

2025-2026 ALEDO ISD INSTRUCTIONAL CALENDAR

JULY 2025

1	2	3	4	5
6	7	8	9	10
11	12	13	14	15
16	17	18	19	20
21	22	23	24	25
26	27	28	29	30
31	New Teacher Intensive			

AUGUST 2025

3	4	5	6	7	8	9
10	11	12	13	14	15	16
17	18	19	20	21	22	23
24	25	26	27	28	29	30
31	Aug. 4-12: 5 District/Campus PL Days & 2 Work Days					
Aug. 13: 1st Grading Cycle Begins						
Aug. 29: Student Holiday/Work Day						

SEPTEMBER 2025

1	2	3	4	5	6
7	8	9	10	11	12
13	14	15	16	17	18
19	20	21	22	23	24
25	26	27	28	29	30
31	Sept. 1: Student/Staff Holiday				
Sept. 19: Student Holiday/Work Day					

OCTOBER 2025

5	6	7	8	9	10	11
12	13	14	15	16	17	18
19	20	21	22	23	24	25
26	27	28	29	30	31	
Oct. 8: 1st Grading Cycle Ends						
Oct. 9: Student Holiday/PL Day						
Oct. 10: Student Holiday/Work Day						
Oct. 12: Student/Staff Holiday						
Oct. 13: 2nd Grading Cycle Begins						
Oct. 31: Student Holiday/PL Day						

NOVEMBER 2025

2	3	4	5	6	7	8
9	10	11	12	13	14	15
16	17	18	19	20	21	22
23	24	25	26	27	28	29
30	Nov. 21: Student Holiday/Work Day					
Nov. 24-28: Student/Staff Holiday						

DECEMBER 2025

1	2	3	4	5	6	7
8	9	10	11	12	13	14
15	16	17	18	19	20	21
22	23	24	25	26	27	28
29	30	31	Dec. 18: Early Release/Work Day			
Dec. 19: 2nd Grading Cycle Ends						
Dec. 31: Student/Staff Holiday						

JANUARY 2026

4	5	6	7	8	9	10
11	12	13	14	15	16	17
18	19	20	21	22	23	24
25	26	27	28	29	30	31
Jan. 1-2: Student/Staff Holiday						
Jan. 5: Student Holiday/PL Day						
Jan. 6: Student Holiday/Work Day						
Jan. 13: 3rd Grading Cycle Begins						
Jan. 19: Student/Staff Holiday						

FEBRUARY 2026

1	2	3	4	5	6	7
8	9	10	11	12	13	14
15	16	17	18	19	20	21
22	23	24	25	26	27	28
Feb. 15: Student Holiday/PL Day						
Feb. 16: Student Holiday/Work Day						

MARCH 2026

1	2	3	4	5	6	7
8	9	10	11	12	13	14
15	16	17	18	19	20	21
22	23	24	25	26	27	28
29	30	31	March 13: Early Release/Work Day			
March 15: 3rd Grading Cycle Ends						
March 16-20: Student/Staff Holiday						
March 23: Student Holiday/PL/Work Day						
March 24: 4th Grading Cycle Begins						

APRIL 2026

5	6	7	8	9	10	11
12	13	14	15	16	17	18
19	20	21	22	23	24	25
26	27	28	29	30		
April 3: Student Holiday/Staff PL Flex Day						
April 6: Student Holiday/Work Day						

MAY 2026

3	4	5	6	7	8	9
10	11	12	13	14	15	16
17	18	19	20	21	22	23
24	25	26	27	28	29	30
31	May 21: Early Release/Work Day					
May 21: 4th Grading Cycle Ends						
May 22: Staff Work Day						
May 25: Staff Holiday						
May 26-27: Staff PL Flex Days						

JUNE 2026

1	2	3	4	5	6	
7	8	9	10	11	12	13
14	15	16	17	18	19	20
21	22	23	24	25	26	27
28	29	30	June 13: 5th Grading Cycle Begins			

Grading Cycles:

1st: 38 Days

2nd: 40 Days

3rd: 45 Days

4th: 61 Days

5th: 61 Days

Total School Days: 164

Semester 1: 78 Days

Semester 2: 86 Days

Total School Days: 164

Approved: 2-17-25

EDUCATION

Ag mechanic students win big in San Angelo

Variety of projects highlight wins

Aledo ag department
Special to The Community News

Aledo FFA students showcased their craftsmanship and dedication at the San Angelo Ag Mechanics Show hosted at the annual San Angelo Stock Show Feb. 1-3. The students earned an impressive five blue ribbons and four red ribbons for their projects.

Projects displayed at the competition included three Santa Maria grills, a Texas fire pit with a cooking top, a 4' x 8' shop table, two deer feeders, an outdoor propane burner coffee table, and a firewood rack. Each entry was judged on craftsmanship, presentation, and the quality of record books documenting the construction process.

"The success of our students at the San Angelo Ag Mechanics Show is a testament to their hard work, creativity, and commitment to excellence," said Aledo FFA Advisor Kolton Beeler. "Each project showcased their skills in welding, fabrication, and design, and I couldn't be prouder of their accomplishments."

The San Angelo Ag Mechanics Show is a prestigious event that provides students with the opportunity to apply their technical knowledge in a competitive setting while preparing them for future careers in agriculture, engineering, and skilled trades.

Aledo FFA continues to build a strong tradition of success in ag mechanics, and this year's performance reflects the dedication and passion of its students.

Blue ribbon winners and their projects are Matthew Long, Santa Maria grill; Grant Foreman and Anthony Flowers, Texas fire pit; Noah Hight, outdoor propane burner coffee table; Garrett Hoff, firewood rack, and Gabriel Opsahl, deer feeder.

Red Ribbon winners and their projects are Decker Sanders, deer feeder; Tripp Hoff, shop table; Dylan Hoover, Skye Truong, and Matthew Ordonez, Santa Maria grill; and Trevor Reinert and Caise Gamble - Santa Maria grill.

COURTESY OF ALEDO FFA

Matthew Long's Santa Maria grill won a blue ribbon.

COURTESY OF ALEDO FFA

Dylan Hoover, Skye Truong, and Matthew Ordonez won a red ribbon for their Santa Maria grill project.

BOARD

from page one

determines how much money flows into Aledo ISD and school districts across Texas," Trustee David Lear said during Monday's meeting. "There's lots of mandates. Sometimes the funding doesn't match. In our school district, we are \$2 million underfunded for special education requirements. We are \$3.3 million underfunded for transportation requirements. We are almost \$1 million underfunded for safety and security. At the federal and state level, we have lots of requirements to meet, and we have to use \$6 million from our budget that could be otherwise allocated to classrooms or programs to fulfill these requirements."

Lear went on to say that the Trustees will advocate for adequate funding increases to allow school districts to fulfill all the mandates and for more local control over education so that decisions around what is best for Aledo come from Aledo, rather than mandates made in Austin.

2023 Bond Update

Aledo ISD continues to chip away at the recommendations the Aledo Growth Committee made leading up to the 2023 bond that was passed by voters. The new Ag Barn at the high school is expected to be move-in ready next week. Construction of the Steve Wood Complex remains on schedule. Barring any unforeseen setbacks like weather, construction should wrap up at the end of March.

The district announced more good news with the acquisition of two new parcels of land. A 40-acre site and 12-acre site will be used to construct future school buildings as the district continues to grow.

Aledo ISD procured the new parcels of land at no cost to the district. The 12-acre plot was donated by Parker County Emergency Services District One. Meanwhile, the 40-acres were part of a swap between the district and the City of Willow Park. Willow Park plans to use the land it received in the trade for an easement.

TRAIN

from page one

the Santa Fe Depot showcases the architectural style typical of small-town depots, with pressed red brick construction and southwestern design influences," Johnson's report said. "Its interior featured three segregated waiting rooms, divided by a ticket and telegraph office, which still holds the original station master's desk. The brick loading platform remains fully intact, and

the building itself is exceptionally well preserved."

The building houses the Weatherford Chamber of Commerce.

In other business, the council voted to abandon a portion of right-of-way located at the southern end of Cherry Street.

Mayor Pro Tem Heidi Wilder conducted the meeting in the absence of Mayor Paul Paschall. In all, the council concluded its business in 12 minutes.

CANDY MCMICHEN/THE COMMUNITY NEWS

Long lines formed last week for a final chance to enjoy a Hutch's fried pie.

PIE

from page one

"What sets us apart is our flaky crust," she said, "No secret recipes, just the right percentage of the basics."

The pies are made fresh every day.

Selling the business to his son and daughter-in-law, David and Sue, in 1977, their fried pies grew into a regional business, eventually selling to wholesalers (ending in 2017) which outsoled several local fried pie establishments.

Moving into their final home in 1987, Hutch's found their niche on College Park Drive, nestled into a shopping center next to Weatherford College's campus.

Long-time employee Diann Russell voiced her appreciation of David and Sue, remembering how they had always treated her well and were willing to take a chance on her.

It seemed fitting, as the Hutchens took a chance on their fried pies in Weatherford 90 years ago.

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Commerce

Mail:

P.O. Box 1031, Aledo, TX 76008

Physical:

1015 Champions Drive, Aledo, TX

Phone:

817-441-7661

Web:

www.community-news.com

PUBLISHER/EDITOR

Randy Keck

rkeck@community-news.com

Direct Line: 817-386-1469

DIRECTOR OF BUSINESS DEVELOPMENT

Loydale Schmid

lschmid@community-news.com

Direct Line: 817-386-1467

OFFICE ASSISTANT

Tate Shepard

business@community-news.com

STAFF AND CONTRIBUTORS

Chris Amos - Features/Photography

Kathy Chruscielski - Photography

John English - Features

Laura Finer - Page and Ad Design

Joanna Hardy - Office Assistant

Richard Henderson - Commentary

Rick Mauch - News and Sports

Breleigh Mayer - Photography

Kristin Morales - Photography

Ryan Wade - News and Sports

Jim Zimmermann - News and Sports

CONTACT POINTS

Billing

billing@community-news.com

Pay bills at community-news.com/billpay/

Ad Design Materials

production@community-news.com

Purchase Advertising

sales@community-news.com

Legal Notices

legal@community-news.com

Subscription Questions

business@community-news.com

community-news.com/subscribe/

Announcements, News, Obituaries

news@community-news.com

www.community-news.com/submissions/

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. 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 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

Lawmaker calls for probe into \$95 million lottery jackpot



Gary Borders
gborders@texaspress.com

The Texas Lottery Commission and its former director are under scrutiny after they allegedly helped a single entity win a \$95 million Lotto Texas Jackpot, the *Houston Chronicle* reported.

Written testimony at a state legislative hearing last week from an attorney indicated an entity called Rook TX guaranteed it would win the jackpot by buying virtually every one of the nearly 26 million possible six-number combinations in the drawing, held in April 2023.

Houston lawyer Manfred Sternberg said that he represented clients victimized by a conspiracy between the lottery commission, former head Gary Grief, and online ticker vendor Lottery.com. He sent a 22-page letter outlining the allegations to multiple state officials, including Gov. Greg Abbott and Attorney General Ken Paxton.

"Our clients have been ignored by the State of Texas, and the State of Texas has been silent on investigating and prosecuting those responsible for serious crimes," Sternberg wrote.

The allegations raised concern among members of the Senate Finance Committee, gathered to consider the commission's budget.

"We just need to call in the Texas Rangers immediately," said Sen. Lois Kolkhorst, R-Brenham.

NYSE and Nasdaq move next door to 'Y'all Street'

The Texas Stock Exchange, which debuted in Dallas last June, has new neighbors: branches of the New York Stock Exchange and Nasdaq, which have moved from Chicago to the Dallas metroplex. *The Dallas Morning News* reported the two venerable exchanges apparently

feel the heat of competition from the upstart stock exchange.

The TXSE began with \$120 million in backing, a fraction of those of the two older exchanges. The upstart exchange has clearly "rattled NYSE and NASDAQ," said Kirti Sinha, a University of Texas-Dallas assistant professor of accounting.

The Texas exchange sees a major opportunity in the 10-state Southeast providing a potential pipeline of 14,000 sponsor-backed private companies. Texas is already home to more than 50 Fortune 500 companies. The state has the largest number of NYSE listings, and more than 200 Texas-based companies are listed on Nasdaq, which caters to tech companies.

All of this indicates the emergence of the Dallas-Fort Worth area as a major player on the financial stage, *The News* reported.

Lawmaker proposes seat belts on all school buses

A bill in the Texas Legislature would require Texas school districts to install seat belts on all school buses, the *Austin American-Statesman* reported. The measure comes after a collision between a concrete pump truck and a Hays County school bus last March killed a 5-year-old boy and a man driving behind the bus.

"We just believe that having them physically restrained in their seats would help minimize – mitigate – any potential harm to the children," state Sen. José Menéndez, D-San Antonio, said. "It is just some common sense."

A 2017 law requires seat belts on all newly purchased buses but not on buses purchased before that and still in service. District officials have blamed a lack of funding for not being able to retrofit seat belts on older buses.

Abbott back in D.C. seeking border reimbursement

The governor returned to Capitol Hill for the second time in eight days in his pursuit of \$11 billion from the federal government to cover the costs of

Turn to CAPITAL, page 4

State Representative Update

Rogers: The Legislature needs to get serious about water

Three ways to meet Texas' water needs



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

This column originally appeared in *The Dallas Morning News* where Glenn Rogers is a contributing columnist.

When my two oldest children were young, there was no "city water" or well water on our ranch south of Graford. Most of Palo Pinto County has marginal ground water resources, and our property is in an area void of this luxury. Water was derived from an old cistern that captured rain off a barn roof, and during the frequent droughts this precious commodity was often in short supply.

Looking back, my two older girls learned some good life lessons about the value and scarcity of water. We still laugh about the required "ranch showers" that were a necessity with a limited supply. Their strict instructions were to get in the shower, turn on the water for only a few seconds, just long enough to get wet, then turn it off. Next, suds up, without water running, until ready to rinse quickly.

If every Texan shortened their shower time by one minute, 14 billion gallons of water could be saved each year. It is amazing how much less water is used with this modified "ranch shower" technique. But oh how we love long, hot showers!

Water conservation is both an individual and collective responsibility. On an individual basis, the average homeowner in Texas uses an average of 92 gallons of water daily for home use, according to the National Environmental Education Foundation, with 68% going to outdoor use during summer months.

Texas water systems are losing at least 572,000 acre

feet of water per year, according to a report from the Texas Living Waters Project, mostly due to leaky pipes. That translates to over 186 billion gallons annually.

Conservation of water requires not only individual responsibilities to avoid wasteful practices, but efforts to improve efficiency and replace aging and deteriorating water and wastewater infrastructure, some of which is over 100 years old.

In addition to the obvious major uses of water for consumption and crop irrigation, stable water resources are required for thermal electricity generation through natural gas, nuclear, and coal-fired plants. It is a limited, high-demand commodity that will increase in price as we move forward.

Complicating matters further, Texas is experiencing explosive growth of its population, estimated currently to be about 31 million, and expected to reach 51.5 million by 2070. Texas gained 1,500 people per day in 2023-24, including births, according to state demographer Lloyd Potter. On an average day, 864 documented Texan wannabes are relocating to our great state. Unfortunately, none of these new citizens are bringing more water.

In a recent survey of community water systems conducted by the Texas Rural Water Association, 20.9% reported that they expect to run out of water within 10 years and 51.9% expect to run out of water within 20 years. Cities and towns across the state are limiting, if not altogether withholding, development permits over water concerns.

The 1968 Texas Water Plan produced by the Texas Water Development Board included a Texas-size recommendation to move water from the Mississippi River to Texas. This and other grandiose plans to water thirsty lands west of the 98th meridian never came to fruition. Turf battles, environmental concerns, and exorbitant costs

Turn to WATER, page 4

Idle American

Mort and the rumor mill



Dr. Don Newbury
newbury@speakerdoc.com

Uncle Mort doesn't own a smartphone, and only recently found a well-worn flip phone for \$10 on eBay. Neither does my ancient uncle own a computer, claiming he'd never remember where the off/on switch is, or how to use it should the screen magically light.

Still, he claims to be a "follower of social media," but his sources are second-hand at best, and often third, fourth and fifth, be they fact, fiction or fantasy. One of his "sources" is the guy who delivers bread to the general store a few miles up the lane from his spread in the thicket. The man usually drops off more than bread.

He is full of rumors, jokes and stories, leaving smiles--and sometimes thigh-slapping laughter--in his wake. The other day, he asked, "Do you know what

I 'herd'?" ... "A small HERD of cattle and a few goats and sheep."

Recently, Mort and his buddies jumped to attention when the breadman mentioned that a friend of his second cousin (on his dad's side) lives in New York City, where his wife works daily in Manhattan. (Mort always clarifies with "where them tallest buildings are.")

She swears she saw President Donald Trump and his sidekick ("almost-equal-kick?") entering the CBS President's office. (She admits that the pair may have been AI versions of the President and of Elon Musk.) Anyways, she thinks she heard President Trump campaigning to get the name of a popular weekly TV program changed from Face the Nation to The Nation Faces Me. And Musk was promoting the Big Dipper and the Little Dipper to become our 52nd and 53rd states, assuming that Canada will become #51.

That sounded "about right" To Mort, who spent the rest of the day informing others of the Trump-Musk sightings.

All the agency shake-ups in DeeCee remind a longtime friend, John Nickols, of his brief tenure almost 50 years ago when he and another Quantic-trained

FBI rookie were agents in the Albuquerque, NM, field office. Well-armed and well-trained, the pair received word about a federal fugitive believed to be holed up in Ruidoso, NM, where he had formerly lived and his family still resided. So, they headed for Ruidoso in hot pursuit, finding nary a fugitive after disturbing both nooks and crannies. After all, they reasoned, the "tip" came from a usually reliable FBI source. Whatever, it was a pretty lousy way to spend Christmas Eve.

Later, the "source" admitted innocently sharing flawed information. The fugitive was in Reynosa, Mexico, NOT Ruidoso. Soon, the fugitive was arrested by other agents. "Many people had goose for Christmas," Nickols remembers. "My partner and I had a wild goose chase." Cool Hand Luke would have said there was a definite failure to communicate.

An avowed Christian, he spent most of his career as a highly successful high school and college basketball coach and as a respected university teacher. He was a pace-setter in everything, except perhaps as a guitarist, where maybe "hobby" is a better fit. However, he befits the description "Bum" Phillips,

longtime Houston Oiler Coach, once offered when asked if star running back Earl Campbell was in a class by himself. "If he's not," Bum drawled, "It don't take long to call the roll."

In this space two weeks ago, I wrote about the recent collision of aircrafts resulting in their crashing into the Potomac River. In the five paragraphs reflecting on earlier crashes involving Braniff International, I relied on memory for details, and failed miserably, perhaps committing more "goofs" than any other in my 22 years of weekly meanderings.

I erred in several references to Braniff, and persons who want to learn accurate details of this airline's remarkable history may Google Braniff Airways Foundation.

The Foundation allows Braniff's rich heritage to live into perpetuity. I am sincerely sorry for my mistakes--all of them of the head and not the heart--and offer deepest apologies.

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. Website: www.speakerdoc.com.

Slings&Arrows

The power of education



Randy Keck
rkeck@community-news.com

It was early September in 1963 when I first sat at my desk in Mrs. Sides' first-grade classroom at Stewart Elementary School in Lubbock. My parents bought a house two blocks down on the same street sometime before school started, and I would often walk or ride my bike to school.

Through the education I received there I learned to read and write; I learned some history, I learned how to add and subtract, and I became intimately familiar with the smell of ink from the mimeograph machine on test days.

I remember all those teachers - Mrs. Poteet in second grade, Mrs. Dorman in third grade, Mrs. Snodgrass in fourth grade, Mrs. Bradstreet in fifth, and Mr. Matthews in sixth grade.

Luckily for me and all the students in that school, there was a decision made by people we didn't even know to build and pay for a school, and to provide teachers and equipment, long before I started attending.

That generosity continued in seventh grade at Wilson Jr. High — I still remember the words to the school song!

After that year, my parents moved to Iowa Park, Texas, and I completed grades 8-12 there — again, the schools were provided by people in the community that didn't even know the Keck family, or that we were going to move there.

After high school, again through the largesse of the people of Texas, I was able to pay my own way through college without incurring debt due to low tuition rates at Midwestern State University, where I graduated in 1979.

I had a number of occupations after college, but for the last (almost) 30 years I have published a community newspaper. During that course of time I have served on local boards, participated in the community, and have been honored to be elected president of the North and East Texas Press Association, the Texas Press Association, and now I serve as president of the National Newspaper Association Foundation.

To say that is not to toot my own horn — none of this would ever

have happened without a free, quality education in public schools. My dad was born in the back room of his father's Texaco station in Seymour, Texas. My mom was born on the family farm in Spade, Texas.

College, for me or my brother, was never even considered as a possibility by my parents — neither of them had college degrees.

My opportunities all happened because taxpayers in the Lubbock Independent School District and in the Iowa Park Consolidated Independent School District paid for schools, equipment, and teachers so that kids like me, and multiple thousands of others, could get a leg up and have a possibility of a better life by providing us with an education.

It happened because taxpayers in Texas provided enough funding so that I could go to school in the mornings, clean carpets in the afternoons, and study at night in pursuit of a college degree.

I'll bet many of you have similar stories.

I'm very concerned because the Texas Legislature and Governor Abbott are about to put all of that at risk by passing and signing into law a voucher scheme that is sure to deplete money that could be used to educate younger versions of ourselves.

Those who are proposing this new entitlement program will tell you that kids like me in 1963 would have a "choice" of where to go to school. I can tell you my parents would never have been able to afford to send me to a private schools, even if there had been vouchers.

To a large degree, the only people vouchers will benefit are those who can already afford to send their kids to private school.

In listening to the debate, I often hear voucher proponents refer to "failing public schools" as if that was a thing. Schools are a reflection of the community around them, and I will submit that if there is a failing public school, it is located in a failing community.

I have also heard that the voucher scheme will not affect public education funding, but it already has. Governor Abbott held school funding hostage during the last legislative session because the house refused to pass vouchers, and school districts across the state were left short of funds.

Today there are students in our local community, and in less fortunate communities, who just need the opportunity an education provides to make themselves better. A quality public education can do that.

Education is the key to unlock the golden door of freedom.

- George Washington Carver

WATER

from page 3

precluded them. More than 55 years later, we acknowledge the infrastructure costs then were a small fraction of what they would be today and wonder what if the bold investment had been made at that time.

The data shows that by 2050, Texas will suffer a water shortfall of up to 5.74 million acre-feet per year if faced with drought conditions like those the state has experienced over the last few years. According to the State Water Plan, the economic losses for the Dallas-Fort Worth area for not implementing the plan would be approximately \$38,000 per acre foot in 2070.

Texas 2036, a nonprofit, non-partisan public policy research and advocacy organization, has made the following key recommendations regarding water infrastructure and funding needs. The 89th Legislature would do well to follow them.

Establish a dedicated funding stream for the Texas Water Fund.

Water infrastructure development and maintenance require a stable, dedicated funding stream to alleviate erratic decisions created by changing political dynamics and complacency created by short periods of above-average rainfall.

Recapitalize the Texas Water Fund with a \$5 billion interim endowment.

Texas voters passed Proposition 6 in November 2023 that created the Texas Water Fund with \$1 billion supplemental appropriation of general revenue. According to the most recent Texas State Water Plan, Texas will need to invest at least \$154 billion over the next 50 years on new water supplies and infrastructure upgrades. The \$5 billion interim endowment, followed by consistent \$1 billion investments, will help get us there.

Enhance legislative oversight and transparency.

One of the major reasons for taxpayer reluctance to dedicate large dollar amounts to critical infrastructure is the lack of transparency and accountability. Strict measures of timely and efficient completion of funded projects are essential.

Water policy rarely makes it to the top of the priority list in Texas legislative sessions. Unfortunately, it is not listed as a legislative priority of the Republican Party of Texas, which sees more value in banning Democrats from committee chairmanships. But this time might be different.

Gov. Greg Abbott's recent announcement of a Texas-size investment in water as an emergency item in his recent State of the State address should be music to the ears of all who live in this great drought-prone and water deficient state.

Sen. Charles Perry, legislators in the Water Caucus and advocates from around the state are leading the charge to prioritize increasing the availability and improving the quality of state water resources.

As of this writing, 30 water management bills have been filed and, with water now one of the governor's emergency items, more are likely to follow. Plans include developing new water supply sources such as marine desalination along the coast, brackish water desalination across the state, produced water treatment in the West Texas oil and gas fields, and surface water acquisitions where available, both in Texas and elsewhere.

The 89th Texas Legislature should be poised for major water investment for the future of Texas. Abbott's emergency item designation, the second largest budget surplus in Texas history, burgeoning population growth and Texans' recent memories of drought conditions should line up the stars and generate sound legislative action.

If not, we might all be taking ranch showers soon.

Glenn Rogers is a rancher from Graford, Texas.

CAPITAL

from page 3

Operation Lone Star along the Texas-Mexico border.

The News reported Abbott met with most of the Texas Republican congressional delegation as well as House Speaker Mike Johnson, R-La.

Abbott's initiatives include sending state troopers and the Texas National Guard to the border, stringing buoys in the Rio Grande and razor wire along the banks, and busing more than 100,000 migrants to Democratic-run cities over the past four years.

At least one Texas GOP congressman agrees.

"We think the people of Texas should be reimbursed for the money they've already spent and are spending to secure our borders," Lance Gooden, R-Terrell, said.

Texas HHS employees fired for accessing sensitive data

Nine employees of the Texas Health and Human Services have been fired for accessing restricted data of Texans applying for

programs offered by the agency, the Texas Standard reported. The employees were accessing the private information of people seeking to apply for Medicaid or assistance under the Supplemental Nutrition Assistance Program (SNAP).

About 60,000 people who applied or received assistance from June 2021 and December 2024 were affected. No arrests have been made to this point..

HHS Commissioner Cecile Young was asked at a Senate finance committee hearing if it was true that more than 8,000 HHS employees had access to private information, according to The Texas Tribune.

"One thing I wanted to make clear is oftentimes when you hear someone breaching privacy it's coming from the outside," she said. "And in this case, sadly, it was actually coming from our employees."

Texas leads nation in top-tier universities

A new report from the American Council on Education and the Carnegie Foundation for the Advancement of Teaching indicates 16 universities in Texas

have reached Tier 1 designation, the most coveted level. That means the state is home to more such institutions than any other state.

In the report, California has 14 and New York 12 top-tier universities. To reach that designation, a university must spend at least \$50 million and award at least 70 research doctorates on average each year.

The five new additions in Texas since the last release of university classifications in 2022 are Baylor College of Medicine, Southern Methodist University, The University of Texas Health Science Center at Houston, the University of Texas Health Science Center at San Antonio and the UT Southwestern Medical Center.

The news is "a testament to the quality of our higher learning institutions and the investment the state has made into education," Andrew Mahaleris, the governor's press secretary, said.

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.

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Pachecos, Bearcats celebrate history

Brothers making dad proud

By Rick Mauch
The Community News

Mike Pacheco watches his oldest son Joaquin drain a clutch basket or his younger son Enrique clamp down defensively on the opponent's leading scorer and he beams with pride.

After all, he could see it coming ever since they were barely able to walk.

"We started playing basketball when they were about 3," Mike recalled. "I'd take them to the community center with me and they were playing against grown men when they were 7 or 8 years old — and I wouldn't let the adults take it easy on them."

That experience has paid in historical fashion. They are part of the first ever UIL district championship squad in Aledo boys basketball history.

Making the experience even more special for Mike is the fact he didn't play basketball in high school, though he's always loved the game, which was obvious in the passion he showed in teaching the sport to his sons.

"Me and my brother have been playing basketball our whole lives. My dad's been coaching us up ever since we could walk," Joaquin, a senior, said. "He's taught us so much. He'd get out the whistle and we'd all get to work. And he's real good. He can shoot like crazy."

From the time they were born in Oklahoma, through their short time in Puerto Rico before moving back to Oklahoma in elementary school, to moving to Aledo in the eighth grade, if there was some spare time it was likely spent shooting hoops.

"Joaquin grew up liking (Russell) Westbrook and you can see it in how he plays. He's fast, rebounds, and isn't afraid to take risks," Mike said.

"Ironically, Enrique didn't like basketball at first," he continued. "But I just said, 'Come along' and I kept saying it. Then, he took to it and he's just gotten better and better."

The senior leader

"Joaquin's motor does not stop. Teams can't keep up with him," first-year Bearcats head coach Brian Blackburn said.

Joaquin is not shy about taking



RANDY KECK/THE COMMUNITY NEWS

Mike Pacheco (center) trained his sons Joaquin, left, and Enrique (right) their basketball skills from an early age.

over a game if necessary. He has the trust of his teammates to do so and he regularly fulfills that faith.

"He's developed more of that on-court leadership — not always so vocal, but more with his actions," Blackburn said.

Case in point, in a game against Saginaw Chisholm Trail, the Rangers went on an 11-4 run in the third quarter to tie the game at 26. In the fourth quarter, with two players guarding him, he still scored 13 points to ignite a 21-7 Bearcats run for a 47-33 victory.

He also stepped to the line in the closing seconds against upset-minded Granbury and drilled a game-winning free throw as effortlessly as if he were in practice as the Bearcats won 54-53.

Like any great shooter, Joaquin doesn't let a drought stop him — though he rarely has droughts. There's an old cliché, if a shooter misses 10 straight shots, he knows the 11th is going in.

"Sometimes you've got to shoot those dumb shots to make the good shots," Joaquin said.

Not only is he a consistent scorer, he is also an unselfish player.

"As the season has gone on and he has received more attention from opponents, it's allowed him to make some great passes," Blackburn said.

Oh, and he averages 11 rebounds per game, prompting Blackburn to say, "He's the best rebounding guard I've ever coached. He just grabs it and we're off to the races."

And Blackburn has seen some great talent in his days, including the likes of NBA player Marcus Smart when Blackburn was an assistant coach at Flower Mound Marcus.

Next phase

This is Joaquin's second season on the varsity. He was key in the team reaching the second round of the playoffs last season, but has elevated his play to a whole new level.

"A lot of the offense last year didn't revolve around me as much. I like having everything go through me," he said. "But it's not all about me. We have a

fantastic team and everybody knows their role. We all bought into that system and it all goes so well together.

"We had a good year last year, but I knew we could be great this year. The day after that playoff loss I couldn't wait to start getting ready for this season."

This season brought a new head coach. Blackburn and Joaquin clicked almost immediately — in fact, the entire team and their new coach gelled right away.

"He's bought in, and that was key for us," Blackburn said. "We played in the TABC (Texas Association of Basketball Coaches) Showcase — I came in two weeks before that and gave them a blueprint — and in the first game of the tournament they scored 95 points."

Mike also sings the praises of Blackburn, noting, "You can have all the talent in the world, but if you don't have the right coach you're not going to win. I'm proud of what my boys and their teammates have accomplished, and that includes listening to their coaches who clearly know what they're doing."

Playing alongside brother

Something else that is special this season is Joaquin and Enrique playing together for what is likely the last time. Even if the team makes a run to a state championship, there are only precious few games left together.

"It feels really special. I know we're coming up on the last of the games I will have with him and I want to treasure every minute of every one," Enrique said. "I've learned so much from him."

Mike admits it's bittersweet when he thinks about their time together in high school soon to conclude.

"I do think about that," he said, almost misty-eyed. "To see them come from being little boys learning the game to where they are now, I'm just so proud — and not only because of what they can do on the basketball court. They're fine young men."

What lies ahead

Blackburn said Joaquin has the skills to be a good player at the college level.

"He's very talented. He can score with the ball, he's quick, he can be patient, all the things a coach wants in a player," Blackburn said.

Joaquin is certainly interested in playing the game at a higher level should the opportunity present itself.

"I'm seeing where it goes. I'll have to talk to my parents, and it would depend on the school," he said. "But yeah, if that happens that would be great."

Keeping it going

While Aledo is used to winning championships year after year in football — they've won district every season since 2008 — this is new for boys basketball. However, the Pacheco brothers and their dad believe it is only the first of what could be a new tradition in AHS sports.

"The football program is insane. Every single year they win. It's nice to have this in basketball," Joaquin said. "We're probably going to keep this rolling next year. We have three returning starters."

To which Enrique added, "This has been a season to treasure. Hopefully we can do the same next year."

Of course, there's also the possibility of twin championships should Joaquin be playing in college, something that brings a huge smile to Mike's face at the very thought.

"Yeah, that would be really nice," he said simply, losing himself in the imaginary moment.



RYAN WADE/THE COMMUNITY NEWS

LFET: Enrique Pacheco drives into the lane on a fast break as the Bearcats cruised past Saginaw on Friday, Jan. 2.
RIGHT: 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.



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requests for the week

- MILK
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- BUTTER
- DELI MEAT
- FRESH FRUIT
- BREAKFAST BARS

Food pantry requests for the week!
This week requests are milk, cereal, butter, deli meat, fresh fruit and breakfast bars. If you're able to donate toward the food pantry requests, donations may be dropped off at 1225 Holland Lake Dr. Weatherford, TX 76086 Monday-Thursday from 8 a.m. - 4 p.m. We appreciate your continued support to help feed our Senior community



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 for tickets and more information. Ticket purchase deadline: Sunday, February 9, 2025

FEBRUARY 24

Teen Time
Aledo Public Library invites Middle and High Schoolers to celebrate National Oreo Cookie Day from 5-6p.m. on Monday, Feb. 24. Origami and other crafts

available while taste-testing a variety of oreo cookie flavors.



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 or call 817-360-8173.



FEBRUARY 28

Young Life Mahjong Brunch
Mahjong Fundraiser benefiting Aledo Young Life in 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 cre-

ative with those team names ladies, let's have some fun!
Register: <https://tx485.younglife.team/mahjong>



Weatherford First Monday Trade Days
Discover the charm of one of Texas' oldest open-air markets, happening the weekend before the first Monday of every month. From 9 a.m. to 4 p.m., Friday to Sunday, at Heritage Park (317 Santa Fe Dr) transforms into a vibrant marketplace filled with treasures! Shop an incredible variety of antiques, furniture, jewelry, plants, artwork, collectibles, and so much more. Feeling hungry? Swing by the food park to grab some delicious eats while you browse. With free entry and parking, there's no reason to miss out! Bring your friends, family, or just yourself for a unique shopping experience.



MARCH 4

Mardi Gras Festival
Join us for our 3rd Annual Mardi Gras Festival from 6-9p.m. on March 4, at

ACROSS

1 dog or cat (2 wds.)
5 Dallas ____kicks (pro indoor soccer)
6 TXism: "let sleeping ____ lie"
7 small bills
8 TXism: "____ chaser" (early riser)
9 this can be acquired on So. Padre Island
12 TXism: "would jerk tears from a ____ eye" (very sad)
17 UT football team lost to this team twice in 2024
19 Merton's county was named for Robert ____
21 removing wrinkles from clothes
22 TX King Vidor directed 1937 film "____ Dallas"
23 a director ____ actor for a scene
28 silly, foolish
29 "hungry enough to ____ horse"
30 TXism: "useless ____ on a bald eagle"
31 Zsa Zsa or Eva
35 Texas journalist and author, Catherine
36 highest waterfall in Texas (2 wds.)
42 TXism for "laughed hard" (3 wds.)
44 Texas actress Annette O'____
46 Guadalupe Mountains peak (2 wds.)

DOWN

1 TXism: "hard ____ at a wedding"
2 newspaper: "Fort Stockton ____"
3 in Van Zandt County on U.S. 80
4 actress Harper in Texas-based 2007 film "No Country for Old Men"
9 Texas-based restaurant, "Friday's" abbr.
10 TXism: "____ sense" (dumb)
11 TXism: "two-bit ____" (poor horse)
12 Texas makes more of this than any other state
13 lasting written works
14 "Hill Country ____ Natural ____"
15 fine sand deposited as a sediment
16 pith helmet, aka ____ topee
18 a single-stranded molecule needed for life (abbr.)
20 Texas' continent (abbr.)
23 21st governor: Culberson
24 California's oldest private univer.

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by Charley & Guy Orbison
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36 NFL "salary ____"
37 TXism for "against"
38 Russian president noted Texas folklorist, Alan
40 Bausch & ____ (eye products company)
41 Texas-born musician Stone
43 when repeated, goodbye in Britian
45 RB Emmitt (init.)
47 actor Brand of TV's "Laredo" (1965-67)
48 St. ____ University in San Antonio
55 ocean movement

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!



MARCH 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.

MARCH 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.



MARCH 29

Aledo Spring Fling Craft Fair and Market Expo
The Aledo Spring Fling will be from 10 a.m. - 4 p.m. on March 29 at the Aledo High School. Come and shop creative quality craft vendors and market vendors who have everything to share with you from wood crafts and paper goods to beauty, floral, and boutique products! Proceeds benefit the Junior Class at Aledo High School every year.

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Talha Riaz, MD
Medical Oncology/Hematology

Robyn R. Young, MD
Medical Oncology/Hematology Specializing in Breast

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Parker County Health Foundation Gala

The Parker County Health Foundation hosted its annual Boots & Bling gala at the River Ranch Stockyards on Saturday, Feb. 15. The sold-out crowd enjoyed food, conversation, an auction, and a concert by Kevin Fowler.

PHOTOS BY RANDY KECK/THE COMMUNITY NEWS



Alex Helms participates in a game before the auction begins.



Tiffany Thompson-Hanley exhibited the bling portion of boots & bling.



Colleen O'Kelly provided testimony of the benefits she received at the Center of Hope, one of the beneficiaries of the PCHF. Also shown are Center of Hope Director Staci Markwardt and Shane Cartwright of the Department of Public Safety.



Kaylee Gayle prepares for dinner to begin.



Auctioneer Terry Waters get the bidding underway.



Participants enjoys an even-odd game to narrow down an eventual winner.



Participants admire their image captured at the photo booth.



Jeff and Donya Benson display a Corgi that was to be auctioned later in the event.



Event chair Penny Shelton and husband Brian take a moment before the program begins.

LAND

from page one

“That acre has a special memory for me because my great aunt Flora [Smyth], of Floras Road that you drive down to get to our farming area, she had no children and never married,” Ellen explained. “So when she died she left an acre of land to her great nieces and nephews. So this is my acre of land that she left me. When we were kids she would take us fishing there in the Trinity River and I remember that, so it is special to me that we started the garden on that acre that Aunt Flora gave me.”

How it started

Clearfork Creek Farm was established in 2020 with all crops being donated to public aid organizations. The Greers have chosen to donate their food to Parker County Center of Hope and Crowley House of Hope.

Center of Hope CEO Staci Markwardt explained many of the individuals and families the

organization serves do not have fresh produce because of financial constraints, making Clearfork Creek Farm’s contribution a valuable ingredient in filling that need.

“Access to fresh produce has transformed what we can offer in our food pantry,” Markwardt said. “For years, we relied heavily on non-perishable items like canned goods and dry staples, which are essential but often lack the nutrients our participants need for a balanced diet.”

Hennah Corrao is the farm manager at Clearfork Creek and there are two part-time employees, but the Greers welcome volunteers and donations to sustain the effort.

“It’s a big job when it comes to harvest, so we would love to have volunteers come help us out,” Lee said.

Helping others

The farm donates a little more than 1,500 pounds of produce a year with a goal of 10,000 pounds.

“Our mission is to help those who are less fortunate and to provide fresh, healthy grown produce,” Lee said. “We grow a little bit of

everything - asparagus, tomatoes, lettuce, beets, radishes...” and Ellen chimed in, “potatoes, onions, garlic, artichokes, and just everything.”

THE CLEARFORK FARM

The Clearfork Farm is a 501c3 non-profit. To contact the farm about volunteering or to donate to the farm, visit www.clearforkcreek.farm or call 817-917-9800.

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If you or someone you know could benefit from food, education programs and services of Parker County Center of Hope, call 817-594-0266 or visit www.centerofhopetx.com.

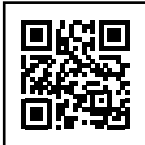
CHRISTOPHER AMOS/THE COMMUNITY NEWS

Lee Green with bags of fresh produce. The Greens are now carrying out the dream Byron Miller had of farming fresh produce for those who can’t afford it.



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POWERLIFTING

Ladycats qualify 20 for regionals

Most in program history

By Rick Mauch
The Community News

When the tough gets going, the tough go to regionals.

And in the case of the Aledo Ladycats powerlifting team, 20 will make the trip to Sherman for the regional meet on Feb. 27.

This comes on the heels of five members of the Ladycats posting top-five finishes at the district meet held at Aledo High School on Feb. 14.

Leading the Aledo contingent at district were Byranna Orr and Ari Mathias. Orr took first place in the 132 weight class, lifting 745 total pounds, while Mathias lifted 805 to capture the top spot in the 148 division.

Charlie Soward lifted 610 to place third in the 123 division.

Also posting top-five finishes were Breleigh Mayer with 710 pounds for fourth in the 148 class and Mallory Morgan's 690 lifted placed her fifth in the 198 division.

The list of regional qualifiers and their weight classes includes:

105 pounds: Lilly Carruthers, Kylie Dernovich

123: Soward, Ashlynn Durnill

132: Orr, Kyla Pierce, Avery Jeter

148: Mathias, Mayer, Gracie Smith, Allie Faulkner, Ella Childress, Kendra Potts.

165: Claire Moseley, Liberty Pelfrey

181: Jayden Staggs, Lily Morris

198: Morgan

220: Adrianna Lambert

242-plus: Kaylin Miller

Alternates: Tina Lapraim, 132; Hadley Baird, 165



RYAN WADE/THE COMMUNITY NEWS

Breleigh Mayer receives the sign from the judge for a good lift as she completes her 225-pound deadlift at the powerlifting meet on Friday, Feb. 14. Mayer hit a new personal record with a combined lift of 710 pounds.

"The team did a great job competing. We were missing a couple athletes that were injured — playing other sports, still trying to break the stigma that they are going to get hurt if they lift," Aledo coach Josh Morgan said. "One of my main goals for them all individually was to make progress and qualify for regional and that's what they did."

To qualify for state, a lifter must place first or second in their weight class at the regional meet or achieve a specific qualifying weight total across their squat, bench press and deadlift in their weight class.

The Girls State Powerlifting Meet is March 14 in Edinburg.

Others posting top-10 finishes at district for the Ladycats were:

105	132
6. Caruthers, 450	6. Pierce, 610
7. Dernovich, 390	8. Jeter, 565
	148
	6. Childress, 600
	7. Potts, 595
	165
	8. Mosely, 560
	181
	6. Staggs, 680
	7. Morris, 600
	242-plus
	7. Miller, 615

SWIMMING

Siblings among Aledo state contingent

Haley Roberson making fourth straight trip

By Rick Mauch
The Community News

Haley Roberson and Victoria Crews must love Austin in the winter. After all, the two Ladycats made it a destination location each February since 2022.

The same is true this season as the senior friends are once again returning to the Class 5A State Swim Meet at the Lee & Joe Jamail Texas Swimming Center at the University of Texas at Austin. They are among a dozen swimmers who will be in the state capital this weekend, Feb. 21-22.

In fact, Haley is making her final trip to state special as she is joined by her younger brother Kale, a sophomore.

"To my knowledge, this is the first time we've had both a brother and sister competing at state — and their mom is coach," said Aledo coach Meghan Roberson with a smile.

Haley Roberson will compete individually for a fourth straight year in the 200-yard individual

medley and for a third time in the 500 freestyle. She will also swim on the 200 and 400 free relays with Crews, junior Julia Gordy, and freshman Mackenzie Oligschlaeger.

The quartet set a school record in the 200 free relay at the Region II Meet, clocking 1:41.57.

Also setting a school record in advancing to state in the boys 400 free relay are Kale Roberson, along with senior Tyler Jackson and sophomores Brayden DeBoer and Ian Perez. they posted a time of 3:21.60 at regionals.

Seniors Avery Faulkner, Evan Bradley, sophomore Jaxon Robinson, and freshman Sydni Kellam are alternates. Faulkner is also a previous qualifier.

"It's been a long season — we've been competing since mid-September, with consistent practices, countless hours in the water, and plenty of early morning wake-ups," coach Roberson said. "We knew regionals would be a tough battle to qualify, so most of my athletes tapered for peak performance — and it paid off.

"The excitement of qualifying has helped them re-engage in the training process, and I know



AVERY FAULKNER

The boys 400 Free Relay of (front) Brayden DeBoer and Tyler Jackson and (back) Ian Perez and Kale Roberson will be at the Class 5A State Swim Meet Feb. 21-22, along with eight Ladycats. The quartet set a school record in winning regionals.

they're eager to compete at this level."

Coach Roberson said the returning state experience is invaluable to the program, particularly with the younger swimmers benefiting from that leadership.

"They really look up to our upperclassmen, and it's great to

see the experience, expertise, and leadership of our returning athletes being passed down," she said. "It's helpful that many of these athletes have attended state previously. It can be an overwhelming environment, being at the UT pool.

Turn to SWIM, page 12

SPORTS BRIEFS

Staff Reports
The Community News

BASEBALL
Bearcats, Eagles state ranked

The Aledo Bearcats and Brock Eagles are entering the 2025 season ranked by the Texas High School Baseball Coaches Association. Aledo is ranked No. 9 in Class 5A and Brock comes in at No. 8 in Class 4A after moving up from 3A.

WC's Davis NJCAA Region 5 Player of the Week

JC Davis of the Weatherford College Coyotes was named the Northern Texas Junior College Athletic Conference's Region 5 Position Player of the Week recently.

A sophomore second baseman from Argyle, Davis scored two runs for the Coyotes, batting .556. He also drove in a run, had two walks and stole three bases during the week.

BOYS' GOLF
Weatherford JV continues streak

The Junior varsity Kangaroos won their fifth consecutive tournament dating to last fall, capturing the title at Southern Oaks Golf Club, hosted by Burleson Centennial. Sophomore Mario Muniz led the Kangaroos.

BOYS' SOCCER
Weatherford JV 1, Boswell 0

Players of the Game: Cale Ing and Jorge Flores.

FOOTBALL
Brock players all-state

Brock senior linebacker Asa Parenteau has been named first-team Class 4A All-State by the Texas Sports Writers Association. He is joined by junior defensive lineman Davin Magga, who was named second team, and junior defensive back Colt Matlock, who was chosen for third team.

Senior quarterback Brody Woods received honorable mention.

The Eagles (13-2) advanced to the Class 4A Division II state semifinals in their first season at that level after moving up from 3A Division I.

GIRLS' SOCCER
Lady Roos experience first non-win

The Weatherford Lady Kangaroos, ranked No. 1 in Class 6A by the Texas Girls Coaches Association, remained undefeated but not unblemished after winning on penalty kicks in overtime at Mansfield on Feb. 14. The teams ended regulation tied 0-0.

The Lady Roos, 12-0-1 overall and 5-0-1 in District 3-6A, did extend their shutout streak. They have outscored their opponents 42-0 this season.

Weatherford JVB 2, South Hills 0

Players of the Game Piper Mercier and Adilyn Meleven goals with an assist by Josie Hunt and another shutout by the defense, the 12th of the season.

LADYCAT OF THE WEEK



Marina Taveras
Softball

The sophomore led the Ladycats' offensive attack as they went 4-1 in the Forney Tournament this past weekend. She had seven hits, including a home run and three triples, and drove in five runs.

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BEARCAT OF THE WEEK



Brady Powell
Wrestling

While he didn't compete at state, the junior came close and was an alternate in the 175-pound weight class after going 3-3 at the Region I Tournament on Feb. 7-8 in Lubbock.

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SOCCER

Ladycats extend home win streak to five

District mark now 6-1

By Ryan Wade
The Community News

ALEDO – With the second half of their District 5-5A schedule underway, the district-leading Aledo Ladycat varsity soccer club had a Valentine’s Day date with Brewer’s Lady Bears. The Ladycats extended their home win streak to five matches as they routed the hibernating Lady Bears, 5-0, at Tim Buchanan Stadium.

The Ladycats (11-3 overall, 6-1 in district) have had a phenomenal 2025 campaign thus far. Aledo Head Coach Bryan Johnson is nearing 200 career wins as the Ladycat head coach and win number 300 for his career. If the Ladycats continue to handle their business the way they have so far this season, Johnson should reach both milestones at home against Fossil Ridge on Feb. 25.

One aspect of their game that has led to the Ladycats’ success this season is their wide range of scoring options. During the start of the 2024 season there were significant question marks surrounding the Aledo squad, including where their goals would come from. Ally Weimer stepped up as a freshman to lead the Ladycats in goals with several other teammates being more passive participants in the offense than true scoring threats.

In 2025 things are different and Friday’s match against the Lady Bears was the perfect case in point. Each one of Aledo’s five goals was scored by a different Ladycat. Weimer may have put the Ladycats on the board with 29 minutes left in the first half, but Baylee Velarde, Avery Sands, Jules Avery, and Kylee Vandiver all followed her lead with goals of their own. The days of opposing defenses being able to mark Weimer to take away Aledo’s offense are a thing of the past.

On Friday, Weimer scored the first Ladycat goal of the match as the ball landed behind a pair of Lady Bear centerbacks. Weimer won the foot race to the loose ball, dribbled down field for about 20 yards before taking a shot on goal that the Brewer keeper had no shot at.

Just six minutes later Velarde scored the second Aledo goal of the match with just more than 23 minutes left in the first half to put the Ladycats up 2-0. They enjoyed that cushion through the remainder of the first half before getting back to work in the second half.

Reagan Tomlin connected with Sands to score the first Ladycat goal of the second half. Having already proven themselves a scoring threat, Velarde and Weimer picked up assists in the second half as they fed Avery and Vandiver the ball respectively on goals of their own.

At the far other end of the pitch, freshman goal keeper Audrey



RYAN WADE/THE COMMUNITY NEWS

Ally Weimer leads the charge for the Aledo Ladycats against Brewer as Ainsley Elmore and Addison Clark follow behind during Aledo’s 5-0 shut-out of the Lady Bears on Friday, Feb. 14.

Obana picked up her second clean sheet in a row after she kept Azle off the board earlier in the week.

The Ladycats return to action on Friday, Feb. 21 when they

travel to Chisholm Trail for another District 5-5A matchup. Aledo bested Chisholm Trail 5-1 back in their first meeting in January.

SPORTS BRIEFS

Staff Reports
The Community News

SOFTBALL
Ladycats preseason No. 4

The Aledo Ladycats entered the season ranked No. 4 in the state in Class 5A by the Texas Girls Coaches Association. The Ladycats, who reached the state semi-finals last season, began the season with a 4-1 record in the Forney Tournament the Feb. 15-16 weekend.

Lady Roos bounce back

After dropping their first two games of the season, including the opener of the Texas A&M Tournament, the Weatherford Lady Roos (2-2), coached by former Aledo coach Jeff Lemons, rebounded with an explosion. They outscored their next two opponents 33-3, winning 17-3 against Jarrell and 16-0 against Vela.

In the win over Jarrell, pitcher Kyndall Jones posted her first varsity victory.

WRESTLING

Roo competes at state

Gunner Spotsanski of the Weatherford Kangaroos competed at the Class 6A State Tournament this past weekend at the Berry Center in Houston. He qualified in the 126-pound weight class.

Also from Weatherford, Mason Walker was an alternate in the 157 division.

SOFTBALL

Ladycats open season strong

Go 4-1 in Forney Tournament

By Rick Mauch
The Community News

Anxious to take the field after cold and rainy weather canceled their season opener a few days earlier, the Aledo Ladycats won four of five games in the Forney Tournament Feb. 13-15.

The Ladycats began with wins over Van, 7-2, and Flower Mound Marcus, 5-0, before falling 3-0 to Mansfield Legacy. They bounced back to defeat Rockwall 8-4 and McKinney 7-3.

“We are really proud of how our team came out strong on day one. Their energy and hustle set the tone,” Ladycats coach Heather Myers said. “On day two we definitely had some flat moments and were exposed in a few areas, but I was encouraged by how we found our stride toward the end. We managed to score runs when we needed to and showed a lot of composure, even when we were playing from behind.

“It’s all part of the learning process, and we’ll take these experiences to improve moving forward.”

The Ladycats, ranked No. 4 in the state in 5A by the Texas Girls Coaches Association, overcame an early 2-1 deficit against Van and trailed Rockwall 4-1 before

rallying for seven runs in the bottom of the third inning. They also fell behind McKinney 3-0 after the first inning.

Marina Tavares led the Aledo offense. She collected seven hits, including three triples and a home run, while driving in five runs in the tournament. Pitching, Taylor McKean garnered a pair of victories, hurling 11 innings, surrendering six hits with three earned runs, while striking out 20, walking three and hitting a batter.

Also hitting home runs in the tourney for Aledo were Delaney Rosser, Brooklyn Taloa, and Breleigh Mayer.

The Ladycats’ game at Waco Midway on Feb. 18 was postponed until March 15 (varsity only) because of cold weather. They are scheduled to play in the Mansfield Tournament this weekend, Feb. 20-22, weather permitting — and at press time Thursday’s games were already canceled.

Forney Tournament - Feb. 13-15
Ladycats 7, Van 2

	R	H	E
Aledo	120	40	-7100
Van	200	00	-252
Aledo hitting: Kyleigh Pawlik 3-4, 2B, RBI, SB; Marina Tavares 2-3, 3B, 2 RBI; Austyn Marriage 1-2, 3B; Kayleigh Martin 1-1; Jordyn Eddigton 1-1, BB, 2 SB; Addie Perry 1-4, 3B, RBI; Delaney Rosser 1-2, HR, RBI, 2 HP, SB; Tempe Perry BB.			

Aledo pitching: Rylee Marx (W) 2 IP, 3 H, 2 ER, 2 K, 1 BB; Lily Heckathorn 3 IP, 2 H, 4K, 2 BB.

Ladycats 5, Marcus 0

	R	H	E
Marcus	000	000	-022
Aledo	104	00X	-591
Aledo hitting: Rosser 3-3, 2B, 2 RBI; Tavares 3-3, HR, 3B, 2 RBI; A. Perry 1-3, SB; Martin 1-2, 2B; Eddington 1-2, SB; Brooklyn Taloa BB.			
Aledo pitching: Taylor McKean (W) 3 IP, 1 H, 5 K, 1 BB; T. Perry 2 IP, 1 H, 5 K.			

Mansfield Legacy 3, Ladycats 0

	R	H	E
Legacy	201	00	-352
Aledo	000	00	-020
Aledo hitting: Tavares 1-3, 3B; Marriage 1-3, SB; A. Perry 2 BB, HP; Pawlak BB; Taloa BB, HP; McKean BB.			
Aledo pitching: McKean (L) 4.2 IP, 5 H, 3 ER, 9 K, 1 BB.			

Ladycats 8, Rockwall 4

	R	H	E
Rockwall	112	-432	
Aledo	018	-821	
Aledo hitting: A. Perry 1-2, BB, 2 RBI; Pawlak 1-1, 2B, 2 BB, 2 RBI; Rosser BB; Gracie Jones BB; Marx BB, HP; T. Perry BB; Eddington BB, 2 RBI; Taloa HP.			
Aledo pitching: T. Perry 2.2 IP, 3 H, 3 ER, 3 K, 4 BB; Heckathorn (W) 0.1 IP, 1 K.			

Ladycats 7, McKinney 3

	R	H	E
McKinney	300	0	-330
Aledo	034	X	-761
Aledo hitting: Martin 2-2, 2-2B, RBI; Breleigh Mayer 2-2, HR, 2 RBI; Tavares 1-2, RBI; Taloa 1-2, HR, RBI; Grace Heath BB, SB; Rosser HP.			
Aledo pitching: Marx 0.2 IP, 3 H, 3 ER, 3 BB; McKean (W) 3.1 IP, 6 K, BB, HP.			

FOOTBALL

Roos jump to college level

Two Weatherford Kangaroo football players recently signed letters of intent to play football at the next level.

Kaden Fleming will play at Washburn University and Xavier Cravens will play at Bethel College.




RANDY CUTSHALL PHOTOGRAPHY


Xavier Cravens will play at Bethel College.



RANDY CUTSHALL PHOTOGRAPHY

Kaden Fleming will play at Washburn University





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BASKETBALL

Bearcats bucked by Broncos

By **Ryan Wade**
The Community News

Aledo's 2025 hoops campaign came to a close earlier than expected as the Bearcats were upset by Denton, 45-40, in the Class 5A Division I bi-district round of the playoffs on Tuesday, Feb. 18.

A close contest throughout, the Bearcats held a 13-12 lead at the end of the first quarter, but were unable to recapture and sustain a lead as Denton pulled ahead to start the second quarter.

Rebounding ended up being a difference maker for the Broncos. Denton not only handled their business cleaning the glass on the defensive end of the floor, but also earned themselves second and third chance buckets on offense numerous times.

Leading 13-12 at the end of the first quarter, Aledo found themselves in unfamiliar territory early in the second quarter as Denton captured the lead for the first time since the opening bucket of the game. Defensive pressure coupled with the Broncos' ability to isolate and trap the Bearcats all over the floor kept Aledo off the board enabling Denton to gain the advantage.

As the half came to a close Aledo trailed by a slim, 24-20 margin.

When play resumed in the third quarter, Aledo appeared to find their form. Not only did the Bearcats close the gap in the second half, but they rallied to build a buffer on the scoreboard.

Leads for both teams were short-lived in the second half. Regardless of how far out in front a team got, the opposition was able to reel them back in. Aledo found that out midway through the third quarter as Denton recovered. The Bearcats outscored the Broncos 14-13 in the third, but it wasn't enough to keep Denton from holding the overall lead heading into the final stanza.

Trailing 37-34 as the fourth quarter got underway, the Bearcats desperately needed a scoring run that would never come. The Broncos held Aledo to just six points in the final eight minutes of play to bring the Bearcats playoff ambitions to an end.

Bearcats vs. Denton – Feb. 18

Aledo	13	7	14	6	40
DHS	12	12	13	8	45

WEATHERFORD COLLEGE

Athletic trainers handle more than bumps and bruises

By **Rick Mauch**
The Community News

An athletic trainer is in the rare position of hoping a certain aspect of their job never has to take place.

"We hope to not see major injuries, but there are a few every year that require emergency care and referral," said Chris Nelson, Head Athletic Trainer for Weatherford College. "Athletic trainers are commonly the first on the scene and have the job to quickly recognize, evaluate, treat, and refer to emergency situations."

In other words, athletic trainers are essential to athletes being able to do all they do. They aren't doctors, but doctors rely on them to identify what is immediately wrong and tend to it on the spot before they can get to a doctor.

"We see everything from abrasions and nose bleeds, sprains and strains of ligaments and muscles, general medical concerns, concussions, and injuries that require surgery followed by rehabilitation/return to sport," Nelson said.

Also, thanks to Athletic trainers, minor injuries are often kept from becoming serious ones.

"There are minor injuries that, if caught early enough, can be treated and corrected with exercise and the athlete can miss little to no athletic participation," Nelson said.

The day-to-day duties of the WC athletic training staff begin each day with preparation for that day and the rest of the week. How can they effectively and efficiently provide medical coverage for practices, strength/conditioning sessions, and games for the nine sports at Weatherford College?

Duties also include coordinating referrals to doctors for evaluations, X-rays, MRIs, and surgeries. A typical day in the athletic training room consists of rehabilitation of injuries, corrective exercise, pre-practice warm-up, post-practice treatments for injuries as well as for body recovery.

"In times that there are no athletes in the athletic training room there is documentation of injury evaluations, treatments, inventory and ordering of supplies," Nelson said. "Our staff also supervises and coordinates the new athletic weight room, recovery room, and nutrition lounge in the top tier of the Vickie and Jerry Durant Residence Hall."

Changes

Nelson has been at Weatherford College since 2010. In that time he has seen many changes. The athletic department has added five

sports and upgraded many of the athletic facilities.

Among those changes was the addition of Associate Athletic Trainer Ryleigh Hyles in 2022.

"Chris had this goal of creating an associate position and not an assistant position in the sense that we would take the sports medicine department and expand its range without creating a separation in the two athletic trainer positions," Hyles said.

Most sports medicine departments at colleges and universities have sport assignments - specific trainers for each sport. Hyles noted that at WC they split the athletic duties 50/50, so that one AT is not seen as the "main basketball AT" or the "main baseball AT" etc.

"Chris and I split all the home event coverage and make sure that we communicate on the injuries of the athletes to make sure that they don't feel like they have to see a specific AT," she said.

Hyles called working alongside Nelson one of her biggest blessings.

"This position was my first job as a certified athletic trainer right out of college and I think the biggest thing I learned was communication is key to a successful athletics department and an even bigger key to allowing a sports medicine department elevate the athletic programs," she said.

"I was able to become a part of this utopia of an athletic department that Chris had created over the years through building trust amongst coaches and players, and I've been lucky enough to learn the art of trust through communication by seeing it firsthand alongside Chris."

Types of injuries

The most common injuries Nelson and Hyles deal with are mild ankle sprains and muscle strains. However, they have also had to deal with some fractures and dislocations.

Nelson stressed that the recovery of an athlete also requires the athlete to take the treatment seriously.

"We encourage positive energy and a compliant attitude towards the treatment/rehab plan," he said.

And when it all works - which it does with regularity - Hyles said it is the most wonderful feeling that she actually wishes never existed. After all, before the recovery comes the injury and all that goes into rehabilitation.

"The recovery process is a long and difficult journey for athletes, and watching an athlete make it to



PHOTOS BY JOSEPH DUFRAIN

Weatherford College Head Athletic Trainer Chris Nelson (top) and Associate Athletic Trainer Ryleigh Hyles (below) deal with every injury from abrasions and nose bleeds to those that require rehabilitation.



the end of that journey is a very bittersweet moment for me because I love seeing them work hard and succeed but ideally - for me - no one would get injured in the first place," she said. "I love helping athletes and being their biggest supporter in games and times of injury, but in a perfect world my job would be solely performance enhancement and injury prevention."

Hyles said she takes just as much pride in the front end of athletic training as she does the big rehabs.

"Not every injury takes a kid out of the game, and I think that's where the investment in an AT is really seen," she said. "It's a lot of corrective exercise and therapeutic treatments throughout the week to keep chronic injuries at bay, and strengthening specific muscle groups to keep bigger injuries from occurring. That's what keeps high-caliber athletes performing like high-caliber athletes through long seasons."

Significance

While athletic trainers are commonplace throughout all sports

today, there was a time when it was considered something special if a school had a trainer or staff on hand.

"It is important to have access to an athletic trainer and a sports medicine department to prevent, recognize, evaluate, and treat acute/chronic injuries," Nelson said. "Prevention of injuries is something that is always changing and an area that we are working on as an athletic department every year to do through corrective exercise, dynamic warm-ups, and strength and conditioning."

"There are more athletic trainers working in many places that active people are found. Settings that athletic trainers are being employed include conventional sports at secondary schools, colleges/universities, performing arts, clinics, military, warehouses, clinics.

"All have the same goal - prevent, recognize, and treat injuries in the physically active person."

As for the situation at WC, Hyles said she's not sure it's replicated in many other places. It's

Turn to **TRAINERS**, page 12

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FOOTBALL

Five Bearcats named TSWA All-State

Finley garners first-team accolades

By Rick Mauch
The Community News

Kaydon Finley had one of the top receiving seasons in Aledo Bearcats history in 2024. It caught the eyes of football followers throughout the state, including members of the Texas Sports Writers Association, many of whom saw the junior play this past season.

Finley is one of five Bearcats who were honored with a selection on the TSWA Class 5A All-State Football Team released recently. The wide receiver was named to the first team offense.

Joining him are third team offensive selections and fellow juniors Payton Williams (6-3, 305 pounds) at guard and Raycine Guillory at running back. Honorable mentions are senior defensive lineman Cooper Cyphers (6-1, 230), a junior, and senior linebacker Owen Henderson (6-1, 210).

"Always happy for some of our players to get the all-state honors. I'm pretty partial to our kids and think that we have more that are deserving of recognition, but it's good to have five kids honored and three of them are returning next season," Bearcats' coach Robby Jones said.

The quintet helped Jones win a Class 5A Division I state championship in his first season at the helm, going 16-0 in 2023. They also helped the Bearcats to a 12-2 record in 2024, which included a berth in the Class 5A Division I state quarterfinals.

They were also a part of Aledo's 17th consecutive district championship dating to 2008 and helped the team continue its national-record

127-game district winning streak that also goes back to 2008.

This is the third all-state honor for Finley this off-season. He was also chosen for the Padilla Poll and Texas High School Coaches Association accolades, the elite team for the THSCA.

In his best season to date, Finley caught 81 passes for 1,429 yards and 21 touchdowns this past season. He averaged 17.6 yards per catch with a long catch of 92 yards for a score. He was targeted 115 times and only had four drops.

Guillory rushed for 1,322 yards and 25 touchdowns, along with having 180 receiving yards and two more TD.

Guillory announced during the playoffs that he is graduating early. He signed a letter-of-intent to play for the University of Utah next season. In two seasons with Aledo, Guillory accumulated more than 2,900 yards of offense and scored 48 touchdowns. He moved to Aledo following his freshman season at Mansfield Lake Ridge, where he was also the leading rusher as a freshman.

Williams was an anchor on the offensive line that led the way for Finley and Guillory to post such numbers.

Cyphers tied for the Bearcats' team lead in tackles for loss with 10.5 and led the squad with 16 quarterback hurries. He posted 43 tackles in all, including 4.5 sacks, and had a team-best three forced fumbles.

Henderson, who has signed a letter-of-intent to play for Angelo State, led Aledo with 58.5 tackles, including two for a loss and a sack. He also had two interceptions, two fumble recoveries, and six quarterback hurries.



BRELEIGH MAYER/THE COMMUNITY NEWS

Owen Henderson (0), Kamron Hall (23)



KRISTIN MORALES/MEMORABLE MOMENTS

Defensive end Cooper Cyphers (42)

SWIM

from page 8

"Surrounding the younger swimmers with those that have been there before can help to normalize the environment. They're there with the team they've been competing with for most of the season."

On the boys' side, all of the qualifiers are first-time state attendees. It's been two years since Aledo qualified a boys relay.

"But given their youth and the tremendous improvement they've shown this season, this certainly won't be their last trip," the coach said.

While Haley Roberson and Crews are in Austin for a fourth straight year, the Aledo program has been competing in some capacity for many years before. Coach Roberson said it's the culmination of not only a winning tradition, but one of hard work and determination throughout the entire Aledo sports program.

"It's less about the tradition of competing at state and more about the tradition of hard work throughout the season that allows us to be able to continue to represent Aledo at the state competition level," she said.

TRAINERS

from page 11

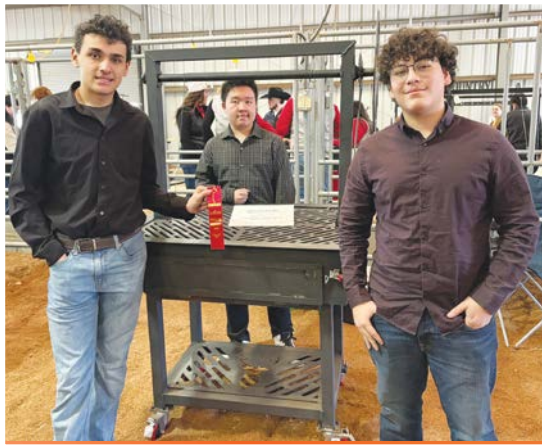
not often an organization can have two athletic trainers seamlessly care for roughly 200 athletes and cover over 200 home events without a hitch.

"The diversity in athletes we get to work with is also unmatched. On any given day I can encounter a volleyball player to a baseball player to a roughstock rider all of which are some of the best athletes in the state at their respective sport," she said. "Not to mention the rich history of successful athletic programs and great coaches that go along with it."

Then, she added with a smile, "National Athletic Training Month is March. I take my gifts in the form of coffee and Coyote wins."

Great Job

Aledo FFA students showcased their craftsmanship and dedication at the San Angelo Ag Mechanics Show



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