

# Rains County Leader

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Vol. 139, Issue 31 - 1 Sections, 8 pages

EMORY, TEXAS - THURSDAY, JANUARY 15, 2026

PRICE 75¢

## 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 cafetorium 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

see **SPOTLIGHT** on page 2



Gwen Petersen



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

Page 3

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

page 3

**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](http://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., Rains County Library, Email [TheRainsGardenClub@gmail.com](mailto: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

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

**RAINS ISD SCHOOL BOARD**  
2nd Monday, 6:30 p.m., Philip Alexander Board Room  
Rains ISD Administration Building.

**RAINS COUNTY EMERGENCY SERVICES DISTRICT #1**  
3rd Monday, 6:30 p.m., Emory Fire Station

**RAINS COUNTY VETERANS SERVICE OFFICE:**  
Mon., Tues. and Thurs., 8:00 a.m. - 5:00 p.m., 110 E. North St.  
**TRANSPORTATION:**  
To schedule a ride Call 903-474-7231

**RAINS COUNTY ROAD & BRIDGE**  
Open Mon.-Fri. 7 a.m.-4 p.m.  
903-473-5099 or 5098

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.



BRANDON ROBERTS  
Edward Jones  
Financial Advisor

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?

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.

This content was provided by 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.

THE PUBLIC FORUM

Dear Editor

Monday January 12, Rains County had it's 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

Government, State House Representative, State Board of Education Region 9, US Congressional District TX32. The event was held at Rains Elementary School in an effort to help support the community. About 120 people were there in support of their Commissioner candidate for Precincts 2&4, Justice of the Peace, Rains County Judge. The moderator was Angela Breitreutz and kudos to her for getting the Candidates in front of the voters of Rains 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 pymts. 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	13,383.80	11,873.32	12.72	13,383.80	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	1,109.94	624.85	77.63	1,109.94	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	19.94
Willis Point	2.0	166,708.93	197,346.29	-15.52	166,708.93	197,346.29	-15.52
Wood	0.5%	\$283,765.27	\$245,192.22	15.73	\$283,765.27	\$245,192.22	15.73%
Alba	1.5	29,283.64	31,022.17	-5.60	29,283.64	31,022.17	-5.60
Hawkins	1.5	52,707.31	42,779.29	23.20	52,707.31	42,779.29	23.20
Mineola	1.5	287,044.10	245,627.69	16.86	287,044.10	245,627.69	16.86
Quitman	1.5	87,089.46	78,630.15	10.75	87,089.46	78,630.15	10.75
Winnsboro	1.5	126,932.99	110,579.25	14.78	126,932.99	110,579.25	14.78
Yantis	1.5	12,042.90	12,887.32	-6.55	12,042.90	12,887.32	-6.55

SPOTLIGHT

Continued from page 1

public outreach with the Emory Police Department by gathering its officers together to distribute popsicles for kids on a hot summer day and passing out coffee vouchers to the public. She said that plans are for staff to hand out free coffee to customers through the window at a local business. This is an effort to let the public know that local police are not just about making traffic stops.

Petersen and her husband

were married in 1989 and have two daughters. The oldest is a personal assistant and a surgical technician. The youngest is an athletic trainer at Fullerton University in California. She is also a traveling trainer for women's Olympic volleyball and is engaged to be married.

"I am very excited to be part of Emory and see it grow," said Petersen. "We have a saying here: 'We are on a resign-freeze policy at the police department.'"

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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](http://www.sudokuoftheday.com) for further tips and help about how to play - and good luck!

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

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## RAINS LADY CAT & WILDCAT BASKETBALL

**LUKE CLAYTON**

With the start of each year, I begin thinking about all the exciting things coming up in the outdoors. Muzzleloader deer season



**Luke Clayton**  
*Outdoor Columnist*

cial 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 used for 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](http://www.catfishradio.org).



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. 66-28.

In the second game of the evening, the Wildcats seasawed 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 Chisum Mustangs and Lady Mustangs in Talkington Gym.

# 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](mailto: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.



Sheriff's Report

The Sheriff's Department reported the following calls for the period of January 5 through January 11:

Arrests

**1-5:** Sarah Marie Cordy-Ramsey. Possession of a controlled substance PG 1/1-B greater than or equal to 1 gr. less than 4 gr., no bond listed



MICHAEL HOPKINS  
Rains County Sheriff

**1 - 5 :** Christopher Fletcher. Assault causing bodily injury to family member; possession of marijuana less than 2 oz; possession of a controlled substance PG 2

greater than or equal to 4 gr. less than 400 gr., \$300,000 bond.

**1-6:** Dylan Joseph Lummus. Traffic offense Class C, \$150 bond.

**1-6:** Brownie Adrin Smith Jr. Stalking, \$10,000 bond.

**1-7:** Logan Cole Wallace. Driving while intoxicated, warrant, \$50,000 bond.

**1-8:** Lacey Marie Snyder. Criminal trespass, no bond listed.

**1-10:** David Michael Mathis. Aggravated assault causing serious bodily injury, no bond listed.

Calls

**1-5:** Hwy. 276 Accident; FM 779 Animal welfare concern - assistance provided; Laresa St. Welfare

concern; Hwy. 19 at CR 3025 Reckless driving; CR 1275 Public service; Hwy. 276 Abandoned vehicle; FM 779 Domestic disturbance - one arrested; Sheriff's Office (SO) lobby Fraud reported; CR 3425 Medical assist; W North St. Arrest; E Lennon Dr. Debris in roadway; Alexander Dr. Funeral escort; FM 513 Welfare concern; Hwy. 69 Livestock on roadway - unable to locate; N Texas St. Accident; SO call Civil issue; W North St. Suicidal subject - one transported; FM 3299 Medical assist; N Texas St. Accident; FM 514 Harassment; Quitman St. Motorist assist; S Texas St. Accident; SO lobby Meet complainant; CR 3503 Controlled burn;

Laresa St. Suspicious activity; Laresa St. Medical assist; CR 1490 Extra patrol.

**1-6:** Wood St. Disorderly conduct; N Planters St. Business alarm; W Lennon Dr. Damaged property; E Lennon Dr. Pedestrian stop; FM 47 Welfare concern; W Lennon Dr. Controlled burn; N Texas St. Medical assist; Hwy. 69E Reckless driving; SO lobby Meet complainant; CR 1540 Abandoned vehicle; SO lobby Meet complainant; FM 514 Grass fire; SO lobby Meet complainant; E Lennon Dr. Follow up investigation; Airport Rd. Warrant service; CR 3328 Controlled burn; Hwy. 69 Medical assist; PR 7707 Brush fire; Industrial Blvd. Panic alarm; CR 3335 Civil matter; W FM 514 Suspicious vehicle; FM 2737 Suspicious person; FM 514 Welfare concern; CR 1605 Medical assist; CR 3350 Medical assist; FM 2737 Suspicious person; Airport Rd. Medical assist; CR 1490 Suicidal subject; CR 3450 Welfare concern; PR 7332 Warrant service.

**1-7:** Hwy. 69 Livestock on roadway; Industrial Blvd. Alarm business; W North St. Arrest; Hwy. 276 Assist motorist; CR 3236 Medical assist; CR 1275 Animal at large; CR 1495 Controlled burn; CR 3450 Welfare concern; S Hwy. 19 Medical assist; CR 1411 Welfare concern; Airport Rd. Noise complaint; SO lobby Meet complainant; FM 47 Livestock on roadway; Hwy. 276 Investigation; PR 5937 Agency assist; E FM 2795 Grass fire; N Locust St. Follow up investigation; W Quitman St. Abandoned vehicle; CR 3133 Brush fire; SO lobby Meet complainant; Hwy. 69 Reckless driving; CR 2450 Brush fire; E Lennon Dr. Welfare concern; 5th St. Brush fire; CR 1690 Suicidal subject; FM 515 Reckless driving; Wood St. Public service; Hwy. 69 Brush fire; FM 514 Brush fire; E Lennon Dr. Meet complainant; FM 514 Disturbance; S First St. Medical assist; SO lobby Meet complainant; W FM 2795 Suspi-

cious person; Hwy. 276 Disturbance; CR 3328 Brush fire; E Lennon Dr. Suspicious person; Hwy. 19S Reckless driving.

**1-8:** Laresa St. Suspicious activity; Honeysuckle Ln. Smoke investigation; Hwy. 69W Medical assist; W Lennon Dr. Warrant service; PR 5450 Medical assist; FM 3299 Medical assist; McMillan Dr. Civil matter; CR 1450 Medical assist; Hwy. 69 Suspicious person; CR 1150 Medical assist; Ave. B Civil matter; Club Park Ct. Medical assist; Hwy. 19S Brush fire; Hwy. 19S Accident; Laresa St. Terroristic threats; FM 47 Livestock on roadway; CR 1409 Investigation; Hwy. 19S Grass fire; CR 3450 Welfare concern; CR 1307 Theft; Northcutt Addn. City ordinance violation; CR 1402 Livestock on roadway; CR 3330 Agency assist; Hwy. 19N Traffic hazard.

**1-9:** Laresa St. Suspicious activity; Hwy. 276 Follow up investigation; CR 1490 Medical assist; E Hwy. 276 Follow up investigation; E North St. Investigation; CR 2250 Harassment; W Quitman St. Follow up investigation; CR 1605 Welfare concern; W Hwy. 69 Welfare concern; E Lennon Dr. Meet complainant; CR 1490 Welfare concern; W North St. Problems with a juvenile; W North St. Repossession; CR 3325 Medical assist; CR 1691 Extra patrol; W Lennon Dr. Criminal trespass; Airport Rd. Follow up investigation; FM 47 Medical assist; Airport Rd. Public service; E Lennon Dr. Accident; W North St. Accident; FM 47 Suspicious activity; Industrial Blvd. Business alarm.

**1-10:** FM 513 Suspicious person; W North St. Stolen vehicle; CR 1402 Disturbance; CR 3425 Neighbor dispute; SO lobby Meet complainant; Hwy. 19S Follow up investigation; Ravine St. Warrant service; FM 514 Fight in progress; CR 1621 Medical assist; CR 1450 Medical assist; Hwy. 19S Meet complainant; CR 3325 Medical assist; Lone Eagle Dr. Agency assist; 3rd St.

Terroristic threats.

**1-11:** 47 Abandoned vehicle; 3rd St. Suspicious vehicle; Laresa St. Suspicious activity; Hwy. 69W Welfare concern; PR 7709 Welfare concern; Hwy. 276 Medical assist; CR 1605 Public assist; N Texas St. Medical assist; E FM 2795 Reckless driving; SO lobby Meet complainant; CR 1235 Livestock on roadway; SO lobby Meet complainant; CR 3346 Controlled burn; E Lennon Dr. Reckless driving; CR 3330 Death; Hwy. 69 Smoke investigation; SO lobby Child custody; E Lennon Dr. Noise complaint; CR 3330 Public service; PR 7332 Noise complaint; Hwy. 69 Reckless driving.

The Sheriff's Department reported 327 calls for the week. Among the calls were: 8 fire - brush, 1 criminal trespass, 1 damaged property, 1 debris in roadway, 1 disorderly conduct, 3 disturbance, 1 domestic disturbance, 2 extra patrol, 1 fight in progress, 7 follow up investigation, 1 fraud, 1 funeral escort, 2 harassment, 3 investigation, 7 livestock on roadway, 14 meet complainant, 1 neighbor dispute, 3 noise complaint, 3 fire-grass, 1 problems with a juvenile, 19 public service, 8 reckless driving, 1 repossession, 2 smoke investigation, 1 stolen vehicle, 3 suicidal subject, 5 suspicious activity, 6 suspicious person, 2 suspicious vehicle, 2 terroristic threats, 1 theft, 1 traffic hazard, 5 warrant service, 14 welfare concern, 7 accident, 5 controlled burn, 1 death, 1 public assist, 2 arrest, 1 pedestrian stop, 4 abandoned vehicle, 3 agency assist, 4 alarm business, 1 alarm panic, 1 animal at large, 1 animal welfare concern, 2 assist motorist, 1 child custody, 1 city ordinance violation, and 3 civil matter.

There were 132 traffic stops, 46 citations, 83 warnings, 25 medical calls and 16 transports.

THIS WEEK IN TEXAS HISTORY

Great Writer a Miserable Human Being

by Bartee Haile

The search for George Sessions Perry, missing from his riverside home in Connecticut, entered its second month on Jan. 14, 1957 with no sign of the famous writer. The future novelist and magazine contributor was born and raised in the Central Texas town of Rockdale. His father, owner of two drug stores, and artistic mother doted on their only child gladly granting his every wish.



BARTEE HAILE  
Historical Columnist

Even though the Perrys did not live directly off the land, the sensitive boy empathized with the sharecroppers and tenant farmers of Milam County. Two of his early unpublished novels were scathing indictments of the rural poverty witnessed in his youth.

The head of the household died of Bright's disease, which destroys the kidneys, in 1921, when Perry was 11 years old. His emotionally fragile mother quickly married again but took her own life in 1923.

According to a childhood friend, Perry felt responsible for the tragic death of his beloved mother. "First, because his failure to give her the affection she needed caused her to remarry, and then because he did not kill the husband who had made her so unhappy."

The orphan rebelled against his domineering and ill-tempered grandmother and an uncle, who doled out the income from his inheritance. In response to Perry's bad behavior and poor grades, the surrogate father packed him off to Allen Academy in Bryan, where he shaped up and finished high school.

After attending Southwestern University, Purdue and the University of Houston, Perry quit college altogether and spent six months selling shoes and lampshades

in Chicago. Deciding to see the world, he worked his way across the Atlantic aboard a freighter but was caught without a passport in France and deported to the United States.

Perry sweet-talked his uncle into giving him some traveling money and returned to Europe. Half a year in Spain, France and Algeria satisfied his wanderlust and rekindled his interest in writing.

In 1931 Perry came back to the Lone Star State and married Claire Hodges, a coed he met at Southwestern. The newlyweds moved into the family home with his grandmother and struggled to survive on \$100 a month from the groom's inheritance.

Over the next six years, the aspiring author produced six novels and more than 50 short stories, all with rural Texas settings, but never got so much as a nibble from publishing houses and national magazines.

Perry surely would have given up without the steadfast support and encouragement of his self-sacrificing soul mate. Claire not only translated his scrawl into neatly typed manuscripts and corrected his grammar but also stood up to her husband's dictatorial granny, something his own mother had never done.

His big break came at last in 1937. The *Saturday Evening Post* finally accepted one of Perry's submissions and, Doubleday bought his first novel, *Walls Rise Up*, the comic tale of three Brazos River vagrants. Within two years, he sold a dozen more short stories and went to Hollywood to work on a movie script.

*Hold Autumn in Your Hand*, generally considered the best depiction of agrarian life in Texas, was published in 1941. The critically acclaimed book won the Texas Institute of Letters award and the National Book Award for the 31-year-old novelist and inspired the 1945 motion picture "The Southerner" starring Texas

native Zachary Scott.

Perry felt humiliated by his rejection for military service in World War II due to a stiff elbow suffered in a fall from a horse. Determined to do his patriotic part, he went overseas as a civilian war correspondent and covered the Allied landings on Sicily in 1943.

Perry was so traumatized by the horrors of combat that he could never again bring himself to write fiction. Light-hearted yarns about the colorful folk of the Texas countryside seemed sacrilegious after what he had seen.

Perry stayed busy, however, knocking out 57 magazine pieces, most for the *Saturday Evening Post* and its sister periodical the *Country Gentleman*, between 1945 and 1950. Twenty-four of those articles were for *The Post's* popular "Cities of America" series, an ironic assignment for someone who openly despised urban life.

In the early 1950's, Perry's output dropped to six or seven articles a year. His sole book-length project was the 75th anniversary history of Texas A&M.

Arthritis of the spine made writing more and more difficult. For years, Perry had put off seeing a doctor for the crippling condition, preferring to medicate himself with whiskey, and by 1954 he was an alcoholic wreck haunted by voices and hallucinations.

Shortly before the tormented Texan disappeared in December 1956, the friend who would identify his body two months later dropped by the author's Connecticut home. "The best thing I can do in this depressed state," George Sessions Perry told the visitor, "is either jump into the river and swim to the north pole or run into the woods until I drop."

The 45-year-old basket-case must have tried to do the former because it was in the river that flowed past his home that searchers finally found his remains.

Contact Bartee Haile at barteehaile@gmail.com or by mail at P.O. Box 130011, Spring, TX 77393.

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PAT O'DONNELL

for Rains County Commissioner, Precinct 2

Experience

I've been very blessed in life, and those experiences have prepared me to make solid, practical decisions for Rains County. While commissioners no longer personally build roads, we still need someone in that role who truly understands construction and what our Road and Bridge crews need to do their jobs well. Along with experience in budgeting, purchasing, and contracts, I also bring a strong background in road construction and heavy equipment.

My goal is simple: to ensure our tax dollars are spent wisely and that Rains County receives the quality it deserves.

**Director of School Maintenance and Transportation:** I managed million-dollar taxpayer-funded budgets and oversaw 14 school buildings and a full bus fleet. I supervised major construction projects and constantly looked for ways to save the district money. To reduce outside costs, I earned my A/C and heating license, herbicide/pesticide license, and bus-driver instructor certification so more work could be handled in-house.

I was responsible for purchasing and vendor contracts, and I maintained roughly 20 buses and school-owned vehicles. I even spent time under buses bracing and welding frames damaged by county roads. And when a driver called in sick at 5 a.m., I was often the one behind the wheel to make sure kids got to school safely.

**TxDOT/Instructor for Amarillo College:** I spent years with TxDOT running heavy equipment and building and maintaining roads. When I went to work for Amarillo College, I traveled across Texas teaching week-long courses to TxDOT and county employees. I wrote instruction manuals and taught heavy equipment operation and safety, road building and maintenance, road materials, and the importance of proper drainage.

Family & Background

I was raised in Grand Saline, but my wife Mandy is a lifelong resident of Rains County. Her parents are Stanley McAree and the late Elaine McAree. Her dad is now 83 and doesn't get out much, so when we're not on a jobsite, we're working on the family farm. Mandy's family has been in Rains County for generations, and we're proud to continue that legacy.

We have five children and three grandchildren, and we're proud of every one of them. They're all hardworking and contributing positively in their communities. Our youngest is still at home, taking online classes through Tyler Junior College and working the contractor's desk at Hooten's Hardware.

I've always worked at least two jobs-most often running equipment or welding after hours, on weekends, and during holidays. Like many families, Covid pushed Mandy and me to reevaluate our future, and we took our construction business full-time. We work-sometimes argue-side by side every day, and we've been blessed to stay busy, especially here in Rains County.

This county is our home, our livelihood, and our family's future. That's why I'm committed to serving it with the same work ethic and dedication that have guided my entire life

**PROPERTY OWNERS HAVE CERTAIN RIGHTS THAT MAY REDUCE THEIR PROPERTY TAX BURDEN**

**HOMEOWNERS** can reduce their property tax bills by taking advantage of homestead exemptions offered by counties, cities, school districts and other local taxing units. A homestead generally consists of a structure and land used as the owner's principal residence on Jan. 1 of the tax year or at time of purchase if acquired after Jan. 1. The homestead exemption reduces the taxable value of your home and can help lower your taxes. An individual is entitled to defer the portion of the appraised value of property they own and occupy as their residence homestead that exceeds the sum of 105 percent of the appraised value of the property for the preceding year. Although the tax collection is deferred, interest continues to run on the unpaid portion of tax at a rate of 5% per year, and the deferred tax remains a lien on the property.

**BUSINESS PERSONAL PROPERTY OWNERS** must file a rendition if you own personal property that is used to produce income – such as the inventory, fixtures, and equipment used by a business, the vehicle and equipment used to transport materials, or the equipment used to provide services. Failure to file the rendition or filing late will result in a 10% penalty. If a fraudulent rendition is filed, a 50% penalty may be imposed. A rendition can be obtained from the Appraisal District office where the property is located. Deadline to file is April 15th each year. A 30-day filing extension is available by written request prior to April 15th.

**PERSONS WHO ARE OVER 65 YEARS OF AGE OR DISABLED** persons who are over 65 years of age or persons who are declared disabled by the Social Security Administration may file for additional exemptions. They may also qualify for a tax ceiling (often referred to as a freeze) on school and locally adopted city, county, and special district taxes for their residential homestead. They are also eligible to defer paying the tax on their residential homestead but the taxes continue to accrue during the deferral along with an interest rate of 5% annually, but no attempt will be made to force payment during the deferral. In addition, a person who is disabled or at least 65 years of age and has a qualified tax ceiling on their homestead may pay their taxes in four equal installments.

**DISABLED VETERANS.** People who have been awarded by the Veterans Administration to have a service-connected disability of 10% or more are eligible for additional exemptions on property they own. The amount of exemption is determined according to the percentage of service-connected disability shown on the veteran's VA Form. A disabled veteran who is awarded from the VA a 100% disability compensation due to a service-connected disability and a rating of 100% disabled or of individual unemployment is entitled to an exemption from taxation of the total appraised value of the Veteran's homestead.

**SURVIVING SPOUSES OF U.S ARMED SERVICES MEMBER KILLED OR FATALLY INJURED IN THE LINE OF DUTY OR FIRST RESPONDERS KILLED IN LINE OF DUTY.** The surviving spouse of a member of the U.S. armed services who is killed or fatally injured in the line of duty or the eligible surviving spouse of a first responder killed in the line of duty are allowed a total (100 percent) property tax exemption on his or her residence homestead, if the surviving spouse has not remarried since the death of the armed services member or first responder.

**FARM AND RANCH OWNERS** may be entitled to receive an alternate method of appraisal determined by the farm income by the property. This method is available to farms and ranches raising crops and / or livestock or property is being used as a wildlife habitat under State guidelines. An application for productivity (ag) use value and additional information is available from Rains CAD.

**FILE APPLICATIONS BY APRIL 30.** Application for agricultural use value and for all property tax exemptions including total exemptions for charitable, religious, and other total exemptions may be obtained from:

**RAINS COUNTY APPRAISAL DISTRICT**  
145 Doris Briggs Pkwy. Emory, Texas 75440 Phone 909-473-2391  
Office Hours Monday – Thursday 8:00 AM to 4:30 PM and Friday 8:00 AM to 4:00 PM or visit us online at rainscad.org



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., Wayanna, 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

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



A memorial service with full military honors for Damon Corey Donald, 46, was held on January 3, 2026, at the Mims Volunteer Fire Department in Avinger. The eulogy was given by Timothy P. White.

Mr. Donald died on December 19, 2025, in Linden. He was born on August 29, 1979, in Sulphur Springs, to David and Donna Donald.

He graduated from Rains High School in 1996 and was an avid hunter and loved the outdoors. He proudly served his country in both the United States Army and the

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



A memorial service for Cecil Moon, 86, will be held on Saturday, January 17, at 2:00 p.m., at Believers’ Baptist Church.

Mr. Moon died on January 6, 2026. He was born on October 24, 1939, to Ray Moon and June Moon (Hambrick).

He served in the US Air Force for eight years, an experience that shaped much of his character and work ethic. Following his military service, he pursued a successful career as a product development engineer.

He was a loving and involved father, committed not only to raising his children but also to supporting them in their endeavors. His proudest accomplishment was his long and happy marriage to Huberta, the love of his life. Together, they shared an extraordinary journey that spanned 69 wonderful years.

He loved airplanes and worked on them in the service. He was also an active member of

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 fiancé Machelle; grandchildren, Taylor Beasley and husband Jonathan, Bailey Kiser and husband Kyle, Jordan Thomas and husband Al, Brittany 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 (Demetra), 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.

Paid obituary

VISIT US ONLINE AT:  
WWW.RAINSCOUNTYLEADER.COM

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](http://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](http://www.pointchurchofchrist.org)

**EMORY BAPTIST CHURCH**

On The Square  
Corner Of North & Planters  
Downtown Emory  
903-473-3357  
[emorybaptist.org](http://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 Rolan — Pastor**

Jerod Haygood — Student & Family Pastor  
Duffey Henderson — Music & Media Minister  
[www.bbcmemory.org](http://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 **936-473-2653**  
**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.

Visit us online:  
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RENT/LEASE  
ALL BILLS PAID  
EAGLE INN APARTMENTS

2-BR \$973/mth. No deposit! Apply at [eagleinnapartments.com](http://eagleinnapartments.com).

For Rent 3BR/2BA manufactured home on Duffy St., \$1,300/mth. Apply at [eagleinnapartments.com](http://eagleinnapartments.com).

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

2BR/1BA Mobile Home, \$1,200/mth. \$800/dep., Point TX Ron 903-268-7089.

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.

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](http://www.mckenzielakeworks.com). 903-269-6173.

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.

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

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.

**BUY IT! SELL IT! FIND IT!**  
**IN THE CLASSIFIEDS!**  
For information, call 903-473-2653

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](http://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**  
**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

**J&R** **PARTS PLUS**  
**DISCOUNT AUTO SUPPLY**  
595 W. Lennon Dr. Emory, Texas 75440  
**903-473-2950**  
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*Your family-owned, hometown full service provider*  
**Your hometown funeral provider**  
Full service cremation provider  
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Advanced up-to-date technology  
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**News? Advertising?**  
**Subscription? Questions?**  
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**Toby Boatman GARAGE DOORS**  
*Residential Commercial*  
**Sales • Service Installation**  
**903-348-6170**  
**903-438-1970**

**FISH DAY!**  
**IT'S TIME TO STOCK YOUR POND!**  
Friday, January 30  
Carlton 1:15 PM-2:00 PM  
NE Texas Farmers Co-op  
Emory 2:45 PM-3:30 PM  
Potts Feed Store  
Greenville 4:15 PM-5:00 PM  
NE Texas Farmers Co-op  
**Saturday, February 7**  
Mineral 7:30 AM-8:15 AM  
Big Country Farm Center  
Quitman 8:45 AM-9:30 AM  
Potts Feed Store  
Sulphur Springs 10:15 AM-11:00 AM  
NE Texas Farmers Co-op  
**FISHWAGON**  
To place an order, call 1-800-643-8439  
[www.fishwagon.com](http://www.fishwagon.com)

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**L.L. Spencer Real Estate**  
*"Your Hometown Realtor" Since 1959*  
*Don R. Spencer Owner/Broker*  
**903-473-2225**  
**Judy Moody - 214-536-3214**  
**LLSpencerRealEstate.com**

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**dial 911**  
at the first sign of a stroke.  
[StrokesNoJoke.org](http://StrokesNoJoke.org)

**OFFICE : 903-473-5150**  
109 Prosperity Pkwy, Emory  
FIRM NO: 10194233

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

**LAST WEEK'S SOLUTION**  
  
Visit [www.cbtx.com](http://www.cbtx.com) for all your banking needs

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Professional Denture Systems  
**Dentures \$1195/SET**  
FROM  
• New Patients Welcome  
• Lab on premises  
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903-473-2211

**D.E. Plumbing Services**  
  
RMP 38867  
**Jonathan Christian**  
**903-513-0063**  
[jonathanchristian76@gmail.com](mailto:jonathanchristian76@gmail.com)

**Robert's Cycle & Sound, LLC**  
855 E. Lennon Dr. Emory, TX 75440  
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Cell Phone & Tablet Repair  
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Off the Square in Downtown Emory

**COOL BREEZE AC & HEATING**  
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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



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

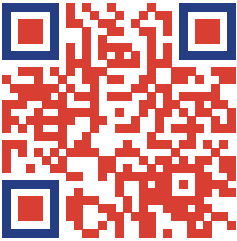
★ ★ ★ ★ ★

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

★ ★ ★ ★ ★ REPUBLICAN ★ ★ ★ ★ ★

FOR RAINS COUNTY JUDGE

KEEP THE FRESH START GOING



903-913-6003 | ElectBrentHilliard.com