

# THE COMMUNITY NEWS

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ALEDO ISD

## Aiming for Safety

### Threat training adds to district's safety measures

Security enhanced in new construction

By Randy Keck  
The Community News

With the opening of one new campus and the renovation of two others, the Aledo Independent School District is taking additional steps to insure student safety.

The new McNally Middle School and the new additions to Aledo Middle School and Vandagriff Elementary School include tornado shelters with 12" concrete walls among other features.

Aledo ISD has in the past and is again this year training law enforcement on how to handle school intruders.

On Friday, Aug. 5, the Aledo ISD Police Department, along with Parker County Constables, state troopers, DFW Police, and Fort Worth Police Department, conducted drills at the Don Daniel Ninth Grade Campus with different scenarios on how to handle intruders.

In what has been referred to as "active shooter training," Aledo ISD Police Chief Fred Collie said another term might be more accurate.

"An even better descriptor is active threat training, because it might not just be a shooter, it could be some



Read this story online



Aledo ISD Police Officer Cliff Boltwood works through a scenario with coaching by Aledo ISD Police Chief Fred Collie.

RANDY KECK/THE COMMUNITY NEWS

other dangerous threat," Collie said.

When asked what he wanted trainees to take away from the training, Collie did not hesitate.

"The most important thing is that when there's a threat, you

immediately go to the threat and address the threat," Collie said. "You don't wait on backup, and you don't go and gather additional tools. You go to the threat. There's no waiting. If you wait 10 seconds for somebody else to get there,

you've waited 10 seconds too long.

That's the most important thing a responder on a school campus can do."

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## AHS student records perfect score in STAAR science test

Everett Smick is incoming sophomore

By Rick Mauch  
The Community News

Wanna know how much Everett Smick loves and knows about science? Just ask him a question.

Odds are pretty good - make that very good - that he'll get the answer right. In fact, you won't find a youngster in this entire state who knows more, at least not according to the State of Texas Assessment of Academic Readiness (STAAR) Test.

Smick, who will be a sophomore at Aledo High School, recorded a perfect score of 6,376 on the STAAR science (biology) test recently to wrap up his freshman year. He answered 50 questions in a 50/50 format without missing a single answer.

Much like a bowler with a perfect game, Smick knocked down every challenge the test threw at him.

"Science is my favorite subject, as I am fascinated by learning how different things work and how people form theories through experiments," Everett said.

"This is my first time getting a perfect score on a state exam and I am very thrilled about it!"

Everett is also on the STEM (science, technology, engineering, math) track program at AHS. The STEM Career Cluster focuses on planning, managing, and providing scientific research and professional and technical services, including laboratory and testing services, and research and development services.

The science test requires students to answer questions that are related to the properties of matter, sources of energy, and effects

of force on different objects. The older students are required to do calculations and find variables such as speed and acceleration.

Different topics such as earth and space science are also covered in the test, as well as biological topics such as environments and about living organisms.

While he didn't match his success in science, Everett proved he is an all-around very smart student. In the English and math sections he scored masters grade level scores.

Masters grade level indicates mastery of the course knowledge and skills showing that the student is on track for college and career readiness.

His scores were 4,755 in English and 4,479 in math.

So, while Everett hasn't yet decided where he wants to attend college, it certainly appears he is ready. It also seems he is on his way to a successful career in whatever he chooses, which he has also said will be in science.

"I would like to do something in the field of neurology and/or psychology," he said. "I enjoy learning how the brain works and how we communicate with one another."

Everett comes from a family with a history in science. His mother works in data science, his grandfather is a mechanical engineer, and his grandmother is a retired nurse practitioner.



Everett Smick



Read this story online

WILLOW PARK

## Residents assured fire department not leaving

City in talks to join ESD 1

By Rick Mauch  
The Community News

To Willow Park residents concerned about their fire department leaving Willow Park, Stephen Watson has a message.

Don't be.

Watson, the fire chief for Parker County Emergency Services District 1, spoke to Willow Park residents and council members in attendance at Tuesday's meeting concerning the possible absorption of the city's fire department into his district.

"We're fully committed that a fire station remain in Willow Park," Watson assured his audience.

Watson offered further assurances that all of the current Willow Park Fire Department employees would retain their jobs at the same pay rate with even better benefits, including the district paying 100% of the insurance costs for an employee and their family.

"They're kind of along for the ride. As long as they are employees of Willow Park it would be a lateral move," Watson said.

In addition, Watson, when asked later, said all equipment, including the ladder truck, would remain based in Willow Park as part of the department.

There is no guarantee the WFPD is going to join ESD1. That will be up to voters in the city, assuming the ESD1 board votes to move forward with an election on Nov. 8 - which most believe they will do. That decision will be made following a public hearing at 6 p.m. on Aug. 17 at Springhill Suites in Willow Park.

"If the election gets ordered, voters decide," Watson said. "It's a hands-off process for the city. It's up to the voters."

The reason for the discussion is that funding in Willow Park is tight. In the upcoming budget, the entirety of the projected \$1.9 million income in property tax is expected to go to fund the police department. Of the projected \$1.7 income from sales tax, \$1.4 million will go to fund the fire department.

That doesn't leave a whole lot left over (\$300,000) for other things in the city. The rest of the city would essentially be run on developmental fees, permit fees, and other miscellaneous fees.

And with fire and police departments that continue to grow - as does the city - that's just not much margin for error, City Manager Bryan Grimes said. The fire department budget, for example, has grown 60% in the past five years.

"Your sales tax has been funding your fire department for the past four years. There's a direct correlation between the growth of the fire

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# In & Around Parker County

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ESD

from page one

department and sales tax,” Grimes said. “There will be a day of reckoning when the development fund runs out.”

Grimes noted that in the proposed budget for the 2022-23 fiscal year there is no money budgeted for street repairs. Things like that could change drastically should the city no longer have to fund its own fire department, as Grimes cited as much as an additional \$850,000 could be freed up.

“There’s a lot you can do with that. It gives you some options you don’t currently enjoy,” he said, mentioning possibilities such as a trail system and park improvements.

Then, he added that if the election fails, the city can still make the budget work, but that growth can’t continue at the current rate.

Mayor Doyle Moss offered his support for the absorption of the WPPD into ESD1 while reminding the citizens that the sole purpose of the presentation Tuesday was to provide information before they cast their vote.

“I think it’s a win-win situation,” Moss said. “ESD1 will be able to man that fire station the way it should be manned. It’s a win for the city, a win for the firemen, a win for everyone.”

When asked what ESD1 gets from an absorption, Watson said, “It’s a win for us operationally. It would be another layer of streamlining if everybody works for the same agency.”

ESD1 covers 311 square miles and 70,000 residents, Watson said. This includes Aledo, the Annettas, Springtown, Peaster, Poolville, Morningstar, Silver Creek, and Lajunta. They are funded by a 1.5% sales tax in unincorporated areas and an ad-valorem (property) tax of up to 10 cents per \$100 in incorporated areas such as Willow Park.

Should the WPPD join ESD1, residents would have to pay the ad-valorem tax.

However, that would be offset by a reduction in their current taxes that would actually decrease their payments, Grimes said.

Nothing will be decided until Nov. 8, assuming the ESD1 board moves forward with an election. Interested citizens are encouraged to attend the meeting on Aug. 17.

“Feel free to get dinner and a beer beforehand, because we need the sales tax,” Grimes said with a chuckle.

Lower property tax proposed

Kicking off the meeting, Grimes presented to the council his recommendation for a lower property tax rate for residents. The council voted to move forward with a public hearing on Aug. 23 at 7 p.m. at Willow Park City Hall.

The new proposed tax rate is 54 cents per \$100. That’s a decrease of three cents from the current rate of 57 cents per \$100.

“We have seen remarkable growth, and that growth is starting to subsidize other city services,” Grimes said. “And that is reflected in the lower tax rate.”

Acoustical consulting firm hired

The council approved the hiring of Sowden and Associates for acoustical consulting services. The subject on everyone’s mind connected to this is the controversy with the Parker County Ice House and the noise complaints from some citizens about their concerts.

While no complaints have come before council for a while, Assistant City Manager Bill Funderburk told the council and citizens that he believes Topper Sowden, owner of the company, “Is the gentleman to come in and help us with the Parker County Ice House situation.

“We did express our urgency. He took our city ordinance with him,” he added, saying that Sowden was waiting on official word to begin a study for a report.

THREAT

from page one

One of the training scenarios was based on an actual event a few years ago in another school district in which a disgruntled spouse got on campus and caused harm to his spouse.

The bottom line, according to Collie, is “when somebody who’s not supposed to be in that school, threatening either a student or a staff member within the school, then we send people, we train people to address that particular threat.”

Another architectural feature of the new and renovated construction is police presence right up in the front of the building adjacent to the main office.

“That’s actually a best practice in constructing schools, that the police officers’ office is up near the front, preferably where they have a good view of the people coming and going,” Collie said. “But we also have to know sometimes we’re working in an older school, and that’s not possible.”

Collie said the goal is not to have a constant presence in the office, however.

“If they’re spending all their time in their office, they’re not doing their job,” Collie said. “They need to be out walking around the schools, and checking doors, establishing relationships with kids and not just sitting in their office watching



RANDY KECK/THE COMMUNITY NEWS

DPS Trooper Jeffery Ivey

cameras or watching people come and go.”

Another security feature in the new construction is additional security in the school office area. The three campuses have a conference room and restroom adjacent to the front office that can be used for parent-teacher conferences without gaining access to the administrative offices of the school.

There are lots of interior windows in the new construction, and all are fitted with shades so that, in the event of an intruder, the intruder would not know if a given room was occupied.

“If there’s an intruder in the school, we go to a lockdown,” Collie said. “We want to make sure the windows are covered, make sure that the intruder can’t see into the classroom. If the intruder can’t see in the classroom, they don’t know if

anybody’s in there. Hopefully they continue on someplace else and give us more of a time barrier because what we’re looking for is a time barrier so we get first responders there to interact with the intruder and make sure that the appropriate actions are taken.”

While the tragic events in Uvalde are fresh on peoples’ minds, Collie said Aledo ISD has been safety minded for quite some time.

“People are rightfully concerned with the safety of their children. And people in Aledo ISD need to know that our administration, our trustees, our staff, are committed to the safety of their children,” Collie said. “And we didn’t just take up safety after the tragedy in Uvalde. We’ve been running a safe school district, and we’re just going to continue to improve on our safety measures.”

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## Sneak Peeks Changes to Vandagriff Elementary School

By Randy Keck  
The Community News

The new site for Vandagriff Elementary School started life as a middle school back in the days before the present Aledo High School was built.

Once the high school was completed, the campus transformed to an intermediate school, and up until last year it was McNally Intermediate School.

With a new middle school now complete, the versatile campus will be Vandagriff Elementary School.

More than just the name has changed. The campus has also gone through a renovation to make ready for new learning opportunities that are designed to meet the needs of the current time.

As in other schools, there will be separate grade level "pods" with common areas for collaboration and instruction.

Many of the brick-walled hallways now have added windows, and the library has a new look.

Safety and security upgrades include the installation of a sprinkler system and the addition of a tornado shelter.

Science labs have been re-purposed as the grade-level pods, and extra gym space is now used for music education.



Library ceiling



Library seating



Grade level pod



Windows have been added to interior hallways.



Whiteboard wall in one hallway



Grade-level playground under construction



Grade level pod and tornado shelter



classroom



Music instruction in former athletic facilities

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Notice is hereby given that the Town of Annetta is now calling for bids for construction of PRESSURE REDUCING VALVE & VAULT IMPROVEMENTS. All bids must be sealed and clearly marked "SEALED BID - PRESSURE REDUCING VALVE & VAULT IMPROVEMENTS" and returned to the Town of Annetta, 450 Thunder Head Lane, P.O. Box 1150, Annetta, TX 76008, prior to 10:00 AM, CST, Thursday, September 8th, 2022 at which time they will be publicly opened and read. The Town of Annetta reserves the right to reject any or all bids received.

The project includes the construction and modification of an existing 8-inch water distribution pipeline, along Old Annetta Road. The Contractor shall temporarily remove from service the existing 8-inch waterline and install a pressure reducing valve within a precast concrete vault, along with all associated isolation valves, bends, fittings, tees, hardware, etc., necessary for a complete in place installation, and as shown in the Contract Documents.

The Contract Documents, consisting of Advertisement for Bids, Information for Bidders, Bid Proposal, Bid Bond, Contract, Performance and Payment Bonds, General Conditions, Notice of Award, Notice to Proceed, Plans, Specifications, Addenda (if any) and Project Contracting and Compliance Provisions may be examined at the following locations:

Half Associates, Inc.  
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Fort Worth, Texas 76137

The cost for Contract Documents is \$50.00 per half size set. The cost of Contract Documents is not refunded. Submit check, cashier check or money order for payment. Cash will not be accepted.

Direct questions regarding distribution of Contract Documents, and the design of the Pressure Reducing Valve & Vault Improvements to Preston Dillard, P.E., Half Associates, Inc., at (817) 764-7504.

The Owner reserves the right to waive any informalities and to reject any or all bids, and to accept the bid they consider most advantageous to the Owner. Bids may be held by the Owner for a period not to exceed sixty (60) days from the date of bid opening for the purpose of reviewing the bids and investigating the qualifications of Bidders prior to awarding of the contract. Award of the contract will be made as a whole to one Bidder. The contract shall be awarded to the lowest, responsive, and responsible bidder. The City reserves the right to throw out any and all bids which are not complete.

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The party to whom the contract is awarded shall be required to furnish performance and payment bonds for 100% of the contract price, from a surety company holding a permit from the State of Texas to act as surety.

TOWN OF ANNETTA

/s/ Mayor Sandy Roberts  
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# Meet Your Neighbors

The annual Bearcat Nation 101 on Saturday, Aug. 6, gave new members of the community an opportunity to learn about the community. Some stopped by for photos at *The Community News*' booth. When you see these folks out and about, give them a hello and a big Bearcat Welcome!



RICK MAUCH/THE COMMUNITY NEWS  
Jason, Isabella, and Liam Kline



RICK MAUCH/THE COMMUNITY NEWS  
Jonathan, Carrie, and Breanne Peck; not pictured is Emily Peck.



RICK MAUCH/THE COMMUNITY NEWS  
From left: Great grandfather James Guerrero, grandmother Shiloh Smith, Tara Hicks, Paislee Hicks



RICK MAUCH/THE COMMUNITY NEWS  
Grandparents Melinda and Kenny Wilson, mom Faith Wilson, granddaughter Sophia Sanchez



RANDY KECK/THE COMMUNITY NEWS  
The Garcia family: Donny, Christi, Avery, Maggie, and Hollie



RANDY KECK/THE COMMUNITY NEWS  
Troy, Taryn, and Evelyn Taylor



NOLAN RUTH/THE COMMUNITY NEWS  
Laurel Kimball and her sons, Henry and Sterling



NOLAN RUTH/THE COMMUNITY NEWS  
Mike and Heather Berlin, Beckham and Scarlett

### NOTICE OF PUBLIC MEETING TO DISCUSS BUDGET AND PROPOSED TAX RATE

The MILLSAP ISD will hold a public meeting at 06:30 pm, August 22, 2022 in Millsap Administration Boardroom/Media Center, 301 E Brazos, Millsap, TX 76066. **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	\$0.942900/\$100 (proposed rate for maintenance and operations)
School Debt Service Tax Approved by Local Voters	\$0.314600/\$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.

Maintenance and operations	7.10 % increase
Debt Service	-1.57 % decrease
Total Expenditures	6.00 % increase

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

	Preceding Tax Year	Current Tax Year
Total appraised value* of all property	\$1,175,918,085	\$1,234,549,117
Total appraised value* of new property**	\$24,476,798	\$35,170,472
Total taxable value*** of all property	\$557,967,801	\$610,105,835
Total taxable value*** of new property**	\$27,476,798	\$35,170,472

\*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\* \$15,745,000  
\*Outstanding principal.

**Comparison of Proposed Rates with Last Year's Rates**

	Maintenance & Operations	Interest & Sinking Fund*	Total	Local Revenue Per Student	State Revenue Per Student
Last Year's Rate	\$0.960300	\$0.314600	\$1.274900	\$6,718	\$4,058
Rate to Maintain Same Level of Maintenance & Operations Revenue & Pay Debt Service	\$1.073200	\$0.355480	\$1.428680	\$7,239	\$3,653
Proposed Rate	\$0.942900	\$0.314600	\$1.257500	\$7,259	\$3,762

\*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**

	Last Year	This Year
Average Market Value of Residences	\$253,905	\$249,859
Average Taxable Value of Residences	\$195,475	\$192,456
Last Year's Rate Versus Proposed Rate per \$100 Value	\$1.274900	\$1.257500
Taxes Due on Average Residence	\$2,492.11	\$2,420.13
Increase (Decrease) in Taxes		\$-71.98

**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 \$1.257500. This election will be automatically held if the district adopts a rate in excess of the voter-approval rate of \$1.257500.

**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.

Maintenance and Operations Fund Balance(s)	\$2,437,744
Interest & Sinking Fund Balance(s)	\$1,396,203

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.

Visit Texas.gov/PropertyTaxes to find a link to your local property tax database on which you can easily access information regarding your property taxes, including information about proposed tax rates and scheduled public hearings of each entity that taxes your property.

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.

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## Capital Highlights

### Drivers urged to be alert as school begins



**Gary Borders**  
gborders@texaspress.com

Millions of Texas children are heading back to school this month, as early as this week in some districts. The Texas Department of Transportation urges drivers to be especially alert and focused when driving in school zones and near bus stops.

Drivers are further reminded that a new Texas law requires drivers to stop and yield to pedestrians in crosswalks, according to TxDOT. The Lisa Torrey Smith Act is named after a young mother killed in Missouri City in a crosswalk as she walked her son to school. The driver received a \$50 fine for failing to yield, according to numerous media reports.

Now it's a crime punishable with up to two years in prison.

#### Ex-trucking owner charged with insurance fraud

The former co-owner of Bill Hall Jr. Trucking in Bexar County has been indicted in Travis County for fraud in an alleged scheme to get lower workers compensation insurance premiums by concealing payroll reports. A Texas Department of Insurance news release said the plot allowed the company to avoid more than \$9 million in premium payments.

Francis Hall, the former co-owner along with her husband, was previously convicted of murder in 2016 for knocking her husband's motorcycle off the road in 2013 with her Cadillac Escalade as she chased his lover, who was in another vehicle, on the same stretch of Loop 1604 in San Antonio. She claimed it was an accident, and the jury gave her the shortest possible sentence in that case. She was released two years later in 2018, according to the San Antonio Express-News.

Fraud investigators with TDI claim that between 2009 and 2016, "Hall allegedly provided false payroll information to Texas Mutual Insurance Company and concealed payroll reports to get lower insurance premiums on their extensive gravel hauling business."

If convicted, Hall could face life in prison and up to a \$10,000 fine. She is currently free on bond.

#### Wildfire dangers continue in the dog days

As the summer heat and dry conditions persist, so does the danger of wildfire. The Texas A&M Forest Service reported 10 active wildfires across the state as of Sunday. The largest fire at 3,323 acres in Throckmorton County was 90% contained. The Big Sky Fire in Gillespie County had consumed 1,459 acres and was also 90% contained.

Burn bans are now in force in 225 Texas counties, according to the forest service. Only El Paso County and a

portion of neighboring Hudspeth County are not under some level of drought throughout the entire state.

#### Health center grants available for underserved communities

The Texas Department of State Health Services is seeking grant applications for \$20 million dedicated to health centers in areas where resources are scarce and access to adequate health care can be challenging. The funding came from the federal American Rescue Plan Act, and the Texas Legislature approved funneling it to federally qualified health centers (FQHC).

"Federally Qualified Health Centers are a valuable support for people who need essential medical care but live in areas where resources are scarce and access can be challenging," said State Sen. Robert Nichols, R-Jacksonville. "Once they are up and running, they operate without local or state financial support. These grants are intended to bridge the gap between start-up cost and full certification to enable the program to expand in Texas."

Open enrollment is available until Dec. 31 or until program funding is exhausted. More information is available on the DSHS website: dshs.texas.gov.

#### Travel industry eligible for COVID-19 grants

More funding from the federal American Rescue Plan Act will soon be headed toward entities tied to travel and tourism which were adversely affected by the COVID-19 pandemic. That includes arts entities, according to the Texas Commission on the Arts.

The program, operated by the Governor's Office of Economic Development & Tourism, provides one-time grants of up to \$20,000 to eligible Texas businesses and non-profits that experienced an economic loss due to COVID-19. The \$180 million dedicated to the grant program to aid in the recovery of Texas tourism, travel and the hospitality industry was authorized in the last regular legislative session.

More information can be found here: tinyurl.com/3244psej.

#### New COVID-19 cases up slightly

The number of new COVID-19 cases in Texas during the past week rose slightly to 78,845, with 244 deaths reported by the Coronavirus Resource Center at Johns Hopkins University. DSHS reports 3,490 lab-confirmed COVID-19 hospitalizations, a slight drop from the previous week.

DSHS also reports 17.9 million Texans are fully vaccinated, or 60.6% of the state's population, while 7.3 million have received at least one booster shot.

*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.*

## Guest Column

### Upholding Article 7: Supporting our Public Schools



**Dr. Glenn Rogers**  
glenn.rogers@house.texas.gov

Support for our public education institutions is as old as the State of Texas. Article X of the 1845 Constitution, adopted by the Legislature prior to our admittance into the Union, enshrines the support, diffusion, and maintenance of public schools as a requirement by the state's Legislature. Thirty-one years later, following the re-admittance of Texas into the United States after the Civil War, the new Texas Constitution reaffirmed the constitutional duty of its Legislature to uphold and provide for public education institutions — this time in Article 7.

Texas has over thirty million residents and 5.5 million public school students in over one thousand school districts educated by 360,000 teachers. For nearly 150 years, Article 7 of the Texas Constitution has stood as a mandate to the Legislature to provide for an effective, well-funded public school system. However, in the past decade, support for public education has declined in popularity in the growing metropolitan areas, and a plethora of special interest groups have capitalized on the opportunity to privatize our school system entirely.

Texas is a bastion of educational liberty. Our state has a robust private, charter, and homeschool network for those who wish to educate their children in an alternative environment; however, the Legislature cannot abandon its duty to the public institutions that provide quality education for millions of young Texans. As we head into the upcoming school year and the 88th Legislative Session, both public entities and the Texas Legislature must work together to better support our public schools and address the lingering concerns from parents, teachers, and administrators alike.

Since the tragedy at Uvalde on May 24th, my office has traveled around the district to meet with public and private schools to discuss school security needs in hopes to avoid a one-size-fits-all mandate, forcing districts to adopt solutions that do not work for them. House District 60 is a uniquely



diverse area encompassing relatively large suburban schools, such as Aledo and Weatherford, as well as smaller rural schools, like Palo Pinto or Breckenridge. While there are common sense strategies, such as adding a Student Resource Officer or bullet-resistant film, the unique specifications of "school security" can vary by school.

Each ISD takes a similar, but unique, approach to school security and leverages its resources, partnerships, and community to find solutions to keep their children safe. The State of Texas must try to provide districts the funding and flexibility to collaborate with parents, law enforcement, and their own administration to better improve the protection and prevention of another tragedy.

However, while brick-and-mortar defense is at the top of parents' minds when they think of protecting our schools, prevention of these tragedies is influenced by many other factors that are underrecognized from a top-down view of our education system. Currently, Texas, alongside the rest of the United States, is in the grip of a massive teacher shortage, leaving many of our local ISDs heading into the upcoming academic year understaffed. As a result, some ISDs are turning to paraprofessionals who may not yet have the classroom expertise to manage students' educational and emotional needs.

Some students are suffering from drastic and long-term mental health effects because of the pandemic, lockdowns, and lack of social interaction. Students need access to qualified mental health professionals and veteran teachers who can provide the secondary support structure or crisis intervention.

In response to the nationwide teacher shortage, Governor Greg Abbott assembled a committee to improve and facilitate teacher recruitment and retention; however, this organization

is looking at long-term aspirations, and schools require immediate assistance. To this end, many retired teachers have considered returning to the profession and providing veteran knowledge to their local communities for the upcoming academic year. Retired teachers returning to the classroom has a benefit for all involved, as local ISDs gain quality faculty, and the retirees can supplement their income during historic inflation.

Teachers are often maligned by politicians and activists as a scapegoat for societal woes. Most of our societal woes are due to the destruction of the family unit. Teachers cannot make up for absent parents, though they often help immensely. Our public education system needs our support; local ISDs are continually asked to provide a more significant role in dealing with the emotional and safety needs of students, with varying degrees of financial flexibility. The right to a free, efficient, and fair education is in the interest of all Texans. Our students need a robust education model that allows for them to graduate and be a competitive applicant in the job market or prepared to pursue quality higher education.

Our public schools are the cornerstones of our communities and state. The Legislature has the unique opportunity this session to uphold our constitutional duty and create an environment that motivates educators to teach and nurture students and keep them safe, while defending the right to parental transparency. It must start with a renewed effort to support our teachers and pro-actively address the immediate challenges facing our public schools.

*Glenn Rogers is the Texas State Representative for District 60, which now includes Parker County.*

## 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](mailto: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](mailto: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](http://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 12, 2022  
THE COMMUNITY NEWS  
www.community-news.com

More events can be found at [www.community-news.com/calendar](http://www.community-news.com/calendar)

**FRIDAY, AUGUST 12**

**Meet the Band**  
The Aledo Band Program will host "Meet the Band" from 6-7 p.m. on Friday, Aug. 12 at the U-Drive next to Bearcat Stadium.

Bring a chair and enjoy music, food, fun, and band merchandise.

Bands participating include the Bearcat Regiment, McAnally Middle School, Aledo Middle School, and 6-12 grade bands.

Food trucks will arrive at 5 p.m.

The annual Band Olympics will follow at 7:30 p.m.



**SATURDAY, AUGUST 13**

**Clear the Shelter**  
The Weatherford Parker County Animal Shelter will hold a "Clear the Shelters" special adoption event from 10 a.m. to 2 p.m. on Saturday, Aug. 13, at Petco, 5600 Overton Ridge Blvd. in Fort Worth.

All dogs and cats at the event will be just \$25 to adopt, and include core vaccinations, spay/neuter, and microchip.

For more information, visit <https://www.facebook.com/events/1417454898751871>



**Meet the Bearcats**  
The Aledo Quarterback Club will host Meet the Bearcats from noon to 3 p.m. on Saturday, Aug. 13, at the Aledo High School Indoor Practice Facility. Traditionally, the Bearcat football players and coaches will be on hand and

players will sign posters as well as performances and signing by AHS cheerleaders, dance team, and the Bearcat Regiment Drumline.

Full details of plans for this year's event were not available at press time.

**Pythian Home to hold fundraising concert**  
The Texas Pythian Home on Bankhead Highway in Weatherford will host a fundraising gospel concert featuring the band Sacred Call at 7 p.m. on Saturday, Aug. 13, in the Durant Auditorium at Weatherford High School.

The Pythian Home has been caring for children since 1909. In the begin-

**ACROSS**

1 Yale is an \_\_\_\_\_ mater of George W.

5 Granbury is the seat of this county

6 Santa \_\_\_\_\_, Texas

7 "\_\_\_\_ an old cowhand from the Rio . . ."

8 money machine (abbr.)

9 torment

15 Kick \_\_\_\_\_ Indian Reservation is in Maverick County

16 place of refuge

19 TXism: "never look a gift \_\_\_\_\_ the mouth" (appreciate)

21 distinguishing characteristic

22 prepared something

27 TXism: "chrome dome"

28 "gave it \_\_\_\_\_-ho" (tossed it out)

29 lately, one buys Texas crude \_\_\_\_\_

30 TXism: "disappointed as \_\_\_\_\_ with a rubber chicken"

32 former spouse

33 Cal Farley founded this youth place in 1937 (2 wds.)

36 Dallas' ABC television affiliate

37 retir. savings acct.

38 technology based on biology

39 dental \_\_\_\_\_ for artificial teeth

41 ICAO code for Texas "Southwest"

**DOWN**

1 TX Dale Evans' "\_\_\_\_ San Antonio"

2 this TX Tinkle wrote Alamo book: "Thirteen Days to Glory"

3 newspaper in Mineola: "Wood County \_\_\_\_\_"

4 TX Robert \_\_\_\_\_ was Secretary of Commerce for TX George W.

8 TXism: "two peas in \_\_\_\_\_ (alike)"

9 TXism: "he's right \_\_\_\_\_" (big eater)

10 TXism: "frisky as \_\_\_\_\_ unsaddled horse"

11 noted A&M football coach: \_\_\_\_\_ Slocum

12 TX McArdle painted "Dawn \_\_\_\_\_"

13 TXism: "\_\_\_\_ nuff"

14 apt. assn. in the Alamo City

15 TXism: "got \_\_\_\_\_ big as Texas" (kind)

16 farm storage tower

17 old spiritual: "Down to the \_\_\_\_\_ Pray"

18 former Mexican state: "Coahuila \_\_\_\_\_" (often "Tejas")

20 "to \_\_\_\_\_ his own"

**TEXAS CROSSWORD**  
by Charley & Guy Orbison  
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ning it was established to care for widows and orphans and through the years has changed to presently care for children with families in need.

The goal of the home is to supply a loving atmosphere so children entrusted in their care will have a role model after whom to pattern their lives and homes. Over the years the Pythian Home has served as a home for more than 1,000 children.

Tickets are on sale in increments of five, ranging from five for \$50 to 50 for \$500.

For more information or to order tickets, call 817-594-4465 or mail Texas Pythian Home, PO Box 2798, Weatherford, Texas 76086.

**MONDAY, AUGUST 15**

**Meet the Teacher**  
All Aledo Elementary Schools will host "Meet the Teacher" on Monday, Aug. 15.

Parents are requested to use the following schedule if possible to prevent overcrowding at a particular time:

A-G: 2-3 p.m.



H-N: 3:30-4:30 p.m.  
O-Z: 5-6 p.m.

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# Sports

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## VOLLEYBALL

# Ladycats drop first match to strong Keller team

Tournament begins this week

By Nolan Ruth  
The Community News

Volleyball season is officially underway, and the Aledo Ladycats are on a mission. After a first round exit in 2021 at the hands of Birdville, Aledo is out to prove it is among the best in the state of Texas.

The Ladycats (0-1) faced a tough test to start the season as they played host to the Keller Indians (1-0) who are ranked 10th in class 6A, and a reigning state semifinalist. Despite keeping it close in the first set, Aledo fell to the Indians in straight sets 22-25, 16-25, and 18-25.

The Ladycats will continue their season at 1 p.m. Thursday, Aug. 11, with a tournament at Lake Ridge High School in Mansfield.

"They graduated one kid off of that team," head coach Claire Gay commented after the game. "They came back fully loaded and their libero is amazing, their setter is an All-American, they've got a middle that's unbelievable, and then they've got really good pieces around those kids. So we were facing a program that should make a deep run this year."

Aledo got off to a good start, matching Keller point for point in the first set. At one point, the Ladycats led by six points in the opening frame. However, the Indians made a run midway through the set to take a lead, and eventually the win 25-22.

In the second set, the Indians took an early lead and never looked back, outscoring Aledo 13-8 before Gay called a timeout to refocus her team. Keller kept its foot on the gas after the break and took the second set 25-16.



LEFT: Vivian Parker blocks the ball in the third set of Aledo's loss to Keller. | RIGHT: Rylee Metts serves to open the Ladycats' volleyball season.



NOLAN RUTH/THE COMMUNITY NEWS

The third set went just as the second, as the Indians again jumped out to a quick lead. Though Aledo fought to the very last point, Keller was just too much for the Ladycats on opening night and completed the match with a 25-18 win in the final frame.

"We competed with them point for point in set one," Gay said. "There were a couple of errors that could have gone either way. Set two they got more runs than we did, set three the same. We made a lot of errors, they did a lot of good blocking. That's hard to play against."

"We'll see how we come back for the tournament," Gay continued. "I think overall, we'll show up tomorrow and have a good practice and prepare for the long play this weekend. August is long. We have a lot of volleyball to play in the month of August."



Morgan Estevez (19) hugs Vivian Parker (3) as the Ladycats celebrate a point scored.  
NOLAN RUTH/THE COMMUNITY NEWS



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7000 I-20 Frontage Road

East Parker County  
Chamber of Commerce  
100 Chuck Wagon Trail

Gateway Shell  
5111 E I-20 N

Los Vaqueros West  
4899 E I-20 Service Rd S

Lynch Legacy Group  
5177 E I-20 Service Road N

McDonalds  
5090 I-20 E at Ranch House

Plains Capital Bank  
100 Crown Pointe Blvd., Suite 1020

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Tiger Mart Exxon  
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# Classifieds

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## Notice of Public Hearing on Amendment of Land Use Assumptions, Capital Improvements Plan, and Impact Fees

The City of Willow Park City Council will hold a public hearing on the matters listed below:

The purpose of the Public Hearing is to consider amendments to the City of Willow Park Capital Improvements Plan (CIP) and Land Use Assumptions, and the imposition of amended Water and Wastewater Impact Fees.

City Council: Tuesday, September 13, 2022  
Time: 7:00 PM  
Location: Willow Park City Hall  
516 Ranch House Rd  
Willow Park, TX 76087

Any member of the public has the right to appear at the Public Hearing and present evidence for or against the update. Please contact the Development Department at 817-441-7108 or [tfisher@willowpark.org](mailto:tfisher@willowpark.org) with any questions.

The above notice was posted on the bulletin board at the Municipal Complex at the City of Willow Park City Hall, Willow Park, Texas on/ before August 12, 2022 by 5:00 p.m.

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**101-Acre Commercial/Industrial Property** - Aug. 30 - 3050 Hwy 16N, De Leon, TX (5 Miles North of Intersection - Hwy 6 & Hwy 16). ExxonMobil directs immediate sale. Low minimum bid: \$50,000. 1,367' frontage on Hwy 16. [FineAndCompany.com](http://FineAndCompany.com), 312-278-0600.

**Commercial/Industrial Land** - Aug. 30 - Real Estate to be sold Absolute, Regardless of Price. ExxonMobil directs immediate sale: 3.7 Acres South of Marilyn St., Conroe, TX; 38,147 SF, 577 W. Santa Fe St., Conroe, TX; 5.37 Acres, Mc Farland Rd., League City, TX. [FineAndCompany.com](http://FineAndCompany.com), 312-278-0600.

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TRACK AND FIELD

# Mach I shines at nationals with history-making performance

Inspirational comeback for Aledo runner

By Rick Mauch  
The Community News

The Mach I Track Club in Weatherford has been sending athletes to the Amateur Athletic Union Junior Olympics for years, but never before have they accomplished what happened this past week in Greensboro, North Carolina.

Gannon Dolan not only captured the club's third national championship in its lengthy history, but he became the first club member to set a national record in doing so. Competing in the Boys 13-14 division, he bested the previous record by four seconds in posting a time of eight minutes, 59 seconds to win the 3,000-meter run.

Dolan's victory was by almost eight seconds faster than the runner-up.

"Gannon is a great runner and easy to coach because he listens to what you tell him and does exactly what we expect," Mach I head coach Lupe Torres said. "It doesn't hurt that he is a hard worker, like all the other Mach I athletes."

Previous national champions for Mach I were Micah Neal and David Hebert.

In addition to his gold medal and record-setting performance, the Granbury runner was named All-American. He also finished third in the 1,500 earlier in the week with a time of 4:15.

All athletes who finished in the top eight of an event received All-American recognition.

Dolan joined Mach I in September of 2021. He then advanced to AAU nationals in



RICK MAUCH/THE COMMUNITY NEWS

From left: Josh Fink of Aledo won a silver medal, Granbury's Gannon Dolan set a national record, and Jack Fink of Aledo placed fifth in their respective divisions for Mach I Track Club in Weatherford at the recent AAU Junior Olympics in North Carolina.

cross country, finishing 11th at the meet in Kentucky.

"I did four workouts with them and went from the top 100 in Texas to the top six in the nation (his best time before nationals)," he said. "The Lord willing I'll be with Mach I all through high school."

Dolan will move into the Boys 15-16 division next season, where he said he already has his sights set on the national record of 8:42 in that age group.

### Inspirational comeback

One of the more inspirational performances in the

meet came from Josh Fink of Aledo, competing in the Boys 11-12 division. In the 1,500 race/walk he tripped and fell down and subsequently fell far behind in the race. He recovered to finish second with a personal-record time of 8:22.

"Josh displayed a great deal of never give up attitude. Mach I is very proud of how he raced," Torres said.

"I think somebody kicked the back of my foot," Josh said. "I was thinking, 'I made it this far. I know what to do, I need to just do it.'"

The other All-American was his older brother, Jack Fink, who had a time of 9:05 to take fifth in the Boys 15-16 3,000 run.

"It's amazing. I've been trying to do this for years since I started running in 2017," Jack said. "It's a dream (come true)."

The team also had several personal bests at the meet, including Josh Fink, 11:06 in the Boys 11-12 3,000 and 5:19 in the Boys 11-12 1,500; his sister, Jenna Fink, 7:01 in the Girls 8-Under 1,500; and Nico Walden, Azle, 10:47 in the Boys 13-14 3,000.

Also competing were Sam Haight, Aledo, 1:59 in Boys 15-16 800 and 4:18 in 1,500; Brody May, Peaster, 2:06 in Boys 17-18 800; Cameron Allen, Peaster, 12:02 in Boys 11-12 3,000 and 5:37 in 1,500; Walden, 4:43 in Boys 13-14 1,500; Jack Fink, 4:19 in Boys 15-16 1,500; and Aiden Mansell, Poolville, 10:24 in Boys 15-16 3,000.

Jack and Josh Fink, Haight, Mansell and Walden were making a return trip to nationals.

"Everyone that ran at nationals really ran hard and really represented Mach I," Torres said. "And those who didn't compete had a great season that we are really proud of."

Others who qualified but did not make the trip were Makylee Ray, Poolville, Girls 17-18; Joshua Kocis, Granbury, Boys 17-18; John Luffey, Aledo, Boys 15-16; Emerita Strathmeyer, White Settlement, Girls 13-14; Ashlynn Crossland, Saginaw, Girls 13-14; Andrew Walsh, Aledo, Boys 11-12; and Carolyn Walsh, Aledo, Girls 8-Under.



Read this story online

# Hudson Oaks golfer second in Texas Open

By Rick Mauch  
The Community News

Joel Thelen of Hudson Oaks tied for second in the Texas State Open at the Cascades Club in Tyler July 26-29. The tournament was part of the Northern Texas Professional Golfers Association Tour.

Thelen posted a four-round total of 14-under-par 266. He and Irving's Sam Fidone trailed champion Luke Long, of Fayetteville, Arkansas, by a single stroke in the final standings.

Long led wire-to-wire in capturing the title.

Thelen was in contention for the top spot throughout the tournament, trailing after the opening round by a shot after firing a 68. He and Long each came back with a 66 on the second day.

On the third day, Thelen posted a blistering 7-under-par 63. Long countered with a 62 to extend his lead by a shot. On the final day, Thelen ended with a 69 to pick up a stroke on long.

The final day belonged to Fidone, however, who finished with a flurry and a 63 only to also come up stroke shy.

For his performance, Thelen won \$17,500, as did Fidone. Long pocketed \$40,000.

Also from the area competing in the tournament was Aledo's Jerod Turner. He tied for 38th with a score of 1-under-par 279 (68-69-73-69). He won \$775.



Joel Thelen



Read this story online

### GOLF

# Area golfer wins NTPGA event

By Rick Mauch  
The Community News

Once again an area golfer had an elite performance in a prestigious golf tournament on the Northern Texas Professional Golfers Association Tour.

Following a runner-up performance by Joel Thelen of Hudson Oaks in the Texas State Open, Armando Villarreal, general manager and head

professional at Oeste Ranch Golf Course in Willow Park, captured the crown in the National Car Rental Northern Texas Assistant PGA Professional Championship at Mira Vista Country Club in Fort Worth Monday. He fired rounds of 4-under-par 67 and 3-under 68 to finish at 135 and win by two strokes.

Turn to GOLFER, page 12

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SPECIAL TO THE COMMUNITY NEWS  
Armando Villarreal shows his trophy from the National Car Rental Northern Texas Assistant PGA Professional Championship.

GOLFER

from page 11

And he played both rounds in the same day.

“It was definitely tough. We were in carts, so that helped. It makes it better, but still, it was so hot and the sun was so intense,” Villarreal said. “Also, we’re working at the course all day. I’m used to being in the office most of the day, so being out in that heat for seven or eight hours was hard.”

For his victory Villarreal was awarded \$1,000.

He led the entirety of the tournament, taking his eventual victory margin of two strokes into the second round. Brendon Lowrance of Abilene Country Club finished second with rounds of 69-68.

In each of his four starts this year Villarreal has finished inside the top 20, including tied for sixth at the On The Rocks/Golf Pro Payments Western Championship, and a solo third at the Prize Possessions/E-Z-GO Eastern Championship.



Read this story online

Bearcats up before dawn

By Nolan Ruth  
The Community News

The 77th season of Aledo Bearcat football got underway at 5:15 a.m. Monday, Aug. 8, as the 2022 squad took the field for their first practice. The Bearcats are coming off of a 12-1 season that came to an end in the regional semifinals to eventual state champion South Oak Cliff.

Despite moving up to 5A Division I, the expectations have not changed and Aledo looks to get its eleventh state title come December. The Bearcats hold an all-time record of 588-290-10, meaning that Aledo could join the “600 Club” with a 12 win season. The team has made the playoffs in each of the last 26 seasons, with all ten state championships coming in that time.

Should the Bearcats make the playoffs again in 2022, it will be the school’s 40th appearance in postseason play. Head coach Tim Buchanan returns for his fourth consecutive season and 25th total at Aledo. Buchanan holds a head coaching record of 267-55-3, all at Aledo.

The season will start at 7 p.m. Friday, Aug. 26, at Parish Episcopal School in Dallas. Fans can get an early glimpse of the team at the intersquad scrimmage at 9 a.m. Saturday, Aug. 13, at Bearcat Stadium, with Meet the Bearcats to follow at noon. A live scrimmage will be held at 5 p.m. Friday, Aug. 19, in Stephenville.



Read this story online

Football practices begin



NOLAN RUTH/THE COMMUNITY NEWS

Junior Hauss Hejny throws a pass.



LEFT: Senior Gavin Olenjack catches a pass in the flat. | RIGHT: Sophomore Owen Henderson lines up to defend the run.



Way to Go!



Left to Right: Claire Campbell, Brad Campbell, Braylon Brown, Taylor Hindman



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