

# THE TRI-COUNTY REPORTER

THE NEWS OF AZLE, SPRINGTOWN, AND SURROUNDING AREAS

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## Miller unseats incumbent on Tri-County Electric Cooperative Board

ZACH FREEMAN

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David Miller says he was pleasantly surprised to learn he'd beaten longtime Tri-County Electric Cooperative board member Jerry Walden in a runoff election Jan. 3.

The Tri-County Electric Cooperative has had an eventful year to say the least.

*Springtown City Administrator David Miller wins election for District 4 after calls for transparency*

The co-op's CEO, Darryl Schriver, was dismissed in July over allegations of misusing a company credit card to purchase Star Wars collector pens and other personal items. Schriver then filed a \$1 million lawsuit against the

electric company's leadership for alleged defamation and wrongful termination. In November, board member for District 3, Jordan Wood, unexpectedly passed away and on Jan. 3, Jerry Walden, who has served on the board

of directors since 1999, was unseated by Peaster resident, Miller.

After incumbent Walden received 38.1% of ballots cast and candidate Miller re-

PLEASE SEE **ELECTION** | A4



MADELYN EDWARDS | TRI-COUNTY REPORTER

David Miller, pictured alongside his daughter Courtney and his dog Zack during a Springtown Halloween event.

## Construction on Boyd Road remains in limbo



An aerial shot of the vacant property across from Walmart on Boyd Road taken via drone by part 107-certified Azle resident, Jon Lo.

COURTESY JON LO WITH JANDK STUDIOS

*Azle City Manager Tom Muir speaks on often-discussed vacant lot*

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AZLE — A major eyesore on Azle's landscape has been generating talk and buzz since the lot was cleared three years ago. Once covered with trees, a large stretch of land across from Walmart on Boyd Road has sat deforested and still largely undeveloped since at least 2021.

Not long after the trees were cleared, heavy rains brought flooding and mud to nearby homes on Timberoaks Drive, resulting in damages, Azle City Manager Tom Muir

said in a phone call with the Tri-County Reporter. A retaining wall was constructed by at least the spring of 2022 in order to prevent future flooding. The area is intended to hold around eight subdivided commercial lots. Many Azle residents have heard rumors of a Wendy's or Panda Express in the works, but that has yet to manifest, city officials have said. By the end of summer 2023, a uniform 8-foot screening wall had also been finished in compliance with prior building agreements and city ordinances, yet a lot still needs to be done

in order to address drainage problems and protection for residents, Muir explained. "The retaining wall was always part of the plan but wasn't done quick enough," Muir said. "The screening wall was a more recent thing and that went up a couple of months ago, and there's other issues as far as getting the final engineer set of plans. There're other things we can't reconcile. They're trying to pull those plans together and get them to us. We've received some and our en-

PLEASE SEE **VACANT** | A4

## Sayonara, 2023!

MADELYN EDWARDS

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This is part two of The Tri-County Reporter's Top 10 list of most impactful stories from 2023. In the Jan. 4 edition, we covered the people we lost in 2023, amazing student competitors and business moves in Springtown as well as a few honorable mentions to the Top 10 list. Moving forward, the next part of the Top 10 list will start with our No. 7 entry and work up to the most impactful news story of 2023. Enjoy!

*A year-end review of tri-county news*

### NO. 7 — BUSTED!

The criminal justice system was hard at work in 2023. Police officers made arrests as the courts dealt indictments and convictions, and offenders had to face consequences.

To kick off the year, Reno police officers made a breakthrough in the 2022 murder of Rodney Dale Tallant on Shady Lane by arresting Floyd Levi Nunley in January. Nunley was determined to

have been a friend of Tallant. Reno police also connected Nunley to other crimes that allegedly occurred in unincorporated Tarrant County, which led to Nunley being arrested and charged with three counts of aggravated sexual assault of a child.

In March, Nunley was indicted on a murder charge in Parker County. That case is still making its way through

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PHOTO COURTESY OF AZLE AERIALS

Azle, like most of North Texas, was covered in a layer of ice in late January and early February. Drone pilots took to the skies during the freeze to capture the scene from above.



ZACH FREEMAN | TRI-COUNTY REPORTER

Azle Elementary Principal Kristin Kiss started off the December school board meeting by introducing her school's sign language club, along with student council president Aaron Anderson and fifth grade representative Natalie Hancock, who led the room in the Pledge of Allegiance in spoken English and in American Sign Language.

## School board legislative update

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### UPDATES FROM THE SUPERINTENDENT

AZLE — Along with speaking out against the recent push for school vouchers and the lack of new funding for schools this legislative session, Superintendent Todd Smith also announced, "Talks with Todd," a new initiative

*Superintendent Todd Smith speaks about vouchers, finance; programs lauded*

where he will go to different schools in the district during lunchtime and encourage teachers to visit with him and share what they believe is working in their schools and what can be done to support

them. Smith also stated that discussion of the Texas Strategic Leadership Grant will return at the next Board of Trustees

PLEASE SEE **UPDATE** | A11



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# Farewell to a 'legend'

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AZLE — A legend has retired.

That was just one of many of the messages conveyed about longtime Azle Fire Marshal Kenny Wilson during his Jan. 2 going-away party at the Azle Fire Department. Wilson joined the department Feb 10, 2000, and has served as fire marshal since June 3, 2004. In a few weeks, Wilson starts his new role as deputy fire marshal over all of Tarrant County.

"My time here at the city of Azle has really gotten me to where I am today," Wilson said in an interview with the Tri-County Reporter. "When I came here nobody knew where Azle was. Because of the things that they helped me do, we're known throughout the state and nationally

## Azle Fire Department hosts retirement party for longtime Fire Marshal Kenny Wilson

for our fire marshal's office. We've been recognized all over, so I appreciate that. Tarrant County added a new position, and they were looking for somebody with the experience and knowledge to step in and just go, and out of the candidates I guess they felt I was the best one."

Azle firefighters, police and others came to wish Wilson the best and recognize the accomplishments made during his 23-plus years serving the community. The department has responded to 4,081 calls in 2023 alone. Over Wilson's tenure, he has investigated countless fires and helped educate a generation

of Azleites about fire safety. Wilson has served as a police officer, firefighter and fire marshal, racking up over 35 years of experience in these fields. He is a prominent member of numerous North Texas fire service organizations and has received multiple master-level certifications in his field.

Azle Mayor Alan Brundrett and Azle City Manager Tom Muir were some of the first to the podium to thank Wilson for his service to the city.

"He's done a great job and has taken the city's fire marshal's office to all new levels every year," the mayor said. "He's been a great addition to



ZACH FREEMAN | TRI-COUNTY REPORTER

Azle Fire Marshal Kenny Wilson holds a gold-headed axe presented to him at his retirement reception, surrounded by (L-R): firefighter/paramedic Cliff Porch, Lt. Joey Liddick, firefighter/engineer Billy Johnson, and firefighter/paramedic Josh Leyerle, representing the Azle Professional Firefighters Local 3627.

the city of Azle and we're going to miss him."

Among his colleagues, the consensus was clear. Wilson had been an inspiration and a major influence on the Azle Fire Department and will be leaving a "legacy of excellence and integrity."

Lt. Joey Liddick, Lt. John Behm, Azle's Deputy Fire Marshal John Rodriguez and other members of Azle Professional Firefighters Local 3627 all got up to speak about Wilson's influence and present him with several gifts from the department.

Behm credited Wilson for pushing him to get his Certified Fire Investigator Training and thanked him with a plaque for his "extreme level of knowledge on every topic and his skills as a mentor." Rodriguez, speaking about their relationship since 1995, gifted Wilson with a Saint Florian and Lockheed Martin challenge coin, and a coin rack. Rodriguez also gifted Wilson with a tumbler engraved with the words, "the Legend has Retired." Among other unique tokens, a

mounted golden-headed fire axe was presented to Wilson by his colleagues along with the American flag that had previously flown over the fire station.

"There's an old saying about an axe," Liddick told Wilson. "It's as versatile a tool as the hands and the skill of its welder. We make fun of you for being short all the time. We even got you a short ladder and a step stool, but in all reality, you are a giant."

Driver and engineer Billy Johnson, who presented the flag, also delivered a heartfelt message about Wilson and his impact on Azle's firefighters.

"Members of the department appreciate everything you've done for us," Johnson said. "The good times, the bad times, the lectures, the instruction, I can't say enough. You've been a mentor to most of us here. You're a brother, you're a leader, you're a friend, most of all, you're family. You're going to be missed. This place is not going to be the same without you. I thank you, love you and

it's my honor and privilege to present the department flag to you."

Fire Chief Will Scott also thanked Wilson's family and gave flowers to his wife, Mendy Wilson.

"Without her support Mr. Wilson would not be where he is today," Scott said. Along with his wife, Wilson's son Luke, granddaughter Sophia, daughter Brooklyn and other family members were present with the fire marshal throughout the ceremony.

To conclude the occasion, Chief Scott played one last message from dispatch for Wilson over the building's loudspeakers, thanking him for his service and wishing him well on his new journey.

Chief Scott will revisit the idea of filling the vacant fire marshal position in the coming weeks, though he admits it will be no easy task to fill such big shoes. In the meantime, Scott, Assistant Fire Chief Lee Godbold and the department's arson investigators will take on Wilson's duties.



Mila was also recognized for her service to the station with a new rope toy presented by Azle Fire Department Lt. Behm, with Assistant Fire Chief Lee Godbold looking on. Wilson hopes to continue training Mila to assist him in arson investigation cases.

# SADDLE UP

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# I have a dream...

The Martin Luther King national holiday is celebrated next Monday, Jan. 15.

Dr. Martin Luther King was a Baptist minister, activist and political philosopher who was one of the most influential and prominent leaders in the civil rights movement from 1955 until his assassination in 1968. The son of an early civil rights activist and minister, he advanced civil rights for people of color by nonviolent resistance and civil disobedience against Jim Crow laws and other forms of systemic discrimination in the United States.



## FROM MY FRONT PORCH

By Sam Houston

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

King participated and led marches for the right to vote, labor rights and other civil rights. He was one of the leaders of the 1963 March on Washington where he delivered his "I Have a Dream" speech on the steps of the Lincoln Memorial; often proclaimed one of the most influential speeches in

American history. The contributions of King in no small way influenced changes in our society and led to landmark legislation like the Civil Rights Act of 1964, the Voting Rights Act of 1965 and the Fair Housing Act of 1968.

Currently our nation is divided, and our political direc-

tion seems muddled. While many politicians from both sides of the aisle scream and politicize issues, they ignore and disregard the option of coming together as one and working to find solutions to problems. Somehow, the idea of all Americans being brothers and having a shared destiny has gotten overshadowed. What exists is loyalty to party rather than country, and the lust for political gain rather than the advancement of our society.

The obstacles that our country faces are many, but they are not obstacles we

cannot overcome. It will require leadership. It compels a never-ending commitment to do the right thing, to advance society for all, and to work together for the greater good. King would say, "The time is always right to do what is right." The time is right for our elected officials to start acting like "leaders" and set forth a clear path for our nation. They should face political backlash from the extremist without fear, dare to reach across the aisle and make reasonable compromise, and create a vision for our future. Without a vision, without

working together, without a commitment for our nation to succeed rather than for a few, our very existence will be challenged.

Dr. King said, "The ultimate measure of a man is not where he stands in moments of comfort and convenience, but where he stands at times of challenge and controversy." We are in a time of controversy. May the words and deeds of Dr. King influence us all to do better, to be better and to demand better.

Until next time...I will keep ridin' the storm out!  
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## Springtown Police Department adds officers as call volume increases

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SPRINGTOWN — Springtown Police Department continues to grow as new officers were hired and pinned at city council meetings in September, October, November and December.

The number of calls the police department has responded to has also increased.

"You can tell our calls keep going up each quarter," Deputy Chief Jamie Oliver told Springtown City Council last month.

Oliver reported the department had 5,740 calls for service in the September through November quar-

### Deputy chief gives quarterly report to council

ter, which is over 1,000 calls more than the previous quarter. The deputy chief's report stated this is a normal increase brought on by the holiday season.

Oliver said the call types are common for the department — thefts, domestic calls and assaults. Officers made 41 arrests during the latest quarter, 20 of which were on-view arrests that don't require a warrant and happen in the presence of a peace officer. These on-view arrests have increased by at least seven since last quarter, according to the deputy chief's

reporting.

"That means our guys are getting out there," Oliver said. "They're looking; they're finding stuff; they're stopping it before it happens."

As far as officers, Oliver said enough school resource officers have been hired to serve at Springtown Independent School District campuses, and just one more patrol officer would make the department fully staffed.

"When I first started here in 2013, it was one person per shift," Oliver said. "We're fixing to have three people — two per day, two per night

and a mid-shift on each shift. We're growing really, really fast."

Traffic stops and roadway accidents also increased during the September through November quarter, while animal complaints have decreased. According to the reports, there were 253 animal calls in the summer but 172 in the fall.

Oliver had nothing but good things to say about the city's animal control officers.

"They're doing a great job," he said. "They do what they're supposed to do. They work hard. They have turned

that place around."

The animal shelter was recently renovated to be enclosed and temperature controlled, among other upgrades.

After Oliver made his presentation, council member Ted Martinez asked about the status of the traffic light on State Highway 199 and Williams-Ward Road. City Secretary Christina Derr reported the Texas Department of Transportation plans to deliver electricity to the site, and then leave the lights on flashing before they are fully functional.

"The reason I ask is if you ever station somebody there, they would just have a field day," Martinez said to Oliver.

"That's where I turn off, and folks just smoke by me, and I'm thinking, 'Guys, there's two speed limit signs right there and a light fixing to be here. What are y'all going to do then?'"

After the meeting, Oliver said the new traffic light is expected to improve safety and slow down drivers as they enter Springtown's central area on SH 199.

"With no power, we've had less accidents since they just put the lights themselves up," he said to The Tri-County Reporter, though he added there could be a few accidents as people adjust to the new traffic light. "It'll help out a lot compared to what we've been having before."

## Whatever happened to voucher programs?

A recap on Texas Legislature's moves, local views on school voucher programs

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AUSTIN, Texas — The Texas Legislature's debate on whether to use public money to fund private school costs via a voucher program is over... for now.

Texas Gov. Greg Abbott prioritized the establishment of a voucher program in 2023's regular legislative session as well as in the special sessions, but such a bill never made it to his desk for signing. The state's voucher program would have established education savings accounts where families would receive thousands of dollars for private school tuition as well as other private education-related expenses.

Abbott has spoken about his support for voucher programs several times, but he usually refers to them as "education savings account" programs or "school choice."

"Our children are a treasure, and we as a state must do everything we can to help those children," Abbott said in October at a Parents Matter Tailgate, hosted by Texas Public Policy Foundation, in San Antonio. "Public education is being funded at a far higher level than ever before in the history of our state. We all know in life that money does not solve every problem. The reality is we need to ensure that parents get to choose the school that's best for their child. When it comes to education, parents matter. When it comes to our future, parents matter. Mom and dad are in charge, and Texas will put them in charge when we pass school choice."

Throughout the legislative sessions, Democrats and rural Republicans in the state's House of Representatives continued to block voucher

bills from passing, according to the Texas Tribune, but their opposition came at a cost. Increased funding for public schools and teacher raises that were tied to the voucher bill — a negotiating tactic used by Abbott — also failed to pass.

"If vouchers are such a wonderful thing and the majority people really want that, then why couldn't we have had a standalone vote — vote on vouchers and a vote on school funding separately?" state Rep. Glenn Rogers said in an interview with The Tri-County Reporter. "I think the fact that it has to be attached to something else shows that it's not what the majority wants to see happen."

Rogers said the school superintendents in his district overwhelmingly opposed voucher programs, even to the point that they would accept a less than ideal amount of school funding if it meant no voucher programs were established.

Both Azle and Springtown school districts have been vocal about their opposition to a voucher program. Azle Independent School District's 2023 Legislative Priorities states the district "opposes the transfer of public funds to private entities through vouchers or other similar programs such as education savings accounts or tuition tax credits." AISD's legislative priorities also sought more regulation of charter schools and requests that state funds be invested "equitably and only on public charter schools that are held to the same financial accountability, reporting and transparency rules as traditional public schools."

Last year, Springtown Independent School District's board of trustees approved not one but two resolutions against any voucher program.

*"I support the governor; I've supported him on every legislative priority except for this one for vouchers... I don't feel like it's the best for my district."*

### REPRESENTATIVE GLENN ROGERS

District 60

Both resolutions differentiate public schools from private ones by pointing out that public schools must accept every student in their districts, including those needing special education and English language learners, and have to adhere to the state's financial and academic accountability standards. Private schools do not have to accept every student, and the SISD board argues private schools aren't held accountable for their finances or academics.

Advocates of voucher programs say they are fighting for parents' right to choose where to educate their children, but the SISD board disputes this logic.

"Education savings accounts and other voucher schemes give private schools, not parents, the right to choose," states the board's March resolution. It added, "School choice already exists in Texas via public school districts, charter schools, inter- and intra-district transfers, home schools, virtual schools and private schools."

Rogers agreed school choice already exists in Texas and also criticized a lack of accountability in voucher programs.

"Parents can choose where to educate their children with no restrictions or regulation from the government,"

Rogers said. "In many states, home and private education is highly regulated, but not here in Texas. We trust parents to do what's best for their children, and what's been labeled school choice at the moment is something that looks a lot more like an entitlement program than a conservative policy. And whenever the government is handing taxpayer dollars to private individuals with no accountability, that's just where you lose me on vouchers."

SISD's March resolution argues voucher programs would harm public schools by diverting taxpayer funds to private entities instead of public schools, especially in rural communities where there are fewer private school options. The board homed in on this point in the October resolution as well.

"During this legislative special session related to private school subsidies that has been called, the Springtown ISD Board of Trustees calls on the legislature to support an increase to the basic allotment to fully cover costs caused by 19% inflation since 2019 and address the unfunded mandates placed on Texas public schools, therefore rejecting diversion of taxpayer dollars to private entities that are not required to comply with Texas

Education Code ensuring transparency and accountability," the resolution states.

While Rogers said he is sympathetic to the argument that vouchers will support parents' decisions on educating their children, he was concerned that a voucher program would grow into a costly burden for the state.

At a recent AISD school board meeting, Superintendent Todd Smith expressed disappointment that none of the state's surplus budget has yet to be earmarked for public education, despite promises from legislators.

"The reality of it is here we are four special sessions later and really not a lot of budget for public education," Smith said.

Smith said many Texas districts rely on additional funding for teacher raises and school safety, among other costs. While Smith acknowledged there is some additional funding granted for school safety, it is not nearly as much as many hoped.

"This isn't necessarily being political but very little got done with the governor's push for vouchers," he said. "We know the March primaries are coming up and the governor has made it very clear that anybody... that would be a supporter of these vouchers is who he's going to endorse. We've seen that maybe even with some mailers that have gone around here."

Smith said Rogers as well as fellow state Rep. Charlie Geren, whose combined districts include AISD, are both against vouchers and are "very strong supporters of public ed."

Rogers confirmed Abbott's threat to oppose candidates who stood against vouchers is a reality. The governor has endorsed Rogers' opponent

in the upcoming March primaries, Mike Olcott, at least in part because of his stance on voucher programs.

"I support the governor; I've supported him on every legislative priority except for this one for vouchers," Rogers said. "I don't feel like it's the best for my district... 88% of all the mail that we received in my capitol office, whether it's text, email, phones, has been against vouchers, so I am comfortable with the decision I made. I'm sorry that I lost the governor's endorsement. I had his endorsements the first two races, and it's disappointing that one issue has changed that."

Smith explained that while AISD had adopted a balanced budget for the fiscal year, many neighboring districts had not, in part due to the "promise that more money is coming."

"Some of these districts went out on a limb and adopted deficits thinking there was going to be more money for public ed this go around, and that's not the case," Smith said. "Those that adopted a deficit budget last year are really concerned."

Smith said administrators from other districts have resorted to talks of cutting staff. Last year nearly \$33 billion was set aside as surplus in the state's budget. Halfway through the financial year, Smith still hopes some of it can be allotted back to public education by the finance committee.

Rogers said there will be consequences for schools not being adequately funded by the state.

"We're going to see some deficit budgets," he said. "We're going to see some repercussions from lack of school funding, both safety and teacher salaries."

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# ELECTION

FROM PAGE A1

ceived 29.4% in a September election, the two candidates faced off in a runoff election in December. Other candidates, Julie Walden and Stan Mickle had won 25.2% and 7.3%, respectively. The runoff was triggered because no candidate managed to receive more than 50% of the vote. During a Jan. 3 virtual meeting, Don Richards, the cooperative's attorney announced Miller had won the District 4 election with 50.8% of the vote.

District 4 covers parts of Parker, Wise and Jack Counties. Richards said 18,652 member-owners or 17% of Tri-County Electric customers voted in the runoff election. With more than 115,000 members in 16 counties, Tri-County Electric is one of Texas' largest co-ops.

Miller is the city administrator for the City of

Springtown and the founder of Stars and Strides Stables, an equine therapeutic riding center. Miller established the riding center after seeing the difference the practice made in the life of his daughter Courtney, who has Kabuki Syndrome. Miller has decades of experience in city management and law enforcement and has lived in Parker County for 18 years. Miller committed to the race after developing concerns with the organization's transparency himself.

"I had been interested in running for the board and I called down and asked about sitting in on a board meeting and I was told you can't because the board meetings aren't open to the public," Miller said. "That was concerning to me because I feel like the membership should have the right to sit in on the board meetings and listen to the business being conducted by the board. I understand there are things that need to be discussed confidentially,

but I had a difficult time understanding why we couldn't sit on a regular board meeting where they're just conducting the day-to-day operations of the co-op. I think the members ought to have the right and the ability to sit in on the meeting if they chose to do so. That's what really pushed me over the edge to run. I feel like there's a definitive need to be more transparent with the members."

According to Miller, member-owners can only speak at a board meeting after they have filed a request form to do so. After a waiting period where the form is reviewed by the CEO and chairman of the board, a member-owner may be permitted to speak during a board meeting for up to five minutes; they must exit the meeting after speaking. Member-owners have also criticized the board for not being reachable by phone or email, instead only communicating through the company's CEO.

Miller said this lack of

transparency has caused the member-owners' trust to drop dramatically in recent years and has created suspicion surrounding the board's actions. Miller ran his campaign advocating for greater transparency, term limits and conducting an audit of current procedures. Miller is just one of many Tri-County customers who have criticized the company in recent years. Miller has scrutinized the board's actions surrounding the Brazos Financing Utility Plan Rider, among other issues, for example.

After the cooperative's wholesale electricity provider, Brazos Electric Power Cooperative, filed for chapter 11 bankruptcy, billions of dollars in debt to ERCOT and costs incurred during Winter Storm Uri were passed onto its consumers. According to Miller, the rider has resulted in member-owners monthly electric bills being \$30 to \$95 more expensive in some cases.

"Open, truthful, clear com-

munication to the membership is what saves controversy," Miller said. "I think everyone was caught off guard with the Brazos rider. You've got a lot of people that are upset. I don't think anyone really expected to be hit with carrying the cost of the whole Brazos situation and I think there could have been much better communication from Tri-County to the membership."

Miller attributes his success partially to the rapid growth of Parker County, the efforts of Northside Baptist Church, different homeowners' associations and grassroots efforts from member-owners like Stephen Rorai. Rorai runs a Facebook page dedicated to discussing the co-op's perceived problems and has confronted co-op leaders about anticipated changes to the company's solar compensation program among other issues. Miller said he did not see victory as a given.

"To be honest with you, I was pleasantly surprised,"

Miller said. "Jerry Walden has been on that board for 24-plus years and I commend him for his tenure and the work that he's done, but I'm also a firm believer in term limits and I just think that 20-plus years is too long. I think sometimes you just have to step away and bring in some fresh ideas and some fresh perspectives and I'm certainly not being critical of Mr. Walden at all, he's done a great job... I'm just sending out a broad thank you to every member of the co-op that believes it's time to bring in some fresh items, that it's time for change and how much I appreciate their support for me."

Going forward, Miller said he hopes to understand why the board has acted in the ways it has so he can reach a balance between the needs of the board and the needs of member-owners. More changes to the board may be yet to come as election dates for Districts 3, 6 and 8 will be announced later this spring.

# VACANT

FROM PAGE A1

engineers are reviewing them. Until we get satisfaction with that I can't see when I'll turn loose a building permit. There's been some progress but not a whole lot."

The property was purchased by Gary Shelton

through GMS Reo, LP who had hoped to develop it for a future Wendy's restaurant, Muir explained.

"In more recent conversations, the developer has expressed interest in pursuing other ventures due to a lack of commitment from Wendy's," Muir said. "Panda Express has been mentioned. It's taken so long for these guys to get the property

where they can build on it. It's been almost two years since they've been trying to build on that thing. It's ridiculous."

The property owner is required to finish setting up a drainage system and add sod and other certified vegetation to the property's retention pond. Without the proper additions, Muir worries that heavy rain could cause the pond's sand to create another

problem with runoff.

## OTHER CONSTRUCTION

Constantly growing, Azle continues to see new construction projects in various stages of development. Just down the road from the aforementioned lot, the owner of Italiano's Capriccio is nearing completion on a series of stores across from his restaurant. According

to Muir, the owner had discussed plans to open a diner, a quick serve smoothie-type drive-thru restaurant and another business that was initially going to be centered around yoga or dance, though Muir said the owner now may be reconsidering the third option. The businesses would be in a prime location for Azle High School students to frequent after

classes. Muir said the owner is out of the country for few weeks and may not be available for comment but has indicated the diner will likely be the first to open, will share parking with Italiano's Capriccio and will be operated by the owner of Italiano's himself. Muir said these businesses are likely to open sometime in the spring.

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**LEGAL NOTICE**

Application has been made with the Texas Alcoholic Beverage Commission for a Wine Only Package Store Permit by Gas N Grub 201 LLC (dba) GNG 201, to be located at 12555 S. FM 730, Azle, Parker County, TX 76020. Officer(s) of the said entity: Mudita Investments LLC - Manager; Aseem Khoja - Manager of Mudita Investments LLC; Evershine Holding Investments, LLC - Manager; Rahim Sewani - Manager of Evershine Holdings Investments LLC.

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**BIG SAVINGS**



# Vouchers are not conservative

The right of every child to a safe, secure and quality education has been a core value of Texas since its independence. Following its independence in 1836, Texas has had six different constitutions, with the current Texas Constitution being amended 530 times since 1876. Nevertheless, throughout decades of revision, secession and reconstruction, our state has never wavered from its promise to provide education to every Texan. Our founders believed this promise was essential to securing the posterity of our state from generation to generation; however, almost a century-and-a-half later, this value is under attack. Under the guise of promoting choice, proposed school voucher programs are a "trojan horse" attempt to privatize Texas' education system and drain its already underfunded public education of necessary resources for millions of children.

A voucher program is a policy of diverting state and taxpayer resources marked for public education to private entities. Proponents of this system try to claim children are "trapped in the public education system they were raised in." This is, quite frankly, not true. Texas already has one of the most robust "school choice" systems for parents in the nation. Between open-enrollment public schools, private



## DISTRICT 60

By Glenn Rogers

Representative Glenn Rogers is a sixth generation Texas rancher, where his family has deep ranching roots in Palo Pinto County going back to the 1890s. He represents District 60 in the Texas House of Representatives.

schools, charter schools, homeschools and online learning, parents have plenty of available options to place their child wherever they see fit. Since 1995, when the Texas Legislature created the Public Education Grant (PEG) program, parents of children in failing schools have been able to receive grants to transfer them to other schools. Only a few hundred parents have asked for a PEG, with transportation issues cited as the most common reason this program has not been more utilized. Vouchers do not increase the number of choices available to a parent; they only serve to finance these private institutions with taxpayer money.

A voucher is a flat rate that pays for a portion of tuition. The family is then expected to cover the remaining cost out of pocket - an impossible task for many low- to middle-income families. The average cost of a private school in Texas is about \$11,407 per student per year, with some costing over \$30,000. Additionally, attending private school may require substantially more financial resources to actively participate

in the private school culture. Recently proposed voucher programs have offered parents \$8,000-\$10,500 toward tuition. This means families who want to exercise their vouchers are still expected to pay the difference per each child to enroll them in a private school. The end result is the majority of Texas families remain in public schools with less funding, whereas more wealthy families who can afford private education outright get a taxpayer-subsidized discount. In a thorough review of voucher programs in other states, a range of 75% (Arizona) to 90% (Ohio) of students receiving vouchers had NEVER ATTENDED public schools. In Louisiana, 99% of the state's "voucher tax" goes directly to families who bring in more than \$200,000 per year. These hardly seem like programs that get low- to medium-income students out of public schools. Rather it reeks of an expensive entitlement program creating clear winners and losers.

The same principle is also true with acceptance standards. Even though a parent has an educational voucher, this does not mean a pri-

vate or charter school must accept their child. Private schools have the discretion to not admit any student based on academic performance, behavioral issues, disability, residence or income level. Once again, most Texas parents would have their children in a public school system that is continually stripped of resources to subsidize education for those who already could pay and be accepted.

Considering these schools are private, the State of Texas would be funneling money into organizations with little accountability. Private schools do not have to comply with the same transparency standards as a traditional public education. Once these private entities start receiving public funds, the line between private and government regulation begins to blur.

Parents who choose private or homeschool education for their children expect a certain level of independence in their education. Texas home schools and private schools are currently some of the least regulated in the country. Voucher programs would alter traditional private education by destroying that independence from government. While proponents of vouchers often like to say, "Let the money follow the child," the follow-up is the "government follows the money."

Public school board members are elected and held accountable by the ISD residents, the salaries of superintendents are made a public record by the Texas Education Agency, and all instructional materials are reviewed by an elected State Board of Education.

When problems arise within our public schools, the taxpayers and the state can act. In the 86th Legislative Session, the Texas House passed HB3, which provided sweeping reforms to our education system. The 87th Legislature approved Senate Bill 3, banning the teaching of Critical Race Theory in K-12 classrooms and House Bill 25 to prevent biological males competing in women's sports. The 88th Legislature passed HB 900, "The Reader Act", which prohibits the purchase of sexually-explicit library material and sets out standards for library material selection and removal.

These conservative victories would not have been possible without an education system that is accountable and transparent at all levels of government. These changes are examples of direct responses to a transparent accountability system allowing for open exposure and correction. Public schools are far from perfect but are continually subject to transparency and continuous improvement. Private schools receiving vouchers desire no

public accountability.

As Texans, it is better that we handle problems out in the open and not masked behind private authority. As a parent of a recent public high school graduate, I know, firsthand, the desire to make sure she has the best education afforded to her. I believe there is a need for public, private, home and charter schools to allow parents the choice to select the type of education that works best for their children. Yet, to maintain this balance, we cannot embrace changes that will make components of our taxpayer funded education system less accountable.

The over \$32 billion surplus available for the 88th Legislature would have allowed for both enhanced public school funding and a limited voucher program. However, in 2011 Texas legislators were faced with a major budget shortfall and were required to take \$5 billion away from public schools, an amount that has never been fully recovered. It would not be conservative to implement a massive voucher entitlement program expecting continued large budget surpluses.

Ultimately, vouchers can only be maintained by raising property taxes and/or defunding our public schools. Neither of these should be acceptable to conservative Texans.

## Spotlight on BUSINESS

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Rob is also an on-site RV Park manager whose focus is on maintenance and guest experience. "Here at Valley Rose, we are a step above an RV Park," said Bobbie. "We are a community neighborhood. We have a newsletter and events scheduled every month. We have Kids' Corner every other Saturday at 5 p.m."

Valley Rose offers covered RV sites, pull-through and back-in sites starting from \$550. The site rent includes all utilities. For long-term rentals, ask about the New Year's deal of \$150 off for the first month.



Come join our welcoming, neighborhood community!

The park is gated with a camera surveillance system. The amenities are enjoyed by all residents, and they include concrete pads, fire pit, playground, dog park, laundry facility, free Wi-Fi, cable, and a gazebo and pool.

We have self-storage units in various sizes available for rent. We also offer covered RV/Boat/Truck storage. Right now, we offer

for a New Year's Storage Unit Special of \$25 off the first month's rent and waived application fee.

Valley Rose RV Park and Storage is open 9 a.m. to 5 p.m., with special appointments available for tours and move-ins. The park is located at 1515 E. Hwy 199 in Springtown. Call for more information 817-583-5372 or to schedule your tour.

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# OBITUARIES

## Shirley Flint 1945-2023

Shirley Ann Flint, 78, of Azle, Texas passed away Dec. 30, 2023, in Fort Worth.

The memorial service will be at Ash Creek Baptist Church in Azle. The date is yet to be determined.

Shirley was born Feb. 26, 1945, in Cooperstown, New York to Oliver and Evelyn Smith.

Shirley was a joyful soul who loved her family first and foremost and was a very dedicated Christian.

She will be remembered for her unwavering faith and her love for her family. Shirley was a member of Ash Creek Baptist Church where she found solace and comfort in her religious community.

Shirley was preceded in death by her beloved husband of 49 years, Gary Flint, who died in 2014.

She is survived by her sons



Michael Flint and wife, Tonya, and Dale Flint and wife, Amy; four grandchildren, Beau, Blake, Cooper and Carson; two great-grandchildren, Wyatt and Everett; siblings, Richard Smith, William Smith, and Keith Smith; and many nieces and nephews.

*The Tri-County Reporter, Thursday Jan 11, 2024*

## Walter Leck 1968-2023

Walter Eugene Leck, 55, passed away Friday, Dec. 22, 2023, in Azle.

A Celebration of Life will be at 1 p.m. Saturday, Jan. 13, at VFW Post 2137, 11875 FM 730 North, Azle, Texas, 76020.

He was born March 15, 1968, in Fort Worth, to Franklin Wesley and Glenda Joyce (Talley) Leck. They both preceded him in death along with his sister, Linda Owen.

Walter graduated from Alvarado High school in 1987. He had several work ventures but ultimately settled on being an auto mechanic, like his father. He had tremendous artistic abilities, and never ceased to amaze us with his creations.

He is survived by his fiancé and best friend of six years,



Candice Lester; brothers Jackie Woodruff and Charles Wesley Leck; sisters, Brenda Scott, and Fatima Gent; several nieces, nephews, cousins and extended family and friends.

*The Tri-County Reporter, Thursday Jan 11, 2024*

## Oscar Obel Jr. 1940-2024

Oscar Lee Obel Jr., 83, fell asleep in the arms of his Lord and Savior, Thursday, Jan. 5, 2024, in Springtown.

A Celebration of Life will be at 4 p.m. Thursday, Jan. 11, at GracePointe Church, Springtown. Alexander's Midway Funeral Home is handling arrangements.

Oscar was born Dec. 30, 1940, in Stephenville to Oscar Lee Obel Sr. and Dorothy Faydailia Cox Obel. They both were there to welcome him home along with his daughter, Cara Obel, and sisters, Barbara, Mary and Joyce. Oscar grew up in Fort Worth and served in the U.S. Navy for four years, and then the Naval Reserves, and retired after 22 years of dedicated service.

He worked at Hurst TV and Appliance in Hurst for many years.

Oscar was a faithful member of the GracePointe Church in Springtown where he sang in the choir.



In his spare time you could find him working in the yard. He will be missed.

He is survived by his loving and devoted wife of 36 years, Linda Diane (Stokes) Obel; son, Christopher Lee Obel and wife, Jaclyn; grandchildren, Lillian, Claire, Jackson and James; several nieces, nephews, extended family and friends.

*The Tri-County Reporter, Thursday Jan 11, 2024*

## Thurman Lee Stokes 1939-2023

Thurman Lee Stokes, 84, of Springtown, peacefully passed away Dec. 31, 2023, in Fort Worth.

Service will be at 10 a.m. Saturday, Jan. 13, at White's Azle Chapel, Azle, with interment at Pope Cemetery.

Lee was a devoted husband, loving father, and cherished friend. Born on July 19, 1939, in Bridgeport, to Elzie Ray Stokes and Eva Belle Stokes, Lee lived a life marked by adventure, resilience and love.

Lee graduated from Birdville High School in 1958, embarking on a life filled with passions, including cars, roller skating and rodeos. He met the love of his life, Patricia Hays, at Pat's Skateland in Fort Worth. Following Lee's service in the U.S. Army, the couple settled in Azle, raising their children, Scott and Toyia.

Lee, a skilled mechanic and craftsman, built the family homes by hand. He was an avid outdoorsman who enjoyed fishing and family vacations.

He was preceded in death by his parents, Elzie Ray Stokes and Eva Belle Stokes;



and his wife, Patricia.

Lee is survived by his son, Scott Stokes and wife, Linda; daughter, Toyia Stokes Winters and husband, Mark; brother, Carroll Stokes and wife, Joan; sister, Norma Farley and husband, Paul; granddaughters, Jessica Murray and Kelsey Baker; great-granddaughter, Caroline Murray; and extended family.

Lee's enduring strength, love and unwavering faith in the Lord will be remembered by all who knew him. May he rest in eternal peace.

*The Tri-County Reporter, Thursday Jan 11, 2024*

## Clarence Winterrowd 1941-2024

Clarence William Winterrowd, 82, loving father, grandfather and brother, passed away Tuesday, Jan. 2, 2024, following several health complications throughout the course of 2023.

A funeral was at 10 a.m. Tuesday, Jan. 9, in Biggers Funeral Chapel, with Dr. Wesley Shotwell officiating. Interment is at Greenwood Memorial Park.

He is survived by his wife, Dianne Winterrowd, and children, Christy Campbell and Scott Winterrowd.

In lieu of flowers, the family respectfully requests dona-



tions to your favorite charity or church.

*The Tri-County Reporter, Thursday Jan 11, 2024*

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Parkway, Azle <b>817-237-4903</b> Sunday School..... 9:30 AM Morning Worship..... 10:30 AM Wednesday Evening..... 7:00 PM</p> <p><b>COMMUNITY BIBLE FELLOWSHIP CHURCH</b> Pastor - Alton Davis 817-521-4510 1405 Reynolds Rd., Azle <b>817-444-7117</b> Directions: 730 N. to 1542 .5 mi. right on Cardinal, left on Reynolds Sunday School..... 9:45 AM Morning Worship..... 11:00 AM Sunday Evening..... 6:00 PM Wednesday Evening..... 7:00 PM</p>	<p><b>AZLE CHRISTIAN CHURCH</b> <b>DISCIPLES OF CHRIST</b> Interim Minister Rev. Russell Clark, Family Life Minister Emerson Braun 117 Church St. • <b>817-444-3527</b> Sunday School..... 10:00 AM Morning Worship..... 11:00 AM</p> <p><b>CORNERSTONE COMMUNITY CHURCH</b> 2233 Hwy 199 E., Springtown <b>817-221-LIFE (5433)</b> Sunday Worship Service ..... 10:00 AM Wednesday ..... 7:00 PM</p> <p><b>CROSSROADS BAPTIST CHURCH</b> Pastor - Jon Baker Corner FM 730S &amp; FM 1886 <b>817-755-0279</b> Transportation Available Worship Service..... 10:30 AM Wed. Prayer Service..... 7:00 PM</p> <p><b>THE EDGE CHURCH - AZLE</b> 1313 S.E. Pkwy, Azle <b>817-237-4822</b> Missouri Synod "Love God - Serve Others - Share Jesus" Traditional Worship ..... 9:30 AM Contemporary Worship..... 11:00 AM</p> <p><b>FIRST METHODIST CHURCH OF AZLE</b> Pastor: Rev. Raymond Gilman 200 Church St., Azle <b>817-444-3323</b> Morn. Worship ..... 8:30 &amp; 10:45 AM Sunday School..... 9:45 AM Youth ..... 5:00 PM Sun &amp; 6:30 PM Wed</p>	<p><b>GRACEPOINTE CHURCH</b> 4110 E. Hwy 199, Springtown Pastor: Timothy McKeown <b>817-221-5683 gracepointesbc.org</b> Sunday School..... 9:45 am Sunday Service..... 11:00 AM Wednesday Bible Study ..... 6:00 PM</p> <p><b>HOLY TRINITY CATHOLIC CHURCH</b> 800 Highcrest Dr. - Azle <b>817-444-3063</b> Saturday ..... 5:00 PM Sunday ..... 9:00 AM Sunday ..... 11 AM (Spanish) Daily Mass (M, T, Th, F) ..... 8:00 AM Wednesday Mass Religious ED ..... 6:30 PM Confessions..... Sat 4 PM</p> <p><b>HOPE LUTHERAN CHURCH ELCA</b> 4795 E. Hwy 199 - Reno <b>817-221-HOPE</b> Follow us on Facebook for streaming services Sunday School..... 9:00 AM Traditional Service..... 10:00 AM</p> <p><b>SOLID ROCK BIBLE CHURCH</b> 591 S. Reno Rd., Springtown, Texas 76082 Pastor - Bill Gay - <b>817-304-7443</b> Coffee and Donuts..... 9:00 AM Sunday School..... 9:30 AM Morning Worship..... 10:30 AM Children's Church After Music Service Wed. Prayer Meeting..... 6:30 PM Wed. Bible Study..... 7:00 PM</p>	<p><b>LEGACY CHURCH</b> Assembly of God Church Pastor: Gary D. Veazey Hwy. 199 &amp; Jaybird Lane <b>817-221-2983</b> Morning Worship..... 9:15 &amp; 11:00 AM Kidz Zone..... 9:15 &amp; 11:00 AM Weds Evening Legacy Group Legacy Youth, Kids All Services..... 7:00 PM</p> <p><b>THE RANCH CHRISTIAN COWBOY CHURCH</b> Pastor: Greg Slankard 7955 Reed Rd., Azle <b>682-327-7082</b> <a href="http://www.TheRanchCCC.org">www.TheRanchCCC.org</a> Sunday School 9:30 AM • Worship 10:00 AM Weds 7:00 pm • Thurs Potluck 6:30 pm</p> <p><b>SILVER CREEK METHODIST CHURCH</b> Pastor: Bill Killough 2200 Church Rd., Azle <b>817-444-1382</b> <a href="http://www.silvercreekmc.org">www.silvercreekmc.org</a> Sunday School 9:30 AM • Worship 10:30 AM</p> <p><b>SILVER CREEK BAPTIST CHURCH</b> Pastor: Jay Ditty Minister of Music: David Musick Corner FM 730 S. &amp; Veal Station Rd. Church <b>817-444-2325</b> <a href="http://www.silvercreekbc.org">www.silvercreekbc.org</a> Sunday School..... 9:45 AM Morning Worship..... 10:50 AM Evening Worship..... 7:00 PM Wed. Prayer Service..... 6:00 PM</p>	<p><b>THE WORD@LAKESIDE CHURCH OF GOD</b> 9396 FM 1886 Fort Worth, TX 76135 <b>817-237-5500</b> <a href="http://thewordatlakeside.com">thewordatlakeside.com</a> Pastors: Brandon and Kelly Bohannon Worship Pastor: Christen Moody Family Life and Young Adult Pastors: Jodie and Mark James, Kids Pastor: Katie Pearson, Student Pastors: Taylor and Sheridan Tomlin, Creative Directors: Logan and Carrie Edwards, Connections Coordinators: Preston and Ashley Larrew</p> <p>Equip Sunday School at the WORD ..... 9:30 AM Empower Worship at the WORD ..... 10:45 AM Kids at the WORD..... 10:45 AM PreK at the WORD ..... 10:45 AM Emanate at the WORD (Special Needs Ministry) ..... 10:45 AM Nursery at the WORD ..... 10:45 AM Young Adults at the WORD ..... 6:00 PM Wednesdays Adult Bible Class..... 7:00 PM The WORD Students (6th-12th grades)..... 6:30 PM Awana Kids at the WORD ..... 6:30 PM Life at the WORD Life Groups Various Times</p>
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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**



# Inside Walnut Creek SUD's 2024 budget

**MADELYN EDWARDS**

springtownreporter@tricityreporter.com

SPRINGTOWN — Despite inflation, Walnut Creek Special Utility District staff aimed to make their fiscal year 2024 budget as lean as possible.

"Quite truthfully, I think we're solid. As far as 2024, we tried to make it as lean as possible, and I don't think we'll have any issues with our budget projections," Walnut Creek SUD office manager Denise Taylor said, adding that if anything, mid-year budget adjustments could be needed because of her conservative planning for revenues. "Overall, I think it's a solid budget, and I don't think we're going to have any issues."

The SUD's board of directors approved the new budget last month.

"We're able to address the

## Budget includes mass notification system, new trucks, employee pay raise

current needs of the employees somewhat with the raise for everyone and believe we've got everything in the budget for the year to address our needs," Board President Mike Gilley said.

Taylor said the district has felt the effects of inflation on the cost of meters, parts and meter interface units, or transmitters. Staff overcame this challenge by finding out what was needed and adjusting the budget accordingly with some funds added for contingencies.

"Everybody did their due diligence, and we made sure that everything that we're getting is what we need and

just making sure that we're keeping it clean and as cheap as we can," Taylor said.

The office manager described the purchases in the budget as general needs — a new copier, trimmers that meter readers can use to cut overgrown grass blocking water meters and snake catchers for crew members to use when they see serpents on the job. More significant purchases include three new trucks to replace older ones and the Everbridge mass notification system.

Customers called for a new mass notification system last summer to spread the word

more effectively about boil water notices and water use restrictions. In September, the district's board of directors approved hiring the company Everbridge to install the system, which is expected to narrow alerts to impacted neighborhoods and can utilize multiple communication modes. Currently, customers can sign up for notifications on the SUD's website and receive all alerts, including ones that don't apply specifically to them.

Taylor said the district is working on getting the Everbridge system set up. The SUD is also in the process of purchasing land on Farm-to-Market Road 51 to install a new elevated storage tank, Taylor said.

Employees are receiving a 5% pay raise in the budget as well as longevity pay based on how many years a staff

member has worked for the SUD as of December of each year, Taylor said.

"The largest one we paid was over \$4,000," she said, referring to staff longevity payments.

Gilley pointed out the district is currently able to make these purchases and give raises without increasing the water rates.

A big change in revenues comes from the city of Boyd's Springhill addition. The city of Boyd is paying Walnut Creek per tap to service the new subdivision. The city of Boyd had also asked for an increase in water supply from the district last year, but Taylor said that's not feasible at this time.

"That would put us over what we can purchase from Tarrant Regional (Water District)," she said. "We may talk about it again. There are some other things going on

that we're looking at that may make it happen."

Gilley said Walnut Creek SUD will need to get more acre-feet of water from Tarrant Regional Water District to meet Boyd's request. He also stressed the importance of meeting the needs of the district's current customers as opposed to wholesale ones.

Gilley's goals for the future are to eliminate estimated water meter readings that lead to inconsistent bills for customers, get the mass notification system installed, make progress on getting bids for bond projects and prevent having another summer of severe water use restrictions. He hopes Walnut Creek SUD can "get away from a lot of the headaches that we've been having and hopefully be just a good provider of a water source for people."

# Skywarn Spotter Training soon to take place

## STAFF REPORTS

In Texas, all eyes are on the sky much of the time, since Texans know the weather can change quickly and drastically. Those with a penchant for weather watching have an opportunity to learn more and provide an important service to their community.

A weather training program known as SKYWARN will be conducted in Weatherford Tuesday, Jan. 30 from 7-9 p.m., although the local National Weather Service office in Fort Worth is still working to confirm the location. The Tri-County Reporter will update this information as soon as it becomes available (or you can check by click-

ing the link at the end of this story if you choose). The free program equips community members with essential information for all types of weather hazards. The main responsibility of a "SKYWARN spotter" is to identify and describe severe local storms.

Every year, the National Weather Service of Fort Worth conducts over two dozen SKYWARN classes within its coverage area of 46 counties in North and Central Texas. These classes are usually held between January and March before the spring severe weather season.

In an average year, the United States experiences more than 10,000 severe

thunderstorms, 5,000 floods and more than 1,000 tornadoes. The effects of severe weather are felt every year by many Americans. In most years, thunderstorms, tornadoes and lightning caused hundreds of injuries and deaths and billions in property and crop damage.

To obtain critical weather information, the National Weather Service (NWS) established SKYWARN with partner organizations. SKYWARN is a citizen volunteer program with between 350,000 and 400,000 trained severe weather spotters. SKYWARN® storm spotters are citizens who form the nation's first line of defense against severe

weather. These volunteers help keep their local communities safe by providing timely and accurate reports.

Since the program started in the 1970s, the information provided by SKYWARN® spotters, coupled with Doppler radar technology, improved satellite and other data, has enabled NWS to issue more timely and accurate warnings for tornadoes, severe thunderstorms and flash floods. Storm spotters play a critical role because they can see things radar and other technological tools cannot, and this ground truth is critical in helping the NWS perform our primary mission: to save lives and property.

## THE SKYWARN® PROGRAM AT NWS FORT WORTH

Many people ask how they can become a member of SKYWARN. In most cases, SKYWARN isn't really something you join, but instead is a concept based on having citizen volunteers help their community and the NWS by observing and reporting hazardous weather occurring in their area. Anyone can be a storm spotter and submit reports directly to the NWS. If you are interested in becoming a member of an official local SKYWARN storm spotter network, you'll probably want to contact your city or county emergency management office for information. Many

communities have organized networks of storm spotters, often made up of amateur radio operators, fire departments, law enforcement or other volunteers. These local networks may have very specific training and membership requirements, so check with your local officials to see how you might be able to get involved.

There is no pre-registration (except for virtual classes), and you do not have to be a resident of a specific county to attend any of the NWS SKYWARN classes. For more information visit <https://www.weather.gov/fwd/skywarnmap>.

**AZLE'S**



# People's Choice AWARDS BALLOT

The Azle Area Chamber of Commerce would like your vote for the following Nominees... **ONLY CHECK ONE IN EACH CATEGORY**

### Favorite Insurance Agency

- Albracht Hardwood Insurance Agency
- Allstate-Mares Insurance
- Angela Harrison Agency - Farmers Insurance
- Angela Lamb Farmers Insurance
- Care N Care Insurance Agency
- Damon Liles Insurance Agency
- Haley Carter State Farm
- Hogle's Insurance Group
- Kyrstin Daniel's State Farm
- Lindsey Ellis State Farm
- Our Infinite Company
- Texas Classic Insurance
- Rachel West - Farmers Insurance
- MP Insurance
- Ussery Insurance Services - Farmers Insurance

### Favorite Azle I.S.D. Employees

- Matt Adams - Assistant Superintendent of Finance & Operations
- Amanda House - Instructional Coach (Hilltop Elementary)
- Starla Petty - Coordinator of Health Services; School Nurse at Forte Junior High
- Chuck Wess - Director of Transportation

### Favorite City of Azle Employee

- Marco Gallardo - Police Department
- Brad Geary - Water Processing Plant
- Victor Gonzalez - Azle Memorial Library
- Jack Noah - Fire Department

### Favorite Event Venue

- 404 Main Place
- A&M Gardens
- Azle Deer Cove
- Eagle Mountain Plaza
- The Orchard
- RnR Event Center

### Favorite Caterer

- Bumble Bee Occasions
- Caitlyn's Catering
- Corn Fed Catering & Fine Foods
- CRAVE
- Red's Burger House
- Red's Bar B Que
- 3-Ws Smoke Shack

### Favorite Non-Profit Organizations

- CASA of Parker County
- Good N.E.W.S.
- Adult & Teen Challenge of Texas
- Future Hope and Healing

**Entries must be on original newspaper ballots, no machine copies will be counted.**

Return ballot to the Azle Area Chamber by February 1, 2024

Winners will be announced at the 62nd Annual Awards Banquet on February 15, 2024

**404 W. Main St., Ste 102, Azle • 817-444-1112**



## TOP TEN

FROM PAGE A1

the court system.

In April, the case of the 2020 killing of Ernest Medley came to rest when the drunk driver responsible for his death was sentenced to 10 years in prison. Former Boyd High School assistant principal and Springtown resident Kevin Scott Evans pleaded guilty to intoxication manslaughter after he hit Medley, who was walking alongside East State Highway 199, with his vehicle.

"I hope you always, always remember Ernest Medley, my brother," Della Mitchusson said when addressing Evans in court. "We will always remember this. He left behind two underage sons that have to grow up without him. You are a good old boy from around these parts but made bad choices. One day we all have to be judged by our God Almighty, so I forgive and pray for you. I hope you pray and ask for forgiveness as well."

During the summer, Azle woman Sarah Doherty (also known as Sarah McKibbin, Sarah Burkeland and Sarah Gill) who allegedly wrote fraudulent checks at local businesses, was busted for wire fraud and tax evasion in Wisconsin. The local businesses Doherty allegedly harmed include Classic Pest Control Operators and Salon 76082.

In another fraud case, Springtown contractor Aaron Seth Miller was charged with misapplication of construction trust funds with intent to defraud and was ordered to pay over \$420,000 to his victims. Parker County Sheriff's Office received reports from people with whom Miller or his company, WD Welding Services, reached an agreement for a construction project, paid money for the project and then no construction was begun, or minimal effort was invested.

Miller was sentenced to a \$2,000 fine, 10 years in prison probated for five years, 90 days in jail as a condition of probation and 200 hours of community service. During his probation, he is not allowed to work as a contractor or subcontractor and cannot directly take money from construction customers.

### NO. 6 — A TALE OF TWO HILLTOPS

The Azle-Springtown area became home to not one, but two schools named Hilltop in 2023 — Azle's Hilltop Elementary School on South Stewart Street and Hilltop Family Christian Academy at the church that shares its namesake on Old Cottondale Road.

Azle's Hilltop Elementary has been in the works ever since Azle Independent School district won its 2021 bond election that included building the new elementary school.

"It's nice to see your tax dollars going toward something positive," said Joe Rainville, a parent of second grade Hilltop student, in an August Tri-County Reporter article. "It's good for the community and good for the kids. This is nice, it's got a nice layout, big classrooms, all the modern amenities."

Hilltop Family Christian Academy also started offer-

ing classes in the fall starting with young students up to the third grade, though academy officials plan to grow steadily and add more grade levels.

"As we thought about building lives that change the world, we thought there's no better way to do that than through an education facility," former Hilltop Family Church Pastor of Youth and Education Justin Harper said.

Also in 2023 education news, Springtown Independent School District opened Porcupine Academy to help non-traditional students earn their high school diplomas. This includes students who have withdrawn from high school because of work commitments, starting a family, or those who have struggled to succeed in a traditional high school structure.

"We are excited to offer this innovative opportunity to students in our community. Porcupine Academy provides a supportive environment where students can earn their high school diploma, regardless of their circumstances," SISD Superintendent Shane Strickland said in a news release. "Our goal is to provide personalized educational plans that empower students to succeed at their own pace."

### NO. 5 — RENO'S NEW BAS AND OTHER LEADERSHIP CHANGES

2023 was a year of change for the city of Reno as the council gained a new mayor and three new city council members.

Hector Bas Jr. won the election in May for Reno mayor over incumbent Sam White. Bas garnered 273 votes, more than 61% of the vote, while White collected 171 votes, more than 38% of the vote.

"With 444 votes, (voters') voices have really been heard," Bas said about his victory.

In addition to Bas, incumbent council member Hernando Herrera won his race for Place 1 over former Planning and Zoning Commission Pro-Tem Chairperson Jason Holden by 58 votes while former Mayor Pro Tem Kathleen "Katie" Tucker lost Place 4 to current Deputy Mayor Pro Tem Jennifer Vogle by 62 votes. Tod Siedell won the race for Reno City Council Place 2 over former P&Z Chairperson Brian Schrader by 62 votes.

"We're excited," Vogle said after the election. "We just want to do a good job and listen to everybody."

Another change to the council occurred in June when member Jeff Davis stepped down from his position, and Joy Jenkins was appointed to fill his spot.

One of the first actions taken by the new council was to appoint Rebekka Roberts as the interim city secretary. Roberts has been taking the lead on the city's administrative tasks after longtime city administrator Scott Passmore retired in February.

Reno P&Z also gained new members Diane Blair and Steve Streiffert as well as a new chairperson Kevin Vandenberg, who previously served on the commission.

Springtown didn't have any changes in its elected officials but does have new heads of the police department and the chamber of commerce.

Springtown City Administrator David

Miller named Jamie Oliver as the Springtown Police Department's new deputy chief in February. Oliver was formerly the police department's criminal investigations department sergeant. He was originally hired as a patrol officer, and he has also served as an investigator.

Miller also took on a new position and serves as the city's public safety director in addition to being city administrator.

This change came after the departure of former Chief Cres Salazar who resigned from the department following the death of his teenage daughter in an ATV accident.

At the Springtown Area Chamber of Commerce, former administrative assistant Terri Toone stepped into the executive director position in 2023 following iconic director Amy Walker's retirement. Administrative assistant and Walker's right-hand woman Marcia Garcia also retired, and Monica Beall was hired as the marketing and account manager.

"We want to increase our membership, and not only increase the membership, but we need to get our members more involved," Toone said about her goals for the chamber. "I want a packed, full house during the luncheons, standing room only. I would like to see our ambassadors get more involved."

Also in 2023, an Azle native took the top spot in Tarrant County when Chandler Merritt became county administrator following the retirement of longtime administrator G.K. Maenius.

"I'm proud to say I was raised right here in Azle," Merritt said. "I went from kindergarten all the way through to the graduating class of 2000 at Azle High School. In fact, every morning I drop my two oldest kids off at Eagle Heights, the same elementary school I attended all those years ago. My father served on the Azle City Council. When I was younger, I attended some of those meetings, quickly learning just how important and meaningful the work was that he performed in public service. This created a sense of public service in me, a passion I hold to this very day as the new Tarrant County Administrator."

No. 4 — the year of bond funding  
One school district was able to capture bond funding in 2023 while another was not. In November, voters in Azle ISD approved \$151 million for multiple projects, including a new Azle Junior High School campus, while Springtown ISD voters rejected plans to build another school to accommodate growth for the fourth time since 2021.

AISD's bond proposal resulted in a tax rate decrease for homeowners, according to Zach Freeman's report in November. This is a key difference compared to SISD's bond proposal, which would have caused the tax rate to be about one cent less than 2022's tax rate but significantly higher than the rate adopted in 2023.

AISD's bond proposal also allows for the reconfiguration of grade levels, with fifth grade students being housed in elementary schools and sixth graders moving into junior high campuses. Forte Junior High and AISD police headquarters are also expect-

ed to be renovated, and a new maintenance warehouse will be built.

SISD's school board called for a bond election twice in 2023 with the same proposal — to build a new middle school while buying additional land for that project, convert the intermediate school into a fourth elementary campus for grades pre-kindergarten through fifth grade and turn the current middle school into a ninth-grade center — and lost both times. A successful bond election would've allowed the district to add more than 1,400 seats for students in the district.

"The result of this election does not change our top priority of providing the best education for our current and future students," SISD Superintendent Shane Strickland said in a statement after results were released in November. "While these results are disappointing, they will motivate us to continue to work hand-in-hand with our community to develop solutions to address student growth."

Voters in Parker County also approved a \$130 million transportation bond proposal at the polls in November. The 32 total bond projects include safety improvements, new road extensions, widening roads and working on frontage roads and ramps in the county, in cities and on Texas Department of Transportation roads. A minor tax rate impact is expected because of the bond, but Parker County Judge Pat Deen said the county may be able to absorb that impact.

Some bond funding doesn't require an election, and this is the kind of revenue Walnut Creek Special Utility District obtained in 2023 for system improvements. In the fall, the SUD's board of directors sold \$40 million in bond funds, but after fees were deducted, the SUD was expected to receive about \$38 million plus an additional \$800,000 for having good finances.

There are close to 17 projects the SUD's bond will fund, including installing a 4-million gallons-per-day filter to the water plant, improvements to boost the pump stations and a new booster pump station south of Springtown. The booster pump station will have booster pumps, storage tanks and an elevated tank.



MADELYN EDWARDS | TRI-COUNTY REPORTER

Walnut Creek Special Utility District board members sign paperwork related to the bond funds the district received to make infrastructure improvements in September.

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### NO. 3 — CAPITOL DECISIONS

The Texas Legislature not only met for the regular session in 2023 but multiple special sessions as well. More than 700 bills became law in September on a variety of topics, including requirements that schools strengthen security by enlisting peace officers at campuses. House Bill 3 requires school boards to decide the appropriate number of armed security officers for each campus and make sure at least one commissioned peace officer is present during regular school hours at each campus, according to information from the Texas Association of School Boards.

In November, Texans voted to approve several constitutional amendments, and the most impactful proposition made way for property tax relief. The state is expected to spend \$18 billion to cut

taxes, and Texas school districts will receive more than \$7 billion to compress their tax rates. The homestead exemption, which is defined by the Texas Tribune as "the amount of a home's value that can't be taxed to pay for public schools," was raised from \$40,000 to \$100,000. For taxes on certain business properties, a cap was placed on those property values to limit how much they could grow.

Voters also signed off on allowing childcare providers to be exempt from property taxes, pay raises for retired teachers as well as the creation of a water fund to fix infrastructure and get more water sources, an energy fund to help build new natural gas-fueled power plants and a broadband infrastructure fund to expand internet availability across the state.

### NO. 2 — WHEN AN ICE STORM MEETS A HEAT WAVE

Two major weather events occurred in the Azle-Springtown area in 2023 — an ice storm in the beginning of the year and a deadly heat wave during the summer.

North Texas, including Azle and Springtown, experienced a winter storm in late January and early February. Ice covered the roads and bridges, and in some cases, trapped vehicles. Freelance journalist Carla Noah Stutsman reported in her Feb. 8 Azle News article that multiple agencies were called to the scene of vehicular wrecks at the start of the storm, and school districts had to cancel classes. Temperatures were in the mid-20s from Monday, Jan. 30 through Thursday, Feb. 2, before warming up Friday, Feb. 3.

The icy roads caused issues for police and other emergency vehicles. Stutsman reported that an Azle police car was wrecked after hitting a patch of ice on the road, and the officer and city employee inside had to go to the hospital for minor injuries. Additional city of Azle vehicles slid into ditches, including an ambulance on North Cardinal Road in Reno that slid sideways.

During the summer, Texans endured months of excessive heat warnings and record-breaking triple-digit temperatures. Zach Freeman reported that at least 14 people had died of overheating, according to the Tarrant County Medical Examiner, from May through August. Some died indoors without air conditioning, and others died outdoors. Most of the victims were older adults in their 50s, 60s and 70s with the oldest one being 79 years old. The youngest one was 26 years old — Caleb Brown who passed out while working outdoors.

Freeman also wrote about many reported cases of heat stroke and heat exposure cases at Texas Health System emergency rooms.

### NO. 1 — WORRIED ABOUT WATER

Many communities in the tri-county area faced concerns about water availability during the summer, and most residents — including those in Springtown, Reno and users of Walnut Creek Special Utility District — were subject to water usage restrictions.

Community Water Supply Corporation, which services unincorporated areas of northern Azle and Briar, had severe restrictions that limited water use to bathing and cooking. In July, the corporation experienced a malfunction in a line connected to Eagle Mountain Lake and had to limit water production to 50% while a part was ordered. There was concern that residents would run out of water.

"If they run out of water, that's 4,092 people that I've got to find a way to make sure they have bottles of water. A lot of those folks are elderly, and they need it. They can't just go to Walmart," Briar-Reno Fire Department Chief Moses Druxman said in Zach Freeman's July article.

Community Water Supply Corporation continued to struggle for months and reiterated the need for conservation again, according to a September article in The Tri-County Reporter.

Concerns about water availability in Reno, particularly for fire protection, also came to a head in city council meetings in 2023. In August, Druxman gave a grim presentation about how the city's water infrastructure issues have led to low water pressure at fire hydrants and could cause deaths or homes being burned down.

"The amount of water pressure I'm getting out of that hydrant is not going to be sufficient to supply the engine to put the fire out," Druxman said at an August city council meeting. "I'm going to have to have one fire truck connect to that hydrant, have that fire truck connect to another fire truck and boost the pressure."

Druxman and Reno residents also brought up concerns about housing subdivisions continuing to develop amid water availability and pressure concerns.

Conversations about water coincided with the Reno City Council's meetings to create an updated budget for the new fiscal year. After an arduous process, the council allocated more funds to the fire department to allow each shift to have a water tanker driver who could supply water to fires. The city's budget also includes funding for well site maintenance, pump repairs and water system improvements to cover water line upgrades or water main breaks.

"I'm hoping this year if we can get my wells back up to par, then next year we could put more money on water system maintenance and be able to upgrade more lines and everything," Reno Public Works Director Chris Albright said after the new budget was adopted. "We've got to take it one year at a time. This system is so far behind."

Reno is also in the process of converting its water disinfection system from chlorine to chloramine so that it will be compatible with neighboring water systems and allow more ease in obtaining water from other entities.

"This is just a small percentage of what needs to be done in the city, but it's a step in the right direction," Albright said about the disinfection system conversion in November.



MADELYN EDWARDS | TRI-COUNTY REPORTER

At the Springtown Area Chamber of Commerce, former administrative assistant Terri Toone stepped into the executive director position in 2023 following iconic director Amy Walker's retirement. Administrative assistant and Walker's right-hand woman Marcia Garcia also retired, and Monica Beall was hired as the marketing and account manager.



# Spotlighting seasoned adults

**AZLE** — The Azle Adult Activity Center, located in Ash Creek Park at 601 Southeast Parkway, ended the year 2023 with parties and fun. Our dear friends, the Mears Family, led the karaoke fun. There was a lot of participation by those in attendance with a variety of song styles.

For the gift exchange, we played the "right/left" game, passing the gifts in the direction according to the "Frosty the Left-Handed Snowman" story. By the end, whatever gift a person was holding was theirs to take home. There was so much laughter, and some even shed some tears.

And oh, what a feast was served up! Along with some meals from Meals On Wheels, a potluck luncheon was provided by those who came. Each dish expressed the individual taste of the cook. The variety ranged from macaroni salad with ham to homemade quesadillas. If anyone left hungry, it was their own fault.

But that wasn't the only party. On the third Thursday of each month, we have a party to celebrate the birthdays and anniversaries of our participants. Care-n-Care Health Insurance has been providing cupcakes and ice cream for this monthly celebration for several years. In 2023, Community Engagement Coordinator Joyce Spikes also led an exercise session.

The past year also brought a new opportunity for participants to receive a monthly box of produce. All that is requested is for each person to partake in at least four meals a month. At the end of the month, those who qualify receive a box with a variety of nutritional produce. A typical box contains potatoes, squash, carrots, apples, avocados and other items according to availability.

As the new year starts, we move forward with programs

## SENIOR SPOTLIGHT

BY JACKIE "JJ" JOY  
jackie@mealsonwheels.org



Santa (Keith Mears) visits the Azle Adult Activity Center. Pictured with Santa are Liz Printice (left) and Laurie Waldrep (center).

COURTESY JACKIE JOY

that benefit older adults. The American Association of Retired Persons will present another Safe Driving course Jan. 19 here at the center. The class will help seniors refresh their knowledge of driving safety. Although completion of the course will not remove a ticket from your record, you can check with your auto insurance company for a possible discount. Please give us a call at 817-444-0070 to register so we know how many to expect.

Attending the AARP course will give you an opportunity to check out the center. We provide meals at 11:30 a.m. each Monday through Friday. There will be a 30-minute lunch break during the class that will give you the chance

to eat with us. When you call to register for the class, please notify the receptionist you would like to eat with us.

A little-known fact about the Azle Adult Activity Center (Senior Center) is we occupy two adjoining buildings, the B. J. Clark Community Center and the B.J. Clark Annex Building. Some days after lunch, people will be in the Annex Building after the dining area has closed. Please feel free to come by to see us.

For further information, you can go to [www.cityofazle.org](http://www.cityofazle.org) to see a calendar and menu for the month of January, give us a call at 817-444-0070 or come by for a visit. We are open 9 a.m.-1:30 p.m.

Hope to see you soon!

## News from Azle City Hall

We welcome your comments or suggestions on information you would like to see reported on this page. Please call Azle City Hall, 817-444-2541, or email Assistant to the City Manager Susie Hiles at [shiles@cityofazle.org](mailto:shiles@cityofazle.org). Until next month.....

**Join the fun!**  
**Coffee Friday with the First Responders**  
1421 NW Pkwy St, Azle, TX 76020

**Sponsored By:**  
The Orchard event venue & retreat

Join us on January 19th @ The Orchard Event Venue from 8:30 AM to 10:00 AM for coffee and conversation! Coffee and breakfast will be provided!

### Medicine Disposal Drop Box

Prescription drug abuse is of great concern to your Azle Police Department. As a proactive measure, they installed a secure MedReturn drop box in the Lobby at Azle City Hall, 505 W. Main Street. It is available to the public Monday - Friday, 8 AM - 5 PM, to dispose any unused or expired medications that otherwise may remain stored in the home. *The drop box is not intended for the use of business, pharmacies, clinics, doctor's offices or any facility that distributes medications.*

Acceptable Medications available for drop off are Prescriptions, Pet Meds, Prescription Patches, Over-the-Counter Meds, and Vitamins.

Unacceptable Medications are Needles, Inhalers, Aerosols, Hydrogen Peroxide, Thermometers, Prescription Ointments, Lotions or Liquids.

Azle Police Department to pleased to provide our community with a safe and convenient way to dispose of unwanted prescription or non-prescription medications.



### Azle Memorial Library News and Free Events

333 W Main St, Azle, TX 76020

817-752-2682 - [www.azlelibrary.org](http://www.azlelibrary.org) - [facebook.com/azlelibrary](https://facebook.com/azlelibrary)

#### Book Sale-Save the Date! January 12 & 13

Gently used books for kids and adults will be on sale in the Library Community Room January 12, from 12-6pm and January 13, from 10am-4pm. Everything \$1 or less! Cash only.

#### Winter Reading for All Ages

Stop by the library during open hours to grab a free gamecard for kids and adults of all ages! Complete any five activity squares on the gamecard and return it by February 16 to receive a prize!

**AARP** Certified tax preparers with AARP Tax-Aide will be at the Azle Memorial Library beginning Tax-Aide™ February 1 to offer **FREE** tax preparation for basic returns (individual only, no business). Appointments required. Call the library at 817-752-2682 after January 15 to book an appointment.

#### FREE In-Person Programs

Additional free programs can be found on the library's website and Facebook page! All events take place in the Community Room.

**Storytime:** Tiny Tykes (ages 1-2) meets Wednesdays at 10:30 am. Preschool Pals (ages 3-6) meets Thursdays at 10:30 am.

**Felt Cat Craft - January 18 @ 6:30 pm.** Teens and adults can learn a new skill and take home a CUTE craft! Please sign up in advance.

**Crafty Quilters:** Meets monthly on 3rd Saturday from 10am-2pm. Quilters of all skill-levels can bring their own materials and equipment while meeting other quilters and sharing ideas. Next date: 1/20.

**Mini Art - January 23 @ 6 pm.** For adults and teens. Create a miniature painting with all supplies provided! Sign up in advance.

**Adult Gaming Night - January 30, 6 - 7:30 pm.** Adults are invited to play a variety of video games on the Library's new Nintendo Switch. Don't know how to play? We'll teach you! Please register in advance by calling 817-752-2682.

**Jigsaw Puzzle Exchange - January 27, 10:30 am - 12:30 pm:** Calling all adult puzzlers - bring a good quality 500+ piece puzzle from your own collection and swap it for another one!

**Trolls Dance Party! January 27 @ 2 pm.** Sign up your kids ages 0-8 and accompany them for this loud and crazy Troll-themed party with dancing, a craft and more! Registration required.

**Last Monday Matinee!** Free new-release movie for adults with freshly made popcorn.

Next movie **January 29 @ 2pm, The Fabelmans**

**Cupid's Arrow Craft - February 6 @ 6 pm.** Adult crafters can celebrate the season of love by making a heart themed wall hanging. Free, but registration is required by calling 817-752-2682.

## DECEMBER 2023 ACTIVITY

### AZLE POLICE DEPARTMENT

**1,398**  
CALLS FOR SERVICE

RESPONDED TO BY PATROL OFFICERS



CITATIONS 224  
WARNINGS 231

TRAFFIC STOPS  
**455**

**31**  
CRIMES AGAINST PROPERTY

**14**  
CRIMES AGAINST PERSONS



**58** ACCIDENTS  
DWI RELATED: 3  
DWI ARRESTS: 8

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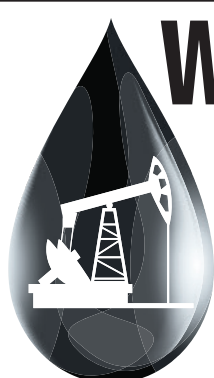
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# United Methodism 'Revived' in Azle

Revive Church leaders speak on the church's origins

ZACH FREEMAN

azlereporter@tricountyreporter.com

AZLE — A schism has been brewing in one of America's largest Christian denominations. Across the country, the United Methodist Church has lost over one-fifth of its churches since 2019. Over 700 churches in Texas — nearly 40 percent of the state's United Methodist congregations — have voted to leave the United Methodist polity. The Reverends Todd and Jenn Pick had only been co-pastors at First United Methodist Church of Azle for about six months when their congregation voted to disaffiliate.

Before coming to Azle, Jenn Pick pastored in Mexia, and Todd Pick pastored in West and Gholson, near Waco. Jenn Pick grew up in the UMC and received a master's degree in biblical studies from the University of St. Andrews in Scotland before going to Drew Theological School to pursue another master's degree. While Jenn is a Texas native, the pair met in seminary in New Jersey, where Todd Pick, a New York native, got his Masters of Divinity. The Picks married and eventually moved back to Texas in 2014 when their son was born.

Like many of their peers, the Picks emphasize that they embrace inclusion, diversity of belief and the UMC's "big tent" model. Of the several issues that prompted the wave of disaffiliations seen across the country was the ever-raging debate on sexuality in the church. In 2019, the UMC held a conference on LGBTQ+ issues and a proposed new One Church Plan which would allow for regional differences in policy in United Methodist Churches around the world. A large contingent of American pastors supported the One Church Plan in the hope they would be able to lift the church's decades-old bans on homosexuals practicing as clergy. The vote failed at the international level, 53% to 47% and the rift between United Methodists continued to grow. Many U.S. churches refused to enforce bans on their clergy, hundreds of which had publicly come out at convention in 2016, and open lesbian, Karen Oliveto, continued to serve as bishop of the UMC's Mountain Sky Convention. That, combined with disagreements over the UMC structure and differing interpretations of the Bible, led to the state of the UMC today.

After the First United Methodist Church of Azle, Silver Creek United Methodist Church, and First United Methodist Church of Weatherford voted to disaffiliate from the UMC Jan. 29, 2023, the Picks and other dissenting members of these three churches met for a solemn discussion about their

futures. At Azle's FUMC, around 72% of present members voted to disaffiliate.

Instead of lamenting, the remaining United Methodists looked around and found they had all the church they needed right there. Later in February, the group met again to plan and create what would become Azle's Revive United Methodist Church. The church officially launched March 5, just a month after its first meeting, after securing a place of worship in the Pick's son's school cafeteria at Cross Timbers Elementary.

"It was probably the quickest launch of any UMC ever," the clergy couple said. "It's an ethical imperative for us to make sure everyone is welcome. No matter background, no matter race, nation, creed, so all of those different things. We think that everybody needs Jesus, and everybody needs community to gather around in sorrow or in joy or whatever is happening in their lives. We need each other to lean on and be there for each other. When someone is excluded, we are not whole, so as whole people we ought to make sure everyone knows that they are welcome."

Today, the church has a little over 100 members and an average attendance of about 75 for Sunday services. Along with paying rent to the school district, the Picks also help by reading to the school's kindergartners on some mornings. The Picks were thrilled to continue their new journey of co-pastoring in Azle, which was a first in both of their careers, and are proud of their combined strengths as a clergy couple.

"I think that our gifts and graces complement one another," Jenn Pick said. "Todd is a beautiful visual artist and graphic designer, which every new church start needs, and also a great pastoral care leader. The things that he can



Jenn and Todd Pick, co-pastors at Revive United Methodist Church.

do are things that I don't have facility over so when we both get together, they get his genius in those areas, and I love doing bible study and administration and those kinds of things. I could teach bible all day long, and you know that you can count on your partner. If something goes awry and I need to turn the microphone up because nobody can here, I know that he's still in here and can do whatever needs to be done while I go and do that. So, it's nice having a partner who you know always has your back. If one of us is sick or something like that we can also cover for each other."

As part of the established UMC network, Jenn Pick described how the church has helped find its footing with the donations from other churches.

"I think that connection is part of who we are as United Methodists," Pick said. "It's one of the things that people can be excited about, so in the disaffiliation kind of time, there's a feeling of loss but there's also this new kind of energy about who we are and

who we can become so I think that Revive embodies that."

The Picks also attributed some of their success to longtime attendee Kelsi Bernsen, who serves as youth leader, and Azle Christian Church. Azle Christian Church hosts a combined youth service with Revive and also offers a place for Revive's weekly Bible study along with other events. The Picks credit the name "Revive" to church member, Ricki Gooch, who they said looked to the Spirit to revive them.

"It's wonderful and it's safe and it's happy and it's welcoming and it's unlike any place I've ever worshipped," Gooch said. "We're all together, we all started at the same place. It was not like joining an already established group. We established this together and we started this as a family, and we continue as a family."

Todd Pick describes his congregation as a people of joy and hope. Moving forward, the Picks see the congregation as a force for good in the community. During their initial meetings, congregants gathered 1,000 pounds

of food to donate to Azle's Community Caring Center. In the nine months since, the church has gathered nearly 10,000 pounds of food for the organization.

"I think a large part of (the future of Revive) is making an impact in the community," Jenn Pick said. "I think there are a lot of people who are in need and a lot of people who need help and who need revival and who need to feel a sense of belonging."

Sharla Bursey, a former Azle ISD speech therapist and longtime UMC member, is one of its congregants who now attends Revive. Bursey has a special relationship with the church in that they help fund her Kairos prison ministry. Kairos, meaning "God's special time," is an interdenominational Christian ministry dedicated to spreading the Gospel to those in prison. Bursey says she was called to the ministry eight years ago after reading Matthew 25:36 (I needed clothes and you clothed me, I was sick and you looked after me, I was in prison, and you

came to visit me.)

"The folks are so loving and so welcoming and they care about me and accept me for who I am," Bursey said. "I'm so glad that I got to be part of this newness, this rebirth, this revival of faith and hope in the Azle community. But it's always there, because we have so many churches and so many great people that follow Jesus here in Azle and it's great to be a part of that community. I think with Revive, we really do believe that Jesus is the way to live our lives and let others know."

Anyone interested in learning more about Revive can attend a service or follow the group Revive United Methodist Church on Facebook for more information. Revive has weekly Sunday services at 11 a.m., with breakfast at 10:30 a.m. at Cross Timbers Elementary. Revive members can also be found at Bible study, youth group and at Wednesday night dinners at Azle Christian Church, 117 Church Street, at 5:30 p.m.



ZACH FREEMAN | TRI-COUNTY REPORTER

Lizzy Garcia, 16, says "I feel very welcomed, and I feel like I'm a big part of youth because I really want to help make a difference and stand out. I love to get involved in the community."



During advent, the church lit candles and laid strips of cloth in a manger as part of the celebration of the Nativity of Christ.

## LEGAL PUBLIC NOTICES

### NOTICE OF PUBLIC SALE

Notice is hereby given that the following will be sold to the highest bidder with bidding to take place at lockerfox.com on Monday the 22nd day of January, 2024 at 10:00 AM to satisfy a landlord's lien, pursuant to Chapter 59, Texas Property Code. Payment to seller via credit/debit card and pickup at the facility. Self-Storage unit contents of the following customers containing household and other goods will be sold. 10 Federal Self Storage, 2920 Avenue F, Arlington, TX, 76011 Cindy Hernandez. Rachel Rosa. Gina Rodriguez. Byron Wesson. Ronnie Duncan. Wanda Walter. Chase Dorow. Robert Davidson. Chase Dorow. Johnny Kenney. Kim Ridges. Jonathan M Averill. Ubald Zouniome. Bradley Willis. Bria Goodman. Giselle Roussell. Joni Willis. Kimmasha Lee. Traci James. Ryan Atkins. Barbara Rowell. Andrea Young. Charlotte Brown Hodges. Shawniece Arkansas

### NOTICE OF PUBLIC SALE

Pursuant to Chapter 59, Texas Property Code, Trinity Self Storage which is located at 200 Walnut Creek Drive Azle, TX 76020 will hold a public auction of property being sold to satisfy a landlord's lien. Sale will be at 11 o'clock a.m. on January 25th, 2024 at 200 Walnut Creek Drive Azle, TX 76020. Property will be sold to highest bidder for cash. Deposit for removal and cleanup may be temporarily required. Seller reserves the right to not accept any bid and to withdraw property from sale. Property in each space may be sold item-by-item, in batches, or by the space. Property being sold includes contents in space(s) of the tenant listed below, with brief description of contents in the space(s). TENANT'S COMPLETE NAME as shown on rental agreement: Karen Rawlins. General description of property: Misc.

The Zoning Board of Adjustment for the City of Azle will conduct a public hearing on Monday, January 29, 2024, to consider a variance request to Section 28.6 "Use Parking Space Schedule" of the Zoning Ordinance for property located at 342 Northwest Parkway, legally described as a tract of land out of the Wilson & Scruggs Survey, Abstract No. 1948, Tract 1L05A. The purpose of the variance is to allow for a reduction to the minimum parking ratio for the proposed spa and salon building. The meeting will begin at 6:00 P.M. in the City Council Chambers located at 505 W. Main, Azle, Texas. (V2024-01)

The Zoning Board of Adjustment for the City of Azle will conduct a public hearing on Monday, January 29, 2024, to consider a variance request to Section 11.3 Development Regulations, Setback Requirements of the City of Azle Zoning Ordinance for the property located at 544 Cresthaven Court, and also known as Lot 396, Castle Hills Estates, an addition to the City of Azle, Tarrant County, Texas. The purpose of the variance is to allow for the construction of a new single-family residence to encroach the minimum twenty-five-foot (25') front yard setback. The meeting will begin at 6:00 P.M. in the City Council Chambers located at 505 W. Main, Azle, Texas.



Sharla Bursey, Revive member, is also supported by the church in her Kairos Prison Ministry.



# UPDATE

FROM PAGE A1

meeting Jan. 22. Partnered with Education Service Center region 11, Azle ISD is one of two districts in the region and one of 36 across the state to receive the grant. Smith hopes the grant can be used to create a "true portrait" of an Azle ISD graduate, collecting data starting from pre-k in order to accurately predict Azle student outcomes.

## DEMOGRAPHICS REPORT

Hudson Huff of Zonda Demographics spoke at the December board meeting to report on the projected growth and economic future of Azle ISD. According to Huff, there are 140 more students enrolled in Azle schools than in fall of last year. The district's largest grade group is high school freshmen at 683, with fifth, sixth, seventh and 10th grade following closely behind.

Despite a slight uptick in unemployment, Huff expects to see a strong employment market going forward. Though Huff pointed out the decline in the number of houses being constructed in D-FW, he said Tarrant is the third best county for home starts for the year while Parker is 12th. Huff said home sales remain strong in Tarrant County.

The district currently has 32 active building subdivisions with seven future subdivisions under construction or in-planning. Groundwork is underway on nearly 235 lots within three subdivisions.

In the 2022-23 school year, there were 250 transfers into Azle ISD, with Springtown ISD being the most common origin point. There were 456 transfers out of Azle ISD, with their most common destination being High Point Academy charter school in White Settlement; Springtown ISD and White Settlement ISD followed closely behind. The largest number of new lots are in the Hilltop Elementary zone, followed by Silver Creek and Liberty Elementaries. Zonda estimates Azle ISD will have about 8,000 students in five years and nearly 9,000 students in 10 years. The district is on pace to have 375 new home closings for 2023. This is the second highest number of annual closings in the district's history.

## TRANSITION CENTER

Director of Special Services Krista MacFarlane presented on the progress and achievements of Azle ISD's Special Education Transition Center this year. The Transition Center was made possible with funding from a grant awarded by the Texas A&M Center on Disability and Development. Using this grant, the center has been able to help create authentic work experience for high school students with disabilities and foster employability and life skills. Among other things, the center is focused on the "Anything's Pawsible" pet boutique which sells treats, toys and other pet care-related items which are made by the program's students. These items can be purchased in Southern



A picture of Azle Transition Center students used during the Special Education Department's presentation.

COURTESY AZLE ISD

Honey Giftique, which has partnered with the center. JoAnna Johnson and Barbara Kent, owners of Southern Honey Giftique, were present to receive thanks and hear a reading of a letter from Amy Worthy, the program's classroom teacher who could not attend. MacFarlane told the board Anything's Pawsible is one of only 10 vendors invited to the Statewide Capacity Building Conference in Austin earlier this year, and within two hours it had sold out of all its products. Along with their work for Anything's Pawsible, students also do dishes, laundry and build other day-to-day life skills.

"Everything is a teachable moment," MacFarlane said. "If you're having a bad day, swing by there and see them because they're doing great things."

The program utilizes the cafeteria of the former Walnut Creek Elementary building, which now houses Hornet Academy and DAEP. Advisors say this space is a much better work environment than the small high school classroom where the program started. The program currently consists of 18 students taking morning and afternoon classes at the center.

## MORE COWBELL

Executive Director of Leadership and Instruction Jessica Hanson was recognized at the meeting after Azle ISD's "More Cowbell" initiative was featured in the Texas Association of School Boards' magazine, "Bragging Rights." A district-wide initiative, "More Cowbell" is one of just 12 district programs featured in the magazine and was implemented by Hanson in the summer of 2022.

"It was an idea that I had at a conference, and I brought it back and pitched it in the superintendent cabinet and it's taken off from there," Hanson explained.

The program uses anonymous district employee nominations and committee overview to select ISD employees based on highest positivity, optimism and the energy they bring each day. Those awarded receive a shirt to wear on More Cowbell Monday, a mini cowbell and a certificate.

"It's just really cool to see the excitement that the employees get when they win the award, and they get teary-eyed," Hanson said. "They're excited and they're just pumped when they get a cowbell."

Hanson said the award has even impacted recruitment in at least one instance, after a teacher asked about it at a birthday party and then later applied for a job in the district.

"I think it creates a positive, optimistic culture that people want to be a part of," Hanson said. "It's just something little but it can mean big things. It feels great. I think (we should do) anything we can do to share what a great place Azle is."

## MISCELLANEOUS

Lloyd Condon of VLK Architects consulted the district on the different bids received for the Fall 2026 construction projects planned following passage of the bond proposal in November 2023. The board approved Condon's suggestion of BTC, a White Settlement-based company specializing in K-12 education construction.

Amanda Moore announced that January 2024 has been proclaimed School Board Recognition Month and the theme is "locally elected, community connected."

An Azle High School junior, Elizabeth Ardito, was recognized for designing the district's Christmas card. Ardito is in Mrs. Lauren Henson's graphic design CTE class. Smith mentioned that Ardito's sister had also designed the district's Christmas card two years ago and went on to intern with the district over the summer.

Eddie Alford presented a tech report to the board informing members of the district's transition from Sender to Skyward Systems. These platforms are used for digital communication, keeping tabs on finances and many other of the district's day-to-day functions. The servers have been built and the software is being implemented, Alford said. The district will

hold consulting meetings in January, February and early March and begin training staff in late spring and into the summer. It is expected to be in use by July 1. Alford said the update will be well worth it, with the previous system being host to a slew of problems for the growing district. Azle and Aledo ISDs were two of the largest districts in the area using Sender, and most districts their size have already transitioned to Skyward, according to Superintendent Smith. The system will be used to view report cards and grades, keep attendance and track finances among other features.

Matt Adams presented the district's grade on the Texas Education Agency's Financial Integrity Rating System of Texas (FIRST). Azle ISD received the superior achievement rating (A) with 96 points out of 100. This grade is based on debt payments, successful submission of finances, number of days of cash on hand and other factors. Established by the Texas legislature in 2001, FIRST is meant to encourage schools to improve financial resources and management. Azle ISD has received a superior achievement or passed rating every year since FIRST's inception. Azle is counted among the other 88% of districts that have received an A this year.



Elizabeth Ardito with the Christmas card she designed alongside a family member, Azle ISD Communications Director Amanda Moore and Board Vice President Tim Brown



AISD Superintendent Todd Smith, Southern Honey Giftique owners JoAnna Johnson and Barbara Kent, AISD Communications Director Amanda Moore and Board Vice President Tim Brown.



Executive Director of Leadership and Instruction Jessica Hanson.



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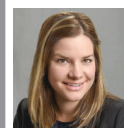
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# Welcome to the gun show

Whipp Farm Productions brings vendors to 404 Main Jan. 6-7, set to return Nov. 16



ZACH FREEMAN | TRI-COUNTY REPORTER  
Uncle JoJo's Snake Removal presented some interesting ways to display their services.



From the space-age Kel-Tec to the Tokarev of the old USSR, Falcon Firearms of Burleson offered event-goers an eclectic selection of armaments.



Kye White, founder of the nonprofit Veteran's OATH selling knives and other goods to raise money for homeless veterans.



Tactical Dog had a wide range of comical and useful patches for purchase at this Whipp Farm Productions event.



No gun smoke here. LesLey Wiedemann with Yilo CBD was just one of the booths that illustrated the wide range of vendors and items at the Whipp Farm Productions event.



Azle business Onward Arms was front and center selling their wares. Whipp Farm Productions offers an opportunity for a wide range of businesses from across North Texas to congregate and reach customers in vendor fairs held about twice a month.

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# THE TRI-COUNTY REPORTER

# DIVERSIONS

B

THURSDAY, January 11, 2024

## SHS students extend 'helping hand' to peers

*POJO's Helping Hand has clothes, hygiene products for students in need*

**MADELYN EDWARDS**

*springtownreporter@tricityreporter.com*

SPRINGTOWN — The Springtown High School business practicum students who lead POJO's Helping Hand want to help their peers get the supplies they need to thrive with ease.

"School is already stressful enough," SHS senior Olivia Scott said.

POJO's Helping Hand is meant to connect students in need with necessary items like clothes, hygiene products and school supplies. School counselors and other faculty members are tasked with identifying students in need and then helping them get essentials from the POJO's Helping Hand store at the Springtown Independent School District's administrative office on East Fifth Street.

The business practicum students also created a QR code for the school community to use to make anonymous referrals.

"We definitely hope to help students get into better places, help them work through any struggles they have, especially with getting the items that they need," Scott said. "Hopefully, it will help them branch out to get their needs without just struggling in silence because that does happen a lot."

Another business practicum senior, April Seely, said homelessness and poverty are "too big of a problem." Seely has known people who struggle with poverty and feels bad that she has necessary resources when others don't. Her goal is for the POJO's Helping Hand project to boost morale among stu-

dents and encourage people to seek and offer help.

"My biggest hope with this entire project is that it allows us to show people that there is no shame in needing help," Seely said. "One of our biggest things when we started this was it needs to be anonymous. It needs to be entirely shameless. There's nothing that needs to be outing you as someone who needs help, but there's nothing wrong with needing help."

Business practicum students, who spend their class time either getting work experience or by doing business-related projects, started POJO's Helping Hand and then merged it with the district's pre-existing clothes closet "Pine Essentials."

Working with the district has

PLEASE SEE **HELP** | B2



PHOTO COURTESY OF REBECCA ZBYNSKI

Springtown High School students work on setting up POJO's Helping Hand for students in need. The student store provides students with necessities like clothes and hygiene items.

## Lady Porcupines win own soccer tourney

**BY RICK MAUCH**

*Special to the Tri-County Reporter*

The Springtown Lady Porcupines celebrated the start of a new year and a new season by winning the championship of their own Springtown Invitational tournament this past weekend, defeating Diamond Hill Jarvis 1-0 in the finals.

Springtown opened the tourney with a 4-1 win over Collegiate Academy, defeated Diamond Hill Jarvis 3-1 and downed Western Hills 1-0 to reach the championship game rematch.

Kylie Weins scored seven of the Lady Porcupines' goals in the tournament, with Samantha Orozco and Alee Stiles each adding one. Allison Kimball was in goal the entire tourney.

The Lady Porcupines (4-1) will next play at Aledo Tuesday, Jan. 16 at 5:30 p.m.

### SPRINGTOWN GIRLS BASKETBALL

The Lady Porcupines continued their best season in a decade with a 54-52 thrilling victory at Lake Worth Jan. 5. At 16-11, it is the most wins

for the team since they finished 17-14 in 2012-13 and they are on pace for the first winning season since going 15-11 in 2013-14.

Lake Worth led by five points after the first half before Springtown went on a 21-11 run in the third quarter.

Allison Ford led Springtown with 17 points and 7 rebounds, while Esther Ballado scored 11 with 8 rebounds, including 5 offensive; Brooklyn Quintanilla added 10 points with 8 rebounds and 9 steals; and Kylie Russell tallied 8 points with 7 rebounds (5 offensive) and 3 steals.

The Lady Porcupines also grabbed 49 rebounds, of which 25 were offensive. Sam Mooneyham grabbed 9 (6 offensive), with Allison Ford pulling down 7 (5 offensive) and Paige Winstead had 5.

The game was also the District 8-4A opener.

Previously, the Lady Porcupines defeated Keller International Leadership of Texas 40-20 Jan. 2. Leaders were Quintanilla 10 points, 5 rebounds, 3 steals, 2 blocks; Mooneyham 10 points, 6 steals, 2 blocks; Winstead 7 points, 9 steals; Brylynn

Bazzell 12 rebounds, 7 steals; Chloe Kirk 9 rebounds, 3 steals; Russell 8 steals.

The Lady Porcupines play at Bridgeport Tuesday, Jan. 16 at 6:15 p.m.

### AZLE GIRLS BASKETBALL

The Lady Hornets began the new year with a 51-48 loss at Northwest Jan. 2, followed by a 37-36 loss at home against Saginaw on Jan. 5. No statistics were available at press time.

Azle (9-10 overall, 1-3 in District 5-5A) led 22-17 at the half before Saginaw went on a 16-5 run in the third quarter. The Lady Hornets rallied with a 9-4 fourth quarter run, but fell short.

The Lady Hornets are 3-5 in games decided by 7 points or less this season. They will host Dallas Madison at 5 p.m. Tuesday, Jan. 16.

### SPRINGTOWN BOYS BASKETBALL

The Porcupines escaped at home with a 49-45 victory against Sanger Jan. 2 to open the new year as Dayne Thompson (25) and Kelby Castro (12) combined for 37 points.

Following a pair of road

games against state-ranked Burkburnett and Krum at press time, the Porcupines (10-7) travel to Bridgeport for a District 8-4A contest Tuesday, Jan. 16 with a 7:30 p.m. tipoff.

### AZLE BOYS BASKETBALL

The Hornets (4-17, 0-3 in District 5-5A) almost overcame a 24-11 halftime deficit, pulling within three points late before falling 41-36 at Northwest Jan. 2. After shooting 15% from the field in the first half, Azle hit 44% of its second-half attempts, while the defense held the Texans scoreless for a four-minute stretch.

Britt Haas scored 12 of his team-high 14 points in the second half, along with pulling down 5 rebounds. Cason Cook scored 10 and Gunner Crow added 8.

In a 69-45 loss at Saginaw Jan. 5, Haas again led with 15 points, while Braydon Torok scored 9, Crow scored 8 and Cook added 7.

The Hornets will host Granbury Friday, Jan. 19 at 7:30 p.m.

### AZLE BOYS WRESTLING

The Hornets won the championship of their own Nest Invitational this past Saturday, scoring 260.5 points. Winning their respective weight classes were Chase Yancey at 132 pounds, Landin Evins at 138, Roman Fraser at 190 and Devin Wingfield at 285.

Among the highlights, Yancey defeated the state's No. 4-ranked wrestler in Class 5A, Michael Brennan of Frisco Wakeland, by decision.

Camran Latham and D'Lathian Young posted runner-up finishes. Hayden Harrison and Tacoma Redding finished fourth as the Hornets had 10 wrestlers place in the top five of their divisions.

The Hornets travel to Burseson Centennial Jan. 25.

### SPRINGTOWN BOYS SOCCER

The Porcupines got the 2024 campaign underway with a 3-0 home victory against Young Men's Leadership Academy Jan. 5.

Cruz Gonzalez, Joshua Anaya and Rylen Passmore each scored a goal for Springtown. Dylan McAlister and Caden White had assists. The Porcupines were host-

ing their own tournament at press time and will play at Aledo Tuesday, Jan. 16 at 7 p.m.

### AZLE BOYS SOCCER

The Hornets opened the 2024 season with a 4-0 loss at Burseson Jan. 2. Then, competing in the Castleberry Tournament Jan. 4-6, they defeated Ferris 1-0, lost 1-0 to Diamond Hill Jarvis and defeated Lake Worth 4-0. No statistics were available at press time.

The Hornets (2-2) were competing in the Springtown Tournament at press time and travel to Coppell Friday, Jan. 19 for a 7:30 p.m. start.

### AZLE GIRLS SOCCER

The Lady Hornets began 2024 by competing in the Irving Tournament Jan. 4-6. They fell 3-0 to Nimitz, followed by a 2-1 win against Carrollton Newman Smith and a 5-0 shutout of Garland. No statistics were available at press time.

Azle (2-1) was playing in the Brewer Tournament at press time and will compete in the Chisholm Trail Tournament J.

## AHS Cheer and Hornet Muscle place fifth at UIL State



*Azle cheer coach speaks on year of success*

**ZACH FREEMAN**

**LORA PASCHAL**

*azlereporter@tricityreporter.com*

AZLE — Azle High School Cheer and Hornet Muscle finished fifth of 36 teams in the UIL State Spirit Coed Competition Thursday, Jan. 4 at the Fort Worth Convention Center.

Despite being a place down from last year, the team showed a significant improvement in its scores. The team that took gold last year won with a score of 92.53. Azle placed fourth in that contest with a score of 90.07. This year Azle placed fifth with a score of 95.77. Azle ranked behind Conroe Caney Creek with 98.33 in first place, Pearland with 97.8 in second, Austin Vandegriff with 96.07 in third and Pharr-San Juan-Alamo Memorial with 95.97 in fourth place. Azle placed fourth in the qualifying round. Azle has been a top contender at the State UIL cheer competition

PHOTO COURTESY CHAPA PHOTOGRAPHY

Azle Cheer and Hornet Muscle put in the work and placed 5th in the UIL State Spirit Coed Competition on Thursday, Jan 4.

PLEASE SEE **CHEER** | B3



**HELP**

FROM PAGE B1

allowed POJO's Helping Hand to have access to more resources, Scott said.

"Since they have had a grant, they've been able to get more products that we need, but we're still relying on donations for everything else," Scott said. "While we try to focus on the high school, we also collaborate with them to reach out to the other schools."

POJO's Helping Hand is supplemented by an American Rescue Plan Act grant issued by the Texas Education Agency to address the lingering impacts of the COVID-19 pandemic, SISD Secondary Behavior Specialist Rebecca Zbyski said. The team behind POJO's Helping Hand has used some of these funds — more than \$2,000 out of a total of \$3,000 dedicated to the project — to buy hygiene items, socks and undershirts.

"At the end of last school year, we started purchasing the basics because needs arose," Zbyski said. "That is when it became clear that something more permanent was needed to meet the needs of our growing district."

Last month, SHS hosted a drive for POJO's Helping Hand and received more than 230 items of clothing for the

project. Zbyski said — and Scott and Seely agreed — students who face stress because of poverty or homelessness will likely have a more difficult time focusing on school. The behavior specialist pointed out that students' self-esteem and socialization with friends and peers may also be affected by these circumstances.

"When we're distracted by getting our basic needs met, it's really hard for us to focus on the other things that we have to do, especially when it comes to education," Zbyski said. "If they're tired because they're not getting enough rest because they're cold, they're hungry, anything like that, those are things that are going to impact their ability to just function in the day-to-day."

Zbyski hopes alleviating some of that stress for students will help them academically, socially and improve how they feel about themselves.

Seely praised Bill Brown, the business teacher who facilitated the creation of POJO's Helping Hand, for guiding the project while allowing it to be student-driven.

"There's been no point in this entire process where it's been like he's overhauled something and we haven't gotten input or we haven't initiated the idea, and he's built it with us," Seely said.

"He's been really good about making sure that we are all included and that he's not just taking over."

In turn, Brown credited his students with building POJO's Helping Hand from the ground up and then pivoting to merge with SISD's initiative when they found out about it.

"They've killed it," he said. "Having no or very little business knowledge coming into it, to get it up off the ground in two months is ridiculous. I mean, it's really good. And the fact that they took each piece, and we've had hurdles along the way, and they've cleared them. Sometimes it's been a little bit harder in certain instances, but they've been more successful with this in two or three months than some adults are with businesses their whole entire lives."

Zbyski also praised the students' work and said the project has empowered students to make a difference.

"It's really easy for us to fall into this habit of not recognizing a need until you get involved with something that's contributing to that particular need," she said. "I think it kind of really shows them that even within their community, it doesn't have to be on this big worldwide scale, that they can impact in their community."

Seely has enjoyed working on this project with her busi-

ness practicum peers. "We're all really creative and talented and intelligent individuals, and we're all driven to do something. We want to make that impact," she said. "It's been really nice seeing it come to fruition."

Scott said establishing POJO's Helping Hand allowed the team to exercise a variety of skills to launch the initiative, such as the artistic skills she used to help create the project's logo.

"I'm specifically going into interior design, so there are business aspects, but I also like the art aspect of business with the creative insight to it," she said. "There's definitely several different things that can be brought into busi-

ness, which is why I like it so much is because it requires basically everything and everything can be tied into business."

Even though POJO's Helping Hand is not a business, Brown said the students learned a lot of skills required to create a business, such as writing a mission statement, identifying a need in the marketplace and a solution, setting up the infrastructure, working with people in other departments and budgeting. One of the challenges students had to overcome was working on the project as a team.

"They ran into those hurdles, but they didn't let it stop them. They just kept

pushing along, and for the most part, everybody was on the same page and worked through," he said. "They kept the bigger picture in mind."

Scott and Seely hope POJO's Helping Hand expands to help other areas of the community and will continue after they graduate.

"We want this to keep going after we're gone," Seely said. "We're all seniors, so we don't want this to just fall into nothingness once we're no longer here supporting it."

To donate to POJO's Helping Hand, reach out to Zbyski at [rzbynski@springtownisd.net](mailto:rzbynski@springtownisd.net). Donations are also accepted at the SISD administration building or at SHS.

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5-6th Grade FREE 2nd Meal \$2.00  
Visitors/Employees \$2.75

**LUNCH:** PreK-4th Grade \$2.55 5-6th Grade \$2.75  
7-12th Grade \$2.55 2nd Meal \$3.20  
Visitors & Employees \$3.75

**PreK - 4th**

**BREAKFAST: Everyday - Assorted Fruits and Cereal, Juice, White or Chocolate Milk, Graham Crackers, Toast**  
Mon No school, **Tues** Sausage Biscuit, Orange Juice, Pineapples, **Weds** Cinnamon Roll, Orange Juice, Oranges, **Thurs** Cinnamon Toast w/ Oatmeal, Apple, Orange Juice, **Fri** Scrambled Eggs, Sausage, and Toast, Bananas, Orange Juice

**LUNCH: Everyday - Variety of milk. Your choice of 1 entree & 1 fruit or juice**  
Mon No school, **Tues** Baked Potato w/ Roll Orange Chicken & Rice, Apple, Peaches, Steamed Broccoli, **Weds** Beef & Cheese Nachos Hot Dog, Oranges, Pineapples, Fresh Salsa Vegetarian Beans, **Thurs** Frito Chili Pie Ham & Cheese Sub Apple Pears Diced Steamed Peas, Cheese Pizza, Garden Salad w/ Breadsticks, **Fri** Pepperoni Pizza, Apple, Mixed Fruit, Corn, Smile Fries

**GRADES 5TH - 8TH**

**BREAKFAST: Everyday - Assorted Fruits and Cereal, Juice, White or Chocolate Milk, Yogurt w/Granola**  
Mon No school, **Tues** Sausage Biscuit, Orange Juice, Pineapples, **Weds** Cinnamon Roll, Orange Juice, Oranges, **Thurs** Cinnamon Toast w/ Oatmeal, Apple, Orange Juice, **Fri** Scrambled Eggs, Sausage, and Toast, Bananas, Orange Juice

**LUNCH: Everyday: Variety of milk. Your choice of 1 entree & 1 fruit or juice, rolls, crackers • Salad bar offered daily**  
Mon No school, **Tues** Cheeseburger Hamburger, Orange Chicken & Rice Apple, Peaches, Steamed Broccoli, **Tues** Beef & Cheese Nachos, Corn dog, Hot Dog, Oranges, Pineapples, Fresh Salsa Vegetarian Beans, **Weds** Cheeseburger, Frito Chili Pie Ham & Cheese Sub, Hamburger, Apple, Pears Diced, Steamed Peas, Breaded Chicken Sandwich, **Thurs** Cheese Pizza, Garden Salad w/ Breadsticks, **Fri** Pepperoni Pizza, Spicy Chicken Sandwich Apple, Mixed Fruit, Corn, Smile Fries

**HIGH SCHOOL**

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Mon No school, **Tues** Sausage Biscuit, Apple Juice, Orange Juice, Pineapples, **Weds** Cinnamon Roll, Apple Juice, Orange Juice, Oranges, **Thurs** Cinnamon Toast w/ Oatmeal, Apple, Orange Juice, Orange Juice, **Fri** Scrambled Eggs, Sausage, and Toast, Bananas Apple Juice, Orange Juice

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Mon No school, **Tues** Baked Potato w/ Roll, Hamburger, Spicy Chicken Sandwich, Apple, Peaches, Steamed Broccoli Vegetarian Beans, **Weds** Breaded Chicken Sandwich, Cheeseburger, Hot Dog, Oranges, Pineapples, Fresh Salsa Steamed Carrots, **Thurs** Frito Chili Pie, Hamburger, Spicy Chicken Sandwich, Apple Sauce, Bananas, Charro Beans, Curly Fries, **Fri** Breaded Chicken Sandwich, Cheeseburger, Chicken Alfredo w/ , Breadstick, Apple, Mixed Fruit, Corn, Green beans

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# CHEER

FROM PAGE B1

since at least 2018. "Such a huge improvement, and clearly shows the work that was put in this season," Coach Chasity Benne said. "Azle Cheer and Hornet Muscle represented Azle well. We are so incredibly proud of these athletes. They have poured their

hearts into this competition. Their dedication and love for this sport is truly admirable. The support Azle has from its ISD leaders is truly amazing." Azle Cheer and Hornet Muscle will finish out the year at Disney World in Orlando, Florida at the UCA High School National Cheerleading Championship Feb. 12 to 18. Coaches Taylor Hodges, Chasity Benne and

Kristen Cook have had a huge impact and are a great addition to the coaching staff at Azle High School, the district said. Superintendent Todd Smith, Athletic Director Becky Spurlock and head football coach Devon Dorris as well as several football players came out to the all-day event to show their support for AHS Cheer and Hornet Muscle.

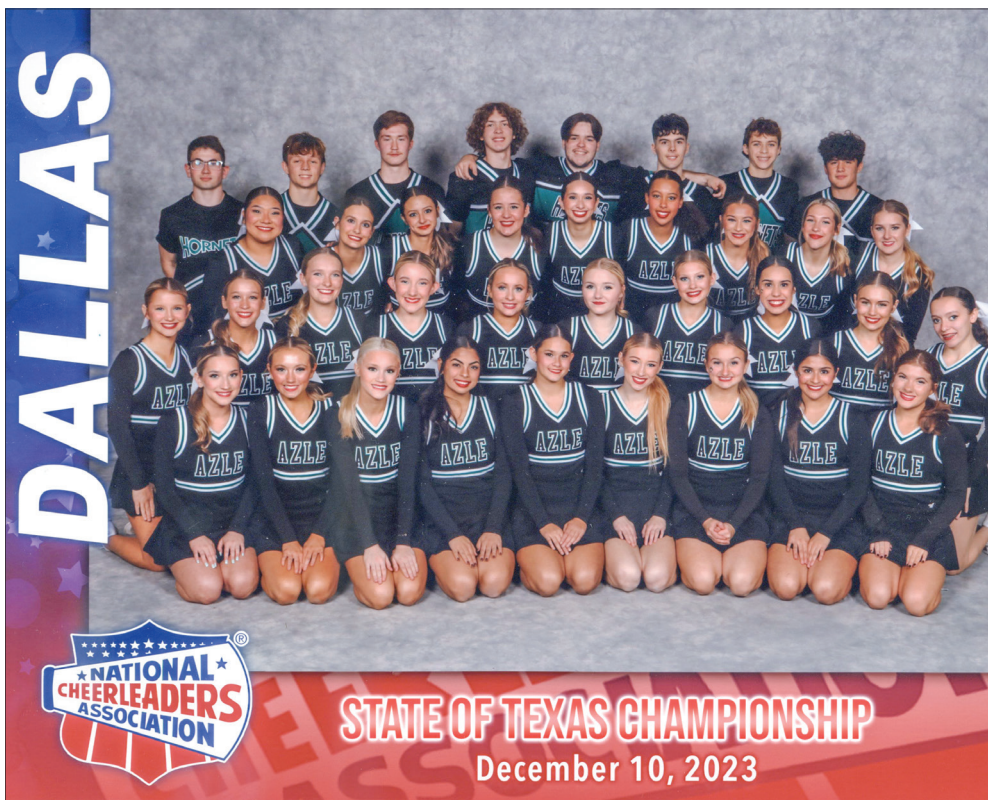


PHOTO COURTESY

Azle High School Cheer and Hornet Muscle finished fifth of 36 teams in the UIL State Spirit Coed Competition Thursday, Jan. 4 at the Fort Worth Convention Center.

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# Metamorphabet

Learning your ABCs the fun way

## GAME ON

By Jennifer Harrison



My opinions on computer gaming and some of my favorite games. I've been playing games on the home computer since the days of the Trash 80. I love indie, open-world, unique, puzzle, and resource games. The cake is a lie.

Metamorphabet is an alphabet game with simple animations. Each letter transforms into an animation that morphs into another with the click of a mouse. The animations are whimsical and really help to engage the child's imagination.

I purchased this game five years ago when my son was three, and he loved it. He would sit in my lap and use the mouse to click on the letters. He figured out very quickly which animations he liked the best, and what letter they were linked to.

Each letter has four or five different words it morphs into. A "U," for example, grows eyes and teeth, and starts crying. It becomes "upset." A "P" turns into a pinwheel. A "J" starts to juggle. With the letter to word association, it will help your child learn their alphabet, and it's a welcome break from the ABC song.

The game is great if you want your child to have a broad vocabulary. It's the first game I felt comfortable letting my child play alone without supervision, and it kept him entertained without being frustrated.

## VECTORPARK

Metamorphabet is produced by Vectorpark, an animation company founded by Patrick Smith. He started as a student in college with an abstract animation. He was just learning to animate, so kept it simple. He ended up selling the animation to MTV, and it won two awards in 1995. Check it out at this link: <https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=oxVgwLjLewI>

MTV offered Smith a job on Beavis and Butthead, and he moved to New York City. He went on to animate 'Downtown' and directed the animated series 'Daria.' Since then he's created many short films and commercials.

Vectorpark.com is a collection of his playable animations. Since Adobe Flash is no

longer supported, the games (except for 'Sandcastles') have to be downloaded, but they are available for free. They use simple colors and shapes and rely on an abstract aesthetic.

They're appealing not just because they're simple, but because the movement of the animation is so organic. Each element has a satisfying drag and pull action which unlocks the morphing of the element into other shapes.

Windsoll, a simple logic puzzle game, features eleven rooms with different scenes, all of which have objects that can be manipulated. The objective is to find the hidden cube to unlock the door to the next scene. Solutions are not obvious. One puzzle features three monsters, and the objective is to distract

one monster while you take the hat off another to retrieve the cube. Meanwhile the third monster is trying to grab your little vehicle and return it to the middle of the room. You'll find yourself just grabbing and clicking on elements because they're fun to watch.

Other minigames include Feed the Head and Sandcastles, very simple stress relievers. Check them out at <https://vectorpark.it/ch.io/>.

If you're looking for great games for your children, especially the under-5 set, these are perfect. They teach essential skills like using a mouse to grab and move objects, and simple problem-solving. They're currently free to download and install, although tipping is encouraged.

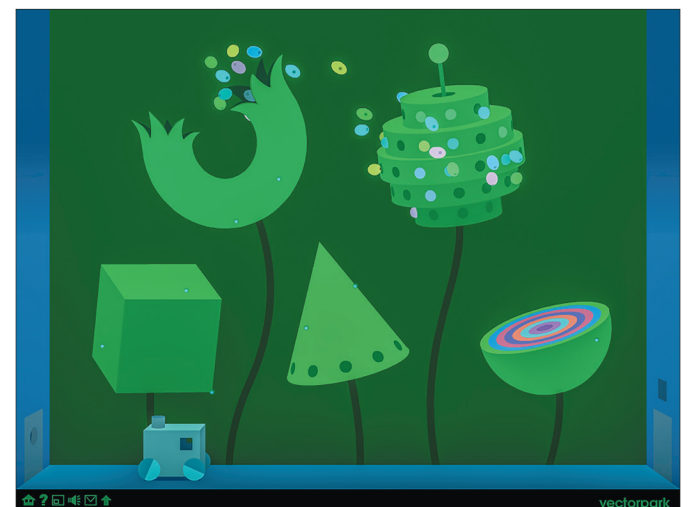


PHOTO COURTESY VECTORPARK

Windsoll is a series of logic puzzles that unlock new animations and allow you to progress from room to room.

# Sudoku

JANUARY 11, 2024

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

Level: Beginner

# Solution to last week's puzzle

JANUARY 4, 2024

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

# WORD SCRAMBLE

Rearrange the letters to spell something pertaining to animal care.

SRUEEC

--	--	--	--	--	--

Answer: Rescue

## CRYPTO FUN

Solve the code to discover words related to animal safety. Each number corresponds to a letter. (Hint: 21 = A)

**A. 21 23 2 11 21 9**  
Clue: Pet or wild

**B. 3 21 16 7 18 24**  
Clue: Caution

**C. 19 25 11 21 23 7**  
Clue: Tender and compassionate

**D. 16 14 3 18 7 15**  
Clue: Care for temporarily

# SPRINGTOWN SCHOOL MENU

Jan 15-19, 2024  
PK through 12th Grade



BREAKFAST PRICES	
EC-12th Grade	\$1.75
EC-12th Reduced	\$0.30
Adult	\$2.25
LUNCH PRICES	
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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** No school **Tues** Chicken Biscuit, Sliced Peaches, Juice, **Weds** Eggstravaganza, Blueberries, Juice, **Thurs** Breakfast Pizza, Sliced Apples, Juice, **Fri**, Strawberry- Banana or Vanilla Yogurt, Banana

**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** No school, **Tues** Chicken Alfredo or Chicken Fried Steak Sandwich, Roasted Broccoli, Fresh Veggies Blueberries or Orange, **Weds** Chicken & Waffles, Tator Tots, Fresh Veggies Apple or Watermelon Craisins, **Thurs** Variety of Milk, Beef Enchilada Bake or Popcorn Chicken, Roll, Ranchero Beans, Fresh Veggies Grapes or Applesauce Cup, Variety of Milk, **Fri** Chicken Sandwich, Pepperoni Pizza, or Baked Potato w/ Ham, Roll, Glazed Carrots, Fresh Veggies, Apple Slices or 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** No school, **Tues** Chicken Alfredo or Chicken Fried Steak Sandwich, Steamed Broccoli, Fresh Veggies Apple, Sliced, Pears **Weds** Cheeseburger or Hamburger, Tator Tots, Fresh Veggies, Apple Slices, Pineapple, **Thurs** Beef Tamales or Chili Tots, Chili Beans, Roll, Fresh Veggies (Garden Salad, Celery, Carrots), Banana, Strawberry Applesauce, **Fri** Pepperoni Pizza or Baked Potato Basket, Green Beans, Fresh Veggies (Garden Salad, Celery Sticks, Carrots), Grapes, Sliced Peaches

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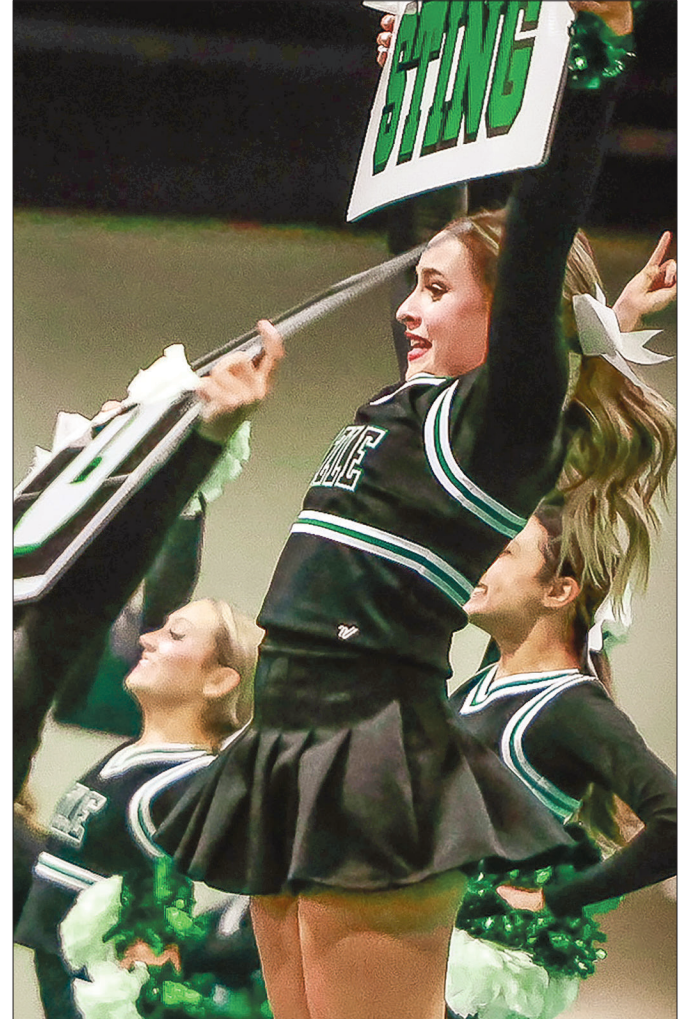
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# Congrats to AHS Cheer and Hornet Muscle!

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737 Boyd Rd., Azle  
817-444-LOVE

### BAPTIST

**ASH CREEK BAPTIST CHURCH**  
300 South Stewart, Azle  
817-444-3219

**AGNES INDEPENDENT BAPTIST**  
350 Agnes N., Springtown  
817-523-7271

**BETHEL MISSIONARY BAPTIST**  
408 S. Ash St., Springtown  
817-220-4238

**AZLE AVENUE BAPTIST**  
2901 Azle Ave., Fort Worth  
817-626-5556

**BY THE WORD BAPTIST**  
West of FM 730 N. at sign, Briar  
817-444-3484

**CALVARY HEIGHTS BAPTIST**  
1 block off Hwy. 199, east of David's Patio, Springtown, 817-221-2241

**CENTRAL BAPTIST**  
4290 Old Agnes Road  
817-594-5918

**CHURCH ON THE HILL**  
836 NW Parkway, Azle  
817-444-3752

**CHRISTWAY BAPTIST**  
7673 West Hwy. 199, Agnes  
817-220-9133 or 817-220-3581

**CLEAR FORK BAPTIST**  
Corner of FM 730 & Ragle Rd., Weatherford, 817-594-1154

**EAGLE MOUNTAIN BAPTIST**  
8780 Eagle Min. Circle, Azle  
817-237-4135

**FIRST BAPTIST CHURCH OF AZLE**  
1017 Boyd Road  
817-444-4828

**FIRST BAPTIST CASTLE HILLS**  
401 Beverly Rd., Azle  
817-797-4706

**FIRST BAPTIST LAKE WORTH**  
700 Charbonneau Tr., west side of Effie Morris Elementary  
817-237-2624

**FIRST BAPTIST LAKESIDE**  
8801 Jacksboro Hwy., Lakeside  
817-237-8113

**FIRST BAPTIST COTTONDALE**  
1 block N. of FM 2123, Cottondale  
940-433-5539

**FIRST BAPTIST POOLVILLE**  
1 block W. of FM 920, Poolville  
817-594-3916

**FIRST BAPTIST SPRINGTOWN**  
5th & Main Street, Springtown  
817-220-5229

**FRIENDSHIP BAPTIST**  
801 Friendship Rd., 9½ miles S. of Springtown off Hwy. 51 S.  
817-594-5940 or 817-599-4917

**FUNDAMENTAL BAPTIST**  
5th & Main in Springtown  
817-523-5477

### GRACE BAPTIST

3 miles N. of Springtown on Hwy. 51 across from Radio Tower

**GRACE POINTE CHURCH**  
4110 E. Hwy. 199, Springtown  
817-221-5683

**HERITAGE BAPTIST CHURCH**  
3577 FM 51 N., Weatherford  
817-564-3946

**IGLESIA BAUTISTA**  
Nueva Jerusalen  
6640 Midway Rd., Springtown  
817-694-0444

**INDIAN OAKS PRIMITIVE BAPTIST CHURCH**  
3229 Shawnee Trail, Lake Worth  
817-237-8441

**LAKE WORTH BAPTIST**  
4445 Hodgkins, Lake Worth  
817-237-4163

**METROPOLITAN BAPTIST**  
6051 Azle Ave., Fort Worth  
817-237-2201

**NEW HOPE BAPTIST**  
782 New Hope Rd., Reno area  
817-221-2184

**NORTHWEST BAPTIST**  
5500 Boat Club Rd., Lake Worth  
817-237-6063 or 817-270-8476

**SANDY BEACH ROAD BAPTIST CHURCH**  
1006 Sandy Beach Rd., Azle, TX 76020 • 817-565-8904  
Pastor Don Webster  
Sunday Service 11 am

**SILVER CREEK BAPTIST**  
730 S. & Veal Station Rd., Azle  
817-444-2325

**NEW BEGINNINGS BAPTIST CHURCH**  
3605 Jacksboro Hwy., Azle  
817-707-2741

**PRIMERA IGLESIA BAUTISTA**  
300 S. Stewart, Azle  
817-500-3641

**SPRINGTOWN BAPTIST TEMPLE**  
201 J. E. Woody Rd., Springtown  
817-523-0376

**UNION BAPTIST CHURCH**  
3451 Sarra Lane, Springtown  
682-333-1645

**WALNUT CREEK BAPTIST**  
220 W. Reno Rd. in Reno  
817-221-2110

**BIBLE COMMUNITY BIBLE FELLOWSHIP**  
1405 Reynolds Rd., Reno  
817-521-4510

**NORTHWEST BIBLE CHURCH**  
5025 Jacksboro Hwy., Fort Worth  
817-624-2111

**SOLID ROCK BIBLE CHURCH**  
591 S. Reno Rd., Springtown  
817-304-7443

**CATHOLIC HOLY TRINITY CATHOLIC**  
800 High Crest Dr., Azle  
817-444-3063

**CHRISTIAN THE CHURCH AT AZLE**  
1801 S. Stewart, Azle  
817-444-9973

**AZLE CHRISTIAN FELLOWSHIP**  
35 West Forty Estates., Azle  
817-688-3339

**GREATER VISION FELLOWSHIP**  
1801 S. Stewart St., Azle  
817-825-0485

**THE ABBEY CHURCH**  
10400 Jacksboro Hwy., Azle  
817-238-1404

**CROSSING FELLOWSHIP**  
120 E. Main St., Azle  
817-406-4577

**CHURCH OF CHRIST AZLE CHURCH OF CHRIST**  
336 NW Parkway  
817-444-3268

**BRIAR CHURCH OF CHRIST**  
109 W.N. Woody Rd.  
(½ block west of FM 730 N. in Briar)  
817-444-7102

### MIDWAY CHURCH OF CHRIST

6400 Midway Rd.  
817-221-2107

**NEWSOME MOUND ROAD CHURCH OF CHRIST**  
1460 Newsome Mound Rd.  
817-677-3290

**NORTHWEST CHURCH OF CHRIST**  
6059 Azle Ave., Fort Worth  
817-237-1205

**POOLVILLE CHURCH OF CHRIST**  
West of FM 920 in Poolville  
817-594-4182

**SOUTHSIDE CHURCH OF CHRIST**  
130 W. Bradshaw Lane, Springtown  
817-221-2799

**SPRINGTOWN CHURCH OF CHRIST**  
Just west of Hwy. 51 North  
817-523-4419

**TRI-COUNTY CHURCH OF CHRIST**  
525 Hwy. 199 W., Springtown  
817-980-8156

**CHURCH OF GOD ABUNDANT LIFE CHURCH OF GOD**  
4800 East Hwy. 199, Suite 7  
Springtown, 817-677-3208

**LAKESIDE CHURCH OF GOD THE WORD@LAKESIDE**  
9396 Confederate Park Rd. (FM 1886)  
817-237-5500

**DISCIPLES OF CHRIST AZLE CHRISTIAN**  
117 Church St., Azle  
817-444-3527

**CENTRAL CHRISTIAN**  
1602 S. Main St., Weatherford  
817-594-3043

**FIRST CHRISTIAN CHURCH**  
4th & Main, Paradise

**EPISCOPAL ST. ANNE'S ANGLICAN EPISCOPAL**  
6055 Azle Ave., Fort Worth  
817-237-1888

**PROVIDENCE REFORMED EPISCOPAL**  
405 Bowie Dr., Weatherford  
817-596-7476

**ST. ELISABETH EPISCOPAL**  
5910 Black Oak Lane, River Oaks  
817-739-0504

**GOSPEL CENTRAL FULL GOSPEL FELLOWSHIP**  
3009 Delaware Tr., Lake Worth  
817-237-7919

**JEHOVAH'S WITNESSES KINGDOM HALL OF JEHOVAH'S WITNESSES**  
212 Pearson Lane, Azle  
817-221-2242

**LUTHERAN THE EDGE CHURCH - AZLE**  
1313 SE Parkway, Azle  
817-237-4822

**HOPE LUTHERAN (ELCA)**  
4795 Hwy. 199, Reno  
817-221-HOPE

**METHODIST BOYD UNITED METHODIST**  
FM 730 North in Boyd  
940-433-5334

**FIRST METHODIST CHURCH OF AZLE**  
200 Church St., Azle  
817-444-3323

**LIGHTHOUSE FELLOWSHIP**  
7200 Robertson Rd., Fort Worth  
817-237-2758

**SILVER CREEK METHODIST CHURCH**  
2200 Church Rd., Azle  
817-444-1382

**FIRST UNITED METHODIST**  
Hwy. 51 N & 3rd Street, Springtown  
817-523-7874

**POOLVILLE UNITED METHODIST**  
1 block W. of FM 920 (behind Poolville Post Office)  
817-599-3601

**THE CHURCH OF JESUS CHRIST OF LATTER-DAY SAINTS (THE MORMONS)**

**THE CHURCH OF JESUS CHRIST OF LATTER-DAY SAINTS**  
1010 Timberoaks, Azle  
817-237-5075

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**GRACE CHAPEL UNITED PENTECOSTAL CHURCH**  
3508 Shawnee Trail, Lake Worth  
817-237-4844

**PRESBYTERIAN GRACE FIRST PRESBYTERIAN**  
606 Mockingbird Lane, Weatherford  
817-594-2744

**ORTHODOX PRESBYTERIAN CHURCH OF FORT WORTH**  
Meeting at Northwest YMCA  
5315 Boat Club Road, Fort Worth  
817-989-9800

**ORTHODOX ARCHANGEL GABRIEL ORTHODOX CHRISTIAN CHURCH**  
1157 S. E. Parkway (Jacksboro Highway), Azle  
817-752-8255

**OTHER ALIENTO DE DIOS**  
2233 E. Hwy 199, Springtown  
817-521-4694

**THE CHURCH IN PEASTER**  
www.thechurchinpeaster.org  
817-596-8805

**CORNERSTONE COMMUNITY CHURCH**  
2233 Hwy 199 East, Springtown  
817-221-LIFE (5433)

**FAMILY CHURCH**  
9 miles S. of Springtown on Hwy. 51  
817-599-7655

**GRACE FELLOWSHIP CHURCH**  
2964 W. Hwy 114, Paradise  
940-969-2427

**HILLTOP FAMILY CHURCH**  
1227 Old Cottondale Road, Springtown, 817-220-7177

**THE FELLOWSHIP AT PLEASANT GROVE**  
1064 CR4679, Boyd  
940-999-8210

**THE HOUSE OF PRAYER**  
1356 Reno Rd., Springtown  
817-221-2551

**POWERHOUSE OF PRAISE CHURCH**  
1649 S.E. Parkway, Azle  
817-319-7364

**BRANDED CROSS COWBOY CHURCH**  
3282 FM 2048, Boyd 76023  
817-755-7021

**SECRET PLACE MINISTRIES**  
112 Optimist Rd., Springtown  
682-229-1433

**GOSPEL GATHERING FELLOWSHIP**  
7315 Silver Creek Rd at Flatrock Rd, Azle  
832-289-8720

**LIGHTHOUSE CHURCH**  
6409 FM 730 S., Azle  
817-444-4311

**LIGHTHOUSE HARBOR CHURCH**  
1960 Long Circle, Pelican Bay  
817-444-3547

**THE LIVING WORD COUNTRY CHURCH OF TEXAS**  
1240 E. HWY 199, SPRINGTOWN  
817-913-2717

**NEW LIGHTED WAY**  
624 Harbor Dr. Circle, Azle  
817-444-1577

**NORTHWEST TEMPLE OF PRAISE**  
6781 Jacksboro Hwy., Lake Worth

**PRECIOUS FAITH TEMPLE CHURCH**  
8601 Hwy. 199 @ Vance Godbey's

**THE HOUSE OF PRAYER**  
1356 Reno Rd., Springtown  
817-221-2551

**THE RANCH CHRISTIAN COWBOY CHURCH**  
7955 Reed Rd., Azle  
682-327-7082

**REAL FAMILY FELLOWSHIP**  
202 Pearson Lane, Azle  
817-677-5963

**GRACE & FAITH CENTER**  
11701 Jacksboro Hwy., Azle  
817-210-6295

**WESTERN HARVEST FELLOWSHIP CENTER**  
6577 Old Springtown Rd., Weatherford  
817-523-2855 or 817-995-9087

**SHEPHERD'S HEART CHURCH**  
14435 FM 730 N • Azle  
817-444-7777

**WESTERN STAR COWBOY CHURCH**  
790 CR 3696 • Paradise 76073  
817-688-6887

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817-444-4613  
"In business since 1946"

## Joe Rider Propane, Inc.

**PROPANE TANKS**



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Full Service Funeral Home  
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Pre-Need Plans  
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Mineral Wells • Weatherford  
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### Ad Classifications

- |                            |                                 |                               |  |
|----------------------------|---------------------------------|-------------------------------|--|
| 1... Air Condition/Heating | 24..... Electrician             | 46..... Looking to Buy        | 69..... Sand/Gravel                    |
| 2..... Antiques            | 25..... Equipment & Tool Rental | 47..... Lost & Found          | 70..... Septic Tanks                   |
| 3..... Appliances          | 26..... Excavating              | 48... Maintenance/Repairs     | 71..... Sewing/Alterations             |
| 4..... Appliance Repair    | 27..... Exterminating           | 49..... Masonry/Stonework     | 72..... Sewer Service                  |
| 5..... Arts/Crafts         | 28..... Farm Equipment          | 50... Mobile Home Service     | 73..... TV/Radio                       |
| 6..... Asphalt Paving      | 29..... Fencing                 | 51..... Motorcycles           | 74..... Tractor Service                |
| 7..... Auctions            | 30..... Firewood                | 52..... Movers                | 75..... Upholstery                     |
| 8..... Autos, Trucks       | 31..... Free                    | 53..... Musical Instruments   | 76..... Vacuum Cleaners                |
| 9..... Auto Repair Service | 32..... For Sale                | 54..... Music Lessons         | 77..... Wanted                         |
| 10..... Backhoe Service    | 33..... Furniture               | 55..... Miscellaneous         | 78..... Well Drilling                  |
| 11..... Boats, Motors      | 34..... Garage & Estate Sales   | 56 Party Planning/Events      | 79..... Welding                        |
| 12..... Bookkeeping        | 35 ...Garden/Mowing Svc         | 57..... Pets/Livestock        | 80..... Lots/Acreage                   |
| 13..... Business           | 36..... Hauling                 | 58..... Piano Service         | 81..... Business & Commercial Property |
| Opportunity                | 37..... Hay                     | 59..... Pool Service          | 82..... RV's for Rent                  |
| 14..... Campers/Trailers   | 38..... Health/Fitness          | 60..... Professional Services | 83..... Houses for Sale                |
| 15..... Carports/Patios    | 39..... Help Wanted             | 61..... Personal              | 84..... Mobile Homes for Rent          |
| 16..... Equipment Repair   | 40 .....Home Improvement        | 62..... Plumbing              | 85..... Mobile Homes for Sale          |
| 17..... Carpet Service     | 41 .....House Leveling          | 63..... Public Notice         | 86..... Mobile Home/RV Lots            |
| 18..... Catering           | 42..... House Cleaning          | 64..... Photography           | 87..... Rent Furnished                 |
| 19..... Cement Work        | 43..... Hunting                 | 65..... Printing              | 88..... Rent Unfurnished               |
| 20..... Demolition         | 44..... Janitorial Service      | 66..... Roofing               | 89..... Wanted to Rent                 |
| 21..... Child Care         | 45..... Job Wanted              | 67..... Recycling             |  |
| 22..... Cosmetics          |                                 | 68..... Storage               |  |
| 23...Computers/Services    |                                 |                               |  |

### RATES

*16 Words or Less:*  
**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

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



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### 006 Asphalt Paving

**BYRUM CONSTRUCTION**  
**Asphalt and Concrete Paving**  
 Driveways • Parking Lots  
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 Asphalt Millings • Gravel  
 Bruce Byrum, Azle, TX **817-690-2429**

### 032 For Sale



**4X4 blynd on 10 Ft tower.**  
**2 sets of windows, carpet, chair and heater available. \$900 call Rich 817-584-8567.**

### 039 Help Wanted

**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.

### 039 Help Wanted

**LINDSEY STATE JAIL CURRENT OPENINGS**  
**Correctional Officers**  
**Assistant Foodservice Manager**  
**Asst. 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](http://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

### 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



**Piano with bench & music. \$450**  
**817-454-3798**

### SILVER DOLLAR CUSTOMS HELP WANTED

2 Mechanics needed and 2 Body Technicians Experience a must and tools a plus! Mechanics We work on all types of vehicles; we specialize in classics.

From full restorations, modifications, rebuilds and upgrades, maintenance, and repairs but not limited to. Hours: Monday - Friday 8:00am to 5:00pm

Occasional Saturday Body Shop Technicians Metal work, fabrications, welding, body working, sanding, grinding, and sand blasting. Hours: Monday - Friday 6:00am to 2:30pm Occasional Saturday Pay Negotiable Contact: Elizabeth @ 817-752-2165 or Come by: 408 Commerce St Azle, Tx 76020

**Kiley Chesney Construction**  
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 Driveways • House Slabs • Garages • Add-ons  
 Small Land Clean-ups • Gravel Driveways  
**Kiley Chesney, Owner**  
 Springtown, TX • Mobile 817-846-6645

### 020 Demolition

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

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

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

### 034 Garage & Estate Sales

**SALE SALE SALE**  
 2023 gone, cleaning house, come buy.  
 Needful Things  
 463 Deer Butte St. Open 9am-?  
 Closed Sunday & Monday.

### 035 Garden/Mowing Service

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

**Garage Sale**  
 16 words for only \$10.  
 A great way to raise extra money!  
 Call today for more info.  
 The Tri-County Reporter  
 817-270-3340

### 024 Electrician

**BULLDAWG ELECTRIC CO.**  
 All types of electrical services and MH hook-ups.  
 Free Estimates. 817-675-4921  
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### 026 Excavating

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

### 029 Fencing

**BOBBY'S FENCE.** All types, Free Estimates, Over 26 years experience. 817-444-3213.

**KILEY CHESNEY CONSTRUCTION**  
 All Types Fences - Tractor Work  
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### 030 Firewood

\$150 Half cord, delivered and stacked. Call 817-689-2424.



**Need to sell your ATV?**  
 Call today and ask about our (\$29.95) 3-MONTH SPECIAL!  
 The Tri-County Reporter  
 817-270-3340

### 036 Hauling

**DORADO TRANSPORT LLC**  
 AZLE, TEXAS

**We Haul: Auto, Power Sports, Equipment and Freight**

**817-789-2519**  
**DoradoTransportLLC@Yahoo.com**

### 039 Help Wanted

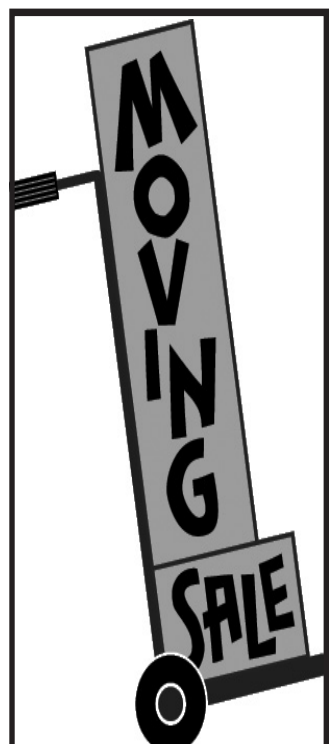
Springtown ISD is accepting applications for Bus Drivers and Monitors. Training available. Contact the Transportation Dept. 817-220-1418.

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**Sign on Bonus Offered**  
**WEATHERFORD**  
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**2-10pm RN/LVNs • 2P - 10P CNAs**  
**Double Weekend CNAs**  
 Apply in person at 521 W. 7th St.  
 Or Call 817-594-8713 or email resume to [HR.Weatherford@SummitLTC.com](mailto:HR.Weatherford@SummitLTC.com) E.O.E.

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Raise some extra money through the Classifieds to help with that move. 16 words for only \$10  
**TRI-COUNTY REPORTER**  
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*Do you and your best friend need a new car for a road trip?*

Find that Perfect Car or Truck in the Community 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**



# 817-270-3340

Deadline:  
1:00 PM FRIDAY

# Classifieds

<p><b>039</b></p>  <h2>KARL KLEMENT</h2> <p>No Positions Available at This Time</p> <hr/> <p><b>Karl Klement Properties, Inc.</b></p> <p>No Positions Available at This Time</p> <hr/>  <p>No Positions Available at This Time</p>	<p><b>Help Wanted</b></p> <h3>KLEMENT DISTRIBUTION, INC.</h3> <p>(Hershey Ice Cream Distributor)</p> <p><b>Route Driver</b></p> <p>Growing company that offers competitive pay and great benefits is seeking long-term Route Drivers to fill and deliver client orders. No CDL required. Company vehicle provided. Qualified Candidates will be able to pass background/drug screening, have a valid TXDL with good driving history. Must be client friendly, dependable, and have previous delivery experience. Apply in person to the H/R office located at: 605 N Business 287, Ste 102, Decatur, TX 76234</p> <p><b>Office Assistant</b></p> <p>The ideal candidate will have excellent customer service skills, a friendly and professional demeanor, and the ability to multitask in a fast-paced environment. We are looking for someone who is organized, detail-oriented, and capable of managing multiple tasks at once.</p> <p>All full-time positions offer growth opportunities &amp; a full benefits package including Medical, Dental, Vision, Life, 401(k) &amp; more.</p> <p>EEOC</p>	<p><b>084 Mobile Homes for Rent</b></p> <p>Singlewide mobile home for rent \$1,200/month \$1,200 in security. Call for info. 817-220-4095 Springtown Area.</p> <hr/> <p><b>086 Mobile Home/RV Lots</b></p> <p>2 RV Lots for rent \$480/mo \$200/dep. All bills paid. Briar area 817-996-0530.</p> <hr/> <p><b>088 Rent Unfurnished</b></p> <p>Rent Special, reduced rent &amp; security Deposit. 2-2 4-PLEX. \$1,050/mo \$600/security deposit, WBFP, walk-in closets, box windows, large kitchen w/ pantry, 1,100 sf. 817-360-3039.</p> <hr/> <p>1 bed/1 bath with bonus room, \$1025/mo all utilities paid. \$700 deposit. Contact AAA Properties, 817-598-0663</p> <hr/> <p>APT. - 2 bed, 1 bath, carport, lakeview, CA &amp; heat, \$1,000 incl. bills. 817-237-7972 ask for Darlia.</p> <hr/> <p><b>Tiny House for rent, new 1/1/1 covered carport, fence yard. Briar \$1,100 per month and \$1,000 deposit, ready now John Clevenger 817 307 2511</b></p>
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Apply in person at:  
605 N. Business 287, Ste 102, Decatur, Texas or call Human Resources  
940-627-6362 | hr.info@klementford.com  
Jodi Pettis, Executive Director

**040 Home Improvement**

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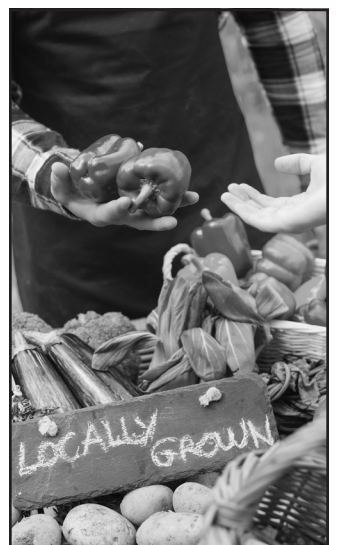
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ACROSS

- 1 TXism: "\_\_\_ as a two-day-old kitten"
2 TXism: "sounds like a dry \_\_\_" (bad singer)
3 hot tubs
4 meaning of Spanish word, "Brazos"
5 Texas "High Fidelity" plays the music of "\_\_\_ Speedwagon"
6 Guadalupe is a spring-\_\_\_ river
7 TXism: "can't \_\_\_ silk purse out of a sow's ear"
8 TX Matt who was a pro wrestler
9 easternmost city in Texas
10 national citizen (2 wds.)
11 shaped clay
12 Texas-based Mary Kay is present in this Chinese country
13 "Bear" or "Berra"
14 TX Janis died of a drug over \_\_\_
15 "Anytime" country singer, Eddy
16 Texas film "Lone Wolf Mc \_\_\_"
17 some confuse \_\_\_ with a raven
18 place with coin-operated washers and dryers (2 wds.)
19 TXism: "plain \_\_\_ on your face"
20 TX George Foreman was one

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THE TRI-COUNTY REPORTER

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