

Penny Record

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Week of Wednesday, December 25, 2024

Social Security Fairness Act passes

It's up to President Biden to sign the Bill into law.

PENNYLELEUX
For The Record

Congress offered some Americans a Christmas gift early Saturday morning when the Senate passed the Social Security Fairness Act (H.R.82). It's up to President Biden to add the bow by signing the Bill into law.

The bill, which was passed by the House of Representative in November, repeals two tax provisions that impact the retirement benefits of some federal workers and other public servants such as teachers, law enforcement and firefighters.

The Windfall Elimination Provision (WEP), enacted in 1983, reduces the Social Security benefits of retired federal workers and other public servants who spent a portion of their careers in the private sector in addition to a federal, state or local government job where Social Security is not intended as an element of their retirement income, such as the Civil Service Retirement

System. And the Government Pension Offset (GPO), enacted in 1977, reduces spousal and survivor Social Security benefits in families with retired government workers.

Some people mistakenly believe that the elimination of these provisions will allow people to receive Social Security benefits that have never paid into the system. That is not correct. What is does allow is people that may have worked in government or public service jobs that had pensions that are not based on the Social Security system, but they also worked at other jobs that did pay into the Social Security system to receive the full benefits they should be entitled to, for what they paid into Social Security.

There has been bipartisan support for the repeal for years, but it wasn't until this year that they were able to follow through. Reps. Abigail Spanberger, D-Va., and Garret Graves, R-La. Filed a discharge pe-

tion to force a House vote. The bill passed last month by a 327-75 vote.

Local Rep. Randy Weber, R-Tx. voted yes on the measure.

As of November 2024, more than two million

Americans had their Social Security benefits reduced by the WEP. Similarly, more than 650,000 people were affected by the GPO, according to the Social Security Administration.

"For too long, the government has taken away Social Security benefits from millions of retired federal, state and local government employees who worked as teachers, police, firefighters, postal

workers and general employees — benefits they earned when they worked other jobs," Richard Fiesta, executive director of the Alliance for Retired

Social Page 3A



Most American Christmas cards in the late 1800s and early 1900s were on colorful postcards with space on the back for a personal greeting and an address. This card is from 1904, the year featured in this history story about Orange.

Christmas trash pickup delayed for holiday, offices close

MARGARET TOAL
For The Record

Residents in the cities of Orange, Bridge City, and West Orange will no garbage pickups on Christmas and New Year's Day, and then will have day-late pickups.

Pinehurst has regular garbage pickup on Tuesdays and residents will not have a change.

With Christmas and New Year's Day falling on Wednesdays this year, the garbage customers in Bridge City and Orange that have pickups on Wednesday, will then

have trucks running their routes on Thursday. Then the Thursday routes will be picked up on Friday, and the Friday routes on Saturday.

West Orange has garbage service on Fridays and their customers will have pickup on Saturday during the two holiday weeks.

Bridge City and Orange County employees are getting a long holiday. Friday, December 21, was their last day. So they got the weekend off plus Monday, Christmas Eve,

Trash Pickup Page 5A

Orange County Christmas as it was 120 years ago

MARGARET TOAL
For The Record

Back in 1904, 120 years ago, Orange "city fathers" were asking "Santa Claus Congress" to push ahead to get a deep water port by the next Christmas. They wanted dredging.

On December 23, 1904, a 28-page special holiday edition of the Citizen-Record Consolidated featured information on business and industries, plus lots of advertising for downtown stores, and fiction stories and poems about Christmas.

Orange was the only city in Orange County at the time, though communities were spread out and West Orange was being developed as a new housing area after a bridge was built to cross Adams Bayou. A story about railroad lines mentioned the Kansas City South-

ern had a station at Maurice. The "ville" had not been added to the Maurice, yet.

The city of Orange had a population of about 4,000 and Orange County had a population of about 5,900, meaning only about 1,900 people in the county lived outside of Orange.

The city had a busy downtown area centered around Front, Fourth, Fifth, and Main Streets. Green Avenue at the time was residential and had several mansions built along the avenue. Only a handful of wealthy people owned an automobile and most people still used horses or horse-drawn buggies or wagons for traveling. Livery services were available.

Orange was rich and prospering because of the big sawmills, especially the Lutchter and Moore Lumber Company. A two-page advertisement paid by the company

touted its Star and Crescent Saw and Planing Mill with lumber "cut from the world famous forests of Calcasieu Parish, Louisiana. The saw mill turned out 300,000 board feet a day and the planing mill had 200,000 board feet a day.

The lumber company advertised to sell railroad ties and side boards for railroad cars, a thriving business in those days.

The paper bragged about how many railroad connections were nearby including that Kansas City one in Maurice, 12 miles north of town. Ones in town included the Orange and Northwestern with one passenger train in and one passenger train out each day. The rest was freight. Also the Cotton Belt Railroad had "four great trunk lines." The biggest one was the Southern Pacific, with J.W.

Christmas Page 5A

The Spirit of the Grinch lives on

A PERSONAL STORY
BY PENNY LELEUX
For The Record

It's three days 'til Christmas and a Facebook post from nine years ago popped up on my feed. I was DONE wrapping Christmas gifts early because it was an act of futility. We had our very own Grinch that was stealing packages from under the Christmas tree. I noticed one package missing and retrieved it after a search of the Grinch's bedroom.

Later, I found an empty box from another present. My husband found the gift and wrapping paper. Can you guess where? Yes, the Grinch had struck again.

Upon further inspection

of the wrapping paper, there was the gift wrap from another present inside that I had yet not missed. It was a gift for my 5-year-old great-niece.

What in the world was the Grinch going to do with that?

For those of you that don't know, the Grinch that year was my husband's brother Bill who had lived with us since 2003, when his mother passed. Bill was a unique individual. He was born with Down Syndrome and had already reached a rather advanced age for individuals with that condition. Most people with Downs usually only make it to their 30s due to other health issues. Heart con-

ditions are a common occurrence and Bill had been dealing with congestive heart failure (CHF) for many years. Nine years ago, Bill was 58. We lost him in 2022 to pneumonia just a few months before his 63rd birthday. He was only the second person with Downs our doctor had heard of that made it to that age. He was well past his "sell by date."

In many ways, Bill was like a 7-year-old. In other ways he was a grumpy-old-man. The 7-year-old couldn't resist the packages under the tree. It was also the 7-year-old that couldn't read the names on the packages. Maybe if he could, it would have only been his gifts that



Bill was a unique individual. He was born with Down Syndrome and had already reached a rather advanced age for individuals with that condition.

disappeared. What child can resist opening packages at Christmas? He was like any other kid, yet most kids manage to leave the packages alone rather than getting in trouble. It's difficult to discipline a child in a 58-year-old man's body. The grump didn't like to listen to reason.

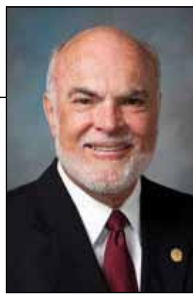
The final solution to the problem was to quit wrapping. Sometimes you must stop efforts in futility. Did I give up? No. I surrendered. There is a difference.

They say the definition of insanity is to keep doing the same thing over and over and expect different

Spirit Page 5A

My Five-Cents

A monthly column from Sen. Robert Nichols by Sen. Robert Nichols, Senate District 3



With the holidays here, now is an appropriate time for reflection, grace, and thanks. I want to express my gratitude to each of you for continuing to allow me to advocate on your behalf. It is one of the greatest honors of my life to represent East and Southeast Texas in the Texas Legislature, and a responsibility I do not take lightly. I hope you all have a safe holiday season and a very Merry Christmas.

Here are five things happening around your state:

1. Bill filing for the 89th Legislative Session begins

November 12 marked the first day legislators could file bills for the 89th Legislature – kicking off the beginning of the next session. Since bill filing opened, members have already filed over 2,000 bills between the House and Senate. Typically, over the course of the session, members will file upwards of 7,500 bills. While most of those will not pass, we will have an opportunity to read and evaluate many of them.

The 89th Legislative Session officially begins on Tuesday, January 14 at noon. Members can file bills until the 60th day of session, March 14th. After that date,

members can only work on bills that have already been filed. The regular legislative session lasts 140 days and will conclude on Monday, June 2. I look forward to representing Senate District 3 once again this session and encourage constituents to reach out to my office if they have an interest in any legislation coming before the Legislature.

2. State Board of Education approves new instructional materials

Last month, the State Board of Education (SBOE) approved a comprehensive list of K-12 instructional materials as part of the new Instructional Materials Review and Approval (IMRA) process. These new materials were developed and approved for statewide use as directed by House Bill 1605 from the 88th Regular Session by Rep. Brad Buckley. Districts that use materials on the approved list are eligible for an additional \$40 per student in additional funding. That bill also directed the state to develop its own high-quality instructional materials. The SBOE approved that curriculum, called the Bluebonnet Learning curriculum, which covers kindergarten through fifth

grade. Using the state-developed curriculum is optional for school districts, but districts who opt to use it will receive an extra \$20 per student, so \$60 per student total. There was some disagreement surrounding the content in Bluebonnet Learning because it uses well-known Bible stories and other Christian-based stories. However, there are references to other faiths and traditions in the curriculum as well. The approval of the instructional materials followed a months-long public comment period and open meetings that allowed public testimony.

3. Dementia research effort announced by Lt. Gov. Patrick

Lt. Governor Dan Patrick announced a new initiative to help lead the fight against dementia. The Dementia Prevention Research Institute of Texas (DPRIT) will be a new research program funded by the state to support researchers and companies coming to Texas and to further their efforts. It's modeled off a similar state program the Cancer Prevention Research Institute of Texas (CPRIT). CPRIT is one of the most successful health programs ever created in Texas, and the goal is for DPRIT to be similar. Together, we can work to offer further insight into this heartbreaking disease.

4. ETCOG receives emergency radio infrastructure grant

The East Texas Council of Governments announced the approval of \$1.75

million in grants awarded to East Texas governments to enhance public safety. The grants will support critical emergency radio infrastructure needs such as integrating and expanding the TxWARN system, interoperability, and VHF system upgrades.

The funds are from the State Emergency Radio Infrastructure program which is facilitated by the Governor's Public Safety Office.

These upgrades are critical to ensure public safety in East Texas and will help modernize emergency radio infrastructure in the region.

5. Leadership pledge funding to stabilize unemployment insurance fund

Governor Abbott, Lt. Governor Patrick, Speaker Phelan, Senate Finance Committee Chair Huffman, and House Appropriations Chair Dr. Bonnen pledge to appropriate funding to stabilize unemployment insurance rates for businesses next session.

Rates have been increasing due to higher wages and an evolving job market in Texas. The Texas Workforce Commission manages the Unemployment Insurance Trust Fund and projected it will need an infusion of funding next year. Typically, those additional funding needs would be paid through additional assessments on businesses. By plugging the hole with state funding, businesses can keep more of their hard-earned profits and the state will keep the fee as it currently is.

Texas House panel may never hear Robert Roberson's testimony

Kayla Guo
The Texas Tribune

A Texas House committee was left without its key witness on Friday after Attorney General Ken Paxton filed a motion late Thursday barring death row inmate Robert Roberson from testifying at the Capitol.

The bipartisan House Committee on Criminal Jurisprudence had planned to hear directly from Roberson on Friday about his failed efforts to overturn his capital murder conviction using the state's junk science law, which grants new trials in cases that relied on scientific evidence that is later discredited.

But Paxton's motion, which argued that the panel's subpoena to Roberson was "procedurally deficient and overly burdensome," excused the state prison system from complying with the committee's subpoena and allowing Roberson to testify in person.

That left the future of Roberson's testimony unclear.

"The effort here has been by some to hide him and silence him, because his testimony would be instructive," state Rep. Joe Moody, D-El Paso and the committee's chair, said on Friday. "Our laws have affected him as deeply as they can affect anyone, and it's our job here in this building to make sure they're fair and just and work as intended. That job is far from over on this issue, and we don't intend to leave it undone."

Roberson was convicted of capital murder in 2003 for the death of his 2-year-old daughter Nikki, who was diagnosed with shaken baby syndrome. He has argued that new scientific evidence discredits Nikki's diagnosis and shows she died of natural and accidental causes.

Lawmakers have tried for weeks to bring him to Austin after the Texas Supreme Court noted in November that state officials should be able to produce Roberson for testimony in compliance with a subpoena, as long as it does not interfere with a scheduled execution. After the committee's first subpoena expired, it served him with another one this week.

Roberson's execution has not yet been rescheduled.

On Friday, members of

the bipartisan panel excoriated the attorney general's office for its intervention in Roberson's testimony.

"If the case against him is so open and shut, as they say, why are they working so hard to flaunt laws passed by our Legislature and signed by our governor?" state Rep. Brian Harrison, R-Midlothian, said. "Are government officials really willing to let a potentially innocent person be put to death by the government in order to protect the reputation of a government system?"

Moody and Rep. Jeff Leach, R-Plano, accused the attorney general's office of stalling Roberson's testimony until the panel automati-

cally dissolves next month with the start of the new legislative session.

In his motion to block Roberson's testimony, Paxton asked the court to hold a hearing before it decides whether to grant his request. But he asked that the hearing not be set before Jan. 13, saying he will be out of the country.

The new legislative session starts — and the committee disbands — on Jan. 14.

"We all see this for what it is," Leach said on Friday. "As shocking as it is and alarming as it is, it's not surprising."

Leach noted that Paxton had numerous lawyers who typically represent the at-

torney general's office in court. And he said that he had heard from several lawmakers, including those who disagreed with him over Roberson's case, saying they were "equally concerned" about Paxton's moves against the committee.

He asked the committee to consider demanding that Paxton or one of his designees appear at a committee hearing before Jan. 14 to explain the attorney general's authority to interfere with the committee's subpoena.

Paxton's office, which legally represents the prison system, hamstrung efforts to secure Roberson's in-person testimony even before Thursday's motion.

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of Orange County, Texas

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Christmas in Orangefield celebrated...



Kaylee Daigle of Designs by Daigle said she had a good day at Christmas in Orangefield Saturday. RECORD PHOTO:Penny LeLeux



Callie Key of The Store Next Door participated in Christmas in Orangefield Saturday at the junior high school. RECORD PHOTO:Penny LeLeux

Social Security bill From Page 1

Americans, said before the final Senate vote. "The WEP and GPO disproportionately affect lower-income workers and women."

There are a lot of critics of the repeal as it will accelerate the Social Security system's insolvency by six months, according to the congressional Budget Office. Currently it will reach insolvency in 2035 without further action.

A Heritage Foundation report estimates eliminating the WEP and GPO will cost Social Security \$196 billion over the next decade.

Eliminating the WEP would boost monthly payments to the affected beneficiaries by an average of \$360 by December 2025, according to the Congressional Budget Office. Scrapping the GPO would increase monthly benefits by an average of \$700 for recipients getting benefits based on living spouses, or an average of \$1,190 for those surviving spouses getting a widow or widower benefit, the CBO estimated.

"Passing this fix right before Christmas would be a great gift to our retired firefighters, police officers, postal officers and more," Senate Majority Leader Chuck Schumer said. "[The WEP and GPO] are deeply unfair, and go against the American ideal of working hard, chipping in and then en-

joying the retirement that you've earned."

Sen. Bill Cassidy, R-La., said he saw firsthand how some public servants are penalized for spending a portion of their career in public service before he ran for office.

"Millions of teachers, firefighters, police officers and I worked in a public hospital for the uninsured, so I would also add nurses, technicians, lab techs and janitors, they all expect us to fulfill this promise and they are watching today," Cassidy said. "I'm filled with hope that the Senate will pass the Social Security Fairness Act to finally stop punishing them for having elected to serve our communities. We can fix a broken system that has unfairly harmed them for almost 30 years."

Some objected to passing the bill, including Sen. Thom Tillis, R-N.C.

"It sounds like motherhood and apple pie—the Social Security Fairness Act—who could be against Social Security fairness?" he said. "The fact of the matter is the policy does address a challenge with Social Security for a single-digit percentage of people who have a pension and are not getting exactly what they should back. So, it's something we need to fix, but this is not the way to fix it."

"When the WEP was enacted, it got the formula

wrong and the result is for thousands upon thousands of retired police officers and retired firefighters and retired teacher, they got shortchanged," said Sen. Ted Cruz, R-Tx. "I've been fighting to fix the WEP problem. In 2017 I introduced legislation to fix the inequity and to treat our retired cops and firefighters and teachers fairly."

Yet, Cruz was one of the 20 Senators that voted against the bill Saturday. He felt the legislation he drafted with former U.S. Rep. Kevin Brady of Texas in 2017 was a better solution because he said it didn't cost as much and wouldn't accelerate the insolvency of Social Security.

Texas' other Senator, Republican John Cornyn voted with the majority 76 that passed the bill.

Cheryl Linscomb retired from Orangefield in 2014. She knew about the bills passage but unfortunately the bill will not benefit her or her husband, Walker.

"We don't have enough quarters paid in. I'm so happy for all my teacher friends and the policemen and the firemen. It should never have been that way," she said. "I might have been encouraged to have a summer job to get my quarters in if I thought it would have paid off in the

SOCIAL Page 5A

SEASONS GREETINGS
From Our Family To Yours!

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From the Creaux's Nest

CHRISTMAS THE BIRTHDAY THAT KEEPS ON GIVING

It's come on the Christmas season, a joyous time when we celebrate the birth of **Jesus Christ**. On Dec. 25, many people who attend church just once a year will attend religious services. The youngsters will wake up to the joy of gifts under the tree, many not yet realizing why this day of gifts from **Santa Clause** and the big feast mom has planned is a special day and why we celebrate. Many youngsters are happy that they are going to **Grandma's house**, where all the aunts, uncles and cousins come together. The children enjoy a fun filled day while the adult rehash old stories about their youth, like how **Uncle Tommy** got in all that trouble with **Papa** when he started a fire that nearly spread to the house. It's a great day for the generations to renew the love of the family unit. As the years go by, one at a time they move on to meet their Maker. New babies arrive to take their place. The conversations change to those good **Christmas times at Grandma and Papa's place**. Aunts and uncles are now the old folks and the cycle continues. **Memories are made at Christmas gatherings** that are everlasting. **Christmas, the birth of Christ**, is a time to give thanks for family and our many blessings. May you have a very **Merry Christmas**. We give thanks to you, our loyal readers and supporters. I must move on. Please come along, **I promise it won't do you no harm**.

ENDING ANOTHER YEAR

This time of year is usually hectic but worse this year with an early paper deadline, plus we put off too much and now it's all bottlenecks. We haven't had time to make phone calls or return any. This holiday is not going to be the big gatherings of the past. Our folks are scattered far away. After the first of the year, I will have to be visiting several doctors, now-a-days all specialists. **Dr. Morbia at Gulf Coast Cardiology** and **Dr. Chris Penning** have kept me alive for the last 30-plus years but now I have to have a specialist for each ailment. When visiting doctors you get to rest and waste time a lot. You spend two or three hours in the lobby, then another hour in a little waiting room, then the doctor takes three to five minutes to recommend you see a specialist. The year **2024** started in the hospital with **COVID** so I'm looking forward to welcoming a better, health-wise, **2025**.

TURNING BACK THE HANDS OF TIME

10 Years Ago-2014

Gone but not forgotten. Don Harmon was a good and generous man. **Don and I** go back to when we were both in our young 20's and in all those years I've never known a fairer, kinder, caring, straight-shooter. **Don** helped countless people, many needing just a little help. He would travel Texas and Louisiana visiting car dealers who became his friends throughout the years. When he worked South Louisiana, he would often return to Orange with a trunk full of fresh baked, hard crust French bread and would then pass it around to friends. **Don** had been a football star at **Stark High** and as a fleshly halfback was offered a scholarship to **McNeese** but went into the **Army** during the **Korean conflict**. On his return joined his dad and brothers in the car business and married **Dorothy Bonin. Don and Ms. Dorothy** raised two fine young men, **Donnie and Kevin. Dorothy**, was sick for a long time. **Don** took care of her diligently, even though he was having some health problems himself. He didn't see a doctor until after her death. Finally it was too much to overcome. **Don**, who had maintained his high school football playing weight was a sticker for good health, hadn't smoked, drank or abused his body and was an unlikely candidate for cancer. There were a lot of car dealers and wholesale buyers around that **Don** probably has reunited with. **Charlie Wickersham, Bill Bell, J.T. Harrison, Leo Brown, Bill Kizer, Leon Slayter** and many others and his longtime friend banker **Elmer Newman**. It will be quite a reunion. **Don** also will again be with **Dorothy, the love of his life**. As for me, like so many others, I loved the guy. **Donald Cecil Harmon, Sr.**, 83, passed away Dec. 20, 2014. **Dorothy** died two years earlier on Dec. 14. Funeral services were held at **Claybar Funeral Home in Orange**. Since then his brother and partner **Corky** passed away May 3, 2017.**** Up jumped the rabbit and like that **Karen Jo** is gone, didn't waste much time packing. After 40 years in the **County Clerk's office**, she has hung it up. She says, "**God's plan** for our lives is sometimes a complete surprise." She said she never expected to retire. "**My 60th birthday is Dec. 28th** and retirement is the best gift **God could have given me** and it truly was a surprise. ******Bridge City ISD Athletic Director Richard Briggs** released a list of 52 applicants for the head football coaching job. Applicants came from all over the country and locally. Indiana, Georgia, Iowa, Louisiana and Arizona were

some out-of-state applicants. Many applied throughout Texas, some assistants at large schools. **** Seen at **Denny's** were the **Johnson boys, Kenny and Steve**, celebrating birthday breakfast for big brother **David**, who turned 71 on Saturday, ****Also spotted was **Jody Raymer**, escorting two lovelies, **Beverly and mother-in-law Ms. Pearl**, who looks good and getting around like a pro with her walker. ****For 20 years, a couple of days before Christmas, the late **Dot Eshbach** brought homemade fudge to us. We were surprised last week when the mail brought a package of fudge from **Cal and Connie Eshbach**, of Kernes, TX, in "**Honor of Dot**." Thanks, she was a special lady. ****Tuesday our Cajun buddy **Jessie Domingue** came by with some French bread from **LeJeune's Bakery in Jeanerette**. Ironically, he also brought a loaf for **Don Harmon**, unaware that **Don's** funeral was going on at the very time. **Jessie** also treated us with Cajun mirliton and quail eggs from **Darrell Broussard** in Gueydan. **Jessie** is not only a talented musician but also is one heck of a **great Cajun**.

50 Years Ago-1974

The **Harmon brothers, Jackie, Carlton and Don** have purchased 22 acres of commercial property on MacArthur Drive. ****The **Lynn Emerson's** have moved into their new magnificent home in Bridge City. Neighbors across the street are **Helen and Doug Harrington**. ******Attorney H.D. Pate** is enlarging his law office to accommodate former assistant district attorney **Don Burgess**. (Editor's note: **Don** went on to become a district judge and appellant court judge. Thanks to **Tom DeLay's** redistricting, the **Judge** will be pursuing other avenues. He chose not to run for re-election.)****The **Orange County Bar Association** installed new officers at a party held at the home of **Mr. and Mrs. John Cash "Jack" Smith. Buddie Hahn** was installed president, **H.D. Pate** vice-president, **Don Burgess**, sec/treasurer. ****Getting special honors at the Bridge City football banquet were **Charlie Hildabrant**, outstanding back; **Craig Morris**, outstanding lineman; **Randy Fults and Hildabrant** were named most valuable players.******Betty Williams** is one of the sweetest, sexiest gals in the country. The young bride is the daughter of **Mr. and Mrs. Dick Bevins** and runs the front end at Texas Ave. Grocery, a family business. ******District Attorney Sharon Bearden** warns folks who will party over the holidays not to drink and drive. If you can't find someone to take you home, leave your car parked and locked and call a cab.****Justice of the Peace, **Pct. 1 Judge James "Stick" Stringer** becomes a private citizen come Jan. 1.******Larry Gunter** is Pinehurst city judge.****Orange city secretary is **Mavis McClure**.******Wayne Baker** is named new sales manager at **Butler-Baker Pontiac/AMC**.******Dr. Paul Willis** is West Orange school superintendent.****The New Year's eve party will again be at **Laverne and Hal Ridley's** place in Victory Gardens. **Laverne** throws a good party. ******Phyllis and Roy Dunn** will mark their 20th anniversary Dec. 31. It should be another one of those sunset to sunrise celebrations bringing the **New Year of 1975**.

A FEW HAPPENINGS

People, businesses, and industries across Orange County showed their big hearts and generosity to help families in need have a nice holiday. **Orange Mayor Larry Spears** on Monday afternoon gave out more praises as 55 gift requests from senior citizens in nursing homes were still hanging on a tree. The mayor credited **Renee Chitty, Megan Hogan, and Kristin West** for gathering up the general people here to raise more than \$600 to help senior citizens get a present.****Looks like **Santa** may need to make sure **Rudolph's nose** is lit in Oranges County because the forecast is calling for clouds and rain on **Christmas Eve into Christmas Day**. But the temps will be mild. A little rain and wet ground has never kept a kid away from playing with new toys. Yikes. **Lady Whistlebreaux** just realized how age is creeping up. Are most of **Santa's** gifts electronic these days? Balls and dolls, bicycles and scooters are still popular, just as they were through the 20th Century.******Shangri La Gardens** once again put on a huge holiday light show to draw thousands to the attraction. Some people went on nights you had to bundle up against the cold, and some had to put mosquito spray on during the warmer humid nights. Traffic seemed to move a bit easier with the sidewalk the city of Orange built with money from the hotel occupancy tax. **Kudos to the Stark Foundation, Shangri La employees, and local volunteers** who keep this event as one of our greatest local attractions.****The local schools are out for the holidays and when classes start up in January, the last semester will fly by. **Bridge City High School** has already announced the royal court members for the **Winter Formal** on January 18. Senior royalty are **Rylee Armand, Hallie Bearden, Allison McAllister, Isabella Weeks, Merik Aras, Jagger Carlin, Peyton Doucet, and Tucker Flatt**. Junior court members are **Isabel Parker, Alexa Soto, Juan Garcia, and Adison Wood**. Sophomore royalty are **Paisley Brown, Jensyn Yeaman, Elijah Akers, and Reece Skinner**. Freshman court members are **Rylee Hebert, Eliabeth Liingston, Joshua Luna, and E'ythen Wiley**.******Roderick Robertson** can still get a powerful swing with a baseball bat at the age of 56. However, **Lady Whistlebreaux** wonders if his wife, **Brandy**, had to get out the liniment.****Our buddy, **Sharon Bearden** took a fall last Thursday and broke his right hip. He was operated on Sunday at **St. E's** to replace the ball. He went into surgery at 1:00 p.m. and be 4:00 p.m. they were serving him one of those famous **St. E's** chicken meals. He was in good spirits and looking forward to being home Tuesday. He wishes everyone a very "**Merry Christmas**." Before long he will be back on the trail defending his innocent clients. As long as I've known him he never had a guilty client. That's according to him.****After producing last week's papers, **Mark and Ethel Dunn** left Vero Beach, Florida, arriving Saturday evening. By Sunday **Mark** started working on this issue of the **County and Penny Record** with one day less work

time Papers for the next two weeks will be published Monday night for early Tuesday morning delivery. He brought his dad a half bushel of **Indian River County** grapefruit. **He and Ethel** personally selected each one. For next week's paper he will be back in Vero Beach, leaving the day after Christmas.**** We send out congratulations to **Makenna Knight** from Bridge City ISD, made the **All State Volleyball Team**.******Philip Welch** and 8-year-old **Sterling** attended the high school state championship game at AT&T stadium, home of the **Cowboys**. Thanks to the help of former Bridge City school superintendent **Jamie Harrison**, who is now the second in command of all Texas public schools, **Philip and Sterling** were able to roam the sidelines and even took pictures on the big Texas star. They saw some great high school athletes, many who will go on to college and pro football. **Philip** is making memories for his young son.

BREAUX BIRTHDAY THIS WEEK

Christmas Day birthday celebrations are always special. Dec. 25: **Judge Flo Ederly, Ronnie Hutchison, Velma Theriot, Janelle Deutsch, Louise Boker, Mary Frances Hartley, Randy Wuske, Christy Thompson** and Orange City Councilor **Terrie Salter** celebrate.****Dec. 26: **Ashley Burris, Emily Glover Jennifer Ferguson, Laura Floyd. Harry Choate** was born on this day in 1922.****Dec. 27: **Sharon Bearden** turns 85, **Coach Russell Bottley, Bobby Fillyaw, Rebecca Johns, Bobby Sibert, Lorraine Bonin, and Max Pelham** celebrate today.****Dec. 28: Commissioner **Kirk Roccaforte, Karen Jo Vance, Lynda Montagne, Jacob Broussard, Stacy Roberts, Debbie Taylor, Harriet Dubose, Kenneth Wiemers, Linn Cardner, Raymond Costilla**.****Dec. 29: **Pam White, Slade McClanahan Sam McLellan, Jacklyn Bradberry, Larry Padget, Sherrie Reid, Lauren Leger**.****Dec. 30: **Kari Stringer, Kyler Walron, Paula Aven, Madison Rance Hanusch, Marie Perkins, Rebecca Hannegan**.****Dec. 31: **Richard Hunter, Jessica Anderson, Sandra Hovind, Hayden George and Norma Fusilier**, all celebrate today.*****Lucy Parker Terry** had a birthday and anniversary this past week. She turned **60 years old** and her **Lucy's Cafe and Bakery** marked **24 years in business**.**Others marking recent birthdays include **Jack Dallas, Brown Claybar, Gene Breaux, Angela Howeth, Sue Louviere Ryder, Theron Pool, Chason Burch, Debora Harmon Lanciaux, Angie Hill McClelland, Hallie Jo Picard, Eddie Welch, Lauren Leigh Lakatta, Janis Woodard, and Christy George**.******Thomas and Phyllis Hennigan**, who have retired to the lake, had their **49th wedding anniversary**. Also celebrating an anniversary were **Brandon and Alexis LaBarbera**.

CAJUN STORY OF THE WEEK

Da Catholic Priest **Fatter Paul** was making his annual Christmas week rounds visiting wit his parishioners and checking out der devotion to **Jesus Christ**, who's birthday would be celebrated in a few days. He stopped for a visit wit old man **Alsid Comeaux**, wat still live in da old place at Indian Bayou. He's a poor ex-farmer him.

Da Priest axe po **Comeaux**, "**Mr. Comeaux**, if you had a horse would you give it to da Lord, hanh?"

"Maise, I sure would me," **Comeaux** answer.

"If you had a cow?" **Fatter Paul** axe.

"Absolutely I would," said **Comeaux**.

"Wat bout a goat?" da **Priest** axe.

"Sure would," **Comeaux** answer.

Den **Fatter Paul** say, "Well, let me axe you wat bout a pig, hanh?"

Comeaux him, he come rite out of dat old chair and he say, "Now dats not fair **Fatter**, you know I got a pig me."

Editor's note: There's a Christmas message in there somewhere.

C'EST TOUT

SPECIAL AWARD TO CAREING PEOPLE

People I've found throughout the year, good **Samaritans**, who reached out to help others. **Pete Lista**, from **Coastal Landscaping** and his wife **Lori** lost their home and all their possessions in a house fire. Many were irreplaceable, historical items. I know about total fire loss, for years you think of things you lost. I walked away, leaving nothing but the ashes. Despite their disaster **Pete** reached out to help others. He looked out for an elderly couple's lawn care and made sure the old folks place stayed groomed. **Pete** will do to ride the range with. He and **Lori** are good folks. *****Thelma Sterling** and **Kay Williams** are good Christian sisters. Throughout the year they make life a little better for their elder neighbors.***For doing good deeds we recognize **Candi Gaspard**, a resident of Turner Road, in Bridge City. She is an offspring of the **Howard Morse** family, grocery pioneers in Bridge City, Vidor and Orange County. **Howard** once owned **Howard's Super Market** and for many years was on the **Bridge City Bank board**. His son, **Wayne**, former Bridge City resident, was deeply involved in the family business. He now lives in downtown Beaumont and is not very mobile, however, his daughter **Candi** sees that he gets **The Penny Record**, a must read for **Wayne**. For dropping him a paper each week of the year **Candi** is a **Good Samaritan**, a very caring person.***My final Christmas award goes to **J.W. Dalton**, for being the most accommodating person I know. He will volunteer to help anyone trying to find a solution to a problem. He really gives it his full attention and is sincere about it. That's why my most accommodating **Christmas award** goes to this good guy. **J.W.**, a homeboy from the Cove, who now has his full attention set on the betterment of Mauriceville.***Finally, two great guys who you can always count on to have your back. These two long ago Union labor guys have never lost their caring for others. **Kenny Pigg** and **Quincy Procell**, whose shop is now part of **Lamar State College Orange**. The above are just a few. **Orange County** is loaded with some of the world's best folks, past and present.****I've got to go. Take care and God bless. **May you have a great Christmas**.

Christmas here 120-years ago From Page 1A



This photograph of downtown Orange is from the early 1900s. The view is likely southward along Fourth Street because of the tree at the end would be along the river. The Orange Public Library is now on the right, or west side of the photograph.

Parker as agent.

Orange had “two strong banks,” First National and Orange National, plus two express companies, two telegraph companies, and two telephone companies.

Five sawmills were in town, along with a paper mill, a rice mill, an iron works, foundry, bottling works, and two shipyards.

Orange Ice, Electric Lights, and Water, provided the services for “a happy life.” That company eventually became Gulf

States Utilities, which morphed into Entergy. Sam C. Trimble was president and general manager, with W.H. Stark as vice president and J.W. Link as secretary-treasurer. Link was also the mayor at the time, owned a lumber company and a land development company, and built the grandest mansion on Green Avenue.

The special industrial-business edition reported that more than 1,000 men were employed in Orange at industries with an-

other 400 to 500 men working in timber camps.

Orange was described as the “Land of Promise” for “prospectors and home seekers.” The town was an escape from the “cold blast of a bleak northern wind.” Water was available through artesian springs reached at less than 500 feet.

The new three-story brick Holland Hotel had 70 rooms with private baths, and hot and cold water. It was “fanned by Gulf breezes and is a delightful summer resort,” or it was a “cozy comfortable home for winter tourists.” The hotel, at the northwest corner of Fifth and Division, also had gourmet food, a barber shop, and a billiard room. Daily rates were \$2.50 and up.

Lots of shops of all sizes lined Front, Fifth, Fourth and Main streets. The Orange Bakery with Beauchamp and Pavell proprietors, had a wide assortment of “Christmas Dainties” including pastries, fruits, nuts, and candies.

Curry, Johnson & Curry was one of the

largest stores and had a half-page ad that touted “our own delivery wagon” and that both their phones had Number 15. The store was for “staple and fancy groceries.” You could get a truffled game pate’ plus fireworks at the store to help celebrate the holidays.

Butcher stores carried a variety of meats and were advertising turkeys, “dressed” or “on foot.”

McDonald’s Lunch Counter probably wasn’t for the ladies in town. It was located in the “rear” of the Custom House Saloon, which was at Front and Fourth Street with the Sabine River in back. However, the lunch counter could pack a quick to-go for people going fishing or hunting.

The newspaper’s editorial staff was disappointed the dredging for the new deep water had not been finished, but there was optimism it would be completed by the next Christmas. The Adams Bayou canal was in the process of being dug. The story did not mention whether the canal was created for shipping or for drainage.

Also, the city commission and city staff would be moving from “tenements” into a new city hall being prepared.

Trash pickup schedule From Page 1A

and Christmas Day.

Pinehurst City Hall closed at noon on Monday and will be closed Christmas Eve and Christmas Day.

West Orange and Orange city halls will be closed on Christmas Eve and Christmas Day.

The county courthouse, along with the city halls in Bridge City, Orange, Pinehurst, and West Orange will be open again on Thursday, December 26.

For New Year’s Day, West Orange City Hall will be closed December 31 and Janu-

ary 1. The county courthouse, plus city halls in Orange, Bridge City, and Pinehurst will be closed only on January 1.

All emergency services for police, sheriff’s office, and fire departments will be working the holidays. The cities with utility departments have crews on standby for water or sewer emergencies. People in cities who need emergency help from public works should contact their local police departments at the regular 10-digit phone numbers.

Spirit of the Grinch From Page 1A

results. To keep wrapping would have been insane.

Instead, I posted on Facebook to warn family they may receive their gifts in a Walmart bag and if they didn’t receive an expected gift, it wasn’t that we forgot, we just hadn’t realized that another gift had been confiscated by the Grinch.

The Grinch may be gone, but there has

been a residual effect. After nine years I was reminded today that it is December 22 and I have not yet wrapped a single gift. It may be Walmart bags again this year. Oh, well, it’s not the end on the world. At least I’m done shopping!

The spirit of the Grinch is still in the air. Merry Christmas Bill.

Social Security bill From Page 3A

end.”

She is in the minority as approximately 95% of the teachers in Texas will benefit from the rescension according to the Texas Retired Teachers Association (TRTA).

Harvey and Doris Wilson, both retired teachers the bill will benefit, found out about the passage Saturday. They received an email from Tim Lee of the TRTA. Harvey Wilson, who retired from Orangefield ISD in 2010 is the president of the Orange County Retired Teachers Association. Doris Wilson retired from West Orange - Stark in 2004. Their Social Security benefits were penalized two thirds of what they were do because of the regulations.

“It will be useful for us if the president does sign it, so we hope that he does,” said Harvey Wilson. “They said we, as retired teachers, couldn’t get all of our Social Security that we had already earned previously. They said we would be double-dipping. Not every retired teacher is affected by it, but if you paid in enough to get in to Social Security before you went to teaching, then you

would only get a portion of what you paid in. They used to tell us when you were older you can teach in school and pay back for the education that you got. A lot of us did that and it didn’t work that way at all.”

“Many teachers worked part-time jobs and got hours in that way,” said Doris Wilson. She said one teacher had her school pension and her husband was on Social Security. When the husband died, she was not allowed to receive his survivor benefit because of the law. The law affects teachers in 17 states. They campaigned their legislators when they knew it was coming up. They were kept informed by the TRTA. She encourages retired teachers to become members of the Orange County Retired Teachers Association to stay up-to-date on legislation and other things that affect their retirement. To join, contact Harvey Wilson at 409-670-8992.

The changes, expected to be signed by President Biden will be retroactive to Jan. 1, 2024.

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Orange County Judge John Gothia

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What Grieving People Wish You Knew at Christmas

Nancy Guthrie
desiringGod.org

"Happy Thanksgiving!" "Merry Christmas!" "Happy New Year!" As the end of the year approaches, everywhere we turn someone is telling us we should be happy.

But for those who've recently lost someone they love, the holidays can seem more like something to survive than to enjoy. The traditions and events that can add so much joy and meaning to the season are punctuated with painful reminders of the person we love who is not here to share in it. Many have wished they could find a quiet place to hide until January 2.

While those of us who surround grieving people can't fix the pain of loss, we can bring comfort as we come alongside those who hurt with special sensitivity to what grief is like during the holidays. Grieving people wish we all knew at least five truths, among others, at Christmas.

1. Even the best times are punctuated with an awareness that someone is missing.

I remember a conversation I had with a friend as we prepared to head out on a holiday trip shortly after our daughter, Hope,

died. "That should be fun!" she said. I sensed I was supposed to agree wholeheartedly with her.

What I didn't know how to explain is that when you've lost a member of your family, even the best of times are painfully incomplete. Someone is missing. Even the best days and happiest events are tinged with sadness. Wherever you go, the sadness goes with you.

2. Social situations are hard.

I have never been able to figure out why crowds are difficult when you're grieving, but they are. Small talk can be unbearable when something so significant has happened. Meeting new people will likely bring questions about family. To walk alone into a room full of couples when your spouse has died, or into an event filled with children when your child has died, can be a soul-crushing reminder of what you have lost.

If you've invited someone in the midst of grief to your holiday event, let them know that you understand if it seems too hard at the last minute and they have to cancel, or that they may only be able to stay for a short time.

If you're going to an event, give a grieving person a call and ask if you



can pick her up and stick with her throughout the event for support. When you come upon a grieving person at a holiday social event, let him know that you are still thinking about the person he loves who has died, and invite him to talk about his memories with that person. Don't be afraid to say the name of the person who has died. It will be a balm to the grieving person's soul.

3. Extended family can be awkward and uneasy.

Grief is often awkward — even, and perhaps especially, with those to whom we're closest.

My husband and I host weekend retreats for couples that have lost children, and the difficulty of being with family at the holidays is often a topic of

conversation among these couples. They know that some family members think they've grieved long enough and want them to move on. Others want to initiate a conversation about the person who died but aren't sure how. What often happens is that the name of the person who died is never mentioned, and it feels to the person who is grieving that they have been erased from the family.

Do you know a grieving person heading to a family gathering for the holidays? You might ask about their expectations when they're with family. And if they have a strong desire for their loved one to be remembered in a certain way, combined with a fear that it may not happen, you might encourage and help them to write a letter to their family in advance

stating clearly what would bring comfort, rather than expect that their family will instinctively know.

4. Tears are not a problem.

For most of us, grief tends to work itself out in tears — tears that come out at times we don't expect. Sometimes grieving people sense that people around them see their tears as a problem to be solved — that tears must mean they aren't doing very well with their grief. But it makes sense that the great sorrow of losing someone we love would come out in tears. Tears are not the enemy. Tears do not reflect a lack of faith. Tears are a gift from God that help to wash away the deep pain of loss.

It is a great gift to let grieving people know that they don't have to be embarrassed by their tears around you — that they are welcome to cry with you. An even greater gift is to shed tears of your own over the loss of the person they love. Your tears reflect the worth of the person who died and assure them that they are not alone in missing that person.

5. It can be hard to remember why Christmas should be so merry.

In "O Holy Night," we sing, "A thrill of hope, the weary world rejoices." Grieving people around you feel the weariness of life and death in this world and wonder how anyone around them can rejoice.

They are in desperate need of the reality of Christ to break through their loneliness and despair. While we don't want to preach at them, we do look for the opportunity to share with them the comfort and joy to be found in the coming of God himself in Christ to rescue us.

The life of Jesus that began in a wooden cradle will culminate in death on a wooden cross. But it will not be a senseless, meaningless death. It will be a death-conquering death, followed by new resurrection life. The writer of Hebrews explains, "The Son came out in tears. Tears are not the enemy. Tears do not reflect a lack of faith. Tears are a gift from God that help to wash away the deep pain of loss." (Hebrews 2:14 NLT). The power death has now, to bring so much sorrow, will not be the way it is forever. What Christ set in motion when he defeated death at his first coming will come to its full fruition when he comes again.

This is our great hope at Christmas, and the hope we have to share with those who are grieving at Christmas — that "yonder breaks a new and glorious morn." The Christ who came as a baby and died as our substitute will one day return to consummate his kingdom. And when he does, "he will wipe away every tear from their eyes, and death shall be no more, neither shall there be mourning, nor crying, nor pain anymore" (Revelation 21:4).

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A New Rod for Gramps

THE FISHERMAN'S FISHERMAN
ROBERT VAIL
For The Record

Young Cris had been going fishing since he was old enough to walk. Gramps, as he had called him, was raising Chris as best he could, living on a fixed income.

Cris' parents were taken from him in a car crash when he was only six months old, and his Gramps was just like a dad to him. Gramps had lost his wife to cancer a year before Cris was born, so the two of them needed each other very much.

Living within a mile of one of Texas' largest bays, Cris enjoyed the time he and his grandfather spent on its shores. Gramps had spent many hours schooling him in the finer art of angling for redfish and he always admired the pretty copper-colored battlers that his gramps caught and later cooked for dinner.

Cris fished with push-button reel on a rod that was tattered and missing an eye or two. Limited as to what he could catch on his smaller outfit, he was just as happy catching croakers for Gramps to use for cut bait to lure the redfish they ate.

Gramps fished with an old knuckle-busting reel that had no drag and di-

rect drive mounted on an old six-foot rod that was a little stiffer than he would like, but it was all he had, and he couldn't afford a newer model, so he made do.

In the spring of Cris' eighth year, he ac-

companied Gramps to a local pawn shop where Gramps was going to try to sell his old shot gun to help

pay for some of his medical bills. Gramps reasoned that since he was too old to tromp the salt marsh after ducks any more, he might as well use the gun for something good.

While in the pawn shop, Cris noticed his grandfather wander over the rack of fishing rods in the corner and pick up a shiny seven-foot rod with a new, bright red Garcia reel on it. Gramps held the rod admiringly, sighting down the length of it. He tested it for balance and made several casts before setting it back in its place.

Cris knew then what he wanted to give his Gramps for next Christmas.

All summer long Cris did as many odd jobs as he could, saving every penny he earned mowing grass and washing cars. In between fishing trips with his Grandfather, he carried out the neighbor's garbage, and as summer turned into fall, he raked leaves all over the neighborhood.

Finally two days before Christmas, he had enough money saved. Cris hopped on his bicycle and pedaled down to the pawn shop ... only to find that the rod



NEW ROD Page 5B

PEACH BOWL: Texas Longhorns take on Arizona State in New Year Day playoff bout



Blue's run was the third-longest touchdown ever scored in a CFP game since the format's inception in 2014. Steve Sarkisian was a proud head coach after the win in Austin.

into the starting role when training camp injuries knocked out C.J. Baxter and Christian Clark for the season. Blue missed a game with the ankle injury, then saw his carries reduced over several games because of fumble problems.

Texas (12-2) advanced to the Jan. 1 Peach bowl to play Big 12 champion Arizona State.

"You can't win (the championship) if you don't win the first one," Texas coach Steve Sarkisian said. "We did that."

Blue already had a 38-yard touchdown earlier in the game. The second one came after Clemson had rallied from down 31-10 to within 31-24 on Cade Klubnik's third touchdown pass.

Blue scored on 38-yard

cut-and-dash burst in the second quarter. On the second touchdown, he dove into the line, shook a tackler, and then outraced three more to the end zone with just 11 minutes left.

He clutched the ball tightly to his chest when a defender tried to rip it away.

"It was a sigh of relief after everything I've been going through," Blue said.

"I stayed patient, I saw a crease and it was everything (open) from there."

Sarkisian said Blue never lost the trust of the team.

"Our staff, his teammates, believed in him," Sarkisian said. "I just gave him a big hug and told him how proud I was."

Quintrevion Wisner added 110 yards rushing

PEACH BOWL Page 5B

ATLANTA, GA — The Peach Bowl stage is set! The Arizona State Sun Devils will take on the Texas Longhorns in the Peach Bowl on January 1!

The Sun Devils earned a first-round bye in the College Football Playoff after a convincing win over Iowa State 45-19 to win the Big 12.

Jaydon Blue had the biggest run in the biggest

game of the season so far for Texas. He had to fight through a nagging ankle injury and fumble problems to do it.

Blue ran for 146 yards, dashing 77 yards for a touchdown in the fourth quarter to help the Longhorns beat Clemson 38-24 on Saturday in the first round of the expanded College Football Playoff. Blue was first thrust

NRG Park needs \$2 billion for facility repairs

Reported By
Houston Public Media

Facilities within NRG Park need roughly \$2 billion of repairs, according to a new assessment that will inform the complex's next master plan.

The Harris County Sports & Convention Corporation released a facilities condition assessment Wednesday detailing the costly repairs needed in the park that is home to the Houston Texans and the Houston Livestock Show and Rodeo.

The assessment estimated a 30-year capital expense project is needed to address the aged facilities. With a price tag of \$116 million alone, the mostly costly repair outlined in the assessment is a new rooftop.

But it's still unclear who might bare the costs of re-

pairing the multi-billion dollar complex.

"NRG Park is one of our region's most valuable public assets," Martye Kendrick, executive director of the sports corporation, said in a statement. "To ensure NRG Park continues to serve the community effectively, we will need investments that match the high level of activity the park supports."

"At the same time, we must balance our responsibility to the public as responsible stewards of this county-owned asset," Kendrick said.

County leaders have for years called for upgrades to NRG Park.

Former Harris County Sports and Convention Corporation CEO Ryan Walsh last year said the complex generates rough-

NRG PARK Page 5B

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OUTDOORS

High Five 2025 With a First Day Hike

**Staff Report
Texas Parks & Wildlife Dept.**

AUSTIN— Strive to explore more in 2025 by starting the new year with a First Day Hike at a Texas State Park.

This annual tradition allows people of all ages and skill levels a chance to experience Texas' wild places through ranger and self-guided walks, bike rides, paddling trips, polar plunges and more in honor of the national initiative aimed at getting people outdoors.

Ring in the new year from 7-8 a.m. with a guided sunrise beach walk at Galveston Island State Park. Participants should meet at the beachside day-use area by the turtle statue for the one-mile walk. Hats and sunglasses are highly recommended. All ages and canine companions are welcome.

Last year, Texas broke not only its historical participation numbers, but it also had the most events, participants and miles hiked of any state. Texas State Parks hosted 177 events where 8,729 people hiked, biked, swam and paddled a record 17,284 miles. The previous statewide record was set Jan. 1, 2023, during Texas State Parks' Centennial Celebration.

"One of the many reasons that I love Texas is the nice weather that we can have even in the winter and there is no better way to spend a beautiful winter day than walking with friends and family at a Texas State Park," said Rodney Franklin, director of Texas State Parks. "Each year, thousands of Texans turn out to a nearby state park to ring in the new year with a First Day Hike and I always look forward to seeing the photos of smiling folks enjoying parks on January 1. Please join us and help Texas State Parks once again become the leader in First Day Hike participation and miles walked for 2025. Hope to see you on the trail!"

Trails at Texas State Parks range in length and difficulty. Some short, easy trails are perfect for family-friendly scenic strolls, while more strenuous ones can challenge experienced hikers. Trail maps for all Texas State Parks can be found on TPWD's website, the recently redesigned official Texas State Park app and individual park webpages.

"State parks offer an incredible variety of outdoor experiences, showcasing the unique natural and cultural features of each region," said Lewis Ledford, president and CEO of the National Association of State Park Directors. "Whether you're trekking through snowy trails in the Rockies or enjoying mild southern breezes, First Day Hikes are the perfect way to start the New Year outdoors and connect with the beauty of our public lands."

TPWD strongly encourages anyone planning a trip to a Texas state park to reserve a day pass in advance since some parks are expected to reach their capacity limit. Reserve day passes online through the TPWD reservation website or by calling the Customer Service Center during regular business hours at (512) 389-8900.

Anyone with the resolution of visiting multiple state parks in 2025 can purchase a Texas State Parks Pass (TSPP). The \$70 TSPP waives entrance fees to all state parks for pass holders and guests in their vehicle for a full year. Additionally, pass holders get discounts on overnight reservations, state park store purchases and more.

Beginning Jan. 1, people who renew or purchase a new TSPP will receive an exclusive, limited-run decal to help display their love of Texas state parks. Purchase passes online through the TPWD reservation website, through the Customer Service Center or at any state park. Decals will be mailed with the pass.

A list of all First Day Hike events can be found on the Texas Parks and Wildlife Department calendar page.

Gulf Coast Fishing Reports- This Week

Compiled by Texas Parks and Wildlife Department

• **Sabine Lake**

GOOD. 68 degrees. Neches River points, drops and bayous producing limits of redfish with live shrimp under a popping cork. Shell flats live shrimp on a Carolina rig for sheepshead and black drum. Sabine Lake bird action midlake leading the way to trout, big bull redfish, and some slot redfish on ¾ ounce gold spoons, or ¾ ounce jig off the bottom. Points, drops and bayous producing limits of trout. Limits of redfish at the mouth of bayous and shell flats with popping cork and live shrimp. In the same area limits sheepshead, drum, and flounder with live shrimp on Carolina rig. Lots of bait in the marsh holding fish.

Report by Captain Randy Foreman, Captain Randy's Guide Service Sabine Lake.

• **Bolivar**

GOOD. 67 degrees. Water levels are swapping back-and-forth this week with the north winds pushing the tide out, and the incoming tide is clear. Anglers are still catching plenty of redfish everywhere. The big croakers are still being caught along with a few more sand trout, black drum, redfish, speckled trout, and crabs caught along the jetty with a few small stingrays and sharks.

The surf is producing numbers of redfish, black drum, the occasional speckled trout and crabs along the whole peninsula with more activity towards Gilchrist, High Island mainly. Report by Captain Shane Rilal, North Jetty Bait Camp.

• **Trinity Bay**

SLOW. 63 degrees. Back end of the bay good for scattered reds and speckled trout on live shrimp and artificial lures. Marshes good for redfish. Fish are moving north, with good catches of speckled trout from above I-10 in the San Jacinto river. Live shrimp and soft plastics effective. Still plenty of fish between Fred Hartman Bridge and I-10. Report by Captain David Dillman, Galveston Bay Charter Fishing. Water clarity is good. Redfish are being caught well in the current and near drop-offs feeding heavily in the bottom using swimbaits, gulf curly tails and gulf shrimp. Trout are fantastic in current over rock flats and shell flats being caught on swim baits and shrimp imitation baits. Flounder are starting to really pick up on drains using swim baits and gulf baits. Drum are heavy on rock flats being caught on live or dead shrimp. Always wear your kill switch when underway. God is great! Report by Captain Zackary Scott, Zack Attack Fishing.

• **East Galveston Bay**

GOOD. 64 degrees. A few more slot-sized speckled trout are showing up, black drum, and redfish being caught on live shrimp and finger mullet. We are still getting a few reports of good fishing by Frenchtown Road, Siever's Cut, and near the boat ramp by Rollover Pass. Report by Captain Shane Rilal, North Jetty Bait Camp. Surface water temperature 59 degrees, water clarity =



Slowing down your presentation during cold months can help produce sluggish redfish inshore. The Record's Capt. Chuck Uzzle displays one of his catches here.

Good. We have concentrated back in the marsh areas where we can get some protection. This week the Redfish bite has been good around areas where good current flow has bait up against the shorelines/grass lines in 2 to 4 feet of water. Our best solid trout bite this week has been on ¼ oz jig heads with the Deadly Dudley 5" Rat Tail in Blue Moon / Chartreuse, Fishing deeper pockets with shell, triggering the most strikes. As in previous weeks if we don't see any nervous bait, we move on rather quickly and cover more water finding the zones where the fish are active. Report by Captain Jeff Brandon, Get the Net Guide Service, LLC.

• **Galveston Bay**

SLOW. 64 degrees. Upper Galveston bay around Sylvan Beach good for speckled trout on soft plastics. Clear Lake pro-

ducing scattered trout catches on live shrimp and soft plastics. A few redfish in both areas. Report by Captain David Dillman, Galveston Bay Charter Fishing.

• **West Galveston Bay**

GOOD. 64 degrees. Drifting the dirty streaks in the open bay producing scattered catches of speckled trout. Those fishing in Chocolate and even Hall's Bayou catching speckled trout, black drum, and redfish on soft plastics and live shrimp effective. Report by Captain David Dillman, Galveston Bay Charter Fishing.

• **Freeport**

GOOD. 62 degrees. Fishing has been good in between fronts. Redfish and trout have been good working under the birds with plastic or gulf under a popping cork. In Bastrop

Bay, Christmas Bay, Chocolate Bay, Salt Lake and Oyster Lake. Brazos River has been good with reds, trout, drum, sand trout with either live shrimp or fresh dead shrimp. Flounder have been good on gulf, new penny shrimp and live finger mullet. Report by Captain Jake Brown, Flattie Daddy Fishing Adventures

• **Texas City**

GOOD. 62 degrees. All eyes have turned to flounder. Good catches of flounder are coming from the Galveston channel, with the best bite on live shrimp and gulps. Fish up to 7 pounds have been caught. Those gigging at night are doing well. Still bull redfish and oversized black drum being caught of the dike and the Galveston jetties. Report by Captain David Dillman, Galveston Bay Charter Fishing.

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'The Lakes' Fishing

• **Toledo Bend Fishing Report**

FAIR. Water normal stain; 61 degrees; 3.73 feet below pool. Fishing is good for this time of year with a late fall pattern. Bass can be caught with a swim jig, chatterbait, and spinnerbait on the bank in 1-6 feet of water. Then back out to 10-16 feet of water and catch them with a Texas and Carolina rig, or 18-25 feet of water with a spoon or dropshot. Report by Stephen Johnston, Johnston Fishing.

• **Sam Rayburn Fishing Reports**

FAIR. Water slightly stained; 58 degrees; 2.02 feet below pool. The forecasted cold will initially slow the bite as fish become accustomed the fish will really start to feed. Bass are chasing shad in the shallows and off points.

Changes to Texas hunting, fishing regulations

Reported By
Texas Farm Bureau

The Texas Parks and Wildlife Department (TPWD) announced several changes to hunting and fishing regulations for the 2024-2025 season.

“The big thing for hunters to know during the 2024-2025 season is we did change some regulations,” Shaun Oldenburger, TPWD Small Game Program director, said. “There was a big change for turkey hunters, not so much in the fall, but for the spring where a majority of the harvest will have mandatory reporting now.”

Each change in regulation is recommended by TPWD after the agency analyzes populations and other factors that may impact wildlife.

“Texas Parks and Wildlife Department looks at

annual changes to regulations. Sometimes, we are mandated to by federal regulations,” Oldenburger said. “We follow harvest strategies and a lot of times there are regulations both liberalizations on some seasons and then also restrictions on other species on annual basis. And dates do change sometimes with some species.”

*** Carcass disposal**

New regulations are in place for statewide carcass disposal of deer.

• Doe days

“Doe days” expanded in 43 counties in the Post Oak Savannah and Pineywoods ecoregions.

• Youth-only seasons

Fall youth-only seasons expanded to include Friday for white-tailed deer, squirrels and wild turkeys.

*** Wild turkey**

Mandatory harvest reporting within 24 hours of harvest is now required for all wild turkeys harvested in all counties during all seasons.

Updates were made to wild turkey season closures, bag limits and season dates in specific counties. Find a county.

• Light geese

Changes to light geese regulations include removal of the Light Goose Conservation Order.

During the regular light goose season, there is a daily bag limit of five in the aggregate and possession limit of three times the daily bag.

• Federal Duck Stamp

Digital federal duck stamps are now available.

Starting during the 2024-25 hunting season, federal duck stamps either



Fall youth-only seasons expanded to include Friday for white-tailed deer, squirrels and wild turkeys.

printed on physical licenses or validated on digital licenses meet the requirements for the entire waterfowl hunting season. Physical federal duck stamps will be sent to the purchaser’s designated mailing address after

March 10, 2025.

• Spotted Seatrout

The daily bag limit is three, with a minimum length of 15 and a maximum length of 20 for spotted seatrout.

During a license year,

one spotted seatrout over 28 inches may be retained when affixed with a properly completed Spotted Seatrout Tag and an additional spotted seatrout over 28 inches with a Bonus Spotted Seatrout Tag.

“It is important that outdoorsmen know the regulations for simple things,” Oldenburger said. “We see some big tickets from our hunters in Texas not having the right licenses and hunter safety. Get your licenses and make sure you have the correct licenses and double check regulations. Spend five or 10 minutes on our website before you go to the field to make sure you’re ready and you’re legal.”

For more information on season dates and regulations, visit tpwd.texas.gov.

Texas 4-H Foundation receives largest single grant



This grant will directly enhance Texas 4-H efforts by expanding program reach, enriching curriculum development, and providing vital resources to support youth statewide.

Paul Schattenberg
Texas A&M AgriLife

The Texas 4-H Foundation received a transformative \$700,000 grant from the Adam R. Scripps Foundation, marking a significant milestone in their shared mission of empowering Texas youth. “This grant represents a powerful investment in the future of Texas youth,” said David White, president and CEO of the Texas 4-H Foundation. “With the support of the Adam R. Scripps Foundation, we’ll be able to expand access to our programs and provide more young people with the resources and opportunities they need to thrive as leaders in their communities.”

White said the Texas 4-H Foundation applied for this grant because it felt the funds were needed to keep up with the growing Texas 4-H program and membership.

“Our mission aligns very closely with the mission of the Adam R. Scripps Foundation,” he said. “They believe in what we are doing and want to help us continue to grow leaders and provide opportunities for 4-H members to gain life skills. We feel very fortunate to have such a generous donor with similar values and goals collaborating with us and supporting the works of the Texas 4-H Foundation.”

Rick Avery, Ph.D., director of the Texas A&M AgriLife Extension Service, which oversees the administration of the Texas 4-H program, said this funding is a tremendous start on a new and exciting chapter for the program as it continues to in-

spire, educate and empower youth across the state.

“We are deeply grateful to the Adam F. Scripps Foundation for their generous support of Texas 4-H,” Avery said. “As the largest youth development program in Texas and the largest 4-H program in America, this funding will significantly enhance our ability to empower youth through transformative programs in leadership and citizenship, natural resources, agriculture and livestock, family and community health, and

STEM.”

This grant will directly enhance Texas 4-H efforts by expanding program reach, enriching curriculum development, and providing vital resources to support youth statewide.

Grant funds will be utilized across the state and will be administered by the Texas 4-H Foundation in collaboration with Montza Williams, Ed.D., Texas 4-H state program leader.

“We are thankful for this partnership and the trust the Adam R. Scripps

Foundation has placed in us,” Williams said. “This grant not only strengthens our programs but also affirms the life-changing work being done every day

by our faculty, volunteers and youth members.”

The Adam R. Scripps Foundation has a long-standing legacy of championing initiatives that

drive education, health and community development. This generous contribution reflects a deep commitment by the foundation.

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NASA's Artemis moon missions pushed back to 2026

The delay narrows the margin between NASA's return to the moon and China's attempt to put its first astronauts on the lunar surface

Andrew Jones
Space.com Report

NASA's first two crewed Artemis moon missions have been pushed back to 2026 and 2027, respectively, and the move could have big ramifications for the agency's Artemis program and competition with China for leadership in space.

Artemis 2, which will send a crew of three Americans and a Canadian astronaut around the moon, was due to launch in September 2025. The mission has now been moved back to April 2026, NASA announced on Dec. 5. Artemis 3 — which is set to put humans on the surface of our nearest celestial neighbor for the first time in more than half a century — has also slipped, from late 2026 to mid-2027.

The latest delays stem, in part, from an issue with the Orion crew spacecraft and its heat shield which was detected after a "skip reentry" during the uncrewed Artemis 1 mission in late 2022.

"We have since determined that while the capsule was dipping in and out of the atmosphere as part of that planned skip entry, heat accumulated inside the heat shield outer layer, leading to gases forming and becoming trapped inside the heat shield," NASA Deputy Administrator Pam Melroy said during a Dec. 5 press conference. "This caused internal pressure to build up and led to cracking and uneven shedding of that outer layer."

Artemis 2 will still use Orion, but with a different reentry trajectory to better

manage the resulting heat. "The safety of our astronauts is always first in our decisions," NASA Administrator Bill Nelson said.

The delay allows NASA more time to understand and fully address the Orion issue, and also to get the landing systems and other aspects like lunar extravehicular activity suits ready for the missions. It will also allow for improvements and increased safety. However, it may disrupt the momentum of contractors and suppliers, which is no small matter; a lack of regular flight cadence can lead to inefficiencies and a loss of expertise.

But most notably, the announcement of the delays to the Artemis missions comes at a time of flux for NASA. It brings a level of uncertainty to the missions themselves, their architecture and perhaps even the entire Artemis program.

Donald Trump was elected as president of the United States in November and is set to return to the White House in January. He campaigned on a platform of cutting budgets and lowering taxes. That, in itself, could spell trouble for NASA programs deemed costly or inefficient.

One aspect of Artemis rumored to be immediately under threat is the Space Launch System (SLS), the giant rocket designed to launch Orion to the moon. The launcher has been under intense scrutiny for years due to vast cost overruns and numerous delays in development. A mobile launch tower for the SLS has also been afflicted by



The Orion spacecraft during trans-lunar injection, to bring an Artemis mission to the moon. (Image credit: NASA)

cost overruns and delays. The U.S. Government Accountability Office (GAO) in September 2023 described the rocket as "unaffordable" for sustained space exploration.

Trump has publicly nominated Jared Isaacman, a billionaire with two private spaceflights using SpaceX hardware under his belt, to head up NASA. Elon Musk, Trump's wealthiest supporter and an active part of the presidential campaign, is close to the president-elect and is thought to be in a position to influence policy.

That has raised the possibility that a new Trump administration could replace SLS with Starship from Musk's SpaceX. Starship is already part of the architecture for future Artemis missions, and its reusability and cost-effectiveness, if proven, would give it major advantages over the expensive, expendable SLS. Such a move would not be straightforward, but the new delays may make this more possible.

In terms of international competition, the delay of Artemis 3 to 2027 further narrows the margin between NASA's return to the moon and China's attempt

to put its first astronauts on the lunar surface. Beijing has committed to a mission to put two astronauts on the moon before 2030 and

is actively working on all of the elements needed to achieve the feat, including a new rocket, spacecraft, lander and launch pad.

Making the first crewed landing on the moon this century would be a symbolic victory for either country. It would also demonstrate momentum and technological prowess, and could provide the perception of leadership in space.

One further possibility, however, is that NASA drops the moon as the goal, looking deeper into space. While NASA sees the moon as a stepping stone to Mars, it could, potentially, look to skip a step.

Musk has been very vocal about his plans to put humans on Mars, and Starship is integral to this effort. An administration close to Musk could also, potentially, decide to back Starship and switch focus from the moon to the Red Planet. Again, such decisions will be a complex interplay of individuals and institutions

NASA MOON Page 5B

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NRG Park home to the Houston Texans.

NRG Park From Page 1B

ly \$60 to 65 million per year hosting the Houston Livestock Show and Rodeo, Texans home games and other sporting events, and concerts, but that's not including all of the overhead and all of the costs of operating the facility.

Key tenants of NRG Park say the assessment highlights challenges that need to be addressed in the near, and long term.

"Our goal remains to provide the best possible gameday experience for our fans and also recognize the importance of NRG Park and NRG Stadium to our entire community," Houston Texans President Greg Grissom said in a statement. "Together, with the

Houston Livestock Show and Rodeo, we look forward to supporting Harris County and HCSCC to identify the best solutions to address these challenges."

Since its opening in 2002, the park has seen more than 100 million visitors, bringing in more than 5.5 million visitors every year.

Planning for the park's next master plan is underway, including a multi-year capital improvement plan. More than \$35 million worth of projects have already been planned and budgeted, according to the sports corporation.

The facility assessment did not include an analysis of NRG Arena or the Astrodome.

Peach Bowl From Page 1B

and two first-half touchdowns for Texas. Quinn Ewers passed for 202 yards and a touchdown.

Klubnik, who grew up in Austin, passed for 336 yards and rallied the Tigers (10-4) in the second half against a Texas defense that had given up just four passing touchdowns all season.

"We just got ourselves in too big a hole in the first half. Everything was uphill," Clemson coach Dabo Swinney said. "We just put it in Cade's hands and let it rip."

The runner-up in the Southeastern Conference, Texas is the only one of last season's four playoff teams

to make the new 12-team field. Clemson won the ACC championship to make the playoff. The Tigers were the No. 12 seed in their first appearance since 2020 and seventh overall.

"It's not easy to get on this stage (again), and they earned it," Sarkisian said. "It think college football got this one right. This idea of a home playoff game with a 12-team format was pretty special."

The winner of the Peach Bowl will go on to the semi-finals (final four) of the College Football Playoff and play in the Goodyear Cotton Bowl Classic on January 10.

NASA's Moon Missions Delayed From Page 4B

such as Congress, making big changes difficult to manufacture.

But big changes are possible, and they would have geopolitical ramifications. Both the U.S. and China are working to secure partners for their respective Artemis and International Lunar Research Station (ILRS) programs, and ending Artemis could give China's efforts a massive boost.

There would also be consequences for NASA's partnerships with the European Space Agency and its member states, Japan, the United Arab Emirates and more, which are engaged in Artemis and projects including

the lunar Gateway. It was also the first Trump administration that kicked off Artemis, and the incoming president may well want to oversee a triumphant return to the moon.

NASA officials underlined on Dec. 5 that the Artemis program is viewed as a cornerstone for advancing human exploration and for the moon to Mars and beyond. The agency is aiming to maintain a consistent flight cadence, while reducing gaps between missions and incorporating lessons learned. However, change may be coming to the agency's plans for Artemis and beyond.

New rod for Gramps From Page 1B

and reel that his Gramps had so admired had been sold only hours before.

Disappointed and with his gaze fixed on the ground, Cris slowly rode his bicycle back home. He knew he did not have enough money to buy Gramps a brand new rod and reel. He needed time to try and figure out what to do, and he knew no better way to think things over than go fishing.

Grabbing his push button reel and rod, he quietly slipped out the back door as Gramps napped in his chair. He figured he would be back before Gramps even knew he was gone.

When he arrived at the edge of the bay, he noticed that the tide was unusually high and the bay as calm as glass. Only the occasional swirl of a passing mullet dimpled the surface.

Cris had brought only one piece of cut mullet, because he didn't really think he would catch anything, but he enjoyed the peace and solitude. Mainly he wanted to try and figure out what to do about Gramps' Christmas gift.

Casting out his piece of bait, he held onto his rod but let his mind wander. Watching a lone seagull glide effortlessly overhead, he pondered what to do.

Suddenly he felt a sharp thump on his line. Then it slowly began to move to one side.

Reeling in the slack, he set the hook into what he

instantly realized was a bigger fish than he had ever hooked. He pulled on his flimsy rod and reel as hard as he dared, and to his amazement, the fish began to swim toward him. Reeling for all he was worth, he had the huge fish wallowing in the shallows at his feet before he knew it. He reached down and gently slid his hand under the gill-plate of the huge red, hefting it to better admire it.

When he lifted the fish, he noticed a shiny new hook in the opposite corner of its mouth. String was still attached to the hook and it dipped into the water. Laying the fish on the bank, he grabbed up the string and began pulling. He felt a resistance from something on the other end of the line.

Tugging harder he saw the tip of a rod break the mirror surface. Giving a final yank, he couldn't believe his eyes when a new rod and Garcia reel--just like the one in the pawn shop--emerged from the water.

What luck! Turning his attention back to the huge redfish, he found that it was gone. Somehow that fish had thrown that hook and disappeared.

Did it flop back into the bay? How on earth did that fish vanish without so much as a splash?

Cris looked around for signs telling how that fish had disappeared when he noticed a short, round man

in a red suit with black knee boots disappear into a stand of sea cane nearby.

Cris paused. Could it be ... you know who? Maybe ... Nah! Probably not.

One thing he knew for sure: that redfish had delivered a brand new, shiny rod with the bright red Garcia reel that he had worked so hard for all summer long.

He gathered his things and started for home on his bicycle knowing--kind of--what had just happened. Arriving there, he hid the new rod and reel in the garage and slipped back inside just as Gramps was stirring

from his nap.

On Christmas morning, he was up before Gramps, placing the now clean, shiny new rod and bright red Garcia reel under the evergreen tree with the glittering golden star attached.

The smile that lit Gramps' face when he saw the new rod and reel was the best Christmas gift Cris could have received. He knew he and Gramps would spend plenty of quality time together in the days to come, sitting on the edge of the bay in pursuit of the mighty redfish.

NOTICE OF APPLICATION TO IMPLEMENT INTERIM FUEL REFUND

On December 20, 2024, Entergy Texas, Inc. (ETI) filed an application with the Public Utility Commission of Texas (Commission) to implement an interim fuel refund to refund or surcharge over-collected fuel and purchased power costs as of October 31, 2024 (Application). This filing was made pursuant to 16 Tex. Admin Code § 25.237(a)(3)(B). ETI's filing affects only the recovery of fuel and purchased power costs and does not affect base rates that are currently in effect. All residential, commercial and industrial customers whose electric service rates include charges for fuel pursuant to Rate Schedule FF, entitled "Fixed Fuel Factor and Loss Multipliers," in all territories served by ETI, are affected by the Application.

The total amount of over-recovery balance to be refunded through the proposed interim fuel refund is approximately \$45.4 million, including interest. According to the Texas Utilities Code and Commission rules, ETI may not earn a profit on fuel and purchased power expenses and may only pass actual fuel and purchased power costs through to its customers. ETI proposes that customers on Rate Schedules GS, LGS and LIPS at a delivery voltage of 69-kilovolts (kV)/138-kv or 230 kV, LIPS at a primary delivery voltage and seasonal agricultural customers be given a one-time credit (or assessed a surcharge, if applicable) during the billing month of February 2025, based on each customer's historical usage. ETI proposes to implement the refund for all other Rate Schedule FF customers over a three-month period, beginning with ETI's first February 2025 billing cycle.

The effect of the refund on customers' bills will vary depending on the rate schedule under which they take service. For a residential customer using 1,000 kWh a month, the interim refund will result in a \$5.93 reduction in the customer's bill for each month of the refund, or a net decrease of approximately 4.1 percent as compared to current charges. Additionally, transmission voltage level customers and seasonal agricultural customers as a group will receive a net refund; however, certain individual transmission voltage level and seasonal agricultural customers may experience a surcharge based on historical usage. ETI's fuel and purchased power expenses will be subject to final review by the Commission in a future fuel reconciliation proceeding.

Persons with questions or who want more information on this petition may contact Entergy Texas, Inc. at Attn: Customer Service – Fuel Refund, P.O. Box 2951, Beaumont, Texas 77704, or call 1-866-981-2602 during normal business hours. A complete copy of the filing is available for inspection at ETI's Beaumont office located at 350 Pine Street, Beaumont, Texas 77701.

The Commission has assigned Docket No. 57473 to this proceeding. Persons who wish to formally participate in this proceeding or who wish to express their comments regarding this petition should contact the Public Utility Commission of Texas, Office of Consumer Protection, P.O. Box 13326, Austin, Texas 78711-3326, or call (512) 936-7120, or toll free at 1-888-782-8477. Hearing- or speech-impaired individuals with text telephones (TTY) may call (512) 936-7136 or use Relay Texas (toll-free) at 1-800-735-2989.

The preferred method to file a request for intervention is electronically, and you will be required to serve the request on other parties by email. Therefore, please include your own email address on the intervention request.

Instructions for electronic filing via the "PUC Filer" on the Commission's website can be found here: <https://interchange.puc.texas.gov/filer>. Instructions for using the PUC Filer are available at: http://www.puc.texas.gov/industry/filings/New_PUC_Web_Filer_Presentation.pdf. Once you obtain a tracking sheet associated with your filing from the PUC Filer, you may email the tracking sheet and the document you wish to file to: centralrecords@puc.texas.gov. For assistance with your electronic filing, please contact the Commission's Help Desk at (512) 936-7100 or helpdesk@puc.texas.gov. You can review materials filed in this docket on the PUC Interchange at: <http://interchange.puc.texas.gov/>.

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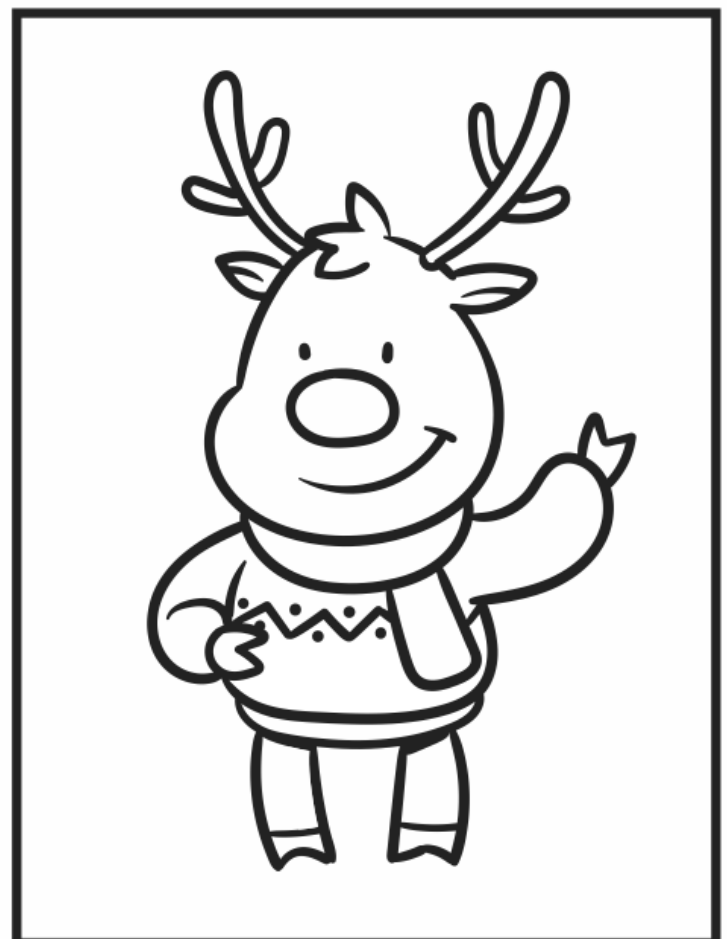
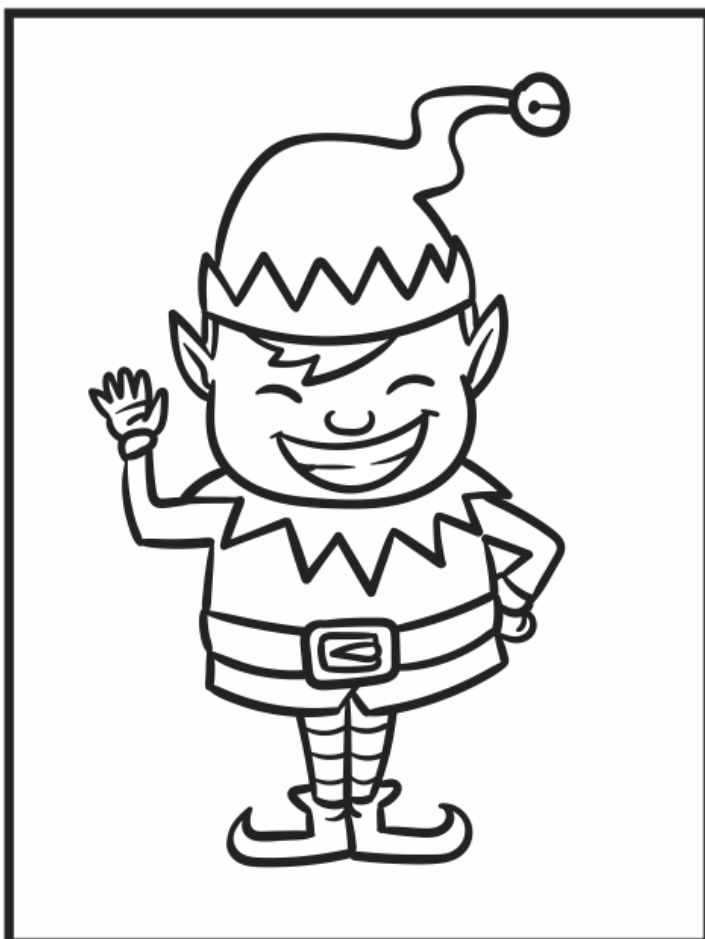
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