



A wreath placed on Wayne McMullen's patrol car in front of the Stephens County Law Enforcement Center following his death last week as community members paid their respects. Photo/Alex Kielar

County remembers Constable McMullen

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With a passion for public service in his blood, Stephens County Constable Wayne McMullen followed in his father, Roger McMullen's footsteps in serving the county and the city.

Stephens County and its public servants who served alongside McMullen, the first responder community and McMullen's family are mourning the loss of one of their own.

McMullen died Tuesday morning, April 22, at the age of 58 after serving

the Breckenridge and Stephens County community for many years.

McMullen ran for the constable position the first time in 2020 with Adam Babilon retiring, and was sworn in Jan. 2, 2021. He was re-elected to the position in an unopposed race in 2024.

Before being elected county constable in 2021, McMullen was a sheriff's deputy starting in 2013. He had previously served the city of Breckenridge in several different roles, starting his career in law enforce-

See McMullen, Page 3



Maylun VanWinkle

VanWinkle named Chamber Executive Director

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Since joining the Breckenridge Chamber of Commerce in October of 2023, Maylun VanWinkle has served as front desk executive assistant as well as event manager.

After serving as event manager since November, VanWinkle has now been named the new executive director of the chamber as Yuri Huntington's replacement.

VanWinkle's promotion to the position was announced Monday afternoon, April 21, and is effective Monday, May 5, following Frontier Days. That will allow her time to transition to the role, with Huntington's last day as ex-

See Chamber, Page 2

Summer Safety Event



A summer safety event was held Friday, April 25 hosted by Texas A&M AgriLife Extension and the Texas Department of Health and Human Services. The event included a water safety program with free life jackets and a bicycle rodeo with free bike helmets and a bicycle obstacle course.

Photos/Alex Kielar



Michael Paris

Paris named BEDC Executive Director

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The Breckenridge Economic Development Corporation has a new executive director following the resignation of David Miller last month.

Michael Paris was recently selected to fill the role for BEDC after previously serving as executive director of San Patricio County EDC since November 2023 and of Paris, Texas EDC from January 2016 to February 2020.

The role was filled in less than a month after Miller's resignation was effective, Tuesday, March 11. Paris officially began the role the week of Monday, April 7 and has been working in economic development for about 17 years.

See BEDC, Page 2

BISD receives 'B' in newly released 2023 A-F ratings

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Following a lawsuit-induced two-year delay, the Texas Education Agency (TEA) released the 2023 A-F accountability ratings for school systems and campuses statewide Thursday, April 24.

Those ratings reflect all schools' performance from the 2022-23 school

year and are available to be viewed by the public at TXSchools.gov.

BISD Superintendent Prairie Freeman said that she was on board with the release of the ratings.

"I believe in transparency, and I think our community deserves to see how our schools are performing. These ratings can help parents, educators and the public better

understand where we're doing well and where we have room to grow," Freeman said. "At the same time, I recognize that these scores don't tell the whole story. Education is complex, and a single letter grade can't fully reflect the effort, growth and unique challenges happening inside

See A-F, Page 3

Weekly Local Forecast

Wednesday, April 30
High 76 | Low 58
Precipitation 75%

Thursday, May 1
High 89 | Low 61
Precipitation 6%

Friday, May 2
High 73 | Low 55
Precipitation 53%

Saturday, May 3
High 79 | Low 58
Precipitation 24%

Sunday, May 4
High 81 | Low 62
Precipitation 24%

Monday, May 5
High 82 | Low 63
Precipitation 24%

Tuesday, May 6
High 73 | Low 61
Precipitation 60%

Hubbard Creek
At capacity: 1,183.00
Current: 1,170.65

Athletes of the Week 8 Entertainment 7
Classifieds 6-7 Opinion 4-5
Cloud Scholarship 3 Sports 8

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Chamber

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ecutive director being Friday, May 30.

As she moves into the new role, VanWinkle said that she wants to keep a lot of the same initiatives that Huntington already has in place and hone in on the things that her predecessor was passionate about.

"I want to make sure that all of our chamber members are heard, feel like we are here for them and that we can do what they need of us," VanWinkle said. "I want to do some more marketing towards our businesses, not so much downtown... those that aren't really right here on this main strip and downtown. Making sure that people know that they are there, that they can shop there and what those businesses have to offer."

One of VanWinkle's favorite things that she has accomplished so

far at the chamber is getting to know the community and having them accept her, while making her feel like she's at home.

"That has been a huge accomplishment as far as making sure that they know who I am as a person and what my heart is, so that they can accept me and love me," she said.

VanWinkle added that growing the chamber's membership base is also a key component for her, as she wants to make sure that the collaborations and community connections that Huntington has put in place remain strong.

When talking about what she learned from Huntington, VanWinkle said, "Literally everything."

"She has taught me everything that I know about the chamber," VanWinkle said. "She's



an amazing mentor, I wouldn't be sitting here talking about this position if it wasn't for her."

With VanWinkle taking over as executive director, the event manager position will be open. She said that they would like to fill that position as soon as possible, and they have someone starting Monday, May 12, for the front desk executive assistant position.

VanWinkle said that she and her husband moved to Breckenridge as his family lives here and they wanted to live in a small town to raise their now-two-year-old daughter, after previously living in Fort Worth for six years.

VanWinkle is originally from Stephenville and she said that she missed the small-town feel and having things not be so hectic.

"Thank you so much to the community of Breckenridge for just accepting me, as I'm not from here," VanWinkle said. "It's kind of hard when an outsider comes into a small town like this, to be able to be accepted and truly feel appreciated. This community has accepted me with open arms, and I am eternally grateful for that."

BEDC

Continued from Page 1

Paris earned a Bachelor of Arts in English and Philosophy from Midwestern State University, located in Wichita Falls, and then later earned a Master's of Business Administration from Cameron University in Lawton, Oklahoma.

Prior to starting his role as executive director of the San Patricio County EDC, Paris was the Vice President of Business Retention and Expansion of the Wichita Falls Chamber from 2008 to 2016.

After being let go from San Patricio County EDC in Feb. 2020, he founded Strategic Site Solutions, where he was the Lead Consultant until Nov. 2023, when he took the job as executive director of Paris, Texas EDC.

Paris said that he wanted to come to Breckenridge to get back to the area because of family.

"I have children in the Dallas Fort Worth area and my mom lives in the Wichita Falls area, so I wanted to get back into this area," Paris said.

One of the main goals and initiatives that Paris aims to target as the executive director is adding an emphasis on primary job creation, noting that his predecessor, Miller, was focused on getting quality housing and retail, like restaurants, established in Breckenridge.

Paris explained that Breckenridge is a "type B" community after previously being "type A", which means that they have more flexibility to recruit



and help incentivize restaurants, retail and affordable housing. He explained that in a type A economic development community, they are focused on industry recruitment, with state legislation set up where there are specific industries that can be recruited using the funds out of type A.

"They wanted a bit more flexibility, it is a small town and you need to be a little bit more flexible to keep that money moving back into the community," Paris said.

Paris said that a primary job is where money comes from an outside source based on certain skillsets and then comes back into the community. On the other side of the spectrum, a secondary job is where the money comes from within the community and stays there, so there is no outside money coming in.

"The effect of a primary job is that you need insurance, you need all these other support industries," Paris said. "And for a big supplier, you need manufacturers of raw materials, things like that. You need those types of people and it has a bigger ripple effect on the economy than somebody who can get pizza dough at Sam's [Club] and make pizzas. I'm not belittling that, I'm just saying it's a different model."

Paris noted that in industrial jobs, employees can make between \$40,000 and \$60,000, while with retail jobs, people make maybe about \$10 to \$12 an hour working at a dry cleaner or something

similar.

"It's not that I want to eliminate retail. It's helped this community tremendously," Paris said. "What I want to do is add more balance to maintaining and supporting focus on primary job creation. For this area, especially for small areas, that means helping local businesses, local industry expand, grow and then if we're lucky, maybe you can recruit somebody to come into town and start a business here."

Talking about whether this town can see the type of growth it saw in the past as a once-boomtown, Paris explained that a lot of the parts are already there. Notably, the people are at the center of the town's potential, he noted.

"The people who grew up here, the people who have a connection with this area have a lot of grit. Because think about it, think about what it takes to be a wildcat or a person dealing in the oil field. If you look at the U.S. Bureau of Economic Analysis, you see that that is still a huge factor for this area," Paris said. "But if you have a place of grit and people who know how to fix things, work on things and [people] who just grew up on the farm, there are employers that love those skillsets. They already know how to get up early in the morning and how to do shift work. They already have a good work ethic. So we have some things that are attractive, that maybe we just need to get out there and be a little bit more promotional about it."

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McMullen

Continued from Page 1

ment with the Breckenridge Police Department in 2008.

He was also an arson investigator, public works director and became the fire marshal in 2010. He retired from the city after 27 years of service in 2013 before starting with the sheriff's office.

Stephens County Sheriff Kevin Roach described McMullen as always being there for you and willing to do anything.

"[He was] a very dependable, hardworking guy and very knowledgeable in his duties. He was relied on for a lot of his knowledge," Roach said. "... he was always willing and able and ready to help. No matter time of day, he pitched in and helped anybody do anything. It was kind of his motto, he wanted to be there to help, but to get the job done, no matter what it was or how long it took him."

Roger McMullen began working for the Breckenridge Fire Department in 1966 before becoming Fire Chief in 1975, a position he served until he died in 2010.

It was not long after that his son Wayne followed in his father's footsteps as a "chip off the old block", as County Judge Michael Roach put it.

Judge Roach said that he first met Wayne while serving his first



The late Stephens County Constable Wayne McMullen died Tuesday morning, April 22 after serving as constable since 2021 and in the Breckenridge and Stephens County communities for many years prior.

Archive photo

term as justice of the peace in 2015.

"I believe that, at the time he was working for the sheriff's department as a deputy and Wayne was always mild-mannered, very quiet and he just had a servant's heart. But he was very much a law enforcement guy, and by that I mean you could push him far enough," Judge Roach. "I think I only remember him getting upset one time... on the scene of a fire a guy was trying to make his way through a roadblock with his vehicle. They were trying to get emergency vehicles through and Wayne lit him up pretty good."

The county judge described how McMullen

was a very compassionate and quiet kind of guy, but also very much "pro-law and order."

"By that I mean, he didn't take any bull. The law was the law and that was what it was going to be," Judge Roach said. "...Stephens County is going to miss him so much."

The Stephens County Sheriff's Office placed a wreath on McMullen's patrol car in front of the Law Enforcement Center on 210 E. Dyer St. last Tuesday following his death.

All flags were also flown at half-staff in his remembrance and the sheriff's office welcomed anyone to come by and pay respects to honor his memory.

A-F

Continued from Page 1

our classrooms." Freeman noted that the way the ratings are released can be improved, stating that more context behind the numbers would be helpful.

"How scores are calculated, what factors contributed most to the rating and how schools can improve moving forward," Freeman said. "Also, I'd love to see additional areas included in the future, such as student well-being, extracurricular involvement or career and technical education success. These are all big parts of a student's experience that deserve recognition too."

The district received a B rating with 83 out of 100 for the overall rating, which measures how much students are learning in each grade and whether or not they are ready for the next grade.

"I'm proud of the work our students and staff have put in. It's a solid rating that reflects dedication and growth," Freeman said. "But we're not stopping there."

There are three areas of performance that the A-F accountability ratings are based on: student achievement, school progress and closing the gaps.

An A rating is earned for a score between 90-100, a B rating is 80-89, a C rating is 70-79, a D rating is 60-69 and an F rating is anything below 60.

Student achievement measures whether students met expectations

on the STAAR test, as well as measuring graduation rate and how prepared students are for post-high school success. As a whole, the district received a C rating in this area with a score of 78 out of 100. This was a drop from the previous year's ratings for 2021-22, which saw BISD score 85.

School progress rates how students perform over time and how the district's performance compares to other districts with similar economically disadvantaged student populations. BISD also saw a drop in its school progress rating, dropping from A (91) to B (83).

Closing the gaps details how well a district is ensuring that all student groups are successful. This was the one area that the school district improved from the 2021-22 ratings, as they increased from 76 (C) to 83 (B).

"If we want to move from a B to an A, we'll need to focus on areas like closing academic gaps, continuing to raise student achievement and providing more support and opportunities for all learners," Freeman said. "We're already working on initiatives in these areas and are committed to pushing even further."

Breckenridge High School maintained a B rating from the previous year, but did drop slightly from 83 in the 2021-22 to 80. The campus rated 79 out of 100 in student achievement, 80 out of 100 in school progress and

79 out of 100 in closing the gaps.

Breckenridge Junior High School fell just short of increasing to an A rating as they received an 89 (B) rating, an increase of seven from the 2021-2022 ratings. BJHS was rated 80 out of 100 for student achievement (an increase of six), 88 out of 100 for school progress (an increase of five) and 92 out of 100 for closing the gaps (an increase of 13).

BJHS Principal Laura Gibson described how the school has continued to improve while she has been there.

"Our score has improved significantly in the time that I have been here. Our teachers have worked hard and we are proud of what our students have been able to achieve," Gibson said.

South Elementary School improved from a C (79) in the 2018-19 ratings to a B (80) in the 2021-22 ratings. In student achievement, the school rated 76 out of 100 (an increase of three), 81 out of 100 for school progress (an increase of one) and 79 out of 100 for closing the gaps (an increase of four).

East Elementary School, which is tied to BISD's overall rating, remained at a B.

Looking ahead, Freeman stated that she is feeling hopeful.

"We've made some meaningful progress this year, and while I can't say exactly where we'll land, I believe we're moving in the right direction," Freeman said.



Breckenridge FFA member MacKenzie Cloud was recently one of 21 junior stock show-goers of the Fort Worth Stock Show & Rodeo to earn a \$10,000 scholarship last month.

Contributed photo

Cloud awarded \$10,000 scholarship

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Breckenridge FFA member MacKenzie Cloud recently earned a \$10,000 scholarship from Fort Worth Stock Show & Rodeo in March.

She was awarded the scholarship for her performance in the calf scramble program at the 2024 FWSSR.

Cloud is currently a senior at Breckenridge High School and received the scholarship from a calf scramble heifer that she purchased for participation at FWSSR last year.

Cloud was one of 21 student stock show-goers to receive a \$10,000 scholarship of a total 49 students to split \$452,000 in schol-

arship awards during this year's stock show in March.

She caught a calf on Jan. 26, 2024 which led to her being eligible for this year's college scholarships.

Cloud had also earned a \$500 purchase certificate for a show heifer last year.

Two students also received a \$16,000 scholarship, nine received a \$12,000 scholarship and 17 received a \$6,000 scholarship.

Since the Fort Worth Calf Scramble began in 1987, close to 8,000 4-H and FFA members who have caught a calf have been awarded a combined \$4.1 million in Heifer purchase certificates.

According to Cloud's mother, Heather Mathews, she will be

attending Texas Tech University in the fall where she will pursue an undergraduate degree in animal science.

After that, her mother said she will eventually move on to Texas Tech University School of Veterinary Medicine to become a veterinarian.

"She has wanted to be a veterinarian for a long time, as she has always loved working with animals," Mathews said. "What began with childhood pets soon expanded to showing goats, heifers, chickens, pigs, lambs and rabbits."

Mathews said that Cloud plans on returning to Breckenridge after earning her degree in veterinary medicine and open up her own clinic.

CHAMBER CORNER

STEPHENS COUNTY FRONTIER DAYS & FESTIVITIES

FRIDAY, MAY 2ND AND SATURDAY, MAY 3RD

TO MAKE THIS YEAR'S CELEBRATION EVEN MORE SPECIAL FOR OUR ATTENDEES, WE ARE REACHING OUT TO ASK FOR YOUR SUPPORT IN ORGANIZING AND LEADING ACTIVITIES DURING THE EVENT

Tin Can Shootout - Use Nerf guns or bean bags to knock down stacked tin cans.

Horseshoe Toss - A kid-friendly version of the classic horseshoe game.

Lasso the Steer - Toss rope hoops to lasso a wooden or hay bale steer.

Cowpoke Obstacle Course - A mini obstacle course with hay bales, ropes, & barrels.

Cowboy Cookie Decorating - Decorate cookies shaped like boots, hats, or stars.

Wild West Photo Booth - Dress up in cowboy hats, vests, and bandanas for photos.

Lawn Games - Bring in some classic lawn games like cornhole, giant Jenga, or ring toss.

Outdoor Movie Screening - Host an outdoor movie screening with classic or romantic films. Provide cozy seating and blankets for couples to snuggle up under the stars.

Tug of War - Divide participants into two teams and see which side has the strength and strategy to pull the other over the line.

Water Balloon Toss - Pair up participants and have them stand face-to-face. Each team starts close together and gradually steps back after each successful toss. The last team with an unbroken balloon wins.

Frisbee Golf - Place hula hoops on the ground or hang them from trees. Players throw a frisbee aiming to land it inside the hoops in as few throws as possible.

Relay Races - Organize a series of relay races with different challenges: a three-legged race, sack race, or a spoon-and-egg race.

Water Gun Fight - Provide participants with water guns & designate play areas.

Inflatable Costumes Race - Participants run or walk around the track while wearing their costumes. The first participant to cross the finish line wins the race.

Flower Crowns - Provide fresh or artificial flowers and supplies for making flower crowns.

Tie-Dye T-Shirts - Offer plain shirts for attendees to tie-dye in vibrant summer colors.

APPLICATIONS ARE READY FOR PICK UP AT THE CHAMBER OFFICE

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A look back at Easter...

Easter, 2025, was a time like none other!

Before choirs proclaimed that He is risen, before church bells sounded around the world celebrating Jesus' resurrection and before children skittered across lawns for multicolored eggs, I saw history's greatest moment patterned in a quiet Fort Worth neighborhood.

It's a place where tattooed lives are transformed by Christ, these parolees who earlier chose the craggy streets of ungodly pursuits, inevitably crashing into barriers, their lives splintered...

Chandler Fozard founded HOPE Prison Ministries in 2009. It offers Christ-centered HOPE, counseling and living.

He was born into a dysfunctional family, raised in boys' homes and incarcerated by



Don Newbury

The Idle American

age 22. But God's judgment was just the beginning of his redemption. Completing his incarceration early, he likewise was granted early release from supervised probation.

Thirteen years later in 2001, he was married, with a thriving business in full swing. Then, he felt "led of the Lord" to help others released from prison. There's a reason why he's often contacted by the Texas Juvenile Justice System, the Texas Department of Criminal Justice and countless

others for help....

HOPE'S founder presses on relentlessly.

I've known Chandler for about two months, believing that he embodies the poetic lines on the Statue of Liberty that proclaim: "Give me your tired, your poor, your huddled masses yearning to be free."

'Tis true, 'tis true....

His passion exceeds life's highest bar. At age 55, he's on task constantly as he prays, works and plans, all the while dealing with folks who are intellectually, mentally and/or physically challenged.

After 5 p.m. one Friday, he drove to Houston for retrieval of a parolee who was off to a bad start upon his release after 21 years in prison. Arrival back home was after 4 a.m.

Stricken with multiple illnesses, the "newbie" had been denied

health care by another alternative housing program, kicked out because he was physically unable to work. He was diagnosed with congestive heart failure. Is it any wonder that he had been unable to work?....

In the early days, Chandler and his wife, Barbara, housed clients in a renovated garage, depending heavily on faith and funding from a few donors. In addition to monetary donations, the ministry is in constant need of mentors, vehicles, household items and more.

Today, housing 44 men and a few women (separately), the ministry operates multiple, Christ-centered transitional homes in west Fort Worth. Its leadership includes people who've received min-

See Newbury, Page 5

Ask Rusty: Please clear up our confusion about our Social Security payments?

Dear Rusty: I am thoroughly confused. What do I need to do to continue receiving automatic Social Security deposits to my bank account, and maintain our Medicare and Supplement health insurance? My wife has received her SS deposit regularly on the 3rd Wednesday each month with automatic bank deposit for many years. I have received my SS deposit regularly the 4th Wednesday each month with automatic bank deposit also for many years. Can you please tell me what to do to continue receiving these automatic deposits?

First, I hear that we do not need to do anything. Then I hear that we must show up in person at our local SS office to visually confirm our identity. We live 100 miles away from our only SS office, and apparently, they don't take walk-ins. Next, I hear that we must contact the SS on the internet and answer their questions in order to continue receiving our checks. I am totally confused and don't know what to do, and we don't want to miss our checks or have our Medicare and supplemental insurance canceled. Can you please help us?

Signed: Confused in Hawaii

Dear Confused: I know there have been a lot of news media reports and articles written on the recent changes announced by the Social Security Administration (SSA) with respect to a need to confirm one's identity in-person. Allow me to set your mind at ease because, from what you have described (that you are already receiving Social Security benefits and Medicare insurance), you do not need to



Russell Gloor

Social Security Matters

do anything to have your Social Security benefits, and your Medicare insurance continue without interruption (and that includes your wife as well).

That which has been reported in the media is sometimes misleading or misinformed, but here at the AMA Foundation's Social Security Advisory Service we are watching these events very closely and can assure you that your regular benefits will continue uninterrupted. The only people who may be affected by the SSA's new processes are those who are applying for Social Security for the first time, or those who need to change where their monthly benefit is deposited. In those cases, the SSA is being very careful that no fraud is being attempted and, thus, the reason for a possible in-person SSA office visit (but only in those specific unique circumstances). But for you and your wife, it will continue to be "business as usual" and you will see no interruption in either your monthly Social Security benefit nor in your usual Medicare coverage and supplement. You don't need to do anything to have all your benefits continue.

So, please relax and do not worry. And rest assured that here at the AMAC Foundation we are watching all events occurring in Washington, D.C., especially those related to Social Security.

See Matters, Page 5

For the rich, free speech – for others, a SLAPP in the face

Fourteen years ago, the legislature passed vital protections for freedom of speech in the Texas Citizens Participation Act. This week, they're looking to gut it.

The TCPA addresses the common problem of "strategic lawsuits against public participation," or SLAPPs. These are frivolous lawsuits brought by the wealthy or powerful against private citizens to stop them from exercising their free speech rights.

For example, say your loved one is in an assisted living facility, and you think the facility is neglecting their care. You file a complaint with state regulators and then post honest, negative reviews of the facility online so that other people can make an

informed choice about sending their family members there.

Then the facility sues you, claiming that you defamed them. Even though the case is frivolous and your criticism is protected by the First Amendment, you have a tough choice: stop talking about the facility or hire an attorney to defend you. You don't want to be silenced, but you don't want to go through a lengthy, expensive, and exhausting legal battle.

This was the choice facing Carol Hemphill when she was sued for criticizing the facility housing her brother, who needed daily care after a traumatic brain injury.

Thankfully, the TCPA helps people like Carol. It allows SLAPP victims to get cases dismissed



Carolyn Iodice

quickly, without racking up huge legal bills. It also helps the victims get lawyers to stand up to the bullies trying to silence them through the courts.

First, the TCPA lets a victim immediately move to dismiss the case if they can show the claim is meritless and targets their speech on issues important to the community. Then, if the court denies the motion to dismiss, there's another layer of pro-

tection. The law automatically pauses any further court proceedings while the victim appeals the ruling, so that the case doesn't turn into a sprawling legal battle before the court of appeals gets the chance to toss it out.

When a victim successfully gets the case dismissed, the TCPA also requires the other side to pay their legal bills. This helps ensure SLAPP victims can afford legal representation to fight the case, and it deters people from filing SLAPPs in the first place. Plus, it's just basic fairness: if someone deliberately brings a frivolous SLAPP against you, they should reimburse you for the costs of getting it dismissed.

These protections ensure that everyone, not just those with money, can afford to fight for their rights. They helped Carol get her case dismissed and her legal bills paid. They helped Ken Martin, an independent local journalist, who was sued by a politician for reporting factual information about him. And they helped Dante Flores-Demarchi, who was sued by a wealthy

See SLAPP, Page 5

The Breckenridge American offers local readers an opportunity to share their opinions on community topics and issues of public importance. Mail or deliver letters to the office at 114 E. Elm Street in Breckenridge, or e-mail letters to editor@breckenridgeamerican.com. The deadline is 5 p.m. Friday for the midweek edition. Letters that do not meet the deadline will not be printed in the paper. Letters must be submitted by the author/signee, and not by a third-party on behalf of the author/signee. Letters must contain the author's first name, last name, complete address, and telephone number. Only the writer's name and title of the letter, as appropriate, will be published with the letter. Names cannot be withheld. Letters from any candidate who is actively running for any political office will not be published. Writers may submit letters of up to 500 words. Letters are not guaranteed to be published in the next edition, but every effort to do so will be made. Unverified letters and letters containing personal attacks the newspaper deems to be of a libelous nature will not be published. In any event, the newspaper reserves the sole discretion to decide whether or not a reader submission will be published. All letters and columns featured on the Opinion Page are the views of the authors and do not necessarily reflect the views of the Breckenridge American.

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Breckenridge American (USPS 063-720/ISSN 2834-1082) is a publication of Palo Pinto Communications, LP and is published every Wednesday by Palo Pinto Communications LP, 1108 W. Walker St., Breckenridge, Texas 76424.

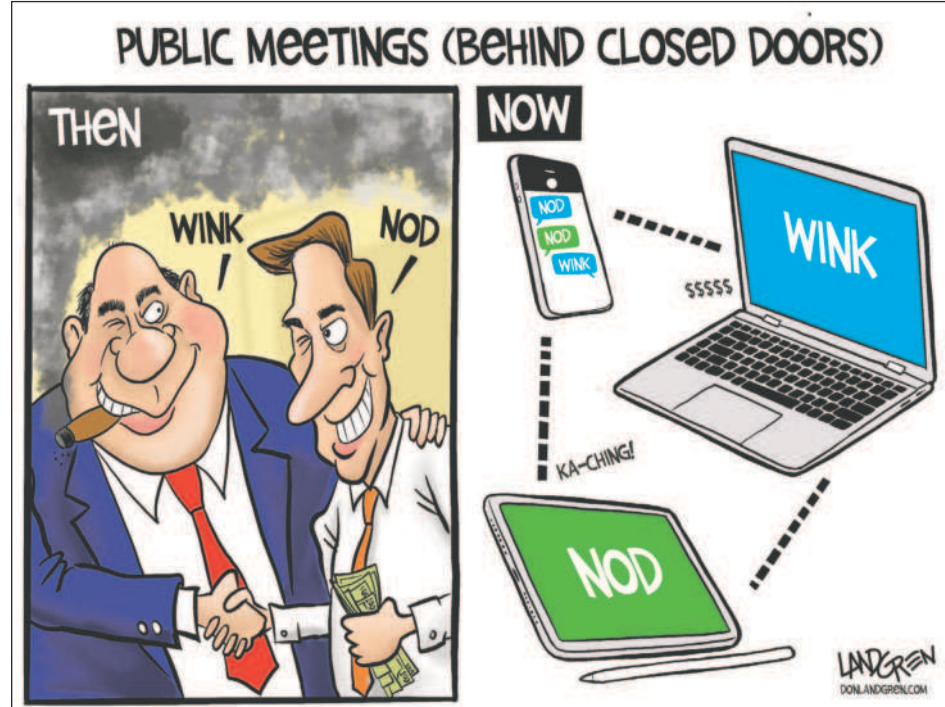
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SUBSCRIPTIONS
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Adjoining County – \$55.00/yr
In-State – \$65.00/yr
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Newbury

Continued from Page 4

istry from HOPE, and others who've known Chandler and been associated with HOPE for many years.

Clearly, the Lord has provided. An article in the Fort Worth Star-Telegram touched the hearts of several eventual donors, one of whom—a CPA and wealth manager—continues to provide significant support so critical to the ministry's continuance....

Though it might be an overstatement to describe facilities as modest, therein HOPE abounds, love thrives and victories are many.

In a computer lab, clients worked on scripturally-bathed curricula.

I met six clients—most in their early 20s—who've put troubled drug issues behind them. Two of the couples are soon to be married, with Chandler—founder of the program's More Than Redemption Church—officiating. The couples will reside in the house recently established for married couples. Their comments about HOPE were tearful; I joined them in joyous boo-hooing....

With two decades of service, HOPE is gaining momentum but remains in constant need of regular donors. Learn more on its Facebook, YouTube and Instagram channels.

Hundreds of clients have been served to date. Among those mentored by HOPE during and after incarceration, not one has returned to prison. One recently completed his GED and is seeking college admission!

Their church attracts some 50 worshipers most Sundays. Guests are welcome; understandably, few attend. I was chilled by Chandler's parting comment. "Each year, we participate in North Texas Giving Day. We are grateful for gifts received, but pet charities receive more." (HopeGivesBack.com provides more information.) Perhaps it was providential that I visited on Maundy Thursday, reflective of Jesus' Last Supper, when he urged His disciples to love one another....

Dr. Newbury is a speaker in the Metroplex. Contact: 817-447-3872. Email: newbury@speakerdoc.com. Audio at speakerdoc.com.

SLAPP

Continued from Page 4

school board member for publicly raising concerns about corruption.

In addition to protecting individual victims, the TCPA protects a culture of open political discourse. In 2023, John Seago, the president of Texas Right to Life, testified against amending the TCPA because of its importance to individuals and organizations that work on important political issues. He testified that he, his organization, and other Texans had been hit with 19 different lawsuits simply for speaking about abortion after passage of the Texas Heartbeat

Act, which banned most abortions in the state. "We turned to the TCPA since we were being targeted simply for our activism," he said last year.

Despite this enormous success, the legislature is currently considering bills to tear chunks out of the TCPA.

This week, a House committee is going to vote on HB 2988, from Rep. Mano DeAyala (R-Houston), which would end the requirement for people who file SLAPPs to pay the other side's legal bills when the case is dismissed. This would make it harder for SLAPP victims to get lawyers to de-

fend their free speech rights, and invite more suits aimed at silencing people – a fundamental encroachment of constitutional rights.

In the coming weeks, we expect other committees to take up SB 336/HB 2459. The bills authored by Sen. Bryan Hughes, R-Mineola, and Rep. Jeff Leach, R-Plano) would remove the TCPA's automatic pause while a victim appeals their motion to dismiss the SLAPP.

The only people who benefit from weaken-

ing these parts of the TCPA are those with deep pockets who want to abuse the courts to silence their opponents. For those people, these bills are a gift.

For Texans like Carol, who just want to speak their mind without being hauled into court, they're a slap in the face.

Carolyn Iodice is Legislative and Policy Director at the Foundation for Individual Rights and Expression, a national free speech group.

Matters

Continued from Page 4

ity and Medicare, and will promptly inform our members of anything which affects them.

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Breckenridge Devotional Page

1. Is the book of Obadiah (KJV) in the Old or New Testament or neither?
2. Which Babylon king went insane living in the fields eating grass? Nebuchadnezzar, Solomon, Daniel, Herod
3. From Genesis 23, what was the first land purchase in the Bible? Garden, Hilltop, Cave, River shore
4. Which apostle was foreordained to minister to the Gentiles? Thomas, Paul, Andrew, John
5. According to Song of Solomon 1:2, what is love better than? Food, Wine, Money, Song
6. Which son of the dying Jacob did he compare to a vicious lion? Reuben, Simeon, Levi, Judah

ANSWERS: 1) Old, 2) Nebuchadnezzar, 3) Cave, 4) Paul, 5) Wine, 6) Judah

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- Albany Church of Christ**
 417 N. Main Street, 325-762-2078
 Russell Scott, Minister
- Eliasville Church of Christ**
 Eliasville – Norman Carpenter, Min.
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 Need something added?
 Email design@grahamleader.com.

FEATURES FROM THE BIBLE
 TRUTH IN SCRIPTURE
 Another Promise to Abram
 Genesis 15


The Lord spoke to Abram in a vision promising him protection and a great reward.

Abram complained that he had no children to inherit the blessing that God would give him. The Lord promised him as many descendants as there were stars in the sky.

Abram believed God and God counted it to him as righteousness. Although He believed, Abram asked for a sign of God fulfilling His promise.

While Abram was in a deep sleep, God told Abram about a sojourn to Egypt by his people where they would remain for 400 years and then return to the land of Canaan.

And God promised that upon their return, Abram's descendants would possess the land from the river of Egypt to the great river Euphrates.



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Even Exchange answers

- | | |
|-------------------|-------------------|
| 1. Allow, Alroy | 6. Sweet, Teaser |
| 2. Twice, Twine | 7. Marsel, Marvel |
| 3. Poppy, Polor | 8. Noise, Narsio |
| 4. Oldsal, Oldsal | 9. Venus, Venilo |
| 5. Cornex, Curway | 10. Wavur, Walter |

SCRAMBLERS solution

1. Fidget 2. Choke;
3. Barren; 4. Cause

Today's Word

NEIGHBORS

— **King Crossword** —

Answers

Solution time: 21 mins.

W	U	R	S	T	S	T	E	P	H		
T	I	N	I	E	R	P	A	N	O	U	T
I	N	S	A	N	E	I	N	T	I	M	E
M	O	A	D	A	L	E	S	R	E	T	
O	N	I	T	T	A	G	T	O	R	O	
N	A	D	A	L	G	E	L	A	T	I	N
		P	E	G	L	E	N				
B	R	U	E	G	E	L	E	G	R	E	T
L	E	N	D	L	O	G	S	U	M	O	
I	C	K	S	P	O	O	L	M	A	R	
S	A	N	T	E	E	T	A	R	P	I	T
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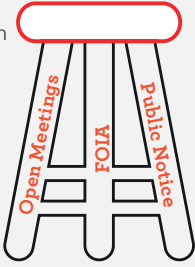
CITY OF BRECKENRIDGE NOTICE OF PUBLIC HEARINGS Pursuant to Section 22-4-(B)(3) of the Breckenridge Code of Ordinances, the Planning & Zoning Commission will hold a public hearing on: DATE: Monday, May 19, 2025 TIME: 5:30 PM PLACE: City Commission Chambers, 105 N. Rose Ave.

(B)(5) of the Breckenridge Code of Ordinances, the City Commission will hold a public hearing on: DATE: Tuesday, June 3, 2025 TIME: 5:30 PM PLACE: City Commission Chambers, 105 N. Rose Ave. The public hearings will be to consider: The property owner of 1103 N. Harvey request a Specific Use Permit at this location for the placement

of a tiny house. This lot is zoned R4 - General Dwelling District. Any and all persons interested in the above referenced item may attend such hearing and will be given an opportunity to be heard. By: /s/ Cynthia Northrop Cynthia Northrop City Manager City of Breckenridge, Texas

Why Public Notice Should Remain in Newspapers

Along with open meeting and freedom of information laws, public notice is an essential element of the three-legged stool of government transparency



Since the first U.S. Congress, public officials have understood that newspapers are the best medium to notify the public about official matters because they contain the essential elements of public notice:



Accessibility



Independence



Verifiability



Archivability



Newspapers remain the primary vehicle for public notice in all 50 states



This is not about "newspapers vs the internet". It's newspapers and newspaper websites vs government websites

and newspaper websites have a much larger audience. Moving notice from newspapers to government websites would reduce the presence of public notices on the internet

Publishing notices on the internet is neither cheap nor free



Newsprint is inherently superior to the internet for public notice because reading a newspaper is a serendipitous process.

We find things in newspapers we weren't expecting to see. On the internet, we search for specific information and ignore everything else.



Citizens continue to learn about vital civic matters from newspaper notices.

Documented examples of people taking action and alerting their community after reading a newspaper notice are reported on a regular basis.

Verifying publication is difficult-to-impossible on the web. That's why the courts subject digital evidence to far greater scrutiny than evidence published in newspapers

Governments aren't very good at publishing information on the internet. Unlike newspaper publishers, public officials aren't compelled by the free market to operate effective websites.



Significant numbers of people in rural areas still lack high-speed internet access. Those who are older than 65 or who have lower incomes or lack high-school diplomas are also cut off from the internet in far higher numbers than the average.



Moreover, the real digital divide for public notice is growing due to the massive migration to smartphones and other small-screen digital devices



Requiring independent, third-party newspapers to ensure that public notices run in accordance with the law helps

prevent government officials from hiding information

they would prefer the public not to see

ENTERTAINMENT

Midweek Edition

OUT ON A LIMB by Gary Kopervas



THE SPATS by Jeff Pickering



POPEYE by Randy Milholland



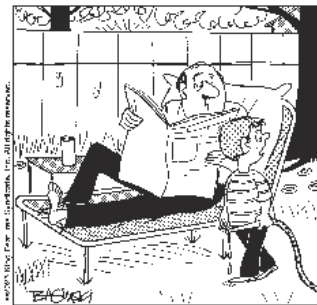
Even Exchange by Donna Pettman

Each numbered row contains two clues and two 6-letter answers. The two answers differ from each other by only one letter, which has already been inserted. For example, if you exchange the A from MASTER for an I, you get MISTER. Do not change the order of the letters.

- 1. Consent to ___ ___ ___ W Metallic mixture ___ ___ ___ Y
2. A couple of times ___ ___ C Hay bale string ___ ___ N
3. O'Neal's "___ Moon" ___ P ___ More ashen ___ L ___
4. Most peculiar ___ D ___ First born ___ L ___
5. Curved out ___ ___ ___ X Carry goods ___ ___ ___ Y
6. Sugary S ___ ___ Avairy sound T ___ ___
7. Mime Marceau ___ C ___ Phenomenon ___ V ___
8. Clamor ___ I ___ Vikinglike ___ R ___
9. Earth's neighbor ___ U ___ Flues ___ T ___
10. Disclaimer ___ V ___ Food server ___ T ___

SCRAMBLERS

Unscramble the letters within each rectangle to form four ordinary words. Then rearrange the boxed letters to form the mystery word, which will complete the gag!



"You'd think the would WANT to cool off on a hot day!"

Word puzzle grid with letters: Squirm, GIFTED, Scifie, KOCHE, Empty, REBARN, Motive, ACUSE

TODAY'S WORD

Crossword

Crossword grid with numbered squares for clues.

- ACROSS: 1 German sausage, 6 Hoops great Curry, 11 More minuscule, 12 Succeed, 14 Ridiculous, 15 Eventually, 16 Bygone bird, 17 Valleys, 19 Pensioned (Abbr.), 20 Taking action, 22 Label, 23 Corrida bull, 24 Tennis star Rafael, 26 Dessert that jiggles, 28 Violin tuner, 30 Novelist Deighton, 31 "The Peasant Dance" painter, 35 Everglades wader, 39 Give temporarily, 40 Lumber unit, 42 Wrestling style, 43 "Nasty!", 44 Thread holder, 46 Damage, 47 South Carolina river, 49 La Brea attraction, 51 Oral, 52 Moving vehicles?, 53 Ceases, 54 Garlic crusher, 7 Catches some rays, 8 Tolkien creature, 9 Christie sleuth, 10 Arm bones, 11 Shakespeare's "___ of Athens", 13 Rockies range, 18 Trail the pack, 21 Recorded, 23 Zesty flavors, 25 Pants part, 27 Director Spike, 29 Smooth writing implementations, 31 Ecstasy, 32 Summaries, 33 Detangle, 34 Brit's restroom, 36 Ado, 37 Inbox fillers, 38 Civil wrongs, 41 Arose, 44 Ooze, 45 Cowardly Lion, 48 Ring decision, 50 Arctic explorer John

Look for answers in the Classifieds.

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The Bucks huddle together before their Senior Night game Monday, April 21 against Tolar. That was the last game they played and have nine days off before playing a bi-district matchup at Iowa Park tomorrow.

Photo/Alex Kielar

Bucks face Hawks tomorrow in bi-district matchup

Alex Kielar
news@breckenridgeamerican.com

Following the cancellation of their last regular season game Friday, April 25 at Tolar, the Buckaroos will enjoy a nine-day break before facing the Hawks in Iowa Park tomorrow, May 1, to commence the bi-district playoffs.

They last played Monday, April 21 at home against Tolar in what was their senior night.

They ultimately dropped the game, 6-5, as the Rattlers came back after the Bucks got out to a 3-0 lead.

The Bucks finished the season with an overall record of 10-11-1 and 8-4 in district play to finish third in 3A Region 1 District 8. Their opponent, Iowa Park won their last six games to finish the season 19-7, including a 9-3 district record. The Hawks earned second place in 3A Region 1 District 7.

After getting swept by Jacksboro in early April, Iowa Park earned wins over Springtown and Boyd before sweep-

ing Henrietta and City View to end the season.

Head Coach Jeremy West described how Iowa Park is a good, well-coached team.

"That district is a gauntlet, [Iowa Park] lost a couple close games and they beat up on each other all season," West said. "They have a lot of good pitching. But it's one game and anything can happen."

The Hawks have a team ERA of 1.99 on the season, according to their MaxPreps page. Their top three pitchers are sophomore AJ Ramirez, freshman CJ McNeill and freshman Braxton Vest.

The young pitching trio dominated all season, which included Vest not allowing any earned runs while striking out 17 over nine appearances and 10 1/3 innings pitched. Ramirez posted a 0.88 ERA and struck out 85 batters in 48 innings over nine appearances. McNeill held a 1.21 ERA in 40 1/3 innings over eight appearances

and struck out 53.

Coach West said that it will be all hands on deck for the Bucks pitching-wise and they had not decided on a starter as of Sunday evening, April 27.

A key for the Bucks if they are to pull out a win is to execute well and not give away free outs offensively or free baserunners defensively. They have recorded the number of errors, walks, hit-by-pitches, passes balls, wild pitches, balks, offensive strikeouts, stolen bases against and other free 90 feet for each game of the season.

In the games that the Bucks "win the sheet," in other words have less freebies than the other team, they are 7-1. When they lose the sheet, they are 3-3.

"We have been swinging the bats well, when we execute and play good defense we put ourselves in a good position to win," West said. "We just have to make one good crack at it and see if we can make some magic happen."

Martinez and Duran, Martinez named Athletes of the Week

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With spring sports winding down, tennis and baseball were the only sports in action last week. The baseball squad begins playoff competition this week, while the tennis season ended early last week at the district tournament.

In the lone game that the Bucks played last week, senior Nieko Martinez showed out for the home crowd one last time on Senior Night, Monday, April 21. For his performance, the catcher has been named the Breckenridge American Athlete of the Week.

Meanwhile, at the district tournament, the girls doubles team of Victoria Martinez and Maria Duran competed against the fourth-seed Aubrey Deal and Kylie Robles of Comanche. The pair did their best against a tough opponent in just their second time competing as a doubles team. Duran and Martinez are the Breckenridge American Co-Athletes of the Week.

Nieko Martinez

After being honored prior to the game on Senior Night last Monday, April 21, Martinez came through for the Bucks in what ultimately was their final game before playoffs. Due to a wet field, the game at Tolar that would have been the regular season finale Friday, April 25, was canceled. In the game earlier in the week,



Nieko Martinez has been named Breckenridge American Athlete of the Week for his performance last week on Senior Night, Monday, April 21 in which he recorded a two-run triple to get the scoring started in the lone game for the Bucks as they start their playoff journey this week.

Photo/Alex Kielar

Martinez broke a scoreless tie in the third inning. With two runners on and one out, Martinez smacked a pitch the other way down the right field line.

The ball rolled all the way to the wall, and the senior catcher wound up on third base with a two-RBI triple. Although the Bucks ultimately lost the game, 5-4, to the Rattlers, Martinez put his mark on the game. Tolar didn't even want to deal with the slugger later in the game, as they intentionally walked him to load the bases in the seventh inning.

Maria Duran and Victoria Martinez

After previously only competing together as a doubles team one other time, due to Duran also competing in track, the pair had a commendable perfor-

mance at the district tournament, despite falling in straight sets.

"They could've used more time in doubles, but with spring being so busy we just didn't have time," Coach Sidnee Martinez said. "They faced a tough draw, but did the best they could."

The doubles team lost in the first round against the Comanche doubles team of Deal and Robles that was ranked fourth in the tournament, 6-1 and 6-2.

Duran had just competed in the girls discus final at the regional track meet at Abilene Christian University the week prior, so just the fact she went from that to trying to prepare for the tennis tournament in a short period of time, says a lot about the type of effort it took.



Maria Duran (left) and doubles teammate Victoria Martinez competed at the district tennis tournament Monday, April 21, only the second time the two competed together. While they were defeated in the opening round, it was against the fourth-seed in the girls' doubles tournament and they put their best foot forward despite not having much practice time together.

Contributed photos

Breck tennis season comes to end at district tournament

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The Breckenridge boys and girls tennis teams competed in the District 8-3A tournament at Early High School early last week and saw their seasons come to an end Monday, April 21.

Ryan Waller and Bry Armstrong were the two boys singles players to compete in the tournament, while Kenzie Blackman competed in girls singles and the girls doubles team

of Maria Duran and Victoria Martinez also played.

"Overall, we did well. I had one person returning from our tennis team last year, two freshmen, two sophomores and a senior who had never played tennis before," Coach Sidnee Martinez said. "Spring is busy. We ran into where everybody did something [else] in spring except three kids. My two sophomore boys, one plays baseball and the other plays golf. It was tough because they missed

tournaments, including district, due to conflicts."

Both Waller and Armstrong advanced to the next round of the boys singles tournament, each taking down their opponent in straight sets. Waller won his sets, 6-0 and 6-5, against Comanche's Camren Nelson and Armstrong took down Nelson's teammate Braxton Moore, 6-1 and 6-1, to win the match.

Waller went on to face the top seed in the district, Tag Hooks of Peaster. After falling 6-0

in the first set, Waller had a more competitive second set, but still lost it 6-5, to ultimately lose the match. Hooks went on to be crowned the district champion.

Armstrong, the lone returner for Coach Martinez, was able to advance one round further than his teammate, defeating third-seeded Pilot Ramirez of Millsap in straight sets, 7-6 and 6-0.

In the next match, Armstrong fell to second-seeded Brett Thomas of Peaster, losing both sets 6-0.

"Bry competed well and showed great growth from last year. He went to district and competed well," Martinez said.

Martinez noted that the junior showed maturity in his skillset this year and is excited to see how he competes in his senior year.

Armstrong still had one more match to play, the third-place match against Early's Tanner Lyon. After losing the first set, 6-2, he forced a third set as he tied the match at one set apiece with a 6-3 win

in the second. But then in the decisive third set, Armstrong fell 6-3 to lose the match and finish in fourth place.

Blackman fell in straight sets, 6-0 and 6-1, to Millsap's Katelyn Meador.

The doubles team of Duran and Martinez faced a tough draw in the first round of their tournament, facing off against fourth-seeded Aubrey Deal and Kylie Robles of Comanche. They were defeated in straight sets, 6-1 and 6-2, and were eliminated.