

Lake Watch

Lake Level  
on September 6

531.47'

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

Lakeline

Pioneer Days  
vendor sign-up

The Lake Whitney Chamber of Commerce is now accepting vendor applications for the 51st annual Pioneer Days festival scheduled for Saturday, October 3. Sponsorship opportunities are also available for this year's festival. For more information, call the chamber at 254-625-2387 or email [info@lakewhitneychamber.com](mailto:info@lakewhitneychamber.com).

Lake cleanup  
project planned

The U.S. Army Corps of Engineers is inviting volunteers to participate in National Public Lands Day Saturday, September 26. This year's project will be cleaning up areas around Nolan River Boat Ramp. Park rangers will be on site from 8:30 a.m. to 12:30 p.m., and volunteers are welcome to come and go as they please. For more information or to sign up, call the Whitney Lake office at 254-622-3332 or email [WhitneyLakeTX@usace.army.mil](mailto:WhitneyLakeTX@usace.army.mil).

Democrats to  
hold meeting

The Hill County Democratic Party will host Tom Baker, Democratic nominee for the 15th Court of Appeals, Monday, September 14, at 6 p.m. The monthly meeting will be held at Lone Star Cafe, 100 Dynasty Drive in Hillsboro. Come early to eat and socialize. Other topics to be discussed include the November election and volunteer training.

Republicans to  
meet Sept. 15

The Hill County Republican Party will hold its next meeting Tuesday, September 15, at 6 p.m. at the Covington Street Annex, located at 126 South Covington in Hillsboro. The discussion will include getting out the vote for the November 3 election and training on the Abbott Impact AP. Anyone with questions about how to download the Abbott Impact AP prior to the meeting should contact Will Orr, Hill County Republican Party chair, at [william.orr.90@gmail.com](mailto:william.orr.90@gmail.com).

For information  
about fishing  
in Texas, visit:  
[tpwd.texas.gov/fishboat/fish](http://tpwd.texas.gov/fishboat/fish)

Commissioners finalize county tax rate, budget

The Hill County Commissioners Court approved the proposed 2026-27 county tax rate and budget in a meeting held Tuesday, September 1. Commissioners adopted the no-new-revenue rate for the general fund while increasing the FM lateral (road and bridge) portion of the tax rate to its voter-approval rate. The no-new-revenue rate is the tax rate that would generate about the same amount of property tax revenue as the previous year on properties taxed in both years, taking changes in taxable property values into account. The voter-approval rate is the highest rate a taxing unit can generally adopt without asking voters for approval. The combined total adopted tax rate across both funds is \$0.467890 per \$100 property valuation. That is an increase of about 3.4 percent over last year's county tax rate. Hill County's adopted budget for the fiscal year beginning October 1 calls for nearly \$39.63 million in expenditures, supported by approximately \$39.37 million in projected revenues and existing fund balances. The county enters the new fiscal year with about \$10.86 million in combined fund balances and is projected to end the year with approximately \$10.60 million, a decrease of about \$263,000. The budget includes a 3.5 percent cost-of-living adjustment for county employees. Prior to the meeting, commissioners had asked County Judge Shane Brassell to revisit the proposed budget to see if an additional 3.5 percent raise would be possible on top of that adjustment. The judge said that he looked into the numbers and did not find the additional raises a financially viable option. He also noted that the change would have "completely destroyed" the county's pay scale, which has been restructured to include appropriate gaps between positions within a department. After discussion, the court voted to adopt the proposed budget without the additional raises. In other action, commissioners appointed Tim Weyland to serve on the Emergency Services District (ESD) 1 Board of Directors, observed Governor Greg Abbott's order of special election for the Texas Senate District 22 seat and approved sheriff and constable fees for the coming year with no changes. Commissioners voted to set contract services fees for the sheriff's office at \$35

see COURT on back

## Governor approves fireworks ban, commissioners extend burn ban



Hill County firefighters have been busy responding to grass fires as hot, dry conditions continue. The Hill County Commissioners Court issued a disaster declaration last week after 35 wildfires were reported in August. The county remains under a burn ban, and Governor Greg Abbott approved the county's request to ban the use of fireworks through September 17. Pictured above are firefighters responding to an August fire in the Blum area. Hill County Emergency Management photo

Governor Greg Abbott approved Hill County's request to restrict fireworks last week after the commissioners court extended the county's burn ban. Hill County Judge Shane Brassell wrote the governor Tuesday, September 1, asking him to extend a fireworks ban that was passed by commissioners that day in conjunction with a disaster declaration and burn ban. The county took the action due to a recent outbreak of wildfires. The court only had the authority to implement a 60-hour fireworks ban without the governor's approval. With the Labor Day holiday weekend coming up, Brassell asked the governor to extend the ban. Abbott approved the request Thursday night, September 4, and certain fireworks will be prohibited in unincorporated areas of the county until Monday, September 17, at 10 p.m. They include bottle rockets and other skyrockets with sticks; missiles with fins; ground blooms; and other similar fireworks that, because of their design, operation, sparks, flame or movement, present an extraordinary risk of igniting dry grass, vegetation or other combustible material. Hill County's burn ban will remain in effect until October 31 unless commissioners or the county judge rescind it sooner. The county's burn ban restricts any burning of combustible materials in the unincorporated areas of the county. That includes, but is not limited to, the burning of brush and trash, campfires and other open fires, and fires contained in a barrel, pit or other container. Outdoor cooking is allowed as long as it involves an attended grill, barbecue pit, smoker or outdoor cooking stove being used solely to prepare food. Welding, cutting, grinding and similar heat-producing work can only be done with adequate fire suppression equipment and personnel present at the worksite. At a minimum, workers must have an appropriate fire extinguisher within 30 feet and a fire monitor. See the county website at [www.co.hill.tx.us](http://www.co.hill.tx.us) to read the full order.

## Wildfire safety urged this hunting season

Fire potential remains high in September with ongoing and worsening drought conditions across most of Texas. As hunting season begins in September, Texas A&M Forest Service encourages Texans to help protect the state's lands and natural resources by being mindful of activities that could cause a wildfire. In 2026, Texas A&M Forest Service responded to 1,078 wildfires for 301,528 acres. Due to strengthening El Niño conditions, flash drought has started. In August, Texas A&M Forest Service responded to 313 wildfires for 121,774 acres. "The rapid onset of a flash drought increased fire occurrence and intensity statewide in August," said Walter Flocke, Texas A&M Forest Service fire analyst. "Under flash drought conditions, grasses, brush and timber fuels lose moisture rapidly and become susceptible to ignition." Critically dry fuels are present across much of North, Central and East Texas, where fire potential will be high in early September. Flocke said extremely dry fuels combined with excessive heat and low humidity can lead to large, fuel-driven fires that are difficult to control. see SAFETY on back

## Aquilla ISD superintendent to retire after school year

After 20 years of dedicated service to Aquilla ISD, Dr. David Edison has announced that the 2026-27 school year will be his final year serving as the district's superintendent. Since coming to Aquilla ISD in 2006, Dr. Edison has devoted over two decades to the students, staff, families and community of Aquilla. Throughout his years with the district, his leadership has been guided by a simple belief: put students first, take care of people and always leave the place better than you found it. Under his leadership, Aquilla ISD has grown, changed, overcome challenges, celebrated countless successes and remained grounded in the close-knit family atmosphere that has long defined the district. Those 20 years have also brought significant milestones that will shape Aquilla ISD for generations to come. The community supported two successful bond elections, in 2010 and 2025, allowing the district to make transformational investments in its facilities and future. Aquilla ISD also dramatically expanded opportunities for students through the implementation of the Texas Education Agency's Pathways in Technology Early College High School (P-TECH) program and its designation as an Early College High School. These programs have created opportunities for Aquilla students to graduate with college degrees and industry-based credentials — demonstrating that the size of a school should never determine the size of the opportunities available to its students. That same commitment to

see EDISON on back



Dr. David Edison



## Information sought on theft, vandalism

Whitney Memorial Plaza Park, 109 West Washington Avenue in downtown Whitney, is maintained by the Lake Whitney Garden Club. The park was recently vandalized, and damage totaled \$800. A park bench was stolen that had been made as a memorial to a deceased longterm member of the Garden Club. Lights were twisted and bent, and bricks were knocked out of the wall. The Lake Whitney Garden Club maintains parks around Whitney, including the Lake Whitney State Park entrance, Whitney City Park, planters in front of the Whitney police station and Whitney Area Museum, and the Lake Whitney Public Library garden area. Club members raise money and provide the labor to keep these parks and garden areas beautiful throughout the year. If anyone has any information, they are asked to contact the Whitney Police Department. The Lake Whitney Garden Club appreciates the support of the community.

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