

Happy New Year!

Rains County Leader

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EMORY, TEXAS - THURSDAY, JANUARY 1, 2026

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2025 YEAR IN REVIEW

Rains County closes year marked by political upheaval, campus changes and controversy



Leader file photo by CHUCK FITTS

A town hall meeting to discuss the solar farm north of Point and other county-related topics was held in the Point City Hall council chamber in April.

By STAFF REPORTS

Rains County Leader

The year 2025 brought political upheaval, criminal allegations against public officials, school improvements and infrastructure changes across Rains County – and ended with Point City Council unable to conduct business after three members resigned.

The resignations in December left the Point council without a quorum, capping a year that began with new leadership across county offices and continued with shakeups in Emory, Point and at the county level.

Rains County Sheriff Michael Hopkins, Commissioner Jeremy Cook and Commissioner Korey Young were sworn in to new four-year terms at the start of the year.

In January, the city of Emory selected Tom Parsons as its new police chief. Parsons later resigned in September to return to the Forney ISD Police Department.

Point opened the year with the resignation of Councilwoman Courtney Frazier, who moved outside the city limits. The city also began work to repair the ground storage tank at its water plant.

County commissioners officially renamed the former *Rains County Leader* office the Hill Building. Purchased by the county in 2024, the building is expected to house the Rains County constable and the Rains County justice of

the peace.

On the courts and fields, the Rains Wildcats and Lady Cats basketball teams both reached the playoffs in 2025, but each was eliminated in the first round by ranked opponents. On January 28, Rains Lady Cat basketball coach Laura Jenkins celebrated her 250th win. Rains ISD also constructed four new tennis courts near the baseball field after the existing two courts fell into disrepair and could no longer support the district's growing program.

In February, the Emory City Council approved a contract for City Administrator Thad Chambers and began working with Hooten Real Estate to extend city services to a new subdivision on Airport Road.

Campus improvements continued into March as the Rains ISD school board approved replacement of playground equipment at Rains Intermediate School.

March also brought public safety concerns. Two high-speed chases moved through the area: one following a carjacking at a local grocery store that ended on State Highway 276 near Quinlan with two arrests, and another that began with an attempted traffic stop on State Highway 19 in Van Zandt County. That pursuit headed north and ended when the suspect wrecked in Delta County near Cooper.

In April, county leaders held town hall meetings in Point, Emory and East

Tawakoni to update residents on a solar farm being built on State Highway 69 North, the proposed special taxing district in Rains County, the status of county roads and bridges, and candidates in the May election.

Commissioners also began reviewing leases on county-owned properties, including Heritage Park, Rose Community Center and the Good Samaritan building. None had current contracts with the local organizations using them, and the court worked to draft new leases that complied with state law and protected all parties.

May opened with Founder's Day festivities at Sandy Creek Park in Emory, featuring pancakes, roasted chicken at the Emory Volunteer Fire Department, a festival and a concert headlined by Stoney LaRue.

After years of litigation, the Texas Education Agency released 2022-23 accountability ratings, with Rains ISD receiving a D. Ratings for 2023-24, released in June, showed improvement to a C, and the 2024-25 ratings in August elevated the district to a B.

Voters in May approved a new taxing district to allow Rains County to collect sales tax in unincorporated areas. The district ultimately was not established after the county failed to file the required paperwork with the state to define its taxing boundaries.

In school governance, voters elected Jim Mack Taylor to the Rains ISD

Board of Trustees to fill the seat of Philip Alexander, who did not seek re-election. The district honored Alexander's 28 years of service by renaming the board room in the Rains ISD Administration Building for him.

City elections saw Emory Mayor Trey Hill win another term. In East Tawakoni, voters elected Harold Chandler as mayor, and chose Ed Fortuna, Kenneth Reed, Teri Rose, John Disch and Chuck Moore for the city council.

The year also brought legal turmoil. A federal lawsuit was filed in district court against Rains County Justice of the Peace Jenkins Franklin over an October 2023 incident. The pending federal case prompted local charges against Franklin.

Franklin was arrested May 28 on two felony counts and two misdemeanor charges, two stemming from 2023 and two from February 2025. All four charges were dismissed by the court in December.

Point officials appointed Donna Jones in May to fill the unexpired Place 1 council term left vacant by Frazier's resignation. The council moved its regular meetings back to the second Tuesday of the month and wrestled with disagreements over city officials' job duties.

The Emory Volunteer Fire Department welcomed a new ladder truck in May, a \$1.5 million vehicle purchased

see **YEAR IN REVIEW** on page 2

SPOTLIGHT

Paulette Aguilar teaches Agricultural Science at Rains High School

By JUDY KRAMER

Rains County Leader contributor

Paulette Aguilar has been an Agricultural Science teacher and Future Farmers of America (FFA) Advisor at Rains High School for one-and-a-half years. She has a total of 13 years teaching experience including six years in the Gilmer ISD teaching Animal Science and Agribusiness, and in the Quitman ISD teaching Floral Design. She teaches Introduction to Agriculture and Animal Science at Rains ISD.

"I am also studying for an administrative degree, just in case I want to pursue it," said Aguilar. "But I really enjoy teaching. I have been fortunate in my years of teaching to have trained successful teams of wonderful students who advanced to State. (That is advancing to State in the Agricultural Proficiency Awards program, meaning they have demon-

strated exceptional skills and knowledge in their agricultural field.) I had multiple teams who went to state including one team that was a state champion farm business management team. I am trying to get another state team in Rains ISD."

Aguilar was driving to West Texas with a wool judging team while being interviewed by phone. This team went to Texas Tech University and San Angelo State University.

"I am part of a three-teacher team that travels a lot," said Aguilar. "We go to workshops, livestock shows, and during summers have been to a couple of competitions and service projects including a public speaking contest where our students were courtesy helpers working with hosts of the contest to move the competition along. They assisted teachers guiding students to rooms and did time keeping."

Aguilar is single, has two siblings

and is a proud aunt of a niece. She says that she is the product of Mineola where she graduated from high school in 2006. She was born in McAllen, Texas, but considers herself fortunate to have lived in the general Northeast Texas area since third grade (mid 1990s).

The general duties of an agricultural teacher in Rains County include lab sessions and practical demonstrations, supervised agricultural experience, student guidance and counseling on career paths and guiding them through FFA programs. Careers in agriculture are diverse and widespread and can be in agribusiness management, agricultural and natural resources communications, building construction management, agriscience, resource development and management, parks, recreations, and tourism services, packaging, horticulture, forestry, fisheries, wildlife and food science.



Paulette Aguilar (left)

City Girl:
What does
2026...

Page 3

Jody Dyer:
On Raising
Dogs...

page 3

Bartee Haile:
Layne put
on Cotton...

page 8

Rain Report

Wed., Dec. 17 0.07 in.

Total for Dec. 0.34 in.

Total for 2025 43.85 in.

Community outreach & organizations

ALCOHOLICS ANONYMOUS
Emory - Tues. & Thurs. 7:00-8:00 p.m., open meetings.

Emory Methodist Church Fellowship Hall. For info call 903-243-6766 or 903-439-7573

AL-ANON - Thurs., 7:00 p.m., Crossroads Al-anon Group, 103 N. Houston St., Edgewood, 903-896-7270

AMERICAN LEGION POST 156, Rabb Bro. Mem. Rains Co. - 4th Mon., 5:15 p.m., 215 N. Duffy St., Emory, 903-438-6045. Buffet breakfast - 2nd Saturday 7:00-10:00 a.m.

ARBALA DANCE - Mon., 7:00-9:30 p.m., Arbala Community Center

CELEBRATE RECOVERY - every Tuesday, 6:30 p.m. Emory Baptist Church

EAST TAWAKONI SENIOR CITIZEN GAME DAY - every Wednesday, 9:00 a.m., 255 Oakleaf Trail.

EMORY LIONS CLUB - 1st and 3rd Tuesdays, 12:00 p.m., Dos Charros in Emory. Call for information 903-473-2311

FOOD BANK AT FREEDOM CHURCH OF GOD - 3rd Fri., 10:00 a.m.-12:00 p.m., 10830 FM 514, Emory. 903-473-2457

FRIENDS OF RAINS COUNTY PUBLIC LIBRARY - 3rd Thurs., 1:00 p.m., Meadows Cultural Center, Rains Co. Public Library

LAKE COUNTRY NEIGHBORS - 1st Thurs., 11:30 a.m., www.lakecountryneighbors.com

LAKE FORK BAPTIST CHURCH FOOD PANTRY - 2nd Tues., 1-3 p.m. 9483 W. FM 515, Alba

LAKE FORK CHAPTER OF THE WELL ARMED WOMAN - first Thursday, 4-7 p.m. at Winnboro Gun Club, Winnboro TX. Sue Parrish 903-473-9819

LAKE FORK SPORTSMAN'S ASSOC. - 2nd Tues., 6:30 p.m. Jamie's Restaurant, Lake Fork Marina

GOVERNMENTAL AGENCIES

EAST TAWAKONI CITY COUNCIL
3rd Tues., 7:00 p.m., East Tawakoni City Hall

EMORY CITY COUNCIL
2nd Tues., 7:00 p.m., Emory City Hall

POINT CITY COUNCIL
2nd Tues., 6:45 p.m., Point City Hall

RAINS COUNTY APPRAISAL DISTRICT
3rd Thurs. of every month, Rains Tax Office at 12:00 p.m.

RAINS COUNTY COMMISSIONERS' COURT
2nd & 4th Thurs., 10:00 a.m., Rains County Courthouse

MARS HILL MASONIC LODGE
#1440 - 4th Thurs., 6:30 p.m., Lodge on Hwy. 69

PIECEMAKERS QUILT GUILD OF RAINS COUNTY - 3rd Mon., 7:00 p.m., AgriLife Extension and Conference Center

POINT LADIES CIVIC CLUB - 1st Thurs., 6:30 p.m., Point Community Center, 903-269-8446

RAINS AMATEUR RADIO ASSOCIATION
2nd Sat. of each month 9:00 a.m. Emory Volunteer Fire Dept.

RAINS GARDEN CLUB - 1st Mon., 11:00 a.m., House of Prayer Family Life Center, 1382 FM 515, Email TheRainsGardenClub@gmail.com

RAINS COUNTY HISTORICAL SOCIETY - 3rd Mon., 6:00 p.m., Jan., Mar., May, July, Sep., Nov., Emory City Hall.

RAINS COUNTY LIBRARY BOARD - 4th Mon., 5:30 p.m., Feb., Apr., June, Aug., Oct., Meadows Cultural Center, Rains County Public Library

RAINS COUNTY GOOD SAMARITANS - Food Pantry open 1:00-4:00 p.m. Mon. & Thurs.

RAINS COUNTY GENEALOGICAL SOCIETY - 3rd Sat., 1:00 p.m., Meadows Cultural Center, Rains County Public Library

RAINS COUNTY REPUBLICANS - July 31 & Oct. 30, 6:30 p.m., Roma Restaurant, 2450 FM 47

STITCH AND LEARN QUILTING CLUB - Thurs., 9:00 a.m.-noon, 903-598-3021, Miracle Faith Baptist Church

WOMEN'S SERVICE CLUB - 2nd Mon., 6:00 p.m., Rose Community Center

WOMEN IN NEED, INC. - A Battered Women's Shelter. Call 903-455-4612 or 903-454-HELP

NEWS BRIEFS

American Legion Breakfast Sat.,

Jan. 10

Rabb Brothers Memorial American Legion Post #156 will hold a breakfast buffet on Saturday, January 10, from 7:00-10:00 a.m. at the Post home at 215 N. Duffy St. in Emory. Takeouts are offered. Payment is by donation, which goes towards the upkeep of the home and for veterans' projects.

Rains County Republican Meeting

Rains County Republicans will hold their monthly meeting on Thursday, Janu-

ary 29, at 6:30 p.m., at Roma Restaurant, 2450 FM 47, Point.

Good Sam Clothes/Thrift Shop Sales

The Rains County Good Samaritan Clothes Shop will be open Monday-Thursday in the building behind the public library on Hwy. 69 in Emory. Hours for Mon.-Wed. are 8:00 a.m.-4:00 p.m., closed noon-1:00 p.m. Hours for Thursday are 8:00 a.m.-noon. Thrift sales will be open every Saturday in January from 8:00 a.m.-noon. Funds go to buy food for the needy and to operate the center.

THE PUBLIC FORUM

Dear Editor

I believe "Texans Anti-Nazi Warning Fell on Deaf Ears" of the November twentieth edition is inflammatory and untrue.

The sheer number of Ad Hominem attacks is astonishing. The columnist called the America First Committee "the standard assortment of kooks and crackpots" with their "head-in-the-sand" and a "love affair with the conqueror of the Atlantic." I intend to demonstrate that most Americans were in their senses and were not Nazi sympathizers.

When the columnist accused "most Americans" of "trying hard to ignore the disturbing developments on the distant continent" it must be remembered the Dust Bowl had ended only three years prior to WWII and the Great Depression ended the same year that WWII started. Many Americans were focused on feeding their families rather than bleeding to rescue the Europeans.

Until late 1941, there was simply no reason for Americans to go and rescue Europe from another war. More than 100,000 Americans died in WWI just two decades prior. America had no military alliance with the nations involved and most of the world was unaware of the horrors of the Holocaust. War is no light matter. More than sympathies are needed before condemning our young men to die far from home. Unlike WWI, we had

no Lusitania, no Zimmerman telegram and no reason to die.

According to the information available at that time, Germany was a lesser evil compared to Japanese barbarism or Soviet brutality. America had no commitments in Europe, but did have territory, servicemen, and civilians scattered across the Pacific islands. The ascent of the Japanese Empire was a major concern because they had committed terrible atrocities like the Rape of Nanking. In response, American oil was sanctioned away.

The threat of Americans being slain and ravaged by retaliating Japanese hordes became greater than the threat posed by the Germans, who by this point had no surface fleet to speak of.

It would have been illogical to send Americans to fight a European war when we were battling an economic crisis, had no direct threat from the Germans, had no knowledge of the Holocaust, and were increasingly concerned about Japanese aggressions. Of course, the war did go global when Japan attacked Pearl Harbor and the Axis declared war on America. Knowledge of the holocaust justifiably made the war more about good vs evil, rather than another border war, but none of this could have been known to Americans then.

Gavril Avramov

Point, Tx 75472

Join the trend with these New Year resolutions

After months of rising prices on everything from milk to mortgages, money-

related resolu-

tions are

prominent.

Here are the top three, according to 2025 research from Edward Jones and Morning Consult.

First is boosting your income. While side hustles, like tutoring or delivery driving, can help increase income, cutting expenses can keep more money in your pocket.

Next is building savings.

Millions of people are taking steps toward financial freedom. Make 2026 your year to do the same.

This content was provided by

Edward Jones for use by Brandon

Roberts, your Edward Jones financial

advisor at 903-473-1592.

TALK/TEXT CRASH
Tx DOT

EAST TAWAKONI

Council appoints board member, discusses Christmas tree

By CHUCK FITTS

Rains County Leader staff

approved the appointment, and the council unanimously approved a motion to appoint Philips to the board.

The council discussed upgrading the Christmas tree next to the East Tawakoni Library and Storm Shelter. After it was determined that the tree and its setup was the responsibility of the Spirit of East Tawakoni, the item was tabled.

Teri Rose was not present for the regular meeting.

The City Council for the City of East Tawakoni has scheduled its next meeting for Tuesday, January 20, at 7:00 p.m. in the council chambers of East Tawakoni City Hall.

YEAR IN REVIEW

Continued from page 1

by the Rains County Emergency Service District to replace the older truck. The department held a ceremonial "push-in" for the apparatus in December.

Also in May, the Emory City Council voted in a special meeting to dismiss City Administrator Thad Chambers. The council later appointed Leah Drown as interim city administrator in October.

Rains ISD closed the school year at the end of May with the graduation of 104 seniors, who collectively received more than \$1.3 million in scholarships.

June marked major changes in county leadership. Rains County Judge Linda Wallace and Rains County Tax Assessor-Collector Shelia Floyd both retired. Commissioners appointed Nicole York to complete Floyd's term and, in July, selected Brent Hilliard as the new county judge.

In Point, Mayor Dustin Briggs resigned in June, and Mayor Pro Tem Tammy Hooten led the city until the November elections. The Emory Baptist Church broke ground in June on a new Family Life Center on its grounds.

Wallace's name resurfaced in July when she was indicted on felony charges of tampering with a witness. The case, like Franklin's, was dismissed by the court in December.

Rains ISD students returned to class in August, preceded by a Back to School Fair and Meet the Teacher events across campuses.

On Aug. 2, a fire destroyed part of the manufacturing building at Kearney Trailers on State Highway 19. Fire departments from Emory, Point, East Tawakoni, Alba, Arbala, Hopkins County, Edgewood, Brinker and Como worked together to contain the blaze.

However, in December, council members Ray Lacy, Kimberley Berg and Donna Jones resigned suddenly from the council, leaving Point City Council without a quorum to conduct business.

As 2025 ended, Rains County faces the new year with fresh leadership in key posts, major legal cases closed, and unresolved questions in Point, as the city searches for a path forward.

Edward Jones

Member SIPC

Brandon R Roberts

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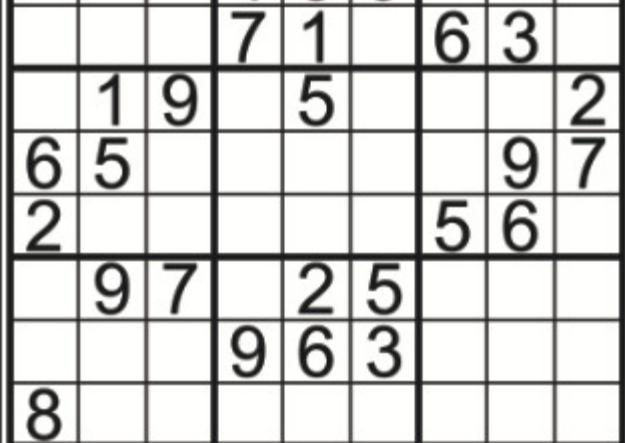
Emory, TX 75440

903-473-1592

> edwardjones.com

SUDOKU

The aim of Sudoku is to complete the entire grid using the numbers 1-9. Each number can only be used once in each row, once in each column, and once in each of the 3x3 boxes. Visit www.sudokuoftheday.com for further tips and help about how to play - and good luck!



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EDITOR/PUBLISHER

Earl Hill III

CITY GIRL

What does 2026 hold in store?

By Linda Brendle

This is the time of year when people who claim to be able to see into the future take the spotlight and tell us what we can expect in the next twelve months. You might think this is a new phenomenon, but foretelling has been around since s o m e o n e first decided the arrangement of his tea leaves or the position of the stars held a special message.

Other than biblical prophets who are in a completely different category, the reputed seer whose predictions have lasted the longest is probably Nostradamus. This French astrologer, apothecary, physician, and soothsayer lived from December 14, 1503 to July 2, 1566. He wrote a collection of poems that supposedly predict the future from the time of their writing until the year 3797.

His prediction for 2026 was that a "she-monster" would plague the world and, in fact, bring it to an end. His predictions are very vague, but some interpreters think the monster represents a virus or biological weapon that will set off the Apocalypse. Before you get too worried, keep in mind he predicted that the Death Devil would come to Earth in July of 1999. His arrival would lead to the extinction of humanity and would introduce a worldwide age of devils.

A more modern prophet was a blind Bulgarian mystic and healer commonly called Baba Vanga. She lived from October 3, 1911 to August 11, 1996 and claimed to have seen into the future. Her sayings were also vague and are a favorite source, especially this time of year, for social media gurus who want to create sensational predictions for the coming year. According to Sky HIS-

BETTER BUSINESS BUREAU

Tips for Holiday Returns and Exchanges

With so many shoppers making returns, it's important to remember that stores set their own rules when it comes to refunds and exchanges. Stores are not legally required to accept exchanges or give refunds unless the merchandise was defective or misrepresented. While most retailers do offer refund and exchange programs, policies vary greatly from one store to another. Be sure to double-check policies this holiday season, even if you are familiar with the brand, as stores can change their policies whenever they want.

The following tips should help to make your holiday returns run more smoothly.

Research retailers beforehand. Look up the business on BBB.org to check its rating, reviews, and complaints before purchasing, especially if you are unfamiliar with the retailer. This can help avoid issues with returns later.

Get to know store policies. Before you make a purchase, find out if the store has a return policy and, if so, how it works. Understand that many retailers change their policies for the holiday season. If the store allows returns or exchanges, find out if you need to pay a restocking fee. Ask the seller if they offer cash refunds, exchanges, or only store credit. Store policies are usually posted at the checkout counter or printed on the back of receipts.

Understand online store return policies. If you are

TORY, here are a few things to watch for in 2026:

The first prediction is the first close encounter between humans and extraterrestrials. This theory is backed by the July 1, 2025 sighting of a huge object that British Astronomers call 3I/ATLAS. Some say it is most likely the oldest comet ever seen while others claim it is a spacecraft, but whatever it is, it's supposedly heading toward Earth. I wouldn't worry too much, though. When first seen, it was over 524 million kilometers from Earth. Besides, we've been seeing extraterrestrial visitors in the grocery store tabloids for decades.

Another forecast is for catastrophic natural disasters with up to 8 percent of the planet's land area being battered by massive earthquakes, violent eruptions, and extreme weather. A Google search indicated that it's impossible to tell exactly how much of the world was affected by natural disasters in 2025, but it's hard to imagine that there will be any more than have already been captured on video and posted on YouTube TV.

Some Baba Vanga devotees say that, according to her sayings, 2026 will be a year of escalating global conflict. I am aware enough of current events to understand that international diplomacy is a tightrope over a chasm of worldwide warfare, but having been raised in the 1950s and 1960s, I'm not worried. We had safety drills in school, and I know that in case of incoming nuclear attack, all I have to do is get under my desk and I'll be safe. (If you don't understand this reference, ask your grandparents.)

Several believers think that Artificial Intelligence will reach a turning point in the New Year, dominating key sectors and causing job disruption as well as many ethical dilemmas. This is really nothing new either. When you go online now, you really can't tell whether the pictures you look at are

real or if they're AI generated. There is a lot of discussion in author groups about the ethics of using AI in our work, and when you look for information on the Internet, the first response you get is an AI overview. And when you click the customer service link on any company's website, you'll be exchanging messages with an AI device instead of chatting with a person.

Baba Vanga apparently predicted that the first four claims may cause a rough year ahead for the global economy. These financial effects can cause chaos in our lives by disrupting supply chains and markets. This shouldn't scare us, though. After all, we lived through the toilet paper shortage of 2020.

One prediction, the mining of energy on Venus, is actually scheduled for 2028, but the preliminary work needs to begin ASAP. Of course, we all know that, if they really want to get energy from space, all they have to do is ask Elon Musk.

There are more predictions, including some medical ones about the mass production of synthetic organs and a blood test for early detection of multiple types of cancers. You get the idea. Over the years Baba Vanga fans have claimed she predicted some major events such as the Chernobyl disaster and the 9/11 attacks, while detractors say the evidence is thin. The fact is, we all do best if we make necessary provision for the foreseeable future and then live our lives one day at a time. And remember what Solomon said in Ecclesiastes 1:9:

What has been is what will be, and what has been done is what will be done, and there is nothing new under the sun.

Happy New Year, and may God bless you all!

Linda Brendle writes a weekly column for Believers' Baptist Church. She is a published author and also writes about caregiving, faith, and family on her blog at <http://www.LifeAfterCaregiving.WordPress.com>. You can e-mail her at LindaBrendle@yahoo.com.

receipt. Returning gifts without a receipt can be tricky. Without a receipt, most retailers offer store credit or an exchange rather than a full refund to your original method of payment, especially if the item is marked down or on clearance.

Bring your ID. Many stores ask to see your ID when you return an item to avoid holiday return scams. Sometimes retailers require you to bring your ID and the original form of payment. If this is the policy of the store where your gift is from, you may need the assistance of the gift-giver in order to be reimbursed.

Get the details on a product's warranty. Most electronics and home appliances come with warranties that are to be fulfilled by the manufacturer, not the retailer. Find out how the store handles returns and repairs if an item stops working or needs replacement parts. Will the retailer ship the item to the manufacturer for you? Or will you need to deal with the manufacturer directly? Knowing the answers will leave you well-prepared for any future issues.

Use credit cards for extra protection. Paying with a credit card may offer additional protections for returns or disputes, especially if there is an issue with the product or the retailer.

Keep your receipt and packaging. Most stores will only accept returns and exchanges if you can present the item with its receipt and original packaging. Always include a gift receipt with items you give, and hold on to any gift receipts you receive.

Know the rules for returning gifts without a

receipt.

shopping online, search for the seller's return policy and read it through before clicking "buy." Find out if they accept returns or exchanges and who pays for the shipping when an item is returned. In some cases, you can save on shipping fees by returning an online purchase to the local brick-and-mortar store. See more of our tips for hassle-free returns for online purchases.

Make returns in a timely fashion. Almost all return policies are valid during a specific time period. Some stores modify their return period during the holidays, so don't risk missing your chance to make your return. Take the item back to the store without delay.

Watch out for return scams. Be on the lookout for fraudulent return policies or suspicious third-party return services that promise to handle the process for you.

For more information

Check out BBB's ultimate guide for a stress-free holiday by going to BBB's Holiday HQ To report or research a scam, go to BBB Scam-Tracker. For tips on how to donate safely, go to the BBB Wise Giving Alliance.

About BBB: BBB is a nonprofit, business-supported organization that sets and upholds high standards for fair and honest business behavior. Most BBB services to consumers are free of charge. BBB provides objective advice, free BBB Business Profiles on more than 5.3 million companies, 11,000 charity reviews, dispute resolution services, alerts and educational information on topics affecting marketplace trust. Visit bbb.org for more information. BBB Serving Central East Texas was founded in 1985 and serves 19 counties.

Keep to know store policies. Before you make a purchase, find out if the store has a return policy and, if so, how it works. Understand that many retailers change their policies for the holiday season. If the store allows returns or exchanges, find out if you need to pay a restocking fee. Ask the seller if they offer cash refunds, exchanges, or only store credit. Store policies are usually posted at the checkout counter or printed on the back of receipts.

Understand online store return policies. If you are

looking for more information, visit www.BBB.org.

Check out BBB's ultimate guide for a stress-free holiday by going to BBB's Holiday HQ To report or research a scam, go to BBB Scam-Tracker. For tips on how to donate safely, go to the BBB Wise Giving Alliance.

Know the rules for returning gifts without a receipt. Shopping online, search for the seller's return policy and read it through before clicking "buy." Find out if they accept returns or exchanges and who pays for the shipping when an item is returned. In some cases, you can save on shipping fees by returning an online purchase to the local brick-and-mortar store. See more of our tips for hassle-free returns for online purchases.

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For more information

Check out BBB's ultimate guide for a stress-free holiday by going to BBB's Holiday HQ To report or research a scam, go to BBB Scam-Tracker. For tips on how to donate safely, go to the BBB Wise Giving Alliance.

About BBB: BBB is a nonprofit, business-supported organization that sets and upholds high standards for fair and honest business behavior. Most BBB services to consumers are free of charge. BBB provides objective advice, free BBB Business Profiles on more than 5.3 million companies, 11,000 charity reviews, dispute resolution services, alerts and educational information on topics affecting marketplace trust. Visit bbb.org for more information. BBB Serving Central East Texas was founded in 1985 and serves 19 counties.

Keep to know store policies. Before you make a purchase, find out if the store has a return policy and, if so, how it works. Understand that many retailers change their policies for the holiday season. If the store allows returns or exchanges, find out if you need to pay a restocking fee. Ask the seller if they offer cash refunds, exchanges, or only store credit. Store policies are usually posted at the checkout counter or printed on the back of receipts.

Understand online store return policies. If you are

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Know the rules for returning gifts without a

receipt.

shopping online, search for the seller's return policy and read it through before clicking "buy." Find out if they accept returns or exchanges and who pays for the shipping when an item is returned. In some cases, you can save on shipping fees by returning an online purchase to the local brick-and-mortar store. See more of our tips for hassle-free returns for online purchases.

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Sheriff's Report

The Rains County Sheriff's Office took the following reports of activity during the weeks of December 15-28:

Arrests

12-18: Milton Frazier. Driving while license invalid (driving while license suspended) - with prior convictions, no bond listed.

12-19: Rodger Dale Gammons. Possession of controlled substance PG 1/1-B greater than or equal to 1 gr. less than 4 gr., non-prosecution.

12-21: Tristan William Follis. Driving while intoxicated, no bond listed.

12-23: Jake Earnest Bryant. Possession of a controlled substance PG 1/1-B less than 1 gr., \$25,000 bond.

12-26: Javen Deal. Manufacture and delivery of a controlled substance PG 2 or 2-A greater than or equal to 4 gr. less than 400 gr., \$375,000 bond.

Calls

12-15: CR 2572 Medical assist; Skyline Dr. 911 hang up call; CR 4510 Theft; CR 4525 Medical assist; Hwy. 19N Controlled burn; Hwy. 69W Medical assist; W North St. Fraud; Hwy. 69W Fire alarm; Hwy. 69W Investigation; CR 4410 Suspicious vehicle; Duffy St. Welfare concern; CR 3360 Suspicious vehicle; Hwy. 19N Grass fire; CR 3231 Grass fire; Hwy. 69 Debris in roadway; Hwy. 19 Medical assist; Harris Harbor Rd. Public assist; Wood St. Motorist Assist; Meadowview Ln. Problems with a juvenile; CR 3325 Medical assist; CR 1315 Medical assist; W Quitman St. Suspicious activity.

12-16: CR 1629 Disturbance; E Quitman St. Business alarm; Hwy. 19N Vehicle fire; CR 3345 Investigation; Ravine St. Extra patrol; CR 3430 Medical assist; CR 1308 Funeral escort; Hwy.

69E Livestock on roadway; CR 3411 Agency assist; FM 515 Intoxicated individual; Duffy St. Warrant service; Hwy. 276 Welfare concern; Skyline Dr. Courtesy transport; S Texas St. Sheriff's Office (SO) lobby Meet complainant; S Texas St. Criminal trespass; FM 515 Extra patrol.

12-17: S Dunbar Ln. Medical assist; CR 3030 Repossession; CR 1520 Medical assist; W Lennon Dr. Reckless driving; Hwy. 275 Paper service; E Lennon Dr. Business alarm; Hwy. 19N Accident; SO lobby Warrant service; E Hwy. 69 Controlled burn; CR 3335 Paper service; S Texas St. Vehicle in roadway; Pecan Dr. Medical assist; CR 513 Suspicious person; CR 3333 Paper service; E Lennon Dr. Business alarm; CR 4510 Problems with a juvenile; CR 3450 Welfare concern; N 1st St. Investigation; CR 2340 Welfare concern; FM 515 Suspicious person; CR 3150 Trespassing; CR 3450 Investigation; E Lennon Dr. Public assist.

12-18: Hwy. 19 Reckless driving arrest made; Industrial Blvd. Suspicious vehicle; CR 1402 Residence alarm; Quitman St. Public assist; Hwy. 69 Funeral escort; CR 3025 Meet complainant; FM 2795 Investigation; SO lobby Theft reported; FM 2795 Livestock on roadway; Hwy. 19N Accident; SO lobby Meet complainant; FM 2795 Investigation; Planters St. Medical assist; E Lennon Dr. Disturbance; E Lennon Dr. Fight in progress; 1st St. Accident; CR 1402 Accident; S FM 779 Meet complainant; Elaine St. Suspicious person; W North St. Agency assist; E Lennon Dr. Noise complaint.

12-19: FM 513 Suspicious person; Katherine St. Medical assist; Smith Cir. Suspicious person; CR 1325 Accident; CR 3380 Abandoned vehicle; W North St. Brush fire; Locust St. City ordinance violation; CR 2110 Residence alarm; Third St. Investigation; PR 7704 Theft; FM 515 Medical assist; CR 2610 Animal

welfare concern; SO lobby Meet complainant; W North St. Medical assist; E Lennon Dr. Reckless driving; Hwy. 276 Vehicle fire; Rayne St. City ordinance violation; Smith Cir. Suspicious vehicle; S FM 779 Controlled burn; W Quitman St. Assault; N FM 2946 Investigation; Hwy. 276 Theft; CR 3325 Medical assist; Missouri St. Noise complaint; FM 47 Animal at large.

12-20: W Lennon Dr. Extra patrol; FM 515 Extra patrol; FM 513 Medical assist; Brazel Bay Medical assist; CR 1535 Suspicious person; Hwy. 19S Reckless driving; S Dunbar Ln. Medical assist; Puckett Pass Public assist; Hwy. 69 Accident; PR 7703 Medical assist; FM 47 Meet complainant; Hwy. 69 Reckless driving; W Tawakoni Dr. Debris in roadway; FM 515 Livestock on roadway; E Lennon Dr. Public assist; FM 515 Intoxicated individual; Hwy. 69 Livestock on roadway; FM 515 Livestock on roadway; Hwy. 276 Vehicle fire; Rayne St. City ordinance violation; Smith Cir. Suspicious vehicle; S FM 779 Controlled burn; W Quitman St. Assault; N FM 2946 Investigation; Hwy. 276 Theft; CR 3325 Medical assist; Missouri St. Noise complaint; FM 47 Animal at large.

12-21: CR 3422 Medical assist; CR 3030 Welfare concern; S First St. Medical assist; Hwy. 19 Suspicious vehicle; S Texas St. Medical assist; CR 4254 Suspicious person; CR 2400 Welfare concern; Hwy. 276 Motorist Assist; CR 2400 Medical assist; Vanceville Dr. Vehicle fire; FM 514 Welfare concern; SO lobby Meet complainant; CR 1605 Medical assist; Ave. B Suspicious person; E Lennon Dr. Missing person; FM 515 Reckless driving; W North St. Traffic stop.

12-22: FM 47 Extra patrol; Egret Cir. Smoke

and Regulation. Online ticket sales were banned, as were courier services.

• A major public school funding bill was passed, pumping \$8.5 billion into raises for teachers and support staff and additional operational funding. Lawmakers also approved funding to strengthen flood warning systems, expand river and rainfall gauges, and speed updates to flood-risk mapping.

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• Warm, dry holiday weather elevates wildfire risk

investigation; Texas St. at N St. Debris in roadway; CR 1490 Medical assist; CR 2460 Damaged property; SO lobby Meet complainant; W Lennon Dr. Suspicious person; FM 515 Livestock on roadway; Hwy. 276 Medical assist; CR 2324 Public assist; CR 1423 Medical assist; FM 2324 Livestock on roadway; CR 1308 Follow up investigation; FM 515 Civil matter; Hwy. 69 Motorist Assist; FM 3274 Accident; E Lennon Dr. Reckless driving; Hwy. 276 Traffic stop resulted in arrest; E Lennon Dr. Reckless driving; CR 1530 Suspicious person; CR 2610 Medical assist.

12-23: Smith Cir. Suspicious activity; CR 2181 Medical assist; Hwy. 276 Business alarm; CR 1315 Criminal mischief; E Lennon Dr. Medical assist; Smith Cir. Trespassing; CR 1308 Street blocked; E Lennon Dr. Suspicious person; CR 2131 Medical assist; CR 1490 Medical assist; W North St. Harassment; CR 2450/2470 Suspicious vehicle - one subject arrested; CR 1605 Controlled burn; Hwy. 69 Controlled burn; W North St. Public service; FM 515 Livestock on roadway; FM 513 Medical assist; Agrilife Building Special assignment; Hwy. 19N Reckless driving; CR 3412 Medical assist; SO lobby Welfare concern; CR 4261 Public service; Hwy. 69 Reckless driving; CR 2430 Child custody; CR 1490 Medical assist.

12-24: CR 1503 Medical assist; FM 515 Extra patrol; N FM 2946 Extra patrol; Hwy. 69S Extra patrol; E Lennon Dr. Business alarm; CR 2430 Medical assist; CR 3325 Medical assist; N Texas St. Business alarm; FM 275 Livestock on roadway; Hwy. 276 Debris in roadway; N Texas St. Medical assist; CR 1530 Medical assist; CR 3325 Medical assist; FM 47N Accident; S 1st St. Medical assist; SO lobby Meet complainant; W Tawakoni Dr. Welfare concern; Quitman St. Follow up investigation; FM 514 Domestic disturbance; W North St. Public service; Clark St. Trespassing; Airport Rd. Medical assist; N Texas St. Accident; CR 1310 Shots fired; FM 515 Brush fire; FM 47 Meet complainant; FM 2737 Noise complaint; Hwy. 276 Residence alarm; FM 2946 Repossession.

12-25: Smith Cir. Suspicious activity; CR 2181 Medical assist; Hwy. 276 Business alarm; CR 1315 Criminal mischief; E Lennon Dr. Medical assist; Smith Cir. Trespassing; CR 1308 Street blocked; E Lennon Dr. Suspicious person; CR 2131 Medical assist; CR 1490 Medical assist.

12-26: CR 3412 Medical assist; FM 2324 Medical assist; Hwy. 19 Traffic stop resulted in arrest; FM 2737 Livestock on roadway; Skyline Dr. Medical assist; CR 1402 Meet complainant; FM 2946 Controlled burn; FM 2737 Accident; W Quitman St. Follow up investigation; FM 514 Domestic disturbance; W North St. Public service; Clark St. Trespassing; Airport Rd. Medical assist; N Texas St. Accident; CR 1310 Shots fired; FM 515 Brush fire; FM 47 Meet complainant; FM 2737 Noise complaint; Hwy. 276 Residence alarm; FM 2946 Repossession.

12-27: Laresa St. Suspicious activity; Ravine St. Medical assist; CR 3210 Suspicious activity; FM 2946 Medical assist; CR 2570 Medical assist; FM 2737 Disturbance; CR 1399 Public assist; CR 1219 Medical assist; CR 1402 911 hang up call; FM 47 Public service; CR 1525 Animal at large; FM 2795E Brush fire; FM 779S Brush fire; Hwy. 276 Welfare concern; W Quitman St. Public assist; 2-Mile Bridge Traffic stop; SO lobby Meet complainant; SO lobby Meet complainant; W Hwy. 69 Accident; W Hwy. 69 Agency assist; CR 3330 Noise complaint; 2-Mile Bridge Motorist Assist; W North St. Criminal trespass; E Lennon Dr. Accident; FM 2324 Fireworks; FM 275 Animal at large.

12-28: S Hwy. 69 Extra

patrol; E Lennon Dr. Business alarm; FM 515 Extra patrol; E Lennon Dr. Extra patrol; CR 4020 Agency assist; Quitman St. Extra patrol; CR 1399 Medical assist; CR 3391 Medical assist; Laresa St. Suspicious activity; FM 275 Livestock on roadway; CR 3325 Medical assist; Hwy. 19S Accident; SO lobby Meet complainant; FM 2737 Public service; FM 2795E Brush fire; FM 515 Reckless driving; FM 47 Criminal trespass; FM 515 Livestock on roadway; PR 5449 Public service; CR 1411 Vehicle fire; FM 276 Stranded boater; E Lennon Dr. Accident hit and run; CR 2300 Grass fire; Oak Leaf Tr. Medical assist; Skyline Dr. Medical assist.

The Sheriff's Department reported 610 calls for the two-week period. Among the calls were: 9 paper service, 1 criminal mischief, 3 criminal trespass, 1 damaged property, 4 debris in roadway, 5 disturbances, 1 domestic disturbance, 13 extra patrols, 5 brush fires, 4 vehicle fires, 1 fireworks, 10 follow up investigations, 2 harassments, 1 structure fire, 15 livestock on roadway, 60 medical calls, 19 meet complainant, 4 noise complaints, 5 grass fires, 4 problems with a juvenile, 45 public service, 13 reckless driving, 2 repossession, 1 shots fired, 2 investigations, 1 smoke investigation, 1 special assignment, 1 stranded boater, 1 street blocked, 7 suspicious activity, 11 suspicious persons, 8 suspicious vehicle, 1 vehicle in the roadway, 2 intoxicated individuals, 1 fraud, 2 funeral escorts, 1 terroristic threat, 194 traffic stops, 3 warrant service, 11 welfare concern, 3 trespassing, 10 accident, 6 controlled burn, 8 public assist, 1 911 hang up call, 1 accident hit & run, 2 agency assist, 4 alarm business, 1 residence alarm, 2 animal at large, 5 assist motorist, 1 child custody, 1 civil matter, and 4 thefts.

There were 251 traffic stops, 49 citations, 194 warnings, 60 medical calls and 43 transports.

STATE CAPITAL HIGHLIGHTS

Five big moves from the Texas Legislature in 2025

The Texas Legislature made a host of major decisions in 2025, as The Dallas Morning News reported.

Here are the highlights:

• Homeowners received a break on their property taxes after approving a proposed constitutional amendment in November. The homestead exemption was increased to \$140,000 from \$100,000.

• People 65 and older were given an additional \$60,000 exemption on top of that.

• A major public school funding bill was passed, pumping \$8.5 billion into raises for teachers and support staff and additional operational funding. Lawmakers also approved funding to strengthen flood warning systems, expand river and rainfall gauges, and speed updates to flood-risk mapping.

• The Texas Lottery Commission was abolished, with oversight moved to the Department of Licensing

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Texas A&M Forest Ser-

vice is warning that unseasonably dry and warm weather conditions are raising the risk of wildfire as the New Year approaches.

"We have seen above-normal grass production across large areas of Texas, especially near Abilene, Wichita Falls, Lubbock, Childress and Amarillo," said Luke Kanclerz of the forest service. "These grasses are now dormant and freeze-cured, which means they dry quickly and can support wildfire activity when wind speeds increase."

About 90 percent of wildfires in the state are caused by human activity, with debris burning and equipment use accounting for the majority. Before traveling, drivers are urged to inspect their vehicles to make sure tires are properly inflated and trailer safety chains are secure to prevent creating sparks that can cause wildfires.

A total of 103 Texas counties are currently under a burn ban. A list of counties under a burn ban can be found at <https://tfsweb.tamu.edu/>.

Judge blocks app store age verification law

A federal judge temporarily blocked a new state law that would require app stores to verify the ages of users and restrict use by those under 18, the San Antonio Express-News reported. U.S. District Judge Robert Pitman granted an injunction against the law, which was set to take effect Jan. 1, saying it likely violates free speech rights under the First Amendment.

"The act is akin to a law that would require every bookstore to verify the age of every customer at the door and, for minors, require parental consent before the child or teen could enter and again when they try to purchase a book," Pitman wrote.

Attorney General Ken Paxton said he would appeal the ruling.

The law would require app store users to be over 18 or to have parental consent before downloading or purchasing an app. Tech com-

panies such as Apple and Google objected, calling it a violation of privacy and saying it would affect all apps, including those dedicated to news, sports or weather.

Paxton's divorce files unsealed

After months of legal wrangling, the files in the divorce case of Angela and Ken Paxton have been released. The files show Angela Paxton contended the marriage has become "unbearable" in part because of his infidelity, the Houston Chronicle reported.

Several media companies sued to force the release of the files, contending the public had a right to know since both parties are public elected officials. Angela Paxton is a Republican state senator from McKinney. Ken Paxton is leaving his attorney general post in a bid to unseat incumbent U.S. Sen. John Cornyn in the March GOP primary.

The couple in mid-December agreed to make the files public just before a scheduled hearing on whether the records should remain sealed.

In her motion for divorce, Angela Paxton said the 38-year marriage had become unbearable and asked for a larger portion of their assets. Ken Paxton responded that his wife should "take nothing."

South Texas builders: ICE arrests upset industry

Immigration and Customs Enforcement agents have arrested more than 9,100 people in South Texas, The Texas Tribune reported, and builders say the arrests are slowing construction of new homes. The arrests account for nearly one-fifth of all ICE arrests in the entire state.

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12-25: Smith Cir. Warrant service; SO lobby Meet complainant; Hwy. 69W Motorist Assist; Hwy. 276 Medical assist; CR 1422 Medical assist; FM 2324 Public assist; CR 1423 Medical assist; FM 2324 Livestock on roadway; CR 1308 Follow up investigation; FM 515 Civil matter; Hwy. 69 Motorist Assist; FM 3274 Accident; E Lennon Dr. Reckless driving; Hwy. 276 Traffic stop resulted in arrest; E Lennon Dr. Reckless driving; CR 1530 Suspicious person; CR 2610 Medical assist.

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12-28

Believer's Baptist Church

By Linda Brendle

And I will raise up for myself a faithful priest, who shall do according to what is in my heart and in my mind. And I will build him a sure house, and he shall go in and out before my anointed forever.

1 Samuel 2:35

This week Pastor Jerod Haygood brought a message from II Samuel titled "God's Forever Priest." The Lord made Aaron and his descendants priests and said they would be priests before the Lord forever. However, when Eli and his two sons dishonored the priesthood through immorality and deceitful ways, the Lord said that He would remove the blessings from the household of Aaron because of this wickedness. But God had a plan all along that would bring about a greater sinless High Priest. This Priest is the Son of God incarnate, the Lord Jesus Christ, who was made a priest not by bloodline, but by divine oath. His priesthood is forever.

The new adult Sunday School classes

begin January 4:
Apologetics/Evangelism (Ages 18-35) –
Jason Rolen
Ephesians – Ken Bernhard
Genesis – Kyle Slaymaker / Lane Garland
Revelation – Duffey Henderson
January Schedule:
Scripture Reading Challenge – January 4
Regular Wednesday Night Schedule, including Adult Bible Study, resumes January 7
The Church Praying – January 11
Bible-n-Biscuits resumes January 13
Members' Meeting – January 25
Wednesday Morning Women's Bible Study resumes January 28

BBC and Emory Baptist Student Ministry Winter Retreat – January 17-19, \$85 per student. See Pastor Haygood for more information.

The Asking for a Friend Podcast Episode #238 is titled "Christmas Hymns." Find the link at www.bbcemory.org.

SAVVY SENIORS

How To Find a Quality Nursing Home for Your Loved One

residents with frequent visitors usually get better care.

Call your long-term care ombudsman:

This is a government official who investigates nursing home complaints and advocates for residents and their families. This person can tell you which nursing homes have had complaints or problems in the past and can help you locate a good facility. Visit LTCombudsman.org for local contact information.

Contact the nursing homes:

Once you've narrowed your search, call the nursing homes you're interested in to verify that they can facilitate your dad's needs. Also, find out if they have any vacancies, what they charge, and if they accept Medicaid.

Make a list:

During your nursing home visit, notice the cleanliness and smell of the facility. Is it homey and inviting? Does the staff seem responsive and kind to its residents? Additionally, be sure to taste the food, and talk to the residents and their family members, if available. It's also a good idea to visit several times at different times of the day and different days of the week to get a broader perspective.

And be sure to find out about their staff screening and training procedures, staff-to-patient ratio, and the staff turnover rate.

To help you rate your visit,

Medicare offers a helpful checklist of questions to ask at Medicare.gov/media/document/12130nursing-home-checklist508.pdf that you can print and take with

TEXAS PARKS AND WILDLIFE DEPARTMENT

Trails to Trout' brings fishing to Tyler's Nature Center

Celebrate the start of the new year by introducing a kid to the Texas winter tradition of rainbow trout fishing. The Texas Parks and Wildlife Department's (TPWD) "Trails to Trout" fishing days are scheduled for Jan. 4 and Jan. 10 at the Tyler Nature Center.

TPWD will stock 900 rainbow trout at the pond for kids and people of all ages to pursue from 9 a.m. to 2 p.m. Anglers only need to bring fishing equipment and bait. TPWD will be on hand to assist new anglers and provide limited fishing equipment for those who need it on a first-come, first-served basis. Trout bait will also be available for those who need it and ice will be provided for attendees that choose to

harvest their catch.

After a morning of fishing at the pond, folks can explore the rest of the Tyler Nature Center by taking a stroll on one or more outdoor hiking trails to complete the great outdoors experience.

Recommended Equipment: Bring a light-action rod and reel combination with small fishing hooks, light line (6 lb. test or less), small bobbers (optional), and small split shot. For bait, bring salmon eggs, whole kernel corn, marshmallows, small worms or prepared trout bait. Small rooster-tail spinners also work well. If you intend to keep trout, make sure to pack a stringer or small cooler.

TPWD plans to stock

you on your visit.

Paying for Care

With nursing home costs now averaging \$324 per day nationally for a semi-private room and nearly \$371 for a private room, paying for care is another area you may have questions about or need assistance with. Medicare only helps pay up to 100 days of rehabilitative nursing home care, which must occur after a hospital stay of at least three days.

Most nursing home residents pay for care from either personal savings, a long-term care insurance policy, or through Medicaid once their savings are depleted. Or, if your dad is a veteran, he may be able to get funds through the VA's Aid and Attendance benefit (see VA.gov/pension/aid-attendance-housebound).

To learn more about the payment options, ask the nursing home director. You can also get help from your State Health Insurance Assistance Program (SHIP), which provides free counseling on all Medicare and Medicaid issues. To find a local SHIP counselor visit SHIPHelp.org or call 877-839-2675.

And for more information, see Medicare's booklet "Your Guide to Choosing a Nursing Home" (product # 02174). You can view it online at Medicare.gov/Publications.

Send your senior questions to: Savvy Senior, P.O. Box 5443, Norman, OK 73070, or visit SavvySenior.org. Jim Miller is a contributor to the NBC Today show and author of "The Savvy Senior" book.

Emory Methodist Church

By Mary White

"Glory to God in the highest, and on earth peace to men on whom his favor rests."

Luke 2:14

Rev. David Banks continued his series "God Keeps His Word – The Promise Unfolds" with scripture text taken from Luke. The story continues and the Word goes forth.

We have lit the candles of hope, peace, joy, love and the Christ candle. The unknowing and the anticipation of Advent

has passed, and the light of Christmas invites us into the warm glow that God is with us. We look forward to 2026 and watch God's Mission unfold.

Birthday wishes go to Linda Northcutt and Roy Bryant. Anniversary wishes go to Kenneth and Betsy Neinast.

Pray for Rusty Hines, Gloria Shows, John Rice and Scarlet Vance.

Have a very happy New Year and as always it is better to be kind than right.

FISHING REPORT

The Texas Parks and Wildlife Department released the following information for Lake Fork and Lake Tawakoni taken on December 24:

Fork: Fair, normal stain; 51 degrees; 2.74 feet below pool. Water temperatures are 48-55 degrees. The morning bass bite is slow, with a better bite midday to evening. Chatterbaits and spinnerbaits are good around small creeks or ditches in 3-5 feet. Red square bill crankbaits are good in the same areas around big stumps. Flats are fair with lipless crankbaits and suspending jerkbaits. Jerkbaits work best around docks. Jig bite has slowed down, but should bounce back with warmer temperatures.

Lake Fork crappie fishing is finally in a wintertime

pattern. There are some fish on brush piles, tire reefs, lay downs and points in 18-25 feet of water. You can also find fish on bridges as fish move to deeper water. Tons of fish have moved into the deeper water areas following bait fish. You can find large schools of crappie congregating on timber along creek channels in 35-60 feet of water. These fish may only be 12-25 feet deep grouped up on tree tops or limbs. They will bite anything you put in front of them. We are having great success with hand tied jigs in all kinds of color combinations. Minnows will most certainly work as well as soft plastics of all shapes and sizes. The winter bite on Lake Fork is the best time of year to catch a limit of crappie quickly and even catch some giant crappie mixed in with the eater size fish. Report by Jacky Wiggins, Jacky Wiggins Guide Service.

Tawakoni: Good. Water lightly stained; 52 degrees; 1.65 feet below pool. Lake Tawakoni has settled into a healthy winter pattern and all species of fish are feeding! Water temperatures are sitting right at 52 degrees on the main lake. There is a big warm-up in the forecast, so water temperature could rise as high as 55 degrees on the main lake. The hybrid striped and white bass bite has been solid. Lots of big whites and some jumbo hybrids being caught on artificials in 30-50 feet. Best lures have been 4 inch swimbaits and 4 inch chartreuse flukes. The eating sized catfish bite has slowed some as it does every year when waters get into the lower 50s. Fishing under the cormorant roosts still are producing good numbers of quality eating sized fish 3-6 pounds. The trophy catfish bite is good for fish up to 55 pounds. Targeting fish in 20-35 feet has been the ticket on fresh cut gizzard shad. The crappie bite is steady. Fish have staged up in deeper more open water and finding the bigger schools of fish is important. Jigs are working best in 18-35 feet near bridge pilings and deep vertical timber. The largemouth bite is surprisingly good right now. Docks in 4-7 feet have been very good with Texas or Carolina rigged soft plastics, or slow rolled square bills crankbaits.

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Church Directory

Calvary Baptist Church

INDEPENDENT FUNDAMENTAL BAPTIST

11:00 a.m. Worship
6:00 p.m. Worship

Pastor: Jimmy Jarrett

Hwy 515 & 779

2-1/2 Miles East of Emory

903-269-8737

Daugherty Baptist Church

2 miles west of Hwy 19N on FM 514

Sunday School 10:00 a.m.

Morning Worship ... 11:00 a.m.

Evening Worship 6:00 p.m.

Pastor Joe Pierce

903-259-1147 & 903-259-0348

St. John the Evangelist Catholic Church

Rev. Michael Ledesma

551 East FM 2795

903-473-5116

Visit stjohnemory.org for Mass times.

From Brookshires, go east

1.2 miles. Turn right onto

FM 2795

County Line Baptist Church

Bro. Wayne Darty

Sunday School 9:45 a.m.

Morning Worship 11:00 a.m.

Sunday Evening 6:30 p.m.

Wednesday Night 7:00 p.m.

nursery available

HWY. 275, 3 miles south

of Miller Grove

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Pilgrims Rest Baptist Church

1140 FM 2964, Emory

Sunday School.....9:45 a.m.

Morning Worship..11:00 a.m.

Evening Worship....6:00 p.m.

"Reaching Out Because We Care"

Pastor Keith Prather

www.pilgrimsrestbaptistchurch.org

Point Church of Christ

Bible Classes 9:00 a.m.

Worship Service 10:00 a.m.

Evening Worship 6:00 p.m.

Wed. Eve. Service 7:00 p.m.

Everyone welcome!

Richard Kellam

www.pointchurchofchrist.org

FIRST BAPTIST CHURCH Point, TX

9:45 a.m. Sunday School

11:00 a.m. ... Morning Worship

6:00 p.m. Evening Worship

6:00 p.m. ... Wednesday Service

Pastor Dan Wynn

903-598-3220

www.fbcpoint.com

Come worship with us

Sundays - 10:45 am

Wednesdays - 7:00 pm

EMORY BAPTIST CHURCH

Dr. Richard D. Piles—Pastor
Chris Henderson—Minister of Music & Sr. Adults
Ronnie Witt—Minister of Youth & Education

Sunday
Sunday Morning
Small Groups 9:15am
Morning Worship 10:30am
Evening Worship 6:30 pm

Wednesday
Wed. Worship 6:30pm
(Adults, Youth, Children)
Choir Practice 6:30pm

Believers' Baptist Church

Sunday
Sunday School 9:15 a.m.
Morning Worship 10:30 a.m.

Wednesday
Adult Bible Study 6:30 p.m.
Student Ministry 6:30 p.m.

Dr. Jason Rolen — Pastor
Jerod Haygood — Student & Family Pastor
Duffey Henderson — Music & Media Minister

www.bbcemory.org

903-473-2653 to have your church placed in this directory

Pastor Rudy and CJ Bond

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5:00 P.M. TUESDAY

FOR SALE

SALES

The Rains County Good Samaritan Thrift/Clothes store will be open Saturdays in December from 8 am - noon. Clothes sale is open Mon.-Wed., 8 am-12 pm, and 1 pm-4 pm. Open 8 am - noon on Thurs.

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SERVICES

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ROHRAL REPAIR Welding, machining - all metals. Tractor repair & Equipment upgrades, mechanical, electrical, broken bolts, etc. Small jobs are welcome! 903-474-0899, 430-306-4165, Emory, TX.

MCKENZIE LAKE WORKS. Building boathouses and docks since 2001. Steel/metal bldgs., & home remodeling. www.mckenzielakeworks.com. 903-269-6173.

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TREE SERVICES

LEGACY TREE SERVICE. www.TheWilsonLegacy.com 903-455-1587. Insured, credit cards, appointments. We specialize in high risk removals. Trimming, Removals, Stumps.

HOOTEN'S LAWN & TREE SERVICE, LLC. Tree trimming/removal. Credit cards, insured. LI0019094. 903-473-8706, 903-474-4402.

PUBLIC/LEGAL NOTICE

LEGAL NOTICE

Application has been made with the Texas Alcoholic Beverage Commission for a Wine and Beer Retailer's Off-Premise Permit (BQ) by TMT DFW LLC, operating under the trade name BIG DADDY'S, to be located at 121 FM 513, East Tawakoni, Texas 75472, in Rains County. The sole managing member of the company is "Talat Mahmood".

PUBLIC NOTICE NOTICE TO ALL PERSONS BUYING PROPERTY IN THE VICINITY OF THE SHIRLEY WATER SUPPLY CORP.

Shirley Water Supply Corp. urges any prospective buyer to verify with the manager at the office, located on FM 1567, east of Hwy. 19, north of Emory, Tex., or south of Sulphur Springs, Tex., whether or not water is available at the tract of land in question.

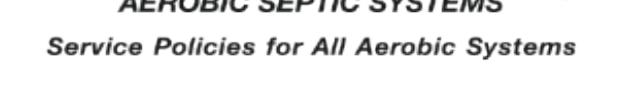
Shirley Water Supply Corp.
6684 FM 1567W
Sulphur Springs, Texas 75482

PUBLIC NOTICE

In accordance with Texas Local Government Code 212.134, Notice and Public Hearing Requirements, notification is hereby made that the East Tawakoni, TX Planning and Zoning committee held a public meeting on December 15, 2025 to review the request to rezone parcel located on the North side of State Highway 276 known as 2175 State Highway 276 East Tawakoni, Texas. This property is currently zoned residential and was reviewed for purpose of the change to commercial property and was given their approval recommendation. A public city council meeting will be held on January 20, 2026 at 7:00pm, East Tawakoni City Hall, 288 Briggs Blvd. East Tawakoni, TX 75472 to consider P&A recommendation and make a final decision, also to allow residents to voice concerns /questions.

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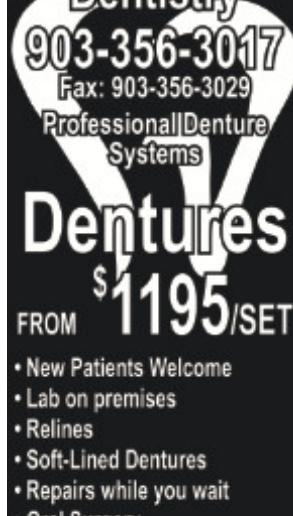
903-473-2225

Judy Moody - 214-536-3214

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LEGAL NOTICE:

This Texas Lottery scratch ticket game will close on January 17, 2026. You have until July 16, 2026, to redeem any tickets for this game: #2584 Bingo Times 20 (\$5) overall odds are 1 in 4.37. These Texas Lottery scratch ticket games will close on January 21, 2026. You have until July 20, 2026, to redeem any tickets for these games: #2634 \$30,000 Cash (\$2) overall odds are 1 in 4.29, #2563 Mega Loteria (\$10) overall odds are 1 in 3.54, #2621 \$1,000,000 Blitz (\$20) overall odds are 1 in 3.74. These Texas Lottery scratch ticket games will close on February 18, 2026. You have until August 17, 2026, to redeem any tickets for these games: #2639 Double Sided Dollars (\$5) overall odds are 1 in 4.35, #2582 \$250,000 50X Cashword (\$10) overall odds are 1 in 3.56, #2515 Loteria Supreme (\$100) overall odds are 1 in 3.23. Texaslottery.com is the official source for all pertinent game information. Game closing procedures may be initiated for documented business reasons. These games may have prizes unclaimed, including top prizes. In addition, game closing procedures will be initiated when all top prizes have been claimed. During closing, games may be sold even after all top prizes have been claimed. Must be 18 or older to purchase a ticket. PLAY RESPONSIBLY. For help with a gambling problem, nccpgambling.org. © 2026 Texas Department of Licensing and Regulation.



*Prices may vary with additional or different techniques used or individual needs of patients



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