

Rains County Leader

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EMORY, TEXAS - THURSDAY, JANUARY 8, 2026

PRICE 75¢

RAINS COUNTY

Candidate forum at courthouse on Monday

By **CHUCK FITTS**
Rains County Leader staff

The Rains County Candidate Forum will be held on Monday, January 12, at 6:00 p.m. in the courtroom of the Rains County Courthouse.

All candidates for the upcoming primaries are expected to attend to answer questions from attendees.

Primary elections are set for March 3 and will see several contested races on the Republican ballot.

The election for Rains County Judge has Brent Hilliard and Jay Ford vying for

the seat. Hilliard is the current Rains County Judge and was appointed by the commissioners court in July.

Two other seats on the Rains County Commissioners Court will have contested races in the primary.

Five candidates are campaigning to replace Commissioner Mike Willis in Precinct 2. Willis declined to run for another term, and the candidates looking to replace him are Bill McBride, John Hill, Pat O'Donnell, Eric Christian and Jim Jones.

Commissioner for Precinct 4 Lori Northcutt will face two challengers to

be re-elected to her seat on the court. Dustin Briggs and Dennis Wagner have filed to run for the seat in the primary election.

Two candidates, Tony Ingram and William Douglas, are running to replace Jenkins Franklin as Rains County Justice of the Peace.

Candidates running unopposed for positions include incumbent Laura Pate for District Clerk of Rains County, incumbent Mandy Sawyer for Rains County Clerk, Maria Cook for Rains County Treasurer and Nicole York for Rains County Tax Accessor/Collector.

State and federal level races for representation of Rains County include the redrawn 32nd Congressional District, U.S. Senator for Texas, and Texas House District 5.

The Republican primary has Ryan Binkley, Paul Bondar, Aimee Carrasco, Darrell Day, Gordon Heslop, Monty Montanez, Abteen Vaziri and Jace Yarbrough vying for the newly redrawn 32nd Congressional District. Democratic candidates for the seat are Anthony Bridges and Dan Barrios.

see **CANDIDATE** on page 2



Leader photo by CHUCK FITTS

Emory Volunteer Fire Department, Emory Police Department and Rains County Sheriff's Department responded to a car vs. tractor-trailer accident at the intersection of Hwy. 19 and Robinson Rd. on Monday afternoon, January 5. One person was transported to Sulphur Springs with unknown injuries. The accident is still under investigation.

POINT

City of Point seeks signatures for special election

By **CHUCK FITTS**
Rains County Leader staff

The City of Point is seeking signatures for a petition to call a special election to fill seats on the city council.

The petition to call the special election for May is located in the lobby of Point City Hall. To sign the petition, you must live inside the city limits of Point and be eligible to vote.

The signed petition is needed "as a result of 3 simultaneously occurring vacancies in the governing body of the City of Point, which occurred on December 19, 2025 at 12:00 a.m. as a result of the resignations of Donna Jones, Ray Lacy, and Kim Edwards."

By signing the petition, the citizens of Point are requesting the Rains County Judge to order a special election to fill the unexpired terms of Place 1, 2 and 4 on the council.

If so ordered, the special election would be held the first Saturday of May

see **POINT** on page 2

RAINS WILDCAT & LADY CAT BASKETBALL

Wildcats, Lady Cats return from holidays with district games

By **CHUCK FITTS**
Rains County Leader staff

The state ranked Rains Lady Cats came one game short of another tournament championship over the holidays, while they and the Rains Wildcats suffered District 12-3A losses in Winnsboro.

The Lady Cats used a big second quarter surge to pull away and beat the Lone Oak Lady Buffaloes, 79-42, at Rains High School on December 19.

Following the girls, the Wildcats ended their six game skid with a 68-31

victory over the Wolf City Wolves at home.

Over the holiday break, the varsity girls competed at the 16th Annual Tenaha ISD Holiday Hoops tournament on December 29-31.

The Lady Cats opened the tournament with a 74-25 win over the Timpson Lady Bears on December 29. Day two of the tournament saw them start with a win over the Brook Hill Lady Guards, 61-39.

Lady Cat Kenzy Thompson nailed a three-point shot at the buzzer against the Lipan Lady Indians to force over-

time. The varsity girls secured a 57-56 victory in the extra frame to advance to the championship game.

In the title game on December 31, the Lady Cats fell to the reigning Class 2A State Champion Martins Mill Lady Mustangs, 54-37.

The Wildcats traveled to North Hopkins ISD to compete at the Freeman Parish Tournament on December 29 and 30.

They started the tournament with a 80-55 loss to the LaPoynor Flyers before bouncing back to beat Saint Jo Panthers, 58-39.

On December 30, they suffered a one-point loss to the Bland Tigers, 37-36, and finished the tournament with a 43-37 loss to the Sam Rayburn Rebels.

The Lady Cats traveled to Paris on Friday, January 2, for a non-district game and beat the North Lamar Lady Panthers, 55-45.

On Tuesday, January 6, the Lady Cats and Wildcats returned to District 12-3A play as they traveled to Winnsboro to take on the Raiders.

The varsity girls were handed their

see **WILDCATS** on page 2

SPOTLIGHT

Megan Lawrence is a realtor and volunteer worker

By **JUDY KRAMER**
Rains County Leader contributor

Megan Lawrence grew up in Canton, graduating from high school in 2005 where she participated in power lifting and track, but she has lived in Emory since 2013. She is a full-time realtor working at Exit Realty in Canton and Alba and spends many hours of her free time volunteering with the Rains Educational Foundation and Rains County Angel Tree Board.

"I used to work in restaurants, waitressing and bartending, but for the past 10 years have been in real estate," said Lawrence. "There is quite a bit of realty inventory now and people are paying over market. Real estate was even good during COVID. The hardest part of the job is when

some sellers move out of state, and I cannot continue representing them because I am only licensed in Texas."

Lawrence is a voting board member and vice president of programs for the Rains Educational Foundation. She gets applications from school employees and then goes through them before distribution to the grant committee. Grants provide resources for programs that enrich teaching, inspire learning and maximize innovative opportunities for all students. She can also add volunteering for Rains Elementary PTO and serving as Treasurer for the Rains Youth Sports Association to her list of ways she has given back to the community.

Lawrence was honored in her realty career when she received the EXIT Realty Pro's "True Grit" award

for 2020 and 2021 and the "Esprit de corps" award for 2021.

Lawrence's husband, Kyle, is from Abilene but now works for L3 in Hunt County. He is a U.S. Marine veteran who served in Iraq, Iran and Afghanistan. The couple has a son, 15, and a daughter, 12, plus some cows, two dogs and barn cats. Their son, a freshman at Rains High School, is taking dual credit courses, and will graduate with an associate's degree. He is active in Future Farmers of America (FFA), basketball, baseball and track, and is on the high school fishing team. Their daughter is in sixth grade at Rains Junior High School, plays volleyball and basketball, and is in Junior FFA.

Family time is spent traveling, fishing, hunting, playing sports, board games and visiting with friends.



Megan Lawrence and family



AgriLife:
Stress is
Serious
Page 2

Jody Dyer:
Stand By Me...
page 3

City Girl:
Reading out
loud
Page 3

Rain Report

No rain reported this week.
Total for Jan. 0.00 in.
Year to date 0.00 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 Winnsboro Gun Club, Winnsboro TX. Sue Parrish 903-473-9819

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

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

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.

Point Ladies Civic Club Meeting Jan. 8

The Point Ladies Civic Club will meet on January 8, at 6:30 p.m., at the First Baptist Church in Point while the community center is undergoing improvements.

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 Candidate Forum Jan. 12

A Rains County Candiate Forum will be held on January 12, at 6:00 p.m., at the Rains County Courthouse, located at 167 E Quitman St., in Emory. Everyone is welcome to attend and ask questions.

Grief Share Sessions Begin Jan. 14

Are you grieving the death of someone close to you? Find comfort and encouragement at Grief Share on Wednesdays, Jan. 14 - April 8, from 2:00-4:00 p.m., at Wilson-Orwosky Funeral Home, 803 N. Texas Street, Emory. For more information, call Jordan or Renee at Wilson-Orwosky Funeral Home at 903-473-3545 or email wilsonorwosky@familyfh.com.

Rains County Republican Meeting

Rains County Republicans will hold their monthly meeting on Thursday, January 29, at 6:30 p.m., at Roma Restaurant, 2450 FM 47, Point.

New Year's financial resolutions: Making them stick

Millions of Americans set money-related resolutions each January, such as saving more or reducing debt.



BRANDON ROBERTS
Edward Jones
Financial Advisor

But too many resolutions fade quickly. A 2023 Forbes Health poll found that over half of people give up on their resolutions by April.

The issue isn't necessarily motivation. It could be execution.

Here are some things to consider.

Vague goals like "save more" often fail. Instead, set specific, measurable targets like, "Save \$100 a month."

You might also focus on just one or two priorities: building an emergency fund, increasing retirement plan contributions or paying down debt.

Then, track your progress regularly and break big goals into small steps. Each win builds momentum to reach the next goal.

Finally, find an accountability partner or work with a financial advisor to stay on track.

The new year offers a fresh start. With clear goals, a realistic plan and the support you need, 2026 could be the year your financial resolutions finally stick.

This content was provided by Edward Jones for use by Brandon Roberts, your Edward Jones financial advisor in Emory at 903-473-1592.

CANDIDATE

Continued from page 1

Incumbent Cole Hefner will seek re-election to Texas House District 5 with challengers in the Republican Primary from Dewey Collier and Steven Laxton. Hector Garza will run unopposed for the Democratic nomination to the seat.

Republican candidates for U.S. Senator of Texas are incumbent John Cornyn,

Anna Bender, Gulrez "Gus" Khan, John O. Adefope, Ken Paxton, Sara Canady, Virgil Bierschwale and Wesley Hunt. Ahmad Hassan, James Talarico and Jasmine Crockett are the candidates running in the Democratic Primary for U.S. Senate.

The candidate forum at the Rains County Courthouse is open to the public.

Visit us online:
rainscountyleader.com

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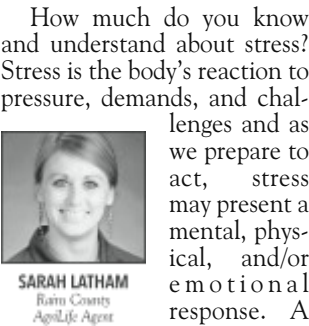
> edwardjones.com

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!

	5				4		3
			7		8	6	
	1			4	5		
			2				
4	6	8	1		3	2	9
				4			
		1		6		8	
	3	7			8		
5		6			7		

TEXAS A&M AGRILIFE EXTENSION SERVICES
Stress is Serious



SARAH LATHAM
Rains County
AgriLife Agent

by the American Psychological Association found 76 percent of respondents experienced at least one symptom of stress in the previous month.

Stress does not always stem from negative experiences. Positive life changes, such as starting a new job, planning a wedding, spending time with family over the holidays, or welcoming a new baby, can also be stressful. At other times, stress comes from more difficult situations like illness, heavy workloads, financial woes, or family conflict. Regardless of where your stress comes from it is not something to be overlooked.

There are three main kinds of stress: acute, episodic acute and chronic.

Acute stress. Acute stress is short-term stress that comes and goes quickly. It can be positive or negative. It is the feeling you get when you are riding on a rollercoaster or having a fight with your loved one. Everyone experiences acute stress from time to time.

Episodic acute stress. Episodic acute stress is when you experience acute stress on a regular basis. With this kind of stress, you never get the time you need to return to a calm, relaxed state. Episodic stress frequently affects people working in certain professions, like healthcare providers.

Chronic stress. Chronic stress is long-term stress, going on for weeks or months. You may experience chronic stress due to marriage troubles, issues at work or financial problems. It is important to find ways to manage chronic stress because it can lead to health issues.

When you are experiencing stress, your body releases cortisol and other stress hormones. While this response can be helpful in short bursts, ongoing or chronic stress can take a toll on both mental and physical health. Long term exposure to stress may

increase your risk for digestive issues and weight gain, anxiety and depression, headaches, sleep difficulties, memory and concentration problems, high blood pressure, heart disease and stroke.

Stress is something we all experience from time to time but if you are experiencing stress over an extended period, you might need to evaluate and make a few changes to help eliminate some of your stressors. Stress-reducing habits can be incorporated into your daily routine and small changes can make a big difference.

Stress may be reduced with even simple actions. Try taking a quick social break and send a message to a friend, even a simple "hello" can lift your mood. If it turns into a longer conversation, roll with it. Strong social connections are essential for emotional well-being.

Physical activity is always good for your mental and physical well-being, benefiting both your heart and your mind. Dance to your favorite song, go for a brisk walk, try hula-hooping, or sign up for that exercise class you have been curious about.

Getting enough rest can help you feel calmer, more focused, and more creative. Aim to power down earlier by turning off screens and winding down with a book or another relaxing activity. Most adults need about seven to nine hours of sleep each night.

Although breathing is automatic, mindful breathing can help activate your body's relaxation response. Get comfortable and take a normal breath. Slowly inhale through your nose, filling your chest and belly. Let your stomach expand. Gently exhale through your mouth or nose. Repeat several times.

Managing stress does not have to be complicated. With small, enjoyable steps, you can support your health and find moments of calm throughout your day.

If you have questions or concerns, please contact 903-473-4580 or email Sarah.Latham@ag.tamu.edu. To view upcoming events or additional information please visit <https://rains.agrilife.org/> or follow Rains County AgriLife on Facebook.

POINT

Continued from page 1

per Texas Election Code, which would be May 2. The City of Point would have to cover the cost of the special election.

If the judge orders the election by February 13, candidates for the seat would have until March 2 to file for the seats. The last day to register to vote in the May election would be April 2

and early voting would be from April 20 - 28.

For more information about signing the petition, contact the Point City Hall at 903-598-3269.

For questions concerning elections in Rains County, contact the Rains County Election office at 903-473-5009.

WILDCATS

Continued from page 1

first district loss as they were beat by the Lady Raiders, 44-33. The varsity boys opened district play with a 37-34 loss to the Raiders.

The Rains Lady Cats are 2-1 in District 12-3A and 21-4 for the season. In Class 3A polls, they are ranked eighth by Texas Association of Basketball Coaches (TABC) and sixth by the Texas Girls Coaches Association (TGCA).

The Rains Wildcats are 7-12 for the season and 0-1 in district.

The Wildcats and Lady Cats host the Commerce Tigers and Lady Tigers on Friday, January 9, in Talkington Gym at Rains High School.

They travel to Mount Vernon on Tuesday, January 13, to take on the Tigers and Lady Tigers in district action.

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Studies show that locales with local newspapers are less corrupt. Local papers report the ins and outs of the communities that they serve and function as a beacon of truth to their communities.

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The Rains County Leader

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J.H. Bradford - 1901-1904

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Kathleen Hill Becknell - 1962-1995
Earl Hill, Jr. - 1995-2019

Stand By Me - Remembering Boyhood

"A film is never really good unless the camera is an eye in the head of a poet."

Orson Welles

The life's work of some is more visible than others. You might build a solid business, grow a strong family, or cultivate a beautiful garden, and no one ever notices.

But make a good movie and all the world knows your name. So it was with Rob Reiner.

Recently we absorbed the tragic news of Rob Reiner's passing, along with his wife Michele. I find myself grieving. Circumstances surrounding their deaths are beyond horrific, and I am so, so very sorry. Though Reiner's political leanings were far from mine, I've always admired his work. Creative genius, even in its roughest forms, I believe reflects the glory of our Creator. Rob Reiner was a creative genius, and arguably one of the greatest movie makers of our time.

The son of famed comedy legend Carl Reiner, Rob Reiner came to prominence on the classic TV sitcom *All in the Family*. Reiner played Mike "Meathead" Stivic, the perfect foil to his Nixon-loving father-in-law Archie Bunker. For five seasons, *All in the Family* was the number one TV show in America.

Reiner came into his own, however, as a director, making movies. Known as an actor's director, his string of hits in the 1980s and early 1990s cemented his standing in Hollywood. These included *This is Spinal Tap* (1984), *The Sure Thing* (1985), *The Princess Bride* (1987), *When Harry Met Sally...* (1989), *Misery* (1990), and *A Few Good Men* (1992).

But, in my humble, if twisted opinion, Reiner's greatest work was his epic boyhood story, *Stand by Me* (1986). The movie is poetry on film. And yes, before the movie world was digitized, in 1986 *Stand by Me* was shot on 35mm film (Kodak's

Eastman 100T Color Negative Film 5247) using Panavision cameras.

The movie is based on Stephen King's 1982 novella *The Body*. Set in the fictional town of Castle Rock, Oregon, the movie has an amazing soundtrack, featuring songs from the 1950s and early 1960s from groups like *The Coasters*, *The Bobettes*, *The Del-Vikings* and more. Included is the iconic song that gives the film its title, *Stand by Me*, by Ben E. King. Reiner's unforgettable movie stars Wil Wheaton (as Gordie Lachance), the late River Phoenix (as Gordie's best friend Chris Chambers), with Corey Feldman and Jerry O'Connell (as friends Teddy Duchamp and Vern Tessio). The story centers around a journey to find the dead body of a missing boy, undertaken by the four friends over Labor Day weekend in 1959, as remembered through the eyes and words of Gordie.

An underlying theme in the movie is death. One of the most difficult things we are forced to do in life is process grief. As a boy, Gordie faces the trauma of losing his older brother Denny (played by John Cusack) in a Jeep accident. As an adult, the story begins with Gordie reading a newspaper article about the death of his childhood friend, Chris Chambers. Much of the movie is an extended flashback, with Gordie remembering and writing and grieving. It is interesting to note that Richard Dreyfuss, who portrays adult Gordie as a writer, was in real life a childhood friend of Rob Reiner.

This movie takes me back to my boyhood. I was Gordie, the same skinny, sensitive kid in a ballcap, destined to become a writer. My best friend at age twelve was Mike O'Rafferty, the spitting image of Chris Chambers. Mike and his brother Billy were my best boyhood companions. My first year in junior high, I met the best friend I've ever had in life, Danny Reed. I miss those guys.

In my youth, we were just like Gordie, Chris, Teddy, and Vern. We swore like sailors. It was a bad thing.



CITY GIRL

By Linda Brendle

I don't remember who read to me before I learned to read for myself - except for the man on the radio on



LINDA BRENDLE
Leader correspondent

Sunday mornings who read the comic section aloud. I hurried to get ready for Sunday School early so I could spread the newspaper on the floor and follow along. There were also radio programs for children on Saturday mornings, and sometimes they read newly published books. That's where I first heard *Horton Hears a Who*, and it's still a favorite of mine.

As I thought of my brother and I sitting on the floor together listening to disconnected voices painting word pictures for us, I wondered if it was just a pleasant memory or if reading aloud is really important. As is my habit, I went to Dr. Google and asked, and I received a resounding YES to my question. Just the initial AI Overview and one article gave me more than enough material - with my personal comments added ins - for a full column. Here are some of the highlights.

Hearing a story or lesson read out loud helps the listener understand that reading is a fluid continuation of words put together in a way that expresses much larger thoughts and ideas rather than a series of individual, disconnected words. It increases vocabulary and comprehension to the extent that listening is believed to be a necessary part of learning to read. This knowledge is needed as a basis of reading to learn in more advanced educational setting rather than just learning to read. If these theories are true, they validate the importance of reading aloud to your children and taking them to story time at the library and other such events. Adults can also develop and increase various cognitive skills through lis-

Reading out loud

tening activities such as lectures, educational audiobooks, and interactive podcasts that require focus. These skills include memory, mental visualization, problem solving, and logic to name a few.

Reading out loud to yourself has many benefits, too. It makes you pronounce unfamiliar words you might skim over when reading silently, and it familiarizes you with the sound of your own voice which can make you a more effective speaker. It helps you ignore distractions and focus more fully on the subject in front of you. I once knew a pastor who got up really early to pray, and in order to keep himself awake and focused, he walked and prayed aloud. I use the same technique in the final edit of my books. When reading silently, my mind has a tendency to read what I thought I wrote. But if I'm actually saying the words, I'm more likely to catch that missed word or that awkward phrase.

Listening to the vocal expression of story or text rather than reading it silently causes the listener to form pictures in their mind which makes the words more engrossing and significant. Reading becomes a positive experience instead of a stressful one, and relationships are formed and strengthened between the reader and the listener, especially if they are parent and child - or grandparent and grandchild. When my grandson Mattias was very little, he knew he could always get my attention with a book. On one visit his parents took all of us to an ice cream shop after dinner. Mattias immediately headed for the sandbox in the corner that was filled to the top with story books. I watch him for a few minutes before turning my attention to the adults in the group. I was enjoying the conversation and ice cream when I felt something on my feet. At first, I thought a dog or cat had sneaked in, and then a little blond head popped up between my knees. Mattias squirmed his way into my lap a plopped a book onto the table in front

of me. His dad started to make him get down so I could finish my treat, but I assured him that we would be just fine - and we were.

Aside from all this academic information, reading out loud is fun! How many times have you paused in reading a book or Facebook and turned to a spouse or a friend to share an interesting headline or a funny post. Early in our marriage, David and I read out loud to each other a lot at his mother's suggestion. When we met, we were both reading the *Left Behind* series. As each new book came out, there was always some discussion about who got the first read. On one of our visits to see his mother, I told her about our issue. She wisely suggested that we read the books together, taking turns reading aloud. It was great fun and a real newlywed bonding experience.

You may be wondering what brought on all this thought about reading aloud. It came from the Scripture Reading Challenge David and I took part in on Sunday. Believers' Baptist, our home church, puts a strong emphasis on the Bible. In planning for the coming year, our elders wanted to begin with the Word, so they asked for eighteen volunteers to take part in a continuous reading of the four Gospels in the New Testament. David and I each took a spot - he read Luke 17-21 and I read John 8-12. We weren't present for the entire eight-hour process, but we arrived about thirty minutes before David's time slot and stayed until the end.

It was a special experience and a memorable one. As I read those familiar words aloud, I couldn't help but think of John 1:1 - *In the beginning was the Word, and the Word was with God, and the Word was God*. Those are words worth reading aloud.

Sources:

- Google AI Overview
- 4 Reasons Why Reading Out Loud Is Actually Good for You, No Matter Your Age, by Melissa Gouty, November 10, 2020, <https://www.literaturelust.com/>

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VOTE

JIM JONES

PRECINCT 2

RAINS COUNTY COMMISSIONER

★ ★ ★

I HAVE DEDICATED MY LIFE TO PUBLIC SERVICE, AND MY HEART WILL ALWAYS BE ANCHORED IN SERVING OUR COMMUNITY.

IF I AM FORTUNATE ENOUGH TO EARN YOUR VOTE, I PLEDGE TO SERVE IN A WAY THAT HONORS GOD – GUIDED BY FAITH, INTEGRITY, AND TRANSPARENCY. I BELIEVE LEADERSHIP SHOULD BE ROOTED IN ACCOUNTABILITY, RESPECT, AND A GENUINE DESIRE TO DO WHAT IS RIGHT FOR THE PEOPLE WE SERVE.

I WOULD LOVE TO HEAR FROM YOU. YOUR THOUGHTS, QUESTIONS, AND CONCERNS MATTER TO ME. PLEASE FEEL FREE TO CALL, EMAIL, OR TEXT ANYTIME. AND IF YOU WOULD BE WILLING TO PLACE A CAMPAIGN SIGN IN YOUR YARD, I WOULD TRULY APPRECIATE YOUR SUPPORT.

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Your PIN does no good if it is written on or near the card it's meant to protect, so it's important to make sure you can remember the number.

A great way to do this is to create it from a word, then use the dial pad on your telephone to transfer the word into a number.

ACROSS

1 this Alan starred in TX-based film "The Big Land"

5 TXism: "____ piece" (long way)

6 Jacksonville AM

7 TX singer _____ Mae Morse

8 TXism: "you got two chances: _____ (not likely) _____"

16 XIT Ranch covered _____ Texas counties

17 Gov. Wilbert _____ was elected to the U.S. Senate in 1941

21 Texas "Cowpokes" creator Reid (init.)

22 barbed-wire Texas tycoon, John "____" Million Gates

23 submissive, obedient

24 21-across, e.g.

29 bundles of money

30 bullets and shells

31 initials of Texas blues artist, Stevie Ray, without the "R"

32 this woman was an famous gambler in early Texas (2 wds.)

34 Kingsville FM

35 notable Texas case: "____" vs. Wade"

36 TXism: "lower _____ scum"

37 TXism: "packed like sardines in _____"

38 TXism: "ole _____ and chain" (spouse)

39 hymn: "____ the Promises"

41 late Texas country singer, Charley

42 TXism: "sells like _____ at the State Fair"

43 small burger

44 UT has handwritten songs by this Paul

45 hockey legend, Bobby

46 large Texas families

47 car's _____ wheel

49 waterfowl found at Texas estuary, Laguna Madre

50 TXism: "the bigger they _____, the harder they fall"

51 this "Lurch" actor Cassidy was "discovered" in "Big D"

52 TX Perot's old co.

DOWN

1 "Caddo _____" near Karnack

2 TXism: "red and yellow, kill _____" (coral snake)

3 in Erath County on U.S. 377

4 TX Hagman's "I _____ of Jeannie"

9 in Parker County on FM 1187

10 Gulf shrimp catchers

11 agcy. that watches for drugs on the so. border

12 TXism: "close but _____ cigar"

13 "_____ out" (not like the rest of a group)

14 poet, TX Shihab Nye

15 name before Exton

18 TX Kenny's "The Gambler, Part _____"

19 "_____ Texas" (the Texas sun)

20 adjustable washing machine foot, e.g.

22 outlaw motorcycle club formed in Texas in 1966

24 nickname for retailer Abraham Lincoln Neiman

25 TXism: "_____ gul" (liquor)

26 not MWF classes at a Texas univ.

27 in Hill County on I-35

28 seat of San Patricio County

29 fast food restaurant was named for this daughter of its founder, Dave

30 "_____ impasse"

33 in Hidalgo County off U.S. 83

34 El Paso TV station

35 surprise attacks

37 sum of its parts

38 TXism: "_____ home the bacon"

40 Mexican name: "Rio Grande del _____"

41 Cowboy schemes: "game _____"

43 TX Chisum cut a _____ in cattle ears

46 religious beliefs

48 made a mistake in Dalkin Park

Solution at www.cbtx.com

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Sheriff's Report

The Rains County Sheriff's Office took the following reports of activity during the week of December 29-January 4:

Arrests

12-29: Johnathan Bernard Yancey. Possession of a controlled substance 1/1-B less than 1 gr., \$50,000 bond.



MICHAEL HOPKINS
Rains County Sheriff

1 2 - 3 0 : Ruth Hill. Possession of marijuana less than 2 oz., no bond listed.

12-31: Vondrea Willis. Traffic offense Class C, \$550 bond.

1-3: James Robert Smith. Parole violation warrant, no bond.

1-4: Jennifer Rena McClanahan. Possession of a controlled substance PG 1/1-B greater than or equal to 1 gr. less than 4 gr., no bond listed.

Calls

12-29: Laresa St. Suspicious activity; CR 1402 Medical assist; Laresa St. Suspicious activity; Sheriff's Office (SO) lobby Meet complainant; FM 2324 Medical assist; W North St. Harassment; FM 47 Assist motorist; Honeysuckle Ln. City ordinance violation; SO lobby Meet complainant; Puckett Pass Medical assist; Pierson Crossing Paper service; CR 3391 Medical assist; CR 2181 Medical assist; Hwy. 69 Theft; E Lennon Dr. Follow up investigation; Ravine St. Medical assist; Planters St. Business alarm; FM 513 Damaged property; Laresa St. Burglary in progress.

12-30: FM 47 Extra patrol; SO lobby Meet complainant; SO lobby Meet complainant; W Hwy. 69 Welfare concern; Hwy. 276 Theft; CR 3160 Controlled burn; CR 1490 Extra patrol; Hwy. 69N Livestock on roadway; Hwy. 19N Welfare concern; FM 513 Welfare concern; FM 513 Medical assist; E Lennon Dr. Follow up investigation; SO lobby

Meet complainant; FM 513 Warrant service; Hwy. 69 Assist motorist; SO lobby Meet complainant; Barn St. Theft; CR 3030 Follow up investigation; Hwy. 276 Repossession; SO lobby Public service; S Dunbar Ln. Medical assist; CR 3319 Suspicious activity; Hwy. 19 N Brush fire; Hwy. 276 Assist motorist; FM 47 Traffic stop resulted in arrest; SB Hwy. 19 Agency assist.

12-31: FM 515 Reckless driving; CR 2250 Livestock on roadway; CR 3319 Extra patrol; N Texas St. Medical assist; Hwy. 19 Reckless driving; Hwy. 19 Reckless driving; W North St. Public service; SO lobby Meet complainant; S First St. City ordinance violation; Blessed Way Animal at large; Hwy. 19 Medical assist; Hwy. 276 Welfare concern; Lennon Dr. Medical assist; W Lennon Dr. Reckless driving; CR 4261 Neighbor dispute; Lennon Dr. Reckless driving; Hwy. 69 Reckless driving; W North St. Public service; Romine Rd Controlled burn; Oak Leaf Tr. Medical assist; FM 514 Controlled burn; CR 1490 Suspicious activity; W North St. Public service; Egret Cir. Medical assist; Hwy. 276 Alarm panic; W North St. Agency assist; FM 47 Animal at large; W Hwy. 69 Welfare concern; CR 3319 Reckless driving; FM 515 Meet complainant; S Texas St. Assist motorist.

1-1: Ravine St. Noise complaint; FM 3274 Accident; CR 2080 Pedestrian stop; CR 1320 at Hwy. 276 Controlled burn; CR 1320 Controlled burn; CR 3425 Abandoned vehicle; CR 3425 Abandoned vehicle; FM 2946 Medical assist; CR 2420 Grass fire; CR 1280 Disturbance; CR 2245 Brush fire; S First St. Civil matter; CR 1301 Grass fire; CR 3330 Welfare concern; FM 515 Livestock on roadway; Briggs Blvd. Brush fire; Hwy. 19S Noise complaint; FM 779 Animal bite; FM 2324 Public service; Industrial Park Rd. Medical assist; W Quitman St. Follow up investigation; Locust St. Pedestrian stop;

FM 275 Medical assist; Oak Leaf Trail Controlled burn; Hwy. 19N Domestic disturbance; E Lennon Dr. Welfare concern.

1-2: CR 1623 Neighbor dispute; CR 1623 Noise complaint; W North St. Meet complainant; N FM 2946 Public service; Hwy. 69E Medical assist; 4460 Civil matter; CR 4320 Theft; SO lobby Meet complainant; FM 779 Follow up investigation; FM 47 Public service; E Lennon Dr. Vehicle fire; Braziel Bay Follow-up investigation; CR 3410 Grass fire; W Lennon Dr. Grass fire; E Lennon Dr. Follow-up investigation; Geronimo Ln. Medical assist; Duffy St. Medical assist; Hwy. 19N Assist motorist; SO lobby Welfare concern; Hwy. 276 Suicidal subject; FM 515 Civil matter.

1-3: E Lennon Dr. Business alarm; CR 2250 Medical assist; CR 3430 Medical assist; Hwy. 69S Reckless driving; N Hwy. 19 Medical assist; CR 4460 Release property; FM 515 Panic alarm; N Texas St. Medical assist; CR 1280 Welfare concern; CR 3418/FM 514 Abandoned vehicle; E Lennon Dr. Follow-up investigation; CR 4320 Animal welfare concern; FM 2737 Medical assist; CR 3446 Medical assist; PR 7706 Domestic disturbance; FM 47 Public service; E Lennon Dr. Meet complainant; Hwy. 19 Controlled burn; FM 515 Public service; Hwy. 19N Medical assist; Hwy. 19 Controlled burn; FM 779 Accident; Hwy. 19 Public service; Elm Ln. Medical assist; Littlefield Dr. Medical assist; W North St. Public service; 1st St. Medical assist.

1-4: Hwy. 276 Livestock on the roadway; SO lobby Meet complainant; West Side Dr. Point Meet complainant; FM 47 Extra patrol; CR 1278 Medical assist; E Lennon Dr. Open door; FM 47 Panic alarm; CR 4480 Public service; Katherine St. Welfare concern; Laresa St. Meet complainant; Clark Dr. Brush fire; Harris Harbor Rd. Welfare concern; PR 7716 Tres-

passing; FM 515 Public service; Hwy. 19N Reckless driving; Honeysuckle Ln. Fraud; Hwy. 19S Reckless driving; Industrial Blvd. Warrant service; FM 515 Extra patrol; Wood St. Disorderly conduct.

The Sheriff's Department reported 295 calls for the week. Among the calls were: 1 paper service, 1 damaged property, 1 disorderly conduct, 1 disturbance, 2 domestic disturbances, 5

extra patrols, 4 brush fires, 1 vehicle fire, 1 fireworks, 8 follow up investigations, 1 fraud, 1 harassment, 4 livestock on roadway, 30 medical calls, 14 meet complainant, 2 neighbor disputes, 3 noise complaints, 1 open door, 4 grass fires, 14 public service, 10 reckless driving, 1 repossession, 1 suicidal subject, 4 suspicious activity, 4 thefts, 2 warrant service, 11 welfare concerns, 2 accidents, 8 controlled burns, 3 pedestrian stops, 3

abandoned vehicles, 2 agency assists, 2 business alarms, 3 panic alarms, 2 animals at large, 1 release property, 1 animal bite, 1 animal welfare concern, 5 assist motorist, 1 burglary in progress, 2 city ordinance violations, and 3 civil matters.

There were 124 traffic stops, 28 citations, 97 warnings, 30 medical calls and 21 transports.

STATE CAPITAL HIGHLIGHTS

New laws taking effect in New Year

A spate of new laws took effect on Jan. 1, The Dallas Morning News reported. Here's a brief summary of the



GARY BORDERS
Texas Press Association

most notable new laws now in force:

- County sheriff's offices are now required to cooperate with U.S. Immigration and Customs Enforcement after the passage of Senate Bill 8. Local jail staff are now authorized to verify the immigration status of inmates and to honor certain federal immigration warrants. A grant program was created by the state to help sheriffs cover training and implementation costs related to the new law.

- Eviction proceedings involving unauthorized occupants must be held in court from 10 to 21 days of filing. Also, the new law limits legal delays occupants may take to avoid eviction.

- With the rapid expansion of artificial intelligence systems into many aspects of daily lives, House Bill 149 established a statewide framework for regulating AI and providing transparency. Companies using AI must notify people when they are interacting with an AI system. The law also created a state advisory group to oversee the implementation of oversight and compliance. Penalties can be assessed for

violations of the new requirements.

- The business inventory tax exemption has been raised to \$125,000, cutting property taxes for small businesses that maintain stock. The previous exemption was \$2,500.

Texas small businesses optimistic about 2026

Most Texas small-business owners are optimistic about 2026 and expect their businesses to grow, according to a survey conducted by Comerica Bank of roughly 1,000 small-business owners, the Houston Chronicle reported. Nearly 80 percent expect sales growth this year, and about 70 percent plan to make capital investments, the survey indicated.

"While the headlines about the economy can be disconcerting, small business owners are telling us that they see much brighter prospects for the part of the economy that touches their business directly," said Comerica Bank chief economist Bill Adams. "That's an encouraging sign that the underlying trend for small business is still solid."

Despite the uncertainty surrounding the impact of tariffs and a slowing of growth in the national economy, Adams said the recent interest rate cut by the Federal Reserve and lower effective tax rates for businesses under the major financial bill passed last summer are encouraging to

small-business owners.

The state's gross domestic product grew at an annual rate of 6.8 percent in the second quarter of 2025, compared to 3.8 percent nationally.

Texas to get \$281 million in federal funds for rural health care

Texas will receive the largest portion of the first rollout of the \$50 billion allocated under the Rural Transformation Program, The Texas Tribune reported. The state will receive \$281 million under the One Big Beautiful Bill Act, which also slashed Medicaid funding by an estimated \$1 trillion.

While Texas is receiving the most funds, when its population rank is calculated that amount comes to about \$60 per rural resident — the lowest rate in the nation. The funds come as the state's rural hospitals and clinics face budget shortfalls and rising costs. Fourteen rural hospitals in Texas closed in the last decade, according to a report from the Center for Healthcare Quality. Over half of the 82 remaining facilities are at risk of closing.

The funding will be used to strengthen rural health care clinics by educating and attracting health care professionals to work in rural areas, as well as modernizing resources and technology.



Your County, Your Voice: Meet with Judge Brent Hilliard!

Rains County Neighbors: Let's Build a Better Tomorrow!

As part of the Brent D. Hilliard Campaign for County Judge, I'm hosting four informal meetings to listen to you, learn from your ideas, and discuss the direction you want for our county. Discuss fixing roads, enhancing public safety, and keeping taxes low—without the bureaucracy. Plus, get free yard signs, campaign materials, and a chance to share feedback directly.



MEETING SCHEDULE

- **January 19, 2026: 6-7:30 PM at Rose Community Center, 239 E Quitman St, Emory, TX**
- **January 26, 2026: 6-7:30 PM at Rose Community Center, 239 E Quitman St, Emory, TX**
- **February 2, 2026: 6-7:30 PM at Rose Community Center, 239 E Quitman St, Emory, TX**
- **February 9, 2026: 6-7:30 PM at East Tawakoni City Hall, 288 Briggs Blvd, East Tawakoni, TX**

RSVP Today: Scan the QR code below to confirm attendance. This ensures we have enough food, drinks, and space for everyone!

Coffee and Cookies On Us – Your Ideas Are Priceless!

For details or questions, contact the campaign at 903-913-6003, brent.hilliard@ElectBrentHilliard.com



★★★★★ REPUBLICAN ★★★★★★
BRENT
HILLIARD
FOR RAINS COUNTY JUDGE

KEEP THE FRESH START GOING

Disclaimer: These meetings are hosted by the Brent D. Hilliard Campaign for County Judge and are not official functions of Rains County or conducted in my capacity as the current County Judge. They are paid for by the campaign to listen to taxpayers, learn from your feedback, and meet the folks we work for. Political advertising paid for by Brent D. Hilliard Campaign, Elisa Allen, Treasurer.

SAVVY SENIORS

How To Find a Quality Nursing Home for Your Loved One

Dear Savvy Senior,
Can you give me some tips on picking a good nursing home for my father? Since his stroke, I've been taking care of him at home, but he's gotten to the point where it's too much for me to handle.



JIM MILLER
Savvy Senior

Exhausted Daughter

Dear Exhausted,
Choosing a nursing home for a loved one that provides quality is a very important decision that requires careful evaluation and some homework. Here are some steps you can take that can help you find a good facility and avoid a bad one.

Make a list: There are several sources you can turn to for referrals to top nursing homes in your area including the Area Agency on Aging (call 800-677-1116 or visit Eldercare.acl.gov for contact information); your dad's doctor or nearby hospital discharge planner; friends or neighbors who may have had a loved one in a nursing home; and online at Medicare's nursing home compare tool at Medicare.gov/care-compare. This tool will not only help you locate nursing homes in your area, but it also provides a 5-star rating system on recent health inspections, staffing, quality of care, and overall rating.

Also, keep in mind that it's always best to choose a nursing home that's close to family members and friends who can visit often, because 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 LTCombudsmen.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.

Tour your top choices: 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 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-house-bound).

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.



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LEGAL NOTICE

TEXAS COMMISSION ON ENVIRONMENTAL QUALITY



NOTICE OF RECEIPT OF APPLICATION AND INTENT TO OBTAIN WATER QUALITY PERMIT

PERMIT NO. WQ0014736001

APPLICATION. Mhc Tt, L.P., 2 North Riverside Plaza, Suite 800, Chicago, Illinois 60606, has applied to the Texas Commission on Environmental Quality (TCEQ) to renew Texas Pollutant Discharge Elimination System (TPDES) Permit No. WQ0014736001 (EPA I.D. No. TX0097675) to authorize the discharge of treated wastewater at a volume not to exceed a daily average flow of 40,000 gallons per day. The domestic wastewater treatment facility is located at 1246 Rains County Road 1470, in Rains County, Texas 75472. The discharge route is from the plant site to an unnamed tributary, thence to Lake Tawakoni. TCEQ received this application on November 19, 2025. The permit application will be available for viewing and copying at Rains County Public Library, Public Notice Section, 150 Doris Briggs Parkway, Emory, in Rains County, Texas prior to the date this notice is published in the newspaper. The application and associated notices are available electronically at the following webpage: <https://www.tceq.texas.gov/permitting/wastewater/pending-permits/tpdes-applications>. This link to an electronic map of the site or facility's general location is provided as a public courtesy and not part of the application or notice. For the exact location, refer to the application. <https://gisweb.tceq.texas.gov/LocationMapper/?marker=-95.903888,32.873611&level=18>

ALTERNATIVE LANGUAGE NOTICE. Alternative language notice in Spanish is available at: <https://www.tceq.texas.gov/permitting/wastewater/pending-permits/tpdes-applications>. El aviso de idioma alternativo en español está disponible en <https://www.tceq.texas.gov/permitting/wastewater/pending-permits/tpdes-applications>.

ADDITIONAL NOTICE. TCEQ's Executive Director has determined the application is administratively complete and will conduct a technical review of the application. After technical review of the application is complete, the Executive Director may prepare a draft permit and will issue a preliminary decision on the application. **Notice of the Application and Preliminary Decision will be published and mailed to those who are on the county- wide mailing list and to those who are on the mailing list for this application. That notice will contain the deadline for submitting public comments.**

PUBLIC COMMENT / PUBLIC MEETING. You may submit public comments or request a public meeting on this application. The purpose of a public meeting is to provide the opportunity to submit comments or to ask questions about the application. TCEQ will hold a public meeting if the Executive Director determines that there is a significant degree of public interest in the application or if requested by a local legislator. A public meeting is not a contested case hearing.

OPPORTUNITY FOR A CONTESTED CASE HEARING. After the deadline for submitting public comments, the Executive Director will consider all timely comments and prepare a response to all relevant and material, or significant public comments. **Unless the application is directly referred for a contested case hearing, the response to comments, and the Executive Director's decision on the application, will be mailed to everyone who submitted public comments and to those persons who are on the mailing list for this application. If comments are received, the mailing will also provide instructions for requesting reconsideration of the Executive Director's decision and for requesting a contested case hearing.** A contested case hearing is a legal proceeding similar to a civil trial in state district court.

TO REQUEST A CONTESTED CASE HEARING, YOU MUST INCLUDE THE FOLLOWING ITEMS IN YOUR REQUEST: your name, address, phone number; applicant's name and proposed permit number; the location and distance of your property/ activities relative to the proposed facility; a specific description of how you would be adversely affected by the facility in a way not common to the general public; a list of all disputed issues of fact that you submit during the comment period and, the statement "[I/we] request a contested case hearing." If the request for contested case hearing is filed on behalf of a group or association, the request must designate the group's representative for receiving future correspondence; identify by name and physical address an individual member of the group who would be adversely affected by the proposed facility or activity; provide the information discussed above regarding the affected member's location and distance from the facility or activity; explain how and why the member would be affected; and explain how the interests the group seeks to protect are relevant to the group's purpose.

Following the close of all applicable comment and request periods, the Executive Director will forward the application and any requests for reconsideration or for a contested case hearing to the TCEQ Commissioners for their consideration at a scheduled Commission meeting.

The Commission may only grant a request for a contested case hearing on issues the requestor submitted in their timely comments that were not subsequently withdrawn. **If a hearing is granted, the subject of a hearing will be limited to disputed issues of fact or mixed questions of fact and law relating to relevant and material water quality concerns submitted during the comment period.**

TCEQ may act on an application to renew a permit for discharge of wastewater without providing an opportunity for a contested case hearing if certain criteria are met

MAILING LIST. If you submit public comments, a request for a contested case hearing or a reconsideration of the Executive Director's decision, you will be added to the mailing list for this specific application to receive future public notices mailed by the Office of the Chief Clerk. In addition, you may request to be placed on: (1) the permanent mailing list for a specific applicant name and permit number; and/or (2) the mailing list for a specific county. If you wish to be placed on the permanent and/or the county mailing list, clearly specify which list(s) and send your request to TCEQ Office of the Chief Clerk at the address below.

INFORMATION AVAILABLE ONLINE. For details about the status of the application, visit the Commissioners' Integrated Database at www.tceq.texas.gov/goto/cid. Search the database using the permit number for this application, which is provided at the top of this notice.

AGENCY CONTACTS AND INFORMATION. All public comments and requests must be submitted either electronically at <https://www14.tceq.texas.gov/epic/eComment/>, or in writing to the Texas Commission on Environmental Quality, Office of the Chief Clerk, MC-105, P.O. Box 13087, Austin, Texas 78711-3087. Please be aware that any contact information you provide, including your name, phone number, email address and physical address will become part of the agency's public record. For more information about this permit application or the permitting process, please call the TCEQ Public Education Program, Toll Free, at 1-800-687-4040 or visit their website at www.tceq.texas.gov/goto/pep. Si desea información en Español, puede llamar al 1-800-687-4040.

Further information may also be obtained from Mhc Tt, L.P. at the address stated above or by calling Mr. Damon Brown, Operations Manager, at 936-718-1100.

Issuance Date: December 17, 2025

Believer’s Baptist Church

By Linda Brendle

In the meantime...he began to say to his disciples first, “Beware of the leaven of the Pharisees, which is hypocrisy.”

Luke 12:1

For the first Sunday of 2026, Pastor Jason Rolén returned to The Incomparable Christ Series with a sermon titled “Unafraid and Unashamed.” Why do people accuse Christians of being hypocrites. Because they see inconsistencies in our lives just like theirs. We don’t claim to be perfect, but sometimes we act that way. Hypocrisy is the thing Jesus spoke against the most.

New adult Sunday School classes began on Sunday. Contact the church office for a list of subjects and teachers.

In keeping with the BBC emphasis on

God’s Word, we began the year with a Scripture Reading Challenge. Beginning at 1:00 p.m. on Sunday and continuing until 9:00 p.m., eighteen volunteers read consecutively through the four Gospels of the New Testament.

Coming Events:

- The Church Praying – January 11
- Bible-n-Biscuits resumes January 13
- Sanctity of Human Life – January 18
- 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 Jerod Haygood for more information.

Emory Baptist Church

By Ronnie Witt

“And shall God not avenge His own elect who cry out day and night to Him, though He bears long with them?”

Luke 18:7

Happy New Year! It was a wonderful day of worship at Emory Baptist on Sunday morning. Bro. Richard Piles shared a message from the book of Luke titled, “Do You Nag God?” Jesus told a parable comparing a desperate widow who continually pleaded her case to a judge with the Christian’s need to continually carry our concerns to God in prayer. God is not an unjust judge, but Jesus encouraged his followers to continually go to God in prayer for our needs, but in this sense, the nagging is encouraged! On Sunday night, Bro. Richard shared a message from II Samuel titled “King David’s Successes.” Also on Sunday night, the youth started a series

called “Bitesize Theology.”

All the regular services and ministries resumed this past week at their regular times. The Christian Quilt Guild met on Monday in the memorial hall building. Backpack Buddies met again on Wednesday morning to pack food bags for Rains ISD students. Senior Adult Ministry lunch and game day has been canceled for January 8 because of a funeral. Christian Quilt Guild Workshop is scheduled for Saturday, January 10, at 9:00 a.m. in the Memorial Hall building.

Looking ahead to next week, the Youth Winter Retreat kicks off on Saturday, January 17, in the fellowship hall and will conclude at Camp Akiva Sunday through Monday. Winter Retreat is designed for students in 6-12 grades. For more information, check out retreat.emorybaptist.org and sign up ASAP at retreat.emorybaptist.org/SignUp.

Emory Methodist Church

By Mary White

On coming to the house, they saw the child with his mother Mary, and they bowed down and worshiped him. Then they opened their treasures and presented him with gifts of gold and of incense and of myrrh.

Matthew 2:11

Rev. David Banks’ message was titled “The Word Goes Forth: Now it’s Our Turn” with scripture text taken from Matthew. The star stopped over Bethlehem, and wise men went and worshiped. But Jesus did not stay in that house. The Word grew, walked,

called and sent. Now it is our turn to walk, not in our own strength, but through the Word that became flesh and that now will go forth through us.

Birthday wishes go to Cassie Franklin, Bonita Calhoun, Cheryl Traylor, Covey Ben Griffin II, Cay House, Jeri Humphrey and Opal Ann Franklin.

Pray for the Bill Garrett family, Debbie Fischer, Jeanie Banks and Dorothy Riddle.

Have a great New Year 2026 and remember to be kind.

Susan Putnam
1961-2026



Susan Putnam, 64, of Emory, Texas, passed away on January 1, 2026, in her home surrounded by her loved ones.

Born June 3, 1961, in Toledo, Ohio, Susan was a loving and supportive wife, an incredible mother and grandmother, and a steady presence in the lives of those around her. Her family was the center of her world, and she found joy in the playfulness and laughter of children, the grounding presence of trees, and an enduring fascination with Sasquatch.

She is survived by her husband, Mark Putnam, children, Katie Putnam, Ryan Putnam, Trevor Putnam, Kevin Atkinson, and Anthony Hess; beloved

grandchildren, her mother, Marcia Rookwood; and her brother, Greg Rookwood. She was preceded in death by her father, Elmer Schwab, and her brother, Dean Rookwood.

Services will be private. Arrangements are under the direction of Murray-Orwosky Funeral Home in Sulphur Springs, Texas.

Susan will be remembered and celebrated by her family, whose lives are forever shaped by her love and support.

Arrangements are under the direction of Murray-Orwosky Funeral Home. The online register can be signed at www.murrayorwosky.com

Paid obituary

Obituaries

Charlie Braswell
1942 – 2026



Charlie Braswell, 83, of Point, died on January 2, 2026, surrounded by his loving family. He was born on March 16, 1942.

Mr. Braswell proudly served as an Army medic during the Vietnam War.

He was warm, funny and had a playful spirit. He was a natural problem-solver, could fix nearly anything and proudly passed both his skills and love of life on to his children.

Mr. Braswell shared 63 beautiful years of marriage with his devoted wife, Ann Braswell, who remained by his side until the very end.

He is survived by his wife; sister, Joyce

Kafer; children, Lisa Garner, Melissa Hopkins and husband Paul, and Craig Braswell; grandchildren Tyler Hatzenbuehler, Paige Garner, Austin Hatzenbuehler and Ryndee Braswell; and great-grandchildren, Nora Hatzenbuehler and Crosby Hatzenbuehler.

He was preceded in death by his parents, Herbert and Doris Braswell; his infant son, Michael; and his sisters, Audrey Calvert and Sherry Vallier.

In lieu of flowers, the family requests donations be made to the Emory Baptist Church Family Life Building Fund.

Bill W. Garrett
1932 – 2025



Funeral services for Billy (Bill) W. Garrett, 93, were held on Monday, January 5, at Emory Baptist Church, with Richard Piles officiating.

Mr. Garrett died on December 31, 2025. He was born on February 14, 1932, in Miller Grove, to Thomas Ray Garrett and Oma C. Burns Garrett.

At the age of 14, Bill accepted Christ as his Savior at Miller Grove Presbyterian Church, a faith that guided his life and service. He graduated from Miller Grove High School in 1953 and later worked in the Kansas wheat harvest before joining the United States Army in 1954. He served in the Missile Division, including time stationed in El Paso, Texas, and Mainz, Germany, and was honorably discharged in 1955.

On September 1, 1956, he married the love of his life, Shirley Joyce Willis. They began their life together in Waco where he worked for Zales Jewelry and attended Baylor University at night. The couple later returned to East Texas, where he earned his master’s degree from East Texas State University in Commerce.

Mr. Garrett devoted his career to education, teaching high school in Tioga, Caddo Mills, Mesquite, and Emory. He also served in the Education Department of the Texas Justice System from 1968 to 1973. His

commitment to public service extended into the community through his work with the Rains Independent School District Board, the Rains County Appraisal District, and the East Texas Council of Governments.

A man of deep faith, Mr. Garrett served his church in many roles, including Sunday School teacher, director, and pastor search committee member. He was also active in numerous professional organizations, including the Texas State Teachers Association, National Education Association, Parent Teacher Association, and the Teachers Retirement Association.

He found joy in the outdoors—fishing in the Gulf of Mexico and Canada’s Lake of the Woods, hunting, ranching, and raising cattle. Alongside Shirley, he traveled extensively throughout the United States, Canada and Europe.

Mr. Garrett is survived by his children, Sharon (Greg) Henry, Vicki Hoodwin, and Todd (Lanetta) Garrett; seven grandchildren; two great-grandchildren; and his sister, Oma Lea Garrett Nelson of Sulphur Springs.

He was preceded in death by his parents; sisters, Nelda Carroll and Flo Coleman; brothers, James, Duane and Edwin Garrett; and his beloved wife, Shirley Joyce Willis Garrett.

Timothy Don Stephens
1962 – 2025

Tim Stephens, 63, of Emory, died unexpectedly on December 27, 2025. He was born on December 22, 1962, in Terrell, to Eddie and Bonnie Stephens.

He was a proud Eagle Scout, Scout Master, and church member/secretary/music minister at Grace Tabernacle. He was a devoted husband to Kathy for 34 years, and a loyal employee at Madix for over 35 years. He will be missed by his large family, church

family and many friends.

Mr. Stephens is survived by his mother; daughters, Jesseca Williams and Kristi Kreuzer; five grandchildren, Christopher, Damien, Christian, Taylor and Kristiana; and numerous aunts and cousins.

He was preceded in death by his father; and wife, Kathy Stephens.

Burial was at College Mound Cemetery in Terrell, alongside his wife and father.

The Righteous Shall Live by His Faith

And the Lord answered me: “Write the vision; make it plain on tablets, so he may run who reads it.

For still the vision awaits its appointed time; it hastenes to the end – it will not lie.

If it seems slow, wait for it; it will surely come; it will not delay.

Habakkuk 2:2-3

Church Directory

Calvary Baptist Church
INDEPENDENT FUNDAMENTAL BAPTIST

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

Pastor: Jimmy Jarrett

Hwys 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

EMORY
METHODIST CHURCH

We All Matter To God

Dr. David Banks
456 Texas St.
One Block from the Square
Sunday School 9:30 a.m.
Worship Time 10:30 a.m.
903-473-2411 • EmoryMC.org

MIRACLE FAITH BAPTIST CHURCH (Independent)
820 SH 276 • Emory

Sunday School 9:00 a.m.
Worship Service 10:00 a.m.
Wed. Night Youth 5:30 p.m.
Wed. Night Service 6:30 p.m.

Pastor: Robert Burns II
Church: 903-473-3238

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

EMORY BAPTIST CHURCH

On The Square
Corner Of North & Planters
Downtown Emory
903-473-3357
emorybaptist.org

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.
MorningWorship 10:30 a.m.

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

Dr. Jason Rolén — Pastor

Jerod Haygood — Student & Family Pastor
Duffey Henderson — Music & Media Minister
www.bbcmemory.org 903-474-0027

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

Pastor Rudy and CJ Bond

Come worship with us
Sundays - 10:45 am
Wednesdays - 7:00 pm

Clarks Chapel Church of God
Our Mission and Vision is to help connect people to Jesus

6345 FM-47 Point TX
<http://clarkschapelcog.org/>
Ⓜ <http://www.facebook.com/clarkschapelcogemorytx>

Classified Ads

We Accept

903-473-2653

CLASSIFIED DEADLINE
5:00 P.M. TUESDAY

FOR SALE

SALES

The Rains County Good Samaritan Thrift/Clothes store will be open Saturdays in January 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.

HOOTEN'S HARDWARE, LLC

Browse our wide selection of RV Parts and Accessories. Hwy. 69N in Emory. 903-473-8788.

RENT/LEASE

ALL BILLS PAID EAGLE INN APARTMENTS

2-BR \$973/mth. No deposit! Apply at eagleinnapartments.com.

For Rent 3BR/2BA manufactured home on Duffy St., \$1,300/mth. Apply at eagleina partments.com.

For Rent 3BR/2BA 2023 house in Emory, \$1,900/mth. 903-368-2028.

STORAGE UNITS

EMORY SELF STORAGE, Hwy. 69S, 410 E. Lennon. Now offering climate-controlled units. 903-474-9150, 903-348-5459.

HELP WANTED

RAINS ISD NEEDS: Custodian/Custodian Substitutes, Bus Drivers/ Substitutes, Food Service Employee/ Substitutes, Child Development Center Employee/ Substitutes. Salary based on experience. \$320/month of full-time employee health coverage paid. Apply on-line at https://www.rainsisd.org Equal Employment Opportunity.

EDUCATION

SPIRITUALITY

Join us for our weekly Spirituality classes. Learn to live from Love. Register: 903-279-9696.

SERVICES

CONSTRUCTION

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 bathhouses and docks since 2001. Steel/ metal bldgs., & home remodeling. www.mckenzielakeworks.com. 903-269-6173.

DODSON AND SONS Painting, drywall, carpentry and more. 903-259-8541. For plumbing needs call Scott Trieb 903-474-4129.

CONSTRUCTION

HOOTEN'S HARDWARE, LLC

Has all your welding, welding repair and lumber needs available on site. Hwy. 69N in Emory. 903-473-8788.

G&G GRAVEL. All types of gravel, chipped asphalt, available for spreading, free estimates. Miller Grove. Bret Garrett 903-268-6910.

LAWN/LANDSCAPE/MOWING

HOOTEN'S LAWN & TREE SERVICE, LLC

Tim Hooten

Lawn maintenance, sodding, landscaping, tree trimming & removal, retaining walls, irrigation systems. LI 0019094. 903-473-8706, 903-474-4402.

TREE SERVICES

SMITH'S LAWN CARE

Landscaping, fencing, hedge trimming, weekly/biweekly rates. 903-521-8506, free estimates.

Get your fence rows spring ready now. The roots of vegetation are more accessible for removal limiting future regrowth with minimal impact on wildlife habitat. Affordable pricing, Marvin 903-348-4399, text please.

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

PUBLIC NOTICE

NOTICE TO ALL PERSONS BUYING PROPERTY IN THE VICINITY OF THE MILLER GROVE WATER SUPPLY CORP.

Miller Grove Water Supply Corp. urges any prospective land buyers to verify with the manager at our office located at 14966 FM 1567W in Miller Grove or by calling 903-459-3383 whether or not water service is available to the property in question.

PUBLIC NOTICE

NOTICE TO ALL PERSONS BUYING PROPERTY IN THE VICINITY OF THE CITY OF POINT WATER SYSTEM

City of Point Water urges all prospective land buyers to verify with the water operator or city secretary at City of Point at our office located at 320 N Locust Street Point, TX 75472 or by calling 903-598-3296 ext. 220 whether or not water service is available to the property in question.

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

NOTICE TO ALL PERSONS BUYING PROPERTY IN THE VICINITY OF THE CITY OF EMORY WATER SYSTEM

The City of Emory understands that property is sometimes sold with the representation that water is available to the property from the City of Emory water system. Such is not always the case, and the City of Emory urges any prospective buyer to verify with the City of Emory at 399 North Texas Street, or call 903-473-2465 that water is in fact available at the particular tract in question.

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

Rains County Road 1325 will be closed beginning January 6, 2026 and will reopen on January 23, 2026.

PUBLIC NOTICE

NOTICE TO ALL PERSONS BUYING PROPERTY IN THE VICINITY OF THE EAST TAWAKONI WATER SYSTEM

The City of East Tawakoni understands that property is sometimes sold with the representation that water is available to the property from the City of East Tawakoni water system. Such is not always the case, and the City of East Tawakoni urges any prospective buyer to verify with the City of East Tawakoni at 288 Briggs Blvd., East Tawakoni, Texas, or call 903-447-2444 that water is in fact available at the particular tract in question.

CONSTRUCTION BUSINESS

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Chainlink • Welded Pipe
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Dirt & rock hauling
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House Pads

903-438-6603

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President

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430-266-2160

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Vote for Brent Hilliard Rains County Judge

Early Voting: Tuesday, February 17-27, 2026
Election Day: March 3, 2026

A Legacy of Service for Rains County

A Life Rooted in Faith and Family

Stacy and I met in junior high; years later, God answered my prayers and brought us back together. We're blessed with three grown Christian sons, wonderful daughters-in-law, and six grandbabies who light up our lives. My life's journey has been guided by a commitment to Christ since the age of twelve. Having served as an ordained deacon, my leadership style is rooted in the calling of Micah 6:8: to act justly, to love mercy, and to walk humbly with God. Today, Stacy



Brent Hilliard and Family

and I are proud members of Emory Baptist Church, where we continue to grow in our faith alongside our neighbors.

Deep Roots, Proven Results

In 2019, we put down permanent roots at the historic John Little Ranch—Rains County is home. As an entrepreneur in energy and IT, I employ 15 neighbors right here in Emory. From delivering Midland's 62-mile water pipeline to running my businesses, I've always focused on results, respect, and fiscal responsibility.

Your County Judge: Progress You Can See

Serving as your appointed County Judge is the honor of my life. I've applied decades of experience to prioritize better roads, stronger public safety, and a taxpayers-first approach. In just six months, we've made real progress—but we're just getting started. I'm asking for your vote to keep that momentum going and ensure Rains County remains safe, rural, and affordable for our children and grandchildren.

Let's Keep the Fresh Start Going!

Highlights From Just Six Months

Roads

- Improved coordination between the Judge's office, Road and Bridge Department, and Commissioner's Court to improve quality and effective implementation of services
- Reconstructed 11.96 miles of paved road and growing
- Shifted to patching larger areas with better, longer-lasting materials
- Added two new positions in Road & Bridge to boost productivity and delivery
- Improved manpower/equipment utilization and supervision
- Prioritizing drainage and water evacuation
- Cleared rights-of-way of trees and foliage for safer, better-maintained roads
- Close to securing \$2.81 million of grants for culverts, bridges, and roads
- Better planning by utilizing existing and newly obtained data moving forward
- Added two new trucks to reduce maintenance costs

Safety & First Responders

- Improved coordination between the Judge's Office and Sheriff's Office to strengthen public safety and our environment as a whole
- Improved hiring for experienced TCOLE-certified deputies and dispatchers
- Added Records Retention position to meet state requirements
- Purchased and equipped a transport van and two new trucks for the Sheriff's Department
- Brought jail into full compliance with Texas Jail Standards
- Implemented weekly mental health support (Navigator Program with Andrews Center)
- Hired experienced Jail Compliance Officer, dispatchers, and deputies
- Modernized jail software and systems for better compliance
- Cleaned out years of expired evidence (in accordance with CCP 59 Penal Code) and hired consultant to maintain evidence processing long term
- Secured the assignment of a qualified retired visiting judge from the 12th Court of Appeals when needed for county cases
- Secured \$892,102.21 in grants for the Sheriff's department

Taxpayers First

- Increased transparency with an open-door policy and direct communication with taxpayers
- Pursuing TXDOT, federal, and other grants—including nearly \$4.746 million (and counting) for Library, Safety, and roads/bridges—to fund priorities without raising taxes
- Added cybersecurity software to protect county systems from ransomware, malware, phishing, and denial-of-service attacks
- Hired General Counsel to provide legal advice on county business and civil matters
- Implemented a new communication program to improve efficiency across county operations
- Fostered a positive and productive work environment for county employees
- Focused every dollar on essentials—getting more done with existing resources
- Improved efficiency and compliance to protect taxpayer money and avoid costly fines

Better Roads, Stronger Safety, Taxpayers First

Looking Ahead: My Commitments To You

Managing Growth Wisely

★ ★ ★ ★ ★

"Managing growth so Rains County stays safe, rural, and affordable."

Honesty & Responsible Taxation

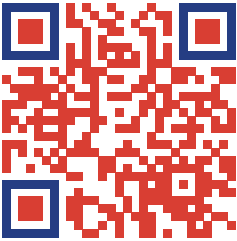
★ ★ ★ ★ ★

"As values rise, I will work to protect taxpayers and make every dollar count."

Integrity & Access

★ ★ ★ ★ ★

"Open door, open records, and open books—so you always know what your county government is doing."



903-913-6003 | ElectBrentHilliard.com