

Centennial projects provide enhanced accessibility

West Texas Parks benefit from new ADA projects

BY LYDIA SALDANA
Contributor

Thanks to park lovers from all over the Lone Star State, Texas State Parks now have many new offerings for visitors. In honor of the centennial anniversary of Texas State Parks in 2023, the Texas Parks and Wildlife Foundation (TPWF) raised almost \$2 million in private funds to enhance the visitor experience at every state park across Texas. Most of these projects are now in place for visitor use, with several other projects still to come.

“Thanks to private donations from individuals, foundations, and corporations across Texas, we have expanded the amenities of our parks while helping to conserve the wild places we all treasure,” said TPWF Executive Director Anne Brown. “Half of the projects

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INSIDE



FEATURED

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Rainfall totals at Alpine-Casparis Airport

2025.0.00"
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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.



\$265K tax refund approved for Alpine ISD property owners after ‘software error’

BY KERRY LAIRD
Correspondent

On December 30, the Brewster County Commissioners Court convened a special meeting at 9:30 a.m. to address a single agenda item: approving an order to correct and refund overpaid Alpine Independent School District (AISD) taxes for the 2023 tax year.

Precinct 3 Commissioner Ruben Ortega

was absent, leaving a quorum of the remaining court members to deliberate on the matter.

The issue stems from a “vendor software error” reported by the Brewster County Appraisal District, said Brewster County Judge Greg Henington.

The error resulted in the incorrect calculation of tax limitations for qualifying homeowners aged 65 and older or

those with disabilities, as outlined in Section 11.26 of the Texas Tax Code.

The miscalculation led to overpayments totaling up to \$264,896.37 across affected properties within the AISD jurisdiction.

The court was tasked with discussing and potentially acting on matters arising from the interlocal tax assessment/ collection contract between Brewster County

and AISD. The contract outlines the county’s tax assessment and collection duties, including issuing refunds when required by law.

Judge Henington assured residents that the county has the funds to manage the refunds without significant disruption. He also clarified that those who have already paid their 2024 property taxes won’t be left out.

“There will be sufficient money coming in to offset the refunds,” said Henington. “If they have, by chance, already paid their ‘24, they, too, will get a refund.”

The commissioner’s court order directs the county’s tax assessor-collector to amend the 2023 AISD tax roll to reflect accurate tax calculations in line with le-

See ISD • 6

AHS junior continues to hit milestones



A milestone usually only achieved as a senior, Alpine High School junior Dae Hardwick continues reaching for greatness as an athlete after attaining 1,000 career points in basketball. Hardwick’s goal is to reach 2,000 before he graduates next year. He is pictured here with his teammates and coaches.

Courtesy photo

Stoke the Flame

BY SHELBY DUPERIER
Guest Columnist-Borderlands Research Institute

It’s camping season! In the fall and winter, locals and visitors alike turn to magical West Texas, home to vast desert land, rich riparian areas, and mountainous “sky islands” that erupt out of nowhere. Big Bend National Park and the Davis Mountains area, both popular camping destinations, are biodiversity hotspots boasting thousands of plant, animal, and bird species.

But with cool days come even chillier nights, and what better way for campers to end a day at the park than with a warm, glowing fire? Unfortunately, with consistently low precipitation, unrelenting winds, and large fire-prone areas, a burn ban can often occur during an overnight stay in these Trans-Pecos parks. But what if I told you there was one flame you could stoke this entire camping season?

Meet the flammulated owl or Psiloscops flammeolus. The word flammeolus is Latin and translates to

“flame-colored,” a reference to the reddish-orange streaks on the raptor’s feathers. It should be easy to spot, right? Not quite.

Flammulated owls are the second smallest owls in North America, and their flame-speckled plumage is actually camouflage. During the day, they are easily concealed among the aged bark of pines or firs and remain equally inconspicuous at night thanks to their completely dark eyes. These strictly nocturnal predators prefer to feast on nighttime insects, like moths, as they lurk high up in the treetops. The only thing that might give away this elusive owl’s location is yet another adaptation to blend in.

Being tiny means flammulated owls are susceptible to predation, so they have an enlarged trachea or windpipe. A distinct, low-pitched hoot – imagine blowing over the top of an empty glass bottle – creates the illusion of a much larger owl and aids in our identification of this species. Although it can be difficult to discern, learning their call is helpful for

scientists and birders. In fact, some researchers have even learned to mimic territorial males to draw them out.

Mimicking vocalizations makes capturing and tagging flammulated owls easier for further study, which is crucial for this migratory bird. They prefer to return to former nesting sites, which assists in their recapture and our understanding of their migratory patterns. But where exactly do they go and why?

Envision a spark of an owl beginning its winter migration from as far north as southwestern Canada. Then, streaking from forest to forest (with a possible layover in one of our desert sanctuaries), it makes its way down through the westernmost United States and into mountainous parts of Mexico and upper Central America. While their range is extensive, little is known about the exact population size of flammulated owls.

They prefer breeding and nesting sites in arid coniferous forests at mid-to-high elevations. In contrast, stop-over sites can vary from city

parks to steep hillsides. Mature forests are especially favored by flammulated owls, which are secondary nesters. This means they cannot make their own nests, instead relying on preexisting nesting cavities like those prepared by woodpeckers.

As flammulated owls move between breeding, nesting, and non-breeding sites, they require stable food resources and consistent habitat conditions. Extreme temperatures and insecticide/pesticide use could threaten their insect-dominant diet. Meanwhile, flammulated owl habitat is also at risk due to old-growth logging, habitat fragmentation, invasive species, and increased wildfire severity/frequency.

So, how can you encourage this diminutive owl to keep burning bright? Firstly, obey all fire bans and practice safe, smart fire management. Secondly, get involved! Whether you are a researcher, educator, landowner, or concerned citizen, there are several ways you can take part in the conservation of our fiery friend.



Flammulated owl in the Davis Mountains.

Photo courtesy of Romey Swanson

Contribute to conservation efforts by keeping track of your flammulated owl sightings via eBird or by participating in bird surveys near you. Support owl research. Educate your friends about flammulated owl ecology. Protect flammulated owls as they migrate by turning off non-essential lights, keeping cats indoors, and avoiding pesticides/insecticides.

But it doesn’t end there. Continuous research is necessary to understand indicator species, such as owls, that lend valuable insight

See OWL • 11

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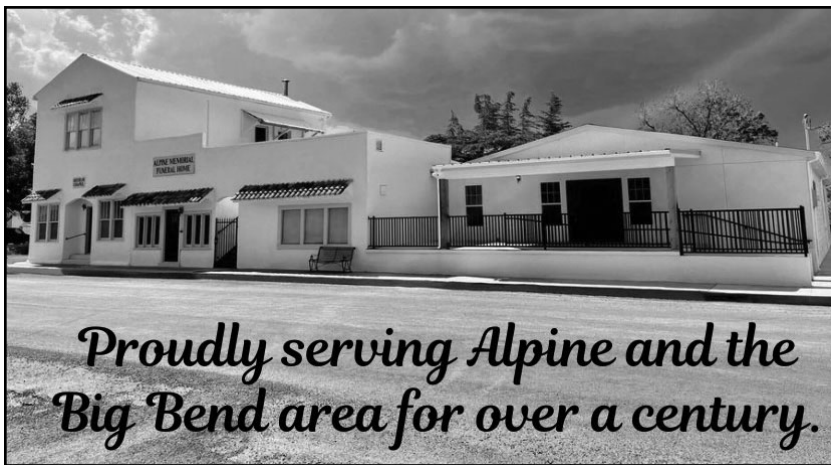
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OBITUARIES

Ronnie Lane Drewry

Ronnie Lane Drewry, born June 29, 1953, in Odessa, passed away peacefully on December 25, in Alpine, after a hard-fought battle with Acute Myeloid Leukemia. Ronnie was a hard-working man of integrity who inspired all who knew him with his unwavering strength and positive attitude.

Ronnie was the second son of George and Betty Drewry and the younger brother of Dann Drewry. He was a devoted husband to Libbie Drewry, the love of his life, whom he married on June 28, 1975. Ronnie was a loving father to their son, Brandon Lane Drewry, and a proud grandfather to his granddaughter, Leyah Ebzy Drewry. He cherished spending time with his family at



his favorite place, their lake house on Lake Amistad. Ronnie was an avid golfer and spent a lot of time on the golf course. He also loved riding his motorcycle or bicycle whenever he got the chance. On a Sunday, you would often find him by his pool soaking in the sun or tinkering in his garage. He was quite the handy guy and could fix just about anything. In high school, he played football as a running back for the Alpine Bucks, earning the nickname "The Bull." His friends all knew they were guaranteed to laugh a lot

when they got together. There was never a dull moment when Ronnie was around! He had an infectious personality that lifted everyone's spirits.

In 1974, Ronnie graduated from the Commonwealth Institute of Science for Mortuary Services in Houston and began his career in El Paso, where he met Libbie. Together, they moved back to Alpine in 1977 to run Whites Auto Store alongside his parents, which later became Otasco and then Coast to Coast until its closure in 2007. He then purchased Big Bend Mini Storage, expanding the company with new locations and operating it until his passing.

He was preceded in death by his father, George Drewry, and brother Dann Drewry.

Survived by his mother Betty Drewry (Alpine),

wife Libbie Drewry (Alpine), son Brandon Drewry (Alpine), granddaughter Leyah Ebzy Drewry (San Antonio), brother-in-laws Lyndon Fruit (Marilyn) of Las Cruces, NM and Bill Fruit (Debbie) of Midlothian, sister-in-law Susan Drewry (Buddy Warnke) of El Paso, nephews Ryan Drewry (Uulia), John Fruit (Margaret), Travis Fruit (Haley), nieces Michelle Lowery (Ace), Allison Thomas (Andy), Paige Fruit and many great nephews and nieces.

Ronnie Drewry will be remembered for his laughter, love for family, and courageous spirit. The bravery he showed while fighting for more time was powered by his love of Jesus Christ. His strong faith was what kept him going. He leaves behind a legacy of integrity, joy, and unwavering support for his

family and friends. May we all see each other again on that glorious day when we, too, reach Heaven and see the face of our Lord and Savior, like Ronnie did this Christmas morning!

Services took place on Saturday, January 4, at 10:30 a.m. at Grace Christian Fellowship Church, 801 E. Brown Ave, in Alpine, interment followed at

Elm Grove Cemetery.

In lieu of flowers, donations can be made to St. Jude's Children's Research Hospital or your favorite charity in memory of Ronnie Drewry.

Services were entrusted to Alpine Memorial Funeral Home, and gifts and condolences may be left at www.alpinememorialfuneralhome.com.

Rebecca Chavez Portillo

It is with a heavy heart that we announce the passing of our beloved mother, grandmother, great-grandmother, and sister.

Rebecca Chavez Portillo departed this life on January 2 at the age of 84. She was born on June 25, 1940, in Alpine.

Rebecca is preceded in death by the love of her life, Leocadio "Lucky" S. Portillo, and her parents, Jose and Juliana Bermudez Chavez, along with her beloved Godson, David Lopez. She is survived by her children Florinda (Dennis) Sullivan, Joe (Laura Lea) Portillo, Lisa (Frank) Villanueva, Leo Portillo, Ray Portillo, and Christy Portillo. Rebecca's grandchildren are Lori Iverson, Monica and Anna Fierro, DJ Villanueva, Julie Rivera, Preston Villanueva, Michael Joe and Dominique Portillo, Brandon, Jeremy Portillo, Jai Portillo, Lexi Cotie, Joseph, Anthony and Abby Portillo, Ashley Mayo, Michael, and Kimberly



Muniz. Rebecca is also survived by her brothers Enrique, Merced, Arturo, and Gilbert Chavez, as well as her best friend of 80 years, Mere Hernandez Methola, 21 great-grandchildren, and many nieces and nephews. We will continue to honor her memory through the values she instilled in us.

Rebecca was a hard worker who dedicated many years to the community. She worked at True Value, Alpine Public Library, and JC Penney. Her passion for reading was evident, and she found joy in sitting outside on her porch with her husband, admiring the beautiful scenery of the Twin Peaks Mountains. Both Lucky and Rebecca were always special fans and supporters

of all their grandchildren's and great-grandchildren's sports events. On any given Friday at lunchtime, the family would gather to enjoy Rebecca's special meals of tacos and red cheese enchiladas, which were loved by those attending.

Pallbearers were David Acosta, Michael Joe Portillo, DJ Villanueva, Jeremy Portillo, Joseph Portillo, and Michael Muniz, Jr. Honorary pallbearer is David Lopez, Rebecca's cherished Godson.

The family would like to extend their heartfelt gratitude for the loving care she received at the McCamey Convalescent Center.

"As long as we hold her in our hearts, she will never truly be gone. When someone you love becomes a memory, the memory becomes a treasure."

Love you forever, Mom.

Services were held at Our Lady of Peace Catholic Church on Tuesday, January 7. Visitation was

at 9 a.m., followed by the recitation of the Most Holy Rosary at 9:30 a.m. The funeral Mass was held at 10 a.m., and interment followed at Holy Angels Cemetery.

Services were entrusted to Alpine Memorial Funeral Home, and gifts and condolences may be left at www.alpinememorialfuneralhome.com.

In Loving Memory of Daniel Pineda

Daniel Pineda, of San Angelo, passed away on December 5 at the age of 40. He was born March 21, 1984, in Odessa to parent Liz Pineda.

Daniel Pineda was a beloved son, grandson, nephew, cousin, and friend. He grew up in Alpine surrounded by the love of his first cousins, Rick Mata, Brent Mata, Thomas Lopez, Clarissa Lopez, and Renee Wylie. Daniel attended school in Alpine before continuing his education at New Mexico Junior College.

Daniel was a skilled and passionate individual with a talent for building computers and a keen interest in creating online animation videos. His career in telecommunications customer service showcased his ability to connect with people, both locally and globally, as he built meaningful friendships with individuals from around the world.

As a young boy, Daniel cherished his time



outdoors, going on hiking adventures in Fort Davis with his cousins and exploring caves on A Mountain in Alpine. Some of his fondest memories were camping trips with his grandfather Tino and his cousins, where they shared laughter, jokes, and stories around the campfire. Daniel had a sharp sense of humor, a gift he inherited from his mother and grandpa, which brought joy to everyone who knew him.

Daniel's life was marked by his creativity, kindness, and genuine connections with others. He will be deeply missed by his family and friends, who will forever hold his memory close to their hearts.

Daniel is survived by his mother, Elizabeth

Pineda, from San Angelo; grandmother, Delia Gallego, from Midland; his aunt Nadine Mata, from Sierra Vista, Arizona; Johnny Pineda, from Fort Stockton; Margo Pineda, from Odessa; first cousins Clarissa Lopez from Midland, Rick Mata, from Sierra Vista, Arizona, Thomas Lopez, from Cedar Park, Brent Mata from El Paso, and Renee Wylie, from Alpine, and 12, second cousins, several other cousins, uncle's, and aunts.

He was preceded by his grandfather, Faustino Pineda III, from Redford, his great-grandparents Alfredo Granado, Jr. and Elfida Granado, from Fort Davis, and his great-grandparents Faustino Pineda, II, and Paula Pineda, from Marfa.

A memorial will be held at Saint Joseph Cemetery in Fort Davis on April 19, 2025, at 10 a.m.

Arrangements are entrusted to Harper Funeral Home and Cremation of San Angelo.

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Separate sealed BIDS for the construction of South addition to Presidio County Medical Clinic located at 1501 North Erma Ave, Presidio TX 79845. The scope of work, without any force or effect involves a 3, 167 sq. ft. addition to an existing building. This includes new exam rooms, a nurse station, a laboratory, providers offices, restrooms, and the expansion of the existing pharmacy.

Bids will be received by Linda Molinar CEO at the office of Preventative Care health Services, 1605 North Fort Davis Hwy, STE. B, Alpine, TX 79830 until 2:00 pm CST, Friday, January 31, 2025 and then at said office publicly opened and read aloud.

The CONTRACT DOCUMENTS may be examined at the following locations:

New Republic Architects, 7100 Westwind Dr. STE 150, El Paso, Texas 79912 or bidders can request a digital PDF copy by emailing Angel Ramos at angel@nraia.com. For any other inquiries, please contact him at 915-585-7028.

Copies of the CONTRACT DOCUMENTS may be obtained at the office of New Republic Architects located at 7100 Westwind Dr, STE 150, El Paso, TX, 79912 upon payment of \$300.00 for each set.

Any BIDDER, upon returning the CONTRACT DOCUMENTS promptly and in good condition, will be refunded the payment, and any non-bidder upon so returning the CONTRACT DOCUMENTS will be refunded \$150.00

09/12/2024

Texas Capital Highlights

Legislative session begins on Jan. 14

The 89th Texas legislative session begins on Jan. 14 with a still-unresolved race for speaker of the Texas House of Representatives.

State Reps. David Cook, R-Mansfield, and Dustin Burrows, R-Lubbock, are considered the frontrunners for speaker, but speculation continues as to whether other candidates will throw their hats into the ring.

The Republican caucus is split between those who oppose appointing any Democrat to chair a House committee and those who contend it's essential to work across the aisle to get the state's business done in a biennial five-month session. Historically, a few chairmanships have gone to members of the minority party.

In the wake of the November elections, the makeup of the 150-member Texas House is 87 Republicans and 63 Democrats.

School vouchers will again be on the legislative plate since they are a top priority for Gov. Greg Abbott. His efforts to pass what are also called Education Savings Accounts failed numerous attempts in 2023, including several special sessions.

Legislative watchers predict more bills aimed at property tax relief but geared more toward business owners since those passed in the 2023 session were primarily aimed at homeowners.

Another issue that Lt. Gov. Dan Patrick has prioritized is banning the sale of all THC products in Texas. Since the state legalized the growth of hemp, some stores have begun selling products containing previously illegal levels of THC, the compound that gives marijuana its "high."

GOP bills seek to regulate wind, solar, and battery power projects

Several Republican lawmakers have filed bills to increase government oversight over renewable energy projects, The Dallas Morning News reported. Proposals include requiring property buffers between the projects and neighboring properties. Another bill would require environmental fees and studies for any new renewable projects.

The News reported that wind, solar, and batteries account for about 46% of electric generation capacity for the Electric Reliability Council of Texas, which controls nearly all of the state's power grid.

"Currently, renewable energy facilities do not have statewide guidelines for permitting and decommissioning, leading to variations in how the installations are installed," said state Rep. Jared Patterson, R-Frisco, and sponsor of one of the bills.

Texas losing its clout in Congress this session.

There are fewer Tex-

ans in leadership in Congress in the session that just began, largely because of the retirements of several GOP members, the Houston Chronicle reported.

U.S. Rep. Kay Granger, R-Fort Worth, who led the powerful Appropriations Committee, and U.S. Rep. Michael Burgess, R-Pilot Point, who led the Rules Committee and was the second-ranked Republican on the Commerce Committee, both retired from Congress this year.

Eighteen of the 25 Texas Republicans in the House have been there for three full terms or fewer. Another incumbent, Michael McCaul, R-Austin, is no longer heading the House Foreign Affairs Committee because of term limits.

State starts 2025 with 2.9 million business entities

Texas rang in the New Year with more than 2.9 million business entities actively registered with the secretary of state's office to conduct business here. That is up more than 125,000 from a year ago, according to Texas Secretary of State Jane Nelson.

"The economic climate in Texas continues to be strong as entrepreneurs grow and create businesses in our state, and more out-of-state entities want to expand to Texas," Nelson said.

That number includes both businesses incorporated in Texas and out-of-state companies conducting business here.

State's citrus industry on the brink of disaster

The state's citrus industry is reeling after a pair of natural disasters — the deadly winter storm of February 2021 and a severe drought, The Texas Tribune reported. Nearly four years after that winter storm, production levels have not recovered.

The state's citrus industry is located entirely in the Valley and has an economic impact of more than \$300 million annually.

"We are not a large physical footprint anymore, but we still pack enough economic punch," said Dale Murden, president of Texas Citrus Mutual, a non-profit trade association that represents the interests of commercial citrus growers.

Farmers in the Valley largely depend on surface water from the Rio Grande. A mature citrus tree needs between 40 and 50 inches of water a year, according to the Texas A&M AgriLife Research Center. About half of that amount must be supplied by irrigation. Drought conditions and Mexico falling behind in delivering water under a 1944 treaty are blamed for the drop in citrus production.

History Association hosts 32nd Pioneer Reunion

BY JULIE CHILDS

Contributing Writer

Big Bend National Park will come alive with history on February 1 as the Big Bend Natural History Association (BBNHA) holds its 32nd annual Pioneer Reunion. This year's event will take place at the Community Room at Panther Junction, offering attendees a fascinating glimpse into the rich heritage of the Big Bend region.

The day's festivities will begin with lunch from 11 a.m. to 12 p.m., setting the stage for an afternoon of engaging presentations. Tickets are available for \$20 for BBNHA members and \$25 for nonmembers. To secure your spot, call the BBNHA office at 432-477-2236.

This year's lineup of speakers is sure to captivate attendees.

Speaker Todd Bureau will delve into the aviation history of Johnson's Ranch, a crucial chapter in Big Bend's storied past. At the same time, Laura Rice Bridge will share tales of early schools and other pivotal stories from the region.

Joel Nelson, celebrated cowboy poet, will recount his experiences as a horse wrangler in the Chisos Mountains, including his time working with the Carters and Buck Newsome, and An-



Speakers from last year's Pioneer Reunion posed for a photo during the event. They are David Keller, Dan Sholly, Rick Gupman, and Tom Alex.

Photo by Julie Childs

jna O'Conner, Superintendent of Big Bend National Park, will provide an update on park news and developments.

The event will be emceed by Ben H. English, renowned Alpine author and BBNHA Vice-Chairman, whose expertise and storytelling prowess promise to enrich the proceedings.

Adding to the day's allure, Ken Zoller, the pho-

tographer for the 2026 BBNHA calendar, will be on hand in the bookstore following the event. Attendees will have the opportunity to discuss his work and secure signed copies of the calendar, a keepsake celebrating the park's breathtaking landscapes.

The Pioneer Reunion is more than just a gathering; it's a celebration of Big Bend's vibrant histo-

ry and a reminder of the importance of preserving these stories for future generations. Whether you're a history enthusiast or simply looking to connect with the community, this event is not to be missed.

Join us on February 1 to honor the people, places, and moments that have shaped Big Bend. Together, let's keep these stories alive.

January summit to include follow-up local video screenings

A two-day Far West Texas Community-Building Summit for our region will begin the evening of Friday, January 17, at The Granada Theatre in Alpine with a live presentation by author Doug Griffiths. His book, 13 Ways to Kill Your Community, will offer a road map for area leaders to strengthen and grow their communities through planning and collaboration.

On Saturday, January 18, attendees will participate in break-out sessions focused on local implementation of ideas from the book. Areas of focus include water quality and quantity, attracting businesses, engaging youth, community aesthetics, valuing the role of senior citizens, and embracing growth and change.

Within 30 days of the event, a video recording of the January 17 presentation will be shown in each of the communities of the Big Bend and TransPecos region as outreach to those who could not attend the original event.

New sponsors supporting the event include the Law Office of Julie M. Balovich, PLLC, Printco, Razor Creative, Fabrica, and the Anonymous Foundation of a Friend of ACP. Other sponsors are Alpine Community Projects, Permian Basin Area Foundation, Still Water Foundation, Benjamin Garcia and The Granada Theatre, Front Street Books, and Jean and Chris Cornell. Additional sponsorship slots remain.

Details are available on the website at <https://www.alpinecommunityprojects.org/january-2025-summit>. Attendee registration through the site will be active in the coming days. The event will be free, but space will be limited. The book 13 Ways to Kill Your Community is available locally and from online sellers.

Alpine Community

Projects is a 501(c)3 non-profit and an expressly non-partisan organization

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its citizens to flourish and lead more fulfilling and happy lives at every age.

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Opinions

ONLINE POLL

THIS WEEK'S QUESTION

Now the Avalanche asks:
Which area of your life are you most focused on improving in 2025?

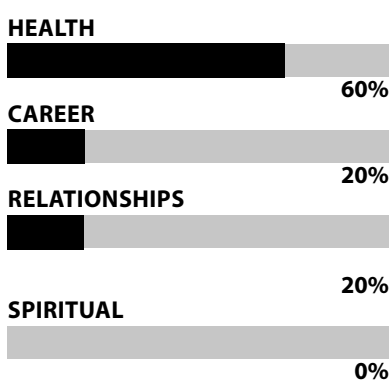
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Vote for this week's poll online at:
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RESULTS

WHICH AREA OF YOUR LIFE ARE YOU MOST FOCUSED ON IMPROVING IN 2025?

RESULTS



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 by noon Monday for consideration.

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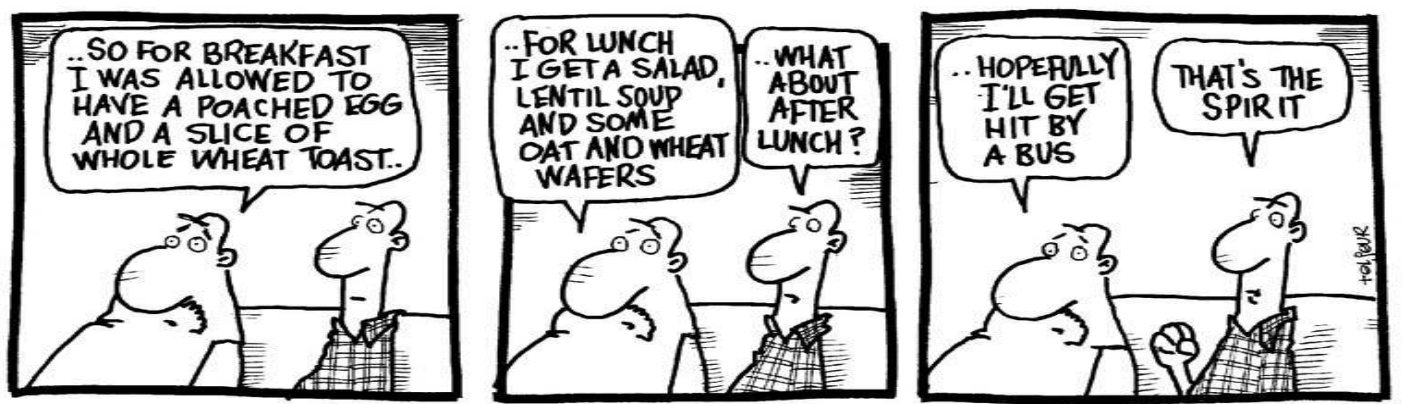
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Any erroneous reflection upon the character, standing or reputation of any person, firm or corporation will be corrected when such occurs in this newspaper and is brought to the publisher's attention.



A Great Year to Be a Buck

The storyline of 2024 could be about the negative impacts of Texas' continued divestment in public education. While that's undoubtedly true, especially in rural communities across the state, it would be an incomplete narrative.

Despite diminished financial support from state leaders, so much good occurred in our community and our Alpine public schools this past year. It was a great year to be a Buck.

Here's what you should know.

In 2024, we received \$1.5M in new grant funding, which allowed us to provide new opportunities for our students, staff, and families. This latest funding was built on the \$3.2M grant portfolio we had built in the previous 18 months.

This year's grants helped us implement even more rigorous mathematics and reading instruction in our elementary classrooms. This hard work paid off, with our Kindergarten through 2nd grade students scoring in the 73rd and 84th percentiles nationally in academic growth in reading and math, respectively.

Grant funding and community partnerships allowed us to expand affordable, high-quality childcare through the Alpine Child Development Center, decreasing the cost of child care by 25%.

We also used grant funds to significantly improve security infrastructures, post-secondary readiness offer-

ings, and mental wellness supports for our students.

Other grants helped fund overdue facility upgrades, including replacing decades-old lighting fixtures at Alpine Elementary and investing in field improvements at Kokernot Field.

Grant funding is also launching a first-in-our-area regional career and technical education (CTE) collaborative across Alpine ISD, Marathon ISD, and Marfa ISD, which will provide more post-secondary opportunities to students across the Big Bend.

In addition, we were honored to receive over \$750,000 in philanthropic investments from local donors and regional philanthropies, each with a goal of supporting and amplifying the great work happening every day in Alpine ISD. These donations, including a historic \$575,000 donation from the Prentice & Alline Brown Foundation, helped fund dozens of much-needed projects across the district.

Technology and equipment upgrades included a new laminator at our middle school, new interactive displays in 10 classrooms, a laser engraver for high school graphic design classes, replacement marquees for two campuses, and a new kiln and etching press for high school art classes.



DR. MICHELLE RINEHART
Superintendent,
Alpine ISD

Donations also paid off overdue meal balances for families in need, provided school supplies for all Alpine ISD students, and blessed teachers with new classroom supplies to start the school year.

Installation of four of the biggest philanthropic-supported investments starts next month. Alpine Elementary will receive three new, state-of-the-art playgrounds, the first such upgrade in over 60 years. Alpine Middle School will also receive its first-ever playground installation.

These incredible grants and donations provided much-needed opportunities and projects for our students and staff, all at no cost to our local taxpayers.

Even better, during 2024, Alpine ISD decreased its overall tax rate for the sixth straight year, for a cumulative 21% reduction over the past seven years. This saved our taxpayers \$4.8M in interest and 12 years of debt payments on our 2019 bond.

A year in review would be incomplete without bragging about the incredible academic growth our hard-working teachers made happen for our students. Alpine ISD students continue to outperform state averages on state assessments in science, social studies, and reading, with significant increases in our science performance and reading mastery levels this

past year. Our students' academic growth rates also grew by 20 percentage points in reading, outperforming state averages.

These results are even more impressive when contrasted against the unsettling reality that Alpine ISD is one of Texas's lowest-funded school districts, with a funding level in the bottom 2% statewide. Every day, we show that we do more with less in Alpine. But don't let the fact that we're "hitting above our weight" fool you into believing that our students and staff don't deserve more.

There's so much more to share about the good that occurred in the 365 days that made up 2024 in #BuckNation. We launched our first direct admissions program with the University of Texas Permian Basin, increasing college access for our high school seniors. Our students enjoyed countless extracurricular successes, from the field to the court to the concert to the show ring and beyond. We graduated 80 Fightin' Bucks into the world, ready to serve, learn, lead, and blossom in their next stage of life.

Have there been challenges this year? Absolutely.

But that has never stopped those of us who are proud to call Alpine home. Buck Pride runs deep here, and we start 2025 with so much pride in what we have accomplished together in 2024. It's going to be another great year to be a Buck.

I don't even like writing about it

*"Thunder rolls
And the lightning strikes.
Another love grows cold
On a sleepless night."*

— Song lyrics by
Garth Brooks

A storm rages as I draft this column—rain, wind, lightning, thunder. I don't like lightning.

"It's lightning! Get out of that tub now," my grandmother was quick to announce when clouds arose. Baths at her house in Pittsburg were playtime as a youngster. Mainly because there was no waiting in line for the old-fashioned tub. However, bath time at home with two sisters meant waiting for the only bathtub in the house.

"Aren't you done yet," was the common Saturday night cry through the bathroom door. Except for that night in Seymour, when just about the time I settled in to soak in the bubbles, my mother burst through the door in a panic.

"Get dressed now."

Gillette commercials played on the television, meaning the Friday night fights were coming on. The siren at the fire station was blaring loudly.

"There's a tornado coming," Mom shouted.

"I'm wet," I pleaded.

"No time," she said. "Get dressed now. We have to get to the cellar."

At the first flash of celestial

electricity, warnings from parents or grandparents were the same. Granny dashed through the house, unplugging her electrical appliances. Both have the Kelvinator refrigerator in the corner of the dining room and the radio in the living room.

"Don't touch the faucets," she warned. "Get away from the windows, you'll get struck."

I knew only two people struck by lightning. I attended the first's funeral service. The second laughs today when he relates his encounter with the phenomenon of nature.

Research reveals a 1 in 1,222,000 chance of getting hit by lightning. That computes to 0.0000008%. Your odds of winning in Las Vegas are better.

The odds of striking a photo of a lightning bolt are good, however, if you know the trick. I read back in the ancient days of film photography how lightning storms follow a pattern of building, peaking, and decreasing in a measurable cycle between discharges. One summer night, I tested that theory from an upper-story balcony of the Palacio Del Rio Hotel in San Antonio. Timing the flashes and shooting long exposures on that cycle netted



LEON ALDRIDGE
Guest Columnist

a half dozen frames with decent images on a 36-exposure roll of Kodachrome. Still hanging on my wall is the framed photo of a cloud-to-ground lightning bolt with the Tower of the Americas in the foreground.

One lightning bolt can reach more than ten miles and scorch anything in its path with 50,000-degree Fahrenheit temperatures. When lightning is about to strike, electricity fills the air. Metal objects, even jewelry, will sometimes buzz. Hair will stand on end.

Should you experience these signs, don't wait for a warning. Need I say, seek shelter. Lightning can travel from the clouds, through your body, and into the ground in about three milliseconds.

This is what happened to the one person I know who was struck by lightning and lived to tell about it. It's a funny story as he relates it. But my friend and colleague with Stephen F. Austin State University teaching days, Miles McCall, puts a positive spin on just about everything.

I've been struck by lightning," Miles said casually, chuckling one day.

"I was sailing on Lake Sam Rayburn with some friends and their dog that day when a

summer storm came up," he begins. Miles loves sailboats. "Wisely, we headed for shore, arriving just as the storm hit. But unwisely," as he laughs about it now, "we sheltered under the first tree we came to. Smart, huh? All I remember after that was a brilliant flash and a deafening clap of thunder."

"A minute or so later, I looked around, and all of my friends and the dog were lying on the ground. I thought, 'Oh no, they're dead,'" Miles said. "Then one of the guys got up and took off running, and I thought, 'Oh no, they're alive and I'm dead!'"

"We were all OK," Miles concluded, "Except the poor dog, he didn't make it. The soles of our shoes were burned off, and our feet blistered. Cracked earth and asphalt spread from the base of the tree in all directions."

They surmised that the charge hitting the tree and traveling out in the root system to them was their saving grace.

As I finish writing this afternoon, the rain, lightning, and thunder have moved out of Center. And that's my saving grace.

Because I don't like lightning. Not even writing about it.

—Contact Aldridge at leonaldridge@gmail.com. Other Aldridge columns are archived at leonaldridge.com

Heard on the STREET

If you could live anywhere, where would it be?



Geoff Avery:
I don't live here, but if I did, I wouldn't move.



Kealan Carter:
Odessa



Amanda Lujan:
I'd love to live in Hawaii if we're talking about a dream place. But in reality, I'd like to live in south Texas to be closer to my sister.



Gloria Luz:
For the winter, the Florida Keys, and in the summer, Billings, Montana.



Rosco Ramirez:
Alpine's the only place I ever want to live.

Send your community events to kara.gerbert@alpineavalanche.com

Upcoming events
January at Davis Mountains State Park
Mondays 7 p.m. to 8 p.m. Space is the Place meet in the parking lot across from the interpretive center with your chair and binoculars to learn about our dark skies.
Wednesday, 1/15 and 1/29 Master Naturalist Hike 10 a.m. to 11:30 a.m. Meet at CCC Rock Lookout. Bring good, sturdy shoes, water, a hat and sunscreen.
Fridays 10 a.m. to 11:30 a.m. Birding for Beginners at the interpretive center.
Saturdays 2 p.m. to 3:30 p.m. Art in the Park at the interpretive center and **7 p.m. to 8 p.m. Miles and Miles of Stars** at the CCC Rock Lookout. Bring a chair and flashlight (red light preferred).



January 15 Friends of the Library Annual Meeting, 5:30 p.m. at the Jeff Davis County Library all members and prospective members are welcome to come meet officers and hear a review of last year's progress.
January 18 Adopt-A-Highway Trash Pickup, 10 a.m. at the front office of the Davis Mountains State Park.
January 18 Friends Group Orientation, noon at the inter-

pretive center at Davis Mountains State Park. DMSP wants to form a friends group and encourages everyone to come out and see what is required and how they can help.

February 5 Telescope Training: McDonald's Observatory is offering Telescope 101 workshops, which will include a mix of classroom and hands-on instruction. Workshops are free for residents of Jeff Davis, Brewster, and Presidio counties. Interested parties may reserve a spot by visiting mcdonaldobservatory.org/visitors/programs/telescopes-101.

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, call 432-837-8216, or visit bbcchoreale.wixsite.com/bbcc.

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 appointment.
GED tutoring, at Alpine Public Library, 805 W. Ave. E. Call 432-837-2621 to make an appointment.
Hike with Homeless Dogs, 9 a.m. to 10 a.m. every Thursday at the Davis Mountains State Park Interpretive Center in collaboration with Grand Companions. For more information contact Charlie Ewing at 432-246-3337 x 301.
Kiwanis Club of Alpine, noon to 1 p.m., first and third Wednesdays at the American Legion.
VFW Post 7207, 7 p.m., first Wednesday of each month at 605 E. Ave F. All members are welcome.

PET OF THE WEEK

Meet Ollie!
Ollie and his sibling Pip were abandoned at the only home they knew when their owner left without them in early November. Ollie was more concerned about being at the shelter than his brother. Pip took it in stride, but Ollie felt sad and insecure for the first week, and then he gradually accepted that things would be alright.
He likes to go out in the yard with his brother and has done fantastic with a small dog introduction. He is working on his leash walking skills, is treat-motivated, and is a fast learner, so getting him caught up on commands should not be an issue.

The shelter staff loves how sweet and kind he is. He loves pets and hugs! Ollie is neutered, micro-chipped, vaccinated, and ready for his new home.
Meet Ollie at the Alpine Animal Services

Shelter, 2900 Old Marathon Hwy.

Alpine Animal Services can help you with your New Year's resolutions. Consider volunteering to walk dogs, play with puppies in the yard, or interact with the cats. Thirty minutes of your day can make a huge difference to the shelter and the animals.

Call 432-837-2532 to donate, foster, or volunteer for the Alpine Humane Society. Support the Alpine Humane Society Thrift Store and Cattery with donated furnishings, décor, and household goods. It will soon be time for kitten fosters; we provide supplies and support, so come in and sign up to be a foster at the Thrift Store.

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 p.m. to 6 p.m., seven days a week 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. If you find a stray or injured pet, contact the Alpine Police Department at 432-837-3486 to dispatch an Animal Control Officer.

Fort Davis Historical Society to host art show

BY KARA GERBERT
Managing Editor

The Fort Davis Historical Society will host its second annual art show and sale beginning March 1. The show will run through Saturday, April 26 and the theme is "Jeff Davis County Images."

Show participants must create and present their pieces that include depictions of landscapes, animals, plants, people, structures, and still lives of everything Jeff Davis County.

The show will be held at the Overland Trail Museum at 511 N. Fort St. in Fort Davis.

Take-ins will occur on Wednesday, February 26, from 10 a.m. to 5 p.m.

A reception for the show and sale will be held on Saturday, March 1, from 5 p.m. to 7 p.m.

Artwork may be picked up on Wednesday, April 30, from 10 a.m. to 5 p.m.

Any questions may be addressed to Margie Millsapps, Curator at 432-940-

1530. Participants may enter up to two entries, with additional work being accepted depending on the space available.
Regulations for the show include the following:
Originality: Photo references are allowed if permission is granted for photos taken by others.
Work on paper must be framed and must be for sale. All artists will be paid at the end of the show. A 20% commission will go to the Fort Davis Historical Society for the sale of the artwork.
Table easels will be provided for the artists, and the FDHS reserves the right to refuse entries that are obscene, controversial, or in bad taste.
No Photos or Prints will be accepted. No artwork from the previous FDHS art show will be accepted.
Paintings must remain in the Gallery for the entire length of the show unless sold. The artist, buyer, or designated agent removing artwork at the end

of the show must initial a checkout sheet.

Artwork should not exceed 30"x30" in height or width with prior approval by the curator-not including frame and mat.
All work on paper MUST be framed.
The FDHS will not be liable for any damages before, during, or after the exhibit. Artwork that adheres to the above guidelines will be accepted. Artists should be aware that the Society reserves the right to reject any entry that is controversial, obscene, or in bad taste.

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NOTICE OF PUBLIC HEARING TO DISCUSS TEXAS ACADEMIC PERFORMANCE REPORT

The Terlingua Common School District will hold a public hearing at the Big Bend High School Meeting Room in Terlingua, TX on January 22, 2025 at 5:00PM. The purpose of the hearing is to discuss the school district's Texas Academic Performance Report for the 2023-2024 school year. Public participation in the discussion is invited.

The report can be accessed on the TEA website:

<https://rptsvr1.tea.texas.gov/perfreport/tapr/2024/index.html>

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gal requirements.

Specifically, the corrections account for (1) The results of the statewide election approving constitutional amendments, including adjustments to tax rate compression and increased homestead exemptions, and (2) Errors in mathematical computations affecting tax limitations for eligible homeowners.

Following these corrections, the tax assessor-collector will issue refunds to affected property owners within 60 days of the order, which would fall around the first of March.

The refund amounts will represent the difference between the taxes initially paid and the adjusted tax liability. Property owners do not need to apply for these refunds, as they will be processed automatically in compliance with the Texas Tax Code.

Henington provided further insight into the range of refund amounts, emphasizing the variation residents can expect.

“It’s all over the board,” he said when asked about the average refund. “Some as high as \$3,000, some as low as \$300.”

AISD’s Board of Trustees had passed a December resolution ordering similar corrections to its tax roll. The resolution acknowledged the appraisal district vendor’s programming error and supported the motion to correct the tax roll.

The school district’s resolution authorized the adjustments and refunds, ensuring the integrity of its tax practices while addressing the overpayment issue.

In June 2024, the Alpine ISD Board of Trustees approved a budget with a \$135,000 deficit, extending the “persistent underfunding” of schools by the State of Texas, stated AISD Superintendent Michelle Rinehart, who highlighted the compound-

ing challenges this underfunding presents, stating:

“Current projections show no increase in state funding to Alpine ISD to offset these losses, meaning these losses are projected to incur an additional deficit for the school district,” said Rinehart. “This [tax error] is an approximate 2.5% decrease in our budgeted revenue for the year on an already deficit budget.”

She added that both Brewster County Appraisal District and Brewster County are investigating whether their errors and omissions insurance will cover these losses to Alpine ISD, as the financial losses stem from mistakes within the appraisal district and Brewster County, not Alpine ISD.

In the last six months, Alpine ISD has implemented a comprehensive plan to boost revenue, with the goal of enhancing staff compensation and student services.

It’s worth noting that Alpine ISD is one of the most underfunded districts in Texas, ranking in the lowest 2% for funding per student need, according to the Texas Education Agency.

“These revenue-generation strategies have worked,” said Rinehart. “So far, we have increased our funding by \$300,000+ over the last six months. However, this mistake thrust an unexpected financial loss on our district, essentially wiping out those revenue gains.

“This has undercut our ability to increase staff compensation mid-year, resulting in, for example, no Alpine ISD staff members receiving a December retention stipend for the first time in a few years.”

The commissioner’s court’s order ensures compliance with the Texas Tax Code, which mandates corrections and refunds for tax roll errors that reduce taxpayer liability.

The corrections will also reflect the changes approved during the 88th

Legislature’s Second Called Session, which expanded tax relief for qualifying homeowners.

The total refund amount, capped at \$264,896.37, will be drawn from AISD’s tax collections for 2023.

The Brewster County Tax Assessor-Collector’s office will oversee the refund process and provide necessary documentation to the court and the school district.

The approved order allows the tax assessor-collector’s office to begin processing refunds immediately. Property owners affected by the error can expect to receive their refunds in accordance with legal timelines.

For further inquiries, residents can contact the Brewster County Tax Assessor-Collector’s office or visit the AISD administration for updates on the refund process.

Despite an ongoing budget deficit and the pressures of state underfunding, Alpine ISD has been working diligently to ensure that these setbacks do not further impact its students and staff.

The district has been proactively pursuing avenues to recover from this unexpected financial burden as it navigates the complexities of addressing these challenges without compromising its commitment to educational excellence.

“This is a frustrating financial blow for Alpine ISD and its staff to bear, especially when the ownership of this mistake lies completely outside our organization,” said Rinehart. “Alpine ISD remains committed to recouping these financial losses from Brewster County Appraisal District, Brewster County, or their insurance companies so that Alpine ISD students and staff are not penalized for mistakes made outside the school district.

“We’re committed to continued collaboration with the CAD and the county to these ends.”

ATTENTION PROPERTY OWNERS

Property owners have certain rights that may reduce their property tax burden.

HOMEOWNERS

Property owners may claim their home as a residential homestead. The filing of this document is only necessary if the homeowner has changed homesteads since January 1, 2024, the appraisal district has requested an updated application, or the owner has become eligible for additional exemptions since last year. A copy of a current driver’s license must accompany the application. Homeowners may also defer the portion of the tax on their residence homestead if the value of the home was raised more than 5% above the previous year. Although the tax collection is deferred, interest continues to run on the unpaid portion of tax at a rate of 8% per annum and the deferred tax remains a lien on the property. To apply for the deferral, the owner should contact the appraisal district which appraised the property in question and complete an application.

DISABLED PERSONS

Persons who are disabled under Social Security law are entitled to additional exemptions on their residential homestead. Disabled applicants must apply with the appraisal district and furnish a determination letter from Social Security. Disabled persons receive all benefits on their home that are available to over 65 persons (see below)

PERSONS WHO ARE OVER 65 YEARS OF AGE-EXEMPTIONS AND DEFERRAL

Persons who are over 65 years of age or disabled persons may file for additional exemptions and a ceiling on school taxes for their residential homestead if they became 65 during 2024 or will be 65 during 2025. Over-65 persons should apply for this exemption at the appraisal district office in their county. Over-65 persons are also eligible to defer paying the tax on their residential homestead if they wish. The taxes continue to accrue during the deferral plus interest, but no attempt will be made to force payment during the deferral. Details and an application may be obtained from any appraisal district or the State Comptroller.

DISABLED VETERANS-SURVIVING SPOUSES

Persons who have been declared disabled by the Veteran’s Administration are eligible for additional exemptions on property they own. The declaration letter from VA is mailed annually, but the appraisal district only needs a copy in the first year of eligibility or if the percentage of disability changes. In certain situations where the disabled vet is 100% disabled and unemployable, their homestead can be completely exempt. Surviving spouses of military and first responders killed in the line of duty may also qualify for this exemption. An annual reapplication for the 100% exemption may be required by the Chief Appraiser.

FARM AND RANCH OWNERS-WILDLIFE OPERATORS

Farmers and ranchers and other property owners may be entitled to receive an alternate method of appraisal determined by the typical income for properties in the county. This method is available to farms and ranches commercially raising crops or livestock or which are used as a wildlife habitat under State guidelines. An application for agricultural use value and additional information is available from your appraisal district. Re-filing is only necessary if requested to do so by the Chief Appraiser.

EXEMPTION APPLICATIONS

Exemption applications for all property tax exemptions including total exemptions for charitable, religious, and other total exemptions may be obtained from an appraisal district nearest you or through the State Comptroller’s Office at 1/800-252-9121 or from their website at <http://www.window.state.tx.us/taxinfo/taxforms/02-forms.html>

BUSINESS PERSONAL PROPERTY OWNERS

State law now **requires** the filing of a rendition declaring what types of business personal property that a person or company owns. Failure to file the rendition will result in a 10% penalty. If a fraudulent rendition is filed, a 50% penalty is mandated. A rendition can be obtained from the appraisal district office where the property is located. Deadline-April 15. A 30-day filing extension is available by written request.

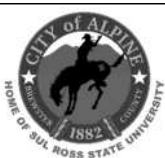
AVAILABILITY OF ELECTRONIC COMMUNICATIONS

Taxpayers may receive certain notices required by law from the local appraisal district in electronic format. Written agreements with the county appraisal district must be entered first, ensuring what electronic means of delivery are acceptable. If you are interested in receiving communications in electronic format, you should contact your local appraisal district to receive a form requesting electronic communications and how that communication should be transmitted.

PROTESTING PROPERTY VALUE

Taxpayers whose property value increases by at least \$1000 will be mailed a reappraisal notice stating the proposed value. The taxpayer may file a protest of the value change by completing the protest form that will be included in the notice. An informal hearing will be available to taxpayers, and if not satisfied, the taxpayer may have a formal hearing before the Brewster County Appraisal Review Board.

If you have questions about any of these topics, please contact the Brewster County Appraisal District at 432-837-2558 or come by our office at 1604 W Hwy 90, Alpine, Texas. Other information may also be available on the Comptroller’s website at comptroller.texas.gov/taxes/property-tax/



NOTICE OF PUBLIC HEARING

NOTICE IS HEREBY GIVEN BY THE CITY OF ALPINE THAT PUBLIC HEARINGS WILL BE HELD AT THE FOLLOWING MEETING DATES AND TIMES:

PLANNING & ZONING COMMISSION MEETING ON JANUARY 27, 2024, AT 5:30 P.M.

CITY COUNCIL MEETING ON FEBRUARY 4, 2024, AT 5:30 P.M.

THE PUBLIC HEARINGS WILL BE HELD IN CONSIDERATION OF THE FOLLOWING ITEMS:

SPECIAL USE PERMIT 2025-01-02: APPLICATION FOR SPECIAL USE PERMIT TO AUTHORIZE THE APPLICANT, ALPINE VELOCITY OPS LLC, DBA VELOCITY #19, TO OBTAIN A WINE AND MALT BEVERAGE RETAIL DEALER’S OFF-PREMISE (BQ) PERMIT FROM THE TEXAS ALCOHOLIC BEVERAGE COMMISSION. THE SUBJECT PROPERTY IS LOCATED AT 1500 W. US 90. THE PROPERTY OWNER OF RECORD IS CO JONES ENTERPRISES LLC. THE PARCEL ID OF THE SUBJECT PROPERTY IS 11321. THE CURRENT ZONING CLASSIFICATION OF THE SUBJECT PROPERTY IS C-1A NEIGHBORHOOD COMMERCIAL DISTRICT AND WILL REMAIN THE SAME IF THE APPLICATION IS APPROVED.

SPECIAL USE PERMIT 2025-01-03: APPLICATION FOR SPECIAL USE PERMIT TO AUTHORIZE THE APPLICANT, ALPINE VELOCITY OPS LLC, DBA VELOCITY #18, TO OBTAIN A WINE AND MALT BEVERAGE RETAIL DEALER’S OFF-PREMISE (BQ) PERMIT FROM THE TEXAS ALCOHOLIC BEVERAGE COMMISSION. THE SUBJECT PROPERTY IS LOCATED AT 610 W HOLLAND AVENUE. THE PROPERTY OWNER OF RECORD IS SONOQUI LEONARDO AND MORGAN. THE PARCEL ID OF THE SUBJECT PROPERTY IS 12360. THE CURRENT ZONING CLASSIFICATION OF THE SUBJECT PROPERTY IS C-2 BUSINESS DISTRICT AND WILL REMAIN THE SAME IF THE APPLICATION IS APPROVED.

SPECIAL USE PERMIT 2025-01-04: APPLICANT, ALPINE HARRYS, LLC, IS REQUESTING THE PERMIT BE ISSUED TO OBTAIN A WINE AND MALT BEVERAGE RETAIL DEALER’S ON-PREMISE PERMIT (BG) AND LATE HOURS CERTIFICATE (LH) FROM THE TEXAS ALCOHOLIC BEVERAGE COMMISSION. THE SUBJECT PROPERTY IS LOCATED AT 412 E. HOLLAND AVENUE. THE PROPERTY OWNER OF RECORD IS MOIS HARRY AND LANG ALOIS AND CLAUDIA. THE PARCEL ID OF THE SUBJECT PROPERTY IS 12335. THE CURRENT ZONING CLASSIFICATION OF THE SUBJECT PROPERTY IS C-2 BUSINESS DISTRICT AND WILL REMAIN THE SAME IF THE APPLICATION IS APPROVED.

ALL PUBLIC HEARINGS WILL BE HELD AT **CITY COUNCIL CHAMBERS LOCATED AT 803 WEST HOLLAND AVENUE** TO HEAR CITIZEN VIEWS AND COMMENTS CONCERNING THE PROPOSED APPLICATIONS. COPIES OF THE APPLICATIONS ARE AVAILABLE AT CITY HALL, 100. N 13TH STREET, BETWEEN THE HOURS OF 8:00 A.M. AND 12:00 P.M. AND 1:00 P.M. AND 5:00 P.M. MONDAY TO FRIDAY. QUESTIONS MAY BE DIRECTED TO THE OFFICE OF THE CITY SECRETARY AT CITYSECRETARY@CITYOFALPINE.COM OR AT (432) 837-3301, OPTION 1.

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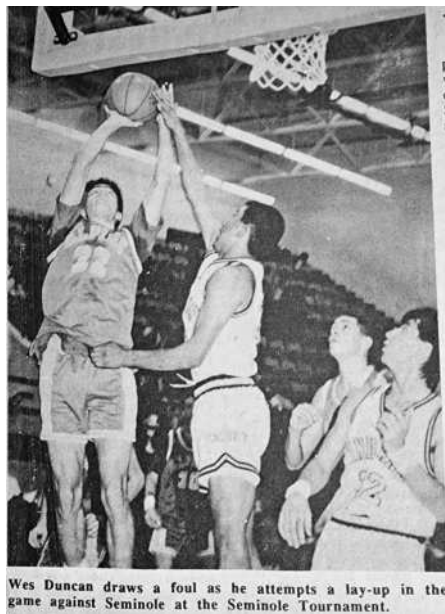
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Some restrictions apply



LOOKING BACK
Alpine Avalanche

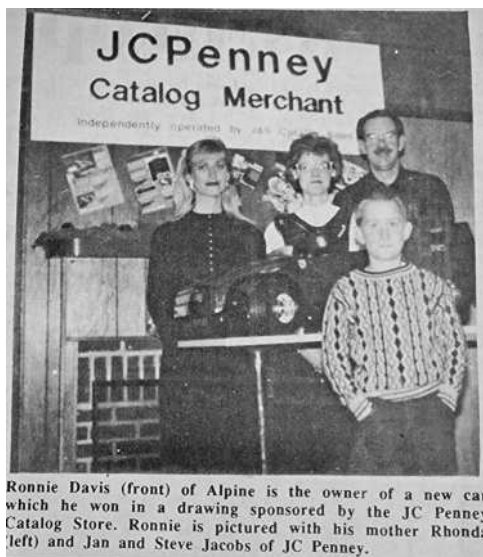
SERVING THE BIG BEND AND DAVIS MOUNTAINS COUNTRY

January 9, 1992



Wes Duncan draws a foul as he attempts a lay-up in the game against Seminole at the Seminole Tournament.

January 9, 1992



Ronnie Davis (front) of Alpine is the owner of a new car which he won in a drawing sponsored by the JC Penney Catalog Store. Ronnie is pictured with his mother Rhonda (left) and Jan and Steve Jacobs of JC Penney.

January 9, 1992



The 1961 Grand Champion steer of the Big Bend Livestock Show was shown by Keesey Joe (left). The trophy is being awarded by Don Adams (right) as grand father, Keesey Jim (center). Adams was the former owner of Adams' M-System Grocery which was located at the corner of North 6th and Avenue E, across from the Post Office. A comparison of the 1961 Grand Champion with the steers shown today illustrates the changes in the beef market in the past 30 years. Keesey Joe's steer, "Buckle Brite", would not make it to the show ring today. (Photo contributed by the Big Bend Livestock Show Association.)

January 9, 1992



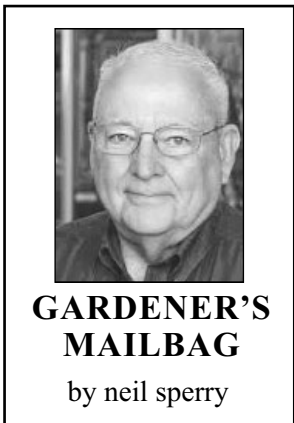
Building donated to Big Bend Hospice
Sam and Virginia Little of Alpine recently donated a house at 611 East Avenue E to Hospice of the Big Bend for use as offices. The house will be remodeled and updated before being used, and volunteers will be needed for work in and around the property. Anyone interested in offering to help out in any way, whether with the house or otherwise, please contact Greg Jenkins at 348-1111. See HOSPICE page 2

Greg Jenkins, left, executive director of Hospice of the Big Bend, receives the deed for the future Hospice office from Mr. and Mrs. Sam Little.

Photos from the Alpine Avalanche Archives at Archives of the Big Bend, Bryan Wildenthal Memorial Library and Portal of Texas.

Skyward yaupon not a good pollinator for some hollies

Dear Neil, I bought two yaupons (Skyward and Pride of Houston). I know that Pride of Houston is female (berry-producing). I just need to know if Skyward is male or female, so I'll know whether to buy another for cross-pollination. Also, will Nellie R. Stevens hollies cross-pollinate with yaupons?



To my other readers: Some hollies, including yaupons, bear their male and female flowers on separate plants. Therefore, you must know when you choose your plant whether you are getting a male or female plant if berries are a goal. Skyward is a relatively new cultivar of yaupon, but I have not grown it. However, no wholesale growers list it as female, and several show it as male (unable to bear fruit). It will be a good pollinator for your Pride of Houston.

you should have good fruit counts on every plant. I grow scores of Nellie R Stevens and also of many types of yaupons. I have never seen them cross-pollinate. They are somewhat distantly related, so they may not be compatible as parents. If you want generous supplies of berries, you might also look to Willow-leaf, dwarf Burford, and Warren's Red Possumhaw hollies. All will load their branches each winter.

Nellie R. Stevens hollies are an exception. They bear both male and female flowers on every plant, so if you have good bee activity while they bloom,

Dear Neil, Do I need to pick off my old pansy flowers after they finish blooming? Do they expend a lot of energy setting seeds, and if so,

would this "deadheading" keep the plants more vigorous?

That was the case 30 or 40 years ago when we grew primarily giant pansies. More recent trends, however, have been toward small and mid-sized varieties that produce many more flowers per plant. They tend to flower much more heavily, and new blooms are produced so quickly that the old flowers are gone from sight as quickly as they wilt and fold. If they produce seeds, they're certainly not slowing the plants down, at least not as long as we provide regular watering and feeding.

The one exception might be if you're growing giant pansies in large patio pots, where the old flowers show for several days after they fade. Pinching off the old blooms as they wither and turn tan will keep things looking better.

Dear Neil, I'm going to be widening a walk and patio that are currently lined with Asian jasmine groundcover. Can I trans-

plant it like I do St. Augustine?

No. The problem you'll encounter is that it doesn't form roots in the soil where its stems lie flat against the ground, so it doesn't make the equivalent of "sod" mats as it becomes dense. Since we're in the winter, once the threat of extreme cold has passed by early February, you might try scalping the area you'll be losing back to two or three inches. That will remove all the runners, and you'll be able to see where the original clumps were planted. You might be able to dig them with a sharpshooter spade and relocate them to your new location. However, they may crumble apart if they've been where they are for several years. I really think you'd be best off preparing great garden soil for the new site and then buying a new 1-gal pot in the spring.

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



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ACROSS

- TX Buddy Holly tune: "___ On"
- Jack of sitcom "The Texas Wheelers"
- large birds raised on some Texas ranches
- Edwards Aquifer is the ___ source of drinking water for San Antonio
- TX Pride was 1971 CMA ___ of the Year
- Dallas Morning News banned these from front page in 1907
- TXism: "he's ___" (not alert)
- TX Barbara Mandrell sang "If Loving You ___ Wrong"
- Olney hosts "One-Armed Dove ___"
- TX rancher Chuck Norris was ___-weight karate champ
- TXism: "couldn't fight his way out of ___ bag"
- TXism: "(___ up on)" (stuffy)
- TX Lefty Frizzell hit: "Always ___ With Your Kisses"
- Grapeland High class
- big oil producer: East ___
- TX Buddy Holly hit: "Not ___ Away"
- Nolan's full initials the Capitol was ___ in 1995
- this Meredith was in 1941 western "The Son of Davy Crockett"
- TX Kite green stroke
- film "JFK" had this type of cast (2 wds.)
- once a Bellview AM and the rest (abbr.)
- crime or shopping ___
- TXism: "he's only got one ___ the water"
- ___ Harvey Oswald
- pronounced punishment
- TX Patrick Mahomes, e.g. actress Sorvino
- camp bed
- wonder
- hallucinogenic drug (abbr.)
- former ___ Lubbock
- they're in a "Joy" candy bar
- where Texas banks keep the dinero
- TXism: "never let ___ you sweat"
- cattle ___-up
- noted Texas choreographer, Tommy
- Cowboys play in ___ Stadium
- TX Vikki Carr hit: "___ Must Be Him"
- West Texas plains tribes were these
- cream of the crop
- discourteous
- this school beat A&M in 1993 and 1994
- Cotton Bowls (abbr.)
- Texas outlaw Ringo sometimes rode with the ___ gang
- TXism: "cold as a banker's ___"
- TX Bonnie & Clyde pulled 'em (2 wds.)
- Austin band: Asleep ___ The Wheel
- Corpus Christi is 65 ___cent water
- tree choppers
- delicate hue
- after football, Staubach worked in real ___
- Texas garden crop
- TXism: "___ up" (bed ridden)
- Willie 1992 album: "The ___ Tapes"
- penalty point tries by the Mavs or Rockets (2 wds.)
- expressed clearly
- TXism: "spittin' image of"
- French pronunciation of Paris
- TX Hagman show: "I ___ of Jeannie"
- Andrews FM
- Texas is number ___ in Fortune 500 companies
- overjoyed

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Sports

Fightin' Bucks stay strong over break with key victories, tournament success

BY KERRY LAIRD
Sports Editor

The Alpine Fightin' Bucks varsity boys' basketball team showed remarkable resilience and skill through a series of challenging games, culminating in their triumphant performance at the Caprock Classic Tournament and a standout start to the 2025 season.

From snapping a three-game losing streak to securing the Consolation Championship and honoring a key player's milestone, the Bucks took charge as kings of the court.

December 20 marked a pivotal moment for the Fightin' Bucks, who faced off against Monahans in a high-stakes matchup aimed at halting their three-game losing streak. The Bucks, eager to end their slump during the Christmas break, traveled to Monahans with victory in their hearts.

The game progressed with both teams exchanging leads, and the first half ended in a tense 30-30 deadlock. The intensity

continued into the second half, where Alpine's defense became the cornerstone of their strategy.

Despite struggling from beyond the arc and at the free-throw line, the Bucks held Monahans to single-digit scoring in both the third and fourth quarters. This defensive tenacity kept the game within reach, leading to a nail-biting overtime period.

In the end, Alpine outpaced the Lobos with a 55-51 win, snapping their losing streak and entering the holiday break on a high note.

Junior Dae Hardwick was the standout performer, scoring 29 points, grabbing six rebounds, four steals, and three assists.

Ferris Daley also played a crucial role, contributing 13 points, including a perfect 4-for-4 from the free-throw line, alongside four rebounds.

Head Coach Aaron Hardwick expressed his satisfaction with the team's performance, stating, "It was a back-and-forth game, and it just felt like the team that was able to make one more play would



The Alpine Fightin' Bucks brought home the Consolation Championship trophy for the second year in a row at the Caprock Classic which began the day after Christmas in Lubbock.

Courtesy photo

win the ball game.

"We needed this in the worst way! Very proud of the kids' toughness, grit, and composure throughout the ball game!"

Following Christmas, the Fightin' Bucks headed to the Caprock Classic Tournament in Lubbock, where they navigated through four intense games to claim the Consolation Championship for the second consecutive year. The tournament showcased the team's depth, versatility, and unwavering team spirit.

The Bucks opened the tournament on December 26 with a thrilling 54-51 victory over Happy High School at Lubbock High

School.

After a strong start, leading 13-7 in the first quarter, Alpine faced a resurgence from Happy, trailing 26-23 by halftime.

However, the Bucks regained their momentum in the second half, increasing their tempo and tightening their defense, particularly in the fourth quarter.

Hardwick and Isaiah Jimenez each scored 14 points, while Zane Wash added 11 points and a crucial block, leading Alpine to a hard-fought win.

"I felt like we caught our wind and got our legs back underneath us after the long trip," said Coach Hardwick. "The tempo and the pace of the game

picked up tremendously, which is what we like. We didn't shoot it all that well, but we defended well, especially in the first—seven points scored against—and fourth—nine points scored against—quarters."

On December 27, Alpine suited up for a rematch against the Slaton Tigers at Monterey High School.

Despite leading 14-9 after the first quarter, the Bucks struggled with shooting efficiency and defensive lapses in the second and third quarters, ultimately falling 72-47.

Hardwick's 17 points were a highlight, and his first basket in the game

See FIGHTIN' • 9

Lady Bucks grit through challenging holiday stretch

BY KERRY LAIRD
Sports Editor

The Alpine Lady Bucks varsity basketball team faced a demanding schedule during the holiday break. They competed against tough opponents while preparing for the start of district play.

On December 20, the Lady Bucks traveled to Monahans for a non-district matchup against the Lobos. Despite a determined effort, the Lady Bucks fell short, losing 49-43 in a close contest.

The game highlighted the team's ability to compete against strong teams, with Monahans holding them to a six-point deficit.

The team then traveled to Lubbock to participate in the annual Caprock Classic Tournament, where they gained valuable experience against diverse opponents. The Lady Bucks played four games over the tournament, splitting their results with two wins and two losses.

The tournament began with a tough matchup against Trinity Christian, resulting in a 57-45 loss.

Facing Trinity Christian, the Lady Bucks put forth a strong effort with 36 rebounds and 17 steals. Additionally, they shot a solid 60% from the free-throw line. However, their performance wasn't enough to overcome Trinity Christian's firepower in the 57-45 defeat.

Grapevine Faith Christian handed the Lady Bucks another setback, defeating them 42-33.

The game against Grapevine Faith Christian highlighted the Lady Bucks' tenacity. They secured 31 rebounds and 15 steals. Despite their efforts, the team fell short

in the 42-33 loss, showing room for improvement in offensive execution.

However, the Lady Bucks showed resilience and turned things around with a hard-fought 43-38 victory against Reagan County.

In the matchup, the Lady Bucks grabbed 35 rebounds and demonstrated efficiency at the free-throw line, shooting 58%.

This combination of rebounding dominance and steady scoring at the stripe was pivotal in their narrow 43-38 win.

Their tournament performance concluded on a high note with a 51-40 win over McKinney Christian Academy, showcasing their defensive intensity and balanced scoring.

The Lady Bucks' defensive prowess led to an impressive 49 rebounds and 23 steals, controlling the boards and forcing turnovers that contributed significantly to their 51-40 victory.

Coach Taryn Johnson reflected on the Lady Bucks' recent performances with a mix of candor and optimism.

"We went 2-2 during Caprock, and December was a struggle month for



Coach Taryn Johnson goes over strategy with the Lady Bucks varsity basketball team during tournament play in Lubbock

Courtesy photo

us," she admitted. Acknowledging her team's challenges, she added, "We knew it was going to be hard."

Returning from the tournament, the Lady Bucks faced Kermit in an away game on January 3. Despite their efforts, the team struggled offensively and fell to the Yellow Jackets, 54-34.

Following the Lady Bucks' loss to Kermit, Coach Johnson took a moment to reflect on her team's performance. Her

absence on the sidelines may have contributed to the struggles, as the players seemed uncertain in their play.

"We struggled against Kermit last Friday and, considering I wasn't able to travel, they were just very unsure of themselves," Johnson noted. She emphasized that the lack of confidence was evident in their execution, a challenge she hopes to overcome as they continue

See LADY BUCKS • 9

Lady Buck Basketball Schedule 2024-2025

	JV	V
Jan. 10: Tornillo, AWAY	5:00	6:30
Jan. 14: Presidio, HOME	5:00	6:30
Jan. 17: Anthony, AWAY	5:00	6:30
Jan. 21: Kermit, HOME	5:00	6:30
Jan. 24: Balmorhea, AWAY	5:00	6:30
Jan. 28: Tornillo, HOME	5:00	6:30
Jan. 31: Presidio, AWAY	5:00	6:30
Feb. 4: Anthony, HOME	5:00	6:30
Feb. 8: District Certification		
Feb. 10-11: Bi-District		
Feb. 13-15: Area		
Feb. 17-18: Regional Semifinals		
Feb. 20-22: Regional Finals/Optional Regional Tournament		
Feb. 24-25: State Semifinals		

**Dates and times are subject to change.



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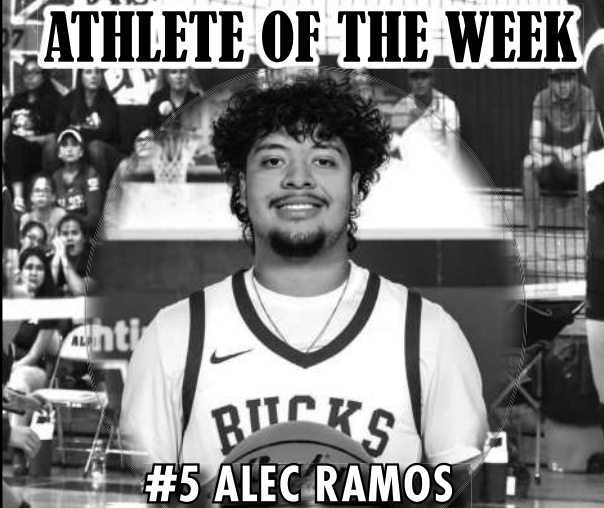
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ATHLETE OF THE WEEK



#5 ALEC RAMOS

Alec is beginning to find his scoring touch! Ramos provided a huge lift off the bench for the Fightin' Bucks, totalling 15 points while going 3-3 from the 3pt line!

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Lady Lobos taken down by Falcons

BY KARA GERBERT
Managing Editor

The Sul Ross State University women's basketball team met the Falcons of the University of Texas Permian Basin last Friday night at the Gallego Center.

The Lobos would lead early on with a fast break from TaMaiya Mims, making the score 5-2 in the first couple of minutes of the game.

The lead was short-lived, however, when a 9-0 run by the Falcons quickly turned the tide, leaving the Lobos behind 20-8 with four minutes to go. The Lobos were not going to sit idly by.

Sophiya Bustillos

knocked down a 3-point-er that would close the gap to 20-15 with just under two minutes left on the clock.

Unfortunately, the Falcons would score the last five points in the first quarter, sealing the fate of the Lobos.

Cheyenne Bonilla would lead the Lobos with 15 points, followed by Mims and Melody Martinez with nine, and Victoria Aguayo would add eight to the total. The Lobos would fall to the Falcons 50-79.

Next up for Sul Ross was the contest against Angelo State on Saturday afternoon.

Early in the first quarter, the Rams exhibited

their strengths, leading 33-13 over Sul Ross going into the second period.

The Lobos would add 11 more points in the second but trailed the Rams 24-53 at the half. On the return, both teams were evenly matched on the boards, hitting 14 buckets before Angelo State would again hit a streak in the final period, adding 25 points to their total over Sul Ross' 11, and taking the win 49-92.

The Lady Lobos are currently 1-6 in the Lone Star Conference and 2-9 on the season before they take on Lubbock Christian tonight at 5:30 p.m., followed by a trip to Midwestern on Saturday.

FIGHTIN' FROM 8

marked his achievement of surpassing 1,000 career points—a milestone celebrated by the team and fans alike.

"Although we didn't play our best basketball for four quarters, you have to credit the other team for some of that," commented Coach Hardwick.

Later that evening, the Bucks bounced back with a gritty 58-53 victory over Whitharral at Trinity High School. Alpine maintained a slim lead throughout the game and surged offensively in the second half.

Daley led the charge with 18 points and five rebounds, while Hardwick added 11 points, eight rebounds, and six steals.

Coach Hardwick praised the team's resilience.

"I loved this game for our kids," he said. "We did not hang our heads from the last loss; instead, we learned from it and got right back to work! I was very proud of the energy being displayed from the bench. I'm very proud of this group and feel like we took a major step forward as a ball club!"

In the consolation championship game on December 28, Alpine faced Morton at Cooper High School. The Bucks' swarming defense and efficient offense led to a commanding 57-40 win.

Hardwick's all-around performance, with 17 points, 10 rebounds, and eight steals, earned him a spot on the All-Tournament Team.

Ferris Daley and Isaiah

Jimenez also contributed double-digit points, solidifying the Bucks' dominance in the tournament.

"All in all, this tournament was really good for us," said Coach Hardwick. "We proved a lot to ourselves and are beginning to ascend as a ball club. I am extremely proud of this group and everything we accomplished."

Bucks beat Badgers

The team returned home with the Consolation Championship title, ready to honor Hardwick's 1,000-point milestone before their next game.

The new year began on a high note for the Fightin' Bucks, who returned home after weeks on the road to face the McCamey Badgers on Friday, January 3, in the hallowed confines of the "Buck Dome."

The game was particularly special as Hardwick was honored for surpassing 1,000 career points, a testament to his dedication and skill as a student-athlete.

The Bucks, entering the new year at 8-5, wasted no time asserting themselves, jumping out to a quick lead.

In the second period, Alpine's defense tightened, limiting McCamey to just six points while shooting an efficient 50% from the field and capitalizing on free throws. This defensive intensity launched the Bucks to a halftime lead of 31-19.

The second half saw Alpine's offensive efficiency soar. The team shot 56% in the third quarter and an impressive 61% in the fourth,

including five second-half three-pointers.

Junior guard Alec Ramos was instrumental, hitting three of those threes and scoring 15 points, along with three rebounds and two assists.

Daley led all scorers with 18 points, hitting 7 of his 13 shots, including three three-pointers.

Wash contributed 12 points, four rebounds, and two blocks. In comparison, Hardwick showcased his versatility with 7 points, 10 rebounds, and 10 assists—a triple-double performance that highlighted his all-around impact on the game.

McCamey, a well-coached team with strong district prospects, couldn't keep pace with the Bucks' balanced attack.

Moving forward, Alpine traveled to Buena Vista on January 7. The Avalanche will provide coverage of the Buena Vista game in next week's edition. The team begins district play against Tornillo in an away game on Friday, January 10, at 8 p.m., looking to claim their position as a formidable force in District 4-3A. The Bucks' first district game at home will take place Tuesday, January 14, against Presidio at 8 p.m.

"It was good to have several players step up and contribute to this win," he said. "These young men are genuinely excited for each other's success on and off the court. This was a true team win, and we couldn't be more excited at the direction we are headed in!"

Lobo men drop first game of the year to Falcons

BY KARA GERBERT
Managing Editor

The Sul Ross Lobos (0-6 Lone Star Conference, 1-10) took the court at the Gallego Center last Friday night to take on the Falcons from the University of Texas Permian Basin (5-1 LSC, 9-3).

The first few minutes of the game were a trade-off, with both the Lobos and Falcons putting points on the board. Lobo forward Tyler Jackson pulled off a tough shot to tie the teams at 9-all early in the game before the Falcons would hit a 10-0 streak to put the Lobos at a disadvantage they couldn't recover

from.

The high scorer for Sul Ross was Cam Clardy for the night, putting up 24 points and was 8-of-15 from the floor, 4-of-7 from behind the arc, and 4-of-four from the line. Also contributing to the Lobos' scoring was Jackson with six, Bryce Harris with six, and Cailean Ables with four.

The Lobos were on point with three-pointers for the night, holding the Falcons to just 11.1%. They also had a strong free-throw game but were outmaneuvered by UTPB on rebounds, with the Falcons putting up 41 to SRSU's 28.

Turnovers were also an issue for the Lobos, with 10 on the evening compared to six from their opponents, resulting in the Falcons capitalizing on nine steals against Sul Ross' three.

The Lobos dropped the first game of 2025 to the Falcons 51-78 and faced Angelo State on Sunday, when they were also bested by the Rams, 64-77.

Next up, the Lobo men hit the road to Lubbock to take on Lubbock Christian tonight at 7:30 p.m. at the Rip Griffin Center, followed by a trip to Wichita Falls to challenge Midwestern State on Saturday at 3 p.m.

Lady Bucks Softball Schedule

Date	Location	Varsity	JV
Jan. 10			First Day of Practice
Jan. 25	El Paso	TBA	Riverside Scrimmage
Feb. 1	Midland	TBA	Christian Scrimmage
Feb. 8	HOME	10 a.m.	Fort Stockton Scrimmage
Feb. 11	Monahans	5 p.m.	Monahans
Feb. 13-15	College Station	TBA-varsity only	NFCA Tournament
Feb. 18	Andrews	5 p.m.	Andrews
Feb. 20-22	Monahans		Monahans JV Tournament
Feb. 25	Fort Stockton	5 p.m.	Fort Stockton
Feb. 27-Mar. 1	El Paso	TBA-varsity only	Fox Tournament
Mar. 4	Pecos	5 p.m.	Pecos
Mar. 7	HOME	4 p.m.	Big Spring
Mar. 8	HOME	12 p.m.	Odessa High
Mar. 11	Midland	4 p.m.	Midland Legacy
Mar. 14	Anthony	5 p.m.	Anthony
Mar. 15	Midland	12 p.m.	Midland Christian
Mar. 18	HOME	5 p.m.	Presidio*
Mar. 21	Colorado City	5 p.m.	Colorado City
Mar. 25	HOME	5 p.m.	Tornillo*
Mar. 28	Kermit	5 p.m.	Kermit*
Mar. 31	HOME	5 p.m.	Anthony*
April 4	Presidio*	5 p.m.	Presidio*
April 8			BYE
April 11	Tornillo*	5 p.m.	Tornillo*
April 17	HOME	5 p.m.	Kermit*
April 24-26		TBA-varsity only	Bi-District
May 1-3		TBA-varsity only	Area
May 8-10		TBA-varsity only	Regional Semi-Final
May 15-17		TBA-varsity only	Regional Final
May 22-24		TBA-varsity only	State Semi-Final
May 29-31		TBA-varsity only	State Tournament

*District Play

LADY BUCKS • FROM 8

to push forward.

The game was a final tune-up before the Lady Bucks embarked on their district campaign. Despite the ups and downs, the Lady Bucks are poised to take the lessons from their tough schedule into district play, determined to grow stronger as the season progresses.

Looking ahead, the girls' varsity basketball team will travel to Buena Vista for a game on Tuesday, January 7. The results will be covered in next week's

Avalanche.

As the Lady Bucks prepared to face Buena Vista, Coach Johnson was focused on getting her team back on track after the break's challenging games. The goal is to rebuild their confidence and refocus on the fundamentals.

"We are trying to get back going in the right direction versus Buena Vista," she said. "Just taking it one day at a time and trying to build us back up."

With a steady approach and a commitment to improvement, she remains

hopeful that the team can start turning things around and regain momentum.

District play kicks off with an away game against Tornillo at 6:30 p.m. on Friday, January 10. The team will then host Presidio for their first home district game at 6:30 p.m. on Tuesday, January 14.

Transitioning into district competition, the Lady Bucks hope to build on the lessons learned over the holiday stretch and channel their tournament successes into victories.

AHS Powerlifting Schedule

Jan. 18 @ Fort Stockton
Feb. 8 @ Kermit
Feb. 13 GLQ @ Wink

Feb. 20 BLQ @ Wink

March 2 Regional Girls
March 13-15 State Girls (Edinburgh)
March 22 State Boys (Abilene)



PUBLIC NOTICE REQUEST FOR PROPOSALS FOR ROAD MATERIALS RFP 2024-12-01

The City of Alpine is soliciting Request for Proposals for Road Materials. The complete Request for Proposal (RFP) may be viewed on the city website at www.cityofalpine.com/bids.

Sealed proposals are due to the Office of the City Secretary by 4:00 p.m. on Monday, January 20, 2025. To be considered, the sealed proposal must address each of the requests for information in the Summary of Qualifications section. Proposals should be clearly marked "SEALED RFP ROAD MATERIAL 2024-12-01 - TO BE OPENED MONDAY, JANUARY 20, 2025, AT 4:00 P.M." and mailed or hand-delivered to the address below:

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City Secretary
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Alpine, Texas 79830

Questions regarding this project may be directed to the Director of Public Works, Eddie Molinar, at eddie.molinar@ci.alpine.tx.us. Any questions or concerns must be addressed in writing by the deadline to submit additional written questions as of 5:00 p.m. on January 10, 2025. No further inquiries will be accepted after the deadline. The tentative award date for this project is February 4, 2025.

Fightin' Buck Basketball Schedule 2024-2025

Date	Location	Varsity	JV
Jan. 10	Tornillo, AWAY		
9th	5:00 JV 6:30 V 8:00		
Jan. 14	Presidio, HOME	9th**6:30	JV**6:30
JV**5:00 V 8:00			
Jan. 17	Anthony, AWAY	9th 5:00 JV 6:30 V 8:00	
6:30 V 8:00			
Jan. 21	Kermit, HOME	9th**6:30 JV**5:00 V 8:00	
9th**6:30 JV**5:00 V 8:00			
Jan. 24	OPEN		
Jan. 28	Tornillo, HOME	9th**6:30 JV**5:00 V 8:00	
Jan. 31	Presidio, AWAY	9th 5:00 JV 6:30 V 8:00	
Feb. 4	Anthony, HOME	9th**6:30 JV**5:00 V 8:00	
Feb. 7	Kermit, AWAY	9th 5:00 JV 6:30 V 8:00	
Feb. 11	OPEN		
Feb. 17-18	Bi-District		
Feb. 24-28	Regional Semifinals		
Feb. 27-March 1	Regional Finals		
March 3-4	State Semifinals		
March 6-8	State Finals		

*Dates and times are subject to change. **Games played at Alpine Middle School

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CENTENNIAL • FROM 1

have made our parks more accessible to all visitors, and we hope these improvements will be enjoyed by visitors for many years to come.”

Park staff across the state identified the projects. Many provide additional accessibility options for visitors with disabilities, including all-terrain wheelchairs, wheelchair-accessible kayak launches, viewing scopes with corrective lenses for color blindness, and even a braille trail in East Texas.

“The fact that so many park superintendents picked accessibility-related projects demonstrates the need and our commitment to improving access in our parks,” said Jessica Burke, accessibility manager for the Texas Parks and Wildlife Department (TPWD). “About one in four adults in Texas have a disability, and while we are working to ensure our

park infrastructure meets ADA requirements, these extra donations provide more thoughtful amenities that enrich a visitor’s experience. We’re very grateful to all who donated to Texas Parks and Wildlife Foundation’s Centennial Fundraising Campaign to make these projects possible.”

WEST TEXAS

In West Texas, Texas Pacific Land Corporation helped fund all-terrain wheelchairs at Hueco Tanks State Park (SP) and Historic Site, telescopes and night vision goggles at Lake Colorado City SP, water bottle filling stations at Big Spring SP and Monahans Sandhills SP, and bike repair stations at Franklin Mountains SP. BNSF Railway Foundation helped fund the bike repair stations at Franklin Mountains SP and water bottle filling stations at Big Spring SP. Phillips 66 supported the

project at Monahans Sandhills. Other West Texas park projects include a search and rescue UTV at Big Bend Ranch SP, astronomy equipment at Davis Mountains SP and Devils River State Natural Area (SNA), and kayaks and related equipment at South Llano River SP.

Besides the generous support of thousands of Texans and the foundations and corporations mentioned above, major support for the centennial fundraising campaign came from the Centennial Champions, a group of Texas philanthropic leaders who understand the enduring significance of our state parks. The Centennial Champions include the Fondren Foundation, The John M. O’Quinn Foundation, The Elkins Foundation, The J.W. Couch Foundation, and The James A. “Buddy” Davidson Charitable Foundation. Thanks to their generous support, all donations were matched

dollar-for-dollar, doubling the impact of each and every gift.

“There were so many wonderful moments to cherish from the centennial celebration of our parks, and the many contributors to this campaign exemplify the very best of our park supporters,” said Texas State Park Director Rodney Franklin. “The generous support of park lovers who funded these impactful projects will be felt by all who love our parks for years and decades to come.”

Since 1991, the Texas Parks and Wildlife Foundation has raised and invested more than \$250 million to advance Texas’ proud outdoor traditions and conserve our state’s lands, waters, and wildlife. Our vision is for all Texans to have access to our state’s wild things and wild places, both now and for generations to come. For more information, please visit www.tpwf.org.


OWL • FROM 1

into the health of our en-

vironment. However, you don’t have to be a scientist to appreciate the complexity of Earth’s ecosystems or

conduct research to make a difference. Just gather underneath the Milky Way for a conversation about a

brilliant little owl, and what starts as a small flame can be stoked into something much bigger and brighter.



SENIOR Spotlight
LEIF JARRELL


In what activities did you participate in high school?
Graphic design for all four years and athletics for my freshman year.

Who was your favorite teacher/coach, and why?
My graphic design teacher Mr. Grisham, because he’s pretty laid back and as long as you get your work done he’s pretty fun to be around.

What was your favorite moment in the last four years?
The end of JR year to be honest.

What are your plans after high school?
I plan to take a gap year and then go to college for chemical engineering.

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“If my people, which are called by My name, shall humble themselves, and pray, and seek my face, and turn from their wicked ways; then will I hear from heaven and will forgive their sin, and will heal their land.” ~ 2 Chronicles 7:14

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Acts 2: Verses 17-21
verse 17, “And it shall come to pass in the last days, said God, I will pour out of my spirit upon all flesh, and your sons and your daughters shall prophesy, and your young men shall see visions, and your old men shall dream dreams;”
verse 21, “And it shall come to pass that whosoever shall call on the name of the Lord shall be saved”

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Devotional Page
The simple obedience of Joseph

BY WYATT BOUTWELL
Holy Cross Anglican Church

In the midst of Christmastide, we reflect on Christ’s birth from Joseph’s perspective. The Gospel appointed for the First Sunday after Christmas is from Matthew Chapter One. It features the first of four different communications from the Lord through angels. Here, verse 18 begins by examining the situation surrounding Joseph’s reaction to Mary’s pregnancy. As a just man, Joseph was committed to the Law and was troubled upon discovering Mary’s pregnancy. He initially considered divorcing her quietly to avoid public shame. However, God intervened through an angel, who reassured Joseph and commanded him to take Mary as his wife, as her child was conceived by the Holy Spirit. The angel also told Joseph to name the child Jesus (meaning “God saves”) because He would save His people from their sins.

This announcement directly links Jesus to the Old Testament prophecies, particularly Isaiah 7:14, which foretold that a virgin would conceive and bear a son named Emmanuel, meaning “God with us.” The angel clarifies the apparent confusion, explaining that Jesus’ name refers to His mission as the Savior, while Emmanuel is a title that reflects His divine nature. Thus, Jesus is both fully God and fully man, bridging the gap

between humanity and God.

Joseph’s response to this divine message is a model of faithfulness and obedience. Despite the potential scandal and misunderstanding that would follow, he obeyed God’s command, taking Mary as his wife and accepting the responsibility of raising Jesus. Joseph’s obedience, though simple, was profound and courageous, demonstrating his trust in God’s plan despite the personal cost.

The reflection also draws parallels between Joseph and his ancestor, King David, highlighting the importance of faithfulness and obedience to God. Like David, Joseph was a man of the Law whose life reflected a commitment to God’s will, even when it seemed perplexing or difficult.

As the Christmas season continues to unfold, Christians are invited to reflect on their own faithfulness. Just as Mary and Joseph exhibited uncommon obedience to God’s calling in their ordinary lives, so too are Christians called to live with simple yet steadfast obedience to God’s word, proclaiming the redemption offered in Jesus Christ through both words and deeds. Amid holiday celebrations, this message reminds believers of their vocation to live out their faith with commitment and devotion, following the example of Mary and Joseph.

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Ephesians 4: 31-32
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WEST TEXAS ROUNDUP

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Italian frittata per una bella vita (beautiful life)

Embracing the Italian phrase *bella vita*, which means beautiful life, it is best to begin with the first meal of the day: breakfast. And what better way to do that than with a frittata?

Frittatas are an Italian dish that resembles a cross between an omelet, a crust-less quiche, and scrambled eggs. Like all three of those egg-based delights, frittatas incorporate meats, vegetables, and cheese to bring a multitude of flavors to your breakfast table.

Frittatas are thought to have originated in the Mediterranean region and ancient Persia, where people ate *kuku*, an egg dish with herbs. The Romans also ate a similar dish that consisted of eggs, cheese, and vegetables, like the modern version we enjoy today.



HEAD OVER MEALS

by kara gerbert

Eventually, this would make its way to Italy, where the word frittata means “to fry.” Frittatas were commonly made from leftovers in Italy and were often eaten as a snack.

Once this breakfast dish crossed the Atlantic, it became a main course in terms of its role in a meal and is enjoyed using various ingredients. If an ingredient can be mixed with scrambled eggs, it

can appear in a frittata.

Many common combinations include spinach, tomatoes, and onions; roasted red peppers and spinach; mushrooms and tarragon; spring vegetables such as green peas and asparagus; and even a Caprese version with tomatoes and spinach. Throwing in some ham, sausage, or bacon just makes everything better.

There are also versions, such as this recipe, that use some of the more unconventional vegetables you may find in your local grocery store.

These days, brussels sprouts have become much more popular as a dish or an ingredient in other dishes. They mix particularly well with parmesan and are often roasted in the oven and topped with this tangy cheese. If so inclined,



Brussels Sprouts and Bacon Frittata

Courtesy photo

they could also be roasted for this recipe, but it will work fine being caramelized as the recipe calls for.

So, the next time you search for an easy yet different idea for breakfast, look no further than the simple frittata. It's a sure way to begin the day embracing *la bella vita*.

BRUSSELS SPROUT AND BACON FRITTATA

INGREDIENTS

- ½ lb bacon, diced
- olive oil
- 1 lb brussels sprouts, ends removed + halved + very thinly sliced
- kosher salt
- freshly cracked black pepper
- 1 small onion, thinly sliced
- 10 eggs
- ¼ cup whole milk
- 2 tbsp maple syrup
- 1 cup freshly grated parmesan cheese, plus extra for garnish
- 1 tbsp fresh thyme leaves

DIRECTIONS

Preheat the oven to 400°F. Spread the bacon into an even layer in a 10" cast-iron skillet. Bake for 15 minutes. Lower the heat to 375°F and bake for another 15 minutes or until crisp. Using a slotted spoon, transfer the bacon to a plate lined with paper towels. Set aside.

Place the skillet (with the bacon fat) on the stove over medium-high heat. Add a drizzle of olive oil and half of the brussels sprouts. Quickly

cook until caramelized and tender, about 3-4 minutes—season with salt and black pepper. Transfer the brussels to a plate. Repeat with the remaining half.

Add another drizzle of olive oil to the skillet, along with the onion. Reduce the heat to medium and cook for about 10 minutes, stirring often, until caramelized and tender. Season again. Add the brussels sprouts back to the skillet and stir to combine.

In a large mixing bowl, whisk the eggs until frothy. Whisk in the milk, maple syrup, and ¾ cup of grated parmesan cheese. Pour the mixture into the skillet. Turn the heat to low and cook for one minute, allowing the eggs to set slightly.

Sprinkle the remaining ¼ cups of parmesan over the eggs. Transfer the skillet to the oven and bake for 20 minutes or until fully cooked. Let cool for about 5 minutes.

Cut the frittata into slices and serve with the reserved bacon, fresh thyme, more parmesan, and black pepper over top.

Co-op hosts Christmas cookie exchange



Each year, the 588 Special Education Co-op hosts a cookie exchange. The staff is pictured here just before the Christmas break, enjoying the fruits of their labors.

Courtesy photo

Elementary school serenades Alpine



Students from Alpine Elementary presented a Christmas vocal program before the Christmas break. These hardworking students were back at it on Tuesday, to begin the second half of the school year.

Courtesy photo

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