

# THE COMMUNITY NEWS

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ALEDO

## Popular park re-opens

### Reflective of younger demographic

By Christopher Amos  
The Community News

New play equipment and a fresh look await visitors to a revitalized park at the end of Village Parkway, directly across from Vandagriff Elementary School. The improvements are part of a broad effort by the city to evaluate, improve, and bring up to code all the Aledo parks, city manager Noah Simon explained.

“It’s a process. We took out the old equipment and put in new equipment,” Simon said.

Neighbors have enjoyed the spot for years, even before the first park was built. Adam Morvant said his children, now adults, played in the area before the first playground. Adam built in the neighborhood in 1996.

“This is way better than the old park,” Morvant said while watching children run about in the park. “There used to be nothing here but a natural creek flowing through when we built here.”

Mayor Nick Stanly explained the park revitalization the city has been doing over the years is reflective of the younger demographic of the residents.



CHRISTOPHER AMOS/THE COMMUNITY NEWS

Nolan, Reagan, and Stella Stanley peek through play equipment during the re-opening ceremony of Howard Way Park.

ALEDO ISD

## Collins to seek another term on school board

### Highlights district success in announcement

Staff Reports  
The Community News

Aledo ISD Board President Forrest Collins has announced his intention to run for re-election for Place 4 on the board of trustees.

In his announcement, Collins pointed to the accomplishments of the board.



Forrest Collins

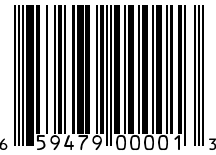
“Together, we have achieved historic success in Aledo ISD,” Collins said. “From academic achievements and increased student opportunities to improved facilities and strategic planning, our district has embraced the idea that we are stronger when parents, educators, and our community work together to support our children. We’ve prioritized excellence in education, ensured fiscal responsibility, and fostered an environment where students thrive both academically and personally.”

Collins, a business owner, has two children who are students in the district. His wife is a special education teacher.

“I’m deeply invested in the success of our students and community,” Collins said. “As our community grows, we must prepare students for the future while preserving the unique qualities that make Aledo ISD special. We must continue to provide critical resources to all students, support our teachers, and push back against government overreach. It is imperative that we continue to invest in our students and provide all children with exceptional educational opportunities. We’ve set a high standard, and we must keep building on our culture of excellence.”

Collins said he would continue to be a strong voice for parents, students, and educators.

“We will continue to have meaningful conversations about the future of our district, challenge the status quo, and never settle for less than what our students deserve and what our teachers have earned,” he said. “Serving our students, families, and educators has been one of the greatest honors of my life.”



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EDUCATION

## Vanguard Prep breaks ground in Aledo

### Therapeutic private school ‘teaches kids to navigate life’

By Christopher Amos  
The Community News

Bailey Ranch Road might deserve the nickname “Education Parkway” with Vanguard Preparatory School joining the quarter-mile stretch already accommodating Aledo High School, Aledo ISD Learning Center, Daniel Ninth Grade Campus, Reading Friends, and The PREP School of Bailey Ranch.

Members of Vanguard Prep were joined Jan. 31 by staff members of Aledo ISD, the City of Aledo, and Menta Education Group for a groundbreaking ceremony directly across the street from the Aledo ISD office.

Targeted for completion in August 2025, the private therapeutic school will provide individualized programs for students K-5 with academic, social, emotional, and behavioral



SCHWARZ HANSON

A rendition of the new Vanguard Preparatory School in Aledo by Schwarz Hanson

differences. Vanguard has provided education in north Texas since 1993 and later partnered with Menta Education Group to become a premier non-profit school.

Luci Luemann joined Vanguard as president in 2022 and helped coordinate the groundbreaking event, greeting Aledo ISD staff as they walked across the street to the future school’s location.

“We’ve been meeting with Aledo and getting their input. We want to be a good community neighbor,” Luemann said. “We are so excited about serving the community and are thrilled with the turn out and support at the event.”

Aledo Mayor Nick Stanley spoke about the tremendous growth the city has experienced

and the need for specialized education in the area.

“I want to welcome all the Vanguard folks. I think you will be amazingly successful,” the mayor added. “This will make sure we are giving every opportunity to every child to have a quality education.”

Turn to PREP, page 3

ALEDO ISD

## New police chief named for Aledo ISD

### Collie to retire

By Mercedes Mayer  
Aledo ISD

Aledo ISD has named David Stevens as the district’s new Chief of Police and Director of Safety and Security, bringing more than 30 years of combined law enforcement experience to the district. Chief Stevens will begin his new duties in late February.

The combined position of Chief of Police/Director of Security position in Aledo ISD



David Stevens

was created to combine the duties of police chief along with safety and security duties vacated by Scott Kessel, the district’s executive director of student services, when he retired in December. Aledo ISD Police Chief Fred Collie will retire this month after 10 years of service in Aledo ISD and 28 years total in law enforcement.

Stevens has spent the last six and a half school years as the director of security for Arlington

Turn to POLICE, page 3

WEATHERFORD

## Residents express concerns regarding short-term rentals

### Development funds approved for restaurant in old Cotten-Bratton building

By Jim Zimmermann  
The Community News

During the Tuesday, Jan. 28 meeting of the Weatherford City Council it was standing room only as residents came to have their say about allowing short-term rentals in the city.

According to records, there are 50 illegal short-term rentals operating within the city

of Weatherford. During the meeting, there were several homeowners who spoke their concerns during the open forum.

What makes them illegal is that they are operating without applying for a hotel/motel license and paying the fee through the finance department.

Several homeowners spoke about the cons of the current short-term rentals, including too many people in one home, too much noise, and trash not being set out required.

Mayor Paul Paschall noted there have only been five reported

Turn to RENTALS, page 3

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# In & Around Parker County

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The Clear Fork Veterinary team has expanded from Dr. Darryl McEndree to include experienced veterinarians Dr. Kimberly Wise and Dr. Clare Williamson, and Dr. Emily Kingston, who joined the clinic in January of 2024.

It also has a full staff of veterinary technicians, customer service representatives, and clinic managers to ensure customer satisfaction for all.

“I have full confidence in all the veterinarians on our staff,” Dr. McEndree said. “They are all dedicated to providing the best care for your pets.”

The clinic provides comprehensive full-life-stage care to dogs and cats, offering wellness exams, vaccinations, hospital care, end-of-life care, pain management, dental care, surgery, radiology and imaging, internal medicine, pharmacy service, emergency care, micro-chipping, heartworm and flea treatment products, and prescription food products.

“We take the care of all pets very seriously,” Dr. McEndree said. “We always try to remain very understanding and compassionate. We try to stay on the front edge of their care, while also providing high-quality treatment and medicine.”

In addition to the pristine care it provides to its animal patients, Dr. McEndree said the practice maintains clear and open communication with their owners, and every visit will be one of compassion.

Dr. McEndree said they work to ensure all animals feel comfortable and safe when they are in their care.

“If anything is our niche, it’s the time we spend with the owner and the pet,” Dr. McEndree said. “We want to be able to make a difference in the lives of animals.”

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The staff at Clearfork Vet Clinic is committed to compassionate, quality care: (from left) Dr Emily Kingston, Dr Clare Williamson, Dr Kim Wise, and Dr Darryl McEndree.



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CHRISTOPHER AMOS/THE COMMUNITY NEWS

Members of Vanguard Prep, Menta Education, and the City of Aledo pose to break ground for a future campus on Bailey Ranch Road.

PREP

from page one

Patti Pickering, Vanguard Head of School, described how difficult finding a location in the fast-growing Aledo area was until Fred Disney, business developer and president of Westbrook Companies, came to their aid. Disney, the Bailey family, and Vanguard came to the conclusion of the new location and the Bailey

family donated seven of the 10 acres for the new campus.

Other administrators at the campus will be principal Logan Spiddle, lead therapist Marissa Ozuna, Menta CEO Dr. Rory Conran, Menta CFO Brian McGowan, strategic growth manager Luci Neumann, and clinical coordinator Janette Warne.

Families interested in learning more can call 214-404-1616 or complete an inquiry form online at [vanguardprepschool.com](http://vanguardprepschool.com).

HUDSON OAKS

North Oakridge Drive to expand

Project gets \$14 million expansion

By Christopher Amos  
The Community News

Residents gathered at Hudson Oaks City Hall on Jan. 27 for a sneak peek at a \$14 million improvement planned for North Oakridge Drive and look over charts and details while questioning engineers and city officials.

"It looks good. What is the downside?" a resident asked City Administrator Sterling Naron standing behind the 10-foot-long map. "Well, there is going to be construction," Naron responded.

To ease construction congestion, the three cement lanes with a turn lane will be done in three phases, with the last in front of Mary Martin Elementary being finished during summer vacation. The project is targeted to start in June and finish late summer 2026.

Phase One will start at Walgreens and go north to Garner Road. Phase Two will go past Red



CHRISTOPHER AMOS/THE COMMUNITY NEWS

Project engineers Fahad Rajabali and Dustin Blaylock of Freese and Nichols, Inc. discuss the map of the North Oakridge Drive project with Hudson Oaks Mayor Tom Fitzpatrick

Eagle Trail/Suzanne Trail, where there will be a traffic circle roundabout. Phase Three will go to Mary Martin Elementary near the corner of Silverstone Drive.

When finished, the road improvement will ease traffic to and from Mary Martin and encourage development along North Oakridge.

RENTALS

from page one

incidents on short-term rentals over the past five years.

For a short-term rental to operate there are several requirements that all involved need to abide by. The council had three alternatives that were presented. They took a vote and approved alternative No. 2, which would include the following:

1. Owner/contact information
2. Hotel tax proof
3. Liability Insurance
4. Compliance certification
5. Parking plan
6. Floor plan
7. House rules and safety documents

The other requirement is that only 25% of the units on the block are allowed to be short-term rentals.

The STRs that are currently operating will need to go through the permitting process and be approved to be complying.

Mayor Pro-tem, Heidi Wilder made a statement reflecting her concerns, "There is a difference between home and a house. A home is where you live and house is where you stay."

Paschall also mentioned that "Most short-term rentals have fresh paint, the landscaping is up to date, and the lawns are freshly manicured to attract new clients. There are some long-term residents' homes that are lacking the same attention."

More discussion is expected to take place at the next meeting on Feb. 11.

Cotten-Bratton project

Council voted to move ahead with a restaurant incentive that was



CITY OF WEATHERFORD

The old Cotten-Bratton building is set to be redeveloped into a restaurant, retail spaces, an event space, pizzeria, and a hotel.

allotted more than half the budget from the Weatherford Economic Development Board. The restaurant Zeno's is part of the Cotten-Bratton project on 113 College Ave., and was approved to receive \$279,471 for improvements.

Zeno's will relocate from its location on the downtown square into the old Cotten-Bratton building on the southeast quadrant of the square.

The overall project will include a restaurant, retail spaces, an event space, pizzeria, and a hotel with rooms ranging between \$175 and \$250 per night.

However, there were some concerns expressed about the allocation of funds that have been awarded. The fund was created for local businesses as an incentive to come and grow their business in downtown Weatherford.

The discussion was that some businesses that were in the queue to possibly receive these funds were turned down. This project was awarded \$80,000 earlier this year and now could receive an additional \$200,000.

"The fund was established to enhance the appearance and vitality of downtown Weatherford, with the goal of benefiting multiple locations and businesses," Wilder said. "While I am excited about this new development, I believe that allocating more than half of the fund to incentivize a single business does not align with the program's intended purpose."

"The objective is to create opportunities for multiple businesses, fostering a collective improvement that elevates our downtown as a whole."

After further discussion, however, the council voted its approval to move forward.

POLICE

from page one

ISD. Stevens directed security operations for all Arlington ISD campuses, facilities and properties 24 hours per day, including special events, athletic events and other after-hours activities. He also has led the development of the district's security operations center, led all district safety and security measures including access control, camera systems and more, and developed and implemented all emergency management planning and operations.

"We are thrilled to have someone with the background, knowledge, and leadership experience in law enforcement and school safety of David Stevens leading all safety measures and police operations for our school district," Superintendent Dr. Susan Bohn said. "With his extensive, first-hand experience in school district safety and policing, I cannot wait to have him join our leadership team and lead our work to protect all our Bearcats and our community."

Prior to joining Arlington ISD, Stevens was a lieutenant in the Arlington Police Department, where he worked for 21 years. Most recently he was the youth services commander for the APD, overseeing the School Resource Officer program, all youth initiatives and the city's community educational outreach programs.

Stevens started his law enforcement career as a patrolman for the Paris, Texas, police department. He has an associate of science degree from Paris Junior College and a bachelor of business administration from Texas A&M - Commerce.

"I truly look forward to serving Aledo ISD and this amazing community in this new role," Stevens said. "School safety specifically and keeping students and staff members safe has been a focus of mine for the last decade, and I am always working to continuously improve, learn and refine what that looks like. I embrace the All In Aledo way of life and will continue protecting, supporting and mentoring our most valuable resource, our kids."

Stevens is a Texas Commission on Law Enforcement (TCOLE) Master Peace Officer and Instructor, and he has completed the Institute for Law Enforcement Administration (ILEA) School of Supervision, School of Executive Leadership and Leadership Symposium. He is also certified as a School Based Law Enforcement (SBLE) Officer.

Stevens and his wife Kathy, a special education aide at the Aledo ISD Early Childhood Academy, have been Bearcats and members of the Aledo ISD community for many years with both of his children graduating from Aledo schools.

The district will host a meet-and-greet with Chief Stevens in February.

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#### Content Submission Policy

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](mailto:news@community-news.com). Please provide the basic story information as well as contact information.

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

The Community News does not charge for time-ly 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

# Patrick releases 25 legislative priorities



**Gary Borders**  
gborders@texaspress.com

Lt. Gov. Dan Patrick has released his top 25 legislative priorities as the legislative session gets underway, *The Texas Tribune* reported. They include banning all forms of consumable THC, the psychoactive ingredient in CBD products; increasing the school homestead exemption from \$100,000 to \$140,000; a Texas version of a government oversight department to improve governmental efficiency; and measures to shore up the state's electric grid and water supply.

Patrick released a statement saying his priorities guarantee the Texas Senate, over which he presides, "will continue to lead as the preeminent legislative body in America by passing our bold, conservative agenda, helping President Trump deliver on his promise of making America great again."

He said he plans to release an additional 15 priority bills soon, for a total of 40.

### Flu cases spiking across the state

The number of influenza cases is rising rapidly, the *Austin American-Statesman* reported, particularly in North Texas where at least two school districts were forced to close because of excessive absences. Data from the Texas Department of State Health Services indicates a 34% positivity rate in the week of Jan. 12-18.

A Fort Worth children's hospital last week reported nearly 700 patients visiting its emergency rooms within a 24-hour span.

"Which is just an astronomical number," Dr. Stephanie Felton, attending physician at Cook Children's Medical Center, said. "Every year, we obviously see the flu. This year, I will say, that we're seeing an abundance of it, as far as the numbers."

Flu symptoms include fever, cough, sore throat, muscle

aches, headaches, and a runny or stuffy nose. Severe symptoms can last up to three days, while less-severe symptoms can hang around for up to two weeks.

### Abbott seeks fed reimbursement for border security

Gov. Greg Abbott has asked the federal government to reimburse Texas for the \$11.1 billion the state has spent in the past four years in Operation Lone Star.

"Over the past four years, OLS efforts successfully reduced illegal immigration into Texas by 87%, demonstrated the ongoing effectiveness of President Donald Trump's border measures, and shone a spotlight on a national crisis," Abbott wrote in a letter to U.S. congressional leadership.

Abbott has long been critical of federal border enforcement efforts under former President Joe Biden, claiming his policies left Texas "defenseless" against infiltration across the border of violent gangs and other criminals.

### Measles cases confirmed in West Texas, Houston

Two cases of measles have been confirmed in school-aged children in West Texas a few weeks after two cases were reported in a pair of Houston residents, the *Houston Chronicle* reported. The West Texas cases were children living in Gaines County who had not received the measles, mumps, and rubella vaccine, according to DSHS. The children were hospitalized for a time in Lubbock but have since been discharged.

The cases in Houston involved two unvaccinated adults who had recently traveled internationally.

DSHS has warned that additional cases may occur, given the highly contagious nature of measles. The virus is transmitted by contact with infectious droplets that travel airborne when an infected person breathes, coughs or sneezes. The virus can remain infectious in the air for up to two hours.

Measles can cause life-threatening illness to unvaccinated persons.

### More than 20 bills filed to weaken vaccine requirements

More than 20 bills have been filed for this legislative session that aim to claw back vaccine requirements, *The Tribune* reported. The proposed legislation would make it easier for parents to opt out of vaccinations for their children; give the Legislature final approval on any new vaccinations required by schools; apply more rules for dispensing the COVID-19 vaccination; and demand more transparency regarding possible adverse effects of vaccines.

The founder of Texans for Vaccine Choice, Rebecca Hardy, said her group is not anti-vaccine.

"We're not here to restrict anybody's access to vaccines or to dismantle the vaccine program," she said. "So, we do not take a stance on if children should get all, some or no vaccines."

Carrie Williams, a spokesperson for the Texas Hospital Association, said vaccines have become politicized and their importance overlooked because of their efficacy.

"Vaccine decisions impact the availability of care, hospital workforce and wait times, and the people around you," she said. "We're always going to be on the side of policies that help prevent epidemics."

### Data centers are booming across Texas

The Lone Star State is "ground zero" for the boom in data centers to meet growing demand, including a new joint venture between OpenAI, SoftBank and Oracle announced recently by President Trump.

*The Texas Standard* reported 10 data centers are already under construction, with 10 more on the way. Each building will occupy half a million square feet.

"The demand for digital services continues to increase and continues to be necessary to build out our capabilities for the 21st century economy," said Dan Diorio, senior director of state policy at the Data Center Coalition, an industry trade

group. "Texas is uniquely poised to benefit from that."

The expansion, along with population growth and more frequent extreme weather events, could stretch the capacity of the state's power grid. Officials with the Electric Reliability Council of Texas (ERCOT) predict power demand will nearly double by 2030. A growing number of crypto mining facilities is also contributing to the demand for more power.

The state had 279 data centers as of September, according to the state comptroller's office.

### State's population now surpasses 31 million

For the past two years, Texas has gained an average of 1,542 residents each day, according to the Texas Demographic Center. The U.S. Census Bureau now estimates the state surpassed 31 million residents in 2024, driven largely by international migration.

For example, of those 1,542 new daily residents, 876 were from international migration, the report showed.

"These figures highlight the state's position as a key destination for global migrants, as well as its continued appeal to those relocating from other parts of the United States," according to the report.

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

## LETTERS POLICY

The Community News welcomes letters from readers on topics of local interest. Letters should be signed and should be limited to approximately 300 words. Please include a telephone number or other contact information so the identity of the letter writer can be verified. Send letters to The Community News, P.O. Box 1031, Aledo, TX 76008 or e-mail to [news@community-news.com](mailto:news@community-news.com).

## Idle American

# Tears of a tragedy



**Dr. Don Newbury**  
newbury@speakerdoc.com

Tears of millions of Americans have scarcely dried since the tragic mid-air collision of a passenger airliner with a military helicopter on January 29 in the icy waters of the Potomac River in Washington, DC. A total of 70 victims--64 passengers, a crew of three and three in the helicopter--lost their lives a handful of seconds and a few hundred feet short of the Ronald Reagan National Airport runway, some 1,200 miles from Wichita, KS, where the flight originated some three hours earlier. We've always heard that such tragedies "come in threes." Prayers abound for all who perished, as well as for all who lost loved ones. May this calamity be isolated, far more removed from the next one.

Upon hearing the news, millions of Americans' thoughts reverted to another river scene almost exactly 16 years ago.

That's when an Airbus A320 airliner was skillfully "landed" on the Hudson River in New York City, some 200 miles from DC. It was 5,858 days earlier--to be exact--when Captain Chesley (Sully) Sullenberger became a national hero. When the plane sustained a bird strike only minutes after take-off from NYC's LaGuardia Airport en route to Charlotte, NC, Sullenberger guided the aircraft toward the river. The waters were icy there, too, but the plane remained afloat long enough for all 150 passengers and a crew of five to be rescued. No one died, and just one passenger was injured. Truly, it was a "Miracle on the Hudson," occurring in January 2009, just a couple of weeks before the nation's last major commercial airline crash near Buffalo, NY, where 50 persons perished.

Numerous ironies are associated with the current tragedy. There always are, with many known only by those whose losses are up close and personal. One, about half of the passengers were figure skaters and their entourages. Largely ignored by major media were two interesting facts. About 24 hours before the crash, there was a close call between a commercial airliner

and a military helicopter near the same DC airport, and about 24 hours later, one of the world's most recognized figure skaters died. Dick Button, five-time world champion and twice an Olympic gold winner, dying at age 95 of natural causes.

The current crash involved a military Blackhawk helicopter colliding with a Bombardier CRJ700 regional jet. Manufactured in Canada, it was considered one of the true "workhorses" of commercial aviation, never experiencing a mid-air emergency. The last CRJ700 plane was manufactured four years ago.

Back in 1959, there was another airline calamity involving Buffalo, but this time, not in New York state. It occurred near Buffalo, TX, where 28 passengers and a crew of six perished. Downed by mechanical failure in a thunderstorm, the Lockheed L-188 Electra had been in service only 11 days for 132 flight hours. It was a Braniff flight, one of the company's first of many setbacks preceding its bankruptcy in 1982.

Many of Braniff's challenges were unavoidable, but at least one advertising debacle was among the worst on record--for

any company. If memory serves--and sometimes it doesn't--the Buffalo crash occurred during Braniff's trumpeting of its "we're-going-to-be-on-time" campaign. If flights were an hour late, passengers were handed silver dollars upon deplaning, along with promises to do better. The Braniff folks even placed large clocks at cabin entries as reminders of their promise. The Buffalo crash underscored the prevailing preference of arrival on time being more important than safe arrival. The campaign abruptly ended, of course, and the clocks came down.

Coming to mind is the 1992 funeral service of a pilot friend whose instruments failed in a Colorado mountain range, where Tim Williamson and five friends had planned to ski--not perish. One sentence of the funeral tribute described what may have been my friend's last words. "Hello, Denver Control. Hello, Jesus."

*Dr. Newbury, longtime university president, continues to speak and write. The Idle American, begun in 2003, is one of the longest-running syndicated columns. Contact: 817-447-3872. Email: [newbury@speakerdoc.com](mailto:newbury@speakerdoc.com). Website: [www.speakerdoc.com](http://www.speakerdoc.com).*





## LACROSSE

### SPORT MAKING DEBUT IN ALEDO

#### Storied coach to lead program

By John English  
The Community News

Aledo High School has a reputation for excellence in many sports.

Now lacrosse is looking to be added to that list, as Athan Iannucci was recently hired to serve as the junior varsity head coach and Director of Lacrosse Operations for the coming season.

Iannucci has a storied career in the sport of lacrosse, being named to the 2007 National Lacrosse League All-Rookie Team after being selected by the Philadelphia Wings as the eighth pick in the first round of the draft. A year later he was named the 2008 League MVP and was an All-Pro First Team that same season.

Prior to that, he played at Hofstra University (2003-05) under future Hall of Fame coach and current Team USA head coach, John Danowski.

The pinnacle of his NCAA career came in 2005 when he was named an All-American and led the NCAA in goals and points, setting Hofstra's single-season scoring record with 62 goals.

#### Immediate impression

Originally from New Westminster, British Columbia, Canada, Iannucci was hired by the Aledo Lacrosse Board. President Ken Dunphy said he and fellow board members Summer Wilkes and Meridith Nussbaum-Ray could tell it was a perfect fit from the beginning.

"When we made the decision to launch Aledo Lacrosse, our board knew we needed a strong leader to establish a solid foundation for our program," Dunphy said. "We interviewed several candidates, but it was clear after meeting Coach Iannucci that he was the ideal choice."

"Following the initial interview, we invited him to run a training session with some of our players,

and it confirmed what we already believed — his coaching style and vision were a perfect match for our program."

Iannucci, 42, will take the helm for Aledo's inaugural JV team while also setting the tone and expectations for the youth coaching staff.

"His leadership will elevate our already strong coaching team and provide a unified vision for the program's development," Dunphy said. "His influence will not only benefit us this year but also shape the trajectory of Aledo Lacrosse for years to come."

#### Adding to success

For Iannucci, the new position appealed to him for a couple of reasons.

"Coaching the JV team offers a unique opportunity to work with some of the finest athletes I have come across in all my years of coaching," Iannucci said. "I don't know what they put in the Aledo water supply, but whatever it is, it's working. Jokes aside, the inherent athleticism I have seen thus far is a testament to the coaching and strength and conditioning program in the Aledo school system. I am fortunate to inherit such athletes into the lacrosse program and hope to continue the success this community has earned the right to come to expect."

#### Ground up

Iannucci said that what excites him most about the Aledo program is the opportunity to help build it from the ground up.

"Every lacrosse player dreams of seeing the sport grow and thrive, especially in communities that value athletics as a cornerstone of their identity," Iannucci said. "The opportunity to introduce and build lacrosse in Aledo—a town that has already established itself as a beacon of athletic success — is truly inspiring."



RYAN WADE/THE COMMUNITY NEWS

Aledo lacrosse coach Athan Iannucci watches a couple players work on a rodeo drill during practice on Jan. 30.

#### "Long term, I hope to see Aledo producing collegiate-level lacrosse players and building a legacy."

— Athan Iannucci

"Aledo's unparalleled dominance in football, combined with its deep, community-wide commitment to sports excellence, creates the perfect environment for expanding the game...being part of a community where sports are celebrated and supported at such a high level is the dream of anyone passionate about growing lacrosse and helping it take root in a place that values athletic achievement and teamwork so deeply."

#### Coaching philosophy

Iannucci said his coaching philosophy involves fostering a passion for the sport of lacrosse while encouraging an understanding of how the sport's lessons apply to daily life.

"I want to teach my athletes more than just the mechanics of the game," Iannucci said. "I want to instill in them a love for lacrosse, a respect for its history, and an understanding of the values it represents. My goal is to help them develop not only as players but as men who can apply the lessons learned on the field to their lives."

"Whether it's striving for excellence, overcoming adversity, or supporting their teammates, these lessons will stay with them long after their time in the program ends. I hope to inspire them to dream big and work hard to reach their full potential in everything they do."

Dunphy, 37, said Iannucci himself lives up to his own coaching philosophy.

"Coach Iannucci brings a wealth of experience and a relentless work ethic that aligns perfectly with the culture of Aledo," Dunphy said. "As a player, he excelled at the highest levels, setting records in college, earning professional accolades, and being named league MVP in 2008. Beyond his impressive achievements, he serves as a strong role model for our athletes, demonstrating the values of dedication, perseverance, and leadership."

"His background and mindset reflect the high standards we aim to instill in our program, and we're thrilled for him to bring that expertise to Aledo."

#### Coming to Aledo

As for his move to Aledo, Iannucci said his new city is "a stunning part of Texas I hadn't explored before, with its upscale rural charm," and said the school spirit and enthusiasm surrounding Bearcats sports is evident.

"Driving through town, the countless Aledo Bearcat signs make it clear this city is passionate about sports," Iannucci said. "It's hard to imagine a better hub for expanding lacrosse in the Fort Worth region."

Iannucci said his ultimate goal for the Aledo Lacrosse Program is to establish it as a premier program in Texas, one that reflects the same level of excellence and competitive spirit

#### WHAT IS LACROSSE?

Lacrosse is a contact team sport played with a lacrosse stick and a lacrosse ball. It is the oldest organized sport in North America, with its origins with the indigenous people of North America as early as the 12th century. The game was extensively modified by European colonists, reducing the violence, to create its current collegiate and professional form. Players use the head of the lacrosse stick to carry, pass, catch, and shoot the ball into the goal.

— Wikipedia



RYAN WADE/THE COMMUNITY NEWS

Aledo lacrosse coach Athan Iannucci hopes to build a collegiate-level lacrosse program in Aledo.

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



FEBRUARY 8

**"Share the Love Day"**  
Weatherford Wags is having Share the Love Day from 11 a.m. - 2 p.m. on February 8, at 209 N. Front Street in Aledo. The "LOVE" puppies will be making their appearance at Two Sisters Teahouse and Boutique! Stop by for Lattes, create your own flower bouquets, unique vendors and each purchase of \$25.00 is entered into a raffle for a basket with gift cards & fun items from our stores! Plus, 10% of sales will be donated to Weatherford Wags Rescue! All puppies are available for adoption through Weatherford Wags! To be pre-approved find adoption questionnaire here: <https://www.weatherfordwags.org/adopt/adoption-questionnaire>



FEBRUARY 10

**Red Cross Blood Drive**  
The Red Cross is holding a blood drive from 12 - 5p.m. on Mon, Feb 10, at the Weatherford Public Library 1014 Charles St Weatherford, TX Visit [RedCrossBlood.org](http://RedCrossBlood.org) to register for the Red Cross

Drive at the Weatherford Public Library. You can also call 1-800-REDCROSS to make an appointment. <https://www.weatherfordtx.gov/calendar.aspx?EID=6469>

FEBRUARY 11

**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



FEBRUARY 13

**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.

FEBRUARY 15

**Parker County Health Foundation Boots & Bling Charity Gala**  
Parker County Health Foundation is holding the charity gala from 6-11p.m. on Saturday, February 15, at River Ranch Stockyards, 500 NE 23rd St., Fort Worth. For more information visit [parkercountyhealthfoundation.org](http://parkercountyhealthfoundation.org)



*Hats, Horses, & Hoopla*

FEBRUARY 22

**Hats, Horses & Hoopla Aledo Project Celebraion 2026** is holding an event from 6-9 p.m. on February 22, at The Social Space, 205 S. Calhoun St. Fort Worth. Visit [aledopc2026.com](http://aledopc2026.com) for tickets and more information. Ticket purchase deadline: Sunday, February 9, 2025

FEBRUARY 25

**67th Annual Rotary Pancake Supper**  
Weatherford Rotary is having their annual Pancake Supper from 6-8p.m. on February 25, at the Weatherford High School Cafeteria, 212 Bethel Rd. Funds raised for towards scholarships for Weatherford high school seniors. For more information visit [weatherfordrotary.org](http://weatherfordrotary.org) or call 817-360-8173.



FEBRUARY 28

**Young Life Mahjong Brunch**  
Mahjong Fundraiser benefiting Aledo Young Life in

**ACROSS**

1 San Marcos is seat of this county

5 Confederate general Robert \_\_\_\_\_

6 TXism: "flat as \_\_\_\_\_ handle prairie"

7 TXism: "old as \_\_\_\_\_"

8 TX Perot's starting naval rank (abbr.)

9 TXism: "have to stand up twice to cast \_\_\_\_\_" (skinny)

16 Dallas arts area: \_\_\_\_\_ Ellum"

18 firmness

21 "Dallas \_\_\_\_\_ Medical Center" for veterans

22 TXism: "frisky \_\_\_\_\_ unsaddled horse"

23 foot digit

24 TXism: "plain as \_\_\_\_\_ line on an eye chart"

30 left the coast due to coming hurricane

34 elected Texas county prosecutor (abbr.)

35 where TX Bonnie Parker was born

36 \_\_\_\_\_ while (former)

37 this Doug played for the Astros and managed the Rangers

39 HEB, ExxonMobil, or TI, e.g. (2 wds.)

43 Shaquille \_\_\_\_\_ went to high school in Texas

44 cracker

45 first state forest: "\_\_\_\_\_ Siecke"

46 Archer \_\_\_\_\_, TX

47 hanging a rustler?

49 garbage

52 Texas-born "Star Trek" creator, Gene (init.)

53 this Tom wrote "Harper Valley PTA" sung by TX Jeannie C. Riley (init.)

54 Murchison Jr. who founded the Cowboys

55 "what \_\_\_\_\_ on?"

58 you can rent \_\_\_\_\_ site at a Texas state park

59 "Honest \_\_\_\_\_" Lincoln

**DOWN**

1 TXism: "chuckle- \_\_\_\_\_" (idiot)

2 seat of Brewster County

3 party night: New \_\_\_\_\_

4 "\_\_\_\_\_ him packing"

9 TXism: "sure \_\_\_\_\_ shootin'" (certain)

10 this Ernie was the first coach of the Dallas Texans

11 TXism: "\_\_\_\_\_ grip like a snappin' turtle"

12 Astro or Ranger lumber (2 wds.)

13 "money" in Mexico

14 "good \_\_\_\_\_ boy"

15 TXism: "have to study up to be a half \_\_\_\_\_"

17 TXism: "hot enough to buckle \_\_\_\_\_"

19 Texas capital murder defendant can be sentenced \_\_\_\_\_ annually

20 annually

24 noted Texas historian \_\_\_\_\_ Fehrenbach

25 a Texas summer

26 female sheep

27 2023 comedy-drama "Accidental \_\_\_\_\_"

28 "just sat there like a bump \_\_\_\_\_"

29 a minister in charge of a church in SE Smith County on highway 135

31 the south in the Civil War (abbr.)

32 boot scootin'

33 a believer in God

40 Texas pastor who compiled Scofield Ref. Bible (init.)

41 TXism: "chew \_\_\_\_\_ awhile" (ponder)

42 TXism: "don't cross the river til \_\_\_\_\_ it"

48 former Volkswagen: Karmann \_\_\_\_\_

50 flashing light on a radar screen

51 trash receptacle

56 head skin

57 Eva of "It Started with a Kiss" with TX Debbie Reynolds

**TEXAS CROSSWORD**  
by Charley & Guy Orbison  
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P-1725

their mission to introduce ALL teenagers in Aledo, Texas to Christ and help them grow in their faith! Join us at Stillwater Meadow from 9a.m. - 12p.m. on Friday, February 28 . Create a team if you are the Table Captain or join a team if you have been invited to play! Get creative with those team names ladies, let's have some fun! Register: <https://tx485>.



[younglife.team/mahjong](http://younglife.team/mahjong)

MARCH 4

**Mardi Gras Festival**  
Join us for our 3rd Annual

Mardi Gras Festival from 6-9p.m. on March 4, at the Weatherford College - Alkek Fine Arts Center.

We'll have mouthwatering food, a gumbo cook-off that'll spice things up, live music to get you moving, and plenty of activities to keep the kids entertained. Let the good times roll!

Event Submissions: Send event submissions to [events@community-news.com](mailto:events@community-news.com). Please include time, date, and place of the event, a short description, and phone/email for obtaining further information, along with photos, graphics, or flyers.

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# Aledo FFA dominates national grant awards

By Christopher Amos  
The Community News

The honors are great but the selected are few. Out of 1,238 FFA Service Access Equity Grant applications submitted nation-wide, 16 were selected from Texas and, of those, 14 are from Aledo High School.

Yordi Atayde, Logyn Denbow, Maxton Ferreira, Tripp Hoff, Dylan Hoover, Ashlyn Leyva, Matthew Long, Stran Mayes, Hannah McCain, Emma Patterson, Maggie Perez, Jonathan Reves, Camryn Williamson, and Megan Williamson each received \$1,000 grants.

SAE grants are intended to help FFA members create or expand designed Supervised Agricultural Experience projects, which are a requirement each FFA member must complete. Members then submit comprehensive reports of their career development experience after completing the projects.

AISD Agriculture Education Coordinator Chris Tondre said he is proud of his students' work to get ready for the Fort Worth Stock Show.



SPECIAL TO THE COMMUNITY NEWS

Among the recent Aledo FFA grant recipients are (from left) Logyn Denbow, Ashlyn Leyva, Maggie Perez, Hannah McCain, Megan Williamson, Emma Patterson, Dylan Hoover, Tripp Hoff, and Yordi Atayde.

"Now we're seeing the result of that hard work in ribbons and scholarships earned," Tondre said. "Our FFA students spend hours

before and after school working on projects and they are a wonderful example of how all-in our ag students and staff are in Aledo ISD."

# Aledo City Hall Update A fine day to lay cement



CHRISTOPHER AMOS/THE COMMUNITY NEWS

Workers finish the front entry and parking areas of the new Aledo City Hall, allowing for construction of the building itself. When finished, the facility will house not only city offices and council chambers, but a public library and newly formed Aledo Police Department. City manager Noah Simon reported there have been a few expected weather delays but the project is on target for a January 2026 grand opening.

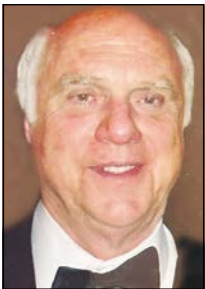
## Obituaries

### Jerry James Loftin

Jerry James Loftin of Arlington passed away at his home on Sunday, January 26, 2025, at age 81. He was born in Fort Worth, and grew up in Meadowbrook near Handley Elementary School and his church, St. Luke's Episcopal. His father, Mark Loftin, was a candy salesman from Arkansas, and his mother, Sylvia, was a colorful figure known for hard work and homemade chicken-fried steak. Jerry graduated from Polytechnic High School, where he served as a cheerleader, before following his older brother Mark Jr. to Texas Christian University.

At TCU, Jerry befriended many and became a TCU yell leader, and joined Sigma Chi fraternity—who gave their cheerleader the nick name, "Leaper Loftin." Jerry joked that he scored multiple touchdowns in the Cotton Bowl (but did it so in warm ups before games). To pay for his education, Jerry spent summers in California working for his uncle Joe Snyder at "Mr. & Mrs. T's," who paid him to drive a beer truck. One summer in LA, Jerry heard on the radio about a riot breaking out in Watts and stupidly drove the beer truck to see what a riot was. Luckily, he survived this (no word on the beverages).

After graduating from TCU with a business degree, he attended law school at the University of Texas. In addition to school and working



Jerry Loftin

in the capital, Jerry helped create a bar called, "The One Knight," a precursor to current day 6th Street, that featured a coffin for a door. He joked that he went broke selling beer to their friends and nearly failed law school as a result.

Jerry met and married Patricia Mims of Laredo at UT. After graduation, he enlisted in the Army, and served many places, most notably Fort Bliss, El Paso, where he learned that his Jewish friends had Saturdays off, while the base was shut down on Sundays. Jerry "converted" and became Jewish (his dog tags say, "Hebrew") to get full weekends. Pat would occasionally drive over, and to have longer weekends with her, he and his "Hebrew" converted friends would explain to his Sergeant that they had to go to temple for an assortment of reasons (including made up holidays) on Fridays too. Jerry eventually was stationed back in Fort Worth, where he would drill (and joked more), "to guard elephants at the zoo."

Jerry almost took a job in advertising in New York. But before they went, Patricia suggested he try practicing law first, so he did so, and became an Assistant District Attorney in Tarrant County. The rest is history.

In short time he became a chief felony prosecutor. Soon after he joined a local civil firm, but

then partnered with a legendary attorney and World War II hero Ronald Altman. Jerry began to tear up courtrooms across North Texas. Most famously, he successfully represented Pricilla Davis in her divorce against billionaire Cullen Davis (who was accused of murder and attempts to kill her and others).

Jerry's stature grew. Probably no one was more surprised and excited by his success than him, and it never went to his head. He was one of the most generous people imaginable. Routinely he gave young assistant DA's their first offices, but also did so many random things such as purchasing cars for children whose parents unexpectedly passed away (and leaving notes from their mom or dad on the card with the keys). On one occasion, he saw several homeless people walking in a storm. He picked them up, and instead of driving them to a shelter as they asked, he first took them to Walmart to deck them out in better clothes and a new TV for the shelter.

Jerry had four children: Trey, Trent, Kristen, and Justin. All four have law degrees, and Trent is now Judge Loftin in Tarrant County. Trent had the honor of practicing law with Jerry, but Trey also had the privilege of trying cases with him. In one—in Denton—they defended a man charged with Aggravated Assault. The prosecutor bragged he had never lost a case—Jerry smiled, leaned in close, and said, "Well Get Ready." Jerry won again.

There probably are not enough pages to tell the stories of his trials nor the victories he earned for his clients (from felonies to large divorce cases, including the nation's first same-sex divorce involving celebrities, that led to all news trucks parked at his home and office for weeks and weeks. He became a media star of sort for court commentary, and had his own radio show with Dwain Dent, and later a TV show too.

Jerry was not only known for trial, but also for fun. He loved to throw big parties and go to restaurants everywhere. Between his presence in the Bar Association (he helped create the Silver Gavel Award, and the Black Bar Association, among other contributions) and his gift of hospitality, his good friend Dee Kelley asked Jerry to help host the 5th Circuit Federal Bar conference here. In doing so, Jerry—a lifetime Democrat—personally hosted conservative Justices Anton Scalia and Clarence Thomas, and took them on a tour of food and fun. They ate their way through the barbecue and steak houses in Fort Worth to the justices' delight before he dressed them in cowboy garb (dusters and hats) from Luskey's Western Ware.

Almost 20 years ago, cancer took Patricia from him, and for a little while life was less fun. Jerry worked hard and still won a lot of trials. After a season or so, he re-met (so to speak) the sister of his childhood friend, and for many

years has enjoyed a terrific friendship with Jan Moncrief. The family is grateful for her fun and friendship with Jerry.

Jerry is survived by Trey and Jennifer Loftin of Aledo (and their children Jurrien, Meagan, Patrice, and Darren); Judge Trent and Dr. Laura Loftin of Fort Worth (and their children James, Patricia "Pippa", and Raleigh); Kristen Loftin Miner and Dr. Scott Miner of Denver (and their children Annalee, Cabot, and Eloise); and Justin and Evin Sisemore of Fort Worth (and their children Saylor Grace, Sutton, and Sevy), as well as a large family of Mims, many "best friends," his helper Juan, and his latest dog—Princess.

Obviously, too many stories can be told, but in the end, it came down to simple things. He loved life, his many dogs (his request is to be buried with his pet's collars from youth to today), his friends, children and grandchildren, and definitely food and fun. Even in his last days his favorite thing was to sneak off to lunch or dinner and indulge in big meals. He was larger than life and will be missed forever. In lieu of flowers, the family requests that you go to dinner with many family and friends and share great stories, or contribute to TCU in a manner you enjoy (Jerry was to no surprise, a master of TCU tailgating. . .)

The Community News  
February 7, 2025

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SWIMMING

Aledo competitors seeking state berth

Roberson, Crews out for fourth straight trip

By Rick Mauch  
The Community News

Aledo has gotten used to sending competitors to the Class 5A Swim Meet and hopes are high to continue that tradition this season. First, however, they must make it through the Region II Meet at the Mansfield ISD Natatorium, going on at press time.

Aledo has 17 swimmers (9 girls, 8 boys) at the meet vying for a berth at state Feb. 21-22 at the Lee and Joe Jamail Texas Swimming Center at the University of Texas at Austin.

Among the regional competitors for Aledo are three Ladycats who have reached state before, including seniors Haley Roberson and Victoria Crews, who are seeking a four-peat.

"Haley and Victoria have three years of experience leading a relay to state and are looking to finish their high school careers off with another run," Aledo coach Meghan Roberson said. "Haley is looking for a four-peat in the 200 (Yard) IM (individual medley) and 500 freestyle."

Also, junior Julia Gordy is trying for a second straight trip to Austin.



AVERY FAULKNER

The Bearcats and Ladycats each finished second at the 5-5A swim meet Jan. 24-25.

The top two finishers in each event earn an automatic bid to state. Eight wild-card entries will join them from the fastest times across the state's eight regions for a total of 16 competitors in each state event.

At state, the top eight performers in the preliminary round of each

event advance to the championship swim, while the 9-16 prelim finishers compete in the consolation bracket.

"In anticipation of a strong performance at the district meet, we've focused our postseason on performing well at regionals. For most of the team, we will begin tapering

our workouts on Monday for optimal performance at Mansfield," Coach Roberson said prior to the regional meet.

"In looking at Districts 6, 7 and 8, we're poised for some very successful, point scoring swims next

Turn to **SWIMMING**, page 9

CORRECTION

In the Jan. 31 issue of *The Community News*, the name of Ally Weimer was misspelled. We regret the error.

FOOTBALL

Amrine takes helm at Brewer

Former Bearcat now a Bear

By Rick Mauch  
The Community News

Former Aledo Bearcat Marte Amrine will soon face his alma mater on the football field next season. He is the new White Settlement School District Athletic Director and head football coach at Brewer High School.



Marte Amrine

Amrine moved to Aledo in the fourth grade from Crowley and graduated from Aledo High School in 1998 after playing for coach Tim Buchanan from 1994-97. His senior season the Bearcats finished 14-1 and were Class 3A state runners-up, setting the stage for the program's first state championship a year later.

"I am excited to be back in the area. Coach Buchanan always taught us it's not about who we play, and I coach that way," Amrine said. "I want our kids to focus on us and becoming the best version of themselves they can. I want them to be completely immersed in our team and our culture."

Amrine was most recently the head coach and athletic director at Maypearl for the past year. Dave Campbell's Texas Football ranked him second on their list of Best First Year Coaches.

Amrine will enter his 20th year as a coach and educator. He also served as athletic director, defensive coordinator, and strength and conditioning coach during his nine years at Dripping Springs.

His career path has also included stops as defensive coordinator in Brock, Seguin, and New Caney. He's also enjoyed success as a head coach in baseball at Flower Mound for three seasons, along with powerlifting and track.

Much like he did as a player at Aledo, Amrine helped set the stage for a run of great success at Brock. He helped then head coach Chad Worrell establish a dynamic program from the outset as part of the inaugural staff from 2012-14, with the program winning a Class 3A Division I state championship in 2015, a year after Amrine had moved on to Dripping Springs.

Amrine played college football at Hardin Simons University in

Turn to **COACH**, page 9

BASKETBALL

Aledo bounces back to beat Granbury

Ladycats dominant in win over Lady Pirates

By Geoff Heppes  
The Community News

Following their first loss of the district season, a 77-61 defeat at Saginaw, the Aledo Bearcats basketball team faced off against another district rival in the Granbury Pirates at home Friday night, Jan. 31. Additionally, the Ladycats took their home court in their second-to-last regular season game against Granbury as well. As the home crowd fueled both teams to the finish line, Aledo emerged victorious in each contest as the girls walked away with a 49-28 win and the boys earned a 60-47 victory.

Bearcats

In the boys' game, Aledo jumped out to a 19-6 first-quarter lead behind stifling defense and six points apiece from senior Joaquin Pacheco and sophomore Caden Cunningham. Aledo entered halftime with a 32-21 advantage that Granbury cut to 44-37 entering the final quarter after the Pirates outscored the Bearcats 16-12. Despite that, Aledo was able to pull away in the fourth quarter as Pacheco and his younger brother, Enrique, accounted for 11 of Aledo's 16 fourth-quarter points.

"I thought our energy to start the game was elite - we really came out and played really hard

that gave us a cushion to start the game," Bearcats head coach Brian Blackburn said. "Teams really try to slow us down, so we need to continue to do well with our execution, but I'm super proud of the effort coming back from Tuesday night."

Joaquin Pacheco and Cunningham led the way with 17 points apiece while Townes Van Huysen posted double-figure numbers with 10 points.

Ladycats

Before the boys' game, the Ladycats took the floor and cruised to the finish line in their 21-point victory. In the game, Aledo reached double-figure scoring in each of the four quarters while, defensively, limiting Granbury to single digits in each frame.

"I told the girls before the game that Granbury was playing for a playoff spot, so we knew they were going to come in with a lot of energy early," Ladycats head coach Donnie Ott said. "We were able to play with a greater sense of urgency than them and extended the lead past 20 - it was a good mindset shift on the girls' part."

The Ladycats turned a 25-16 halftime lead into a comfortable victory by doubling up Granbury 24-12 in the final two quarters.

"I thought it was beautiful to watch. They really executed on the offensive end and did a good job of going inside-out," Ott said. "We shot eight-of-15 from the 3-point



RYAN WADE/THE COMMUNITY NEWS

Senior guard Joaquin Pacheco gets by a pair of Granbury players to put up a shot during the Bearcats' 60-47 victory to stay atop the District 5-5A standings.

line tonight, which was huge, and the girls were really patient in setting up those shots. Liz (Elizabeth Griffin) was six of 10 and got some good, clean looks from beyond the

arc. Our attention to detail has been really good."

Griffin led the way with a game-high 16 points while Tiara Butler

Turn to **HOOPS**, page 9

LADYCAT OF THE WEEK



Ally Weimer  
Soccer

The sophomore scored four goals and had an assist as the Ladycats defeated Saginaw Chisholm Trail 5-1 and blanked Keller Fossil Ridge 4-0.

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BEARCAT OF THE WEEK



Trapper Davis  
Soccer

The junior scored two goals with an assist as the Bearcats defeated Saginaw Chisholm Trail 4-3, followed by scoring a goal in a 2-0 victory against Keller Fossil Ridge.

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SPORTS BRIEFS

BOYS BASKETBALL  
Weatherford Tison vs. Joshua Loflin

Seventh grade: A team won 55-31, B team lost 30-15.  
Eighth grade: A team lost 27-14, B team won 49-37.  
Players of the game Hayden Purvis (31 points), Braxton Clark, John B. Collier.

TCA in state rankings

The Trinity Christian Eagles are enjoying a fine season and are among the Texas Association of Private and Parochial Schools Class 4A top 10 this week, according to the Texas Association of Basketball Coaches.  
The Eagles were ranked No. 9 at the beginning of the week with a 23-6 record.

GIRLS BASKETBALL  
Aledo Middle School vs. Mansfield McKinzey

Seventh grade: A team won 28-21, B team won 24-8, C team won 20-8.  
Eighth grade: A team lost 31-25, B team won 27-11, C team won 12-7.  
Weatherford JV 48, North Crowley 37  
Player of the Game Aly De La Cruz.

Weatherford Tison vs. Joshua Loflin

Eighth grade: A team lost 32-27, Players of the Game, Maddie Lindsay and Marisa Medina; B team won 27-16, Players of the Game Alex and Aaliyah Dixon.  
Seventh grade: A team lost 38-16, Player of the Game Helena Michno.

Weatherford Hall vs. Joshua Nichols

Eighth grade: A team lost 38-36, Players of the Game Gracie Clifft, Maddie Tompkins, Cece Richards; B team won 32-4, Players of the Game Sydney Cathey and Arabella Patterson.  
Seventh grade: A team won 44-16, Players of the Game Caroline Chrestman and Libby Janssen; B team lost 11-6, Players of the Game Debanhi Orozco and Piper Davidson.

GIRLS SOCCER  
Ladycats, Lady Roos among state rankings

The Aledo Ladycats moved into the Class 5A state rankings in the Texas Girls Coaches Association this week at No. 24. The Ladycats entered this week 8-2 overall and 3-0 in District 5-5A.  
Meanwhile, the Weatherford Lady Kangaroos maintained their No. 1 ranking in Class 6A. The Lady Roos are 9-0 overall and 2-0 in District 3-6A. They have out-scored their opponents 32-0.  
Aledo and Weatherford played earlier this season on Jan. 17 in Aledo, with the Lady Roos winning 1-0.

Weatherford JVB 4, Granbury 0

Goals: Morgan Banfield 2, Piper Mercier, Temperance Medicott.  
Assists: Piper Mercier, Lola Anderson, Scarlet Rorie.  
Shutout No. 7 by the defense.

Alumni Report: Several football players from area enjoyed fine seasons

Keys made impact in first year with LSU

By Rick Mauch  
The Community News

Shortly after he signed to play with the LSU Tigers, a billboard in Baton Rouge, Louisiana welcomed the arrival of Aledo's Dav'hon Keys. After all, he was born in Louisiana before moving to Texas at an early age.

And now that he's back, he's making his presence known. The former Bearcat saw action in a dozen games as a true freshman linebacker this season, starting the final four, and he ended his season in grand fashion.

Keys played a key role in helping the Tigers to a 44-31



ELLA HALL

Former Aledo Bearcat Dav'hon Keys made a huge impact with the LSU Tigers as a true freshman.

win over Baylor in the Texas Bowl. He returned an interception — the first of his college career — 41 yards for a touchdown, along with registering five tackles.

In all, Keys posted 31 tackles, including 1.5 for a loss and 1.5 sacks. He also recovered a fumble, broke up three passes, and had two quarterback hurries.

In Keys' four starts to end the season, the Tigers were 3-1. LSU finished with a 9-4 record.

Here are some other area athletes who saw action in the college football season now past.



TCU SPORTS INFORMATION

After two seasons at Washington State, Aledo's Ansel Din-Mbuh has transferred to play for the TCU Horned Frogs.

Ansel Din-Mbuh

After a solid sophomore season at Washington State, Din-Mbuh is coming home. The defensive lineman from Aledo transferred to TCU for the coming season.

Turn to ALUMNI, page 11

VOLLEYBALL

Elms named Legacy All-Star

Staff Reports  
The Community News

Senior Kinley Elms of the Aledo Ladycats has been named a Volleyball Legacy All-Star by the Texas Girls Coaches Association.



Kinley Elms

The TGCA selects a maximum of 20 Legacy All-Stars from conferences 1-4A and 5-6A. These athletes are selected by the TGCA Volleyball Committee, which is composed of member coaches. Athletes must be seniors.

These all-stars will not participate in the summer clinic all-star activities but will receive a certificate and a letter jacket patch.

Elms was earlier named to the Class 5A Division I All-State Tournament Volleyball Team by the TGCA after helping the Ladycats reach the state semifinals this past season. In helping the Ladycats to a 35-8 season that included their first state semifinals appearance since 2017, Elms posted 418 kills, 98 blocks and 122 defensive digs.

COACH

from page 8

Abilene, where he was a defensive end and lettered all four seasons.

He and his wife, Rachel, have two sons, Bryson, a sophomore at Texas Tech, and Brock, a high school senior.

SPORTS BRIEFS

LONE STAR CUP  
Aledo chasing elite trophy

As the winter portion of the high school year moves into spring, Aledo finds itself once again competing for a University Interscholastic League Lone Star Cup. Once the school year is over, the schools with the most success in activities that include team tennis, cross country, marching band, military marching band, volleyball, robotics BEST, football, congress, and spirit will be crowned champions.

Aledo is tied for first place in Class 5A with Frisco Wakeland, each with 41 points, one point ahead of Lucas Lovejoy and two points ahead of Comal Smithson Valley. Rounding out the top six are Argyle with 37 points and Cedar Park with 36.

SWIMMING

from page 8

weekend and are optimistic that we'll have several opportunities to qualify swimmers for state this year. Granbury will continue to be a strong competition, as well as Paschal, who's moving down from 6A."

Granbury won the District 5-5A meet for boys and girls, with Aledo finishing second in each division. Haley Roberson was named Female Swimmer of the Meet.

Amrine had high praise for his alma mater as the program others around the state aspire to emulate, including his at Brewer.

"Aledo has been outstanding for a long time and that is a testament to the coaches and kids in the program," he said. "I really am just excited that I get to pour all I have into the kids of White Settlement."

HOOPS

from page 8

and Brooklyn Dempsey poured in nine and eight points, respectively. Kinley Elms also chipped in with six points.

Subvarsity

On the sub varsity levels, the JV and freshman boys and girls teams were all victorious. The JV boys won 78-57 while the freshman team earned a 75-45 victory. On the girls' side, Sarah Edwards' nine points paced Aledo's JV past Granbury while Bailey Martin scored a game-high 13 points to push the Ladycats freshman squad past Granbury 50-33.

Up next

The Bearcats (25-5, 9-1) remained atop the district standings and were playing at Azle at press time with an emphasis of working on offensive execution in certain situations. Meanwhile, the Ladycats (20-11, 9-2) were ending the regular season at Azle.

"I've never been around a group like this in 26 years of coaching — 13 with girls," Ott said. "There have been no issues or arguments about playing time, and all seven of our seniors have created such a genuine, loving culture of playing for each other and caring for each other. When I retire, I will remember this team for the rest of my life."



RYAN WADE/THE COMMUNITY NEWS

Ladycat basketball celebrated Senior Night during their district matchup with Granbury on Friday, Jan. 31. From left to right, seniors Savannah Salas, August Carlone, Kinley Elms, Rebekah Jarrell, and Ella Isbell pose with the Ladycat senior team managers.

Ladycats roll past Saginaw

SAGINAW — With the regular season winding down, the Aledo Ladycats basketball team picked up another key district win to solidify their playoff positioning Tuesday, Jan. 28 at Saginaw. In that game, Aledo started fast and never looked back, racing past Saginaw for a 52-23 blowout win.

The win kept Aledo (19-11, 8-2) ahead of Fossil Creek for second place in the district and in line to be the top-seeded large school representing its district in the Class 5A Division I postseason bracket.

Ladycat guards Elizabeth Griffin and Brooklyn Dempsey each scored 15 points to lead Aledo while Tiara Butler added seven. Brenna Clock and Kinley Elms

also chipped in with four points apiece while Jaylee Owens had three and August Carlone and Ella Isbell recorded two points apiece.

The Ladycats junior varsity and freshman teams were also big winners. The JV team won 56-11 behind 14 points from Sawyer Voight while the freshman squad captured a 62-11 victory behind 18 points from Sonsales Rosado.



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REQUEST FOR PROPOSAL (RFP)

Notice is hereby given that the following RFP will be accepted by Aledo Independent School District (140837) on or before Monday, **March 17, 2025, no later than 2:00 PM CST**. Late proposals will be rejected as non-responsive. Forms and specifications may be obtained, and submissions received at the website referenced below until the designated time.

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FCC Form 470 Application Number: **250017132**

Link for all interested vendors: <https://kelloggllc.bonfirehub.com/portal>

All Questions and Proposals must be submitted online.

Questions must be submitted no later than 2:00 PM CST on **Tuesday, February 18, 2025**.

Proposals must be submitted no later than 2:00 PM CST on **Monday, March 17, 2025**.

The Aledo Independent School District reserves the right to reject any and/or all proposals and to make awards as they may appear to be advantageous to the District and to waive all formalities with respect thereto. Bidders are encouraged to submit proposals well in advance of the deadline. The District is not responsible for the bidder's technical difficulties that may be experienced at the time of the bid closing.

PUBLIC NOTICE

The Zoning Board of Adjustment for the Town of Annetta will conduct a public hearing on February 24, 2025 at 7:00 p.m. at Town Hall, 450 Thunder Head Lane, Annetta, and will act upon the following request:

- A Special Exception for 15 Spring Creek Drive, a property containing 4.479 acres of land (Lot 1, Block 1, Subdivision: Tucker Park Trail, F-669) to allow for a 1,200 square foot accessory building with a 16 by 40 "leanto" that exceeds the allowed square footage as set forth in Section 8.10.B.2.c of the Town of Annetta Zoning Ordinance 215.
- A Special Exception to Section 8.10.B.10 of the Town of Annetta Zoning Ordinance 215 for 15 Spring Creek Drive, a property containing 4.479 acres of land (Lot 1, Block 1, Subdivision: Tucker Park Trail, F-669), to allow garage doors on any size accessory structure to face the right-of-way with additional landscaping, exterior materials or colors and ornamental features to ensure compatibility with the neighborhood.

All interested persons are urged to attend.

TO BE PUBLISHED: Friday, February 7, 2025

/s/

Jamee Long, City Secretary/Administrator  
Town of Annetta, Texas

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WRESTLING

# Aledo grapplers shine at district

## Qualify dozen for regionals

By Rick Mauch  
The Community News

With their best district performance in their young history, the Aledo Bearcats and Ladycats now set their sights on regional competition.

Aledo qualified a dozen competitors (8 boys, 4 girls) for the 5A Region I Tournament this weekend, Feb. 7-8, in Lubbock following the District 4-5A Tournament in Azle on Jan. 31.

The top four finishers in each weight class qualified for regionals, while the top four in each division at regionals will move on to state at the Berry Center in Houston Feb. 14-15.

## Qualifying for the Bearcats were:

- Brice Bohn, second in 126-pound weight class.
- Brady Powell, second in 175 class.
- Cameron Robbins, third in 106.
- Dylan Chandler, third in 120.
- Oliver Tatro, fourth in 132.
- Benjamin Hungerford, fourth in 144.
- Cade Rangel, fourth in 215.

As a team, the Bearcats were fourth out of 18 squads.

## Ladycats qualifying for regionals are:

- Ari Mathias, second in 138.
- Joy Stephens, third in 120.
- Lillian Carruthers, fourth in 100.
- Avery Kernan, fourth in 107.

Narrowly missing a regionals berth and going as an alternate is Grace Beasley, who placed fifth in the 114 division.

The Ladycats were sixth out of 18 in the team standings.

Bohn and Kernan are making return trips to regionals. Bohn was an alternate to state in 2023.

"Aledo wrestling as a program had a great showing at the UIL District 4-5A tournaments. The girls varsity team had a fantastic showing. Their hard work and



PHOTOS ARE COURTESY OF BEN SHAW

Aledo boys wrestlers (from left) assistant coach Doug Wheeler, James Beyer, MJ Turdo, Brady Powell, Cade Rangel, William Reese, Ben Hungerford, JD Neff, Ollie Tatro, Gulian Lara, Brice Bohn, Dylan Chandler, Cameron Robbins, Grayson McNeal, and head coach Ben Shaw.



Aledo girls wrestling team (from left) assistant coach Doug Wheeler, Braylin Wiggins, Lilly Carruthers, Avery Kernan, Ari Mathias, Joy Stephens, Grace Beasley, and head coach Ben Shaw.

dedication in training truly paid off," first-year Aledo coach Ben Shaw said.

"The boys varsity also performed admirably throughout the tournament. They demonstrated great determination, winning several close matches to secure their spot for the next round.

"I am extremely proud of both teams and their continuous drive to improve in their wrestling abilities. We will be back to work this week as we prepare to qualify for state. The future of Aledo wrestling looks bright with such dedicated and hard-working kids."

## Junior varsity

Two Bearcats won their weight classes, Matthew Douglas at 111-121 pounds and Gabriel Opsahl at 116-126. Three others finished second, Keydan Lemen in the 111-121 class, David Sanchez in 160-176 and Gunner Swaim in 166-179.

Placing third were Blaze Beasley (133-142) and Thomas Hopkins (144-153). Fourth-place finishers were Noah Chasteen (126-130), Easton Chisam (131-135), Kaiden Jones, (133-142), Colton Adolph (166-179) and Sebastian Barberena (188-190).

Scarlett Hall placed in the 120-131 weight class for the girls JV.

# ALUMNI

from page 9

Din-Mbuh played in 12 games and started nine for the Cougars (8-5), though he did not play in the Holiday Bowl, which they lost 52-35 to Syracuse.

Din-Mbuh was named the Pacific 12 Conference's top defensive line performer this past season. He posted 24 tackles, including seven for a loss, with a team-leading six sacks. He had three sacks in a single game.

As a freshman he played in 10 games, posting a pair of tackles.

## Money Parks

The senior wide receiver from Aledo suffered a season-ending knee injury against Houston after playing eight games for the Utah Utes (5-7). Still, his season featured 21 catches for 294 yards and three touchdowns.

For his career with the Utes, Parks played in 47 games, starting 24. He caught 79 passes for 1,013 yards and eight TD.

Parks also caught at least one pass in 32 straight games.

## Hauss Hejny

The former Bearcat quarterback spent one season at TCU before entering the transfer portal. He is now a member of the Oklahoma State Cowboys preparing for his sophomore season.

As a Horned Frog, Hejny did not throw a pass. He ran 15 times for 65 yards.

## Hawk Patrick-Daniels

The running back from Aledo spent his freshman season at Tyler Junior College. He saw action in a variety of ways, rushing 19 times for 39 yards, catching 17 passes for 128 yards and a touchdown and returning a kickoff for 15 yards in 10 games for the 7-4 Apaches.

## Jake Gillespie

The freshman safety from Aledo played in seven games for the Stephen F. Austin Lumberjacks (7-5). He posted three tackles.

## Chris Wright

A junior linebacker, the former Bearcat had 84 tackles, including 11 for a loss and three sacks for Abilene Christian. He forced two fumbles, recovered one, had six quarterback hurries, one pass breakup, and a blocked kick playing in all 14 games for the Wildcats (9-5), who reached the second round of the NCAA Football Championship Subdivision.

Angelo State was eliminated by eventual national champion North Dakota State, 51-31, as Wright had four tackles.

## Devan Daugherty

Also for ACU, the senior former Bearcat played 13 games as a deep snapper. He transferred from Midwestern State, where he was all-conference.

## Devin Dawson

A senior defensive lineman from Aledo, he played in seven games, had eight tackles and two quarterback hurries for Abilene Christian. At Alcorn State, before transferring, he had 69 tackles, including 15 for a loss, and seven sacks.

## Cash Jones

The junior running back from Brock has been a part of some great success with the Georgia Bulldogs. He helped them win a national championship in 2022, followed by a 12-1 record in 2023 and a berth in the College Football Playoff quarterfinals this past season.

Jones played in all 14 games for the Bulldogs (11-3) in the 2024 season. He rushed 14 times for 41 yards and was used mostly as a receiver, catching 24 passes for 275 yards and four touchdowns.

In his college career he has played in 39 games. He has rushed 39 times for 238 yards and three touchdowns and has caught 37 passes for 378 yards and five TD.

The Bulldogs were eliminated by Notre Dame 23-10 in the Sugar Bowl.

## Ken Seals

The former Weatherford quarterback was a fifth-year senior for the TCU Horned Frogs (9-4) in 2024. As a backup he was 10-of-13 passing for 97 yards and a touchdown, along with rushing four times for 12 yards.

During his four seasons at Vanderbilt, Seals set for a school record for career completion percentage (60.5). He passed for 4,292 yards (seventh in Vanderbilt history) and 28 touchdowns (ninth in program history).

## Kurt Hatch

The sophomore offensive lineman from Weatherford was an anchor for the Tarleton State University Texans. He played in 11 games and helped lead the team to the No. 1 rushing offense in the United Athletic Conference (202 yards per game), also 12th in all of the Football Championship Subdivision.

The Texans' 25 rushing TD were the most in the UAC and 14th in the FCS. Also, their 6.4 yards per play led the UAC and was 11th in the FCS.

Hatch and the offensive line allowed just 14 sacks in 14 games as the Texans went 10-4 and reached the second round of the playoffs.

SOCCER

# Aledo teams sweep opponents

## Ladycats move into state rankings

Staff Reports  
The Community News

The Aledo Ladycats and Bearcats swept a pair of District 5-5A opponents last week, defeating Saginaw Chisholm Trail on Jan. 28 and Keller Fossil Ridge on Jan. 31.

## Ladycats

Aledo (8-2 overall, 3-0 in district), which moved into the Texas Girls Coaches Association Class 5A state rankings this week at No 24, won 5-1 at home against Chisholm Trail before going on the road to post their first district

shutout at Fossil Ridge with a 4-0 blanking.

Avery Sands played a key role in the shutout, moving from her regular position as defender to center back.

Ally Weimer paced the Aledo offense during the week with four goals and an assist. Other highlights were two goals and an assist from Ainsley Elmore and a goal with three assists from Katie Cox.

The Ladycats entered this week having surrendered just three goals in their past five games. One of their two losses was a 1-0 setback to Weatherford, the No. 1 team in the state in Class 6A.

Aledo was hosting Saginaw at press time and plays at 7:45 p.m. on Friday, February. 7 in Granbury.

## Bearcats

Aledo (6-3-1, 2-1 in district) escaped Chisholm Trail on the road with a 4-3 victory. Trapper Davis scored two goals and had an assist and Austin Randriamahefa scored two goals. Calvin Gruber and Harrison Kear each had an assist.

They followed with a 2-0 home victory against Fossil Ridge. Davis and Erik Soltow each scored a goal off of a pair of assists from Kear.

Pierce Ling was the goalkeeper as the Bearcats posted their fourth shutout of the season. They have surrendered a single goal in three other games.

The Bearcats were playing at Saginaw at press time and host Granbury at 7:45 p.m. on Friday, Feb. 7.



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FOOTBALL

# Bearcats land five on Padilla all-state

## Four juniors, one senior honored

By Rick Mauch  
The Community News

The passing duo of best friends wide receiver Kaydon Finley and quarterback Gavin Beard, both juniors, were among five Aledo Bearcats who were named Class 5A Division I All-State by the Padilla Poll, which was recently released.

Joining them are junior defensive linemen Cooper Cyphers and Carson Dempsey, along with senior linebacker Owen Henderson.

Finley and Beard were named to the first team offense, with Cyphers being on the first team defense. Dempsey and Henderson were selected for the second team defense.

Finley was among the most prolific wide receivers in the state, catching 81 passes for 1,429 yards and 21 touchdowns, his most productive season to date. He was targeted 111 times with only four drops.

Beard, in his first season as the starting quarterback, completed 69% of his passes for 2,573 yards. He threw for 35 touchdowns opposite five interceptions, despite missing two games with an injury.

Cyphers posted 43 tackles, including 37 solo. He also had 4.5 sacks, 10.5 tackles for a loss and forced three fumbles.

Henderson had 58.5 tackles, 46 of which were solo. He also had two interceptions, recovered a pair of fumbles, registered a sack and two tackles for loss.

Henderson has committed to play for Angelo State University next season.

Dempsey's 22 tackles included 20 solo takedowns, along with 2.5 sacks and 5.5 tackles for a loss.

"All of our players that were selected are very deserving," Aledo coach Robby Jones said. "And I think we have some players that were left off the team that deserved recognition as well. But I'm a little biased because I like all of our guys."

"I would vote for an Aledo Bearcat over anyone else in the state if I got to vote on these teams."

The Bearcats finished 12-2 this past season, advancing to the Class 5A Division I state quarterfinals. They won the District 3-5A Division I championship, running their national-record district winning streak to 127 games dating to 2007.

## Bearcats 2025 schedule Scrimmage

Aug. 21, Mansfield Timberview, 7:30 p.m.

### Pre-district

Aug. 29, Denton Guyer, 7:30 p.m.

Sept. 5, at Lancaster, 7:30 p.m.

### District 3-5A Division I (all games start at 7 p.m.)

Sept. 12, Brewer, 7 p.m.

Sept. 19, vs. Birdville at Birdville ISD Stadium

Sept. 26, Keller Fossil Ridge, homecoming

Oct. 3, vs. Denton Ryan at C.H. Collins Stadium in Denton

Oct. 10, Granbury

Oct. 17, Open

Oct. 24, vs. Richland at Birdville ISD Stadium

Oct. 31, Azle, Senior Parent Night

Nov. 6, vs. Denton at C.H. Collins Stadium

SOFTBALL

# Ladycats eager to replicate success on diamond

## Aledo seeking to surpass state semifinal appearance

By Geoff Heppes  
The Community News

Following a spectacular 2024 season on the softball diamond, the Aledo Ladycats squad is aiming to reach and surpass the heights they reached a season ago. In 2024, Aledo won its district and marched all the way to the state semifinals, where it lost 1-0 to Harlingen South.

It was Aledo's third state tournament appearance in four years, including a runner-up finish in 2021.

"I couldn't be prouder of the progress our team made last season," Ladycats head coach Heather Myers said. "The girls really came together and put in the work, both on and off the field. We faced some tough challenges, but they used that as motivation to grow and improve, and it shows in how they're approaching this season."

With the offseason winding down and the regular season in the forefront, the Ladycats have been making the most of their offseason through travel ball, in-school practices, and scrimmaging. Myers enjoys seeing her players putting in the work, but is more pleased with "how" they are doing it.

"The energy and commitment they bring to practice and scrimmages is contagious, and you can see how much they want to get back to the state tournament," Myers said. "Our focus this season is building on that growth from



SCOTT W. COLEMAN

Addie Perry (9) at bat during the Class 5A state softball semifinal.

last year, staying disciplined, and pushing each other to be better every single day."

Aledo is returning several key players from last year's squad that posted an overall record of 35-4, which includes a 12-0 District 5-5A mark, running their league winning streak to 42 games.

The pitching staff will be led by rising senior Taylor McKean, who Myers called "a staple" for the team on the mound with great knowledge, mental fortitude, and a deep repertoire of pitches. Myers also mentioned Marina Taveras as a talented and dynamic piece of the infield puzzle with speed, power, and leadership at the plate and in the field. Furthermore, Addie Perry is expected to be a spark plug who has great anticipation and

clutch moments for the team, and another teammate is expected to let her natural abilities play a key role in Aledo's potential success.

"Addie Perry is a spark plug for us. Her knowledge of the game is impressive, and you can really see it in her play," Myers said. "She's always thinking two steps ahead, and she has a knack for coming through in big moments at the plate. Her energy is contagious, and she motivates everyone around her."

Gracie Jones will provide a quality power bat at the plate while catchers Austyn Marriage and Breleigh Mayer bring an abundance of intelligence, countless repetitions, and quality communication with their pitchers to the plate.

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