

Springtown mayor announces retirement and reflects on time in office

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SPRINGTOWN — On Jan. 2, Springtown Mayor Greg Hood announced his decision to not seek reelection after serving seven-and-a-half years in office. At a special city council meeting, Hood spoke to the council and the citizens of Springtown to officially announce he will not be seeking

Mayor gives reason for stepping away and thanks the citizens for support

reelection. "As I reflect on seven-and-a-half years of service as your mayor, I am filled with gratitude for the trust you placed in me," Hood said. "Together, we have faced many challenges and celebrated suc-

cesses and worked tirelessly to enhance our community. It has been an honor to lead alongside such dedicated individuals and to witness a resilience and spirit from our residents." Hood spoke of how he

came to be mayor back in 2018. "I was grateful to be appointed to this position as a fulfillment of an unexpired term after the passing of



JOLEE SKINNER | TRI-COUNTY REPORTER
Springtown Mayor Greg Hood announces he will not seek reelection.

PLEASE SEE **HOOD** | A6



Mia dressed in her Christmas attire.

PHOTO COURTESY SALLIE HAMILTON

The 2024 Christmas Critters photo contest winner

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AZLE — A few weeks ago, the Tri-County Reporter advertised its Christmas Critters photo contest, asking readers to submit a photo of their pet dressed in holiday attire. Though the competition was tough, Tri-County Reporter selected Mia as the

winner of the 2024 Christmas Critters photo contest. Mia is a chihuahua mix that Sallie Hamilton adopted in 2020 after losing her other pets. "I got Mia in June of 2020," Hamilton said. "It was a difficult year; all our pets were about the same age and we lost each one within the first five months of that year. In

January, my daughter had gotten a 6-month-old miniature schnauzer, Isla, to help cope with the first loss. We thought Isla needed a friend and by June, I was ready to find me a dog as well." Hamilton had been looking for smaller dogs in shelters everywhere to no avail. But

PLEASE SEE **CRITTERS** | A4

Looking back on the second half of 2024

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In an exciting year full of big developments, it's hard to pick favorites. This year there was no shortage of new happenings in the tri-county area. Azle, Springtown, Lake Worth and the surrounding areas continue to grow and change at an astounding rate. In part two of the Tri-County Reporter's year in review, we highlight some of these notable events from July to December presented with a brief synopsis in approximate chronological order.

SPRINGTOWN MAN DIES FROM WEST NILE VIRUS

A Springtown man, Gary Hopps, passed away after contracting West Nile Virus June 29. Gary became ill after being bitten by a mosquito while working outside. When Gary first went to see a doctor, he was misdiagnosed. Doctors later confirmed he had West Nile Virus, which led to his decline and death. Gary's wife, Dranda Hopps, warned others about the dangers of West Nile Virus, urging anyone with flu-like symptoms after a mosquito bite to request a spinal tap for a proper diagnosis.

CURT WILSON ALUMNI BAND PLAYS FOR AZLE HIGH SCHOOL

Over the summer, Texas Christian University grads from all walks of life, including Azle Junior High band director Kevin Chapman, put

on big band performance at Azle High School in honor of longtime TCU music director Curt Wilson before a 10-day tour of Greece. The group brought world class music to the school in June and returned from its tour at the start of July.

JASON RILEY NAMED BOYS VARSITY BASKETBALL AND GOLF COACH AT SPRINGTOWN HIGH

In July, Jason Riley was named the new boys varsity basketball and golf coach at Springtown High School. Riley had coaching experience at Covington and Rio Vista high schools. He served as assistant junior

varsity coach at Cypress Woods High School where his team won many district titles. This was also Riley's first-year coaching golf, a sport he previously played for six years

AZLE GOES DUCKING MAD

Despite traveling the world, Alex Roberson always comes back to Azle. For most of his life Roberson has lived in the community and loved going on cruises. For the last month, he has been working to bring a fun aspect of his nautical adventures back home. Born out of his cruise ship experiences and a practical

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Lake Worth Fire Chief Ryan Arthur is standing on site of a new fire station currently being constructed.

Vehicle pursuit begins in Azle, ends in downtown FW crash

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PARKER COUNTY — A 19-year-old Rhome man could have pulled over and accepted a citation — but he fled from a Parker County Sheriff's deputy and things turned out a lot worse for him.

On Sunday night, Dec. 29, a Parker County Sheriff's



Shay Martin Gilbert

deputy attempted to conduct a traffic stop but the driver failed to stop, leading officers in a vehicle pursuit that traversed into Tarrant County before it ended in a crash. "Shortly after 8 p.m., sheriff's deputies attempted to conduct a traffic stop on a 2015 white Ford Mustang in the 1300 block of Northwest Parkway in northern Parker County," Parker County

Sheriff Russ Authier said in a press release. The location is near David Beard's Catfish Restaurant, just inside the Azle city limits. The reason for the attempted stop was an improperly displayed buyer's tag on the Mustang. The press release identified Shay Martin Gilbert, 19, who lists a Rhome address, as the driver of the car. Gilbert

did not pull over when the deputy's emergency lights and sirens alerted him, which led to the car chase. Gilbert continued the high-speed chase throughout Parker County and into Tarrant County while exceeding the speed limit and disregarding several other traffic laws including turning his lights off during one point of the pursuit, according to the

release. The driver continued driving onto Boat Club Road in Lake Worth, then to Interstate 820 East. The release indicates the Fort Worth Police Department joined the pursuit near the intersection of Interstate 820 and Interstate 35 West, lending the use of its helicopter to

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'Azle listening guy' reflects on 3 years of cornerside chats

Will Norman talks self-growth, connections and the impact of listening

ZACH FREEMAN

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AZLE — Will Norman, known affectionately in Azle as “the guy on the corner” or “the listening guy,” has been providing an ear and encouraging words to his community for over three-and-a-half years. In that time, he has learned much, made lifelong connections and become a better version of himself.

Norman estimates he has spoken with more than 4,500 people, some coming from across Texas or even out of state. Hearing about Norman through the radio, television, social media and word of mouth, the intersection of Boyd Road, Speer Street and Northwest Parkway has become a place of pilgrimage for those looking to be heard. From his lawn chair pulpit, Norman does not preach politics or religion — he simply listens.

From Monday to Friday, 10 a.m. to 4 p.m., people come to his corner to talk turkey on any and every issue imaginable. From struggles with depression, marital issues, health problems, addiction, job troubles and dealing with loss, the sidewalk Samaritan has heard it all and emphasizes confidentiality and non-judgmental support.

“I had gone through some stuff a few years ago and felt like there was just nobody

there for me when I needed it. At least that was my perception, but your perception still becomes your reality,” Norman said. “My grandson kind of gave me the idea, one day he said, ‘maybe that’s something you could do, is help people.’”

Norman took his grandson’s words to heart and in May 2021, he began to sit at his corner and became for others what he himself had needed. It did not take long for people to take notice of Norman and his “Need to talk? I’ll listen” signs.

Over the years, many people have come back to thank him, saying that talking through their problems granted them relief. From those talks, he has developed a sense of duty and his desire to be a dependable listening ear has only strengthened. For Norman, receiving thanks and getting to hear that their conversations made an impact is priceless.

“You can’t buy that,” Norman said of the feeling. “If you’re trying to help somebody else, you’re getting a blessing from it and you don’t have time to worry about your own problem. And a lot of times, it puts your problem into perspective. It makes your problem seem really small, when they’re going through something really big.”

While his gratification



While standing in front of his canopy at the intersection, a ray of sunlight shines on Will Norman’s listening ear.

ZACH FREEMAN | TRI-COUNTY REPORTER

is worth more than gold, Norman said the cost of doing what he does is not cheap. He is currently on his eighth canopy, which over Christmas week developed a tear. Replacing canopies, tarps and signage has become a guaranteed cost of doing the work he does, though he is not without help. When Norman began considering selling some of

his own personal items for cash to replace a previous degrading canopy, he was approached by his own Good Samaritan who bought one for him.

Norman now has no shortage of friends. In his free moments between listening, he keeps busy waving at honking drivers. Through conversations and mutual connections, he has become well acquainted with many other local do-gooders, like Debbie Haynes and Andy Morales, who help the homeless, or teachers who help Azle special education students transition into their adult lives. He has attended funerals for those he met on his corner and celebrated births, marriages and renewed relationships.

Norman has learned that good deeds and kindness often spread. Through the thousands he has spoken to, he hopes to help others he may never meet.

Despite his own personal health challenges leaving him on disability, he continues his service, driven by a desire to help others and inspire joy. Even in freezing cold or sweltering heat, the 64-year-old tries to be there for anyone who might need him.

“Some people think that when it gets cold and hot, that people will stop coming,” Norman said. “No, it gets worse. If you’re already going through something in your life and now, you’re cold and miserable, or hot and miserable, it makes that thing worse that you’re going through.”

By being kind for others,

Norman said he has begun to look more kindly upon himself. The first time he appeared on the local news, Norman didn’t like the person he saw on TV. Now, he said his burdens have lightened and he now finds much greater comfort in who he is.

“I thought I looked like a poor sad sack there and I felt bad, because that’s not me. I’m a joyful person,” Norman said. “I think I’ve changed since I’ve been out here. I’m a different person than I was. I think I’m more lenient, more forgiving, more open, more I don’t even know what other word to use, just more understanding, more to where it’s okay. I’m more joyful.”

While some still can’t point him out without his signature red sunglasses and baseball cap, Norman is sometimes now recognized by total strangers while out and about. His notoriety continues to grow and he has had recent talks with Fox 4 Good Day news anchor Lauren Przybyl, who hopes to one day get him in the studio for a follow-up. While Norman has been seen through digital and print mediums spanning North Texas and beyond, he is a proud Azle local. He has lived in the area on and off for the last 45 years with no plans of ever leaving. His longtime wife Brenda Mayo Norman, who is director of education at Young Sprouts Creative Learning Center, supports him in his calling. Norman’s grandson, Kameron Weger, is an Azle High School Class of 2024 graduate and was recognized as last year’s only graduating

student with perfect kindergarten through 12th grade attendance.

“I love, love, love our community,” Norman said. “I love people. I love everything, even people that I don’t like, I love. You don’t have to like somebody to love them, or to show love to them.”

Norman has even made friends with Jolly Old Saint Nick, who has been seen visiting him at his usual spot each year around the holiday season. Since beginning his cornerside chats, Norman has grown a long white beard himself. In a recent charity event raising money for a police officer, he even dressed as a patriotic Santa Claus. Next year, he hopes to afford his own red suit and possibly take up the Santa mantle more often.

“I love Christmas,” Norman said. “I like going to the mall and just watching people, because during the Christmas season is the only time that almost everybody at the mall is there for somebody else.”

For those that feel they’re alone in their problems, Norman said he is here to help and will continue to be for the foreseeable future.

“My thing is, don’t worry about paying it forward, just pay it. Don’t wait for somebody to do something for you. Just do something ... My mantra is, no one can help everyone, but everyone can help someone. I saw a thing the other day that said, helping someone may not change the world, but helping someone may change their world, and I really liked that.”



While wearing the same “Lone Star State” cap, Norman reminisces on photos taken for a story in Fort Worth Magazine titled “Streetlight Samaritan.” The photos, he said, were taken by his nephew who is also a journalist.

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Car fire briefly shuts down SH 199

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AZLE — A burning vehicle shut down parts of State

Highway 199 Thursday, Dec. 26. The incident occurred near the 700 block of SH 199 just past the Main Street exit. The highway was shut down

as a precaution while the car was extinguished. Azle Fire Marshal Melvin Wilson told the Tri-County Reporter the vehicle was a 2010 Nissan



COURTESY AZLE FIRE DEPARTMENT

Azle firefighters work quickly to extinguish a car fire on State Highway 199 Dec. 26.



A closeup of the Nissan's burnt-out hood where the fire likely began.

Altima. Wilson said the driver reported the fire was electrical in nature and originated from under the car's hood. The Azle Fire Department extinguished the blaze within minutes of its first notification. The vehicle was a total

loss, but the driver was not injured.

"The driver was very lucky and I'm glad she was able to get her vehicle stopped when she noticed the smoke from under the hood," Wilson said. On Facebook, the Azle

Professional Firefighters Local 3627 page stated that despite comments and reports indicating otherwise there was no collision, and no other vehicles were involved in the incident.

Cross Timbers Golf Course closes for weather

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AZLE — Starting Jan. 5, Cross Timbers Golf Course will be temporarily closed until stated otherwise due to cold weather. The Pro Shop and Roadrunner grill at 1181 South Stewart St. will continue operating daily from the hours of 7 a.m. to 5 p.m. and 7 a.m. to 3 p.m., respectively.

The course's greens will remain covered until temperatures rise. This winter's first big cold snap will bring projected temperatures as low as 20 degrees in the first full week of January.

Last season, cold, harsh, dry conditions and a record amount of play and cart traffic — 47,000 rounds in 2023 — caused the course to experience a phenomenon known

as winterkill. Re-sprigging the affected fairways, roughs and greens cost Cross Timbers and the city approximately \$65,000 and left much of the golf course closed from May through September, 2024. By closing the course and shielding the grass from the elements, the city hopes to prevent future disruptions to course operations and protect the health of its greens.

CRITTERS

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one day, she found exactly what she had been looking for.

"We looked in the local animal shelters for a small dog and they didn't have any," Hamilton said. "We looked at online animal rescues and they had several hoops to jump through and hardly any responses back. After much persistence and applications, we came across Mia's picture. The lady we got Mia from had said Mia had been found wandering

the streets of Houston and had a litter or two before being rescued. After messaging the rescuer on Petfinder, they brought Mia over and she was a perfect fit for our family. From that day forward Mia had found her forever home."

Hamilton said she and her family incorporated the photo contest as a part of their holiday celebrations this year.

"My family and I used the contest as a game on Christmas Eve," Hamilton said. "We each selected a pet and started taking photos."

Hamilton said Mia loves to

stroll in the mornings and is a lover of big piles of leaves.

"Mia really enjoys walking," Hamilton said. "I take her out on walks on weekday mornings if it's not too hot or too cold. She likes walking through piles of leaves in the fall. During the holiday season on those walks, I like to take her up to the big holiday inflatables. She doesn't really like that though, just barks at them. And sometimes I make her sit and I take a photo of her."

Tri-County Reporter thanks all the participants of the 2024 Christmas Critters photo contest.

LEGAL NOTICE

Application has been made with the Texas Alcoholic Beverage Commission for Mixed Beverage Permit and Food Beverage Certificate by Sushi on the Square LLC dba Senshi Grill & Sushi, to be located at 101 E. 1st Street, Springtown, Parker County, Texas. Owner of said corporation is Clifton Kelley.

LEGAL NOTICE:

Application has been made with the Texas Alcoholic Beverage Commission for a wine and malt beverage retailer's off-premise permit (BQ) by Rashbir Partners Inc dba Energy Stop, to be located at 11202 S FM 730 Azle, Parker County, Texas - 76020. The owners and directors of the said company are Rashmi K. Surani and Rahul Ganji.

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School trustees worry about future funding

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AZLE — Azle Independent School District trustees are worried the district could lose out on funding by no fault of its own.

The district and five others were highlighted at a Nov. 8 Tarrant Appraisal District board meeting for being at risk of state funding cuts in 2026. Due to a rapidly changing property market, lowered interest rates and other factors officials are concerned the district could fail an upcoming Property Value Study by the Texas Comptroller's office.

At least once every two years, the state comptroller estimates taxable property values in each school district to ensure local appraisal districts are assessing home prices at market value in an attempt to promote equality in school funding. In theory, districts that raise more money in local property taxes receive less funding from the state, while those that raise less receive more. Districts that generate more funding through local property taxes than the per student allotment determined by the state are subject to recapture and may be required to send some of their funds to the state.

Discrepancies between the values found by county appraisal districts and the state can cause schools to miss out on critical funding. In instances where local districts and the state differ by more than 5%, schools may be granted a two-year grace period before losing funding if they also pass an additional Methods and Assistance Program Review along with other legal requirements. If the difference in values ex-

ceeds a 14.5% threshold, or 85.5%, schools may lose state funding altogether without a grace period. Preliminary figures presented by Chief Appraiser Joe Don Bobbitt have trustees and administrators worried that one of these scenarios may be possible. This intersection of modern property tax law and state funding for schools is the result of about 50 years of legal back-and-forth between districts and the state. It has been contested, taken to court and altered numerous times, with many school boards protesting its most current iterations for a variety of reasons.

The number of school districts that have failed the PVS has nearly doubled in the last few years. Last year, 106 school districts across Texas were assigned invalid values compared to just 59 in 2021. Schools have lost more than \$120 million in funding as a result.

TAD has seen no shortage of changes to policy since the expansion of the board to include three new elected members in May. In July, the board voted to transition from reappraising property values every year to every other year instead, not unlike Parker County. It also approved a soft 5% threshold limiting appraisal increases for a property's market value. In August, the TAD board approved additional significant changes to its reappraisal plan in an effort to further slow property value increases. In a Dec. 13 meeting, the TAD board voted to not renew its membership with the Texas Association of Appraisal Districts over disagreements about the frequency with which it is required to reappraise property values.

While homeowners may wind up paying less in taxes, some district administrators and trustees feel they've been left holding the bag. For Azle ISD, this only adds to the uncertainty on the future of its funding. At a Dec. 16 board meeting, trustees decried possible factors that may have impacted the district's ability to pass a PVS.

"This is something we can get penalized for, but we have absolutely no control," board secretary Sarah Bennett said.

Another possible problem raised by trustees is the different times of year that appraisal districts and the state comptroller evaluate the property market. Appraisal districts are required to appraise property using historical Jan. 1 to Dec. 31 market values while the PVS uses sales from a time frame of six months from June to January or from January to July. Board of trustees president Bill Lane said it's like comparing apples to oranges and that the process is too confusing for most to make sense of.

"Could anybody come up with a more convoluted way to determine those values?" Lane asked. "They're making it harder than it already is."

During the November meeting, Bobbitt joked that the only one who really understood the math behind most of these processes was former Texas Education Agency finance expert Omar Garcia.

After a promise of additional funding stalled out in 2023 Texas legislative sessions, many districts have been hurting for cash. According to recent surveys, most Tarrant County school districts have adopted deficit budgets for the 2024-25 school year. While



ZACH FREEMAN | TRI-COUNTY REPORTER

Chief Appraiser Joe Don Bobbitt speaks to Azle ISD trustees Dec. 16 with AISD Assistant Superintendent Matt Adams to the side.

Azle ISD has passed a balanced budget, tensions run high in talks about future funding. In further discussion, Superintendent Todd Smith highlighted the impact inflation has had on school spending with its cost for insurance, fuel, utilities and employee compensation having increased by 179%, 73%, 29% and 14% respectively.

The exact funds available are determined by a state-wide basic allotment per student plus additional funds based on district population, poverty level and other characteristics of families in local schools. The state's basic allotment has been set at \$6,160 per student since 2019.

"Sometimes out there in the general public, they think, well, your values are increasing, the district's growing, you must be getting more money," Assistant

Superintendent of Finance and Operations Matt Adams said. "Well, if we, if we generate \$6,000 of that \$10,000 locally, then all the state does is lower their contribution to \$4,000 and we're still just getting that \$10,000 per student."

Azle ISD has joined many other districts across the state urging for an increase in the basic allotment. In a presentation, Smith said the allotment would need to increase by \$1,340 in order to catch up to inflation since 2020. In 2024, Smith said district costs exceeded state funding in several critical areas including special education, security and transportation to the tune of a combined \$7 million.

In the event that Azle ISD fails the study, it will have a chance to file an appeal and argue about the accuracy of the state's values. In

the November meeting, TAD board member Gary Losada attempted to reassure school officials, saying the reappraisal plan's management review process gives the board the power to amend the plan in the event that district seems certain to fail the PVS.

While it can speculate using current and future data, the appraisal district and schools will not know the final outcome of the next PVS on funding until January 2026. This leaves districts unsure about how to plan ahead and leaves a chance it might not receive critical funding halfway through the school year.

"The thing about this, there's no way to recapture or recuperate this funding once it's lost," Adams said. "We have no way to get it back the next year or at any point in the future, really."

Teen killed in overturned vehicle near Lake Worth

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LAKE WORTH — On Saturday, Jan. 4, at around 8 a.m., a 17-year-old was discovered deceased inside an overturned vehicle near Lake Worth.

Early that morning, Northwest units were dis-

patched to the 8600 block of Heron Drive after a vehicle accident was reported, an official with the Fort Worth Police Department said.

The vehicle was found to be overturned in trees and water. Police officers and medical personnel searched the car and found one deceased person inside the vehicle with

no other victims.

The Tarrant County Medical Examiner's office identified the 17-year-old victim as Aidan Lee Caraway.

FYPD officials have yet to determine the cause of the accident; the traffic investigations division continues to investigate.

Cold weather claims Walmart garden center sprinklers

ZACH FREEMAN

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AZLE — The fire sprinkler system that protects the lawn and garden area of the Azle Walmart froze due to cold weather conditions.

The Azle Fire Department responded to a water flow alarm call at 8:13 p.m. Sunday, Jan. 5; after checking for fire and resetting the sprinkler system, firefighters cleared the scene by 9:10

p.m. The store was placed on fire watch per AFD emergency protocols. Azle Fire Marshal Melvin Wilson reported that Walmart's fire sprinkler company was notified and the repairs are being made.

LEGAL PUBLIC NOTICES

The City of Reno will have a plat proposal for 2.4982 Acre Lot on corner of East Reno Road and Arvel Circle, Azle, Texas 76020 (1660 E Reno Road). R&R Little Estates Lots 1-2. John Hall Survey, Abstract No. 2308 Parker County Texas. Council Meeting will be January 27, 2025, at 7PM. Meetings will be held at Reno City Hall at 195 W Reno Road, Azle, TX 76020.


The Sanctuary City Council is composed of a mayor and five council members, all elected at large for two-year terms by qualified voters within the city limits of Sanctuary. The mayor and council places 2 and 4 are elected in even numbered years and council places 1, 3 and 5 are elected in odd number years (unless there are resignations in other positions). For the May 3, 2025 Elections the following places will be up for reelection in the City of Sanctuary: Place 3 Cliff Scallan 2 yr term Place 1 Alderwoman Dana Fohl 2 year term Place 5 Alderman Robert Gunter 2 year term Contact the City Secretary at 817-221-6016 or at CityofSanctuaryTX@yahoo.com for an Application to Be On the Ballot. Or you may print the Application and Qualifications for Office from here and mail it in to: City of Sanctuary P O Box 125, Azle Texas 76098 Notices All the election notices will be posted on the outside bulletin board at Sanctuary City Hall, located at 1920 Berkeley Dr. Azle Texas 76020. This is the official posting location for all the Election notices. The notices will also be posted to the City's website as well as in the Tri County Reporter newspaper. First day to apply for a ballot by mail using Application for a Ballot by Mail (ABBM) or Federal Post Card Application (FPCA) Wednesday, January 1, 2025* First day to apply does not move because of New Year's Day holiday. An "Annual ABBM" or FPCA for a January or February 2025 election may be filed earlier, but not earlier than the 60th day before the date of the January or February election. First Day to File for Place on General Election Ballot (for local political subdivisions ONLY) 1 Wednesday, January 15, 2025 Last Day to File for Place on General Election Ballot (for local political subdivisions ONLY) 2 Friday, February 14, 2025 at 5:00 p.m.

The Zoning Board of Adjustment for the City of Springtown will hold a public hearing to consider a variance request for the minimum setback required for a private swimming pool, for Lot 2R, Block 6, Wilson's First Addition, an addition to the City of Springtown, Parker County, Texas, also known as 204 W 5th Street. The meeting will take place in Council Chambers in the Municipal Annex Building at 200 N. Main Street, Springtown, TX 76082, on January 23, 2025, at 7 p.m.


NOTICE OF INTENTION TO ISSUE CITY OF SPRINGTOWN, TEXAS CERTIFICATES OF OBLIGATION TAKE NOTICE that the City Council of the City of Springtown, Texas, shall convene at 7:00 o'clock P.M. on February 27, 2025, at the Court Annex Building, 200 N. Main Street, Springtown, Texas, and, during such meeting, the City Council will consider the passage of one or more ordinances authorizing the issuance of one or more series of certificates of obligation in an amount not to exceed \$4,910,000 for the purpose of paying contractual obligations to be incurred for (i) designing, acquiring, constructing, resurfacing, improving, equipping, and maintaining City streets, roads, overpasses, and intersections, including curbs, gutters, sidewalks, trails, traffic signalization and signage, lighting, ADA accessibility, traffic management equipment, utility relocations, drainage and irrigation, and landscaping related thereto, and the acquisition of easements, rights-of-way, and other real property interests necessary therefor, (ii) designing, constructing, acquiring, equipping, and improving the City's water treatment plant, (iii) renovating, improving, enlarging, and equipping the City's water system, (iv) designing, constructing, acquiring, and improving one or more City drainage projects, (v) acquiring land, easements, rights-of-way, and other real property interests for an administrative office building housing the governmental functions of the City, including the Public Works Department, (vi) purchasing a vehicle for the City's Public Works Department, (vii) acquiring and installing equipment for City Hall, the Municipal Annex Building, City water and sewer system facilities, and the animal shelter, (viii) designing, constructing, improving, and equipping park or recreation facilities that are generally accessible to the public and are part of the City's park system, and (ix) professional services rendered in relation to such projects and the financing thereof; such certificates to be payable from ad valorem taxes and a limited pledge of the net revenues of the City's combined Waterworks and Sewer System. In accordance with Texas Local Government Code Section 271.049, (i) the current principal amount of all of the City's outstanding public securities secured by and payable from ad valorem taxes is \$21,100,000; (ii) the current combined principal and interest required to pay all of the City's outstanding public securities secured by and payable from ad valorem taxes on time and in full is \$29,058,988; (iii) the estimated combined principal and interest required to pay the certificates of obligation to be authorized on time and in full is \$8,964,255; (iv) the maximum interest rate for the certificates may not exceed the maximum legal interest rate; and (v) the maximum maturity date of the certificates to be authorized is August 15, 2050. The certificates are to be issued, and this notice is given, under and pursuant to the provisions of Texas Local Government Code, Subchapter C of Chapter 271

THE STATE OF TEXAS CITATION BY PUBLICATION CAUSE NO. 24P433 In the Matter of the Estate of Dolphus Claude Berry, Deceased TO ALL UNKNOWN OR MISSING HEIRS OF THE ESTATE OF DOLPHUS CLAUDE BERRY, DECEASED Jon William Berry in the above-numbered and entitled estate filed an Application for Letters of Independent Administration and Determination of Heirship on 10/28/2024, In the Estate of Dolphus Claude Berry, Deceased, requesting that the Court determine who are the heirs and only heirs of Dolphus Claude Berry, Deceased, and their respective shares and interest in such estate, and appointing Jon William Berry to serve as the Independent Administrator of said estate and Determined Heirship. The court may act on said application at any call of the docket on or after 10:00 o'clock A.M. on the first Monday next after the expiration of 10 days from the date of publication of this citation, at the Parker County Court, One Courthouse Square, Weatherford, TX 76086 in Parker County, Texas. All persons interested in this case are hereby cited to appear before said Honorable Court QY filing a written contest or answer to said Application before the above stated time and date should you desire to do so. To ensure its consideration, you or your attorney must file any contest, objection, intervention, or response in writing with the County Clerk of Parker County, Texas on or before the above noted date and time. Given under my hand and the seal of said Court of Parker County, Texas at the office of the Parker County Clerk, on this 31st day of October, 2024.

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Prospective new owners seek funding for Azle Oaks rehab

ZACH FREEMAN

azlereporter@tricountyreporter.com

AZLE — One of Azle's oldest apartment complexes may be getting a much-needed makeover.

Jonathan Campbell, a representative of LCJ Companies, approached Azle City Council requesting its support via resolution in an application for a 9% housing tax credit for the rehabilitation of Azle Oaks Apartments.

According to Azle City Manager, Tom Muir, Azle Oaks was built almost 50 years ago and is in need of "some tender loving care." It is located at 700 Jarvis Lane near the Azle Junior High School and holds about 115 units, housing young families, the elderly and everyone in between.

While LCJ Companies does not currently own the complex, it hopes to in the not so far future. The United States Department of Agriculture's Rural Housing Service and Department of Housing and Community Affairs offers loans, grants and other resources to development

projects in key areas. These entities also offer tax credits to developers for the rehabilitation of certain low-income housing units, which LCJ is seeking in this case. As part of state law, the company must receive the support of the local city council before proceeding. Apart from its written support and a \$250 permit fee waiver, the city is not on the hook, financially or otherwise, for any part of this project.

The company had previously approached Azle City Council in 2021 with similar intentions. Campbell said the project was ultimately deemed uncompetitive by the state after a preapplication exposure process. Since then, there has been a rule change where USDA properties are awarded by the state based on the original oldest phase date of construction, which for Azle Oaks Apartments was 1975. Based on new metrics, LCJ Companies believes this year Azle Oaks will be considered competitive.

Altogether, funding approval, purchasing and rehabilitation for Azle Oaks may

take two years or more, but Campbell said he expects to appear before council in another 12 months to discuss permitting. By taking part in this process Campbell said the company hopes to own, renovate and manage Azle Oaks for the next 30 years at a much lower subsidized cost. LCJ Companies specializes in the renovation and management of USDA tax credit funded housing.

In a phone call with the Tri-County Reporter, one former resident alleged that there were leaks and ventilation problems causing wet walls and mold in her apartment. In speaking with other neighbors, she reported they also had major plumbing problems which she felt had been ignored by management. Azle Economic and Planning Director David Hawkins said the issues never got far enough along for the city to get involved, after an inspection by SAFEbuilt in August, and current management has made attempts to address leaks in the unit.

"We are going to be investing all in close to \$100,000



The Azle Oaks Apartments sign.

ZACH FREEMAN | TRI-COUNTY REPORTER

in rehabbing these properties, the inside and outside," Campbell said. "New appliances, new flooring, new roofs, new drainage, foundations, plumbing, electrical, we would try to extend the life of this project another 40

years." Along with an overhaul of all the essentials, Campbell said LCJ may also install some sports courts, possibly pickle ball, dog parks and other amenities based on the site's density and how its

foundations are laid out. At time of construction, residents will have the option of staying in their units for a "walk-in rehab" or transfer to a vacant unit until the bulk of work in their apartment is done.

HOOD

FROM PAGE A1

the previous mayor, Tom Clayton, and then to be elected to three additional terms," Hood said. "After much consideration, I am not seeking a fourth term as your mayor. My intention is to retire from my job in two years and I want to dedicate my focus to those endeavors."

Hood expressed his gratitude to his employer for working with him as he serves his office as mayor and stated he wants to be able to spend more time with his family in the future.

"I am grateful for my employer, Tri-County Electric (Co-op) for giving me the latitude and flexibility in serving as mayor for the citizens of Springtown," Hood said. "My desire is to lighten the obligations in my life, while focusing on my family and my employer for the remaining two years."

Hood thanked City Administrator David Miller

for working together with him. Hood will continue to serve Springtown until the end of his mayoral term and is excited to see what will happen in Springtown.

"Mr. Miller, it has been a pleasure working with you and your staff and the city employees of Springtown," Hood said. "As I fulfill my existing term until May, I will continue to work with council through this transition and a special thank you to the citizens of Springtown for your support and understanding. As I step away from this role, I am excited to see how our community will continue to grow and thrive. Thank you for an incredible journey."

Though Hood was born in Fort Worth, he grew up in Springtown. With two older siblings, Hood came as a surprise to his parents. Deciding to stay in Springtown, Hood has been at Tri-County Electric Cooperative for the last 32 years. Hood says this was the main part of his decision to not run again for office.

"I'm trying to ease my life a little bit where I can enjoy retirement," Hood said. "I just need to ease up off the required daily duties and focus on my last two years of my job. And I must appreciate Tri-County. They have always been very good about working with my schedule."

Hood mentioned that serving as a council member again is not out of the question. Hood's public service started by serving on the Planning and Zoning Commission in 1999; then he held a spot on city council. But Hood became mayor of Springtown under unexpected circumstances.

In July 2018, former Springtown Mayor Tom Clayton died suddenly. As a result, the Springtown city council appointed Hood to serve as mayor until the May 2019 regular election, due to his prior service on the city council.

"It was unexpected, for sure," Hood said. Hood also reflected on some of the

more challenging moments as mayor.

Hood was only mayor for a year-and-a-half when COVID-19 struck. Springtown City Secretary Christina Derr emphasized the unknown of what to expect during that time.

"The hardest part of COVID was, there was nobody alive who had lived through something like that before," Derr said. "If we have an issue sometimes, we'll call another city or we'll call TML or call our attorney. There was nobody to call. Everyone was winging it."

But Springtown came around and faced COVID head on, until another challenge came. An historic artc blast arrived in North Texas in the February 2021 and deeply affected the city's water supply as well as electrical service.

"It was very challenging," Hood said. "The biggest impact was during the week without electricity and therefore the city's water was not getting pumped from the station to then the pipes."

"By the time we got it back up and running, it had been enough time for it to freeze the pipes down at the intake," Hood said. But eventually, the water issue was resolved after everything had melted.

Hood also addressed the magnitude of growth Springtown has experienced in the last few years and his hopes for the city.

"It's been a challenge in all these cities," Hood said. "All we can do is try to control it as best we can. We've got David (Miller, city administrator) for another two years and I know that he's going to keep a steady hand on our budgets and meet those expectations that our citizens deserve."

Tackling local issues, Hood said his goal was always to leave his city better than he found it.

"My goal always was during this time serving as mayor, is to leave Springtown in a better situation than when I came in and I feel like we've done that," Hood said. And Hood recognizes the

strength that Springtown has built with all the challenges.

"Realizing how we can get knocked down and how resilient not only the Springtown community is, but our staff and all the employees rallied and stuck together to get through those tough times," Hood said.

It's important for public servants to have leadership qualities when holding public office and Hood says listening is the most important.

"It's less about anything I do; it's more about listening to what the citizens say and feel and trying to meet their needs through the services we try to provide," Hood said.

When asked what advice he would give to the next mayor, Hood says it would be to focus on the quality of service while keeping a handle on the town's growth.

"I think it's just trying to keep a handle with the growth and still provide the quality services required," Hood said. "Those are expectations that our citizens deserve."

PURSUIT

FROM PAGE A1

keep a visual on the suspect vehicle and relay radio communications to officers in the pursuit.

The pursuit finally ended when the Mustang crashed into a vehicle parked in the 600 block of West Weatherford Street near Tarrant County College in downtown Fort Worth. No injuries were reported. Looking from the air, the

helicopter pilot relayed to officers that the suspect fled the scene on foot. Fort Worth police officers found and detained the suspect until sheriff's deputies arrived on the scene.

Gilbert had a passenger inside the Mustang, who identi-

fied herself as his girlfriend. She stated to the police she did not know why Gilbert fled from deputies. The girlfriend also reported she repeatedly asked Gilbert to stop and pull over, to no avail.

After his arrest, Gilbert was taken to the nearest hospital

to be cleared of any injuries.

"As a precautionary measure, the suspect was cleared by medical staff at a local hospital before being booked into the Parker County jail on a charge of evading arrest or detention," the press release says.

As of Monday, Dec.30, Gilbert remains in jail in lieu of \$15,000 bond. Authier expressed his thanks to Fort Worth Police for lending aid to the department's deputies to help prevent further incidents resulting from this pursuit.

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2024 FROM PAGE A7

stretched thin. While some residents support disincorporation, Hunter says many simply just want to have a vote on the matter.

JAMES L. KINGREA INDUCTED INTO SPRINGTOWN ISD WALL OF HONOR

On Sept. 6, James L. Kingrea was inducted into the Springtown Independent School District Wall of Honor for his athletic achievements, community service and dedication to Springtown. Born in 1946, Kingrea moved to Springtown and quickly excelled in sports, particularly football and track. He was the captain of the football team and set a shot-put record of 54 feet, 6 inches. Unfortunately, a neck injury during college ended his athletic career. Kingrea returned to Springtown with his wife, reconnected with friends and became active in the community. Kingrea was surprised and honored being the only honoree for the Wall of Honor in 2024.

50 YEARS OF FESTIVALS

Since at least 1974, Azle has held a community-wide festival for its residents to enjoy, though this event has not always been called Sting Fling. In the last half century, different Azle fêtes have gone by different names and have occurred at different times of the year. In a Sept. 12 article, the Tri-County Reporter dove into the history of festivals on Azle's Main Street.

IN THE THICK OF THE 'BRIAR PATCH'

Residents of the former city of Briar have been waging an ongoing debate on policing and a struggle against local crime for nearly a half century. In a Sept. 19 article, the Tri-County Reporter dove into the history of crime and policing in the area, focusing on the drug bust of an area resident as a case study.

BUZZY

Buzzy unveiled a strong new look at a Sept. 20 pep rally and home game. The new suit is equipped with more muscle and attitude

than its predecessor and has multiple physical upgrades, really letting Buzzy show off his dance skills.

DUTCH BROS. BUILT ON SITE OF FORMER DAIRY QUEEN

Since the early 1960s, Dairy Queen has been a trusted staple for good eats and ice cream treats for generations of Azleites. After sagging under years of disrepair, patrons said their goodbyes to the restaurant in 2022 and it was demolished. The lot sat empty until the construction and Sept. 20 opening of a highly anticipated Dutch Bros Coffee.

MARY HARMS AWARDED KEY TO THE CITY OF SPRINGTOWN

Mary Harms was awarded the key to the City of Springtown by Mayor Greg Hood Sept. 21, in recognition of her four decades of dedication to the event. Harms was a key figure in the creation and coordination of the Wild West Festival. She cofounded the festival in 1984 and helped grow it from a small gathering with 10 vendors to a major event with more than 200 vendors. 2024 marked both the festival's 40th anniversary and Harms' final year as coordinator. She passed her role to Andrew Alvis. Harms will continue volunteering at the festival.

AZLE LOCALS BAND TOGETHER FOR ASH CREEK BEAUTIFICATION

Ash Creek is a permanent, but not always prominent, feature in the backyards of many Main Street businesses. Deb Turpin, owner of Eagle Mountain Plaza at 300 East Main Street, has a goal to preserve this natural resource for generations to come. With the help of other local business owners and city council members, Turpin scouted portions of Ash Creek in late September and went on to lead cleanup efforts later in the year.

FIREFIGHTER AND RESERVE OFFICER DIES IN MOTORCYCLE CRASH NEAR SPRINGTOWN

First responder Joshua Brandes, died Oct. 1 following a wreck on Farm-to-Market Road 51. Springtown Police responded to the scene of a crash involving a motorcycle and a truck pulling a

trailer. Brandes was unable to stop before colliding with the trailer, injuring his leg before swerving into oncoming traffic and crashing head-on with a Cadillac. Brandes was pronounced dead at 1:24 p.m. He was a 13-year veteran firefighter with the Irving Fire Department and a reserve officer with the Decatur Police Department.

FOURTH GRADE MENTORS CELEBRATE SUCCESSFUL AZLE INTRODUCTION

Academy 4 highlighted a successful Azle launch of its fourth-grade mentoring program with an Oct. 3 gala and fundraiser at the One Azle building. The nonprofit organization paired local adults to Azle ISD fourth graders at Cross Timbers and Hilltop Elementary schools. Students learned important lessons from adults while engaging in fun and learning during club time as well.

PLANE CRASHES IN EAGLE MOUNTAIN LAKE

Authorities responded to a downed plane on the eastern side of Eagle Mountain Lake Oct. 7. CBS News footage showed a white-and-red plane suspended underwater in the lake. The Federal Aviation Administration registry shows the aircraft is a Champion 7EC fixed wing single-engine light airplane. The tail number also identified the plane as belonging to Stephen Spence of North Richland Hills. Later, it was confirmed that Spence, the only occupant of the aircraft, died as a result of the crash.

JENKINS RESIGNS FROM RENO COUNCIL

On Oct. 10, Reno City Council member Joy Jenkins resigned her position, effective immediately, citing frustrations with the city's direction and leadership. In a letter to Mayor Hector Bas, Jenkins expressed concerns about the lack of financial transparency, budgetary issues and misreporting of payroll. She also criticized the city's prioritization of a developer's interests over its citizens regarding dense housing, a MUD district and higher taxes. Jenkins pointed out a Sept. 30 council meeting incident, where a council



The new Buzzy shows off his range of motion with a dance in September.

ZACH FREEMAN | TRI-COUNTY REPORTER

member interrupted a citizen to take a call from the developer. Jenkins said that was the last straw in her decision to resign.

SILVER CREEK HERITAGE SOCIETY CELEBRATES 25 YEARS

Located about eight miles from Azle's Main Street, a small, unassuming cottage is celebrated as a meeting place between friends and as a vital piece of Parker County history. On Sunday, Oct. 20, the Silver Creek Heritage Society celebrated 25 years since its founding in October 1999

AZLE SETS 20-YEAR PLAN

The Azle City Council and planning and zoning commission held a special joint meeting Oct. 29 to approve the final draft for the city's comprehensive master plan and parks and recreation master plan. The plan, titled "Azle: On the Horizon," sets a vision, guidelines and a flexible framework for the city until 2045. For about 18 months, the city and its advisor on the project, Half Associates, have been working to develop this plan with feedback from community members. Numerous public workshops and meetings were held in that period to gather such input. The plans cover land use, throughfares, parks, downtown and the implementation of the ideas presented in each category.

SPRINGTOWN LEGENDS MUSEUM REOPENS

The Springtown Legends Museum reopened Nov. 1 with a new coordinator, Amy Hedges, after a four-year hiatus. The museum has four main collections: natural history, furnishings, archival history and military history, with rotating exhibits throughout the year. New programs for kids will be offered like story time, STEM activities, scavenger hunts plus scholarship opportunities for local seniors. Hedges also plans to host outdoor movie nights and invite local historians to speak. The museum is seeking donations

of items, pictures or artifacts from the community.

BURT ELECTED TO LAKE WORTH ISD BOARD

On Nov. 5, Cindy Burt won Place 7 on the Lake Worth ISD board of trustees, defeating incumbent Chris Thomas by 388 votes; Burt received 1,887 votes compared to Thomas' 1,499 votes. Cristina Gallagher, who ran unopposed, won Place 6. Board President Armando Velazquez congratulated Burt and Gallagher and thanked Thomas for his years of service.

AZLE BEAUTIFICATION BOARD MEETS, SETS GUIDELINES

After being codified by city ordinance in March, Azle's beautification board met for the first time Nov. 7, with a goal of making the "dark spaces lighter and the drab things prettier." Five board members, including an Azle High School student, held their first meeting to establish guidelines covering the future of beautification projects in the city.

SPRINGTOWN'S FIRST ANNUAL 'ALYSSA'S RIDE' HONORS FENTANYL VICTIMS AND RAISES AWARENESS

Springtown local Brad Baltzell hosted the first annual "Alyssa's Ride" Nov. 30 to honor those lost to fentanyl and raise awareness about the growing crisis. The ride was part of The Alyssa Project, a nonprofit organization founded by Baltzell in memory of his daughter Alyssa, who tragically died from fentanyl poisoning in 2020. The ride began at Prodigy Cycles, then traveled to Weatherford, Mineral Wells and Springtown. All funds raised will benefit drug awareness and rehab programs. Baltzell hopes Alyssa's Ride will become a national movement to combat the fentanyl epidemic.

Azle student competes in National American Miss Just one year after competing at her first National American Miss event, Vanessa Webb represented her state in the 4-6 age category as Texas Princess,

beating 60 other girls in her division to take home the coveted Miss Texas sash and tiara in June. Webb went head-to-head with other National American Miss contestants for the national title in Orlando, Florida at the end of November.

WOMAN KILLED; MAN ARRESTED AFTER FM 730 S. WRECK

An Azle woman was killed and a Weatherford man was arrested after a major accident near the 7000 block of Farm-to-Market Road 730 South. On Dec. 8, Daniel Rascon, potentially under the effects of drugs and alcohol, crashed into a car carrying three women, killing one and injuring two others. Rascon, a 21-year-old Mexican national, charged with intoxication manslaughter as well as two counts of intoxication assault; he is also the subject of an ICE detainer, and remained in custody in the Parker County jail as of Dec. 31, 2024.

FUTURE FUNDING WORRIES

Trustees expressed fears of future funding cuts during a Dec. 16 Azle Independent School District board meeting. The district and five others were highlighted by TAD for being at risk of state funding cuts in 2026. Due to a changing market and other factors, the district may be at a heightened risk of failing a property tax study by the Texas State Comptroller, which determines each school district's yearly allotted state funds. The situation is still developing and may not have a direct impact on school funding until January 2026.

WARE (SEMI) RETIRES AFTER 25 YEARS WITH NEWSPAPER

Longtime Azle News, Springtown Epigraph and Tri-County Reporter publisher Kim Ware officially retired Dec. 19, though she is set to remain at the paper part time during a three-month transition period. In the Dec. 19 paper, the Tri-County Reporter published two articles detailing Ware's history at the newspaper and the impact she had had in on the community.



JOLEE SKINNER | TRI-COUNTY REPORTER

The Springtown Legends Museum reopened Nov. 1 with a new coordinator, Amy Hedges, after a four-year hiatus.

JIM STEVENS PHOTOGRAPHY

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THURSDAY, January 9, 2025

Azle wrestlers hammer down in Arkansas

Lady Pines second in own soccer tourney

RICK MAUCH

Special to the Tri-County Reporter

Not only are Azle wrestlers among the best in Texas, it turns out they among the best in several states as they proved with their performance in the recent Bring the Hammer Tournament at Cabot High School in Cabot, Arkansas.

The 30-team tournament featured squads from Arkansas, Texas, Oklahoma, Kansas, Tennessee, Mississippi and Missouri.

Individual champions receive a custom engraved sledgehammer. Azle had five individual champions and a boys team championship, with the girls finishing fourth.

"We had our best ever showing here," Azle coach Tyler Harrison said with excitement.

Winning championships in their weight classes for the boys were Chase Yancey at 144 pounds and Devin Wingfield at 285. Girls champions are Noah Kovach, 100; Mariah Dillard, 115; and Elly Yelle, 135.

Also placing for Azle were:

Boys
106: 4. Mark O'Neil
113: 6. Kolby Moreland
132: 5. Tyler Yancey
150: 3. Wyatt Hicks
157: 2. Landin Evans
175: 4. Eli Bryan
215: 5. Roman Fraser

Girls
110: 5. Kaylie Groot
135: 5. Natalie Petit
190: 4. Kinzlynn Camarillo
Also during December, Yancey reached a milestone moment in his high school career, winning his 100th

match earlier in the month.

SPRINGTOWN GIRLS SOCCER

The season got underway for the Lady Pines (3-1) by finishing second in their own tournament this past weekend. They outscored their opponents 18-1, defeating Fort Worth Carter Riverside 6-0, Fort Worth Western Hills 7-0 and Pilot Point 5-0 before falling 1-0 to Bridgeport in the championship match.

Springtown goals in the tournament were scored by Kylie Wiens (6), Sam Orozco (5), Skilei Thomas (2) and one each from Emma Hauprich, Taylor Glover, Icis Lopez and Lily Duvall.

Brooklyn Brickle was the Lady Pines' goalkeeper throughout the tourney.

Their game against Pilot Point Jan. 6 was canceled because of cold weather. The Lady Pines are back at home against Graham at 4:15 p.m. Jan. 13, weather permitting.

SPRINGTOWN BOYS SOCCER

The Porcupines were set to begin the season with a trip to Pilot Point Jan. 6. However, the game was canceled because of cold weather.

Likewise, the Springtown Tournament this weekend has been canceled because the forecast calls for the possibility of ice and snow.

They will host Graham Jan. 13 at 7 p.m., Weather permitting.

AZLE GIRLS SOCCER

The Lady Hornets (1-2) got the season started in the Judy Hammond Tournament in Irving Jan. 2-4. They dropped their first two games by iden-

PLEASE SEE **ROUNDUP** | B3



The Azle Lady Hornets and Hornets basketball teams wrapped up 2024 with games in Granbury Dec. 31. The Lady Hornets lost 43-24, while the Hornets were edged out 56-52.

LAYTH TAYLOR | TRI-COUNTY REPORTER



COURTESY PHOTO

Mendi Carlson, left, won two world titles as a purple belt in the Master Worlds Tournament.

Carlson wins double gold at No-Gi Worlds

JOHN ENGLISH

Contributing writer

When it comes to the sport of Brazilian Jiu-Jitsu, Mendi Carlson is a natural.

The Azle resident recently competed in the Master Worlds Tournament and won two world titles as a purple belt, which is the first of the

three advanced belts behind brown and black.

Carlson initially competed in the Master Worlds Championship (in the gi) in Las Vegas as a blue belt in September 2023 and was going into the No-Gi Worlds tournament in December 2023 hoping for a double title that year.

"Two weeks before the competition, I was rolling (live sparring/grappling) with a friend and fractured my rib," Carlson said. "I was immediately devastated, but I rested until the tournament. With all my travel arrangements already in place, I

PLEASE SEE **DOUBLE** | B3

Sports Year in Review

RICK MAUCH

Special to the Tri-County Reporter

From accomplishments not made since before players on the current team were even born to appearances at state — including a perfect season in wrestling — it was another great year for sports in the area. Here's a look back at the highlights:

BASEBALL

Azle

The Hornets (14-13) captured the championship of the Jet Teague Tournament in Kennedale, including a combined perfect game by pitchers Cole Webb and Anthony Virag in a 6-0 win over Amarillo Palo Duro.

Garrin Graves was named District 5-5A Offensive Player of the Year. Graves was also second-team Class 5A All-State by the Texas High School Baseball Coaches Association. In addition he was honorable mention All-State by the Texas Sports Writers Association.

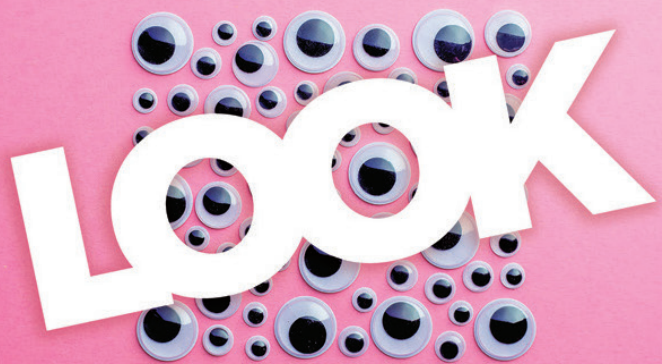
The Hornets were also awarded the Team Academic Excellence Award by the American Baseball Coaches

PLEASE SEE **REVIEW** | B2



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REVIEW

FROM PAGE B1

Association. They are one of only 350 teams across the entire nation to receive this honor.

Springtown
The Porcupines enjoyed the best season in school history, advancing to a regional semifinals with a 24-9 record.

After Brayden Fox pitched a no-hitter against Krum to win 3-0 March 28, pitchers Keegan Martinez and Caleb Elmore combined to throw another in a 9-0 victory at Castleberry April 2.

Fox was District 8-4A MVP.

Azle Christian School
The Crusaders finished with a 14-8 record and advanced to the second round of the postseason for a second consecutive season. Andy Wisniewski was named Texas Association of Private and Parochial Schools Division 5 District 1 Utility Player.

BASKETBALL

Azle girls
The Lady Hornets (17-18) advanced to the bidistrict playoffs after finishing fourth in District 5-5A.

Springtown girls
The Lady Pines (19-18) reached the bidistrict playoffs and posted the most victories in a season since 2010-11, reaching the playoffs in back-to-back seasons for the first time since 2015-17.

Springtown boys
The Porcupines (19-13) placed third in 8-4A, reaching the playoffs for a second straight season, something not accomplished since 2013-15.

Dayne Thompson was 8-4A Offensive Player of the Year. Thompson was also named to the Texas Association of Basketball Coaches Class 4A All-Region Team.

Azle Christian School boys

The Fighting Crusaders (23-11) posted the most wins in team history and captured the Texas Association of Private and Parochial Schools District 2-1A championship, the program's first since the 2014-15 season.

Azle boys
Cason Cook was named 5-5A Newcomer of the Year. Samson Tukia was named a Student Assistant of the Year by the Texas Association of Basketball Coaches.

CROSS COUNTRY

Azle girls
Led by Audrina Montoya, sixth individually, the Lady Hornets finished second in the District 5-5A Meet.

Azle boys
The Hornets also finished second in 5-5A Meet with Pablo Neri finishing fifth individually.

Springtown girls
Madelyn Walker qualified for the Class 4A State Cross Country Meet. The Lady Pines finished second in the

District 7-4A Meet.

Azle Christian School girls Halle Collins posted a second-place finish in the Texas Association of Private and Parochial Schools Class 1A State Meet with a time of 13:23.04 over the 2-mile course.

FOOTBALL

Azle
The Hornets finished 7-4 and advanced to the playoffs for the first time since 2021. Hagen Hughes was one of the top running backs in North Texas, finishing with 1,836 yards and 24 touchdowns, rushing for 3,082 yards in his career.

Springtown
Defensive lineman Ridge Westendorf was named to the Texas Sports Writers Association All-State Team honorable mention for the 2023 season. The Porcupines finished 9-4 in 2023 and advanced to the third round of the playoffs.

The 2024 version of the Porcupines won the program's first outright district championship (5-4A Division I) since 1998. They finished 10-2 and reach the second round of the playoffs.

Top all-district honors went to:
MVP — Safety/receiver Chase Thompson
Offensive Newcomer of the Year — Quarterback Kaine Hill

Co-Defensive Newcomer of the Year — Linebacker Rome Ewell

Co-Offensive Lineman of the Year — Center James Snyder

Utility Player of the Year — Receiver/safety Riley Jackson
Special Teams Player of the Year — Kicker Bryce Smith
Coach of the Year — Brian Hulet

Lake Worth
The Bullfrogs' (2-8, 2-3 in District 6-4A Division I) hopes for a 13th straight playoff berth slipped away as they finished in a three-way tie with Ranchview and Castleberry for fourth in district but lost a tiebreaker.

POWERLIFTING

Azle girls
Raegan Williams placed third in the 123-pound division at the 5A Division I State Powerlifting Meet. Also, Emma Sustala placed eighth in the 181 division. Ella Swaim was 11th in the 105 class. Also qualifying for state was Kyndal Robbins.

Springtown girls
As a team, Springtown was fifth at the 4A Division I State Meet.

Zoey Adams placed third in the 105-pound division. Hayley Knight was third in the 148 division Ashianya Elam took third in the 198 class.

Taking fourth in their divisions were Abigail Stoner, 132, and Grace Lewis, 165. Melissa Chavez was fifth at 148.

Callee Gaston was eighth at 114; Izzy Parker, 10th in 114; Skyler Tyree, sixth in 123;

Jessica Montgomery, eighth in 123; Destiny Ramirez, 11th in 165; Lyndsey Shotwell, ninth in 181; Addison DeGree, ninth in 220; and Isabella Medina, 10th in 242.

The 14 state qualifiers are the most ever for the Lady Pines program.

Azle boys
Alan Hard finished 12th in the 132-pound division at the 5A State Meet. Case Moore was 16th in the 220 division. Also competing were Tyler Ulrich and Cash More.

Springtown boys
Parker Bening placed 15th in Class 4A in the 132-pound division. Also competing was Hayden Nichols.

Lake Worth boys
Aric Long pulled 640 in the deadlift for the regional record and first place to qualify for the 4A Division I State Meet.

Lake Worth girls
Kimberly Dominguez qualified for the 4A Division I State Meet.

RODEO

Azle won the team championship of the North Texas High School Rodeo Association. Springtown was fourth.

Hevenli Scribner of Azle won barrel racing. Also from Azle, Andrea Allred led the field in poles.

Colton Phillips of Springtown finished second in bull riding. Cade Walker of Springtown was runner-up in steer wrestling.

Azle's Laurel Allred finished second in Girls All-Around. Scribner was fifth.

Among the boys, Kasen Scarlato of Azle placed fifth. Allred was also third in walk-up goat tying in the finals. Sean Bunero of Azle took third in ribbon roping.

SOCCER

Springtown girls
The Lady Pines posted the best season in program history, finishing 16-5-1 and second in 8-4A at 8-1-1. They won a bidistrict contest, defeating Carter-Riverside 2-0, only done once before — in 2023.

Kylie Wiens was district co-offensive MVP and Icic Lopez was Midfield Player of the Year. Allison Kimball was co-goalkeeper MVP and first-year head coach Ryan Byerly received coach of the year.

Azle girls
The Lady Hornets (14-9-1, 6-4-2 in 5-5A, third) finished one of their most successful seasons ever. They advanced to the playoffs for the first time since 2019, defeating Fort Worth South Hills 1-0 in bidistrict.

Rebecca Marx was district Defensive MVP and Emma Nelson was Goalkeeper of the Year.

Lake Worth boys
The Bullfrogs finished fourth in 8-4A and advanced to the playoffs for a fourth straight season. Roman Mtambala was named district Newcomer of the Year.



JOEY GARCIA | TRI-COUNTY REPORTER

The Porcupines moved on to at least the area (second) round of the postseason for a fourth consecutive year by sweeping Sanger 2-0 in their best-of-3 series at Castleberry High School May 3-4.

SOFTBALL

Azle
The Lady Hornets (22-13-1) advanced to the second round of the playoffs after finishing second in District 5-5A. Kaylee Parrish was district Defensive Player of the Year. Torrie Johnson was Catcher of the Year and Bella Tipton Freshman of the Year.

Springtown
The Lady Pines (14-15-1, 5-5 in 8-4A) were fourth in district and reached the playoffs for a fourth consecutive season. Cheyanne Atchley received 8-4A Defensive MVP.

SWIMMING
Azle
Brooke Nowakowski shattered her personal record by over four seconds, finishing fourth in the 100-yard backstroke at the Class 5A Region II Swimming and Diving Meet, clocking 1:04.63.

Other top 10 finishers for the Lady Hornets were Peighton Berry, sixth in 200 freestyle and ninth in 100 freestyle, and the 10th-place 200 free relay of Kaylee Willey, Karla Rodriguez, Berry, Nowakowski).

For the Hornets, Kalen McCullough was seventh in the 50 free.

Rodriguez also qualified for the Texas Amateur Athletic Federation Games of Texas, competing for the Weatherford Wild.

TENNIS

Azle
Lady Hornets Emily O'Neill and Jorja Erwin saw their historic season come to an end in the round of 16 at the Class 5A Region I Tennis Tournament. They are the first girls from Azle ever to qualify for the regional tournament.

In team tennis, the Hornets/Lady Hornets advanced to bidistrict after finishing fourth in District 5-5A.

Hudson Carroll of the Hornets was named Freshman of the Year in 5-5A.

TRACK AND FIELD

Springtown boys
The 4x100-meter relay of Brayden Fox, Braydon Butler, Riley Jackson and Kamryn Cleveland led the Porcupines at the 4A State Track Meet with a school-record time of 1:27.02 to finish fifth. Also, the boys 4x100 relay of Fox, Jackson, Butler and Caden Rogers, also set a school record with a time of 42.09 seconds, finishing seventh.

Springtown girls
In the triple jump, junior Mack Flaughner made her third consecutive appearance at state, finishing sixth with 36 feet, 4.75 inches.

She finished fourth at state as a sophomore and seventh as a freshman.

Flaughner was named a track and field all-star by the Texas Girls Coaches Association. She also competed in the USA Track and Field Junior Olympics.

Azle boys
The Hornets' Josh Montelongo came close to landing a berth at state but narrowly missed out in the 400. His time of 49.70 seconds was third at the Region I Meet.

Azle Christian School girls Hallie Collins captured a silver medal and a pair of bronze medals at the Texas Association of Private and Parochial Schools Class 1A State Meet.

In the pole vault, Collins cleared 8-6 to tie for second. She posted a time of 2:34.81 to place third in the 800 and clocked a 5:48.82 for third in the 1600. In addition, Collins placed fourth in the 400 with a time of 1:04.56.

Also from Azle Christian School, Vanessa Malewiski placed seventh in the triple jump. She joined Alexia Rios-Sioto, Jacelynn Hammond and Elle Henderson on the eighth-place 4x100 relay.

VOLLEYBALL

Azle
The Lady Hornets (28-15, 8-4 in 5-5A, tied for second)

enjoyed their best season since 1998 as they advanced to the Class 5A Division II Region I semifinals.

Jacqui McClain was district Offensive Player of the Year and Ellie Lund was Utility Player of the Year. McClain was also named to the Texas Girls Coaches Association All-State Team.

Springtown
For a fifth straight season the Lady Pines (29-15, 11-3 in 7-4A, tied for second) advanced in the postseason.

Libby Tedder was named league MVP. Tedder was also honored with Texas Girls Coaches Association All-State.

WRESTLING

Azle girls
Mariah Dillard capped a 46-0 season, winning the 120-pound division at the Class 5A State Tournament. Her sister, Alicen Dillard (40-6), a three-time state finalist, finished second in the 138.

Also placing second was Noah Kovach (48-8) in the 100 division.

Also competing for the Lady Hornets was Annabelle Davis (23-6) in the 165 division (2023 state champion in the 145 division).

As a team, the Lady Hornets finished second.

Azle boys
The Hornets were led by the third-place finish of Chance Yancey (58-9) in the 132 division at state. Wyatt Hicks (47-13) placed sixth in the 126 class, competing in his second consecutive state tourney.

Also for the Hornets, Landin Evans (42-16), Elijah Bryan (27-17) and Devin Wingfield (37-14) competed in the 138, 175 and 285 divisions, respectively.

Springtown boys
Senior Dallin Fabrizius (37-9) made a second straight appearance at state, competing in the 215 class.

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SE HABLA ESPAÑOL

DOUBLE

FROM PAGE B1

decided to go ahead and compete. I lost in the finals and ended up with silver."

In June of 2024, Carlson received her purple belt after two years at blue (the minimum time you can hold the belt) and just three years after starting jiu-jitsu.

She then went to the Master Worlds Tournament in September and won gold (in the gi).

On Dec. 12, 2024, she went to No Gi Worlds to compete as a purple belt again.

"I was very excited to go back to that tournament to get my gold with a healed rib and feeling strong and well-trained coming in," Carlson said. "I won my division and then went into the Open Weight Class division feeling confident. I am in the Medium Heavyweight class, and it is right in the middle. I ended up pulling all three super-heavy competitors in the bracket. I also fought a middleweight competitor ... one by one, I was able to take

down, pass for points and/or finish a submission to win double gold."

Carlson started jiu-jitsu after watching her two sons train and compete for two years.

"The first year of their training, I thought, 'Hey, I think I would like to do that,'" Carlson said. "The second year, I was really interested but I wanted to make sure I wouldn't quit if I started. My first class was a ladies-only class, an open mat hosted by my friend and my son's coach, Kari Summers. It was a safe and welcoming environment to learn this sport in a female-only setting."

Carlson said martial art is not like any other sport in which she has competed, and in some cases appeals to her in ways other sports have not.

"Jiu-Jitsu is one of the toughest things I've ever done," Carlson said. "I have always been a competitive athlete in various sports like track and field and soccer. It is challenging both physically and mentally. I love that I have trained myself to remain calm in a stressful situ-

ation. People often liken BJJ to a physical game of chess and I agree — it's all moves and counter moves. I have really enjoyed learning the concepts of physics in the game. I can really nerd out on the fact that I can use fulcrums and levers to tip someone a lot bigger than me over to improve my position."

Carlson, 46, grew up in Azle, graduating from Azle High School in 1997.

She and her husband, Jim, have been married for 21 years and have three children, Dylan Rae, Lennox and Campbell.

She is the president of Melville Excavating Inc., a local construction business, and said she never imagined she would compete in a combat sport.

"I am very grateful to my husband for supporting me and being my biggest fan," Carlson said.

The Azle woman trains six days a week and tends to add a few extra classes or open mats if she has a big tournament coming up.

She also implements strength training at



COURTESY PHOTO

Carlson said martial art is not like any other sport in which she has competed, and in some cases appeals to her in ways other sports have not.

Redemption Barbell three days a week.

While winning two world titles as a purple belt was exciting, Carlson said it is continuing to learn the sport, the camaraderie and challenging herself she enjoys most.

"There is always impostor syndrome that you have to cope with in a ranking sys-

tem," Carlson said. "Being able to do well at the belt you are ranked at among your peers definitely helps that. I really enjoy competing. I realize there's a time limit on how long I will be able to train jiu-jitsu at a competitive level. I am about to be 46 years old. I want to compete and challenge myself as much as

possible.

"It's funny, you go to a World Championship and win and then you get back to the training mats and get humbled by your amazing teammates — back to the real world. I could not do what I do without my training partners who challenge me and make me better every day."

ZED by Duane Abel



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ROUNDUP

FROM PAGE B1

tical 1-0 scores to Birdville and Irving Nimitz before defeating Carrollton Newman Smith 3-1.

Scoring goals against Newman Smith were McKenzie Smith, Lily Hudman and Arely Licerio, who also had an assist. Other assists came from Yazmeen Tejeda and Velericia Macias.

Kim Licerio was named to the all-tournament team.

Azle was scheduled to play in the Brewer Tournament this weekend, Jan. 9-11, but the status of that was up in the air at press time due to the inclement and cold weather forecast. They are set to play in the Chisholm Trail Tournament Jan. 16-18.

AZLE BOYS SOCCER

The Hornets (0-2-1) played in the Castleberry Tournament this past weekend to open the season. They tied Western Hills 1-1 in the first game but lost 8-0 to Midlothian Heritage and 7-0 to San Antonio Cornerstone.

At press time, Azle was playing at Argyle. Their status in the Ennis Tournament this weekend was in jeopardy because of the weather.

They will host Burleson Jan. 14 at 7 p.m., weather permitting.

LAKE WORTH GIRLS SOCCER

The Lady Frogs (2-1) got the season going in the Crowley Tournament this past weekend. They lost to North Crowley 4-0 in the opener but bounced back with a pair of wins in which they outscored their opponents 11-0.

Lake Worth was set to play in the Castleberry Tournament this weekend, but that is up in the air because of weather. They will play their first home match Jan. 14 against Fort Worth Western Hills at 7:30 p.m., depending on the weather.

LAKE WORTH BOYS SOCCER

The Bullfrogs (1-2) began the season in the Abilene Tournament. They defeated Big Spring 5-1, but then lost 8-0 to Abilene and 6-0 to Midland.

At press time, Lake Worth was playing at Mineral Wells. Their home game against Fort Worth Wyatt Jan. 10 is in question because of weather, and they travel to Fort Worth Western Hills Jan. 14 at 7:30 p.m., again, depending on weather.

AZLE BOYS BASKETBALL

The Hornets (9-15, 0-2 in District 5-5A) fell 54-50 at home to Northwest and 56-42

at Granbury.

Vs. Northwest: Bryce Robinson 16 points, Jayden Taylor 16 points, Britt Haas 10 points

Vs. Granbury: Taylor 12 points, Cason Cook 8 points, Robinson 8 points

The Hornets were hosting Brewer at press time, travel to Aledo Jan. 10 and host Chisholm Trail Jan. 14, all at 7:30 p.m.

AZLE GIRLS BASKETBALL

The Lady Hornets (6-17, 1-3 in 5-5A), after a rough time in the College Station Tournament, returned to league play and fell 43-24 at Granbury. Evianna Quillin led with 8 points and Abbey Natusch added 5.

Azle was player Brewer at home at press time, visit Aledo Jan. 10 and welcome Chisholm Trail to town Jan. 14, all games tipping off at 6:15 p.m.

SPRINGTOWN BOYS BASKETBALL

The Porcupines (6-14, 3-0 in 7-4A) competed in the Ponder Tournament, falling 60-39 to Paradise, 54-45 to Cedar Hill DasCHE and Liberty 50-39 before defeating Frisco Leadership 64-54. They returned to district play at Castleberry on Jan. 3, 46-31.

Vs. Paradise: Ethan Graham 13 points, Ayden Lugo 8 points

Vs. DasCHE: Lugo 12 points, eight rebounds; Dylan Crutchfield 9 points, six rebounds

Vs. Liberty: Grayson Brooks 8 points, Lugo 7 points
Vs. Leadership: Lugo 17 points, Brooks 15 points, Kane Grubbs 8 points

Vs. Castleberry: Lugo 15 points, Crutchfield 10 points, Keagan Gutierrez 7 points
Springtown was hosting Decatur at press time. They travel to Eagle Mountain Jan. 10 and host Krum Jan. 14, both at 7:30 p.m.

SPRINGTOWN GIRLS BASKETBALL

The Lady Pines (8-12, 2-3 in 7-4A) had a holiday tournament in Fort Worth canceled. They returned to action in league play at Castleberry, winning 92-7 as five Lady Pines scored in double figures.

Kylie Russell led Springtown with 19 points, followed by Esther Ballado with 18. Brylynn Bazzell 13 scored 13, Olivia Williams had 12 and Evelyn Herrera posted 11. They narrowly missed having six in double figures as Madison Mussulman finished with 9.
The Lady Pines were host-

ing Decatur at press time; they visit Eagle Mountain Jan. 10 and host Krum Jan. 14, all at 6:15 p.m.

LAKE WORTH BOYS BASKETBALL

The Bullfrogs (10-9, 0-3 in 7-4A), after a rough outing in the Ponder Tournament, fell 63-47 at Stephenville before going back into district action with a 65-52 home loss against Krum Jan. 3. Highlights of the tournament included a 35-point game from Braylon Fridia and Ivan Sanchez scoring 20.

Vs. Stephenville: Fridia 16 points, eight rebounds; Ayden Brooks 10 points, 12 rebounds; Sanchez 8 points

Vs. Krum: Fridia 21 points; DeJay Black 13 points, seven rebounds; Brooks 8 points, five rebounds; Lopez four assists; Sanchez three steals

Lake Worth was hosting Bridgeport at press time and visits Castleberry Jan. 10. They also visit Decatur Jan. 14. All games begin at 7:30 p.m.

LAKE WORTH GIRLS BASKETBALL

After a long holiday break, the Lady Frogs (14-10, 0-5 in 7-4A) returned to league action by playing host to Krum Jan. 3. They fell 49-28 as Jackie Cleveland scored 16 points and Aliyah Salas added 7.

At press time, Lake Worth was hosting Bridgeport, followed by a visit to Castleberry Jan. 10 and another trip to Decatur Jan. 14, all starting at 6:15 p.m.

AZLE CHRISTIAN BOYS BASKETBALL

The Fightin' Crusaders (14-4) defeated Stephenville Faith 64-26 as Gavin Montez scored 22 points, Kanon Wyatt scored 13 and Brody Fairman added 10. They also downed Haslet Heritage Christian 71-20 behind 15 points from Corban Potter, 13 from Wyatt and 11 from Fairman.

The Crusaders were hosting Garner at press time. They host Mineral Wells Community Christian Jan. 10 at 7:30 p.m. and host Granbury Grace Classical Christian Jan. 14 at 6 p.m.

AZLE CHRISTIAN GIRLS BASKETBALL

The Lady Crusaders (8-6) fell 38-26 to Stephenville Faith. Elle Henderson scored 9 points.

ACS was playing at Mineral Wells Community Christian at press time. They host Wichita Falls Christ Academy Jan. 17 at 5:30 p.m.

Sudoku

JANUARY 9, 2025

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

Level: Intermediate

Solution to last week's puzzle

JANUARY 2, 2025

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

WORD SCRAMBLE

Rearrange the letters to spell something pertaining to dog option.

B D E R E

--	--	--	--	--

Answer: Breed

CRYPTO FUN

Solve the code to discover words related to dog adoption. Each number corresponds to a letter. (Hint: 2-4)

A. 9 20 12 5 17
Clue: Bring into the family

B. 22 18 2 11 17 2 14
Clue: Where pets wait for home

C. 5 23 5 5 26
Clue: Young dog

D. 14 2 22 1 23 2
Clue: Animal organization



COURTESY PHOTO

Winning championships in their weight classes for the boys were Chase Yancey at 144 pounds and Devin Wingfield at 285. Girls champions are Noah Kovach, 100; Mariah Dillard, 115; and Elly Yelle, 135.

Soccer season underway with coaching changes

RICK MAUCH

Special to the Tri-County Reporter

The 2025 soccer season is underway and area programs are going to see some changes in the coaching ranks.

In Azle, Josh Epps takes the helm of the boys program. Meanwhile, at Springtown and Lake Worth, familiar faces have expanded roles.

Ryan Bylerly, who has had great success leading the Springtown Lady Pines, is now also the head coach of the Porcupines this season. Likewise, Robert Alvarez will have double duty as he takes over the Lake Worth Bullfrogs, along with remaining the coach of the Lady Frogs.

SPRINGTOWN PORCUPINES

"The boys have worked hard, putting in plenty of hours to be successful this season," Bylerly said. "We have a good mix of senior leadership and some young talent looking to step up."

"It's an exciting opportunity to work with this group of young men. This team has plenty of potential and they are all very motivated to do well this year."

The Porcupines are hoping to turn things around after going 2-17-1 overall and 1-9 in District 8-4A last season. Senior leaders looking to help make that happen include: Goalkeeper Angel Benitez, captain, four-year varsity starter. "A great leader for

this growing program," Bylerly said.

Center-back Mason Coleman, captain, four-year varsity starter and a player that Bylerly said, "communicates and pushes everyone to work harder."

Midfielder Bryce Smith, another four-year varsity starter whom Bylerly called "A consistent player that plays his position perfectly and allows the rest of the team to play more freely."

Wing/striker Brody Phifer. "Brody is meant for the wing because of his ability to get out of any situation and use his pace as a benefit for the team," the coach said.

This season Springtown shares District 8-4A with Eagle Mountain, Lake Dallas, Lake Worth, Castleberry Hurst Collegiate Academy.

SPRINGTOWN LADY PINES

Bylerly is entering the 2025 season with great anticipation for the Lady Pines, as are Springtown faithful — and with plenty of reason.

"We are really excited for this season. The girls have been working hard and there is a great spirit within the group," the coach said.

The Lady Pines return a plethora of talent, including nine starters, from the best season in program history. They were 16-5-1 overall, 8-1-1 and second in District 8-4A, along with advancing to the second round of the playoffs for only the second time in

team history (the first being in 2023).

"We are full of team leaders, which makes it a neat experience," Bylerly said.

Returners include: Senior forward/midfielder Kylie Wiens, 8-4A Co-offensive MVP

Senior forward/mid Isis Lopez, Midfielder of the Year Senior mid/defender Alea Stiles, second team all-district

Senior forward Taylor Glover, honorable mention all-district

Junior midfielder Lily Duvall, first team all-district

Junior defender Laura Garcia-Diaz, first team all-district

Sophomore defender/ Midfielder Faron Buder, first team all-district

Junior midfielder Samantha Orozco

Junior defender Makayla Ballard, first team all-district

Sophomore goalkeeper Brooklynn Brickle, honorable mention all-district

New to the squad is move-in senior defender/midfielder Skilei Thomas, who Bylerly called, "A very good addition."

"So lots of talent in the team. We look forward to the new district alignment and seeing some different teams," he added.

AZLE LADY HORNETS

The Lady Hornets return six starters from one of their best seasons ever, finishing

14-8-2 overall, 6-4-2 and tying for second in District 5-5A with a second-round playoff appearance.

Defense was their forte', shutting out nine opponents and holding seven others to a single goal.

Returning are:

Junior Emma Nelson, 5-5A Goalkeeper of the Year

Senior midfielder Sophie McIntyre, first team all-district

Sophomore defender Rachel Harder, honorable mention all-district

Junior forward Lily Hudman, second team all-district

Junior Yasmeen Tejada, honorable mention all-district

Senior Mckenzie Roberts, honorable mention all-district

"We have two freshmen on varsity, and we had one transfer student join us as well. I think they will be a great addition to the team this year," coach Hannah Smith said. "After losing 11 seniors last year we had quite a few spots to fill, and they are definitely helping us do so."

District 5-5A will include Azle, Aledo, Brewer, Chisholm Trail, Keller Fossil Ridge, Granbury and Saginaw.

"We are eager to get district started," Smith said. "We had a couple changes to our district this year. It will be interesting to see how we all do in preseason and then see how

we match up in district play.

"These girls have put in so much time and effort into our preseason, I am excited to get into tournament play and see how well we all come together. There has been a lot of movement of players positions so we have really been honing in on team play and doing all we can to prepare for a successful season."

AZLE HORNETS

The Hornets entered the season with new head coach Josh Epps. He started his coaching career at Hillsboro High School where he was the head boys and girls soccer coach. He was also the varsity assistant girls soccer coach at Trinity High School and the head girls soccer coach at Splendor High School. He also coached club soccer for FC Dallas and North Texas ODP.

For the past four years, Epps has taught honors biology and served as the varsity assistant girls soccer coach and assistant swim coach at Azle.

While no individual information was available about the returning Hornets at press time, Epps takes over a team that finished 5-15-1 overall and 1-11 in District 5-5A. The Hornets' last winning season was 8-5-1 in 2015.

LAKE WORTH BULLFROGS

Alvarez takes the lead of the Bullfrogs after having

coached the Lady Frogs for several years. His success includes several playoff appearances and having led programs at Abilene Cooper and Abilene Wylie.

No individual information on returning players was available at press time.

The Bullfrogs are coming off a 4-16-1 season overall. However, their 3-7 record in 8-4A was good enough for fourth place and a playoff berth.

It is worth noting that the Bullfrogs were 4-2-1 in games decided by a single goal.

Also, while they've not had a winning season in that span, the Bullfrogs play their best when it counts most, having reached the postseason in each of those years.

LAKE WORTH LADY FROGS

Alvarez seeks to lead the Lady Frogs back into the postseason for the first time since 2021 after three consecutive fifth place finishes in district. Lake Worth is coming off a 5-13-3 overall season in which they were 1-7-2 in District 8-4A.

The last time the Lady Frogs had a winning season was Alvarez' first season. They were 11-10-3 in 2019.

No individual information about returning players was available at press time.

Azle schools see improvements, continue work in special student populations

ZACH FREEMAN

azlereporter@tricountyreporter.com

AZLE — Azle ISD is seeing some improvements in accountability scores for certain special student populations. During a Dec. 16 board of trustees meeting, Jordan Thiem, director of secondary curriculum and federal programs for the district, presented the most recent Texas Education Agency Results Driven Accountability scores for Azle students. One change, Thiem noted, is that the scores will be used to judge the district's compliance with state education standards, as well as federal, for the first time.

The scores, Thiem explained, reflect STAAR test scores for students in three categories: English as a second language, special education and other special populations. From these scores, TEA assigns a determination level to each group in accordance with federal standards. This ensures test scores for these special populations do not lag behind in any particular school and that they're being graded proportionally to one another.

"The real intent behind this is to drive transparency on numbers for these special groups," Thiem said. "It's also with the idea of improv-

ing results and establishing needs inside of these special populations."

In its last scores, Azle ISD received the highest distinction possible in all three categories, Determination Level 1. This is an improvement from the 2022-2023 school year's scores where other special populations, including military families, highly mobile families, homeless students and those in foster care, were at Determination Level 2. Thiem concluded that the district's recent drive to target support to students in the foster care system and those covered under the McKinney-Vento Homeless Assistance Act

have been working. Thiem said there is still work to be done and Azle schools will continue improving in each of these categories. Within other special populations, Thiem said Azle schools will continue to focus on recovering learning loss reflected in mathematics, reading and writing scores across districts. For its special education populations, Thiem said the district will continue to look at writing processes at the secondary level with an emphasis on cross-curricular humanities and evaluate inclusion supports at the high school in all subject matter.



ZACH FREEMAN | TRI-COUNTY REPORTER
Thiem dressed in his winter best for the Dec. 16 board of trustees meeting at the Azle ISD administration building.

Azle School Menu Jan 13-17, 2025

BREAKFAST: PreK-4th Grade, 7-12th Grade \$1.55
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 s and Cereal, Juice, White or Chocolate Milk, Graham Crackers, Toast

Mon Apple Frudell, Apple Juice, Fruit Cup **Tues** French Toast, Mini's, Fruit Cup **Weds** Cinni, Minis, Apple Juice, Cup
Thurs Elementary Breakfast Bites, Apple **Fri** Cinni, Minis, Apple Juice, Fruit Cup

LUNCH: Everyday - Variety of milk. Your choice of 1 & 1 or juice

Mon Crunchy Tacos, Mac & Cheese, Whole Wheat Roll, Black Beans, Strawberry, Slices **Tues** Grilled Cheese Sandwich, Mini Corn Dogs, Mixed Fruit **Weds** Chicken Nuggets, Maxstixs, Buttery Mashed Potatoes, Marinara, Paradise Punch Juice **Thurs** Beef & Cheese Nachos **Fri** Cheese Pizza, Cheeseburger, Emoji Fries, Apple

GRADES 5TH - 8TH

BREAKFAST: Everyday - Assorted s and Cereal, Juice, White or Chocolate Milk, Yogurt w/Granola

Mon Dutch Waffle, Apple **Tues** Breakfast Taco Egg, Sausage and Cheese, Oranges
Weds All-Star Breakfast Combo, Bananas

Thurs Breakfast on a stick, Yogurt Parfaits, Banana Muffin **Fri** French Toast Sticks, Glazed Donut, Mixed Fruit

LUNCH: Everyday: Variety of milk. Your choice of 1 & 1 or juice, rolls, crackers • Salad bar offered daily

Mon Cheeseburger, Corn Dog, Mac & Cheese, Whole Wheat Roll, Crinkle Fries **Tues** Chicken Alfredo, Maxstixs, Spicy Chicken Sandwich, Garlic Bread Stick, Crinkle Fries **Weds** Cheeseburger, Chicken Tenders, Popcorn Chicken Bowl, Whole Wheat Roll, Crinkle Fries, Paradise Punch Juice, **Thurs** Breaded Chicken Sandwich, Chicken Bacon Ranch Wrap, Spaghetti w/ Meatsauce **Fri** Cheese Pizza, Mini Corn Dogs, Walkin' Taco, Corn, Crinkle Fries, Apple, Apple Juice, Peaches

HIGH SCHOOL

BREAKFAST: Everyday - Assorted s and Cereal, Juice, White or Chocolate Milk, Yogurt w/Granola

Mon Cinnamon Toast Crunch, Reduced Sugar, 2 oz, Dutch Waffle, Apple Juice, Oranges, Hashbrown
Tues Breakfast Bites (mini pancake with sausage), Yogurt Parfaits, Banana Muffin, Apple, Apple Juice
Weds French Toast Sticks, Glazed Donut, Apple Juice, Mixed **Thurs** No school **Fri** No school

LUNCH: • Everyday: 1% unflavored or non fat chocolate milk & juice • Salad Bar

Mon Cheeseburger, Steak Fingers, Mozzarella Sticks, Pepperoni Pizza, Chicken Burrito, Orange Chicken & Rice, Cheeseburger, Steak Fingers **Tues** Buffalo Boneless Wings (SPICY), Mac & Cheese, Pizza Pocket (cazone), Supreme Pizza, Beef Quesadilla Triangles, Chicken Ramen, Buffalo Boneless Wings (SPICY), Mac & Cheese **Weds** Chicken and Waffles, Mini Corn Dogs, Meatlovers Pizza, Pepperoni Pizza Pocket, Arroz con Pollo (Cheesy Chicken & Rice), TSO Chicken w/ Noodles **Thurs** Breaded Chicken Sandwich, Chicken Bacon Ranch Wrap, Cheese Pizza, Hamburger Pizza, Tostada (Mexican pizza), Chicken Fried Rice w/ Chicken Egg Roll **Fri** Hot Dog, Maxstixs, Bacon Pizza, Cheese Pizza, Pork Tamales, Sweet Fire Chicken, Hot Dog, Maxstixs

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Springtown School Menu

BREAKFAST PRICES

EC-12th Grade	\$1.75
EC-12th Reduced	\$0.30
Adult	\$2.25

LUNCH PRICES

PK-4th Grade	\$3.00
5th-8th Grade	\$3.25
High School	\$3.00
Reduced	\$0.40
Adult	\$4.25

Students may prepay for their meals. *Menus are subject to change.

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 Eggo Froot Loops Waffles, Unsweetened Peach **Tues** Biscuit, Pineapple **Weds** Eggstravaganza, Sliced Pears **Thurs** Breakfast Pizza, Fresh Apple Slices **Fri** Yogurt Parfait, Granola, Strawberries

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

Mon BBQ Rib Sandwich, Chicken Wings, Hot & Spicy Chicken Wings, Roll, Fiesta Sticks, Fresh Baby Carrots, Roasted Broccoli **Tues** Chicken Alfredo with a Twist, Chicken Fried Steak Sandwich, Yogurt & Pretzel Box, Side Salad **Weds** Regular or Spicy Tenders, Waffles, Tator Tots, Fresh Veggies, Apple, Blueberries **Thurs** Beef or Chicken Tacos, Beef or Chicken Nachos, Refried Beans **Fri** Baked Potato w/Pulled Pork, Pulled Pork Sandwich, Roasted Broccoli, Roll, Banana, Sliced Strawberries

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 BBQ Rib Sandwich, Chicken Wings, Hot & Spicy Chicken Wings, Roll, Fiesta Sticks, Fresh Baby Carrots, Roasted Broccoli **Tues** Chicken Alfredo with a Twist, Chicken Fried Steak Sandwich, Yogurt & Pretzel Box, Side Salad **Weds** Regular or Spicy Tenders, Waffles, Tator Tots, Fresh Veggies, Apple, Blueberries **Thurs** Beef or Chicken Tacos, Beef or Chicken Nachos, Refried Beans **Fri** Baked Potato w/Pulled Pork, Pulled Pork Sandwich, Roasted Broccoli, Roll, Banana, Sliced Strawberries

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THURSDAY, January 9, 2025

AD CLASSIFICATIONS

- 001 Asphalt & Cement
- 002 Auctions
- 003 Business/Commercial
- 004 Business Opportunity
- 005 Cleaning Services
- 006 Construction/Contractors
- 007 Demolition
- 008 Electrician
- 009 Excavating
- 010 Fencing
- 011 Firewood
- 012 For Sale
- 013 Garage & Estate Sale
- 014 Help Wanted
- 015 Home Improvement
- 016 Landscape & Mowing Services

- 017 Livestock & Pets
- 018 Lost & Found
- 019 Masonry & Stonework
- 020 Moving & Hauling
- 021 Painting
- 022 Plumbing
- 023 Pressure Washing
- 024 Real Estate for Rent
- 025 Real Estate for Sale
- 026 Repair Services
- 027 Roofing
- 028 Sand, Gravel & Soil
- 029 Small Business
- 030 Storage
- 031 Welding
- 032 Miscellaneous

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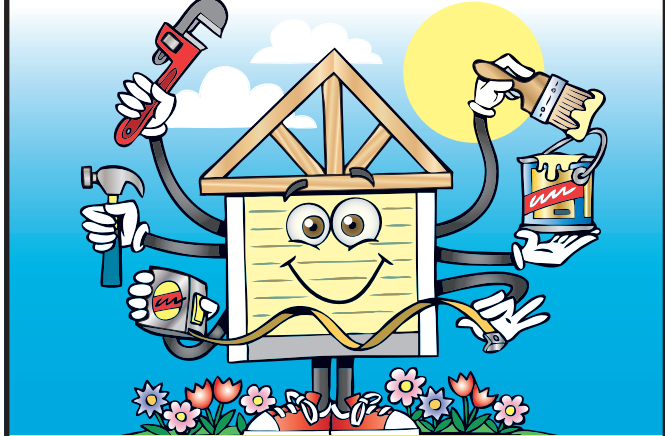
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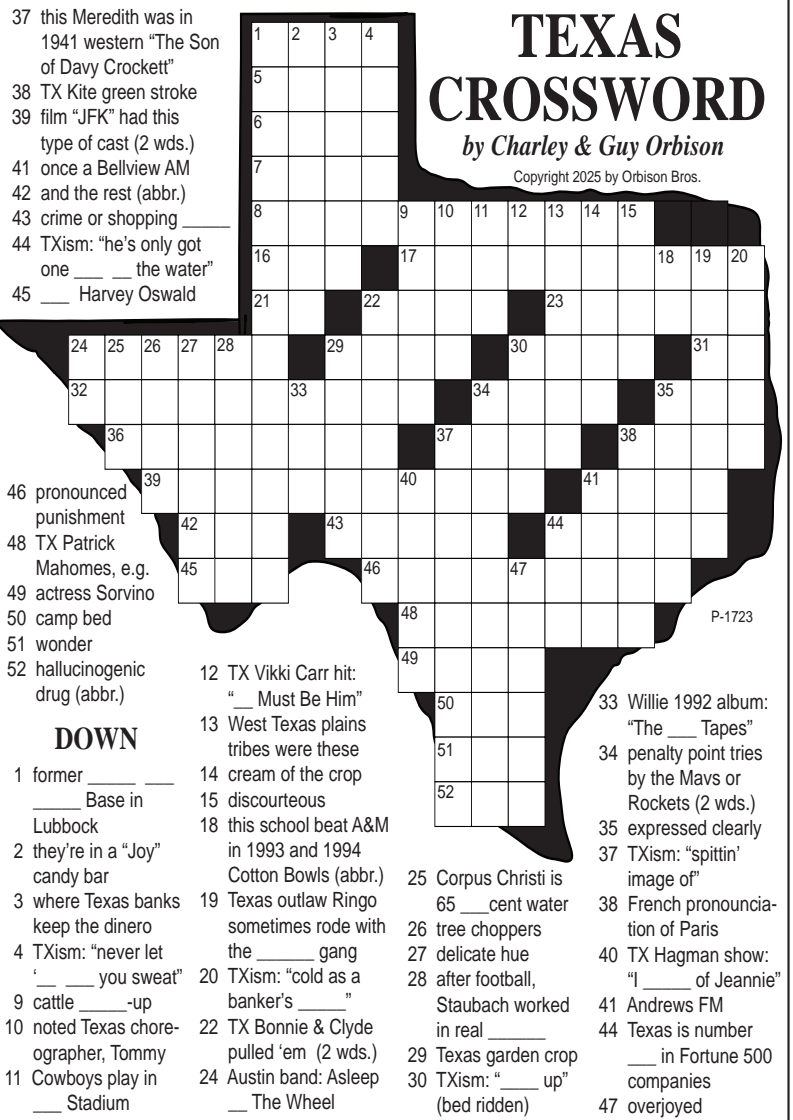
- 1 TX Buddy Holly tune: "___ On"
- 5 Jack of sitcom "The Texas Wheelers"
- 6 large birds raised on some Texas ranches
- 7 Edwards Aquifer is the ___ source of drinking water for San Antonio
- 8 TX Pride was 1971 CMA ___ of the Year
- 16 Dallas Morning News banned these from front page in 1907
- 17 TXism: "he's ___" (not alert)
- 21 TX Barbara Mandrell sang "If Loving You ___ Wrong"
- 22 Olney hosts "One-Armed Dove ___"
- 23 TX rancher Chuck Norris was ___ weight karate champ
- 24 TXism: "couldn't fight his way out of ___ bag"
- 29 TXism: "___ up on" (study)
- 30 TX Lefty Frizzell hit: "Always ___ With Your Kisses"
- 31 Grapeland High class
- 32 big oil producer: East ___
- 34 TX Buddy Holly hit: "Not ___ Away"
- 35 Nolan's full initials
- 36 the Capitol was ___ in 1995
- 37 this Meredith was in 1941 western "The Son of Davy Crockett"
- 38 TX Kite green stroke
- 39 film "JFK" had this type of cast (2 wds.)
- 41 once a Bellview AM
- 42 and the rest (abbr.)
- 43 crime or shopping ___
- 44 TXism: "he's only got one ___ the water"
- 45 ___ Harvey Oswald
- 46 pronounced punishment
- 48 TX Patrick Mahomes, e.g.
- 49 actress Sorvino
- 50 camp bed
- 51 wonder
- 52 hallucinogenic drug (abbr.)
- 12 TX Vikki Carr hit: "___ Must Be Him"
- 13 West Texas plains tribes were these
- 14 cream of the crop
- 15 discourteous
- 18 this school beat A&M in 1993 and 1994
- 19 Texas outlaw Ringo sometimes rode with the ___ gang
- 20 TXism: "cold as a banker's ___"
- 22 TX Bonnie & Clyde pulled 'em (2 wds.)
- 24 Austin band: Asleep ___ The Wheel

DOWN

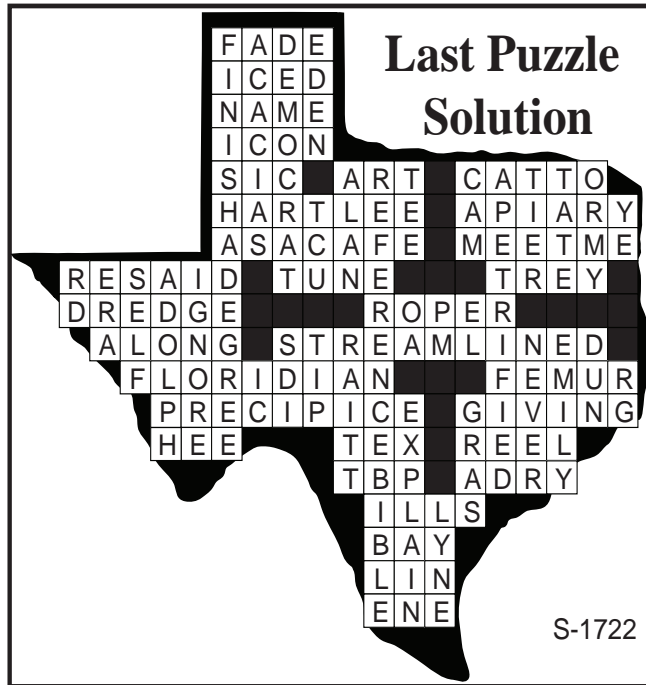
- 1 former ___
- ___ Base in Lubbock
- 2 they're in a "Joy" candy bar
- 3 where Texas banks keep the dinero
- 4 TXism: "never let ___ you sweat"
- 9 cattle ___ up
- 10 noted Texas choreographer, Tommy
- 11 Cowboys play in ___ Stadium
- 25 Corpus Christi is 65 ___cent water
- 26 tree choppers
- 27 delicate hue
- 28 after football, Staubach worked in real ___
- 29 Texas garden crop
- 30 TXism: "___ up" (bed ridden)
- 33 Willie 1992 album: "The ___ Tapes"
- 34 penalty point tries by the Mavs or Rockets (2 wds.)
- 35 expressed clearly
- 37 TXism: "spittin' image of"
- 38 French pronunciation of Paris
- 40 TX Hagman show: "I ___ of Jeannie"
- 41 Andrews FM
- 44 Texas is number ___ in Fortune 500 companies
- 47 overjoyed

TEXAS CROSSWORD

by Charley & Guy Orbison
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Last Puzzle Solution



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