

THE COMMUNITY NEWS

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ALEDO ISD

Parker County partners with district for COVID-19 vaccines

District to continue protocols

Staff Reports
The Community News

A lot can happen in a week. In the wake of Texas Gov. Greg Abbott's lifting of mask mandates and opening all businesses, attention immediately went to schools. Last Thursday, the school district issued a letter to parents and guardians of the district announcing that the district will continue its COVID-19 health and safety protocols after Abbott's announcement.

Superintendent Dr. Susan Bohn said in the letter that the decision was made after "reviewing the COVID-19 requirements and guidelines issued by the Texas Education Agency and other agencies." In addition, Bohn said the district had consulted with "staff, parents, community members, Parker County Public Health officials, and our Aledo ISD COVID-19 Task Force."

Among the reasons Bohn gave for the decision was that teachers and staff had not been eligible for COVID-19 vaccines until that week.

"While Aledo ISD officials have been advocating for all school staff to be eligible for and have access to COVID-19



RANDY KECK/THE COMMUNITY NEWS

Suze Brassfield (right), Nutrition Manager at Stuard Elementary School, was the first person to receive a COVID-19 vaccine on Wednesday in a program set up through the county and school districts to get front-line workers vaccinated.

vaccinations since they became available, Texas school staff was not made eligible until the day after Governor Abbott made his announcement," Bohn said. "Some of our teachers and staff have become very ill and required long hospital stays due to this disease. We care about the health and well-being of our teachers, staff, and students, and we cannot serve our students and keep

our schools open if they are not healthy."

Of concern are close contacts, defined by the Centers for Disease Control as someone who was within six feet of an infected person for a length of time, triggering quarantines.

"The removal of masks would likely increase the incidence of 'close contacts' and therefore the numbers of students and

staff who would be required to quarantine, missing school and activities," Bohn wrote. "If a large number of staff members cannot be at school, we will struggle to serve students and keep our schools open, especially given the current statewide shortage of substitute teachers."

"The best thing for students and staff is open schools that

Turn to **AISD**, page 2

EAST PARKER COUNTY

Water credits on tap for local customers

By Brandi Addison
The Community News

Residents across East Parker County will receive a credit to offset the water used during the winter storm from continually dripping faucets and minor leaks.

Hudson Oaks first announced its decision to give residents a 2,000-gallon water credit on Feb. 26, days after the storm, and Weatherford soon followed suit.

Aledo council members voted during a special meeting on March 4 to give a 3,000-gallon credit to all city water customers, which will be applied on the next billing cycle.

The city also announced to customers last week that it would not charge late penalties for water bills, which were sent late this month due to the busyness of public work maintenance staff, who have been working issues from the storm.

Willow Park City council voted on Tuesday to give all city water customers a 2,000-gallon credit. The credit will also be applied on the next billing cycle for Willow Park credits.

"The city managers in Parker County — Weatherford, Hudson Oaks, Willow Park, Aledo — we all started having conversations about crediting the water bills to kind of mitigate and offset these costs for our customers," Willow Park City Manager Brian Grimes said.

The Aledo and Willow Park city councils also discussed the impact of the winter storm that plowed through Texas in mid-February, both declaring it as an emergency disaster for their respective cities.

Willow Park reflects storms

City workers, police officers, and firefighters worked long hours to support residents throughout the winter storm., according to Willow Park officials.

Public works said the first reports of electricity failure were around 2 a.m. on Feb. 15. By the morning of Feb. 19 everything returned to normal.

Grimes said the city officials and communications director Rosealee Kertok did an excellent job of "shutting down rumors," as residents were uncertain about water and electricity.

This was a big part in keeping residents safe and informed, he said.

Willow Park Chief of Police Carrie West said the department worked overtime, as it helped to man the warming center located at Christ Chapel in Willow Park.

West said this proved to be the biggest problem for officers during the storm, as the cost of about \$9,600 nearly depleted their entire overtime budget.

Public works staff worked 14 to 16 hours in a single day, as residents struggled to maintain electricity and water. Chase McBride said some of the workers stayed overnight, in the freezing weather, to manually ensure the water pumps did not fail by switching the breakers on and off.

"These guys really outdid themselves," Kertok told *The Community News*.

PARKER COUNTY

Judge follows Abbott's lead

100 percent occupancy announced

Parker County Judge Pat Deen announced on March 3 that, "pursuant to the Governor's Order, Parker County will allow businesses to open at 100% occupancy."

Deen's announcement pointed out that Parker County does not have a local mask order.

"Although some individuals may still choose to wear a mask, it will no longer be required. Parker County will be working with the Governor and local legislators to increase vaccine allocations. I have also requested that the Parker County Hospital District work directly with our local school districts to provide vaccine allocations to teachers and school staff members," Deen's announcement said.

Attentive Audience



RANDY KECK/THE COMMUNITY NEWS

Students from Coder Elementary School visited the Aledo High School ag barn on Wednesday to read to the animals and learn about ag programs. More coverage will be in next week's issue.



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Play and Learn

New playground at TCA designed for multiple functions.

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Out of Balance

Dak Prescott's contract is compared to the minimum wage.

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Around the Bases

Bearcats pick up three wins in tournament action.

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AISD

from page one

stay open. Aledo ISD has been one of the few school districts to safely have in-person instruction for the vast majority of our students since the first day of school of the 2020-2021 school year without having to close any campus for any period of time due to COVID-19."

The Abbott announcement added new urgency to the desires of educators to be vaccinated, which led to an agreement between the Aledo ISD and other districts with Parker County.

On Wednesday, The Don Danial Ninth Grade Campus Gym was the site of educators lining up for vaccinations that were provided through the Parker County Hospital District. About 225 COVID-19 vaccinations were administered to teachers, coaches, and other front-line workers in the district.

"We are so thankful for Parker County Judge Pat Deen, Parker County Hospital District CEO Randy Bacus, and PCHD Chief Medical Officer Dr. Steven Welch for working so hard to make sure that vaccines were made easily accessible to our Aledo ISD teachers and staff as soon as the Texas Department of State Health Services expanded eligibility for school staff last week," Bohn said.

Parker County and the PCHD worked with the district to ensure teachers and staff could be vaccinated quickly and conveniently, leading to the administration of the Pfizer-BioNTech vaccine to staff.

"Our Board of Trustees and district administration have been advocating for teachers to be given priority following healthcare workers and first responders in the statewide administration of the COVID-19 vaccine," AISD Board President Hoyt Harris said. "This expedited response is just another way our teachers and staff



RANDY KECK/THE COMMUNITY NEWS

Stan Reid, AP Human Geography teacher at Aledo High School, receives his vaccine.

have felt support from so many families and community members and partners."

The district had more than 250 employees register to receive the COVID-19 vaccination. Aledo Family Medicine's Dr. Shaun Kretzschmar secured additional vaccinations needed to fulfill all of the requests the district received. Kretzschmar was set to administer the Johnson & Johnson vaccines later in the week.

The opportunity to receive a COVID-19 vaccine was offered to all Aledo ISD teachers and staff as well as student teachers, custodial staff, and Camp Fire staff that work on Aledo ISD campuses.

Bohn told *The Community News* at the vaccination event that she was pleased the county was responsive to the school district's request for vaccinations.

"They really did make changes to make sure our teachers on the front line could get immunized," she said.

Star Parker to headline Bush Legacy dinner April 16

Star Parker will be the guest speaker for the Bush Legacy Republican Women of Weatherford fundraising dinner at 6 p.m. Friday, April 16, at Dove Ridge Vineyard in Weatherford. The event is the major fundraiser for the club.

Parker is the founder and president of CURE, Center for Urban Renewal and Education.

CURE is a non-profit Policy Institute based in Washington, D.C. that fights poverty to restore dignity through messages of faith, freedom, and personal responsibility.

The vision of CURE is to preserve, promote, and protect Christianity, capitalism, and our constitution to improve culture, reduce government dependency, and to build race relations.

CURE works in public policy, the public square, and in poor communities through three programs: a Policy Program that works directly



with the White House and the Congress on Welfare Reform ideas; a Media Program that includes rapid response, a daily news site, blackcommunitynews.com and a TV Show, CURE America with Star Parker; and a Clergy Program that umbrellas a national network of more than 950 conservative clergy

who serve in various distressed zip codes around the country.

Bush Legacy Republican Women of Weatherford are selling table sponsorships and tickets for the event. VIP guest will enjoy meeting Star Parker and take home a photo with her. For More information call 817-594-5029 or visit BLRWW.com

Food Handlers Class

A Food Handlers Food Safety class will be offered from 4-6 p.m. on Thursday, April 1, at the Parker County Agricultural Service Center located at 604 North Main Street in Weatherford. The cost for the class will be \$20.

This two-hour course is for all food employees to help promote the service of safe food. The certificate is good for two years and is valid anywhere in the State of Texas. The course is a basic overview of food safety practices that are necessary to ensure that safe food is served at your

establishment. Practices discussed include good personal hygiene, cross contamination and time and temperature abuse.

Certified Food Managers Course and Exam

Texas A&M AgriLife Extension Service will offer a one day Certified and Re-Certification Food Manager Course and Exam from 8 a.m. to 5 p.m. on Tuesday, March 30, at the Parker County Agricultural Service Center located at 604 North Main Street in Weatherford.

The ServSafe Certified Food Manager Exam will be administered immediately following the class. The cost for the course is \$115, which includes the course, ServSafe Certified Food Managers examination, course book, and all course materials. This course is an update and review of food safety principles and practices and will help prepare you for the exam.

For questions, a registration form, or to register for either or both courses call 817-598-6168 or visit parker.agrilife.org.

THANK YOU TO OUR COMMUNITY

We would like to say a big Thank You to all of the fire, police, public works, city staff and all public servants who went above and beyond during the Big Freeze. The community really pulled together to make sure that everyone was taken care of and supported the small businesses in the area that could be open.


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RANDY KECK/THE COMMUNITY NEWS

These cattle from the Aledo High School FFA Program seem to pay little heed to the massive earthmoving equipment behind them.



RANDY KECK/THE COMMUNITY NEWS

Spring must be right around the corner as Parker County Master Gardeners have been spotted around Aledo City Hall and the Aledo Community Center. Shown are Master Gardeners Linda Holderman (left) and Susan Showman.

Additional playground allows ‘younger Eagles’ to play and learn at the same time

By Melissa Winn
Special to Trinity Christian Academy

William Shakespeare famously once wrote that “all the world’s a stage.”

And while the playwright likely meant to draw a parallel to the drama everyone lives throughout their lives and the role they play in it, the phrase has come to mean so much more.

Mike Skaggs, Trinity Christian Academy’s Head of School, recently shared what he felt the phrase meant as it pertains to educators.

“We believe that for children, and for all of us really, all the world should be seen as a classroom,” Skaggs said.

The comments were made at a December ribbon cutting for the new early childhood playground at the Elementary School.

“This beautiful space before us isn’t just a playground, it’s a classroom,” Skaggs added.

While the current playground is more than suitable for the first grade and older students, it wasn’t ideal for the 3- to 5-year olds, Skaggs said.

“We saw the need and it was included in our Grounded in Faith-Growing in Excellence Capital Campaign plans,” he said.

With a donation from the Amon G. Carter Foundation in Fort Worth, the project was completed much sooner than planned and was ready for use at the beginning of the school year. Beyond fun and games, the area will help the youngest Eagles develop cognitively, physically, socially and emotionally.

“When we returned to school in the fall, we were so grateful to have it because it allowed more classes to have longer recess because we had additional play space,” Skaggs said. “These structures not only develop students physically, helping them grow stronger and more agile, they help students learn to process their world.”



The additional playground is housed next to the original one and allows the younger children to bang on plastic drums, play inside and outside a makeshift home and run

and climb to their heart’s content, albeit on a smaller scale.

While the area was completed before COVID protocols were in place and in-person classes

returned, Dr. Steven Newby, TCA’s elementary school principal, said it has been the “perfect” addition.

“It’s a blessing for our kids,” Dr. Newby said. “It truly complements the [early childhood] program and the children love it.”

With representatives from the East Parker County Chamber of Commerce, School Board, TCA staff and leadership, along with parents and students, Skaggs thanked all in attendance at the ribbon cutting and reiterated how important the playground is.

“Play is how children learn and this playground is a wonderful tool to help us assist children in reaching their maximum potential with the ultimate hope of partnering with that child and their family in understanding God’s purpose for his or her life,” he said.

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Thistles & Roses

Dak Prescott's contract and the minimum wage



Richard Henderson
richard@rahenderson.com

Dallas Cowboy quarterback Dak Prescott just signed a contract for \$140 million over four years. The number could be higher depending on incentives. He gets \$66 million just for signing his name to the contract. I am a free market, free enterprise kind of guy which means if that is his value in that market, more power to him.

But I think it is fair to question our society's priorities and get some perspective on what such a deal means. And in many ways, the contract makes no sense to me.

Here you have an athlete, Prescott, coming off of a major injury. There is nothing in this world to prevent another devastating injury. There is absolutely no guarantee that the Cowboys will be back in a Super Bowl in the next four years. They have not been there in 25 years. There are about 40 other players on an NFL team and a lot has to

go right, and so much can go wrong, in winning a Super Bowl.

We have a current debate in Congress about what to do about the economy and COVID and what the minimum wage should be. It is currently \$7.25 per hour and some want it raised to \$15 per hour. Direct incentive checks will be \$1,400 per person, with some families getting about \$5,000. A large percentage of the population lives paycheck to paycheck, just barely getting by.

So let's do some math. If you divide \$140 million by four years it is \$35 Million a year. There are 52 weeks in a year, so divide \$35 million by 52. Prescott will be paid \$673,076 per week. The average work week is supposed to be 40 hours so divide \$673,076 by 40. That is \$16,901.90 per hour for Mr. Prescott.

I don't begrudge him for getting the money, but why do we pay so much in our society for an athlete to play a game? Why is the football coach usually the highest paid person on a college campus?

If you go to the Parker County website, you will see county commissioners and judges making about \$150,000 per year. County employees who perform a great service for us citizens make far less. Teachers are paid about the same, which is not nearly enough. We don't

pay police or other first responders what they are worth. The Community News is a valuable asset and contributes greatly to our local quality of life but publisher Randy Keck doesn't exactly get rich doing it. We lawyers do better than minimum wage but most of us are not making as much as some would think, and what we do has a major effect on human lives.

What we pay athletes at this level is not unusual in the sports world. According to an article in The Guardian British newspaper, the average soccer player in The English Premier League is more than \$4 million a year, with top players making even more.

At the end of the day, we fans pay these salaries one ticket and one beer and one hot dog at a time. I have gone to Cowboy games at AT&T stadium. It is quite a spectacle and much money is spent. We have created this market and determined our priorities.

And to be sure I am playing Socrates here, just asking questions and pointing out a few things. I know I can't change the world, but I have to say I wouldn't mind having Prescott's youth and talent.

Come to think of it, getting paid \$17,000 per hour for playing a game sounds pretty good!

Guest Column

Let government know who's boss



Ken Paulson
Ken.Paulson@mtsu.edu

When government fails, it's the rare public official who says, "Oops. My fault."

That's human nature, particularly for officials in the public eye who may have to run for office again. No one wants to be held directly responsible for letting the public down.

Case in point is the recent catastrophe in Texas, when unexpected winter storms left four million homes without power, ruptured pipes, and tainted the water supply for many.

Texas' energy grid essentially collapsed. While Texas Gov. Greg Abbott was quick to blame frozen wind turbines, the cause was much more complex than that. To truly understand how things went so terribly wrong will require time, study, and research.

So, too, with the coronavirus vaccine distribution. In this state and others, residents are frustrated with the slow rollout of vaccines. Is it poor distribution? Politics? A flawed strategy? These are literally matters of life and death.

But how do you get to the truth when public officials so rarely step up to take direct responsibility for failures?

The answer is public records. And public meetings. And access to the information that taxpayers deserve.

States throughout the country have laws that guarantee access to government records and meetings. But the details vary widely and there are many statutory exceptions. New challenges to access emerge every year in virtually every state.

The need to fight for government transparency is reaffirmed each year during Sunshine Week, a national awareness event overseen by the News Leaders Association and keyed to the March 16 birthday of James Madison. The fourth president of the United States drafted the Bill of Rights – including the guarantee of a free press – in 1791.

That journalism connection reflects the role news media play in the free flow of information, but it unfortunately can also leave the public with a sense that Sunshine Week reflects the concerns of a single industry.

To the contrary, access to government information is critical to every American who cares about the quality of his or her community, state, and nation.

It's important to see government employees – including elected officials – as the people we hire through our tax dollars to do a good job for all of us. If you run a business or hire a contractor, you wouldn't hesitate to demand a full understanding of how something went wrong. That should be exactly our relationship with government.

Getting that information, though, requires public meetings where residents

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City of Willow Park
Notice of Public Hearing

The City of Willow Park Board of Adjustment will hold public hearing on the matter listed below:

1. PUBLIC HEARING to consider a request for variance to the Zoning Ordinance Sec. 14.12 – Off Street Parking and Loading Requirements – Concrete Pavement required on an 81.767 acre tract of land J.M. Froman Survey, Abstract No. 471, and I&G.N.R.R. Company Survey, Abstract No. 1821, City of Willow Park, Parker County, Texas, located in the 8200 Block Bankhead Hwy.

Board of Adjustment Wednesday, March 24, 2021
 Time: 6:30 PM.

Any member of the public has the right to appear at the Public Hearing. Please contact the Development Department at 817-441-7108 or bchew@willowpark.org with any questions.

Posted: March 09, 2021

Town of Annetta North
Ordinance 2021-02

AN ORDINANCE AMENDING ORDINANCE NO. 2018-02, AS AMENDED, THE COMPREHENSIVE ZONING ORDINANCE OF THE TOWN OF ANNETTA NORTH, TEXAS, BY CHANGING THE ZONING CLASSIFICATION ON LOTS 1, 2 AND 3, BLOCK 1 OF THE UNDERWOOD HILL 2ND ADDITION, IN THE TOWN OF ANNETTA NORTH, ALSO DESCRIBED AS APPROXIMATELY 8.72 ACRES SITUATED IN THE THOMAS ROLSTON SURVEY, ABSTRACT NUMBER 923 AND THE JACOB BROCKMAN SURVEY, ABSTRACT NUMBER 47, PARKER COUNTY, TEXAS, FROM ITS PRESENT CLASSIFICATION OF "AG" AGRICULTURAL DISTRICT TO "R-2" SINGLE-FAMILY RESIDENTIAL DISTRICT-2.0 ACRE LOTS, AND REVISING THE OFFICIAL ZONING MAP IN ACCORDANCE THEREWITH; PROVIDING THAT THIS ORDINANCE SHALL BE CUMULATIVE OF ALL ORDINANCES; PROVIDING A SEVERABILITY CLAUSE; PROVIDING A PENALTY FOR VIOLATIONS HEREOF; PROVIDING A SAVINGS CLAUSE; PROVIDING FOR PUBLICATION IN THE OFFICIAL NEWSPAPER; AND PROVIDING AN EFFECTIVE DATE.

Any person, firm or corporation who violates, disobeys, omits, neglects or refuses to comply with or who resists the enforcement of any of the provisions of this Ordinance shall be fined not more than Two Thousand Dollars (\$2,000.00). Each day that a violation is permitted to exist shall constitute a separate offense.

Town of Annetta North
Ordinance 2021-04

AN ORDINANCE AMENDING ORDINANCE NO. 2018-02, AS AMENDED, THE COMPREHENSIVE ZONING ORDINANCE OF THE TOWN OF ANNETTA NORTH, TEXAS, BY CHANGING THE ZONING CLASSIFICATION ON APPROXIMATELY 13.853 ACRES OF LAND OUT OF THE H. FRANKLIN SURVEY, ABSTRACT NO. 478, TOWN OF ANNETTA NORTH, PARKER COUNTY, TEXAS, FROM ITS PRESENT CLASSIFICATION OF "AG" AGRICULTURAL DISTRICT TO "R-2" SINGLE-FAMILY RESIDENTIAL DISTRICT-2.0 ACRE LOTS, AND REVISING THE OFFICIAL ZONING MAP IN ACCORDANCE THEREWITH; PROVIDING THAT THIS ORDINANCE SHALL BE CUMULATIVE OF ALL ORDINANCES; PROVIDING A SEVERABILITY CLAUSE; PROVIDING A PENALTY FOR VIOLATIONS HEREOF; PROVIDING A SAVINGS CLAUSE; PROVIDING FOR PUBLICATION IN THE OFFICIAL NEWSPAPER; AND PROVIDING AN EFFECTIVE DATE.

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PAULSON

from page four

can ask questions. It also means access to the documents that led to a poor decision. Words on paper can be much more forthright than the dissembling of politicians.

It's critical that we hold government accountable, for better or worse. (It's also important to acknowledge when government leaders are doing a good job.)

How can you help? I have two suggestions.

First, keep doing exactly what you're doing at this moment. Read and support your local newspaper. Local journalists, more than anyone else, will stand up for your right to information. Facebook will not be going toe-to-toe with your mayor.

Second, when you believe government isn't doing its job, demand an explanation. Ask to see the documents. Attend public meetings. And above all, support legislative efforts to make government more transparent.

It's too easy for officials who have failed us to point fingers, blame the media, and wait for their side of the partisan fence to rally to their defense. We deserve better. We all pay taxes to support the work of government. We should get our money's worth.

Ken Paulson is the director of the Free Speech Center at Middle Tennessee State University, a lawyer and a former editor-in-chief of USA Today.

Capital Highlights

Mask mandate ended March 10



Gary Borders
gborders@texaspress.com

Many entities to continue requiring them

While Gov. Gregg Abbott has lifted the statewide mandate to wear a mask in public and allowed all businesses to operate at full capacity, many businesses, schools and other entities say they will continue to require that masks be worn. Abbott issued the order last week, effective March 10.

"With the medical advancements of vaccines and antibody therapeutic drugs, Texas now has the tools to protect Texans from the virus," Abbott said. "We must now do more to restore livelihoods and normalcy for Texans by opening Texas 100 percent." He urged Texans to take responsibility for themselves when it comes to wearing masks and following other health safety practices.

Political leaders in several of the state's largest cities criticized the decision. Houston Mayor Sylvester Turner tweeted, asking (and answering for himself) whether Abbott's move was "an attempt to deflect from the winter storm systemwide state leadership failure. Yes." San Antonio Mayor Ron Nirenberg urged residents to join him in continuing to wear a mask, a sentiment echoed by Austin Mayor Steve Adler and Dallas County Judge Clay Jenkins.

Meanwhile, the Texas Education Agency revised its health guidance policies, saying that "local school boards have full authority to determine their local mask policy." Many of the state's college campuses announced they would continue to require that masks be worn, including The University of Texas, the Texas A&M University System, Texas Tech, Southern Methodist University, and others.

Several large retailers announced they would continue to require customers to wear masks, including Walmart, Target, Costco and Whole Foods. Grocery retailer H-E-B will "strongly encourage" they be worn, according to a company statement, and employees will continue to wear masks. HEB president Scott McClelland told the Houston Chronicle that antagonistic customers have caused nearly 2,000 in-store incidents regarding masks at Houston stores alone. He said customers not wearing a mask would be asked to do so, and an employee would offer them a mask if they didn't have one. Store employees will not escalate the situation if a customer refuses, he said.

In the wake of Abbott's announcement, the Texas Supreme Court removed requirements that most court proceedings in the state be held remotely and gave judges the authority to require masks and social distancing. It encouraged judges to hold trials remotely.

Texas getting more than 1 million COVID-19 vaccine doses this week

More than 1 million COVID-19 vaccine doses are shipping this

week to providers across the state, a significant increase from previous weeks. That's largely due to nearly a quarter-million doses of the new Johnson & Johnson vaccine coming to Texas. The single-dose vaccine began shipping last week. As of Sunday, more than 4.2 million Texans had received at least one dose and 2.319 million were fully vaccinated. That means about 22 percent of the state's population has gotten at least one dose. Teachers and school staff have been added to the list of those eligible for one of the three vaccines being offered.

COVID-19 cases drop, deaths increase in past week

The number of new COVID-19 cases reported in Texas in the past week dropped to 43,328, according to the Coronavirus Resource Center at Johns Hopkins University of Medicine. That's down 22 percent from the previous week and down nearly 73 percent from the record high of 158,922 recorded the week of Jan. 10. However, recorded deaths in Texas rose to 1,730, up 17 percent from the previous week. Hospitalizations for lab-confirmed COVID-19 patients totaled 4,921, down from the record high of more than 14,000 during the week of Jan. 11.

School districts not penalized for high absences, remote learning

The Texas Education Agency announced last week that it will "hold harmless" school districts that have seen attendance declines

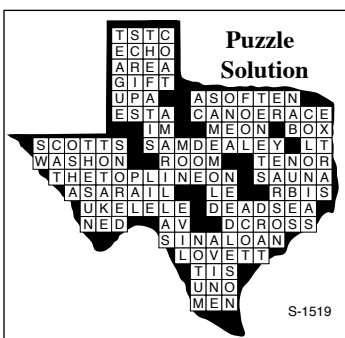
because of the pandemic, as long as they at least maintain current levels of in-school learning. Districts will be funded on attendance projections made before the pandemic, allowing them to retain teachers who might have faced layoffs because of lower enrollment. The state's top leaders announced their support for the hold-harmless provision in a March 4 press release.

Teens urged to buckle up

Car wrecks are the leading cause of death among teenagers, and 41% of Texas teen drivers killed in 2019 weren't wearing a seat belt. That's why the Texas Department of Transportation is conducting a "Teen Click It or Ticket" campaign in March. TxDOT is sending out safety messages via social media, TV, radio and digital media.

"Due to their limited driving experience, teens are far more susceptible to being in a crash," said TxDOT Executive Director James Bass. "Far too many of these crashes are deadly because of the failure to buckle up. Wearing a seat belt is the single most effective thing you can do to protect yourself in a crash. Click it and be safe."

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



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RANDY KECK/THE COMMUNITY NEWS

Aledo Ladycat third-baseman Presley Hull throws out a Brewer batter as pitcher Jenna Austin ducks in JV action at White Settlement on Tuesday.

Signings



RANDY KECK/THE COMMUNITY NEWS

Trinity Christian Academy quarterback Ryan Hollingsworth signed to play football at Hendrix College on Thursday, March 5. Shown (from left) are Rebecca and Shawn Younger; and Ryan, Jennifer, Russ, and Cade Hollingsworth.



RANDY KECK/THE COMMUNITY NEWS

Trinity Christian Academy linebacker Jake Povero signed to play football at Hendrix College on Thursday, March 4. Shown are (from left) Kay Turner, Shannon Clemons, and Jake, Marc, Faye, and Donald Povero.

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SOFTBALL

Hot bats carry Ladycats through the week

55 runs scored in six

Staff Reports
The Community News

The Aledo Ladycats' hot bats carried them to five wins and one loss over the last week, including a 12-1 district-opening win at Brewer on Tuesday.

At Brewer, Macy Graf led off with a walk and scored when Marissa Powell doubled on a grounder to left field. Powell made it to third base on a sacrifice ground ball by Madysen Boutwell and then scored when Texas Ray's two-out ground ball was bobbled and she reached first on an error.

Brewer got one run back in the bottom of the first to make the score 2-1, Aledo.

Ladycats continued to cross the plate in the top of the second inning.

Maddy Jarvis started the inning by reaching second base on a Brewer error. She advanced to third base when Audrey Pearce singled, and scored when Graf grounded out to third. Pearce advanced to third base on the play.

Pearce scored on yet another Brewer error when Powell hit the ball to third. Powell ended up in scoring position at second on the play and reached third base when catcher Morgan Brown grounded out to short. She scored when Boutwell hit a single to left field.

Boutwell advanced to third when Ray hit a two-out line drive that was mishandled by the Brewer third baseman, and scored when Claire Byars doubled to right field, putting Aledo up 6-1 with two outs and two runners in scoring position, setting the stage for Kayleigh Smith to clear the bases with a home run to right field, and Aledo ended the top of the second inning up 9-1.

The Lady Bears went down in order in the bottom of the dining.

Aledo padded their lead with two more runs in the top of the third. Powell scored from third base with two outs when Boutwell reached base on a Brewer error. Ray was then hit by a pitch, which loaded the bases. Brown scored on a fielder's choice to put Aledo up 11-1 in the third inning.

In the top of the fourth Smith hit her second home run of the game, this time a lead-off homer to center field.

Aledo scored eight of their 12 runs with two outs.

Tourney

Last week the Ladycats compiled a 4-1 record at the Coppell/Marcus tournament, March 4-6.

They started the tournament with a 7-1 win over Marcus. The 'Cats scored three runs in the top of the second: Boutwell and Ray scored when Reagan Davis reached base on an error and Rhett Gabbert scored on a Pearce single.

Aledo added three more runs in the third: Boutwell scored on a passed ball; and then Ray and Davis scored on another Pearce single. Aledo's last run came on a homer by Brown.

The 'Cats fell to Lubbock Coronado on the same day but came back to defeat Mansfield 6-1, Cedar Hill 14-1, And North Side 12-3. Boutwell had a home run in the Cedar Hill game. Marissa Powell, Kaylee Lucas, and Nathalie Touchet had home runs in the game.

On the pitching side, Kayleigh Smith took the wins in the Marcus, Mansfield, and Brewer games. Touchet had the win in the Cedar Hill game, and Jenna Austin had the win against North Side.

The Ladycats are 1-0 in district and 10-2 overall.



SPECIAL TO THE COMMUNITY NEWS

Nathalie Touchet, Kaylee Lucas, and Marissa Powell each had home runs in Aledo's 12-3 win over North Side in the final game of the Coppell/Marcus tournament on March 6.

SOFTBALL

Meeting the Ladycats

By Randy Keck
The Community News

The Aledo Ladycats have jumped out to a 10-2 record this season with the blessing of having both youth and experience on the team.

The 'Cats lost only one senior from last season, returning everyone else.

And in the "everyone else" are only two seniors.

"Moving into the season, we still have our ace Kayleigh Smith (junior) and another dominant pitcher, Nathalie Touchet (sophomore)," said Head Coach Heather Myers. "And then behind the plate, we've got Morgan Brown, who's a senior. She's been our starting catcher since her freshman year."

Other experienced players include third baseman Madysen Boutwell (junior), shortstop Macy Graf (junior), and centerfielder Marissa Powell (junior).

All of those listed have been starters since their freshman year. Graf has already committed to Mississippi State.

Morgan is seen as the primary leader on the field.

"She sees the whole field because she's the catcher," Myers said. "She's our go-to, but she also has a vast knowledge of the game. She's a calming force behind the plate."

And the left side of the infield will be especially challenging to opposing teams.

"The left side of our field is pretty dominant when those two [Boutwell and Graf] are there. I feel like it gives a little peace to the pitchers, because I always tell my pitchers to pitch to contact and let your defense work for you."

Other returning players include Audrey Pearce (senior), Hannah Pack (junior), Caitlin Beaty (junior), Reagan Davis (sophomore), Kaylee Lucas (junior), Rhett Gabbert (junior), and Texas Ray (sophomore).

With so many returning players on the varsity, there was little room to bring up any of last year's JV players, but three made it to the roster, sophomores Claire Byars, Presley Hull, and Jenna Austin.

"Claire has stood out. She's earned herself a lot of playing time so far and she's continuing to be a standout on the field and at the plate," Myers said. "If she continues to be as strong offensively and defensively as she has done so far, she could very well earn a starting position this season."

Being in a new district makes it difficult to know what exactly to look for.

"Granbury is going to be competitive, they have a very strong pitcher; and then Azle's always going to be competitive, and Brewer is scrappy. You can't ever count Brewer out for anything," Myers said. "We have to approach every team with the mindset that we're going to have to compete. We don't get any days off."

"We have a very talented team with 17 talented individuals, and they're working hard day in and day out. And I'm eager to see how this all pans out."

BASEBALL

Bearcats pick up three wins in tournament action

Staff Reports
The Community News

The Aledo Bearcats baseball team won three games and tied one during the DFW CLASH Tournament March 5-6.

The 'Cats began the tournament on Friday morning against Denton Guyer in a game that ended in a tie.

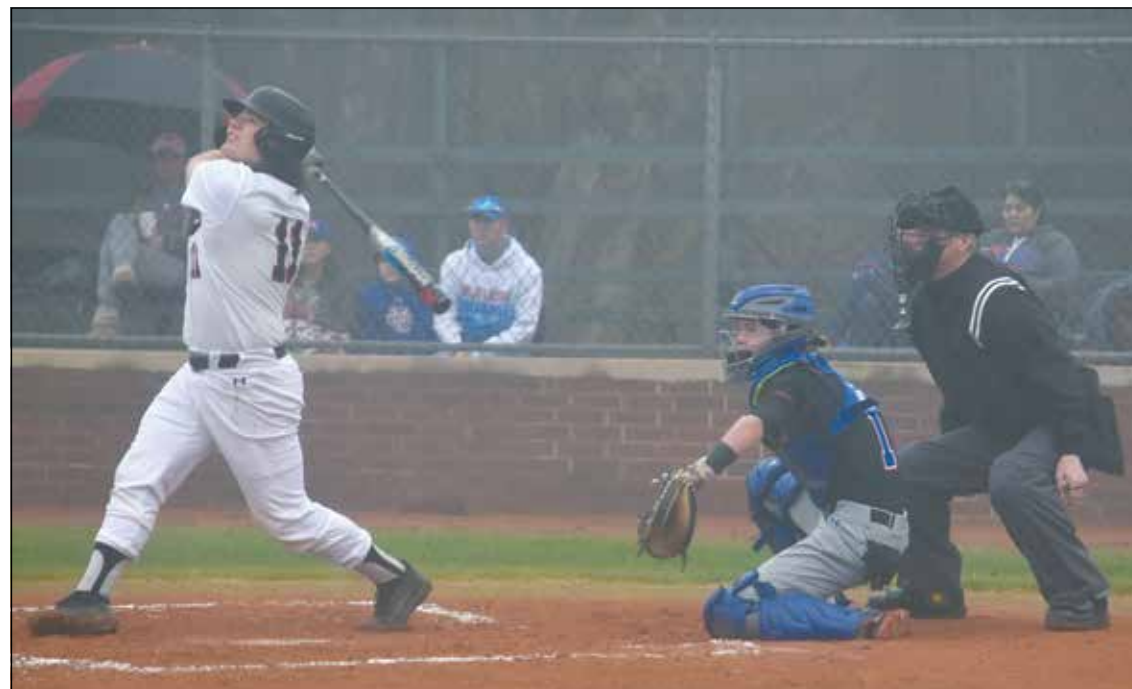
Aledo got on the scoreboard early, scoring two runs in the top of the first inning on a home run by Creed Willems, driving in Zach Harrison.

The game was scoreless until the bottom of the third, when Guyer scored a run, leaving Aledo ahead 2-1.

The Bearcats scored their other two runs in the top of the fourth inning Sam Sisk started the inning by being hit by a pitch. Estevan Flores put down a sacrifice bunt that moved Sisk to second, and Sisk got to third base on a hard single to right field by Keaton Laidley. Max Belyeu singled, scoring Sisk and Laidley.

Carter Shands got the shutout for Aledo in the second game Friday against Forney, which Aledo won 3-0. The Bearcats scored a run in the bottom of the first when Belyeu scored from third on a Forney Error. The 'Cats scored another run in the fourth when Sisk scored from third on a single by Ethan Nawrocki. The 'Cats' final run came on a single by Willems, scoring Belyeu.

On Saturday the Bearcats took a 7-2 win over Wakeland. Again scoring early, the Bearcats put two runs on the board in the bottom of the first inning. Gabe Baker, pinch running for catcher



RANDY KECK/THE COMMUNITY NEWS

Aledo catcher Creed Willems blasted two home runs in the past week. He is shown earlier in the season.

Willems, scored from second base on a Nolan Garcia line-drive single to right field. Hunter Rudel scored when Parker Stegall singled to left field.

Wakeland tied the game in the top of the second, 2-2, but in the top of the third Willems hit a lead-off home run. Another run came in when Stegall doubled, allowing Garcia to score.

In the next inning, the Bearcats continued the two-run inning pattern, with Belyeu scoring on a Willems single and Harrison tagging and scoring on a fly out to right field.

Up 6-2, the Bearcats scored their final run in the bottom of the fifth. Garcia scored when Bridger Wilson doubled on a fly ball to left field.

Turn to **BASEBALL**, page 8



Matt Morris

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ACROSS

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5 sound repeat in Palo Duro Canyon
6 806 is panhandle code
7 TXism: "never look a ___ horse in the mouth"
8 TXism: "woke ___ bear" (trouble)
9 TXism: "changes his mind ___ as he does socks"
16 "is" south of the border
18 "TX Water Safari" on the San Marcos River (2 wds.)
21 "___ an old cowhand ..."
22 TXism: "you're puttin' ___" (kidding)
23 TXism: "stuffed like a ballot ___"
24 TX ragtime Joplin, et al.
30 this TX submarine commander was "the Navy's Audie Murphy" (2 wds.)
34 TX "Merry Mex" Trevino golfer (init.)
35 TXism: "you're hanging your ___ my line" (interfering)
36 TX Willis built the Longhorn Ball ___
37 highest male voice
39 TXism: "plain as ___ an eye chart"
43 dry heat bath

DOWN

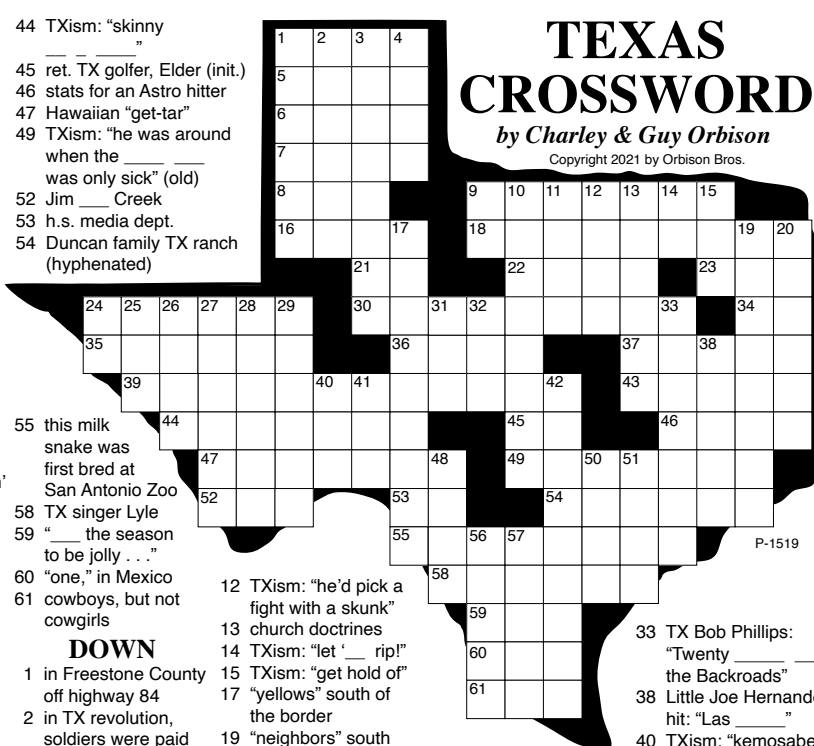
1 in Freestone County off highway 84
2 in TX revolution, soldiers were paid with land
3 TXism: "___ in the fire" (in trouble)
4 outer garment
9 car cooler (abbr.)
10 TXism: "poured out of the ___" (alike)
11 6-man football class

44 TXism: "skinny ___"
45 ret. TX golfer, Elder (init.) stats for an Astro hitter
47 Hawaiian "get-tar"
49 TXism: "he was around when the ___ was only sick" (old)
52 Jim ___ Creek
53 h.s. media dept.
54 Duncan family TX ranch (hyphenated)

55 this milk snake was first bred at San Antonio Zoo
58 TX singer Lyle
59 "___ the season to be jolly ..."
60 "one," in Mexico
61 cowboys, but not cowgirls

12 TXism: "he'd pick a fight with a skunk" church doctrines
13 TXism: "let ___ rip!"
15 TXism: "get hold of" "yellows" south of the border
19 "neighbors" south of the border
20 many UNT students in film "Necessary Roughness"
24 dir. to San Angelo from Abilene
25 TXism: "fraidy ___"
26 fed. safety org.
27 TXism: "make hay while ___ shines"

33 TX Bob Phillips: "Twenty ___ the Backroads"
38 Little Joe Hernandez hit: "Las ___"
40 TXism: "kemosabe" tall TX tale
41 tall TX tale
42 TXism: "sharp as ___ catcus"
48 wicked
50 Jim Bowie's Alamo bed (2 wds.)
51 mild expletive
56 insect dorsal surface
57 TX Ely's transport as "Tarzan" (2 wds.)



BASEBALL

from page seven

Kevin Taylor picked up the win for the Bearcats on the mound, pitching 4.2 innings and allowing no runs.

In the final game of the tournament, Aledo downed Rockwall 4-2. The Bearcats picked up two runs in the top of the fourth inning. Flores doubled, scoring Willems, and Belyeu, in as a courtesy runner, scored when Taylor singled.

The 'Cats picked up another run in the fifth inning when Laidley doubled, scoring Baker. The final run came in the top of the seventh when Ethan Jaques scored on a wild pitch.

The winning pitcher was Jaxon Simmons, pitching four innings and allowing two runs.

The Bearcats have a 5-3-1 record heading into the Drew Medford Classic tournament this weekend.

Clay busters bring home medals from Ellis County event



Head Coach David Mason, Kendrick Swain, and Brice Bohn

Special to The Community News

The Aledo Clay Busters Youth Shooting Team competed in a Scholastic Clay Target Program Tournament held at the Ellis County Sportsman's Club in Waxahachie on Saturday, Feb. 27.

Events included competition in sporting clays and skeet. In spite of the fog, rain, and mud, Aledo Clay Busters finished with great results and many personal best scores. At the end of the day, trophies were earned by Brice Bohn, Kendrick Swain, Lia Arft, and Scott Mason.

ACB had three shooters finish with scores of 90 or better out of 100 in skeet competition, all representing personal bests for them. Those shooters were Kendrick Swain (90), Craig Mason (92), and Scott Mason (94). The skeet competition also saw Kendrick

Swain, Scott Mason, and Luke Shelton shoot perfect rounds of 25/25.

Medals and Top Ten Finishers were: SKEET Open Intermediate Entry Division

1st: Kendrick Swain
3rd: Brice Bohn

Open Senior JV Division
3rd: Scott Mason
5th: Craig Mason

Ladies Senior JV Division
2nd: Lia Arft

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Open Intermediate Entry Division

1st: Brice Bohn
5th: Tyler Lewis
8th: Kendrick Swain

Open Senior JV Division
7th: Scott Mason (four way tie)

Ladies Senior JV Division
5th: Lia Arft

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Dr. Riaz is excited to be in North Texas where he will be close to his family and looks forward to helping and providing its community members with exceptional care. Dr. Riaz and his wife Dr. Bismah Siddiqui are parents to one daughter and are thrilled to be starting their new chapter in life here. In his spare time, Dr. Riaz loves to travel with family and friends, enjoys music, and is also a huge soccer fan (Fan of Liverpool FC).



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GOLF UPDATE

Ladycat golfers competed last weekend in The Lady Pirate Invitational held at Harbor Lakes Golf Course in Granbury. The ladies competed against a strong field with a Day 1 finish of second place. On Day 2, amid an eight-stroke deficit, the Ladycats pushed forward to take the lead with a four-stroke lead to win the tournament. They also took fourth and fifth place individually.

The Bearcats Varsity (1) Black golf team also competed last weekend in Lubbock at The Regional Preview held at The Rawls Golf Course home of the Texas Tech Golf Teams. Day 1 had its challenges with high winds and cold, but the Bearcats were able to take a third-place position. While Day 2 had better wind conditions, the panhandle teams made for a tougher challenge. Bearcats took third place and a fifth-place individual standing.

The JV Ladycats took second place in the Burleson Centennial Tourney at Diamond Oaks on March 9. At press time the JV Bearcats were competing in the Chic-Fil-A Challenge at Southern Oaks. Ladycats will compete in the Burleson Centennial Tourney at Southern Oaks on Friday and Saturday, March 12-23.

TOP: The Varsity Players shown at The Regional Preview are (from left) Wyatt Hudson, Jake Phillips, Tanner Smith, Jhett Moore, and Bryce Wolf. Coach Joe Roquemore is in the back.

DALIA SMITH/SPECIAL TO THE COMMUNITY NEWS

Ladycat golfers who competed at the Granbury Invitational are (from left) medalists Kyla Morales and Madison Warner; the winning varsity team of Sanaa Lemen, Mallory Miller, Ava Forman, and Aly Saunders. Not pictured is Ella Fisher. Aly and Ella took 4th and 5th place individually as well.

JENIFER MILLER/SPECIAL TO THE COMMUNITY NEWS



RANDY KECK/THE COMMUNITY NEWS

Taylor Kessler gets a bead on the ball in recent boys soccer action.

SOCCER UPDATE

The Aledo Ladycats defeated Wichita Falls Rider 3-1 on Friday, March 5.

Ashlyn Laughley scored two of the Ladycats' goals and Kaitlin Barouh scored another. Grace Ornelas assisted on all three. Emma Davis was selected Player of the Game.

The girls traveled to Wichita Falls on Tuesday and came back with a 5-0 win. Laughley and McKenna Vela each had two goals, and Caroline Miller had one.

Vela had two assists. Barouh, Ornelas, and Miller each had one. Barouh was selected as Player of the Game.

The Ladycats are now 12-4 overall and 7-2 in district.

In Bearcats action, Aledo fell to Rider 1-5 on Friday, March 5, and they lost to Wichita Falls High School and they lost to Wichita Falls 0-3 on Tuesday.

Head coach Derek Vierling said "Chad Petro played well on defense and Danny Sigala played well on offense."

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TENNIS

RacquetCats excel at Chisholm Trail

By **Andrea Garnett**
Special to The Community News

The Aledo RacquetCats had quite a showing at the Chisholm Trail tournament on Friday, March 5. The weather was great and so was the tennis that was being played.

First place in A mixed doubles went to the A girls' doubles team of Maddie Farmer and Allie Farmer.

First Place went to the team of Katie Siddons/Ian Leslie in A mixed doubles.

Jax Joiner came away with second place in boy's A singles.

Third place in girls' B doubles was awarded to Payton Bierle and Paige Federman; and thrd Place in B mixed doubles went to the team of Georgia Posey and Hogan Posey. Ben Farmer was a Consolation Finalist n B Singles.

Aledo was scheduled to travel to Keller on Thursday, March 11, for the Keller Timbercreek tournament.



ANDREA S. GARNETT/SPECIAL TO THE COMMUNITY NEWS
Jax Joiner was second place in boy's A singles.



ANDREA S. GARNETT/SPECIAL TO THE COMMUNITY NEWS
Ian Leslie and Katie Siddons were first place in mixed A doubles.



Allie Farmer and Maddie Farmer placed first in girls' A doubles.



Paige Federman and Payton Bierle placed third in girls' B doubles.

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