

Lake Watch

Lake Level
on January 23

531.35'

Normal Elevation 533.00'
Lake Watch is provided by the
U.S. Army Corps of Engineers
on Lake Whitney

Lakeline

Steele Creek VFD breakfast Feb. 7

Steele Creek Acres Volunteer Fire Department will hold a breakfast event from 8 a.m. to 11 a.m. Saturday, February 7. For a \$10 donation, those in attendance will enjoy a wide variety of food options, including pancakes, eggs, sausage, bacon, biscuits, gravy, "Phil's Famous Fried 'Taters," coffee cake and fresh fruit. The event will be at 1336 Farm Road 1713 in Morgan, on the Bosque County side of the Katy Bridge. All proceeds from the event will go towards the VFD's day-to-day expenses. For more information, call 254-998-1954.

Fair add-ons available online

Organizers of the Hill County Fair have announced that the online add-on option for those wanting to support youth participants is now open. To add-on to sale items, visit hillcountyyfair.fairentry.com. The last day to add a contribution will be Saturday, January 31. Hill County Ag Youth Inc. is a 501(c)3, making all contributions tax deductible. For questions, email hillcountyyfair@gmail.com.



(January 21) Fair. Water normal stain; 50 degrees; 1.65 feet below pool.

Typically, when a big cold front comes in, the striper bite improves. Schools of stripers will be chasing shad to the surface, and seagulls will be feeding on the shad as well as the striper. So the key to finding the fish will be finding the working seagulls. Fish should be easy to catch by casting chartreuse soft plastics with a paddle tail or swimbaits into the schooling fish and working birds. A slow retrieve works best.

Striped bass are fair on live bait and swimbaits in 25-30 feet of water.

Catfish are good using punch bait in 30 feet of water.

Crappie are fair on the main lake brush in 20-30 feet of water.

White bass are slow on slabs in 20 feet of water.

Largemouth bass are slow using soft plastics on deep structure and around docks.

Report by Captain Cory Vinson, Guaranteed Guide Service.

Council discusses wastewater plant funding

The Whitney City Council discussed funding options for a new wastewater treatment plant and several other agenda items in a special session Thursday, January 22.

The city has long had compliance issues with its wastewater plant, which was built in the early 1990s and was having problems by the end of that decade. The city has been planning a new plant for the past couple of years as it continues to struggle to meet the requirements of the Texas

Commission on Environmental Quality (TCEQ).

Initial estimates when conversations began put the total price tag of a new modular wastewater plant at \$2.5 million. Now, that estimate has risen to \$5 to \$6 million. City Administrator Billy Pribble said that the longer action is delayed, the more expensive the project will be.

The city was initially expected to fund the new plant with a combination of reserve funds and increased sewer

rates, but plans were put on hold when TCEQ began discussing changes to the permit parameters. With the cost now drastically higher, Pribble said that the council needs to look into other funding options.

The city sought funding from the Texas Water Development Board, but the request has not been approved at this time.

D'Anne Carson of Government Capital Securities spoke to the council about financing options. She said that the best

way to pay for the plant would likely be a certificate of obligation, which could be repaid with tax revenue and other designated funds as determined by a utility rate study. The city would be required to post notice in the newspaper, and the annual payments were estimated at about \$400,000 based on the latest opinion of probable cost.

The city has requested an attorney general's opinion on its ability to accept donations for projects. Council member

Amy Teal said that she hopes whatever path the city takes, donations can be accepted to keep taxes down. She said that she would prefer a budget study and bringing the issue before voters on a ballot.

The council discussed deadlines for calling a bond election, which are in February for May elections and August for November elections. Pribble said that any ballot measure would have to wait until November, as he needs time to see COUNCIL on back

Buyers support youth at HCF auction

The 2026 Hill County Fair came to an end Saturday, January 17 with the annual Livestock Sale of Champions, which supports youth who work hard all year to prepare for the county fair.

Chase Miller of Abbott FFA had the grand champion market steer, which sold for \$16,000 to the Hill County Fair Syndicate. Jaycob Brockette of Abbott FFA sold the reserve champion market steer to Bobcat Contracting for \$12,000.

The Hill County Fair Syndicate was formed with over 100 members before last year's fair to help champion and reserve winners sell at champion levels.

In the past, there were times a reserve champion sold at a lower price, which locked in the cap for the rest of the exhibitors.

The goal of the syndicate is to get those prices higher and allow other buyers to spend their money on animals further down the sale list. In



Addysen Girsh of Whitney FFA sold the grand champion market rabbits to the Hill County Fair Syndicate for \$4,000. See story for more information about other grand and reserve champions.

the event that the syndicate is outbid, that money will be divided equally through add-ons to all sale qualifiers.

Others showing grand and reserve champions, and their

buyers, included:

Jessalyn Lowery of Hillsboro 4-H sold the grand champion market swine to the Hill County Fair Syndicate for \$11,000. Gabbie Salazar of

Abbott FFA sold the reserve champion market swine to Hill County Fair Syndicate.

Calan Pruitt of Abbott FFA sold the grand champion see LIVESTOCK on back

Creative Arts Division wraps up with auction

The Hill County Fair Creative Arts Sale of Champions was held Friday evening, January 16, and creative youth from throughout the county had a chance to sell their items to the public. Grand and reserve champion winners and their buyers are featured below.

Grand Champions

Wyatt Moss, Aquilla ISD, kindergarten, home-baked crafts, \$1,500 to Sheriff Hunter Barnes, Frontier Support Logistics, County Judge Shane Brassell

Landyn Kettler, homes-

chool, kindergarten, crafts - home accessories, \$4,000 to ST Express, LLK Realty and Kettler Cattle Co.

Rustin Manaseri, Itasca ISD, kindergarten, textiles - pillows, \$2,100 to Bowman Environmental

Thomas Kolar, Abbott ISD, second grade, home-baked foods - brownies, \$600 to Williamson County Equipment

Cannon Carmichael, Blum ISD, second grade, art - paint, \$600 to First National Bank of Central Texas

Mattie Whalen, Bynum ISD, fourth grade, photography -

plant/flora, \$3,300 to David Ivey

Lillian Sneed, Aquilla ISD, third grade, crafts - birdhouses, \$700 to Hill County Farm Bureau

Briley Hutchinson, Penelope ISD, second grade, textiles - clothing/fabric items, \$500 to Sheriff Hunter Barnes

Emerson Dugan, Itasca ISD, seventh grade, home-baked foods - decorated cakes, \$1,200 to Bowman Farms

Lydia Withers, Hill County Christian Academy, fifth grade, art - oil/acrylic - scene/landscape, \$700 to the Bates family

Levi Ball, Aquilla ISD, fifth grade, photography - people, \$600 to Citizens National Bank

Gage Brassell, homeschool, eighth grade, crafts - leather craft, \$1,000 to Frontier Support Logistics

Micah Hurtt, Itasca ISD, sixth grade, textiles - quilts, \$600 to Four Kings Dairy

Kenna Claridy, Whitney ISD, 10th grade, home-baked foods/canned vegetables, \$500 to Hill Regional Hospital

Libby Pruner, Whitney ISD, ninth grade, art - oil/acrylic - see CAD on back



The Hill County Fair's Creative Arts Division wrapped up with the Creative Arts Sale of Champions Friday evening, January 16. Grand champions selling items included Wyatt Moss, Landyn Kettler, Rustin Manaseri, Thomas Kolar, Cannon Carmichael, Mattie Whalen, Lillian Sneed, Briley Hutchinson, Emerson Dugan, Lydia Withers, Levi Ball, Gage Brassell, Micah Hurtt, Kenna Claridy, Libby Pruner, Kaitlyn Marshall, Cutter Cox and Parker Dugan.

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