

# THE COMMUNITY NEWS

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

## Carrie West celebrates five years leading Willow Park PD

By Rick Mauch  
The Community News

Five years ago Carrie West came to Willow Park, making history as Parker County's first female chief of police.

Born and raised in Fort Worth, a graduate of Paschal High School, and a lifelong resident of the Metroplex, she was already a success in law

Turn to **WEST**, page 6

### CORRECTION

In last week's issue of The Community News, the identifications of DPS Trooper Jeffery Ivey and Aledo ISD Police Officer Cliff Boltwood were reversed. We regret the error.

## Band Olympics



CHRISTOPHER AMOS/THE COMMUNITY NEWS

Garhett Daves, Marco Nava, and Jerry Olazaran get tangled up during the Aledo Band Olympics hoola-hoop relay on Aug. 12. This is the 20th year for the zany team-building event.

ALEDO

## New city budget proposed

By Rick Mauch  
The Community News

At a special Aledo City Council meeting on Aug. 10, Mayor Nick Stanley unveiled the proposed city budget and property tax rate for the 2022-23 fiscal year.

The total budget for all city funds (general fund, water and wastewater, debt fund and economic development fund) is \$11,713,792.

The newly proposed property tax rate is 38 cents per \$100. It reflects a 3.5% increase in maintenance and operations revenue from the fiscal year 2021-22 property tax rate of 33 cents per \$100.

As for sales tax, Stanley said the projected portion coming to Aledo is estimated to be around \$1,050,000. That's up from \$913,864 raised in 20-21, while the current fiscal year to date is \$787,575 on a budget of \$870,000.

Aledo's share of the 8.25% sales tax is 1.5% (6.35% goes to the state, 0.5% to Parker County).

"Our priority is to have a balanced budget that includes equipment and resources to deliver high-quality services to the Aledo community while being great stewards of the resources we have," Stanley said. "Some of the key priorities are to grow the tax base (economic development), focus on the many infrastructure needs of our community (roads, water, sewer) and move towards the creation of an Aledo Police Department.

"In the next fiscal year we will be creating a financial road map that will help guide the funding of our projects so we can accomplish and fund our needs in a reasonable, methodic, and fiscally responsible manner."

Debt service for the new city hall project is included, Stanley noted. The City of Aledo does not pay for fire as the fire department is provided by Emergency Services District No. 1, which is a taxing authority funded separately through property taxes.

There are funds in the proposed budget to cover the cost of the sheriff's contract, \$405,000. There is also \$50,000 for consulting/professional services in the proposed budget to begin the work of setting up the city's own police department.

Stanley said the council will meet as often as needed to discuss the proposed budget before its final adoption in September, likely on or before Aug. 22. All meetings, including budget discussions, are open to the public and there will be public hearings before the budget is adopted, he added.

ALEDO ISD

## District announces gate closure schedule

Staff Reports  
The Community News

The Aledo ISD has notified parents and guardians in the school district that the parking lot gates around Aledo High School, the Aledo Learning Center, Daniel Ninth Grade Campus, and Coder Elementary School will be locked overnight and some during the school day on a set schedule.

The gates were installed after the school district received a security grant in 2020.

In the communication from Superintendent Dr. Susan Bohn and AISD Police Chief Fred Collie, the communication noted that the new gate closure schedule will "allow for better control of vehicle traffic in and out of this large district property area" and act as "a deterrent for people trying to enter our facilities when they're closed."

The district has been experiencing some vandalism and trash on facilities.

"Almost daily, our maintenance and cleaning crews start their mornings cleaning beer cans and bottles, food containers, and other trash from the far corners of the main lot between our North Transportation center and Daniel Ninth Grade Campus," Bohn and



RANDY KECK/THE COMMUNITY NEWS

The Aledo ISD has announced a new gate closure schedule for the main high school complex.

Collie said. "As people access this lot overnight, they regularly destroy or damage property and drive recklessly through the lots which have

resulted in noise complaints from nearby neighbors."

In addition, Bohn and Collie said the closures during the day will

discourage students from leaving the campus during the school day.

All gates will be locked

Turn to **GATES**, page 3

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# Art Association honors Artists of the Month

Spirit of the Southwest art show in the works

Marti Bailey won first place at the July Weatherford Art Association competition with her oil on canvas work "Violet Waters." This painting and other pieces of her work can be found at the Doss Heritage and Culture Center all month.

Vikki Linderman took second place for her acrylic on canvas titled "Day's End." Vikki's work is displayed at the First Bank Texas in downtown Weatherford. Kathy Cuning, long time Parker County resident, won third place with her acrylic "Reblooming Immortality." You can see her work at the Community Credit Union.



Marti Bailey



Vikki Linderman



Kathy Cuning

The association will also host Joan Frost Prine, wife of the late western artist Doug Prine. She is a self-taught artist in her own right who creates beautiful works of the old west.

The next show hosted by WAA is the Spirit of the West, which showcases art from around the Southwest. The deadline for submission of paintings is Sept. 2.

The Weatherford Art Association meets at 6 p.m. on the fourth Monday of each month at 125 South Waco in Weatherford. Artists show their work in oil, watercolor, pastel, mixed media, acrylic, and other mediums.

For more information about the association or entering the art show, visit [weatherfordart.com](http://weatherfordart.com).

The Weatherford Art Association holds a regular Artist of the Month competition along with demonstrations that give techniques and skills to both accomplished and beginner artists.

In September, Patsy Walton will present her impressionistic and abstract style in painting florals. Jack Harkins will also show how to paint with an impressionistic style yet objects that are recognizable in October.

## PARKER COUNTY

# Appraisal district sending out notices

Property owners are receiving postcards from the Parker County Appraisal District (PCAD) for the 2022 Notice of Estimated Taxes. The postcard directs property owners to the official website where estimated taxes, proposed tax rates, tax entity budget hearing information, and tax entity contact information can be easily accessed.



PCAD is required by law to create the website and mail the postcard to property owners. The purpose of the website is to raise awareness of the tax rate adoption process and allows property owners to provide feedback to the taxing entities on proposed tax rates.

The website will be updated regularly during August and September until all the tax rates are adopted. Property tax statements will be mailed in October. If you have any questions, call 817-596-0077. PCAD is open from 8 a.m. to 5 p.m. Monday through Friday.

## GATES

from page one

overnight, and all gates will be unlocked in the afternoons and evenings from 2:30-9 p.m.

All gates will be closed at 9 p.m. Gate A, behind the AISD Administration Building near the entrance to the ag barn, and Gate B, which provides access to the area between the high school and Bearcat Stadium, will be unlocked from 6:30 a.m. to 2:30 p.m. each school day. The remaining gates will open at 8 a.m.

Gates will also be open to accommodate officially scheduled events in the school district.



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# Aledoan receives two additional degrees

Aledoan Avi Deshmukh, MD, FACS, MBA, MHA recently earned his graduate degree from George Washington University in Clinical Research and a master's degree in Healthcare Informatics from Liberty University. In addition to being as a physician and a retired military veteran, Dr. Deshmukh has also over the years received his MBA and MHA. Dr. Deshmukh has retired from practicing medicine and is now pursuing a career in the Insurance industry. His primary focus will be life and health insurance.



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## Capital Highlights

### Texas gas prices lowest in nation



**Gary Borders**  
gborders@texaspress.com

While gas prices nationwide dropped below \$4 per gallon average last week, the state boasts the lowest prices in the country at an average of \$3.49 — 50 cents below the national average, according to AAA Texas.

“Retail gasoline prices in Texas fell for the eighth consecutive week,” said AAA Texas spokesperson Daniel Armbruster. “While gas prices will likely keep dropping in the near term, it is unclear how long the trend will last. Demand for fuel jumped seven percent across the U.S. this week and regional fuel supplies fell by around three percent.”

Drivers fueling up in College Station are paying the most on average at \$3.72, while those in the Brownsville-Harlingen area have the cheapest fuel at \$3.19, according to a report by KWTX-Waco.

#### Voter registration deadline is Oct. 11

Eligible Texas voters must be registered by Oct. 11 in order to cast ballots in the Nov. 8 general election, according to Texas Secretary of State John Scott.

“Even though we’re still two months away from the voter registration deadline, it’s never too early to make sure you’re registered, update your registration information if you need to, and prepare yourself to vote in the upcoming election,” Scott said.

Texas law requires eligible voters to be registered 30 days before Election Day. Since the 30th day before Nov. 8 falls on a Sunday, prospective voters have two extra days to register this year.

Voters can visit the state’s official voting website — [VoteTexas.gov](http://VoteTexas.gov) — for more information.

#### Drought conditions now into sixth month

By the end of July, drought conditions covered 97% of the state, up 11 percentage points from the end of June, according to Dr. Mark Wentzel, hydrologist with the Texas Water Development Board. July was drier and warmer than normal, a familiar refrain in 2022.

Storage in the state’s reservoirs is at 71% of capacity, which is 13 percentage points below normal for this time of year, Wentzel wrote. Still, the current drought is not as severe as the one Texans endured in 2011 for most of the state. However, South Texas is faring worse than it did in 2011 since it started the year with its water supply reservoirs already well below normal.

#### More state resources mobilized for wildfire threats

On Friday alone, Texas A&M Forest Service firefighters responded to 15 new wildfires that burned 540 acres. There are five active wildfires throughout the state, the largest being the Pine Pond Fire in

Bastrop County, covering an estimated 700 acres and just 35% contained as of Sunday.

The Texas Division of Emergency Management at the direction of Gov. Greg Abbott has deployed additional strike teams, consisting of 32 firefighters and 10 engines.

“Communities across the state continue to be impacted by dangerously dry conditions that could lead to further spread of wildfires,” said Abbott said.

Burn bans are now in place in 224 Texas counties, out of 254 total.

#### Scammer posing as TDI employee

If someone calls claiming to be a Texas Department of Insurance employee offering to meet at one’s home to discuss insurance needs, it’s almost certainly a scam. That’s according to a TDI news release, which notes the agency only calls people who ask for assistance.

The agency’s fraud unit received a report from a person who was contacted by someone claiming to be a TDI employee and offering to come over and review insurance needs.

“The individual who received the call did the right thing by not providing any personal information and contacting us,” said Chris Davis, head of TDI’s Fraud Unit. “This may have been an attempt at identity theft or other crime.”

Anyone needing help with an insurance issue or suspecting insurance fraud can contact the TDI help line at 800-252-3439.

#### All state oil and gas records now online

Have you been wondering about that working pumpjack in the strip-mall parking lot in Longview? (Yes, there is one.) The Texas Railroad Commission has recently completed placing all historic oil and gas production records online.

The RRC database covers oil production dating back to 1931 and gas back to 1937. More than 1,300 rolls of microfilm containing about 2.2 million images in the RRC’s central records were digitized.

“This is a significant undertaking and a historic moment for the Commission,” Matthew Herzon with RRC, said. “Not only does it give the public quick and easy access to the information, but it can also save staff time that’s spent researching for public information requests. Requesters can now get historical production information with the click of a mouse if they wish, and our staff can devote time for other tasks.”

#### COVID-19 cases dip slightly

The number of new COVID-19 cases in Texas in the past week dipped slightly to 72,715 with 194 new deaths reported, according to the Coronavirus Resource Center at Johns Hopkins University. The Texas Department of State Health Services reported 3,174 lab-confirmed COVID-19 hospitalizations on Sunday, a slight drop from the previous week.

*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](mailto:gborders@texaspress.com).*



## DPS offers tips and resources for school year

As the new school year gets under way, the Texas Department of Public Safety (DPS) reminds drivers to use extra caution in and around school zones and neighborhoods. This includes knowing the Texas laws about driving near stopped school buses and not using cell phones when you’re behind the wheel. It also means utilizing the many safety resources available to parents, school staff and students.

“Heading back to school is such an exciting time and we all need to work together to ensure everyone stays safe,” said DPS Director Steven McCraw. “Please, be cautious and do your part by talking to your kids about safety, reporting suspicious activity and by following traffic laws in and around school zones.”

DPS offers these tips for back to school safety:

Give students extra room and don’t assume they are paying attention to traffic. Students are frequently distracted by mobile devices or listening on electronic devices and may not be paying attention to their surroundings.

Don’t block a crosswalk when stopped at a red light or stop sign.

Follow the directions of school crossing guards.

Watch for children on bicycles traveling to and from schools.

Reduce your speed when you spot a school bus and know children may unexpectedly step into the road without checking for oncoming traffic.

Be careful around railroad crossings. School buses are legally required to stop at them.

Know laws regarding school buses. According to

Texas law, if a bus has alternating flashing red signals visible from the front or rear, drivers MUST stop before reaching the bus. Drivers can only proceed if the flashing lights are no longer activated, the driver signals you to proceed or the bus has resumed driving. Approaching drivers do NOT have to stop for a school bus that is operating a visual signal if the road is separated by a physical barrier or an intervening space. If a highway is only divided by a left-turn lane, it is not considered divided and drivers must stop for school buses.

Drivers who illegally pass a school bus face fines up to \$1,250 for the first offense. For people convicted of the offense more than once, the law allows for the person’s driver license to be suspended for up to six months. A ticket for this offense cannot be dismissed through defensive driving. Criminal charges are possible if a driver causes someone serious bodily injury.

Always obey speed limits and traffic laws in school zones.

Remember, texting while driving is illegal in Texas.

DPS would also like to remind students, parents, teachers and school administrators about some other safety tools available during the school year.

The iWatchTexas program is a critical resource for reporting suspicious activity in schools and communities in order to help prevent dangerous attacks. Everyone is urged to download the free iOS or Android mobile app prior to the start of the school year. Tips can be reported via the website, the mobile app or by calling 844-643-2251.

All reports are confidential. For information on how to use iWatchTexas, you can view this how-to video.

Remember, iWatchTexas is not for emergencies. If there is an emergency on a school campus or in a community, call 911 immediately. Also, the program can be used to report suspicious activity in areas other than schools.

The Texas School Safety Center is another useful tool for school security. It’s part of Texas State University and offers valuable resources on school safety for parents and members of the school community. It’s designed to be a central location for research, training and technical information for all school districts, charter schools and community colleges in the state. The Texas School Safety Center has staff experienced in school safety and can provide technical assistance or training, conduct program evaluations or offer resources to schools. Classes are also available online for the community.

Finally, on Sept. 1, 2021, DPS implemented the Active Shooter Alert System. This is not school-specific but could be used in the event of a shooting at or near a school. The newly implemented alert system is designed to notify people in close proximity to an active shooter situation through cell phones, local broadcast media and Texas Department of Transportation Dynamic Message Signs (DMS), to encourage people to avoid the area or shelter-in-place.

By utilizing all available resources, Texans can work together to keep our schools safe.

## The Community News

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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.

## Back to School

Band Olympics and painting parking spaces are two traditions that get new school years under way in the Aledo ISD. On this page you will find a variety of activities from the last week signaling the start of a new school year.

Each year, we visit one or two campuses on the first day of school. This year we visited McCall Elementary School and Aledo Middle School. We were not able to obtain clearance to use the middle school photos by press time, so we plan to include them in a future issue.



CHRISTOPHER AMOS/THE COMMUNITY NEWS

LEFT: Freshman band member Scarlet Wermuth and mother Tara look through Aledo Band shirts for sale at Meet the Band. | RIGHT: Seniors Ruthie Pulliam and Olivia Tontreras paint Olivia's reserved parking space at Aledo High School. Dozens of seniors, many with parents, brought buckets, brushes and rollers to the parking lot on Friday, Aug. 12, to personalize each student's special parking spot.



RANDY KECK/THE COMMUNITY NEWS

LEFT: Hallie Sheffield takes a photo of first-grader Lincoln Kelly at McCall Elementary School. | RIGHT: Ian and Angie Christiansen are shown with Cooper (fifth grade) and Emilyynn (second grade).



CHRISTOPHER AMOS/THE COMMUNITY NEWS

Addyson Pennington passes a wet sponge to Michael DeLapp in one of the Aledo Band Olympics wetter events.



RANDY KECK/THE COMMUNITY NEWS

LEFT TO RIGHT: Courtney Valentine is shown with Rhyden (fourth grade), Koda (kindergarten) and Piper. | Second-grader Mason McLeod was ready for the first day. | Third-grader Cade and fifth-grader Hallie Menard | Chelsea (kindergarten), Lily (third grade), and Sutton (fourth grade) Lynch pose outside of McCall Elementary School.



CHRISTOPHER AMOS/THE COMMUNITY NEWS

Amy Carpenter purchases Aledo Band promotion material from Debbie Furlow at the Meet The Band after-event.

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# WEST

from page one

enforcement before making the historic decision to lead Parker County's second-largest police force. She had served more than 21 years with the City of Corinth police department, including being named Officer of the Year and Supervisor of the Year in 2009.

She retired from the Corinth PD in July 2016. But, after working as a risk manager in the private sector, she was reminded her calling is in law enforcement, and in 2017 she came to Willow Park.

Under her leadership, the department attained the status of "Recognized Agency" with the Texas Police Chief's Association in 2020. That same year she received the East Parker County Chamber of Commerce's Pappy Thompson Community Service Award.

West offered her thoughts on her first five years at the helm in Willow Park, along with a few thoughts about what might lie ahead and more.

CN: How would you assess your five years in Willow Park so far? Were your initial goals met?

CW: My first five years in Willow Park have flown by! It has been a blessing to have a supportive mayor, council, city manager, management team, and a great team within the police department. It is this support that has allowed many of the initial goals to be met. These goals included both internal and external improvements.

Internal improvements include increasing officer pay and implementing a step-pay plan. While not

complete, strides have been made in the right direction. Additional internal improvements included upgrading the in-car camera systems and adding body cameras. Also, improvements to the hand-held ticket writers were made, switching from a previous vendor to a vendor that integrates seamlessly with the software utilized by the municipal court. Internal improvements also include standardizing and issuing basic elements of an officer's duty gear, including handguns, belts, and other necessary items.

Other items added include TASER's, which previously were not utilized. Improvements were also made to the department's policies. The department is accredited with the Texas Police Chief's Accreditation Program. This program is the gold standard in Texas and requires a review of all of the policies in the agency as well as an on-site inspection process to ensure all requirements for accreditation are satisfied.

Lastly, as part of the re-branding, our vehicles were re-wrapped to a more traditional look. We now operate a fleet of black and white cars.

External improvements include more community engagement to invite and foster a partnership with those that live and work in Willow Park and our surrounding communities. We have successfully implemented the Citizens Police Academy (CPA), Clergy and Police Alliance (CAPA), and National Night Out (NNO). The CPA meets once a week for about 10 weeks and participants meet many of our officers and learn more about what actually happens in the Police Department. We invite citizens of Willow Park



COURTESY CITY OF WILLOW PARK

Carrie West has been the police chief in Willow Park for five years.

to attend as well as citizens from our surrounding communities. The CAPA program is very similar to our CPA, but our CAPA members go a step beyond and serve our officers spiritually and are available for citizens following a tragedy. Our officers have their contact information and utilize their guidance when needed. We also partner with other entities for car seat safety checks.

Lastly, be on the lookout during the Holidays, as the Grinch has been known to make traffic stops rewarding good drivers!

CN: What has been the biggest challenge you've faced?

CW: The last five years have been challenging for policing. The poor decisions by some law enforcement officers at other agencies have

impacted law enforcement across the nation. The poor decisions of a few have called into question the integrity of all law enforcement, and our profession is better than that. The Willow Park Police Department has worked diligently to serve our community with honor, integrity, honesty, and quality customer service.

I would also like to add the events of 2020 and the learning opportunities that came with a worldwide pandemic. Uncertainty was felt across the globe as we navigated uncharted waters. The challenges of the pandemic were many, but managing staffing levels to ensure continuity of operations was a major challenge.

During this time, we also had "ice-mageddon." Officers were on duty continuing to be available for the community even though some faced personal challenges with loss of power or water at their homes. We assisted at warming centers and allowed residents to charge their electronics at the Public Safety Building.

CN: What kind of growth have you seen?

CW: Our county continues to attract both businesses and residents. While estimates vary depending upon the source, the North Central Texas Council of Governments says Willow Park has experienced a 5.5% rate of residential growth in the last year. I would expect this trend to continue. There are currently multiple new residential building projects in the city to perpetuate the growth.

Turn to WEST, page 7

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

The ALEDO ISD will hold a public meeting at 06:00 pm, August 29, 2022 at the Administration Building, 1008 Bailey Ranch Road, Aledo, TX 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.

Maintenance Tax	\$0.942900/\$100 (proposed rate for maintenance and operations)
School Debt Service Tax Approved by Local Voters	\$0.425000/\$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	9.57 % increase
Total Expenditures	7.65 % 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	\$6,479,040,336	\$6,538,981,074
Total appraised value* of new property**	\$241,435,912	\$270,418,813
Total taxable value*** of all property	\$4,893,948,784	\$5,345,137,843
Total taxable value*** of new property**	\$241,435,912	\$270,418,813

\*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\* \$270,192,278  
 \*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
<b>Last Year's Rate</b>	\$0.967900	\$0.425000	\$1.392900	\$9,398	\$2,353
<b>Rate to Maintain Same Level of Maintenance &amp; Operations Revenue &amp; Pay Debt Service</b>	\$1.041650	\$0.407460	\$1.449110	\$8,135	\$2,289
<b>Proposed Rate</b>	\$0.942900	\$0.425000	\$1.367900	\$8,590	\$2,348

\*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	\$416,275	\$407,049
Average Taxable Value of Residences	\$371,452	\$359,033
Last Year's Rate Versus Proposed Rate per \$100 Value	\$1.392900	\$1.367900
Taxes Due on Average Residence	\$5,173.95	\$4,911.21
Increase (Decrease) in Taxes		\$-262.74

**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 \$1.417679. This election will be automatically held if the district adopts a rate in excess of the voter-approval rate of \$1.417679.**

**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)	\$24,075,710
Interest & Sinking Fund Balance(s)	\$3,521,310

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](http://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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## 126 RANCH HOUSE ROAD

## DA recovers \$18K in stolen church money

### Defendant sentenced to 10 years in prison

Parker County District Attorney Jeff Swain gave a local church a check for \$18,061 on Wednesday, Aug. 10, for embezzled funds that he recovered using asset forfeiture from a former church secretary's bank account.

In the criminal case, Janet Shelley Walker, 63, of Whitney, was convicted on June 14 of theft (\$30,000 or more but less than \$150,000) from a non-profit organization and sentenced to 10 years in prison.

"In the investigation, it was revealed that Ms. Walker was in charge of paying the church's bills and had been also paying her own bills, including her mortgage, for quite some time," Swain said. "During the investigation, she sold the home she was paying for with church funds and

we traced those funds to a bank in Hillsboro. I decided to use asset forfeiture law to seize the assets in her bank accounts so we could get the church their money back."

At the time, Swain had not yet been elected and was still a Parker County Assistant District Attorney.

"I had to call the District Attorney in Hill County and ask if he could swear me in down there as a Special Assistant District Attorney so that I could prosecute the forfeiture case and get the church their money back," Swain said. "As far as I know, that was a first for anyone in our office. We have previously been sworn in to prosecute criminal cases in other counties when their prosecutors have had conflicts, but we haven't ever done it to get restitution for a victim."

Asset forfeiture proceedings are more commonly used to seize assets from drug dealers, Swain said.

However, under Texas law, they can also be used for felony cases involving theft, burglary, robbery, kidnapping, sexual assault, and several other offenses and can result in the seizure of the implements of those crimes and the financial proceeds gained from them.

Swain credited a methodical investigation by his office and the Parker County Sheriff's Office in tracking the funds that Walker stole. "Between the grand jury subpoenas and search warrants that we issued, we obtained the bank records and business records we needed to prove both our criminal case and the asset forfeiture case."

"We were proud to be able to help one of our local churches who was victimized," said Parker County Sheriff Russ Authier. "It's unfortunate that some people are willing to steal from churches."

"The church that was our victim in this case fell into a trap that is all too common for non-profits, which

is the belief that no one would steal from such an organization," Swain said. "They're certainly right in that stealing from a church should be beyond the pale, even for a thief. Unfortunately, thieves don't feel the same sense of morality that the rest of us have."

The case came to light when a new pastor started working for the small church and saw irregularities in their checking account. As he looked further into it, he found that Walker had written checks from the church to pay a variety of her personal bills for years.

"There are several things that other non-profits could learn from this case to help them avoid similar problems," Swain said. "Running a background check on all employees when they are first hired is essential. Ideally, that would be updated from time to time. At least annually, organizations should have their financial records

audited or reviewed by someone other than the person who usually handles the finances. A small group may not be able to afford to have a full audit by a CPA, but they can at least get a second set of eyes on the books."

Swain also encouraged non-profit entities to utilize transparency in their financial practices. "The light of day can be a real deterrent to misconduct," he said.

Finally, he encouraged organizations who have dual-signature checks to never pre-sign checks. "That's almost an invitation to theft. If the dual-signature function is important to your group, if you pre-sign checks, you have completely undone the security that you were trying to achieve."

The church requested not to be named.

The case was handled in the 415th District Court, Judge Graham Quisenberry presiding.

## WEST

from page one

Additionally, the commercial areas continue to develop. The growth in Willow Park since I started in 2017 includes the completion and expansion of several retail establishments, new neighborhoods, additional restaurants, and expansions of businesses that were operational in 2017.

We have also grown our community-based programs such as the Citizens Police Academy and the Clergy and Police Alliance.

CN: What do you like most about your job?

CW: Can I say everything? It is all about the people. It is the people on our team that are the heart and soul of our agency. The relationships within the agency and the relationships built outside of the agency are the vital components of the success of the agency and are probably my favorite parts. I enjoy talking

to individuals and groups about the wonderful things happening and what we see in the future for the Willow Park Police Department.

CN: You made history as the first female chief of police in Parker County. Do you feel you broke a glass ceiling for other women in that field?

CW: Every advancement that is made for inclusiveness in law enforcement is an advancement in the right direction. I am not sure the glass ceiling is broken here in Parker County, but I would sure like to think I put a big crack in it!

Leadership roles, not just chief executive positions, within police agencies lack females. As a profession, we need to do more to facilitate that inclusiveness. The Texas Police Chiefs Association (TPCA) implemented the Women's Law Enforcement Executive Committee in 2019 to further this mission. I was appointed as chair in 2021

and have worked diligently to launch the TPCA mentoring program.

CN: What are your hobbies when you're not working?

CW: I have recently started traveling more when I can get away. There is a lot of the continental United States that I would like to see. A recent trip into the Smokey Mountains ignited the desire to do some road-trip traveling. I still occasionally play a round of golf, but not as often.

CN: What lies ahead/what goals do you have for the future?

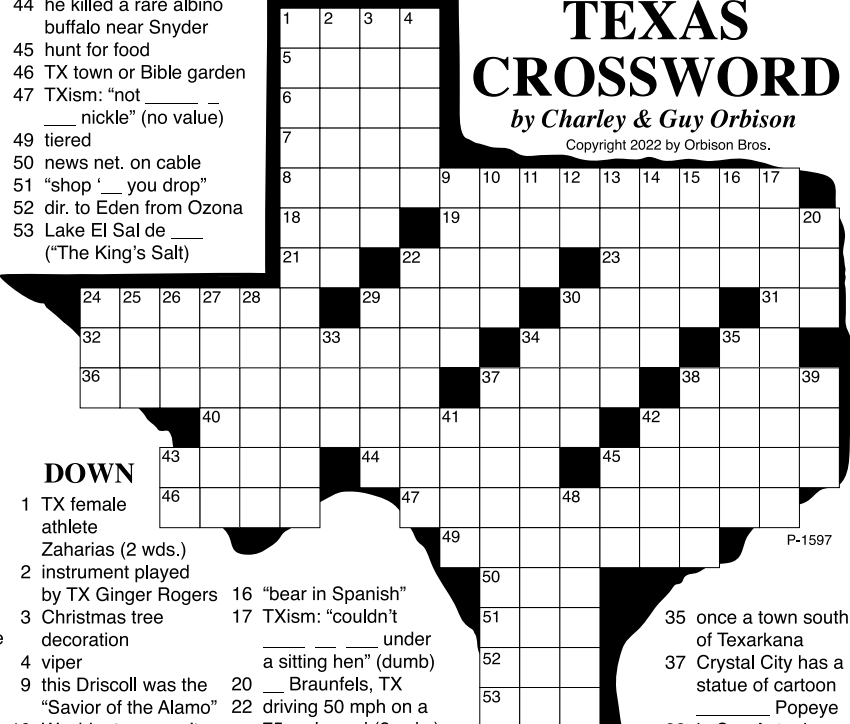
CW: I want to continue to serve the citizens of Willow Park and continue to build relationships within the community. I am also working towards becoming more involved with the TPCA to promote professional policing at the state level.

### ACROSS

1 TXism: "wearing nothing \_\_\_ smile" (naked)  
 5 TXism: "happy as \_\_\_ in a candy store"  
 6 Big \_\_\_ National Park  
 7 "do it or \_\_\_!"  
 8 LLano is the "\_\_\_ Texas"  
 18 TXism: "\_\_\_ rattle your teeth!" (threat)  
 19 an area in Texas (2 wds.)  
 21 \_\_\_ Leon, TX  
 22 TXism: "the \_\_\_ is wagging the dog"  
 23 former A&M basketball coach, Tony (1991-98)  
 24 TXism: "\_\_\_ calf rope" (quit)  
 29 saddle  
 30 \_\_\_ Pictures made "Walker, TX Ranger"  
 31 Cowboy Dave who was head Bear (init.)  
 32 TXism: "couldn't drive \_\_\_ \_\_\_ snow bank" (incompetent)  
 34 TXism: "\_\_\_ a fancy to" (attracted)  
 35 this Ames played "Mingo" (init.)  
 36 Austin politicians  
 37 TXism: "chew the fat"  
 38 this Keenan was Digger on "Dallas"  
 40 hit with a gun (hyph.)  
 42 the "Wink Sink," or "Kermit Crater," or "Guacamole \_\_\_"  
 43 Oklahoma town

### TEXAS CROSSWORD

by Charley & Guy Orbison  
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44 he killed a rare albino buffalo near Snyder  
 45 hunt for food  
 46 TX town or Bible garden  
 47 TXism: "not \_\_\_ nickle" (no value)  
 49 tiered  
 50 news net. on cable  
 51 "shop '\_\_\_ you drop"  
 52 dir. to Eden from Ozona  
 53 Lake El Sal de \_\_\_ ("The King's Salt")

### DOWN

1 TX female athlete  
 Zaharies (2 wds.)  
 2 instrument played by TX Ginger Rogers  
 3 Christmas tree decoration  
 4 viper  
 9 this Driscoll was the "Savior of the Alamo"  
 10 Washington wasn't a Texan cause he couldn't "tell \_\_\_"  
 11 TXism: "compadre"  
 12 "\_\_\_ for a penny..."  
 13 TXism for "also" (2 wds.)  
 14 TXism: "scarce as a wildcatter with \_\_\_ balance"  
 15 TX pro football Hall-of-Famer Yale

16 "bear in Spanish"  
 17 TXism: "couldn't \_\_\_ under a sitting hen" (dumb)  
 20 \_\_\_ Braunfels, TX driving 50 mph on a 75 mph road (2 wds.)  
 24 TX country singer Ketchum  
 25 TXism: "fits like scales \_\_\_ fish"  
 26 TX Dan Morales is a Harvard \_\_\_  
 School graduate  
 27 Emmitt Smith often \_\_\_ off the field  
 28 Steinbeck's wife from Texas

35 once a town south of Texarkana  
 37 Crystal City has a statue of cartoon \_\_\_ Popeye  
 38 in San Antonio: Sea \_\_\_  
 39 TX poet Naomi Shihab \_\_\_  
 41 TXism: "pulled the \_\_\_ over his eyes"  
 42 "\_\_\_ for the best"  
 43 TXism: "cut \_\_\_ some slack"  
 45 TXism: "a \_\_\_ piece"  
 48 "Eagles" drummer from Texas, Don

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## VOLLEYBALL

## Ladycats shine in first weekend

 By Nolan Ruth  
 The Community News

After dropping their first match of the season against Keller, the Aledo Ladycats volleyball team traveled to Mansfield for their first tournament of the campaign. It was a successful weekend for Aledo (9-2) as the team won six in a row in the first two days, before finishing third in the final day.

The Ladycats built on their 8-1 weekend just days later when the team traveled to Fossil Ridge High School in Keller and defeated the Lady Panthers 3-1 after a hard-fought match.

Aledo's next competition will be at the Northwest ISD Tournament starting on Thursday, Aug. 18, and concluding on Saturday, Aug. 20.

"Overall you can't be disappointed about these three days," head coach Claire Gay said after the tournament. "Even in the loss that we took, we competed very well. We came in with a brand new look and a different style. I feel that you can't be disappointed after this."

The Ladycats opened their tournament at Lake Ridge High School on Thursday, Aug. 11 and got off to a rough start as they dropped their first set to Keller Central 25-15. However they stormed right back taking the final two sets 25-13 and 25-22.

In the second match against home team Lake Ridge, Aledo left no doubt as they swept the Eagles in straight sets, followed by a sweep of Dumas to put the Ladycats in excellent position after the first day.

Day two took place on Friday, Aug. 12 at Timberview High School where Aledo continued its run. The Ladycats swept Arlington High by winning both sets by a score of 25-20. The second game of the day saw a close match with Mansfield High, but Aledo again came away with a sweep.



Vivian Parker spikes the ball in the third place match against Hereford.

NOLAN RUTH/THE COMMUNITY NEWS

A win in the final match of day two against Waco Midway would secure a spot in the championship bracket for the Ladycats. Midway got out to a quick start and had Aledo trailing early, but the Ladycats made a good run to bring things back even. The two teams matched each other point for point until it was tied at 24. Aledo was able to use its momentum to get two more points to take a 26-24 set win.

The second set went more favorably for the Ladycats as they were

able to break away from Midway a little more than the first set, winning 25-22 and securing a spot in the championship bracket with a 6-0 tournament record.

"We've battled," Gay said after day two. "It's good to see. We came from behind when down a set that was not pretty, so for them to come back and prove themselves the rest of the time, it was good."

Riding a six-game winning streak, and a twelve set winning streak, Aledo went into the

championship bracket on Saturday, Aug. 13 against Midlothian. This time, things did not go the way of the Ladycats. Midlothian took the first set 25-14, and despite a strong push from Aledo in the second set, the Panthers completed the sweep with a 25-23 win. The loss put the Ladycats in the bottom part of the bracket, meaning the best they could finish was third.

Aledo was tasked with bouncing back against Plano East to keep their medal hopes alive. The

Ladycats took the court with an eagle eye look of determination and swept Plano East to put them in the bronze medal match.

The only thing standing in Aledo's way of a top three spot was Hereford. The fourth ranked team in 4A made the trip from the panhandle and was undefeated before also getting beaten by Midlothian.

The two teams were dead even to start the contest before the Ladycats started to pull away midway through. Aledo took set one 25-17. In the second set, Hereford came out with more ferocity and at one point led by four. However, the Ladycats found their footing and went on a run that saw them reclaim the lead and win the set 25-19.

After being presented with a third-place plaque, sophomore Lauryn Mack was given a medal for being named to the All-Tournament team.

"It was my first tournament with Aledo," Mack said after receiving the honor. "It feels great, I'm really excited and it's great to have a good start to the season. I'm happy to see where it goes in the future and I think it can turn into something amazing."

Three days later, at Fossil Ridge, the Ladycats came out of the gates firing. The Ladycats got out to a 12-4 lead in the first set before the Lady Panthers took a timeout to regroup. Senior Maddie Frank made a difference early, recording multiple kills to give Aledo the lead.

The Ladycats took the first set with ease, 25-16. Fossil Ridge made a strong push in the second set, and the two were tied at eight early on. Aledo won the second set 25-18 and stood 25 points away from sweeping the Lady Panthers.

However, Fossil Ridge had no intention of going quietly. The

 Turn to **LADYCATS**, page 9

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NOLAN RUTH/THE COMMUNITY NEWS

Payton Hilmer (18) and Maddie Frank (1) attempt to block the ball.

## LADYCATS

from page eight

Ladycats held a 14-10 lead when Fossil Ridge called a timeout in the third set, and immediately the Lady Panthers came storming back to take an 18-16 lead. Fossil Ridge ultimately took the set 25-21 to force a fourth set.

"I told them that we had to contain the amount of swings that they got," Gay recalled. "We had to do a better job of serving tougher and a better job of hitting the ball

to space and not just directly to their better defenders."

It appeared Fossil Ridge had found its groove and found itself leading the Ladycats 17-10 in the fourth set. Gay took a timeout to regroup her team and Aledo started to push back, working the score to 18-16. Then four consecutive Alyssa Gonzales aces gave the Ladycats a 20-18 lead.

Minutes later, Aledo finished off the set 25-22 to take the match 3-1, extending their win streak to three and improving to a 9-2 record.



## The Rock to host Acrobatics and Tumbling

By Nolan Ruth  
The Community News

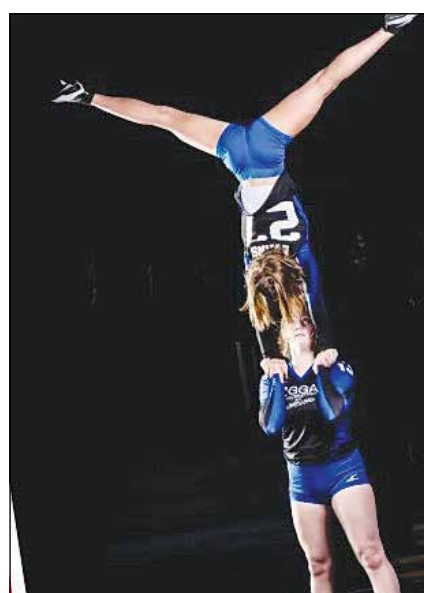
A new competitive event is coming to The Rock of Sports & Performing Arts in Hudson Oaks this fall. Acrobatics and Tumbling is a subcategory of gymnastics that has been sweeping the nation, and especially Texas.

Baylor University won its seventh consecutive National Collegiate Acrobatics & Tumbling Association National Championship in May of 2022 against 40 other colleges around the United States.

The event was also just picked up by the United States Olympic Committee as an official sponsored event.

Now, The Rock will become the first gym in the Dallas/Fort Worth Metroplex to host a clinic, classes, and possibly a competitive team.

The clinic will take place from 9 a.m. to 4 p.m. on Saturday, Aug. 27. Coach of the reigning youth champion, Tracy Cowan, will be on hand to instruct during the clinic. Anyone from beginners to advanced students are welcome. Athletes will be split into age groups 6-9, 10-12, and 13-plus.



"It's kind of a hybrid cross between all-star cheer and trampoline tumbling," the gym's owner, Tina Rusinovich, explained. "It doesn't have all the 'foo-foo fluff' that cheering has, it's more athletic. The athletes will be in volleyball style uniforms with numbers on them."

Of all the subcategories of gymnastics, Acrobatics & Tumbling is among the most precise as coaches

must submit their formations and routines with which athlete/number will be in which position at any given time.

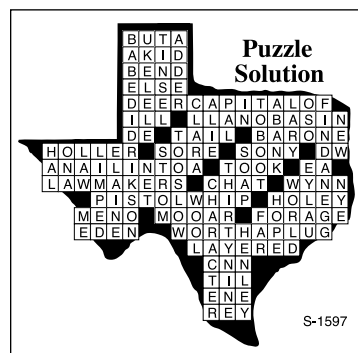
The routines include many maneuvers and techniques from multiple different gymnastic events, but a lot of them are inverted.

"Cheerleaders would usually do routines on their feet," Rusinovich said. "With this, they're actually going to be inverted on their hands."

The sport has been growing rapidly and Rusinovich wanted to get The Rock and her athletes ahead of the game.

"The closest gym to us that does this is in Waco," she mentioned. "There's a couple in south Texas and then there are many in other states. But we're going to be one of the first ones to start this program."

The Rock will start holding classes for Acrobatics & Tumbling in the Fall of 2022 and will look to be able to put together a competitive team with enough interest shown. If not enough interest is shown at first, classes will still take place until there are enough athletes to hold a team.



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### NOTICE TO BIDDERS TOWN OF ANNETTA PRESSURE REDUCING VALVE & VAULT IMPROVEMENTS

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.  
4000 Fossil Creek Blvd.  
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.

A certified check or bank draft, payable to the order of TOWN OF ANNETTA, negotiable U.S. Government bonds (at par value) or a satisfactory Bid Bond executed by the Bidder and an acceptable surety in an amount equal to five percent (5%) of the total bid shall be submitted with the bid.

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  
August 9, 2022

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**AUCTIONS**

Vehicles & Equipment Auction, Wed., Aug. 24. Kubota tractor items sell no reserve. 570+ items selling, including: pickups, flatbed trucks, forklift, RVs, utility/service trucks, passenger vehicles, tractors, campers, bucket trucks, lawn mowers and more. All items are sold "AS IS." 10% buyers premium applies. Aaron McKee TX Lic. #16401. Bid now at purplewave.com.

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, 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, 312-278-0600.

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**BID NOW! purplewave.com**

### Notice of Public Hearings

Notice is hereby given that the Zoning Board of Adjustment of the City of Aledo, Parker County, Texas will conduct a public hearing in the Aledo Community Center, 104 Robinson Court, Aledo, Texas.

**Public Hearing Location:** Aledo Community Center, 104 Robinson Court, Aledo, Texas 76008  
**Date:** Wednesday, August 31, 2022  
**Time:** 6:00 P.M.

1) Consider a request for a variance to the Aledo Zoning Ordinance, Special Street Frontage Standards Section 16.8.5 requiring the primary entrance of a building be oriented towards the primary street for Lot 2R, Block 1, Mangum Addition, generally located at 395 S FM 1187, Aledo, Parker County, Texas.

Published in *The Community News*, August 19, 2022, and posted at Aledo City Hall August 15, 2022.  
 Deana McMullen, City Secretary

# community-news.com

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NOLAN RUTH/THE COMMUNITY NEWS  
Aledo Head Coach Tim Buchanan works with players during the Bearcats' Intra-Squad Scrimmage on Saturday, Aug. 13.

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TENNIS

# Bearcats slam competition in season openers

The Aledo Varsity Tennis team kicked off their fall season on Aug. 3 with a match against Boswell High School. Persevering through the heat, the Bearcats won 17-6, winning all but one of the doubles matches for a commanding lead. The team won 11 out of 16 singles matches to clinch the win.

On Aug. 4, the Bearcats played their first double header, hosting Trinity High School in the morning, and Fossil Ridge High School at 2 p.m. The team dominated the morning match against Trinity, ending with a score of 23-1. Fossil Ridge provided heavy competition for the Boys Singles Lines 1 and 2, but the Bearcats again fought through the midday heat to end the match with a score of 19-4.

Members of the 2022-23 varsity team are Seniors: Ian Leslie, Hogan Posey, and Paige Federman; Juniors: Scott Mason, Ben Farmer, Craig Mason, and Kenley Germany; Sophomores: Bryanna Orr, Elli Kate Bussmeir, Eleanor Jack, Gracie Heydman, Patrice Loftin, Jacob Heckathorn, Will Beyer, and Francois Britz; Freshman: Sydney Byrd. Freshman Natalie Nawrocki also competed in these matches.



The Aledo High School tennis team at the Boswell Tournament.

SPECIAL TO THE COMMUNITY NEWS

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