



**ROUTE 66 RAMBLE  
PART 4, KANSAS  
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**TWO-A-DAYS  
PAGE 9**



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# THE TEXAS SPUR

SINCE 1909 ★ NEWS FOR DICKENS AND KENT COUNTIES

Vol. 114 No. 44 | Thursday, August 8, 2024 | www.TheTexasSpur.com | ONE DOLLAR



**BATTER UP** Area resident Stephen Reynolds will be an umpire at the national Junior League World Series August 4-11. (Shown above is a previous game.) | JOHNNA REYNOLDS PHOTOS

## Reynolds ump's at his 'field of dreams'

BARBARA BRANNON | THE TEXAS SPUR

Jayton's Stephen Reynolds—known to ag producers in these parts as head of the local Farm Service Agency office in Spur and to school-sports followers as the voice of the Texas 1A Fan podcast—had a dream.

One he'd called his first youth baseball game purely by accident a few years back, he found his way gradually from coaching on the sidelines to regularly donning the umpire's mask behind the plate.

And who, in those circumstances, wouldn't want to make it to the World Series?



The Junior League World Series in Taylor, Michigan, this week, to be exact.

That's where Reynolds and his wife, Johnna Richey Reynolds, traveled cross-country from Jayton. Stephen officiated his first game on Sunday—his birthday.

"From all of my friends and family to the WS um-



REYNOLDS with World Series umpire credential.

pire crew, to many of the players in my first WS game after my wife had the PA announcer announce it at the beginning of the game, thank you so much," Stephen posted on Facebook.

"It was a very special day."

After the Reynoldses married 35 years ago, Stephen said, an opportunity to opportunity to coach minor-league Little League came his way. Baseball had always ranked up there with his favorite sports, and he grew up playing the game in his hometown of Hamlin, Texas.

Then, before one game, a colleague approached him. "I need a favor from you today," he'd said—and Stephen called the game. "So that was kind of my dipping my toe in the water."

See REYNOLDS, page 10

## New principal named for JGISD

KAY ELLINGTON | THE TEXAS SPUR

Jayton-Girard ISD will open the 2024-25 academic year with a new principal. Jamie Humphries, most recently an assistant principal at Seagraves High School, has been named the principal for Jayton schools.

A 1998 graduate of Angelo State University, Humphries is very familiar with small schools. He grew up in Panther Creek and taught from 1998 to

2000 in Klondike and from 2000 to 2010 at Wellman-Union.

He was in Seagraves from 2010 to 2023, and in his last seven years at Seagraves, he was in school administration, first as a middle school principal and then as an assistant principal at the high school.

"One of the reasons why I wanted to come to Jayton," Humphries said, "is that I wanted my daughter,



**NEW JAYTON PRINCIPAL** Jamie Humphries (left), who has been in education for 26 years as a teacher and administrator, was named to be the new principal at Jayton-Girard ISD. Shown in the photo are Humphries with his family: daughter Hallie Humphries, wife Melissa Humphries, sons Jace and Cade Humphries, and daughter-in-law Jacy Humphries. | COURTESY PHOTO

who will be a freshman to have the small-town school experience. Sea-

graves was a 2A school and it's not quite the same as a

See PRINCIPAL, page 5

## RODEO ROYALTY



DANA PARNELL  
Dickens Co. Queen Candidate



EMBERLYNN MULLIN  
Motley Co. Queen Candidate

## Meet the queen candidates for Motley-Dickens Old Settlers

STAFF REPORTS

**Introducing the Dickens County Queen Candidate: Dana Parnell**

Dana Parnell is the daughter of Ruel and Kristy Harold and the granddaughter of Billy (Bo) and Donna Whitaker.

A sophomore at Guthrie High School, she is 15 years old and a member of the cheer squad for her

second year. She earned the All State Cheerleader title this year and also brought home four medals with her UIL team in biology.

She enjoys spending her time working at Salt Fork Outfitters, riding horses, and rehabilitating three rescue horses her family recently adopted.

See QUEEN, page 6

COMMUNITY | news@TheTexasSpur.com

## What's happening

### COMING UP IN TEXAS SPUR COUNTRY

Submit your community announcements (maximum 75 words) to news@thetexasspur.com for events within the coming month, to run up to 4 issues

### FIRST DAY OF SCHOOL INFORMATION

PATTON SPRINGS INDEPENDENT SCHOOL DISTRICT Monday, Aug. 12

SPUR INDEPENDENT SCHOOL DISTRICT Tuesday, Aug. 13

JAYTON-GIRARD INDEPENDENT SCHOOL DISTRICT Wednesday, Aug. 14

### Local Events

Please let us know of any corrections: News@thetexasspur.com

**DICKENS COUNTY-SPUR LIBRARY** story time, Thursdays, 10 a.m., ages babies to preschool, 403 E. Hill St., Spur

**DICKENS, KENT AND STONEWALL COUNTY EXTENSION AND 4-H** are hosting the Western Rolling Plains Beef Mini Conference, Thursday, Aug. 8, 2 p.m., at the Aspermont Community Center, 9660 US-83, Aspermont. For more information, contact Dickens County (940) 765-7461, Kent County (806) 237-3751, or Stonewall County (806) 773-6937.

**JAYTON INDEPENDENT SCHOOL DISTRICT** will have an Open House on Thursday, Aug. 8, 5:30 p.m., followed by Meet the Jaybirds at the gym/pool at 6:30 p.m. The Booster Club will provide hotdogs after Meet the Jaybirds. The swimming pool will also be open for the last swim of the year.

**SPUR METHODIST CHURCH** will host the staff of Spur ISD for our annual Spur ISD luncheon at the church, Friday, Aug. 9, at noon, 528 Burlington. We will be having a taco bar along with desserts. We are looking for volunteers to help bring some of the food items as well as for several people to help serve at the luncheon. Please contact the church office for the link to sign up to help with this event, (806) 271-4448.

**SPUR INDEPENDENT SCHOOL DISTRICT** will host its Open House, Monday, Aug. 12.

**DICKENS COUNTY FARM BUREAU** and Texas Farm Bureaus are offering a Farm from School online class. K-5 teachers can sign up to participate in the program. Students get to interact virtually with farmers and ranchers and learn how agriculture connects to what they're learning in the classroom. Classes will meet virtually with a farmer or rancher once a month from Sept.-Dec. Get program details and sign up by Wednesday, Aug. 14, at www.texasfarmbureau.org/aic

**DICKENS COUNTY PUBLIC MARKET** Saturday, Aug. 17, 10 a.m.-4 p.m., Spur Senior Center, 210 Burlington Ave., Spur

**SOUTH PLAINS ELECTRIC COOPERATIVE** will hold its annual membership meeting Tuesday, August 20, at the Lubbock Memorial Civic Center. Registration is from 5-6 p.m.; dinner begins at 5 p.m.; meeting, 6 p.m.; announcement of door prize winners, 6:30 p.m. (must register in person but need not be present to win.)

**MOTLEY-DICKENS OLD SETTLERS REUNION & RODEO** will be held Thursday-Saturday, Aug. 22-24, in Roaring Springs. The parade will begin at 10 a.m., Saturday, Aug. 24. To enter to win parade prizes, register at the table on the corner of 4th and Broadway, Roaring Springs.

**SPUR INDEPENDENT SCHOOL DISTRICT** Spur Mini-Cheer Camp, Saturday, Sept. 7, 9 a.m.-3 p.m., at the Dome, with hot dog lunch provided

**SAVE THE DATE** for the 1st Annual Spur Chili Cookoff, Saturday, Oct. 12, noon, Spur Senior Center, 210 Burlington. Entry deadline is Friday, Oct. 4, 5 p.m. All entries and fees must be received by this date. Please contact the Spur Area Chamber of Commerce, 101 E. Hill St. or (806) 271-3097, for more information.



**LONG LIVE INDIA** David Pafford and his son, Caleb found India overwhelming in many ways—but joyous during a flag ceremony in which the crowd chant is "Hindustan, Zindabad!". MORE PHOTOS, PAGE 8 | COURTESY PHOTO

## India: So many people, so much love, culture, chaos – and potential

DAVID PAFFORD | SPECIAL TO THE TEXAS SPUR

David Pafford of Spur and his son Caleb continue their travels through India, including a visit to the border with Pakistan. "If

you would like to see more photos and hear the 'long version' of our story," wrote Pafford, "please visit the website www.farther-beyond.com/circumnavigation. I hope you will join us

See PAFFORD, page 8

## CLASSES BEGIN TUESDAY, AUG. 13

## Spur schools go to 4-day week

KAY ELLINGTON | THE TEXAS SPUR

After polling parents and teachers, Spur ISD made the decision last spring to adopt a four-day school week for the 2024-25 school year.

According to Superintendent Craig Hamilton, the district made the decision because "we think it will help with teacher retention, and in the schools that we talked to who have gone to a four-day week, they are getting better performance out of the students than they were with the five-day week."

Hamilton said that in

See SCHOOL, page 9



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Please send announcements, calendar events, and news items to news@thetexasspur.com  
Display ads, classifieds, legal notices and obituaries should be submitted to spur@thetexasspur.com  
Information may be dropped off locally at 424 N. Burlington Ave., Spur.

**THE TEXAS SPUR** is a weekly publication published 52 times per year, covering Dickens and Kent Counties, including Spur, Dickens, Afton, McAdoo, Clairemont, Jayton and Girard. All submissions are run at the discretion of the editor.

**CONTENT SUBMISSIONS** Deadline for ad submissions, announcements and news is Monday at noon.

**SUBSCRIPTION QUESTIONS** Changes of addresses, renewals, temporary stops can be emailed to spur@thetexasspur.com

**SUBSCRIPTIONS** are \$45/yr for mailing addresses within Dickens and Kent counties (\$39/yr for residents 65 and older); \$56/yr elsewhere in Texas and out-of-state; and \$39/yr or \$5/mo for online subscriptions.

Go to www.thetexasspur.com to subscribe using PayPal, or send payment to The Texas Spur, P.O. Box 430, Spur, TX 79370.

**ADVERTISING** display rates are \$5.70 per column inch local and \$8.00 per column inch national. Obituary notices, classified ads, and text-only legal notices are \$10 for the first 35 words plus 25¢ for each additional word; photos are \$5.00. In display format, such notices are \$5.27 per column inch. Engagement, wedding, anniversary, and birth announcements are free (500 word / 1 photo maximum).

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We welcome letters to the editor via mail or email—to thank a group or organization, suggest an idea, or state an opinion, for instance. Be sure to provide your name and address to verify your identity.

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Austin, TX 78768  
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District Office, Lubbock  
(806) 795-0635  
dustin.burrows@house.texas.gov  
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The Texas Spur encourages citizens to consult [www.ballotpedia.org/Who\\_represents\\_me](http://www.ballotpedia.org/Who_represents_me) for their elected officials at every level of government.



EDITORIAL | spur@thetexasspur.com  
**Paragraphs & pixels**  
**BARBARA BRANNON**

**ROUTE 66 RAMBLE, PART 4: KANSAS**

**Not in Kansas anymore? Think again**



**RAINBOW BRIDGE** In Riverton, Kansas, the Marsh Arch bridge over Brush Creek is the only surviving bridge of this type on the entire length of Route 66. MORE PHOTOS, PAGE 8 | THE TEXAS SPUR

Of the eight states through which Route 66 once passed—and its historic remnants still do—Kansas claims the least, by far. But that 12.8-mile-long elbow jutting into the state’s southeasternmost corner has played an outsized role in the culture of the Mother Road, and in its survival for roadies to drive today.

In the second half of the twentieth century, progress in the form of one of the U.S.’s earliest high-speed Interstate highways— I-44, which extends now from St. Louis to Wichita Falls, Texas—replaced Route 66 along a wider and straighter path.

(Roadgeek trivia, per Wikipedia: As US 66 was being bypassed by I-44, the Route 66 Association requested the designation “Interstate 66” for I-44 from St. Louis to Oklahoma City; transportation officials rejected the request.)

Part of that straighter-path philosophy was to eliminate Route 66’s right-angle into Kansas entirely.

As we departed Missouri and crossed the yellow-brick stripe on old 66 that marks the state line into Kansas, we at first wondered why anyone might care. Then, around the bend, a delightful mishmash of Route 66 reminders hove into view.

A drive-through aluminum highway shield.

A pole design pointing to destinations as disparate as Amarillo (474 miles), Tucumcari (579), and Santa Monica Pier, CA (left blank, but it’ll take us another week to get there).

And spying from atop an iron post just as sneakily as he might’ve done behind a billboard in the 2006 “Cars” movie, a twin of the Sheriff’s 1949 black-and-white-with-cherry-on-top police cruiser.

We laughed when we also discovered a facsimile of Luigi the Fiat peeking out of a garage door.

Turns out we’d barely scratched the surface.

Back in 2001, Galena provided a pivotal bit of pop culture during Pixar director John Lasseter’s scouting expedition for an animated film he’d begun to envision during a cross-country family vacation the summer before.

There, outside a run-down Kan-O-Tex filling station, his team spotted a rusted, run-down vintage tow truck. And he met the truck’s owner, who possessed the redoubtable skill of bending his double-jointed legs in opposite directions.

Kay and I, knowing only a few tidbits of this history, cruised right on through Galena, most of whose establishments weren’t yet open for the day. Right up the road in Baxter Springs, Kansas’ Route 66 Visitor Center, was. The restored Phillips 66 station also offered public restrooms.

I swung open the door into the tiny lobby. Before either of us could inquire directions to the loo, the greeter bellowed out, “What’s your favorite character in ‘Cars?’”

“Um . . . Sally the Porsche?” I ventured.

“Wrong.”

I tried again, the correct answer dawning

on me after taking in the memorabilia and photos that festooned the walls throughout the station.

“Mater!” I supplied, slapping my forehead.

Dean “Crazy-Legs” Walker proceeded to perform for us the famous stunt that had inspired the “Cars” team to give their friendly tow truck its memorable reverse-gear characteristic.

Walker’s only one of the legendary personalities who lent their true stories and knowledge to the movie — which in turn brought multiple generations of new fans to experience the real Route 66 for themselves. Here in Galena, once a run-down, rusted-out mining town bypassed by the big-muscle road, authenticity fed the inspiration for a pop-culture phenomenon that would eventually drive dollars back into tiny-town economies for 2,448 miles.

The three Kansas towns we visited multiple times that day — motoring back into Missouri and across to Oklahoma and back again to photograph the Route 66 zeitgeist in differing light—captured for us the evolution of a road from Roaring Twenties enthusiasm to Fifties heyday to crumbling ’80s ruin and back again.

We thrilled at the ability to drive across the one remaining segment of a Marsh Arch “rainbow” bridge across Brush Creek between Riverton and Baxter Springs, which launched us into fond memories of crossing a similar, larger, preserved bridge last summer in Fort Morgan, Colorado.

We gleaned even more appreciation for these sites from the streaming audio content we’d discovered at the outset of our journey, Anthony Arno’s “Route 66 Podcast.” Arno’s format includes bits of backstory, but the host mostly provides generous stretches of airtime for his interview guests to ramble at will. It’s an informative and inspiring way to learn about the children of the Mother Road.

We’d already listened to the wonderful opening segment with Michael Wallis, author of “Route 66: The Mother Road” (first published in 1990 and updated since then). It’s Wallis’s gravelly voice “Cars” fans will immediately recognize as that of the Sheriff and that millions of roadies recognize as belonging to one of the moving forces in saving the Route.

We finished our afternoon in Kansas learning from a few more of the road’s characters, warriors and champions. A lovely golden light settled over the old Kan-O-Tex Station, where a family snapped photos and waved good-bye to the real county sheriff, who’s married to the station’s co-owner and was making a few fix-ups (that’s a story for another day). We marveled at the ripple effect that’s brought Route 66 nostalgia to a whole new generation.

That’s a lot of value for just 12.8 miles.

READ MORE about the real-life inspirations for the Disney/Pixar “Cars” characters in a piece just out by Amarillo author Nick Gerlich in “Route” Magazine, [www.routemagazine.us/stories/the-cars-story](http://www.routemagazine.us/stories/the-cars-story)



**AT THE MARSH ARCH BRIDGE** in Riverton, Kansas, photographers Rick Pulley and Tammy Roberts took advantage of the scenic spot for some publicity takes. Pulley, also a musician, supports a veterans project called Bands <4> Brothers | THE TEXAS SPUR

**2024 Community Calendar**  
**Community Services and Organizations**

**SPUR VISITOR CENTER**, 101 Hill Street at Burlington Avenue, is operated by the Spur Area Chamber of Commerce and open during regular hours Tuesday–Saturday. Visitors seeking information on the area may email [spurchamber@gmail.com](mailto:spurchamber@gmail.com) or call (806) 271-3097.

**THE SPUR AREA FOOD BANK** serves families throughout Dickens County. The Food Bank is a nonprofit 501(c)(3) organization operating via private donations and welcomes donations to this community work. Donations are tax-deductible and are accepted directly into the Food Bank’s account at Spur Security Bank or at 612 Burlington Ave. The Spur Area Food Kitchen Inc. does not discriminate due to race, color, national origin, sex, age, or disability.

**THE KENT COUNTY LIBRARY**, 156 W. 4th St., Jayton, is open for patron services Monday–Thursday, 9:30 a.m.–5 p.m. Library patrons may also check out e-books and audiobooks on the Libby app for free with their library card. For information call (806) 237-3287 or “like” Kent County Library on Facebook.

**THE KENT COUNTY SENIOR NUTRITION CENTER**, 156 W. 4th St., Jayton, is open Monday and Wednesday from 8 a.m. to noon and Tuesday and Thursday from 8 a.m. to 2 p.m. A lunch meal is served at noon on Tuesdays and Thursdays for a nominal cost, and is also available for carry-out. For information call (806) 237-3288.

**THE SPUR-DICKENS COUNTY PUBLIC LIBRARY**, 403 E. Hill St., is open Monday–Thursday, noon–5 p.m., and extended hours on the first Monday of each month until 7 p.m. Call (806) 271-3714 for questions. Free WiFi (password spurlib2017) is available inside and from the parking lot. Also contact the library for inquiries regarding the Spur Photography Club.

**SPUR-DICKENS COUNTY MUSEUM**, 327 Burlington Ave., Spur, is open April through October. For a tour please call a board member: Frayne Morris, (806) 271-3577; Linda Swenson, (806) 271-3238; Woodie McArthur, (806) 271-4415; or Don Wright, (806) 271-4520.

**SENIOR CITIZENS CENTER/SOUTH DICKENS**, 210 Burlington Ave., provides a dine-in meal at noon Monday–Friday, the salad bar is available on Wednesdays. A donation of \$4 is suggested for ages 60 and older, with an \$8 donation for those younger than 60. For more information call (806) 271-4472.

**SENIOR CITIZENS CENTER/NORTH DICKENS**, 511 Montgomery St., Dickens, provides a meal at noon Monday–Friday. A donation of \$5 is suggested. For more information call (806) 623-5520.

**DICKENS COUNTY MUSEUM** on Montgomery Avenue in Dickens is open 9 a.m. to 2 p.m., the second and fourth Saturdays monthly. For a special viewing or other hours please call Ruby Combs at (806) 269-6215 or Bron Combs at (806) 294-5302.

**KENT COUNTY LIONS CLUB** meets the second and fourth Mondays of each month at noon at the Kent County Community Center, 156 4th St., Jayton. Lunch is served at a cost of \$10 per person; please RSVP to Daryl Ham at (806) 269-1179.

**SPUR ART GUILD** Open painting day every third Monday at the Spur Senior Citizens Center, 201 Burlington Ave., Spur.

**Public and Civic Meetings Coming Up**

Please let us know of any corrections: [News@thetexasspur.com](mailto:News@thetexasspur.com)

**NOTICE:** The Dickens County Clerk’s office will be closed Monday–Wednesday, Aug. 12-14, to attend the Texas Secretary of State’s Election Conference.

**CITY OF SPUR CITY COUNCIL** special meeting, Thursday, Aug. 8, 5:30 p.m., City Hall, 402 N. Burlington Ave., Spur, (806) 271-3316

**DICKENS COUNTY COMMISSIONERS COURT** Monday, Aug. 12, 9 a.m., County Courthouse, 201-US 82, Dickens, (806) 623-5532

**KENT COUNTY COMMISSIONERS COURT** Monday, Aug. 12 and Monday, Aug. 26, 9 a.m., County Courthouse, 101 Main St., Jayton, (806) 237-3373

**KENT COUNTY LIONS CLUB** Monday, Aug. 12 and Monday, Aug. 26, noon, Community Center, 156 W. 4th, Jayton

**PATTON SPRINGS INDEPENDENT SCHOOL DISTRICT** board meeting, Monday, Aug. 12, 1261 E. FM 193, Afton, (806) 689-2220

**ANDREW KENT MUNICIPAL WATER DISTRICT** Tuesday, Aug. 13, 4:30 p.m., District office at Kent County Courthouse, 101 Main St., Jayton

**JAYTON-GIRARD INDEPENDENT SCHOOL DISTRICT** board meeting, Thursday, Aug. 15, 6:30 p.m., school board room, 700 Madison Ave., Jayton, (806) 237-2991

**SPUR CHAMBER OF COMMERCE** Monday, Aug. 19, 6 p.m., Community Center, 101 E. Hill St., Spur, (806) 271-3097

**WHITE RIVER MUNICIPAL DISTRICT** Monday, Aug. 19, 7 p.m., District office at White River Lake

**CITY OF SPUR CITY COUNCIL** Tuesday, Aug. 20, 6 p.m., City Hall, 402 N. Burlington Ave., Spur, (806) 271-3316

**SPUR INDEPENDENT SCHOOL DISTRICT** board meeting, Monday, Aug. 26, 7 p.m., school administration office, 800 Williams Ave., Spur, (806) 271-3272

**Dickens commissioners vote 10% salary increase**

BARBARA BRANNON | THE TEXAS SPUR

In a special meeting and budget workshop scheduled for August 5, Dickens County officials fine-tuned the proposed budget for the 2024-25 fiscal year, debating whether to approve their suggested 10 percent increase in salaries including their own.

In the end, on a motion led by retiring commis-

sioner Charlie Morris, commissioners were unanimous in their consensus that the raise would adjust many years of zero to minimal salary increases for a historically undercompensated staff.

“Right now it’s timely,” said County Judge Kevin Brendle. “We’re going to be raising less money from

See **DICKENS**, page 8

**CAPITAL HIGHLIGHTS**

**Pattern of abuse reported at Texas juvenile facilities**

AUSTIN— A federal investigation into five state facilities concluded children in custody face excessive force, sexual abuse and a lack of vital services, The Dallas Morning News reported.

At a news conference last week, Kristen Clarke, assistant attorney general in the Justice Department’s civil rights division, said children held in those facilities are not receiving the treatment and rehabilitation they are supposed to get.

“Our investigation provides reasonable cause to believe that, far from achieving those objectives, TJJD engaged in a pattern of abuse, deprivation of essential services and disability-related discrimination that seriously harms children and undermines their rehabilitation, all in violation of their rights,” Clarke said.

In response, the Texas Juvenile Justice Department said it had made “several significant improvements”



in staffing, educational programs and mental health care. The Legislature appropriated more than \$1 billion last session to improve youth facilities.

The youth facilities are located in Gainesville, Edinburg, Brownwood, Giddings and Mart.

Investigators found evidence of physical and sexual abuse, according to the report.

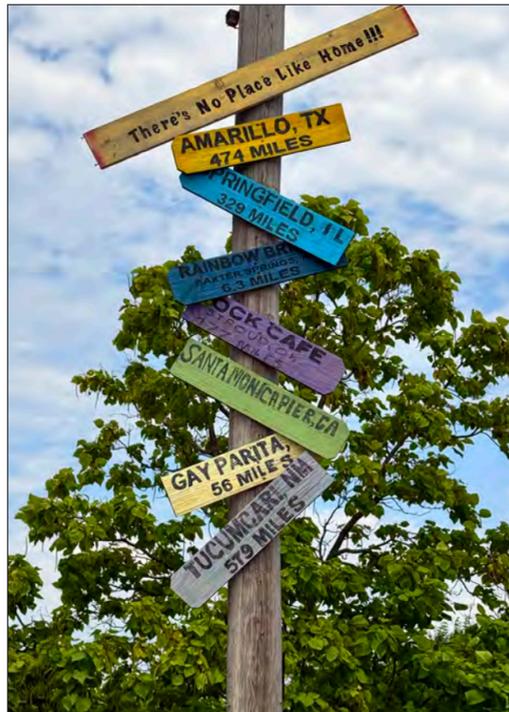
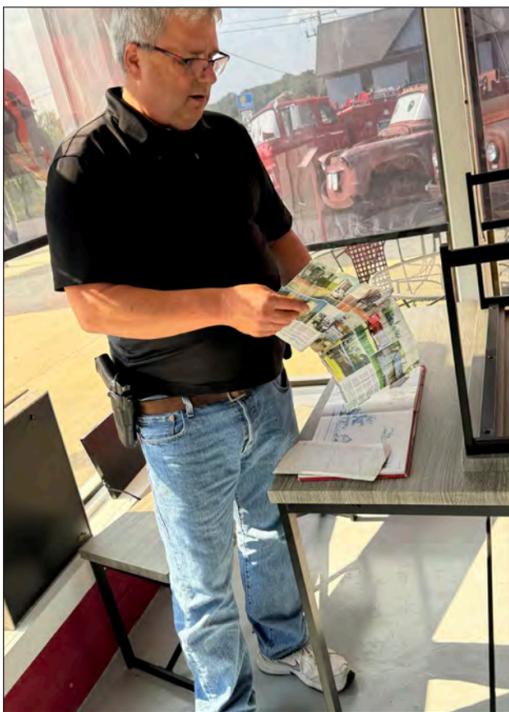
**TXDOT ADOPTS LONG-RANGE TRANSPORTATION PLAN.** “Connecting Texas 2050” was adopted recently

See **CAPITAL**, page 7

# SPOTLIGHT ON SPOTLIGHT ON ROUTE 66 RAMBLE, PART 4



CARS ON THE ROUTE is the updated name of roadie Renee Charles's souvenir shop (below right) in Galena, Kansas, which encapsulates the automobile culture of the Mother Road but also the pop-culture phenomenon of the 2006 "Cars" animated film. | THE TEXAS SPUR



### SCHOOL FROM PAGE 1

Spur's new schedule staff and students will be off on Mondays in the fall, which would be until the Christmas holidays, and then Fridays in the spring, January through May. Teachers and students will all be on the four-day schedule.

Hamilton said as superintendent, he would still work a five-day week.

The superintendent said that the district had taken its time in going to a four-day week, observing other area schools that in recent years had gone to the shortened schedule, and the effects of the change. Some parents had expressed concerns about the impacts of the longer days in the shorter weekly schedules (students will attend classes from 7:30 a.m. to 4:05 p.m.).

Hamilton said that the

new schedule won't be that much longer than the schedule had become in recent years. Spur schools were already starting at 7:45 a.m., and that the first 10 to 15 minutes would be a tutorial period, including

breakfast for elementary students, and prep time for secondary students.

He said he thought the new schedule would really offer parents some benefits in "traveling and doctors' and dentists' ap-

pointments and that sort of thing."

This week teachers and administrators for Spur ISD are having staff development, and the first day of classes for students is Tuesday, Aug. 13.



# JAYTON GRIDIRON

## 21st Annual CLASSIC 2024

**Thursday, August 29th**  
 \*Crowell vs McLean 6:00 PM  
 \*Jayton vs Westbrook 8:00 PM

**Friday, August 30th**  
 \*Borden County vs Valley 6:00PM  
 \*Knox City vs Klondike 8:00 PM

**Saturday, August 31st**  
 \*Bryson vs Ira 3:00PM  
 \*Garden City vs Nazareth 5:30PM  
 \*Highland vs Cherokee 8:00PM

\*Home team

**REYNOLDS FROM PAGE 1**

Several years later, when their own kids started playing T-ball in Hamlin, he umpired those games. By the time the Farm Service Agency moved the family to Paducah, Texas, he was serving as league president, the role that's also assigned to calling games.

In 2003, Johnna said, him, "You seem to enjoy this so much, why don't you go get paid for it?" And through the Texas Association of Sports Officials chapter in Lubbock, he obtained training and began calling high school ball, on fields between the West Texas cities of Paducah, Lubbock and Floydada—all while still calling youth baseball in Paducah.

You could say he'd found a niche.

When the FSA took the Reynoldses to a new post again, to Jayton in 2010, Stephen took a couple of years' hiatus. But then he crossed paths with Bobbie Brown, district administrator for District 38 Little League, which includes Spur and Jayton.

He got a call up one June evening. "Do you still have your umpire equipment?"

The league needed help with a championship game in Slaton, and Brown tapped him as a fresh face for the officiating ranks.

**Since then, Stephen has worked his way up** in his side gig, to a point where he was also responsible for training others.

"I learned a lot through the TASO chapter in Lubbock," he said. Clinics provided him the chance to hone his skills, including the switch from the finger-pointing gesture for a called strike that he'd long perfected, to the "hammer" that Little League International prescribed.

"The very first time, I knocked my own mask off," he admitted.

In 2015 Stephen was selected to call his first state tournament, and in 2017 was nominated and selected to call the Junior Southwest Regional in Santa Fe. The following year, he filled the same role with the Junior Southwest Regional in Albuquerque, before Covid prompted a hiatus. Returning to action

in 2022, he umpired at the Senior Southwest Regional in Seguin, Texas.

Those games were a very exciting arena, Stephen said, "which could translate to a few nerves" given the national broadcast coverage, and his first experience with instant replay.

"You're going to take some heckling and complaining" when you're the buy in the umpire's uniform, he said, "but it's still the best seat in the house."

Starting in 2023, Stephen was selected to be an umpire selector/evaluator. This was a different role, he said, not being on the field calling, making sure umpers are up to speed, and managing pregame and postgame discussions.

**At the World Series level**, Stephen explained, one of the biggest changes has been not in the game itself but in the public attention available to it. Time was, only the Major League grade 11-12 boys at Williamsport was the only tournament televised. Now, ESPN contracts for every baseball and softball matchup to be broadcast,

and with that has come the instant replay, he said.

After a full one-day training in March (half day spent on the manual, half a day on the field) and mastering the rules, Stephen said he would still be working to prepare for Michigan. In the Junior Series, there would be 13 umpires, and an umpire might call 5 or 6 games; the roster would change daily.

Stephen planned to make a road trip of it with the family (daughter Jaylee and son Garrett are both recently engaged, he said), arriving in time for Opening Ceremonies on Saturday, Aug. 3.

What did he expect the atmosphere to be like when they arrived? I asked. "I'll find out when I get there," he replied with his customary droll chuckle.

By now he's had a chance to test his mettle on one field of dreams, with that first game August 4 and the series wrapping up the weekend of August 10.

We'll be watching from time to time (switching channels back and forth from the Paris Olympics!) to see if we can spot our hometown guy behind the plate.



STEPHEN REYNOLDS of Jayton has honed his baseball-officiating skills over more than two decades. | COURTESY PHOTO

We know he's doing a task he truly loves.

"You take a lot of criticism being an official from time to time," he said, "but the joy of working with the kids outweighs it."

The 2024 Junior League Baseball World Series schedule and scores can be consulted at <https://www.littleleague.org/world-series/2024/jlbws/tournaments/world-series>

**SPUR ISD FROM PAGE 4**

Administrative Procedures Manual for 2024-2025 as presented. The motion passed 6-0.

A motion was made by Ortiz and seconded by Smith to approve the Spur ISD Federal Grant Policies and Procedures Manual for the 2024-2025 school year as presented. The motion

passed 6-0.

A motion was made by Smith and seconded by Humphreys to approve 6:00 p.m. Monday, August 26, 2024, as the set date and time of the public hearing to set the tax rate for the 2024-2025 school year. The motion passed 6-0.

Present for the board were President Roy Sanchez and board members

Pat Ortiz, Andrew Adams, Terri Wyatt, Matt Humphreys and Casey Smith. Cody Schmidt was absent.

Others present were Superintendent Craig Hamilton, Elementary Principal Jose Molina, Secondary Principal Tanya Phillips, Athletic Director Tate Clark, Business Manager Bridgette Zarate, and Superintendent Secretary April Ortiz.

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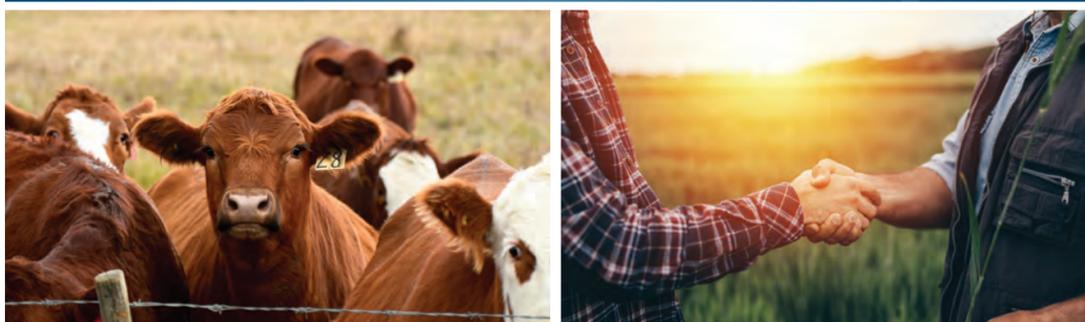
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