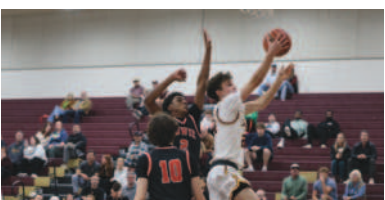




MAKE ART WITH
HOLIDAY TRASH:
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TIGERS WIN
OPENER
PAGE 8

Dripping Springs Century News

33rd Year No. 52

December 26, 2024

drippingspringsnews.com

75 cents

Land for RM150 extension donated to county

Shannon West
Managing Editor

The Hays County Commissioners Court unanimously authorized the execution of an agreement between Hays County and Blanco River Ranch Properties, LP regard-

ing the donation of property to the county for the Yarrington Road extension project at the regularly scheduled meeting. The project will include green space and walking trails in addition to the new road that will connect the roundabout near Hays City

Store to Interstate 35. Hays County Commissioner Lon Shell explained that the project, which has been in the Hays County Transportation Plan for a “long time,” involves the extension of FM 110 and Yarrington Road west from I-35 to connect

with RM 150 in Kyle. “This item concerns a good chunk of right-of-way needed for that road. The landowner... is willing to donate that right-of-way to the county, and that’s what this agreement would allow,” Shell said. “The value of that property

is immense, as we all know, and it is a lot of right-of-way. And it is a good chunk of that extension. I do want to thank the landowner.” Shell said the owner will be replating the right-of-way and Hays County will reimburse them. The landowner would like the county

to support them if they wish to create a Public Improvement District. According to the Texas Real Estate Source website, Texas “state statute grants cities and counties the authority to levy assessments against proper-

SEE **DONATION** PAGE 6

SANTA BABY



Santa poses for pictures with preemies in the NICU at Ascension Seton Hays

Santa Claus stopped by Ascension Seton Hays to bring holiday cheer to parents and their babies in the neonatal intensive care unit. Babies were dressed in holiday outfits for their very first picture with Santa. ASH is a Level II NICU, providing complex care for newborns who are experiencing difficulties, such as a baby arriving sooner than expected, after birth. More photos on page 6.

PHOTO SUBMITTED BY SETON HAYS

DSISD Board approves new attendance zones

Staff Reports

The Dripping Springs ISD Board of Trustees has approved new attendance zones for elementary and middle schools, effective in the 2025-26 school year. The changes account for the addition of Elementary School #6, currently under construction in the Headwaters neighborhood, and the expansion of Sycamore Springs Middle School to accommodate 1,200 students, up from its current capacity of 850.

The adjustments aim to balance enrollment districtwide. They will alleviate overcrowding at Dripping Springs Elementary and Walnut Springs Elemen-

tary while increasing student numbers at underutilized campuses on the district’s east side, including Cypress Springs, Rooster Springs and Sycamore Springs. The middle school zoning changes will also shift more students to Sycamore Springs to help manage the projected growth at Dripping Springs Middle School.

To develop the new boundaries, DSISD formed an Attendance Zoning Committee in August 2024. The committee, made up of parents, staff and community members, considered several factors, including optimizing facility use, delaying the need for additional school construc-

SEE **DSISD** PAGE 3



The Hays County Commissioners Court honored both Sheriff Gary Cutler and Chief Mike Davenport as they celebrate their upcoming retirements after years running the Hays County Sheriff’s Office. PHOTOS COURTESY OF HAYS COUNTY

Sheriff Cutler, Chief Davenport celebrate retirement

Staff Reports

Hays County Sheriff Gary Cutler and Chief Mike Davenport were honored Thursday af-

ternoon during a retirement celebration hosted by the Hays County Sheriff’s Office.

Cutler, who has served as the county’s

top law enforcement official since his election in November 2010, retires with over 50 years of experience in law enforcement. Under his leadership,

the Hays County Sheriff’s Office grew to employ approximately 500 civilian and commissioned staff.

A graduate of Sam Houston State Univer-

sity with a degree in criminal justice, Cutler began his career in 1974 with the Travis County Sheriff’s Office. Over 26 years there, he rose to the

rank of captain, overseeing key areas such as criminal investigations, narcotics, SWAT and evidence manage-

SEE **RETIREMENT** PAGE 2

Five-Day Forecast

Thursday	Friday	Saturday	Sunday	Monday
High: 75 Low: 49 70% Chance of Rain	High: 74 Low: 51 Mostly Sunny	High: 73 Low: 44 20% Chance of Rain	High: 72 Low: 50 Sunny	High: 78 Low: 55 Sunny

OBITUARIES

Sofia T. “Sofie” Rendon

April 28, 1946 — December 3, 2024



SOFIA T. RENDON

It is with great sadness that we announce the passing of Sofia T. Rendon, aged 78, of Dripping Springs, TX, on 12/3/2024. She passed in the comfort of her home surrounded by family. The family extends its heartfelt thanks to the caregivers, nurses, and friends who supported Sofie in her final days.

Sofia, lovingly known as Sofie, was born on April 28, 1946 in Raymondville, TX to Jose and Francisca Longoria Torres.

As a devoted wife and loving mother, Sofie was known for being hard working, kind, and ready to lend a hand. She was loved and respected by all who knew her. Sofie loved taking care of others. Sofie was a pillar within her church. Her love for the Lord was shown through her service to the community. She supported her community with her early work in the

school’s cafeteria as well as detailed care of community facilities and the homes of many.

Sofie was preceded in death by Father: Jose Torres, Mother: Francisca Torres, Brothers: Joe Torres, Ramiro Torres, Juan Torres, Mike Torres, and granddaughter: Madison Barnett. She is survived by her husband: Hilario Rendon, daughters: Rebecca Garza, Rachel Gonzalez (Alejandro Gonzalez), Rita Walker, and Rosario Rendon Preciado, numerous grandchildren and great-grandchildren, Brothers: Francisco Torres, and Rey Torres, Sisters: Maria Nelda Torres, Eduvina Ochoa, and Dora Rivera, as well as her many nieces and nephews.

Family and friends are invited to the Rosary and Mass beginning at 9 am, Friday, January 3, 2025, which will be held at St. Martin de Porres Church in Dripping Springs, TX. There will be a reception at 11 am and a burial will follow at St. Mary’s in Wimberley, TX at 1:30pm.

Sofia T. Rendon will be remembered for her compassion, strong will, and golden heart, and will be greatly missed by all who knew and loved her.

How to donate to pets in Hays County this holiday season

Staff Reports

Wondering where you can donate to pets in need this holiday season? Many local animal shelters and community pets could use essential supplies to stay warm and comfortable throughout the winter. Here is a list of shelters and supply drives in Hays County to benefit people and pets: There are several pet supply drives upcoming in Hays County.

HAPPY HOWLIDAYS PET SUPPLY DRIVE

The Hays County Pet Resource, Education and Research Center is collecting donations for their end of year food distribution event to provide essential items for families in need. Accepted donations for cats and dogs include dry and wet food, toys, blankets, treats, grooming supplies, leashes, collars, bowls and accessories.

Donations can be dropped off at the following locations during business hours:

- San Marcos Chamber of Commerce
- Pets and Moore
- Beyond Grooming
- Kissing Tree

- Hays County Health Department
- Hays County Tax Appraisal Office
- Buda Public Library
- Wimberley Public Library
- Dripping Springs Library
- Stay N Play Pet Ranch

COMMUNITY ACTION PET SUPPLY DRIVE

The San Marcos Youth Task Force is collecting donations for the San Marcos Regional Animal Shelter through Dec. 13, including wet or dry kitten and puppy food, toys, laundry detergent, cleaning supplies, pet shampoo, blankets and beds. Donations can be dropped off at the Community Action Administration Office at the Village of San Marcos. SMRAS also accepts donations at the shelter 24/7 in the blue bins located outside.

WIMBERLEY ADOPTION GROUP AND RESCUE

WAG accepts gently used towels, flat sheets, cleaning supplies, collars, leashes, harnesses and dog beds of all sizes. Items can be dropped off at WAG’s thrift store, Treasures on Twelve, during business hours.

PAWS OF CENTRAL TEXAS

The Green at Plum Creek apartment complex is accepting donations for PAWS of Central Texas Animal Shelter and donations can be dropped off in the main office. PAWS is in need of dish soap, paper towels, blankets, cat toys, dry and wet dog food, dog safe peanut butter, rubber dog toys, cat litter and wet kitten food. Donations can also be dropped off at PAWS Kyle and Dripping Springs locations.

RESCUE PAC BUDA

Healthy Pet store in Kyle is hosting a giving tree during the month of December benefiting Rescue PAC. Shop shelter pets wish lists and receive 20% off any donated item. Accepted donations include food, treats, enrichment toys and medical supplies.

PREVENT A LITTER

PALS is accepting pet food donations for their December 21 food distribution in San Marcos. Donations of wet and dry dog and cat food can be dropped off directly at PALS during or outside of business hours.

For more information or interview requests, please contact pr@austinpetsalive.org

Elementary students compete at UIL academic contest

Staff Reports

More than 250 Dripping Springs ISD elementary students competed at the UIL Academic District Contest on Saturday, Dec. 7 at Sycamore Springs Middle School. The top three finishers in each event are listed below.

Chess Puzzles (2nd Grade)

- 1st: Charles Naquin, CSE
2nd: Rish Surti, SSE
3rd: Rowan Morris, RSE

Chess Puzzles (3rd Grade)

- 1st: Avish Parikh, RSE
2nd: Oliver Godard, RSE
3rd: Aaryav Karthikeyan, CSE

Chess Puzzles (4th Grade)

- 1st: Duncan Vallee, DSE
2nd: Wolfgang Benites, WSE
3rd: Aaron Richards, WSE

Chess Puzzles (5th Grade)

- 1st: Ryan Uppal, RSE
2nd: Sawyer Freed, WSE
3rd: Ben Austin, CSE

Creative Writing (2nd Grade)

- 1st: Evie Chang, DSE
2nd: Elsie Paxton, SSE
3rd: Clara Boehm, CSE

Maps, Graphs & Charts (5th Grade)

- 1st: Shrihan Karthikeyan, CSE
2nd: Elijah Norden, RSE
3rd: Jack Urban, CSE

Music Memory (2nd Grade)

- 1st: Chloe Comai, RSE
2nd: Kennedy Halbrook, RSE
3rd: Elise Stansell, WSE

Music Memory (3rd Grade)

- 1st: Caroline Dietz, CSE
2nd: Carys Gilligan, RSE
3rd: Blake Jones, SSE

Music Memory (4th Grade)

- T1st: Bethany Hoggatt, WSE
T1st: Bobby Duchamp, RSE
T1st: Stiles Shevlin, SSE
T1st: Hailey Jimenez, SSE

Music Memory (5th Grade)

- 1st: Henry Naylor, SSE
2nd: Ava Hammer, SSE
3rd: Jalen Henry, SSE

Number Sense (4th Grade)

- 1st: Aarav Desai, SSE
2nd: Ranjith Chitturi, WSE
3rd: Anderson Haire, WSE

Number Sense (5th Grade)

- 1st: Ian Matar, RSE
2nd: Vivan Kapadia, RSE
3rd: Margaux Raguét, WSE

Number Sense (6th Grade Level)

- 1st: Hudson Villoria, RSE
2nd: Hunter Wottrich, RSE

Oral Reading (4th Grade)

- 1st: Maanya Koluguri, DSE
2nd: Zoe Akavan, DSE
3rd: Eden Knox, DSE

Oral Reading (5th Grade)

- 1st: Bronson Smith, WSE
2nd: Stone Nelson, DSE

- 3rd: Margot Labit, SSE

Ready Writing (3rd Grade)

- 1st: Samuel Robinson, CSE
2nd: Abhi Amerneny, SSE
3rd: Zoey Dinh, RSE

Ready Writing (4th Grade)

- 1st: Grace Fox, RSE
2nd: Olivia Lussier, CSE
3rd: Hattie Miller, SSE

Ready Writing (5th Grade)

- 1st: Genevieve Paxton, SSE
2nd: Elin Logan, SSE
3rd: Madison McCall, WSE

Spelling (3rd Grade)

- 1st: Ananya Vishnubhatla, SSE
2nd: Anika Pendse, SSE
3rd: Elliott Ogden, RSE

Spelling (4th Grade)

- 1st: Nishtha Ramrakhyan, RSE
2nd: Emily Friesenhahn, DSE
3rd: Fiona Wilburn, WSE

Spelling (5th Grade)

- 1st: Avanti Joshi, RSE
2nd: Landry Gilbert, WSE

Storytelling (2nd Grade)

- 1st: Sumedha Kamatham, DSE
2nd: Ayda Harrell, DSE
3rd: Bellamie Koontz, RSE

Storytelling (3rd Grade)

- 1st: Ari Norden, RSE
2nd: Elizabeth Kelly, RSE
3rd: Kyler Kaspar, SSE

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ART BEAT

Presented by the Dripping Springs Art League

Make Art with Holiday Trash!

Sabrena Wright
Dripping Springs Art League

Although recycling habits and eco-friendly holiday options are more common than in years past, holiday traditions present stubborn recycling challenges. Foil, glittery or plastic-coated wrapping paper, ribbons and bows, weary globe ornaments, and faded fake flowers or evergreen sprigs on the wreath – none of these can be recycled. Before sending these holiday castoffs to their final resting place in the dump why not repurpose them in an abstract art project? Acrylic painting, sketching and mixed media are great plays to “play with your trash.”

Acrylic painters are always on the hunt for unique ways to make marks. These can shape an artist’s work into a recognizable style. Why not use holiday trash to create a new and interesting look? There are also plenty of opportunities to experiment with collage and mixed media styles along the way! Foil, imagery and patterns off paper and cards, or



tissue paper and flattened paper raffia all can create interesting images.

For example, in the first picture, I used several techniques. Wrapping paper was taped

down inside a shallow tilted cardboard box. The background was lightly shaded with pastel chalks. Small globe ornaments were dipped in green and red paint, then rolled

one at a time across the paper. A broken snowman hat was dipped in gold paint to make the dots. A holiday card was used to create a stencil for the leaves. An evergreen sprig was

dipped in pearlescent paint and allowed to flick the highlights. Finally, the faded silk poinsettia flowers were painted and glued to the surface. One word of advice: plastic coated wrapping paper does buckle if it gets too wet, so several thin layers of acrylic are better than one thick layer. It also helps to “stretch” the paper during drying by leaving it taped to a firm surface.

In the second image, I used a brayer to apply black paint to the back of wrapping paper. After drying the background, blue and white tissue paper as well as painted shapes of cut from wrapping paper and cards were affixed. Gesso was used to glue things down. After this step dried completely, a topcoat of gesso was applied. Again, thin coats yield better results. The dried work was fairly rigid even though I was using a really lightweight wrapping paper for the base.

As for those mixed media enthusiasts out there, not only can you use all of the above techniques for your work, but you can also create assemblage. Wrapping paper can be torn, layered, crumpled and glued to armatures to create a shape and to add texture.

You may have to lightly sand shiny surfaces for good glue and paint adherence. (Do a small test to see.) Arrange and adhere the larger objects such as the bows, globes, fake flowers and the evergreen sprigs to an armature and spray the entire object with auto paint primer. From there you can repaint with a monochrome color, a more complex multicolor, or a spray metallic paint. (I like a shiny mirror finish.)

The more you think about the possibilities, the more ideas will pop up in your head. That’s where the wrapping paper comes in handy again. Usually, the flip side of unrecycled paper is unfinished, slightly rough. It is great for making sketches of your ideas. Cut out sketchbook size pieces from the used wrapping paper and bind them together to make a sketchbook that you can carry with you.

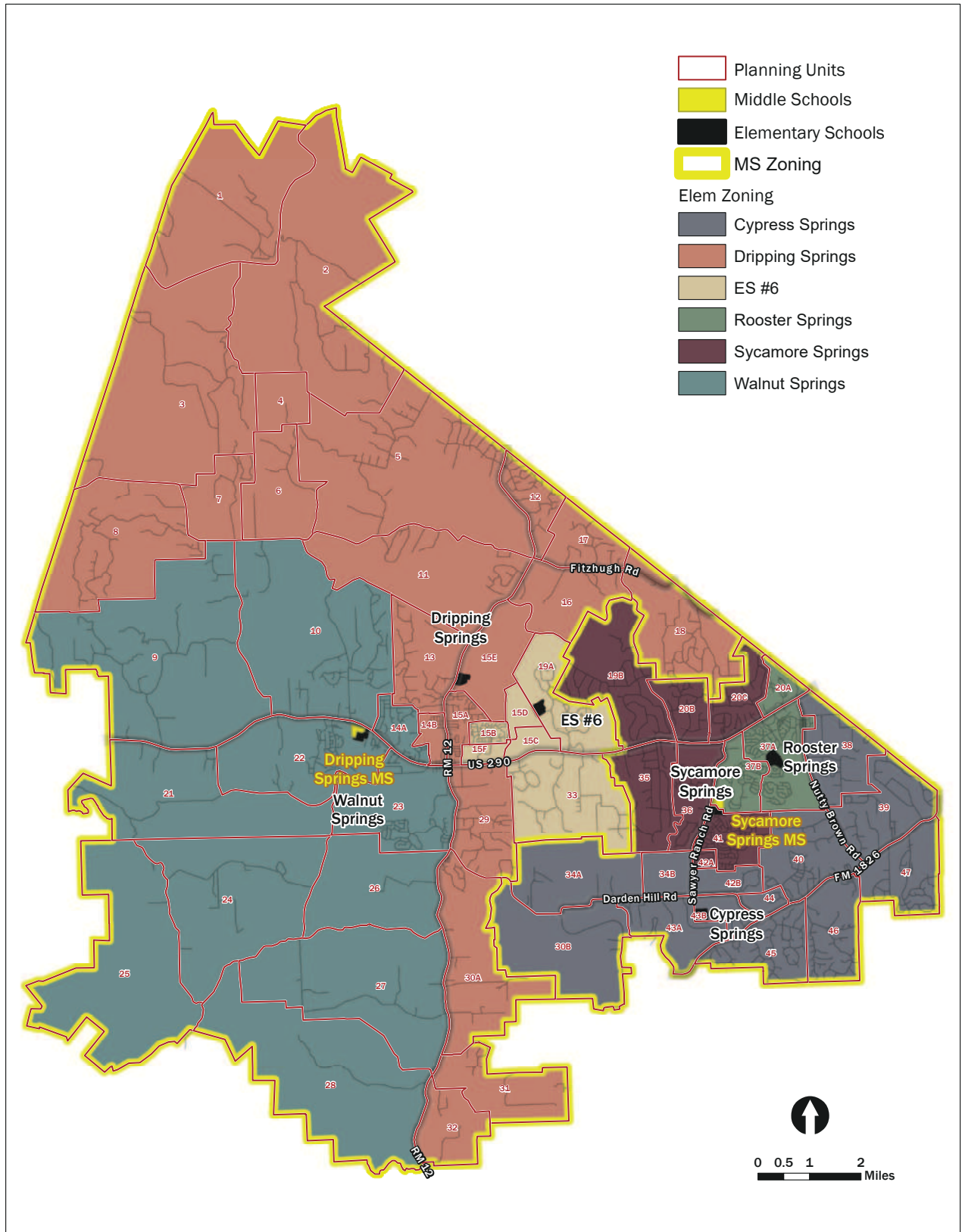
This holiday season as you stare at the unopened gifts, I hope that your imagination is filled with the thrill of what may be inside, as well as the plans you have for the holiday packing wrapped around it.

Cheers and have a wonderful holiday season!

DSISD FROM PG. 1

Elementary & Middle School Attendance Zones

Effective 2025-26 School Year



tion where possible, keeping subdivisions together whenever feasible and zoning students to the closest campus. The committee also worked to

minimize how often students are rezoned by anticipating future attendance boundary changes.

The district plans to establish a grandfa-

thering process to allow some students affected by rezoning to remain at their current schools. Guidelines for this process will be announced by Janu-

ary 31, 2025. These changes reflect the district’s efforts to manage its rapid growth while ensuring equitable enrollment and efficient use of resources.

Food Bank among recipients of \$250,000 in health equality grants

Staff Reports

The Hays County Food Bank is one organization among the beneficiaries of \$250,000 in funding awarded by the Fayette Community Foundation’s Rural Community Health Fund in partnership with St. David’s Foundation. The funds, aimed at advancing health equity in rural Central Texas, were distributed to multiple organizations serving communities across the region.

The RCHF, established to address health disparities in underserved areas, collaborates with St. David’s Foundation to align funding with the unique needs of local communities. Entities in Hays County received 42% of the total funding, with an additional 5% allocated to programs spanning multiple counties, including Hays.

Central Texas organizations receiving grants include the Hays County Food Bank, Occupy Campus Ministry, Breaking Bread Outreach Ministries, Outsiders Anonymous and Hays Cares, among others. These groups address issues ranging from food insecurity to homelessness, mental

health, and emergency assistance.

David Porter III, an at-large member of the RCHF Advisory Council, emphasized the transformative impact of the funding. “The impact of the funding thus far has proven to be transformative and uplifting in many regards. Those organizations receiving the grants have been inspired to continue to serve those in need. The grant acknowledges and sheds light on their long-time dedication and devotion to the wellbeing of each other...’neighbors truly caring for neighbors’”, Porter said.

The RCHF prioritizes advancing health equity through strategies designed to lower barriers to funding. Organizations without a 501(c)(3) status are encouraged to apply with a fiscal sponsor, with additional support available to help applicants find fiscal partners if needed.

This funding cycle demonstrates the commitment to addressing health disparities in rural Texas and supporting organizations that provide essential services in historically underserved areas.

For a full list of grant recipients, visit the faycofoundation.com/rchf.

SEEKING RENTAL SPACE

Established local business is seeking a small office space to lease. Please call Mandy at 601-504-4545 or email mfarrow@mosercommmedia.com

Dripping Springs

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Public Notice

NOTICE OF ENACTMENT
CITY OF WIMBERLEY
ORDINANCE NO 2024-27

AN ORDINANCE OF THE CITY COUNCIL OF THE CITY OF WIMBERLEY, TEXAS AMENDING APPENDIX A – CITY OF WIMBERLEY FEE SCHEDULE; REPEALING ANY ORDINANCE OR PARTS OF ORDINANCES IN DIRECT CONFLICT WITH THE FEE SCHEDULE AND PROVIDING FOR FINDINGS OF FACT, SAVINGS, SEVERABILITY, REPEALERS, EFFECTIVE DATE, AND PROPER NOTICE AND MEETING.

Public Notice

NOTICE OF ENACTMENT
CITY OF WIMBERLEY
ORDINANCE NO 2024-26

AN ORDINANCE OF THE CITY COUNCIL OF THE CITY OF WIMBERLEY, TEXAS AMENDING CHAPTER 11, TRAFFIC AND VEHICLES OF THE CITY OF WIMBERLEY CODE OF ORDINANCES, BY ADDING ARTICLE 11.06 – VEHICLES FOR HIRE AND ARTICLE 11.07 – HORSE DRAWN CARRIGES; AND PROVIDING FOR FINDINGS OF FACT, SAVINGS, SEVERABILITY, REPEALERS, EFFECTIVE DATE, AND PROPER NOTICE AND MEETING.

Public Notice

NO. 24-0495-P

IN THE ESTATE OF
ROBERT P. RISSER, JR.,
DECEASED
§
IN THE COUNTY COURT
OF
HAYS COUNTY, TEXAS

NOTICE OF PUBLIC SALE

In accordance with the Texas property code, Chapter 59, RightSpace Storage - Wimberley, 16955 Ranch Road 12, Wimberley, TX, 78676, will conduct a public auction to satisfy a landlord's lien. Units will be sold to the highest bidder online at Lockerfox.com. Seller reserves the right to withdraw any unit or not accept any bid at time of sale. Sale will be held online at Lockerfox.com starting on or before Thursday January 09, 2025 at 10:00 am and bidding will close on or after Thursday January 16, 2025 at 10:00 am. General description of contents: general household/ personal goods/other contents. Names of tenants as they appear on the lease:

Gerardo Martinez

Nancy Guzman

Joshua Poole

Tenants may redeem their goods for full payment with a money order or cashier's check only up to time of auction. Call

RightSpace Storage - Wimberley at (512) 722-3296

NOTICE OF ENACTMENT
CITY OF WIMBERLEY
ORDINANCE NO 2024-25

AN ORDINANCE OF THE CITY COUNCIL OF THE CITY OF WIMBERLEY, TEXAS AMENDING SECTION 9.03.225 - HISTORIC PRESERVATION OVERLAY DISTRICT; HD (HISTORIC DISTRICT) HL (HISTORIC LANDMARKS) OF THE WIMBERLEY CODE OF ORDINANCES, PROVIDING FOR FINDINGS OF FACT, SAVINGS, SEVERABILITY, REPEALERS, EFFECTIVE DATE, AND PROPER NOTICE AND MEETING.

NOTICE TO CREDITORS

Notice is hereby given that original Letters Testamentary for the Estate of Robert P. Risser, Jr., Deceased, were issued on December 17, 2024, in Cause No. 24-0495-P, pending in the County Court at Law of Hays County, Texas, to: Janet Lynn Risser.

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: Joseph J. Malone
Attorney at Law
Stevens & Malone, PLLC
P.O. Box 727
Wimberley, Texas 78676

DATED the 17th day of December 2024.

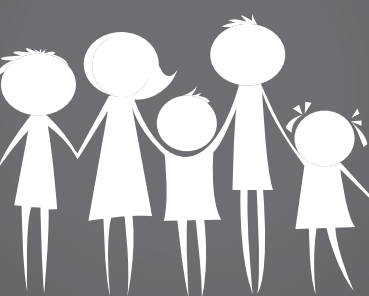
/s/Joseph J. Malone
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NOTICE TO CREDITORS

Notice is hereby given that Letters Testamentary were issued on December 12, 2024, to Susan Gay Pfeiffer as Independent Executor of the Estate of Elizabeth J. Bryan, Deceased, which is being administered under Cause No. 24-0505-P in County Court At Law No. 1 of Hays County, Texas. All persons having claims against this Estate are required to present the claims within the time and in the manner prescribed by law; claims may be presented to the Independent Executor and should be addressed as follows:

Estate of Elizabeth J. Bryan
c/o Susan Pfeiffer
240 Lanier Ranch Road
Unit B
Driftwood, Texas 78619

Dated: December 18, 2024.

/s/ SUSAN GAY PFEIFFER,
Independent Executor

NOTICE TO CREDITORS

Notice is hereby given that Letters Testamentary were issued on December 3, 2024, to Edward Noah Jones, Jr., as Independent Executor of the Estate of Barbara Gayle Jones, Deceased, which is being administered under Cause No. 24-0461-P in County Court At Law No. 3 of Hays County, Texas. All persons having claims against this Estate are required to present the claims within the time and in the manner prescribed by law; claims may be presented to the Independent Executor and should be addressed as follows:

Estate of Barbara Gayle Jones
c/o Edward Jones
17 Brookside Drive
Wimberley, Texas 78676

Dated: December 17, 2024.

/s/ EDWARD NOAH JONES, JR.,
Independent Executor



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Capital Highlights

Regulators: More than 250 new cases of groundwater contamination



Gary Borders
Texas Press Association

Nearly every county in Texas has at least one case of groundwater contamination, according to an annual report outlined in The Texas Tribune. The latest report compiles 2,870 open cases of groundwater contamination, some of which go back decades, according to the Texas Groundwater Protection Committee.

During 2023, 252 new cases were reported that could affect public drinking water. In addition, 289 property owners were notified that such contamination could affect their private wells.

The state relies on groundwater from aquifers for roughly 55% of its water supply. Voters in 2023 approved a \$1 billion fund to develop more water resources, including desalination of brackish groundwater.

“Any groundwater contamination is a cause for concern,” said Adam Foster, director of the Texas Alliance of Groundwater Districts. “It needs to be reported properly and addressed.”

Groundwater contamination falls under the purview of either

the Texas Commission on Environmental Quality or the Railroad Commission, depending on its source, with the former handling 80% of the cases.

The single most common source of groundwater pollution in Texas is gas stations, which make up a third of all cases. A map of groundwater contamination cases can be found on the TCEQ site by going here: <https://tinyurl.com/375xrerk>.

ABBOTT UNVEILS NEW BORDER STRATEGY

Gov. Greg Abbott said last Thursday the state is initiating a billboard campaign across Central America and border cities in northern Mexico to discourage migrants from attempting to enter Texas, the Austin American-Statesman reported.

The billboards are in multiple languages, including Spanish, Chinese, Arabic and Russian. They tell stories of migrants being sexually assaulted while trying to enter the United States.

“This is tough medicine,” Abbott said. “But we want no more rape trees in Texas. Do not make the dangerous trek to Texas.” He was referring to the ashes of a tree where migrant women were sexually assaulted by human traffickers and left to die, according to the Statesman.

Abbott is seeking another \$3 billion in the

next legislative session for Operation Lone Star. Since launching in March 2021, the state has spent \$11 billion to deter migrants and fortify the border.

NEW SPACE INSTITUTE IS UP AND RUNNING

The Texas A&M Space Institute, to be located next door to NASA’s Johnson Space Center in Houston, recently broke ground on a 400,000-square-foot facility. The \$200 million facility is funded by 2023 legislation creating the Texas Space Commission with the purpose of keeping Texas at the forefront of the space program, the Texas Standard reported.

Institute Director Dr. Nancy Currie-Gregg, a former astronaut and an engineering professor, noted the U.S. and Texas face competition from many other nations with their own space programs. Among the projects to be tackled at the new institute will be rover and spacesuit development, and possibly developing concepts for a space hospital.

“It’s really meant for collaboration between academics, industry and government to achieve government goals or to achieve, just quite frankly, commercial space goals,” she told the Standard. “But it’s all about collaboration.”

Currie-Gregg added the long-term goal is traveling to Mars, but first “we really need to

return to the lunar surface.”

INVESTIGATION: BIG TRUCK OVERSIGHT HAS WANED

An investigation by the Austin American-Statesman indicates commercial vehicles are being stopped for safety inspections far less than they used to be, even as commercial traffic has increased. The Statesman found that random roadside safety inspections dopped 20% statewide over the past decade.

The reasons include staffing at state and local law enforcement agencies failing to keep pace with the state’s growth and thousands of Department of Public Safety troopers being sent to the border for Operation Lone Star and other immigration-related issues.

DPS spokeswoman Sheridan Nolen acknowledged that the border assignments have hamstrung commercial vehicles oversight operations. The agency plans to ask the Legislature for more money in the next session.

The Texas Department of Motor Vehicles reported the number of commercial vehicles operating solely within state lines rose to 459,000 last year from 340,000 in 2013.

At least one Republican elected official is critical of the decrease in safety inspections.

“With the safety concerns that we have, I think that pulling of-

ficers off for Operation Lone Star or any other gimmick is just bad governance,” Ector County Judge Dustin Fawcett, from Odessa, said.

SCHOOL DISTRICTS ASKED TO REFUND \$16 MILLION TO FEDS

Federal officials are asking Texas schools to return \$16 million they say was billed incorrectly to Medicaid, The Tribune reported.

The U.S. Department of Health and Human Services sent an email recently to 572 school districts in the state asking them to return anywhere from \$100 to \$800,000 for services billed in 2011. A 2017 audit found Texas schools had improperly billed the agency 238 times.

The state has already paid the \$16 million and now is required by law to recoup its costs from the districts, many of which are struggling financially.

“Because this comes in the middle of a budget year, it makes planning for schools virtually impossible,” said Brian Woods, director of advocacy at the Texas Association of School Administrators. “Had this clawback been known prior to schools approving their budgets in the summer of 2024, then at least it could have been planned for, right?”

More than 40 schools owe more than \$100,000 while more than half owe less than

\$10,000.

RRC ADOPTS NEW OIL AND GAS WASTE MANAGEMENT RULES

The Texas Railroad Commission has adopted a “significant overhaul” of rules and regulations for oil and gas waste management facilities in Texas. It is the first overhaul of the agency’s waste management rules in four decades.

The adopted rules enhance the RRC’s oversight of waste management facilities, with staff dedicated to environmental permit compliance, according to the news release.

“The oil and gas industry has evolved dramatically since the 1980s. After a years-long process, and with thoughtful and thorough deliberation from the public, agency experts, and industry stakeholders, I am proud to report the Railroad Commission has passed its first overhaul of waste management rules in 40 years,” said Chairman Christi Craddick.

The new rules can be found on the RRC’s website: rrc.texas.gov.

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: gborders@texas-press.com

DONATION FROM PG. 1

ties in their district in order to fund specific improvements benefitting those properties.” Shell said that the landowner does not have set development plans, so the PID could encompass all or parts of the property.

“The other thing we ask for in this agreement is [that we] would be to create a Water Control Improvement District because we want to be able to have the homeowners or the commercial side of it cost participate in the

cost of drainage,” said Albert Cortez, Blanco River Ranch project manager, adding that the drainage from the road and the development will be redirected into a new “creek of sorts” that will be surrounded by green

space and trails.

Shell said the county would like to take care of drainage using best practices but also would like it to be aesthetically pleasing.

“We want to create something that isn’t just this giant concrete

and asphalt road that goes through our Hill Country. We want to make it something that’s not just aesthetically pleasing but responsible for the environment,” Shell said. “I think management of that drainage and

having a district that will allow those homeowners to share in the cost of ... construction and ongoing maintenance of that drainage system and the amenities associated with it [would be beneficial].”



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SANTA FROM PG. 1



PHOTOS SUBMITTED BY SETON HAYS



PETS OF THE WEEK

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

Baxter • Male
3 years old
Rat Terrier mix

I'm a super happy boy who loves people and gets along great with most other pups, though I'm a little shy around bigger dogs I don't know. I adore my humans, always craving their attention and love to tag along wherever they go. I'm house-trained, good in cars, and enjoy gentle walks to keep my legs strong - they're a bit wobbly, so I'm not your typical energetic young dog. I'm all vaccinated and heartworm-free, ready for a forever home with maybe just one or two small dog friends. I'd be perfect for a first-time dog owner or in an apartment, promising lots of love and loyalty.



Emilia • Female
14 years old
Dachshund

I'm a sweet, older Doxie lady looking for a new home. I've always lived with the same people, so this change is a bit tough, but I'm trying my best. I like my space and prefer not to be handled too much. I get along with other dogs by just ignoring them, and I enjoy sitting in laps or curling up in my bed when I feel safe. I recently had a dental procedure, and now I feel much better. I'm good on car rides and walks, though I'm not very cuddly yet. I need a calm, patient home with adults or older teens who understand I'm not the energetic type but will warm up with time.



Sloppy Kisses • Female

Sloppy Kisses came to PAWS as a puppy but for some reason continued getting overlooked. At just one year and two months old, she is approaching 200 days in our care. And when asked what she wants Santa to bring her, a loving home was at the top of her list. So, we are on a mission to help Santa make this happen! Here's what you need to know about this happy-go-lucky girl: She is good with kids AND dogs; No felines please; She lives up to her name; Guaranteed to add excitement and laughter to your life; Always up for an adventure and walks; Loves water. Sloppy Kisses already spent her 1st birthday with PAWS, so let's not add the holidays to that list too. 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

12/22

WINTER THEMELESS WEEK, PUZZLE 7 by Adrian Johnson and Rafael Musa

ACROSS

- 1 Moves for a wild couple?
12 ____-Atlantic
15 "Refresh my memory"
16 Principal on "Abbott Elementary"
17 "Heaven forbid!"
18 Spot to do a leg press
19 Fencing sword
20 Panda Express cooking vessel
21 Antonym of defiant
23 Former Russian monarch
25 "Chandelier" singer
27 Kind to others
28 Word after "Kodak" or "aha"
31 'Tis in the past

- 33 Earn \$200 in Monopoly
36 Meditative practice at a farm
38 Clock setting for some NYCFC games
39 Takeoff stat
41 It precedes 1/1, for short
42 Rise over ____ (algebra concept)
43 "Can you identify yourself?"
46 Brought together, as sheep
48 Lone
49 Explosive that may protect a harbor
51 Get together
53 ____-cone
54 Surrounding radiance

- 57 Worshippers of Hanuman and Vishnu
59 Supplement retailer
61 Jet Propulsion Laboratory org.
63 Brazilian singer ____ Carolina
64 Drinks made with Corona and tequila, perhaps
67 That girl
68 To-dos assigned at meetings
69 Qty.
70 Sneaky tweak to an online article

DOWN

- 1 Hicham El Guerrouj ran one in 3:43 in

PREVIOUS PUZZLE ANSWER

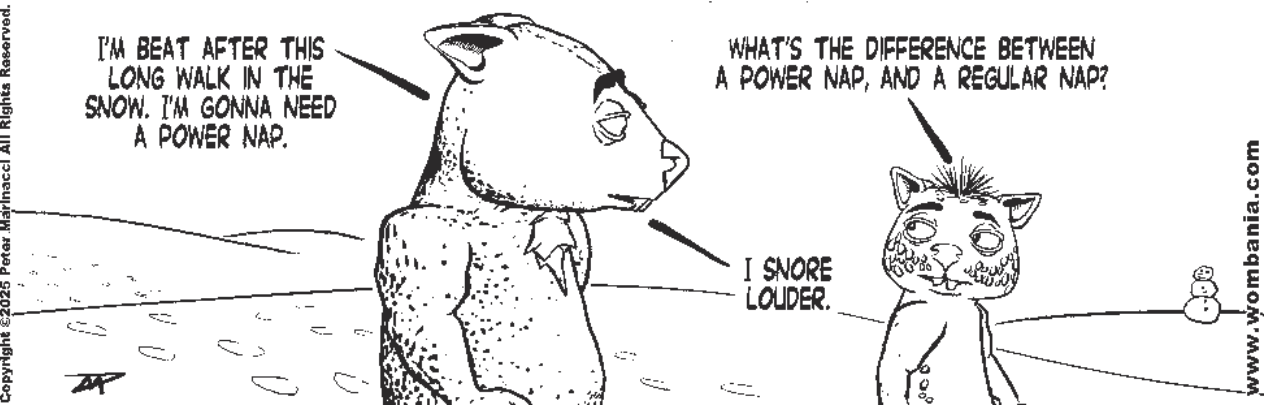
B	A	S	E			A	T	M			A	C	I	D	S
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S	T	E	A	L			S	I	R		W	Y	N	N	

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- 1999
2 Proficient
3 "Absolutely," informally
4 Measurements for tailored pants
5 To the ____ degree
6 Get bigger
7 Remove, as a ruler
8 Good Texas Hold 'em hand
9 Photographer Goldin
10 Lump of earth
11 "Rocket Man" singer John
12 "Please," to a child
13 Group with Lions and Tigers and Bears (oh my!)
14 Title for Judi Dench
22 Populous place
24 Noted thesaurus compiler
26 Like, so many
29 Butterfly relatives
30 Greet someone quickly
32 Beach surface
33 Church seats
34 Like a personal attack
35 Unpaid work?
37 R&B singer ____ Marie
40 Goes kaput
44 Watermelon discard
45 Drink made with wine and fruit
47 Get back together
50 Golden Horde member
52 Sousaphone relatives
55 Gave stars to
56 "Same here"
57 "You're too funny"
58 Religious subgroup
60 Is unable to
62 Executive's subordinate, for short
65 Summer, in French
66 "Umbrella" singer, to fans

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

Western Wonderland
Nov 27- Jan 5

Now in its 2nd wonderful year, visitors will have fun joining events and activities, strolling the Trail of Lights and so much more. At the heart of Western Wonderland is the giant ice-skating rink. Visitors will glide and twirl under the twinkling lights on the largest outdoor ice-skating rink in Central Texas. Dripping Springs Ranch Park • 1042 Event Center Dr. • Dripping Springs, TX 78620

Trail of Lights at EmilyAnn
Nov. 30 - Dec. 6

EmilyAnn Theatre and Gardens' Trail of Lights is open from Nov. 30 to Dec. 26. The trail is open rain or shine. Most nights feature live entertainment on the stage next to our yule log where guests can enjoy complimentary marshmallows and hot chocolate. Santa Claus flies in most nights from the North Pole and will be in his house to greet everyone! There will also be several special event nights throughout the run of the trail. Walking trail only on Dec. 24 and 25. • 1101 FM 2325 • Wimberley, Texas 78676 • emilyann.org/trailoflights

Tween Scene on Ice
Dec. 26 • 7 p.m. to 9 p.m.

DSRP is a safe place where Tweens get to be Tweens! Meet your friends at Ranch Park this spring break for an evening of fun. Participants are encouraged to bring their roller blades or roller skates for some roller rink style fun. Families are welcome! Children ages 9-14 can attend without an adult. Concessions will be available for purchase. Register online at drippingspringsranchpark.com/tween-scene. Tickets are \$10 online at \$13 at the door. Only a limited number of tickets are available. Dripping Springs Ranch Park • 1042 Event Center Dr. • Dripping Springs, TX 78620

Free Dance Lessons at
Mercer Dancehall
Dec. 27 •

7:30 p.m. - 8:30 p.m. Mercer Street Dancehall will host free dance lessons. Doors open to the hall at 5 p.m. Dance lessons run from 7:30 p.m. to 8:30 p.m. 23490 RR12 • Driftwood, TX 78619 • mercerdancehall.com

Cozy Gals Paint Night
December 27 •

5 p.m. to 8 p.m. Join the Art Garage for a cozy winter evening of pottery

painting with friends. Pottery choices will include a variety of different coffee mugs and tea cups, perfect for the cold weather. Pottery is not included in ticket price, but featured pottery will be discounted at the event. Complimentary drink with ticket purchase! Space is limited, must buy tickets to attend. Please arrive by 6 p.m. to have plenty of time to paint. More information at theartgarageaustin.com. 11190 Circle Drive, Suite 202-4 • Austin, TX 78736

Pound House
Farmstead Open Hours
Dec. 30 • 10 a.m. - 2 p.m.

The historic farmstead offers tours on Mondays and Saturdays from 10 a.m. to 2 p.m. Groups larger than 10, please call ahead. Suggested donation of \$5 per person • 419-B Founders Park Rd • Dripping Springs, TX 78620 • phfmuseum.org

New Year's Circus Party

Hamilton Pool Vineyards is hosting a New Year's Circus Party. Join them for New Years Eve party like no other. Circus performers, jazz music, DJs, disco ball drop, photo booth, wine canapes and more. The Party runs from 7 p.m. to 12:30 a.m. Tickets available at hamiltonpoolvineyards.com.

25711 Hamilton Pool Vineyards • Dripping Springs, TX 78663

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 options and meeting packets at: cityofdrippingsprings.com. Meetings are held at City Hall Council Chambers • 511 Mercer St. • Dripping Springs, TX 78620.

City of Dripping Springs offices are closed through December 25 as well as December 31. The next city council meeting is scheduled for January 7.

Hays County
Commissioners Court
Regular Meeting
January 7 • 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
January 21 • 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 dsisdtx.us. Live meeting at the Center for Learning & Leadership • 300 Sportsplex Dr. • Dripping Springs, TX 78620.

SPORTS

Tigers win opener, Loe tops 1000

Carl Waits
Sports Writer

Grant Reagan hit nothing but net the first shot and a 3-0 lead that the Tigers would never relinquish for the remaining time. The Tigers had another productive game as they battled

the Jaguars. Judson Loe, Rushton Budge and Reagan led the scoring in double-figures. DS held a 13-8 lead after one. At the break the Tigers still held a 28-21 advantage. DS pushed out to a score of 38-29 after three and then exploded for 21 points to salt away the win. A 11-15

in the free throw game did not hurt. The Tigers finished off Hays Johnson 59-43 for the victory. Scoring for the Tigers were Loe 22, Budge 15, Reagan 11, Brady Coleman 3, Brayden Spencer 3, Grant Gillum 2, David Allsbrook 2, Brandon Froidcoeur 1.



Tigers Head Coach Thomas Acker stands with Judson Loe, who scored his 1,000th point in his DSHS career.

PHOTOS BY RONNIE ADAIR

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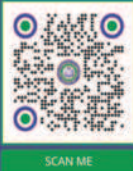


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FARM AND RANCH SALE	
25909 Hamilton Pool Rd, Round Mountain: 53 acres. Beautiful 3,283sf home with custom-built pool that includes both a waterfall and waterslide. 2,000sf four stall horse barn with tack room. 1,250sf workshop. Abundant Oaks, +-7-acre paddock	\$3,950,500 MLS: 9609854
RESIDENTIAL / LAND SALE	
370 Brady Pass, Dripping Springs: Beautiful 26.84-acre homestead nestled deep in the heart of the hill country while also being a short 15 minutes from Austin. Features local wildlife, a variety of different trees, as well as a picturesque creek that runs through the property, creating a park-like setting.	\$5,995,000 MLS: 8884586
1451 Springlake Dr, Dripping Springs: 8.05-acre tract, right outside of Dripping Springs off RR 12 and just 30 minutes from Austin. Potential to be subdivided into smaller lots for single-family homes with City Water available.	\$725,000 MLS: 9227456
100 Dario Dr, Dripping Springs: Beautiful 17.73-acre lot in coveted Creek Road Ranch with access to City water. Ready for Home Building and ample space to have horses or other animals. Gorgeous Hill Country views, native grass pastures, Hardwoods, and Blue Creek that borders the property.	\$1,382,940 MLS: 8575956
COMMERCIAL SALE	
133 Glosson Ranch Rd #C, Dripping Springs: Exceptional commercial property, featuring an expansive 5,000 square foot fully HVAC warehouse and a fully air-conditioned 750 square foot office space fitted with a kitchen and bathroom.	\$1,125,000 MLS: 5101731
133 Glosson Ranch Rd #A, Dripping Springs: 14,000 square feet across two versatile buildings with no zoning restrictions, featuring 6 grade level garage doors and utilities in place, with power, septic, and water connected, move in ready!	\$1,799,000 MLS: 5352313
13127 Fitzhugh Rd, Austin: Unique 4.79-acre unrestricted tract right outside Dripping Springs. Features 4,900+- square feet of improvements which includes 21 beds across three houses, two cabins, and a commercial-grade kitchen/pavilion.	\$1,900,000 MLS: 3926230
720 US 290, Dripping Springs: 2.556-acre development opportunity in the heart of Dripping Springs. Zoned CS. Sold together: 1 Lot - 1.5 Ac. Hwy frontage, 1 Lot - 1.05 Ac. On Sportsplex Drive	\$2,550,000 MLS: 1026523
22601 Ranch Road 12, Dripping Springs: 7.1-acre tract, with 1 6,000+sf Building being built. This property, boasting a prominent frontage on Ranch Road 12, is not only Ag Exempt but also fully entitled and permitted for a massive 42,000 sq.ft. of flex commercial space, primed and ready for construction.	\$2,485,000 MLS: 3298824
COMMERCIAL LEASE	
249 Sportsplex Drive #D, Dripping Springs: 1,795 square foot white box space, the plaza is ready to accommodate your custom build-out with an additional \$25psf tenant improvement allowance. City Utilities and High-Speed Internet available.	\$3,590 MLS: 7929442
249 Sportsplex Drive #E, Dripping Springs: 3,000 square foot shell space, the plaza is ready to accommodate your custom build-out with an additional \$50psf tenant improvement allowance. City Utilities and High-Speed Internet available.	\$6,750 MLS: 1039890
2201 Hwy 290 W Unit B, Dripping Springs: Historical homestead from the 1800's all renovated office/retail/hospitality space. Total leasable square footage includes the +/- 2175/SF farmhouse as well as a +/- 400/SF Garage conversion with HVAC	\$5,150 MLS: 3067282
22601 Ranch Road 12, Dripping Springs: 6,256 square foot warehouse in shell condition, ready for your custom build-out. Water, electricity, and sewer connections are readily available, with tenant improvement allowances negotiable.	\$7,196 MLS: 1814090
Rippy's Warehouse, Dripping Springs: 6,000sqft open warehouse space located behind the old feedstore in downtown Dripping Springs on Wallace Street. Currently in shell space, perfect location for office, retail, or storage space.	\$6,000 MLS: 7385266



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400 HWY 290 W / BLDG B / SUITE 101 / DRIPPING SPRINGS TX 78620



Brayden Spencer, who scored nine points against Bowie, goes to the basket for a layup.

Upoming sports events

Girls Soccer: The season for the soccer teams officially begins December 1 with the regular season beginning January 1. The Lady Tigers played in two scrimmage games. The first with Hays Johnson played on a cool, rainy night. Emerson Barefoot made both goals in the first half. Earning praise from the coaches were Daisy Kaner, Alyssa Creekmore and Lauren Valasco. Next they travelled to Round Rock to take on the Lady Dragons. It was a scoreless tie at the half but Round Rock was able to gain the net in the second half

and hold off the Lady Tigers who aggressively attacked the goal but could not penetrate. Goalkeeper, Annabelle Pittman had a big night holding off attempt. Players lauded for their play were midfielder Carson Thompson along with Creekmore, Lily Ruff and Ella Castillo. Dripping Springs will open at Boerne Champion on January 7. **Boys Soccer:** The Tigers had two scrimmages with Kipp Austin and San Marcos. As they have for quite a few years, the Tigers will open their season

with a 3-game, Dr. Pink tourney In Frisco. **Swim Team:** This year' team is primed for big things as they will be finishing up their season in the month of January. Ordinarily records start falling late in the season and continue to be broken to the end. However, the record-breaking started early and often. On January 31, the District 26-6A meet will be held at the Round Rock Aquarium Center. Qualifiers will compete at the Region 7-6A meet held at the Bill Walker Pool in San Antonio on February 7.