MEMORANDUM

DATE: January 23, 2025

TO: Mayor Lankford & City Council VIA: Mercy Rushing, City Manager

FROM: Cindy Karch, City Secretary/Finance Director

SUBJECT: Discuss and consider award of bid to SPI to provide City Engineering

CK

Services to the City of Mineola.

Background Information:

The City solicited bids for City Engineering Services. The notice of bid acceptance was published in the Wood County Monitor and posted on the City of Mineola website. Three bids were received: Garter, Hayter Engineering and SPI. Staff ranked the proposals as follows:

Garver – 372 Points

Hayter Engineering - 363 Points

SPI – 393 Points

The city has a positive working relationship with Hayter Engineering and SPI and has always been happy with their service. While Garver is a new firm, their proposal was strong, and they have a local office in Tyler, which was considered in their score. However, SPI received the highest ranking due to their prior experience with Mineola water and sewer projects. SPI also has an office in Tyler and will have an engineer dedicated to Mineola.

The recommended contract will cover all engineering services for City projects during the contract term, including the \$5,500,000 in projects funded by the Texas Water Development Board. The contract will be presented to the Council for approval at the February meeting.

The City's previous engineering firm, KSA, did not submit a proposal.

Recommendation:

Staff recommends awarding the bid to SPI. Copies of the bid packets may be viewed upon request.

Final Disposition:

www.wood.cm

Thursday, November 28, 2024

Vol. 9 No. 48 One Section

SRA proposals concern RV park owners

By BRYNNA WILLIAMSON news@wood.cm

Nearly 30 community members from the Wood County area attended last Thursday's Quitman City Council

meeting. The majority of the meeting revolved around a discussion of the proposed changes to the Sabine River Authority (SRA) Lake Fork Rules and Regulations.

The three key takeaways, according to City Secretary James Attaway's presentation, were regarding the SRA's proposed rule changes to include extending roadway width, increasing the separation distance between RVs to 25 feet and eventually removing all park model RVs and tiny homes.

 especially those who own RV parks in the Lake Fork area – spoke to the council regarding their concern about the new rules. While park owners mentioned that they wanted to work alongside the SRA, many had concerns about the proposed park model home removal, which they say will come to impact local cities and the county with millions of dollars of lost revenue. Ultimately, with both the park model RV removal and the increased lot size regulation, some park owners may not be able to afford staying open, said sever-

the meeting. "Just the groceries there's 47 parks on the lake. Just say a thousand people a weekend

al citizens who spoke at

Community members that the parks drive. \$200 is typical, for groceries 52 weeks a year; I suggest that's probably very, very conservative, and very low. That's \$10.4 million a year, in annual revenue," said park owner Mark Dunn (who has no relation to Quitman Mayor Randy Dunn). "When that starts to ripple through, then your local economy starts to suffer."

"That's a downward spiral, unfortunately," he continued.

However, despite the many concerns, questions and personal feelings involved in the discussion, Mayor Dunn took a moment to remind the community that nothing is yet finalized regarding the rules, and that Troy Henry, the Upper Basin manager for the SRA, "is a good



Mark Dunn addresses the Quitman City Council Thursday concerning proposed rule changes by the Sabine River Authority that will impact recreational vehicle parks around Lake Fork, many of which were represented. (Monitor photo by Brynna Williamson)

guy" who is willing and if they have situations wanting to work with the community on the proposed changes.

"We were asking from a little bit different standpoint, but our heart goes out to you that this is all coming on so quick," said Mayor Dunn. "They haven't

that come in, saying, 'Hey, we need a chance to work towards that; we can't just do it that hard and fast,' then I would voice that. He (Henry) welcomed that."

The board voted to send a letter to the SRA in order to request an got that set in concrete... economic impact study

of the proposed chang-

The Mineola City Council was scheduled to consider a similar letter on Monday.

The board also discussed a motion to approve the consumption of alcohol (beer and

See SRA, Page 5A

Blue Santa returning to assist kids

The Blue Santa program is gearing up for another year of granting Christmas wishes as local police officers and first responders take children shopping who otherwise might have a lean Christmas.

Whataburger in Mineola will continue its role in the program along with 22 sister stores in East Texas, donating one half of all sales from 5-7 p.m. on Tuesday, Dec. 3.

So don't be alarmed by flashing lights in front of the restaurant on N. Pacific St.

Donations can also be made directly to the offi-

cers on hand. The officers and their

charges will descend on on Tuesday, Dec. 17 for their shopping spree.

Each year the children are delighted to find that, yes, they can buy anything in the store they want.

Last year the shopping sprees were around \$400 each for 65 kids.

The program was be-

the Mineola Walmart gun in 2019, when the shopping sprees were \$100. Since that time about \$75,000 has been raised and 200 children assisted.

> The Wood County First Responders Association was formed as

> > See SANTA, Page 5A

Wreaths Across America expands to seven Wood County cemeteries

America program continues to grow across Wood County.

This year the program that places Christmas wreaths on the graves of military veterans during the holiday season will be honoring those who served at seven local cemeteries.

The New Hope Cemetery east of Mineola is joining the program this year. The cemetery, established in 1864, has 112 veterans graves to honor, including some Civil War veterans.

Other participating cemeteries this year include Roselawn north of Mineola, which is the home to more than 700 veterans. Others include Hawkins Cemetery, Hol-

The Wreaths Across ly Tree Cemetery, Lee Čemetery in Winnsboro and the Shady Grove and Pineview Cemeter-

Wreaths will be placed

on Saturday, Dec. 14 following a brief ceremony at most locations.

The wreaths cost \$17 apiece.

They can be purchased the website wreathsacrossamerica. org and may be designated to a specific cemetery, and in some cases, to a specific grave.

The codes for the local cemeteries are as follows, along with the number of wreaths needed (as of Nov. 20) and ceremony times:

New Hope TXNHCM 110 wreaths needed, ceremony at 11 a.m.

Roselawn TXBFHM 57 more needed, ceremony at 11 a.m.

Holly Tree TXHTCR, 94 wreaths, goal exceeded, ceremony at 10 a.m.

Hawkins TXHCBS 150 wreaths, goal exceeded, ceremony at noon

Shady Grove TXS-GCW 110 wreaths needed, ceremony at 1 p.m.

Pineview TXPINE 34 wreaths needed (joint ceremony with Shady Grove)

Lee Cemetery TX-LEEC 469 wreaths need ed, ceremony at 11 a.m.

Volunteers may also contribute by attending the events and helping put out the wreaths. Donations are also accepted to defray various administration and transportation expenses.

Golden makes the most of Musgraves' joke

Golden Texas is no stranger to the national spotlight, like that time Oprah Winfrey mentioned the famed sweet potatoes on her show and gave some away to her audience.

The celebrity who brought the unplanned attention this time was local native and country music superstar Kacey Musgraves.

The community's reaction to a perceived slight jab at the community has led to a positive outcome for the Golden Sweet Potato Festival's scholarship fund for Alba-Golden High School seniors.

It all started soon after the Nov. 5 election when Musgraves was performing in Toronto, Canada.

She told the audience she had called her hotel and asked to extend her stay – for four

Then she mentioned being

from a "tiny ass" town in Texas called Golden, and some audience members began to cheer, to which she replied that's it's not really something to cheer about.

That got the wheels to turning in Golden, spearheaded by the festival's board of directors and member Kamie Bishop.

She posted on Facebook that they respectfully disagreed with Kacey's assessment of her former hometown and came up with a t-shirt to broadcast that there is indeed something to cheer about.

The t-shirts are in an orange shade closely resembling the famed potatoes, with the mes-

Golden, Texas Something to cheer for – everyone

They quickly sold out, raising more than \$8,000 for the scholarship fund and spurring an apology from Musgraves along with a \$10,000 donation to the fund.

She called her remarks about Golden a "sarcastic, completely unserious joke," adding "...maybe every joke or viewpoint doesn't always land."

She continued, "In so many ways I really love my Texas roots. Nothing but love and I truly never meant to offend."

The story was picked up by TMZ, which posted the concert video as well as her entire

statement from her Instagram. That lead to the following statement from the festival board:

A HEARTFELT THANK YOU FROM **GOLDEN**

Now that the dust has settled, we want to take a moment to share a few things about our community, Gold-

en, Texas. The kids you see here (group photo of the Alba-Golden seniors in their shirts) were the motivation behind the "Something to Cheer For" shirts. Golden is a great community filled with even better people. We turned a negative situation into a positive, showing what truly makes Golden so special.

While sometimes things can hurt our feelings or get under our skin, we've found a way to rise above it – just like Golden always does. This community supports each other, has each other's backs, and that's why Golden is truly something to cheer for. We love our little slice of Heaven, and we stand by the saying: "Once from Golden, always from Golden."

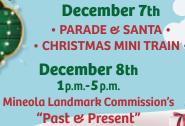
We also want to acknowledge Kacey Musgraves, who reached out publicly as well as privately and sincerely apologized for the comment made about our town. She expressed how much she still appreciates and loves Golden, and we are grateful for her kind words. We will not let that go unnoticed. We take great pride in our community and the kindness we show to one another. It's a reminder to always remember where our

roots are. In a wonderful act of generosity, Kacey graciously donated \$10,000 to support our scholarship fund. With her donation, plus the proceeds from the sale of our shirts, we raised a total of \$18,062 for the GSPF Alba-Golden Seniors Scholarship Fund.

A huge thank you to everyone who made this possible. Your support means the world to our community!







Home Tour

Tickets \$20

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Obituaries

SUSAN KAY BLALOCK 1960-2024



Susan Kay Blalock of Quitman went to meet her Lord on Friday, Nov. 15, 2024. She was 64 years old. Susan had been a long-time educator (40 years) beginning with teaching 2nd grade at Valley View Elementary in Longview. She later became a licensed counselor, but she always put on her resume: I CAN TEACH ANY CHILD TO

READ!

Susan was born in Dallas to Keith and Sara Bobo. They later moved to Henderson and then to Longview, where she graduated from Longview High School in 1978.

Susan attended Kilgore College and East Texas State University where she graduated with a bachelor's degree in education in 1982. She was a member of Kappa Delta Sorority. Susan later obtained her Master Reading Teacher Credentials and her master's degree in counseling from Texas A&M Commerce. She was a licensed professional coun-

Susan married Byron Blalock in 1989. They had four children: Celeste, Sara, Dana and Laura. Byron was a football coach and thus they moved to different cities and towns until they finally settled on some land they bought north of Quitman.

Susan was a very spiritual person, spending much of her waking hours in silent prayer with her Lord. She especially liked to pray in solitude sitting on her back porch where she could see God's nature and working in her vineyard tending her grapevines.

Susan loved to travel. During her lifetime, she traveled all through Europe, Iceland, Japan, New England, Key West, San Diego, San Francisco, Alaska, Hawaii, Yellowstone, the Grand Canyon, the legacy of beauty and confidence.

Great Lakes, up and down the Mississippi River, Canada, Mexico, Argentina, Chile, Uruguay and

Susan was preceded in death by her parents and her daughter, Celeste.

Susan is survived by her heartbroken husband, Byron; brothers, Keith and Jerry Bobo and Jerry's wife Beverly; her children, Sara Hooten and husband Brandon of Anna, Laura Krueger and husband Jordan of Royce City and Dana Stribling and wife Nao of Japan; grandchildren, Adeline Hooten, Jemma and Bennett Krueger, Amelie, Nico and Skye Stribling; as well as numerous nieces and nephews.

The family received visitors from 5-7 p.m. on Wednesday, Nov. 20, 2024 at Lowe-Gardner Funerals and Cremations. Services were held at 2 p.m. Thursday, Nov. 21, 2024 at Myrtle Springs Baptist Church near Quitman.

Serving as pallbearers were Brandon Hooten, Jordan Krueger, Zane Hall, Spencer Starr, Justin Blalock and Shannon White.

In lieu of flowers, please donate to the Myrtle Springs Cemetery Association.

BRANDY LYNN DURHAM (WRIGHT) 1977-2024



With heavy hearts, we announce the passing of Brandy Lynn Durham (Wright) on Nov. 21, 2024 at age 46. She was born on Dec. 7, 1977 in Miami, Fla. to Debbie Ann Evans and James Presley Durham.

Brandy made a significant impact in the lives of many as a dedicated hairstylist for 12

years, with her talent gracing the halls of Great Clips and Smart Stylz. Her passion for styling hair brought joy to countless clients, leaving behind a

As a loving mother and grandmother, family was at the center of Brandy's world. She adored her grandchildren beyond measure. She delighted in showering them with popsicles and M&M's, always finding joy in their happiness. She enjoyed music and dancing. She was a former Quitman Bulldog and an avid basketball player. She loved Betty Boop, and her sisters would refer to each other as The Golden Girls. She was an excellent cook, and her fan favorites were ranch pork chops, lemon chicken and cinnamon toast. She had the most beautiful heart, and everyone could see her coming by her fiery red hair. Brandy's sweet nature extended beyond her family; her love for hot tamales, red hotz, and cinnamon Jolly Ranchers was no secret, as her sweet tooth brought warmth and comfort to all those around her.

She was preceded by her father, James Durham; and her grandparents.

Left to cherish her memory is her mother, Debbie Stewart of Mineola and dad, Ray Stewart of Quitman; love of her life, Charles Wright; children, Jordyn Young and husband Dalton of Alba, Cameron Bussell of Mineola, Logan Wright and wife Courtney of Arp, Landon Wright of Lindale, Ashlynn Torbert and husband Jeremy of Lindale and Reagan Lockwood and husband Logan of Van; brother, Eddie Durham of Mineola; sisters, Tabitha Mauer of Kilgore, and Mindy Smith and husband Donald of Arp; her seven grandchildren, Shyanne, Weston, Wylder, Wrenley, Layton, Emerie and Laiklyn; nieces, Reagan Smith and Baylee Mauer; nephews, Colton Smith and Wade Mauer Jr.; memaw, Sue Evans; and many other family members and friends who will miss her dearly.

Graveside service for Brandy was held at 3 p.m. Sunday, Nov. 24 at Concord Cemetery in Mineola. The family received friends from 1 to 3 p.m. at Lowe-Gardner Funerals and Cremations.

Mineola trustees recognize students, staff

By PHIL MAJOR publisher@wood.cm

The Mineola School Board recognized the following students and staff at the Nov. 18 board

meeting: Primary - Presley Duke and Royce Morales, 1st grade; teacher, Heather Kinsel, 3rd grade.

Intermediate - Stetson Latham and Hayley Molina, 4th grade; teacher, Sandra Jasso, 4th grade. Middle - Zane Hazelwood and Kimberly

er, Heather Crain, art. High school - Johnathan Ledesma Garcia and Carmen Carrasco, seniors; teacher, Julie

Mike Simmons

Santos, 6th grade; teach-

Chappa, math.

Buzz's Ultimate Effort Award - Jospeh Kellogg, transportation department, for assisting a Sulphur Springs bus in getting back on the road after a mechanical breakdown.

Cross country state qualifiers Olivia Hughes, senior, and Raylie Peebles, junior, were recognized. Hughes ran in the state meet all four years and Peebles for the second time.

Superintendent Cody Mize noted that the Mineola ISD Education Foundation's recent winter market and pageant raised more than \$27,000.

Enrollment was announced at 1,756 students, down five from last month's record high. Attendance was reported at 95.62%, led by the primary campus.

Trustees reviewed two annual performance re-

The district scored a perfect 100 on the Financial Integrity Rating System for the 2022-23 school year.

The district also scored the top "1" rating on the 2023-34 Results-Driven Accountability report, which looks at federal programs and special populations.

English as a Second Language coordinator Annette Pecorino reported that the district's population of ESL students has risen an average of 5% per year and is up 40% in the past seven years from 193 students to 272.

Seven new students enrolled in the last few weeks.

She noted that each year the district is making progress in serving students, helping them to transition to competent English speakers.

Keep up with news of **W**ood County the Monitor

Mineola Library Notes

BY LIBRARIAN MARY HURLEY

We made it to Thanksgiving. Now onto the December events. There are a lot of things going on around us. If you need a quiet minute, stop by the Mineola Memorial Library and just sit, read a book and enjoy the quieter atmosphere.

We are collecting books for Caring & Sharing. We are collecting new books for infants, children, teens and adults. Hardback, paperback, boardbooks, large-print: just as long as they are new. Drop them off at the library by Dec. 7 and we will get them to Caring & Sharing to distribute.

Our annual open house is fast approaching on Thursday, Dec. 12 from 4-6 p.m. We will have refreshments, a state of the library address, and of course, our friend and fellow reader,

Santa Claus will be stopping by for photos (you take with your device), conversations and maybe even a sto-

Heads up for Dec. 23 at 7 p.m. The Select Theater will be showing "The Polar Express," and ticket sales will benefit the library. Get your tickets, put on your jammies, and come enjoy a great movie at the oldest, continuously operating theater in Texas. Be sure to purchase popcorn, too.

Remember, Lone Star Legal from Legal Aid will be here, Tuesday, Dec. 3 from 1-3 p.m. to answer legal questions. What they cannot answer here, they can help vou find out where to get more information. This is their last visit this year so be sure to take advantage of them and

their expertise.

Toddler Story Time will continue on Tuesday mornings at 9 a.m. for those 18 months to 3 years

with their parent/caregiver. Pre-School Story Time is on Wednesday mornings at 10 a.m. for ages 3-5 years with their parent/caregiver. Youth Committee Advisory will meet Tuesday, Dec. 3 at 4 p.m. to plan a convention at the library. Homeschool Heroes will meet first and third Fridays at 10 a.m. (Dec. 6 and 20). Crafting Club will meet Saturday, Dec. 7 at 10:30 a.m.

The library will be closed Dec. 24, 25, 31 and Jan. 1.

Mineola Memorial Library is a 501(c)3, non-profit and your donations may be tax-deductible.

Alba-Golden ISD hires new finance director

By JOHN ARBTER woodctystringer@gmail.com

nance at a special ses-

The Alba-Golden ISD Board of Trustees unanimously approved the hire of Bo Shelby as the district's director of fi-

sion last Thursday.

Shelby will be joining the district from the accounting firm of Rutherford and Taylor and will bring six years' worth of experience in auditing of school districts. His education includes an accounting degree from Henderson State University in Arkadelphia, Ark., where he attended on a baseball scholarship, and a master's degree from East Texas A&M.

Shelby will report for duties on Dec. 2 under a standard administrative one-year contract.

The outgoing director, Kaitlyn Hawley, will log her last day with the district on Dec. 31, so there will be no gap.

Alba-Golden Superintendent Shelby Davidson highlighted Shelby's diligence, work ethic anď communications skills.

"He will be a big asset to the district," he stated. Shelby resides Greenville with his wife and young son and will be looking to relocate closer to the Alba-Golden Schools.

Sell your stuff with an ad in the classifieds





PUBLIC NOTICE

Notice is hereby given that a public hearing has

been set by the Wood County Commissioners

Court on Tuesday, November 12, 2024 for revision

on the plat of Holly Lake Ranch Subdivision,

The revision includes Lots 355 & 356, Part III,

The public hearing is set for Friday, December

20, 2024, at 9:00 A.M. in the Wood County

Commissioners Courtroom. All persons interested

in revision to this plat may appear at the public

hearing with opposition should they so desire.

Wood County Precinct 3 Commissioner

located within Precinct 3 of Wood County.

Section II, Holly Lake Ranch Subdivision.

The City of Mineola 300 Greenville Hwy, Mineola, TX 75773 (903) 569-6183

The City of Mineola, in accordance with Section 2254.004, Texas Government Code, is requesting qualifications for City Engineering Services. It is the policy of the City of Mineola to purchase services in accordance with Section 2254.004, Government Code. It is understood that the City of Mineola City Council reserves the right to arrive at such determination by whatever means deemed appropriate and shall be the sole judge in the matter. Instructions for Qualification Statements can be found on the City of Mineola Website at https://www.mineola.com/ or by contacting the City via email at ckarch@mineola.com or by mail at the address listed above.

Request for Qualifications will be received by the City of Mineola at 300 Greenville Hwy, Mineola, TX 75773 until 3:00 P.M., Local Time, Thursday, January 16, 2025.



ads@wood.cm or 903-569-2442