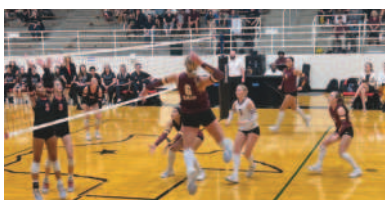




THE CREATIVE
INTROVERT
PAGE 3



DSHS BAND
STATE BOUND
PAGE 12



LADY TIGERS WIN
DISTRICT TITLE
PAGE 12

Dripping Springs Century News

33rd Year No. 45

November 7, 2024

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75 cents



Meghan Derion, ceramist and studio manager for the Art Garage has been crafting handmade bowls for the Empty Bowls Project for 10 years. This year, she worked with other artists and local girl scouts to throw and paint 300 bowls for the event. She volunteers her time and talent because the project is a chance to connect with her neighbors and give back to the community. She started making bowls for this year's event in September.

PHOTOS KEN VARGAS



Upon entering the venue, diners first have to decide which of the 1,200 bowls speaks to you.



Camden and Jennifer Houger of Dripping Springs selected Broccoli Cheddar and Poblano Smoked Gouda cheese soups for their bowls. It was their first time attending the Empty Bowls Project event.



Grey Fox up a Tree, by Mike Zarella, was one of four winning photographs selected by a panel of judges to be featured in the Hill Country Alliance's (HCA) 2025 Texas Hill Country Calendar. More than 550 photos were submitted in a contest for the calendar. The popular calendars are available now at hillcountryalliance.org.

PHOTO MIKE ZARELLA FOR HCA

2025 Hill Country Alliance calendar features photo contest winners

Staff Reports

The Texas Hill Country is a scenic region known for its diverse wildlife, clear springs, expansive rural landscapes, historic towns, and some of the starriest night skies in the country. However, rapid population growth and increased development put these qualities at risk. Each year, the Hill Country Alliance (HCA) holds a photo contest to encourage photographers

to capture the essence of the Texas Hill Country and inspire preservation efforts. This year, the 2024 Hill Country Alliance Photo Contest attracted over 550 entries, showcasing enchanting wildlife, vast fields of wildflowers, and other breathtaking landscapes. A panel of judges selected four winning photographs, which are featured in HCA's 2025 Texas Hill Country Calen-

SEE CONTEST PAGE 5

Full hearts turn Empty Bowls into full bellies

Ken Vargas
Managing Editor

More than a hundred years ago, in the town of Dripping Springs, Texas with its

limestone bluffs and sprawling oaks, a weary traveler wandered down the main road. His clothes were faded, his boots worn thin, and his face weathered from many miles of

riding under the Texas sun. Hungry and tired, he made his way to the town square, hoping for a meal. But it had been a hard year in Dripping Springs,

with drought taking its toll on crops, and each family was scraping by on what little they had. The townsfolk watched him, wary but

SEE BOWLS PAGE 3



A rendering of the redesign of the Riverside and IH-35 overpass in Austin. Last week, officials from TxDOT broke ground on the massive construction project, Capital Express Central, of the IH-35 corridor in Austin from US HWY 290 to SH71/Ben White Blvd. The \$5.6 billion project is expected to be completed in 2033.

RENDERING: TXDOT

TxDOT breaks ground on large \$5.6 billion IH-35 Capital Express Central project

Staff Reports

The Texas Department of Transportation was joined by Texas Transportation Commission Chairman J. Bruce Bugg, Jr., Commissioner

Robert Vaughn, Sen. Judith Zaffirini and other partners to break ground on the I-35 Capital Express Central project in Austin. "Currently, TxDOT has under con-

SEE TXDOT PAGE 5

Innovation Treehouse creates Mario Kart themed wheelchair costume for Austin family

Staff Reports

The Innovation Treehouse, in partnership with Flying Fish Swim Academy and CPATH (Cerebral Palsy Awareness Transition Hope), delivered a custom-made Mario Kart-themed Halloween costume to a family in the greater Austin area. The costume, provided free of charge to the family, creates a powered-up Trick-or-treating experience for their son.

"The details make the costume come alive," said Marguerite Erickson, one of the makers. "The large yellow banana peel is everyone's favorite." The wheelchair costume has glowing blue lights, sound effects, and fans inside the "thrusters" that make paper flutter like



Heather Kennedy and Jess Graffunder from Innovation Treehouse (left) created and delivered a Mario Kart-themed wheelchair costume to an Austin family (Leslie, Luke and Josiah) so Josiah could participate in Halloween. Josiah won first place in his elementary school's costume contest for this amazing and fully functional costume.

PHOTO MARGUERITE ERICKSON



Five-Day Forecast

Thursday

High: 74
Low: 59
60% of rain



Friday

High: 71
Low: 48
50% of rain



Saturday

High: 78
Low: 49
Sunny



Sunday

High: 75
Low: 54
Sunny



Monday

High: 78
Low: 64
Sunny



Community Day for Nonprofits conference set for November 13

Staff Reports

The Dripping Springs Chamber of Commerce and the Dripping Springs Community Foundation will host Community Day, a daylong conference, on Nov. 13 from 8:30 a.m. to 4 p.m. at the Deep Eddy Vodka Tasting Room, 2250 E. Highway 290. The event is open to nonprofit leaders, including board members, staff and volunteers, and anyone in Dripping Springs who wants to know more about board service and the local nonprofit sector. "If you are on a board or are thinking of serving on a board, this local event will provide tools and relationship-building to make your service more impactful," said Chris Marcum, president of the Dripping Springs Community Foundation. "Also, if

you are an emerging nonprofit or thinking of embarking on a nonprofit journey, this is your chance to meet and network with others already achieving sector success." More than 20 speakers from the nonprofit sector will offer insights on issues facing nonprofit management, sharing their experiences, tips and strategies. Topics will include fundraising, board governance, grant applications, nonprofit finance, legal issues, and donor relations, with guidance on finding funding resources and building strong donor relationships. Meet 10 local and regional funders who provide nonprofit funding to organizations and learn how to apply. Mayor Bill Foulds will kick off the day, and the keynote speaker will be Austin Dickson, CEO of the Community Founda-

tion of the Texas Hill Country. In addition to learning from experts, Community Day is a fantastic opportunity for nonprofit leaders to network with other nonprofit organizations in the community. "Supporting the nonprofit sector is part of the dual mission of the Dripping Springs Community Foundation," said Marcum. "A strong community-based social sector is ever more important as our community grows so rapidly." "We are delighted to partner with the Chamber," said Marcum. "Bringing the business sector and the nonprofit sector together leads to greater creativity, bolder innovation, collaboration and a forum for working together to positively impact Dripping Springs. "The Chamber is excited to work with the Com-

munity Foundation so we may combine our resources and expertise. Together we aim to address some of the challenges of local nonprofit organizations, enabling them to serve their missions more effectively," said Susan Kimball, president of the Dripping Springs Chamber of Commerce. Admission is \$50 per person. For groups of three or more from the same organization, contact the Chamber of Commerce at info@dstxchamber.com for discounted pricing. Coffee, refreshments, and lunch will be provided, and the venue will feature chairs for attendees. A cash-bar mixer will follow the conference. To register, visit dstxchamber.com or call 512-858-7000 during business hours. Email inquiries can be sent to info@dstxchamber.com.

OBITUARIES

John Edward Stone III



John Stone III

In Austin, beneath the vast Texas sky, we mark the passage of John Edward Stone III, a man of keen wit and boundless intellect, who hath been called hence by the silent herald of heart failure on the day of Venus on the twenty-fifth of October, in this year of two thousand and twenty-four. Born in the springtime bloom of Nacogdoches in the year 1952, on the ninth of April, John's life was a tapestry woven with the golden threads of innovation and silver strands of humor. He was a proud American, Texan, and American Legion member. His heritage can be traced as far back as Declaration of Independence signer Thomas Stone, a delegate from Maryland and a founding father of our great nation.

Educated at Angellina College in Lufkin, where he didst earn his Associate of Applied Science, John's mind was as fertile as the Texan earth, yielding a harvest of ideas that would shape the world. As an inventor in the realm of computer hardware design, he was twice granted United States Patents, in 1997 and 2006, for his contributions that advanced the chariot of technological progress. John was survived by his devoted daughter, Mellisa "Elise" Ann Stone, of Dripping Springs, TX who, like a single star in the night's embrace, continues to shine brightly with the light of his creative legacy.

In life, John was a master of the culinary arts, his kitchen a veritable alchemy lab where he transformed the mundane into the sublime. Gardens bloomed under his care, and fish leapt at his call. His soul took flight not only in his earthly pursuits but also as he soared through the heavens, piloting his airplane with the freedom of a fearless eagle. John's wit was unlike

any other--truly unique. His tales and jests, like the works of a skilled bard, were cleverly crafted and unforgettable. As Horace once wrote, "Mix a little foolishness with your prudence: It's good to be silly at the right moment." A lover of two-step dancing, John moved through life dancing to the beat of his own drum. He brewed life as he brewed his well crafted beer, with patience and a taste for the sweetness of mirth. Traveling from shore to shore, he gathered tales and memories as a minstrel collects songs, and his love for music was the thread that bound his adventures into a grand epic. John Edward Stone III, whose name shall be etched in the annals of time, was the embodiment of creativity, a man whose intelligence illuminated the unknown, and whose humor was a beacon of light in a too-often dim world. He lived as he loved, with an unquenchable thirst for the nectar of life, and in his passing, the world hath lost a soul of boundless jest and most excellent fancy.

Let us not mourn, but rather celebrate the man who lived with the courage of his convictions and the strength of his laughter. For in the words of the immortal bard, "All the world's a stage, and all the men and women merely players; they have their exits and their entrances, and one man in his time plays many parts."

John hath played his parts well, and now he takes his bow. His story, inscribed in the hearts of those who truly knew him, shall be told and retold, a tale of a life richly lived. Thus, we commend John Edward Stone III to the ages, his flight now bound for the undying lands, where perhaps he shall take his place amongst the stars, a pilot navigating the celestial realms with joyous abandon.

A private goodbye will be held at Harrell Funeral Homes.

His family has requested donations, in lieu of flowers, to be sent to Christopher House-Austin Hospice--located at 2820 E. Martin Luther King Blvd. in Austin, TX 78702.

DSISD to hold two more public meetings on new attendance zoning map

Staff Reports

After holding four public input meetings last month, the Dripping Springs ISD attendance zoning

committee will hold two more community meetings on Thursday, Nov. 7, to gather comments on two proposed attendance zone maps for the district. District growth, the

expansion of Sycamore Springs Middle School, and construction of a new elementary school have prompted the need to review attendance zones ahead of the 2025-26 school year. The two proposed attendance zone maps are available on the district's website. Since August, the committee and district administrators have held three meetings to develop the initial zoning maps. Feedback from the October public meetings and the Nov. 7 sessions will be reviewed before a final recommendation is presented to the Board of Trustees in December 2024. Elementary School No. 6, currently under construction in the Headwaters neighborhood, will accommo-

date 850 students in grades pre-K through fifth. The Sycamore Springs Middle School expansion, set to be completed in spring 2025, will accommodate 1,200 students. In May 2023, Dripping Springs ISD voters approved a \$223.7 million bond package to fund capital improvements, renovations, and new schools to address increasing enrollment. The new elementary school, budgeted at \$66.26 million, will relieve overcrowding at Dripping Springs Elementary and Walnut Springs Elementary and will feed into Dripping Springs Middle School. To view the current attendance zone maps under consideration, visit dsisdtx.us/page/attendance-zones.

Attendance Zoning Meetings

Thursday, November 7	Center for Learning & Leadership
10:00 AM and 6:00 PM	Board Room
	300 Sportsplex Drive

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ART BEAT

Presented by the Dripping Springs Art League

The Creative Introvert

Steve Friedman

Introverts often get a lot of input . . . “You’re not worthy. You are a loner or a hermit. You aren’t social and can’t make friends.”

I heard those voices throughout my childhood...from me, inside my head!

And then I heard them from classmates, co-workers, and others in my life for decades!

I always felt like I was different in some unknown way and that made me unsure and apprehensive.

Introvert Strengths

It took me until my 40s to recognize that I wasn’t strange or dysfunctional (any more than anyone else), or a loner relegated to only my own thoughts. After much research and reflection (two common introvert traits), I discovered that roughly half the world are introverts. But more importantly, I realized that I’m not a second-class citizen but that I have many talents that are needed in the board



STEVE FRIEDMAN

room and the social hall.

I’m an insatiable planner. I usually consider many sides of an issue and prepare my words before speaking. I am a good listener that gathers information and compiles it, often into unique perspectives and complex problem-solving. I’m not “less than” but actually am a valuable countermeasure to some of the more outspoken, seat-of-the-pants people that tend to usurp a lot of attention.

Once I realized my strengths, I was able to grow and leverage them for business success and social connection. Oh, I may never be the life of the party and walk out of networking events with a tall stack

of business cards, but I will often make a few quite valuable relationships that can sprout into long term friendships and partnerships.

I’ve discovered that introversion is not my curse but my blessing!

I’ve also learnt that introversion is quite common within the art community. This should come as no surprise as creatives often explore their inner selves and gaze at scenes and ponder life in order to create their alluring and evocative art.

Marketing for Introverts

While most artists embrace this process in creating new pieces and expressions, many find that talking about their art and marketing it even to the most intrigued audience can be overwhelming. But it doesn’t have to be that way. Here are some time-tested tips:

1) Prepare: don’t just “wing it” but prepare your elevator speech. Practice alone or with friends and family.

2) Bring notes: don’t rely on memorizing your script. Bring a small note card to lean on until it becomes commonplace.

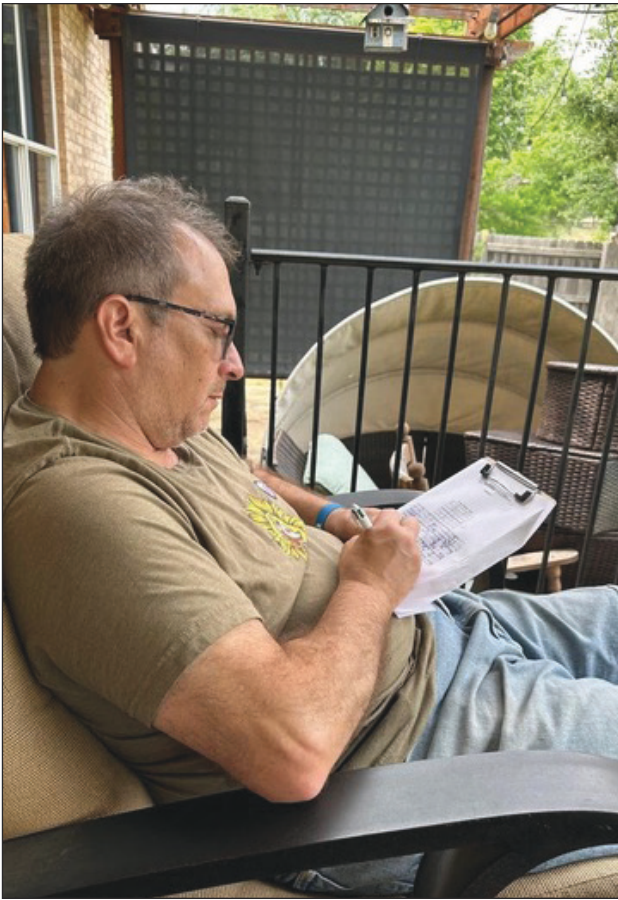
3) Choose the right environment: often large crowds of strangers can be overwhelming. Find smaller venues or markets or leverage your “home field advantage” and have studio open houses.

4) Take breaks: Introverts need to re-energize. Ensure you take a break before, during, and after your show or market. Take a walk, escape with a phone app, listen to music.

5) Use YOUR style: no need to be lunging into the aisle to grab prospective buyers.

Create an inviting display, let them come in and browse, and let them know you are available if they have any questions.

6) Ask questions: People love to be asked questions. It can take the focus off you, and



it can create a bit of a bond as well. Ask who they may be shopping for or if they are an artist or creative themselves.

Learning about your introversion and proudly using your innate skills can open the door to greater self-assurance, happiness, and marketing success.

The key is not to change yourself, but to be yourself!

To Learn More About Introversion:

Steve Friedman is an award-winning author of his memoir, *In Search of Courage: An Introvert’s Story*, and of his leadership book, *The Corporate Introvert: How to Lead and Thrive with Confidence*. His website, *Beyond Introversion*, includes blogs, books, and Strength Quizzes that can be found at www.BeyondIntroversion.com.

BOWLS FROM PG. 1



Joann Moulds, has been volunteering for the Empty Bowls Project for 6 years. This year she worked the soup line to serve curried butternut squash prepared by Thyme and Dough.

PHOTOS KEN VARGAS



Local girl scouts volunteered to serve bread and cookies and also wash bowls after diners were done so patrons could take their bowls home with them.



Diners gather with friends and neighbors for a bowl of soup and a pleasant visit. The Empty Bowls Project served around 1,000 diners Sunday at Ranch Park event center.

curious. Sensing their reluctance, the traveler called out with a smile, “Times are tough, so what do y’all say we make some stone soup?”

The people exchanged glances, wondering what kind of nonsense this stranger was talking about. Stone soup? Surely, he was pulling their leg. But the traveler bent down, picked up a small chunk of Dripping Springs limestone, and held it up with a twinkle in his eye. “This here’s a special stone,” he said. “Makes the best soup this side of the Blanco River.”

He set up an iron pot over a fire pit in the square, filled it with water from the nearby spring that gave the town its name and dropped the stone in the kettle. Leaning over the pot, he took a deep breath and sighed contentedly. “Mmm, smells good already,” he declared, though the water had barely begun to warm. “But a pinch of salt would really bring out the flavor.”

An older woman, softened by his charm, fetched some salt and sprinkled it in. The traveler took a taste, nodded thoughtfully, and said, “It’s coming along nice. But it could really use some onions.”

One by one, the townsfolk contributed—some onions, a few potatoes, a carrot or two, even a scrap of bacon. Soon, the pot was filled with a rich, hearty stew, simmering as the sun began to set over the hills.

When the soup was

finally ready, the traveler instructed everyone to fetch a bowl. Families gathered close, neighbors shared stories, and laughter filled the square as they enjoyed a meal created from a single stone and the kindness of shared contributions. As the last bowl was emptied, the traveler rinsed the limestone, tucked it into his pocket, and thanked the town with a tip of his hat.

The fine folks of Dripping Springs have kept the spirit of that story alive, and each fall they gather for the Empty Bowls Project to fill hearts and bellies while raising funds for those in need.

This past Sunday, nearly a thousand diners gathered at the Ranch Park Event Center for this year’s Empty Bowls Project, not only to enjoy a meal of soup, but to support Dripping Springs Helping Hands, a local nonprofit that provides food and assistance to Dripping Springs families.

Months of planning go into this one-day event. It starts with the hands of potters and ceramists who craft “empty” bowls, each unique and vibrant. This year, 1,200 bowls were made and laid out on tables in a colorful kaleidoscope for diners to choose from.

For \$25, attendees pick a handmade bowl before entering the dining hall, where dozens of soups from 38 local restaurants wait to be ladled. The aroma of the soups fills the room -- like a warm blanket, welcoming diners to sit with friends and neigh-

bors, share a meal, and support the cause. Local Girl Scouts add to the warmth, serving fresh-baked bread and offering cookies at the tables, while live music fills the air.

The Empty Bowls Project has become a cherished tradition in Dripping Springs, with all food and drink donated by volunteers and local businesses. This year’s event was “a huge success and record-setting fundraiser for Helping Hands,” said June Baumol, co-chair of the event. Baumol, who has volunteered for nine years, shared that “we sold 1,200 bowls Sunday. Many people buy more than one bowl.”

Nearly 80 volunteers helped manage the event, ensuring smooth service for over 1,000 attendees. After finishing their meal, guests could bring their bowl to a washing station where volunteers carefully cleaned and wrapped it for them to take home as a memento.

Baumol expressed gratitude for the community’s generosity, noting one guest who purchased three bowls

and made an additional \$1,000 donation. “It reminds me that there is so much love in our community,” she said.

More than 190 gallons of soup were prepared and donated for the event from 38 local restaurants. 12 Fox Brewing and Acopon Brewing served complimentary beer and wine was provided by Bell Springs Winery.

Dozens of volunteers helped promote the event and serve diners starting with the many ceramists who spent hours making the empty bowls for this event. There were 113 sponsors for this event! You can see them at DrippingSpringsempytbowls.org

The Empty Bowls Project raises nearly 70 percent of the funds needed to support Helping Hands’ mission. For more information on how to volunteer or donate, visit Helpinghands-drippingsprings.org.

With every bowl sold and every spoonful shared, Dripping Springs continues a tradition that began with one traveler, one stone, and a community willing to give.

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Capital Highlights

Insurance hikes make affordable housing tougher



Gary Borders
Texas Press Association

A growing number of Texas homeowners are forgoing buying homeowners insurance as premiums skyrocket, according to a recent report from the Texas comptroller.

Recent natural disasters – hurricanes, severe storms and wildfires – have prompted some insurers to limit or even eliminate coverage in Texas. Daniel Oney, research director of the Texas Real Estate Research Center at Texas A&M University, says premium increases in Texas have outpaced the rest of the country.

“At the end of 2023, Texas had the biggest percentage point increase of any state in the last five years,” he said. “You file claims, the insurance companies pay that, then they have to get that covered by the reinsurers. So, some of the price increases we’re seeing now are from storms that happened a couple of years ago.”

Oney said a “surprisingly large number of people” are choosing not to have insurance once their home is paid for. Mortgage lenders require homeowner insurance, but there is no requirement to do so once a home is paid for.

The high cost of insurance is just one factor affecting the state’s housing shortage, which is driving up home prices and rental costs. The Texas Tribune reported that in 2022 the state needed about 320,000 more homes than existed, according to an estimate by Up For Growth, a housing policy organization.

“While Texas has been building a lot of housing overall, in many places, it just has not been enough to keep up with demand in the state and people moving in from out of state,” said David Garcia, Up For Growth’s policy director.

NORTHEAST TEXAS OFFICIALS ATTACK RESERVOIR STUDY

A recent study by the Texas Water Development Board on the long-proposed Marvin Nichols Reservoir is under attack by northeast Texas officials, The Dal-

las Morning News reported. The proposed 66,000-acre lake would be built in Franklin, Red River and Titus counties to pump water more than 100 miles to the Dallas-Fort Worth area at an estimated cost of \$7 billion. It has been on the state’s planning books since 1968, drawing staunch opposition from landowners and officials in the affected counties.

The Region D water planning group, which represents those counties, said the draft report is biased and misleading. Opponents of the reservoir say it would destroy homes, farms, churches and cemeteries while not providing any benefit for people living in that area. Proponents say the reservoir is a solution to Dallas-Fort Worth’s growing water needs as its population continues to boom.

“It’s a flawed project. It should not go forward,” Jim Thompson, chair of the Region D planning group, said. “It should be removed from the state water plan.”

Kevin Ward, the chair of Region C, which represents the metroplex area, said the concerns of northeast Texas residents have been heard.

“We’ve heard it, so you’ve got to believe that if we thought there was another way to do what we’re trying to do right now ... we’d certainly latch onto it as fast as we could,” he said.

TEXAS BUYS TWO RANCHES NEAR THE BORDER

The state General Land Office announced last week that it has bought a massive ranch in the Big Bend Region and a smaller ranch in Starr County, The Tribune reported. The 353,785-acre Brewster Ranch that borders Big Bend National Park is a collection of 28 ranches put together by its previous owner over two decades. Land Commissioner Dawn Buckingham said the ranch could be used for hunting, agriculture, and carbon sequestration.

“With such a beautiful and expansive property, the GLO has the opportunity to generate many forms of revenue for the schoolchildren of Texas,” she said in a statement.

Also purchased was a 1,400-acre ranch in Starr County, along the Texas-Mexico border. The state plans to build a border wall on the property to deter illegal migration.

BATTLESHIP TEXAS STILL LOOKING FOR A NEW HOME

The U.S.S. Texas has been undergoing repairs at a dry dock near Galveston after the Legislature approved \$25 million to keep the ship seaworthy, but wharves officials have rejected a proposal to dock it there permanently, according to the Texas Standard.

The battleship is the only one still in existence that served in both World Wars. For decades it was docked in the Houston Ship Channel near the San Jacinto Battleground State Historic Site and served as a museum. Over the years it developed leaks and was in danger of sinking before it was towed to a dry dock in Galveston for renovation. The Texas is currently berthed next to the Elissa, the official tall ship of Texas.

However, there has been a backlash from business owners near the ship, who are concerned that if not moored correctly the ship could cause damage if a hurricane or tropical storm struck Galveston.

Repairs likely will take at least another year, during which the ship’s supporters hope to find a permanent location for the venerable vessel.

RRC DIGITIZES MORE THAN 83 MILLION OIL AND GAS RECORDS

The ongoing effort by the Texas Railroad Commission to digitize its oil and gas records continues, with 83.4 million now searchable online from any place with an internet connection. The records date back to the 1930s and include oil and gas production records, such as well depths and location of producing fields.

“Putting millions and millions of oil and gas records online is a win-win for the public and the agency,” said Danny Sorrells of the commission. “Not only does it give the public easy access to historical information dating back almost 100 years, but our staff can now devote the time they would have spent tracking those records for the public for other tasks at the agency.”

Gary Borders is a veteran award-winning Texas journalist. He published a number of community newspapers in Texas during a 30-year span, including in Longview, Fort Stockton, Nacogdoches, Lufkin and Cedar Park. Email: gbor-

Hill Country Conservancy and partners secure \$23.2 million grant for land conservation

Staff Reports

A coalition of 27 regional nonprofit partners, led by the Hill Country Conservancy, has secured \$23.2 million in federal funding — the largest single federal award for conservation easement funding in the Texas Hill Country — and set a goal of preserving 7,500 acres, primarily in rural areas.

Known as the Hill Country Headwaters Conservation Initiative, the coalition will leverage the expertise and local relationships of all 27 partners to engage landowners in significant portions of the Colorado, Guadalupe, San Gabriel, Llano, and Lampasas River watersheds. The coalition will screen and rank potential properties, prioritizing land with sensitive water recharge features, such as caves and sinkholes, that enable unfiltered drainage into the region’s aquifers. Properties home to unique and threatened wildlife habitats will also receive priority, along with historically underserved producers.

“The rapid growth and development throughout the Texas Hill Country has created an urgent need for land conservation that no single organization can tackle alone,” said Hill Country Con-

servancy CEO Kathy Miller. “This funding allows our coalition to be more strategic and proactive in protecting high-impact properties that deliver the most value in safeguarding endangered species, iconic spring-fed streams and pools, and essential aquifer systems supplying water to communities and farmers from Central Texas to the Gulf of Mexico.”

The funding was awarded through the U.S. Department of Agriculture’s Regional Conservation Partnership Program.

Urgent Need to Preserve Rural Land

The Hill Country’s population has grown nearly 50% over the last 20 years, with two-thirds of that growth occurring in unincorporated areas where counties have limited authority to regulate land use and minimal funds for preserving open space. Land prices have increased six to eightfold during this period, creating financial pressure on agricultural landowners to sell and driving up costs for conservation groups and public entities seeking to acquire easements and land.

Today, approximately 90% of the Hill Country’s 11 million acres is agricultural, but only 550,000 acres are protected from development through



The Four Winns Ranch near Wimberley, is an example of a conservation easement project that will forever preserve 165 acres from development and ensure the preservation of the land in its natural state. Last month, the Texas Hill Country Conservancy and its partners secured a federal grant of \$23.2 to purchase easements in order to preserve an additional 7,500 acres in critical watersheds in the rural Hill Country.

PHOTO HCA

public ownership and private conservation easements. The region’s population is projected to grow another 45% over the next 30 years, further accelerating development.

Celebrating its 25th anniversary, Hill Country Conservancy is a Texas leader in bringing together municipalities, counties, the USDA, and private landowners to secure mutually beneficial conservation easements on private lands. Though it has historically focused its efforts in and around Travis and Hays counties, where its work be-

gan, the organization has recently expanded its reach across the 18-county Hill Country to address growing development pressure.

“The Hill Country Conservancy was founded to end conflicts among environmentalists, landowners, and developers and instead foster collaboration to preserve land critical to protecting wildlife habitats and water resources,” Miller said. “This cooperative approach has been effective in preserving thousands of sensitive acres over the past 25 years, but the need to protect the Hill Coun-

try’s unique ecology has only become more urgent due to rapid growth and climate change.”

Founded in 1999, the Hill Country Conservancy works with landowners and conservation groups to protect essential watersheds, recharge areas, wildlife habitats, and agricultural lands in the Hill Country. Known for facilitating complex conservation projects with various partners, HCC currently holds 27 conservation easements totaling over 15,500 acres and has collaborated with partners to con-

serve thousands more acres within the Barton Springs Edwards Aquifer region and other basins.

The Hill Country Headwaters Conservation Initiative was launched in 2018 by Hill Country Conservancy and 18 partner organizations to enhance and protect natural resources through partnerships with conservation-minded landowners. Today, the initiative has grown to include 27 partners.

For more information about the Hill Country Conservancy, visit hillcountryconservancy.org.

DISD earns grade of “A” for financial management rating from TEA

Staff Reports

Dripping Springs ISD has earned the highest rating, “A: Superior Achievement,” and a numerical score of 98 on the Texas FIRST (Financial Integrity Rating System of Texas) report for the 2023-24 rating year. The district's score improved by eight points from the 2022-23 rating year, maintaining the highest rating every year but one.

The Texas Educa-

tion Agency has issued FIRST ratings to public school districts since 1999 to assess the quality of districts’ financial management and reporting. The report holds the Texas public schools accountable for their financial management practices, encouraging improvement to ensure maximum allocation of resources for direct instructional purposes.

The FIRST rating is based on 20 indicators, including results

of the annual external audit, debt management, fund balance, and administrative cost ratio, among others. The recent designation reflects financial information from the 2022-23 fiscal year.

The TEA evaluated 1,017 Texas school districts on financial management performance, with 850 districts, or 91.2%, earning an “A.” Another 82 districts scored a “B,” 50 received a “C,” and 15 were rated “F.”

Greater San Marcos Partnership rebrands as the Hays Caldwell Economic Development Partnership

Lance Winter
Hays Caldwell Economic Development Partnership

After more than a decade as a cornerstone of regional progress, the Greater San Marcos Partnership (GSMP) has embraced a fresh identity: the Hays Caldwell Economic Development Partnership (HCEDP). The organization, which has long been at the forefront of attracting and fostering economic growth in the Hays/Caldwell area, is rebranding to better reflect its evolving mission, geographic reach, and deep commitment to the broader region.

Founded nearly 14 years ago, GSMP has been instrumental in turning the San Marcos area into a vibrant economic hub, attracting new businesses, encouraging innovation, and promoting sustainable development. Yet, as the region continued to expand and the needs of the surrounding counties grew, the organization recognized the necessity of a brand that mirrored its growing scope.

The decision to rebrand as the Hays Caldwell Economic Development Partnership stems from the organization’s desire to emphasize its inclusive focus on both Hays and Caldwell counties. Communities such as Kyle, Buda, and Lockhart have seen rapid growth and have become vital contributors to the area’s prosperity.

“The rebranding isn’t just a name change. It’s a reflection of who we’ve

become as an organization,” said the HCEDP President Mike Kamerlander. “We’re proud of the work we’ve done under the GSMP banner, but we wanted a name that spoke more clearly to the communities we serve and the partnerships we’ve built. The Hays Caldwell Economic Development Partnership signifies our commitment to supporting economic development across both counties.”

The rebranding also comes as the region experiences unprecedented growth. In recent years, Hays County has consistently ranked among the fastest-growing counties in the nation, while Caldwell County is attracting increasing interest from industries seeking proximity to major transportation corridors and the benefits of a skilled workforce.

The HCEDP’s new identity aims to convey a spirit of collaboration. Through partnerships with local governments, businesses, and community stakeholders, the organization works to bring high-quality jobs, infrastructure improvements, and investments in education and workforce development to the region.

“By expanding our focus and working more closely with stakeholders in both counties, we’re positioning ourselves as a regional economic development leader, said Chairman of the Board, Mick Hawton. “The new name reflects our shared future and how we’re embracing the challenges and op-

portunities that come with it.”

Though the name has changed, the organization’s dedication to driving economic prosperity remains as strong as ever. HCEDP will continue its work on key initiatives that support the growth of local businesses, attract new investment, and enhance quality of life for residents. Programs focusing on talent development, innovation, and sustainability will remain integral to its mission, ensuring that the region remains competitive in an ever-changing economic landscape.

“Our roots run deep in San Marcos, and that legacy will carry forward,” Kamerlander said. “But as we look to the future, we’re excited to see how this new chapter will help us continue our work on behalf of both Hays and Caldwell counties.”

The launch of the Hays Caldwell Economic Development Partnership is more than just a rebranding; it’s a renewed commitment to building a prosperous future for the entire region. With a fresh vision, a unified voice, and a stronger connection to its communities, HCEDP stands ready to lead the way into a new era of economic opportunity.

As HCEDP opens this new chapter, the organization’s deep sense of purpose remains unchanged: to champion economic growth, empower local communities, and ensure that the region thrives in the years to come.

INNOVATION FROM PG. 1

flames. A 3D-printed steering wheel, the giant ‘M’, and symbols for the four sound effect buttons round out details of the design.

Innovation Treehouse members were inspired by Walkin’ & Rollin’, a Kansas-based non-profit that builds wheelchair costumes. Jess, another leader of the project said, “While we were a little intimidated by the high quality of Walkin’ & Rollin’s costumes, we wanted to support a child in Central Texas. CPATH connected us to a family that loves Halloween as much as we do!”

The creators learned many new skills while working on the proj-

ect at the Innovation Treehouse. Marguerite said, “If we had to do it over again we would have made the yellow hubcaps out of a sturdier material. But that is what the Innovation Treehouse is all about – problem-solving together and appreciating everyone’s individual talents and what they contribute to the team.”

The Innovation Treehouse wants to thank the donors and sponsors who made this project possible, especially Flying Fish Swim Academy. Marguerite says, “Seeing the joy made the long hours worth it.” Happy Halloween everyone!

The Innovation Treehouse is a non-profit based in Dripping Springs, TX. The organization is a learning community providing skill improvements including technical skills, critical thinking, problem solving, and understanding how to work as a team. The Innovation Treehouse uses experiential learning in STEM as a tool, believes in a growth mindset and creates intentional spaces where individuals of all ages can experiment, fail, learn, and repeat together. For more information about the organization, visit [innovationtreehouse.org](#).

Local attorney Milena Christopher selected by Texas Bar Foundation nominating chair role

Staff Reports

Milena Christopher, an attorney with The Law Office of Milena Christopher, P.C., has been selected as one of 40 individuals to serve as a 2024-25 nominating chair for the Texas Bar Foundation. Nominating chairs are chosen annually for the 17 State Bar of Texas districts based on outstanding professional achievements and a demonstrated commitment to the foundation. Christopher’s appointment reflects her dedication to the legal profession and her community.

Christopher founded her law office in Dripping Springs in 2003 after working as a prosecutor in the sex crimes and child abuse division in Fort Lauderdale, Florida. She specializes in family law and probate, focusing on helping clients avoid future legal conflicts through proactive estate planning. Known for her com-



MILENA CHRISTOPHER

passionate approach, she advocates for collaborative law and mediation, particularly in family law cases involving children.

Christopher holds a master’s degree in psychology in addition to her law degree, enhancing her ability to support clients in high-stress legal matters. Her firm has received several local honors, including “Best Attorney in Dripping Springs” and “Best Attorney for Collaborative Law in Hays County.” She was also recognized by the Hays-Caldwell Women’s Center with the Chris Barbury Award for her years of service.

A longtime Dripping Springs resident, Christopher is active

in the community, including founding the “Goat Couture” charity event, which raises funds for Future Farmers of America (FFA) programs at local high schools. She is also a speaker in the Hill Country, sharing her expertise with attorneys and community organizations.

Selection as a Texas Bar Foundation fellow is open only to State Bar of Texas members and requires election by the foundation’s Board of Trustees. Since 1965, the foundation has awarded more than \$27 million in grants supporting justice-related programs statewide.

In 2023, the Texas Bar Foundation awarded grants to 17 non-profit organizations in Central Texas totaling more than \$247,000 and \$1.67 million statewide. These beneficiaries provide non-profit legal services, public advocacy, and other services that benefit the administration of justice in Texas.

CONTEST FROM PG. 1

dar, now available on the HCA website.

Sunsets were the dominant subject of this year’s winners, with the grand prize and first runner-up both highlighting the region’s vibrant skies. Grand prize winner Jesus Corona’s “Sunset” captures a field of wildflowers at dusk in Bexar County, while Gary T. Ray’s “Gruene Nights” received first runner-up for its striking pink sky over the small town of Gruene. Sunsets, with their fleeting beauty, serve as a reminder of the natural world’s wonders—and the delicate balance of the Hill Country’s environment, especially during ongoing drought conditions. HCA’s water program emphasizes the need to protect precious resources like clear, flowing springs.

The second runner-up, Bill Weekley’s

“Danger in the Wildflowers,” is a close-up of a rattlesnake in Kerr County, and third place went to Mike Zarella’s “Gray Fox up a Tree” in Blanco County. These photographs and others submitted to the contest remind viewers of their connection to the Hill Country’s intricate ecosystem, underscoring HCA’s mission to promote conservation and land stewardship.

HCA also acknowledges the following photographers whose work is featured in the 2025 Hill Country Calendar: Airon Mothershed, Alan Zhou, Ashley Campbell, Aspen McCalum, Baba Arimilli, Carol Serur, Carolyn Whiteside, Daniel Gomez, Delaney Kempf, Donna Chance, Elvis Canoy, Gary Sertich, Jackie Wise, Jacob Saunders, Jeff Newton, Jennifer Bau-

erkemper, Jess Brown, Joseph Richards, JP Sanchez, Katherine Carvajal, Kim Smith, Lisa Hood, Matthew Guthrie, Meghan James, Michael Tidwell, Michael Wight, Nicky Scott, P. Michael Jones, Patty Robertson, Paul Huchton, Shelby Skittone, Steffen Baumgart, Stephen Isenhower, Tim Speer, and William Shelton, who won the People’s Choice Award.

The Hill Country Alliance is a nonprofit organization dedicated to preserving the open spaces, starry skies, clean water, and unique character of the Texas Hill Country.

The 2025 Texas Hill Country Calendar is available for \$15 and makes an ideal holiday gift. To purchase, visit [hillcountryalliance.org](#).

TXDOT FROM PG. 1

tract over \$53 billion under construction across Texas,” said Chairman Bugg. “Last week we broke ground on the start of the \$13 billion NHHIP project in Houston, and today we are breaking ground on the \$5.6 billion Capital Express Central project, bringing that total of construction and planned projects to \$71.6 billion.”

This I-35 Texas Clear Lanes project will add two non-tolled high-occupancy-vehicle (HOV) managed lanes in each direction from US 290 East to SH 71/Ben White Boulevard. The project will also lower the mainlanes from Airport Boulevard to Lady Bird Lake, remove the up-pier decks, provide opportunities for deck plazas, improve transit connections, add boulevard-style segments through downtown

and enhance pedestrian and bicycle paths along the corridor.

“I-35, and this particular project is of such significance and such importance,” Sen. Zaffirini said. “The impact will be statewide, nationwide, and international. But it will also be local, and we who travel this route every day are most relieved. We welcome it because it will relieve congestion, improve safety and drainage, and help in so many ways.”

“In addition to mobility improvements, we’re also improving bicycle and pedestrian paths helping to accommodate all modes of transportation,” said Commissioner Vaughn. “We are excited to make transportation safer and easier to use for cyclists, runners, walkers and everyone else.”

The project includes more than 19 miles of

new shared-use paths, as well as widened and enhanced east-west crossings, and new bicycle-pedestrian crossings at 3rd Street, 15th Street and 41st Street.

Construction on the Central project started in October 2024 with the reconstruction of the Martin Luther King Jr. Boulevard Bridge. The contractor is Harper Brothers, LLC. The next segment to begin construction will be at Lady Bird Lake (Holly Street to SH 71/Ben White Boulevard) in early 2025. The contractor is Balfour Beatty. Construction along the entire corridor is expected to be complete in 2033, weather permitting.

To learn more about the Central project and future construction updates or sign-up for alerts by visiting [mymobility35.org](#).



Dripping Springs CLASSIFIEDS

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Public Notice

NOTICE TO BIDDERS
CITY OF DRIPPING SPRINGS,
TEXAS
TREE SERVICES
PUBLIC NOTICE

Notice is hereby given that the City of Dripping Springs is soliciting Bids for Tree Maintenance and Removal Services.

REQUEST FOR BIDS: “Tree Services”

Contractor shall provide all necessary labor, material, and equipment to provide tree maintenance and removal services for the City of Dripping Springs starting on or about December 6, 2024, and ending on or about September 30, 2025, and subsequent renewal periods in strict accordance with the terms, conditions, and provisions of this solicitation.

Sealed bids addressed to the City of Dripping Springs, 661 West Highway 290, Dripping Springs, Texas, 78620, will be received from Contractors interested in providing tree maintenance and removal services as specified by the City of Dripping Springs, Texas for a NON-EXCLUSIVE CONTRACT DURATION OF ONE (1) YEAR, WITH THE OPTION TO RENEW FOR TWO (2) ADDITIONAL ONE (1) YEAR PERIODS.

THE AGREEMENT SHALL BE A NON-TRANSFERABLE AGREEMENT.

Contract awards for the tree maintenance and removal services will be made to the lowest, responsive, responsible bidder. The lowest and best value bids are those, which result in the lowest cost to the City of Dripping Springs for the complete tree maintenance and removal services program to be performed by a qualified bidder. The City reserves the right to reject any and all bids and to waive any and all irregularities.

NO PRE-SUBMITTAL CONFERENCE: A pre-submittal conference will not be held.

Sealed Bids, must be submitted in one (1) original, (2) copies, and one (1) electronic copy (in PDF format) on flash drive and shall be delivered to:

City of Dripping Springs

City Administrator

661 West Highway 290

Dripping Springs TX 78620

Bids must be submitted by 10:00 AM on Friday, November 22, 2024, at which time bids will be publicly opened and read. Bids received after the opening date and time will not be considered.

Requests for Proposal Packet is available at <https://www.cityofdrippingssprings.com/requestforbids>.

Should this solicitation fail to contain sufficient information in order for interested contractors to obtain a clear understanding of the services required by the City, or should it appear that the instructions outlined in the solicitation are not clear or are contradictory, any interested contractor may in writing request clarification from Michelle Fischer, City Administrator, no later than November 18, 2024 prior to the required time and date for sealed bid proposal submission. The interested contractor shall email a copy of the written clarification request to the City Administrator, Michelle Fischer, at mfischer@cityofdrippingssprings.com. Written

Public Notice

requests from interested firms and written responses by the City will be provided to all Applicants. This is the only permissible contact with the City regarding this bid process until the bids are opened and the Applicant is contacted by the City.

Public Notice

REQUEST FOR PROPOSALS

Dripping Springs ISD is requesting for proposals for RFP #24-25-003 Internet Services District-Wide. Proposals will be accepted until 12-13-2024 at 2:00 p.m. local time. Specifications are available in the DSISD Purchasing Office (512-858-3039) between the hours of 8:00 a.m. and 4:00 p.m., Monday through Thursday. Proposal responses must be returned to the DSISD Purchasing Department, Attn: Valerie Littrell, 300 Sportsplex Dr, Dripping Springs, Texas 78620, by the date and time indicated above. No faxed or emailed submissions will be accepted. Late bids will be returned unopened. Dripping Springs ISD reserves the right to reject any/or all submissions and waive all formalities in the bid process.

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DRIPPING SPRINGS INDEPENDENT SCHOOL DISTRICT Exhibit C-2						
STATEMENT OF REVENUES, EXPENDITURES, AND CHANGES IN FUND BALANCE - GOVERNMENTAL FUNDS						
For the Year Ended June 30, 2024						
Data Control Codes		General Fund	Debt Service Fund	Capital Projects Fund	Nonmajor Governmental Funds	Total Governmental Funds
Revenues						
5700	Local, intermediate, and out-of-state	\$ 82,998,696	\$ 37,458,409	\$ 3,314,147	\$ 6,335,628	\$ 130,106,880
5800	State program revenues	10,031,745	2,279,472	412,944	1,094,189	13,818,350
5900	Federal program revenues	921,667	-	457,970	3,812,610	5,192,247
5020	Total Revenues	93,952,108	39,737,881	4,185,061	11,242,427	149,117,477
Expenditures Current:						
0011	Instruction	50,410,822	-	-	3,779,786	54,190,608
0012	Instruction resources and media services	1,052,714	-	-	30,475	1,083,189
0013	Curriculum and instructional staff development	1,506,437	-	-	634,463	2,140,900
0021	Instructional leadership	1,157,285	-	-	471,222	1,628,507
0023	School leadership	4,064,710	-	-	33,495	4,098,205
0031	Guidance, counseling and evaluation services	3,147,598	-	-	947,342	4,094,940
0033	Health services	894,954	-	-	126,189	1,021,143
0034	Student transportation	4,081,728	-	-	65,067	4,146,795
0035	Food services	5,581	-	69,840	4,356,331	4,431,752
0036	Extracurricular activities	3,080,628	-	-	611,862	3,692,490
0041	General administration	4,222,096	-	-	163	4,222,259
0051	Facilities maintenance and operations	8,419,972	-	159,208	172,533	8,751,713
0052	Security and monitoring services	967,396	-	364,077	108,768	1,440,241
0053	Data processing services	2,242,288	-	960,434	-	3,202,722
0061	Community services	176,165	-	-	-	176,165
Debt service:						
0071	Principal on long-term debt	390,005	17,290,000	-	114,297	17,794,302
0072	Interest on long-term debt	16,002	9,722,480	-	5,461	9,743,943
0073	Bond issuance costs and fees	-	561,125	830,710	-	1,391,835
Capital outlay:						
0081	Facilities acquisition and construction	494,363	-	30,564,034	117,437	31,175,834
Intergovernmental:						
0091	Contracted instructional services	8,823,666	-	-	-	8,823,666
0099	Payments to Appraisal District	868,059	-	-	-	868,059
6030	Total Expenditures	96,022,469	27,573,605	32,948,303	11,574,891	168,119,268
1100	Excess deficiency of revenues over under expenditures	(2,070,361)	12,164,276	(28,763,242)	(332,464)	(19,001,791)
Other Financing Sources (Uses)						
7901	Refunding bonds issued	-	68,190,000	-	-	68,190,000
7911	Issuance of bonds	-	-	95,100,000	-	95,100,000
7913	Proceeds from SBITAs	615,140	-	-	134,415	749,555
7915	Transfers in	1,199,403	-	-	21,394	1,220,797
7916	Premium on issuance of bonds	-	6,447,607	5,730,710	-	12,178,317
8911	Transfers out	(784,732)	-	(2,974)	(24,896)	(812,602)
8940	Payment to bond refunding escrow agent	-	(74,085,693)	-	-	(74,085,693)
7080	Total Other Financing Sources Uses	1,029,811	551,914	100,827,736	130,913	102,540,374
1200	Net change in fund balances	(1,040,550)	12,716,190	72,064,494	(201,551)	83,538,583
0100	Fund Balance - Beginning	50,141,699	23,092,095	6,899,979	2,697,856	82,831,629
3000	Fund Balance - Ending	\$ 49,101,149	\$ 35,808,285	\$ 78,964,473	\$ 2,496,305	\$ 166,370,212



Public Notice

Public Notice

NOTICE TO CREDITORS

Notice is hereby given that original Letters Testamentary for the Estate of Thomas G. Humphrey, deceased, were issued on October 28, 2024, in Cause No. 24-0391-P, pending in the County Court-At-Law No: 1, Hays County, Texas, to: Eric James Humphrey. All persons having claims against this Estate which is currently being administered are required to present them to the undersigned within the time and in the manner prescribed by law.

c/o: Mary D. Newnam

Attorney at Law

PO Box 1709

14380 Ranch Rd 12

WIMBERLEY, TX 78676

DATED the day 1st of November, 2024.

/s/Mary D. Newman

Mary D. Newnam

Attorney for Eric James Humphrey

State Bar No.: 24037172

PO Box 1709

14380 Ranch Rd 12

WIMBERLEY, TX 78676

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OUTDOORS

Dreaming Whitetail

2024-25 season underway, more than 700,000 Texas hunters expected to head to the field this season



The 2024-25 white-tailed deer season opened statewide on Nov. 2. Experts are saying it's going to be a good one with plenty mature bucks in the field. Antler quality is expected to average to above average across most of the state thanks to good habitat conditions last spring and summer.

By Matt Williams
Outdoors Writer

It's showtime for Texas deer hunters. The 2024-25 general hunting season for white-tailed deer opened statewide at 30 minutes before sunrise on Nov. 2.

Most whitetail junkies will agree: There is nothing like witnessing the dawn of a new day from the peaceful confines of a cozy hunting blind situated in good deer woods. For many, it makes no difference if a deer shows up or not. Just being out there with a front row seat in nature's chapel is what deer hunting is all about.

Experts are saying it should be a banner year in most areas, with plenty of mature bucks in the field.

Antler quality is expected to be average to above average across most of the state, thanks to bountiful rainfall last spring and early summer. The exceptions are southwest Texas and portions of the Edwards Plateau. Antler quality there is expected to be average to slightly below average in localized areas that didn't see the timely moisture early in the year, according to Blaise Korzekwa, white-tailed deer program leader with the Texas Parks and Wildlife Department.

Don't sweat it if work or other obligations spoiled the chances of getting in the field over opening weekend. There is plenty of time to fill those tags. The general season runs through January 5 in most of the state; January 19 in the South Zone.

Texas: A Whitetail Mecca

The stellar outlook comes as no surprise. Just about every deer season is a good one for Texas' 757,000 whitetail hunters. It's hard to imagine things turning out any other way.

Texas is huge state with a robust white-tailed deer herd currently estimated at around 4.7 million animals. That's down from the 2021 estimate of 5.4 million, but still nearly 3-4 times the deer populations found in other leading states like Michigan, Alabama, Mississippi and Wisconsin.

Much of the decline is attributed to 2022 drought conditions in the Edwards Plateau ecoregion, which historically maintains about 1/3 of the state's deer population. Korzekwa says poor habitat conditions across much of that region over the last few years has resulted in a population decline of about 25 percent.

Despite the drop, the Edward Plateau still maintains a herd of about 1.5 million whitetails. That's equal to the total deer population estimates in Wisconsin and Mississippi. The biologist also pointed out that deer populations in most other regions across Texas have held steady or seen slight increases since 2019.

Not surprisingly, Texas hunters bring home a bounty of venison each season. The numbers tell the tale of the tape.

Texas deer hunters shot nearly 740,000 whitetails last season, according to TPWD's annual Big Game Harvest Survey. Among them were about 425,000 bucks (57 percent) and about 315,000 does (43 percent).

The Edwards Plateau had the most hunters (162,000) and accounted for more harvest (188,000 deer) than any other ecoregion. South Texas ranked second in total harvest (130,000), followed by the Cross Timbers and Prairies (103,500); Post Oak Savannah (99,500); Pineywoods (82,500); and the Rolling Plains, about 73,000.

Korzekwa says the total harvest last season was up about nine percent from 2022, largely due to improved habitat conditions and antler quality. Statewide, hunters enjoyed a success rate of 68 percent last year — the highest recorded in at least two decades.

"Even a down year for Texas hunters is still an exceptional year when you look at deer hunting success nationwide," he said. "The sheer number of deer and the way our hunters manage them are key factors in the numbers and quality of the bucks Texas is known for."

Dry and Crunchy

This October was among the driest on record nationwide, and much of the Texas landscape was still brown and crunchy just ahead of the season opener. As of Nov. 1, 186 of the state's 254 counties were under burn bans.

Some hunters may be wondering if the late summer/early fall dry snap might have a negative impact on hunting success, or the quality of bucks they might see in the field this season.

Korzekwa doesn't think so. In fact, the biologist says the dry landscape could improve hunting success, especially for those who like to set up in close proximity to corn feeders.

Photo by Matt Williams

Contributed photo/Texas Buck Registry
Some outstanding low fence bucks were tagged by the Texas hunters during the October archery and MLD seasons. One of the best entered in the Texas Buck Registry thus far is a Lampasas County 17 pointer shot by Ty Hinds. The 6 1/2-year old free-ranging buck scored 182 6/8, according to TBR.

Hunting Season	EcoRegion	# Hunters	Hunter Days	Buck Harvest	Doer Harvest	Total Harvest	% Bucks	% Does	% Hunter Success	Harvest per Hunter	Hunter Days per Hunter	Harvest per 1000ac	Hunters per 1000ac
*2022-23	Blackland Prairies	19,459	251,235	8,965	9,342	18,307	49	51	62	0.94	12.91	6.44	6.85
*2022-23	Cross Timbers and Prairies	110,748	1,298,493	54,072	44,164	98,236	55	45	69	0.89	11.72	8.05	9.07
*2022-23	Edwards Plateau	168,513	1,578,548	97,670	79,929	177,599	55	45	73	1.05	9.37	8.82	8.36
*2022-23	Gulf Prairies and Marshes	14,875	200,774	7,832	6,700	14,533	54	46	73	0.98	13.50	7.84	8.02
*2022-23	High Plains	3,770	36,855	2,642	1,804	4,447	62	38	73	1.13	9.79	2.37	2.11
*2022-23	Pineywoods	119,304	1,786,606	45,957	39,634	85,591	54	46	59	0.72	14.98	5.98	8.34
*2022-23	Post Oak Savannah	113,089	1,308,885	44,636	33,878	78,514	57	43	59	0.69	11.57	5.23	7.53
*2022-23	Eastern Rolling Plains	58,884	677,852	27,272	25,857	53,129	51	49	67	0.91	11.55	5.70	6.30
*2022-23	Western Rolling Plains	34,640	371,013	14,310	7,548	22,458	66	33	59	0.65	10.71	1.58	2.43
*2022-23	South Texas Plains	93,833	908,302	61,716	49,637	111,353	55	45	77	1.19	9.68	6.66	5.61
*2022-23	Trans-Pecos, Mountains and Basins	14,467	117,529	8,304	7,078	15,382	54	46	84	1.06	8.12	3.46	3.26
*2022-23	Urban	2,038	14,356	849	472	1,321	64	36	80	0.65	7.06	2.72	4.19
*2022-23	Statewide	753,418	8,550,448	377,394	303,277	680,671	55	45	64	0.90	11.35	6.00	6.64
*2023-24	Blackland Prairies	20,591	236,218	10,967	4,718	15,685	70	30	68	0.76	11.47	5.52	7.24
*2023-24	Cross Timbers and Prairies	109,542	1,350,913	57,894	44,632	102,525	56	44	71	0.94	12.33	8.40	8.97
*2023-24	Edwards Plateau	162,117	1,644,558	109,156	79,062	188,218	58	42	79	1.16	10.14	9.34	8.05
*2023-24	Gulf Prairies and Marshes	14,888	173,439	9,564	8,289	17,853	54	46	69	1.22	11.81	9.63	7.92
*2023-24	High Plains	5,628	60,899	3,826	2,933	6,759	57	43	60	1.20	10.82	3.78	3.15
*2023-24	Pineywoods	122,994	1,810,619	46,034	36,470	82,505	56	44	59	0.67	14.72	5.77	8.60
*2023-24	Post Oak Savannah	113,111	1,296,523	56,873	42,719	99,592	57	43	70	0.88	11.46	6.63	7.53
*2023-24	Eastern Rolling Plains	57,701	619,259	31,370	19,000	50,370	62	38	70	0.87	10.72	5.41	6.21
*2023-24	Western Rolling Plains	30,337	311,004	13,007	9,309	22,316	58	42	69	0.74	10.25	1.57	2.13
*2023-24	South Texas Plains	97,325	982,916	73,578	56,618	130,197	57	43	79	1.34	10.10	7.79	5.82
*2023-24	Trans-Pecos, Mountains and Basins	20,179	201,357	12,114	8,799	20,913	58	42	86	1.04	9.98	4.71	4.54
*2023-24	Urban	2,745	30,956	1,530	1,403	2,933	52	48	90	1.07	11.28	6.03	5.65
*2023-24	Statewide	757,047	8,718,659	424,892	314,972	739,864	57	43	68	0.98	11.52	6.52	6.68

The above chart shows white-tailed deer harvest by region over the last two seasons. Around 757,000 deer hunters shot 740,000 whitetails last season in Texas.

"A drought this time of year typically doesn't have as large of an impact on the population," he said. "One thing the does occur is the deer tend to concentrate a more around corn feeders and any successful food plots. We tend to see higher hunter success when we have drought conditions, mainly because the deer are prone to come to corn feeders much better than when things are lush and green."

Although it packs very little nutritional value, corn is a great source of fuel for carrying the animals through winter. Fed at regular intervals, on a consistent basis, corn can become somewhat addictive.

Supplemental food plots also can boost the odds of luring deer into the open for evaluation, especially late in the season after natural food supplies have been exhausted. Food plots also provide great sources of nutrition to carry animals through stressful winters, when other food supplies are scarce.

The bad news is food plots need water to germinate the seeds. With limited rainfall around the state through early fall, many planting efforts were a bust this year without irrigation to spur the green-up. Korzekwa says acorn production is another component hunters should take into consideration when planning hunting strategies. The nutritious nuts are a heavily preferred food source. I've seen deer walk right past corn piles en route to white oak flats.

Acorn abundance can vary from one year to the next. Bumper crop years can make hunting around corn feeders and food plots painfully slow. Just the opposite can happen when acorns are scarce.

"If someone has a lot of oaks, there is good chance they will notice activity around feeders begin to slack off once

the acorns start to drop," Korzekwa said. "They'll still come to feeders, but not near as much."

As antler quality goes, Korzekwa says the recent dry spell won't have any noticeable impacts because it happened after bucks had fully developed their antlers. Numerous low fence bucks tagged by October archery and Managed Lands Deer permit holders are solid evidence of the antler quality on some mature animals this season.

Several have been entered on the Texas Buck Registry website, texasbuckregistry.com. Among the best is a Lampasas County 17 pointer shot by Ty Hinds. Hinds' buck scores 182 7/8, according to the TBR website. Another is a Shackelford County 14 pointer killed by lady hunter Katie Despino. Despino's buck scores 168 6/8 B&C.

While antler quality certainly won't be lacking this season, Korzekwa says dry conditions could take a toll on the body condition of bucks later on.

"If the drought continues to hang on, we could run into some scenarios where bucks may be in worse shape than usual during the post rut," Korzekwa said. "Bucks naturally lose weight during the rut because they are out chasing does. Without rain, there won't be any moisture in the ground to promote the growth of winter forbs. That could definitely have a negative impact their body condition once the rut winds down and make them slower to recover."

Deer Season At A Glance

North Zone:
Nov. 2 - Jan. 5
South Zone:
Nov. 2 - Jan. 19

Special Late Season

North Zone:
Jan. 6-19, 2025
South Zone:
Jan. 20 - Feb. 2

Youth-Only

North Zone: Oct. 25-27 and Jan. 6-19
South Zone: Oct. 25-27 and Jan. 6-19
Archery Only: Sept. 28 - Nov. 1
Muzzleloader: 90 Counties, Jan. 6-19

Hunter Reminders

- Carcass Disposal: Hunters are reminded carcass disposal regulations implemented last spring. The regulations are meant to help reduce the risk of unintentional transmission of Chronic Wasting Disease (CWD) to susceptible wildlife from CWD-positive areas to areas where the disease is not yet known to exist.

TPWD says it is best to leave unused carcass parts at the property of harvest. Hunters are allowed to debone a carcass at the property of harvest provided:

- Meat is processed no further than whole muscles and may not be ground, chopped, or sliced.

- Meat from multiple deer must remain in separate bags or containers while transported.

- Proof of sex and tagging requirements remain with the meat until reaching a final destination.

If the carcass is transported away from the property of harvest, unused parts must be disposed of in a commercial trash service, returned to the property of harvest or buried at least three feet deep.

Harvested deer or deer heads may be taken to a commercial processor or taxidermist. The processor or taxidermist must properly dispose of

unused parts.

- * Increased Doe Days: Deer hunters in 43 counties in eastern Texas (Post Oak Savannah and Pineywoods ecoregions) are now allowed to take antlerless deer during the first 23 days of the season, up from 16 days.

- * Hunter Education Certificate/License: Always keep proof of a valid hunting license and hunter education certificate with you in the field, just in case you are checked by a game warden. In Texas, every hunter born on or after Sept. 1, 1971, is required to pass a state-approved hunter education course.

- * White-Tailed Deer Antler Restrictions: Applies in 117 counties. The restrictions limit hunters to two bucks, only one of which may have an inside spread of 13 inches or more. The second legal buck must have at least one unbranched antler. Reference the 2024-25 Texas Outdoor Annual to check laws and bag limits for your county.

- * Mule Deer Antler Restrictions: Applies in Andrews, Armstrong, Bailey, Briscoe, Castro, Childress, Cochran, Collingsworth, Cottle, Dawson, Donley, Floyd, Foard, Gaines, Hale, Hall, Hardeman, Hockley, Lamb, Lynn, Lubbock, Martin, Motley, Parmer, Randall, Swisher, Terry, Terrell, and Yoakum counties.

A legal buck deer is defined as a buck with an outside antler spread of the main beams of 20 inches or greater. Any buck with at least one unbranched antler (e.g., spike) is not legal to harvest, unless the outside spread of the main beams is at least 20 inches.

Matt Williams is a freelance writer based in Nacogdoches. He can be reached by email, mattwillwrite4u@yahoo.com.

PETS OF THE WEEK

Featuring local furry friends eligible for adoption & looking for loving homes!

Otto
Male
10 years old
Miniature Pinscher mix
Hi everyone, I'm Otto
First thing you'll notice with me is that I have the cutest under-bite/overbite combo you'll ever see! I absolutely adore people and get along well with other dogs, though cats are a bit of a mystery to me. I'm fully crate trained and house trained, but I prefer lounging freely around the house. Walking on a leash is a breeze for me, and car rides? Oh, I love them! I'd love to join a home where there's another doggie companion for me to hang out with, because I like friends. Ready to bring some extra love and fun into your life? Adopt me, and you won't be disappointed!
Please visit [LizzysHospice.com](#) or email us at [LizzysHospice@gmail.com](#) if you have any questions or would like to fill out an application.



Euliss
Male
13 years old
Terrier mix
Howdy, I'm Euliss
Everyone who meets me says I'm a cheerful boy who loves life. I enjoy car rides and walk well on a leash, so I'm great for apartments because I'm quiet and well-behaved. I can get a little excited around small dogs, but I calm down quickly and I love meeting new friends. I'm smart and really good at learning new tricks, so I'm a pretty fun friend to have. I'm neutered, vaccinated, house-trained, and hoping to find a loving foster or forever family who will love me and care for me.
Please visit [LizzysHospice.com](#) or email us at [LizzysHospice@gmail.com](#) if you have any questions or would like to fill out an application.



Pumpkin
Age: 18 mos.
Female
In the spirit of Halloween, we thought it was only fitting to feature Pumpkin, a 1.5-year-old, 22-pound pup with a personality as delightful as her name! Pumpkin is looking for a quiet home where her sweet nature and quirks can truly shine. Known for her excellent leash manners and love of snuggling up with her person, she makes a wonderful, loyal companion.
Pumpkin would thrive best in a serene home without other pets or young children, where she can enjoy a calm, consistent environment. While she loves being near her human, Pumpkin can feel unsure about being picked up and may experience some anxiety when left alone, so we believe her ideal match will be a patient, understanding adopter who can offer her the gentle, structured support she needs.
If you're ready to open your heart to a one-of-a-kind dog, come meet Pumpkin at our PAWS Kyle campus
For more information about Pumpkin or other animals available for adoption, visit: [pawsshelter.org](#)



How to Foster/Adopt a Lizzy's Animal Hospice Pup

Lizzy's desperately needs foster families and forever families for their sweet pups. Lizzy's is a 501c3 non-profit elder care / hospice for dogs 10+ years, large and small - most of which are healthy. Lizzy's also has healthy pups under 10 years. Please go to [lizzyshospice.com/adopt-or-foster](#) and click on the Apply Here button to submit an application. Lizzy's is quick to process applications and to respond to emails. Email [lizzyshospice@gmail.com](#) with any questions.

Universal Crossword

11/3 **THEMELESS SUNDAY 108** by Rafael Musa

- ACROSS

1 Versatile organic building block

9 Italian moped brand

14 "Could you repeat that?"

16 Suburban bars?

17 Greek philosopher in the lyrics to Taylor Swift's "So High School"

18 Incisors, e.g.

19 Light purple shade

20 Cornhole move

22 Seven, in French

23 Home project letters

24 Broke a fast

26 Color akin to khaki

28 "___ my last email ..."

29 ___-CIO
- 30 Chamomile, but not Earl Grey

32 Hodgepodge

35 Like moving boxes filled with books

36 Dwindle

37 Blue ___ Mountains

39 Gastropub servings

40 Joint covered by tube sock

42 Protective gear for graffiti artists

44 They encourage PDAs at baseball games

46 Winter hrs. in Santa Fe

47 Fitting

48 Gold, in Spanish

49 Prosecutors, for short

50 ___ meeting
- (school event)

53 Have on

55 (Keep scratching my chin, human!)

57 Vowel-shaped girder

59 "Hasta la vista"

61 "I messed up"

63 "Ish"

64 Metaphorical vehicle for an overly excited group

65 Liability's counterpart

66 Alliterative advertising adage

PREVIOUS PUZZLE ANSWER

C	A	T	S		M	L	A			I	T	C	H			
T	A	H	O	E		E	O	N	S		C	H	A	I		
A	R	E	W	E	R	E	A	D	Y		Y	A	N	K		
B	L	A	N	K	E	T	F	O	R	T		T	I	E		
S	A	D		E	S	C		R	U	E		M	T	S		
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E	R	G	O		S	O	O	N		T	A	P	E	R		
S	T	O	W			O	K	S			O	X	E	N		

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[www.upuzzles.com](#)

- gate

3 YouTuber Mariko, or author Bronte

4 Tempe neighbor

5 Spot with cappuccinos and calicos

6 Sense of self

7 Drink made with espresso and milk

8 Native Hawaiian Disney character

9 Big tub

10 Former partners

11 Speak out?

12 Personal annoyances

13 Cigarette butts' places

15 They're saved for rainy days

21 Cul-de-___

25 Letters before an online summary

27 "Pass"

29 Ice-skating jumps

30 Fathers, to toddlers

31 Sumptuous meal
- 32 Combo salon treatments

33 Blotches from a fountain pen

34 Person unlikely to keep a secret

36 2010 FIFA World Cup anthem by Shakira

38 Tennis player Raducanu

41 Earth-friendly prefix

43 Helps out

45 Artist hidden in "star power"

49 Arrange, as a shawl

50 Punishment-related

51 ___ Nadu (Indian state)

52 Churchgoers' cries

54 Was a passenger

56 "Wide Sargasso Sea" author Jean

58 Snoozefest

60 ACT alternative

62 U.S. state with the most counties: Abbr.

Want more puzzles? Check out the “Just Right Crossword Puzzles” books at [QuillDriverBooks.com](#)

WOMBANIA™

by PETER MARINACCI



“Wombania is about a family of Wombies who move in with their human relative and take over his home and his life. An all-ages comic, Wombania is a unique look at life, relationships, food, and technology, and how we struggle to cope with the fast-paced, ever-changing world in which we live.”

Community Calendar

Dripping Springs Farmers Market
November 6 & 13
Wednesdays
3 - 6 p.m.
Local producers offer produce, meats, and artisanal foods for purchase along with flowers, plants and hand-made crafts. Dripping Springs Ranch Park • 1042 Event Center Dr. • Dripping Springs, TX 78620.

Art Market at the Triangle
November 9
10 a.m. - 4 p.m.
Local artists selling a variety of art on Mercer Street. Sponsored by the Dripping Springs Art League and the Dripping Springs Parks & Community Services. Veterans Park • 140 E. Mercer St. • Dripping Springs, TX 78620

Pound House Farmstead Community Mondays
November 11
8 - 11 a.m.
Every Monday Sept. 16-Nov. 18, 2024, from 8am until 11am, Come walk, sit, play, read and just enjoy the peaceful and beautiful historic farmstead grounds. Tours are not available during this time. It's a great place for friends and family. Pound House Farmstead • 419B Founders Park Road • Dripping Springs, TX 78620

Driftwood Historical Conservation Society Monthly Meeting
November 12 • 6 p.m.
Monthly meeting of the Driftwood Historical Conservation Society. Come and learn about the latest news about Driftwood and meet your neighbors. Driftwood Community Center • 15112 FM 150 • Driftwood, TX 78619

Holiday Art Market
November 23
11 a.m. - 5 p.m.
Holiday Art Market with great vendors, good music and drink. Jester King Brewery • 13126 Fitzhugh Rd. • Austin, TX 78736

Vintage Market
December 6-8
10 a.m. - 4 p.m.
Vintage market is a shopping experience in time for your holiday gift-giving season. Live music, and food and drinks. Dripping Springs Ranch Park • 1042 Event Center Dr. • Dripping Springs, TX 78620.

Caliterra Hill Country Holiday Bazaar
December 14-15
11 a.m. - 6 p.m.
Grab your friends and shopping lists for this fun shopping experience. Local artists and vendors,

live music, food & drink. Caliterra Community Hall • 505 Wynnpage Dr. • Dripping Springs, TX 78620. (Next to LeMuse coffee shop)

LOCAL GOVERNMENT AND EDUCATION

City of Dripping Springs Public Meetings
The City of Dripping Springs welcomes residents and others doing business with the city to attend any of the public meetings below. Streaming option and meeting packets at: [cityofdrippingsprings.com](#). Meetings are held at City Hall Council Chambers • 511 Mercer St. • Dripping Springs, TX 78620.

November 7 • 4 p.m.
Historic Preservation Commission Regular Meeting

November 12 • 6:30 p.m.
Founders Day Commission Meeting

November 13 • 11 a.m.
Historic Preservation Commission Regular Meeting

November 18 • 3:30 p.m.
Transportation Committee Meeting

November 19 • 6 p.m.
City Council Regular Meeting

Hays County Commissioners Court Regular Meeting
November 19 • 9 a.m.
This is a regular meeting of the Hays County Commissioners Court, the governing body of the county. This group of elected officials and staff oversees the functions and budget for all county-related business. Hays County Historic Courthouse • 111 E. San Antonio St. • San Marcos, Texas. Streaming option available at [hayscountytexas.com](#)

DRIPPING SPRINGS INDEPENDENT SCHOOL DISTRICT

Dripping Springs Board of Trustees Monthly Meeting
November 18 • 6 p.m.
Live meeting of the DSISD Board of Trustees which sets policy, agenda and strategic planning for the Dripping Springs school district. Agendas and live streaming option available at [dsisdtexas.us](#). Live meeting at the Center for Learning & Leadership • 300 Sportsplex Dr. • Dripping Springs, TX 78620.



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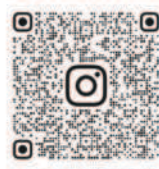




SHOP 1893

Shop 1893 for San Marcos' coolest selection of vintage, collectibles, antiques, resale, maker supplies, upcycled and original creations & more!

More than 3-dozen unique vendors



Hours: Wed-Fri: Noon-5pm
Sat: 10am - 3pm

The Price Center
222 W San Antonio Street
Downtown San Marcos

Hot 'n Juicy Explained



At Wendy's our hamburgers are Hot 'n Juicy because they're made from 100% pure beef, pattied fresh daily, never frozen and cooked just when you order them. Never pre-wrapped, never held under lights, they're freshly made, just for you!

Our hamburger buns are fresh baked because fresh tastes best

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BUSINESS



Ambassadors from the Chamber of Commerce and friends gathered on Oct 29 at the Caliterra community center to celebrate AG Wealth Advisors and its founder Al Gonzales with a ribbon cutting ceremony and reception.

PHOTO KEN VARGAS

Dripping Springs Chamber celebrates AG Wealth Advisors with ribbon cutting

Ken Vargas
Managing Editor

Ambassadors from the Dripping Springs Chamber of Commerce gathered at the Caliterra clubhouse on Oct. 29 to celebrate a ribbon-cutting ceremony to officially welcome Al Gonzales and his firm, AG Wealth Advisors, to the community. Gonzales, is the founder and chief financial planner at AG Wealth Advisors, with more than 19 years of experience in the financial services industry. His Dripping Springs-based firm specializes in life insurance for families. As an independent financial advisor, Gonzales partners with LPL Financial, one of the largest independent advisor broker-dealer platforms. “They handle my back-office operations, trades, and are the custodian of my clients’ portfolios. As

AG Wealth Advisors’ founder, I work with my clients to create financial solutions from resources available on the LPL platform for themselves and their estates,” Gonzales said. Originally from New York City, Gonzales and his family lived in Northwest Austin for 32 years before relocating to Dripping Springs in 2019 with his wife and three adult children. “My wife and I wanted to live in a small-town community where we could grow and be known in the area. We moved to Northwest Austin in 1987 and wanted to regain that small-town lifestyle when we came here in 2019,” he said. Gonzales earned a Certificate of Financial Planning from the University of Texas at Austin in 2021 and achieved the Certified Plan Fiduciary Advisor designation in 2023. He also holds a bach-

elor’s degree in international economics from Boston University and an MBA in technology management from the University of Phoenix. AG Wealth Advisors operates without a storefront; advisors work from home offices and meet with clients in a secure online environment, such as Zoom. This unique setup made the ribbon-cutting ceremony unconventional, as the Chamber celebrated a business that connects with clients remotely rather than at a physical location. Active in the local business community, Gonzales serves on the Dripping Springs Chamber of Commerce board of directors and as an ambassador for the Austin Chamber of Commerce. AG Wealth Advisors was recently named “Best Financial Advisor” in the 2024 Best of Dripping Springs Awards, chosen by readers of the Drip-



AL GONZALES

ping Springs Century News. “I put myself out there by becoming involved with many areas of the Chamber. My business is all about relationships and trust. I lead by example, re-igniting the Ambassador’s program and engaging other Chamber members. I lead the monthly Chamber networking event, Coffee Connection, and I’m now on the Chamber board listening to members’ needs,” Gonzales said. He encourages all businesses and solo entrepreneurs to join the Chamber, calling it a “great way to develop

friendships, potential clients, mentors, and engage with the community as a resource by giving your time, talents, and treasures.” A familiar face at local events, Gonzales is known for his support of area business meetings and community gatherings. In his free time, he enjoys traveling, attending sports events, and reading. Gonzales said his ideal client is someone looking to minimize their tax consequences and remain comfortably retired. “Having a financial plan helps individuals, families, or businesses understand the opportunities they can pursue in retirement. Traveling, buying a second home, or creating a legacy for future family members are some of the goals my clients have,” he said. For more information about AG Wealth Advisors, visit agwealthadvisors.com or call 512-877-8764.

Texas named top state for business in 2024

Staff Reports

Site Selection magazine has named Texas the top state for business climate in the U.S., marking the second consecutive year the state has claimed the title. In the magazine's November 2024 issue, Texas topped a list of the top 25 state business climates, followed by Georgia, North Carolina, Virginia, and Florida. Rankings were based on a 14-metric index that included a survey of corporate real estate executives and site selectors, corporate facility investment data from the Conway Projects Database, and various external sources measuring factors such as taxation, infrastructure, tech employment, and startup ecosystems. Ohio, Arizona, Indiana, Illinois, and Michigan round out the top 10. Among the top 10 states, Florida saw the

most significant rise, jumping from No. 8 to No. 5. Arizona moved to No. 7 from No. 11, and Indiana climbed six spots to No. 8. The executive survey component of the rankings placed Texas in the No. 1 position, followed by North Carolina, Tennessee, Virginia, and Georgia. “Texas again leads all states with the top business climate in America for the second year in a row,” Gov. Greg Abbott said in a statement. “As the eighth-largest economy in the world, Texas is the No. 1 destination for businesses to come here, succeed here, and create more good-paying jobs for hardworking Texans. Texas offers advantages no other state can claim: a business-friendly climate with no corporate or personal income tax, a highly skilled, diverse workforce, easy access to global markets, robust infrastructure, and a reasonable regu-

latory environment that allows businesses and entrepreneurs to thrive. I thank Site Selection magazine for recognizing Texas as the nation’s leader, and I congratulate economic development professionals across this great state for their work to keep Texas the economic envy of America.” In addition to ranking No. 1 overall, Texas also led all states in the survey of corporate real estate executives and site selectors, a key data point in Site Selection’s annual Top Business Climate index. Other factors that contributed to Texas’ top ranking included the number of job-creating relocation and expansion projects in the state, as well as Texas’ pro-growth approach, investments in workforce development and infrastructure, access to technology and tech talent, and a stable regulatory environment.

Central Texas economy continues to enjoy strong employment growth

Staff Reports

In September 2024, the unadjusted unemployment rate in the Rural Capital Area of Central Texas decreased to 3.5 percent, according to data released by the Texas Workforce Commission (TWC). This means that 3.5 percent of the workforce in the nine-county Workforce Solutions Rural Capital Area (WSRCA) were actively seeking employment, totaling 24,503 residents. Additionally, there were more than 21,546 job openings available online across various industries. Since September 2023, the local labor force has grown by 19,526 residents, with 18,465 of them successfully finding em-

ployment within the area. In September, the unemployment rates in the WSRCA counties were as follows:

- Blanco County: 2.8 percent (down from 3.0 percent in August)
- Burnet County: 3.1 percent (down from 3.4 percent in August)
- Hays County: 3.4 percent (down from 3.7 percent in August)
- Lee County: 3.2 percent (down from 3.5 percent in August)
- Williamson County: 3.6 percent (down from 3.8 percent in August)
- Bastrop County: 3.5 percent (down from 3.8 percent in August)
- Fayette County: 3.2 percent (down from 3.6 percent in August)

Business Calendar of Events

Chamber Coffee Connector
November 6 • 8:15 a.m.
Morning Business Networking for Dripping Springs Chamber of Commerce members. Please bring plenty of business cards to share. Non-member guests may attend once before joining and must register through Chamber staff by contacting amanda@dstxchamber.com. Dripping Springs Distilling • 5330 Bell Springs Rd. • Dripping Springs, TX 78620

Rotary Club of Dripping Springs Regular Meeting
November 6 • Noon
From the earliest days of the organization Rotarians have been concerned with promoting high ethical standards in their professional lives and serving the community. Come visit to learn more. Flores Mexican Restaurant • 2440 E HWY 290 • Dripping Springs TX 78620

Monkees of Dripping Springs Ribbon Cutting
Nov 8 • Noon
Join us for a ribbon cutting and grand opening of Monkees, a high end women’s boutique is now open in Dripping Springs. The store offers clothing, accessories, gifts and shoes through a mix of selected brands and designers. Come on out and help us welcome them into the community. 136 Drifting Wind Run #121 • Dripping Springs, TX 78620

Community Day for Nonprofits
November 13 8 a.m. - 5 p.m.
Dripping Springs Community Day is a full day of speakers sharing their expertise on nonprofit topics that affect your organization’s growth, finances and governance. Designed exclusively for nonprofit board members, staff and volunteers. \$50 fee if registered by Nov 8. \$60 after that deadline. Contact the Dripping Springs Chamber of Commerce at 512-858-7000 or email info@dstxchamber.com. Deep Eddy Vodka Tasting Room • 2250 E. HWY 290 • Dripping Springs, TX 78620

Franchise Expo
November 14 & 15 10 a.m. - 4 p.m.
Meet with 125 of the hottest franchise brands at every investment level and industry. Several workshops and seminars offered. FREE admission. Go to franchiseexpo.com/austin for more information and to register. Austin Hotel • 9721 Arboretum Blvd. • Austin, TX 78759

Have a business networking meeting or event to share? Send your listing in 50 words or less to dscenturynews@gmail.com using the subject line "Business Calendar Notice" at least 10 days before your event date.

August)
• Caldwell County: 3.6 percent (down from 4.1 percent in August)
• Llano County: 3.4 percent (down from 3.9 percent in August)

In comparison to the statewide unemployment rate, which decreased to 4.1 percent in September, the region’s unemployment figures were lower. Similarly, the national unemployment rate dropped to 3.9 percent.

SPORTS



Tiger Marching Band advances to State Championship

The Dripping Springs HS Tiger Band punched their ticket to the UIL 6A State Marching Contest on Saturday on Nov. 2 at Heroes Stadium in San Antonio. Following a preliminary performance in the rain and a weather delay, Dripping Springs delivered its final performance at 10:45 p.m. to be named one of five Area D bands to advance to the state competition. The Tiger Band will compete at the UIL State Marching Contest on Nov. 11 at the Alamodome in San Antonio. The band will perform second out of 40 participating bands at 8:45 a.m.. The 14 bands advancing to finals will compete Tuesday, Nov. 12 beginning at 2:15 p.m..

PHOTO DSISD

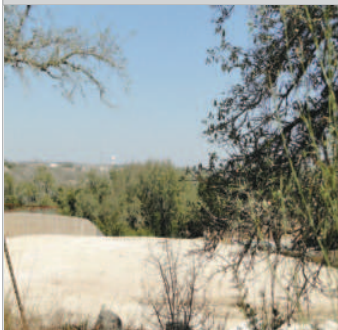


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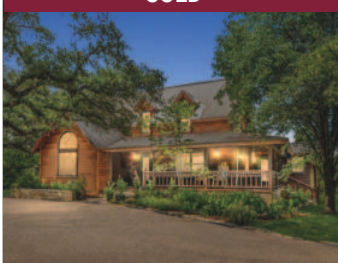
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Dripping Springs Tigers' Christa Wilburn (#6) leaps for a kill shot against Vista Ridge in Monday's first-round match of their Bi-District playoff. The Lady Tigers won the match in three sets 25-23, 25-15 and 25-13 at Austin's Burger Center to advance to the Area round. Last week, the Lady Tigers clinched their district title with a 12-0 record in district play.

PHOTO KEN VARGAS

Lady Tigers Volleyball finish regular season

Carl Waits
Sports Reporter

The final district game was with second place finisher Austin High. It was another excellent contest to prepare Dripping Springs for the upcoming playoffs. It is a game that will likely be a rematch later in the playoffs as both teams will be competing in D2. In this final match Dripping Springs outlasted Aus-

tin 3-1 (25-23, 23-25, 25-21, 25-16). The Lady Tigers finished the regular season 44-2 and an undefeated record of 12-0 in district play. Tiger stats: Kills (62): Henley Anderson 24, Riley Certain 15, Christa Wilburn 13; Aces (7): Certain 3, Lourdes Frontera, Callie Krueger, Wilburn, Anderson; Blks (5): Sydney Lund 2, Eloise Roffers, Ashley Euston, Anderson; Digs (55): Krueger 14,

Wilburn 12, Anderson 11, Frontera 10; Assts (61): Frontera 34, Lund 24, Krueger 2; Receiving (67): Krueger 24, Wilburn 18, Certain 15, Anderson 9. Season leaders: Kills: Anderson 503, Wilburn 308; Aces: Krueger 61, Anderson 60; Blks: Euston 32, Lund 27; Digs: Krueger 464, Wilburn 318; Assts: Frontera 724, Lund 438; Receiving: Krueger 533, Anderson 435.