power washing won't break the bank but it can revive the look of a home. Power washing removes dirt and grime from

the siding of a home and a power washing can be used to clean porches, walkways and patios as well. Hardware chains like Home Depot and Lowes typically rent power washers, but homeowners who don't want to do it themselves can hire a professional for a few hundred dollars, if not less. Power washing after winter can be a good idea, as the elements can take a toll on a home's exterior. A good power washing before spring and summer entertaining season can thus give a home a fresh, clean look without breaking the bank.

• **Furnished front porch:** A furnished front porch can serve as a welcome sign to neighbors and provide a great place to relax with a morning cup of coffee and a good book. Homeowners with a small porch won't need to bust their budgets to upgrade their front porch furnishings. Some small chairs with bright cushions, a small table and a rug underfoot can revamp an entryway at low cost.

• **Window box installation:** Installing window box planters is another cost-effective

way to brighten up a home's exterior. Homeowners can hang window boxes outside windows on the front of their homes and then fill them with brightly colored flowers to add an inviting pop of color to their home exteriors. The experts at Better Homes & Gardens urge homeowners to take weight into consideration before buying window planters. Keep in mind that soil and developed plants can be heavy, so look for a sturdy box as well as one that has drainage holes.

• **Replace hardware:** Another simple way to freshen up a stale exterior is to replace hardware. Door knobs, knockers, house numbers, and even the mailbox can appear dated after a while. Replacing these items is inexpensive and quick but can have a profound impact on how the exterior of a home appears to residents and visitors.

Exterior renovations need not break the bank. Various simple and inexpensive tweaks can quickly revitalize the exterior of a home.



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# How to throw a last-minute dinner party

Do you feel like having a party? A spur-of-the-moment desire to host friends or family is not uncommon. Though it may be ideal to give yourself a few days to plan a dinner party and assemble what's needed to be your best host, sometimes inspiration strikes and compels people to throw last-minute dinner parties.

In such instances, these tips for putting together a feast on the fly can be especially valuable.

- Keep it simple. Build your menu around your own specialty, ideally one that is easy to prepare. Don't try out that fancy new cookbook recipe right now. Single-pot casseroles or pasta dishes whip up in a flash and can feed a crowd.
- Stock essentials at home.

It's easier to invite people over at the last minute if you don't have to shop for supplies. Keep a running inventory of foods that can be brought out at a moment's notice, such as items that may go on a charcuterie platter. Olives, block cheeses, crackers, salad fixings, cured meats, and fresh vegetables can be arranged in a heartbeat. With a can of chick peas, some garlic, lemon juice, and parsley at the ready, you can quickly create a homemade hummus, too.

- Consider a potluck. Guests may want to help out if they are invited over on short notice. A potluck is a perfect way to fill a table with food with minimal effort, as everyone contributes a little something.
- Clean the visible rooms.



There likely won't be time to clean your entire home before an impromptu party. Therefore, focus on the kitchen, dining area and guest bathroom. Gather errant items from around the house and store in a bed-

room behind closed doors. Close doors on other spaces that are off-limits during the party.

- Get the kids involved. If you have children, give them jobs to help out. They can set tables, fill ice cube trays or

run the vacuum over high-traffic areas. Removing some tasks from your to-do list can free your time for other needs.

- Scour your home. Create interesting place settings or a festive table with items

you already have on hand. Consider using food as functional decor on a table. A bowl of lemons makes an eye-catching centerpiece.

Make last-minute dinner parties happen with a few tricks of the trade.

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## 6 options for funding your next home improvement project



Homeowners may find that the more expensive renovations require them to secure some type of financing.

Before starting a home improvement project, either on one's own or with the assistance of a professional contractor, homeowners must first consider the costs involved. According to the home improvement resource HomeAdvisor, more than one-third of homeowners do not understand what hiring a professional will cost, and then cannot successfully budget and secure financing once they have set their sights on a renovation project.

HomeAdvisor says that some of the more popular projects, such as remodeling a kitchen or bathroom or building a deck, can cost, on average, \$19,920, \$9,274 and \$6,919, respectively.

Homeowners may find that the more expensive renovations require them to secure some type of financing. Those who have never before sought such financing may want to consider these options.

1. Cash-out refinancing:

With cash-out refinancing, a person will begin the mortgage process anew with the intention of paying off the current mortgage balance, and then taking out additional funds for other purposes. Cash-out refinancing is a way to tap into a home's existing equity for use on improvements or other expenses, such as college tuition.

2. Home equity line of credit: The financial experts at Bankrate indicate that a HELOC works like a credit card, with the house as collateral. There is a credit limit, and borrowers can spend up to that limit. The interest rate may or may not be fixed. However, the interest may be tax-deductible if the financing is used to improve, buy or build a home.

3. Home equity loan: Individuals also can borrow against equity in their homes with a fixed interest rate through a home equity loan. Most lenders will calculate 80 percent of the home

value and subtract a homeowner's mortgage balance to figure out how much can be borrowed, according to the financial advisory site The Simple Dollar.

4. Personal loan: Homeowners can shop around at various financial institutions for competitive personal loans to be used for home improvement purposes. Funds may be approved

within one business day, which can be ideal for those who want to begin their improvements soon.

5. Personal line of credit: A personal line of credit allows borrowers to borrow only the money needed at the time, and offers a variable interest rate that is generally lower than fixed loan rates. Again, like a credit card, PLOC gives a person a maximum borrow-

ing amount and is ideal for ongoing purchases.

6. Credit cards: In a pinch, credit cards can be used to finance improvements, but they do come with the cost of very high interest rates if the balance is not paid in full by the time the bill comes due. However, for funding smaller projects and maximizing rewards points through home improvement retailers or

specific credit card company promotions, credit cards can be a way to earn various perks in addition to the benefit of improving a home.

Homeowners looking to finance their next improvements should speak to a financial advisor and shop around for the best types of funding for them.

# Candle crafts tap creativity



Candles can be housed in various vessels, but a clever turn is to use teacups or mugs to mimic the look of popular beverages.

Crafting is enjoyed by children and adults. Even the most ardent arts and crafts enthusiasts might be surprised to learn that their favorite hobby can offer a number of benefits related to their health and well-being.

Research shows that regularly engaging in crafts can have tangible health benefits. The rhythmic and repetitive movements of certain crafts, as well as the need to focus one's attention, can produce a calm that helps anyone, including those who may experience anxiety, according to health and self-care resource Berkeley Wellness. In an online study published in the British Journal of Occupational Therapy that surveyed more than 3,500 knitters, researchers found knitting was 'soothing' and 'restful' and had meditative or zen-like qualities.

The sense of accomplishment after completing a project

is another great reason to engage in arts and crafts, which also may boost cognitive health by protecting certain neurological pathways in the brain.

There are many ways to engage with arts and crafts. Woodcrafting, painting, mosaic work, and metal arts are some popular activities.

One time-honed craft activity that is good for beginners or advanced crafters alike is candlemaking. Today's craft stores sell many different types of waxes and products that can produce beautiful scented candles.

### TEACUP CANDLES

Candles can be housed in various vessels, but a clever turn is to use teacups or mugs to mimic the look of popular beverages. There's also the reassurance that such beverage holders can withstand hot wax.

Start by visiting a craft

store and choosing a type of wax. Gel waxes are versatile and can boil, pour and set up easily. They'll also be mostly translucent, which is great for replicating the look of various drinks. Follow the instructions on the packages for usage and invest in coordinating wicks, colorants, and appropriate scents.

It's also necessary to choose a style of candle. In a teacup, a tea-colored hued wax paired with a lemon scent can be reminiscent of a hot cup of lemon tea. Use other glasses or mugs to replicate the looks and scents of hot chocolate, mimosas, cappuccino, and much more.

As you become more comfortable, experiment with incorporating molded wax embellishments, such as lemon slices, ice cubes, berries, or even cinnamon sticks. This will help drive home the realism and whimsy.

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# Poisonous plants to avoid around the house

Homeowners must consider various factors when choosing plants to display in and around their homes. That's because, despite their beauty, various plants are toxic to humans and animals.

Avoiding potentially poisonous plants can prevent injuries and even deaths. Here's a list of some plants homeowners may want to avoid.

- **Rhododendron:** Rhododendrons produce flower clusters that bloom in the spring. They also produce thick, glossy leaves that thrive in the fall and winter in many areas. If any part of the plant is swallowed it can cause vomiting and potentially slow the pulse.

- **Lily-of-the-valley:** This popular plant grows close to the ground, blooming bell-shaped, sweet-smelling flowers. If large doses of the toxin in this plant are ingested, it can gradually slow the heart down and potentially prove fatal.

- **Dumb cane:** The houseplant dieffenbachia, commonly known as Dumb cane, adds tropical appeal indoors. The sap of the plant causes the tongue to burn and swell, enough to block off air to the throat. It can be fatal if ingested by both pets and humans.

- **English ivy:** This go-to draping vine looks lovely cascading down from planters or shelving. While its toxins need to be ingested in large amounts to cause problems, English ivy can cause skin irritation, rash and fever, particularly after eating the berries.

- **Bittersweet nightshade:** Bittersweet nightshade grows as a weed on some properties. It's particularly problematic for those who have pets or young kids because of the brightly colored berries it produces. The highest level of toxicity comes from these berries.

- **Foxglove:** According to The Spruce: Decor, foxgloves are among the most toxic specimens commonly grown on landscapes. They are widely coveted for their pink, purple and white bell-shaped flowers that grow in tall spires. They're also deer- and rabbit-resistant, making them especially popular. However, foxgloves contain potent cardiac glycosides that can be lethal in high doses.

- **Philodendron:** Philodendron are easy to



Avoiding potentially poisonous plants can prevent injuries and even deaths.

care for and hearty. While not fatal, a bite of philodendron can irritate the skin and cause nausea and swelling of the mouth, throat and tongue. Similar effects occur with Pothos, another common and hearty houseplant.

- **Yew shrubs:** The needle-like leaves of this shrub are toxic to humans and animals, as are the fleshy, bright red berries that grow toxic seeds. Kids may be tempted to pick and consume these bright berries.

- **Palms:** Several different palm trees are poisonous to people and pets. Palms are an overlooked source of poisoning tragedies in warmer climates. Formosa palm, Sago palm, Queen Sago, and Cardboard palm are some of the varieties that can cause issues if ingested or allergic skin reactions if touched.

When planning a landscape, work with a skilled garden expert to choose plants that will not be hazardous to family and pets.



English Ivy, a popular vine for landscapes and plantings, can cause skin irritation, rash and fever.

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# The basics of fertilizing a lawn

Spring marks the return of lawn and garden season. Lawns often bear the brunt of winter's wrath, so spring is a great time to nurse them back to health, and fertilizing can be an essential component of that process.

Fertilizing a lawn can be intimidating. An array of fertilizers, with each seemingly designed to address a different issue, can make homeowners' heads spin when visiting their local lawn and garden center. However, fertilizing is a very simple task that any homeowner can tackle. In fact, fears about fertilizing are often unfounded and can be overcome with some basic knowledge of the process.

- Identify which type of grass is in the yard. The home improvement experts at HGTV note that turfgrass is

divided into two categories: cool-season grass and warm-season grass. A local lawn and garden center can help homeowners identify which type of grass is in the yard, and this often depends on location. Fescue, bluegrass and perennial ryegrass are some examples of cool-season grasses, while Bermuda, bahia, St. Augustine, and zoysia are considered warm-season grasses. Identifying which type of grass is in the lawn is important because that will indicate when to fertilize.

Cool-season grasses are typically best fertilized in early spring, while warm-season lawns can benefit from an application just before especially warm temperatures arrive.

- Survey the lawn to identify which spreader to use. A small yard or a thriving

lawn with only a few bald or unsightly patches may not need a full application of fertilizer. In such instances, a hand spreader can suffice. For larger lawns and areas, a broadcast spreader is the ideal option. Spreaders have multiple settings, and the fertilizer package will indicate which setting to utilize when using the product.

- Test the soil prior to purchasing fertilizer. The lawn experts at Pennington note that a simple soil test can reveal soil pH and phosphorous and potassium levels. Soil tests can be purchased at most home improvement stores and lawn and garden centers, and they can help homeowners determine which fertilizer will most benefit their lawns.

- Water the lawn prior to

fertilizing. The experts at Scotts recommend a good watering a few days prior to fertilizing a lawn. Such an approach ensures the soil is ready to accept the fertilizer once it's applied.

- Follow the instructions carefully. Detailed instructions are typically provided on fertilizer product packaging. Once homeowners have identified and purchased the product they need, they can simply follow the instructions on the packaging, including how and when to water after application, which can make fertilizing less intimidating.

Fertilizing in spring can help a lawn recover from the previous summer and winter, ensuring it's lush and green when summer entertaining season arrives.



Fertilizing can help a lawn recover from winter damage.

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# The basics of container gardening

Gardening is a rewarding hobby that has been linked to health benefits like reduced stress and improved mental well-being. Gardening also can lead to an inviting home landscape full of attractive blooms and/or delicious foods.

Backyard gardens have long been planted after clearing a plot of land, tilling and amending the soil, and planting rows of favorite crops. However, gardening can be less labor-intensive and even more successful when people consider the many benefits of container gardening.

## WHAT IS CONTAINER GARDENING?

As its name implies, container gardening is growing plants inside of containers. These containers can be flower pots, rectangular deck boxes or even large raised garden beds.

## PROS TO CONTAINER GARDENING

One of the advantages of container gardening is that plants can be moved in and out of sunlight to ensure the right growing conditions. This isn't as easily achieved when gardens are stationary. Also, beginner gardeners may be more able to control soil conditions inside of a small container rather than a vast ground-based garden, which will require a good deal of manual labor. Pots and boxes also can be grouped together to create

eye-popping displays, usually at lower costs than the sheer volume of plants that would be needed to fill out an expansive landscape.

## CONS TO CONTAINER GARDENING

Container garden plants will not have direct access to the ground, so they need gardeners to create the ideal growing conditions. Developing the right care formula can be challenging. The home and garden resource The Spruce says that drainage is an important factor in container gardening, and most containers do not offer enough drainage holes. If water cannot escape the soil, the roots of the plants can rot and die. It's not enough to add stones or gravel to the bottom of containers. Drill additional holes in the bottom (1½-inch in diameter for small or medium-sized pots; one inch in diameter for larger pots). Also, be sure to check on soil moisture so that watering can be adjusted. During hot stretches, plants may need to be watered more frequently.

## PLAN FOR PLANTS THAT GROW WELL TOGETHER

Grouping plants together can create visually stunning combinations. However, it is important to choose plants that require the same amount of light and moisture. Look at plant tags when visiting the garden cen-



Gardening can be less labor-intensive and even more successful when people consider the many benefits of container gardening.

ter and select complementary plants, or ask a store employee. Mixing different plant shapes, colors and leaf textures, as well as plants of various heights, can help containers look filled out.

## FEED PLANTS ACCORDINGLY

Plants need nutrition to thrive in containers. Quality potting mixes will contain fertilizers, but nutrition will wane over time. Every couple of weeks, container plants will need either fresh potting mix or granular fertilizer added to feed them. Oregon State University Extension Services suggests using a slow-release fertilizer or worm castings several times throughout the season.

Container gardening is a great way to add plants to smaller patios, reduce the workload involved in maintaining expansive gardens, and customize conditions for optimal growth.






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# Tips to pick the right plants for your landscape



Native plants can often handle local weather conditions, so prioritize natives over more exotic plants whose key attribute is aesthetic appeal.

Each year, gardening enthusiasts anxiously await the arrival of spring. Spring is a great season to plant new flowers, plants, grasses, and trees, making it a popular time of year to spend sunny days out in the yard.

Veteran gardeners may know their landscapes well and be able to pick the right plants on their own. Novices may need a little help as they look to give their landscapes a whole new look. The following are some helpful tips to help homeowners pick the right plants for their landscapes.

- Conduct a site evaluation. A colorful landscape featuring an array of plants and flowers can be eye-catching and add curb appeal to a property. However, where plants will be planted is a significant variable that must be considered before homeowners choose what to plant. The Center for Agriculture, Food, and the Environment at the University of Massachusetts Amherst notes that site evaluation is the first step when picking plants. A number of factors must be evaluated, including light availability; water availability; exposure to the elements, including wind and extreme temperatures;

and competition from existing vegetation, among other things. Document these variables prior to picking plants. For example, take note of the area you plan to plant to see if it is full sun or partial shade, and then pick plants whose growing conditions align with those you observe.

- Look at more than looks. Aesthetic appeal might be what homeowners most desire from their landscapes, but that appeal is only achieved when the right plants are chosen for a space. If the wrong plants are chosen, they're unlikely to thrive or they could threaten existing vegetation, thus compromising the overall appeal of the property. Native plants can often handle local weather conditions, so prioritize natives over more exotic plants whose key attribute is aesthetic appeal. If jaw-dropping aesthetic appeal is your top priority, speak with a local landscaping professional about which natives can provide that without compromising surrounding vegetation.

- Consider maintenance prior to planting. Maintenance is another variable gardeners must consider. Newly planted trees may require substantial

watering until they've fully established their roots, and some homeowners may not have time for that. In addition, certain plants may require a considerable amount of pruning in order to create and maintain the look homeowners desire. Individuals must be willing to invest the time and effort necessary to maintain new plantings that require such diligence. If not, look for plants that don't require much maintenance while keeping in mind that even low-maintenance plants still require some effort and attention.

- Consider local wildlife. If your lawn is routinely visited by local wildlife, then look for plants that won't look like a meal to these welcome, if uninvited, guests. For example, if you routinely see deer lounging around in your backyard, look for deer-resistant plants. This is a good way to protect your investment, of both time and money, and ensure minimal wildlife traffic through your newly landscaped yard.

- Spring gardens are awe-inspiring, especially when homeowners embrace various strategies for successful planting.

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# Tips to organize your cluttered kitchen

Kitchens serve as the heart of many homes. Thanks to the popularity of open floor plans, kitchens also tend to be highly visible from nearby spaces, such as family rooms and even main entryways. A messy, cluttered kitchen can be an inefficient eyesore that's visible from various locations in a home. That makes getting organized in the kitchen a worthwhile goal.

The following are some tips to help homeowners organize their kitchens.

## START WITH THE UTENSILS

Utensils come in all shapes and sizes. Take inventory of your utensils, discarding or donating items you don't use. Next, designate drawers or countertop storage solutions for the utensils you use most often. Place them within easy

reach, and take into account your dominant hand for placement.

## CATEGORIZE YOUR PANTRY

Empty the pantry, paying attention to staples you regularly use. Then figure out a system for categorization that works for your household. Perhaps place all baking essentials together, such as flour, oil, baking soda, and cocoa powder. Maybe you need to designate a 'kids corner' in the pantry where you keep fruit snacks, granola bars and breakfast cereals. Use uniformly shaped containers to store packaged foods so you're not contending with oddly shaped boxes and bags.

## USE EXTRA WALL OR CEILING SPACE

Large pots and pans can

eat up cabinet space or clutter the inside of an oven for those who don't have any other space. While your decorative enamel Dutch oven might fit nicely on a shelf or counter, cast-iron pans and skillets can be hung from durable hooks over an island or near the stove.

## ORGANIZE UNDER THE SINK

It can be difficult to keep cleaning products tidy and within reach. Try installing a short tension rod inside the cabinet and use it to hang spray bottles, rubber gloves and cleaning cloths.

## USE KITCHEN

### CABINET ROLLOUTS

A shortage of storage space in cabinets can be remedied with rollouts. They provide additional capacity to cabinets and make it easier to

find items, instead of having to dig at the back of dim cabinet recesses.

## TAME YOUR CONTAINER COLLECTION

It's tempting to save all of those take-out containers or empty margarine tubs for leftovers. But if there's an avalanche every time you open up a cabinet to reach for a container, you probably have too many. Invest in one type of storage container so you can nest the containers and lids for ultimate organization.

An organized kitchen is more attainable than it may seem. Some simple strategies can help homeowners make these home hubs less cluttered and more calming.



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# Safety upgrades for seniors' homes

Many seniors want to spend as long as possible residing in the comforts of their own homes. According to AARP's 2021 'Home and Community Preferences Survey,' more than three-quarters of U.S. adults age 50 and older prefer living at home. But getting older often comes with certain deficits that may not make current living situations the safest for seniors.

Retirement Living reports that an older person is treated in an emergency room for a fall-related injury nearly once every 10 seconds. Falls cause millions of injuries and 32,000 deaths a year, according to the U.S. Centers for Disease Control and Prevention. Seniors may be affected by low vision, mobility limitations, cognitive decline, balance issues, and loss of muscle strength. Certain adaptations may be necessary if seniors want to stay in their homes, particularly in older homes that have not recently been renovated.

### CHANGE KNOBS TO LEVERS

This is an easy modification. Levers are much easier for individuals with arthritis or persons who lack dexterity in their hands. Everything from doorknobs to faucet knobs can be replaced with levers.

### CREATE ZERO-THRESHOLD ENTRYWAYS

Zero-threshold entryways, also known as flush entries, do not require crossing a lip or any raised barrier. They can appear on doorways and showers and make it easy for people who have mobility issues, as well as those using scooters, walkers and wheelchairs, to move about unencumbered.

### CLEAR CLUTTER/MOVE OBSTRUCTIONS

One inexpensive modification is to remove extraneous furniture and accessories. Such a change widens walking spaces in a room and accommodates walkers and wheelchairs. In addition, furniture can be pushed to the room's perimeter to make moving around easier. It's also important to remove



Minimizing falls could come down to providing support in key rooms of a home.

area rugs, as they're often tripping hazards.

### INSTALL GRAB RAILS AND SUPPORTS

Minimizing falls could come down to providing support in key rooms of a home. Adding grab rails in the bathroom near the toilet and in the shower can help a person use those facilities without assistance. Install a grab rail close to seating in the kitchen to add support.

### CONSIDER SMART LIGHTING

Motion-activated or darkness-activated lighting switches and fixtures can automatically turn on lights,

thereby improving visibility. Also, rocker light switches are easier to maneuver than standard toggles.

### INVEST IN A STAIRLIFT

Single-story homes are preferable for growing older gracefully, but many seniors live in multi-story homes. A stairlift makes a multi-floor home more accessible, according to Elder, an eldercare service provider. Stairlifts make it easier to traverse staircases and reduce the risk for falls.

These suggestions are just a few of the many home modifications that can help seniors safely age in place.



Adding grab rails in the bathroom near the toilet and in the shower can help a person use those facilities without assistance.

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# Create your native plant garden



Gardening is a worthwhile endeavor that not only passes the time, but can be a form of exercise and relief from the daily grind. Gardens also provide ample opportunity to experiment, as individuals can produce everything from vegetables to bountiful blooms.

Recent years have witnessed a growing emphasis on eco-friendly gardening that aims to reduce reliance on chemical fertilizers and pesticides in an effort to protect the planet. One way to do so is to rely on native plants.

#### WHAT ARE NATIVE PLANTS?

Native plants are indigenous to particular regions. The National Wildlife Federation says native plants grow in habitats without human introduction or intervention. Native plants have formed symbiotic relationships with local wildlife over thousands of years, which the NWF notes makes them the most sustainable options. Native plants help the environment and thrive with little supplemental watering or chemical nutrients.

#### NATIVES VARY BY REGION

Native plants vary by region. In arid climates, certain succulents may be native because they don't need much rainfall to thrive. In lush wetlands, succulents might be out of place.

#### START NATIVE PLANTING

The NWF offers native plants for 36 different states that can be shipped right to customers' doors to help replenish native varieties. In addition, gardeners can visit local gardening centers to select native plants. Small and independently owned centers often feature knowledge-

able local staff whose expertise can prove invaluable to individuals seeking native varieties.

It's important to keep in mind that native varieties may look less cultivated than more exotic blooms and foliage designed to sell for their unique appearances. Wildflowers and native grasses may be the types of native plants found in abundance, which may grow up and out quickly. These other tips can help the process.

- Plan and prepare the site by removing weeds and turning over the soil. This will give seedlings an opportunity to take root without competition from weeds. Seedlings will give gardens a faster head-start than waiting around for seeds to germinate. However, gardeners can start seeds indoors and then move them outside once they are seedlings.

- Avoid planting native plants in rows, as that's not how they're likely to grow naturally. Vary the placement so the plants look like they sprouted up haphazardly.

- Gardeners can still exert some control over native gardens prone to growing a little wild. Borders and paths can better define the growing areas.

- Grow Native!, an initiative from the Missouri Prairie Foundation, suggests planting two to four species in broad sweeping masses or drifts. Mix grasses with flowering plants. The grasses produce dense, fibrous roots that can prevent weed growth.

Native plants should require minimal care. Keep an eye on them and supplement with water if conditions have been especially dry.

# Native plants make a healthier planet

Spring and summer present ideal growing conditions for many plants, making these seasons an ideal time to tend to lawns and gardens. Though it's easy to succumb to the temptation of exotic plants, avid gardeners and eco-conscious planters recognize the significance of native plants.

Novices may not realize that native plants are much better for a landscape and the local ecosystem it calls home. Recognition of the many benefits of native plants can make for healthier lawns and gardens and a healthier planet as well.

- Native plants are built for local climates. One of the issues gardeners who plant exotic plants run into is keeping those plants thriving when weather turns harsh. For example, exotic plants may require extra watering in areas that experience drought or even long periods without precipitation in spring and notably summer. The United States Environmental Protection Agency reports that at least 40 states anticipate water shortages by 2024. Planting native plants can help to combat those shortages by reducing the need to water plants if conditions become dry in late spring and summer.

- Native plants save money. It's also important to note that native plants save homeowners money. Because they're capable of thriving in local conditions, native plants tend to require less watering, which can help homeowners reduce their utility costs. But native plants also require less upkeep, which means homeowners can save on potentially costly, not to mention eco-unfriendly, pesticides and other amendments in order to maintain the look of exotic plants. And though it's not always the case, exotic plants tend to cost more at nurseries than natives.

- Native plants save gardeners time. In addition to saving money, native plants don't require as much attention. Though spring and summer is a great time to be in the yard, it's also a great time to be out and about. Because native plants thrive in local conditions, gardeners won't need to spend much of their free time tending to them. Exotics tend to require a lot of extra attention and effort, especially when conditions become harsh. Spending more time outdoors in harsh weather does not appeal to most gardeners.

- Native plants blend in with an existing landscape. Native plants look natural



PHOTO COURTESY TRWD

The Indian Blanket Flower is a Texas native. It reseeds easily and is very easy to grow. Deadheading the flowers can promote more continuous blooming.

within an existing landscape, adding some instant aesthetic appeal without breaking the bank. When planting exotics, homeowners may feel a need to redesign their entire gardens to create a certain look (think Japanese garden). That can quickly consume a budget and take up a lot of

free time in both the short- and long-term.

Planting season marks a great time to revitalize a landscape. Choosing native plants when doing so pays numerous dividends for homeowners and the planet they call home.



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# Should I DIY?

3 questions to determine if it's best to renovate on your own

A do-it-yourself mentality has taken hold in millions of households across the globe. Popular television channels like HGTV and DIY Network as well as accessible home improvement content on apps like YouTube has inspired many homeowners to tackle renovation projects around their homes. Taking such initiative is admirable, though it also can prove costly if homeowners end up biting off more than they can chew.

Home improvement videos and television shows have a tendency to oversimplify renovation projects, potentially giving homeowners a false sense of confidence in their DIY abilities. A concerted effort on the part of homeowners to determine if it's best to renovate on their own or hire a professional should always be the first step of any renovation project. No two homeowners are the same, but the following three questions can help homeowners determine if DIY is their best option.

1. Can I afford to DIY?

Professional home improvement projects are

costly for a variety of reasons. Materials can be costly, but so are the tools and labor necessary to do the job right. Homeowners may not have the tools necessary to complete complicated projects. Specialty tools can be expensive to purchase or even rent, and the cost of acquiring such tools should be included in any DIY project cost estimates. Labor also factors heavily into professional projects, and for good reason. Talented contractors have unique skills that have been developed and perfected over many years. Those skills can ensure projects are completed quickly and correctly. Labor may seem costly, but such costs may ultimately prove to be a bargain compared to the cost of fixing DIY mistakes. Projects that are minor in scope and don't require the use of potentially costly specialty tools may be better suited for weekend warriors than more complicated renovations.

2. Do I have the time?

Homeowners must determine how much time they



Homeowners must determine how much time they have to complete a project before deciding to do it themselves.

have to complete a project before deciding to do it themselves. No one wants to spend months staring at an unfinished renovation project. Homeowners who are already pressed for time may not be able to complete projects in a timely fashion, which can make homes less comfortable and even less safe.

3. Can I pull this off?

DIY projects can instill homeowners with a sense of pride in their homes, but it's imperative that homeowners considering the DIY option conduct an honest assessment of their skills. A lack of renovation experience does not necessarily mean a homeowner cannot successfully

complete a DIY project. But in such instances, it may be best to start with small, straightforward projects and then gradually move up to bigger, more complicated projects as skills are fine tuned. And homeowners who have never been at their best with a hammer in hand should not be ashamed to leave the work to

the professionals.

Television shows and online tutorials can make renovations appear easier than they actually are. Homeowners considering DIY renovations can ask themselves a handful of questions to determine if they're ready for the challenge of renovating their homes on their own.

# Small renovations that can make a big impact



Home renovations provide a host of benefits. Such projects can increase resale value and improve on the safety, aesthetics and functionality of a home.

Some homeowners may employ the mantra 'go big or go home' when they embark on home improvements, thinking that only the largest renovations produce noticeable change. But that's not the case. Various smaller renovations can provide a lot of bang for homeowners' bucks as well.

- Countertops (and hardware): A complete kitchen overhaul may stretch some homeowners' budgets. However, changing an older countertop for a new material can provide the facelift a kitchen needs. And while changing the cabinets may be homeowners' ultimate goal, swapping hardware in dated finishes for newer handles and pulls can provide low-cost appeal.

- Paint: Painting a space is an inexpensive improvement that adds maximum impact. Paint can transform dark and drab rooms into bright and airy oases. Paint also can be used to create an accent wall or cozy nooks. Homeowners also can showcase their personalities with their choice of paint colors.

- Lighting: Homeowners should not underestimate what a change in lighting can do. When rooms or exterior spaces are illuminated, they take on entirely new looks. It's worth it to invest in new

lighting, whether it's a dramatic hanging light over the dining room table or task lighting in dim spaces.

- Weatherproofing: Improving windows, doors, weatherstripping, and insulation in a home can offer visual appeal and help homeowners save money. The initial investment may be significant, but those costs will pay off in energy savings. According to One Main Financial, space heating is the largest energy expense the average American homeowner has, accounting for around 45 percent of all energy costs.

- Mudroom: Turn an entryway into a more functional space with the addition of cabinets, benches or custom-designed storage options that perfectly fit the area. Cubbies and cabinets can corral shoes, umbrellas, hats, bags, and much more.

- Accent updates: Any space, whether it's inside or outside a home, can get a fresh look with new decorative accents. Invest in new throw pillows and even slipcovers for living room sofas. Use new tile or paint the brick on a fireplace in a den, then update the mantel with decorative displays. Purchase wall art that can bring different colors into a room. Change the cushions on deck furniture and buy color-coordinated planters.

These subtle changes will not cost as much as full-scale renovations, but they can still help homeowners transform their homes.

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# The many benefits of houseplants



The lines between the outdoors and indoors are being blurred. Homeowners build extensive outdoor living spaces so they can relax on weather-resistant furniture and even cook in lavish kitchens in their backyards. In addition, indoor three-season rooms full of bright, open windows that showcase outdoor vistas challenge the boundaries between outside and inside.

For those working with limited budgets, there are some easy, inexpensive ways to enjoy the majesty of natural landscapes indoors. Houseplants can be used to improve indoor spaces, and they also provide various health benefits.

#### HELP WITH ALLERGIES

According to WebMD, rooms with houseplants tend to have less dust and mold in them than those without any foliage. Leaves and other parts of the plants serve as natural filters, catching airborne particles and allergens. Plants with textured leaves might be especially effective at trapping particles.

#### PUT MORE OXYGEN INTO THE AIR

The human respiratory system works by bringing in oxygen and releasing carbon dioxide. Plants do the opposite during photosynthesis. They absorb carbon dioxide and then release oxygen. Plants can put much more oxygen into the air, improving indoor conditions.

#### INCREASE INDOOR HUMIDITY AND REDUCE ILLNESS

Studies from the Agricultural University of Norway found that indoor plants can increase humidity in indoor spaces, which decreases the incidences of

sore throats, dry coughs, dry skin, and the common cold. Higher absolute humidity can decrease the chances of survival and transmission of the flu virus.

#### FILTER THE AIR

Researchers who presented their work at the 252nd National Meeting & Exposition of the American Chemical Society found certain houseplants can combat the potentially harmful effects of volatile organic compounds. Plants may help filter out VOCs like benzene, acetone and formaldehyde, which can enter indoor air via cleaning supplies, dry-cleaned clothes, furniture, printers, and paints.

#### IMPROVE INTERIOR ATMOSPHERE

Prevention magazine says plants can be used to screen unattractive areas, moderate room temperature by shading spots from the sun and even reduce noise. Plants also can improve ambiance and create a pleasing atmosphere in a room.

#### CAN IMPROVE MOOD

Growing and caring for plants can alleviate everyday stress. A nationwide study from UK Magazine Gardeners World found 80 percent of gardeners declared themselves satisfied with life compared to 67 percent among non-gardeners. Gardeners were more positive mentally. Greenery can help people feel more at home and improve mental health. A rehab center in Norway found patients reported a greater increase in well-being four weeks after having greenery added to their surroundings.

Houseplants can improve indoor areas and positively affect personal health.

## How to make outdoor living spaces more comfortable

Private backyards are now go-to spaces for recreation and entertainment and great places to recharge the body and mind.

One ripple effect of the COVID-19 pandemic was more time spent outdoors, even if it was predominantly on one's own property. OnePoll, in conjunction with the lawn care company TruGreen, surveyed 2,000 American homeowners and found participants spent 14 hours outside every week in 2021, which was three hours more than prior to the pandemic. In addition, respondents admitted that time spent outdoors was therapeutic.

A separate survey conducted for the International Casual Furnishings Association found that people now spend more time relaxing, gardening, exercising, dining, and entertaining outside than in years past. Though COVID-19 may no

longer dominate headlines, the desire to enjoy outdoor spaces has not waned.

While enjoying outdoor living areas, homeowners can do all they can to make these spaces comfortable and welcoming. The following are some good starting points.

#### GET ALL LIT UP

Outdoor spaces can be enjoyed no matter the hour when there is ample lighting. That could be why the International Casual Furnishings Association reports those who plan to renovate their outdoor spaces list outdoor lighting as a priority. Outdoor lighting not only sheds light on entertaining spaces, but also makes spaces safer and more secure.

#### INCREASE PRIVACY

No matter how friendly homeowners are with their neighbors, there comes a time when privacy is paramount. Fencing, whether it is wood or vinyl, or even a natu-

ral fence made from closely planted hedges, can ensure residents feel comfortable venturing outdoors to swim, take a cat nap or even star gaze in private.

#### ADDRESS THE ELEMENTS

Homeowners should note the direction their backyard faces and the typical daily conditions of the space. For example, a yard that faces southwest may get plenty of strong sun during the day, requiring the addition of shade trees, covered patios or arbors to cut down on the glare and heat. If the yard is often hit by winds, trees or bushes planted strategically as wind-breaks can help.

#### SIT COMFORTABLY

High-quality comfortable seating increases the likelihood that homeowners will want to stay awhile in their outdoor spaces. A deep seating set complete with plush chairs, outdoor sofa or love seat and chaise lounge chairs



Invest in high-quality comfortable seating to make your outdoor space more inviting.

gives people more opportunity to sit and stay awhile.

#### TAKE A DIP

A pool can be the perfect gathering spot on a warm day, while a spa/hot tub can bridge the gap to cooler

weather. According to the Family Handyman, soaking in hot tubs can relax tired muscles after a long day, loosen up stiff joints, improve cardiovascular health, and reduce the time it takes to fall asleep.

#### BITE BACK AT BUGS

Homeowners may want to consider using a professional exterminator to get rid of ticks, mosquitoes and other nuisance insects from outdoor spaces.

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# What to know about installing a pool at home

Pools definitely have a wow factor that's hard to replicate. Homeowners considering pool installation can take note of these factors as they try to decide if a pool is right for them.

## COST

The cost to install a pool depends on a host of factors, including which type of pool homeowners are considering and where they live. According to the online home improvement resource Angi (formerly Angie's list), the average cost to install an above ground pool in the United States in 2022 was \$3,322, while the average inground pool installation in the same year was \$55,000. That's quite a disparity in price, and homeowners should know that the average cost of each project is higher in certain regions and under certain

circumstances. Potential ancillary costs, such as excavation and plumbing relocation, will add to the final cost of the project. The erection of fencing around the pool if no fencing currently surrounds the area where the pool will be located also will add to the final cost.

## POOL TYPE

As noted, above ground pools, on average, require a considerably smaller financial investment than inground pools. This is an important consideration, but which option may ultimately prove the better investment is worth researching. Homeowners can speak with a local real estate professional to determine if an inground pool or above ground might yield a significantly higher return at resale. If an inground pool is likely to

increase property value by a substantial amount, it could be well worth the extra up-front costs.

## MAINTENANCE

Pools are undeniably fun, but they still require maintenance. The experts at Better Homes & Gardens note that vinyl liners in pools last approximately six to 10 years, while painted concrete may require a fresh coat of paint every five years. Plaster finishes may last as long as 15 years, while cement-coated products can last a lifetime. Pools also need periodic cleaning, and chemicals to keep the pool operating safely and cleanly will require an additional, if somewhat minimal, financial investment. Homeowners investing in a new pool should be aware of the maintenance required to keep the pool clean



and be willing to do that maintenance. And though homeowners typically can open and close pools on their own, it's also possible to hire someone to do it for a relatively small fee each season.

## LOCATION

A survey of the land in a yard can reveal how smoothly a pool installation may or may not go. Though it's possible to install a pool in just about any yard, some spaces might require greater preparation and

pre-installation effort than others. Sloped backyards, for example, may require the services of a landscape architect to prepare the space, which can extend the time it takes to complete the project and add the overall cost.

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# How to create more privacy on your property

Privacy is a key component of any backyard oasis. Some homes may be so remote that privacy isn't an issue. But many suburban homeowners recognize they might need to tweak their landscapes if they hope to create a private oasis outside.

### FENCING OR PLANTING?

Most homeowners looking to create more privacy on their property will have to choose between fencing and planting. Fencing provides immediate privacy because, once it's installed, no one can see into the yard. Fencing also doesn't require watering or other immediate upkeep, which will be necessary when planting to ensure tree roots can establish themselves.

But planting has its benefits as well. Planting for privacy is essentially creating

a living fence that can grow over time and provide even more privacy as trees reach maturity. Plants also tend to be less costly than fencing. The home renovation experts at BobVila.com estimate that fencing projects typically cost between \$1,667 and \$4,075. However, fencing projects can cost considerably more than \$4,000, especially for homeowners with large properties they want to enclose. Large, mature trees can be expensive, though it's unlikely they will cost as much as fencing. In addition, fencing requires more maintenance and will potentially need to be replaced, while native trees won't require much upkeep and can last for generations.

### PLANTING

Homeowners who choose

to plant for privacy will next have to decide which type of plants to add to their properties. Evergreens provide year-round privacy because they don't shed their leaves, so these are the ones most often chosen when creating a living fence. A number of varieties of evergreen trees can do the job, but it's important that homeowners consult with a landscape architect prior to choosing trees so they can ensure the trees will thrive when faced with the growing conditions on their properties. During such a consultation, homeowners may discuss the following popular privacy trees.

· **Leyland cypress:** The Arbor Day Foundation notes that the Leyland cypress is popular for hedges and boundaries, likely because a typical tree reaches a mature

height of 60'-70' and can spread as wide as 25'. The Leyland cypress grows fast, which may appeal to homeowners who don't want to wait to establish privacy.

· **Green Giant Arborvitae:** There are different varieties of the arborvitae, but the Green Giant tends to be the go-to option for privacy. The ADF notes that Green Giants will grow up to three feet per year until they reach maturity, providing a fast-growing option for privacy planters. The Green Giant can spread as wide as 20 feet at maturity, which is another attribute that makes it so popular among homeowners desiring privacy.

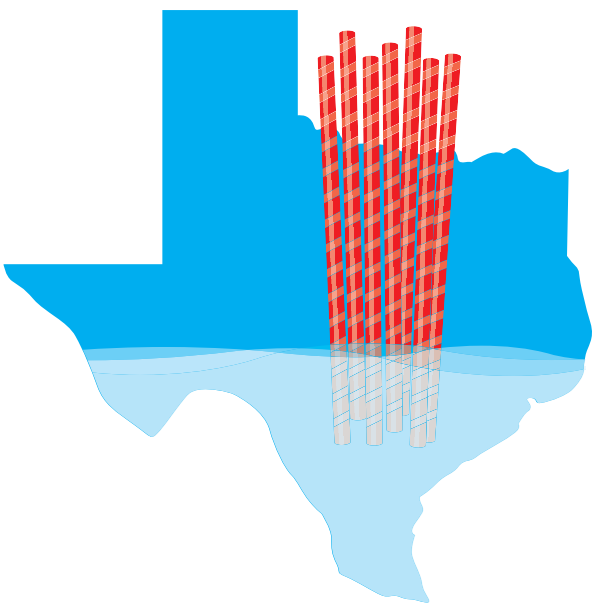
· **Eastern White Pine:** The ADF notes that the eastern white pine, which can reach heights as high as 80 feet, is favored in spacious yards. That's



likely due to its height and its potential spread, which can reach 40 feet. Homeowners who choose the eastern white pine might like it for its resemblance to a Christmas tree, and

in fact it is widely used for that purpose. The privacy provided by the eastern white pine is significant, but it might be best suited to especially large properties.

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