

THE COMMUNITY NEWS

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ALEDO ISD

Trustees adopt 2024-2025 budget

Overall tax rate declines for sixth year in a row

By Mercedes Mayer
Aledo ISD

For the sixth-straight year, the Aledo ISD Board of Trustees has adopted a lower tax rate, lowering the rate by \$0.0023 for 2024-2025 and bringing the total six-year reduction to nearly \$0.39 cents.

"We are grateful for continued relief for our Aledo ISD taxpayers with another reduction in the overall tax rate," Superintendent Dr. Susan Bohn said. "I appreciate the incredible amount of thoughtful work that has gone into this year's budgeting process — most definitely the most difficult of my career."

Over the last five years, the Maintenance and Operations side of the tax rate has been compressed after the passing of House Bill 3 in 2019. The Board adopted a new tax rate of \$1.2052 for 2024-2025 on Monday night.

In adopting the budget during the special board meeting, Trustees also approved: a one-time payment of \$1,200 for all full-time employees (\$600 for part-time employees) that will be made in September, a salary step increase for returning teachers (minimum \$300 and possibly more depending on years of service), an adjustment to bus driver's hourly rate and police officer salary based on a market study, and a small number of individual targeted equity adjustments.

"For months, a team of campus and district leaders have worked with trustees on the very difficult task of making budget cuts while still focusing on using our limited resources to support our greatest needs," Board President Forrest Collins said. "Compensating our amazing staff was a priority for trustees in this year's budget even if it meant passing a deficit budget and dipping into our fund balance to do so. I really do wish the legislature's inaction hadn't caused us — and most school districts across the state — to be in this position; we would love to do more for our staff."

District leadership has been committed to having more competitive compensation in Aledo ISD over the last several years, approving anywhere from a 3% to 7% raise for employees in six of the last eight years and getting the district's starting teacher salary much more

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We're Ready



The Aledo Dance Team entertains at Meet the Bearcats on Aug. 23. See more photos and story on our website.

CHRISTOPHER AMOS/THE COMMUNITY NEWS

WILLOW PARK Council discusses new tax rate

Slight increase mainly funds police

By Rick Mauch
The Community News

Willow Park City Council members discussed a proposed 43 cents per \$100 2024-25 property tax rate at their meeting on Tuesday, Aug. 27

The proposed rate is an increase from the 40 cents of the previous year, which came on the heels of a 14 cent tax reduction in 2023.

"I still think overall we're one of the lowest tax rates in Parker County and the area," Willow Park City Manager Bryan Grimes said.

Grimes also noted that the largest part of a tax increase would go to funding officer salary increases and purchasing equipment for the Willow Park Police

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ALEDO

A hard look at parks

Council working toward new master parks plan

By Randy Keck
The Community News

The Aledo City Council took a detailed look at the city's parks at its Aug. 22 meeting.

Whitney Walters, the city's communications and engagement officer, walked the council through a look at the playground at the Aledo Community Center, Bearcat Park, and Howard Way Park. The city hired a park safety specialist to evaluate the three sites, and to determine if they meet safety standards.

The oldest park in the city is the playground at the community center, where the determination was that none of the equipment there met safety guidelines and needs to be removed.

Howard Way Park was in much the same situation, with playground equipment not meeting standards. Only one minor issue was found at Bearcat Park.

"There's never been park inspections in Aledo that we can find in the record," Aledo Mayor Nick Stanley said. "This process stems from [council member] Shawna Ford and myself calling on [City Manager] Noah [Simon] and city staff to prioritize parks."

In addition to the playground equipment itself, Stanley said he wants to make sure there are shade structures at the parks, not only for the children, but for parents.

"This is Texas, and we've experienced some really considerable heat. There's a shade structure



RANDY KECK/THE COMMUNITY NEWS

The equipment at Aledo's Community Center playground has been deemed not to meet safety guidelines, and will be removed and replaced at a later date.

over the Howard Way playground equipment that covers just the immediate playground. But in terms of parents, I'm cognizant of this because I have three young kids. So now we're going to have shade structures," Stanley said.

Nothing was nailed down at the meeting other than to direct staff to continue the process, which includes finding funds to upgrade the city's parks.

With a tight city budget, Stanley commented, "We're going to do as much as we can with as little as we have, and at the end of the day try to expand our parks."

The council also voted to redeem about \$205,000 in bond obligations from a 2012 issue.

Ex-Students' Association Banquet

The Aledo ISD Ex-Students Association will hold their banquet honoring the class of 1974 on Saturday, Sept. 21, at the Parker County Cowboy Church, 5050 FM 5 in Aledo. Visitation will begin at 4:30 p.m. and the meal will be served at 6 p.m.

All ex-students of Aledo ISD are encouraged to attend. The cost will be \$25, which covers the meal, expenses, and \$5 for dues. Reservations must be made by Sept. 13.

To reserve a spot or for more information, send a note to Aledo Ex-Students' Assn., P. O. Box 737, Aledo, Texas 76008 or email June King at junefraserking@sbcglobal.net.

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In & Around Parker County

Texas Butane turning 66 under family ownership

Although very young, Judy White remembers her father opening Texas Butane 66 years ago.

Her dad had a Humble station at the corner of Bankhead and Fort Worth Highway at the time.

"We lived across the street," Judy said, "and I would sell Girl Scout cookies at that station. And he made everybody buy them."

She recalls one night when a truck came in about 10 p.m. with a flat tire. Judy asked the driver if he would buy some Girl Scout cookies and the driver gave her a gruff "no."

Her dad told the driver it was late and he wasn't going to fix the tire. The truck driver was mad and he went out to his truck.

"When he left daddy said go out there and tell him if he buys two boxes of cookies. I'll change the tire."

With that type of family support, Judy sold the most Girl Scout cookies in Parker County two years in a row.

Judy's father sold the gas station to get the propane business, and the kind of family support he showed his daughter has made Texas Butane the "go-to" place for fuel more than 65 years now.

In fact, Judy worked in the business in her early years, and now her



children and grandchildren work there, making it a five-generation business. Not only that, Judy met her future husband, Morris, when he was working at Texas Butane.

"He says he married the boss's daughter, and all he's ever gotten is hard work," Judy quipped.

Judy and Morris celebrated their 59th wedding anniversary on Tuesday, March 5, and have spent their married life together in the business.

Despite the name, Judy and Morris said they sell more propane than anything these days. The versatile fuel can operate commercial busses, power home

heating, operate generators, and heat your home.

Texas Butane services Parker County and surrounding counties, and counts multi-generational customers along with their multi-generational business.

But the business is more than hooking up and filling propane tanks.

"Safety comes first," Judy said. "Many a time we don't fill a tank if it's not safe for the people."

Judy recalls one incident when her driver called making a delivery to a house with a woman and small children. The driver said there was a leak and Judy instructed him

not to fill the tank. Judy called a plumber and sent him to the home. The next morning, the lady called Judy and thanked her.

"You saved our lives," the woman said. "We had a broken pipe under the house and we wouldn't be here if you had filled that tank."

"You can go somewhere and get warm," Judy said. "It was more important to keep them safe."

Texas Butane is also committed to keeping supply on hand.

"We have 150,000 gallons of storage and we're about to put in more," Judy said, "so we have the supply on hand when people need

it. In 66 years, we've never been without propane."

When you call, you'll hear a friendly voice on the phone.

"We have the greatest employees, they care. They care just like we do," Judy said. "I feel like it's a family - they turn into our family. We have two granddaughters that work here. Two sons that work here. And a son that does part time work."

You can call Texas Butane at the same phone number they had 65 years ago, 817-594-2612, or visit them at the same location on the square in Weatherford.

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COUNCIL

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Department. He said in the proposed new budget, the police department's portion is between \$2.1 and \$2.3 million, adding the proposed new tax would bring in an additional \$199,000, increase the overall property tax income to around \$1.8 million.

Sales tax revenue covers the rest of the police department increase. However, because of inflation, sales tax revenue is down slightly from previous years, thus creating the need for the property tax increase. "We take back the blue very seriously here," Grimes said.

The new tax rate goes into effect on Oct. 1 and runs through Sept. 30, 2025, as would the Fiscal Year 2025 budget. The council is still working on finalizing the budget.

Both the tax rate and the budget are pending a public hearing, which will be held at the Sept. 10 meeting. The council is expected to vote on both that same night.

Wastewater fund

Due to rising costs in the water and wastewater systems, along with construction of a much-needed wastewater plant, in August of 2023, NewGen Strategies and Solutions proposed a plan to maintain the city's water fund and allow the wastewater fund to become independent of the water fund within three years. The first year of that plan was implemented for FY 2023-2024 with an increase in wastewater rates to both residential and commercial, and by establishing a multi-family wastewater rate.

Year 2 is set to begin with the new fiscal year.

"I'm going to say we're on track," Public Works Director Michelle Guelker 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.

NewGen officials said the cost to the city to create a balance would be approximately \$35.4 million. To help offset that cost, the average monthly bill will see a modest increase.

For example, the increase this coming fiscal year will be 10 cents per 1,000 gallons for both residential and commercial accounts. Senior rates will remain unchanged for any use under 9,000 gallons per month.

Willow Park had not increased either rate since 2017.

Wastewater treatment plant

Assistant Public Works Director Chase McBride updated the council and those in attendance on the progress of the new wastewater treatment plant. He said the main plant is about 80 percent complete, and everything is still on target for an October 2025 opening.

"Everything has been running smoothly," McBride said. "The biggest thing we've run into is weather, but that's the case with any outdoor project."

"This is a great contractor (Gracon Construction). They had a lot of hurdles to jump, but they're great."

MEDIA

New news site launched

Weatherford News will focus on county seat

Staff Reports

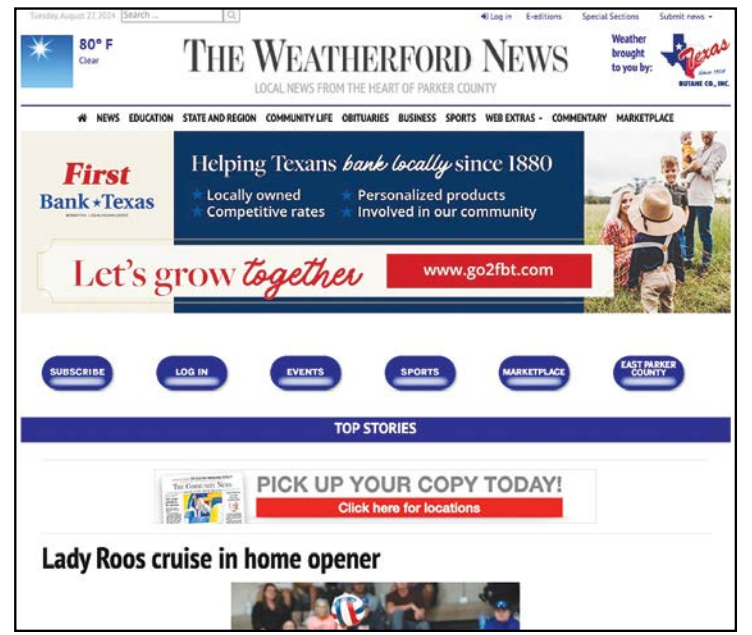
Randy Keck, owner and publisher of *The Community News*, based in Aledo, Texas, has announced the launch of a new website dedicated to covering news and events in Weatherford, Texas.

The new site, weatherford-news.com, will be a complement to *The Community News'* existing site, community-news.com.

"As Parker County continues its extraordinary growth, the need for locally-focused news content does not go away," Keck said. "In fact, it is more important than ever to have reporters covering local government entities."

The new site has already been deploying reporters to cover Weatherford ISD board meetings and Weatherford City Council meetings.

"We are still staffing up and recruiting sponsors to allow us to expand our ability



to provide more Weatherford coverage," Keck said.

Each of the two sites will focus content for its local constituency and surrounding area.

"There will be some content overlap on the sites to meet the information needs of each area we cover," Keck said. "In addition, our flagship newspaper *The Community News* will continue its long-term mission to be the best

possible newspaper for its readers."

Keck has owned *The Community News* for 29 years, and the newspaper has been Parker County-owned for 33 years. It is the largest paid-circulation newspaper in Parker County.

For more information, email rkeck@community-news.com.

BUDGET

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competitive, ranking tops in Parker County and in the top 10 among market comparison districts.

"Our Bearcat staff is the very best in the state, and they work hard every day to ensure all students experience high levels of learning and that their learning experiences are exceptional — even when we are asking them to do more with less," Bohn said. "Our Trustees and district are very prudent with taxpayer dollars and at the same time we recognize the need to compensate our employees and be competitive in the market. These last two years — and more than likely going

forward for at least the next year — have made public school budgets a very difficult balance between conservatism and fair, competitive compensation."

Also discussed at the meeting:

Trustees voted to prepay \$3,155,000 of bonds, saving the district and its taxpayers \$2.6 million in future interest costs; this brings Aledo ISD's bond savings to more than \$54.8 million since 2006 by actively managing the district's debt portfolio.

CFO Earl Husfeld shared that Aledo ISD's bond rating by Fitch Ratings was upgraded from AA to AA+, a recognition from an outside agency of the district's financial

conservatism and superior financial management.

For nearly two years, Trustees and Aledo ISD administration have consistently advocated with the Texas Legislature for increased funding for Texas public schools due to the impact of historic inflation and outdated funding formulas. For instance, Aledo ISD's insurance bill alone has gone up 459% since 2019 and now exceeds \$2.1 million per year. Despite a \$33 billion surplus in 2022, the Texas Legislature did not allocate additional capital to public schools for these costs and, with limited reserves available and amid uncertainty with the state funding for future years, Aledo ISD was forced to cut about \$4.4 million from its budget. Previously,

the district communicated about an estimated \$3.8 million in cuts on February 20, but that number has increased since that time, mostly due to not filling vacated staffing positions.

As previously shared, budget cuts included:

- All campuses and departments decreasing their annual operational budgets by 20% (total 30% cuts over the last two years);
- Reduction of central office and administration/leadership positions;
- Reduction of positions originally planned for student growth;
- Reduction of positions through attrition, class size increases, and revision of staff schedules;

- Additional specific reductions (energy usage, overtime management, etc.); and

- Restructuring of roles and responsibilities in athletics, fine arts, library services, GT services, ESL services, special education, counseling, nursing, Career and Technical Education, and instructional support.

Aledo ISD also explored increasing revenue to help cover expenses through other sources, such as athletics fees, technology device protection plan fees, increased football season ticket prices and parking fees. Those items were all implemented for the 2024-2025 school year.

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We're always on the lookout for story ideas. To share one, call Randy Keck at 817-386-1469 or email news@community-news.com. Please provide the basic story information as well as contact information.

We welcome letters, articles and guest opinions from our readers. Opinions expressed in this newspaper will be labeled as opinions, editorials or letters, and do not reflect the opinions of the ownership. Letters should be signed, and limited to approximately 300 words. All submissions to the newspaper should include a telephone number in case we have questions. Letters are due by Monday at noon for that week's paper. Community announcements, achievements and obituaries are due by noon Friday for the following week's paper.

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

Power grid again reaches record demand



Gary Borders

gborders@texaspress.com

The dog-day heat wave has sent power demands to new records, the Austin American-Statesman reported. With much of the state enduring an excessive heat warning, power demand peaked at 85,559 megawatts last week, breaking a record set last August.

While searing outside temperatures certainly boost demand, other factors are in play as well — the state's growing population and increased expansion by large-scale industrial users such as data centers and cryptocurrency miners.

Texas is the only state that operates its own power grid. In June, the Electricity Reliability Council of Texas predicted the grid would face challenges this month and increased likelihood for emergency alerts during peak times of the day.

"Reserve shortage risks are the highest during the evening hours ... when daily loads are typically near their highest levels and solar production is ramping down," the report from June says. While power throughout the state remained largely untouched, around 8,500 customers in Harris County last week experienced outages believed to be related to demand.

CenterPoint to push Beryl damage costs to ratepayers

CenterPoint plans to pass costs for electricity infrastructure damages caused by Hurricane Beryl on to its customers. It

plans to pass bonds that will ultimately be paid through rate increases, the Texas Standard reported. The company testified last week before the Public Utility Commission.

In its latest quarterly report to the U.S. Securities and Exchange Commission, the company estimated recovery costs related to Beryl and an earlier May windstorm — a derecho — will approach \$2 billion for both events. As is customary, ratepayers will be on the hook.

"In my almost 35 years of experience in this utility business, the customers end up paying. They always end up paying," said energy consultant Karl Rábago, who served on the PUC under Governors Ann Richards and George W. Bush.

"That's because electricity is essential for modern life, and you can't just go around bankrupting or allowing utilities to go bankrupt by forcing shareholders to bear what some people might say is the fair consequences of mismanagement."

Transgender Texans can't change sex on DL

Texans will no longer be allowed to change the gender on their driver's license even if they have obtained a court order, the Houston Chronicle reported. In a statement, the Texas Department of Public Safety said that as of Aug. 20, the agency will no longer comply with court orders mandating a change to a driver's license. Texas Attorney General Ken Paxton has raised questions about the validity of such court orders.

The department said that was because "neither DPS nor other government agencies are parties to the proceedings and because officials have questions about the legal basis for courts to issue the orders."

Brad Pritchett, interim CEO of the advocacy group Equality Texas, said the new policy "denies trans people the minimum respect of having a state ID that reflects their identity" and will hurt more than 92,000 transgender adults in Texas.

Busing of migrants is in idle mode

After sending thousands of migrants to northern cities run by Democrats, Gov. Greg Abbott's bus trips have largely ended after the number of migrants apprehended at the border plunged, The Texas Tribune reported.

The state has not sent any buses north since late June, according to a report in The New York Times.

"Texas has decreased illegal crossings into the state by over 85% thanks to our historic border mission," Abbott spokesperson Andrew Mahaleris said in a statement.

Abbott plans to continue the busing program, which only takes migrants who voluntarily get on board.

An executive order by President Joe Biden in June effectively stopped granting asylum to migrants. In the first month the order was in place, 32% fewer migrants were apprehended, a sharp drop that continued into July.

Since the busing program began in 2022, nearly 120,000 migrants have been transported to other states, according to Abbott's office.

Peak of hurricane season arrives

As the peak of the 2024 Atlantic hurricane season arrives, forecasters have their eyes on four tropical waves with the potential to turn into something more menacing, the Statesman reported. All four systems are moving westward across the Atlantic.

We have entered the traditional peak of hurricane season, with the most activity occurring between now and mid-October, according to the National Hurricane Center. To date, five named hurricanes have been noted this season.

Hurricane season ends officially on Nov. 30.

Teaming up to prevent DWIs

With the Labor Day holiday coming up, the Texas Department of Transportation is teaming up with law enforcement officers to remind motorists about the dangers of drunk driving. The "Drive Sober. No Regrets" campaign reminds motorists of the consequences of driving drunk.

"Every drunk driving fatality is preventable, plain and simple," said TxDOT Executive Director Marc Williams. "If you plan to celebrate Labor Day by drinking, make sure you arrange a sober ride using a ride share, taxi, public transit or a designated driver."

In 2023, there were 334 DUI-alcohol related traffic crashes over the Labor Day holiday weekend, resulting in 14 fatalities and 35 serious injuries. TxDOT is working with law enforcement agencies across Texas to identify and arrest drunk drivers through the Labor Day holiday, ending Sept. 2.

The state continues to work to end the streak of daily traffic deaths, now approaching 24 years. The last deathless day on Texas roadways was Nov. 7, 2000.

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, Lufkin and Cedar Park. Email: gborders@texaspress.com

Idle American

Up with parrots, down with whoops



Dr. Don Newbury

newbury@speakerdoc.com

Uncle Mort had never heard of "support parrots," but admits that he shouldn't have been surprised.

"Seems like way too many of my friends are either sued or getting sued, but none of the squabbles involve birds," he laughed. This was his jovial response upon reading recently that a New York City woman was awarded three-quarters of a million dollars when neighbors complained that her parrots were "too noisy."

The birds' owner, Meril Lesser, had lived in an apartment for several years before the legal battle started in 2015 when neighbors complained of the birds' "noisiness." No doubt Lesser and her parrots laughed all the way to the bank when the brouhaha was settled recently.

Damian Williams, U.S. attorney for the Southern District of New York, said the settlement is "the largest recovery the Department of Justice has ever obtained for a person with disabilities whose housing provider denied them their right to have assistance animals."

Mort assumes that the ruling applies to fowl as well, and/or that perhaps New Yorkers lump anything that breathes into the animal category.

Anyways, the news set him to thinking about a possible "win-win" scheme that historically melts into a "lose-lose."

It's not Mort's first experience with "comfort creatures." Years ago, when he heard that whooping cranes were making a comeback, he almost helped out.

When their numbers were dangerously low, he offered a practical solution.

"Just take a bunch of 'regular cranes' and teach 'em to whoop," he suggested.

Now, he envisions making fast bucks rounding up the regular cranes down in the thicket.

Properly fed and nested, these birds could readily become support cranes, he believes. Since East Texas cranes aren't known for whooping, Mort thinks those New Yorkers will pay big bucks when he labels 'em "whoopless support cranes."

A similar ploy went afoot years ago when Mort offered "support possums," which he said didn't stay awake long enough to provide much support.

While on the subject of whooping, there's bound to be "record whoops" come Nov. 30 when Texas A&M University and the University of Texas hook up in College Station to resume a football rivalry that never should have ended.

The Aggies and Longhorns played annually for 96 years, ending when A&M jumped to the Southeast Conference in 2011. For decades, the A&M/UT annual Thanksgiving showdowns were beyond memorable and featured nationally on TV.

Now, for crying out loud, the Aggie/Longhorn game has a SPONSOR--Cotton Holdings, Inc. I don't even know what Cotton Holdings sells, but I'll wager we'll find out when the ads roll during the game. (Count me among those shedding tears that the game won't be played on Thanksgiving Day, but at least on the same weekend.) I'm also in another "boo-hoo" group--the one that deeply misses amateur collegiate sports.

I'm not saying he's the best quarterback EVER, but he may be the most generous athlete ever to come down the pike. The recent \$5 million gift from Patrick Mahomes to his alma mater,

Texas Tech University, is one of the largest ever by an athlete. Texas Tech fund-raisers must be gleeful, already dreaming of additional projects up the road warranting Patrick's favor.

The current gift will go toward a \$100+ million upgrade of Jones Stadium. Don't be surprised if Buzz--the 12th steed to gallop around the stadium when Red Raider touchdowns are scored--sports a fancy saddle with NIL markings (name/identification/likeness). This could be the first-ever NIL contract with a horse.

If the Fort Worth Star-Telegram had prevailed in 1925, Texas Tech teams would have been known as the "Dogies." Late Star-Telegram publisher Amon Carter led the charge for the Texas Legislature to fund Texas Tech. In the mascot contest, however, Red Raiders won out. Maybe they were afraid that too many folks didn't think the "guns up" crowd could spell "doggies."

Dr. Newbury, longtime university president, continues to speak and write. The Idle American, begun in 2003, is one of the nation's longest-running syndicated humor columns. Contact: 817-447-3872. Email: newbury@speakerdoc.com. Website: www.speakerdoc.com.



Obituaries

Donna Sagebiel

Donna Kay Martin Sagebiel passed away peacefully on Tuesday evening, August 13.

Born in Fort Worth, Donna was the eldest daughter of Johnny Wayne and Eleanora Martin. She grew up in White Settlement and was baptized at St. John Lutheran Church in Detmold, Texas.

Donna graduated from Brewer High School and was confirmed at Trinity Lutheran Church in Fort Worth where she married the love of her life, Gordon Frederick Sagebiel, on April 8, 1967. They met at Tarleton State University where she studied nursing. They traveled to College Station where Gordon studied at Texas A&M University. Together, they had four children and 10 grandchildren.

Donna was known for her creative talents in decorating cakes and countless sewing projects. Donna enjoyed helping her children's pursuits in band, 4-H, FFA, and Camp Fire projects. She served her church, leading Vacation Bible School, coordinating Mother Daughter Banquets, and more. Additionally, she often substitute-taught at Aledo High School. Closer to home, she encouraged her children and grandchildren to do well in



Donna Sagebiel

school and study hard. Her favorite thing to do was spending time with family and creating her legacy of handmade gifts.

She was preceded in death by her parents and her husband of 55 years, Gordon Sagebiel.

Donna is survived by her two sisters, Sharron and the late Bill Burt and Bonnie and Jim Story, as well as her children, Richard and Nancy Sagebiel of Bastrop, Jason and Dr. Anna Sagebiel of Clive, Iowa, Rev. Jennifer and Chris Gold of Marion, and Dr. Kayla and Michael Sweet of Buda. Surviving grandchildren are: Daniel, Grace, Hannah, Rayann, Wyatt, Wayde, Zachary, Zane, Kyle and Matthew; along with numerous nieces, nephews and loving family members and friends.

A celebration of her life was held on Saturday, August 24, at Trinity Lutheran Church, with interment at Greenwood Memorial Park.

Consideration of memorial contributions to Trinity Lutheran Church (Fort Worth), The American Diabetes Association, or to a charity of choice is suggested.

The Community News
August 30, 2024

Irvin Justice

Irvin "Irv" Justice passed away on August 15, 2024, at the age of 89, in Aledo. Born on March 20, 1935, in Mellen, Wisconsin, he was a remarkable individual known for his wit, kindness, and welcoming nature.

Irv dedicated 22 years of his life to the United States Air Force, retiring as a Senior Master Sergeant. His military career was marked by dedication and excellence, traits that he carried into his subsequent career as a Civil Engineering Technician for the Corps of Engineers.

Beyond his professional life, Irv was a devoted family man, survived by his wife of nearly 67 years, Patricia Justice, and their children: Lori Kleymann, Lisa Daniels, Mark Justice and his wife Sherri, Wendy Case and her husband Alex, and Lindsey Johnson and her husband Zane. His legacy continues through his grandchildren, Ashley and Jordan Kleymann, Brittany McGee, Lauren Martin, Jace and Haylen Johnson, and great-grandchildren Gunnar and Peyton Gibbs, Evelyn



Irvin Justice

and Joseph Martin, and Miller McGee. He also leaves behind his sisters, Audrey Trnka and Jean Martin, along with numerous cousins, nieces, and nephews. Irv was preceded in death by his parents, Irvin Justice and Mary Gehrman.

An avid sports enthusiast, Irv spent many years coaching softball and umpiring for youth sports. He was a die-hard Aledo Bearcat football fan and loved the Texas Rangers and Dallas Cowboys (before they started breaking his heart). His love for crossword puzzles, travel-especially trips to Colorado with his son Mark-and a profound affection for his family were the hallmarks of his life.

In remembrance, the family will hold a private celebration of life at a later date. In lieu of flowers, contributions may be made to Mended Hearts, the American Heart Association, or St. Jude Children's Research Hospital, honoring Irv's compassionate spirit.

The Community News
August 30, 2024

Dennis Vernon Thompson

Dennis Thompson of Annetta passed away on August 24, 2024.

The brimming legacy of a life well lived is stitched into the remarkable story of Dennis V. Thompson. He was the first-born child of Martha (Sprugel) Thompson and Archie Thompson, arriving on a cold day in December of 1945 in Iowa Falls, Iowa.



Dennis Thompson

Having grown up on an Iowa farm, he established a strong work ethic and moral compass for a lifetime of commitment to the world around him. A steadfast commitment to family, employment, civic contributions, generosity for those less fortunate, and the nurturing and attentiveness of his faith served as bedrock for all the rest.

He graduated from Lu Verne High School and was a life-long ambassador for the school and his beloved classmates. He graduated with a BA in Accounting from the University of Northern Iowa, and proudly enlisted and served his country in the US Army from 1967-1970. He was awarded a Bronze Star with Oakleaf Cluster for his service in Vietnam, where he acted as a finance specialist.

Following his CPA certification, he spent the first twenty years of his career in public accounting, both for a former Big Eight Accounting firm and as an Audit Partner in a CPA firm in Wichita Falls. In 1992 he changed career paths, becoming a Senior Litigation consultant with Courtroom Sciences, Inc. (CSI). He then established an independent consulting firm, Trial Lab LLC, which specialized in litigation strategies and communication, consulting and preparing corporate clients and trial teams for trial. That work took him to corporate boardrooms and courtrooms throughout the US, Europe and Japan.

Mr. Thompson completed mediation training at the Texas Wesleyan School of Law and the University of Texas, Arlington and was a credentialed family and civil mediator. He was a member of the American, Texas State, and Tarrant County Bar Associations.

Dennis was a frequent guest lecturer at Texas Wesleyan School of Law and helped coach mock trial, mediation, and arbitration teams to national and international championships. He was honored with the

coveted Steve Chaney Friend of the Law School Award in 2011. In 2018, his legal and finance experience led him to accept a position with Tri County Electric Cooperative, where he continued as Facilities Director until his death.

His Parker County community work included 10 years of volunteer service with the Ride for Heroes bicycle ride as a board member and board chair, Aledo ISD student mentor, the Rotary Club of Weatherford, and the Aledo ISD Growth Committee. He was also his wife, Kathryn's biggest fan and number one volunteer at every non-profit she was involved with. His faith kept him grounded as a member of HighRidge Church.

He was proud of his family and enjoyed many activities and adventures with them growing up. He loved their visits, and adored his three grandchildren. Dennis and Kathryn recently celebrated their 20th wedding anniversary by renewing their wedding vows in a memorable ceremony in Wichita Falls.

He was preceded in death by his parents, grandparents, two brothers-in-law, and two nephews.

Left to cherish his memory are his loving wife, Kathryn; son, Matthew, of Abilene; daughter Jennie Leonard (Clint), Rathdrum, Idaho; stepson Justin Tubbs, Wichita Falls; grandchildren, Carson, Cady and Kinley Leonard of Rathdrum, Idaho; sisters, Allene (Cookie) Cranston, Johnston, Iowa, and Nancy Kastengren (Jim Larkin), Dublin, Ohio; niece, Carrie Stephens (Brenden), Urbandale, Iowa; nephew, Scott Kastengren (Olympia), Norris, Montana; three grandnieces, Rebecca and Gracie Stephens, Des Moines, Iowa, and Lindsay Stephens, Ames, Iowa; grandnephew Noah Kastengren, Phoenix, Arizona; and many other relatives and friends. And not the least of these is his little canine companion, Toby.

A memorial service celebrating his life will be held at 11 a.m. on Friday, September 6, 2024 at HighRidge Church, 1000 Cinema Drive, Hudson Oaks, Texas.

In lieu of flowers, the family requests memorials to the Children's Advocacy Center of Parker County or the charity of your choice.

The Community News
August 30, 2024

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THE COMMUNITY NEWS

PUBLIC MEETING AND HEARING ON THE TAX RATE

A tax rate of \$0.432546 per \$100 valuation has been proposed by the governing body of CITY OF WILLOW PARK.

PROPOSED TAX RATE	\$0.432546 per \$100
NO-NEW-REVENUE TAX RATE	\$0.375858 per \$100
VOTER-APPROVAL TAX RATE	\$0.461084 per \$100

The no-new-revenue tax rate is the tax rate for the 2024 tax year that will raise the same amount of property tax revenue for CITY OF WILLOW PARK from the same properties in both the 2023 tax year and the 2024 tax year.

The voter-approval tax rate is the highest tax rate that CITY OF WILLOW PARK may adopt without holding an election to seek voter approval of the rate.

The proposed tax rate is greater than the no-new-revenue tax rate. This means that CITY OF WILLOW PARK is proposing to increase property taxes for the 2024 tax year.

A PUBLIC ON THE PROPOSED TAX RATE WILL BE HELD ON September 10, 2024 AT 6:00 AT Willow Park City Hall, 120 El Chico Trail, Suite A, Willow Park, TX 76087.

The proposed tax rate is also not greater than the voter-approval tax rate. As a result, CITY OF WILLOW PARK is not required to hold an election at which voters may accept or reject the proposed tax rate. However, you may express your support for or opposition to the proposed tax rate by contacting the members of the Willow Park City Council of CITY OF WILLOW PARK at their offices or by attending the public mentioned above. 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: Lea Young, Eric Contreras, Greg Runnebaum, Nate Crummel

AGAINST the proposal:

PRESENT Lea Young, Eric Contreras, Greg Runnebaum, Nate Crummel

ABSENT: Mayor Doyle Moss, Councilman Chawn Gilliland

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

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

The following table compares the taxes imposed on the average residence homestead by CITY OF WILLOW PARK last year to the taxes proposed to be imposed on the average residence homestead by CITY OF WILLOW PARK this year.

	2023	2024	Change
Total tax rate (per \$100 of value)	\$0.397597	\$0.432546	increase of .0349
Average homestead taxable value	\$335,983	\$361,916	increase of 7.718%
Tax on average homestead	\$1,335	\$1,565	increase of \$230
Total tax levy on all properties	\$1,636,010	\$1,807,654	increase of \$199,171

For assistance with tax calculations, please contact the tax assessor for CITY OF WILLOW PARK at 817-596-0077 or parkercad@parkercad.org, or visit www.texas.gov/property taxes for more information.

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CROSS COUNTRY

TCA varsity sweeps in Burleson

By Rick Mauch

The Community News
Led by the first-place individual finish of Boren Merrill, the Trinity Christian Eagles won the Boys 1A-4A division at the Burleson Centennial Spartan Invitational on Saturday, Aug. 24.

Also, three Lady Eagles placed in the top five as the TCA girls also won their division.

Merrill ran the 5K course in 19 minutes, 5.98 seconds. Emma Saadeh led the Lady Eagles by placing third individually on the 3200-meter course with a clocking of 13:58.53.

Also placing in the top five for the TCA girls were Olivia Quinn, fourth, 15:45.01; and Madison Clark, fifth, 15:54.71.

Jonah Brown placed fifth for the Eagles with a time of 20:12.19. Also, Henry Reynolds was seventh in 20:51.90 and Jonas O'Dell took ninth with a 21:07.06.

Rounding out the top five individuals for the Lady Eagles were Ellery Wright, 16th, 17:09.39; and Kara Whiteaker, 19th, 17:23.88.

Harrison Brown placed 13th to round out the TCA boys, posting a 22:01.76.

The Eagles scored 20 points as a team, outdistancing second place by 42 points. The Lady Eagles won 12 points, scoring 34 points.

TCA teams are back in action Sept. 7 at the Assault of Eagle Summit in Decatur.

Weatherford

The Lady Roos placed second as a team in the Girls 5A-6A division at the Spartan Invitational, scoring 54 points and finishing eight points back. They were led by a runner-up individual finish by Remington Boone with a time of 19:35.22 over the 5K course.

FOOTBALL

Bearcats, Guyer same but different

Face off Friday to open season

By Rick Mauch
The Community News

When Aledo Bearcats head coach Robby Jones looks at his team's season-opening opponent, the Denton Guyer Wildcats, he sees similarities to his own team.

"They kind of remind me of us. They have a really good defensive line - two who have committed to go play somewhere (sophomore Zane Rowe to Oklahoma and senior Zavier Ukponu to Wisconsin) - good linebacking corps and a young secondary," Jones said. "Same with us."

"When you look at us pre-game you'll see the difference between 5A and 6A, the difference in size. They're huge on the offensive line. They outweigh our kids by 20-30 pounds on average."

However, that has not been a problem with the Bearcats throughout their history as they've conquered numerous foes who on paper had an advantage.

"We've played teams bigger, we've played teams faster, we play harder than they do," Jones said.

The Bearcats visit Guyer Friday, Aug. 30, to open the season with a 7 p.m. kickoff.

Ready to return

Guyer returns five offensive and two defensive starters from a 7-4 season that saw the Wildcats extend their playoff streak to 16 seasons with a 6A Division II bi-district appearance. Aledo brings back three offensive and four defensive starters from a 16-0 Class 5A Division II state champion.

The bi-district exit was out of line with what the Wildcats and their fans have become accustomed to. In 2019 and 2021 they reached the Class 6A Division II state final,

with semifinal appearances in 2020 and 2022.

However, Jones sees the 2024 Wildcats as a team ready to bounce back to greatness. The school opened in 2005 and every year since 2007 has reached the post-season, advancing 14 times with two state championships (2012, 2013).

"I think they're on the verge of being a very good football team again," Jones said.

Jones should know. He's been a part of 11 of the Bearcats' state-record state championships. From 2009-22 he was the offensive coordinator, and last year he led the Bearcats to their fifth 16-0 season in his first season ever as a head coach.

Williams, Guillory good to go

Junior running back Ray Guillory and senior offensive lineman Payton Williams should see playing time this week. Jones said both have been cleared by their doctors after recovering from injuries, Guillory's knee and Williams a broken fibula.

However, that action will be limited, the coach noted.

"Ray says he feels great. I think structurally the knee is fine, it's a matter of conditioning," Jones said. "We're not going to leave him on the field if he's tired."

"Same with Payton. He will roll in with other linemen. We've got to have our leaders on the field at the right time and that means we have to make sure we don't overuse them at other times."

Guillory saw action in the scrimmage at Mansfield Timberview on Aug. 22, carrying the ball a handful of times. Williams did not participate in the scrimmage.

Despite missing several games, including the state semifinals and finals, Guillory rushed for 1,207



BRELEIGH MAYER/THE COMMUNITY NEWS

Gavin Beard finds an opening last season against Azle. Beard will captain the Bearcats this season. Also shown is Alex Arana (50).

yards and 17 touchdowns in 2023, along with catching 10 passes for 175 yards and four TD.

QB matchup

Bearcats starting quarterback Gavin Beard has started a game before, but as Jones puts it, "It's his first game as 'Hey, I'm the man. I'm not Hauss' (Hejny) backup any more."

Hejny, who guided the Bearcats to state titles in 2022 and 2023, is now playing at TCU.

Beard, a junior, looked solid as a backup, completing 45 of 62 pass attempts (73%) for 517 yards

with two touchdowns and two interceptions. In his lone start at Brewer, a 59-13 win, he was 19-of-23 for 223 yards with a TD and no interceptions.

On the other side, Guyer welcomes senior transfer Kevin Sperry, an Oklahoma commit. He led Carl Albert of Midwest City, Oklahoma to its sixth state championship in seven seasons in 2023, throwing for over 2,500 yards with 31 TD and 4 interceptions, along with rushing for over 550 yards and 11 TD.

Turn to **BEARCATS**, page 9

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SEPTEMBER 10

Dementia Support Group
Join the Dementia Support Group from 4-5 p.m. at Harvest of Aledo 1043 Bailey Ranch Rd. Even more so, we value the efforts of the caregivers, especially the families of our residents. This meeting will take place on the second Tuesday of every month. For more information call 682-209-0643

SEPTEMBER 12

Alzheimer's Group
The East Parker County Alzheimer's Group meets from 1-3 p.m. on the second Thursday of each month at Aledo United Methodist Church, 100 Pecan. Drive. For more information, call 817-441-8329.



OCTOBER 4 - 31

Clark Gardens Pumpkin Patch
Clark Gardens Pumpkin Patch will be open daily Monday - Saturday from 8 - 5 p.m. and Sunday 10-5 p.m. Our Pumpkin Patch is the perfect place for a cozy, family-fun filled, fall experience. Choose from pumpkins of

all shapes and sizes to purchase and take home. Enjoy pumpkin ring toss, pumpkin bowling, and other festive games. Model Trains: View Model Trains at the Clarks Station Garden Walks: Stroll through our gardens and enjoy Fall in full bloom. Purchase snacks and refreshing beverages in our admissions booth. Make Clark Gardens a stop on your Fall bucket list! Admission: \$10 adults, \$8 Senior, \$5 children, 3 and under FREE. *additional fees apply for pumpkin purchases

OCTOBER 8

Dementia Support Group
Join the Dementia Support Group from 4-5 p.m. at Harvest of Aledo 1043 Bailey Ranch Rd. Even more so, we value the efforts of the caregivers, especially the families of our residents. This meeting will take place on the second Tuesday of every month. For more information call 682-209-0643

OCTOBER 10

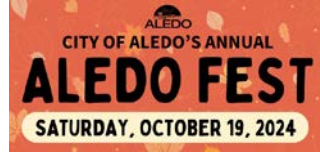
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OCTOBER 12

Aledo UMC Lord's Acre Fall Festival
Gather the family for a fall bucket list event y'all won't want to miss from 10 a.m. - 3 p.m. on Saturday, October 12th. AUMC will host its annu-



al community fall fest with kid's activities, food, vendors, silent and live auctions, live music performances, and community fun. The money raised helps support AUMC's mission efforts in Aledo, surrounding areas, statewide and around the world. Forward this event to all your friends and follow us on our page to stay in the loop on all the fun things we have planned!



OCTOBER 19

2024 Aledo Fest
Aledo fest will be from 10 a.m. - 2 p.m. on Saturday, October 19 in downtown Aledo. It will feature live music and activities for kids of all ages. Meet your local businesses at vendor booths, do some gift shopping, and get a little something for yourself! Come hungry for a variety of food trucks on-site for good eats & autumn treats! Vendor and sponsorship applications are available now - please visit our website. <https://www.aledotx.gov/AledoFest>

EVENT SUBMISSIONS

Send event submissions to events@community-news.com.

TEXAS CROSSWORD
by Charley & Guy Orbison
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ACROSS

- 1 oil rich countries
- 5 Patricia of Texas-based film "Hud"
- 6 "____-farty" (pretentious)
- 7 made a run for it
- 8 San Antonio Zoo has several of these (2 wds.)
- 16 ambulance services (abbr.)
- 17 Galveston County town (2 wds.)
- 21 TX Ernie who was "Mr. Cub" (init.)
- 22 New England ____ chowder
- 23 TXism: "____ a bug in a rug"
- 24 TXism: "from womb ____" (lifetime)
- 29 TXism: "at the drop of ____" (impulsive)
- 30 rose stalk
- 31 t-shirt size
- 32 TX Gary Morris hit: "The Love ____ Me"
- 34 planting dirt
- 35 LBJ Supreme Court nominee, Fortas
- 36 in the 1990s, it was easy to find one in Texas (2 wds.)
- 37 TX Ronnie who sang with Brooks
- 38 long, narrow cut
- 39 in Columbus, TX: "Tate-____ Brandon House"
- 41 TXism for "fellow"
- 42 enjoyed a meal
- 43 TX Bobby, co-founded the Black Panther Party
- 44 unoriginal, trite
- 45 "tit for ____"
- 46 "in ____" (work well together)
- 47 TXism: "sticks like ____ a road"
- 48 Cuero's Turkeyfest race: "Great ____ Gallop"
- 50 Gulf game fish
- 51 dove sound

DOWN

- 1 TXism: "attacked like conventioners ____"
- 2 how shearers charge? (2 wds.)
- 3 cowboys are big
- 4 in Callahan County on I-20
- 9 37th governor, Shivers
- 10 tidy
- 11 Neil Diamond's "____. I Said"
- 12 late Texas singer, Gilley (init.)
- 13 live music TV show: "____ City Limits"
- 14 with "S2," name of a security system
- 15 TXism: "he's lower than pond ____"
- 18 Army inspector, e.g. (abbr.)
- 19 in 1991, IRS sold some of TX Willie Nelson's property to pay this (2 wds.)
- 20 "____ Mission" is oldest in Texas
- 22 smokestack
- 24 TXism: "dot the i's and cross the ____"
- 25 TX Roy Orbison's "____, Pretty Woman"
- 26 golf ball holders
- 27 sirloin and brisket are cuts ____
- 28 TXism: "he wouldn't know how to ____ stick horse" (dude)
- 29 frock (2 wds.)
- 30 TXism: "gave me a ____ and dance" (runaround)
- 33 Texas country singer, Stuckey
- 34 TXism: "he's a ____ nuff Texan"
- 35 star of "Bandit Kings of Texas," Lane
- 37 former San Angelo festival: "Fiesta ____"
- 38 "mister" in Mexico in Brown County on U.S. 67 & 84
- 40 in U.S. 67 & 84
- 41 taxi cost
- 44 illegal motion by a Ranger pitcher
- 47 corporate raider, TX
- 49 ____ Pickens showed disapproval

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@DentonGuyer 7:50 PM • 9.30.24 vs. Lancaster 7:50 PM • 9.6.24
 @Brewer 7 PM • 9.13.24 vs. Birdville 7 PM • 9.20.24
 @FossilRidge 7 PM • 9.26.24 (Thur)
 vs. Denton Ryan 7 PM • 10.4.24
 @Granbury 7 PM • 10.11.24 vs. Richland 7 PM • 10.28.24
 @Azle 7 PM • 11.1.24 vs. Denton 7 PM • 11.8.24

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Legal Notice

The Aledo Independent School District (the District) is requesting competitive sealed proposals for the following RFPs:

2410-14: Special Education Supplies, Materials, Equipment, Software, Repair Services, and Student Services

2410-15: Fine Arts Supplies, Materials, Equipment, Software, and Services

2410-16: Athletic Supplies, Materials, Equipment, Software, and Services

Specifications for this project may be obtained on the District's electronic procurement system at <https://aledoisd.ionwave.net/>. Proposals will be received until 3 PM CT on September 27, 2024. Proposals will be electronically unsealed and opened shortly after the specified time of closing. Late bids will be rejected as non-responsive. Accommodations and modifications for people with disabilities are available upon request. Submit requests to Kim Whitley at kwhitley@aledoisd.org. The District reserves the right to reject any and/or all proposals, to accept the proposal(s) that provide(s) the best value to the District, and to waive all formalities with respect thereto.

NOTICE OF PUBLIC HEARING ON PROPOSED 2024-2025 FISCAL YEAR BUDGET FOR THE CITY OF WILLOW PARK

The City of Willow Park City Council will hold a public hearing on the proposed 2024-2025 fiscal year budget at a City Council meeting at 6:00 p.m. on September 10, 2024, in the Willow Park City Hall, Council Chambers, 120 El Chico Trl., Suite A, Willow Park, Texas.

This budget will raise more total property taxes than last year's budget by \$199,171 or 10.49% and of that amount \$50,730 is tax revenue from new property added to the tax roll this year. The public is encouraged to review the City's proposed budget on the City of Willow Park website at www.willowparktx.gov or view a paper copy of the budget in the City Secretary's office.

The public may comment by providing written comments either through the mail at the following address: 120 El Chico Trl., Suite A, Willow Park, Texas 76087, or by email at cdozier@willowpark.org. Any written comments received by the City on or prior to 6:00 p.m. on the day of the public hearing will be included with information provided to the City Council for their consideration.

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

Crystal Dozier

City Secretary

City of Willow Park

ORDINANCE NO. 909-24

AN ORDINANCE OF THE CITY COUNCIL OF THE CITY OF WILLOW PARK, TEXAS, ADOPTING A COMPREHENSIVE FEE AND RATE SCHEDULE FOR THE FOLLOWING ENTERPRISE FUND UTILITY RATES/SERVICES/CHARGES FOR FISCAL YEAR 2024-25, INCLUDING WATER IMPACT FEES, WATER TAP FEES WASTEWATER IMPACT FEES, WASTEWATER TAP FEES DRAINAGE IMPACT FEES, UTILITY DEPOSITS/FEES, WATER BASE RATES, WATER VOLUMETRIC CHARGES, WASTEWATER RATES, SOLID WASTE RATES, ADDITIONAL UTILITY SERVICES CHARGES, AND WATER METER COSTS; AMENDING VARIOUS CITY ORDINANCES; AND CONTAINING A SEVERABILITY CLAUSE AND AN EFFECTIVE DATE.

PASSED AND APPROVED ON THIS DAY 27TH DAY OF AUGUST, 2024.

CRYSTAL R. DOZIER, TRMC, CMC
CITY SECRETARY
CITY OF WILLOW PARK

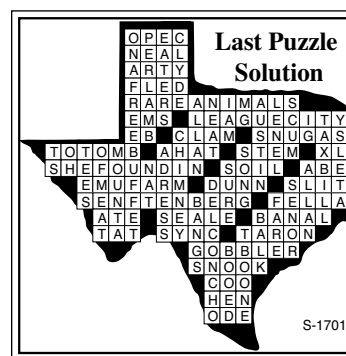
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FOOTBALL

McClellan makes Falcons roster

Former Bearcat joins NFL ranks

By Rick Mauch
The Community News

The Aledo Bearcats will have a player in the National Football League come opening day. Running back Jase McClellan was named to the Atlanta Falcons' 53-man roster when the regular season begins on Sunday, Sept. 8 at home against Pittsburgh.

McClellan was taken as the 186th pick in the sixth round of the 2024 NFL Draft.

In the 2024 preseason, McClellan rushed for 97 yards and a touchdown on 24 carries. He also caught three passes for 24 yards.

His best outing was 55 yards rushing on 11 carries in a 13-12 loss to the Baltimore Ravens.

"The entire Aledo Bearcat program and community are extremely proud and excited for Jase," Aledo head coach Robby Jones said. "Jase has worked hard for this opportunity and we expect him to succeed as a pro just as he did in high school and college."

Jones was the offensive coordinator when McClellan played for the Bearcats from 2016-19, rushing for 6,468 yards and 122 touchdowns, along with catching 28 passes for 429 yards and three scores.

The Bearcats won three state titles (2016, 2018, 2019) and finished as runner-up once (2017) in McClellan's four seasons at Aledo.

They posted a 62-2 record in that span, with both losses by a combined total of four points.

At Aledo, McClellan was the Maxpreps All-Freshman Team National Player of the Year in 2016, a Class 5A All-State selection in 2018 and played in the Under Armour All-American Game following his senior season.

McClellan played in college at Alabama, helping the Crimson Tide to a 2020 national championship and a 2021 runner-up finish. They also reached the 2023 semifinals before narrowly falling to eventual national champion Michigan.

In 44 games for Alabama, McClellan rushed for 1,981 yards and 18 TD, along with catching 40 passes for 409 yards and six



touchdowns. He led the Crimson Tide in rushing as a senior with 890 yards and eight TD rushing, also catching 15 passes for 137 yards.

The Falcons' game against the Steelers can be seen on Fox TV. It is tentatively scheduled for noon kickoff.

BEARCATS

from page six

Jones said none of that is bothering his new starting QB.

"He's always kind of a calm, cool character. He's an extraordinarily confident kid," Jones said.

Key matchups

Again, the quarterbacks factor in. If Aledo's defensive line can pressure Sperry consistently, it will greatly help the young Bearcats' secondary. Also, if the Aledo offensive line can protect Beard, he could take advantage of Guyer's inexperienced secondary.

"They have a big-time receiver (junior Corbin Glasco, 43 catches, 488 yards, 6 TD in 2023) and so do we (junior Kaydon Finley, 39 catches, 602 yards, 6 TD in 2023). When Ray is on the field, I feel we have an advantage at running back," Jones said. "I think it could come down to how well our secondary holds up against their quarterback and how well our defensive line puts pressure on him."

Team captains

Perhaps for the first time ever, the Bearcats will have two juniors as part of the team captain crew. When Tim Buchanan became the head coach in 1993, he set aside that honor for a pair of seniors.

Then, in 2022, players and coaches were allowed to add juniors to their nominations. As a result, Hejny was named a captain.

This year, the offensive captains are Beard and Finley. The defensive captains are senior linebackers Owen Henderson and Ben McElree.

Captains are determined by a vote of teammates and coaches.

"Owen has emerged as a vocal leader and Ben was an obvious choice. Your quarterback, naturally, should be one of the leaders, and Kaydon's been the guy in his class who's looked to as 'the guy,' and he's taken that role on," Jones said. "These are the guys others look to for leadership on the field and in the locker room."

In rare company

Very few teams have an advantage against Aledo in their all-time series together, but Guyer is one. The Wildcats lead 3-2.

Their first meeting was in the 2012 Class 4A Division I playoffs. The Wildcats won 42-30 and went on to win their first state championship.

Ironically, the Bearcats finished 10-2 that season with both losses to state champions. They also lost 41-28 to Stephenville in pre-district, with the Yellowjackets later capturing the 4A Division II title.

Also, both teams are undefeated on the road in the series. Aledo's two wins were in Denton, 40-0 in 2018 and 48-45 on a last-minute field goal in 2023, while Guyer won 60-57 in 2019 and 44-14 in 2022, both in Aledo.

Along with the regular-season meetings, Jones noted the teams also scrimmaged each season from 2010-13.

"We've got a pretty good history with these guys," Jones said. "I don't know if it's a rivalry, but we have great mutual respect for each other."

State success

In each season the Bearcats and Guyer have played, one or both teams have gone on to win state.

- 2010: The teams scrimmaged, with Aledo going on to win state.

- 2011: Scrimmaged, Aledo won state.
- 2012: Scrimmaged and Guyer won playoff game, Guyer won state.
- 2013: Scrimmaged, both teams won state.
- 2018: Aledo won, went on to win state.
- 2019: Guyer won, Aledo won state.
- 2022: Guyer won, Aledo won state.
- 2023: Aledo won, then won state.

Elsewhere in District 3-5A Division I

Thursday, Aug. 29

- Crowley at Birdville
- Lake Dallas at Denton
- The Colony at Keller Fossil Ridge

Friday, Aug. 30

- Azle at Abilene Cooper
- Saginaw at Brewer
- Waco at Granbury
- Haltom at Richland
- Haslet Eaton at Denton Ryan

Game at a glance

Aledo Bearcats (0-0) at Denton Guyer Wildcats (0-0)

When: 7 p.m. Friday, C.H. Collins Stadium, Denton.

Returning starters: Aledo 3 offense/4 defense, Guyer 5 offense/2 defense.

Aledo players to watch: QB Gavin Beard, entering first season as starting signal caller (45-of-62, 517 yards, 2 TD, 2 int. in 2023), WR Kaydon Finley (39 catches, 602 yards, 6 TD in 2023).


Guyer offensive players to watch: QB Kevin Sperry (31 TD, 4 int. 2,564 passing yards; 563 yards, 11 TD rushing in 2023), led Carl Albert of Midwest City to sixth Oklahoma state championship in seven seasons; WR Corbin Glasco (43 catches, 488 yards, 6 TD in 2023).

Aledo defensive players to watch: LB Ben McElree (42 tackles, 8.5 for loss, 2 forced fumbles, sack in 2023); DL Decker Sanders (30 tackles, 2 sacks, 6.5 tackles for loss in 2023).


Guyer defensive players to watch: DL Xavier Ukponu (31 tackles, 6 for loss, sack in 2023), committed to Wisconsin; DL Zane Rowe (23 tackles, 4 for loss, 2 sacks), committed to Oklahoma.

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VOLLEYBALL

Aledo stunned by Midlothian



Ladycats lose momentum after building two-set advantage

By Geoff Heppes
The Community News

After finishing in the top eight of the Northwest Tournament, the Aledo Ladycats volleyball team returned to their home court for more stiff competition Tuesday night where the Ladycats hosted the Midlothian Lady Panthers.

Aledo stormed out of the gates with purpose, building a 2-0 lead in sets but could not put away Midlothian, who surged back into the match and forced a fifth set. Ultimately, the Ladycats fell in five sets to the visitors by a final score of 25-18, 25-10, 17-25, 19-25 and 9-15.

RYAN WADE/THE COMMUNITY NEWS

Outside hitter Alyssa Todd soars through the air for a spike during the second set of the Ladycat varsity volleyball match against Midlothian on Tuesday, Aug. 27. Todd racked up 17 kills and 19 digs as Aledo fell to the visiting squad, three sets to two.

In the first two sets, Aledo was firing on all cylinders. The Ladycats raced ahead 11-6 in the first set after an emphatic block from senior middle Haley Lowe. Then, a nice dump shot from junior setter Sophie Frank capped a 3-0 run that extended the lead to 17-11 and Aledo nursed that lead through the end.

The Ladycats were even more dominant in the second set. The home team raced out to a 5-1 lead, but Midlothian clawed its way back into the match, cutting the deficit to 8-7. However, Aledo - fueled by a flurry of kills from junior outside hitter Alyssa Todd - surged ahead 21-7 on an impressive 13-0 scoring run. A big kill on the right side from senior middle Kinley Elms ended the victorious second set.

Then, the visitors entered set number three with a sharp increase in energy and effort. The Lady Panthers got ahead 4-0 before Aledo scored and held onto its slim lead throughout the early stages of the set.

But Aledo continued to battle. A tip shot from 6-foot-2 middle Lily Lufkin tied the score at 9-9 and senior middle Ella Isbell followed with a kill

of her own to give Aledo its first lead of the set at 10-9.

Midlothian seesawed back in front 12-11, but back-to-back kills from Elms pushed Aledo ahead 13-12 and another point made it 14-12, forcing the Lady Panthers to use a timeout. The stoppage of play helped the visitors, who responded from the brief intermission with a 7-0 run to claim a 19-14 lead. Aledo could not creep any closer than four points the rest of the set.

The teams moved into the fourth set and Aledo again faced a significant early deficit of 6-1. Each time the Ladycats pulled to within four points, the Lady Panthers had the answers and ultimately pulled out the set to force a decisive fifth set.

Aledo managed to stay within three to four points for most of the sudden-death set with Midlothian. Todd hammered home kills on consecutive points to cut the deficit to 13-9 late, but the visitors scored the last two points to seal the comeback victory.

Todd led the way offensively with 17 kills to go with 19 digs while Elms had a strong presence up front with 12 kills and five blocks. Ella Meador anchored the back line defense

with a team-high 25 digs, along with four service aces, while senior Kenrie Pruitt recorded 15 digs. Lowe and Isbell each added three blocks while setters Ava Reding and Sophie Frank had 27 and 14 assists, respectively. Tatum Kosse also chipped in with six kills.

Aledo (11-7) will take the court again in the Arlington Classic Invitational Tournament on Friday and Saturday. The Ladycats will open with pool play matches against Richardson Pearce and Amarillo.

Ladycats perform well in Northwest tournament

The Ladycats continued tournament competition on the volleyball court over the Aug. 23 weekend in the Northwest ISD Volleyball Classic. Overall, the Ladycats went 5-3 and finished in the top eight teams in a field crowded with strong competition.

The Ladycats (11-7) recorded a pair of straight-sets wins over Denton Braswell (25-12 and 25-16) and El Paso Coronado (25-11 and 25-23) on the first day of action along with a tight loss to Colleyville in straight sets (19-25 and 23-25).

Ready to Rumble!

Meet the Bearcats



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