

## Leon Heights Elementary turns 70



Courtesy Photo

Leon Heights Elementary students are welcomed back for the first day of the 2025-2026 school year. The campus is celebrating its 70th anniversary next week on Jan. 27.

Special to the Journal

Leon Heights Elementary will celebrate its 70th anniversary on January 27, 2026, marking seven decades of education, tradition, and deep community roots in Belton ISD.

The campus will mark the milestone with a special on-campus celebration beginning at 1 p.m. on Tuesday, Jan. 27. Leon Heights Elementary is located at 1501 North Main St. in Belton.

The celebration will include a reception, student musical perfor-

mances, reflections from school and community leaders and opportunities for fellowship and photos.

Since opening its doors in 1956, Leon Heights has served generations of families, becoming a place where connections are formed, memories are made, and students are known and valued.

The milestone anniversary offers a meaningful opportunity to reflect on the school's lasting impact, from alumni whose lives and careers were shaped in its classrooms to educators who have dedicated decades of ser-

vice to its students.

For Ben Smith, a Leon Heights alumnus who now serves as Belton ISD's Executive Director of Secondary Campus Leadership, the strongest memories are the relationships built early on.

"The connections I made with my classmates stand out the most. I am still friends with several of them today," Smith shared. "My teachers taught me to persevere through difficult learning experiences. My reading, writing, and math skills today reflect what I learned from my excellent Leon Heights teachers."

Smith attended Leon Heights from 1982 to 1986 and credits Mrs. Pirtle for her big heart for kids, Mrs. Putman for pushing rigorous learning, and Coach Gillmeister for creating fun and energetic experiences in physical education.

"Embrace the moments," Smith said. "They pass quickly."

Current principal Lexie Newberry says leading Leon Heights during its 70th anniversary year is both meaningful and humbling.

"Leon Heights is more than a building. It is a place filled with generations of stories, memories, and traditions," Newberry said. "I have spent my entire career in Belton ISD, so I deeply understand the pride that surrounds this school. Knowing my father-in-law was part of the very first group of students to attend Leon Heights makes this year feel especially full circle."

Newberry describes the campus legacy as one rooted in belonging, pride, and community.

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BELTON JOURNAL/David Tuma

Jackson Milligan of Waco fishes during Monday's free fishing at Camp Tahuaya. The annual tournament that was to continue this weekend has been cancelled due to the expected weather forecast.

## Camp Tahuaya Fishing Tournament cancelled

By **Shanna Grote**  
The Belton Journal

Families bundled up and headed outdoors this past holiday weekend to participate in Camp Tahuaya's annual Fishing Tournament.

Camp Tahuaya is located just south of Belton and is operated by Scouting America. The camp is best known for its spring-fed lake and clear waters. Recent renovations have brought new life and activities to the camp and more opportunities for families.

Camp Tahuaya hosts year-round camping, fishing, and outdoor

education programs and often teams up with Texas Parks and Wildlife for angler education and conservation training. The lake is privately stocked and maintained, giving the camp the ability to host tournaments and youth instruction events.

Though the weekend mornings were a cold start, kids and parents lined the banks of Lake Boyd Callan.

Anglers enjoyed the new floating dock and fishing dock, both of which were donated by the Order of the Arrow's

See **FISHING**,  
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## Meetings provide glimpse of upcoming Interstate projects

### Segment 1 Preliminary Schedule



\*Project schedule and dates are preliminary and subject to change. Advancement to right-of-way acquisition, utility adjustments, final design and construction is contingent upon the results of the environmental process and funding availability.

By **David Stone**  
The Belton Journal

Belton residents were able to take a look at plans last week for the expansions of Interstates 14 and 35 that some say would move key Belton exits two miles away and remove direct access to downtown.

The Texas Department of Transportation held public meetings in Belton and Temple to present plans for the 7-mile expansion of I-35 from Loop 121 in Belton to Loop 363/US 190 in Temple. The Belton meeting was Jan. 14 at the Cadence Bank Center.

The proposed improvements in-

clude improving the I-14/US 190/I-35 system interchanges, widening I-35, and improving overall safety, connectivity and mobility.

Currently, the existing section along this corridor of I-35 includes three general-purpose lanes and two frontage road lanes in each direction. The expansion would include — in each direction — an additional general-purpose lane for a total of four, three express lanes, two to three frontage road lanes and a shared-use path. The project is part of a larger plan to extend I-14 from its cur-

See **INTERSTATE**,  
Page A2

## Filing begins for May 2 elections

By **Lynette Sowell**  
The Belton Journal

Filing is open now for the May 2 general elections for the Belton City Council and the Belton Independent School District board of trustees.

On Wednesday, Jan. 14, the first day of filing, two Belton City Council incumbents filed for re-election.

John R. Holmes Sr. filed for Place 1 and Dave Covington filed for Place 2.

Holmes is the current Mayor Pro Tem and has served on the Belton City Council for nine years.

The filing period is open until 5 p.m. on February 13.

A candidate packet is available online for residents interested in serving. Councilmember terms are three years. The council meets twice a month for evening meetings. Each councilmember receives \$1 annually for his or her service. Information and candidate packets can be found online at [https://www.beltontexas.gov/government/city\\_clerk/election/index.php](https://www.beltontexas.gov/government/city_clerk/election/index.php). Completed packets must be submitted to Belton City Clerk Amy Casey, at City Hall, by the deadline.

For the Belton ISD board of trustees, incumbents

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## Temple Airport, BISD educate students about aviation careers

By David Stone  
The Belton Journal

A new partnership between Draughon-Miller Central Texas Regional Airport and Belton ISD is introducing students to career pathways in aviation through a hands-on STEM program.

This program began after Dr. Malinda Golden, BISD superintendent, connected with the City of Temple to explore opportunities to support aviation education in Belton public schools.

Temple city staff worked alongside BISD Career & Technical Education Director Denise Ayers to connect the district with “You Can Fly High” school aviation STEM curriculum, a free program designed for the next generation of aviation professionals.

Gabi Nino, BISD’s assistant superintendent of Teaching & Learning, said the school district is “incredibly excited about this partnership with the city of Temple Executive Air Center.”

“The partnership reflects our community’s shared commitment to empowering every learner to pursue their dreams while strengthening the future

of our workforce,” Nino said. “By providing high-quality, real-world learning experiences for our Mechanical & Aerospace Engineering students, we are moving beyond the four walls of the classroom to ignite innovation and develop critical thinking skills.”

“We are deeply grateful to our partners for opening their doors and helping bridge classroom learning with high-demand careers beyond graduation,” Nino added.

Belton ISD assembled a team of administrators and educators to build the program and partnered with the Temple airport to provide real-world exposure to the aviation industry. As part of this effort, city staff supported light renovations to the Elmer Reed Terminal, transforming the space into a classroom where students periodically meet on-site at the airport.

Throughout the past semester, students enrolled in the program have had opportunities to engage with aviation industry professionals, including pilots, air traffic professionals, flight schools, military representatives and airport staff.

Students also participated in airport tours, gaining up-



Courtesy Photo

Belton ISD and the Temple airport have announced a partnership to introduce students to aviation careers.

close exposure to aircraft and airport operations.

According to Emelie Palma, a City of Temple public relations specialist, the Aviation STEM program is located at Belton New Tech High School and continues to grow through collaborative support from Bel-

ton ISD and the Temple airport.

“Our team holds strong to the sentiment that the future of aviation depends on inspiring the next generation today,” said Andre Hill, a manager at the airport.

“By partnering with Belton ISD, we’re giving students ex-

posure to aviation careers and helping them see a clear path from the classroom to the workforce,” Hill said. “Programs like this strengthen our region by building the skilled talent that will support aviation and economic growth for years to come.”

## Interstate - From Page A1

rent terminus in Belton to BU 190 in Rogers.

The first segment ends at the Loop 363/US 190 exchange with I-35 in Temple, and the second segment follows the loop east to FM 93. The third segment continues to Rogers. In decades to come, I-14 is expected to stretch 1,300 miles from Odessa to Augusta, Ga.,

Several residents attending the Jan. 14 meeting said the project would affect more than just downtown Belton. It affects everyone —homeowners, renters, small businesses, restaurants, banks, medical offices, schools, churches, the university, and families who rely on a healthy local economy and a connected community. Reduced access means fewer visitors, less economic activity, lower property values, and long term damage to the vitality of Belton.

According to a post on Facebook

signed by dozens of Belton businesses, the city “has worked for years to build a thriving, walkable, event filled downtown that brings thousands of people here for Belton Market Days, Downtown Belton’s Candy Trail, Christmas on the Chisholm Trail, Bacon Blues and Brews, Schoepf’s Summer Music Series, Belton’s Fourth of July Parade and Celebration and so much more.”

“A 20-lane highway and the loss of direct access could undo decades of progress and isolate the historic heart of our city,” the post stated.

“This is one of the most important opportunities we have to speak up,” the post continued. “Decisions made now will shape Belton for the next 50 to 100 years.”

The purpose of the expansion is to enhance safety, reduce traffic congestion, and improve connectivity in the

I-35 corridor and accommodate the future I-14 extension.

According to TxDOT, the project is needed on this stretch of I-35 because it currently is inadequate to meet current and future traffic volumes, and there are safety and operation issues with ramp and intersection configurations. Also, TxDOT says the interstate-to-interstate connections do not meet criteria and standards for an interstate facility.

TxDOT says in the Segment 1 corridor, the crash rate exceeds the state average. The concentration of crashes are at the I-14, US 190 and Sixth Avenue interchanges.

The first round of public meetings for Segment 1 was held May 2, 2024, in Belton. At that meeting, residents addressed existing congestion and safety concerns, local access and roadway conditions, and impacts to properties and

neighborhoods.

Proposed improvements for the upcoming project include extending I-14 from its current terminus in Belton to the Loop 363/US 190 interchange in Temple via alignment following I-35; improving interchanges and ramps along the joint interstate, and widening I-35.

According to TxDOT, these improvements will upgrade mobility and safety between urban and rural areas, military installations and economic sectors including freight, energy, timber and agriculture.

For those who did not attend the meeting but would like to view the plan and make a comment, a virtual meeting is online at <https://shorturl.at/Be1WO>. Comments must be received by Jan. 29.

## Turns 70 - From Page A1

“For 70 years, Leon Heights has been shaped by dedicated educators, supportive families, and a community that truly loves this place,” she said. “Generations have walked these halls, and that shared experience creates a bond that is incredibly special. Leon Heights is not just a school. It is a piece of history people carry with them long after they leave.”

While the campus has evolved to meet the needs of today’s learners, its core mission remains unchanged.

“We honor tradition while holding high expectations for student success,” Newberry said. “By maintaining a close-knit, welcoming atmosphere while strengthening teaching and learning, we ensure students are prepared for the future without losing what makes Leon Heights feel

like home.”

Few people embody the school’s history more than Debra Johnson, who has been part of the Leon Heights family for 28 years.

“It is a small campus, and I love the people,” Johnson said. “What has remained the same is the care and attention staff give to students and their families. We want every child to feel valued and supported and to help them grow academically and as people.”

Johnson, who was born the same year Leon Heights opened, says the anniversary holds special meaning.

“We are the same age,” she said with a laugh. “I am excited about the 1970s theme, and I am kind of an expert.”

Over the years, Johnson has taught multiple generations of the same families and continues to direct an after-school honor choir that has met weekly for more than 25 years. The choir previously performed at the school’s 50th anniversary celebration.

“Because it is such a small school, everybody knows each other,” Johnson said. “I have taught students whose parents were once in my choir. I know every child’s name, and I get to watch them grow from kindergarten through fifth grade. That connection is special.”

After 70 years, Leon Heights Elementary continues to be a place where students feel known, families feel connected, and a proud legacy lives on one generation at a time.



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# OBITUARIES



## Bumpus Jr.

**Floyd David Bumpus, Jr.**  
 August 18, 1952 –  
 January 15, 2026

Floyd David Bumpus, Jr., known to most as “Dave,” passed away Thursday, January 15, 2026. He was born on August 18, 1952, in Little Rock, Arkansas, the son of the late Floyd Bumpus and Wilma Ruth Bishop Bumpus.

Dave graduated from Bryant High School and received his Bachelor of Science Degree in Computer Science from the University of Mary Hardin-Baylor.

He worked a number of interesting jobs and had numerous talents. He proudly served his country as a U.S. Army tanker in Germany, at the end of the Vietnam era. He later served as a pharmacy technician in both Alaska and Denver. After his almost 15 years in the military, Dave worked as a network administrator for Bell County, Arco-Bell, and the City of Belton. Dave served his community as a HAM radio operator, specializing in Morse code, following in the footsteps of his father Floyd and twin brother Lloyd. He was a storm chaser, assisting weather services in locating storms. He was an interpreter for the deaf at the Belton Church of Christ, where he was an active member for many years. Dave was a volunteer firefighter when Belton had a volunteer department and worked his way up through the ranks to fire chief for the volunteers. He also earned his EMT certification during this time and assisted on medical calls. Dave had a love for many sports, particularly football and boxing. He enjoyed playing fastpitch softball, co-ed softball, racquetball, and golf, among other sports. He was competitive! He refereed select soccer and home-school volleyball games. Dave loved

traveling and spending time with his family and fur babies.

Dave married the love of his life, Bonnie Suzanne Buckner, on June 22, 1991. He is survived by his daughter, Jamie Suzanne Snyder, and son-in-law Scott. He was a proud granddaddy to his grandchildren Holden and Aubrey. He’s also survived by his sister Linda Lake, honorary sister Susan Simmons, brother-in-law Bill Buckner and wife Cindy, and precious nieces and nephews. Dave is preceded in death by his parents and his sister, Roxanna Bumpus.

Visitation will be at 10:00 on Saturday, January 24, at Dossman Funeral Home in Belton, Texas. The funeral service will be at 11:00, and burial will follow at Bellwood Memorial Park Cemetery in Temple.

In lieu of flowers, please consider donating to Weimaraner Rescue of Texas or a charity of your choice.

## Hargrove

**Anna Sue Hargrove**  
 March 30, 1933 –  
 January 13, 2026

Anna Sue (Barnes) Hargrove, age 92, of Little River, died January 13, 2026, after a lengthy illness.

She was born on March 30, 1933, near Belton, second of three children and the only daughter of James L. (Tess) Barnes and Lydia Grace (Culpepper) Barnes.

She spent her early years in the Taylors Valley community on their family farm and attended school in the two-room Taylors Valley School through the eighth grade. She graduated from Belton High School in 1951. During her high school years, she played basketball and softball. She married Leonard W. Hargrove from Heidenheimer on July 19, 1951. In their early years of marriage, she was a mother and housewife, but during the 1970s she worked for Belton ISD as a teacher’s aide and in the 80s provided daycare for children in her home. She and her husband Leonard lived in Belton most of their adult lives, raising three children. She was very active in supporting her children in sports, band, and academic activities in Belton public schools and es-

pecially Belton High School.

After Leonard took early retirement, they bought a farm in Wilson Valley near Little River, where they raised cattle, were active gardeners, and grew and/or preserved a variety of fresh fruits and vegetables from the farm. In her later years she enjoyed attending sports and band events of her grandchildren, playing Texas 42 dominoes with friends and family, and hosting family members in her home until her illness in early 2025. Her greatest pride was in her children, grandchildren, and great-grandchildren, and anyone whom she met would soon learn all about them and what they were up to.

She was an active member of Taylors Valley Baptist Church since 1943, when she was ten years old and continued to be active for 80+ years, serving as a Sunday School teacher, Vacation Bible School teacher, and joyful member of the church choir.

She is survived by one brother, Gary Barnes (wife Janet) of Georgetown; three children, two sons, William L. (Bill) of Salado and Bryan L. (wife Judy) of Midland, and one daughter, Sheri A. Yerrington (husband Ken) of Georgetown; eight grandchildren: Anne Graham (husband Darrell) of Ft. Worth, Bob Hargrove (wife Laura) of Temple, Paul Hargrove (wife Riley) of Minneapolis, MN, Crista Nickell (husband Michael) of Midland, Cody Hargrove (wife Roselyn) of Midland, Amy Kerley (husband Aaron) of Hutto, Chad Yerrington (wife Henni) of Temple, and Jay Yerrington of Round Rock; twelve great-grandchildren; and eight nieces and nephews.

She is preceded in death by her husband, Leonard, and her older brother J.L. Barnes.

Visitation will be held at Dossman Funeral Home in Belton on Saturday, January 17, from 5:00 -7:00 pm. Services will be held at Taylors Valley Baptist Church on Monday, January 19, at 10:00 am, with interment to follow at Wilson Valley Cemetery.

Memorial gifts can be made to the Taylors Valley Baptist Church Building Fund.

Dossman Funeral Home of Belton is in charge of arrangements.

## TxDOT bringing the roads ahead of icy forecast

Special to the Journal

Texas Department of Transportation Waco District crews proactively mobilized on Wednesday, Jan. 21, to start early brine application on State roads in the eight counties the Waco District serves.

Crews are applying brine on all major State roadway travel lanes, including I-35 and I-14 through Friday.

Brine is a salt and water mixture that can help slow initial icing on pavements.

Starting Friday, crews will transition to 24-hour operations through the end of the projected wintry weather. All operations are dependent on weather, and crews will adjust as conditions warrant.

If travel is necessary during wintry weather, drivers should:

- Follow local forecasts; be prepared to delay or cancel travel plans during icy weather conditions.
- Buckle up.
- Decrease speeds and drive to conditions.
- Increase following distance between vehicles.
- Anticipate slick and hazardous driving conditions; be extra cautious on bridges, overpasses, ramps, turns, and shaded areas.
- Do not use cruise control or lane assist.
- Give TxDOT vehicles at least 200 feet of space during operations.

## Elections - From Page A1

filed for re-election.

Rucker Preston filed for Trustee At-Large, and Brandon Bozon filed for Trustee At-Large.

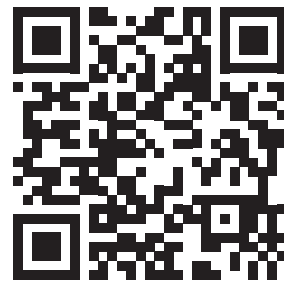
These are three-year terms through May 2029. For more information, visit [www.bisd.net/election](http://www.bisd.net/election).

Candidate packets, including the application, are available at the Belton ISD Administration Building.

The last day to file a declaration of write-in candidacy is Tuesday,

Feb. 17, by 5 p.m.

The last day to register to vote in the May 2 election is Thursday, Apr. 2. Voters can check registration status online at <https://www.votetexas.gov/>.



## Fishing - From Page A1

Netopolis Sipo Schipinachk Lodge.

Kids and parents compared catches throughout the mornings while volunteers helped with nets, measurements, and the occasional tangled line. Several anglers hit their trout limit before lunch, while younger kids seemed just as excited to catch just about anything.

Organizers said attendance was strong for the opening weekend and that enthusiasm stayed high despite the weather. “Our guests are having a blast out here,” one organizer said. “We’ve seen trout, smallmouth bass, and bluegill coming out of Lake Boyd Callan all morning.”

Anglers were allowed to keep up to six trout per day along with up to six other fish of another species. Prizes are awarded in three age divisions, elementary youth, 12–17 year olds, and adult. Prize

categories include Largest Trout, Heaviest Basket, Smallest Trout, and Largest Non-Trout.

Volunteers from Scouting America, Green Suter Outdoors, and Texas Parks and Wildlife helped run the event, answer fishing questions, and teach new anglers how to clean their catch. After weigh-ins, families could warm up by the fire and cook their catch on site.

The tournament was scheduled to run two weekends in January with the remaining sessions scheduled for this Saturday and Sunday. Organizers of the event informed the Belton Journal that they are cancelling this weekend’s tournament due to the expected inclement weather.

Questions regarding future tournaments or fishing access can be directed to [reservations@campthua.org](mailto:reservations@campthua.org).

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A4  
Thursday,  
January 22, 2026

# LIFESTYLES

THE BELTON JOURNAL

## Local culinary arts student vies for top prize

By Michele Weisman  
The Belton Journal

Krysalyne Petersen, a local culinary arts student at Johnson & Wales University in Rhode Island, is participating in The Greatest Baker 2025 online challenge through the *Bake from Scratch* magazine.

The winner will receive \$10,000, a two-page spread in the magazine, along with the title, The Greatest Baker.

The challenge benefits The Andrew McDonough B+ Foundation, a 501(c) 3 supporting families of pediatric cancer pa-

tients, and cancer research.

Petersen discovered the competition while scrolling on Instagram.

"Baking is more than a competition for me. It's been a source of my comfort and creativity and connection," she said.

The 2025 challenge started in December, and Petersen has consistently shifted between first and second place.

Through a weekly elimination process, the public votes online. From the number of votes, contestants either move onto the next phase or are eliminated. The competition draws to a close at the start of February.

Petersen said, "Every recipe I make has a piece of my heart in it. This competition represents how far I've come by believing in myself and my passion. And this competition is a reminder that chasing what you love can open doors you never expect."

Each contestant has a dedicated link to share

with their followers, friends, and family.

On the link are photos of items they have baked.

Petersen has photos of a tres leches cake, a lime pie popular with family and friends, an over-the-top Oreotopped cupcake, and more.

Voters can vote once a day for free. Additional votes are purchased. All proceeds go to the Andrew McDonough B+ Foundation.

Petersen attended Chisholm Trail Elementary, South Belton Middle School, and graduated from Ellison High School in 2025.

If she wins, Petersen said, "The \$10,000 from the competition will help with tuition. And a photo shoot to be in the magazine. That would be a pretty cool opportunity for me, and put a head start to my career."

To view Peterson's page and vote, go to <https://greatestbaker.org/krysalyne-petersenNY>.



Courtesy Photos

Krysalyne Petersen shows off one of her desserts made in lab class at Johnson & Wales University. The culinary student is seeking votes for a chance to win a \$10,000 award and magazine photo shoot.

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## City Council amends Thoroughfare Plan

By David Stone  
The Belton Journal

Belton City Council on Tuesday amended the Belton Thoroughfare Plan, a critical growth-management tool that ensures that the community's transportation needs are met. The plan enables city staff to obtain necessary rights-of-way and road construction to facilitate safe and effective traffic flow.

"The Thoroughfare Plan is an integral component of Belton's Comprehensive Plan and is implemented through the city's Subdivision Ordinance," said Bob van Til, the city's Development Services director.

The current plan was updated and adopted in 2022. The newly amended plan changes the following thoroughfares:

Wheat Road north from Red Rock to Sparta Road: Reclassify the road from a Minor Arterial (100-foot right of way) to a Minor Collector (60-foot right of way). Based on the revised emphasis of this road by residents, the classification is better served as a Minor Collector. This is also identified in the current Strategic

Plan as a Minor Collector.

Wheat Road south from Sparta Road to Interstate 14: Reclassify the road from a Minor Arterial (100-foot right of way) to a Minor Collector (60-foot right of way). Based on the revised emphasis of this road through the county, the classification is better served as a Minor Collector.

Wheat Road Cut-Off from Wheat Road to Interstate 14: Remove this Minor Collector from the plan. Staff does not anticipate this connector to be needed.

Barge Cut-Off from River Fair Boulevard to FM 317 (west of FM 317): This is a new Minor Collector that is supported by the 2012 traffic study and a 2024 update to the traffic study based on an updated local area land use plan as proposed by the landowner. The recently updated land use plan identified significant residential and non-residential development anticipated in this area. This proposed roadway provides an internal circulator to support that anticipated development.

Huey Drive from Loop 121 to Interstate

35: Reclassify this Major Collector to a Minor Collector. The 80-foot right of way appears excessive for the development trends in this area.

Shanklin Road east of Interstate 35 from Future Capitol Way to Elm Grove: Remove the Major Arterial from the map due to topographical constraints.

Shanklin Road north of FM 436 from FM 436 to Witter Road in Temple: Realigning the Major Arterial to the northern boundary of the future Tyler Ridge Belton Addition.

Avenue O from Loop 121 to Interstate 35: Reclassify from Major Collector to Minor Collector. Reclassify the roadway due to its proximity to the Interstate 14 feeder road which provides additional capacity for traffic.

Park Avenue from 24th Avenue to Guthrie Drive: Remove from the map because it was built by a developer and is currently a private road.

The Planning and Zoning Commission recommended approval of the proposed amendments to the Thoroughfare Plan during their Dec. 16 meeting.



# Local Activities & Events

## Newcomers Club Activities

### January

- 01/23: Trailblazers Walking Group
- 01/24: Jimmy's Egg
- 01/26: Well Read Women, Monday Canasta
- 01/27: Singing Bluebonnets
- 01/28: Fun Lunch

**"To join or for more information, please call: Mary Pringle (760)265-5035 or email at: pringlem@msn.com. Visit the website: www.bellcountynewcomers.com."**

### Baugh Center for the Visual Arts - Jan 12 - Feb 12

This collection of works highlights a year of dedicated portraiture resulting in a diverse selection of drawings and paintings. It includes energetic life drawings, often executed during collaborative sessions with students, which emphasize spontaneity and capturing immediate impressions. Complementing these are more intensive long form painted portraits, developed over multiple sittings in the studio. These focus on the subtle, untold narratives that emerge between artist and sitter, capturing not just a likeness, but the unique spirit and story of each individual. This exhibit will be on display January 12–February 12, 2026. Exhibitions are free and open to the public. Gallery Hours are Monday-Friday, 9AM-4PM. at 812 Shine St, Belton.

### Bell County Master Gardeners - Jan 21

Join us for our next Herb Roundtable as we explore turmeric, its history, uses, growing considerations, and more. These roundtables are interactive, discussion-based sessions where everyone is encouraged to share and learn together. Bell County Extension Office- Learning Center, 1605 N. Main Street, Belton. No registration needed.

### Bell County Historical Commission Meeting - Jan 26

The Bell County Historical Commission will meet on Monday January 26, 2026. The meeting starts at 6:00 pm in room 117 of the old courthouse at 101 East Central Ave, Belton, Texas. This is a business meeting, and various committees and chairs will give reports. The meeting is open to the public and all who are interested in history are encouraged to attend. Monday October 26, 2026, at 6:00 p.m. at Old Bell County Courthouse, room 117. For more information call 254-493-1472.

### MPR Explorers @ The Point- Jan 29

The MPR Explorers (sponsored by the Mary Ruth Briggs Library) is holding their monthly "Conversation over Coffee" with entertainment by the Lake Belton High School Choir Show Ensemble. Join us for a discussion with the Friends of the Mary Ruth Briggs Library (non-profit 501 (c) 3 organization) and learn how you can help bring a stronger, more accessible library to life in Morgan's Point Resort, Garrett & Mic Hill Event Center 60 Morgan's Point Blvd., Morgan's Point Resort on Jan 29, 10:00 a.m. - 11:30 a.m.

### Sons Of The Republic of Texas George W Tyler Chapter - Feb 7

The Sons of the Republic of Texas, George W. Tyler Chapter #3 is continuing to gain momentum after a brief period of reduced activity. In September 2025, 16 members and guests met to discuss and plan for the chapter's future. We remain committed to supporting and advancing the goals of The Sons of the Republic of Texas. Currently we have 11 active members and 10 individuals that have submitted their applications. We are actively seeking additional members. Our next meeting is schedule on February 7, 2026 from 10am to noon and will be held at the Bell County Agrilife bldg 1605 Main Street Belton, Texas. Come join us, we welcome those that would desire to work with us promoting our ancestors in Texas.

**NAMI (National Alliance on Mental Illness)** will meet both on TUESDAY, Jan. 13th and Jan. 27th at 6:30pm at the Temple VA Hospital. Use the entrance on the Valet parking side of the hospital and take the elevator to the 5th floor -Conference Room 5G31. Both care-givers, supporters and those suffering from mental illness are welcome to join us for mutual support and sharing of information . For more information, call 254-771-3638.

**Bell Area Parkinson's Support group (BAPS-North)** meets at CTCOG, 2180 N. Main St, Belton on the 2nd and 4th Fridays from 2:30-4:00 PM every month. All are welcome, and there is no membership cost. The Bell Area Parkinson's Support group (BAPS-West) meets at St. Andrews United Methodist Church Fellowship Hall, 206 W Fowler Ave, Killeen on the 1st and 3rd Fridays from 2:30-4:00 PM every month. For more information contact Gayle Shull at GayleInBelton@gmail.com or (254) 718-4197.

**Marine Corp League** will meet the third Tuesday of each mont at VFW 3859. Dinner is served at 6:30 p.m. and metting will begin at 7:00 p.m. 201 VFW Dr, Harker heights, Tx 76548. Email commandant@mcl1249tx.comfor more inforamtion.

**Aspen Hospice and Palliative Care Volunteers Needed** Listed here are many ways you can help make a difference for our hospice patients. You can provide companionship, listen to music, read, reminisce, play games, cards, checkers, paint nails, apply makeup, curl hair or take them on walks. Please visit aspenhealthcare.net or call 512-856-5668 for more information.

**Young's Daughters Funeral Home Dementia/Alzheimer's Caregiver Support Group** occurs weekly on Fridays from 6-7 p.m. This group allows your loved ones to join. Loved ones will be doing activities while the group of caregivers are joining together to better understand and learn tips and tricks for daily life. Young's Daughters Funeral and Bereavement Center is located at 4235 East Hwy 190 in Temple.

**Pistons on the Creek** will meet every third Friday from 5:30 p.m. to 11 p.m. Come down to Nolan Creek and show off your rides. From classic to modern, muscle, rat rod, exotic, all automotive enthusiasts are welcome. Support our awesome downtown businesses and restaurants surrounded by live music, food, drinks and a great atmosphere.

**Bell Fine Arts Visitors welcome** Wednesday's from 9 a.m. to 2 p.m. at 306 E 5th Ave in Belton. Majong games are available every Monday from 1 p.m. to 4 p.m. Come join the fun and meet new folks. For more information text Jeanne at 409-313-0611.

**Local chapter of the Crochet Guild of America** meets from 10 a.m. to 12 p.m. on Wednesdays at the Lena Armstrong Public Library, 301 E. First St., in Belton. The group is open to anyone interested in crochet. All skill levels are welcome. For information email Betty Reichert at bettyreichert@yahoo.com or Kathy Bement at katshookandneedle@gmail.com. Anyone interested in joining the local chapter of the Crochet Guild of

America will also need to join the National Crochet Guild of America. Visit [www.crochet.org](http://www.crochet.org) for details.

**Bell County Texas Democratic Women** holds their monthly meeting on the third Saturday of each month at 10 a.m. in the Belton AgriLife Center, 1605 N Main in Belton. Join us to hear from local and state candidates and about important issues and events. This is open to the public.

**Leadership Belton** is an excellent source for learning leadership skills. This 10-month program focuses on three key elements: community awareness training, leadership training, and team building. Do you have someone ready to take the next step to become a leader? If so, Leadership Belton is here to make that difference. For more information on how to participate, contact the chamber at 254-939-3551 or e-mail at [info@beltonchamber.com](mailto:info@beltonchamber.com).

**Engage & Empower with BISD** Belton ISD believes the learning experiences of our students are enhanced through the engagement of our community. We invite parents and community members to get involved in our schools. Register as a volunteer with our new volunteer and partnership system at the following link: [https://beltonisd.ezcommunicator.net/edu/beltonisd/login\\_form.aspx?app=0](https://beltonisd.ezcommunicator.net/edu/beltonisd/login_form.aspx?app=0).

**Temple-Belton Ladies Lion Club** Meeting Second and Fourth Monday of every month at 6:30 pm at the Belton V.F.W., 2311 S. Pearl St., Belton.

## Community Information

**TAKE ME HOME PROGRAM** The Belton Police Department is adopting the Take Me Home Program, aimed at helping individuals who need special assistance to return safely home after getting lost. The program is a database with photos and personal information to help police officers find someone who is lost or wandered away from home. Take Me Home is designed for individuals who may need additional aid including those with Dementia, Autism or specific mental health needs. It's free to register someone and the data is kept confidential to first responders. You can sign up a loved one here: [www.beltontexas.gov/takemehome](http://www.beltontexas.gov/takemehome). Read more about the program here: [https://www.beltontexas.gov/news\\_detail\\_T11\\_R1166.php](https://www.beltontexas.gov/news_detail_T11_R1166.php).

**Dial 988 for Mental Health Emergencies** To help those contemplating suicide, press option 1 for assistance with military/veteran population.

**Text-to-911** for speech/ hearing impaired, those unable to call or speak due to home invasion, abduction or domestic violence or physically incapable. Providing location, city name and nature of the emergency in the first message is imperative. For further education on this service, don't hesitate to call 254-933-5500.

### Citizens Helping in Police Service (CHIPS)

are extra eyes and ears while in areas where large groups may gather. Contact the Belton Police Dept. to join.

**Belton Citizens Police Academy** meets Thursday nights to enhance police and community partnerships. Apply online to be a part of this exciting program.

**Slam the Scam** Throughout the year, we give you the tools to recognize scams and stop scammers from stealing your money and personal information. Share the information with your loved ones & Slam the Scam! Visit [ssa.gov/scam](http://ssa.gov/scam) for tips.

**Dementia/Alzheimers Support Group-** Young's Daughters Funeral Home & Bereavement Center, 4235 E. US HWY 190 in Temple. Fridays from 6 p.m. to 8 p.m., Join us for activities while caregivers discuss and help each other during this difficult time. Call Sabrina at 254-401-1302



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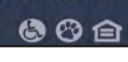
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  - Elm Grove Baptist Church 6388 Elm Grove Rd. ~ 254.933.8127
  - Family Gospel Church 2210 Holland Rd. ~ 254.721.0707
  - Fellowship Baptist Church 2025 Morgan's Point Rd ~ 254.780.2388
  - First Baptist Church Belton 506 N. Main St. ~ 254.933.3391
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  - Holy Temple of Our Lord Jesus Christ of the Apostolic Faith 519 S. Pearl St. ~ 254.613.4591
  - Hope Community Church 507 Mitchell St. ~ 254.933.8222
  - Hope Tabernacle 202 E. 1st Ave. ~ 254.933.8222
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  - Keys Valley Baptist Church 4393 W. US Hwy. 190 ~ 254.939.1650
  - Lakeview Baptist Church 7717 N Hwy. 317 ~ 254.780.1884
  - Liberty Church 302 E. Central Ave. ~ 254.933.7107
  - Liberty in Christ Church 2520 N. Main ~ 254.939.3337
  - Miller Heights Baptist Church 1400 S. Wall St. ~ 254.939.1835
  - Ministerios Vida 2020 S. IH-35 ~ 254.624.8015
  - Mt. Zion United Methodist Church 218 Alexander St. ~ 254.939.5621
  - New Life Fellowship 706 E. 4th. ~ 254.939.8011
  - Nolan Valley Baptist Church 13206 W. FM 93 ~ 254.721.5998
  - Pentecostal Church of Jesus Christ 117 N. Birdwell St. ~ 254.939.0822
  - Redeemer Reformed Baptist Church 2378 FM 1670 ~ 818.519.9855
  - Tapestry Community Church of Belton 1215 S. Wall St. ~ 254.218.4008
  - Temple Vision de lo Alto 4357 Orchard Hill ~ 254.563.1231
  - Trinity Full Gospel 810 East 2nd Ave. ~ 254.939.7673
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  - Christ Episcopal Church and School 300 N. Main St. ~ 254.773.1657
  - Christian Life Church 4343 West FM 93 ~ 254.939.2626
  - Covenant Lutheran Church 4202 Hickory Rd. ~ 254.733.7718
  - Eighth Street Baptist Church 215 Martin Luther King Jr. Dr. ~ 254.773.2598
  - First Baptist Church Temple 8015 West Adams Ave. ~ 254.773.6866
  - First Methodist Church Temple, GMC 102 N. 2nd Temple. TX ~ 254.773.7992
  - First Presbyterian Church Temple 12 West French ~ 254.773.3407
  - Foundation Church 10751 W. Adams ~ 254.780.9673
  - Grace Baptist Church 740 Jayline Drive ~ 254.773.1401
  - Grace Comm. Primitive Baptist Church 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
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## When Age Becomes a Blessing, Not a Barrier



John C. Perry

My wife and I recently had dinner with some dear friends. They told us about an upcoming trip to Tuscany to hike. Hiking is something they've done for years here in Texas, and many of their overseas vacations revolve around that passion.

But then she said something that concerned me. As they talked about their Italian adventure, she

added quietly, "I guess this will be our last overseas hike."

I asked why, and she replied, "Well, I'm in my seventies now, too old to keep doing this."

My first reaction was disappointment for them. After all, hiking has been a joy they've shared for decades. My second thought was, Wait a minute . . . I'm three or four years older than she is.

So, what about this age thing?

When I'm working out with my trainer at the gym and she pushes me a bit further than I'd prefer, I used to say, "You forget how old I am." Hoping she might ease up. She never did. Her response was always the same: "Age is just a number. Keep going."

And she's right. Age itself should never define you.

Yes, as we grow older, we may not do things at the same pace or intensity we once did. I still jog, but my pace today is only a fraction of what it used to be. When I was younger, if someone passed me on the trail, it nearly destroyed me.

But age brings wisdom. To still be able to jog at all is a blessing from God. So now, when someone passes me, it doesn't bother me. I'm grateful that God still allows me to get out and do something I enjoy.

Of course, the older we get, the more prone we are to medical issues. But unless those issues are what's holding you back, don't let age be the thing that stops you from doing what you love.

What does the Bible say about

aging?

Isaiah 46:4 reassures us: "Even to your old age and gray hairs I am he, I am he who will sustain you." God's presence sustains us in every season of life.

Scripture even portrays aging as a blessing. Proverbs 16:31 tells us, "Gray hair is a crown of splendor; it is attained in the way of righteousness." Is this verse reminding us that aging can be the mark of a life well lived?

One day, hopefully many years from now, I will have to slow down. But until that day comes, I intend to do as much as I can for as long as I can.

And when the time arrives when my body can no longer do what my heart desires, I'll hold fast to 2 Corinthians 4:16: "There-

fore we do not lose heart. Though outwardly we are wasting away, yet inwardly we are being renewed day by day."

God is always with us. Regardless of age, He strengthens us and walks beside us every step of the journey. So, my friends keep moving, keep trying, keep living, age may count the years, but it doesn't define the story. Remember, age may change our pace, but it never changes God's promise!

*John C. Perry is the Lay Leader with New Life Methodist Church. They meet every Sunday at 9 a.m. (Bible Study) and 10 a.m. (Worship Service) in the Salado Middle School at 1169 Williams Rd.*



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## Temple College cuts ribbon on new main building, launches centennial year

Special to the Journal

Temple College officially opened the doors to its new four-story Main Building on Friday, cutting the ribbon on a transformative facility that reshapes the south side of campus and the Temple skyline.

The ceremony also helped mark the beginning of the College's Centennial year.

"This Temple College Main Building is a new front door to opportunity for our students and our community," said Temple College President Dr. Christy Ponce. "As we celebrate 100 years of service to Central Texas, this Main Building stands as a promise that Temple College will continue to deliver high-quality education, access and opportunity for generations."

A crowd of more than 300 guests gathered for the ceremony, including College leaders and staff, students, city officials, state representative Brad Buckley, community and business partners, and education leaders.

The 109,000-square-foot Main Building now anchors the south side of campus and features 21 classrooms, two computer labs, a testing center, student services and advising offices, faculty and administrative office suites, tutoring and student success areas, and a new boardroom. The 9,130-square-foot Dr. Harry B. Macey Conference Center accommodates up to 650 people and can be divided into three rooms, opening onto an outdoor patio and the main lobby for large campus and community events.

The site also includes a new drop-off and entry plaza for visitors and prospective students, as well as a new quad to the north of the building featuring a fountain, seating areas, and a tiered lawn designed for gatherings, performances and student life.

The Main Building also houses the new University Center, which will be occupied by

Texas A&M University-Central Texas. The partnership allows Temple College students to seamlessly transfer into bachelor's degree programs while remaining on the Temple campus.

"This is a special day, and we're excited to play a part in the opening of this beautiful building," said Dr. Richard Rhodes, president of Texas A&M University-Central Texas. "We're honored to strengthen our partnership with Temple College and bring expanded resources from A&M-Central Texas to the Temple campus through the new University Center. We now offer seven bachelor's degrees to the students here, and as we continue to build out our services, we look forward to celebrating many successes in the years to come."

The College Main Building is one of four facilities built or renovated as part of Temple College's \$124.9 million bond program approved by voters in 2021.

Other projects include the Workforce and Visual Arts Building, the Campus Services Center, renovations to the Dental and Surgical Technology facilities, and the Health Sciences Center currently under construction.

The building was designed by Stantec, a global leader in sustainable design and engineering that has partnered with Temple College on multiple campus projects. Cloud Construction Company, based in Temple, served as the general contractor for the College Main Building and other bond-funded projects.

Following the ribbon-cutting, guests toured the new facility, exploring its classrooms, collaborative spaces and modern student services areas designed to support enrollment growth and student success well into Temple College's second century.



Courtesy Photos

**TOP:** Temple College President Dr. Christy Ponce, center, cuts the ribbon to officially open the new Temple College Main Building. She is joined by college, city, community and business leaders. **ABOVE:** The new Temple College Main Building was celebrated with a ribbon cutting last week.

## Rally for county no-kill shelter set for today

By Lynette Sowell  
The Belton Journal

Bell County Commissioner for Precinct 4 Louie Minor, Public Accountability for Animal Welfare (PAAW), Happy Tail Rescue, Journey Home Rescue and members of the public are holding a rally to call for a no-kill animal shelter for Bell County.

The rally will take place on Thursday, Jan. 22, from 4:30-6:30 p.m., at the Bell County Animal Shelter, 2509 S. Loop 121 in Belton.

According to the 2025 annual report for the Bell County Animal Shelter, a total of 3,183 animals were brought into the shelter. A total of 1,157 of those found adopted homes. Another 810 were transferred out.

However, 975 of the animals brought into the

shelter – roughly 30 percent – were euthanized.

"The community is demanding a full transformation of the facility into a genuine no-kill shelter — one that prioritizes life-saving programs, transparency, and humane care," Minor wrote in a media release. "Residents are calling the current situation unacceptable. The killing of nearly one thousand animals is a clear sign that the Sheriff's current model is broken beyond repair."

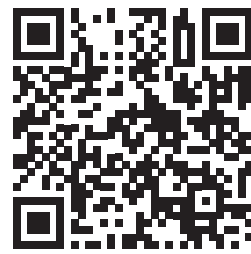
The shelter is open daily for animal adoption, and fees for unsterilized dogs and cats are \$50 and \$20, respectively. Sterilized dogs and cats are \$60 to adopt. Those who adopt animals must have them vaccinated for rabies within 72 hours and unsterilized adopted animals must be sterilized within

30 days.

According to the adoption guidelines on the county website, all animals are placed up for adoption unless the Supervisor deems the animal's behavioral problems create a risk of liability to Bell County or the public in general.

"Our first goal is to remove problematic animals and then to find suitable homes for as many animals as possible. Realistically, not all animals are suitable for adoption. Therefore, the Bell County Animal Shelter is a limited-kill facility. Animals that cannot be adopted will be euthanized in a respectful, humane manner," the website reads.

The shelter lists adoptable animals on Facebook at <https://www.facebook.com/Bell-countyanimalsheltertx/>.



TO ALL INTERESTED PERSONS AND PARTIES:

Asphalt Inc., LLC, has applied to the Texas Commission on Environmental Quality (TCEQ) for issuance of Proposed Air Quality Permit Number 180235, which would authorize modification of the Belton Asphalt Plant located at 2350 Taylors Valley Road, Belton, Bell County, Texas 76513. Additional information concerning this application is contained in the public notice section of this newspaper.

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## Arrest made in 2024 tow truck driver death

By Lynette Sowell  
The Belton Journal

The Texas Department of Public Safety announced last Thursday that an arrest has been made in connection with a Dec. 20, 2024, fatal crash involving a tow truck driver in Salado.

David Conrad Holz, 57, was loading a disabled vehicle onto his tow truck when he was struck and killed by a gold Chevrolet Impala traveling northbound.

Initially, the vehicle was described as a light gold or tan Chevrolet Impala with damage to the front right passenger side, which was missing a mirror and door handle.

Dash camera footage from the tow truck revealed that the Impala's brake lights activated momentarily before the vehicle continued northbound without stopping.

After the investigation that followed, Jesse G. Hernandez, Jr., 24, of Killeen was located in Laredo, Texas, and arrested and transported to the Webb County Jail.

Texas law requires drivers to slow down at least 20 miles per hour under the posted speed limit or, if able, to change lanes when passing a first responder stopped on the roadside.

This includes police and fire units, tow trucks and ambulances.



## HONORING THE VOICES AND LEADERSHIP BEHIND BELTON ISD

The Big Red Community is proud to celebrate Belton ISD's Board of Trustees throughout January 2026 for School Board Recognition Month. This year's theme, "The Future Is Public," highlights the power of strong public schools and the dedicated leaders who help shape them.

Our trustees are committed volunteers who champion public education, advocate for students and staff, and guide the district with vision, integrity and a deep belief in the promise of each and every learner. Their leadership connects our classrooms, families and community, ensuring Belton ISD continues to provide exceptional learning experiences for all.

Members of the Belton ISD Board of Trustees are:

**Manuel Alcozer, President (Area 5)** — Serving since 2018

**Chris Flor, Vice President (Area 4)** — Serving since 2018

**Erin Bass, Secretary (Area 2)** — Serving since 2021

**Riley Beck, Trustee (Area 3)** — Serving since 2025

**Brandon Bozon, Trustee (At-Large)** — Serving since 2025

**Jeff Norwood, Trustee (Area 1)** — Serving since 2016

**Rucker Preston, Trustee (At-Large)** — Serving since 2023



## LBHS COACH TIFFNEY BARNES CELEBRATES 100TH CAREER WIN

Lake Belton High School Girls Basketball Coach Tiffany Barnes reached a major milestone during the Thursday, November 13 game versus Stratford, securing her 100th career win. Barnes said the achievement reflects years of hard work, growth, and teamwork and serves as a reminder of how far her program has come.

She shared that consistency has been her biggest lesson, noting that daily habits, discipline and support from others have shaped every win. Her team was excited to be part of the milestone and motivated to keep the momentum going. For Barnes, the 100th win is both a proud moment and fuel for even bigger goals ahead.



## BELTON ISD CAMPUSES SPREAD JOY THIS HOLIDAY SEASON

Belton ISD campuses are spreading holiday care through programs that lift up students and families. Chisholm Trail Elementary's Elf Closet provided parents with a warm, private place to choose new gifts for their children, serving more than 75 students through generous donations.

At Charter Oak Elementary, the Cheetah Pantry continued sending home discreet weekly meal bags for families in need, supported by the PTO's recent Food and Shoe Drive. Students look forward to the meals, and families are grateful for the support.

Across the district, generosity is making a real difference this season.



## A FRESH TAKE ON THE 12 DAYS OF CHRISTMAS: BHS STUDENTS CREATE HOLIDAY MURAL

Belton High School art students brought holiday energy to the community with their 12 Days of Christmas mural. After a local family reached out with the idea, Art IV students took charge, sketching, refining and selecting designs to build a bold, unified piece from their own artwork. A student committee led the creative direction, working together to merge ideas and make the mural feel cohesive and community-ready.

From planning to painting, students gained real-world experience and poured their creativity into every detail. The finished mural became a joyful showcase of student talent, teamwork and holiday spirit.



## Q&A WITH DR. MALINDA GOLDEN



As the semester winds down and the calendar turns toward a new year, Superintendent Dr. Malinda Golden is taking a moment to reflect on the people and partnerships that make Belton ISD special. From community connections that strengthen our schools to moments of pride witnessed across classrooms, she shares what's inspired her this fall and what she's most excited to focus on in 2026.

**Q: Our community plays such an important role in supporting schools. What partnerships or community moments this semester have really made an impact?**

A: Community engagement is essential to enhancing student learning, and we've seen so many meaningful examples this semester. One that really stood out was with our construction trades students. I watched skilled masons, construction supervisors and business owners take time away from their own projects to mentor our kids, coaching them, evaluating their work and showing them real-world applications of their craft.

One of those partners was even a former Belton ISD student who has built multiple businesses and came back to give back. Seeing our students learn directly from professionals who care deeply about their success was powerful. Moments like that remind me how much our community's willingness to show up can shape what students believe is possible for their future.



**Q: The new year brings fresh opportunities. What goals or priorities are you most excited to focus on in 2026?**

A: I'm excited to deepen our engagement with the community and continue listening to the hopes and dreams our families, staff and partners have for Belton ISD. This district exists to serve our community, and our work is centered on creating the conditions for students to leave us truly career-ready and prepared for their next steps.

Every community that makes up Belton ISD brings its own strengths and aspirations, and I want to ensure those voices continue shaping the future of our schools. In 2026, I'm looking forward to thoughtful, intentional conversations that help us align our goals with what our community wants for its children and for the broader Belton ISD landscape.

**Q: You spend time on campuses throughout the year. What have you observed lately that makes you especially proud to lead Belton ISD?**

A: There have been so many moments that make me proud. Recently, a parent nominated one of our teachers for the Be Remarkable Award, which was a powerful reminder of how much our families value our staff.

I also visited a classroom where a teacher was using strong, research-based practices and pushing students' thinking in both English and Spanish. Watching her teach was energizing.

From engaging campus events to student artwork showcased in the community, I see daily examples of dedication, creativity and growth. Those moments reinforce how special this district truly is.



## BURRELL ELEMENTARY BRINGS MACY'S PARADE MAGIC TO CAMPUS

James L. Burrell Elementary brought full Macy's Day Parade magic to campus with a creative twist that students will not forget. The school transformed its hallways into a mini parade route, complete with giant inflatables drifting past cheering students during the Balloon Walk. The creativity did not stop there. The grand finale featured the crowd-favorite Staff Turkey Trot inflatable race, sending laughter echoing through the halls. It was a joyful, imaginative celebration that showcased the campus's spirit, creativity and commitment to making school experiences memorable.



## NEWS AND UPDATES

### STAYING CONNECTED IN 2026: UPDATE YOUR INFO WITH BELTON ISD

As we head into a new semester and cooler weather, Belton ISD encourages families to make sure their child's school has the most up-to-date contact information on file.

When weather impacts school operations, BISD communicates quickly through ParentSquare (email, text and phone alerts), the district website and social media, and local media outlets. Keeping your contact information current ensures you don't miss important updates.

Families can review and update phone numbers and email addresses through Skylert in Family Access (found in the left-hand menu). If primary contact information needs to be changed, please reach out to your campus registrar for assistance.



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## Lake Belton earns five gold medals at BISD Invitational

By Clay Whittington  
The Belton Journal

The Lady Broncos opened their season in impressive fashion last week, when they claimed the championship at the Belton ISD Invitational.

Competing against a deep field at Temple's Mayborn Convention Center, Lake Belton collected five gold medals en route to a 48-point total. Copperas Cove (44) was second, finishing four points behind.

With a total of 525 pounds, Catalina Esquivel won the 97-pound weight class, producing a 185 squat, 115 bench press and 225 deadlift for the total. Additionally, Moriah Rydberg (114, 255-155-250-660), Nani Rubio (123, 285-115-300-700), Analia Diaz (148, 245-160-300-705) and Jaya Lisenbe (220, 405-225-350-980)

placed first in their divisions.

Emyle Love claimed the Lady Broncos' lone silver medal with a 255-150-265-670 showing in the 132 weight class.

The Lady Broncos' remaining points were produced by Macie Solis (4th, 105, 210-115-240-565), SheKayla Munoz (4th, 114, 235-135-240-610), Aralina Acosta (4th, 181, 295-145-315-755), Isalei Simpson (5th, 242+, 245-155-265-665) and Maiya Keen (5th, 220, 295-165-265-725).

Troy (3rd, 35) and Belton (4th, 19) followed in the final standings.

Melissa Farmer delivered the Lady Tigers' top outing, winning the 242 championship with a 365-175-380-920 total, and the performance was complemented by three more medals.

Byonka Donaldson (242+, 340-200-340-880) was second, while Claire Gouveia (114, 220-135-265-620) and Kenne-

dy Weston (181, 315-165-335-815) were each third.

Placing fifth in the 132 weight class, Ciaran Messersmith (200-110-240-550) completed Belton's scoring.

With 64 points, Troy dominated the boys division, easily beating out second-place Waco (29) by 35 points. The Broncos were third, scoring 25 points.

Hunter Loraus — a 220-pounder — claimed the team's only gold medal, winning his weight class with 1,290 (505-350-435), while teammate Colton Crocker was second in 308 (455-290-525-1,270).

Also emerging with medals for Lake Belton were third-place finishers Leonel Castillo (132, 315-200-340-855), Jax Holliman (148, 350-240-400-990), Blake Baty (220, 510-310-440-1,260) and Kaleb Truelove (308, 425-315-450-1,190).

Lake Belton's other point-producers

were Wesley Bradley (4th, 148, 390-220-330-940), Prince Kabuya (4th, 181, 405-265-390-1,060), Matthew Jackson (5th, 181, 385-290-385-1,060), Raul Martinez (5th, 242, 375-270-380-1,025) and Luke Cowan (5th, 275, 435-270-415-1,120).

Copperas Cove (4th, 23) and Little River Academy (5th, 17) rounded out the top five teams.

The Tigers were eighth, scoring seven points thanks to Corbin Wittman (2nd, 132, 390-235-375-1,000) and Jorge Guardiola (4th, 165, 350-225-355-930).

Belton will look to build on the performance Saturday, when it travels to compete at Copperas Cove.

Lake Belton took part in the Florence meet Wednesday, but final results were not available. The Broncos and Lady Broncos will also be in attendance at Copperas Cove.



## Bobcats take down Tigers 67-29 in district play

By Aries Ramos  
The Belton Journal

Belton ran into a tough night Friday at home, falling 67-29 to Chaparral as the Bobcats used steady pressure and scoring depth to pull away in district play.

The Tigers struggled to find rhythm early, as Chaparral set the tone with aggressive defense and quick transition offense. Despite the slow start, Belton remained

composed and managed to put points on the board in both the first and second quarters, scoring nine points in each period. However, Chaparral's ability to convert turnovers into scoring opportunities allowed the visitors to steadily build separation.

Coming out of halftime, Belton showed improved balance on both ends of the floor. The Tigers moved the ball more effectively and competed

with increased energy, limiting Chaparral's scoring during the third quarter. While the Bobcats held a slight 11-7 edge in the period, Belton's defensive effort and willingness to attack the glass were noticeable improvements.

Chaparral regained control in the fourth quarter, stringing together multiple scoring runs that

See **TIGERS,**  
Page B3

## Lady Broncos rolling at No. 4 in State rankings

By Clay Whittington  
The Belton Journal

The Lady Broncos know exactly who they are.

Since the start of the season, Lake Belton has proven exactly how much potential it has, losing just one time en route to its spot at fourth in the state rankings.

Undeniably, the roster is collectively rich with talent, but it is only because individuals are aware of their roles, according to Lady Broncos

head coach Tiffney Barnes.

"The beauty of this group is that nobody is selfish," she said. "Even if they don't step on the floor, they are cheering for their sisters because they know each others' strengths. Some individuals can't play every game, and others only play against certain opponents."

"They know that, and they accept it."

The mentality has not failed them yet, including Tuesday, when host Chaparral almost accomplished an upset.

With sole possession of first place in the District 16-5A standings on the line, Lake Belton trailed for a majority of the contest before rallying to force overtime, where it was responsible for the game's final nine points in a 61-54 victory.

The Lady Broncos held a 2-0 lead before the Lady

See **LAKE,**  
Page B3

## Tigers get revenge on Eagles

By Clay Whittington  
The Belton Journal

Almost a year ago, the Tigers traveled to state powerhouse Killeen Ellison and lost by 58 points.

Times, however, have changed.

On Tuesday, Belton returned to the gymnasium where the Eagles dominated the last encounter on Jan. 31, 2025, winning 92-34, but Ellison could not repeat the feat.

Paced by five double-digit scorers, the Tigers cruised past the Eagles, who have reached three consecutive state semifinal games and two state championships, winning 82-67 to even their District 16-5A record.

Belton was almost flawless from the field in the first quarter as it established a 25-17 lead, and the advantage inflated to 49-31 by halftime thanks in part to senior guard Jay'dn Loggins' buzzer-beating 3-pointer from halfcourt. The shot was part of a 14-1 run to close the period.

The cushion was a dozen points, 62-50, following three quarters, but the Tigers were never threatened.

Ty Johnson, a junior forward, shared team-high scoring honors with Loggins, finishing with 16 points apiece.

The outing came on the heels of a district-opening loss at Chaparral on Friday.

Belton went back-and-forth with the Bobcats early but lost its offensive rhythm in the second and third quarters, and the slump proved costly.

The Tigers posted just 13 points during the stretch, and despite a fierce comeback attempt, Belton suffered a 64-55 defeat to

snap its four-game winning streak.

Behind a seven-point, four-rebound first quarter from senior forward Daniel Briscoe, the Tigers took a 14-11 lead into the second period, but they could not maintain the momentum.

Chaparral outscored the Tigers by nine points in both the second (15-6) and third quarter (16-7), but Belton would not go away.

Despite trailing 42-27 to begin the final period, the Tigers recorded the quarter's first seven points, pulling with eight points, 42-34, with 7 minutes, 13 seconds remaining in regulation.

Belton could not complete the comeback, though, and lost to Chaparral for the first time in the Bobcats' brief existence. The Tigers won the first six encounters with five victories coming by double digits.

Chaparral was led by forward Carlos Robinson, who finished with a game-high 21 points to go along with 16 rebounds and two blocks, while teammates Curtis Watson-Davis and Demoni Mayes, who are both junior guards, added 17 points and 10 points, respectively.

In defeat, Loggins scored a team-high 20 points, while junior teammate Luke Munden added 10 points for the Tigers.

Belton will attempt to build on its performance at Ellison in a pair of home games, hosting Waco on Friday and Lake Belton on Tuesday.

Killeen Chaparral and Waco University share an early lead in the league race with identical 2-0 records, while the Tigers and Broncos are tied for third at 1-1. Ellison and Waco are 0-2.

## BISD soccer wraps up tourney play

By Aries Ramos  
The Belton Journal

Both Lake Belton and Belton girls soccer teams closed tournament play over the weekend, gaining valuable experience as district play approaches later this month.

Lake Belton faced one of its toughest weekends of the season while competing in its third and final tournament, squaring off against multiple playoff programs. The Lady Broncos

opened tournament play against Weiss and tried to battle back after an early deficit. Lake Belton settled in offensively and responded with a pair of goals before halftime to even the match at 2-2. However, costly defensive lapses in the second half allowed Weiss to regain control, handing the Broncos a 4-2 loss.

The second match proved to be one of Lake Belton's strongest performances of the weekend. Locked in a physical and evenly matched contest against

Canyon, the Lady Broncos battled to a 1-1 draw deep into the second half. With just minutes remaining, a late penalty kick swung the outcome, resulting in a narrow defeat despite an otherwise strong defensive effort and disciplined team play.

Lake Belton closed the tournament against Frisco Wakeland, the top ranked team in Class 5A Region II. Playing in challenging conditions with heavy winds exceeding 20 miles per hour, the Broncos were

tested by Wakeland's speed. Despite the result, the match provided valuable exposure to the pace and intensity required to compete at the highest level.

The Lady Broncos now turn their focus to district play, opening the schedule January 30 at Ellison with lessons learned from a demanding non-district slate.


Belton competed in the Governors Cup in Georgetown, also facing a challenging field as the Tigers wrapped up tourna-

ment action. Belton opened play Thursday against Austin High, surrendering a late second half goal in a tight 1-0 loss. The Tigers remained organized defensively but struggled to generate consistent scoring chances.

Friday's matchup against Colleyville Heritage followed a similar script, with Belton holding strong through a scoreless first half before second-half

See **SOCCER,**  
Page B3

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# Sports Briefs

**By Clay Whittington**  
*The Belton Journal*

Hosting the Jim Grimm Memorial Tournament, the Broncos and Lady Broncos delivered a strong showing, collecting multiple medals while preparing for the upcoming district schedule.

In the boys division, Tanner Wentz (126

pounds), Carl Huffman (138), Austin Carrillo (144) had impressive outings.

Carrillo earned multiple pinfall victories en route to the championship match, where he was defeated.

Wentz made a deep run through the consolation bracket, and Huffman opened with several wins

to advance through the bracket.

Additionally, Akshar Parikh, Jayden Alba and Joseph Casmus each bounced back from early losses to gain pinfalls in the consolation rounds.

Arianna Smith (115) advanced to the consolation finals in the girls division, and teammate Michelle Hoffman (135) also fell in the consolation finals.

Akira Beck (140), Kameryn Vaden (190) and Lorelai Scallorn (235) each had deep runs in the consolation bracket as well.

The District 6-5A tournament is set for Wednesday at Mary Hardin-Baylor.

**SOFTBALL**

Practices for the upcoming season recently began for both Lake Belton and Belton with scrimmages permitted to begin Saturday. Games are allowed starting Feb. 9.

The Lady Broncos will host four scrimmages against Georgetown (Tuesday), Waco Midway (Jan. 30), College Station (Feb. 2) and Salado (Feb. 6).

Then, their season will begin Feb. 19 with a trip to Georgetown.

The Lady Tigers' first game is set for Feb. 10, when they play at Killeen Shoemaker.

District 16-5A play begins March 17, when the Lady Broncos host Waco University and Belton

plays at Waco.

**BASEBALL**

Practices for the upcoming season begin last week for both Lake Belton and Belton with scrimmages permitted to begin Jan. 31. Games are allowed starting Feb. 16.

The Broncos will take part in scrimmages against visiting China Spring (Jan. 31), Temple (Jan. 31) and Buda Johnson (Feb. 3) before scrimmaging at Leander Rouse against the host Raiders and Round Rock McNeil on Feb. 7. Lake Belton closes its preseason with scrimmages at Round Rock Cedar Ridge (Feb. 10) and versus Austin Westwood (Feb. 13). Then, the Broncos'

season will begin Feb. 19 with another trip to Cedar Ridge.

The Tigers have an intrasquad scrimmage set for Saturday before scrimmages at Bastrop (Jan. 31), versus Georgetown East View (Feb. 3), Troy and Little River Academy (Feb. 6), Hutto (Feb. 10), at Round Rock Stony Point (Feb. 13) and versus Leander Glenn (Feb. 16).

Belton's first game is set for Feb. 19, when it travels to compete in the three-day Pflugerville ISD tournament.

District 16-5A play begins March 24, when the the Broncos travel to Belton for the first game of the series, which moves to Lake Belton on March 27.

## Belton Lake: Stillhouse

**EXCELLENT.** Water normal stain; 60 degrees; 0.75 feet above pool. Winter patterns are in place now, therefore really keeping an eye on the weather will be key to fishing success. The best results will be had during the wind shift from south through west to north as dry cold fronts push in. Fishing will improve as the winds swing through the southwest and right up to the point where the northerly winds peak. The next best scenario will be on the first day of returning southerly winds. The worst results can be expected during post-frontal conditions with classic clear, cold, calm weather in the hours or days following the passage of a front. Foggy conditions will also make fishing very difficult whenever they set in. All other conditions will typically result in average fishing. We are in the midst of a short warmup between fronts right now and the water temperature is rising. The fish have responded positively and have shown a willingness to chase farther and faster than back in mid-December when the water was nearly 5 degrees cooler. Fishing has been solid in the first three hours of the morning following sunrise, and again in the mid afternoon, from 2-4:30 p.m. The MAL Dense with silver body used vertically has been my lure of choice. Fish it by dropping to bottom, removing all slack, then cranking the lure upwards through the lower third of the water column while observing fish response on Live-Scope. If the fish are reluctant, experiment with slowing the retrieve after the blade begins spinning. The best depths have been 35-41 feet. Report by Bob Maindelle, Holding the Line Guide Service. Catfish are excellent. Trophy size blue catfish can be found along river channels, sand flats and around steep ledges in 30-40 feet of water. Larger fresh cut baits have been effective for the trophy size fish while eater size fish under 10 pounds are still active and slow drifting with small cut shad along sand flats is best for those. Channel catfish are slow but can be caught on punch bait around timber in 10-25 feet of water. Report by Brian Worley, B&S Catfishing.

**GOOD.** Water stained; 58 degrees; 1.61 feet above pool. Winter patterns are in place now, therefore really keeping an eye on the weather will be key to fishing success. The best results will be had during the wind shift from south through west to north as dry cold fronts push in. Fishing will improve as the winds swing through the southwest and right up to the point where the northerly winds peak. The next best scenario will be on the first day of returning southerly winds. The worst results can be expected during post-frontal conditions with classic clear, cold, calm weather in the hours or days following the passage of a front. Foggy conditions will also make fishing very difficult whenever they set in. All other conditions will typically result in average fishing. We are in the midst of a short warmup between fronts right now and the water temperature is rising. The fish have responded positively and have shown a willingness to chase farther and faster than back in mid-December when the water was nearly 5 degrees cooler. Fishing has been solid in the first three hours of the morning following sunrise, and again in the mid afternoon, from 2-4:30 p.m. The MAL Dense with silver body used vertically has been my lure of choice. Fish it by dropping to bottom, removing all slack, then cranking the lure upwards through the lower third of the water column while observing fish response on Live-Scope. If the fish are reluctant, experiment with slowing the retrieve after the blade begins spinning. 28-35 feet is solid in the first 90 minutes of the morning, then 38-49 feet as the skies brighten. Report by Bob Maindelle, Holding the Line Guide Service. Bass are good, focus on roaming schools following baitfish in open water. Mid-strolling minnow-style soft plastics continue to be the most reliable option for both numbers and size. Umbrella rigs are also producing solid fish, especially when worked over submerged vegetation. Report by Ander Meine, Bassquatch Fishing.

## Tigers win big 4-0; Broncos struggle in Mustang Cup

**By Aries Ramos**  
*The Belton Journal*

Belton bounced back in a big way Friday night,

responding to a recent loss with a dominant 4-0 victory over Copperas Cove. Meanwhile, Lake Belton endured a chal-

lenging stretch of matches at the Mustang Cup, facing quality opponents as the Broncos look ahead to regrouping efforts.

Belton entered Friday's matchup determined to reset after a setback against Harker Heights, and the Tigers wasted little time asserting control. From the opening whistle, Belton played aggressively, dictating tempo and creating scoring chances through passing and strong off ball movement.

Jorge Hernandez led the charge offensively, scoring twice to power the Tigers' attack. Hernandez pressured Copperas Cove's back line and capitalized on scoring opportunities in the final third. Valentin Villanueva and Jonathan Jaimes also found the net, rounding out a balanced scoring effort that kept Cove on its heels throughout the match.

Belton's ability to convert chances was matched by disciplined play defensively, as the Tigers limited Copperas Cove's looks on goal and controlled possession for extended stretches. Hernandez added an assist to his standout performance, while Sammy Clark also recorded an assist, helping facilitate Belton's fluid attacking buildup. The result was a complete team performance and a confidence boosting shut-

See **BOYS**,  
Page B3

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### Lake - From Page B1

Bobcats responded with a 3-pointer, and the advantage remained with Chaparral until the fourth quarter as it took a 10-point, 36-26, cushion into halftime.

By the conclusion of the third period, however, Lake Belton was within striking distance at 45-42, and the Lady Broncos completed the comeback less than 90 seconds into the fourth quarter thanks in part to sophomore guard Alex King's field goal in the paint that put them ahead 46-45.

The Lady Broncos did not trail again dur-

ing regulation and were leading 52-50 before Lady Bobcats junior guard Demiyah Carter's runner tied the score with four seconds showing on the clock.

Chaparral would score first in the extra period, but it would not score again.

"The girls just had to fight," she said. "We knew this was going to be a really great game, because Chaparral is a really good team. They are really good defensively, so we knew we were walking into a battle."

"That was just a lot of mental tough-

ness to pull it out."

King finished with a game-high 20 points to go with five rebounds, while Taylor complemented the effort with 13 points, and sophomore guard Erica Taylor had a dozen points, nine rebounds and three assists. Additionally, sophomore shooting guard Layla King had nine points and Olivia Dann, a freshman small forward, added 10 rebounds, seven blocks, four rebounds and four assists.

As a result, the Lady Broncos (27-

1) enter Friday's contest against visiting Waco University in sole possession of first place in the league standings with a 4-0 record, while the second-place Lady Bobcats (20-7, 3-1) will attempt to rebound at Ellison.

"We've been working on our mental toughness since July," Barnes said. "This is the moment we have been waiting for. We've been looking forward to this."

"Now, we finally got it."

### Soccer - From Page B1

breakdowns led to a 2-0 defeat. Tournament play concluded Saturday with a hard fought 0-0

draw against LASA in blustery conditions, as shifting winds impacted both teams' ability to

maintain rhythm and possession. With tournaments com-

plete, Belton will travel to Vista Ridge on Friday for a final tune-up before opening district com-

petition next week, while Lake Belton prepares to begin its district run with renewed focus.



### Local business owners: Don't overlook retirement plans

Scot Hrbacek, CFP® *Financial Advisor*

If you're a local business owner, you're likely juggling growth, expenses and your team's needs, all while planning for your own future. A workplace retirement plan may be able to help with all of that, directly and indirectly.

For the business, employer contributions are tax-deductible. And as a participant in your company plan, your pretax salary deferrals are excluded from income taxes. Many plans even offer Roth options for tax-free withdrawals later. Your local business may also qualify for federal tax credits to offset startup and administra-

tive costs, along with other expenses.

A retirement plan also can reduce risk. If you have your own net worth tied up in the business, your retirement may depend on a future sale. Building personal assets now adds flexibility and security.

And in today's competitive labor market, strong benefits help attract and keep great employees.

Not sure where to start? A qualified financial advisor can guide you through options and help align your plan with your goals.

*This article was written by Edward Jones for use by your local Edward Jones Financial Advisor. Edward Jones, Member SIPC*

## Edward Jones

3011 N. Main, Ste C, Belton, Tx 76513  
(254) 933-7680 • scot.hrbacek@edwardjones.com  
Member SIPC

### Tigers - From Page B1

stretched the lead and put the game out of reach. Belton continued to compete until the final horn, but Chaparral's depth and pace proved difficult to overcome.

Individually, Aubrey Edwards provided a strong presence defensively, im-

pacting the game with her rebounding and physical play in the paint. Edwards consistently battled on the boards and helped limit second chance opportunities. Emma Flory handled ball handling duties against Chaparral's aggressive guard pressure,

showing poise and decision making while helping initiate the Tigers' offense.

Though the result did not go Belton's way, the Tigers will look to build off the positive stretches shown in the second half as they continue district competition. Belton returns to

action Tuesday with a road matchup against Ellison, marking the fourth district game of the opening round.

The Tigers will aim to respond with sharper execution and renewed energy as they continue to grow through district play.

### Boys - From Page B2

out win at home.

Across town, Lake Belton faced a demanding slate at the Mustang Cup, opening the tourna-

ment against Palestine. The Broncos showed resilience early, responding to Palestine pressure with a goal from Kai Zuniga,

assisted by Zane Fitzwater. Despite the response, Lake Belton trailed 4-1 late in the first half and eventually fell 6-1 as Pal-

estine pulled away in the second half.

Lake Belton returned to action against state ranked Decatur, facing another tough test. The Broncos trailed 3-0 at halftime and were unable to close the gap, falling 5-0 in a match that highlighted the level of competition at the tournament.

In their final contest, Lake Belton took on Walnut Grove in a closely contested match early on. Walnut Grove scored midway through the first half to take a 1-0 lead, which held through halftime. Lake Belton continued to battle but ultimately fell 2-0 as Walnut Grove added a second half goal.

Despite the results, the Mustang Cup provided valuable experience for the Broncos against high level opponents. Lake Belton will look to apply those lessons moving forward, while Belton aims to build momentum after Friday's emphatic victory as both programs continue their push through the season.



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## LEGALS

### THE STATE OF TEXAS CITATION BY PUBLICATION – CIVIL CAUSE NO. 25DCV353583

To: SHONDRAEUS KNIGHT AND NATASHA KNIGHT  
Greetings:

You are hereby commanded to appear by filing a written answer to the PLAINTIFF'S ORIGINAL PETITION at or before 10 o'clock AM of the first Monday after the expiration of 42 days from the date of issuance of this Citation, the same being Monday, at or before 10 o'clock AM, before the Honorable 146th Judicial District Court, Bell County, Texas to be held at the Bell County District Courts Building in Belton, Texas. Said PLAINTIFF'S ORIGINAL PETITION was filed in said court on May 01, 2025.

The file number of said suit being No. 25DCV353583. The names of the parties in said suit are:

M&T BANK VS. SHONDRAEUS KNIGHT,NATASHA KNIGHT,MIDLAND FUNDING LLC,DOES 1 THROUGH 10 AND ROES BUSINESS ENTITIES 1 THROUGH 10, INCLUSIVE

## LEGALS

The nature of said suit being substantially as follows, to wit:

Service of the Plaintiff's Original Petition upon defendants SHONDRAEUS KNIGHT, NATASHA KNIGHT and DOES 1 THROUGH 10 AND ROES BUSINESS ENTITIES 1 THROUGH 10, INCLUSIVE as a potential party in interest. This was issued at the request of attorney: WILLIAM G MALCOLM, 2112 BUSINESS CENTER DRIVE SECOND FLOOR, IRVINE CA 92612.

NOTICE TO DEFENDANT: You have been sued. You may employ an attorney. If you or your attorney do not file a written answer with the clerk who issued this citation by 10:00 AM on Monday next following the expiration of forty two days after you were served this citation and petition, a default judgment may be taken against you. In addition to filing a written answer with the clerk, you may be required to make initial disclosures to the other parties of this suit. These disclosures generally must be made no later than 30 days after you file your answer with the clerk. Find out more at TexasLawHelp.org.

Issued and given under my hand and seal of said Court at office in Belton, Texas, on January 13, 2026.

Joanna Staton District Clerk Bell County, Texas, 1201 Huey Road, P.O. Box 909, Belton, Texas 76513

By: Misti Cortez Deputy Clerk  
01.15,22,29,02.05-PD

### NOTICE TO CREDITORS

Notice is hereby given that original Letters Testamentary for the Estate of BRUCE ALLEN CLARK, Deceased, were issued on January 8, 2026, in Cause No. 25CPB00640, pending in the County Court at Law No. 1 of Bell County, Texas, to: ARMANDINA "MANDY" CLARK.  
All persons having claims against this Estate

## LEGALS

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: ESTATE OF BRUCE ALLEN CLARK ARMANDINA "MANDY" CLARK, 2369 Stone Road ,Temple, TX 76501 DATED the 13 day of January, 2026. J. ERIC STOEBNER, State Bar No.: 24046919, Telephone: (254) 771-1855, Facsimile: (254) 771-2082, E-mail: eric@templolawoffice.com 01.22

### THE STATE OF TEXAS CITATION BY PUBLICATION-PARENT AND CHILD

To: Jamal Reese, any Unknown Father and All Whom It May Concern, Respondents, in the herein-after-styled and - numbered cause:

You have been sued. You may employ an attorney. If you or your attorney do not file a written answer with the clerk who issued this citation by 10 a.m. on the Monday next following the expiration of 20 days after you were served this citation and petition, a default judgment may be taken against you. The Original Petition of the Texas Department of Family and Protective Services, Petitioner, was filed in the 146th Judicial District Court of Bell County, Texas, on June 11, 2025, against Taylor Brantley and Jamal Reese, Respondent(s), numbered 25DFAM354419, and entitled "In the Interest of AMIYA BRANTLEY, also known as AMIYA BRANTLEY-REESE, minor child." The suit requests to terminate the parent-child relationships and/or to appoint a managing conservator of the child. The date and place of birth of the child who is the subject of the suit is:

AMIYA BRANTLEY, also known as AMIYA BRANTLEY-REESE, DOB: March 4, 2021, Place of birth:

Unknown

The court has authority in this suit to render an order in the child's interest that will be binding on you, including the termination of the parent-child relationship, the determination of paternity, and the appointment of a conservator with authority to consent to the child's adoption.

The name and address of the attorney for plaintiff is Susan Parker, Bell County Attorney's Office, P.O. Box 1127, Belton, TX 76513

Issued and given under my hand and seal of the Court at Belton, Texas, this the 14 day of January 2026

Joanna Staton, District Clerk of Bell County, Texas, 1201 Huey Road, P.O. Box 909, Belton, TX 76513  
By: C. Rodriguez Deputy.  
01.22

### NOTICE TO ALL PERSONS HAVING CLAIMS AGAINST

THE ESTATE OF JANET I. GROBOWSKY a/k/a JANET IRENE GROBOWSKY, DECEASED

Notice is hereby given that original Letters Testamentary upon the Estate of Janet I. Grobowsky a/k/a Janet Irene Grobowsky, Deceased, were issued to Donald R. Grobowsky on January 7, 2026, in Cause No. 25CPB00731, in the County Court of Bell County, Texas, which matter is still pending.

All persons having claims against said estate are required to present same within the time prescribed by law to: Donald R. Grobowsky, c/o Erin F. Stevens Haley & Olson, P.C., 100 N. Ritchie Road, Suite 200, Waco, Texas 76712  
01.22

### NOTICE TO CREDITORS

Notice is hereby given that original Letters Testamentary for the Estate of RAYMOND GUS STANKE, JR., Deceased, were issued on January 7, 2026, in Cause No. 25CPB00753, pending in the County Court-At-Law No: 1, Bell County, Texas, to: CAROL JOAN STANKE.

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: Jeffrey Thigpen

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### TEXAS COMMISSION ON ENVIRONMENTAL QUALITY NOTICE OF APPLICATION AND PRELIMINARY DECISION FOR AN AIR QUALITY PERMIT

#### PROPOSED PERMIT NUMBER: 180235

**APPLICATION AND PRELIMINARY DECISION.** Asphalt Inc., LLC, 11675 Jollyville Rd Ste 150, Austin, TX 78759-4108, has applied to the Texas Commission on Environmental Quality (TCEQ) for issuance of Proposed Air Quality Permit Number 180235, which would authorize modification of the Belton Asphalt Plant located at 2350 Taylor Valley Road, Belton, Bell County, Texas 76513. **AVISO DE IDIOMA ALTERNATIVO.** El aviso de idioma alternativo en español está disponible en <https://www.tceq.texas.gov/permitting/air/newsourcereview/airpermits-pendingpermit-apps>. This application was submitted to the TCEQ on May 21, 2025. The existing facility will emit the following contaminants: carbon monoxide, nitrogen oxides, organic compounds, particulate matter including particulate matter with diameters of 10 microns or less and 2.5 microns or less and sulfur dioxide.

The executive director has completed the technical review of the application and prepared a draft permit which, if approved, would establish the conditions under which the facility must operate. The executive director has made a preliminary decision to issue the permit because it meets all rules and regulations. The permit application, executive director's preliminary decision, and draft permit will be available for viewing and copying at the TCEQ central office, the TCEQ Waco regional office, and at Lena Armstrong Public Library located at 301 East 1st Street, Belton, Bell County, Texas 76513, beginning the first day of publication of this notice. The facility's compliance file, if any exists, is available for public review at the TCEQ Waco Regional Office, 6801 Sanger Avenue, Suite 2500, Waco, Texas. The application, including any updates, is available electronically at the following webpage: <https://www.tceq.texas.gov/permitting/air/airpermit-applications-notices>.

**PUBLIC COMMENT/PUBLIC MEETING.** You may submit public comments or request a public meeting about this application. The purpose of a public meeting is to provide the opportunity to submit comment or to ask questions about the application. The TCEQ will hold a public meeting if the executive director determines that there is a significant degree of public interest in the application or if requested by a local legislator. A public meeting is not a contested case hearing. **You may submit additional written public comments within 30 days of the date of newspaper publication of this notice in the manner set forth in the AGENCY CONTACTS AND INFORMATION paragraph below.**

**RESPONSE TO COMMENTS AND EXECUTIVE DIRECTOR ACTION.** After the deadline for public comments, the executive director will consider the comments and prepare a response to all relevant and material or significant public comments. Because no timely hearing requests have been received, after preparing the response to comments, the executive director may then issue final approval of the application. **The response to comments, along with the executive director's decision on the application will be mailed to everyone who submitted public comments or is on a mailing list for this application, and will be posted electronically to the Commissioners' Integrated Database (CID).**

**INFORMATION AVAILABLE ONLINE.** When they become available, the executive director's response to comments and the final decision on this application will be accessible through the Commission's Web site at [www.tceq.texas.gov/goto/cid](http://www.tceq.texas.gov/goto/cid). Once you have access to the CID using the above link, enter the permit number for this application which is provided at the top of this notice. This link to an electronic map of the site or facility's general location is provided as a public courtesy and not part of the application or notice. For exact location, refer to application. <https://gisweb.tceq.texas.gov/LocationMapper/?marker=-97.43407,31.05234&level=13>.

**MAILING LIST.** You may ask to be placed on a mailing list to obtain additional information on this application by sending a request to the Office of the Chief Clerk at the address below.

**AGENCY CONTACTS AND INFORMATION.** Public comments and requests must be submitted either electronically at [www.tceq.texas.gov/goto/comment](http://www.tceq.texas.gov/goto/comment), or in writing to the Texas Commission on Environmental Quality, Office of the Chief Clerk, MC 105, P.O. Box 13087, Austin, Texas 78711-3087. Please be aware that any contact information you provide, including your name, phone number, email address and physical address will become part of the agency's public record. For more information about the permitting process, please call the TCEQ Public Education Program, Toll Free, at 1-800-687-4040 or visit their website at [www.tceq.texas.gov/goto/pep](http://www.tceq.texas.gov/goto/pep). Si desea información en Español, puede llamar al 1-800-687-4040. You can also view our website for public participation opportunities at [www.tceq.texas.gov/goto/participation](http://www.tceq.texas.gov/goto/participation).

Further information may also be obtained from Asphalt Inc., LLC at the address stated above or by calling Mrs. Melissa Fitts, Senior Vice President, Westward Environmental, Inc. at (830) 249-8284.

Notice Issuance Date: January 13, 2026

**LEGALS**

Attorney at Law, PO Box 428, TEMPLE, TX 76503  
 SIGNED On January 15, 2026.  
 Jeffrey Thigpen Attorney for CAROL IOAN STANKE, State Bar No.: 24099990, PO Box 428, TEMPLE, TX 76503, Telephone: (254) 773-1663, Facsimile: (254) 773-2574, Email: jeff@linzythigpen.com 01.22

**THE STATE OF TEXAS CITATION BY PUBLICATION CASE NUMBER 25CPB00377**

To: Catherine Chamberlain-Cahall LARRY ERNEST COX, Applicant, on June 16, 2025, filed an application for declaration of heirship and issuance of letters of dependent administration in a proceeding styled: WILLIAM CHAPMAN CHAMBERLAIN, Deceased, and bearing the number 25CPB00377 in the County Court of Bell County, Texas. The court will hear the aforesaid Application after the expiration of ten days, exclusive of the day of publication, from the date this citation is published which will be January 22, 2026, in the County Court at Law #1 Courtroom, at the Bell County Justice Complex, 1201 Huey Road, in Belton, Texas. All persons interested in the aforesaid estate are commanded to appear at or before the time set for said hearing by filing a written contest or answer to said application should they desire to oppose or contest it. Said written contest or answer shall be filed in the office of Shelley Coston, County Clerk, Bell County, Texas, PO Box 480, Belton, Texas 76513. The name and address of the attorney for applicant is: JOHN ERIC STOEBNER, 2106 BIRD CREEK

**LEGALS**

DRIVE, TEMPLE TX 76502  
 The officer serving this Citation shall, in compliance with the Law, serve it by publication once in a newspaper of the general circulation in this, the County in which the decedent last resided as required by Section 202.052 of the Texas Estate Code, for not less than ten days before the return day hereof, exclusive of the day of publication, and the date of publication said newspaper bears shall be the day of publication. Issued and given under my hand and seal of said Court at office on January 16, 2026. Shelley Coston County Clerk of Bell County, Texas PO Box 480 1201 Huey Road Belton, TX, 76513  
 By: Lillian Phillips Deputy 01.22

**THE STATE OF TEXAS CITATION BY PUBLICATION CASE NUMBER 22CPB00309**

To: UNKNOWN HEIRS COURTNEY MEZA, Applicant, on January 14, 2026, filed an First Amended Application to Determine Heirship in a proceeding styled: RONNIE JAN REINHARDT, Deceased, and bearing the number 22CPB00309 in the County Court of Bell County, Texas. The court will hear the aforesaid Application after the expiration of ten days, exclusive of the day of publication, from the date this citation is published which will be January 22, 2026, in the County Court at Law #1 Courtroom, at the Bell County Justice Complex, 1201 Huey Road, in Belton, Texas. All persons interested in the aforesaid estate are commanded to appear at or before the time set for said hearing by

**LEGALS**

filing a written contest or answer to said application should they desire to oppose or contest it. Said written contest or answer shall be filed in the office of Shelley Coston, County Clerk, Bell County, Texas, PO Box 480, Belton, Texas 76513. The name and address of the attorney for applicant is: KENNETH R. VALKA ATTORNEY AT LAW, 127 LAKE ROAD, SUITE 209, BELTON TX 76513  
 The officer serving this Citation shall, in compliance with the Law, serve it by publication once in a newspaper of the general circulation in this, the County in which the decedent last resided as required by Section 202.052 of the Texas Estate Code, for not less than ten days before the return day hereof, exclusive of the day of publication, and the date of publication said newspaper bears shall be the day of publication. Issued and given under my hand and seal of said Court at office on January 16, 2026. Shelley Coston County Clerk of Bell County, Texas, PO Box 480 1201 Huey Road, Belton, TX 76513  
 By: Lillian Phillip Deputy 01.22

**THE STATE OF TEXAS CITATION BY PUBLICATION CASE NUMBER 25CPB00382**

To: UNKNOWN HEIRS VICKI HACKMANN, Applicant, on July 11, 2025, filed an First Amended Application to Determine Heirship Seeking Independent Administration and Letters of Administration in a proceeding styled: BRYAN LESLIE BECK, Deceased, and bearing the

**LEGALS**

number 25CPB00382 in the County Court of Bell County, Texas. The court will hear the aforesaid Application after the expiration of ten days, exclusive of the day of publication, from the date this citation is published which will be January 22, 2026 in the County Court at Law #1 Courtroom, at the Bell County Justice Complex, 1201 Huey Road, in Belton, Texas. All persons interested in the aforesaid estate are commanded to appear at or before the time set for said hearing by filing a written contest or answer to said application should they desire to oppose or contest it. Said written contest or answer shall be filed in the office of Shelley Coston, County Clerk, Bell County, Texas, PO Box 480, Belton, Texas 76513. The name and address of the attorney for applicant is: LANE HEGINBOTHAM, 425 NORTH 8TH STREET, KILLEEN TX 76541  
 The officer serving this Citation shall, in compliance with the Law, serve it by publication once in a newspaper of the general circulation in this, the County in which the decedent last resided as required by Section 202.052 of the Texas Estate Code, for not less than ten days before the return day hereof, exclusive of the day of publication, and the date of publication said newspaper bears shall be the day of publication. Issued and given under my hand and seal of said Court at office on September 23, 2025, Shelley Coston County Clerk of Bell County, Texas, PO Box 480, 1201 Huey Road, Belton, TX 76513  
 By: Lillian Phillips Deputy 01.22

# Business Showcase

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English Maids has been a long-standing dependable and trustworthy business offering residential cleaning services to Belton and the Central Texas communities for over a decade. The business was started by Kay English out of her home in Waco in 2006, and her daughter, Lauren English-Thurman joined the business in 2009. The company then expanded from Waco to serve surrounding communities, including Belton, Salado and Temple. The mother-daughter team focuses on providing the best service for residential and commercial cleaning, offering weekly, bi-weekly and monthly cleaning.

“During COVID, it was really important because a lot of people were trying to keep their house clean and sanitized,” said Lauren English-Thurman. “Our motto is a clean home is a healthy home.”

Every home is cleaned and disinfected during every visit, she added. English-Thurman said that some of their customers utilize their services because they physically cannot clean or do it themselves.

“I get the most joy when we can go in and help them, and then they’re so appreciative because it helps their overall quality of life to have a clean home,” Thurman-English added. “And it definitely helps the busy moms working and things like that, but I find the most satisfaction when I can help somebody that would not otherwise be able to do it.” The company employs around 10 to 12 employees at each of its offices, in both Waco and Belton. Each employee is well-trained, screened and has passed a background check. They are also insured, bonded and carry workers’ compensation.

“I think what sets us apart is we’re family owned and operated,” English-Thurman said. “We pay special attention to detail. I talk to our customers on a regular basis, build a relationship with them, so that we can customize their cleaning.”

English Maids is a member of The Cleaning For a Reason Foundation and offers free cleanings to women receiving cancer treatment. For more information, visit [www.englishmaids.biz](http://www.englishmaids.biz) or call 254-231-0583.

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**Bell County Museum Homeschool Day!**

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Date: Feb 12, 2026

**HOMESCHOOL DAY AT THE MUSEUM**

10am - Pioneer Log Cabin presentation (limited to 35 kids)  
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Feb 12, 2026 9:00 AM - 12:00 PM

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# EDITORIAL

## Throwing Starfish

My Front Porch • Lynette Sowell

Sometimes in the everyday sameness of life and our routines, we can feel a little overwhelmed with everything we have to do and those we need to do things for, and others who may need us.

We can sometimes get discouraged, wondering if what we do is making any difference.

Or, we don't hear a simple thank-you for what we do.

Maybe, we start feeling unappreciated and we start to wonder if our efforts are futile.

I'm reminded of the story of the starfish, and it goes something like this:

*An old man had a habit of early morning walks on the beach. One day, after a storm, he saw a figure in the distance moving like a dancer. As he came closer he saw that it was a young woman and she was not dancing but was reaching down to the sand, picking up*

*starfish and very gently throwing them into the ocean.*

*"Young lady," he asked, "Why are you throwing starfish into the ocean?"*

*"The sun is up, and the tide is going out, and if I do not throw them in they will die."*

*"But young lady, do you not realize that there are miles and miles of beach and starfish all along it? You cannot possibly make a difference."*

*The young woman listened politely, paused and then bent down, picked up another starfish and threw it into the sea, past the breaking waves, saying, "It made a difference for that one."*

Single mother—or single dad—no one applauds you or throws out the red carpet for working hard, putting supper on the table, toting the kids to practice in the rain—but it means the world to your little starfish, growing before your eyes.

Tired teacher, staying late grading papers, listening to yet another complaint from a parent, while still paying out of your pocket for a student's lunch because they're hungry—no unseen good deed is insignificant to the one it serves.

Burger flipper, you wonder if you'll ever finish college as you serve yet another drive-through breakfast with a smile—your smile may be the only one that customer sees today. One day, you'll be cruising through drive-through on your way to your dream job, too. Smile, as you remember where you had your start.

Small, seemingly invisible acts of kindness, bravery, self-sacrifice, even love. You who work unseen and unrewarded—keep throwing those starfish. It makes a difference for each one.

## A Rock-Hard Reality

Shop the Insanity • Darren Blair

As some of you may have guessed, I'm older than I look.

I have reached an age where younger individuals ask me about what life was like in the 1980s and 1990s when I was growing up. Often, they are some combination of astonished, amused, bemused, confused, shocked, and alarmed by what I tell them. I grew up in a far different world than the one they know, a world that they at best can only experience second-hand and often receive little instruction about outside of pop culture.

One day, I was asked if I would like to go back to the 1980s in the sense of that period somehow being transplanted onto the present. I explained that while there are some things I do miss about the era, the decade as a whole, like many decades, was a mixed bag of good and bad. As such, while there are things I feel we need to consider a return to, there are also things best left in the past.

For example, when I was growing up it was perfectly normal for kids to spend hours upon end outside. If the sun was up, the weather was good, and we had no obligations

(including Saturday morning cartoons), most of us would be outside playing games, enjoying the playground, or doing other youthful activities. A few of us would occasionally even be allowed to explore if we were old enough or we were with a trusted older sibling. Sounds like a delightful era, right?

Not entirely. Some kids didn't have a choice, as their parents would hand them a lunch and get them outside so that the parents could have an empty house. Other kids were latch-key kids; both parents worked or had other obligations, so they had a key with which to come and go. And of course, if things went wrong, there was often not an adult or older sibling immediately present to help.

...And even if someone was present, they might not have understood the seriousness of certain injuries. For example, when I was 5, I went with my dad and older brothers on a Scouting excursion to give mom a weekend by herself. The itinerary included rappelling down the side of a cliff. I went over the edge just like the older boys, and slammed face-first into the side of the cliff. Helmet? What helmet?

Who wore helmets in the 1980s? That's how little we understood about head trauma. Instead, I was made to apologize to the cliff and essentially told to walk it off.

Kids playing outside, getting exercise, and working their imaginations? Good. Kids not always having proper supervision or safety equipment due to a lack of understanding about how dangerous certain things could be? Far from good. That's what I mean.

It's a big part of why I say that society needs to test the old against the new. The new ways might be better, they might be functionally neutral, or they might be worse. Meanwhile, the old may have survived for a reason, or may be something to unload. Viewing the past with those metaphorical rose-colored glasses or discarding it wholesale in favor of the next big thing are both grave errors in thinking. Rather, we need to take the best of what came before, fuse it with the best of what is, and use it to build towards the future.

As musician Billy Joel put it in his song *Keeping The Faith*: "...Because the good old days weren't always good, and tomorrow's not as bad as it seems".

## Randomness

Pleasant Ramblings • Mark Magnan

A few random thoughts for the week. Think of this as a blender with a lot of different things thrown in, the result is always a bit odd, that is my thought process on some weeks.

Some years ago cars were a lot fancier, they had different levels of trim with some being adorned with chrome on the sides where it was not expected and even hood ornaments. I think it was a better time to drive, you could feel special in your car, and with those hood ornaments you felt like it was a luxury car. Now even some luxury cars don't have hood ornaments.

Do you ever wonder what the best thing in the world was before sliced bread?

Speaking of bread, biscuits

are bread correct? Why don't we slice them? Other than the obvious reason that it would be an awfully small sandwich.

Have you ever pondered the origins of tortillas? They are bread. What if way back someone made a large round loaf of bread and cut off small slices for the family, that was one way of getting plenty for everyone. Then somewhere down the line someone invented a machine that makes tortillas out of a round dough ball. It really doesn't matter, tortillas are some of the best bread out there.

Have you ever been working hard in the kitchen and not realized that you actually cut yourself until you mixed up something containing salt or lemon juice?

What do I plant to start raising seedless grapes?

There is a veterinarian clinic near me that advertises a "drive thru window". OK, what do you do, drive up, hold up your dog and explain that he has diarrhea and they toss you some pills? It is probably a good idea if you have a pet snake, no sense taking the whole thing inside when all the vet wants to see is the head anyway.

What is the deal with wedding cake? Is it something special? Why don't we have it for other occasions? And why do Italians have a special wedding cake? I have been to a few weddings that should have just served fruit cake.

We hear the expression about comparisons, apples and

oranges, why wasn't it something different, say; rhinoceroses and hippopotamuses?

Since almost every person has a phone with a camera and the ability to take video, we don't really see the evidence of UFOs like I thought we might. I figured by now there were be some lady in east Texas dressed in her terry cloth bathrobe, standing on the front porch of her double wide trailer filming her husband being sucked into a "flyin saucer" by a tractor beam, all the while three "coon" dogs are barking their heads off in the yard. Disclaimer; before anyone thinks I am making fun of someone living in the woods of east Texas, I would be quite content to have my own double wide living way back there where it gets

really dark, and the chance of an extraterrestrial encounter is fairly good. Oh and throw in marginal cellphone reception and I am in for sure.

We see a lot of funny and even amazing things filmed these days. I wish people had the ability to concentrate on the task of filming. At times just when the incident takes a turn the "camera-person" panics and moves the camera. I mean I really do want to see the outcome of those two shoppers fighting over that 95" TV. I want to know who deserves it.

Who is the culinary genius that invented corn dogs? Why don't we have a three day weekend in the summer honoring that amazing dish?

I hope everyone's new year is off to a good start.

## Peace on Earth

Coffee Talk • Renae Brumbaugh Green

If I were an animal, I think I'd be an ostrich. I've always been quite happy to bury my head in the sand, hiding from things that cause me stress. Plus, it's warm and cozy down there.

But ostriches don't really bury their heads in the sand. That's a long-standing myth, probably based on their nesting technique. They bury their eggs in the sand to protect them and keep them warm. Ostriches are quite large, and can run up to 45 mph, making them one of the fastest land birds. And if they can't outrun their predator, they drop to the ground and get very still, hoping to blend in with the surrounding landscape. That's not cowardly, in my opinion. That's just smart.

Like an ostrich, I don't really hide from stress either. Instead, I try to build healthy habits and boundaries to keep stress away. One of those boundaries may seem odd for a person who writes a weekly column for newspaper: I don't watch the news. I believe, at my core,

that we humans weren't built to manage the constant barrage of negative sensationalism that is sent across the airwaves. I read some trustworthy online news sources—usually only the headlines—and I'm good. Even with those boundaries in place, I often feel overwhelmed at the state of our world... at the state of our nation.

I'm grateful for the relative peace I've lived in my entire life. For the most part, war has happened in far away places and hasn't affected my daily existence. But with the current state of things, I wonder how long that will last.

Where is the peace? Where is the unity that bonds all U.S. citizens together as we proudly wear the red, white, and blue? It was there when I was a kid. It was there on 9/11. But somehow, somewhere, it disappeared. I want it back.

Just a few weeks ago, we saw the Christmas message scripted on cards and church signs and store windows: "Glory to God in the highest, and on

earth peace!" That's a lovely scripture, but did you know that's not the complete verse? The message continues on... "and on earth peace among people with whom He is pleased."

Peace isn't promised to everyone, no matter how they behave. It's assured to those who please God with their faith, their hearts, and their actions. Our nation has never been a perfect one, but once upon a time, I believe it was a nation that collectively tried to please God... to live righteously... to show kindness and mercy and bring justice when needed.

I don't see that much anymore. At least, not in politics. I see corruption and lies and hate on both sides of the political aisle. And that doesn't please God in the least. So it only stands to reason that He won't bless us with peace as long as we're acting with anger, vengeance, and hate.

But all hope isn't lost. We, as individuals, have more power than we real-

ize. I may not see peace on a national level, but you know where I do see it? At home, every time I show love to my family. I see it at work, when I smile at a colleague and they smile back, and we ask about each other's families and struggles and encourage each other with kindness. I see it in the grocery store, when someone lets an overwhelmed young mother move ahead of them in line. I see it in traffic, when someone stops and lets me in when they didn't have to.

Those little acts are the kinds of things that please God. And those things bring peace to our lives, even when the world around us seems harsh and chaotic.

***"Glory to God in the highest, and on earth peace among people with whom He is pleased."***

***Luke 2:14***

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## Did You KNOW? Thomas Paine

His name might not have been the inspiration for America's capital city, a state in the Pacific Northwest or countless locales across the nation, but Thomas Paine was a hugely influential figure in the formation of the United States. Born in England in 1737, Paine moved to Philadelphia in the early 1770s and soon wrote the pamphlet, Common Sense. According to the Mount Vernon Ladies' Association, Paine argued against the British colonial system, asserting it was rooted in tyranny directed by the aristoc-

racy and monarchy. That assessment led Paine to contend the colonies should sever their ties to England and establish a democratic government. The success of Paine's work is due to various factors, including his writing style, which was clear and simple and thus digestible to the masses, a reader-friendly tone that many historians have noted helped to generate enthusiasm for the notion that the colonies should break apart from the British Empire.

## Did You KNOW?

As residents of the United States of America celebrate the nation's two hundred and fiftieth anniversary, some might be curious where the "America" portion of the country's name comes from. According to the Library of Congress, America is named after Italian explorer Amerigo Vespucci. The LOC contends that Vespucci was the first to suggest that the lands Christopher Columbus sailed to in 1492 were part

of a separate continent. German mapmaker Martin Waldseemüller honored Vespucci's assertion in 1507, when he created a notable map that was the first to depict the lands as a separate continent, naming the area "America," which is a Latinized version of "Amerigo." That map is now part of the cartographic collections at the LOC, and is sometimes referred to as "America's Birth Certificate."

**CONNECT THE DOTS**

Reveal the famous American figure by connecting the dots in order. Then color in the finished picture.

Answer: President Abraham Lincoln



# Welcome to Belton, Texas

DECEMBER 2025



BELTON ISD BOND 2022 UPDATE

# 345 NEW HVAC UNITS INSTALLED ACROSS BELTON ISD

Belton ISD is proud to share that the 2022 Bond has resulted in a total of 345 new heating, air conditioning and ventilation (HVAC) units at 11 campuses and facilities. The installation of the final units will continue over the holiday break and will allow Belton ISD to provide safe and comfortable learning environments for our students and staff.

**Campuses/facilities benefitting from new HVAC units**

- Belton High School
- Belton New Tech @Waskow
- Lake Belton Middle School
- Belton Middle School
- Southwest Elementary
- Belton Early Childhood School
- Sparta Elementary
- Joe M. Pirtle Elementary (*completion anticipated summer 2026*)
- DAEP facility
- Belton ISD Administration Building
- Roy and Jean Potts Swim Center



## THANK YOU, BIG RED COMMUNITY!

This holiday season, Belton ISD is thankful for the community's support of the 2022 Bond program. On October 2, students, staff and families joined the Board of Trustees for a ribbon cutting at the new Delta facility, the final major construction project funded through the 2022 Bond. 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.

### 2022 BOND AT-A-GLANCE - DECEMBER 2025

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

- complete
- in progress

#### AGING AND EQUITABLE FACILITIES



- CONSTRUCTION OF NEW DELTA PROGRAM FACILITY**  
Opened September 2025
- BELTON HIGH SCHOOL CTE ADDITION**  
New construction to accommodate ROTC, audio/visual, and culinary programs  
Opened August 2024

- BELTON HIGH SCHOOL FINE ARTS ADDITION**  
New band hall opened July 2024, new black box opened May 2025
- BELTON HIGH SCHOOL INTERIOR FINISHES**  
Completed August 2024
- BELTON HIGH SCHOOL CTE RENOVATIONS/UPGRADES**  
Renovation project to provide new construction technology, agriculture, and vet tech classrooms  
Classroom instructional spaces completed September 2024, new shop spaces for constructional 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*

#### GROWTH AND CAPACITY PROJECTS

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

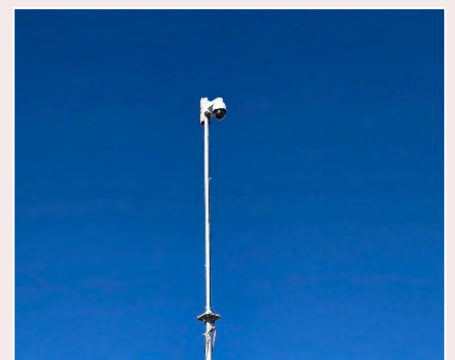
- SOUTHWEST ELEMENTARY ADDITION**  
New 10-classroom addition, art and music classrooms, and gym  
Opened August 2024
- BELTON ISD AG FACILITY**  
New facility for swine and poultry  
Opened August 2024
- JAMES L. BURRELL ELEMENTARY**  
New K-5 elementary school  
Opened January 2024
- LAND FOR FUTURE USE**  
Four property purchases to date  
Completed December 2025
- HUBBARD BRANCH ELEMENTARY**  
New K-5 elementary school  
Opened August 2024



#### SAFETY AND SECURITY PROJECTS



- SECURITY VESTIBULES (15 CAMPUSES)**  
Completed September 2024
- EXTERIOR LIGHTING UPGRADES**  
Phase 1 Completed August 2023  
*\*Phase 2 underway with anticipated completion in January/February 2026.*
- SHATTER-RESISTANT FILM**  
Completed August 2023
- WATER REFILL STATIONS AND FOUNTAINS**  
Completed August 2023
- ACCESS CONTROL AND SECURITY CAMERAS**  
Completed April 2025



#### TRANSPORTATION/TECHNOLOGY

- TECHNOLOGY INFRASTRUCTURE**  
Dark fiber project completed June 2024
- NEW STUDENT DEVICES**  
Devices distributed include:  
364 devices for 2022-23 school year  
4,703 devices for 2023-24 school year  
3,484 devices for 2024-25 school year
- BUS PURCHASE #1:**  
20 buses for 2023-24 school year
- BUS PURCHASE #2:**  
10 buses for 2025-26 school year
- BUS PURCHASE #3:**  
8 buses ordered for 2026-27 school year



*To ensure effective life cycle management practices, Belton ISD purchased student devices and school buses in a phased approach.*

**THANK YOU, BIG RED COMMUNITY, FOR YOUR SUPPORT OF THE 2022 BOND!**

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