

THE COMMUNITY NEWS

Serving Aledo • the Annettas • Hudson Oaks • Willow Park, Texas

BUSINESS

FW making pitch for vehicle plant on Walsh Ranch

Agreement could bring 7,500 jobs

By Randy Keck
The Community News

The City of Fort Worth is in the running for an electrical vehicle plant that would encompass 2,000 acres at the southern end of Walsh Ranch between I-20 and Aledo-Iona road just west of Markum Ranch Road.

Robert Sturns, director of Fort Worth Economic Development, made a presentation to the Fort Worth City Council at a workshop on Aug. 10. In the presentation, he pointed out that Fort Worth is competing with other sites around

the country for the plant, and told the council they would be asked to approve economic incentives at their next meeting on Aug. 17.

The company in negotiation is Rivian, an American electric vehicle manufacturer. Strategic and institutional investors in Rivian include Amazon, Ford, Cox Automotive, Fidelity, and T. Rowe Price.

“This has been a very hands-on, all-departments-on-deck process involved in getting us to this point.” Sturns told the council, adding that typically when economic development deals are presented to the council the city has already been selected.

“This is still a very competitive process with this company,” Sturns said. “But because of the timing of needing to get some things tied down with them, we want to go ahead and bring forward this proposal for you just so you can understand what the city is pitching to the company.

“And then hopefully as Fort Worth is selected as the preferred location, which we hope will happen and happen soon, then we would finalize the rest of the agreements needed to make this development a reality.”

Sturns said Rivian’s current plant is in Normal, Illinois, where they took over a 3-million-square-foot former Mitsubishi Eclipse plant.

“They’re more focused on the truck and SUV market,” Sturns said, “and they also have recently contracted with Amazon for about 100,000 electric vehicle delivery vans that are operating around the country. They have 7,000 current employees and growing with a plan to deliver about 20,000 vehicles in year one, and then 40,000 vehicles in year two as part of the overall development.”

The site straddles the Tarrant-Parker County line, and roughly half appears to lie within the Aledo ISD. On the site would be vehicle manufacturing, vehicle component manufacturing, and a development center.

“This would encompass up to 12 million square feet of new vertical construction,” Sturns said. “And I said that estimated production of vehicles per year, with an estimated \$5 billion capital investment and a minimum of 7,500 jobs. And so just for some reference, that’s about five times the capex and two and a half times the jobs of the Toyota Headquarters in Frisco, and would really represent one of the largest projects in the state’s history.”

Sturns said the company is on a “very aggressive timetable, which is why we’re bringing this proposal forward to you right now, even

Turn to RIVIAN, page 6

WILLOW PARK

Increased tax rate proposed

Fort Worth water officially connected

By Brandi Addison
The Community News

The Willow Park City Council unanimously voted for the city to propose a new tax rate for the period between Oct. 1 and Sept. 30, 2022.

City Manager Bryan Grimes recommended that council approve the tax rate of \$0.566654 per \$100 in valuation — the maximum approved rate before requiring voter approval— about three cents more per \$100 in valuation than the current rate.

“You can always come off that in a couple weeks when you set the rate,” Grimes said. “But once you set the rate, you cannot go higher than that. You can only go lower.

“The county did a similar measure,” he added.

One of the driving factors of the tax increase, he said, is the city’s desire to fully staff the fire department. An increased tax rate would allow the fire department to staff three new firefighters on Oct. 1, as opposed to April 1 as originally scheduled.

“The fire department gets their guys six months sooner. You still have significant pay raises for the police department in there,” Grimes said.

Turn to RATE, page 5



RANDY KECK/THE COMMUNITY NEWS

Master Gardener Erika Swyryn shows a Monarch Butterfly caterpillar to Harper Isbell and Elliot Lanphier at the Town of Annetta’s booth at Bearcat Nation 101, held Saturday, Aug. 7, at Aledo High School.

Bearcat Nation 101 gives lay of land

District newcomers receive orientation

By Randy Keck
The Community News

They came from all over — an estimated 300-400 of them. Some were newcomers to the area. Others have been here a while, but just now have children starting school.

But what they all had in common was learning all about the Aledo ISD and other government and family-related organizations in the area.

The annual Bearcat Nation 101 returned this year after a COVID-19 break in 2021, and the attendees seemed eager to learn about scouts, campuses, athletics, and school clubs on Saturday, Aug. 7 at Aledo High School.

Not only did new families become acquainted with the district, but the reverse was true as well.

“Bearcat Nation 101 was a wonderful opportunity to meet so many of our new Aledo ISD families and to get them connected to the

district through the many opportunities offered both at our schools and in the community,” Aledo ISD Superintendent Dr. Susan Bohn said. “It is our hope that BN101 eased some of their nerves of starting in a new school district and also showed them how supportive of a community we live in.”

Readers can meet some of the area’s new residents in “Meet Your New Neighbors” on page 3.

AHS Wind Ensemble chosen for prestigious TMEA honor

By Mercedes Mayer
Aledo ISD

The Aledo High School Wind Ensemble was chosen as one of two featured high school bands from the state of Texas to be featured and perform at the 2022 Texas Music Educators Association Convention in February in San Antonio.

Each year a handful of middle school, high school, and college groups perform band, orchestra, and vocal concerts. Several elementary schools also perform. The Aledo band last performed at the convention in 2016 when they were chosen as the 5A State Honor Band.

The convention — which is Feb. 9-12, 2022 — is one of the largest attended music conventions in the world with more than 31,000 expected to be in attendance.

“It is an incredible honor for our program to be chosen for this prestigious recognition,” Aledo ISD Superintendent Dr. Susan Bohn said. “The drive and dedication of our band students and staff is a large factor in their success. An honor such as this is a reflection of the entire Aledo ISD band program.”

Turn to ENSEMBLE, page 5



6 59479 00001 3
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Published Weekly

Slings and Arrows

Take some time to laugh.

PAGE 7

At the Net

AHS tennis team splits opening double-header.

PAGE 9



Gimme an “A”

Mini Cheer Camp wraps up summer camp season.

PAGE 12



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In & Around Parker County

Faith Presbyterian welcomes new pastor

Hoping to cultivate a place for transparency without judgment, Pastor Matthew Aldas of Faith Presbyterian Church takes pride in his unique quirks, using them to connect with his congregation while at the pulpit.

Born and raised in North Texas, the 37-year-old moved back to the area less than two weeks ago with his wife Kathryn and his three daughters after pastoring a church in Southwest Virginia for the last several years.

“I was really drawn to Faith in the sense that Aledo is a town on the rise, so to speak, and I liked the sense of authenticity and candidness that the residents have,” Aldas said.

Having just preached his debut sermon at Faith Presbyterian on Aug. 2, the new pastor said he really wants his congregants to unabashedly boast these unique qualities and interests that brought him to Aledo in the first place.

He hopes, if he leads by example, others will follow.

On the cusp of being a Gen X-er and a Millennial, Aldas isn't ashamed to tell his congregants that he likes the Simpsons — or to admit to a local reporter that he's wearing Super Mario-themed socks — and he



wants anyone to feel like they could invite him for a cup of coffee.

“I think that, especially in our age of instant information, the church is often recognized and defined by things that are detrimental,” Aldas

said. “I want Faith Church to be known as a place that people can be real; people can be honest without fear of judgment; people won't be afraid to make mistakes and be a human.

“I want it to be a place of comfort, compassion and grace. Ultimately, I want people to know that God loves them, and they do belong here,” he added.

Embracing this mission, he has launched a new sermon series — called ‘Conversations at the Dinner Table’ — set to begin Sunday, which will look at the natural dialogue that occurs in the Bible.

More specifically, he said it will hone in on the last conversations between Jesus and his disciples, in John 13-17, when Jesus realized that his time on Earth was coming to a close.

“It's about expressing the vulnerable nature that we may or may not realize happens when we sit down and share a meal with people,” Aldas said.

While he recognizes that it's not everyone's ‘cup of tea’ to learn under a pastor so open about their interests, he wants to use his stories and interests to start conversations with others — his congregants, local community members, complete strangers and those who may not know God.

“There's nothing more important for me as a pastor than connecting with people,” Aldas said. “The people are always more important than anything else.”

Faith Presbyterian Church is located at 301 Bailey Ranch Road. For more information, visit faithaledo.com.

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Meet your New Neighbors

Many people who are new to the area attended Bearcat Nation 101 on Aug. 7. If you see these folks out and about, say "hello" and welcome them to the community! (More on Page 5)



Shelley, Michael, and Sam Lopez are new to the community.



Scott and Heidi McDonald, along with children Sam and Megan, moved to the community from Arlington.



Vicki and Olivia Blake moved from California.



Niels and Dena Gittisarn and daughter Sophia moved from California.



Eva and Sofia Johnson moved from California.



Stephanie and Rhett Rinks moved in from Mansfield.



Jill and Jackson Kientzy are from Phoenix.



Angie and Nick Bruno and their children Jack and Grace moved from Denver.



Will and Emily Howard are from Keller.



Kurt and Nixie Otto and children Everly and Easton moved into the district from Fort Worth.



Joseph Cotten, Kip, Jude, and Whit moved in from Virginia.



Brian and Laura Gordy and their children Julia and Madelyne, and Vivain and Scarlett (not pictured), came from Maryland.



Brittany and Brent Baird moved from Kingwood with their children Hadley, Truett, and Logan.



Ryan, Angela, and Evan Sides moved to the community from Fort Worth.



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Meet the Eagles

Hundreds of supporters turned out for the inaugural "Meet the Eagles" at Trinity Christian Academy on Aug. 6.

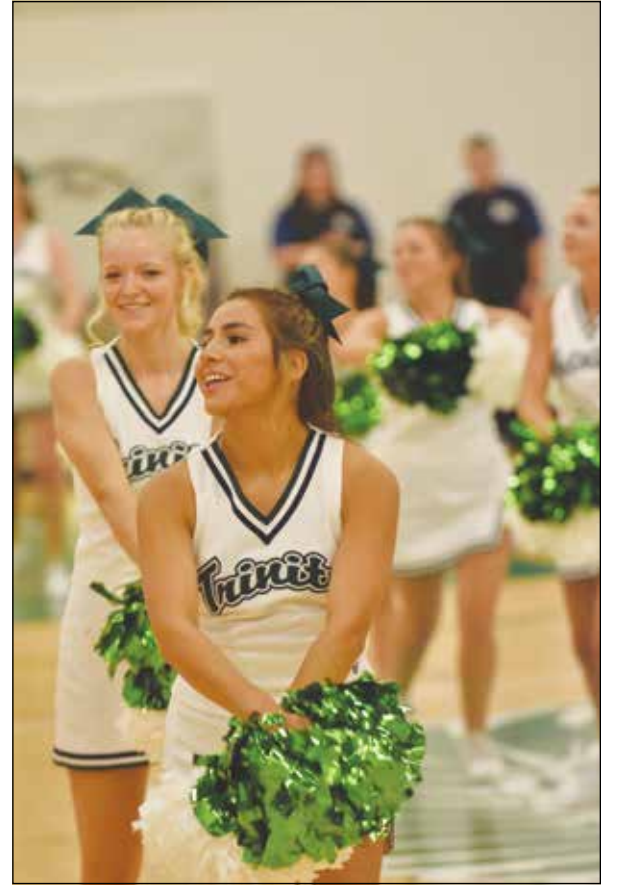
Photos by Randy Keck



Hayes McQueen gets his face painted by Maddie Budans.



Jay and Jude DeLaFuente pose with the football team.



Sophie Scott



Braydon Lewis



Anna Nelson



Kennan Dowling



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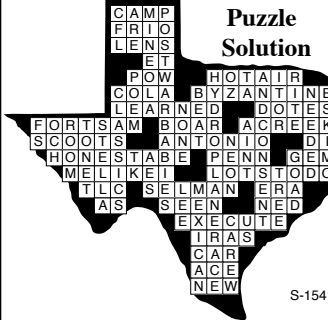
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RATE

from page one

“So, this is still a ‘Back the Blue, Back the Public Safety’ budget.

The city will hold a public hearing at the Aug. 24 council meeting.

Fort Worth Water Project

After years of planning and discussing, Willow Park officially connected to Fort Worth water on Aug. 4.

Under the temporary agreement, it will allow the city to receive up to 500,000 more gallons of water per day.

Once completed, Fort Worth will provide 3.5 million gallons of water per day to Willow Park, in addition to the existing 1.6 million gallons of well water it received each day.

The city described it, in a news release last week, as a “giant step forward in Willow Park’s decades-long struggle for water supply security and sustainability.

Obituary

Jewell Howard

Jewell Marie Howard, 98, of Aledo, Texas, peacefully passed away on Tuesday, August 3, 2021, at Holland Lake Nursing & Rehab in Weatherford, nine days shy of her 99th birthday. Jewell was born on August 12, 1922, in Granbury to Charles Patrick Holder and Oma Lyles Holder.



Jewell Howard

Jewell was a longtime member of the Annetta United Methodist Church and spent her working years employed as a factory worker and cafeteria manager at TCU. Jewell will be affectionately remembered for her love and devotion to God and to her family.

Jewell is preceded in death by her parents, her husband, Clyde W. Howard, and her brother, J. R. Holder. She is survived by her daughter, Charlotte Jackson and husband Wayne, of Aledo; three grandchildren - Stacey Jackson, Dawn Jackson, and Josh Jackson; and by one great-granddaughter, Reese Jackson. She is also survived by a sister-in-law, nieces, nephews, extended family, and a host of friends.

A celebration of Jewell’s life will be held graveside at 10 a.m. Friday, August 13, at the Annetta Cemetery located at 2667 W. Farm-to-Market Road 5.

The Community News
August 13, 2021



NEIGHBORS

(From Page 3)

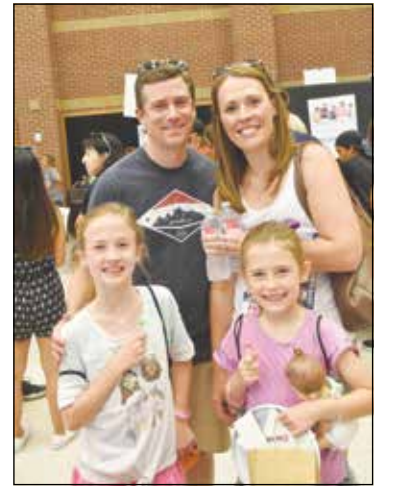
The Reid Family (David, Beatriz, William, Jacob, Peter, Virginia, and Lucy) moved to the area from Georgia.



Pete, Mandy, and Ethan Zachrisson came to the area from Las Vegas.



Tawanna and Kevin Irwin, along with children Layla and Ryder, have moved from the Grapevine area.



Jeff and Jennifer Williams, Adelyn and Emersyn moved to the community from Mansfield.



This community is the new home of military family Rick and Chrissy Hollinger, Heidi, and Carly.



Patience Johnson and Sean Vaughn



Esmerelda Palma and Ayannis Morales moved in from Virginia.

ENSEMBLE

from page one

The Aledo ISD band program has a long history of success that starts at the middle school level.

Last year, the Aledo Middle School band was chosen as one of four middle school bands in the nation to perform at the Midwest International Clinic in Chicago. While the clinic was postponed due to the COVID-19 pandemic, the AMS Honor Winds Ensemble will now

perform Dec. 15-18, 2021, in Chicago at the McCormick Place.

“The Aledo band program is very honored to continue to grow greatness in our music programs and represent Bearcat Nation, Texas and our nation for the 2021-22 school year,” said Joey Paul, AISD director of bands. “These two events are among the most prestigious honors a band program can earn. I am so proud of the hard work of our students and directors, and I am thankful for the support we receive from our entire community.”

NOTICE OF PUBLIC HEARING ON TAX INCREASE

A tax rate of \$ 0.56665 per \$100 valuation has been proposed by the governing body of City of Willow Park.

PROPOSED TAX RATE	\$ 0.56665	per \$100
NO-NEW-REVENUE TAX RATE	\$ 0.488340	per \$100
VOTER-APPROVAL TAX RATE	\$ 0.566654	per \$100

The no-new-revenue tax rate is the tax rate for the City of Willow Park tax year that will raise the same amount of property tax revenue for City of Willow Park from the same properties in both the 2020 tax year and the 2021 tax year.

The voter-approval rate is the highest tax rate that City of Willow Park may adopt without holding an election to seek voter approval of the rate.

The proposed tax rate is greater than the no-new-revenue tax rate. This means that City of Willow is proposing to increase property taxes for the 2021 tax year.

A PUBLIC HEARING ON THE PROPOSED TAX RATE WILL BE HELD ON August 24, 2021 at 7:00 p.m. at 516 Ranch House Road, Willow Park, Texas 76087.

The proposed tax rate is not greater than the voter-approval tax rate. As a result, City of Willow Park is not required to hold an election at which voters may accept or reject the proposed tax rate. However, you may express your support for or opposition to the proposed tax rate by contacting the members of the Willow Park City Council of City of Willow Park at their offices or by attending the public hearing mentioned above.

YOUR TAXES OWED UNDER ANY OF THE TAX RATES MENTIONED ABOVE CAN BE CALCULATED AS FOLLOWS:

$$\text{Property tax amount} = (\text{tax rate}) \times (\text{taxable value of your property}) / 100$$

FOR the proposal: **Eric Contreras, Greg Runnebaum, Lea Young, Nathan Crummel**

AGAINST the proposal: **None**

PRESENT and not voting: _____

ABSENT: **Doyle Moss, Tyler VanSant**

The 86th Texas Legislature modified the manner in which the voter-approval tax rate is calculated to limit the rate of growth of property taxes in the state.

The following table compares the taxes imposed on the average residence homestead by City of Willow Park last year to the taxes proposed to be imposed on the average residence homestead by City of Willow Park this year.

	2020	2021	Change
Total tax rate (per \$100 of value)	\$0.536700	\$0.566650	increase of \$0.029950, or 5.58%
Average homestead taxable value	\$263,710	\$287,863	increase of \$24,153, or 9.16%
Tax on average homestead	\$1,415.33	\$1,631.18	increase of \$215.85, or 15.25%
Total tax levy on all properties	\$2,690,964	\$3,217,466	increase of \$526,502, or 19.57%

For assistance with tax calculations, please contact the tax assessor for CITY OF WILLOW PARK at 817-596-0077 or parkercad@parkercad.org, or visit www.parkercounty.truthintax.com for more information.

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RIVIAN

from page one

though they have not selected Fort Worth, officially as the site."

To meet the timetable, some items would need to be addressed regarding infrastructure and incentives.

"Obviously having a single user like Walsh Ranch, being able to come together and work on this project has been able to allow us to meet that timetable as we continue to have discussions with them," Sturns said.

Under the proposed agreement, the company would commit to \$5 billion of private investment on real property improvements and business personal property.

"That would equate to about \$2 billion on real property improvements, with an estimated \$1.6 billion in hard construction costs. And then a minimum of 15% of those hard and soft construction costs to certified MBEs (Minority Business Enterprises) represent about a \$300 million investment in our MBEs tied to this overall development," Sturns said.



COURTESY RIVIAN

The R1T is Rivian's all-electric pickup.

The overall vertical construction footprint would be 12 million square feet.

Under the incentive agreement, Rivian would agree to a minimum of 1,875 new jobs by Dec. 31, 2025, 3,750 new jobs by Dec. 31, 2026, and then a minimum of 7,500 new jobs by Dec. 31, 2027, all with minimum average salaries of \$56,000.

The city would commit to a 15-year, Chapter 380 economic development program agreement that would equal 85% of the incremental Maintenance & Operation tax

increases on the property. The city's commitment would be capped at \$440 million.

"This is a performance grant, so they have to invest the dollars, they have to have the jobs, they have to make all these commitments and generate that new taxable increment before the city provides any type of grant back to them," Sturns said. "As a result of that, the city should receive about \$163 million in taxes over that 15-year period ... there's also the incremental addition to the city that will be resulting from 7,500

ACROSS

- 1 Pittsburg is seat of this county
5 Pearsall is seat of this county
6 contact
7 actress Taylor of Texas-based epic "Giant" (init.)
8 TXism: "___ wow" (meeting)
9 empty talk (2 wds.)
15 Coca-___
16 this empire lasted after the Western Roman Empire fell
19 TXism: "book ___" (educated)
21 "___ on" (spoils)
22 San Antonio army post, colloquially (2 wds.)
27 Texans can kill a wild ___ on their property without a hunting license
28 TXism: "up ___" without a "paddle" (in trouble)
29 scurries
30 San ___
32 this sgt. introduces a recruit to the Army (abbr.)
33 President Lincoln, familiarly (2 wds.)
36 TX-born Robin Wright was married to this Sean
37 Texas state ___ is blue topaz
38 TXism: "passed ___ ___" was up on "jacks" (fast driving)

DOWN

- 1 Warren Moon was in this league, before Houston Oilers
2 TXism: "his facts ___" elastic" (liar)
3 in Wood County on U.S. 69
4 phenomena after WWII (2 wds.)
8 work of the Poet Laureate for Texas
9 a fast TX event on water (2 wds.)
10 TX King Vidor directed the tornado scenes in "The Wizard of ___"

TEXAS CROSSWORD

by Charley & Guy Orbison

Crossword puzzle grid with clues for across and down words. Includes grid numbers and a small map of Texas in the background.

new employees from sales tax, new houses, hotel occupancy tax, there's a number of other inputs that the city would benefit from as it relates to having a project of this size

located within the city. We estimate about an eight-year payback for the project, which is pretty much in range with where we like to see some of these."

For more information about the company, visit rivian.com.

NOTICE OF PUBLIC MEETING TO DISCUSS BUDGET AND PROPOSED TAX RATE

The Millsap Independent School District will hold a public meeting at 6:30 on Monday August 23, 2021 in the Millsap Administration Boardroom/Media Center, 301 E Brazos, Millsap, TX. The purpose of this meeting is to discuss the school district's budget that will determine the tax rate that will be adopted. Public participation in the discussion is invited.

The tax rate that is ultimately adopted at this meeting or at a separate meeting at a later date may not exceed the proposed rate shown below unless the district publishes a revised notice containing the same information and comparisons set out below and holds another public meeting to discuss the revised notice.

Maintenance Tax \$.9603/\$100 (Proposed rate for maintenance and operations)

School Debt Service Tax

Approved by Local Voters \$.3146/\$100 (proposed rate to pay bonded indebtedness)

Comparison of Proposed Budget with Last Year's Budget

The applicable percentage increase or decrease (or difference) in the amount budgeted in the preceding fiscal year and the amount budgeted for the fiscal year that begins during the current tax year is indicated for each of the following expenditure categories:

Table with 3 columns: Category, Current Year %, Change, Last Year %.

Total Appraised Value and Total Taxable Value (as calculated under Tax Code Section 26.04)

Table with 3 columns: Category, Preceding Tax Year, Current Tax Year.

*"Appraised value" is the amount shown on the appraisal roll and defined by Tax Code Section 1.04(8). ** "New property" is defined by Tax Code Section 26.012(17). *** "Taxable value" is defined by Tax Code Section 1.04(10).

Bonded Indebtedness

Total amount of outstanding and unpaid bonded indebtedness* \$ 16,651,834

* Outstanding principal.

Comparison of Proposed Rates with Last Year's Rates

Table with 6 columns: Category, Maintenance & Operations, Interest & Sinking Fund, Total, Local Revenue Per Student, State Revenue Per Student.

*The Interest & Sinking Fund tax revenue is used to pay for bonded indebtedness on construction, equipment, or both. The bonds, and the tax rate necessary to pay those bonds, were approved by the voters of this district.

Comparison of Proposed Levy with Last Year's Levy on Average Residence

Table with 3 columns: Category, Last Year, This Year.

Under state law, the dollar amount of school taxes imposed on the residence homestead of a person 65 years of age or older or of the surviving spouse of such a person, if the surviving spouse was 55 years of age or older when the person died, may not be increased above the amount paid in the first year after the person turned 65, regardless of changes in tax rate or property value.

Notice of Voter-Approval Rate: The highest tax rate the district can adopt before requiring voter approval at an election is 1.2911. This election will be automatically held if the district adopts a rate in excess of the voter-approval rate of 1.2911.

Fund Balances

The following estimated balances will remain at the end of the current fiscal year and are not encumbered with or by a corresponding debt obligation, less estimated funds necessary for operating the district before receipt of the first state aid payment:

Table with 2 columns: Fund Balance(s), Amount.

A school district may not increase the district's maintenance and operations tax rate to create a surplus in maintenance and operations tax revenue for the purpose of paying the district's debt service.

NOTICE OF PUBLIC MEETING TO DISCUSS BUDGET AND PROPOSED TAX RATE

The Aledo Independent School District will hold a public meeting at 6:00 PM, August 23, 2021 in the Board Room of the Administration Building, 1008 Bailey Ranch Road, Aledo, Texas 76008. The purpose of this meeting is to discuss the school district's budget that will determine the tax rate that will be adopted. Public participation in the discussion is invited.

The tax rate that is ultimately adopted at this meeting or at a separate meeting at a later date may not exceed the proposed rate shown below unless the district publishes a revised notice containing the same information and comparisons set out below and holds another public meeting to discuss the revised notice.

Table with 2 columns: Category, Rate.

Comparison of Proposed Budget with Last Year's Budget

The applicable percentage increase or decrease (or difference) in the amount budgeted in the preceding fiscal year and the amount budgeted for the fiscal year that begins during the current tax year is indicated for each of the following expenditure categories.

Table with 2 columns: Category, Change.

Total Appraised Value and Total Taxable Value (as calculated under Section 26.04, Tax Code)

Table with 3 columns: Category, Preceding Tax Year, Current Tax Year.

*Appraised value is the amount shown on the appraisal roll and defined by Section 1.04(8), Tax Code. ** "New property" is defined by Section 26.012(17), Tax Code. *** "Taxable value" is defined by Section 1.04(10), Tax Code.

Bonded Indebtedness

Total amount of outstanding and unpaid bonded indebtedness* \$278,389,289

*Outstanding principal.

Comparison of Proposed Rates with Last Year's Rates

Table with 6 columns: Category, Maintenance & Operations, Interest & Sinking Fund, Total, Local Revenue Per Student, State Revenue per Student.

*The Interest & Sinking Fund tax revenue is used to pay for bonded indebtedness on construction, equipment, or both.

The bonds, and the tax rate necessary to pay those bonds, were approved by the voters of this district.

Comparison of Proposed Levy with Last Year's Levy on Average Residence

Table with 3 columns: Category, Last Year, This Year.

Under state law, the dollar amount of school taxes imposed on the residence homestead of a person 65 years of age or older or of the surviving spouse of such a person, if the surviving spouse was 55 years of age or older when the person died, may not be increased above the amount paid in the first year after the person turned 65, regardless of changes in tax rate or property value.

Notice of Voter-Approval Rate: The highest tax rate the district can adopt before requiring voter approval at an election is \$1.439251. This election will be automatically held if the district adopts a rate in excess of the voter-approval rate of \$1.439251.

Fund Balances

The following estimated balances will remain at the end of the current fiscal year and are not encumbered with or by a corresponding debt obligation, less estimated funds necessary for operating the district before receipt of the first state aid payment.

Table with 2 columns: Fund Balance(s), Amount.

A school district may not increase the district's maintenance and operations tax rate to create a surplus in maintenance and operations tax revenue for the purpose of paying the district's debt service.

Capital Highlights

Delta variant spurs huge increase in COVID-19 hospitalizations



Gary Borders
gborders@texaspress.com

The number of Texans hospitalized with lab-confirmed COVID-19 cases is increasing faster than at any other point since the pandemic began in early 2020, due to the highly contagious Delta variant.

As of Aug. 8, the Texas Department of State Health Services reported 8,892 people were in Texas hospitals. That is up more than four-fold from a month ago. The Coronavirus Resource Center at Johns Hopkins University reported 96,807 cases in the past week and 384 deaths. That is nearly eight times the number of new cases reported a month ago and more than double the deaths.

In Austin, health authorities warned the public that a surge in cases has swamped hospitals, according to a New York Times report. Intensive-care units are near capacity, with only a handful of ICU beds available.

Gov. Greg Abbott has barred local governments and public schools from re-instituting mask mandates but is urging people to get vaccinated against COVID-19. The vast majority of those hospitalized have not been vaccinated.

A total of 12.84 million Texans are fully vaccinated, about 44% of the state's total population, according to DSHS.

Second special session underway; Dems still AWOL

Abbott convened a second special session just hours after the first session expired but there still wasn't a quorum present to pass bills. Many Texas House Democratic legislators remained in Washington, D.C. in an effort to both block a quorum and lobby members of Congress to pass a federal voting rights bill.

Abbott has put forth a 17-item agenda that includes the election reform bill, bail reform, border security, and other issues that were presented but not passed during the regular session.

"I will continue to call special session after special session to reform our broken

bail system, uphold election integrity, and pass other important items that Texans demand and deserve," Abbott said when announcing the new session. "Passing these special session agenda items will chart a course towards a stronger and brighter future for the Lone Star State."

Texas House Democrats predictably were critical. State Rep. Ina Minjarez said Abbott is "wasting" taxpayers' money, chiding the governor in a tweet with the hashtag #StopGaslightingTexans.

Additional month of legislative funding announced

Texas Capitol employees won't have to go without a paycheck in September after all.

Abbott vetoed a portion of the state budget that funds the Legislature and its staff after House Democrats walked out during the regular session. But Abbott, Lt. Gov. Dan Patrick, House Speaker Dade Phelan and others announced an additional month of funding for the Legislature before the second special session that began Saturday.

"Texans should not have to pay for Legislators who quit their jobs and leave unfinished business," Abbott said. "... Funding is being temporarily restored for legislative staff that will be necessary to pass critical legislation..."

At least \$12.6 million will be transferred from the Texas Department of Criminal Justice to both chambers and the legislative agencies that support them, the Texas Tribune reported. The biennial budget, which is already funded, ends Aug. 31. Without the additional funding, more than 2,000 state workers might not have been paid after that date. The special session by law lasts no more than 30 days.

Pandemic help for timber harvesters, haulers

Texans who make a living cutting or hauling timber, or processing wood by chipping or grinding, are eligible for grants from a fund of up to \$200 million provided by the U.S. Department of Agriculture under a pandemic assistance program. The new program, Pandemic Assistance for Timber Harvesters and Haulers (PATHH), encourages timber harvesters and haulers to apply. The deadline is Oct. 15.

"We Texans pride ourselves on our rugged individualism and self-reliance. However, when the entire forestry supply chain crashed as a result of the pandemic response, it was more than just a hurdle to overcome," said Rob Hughes, executive director of the Texas Forestry Association. "That's why TFA and Texas A&M Forest Service, along with many other partners, have been actively involved in pushing for the Logger Relief Act, which passed in the last federal pandemic relief bill."

Loggers and truckers can apply for PATHH by working with their local Farm Service Agency office. To find a local office, go to farmers.gov/service-locator or call 877-508-8364.

Avoid scams when buying a used vehicle

With used-vehicle demand soaring and inventories shrinking, it's easy to fall victim to scams, according to the Texas Department of Insurance. At least part of most sales now take place either on apps or online, and a lot can go wrong. Here are some tips from TDI to avoid being swindled:

- If the price is amazingly low, odds are high that it's a scam.

Take your time. Be skeptical when sellers claim they must sell quickly because they're moving soon, or say they need to sell the vehicle for a relative. And never pay for a vehicle with gift cards.

Some scammers use the same photo on different sites, with different prices and contact information. This scam can be avoided by using a "reverse image search." To learn how, look up "reverse search" in your preferred search engine.

See the vehicle in person and take it for a drive. Buying a vehicle sight unseen can lead to disaster.

Check the VIN to make sure the vehicle wasn't stolen, flooded, or totaled after a wreck. A VIN search will also ensure there isn't a lien on the vehicle you are buying.

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.



Slings&Arrows

Not as bad as it sounded



Randy Keck
rkeck@community-news.com

In last week's column I broke one of my cardinal rules, that being to make sure people know when we are publishing satire or humor here on the commentary page.

I'm touched by expressions of concern that I'm falling apart, but it's not as bad as I made it sound last week when I wrote about aging.

At the risk of an ugly pun, last week's column was a feeble attempt to write about the aging process and my place in it.

Is my hair turning gray? Yes.

Do my joints ache more than they did in younger years? Yes.

Do I have the same stamina I did back when I moved up and down the basketball court? No.

Do these things mean I'm ready to be carted off? No, at least I don't think so.

When we deal with issues of life, humor is an indispensable weapon. To be able to laugh at something is to have a degree of power over it.

Norman Cousins was a journalist who worked

for what is now the *New York Post* and the *Saturday Review*, among others.

Cousins suffered from

"A good laugh overcomes more difficulties and dissipates more dark clouds than any other one thing."

-Laura Ingalls Wilder

a painful connective tissue disease, and I read that there were times that the only way he could find relief from the pain was to laugh. He did a great deal of research on the biochemistry of human emotions. He believed that emotions were a key in the fight against disease.

His book, "Anatomy of an Illness as Perceived by the Patient" was a best seller when it was written.

It started a movement of patients working with their doctors and using humor to

boost their bodies' capacity for healing.

I do believe pain is more acute when we can't deal with the issues of life with humor.

I once heard a story about a famous priest who had a vision from God. When he was asked what God told him, he replied, "God said to me, 'don't take yourself so seriously.'"

I received a call a few years ago from an elderly reader who wanted to renew his subscription to the paper. I asked if he wanted to renew for one, two, or three years. His reply was, "One year. I'm so old I don't even buy green bananas!"

Now there's a person who I'll bet lived longer because he had a sense of humor.

My sense of humor was shaped by Mark Twain. His humor is so dry you have to watch for it lest you get taken in by his prose and take it literally. I have found myself laughing out loud reading a passage from "Roughing It" or "Life on the Mississippi."

And it was Twain who said, "Against the assault of laughter, nothing stands."

So, live a little, laugh a little ... or maybe laugh a lot!

Randy Keck is the owner and editor of The Community News.

QUOTABLE

"A person without a sense of humor is like a wagon without springs. It's jolted by every pebble on the road."

-Henry Ward Beecher

The Community News

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SUBMIT STORIES, PHOTOS OR IDEAS
We're always on the lookout for story ideas. To share one, call Randy Keck at 817-441-7661, ext. 207 or email news@community-news.com. Please provide the basic story information as well as contact information in case we have questions.

We welcome letters, articles and guest opinions from our readers. Opinions expressed in this newspaper will be labeled as opinions, editorials or letters, and do not necessarily reflect the opinions of the ownership. Letters should be signed, and limited to approximately 300 words. All submissions to the newspaper should

include a telephone number in case we have questions. Letters are due by Monday at noon for that week's paper. Community announcements, achievements and obituaries are due by noon Friday for the following week's paper. Send submissions to news@community-news.com.

Photos submitted should include names of the people in the photograph. For ease in submitting photographs electronically, visit our contact form at community-news.com/contacts.

The Community News does not charge for timely wedding, engagement and birth announcements provided they are of reasonable length. Lengthy announcements will either be edited to a reasonable length or, at the discretion of the person submitting the announcement, be charged a fee. The deadline for submitting announcements is noon Friday for the following week's paper.

Events

AUGUST 13, 2021
THE COMMUNITY NEWS
WWW.COMMUNITY-NEWS.COM

Find more events at community-news.com/events

AUGUST 13

Parker County Women's and Newcomers' Club
Laurie Chance Smith, author of "Around Veal's Station," will be the featured speaker at the August meeting of the Parker County Women's and Newcomers' Club, which meets at 9:30 a.m. on the second Friday of every month at First United Methodist Family Life Center, 301 S. Main in Weatherford. The social hour, including Club Shop, begins at 9:30 a.m. The business meeting, including program, is at 10:30 a.m. Lunch is \$11. Please make lunch reservations by calling Shirley at 817-757-7379. For more information on the organization, visit pcwnc.org.

Meet the Band

The Aledo High School band program will host "Meet the Band" from 6-7 p.m. Friday, Aug. 13, at Aledo High School. Food trucks, Aledo merchandise, and live music will be featured (food trucks will



arrive at 5 p.m.). The Band Olympics will follow at 7 p.m.

AUGUST 14

Meet the Bearcats

Meet the Bearcats will be held at noon on Saturday, Aug. 14, at the Aledo High School Indoor Practice Facility. Meet the Bearcats traditionally provides fans

AUGUST 16

Rotary Club of Aledo

The Rotary Club of Aledo meets from 11:30 a.m. to 1 p.m. the first and third Monday of each month at Sunny Street Cafe, 229 Shops Blvd. Suite 103 in

(young and old alike) an opportunity to meet fall athletes and cheerleaders.



Willow Park. For more information, visit aledorotary.org.

Meet the Teacher

All Aledo ISD elementary schools will host "Meet the Teacher" on Monday, Aug. 16. For students whose names begin with A-L, the time will be 4:30-5:30 p.m. For students whose names begin with M-Z, the time will be 5:30-6:30 p.m.

AUGUST 24

Aledo Community Lions Club

The Aledo Community Lions Club meets from 12-1 p.m. the fourth Tuesday of each month at the Aledo Community Center. The public is invited. For more information call Bob Carlson at 817-718-4902.

SEPTEMBER 06

Rotary Club of Aledo

The Rotary Club of Aledo meets from 11:30 a.m. to 1 p.m. the first and third Monday of each month at Sunny Street Cafe, 229 Shops Blvd. Suite 103 in Willow Park. For more information, visit aledorotary.org.

SEPTEMBER 10

Parker County Women's and Newcomers' Club

The Parker County Women's and Newcomers' Club meets at 9:30 a.m. on the second Friday of every month at First United Methodist Family Life Center, 301 S. Main in Weatherford. The social hour, including Club Shop, begins at 9:30 a.m. The business meeting, including program, is at 10:30 a.m. Lunch is \$11. Please make lunch reservations by calling Shirley at 817-757-7379. For more information on the organization, visit pcwnc.org.

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VOLLEYBALL

Ladycats fall in season opener

By Nolan Ruth
The Community News

The volleyball season officially got under way Tuesday night in Keller when the Ladycats took the floor for the 2021 season opener. It was a close and hard-fought match, but the Ladycats came up short, losing three sets to one.

After dropping the opening set 19-25, the Ladycats made a statement in the second set by winning 25-8. The final two sets were close but Aledo fell short 20-25 and 23-25.

"The girls played well, but just couldn't finish the job," head coach Claire Gay said in a single statement. "It's good to be exposed and we are ready to work."

Despite the loss, senior Mattie Gantt was named the player of the match. Gantt recorded 28 assists and three aces while also getting 17 digs and two blocks defensively.

Young sophomore star Vivian Parker had a stellar match as well, receiving 29 serves with only two errors, 17 digs, nine kills, a block, and an ace. Payton Hilmar also played well, recording 8 kills and three blocks.

The Ladycats will look to respond this weekend with a tournament in Rockwall. The first home match will be at 6:30 p.m. Tuesday, Aug 17 against Paschal High School.



SPECIAL TO THE COMMUNITY NEWS

Aledo Racquetcats shown are (front row, from left) Katie Siddons, Georgia Posey, Kenley Germany, Paige Federman, Zoe Whitcomb, Payton Bierle, Cambell Charrier, and Bryanna Orr and (back row) Zane Martin, Connor Avery, Jax Joiner, Hogan Posey, Craig Mason, Scott Mason, and Ian Leslie.

TENNIS

Aledo Varsity splits season opener doubleheader

by Andrea Garnett
The Community News

The RacquetCats started their fall team tennis off with a great start defeating Abilene Cooper 11-3 at home on Thursday, Aug. 5.

Boys doubles swept the competition with Line 1 Jax Joiner/Hogan Posey (6-3)(6-2), Line 2 Ian Leslie/Scott Mason (6-4)(6-1), and Line 3 Ben

Farmer/Craig Mason (0-6) (6-2)10-2.

Girls doubles came away with two wins with Line 1 Katie Siddons/Georgia Posey (6-0)(6-0) and Line 3 Payton Bierle/Zoe Whitcomb (5-7) (6-4)10-3. The mixed doubles pair of Zane Martin/Kenley Germany also won (6-1)(0-6)10-5.

Boys singles posted wins with Line 2 Ian Leslie (4-6)(6-4)10-8, Line 4 Scott Mason (7-5)(6-3) and Craig Mason (6-1)(6-0). Girls singles had wins from Line 1 Katie Siddons (6-1) (6-3) and Line 3 Georgia Posey (6-0)(6-1).

Competition was stopped after Aledo achieved 11 wins to take

the match; the first team to 10 wins.

Later that afternoon and with higher temperatures on the court Aledo failed to win against a strong Abilene High team 6-13.

Boys doubles wins went to Line 1 Joiner/Posey (6-4)(6-4) and Line 2 Leslie/Farmer (7-6)3 (6-3). Girls doubles wins

came from Line 1 Siddons/Posey (6-3)(6-2) and Line 3 (7-5)(4-6)10-7. Aledo had no victories in boys' singles and only two wins in girls' singles with Line 1 Siddons (6-0)(6-3) and Line 3 Posey (4-6)(6-0)10-8.

Aledo's next match is Friday, Aug. 13 at home against Boswell High starting at 4:30 p.m.

FOOTBALL

Bearcat seniors accept mission

Three milestones can be set this season

By Nolan Ruth
The Community News

It is officially football season! Monday evening the Aledo Bearcats took the practice field for the first time in the 2021 season. The Bearcats have a big season coming up with three major milestones that can be met this season.

First, the Bearcats will be able to reach 100 consecutive district wins by mid-October. Burlson, Everman, Joshua, and Mansfield Timberview are the teams that stand in the way of that. Secondly, another state title will accomplish two more milestones. Aledo can extend its state championship record to 11, and can four-peat for the first time in school history. The four-peat milestone

will make this year's senior class probably the most prolific in school history.

"It's been incredible," senior lineman and first year starter Jurrien Loftin said, looking forward to the season. "We have a lot of great leadership and a lot of guys who have been here before and done it before. But like Coach Buc says all the time, this is our year. No one is going to care about the ones that came before us if we don't get it done now."

The laser focus determination could be felt on both ends of the practice field with the offense and the defense. Defensively, this could be a very good year for the Bearcats with two Division I recruits and one of the top sophomores in the state.

"Personally I would like to lead the state in sacks this year," defensive end Kyle "Boogie" Thompson said. "I want to keep the district

"No one is going to care about the ones that came before us if we don't get it done now."

- Jurrien Loftin

streak alive and ultimately win a state championship. It's a fresh year with new people but we have a solid group this year. I think we have what it takes to win it again."

The defense will be led by Thompson, along with star defensive back BJ Allen and senior cornerback Sammy Steffe; all three played a vital role in the Aledo defense in 2020.

Offensively, there are a lot more moving parts compared to last year's squad. The key components will be quarterback Brayden

Fowler-Nicolosi and tight end Jason Llewellyn. After only starting for half of the season in 2020, Nicolosi is ready for a full season in black and orange with some fresh faces.

"I'm looking forward to growing closer with these guys," Nicolosi said after the second day of practice. "Hopefully we can finish the same way we did last year. This is my family, we had automatic chemistry when I came in last October and I think we feel really good."

"Obviously we want to go 16-0 and win a state championship,"

Llewellyn added to Nicolosi's sentiment. "It should be a really fun senior season. Everyone talks about the senior season, you see it in movies, it's just the time to be alive. Bringing a lot of energy and teaching these younger guys how to be a Bearcat and how to win is a top priority as well."

Complementing the returning offensive stars, Maddox Epperson and Gunnar Allen will lead the charge up front. Both players are the key returning pieces on an offensive line that will look pretty new starting the season. Both were short on words, but clear in their goal.

"I'm looking forward to my senior season," Epperson said. "I want to help the younger guys too so that when we leave, they can

Turn to SENIORS, page 10

Pediatric & Adolescent Dentistry

Robert Casey Stroud, D.D.S., P.C. and Michael Ball, D.D.S., F.L.L.C.



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NOTICE OF REQUEST FOR BID CITY OF ALEDO

NOTICE IS HEREBY GIVEN that the City of Aledo, Texas, will receive written Bids only, for **MOWING AND LAWN CARE MAINTENANCE**, as stated in the Request for Bid documents.

The City shall receive bids from qualified professional lawn service companies specializing in commercial lawn maintenance for the City of Aledo as outlined in the Request for Bid.

Said Bids must be in the office of the City Secretary, City of Aledo, P.O. Box 1, 200 Old Annetta Road, Aledo, Texas 76008, and NO LATER THAN 2:00 P.M. CST ON SEPTEMBER 13, 2021. Bids that are postmarked but not received until after this deadline will not be accepted. Bids received after the posted cut-off time will not be accepted.

All Bids are to be marked clearly on the outside "BIDS FOR MOWING AND LAWN MAINTENANCE SERVICES".

Bids may be mailed to City of Aledo, P.O. Box 1, Aledo, Texas, 76008 or delivered by courier or in person to the City Secretary's office, Aledo City Hall, 200 Old Annetta Road, Aledo, Texas, 76008.

Bid documents may be obtained at the City of Aledo City Hall, 200 Old Annetta Road, Aledo, Texas, 76008. Bid documents will be ready for pickup on and after AUGUST 23, 2021. Request for Bid documents may also be downloaded at www.aledotx.gov. Information may be requested by email to Toni Fisher at parksdirector@aledotx.gov.

The City of Aledo will NOT entertain Bids received by any electronic means.

The right is reserved to reject any and all Bids or to accept the Bid which is deemed by the City of Aledo to be in the best interest of the City of Aledo. The City of Aledo also reserves the right to waive any irregularities and/or informalities in the Bid process.

For additional information, contact the City of Aledo at (817) 441-7016, or Facsimile at (817) 441-7520.



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NOTICE OF PUBLIC HEARING ON PROPOSED 2021-2022 FISCAL YEAR BUDGET FOR THE CITY OF WILLOW PARK

The City of Willow Park City Council will hold a public hearing on the proposed 2021-2022 fiscal year budget at a City Council meeting at 7:00 p.m. on August 24, 2021, in the Willow Park City Hall, Council Chambers, 516 Ranch House Road, Willow Park, Texas.

This budget will raise more total property taxes than last year's budget by \$139,936 or 8.20% and of that amount \$42,741 is tax revenue from new property added to the tax roll this year. The public is encouraged to review the City's proposed budget on the City of Willow Park website at www.willowpark.org or view a paper copy of the budget in the City Secretary's office.

The public may comment by providing written comments either through the mail at the following address: 516 Ranch House Road, Willow Park, Texas 76087, or by email at cscott@willowpark.org. Any written comments received by the City on or prior to 5:00 p.m. on the day of the public hearing will be included with information provided to the City Council for their consideration.

Members of the public are encouraged to provide input through any means available and/or to participate in the public hearing in person.

Candy Scott
City Secretary
City of Willow Park

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SENIORS

from page nine

continue to keep winning after we get number 11 this year.”

“I’m just ready to hit the field with my brothers,” Allen added. “I’ve been looking forward to it for a long time and I’m ready to win another state championship.”

Two of the newer faces on the offense are no strangers to having their names called, but both will be stepping into bigger roles. Ryan Williams, who spent the 2020 season at linebacker, will be taking over at tailback in place of the graduated Demarco Roberts. BJ Fleming will step up into the wide receiver hole left by the departure of Jo Jo Earle. Fleming knows the shoes he is filling and he believes he is up to the challenge.

“I want to get my stock up,” Fleming said. “Last year I was the second go-to man behind Jo Jo, and now I know I have to step up and be the man this year, and I just want to make sure I complement my teammates and we make each other look good so we can bring home another title.”

Williams, like the linemen that will be in front of him this year, was brief in his statement, but the eagle-eye look of determination said all that needed to be said.

“This team means a lot,” Williams said. “They’re family to me. The more we practice and work, the better chance we have to win, and we want that eleventh ring.”

The Bearcats will be in full pads at the end of the week, with an intra-squad scrimmage on Saturday. Next week the Bearcats will travel to Arlington for a scrimmage with Bowie High School in the first real action of the season, beginning the quest for what hopes to be another state title.

SWIMMING

Two Parker County swimmers compete at National Futures Championship

by Suzanne Carlson
The Community News

Two Parker County swimmers attended the 2021 USA Swimming National Futures Championships in West Fargo, North Dakota, on July 28-31.

Jaelle Carlson (18) and Aledo High School graduate Hannah Farmer (19) competed at the event, one of four such meets across the nation, at the Hulbert Aquatics Center. The competition pool was built for the 2016 Olympic Trials in Nebraska and was sold to the Hulbert Aquatics Center as a joint venture, then moved to West Fargo.

Both ladies formally competed under the Fort Worth Area Swim Team (FAST) which merged with Sigma Swim (under Metroplex Aquatics) back in March of 2019, two-weeks before the shutdown.

Farmer, a sophomore this fall, has been swimming at the University of Houston. In Fargo, she qualified to swim the 100-breast with a 12th place finish and time of 1:14.83, the 200-breast with an 11th place finish and a time of 2:40.43, and ended the meet with a 50-free time of 27.64.

Carlson, an incoming freshman at The University of Arkansas at Little Rock (UALR)



SUZANNE CARLSON/THE COMMUNITY NEWS

From left: Hannah Farmer (19), Jaelle Carlson (18), and Coach Wendy Gettings

this fall, qualified to swim the 200-free, the 100-free with a 6th place finish (qualifying for Winter Junior Nationals in December)

with a time of 57.89, the 100-fly swimming a 1:05.82, and finished 22nd in the 50-free with a 27.22. These times along with

her GPA qualified her for the USA Swimming 2020-2021 Scholastic All American Team.

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Mini Cheer Camp

Summer camp season ended with Mini Cheer Camp last week - Photos by Randy Keck



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