

# THE COMMUNITY NEWS

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## WILLOW PARK

### New tax rate among state's biggest decreases

#### New budget passed

By Rick Mauch  
The Community News

In a world where prices are going up by the minute, it seems, property owners in Willow Park will now be able a thing or two that they might have previously put back on the rack. Heck, with the tax break they're receiving they can even buy one for a friend.

The city council, at its meeting on Tuesday, Aug. 22, approved a tax decrease of more than 26% from last year. The new tax rate is 40 cents per \$100, a decrease of more than 14 cents from 54.

It is also the second straight year the city has seen a property tax cut, having been 57 cents two years ago.

The new tax, along with the new budget for fiscal year 2023-24, will go into effect on Oct. 1 through Sept. 30, 2024.

"We're very excited to pass savings on to citizens of Willow Park," Place 1 Council Member Eric Contreras said. "Every dollar counts in a family budget."

The lower tax is largely the result of the Willow Park Fire Department being annexed by Parker County Emergency Services District 1 through a vote of residents last November.

As the potential annexation was being discussed, Willow Park City Manager Bryan Grimes explained to residents that since the city sales tax would no longer have to go mostly to funding the fire department, they could reap the benefits. Along with a lower tax rate, the city now has funds for other things such as roads, etc.

"Obviously, a 26% reduction, 14 cents overall, is significant to taxpayers," Grimes said. "We're very fortunate to be living in a community that's growing and supports local business."

#### New Budget

The council also approved the budget for the new fiscal year of just over \$4.2 million. It's an increase of just over \$251,000 from the previous fiscal year.

The budget includes a projected property tax of just over \$1.9 million and a projected sales tax of \$2.25 million.

Grimes noted the new budget and the freedom of not having the sales tax support the fire department allowed for the creation of a parks department. Other plusses include funds for street repairs, putting money back for debt service and putting money in reserve.

"This is a budget staff feels confident about and is comfortable with and we feel will serve us well moving forward in the next year," Grimes said.

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## BUSINESS

### An Ace Up His Sleeve

New Willow Park store owner brings knowledge and track record

By Randy Keck  
The Community News

You may have noticed some "spiffing-up" lately at Willow Park Ace Hardware. Last week the business officially changed hands, and Mark Labadie, the new owner, has begun the task of refurbishing, restocking, and revitalizing the long-time Willow Park business.

It's no secret that the business has shown signs of disrepair lately — both literally, as in missing letters from signs — and as evidenced by missing merchandise from shelves.

Labadie has plans to fix all of that. He opened the Benbrook Ace Hardware in 2021 in the old Winn Dixie/Brookshire's building and has had a top-flight operation there ever since.

The success of the Benbrook store may not be surprising since Labadie's background includes a stint at Ace Hardware corporate, where his job was to teach Ace owners how to be better Ace owners.

In taking on the Benbrook operation, Labadie set an old



RANDY KECK/THE COMMUNITY NEWS

Mark Labadie, the new owner of Willow Park Ace Hardware, has big plans for improving the business.

adage on its head, proving that "those who teach can do."

The idea of becoming a store owner occurred to Labadie when he was working for corporate. He and his wife were on a walk during the pandemic. "We decided one day like, instead of me teaching, I said we should have our own Ace store," Labadie said.

His wife was on board, replying "Okay, no problem. Let's do it."

"So that's when we started putting it all together," Labadie said. "And having that Ace corporate background, it's helped out."

Labadie said he is going to put the same mindset and programs that have made the Benbrook store successful to work in Willow Park.

"We're going to fix the problems here and get it better," he said.

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## LOWEDA WOOD

### A century of memories

Centenarian remembers time in Aledo and more

By John English  
The Community News

On Aug. 5, 1957, American Bandstand, a show catering to teenage baby boomers and featuring popular songs and dances of the time, made its television debut.

That was also the day that Loweda Wood celebrated her 34th birthday.

The former Aledo resident and member of the Greatest Generation just turned 100, and her family held a birthday celebration in Kennedale with more than 250 people in attendance.

Wood said it is difficult for her to express just how much it meant to her.

"I have just been overwhelmed," Wood said. "I'm still floating around on air. They are wonderful people and it was a great party."

"I sat up and cried for part of the night. I'm just blessed with so many friends that I can't even describe to you the feeling that I had at that party."



SPECIAL TO THE COMMUNITY NEWS

Loweda Wood, who lived in Aledo for more than seven decades, loves fishing.

Wood's daughter, Charlotte Patterson, helped organize the event and said that while it did mean a lot to her personally to have that kind of turnout, she was not at all surprised.

"Mother has always been a what-you-see-is-what-you-get type of person," Patterson said. "She is the same today as she was yesterday and will be tomorrow, and she has always

Turn to **CENTURY**, page A3

## ALEDO ISD

### Budgetary concerns weigh heavy during board meeting

#### Shortfalls related to property tax cuts

By Ryan Wade  
The Community News

With the 2023-24 school year officially underway the Board of Trustees for Aledo ISD had several important items on the docket for their meeting on Monday, Aug. 21. Chief among those issues was addressing concerns related to budget shortfalls in the wake of the Texas State Legislature's passing cuts to property taxes during the special session earlier this summer.

The funding issue doesn't stem from the cuts to property taxes, though. The issue lies with the legislature only doing half the job during their special session.

The state has a surplus of dollars, which is why Governor Greg Abbott pressed the legislature to pass property tax relief across the state when he called for a special session. The legislature came to an agreement on tax cuts just before the deadline, which will significantly reduce the tax burden for property owners across the Lone Star State. As part of the bill, funding the maintenance and operations (M&O) side of the budget for schools across Texas will come from the surplus sitting in Austin.

Here's the problem.

With deliberations running up until the 11th hour just to pass the tax cuts, the legislature did not leave enough time to discern where the dollars from the surplus would go in order to fund the M&O side of the budget for schools across the state. In response to what is rapidly becoming a budgetary crisis for school boards and administrators, Aledo's Board of Trustees sent letters to each of the area's state representatives last week advising them of the problems facing school funding and pleading for the legislature to finish the job.

"When we started coming to understand that the legislature wouldn't be doing anything for school funding — or doing a very, very minimal amount for school funding — certainly nothing to tackle the issue of teacher pay and inflation, we decided that we needed to make cuts," Superintendent Dr. Susan Bohn stated during Monday's meeting. "We decided that this community would expect that we would try to get into budget, or as close to into the budget as we can, so we have done a 10-percent operational cut for all campuses and all departments across the district. We will continue to implement those and look for other opportunities [to make budgetary cuts]."

Chief Financial Advisor for the district, Earl Husfeld, mentioned in light of the lack of finalized appropriation of state funding for schools,

Turn to **BOARD**, page A6

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# In & Around Parker County

## Texas Butane Co. promises safety, quality service to all customers

Founded in 1958, Texas Butane Co. is a true family-run business with deep roots in Parker County.

Co-owner Judy White — who shares the business with her husband, Morris — can recall riding to Austin with her parents Mary and V.E. Kemp Jr. for her father's TRRC exam, which certified his familiarity with gas and the safe delivery of it.

Judy and Morris, who met as some of the company's earliest employees in 1964 and married the following year, purchased the business from Judy's mother when her father passed.

The couple vowed, then, that Texas Butane Co. would continue to be recognized for its same great quality and high standards despite the change in ownership.

"One of my sons who works here once said, 'It's not a job, it's our heritage,' and that's how we all feel about it," Judy said. "We stick to ethical business practices and we think our customers recognize that."

Today, the company can store up to 150,000 gallons and has nearly a dozen delivery trucks. Judy and Morris are joined in company operations by their three sons, a daughter-in-law, two granddaughters, and many other valued employees.

"We have the greatest employees in the world," Judy said. "Everyone here is community driven. We all think it's a wonderful community to be part of, and we do everything we can to give back to Parker County and the surrounding areas."

The company offers a wide range of services, including the sale and lease of propane tanks, as well as tank installation. They offer propane delivery to residential homes and commercial businesses both.

Judy said propane is a multipurpose fuel used for several reasons: warming the house, heating swimming pools, cooking and grilling, RV travel, and more.

"If it's propane related, we pretty much take care of it," Judy said.

Over the last few months, Texas Butane Co. has seen increased interest in tanks for generators due to the recent winter storm.

One of the only differences in company operations, since the company's inception, was the shift from butane to propane for customers' benefit. The product is more consistent and stable in the winter's cold weather.

Judy said the company's point of pride lands in their priority for safety. The first step for all customers is a complete evaluation of systems to ensure there are no potential safety issues, such as leaks.

"Safety will always be our number one goal," Judy said.

The business has been awarded the Small Business Award from the Weatherford Chamber of Commerce and four consecutive Reader's Choice award for propane from 2017-21. It also received the Texas Treasure Business Award, which recognized businesses that have been owned by the same family for 50 years.



Now in its fifth generation of family, Texas Butane Co. has operated in Parker County for 65 years. Judy can date her family's history here back to her ancestors who signed the petition to create the county.

"We love Parker County," Judy said. "This is our home and where we want to be."

Texas Butane is located at 103 W. Church (on the square) in Weatherford. For more information, call 817-596-8758 or visit [texasbutane.com](http://texasbutane.com).



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**ACE**

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There is a bit of a different scenario in Willow Park than in Benbrook, however.

"That [Benbrook] was a new, ground-up store," Labadie said. "When we opened that one, it was just concrete and the ceiling was caved in. So we worked with the landlord and the city. We all came together as to what we're going to do with this space and how we're going to divide it up because it was a grocery store. So now it's divided into three spaces with us being the largest."

The Benbrook store took off immediately. Labadie explained that Ace has three tiers of stores, tiering up from Ace branded to "Visionary," then "Platinum," and finally "Pinnacle."

"At Benbrook, we've been Pinnacle. We were Pinnacle the first year we were open. We worked really hard to hit that top tier status, and then did it again the next year," Labadie said. "We're going to do it again this year."

When asked what sets Ace Hardware apart from other hardware and big-box stores, Labadie replied "it's really the community that it's in.

Ace corporately — they're very picky about where they'll put a hardware store. You know, generally, it's the community that makes it special."

Labadie has already seen that first-hand in Willow Park.

"So being in this store, knowing the disrepair it's been in for the for as long as it has been, I've asked the people that come in here and shop, 'Why do you keep coming back?' I get the same answer every time. 'Well, this is my Ace Hardware. This is my Ace,' and that's what makes it different than the big box. Nobody ever says 'that's my Home Depot or that's my Lowe's.' It's 'this is my Ace.'"

**Moving Forward**

The transformation of the Willow Park store into the successful image of its sibling in Benbrook won't happen overnight.

"Our first goal is to just get the inventory back in," Labadie said. "We're going to get the inventory back in and fix the price tags because right now they have peg hooks with product on it and no price tags, or price tags and no product. So we're gonna balance that out where we have price tags and products on all the shelves."

Labadie said after that it's going to be finding out the community needs: what kind of plumbing do the houses have in them; what kind of air conditioner filters are needed, and that kind of thing.

"The older neighborhoods have crazier plumbing, so they need crazy fittings," Labadie said. "So we find out what those needs are; four inch air filters — we don't set stores was four inch air filters, but people need them. So then we find out what's the sizes people need. We bring those things so we can tailor it to the community and that's really the next step is start to tailor the process."

The main thing for Labadie is to have what people need when they come into the store.

"So if you want to dig under the house [to fix the plumbing], you don't want to replace everything on the house. You may just want to be able to slap a rubber boot on there. We got to make sure we have the rubber boot. We might not sell it every day — we might not sell 100; we might not sell five in a whole entire year. But if we have five and you need two, you'll be happy that we have it right here."

And if they don't have it, Labadie is training the store staff to be able

to order parts on the spot for next-day delivery from the Ace warehouse about an hour away.

There are also other things the store can do immediately, such as automatic keys and programming key fobs.

"They have all this stuff to do automotive keys, but nobody knows how. So we're gonna get our people trained," Labadie said.

Other parts of the process will take longer. Labadie has a new store layout in mind, but that will take time — probably a year or so.

"About a year or so from now we're going to look at completely resetting the store, fixing anything that needs fixed, we're going to update the hub, we're going to start doing all the things that the Benbrook store does."

**Product lines**

Labadie has plans to add and expand some product categories in the store. For example, he said the number one product category in the Benbrook store is grilling.

"We know there are some grill stores in the area. They do a great, fantastic job. But if you're here and

you need that stuff, we're going to have it. We're going to update all the grill stuff. We're going to look at bringing Big Green Egg in here," Labadie said.

He also plans additional space for drain cleaners.

"We'll have more stuff for septic, more stuff for just regular drain cleaning — augers and plungers," he said.

In addition, he plans a bigger choice of 4" air filters, and the addition of RV parts, as well as completely resetting automotive tools.

"Every category we're going to update and bring in something new," he said.

Overall, Labadie feels his ownership of the Willow Park store was meant to be.

He was in another community looking at a store to possibly buy, but didn't have a good feeling about it, when he found out the Willow Park store was for sale.

"I don't feel like was just a happy accident," Labadie said. "I really feel like we were meant to purchase this store. We get a lot of the Willow Park folks out in Benbrook already. It was I mean to be that we're here."

**CENTURY**

from page A1

had the most generous and loving heart and compassion for people. She would do anything for anyone, and there were generations of people there.

"I have two brothers, and some of their friends were at the party, because they could remember coming to Mr. and Mrs. Wood's house when they were growing up and having sleepovers and other things. We always had an open door. She's met so many people in so many walks of life, and she's the same with everyone."

And Wood has tried to live her life with a general sense of gratitude.

**Growing up in the Great Depression**

Born in a log cabin in Millsap in 1923, Wood was 6 when the Great Depression started. She said that the lessons she learned from that period have remained with her throughout her life.

"I think people should have to live on a farm for a while and learn

how to work," Wood laughed. "I worked in the field and I worked in the cotton patch, and it never hurt anybody. It taught me a good work ethic and to be honest.

"We had a vegetable farm one time during the Depression and my daddy would gather loads of vegetables like carrots, radishes and watermelons and take them up to Oklahoma City. Once he had to bring them all back and feed them to the dogs because the market had hit bottom."

Wood still remembers much of her childhood quite well.

"I was born while (Calvin) Coolidge was president," Wood said. "And then (Herbert) Hoover got us in a bigger mess, and then next was (Franklin) Roosevelt, and I loved Roosevelt. He was president when I got married."

"My husband was in the service for five years. He came home after that, and we enjoyed 52 years together. He was a wonderful, caring person. He taught me a lot."

Luther Wood, who entered the Army as a buck private, eventually attained the rank of Lieutenant. He passed away in 1992.

Patterson, 74, said she still remembers the important lessons her parents imparted on her as a young girl.

"My parents brought us up in a home of integrity and honesty," Patterson said. "They always taught us that life is short, and we should enjoy every moment that we get. We did a lot of things as a family, things like vacations, family time and we learned the books of the Bible sitting around the dinner table at night."

**Reflecting on life**

When Wood reflects on her life and tries to understand how she has had such a long and satisfying existence, she said it boils down to two things.

"The Lord has been good to me," Wood said. "I've been blessed with good health and memory. I've had a wonderful, wonderful life and, also, when I make friends, I try to hold onto them and keep them around."

Patterson, however, said at a recent doctor's visit, Wood offered up a slightly different hypothesis.

"What she told her doctor when he asked her 'What do you think

your secret is to a long life?' was 'I don't smoke, I don't drink, and I don't cuss, but sometimes I wanted to,'" Patterson said.

Wood moved to Aledo in 1949 and lived there for more than seven decades.

She managed a women's shoe store in Ridglea called Paul's Shoes for 22 years and has been a near lifelong member of First Baptist Church of Aledo.

Wood is a devoted Texas Ranger fan, and she went with her grandson to see Nolan Ryan inducted into the Baseball Hall of Fame in Cooperstown, New York.

Patterson said that still having her mother around for so long is a luxury for which she is eternally grateful.

"It's absolutely wonderful," Patterson said. "Back when she first moved to Aledo, the population was 250. We were always told that Aledo is just a little bedroom community. They didn't want any industry, and it was very small. Of course, we all know how that has changed. She came to live with me so that we could cook together and do things

together, and I'm blessed. I'm very blessed."

Wood and her husband were two of the original signees of the Aledo Charter to incorporate. Luther, who served in the army during World War II, has a brick in the Aledo Veterans Plaza.

Patterson said the most important lesson her mother taught her was a credo by which Wood has always tried to live her own life.

"She taught us the Golden Rule at an early age," Patterson said. "Treat others the way you would want to be treated."

Wood has tried to make the most of her time here on earth, visiting 42 states, including Hawaii, and has been to Canada and the Bahamas.

She has children, grandchildren, great grandchildren and great, great grandchildren. And as to whether or not the long time Aledo resident has accomplished all that she wanted to in life, that answer is — not quite.

"I would still like to jump out of an airplane," Wood said. "When President Bush did that, I said, 'I want to do that a few times.'"

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Photos submitted should include names of the people in the photograph.

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.

## Capital Highlights

# STAAR scores show continued struggles in math, reading



**Gary Borders**

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Texas public student scores in standardized testing continue to improve since the pandemic, but more than half of those taking the test still struggle with math and just under half read below grade-level, the *Texas Tribune* reported.

Students in grades three through eight took the State of Texas Assessments of Academic Readiness tests in math and reading last spring. The results were released last week by the Texas Education Agency.

Math scores have improved since the pandemic low of just 35% meeting grade level or above in math in 2021, up to 43% in the latest STAAR scores. The percentage of students reading at grade level or above was essentially flat at 52%, but still above pre-pandemic levels, which were 47% in 2019.

Teachers across Texas continue to work with passion and skill to help students learn," said Mike Morath, Texas Education Commissioner. "This year's results show the efforts of our educators continue to deliver improved results for students."

### Lawyers: Paxton used burner phones, fake Uber account

A series of documents filed by House impeachment managers claim suspended Texas Attorney General Ken Paxton gave indicted real estate developer Nate Paul "unfettered access" to the AG's office in order to "harass his enemies," *The Dallas Morning News* reported.

Paxton used burner phones, a secret personal email account and a fake Uber account in order to visit a woman with whom he was having an extramarital affair, the documents indicate.

"Uber records reflect drivers picked up Paxton under the alias of 'Dave P' a block from his home and ferried him to his lover's or Paul's properties more than a dozen times from August 6,

2020, until October 2, 2020," the House managers wrote.

Paul allegedly bribed Paxton by paying for a house remodeling and giving Paxton's lover a job, the documents indicate.

Paul was indicted in June for federal financial crimes. A federal grand jury is reportedly looking into Paxton's connection with Paul. Paxton was impeached by the Texas House in late May and faces trial in the Senate on Sept. 5. He was immediately suspended without pay upon being impeached.

Paxton also faces a criminal trial next year on a 2015 indictment for securities fraud.

### New strain of COVID-19 being monitored

The World Health Organization is monitoring a new strain of COVID-19 it says is accounting for a growing share of cases in several countries, including the United States, according to the Texas Standard. EG.5, or "Eris," is being monitored to see how it might mutate.

Dr. Catherine Trosi, an infectious diseases epidemiologist at UTHealth Houston School of Public Health, said it's hard to know the exact cause of the recent uptick in COVID cases.

"When the public health emergency ended, a lot of tracking went away," she told the *Texas Standard*. "The latest data shows 17% of cases are due to this variant. But we're not tracking cases

really well because people have stopped testing. Even if you test positive, it doesn't get reported to health departments. So really the markers we have are hospitalizations, which we have seen go up quite significantly – although it's important to remember we are still at historic lows in terms of hospitalizations due to COVID."

The Texas Department of State Health Services reported a rolling seven-day average of 929 hospitalized COVID-19 patients, up 132 from the previous week, with 21 fatalities.

### Survey: 80% of anti-migrant buoys are in Mexico

A survey by the binational agency in charge of the Rio Grande indicates nearly all of the anti-migrant buoys Texas has installed in the river are on the Mexican side of the river, *The Dallas Morning News* reported.

The survey by the International Boundary and Water Commission found that of the 995-foot string of buoys installed near Eagle Pass last month, 787 feet – nearly 80% – are on the Mexican side.

The U.S. Justice Department has sued the state in attempt to force it to remove the barrier. In court, the state has insisted the barrier is on the U.S. side of the river. Mexico contends the barriers violate both federal law and

an international treaty between it and the United States.

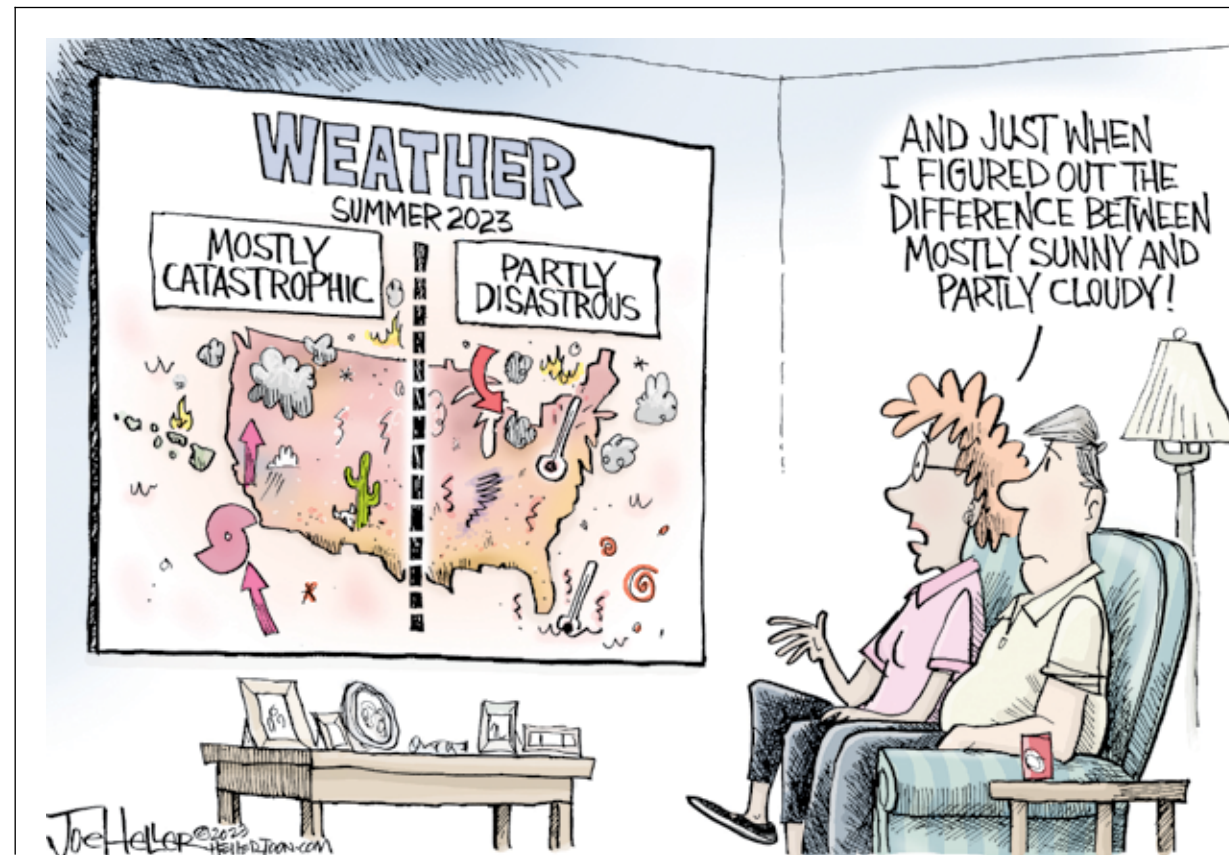
### Employment records set in the state

Texas has more jobs and more people employed than ever before, according to the Texas Workforce Commission. The state has recorded 29 consecutive months of growth and again leads the nation in the number of jobs added over the past year – 441,700 new positions since July 2022.

"Texas leads the nation in sustainable job growth with more than 2.7 million positions added in the past decade," said TWC Chairman Bryan Daniel. "The Texas economy remains strong, and TWC will continue to provide support through tools and resources for job seekers and employers alike."

The leisure and hospitality sector led job growth with 9,800 jobs, while manufacturing added 6,600 positions, closely followed by private education and health service with 6,400 jobs. Of the 26,300 new jobs added in July, all but 400 were in the private sector.

*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).*



## Slings&Arrows

# 'None of the Above' season is approaching



**Randy Keck**

[rkeck@community-news.com](mailto:rkeck@community-news.com)

I think I have always been an adult – even when I was a child.

My mother told me about something that happened when I was a small child – I think my dad might have said something, and my mother pointed out to him that I was only a child.

"Then why doesn't he act like it?" was my father's response.

I thought about that episode when I got to thinking about the weather. On the calendar, at least, summer is winding down. It is actually less than a month until the first day of fall.

So why doesn't it act like it.

For some reason Mother Nature (not Gay Larson; I'm talking about the mythical

Mother Nature) has not gotten the memo, and continues to feed us extreme summer heat.

As much as we complain about how hot it is, the time will rush by until we complain about how cold it is.

So enjoy the heat while it lasts – how's that for looking at the glass half full?

Speaking of Mother Nature, Gay Larson was officially crowned Mother Nature this morning (Wednesday, Aug. 23) by the Parker County Master Gardeners.

I have never been to, nor have I ever seen, an actual coronation (I skipped Prince Charles') so it was quite a treat, and Aledo Community Center was filled with well wishers and friends who wanted to let Gay know how special she is.

With the short time between our press deadline today and the event this morning, I could not do justice to the event, so look for print and video reporting next week.

And speaking of acting like adults, we are on the cusp of a

new presidential election season. While the first Republican presidential debate hasn't happened yet for me, it will be over by the time you read this.

I am hoping it will be a debate of substance and free of the fifth-grade level name calling that has permeated politics lately (no offense to fifth graders intended).

A record number of Americans now identify as independents, and if you want to understand why, all you have to do is watch the Republicans and Democrats go at it.

I'm going to write more on this later, but it seems today that political parties once saw each other as "the opposition." Now they see each other as "the enemy."

I was a big Ronald Reagan fan back in the day – I volunteered in his 1980 campaign. One of his hallmarks as a great leader was not to demonize the opposition. Instead, he chose to work with Democrats to find common ground.

Reagan felt that if you could get 60% of what you want and the other side agrees, then you're ahead of the game to agree on it and then start working on the other 40%.

Today the parties want 100%, and they're not going to budge, and so very little gets done.

Still, I'm a political junkie and I'm looking forward to the debate – you know, the one that's already happened when you read this.

Who knows what the landscape will be when it is over since the leader in the polls decided not to participate.

Speaking of independents, a vast majority of Americans don't want to see a re-run of the last election, but as I wrote during the 2016 election, we unfortunately do not have a "none of the above" option on presidential ballots.

But I'm holding out hope that one day we'll get that option.

*Randy Keck has been the owner of The Community News for 28 years. He is the treasurer of the National Newspaper Association Foundation.*

WHERE ARE THEY NOW

## Acting out her dream

### Bailey helping others reach entertainment goals

By John English  
The Community News

From the time she was a young girl, Hailey Bailey knew she wanted to be in show business.

Originally from Fort Worth, Bailey and her family moved to the Willow Park area when she was 9-years old and it was there that she grew especially close to her extended family and nurtured a budding passion for acting.

"I was the kind of kid that was always performing," Bailey said.

Now, as part of the Image public relations firm in Los Angeles, she is helping others nurture that same dream.

Bailey's father owned a car dealership in Fort Worth on University Drive that he had to relocate due to the construction of a toll road over his former property, but Bailey said it turned out to be a good thing for her family.

"It was actually coming at a time in our lives when it really

made sense to move out to the Aledo- Willow Park area," Bailey said. "My dad found some different locations for his businesses out in Graford, and the Aledo-Willow Park area was kind of an in-between for our school, which was All Saints Episcopal School at the time. So it was kind of a perfect time.

"Our grandparents all really wanted to live closer, so basically at that time, we packed up and bought my grandmother's house, and she built a new house right on the front of our property. And then my dad's dad moved into a little apartment that we called 'the barn.' It looked like a barn, but it was actually an apartment in the back of our property. So we basically had like a little compound where I got to live out the rest of my childhood with all of my living grandparents."

#### Diversified talents

Growing up, Bailey was into sports, singing and performing.

She earned a spot on the varsity volleyball squad as a freshman and participated in varsity cheerleading before she started focusing on acting.

Bailey, 26, would travel to Dallas once a week for acting classes and said that her journey to public relations, which took her to the University of Texas at Austin and threw a few different PR internships, has been quite the adventure.

"It has been crazy," Bailey said. "I'm just taking it day by day, for sure. I loved going to UT. I was an acting major at UT. I eventually reached a point where I got burnt out and I started to feel like acting looked like a path where I would just have to sit around and wait for someone to give me a yes and give me a job to pay the bills.

"Being raised by two successful entrepreneurs for parents, that career path just didn't really vibe with me anymore as I got older. As I continued on my path at UT, I realized that I was probably better suited towards the business side of the industry. So from there I went for my first internship in Los Angeles."

Her first internship was with a production company called Temple Hill Entertainment.

"The owner's name is Marty Bowen, and he's actually from Fort Worth himself," Bailey said. "I loved that internship. It gave me a lot of insight into the industry and started me on my journey of figuring out where I fit in."

An episode during her time as an intern with Temple Hill Entertainment made a big impact on her and was one of her first great experiences in the business.

"I actually pitched something to one of the executives at the time that made it into development," Bailey said. "It never came to fruition, but it kind of made it to that next step, and they emailed me after my internship and told me that my idea had gone on to be something else. I was just kind of surprised. I was like, 'Oh wow! Okay, cool!'"



IMAGE PR

PHOTO COURTESY OF IMAGE PR  
Former Willow Park resident Hailey Bailey now lives in Los Angeles and is the founder of the Image PR firm for entertainers.

#### Shifting focus

But it was also at Temple Hill that she recognized that her focus had shifted once again.

Turn to ACTING, page A6



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# ACTING

from page A5

"I realized at that first internship that I needed a job that was more hands-on because I like doing something different every day, and that's what my job now entails," Bailey said. "I went back for my senior year at UT. I had a class where we had a guest lecturer who was this fabulous publicist for Aziz Ansari and John Krasinski and a bunch of talented and amazing comedians. Then she told us about her day-to-day, and that was when I realized that that was the job for me."

Bailey said she approached the lecturer and asked what she needed to do make that happen.

"She told me to do some PR internships, and I would be all set, because I already had the entertainment side on my resume," Bailey said. "My senior year at UT I only had like pilates and nutrition on my schedule, so I took two different PR internships for my remaining time at UT. From there I went on to LA, and the rest is history."

Bailey worked for a while for a major PR firm before venturing out on her own last fall, founding Image PR.

Bailey's clients include Brandi Cyrus (Miley's half sister), Eva Gutowski, Charly Jordan, Ellie Zeiler, and Katie Austin.

Her daily routine involves working to present her clients accurately and in the best possible light.

"I help my clients create and maintain a public image," Bailey said. "I make sure that the image they want to put out into the world is put out there on their terms, and the media doesn't run some crazy story about them that isn't quite true. I just try to empower them to feel confident that the story they're putting into the world is a cultivated and accurate representation of who they are."

Fortunately for Bailey, her clients make it easy.

"I pride myself in selecting clients that are good people," Bailey said. "They make my day-to-day a lot less stressful, and the stress that I do feel ends up being worth it because they are great people. I believe in everything they're doing."

## Biggest reward

Bailey said the most fulfilling aspect of her job is seeing her clients have success.

"I would say its the big wins," Bailey said. "It can be a very stressful

job, but once we make it to that big moment and I get to celebrate that with my client, it kind of feels like being Santa on Christmas.

"You know, you've been working really hard, and now you're headlining at the Encore Beach Club, that's a win... These are the things we are building toward, and once we hit a milestone like that, it makes everything worth it."

Bailey attributes her success to her upbringing, the values her parents imparted on her as a young girl and a very special camp from her childhood.

"My parents instilled an amazing work ethic and morals within me and also the camp that I went to as a young kid called Camp Waldemar," Bailey said. "It was life-changing, and it really set me on the right path creatively...they were the first people to ever let me direct a musical and they really believed in me and kind of let me explore my passions for that. I owe most of finding my path to Camp Waldemar."

## Looking ahead

As far as ever getting back to acting is concerned, Bailey said there are no immediate plans

"I think that ship has sailed," Bailey said. "I was a master student

under Cathryn Sullivan in Dallas for quite some time. I loved her. I loved the program and I loved acting. But ultimately, I don't know that I would want to be in front of the camera any more. I feel like that time in my life was meant to teach me about the industry and how people can get taken advantage of so that I can protect my clients now and moving forward.

"That experience and my experience with the industry helps me advise my clients and consult them correctly in order for them to have success."

Bailey said it still seems surreal at times that she has enjoyed the success she has so far, but added that she does have definite goals for where she would like to take her company in the future.

"I just launched my business in November of 2022," Bailey said. "I'm not even quite a year in, so my goal hasn't changed, but it has expanded. What I really want to do is just continue expanding and working on projects that make me excited, eventually, like producing maybe or creating a product line of my own. The opportunities are endless, and I'm very open minded at this point, knowing that my role has already

changed so much in the last eight months in terms of what I'm doing for my clients.

"I'm so much more than a publicist at this point. I really think my ultimate goal is to continue to find a way to be passionate about the projects I am working on."

Bailey said she has had her nay-sayers over the years, and if she had one bit of advice she could offer to younger people thinking of going into public relations, it would be to persevere.



"I would say don't listen to anyone that tells you that you can't do it, it's not a real job, or that it's not realistic,"

Bailey said. "I think a lot of people like to talk and tell you that you will fail, when they don't really understand how big of an industry this is...and if anyone is passionate about it and wants to try, you just have to get out here and go for it. Don't listen to anyone else who tells you it's not realistic or it's not possible, because it is."

# BOARD

from page A1

Aledo ISD, like many others across the state, are having to adopt deficit budgets. Husfeld said the district is working diligently to minimize deficits in the short term, but cautioned the longer the legislature takes to determine where funding dollars will come from, the larger the deficits will become.

Both he and Board of Trustees President Forrest Collins expressed their personal hopes the legislature will reconvene for a second special session as early as October to provide funding relief for schools.

"What we aren't doing this year is we aren't cutting staff," Bohn stressed during the meeting. "We aren't saying, 'We aren't doing that program anymore because we can't afford it.' If the legislature doesn't do anything in the special session, when we're back here this time next year, we will be talking about that. I don't think there will be any way that we can't."

Property tax rates for Aledo ISD have been on the decline in recent years before the

legislature passed sweeping tax cuts this year. The M&O side of funding within the district will see an 18.5 cents per \$1,000 of property value decrease this year while the debt services side will see a 2.5 cents increase due to the passage of the school bond in March of 2023.

The net 16 cents reduction in tax burden across the district means overall the district has experienced a 39 cents reduction in property taxes over the past five years.

On top of the decrease in property taxes the district has experienced in the past few years, Husfeld also mentioned a potential increase in the state's homestead exemption from \$40,000 to \$100,000 will be put before voters during the November election. Tax statements sent to property owners in October will reflect the increased exemption rate before the measure hits the ballot to give property owners an understanding of their tax burden in the event the measure passes.

Schools are required to submit their budgets to the state prior to the election to be reflected on tax statements as if the

measure has already passed. Voters have historically approved increases to the exemption when it has been on the ballot.

Should voters not pass the measure, Husfeld stated the district would revise the budget at that time to reflect the current homestead exemption limits.

The first day of school last week marked the first time in a few years the district has not opened a new school. Last year the district opened the new McAnally Middle School on the first day of the 2022-23 school year. The new Lynn McKinney Elementary School that is currently under construction is slated to open just in time for the first day of school in August of 2024.

Assistant Superintendent of Curriculum and Instruction Amber Chrissey added that even though no new schools opened in the district this year, Aledo ISD still added over 100 new teachers across the district.



# COUNCIL

from page A1

## Wastewater rate study

The council voted to accept a water/wastewater rate study from NewGen Strategies, which city officials had requested several months ago. Willow Park has not increased either rate since 2017.

Assistant City Manager Bill Funderburk noted the city has been transferring money from the water account to the wastewater fund to offset a deficit.

Due to rising costs in the water and wastewater systems, and construction of a must needed wastewater plant, NewGen Chief Financial Officer Chris Ekrut said a three-year model was requested to make both funds financially healthy.

"We need some sizable wastewater (fund) increases going forward," Ekrut said.

In the study, it was recommended the city address:

- \*Revenue sufficiency - Revenues must match or exceed expenses.
- \*Reserves - Must plan for a rainy day.
- \*Reinvestment - Repair, replace, and reinvest in infrastructure.

Ekrut said the cost to the city to create a balance will be approximately

\$35.4 million. To help offset that cost, the study showed monthly bill impacts going forward for Willow Park, should an increase take effect, will be:

\*Residential - Current, \$108.21; fiscal year 2024, \$119.21; FY25, \$130.66; FY 26, \$142.11; FY27, \$142.56; FY28, \$143.01.

\*Commercial - Current, \$201.21; FY24, \$258.40; FY25, \$289.59; FY26, \$320.78; FY27, \$322.13; FY28, \$323.48.

"Not having any adjustments over several years, it's something we have to look at," Willow Park Mayor Doyle Moss said. "The cost of everything is going up. We're playing catch-up."

## New wastewater plant

The council authorized city staff to amend the bid specifications for a new wastewater plant and seek competitive proposals. The capacity has been reduced from 1 million gallons to 750,000 gallons based on current and projected future water usage because of growth expectations.

"Seven hundred and fifty give you quite a bit of expansion room, based on projections we now have," said Derek Turner of Jacob and Martin Civil Engineers.

Current water usage in Willow Park is about 350,000 gallons per day.



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**Dementia Support Group**  
Join us for our Dementia Support Group on Thursday, August 31st at 5:30 p.m. at Harvest of Aledo. Guest speaker Kim Waid, Certified Dementia Practitioner. Harvest of Aledo is here to provide emotional, educational, and social support to friends and families of individuals coping with Alzheimer's Disease or related dementias. You don't have to do this alone. Make new friends. Learn from each other. RSVP to 682-209-0643

**SEPTEMBER 1**  
**The Shops at Willow Bend: Bubbles & Baubles-DIY Blankets**  
The Shops at Willow Bend Join our September Bubbles and Baubles event on Friday, September 1, from 5 - 7 p.m. at the Rebel Athletic Store inside of The Shops at



Willow Bend! Come and DIY your own blanket! There will be complementary drinks for adults. Cost to attend: FREE!

**SEPTEMBER 2**  
**Ironmen Breakfast**  
Join Ironmen Breakfast Breakfast on Saturday, September 2, from 8-10 a.m. at Parker County Cowboy Church, for fellowship for the men. Join Rick and the "Baconators" for a meal & a message! Come hungry and bring a friend!



**OCTOBER 7**  
**Aledo UMC Lord's Acre Fall Festival**  
Join this fun annual event from 10 a.m. - 3 p.m. on

Saturday, October 7, at Aledo United Methodist @ 100 Pecan St in Aledo, Tx for a day full of fun, vendors, food, a Kid's Zone, a Country Kitchen, Silent & Live Auction, and much more!



**OCTOBER 21**  
**ALEDO-FEST**  
will be on Saturday, October 21, from 1 - 5 p.m. at Aledo High School's south parking lots, 1000 Bailey Ranch Road  
This year's event will feature live music and many activities for kids of all ages! Meet your local businesses at the many vendor booths, do some gift shopping and early holiday finds, and get a little something for yourself! Come hungry for a variety of food trucks on-site for good eats & autumn treats! For questions or more information, please contact Deana McMullen, City Secretary, at City Hall: 817-441-7016, or cell/text: 817-829-4024, email, or visit Aledo City Hall.

## TEXAS CROSSWORD

by Charley & Guy Orbison  
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**ACROSS**

1 Oldham County seat  
5 TX Jensen Ackles was in "Rust" before shooting incident with this Baldwin  
6 Spanish "little girl"  
7 Fri. night score  
8 founded in Texas, "Steak and \_\_\_"  
9 horse racetrack in Selma, Texas: "\_\_\_ Park"  
15 TXism: "up and \_\_\_ juice" (coffee)  
16 sold by Texas-based Whataburger  
19 with "inc.," Texas based cosmetics company (2 wds.)  
21 TXism: "heavy as the front end of a John \_\_\_"  
22 2nd place (hyph.) in golf, scoring a 3 on \_\_\_ 4 is a birdie  
27 in golf, scoring a 3 on \_\_\_ 4 is a birdie  
28 those kids who ain't a seeker  
29 marijuana cigarette  
30 "the food was good, what there \_\_\_" (small portion)  
32 it uses machines that learn (abbr.)  
33 TXism: "hot as \_\_\_ bumper"  
36 A.H. \_\_\_ founded the Dallas Morning News  
37 TXism: "the ole ball \_\_\_ chain" (spouse)  
38 fishing boat that drags baited lines

**DOWN**

1 \_\_\_ Alstyne, TX  
2 UT grad, Wallach  
3 TX George H.W. wanted a kinder and \_\_\_ nation  
4 TX Tommy Lee Jones has won one of these (2 wds.)  
8 Padre Island beach bronzed (2 wds.)  
9 reservoir north of Denton  
10 "Gig \_\_\_ Aggies!"  
11 Texas-born saxophonist, "Tex" (init.)  
12 place for a school assembly  
13 former talking horse CBS sitcom (2 wds.)  
14 Cowboy running back, Tommie (1990-94)  
15 Potter County seat  
16 Lukas of "Leap of Faith" starring Texas-born Steve Martin straying from the proper course (noun)  
17 live in a place  
18 live in a place  
20 San Antonio public FM station  
22 home state of Jerry Jones (abbr.)  
23 televangelist in Rockwall, TX, Larry

39 front door, e.g.  
41 this Smith worked for the Astros for 35 years  
42 Texas-born astronaut, White  
45 parental response: "because \_\_\_ so"  
46 end of boxing bout (abbr.)  
47 french fries seasoning  
48 org. that controls athletic contests in Texas schools  
49 fuel nozzle site (2 wds.)

12 place for a school assembly  
13 former talking horse CBS sitcom (2 wds.)  
14 Cowboy running back, Tommie (1990-94)  
15 Potter County seat  
16 Lukas of "Leap of Faith" starring Texas-born Steve Martin straying from the proper course (noun)  
17 live in a place  
18 live in a place  
20 San Antonio public FM station  
22 home state of Jerry Jones (abbr.)  
23 televangelist in Rockwall, TX, Larry

24 Branch Davidians of Waco notoriety  
25 "Stark Museum \_\_\_" in Orange  
26 in Ellis County on I-35 (2 wds.)  
28 sword handle  
31 Alamo heroes were unable to \_\_\_ off the Mexicans

34 TX Sissy was this Lynn in 1980 film "Coal Miner's Daughter" (init.)  
35 Texas actor Tommy \_\_\_ Jones  
37 \_\_\_-retentive (overly orderly)  
40 took \_\_\_ of hot coffee  
43 a dog \_\_\_ his tail when he's happy  
44 TXism: "tame as \_\_\_"  
50 analyze a sentence into its parts  
51 Austin univer.

**EVENT SUBMISSIONS**  
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## NOTICE OF HEARING TO VOTE ON TAX INCREASE

A tax rate of \$0.100000 per \$100 valuation has been proposed by the governing body of ESD #9.

PROPOSED TAX RATE	\$0.100000 per \$100
NO-NEW-REVENUE TAX RATE	\$0.081940 per \$100
VOTER-APPROVAL TAX RATE	\$0.097414 per \$100
DE MINIMIS RATE	\$0.1278350 per \$100

The no-new-revenue tax rate is the tax rate for the 2023 tax year that will raise the same amount of property tax revenue for ESD #9 from the same properties in both the 2022 tax year and the 2023 tax year.

The voter-approval rate is the highest tax rate that ESD #9 may adopt without holding an election to seek voter approval of the rate, unless the de minimis rate for ESD #9 exceeds the voter-approval rate for ESD #9.

The de minimis rate is the rate equal to the sum of the no-new-revenue maintenance and operations rate for ESD #9, the rate that will raise \$500,000, and the current debt rate for ESD #9.

The proposed tax rate is greater than the no-new-revenue tax rate. This means that ESD #9 is proposing to increase property taxes for the 2022 tax year.

A PUBLIC HEARING ON THE PROPOSED TAX RATE WILL BE HELD ON August 22, 2023 AT 7 pm AT Parker County ESD 9, 1107 FM 1189, Brock, TX 76087.

The proposed tax rate is greater than the voter-approval tax rate but not greater than the de minimis rate. However, the proposed tax rate exceeds the rate that allows voters to petition for an election under Section 26.075, Tax Code. If ESD #9 adopts the proposed tax rate, the qualified voters of the ESD #9 may petition the ESD #9 to require an election to be held to determine whether to reduce the proposed tax rate. If a majority of the voters reject the proposed tax rate, the tax rate of the ESD #9 will be the voter-approval tax rate of the ESD #9

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

Property tax amount = (tax rate) x (taxable value of your property)/100

FOR the proposal:	Jim Calhoun	Randall Grissom
	Craig Chambers	
AGAINST the proposal:	None	
	PRESENT and not voting:	N/A
ABSENT:	Cruz Rivas	Trey Pool

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.

The following table compares the taxes imposed on the average residence homestead by ESD #9 last year to the taxes proposed to be imposed on the average residence homestead by ESD #9 this year.

	2022	2023	Change
<b>Total tax rate (per \$100 of value)</b>	\$0.100000	\$0.100000	increase of 0.000000, or 0.00%
<b>Average homestead taxable value</b>	\$369,807	\$432,388	increase of 13,347, or 3.74%
<b>Tax on average homestead</b>	\$369.81	\$432.34	increase of 13.35, or 3.75%
<b>Total tax levy on all properties</b>	\$1,154,303	\$1,501,497	increase of 125,431, or 12.17%

For assistance with tax calculations, please contact the tax assessor for ESD #9 at 817-596-0077 or [parkeracad@parkeracad.org](mailto:parkeracad@parkeracad.org), or visit [www.parkeracad.org](http://www.parkeracad.org) for more information.

CROSS COUNTRY

## Aledo teams sweep Cowtown Challenge

### Fink, Larson win individual titles

By Rick Mauch  
The Community News

It was a clean sweep for Aledo cross country teams on Saturday, Aug. 19 as they swept all varsity and junior varsity competitions at the Cowtown Challenge, held at The Buff in Haltom City.



Jack Fink

Madison Larson won an individual championship for a second straight week, topping the field in the 5K event with a time of 18 minutes, 54.95 seconds.

On the boys side, Jack Fink registered his first individual win of the season after taking second in the opening week. He clocked a time of 16:31.88 in his victory.

The Ladycats had four of the top five finishes, with Micah Neal taking second, Molly Garrison placing third and Sofia Brandenburg fifth. In fact, all seven Ladycat varsity runners placed in the top 10.

The junior varsity boys recorded a perfect score as the top five runners comprised the top five finishers, led by Layton Ybarra. The JV girls also had the individual winner with Aubrey Connally.

It's the second consecutive week they have competed in a meet at this venue. They began the season at the Birdville Early Bird Invitational on Aug. 12. In that 2-mile meet the Ladycats varsity also won while the Bearcats varsity was second.

"It was a great day for the Aledo Bearcats and Ladycats," coach Michael Pinkerton said. "This was the first 5K of the season, and the entire meet was swept by our Ladycats and Bearcats!"

Aledo will next compete at the Southlake Carroll Invitational on

Turn to **COWTOWN**, page A12

ALEDO FOOTBALL ADVANCE

## Bearcats look for payback in coach's debut

### Open season at home

By Rick Mauch  
The Community News

Public school powerhouse hosts a private school dynamo when Dallas Parish Episcopal comes to Buchanan Stadium to face the Aledo Bearcats Friday night, Aug. 25, at 7:30 p.m.

And while Bearcat faithful are used to facing the best competition available - and being the best competition other teams can face - what is new is the man leading their charge into battle.

The game will be the debut of Robby Jones as the Bearcats' head coach. However, he is no stranger to Aledo fans, having been with the program for 24 years.

Jones was the offensive coordinator from 2009 through last season. It was his offense that featured legendary high school running back Johnathan Gray for state championship seasons from 2009-11, in which Gray amassed 12,133 all-purpose yards (10,889 rushing) and 205 career touchdowns (70 as a senior).

Jones also engineered the most explosive offense in football at any level in a single season. The 2013 state champion Bearcats went 16-0 and became the only team ever to score over 1,000 points (1,023).

And now Jones takes the helm, replacing retired coaching legend Tim Buchanan. The last time Buchanan retired - a five-year stretch from 2014-18 - the Bearcats went 75-4 under Steve Wood, who also recently retired as athletic director.

Jones worked under both coaches and now looks to establish his own place in the record books.

### Scrimmage thoughts

The Bearcats scrimmaged Stephenville on Friday, Aug. 18 at home in preparation for this week's season opener and Jones liked what he saw from his team.

"I think we scrimmaged well both on offense and defense," he said. "Stephenville's a great



RYAN WADE/THE COMMUNITY NEWS

### Hawk Patrick-Daniels

program, but they are a 4A school and we ought to be able to handle a 4A school - and we did.

"I think our guys were ready to see an opponent across from them who wasn't their friend."

Jones praised the running of transfer sophomore Ray Guillory, a move-in who led Mansfield Lake Ridge in rushing last season (769 yards, 9 TD). He was also happy to see junior wide receiver Trace Clarkson catch a couple of touchdown passes in his first action against another opponent since injuring his ACL last season.

"All in all, I am pleased with our performance," Jones said. "It

was a good measuring stick for us."

### Back with more experience

A young Bearcats team went to Dallas last season and was defeated by the Panthers, 24-17. The Bearcats made a rally from a 24-3 deficit, but ultimately came up short.

In that contest Aledo quarterback Hauss Hejny appeared headed into the end zone for what would have been the tying/go ahead score when controversy occurred. He fumbled, but there was a question as to whether he was down before losing the ball.

"It's a good test for us. It will show how well the kids prepared over the summer and the first two weeks (of practice)," Jones said. "We've got a lot more experience this year. The kids were a little more focused today. We're getting ready to play a good opponent and you can see it in their faces."

The Bearcats would actually lose to Denton Guyer at home the next week, 44-14, for the only 0-2 start in Buchanan's career. Of course, everyone knows what happened after that as the team reeled off 14 straight wins en route to another state title.

Turn to **ADVANCE**, page A10

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**PUBLIC NOTICE**

THE TOWN OF ANNETTA, TEXAS WILL HOLD A PUBLIC HEARING FOR THE PROPOSED OPERATING BUDGET FOR FISCAL YEAR 2023-2024 AT THE REGULAR ANNETTA CITY COUNCIL MEETING ON THURSDAY, SEPTEMBER 21, 2023 AT 7:00 P.M. AT THE ANNETTA TOWN HALL, 450 THUNDER HEAD LANE.

**Town of Annetta North Public Hearing Notice**  
Notice is hereby given that the Town Council of the Town of Annetta North will conduct a Public Hearing Tuesday the 12th day of September at 7:00 p.m., 2023 at the Annetta Methodist Church Fellowship Hall 2836 FM 5, Annetta, Texas regarding an ordinance amending the Zoning Ordinance of the Town of Annetta North, as amended, zoning land generally described as; approximately 8.991 acres of land out of the Jane Collie Survey, Abstract No. 246 & the H. J. Roberts Survey, Abstract No. 1139, Town of Annetta North, Parker County, Texas as "R-2" (Single Family Residential District-2.0 Acre Lots). Members of the public are encouraged to attend and will be heard.

**ORDINANCE NO. 228**

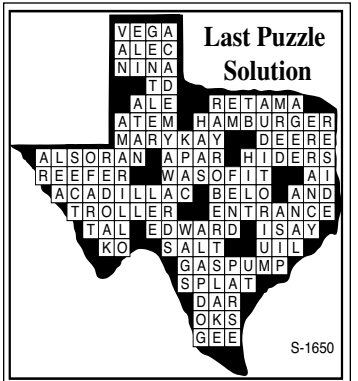
**AN ORDINANCE OF THE TOWN OF ANNETTA, TEXAS, PROHIBITING THE USE OR DETONATION OF FIREWORKS DURING A BURN BAN IMPLEMENTED BY THE PARKER COUNTY COMMISSIONER'S COURT; DECLARING THE USE OR DETONATION OF FIREWORKS WITHIN TOWN LIMITS TO BE A NUISANCE PURSUANT TO TEXAS LOCAL GOVERNMENT CODE SECTION 217.022; PROVIDING A SEVERABILITY CLAUSE; PROVIDING A SAVINGS CLAUSE; PROVIDING THAT THIS ORDINANCE IS CUMULATIVE; PROVIDING A PENALTY FOR VIOLATION; PROVIDING FOR PUBLICATION; AND PROVIDING AN EFFECTIVE DATE.**

Any person violating any of the provisions of this Ordinance shall be deemed guilty of a Class C misdemeanor upon conviction and shall be fined, except as otherwise provided herein, in a sum not to exceed Two Thousand Dollars (\$2,000.00) for each offense, and a separate offense shall be deemed committed upon each day during or on which a violation occurs or continues.

This ordinance shall be in full force and effect from and after its passage and publication as required by law.

**PASSED AND APPROVED BY THE TOWN COUNCIL OF THE TOWN OF ANNETTA, TEXAS, ON THIS 17TH DAY OF AUGUST, 2023.**

(s) Sandy Roberts  
Mayor  
Attest:  
(s) Jamee Long  
Town Secretary



**NOTICE OF REQUEST FOR PROPOSAL CITY OF WILLOW PARK**  
The City of Willow Park is accepting bids for a Bank Depository. Bids must be received by 5:00 P.M. on September 22, 2023 at Willow Park City Hall located at 120 El Chico Trail, Suite A, Willow Park, TX 76087. The City will award the bids at the regular city council meeting on September 26, 2023 at 6:00 P.M. The City Council reserves the right to reject any and/or all bids. Respondents may download an electronic copy of the bids specification on the City's website at https://www.willowparktx.gov/public-notices-rfps-rfq. Information may be requested by e-mail to Candice J. Scott at cscott@willowpark.org.

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# ADVANCE

from page A8

Episcopal, meanwhile, would start 3-0 before losing 31-28 at home to Dallas South Oak Cliff, which won a second consecutive Class 5A Division II state championship.

## Two rich histories

The Bearcats, of course, are the defending Class 5A Division I state champions. It was their 11th state championship in program history and 10th since 2009. They have more state titles than any other public school program in the history of Texas.

The Panthers have won four consecutive Texas Association of Private and Parochial Schools Division I championships. They also captured a Division II title in 2014.

Between them, these programs have won 361 games over the past 15 seasons with 15 state championships. The Bearcats are 211-15 and Parish Episcopal is 150-43.

## All-time series

Not many teams have a victory advantage against the Bearcats, but Episcopal is one. That is a bit of a tricky statistic, however, as last season was the first time the teams had ever met.

Very few teams lead their overall series against the Bearcats. Of those who do, most games were played before the arrival of Buchanan in 1993.

“Our kids still remember that feeling of disappointment last season,” Jones said. “They didn’t feel like they played their best, and they’re ready for a better showing.”

## Winning streaks

Aledo brings a 14-game winning streak into the contest and Parish Episcopal has won nine straight.

## Season opening success

Since Jones arrived in Aledo, the Bearcats are 18-6 in season openers. The Bearcats have not lost back-to-back season openers since the 1990-91 seasons, when they lost to Comanche both times, 13-0 and 13-7.

“We’re not going to do it again this year,” Jones said. “It’s going to be a tough game, no doubt, but we plan on winning.”

Episcopal has won five consecutive season openers.

## State rankings

The Bearcats enter the season ranked No. 1 in Class 5A Division I. Episcopal is the top-ranked program in TAPPS Division I.

Of course, Jones noted that it’s not uncommon for the Bearcats to play highly ranked opponents early in the season. Such teams in the past have included Baker Mayfield-led Lake Travis in 2011, along with the likes of Cedar Park, Highland Park and more.

And, of course Parish Episcopal and Denton Guyer last season and again this year.

“We’ve normally opened up against a top-ranked team or played them in our second game, so we’re used to that,” Jones said. “We know who we are. Rankings don’t matter this time of year, it’s where you are when the season’s over that we’re concerned with.”

## Championship road

Since 2009 Aledo has either won a state championship or had its season ended by a team that went on to win the title. The lone exception was in 2015 when they lost to Mansfield Lake Ridge in the state semifinals and Lake Ridge lost the next week to Richmond George Ranch.

In fact, of their 14 losses overall in that span, seven have been to state champions and three others to teams that reached a state final.

While not nearly as lengthy a stretch, Parish



Lincoln Tubbs

RYAN WADE/THE COMMUNITY NEWS

Episcopal, 46-4 in its four-year title run, lost to 5A Division II state champion Dallas South Oak Cliff last season. In 2021 their lone loss was to 4A Division I finalist Austin LBJ.

And in 2020 the only time the Panthers lost was to Fort Worth Nolan Catholic, whom they turned around and defeated in the state final.

“That means the championship goes through you,” Jones said. “If you want to be the man, you’ve got to beat the man.”

## Elsewhere in District 3-5A Division I

Thursday, Aug. 24

Frisco at Brewer

New Braunfels at Denton Ryan

Friday, Aug. 25

Burleson at Burleson Centennial, 7 p.m.

Frisco Rock Hill at Northwest, 7 p.m.

Boswell at Saginaw, 7 p.m.

South Hills at Dallas Molina, 7:30 p.m.

Red Oak at The Colony, 7 p.m.

Azle opens season Sept. 1 at Grapevine, 7 p.m.

## Game at a glance

Dallas Parish Episcopal Panthers (0-0) at Aledo Bearcats (0-0).

When: 8 p.m. Friday, Buchanan Stadium.

Returning starters: Parish Episcopal 8 offense/3 defense. Aledo 7 offense/5 defense.

Parish Episcopal offensive players to watch: QB Sawyer Anderson (3,208 yards, 37 TD, 7 int. passing), RB Maddux Reed (1,038 yards, 18 TD rushing; 227 yards, 1 TD receiving), WR Bryson Fields (24 catches, 566 yards, 5 TD).

Aledo offensive players to watch: QB Hauss Hejny (1,953 yards, 19 TD, 6 int. passing; 1,277 yards, 15 TD rushing, 9.5 yards per carry), WR Hawk Patrick-Daniels (moving over from RB, where he gained 1,410 yards and scored 21 TD), OL Josh McCarley (started final four games last season after all-stater Isaac Sohn, now at the University of North Texas, got injured).

Parish Episcopal defensive players to watch: DL Caleb Irving (96 tackles, 13.5 for loss, 2.5 sacks), LB Parker Meese (70 tackles).

Aledo defensive players to watch: LB Davhon Keys (102.5 tackles, 8.5 for loss, 1 int.), S Jake Gillespie (80 tackles, 7.5 for loss, 2 int.), CB Jaden Allen (41 tackles, 3 int.).

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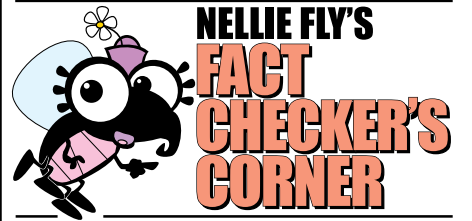
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# Kid Scoop

THE AWARD-WINNING PRINT & ONLINE FAMILY FEATURE



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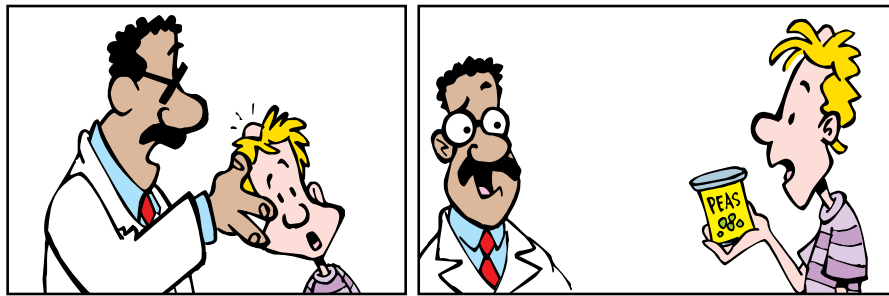


## SMILE POWER

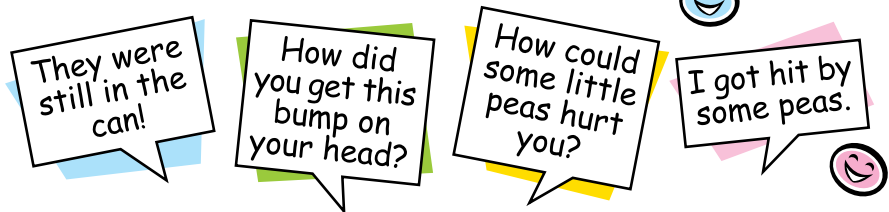
Smile and the world smiles with you! Smiles have the power to make people happy. Maybe that is why millions of people use the smile emoji when sending messages. And with a smile, people from different countries who speak different languages can communicate.

### Just What the Doctor Ordered

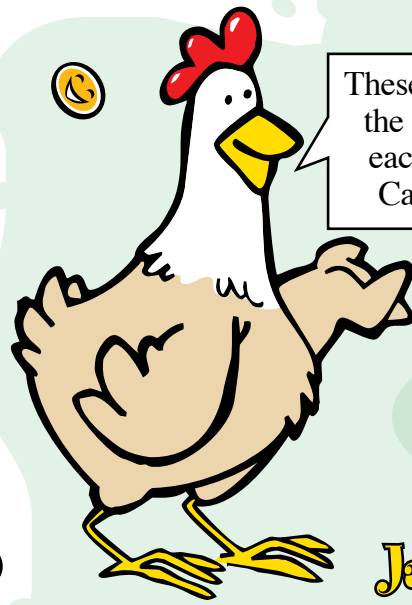
Doctors even tell us that laughter can help sick people heal more quickly. All in all, a smile is very powerful.



Cut out the word balloons below and paste them in the correct order on the comic strip above.



Standards Link: Health: Identify activities and actions that promote or enhance emotional health.



These riddles are from all over the world and the answer to each one is the same thing. Can you guess what it is?

#### Spain

What is a small, white chest that all know how to open and nobody knows how to close?

#### Jamaica

What is more useful when it is broken?

#### Peru

In a pot there are two kinds of food. What is it?

#### Zambia

What is an entire little house without a door?

#### Malawi

I have built my house without any door. What is it?

#### Afghanistan

In a bowl of china fixed, two liquids with colors unmixed. What is it?

Have you figured out the answer? If not, color all the boxes with odd numbers. Read the letters that are left and you will know the answer.

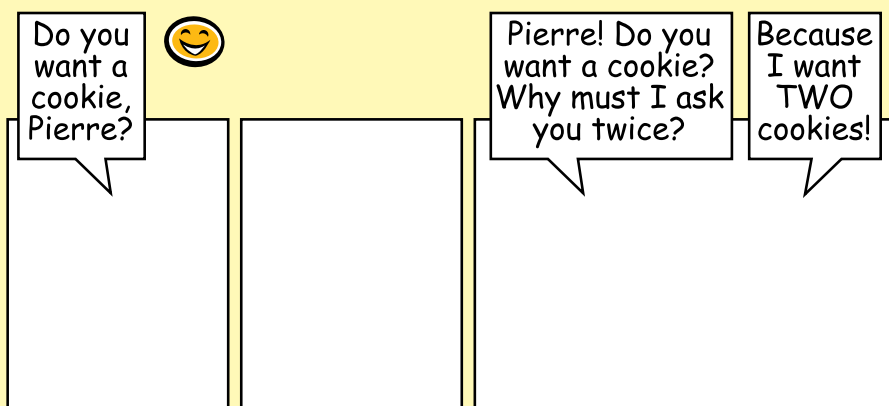
2	7	9	6	5	8	4	3	2
A	H	T	N	W	E	G	P	G

Standards Link: Social Science: Compare life in different places and recognize that some aspects of cultures are similar.

How many smiles can you find on this page?

### Laughter! The Universal Language!

There are jokes from all over the world. What can you learn about people by reading their jokes? Draw your own comic strip using this joke from Martinique.



Standards Link: Reading Comprehension: Follow simple written directions.

### Extra! Extra! Superlative Fun

Look through the newspaper for three happy pictures. Label one "Happy," one "Happier," and one "Happiest." Repeat this game with other words.

Standards Link: Vocabulary Development: Understand comparative and superlative case.

With so much information available in print, on TV and online every day, it is important to know that some information is **true** and some is **false** or misleading.

Sometimes news reports make a mistake. Good journalists will let readers and viewers know of the error as soon as possible. Other times, false information is designed on purpose to make you feel a certain way.

### How do you tell the difference between fact and fiction?

1. Read beyond the story's headline. Headlines can't tell the whole story.
2. Do some research! Go to the library and look up more information. Your librarian can help you.
3. Look for more information online. Be sure to check more than one online site as some sites simply repeat false information.
4. Make sure the publications and websites you use to check facts are trustworthy.
5. Ask a parent or family member to help you understand more about the story.

### FACT CHECKER CHALLENGE OF THE WEEK

One of these statements is true and one is false. Do the research and find out. Then share what you learned with your friends and family!

Smiling makes us feel happier.

TRUE  FALSE

Smiling is contagious.

TRUE  FALSE

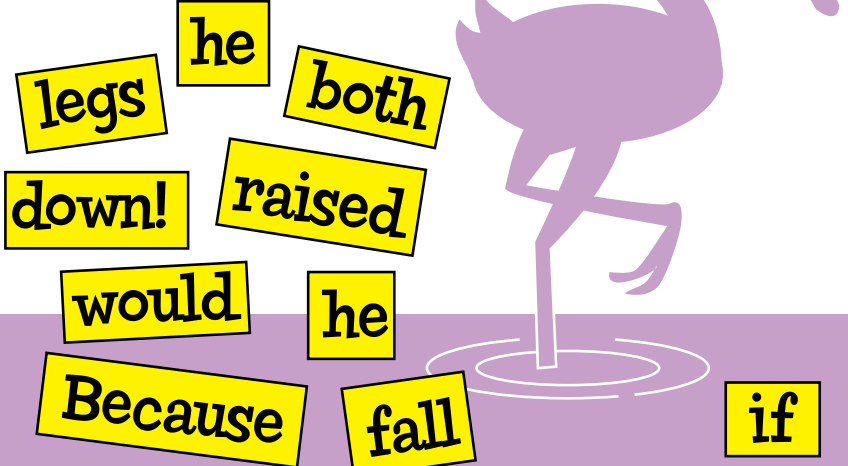
Was it easy or difficult to find out if the above statements were true or false? It's not always easy being a News Fact Checker. But it's important to always try to get the **whole** story!

Standards Link: Research: Locate and check information about a given topic using multiple resources.

### Kid Scoop Puzzler

Why does a crane raise one leg when he stands in the water?

Put the words in the right order to discover the answer to this joke from Poland.



Standards Link: Reading Comprehension: Follow simple written directions.

### Double Double Word Search

Find the words in the puzzle. How many of them can you find on this page?

- OPEN
- COMIC
- SMILE
- LAUGHTER
- FOOD
- JOKES
- WORLD
- QUICKLY
- GUESS
- ORDER
- PEOPLE
- SILLY
- BOWL
- LEARN

W	O	D	O	O	F	E	R	A	W
Y	C	P	T	V	L	L	W	O	B
L	O	Q	E	I	A	O	E	C	N
K	R	M	M	N	U	Y	L	I	R
C	D	S	P	S	G	L	P	M	A
I	E	A	S	Z	H	L	O	O	E
U	R	E	W	C	T	I	E	C	L
Q	U	J	O	K	E	S	P	U	U
G	B	F	D	L	R	O	W	F	Q

Standards Link: Letter sequencing. Recognize identical words. Skim and scan reading. Recall spelling patterns.

### FROM THE Kid Scoop LESSON LIBRARY

#### Good News/Bad News

In today's paper, categorize stories as either "good news" or "bad news." Explain why you think newspapers print "bad" news at times. Are there some stories that are bad news to some and good to other people?

Standards Link: Writing Applications: Write formal letters; write persuasive compositions that state a position or proposal.

## What is the longest word in the English language?

ANSWER: Smiles; because there is a 'mille' between the first and last letters.

### Write On!

#### What makes you smile?

Write a paragraph about what makes you smile. Give at least three details about this.

VOLLEYBALL

# Ladycats follow tournament success with rout of Lamar

## Coach celebrates 500th win recently

By Ryan Wade  
The Community News

It's been a nice stretch for the Aledo Ladycats volleyball team.

After giving their coach, Claire Gay, her 500th career victory on Aug. 14, a 3-2 thrilling victory against Keller Fossil Ridge at home (25-21, 25-19, 25-27, 26-28, 15-9), they captured silver with their second-place finish in the Northwest Tournament over the weekend.

Then, the Ladycats hit the road on Tuesday, Aug. 22, where they decimated Lamar in straight sets on their home court to take the match.

Aledo (13-6) prevailed by scores of 25-11, 25-23, and 25-12 over the host Lady Vikings.

Kaelee Berkley and Kinley Elms dominated at the net for the Ladycats as they ended the match with 14 kills and 11 kills, respectively.

Kenrie Pruitt and Ella Meador scooped nine digs a piece in the match. Ava Reding amassed 23 assists. Alyssa Todd scored a pair of aces while serving and Haley Lowe picked up a pair of blocks in the middle of the net.

During tournament play starting on Thursday, Aug. 17, the Ladycats dusted off Waxahachie to win the match 2-1 in the opening round. Byron Nelson and Coronado handed Aledo back-to-back losses to close out the opening day with a 1-2 record.

Business picked up for the Ladycats on Day 2. They made short work of Lamar and Grapevine, winning in



COACH NATALIE GONZALES

TOP: Aledo's varsity Ladycats pose for a team photo during the Northwest Volleyball Classic last weekend. | BOTTOM: Ella Meador holds Aledo's Consolation Silver Champion trophy from the Northwest Volleyball Classic where the Ladycats went 5-3.

straight sets to start off the day. An unfortunate encounter with Rockwall led to the only loss of the day for Aledo to make them 3-3 in the tournament through the first couple days of competition.

On Saturday, August 19, Aledo closed out the tournament with wins over Ridge Point and Highland Park to secure their spot on the podium as they brought home the hardware.

Tournament season continues for the Ladycats this weekend as they will compete in the Arlington Classic.



## COTOWN

from page A8

Saturday, Aug. 26. First Race is at 6:40 a.m.

### Cowtown Challenge at the Buff, Haltom City



#### Aledo results

##### Varsity boys (team champions)

1. Jack Fink, 16:31.88.
9. Dominick Barrera, 17:57.89.
10. Luke Schabel, 18:00.35.
17. Bo Merrill, 18:30.81.
19. Tyler Connelly, 18:48.28.
22. Anderson Smith, 18:58.40.

##### Varsity girls (team champions)

1. Madison Larson, 18:54.95.
2. Micah Neal, 19:38.62.
3. Molly Garrison, 19:57.01.
5. Sofia Brandenburg, 20:41.14.
6. Mykel Murry, 20:50.67.
7. Elizabeth Griffin, 21:37.41.
9. Mayden Mitchell, 21:45.55.

##### JV boys (team champions)

1. Layton Ybarra, 17:33.44.
2. Lincoln Tuin, 19:37.87.
3. Landon Eaton, 19:41.56.
4. Ian Robbins, 19:46.36.
5. Reed Murray, 19:51.95.
7. Zach Rivas, 20:20.07.
10. James Price, 20:40.89.
13. Ethan Matthews, 20:54.78.
31. Jaden Delgado, 23:06.24.
48. Caden West, 24:30.21.
51. Reece Copeland, 24:44.81.

##### JV girls (team champions)

1. Aubrey Connally, 23:35.04.
2. Sadie Williams, 25:03.03.
8. Maddy Shepard, 27:15.11.
20. Alexa Estrada, 30:26.59.
30. Julia Bettencourt, 35:50.63.

# Scrimmages are over



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## Longtime assistant set to make own mark

By Rick Mauch  
The Community News

Robby Jones already knew what it was like to replace a coaching legend. He watched his dad do it - twice.

Robby has taken the helm of the Aledo Bearcats this season after more than two decades as an assistant and the past 14 as offensive coordinator. He replaces one of Texas' all-time great head coaches, Tim Buchanan, who guided the Bearcats to eight state championships and was athletic director while the now also retired Steve Wood won three more.

Buchanan took a hiatus from coaching to only be the AD from 2014-18. Then, he and Wood switched roles in 2019.

And through it all, Jones was there. Just like his father, he knew when the time was right he'd get his chance.

"I learned football in general from those guys," Robby said. "I was on the defensive side of the ball for a while with coach Wood. That helped me when I became offensive coordinator because I understood defenses. I understand how to attack defenses."

"I learned how to treat kids, how to coach X's and O's. Buc is still helping me with how to treat parents."

Before all that, however, he learned from his dad even though he had yet to put on his first coaching whistle. Jerry Jones gave his son a look at what replacing a legend is like.

He was an assistant for G.A. Moore at Celina for a handful of seasons before taking over the head coaching job when Moore returned to Pilot Point for the second of his three stints there in 1977. Jerry then took over for Moore again at Pilot Point when Moore left to coach at Sherman in 1986.

And, just like his son, Jerry enjoyed success as a state champion assistant coach when Celina shared a state title in 1974 with Big Sandy.

"When I was a kid I saw how that played out. I saw the pressure that was put on my dad," Robby said. "But I learned a lot also, especially when he

took the job at Pilot Point and I was a little older."

Suffice to say Jerry handled the pressure well. He fashioned a career record of 206-77-5 in 25 years as a head coach at Celina, Maypearl, Pilot Point and Prosper. That's an average of more than eight wins and just over three losses per season over a quarter century, a record plenty of coaches would love to have.

### Part of the community

Robby has endeared himself to the Aledo community. Sure, being a part of 10 state championships doesn't hurt, but he and his family are not just Bearcats, but Aledo through and through.

Of course, being one of the best assistants to be found, Robby has had chances in the past to become a head coach. But, being loyal - especially to his family - he just couldn't bring himself to leave.

"I had some opportunities, but they weren't right for me and my family," he said.

Robby's wife, Cheryl, is principal at the Aledo Learning Center. Their two sons, 24-year-old Tarleton graduate Dane and 22-year-old Tarleton student Cade (Robby and Cheryl both went to Tarleton), both went through all their pre-college school years in the Aledo School District.

"How many coach's kids can say that? Not many," Robby said. "Any place that hired me would have to offer my wife an administrative position because I wasn't going to ask her to give up her career."

"They wanted to be Bearcats. Plus, I had a good gig as offensive coordinator for Aledo football - and that was pretty good."

As for community support, some of the fans have a long connection with him - very long.

"Some of the parents setting in the stands are kids I've coached," he said.

### Already has his own legacy

Robby is already a part of Aledo football lore - national football lore, in fact. Not only once, but twice, he's been a big part of history being made.

When Robby became the offensive coordinator in 2009, he had been the running backs coach and co-OC the two seasons before.

During that time he groomed a



First-year Bearcat head coach Robby Jones addresses his team.

RYAN WADE/THE COMMUNITY NEWS

young running back who would go on to become one of the greatest high school running backs in U.S. history.

Johnathan Gray, who is now one of his assistant coaches, rushed for 10,889 yards, amassed 12,133 all-purpose and scored 205 touchdowns in his four seasons as a Bearcat. Most of his success came between 2009 and 2011, when Aledo went 45-3 and won three consecutive state championships.

Then, two seasons after Gray graduated and moved on to play for the University of Texas, Robby was the mastermind behind the most prolific offense in football history - at any level. The Bearcats became the only team ever to score more than 1,000 points in a season (1,023) in posting a 16-0 record and, of course, a state championship.

Two years earlier his offense scored 885 points in 2011 and ranks 16th all-time. The 2016 offense ranks 26th with 855, in 2019 they scored 815 to rank 52nd all-time,

and a year earlier they scored 809 to rank 62nd.

Those teams combined to go 77-3 and win five state championships.

In his 14 seasons as offensive coordinator the Bearcats 49 points per game, including 45 per game in the postseason.

### Ready to get going

As the season opener approaches at home against Dallas Parish Episcopal - a team that handed the Bearcats a rare defeat, 24-17, to open the 2022 season - Robby is anxious for the game to finally arrive.

"I'm ready for the first game to get here and get into a coaching routine," he said, adding with a chuckle, "I'm becoming a lot better at emailing."

"I got back from coaching school and it took me two hours to reply to all my emails. I had a routine as an offensive coordinator, but I didn't have a routine as a head coach and I'm ready to one started."

His debut is certainly a doozy, featuring a pair of the state's most elite powerhouse programs. Along with the Bearcats' sterling record of success, the Panthers have won four consecutive Texas Association of Private and Parochial Schools Division I championships and a Division II title in 2014.

As for what his legacy among Aledo head coaches will be when it's all said and done, Robby is ready for whatever challenges come along. He will face them with the championship attitude he learned starting with his dad and later from Buchanan, Wood and his fellow Bearcat coaches.

"We plan to continue the tradition in success in 5A and when we go 6A we'll be ready for that," he said. "It's going to be more difficult, but we're always going to have championship expectations."

"We're always going to have championship expectations."

- Coach Robby Jones



# Fall Sports Preview

## Bearcats defending another title



### Team in familiar position

By Rick Mauch  
The Community News

If it's August, it's time for the Aledo Bearcats to defend a state championship. Ten times since 2009 they have been in this position, and Robby Jones has been there every time.

Now it is Jones who is leading the Bearcats as their head coach, replacing the legendary Tim Buchanan.

"It's always difficult to defend a title. We've gotten kind of spoiled here in Aledo," Jones said. "You continue to work hard, practice hard. That's how you get into a position to defend in the first place."

"These kids are ready to play a game, they tell me. They're ready to get into game mode, install a plan and get going."

"They'll do just that when they host another perennial power, four

time defending Texas Association of Private and Parochial Schools Division I champion Dallas Parish Episcopal at 7 p.m. on Friday, Aug. 25. The Panthers' route to the title included a season-opening 24-17 win against the Bearcats in Dallas last season.

The Bearcats have not lost back-to-back season openers since 1990-91, when they lost to Comanche each year, 13-0 and 13-7. That was long before Jones came along in 2000, however. It was even before Buchanan came to town in 1993.

So, as the season looms for the Bearcats, optimism is once again high. They return plenty of talent on both sides of the football, seven offensive and five defensive starters.

The varsity roster features 34 seniors. Eleven of those are among the dozen returning starters.

"We don't have a whole lot, but the ones we have are pretty good," Jones said.

### Offense

The Bearcats return the heart of their offense, TCU commit Hauss Hejny at quarterback. The senior, who was the Offensive MVP of the 52-14 Class 5A Division I state championship victory against College Station, passed for 1,953 yards with 19 touchdowns opposite six interceptions, while rushing for 1,277 yards and 15 scores.

Hejny was at his best in the biggest games. In wins at Burleson

Centennial and Denton Ryan in consecutive weeks late in the season, he rushed for 308 yards and four TD while completing 23 of 27 passes for 423 yards with five TD and one interception. In the state championship game he rushed for 142 yards and a pair of TD along with completing 11 of 15 passes for 177 yards, two TD and no interceptions.

Hejny will have lots of help in moving the ball. Also back as starters are sophomore wide receiver Kaydon Finley (26 catches, 417 yards, 6 TD) and senior tight end Tyson Timms (25 catches, 332 yards, 3 TD).

Senior Hawk Patrick-Daniels is moving to slot receiver after leading the team in rushing yards as a running back last season with 1,410 yards and 21 touchdowns. He also caught 10 passes for 96 yards and another score.

Patrick-Daniels played receiver at Brewer before coming to Aledo last year.

"He feels that's a more natural position for him, but we'll still use him in the backfield," Jones said.

Sophomore Ray Guillory, a move-in, is expected to start at running back. He led Mansfield Lake Ridge in rushing with 769 yards and nine TD, along with catching 18 passes for 154 yards and three more TD.

Senior wide receiver Trace Clarkson is returning after missing his entire junior season with a knee injury.

The offensive line features three seniors who were regular starters in 2022, Devron "DJay" Williams (6-foot-4, 300 pounds), Alex Arana (5-9, 225) and Carter Campbell (6-1, 250). Also, senior Josh McCarley (6-0, 230) started the final four games of the season after all-stater Isaac Sohn, now at the University of North Texas, got injured.

Sophomore Payton Williams (6-2, 300) is joining the varsity after

Turn to DEFEND, page B5

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# CROSS COUNTRY Aledo set to continue long running tradition



Elizabeth Griffin

## Boys and girls both eyeing state

By Rick Mauch  
The Community News

Competing at state has become a tradition in the Aledo cross country program under head coach Mike Pinkerton.

That continued last season when the Ladycats qualified as a team and were joined by now junior Jack Fink on the boys side. The girls team lost only two runners and the boys graduated just one. So hopes are high for even more success in 2023.

"It will be a tough season, as we are going to several big meets. However, our teams will be highly competitive this season," Pinkerton said. "I believe we will be very successful."

Back from the girls state team are sophomores Sofia Brandenburg, Molly Garrison, Elizabeth Griffin and Sadie Williams, along with senior Aubrey Connally. Griffin posted a career-best time of 19 minutes, 11 seconds to place 21st at state, while Garrison led the group at regionals with a PR time of 18:30 for second place.

"It will be a very exciting season."



Fink is a two-time state qualifier, having reached with the entire boys team in 2021. He finished 32nd at state last season after taking 13th at regionals.

Fink will be joined by fellow returners Dominick Barrera, sophomore; Bo Merrill, sophomore; Luke Schabel, junior; and Anderson Smith, sophomore.

Incoming freshmen and newcomers who could make a big impact, Pinkerton said, include sophomore Madison Larson (from Fort Worth Southwest Christian), freshman Mayden Mitchell, freshman Micah Neal, junior Layton Ybarra (from White Settlement High Point Academy) and sophomore Mykel Murry, who didn't run cross country last year.

Ybarra won the Texas Charter School Academic and Athletic League state championship in 2022 and Larsen finished second in the Texas Association of Private and Parochial Schools Class 5A State Meet last season.

As for the road to state, Pinkerton noted, "Regionals will be very tough as usual, with Grapevine and Colleyville Heritage being strong every year. I believe that our kids will compete very well, and we will be successful at both district and regionals."

"It will be a very exciting season."



Jack Fink

## CHEER

# Busy year ahead

## Burk takes lead as new coach

By Ryan Wade  
The Community News

Aledo's Ladycat cheer squad is going through quite the overhaul for the 2023-24 athletic year.

Beyond the change with the program officially being brought under the athletic department's umbrella this season, the biggest change comes in the form of newly-minted squad head coach, Sarah Burk.

Prior to arriving in Aledo, Burk coached Birdville's Lady Hawks cheer team last season. With the expansion of Aledo's team this year, it was an opportunity too good for Burk to pass up.

"It was a great opportunity, since [Aledo] moved their cheer program under athletics, for me to get to come and grow a program," she stated. "This year I'm able to make two competition teams instead of just one. We'll be able to compete at different levels."

"It will grow my freshmen girls, who were not able to participate in competitions in the past. It will give them an opportunity to grow so that once they are juniors or seniors they will have that experience. I'm hoping to get an opportunity to start working with the middle schools, as well, to share my vision for the program so we can be vertically aligned on things like competition and game day."

In previous years, opportunities to compete during competition season was reserved for just the varsity squad. With this move, Burk will be able to take two squads to four of the five competitions to represent Aledo this year, starting in November.

The move from Birdville to Aledo isn't the only adjustment the new skipper is getting used



KRISTIN MORALES

to. In her previous post, the only thing she had to navigate come competition time was the holiday schedule.

Historically, that's not the only thing going on around Aledo, though. November is still an extraordinarily busy time at AHS.

"One of my girls just asked me why we're already learning choreography," Burk said as she looks ahead on her team's schedule. "That's the reason why. We're

going to be managing quite a bit. This is my first year here in Aledo. I'm not used to the football team going all the way to state championships. I'm still wrapping my head around [cheering for football as cheer competition season begins]. That's going to be new territory for me."

While it is new territory for her, the new head coach is already getting some significant help from

her veteran cheerleaders. Team captain Daniella Tregellas, co-captain Maryn Ward, and spirit officer Lilly Wilson have shared their experience with the bustling schedule as the team prepares for the season ahead.



"The girls have been very welcoming and enlightening me on all things Aledo," Burk commended her squad during the transition. "They're very intuitive about

things I might not know about the community and getting me ready for football season. It's been a blessing."

The Ladycat cheer team will assume their gameday cheer duties with the varsity football season opener on Friday, Aug. 25 when Dallas Parish Episcopal comes to town. The squad's first taste of competition is still a few months away, slated for Nov. 18.

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GOLF

# Ladycats, Bearcats prepping for more success



Kyla Morales takes some practice swings in preparation for the 2023 state tournament. Morales returns this fall for her Senior year.

RICK MAUCH/THE COMMUNITY NEWS

## Plenty of returning talent for boys, girls

By Rick Mauch  
The Community News

The Aledo golf program has a long history of sending golfers to state in the spring. And it all starts with success in the fall.

"This fall is about getting all the kids experience against some quality competition," coach Brian Mourning said. "This will give us a look at what we can expect for the spring."

The Ladycats qualified the entire team for state last season, a third consecutive year. The boys were represented by the now graduated Braylon Mahanay, who is now competing for Weatherford College.

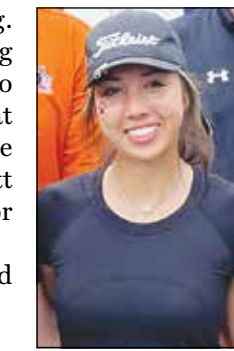
Back from that Ladycats team who competed at state are senior Kyla Morales and sophomore Emily Crick. They will be joined on the varsity by fellow returning seniors Sara Michaelis and Kennedy Parker, along with juniors Reagan Gilliland and Abby Gray and sophomore Karlee Shaw.

The Bearcats narrowly missed returning as a team to state in

the spring. Back among those who competed at regionals are senior Jett Moore, junior Helton Mosiello and sophomore Grayson Freeman.

They will be joined by senior Cade Moore, junior Ethan Elmore and sophomore Braydon Stokes as varsity returners.

Who will be on the Black and Orange Teams for boys and girls has not been determined. In fact,



Kyla Morales



Jett Moore

Anderson could make an impact, Mourning added.

And while district competition is a long way away in the spring, the fall can give coaches and players

a glimpse of who their biggest threats will be come the district tournament. Last season, as has been the case for many years, the Ladycats and Bearcats won district in runaway fashion.

"Granbury has most of these girls team coming back. They placed second at district last year. On the guys side, Rider has some kids that can play," Mourning said.

The Bearcats begin the season in the Bart Granger Memorial tournament Sept. 15-16 at Pecan Valley Golf Course in Fort Worth. The 54-hole tournament features a grueling 36 holes on Friday, followed by 18 on Saturday.

The Ladycats start the season the same weekend at the Granbury Fall Classic at Harbor Lakes Golf Club, a 36-hole event.

"This fall is all about getting the kids experience."

- Coach Brian Mourning

there is an ongoing competition weekly, Mourning said.

"We do not have set teams for the year. We will qualify for tournaments," he said.

A few boys who could make the jump

up from junior varsity, Mourning said, include senior Johnnie Reed and juniors Brian Yarbrough and William Kirkman. Also, freshman Tyler



TENNIS

# Team Tennis

## Fall team touts experience for Aledo

By Ryan Wade  
The Community News

Following a successful spring season that sent eight players to Lubbock for the regional tournament, Aledo's tennis team heads into the fall season with a significant number of experienced competitors returning to the club.

And, once again the Racquetcats are expected to walk away with a district championship - something that has been the norm for them for quite some time. Last season was no different as they won 5-5A and advanced past bidistrict in the postseason.

Craig Mason paired with outgoing senior Hogan Posey last spring as the duo won district before qualifying for regionals. Mason heads into his senior season at Aledo as a four-year varsity player for the Bearcats.

Scott Mason and Bryanna Orr won district last season in mixed doubles competition before making the trip to Lubbock. A

four-year varsity player in his own right, Mason will cap off his high school career this year, as well. Meanwhile, Orr will bring a ton of high-level experience to her junior season for Aledo.

After qualifying for regionals last spring, Kenley Germany will have an opportunity to make another run in girl singles competition during her senior year.

Juniors Ben Farmer and Elli Kate Bussmeir will bring regional

tournament experience into the fall campaign for the Bearcats, as well. Farmer qualified for regionals as a singles competitor. Paige Federman and Bussmeir made it to regionals as a team in girls doubles play. With the departure of Federman,

Bussmeir will have an opportunity to parlay previous experience into future success this season.

Two more seniors will lead the boys team this fall. Ibrahim Choudhry and Nate Ashabraner

Turn to TENNIS, page C6



SPECIAL TO THE COMMUNITY NEWS

Aledo tennis team members pictured are (front row, from left) Paxton Psencik, Tom Ruminsky, Ben Kurth, Casen Freeland, and Brennan Holbrook; (second row) Kenley Germany, Elli Kate Bussmeir, Eleanor Jack, Bryanna Orr, Sydney Byrd, Lila Satterfield, Gracie Heydman, Natalie Nawrocki, and Patrice Loftin; and (back row) Nate Ashabraner, Will Beyer, Scott Mason, Jacob Heckathorn, Craig Mason, Francois Britz, Benjamin Farmer, and Ibrahim Choudhry.

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# VOLLEYBALL Pieces change, but goals remain for Ladycats

## Talent returns for continued success

By Ryan Wade  
The Community News

After compiling a 31-16 overall record (10-2 in District 5-5A) during the 2022 season before being ushered out the playoffs by Argyle last November, the Ladycat volleyball team graduated some of the squads top contributors. Maddie Frank, Alyssa Gonzales, and Mia Little left a void when their respective high school careers came to an end.

Adding to the chasm was the departure of highly-talented outside hitter Lauryn Mack. Mack transferred into Aledo for the 2022-23 academic year and quickly became a prominent player for the Ladycats.

Unfortunately, as quickly as she arrived in Aledo, Mack transferred back out where she will play for All Saints Episcopal in Fort Worth this season.

Rebuilding a team from one season to the next while endlessly trying to maintain, if not exceed, the same level of success from the year before is the name of the game in prep athletics. In light of the talent that departed at the end of the 2022 season, Ladycat head coach Claire Gay finds herself in an all too familiar position of filling the gaps with fresh faces while looking to veteran players to step up into leadership roles.

One familiar face Gay looked to last season as the future leader of the squad is Vivian Parker. As a junior, Parker amassed 327 kills last season while also scooping up 465 digs. Not only will she play a big role in Aledo's attack this season, but she will also be looked at as a leader by her teammates.

Haley Lowe and Kinley Elms will also get more work up front for the Ladycats. In the absence of Gonzales and Frank, Lowe and Elms will pair up with Parker to be



KRISTIN MORALES

the three towers of power at the net for the 2023 season.

Lowe's defense was her hallmark in 2022 as she collected 60 blocks.

In her 55 sets played last season, Elms' kill rate was just shy of one per set. This season the Ladycats will do well if she is able to continue that rate with the dramatic uptick in opportunities to be on the floor coming her way.

Juniors Kenrie Pruitt and Ava Reding return this season, as well. Reding accounted for 456 assists in 2022.

Pruitt earned more playing time late in the season last year. In 37 sets played in 2022 she accounted for 87 digs and 15 assists.

In the wake of Little moving on after last season, sophomore Ella Meador will get the bump up to the varsity squad as the resident libero.

With a mixture of veteran players and salty newcomers to the squad, the Ladycats look to make another run at the top of the District 5-5A standings and hopefully craft a run deep in the playoffs in 2023.



## TENNIS

from page B3

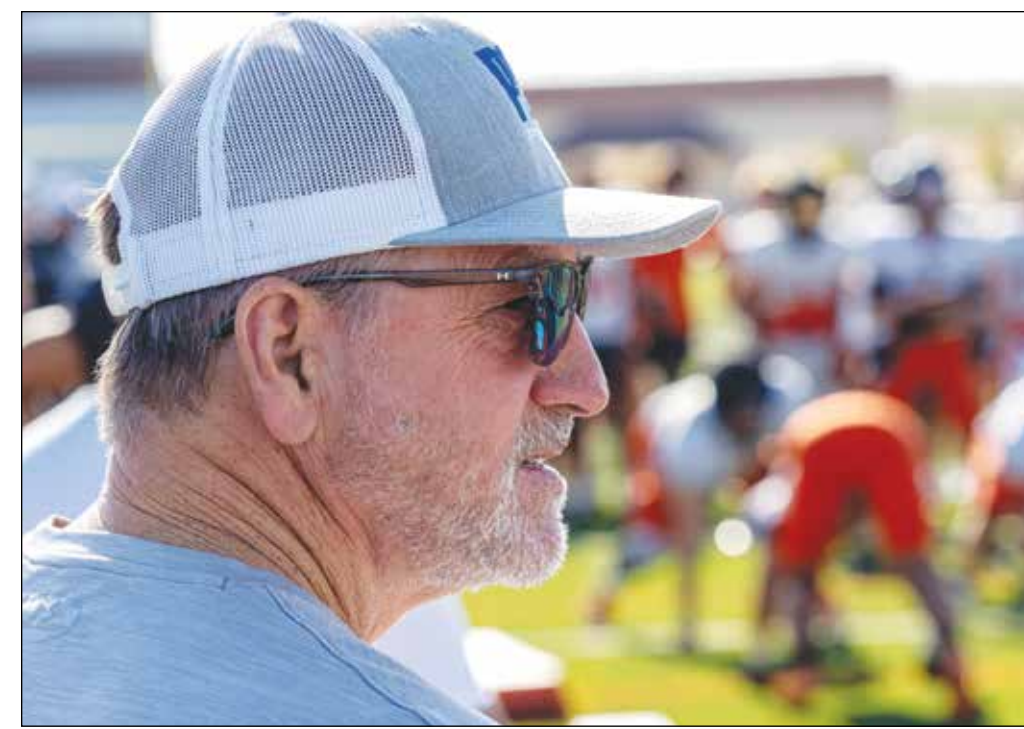
round out the elder statesmen for the Bearcats.

For the underclassmen, Will Beyer, Jacob Heckathorn, Francois Britz, Eleanor Jack, Gracie Heydman, and Patrice Loftin make up the remaining juniors on the team. Natalie Nawrocki and Sydney Byrd are the only two sophomores on the team this year.

The tennis team welcomes six incoming freshmen to the team for the fall season. Lila Satterfield, Tom Ruminsky, Brennan Holbrook, Ben Kurth, Paxton Psencik, and Casen Freeland will have an opportunity to gain some wisdom from the seasoned upperclassmen as the season begins.

SPECIAL TO THE COMMUNITY NEWS

LEFT: Craig Mason serves in one of his matches.



RYAN WADE/THE COMMUNITY NEWS

Retired Aledo head coach looks on during goalline drills on Saturday, Aug. 12.



RYAN WADE/THE COMMUNITY NEWS

Aledo head coach Robby Jones gives instructions to his players during a drill at the intersquad scrimmage.

## DEFEND

from page B1

being moved up from the junior varsity for the postseason in 2022.

Another offensive notable is junior tackle Cody Cartwright (6-4, 230), whom Jones called a "sixth cog in the offensive line." He was a tight end and defensive end last season. Likewise, senior wide receiver Colton McCoy is a player to watch.

"We actually have a package where we get him into the lineup," Jones said. "He'll see lots of time."

DJay Williams has committed to play for Louisiana Lafayette in 2024.

"We've got some weapons. We just have to put them in position," Jones said.

## Defense

Senior Davhon Keys, who has committed to play for LSU after high school, returns to anchor the defense at linebacker. He led the Bearcats with 102.5 tackles, including 8.5 for a loss, along with an interception he returned 73 yards for a touchdown. He was also a solid contributor on offense with 13 touchdowns.

Four starters return in the defensive backfield. Seniors Jake Gillespie (80 tackles, 7.5 for loss, 2 interceptions) and Jayton "Boogie" Owens (43.5 tackles, 1 interception) are back at safety, while seniors Jaden Allen (41 tackles, 3 interceptions) and Chris Johnson (29.5 tackles, 2 interceptions) are returning at cornerback.

Gillespie was the Defensive MVP in the state championship game. His early forced fumble set the Bearcats up at College Station 37-yard line for a TD and a 14-0 lead. Then, he had a punt return of more than 51 yards to the Cougars' 15, which led to another TD and a 21-0 advantage. Then, as the third quarter was coming to an end he intercepted a pass in the end zone that he returned 20 yards.

Gillespie has committed to play for Stephen F. Austin next season. Allen has committed to Arkansas and Johnson to Arizona State.

Senior linebackers Ky Howington (26 tackles, 3 for loss, 1 sack, 1 interception) and Ben McElree (23 tackles, 4 for loss) look to join the starting lineup this season. McElree moved up varsity during the season and also saw some time at running back.

Sophomore defensive tackle Decker Sanders, who joined the varsity during the playoffs after spending the regular season on the freshmen and JV teams, is challenging for a starting spot. Junior defensive tackle Jaxon Richter was also moved up during the postseason.

Also on the defensive line, sophomore Carson Dempsey (12 tackles, 5 for loss, 2.5 sacks) didn't start but saw a lot of action and could see even more this season. Also, senior defensive lineman Cooper Kohan, who started the first game at linebacker last season and got a season-ending injury, is back.

The defensive end position features several players battling for starting and/or significant playing

time, including Junior Wally Byers, senior Brett Turner and sophomore move-in Cooper Cyphers, who started for Colleyville Heritage last season. Byers could also see some time at fullback and tight end, and Turner was the starting fullback when the Bearcats used that position in an offense last season.

Other defensive notables are juniors Brody Adams at defensive, along with Jacob McIntire and Talan Forman at defensive tackle.

"There's going to be quite a bit of rotating on the defensive line," Jones said. "We've got a lot of guys to rotate in, keep 'em fresh."

## Special teams

Like his predecessors, Buchanan and Steve Wood - who went 75-4 with three state titles while Buchanan was athletic director only from 2014-18 - Jones is a big advocate of special teams.

"A lot of times it's the difference between winning and losing a game," Jones said. "You've got to be a football player to be on special teams."

Among the areas Jones and his staff paid close attention to in the offseason were deep snappers. He believes they have two good ones in senior Raymond Howard for extra points and field goals and Tims for punts.

Senior Logan DeFranzo and junior Cole Crawford will handle kicking duties. Junior Thaddeus Keller is punting.

Holding for extra points and field goals is also critical. McCoy and

senior Austin Keith will be called on for that task, Jones said. "Special teams can be overlooked," Jones said. "But if you're better than your opponents there you'll have a big advantage."

## District

The Bearcats competed in one of the state's toughest districts last season, alongside fellow powers Burleson Centennial (12-2, state quarterfinals) and Denton Ryan (7-4, second round).

Aledo is No. 1 in the state entering the season. Ryan is preseason No. 15.

Ryan returns two offensive and six defensive starters. Centennial returns one offensive and four defensive starters.

"The Ryan coach (Dave Henigan) said they're not as talented, but they're a better team, which makes them more dangerous," Jones said. "Centennial, that offense (option) is always tough. It's a system."

"At Northwest, Bill Poe's a good football coach. He's always going to have a good team."

Northwest was the fourth playoff team from the district in 2022. The Texans finished 6-5 and return five offensive and five defensive starters.

Also in the district, The Colony (4-6) returns seven starters on both offense and defense. Azle (3-7) has four offensive and six defensive back, Brewer (2-8) returns seven offensive and eight defensive.

Saginaw (1-9) has six offensive and seven defensive back and South Hills (1-9) has five on offense and three on defense returning.

Aledo carries a 111-game district winning streak into the 2023 season, believed to be a national record. The last time they lost a district contest was in 2007.

Some thought that record was in jeopardy last season when they had road games at Centennial and Ryan. However, they won both of those games (64-21 over Centennial and 35-21 over Ryan).

This season the Bearcats host both of those opponents.

"We've had a few scares, but it's still going," Jones said with a smile. "We plan on continuing it. Our goal is to win every game."

## Intangibles

The Aledo JV, which has been a powerhouse for years at its level, was a perfect 10-0 last season, Jones said. Several from that squad could play key roles in the varsity's 2023 success.

"We haven't lost a JV A game in years," Jones said. "Our JVs do well."

It's that kind of consistency that Jones is calling on once again for continued success.

"The coaches that were here were trained by Buchanan and Wood. We're not going to change much. Why would we?" Jones said. "We've evolved, adapted to new styles, but keep it within our terminology."

Staying grounded is also a clutch intangible, he added.

"Not thinking it's automatically going to happen is important," he said. "If we are able to stay level headed and not think about a state championship right now we'll be fine."



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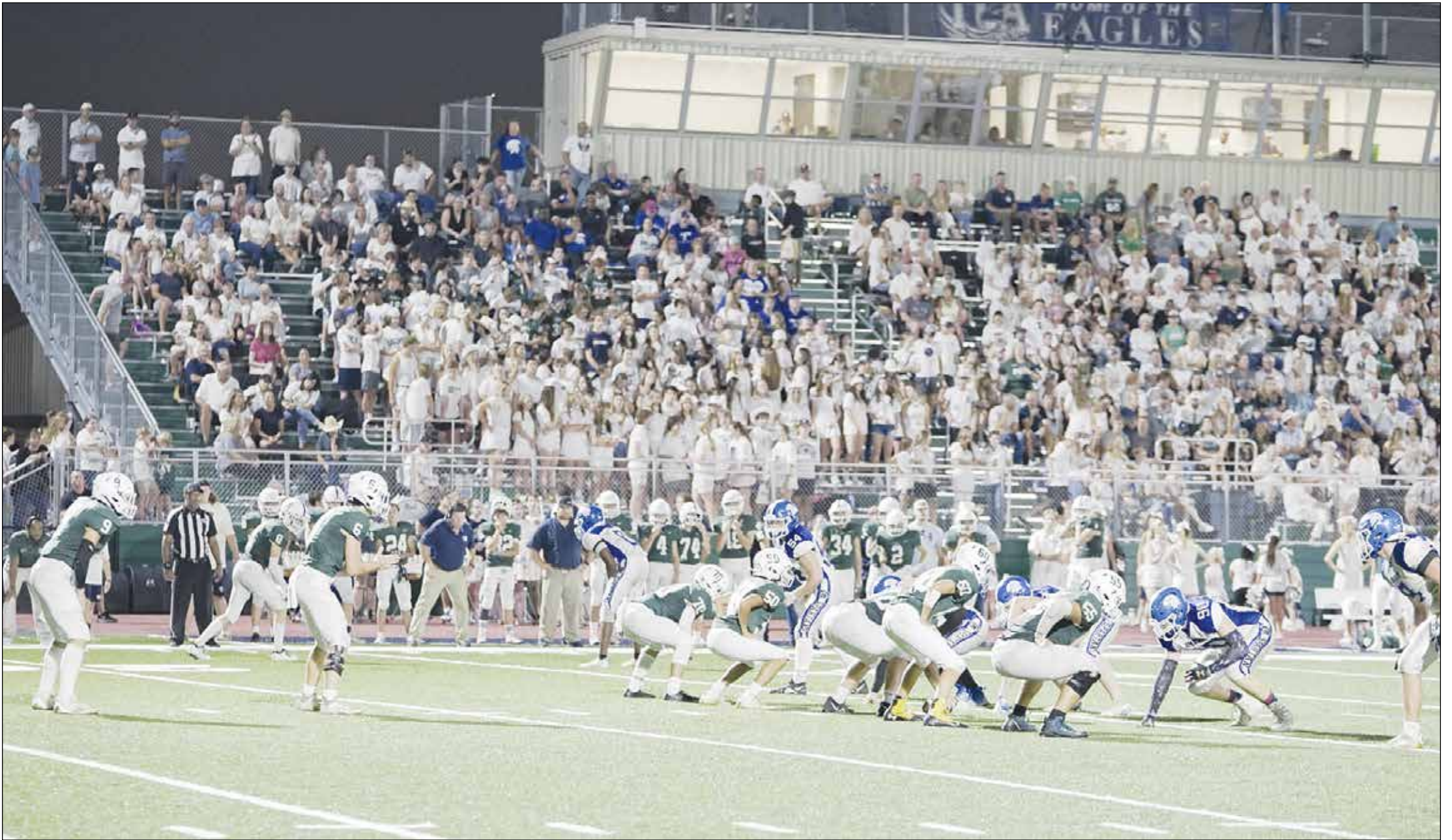
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# FOOTBALL Eagles look to rebound under new coach



## McKenzie takes the reins

By John English  
The Community News

With football season right around the corner, the Willow Park Trinity Christian Eagles are looking to rebound from a tough 2022 campaign.

Trinity Christian finished 1-9 overall with a young and inexperienced team last season, and new head coach Cody McKenzie said, regardless of record, he was proud of how his team persevered.

"Last year was tough, with limited numbers and a young team," McKenzie said. "But our kids competed their tails off, and our young guys gained a great amount of varsity experience that will help us this fall."

McKenzie took over the program when Brian Marmian left after one season.

Some of the stronger returners for TCA this season include senior wide receiver Jake Anderson, senior noseguard Luke Sims, senior wide receiver/running back/cornerback Mathew Sykes, sophomore quarterback/tight end/wide receiver/strong safety Braxton Smith, sophomore quarterback/tight end/tackle Kadin James, sophomore linebacker/guard/tight end Nathan Bryson, sophomore quarterback/free safety Brady Reese and junior wide receiver/free safety Braxton Lewis.

"All these guys will be two-way starters for us this season and make

a major impact on our success," McKenzie said.

Sykes was an all-district selection in 2022.

After some tough sledding last season, McKenzie said he is excited to see what his team will do with a year of varsity competition and off-season conditioning under its belt.

"Growth and experience will play a major role in competing better with this year's team," McKenzie said. "Our young guys went to work last year in the off-season and summer to prepare their bodies physically. With the extra year of maturity and the experience gained while having to compete at the varsity level last

year, TCA will compete better each week."

One of the bigger challenges facing athletes this summer has been the intense heat, and McKenzie said he and his coaching staff have taken the necessary precautions to ensure the safety of his athletes.

"With having a small number of players this season, we are adding in extra breaks and getting them in the shade when we can," McKenzie said. "The kids have handled the elements well, and I believe that comes with a metal toughness that was created in the off-season/summer."

To contend for a playoff spot in 2023, McKenzie said it comes down to two basic factors.

"We have to stay healthy and have good execution," McKenzie said. "Our kids will battle with

everyone who steps on the field with us. If we can stay healthy this season with limited numbers, I believe we can begin to close the gap on our district opponents and put ourselves in the playoff mix."

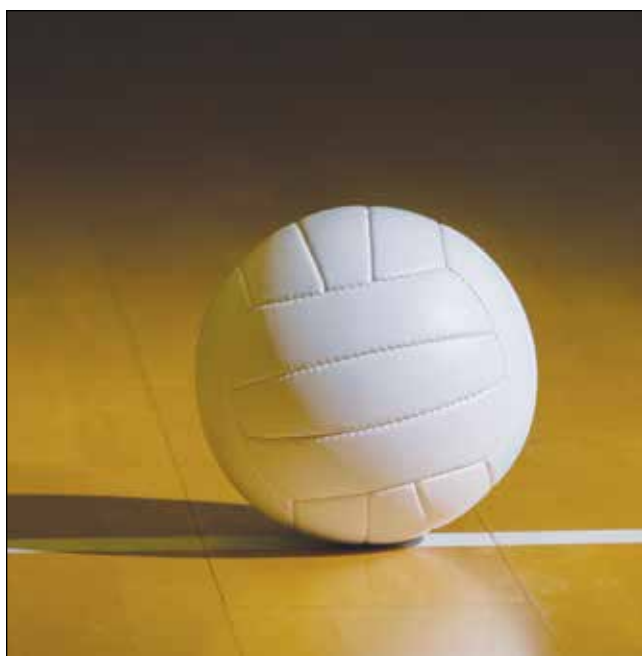


And McKenzie said there is no question about who the standard bearer is in TAPPS Division III District I this season.

"Lubbock Trinity will continue to be a tough test," McKenzie said. "Lubbock Trinity won the district last year and just fell short at the state semis. I look for them to be the team to beat."

Trinity Christian-Willow Park will open the season at 7:30 p.m. on Aug. 25 against Temple Christian in Willow Park.

# VOLLEYBALL TCA looking for turnaround



## Mullen leading in first year

By John English  
The Community News

The 2022 volleyball season was a struggle for the Willow Park Trinity Christian squad, with only one district victory and a last-place finish in 1-4A competition.

But 2023 could be a much different story as first-year coach Katherine Mullen appears to have the Eagles on the right track. Mullen said that she has been impressed by her team early on, especially when it comes to work ethic.

"I think it's really positive," Mullen said. "The girls are working really hard at the task in front of them. I mean they are working very hard."

For Mullen, the expectations for this season are pretty clear.

"We want to win more games and have a better record," Mullen said. "We want to build a foundation that we can grow off of."

With a solid core of players returning, including senior libero Caroline Thompson (all-district selection), senior defensive specialist Giuliana Marcantonio, sophomore setter Sadie Gough and sophomore outside hitter Emily

Ickert, Mullen said she believes she has the team to be competitive.

"I love them," Mullen said. "I think they're great. I think we have it; I just think we have to fine tune some stuff."

To compete for a playoff spot this season, Mullen said she needs a couple of things from her players.

"We really need for everybody to buy into their role of what they bring to the team," Mullen said. "And then we just need to build up that confidence and that greatness."

The Eagles competed in the FWC PIT Tournament this past weekend, losing the first two games of the competition, but rallying to win their next three. TCA ended up taking first place in the Silver Division and bringing home a trophy.

Mullen said she is optimistic about what her team can accomplish this season, and said her goals for her players are two-fold.

"I want them to learn to fight and be competitive," Mullen said. "But also to have good character and represent the team well."



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# CROSS COUNTRY Young team continues building structure

By John English  
Contributing Writer

As cross country season gets underway, Trinity Christian-Willow Park is hoping to pick up right where it left off last year.

Second-year coach AJ Moore helped guide the program to a district title and a top-10 finish at state individually, and said in his first year as coach in 2022, he tried to establish a system that would lead the program to future success.

“It was a season of building structure,” Moore said. “Last year, our boys won the district meet, and we had three all-district runners. We also took 14 runners to state (seven boys and seven girls).”

The boys placed 13th out of 25 teams at the State TAPPS meet in Waco in 2022, and the girls placed 10th out of 21, with one top ten placer in Gracee Whiteaker, who finished fourth overall.

Moore said the Eagles distance runners are competing in a few more meets in 2023, and said he implemented a stronger summer season for training.

But Moore said the experience level is the biggest difference and potentially the biggest question mark for Trinity Christian headed into this season.

“The main difference this year is the age of our boys team,” Moore said. “This year, we have only one senior – Co-captain Wilson Winchester. The rest of the team are freshmen, five of which are returning from junior high. Our varsity girls team is pretty much the same with one senior— Co-captain Gracee Whiteaker - and the rest are lower classmen.”

Trinity Christian has trained almost exclusively at dawn and dusk this summer, with indoor weight training to supplement their

practices to avoid the heat, and Moore said there are a couple of objectives for 2023.

“Because of our size, the majority of our varsity boys and girls runners are able to compete at the state meet,” Moore said. “Success is measured individually as well as collectively. Our runners have individual goals and our teams have goals - wanting to finish in the top ten. After two consecutive all-state finishes, a possible senior state champion (Gracee Whiteaker) is a possibility.”

Whiteaker's main competition for a state title will be fellow district runner Emily Smith of Colleyville Covenant, who is the defending state champion.

Trinity Christian-Willow Park will compete in the SCS I Invitational at 7 a.m. on Aug. 26 at Southwest Christian School.

“Success is measured individually as well as collectively.”

- Coach AJ Moore



Wilson Winchester at start of Parker County XC Championship Weatherford



Coach AJ Moore with Varsity Girls at 22 season opener Waxahachie Woodhouse invitational.



Coach AJ Moore with Varsity Boys at 22 State Meet in Waco



Gracee Whiteaker at start of Parker County XC Championship Weatherford



Co-Captains Gracee Whiteaker & Wilson Winchester - top finishers at Jesuit Classic Prestonwood Polo Club

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