

Listi marks 25 years with the City of Belton



Courtesy Photo

Belton City Manager Sam Listi was recently recognized for 25 years with the City of Belton.

By David Tuma
The Belton Journal

Belton City Staff, Department heads, and council members held an emotional recognition last week at City Hall for Sam Listi.

The recognition was a surprise for Listi, who this month marks 25 years of

service to the Belton community.

Sam A. Listi was selected as city manager for the City of Belton on March 12, 2001, after former City Manager Jeff Holberg retired.

Listi almost immediately set about building the organizational infrastruc-

ture that would define his tenure. He developed Belton's first formal Strategic Plan in 2000, introduced it to the Council in 2001, and has updated it comprehensively every five years with annual reviews ever since.

That discipline — rare in local government, where short-term pressures often crowd out long-range thinking — has given Belton a continuity of direction through six different mayors and multiple shifts in council composition.

His management philosophy, which he first articulated in writing at his 2003 performance evaluation, rests on four pillars: maintaining a strategic planning framework, operating within a balanced budget, enhancing communication among the Council, staff, and community, and emphasizing intergovernmental partnerships. He has held to those principles without deviation for more than two decades.

"Sam consistently places the interests of the community first. Those who have worked closely with him know that his motivation has never been personal recognition or self-interest," said Assistant City Manager Matt Bates.

When Listi took the position of City Manager, Belton's population was approximately 17,010. Today the city is home to nearly 27,804 residents, a 63 percent increase. Over that span, Listi has guided the city through two recessions, a global pandemic, major flooding events, Winter Storm Uri, and sustained regional growth — all while maintaining a balanced budget every single year and reducing the property tax rate from \$0.7350 to \$0.5225.

His career has been recognized with numerous state and national awards, and eight of Belton's ten current department directors grew up professionally within the city organization under his mentorship. He is widely regarded by current and former elected officials as one of the most effective and principled city managers in Texas.

Former Mayor Marion Grayson described Listi as "visionary, passionate, and graceful in

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BELTON JOURNAL/David Tuma

The historic Beltonian Theater in downtown Belton will reopen in summer 2026 under new ownership.

New owners plan summertime Beltonian Theatre reopening

By David Stone
The Belton Journal

After spending nearly a year with a "for sale" sign out front, the landmark Beltonian has new owners who are hoping to reopen the regal theatre this summer.

The theatre was purchased by Katie and Joey Carlin, members of the Temple/Belton area for more than a decade.

"We are thrilled for this new adventure and we are excited about serving the community in this way," Katie said this week. "The Beltonian made us want to get involved in the theatre business."

"We were sad when we saw it up for sale last year," she said. "It was a meeting place for the community. The Beltonian has such a rich history of helping folks share a moment together, and we want to keep that alive."

"Our goal is for a summertime opening; fingers are crossed as we are navigating this transition," Katie added.

The Carlin's have lived in the area since 2010 though they took a three-year detour to North Carolina.

"We missed this community so much that we moved back in 2017 and have loved every moment of raising our family here," Katie said.

While Sara and Zechariah Baker left big shoes to fill, the Carlins hope to keep the nostalgia going as they did with classic movies, fan favorites and live events, but they are planning a slightly different flare.

"We are definitely looking forward to collaborating with the community on new ideas as well," Katie said. "Our manager and great friend, Ben Lockwood, is lending his artistic tastes to the programming. He will be the mastermind behind the programming, but we are all in and working together to bring on some fun stuff."

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Brewery hosts 4th annual 0.5k with green theme

By Shalee Corey-Wiebe
The Belton Journal

Nolan Creek Brewery hosted its 4th annual 0.5k Hop, Skip and Sip on Saturday. At 2 p.m., a sea of people dressed in St. Patty's Day attire walked, ran, or skipped from The Gin/Scores complex to Nolan Creek Brewery, a total of three blocks.

At the end of the race, participants got to hang out at the brewery, listen to live music, and have a free beer.

Lorne Brockway, one of the owners of Nolan Creek Brewery, said about the beer they have available, "Because it is St. Patty's Day, we do brew some beers. So we brew an Irish stout, we brew an Irish red—we kind of do some seasonal, typically Irish beers."

Lorne also talked about

how this event supports family and the community.

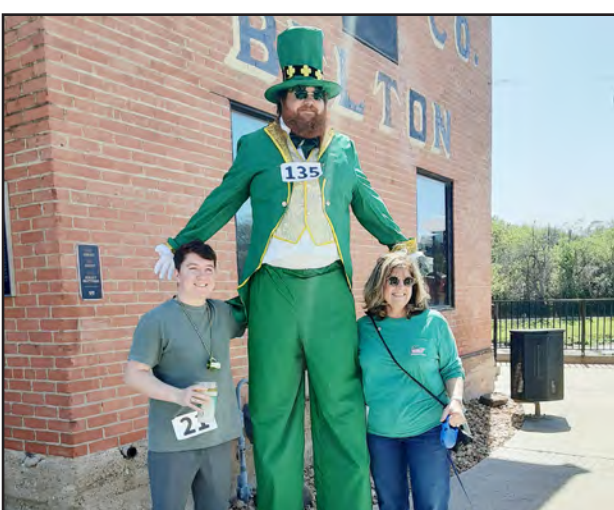
"We always try to build those (events)—very kid friendly and dog friendly. People like to just come and hang out, and it's a safe place."

Kenna Calderon, also one of the owners of the family business, said that the 0.5k builds community.

"We try to involve as many businesses as possible that are on the 0.5k route. We're a small, close-knit community, and I love to have something that involves all of downtown."

Kenna said that her favorite part about the 0.5k is seeing everybody just get dressed up and have a good time.

"It's a silly event at the end of the day—and just watching everybody of all



BELTON JOURNAL/Shalee Corey-Wiebe

Participants in the 4th annual 0.5k Hop, Skip and Sip held by Nolan Creek Brewery show off their green on Saturday.

abilities be able to participate. We've got people with dogs, kids, walkers. We haven't seen roller skates yet, but I'm waiting for the day."

Brockway said that anyone from kids to people

in wheelchairs could do the 0.5k.

"Some of our dear friends, their parents are in their 80s, and they do it. They walk slow, but they come and participate."

YAC, volunteers to clean local homes and yards on April 11

By David Stone
The Belton Journal

The Belton Youth Advisory Commission will be pulling weeds, raking leaves and mulching flower beds on April 11 for One Community, One Day — an event where 15 to 20 homes in the community get extra help with chores inside and out.

"This is YAC's biggest event of the year," said James Grant, Belton Parks & Recreation director and advisor for the Youth Advisory Commission. "They will do whatever is needed, including minor fence repair and washing windows."

"Once these homes are selected, our YAC gets busy recruiting volunteers to come out and help our com-

munity with these projects," Grant said. "The community steps up in a big way for this. We've seen as many as 200 volunteers participating in One Community, One Day."

Volunteers come from businesses such as TRU Homes and H-E-B and from city departments like Police.

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Courtesy Photo

Volunteers with the Belton Youth Advisory Commission will be doing a few chores for a select number of residents in the community during the annual One Community, One Day on April 11.

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BISD students preparing for culinary careers

By David Stone
The Belton Journal

Nearly 180 students attending Lake Belton High School are in a Career & Technology Education program designed to prepare them for a career in culinary arts.

Belton High also offers the culinary program, and about 128 students are participating at that school. Denise Ayers, director of Career Readiness for Belton ISD, said culinary programs at both schools mirror each other for the most part.

"They are identical, but both programs have the opportunity to do different things," Ayers said. "We offer 25 programs of study across 12 career clusters. Students train for careers in high-demand industry areas."

Students participating in culinary arts can start at any grade level, she said.

Nicolas Warrent, culinary arts instructor at Lake Belton High, has a strong background in food service.

"I was in Army food services for 25 years," Warrent said. "Food service has always been my passion, so once I finished college, I went into the Army, and I was selected to become an Army food instructor in 2004."

Warrent is now in his third year at LBHS.

"We offer 10 classes," he said. "We go through cooking phases — we tackle different culinary categories such as global cuisines, cutting techniques and knife skills. We teach real-world skills and prepare our students to go into the restaurant field."

"Culinary students learn how to prepare and cook a wide range of menu options," Warrent continued. "They learn front-of-the-house and back-of-the-house skills, and we focus on healthy cooking skills."

Warrent said much of the training is based on classroom curriculum, but they are in the lab — the kitchen — at least once a week.

"We focus on academic learning and technical skills, then we apply in the kitchen what we learned in the classroom."

Several Lake Belton High culinary students work in school cafeterias, gaining valuable work experience.

"Right now, we have seven working in the LBHS cafeteria, four at High Point Elementary and four at North Belton Middle School," Warrent said.

"We also operate the Bronco Bistro, which caters to



Courtesy photos

ABOVE: Zim Ramos (left) and Jamie Wyer work on a culinary arts assignment in the kitchen lab at Lake Belton High. The program has 179 students, and the culinary program at Belton High has about 128 participants. **ABOVE RIGHT:** Alexa Kaufman mixes ingredients during a lab exercise in the culinary program at Lake Belton High School.

staff and faculty," he said. "It's more of a fundraiser — we don't feed the students."

"We use a Clover point of sale system in Belton ISD that is compatible with many restaurants. Customers order from menus designed by students and put the menus Clover," he explained.

The "labs" are equipped with eight ovens, two convection ovens, two flat-top grills, two dishwashing machines and a washer and dryer to keep aprons and towels clean.

"Our kitchens are inspected by Food & Safety just like a restaurant," according to Warrent. "So we learn food sanitation practices. Bell County comes every April and August, but we never know exactly when."

"Out of 32 advanced students, 22 are ServSafe Certified," he said. "We are working to increase those numbers. In fact, we have 11 advanced students sitting for their certification exams this week."

Being ServSafe Certified means an individual has successfully passed a National Restaurant Association food safety training exam, demonstrating knowledge of proper food handling, sanitation, and allergen management.

Warrent and Ayers said students with ServSafe cer-

tification are qualified for higher-paying entry-level positions.

LBHS culinary students are active in Family Career & Community Leaders of America (FCCLA) competitions and three students have qualified for state events. They have the opportunity to earn culinary scholarships.

Of the 179 culinary students at Lake Belton High, 114 are starting culinary arts students (lower-level curriculum), 33 food science students, 20 practicum of culinary arts students and 12 advanced culinary students.

Belton ISD's Culinary Arts program, part of its Career and Technical Education department, offers high school students hands-on training in food preparation, safety, and hospitality management.

This year's Lake Belton culinary services students have earned 10 Family & Consumer Sciences Assessments culinary arts awards, including seven gold, two silver and a bronze.

Programs at Belton High and Lake Belton High feature modern kitchen facilities, competitive opportunities, and pathways toward industry certification and careers.

Freedom 250th traveling exhibit pays stop at National Mounted Warrior Museum



Courtesy Photo

The Freedom 250th Truck, an interactive traveling exhibit commemorating the upcoming 250th anniversary of the United States, will be at the National Mounted Warrior Museum Wednesday through Saturday, March 18–21.

Special to the Journal

The National Mounted Warrior Museum (NMWM) is hosting the Freedom 250th Truck, an interactive traveling exhibit commemorating the upcoming 250th anniversary of the United States, from Wednesday through Saturday, March 18–21.

The exhibit is open every day from 10 a.m. to 5 p.m., and visitors of all ages can enter for free.

The National Mounted Warrior Museum is located at 105 Trooper Loop, Fort Hood.

Visitors to the NMWM do not need a federal ID card or a Fort Hood visitor's pass to enter the museum.

The Freedom 250th Truck is a specially designed mobile museum that travels across the country, sharing the story of America's founding and the values that shaped the nation.

Through interactive displays and engaging educational experiences, visitors will have the chance to explore key moments in U.S. history and reflect on the meaning of freedom as the country approaches its historic 250th anniversary in 2026.

Visiting the National Mounted Warrior Museum offers Central Texas residents, military families, students, and visitors a special chance to experience this traveling exhibit and honor America's heritage.

"The Freedom 250th Truck offers a meaningful chance for our community to reflect on the history, service, and sacrifices that shaped our nation," said Bob Crouch, Vice President of the NMWF. "We are proud that the National Mounted Warrior Museum is hosting this special exhibit as our country gets ready to celebrate 250 years."

Guests will also have the opportunity to explore the National Mounted Warrior Museum, which preserves and honors the legacy of the U.S. Army's mounted warfare soldiers.

For more information, please call 254-287-3626.

Beltonian - From Page A1

Katie said keeping The Beltonian's rich history alive and keeping it as a hub for the arts for many years to come was 100 percent the reason for purchasing the old theatre. She added that the theatre will continue to offer food alongside the classic concessions, and the menu planning is underway.

A move to Corpus Christi prompted the Bakers to put the Beltonian up for sale. Zechariah is now in the H-E-B store leadership program, and Sara is running the Performing Arts Center at Texas A&M University-Corpus Christi. As thrilled as they are with their new life journeys, the couple says they miss running the majestic Beltonian.

"The Beltonian will always be a part of who we are," Zechariah said. "We miss it terribly, and we are excited to pass ownership to a local family who intends to carry on programming and many of the traditions that we es-

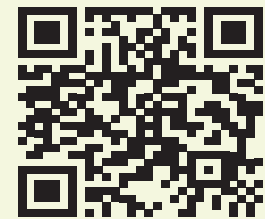
tablished."

In the seven years the Bakers owned the Beltonian, they added a ton of improvements to the business and the building.

The upgrades include adding a new kitchen floor, new projector with new movie capability, a new screen, all new speakers and wiring, new flooring in front of the stage, new roof, a stand-alone sound system for concerts and rentals, new hot water heater, new ice machine, new refrigerators and freezers in the kitchen, new sinks in the kitchen and restrooms, touch-less dispensers for paper towels and a point of sale system.

Also: a new Coca-Cola dispensing set-up, a cotton candy machine, upgrades to the popcorn machine, a 1,000 count Blu-ray library for rentals, chairs and tables for the upstairs party room, 2,000 newsletter subscribers and 20,000 total social media followers.

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Belton Parks Master Plan town hall meeting is March 31

By David Stone
The Belton Journal

The Belton Parks, Recreation, Trails & Open Space Master Plan is nearly complete, and local residents have one last opportunity to get involved in the plan's creation.

"The city of Belton wanted to better understand the recreational needs of the community, and to do so, we conducted a comprehensive community participation initiative," said James Grant, Parks & Recreation director.

"Opportunities for the public to be involved during the development of this plan included focus group meetings, two community surveys, a town hall meeting and several pop-up events," Grant said. "Our last public engagement opportunity will be a Town Hall Meeting on Tuesday, March 31, at 6 p.m. at the Harris Community Center.

MHS Planning & Design will be presenting the accumulation of three months of engagement efforts

that included five events and public meetings, nearly 900 survey responses, 19 focus group organizations, and more than 25 communities outside of Belton represented.

"All of this totals more than 2,000 community members and visitors engaged in helping guide our Parks & Recreation department for the next 10 years," Grant added.

The Master Plan is expected to be completed by late spring.

"The city of Belton would like to thank everyone who participated in the development of this plan," Grant continued. "We are blessed to live in such a wonderful community filled with people like you helping to mold the future of Parks & Recreation in our community."

"The master plan is a guiding document for our department," said James Grant, director of Belton Parks & Recreation. "It tells us what people would like to see that we don't have, and it helps determine

areas that need to be improved."

According to Grant, the Parks & Recreation Master Plan has several purposes.

"It helps us with planning and budgeting for the next 10 years," he said. "Most importantly, though, it helps us qualify for grants to fund park and recreation projects."

"We usually apply for two Texas Parks & Wildlife grants. Last year, we received two \$750,000 grants. We apply for grants every year and we hope to receive the TP&W grant multiple times in the next 10 years."

"Belton Parks & Recreation used grants to purchase part of the old Leon Valley Golf Course," he said. "We used that land to expand Heritage Park from 65 acres to 150 acres. It also allowed us to build the Standpipe park."

"Belton's parks are at the heart of the community," said Mayor David K. Leigh. "We want every voice — longtime residents or new neighbors — to help direct the future of our shared spaces."

Patterson elected Bell County Justice of the Peace, Precinct 1

Special to the Journal

Patrick "Pat" Patterson has been elected as the next Justice of the Peace for Bell County Precinct 1.

Patterson expressed deep gratitude to the voters, supporters, and community members who stood behind his campaign.

"I am extremely grateful for the support from friends, family, and the people of Bell County," Patterson said. "Campaigns are not for the faint of heart, and I certainly do not take the public's trust lightly."

Patterson brings significant experience to the position, including nearly two decades of service in county government and valuable courtroom experience.

A graduate of the University of Mary Hardin-Baylor, Patterson has long been committed to serving the Bell County community with integrity, fairness, and dedication.

Throughout the campaign, Patterson emphasized the importance of experience, honesty, and integrity in the role of Justice of the Peace. He pledged to serve the citizens of Precinct 1 with professionalism and respect while upholding the law and ensuring fair and efficient court proceedings.

"I am truly honored to earn the trust of the voters and to have the opportunity to serve as your next Bell County Justice of the Peace, Precinct 1," Patterson said. "I look forward to working hard every day to serve our community with the fairness and integrity it deserves."

For more information, visit www.patterson4jp1.com.

Pathway to improve safety for MPR students walking to school

By David Stone
The Belton Journal

Texas Department of Transportation work crews are busy constructing a \$3.8 million, 1.8 mile pathway along FM 2483 that will help students safely walk or bike from Morgan's Point Resort to several Belton ISD schools.

The project is federally funded, and construction will take about a year, according to TxDOT.

The pathway will run from Lake Belton High to Morgan's Point Road, then north along Morgan's Point Road to Sobrante Road. There will be a crosswalk at the intersection of FM 2483 and Morgan's Point Road.

Money for the 10-foot pathway will come from the Transportation Set-Aside funding program, which qualifies for Transportation Development Credits.

That means the entire \$3.8 million will be funded with federal dollars without a match from the city.

The pathway addresses the safety of students from Morgan's Point Resort who attend Lake Belton High School, High Point Elementary, and North Belton Middle School. It will enable these students to conveniently walk or bike to school, ensuring their safety.

Additionally, this project will provide residents of Morgan's Point Resort with a secure means of accessing the Crossroads Recreational Complex on Prairie View Road.

"The project will improve pedestrian safety and mobility in the area," said Jake Smith, public information officer for TxDOT. "There will be lane closures throughout the project, which is expected to end in early 2027."

A survey conducted by the city in May 2023 re-

vealed that 89.7 percent of respondents expressed support for the shared-use pathway project, citing concerns for student safety, as well as the anticipated health benefits and improved community accessibility and walkability.

Listi - From Page A1

pursuit of Belton's excellence."

Under his leadership, the city has completed five major Capital Improvement Plan cycles since 2002, and there have been 36+ low-income replacement homes built or rehabilitated since 2001.

In 2025 alone, \$18 million in debt was issued for critical infrastructure.

Former Mayor Jim Covington, Belton's longest-serving mayor,

once talked about Listi's forward thinking.

"Sam's strategic thinking was focused not just on next year, but on the next decade and beyond."

In Texas, studies have shown a mean tenure of 6.3 years for city managers, with women in these roles sometimes staying longer.

Listi is a member of the International City/County Management Association (ICMA); Texas City

Management Association (TCMA) Region 9; American Institute of Certified Planners (AICP); American Planning Association (APA); Killeen-Temple Metropolitan Planning Organization (KTMPO) Policy Board, Belton Lions Club, and Christ the King Catholic Church. Listi is married to his wife Karen, and has two sons and three grandsons.

YAC - From Page A1

Fire and Planning. Many Belton ISD students participate, too.

After the YAC has done all the planning, selecting the homes, recruiting the volunteers and gathering the tools necessary to complete the task for each home, they are ready for the Big Day.

"We all meet at the Harris Center at 8 a.m. where YAC members welcome everyone, assign

them to the house or houses that they will be working on and have a quick safety briefing before we gather for a big group photo," Grant added.

"They serve coffee and donuts that morning while everyone is gathering and they normally have pizza waiting on the volunteers when they finish and head back to the Harris Center for lunch."

This year they have de-

ecided to have a large cook-out for the volunteers.

Freshman Levi Covington, a YAC member, shared information about One Community, One Day at last week's City Council meeting.

"I want to invite City Council to come to our event and be 'grill masters' for the day," he said. "Y'all can grill the hot dogs for all the volunteers serving our community."

Council members agreed to the invitation and will be cooking hot dogs on April 11.



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LIFESTYLES

THE BELTON JOURNAL

13-year-old singer takes stage at JNeely's

By Shalee Corey-Wiebe
The Belton Journal

On Saturday, March 14, Elijah Ribarski sang country and played guitar live at JNeely's from 6:30 p.m. to 9:30 p.m.

At only 13 years old, Elijah has been doing music for two years now.

Elijah and his mom, Elizabeth, said that he started playing guitar when they went to watch the annual air show in Temple.

Elijah said, "There was this guy named Eddie—he was playing his guitar down there, and I wanted to play his guitar, and I guess he saw potential in me."

Eddie Pruett, owner of Good Vibrations Music Store and the person who currently rents out equipment to Elijah, spoke with Elizabeth after the air show and offered to get Elijah his own guitar, which she accepted.

She said, "And so we went out to Scores one open mic, and he didn't even want to go that day. He was like, 'I'm tired.' I was like, 'You have to go!' because I knew what was about to happen."

During that open mic at Scores Pizza and Wings, Eddie Pruett presented the guitar to Elijah as a surprise.

After that, Elijah continued to go to open mics. There, Stephen Perez, another musician who helped Elijah get his first guitar, encour-

aged him to play live at open mics on Wednesdays.

Elijah said that sometimes he gets nervous while singing in front of people, but that he feels supported by his mentors.

"I get a little anxious sometimes, because you never know how big of a crowd there's going to be. But when I have my mentors who taught me, and they're here and they're telling me what to do, I snap into a good mindset."

Elijah and Elizabeth said others that supported him in his music included Chase Delao, Tyler Layne, as well as Max Carter and his dog, Nugget.

Elizabeth said, "They've just always had his back."

Elijah said his favorite part about singing live was "probably just seeing people listen and be happy."

He talked about his future plans for music.

"I want to start writing my own music soon. I want to try to get up there one day. But if that doesn't really go how I want it to, I'm probably just going to try to join the police academy, because I always wanted to be a cop when I was little as well. I still want to pursue that."

Elizabeth said, "I definitely think that music is an outlet for him, and I do hope to see him pursue it."



BELTON JOURNAL/Shalee Corey-Wiebe

13-year-old Elijah Ribarski sings at JNeely's during last Saturday's open mic night. Air Force veteran Dennis Graham and his nephew, Jay Standard, caught and released 132 white bass on Belton Lake after storms passed the morning of March 11

7 Brew Coffee opens in Belton

By Michele Weisman
The Belton Journal

7 Brew Coffee held a ribbon-cutting ceremony on Thursday, March 5, in Belton and opened its doors on Monday, March 9. They offer customers 20,000 drink variations and engaging conversation while in line.

At the ribbon cutting, 7 Brews Coffee gave CASA of Bell & Coryell Counties a check for \$1,500.

They also supported CASA, at their Copperas Cove, Decatur, Fort Worth, and Weatherford openings.

They held a swag day

on Saturday, March 14, giving customers who ordered a large drink a free 7 Brew t-shirt. In their eighth year, their first establishment was and still is in Northwest Rogers, Arkansas.

Customers who purchase the popular Blondie, Ocean Breeze, or any variety of their coffees, energy drinks, teas, sodas, lemonades, shakes, and smoothies during Brew Madness in March can enter a virtual scratch-off. Scanning a QR game code in the 7 Brews drive-through will reveal if you have won.

"Some days you'll

get \$1 off your drink, a free drink, a t-shirt, or a swag item. We have three grand prizes of three brand new Ford Broncos, announced at the end of the month," said Emma Dewitt, director of field operations for 7 Crew Enterprises. "We're so excited to be open in Belton and serving this community."

The newest Central Texas location is at 2304 N. Main Street in Belton. Their hours of operation are Sunday through Thursday from 5:30 a.m. to 10 p.m. and Friday and Saturday from 5:30 a.m. to 11 p.m.



Courtesy photo

7 Brew Coffee cuts the ribbon for their Belton location and is celebrated by the Belton Area Chamber of Commerce. The event also included a \$1,500 check presentation to CASA of Bell and Coryell Counties.

Body of Christ annual banquet to feature 'Skeeta' Jenkins

By David Stone
The Belton Journal

The Body of Christ Community Clinic will hold its annual Together We Heal Banquet on Thursday, April 30 at the University of Mary Hardin-Baylor, and this year's keynote speaker is Charles "Skeeta" Jenkins.

According to Body of Christ Director Donna Dunn, "This special event brings our community together for an evening of inspiration, generosity, and hope, all in support of expanding healthcare access for our under-

served neighbors in East Bell County.

"This year's banquet carries a special meaning as we celebrate 16 years of compassionate service and reflect on our nation's 250th anniversary. It is a moment to look back with gratitude and forward with renewed commitment."

Together We Heal will be held in UMHB's McLane Great Hall, and the evening will begin with doors opening at 5:15 p.m. There will be a silent auction and a program designed to uplift and encourage, Dunn

said.

"We are especially delighted to welcome Mr. Jenkins as our keynote speaker. He holds a master's degree in Marriage & Family Christian Counseling and a bachelor's degree in Social Work, both from the University of Mary Hardin-Baylor. He currently serves with the Temple Independent School District, and is a gifted speaker, actor and the author of four children's books.

"Known for his authenticity, Jenkins' message draws from his own journey of overcoming

hardship to remind others that no matter what their circumstances, they are the writer, director, and producer of their own story. His message promises to be both powerful and deeply encouraging."

Since opening its doors in 2010, the Body of Christ Community Clinic has remained steadfast in its mission to provide essential medical and dental care to uninsured, low-income, and no-income residents of East Bell County.

In 2025 the Clinic served 2,582 individuals — neighbors who

received care and compassion thanks to the unwavering support of our community and the many clinic volunteers.

"The Clinic warmly invites individuals, families, churches, and businesses to join us for this special evening," Dunn said. "Table sponsorships and Underwriter opportunities are available for those who wish to make an even greater impact."

Jerry Wickwire, chair of the Body of Christ board, called the annual banquet the "cornerstone of our fundraising efforts."

"We invite our community to stand with us so we can continue this vital mission. We invite our community to stand with us so we can continue this vital mission. Together, we can make a profound difference in the lives of



Skeeta Jenkins

those who need it most," he added. "Let's come together and make a difference. I invite everyone to be part of this inspiring evening and help us to improve the health of our community, one step at a time."

For ticket or sponsorship information, please call the Clinic at (254) 939.9500 or contact Dunn at donna.dunn@bodyof-christclinic.org.



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Spring is in the air and folks are flocking to local lakes



Courtesy Photo

Air Force veteran Dennis Graham and his nephew, Jay Standard, caught and released 132 white bass on Belton Lake after storms passed the morning of March 11.

By David Stone
The Belton Journal

The weather is warm, fish are biting, and hey, those burgers aren't gonna grill themselves. Spring is just days away, and local outdoor lovers are heading to Belton Lake and Stillhouse Hollow Reservoir for a little fun in the sun.

While no official studies have been done to determine the economic impact these liquid jewels have on the Bell County economy, they do draw tens of thousands of visitors to the area every year.

The Morgan's Point Resort Paddling Trail attracts canoe, kayak and

paddleboard enthusiasts from around the state and the nation, hiking ranks among the best in the Texas Hill Country and thousands of birders flock to local lakes to view eagles, hawks and rare lark buntings, golden-cheeked warblers and black-capped vireo.

Scouts are drawn to Camp Tahuaya near Stillhouse and Blue Bonnet Shores (formerly Camp Kachina) on the banks of Belton Lakes, plus a countless number of Fort Hood soldiers and visitors enjoy the many year-round activities at Belton Lake Outdoor Recreation Area.

Camping and hiking are huge here, and parties,

family and class reunions, military events, corporate socials and other large gatherings keep the many pavilions booked at U.S. Army Corps of Engineers lake parks.

But, perhaps the biggest draw to local lakes is fishing — to be specific, white and hybrid striped bass fishing. Anglers come to test their skills at Stillhouse and Belton lakes and to compete in dozens of fishing tournaments held annually on the waters and shores of the two lakes.

"Our atypically warm February has our spring fishery ahead of schedule," said Bob Maindelle, owner of Holding the Line fishing

guide service. "White bass are spawning in our tributaries to Lake Belton and to Stillhouse Hollow Reservoir, and the threadfin shad have begun to spawn just this week."

In 2025, Holding the Line clients caught and released 15,911 fish over the course of 178 trips on Stillhouse and Belton Lake, an average of 89.39 fish per trip.

"The fishing here is excellent," Maindelle said. "There's really no reason to go anywhere else. We focus on white bass on Stillhouse, and on whites and hybrid striped bass on Belton."

Lake parks boast some of the top hiking and mountain biking in Central Texas. The parks are Miller Springs Nature Center, just below Belton Dam, and two Stillhouse parks — Dana Peak and Chalk Ridge Falls.

In addition to maintaining Belton Lake parks and recreation areas, the Corps of Engineers also provides lake rangers in the parks and on the water.

"We patrol the parks and lake looking for violations of rules and regulations, primarily safety

concerns," Lead Lake Ranger Jewel Hale said. "As rangers, we try to educate the public on water and boating safety. It's a lake and water can be dangerous."

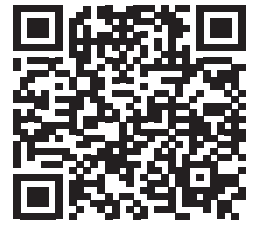
"Our rangers patrol the parks and lake looking for violations of rules and regulations, primarily safety concerns," Ranger Jewel Hale said. "As rangers, we try to educate the public on water and boating safety. It's a lake and water can be dangerous."

Hale said gate attendants working at Belton Lake and Stillhouse parks where an entrance fee is charged no longer take payments. Instead, payment kiosks and QR codes will be used.

"The fastest way to pay is to use your smartphone and scan the QR code," she said. "That is much faster and more user friendly than the payment kiosks."

Frequent lake users and those who travel may want to invest in the \$40 annual pass, which is good for admission to any Army Corps of Engineers Park. The passes can be obtained at the Belton Lake Office, 3110 FM 2271 near Belton Dam, or the Stillhouse Hollow Office at 3740 FM

1670. America the Beautiful National Parks passes are accepted at local parks with the exception of Belton Lake Outdoor Recreation Area (BLORA). These come in a variety of options, including passes for senior adults and active duty military. Visit <https://www.nps.gov/planyourvisit/passes.htm> for information.





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St. Patrick supposedly used the clover/shamrock to explain the Holy Trinity to native Irish in an effort to convert them to Christianity.





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A Message and a Moment I Never Forgot



John C. Perry

We recently lost a remarkable man, Coach Lou Holtz, one of the most respected figures in college football and one of the most influential voices of character and faith in our time.

When I was in my thirties, yes, that was a very long time ago, I had the privilege of hearing him speak in person. I expected a motivational talk from a successful coach. What I

received was something far deeper. His message was grounded, wise, and openly rooted in his faith. It left a lasting mark on my life.

His talk centered on hard work, dedication to God, commitment to family, and integrity in your job. It was exactly what I needed to hear at that moment in my life. Looking back, I believe God placed him at that event for me.

I still remember one of his quotes word for word: "Do the right thing, do the best you can, and always show people you care." Those became his famous Three Rules for Life, and I've carried them with me ever since.

I was also struck by what he said about attitude and success: "Ability is what you're capable of doing. Motivation determines what you do. Atti-

tude determines how well you do it." That simple truth has served me well in every aspect of my life.

And then there was this gem: "Don't ever promise more than you can deliver but always deliver more than you promise." Imagine what kind of world we would have if everyone lived by that.

Coach Holtz was a lifelong, deeply committed Catholic, and his faith shaped nearly every part of his personal life and coaching philosophy. He often spoke about prayer, God's guidance, and the belief that God answers prayers, though not always in the way we expect. He said his coaching career itself was an unexpected answer to prayer.

One story he shared stayed with me all these years. As a young boy, he prayed to God to make him a great

football player. God answered that prayer, but in a way he never expected. Instead of becoming a star athlete, he became a coach who influenced thousands of young people. God gave him something greater than what he asked for.

His faith was especially visible during his years at Notre Dame, where he won a national championship. He reinstated mandatory Mass for players before games. He reminded his athletes not to chase success without grounding themselves in faith, and he urged them not to let the world define their worth, but to let God do that.

When you look at his Three Rules for Life, you see the heart of his faith. Doing the right thing honors God. Doing your best is an act of stewardship. Showing people, you

care is the very essence of Christian love. He told us that if we lived by these three rules, they would build trust, character, and a meaningful life.

I remember him saying that football was his job, but faith was his purpose. That line has stayed with me for decades.

Coach Lou Holtz passed away on March 4th at the age of 89. One brief encounter with him helped shape the direction of my life. What an amazing Christian man he was.

Thank you and rest in peace, Coach Holtz.

John C. Perry is the Immediate Past 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.



Local Activities & Events

Newcomers Club Activities

March

- 03/19: Nonfiction Book Club, Meet & Greet
- 03/21: Exploring Wines
- 03/23: Well Read Women, Monday Canasta
- 03/24: Singing Bluebonnets
- 03/25: Fun Lunch
- 03/26: Mexican Train Dominoes
- 03/27: Trailblazers Walking Group
- 03/28: Jimmy's Egg

"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."

Bell County Master Gardener - Mar 19

Join us for our upcoming plant preview. Curious to see what will be offered at our upcoming Spring Plant Sale? Come to our preview where Master Gardener Christy Reese will go over what's to come. March 19, 6:00 p.m. - 7:30 p.m. at Bell County Extension Office- Learning Center, 1605 N. Main Street, Belton.

MPR Explorers - Mar 26

MPR Explorers invites residents to its monthly gathering featuring a musical performance by the Lake Belton High School Choir Show Ensemble, followed by a meet-and-greet with the Directors of the Friends of the Mary Ruth Briggs Library. The program highlights local talent and strengthens community connections as MPR continues building momentum for events and programs that benefit residents of all ages. Thursday, March 26, social at 10:00 a.m.; program concludes at 11:30 a.m. at Garrett & Mic Hill Event Center, 60 Morgan's Point Blvd.

Bell County Master Gardener - Mar 28

Join us for our upcoming plant preview. Curious to see what will be offered at our upcoming Spring Plant Sale? Come to our preview where Master Gardener Christy Reese will go over what's to come. March 28, 8:00 to noon or until sold out at Cadence Bank Center, 301 W Loop 121, Belton.

Bell County Historical Commission Meeting - Mar 23

The Bell County Historical Commission will meet on Monday March 23, 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.

NAMI (National Alliance on Mental Illness) will meet on TUESDAY, Mar 24 at 6:30 p.m. 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.

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.

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 month at VFW 3859. Dinner is served at 6:30 p.m. and meeting will begin at 7:00 p.m. 201 VFW Dr, Harker heights, Tx 76548. Email commandant@mcl1249tx.com for more information.

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.

Bell County Historical Commission holds their meetings on the fourth Monday of every month at 6 p.m. in the historical Bell County Court House, 101 E. Central Ave in Belton. Join us in our vision of preserving and promoting Bell County's rich historical heritage for current and future generations. We are dedicated to initiating and conducting programs that preserve and celebrate the county's historic cultural resources in alignment with state laws governing historical preservation in Texas. Our community resources consist of a research room, book repository, cemetery information, historical markers and monument records. Our services include information on historic preservation, educational programming, history community outreach and partnerships. We welcome you to join other history minded folks and get involved by serving on one of our committees that consist of preservation, cemetery, markers and education. To volunteer or for more information please visit

historicalcommission@bellcounty.texas.gov, call 254-933-5917 or visit the office located in the historic Bell County Courthouse, 101 E. Central Ave., RM 117.

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 for details.

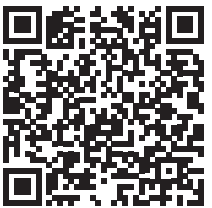
Bell County Texas Democratic Women holds their monthly meeting on the third Saturday of each month at 10 a.m. in the Belton AgriLife Center, 1605 N Main in Belton. Join us to hear from local and state candidates and about important issues and events. This is open to the public.

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.

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.

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/take-mehome. Read more about the program here: 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 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

stay connected: Stay informed

Got a local event, church gathering, or meeting? Tell us and keep everyone in the loop.

Email details to david@beltonjournal.com

Or call (254) 939-5754

Childrens Advocacy Center of Central Texas expands program

By Michele Weisman
The Belton Journal

Children's Advocacy Center of Central Texas (CACCT) gives hope, healing, and justice to abused children in Bell, Milam, and Coryell counties.

In 2025 alone, the CACCT received 7,900 reports of child abuse.

Executive Director Debra Longley also sees CACCT's goal as ending child abuse.

When an intake is received by CACCT, Brandi Maxey, statewide intake coordinator, reviews it. The child is scheduled for an interview by a forensic interviewer trained in child development and in asking non-leading questions to assist the investigation.

CACCT takes a neutral, non-biased approach. CACCT interviews children up to 17 years old who have experienced sexual abuse, severe physical abuse, or have witnessed a crime.

The child and the non-offending parent or guardian, comes to the center. Volunteer Ben Holman welcomes the family to the center. Offering refreshments and toys in a family room setting, the process is explained.

Simultaneously, CPS or law enforcement enters through the back door to meet with the CACCT forensic interviewer. From an observation room, CPS and law enforcement then watch the interview live on screen.

In a room furnished with two chairs and a small table, trust

is the top goal of the interviewer. There are anatomically correct dolls made available for the child to explain what happened.

Savannah Lewis, a forensic interviewer, said, "A lot of times, you just let them speak. You go back and ask questions. And that also helps our law enforcement at CPS with their investigations."

At the end of the interview, the non-offending parent or guardian and child are offered mental health services. Should they agree, locations in Belton, Killeen, or Fort Hood are available to choose from.

The child is given a goodie bag from the Comfort Bag Room before leaving the center. Handmade blankets, prepackaged snacks, colored crayons, and more are provided by donors.

Joel Jimenez Jr., a veteran with a B.A. in social work, is the military partnership manager on Fort Hood, coordinating the same services that civilians receive.

"We are the first CAC in the country to have a remote satellite office on a military installation coordinating services. Next week, we're going to be in Huntsville, Alabama, where the first CAC was established to present how to start a CAC military location," said Longley. "We've been accepted to start a new program to provide problematic sexual behavior therapy for adolescents. Children who have perpetrated, research shows that if they get therapy early on, there's a 97% success rate and they won't offend again."

"We are a nonprofit in our community that has a mission

to end child sexual abuse. A community member can help us achieve that by knowing the signs of child abuse and reporting it."

April is Child Abuse Prevention Month. Visit their Facebook page at Children's Advocacy Center of Central Texas to see online awareness training and fundraisers, like the Chicken Poop and Bingo on April 18. The Texas child abuse hotline is 1-800-252-5400. To find out more about CACCT, go to www.cacct.com.



BELTON JOURNAL/Michele Weisman



TOP: Debra Longley, Executive Director of the Children's Advocacy Center of Central Texas, stands in the center's lobby. ABOVE: A Comfort Bag Room is fully stocked with gifts for children at the Children's Advocacy Center of Central Texas (CACCT).



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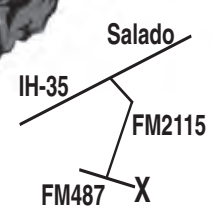
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03.12,19,26 pd

LEGALS

APPLICATION HAS BEEN MADE WITH THE TEXAS ALCOHOLIC BEVERAGE COMMISSION FOR A

Wine Only Package Store Permit by Belton Biz LLC Dba NexStar Market to be located at 601 N Main St, Belton, Bell Co., Texas. Managers of said LLC are Joheb Maredia – Manager, Shafik Maknoji –Manager
03.12,03.19pd

THE STATE OF TEXAS CITATION BY PUBLICATION – DIVORCE

CAUSE NO. 24DFAM349926

To: JUANITA MARIA ISABELA GIL JARABA

Greetings:

You are hereby commanded to appear before the 426th Judicial District Court, Bell County, Texas to be held at the Bell County District Courts Building in Belton, Texas, by filling a written answer to the SECOND AMENDED PETITION FOR DIVORCE at or before 10:00 A.M. of the Monday next after the expiration of 20 days after the date of service hereof, a copy of which accompanies this citation, in cause number 24DFAM349926, styled

In the Matter of the Marriage of JOSE LUIS GERONIMO and JUANITA MARIA ISABELA GIL JARABA filed in said court on July 30, 2025, and the nature of which suit is a request to Divorce: No Children.

The Court has authority in this suit to enter any judgement or decree dissolving the marriage and providing for the division of property which will be binding on you.

This was issued at the request of attorney: BRETT PRITCHARD 1201 S WS YOUNG DR STE C KILLEEN TX 76543.

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

LEGALS

on Monday next following the expiration of twenty 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.

Witness, Joanna Staton, District Clerk of Bell County, Texas.

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

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

By: M. Cortez deputy
03.19

NOTICE TO CREDITORS

Notice is hereby given that original Letters Testamentary for the Estate of CONNIE J. HENDERSON, Deceased, were issued on March 9, 2026, in Cause No. 24CPB00527, pending in the County Court at Law No. 1 of Bell County, Texas, to: MARK STANTON GALLOWAY.

All persons having claims against this Estate which is currently being administered are required to present them to the undersigned within the time and in the manner prescribed by law. ESTATE OF CONNIE J. HENDERSON, c/o: MARK STANTON GALLOWAY, 6031 Bantry Bay, San Antonio, TX 78240 DATED the 12th day of March 2026 J. ERIC STOEBNER , State Bar No.: 24046919, Telephone: (254) 771-1855, Facsimile: (254) 771-2082, E-mail: eric@templelawoffice.com
03.19

NOTICE TO CREDITORS

Notice is hereby given that original Letters of Administration with Will Annexed for the Estate of MOLLY EARL WINTERS, Deceased, were issued on March 6, 2026, in Cause No. 25CPB00675, pending in the County Court-At-Law No: 1, Bell County, Texas, to: MAGGIE JONES.

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: Ashley Clapper Attorney at Law, 603 North 8th Street, Killeen, Tx 76541 Signed On 3/12/21

LEGALS

CORBIN & CLAPPER, PC, 603 North 8th Street, Killeen, TX 76541, Tel: (254) 526-4523, Fax: (254) 526-6711

By: ASHLEY CLAPPER, DANIEL A. CORBIN, State Bar No. 04814300, ASHLEY CLAPPER State Bar No. 24076317, Legal@CorbinLegalTeam.com
03.19

THE STATE OF TEXAS CITATION BY PUBLICATION – PARENT AND CHILD

CAUSE NO. 26DFAM359748

You are hereby commanded to appear before the 426th Judicial District Court, Bell County, Texas to be held at the Bell County District Courts Building in Belton, Texas, to be held at the courthouse of said County in the City of Belton, Texas, at or before 10 o'clock AM of the Monday next after the expiration of 20 days after the date of service of which this citation, then and there to answer the original petition in suit affecting the parent-child relationship of WILLIAM COLBY WHORTON, Petitioner filed in said Court on February 20, 2026, against EMILY KATHRYN PERRY AND UNKOWN FATHER, respondent, and said suit being number 26DFAM359748, on the docket of said Court, and entitled In the Interest of Children BRAYDON LEE PERRY, DOB: 05/25/2012

The nature of which suit is a request to Parent/Child Relationship.

The Court has authority in this suit to enter any judgement or decree in the child's/children's interest which will be binding upon 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/children's adoption. The officer executing this writ shall promptly serve the same according to requirements of law, and the mandates hereof, and make due return as the law directs.

This was issued at the request of attorney: BRETT PRITCHARD, 1201 S WS YOUNG DR STE C, KILLEEN TX 76543.

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 twenty 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

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April 2, 2026

Shanna Grote- Marketing@BeltonJournal.com

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David Tuma- David@BeltonJournal.com

CALL 254-939-5754



LEGALS

be made no later than 30 days after you file your answer with the clerk. Find out more at TexasLawHelp.org.
 Witness, Joanna Staton, District Clerk of Bell County, Texas.
 Issued and given under my hand and the seal of said Court at office in Belton, Texas, on March 12, 2026.
 Joanna Staton District Clerk Bell County, Texas, 1201 Huey Road ,P.O. Box 909, Belton, Texas 76513
 By: M Cortez Deputy Clerk
 03.19

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

To:, Arnold Bonilla, any Unknown Father and All Whom It May Concern, Respondents, in the hereinafter-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 First Amended

LEGALS

Petition of the Texas Department of Family and Protective Services, Petitioner, was filed in the 146th Judicial District Court of Bell County, Texas, on December 4, 2025, against Sarah Tyler and Arnold Bonilla, Respondent(s), numbered 25DFAM356844, and entitled "In the Interest of MILA TYLER, 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: MILA TYLER, DOB: September 30, 2025, Place of birth: Texas
 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 10th day of February 2026
 Joanna Staton, District Clerk of Bell County, Texas, 1201 Huey Road, P.O. Box 909, Belton,

LEGALS

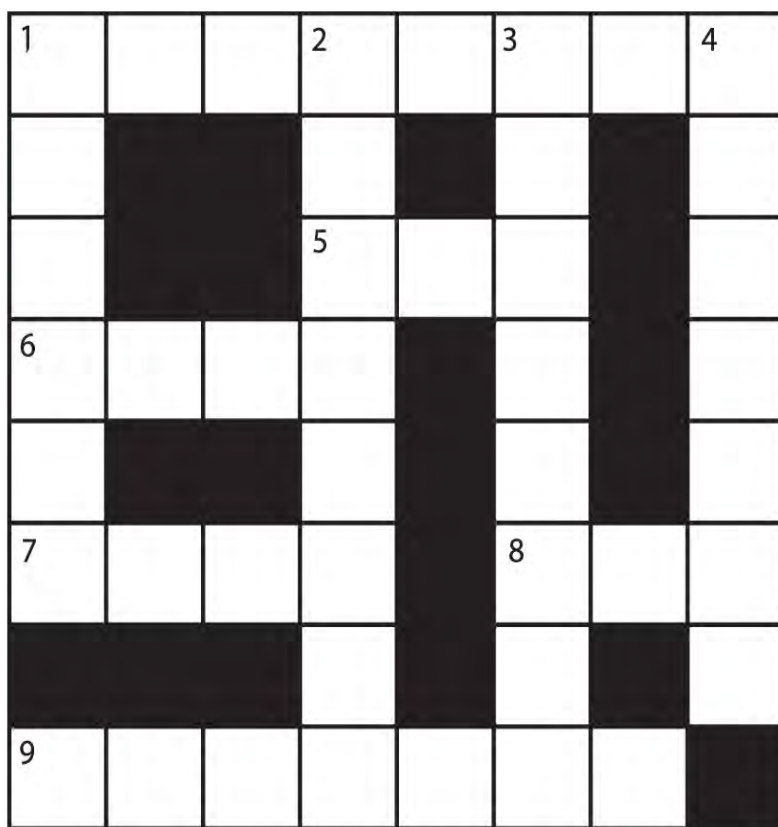
TX 76513
 By: C. Rodriguez_Deputy.
 03.19

NOTICE TO CREDITORS

Notice is hereby given that original Letters Testamentary for the Estate of REV. GONZALO P. FERRER, Deceased, were issued on February 12, 2026 in Cause No. 25CPB00533, pending in the County Court of Falls County, Texas, to: MARIA LUISA SANABRIA.
 All persons having claims against this Estate which is currently being administered are required to present them to the undersigned within the time and in the manner prescribed by law. c/o: Mary Wiley Attorney at Law, 100 W. Central Texas Expressway, Suite 306, Harker Heights, Texas 76548
 DATED the 17th day of March, 2026.
 /s/ Mary Wiley /s/, MARY WILEY Attorney for MARIA LUISA SANABRIA, State Bar No.: 24032669, 100 W. Central Texas Expressway, Suite 306, Harker Heights, Texas 76548, Telephone: (254) 634-6969, Facsimile: (254) 634-6587, E-mail: mary@lindleylawoffices.com



Crossword Puzzle



THIS DAY IN HISTORY



1861: The Kingdom of Italy is proclaimed.

1958: The United States launches the first solar-powered satellite.

1966: Off the coast of Spain in the Mediterranean, a submarine finds a missing American hydrogen bomb.

People FACT:



The collapsible version of this device was made popular by Parisian merchant Jean Marius in the early 18th century.

Answer: Umbrella

ACROSS

- 1. Rainy day tool
- 5. Incorporated
- 6. Widely admired
- 7. A sea eagle
- 8. Opposite of stand
- 9. State of atmosphere

DOWN

- 1. Positive notion
- 2. Most rain
- 3. Sport with netted stick
- 4. Means or skill

1. Upside Down 2. Rainiest 3. Lacrosse 4. Ability

1. Umbrella 5. Inc. 6. Icon 7. Erne 8. Sit 9. Weather

Answers:

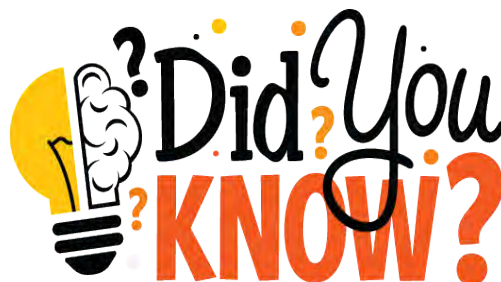
NEW WORD

RUNNER

part of an umbrella that slides up and down

How they say that in...

- English:** Rain
- Spanish:** Lluvia
- Italian:** Pioggia
- French:** Pluie
- German:** Regen



A vented canopy on an umbrella is an extra layer that allows air to pass through. This helps to prevent the wind from carrying larger umbrellas away.



Get the PICTURE?



Can you guess what the bigger picture is?

Answer: Umbrella

EDITORIAL

Letting the sunshine in

My Front Porch • Lynette Sowell

This week is known as Sunshine Week, which has less to do with the golden orb in the sky and has more to do with the public's right to know what the government does with taxpayer funds. We citizens have the right to access information from our government when we have questions about its dealings with private businesses, nonprofits, etc.

I've heard some individuals criticize the perceived lack of information released. Often, however, it's not that the information isn't released, but it's that we're not looking for it or paying attention. Our city has a trove of information available, we only need to look it up or ask for help to find it. There is a LOT of information on the city's website. For example, there are detailed city budgets going back for more than 15 years, available within seconds.

I've heard some residents clamor on social media that "the city needs to be audited!" Well, guess what? Every year an audit is conducted and lo and behold, the results of that audit along with annual audits going back for many years, are available on the city's website.

As far as us not paying attention to what's going on in our government, sadly, by the time a decision is finalized and affects us it, becomes harder to do something about it.

Once upon a time, a gentleman lamented before the city council that people work and are busy, and can't always keep up with what's going on with the city's business. "Isn't there a way you can get us a report on what happened? Put it in our water bills, or something like that?"

Guess what? This is what we do here at The Belton Journal. We sit in and/or listen in on those meetings. We take the results and information about those discussions and voting, and share it with our readers.

I am thankful for readers who take the time to read and share the news, because we in the news business are the ones who want to help readers get the best information they can use.

We have the right to ask questions of our government and receive answers. When it works properly, government allows people to gather and discuss and ask questions, seeking clarification. When government shuts people out and does not allow any questioning whatsoever, or balks at providing information, then it stops being government of the people, by the people, and for the people. Our government and elected officials should not shrink from our questions.

The "stop asking questions and just let us spend the money" is not an approach that fosters trust in citizens. It has been

my experience that some facets of government do not welcome questions. Government SHOULD welcome our questions.

In a FUNCTIONAL relationship, there is communication and discussion. When government refuses to communicate or respond to questions, dysfunction begins, which keeps the door closed between it and the people the government is supposed to serve.

Press releases and maintaining a "positive" image are not necessarily government transparency. It is one thing to issue press releases and information about positive goings-on, but there are governmental entities that would prefer the media stick to the "positive" stories and not waste their time with questions or looking at information and facts which do not paint an entity in a positive light.

We need to keep questioning and keep asking if we don't know. Sometimes, the answer or solution isn't what we're thinking of. For example, I've heard: "We should use that money for Road XX to pave other streets in town. Why isn't that happening?" It may seem a reasonable question at first, but those funds are legally not allowed to be spent on other projects, and it's the answer we must live with.

All Abuzz

Shop the Insanity • Darren Blair

Bumblebees.

Just about everyone who is in the know agrees that bees, including bumblebees, are important for the ecosystem. As they fly about, bumblebees pollinate different plants, helping them grow. If bees were to become extinct, a goodly chunk of our plant life – including many of our crops – would be in grave danger, something apocalyptic fiction is already starting to examine.

Thus, we need to protect the bees. We need to monitor what chemicals and substances we're using. We need to plant flowers that attract pollinators like bees so they have a place they can thrive. And of course, we need to leave them alone so that they can do their own thing.

Sounds good, right? Except... sometimes "do[ing] their own thing" involves their deciding to *not* leave us alone...

The plan for the day is simple. Attend a morning matinee at the local multiplex so that I can see the film I'm going to review that weekend. Run some errands I need to do. Go pick mom up so that I can help her run some errands she needs to do. Bit of a busy day, but nothing out of the ordinary. What's more, I have nothing on my calendar whatsoever the very next day, so if things do take longer than expected I can get the review done bright & early the next morning. It's all good.

Until it isn't...

There I am, sitting in the car. We just finished shopping at one particular retailer, and we're about to hit the road to our next destination. I haven't even had a chance to get my seatbelt on when we have an unexpected visitor. I don't see it clearly at first because it's right at the edge of my vision, but I recognize that

it's some sort of flying insect. For some strange reason it's come to inspect the car. I figure that if I give it a moment or two it'll satisfy its curiosity and go away on its own.

At least, that was my train of thought before *it landed on my eyebrow*.

There I am, sitting in the car, with some big, fuzzy insect sitting on my eyebrow. I defensively close my eyes to protect them, and then ask mom if she can see what's happening. Turns out that it's a bumblebee. A big, fat bumblebee. I don't have the words to adequately describe just how disconcerting this sensation is, knowing that a living creature with a stinger is on my face and said stinger is just micrometers from my eye.

Why is it on my eyebrow? Did something about my eyebrow make it think my eyebrow was some sort of plant? Was the

bumblebee just trying to rest and decided my face was the most convenient thing around to rest on? Is this karma for some past event? Regardless of the hows and whys, the fact remains that I'm in a bit of a situation.

Mom is able to ever so carefully nudge the bumblebee off my face, at which point it flies away on its own. Once I feel its departure, I open my eyes and proceed to take stock of yet another seemingly random and bizarre event. I don't know what the odds were of it happening or if it'll happen again, but it did indeed happen.

Seriously. Does anyone out there know what the proper protocol is for removing a bee from one's own face? I'd prefer a way that doesn't also involve me having to remove a stinger from my own face. Thank you.

Random-ness

Pleasant Ramblings • Mark Magnan

Have you ever wondered how a restaurant serves "homemade" food? Do they cook at home and bring it to the restaurant, or are they trying to trick us? What about home style? What if their grandma wasn't that good of a cook? Maybe just regular everyday fried chicken is the way to go.

I have seen cop shows and they have a K9 dog with a vest that says "Police". Obviously the dog is not undercover, but why label them so vividly? I mean if you see a dog dragging a cop in uniform he is either a police dog or an off duty cop walking his pet. If you have just robbed a bank and are running from the cops and a dog is chasing you, you can probably be certain that is a police K9. Well, unless you ran through a yard and picked up a mad dog by stepping in his water dish. At any rate, unless you are a world class sprinter you are probably going to get bit, and unless it is a toothless Corgi it will hurt.

And if you watch those shows, often the dog flushes out the bad guy and just gets held back. Why not let the dog gnaw on a leg for a few seconds? I mean, it only seems fair.

English is funny. Why is it, meet and meat, but greet and great?

Have you ever hit your knee or your funny bone so hard that you couldn't even get a swear word out of your mouth?

Which reminds me. Why do we still have toes? I mean, (well if you are from Tennessee) when is the last time you picked up something with your toes? I am rarely barefoot so the toe balance thing doesn't help me much. Actually, I seem to hit my toe on something when I walk around too much with bare feet. I would think we would have evolved into solid feet by now, unless for some reason Tennessee is holding us back.

And I think my socks would last much longer if I didn't have individual toes. Why in the world are we planning a colony on Mars but we can't make socks with elastic that lasts more than a few months? I mean, nothing puts me in a foul mood more than socks that keep slipping down into my boots. I would pay good money for boot socks that would last and stay up! Maybe if there was a way to rejuvenate the upper portion of the socks.

How come when I bundle up in a coat to go the store on a cold, windy and rainy day, there is always someone there in flip flops, gym shorts and a tank top

looking at me like I am the odd one?

Have you noticed that aliens from outer space are always green? Well, back in the days of old science fiction TV shows in black and white, they were mostly silver. Now it seems like they are portrayed as green. And they only have four fingers, including thumbs. So three fingers and a thumb. Which is common with most high school wood shop teachers. I would figure our current configuration of five digits is optimum.

Has anyone ever started one of those single serve coffee makers without sticking your cup under it? Yeah, me neither.

I was recently in a restaurant and had to visit the restroom. I went in and noticed the dividers between the fixtures had cup holders. Does that seem strange to anyone else? I would probably take my drink into a failed nuclear reactor before I would take it into a public restroom, even with a cover on it.

How come people say, "Give me a second," yet they mean 10 minutes? Or, "I'll be there in a minute," and it is a half an hour.

Have a good week. I will be back in seven days! See how honest I am?

Unused resources

Coffee Talk • Renae Brumbaugh Green

Several years ago, I hired a professional organizer. I'm not like all you perfectly left-brained, linear thinkers who have a place for everything and can find anything you want at a moment's notice. I'm more of piles and stacks kind of organizer. So a few years back, I saved up my Christmas and birthday money and got some help.

It proved to be the bargain of the century for me. My new friend didn't just help me stack things in boxes to hide in my garage. She talked to me, learned about my personality, and tried to figure out what organizing system would work for me.

For example, drawers don't work for me. In my brain, if I can't see it, it doesn't exist.

Our conversation went something like this:

Her: How do you find stuff?

Me: I dig through my piles until I find it.

Her: Why don't you use folders?

Me: I always put stuff in the wrong folder. Plus, I can't make the folders stand up like they're supposed to.

Her: Have you tried hanging folders?

Me: I loathe hanging folders. Stuff gets in between, where there's not an actual folder, and slides to the bottom, and I never see it again.

I was a challenge for her. But together, we came up with a plan that actually helped me. My stacks are smaller now, anyway.

One of the best things she taught me was to move all my handwritten addresses from my spiral-bound, polka-dotted address book to my computer. I'd had this program for years but never took the time to learn it. It had been there, waiting to be accessed, while I scrambled through that little alphabetized address book with all its mark-outs and changes, where things weren't really alphabetized because how do you really keep things in ABC order in one of those books? "I'm sorry, Mr. Abdo. I can't add your name here. Mr. Applebaum is already in the system, and there's no room." Every time somebody moves or gets married, you've gotta buy a new book. It's a nightmare. With my computer's address book, there are no scratch-outs. I just click on that person's name and edit the information. I don't even have to add new contacts in order. The computer automatically alphabetizes it for me.

I'd had that computer address book available to me for years before I actually used it. There's no telling how many wasted hours I spent, plodding through my little spiral scratch-out system, stressing because I couldn't find what I needed,

when the perfect solution was right there.

God's Word is like that. It's filled with all the tools we need. His promises are like coupons we can cash in.

Feeling stressed or anxious? We can find peace in His Word. Confused? Perplexed? In James 1, He promised wisdom to anyone who asks.

The more we study God's Word and apply it to our lives, the smoother our paths will be. Not that our lives will be perfect. But The Bible contains the tools we need to navigate our trouble spots.

Often, I treat God's Word like I treated my computer's contact program. I know it's there, but I don't use it. I muddle through life with my piles and stacks, stressed out and bogged down.

Starting now, I will be more efficient with my life. I'll read God's Word, search out His promises, and cash them in. After all, what good is it to have such a perfect resource available if we never actually use it?

"He is a faithful God, who keeps His promise and is merciful to thousands of generations of those who love Him and obey His commands," Deuteronomy 7:9.

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St. Patrick's Day and the Texas Spirit

Every year on March 17th, people around the world celebrate St. Patrick's Day—a day known for green shirts, parades, Irish music, and a lot of good cheer. While the holiday began as a way to honor the life of St. Patrick and Irish heritage, here in Texas it has taken on a flavor all its own.

Texans have a way of celebrating things bigger and louder, and St. Patrick's Day is no exception. From small-town gatherings to big-city parades, you'll see green decorations hanging next to Texas flags, cowboy hats mixed with shamrocks, and communities coming together just for the fun of it. It's a perfect example of how Texas culture welcomes traditions from all over the world and makes them feel right at home.

But beyond the festivities, St. Patrick's Day carries a message that fits

well with the Texas spirit. The story of St. Patrick is one of faith, perseverance, and courage. According to history, he overcame hardship and returned to Ireland with a mission to share hope and truth. That kind of determination resonates with Texans, who have always valued grit, resilience, and standing firm in what they believe.

Texas itself has long been shaped by people from many backgrounds who brought their traditions with them. Irish immigrants were among those who helped build railroads, towns, and communities across the state in the 1800s. Today, their influence can still be seen in family names, local celebrations, and the pride many Texans take in their Irish roots.

On a day like St. Patrick's Day, you might walk into a local restaurant or small business and see people wearing

green while enjoying good food and good company. It's not just about the color or the decorations—it's about community. It's about neighbors laughing together, supporting local places, and taking a moment to celebrate life.

And that really feels like Texas.

Whether it's a parade in a big city, a gathering at a hometown café, or just friends sharing a meal, St. Patrick's Day reminds us that traditions—no matter where they start—can bring people together. In Texas, that spirit of togetherness is something we celebrate all year long.

So today, don your green, tip your hat, and enjoy the day. In true Texas fashion, celebrate it with a little extra hospitality, a lot of laughter, and maybe even a "Happy St. Patrick's Day, y'all."

UMHB holds 27th annual Spring Revival

Special to the Journal

The 27th annual spring revival, a three-day student-directed event, came to the University of Mary Hardin-Baylor (UMHB) last week, where hundreds of students gathered inside a large white tent at the heart of campus.

This year's theme was "The Potter and The Clay," and Shane Pruitt, the National Next Gen Director for the North American Mission Board, was the featured speaker. Crescent City Worship, a collaborative team of students, staff, and alumni of New Orleans Baptist Theological Seminary, led worship for the event.

"Revival 2026 invites our campus community into the clay and the potter journey, identifying the barriers that keep our hearts from being shaped by a loving Father through a life-changing relationship with Jesus," said UMHB's Dean of Students, Michael Burns.

Isaiah 64:8, this year's theme verse, says, "And yet, O Lord, you are our Father. We are the clay, and you are the potter. We are all formed by your hand."

Shane Pruitt opened the revival by defining our primary purpose: to know Jesus and to make Him known. He warned

against the "playdough" tendency of modern faith, in which we try to mold Jesus into a shape that fits our personal preferences or social causes. Instead of a God who simply validates our existing lives, Pruitt challenged students to encounter the real, biblical Jesus. This authentic faith doesn't leave us as we are; it possesses the power to radically change our hearts from the inside out.

On the second night, the focus shifted to the identity of a Christ-follower and how Jesus' resurrection should shape our daily lives. Pruitt explained that because Jesus didn't stay in the grave, we don't have to live there either, urging students to leave their "grave clothes" behind. A sophomore UMHB student named Noah Britton moved the crowd by sharing how surrendering to God felt like being a piece of stone under a sculptor's hand. He described how God lovingly chipped away at his old self, revealing the person he was truly meant to be in Christ.

The final night centered on God's specific calling for each student to hope, to serve and share the Gospel, and to lead in ministry. Throughout the event, Pruitt consistently invited students to move beyond



Courtesy Photo

Students at UMHB participate in last week's 27th annual Spring Revival on campus, challenging students to allow their faith to shape their daily lives.

mere belief into a life of active surrender and ministry.

"The atmosphere was transformative as students began to minister to one another, choosing to follow and serve Jesus

with newfound bold intentionality. Seeing a generation ready to live out their faith in Jesus by praying for each other and worshipping together was a beautiful conclusion to the revival," Burns said.

MPR cutting risk of city wildfires

By David Stone
The Belton Journal

With heavy wildfire season underway in Texas, the city of Morgan's Point Resort is making the community safer by removing downed trees and brush from city property such as parks, easements and land beneath power lines, Fire Chief Shane Sibley said this week.

"Some of the brush has been there since we were hit by a tornado in 2024,"

Sibley said. "With the current threat of wildfire, we are building a buffer zone between residential properties to slow or contain any wildfire that could occur here."

"Clearing city properties has always been on our radar, but we sustained significant damage from the tornado and it opened our eyes," he added. "We are identifying areas of high risk to clear first. We are doing consultation work with the Texas Forestry Service — getting their input and recommendation. This is going to be an

ongoing thing in Morgan's Point"

Sibley said the City has roll-off brush bins that can be delivered to private property so residents can clear areas around their homes. The City's Public Works department delivers and picks up the bins.

"If a resident needs a bin, they can call City Hall and make a request," Sibley said. "The bin is delivered, the resident cleans his yard of natural debris such as trees and limbs. Once it's full, the resident calls to have it picked up. We want to make our

community safe."

Sibley emphasized that the bins are only for natural items, not trash.

"We had a slow start to wildfire season here in Morgan's Point Resort, but now we are getting into heavy wildfire season," he said. "There are fires everywhere across the state."

"We've been in and out of burn bans for a few weeks, and now we have high winds, which increases concern. The high winds adds to the need for a burn ban.

Applications for Leadership Central Texas accepted through April 30

Special to the Journal

The Development District of Central Texas (DDCT) is hosting Leadership Central Texas 2026 this summer, with three Thursday sessions, June 18, July 16, and August 20 from 9 a.m. Until 4 p.m.

The purpose of Leadership Central Texas is to identify and develop regional leaders who live or work within the seven-county DDCT region by promoting awareness of pathways and resources for regional

leadership opportunities. Topics include economic and business development, regional infrastructure planning, social services, transportation, and the roles and responsibilities of government officials.

Topics are taught by leaders across these fields, and participants will be provided leadership style tests and self assessments to assist with development into regional leaders.

Each attendee will

be encouraged to identify leadership opportunities where their individual talents would best be applied to ensure the growth and future well-being of Central Texas.

The application can be found at www.ddoct.org/leadership-central-texas/.

All applications must be received by 5 p.m., Thursday, April 30, 2026.

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