

# Lampasas Dispatch Record

VOL. 117, NO. 43 ONE SECTION

TUESDAY, MAY 31, 2022

75 CENTS



## Remembering the fallen

VERONICA BUTLER | DISPATCH RECORD

Oak Hill Cemetery has approximately 800 graves of veterans, whose service ranged from the Texas Revolution to World War II and beyond. Every year before Memorial Day, the American Legion Post 277 and other groups place flags at the veterans' graves.

## Kempner council sets budget discussion

BY ALEXANDRIA RANDOLPH  
DISPATCH RECORD

The Kempner City Council tabled a discussion of the city budget for fiscal year 2022-2023, but members still had much to discuss at last week's meeting.

Due to a miscommunication, the budget discussion that was slated for the May 24 meeting will be held June 14, city officials said.

But council members noted a few items to discuss.

Mayor John "J.W." Wilkerson said he and city staff recently discovered a possible budget error.

"None of my figures were adding up on the street fund," he said. "We found out there is a high likelihood that the city has been underfunding the street

fund, and now we've got to figure out how long that has been going on."

Wilkerson added that "with the new council and the staff allowed to do their jobs, we're figuring these things out and moving forward."

City Manager David Williams told the council the city will receive the second installment of American Rescue Plan Act funding in August. Council members discussed whether the funds could be used to lease police patrol vehicles, but there was uncertainty about the conditions that apply to the funds.

"We need to dive into that further," Wilkerson said. "I would really be cautious to earmark those funds for that lease program."

Council members also

discussed adjustments to employee salaries.

"The problem we're having is retention," Councilman Thomas Combs said.

"Based on the figures I saw, we need to pay more. I would rather spend more money on the only service we truly provide people: the police department."

Wilkerson said he is familiar with market value studies for police officers through his career with the Texas Municipal Police Association.



David C. Williams II

SEE BUDGET, PAGE 8

## Army officials honor 13 at Memorial Day event

BY ALEXANDRIA RANDOLPH  
DISPATCH RECORD

U.S. Army officials memorialized the loss of American soldiers at a Kempner ceremony on Monday.

Kempner's Memorial Day ceremony was held at the Sylvia Tucker Memorial Park, with Lt. Col. Dean Huard serving as the keynote speaker.

Huard is an Army logistics officer who began his career with 26 years in the U.S. Coast Guard. He then served as quartermaster officer at the University of Oregon.

For the past 30 years, Huard has served in leadership positions with the National Guard, U.S. Army Reserves and in active duty. He is the brigade executive officer/ chief of staff of the 407th Army Field Support Brigade at Fort Hood.

During his service, he deployed in support of Opera-

tion Enduring Freedom, Operation Iraqi Freedom and Operation Inherent Resolve. His decorations include the Bronze Star, Defense Meritorious Service Medal and Joint Service Commendation Medal.

During Monday's ceremony, Huard spoke about the loss of 13 American soldiers in Kabul, Afghanistan in August 2021.

"The servicemen who died last August in a terrorist bombing is no longer in the news," he said. "They'll be remembered in services like this one."

Huard shared the names and ages of each of the soldiers, as well as quotes from social media posts and information about their family life and interests.

"They came from every background ... but shared a common goal: to serve the United States," he said. "Our history is filled with stories

of sacrifice."

Huard said over one million American soldiers have fallen in a multitude of conflicts in the last century.

"They died so we can continue to cherish the things that they loved," he said, "God, country and family."

He said many have sacrificed their lives "to keep America secure against those enemies who would destroy the American way of life."

Huard encouraged the audience to honor those sacrifices by caring for surviving veterans and taking time to memorialize the fallen through events like the Memorial Day ceremony.

Col. Anthony Barbina, 36th Engineer Brigade commander at Fort Hood, also was present for the ceremony. Barbina's brigade assisted in the construction of the memorial wall at Sylvia Tucker Memorial Park.



ALEXANDRIA RANDOLPH | DISPATCH RECORD

Several Fort Hood officers attended the Kempner Memorial Day ceremony on Monday. Pictured left to right are Lt. Col. Dean Huard, Col. Anthony Barbina and Kempner Mayor J.W. Wilkerson.

## Council discusses competitive salaries for city staff

BY ALEXANDRIA RANDOLPH  
DISPATCH RECORD

Lampasas City Council members discussed discrepancies in city staff salaries during a recent capital improvements workshop, and they revisited the issue during a regular council meeting last week.

On May 19, the council heard a report from staff about competitive salaries. After hearing a follow-up on May 23, the council determined it would hold future discussions about how to increase pay and offer employees more

incentives.

City Manager Finley deGraffenried said the city has been falling behind in compensation compared to other municipalities of similar size and growing cities nearby.

"There's been an acceleration of wages here recently," he said. "We're closer to our competition now, as our competition has grown out to us."

Assistant City Manager

Ryan Ward provided Texas Municipal League survey data in which Texas cities such as Brownwood, Fredericksburg, Lago Vista, Gatesville and Marble Falls participated. Twenty city staff positions were considered, and Lampasas had 13 comparable positions.

Using a range of salaries in each city for the identified employment position, the TML survey calculated the average salaries for each position in each city. Lampasas salaries were higher on average for four positions

and lower for nine others.

According to the TML survey data, Lampasas pays a 2.6% higher salary on average for a finance director, 11.2% higher salary for library director, 7.3% higher for Parks & Recreation director and almost 7.9% higher for the police chief position.

The city pays a 13.8% lower salary on average to accounting specialists, 13% lower for assistant city manager, 1.4% lower for a building official, 21% lower for court clerks, 2% lower for a fire chief, 19% lower for firefighters,

19.8% lower for an IT manager, 3.2% lower for a development director and almost 11% lower for police officers.

"Some of the percentages are significant," Ward said, citing the 21% difference in court clerk salary. "We're going to try to look at the base salary on that position and get it up to average."

During the workshop session, Ward pointed out that while the percentage of the discrepancies seem large, other percentages may represent only a small difference in annual

salary.

"The difference may only be about \$1,000," he said.

In the regular council meeting last Monday, Ward said he presented survey results that were statistically relevant, striking out data points that were dramatically imbalanced based on city population or tax base.

"I tried to get the best apples-to-apples comparison," he said. "You also want to take into account the proximity of the towns we're competing against."

SEE STAFFERS, PAGE 8

### WEATHER

| Date   | High | Low | Rain |
|--------|------|-----|------|
| May 25 | 77   | 57  | 0    |
| May 26 | 93   | 59  | 0    |
| May 27 | 91   | 65  | 0    |
| May 28 | 93   | 66  | 0    |

Total rainfall for 2022: 4.28 in.

Data from the Lower Colorado River Authority (site 11 miles west-northwest of Lampasas, near Nix).

### BRIEFLY

#### KIWANIS PEACH SALE

The Kiwanis Club of Lampasas is offering Texas peaches to raise funds for local scholarships.

A 22-pound box of peaches is \$50. Orders must be placed by July 8. Call Randy Morris at 512-556-6220, First State Bank of Burnet at 512-556-5466 or Cooley Baltrun PLLC at 512-556-6228 to place an order.

Or send a check with phone number to Kiwanis Club, P.O. Box

1621, Lampasas TX 76550. Pick-up date is July 16 from 9-11 a.m. at the Hostess House parking lot.

#### LITTLE NIGHT MUSIC

The concert series Little Night Music will kick off Friday at the courthouse bandstand in downtown Lampasas.

Zach Morris is slated to perform from 8-10 p.m.

Courtyard Square Association will offer free lemonade, water and popcorn. Those who attend should bring a lawn chair for the evening of musical entertainment.

#### LAMPASAS MISSION

Lampasas Mission has announced it's in need of clean plastic grocery bags. Plastics bags can be dropped off at the Mission, located at 910 E. Fourth St.

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## Annual Kid Fish event Friday

### Library offers "Fishing 101" on Wednesday

BY ALEXANDRIA RANDOLPH  
DISPATCH RECORD

The annual Kid Fish & Camping in the Park will return to Lampasas on Friday, and this year the Lampasas Public Library will partner with Parks & Recreation to teach "Fishing 101."

Chris Eicher, Parks & Recreation director, said the Kid Fish at W.M. Brook Park has been held annually for more than 16 years.

"It's come one, come all," he said.

Fishing registration will begin Friday at 5 p.m. Kids can bring a fishing pole from home or borrow one from event staff.

"As soon as they are registered, they can start fishing," Eicher said. "We'll be out there fishing all night long."

Children who want to camp overnight at the park must be accompanied by a parent or guardian.

A hot dog supper will be held at 7:30 p.m., with a movie and popcorn to follow at dark.

"We'll be showing 'Encanto,'" Eicher said. "We hire a company to bring in an inflatable screen and projector."

After the movie, S'mores will be offered around a campfire.

Fishing will continue until noon Saturday, with breakfast tacos provided at 7:30 a.m.

Awards will be presented to those who catch the biggest fish within the following age categories: 2-6 years, 7-11 years and 12-16 years.

The fishing event brings anywhere from 100 to 300 kids to the park, Eicher said.

In preparation for the fishing derby, Lampasas Public Library will host "Fishing 101," a lesson on fishing. The



Daniel Chapman prepares a cane pole for his son, Rory Chapman, 7, during the 2021 Spring Ho Festival fishing derby at W.M. Brook Park.

FILE PHOTO

program will be held at W.M. Brook Park from 10-11 a.m. Wednesday.

Assistant Library Director Emily Stone said library staff will assist children who are new to outdoor skills.

"Not all kids in Lampasas know how to fish, and we'll have someone from Texas Parks & Wildlife Department there to teach them," she said.

Library employees will also be at the park Friday evening to support Kid Fish, Stone said.

"We'll be out there at about 6 p.m. on Friday with tips and tricks for camping," she said. "This will be in conjunction with our summer reading program. It fits well with our nature themes."

This year's Summer Reading Program at the library is themed "Read Beyond the Beaten Path," and encourages kids to enjoy reading and the outdoors.

Stone said she has some general wilderness knowledge, being both a reader and "a big camper my whole life, too."

Stone joked that she is "guilty of bringing books on a hike."



COURTESY PHOTO

Lampasas Middle School National Junior Honor Society students collected toy donations and raised funds for children in the Lampasas CPS program. Pictured from left to right are Jacie Resa, Sagen Plouff, Laylah Bryant, Toby Brooks-Potter and Juan Rodriguez.

## Middle school students raise funds for local children in need

BY ALEXANDRIA RANDOLPH  
DISPATCH RECORD

Lampasas Middle School National Junior Honor Society students raised more than \$600 and collected toys for local children in the Child Protective Services program.

"We had such a good time doing this," said Carrie Shahan, an instructional specialist and NJHS sponsor at Lampasas Middle School.

In previous years, the students have raised money for Pennies for Kids, a nationwide fundraiser effort, Shahan said, but that was discontinued. The students brainstormed and decided to hold a toy drive for

children in the Lampasas CPS program.

"They came up with the idea all on their own," Shahan said.

Shahan added that NJHS students were concerned that children in need received donations during the holiday periods but not as often during other times of the year.

The students organized and held a Cardio for Kids Walk at LMS. The NJHS students prepared fliers to advertise the event. Each student who participated donated \$1 toward the toy drive. Students walked the campus on dates organized by grade level. Sixth-graders walked on May 9, seventh-graders on May 12 and eighth-graders on

May 13.

"We raised close to \$600 just from the walk," Shahan said.

Toys also were collected through Prime Time teachers' [homeroom] classes.

"We asked for education toys, jump ropes and sidewalk chalk," Shahan said. "We received 40 to 50 different items. Some kids gave \$10 apiece to their Prime Time teachers."

After the donation drive, NJHS students developed many ideas for how to handle next year's donation event, Shahan said, including holding a Pennies for Kids-like event that allows students to donate as much as they would like.

## Area residents react to gas prices inching toward \$5

BY VERONICA BUTLER  
AND MONIQUE BRAND  
DISPATCH RECORD

Prices at the gasoline pump are hitting hard, and some area residents voiced their concern about the increases.

Statewide, the average price is \$4.29 for a gallon of regular unleaded fuel, according to the AAA Texas Weekend Gas Watch. That price is the highest average ever recorded by AAA for the state. It is 19 cents more than last week and \$1.53 more per gallon compared to this day last year.

Of the major metropolitan areas surveyed in Texas, drivers in the Fort Worth-Arlington and Dallas areas are paying the most on average at \$4.40 per gallon,

while drivers in Amarillo are paying the least at \$4.01 per gallon.

In Lampasas last Monday, gasbuddy.com users reported the cheapest gasoline was \$4.14 per gallon at Murphy USA.

Tammy Ashburg of Kempner told the Dispatch Record with gas prices being so high she contemplated not going to work the last couple of days. She commutes to Austin every weekday.

"It's devastating, and it keeps going up," Ashburg said Sunday of prices at the pump.

Killeen resident Tory Martin commutes to Lampasas during the week, as he works in the county.

"It's getting to be too much. Inflation is real, and we are

feeling [it] severely," Martin said.

Lampasas resident Shauna Mulberry told the Dispatch Record she has chosen the work-from-home option to save money.

"I'm thankful for having the means to fill my tank," she said. "Some are not so lucky, but as it continues to go up I get concerned."

And the problem is not unique to Lampasas County. Nationwide, the average price for a gallon of regular unleaded is \$4.59, which is 17 cents more than last week and \$1.55 more than the price per gallon at this same time last year.

The statewide average continues to hit record highs, as crude oil inched up to \$115 a barrel earlier in May.

U.S. demand increased week to week, while regional supplies dipped. The all-time high prices come as 3.2 million Texans will be traveling over the Memorial Day weekend, according to AAA Texas data.

"It's been another record-breaking week at the gas pump, with no immediate relief in sight for drivers," AAA Texas spokesperson Daniel Armbruster said. "However, higher gas prices have historically not deterred people from traveling; rather, some may modify their plans such as eating out fewer times or choosing less expensive activities as well as accommodations."



MASON HINES | DISPATCH RECORD

The price for diesel at a local gas station rose to just under \$5 last week. Gasoline prices also are above \$4 per gallon and increasing.

### COLLEGE HONORS

#### ABILENE CHRISTIAN UNIVERSITY

Olivia Zmolik of Lampasas has been named to the Abilene Christian University Spring 2022 Dean's Honor Roll.

Zmolik is a freshman majoring in chemistry.

To qualify for the Dean's Honor Roll, students must be registered for 12 or more credit hours and earn a grade-point average of 3.6 or higher.

#### ANGELO STATE UNIVERSITY

Angelo State University conferred 880 undergraduate and graduate degrees during the 2022 spring commencement exercises May 13-14 at the Junell Center/Stephens Arena in

San Angelo.

Among the graduates were Hunter Oncken of Lampasas, who earned a Bachelor of Science in agribusiness, and Luis Torres of Lometa, who received his Bachelor of Arts in political science.

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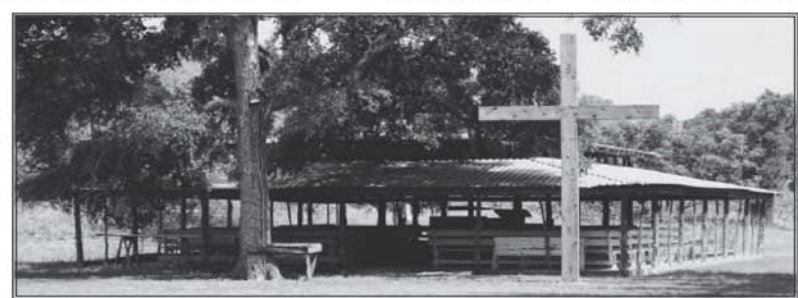
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## It is time for changes in school security

And now, Uvalde. This South Texas city was once the home of a United States vice president, John Nance Garner, and a Texas governor, Dolph Briscoe. It now has the sad and tragic distinction of being where one of the deadliest school shootings in history took place.

All this after Salvador Ramos, an 18-year-old Uvalde resident from a troubled family background, last Tuesday shot and critically wounded his grandmother, took her pickup and wrecked it near Robb Elementary School before he entered the building through a propped-open door. He proceeded to terrorize the campus, killing 19 children and two teachers.

Four minutes after the gunman entered the school, the first officers with the school district and the Uvalde Police Department entered the building but pulled back after coming under fire, a Texas Department of Public Safety spokesman said. The officers called for help, including requests for special equipment, body armor, precision shooters and negotiators, the DPS said. At that point, the police response shifted to getting students and teachers out of other classrooms, the spokesman said.

About an hour later, a Border Patrol tactical team arrived, entered the classroom where the shooter was barricaded and fatally shot him, according to the DPS.

In the aftermath of the massacre, questions have abounded about what could have been done differently and, in the future, should be done differently to help prevent other such crimes. Similar soul-searching undoubtedly occurred after mass slayings at Sandy Hook Elementary School in Newtown, Conn., Marjory Stoneman Douglas High School in Parkland, Fla., and Columbine High School in Littleton, Colo.

Dick Morris, an adviser to presidents Bill Clinton and Donald Trump, told television

**It is time for a more aggressive law-enforcement approach. Lampasas ISD should train and arm some of its staff. And each campus needs a full-time, armed school resource officer to help protect students and staff.**

talk show host Grant Stinchfield that what stopped airplane hijackings was armed guards and the installation of metal detectors at airports. Morris suggested schools have just one entry point, one exit point and armed guards at each location.

In addition, he indicated schools should train and arm teachers.

Participation should be voluntary, he said.

The former presidential adviser does not believe gun control will stem school shootings. He acknowledged, when questioned by Stinchfield, that his thinking has evolved from being a proponent of gun control to that of a more aggressive law-enforcement approach. He quoted the late British Prime Minister Winston Churchill: "When the facts change, I change my opinions. What do you do, man?"

The Dispatch Record believes Morris' suggestions bear serious consideration.

Long before last week's events, Lometa Independent School District instituted training and arming of some of its staff. Lampasas ISD should do likewise.

Presently, Lampasas ISD has a school resource officer at its high school and middle school campuses. But what about Taylor Creek, Hanna Springs and Kline Whitis elementary campuses? They each need a full-time armed law-enforcement presence, as well. After all, elementary students are the most defenseless of any of our students.

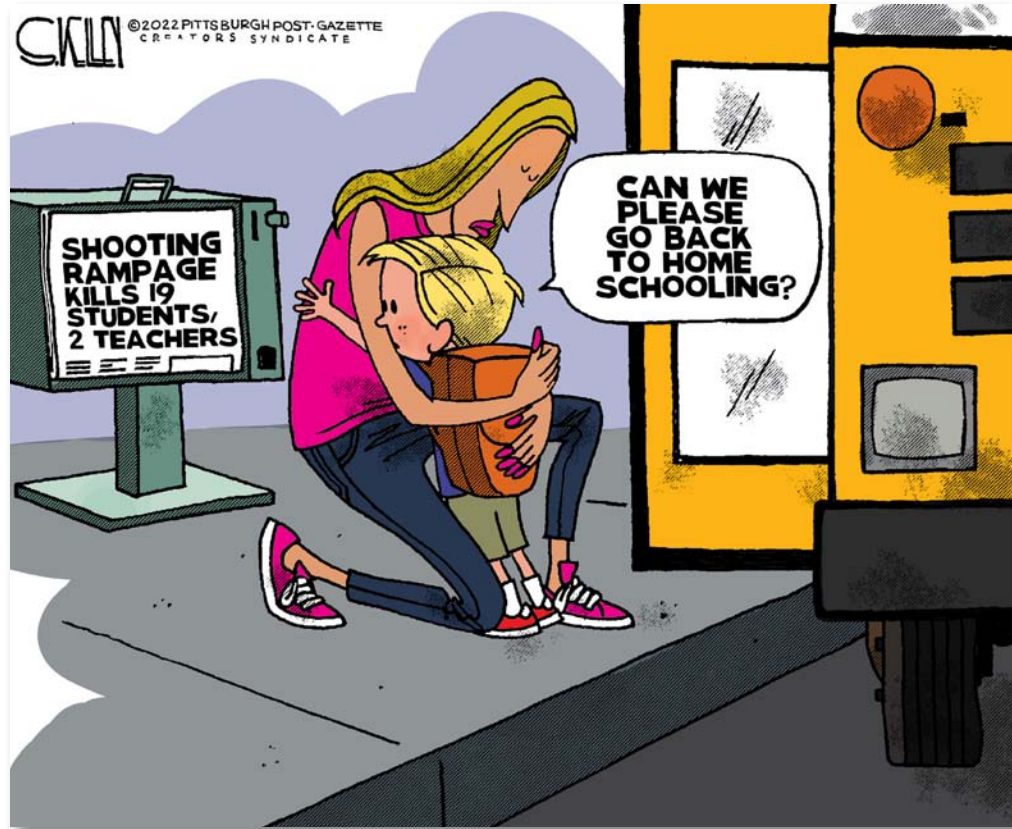
If the added cost to the school district and city gives anyone pause, think about the value of each student, teacher, support staff member and administrator.

And the Lampasas school district would not have to absorb the total cost, as the city shares in the expense. At present, LISD pays three-fourths of the cost to staff a police officer on campus; the city, one-fourth. Resource officers patrol the city when school is out of session.

Consider this, too: When Lampasas school trustees OK'd a \$35.9 million budget for fiscal year 2022, it was estimated the general fund balance -- essentially its savings account -- would be between \$12 million and \$13 million at the end of this fiscal year. The school district can afford the added cost for beefed-up protection of its students. The Lampasas ISD also can free up funds by making staffing cuts through attrition. Some vacant employee positions would remain unfilled, so funds could be diverted to campus security.

The mass slayings at Robb Elementary School show that reforms in school security measures must be made.

And the time to address those reforms is now.



## Difficult search for answers after Uvalde

I find myself more shaken and stricken after last week's latest mass shooting -- the elementary school massacre in Uvalde, Texas, that saw 19 children and two teachers slain in cold blood -- than I did after other mass shootings in recent years.

Part of that is biographical: As an ex-Texan, the son of an elementary school teacher and the owner of a rifle made by the same manufacturer as was the apparent murder weapon, this just hit home a little closer. And part of that, of course, is the sheer nature of the evil incarnate the likes of which decides to go shoot up a schoolhouse.

The palpable nature of that profound evil in our midst is yet the latest reminder of the truism, contrary to modern convention though that truism may be, that man is by his nature inclined toward iniquity. As God Himself says in Genesis 8:21, "The imagination of man's heart is evil from his youth." Naturally inclined toward tradition, conservatives -- if perhaps no one else -- intuit this. As the great conservative statesman Edmund Burke once said, "Men are qualified for civil liberty in exact proportion to their disposition to put moral chains upon their own appetites -- in proportion as their love to justice is above their rapacity."

In theory, in an America ravaged by plummeting church attendance and a concomitant crisis of mass despondency, this sentiment could militate in favor of greater "gun control" measures. But in America there is, of course, our cherished Second Amendment -- with its individual right to gun ownership secured in our jurisprudence by the landmark 2008 Supreme Court case, *District of Columbia v. Heller*. Just as important, there is also the unavoidable reality that, in the year 2022, there are now more firearms in circulation in America than there are human beings. Put simply, even if one wanted to better "control" guns, that ship has sailed at this point.

**'Gun control' fails on both empirical and historical grounds. All too many of the other great tragedies of history were perpetrated by armed troops against unarmed populations.**

The "conservative theoretical case" for greater gun "control" thus fails on empirical grounds. But it also fails on alternative theoretical -- and historically informed -- grounds.

As then-Judge Alex Kozinski of the U.S. Court of Appeals for the Ninth Circuit wrote in a powerful dissent from denial of en banc rehearing in the 2003 case of *Silveira v. Lockyer*: "All too many of the other great tragedies of history -- Stalin's atrocities, the killing fields of Cambodia, the Holocaust, to name but a few -- were perpetrated by armed troops against unarmed populations. ... If a few hundred Jewish fighters in the Warsaw Ghetto could hold off the Wehrmacht for almost a month with only a handful of weapons, six million Jews armed with rifles could not so easily have been herded into cattle cars. ..."

"The prospect of tyranny may not grab the headlines the way vivid stories of

gun crime routinely do. But few saw the Third Reich coming until it was too late. The Second Amendment is a doomsday provision, one designed for those exceptionally rare circumstances where all other rights have failed."

As unspeakably evil as atrocities like Uvalde are, those words are just as true today as they have ever been. (Indeed, if anything, in the aftermath of two years of COVID-induced hysteria, they ring even truer.) And as a poignant reminder of the ever-lurking threat of that "prospect of tyranny," I keep on my work desk at all times a rock that a rabbi once gave me that he smuggled out of the Auschwitz crematorium -- as well as a rock I personally took from the killing field of Treblinka. One can trace a direct line from those rocks to my rifle.

Greater "gun control," then, is simply not the answer. There must be a very strong rebuttable presumption against even incremental proposed reforms, such as so-called "red flag" laws. And based on all the available empirical evidence, that presumption has not been overcome in any gun-related reform now discussed.

What, then, to do? Tragically, there are no easy answers. At a micro level, governments at all levels must increase funding for mental health awareness and early-intervention programs.

At a macro level, it is well past time to start rolling back the liberalization of involuntary commitment that roiled American society in the tumultuous 1960s and 1970s. Making it easier to remove mentally disturbed and patently insane loners from the streets would not merely have a salutary effect on alleviating America's epidemic of mass shootings; it would also help ameliorate our homelessness epidemic, given the disproportionate number of homeless individuals who are mentally ill. Prosecutors must also more stringently pursue gun trafficking, straw purchasing and other firearms-related charges.

Every single school in America must also be hardened. It is incumbent upon governors and state legislatures to ensure every single school in their jurisdiction has armed security and a single entrance point (multiple one-way, exit-only doors are fine). Crucially, this cannot be left up to superintendents on a district-by-district basis; this must be mandated by state governments. In the 2012 Aurora, Colorado, movie theater mass shooting, the shooter chose the only theater in the immediate radius that did *not* permit moviegoers to carry a concealed weapon. We cannot risk psychopathic would-be school shooters making a similar calculation about a comparatively "softer" school target.

Innocent children are society's most precious assets. That a parent can drop a child off at school and ever harbor any doubts about whether that child will return at the end of the school day is beyond inexcusable. If Democrats agree, then they will work with Republicans on some of these clear and obvious measures -- assuming, of course, they don't take the cowardly way out and resort to grandstanding about misbegotten "gun control."

**JOSH HAMMER** is opinion editor of Newsweek, a research fellow with the Edmund Burke Foundation and a syndicated columnist with Creators.

## Finding a path in a plague of evil

Two more days, and the classrooms would have been empty. Parents would be at home, going over lists for summer camp or rubbing sunblock on those small faces at the pool.

They wouldn't be reliving the moment they dropped their sons and daughters off at school, kissing them goodbye for what would be the last time. They wouldn't be waking up in the rawest pain of their lives, empty bedrooms down the hall. And they wouldn't be consumed by the guilt that if they'd just kept their kids home that day, none of this would have happened.

There isn't a parent in America who didn't wake up this morning and have the terrifying thought: That could have been us. For 22 families in Uvalde, Texas, it's the kind of loss most people can't fathom. Children, mowed down after their end-of-year awards.

Hero teachers, sacrificing themselves to save the little children behind them. In a single instant, the entire elementary school went from a summer celebration to a bloody warzone that would change the community forever. "Don't take a hug for granted," one dad said through tears. "Tell them you love them."

We've watched moms and dads in communities all across America experience the same inexplicable grief. We've cried at the photos of smiling fourth-graders who will never have another school picture. We've wept with the daughters who say they just want to hear their mom's voice again.

"I want everything back," Adalynn wrote on Facebook about fallen fourth-grade teacher Eva Mireles. "I want you to come home."

We think about the brave border agents who charged into the gunfire, risking everything to bring the shooter down. And we wonder: When will it stop?

There are more empty seats around the dinner tables in Texas now, victims of a story that started in Columbine and continues to break hearts from Connecticut to Virginia Tech. In the days since an 18-year-old walked into the halls of Robb Elementary, snuffing out the futures of so many children, the entire nation is grasping for solutions. Gun control and mental health funding are back on the table, but so is the longing for something deeper.

Despite what the Left says, our children aren't picking up rifles and killing people because there's a Second Amendment. There's been a Second Amendment for 231 years -- and school shootings have only been around the last 30. As Dr. Ben Carson has said, "The heart of the matter is not guns. The heart of the matter is the heart." And until we, as a nation, are willing to admit that, nothing will change.

These tragedies, whether they're in Sandy Hook or Santa Fe, are the slow burns of the cultural crisis that's destroying us. In a country that's seen far too many evils, it's time to acknowledge that we are a broken people in need of the God we keep pushing away.

Now is the time for honesty. What's really wrong, Peggy Noonan wrote after Parkland, is something deep down we all know. "The family blew up -- divorce, unwed childbearing. Fatherless sons. Fatherless daughters, too. Poor children with no one to love them. The internet flourished. Porn proliferated. Drugs, legal and illegal. Violent video games, in which nameless people are eliminated and spattered all over the screen ... The abortion regime settled in, with its fierce, endless yet somehow casual talk about the right to end a life ... So much change, so much of it ungentle. Throughout, was anyone looking to children and what they need?"

Four years later, the flags are at half-staff again -- not because the schools haven't been hardened but because too many hearts are. Most people have refused to go beyond what they see to what we know: that this is a spiritual problem. And only God's truth -- the same truth society has ridiculed, mocked and rejected -- is capable of fighting the evil plaguing our nation.

As my friend Ken Blackwell says, "You can't run faith out of the public square and not expect to have these sort of consequences."

Violence didn't get its start when God was expelled from school. But it's certainly been given a culture in which to thrive now that we've banned any discussion of the One who came that we might have life and have it more abundantly. Instead, the one who seeks to steal, kill and destroy has been given unhindered access.

Our schools have been forced into marginalizing the source of life. Religion is out, and defining your own reality is in. How can we be shocked when these products of our godless culture shatter society's false sense of security -- built on a foundation of lies? In a world that's walked away from God's design on life, marriage, family, and our very identity, no one should be surprised at what unfolds.

It's time to look beyond what's in the hands of these killers to what we've allowed to be put into their hearts and minds.

While these forces tug at the fraying fabric of America, our prayers are more important than ever. Join us in offering them -- for Uvalde's victims, for our leaders and for this nation. "The Lord is close to the brokenhearted and saves the crushed in spirit" (Psalm 34:18).

**TONY PERKINS** is the president of Family Research Council. His Washington Update is written with the aid of FRC Action senior writers.

### LETTERS POLICY

The Dispatch Record encourages letters from readers. Letters should be to the point, typed if possible, and signed. Address and telephone numbers also should be included for verification purposes.

Only one letter per writer will be considered in a 60-day period. Letters endorsing a position on issues of local interest will be accepted, but letters endorsing a candidate for political office will not be accepted. We reserve the right to edit for length, content and potentially libelous statements.

Send opinions to letters@lampasas.com, or mail to P.O. Box 631, Lampasas, TX 76550.



## Two Badgers nominated for area player of the year awards

BY HUNTER KING  
DISPATCH RECORD

Two former Badger athletes are nominated for Austin-area high school player of the year awards.

Case Brister has been nominated in back-to-back years, this time for offensive player of the year because of his performance at running back in his senior campaign. He was nominated for defensive player of the year in his junior season.

Nate Borchardt, the Badgers' standout basketball player, has been nominated for player of the year as well.

Brister accumulated nearly 2,000 total yards on offense and 19 touchdowns in his senior year, not including his effort as a kick returner.

He averaged 8.2 yards per carry and 140.4 rushing yards per game.

While he was nominated for the offensive award, the senior also recorded 102 tackles from his linebacker spot.

"Not only is Case Brister a tremendous athlete, but he was also a great teammate," said T.J. Cleavinger, the Badgers' new offensive coordinator. "He is a very bright young man with a great work ethic. The work put in over the course of his career and his 2021 performance made him very deserving of this nomination. Badger Nation will miss him."

What does this nomination mean to Brister after his final season of football?

"It's an honor to be recognized on both sides of the ball in my career," Brister said. "I have been

very blessed to have had coaches and teammates who support me and to help me achieve these accomplishments."

Borchardt, in his senior basketball campaign, scored 867 points on 37% shooting. He was 27% from three-point range and 74% from the free-throw line.

He also pulled down 183 rebounds, collected 107 assists, had 208 steals and 13 blocks.

In his four years as a Badger, Borchardt scored 1,925 total points, which puts him at second all-time in Lampasas school history.

Head basketball coach Aaron Nuckles couldn't say enough good things about his senior player.

"The list of finalists for this award is so impressive," Nuckles said. "Nate has done such a great job of molding his basketball game into the complete package ... on-ball defender, backside defender, shooter, driver, scorer and being able to read the opposing defense. "This nomination is just another tip of the hat for Nate on the hard work that he has put in for the past few years, quite impressive," the coach said.

Borchardt said it feels great to be nominated for something of this magnitude.

"I am super pumped about it and feel really honored to be nominated," the recent graduate said. "The nomination means a lot because it's a pretty big thing, and I've never been nominated for something like this."

The date of the live event where the winners will be announced is June 6, and the location is the Dell Hall in Austin.



Case Brister was a four-year varsity starter for the Badgers, playing both linebacker and running back in his career.



Nate Borchardt is the second-leading scorer in Badger basketball history and played varsity ball since his freshman year.

The winners of these awards will be announced June 6.

## Badgers and Lady Badgers to start summer basketball next week

BY HUNTER KING  
DISPATCH RECORD

The Badger and Lady Badger basketball teams will spend June playing in a summer league that begins next Monday and Tuesday.

The Badgers will play their first games on Tuesday against San Saba at 5 p.m. in the Lampasas High School gym and against Burnet at 7 p.m.

After that, the Badgers will play twice on June 14, twice on June 21 and twice on June

28. All games will be in the main high school gym.

The other teams in the league include Lometa, Faith Academy and two teams from Marble Falls.

For the Lady Badgers, the games will start on Monday. The girls' league also runs through the month of June.

Three different Lampasas teams will compete. They will play against teams such as Hamilton, Marble Falls, San Saba, Lago Vista, Burnet and Lometa.

On Monday, Lampasas

1 will meet Hamilton 1 at 4:50 p.m. in the main gym; Lampasas 2 will play Marble Falls 2 at 5:40 p.m. in the second gym; and Lampasas 3 will play Burnet 2 at 6:30 p.m. in the second gym.

Later in the evening, Lampasas 1 will play Lago Vista at 8:10 p.m., and Lampasas 2 will play Lometa and Burnet 2.

For the rest of the schedule, the Lady Badger teams will play multiple games on June 13, June 20 and June 27 in the two gyms at the high school.



FILE PHOTO

Incoming sophomore Addison Borchardt will be a leader for the Lady Badgers next season.



FILE PHOTO

Luke Shivers, heading into his senior year, will look to take a big step forward next year.

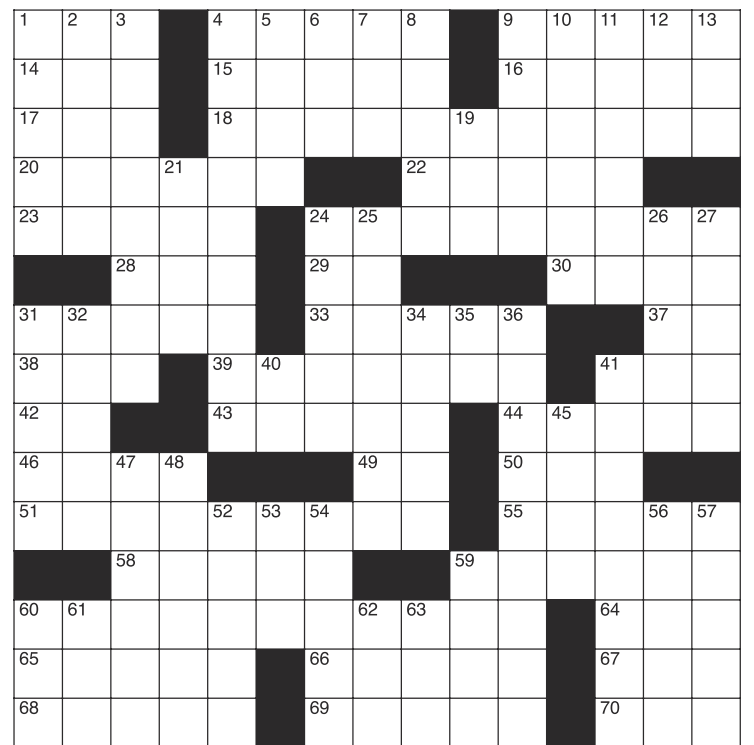
## Crossword

### CLUES ACROSS

- Japanese classical theater
- Chess pieces
- Pieces of writing
- Doctors' group
- Capital of Guam
- Type of turtle
- Swiss river
- MLB Hall of Famer
- Places to sit
- Fancy rides
- One of Washington's Tri-Cities
- Without class
- Male child
- Keeps you cool
- Biblical place
- Italian city
- District in central Turkey
- Job for a grad student
- Central nervous system
- Arrange in steps
- Witch
- Promotional material
- Having certain appendages
- Approaches
- One who did it (slang)
- Of I
- Blood relation
- Works out
- Female given name
- Isaac's mother (Bib.)
- Makes someone happy
- Creative
- Small, faint constellation
- S. American trees
- Makes simpler
- Neither
- We all need it
- Unique plastic utensil
- Thyroid-stimulating hormone (abbr.)

### CLUES DOWN

- Civil Rights group
- Metropolis
- Badgers
- Regular business given to a store
- Gets older
- A bundle of banknotes
- Midway between north and northwest
- Takes to the sea
- Prestigious film prize: \_\_\_ d'or
- Baltimore ballplayer
- Removed
- Term of respect
- Genus containing pigs
- Illumined
- One who symbolizes something



- Member of a Turkic people
- The academic world
- "Key to the Highway" bluesman
- Hang-ups
- Long, leafless flower stalk
- Categorize
- Loads
- Indicates position
- Unreasonable
- Dorm worker
- Dweller
- Welsh female name meaning "snow"
- Offering again
- National capital
- Firm, dry and brittle
- 007's creator
- Allied H.Q.
- Mackerels
- Month of the Hindu year
- Not odd
- Belonging to a thing
- "Boardwalk Empire" actress Gretchen
- Religion
- Equal, prefix

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Applicant must be able to pass a physical, drug screen and background check. Applications may be picked up at the City Administration Building located at 312 E. Third, Lampasas, Texas 76550, Monday-Friday, 8:00 a.m. to 5:00 p.m. or submitted online at [www.lampasas.org](http://www.lampasas.org). This position is open until filled. EOE/ADA

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The City of Lampasas is accepting applications for Apprentice Line Worker. Starting hourly range based on experience and qualifications is \$14.76 to \$20.77; plus excellent benefits. Under supervision, Apprentice Lineworker must perform work associated with installation, maintenance and repair of overhead and underground electric distributions lines, and other related work as required. Requirements include a High School Diploma or GED and a Texas Commercial Drivers License. Experience is preferred. Applicant must be able to pass a physical, drug screen, and background check. Applications may be picked up at the City Administration Building, 312 E. Third, Monday through Friday, 8:00 a.m. to 5:00 p.m. or submitted online at [www.lampasas.org](http://www.lampasas.org). This position is open until filled. EOE/ADA

### Job Opening

### Line Worker

The City of Lampasas is accepting applications for Line Worker. Starting hourly range based on experience and qualifications is \$24.04 to \$33.66; plus excellent benefits. Line Worker must perform work associated with installation, maintenance and repair of overhead and underground electric distributions lines, and other related work as required. Requirements include at least four years experience doing line work, a High School Diploma or GED, and a Texas Commercial Drivers License. Applicant must be able to pass a physical, drug screen, and background check. Applications may be picked up at the City Administration Building, 312 E. Third, Monday through Friday, 8:00 a.m. to 5:00 p.m. or submitted online at [www.lampasas.org](http://www.lampasas.org). This position is open until filled. EOE/ADA

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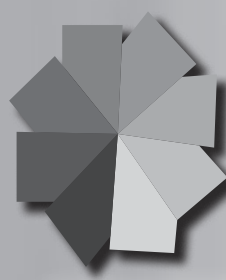
The City of Lampasas is now accepting applications for a Part-time Library Clerk to work 20-25 hours per week. (Note: Part-time hours are daily, Monday through Friday, some Saturdays). Duties include assisting patrons and performing clerical work. Must have experience working with the public. Must type 40 wpm and be familiar with computers, including Microsoft Office applications. Previous library experience preferred. Must be available to work some Saturdays and some evenings. High School diploma, or any equivalent combination of experience and training, is required. Starting salary is \$12.14 per hour. Applicant must pass a physical/drug screen and background check. Applications and job description may be picked up at the City Administration Building, 312 East Third, Monday through Friday, 8:00 a.m. to 5:00 p.m. or submitted online at [www.lampasas.org](http://www.lampasas.org). Deadline for applications is June 6, 2022 or open until filled. EOE/ADA

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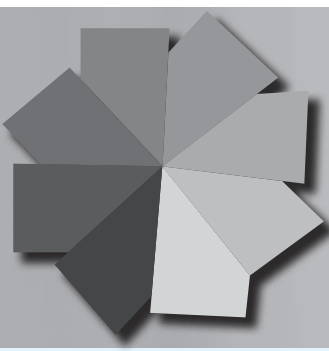
Lampasas County is accepting bids for a Freightliner Cascadia 125. Bids are to be submitted no later than 4:00 p.m. on June 3, 2022. Please contact the Auditor's office for specifications at 409 S Pecan Street Suite 207 or call 512-556-8271 ext: 224.

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**DEATHS**



**Mr. Gant**

Charles "Charlie" Lynn Gant, 70, of Leakey died on May 22, 2022.

He was born on Feb. 23, 1952 to Charles Smart and Jean Ryan (Smart) Withers in San Antonio. He was adopted by Randy Gant after his father's death.

He attended school in Lampasas and then served four years in the United States Marines. He was a carpenter by trade, but he could master any project he set his mind to.

He married his wife, Kay, on Dec. 12, 1987.

He devoted his life to preaching the gospel, traveling the world teaching anyone who would give him the opportunity to learn about the Lord. He was a missionary and preacher of the gospel in Russia and Kazakhstan for 16 years, then continued his mission in churches in Texas. He finally settled in Leakey.

Charlie was an avid outdoorsman and enjoyed fishing, hunting and

camping.

He is survived by his wife, Kay; son Roman (Beverly) Vaughn of Luling; daughters Honey Howell of Rio Frio, Julie (Jonathan) Blair of Flatonia, Heather (Michael) Smith of Flatonia, and Jennifer (Jerry) Bunting of Lampasas; 17 grandchildren; seven great-grandchildren; five brothers, Russell Gant, Tommy Withers, David (Sharon) Withers, Bill (Charlene) Withers and Ronnie (Charme) Withers; and five sisters, Linda Spurlin, Sandra Roe, Leasa Arms, Donna (Bobby) Laymon and Katie Sue Withers.

He was preceded in death by his parents; one son, Gary; and three brothers, Leroy Gant, Steven Gant and Sam Withers.



**Mrs. Higgins**

Birdie Faye Dixon Higgins, 92, died on May 27, 2022 at her home in Comfort.

A funeral service will be held at Sneed-Carnley Funeral Chapel in Lampasas at 10 a.m. June 3, with an 8-10 a.m. visitation prior to the service.

Burial will follow at Oak Hill Cemetery in Lampasas.

Faye was born on March 28, 1930 on a farm near Owl Creek in the small community called Seattle in Coryell County. Her parents were Alvis Dixon and Mary Vida (Tippit) Dixon.

Faye grew up in the Owl Creek Community and graduated from Flat High School in 1949. After high school, she moved to Temple, where she worked for Bell Telephone as a telephone operator.

She married John Tom Higgins Jr. of Lampasas on Nov. 17, 1951. They were married for 40 years and raised three children.

Faye was a bookkeeper and worked in her husband's law office until he retired.

She believed one of her greatest accomplishments

was to be the first female elected to the Lampasas Independent School District Board of Trustees and then the first female president of the board. However, many would argue that her true calling was being a friend. She never missed a birthday, prom, graduation or marriage, or any reason to bake a peach cobbler or pecan pie.

Faye is survived by her two daughters: Karla Higgins Lancaster of Lampasas, and Abbie Crenwelge of Comfort and husband Dale; brothers James Dixon and wife Allene, and Jackie Dixon and wife Jeanette, all of Gatesville; a sister, Pat Palmer and husband James of River Forrest, Illinois; and grandchildren Alandra Lancaster-Teodorescu and husband Danny of San Antonio, Brandon Lancaster

and wife Patty and great-granddaughter Mia of San Antonio, Cameron Crenwelge of Houston, and Peyton Crenwelge of Dallas.

She was preceded in death by her husband, John Tom Higgins Jr. of Lampasas; her son, John Tom Higgins III, M.D. of Lampasas; and a brother, Joe Dixon of Temple.

Memorial donations may be made to Hill Country Memorial Hospice of Fredericksburg, 808 Reuben St., Fredericksburg, TX 78624, or VFW Post 8539 of Lampasas, 481 U.S. Hwy 190, Lampasas, TX 76550.



# Budget workshops scheduled in August

FROM PAGE 1

"I think it would be helpful for David [Williams] to do a market value study," the mayor said. "I can assist him with that. I think it would help council make an educated decision." In other matters, Williams scheduled two upcoming workshops to coincide with regular meetings of the council. The workshops will be held Aug. 9 and Aug. 16, in lieu of Aug. 4. These

workshops will identify needs and projects within the city and the finances required, city officials said.

City staff and citizens also provided updates to the council, including information on upcoming events. The annual KempnerFest and Battle of the Badges is set for June 25. The 25<sup>th</sup> Birthday Celebration for the city of Kempner will be held Aug. 6.

In his report, Williams updated the council on recent repairs to City Hall.

"A few weeks ago, we had some leaks," he said. "It's been repaired by actual roofers." He added that previous work appeared to have been done by someone who lacked roofing experience.

Staff also is investigating repairs to trash receptacles in Sylvia Tucker Memorial Park, Williams said.

"There are trash cans that are rusted through on the bottom, and critters have been getting into them," he said.

Staff is determining whether the trash cans should be patched with welded metal, or whether a plastic cover can be used.

Municipal Judge Gene Isenhour suggested the cans be replaced.

"We acquired them from Kempner Iron & Metal," Isenhour said. "If you want to replace them, that could be an option."

In other action last week, the council unanimously approved Williams' selection of an intern for the Development District

of Central Texas' Rural internship program.

Williams said the city held an application period, and he had a student in mind who fit the position.

"The student I'd like to select is finishing up her junior year at Lampasas High School," Williams said. "She has a 4.5 GPA and a very strong endorsement from the LHS vice principal. She's eager to work with the city on economic development, and I think she will be a good fit for the program."

**SHEEP, GOAT AUCTION**

The May 26 market report from Mills County Commission Co. follows.

**Total receipts:** 2,250. Previous week: 3,547.

**Trends:** Light kids steady. Slaughter kids \$5- \$10 lower; slaughter nannies \$5 higher; replacement nannies \$5-\$10 higher.

Wool lambs \$10 higher; Dorper lambs and Barbado lambs \$10-\$15 higher. Prices follow.

**WOOL**

Lambs: 50-70 lb., \$240-\$280 cwt.; 70-90 lb., \$220-\$270 cwt.; 90-110 lb., \$215-\$260 cwt.

Slaughter ewes: \$50-\$90 cwt. Bucks: \$100-\$160 cwt.

**DORPER - DORPER CROSS**

40-60 lb., \$235-\$315 cwt.; 60-75 lb., \$245-\$315 cwt.; 75-90 lb., \$230-\$290 cwt.

Slaughter ewes: \$70-\$145 cwt. Slaughter bucks: \$115-\$195 cwt.

Replacement ewes: \$185-\$300 per head. Replacement bucks: \$350-\$500 per head.

**BARBADO - BARBADO CROSS**

35-50 lb., \$190-\$280 cwt.; 50-70 lb., \$230-\$285 cwt.; 70-90 lb., \$200-\$275 cwt.

Slaughter ewes: \$70-\$130 cwt. Replacement ewes: \$90-\$180 per head.

**BOER - BOER-SPANISH CROSS**

Kids: 35-45 lb., \$260-\$400 cwt.; 45-60 lb. \$350-\$415 cwt.; 60-70 lb., \$290-\$415 cwt.; 70-90 lb., \$240-\$390 cwt.; 75-110 lb. muttons, \$280-\$415.

Nannies: light slaughter, \$160-\$320 cwt.; heavy slaughter, \$110-\$160 cwt.; thin slaughter, \$70-\$110 cwt.

Billies: light slaughter, \$210-\$270 cwt.; heavy slaughter, \$190-\$240 cwt.

## Annual job fair slated for June 16

BY MASON HINES  
DISPATCH RECORD

The Lampasas Economic Development Corp. will host a job fair June 16 from 10 a.m. to 1 p.m. at the Lampasas Middle School.

This event, put on in conjunction with the Texas Veterans Commission and Workforce Solutions of Central Texas, is an opportunity to give Lampasas residents in search of a job the best chance to meet with employers face to face.

This is the seventh year the job fair has been offered.

Employers from numerous industries are expected to be present at the event, representing industries such as healthcare,

manufacturing, retail, technology, hospitality and food service.

Lampasas Economic Development Director Mandy Walsh said she expects a good turnout of employers, though that number is not finalized yet.

"We won't know until closer to the date, but in the past we've had approximately 30-40 hiring businesses represented," Walsh said.

For businesses interested in participating in the event, pre-registration is required.

"You have to pre-register. We are giving priority to local businesses," said Walsh.

Some that have had tables at past job fairs include:

- H&R Block
- Texas Department of Criminal Justice
- Texas Department of Family & Protective Services
- Texas Department of Health and Human Services
- Texas Department of Transportation
- University of Texas Medical Branch
- Whataburger
- Oil States Industries
- Ajinomoto

Resume support for individuals who may need it prior to the event is available at the Workforce Commission, 523 E. Third St. in Lampasas.

For more information on the job fair or to participate, email [mwalsh@cityoflampasas.com](mailto:mwalsh@cityoflampasas.com).



FILE PHOTO  
Marlee Hyatt, left, goes over employment information with Hill Country Community Action HR Specialist Regina Baker at last year's Lampasas Economic Development Corp. job fair.

## Staffers have left due to salaries, officials say

FROM PAGE 1

Lampasas' biggest competitor in hiring is the city of Burnet, Ward said.

"If we're trying to retain staff, I think Burnet is our closest competition," he said.

"In nearly every instance salary-wise, they're paying more."

Police Chief Jody Cummings supported that statement, saying that "at least a couple [of officers] went from us to Burnet in the last few years."

Parks & Recreation Director Chris Eicher said he also has lost employees to Burnet.

"We're at \$12.75 for entry level [employees]," he said. "I just lost a guy to Burnet for \$17 an hour."

Ward added that Lampasas offers other significant employee benefits, such as a strong retirement plan, but Cummings said it is difficult to hire young officers on future benefits.

In last Monday's meeting, Ward said he believed most of Lampasas' city retirement benefits are relatively competitive, and the city has a program for certification pay to promote training and growth.

"There are other cities that match one-to-one for retirement, but we match two-to-one, and that's a benefit for us," Councilman Randy Clark said.

In the recent workshop session, Councilman Herb Pearce voiced concerns over continually rising costs of living.

"The average cost of a house is \$330,000," he said. "Can a third-year officer afford that? Can a teacher? If we don't take care of our people, we won't have a city to take care of."

Pearce also expressed concerns about retaining healthy numbers of emergency service personnel to balance the city's growth.

With 600 new homes slated to be built in Lampasas, "there's 2,000 new residents using Lampasas services," Pearce said. "We've got to be ready for that."

Cummings said he believes the police department will continue to face three central issues in retaining officers: the anti-police movement which has changed the safety of the industry, a healthy economy that

has generated more lucrative job options and the increasingly populated cities growing nearby.

Cummings and Fire Chief Jeff Smith told the council it is primarily mid-level officers and firefighters leaving employment with the city.

"You have to be able to keep those people here so you have folks moving up into leadership positions," Smith said.

Hiring new employees is more costly than retaining existing ones, Pearce said.

"We're better to develop our people and keep them," he said.

Ward said during the council meeting that graduated pay increases for long-term employees would be another object of research for city staff.



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