

## Pioneering wildfire alert system tested during panhandle fires

BY JONATHAN STUCKEY  
Texas A&M Forest Service

### Improved coordinated methods for wildfire detection

Thousands of people across the Texas Panhandle received wireless emergency alerts February 26-27, warning of an eminent, dangerous wildfire on the landscape with the potential to expand.

These notifications from the Texas A&M Forest Service utilized a first-of-its-kind process, benefiting from technology and a foundation in strong inter-agency relationships.

This new fire prediction system allowed local, state, and federal fire agencies to notify the public and other fire-fighting partners nine times faster than average.

The announcements, requested by local emergency management officials and the Texas A&M Forest Service issued by the National Oceanic Atmospheric Administration National Weather Service, are among the first multi-function processes that have been used for a large-scale wildfire in Texas.

See FIRE • 6

## INSIDE



FEATURED

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### Rainfall totals at Alpine-Casparis Airport

2024 . . . . .	.205"
March . . . . .	.004"



### Burn Ban ON

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**PLEASE REMEMBER TO THANK A VETERAN, A MEMBER OF THE ARMED FORCES, OR A LAW ENFORCEMENT OFFICER EVERY DAY.**



## Library congratulated for excellence award

BY JOH COVINGTON  
Staff Writer

The Alpine City Council held its regularly scheduled meeting on Tuesday, March 19.

Alpine City Manager, Megan Antrim updated the council on the current status of the city projects priorities list. At the top of the list is the wastewater treatment plant which has been reviewed for updates and has fixed pumps. The street department is fully staffed with new employees, and they have begun training along the Country Club Estates Road as well as on pot-

holes around Alpine. The department is still waiting for their new hot patch machine which is expected to arrive in July.

Don Wetterauer, the executive director for the Alpine Public Library gave an update during this meeting. The library recently received the Achievement of Library Excellence Award from the Texas Municipal Library Directors Association. The Alpine Public Library was one of only 84 libraries out of 545 to receive the award.

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The Alpine City Council met for their regular meeting in the city chambers. Pictured here are Alpine City Secretary Geoffrey Calderon, Mayor Catherine Eaves, councilmembers Judy Stokes and Rick Stephens, Alpine City Manager Megan Antrim, and councilmember Chris Rodriguez.

Courtesy photo

## Newman places third overall at rodeo finals



Alpine High School senior Clancy Newman placed third overall in the saddle bronc event in this year's Texas High School Rodeo Finals, Region II. Newman is a three-time finals qualifier and he also received a \$750 scholarship this year.

Courtesy photo

## Marathon farmers market for young business

BY JOH COVINGTON  
Staff Writer

Next month the streets of Marathon will be lined with homemade specialty products and food for their new iteration of the farmer's market. One unique thing about this particular farmer's market will be its sellers, kids who are learning the ropes of small business, artistry, and salesmanship.

One of the organizers, Nadine Mannhart told the Avalanche, "We are encouraging our kid entrepreneurs as they grow their craft. Marathon is a great family town, and this gives the kids a chance to experiment with making something with their own hands and the responsibility of seeing it through the whole life cycle of a product."

The farmers market will be held every Saturday in April from 8:30 a.m. to 12 p.m. and then will pause for Marathon's busy season until its return in September and October.

The young entrepreneurs will have their own section in the market, designated for their homemade creations. From start to finish, from the drawing board to development, these creative kids have made lovely items to sell.

"In our time here in the last couple of years, it has been common for the kids to set up their own stands. This is just another outlet. The ideas for products etc. are kid-generated," said Mannhart.

Even though there will be familiar faces behind the stands, the supporters are backing the kids this year

with extra voraciousness.

Marathon is a small tight-knit community that is using the opportunity to give its young community members a safe space to learn new skills and grow as people and young business owners.

"It is a homegrown, homemade, and handcrafted local market. We are lucky as we have a wide variety of vendors lined up from local organic eggs and sourdough bread to masterly crafted leather upholstery and handmade flutes," Mannhart said.



The kid's goods won't be the only draw to the market either, many in the area will be able to sell their wares. People from the area are encouraged to help support the sellers as well as benefit from some excellent products.

If new vendors are interested in participating in

the market, they can contact Mannhart at nadine-mannhart@gmail.com with two pictures of their craft.

Farmer's markets have seen a resurgence in recent years across the country, in a move away from the status quo and toward a more community-minded small market.

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# Wild turkeys strut into spring

Collaborative conservation efforts, research aim to bolster wild turkey populations across Texas

BY SARA FULLER  
Natural Resources Communications  
Strategy Coordinator for Texas A&M

More Texans may encounter distinct vocalizations and dramatic strutting of male turkeys seeking a mate this spring thanks to ongoing education and research collaboration by Texas A&M AgriLife and the Texas Parks and Wildlife Department.

Jacob Dykes, Ph.D., Texas A & M AgriLife Extension Service wildlife specialist, Corpus Christi, said thanks to the state's diverse ecoregions, Texas supports three of the five total subspecies of wild turkey found in North America — the Rio Grande turkey, eastern turkey, and Merriam's turkey.

Rio Grande turkeys prefer the arid and brushy environments found throughout the Rolling Plains, Edwards Plateau, southern Post Oak Savanna, and the South Texas plains, while eastern turkeys prefer areas with higher rainfall, such as the Piney Woods and bottomland hardwoods of East Texas. Merriam's turkeys, the least common, prefer the ponderosa pines found in the Trans-Pecos mountains.

"We're fortunate that Texas offers such a wide range of ecosystems that support diverse wildlife species like these turkeys," said Dykes, also an assistant professor in the Texas A&M College of Agriculture and Life Sciences Department of Rangeland, Wildlife, and Fisheries Management "While we've come a long way in restoring turkey populations across the state, there is still more work to be done to ensure they continue to thrive."

While the state currently boasts a thriving population of more than 500,000 wild turkeys, Dykes said this wasn't always the case. "The history of regulations in Texas really paints a picture of just how early Texans recognized the turkey population was declining," said Jason Hardin, wild turkey program leader with the Texas Parks and Wildlife Department. "One of the first steps taken to address this was a three-and-a-half-month closure on turkey harvest in 1881."

Both Hardin and Dykes note that unregulated market harvest coupled with habitat alteration were the primary forces driving the historic decline throughout the species' historic range.

In 1942, the Texas Game, Fish, and Oyster Commission, the precursor to the Texas Parks and Wildlife Department, estimated that fewer than 100 turkeys remained in East Texas.

Over the following decades, Texas Parks and Wildlife biologists and partners worked in earnest to utilize stocking strategies — the capture and translocation of all three subspecies from turkey populations within and outside of Texas — as part of concerted restoration efforts. While restoration efforts have succeeded in some regions, scientists are still trying to determine why turkey populations in eastern Texas are seeing slower population recovery and limited range expansion.

Restoration of Texas' Rio Grande turkey population is the model for suc-

cess that conservationists hope to replicate across the state. From 1920 to 2000, 33,000 Rio Grande wild turkeys were released using a variety of means across Texas, Hardin said.

Currently, Texas Parks and Wildlife considers 95% of the suitable Rio Grande turkey range to be occupied by wild populations. Based on the Rio Grande's expansive range and population success following restoration, Hardin said it's safe to call the subspecies the "King of Texas."

In fact, as the Rio Grande turkey range intersects with isolated populations of Merriam's turkeys in the Davis Mountains, biologists are seeing hybridization between the two subspecies — the result of interbreeding.

While the Rio Grande turkey translocation was

successful, the return of the eastern turkey was limited and required the department to reassess their stocking strategies beginning in the 1990s.

To shed light on why the stocking strategies that worked for the Rio Grande turkey didn't translate to success with eastern populations, biologists returned to the drawing board, calling on the expertise of researchers with Texas A&M University.

As a graduate student at Texas A&M in the mid-1990s, Roel Lopez, Ph.D., head of the Department of Rangeland, Wildlife and Fisheries Management and director of the Texas A&M Natural Resources Institute, used ecological modeling to simulate the dynamics of a wild turkey population under a variety of restoration strategies.

Through this process, he devised a new stocking strategy as an alternative to previous stocking approaches.

This new method, known as super stocking,

called for the release of approximately 80 male and female turkeys at each restoration site as opposed to the 15-20 released through previous methods.

Hardin said research

projects conducted by Texas A&M and other universities had great success implementing the super stocking method in

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## Notice:

**Dr. Mark Dwinell's last day of seeing patients at Preventative Care Health Services (dba) Presidio County Health Services, Inc. is April 17, 2024**

**His patients may:**

- Remain as a patient at PCHS and be referred to another practicing provider at this clinic. Make an appointment with Dr. Patrick Daly, Dr. Emily Sliz, Tyler Zher, PA, William Mason-FNP and Jose Soto, FNP today.
- Obtain your medical records from this office.
- Request a medical records transfer release to another health care provider.

## Aviso:

**El último día de el Dr. Mark Dwinell's de ver a los pacientes en Preventative Care Health Services (dba) Presidio County Health Services, Inc. es 17 de abril de 2024**

**Sus pacientes pueden:**

- Permanecer como paciente en PCHS y ser cita con otro proveedor practicante en esta clínica. Haga una cita con la el Dr. Patrick Daly, la Dr. Emily Sliz o, Tyler Zher, PA, William Mason-FNP hoy y Jose Soto, FNP
- Obtenga sus registros médicos de esta oficina.
- Solicitar una liberación de transferencia de registros médicos a otro proveedor de atención médica.

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# Forest Service warns of extreme wildfire danger

BY KARA GERBERT  
Managing Editor

A press release issued from the Texas A&M Forest Service (TAMFS) last week warned that Texans should stay prepared as extreme wildfire danger increases.

Extremely critical fire weather conditions were expected last week in the Texas panhandle near Amarillo, Borger, Canadian, Childress, Lubbock, Pampa, and Perryton. High winds combined with above-normal temperatures along with low humidity could allow dry grass vegetation to result in large wildfires that would be difficult to control. Any wildfires that happen to ignite in this type of dry grass vegetation have the potential to spread at rates of 3-5 miles per hour. TAMFS had strategically placed equipment and aircraft in high-risk areas of the panhandle in preparation for the possibility of another wildfire outbreak.

Under these conditions, evacuations are a possibility and TAMFS urged Texans to have an evacuation plan that could be used in case of a fire or other disaster and recommended preparing a "Go Kit" that would meet the needs of all family members in a household.

These kits should include plans for evacuation of the entire family, pets, and livestock. Any prescriptions, eyeglasses, and other medication that may be needed should be ready to go along with extra doses as a precaution. All legal paper-

work, including insurance, phone numbers, wills, and other important documents should be assembled and ready in case of evacuation. All personal items such as phones, chargers, laptops, toiletries, clothing, and sanitation supplies should be packed and ready along with any items of sentimental value, such as pictures, heirlooms, and irreplaceable memorabilia if possible.

Along with the contents of a "Go Kit", Texans are encouraged to identify at

least two evacuation routes and save them in a navigation system or phone. This evacuation plan should be practiced, and all members of the household should be capable and confident with the plan.

Keep informed of situations as they occur and work with local emergency responders on what to expect and how you will be notified should an evacuation be necessary.

Weather conditions in the panhandle this past week-

end showed an increase in humidity as well as the possibility of precipitation that was predicted to decrease as this week progressed, while winds were still prevalent in the teens. Drought conditions persist both in the panhandle and throughout the state. Although the Big Bend region has seen a small amount of moisture this year, severe drought conditions from last year still linger and Brewster County remains under a burn ban.



Smokehouse Creek Fire

Courtesy photo

## Public meetings to be held regarding Chisos Mountains Lodge

BY KARA GERBERT  
Managing Editor

Two public meetings are scheduled for the end of this month to discuss visitor access during construction and view ideas of how the new upgrades and renovations will look in regard to the Chisos Mountains Lodge, the only lodging facility located within Big Bend National Park (BBNP).

The main building, built in 1964, has been experiencing damage to the foundation over the years due to the instability of the soil beneath the building. To compound this issue, visitation has increased in BBNP to the point that the kitchen and dining service capabilities are being surpassed by the number of visitors.

Due to these issues, BBNP began looking for solutions in 2019 to better serve visitors to the park. The two meetings, one in Study Butte-Terlingua and the other in Alpine will shed light on the replacement of the Lodge, making the closure of the area around the Lodge necessary. This would include the Chisos Basin Visitor Center, the Lodge itself, the main parking lot, and the camper store. There is expected to be limited visitor access to other parts of the Basin, as it is the trailhead for several of BBNP's more popular hiking trails.

The public meeting in Study Butte-Terlingua is scheduled to be held on March 25 from 6 p.m. to 7:30 p.m. at the J.W. "Red" Pattillo Community Center located behind the post office at 100TX-118. The second public meeting is scheduled for Thursday, March 28 from 6 p.m. to 7:30 p.m. in the Big Bend Telephone Community Room located at 808 N. 5th Street in Alpine.

BBNP will continue to have regular updates on the Chisos Basin Lodge replacement project via their social media streams as well as their website [go.nps.gov/chisosbasinfuture](http://go.nps.gov/chisosbasinfuture).

## Comanche Springs Rodeo returns with more family fun March 21-23

BY SHAWN YORKS  
Contributor

Fort Stockton will kick off the spring season the right way with the annual Comanche Springs Rodeo March 21-23 at the Pecos County Coliseum in Fort Stockton. Begun in 1919 and paused for Covid in 2020, the rodeo has grown since its 2021 return and is adding some more activities in 2024.

"Since Friday night (March 22) is Family Night, Big Bend Telephone is going to have some jumping houses there for (the kids)," said Fort Stockton Chamber of Commerce president Ama McCorkle. "And then, of course, we'll have the mutton bustin' and boot scrambles."

The rodeo is a presentation of the Fort Stockton Chamber of Commerce.

The rodeo is sanctioned by the United Professional Rodeo Association, the Cowboys Professional Rodeo Association, and the New Mexico Rodeo Association. The stock contractor is Cadillac Rodeo Company of Mexia.

The fun begins Thursday, March 21 with rodeo slack beginning at 6 p.m. Slack is free to attend, but Friday's Family Night performance is free for kids 12-and-under. Family Night will have the bounce houses adjacent to the vendors area outside the arena, and Friday's performance begins at 7:30 p.m. with the bounce houses open around 5:30 p.m.

Saturday's activities kick off with the rodeo parade at 10 a.m. from Rio Street, down Dickinson to Main, ending



Emilee Charlesworth of Marathon competes in the Comanche Springs Rodeo in Fort Stockton last year.

Photo by Shawn Yorks

at Zero Stone Park, and the rodeo performance is again at 7:30 p.m. The Rodeo Dance featuring Stateline Band begins at 9 p.m. next door at the Pecos County Civic Center and is free to all.

The parade is free to enter but no candy is to be thrown. Walkers are permitted to hand candy to children along the parade route. All entries will be accepted and while forms will be accepted at line-up, try bringing forms to the Chamber office, 1000 East Railroad by Noon March 21.

The indoor concession stand in the Coliseum lobby will sell soda, wa-

ter, cotton candy, popcorn, pickles, and beer. Other concession sales will be in the vendor outside the arena in the ID parking lot. Beer tickets can be purchased in the ID parking lot, as well, and anyone who plans to purchase alcohol will need to obtain a wristband.

In conjunction with the rodeo, the Tyler Magnus Team roping will take place Friday, Saturday, and Sunday. Friday open roping begins at 10 a.m. and Sunday open roping at 9 a.m., with Saturday's Comanche Classic beginning at 10 a.m. For more info on the roping, call Tyler at (512) 940-4786.

Events for the rodeo

include bareback, saddle bronc, ranch bronc, team roping, steer wrestling, and bulls, as well as ladies' barrels and tie-down.

The 2024 Miss Rodeo Comanche Springs Pageant takes place March 22-23. The 2023 Royalty is Miss Rodeo Comanche Springs Kaelanne Quinonez, Miss Rodeo Comanche Springs Teen is Kendall McComb, Miss Rodeo Comanche Springs Princess is Sadie Wood, and Miss Rodeo Comanche Springs Sweetheart is Kinslee Morris.

"We want everybody to come out and have fun," McCorkle added.

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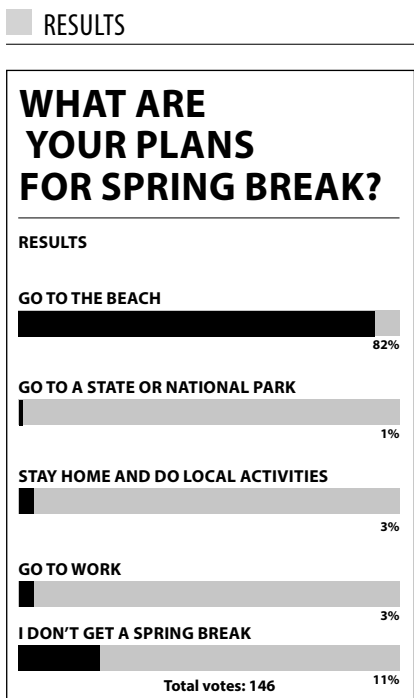
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# Opinions

## ONLINE POLL



**THIS WEEK'S QUESTION**

Now the Avalanche asks:  
**What are your plans for Spring Break?**

- Go to the beach.
- Go to a state or national park.
- Stay home and do local activities.
- Go to work.
- I don't get a Spring Break.

Vote for this week's poll online at:  
[www.AlpineAvalanche.com](http://www.AlpineAvalanche.com)

## LETTERS

Send us your letters. Please include your name, address and phone number for verification purposes. Only your name and city will be published. Letters should be no more than 300 words. Letters become the property of the Alpine Avalanche and may be edited prior to publication for spelling and grammatical errors, clarity and length. Ad hominem attacks will not be accepted. Letters that include profanity or libel will not be printed. Send your letters to [kara.gerbert@alpineavalanche.com](mailto:kara.gerbert@alpineavalanche.com) by noon Monday for consideration.

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## DII transition is exciting, challenging

It's a very exciting time in Sul Ross State Athletics. I cannot fully explain how amazing it is to see the realization of such a major milestone coming to life. When I first stepped onto campus a little over three years ago, the potential of this place was palpable. I was so excited when I was offered the opportunity to serve as the Athletic Director and help nurture the department into what it is today.



AMANDA WORKMAN  
Sul Ross Athletic Director

When I first walked into my office, I had no idea what to expect. As a first time AD, I promised myself that I would be humble enough to spend the first few months observing and not just bust through the doors and implement change. I needed to see what was working and what wasn't. Almost immediately, I felt that we were not in the correct athletic division or conference. I spent 12 years of my career at a Di-

vision II institution and I truly felt that was a better home for Sul Ross.

Why? Travel for one thing. In our current conference, we travel past multiple Lone Star Conference schools to play an American Southwest Conference opponent. Our student-athletes miss classes for multiple days in a row and as an Athletic Director, this felt irresponsible when we consider that education is the most important aspect of the college experience. We want student-athletes to graduate, and it is difficult to see success in this area with so much missed class time.

Second, the ability to offer athletic aid and be financially invested in a student-athlete's education is very important to me. Even in small amounts, athletic scholarships make a huge impact and relieve some of the financial burden that comes with obtaining a degree.

Third, the ability to create regional rivalries and better engage the community felt important. Lone Star Conference fans travel well, and I am excited to expose them to this beautiful area. Also, having Sul Ross busses and teams rolling through regional areas like Lubbock, Odessa and San Angelo should assist with brand recognition and hopefully increase the overall student population.

Fourth, recruitment and retention of not only athletes but students in general. We have seen a major shift in this area since announcing our intention to transition to Division II. We are now being approached by athletes that previously wouldn't answer our phone calls. People want to be here and that is perhaps most exciting of all. The ability to offer a red shirt opportunity at the DII level has the potential to increase graduation rates and even allow student-athletes to complete a master's degree during their playing career.

To prepare, athletics has been working hard to improve our department. Over the past three years, the student-athlete population has grown by 60 percent. We are steadily increasing retention and graduation rates and seeing an overall increase in progress towards degrees.

A new, exciting era is upon us, and the future is very bright. While I am acutely aware that the next few years will bring vast challenges, I also see the opportunities that lie ahead. Perhaps most exciting to me is the fact that people are buzzing about Sul Ross again. Students are approaching us wanting the opportunity to come here. When recruits visit campus, I see them fall in love with this place repeatedly.

Sul Ross is special, and I am so excited to see what this new era brings not only to the athletic department, but the institution and the community of Alpine and the surrounding area. Go Lobos!

## Deciding on which direction to go

*On the road again,  
goin' places that I've never  
been,  
Seen' things that I may never  
see again,  
And I can't wait to get on the  
road again*

— Song lyrics written and recorded by Willie Nelson

I'm thinking about going in the opposite direction. Geographically speaking, that is. This trip I'm thinking about could be made going two different directions. Center is only 17 miles from the Louisiana border, so going north for 127 miles would take me to Texarkana. And 134 miles of windshield time would find me looking at the city limits of Beaumont. Whichever way I venture from home, the initial leg of this proposed journey would be only 1/24, or roughly four percent, of the entire journey.

Traveling the perimeter of Texas. An episode of Texas Country Reporter featuring three ladies who did that three years ago started me thinking. They spent nine days on the road, covering something like 3,100 miles of Texas roads less traveled. Avoiding all interstate highways. Learning of their adventure sent me searching, looking under the seat in my car for that 1999 edition of the Cracker Barrel Road Atlas, Nationwide Store Listing, and R.V. Guide. And trying to decide whether I would follow

their route traveling clockwise or take the opposite direction and circumvent the state counterclockwise. Regardless of any direction, such an endeavor didn't cross my mind until last week when, ironically, friends in two different parts of Texas sent me a link to the Texas Country Reporter blurb. One of them added, "This sounds like something you and Oscar would have done."

Oscar Elliott and I met at Mount Pleasant's South Ward Elementary School in 1959. At the bicycle rack during lunch. It was my first week as a fifth-grade student in N.A. Mattingly's home room class, recently transplanted there from way out west at Seymour.

"Haven't seen you before," Oscar said. "You new here?" "Yes," I replied. "I live on Redbud Street." We mounted bikes and headed home for lunch in the same direction. When I dropped off at my house, he waved and continued to his house on Stella Street.

That two-minute two-wheeler trip began a 57-year friendship that would include many two-wheel rides. Before Oscar's earthly journey ended a few years ago, we logged motorcycle miles on summer trips to sunny Florida. When Panama City Beach was known



LEON ALDRIDGE  
Guest Columnist

as the Red Neck Riviera. When budget bike riders stayed at high-class joints like the Barney Gray Motel. We went to wintery Colorado, waking up in legendary burgers like Leadville to find bikes covered in overnight snow. And crossing 11,000-foot mountain passes. In the snow. We made short scenic trips through Arkansas, Oklahoma, and Louisiana. Saturday trips that were often well underway 15 minutes after a "What 'cha doin' today" phone call about coffee time a.m. All on motorcycles. But traveling the circumference of Texas never crossed our minds.

Which might seem odd because road trips, most with little notice, are always on my mind. My mother's family gene pool has a basic unit of heredity that just can't sit still. With five minutes' notice, anyone of us is good for a trip across Texas. Like a few weekends ago when Abilene cousin Derf called. "What are you doing this weekend?" he asked. Everyone calls him Derf; that's Fred spelled backward, but that's another story. Said his wife was planning a girl's weekend with the daughters, and he needed to get away.

"Nothing," I replied. "Come on." So, he drove five and a half hours—one way—to spend the

weekend in Center helping me with my kitchen remodel. Then drove five and a half hours back home. That's our family. We're like that, and I love every one of us. Will I make a trip around Texas? First, I've got to decide in which direction to start.

Border-to-border, the longest distance across the Lone Star State is 801 miles from north to south. Going east to west, it's 773 miles. While we're elaborating on geographical data, real estate contained within the 4,137-mile perimeter of the state totals 267,339 square miles. That's 7.4 percent of the nation's total area. Less important is deciding how long it will take. After mapping it with the tattered but trusty road atlas, I'm somewhat certain my trip could take longer than the ladies on Texas Country Reporter. Depending on which way I turn at El Indio near the border or whether I try to include the Big Bend area by hanging a left at Marfa for a couple days' diversion. Maybe I will do it. Just because there are some things people should do when they reach my age. The trip likely won't happen on a motorcycle, however. Just because there are some things a person should not do when they reach my age. One thing for sure, the trip will be dedicated to Oscar's memory.

Because it's one direction we never thought about going.

## LETTER TO THE EDITOR

### Christian America

The historian Kevin M. Kruse wrote "One Nation Under God" in 2015. Recently, I ran across a term new to me. "Christian America". It was coined in the 1930's when businessmen enlisted religious activists in their fight against FDR's New Deal.

Big corporations paid conservative clergy "to attack the

New Deal as a program of 'pagan statism' that perverted the central principle of Christianity: the sanctity and salvation of the individual". They were able to get Dwight D. Eisenhower elected president in 1952. But President Eisenhower started a religious movement and religion moved in with government. The phrase "Under God" was added to the Pledge of Allegiance and "In

God We Trust" became our official motto.

Historically, we are a nation forged from the experiences of immigrants fleeing religious persecution. Immigrants were coming from countries with a State sanctioned religion. They simply wanted to worship according to their own beliefs since they were persecuted for it in their mother country. So, it's not surprising

that as the Founding Fathers fashioned the rules for our nation, they separated church from state. That has worked in our favor throughout our history. So, it defies reason to learn that there is a movement afoot to recreate our nation as a "Christian America" and ignore the rights of other religions.

L. P. Martin  
Fort Davis





# Heard on the STREET

Our Avalanche reporter asked, "Where did you travel from for Spring Break?"



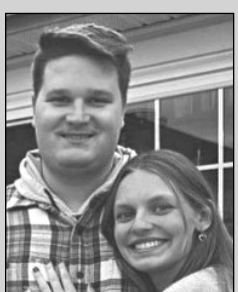
**Kat Anderson:** This is just one of our stops, we are road-tripping from Fredericksburg. We wanted to get away for spring break.



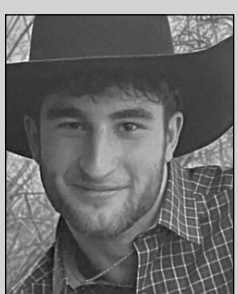
**Kylie Howard:** California, but this isn't my first time visiting the Big Bend.



**Samantha Van Ness:** All the way from Greeley, Colorado. We have mountains but I do like to visit the desert.



**George Miller:** We drove from Midland on Sunday. It's a Texas stay-cation.



**Evan Childers:** Michigan.

Send your community events to [kara.gerbert@alpineavalanche.com](mailto:kara.gerbert@alpineavalanche.com).

UPCOMING EVENTS

**March 22 Cheese Enchilada Dinner,** 5 p.m. until sold out, the Alpine Humane Society is holding this fundraiser at the American Legion at 306 W. Sul Ross. Plates come with cheese enchiladas, beans, rice, salad, and salsa.

**March 23 Sunshine House 2nd Annual March for Meals Fun Run,** 8 a.m. at the St. James Episcopal Church corner of 6th Street and Ave A. Entry fee is \$15 and it benefits the Sunshine House's initiative to combat hunger and feed people in the community.

**March 23 Boy Scouts Troop 41 Bake Sale,** 8 a.m. to 11 a.m. in front of Family Dollar on 5th Street. Easter themed desserts and baked goods will be available. All proceeds go towards funding

summer camp attendance.

**March 29 Friday Night Lights Jackpot,** 6 p.m. Sul Ross SALE Arena including barrel racing, breakaway roping, and team roping. All entries are cash only. NIRA rules in all events except for youth breakaway.

**April 6 Sculpture and Mark Making Workshop,** with Alex Ferante and partner Brynn at Sul Ross State University.

**April 26 Friday Night Lights Jackpot,** 6 p.m. Sul Ross SALE Arena including barrel racing, breakaway roping, and team roping. All entries are cash only. NIRA rules in all events except for youth breakaway.

ONGOING EVENTS

**Alcoholics Anonymous,** 502 E. Lockhart Ave. Schedules are available on the front door. For more information, call 915-562-



4081 or aa-intergroup.org.

**Alpine Lions Club meeting,** noon Tuesdays at the BBT conference room, 5th St. and Brown St.

**American Legion Post 79 meeting,** 6:30 p.m., second Monday each month, Legion Hall, 306 W. Sul Ross Ave. Dinner provided.

**American Legion Auxiliary meeting,** 4 p.m., third Monday each month, Legion Hall, 306 W. Sul Ross Ave.

**Amigo Run Club at Alpine City Place,** 5:30 p.m. to 8 p.m. at 101 W. Ave E. Weekly running club to walk/run 1-3 miles. Meet at the Amigo garage and finish

at Amigo. Call 432-837-4012 for more information.

**Big Bend Amateur Radio Club meeting,** 7 p.m., second Tuesday each month, Frontier Masonic Lodge #766, 2300 Highway 118 North.

**Big Bend Community Choral rehearsals** on Monday evenings at 6 p.m. in the Sul Ross Fine Arts Building, Room 200. All are welcome, but first contact Andrew Alegria at [Andrew.alegria@sulross.edu](mailto:Andrew.alegria@sulross.edu), call 432-837-8216, or visit [bbchorale.wixsite.com/bbcc](http://bbchorale.wixsite.com/bbcc).

**Celebrate Recovery,** at Big Bend Cowboy Church on Thursday evenings from 6 p.m. to 8 p.m. For more information contact CW at 432-386-3628 or Stacey at 432-386-2979.

**Citizenship Classes,** at Alpine Public Library by appointment only, 805 W. Ave. E. 432-837-2621

**ESL Tutoring,** at Alpine Public Library, 805 W. Ave. E. Call 432-837-2621 to make an appoint-

ment.

**Exercise Classes,** at Sunshine House, 402 E. Holland Ave. Tuesdays-yoga and balance, Thursdays-strength and conditioning. 10:30 a.m. to 11 a.m. Free to all. Contact Cindy at 512-423-2409 for more details.

**GED tutoring,** at Alpine Public Library, 805 W. Ave. E. Call 432-837-2621 to make an appointment.

**Hike with Homeless Dogs,** 10 a.m. to 11 a.m. every Thursday at Davis Mountains State Park in collaboration with Grand Companions. For more information contact Charlie Ewing at 432-246-3337 x301.

**Kiwanis Club of Alpine,** noon, Wednesdays at the Sul Ross University Center, room 210

**Late Night Game Night,** 9 p.m. to 11 p.m. every Thursday night at Amigo, 101 W. Ave E. See more at [alpineavalanche.com](http://alpineavalanche.com).

## PET OF THE WEEK



Come by the shelter to meet sweet Cecile.

She is a friendly, gentle, quiet, little couch potato that loves kisses. She is a medium-sized 45 lb. young dog that found herself at the shelter pregnant. She delivered her litter of pups a couple of months ago and now it's her turn to find her forever home. You can meet this loving girl at the Alpine Animal Shelter on Old Marathon Rd.

Plan your Lent dinner with our fundraiser for Alpine Humane Society, a cheese enchilada plate with rice, beans, and salad, on Friday, March 22, at the American Legion. Come early; limited quantities are available. 5 p.m. until sold out.

You can also come to our next Yappy Hour at Alcove Social (the old Saddle Club) on Tues-

day, March 26, from 5 to 8 p.m.

Stay tuned for details on our upcoming fundraiser on April 6, Messages from the Rainbow Bridge, Sara Cash, Social Worker, Grief Therapist, and Reiki Practitioner will use her mediumship gifts to relay messages of love and healing from our departed pets for a select group of participants.

Call 432-837-2532 to donate, foster and volunteer.

Pet promotions are courtesy of the Alpine Humane Society. Alpine Animal Services handles pet adoptions at the city shelter, 10 a.m. to 1 p.m. and 2 to 6 p.m. Monday through Friday at 2900 E. Old Marathon Highway. For information about shelter pet adoptions, cremation services, or lost/found pets, call the

Shelter at 432-837-9030.

The Alpine Humane Society Thrift Store and Cattery is at 706 N. 5th Street in Alpine, open 10 a.m. to 5 p.m. Monday through Saturday. The Pet Pantry is at 600 N. 5th Street. The AHS Helpline is 432-837-2532. To view adoptable pets, visit [PetFinder.com](http://PetFinder.com) or [www.alpinehumane-society.org](http://www.alpinehumane-society.org), and check us out on Facebook and Instagram.

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## New agents and coordinators join the Big Bend Sector



Members of the U.S. Border Patrol agent Class #1245 and the Border Patrol Processing Coordinator Class #46 took their oaths to become a part of our men and women in green working in the Big Bend Sector. The Big Bend Sector covers over 135,000 square miles and over 118 counties, 77 from Texas and all of Oklahoma.

Courtesy photo

*The 588 Educational Cooperative*

CROSSING THE ROAD... BRIDGING THE GAP

**DESTRUCTION OF SPECIAL EDUCATION RECORDS**

In accordance with applicable state and federal regulations, the 588 Educational Cooperative does hereby notify you of its intent to destroy student special education records. All special education records, prior to **July 1, 2017**, will be destroyed. The 588 Educational Cooperative will destroy special education records for the following school districts:

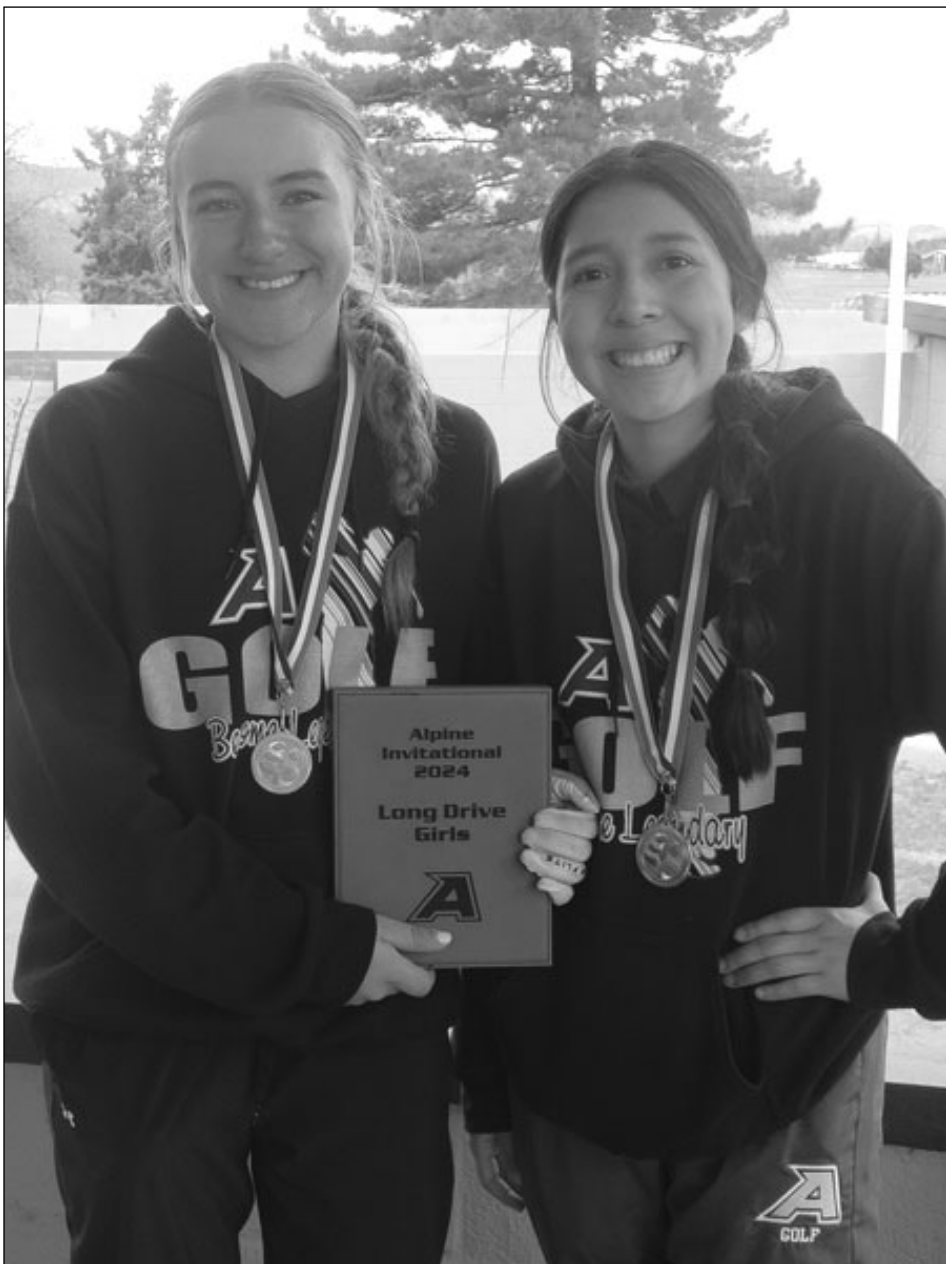
- Alpine Independent School District
- Balmorhea Independent School District
- Culberson County-Allamore Independent School District
- Fort Davis Independent School District
- Marathon Independent School District
- Marfa Independent School District
- Presidio Independent School District
- Terlingua Common School District
- Terrell County Independent School District
- San Vicente Independent School District
- Sierra Blanca Independent School District
- Valentine Independent School District

If you would like to be provided with a copy of the records to be destroyed, please contact the 588 Educational Cooperative by telephone at 432-837-3315, by fax at 432-837-3573, or via mail at 704 W. Sul Ross Ave, Alpine, Texas, 79830.

Records will be destroyed within 90 days of the date of this notice.



# Top-notch golf



**Evelyn Smith and Analia Adame took first and second place respectively on Monday during the Alpine golf tournament. Smith took gold with a score of 93 while Adame took the silver with a score of 96.**

*Courtesy photo*

## FIRE • FROM 1

Built on the expertise of fire behavior and prediction knowledge, the Integrated Team Fire Warning Paradigm Process was initially demonstrated in Oklahoma in 2022 and 2023, after being created in response to the devastating 2018 Camp Fire in California.

The new process serves as an improved coordinated method for wildfire detection, notification, and action. The process was designed by members of the Southern Great Plains Wildfire Outbreak Working Group, including Texas A&M Forest Service, Oklahoma Forestry Services, National Weather Service, and Kansas Forest Service personnel.

“This has been a long-standing work in progress,” said Todd Lindley, National Weather Service science and operations officer, in Norman, Oklahoma. “Brad Smith (Texas A&M Forest Service) and Drew Daily (Oklahoma Forestry Services) helped us to work through retrospective simulations of fire disasters in the Southern Plains, using the combined knowledge of environmental conditions and technology from the satellites, to depict fire behavior that is particularly dangerous.”

Texas A&M Forest Service brought a new perspective for the other agencies in combining fire prediction and weather with knowledge of fire history and behavior. Smith catalyzed the expansion of prediction resources and technology for the state, implementing more than 150 new weather stations statewide that are used for fire potential monitoring.

The satellite hotspot detection process of the multi-agency warning system is initiated when a red flag fire day is in effect. A red flag warning is issued by the National Weather Service when the combination of weather conditions and composite fuel moisture support extreme fire danger. On these days, the National Weather Service and emergency management services within the warned

area repeatedly assess fire conditions.

Texas A&M Forest Service Predictive Services utilizes additional tools to monitor fire potential by measuring the fire environment including fuel and weather. These factors, paired with an extensive knowledge of fire behavior history in the area, can be used by the Texas A&M Forest Service to inform the National Weather Service or local communities on emergency management decisions.

The National Weather Service monitors conditions on red flag days using infrared channels of the new GOES-16 and GOES-17 satellites.

“We use these channels of the satellites to detect heat,” said Doug Weber, National Weather Service senior forecaster and fire program coordinator, Amarillo. “When a fire hits, it heats up really quick. We’re able to see the flicker on the satellite immediately, and it jumps out on the map.”

Following the initial detection and assessment of a fire through satellite imagery, National Weather Service members notify local emergency management teams and state fire and forestry officials of the fire.

More than 350 Texas Panhandle officials and emergency management personnel are currently subscribed to the initial alert system and receive wildfire threat notifications.

Once notified, local officials assess the threat of the fire to determine whether a wildfire notification for community members is appropriate. Factors such as fire location, fuels the fire is burning and weather are used by state and local officials to determine the fire’s rate of spread and potential impact, which will help determine if a fire warning notification is appropriate.

Within minutes, local officials can request a wildfire or evacuation notification from the National Weather Service to community members within a specified perimeter, like other natural disaster alerts issued by the

National Weather Service.

Throughout the notification process, the interest of local emergency management teams is paramount to the issuing of the notifications by the National Weather Service. The improved notification process emboldens local emergency management teams to make critical decisions that will affect community members, with the help and support of state officials and neighboring communities.

“It’s highly encouraged that local emergency management officials initiate the fire warning,” said Luke Kanclerz, Texas A&M Forest Service Predictive Services Department head, Henderson. “A majority of the fire warnings issued February 26 and February 27 were issued by the local and county emergency management officials in the Panhandle.”

Lindley noted that the development of new technology and strong inter-agency relationships have aided in the timeliness of the new notification process.

“This entire process has been accomplished in nine minutes on average, ranging from three minutes to 15 minutes,” Lindley said. “What is significant about that is that previously, we were only authorized to send notifications to the public at the request of local emergency managers, which took 80 minutes in some cases. We have cut that process down significantly so that we can be more forward leaning and proactive on getting these alerts to the public.”

Kanclerz expressed his hopes that this new warning process will provide timely notification of wildfires, more accurate fire behavior imaging, and a safer environment for community members and first responders.

“With a fire season ahead, these alerts are a quick and efficient way to notify community members of a dangerous fire,” Kanclerz said. “We have worked on this process in the hopes of improving public safety.”

## LIBRARY • FROM 1

The library also received a grant from Texas Rural Communities which will go towards supporting their life skills programs such as health and wellness and financial literacy. The library has had a full calendar offering reading programs and educational family programs. They hosted a kid’s teddy sleepover, where kids dropped off their stuffed animals for a library sleepover. The American Legion hosted a Fish Fry and the Granada Theater will be hosting a Talent Show benefit for the library on April 13. On April 20, they are having their annual patio sale. Their expansion is expected to be completed in June or July. It is a million-dollar project that hasn’t used any tax dollars.

Short-term rental properties were a topic of discussion once again. Ward 3 council member Darrin Nance brought this discussion topic forward while a few short-term rental owners were present at the meeting. The council is reviewing the guidelines associated with short-term rentals.

“The ordinance is to help regulate the health and safety of visitors to Alpine,” said Antrim.

Ward 5 council member Rick Stephens suggested that the annual fee for registering the STRs perhaps should be illuminated to

encourage people to register their properties. There will be a workshop in the future to ask STR owners about the fees, fines, and guidelines. The city will be sending out letters to pending permits of STR applicants.

Stephens brought a discussion about speeding issues accruing along Avenue B forward. The speed limit is 20 mph, and Stephens suggested a speed bump. The council thought that a possible first step would be to add a stop sign to prevent speeding.

Alpine Mayor Catherine Eaves reminded the council about the work that remains to be done for the city charter and the steps that still need action. Amended last in 2005, the charter needs clarification on appointing new council members and council member terms. These will be added to the propositions for the November elections.

The council approved the final reading of the amendment to the code of ordinances regarding the juvenile curfew. The State of Texas has updated its laws and so cities are thus repealing the curfew to better align with the new laws.

The council members also approved the hiring of Lloyd Gosselink Attorneys and Consulting Services for intervention and

negotiation with the AEP Texas Inc. request for a rate increase. The consulting firm represents many cities that want to oppose an increased rate change. AEP has gone before the Public Utility Commission to request a rate increase for what they charge their customers. They have asked for a 9.29% increase, which would be approximately \$4.59 more each month. There is no cost to the city for joining the coalition.

The council’s next order of business was concerning elections. They approved setting the pay rate for election officials, setting the number of those workers and designated the early voting ballot board for the May 4, general and special elections. They also approved the agreement between Alpine and the Brewster County Elections Administrator for the use of election equipment and services, an agreement that the commissioner’s court approved in their own meeting last week.

Lastly, the council approved the bid proposals for purchasing different kinds of asphalt, topping rock, and base material from the companies Ergon and Jarrett Dirt Work Services.

The next city council meeting is scheduled for Tuesday, April 2.

## NOTICE OF SHERIFF'S SALE


**THE STATE OF TEXAS §**  
**COUNTY OF BREWSTER §**

By virtue of Tax Warrant issued out of the 394th District Court of Brewster County, Texas in Cause No. TXB22397 on the 27th day of February, 2024 by the Clerk thereof, and to me as Sheriff, directed and delivered, I will proceed to sell at **10:00 a.m. on the 2nd day of April, 2024** at the West Door of the Brewster County Courthouse, in Alpine, Texas, the Properties described below:

Cause No.	Styling	Legal Description
TXB22397	City of Alpine, et al vs. Owners of Various Properties Located Within the City Limits of Alpine, Texas	<p>Tract 2: Lots Six (6) and Seven (7), Block Forty-seven (47), Shipman Addition, to the City of Alpine, Brewster County, Texas. R12618</p> <p>Tract 3: Lot Five (5), Block Two (2), Hancock Subdivision C, to the City of Alpine, Brewster County, Texas. R32107</p> <p>Tract 4: Portion of Lot One (1), Block Three (3), Metta Harms Addition, to the City of Alpine, Brewster County, Texas, which lies North of the State highway #3, also designated as Federal Highway #90; and being the same land described in a Warranty Deed recorded in Vol. 233, Pg. 845, Deed Records of Brewster County, Texas. R34418</p> <p>Tract 5: Lots One (1) and Two (2), Block Twenty (20), Thomas-Derrick Addition, to the City of Alpine, Brewster County, Texas. R12815</p>

LEVIED ON the 27 day of February, 2024, as the property of those persons listed above to satisfy taxes, penalties, and interest and all costs of seizure and sale against those persons listed in said Warrant and any other unknown owners in favor of the Taxing Units listed in said Tax Warrants.

GIVEN UNDER MY HAND THIS THE 27 DAY OF FEBRUARY, 2024.

  
Sheriff, Brewster County, Texas





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## LOOKING BACK

Alpine Avalanche

SERVING THE BIG BEND  
AND DAVIS MOUNTAINS COUNTRY

March 13, 1997

The Big Bend Unit of the American Cancer Society is hosting the second annual Relay for Life on April 25-26 at the Sul Ross State University track. Sponsors are needed this year to help underwrite expenses.



March 13, 1997

No injuries were reported at this fender bender accident on East Highway 90 and Loop Road, but all the local law came out to investigate by evidence of the photo. Seen here are vehicles from the Alpine Police Department, the Sheriff's Office, and DPS.

March 13, 1997

This week the Big Bend Education Corporation received a check for \$2,500 from the Big Bend Operations for National Park Concessions, Inc., for their school fund.



March 6, 1997

Sandy Fuentez, Kelly Graham, Lisa Espinoza, Jennifer Phillips, and Kristin Arriola display their group project at the local history fair. Their project "Selena" will be entered into the Regional History Fair on March 26.

Photos from Alpine Avalanche archives at Archives of the Big Bend, Bryan Wildenthal Memorial Library, Sul Ross State University.

# Adding river rock instead of pavers or bricks is better for tree roots

**Dear Neil: Would adding additional brick squares beneath the tree impact it negatively? I can't get grass to grow there, and it's difficult to blow leaves out. Not to mention the mud our dog tracks into the house.**

It would not. Air and water would still be able to reach the roots. I do have a couple of other ideas, however. You might consider using softball-sized river rock instead. It would give an interesting contrast in looks and texture. You could plant a dwarf Burford holly on the left back toward the visible "end" of the wood fence to give a third dimension and block off the view behind the tree (not that it's not attractive - just to close things off). But the biggest benefit of the rock would be as

**GARDENER'S MAILBAG**  
by neil sperry

the tree's roots grow and swell, they wouldn't bother the rocks. You'd never see them. With your brick squares, you would.

And my other alternative might be to plant regular mondograss (monkeygrass) or liriopse as a groundcover. Neither produces any runners, so it would be easy to blow out the leaves, and they give a nice, natural look.

Looking at your turf just beyond this area, it

looks like you soon may have the opportunity to extend this all a little farther into the yard once your winter grasses die out in summer's heat. Keep that in mind before you do anything really permanent with the existing bed.

**Dear Neil: I was told that these are Russian olives. At one point they were luscious, but now they are almost bare. What caused this? What can I do to get them full looking again?**

Whoever told you these were Russian olives was close, but just a bit outside. This is *Elaeagnus pungens*, or silverberry. Most Texas gardeners simply refer to it as "elaeagnus" and know it as a really tough shrub for most of the state. It handles our heat and droughts well. Other than lace

bugs, they have few pest problems. What it didn't handle was the cold of February 2021, and that's what has continued to take a toll on your plants. I've seen that across big parts of Texas. Many of the plants have been removed a good while back and you may decide to do the same. Before you do, however, you could try cutting them back to 10 or 15 inches - remove the straggly tops and leave the busy regrowth from the bases. I can't guarantee you'll get any vigorous regrowth after all this time, though. You might be better ahead just to replace them. For what it's worth, the Russian olive (*Elaeagnus angustifolia*) is a much taller plant. Its leaves are similarly gray but much longer and narrower. It is not frequently used in urban

landscapes.

Have a question you'd like Neil to consider? E-mail him at [mailbag@sperrygardens.com](mailto:mailbag@sperrygardens.com). Neil regrets that he cannot reply to questions individually.



### ACROSS

- 1 Nicholas of film "Mom and Dad" with TX Anne Winters
- 5 spoken, not written
- 6 Lucy had title role in this 1974 film
- 7 poetic "appearance"
- 8 mustang or bronco (2 wds.)
- 17 TX Laura Bush, \_\_\_ Welch
- 18 boll weevil once caused this to Texas cotton (2 wds.)
- 21 DL or SSN, e.g.
- 22 "don't \_\_\_ your feet" (get it done)
- 23 newspaper VIP
- 24 horrified
- 29 TX ZZ Top album: "\_\_\_ Hombres"
- 30 TX Lupe Ontiveros had a part in "As Good \_\_\_ Gets"
- 31 Texas-based film: "Hell \_\_\_ High Water"
- 32 most areas of Texas have a \_\_\_ library
- 34 "\_\_\_ fact" (by that very fact)
- 35 2012 film starring TX Amy Acker: "Nothing \_\_\_ About Nothing"
- 36 where Jimmy and Jerry went to college
- 37 largest continent
- 38 boot smell?
- 39 a tied game: "\_\_\_ \_\_\_ your sister"
- 41 wrestling matches "tween two schools
- 42 \_\_\_ Boston, TX

### DOWN

- 13 the cowboy \_\_\_ against the hitchin' post
- 44 TX Hyer film: "The Sons of \_\_\_ Elder"
- 45 biblical donkey
- 46 TXism: "\_\_\_ a spell" (stay and visit)
- 47 apple drink
- 48 resided in a certain place
- 50 TXism: "fits like ugly \_\_\_ ape"
- 1 with "The," newspaper covering
- 2 TXism: "mad as \_\_\_ -on rooster"
- 3 reproductive cell in an organism
- 4 TX Buddy's widow: Maria \_\_\_ Holly
- 9 this TX Lisa was a host of "Good Morning America"
- 10 historical periods
- 11 TXism: "that \_\_\_ won't hunt" (differ)
- 12 U.S. operations of this printer co. are based in Houston

## TEXAS CROSSWORD

by Charley & Guy Orbison  
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# Sports

## Fightin' Buck golf keeps toppling the competition

BY KARA GERBERT  
Managing Editor

The Alpine Fightin' Buck golf team just keeps improving as their season continues. The boys' last tournament brought home the first-place win for the Alpine team, and head coach Marco Gomez believes this will give the team the boost of confidence needed to stay at the top.

"This week we host the tournament on our home course, and I believe this will help our kids immensely. I think they will do very well, and hopefully finish in the top three teams this week," said Gomez.

The girls didn't have enough players to compete as a team at home at this time, but they can compete individually, and compete they did. On Monday, Evelyn Smith took first place at the home tournament, shooting a 93. Analia Adame, who shot a 96, took home the silver medal, and Ashlee Neal shot 119 for the day. "I was worried that because the weather was wet and chilly the girls

might not shoot as well as I know they can, and that the scores would be higher, but they did well," stated Gomez.

Before the home tournament on Monday, Smith had this to say about playing at home. "Playing at my home course is an exciting feeling because it allows me to represent my school and the determination to play harder."

Several members of the boys' team were asked how they felt about this week's tournament being played at home, and their remarks were all positive. Ace Granado replied, "For me, the advantage of playing at our local golf course would be club selection from previous experience on the course. I find myself less often doubting choosing between clubs for my shot."

David Baca said, "I feel confident, but never too confident because golf may twist and turn you even on your own course." Baca is a dedicated player and can be seen on the local course almost daily beyond the traditional practices with the team.

Alpine senior Mateo Solis



**Ace Granado puts his ball towards the hole in tournament play last Tuesday at the Alpine golf course.**

had quite a bit to say about playing at home. "I think playing on our home course is a very comforting experience. I feel that the overall familiarity allows us to really show what we're all capable of doing for this program. Some of us have been playing on this course for almost our whole lives, and for us to be able to show our growth as players as well as our determination towards our performance is definitely an opportunity that

I'm sure we're all thankful for as a team," Solis replied.

The boys' team took to the links on Tuesday morning and wrapped up the day with a third-place finish overall behind Fort Stockton and Pecos. Individually, David Baca placed first with a score of 77. The other four varsity players did well also, with Mateo Solis shooting 90, Riley Killingsworth scoring 101, and Ace Granado shooting 105 followed by Levi Garcia

finishing the day with a score of 119. The Alpine JV team also competed on Tuesday. Mason Dove had the lowest score of the day for the JV team, shooting 105. He was followed by Ferris Daley who shot 108, Camilo Celaya with 114, and Colt Hale finished with 136.

Gomez said going forward the team will be working on their short game in preparation for district play.

### Fightin' Buck Schedule

**Track & Field**  
Mar. 22-23 San Angelo Relays @San Angelo  
Mar. 28 Crane Relays @Crane

**Buck Baseball**  
Mar. 22 Alpine vs Tornillo\* JV @ 4:30 p.m.

Varsity TBA  
Mar. 26 Stanton vs Alpine\* JV @ 4:30 p.m.

Varsity @ 7 p.m.  
Lady Buck Softball  
Mar. 22 Tornillo vs Alpine\* Varsity @ 5 p.m.

JV @ 7 p.m.  
Mar. 26 Alpine vs Stanton\* Varsity @ 5 p.m.  
JV @ 7 p.m.

**Tennis**  
Mar. 22 RCHS Invitational @ Regan County  
Mar. 26-27 Fort Davis Invitational @ Sul Ross  
April 2 Alpine vs Fort Davis @ Fort Davis

**Buck and Lady Buck Golf**  
Mar. 27 District Varsity and JV\* @Pecos  
April 2 District Varsity and JV\* @Pecos

\*Denotes District Game

## District baseball begins at home due to weather

BY KARA GERBERT  
Managing Editor

The Alpine Fightin' Buck baseball team would have hit the highway on Tuesday to travel to Crane for their first district ball game of the season, but the weather had other plans. Instead, the match-up with the Golden Cranes was moved to Koker-not Field, giving the Bucks a little home-field advantage to kick off their district rivalries for the 2024 season.

Alpine's last game before Spring Break was against Monahans, where they battled against a tough Loboes team with a 7-1 record.

Monahans would be the first to get on the board in the March 12 match-up, with a pop-up to right field that had one of their runners tag up to score in the bottom of the second. A walk, a double, and a line-drive triple advanced three of the Loboes runners across the plate in the bottom of the third, to add three more points to the

board for Monahans.

Two RBI singles, one on a bunt would score another two of the Loboes runners, bringing the score to 6-0 in favor of Monahans. Both the fourth and fifth innings would add four more points to the board for the Loboes and a final single to left field in the bottom of the sixth would seal

the fate of Alpine, leaving Monahans the victor in a 0-11 game.

Going into Tuesday night's game, the Bucks were facing a team with a 5-4 record going into district play. The Golden Cranes have toppled McCamey, Van Horn, Hawley, Idalou, and Christoval this season

while the Bucks have taken down Eunice, Midland TLCA, Lovington, and Regan County, currently just a win behind Crane, but with more games under their belt.

Alpine fell to Crane on

Tuesday night at home 2-15 in their first district game of the season. The Bucks travel to Tornillo tomorrow to face the Coyotes and will then face Stanton at home next Tuesday.



**Alpine's Alec Ramos winds up to hurl a pitch toward home plate during a recent game at Koker-not Field.**

Photo by Annika Canaba

## Lady Bucks enter district play

BY JOH COVINGTON  
Staff Writer

The Alpine Lady Bucks entered district play on Friday, playing the Presidio Blue Devils with a narrow loss of 6-9.

"We felt very prepared as we entered the game with Presidio," said Christopher Virdell, head coach for the Lady Bucks volleyball team, "we jumped out early on them and took a four-run lead."

Neither team gained any ground in the first inning, but Alpine scored a point in the second inning and three in the third. The Blue Devils chased the Lobos with two points in the third and matched them with three points in the fourth inning.

"I feel the girls played well in their positions for the first half of the game. We struggled in some areas in the middle innings and a few errors got them back into the game," said Virdell.

In the fifth inning, both teams were neck and neck at 5-5 and neither made any ground until the Blue Devils gained four points in the sixth. The Lady Bucks won



**Alpine Lady Buck softball player Kody Hawkins has her game face on during a recent game.**

Photo by Annika Canaba  
rest of the first half of the district, we will have to correct both those things and be ready for some tough games," said Virdell.

another point in the final seventh but didn't overcome the Presidio team, losing 6-9.

"I think the biggest lapse in the game is that we struggled to hit the ball and left runners in scoring positions, Virdell said.

The Lady Bucks have been very busy, playing in multiple scrimmages and tournaments since the beginning of the year to prepare for the season. This game with Presidio was the first of many challenges for the players returning to the team from last year, and those who are new to the sport.

"As we look ahead to the

The Lady Bucks' Tuesday game was relocated from Crane to Alpine for a home district game due to the wet conditions on the Crane field. The Lady Bucks allowed the Golden Cranes a single run, which kept them from a shut-out, but they would defeat Crane in this second district game of the season 22-1.

The Lady Bucks' next challenge will be against Tornillo in a district home game, scheduled for tomorrow.

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# Lobos hit Tucson Invitational

BY JOH COVINGTON  
Staff Writer

Last week the Sul Ross Lobo softball program traveled to Tucson, Arizona to compete in the Tucson Invitational. The Lobos went up against teams from Rhode Island, Connecticut, Nebraska, and Pennsylvania and came out with several impressive wins.

The invitational began with the Lobos winning a pair of games on March 12, one with the Salve Regina with a 4-1 win, and the second with Hartford 6-3.

In game one on Tuesday afternoon, the Lobos entered the scoreboard at the bottom of the first with an RBI single to center from Lily Wiser. Kyndell Garcia stole home in the third and increased the Lobo lead to 3-0. And Alisandra Garcia was brought in whenever Ciera Avila hit an RBI single to left. It was at the top of the seventh inning that Salve Regina got a home run for their singular run in the game.

Following that game, the Lobos once again struck hard and fast in the top of the first when Madison Hodges hit an RBI single. Ciera Avila gave the Lobos a four-run lead with a double in the fourth inning, driving Vivian Jimenez. At the bottom of the fourth, the Hartford team caught up with the



Sul Ross' Madison Hodges swings for a ball during a recent home game.

Lobos with a two-RBI single, but the Lobos added a run in the fifth to distance themselves once again with a Janel Luna scored from third base.

The score was 6-2 at the top of the seventh until Hartford loaded the bases and managed to make one more run at the bottom, ending the game with the Lobo's win of 6-3.

The next day, the Lobos also played two games. The first game was with the Midland University JV team and the second with Frankland and Marshall College.

Photo by Brylee Sweeten  
Midland University was at bat at the top of the first and jumped ahead of Sul Ross by nine points with four singles, two doubles, and several RBIs.

At the bottom of the first, the Lobos began their assault to catch up to their opponent. Garcia scored whenever Chambers singled and had an RBI, Clemente advanced to second, and Hodges advanced to third.

Then, Hodges and Clemente scored whenever Aguilar singled to right field, sending Chambers to third.

In the second inning, Sul Ross continued the climb from three points to seven, cutting the deficit to 9-7 with a combination of RBIs from Garcia, Chambers, and Williams. Garcia grounded out, sending Luna to score. Chambers singled to left field, allowing Clemente and Hodges to score. Williams walked, sending Quarles to second, Aguilar to third, and Chambers to score before the end of the inning.

In the third inning, Sul Ross made the final score when Hodges had a sacrifice fly and RBI, giving Frakes third base and Garcia the door to score, ending the game with a close loss for the Lobos of 9-8.

The Lobos played their last game on March 14, with Eastern Connecticut State which ended their tournament participation with a difficult loss of 0-11 in five innings.

The Lobos were held to three hits while Eastern Connecticut jumped four points in the first inning. Avila was able to hit a double in the bottom of the first for the Lobos but was left stranded. In five runs Eastern Connecticut rallied on the hits in the top of the fifth to finish the game early.

The Lobos' next game will be in Richardson with UT Dallas, scheduled for tomorrow for a doubleheader.

## Shorthorn places second at State powerlifting competition



Jack Annalise Marquez took home a second-place finish at the Texas High School Women's Powerlifting Meet. Marquez's total was a combined lift of 995 lbs. and along with the second-place finish, Marquez received a First Team Academic All-State honors.

Courtesy photo

## SRSU welcomes AES back to school



Some of Sul Ross State University's student-athletes welcomed the Alpine Elementary School students back to school after their week-long Spring Break vacation.

Courtesy photo

# Golfing in the mist



Alpine Lady Buck golfer Evelyn Smith prepares to send the ball flying across her home course Monday, as Alpine hosted this week's high school golf tournament. Despite wet, chilly weather, Smith took first place at Monday's girl's tournament.

Courtesy photo

# Lobos sweep Hardin-Simmons at home

BY KARA GERBERT  
Managing Editor

After a season of struggles thus far, the Sul Ross Lobo baseball team toppled the Hardin-Simmons Cowboys in a three-game series at Kokernot Field. After two walk-off wins for the Lobos despite a postponement due to inclement weather, Sul Ross was able to battle against the hot batters in game three to sweep the series.

In game two, the Cowboys would be on the board first, but thanks to a solo home run by Aaron Morales, the Lobos would tie up the score in the bottom of the first. They would then add two more runs to the board, taking the lead on an RBI single from Primo Vasquez followed by a sacrifice fly by Corbin Dube that would bring Carsen Thor across the plate.

The Cowboys would help close the deficit with a single run in the third, but this week's ASC Co-Hitter Peyton Kennard hit a two-run homer in the bottom of the third to keep the Lobos in the lead 5-2. The Cowboys would pull ahead by one, with three runs on three hits in the top of the seventh, but Sul Ross would battle back with an RBI single from Estevan Ortiz to tie things up. A pinch hit by Steven Mills led to a leadoff single which would move him to second on a sacrifice bunt by Alvaro Hernandez in the bottom of the ninth. Morales would drive in pinch runner Sterling Inman with a single up

the middle, allowing the Lobos to take the win 7-6.

Game three started a little different for the Lobos when they were able to put up three in the first inning with a single from Morales and an RBI double from Vasquez to right center field. Lee Kubosh hit a two-run single to left center that left the Lobos ahead at the bottom of the first 3-0. The Cowboys would answer back in the second, with three hits on three runs to tie the game, but the Lobos were not going to let that stand. A solo home run by Steven Mills in the bottom of the second prompted a three-run bottom of the second to put the Lobos ahead by three.

Hardin-Simmons wasn't satisfied and would add four more hits and add five runs to the board in the top of the fourth, taking an 8-6 lead.

The bottom of the fourth had the Lobos cutting the deficit by one with a single run, followed by a five-run rally in the bottom of the fifth, thanks to Morales' three-run homerun, allowing the Lobos to pull ahead 12-8. A two-run hit by Kennard would add another two points to the board for Sul Ross, and while the Cowboys would get to within four in the top of the eighth, Kennard would add another two-run homerun to the Lobos tally in the bottom of the eighth putting Sul Ross up by six runs. Sul Ross would finish the game 16-11.

Next up for the Lobos is a matchup with UT Dallas in Richardson tomorrow afternoon.



Peyten Kennard makes contact with a ball during last week's match-up against Hardin Simmons. Kennard leads the Lobos this season with a total of five home runs and 18 RBIs, which earned him the ASC Co-hitter of the week honors.

Photo by Brylee Sweeten

## Restaurant Guide

\$6 a week gets you a spot in our restaurant guide  
www.alpineavalanche.com

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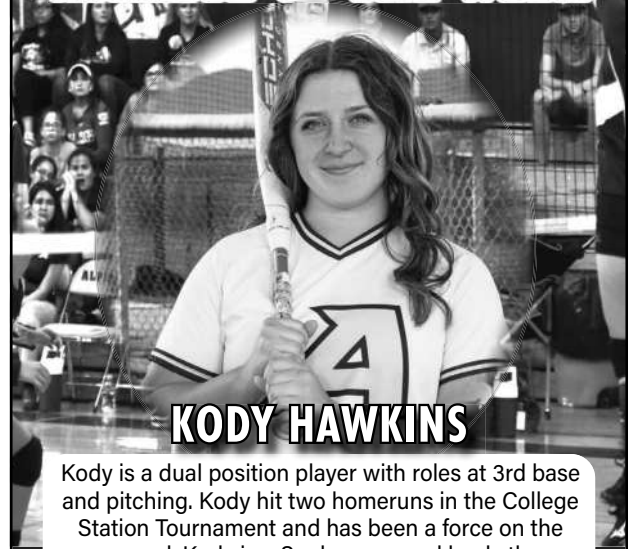
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## ATHLETE OF THE WEEK



### KODY HAWKINS

Kody is a dual position player with roles at 3rd base and pitching. Kody hit two homeruns in the College Station Tournament and has been a force on the mound. Kody is a Sophomore and leads the team in batting average.

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**NOTICE TO CREDITORS OF THE ESTATE OF KATHLEEN HOLLAND OLSEN**

NOTICE IS HEREBY GIVEN that Letters Testamentary upon the Estate of Kathleen Holland Olsen, Deceased, were granted to John Catto Stradley, Jr., as Independent Executor on March 12, 2024 by the Probate Court of Brewster County, Texas in cause number PR03158. ALL PERSONS having claims against said estate are hereby required to present same to said Independent Executor, c/o Gina Fields, 5809 Acacia Circle, El Paso, Texas 79912, within the time prescribed by law.

AINSA HUTSON HESTER & CREWS LLP  
5809 Acacia Circle  
El Paso, Texas 79912  
Telephone: (915) 845-5300  
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By *Gina Fields*  
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**PUBLIC NOTICE**

Notice of Initiation of the Section 106 Process-Public Participation in accordance with the FCC's Nationwide Programmatic Agreement. Commnet Wireless, LLC is reviewing an existing 146 ft (154 ft overall) monopole telecommunication tower for the purpose of updating the National Environmental Policy Act (NEPA) compliance documentation to support a proposed project for Verizon to install antennas at 145 ft of the tower with associated equipment. The tower is located at 53617 State Hwy 118, Terlingua, Brewster County, Texas (29.325917, -103.5329). Commnet Wireless, LLC is publishing this notice in accordance with Federal Communications Commission regulations (47 CFR § 1.1307) for Section 106 of the National Historic Preservation Act (NHPA) and for the National Environmental Policy Act (NEPA). We respectfully request that parties interested in commenting on this Federal undertaking relative to potential effects on cultural or historic properties or with questions on the proposed facility should contact GSS, Inc., 1054 Texan Trail, Suite 300, Grapevine, TX 76051; Ph. (682) 651-0034 within 30 days of the posting of this notice. (GSS # D24189-TX)



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### **NOTICE OF RATE CHANGE REQUEST**

AEP Texas Inc. (AEP Texas) publishes this notice that on February 29, 2024, AEP Texas filed with the Public Utility Commission of Texas (Commission) its Petition and Statement of Intent to Change Rates (the Petition), a copy of which is kept at AEP Texas' office at 400 W. 15<sup>th</sup> Street, Suite 1500, Austin, Texas, 78701. The Petition has been assigned Docket No. 56165. This notice is being published in accordance with 16 Tex.Admin. Code § 22.51(a) (1).

AEP Texas' Petition is based on the system-wide financial results for a 12-month test year ending on September 30, 2023, adjusted for known and measurable changes. Related to its distribution cost of service, the Company requests a rate increase of approximately \$100.4 million over its adjusted test year revenues. This net change is a 13.1% increase over net present distribution revenues. When expected annualized Transmission Cost Recovery Factor revenues are included in the comparison to present revenues, the net increase to distribution cost-of-service is 8.4%. Related to its transmission cost of service, the Company requests a rate increase of \$63.1 million above its adjusted test year revenues, an increase of 9.29%.

In addition to new rates, AEP Texas requests a prudence determination on all capital investment made to its system for the period from January 1, 2019, through September 30, 2023.

AEP Texas' Petition requests Commission approval to continue its offering of facilities rental services, as described in tariff schedules 6.1.2.3.6, 6.1.3.3.6, and 6.1.4.3.6, and a good-cause exception to the Commission's rule requiring AEP Texas to obtain the Commission's approval to provide these services every three years. If approved, the requested good-cause exception will allow the Company to extend the effective date of its existing tariff schedules through the effective date of the tariffs approved in its next comprehensive rate case.

Finally, AEP Texas requests recovery of its reasonable rate-case expenses associated with this proceeding and certain prior rate proceedings, including those expenses paid to reimburse municipalities for their participation.

If approved, the increased rates will be charged to AEP Texas' direct customers, all retail electric providers (REPs) in AEP Texas' service area, as well as the retail electric customers of those REPs. The extent to which the REPs pass along to their customers the increased retail rates is a function of the competitive market. In addition, AEP Texas' petition affects customers taking service under the Company's wholesale transmission rates.

AEP Texas has requested its proposed rate change become effective 35 days after the filing its Petition.

Persons who wish to intervene in or comment upon these proceedings, in Docket No. 56165, *Application of AEP Texas Inc. for Authority to Change Rates*, should notify the Commission as soon as possible, as an intervention deadline will be imposed. A request to intervene or for further information should be mailed to the Public Utility Commission of Texas, P.O. Box 13326, Austin, Texas 78711-3326. Further information may also be obtained by calling the Commission at (512) 936-7120 or (888) 782-8477. Hearing-and-speech-impaired individuals with text telephones (TTY) may contact the Commission at (512) 936-7136. The deadline for intervention in the proceeding is 45 days after the date the Petition was filed with the Commission.

### **AVISO DE MODIFICACIÓN DE TARIFA**

AEP Texas Inc. (AEP Texas) publica este aviso de que el 29 de febrero de 2024, AEP Texas presentó ante la Comisión de Servicios Públicos de Texas (Comisión) su Petición y Declaración de Intención de Cambiar las Tarifas (la Petición), una copia de la cual se encuentra en la oficina de AEP Texas en 400 W. 15<sup>th</sup> Street, Suite 1500, Austin, Texas, 78701. A la Petición se le ha asignado el Número de Expediente 56165. Este aviso se publica de conformidad con 16 Tex.Admin. Code § 22.51(a)(1).

La Petición de AEP Texas se basa en los resultados financieros de todo el sistema para un año de prueba de 12 meses que finaliza el 30 de septiembre de 2023, ajustados por cambios conocidos y medibles. En relación con el costo de servicio de distribución, la Compañía solicita un aumento de tarifas de aproximadamente \$100.4 millones de dólares sobre sus ingresos ajustados del año de prueba. Este cambio neto supone un incremento del 13.1% sobre los ingresos netos actuales de distribución. Si se incluyen los ingresos anualizados previstos del Factor de Recuperación de Costes de Transmisión en la comparación con los ingresos actuales, el aumento neto del costo del servicio de distribución es del 8,4%. En relación con el costo del servicio de transporte, la Compañía solicita una subida de tarifas de 63,1 millones de dólares por encima de los ingresos ajustados del año de referencia, lo que supone un incremento del 9,29%.

Además de las nuevas tarifas, AEP Texas solicita una determinación de prudencia sobre toda la inversión de capital realizada en su sistema para el período comprendido entre el 1 de enero de 2019 y el 30 de septiembre de 2023.

La Petición de AEP Texas solicita la aprobación de la Comisión para continuar con su oferta de servicios de alquiler de instalaciones, tal y como se describe en los programas de tarifas 6.1.2.3.6, 6.1.3.3.6 y 6.1.4.3.6, y una excepción de causa justificada a la norma de la Comisión que exige a AEP Texas obtener la aprobación de la Comisión para prestar estos servicios cada tres años. Si se aprueba, la excepción de causa justificada solicitada permitirá a la Compañía ampliar la fecha de entrada en vigor de sus programas de tarifas existentes hasta la fecha de entrada en vigor de las tarifas aprobadas en su próximo caso tarifario global.

Por último, AEP Texas solicita la recuperación de sus gastos razonables relacionados con este procedimiento y algunos procedimientos tarifarios anteriores, incluidos los gastos pagados para reembolsar a los municipios por su participación.

Si se aprueban, las tarifas incrementadas se cobrarán a los clientes directos de AEP Texas, a todos los proveedores minoristas de electricidad (REP) en el área de servicio de AEP Texas, así como a los clientes minoristas de electricidad de esos REP. La medida en que los REP repercutan a sus clientes el aumento de las tarifas minoristas depende del mercado competitivo. Además, la petición de AEP Texas afecta a los clientes que contratan el servicio según las tarifas de transmisión al por mayor de la empresa.

AEP Texas ha solicitado que el cambio de tarifa propuesta entre en vigor 35 días después de la presentación de su Petición. Las personas que deseen intervenir o hacer comentarios sobre este procedimiento, en el expediente N°56165, *Aplicación de AEP Texas Inc. de Autoridad para Cambiar las Tarifas*, deben notificarlo a la Comisión lo antes posible, ya que se impondrá un plazo de intervención. Las solicitudes de intervención o de información adicional deben enviarse por correo a Public Utility Commission of Texas, P.O. Box 13326, Austin, Texas 78711-3326. También puede obtenerse más información llamando a la Comisión al (512) 936-7120 o al (888) 782-8477. Las personas con discapacidad auditiva o del habla que dispongan de teléfonos de texto (TTY) pueden ponerse en contacto con la Comisión en el número (512) 936-7136. El plazo para intervenir en el procedimiento es de 45 días a partir de la fecha de presentación de la petición a la Comisión.



# Spanish dancers perform in El Paso



Members of the Fort Davis Junior High Spanish Club traveled to El Paso last month to perform in the San Jacinto Plaza.

Courtesy photo

**SENIOR Spotlight**  
**AYVAH ARAUZZA**

**What activities are you involved in during your senior year?**  
I am an Athletic Trainer for the football and track and field teams.

**Who has been your most influential teacher or coach through high school?**  
Coach Hardwick has definitely been the most influential throughout high school. He has been there to help me out with anything I need, and I can always count on him.

**What was your favorite moment in the last four years?**  
My favorite moment throughout high school was making new friends and memories throughout high school that I can cherish forever.

**What are your plans after high school?**  
I plan on attending Angelo State University and studying nursing.

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## Devotional Page

### Lessons Learned in Little Chairs

BY SUSAN CELAYA  
First United Methodist Church

Growing up, I was blessed with parents who faithfully took us to church and Sunday school every week. My memories of sitting in a circle of little pink wooden chairs are still vivid. In those small seats, we listened to stories of Jesus, sang songs about God's love, and learned simple Bible verses. Those childhood experiences formed the foundation of my faith, and the basic truths still provide guidance today.

As young children, we learned about who God is. Bible verses told us that "God is love." (1 John 4:8). And our teachers told us that God loves each of us. "Jesus Loves Me" is a song as true now as when we sang it at age four. We learned that God is good and has given us wonderful things. Our teachers taught us to give thanks for the simple gifts, like good food, happy times with our families, the sunshine, and the rain, and playing outside with our friends.

In those little chairs, we also learned that God loves everyone, even those who are different from us. Jesus went to eat with Zaccheus, a man no one else liked. Jesus healed the lepers, whom everyone else avoided. He met a woman at the well who was from a hated group, but Jesus spoke kindly with her. We heard the story of a good person who stopped

by the side of the road to help a beaten traveler when others ignored the injured man. The lesson was that it is not who you are that matters but how you treat others.

"Jesus loves the little children, all the children of the world...they are precious in his sight," we sang. God's love reaches everyone, and so should ours. "Do to others what we'd like others to do to us." "Be kind" (Ephesians 4:32). As preschoolers, we learned how to relate to people around us. We knew that God wants us to treat others, all others, with kindness and compassion, and to help those in need.

Undeniably, the world is much more complex for us today than it was when we were four. But, really, the simple building blocks of belief we learned sitting in little Sunday school chairs are the foundation of our adult faith. How do we relate to others we meet during our daily activities? Are our attitudes and actions toward those different from us in accordance with what Jesus taught? Are they caring, accepting, compassionate? What about our views about what happens in the wider world? Do our convictions grow from our core belief that God is love? Do we remember that the Bible tells us to "Be kind?"

God is love. Love one another. Give thanks to God. Be kind. Help other people. Lord, let us remember what the children know. Amen.

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I can do all things through Christ which strengthen me.  
~ Philippians 4:13

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# Post-modern caravan



Last Thursday, the Alpine Visitors Center was a rendezvous point for a Volkswagen caravan from the other far-flung corners of Texas. The guests stopped to stretch their legs, play with their canine companions, and enjoy Alpine for a few minutes before hitting the road again for Marfa that afternoon. Many of the drivers have been living the Volkswagen lifestyle for years and get on the road every chance they get.

Photo by Joh Covington

# Turning circles



The Javelina's on Ice skating rink was bustling with fun last Friday. Friends and families practiced their skating skills on the only chilly day of the last week's Spring Break.

Photo by Joh Covington

# When life gives you lemons



Local Alpine kids helped customers cool off with a lovely cup of lemonade last Thursday.

Photo by Wayne Kinney

# TxDot takes active role in combating human trafficking

BY KARA GERBERT  
Managing Editor

As far back as 2004, the Texas Department of Transportation (TxDOT) employees have witnessed different instances of human trafficking. Although this is a worldwide issue, the increase in border insecurity ups the stakes for Texans.

TxDOT created its "On the Road to End Human Trafficking" program to educate employees along with the traveling public on how to recognize and report possible instances of human trafficking.

By definition, according to the Trafficking Victims Protection Act of 2000, human trafficking is defined as sex trafficking in which a commercial sex act is induced by force, fraud, or coercion, or in which the person induced

to perform such act has not attained 18 years of age; or the recruitment, harboring, transportation, provision, or obtaining a person for labor or services through the use of force, fraud, or coercion for subjection to involuntary servitude, peonage, debt bondage, or slavery.

According to the National Human Trafficking Hotline, the state of Texas ranks #2 in the U.S. for the number of human trafficking cases. These cases are not limited to race, color, origin, religion, age, gender, sexual orientation, socioeconomic status, or education level. Both adults and minors are victims of trafficking and there are several key signs to be on the lookout for.

Signs of trafficking include persons who seem to be under the control of

someone else. Such signs include forcing someone to live in unsanitary, inhumane, or crowded living conditions. The withholding of wages or being paid less than promised or working in dangerous conditions and long hours can indicate labor trafficking.

Sex trafficking signs can also include persons who seem to be under the control of someone else who monitors their movements or spending as well as being unable to communicate with others on their own while someone else does so on their behalf. Unexplained bruises, scars, or other types of injuries or physical abuse may also be signs, and of course, prostitution, stripping, or pornography are indications of possible sex trafficking.

It is important to under-

stand the difference between human trafficking and human smuggling. While smuggling is the transportation of humans across a border and is usually consensual, trafficking is exploiting a person by force, fraud, or coercion to transport them across borders as well as domestically.

If you suspect someone is the victim of human trafficking you can call 911 or report it to the National Human Trafficking Hotline at 888-373-7888 or text 233733. There are also links on the TxDOT website that allow the download of an app to either iPhone or Android systems or you may visit [iwatchTexas.org](http://iwatchTexas.org) or call 844-643-2251 to report an incident. TxDOT also offers awareness resources that are available on their website.

## TURKEY • FROM 2

areas of suitable East Texas habitat, and the department adopted it as the restocking standard across the region in 2014.

To support these efforts, Stephen Webb, Ph.D., Texas A&M Natural Resources Institute research assistant professor in the Department of Rangeland, Wildlife and Fisheries Management, and other researchers are using technological advances like genetic monitoring to understand and enhance the super stocking method.

Since 2014, Texas Parks and Wildlife has used the super stocking method to release over 1,100 wild turkeys from 10 different states into 10 East Texas counties, Webb said. Researchers hope to determine how these birds have influenced the genetic diversity of eastern turkeys across the relocation area.

The genetic information collected will also shed light on which populations have fared best following translocation, he said.

"Perhaps we will see that only the birds sourced from Texas, Louisiana or Missouri have thrived, while those brought in from further away aren't surviving to successfully pass on their genetics," Webb said. "This can help biologists make more informed decisions regarding where they source birds from in the future."

Rio Grande turkeys are the focus of a second project by Texas Parks and Wildlife and Webb located in Texas' semi-arid Rolling Plains ecoregion.

Webb said turkey distribution in this region is

highly dependent on available food and roosting habitat, typically found along riparian corridors.

Loss of or alteration to these habitats is of increasing concern due to the potential negative impact on Rio Grande turkey populations.

Utilizing geospatial data to classify the land use and land cover of turkey roost locations obtained in the early 2000s, researchers can use models to predict areas of potential roosting habitat and how they have changed over the past 20 years.

"Using this data, we can assess how land use and land cover has changed and what effect that potential change has had on roosting availability," Webb said. "This will help Texas Parks and Wildlife prioritize areas of conservation need in the region."

As the landscape of Texas continues to change through increased fragmentation and urban/suburban encroachment, Dykes said management activities on private lands are critical to supporting conservation efforts for all three subspecies.

"Like a lot of wildlife, turkeys require different types of habitats throughout the year depending on their life cycle," Dykes said. "This is especially true when it comes to nesting and rearing poults."

Dykes said turkeys rely on the cover and composition historically provided by native bunch grass species to provide adequate nesting coverage but also adequate spacing for poults to move and forage along-

side their mother while also avoiding predators.

"Incorporating native grasses and herbaceous flowering species into landscapes can help provide habitat and food sources for these and other native birds," Dykes said. "This impact is also greatly amplified when landowners take a 'neighborhood' approach to conservation."

Dykes said when landowners work together to collectively implement management practices benefiting turkeys, other wildlife benefit across the landscape as well.

In East Texas, providing habitat could mean maintaining an open forest canopy through thinning as well as prescribed fire to foster the growth of beneficial understory plant species, he said.

In western portions of the state where roosting resources may be limited, Dykes said artificial turkey roosts can provide a safe alternative and protect roosting birds from predators.

Webb said certain efforts such as food plots and predator control may benefit turkey in the short term, but they don't address the root cause of turkey decline.

"It still comes down to conserving and managing turkey habitat properly to provide the resources they need to survive," Webb said. "We hope the knowledge we gain through our ongoing research will help empower biologists and landowners to do just that."

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# In your face, bold, peri peri chicken

Peri Peri is the “new” culinary trend to hit the global food party. Type peri peri into your browser and you can find numerous takes on this dish. It is a mash-up of Portugese meets Africa, and while this recipe calls for using Thai bird chiles, there’s no set rule about which chile you actually use.

I am a big fan of Aleppo peppers and use these in many of the dishes that call for crushed red chile flakes or something similar. Because Thai chiles are between 50,000 and 100,000



**HEAD OVER MEALS**  
 by kara gerbert

on the Scoville scale (the scale that measures heat intensity), using these to

make this dish may not find you many fans. Peri Peri Chicken means “Pepper Pepper Chicken” which should explain everything you need to know. By using Aleppo peppers, you can bring the heat, but not too much heat, as they factor in between only 2,500 to 7,000 on the Scoville scale. So, you can still get some heat, but not so much that the chicken is inedible for those who don’t want to destroy their tastebuds.

Thanks to the marinade of spices and the citrusy acid of the lemon juice as

well as the acid from white wine vinegar, it gives this chicken a tangy, spicy, and citrusy sweet taste after being roasted to perfection. If you don’t want to roast your chicken, it can always be grilled and it can be served in salads, wraps, sandwiches, or as a stand-alone main dish.

Regardless of how hot you want it or how you decide to cook it, this is one chicken dish that covers all the bases and will have you reaching for seconds at the dinner table.



Peri Peri Chicken

Courtesy photo

## Peri Peri Chicken

**Ingredients:**

- Homemade Peri Peri Sauce:**  
 3 shallots, chopped  
 6 garlic cloves, chopped  
 1 red bell pepper, chopped  
 10 Thai red bird chilis or chilis of choice  
 2 bay leaves  
 1/3 cup olive oil  
 4 Tbsp tomato paste  
 1.5 Tbsp white wine vinegar  
 1 lemon (rind + juice)  
 1 Tbsp dried oregano  
 2 tsp smoked paprika  
 1.5 tsp salt

- For chicken:**  
 4 chicken leg quarters (alternately, you can use drumsticks, bone-in thighs or whole chicken)  
 1 tsp salt  
 1 tsp pepper  
 1 tsp smoked paprika  
 oil for basting

- For Dipping Sauce:**  
 Heat 1 tsp olive oil in a saucepan. Add all remaining marinade and simmer for 10-15 minutes. Add 1 Tbsp butter and cook for 5 minutes.

**Directions:**

Place all Peri Peri sauce ingredients except olive oil in a blender or food processor. Blend to a fine consistency. Add in olive oil. Blend until the oil is well incorporated and the sauce has a smooth consistency.

Pat the chicken quarters dry and rub them down with salt, paprika and smoked paprika.

Pour peri peri sauce on the chicken and rub the marinade all over the chicken. With your fingers, loosen the skin from the chicken and make sure to get the marinade under the skin. Marinate for 4-24 hours (the longer the better).

When ready to roast, preheat the oven to 400°F.

Cover a sheet pan with aluminum foil for easy clean up. Place an oven safe wire rack on the sheet pan, and place the chicken quarters, well coated with peri peri sauce, on the

wire rack skin side up. Lightly brush olive oil all over them. (Do not discard the remaining peri peri sauce marinade, you will use it later to baste the chicken as well as to make peri peri dipping sauce).

Bake for 30 minutes. Baste the chicken with reserved marinade, then bake for another 30-40 minutes, depending on the size of your chicken pieces, or until the chicken reads 180-185°F on an instant read thermometer. (165°F if cooking chicken breast)

Keep an eye on it towards the end of cooking time. If it’s browning too quickly, cover it loosely with foil.

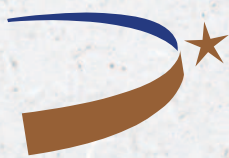
If necessary, you can also broil the chicken for more brown and crispy skin. Remove the chicken from the oven and let rest for 10-15 minutes before serving. Serve it with Peri Peri Dipping sauce.



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