

Belton, a year in review

July through December

By Lynette Sowell
 The Belton Journal

The month of July began with longtime traditions to celebrate Independence Day.

The Belton Area Chamber of Commerce launched a week-long fest of events leading up to the Fourth of July holiday. The traditional Belton Street Party was held in front of the historic Bell County Courthouse.

The street celebration drew in residents of Belton and visitors from Temple, Killeen, Harker Heights, Salado and other neighboring communities to enjoy the free family-friendly activities. An array of food trucks, craft beer, and wine were available throughout the night. A designated Kids' Zone provided a place where they could use their creativity by designing things with large blue blocks sponsored by the Temple Children's Museum.

Other activities for kids and adults included the free "Photo Kingz 360 photo booth," sponsored by West Temple Orthodontics.

Activities throughout the week included the Carnival at Liberty Park.

On July 4th, the day began with a Patriotic Program in front of the Bell County Courthouse.

Following the program, the Fourth of July parade was held, with more than 175 entries for the event. The parade theme honored Belton's remarkable legacy of "Celebrating 100 Years of Rodeo."

The first Belton rodeo started in 1924 on Penelope Hill.

Fourth of July celebrations concluded with a Backyard Party at Schoepf's with a concert and Fireworks show.

More than one month after the severe weather that caused massive damage in West Temple and the surrounding areas, Belton Public Works continued to clean up brush throughout the city. City officials were determined to try to clean up the brush in-house. The city used two brush trucks and rented equipment to help the work crews collect brush and clear roadways. The city wound up receiving TECQ approval to burn brush at the Police Department Firing Range. Many volunteer groups worked to clean up throughout the city.

Over at the City of Morgan's Point Resort, the city found a vendor to perform repairs to the marina that began in July, with the marina closed to the public during this time.

Some homeowners in the Three Creeks community received notification that their homeowners' insurance rates would be raised by the Insurance Services Office (ISO). Some insurance rates soared due to an ISO rating of 10, the worst insurance rank an area can receive. ISO is a for-profit advisory and rating organization that maintains billions of data banks of statistical and actuarial analytics to develop insurance risks and rates for insurance professionals and companies.

Central Bell County Fire/Rescue (CBCFR) provides fire protection services for fires, medical emergencies, accidents, and other EMS responses for Three Creeks and



TABLE OF CONTENTS

Obituaries -----	A3
Editorial -----	A3, A9, B3
Lifestyles -----	A6
Service Directory ----	A9
Sports -----	B1
Classifieds -----	B6
B-Town Bulletin -----	B8
Church Directory-----	B9



the surrounding areas of FM-1670.

EMS used to respond to the Belton ETJ area from Nolanville. However, they lost their contract when the City of Nolanville created their own fire services in September 2023 and asked CBCFR to move.

Bell County Fire Chief William Jordan explained that the previous Fire Chief was responsible for submitting the required paperwork every two years to the ISO. When he passed away, the required paperwork and onsite inspections lapsed. Jordan was unaware the inspections and paperwork had expired. According to Jordan, he began getting phone calls from angry homeowners asking why their insurance premiums were increasing. He contacted the ISO and requested a reevaluation and field survey.

DeMarr Lowe Thomas, owner of The Retreat Therapeutic Massage in Belton, was arrested by Belton police for indecent assault. The incident occurred in late June 2024 while he was giving a massage at his business. This

is the third separate victim to come forward, according to a press release issued by Belton police. Thomas was previously arrested on Sept. 12, 2022, for sexual assault at the same business after the first victim came forward and reported the incident.

In celebration of National Parks and Recreation Month, the City of Belton Parks and Recreation Department created a Belton Parks Tour. A poster was designed so that children can collect stickers at each event to attach to their poster. They could visit all four parks at events, receive a sticker and attach it to the poster, and get a free t-shirt. Events were held at Miller Springs, Chisholm Trail Park, Heritage Park, and the Harris Community Center.

Tammie Baggerly was appointed the principal of BISD's Delta Program, a newly established position in the Belton Independent School District.

The Delta Program represents a collaborative effort and a shared vision to

support 18-21-year-old students' transition to adult independent living and work.

16 years in education, Baggerly is well-acquainted with the BISD community, having been with the district for 15 years. Over the past five years, she served as an assistant principal at Southwest Elementary School and previously as an instructional coach.

The Delta program, currently located at the Belton High School campus, will move to its new facility at 731 East Fourth Avenue in the spring. This new building is being constructed with funds from the 2022 voter-approved bond.

In July, BISD Deputy Superintendent Mike Morgan updated the board of trustees on projects funded through the 2022 voter-approved bond. James L. Burrell Elementary opened in January 2024 and Hubbard Branch Elementary was set to open in August 2024.

See **YEAR**,
 Page A2

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Year - From Page A1

Other projects in the final phases include gymnasium, music, and art classroom additions at Southwest Elementary; fine arts and athletics areas at Lake Belton Middle School; Career and Technical Education (CTE) and fine arts additions, upgrades at existing CTE spaces, and other capital improvements and renovations at Belton High School.

at the top of Linnemann's office building that opens into a beautiful courtyard. The events are hosted by Level 3. They host various events such as wedding receptions, birthdays, and business-related meetings.

The new food truck company Courtyard Culinary Company, called C3 for short, has a food truck on East Street. Dealing with the summer heat, they installed eight misting

CASA of Bell and Coryell Counties swore in seven new advocates in August. With this new class of volunteers, CASA has added a total of 25 new advocates in 2024, continuing to grow the organization's team of volunteers committed to advocating for the best interests of children in foster care. This pushes CASA's total roster of advocates to more than 150 – the highest number of volunteer advocates that Bell and Coryell Counties has ever had.

Also in August, Off the Rails Wine Bar was sold to two new owners, Amber Hill and her mother, Sherry Stomberg. The previous owner, Judy Garrett, opened Off the Rails in February 2023. They have donated to schools, had auctions, given donations for tornado relief, and have helped the band financially. "We contribute to anything to help the community," said Hill.

The Sazon Latin Food Night Market transformed downtown Belton into a vibrant celebration of Latin American cuisine, music, and culture the first Saturday evening in August. A variety of food vendors showcased the best flavors from the Caribbean, Central, and South America. Among the featured vendors were El Argentino Grill, offering a selection of grilled meats and empanadas, Samba Brazilian Cuisine with their skewers and cheese bread, and Culinary Capricorn Company, established in 2023, selling various empanadas. Quesabirria Y Tacos also served up tacos, including options like grilled steak with other meats. Vendors were busy throughout the evening, with customers eager to try the diverse offerings. The market also featured lively music, adding to the festive atmosphere. The event has become a monthly gathering.

The Texas Department of Transportation began receiving public comments on a

installing a shared-use path along one side of the road; installing a sidewalk along the other side of the road; and a roundabout alternative F.M. 93/Main Street intersection.

The Bell County Fire Marshal concluded his investigation into a structure fire at the Stillhouse Hollow Marina (4596 Simmons Rd.) in Belton. The result of the investigation is that the incident has been determined to have been the result of an accident. The Bell County Fire Marshal led the investigation into the event, which occurred at 7:16 a.m. Wednesday, August 7.

Our Hospice House celebrated its first year of serving compassionate, around-the-clock care to terminally ill residents in a family-like environment. Since opening its doors in August 2023, Our Hospice House served 71 guests, providing them and their loved ones a peaceful, supportive space, coupled with loving care givers in their final days.

Founded by dedicated local hospice physician Dr. Jeff Bates, MD, and his wife Jennifer Bates, a hospice nurse, 'Our Hospice House' is a project of local non-profit organization The Lords Work Inc.

Belton ISD announced that Kris Hobson, principal of Lake Belton Middle School, was selected as the Texas Association of Secondary School Principals (TASSP) Region 12 Outstanding Middle School Principal of the Year.

Hobson has been part of the leadership team at Lake Belton Middle School for 13 years, serving as principal since 2014. During his tenure, Hobson has introduced innovative programs, fostered a strong school culture, and maintained an unwavering dedication to student achievement. Under his guidance, Lake Belton Middle School has experienced significant improvements in academic



August

West Temple Orthodontics reopened its doors at a new location, 120 Morgan's Point Rd. Suite 102. Their original building was destroyed in the late May EF-2 tornado that hit West Adams Avenue. They took two office suites and combined them into one office. Walls inside were removed to create a reception area. They created a break room, sterilization area, supply room, x-ray area, patient area, and records room.

Linnemann Realty, with offices downtown off Central Avenue added a food truck on East Street. There is an event center

fans covering the courtyard and food truck area. They serve burgers and a short variety of items. The meat is ground on site and each of the fries is cut by hand each night. They are fried low then high. Everything is made from scratch.

Belton First United Methodist Church located at 205 E. 3rd Ave., started up its weekly free lunch for college students, now in its 20th year. The meals are served on Wednesdays from 11 a.m. until 1 p.m. in the church's Fellowship Hall. The church feeds about 300 students per week at no cost, although donations are welcomed.

proposed plan to reconstruct F.M. 93 from N. Wheat Road to Main Street. Proposed improvements from Wheat Road to Mitchell Street include, widening F.M. 93 from two undivided lanes to four divided lanes with a raised median, installing a shared-use path along one side of the road, installing a sidewalk along the other side of the road; and a roundabout alternative for F.M. 93/Loop 121 intersection. Proposed improvements from Mitchell Street to Main Street include widening F.M. 93 (2nd Avenue) from two to three lanes, one lane in each direction with a two-way, left-turn lane in the middle;

performance, student engagement, and community involvement.

The City of Morgan's Point Resort announced the completion of phase one of the citywide brush and debris cleanup following the severe storm on May 22, 2024. This milestone marks a significant step in the city's ongoing efforts to restore normalcy following the devastating storm. The city's debris collection contractor, Ceres Environmental, collected more than 37,000 cubic yards of

See **REVIEW**,
Page A4

WHY DOESN'T CHUCK NORRIS HAVE A ROOF ON HIS HOUSE?

THE GOLD AND WIND DON'T DARE TO COME IN..



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OBITUARIES

Herring

Wanda Herring

May 13, 1944 – December 24, 2024

Graveside services for Wanda Herring, 80, of Killeen, were held at 11:00 AM, Monday, December 30, 2024, at Rest Haven Cemetery with Rev. Leland Burkett and Shala Sturgeon officiating.

The family received friends for visitation from 3:00 - 5:00 PM Sunday, December 29, 2024 at the Dossman Funeral Home Chapel in Belton.

Mrs. Herring died Tuesday, December 24, 2024, at her home in Killeen, surrounded by her many family members.

Mrs. Herring was born May 13, 1944, in Houston, the daughter of Sir Francis Drake and Lillie Faye Owens Drake. She married Harold "Wayne" Herring Sr., April 8, 1961, in Belton at Trinity Full Gospel Church. Their marriage of 63 years remains an inspiration to her family of what true love and commitment looks like.

Even though Wanda wore many hats in the workforce, in her church and in PTA; she was always a mom first. In Wanda's eyes her greatest achievement was raising her 3 children.

Along with her many hats she wore, she had many names... Wanda, Mom, Mimi and Aunt Wanda. In each of those titles she left an imprint on each of our hearts.

Mrs. Wanda was a bookkeeper in her many endeavors with family, including Quality Paint and Body, Jamie Herring Custom Homes, and Mommy and Me Boutique in Killeen. Even through the battle of her disease, she worked everyday with a smile on her face. She was resilient in her work ethic.

She was a longtime member of Bethel Church in Killeen. Her faith was a true embodiment of a life with Jesus.

She was preceded in death by her husband, Wayne Herring Sr., April 1, 2018 and one sister Faye Caufield. Survivors include two sons, Wayne Herring Jr. and wife Jeannie, and James "Jamie" Herring and wife Kelly; one daughter Missy Carroll and husband Mike; eight grandchildren, Trey Herring and wife Erika, Chrislyn Herring, Leah Turner and husband Austin, Kayla Nunn and husband Terrence, Blayton Evans, Kylar Evans, Kyndall Carroll and Kasen Carroll; nine great-grandchildren, Destin Herring, Sidney Taylor III, SaRiyah Taylor, Serenity Taylor, Tryson Nunn, Chandler Nunn, Kennedy Turner, Lane Turner and Saylor Turner.

Memorials may be made to Bethel Church, 997, Stagecoach Road, Killeen, Texas 76542, in lieu of flowers.

Martin

Vicki Thompson Martin

Feb 15, 1971 - Nov 28, 2024

Vicki Thompson Martin, a devoted wife, mother, and faithful Christian, was born on February 15, 1971, in the historically charming town of Natchitoches, Louisiana. Her vibrant spirit and unwavering faith touched all who had the privilege of knowing her. Vicki lived a fulfilling life until her untimely passing on November 28, 2024, in Belton, Texas. Vicki's life was defined by her dedication to her family and her belief in God. Though she deeply desired more time with her loved ones, Vicki found peace in her faith, knowing that God was calling her to an everlasting happiness and peace in His presence.

A certified optician and accomplished office manager in dentistry, Vicki exemplified professionalism and warmth in her career. Her dedication and compassion extended beyond her work responsibilities, creating meaningful connections with her colleagues and those she served. Outside of her professional life, Vicki found peace and joy at the beach or near the ocean, her favorite place to unwind and connect with nature and loved ones. She loved traveling with friends and family, exploring new places, and creating cherished memories filled with laughter and adventure.

Vicki took immense pride in her children and family. She was a constant source of love and guidance, and her legacy will continue to shine brightly through the lives of her husband, children, and everyone fortunate enough to have known her. Vicki is survived by her husband of 26 years, Ronald Martin; her children, Austin and Lexie; her mother, Linda Thompson; her father, Jerry Thompson; her siblings, Jerry "Bud" Thompson and Joanna Thompson; and her beloved nieces and nephew. Her cherished dogs, Zoey, Leo, and Ryder, will forever miss her warmth and affection.

Vicki's journey was filled with purpose, laughter, and an unshakable belief in the importance of love and connection. Her generosity, compassion, and selfless spirit touched countless lives and left an indelible mark on all who knew her. In a final act of generosity, Vicki honorably donated her body to science, advancing medical research to help others. A private Celebration of Life will be planned to reflect Vicki's vibrant spirit and love for gathering people together.

Arrangements are under the direction of Sabrina Young at Young's Daughters Funeral Home and Bereavement Center

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EDITORIAL

Choices

Coffee Talk • Renae Brumbaugh Green

few years ago, my family and I visited the San Antonio Riverwalk between Christmas and New Year's Day. It was decorated with twinkling Christmas lights and glittery trees, and mariachi bands played festive holiday music.

We expected the Riverwalk to be crowded. What we didn't expect was the great sea of college football fans. Our visit just happened to fall on the weekend before the Alamo Bowl game. Everywhere, we saw face-painted fans wearing purple and white for Northwestern or yellow and black for the University of Missouri. We couldn't even get tickets for a riverboat ride—they were sold out. Entire college bands floated down the river playing their

school's fight songs, followed by boatloads of football players.

We figured since we couldn't ride the boats, we'd just enjoy from the sidelines. So when the Northwestern band floated past, followed by the Northwestern football players, we yelled, "Go Northwestern!" The players waved and cheered back at us.

A few minutes later, when the University of Missouri band and players floated by, guess what we did? My mama didn't raise no fool.

We yelled and cheered for the University of Missouri. Our little family was quite possibly the most popular family on the Riverwalk that evening.

We didn't have a dog in that fight, so we really

didn't care who won. I'm glad we didn't have to choose. While my choice of college football teams doesn't really matter, I make many choices each day that matter a lot.

As I think about my resolutions for my new year, I'm reminded that my goals are pretty meaningless if I don't back them up with choices. Those extra pounds I want to lose? My choice. No one forces me to eat potato chips and chocolate truffles. I make choices about what I eat; therefore, to some extent, I make the choice about what I weigh.

What about that next book I want to write? That garage I want cleaned out? Those friendships I want to build? They can become reality if I make the choices, day by day,

step by step to achieve my goals. Otherwise, they will remain exactly what they are – lofty dreams. (And yes, a clean garage is a lofty dream for me. Have you seen my garage?)

This year, I want to stop talking about my goals and actually achieve some of them. In order to do that, I'll try to make better choices. I know my goals won't be met in one fell swoop, but in small steps. Over time. One small choice after another.

"This day I call the heavens and the earth as witnesses against you that I have set before you life and death, blessings and curses. Now choose life, so that you and your children may live."
Deuteronomy 30:19



Your usual or something new?

When it comes to your coffee order, there's a case for playing it safe. After all, you know what you like, right? With investment decisions, however, things get a bit more complicated.

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Belton was first known as the town of Nolanville. In 1851, Nolanville was incorporated and the town name was changed to Belton.
Fact from Texas State Historical Association.

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Review- From Page A2

vegetative debris. Phase two of the cleanup operations began on Monday, August 26, conducted by the City of Morgan's Point Resort Staff. The focus was on the remaining piles of storm-related vegetative debris across the city.

September

The HOP - Hill Country Transit District held a ribbon cutting to launch its new Microtransit System. Service changes began on September 3rd, when the new vans literally rolled into Belton, replacing the fixed-route buses. Instead of waiting at a bus stop, riders now request a ride by downloading the HOP app on an Android or iOS device. The system operates similar to an Uber format and has a fare of \$2. Riders can request to be picked up at their home, a grocery store, doctor's visit, school, and dropped off at their designated location. Routes can be scheduled to be picked up and dropped off ahead of time. Riders can travel the vans to a bus transfer area, between Temple, Belton, Harker Heights, Killeen, and Copperas Cove.

Marjorie Ferrill celebrated a milestone 100th birthday on Wednesday, September 11, at her home in Temple. Ferrill was born

on September 11, 1924 during the Great Depression. She was born to the parents of Mr. and Mrs. George Frank in Holland, TX. She recalled attending school in Holland, where the kids from all grade levels were in one room. As a family they moved to Bartlett where she graduated high school as valedictorian. She continued her education at University of Mary Hardin-Baylor, but times were still tight for money, and she opted out of college. In 1956, Ferrill began her career at Baylor Scott & White Hospital as a medical secretary, where she dedicated 34 years of her life, ultimately retiring as an associate director in 1990.

The fiscal year 2025 Annual City Budget was approved by the Belton City Council. The council-approved ad valorem tax rate is \$0.5225 per \$100 of taxable value. Property values in Belton have risen by 8.42 percent, bringing the average home value to \$296,559. Under the new tax rate, homeowners will see an increase of approximately \$96 per year, or about \$7.75 per month. As presented the budget is based on revenues of \$50,903,660, and expenditures of \$48,666,680 for fiscal year 2025. The budget was adopted 6-0, followed by a rollcall of council members on



their vote to adopt.

The Belton city council passed a resolution to allocate its remaining \$90,000 in federal COVID-19 recovery funds to the United Way of Central Texas to assist residents with rent and utility payments. This initiative builds on previous efforts by the city council to use American Rescue Plan Act (ARPA) funds to support residents in need. The reallocation of \$90,000 to the United Way

extensions. With Loop 121 having a median dividing traffic, this expansion will create a safe entrance into the Belton Business Park.

Belton ISD announced that two Belton High School seniors were named among the 16,000 semifinalists in the 2025 National Merit Scholarship Program, placing them among the nation's top academic achievers. David Shelburne and Steven Arantes both showed outstanding dedication to their

Wishing you a

HAPPY NEW YEAR

Hope you have a year full of adventures!



Alton D. Thiele P.C.



ensured that all federal funds were obligated before the December 31, 2024, deadline.

Construction began on connecting Avenue D to Powell Avenue. This project started after a Traffic Impact Analysis conducted in 2017 with the Belton Business Park. As the project evolved, utilities were included to ensure adequate looping, and a six-foot-wide sidewalk was incorporated along Avenue D. In 2019 it was determined that the Texas Department of Transportation would design and construct the Loop 121/Avenue D intersection and four-way light as part of the Loop 121 widening project. The northern segment of Loop 121 is scheduled to be completed by the spring of 2025. This project includes providing water and sewer

studies, leadership within the school, and a strong commitment to their communities. To be considered for a merit scholarship award, semifinalists must meet several requirements to progress to the finalist stage of the competition.

Four Belton ISD schools were recognized as Purple Star Designated Campuses, a prestigious honor awarded to schools that go above and beyond to support military-connected students and their families. The campuses receiving this designation—Lakewood Elementary School, Southwest Elementary School, Belton Middle School,

2024- From Page A4



and Belton High School—were celebrated for their commitment to ensuring military students feel welcomed and supported throughout their educational journey.

Each school earned the Purple Star designation by meeting rigorous criteria, including establishing a dedicated campus-based military liaison, maintaining resources for military families, and implementing transition programs to ease the adjustment for students moving due to military-related

relocations. These campuses also engage in ongoing military appreciation activities, demonstrating their deep respect for the sacrifices of service members and their families.

The Betty Martin Chapter of the Daughters of the American Revolution (DAR) marked its 120th anniversary with a celebration at the Temple Railroad and Heritage Museum on September 29. The event drew community members to honor

the chapter's dedication to education, historic preservation, and patriotism. Throughout the day, local choirs performed, and attendees witnessed the recognition of student essay contest winners.

State Representative Hugh Shine delivered remarks at noon, underscoring the chapter's impact on veterans and the education of local youth.

The 14th Annual Bell County Senior Expo took place at the Cadence Bank Center, showcasing how Central Texas is a "Senior Friendly" place to live. This year's event was hosted by The Belton Journal Newspaper. George Losoya, Director for the Area Agency on Aging of Central Texas, served as the guest speaker, addressing seniors and families on Medicare and Medicaid fraud issues. The senior expo provides an invaluable resource for seniors and families, offering access to healthcare services, financial advice, legal help, and social services. It fosters community engagement, connecting seniors with local organizations and businesses tailored to their needs.

The event featured workshops, seminars, and informational booths educating seniors on various topics. Networking opportunities among seniors, caregivers, and service providers helped create a sense of belonging and reduce feelings of isolation.

Health screenings conducted at the Expo enabled seniors to monitor their health and identify potential issues early.

The annual free event is a no-pressure, sales-free experience that featured nearly 200 costumed vendors with Winter Wonderland-themed booths, along with hundreds of door prizes and giveaways.

October

On October 1, Belton ISD officially opened the last of two elementary schools funded by the passage of the 2022 school bond. The James L. Burrell Elementary School was opened in January 2024, followed by a second elementary school, the Hubbard Branch Elementary School, which opened at the start of the 2024 school year.

The grand opening of Hubbard Branch Elementary School, which opened to students at the start of the 2024 school year was completed in May. It is a new 111,000-square-foot, two-story building providing a modern and enriching environment for up to 800 students.

At the event, district leadership shared remarks honoring Miller Heights Elementary, the original school that served the community for 61 years prior to the Hubbard Branch construction. James L. Burrell Elementary School is located at 8104 Glade Drive in Temple.

The Belton Lions Club brought back the annual quirky fundraiser "Lions on the Leon" with the "Wacky Boat Race." The event at Heritage Park in Belton provided the perfect opportunity to race a cardboard boat in the Leon River. Fundraisers throughout the year allow the Lions Club to support different causes. This year's event was expanded to include a "Captain D" 5K run, walk, or crawl. The fundraiser will help support Texas Lions Camp for Children, scholarships, and other charity needs as they arise. About 15 contestants participated in the 5K and received a specially designed medal. This year, 14 boats competed in two categories.

Manufacturing Day was celebrated in Belton. Celebrated nationally on the first Friday in October, Manufacturing Day is manufacturing's biggest annual opportunity to inspire the next generation, positively shift perceptions about the industry, and build the foundation for the manufacturing workforce of the future.

Belton High School and Lake Belton High School students participated in industry tours followed by a presentation from Charley Ayres, Workforce Solutions of Central Texas, on manufacturing occupations and interactive

See BELTON, Page A7



Happy **NEW YEAR**



Pat Duffield
Constable Pct. 1



Martha Dominguez
Constable Pct. 4



James E. Nichols
County Attorney



Ted Duffield
Peace Justice, Pct. 1



Cari Starritt-Burnett
169th Judicial District Court



Shay A. Luedeke
Tax Assessor-Collector



Larry Wilkey
Peace Justice, Pct. 3, Pl. 2

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A6
Thursday,
January 2, 2025

LIFESTYLES

THE BELTON JOURNAL

Harper-Talasek Funeral Homes donates \$12,000 to Our Hospice House

By Michelle Rodriguez
The Belton Journal

Care coordinator Jack McChurch with Harper-Talasek Funeral Homes donated \$12,000 to Our Hospice House on Dec. 12 through their Classics for CARing Car Show Fundraiser held this past September. They strive to be involved in the community. Our Hospice House provides around-the-clock care for terminally ill guest at no costs to their families. The house is currently located at 1661 FM-93 in Temple.

"It took 8 months to plan the car show. The next one is being planned 1 year in advance. We learned we needed more time. We need more community involvement in the way of sponsorship opportunities, exhibitor booths, in-kind donations, and community attendance to observe the car show," said McChurch.

He has a personal goal to raise \$50,000 at the second annual car show coming up on Sept. 21, 2025 at Harper-Talasek at 500 W. Barton Ave. in Temple. He hopes to have more involvement by allowing more car enthusiasts participation, sponsors, and the community to raise even more funds in supporting Our Hospice House.



Courtesy Photo

Our Hospice House receives a check for \$12,000 after the Classic Cars For CARing show.

"The funds that were donated will be used to have our forever home that we're going to be moving into in January or February to continue to serve our community and provide the pleasant environment that we have now. We will be able to continue working with the hospice provider partners. They purchased the new home in early November. Some minor things needed to be done as far as repairs, painting, and things of that nature," said executive director Annie Mc-

Call with Our Hospice House.

The minor repairs were done by volunteers. They not only gave their time, but materials as well. Medical doctor Jeff Bates and his wife registered nurse Jennifer Bates are the founders of Our Hospice House.

"I could see that there was a need for those on the end-of-life journey. We are grateful to be able to have compassionate caregivers come into the home and give the care that's needed and given. I could see that it's very important to a lot of people. We did not have anything like Our Hospice House in our community. Dr Jeff Bates and Jennifer Bates approached me to come onboard because through the years it was such a blessing to have compassionate care in a setting like this," said McCall.

They've been at the current house since Aug. 23. They have been providing end-of-life care with their partnership with all of their 14 providers in the agreement they have with the community. Some guests don't want to remain at

home when they're experiencing end of life. They don't want their loved ones to remember and experience their passing in their home.

"The current house is leased until July. The new house will have walk-in showers in all the bathrooms which will be really nice. There will be a better parking situation for family members coming and going. It will be more secure. The new property is 2.88 acres, large enough to possibly build a second home. State requirements allow only 3 guests per home which would allow us to serve more individuals in the future. The rooms are larger overall to make it more comfortable to the families that are visiting," said McCall.

When McChurch moved to the area, he heard about Our Hospice House and called and asked if he could come out and see the home. He met McCall at the house and then a few months later they were at a Temple Lions Club meeting and reconnected. He asked about doing a car show as a fundraiser.

"He told me that his wife was a hospice nurse. Her name is Amy. The participants of the fundraiser have classic cars. We thought it was catchy to name it Classic Cars for CARing. People with different cars were interested in participating so we opened it up to include anyone that would like to participate," said McChurch.

The rooms at the new hospice house have electric beds and are nicely furnished. There is medical equipment in the rooms like oxygen concentrators, e-tanks, and wheelchairs. They provide linens, towels, and wash cloths.



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Belton - From Page A5



activities offered by Temple College on October 1 and 2. The Manufacturing Day Event partners included Workforce Solutions of Central Texas, Belton Area Chamber of Commerce, Belton ISD, Belton Career Builders, Temple College, and the City of Belton.

The 36th Annual J.A.I.L. (Jesus Acts in Inmates' Lives) Ministry banquet marked the end of an era as it honored Bell County Sheriff Eddy Lange. Lange served as the head of the sheriff's department for 12 years, having been first elected in 2012 and subsequently re-elected in two consecutive elections. He chose not to run for re-election in March of this year and officially left office at the end of 2024. For 36 years J.A.I.L. (Jesus Acts in Inmates Lives) Ministry has provided faith-based support to Bell County adult and juvenile offenders, victims, law enforcement professionals, and affected families.

Joan and Maurice Northen celebrated 70 years of marriage on Wednesday, October 16. The couple was married October 16, 1954, at First Baptist Church of Belton, where they

Her mother was Ara Lee and her father was R.T. Normand.

Belton ISD trustees updated cellphone guidelines for students, which will take effect on Jan. 8, 2025. Elementary students are required to store their personal electronic devices, which must remain silenced or turned off throughout the entire school day. Middle school students must put away their devices, ensuring they are silenced or turned off during each instructional class period. At the discretion of campus administration, students may earn the privilege to use their devices in the hallways and during lunch as part of a reward system connected to expectations of being safe, respectful, and responsible. High school students must put away their devices, with devices silenced or turned off during each instructional class period. However, students will be permitted to access their devices between classes and during lunch.

The office of Governor Greg Abbott announced that Taylor Ratcliff, M.D. of Belton, was reappointed to the Advisory Council on Emergency Medical Services



install two electric vehicle charging stations downtown. Each station will have two chargers. Don Ringler Chevrolet made the stations available through the General Motors Dealer Community Charging Program for EV.

GM provides the dealership with the chargers and Don Ringler Chevrolet is responsible for the pedestals that house the chargers, cable management, and network maintenance for the first five years. The level 2 chargers are not rapid chargers. Depending on the amount of charge an EV already has, it could take a few hours for a full charge. This is a perfect fit for shops downtown and the City of Belton.

The idea is to install these chargers near shopping and dining locations so drivers and passengers will have places to visit while their vehicles are charging.

The City of Belton is responsible for the installation costs of the charging stations, which are estimated to be \$20,000. The initial charge per kw is \$1 per hour of charging.

On October 24, Belton ISD students, staff, and community leaders gathered to

celebrate the official opening of the district's new Ag Barn, a facility designed to support agricultural education programs and provide hands-on learning opportunities for students. After the ribbon-cutting ceremony, attendees were led on student-guided tours of the Ag Barn. The new facility includes spaces for livestock, equipment storage, and other resources aimed at helping students apply agricultural skills in a real-world environment.

The Belton City Council allocated \$391,653 in interest earnings from the city's American Rescue Plan Act (ARPA) funds in what is expected to be the final spending related to the federal Covid-19 recovery funds. The subcommittee recommended funding to be allocated for the Nolan Creek Bridge (\$15,000); Belton Senior Center (\$100,000); Heritage Park - Multipurpose Field (\$175,500); Pickleball Court Expansion at Chisholm Trail Park (\$45,000); Heritage Park LED Light Conversion (\$50,000); and the Children's Advocacy Center (\$6,153).

See **REVIEW**,
Page A8



have been members, Joan for 80 years and Maurice for 70 years. Their parents picked their wedding date. Maurice and his father produced the first bale of cotton in Bell County. Together they also participated in the Belton 4th of July Parade with a mule drawn covered wagon and supported the Belton Chamber of Commerce for many years. Maurice along with farming, worked for the Belton Post Office for 35 years, and was recognized as a 1,000,000-mile carrier. Joan moved to Belton with her family during the war at the age of 8 with her parents to help her grandparents on the Thomas/Normand dairy farm which was located near the old Leon Valley Golf Course.

(GETAC). Dr. Ratcliff is an emergency medicine and EMS physician at Baylor Scott and White Healthcare, medical director at Williamson County EMS, physician medical director for the Texas Emergency Medical Task Force Team 7, and a captain of the Morgan's Point Resort Fire Department.

He is former chair of the Emergency Healthcare System for the Capital Area of Texas Regional Advisory Council. Ratcliff received a Bachelor of Science in EMS Management and a Doctor of Medicine from the Texas Tech University Health Sciences Center.

The City of Belton is working to



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HAPPY NEW YEAR

Cheers to a new year and new beginnings.






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IF YOU DRINK, DON'T DRIVE.

DECIDE TO RIDE

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JACK HILLIARD
DIST. CO. INC
TEMPLE, TEXAS



Review - From Page A7



The Nolan Creek bridge will be an aluminum walking bridge that will provide easier access between downtown and Liberty Park.

The second of three Imagine Belton public meetings was held on October 28 at the Harris Community Center. Approximately 40-50 people attended, and the community was invited to give feedback and ask questions by filling out a feedback form and putting them in the comment boxes. The Imagine Belton plan focuses on making the city more walkable, adding new housing and business opportunities, and preserving the character of historic downtown. The plan introduces new zoning changes around Main Street, 6th Avenue, and Nolan Creek, dividing these areas into subdistricts with specific development guidelines.

Zoning updates will offer more flexibility for property owners by allowing different types of buildings, such as small shops, homes, and live-work spaces. Streets will be improved for better walking and biking, and new parks and trails are planned to provide

outdoor spaces for the community.

On October 30, Bell County and Central Counties Services (CCS) hosted an Open House event at the Bell County Diversion Center. The facility officially opened in November, but visitors to the event were able to tour the space and learn how it will impact the community. The Bell County Diversion Center is a result of a community-wide partnership between Bell County, Central Counties Services, local law enforcement agencies, the criminal justice system, and area healthcare providers. The Diversion Center will function as a Crisis Residential Unit, operated by Central Counties Services, with a goal of diverting individuals with mental health conditions away from the criminal justice system and into mental healthcare.

November

Texas A&M AgriLife Extension in Bell County welcomed County Extension Agent Meagan Cline as the new Natural Resources Agent for Bell County. Cline assumed her



new role Nov. 1. Cline has an extensive background in ranching and livestock production. She was active in the show barn with beef heifers, market lambs and market goats, as well as a participant in horse judging, livestock judging, and public speaking. Cline obtained her Bachelor of Science degree in Animal Science at Texas A&M University. Upon graduating college, Cline accepted a full-time position as the head veterinarian technician at the 6666 Ranch in Guthrie, Texas where she worked under Dr. Glenn Blodgett, Dr. Nathan Canaday, and team.

The Belton Area Chamber of Commerce hosted the annual Veterans Day Patriot Way Brick Walk Dedication Ceremony on Nov. 11 at the Chamber's front parking lot, bringing together the Belton community to honor

veterans and spotlight the growing Patriot Way Brick Walk.

Community leaders, including State Representative Hugh Shine and Mayor David Leigh, gathered alongside veterans, VFW members, and local residents to commemorate the service and sacrifice of veterans. Belton's Patriot Way Brick Walk, originally established through a collaboration between the Chamber and the City of Belton, serves as a lasting tribute to local veterans. The brick walk, located along Central Avenue, includes engraved bricks representing individual veterans, accompanied by storyboards that share their history. Each year, the walk expands as families and friends add new bricks to honor veterans past and present.

The ceremony's highlight was the recognition of new honorees with bricks added during the past year. This year's honorees included Ray D. August, Capt. John Biggerstaff, Joe Brady, Sgt. Luis A. Montero, Maj. Charles W. Sage, and many others. A full list of honorees is available on the Belton Chamber's website.

The Belton City Council authorized Cynthia Hernandez, the Executive Director of the Belton Economic Development Corporation, to execute a contract with Bell Contractors for the construction of the IH-14 water and wastewater improvement project. The project includes a waterline extension for Dog Ridge beginning at FM 1670 to IH-14 extending east to 190 Land and terminating at Auction Barn Road. The cost of the project is \$2,726,718.

The University of Mary Hardin-Baylor

See **YEAR,**
Page A9



NEW YEAR'S RESOLUTIONS

1. Transform my backyard into the ultimate escape.
2. Add privacy and good looks to yard.
3. Extend home with a new YellaWood® brand deck.
4. Create a chair that marries modern design with unbeatable comfort.
5. Talk to the experts at



Year - From Page A8



(UMHB) and members of the Central Texas community established a Presidential Endowed Scholarship to honor fallen soldier Staff Sergeant Felix M. Conde-Falcon. SSG Conde-Falcon's children, Richard Conde and Jeannie Holland attended the university's annual Military Appreciation Football game, where they were honored alongside representatives from the Military Officers Association of America – Central Texas Chapter, American Legion Post 133, and VFW Posts 4008 and 10377, in a ceremony at halftime.

Staff Sergeant Felix M. Conde-Falcon was posthumously awarded the Medal of Honor for his bravery during the Vietnam War. SSG Conde-Falcon distinguished himself on April 4, 1969, when he was killed in the line of duty after destroying multiple enemy bunkers and demonstrating extraordinary leadership under fire.

To date, this endowment has received \$120,000 in contributions. A scholarship will be awarded to an eligible freshman or sophomore UMHB student enrolled in the ROTC.

The City of Belton and the Belton Area Chamber of Commerce partnered to purchase a 30-foot-long, 6-foot-wide walking bridge over Nolan Creek. The bridge itself will be placed over the water crossing near PNC Bank and the tax office. The City of Belton will add wheels to the bridge which will make it movable. The bridge itself is a temporary bridge for use during the July 4th celebration and other major events. This bridge will give better access to Liberty Park and parking at the Belton Christian Youth Center parking lot.



December

Members of the Belton Education Foundation (BEF), joined by Belton ISD administrators, surprised teachers across the district with funding to fulfill wish lists aimed at enhancing learning opportunities. In total, nearly \$125,000 in grants were awarded to support 36 projects, the largest amount awarded to date. These grants, distributed to staff at 18 campuses and the Teaching and Learning Department, will have a district-wide impact.



The grants will fund everything from BBQ equipment for the district's first BBQ team, The Slab, to the launch of the STEM-based learning program Project Lead the Way. Other initiatives include the creation of a student garden, enhanced classroom technology, innovative teaching tools, and resources to support district-wide programs aimed at fostering creativity, critical thinking, and hands-on learning opportunities for students.

Teachers from Delta 18+ were awarded funding to create

The property in question was in Belton and Salado City limits, Belton ETJ and Bell County. The situation of multiple jurisdictions is common at the city's edge. These entities worked out a solution for a property swap so the property in question is in the Salado City Limits.

The annual Christmas on the Chisholm Trail had its activities, along with the annual Christmas Parade, moved to Dec. 14 because of inclement weather on Dec. 7. An ice-skating rink was set up in the city parking lot next to



a Delta Garden at their new facility, set to open in the spring.

The cities and citizens of Belton and Temple combined forces and met at the Harris Community Center on Dec. 3 to honor and thank State Rep. Hugh Shine, for his dedicated service from 1986 – 1991 and 2016 – 2024 before his successor takes office in January 2025. It was a packed house with county commissioners, schoolboards, city chambers, and many prominent community members. The program began with the City of Belton Mayor David K. Leigh welcoming guests then proclamations were read jointly between both city mayors.

Shay Luedeke, Bell County Tax Assessor, and Russell Schneider, Bell County Commissioner, Precinct 1, presented a check for \$25,869 to the City of Belton for their share of funds collected from an additional fee of \$1.50 for each vehicle registered in the County. The funds will be used for their intended purpose, helping fund crossing guards for school children. Luedeke and Schneider also presented the council with a check of \$21,245 from hotel tax collected.

Council members Dave Covington, John Holmes, and Stephanie O'Banion were appointed to review the City's updated Personnel Policy Manual and provide recommendations to the council for adoption.

There was a public hearing and afterward, the council approved an ordinance amending the Project Plan and Financing Plan for the City of Belton Tax Increment Reinvestment Zone #1 for the extension of wastewater services to future phases of River Place on the west side of TX 317, north of FM 439.

The Council authorized the City Manager to execute a Boundary Adjustment Agreement between the City of Belton, the Village of Salado, and CELTS International LLC, regarding adjusting the common boundaries of Belton and Salado city limits, on property located northwest of the intersection of IH-35 and FM 2484.

Cochran, Blair & Potts Department Store and was free to the public.

The Belton Area Chamber of Commerce board approved two park improvement plans that were requested by Leadership Belton members. The plans include upgrades to Miller Heights and Yettie Polk Parks. One of those additional amenities is to resurface the basketball court and replace existing poles and backboards. The group is forming a staggered list of things to do at Miller Heights, and additional items will be added. Other improvements planned for the park include adding a bench for basketball spectators, adding two or three dog-waste stations and landscaping around the court and around the park entrance sign. Leadership Belton will help raise the needed money.

The other group has its eyes on Yettie Polk Park, the city's oldest recreation area. There are a few existing security cameras along the trail as well, but Leadership Belton wants to add more.

The 6.2-acre Miller Heights Park is located on South Miller Street and includes picnic tables and grills, a playground, a basketball court in need of repairs, a fitness station and about a half-mile of walking trails.

Gulf States Toyota (GST), in partnership with Don Ringler Toyota, donated more than \$41,000 worth of new automotive parts to the automotive training programs at Belton High School and Lake Belton High School. The donation, valued at \$41,845.14 in retail, includes essential automotive components such as transmissions, wiring harnesses, alternators, and other high-quality parts. This initiative was made possible through collaboration between GST, Don Ringler Toyota, and the automotive instructors at Belton Independent School District (BISD), ensuring the parts directly meet the needs of the schools' training programs.

EDITORIAL

A Sobering New Year

Shop the Insanity • Darren Blair

One of the first jobs I ever had was as an attendant at a long-term vehicle storage facility. If new cars came in, I was to use one of the company's digital cameras (which used floppy disks for data storage, if that tells you how long ago it was) to take detailed photographs of each vehicle as proof of the condition we received it in. If cars were being retrieved, I was to help wash them and clean them up. At least once a week, I was to drive a utility cart through the lot; we had a gas-powered air compressor on a trailer, and I would use that compressor to air up any tires that were low.

In between all of this, as time permitted I was to inspect the premises and pick up trash. So about 2 – 3 times a week I would take a plastic wagon-like cart, load it with tools & trash bags, and walk around. The company was located at the intersection of two main roads, and so there was constantly trash that needed to be picked up.

The most frustrating – and dangerous – part of this job involved picking up broken alcohol bottles. People would drive along at night, fling their empties out the

window, and let the bottles shatter to pieces in or next to the road. Not only did this indicate someone driving drunk, it also meant that there was a risk of shredded tires, shredded feet, or shredded hands as innocent parties found the broken glass the hard way.

Fast forward several years, and I'm delivering newspapers to finish paying for college. No more broken alcohol bottles, right? Rather, folks, I find myself being the first person on the scene of two drunk driving accidents in the span of 11 months. One of these accidents resulted in the death of the driver. The other resulted in an innocent teenager going to the hospital and two other vehicles (aside from the driver's vehicle) being so badly damaged that it's a miracle everyone survived. There are certain sounds and visuals I'm never going to be able to scrub from my brain, and a part of me is going to keep wondering about the aftermath for everyone else involved.

Is it any wonder that I'm not keen on the idea of people drinking and driving?

Folks, "drinking" and "driving" don't go together. If you plan on doing one, don't do the other. If you're going to drink, make sure that you've secured a safe ride home, whether it's a designated driver, a sober individual you can count on, or a credible cab service of some kind. The only time your car keys should leave your pocket is if you're handing them over to someone reliable who can guard them until you're in shape enough to be trusted to have them back.

And yes, folks, there's no such thing as "only a little buzzed" or "one for the road". If you drink, you're not going anywhere under your own power, not unless you want to endanger others. It's that simple.

If you don't already make "having a safe ride home" a part of your routine when you go out, go ahead and add that to your list of New Year's resolutions. Too many lives are changed forever, or even ended, by drunk driving. Again folks, "drinking" or "driving", not both. That choice needs to be made before you even think about cracking open that first cold one.

JESUS *is the* REASON *for the* SEASON

For unto us a Child is born,
unto us a Son is given, and the
government will be on His shoulders.

And He will be called Wonderful
Counselor, Mighty God, Everlasting
Father, Prince of Peace.

— *Isaiah 9:6*



Wishing You A Blessed Christmas Season, From Our Family To Yours.





Lake Belton girls' basketball at Aggieland Invitational

By Tony Adams
Belton Journal

The Lake Belton Broncos girls' basketball began their post-Christmas schedule with a visit to College Station to play at the Aggieland Invitational.

Pool E play started on Thursday, as the Broncos, Kingwood Mustangs and College Station Cougars battled in a round-robin.

The pool began with the Cougars having pulled away from the Mustangs late, 56-40.

Two hours later, the Broncos faced Kingwood.

Lake overcame a five-point deficit by holding Kingwood scoreless for a stretch of six minutes in the final quarter and 13 straight points to upend the Mustangs, 39-35.

The Broncos led after the first quarter, 10-8, as Alexa King had five points in the opening period.

Lake got balanced scoring in the second quarter, as they outscored Kingwood 12-10, and led by six points at the half, 22-16.

The Mustangs ripped through the third quarter on a 13-4 pace, and led the Broncos going into the fourth period, 29-26.

Lake Belton's defense forced several turnovers after the Mustangs captured a 33-29 advantage with 6:10 to play.

Ariella Polley, Jordan Carter, Layla King, and Alexa King combined for the 13-point streak and the defense held off the final Kingwood push.

Alexa King led the Broncos with 14 points. Natalie Maldonado had eight points, and Carter chipped in five.

Pool E play ended with a battle against College Station.

The Cougars scored the first 12 points

See **AGGIELAND**,
Page B2

Belton ISD sports year in review

By Clay Whittington
The Belton Journal

Belton ISD athletics had a great start to the end of 2004.

After concluding the 2023-24 school year with a wealth of success, Belton and Lake Belton entered the offseason with the hopes of building on the performance when the schedules began anew in the fall.

So far, the programs have achieved the feat.

Belton and Lake Belton each advanced to the playoffs in both football and volleyball, and the Lady Tigers cross country team captured their district championship thanks in part to standout Olivia Brillhart, who capped off her career with a fourth consecutive appearance at the state meet.

After placing 53rd in the University Interscholastic League Class 6A state meet as a freshman, Brillhart followed with 17th- and 56th-place showings in the ensuing years.

Then, in her final season, she won the district title, finished fourth at the Region II meet and emerged from the state meet 26th overall with a time of 19 minutes, 10.0 seconds.

While Brillhart was leading the way, multiple Lady Tigers had impressive campaigns.

At the district meet, Belton narrowly edged out Lake Belton for the team title. The Lady Tigers placed three runners – Brillhart, sophomore Isabella Warner (4th, 20:39.9) and senior Liliana Nelson (6th, 20:56.7) – in the top 10 to help amass 40 points, while the Lady Broncos tallied 42 points.

Hailey Schutz, a senior, and junior Delilah Hoffman were 13th (21:49.3) and 16th (22:24.0), respectively, to round out the Lady Tigers' score. Additionally, sophomore Lilyana Gallegos (17th, 22:24.9) and junior Destiny Schutz (22nd, 22:53.7) raced for Belton, but their times did not count toward the team total.

Individually, Lake Belton freshman Teagan Pettijohn was third (20:11.2), while teammates Lucy Loa (7th, 20:59.4), a freshman, sophomore Jenna Benedick (8th, 21:09.3), freshman Elizabeth Sandlin (9th, 21:23.0) and freshman Alayna Fulton (15th, 22:17.4) followed.

Also representing the Lady Broncos were sophomore Sarah Gray (19th, 22:45.2) and freshman Claire Henn (25th, 23:37.9).

The Lady Broncos' season ended at the regional meet, where they were 14th.

In the boys five-kilometer regional race, senior David Shelburne was 31st (16:51.98),

and 19.3 points for the season, senior deep snapper Collin Sallee, sophomore center Ben Gutierrez, sophomore lineman Angel Zarate, Shepard and Ross landed on the first team.

Defensively, Sherwood was honored as a safety and returner, and senior teammate Damien Tiumalu joined him as one of five outside linebackers named to the first team.

The Tigers also placed senior offensive lineman Ashton Spillers, senior kicker Cole Angell, senior defensive tackle Hayden Holman, junior running back Gino Zecca, junior cornerback Caleb Heacock and sophomore cornerback Azian Wilkinson along with Sallee, a tight end, and Tiumalu, a returner, on the second team.

In its third year as a UIL program, the Broncos are still searching for their first playoff victory after a trio of first-round exits, but Lake Belton has plenty of premier pieces to continue building around, according to district coaches.

The Broncos were awarded a superlative and 10 first-team spots and placed 10 more players on the second team after finishing in a three-way tie for second place in the final District 8-5A, Division I standings with a 7-4, 5-2 record.

Lake Belton junior Davion Peters earned the highest accolade, being named utility player of the year. He led the team with 57 receptions for 707 yards and six touchdowns and carried the ball 60 times for 512 yards and a team-high 10 touchdowns rushing.

Complementing the superlative showing, senior running back Tekoa Martin, senior receiver Zach Dodd, senior offensive linemen Caleb Loper and Tucker Schwartz, senior center Brett Harmon, senior defensive ends Zion Williams and Jeremiah Battreall, senior safety Josh Mallard, junior defensive tackle Evan Lazott and junior inside linebacker Gavin Owens were placed on the first team for the Broncos.

Lake Belton's second-team members were senior tight end Isaiah Reed, senior offensive lineman Tate Lisenbe, senior inside linebacker Aisea Filitonga, senior punter Tommy Stephens, junior quarterback Maverik Maddux, junior receiver Christian Onchwari, junior defensive tackle Caleb Chandler, junior safety Braxton Cope, junior cornerback Ayden Mitchell and sophomore receiver Zion Harness.

On the volleyball court, for the second consecutive year, both Belton and Lake Belton excelled during the schedule with each situating themselves among the league's top strong outings.

In the opener against Gatesville, Flory finished with five points, including a 3-pointer, in a 28-26 win, but the Lady Tigers could not maintain the momentum.

Later that day, Skidmore-Tynan earned a 48-23 as Flory had another five-point performance. Freshman teammate Isabella Warner led Belton with 13 points in the loss.

The Lady Tigers rebounded by defeating Troy 38-38 and West by a point, 38-37, to capture third place.

Against Troy, Warner led the squad

the Lady Tigers will be forced to fight for a postseason berth, beginning Friday against the host Lady Broncos.

If its final tune-up is any indication, however, Belton is prepared for the challenge.

Competing at the two-day Troy tournament during the weekend, the Lady Tigers posted a 3-1 record to finish third overall at the event.

En route to the program's best tournament showing in recent history, Belton junior guard Emma Flory was named to the all-tournament team following a series of

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En route to the program's best tournament showing in recent history, Belton junior guard Emma Flory was named to the all-tournament team following a series of

four teams to earn return trips to the playoffs.

While the accomplishment was not easy, it is easy to see why the squads were successful.

In total, the Lady Broncos and Lady Tigers combined to place 13 players on the 16-5A All-District Team, including five superlative recipients.

For Lake Belton, which finished second in the final standings before advancing to the third round of the playoffs, junior Madison Bingham, who recorded 287 assists during district, was named most valuable setter, while teammates Kaitlyn Hutchins and Ava Wood were named co-offensive player of the year and co-newcomers of the year, respectively.

With 144 kills during district, Hutchins split her award with Ellison sophomore outside hitter Ja'lya Swiney, while Wood, a sophomore middle blocker, shared her honor accolade with Belton freshman Malu Pula. Wood had 49 kills and 27 blocks during district play.

Additionally, Lady Tigers senior Macey Duskocil was named most valuable utility player by a unanimous vote.

Belton reached the area round of the playoffs.

While the quintet received the loftiest acknowledgements, they were not the only local players recognized.

Lake Belton standouts Gabby Jones, a senior outside hitter, senior libero Hanna Ward, who set a new school record with 521 digs this season, and junior defensive specialist Keileigh Krueger landed on the 13-person first team, and they were joined by third-place Belton's Miley Davila, a junior defensive specialist, and junior middle hitter Kaitlyn McCracken.

On the second team, Natalie Maldonado, a senior defensive specialist, and senior middle blocker Mykenna Johnston represented the Lady Broncos, while junior outside hitter Cierra Stites and Landry Duggan, a junior setter, were selected for the Lady Tigers.

Junior outside hitter Morgan Kukulski, senior setter Hannah Kasner, junior outside hitters Thia Allison and Nia Grayson and freshman outside hitter Abbi Jones were each honorable mentions for Lake Belton, while Belton's honorable mentions were junior setter Hadley Dollar, junior middle hitter Lyza LeBlanc, junior setter Kelsey Murrow, senior outside hitter Avelle Bonfoh, senior Bella Pula, sophomore libero Allie Goodnight and junior defensive specialist Marissa Hinojos.

Lady Tigers ready for basketball district schedule

By Clay Whittington
The Belton Journal

District competition has arrived, and the Lady Tigers appear ready.


After two months of preparing through both practice and play, the final 10-game stretch of the regular-season schedule has arrived. Now, every outcome is critical to Belton's chances of returning to the playoffs for the first time since 2022.

In a highly talented District 16-5A along with Lake Belton, Killeen Chaparral, Killeen, Waco and Waco University,



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Aggieland - From Page B1

and never looked back as they defeated the Broncos,




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FISHING REPORT



Belton

GOOD. Water stained; 63 degrees; 2.22 feet below pool. Thanks to continued mild weather, the white bass and hybrid striper fishing is consistent and in keeping with how it typically is this time of year. Fishing is best as a front arrives and north or northwest wind velocity increases. Fishing is worse once the north winds subside leaving cold, calm, and clear conditions. Fishing is average as the southerly winds return, and until the next front arrives. White bass fishing is fair with the MAL. Original with chartreuse tail for vertical work in deep water, and the White Tornado in 1-1/8 ounce white color for horizontal work when fish show to be carpeting the bottom to either or both sides of the boat. The morning bite is from 7:45-11:00 a.m. Expect a weaker, shorter afternoon bite from 1:45-5:00 p.m. Gulls are beginning to show and help to find fish during the first hour of the day. Report by Bob Maimdelle, Holding the Line Guide Service. Catfishing continues to be excellent. While water temperatures dropping, anglers should search for blue catfish in deeper, 30-45 feet, river channels and around steep ledges. Larger cut baits have been effective for trophy size fish. Eater fish under 10 pounds are still active and slow drifting with small cut shad along sand flats. Channel catfish are fair but can still be caught on warmer days using punch bait in 15 to 25 ft of water. Report by Brian Worley, B&S Catfishing.



Stillhouse

GREAT. Water stained; 60 degrees; 2.18 feet below pool. The white bass and largemouth bass are still putting on a show at Stillhouse with 2-angler catches over 100 fish in a morning. White bass are feeding on the edges of flats in the 20-foot range just after sunrise, then moving quickly deeper and continuing to feed until around 10:45 a.m. Fish can be caught as deep as 48-53 feet, especially on calmer, clearer days when the sun's rays reach that deep on this lake's very clear water. As of December 16, the water temperature from top to bottom was still 58-62 degrees, but will likely drop entirely into the high 50s with the chilly weather forecast heading into the weekend. MAL Dense Lures with silver bodies and chartreuse tails worked straight up off the bottom aided by a splashier are getting these results. We will likely drop back to a Bladed Hazy Eye Slab with a spinner and stinger hook going forward as the water cools and the fish slow down. There are plenty of largemouth bass and freshwater drum mixed in with the white bass in these same deep water areas. The shad-imitating 5/8 ounce Bladed Hazy Eye Slab is the go-to bait for these fish. Report by Bob Maimdelle, Holding the Line Guide Service.

66-31. Taylor Cornehl, Toree Burleson, and Tearra Burleson combined to score the opening 12 points in a span of 5:05.

Maldonado's 12-foot jumper from the right side gave the Broncos their lone basket of the quarter with 1:08 to go.

The Cougars outscored the Broncos in the second quarter, 20-4, using a full court press, having forced turnovers and ill-timed shots as they led at the half, 32-6.

The King twins each drilled a three-pointer to bookend field goals in the third period. The Broncos made six trips to the free-throw line in the quarter but

were only able to convert 5-of-12 attempts. College Station led going into the final period, 47-19.

The Cougars rotated the regulars and reserves in and were able to give College Station 19 points in the final period.

Alexa King led Lake with nine points and Layla King added seven.

On Friday, the Broncos faced Richardson in the beginning of Silver Bracket play.

The Eagles were active on the offensive boards and were able to take advantage of many second-chance shots as Richardson defeated the Broncos, 48-35.

Lake trailed 6-0 before

having scored seven to take their lone lead of the game. The Eagles went on a 6-2 stretch to finish the first quarter and led 12-9.

Richardson scored three baskets off third-chance opportunities and another three from second-chance as the Eagles outscored the Broncos 13-5 in the second quarter and led at halftime, 25-14.

The Eagles continued to pound the glass, as they outscored the Broncos in the 3rd third quarter, 15-10. Alexa King and Maldonado were able to keep things in check for Lake. However, they trailed the Eagles after three periods, 40-24.

Alexa King and Mal-

donado each had nine points, Layla King had seven points, and Polley chipped in five.

The Broncos finished the tournament on Friday afternoon as they took on the Bryan Rudder Rangers.

Turnovers led to a great deal of consternation for the Broncos in the even quarters, as the Rangers outscored Lake 44-18 in route to a 65-42 loss.

Lake nudged out front early on the Rangers, 8-5. Rudder took the lead late in the quarter and held a 9-8 advantage heading into the second period.

The Rangers turned on the full court press and forced several turnovers that were converted into Rudder points. The Broncos were outscored in the second period, 23-9, and trailed at halftime, 32-17.

Lake cut the margin to nine points over the first three minutes of the second half, and outscored the Rangers in the third quarter, 16-12. The Broncos held out hope by staying close, having trailed Rudder going into the fourth stanza, 44-33.

Lake scored the first basket in the fourth quarter to slice the margin to single digits before Rudder finished the game on a 21-7 run.

Alexa King led the Broncos with 15 points, Layla King added ten, and Maldonado chipped in eight.

"We learned a great deal from this tournament," Lake Belton head coach Tiffney Barnes said. "We will need to work on some things ahead of the start of district play."

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Financial considerations when changing jobs

Scot Hrbacek, CFP® Financial Advisor

Are you changing jobs soon? If so, you'll obviously be interested in your new salary — but you'll also want to look at other financial considerations.

know if there's a waiting period before you can get on your new employer's health insurance. If so, you may need to explore COBRA coverage or get on your spouse's plan.

For starters, if you had a 401(k) through your previous employer, you'll need to decide what to do with it. You could leave it alone, if allowed, or transfer it to your new employer's 401(k), or roll it over to an IRA.

Don't forget term life insurance — does your new employer offer a group plan?

Finally, look at other available benefits. Your new employer may offer tuition reimbursement to help further your career or even provide college planning benefits for your children, such as matching contributions to a 529 education savings plan.

Changing jobs can be rewarding in many ways — so make sure you know all the benefits involved.

This Article was written by Edward Jones for use by your local Edward Jones Financial Advisor

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EDITORIAL

Things I Learned on My Christmas Vacation

Pleasant Ramblings • Mark Magnan

When I was in school I always disliked the written version of what I did on my vacation, whatever it was, either summer or the Christmas break. Of course when I was in school it was just a few days off at Christmas, not the extended break that is common now. We did get the week between Christmas day and New Year's day off, but then it was back to the coal mine. We often had the assignment on that first day to write about what happened during the time we were away from school. It was viewed as a way to encourage us to write, however I think it was a way for the teacher to give the students something to do that didn't require any effort on their part. I didn't enjoy that task as much as I do these days, but it did refine my skills, never did my teacher think that I would someday be a world famous writer. So in keeping with that tradition passed down over the years, here are a few things that I learned on my Christmas vacation, as opposed to the things that I "did" which are not that exciting.

After listening to Christmas music for a month or more, I realized

that there were some singers that had great voices in the days before all the technology enhancements came along. These singers were obviously very famous in their days, I guess the "rock stars" of their time. And yes, we have some very good singers these days, but a lot of what we see now is flash and over use of some techniques that were not as popular a few decades ago. Some of those Christmas songs set the bar for that specific song and it is hard to go beyond that, even with technology. There are a few instances where I prefer a modern version over the older versions. And, as I stated a couple of weeks back, I am more of a purist when it comes to Christmas songs, I am not a huge fan of the novelty song. With that said, I will be happy to tune back into my normal type of music and put off the Christmas tunes until November again.

Other items of interest. Turkey is a good meal, singular. Oh I eat sliced turkey during the year, but I don't think that actually counts. A full bird for a meal is just a lot, and not what you want to have for several days, and

turn around and have to not only cook another but eat another as well in just a short thirty days. Now if someone could breed a turkey that is the size of the small game hens, I would be on board with that. Pop one in the oven, no hours spent preparing and cooking, just in and out. I could easily finish one of those at a sitting. No leftovers for multiple days, no huge bones to get rid of, just the perfect holiday bird. Now don't get me wrong, the other menu items are fine being supersized, like mashed potatoes and of course dressing. A large baking pan of dressing is the proper amount. The only time you have too much dressing or mashed potatoes is when you run out of gravy. And leftovers of those dishes are acceptable. The reheating is a real trick, but well worth the effort.

It seems like you get a lot of very odd ads at this time of the year, retailers trying to sell you anything during the Christmas rush.

Apparently there is a mix that is made of mushrooms but is supposed to taste just like coffee, only a lot better for you. I am a "no thank you" at this

point. If I go to a friend's house and they make me a cup and it indeed tastes like coffee then I might be more inclined to try a box, or can, or whatever it comes in. Right now I really enjoy my normal coffee.

Of course we all overeat during the holiday season. Did you know that there is some powder that you mix into your favorite beverage in the morning, it gives you energy all day, and the pounds just fall off? I am not sold on that one either. Oh, and by the way, it tastes fantastic too! My experience with some of these is that it ruins your favorite morning drink, tastes chalky and really doesn't help you lose weight, other than the fact that it takes the edge off of your appetite for a few hours because it upsets your stomach.

And finally, who doesn't like to get socks for Christmas!?? I have seen no less than a dozen ads for socks this season. Did you people not get enough socks and underclothes for Christmas as a child? Heck, if I want socks, I just go to the store in the summer and buy them, I certainly don't want my Christmas stocking stuffed with socks!

Back in the day...

My Front Porch • Lynette Sowell

...some of us lived dangerously, when we were in our teens. We had skills that some "kids these days" don't. Like, how to handle a crisis hundreds of miles from home, with no cell phone, no GPS, no Internet.

This time of year with weather extremes makes me think of snow days and the road conditions that come with them. Like the time I'd just completed three weeks of "J-term" in January at my college in Pennsylvania and we had a long weekend before the real semester started.

Some fellow New England students and I decided to go home for a quick weekend trip.

I did what any sensible 19-year-old would do, I used the dorm's pay phone to call home and let them know I'd be home for the weekend, and if they could meet me at the mall near I-84 in Connecticut.

My parents were thrilled I'd found a ride for the more than 300-mile trek. If we had any delay, we'd stop at a pay phone and call home.

Carla, Ruth and I piled our stuff into the back of Carla's station wagon and set off. The forecast for northeastern Pennsylvania was for snow, possibly six to eight inches. We planned to leave before the snow fell in earnest. A little bit of snow didn't scare us New England girls.

Night fell, snow fell harder as we drove. It was my turn to drive on the northeast side of Scranton and until we joined I-84. Somewhere between Scranton and Port Jervis, New York, the road grew slick.

During a downhill slope, it happened. The station wagon slid. We glided into the wire guardrail, soft as bumper car, did a 180 and the car stopped. The engine died.

No lights, heat, nada. Carla was extremely calm. It dawned on me I'd just wrecked my friend's car. In a snowstorm. In the mountains of northeastern Pennsylvania. Alone. The next exit was less than a mile ahead. The sign promised a truck stop and food and fuel. Which meant phones.

I volunteered to walk. Carla said she'd stay with the car. Ruth said she wouldn't let me walk alone. Not five minutes after we'd gotten stuck and were making plans, a vehicle approached, someone's souped-up engine. Out of a Charger popped a pair of the Penn. equivalent of good 'ole boys.

The pair offered to give us a ride as far as the next exit to the truck stop.

So, Ruth and I glanced at each other, took a deep breath and said, "Okay."

(All parents reading this column collectively scream or holler. I would have.) They gave us a ride without incident, dropped us off at the truck stop, wished us luck and were gone.

We called home, promising to call again as soon as we got some help. All the tow trucks were on the roads, helping idiots like us. Meanwhile, what about Carla—was she okay, was she cold? Had we been dumb to leave

her? And what about her car? A trucker, riding out the storm overnight, offered us his sleeping cabin and he would sleep in a restaurant booth. We turned him down politely.

At last, a tow truck pulled into the station, and he learned of the plight of foolish young women on the road in a blizzard. He would give us a ride and check the car. We made quick phone calls (our poor parents!) and headed back to the car.

Thankfully, Carla hadn't frozen. A very nice and cranky Pennsylvania state police officer was reading her the riot act for attempting a trip in a blizzard at night. Tow Truck Man popped the hood, jiggled some wires, told Carla to turn the key, and voila—engine started.

Our parents would've been proud at our politeness as we hopped into the car, our faces red, and promised to be careful. Tow Truck Man wouldn't accept a time for his help.

"Just get your ***** home in one piece."

The weather cleared after leaving Pennsylvania, and the rest of the trip was without incident.

So after this tale, I dare you, especially if you're under 30. Leave your cell phone home for a day. See how you do. Do you remember anyone's phone numbers? Can you figure out to do in an emergency without what's-her-name in an app giving you advice? See if you can function like we did, back in the day, even in our foolishness. One day, you might just have to.

Thanks for ringing in the new year with us

From Your Favorite Belton Journal Family:



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Delta Students

Last but not least, by far our favorite workers, the BISD Delta 18+ & Temple Work-Based Learning students, or as we call them, our Lifesaving Department



BELTON ISD MIDDLE SCHOOL MUSICIANS SHINE IN TMEA ALL-REGION BAND AUDITIONS

Belton ISD students were part of more than 360 middle school musicians who competed in the TMEA All-Region Band Auditions in College Station on Saturday, August 26. Remarkably, nearly 75 percent of our students earned a place in the TMEA Region 8 South Zone All-Region Band, which performed at the Region Clinic and Concert held at the Belton High School Performing Arts Center on November 9. This outstanding achievement includes 2 students from South Belton Middle School, 21 from Belton Middle School, 34 from North Belton Middle School, and 47 from Lake Belton Middle School.

These talented young musicians displayed outstanding technical skill and a deep appreciation for musical expression and teamwork. Earning seats in the All-Region Band required them to excel in challenging auditions evaluated by expert judges. This remarkable achievement not only highlights the dedication and talent of these students but also reflects the exceptional support and guidance provided by the Belton ISD Fine Arts Department in fostering such extraordinary potential.

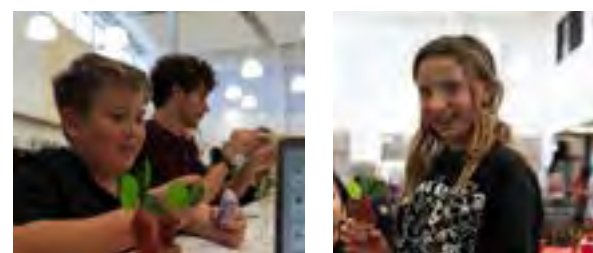
The directors leading these talented students are Chris Pulley and Patrick Trahan at Belton Middle School; Jordan Dolotina and Camber Comeaux at Lake Belton Middle School; Dane Wurman and Kaitlyn Pineiro at North Belton Middle School; and Chris Ross and Evan Simmons at South Belton Middle School.



MAGIC AND MASTERY:

HARRY POTTER CRAFTERNOON AT SOUTH BELTON MIDDLE SCHOOL

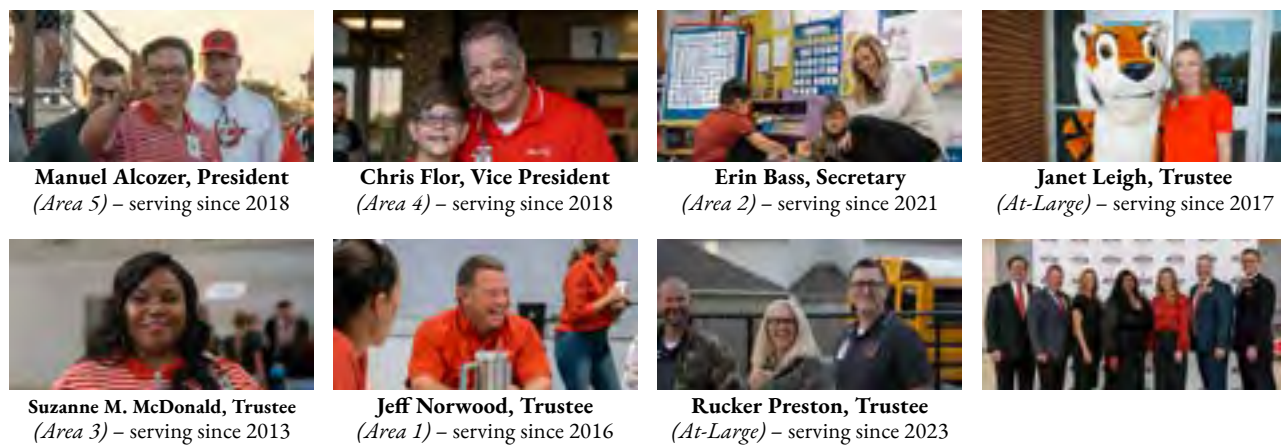
South Belton Middle School recently hosted a magical “Harry Potter Crafternoon” in the library. Students created their own pencil wands, created mandrake pots, and took the online sorting hat quiz to discover their Hogwarts house, followed by making a personalized house button. Through this fun and creative event, students also practiced key Journey of a Graduate competencies, collaborating, creating, and exploring new interests together. It was an engaging experience that brought the magic of Harry Potter to life while building essential skills!



HONORING BELTON ISD’S BOARD OF TRUSTEES: CHAMPIONS OF EDUCATION

The Big Red Community is proud to celebrate Belton ISD’s Board of Trustees all January 2025 for School Board Recognition Month. These dedicated volunteers are passionate advocates for public education, serving our students, staff, and taxpayers with a commitment to Belton ISD’s mission. They bring vision and leadership, bridging the community and the classroom to create exceptional learning experiences for each and every student in our district.

Belton ISD’s School Board members include:



UNLOCKING LEARNING:

CORALINE ESCAPE ROOM AT TARVER ELEMENTARY

Alice J. Tarver Elementary brought reading to life with a thrilling *Coraline*-themed escape room in the library. Based on one of the 5th grade read-aloud books, this interactive experience offered students a fun, hands on approach to practicing essential reading skills. As students worked together to solve clues and “escape,” they immersed themselves in the story while building comprehension in an engaging and unforgettable way. It was a learning adventure that truly made reading standards come alive!



Q&A WITH DR. MALINDA GOLDEN



Since stepping into her role as superintendent in February 2024, Dr. Malinda Golden has been dedicated to advancing the vision of Belton ISD. With nearly a year leading the district, she continues to strengthen community ties and implement initiatives that support students, families, and staff across the district. Dr. Golden’s passion for creating empowering, inclusive educational opportunities remains a driving force in her leadership. As 2024 comes to a close, she reflects on the district’s achievements, shares her goals for the future, and offers new insights into her role and vision for Belton ISD. Here is a chance to learn more...

Q: Can you share a moment during your campus visits that truly exemplifies the spirit of Belton ISD?

A: As I approached Charter Oak Elementary recently, I was greeted by colorful chalk art on the sidewalk, filled with positive messages about kindness. The Journey of a Graduate competency, empathy, truly came to life as I walked into the doors.

During my classroom visits, a second-grade student enthusiastically showed me the kindness bookmarks she and her friends in the Kindness Club created for the entire

campus. Her passion for fostering kindness among peers had blossomed into a student-led club, fully supported by the school to focus on building empathy. It was inspiring to witness students actively cultivating Journey of a Graduate competencies—not just through lessons but by taking the initiative to grow these qualities within their school community.

Q: How is Belton ISD supporting teachers and staff to help them feel valued and motivated?

A: Goal 4 is all about ensuring that people feel valued and supported in Belton ISD. We’ve even adopted a key progress measure to guide us in doing this effectively. Annual survey data shows high engagement across our school community, but we still have work to do in helping everyone feel truly valued. Our vision is for staff to arrive in the parking lot feeling excited to be here. We’re currently exploring how we recognize our staff—how they prefer to be acknowledged, respected, and celebrated. Each department and campus, with district support, is working to better understand this. Celebrating someone is deeply personal, and we want to make sure it’s done meaningfully. We’re already implementing initiatives like the Big Red Heart Award, but we know there’s more we can do. We’re on a journey to understand and put systems in place that honor each staff member in ways unique to them. Another way we’re showing appreciation is by sharing stories of our

staff’s impactful work. For example, at a recent campus visit I recognized an art teacher who’s doing incredible work by blending art with reading and writing, encouraging students to write about their creations. Sharing these stories helps ensure that everyone feels their contributions are valued and their work truly matters.

Q: How do you involve students in shaping the future of the district?

A: Engaging student voice has been and will continue to be a priority in Belton ISD. From involving students in the design of our two newest schools to actively engaging them through our Superintendent’s Student Advisory Council we are committed to listening to our students. Right now the council is helping us by reviewing attendance data and exploring root causes and solutions for attendance challenges. Last year, the council identified a need for more support around mental health, which led to the pilot launch of the Hope Squad this year.

Our students are also advocating strongly for programs they value, especially during challenging budget times, and I’m incredibly proud of how they are using their voices to make a difference. Continuing to involve students in these decisions is essential—they have valuable insights, and everything we design is ultimately for them, so their input is critical to getting it right.

NEWS AND UPDATES

BELTON ISD AND THE PENGUIN PROJECT PRESENT SHREK JR. – AN INSPIRING PERFORMANCE



Belton ISD and the Penguin Project are excited to return for a third year with *Shrek Jr. the Musical* from May 2-4, 2025, at the Belton High School Performing Arts Center. This remarkable collaboration showcases students with special needs performing on stage alongside student mentors, bringing a beloved story to life in an inspiring and unforgettable way. Don’t miss out—mark your calendars for this heartwarming event!

For more information, please contact Jennifer.Ramirez@bisd.net or Allison.Ware@bisd.net.

SAVE THE DATE: WALL OF HONOR CEREMONY

Join us on Saturday, May 17, 2025, as Belton High School celebrates its 25th class of Wall of Honor inductees. A meet and greet begins at 9 a.m., followed by the induction ceremony at 10 a.m. This prestigious event honors Belton’s finest athletes, commemorating achievements from 1909 to today. Don’t miss this special celebration of athletic excellence!



BELTON ISD REMINDS FAMILIES TO UPDATE CONTACT INFORMATION

As the cooler months approach, Belton ISD reminds families to ensure their child’s school has up-to-date contact information.

In the event of school delays or closures, BISD will communicate with families via ParentSquare (email, text messages, and phone calls), the district website and social media accounts, and local media outlets.

Families can update their contact details, including phone numbers and emails through the Skylert settings in Family Access (available in the left-hand menu). If primary contact information needs to be changed, families should contact their campus registrar.

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2022 BOND PROGRAM NEARING COMPLETION

In May of 2022, Belton ISD voters approved a \$173.8 million bond package to address growth and capacity, safety and security, and aging and equitable facilities. We are proud to share that as 2024 comes to a close, the bond program is nearing completion and students across the district are benefiting from the community's investment in our schools.

PROJECT AT-A-GLANCE - DECEMBER 2024

Construction projects with a green checkmark are open for student use unless otherwise noted.
Final closeout documents may be pending.

✓ complete ⌚ in progress

GROWTH AND CAPACITY PROJECTS

In all, Belton ISD's 2022 Bond resulted in nearly 1,400 new elementary seats in our fast-growing district.



✓ **JAMES L. BURRELL ELEMENTARY**
New K-5 elementary school
Opened January 2024



✓ **HUBBARD BRANCH ELEMENTARY**
New K-5 elementary school
Opened August 2024



✓ **SOUTHWEST ELEMENTARY ADDITION**
New 10-classroom addition, art and music classrooms, and gym
Opened August 2024



✓ **BELTON ISD AG FACILITY**
New facility for swine and poultry
Opened August 2024



✓ **LAND FOR FUTURE USE**
Two property purchases to date

SAFETY AND SECURITY PROJECTS



✓ **SECURITY VESTIBULES (15 CAMPUSES)**
Completed September 2024



✓ **EXTERIOR LIGHTING UPGRADES**
Completed August 2023
*Phase 2 pending, planned for Spring 2025



⌚ **ACCESS CONTROL AND SECURITY CAMERAS**
Anticipated completion January 2025



✓ **WATER REFILL STATIONS AND FOUNTAINS**
Completed August 2023



✓ **SHATTER-RESISTANT FILM**
Completed August 2023

AGING AND EQUITABLE FACILITIES



⌚ **CONSTRUCTION OF NEW DELTA PROGRAM FACILITY**
Anticipated completion in early 2025



✓ **BELTON HIGH SCHOOL CTE ADDITION**
New construction to accommodate ROTC, audio/visual, and culinary programs
Opened August 2024



✓ **BELTON HIGH SCHOOL INTERIOR FINISHES**
Completed August 2024



✓ **BELTON HIGH SCHOOL FINE ARTS ADDITION**
New band hall opened July 2024, final touches underway
Black box renovation in progress, anticipated completion in December 2024



✓ **BELTON HIGH SCHOOL CTE RENOVATIONS/UPGRADES**
Renovation project to provide new construction technology, agriculture, and vet tech classrooms
Classroom instructional spaces reached substantial completion in September 2024, new shop spaces supporting construction technology completed November 2024.



✓ **LAKE BELTON MIDDLE SCHOOL FINE ARTS EXPANSION**
Construction of new band hall, plus renovations to provide dedicated orchestra space
Opened August 2024



✓ **LAKE BELTON MIDDLE SCHOOL ATHLETICS SPACES**
New restrooms, concessions, locker rooms, and a training room for campus athletics
Opened August 2024



✓ **BELTON NEW TECH @WASKOW CTE/FINE ARTS IMPROVEMENTS**
Completed summer of 2022
Due to timing of this project, bond funds were not used

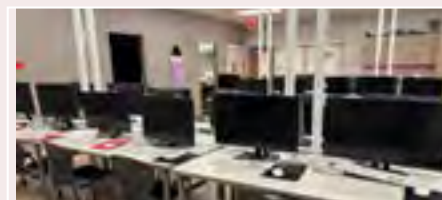
TRANSPORTATION/TECHNOLOGY



✓ **BUS PURCHASE #1:**
20 buses for 2023-24 school year



⌚ **BUS PURCHASE #2:**
10 new buses arriving soon



✓ **NEW STUDENT DEVICES**
Student devices distributed for 2024-25 school year



✓ **TECHNOLOGY INFRASTRUCTURE**
Dark fiber project completed June 2024

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13390 Bendle Road, Troy, Tx, \$315,000, 2 bed, 1 bath, Contact Vista Real Estate for more 254-231-0209

812 Leah Dr, Troy Tx, \$219,900, 4 bed 2 bath, Contact Vista Real Estate for more 254-231-0209

2 Cliffhouse Dr Unit #210, Belton, Tx, \$150,000, Contact Vista Real Estate for more 254-231-0209

4008 Pecan Meadow, Belton, Tx, \$1,150,000, 4 bed, 3.5 bath, Contact Vista Real Estate for more 254-231-0209

2609 N 15th Street, Temple, Tx, \$235,000, 3 bed, 2 bath, Contact Vista Real Estate for more 254-231-0209

TFN

\$264,900 3326 Charbray Drive Belton Residential 4Beds, 3.0Baths, 2,248 SqFt, Built in 2019 Ashford Homes in Sendero Estates presents the San Bernard River plan. 4 bedrooms, 3 full bathrooms Bradley Sheppard Regional Manager / Associate Broker Better Homes and Gardens Real Estate 254-541-2731

\$268,900 3318 Charbray Drive Belton Residential 4Beds, 3.0 Baths, 2,273 SqFt, Built in 2019 Ashford Homes in Sendero Estates presents the Verde floor plan. 4 bedrooms, 3 full bathrooms and a 3 car garage. Bradley Sheppard Regional Manager / Associate Broker Better Homes and Gardens Real Estate 254-541-2731

\$264,900 3208 Charbray Drive Belton Residential 4Beds, 3.0Baths, 2,248 SqFt, Built in 2019. Ashford Homes in Sendero Estates presents the San Bernard River plan. 4 bedrooms, 3 full bathrooms. Bradley Sheppard Regional Manager / Associate Broker Better Homes and Gardens Real Estate 254-541-2731

REAL ESTATE

\$226,900 3216 Charbray Drive Belton Residential 3Beds, 2.0Baths, 1,940 SqFt, Built in 2019 Ashford Homes in Sendero Estates presents the Guadalupe floor plan. 3 bedrooms, 2 full bathrooms. Bradley Sheppard Regional Manager / Associate Broker Better Homes and Gardens Real Estate 254-541-2731

\$229,900 3224 Charbray Drive Belton Residential 4Beds, 2.0Baths, 1,923 Sq Ft, built in 2019 Ashford Homes in Sendero Estates presents the Beals floor plan. 4 bedrooms, 2 full bathrooms. Bradley Sheppard Regional Manager / Associate Broker Better Homes and Gardens Real Estate 254-541-2731
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LEGALS

NOTICE TO CREDITORS

Notice is hereby given that original Letters Testamentary for the Estate of LINDA CAROL REID, Deceased, were issued on December 10, 2024, in Cause No. 24CPB00738, pending in the County Court-At-Law No: 1, Bell County, Texas, to: KERRI MICHELLE FEATHERSTON.

All persons having claims against this Estate which is currently being administered are required to present them to the undersigned within 120 days of this notice.

c/o: KERRI MICHELLE FEATHERSTON,, 431 S. Cedar Ridge Circle Robinson, Texas 76706

DATED the 17th day of December 2024.

Sarah Berryman Kendrick Attorney for KERRI MICHELLE FEATHERSTON, State Bar No.: 24064891, 3809 West Waco Drive, Waco, Texas 76710, Telephone: (254) 752-8644, Facsimile: (254) 752-8624,
Email: sarah@raineyandrainey.com 01.02

NOTICE TO CREDITORS

Notice is hereby given that original Letters Testamentary for the Estate of Edwin R. Haskovec, Deceased, were issued on December 17, 2024, in Cause No. 24CPB00659, pending in the County Court-At-Law No: 1, Bell County, Texas, to: Heather Nicole Franco.

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. Estate of Edwin R. Haskovec. c/o: Heather Nicole Franco, 1410 S. 35th St. Temple, Texas 76504

DATED the 20th day of December 2024.

Respectfully submitted, THE ZIMMERMAN LAW FIRM, P.C., By: /s/ Garrett L. Beach, Garrett L. Beach, State Bar No.: 24101493, 3501 W. Waco Dr., Waco, Texas 76710, Telephone: (254) 633-3333, Facsimile: (254) 752-9680, E-mail: gbeach@zlawhelp.com, Attorneys for Heather Nicole Franco 01.02

NOTICE TO CREDITORS

Notice is hereby given that original Letters Testamentary for the Estate of Steven Wayne Millsap, Deceased, were issued on December 16, 2024, in Cause No. 23CPB00656, pending in the County Court of Bell County, Texas, to Independent Executor Debra Lynn Millsap.

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: Melinda Hedrick Beard Kultgen Brophy Bostwick & Dickson, PLLC, 220 S. Fourth Street, Waco, Texas 76701

DATED the 23rd day of December, 2024.

LEGALS

Respectfully submitted, BEARD KULTGEN BROPHY BOSTWICK & DICKSON, PLLC, Melinda Hedrick, State Bar No. 24013395, 220 S. Fourth Street, Waco, Texas 76701, (254)776-5500, (254) 776-3591, (Facsimile), BY: /s/ Melinda Hedrick Melinda Hedrick
01.02

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ACREAGE From the Starry Nights to the City Lights this one-of-a-kind Texas Ranch is under 30 minutes to Waco & 1.5 hrs to Austin! Approx 29 acres with views over Leon River/Lake Belton! 3,000+ square ft custom home you must see to appreciate. Enjoy the fabulous chef's kitchen and large family room both with panoramic views. Take family game night to a whole new level with wet bar and full bath with separate entrance for possible future pool. Huge covered back porch to see the magnificent Texas night sky and enjoy cool nights by the custom fireplace. Everything is bigger and better in Texas and it is clear to see why when you see this amazing ranch!

NEW CONSTRUCTION! Beautiful rock and brick home situated on 1/2 acre in the newly developed Deer Grove subdivision in Belton ISD. The open floor plan features 3 bedrooms and 2 bath, a pop-up ceiling in the family room as well as a corner fireplace as a focal point. Large open kitchen with beautiful cabinets and granite! A formal dining and breakfast area plus office. A generous master suite with large walk in closet as well as nice sized secondary bedrooms. Large covered porch, perfect for relaxing or entertaining with your friends and family. As if that is not enough - the home has been pre-wired for a home generator.

SALADO -- **Sellers are offering a 2-year home warranty to include pool and septic coverage!** Beautiful custom home with pool to cool off in the Texas summer heat and an oversized backyard to enjoy! This home is located in Salado ISD - features a split floorplan with 4 bedrooms (2 secondary are oversized), 3 bath, formal dining and eat-in breakfast area with luxury vinyl flooring throughout. The kitchen is open to the breakfast and living areas making it great for entertaining. Oversized, insulated garage. All interior walls insulated for sound and exterior walls are fully insulated making this very energy efficient! Great location with easy access to I-35, Belton, Temple, and Austin.

BELTON ISD - Charming home with a nice front porch, 2 bedrooms, one bath and lots of storage. Living area could be used as a meeting room. Lot features a beautiful mature tree in the front yard, fully fenced yard, and several out buildings. Excellent location with many possibilities! Adjacent properties are also listed for sale and could make this an amazing commercial property

THE ESCARPMENT is a legendary neighborhood, and the perfect setting for this gorgeous residence. Just minutes from Stillhouse Hollow Lake, this gated home sits on over an acre and includes a sparkling pool, garden area and a 30x40 building that is insulated. Enjoy the abundance of windows throughout the home and especially in the breakfast area while watching nature. A gourmet island kitchen is a chef's dream with an loads of countertop space with attached breakfast area. The master suite is an exceptional space with room to make a sitting area and you can enjoy the sunroom just off the suite. The property has beautiful shaded areas, native Texas plants and fruit trees to enjoy throughout the year. As a bonus enjoy the wildlife that passes by in the extended yard outside the fence.

Exceptional property featuring a 3800+ sqft home sitting on 84 fully fenced AG exempt acres with stock tank and views for miles!

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PUBLIC NOTICE OF BID

Region 7 ESC is soliciting bids on behalf of 154 education entities & six education service centers in the Region 7 Purchasing Cooperative. Bids are solicited for the following:

- Bid Category/Bid Submission Time Cntl
- Commodity Processing/Jan 14, 2025, 2:00 pm
- Food Service/May 13, 2025, 1:30 PM
- Bread/Milk/Juice/Ice Cream/May 13, 2025, 1:30 PM
- Copy Paper/May 13, 2025, 1:30 PM
- Catering/Jan 23, 2025, 1:30 PM
- Building Maintenance & Safety Supplies/Jan 23, 2025, 1:30 PM
- School Safety Resources & Supplies/Mar 27, 2025, 1:30 PM
- Cafeteria Equipment & Supplies/ Mar 27, 2025, 1:30 PM
- General Office Supplies & Furniture/Mar 27, 2025, 1:30 PM
- Plumbing Supplies/May 22, 2025, 1:30 PM
- Construction, Building & Supplies/May 22, 2025, 1:30 PM
- Library Books & Supplies/May 22, 2025, 1:30 PM
- Computer Hardware & Supplies/Jul 24, 2025, 1:30 PM
- Uniforms: Athletic, Band, Performance, Institutional & Supplies/Jul 24, 2025, 1:30 PM
- Printing & Printing Supplies/Jul 24, 2025, 1:30 PM
- Vocational Equipment & Supplies/Jul 24, 2025, 1:30 PM
- Vehicles: All Types; New/Pre-owned; Buy/Lease/Sep 25, 2025, 1:30 PM
- Grounds/Athletic Fields Maintenance, Equipment & Supplies/Sep 25, 2025, 1:30 PM
- Computer Software & Supplies/Nov 18, 2025, 1:30 PM
- Science Supplies/Nov 18, 2025, 1:30 PM
- Physical Education/Recreational Sports, Equipment & Supplies/Nov 18, 2025, 1:30 PM
- Supplemental Food Service/December 02, 2025, 1:30 PM

Bid specifications may be accessed at: <https://purchasing.esc7.net>, phone (903) 988-6932 or e-mail purchasing@esc7.net. Hard-copy bids will be opened at the ESC on each opening date and time. Electronic bids will be opened online at the ESC on each bid submission date and time. Cooperative bids may be awarded to multiple respondents. Factors which must be considered by the Cooperative in making the award of bids include discounts/pricing offered, compliance with terms, net terms provided, free shipping, exclusions of bid, and purchase orders accepted. Payments for member orders are not facilitated by the Cooperative. Region 7 reserves the right to make final decisions as to the best interest of the Cooperative and its members.

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The Bell County Master Gardeners and Troy Chamber of Commerce Lunch and Learn presents "Fire Wise Landscaping with Native Plants", Friday, January 10 from 12 p.m. to 1 p.m. at the Troy Community Center, 201 E. Main St., Troy. Certified Master Gardener, Pat Johnson will present information on how to prepare and use fire wise plants in your landscape. Learn to select native plants that will accent your environment and make your landscape area safe. The class limit is 50. Register at info@greatertroy-chamber.com or contact Gaby Warlick at 254-400-7345.

The Bell County Master Gardener Association will be holding its monthly Herb Study Group on Wednesday, January 15 from 10 a.m. to 12 p.m. at the Texas Agrilife Extension Office, 1605 N. Main St., Belton. This month's topic is "Herb of the Year- Chamomile." No registration required and the public is welcome to join.

The Bell County Master Gardener Association is hosting a free monthly seminar "Growing Spring Vegetables in Central Texas" on Thursday, January 16 from 6 p.m. to 7:30 p.m. at the Texas Agrilife Extension Office, BCMGA Learning Center, 1605 N. Main St., Belton. Certified Master Gardener, Dave Slaughter will teach you how to overcome the challenges of growing a spring vegetable garden in Central Texas. Come learn how to overcome the challenges, what seeds to plant, and best time to plant. The class limit is 50. Please register at bcmgaspeakers@gmail.com.

The Bell County Master Gardener Association presents a hands-on workshop "Seed Starting" on Saturday, January 25 from 9 a.m. to 12 p.m. at the Texas Agrilife Extension Office, BCMGA Learning Center, 1605 N. Main St., Belton. Certified Master Gardener Wayne Schirmer will discuss the requirements for seed germination and how to grow seedlings. You will receive information on when to start seeds to have transplants at the proper time. Wayne will discuss dense seed planting as well as optional things that can assist in seed starting. You will plant seeds that you'll be able to take home to germinate and plant in your spring vegetable garden. The class limit is 20 and the class fee is \$25. Register at bcmgaspeakers@gmail.com. Registration closes on Wednesday, Jan 15 or when the class is full.

The Bell County Museum will have The Vietnam Experience on display through January 2025. The exhibit of artworks from Naval History and Heritage Command will be accompanied by artifacts and archival documents related to the Vietnam War. Leave a remembrance for a lost loved one or share your own experience in the war through our interactive memorial.

The Bell County Master Gardener Association will be holding its monthly Herb Study Group on Thursday, January 9 from 6 p.m. to 7:30 p.m. at the Texas Agrilife Extension Office, 1605 N. Main St., Belton. This month's topic is "Herb of the Year- Chamomile". There will be a round table discussion (structured conversation where a group of people explore a topic or issue.) We encourage you to research and join in the discussion. No registration required and the public is welcome to join.

The Cultural Activities Center in Temple has announced lineups for its two premier music series, and visiting bands will include Los Lonely Boys, Asleep at the Wheel and the wildly popular Shinyribs. 2025 will usher in new music in both the Texas Music Series and the Central Texas Orchestral Society's Classical Music Series. Some old friends will be making return engagements in Temple, and many new performers also will be playing the CAC stage. For more information, please visit https://www.cacarts.org/events. Be on the lookout for the full 2025 Texas Music Series-lineup in next weeks edition of the newspaper.

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Belton First Assembly of God
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Cornerstone Community Church
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Dominion Life Chapel
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Christ of the Apostolic Faith, Inc.
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and School
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Christian Life Church
4343 West FM 93 ~ 254.939.2626
Covenant Lutheran Church
4202 Hickory Rd. ~ 254.733.7718

First Baptist Church
8015 West Adams Ave. ~
254.773.6866
First Methodist Church GMC
102 N. 2nd Temple. TX
~254.773.7992
First Presbyterian Church Temple
12 West French ~ 254.773.3407
Foundation Church
10701 W. Adams ~ 254.780.9673
Grace Baptist Church
740 Jayline Drive ~ 254.773.1401
Grace Comm. Primitive Baptist
3111 N. 3rd St ~ 254.774.8192
Grace Presbyterian Church
2401 S 57th ~ 254.773.2134
Harvest Church
2501 General Bruce Dr. ~
254.780.3566
Immanuel Lutheran Church
2109 W. Ave H ~ 254.773.3898
Leon Valley Church of Christ
4404 Twin City Blvd. ~
254.939.0682
New Hope Church of God
2005 W. Ave D., Suite D. ~
254.742.2181
St. Francis Episcopal & School
5001 Hickory ~ 254.733.4255
St. Luke's Catholic Church
2807 Oakdale Dr. ~ 254.773.1561
St. Mary's Catholic Church
1018 S 7th St. ~ 254.773.4541
Taylor's Valley Baptist Church
2497 W. FM 93 ~ 254.939.0503
Temple Bible Church
3205 Oakview Drive ~ 254.778.3233
First Church of the Nazarene
5000 S. 31st ~ 254.773.3744
The Redeemed Christian Church of
God Salvation Center
405 Van Dyke Drive, Suite 403A ~
469-348-1475
Unity Church of Temple
318 N. 2nd ~ 254.770.0070
Vineyard Christian Fellowship
7425 W Adams Ave. ~ 254.778.2802
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