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# The Times

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One Dollar Vol. 25 No. 08 PUBLISHED IN THE FREESTONE COUNTY SEAT, FAIRFIELD, TEXAS Wednesday, February 25, 2026

Freestone County Republican

## Candidates Questioned on Issues



REPUBLICAN CANDIDATES FOR COUNTY JUDGE, incumbent Lloyd Lane (left) and Jeff Looney, answered questions in front of a packed room during last week's forum.

Early Voting is currently underway for the Texas Primaries with Election Day set for Tuesday, March 3, 2026.

The Freestone County Republican Party held a Candidate's Forum last Monday, February 16, to allow county residents the chance to get to know the many candidates vying for a spot on this year's Primary Election ballot.

Welcoming the large crowd was Republican Party Chair, Keith Turchi, followed by the Pledges to the American and Texas flags, led by Linda Weldon.

Offering up a prayer for the county, country, and candidates was Pastor Jim Albin of First Baptist Church, Wortham.

Moderator and candidate introductions were given by Julianne Watkins with Buzz Russell serving as event moderator.

### County Judge

Candidates for County Judge were up first. On the ballot for the primaries are current sitting (interim) Judge Lloyd Lane, Jeff Looney, and James Tyus (not in attendance).

**--Lane:** I'm a member of the Fifth Generation of my family in Freestone County. I was born and raised here and wouldn't want to live anywhere else. I became a commissioner in

2021. During my time serving the county, we moved the tax office, updated and moved the 911 department, updated deputy equipment, acquired new patrol cars for the sheriff's office and new fire trucks for each volunteer fire department; and there are more big things coming. Getting a new jail is most important right now, and we are working towards getting that done.

**--Looney:** I support law enforcement officers and all emergency services. I'm for protecting land and resources. I'm not afraid to stand up or make decisions. We need a joint effort in setting goals and objectives for the county. I will be transparent. Senior Services can't be left out. Property taxes are important to me as well. I invite you to contact me if you have any questions.

**Question:** The FY 2026 budget was adopted with a tax rate increase to .3335% to generate more revenue for the county. What specific strategies will you implement to ensure long-term fiscal stability without further increasing the tax burden on residents?

**--Lane:** When I began serving as Commissioner in 2021, the tax rate was set at .39375%. Since then, it has been lowered twice, but

-Forum-  
Page 9-A

**MEET YOUR LOCAL CANDIDATES**  
RUNNING FOR:

**PRIMARY ELECTIONS**  
**ELECTION DAY**  
MARCH 3, 2026  
EARLY VOTING ENDS FEB. 27, 2026

STATE SENATOR DISTRICT 5  
**Charles Schwertner (R)**

STATE REPRESENTATIVE DISTRICT 13  
**Angelia Orr (R)**

STATE REPRESENTATIVE DISTRICT 13  
**Kat Wall (R)**

COUNTY JUDGE  
**Jeff Looney (R)**

COUNTY CLERK  
**(Julie) Renee Gregory (R)**

COMMISSIONER, PCT. 3  
**Richard McGowan (R)**

COMMISSIONER, PCT. 3  
**Opal Oliver (D)**

COMMISSIONER, PCT. 4  
**Clyde Ridge (R)**

JUSTICE OF THE PEACE, PCT. 3  
**Cinnamon Archibald (R)**

JUSTICE OF THE PEACE, PCT. 3  
**Karen Malone Daniels (D)**

JUSTICE OF THE PEACE, PCT. 4  
**Adam Minze (R)**

REPUBLICAN CHAIR, PCT. 1  
**Elizabeth Waters (R)**

Political Ad paid for by individual candidates.

## National FFA Week

Brings Students, Communities & Agriculture Together

More than one million FFA members, alumni and supporters are getting ready to celebrate National FFA Week this month, an annual tradition coordinated by the National FFA Organization to share the value of FFA and the impact it has on its members every day. National FFA Week kicked off on Saturday, February 21 and runs through Saturday, February 28.

See pages 2 - 5-A this week for information about FFA chapters in Freestone County, Texas.

FFA is the top school-

based youth leadership development organization in the country, with more than one million members in all 50 states, as well as two territories, Puerto Rico and the U.S. Virgin Islands. Formerly known as Future Farmers of America, the organization was rebranded as FFA because it now equips students with the skills to pursue more than 350 careers in business, science, engineering, education, communications, policy, and more.

"National FFA Week is a time when we showcase the collective impact of FFA nationwide," said National FFA Advisor, Dr. Travis Park. "Throughout FFA, we see our members stepping up as leaders, innovators, and advocates for agriculture. We know this happens, thanks to the dedication of agricultural teachers and FFA Alumni & Supporters. This week, National FFA Week, is when we celebrate the collective agricultural education ecosystem."

The six National FFA Officers will travel across the country to connect with members during the week, leading workshops, delivering keynote talks and interacting with students on a more personal level.

President Trey Myers will be traveling to North Carolina. Secretary Lilly Nyland will be traveling to Maine, Vermont and Massachusetts. Eastern Region Vice President Joey Nowotny will be traveling to Hawaii. Western Region Vice President Jael Cruikshank will be traveling to New York. Southern Region Vice President T. Wayne Williams will be traveling to Nevada. Central Region Vice President Claire Woepfel will be traveling to Utah.

"I'm really looking forward to heading to North Carolina and getting to see FFA show up in so many different ways," said National FFA President Trey Myers. "From visiting brand-new chapters to meeting a group that's learning about agriculture at a real, working zoo, every stop is going to tell a different story. What I'm most looking forward to, though, are the one-on-one conversations. I can't wait to connect individually with members and hear what FFA looks like in their lives."

Several chapters in different states across the country will be participating in their own special events to commemorate National

-Nat'l FFA Week-  
Page 6-A



## Area Champions...Again!

THE LADY EAGLES DEFEATED Grandview 81-37 in the Area Championship at Corsicana High School on Friday night, February 20. Pictured are (front) Delaney McGowan, Kaylee Williams, KeKe Alexander, Aaliyah Nash, Samayah Wiley, (back) Kole Brackens, Rhett Ralstin, Blayke Brackens, KK Forge, Jacelynn Schmidt, and Ja'Maria Bass. Fairfield advances and will take on Hitchcock in the Regional Semi-Final. (Turn to page 8-A for sports coverage)

## Agricultural Emergency Declared

Texas Agriculture Commissioner Sid Miller has declared an Agricultural Emergency, rallying Texans to back the State of Texas Agriculture Relief (STAR) Fund and urging wildfire-hit producers and agribusinesses to seek financial aid. Across the Panhandle and West Texas, Texans are facing devastating losses due to wildfires.

"Texans always rise for neighbors in

crisis," said Commissioner Miller. "I'm calling on individuals, businesses, and groups statewide to fuel the STAR Fund to help sustain the backbone of our food, fiber, and fuel supply."

TDA is deploying key resources:

-Emergency-  
Page 7-A

**CALENDAR**

**BUTLER**  
Democrat Candidate Forum  
February 28 - 5:30 pm  
Butler Community Center  
Black History Program - 6 pm

**INSIDE**

Nat'l FFA Week  
Page 2 - 5-A

Election Day Info  
Page 6-A

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## Youth are the future of agriculture.



During National FFA Week, we salute our students and their teachers.



Fairfield High School's 2025-2026 FFA Officers: (Left to Right) Maggie Moreno, Mycah Smith, Arden Strait, Avery Strait (Senior), Alaina Baker (Senior), Blake Phillips (Senior), Daley Glass, Trinity Glass (Senior), Obie Crook (Senior).



Greenhand (First year Ag Students) Officers: (Left to Right) Colton Rangel, Lacie Bailey, Daphne Devanna, Piper Holcomb, Kodi Ann Weaver, Austin Rogers (Not Pictured).



Daphne Devanna and Blake Phillips at the STATE LDE contest. Blake placed 9th in Job Interview and Daphne placed 24th in Greenhand Creed speaking in the entire state of Texas!



Leadership Development Event contest students. (Submitted pictures)

# Thanks!

to ALL our local Ag Students

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National FFA Week - February 21-28, 2026

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FIRST PLACE RANGE PLANT ID TEAM (l-r) Grace Smith, Marley Alderman, Daisy Rivera, and Harley Hazen.



TEAGUE FFA OFFICER TEAM includes (back, l-r) Student Advisor - Cole Mims, senior; Secretary - Kameryn Thompson, senior; President - Grace Smith, senior; and Reporter - Landon Evans, senior; (front, l-r) Sentinel - Kaden Brockman, sophomore; Parliamentarian - Addy York, freshman; Vice President - Megan Shaw, senior; and Treasurer - Kyle Shugart, senior.



PARTICIPATING IN A WELDING BUILD OFF were (l-r) Carlos Medina, Kaedyn Ovalle, Lucky Akins and Grady Langley.



STATE LONE STAR DEGREE RECIPIENTS at State FFA Convention are (l-r) Landon Evans, Cole Mims, Grace Smith, Megan Shaw, Kynlee Grabs, Miley Steen, Kameryn Thompson, Lillian Chamblis, and Marley Alderman.



DISTRICT LEADERSHIP DEVELOPMENT Contest Winners from Fall 2025 for Teague FFA Chapter.

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## Wortham Chapter FFA Officers

--**President:** Tanner Wilkins is a junior with three years of FFA under his belt. He participates in LDE-Quiz, Broadcasting, and CDE-Horse Judging. He has also held an officer position for three years. FFA has helped him grow and be more responsible. Tanner plans to attend TSTC and be a lineman. He is the son of Jessica and Scott Wilkins.

--**Vice President:** Emory Russell is a junior with four years of FFA experience. She participates in Vet Med, Creed Speaking, Spanish Creed Speaking, and Senior Quiz. FFA has been a place for her to grow and become a better person. After graduation, Emory plans to go wherever God puts her. She is the daughter of Stephanie Russell and Kevin Russell.

--**Secretary:** Korie Reed is a freshman with three years of FFA in the books. She participates in Greenhand Creed and Quiz. She has held an officer position for two years. FFA has taught her dedication, responsibility, public speaking skills, problem solving and leadership. After graduation she plans to get a degree in physical therapy/athletic training. Korie is the daughter of Nicole and Collin Stubbs.

--**Treasurer:** Madison Henderson is a freshman with two years of FFA under her belt. She participates in LDS-Quiz, Broadcasting, and CDE-Horse Judging. FFA has provided life skills like teamwork and critical thinking. After graduation, she plans to work for Henderson Cattle Co. She is the daughter of Mandy and Brad Henderson.

--**Sentinel:** Ryan Ramirez is a sophomore with one year in FFA. He participates in LDE-Senior Skills. FFA has allowed him to be able to try new things. After graduation he plans to attend Trade School. Ryan is the son of Amber and Ray Ramirez.

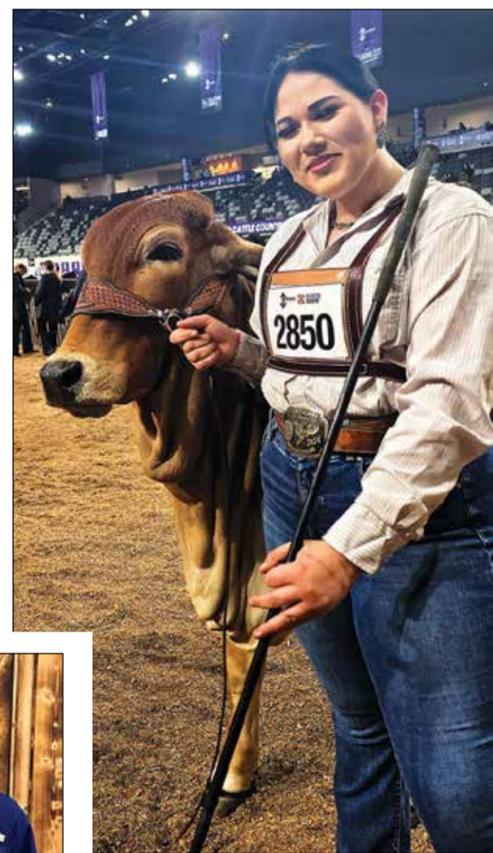
--**Reporter:** Maggie Downey is a freshman with two years FFA experience. She participates in Horse Judging and Job Application. FFA has allowed her to carry the family tradition. She plans to attend college after graduation. She is the daughter of Tabitha and Lance Story.

**SUPPORTING OUR High School FFA Chapters**

National FFA Week - February 21-28, 2026



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*Therefore be patient, brethren, until the coming of the Lord. The farmer waits for the precious produce of the soil, being patient about it, until it gets the early and late rains.*

*James 5:7*

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# Fairfield FFA Chapter



FFA meeting where the TX FFA officers came to put on a workshop for our Fairfield Cham members.

## Teague FFA Chapter



WORKING ON RESTORING a tractor in class is Case Nichols.



PARTICIPATING AT THE Fort Worth Goat/Lamb Show are (l-r) Leah Shaw, Mr. Shaw, Addy York, and Megan Shaw of Teague FFA.

## Wortham FFA Chapter



Showing their animal projects are Wortham FFA students.



Wortham FFA students working hard in the shop.

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**WEIGH-IN: SUNDAY, MARCH 1st, 2026 1:00 PM**

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-Nat'l FFA Week-  
Continued from 1-A

FFA Week. This year marks the 50th anniversary of Alaska being chartered as part National FFA, as it was the final state added to the organization. After nearly all of the Alaska FFA historical records were lost in a barn fire several years ago, leaders are inviting the public to share photos, documents and memories to help rebuild what was destroyed. Anyone with these historical records or artifacts can share them by connecting directly with Faith Stewart, Alaska FFA State Reporter, at [faith@alaskaffa.org](mailto:faith@alaskaffa.org).

**GET INVOLVED IN NATIONAL FFA WEEK**

Each day of National FFA Week is marked by a unique opportunity to get involved:

--Wednesday, February 25 is **Advisor Appreciation Day** – a chance for students and alumni to recognize the agriculture teachers who have made an impact on their lives

--Thursday, February 26 is **Give FFA Day** – a day dedicated to raising money to support FFA and agricultural education on local, state, and national levels, with the organization's most ambitious fundraising goal yet – to raise \$1.75 million. To receive a text alert on Give FFA Day to donate, visit [org/GiveFFADay](http://org/GiveFFADay)

--Friday, February 27 is **Wear Blue Day** – people are encouraged to show FFA pride by wearing blue, the color of the iconic FFA jacket

--Saturday, February 28 is the **last day of FFA Week**

This year's Give FFA Day will incorporate a new way for people to support the next generation of leaders: **ChapterBoost**. The ChapterBoost program showcases local FFA chapters and their goals for hands-on learning, leadership development and agricultural education, giving donors the opportunity to make an immediate impact by selecting a project to support directly through crowdfunding an individual chapter. Any gifts made to ChapterBoost during Give FFA Day will count toward the final Give FFA Day total.

The National FFA Organization is a school-based national youth leadership development organization of more than 1,042,245 student members as part of 9,407 local FFA chapters in all 50 states, Puerto Rico and the U.S. Virgin Islands.

## Attention: Texas Business Owners

Thank you for what you do for the economy of the Great State of Texas! Your business is so vital to the success of the state and because of that, you are invited to the Texas Conference for Employers, held in person in your local area.

Texas Workforce Commission's Office of the Commissioner Representing Employers sponsors the Texas Conference for Employers, a series of employer seminars held each year throughout the state. Employers who attend the seminars learn about state and federal employment laws as well as the unemployment claim and appeal process. We assemble our best speakers to guide you through ongoing matters of concern to Texas employers and to answer any questions you have regarding your business.

The conference will be held August 6-7, 2026, at the Waco Convention Center. Registration for this two-day event is \$325 and you can learn more about the Texas Conference for Employers online at [twc.texas.gov/agency/texas-conference-employers](http://twc.texas.gov/agency/texas-conference-employers)

If you have any questions regarding registration, please contact Conference Planning at the number or email below.  
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**Email** [conferenceplanning@twc.texas.gov](mailto:conferenceplanning@twc.texas.gov)

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## Small Landowner Workshop

Texas A&M AgriLife Extension Service in McLennan County along with McLennan Community College Continuing Education are hosting a Small Landowner Spring Educational Workshop Series at the McLennan County AgriLife Extension office, located at 4224 Cobbs Dr. Waco, Texas 76710.

This educational series will consist of three sessions, Monday nights, April 13, 20, & 27 2026, from 6:00-8:00pm. The cost for the workshop is \$49 for all three sessions.

Online registration is through MCC Continuing Education at MCC Continuing Education ([mclenan.edu](http://mclenan.edu)). Click on Community Programs, Click Outdoors & Animals, scroll to the New Landowner Ed Series program or call MCC Continuing Education at (254) 299-8888 to register by phone.

Join us starting Monday, April 13th to learn the basics of understanding and managing your land more effectively. Individuals can choose between the virtual (via/on Microsoft Teams) or in-person option to attend this program. Once registered we will send out more details.

**Session 1:** April 13th - Who and What is AgriLife Extension, What to Do with My Piece of Texas, and Agriculture Property Tax Valuations

**Session 2:** April 20th- Intro to Beekeeping and Backyard Poultry Production

**Session 3:** April 31st- Pasture Management 101 and Pond Management 101

For more information, please contact the McLennan County Extension Office at (254) 757-5180 or email [jerod.meurer@ag.tamu.edu](mailto:jerod.meurer@ag.tamu.edu)

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Freestone County Times encourages submission of letters to the Editor, articles and/or photographs from our readers. Letter to the Editor must be signed and include hometown/county.

DEADLINES for News and Advertising are FRIDAY at 12:00 NOON each week. ACCEPTING ALL MAJOR CREDIT CARDS.

TEXAS PRESS ASSOCIATION MEMBER 2026

# Election Day: Ballots & Poll Locations

Early Voting in person ends Friday, February 27, 2026, for the Democratic and Republican Joint Primary Elections.

There are two locations for Early Voting in Freestone County: the Green Barn Civic Center in Fairfield (open 7:00 a.m. to 7:00 p.m.) and the Teague Civic Center in Teague (open 8:00 a.m. to 5:00 p.m.).

Election Day will be next week on Tuesday, March 3, 2026 with polls open from 7:00 a.m. to 7:00 p.m.

On this day, registered voters must cast their ballots at the location assigned to their voting precinct.

There will be 13 polling locations on Election Day:

- Fairfield #1: Fairfield Civic Center, 839 E. Commerce, Fairfield
- Fairfield #2: Fairfield Church of God in Christ, 1321 South Fairway, Fairfield
- Donie #3: Donie Community Center, 215 Main Street, Donie
- Cotton Gin #4: Cotton Gin VTG. Bldg., 795 FM 1366, Cotton Gin
- Teague #5: Teague Civic Center, 515 Main Street, Teague
- Kirvin/Caney #6: Caney Baptist Church, 438 FM 833, Streetman

--Wortham #7: Wortham Fire Department, 107 S 2nd, Wortham

--St. Elmo #8: Southern Oaks Clubhouse: 111 Southern Oaks Drive, St. Elmo

--Teague #9: Church of Christ, 1001 8th Ave., Teague

--Freestone #10: Freestone Community Center, 739 FM 80 S., Freestone

--Butler #11: Butler Community Center / E.E. Wheat Memorial Center, 1604 FM 489, Fairfield

--Dew #13: Dew School Library, 606 CR 481, Dew

--Streetman #15: Streetman City Hall, 204 East Main, Streetman

For questions about the election and the voting process, contact Renee' McBay, Freestone County Election Administrator at 903-389-0469.

Contested races on the ballot this year for the Republican party include the following elected positions:

- Precinct Chair, Precinct No. 1: Brenda Finch and Elizabeth Waters
- County Chair: Keith Turchi and Linda K. Weldon
- County Constable, Precinct No. 3: Jimmy (LJ) McAdams and Robert Willis
- Justice of the Peace, Precinct No. 4: Adam Minze and Lisa Hendrix
- Commissioner, Precinct No. 3: Richard McGowan and Jerred Swinburn
- Commissioner, Precinct No. 2: Trent Harri and

Will McSwane

--County Judge: Jeff Looney, Lloyd Lynn Lane and James C. Tyus

--State Representative, District 13: Kathaleen "Kat" Wall and Angelia Orr

--State Senator, District 5: Charles Schwertner, Apollo Hernandez and Larry Nance

Additional contested races include Judge - Court of Criminal Appeals (Place 3 & Place 9), Railroad Commissioner, Commissioner of Agriculture, Comptroller of Public Accounts, Attorney General, Lieutenant Governor, the Texas State Governor (with 11 candidates vying for the Republican nomination), and U.S. Senator (with 8 hopeful candidates).

Contested races for the Democrat party include: State Senator, District 5 (Paul Thomasson and Kevin Nelson), Justice - Supreme Court (Place 7), Chief Justice - Supreme Court, Commissioner of the General Land Office, Comptroller of Public Accounts, Attorney General, Lieutenant Governor, and Texas State Governor (with 9 candidates).

Also on the ballot in the Democratic primary is U.S. Representative - District 17 (Casey Shepard, Milah Flores and J. Gordon Mitchell) and U.S. Senator (Jasmine Crockett, James Talarico and Ahmad R. Hassan).

Copies of the ballots accessed online at [www.co.freestone.tx.us/page/Freestone.Elections](http://www.co.freestone.tx.us/page/Freestone.Elections)

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