

Rains County Leader

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EMORY, TEXAS - THURSDAY, JULY 16, 2026

PRICE 75¢

RAINS COUNTY

County fire marshal appointed, special tax district discussed

By **CHUCK FITTS**
Rains County Leader staff

The Rains County Commissioners Court appointed a new fire marshal for the county and discussed a sales tax district during the regular meeting on Thursday, July 9.

During the meeting, the court considered the official appointment of David Shedd as the fire marshal for Rains County. They began by unanimously approving a motion to create the office for

the county before unanimously appointing Shedd to the position.

Commissioners unanimously approved a motion to accept a bond for Shedd to serve as Rains County Fire Marshal. The position does not have a salary at this time and the office has no budget, but by creating the office, commissioners can budget for the position and the office during the upcoming budget cycle that begins on Thursday, July 16.

Rains County Judge Brent Hilliard of-

ficially swore Shedd into office following the meeting.

The court considered placing on the November ballot the creation of a special taxing district for the county.

The measure was approved by voters during the May election in 2025, but some paperwork, including city boundaries, had not been properly filed, therefore the district was never officially created.

Commissioner Jeremy Cook stated that the deadline to place the measure

on the November ballot is August 17. Cook asked that the item be placed on the agenda to begin discussion before they have to decide on placing the measure on the ballot. No action was taken on the item.

Rains County Clerk Mandy Sawyer asked the court to approve her request to use record management funds to pay for a temporary position. She informed commissioners that Deputy Clerk Lori

see **COURT** on page 2

Presenting Old Glory



Leader photo by CHUCK FITTS

The American Legion Post 156 Color Guard presented the colors for the Pledge of Allegiance during the regular meeting of the Rains County Commissioners Court on Thursday, July 9. Members of the color guard are, from left to right, David Harvey, Gary Thomas, Ed Chalk and Matt Robare.

SALES TAX ALLOCATIONS

Emory hits milestone early, county continues upward trajectory

By **CHUCK FITTS**
Rains County Leader staff

Emory eclipses a milestone earlier than previous years and Rains County continues to see increases in sales tax revenue compared to 2025 according to the new numbers released by the Texas Comptroller's office on Wednesday, July 8.

In the press release, the office of acting Texas Com-

troller Kelly Hancock announced that \$1.2 billion would be returned to Texas cities, counties, transit systems and special purpose taxing districts based on sales made in May by businesses that report tax monthly.

Rains County, with a half-cent sales tax rate, saw an increase of 13.78 percent in the amount of sales tax allocations being returned com-

pared to last year. The state will return \$92,267.75 in July, and the county remains 13.87 percent ahead of the year-to-date total at \$684,596.96.

As for the cities in the county in July, they all saw decreases in sales tax returns from the 1.5-percent sales tax rate compared to last year, but most remain ahead on year-to-date totals.

Emory saw the smallest

decrease, 0.58 percent, in the amount of sales tax revenues being returned in July, but the \$147,304.11 will push the year-to-date total over the million dollar mark a month earlier than 2025. The city's year-to-date moves to \$1,020,992.23, which is 6.87 percent ahead of last year.

The City of Point is ex-

see **SALES TAX** on page 2

POINT

Council updated on water tanks, discusses rate increases

By **CHUCK FITTS**
Rains County Leader staff

The Point City Council held a regular meeting on Thursday, July 9, to hear more updates on the work performed by J&A Coating and discuss water, sewer and garbage rate increases.

During the meeting, a representative from J&A Coating provided council members with details of work performed by the company's crews on city water tanks. They were finishing the restoration of three tanks near Flats to enable bringing them back online.

Point Mayor Angela Nelson stated they had received a proposal that could allow the city to purchase a new tank for the Clearwater site.

The contractor in charge of the new tank was talking with financial institutions about financing the purchase. If agreements could be made, the city would pay under \$10,000 per month for the new tank and its installation instead of a lump sum of \$227,000.

When the new tank is installed, J&A Coating would begin restoration of the old tank at the Clearwater site. The representative stated the repairs should take about a month with replacement of side panels, roof panels and cleaning of the tank.

Council members asked about the existing tank and the representative began to describe its condition. He was asked to stop describing it and to bring photos and video for the council to view.

The council asked J&A Coating to provide them with quarterly reports of the work they've done for Point and they agreed. No action was taken on the item as it was informational.

Nelson presented the council with a proposal to increase the water rates for City of Point water customers.

The Sabine River Authority (SRA) had presented their yearly increase to the city for pumping water out of Lake Tawakoni, and Nelson said that the

see **POINT** on page 2

SPOTLIGHT

Yashica Conley cares for children from birth to 12 years

By **JUDY KRAMER**
Rains County Leader contributor

Yashica Conley has owned Tiny Tots Day Care in Emory since 2010. She is licensed for 37 children, and she and her staff care for 29 children. She first got her experience when she was younger and babysat for neighbors with an in-home day care. She later graduated from Tyler Junior College with an associate degree in childhood education. She said that she works in this field because "I love children and they are our future."

She works with The Child Care Ser-

vices (CCS) Program that provides many services to Texans including supporting families with children and childcare providers. CCS helps her to hire people to work one-on-one with children who have special-education needs. She also works with Texas School Ready focusing on improving school readiness for children from birth to age 5, and the Texas Rising Star program that is a quality rating and improvement system for childcare programs.

Conley said that before she opened Tiny Tots Day Care, she was a truck driver who hauled cars to every state in

the country.

"It was a great experience, but I wasn't with my kids enough and wanted to be with them," she said. "I also once had a food truck where I sold BBQ and may look into doing that again."

She is a widow who loves family time and gets together with them for Sunday dinners after church and on holidays. She has two children, plus she raised two other children and has an 18-month-old godson whom she is raising. Her son is assistant director at her

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Yashica Conley



City Girl:
Reading and
Writing...

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Jody Dyer:
Football Fans
Discover...

page 3

**Texas Rural
Reporter:**
Five Political...

page 5

Rain Report

Sun., Jul. 12 0.10 in.
Mon., Jul. 13 0.38 in.
Total for June 5.92 in.
Year to date 22.89 in.

Football Fans Discover America

"If you want to hate America, watch the news. If you want to love America, drive across it."

Anonymous

For those of us with a little age and life experience, and a working knowledge of world history, we know that America is literally the greatest country ever to exist on this blue planet Earth. As we celebrate our 250th birthday this year, it's okay to recognize that America is a wonderful country. Some among us, however, lacking perspective, and perhaps a functional IQ, may dispute this fact. Accustomed as many are to the negative talking heads lambasting our great and glorious country most nights on the news, and daily online, this may be understandable. And, if you've never left the confines of your swank suburban home to amble the backstreets of Rome, seen Amsterdam after dark, or spent a week in Somalia, you may not know how good we have it or how the rest of the world really lives. There is nothing like travel to give you an education and foster a true love for our America.

But many living here today do not love America. We are covered up it seems by America haters in every corner of life. As such, it has been most refreshing to see and hear the positive reactions from the foreign visitors to our land in recent weeks, those amazingly dedicated sports fans from across the pond and around the world. If you have been living under a rock recently, you may have missed this big picture piece of sporting news. The FIFA World Cup has come to America. What we right-thinking Americans call soccer, the rest of the world knows as football (no relation to the fine he-man American football that we love). And with the flood of visitors from around the world here to see the games, all armed and recording with their ever-ready smart phones, we have been treated to their honest reactions to life in America. With matches held all over the U.S., instead of these soccer tourists only piling



JODY DYER
Typewriter Weekly

into the urban centers on each coast, many have had the opportunity to travel through our heartland for a taste of REAL America. And it has been interesting...

Enchanted by America, our visitors have been impressed with many things, including the plethora of shopping options here, from Walmart (where you can buy everything from guns to groceries), to Cosco (with toilet paper available by the pallet), to surreal Bass Pro Shops (a cathedral of camping gear). After visiting a Buc-ee's in Texas, one fan described it as a "gas station mixed with Disney World wrapped in a gift shop."

These soccer fans have been especially fascinated by our food in America. British visitors raved about how good everything tastes here compared to the UK. One post showing a Norwegian boy's delight in his burger at In-N-Out garnered almost a million views.

Freddy from Germany, an X user with 500K followers has been posting enthusiastically. Admiring the culinary pile at his table, he called Taco Bell the "holy land" of fast food. Freddy also made a stop at Waffle House, and praised the great food, great prices, and friendly smiling staff. Breakfast foods were a favorite with our new friends.

A visitor from Japan posted about his experience with biscuits and gravy. At first turned off by its appearance, he soon changed his mind, and with some literary skill wrote:

"It was magnificent, warm, peppered. The biscuits drank the gravy the way a dry field drinks rain...and every mound I had insulted was a soft fold of comfort that my homeland, in 800 years, never thought to invent."

Besides biscuits and gravy, and the wonders of Waffle House, other American delights enjoyed included crushed ice in plentiful supply at Sonic, and savory BBQ, especially melt in your mouth Texas brisket. Many soccer fans were floored by the wonder of ranch dressing. The TSA has been complaining about foreign fans at airports across the country now trying to smuggle ranch dressing home hidden in their bags.

Air conditioning has been another American convenience appreciated by our

world visitors (EU climate policies make A/C much less common in Europe).

Besides our fast food and modern conveniences, soccer fans have enjoyed everything from rodeos to Red Sox games. They have been gob smacked by our massive sports venues, while we have been deeply impressed by their appreciation (Japanese fans were seen, out of respect, staying to clean stadiums before leaving).

Visitors have also been awestruck by the breathtaking beauty of our great country. One British couple stood in tears as they looked out over the Grand Canyon. Another fan traveling through Utah marveled at the landscape of our nation, questioning that it was even real.

But perhaps the best part of this World Cup experience has been the positive social interaction between people from all over the world. Smiling Americans have been showing true hospitality and love to grateful soccer fans excited to experience the U.S.A.

These foreign friends remind me of another visitor from the past. In May of 1831, the young Alexis de Tocqueville (French magistrate, philosopher, and historian) traveled to America for what would become an enlightening nine-month tour. He distinguished himself from what some called then "our common herd of travelers" who often visited from Europe by his unbiased and friendly approach to our citizens and the accuracy of his observations. He wrote this after his visit...

"The greatness of America lies not in being more enlightened than any other nation, but rather in her ability to repair her faults."

Faults and all, America is the freest enduring experiment in self-government ever known. Let us thank God for what we have and appreciate this great and wondrous country that He has blessed us with as we continue to repair our faults and live free. Happy 250 America!

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.

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CITY GIRL

Reading and Writing in Rains County

By Linda Brendle
My favorite talk for those times when I'm asked to speak to a group about writing is one I call "How to Become a Book Writer." I first wrote this particular talk in response to an email from a fifth grade teacher. She was teaching a section on creative writing, and her students had come up with ten questions about the writing process, publishing and the business end of creating a book. Their first question became the title for the talk, and the short answer was "Read, read, read. Write, write, write. Repeat." I'm sure that answer would have frustrated the students if I had left it there, especially if they were like one little girl that approached my booth at the Fair a couple of years ago.



LINDA BRENDLE
Leader correspondent

"I want to write stories," she said, looking very serious.

"That's very good," I responded. Then, I followed up with a question. "What kind of stories do you like to read?"

"Oh," she said dismissively. "I don't like to read. I just want to write stories."

I'm sure she's not the only would-be writer who feels like that, but I don't understand that way of thinking. I believe that being a writer begins with a love of the written word, whether you're on the reading end or the writing end. I'm not much of a memoir reader – which is ironic since I've written two of them – but before I published my first memoir, I read several books of that genre. It gave me an idea of what had already been written about Alzheimer's caregiving, what I liked and didn't like, and what I might

say that hadn't already been said.

When it came time to venture into fiction, I didn't have to do any special reading. I've been reading fiction since I was four years old and discovered "The Little Red Hen" – and I've been reading mystery since I discovered Agatha Christie in fifth grade – but I still pay attention to dialogue, character development, and description. It's not like I'm studying a textbook, and it's not even really a conscious effort, but it's just a sideline of enjoying the story. It helps me solidify and further develop my own style and voice. Sometimes I hear an echo of Robert B. Parker's style in my characters' dialogue.

Since I love to read, libraries have always been one of my favorite places to go. When I visit a new place, I'm always interested to see what the public library looks like, and when I move to a new town, the library is one of the first places I check out. We have a great public library in Rains County that offers a wide variety of books, resources, and programs for all interests and ages. Just in the last few weeks, the Rains County Public Library has hosted The Creature Teacher featuring a live kangaroo, Wildlife on the Move with a VERY long snake, and Hometown Helpers who brought their emergency vehicles and equipment for hands-on climbing and investigation. This is in addition to Preschool Storytime, Summer Readathon, and much more.

For those who love to own books so they can re-visit their favorites whenever they like without fear of an overdue fine for keeping the book too long, the Friends of the Rains County Public Library has a HUGE sale of gently used books several times a year. The next one is coming

soon – Friday, July 24 and Saturday, July 25, 9:00 a.m. to 1:00 p.m. both days. The best selections are available early Friday, and Saturday is Bargain Day – fill a bag for \$4 or a box for \$8! The Sale will be held in the Meadows Room of the Rains County Public Library at 150 Doris Briggs Parkway, Emory. This is the perfect opportunity to re-stock for your back-to-school reading or gather some research material for that book you've been thinking about writing.

Maybe you'd like to go ahead and try your hand at putting pen to paper. You are in luck! The Friends of the Library is also hosting it's second Youth Writing Challenge in conjunction with the Book Sale. All Rains County writers eighteen years old and younger are invited to write an essay beginning with "My magical summer..." Writers ages nine and under should submit two paragraphs, ages ten to thirteen should write one page, and writers fourteen to eighteen should submit two pages. Entries may be typed or legibly handwritten and submitted at the Library during the Book Sale. All writers submitting an essay that meets all the requirements will receive prizes including an amazing cookie from Baking Yum-ologist!

Friends of the Library Marketing Director is quoted as saying: "Our last writing challenge received several entries, including some from older patrons. They are posted in the hallway where the restrooms are located. All are amazing and worthy of being read!"

Want to be a writer? Read, read, read. Write, write, write. Repeat.

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.

SPOTLIGHT

Continued from page 1

daycare, and her daughter is a corrections officer at a prison in North Texas.

Conley was born and raised in Rains County and graduated from Rains High School in 1990 where she played a lot of volleyball,

basketball and ran track. She continues to be active in sports, playing baseball, volleyball and she likes walking. She is still educating herself and only has two more classes before she earns her real estate license.

She may have driven all over the country when she worked as a truck driver but now travels as a hobby and has been to Missouri, Florida, Oklahoma, Las Vegas, Nevada and Colorado for vacations.

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TEXAS CROSSWORD
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ACROSS

1 country bumpkin

5 TXism: "fits like ugly ___ ape"

6 J. Frank Dobie was an authority on Texas folk ___

7 TXism: "out the ___" (drink)

8 TXism: "as welcome as a skunk ___ picnic"

9 TX Dale Evans song: "___ I San Antonio" in film "Rio Grande"

12 TXism: "___ a rooster he'll crow"

17 seat of Coleman County

19 group at TX Willie Nelson's Farm Aid IV: "Guns ___"

21 third DWI is ___ in Texas

22 TXism: "out of ___" (broken)

23 Texas wildcatter

28 what TX George Jones could do

29 TXism: "___ solid perfect"

30 end of flag pledge: "Texas, ___ indivisible"

31 TXism: "she has to sneak ___ ___ mirror to fix her hair" (homely)

35 TX Sissy Spacek portrayed ___

Ann Fugate in film "Badlands"

36 TXism: "park your tongue" (2 wds.)

42 how 1993 cult seige near Waco ended on April 19

44 TXism: "hungry as ___ on a concrete pasture"

46 "it's ___ you see everyday" (rare)

48 Dallas mayor won "Lucky ___" from Buffalo mayor in 1993 Super Bowl

49 fancy word for "soon"

50 Texas newspaper: "Hays ___ Press"

51 Texans

52 make a choice

53 "been there, ___ that"

54 an orca

56 TXism: "___ horse town" (small)

57 TX Debbie film: "The Singing ___"

58 D.C. time zone

9 Fort Worth's ___ Carter Museum of Western Art

10 Twitty tune: "As Soon As I ___"

11 TXism: "beats ___ thing I ever saw"

12 TXism: "___ slinger" (writer)

13 Mexican painter and subject of TX Robert Rodriguez opera

14 TXism: "dry ___" (bad oil well)

15 "this" in Mexico

16 TXism: "sick as a watermelon ___"

18 UT grad, Wallach activity (2 wds.)

20 TX George H. W. to TX George W.

23 TX Shelley Duvall "Popeye" role (init.)

24 corporation abbr.

25 TX Scott Joplin's "Maple ___ Rag"

26 dock where small boats are moored

27 pitching wedge, e.g. (2 wds.)

32 circus showman, Bamum

33 an Oilers coach, ___ "Bum" Phillips

34 Astros' league before 2013 (abbr.)

36 bro's sib

37 abbr. of relief at end of work week

38 "___ up!" (act your age)

39 TX Rodney Crowell wrote hit "Til ___ Control Again"

40 "north," south of the border

41 TXism: "that's the ball ___" (it's over)

43 cooler before air conditioning

45 former Cowboy GM, Schramm (init.)

47 lockjaw or trismus

48 to yield or grant

55 made a loan

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- Free family event
- Food trucks (one voucher per person)
- Foam play (dress for wet and bring towel)
- Face painting
- Cotton candy
- Music

Sheriff's Report

The Rains County Sheriff's Office took the following reports of activity during the week of May 11-17:



MICHAEL HOPKINS
Rains County Sheriff

Arrests

7 - 1 : Adam Wesley Webb. Criminal trespass, \$2,500 bond.
7 - 2 : Joshua Allen.

Unauthorized use of vehicle, \$90,000 bond.

7-2: Larry Busby. Aggravated assault with a deadly weapon TDCJ Warrant, no bond listed.

7-8: Lauren Gayle Forcia. Violation of bond or protective order, \$6,500 bond.

Unknown date: Justin Allen Mageors. Assault causing bodily injury, \$3,000 bond.

Calls

6-29: FM 514 Medical assist; CR 3155 Welfare concern; Sheriff's Office (SO) lobby Scam; W Tawakoni Dr. Bank alarm; W Tawakoni Dr. Abandoned vehicle; CR 1399 Domestic disturbance; FM 3299 Medical assist; Hwy. 276 Funeral escort; CR 1470 Abandoned vehicle; Doris Briggs Pkwy. Terroristic threats; CR 1470 Medical assist; CR 3210 Medical assist; SO lobby Meet complainant; CR 1472 Medical assist; Santa Fe St. Follow up investigation; FM 2324 Debris in roadway; Hwy. 69 Meet complainant; CR 2224 Medical assist; Wells St. Medical assist; FM 47 Reckless driver; CR 1399 Hit and run accident; Ravine St. Assault; FM 779S Animal bite; Tawakoni Tr. Disturbance; Quitman St. Suspicious activity; FM 514 Suicidal subject.

6-30: Barns St. Trespassing; N Texas St. Medical assist; E Lennon Dr. Medical assist; Quitman St. Meet complainant; CR 3410 Street blocked; CR 2224 Follow up investigation; Doris Briggs Pkwy. Special assignment; Briggs Blvd. Suspicious activity; E Lennon Dr. Accident; CR 3231 Fire alarm; Old Mill Ln. Medical assist; W Quitman St. Accident; SO lobby Investigation; FM 515 Reckless driver; Hwy. 19S Reckless driver; Duffy St. Suspicious activity; CR 3317 Disturbance; FM 514 Disturbance; FM 513 Accident.

7-1: CR 3317 Suspicious person; FM 513 Stolen vehicle; CR 4250 Medical assist; PR 779S Suicidal subject; Locust St. Livestock on roadway; Ave. D Medical assist; Ave. D Medical assist; FM 2737 Welfare concern; SO lobby Meet complainant; E Lennon Dr. Medical assist; SO lobby Release property; FM 2324 Medical assist; FM 275 Controlled burn; CR 3380 Controlled burn; E Lennon Dr. Accident; SO lobby

Meet complainant; N Texas St. Medical assist; Tawakoni Tr. Meet complainant; SO lobby Meet complainant; CR 1402 Controlled burn.

7-2: FM 515 Medical assist; Hwy. 19N Medical assist; SO lobby Warrant service; CR 1621 Disturbance; Nix Dr. Structure fire; CR 5501 Public assist; CR 2324 at CR 1308 Accident; 4th St. Livestock on roadway; SO lobby Meet complainant; Nix St. Structure fire; Northcutt Addn. Animal at large; CR 2460 Medical assist; CR 1640 Medical assist; FM 515 Fraud; E Lennon Dr. Medical assist; CR 2181 Animal welfare concern; CR 3317 Missing person; Locust St. Animal welfare concern; SO lobby Theft report taken; Alexander Dr. Motorist assist; S Texas St. Medical assist; SO lobby Meet complainant; FM 47 Structure fire; FM 779S Accident; PR 5451 Medical assist; FM 2795W Medical assist.

7-3: CR 3335 Suspicious activity; Briggs Blvd. Welfare concern; CR 3325 Medical assist; CR 1605 Meet complainant; S Texas St. Meet complainant; CR 1530 Terroristic threats; FM 515 Animal welfare concern; SO lobby Meet complainant; FM 2795 Medical assist; SO lobby Meet complainant; N Texas St. Pedestrian stop; N Planters St. Business alarm; FM 2737 Residence alarm; FM 2737 Livestock on roadway; CR 2370 Medical assist; Briggs Blvd. Fire alarm; Hwy. 19S Debris in roadway; Hwy. 19S Accident; Clark Dr. Medical assist; CR 1320 Harassment; CR 4453 Accident; N Texas St. Motorist assist.

7-4: CR 4510 Suspicious activity; CR 1628 Medical assist; S Texas St. City ordinance violation; CR 2370 Controlled burn; CR 4254 Medical assist; Hwy. 19 at CR 2324 Reckless driver; N Texas St. Motorist assist; Ravine St. Warrant service; CR 3480 Alba Reckless driver; W Quitman St. Open door; E Lennon Dr. Accident; S Texas St. Accident; CR 1470 Welfare concern; Hwy. 19S at CR 2324 Abandoned vehicle; Ravine St. Warrant service; Ravine St. Agency assist; Duffy St. Disorderly conduct; CR 2220 Livestock on roadway; CR 2430 Domestic disturbance; PR 7717 Neighbor dispute; PR 7703 Neighbor dispute; FM 2946 Grass fire; Hwy. 275 Suspicious activity; CR 1320 Vehicle fire; In the lake Stranded boater; CR 3325 Animal welfare concern; CR 1450 Controlled burn; McMillan Dr. City ordinance violation; CR 2430 Follow up investigation.

7-5: CR 3351 Welfare concern; Meadowview Ln. Noise complaint; CR 3309 Animal welfare concern; W Lennon Dr. Grass fire; Hwy. 276 Suspicious activity; Hwy. 276 Open door; E Lennon Dr. Business alarm;

Hwy. 69 Suspicious vehicle; CR 3220 Theft; CR 1320 Controlled burn; E Lennon Dr. Motorist assist; N Texas St. Welfare concern; CR 1540 Abandoned vehicle; CR 1470 Welfare concern; PR 7332 Medical assist; FM 2324 Welfare concern; Hwy. 19N Medical assist; Hwy. 69 Point Welfare concern; E Lennon Dr. Accident hit and run; FM 47 Neighbor dispute; FM 2795W Medical assist; Duffy St. Meet complainant; W Lennon Dr. Welfare concern; FM 275 Disturbance; CR 3150 Accident; CR 3150 Meet complainant; S Texas St. Reckless driver; CR 3480 Noise complaint; FM 2795E Noise complaint; FM 47 Noise complaint; S Hwy. 69 Reckless driver.

7-6: CR 3231 Medical assist; W Hwy. 69 Suspicious person; Ave. C Damaged property; CR 1495 Controlled burn; SO lobby Scam; SO lobby Meet complainant; SO Release property; Hwy. 276 Animal at large; S Texas St. Accident; Hwy. 69 Indecent exposure; SO lobby Meet complainant; Hwy. 69 Reckless driver; S Texas St. Repossession; Hwy. 276 Reckless driver; N Hwy. 19 Medical assist; PR 7795 Domestic disturbance; CR 3025 Trespassing; FM 514 Medical assist; FM 47 Damaged property; FM 2795W Medical assist; SO lobby Release property; CR 1640 Meet complainant; CR 2110 Controlled burn; Hwy. 69S Grass fire; Hwy. 69 Accident; Ave. D Found property; Santa Fe St. Fireworks; PR 5451 Structure fire; FM 47 Welfare concern; PR 5451 Medical assist; FM 779 Animal welfare concern; FM 2324 Debris in roadway; Hwy. 276 Welfare concern; CR 5450 Medical assist; Hwy. 69E Business alarm; W Tawakoni Dr. Business alarm; 1st. St. Emory Downed power lines; W Lennon Dr. Suspicious vehicle.

7-7: Alexander Dr. Suspicious vehicle; S Texas St. Missing person; PR 5501 Disturbance; Hwy. 69W Business alarm; CR 4253 Trespassing; CR 3367 Medical assist; E Lennon Dr. Medical assist; N Hwy. 19 Medical assist; Club Cir. Death; S Hwy. 19 Release property; FM 3299 Medical assist; FM 2795 Funeral escort; PR 7703 Warrant service; CR 1540 Abandoned vehicle; CR 1621 Welfare concern; CR 4253 Civil matter; Hwy. 69W Medical assist; Locust St. Vehicle fire; McMillan Dr. Domestic disturbance; FM 2946 Disturbance; E Lennon Dr. Reckless driver; SO lobby Meet complainant; FM 2795E Medical assist; FM 2324 Livestock on the roadway; CR 1399 Brush fire; FM 2324 Investigation; FM 2324 Brush fire.

7-8: CR 2430 Medical assist; Laresa St. Welfare concern; CR 4254 Medical assist; SO Medical assist; S



Leader photo by CHUCK FITTS

David Shedd, on the left, is sworn in as the new Rains County Fire Marshal by Rains County Judge Brent Hilliard with Rains County Clerk Mandy Sawyer holding the Bible following the meeting of the Rains County Commissioners Court on Thursday, July 9. Shedd was appointed to the newly created office by the court during the meeting.

Texas St. Welfare concern; CR 1495 Medical assist; W Lennon Dr. City ordinance violation; Tawakoni Dr. Medical assist; CR 1274 Repossession; FM 514 Disturbance; CR 3390 Medical assist; CR 1402 Brush fire; FM 513 Animal bite; CR 1540 Repossession; Hwy. 19N Reckless driver; Hwy. 19N Livestock on roadway; SO Investigation; CR 2400 Controlled burn; Hwy. 69N Reckless driver; Hwy. 19N Welfare concern; Rhodes Dr. Motorist assist; N Texas St. Motorist assist.

7-9: CR 1402 Grass fire; Ravine St. Medical assist; 2-mile bridge Reckless driver; Quitman St. Pedestrian stop; CR 1250 Animal welfare concern; Hwy. 276 East Tawakoni Found property; CR 4480 Controlled burn; Hwy. 69W Abandoned vehicle; PR 5451 Medical assist; FM 514 Welfare concern; CR 1150 Debris in roadway; 2-mile bridge Welfare concern; FM 779S Brush fire; CR 2360 Controlled burn; SO Warrant service; FM 513 Motorist assist; CR 3328 Medical assist.

7-10: FM 513 Public assist; FM 513 Medical assist; CR 1280 Animal at large; E Lennon Dr. Suspicious vehicle; E Lennon Dr. Agency assist; Hwy. 276 Livestock on the roadway; Hwy. 19N Medical assist; Hwy. 69 Reckless driver; N Texas St. Medical assist; N Texas St. Medical assist; CR 3299 at Hwy. 276 Motorist assist; CR 2610 Animal bite; Hwy. 276 at FM 2737 Grass fire; FM 47 Welfare concern;

CR 2430 Medical assist; CR 1621 Harassment; PR 7795 Welfare concern; FM 2795E Brush fire; CR 3150 Suspicious vehicle; Hwy. 276 East Tawakoni Motorist assist.

7-11: Hwy. 69 Disturbance; Hwy. 69 Agency assist; E Lennon Dr. Welfare concern; Lake Fork Stranded boater; CR 1640 Medical assist; FM 513 Medical assist; Hwy. 19N Reckless driver; CR 1140 Medical assist; SO lobby Meet complainant; SO lobby Meet complainant; FM 2737 Noise complaint; FM 513 Welfare concern; E Lennon Dr. Harassment; FM 3274 Welfare concern; E Lennon Dr. Business alarm; Hwy. 276 Public assist; Hwy. 276 Reckless driver; Locust St. Animal bite.

7-12: Quitman St. Welfare concern; PR 8241 Noise complaint; Hwy. 69 Damaged property; PR 8240 Noise complaint; CR 3190 Suspicious vehicle; Industrial Blvd. Medical assist; CR 4265 Residence alarm; Hwy. 69 Business alarm; Hwy. 69 Suspicious person; Hwy. 69W Business alarm; Hwy. 69 Suspicious person; Hwy. 69 Residence alarm; FM 513 Medical alarm; CR 4250 Suspicious vehicle; E Lennon Dr. Medical assist; Hwy. 276 East Tawakoni Meet complainant; E Quitman St. Alba Agency assist; N Texas St. Medical assist; CR 1140 Medical assist; E Lennon Dr. Welfare concern; Oakleaf Tr. Disturbance; Hwy. 19S Suspicious person; Hwy. 276 Public assist; Hwy. 276 Reckless driver.

The Sheriff's Department reported 665 calls for the two weeks. Among the calls were: 1 paper service, 3 damaged property, 4 debris in the roadway, 1 disorderly conduct; 10 disturbance, 4 domestic disturbance, 1 downed power lines, 10 extra patrol, 5 brush fires, 2 vehicle fire, 2 fire alarm, 1 fireworks, 26 follow up investigation, 1 fraud, 2 found property, 2 funeral escort, 3 harassment, 1 indecent exposure, 3 structure fire, 3 investigation, 7 livestock on roadway, 22 meet complainant, 3 neighbor dispute, 7 noise complaint, 2 open door, 5 grass fires, 1 problems with a juvenile, 58 public service, 17 reckless driver, 3 repossession, 3 scam, 1 special assignment, 1 stolen vehicle, 2 missing person, 2 stranded boater, 1 street blocked, 2 suicidal subjects, 7 suspicious activity, 4 suspicious person, 7 suspicious vehicle, 2 terroristic threats, 2 thefts, 5 warrant service, 27 welfare concern, 3 trespassing, 13 accident, 11 controlled burns, 1 death, 6 public assist, 1 911 hang up call, 2 pedestrian stop, 6 abandoned vehicle, 2 hit and run accidents, 4 agency assist, 1 bank alarm, 8 business alarm, 3 residence alarm, 3 animal at large, 4 release property, 4 animal bite, 7 animal welfare concern, 1 assault, 9 assist motorist, 3 city ordinance violation, 1 civil matter.

There were 228 traffic stops, 157 warnings, 57 citations, 67 medical calls, and 37 transports.

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TEXAS RURAL REPORTER

Five Political Fights Rural Texans Should Watch

By Suzanne Bellsnyder,
Texas Rural Reporter

Rural Texas has long been treated as settled red territory. Republicans count on our votes. Democrats try to get to know us during election years. And neither party expects rural loyalties to shift.

That assumption deserves another look in 2026. Rural Texas is not turning blue, but several issues no longer fit neatly inside party lines: vouchers, industrial development, affordability and corporate power.

Here are five political fights rural Texans should watch.

The Politics of Data Centers

Data centers have become a test of rural political power—a fight over water, electricity, land, tax incentives and local control. A Texas Politics Project poll found 62 percent of rural Texans oppose a data center in their community, and residents are packing hearings to demand transparency.

Gov. Greg Abbott, long a data-center booster, is shifting under pressure. He now backs infrastructure cost-sharing, water reuse, an end to some tax breaks and even a ban on data centers in “rural Texas neighborhoods.”

Without a special session, the Legislature cannot act until January 2027. Will local communities get a real voice before these projects rise beside our homes, farms and schools?

Democrats Courting Rural Voters

We can see that effort at the party convention, where Democrats spoke directly to rural voters; in agriculture commissioner nominee Clayton Tucker’s campaign against irresponsible data centers; and in gubernatorial nominee Gina Hinojosa’s appeal to rural public schools with her Team Texas Public School initiative to fight school closures, advocate for better funding, and protect rural public schools. James Talarico is also taking his Senate campaign into rural

communities statewide. Democrats often skip.

Democrats have recruited candidates for every state House seat and every race on the ballot, including rural districts where they have not had the numbers to compete. That is different from Beto O’Rourke’s 2018 run. Beto took one campaign into all 254 counties. This time, Democrats are building a strategy from the top of the ticket to the bottom.

The U.S. Senate Race—Paxton vs. Talarico

This race tests party loyalty against character. Paxton offers a familiar conservative identity: combative, Trump-aligned and eager to confront Democrats and the federal government. Talarico is building his campaign around faith, public education, working families and corruption.

Talarico does not need to win rural Texas. He needs to lose it by less. But rural voters will weigh his positions on abortion, guns, immigration and energy, not just his language on faith and schools.

In 2018, Beto came within 214,921 votes of beating Ted Cruz, and Democrats flipped 12 Texas House seats despite contesting only 130 of 150 districts. History may not repeat itself, but rural margins matter.

Texas’ Extra Billions

Texans are being offered competing ideas for the state’s cash reserves. The rainy-day fund has hit its \$26.5 billion cap, with earnings expected to push it toward \$28.5 billion by the end of fiscal 2027. Because it is capped, additional oil-and-gas revenue now flows into general revenue—the same surplus Abbott says will fund his plan.

Hinojosa wants to draw \$17 billion from the fund for a one-time \$1,500 payment to every household. Abbott wants to eliminate school property taxes on home-steads using the ongoing surplus. A third option is to spend it on schools, water, roads, rural hospitals and the electric grid.

The difference matters. Hinojosa’s plan helps fami-

lies once. Abbott’s promises longer-term relief, but only if the surplus keeps flowing. The third never arrives as a check or lower bill, but it could keep local governments from shifting neglected costs onto taxpayers. Rural Texans should ask who gets the money—and what happens when it is gone.

Republican Fault Lines

A fault line is opening inside Republican Texas. It starts with Cornyn primary voters unsure they can support Paxton in November. For some, it is a values question, not a policy one.

Trump still has strong support among Texas Republicans, but approval drops on government spending, inflation and ethics. Among independents, opposition is stronger. The question is not whether these voters become Democrats. It is whether they are enthusiastic enough to show up.

The split is also visible among Republican leaders. Agriculture Commissioner Sid Miller is pressing Abbott to call a special session and pause data-center growth, exposing the divide between leaders focused on corporate development and rural conservatives asking who pays the price.

Small-government conservatives are watching Austin direct local schools, limit local decisions and pick business winners as spending and centralized power grow. Rural women, county leaders and public-school parents experience the failures directly—understaffed schools, struggling hospitals and responsibilities without the resources to meet them.

These voters are not ready to become Democrats. But they are no longer all moving in the same Republican direction.

About the Author

Suzanne Bellsnyder is editor and publisher of the *Hansford County Reporter-Statesman* and *Sherman County Gazette*. A former Capitol staffer with decades of experience in Texas politics and policy, she now focuses on how state decisions shape rural life through her newspapers, including the *Texas Rural Reporter*. Subscribe at www.TexasRuralReporter.Substack.com.

TEXAS PARKS AND WILDLIFE DEPARTMENT

Texas Game Wardens Remove 62 Impaired Operators, No Boating Fatalities Reported

AUSTIN – Texas Game Wardens maintained a strong presence on lakes, rivers and coastal waters across Texas during the Fourth of July holiday weekend. They contacted more than 10,800 vessels while participating in Operation Dry Water, a nationwide campaign focused on reducing the number of alcohol- and drug- related incidents and fatalities through awareness and enforcement of boating under the influence on the state’s waterways.

Between July 3-5, 417 game wardens contacted 10,817 vessels, issued 1,466 citations and 1,974 warnings for various boating safety violations, filed 62 boating while intoxicated (BWI) charges and four driving while intoxicated (DWI) charges. Wardens also made 20 additional arrests for various other offenses.

The 62 BWI charges represent the highest number filed by Texas Game Wardens during the Fourth of July holiday weekend since 2019.

Despite responding to 25 boating incidents over the weekend, game wardens did not receive any reports of boating-related fatalities, although numerous incidents involved serious bodily injury. There were also two

open-water drownings; one at Lake Hawkins in Wood County and one at Lake Palo Pinto in Palo Pinto County along with numerous calls for boating assistance statewide.

“Thousands of Texans and visitors safely enjoyed time on the water this holiday weekend, and we’re grateful the majority of boaters made responsible decisions by wearing life jackets, avoiding alcohol and watching out for each other,” said Col. Ron VanderRoest, Texas Parks and Wildlife Department (TPWD) Law Enforcement Division director. “At the same time, the two lives lost are a sad reminder of how quickly tragedy can strike and the importance of remaining vigilant.”

In addition to boating safety enforcement, game wardens responded to numerous significant incidents, including several vessel collisions, a reported hit-and-run involving a personal watercraft, medical emergencies, arrests for possession of controlled substances, multiple suspected human trafficking cases discovered during calls for service and proactive enforcement, and the rescue of a kayaker who had been in the water for approximately three hours

without a life jacket after capsizing.

Boating safety education was a priority throughout the weekend. Through TPWD’s Adopt-A-Ramp program, our invaluable volunteers made 393 contacts with boaters at Joe Pool Lake, Lake Lavon and Lake Bastrop, sharing information about boating laws, life jacket use and safe boating practices before people launched.

As part of the outreach effort, TPWD also hosted a Fill the Boat life jacket donation event at Cedar Hill State Park. The event collected 23 adult life jackets, three youth and infant life jackets and three canine life jackets. Once inspected, the donated life jackets will be distributed to area life jacket loaner stations to help make safety equipment more accessible to the public.

“Texas Game Wardens did exactly what Operation Dry Water is designed to do by identifying and removing impaired operators before someone gets hurt,” said VanderRoest. “While we’re proud of the work wardens accomplished this weekend, the safest holiday weekend is one where everyone chooses to avoid alcohol and drugs on the water.”

Texas Game Wardens will continue proactive boating safety patrols, education efforts and outreach throughout the summer, encouraging everyone on the water to wear a properly fitted life jacket, designate a sober operator, monitor changing weather conditions and complete boater education.

More information about boating safety, boating laws and boater education requirements is available at <https://tpwd.texas.gov/fishboat/boat/>.

TEXAS COMMISSION ON ENVIRONMENTAL QUALITY



NOTICE OF APPLICATION AND PRELIMINARY DECISION FOR TPDES PERMIT FOR MUNICIPAL WASTEWATER

RENEWAL

PERMIT NO. WQ0013659001

APPLICATION AND PRELIMINARY DECISION. Steamboat Shores Owners Association, 2 Steamboat Shores, Emory, Texas 75440, has applied to the Texas Commission on Environmental Quality (TCEQ) for a renewal of Texas Pollutant Discharge Elimination System (TPDES) Permit No. WQ0013659001 which authorizes the discharge of treated domestic wastewater at a daily average flow not to exceed 13,500 gallons per day. TCEQ received this application on January 15, 2026.

The facility is located at 2 Steamboat Shores, in Rains County, Texas 75440. The treated effluent is discharged directly to Lake Fork Reservoir in Segment No. 0512 of the Sabine River Basin. The designated uses for Segment No. 0512 are primary contact recreation, public water supply, and high aquatic life use. All determinations are preliminary and subject to additional review and/or revisions. This link to an electronic map of the site or facility’s general location is provided as a public courtesy and is not part of the application or notice. For the exact location, refer to the application. <https://gisweb.tceq.texas.gov/LocationMapper/?marker=-95.666666,32.892777&level=18>

The TCEQ Executive Director has completed the technical review of the application and prepared a draft permit. The draft permit, if approved, would establish the conditions under which the facility must operate. The Executive Director has made a preliminary decision that this permit, if issued, meets all statutory and regulatory requirements. The permit application, Executive Director’s preliminary decision, and draft permit are available for viewing and copying at Rains County Courthouse, 220 West Quitman Street, Emory, in Rains County, Texas. The application and associated notices are available electronically at the following webpage: <https://www.tceq.texas.gov/permitting/wastewater/pending-permits/tpdes-applications>.

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

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

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

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

The Commission may only grant a request for a contested case hearing on issues the requestor submitted in their timely comments that were not subsequently withdrawn. **If a hearing is granted, the subject of a hearing will be limited to disputed issues of fact or mixed questions of fact and law relating to relevant and material water quality concerns submitted during the comment period. TCEQ may act on an application to renew a permit for discharge of wastewater without providing an opportunity for a contested case hearing if certain criteria are met.**

EXECUTIVE DIRECTOR ACTION. The Executive Director may issue final approval of the application unless a timely contested case hearing request or request for reconsideration is filed. If a timely hearing request or request for reconsideration is filed, the Executive Director will not issue final approval of the permit and will forward the application and request to the TCEQ Commissioners for their consideration at a scheduled Commission meeting.

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

All written public comments and public meeting requests must be submitted to the Office of the Chief Clerk, MC 105, Texas Commission on Environmental Quality, P.O. Box 13087, Austin, TX 78711-3087 or electronically at www.tceq.texas.gov/goto/comment within 30 days from the date of newspaper publication of this notice.

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

AGENCY CONTACTS AND INFORMATION. Public comments and requests must be submitted either electronically at www.tceq.texas.gov/goto/comment, or in writing to the Texas Commission on Environmental Quality, Office of the Chief Clerk, MC 105, P.O. Box 13087, Austin, Texas 78711-3087. Any personal information you submit to the TCEQ will become part of the agency’s record; this includes email addresses. For more information about this permit application or the permitting process, please call the TCEQ Public Education Program, Toll Free, at 1-800-687-4040 or visit their website at www.tceq.texas.gov/goto/pep. Si desea información en Español, puede llamar al 1-800-687-4040.

Further information may also be obtained from Steamboat Shores Owners Association at the address stated above or by calling Debbie Andrews, President, at 903-530-8024.

Issuance Date: July 7, 2026



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