

Rains County Leader

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EMORY, TEXAS - THURSDAY, JANUARY 15, 2026

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RAINS COUNTY

Commissioners court considers library board appointments

By CHUCK FITTS

Rains County Leader staff

The Rains County Commissioners tabled the appointments to the Rains County Library Advisory Board and passed a resolution in support of exemption to Hotel Occupancy Tax for counties during the regular meeting on Thursday, January 8.

The meeting began with public comments to the commissioners concerning certain books in the Rains County Library.

After approving the consent agenda, the court began discussion on a list of

recommended appointments to the Rains County Library Advisory Board.

The board is made of 12 volunteers that are appointed by Commissioners Court. They advise on library policy, budget, and development while fostering community engagement and advocating for library services.

Bernadette Thompson, the Rains County Librarian, stated that the board has four members and needs the appointment of eight more members to have a quorum. The eight vacancies stem from four resignations and four with terms ending.

Thompson noted that she had a

larger than normal interest to be on the board and created an application for board membership. She presented the court with her recommendation for the eight nominees from the 20 applications that she had received.

Commissioners noted that they were usually having to beg for people to be on the board and wanted more time to review the applications before appointing volunteers to the open seats. They unanimously tabled the matter until the next meeting.

The court was presented with a resolution in support of an exemption to the Hotel Occupancy Tax for county gov-

ernments officials and employees when traveling on official business and to allow the submission of a waiver from the state hotel occupancy tax. It was unanimously approved.

Commissioner Lori Northcutt advised the court to begin review of the regulations for tiny homes in the county. She noted that some developers were looking into tiny home communities in the county; therefore, regulations need to be reviewed and updated, if needed. No action was taken on the item as it was just for discussion.

see **COMMISSIONERS** on page 2

Candidates attend forum



Leader photo by TREY HILL

Candidates for local, state and national offices attended the Rains County Republican Party's candidates forum on Monday night, January 12, in the cafeteria at Rains Elementary School. Candidates running for Rains County Commissioner for Precinct 2 (above) took their turn answering written questions that had been submitted before the event began.

RAINS ISD

Trustees approve library book purchases, policy updates

By CHUCK FITTS

Rains County Leader staff

The Rains ISD Board of Trustees held a regular meeting on Monday, January 12, to approve recommendations for school library resources and update board policies.

During the meeting, trustees were presented with a list of resources to be purchased for the district libraries including new books for students to read.

The list of recommended new books was reviewed by the Local School Library Advisory Council (LSLAC).

The LSLAC is a committee, composed primarily of parents of students, that was mandated by Texas SB 13 to review challenged library books. The council includes parents, school trustees, librarians, teachers, counselors, administrators, and community members.

The school board unanimously ap-

proved the district's library resource purchases.

Board members reviewed Board Policy Update 126 for a second reading. It was noted that an adjustment was made to policy DBD(Local) to adjust the time limit for public comment by an individual from five to three minutes. Three minutes is a statewide standard adopted by most districts in the state.

see **RISD** on page 2

SALES TAX ALLOCATIONS

All entities see increase for January returns

By CHUCK FITTS

Rains County Leader staff

The City of Point saw another large increase in local sales tax allocations being returned in January by the office of acting Texas Comptroller Kelly Hancock, while Emory, East Tawakoni and Rains County saw slight increases compared to 2025.

The state saw a 4.9-percent increase compared to last year with \$1.2 billion being returned to Texas cities, counties, transit systems and special purpose taxing districts based on sales made in November by businesses that report tax monthly.

Rains County, with a half-cent sales tax rate, will have \$88,670.90 returned from the state. The total is a 16.7-percent increase over the \$75,978.14 returned to the county in January of last year.

As for the cities in the county, Point saw a significant increase in the amount of money being returned in January from the 1.5-percent sales tax rate, while Emory and East Tawakoni saw steady growth compared to the same time last year.

The City of Point begins the year 83.08 percent ahead of last year's total with \$19,591.24 being returned from the state this month compared to \$10,700.78 from 2025.

With a double-digit increase of 15.14 percent in sales tax revenues from this time last year, Emory is expecting \$152,279.17 from the state in January.

East Tawakoni is expected to receive \$8,250.02 from the state, which is an increase of 4.59 percent from the 2025 total.

see **SALES TAX** on page 2

SPOTLIGHT

Gwen Petersen is Administrative Assistant and more at Emory PD

By JUDY KRAMER

Rains County Leader contributor

Gwen Petersen was hired in February 2025 as Administrative Assistant at the Emory Police Department, but since then she has also become property and evidence manager as well as records handler. She came to the job after four years experience with the Greenville Police Department. Many years before that she spent 15 years working for the Department of Defense in Japan and Germany. She accepted the Administrative Assistant position in Emory because she wanted a family-friendly environment, and a slower pace, but still be able to make an impact with her experience.

"My husband, Richard, was a Marine stationed overseas so I found employment with the Department of Defense while he was stationed in Japan and Ger-

many," said Petersen. "In Japan I did some volunteer work as an aide and substitute teacher. I was also liaison officer for 'Operation Tomodachi' in disaster relief following the 2011 Tohoku earthquake and tsunami. I experienced disaster myself, at another time, when I left the mainland for Okinawa and a hurricane hit the area. I spent three days in a shelter with water on the floor and sandbags stacked against the outside door. On the third day we began to run out of food. During my time in Germany, I worked as an aide and assistant but was primarily doing office automation."

Petersen said that in 2021 she and her husband were ready for him to retire from the military and they returned to their house and home in Greenville, planning to spend happy times with their grandchildren. However, a miscalculation in her husband's years of military

service resulted in him having to return to Europe for two more years before retiring. Petersen decided to stay in Greenville and was able to visit Richard every six months until he returned in 2023.

Since Petersen arrived back in Greenville, she has been volunteering in her community. She works with Altrusa International, a global network of clubs that volunteers time, money and skills for local causes. Through Altrusa she has been involved in Reading Rodeo at schools, Tour of Homes in Greenville, raises funds for CASA for Hunt County (that advocates for children in foster care), works for other nonprofits and feeds the homeless. Her group will be sponsoring Days for Girls on January 24. Petersen has also been instrumental in

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Gwen Petersen

**City Girl:
Why has
society...**

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**Jody Dyer:
Discovering
the Perfect...**

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**Wildcat
Sports**

page 4

Rain Report

Fri., Jan. 9 0.06 in.
Total for Jan. 0.06 in.
Year to date 0.06 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 Winnie Gun Club, Winnie 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., Rains County Library, 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.

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.

Putting your aging parents' wishes first

As your parents grow older, it may be time to talk with them about financial and aging issues.

Position these conversations to honor their plans and understand their wishes, so their affairs will be taken care of as they would like.

First, consider health care. Find out if they have limits on medical care and appropriate legal documents, like a health care power of attorney. Another subject: independence. Have they thought about the need for long-term care?

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

Also, ask if they have updated wills, revocable trusts and durable powers of attorney, so a trusted person can make financial decisions if they become incapacitated.

Finally, have they left instructions in their will about their funeral preferences?

These are sensitive subjects, but you can get help from other family members or a trusted legal or financial professional.

By raising these issues with your parents, you can help avoid unpleasant surprises — and maybe even create some peace of mind for your family.

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

COMMISSIONERS

Continued from page 1

The court unanimously approved a motion to accept a grant from the East Texas Council of Governments for services for youth in the county. They formally acknowledged the changes to the federal congressional district map and accepted into the minutes of the meeting the training hours of Rains County Judge Brent

Hilliard. All commissioners were present for the regular meeting.

The Rains County Commissioners Court have scheduled their next regular meeting for Thursday, January 22, in the courtroom of the Rains County Courthouse.

RISD

Continued from page 1

The Board Policy Update 126 was unanimously approved by the board.

Rains ISD Superintendent Joe Nicks stated to the board during his report that the district has received recognition and compliments for their implementation of the Bluebonnet Learning curriculum for K-5 from members of the Region 7 Education Center.

Trustees adjourned to a closed session for about 30

minutes for personnel. Upon returning to open session, they unanimously approved the superintendent's goals for the district.

All trustees were present for the regular meeting.

The next regular meeting of the Rains ISD Board of Trustees is scheduled for Monday, February 9, at 6:30 p.m. in the Alexander Board Room of the Rains ISD Administration building.

Advertising Works
903-473-2653

THE PUBLIC FORUM

Dear Editor

Monday January 12, Rains County had its first large scale candidate forum since 2010. Why has there not been another candidate forum in 15 years? There are too many different factors to discuss but they can be found in the lack of participation by people who Will Vote yet they don't have any time to come listen to the candidates asking for their vote making them a more informed voter, electing the best candidate asking for their vote. We had over 20 candidates coming together who want to represent us the people of Rains County in Local County

Marvin Henson
Point, Tx 75472

SALES TAX

Continued from page 1

The Texas Comptroller's office is expected to release local sales tax allocations made from sales in December for those reporting monthly and October, November and December for businesses that report quarterly during the second week of February.

JANUARY '26 SALES TAX STATISTICS

County City	Taxed	Net pymt. this period	Net pymt. prior year	Pct. change	'26 pymt. to date	Net pymt. prior year	Pct chg. from '25
Rains	0.5%	\$88,670.90	\$75,978.14	16.70%	\$88,670.90	\$75,978.14	16.70%
East Tawakoni	1.5	8,250.02	7,887.53	4.59	8,250.02	7,887.53	4.59
Emory	1.5	152,279.17	132,248.38	15.14	152,279.17	132,248.38	15.14
Point	1.5	19,591.24	10,700.78	83.08	19,591.24	10,700.78	83.08
Hopkins	0.5%	\$314,518.65	\$313,705.37	0.25%	\$314,518.65	\$313,705.37	0.25%
Como	1.0	6,157.32	5,923.39	3.94	6,157.32	5,923.39	3.94
Cumby	1.25	12,268.62	13,246.80	-7.38	12,268.62	13,246.80	-7.38
Sulphur Springs	1.5	779,968.58	785,116.86	-0.65	779,968.58	785,116.86	-0.65
Hunt	0.5%	\$764,520.05	\$731,744.82	4.47%	\$764,520.05	\$731,744.82	4.47%
Caddo Mills	1.5	119,299.99	102,025.45	16.93	119,299.99	102,025.45	16.93
Campbell	1.5	13,389.80	11,873.32	12.72	13,389.80	11,873.32	12.72
Celeste	1.25	13,266.19	12,127.97	9.38	13,266.19	12,127.97	9.38
Commerce	1.5	181,084.37	180,667.08	0.23	181,084.37	180,667.08	0.23
Greenville	1.5	1,134,987.39	1,116,039.56	1.69	1,134,987.39	1,116,039.56	1.69
Hawk Cove	1.0	2,080.87	1,881.64	10.58	2,080.87	1,881.64	10.58
Lone Oak	1.5	21,394.06	20,378.46	4.98	21,394.06	20,378.46	4.98
Neylandville	1.0	1,109.88	624.85	77.63	1,109.88	624.85	77.63
Quinlan	1.5	180,885.29	157,157.27	15.09	180,885.29	157,157.27	15.09
Union Valley	1.0	5,601.58	4,668.14	19.99	5,601.58	4,668.14	19.99
West Tawakoni	1.5	18,465.84	15,672.13	17.82	18,465.84	15,672.13	17.82
Wolfe City	1.5	18,325.09	17,746.33	3.26	18,325.09	17,746.33	3.26
Van Zandt County	does not collect sales tax						
Canton	2.0	452,360.02	432,315.94	4.63	452,360.02	432,315.94	4.63
Edgewood	2.0	47,536.09	41,639.11	14.16	47,536.09	41,639.11	14.16
Edom	1.0	1,784.56	1,683.25	6.01	1,784.56	1,683.25	6.01
Fruitvale	2.0	8,948.71	7,335.95	21.98	8,948.71	7,335.95	21.98
Grand Saline	2.0	71,425.25	53,387.13	33.78	71,425.25	53,387.13	33.78
Van	2.0	117,994.99	98,371.61	19.94	117,994.99	98,371.61</td	

CITY GIRL

Why has society become so destructive?

By Linda Brendle

Warning! This is not a light, fluffy, feel-good column about my cat(s) or the little green house that didn't protect my plants from the freezing temperatures after all. It's a social commentary on a situation that I will explain later. First, I want to share my thoughts on what Google AI had to say on the subject.

The perception that society is becoming more destructive stems from a variety of complex, interconnected factors...Key contributing factors frequently cited by experts, social commentators, and research include:" (Comments following each factor are mine.)

Economic Disparity: Most experts say that, since salaries have not kept pace with inflation, the younger generations are angry and restless because they don't see how they will attain the American dream of being better off than their parents. What I see from a grumpy old lady perspective is that most of them don't work as hard as their parents did. I saw Mom leave home at 6:30 a.m. and return at 6:30 p.m., commuting by bus from Mesquite to Dallas where she was paid less than half the current Texas minimum wage and less than 20 percent of the California minimum wage. Dad worked two to three jobs, my brother had a paper route before he was old enough to get a "real" job, and I applied for my first job on my sixteenth birthday. And don't get me started on credit cards. I could write a whole column on this factor, but I'll move on.

Social Isolation and the Decline of Community: Google explained the meaning of this factor but didn't address the cause. I believe it's at least partially because everybody has to have their own car and every house has to have an eight-foot privacy fence. By the time I took my first office job in downtown Dallas, Mom had switched

from the bus to carpooling. In those days of bench seats instead of bucket seats, it was possible for a sedan to hold six adults, and I became number six. A real sense of community develops during that much togetherness. And fences? When they were four feet high and made of chain link, you knew your neighbors - maybe better than you wanted to. It was hard to feel isolated when you saw people every time you took out the trash, hung out the laundry, fed the dog, or mowed the lawn.

Hyper-Individualism and Self-Centeredness: This factor can be summed up in two attitudes that come into being some time around 1980. It's all about me and It's not my job.

The Impact of Technology and Social Media: The first Google sentence on this factor reads: "The constant exposure to carefully curated, often negative, information online can lead to a sense of constant comparison and a rise in anxiety and jealousy." I first became aware of this type of brain-washing long before I knew that computers existed. One of mother's co-workers liked fashion magazines, including some aimed at teens. When she finished with them, she passed them on to me. It didn't take long for me to recognize the differences between my totally natural appearance and that of these models with their perfect clothes, hair, make-up, and bodies, undoubtedly helped along by an air brush here and there. But anxious or jealous as I might have been, I never took up graffiti, and I never keyed or set fire to someone's car.

There were two more factors, but you get the idea, and I haven't reached my main point yet. This week I was on the receiving end of some destruction, and I want to share a post I wrote on Facebook:

There are no words to express how angry I am at the person who hacked my blog - Life After Caregiving. I first noticed something was a little off a couple of months ago when occasionally I would have a day of unusual activity - like several hun-

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.

Women's Service Club

Last year, the Women's Service Club created a program called Adopt-A-Cadet. They are pleased to report that all three of their nominees have made it through the basic training of their military choice and each has been stationed at a base. At the annual Poppers in the Park event on July 3, 2025, the Club presented each trainee's family with an American Flag that flew over the Capital on the day of their graduation. The club has sent cards of encouragement to: Kamron Ely, Navy, graduated in October and is now stationed in South Carolina; Bryson Bailey, Army, graduated in December and is now stationed in Fort Bliss; and Noah Murff, Navy, graduated in October and the military station is unknown at the time of this report.

Besides the Cadet pro-

gram, the Club also gave scholarships to four deserving seniors from Rains High School. Those seniors are: Izzie Stroman, who is enrolled at Texas A&M at College Station, Memphis McNew, who is enrolled at Paris Jr. College, Sarah Carter, who is enrolled at Texas State at San Marcos, and Emerson Prinz, who is enrolled at Texas A&M at College Station.

The Women's Service club is a 501c3 non profit organization and was established in 1942. It is believed to be the oldest organized ladies club in Rains County and was created to aid in the return of WWII soldiers and to make Emory a more desirable place to live. A few of the first projects included cleaning up old abandoned cars from along the side of the railroad tracks, mowing vacant lots, and cleaning up

Reported by
Jeanine Hayes

FISHING REPORT

The Texas Parks and Wildlife Department released the following information for Lake Fork and Lake Tawakoni taken on January 7:

Fork: Good. Normal stain; 57 degrees; 2.96 feet below pool. The warmer days are bringing some bass shallow as the water temperature ranges from 55-59 degrees. Spinnerbaits and chatterbaits around grass are fair in 2-4 feet. Suspending jerkbaits, and squarebill crankbaits are best around timber in 5-8 feet. Texas rigs around small ditches and channels are good with creature type baits and lizards in 8-12 feet. Report by Marc Mitchell, Mitchell's Guide Service.

Lake Fork crappie fishing is nothing short of on fire right now. This is the best time to catch limits of fish consistently with the occasional big fish. Fish are in 14-60 feet of water related to timber, brush, tires, bridges, ledges and points. These fish are very hungry and feeding

on shad. Any crappie bait you want to try should work right now. Small hand tied jigs and minnows are working extremely well and soft plastic baits of all kinds should also work. Use small baits most days, but many fish we clean have shad in the 3-4 inch range. Report by Jacky Wiggins, Jacky Wiggins Guide Service.

Tawakoni: Good. Water lightly stained; 53 degrees; 1.82 feet below pool. Lake Tawakoni continues to fish well into the new year of 2026. The lake is in a solid winter pattern as main lake temperatures are sitting right at 53 degrees. The hybrid, striped and white bass bite are good, with daily limits of jumbo white bass with some hybrids and stripers mixed in. Flukes, slabs and small jigs are best in 28-50 feet. The eating sized blue catfish bite is good. Fish are solid in the 1-2 pound range in 30-50 feet on punch bait. Trophy blue catfish are great with daily catches of 20-50 pound blues on cut bait in 3-30 feet.

Crappie are good on the 2 mile bridge on small tandem rigged jigs in 22-28 feet. Largemouth bass have been slow the past few weeks. Report by Captain Michael Littlejohn, Lake Tawakoni Guide Service.

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dred views instead of a couple of dozen. The visitor(s) looked at a wide variety of posts, so I assumed it was a new subscriber catching up on past writings. I did a little searching on Google to see if I could find evidence that someone was pirating my content, but nothing showed up. Then, yesterday I tried to post my weekly column, and I couldn't access the site. My user name had been changed, and although I could see the posts, I was shown as a "Reader."

I spent the next hour or so, trying to correct the problem on my own. I managed to get into my profile where I changed my user name and password, but it showed that I had no sites, and I was still shown as "Reader." I chatted with AI for a while, but since I use only the free app, I couldn't talk with a live person. However, the AI did give me an email address to the help desk, and they're working on it. So far, I've found that my content still exists, but it is not connected to my account.

To the person(s) who did this, I started this blog in July of 2011. The content isn't great literature, but it is my life. It is my thoughts, my questions, my emotions, my stories. I have digital copies of most of my entries, but it's not the same. I don't know what you hoped to gain by what you did, but I hope you have an attack of conscience that is so bad that you will never do this to someone else. It doesn't show how smart and important you are, it only shows that those who can't create can only destroy.

###

I'm not asking for sympathy or retribution - although I would mind a little come-uppance for the perpetrator. But Jesus said in His Sermon on the Mount that we should love our enemies. So, to whoever did this, I love you like He said to, but I don't like you very much.

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.

Discovering the Perfect Pencil

"It's like my whole world is coming undone, but when I write, my pencil is a needle and thread, and I'm stitching the scraps back together."

Julia Alvarez

Pencils are practical tools, ever ready to capture words and scratchy thoughts onto paper. Since childhood, most of us have lived with pencils. In elementary school, they first gave us those big fat pencils that felt like logs in our little hands. Later we got to use real grown-up pencils, usually the bright school bus yellow variety (the best were the Ticonderoga brand). Somewhere in junior high or high school, most of us left our pencils behind, traded for the ubiquitous ballpoint pen, also a wonderful tool. Recently I have rediscovered the pencil. And in doing so, I think I've found the perfect one.

With some trepidation, I can say that I am a writer. When working on a column, I always write my first draft using my typewriter, a treasured Royal portable (a 1946 Arrow model). But before going to my typewriter, often in the wee hours of the morning when I first fall out of bed, I will write out by hand what I call skeleton notes. Sometimes this is just an outline, so I have a word map of sorts to guide me as I type. Sometimes it is more. Often words will just flow, like turning on a faucet. And as I sit up in bed in my boxer shorts, I need to capture them. Ordinarily, I keep a notepad and pen handy. But now, instead of a pen, I have switched to a pencil. I find that a pencil better captures words before they get away. I can write faster with a pencil. This small change occurred after I read about and bought a box of the famous Blackwing pencils.

The Blackwing 602 pencil, with its flat ferrule, clamp eraser, and trademark slogan "Half the Pressure, Twice the Speed" stamped on the side, was created in 1934 by the Eberhard Faber Company. It was the first commercial

pencil made with wax in its core and was noted for its incredibly smooth writing. The Blackwing pencil caught on with creative folks, most notably writers, animators, and musicians. John Steinbeck wrote the *Grapes of Wrath* using a Blackwing 602. He didn't type, so would hand write his manuscripts and then have his secretary type them. Many other writers, including Truman Capote and Thomas Wolfe were fans of the Blackwing pencil.

A few years later, a company in Stockton, California - Cal Cedar - acquired the Blackwing name and trademark. In 2010 they brought the Blackwing 602 back. Because the exact secret formula of graphite, clay, and wax had been lost, the company had to re-engineer the pencil in order to bring it back to life. They mastered the top-secret graphite formula. Some say the new Blackwing is better than the original. And fortunately, we can now buy them again.

They have several models, but the classic Blackwing 602, usually recommended for writers, is what I use. I find them smooth and easy. It's like writing with butter. The pencil skims across the page easily and quickly. And using my Blackwing appeals to my senses. The 602 has a tactile quality that is missing with a drugstore pencil or plastic pen. The smooth finished wood feels good in my hand. The smell of graphite and cedar is soothing. There is a satisfying scratch on paper as dark lines emerge. All stirs the senses and makes writing a pleasure. And I can quickly capture my thoughts and whip out my skeleton notes before running my words through my typewriter.

If you find the need to pull words from your head and put them on paper, consider the lowly pencil, and maybe try a Blackwing (blackwing602.com). They are a bit expensive. You'll pay a little more than a few dollars per pencil (much more than a twenty-five cent Walmart pencil), but I think they are worth every penny. Happy writing...

JODY DYER is a columnist, author, and former teacher. Described by some as a Renaissance man, he is a baseball fan, coffee roaster, and accomplished feral hog trapper. He likes to read, appreciates the outdoors, and is good with dogs and children. He is the father of three, and lives with his wife in Texas.

typewriterweekly.com

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Martin Luther King Jr. Day is Next Monday

CBTx
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We will reopen for normal business hours on Tuesday, January 20, 2026.

Have a great holiday weekend!



Solution at www.cbt.com

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Member FDIC

Sports

RAINS LADY CAT & WILDCAT BASKETBALL

Lady Cats bounce back, Wildcats secure district win



Leader photo by CHUCK FITTS

With a Tiger looming over him, Wildcat Trey Canady (13) glides in for the layup during the 43-40 district loss to Commerce in Talkington Gym on Friday night, January 9.

By CHUCK FITTS

Rains County Leader staff

The Rains Lady Cats returned to form in District 12-3A with two convincing victories, while the Rains Wildcats notched their first district win.

On Friday, January 9, the high school teams hosted Commerce in Talkington Gym for district games.

The Lady Cats bounced back from their first district loss by suffocating the Lady Tigers, 66-36.

In the second game of the evening, the Wildcats sawed the lead with the Tigers, but miscues at the end resulted in a 43-40 district loss to Commerce.

On Tuesday, January 13, the teams traveled to Mount Vernon.

The Lady Cats built a 32-8 halftime lead and cruised to a 66-19 district win over the Lady Tigers.

The Wildcats held the Tigers to four points in the second quarter and scored a district win, 46-36.

The Rains Lady Cats improve to 4-1 in District 12-3A and 23-4 for the season. The Rains Wildcats move 1-2 in district and 8-13 for the season.

The high school teams will continue district play on Friday, January 16, when they host the Prairiland Patriots and Lady Patriots.

On Tuesday, January 20, they will take on the Chishum Mustangs and Lady Mustangs in Talkington Gym.

LUKE CLAYTON

White bass like it cold

With the start of each year, I begin thinking about all the exciting things coming up in the outdoors. Muzzleloader deer season opens in a matter of days, and I have my CVA 50 caliber Optima all cleaned, sighted in and ready to go. If there were an official hog hunting season, it would begin with the close of whitetail season. I absolutely love hunting wild hogs year-round, but there is no better time than cold weather for putting that great-eating wild pork in the freezer.

Spring turkey season is only three months away, and there are not many things that get my blood pumping like the sound of a big gobbler answering my call from back in the woods on a spring day when the woods are adorned with those first touches of green.

The first fishing event of the year, other than fishing stocked ponds and city lakes for rainbow trout, is the white bass run.

I look forward to fishing creeks above our many lakes with healthy white bass populations during the spring run, which often begins in early February and lasts through April. But there is no better time than the present to stock the freezer or have a fish fry of freshly caught white bass fillets.

This past week, I joined Lake Ray Hubbard guide Brandon Sargent with Lead Slinger's Guide Service and good friend Jeff Rice for some fast-paced white bass catching.

This time of year, white bass stack up on the lower end of lakes in huge schools and go on a feeding frenzy in preparation for their spawn.

In a few weeks, depending on weather and rainfall, they will begin their annual migration up toward

the creeks and rivers that feed the lake, but right now the majority of 'whites' can be found in the lower lake, and catching can be red hot.

As Brandon eased "Big Bertha," his big guide out of Sapphire Bay Marina, he gave Jeff and me a preview of how he expected the morning to go. "We will fish the lower lake, and I'll be looking for huge balls of baitfish (shad) in water around 20 feet deep.

Find a heavy concentration of bait, and we will find the white bass.

Let's head to a spot that has been packed with both white bass and baitfish. I've been limiting out in this area on most recent trips; occasionally it's necessary to move a bit to keep up with the fish, but the area has been consistent for catching jumbo-size white bass with many in the 14-16-inch range."

As we approached the area he had been fishing, the GPS trail on his graph

looked like a bowl of spaghetti; it was obvious he had spent a great deal of time in these few acres of the lake on the past few trips.

We didn't begin fishing immediately. Brandon studied his sonar carefully, and we watched several small balls of bait pass under the boat.

He noted that we could catch a few fish from these small schools, but the mother lode would be holding around the big concentrations of bait.

After a few minutes of searching, he activated the Spot Lock that keeps the boat perfectly positioned, turned on his BoBo's thumper, and the little trolling motor that churns the water on the surface.

Game fish are attracted to the thumping sound, and the water churning on the surface helps trigger the bite.

On the screen of his forward-facing sonar, clouds of white bass

began to show, many in a vertical pattern that indicated feeding fish.

We were using half-ounce

lead slabs that Brandon custom builds, and the drill was to position the baits just above the fish and slowly crank them up, mimicking a baitfish fleeing for its life.

Almost every strike came as the fish came from below to catch the bait. For many years, I've caught white bass in the dead of winter by keeping slabs right on bottom.

Back in the days before modern sonar, we had no idea they would chase baits vertically up the water column in the winter when the water was cold. I tried my old winter pattern of dropping the slab to the bottom and just holding it there,

giving a slight jiggle to the rod to imitate a wounded shad, but nary a bite!

I have no explanation as to why this old method did not produce, but I didn't stick with it very long; the whites wanted a vertical presentation, and that's what we gave them.

We kept enough of the white bass for a great meal of tasty fish tacos back at the marina, prepared by Chef Brandon!

The key to a good-tasting white bass fillet is to remove the red meat. The fillets on larger white bass have a thin layer of red meat on the outside of the fillet, which can easily be trimmed by leaving the fillet knife blade an eighth inch or so above the skin side of the fillet.

Properly trimmed white bass are great-tasting fish, and it takes little time to trim the red meat.

Brandon is also doing evening wild hog hunts near Crandall using thermal scopes around corn feeders.

To learn more about his fishing and hog hunts, contact Lead Slingers Guide Service at 469-989-1010.

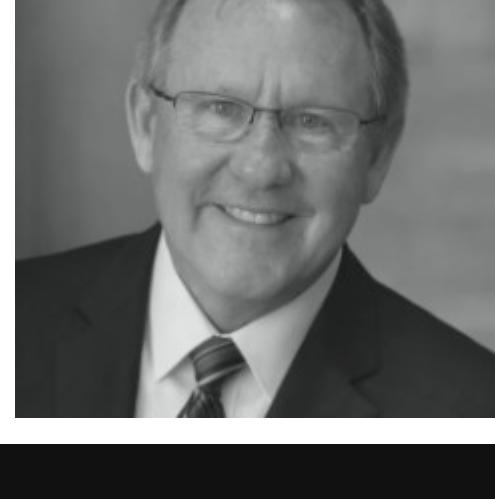
Listen to Luke's weekly radio show/podcast "Catfish Radio with Luke Clayton" just about everywhere podcasts are found. Email Luke through his website, www.catfishradio.org.



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



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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.

Emory Methodist Church

By Mary White

"Therefore go and make disciples of all nations, baptizing them in the name of the Father and of the Son and of the Holy Spirit,"

Matthew 28:19

Today was the second Sunday of Epiphany where we gathered to see what God has done and envision what God will do. Our new leaders of the church spoke about what our church looks like and our vision for the future in 2026. One of the speakers was Brad Thomas and he told how two different couples approached him when he and his wife Lori first came to the church. They made them feel so welcome and told him God needed them here. He is now

Finance Chair and Youth Leader. So this is our mandate, read the Great Commission and as if Jesus is speaking to you go and make disciples.

Coming up we will have our Friday night game on January 16 at 6:00 p.m. Bring a finger food snack and a game you want to play. We also have games on hand. All are welcome so come and fellowship with us.

There will be the Emmaus Meeting after worship on January 25.

Birthday wishes go to Frances Cason.

Pray for Cherry Krantz, Christy DeLaCruz, Billy Morris, Kay English, Betty Mendoza, Jeanie Banks and Debbie Fischer.

Have a great week.

Gay Poston

1964 - 2026



Funeral services for Gay Poston, 61, of Alba, were held on January 12, at Enon Baptist Church, with Bro. Reggie Day officiating.

Interment followed at Pleasant Ridge Cemetery. Serving as pallbearers were Asa Staley, Jr., John Staley, Jeremy Ragsdale, Mason Ragsdale, Jake Hass and Justin Hass.

Mrs. Poston died on January 8, 2026, at her home in Alba. She was born on October 28, 1964, in Dallas.

She lived in the Alba area all of her life. She was a member of Enon Baptist Church and worked as an aluminum fabricator. In 1984, she married Gilley Poston.

She lived and loved life to the fullest. She was a devoted wife, momma, and Mimi, and had a deep love for helping others. Her

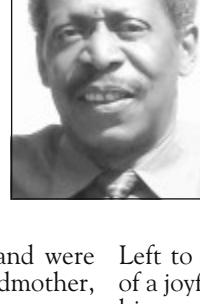
kindness and generosity touched many lives.

Mrs. Poston is survived by her husband of 41 years; mother, Helen Hass of Alba; son, Dakota Poston and wife Alicia of Alba; three brothers, Asa Staley, Jr. of Alba, John Staley and wife Kim of Fate, and Jackie Staley of Alba; four sisters, Gloria Ragsdale and husband Mike of Alba, Marie Ingram and husband Don of Quitman, Libby Hass of Alba, and Chastity Hass of Alba; three grandchildren, James, Johnny and Lucas; and numerous other relatives and friends.

She was preceded in death by her son, Mike Poston; and her father, Henry Hass. Services were under the direction of Wilson-Bartley Funeral Home, Alba.

Mark Clifton Turner

1952-2026



Mark Clifton Turner (affectionately known as "Mutt" to family and friends) was born on December 11, 1952, the third of H. T. and Stella Mae Turner's five children. An older brother Johnny, his youngest sister Tina, and his father and mother preceded him in death. After his mother died at an early age, Mark and his three sisters moved to Point and were raised by their paternal grandmother, Maud Turner.

Mark was educated first at Richland (a Rosenwald school) in Point, and then at Rains High after schools in the County were integrated in the late 1960s. After high school, Mark worked briefly at the Lee Jeans factory in Sulphur Springs.

In the late 70s/early 80s, Mark completed a course of studies in the then-pioneering field of digital telephone switching and business telephone systems. Thereafter he worked for Northern Telecom, rising quickly through the ranks from installer to regional management. At Northern Telecom, Mark's hard work and impeccable work ethic earned him numerous performance awards including the company's Circle of Excellence Award twice. After Northern Telecom, he continued using his management skills at Dallas-based All Temps 1

Personnel.

The hallmarks of Mark's life throughout his life were his quiet demeanor, ever-present empathy, and unwavering generous nature. Those who benefitted from his nonjudgmental generosity are far too numerous to recount here.

Mark departed this physical plane on January 6, 2026.

Left to celebrate his life with the hope of a joyful reunion with him one day are his two daughters - Kim Turner (Dallas, TX) and Shawna Turner (Garland, TX); three grandchildren - Waylon, Caden and Kai; six great-grandchildren - Nyemiah, Aarielle, Waylon, Jr., Wayannah, Way Quan, and Aleyiah; two sisters - Linda Hayes (San Diego, CA) and Maebeth Turner (Emory, TX), as well as legions of cousins and dear friends, many of whom he grew up and maintained contact with his entire life.

Visitation/Viewing will take place on Friday, January 16, 2026 from 12:00 p.m. to 6:00 p.m. at Cozine and Tarver Funeral Home, 1608 King Street in Greenville. Funeral services will be at 1:00 p.m. Saturday, January 17, 2026 at Bull Creek Cowboy Church, 9591 West Highway 69 in Lone Oak. Interment will follow at Benton Hill Cemetery in Point.

Paid obituary

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WWW.RAINSCOUNTYLEADER.COM

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



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

Choir Practice

6:30pm

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

Wednesday

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

Choir Practice 6:30pm

EMORY METHODIST CHURCH

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One Block from the Square

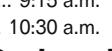
Sunday School 9:30 a.m.

Worship Time 10:30 a.m.

903-473-2411 • EmoryMC.org

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

Sunday School 9:15 a.m.

Morning Worship 10:30 a.m.

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.bbemory.org

903-474-0027

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

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



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

Believers' Baptist Church

By Linda Brendle

But God said to him, "Fool! This night your soul is required of you, and the things you have prepared, whose will they be?"

Luke 12:20

Duffey Henderson, Music & Media Minister, brought a message from Luke this week called "A Fool and His Money." As Jesus teaches, a man from the crowd demands that He tell his brother to divide his inheritance with him. Jesus points out that He is not an arbitrator of civil matters. Then Jesus warns against a covetous heart, following up with a parable to show its dangers. Jesus concludes by saying that the man reaped his earthly reward but failed to

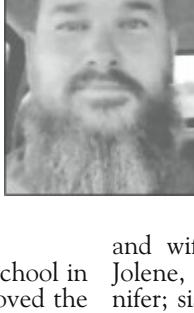
obtain what truly matters, a heavenly reward, eternal life. In what ways are you prone to covetousness in your heart? Do you find yourself placing far too much weight on earthly, material possessions and wealth?

Coming Events:
Sanctity of Human Life – January 18
Members' Meeting – January 25
Wednesday Morning Women's Bible Study resumes January 28

Home Group Fellowships – February 1
BBC and Emory Baptist Student Ministry Winter Retreat – January 17-19, \$85 per student. See Pastor Jerod Haygood for more information.

Damon Corey Donald

1979 – 2025



United States Marine Corps. He was a veteran of the Iraq war.

Following his military service, he devoted himself to education, serving as an Agriculture teacher for Rains High School in Emory, and the Avinger and Linden-Kildare Independent School Districts.

He is survived by his mother; three brothers, Darrell Donald and wife Casey, Daniel Donald and wife Jolene, and Dennis Donald and wife Jennifer; sister, Kayden Donald; and numerous nieces and nephews.

He was preceded in death by his father.

Cecil Moon

1939 – 2026



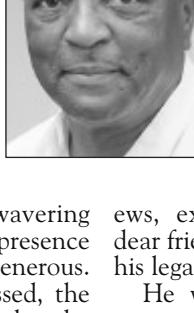
his church community, where he could be seen every Sunday, both participating in Sunday school and driving the church bus.

Mr. Moon is survived by sons, Wendell Moon and wife Chaunn, and Russell Moon and fiancée Machelle; grandchildren, Taylor Beasley and husband Jonathan, Bailey Kiser and husband Kyle, Jordan Thomas and husband Al, Brittney Burgess and husband Josh, Megan Moon, Corey Moon, Jordan McReynolds, and Andrew Jesko and wife Lindsey; siblings, Carol Kennedy, Frankie Moon, and Bub Moon; great-grandchildren, Kinlee Wright, Hartlee Beasley, Wyatt Beasley, Lawsyn Kiser, Rachel Thomas, Timothy Thomas, Keena Burgess, Daxton Burgess, and Leeah McReynolds; and numerous nieces, nephews, cousins and friends.

He was preceded in death by his parents.

Ray Turner

1955-2026



It is with profound love and deep sorrow that we announce the passing of our beloved father, grandfather, brother, and friend, Ray Turner, who peacefully entered eternal rest on Sunday, January 11, 2026, at the age of 70.

A man of quiet strength and genuine kindness, Ray was known for his warm wit, infectious laughter, and unwavering support of those he loved. His presence was steady, and his heart was generous. Though he will be deeply missed, the memories he created and the values he instilled will forever live on in the hearts of all who knew him.

Ray leaves to cherish his memory his loving wife, Evelyn Turner; daughter, Deanita McCall (Dwoski); sons, Raymond (Marcela) and Cedric (Megan); grandchildren, Caleb, Seth, Sophia,

Berkleigh, and Quinn; two sisters, Maud Hay (Ronald) and Nelder Stewart (Bobby); three brothers, James (Demeatra), Arvin Glenn, and Kenneth; one aunt, Addine Thomas; one uncle, Wilbur Clark; three sisters-in-law, Deborah Green (Leroy), Janice Henley (Lester), and Sharon Ayer's (James); along with a host of nieces, nephews, extended family members, and dear friends who will continue to honor his legacy.

He was preceded in death by his parents, Morris Oliver Turner and Lillian Ruth Clark Turner; two brothers, Nelson and Alvin; and one sister, Sharlene.

A Celebration of Life honoring Ray Turner will be held on Tuesday, January 20, 2026, at 11:00 a.m. at Richland Baptist Church.

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We invite you to study God's word with us soon.

CHURCH OF CHRIST

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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.

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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.

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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
- 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."

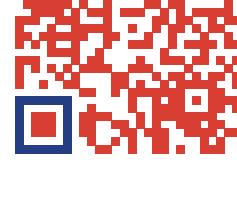
Integrity & Access



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



KEEP THE FRESH START GOING



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