

# Giddings Times & News

SERVING LEXINGTON, DIME BOX, LINCOLN, SERBIN, NORTHRUP, PAIGE, LEDBETTER, MANHEIM, FEDOR & GIDDINGS  
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## Mysterious flying lights seen nightly in Dime Box

### Suspected drones appeared just 7 weeks ago

Anyone keeping up with state and national news is undoubtedly aware of increasing reports of some mysterious objects flying in the sky at night.

Many of these objects are suspected of being drones -- unmanned air vehicles that are remotely controlled and usually equipped with cameras.

It appears Lee County is now being visited by unidentified flying objects that are clearly not typical aircraft.

Nolan Lerche, who lives in the country near the

intersection of County Roads 117 and 430 southwest of Dime Box, began seeing these mysterious objects hovering above the horizon just after the first of December.

"They've got five or six drones that go over our area every night," says Lerche. "They're long, and fairly high."

"Something's going on," he believes. "A couple of times they were real low, and then they'd take off. I really don't want to get too close to them. I don't trust what I'm looking at."

The objects, which are lighted, are often above the clouds, so it is difficult for Lerche to make an accurate assessment on their size. "I suspect they're fairly large, but I can't tell you what I don't know," he says. "I do know that if you sit out here and watch them, you'll see movement."

The objects begin to make their appearance between 6:30 and 7 p.m., right when it starts to get dark. "I know they're not airplanes -- they don't

See Flying, 3

## Schneider: City is blessed to receive so many grants

### New emergency siren alert system to be installed

Spencer Schneider, who has just under six months left before he retires as Giddings City Manager, reports that most everything operated smoothly and efficiently over the holidays.

When making last year's report, Schneider indicated that he had officially retired from being a full-time drummer with the Lost Cause Band as of New Year's Day 2024.

This year, Schneider says he is temporarily picking up his drum sticks again to join Lost Cause and play music on a cruise ship sailing out of Galveston on Feb. 10-15. Also on the trip will be Mark Halata

and Texavia, as well as the Moonglow Orchestra.

It was also reported last year that a developer by the name of Emanuel Glockzin from Bryan had made overtures with the city about building senior citizen housing on Hwy 77 across from Giddings High School.

Schneider reports that Glockzin was never heard from again, and the property in question was sold to a woman who had also expressed interest in creating a subdivision with homes and duplexes. However, that too has been silent for the past six months or so.

Schneider has worked

as an employee for the City of Giddings for 34 years, with the last 4 years serving as City Manager. "I want to leave the city better than I found it," he pointed out.

He began his career as a code official. "My first boss told me just to keep us out of court," he recalls.

Schneider served under nine different city managers before stepping into the job himself. Some were great, while others were challenging. However, one did give him some advice which he took to heart. "There are three things you don't do in this job," he said. "Don't anger

See Blessed, 8

## State leaders pushing TCEQ for public hearing

### Legislators join county to stop compost facility

The heated battle that many Lee County citizens are fighting to prevent a commercial compost operation known as Break It Down from setting up shop near Lincoln just took a new leap.

State Senator Lois Kolhorst and State Representative Stan Gerdes have made it clear they are solidly behind Lee County in an official document

sent last week to the Texas Commission on Environmental Quality.

As previously reported, the owner of Break It Down filed the necessary paperwork to get his operation approved by the TCEQ back in the fall. In late November, the TCEQ notified neighbors that a compost facility utilizing, among other things, dead animal carcasses and res-

taurant "slop" was coming to Private Road 3264.

The neighbors quickly organized and got over 2,000 concerned citizens to file protests to the TCEQ. Many of these letters demanded a public hearing on the matter so citizens could convince the TCEQ this was a bad idea for the Lincoln area.

The government officials

See Hearing, 4

## Lori Hamff-Diez named Giddings EDC Director

### Business, grant writing experience

Local businesswoman Lori Hamff-Diez has been named as the Giddings Economic Development Corporation's Executive Director.

The GEDC Board of Directors unanimously voted to offer the position to Hamff-Diez during a recent meeting.

Although no formal documents have yet been

signed, Hamff-Diez is ready to take charge in managing the EDC's day-to-day activities and long-range planning. "I'm very honored that the City Council and the EDC board has put their faith in me," she told the Times & News.

"I was born and raised in Giddings, so it means a lot to be able to improve the community -- not only for the small businesses, but the citizens as well," she says. "My mom was the county clerk and my dad was a small business owner, so it's humbling to be able to give back."

The EDC office director position became open last April when Amanda Casey resigned to work for the county judge's office. The EDC offered the position to someone from

See Director, 10



**WINTER FIELD DAY** -- Lee and Williamson County ARES (Amateur Radio Emergency Services) units and personnel combined forces to participate in a national emergency exercise this past week-

end at Fireman's Park in Giddings. ARES put their equipment through its paces by contacting well over 640 sites throughout the U.S. and other countries. Williamson County Emergency Coordinator

Michael Moody (left) and Lee County Emergency Coordinator Marida Favia del Core Borromeo (right) demonstrate how digital and analog emergency radio equipment can function in a remote tent.

## Lee County ARES works with nationwide exercise

### Amateur radio group saves lives during disasters

Fireman's Park west of Giddings was the site of the Winter Field Day exercise for local Amateur Radio Emergency Service (known as ARES) over the past weekend.

Lee and Williamson County ARES groups joined together in a national exercise to simulate emergency communica-

tion in remote locations using amateur or "ham radio" equipment.

Travelers passing by may have noticed several trailers and tents set up with large radio antennas and odd-looking devices pointed in multiple directions.

ARES' primary goal was to put their equip-

ment through its paces by contacting as many ARES-type operators as possible, including those in other countries. This included testing generators, antennas, and Lee County ARES' brand new repeater system that can significantly extend signal range.

See ARES, 6

## 'Break It Down' founder no-show at county court

### Gerdes developing compost-related legislation

Though Lee County is dealing with many issues, one that is currently on the forefront is the possibility of a commercial composting company being granted permission by the TCEQ to operate a facility off Private Road 3264 in Lincoln.

County Judge Frank Malinak brought the item up for discussion during Monday's meeting of the Lee County Commissioners Court.

Judge Malinak indicated that one of the primary reasons the item was included on the agenda was to give

Break It Down's owner, Jeff Paine, a chance to speak publicly about his facility and plans.

Paine had previously complained to reporters that nobody on the county government level is willing to speak with him.

See Court, 8

## Deadline to file for city, school elections Feb. 14

### Giddings & Lexington city councils, school boards

Even though the November General Election is behind us and everyone from President Donald Trump to the local county commissioners and constables have been sworn

into office, other big local elections are just around the corner.

The filing deadline is fast approaching for the May 3 Uniform Election in which Giddings and

Lexington residents will cast votes to fill seats on city councils and school boards.

Candidates interested in filling those spots have

See Signup, 4



LORI HAMFF-DIEZ



**NEW CONSTRUCTION** -- Despite dreary weather Tuesday morning, workers were steadily building a new home in the Buffalo Ridge subdivision in Giddings. The large truck with

the extension arm is shown preparing to pour concrete for the slab. This will be a 1,795 square foot home located at 142 Buffalo Ridge Drive. It is being built by Bonte Homes of College

Station for JAR Capital Investments LLC. Another new 2,087 square foot home will also be built right next door to it at 122 Buffalo Ridge Drive.

-- Times & News Photo

# OBITUARIES



**Ernest Edwin Beisert**

Funeral services for Ernest Beisert, 85 of Lincoln, Texas, are scheduled for 10:00 a.m. on Tuesday, February 4, 2025 at Christ Lutheran Church in Loebau, Texas with Rev. David Mumm officiating. Burial will follow in the church cemetery. Visitation will be held on Monday, February 3, 2025 from 11:00 a.m. until 8:00 p.m. and on Tuesday, February 4, 2025 from 7:00 a.m. until 8:00 a.m. at Phillips and Luckey Funeral Home in Giddings. The Beisert family will be present for visitation Monday evening from 5:00 p.m. until 7:00 p.m.

Ernest Edwin Beisert was born on December 13, 1939, in Lincoln, Texas, to Louis and Minnie (Hohle) Beisert. He was baptized on December 24, 1939, at Christ Lutheran Church in Loebau by Reverend Herbert Hartfield and was later confirmed at the same church on April 11, 1954. His memory verse was Genesis 15:1: "Fear not: I am thy shield and thy exceeding great reward."

Ernie attended school only through the eighth grade so he could help his family on the farm. As a teenager, he moved to Houston, where he worked alongside his brothers at a drywall company and played the accordion in a country music band with them. On September 9, 1961, he married Bernice Aline Reuther at Christ Lutheran Church in Loebau, with Reverend Herbert Hartfield officiating. Their 63-year marriage was blessed with two beautiful children, a son and a daughter.

Shortly after their wedding, Ernie and Bernice moved to Dallas, Texas, where Ernie continued his work in the drywall business. In 1967, they started their own company, Ernie's Drywall, which he managed until his retirement in 2004. During these years, Ernie enjoyed many hobbies, including dancing, fishing, camping, deer hunting, gardening, and coaching his daughter Pam's softball teams.

In 1985, Ernie and Bernice became instrumental in helping establish Cross of Christ Lutheran Church in DeSoto, Texas, serving on the task committee to bring the church to life. Throughout his life, Ernie was deeply devoted to his faith and served as a trustee at all three churches he attended—Grace Lutheran in Dallas, Cross of Christ Lutheran in DeSoto, and Christ Lutheran in Loebau—always offering his time and talents to serve the Lord in any way he could.

After retiring in 2004, Ernie and Bernice returned to Lee County, settling on her parents' farm. Ernie enjoyed life in the country, raising cattle, working at Iselt Concrete, making firewood, and mowing the church lawn, all with his brother-in-law, Leonard (Nucky). In his later years, one of his greatest joys was listening to polka and country music while shelling pecans.

Ernie passed away during the early morning hours of Saturday, January



**Herbert Kellar**

In loving memory of Herbert Lyle Kellar, 94 of Giddings, Texas, who passed away Monday, December 16, 2024, in Bastrop, Texas. The family invites you to join them celebrating Herb's life at a memorial service on Sunday, February 2, 2025, at 11:00 AM – 12:00 PM located at 1123 CR 229, Giddings, Texas 78942.

Herbert Lyle Kellar was born on March 30, 1930, in Detroit, Michigan to Guy Mark and Florence Irene (Beavnier) Kellar. Herbert attended Pershing High School in Detroit, Michigan and was a member of ROTC. After graduating, he joined Marine Air Control Squadron 24 (MACS-24), a unit of the US Marine Corps as a Sergeant specialized in aviation command and control, providing aerial surveillance during the Korean War. This led to his lifelong career in radio and satellite communications.

On August 30, 1950 he married Hazel Gene Kimball and shared 2 beautiful children together, Mark Alan and Vera Jean until Hazel's death February 12, 1976.

On May 6, 1977, he was united in marriage to Betty Jo Busse with Rev. Robert Koenig officiating at Immanuel Lutheran Church in Giddings. Together they shared 5 more beautiful children, James Anderson, Sharon Anderson Maass, Robert Anderson, Gail Anderson and Jasmine Kellar. Herbert and Betty also fostered hundreds of children over 4 decades. Herbert was very committed to his community and a life of public service. He could be found in his free time tinkering with electronics, fishing, collecting geodes, volunteering, or completing projects for his beloved wife.

Herbert passed away the evening of Monday, December 16, 2024 in Bastrop, Texas.

He was preceded in death by his parents, Guy and Florence; his first wife, Hazel Gene Kellar, and wife, Betty Jo Kellar; sons, Mark Alan Kellar,

25, 2025 at his home in Lincoln.

Ernie was preceded in death by his daughter, Pamela Edsall; parents, Louis and Minnie Beisert; parents-in-law, Richard and Meta Reuther; brothers, Willie Beisert and wife, Ruby, Marvin Beisert and wife, Charlene, Robert Beisert, Ruben Beisert and wife, Shirley, Alfred Beisert; sisters, Freida Schulze and husband, Walter, Elnora Medack and husband, Herbert, Clara Deal and husband, Rupert, Loraine Tatum and husband, Henry, Leona Schulze, Esther Exner and husband, Herbert, Grace Rackel and husband, Waldemar, Corine Iselt and husband, Eugene, Helen Beisert; brothers-in-law Warren Speaker, Joe Benignus, and Alfred Iselt.

Ernie is survived by his wife Bernice; son, Steven Beisert; grandchildren, Jessica Fulbright and husband, Jonathan,

## ARES

(FROM PAGE ONE)

"I talked to Colorado, North Florida, South Florida, East Pennsylvania, Iowa, and Tennessee," said Calvin Burnham. "If there were an emergency such as a hurricane, we could set up in a remote location and pass along information to our served agencies."

More than 640 contacts were ultimately made over the weekend by both groups, including points in Canada, Europe, Japan, and South America.

### When ARES helps

Marida Favia del Core Borromeo, Emergency Coordinator for Lee County ARES, explained that served agencies include the Office of Emergency Management, the emergency operation center at the Sheriff's Office, and other first responders.

"We can be the 'go-between' for Lee County and the state, another county, or another region -- depending on the emergency and how wide the area of the emergency," she said.

ARES comes into play when traditional radio and electricity are compromised. During a field day test, each ARES earns "points" for all successful tests and connections that are made, whether it's using analog radio, digital communications, or even Morse Code over the internet.

Williamson County ARES discovered that its backup power generator had issues and was creating errors with their equipment. Lee County ARES had some snags with Windows 10 keeping accurate time, and their brand-new antenna.

### Sun spots

"We're having some issues making contacts on it, and we don't know if it's the antenna or bandwidth conditions," said Tim Lee. "I live out by Ledbetter, and I have a station at home. Between there and here, it appears the antenna is working fine. It appears that it's just really bad propagation today."

"The signals bounce off

James Eugene Anderson, Jr., and Robert Loyd Anderson; daughter, Gail Yvone Anderson; siblings, Geraldine Eva Kellar, Francis Mark Kellar, and Grover Laurence Kellar.

Herbert is survived by his children, Lt Col Vera Kellar of Colorado, Sharon Maass and her fiancé Tommy Lara of Giddings, and Jasmine Kellar of Houston; daughters-in-law Sharon Anderson of Burton and Rita Henke of Fredericksburg; 10 grandchildren; 19 great grandchildren; and 1 great-great grandchild.

Memorials may be made to Divinity Hospice at 300 Joe DiMaggio Blvd, Ste 40, Bldg 11, Round Rock, Texas 78665 or Children's Advocacy Center at 59 TX-150 Loop, Bastrop, Texas.

Caitlin Pickard and husband, Kyle; brothers, Alvin Beisert and wife, Ruth; sisters, Gladys Iselt, Elna Moerbe and husband, Gene, and Janette Benignus; sisters-in-law, Lorene Speaker, Alice Beisert, Betty Beisert; brother-in-law, Leonard Reuther and wife Bernice; as well as numerous nieces, nephews, other relatives and friends.

Memorials may be made to the Christ Lutheran Church Memorial Fund in Loebau, Lutheran Hour Ministries, or to the charity of one's choice.

Arrangements by Phillips and Luckey Funeral Home in Giddings.

the ionosphere at different times of the day," interjected Burnham. The ionosphere could be higher or lower, and it also changes to absorb instead of reflect. And if there's a solar flare, that can affect things."

### Find high ground

If an emergency, the mobile ARES trailer would likely seek out the highest ground possible to ensure signals have the best chance of getting out.

The tallest area is a "mountain" near Highways 77 and 21.

In addition to the new signal repeater inside the trailer, Lee County ARES has two other repeaters -- one is located on the 400-foot tower at the Sheriff's Office, and the other is on a tower in Lincoln.

A repeater takes a local signal that someone will transmit, and rebroadcast it on a different frequency at a much further distance. "Let's say you have a repeater on a mountaintop," said Lee. "You might not be able to get over the mountain, going directly, but you could by going through the repeater. It just bounces and re-broadcasts that signal to the other person."

"The useful distance for that repeater is probably about a mile-and-a-half to two miles on the current antenna on the trailer," Lee continued. "If we put this trailer on mountaintop somewhere, or in a location which has a much higher elevation, it can go 20 to 30 miles. We hook it up to a 100-foot tower, we're probably looking at 30 to 40 miles coverage."

### Emergency weather

Local ARES have sprung into action several times over the past few years. Jim Kinter of Williamson County ARES, who participated in last weekend's Winter Field Day, explained that he is a "net controller" during emergencies. He essentially acts as a "dispatcher" or a central point of contact, coordinating the flow of information.

"Everybody will get onto a Repeater and call in reports of severe weather like hail, tornadoes, and flooding," he explained. "Net Control will take it and log it. Whenever I hear something bad, I log into the National Weather Service chat, and copy and paste it into the chat. Then all of the meteorologists, the Weather Service -- everyone who's on the chat -- can see what I just sent. The information is disseminated to a large group."

"The big hale storm that came down I-35 two years ago and hit Round Rock, I was Net Control on that one," Kinter said. "Whenever I'd hear golf ball-sized hail was coming down at a new location,

I'd post that. For example, down in New Braunfels, they can't see it. They have radar tracking, but we're giving them boots-on-the-ground information. They can then track the progress of the storm -- how bad it is, and which way it's going."

### Life savers

Lee County ARES has also been very active. "In Winter Storm Uri, we exchanged 1,236 messages over six days, 24 hours a day," said Borromeo. "Most of us did not have power, so we were using either batteries or the solar generator. But people were able to also hear just announcements. For example, like water is going short, and fill up your tubs."

"There were power lines going down, and people would say, 'I'm dark,' so we would call the public utility," Borromeo continues. "They'd say thank you and go repair it."

"We helped find insulin for a couple who needed it," she recalled. "I was one of the operators. Some of us had internet connection, so we were able to find a pharmacy that was the closest. We called and asked, 'Can you open, this couple needs insulin?' They said, 'If they can get here, yes.'"

Local ARES has saved more than one life during emergency conditions. "There were two people who were stranded," she noted. "One was an older man after a surgery, and one was a grandma. They couldn't move, and we were able to find loved ones or people to go and get them."

### Easily accessed

It is important to note that any member of the public can buy a portable hand-held shortwave radio to hear such broadcasts by ARES and other amateur operators.

"You can find them on Amazon for \$25," says Borromeo. "You can't speak on our frequencies, but everybody can take a scanner and hear us."

### Investigation for stolen bicycle

A local resident called the Lee County Sheriff's Office on Tuesday, Jan. 14 to report a bicycle was stolen from a residence on CR 217 in the Northrup area. A deputy spoke with the complainant.

### School bus broken down on FM 112

Lee County sheriff's deputies were dispatched to FM 112 on Tuesday, Jan. 14 to assist with traffic control for a Lexington ISD school bus that was down for maintenance.

### Happy volunteers

Everyone who participates in ARES does so on a volunteer basis, since there are no salaries. People volunteer because they enjoy it. "You never know what you're going to hear when you turn the dial," Calvin Burnham said. "You could hear something across the county, or something in Europe."

During Winter Field Day, Jim Kinter was running around the Fireman's Park campground with a portable antenna, trying to make contact with the International Space Station as its orbit carried it right over the area.

Kinter was very excited about the opportunity to talk to the astronauts, who are known to carry on conversations with amateur radio operators. Doing so will get that ARES unit "extra points" during Field Day. Unfortunately, the station did not respond on Saturday's attempt, probably because the astronauts (who operate on Russian time) had already retired or fallen asleep for the night.

Borromeo says the next step for Lee County ARES is becoming more involved with the Giddings Police Department. "We have not started yet. They are interested if we want to bring our radios there and help them out," she indicated.

*Brenham* *Dermatology*

**Mary McClean, MD, FAAD**  
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## LEE COUNTY REQUEST FOR BID ROAD MATERIAL (6 MONTHS) FOR ROAD & BRIDGE PRECINCTS

Lee County will be accepting Road Material sealed bids for the Road & Bridge Precincts. The six-month bid includes: Cold Mix, Hot Mix, Emulsions, SS-1, CRS-2, and CRS-2H. Bid packets may be picked up at the Lee County Judge's Office; Lee County Annex (Bldg. B), 898 E. Richmond Street, Room 107, Giddings, Texas 78942; on the county website, [www.co.lee.tx.us](http://www.co.lee.tx.us) or by calling (979) 542-3178. Bids must be submitted in a sealed envelope clearly marked, "ROAD MATERIAL BID - 6 MONTHS" and mailed to the Lee County Clerk's Office, P.O. Box 419, Giddings, Texas 78942, or delivered to 843 East Industry, Giddings, Texas 78942 by 4:00 p.m., Friday, February 21, 2025. Bids will be opened during the 10:00 a.m. Commissioners' Court on Monday, February 24, 2025 and are scheduled for award during the 10:00 a.m. March 10, 2025 Commissioners' Court.



**INSIDE OPERATIONS** -- Lee County ARES team members Tim Lee (upper left), Marida Favia del Core Borromeo (center), and Calvin Burnham operate the radio equipment inside the ARES mobile unit trailer. During the Winter Field Day exercise, the team contacted other emergency operators using different methods. ARES teams have been put into use during hurricanes and ice storms to provide the National Weather Service with the latest updates.



**NEWEST ADDITION** -- Lee County ARES Emergency Coordinator Marida Favia del Core Borromeo stands next to a brand new Repeater device recently installed in the ARES trailer. The Repeater picks up local radio signals and rebroadcasts them on different frequencies at a much further distance. On a high vantage point, a signal could be boosted 20 to 30 miles.

**Solid win for Buffs against Smithville**

The Giddings Buffaloes varsity boys basketball team hosted the Smithville Tigers in the final district game of the first round last Friday night. The Buffs came out strong and took a 34-7 halftime lead, then continued the process as they took a 66-19 win. Brandon Burgdorf scored 22 points, while Ryan Orocio and Ramzi Awad each added 12. The win puts the Buffs, 6-16 overall and 2-3 in district, in 4th place at the halfway point behind La Grange, Navasota and Bellville. "This was a solid win for us. Smithville is down this year, and we came out and established control early. We did what we were supposed to do," said GHS Coach Neal Majewski.

**Giddings ISD (Category One Service)**  
 Is seeking E-Rate services for E-Rate Funding  
 (July 1, 2025 - June 30, 2026)  
 All interested vendors please visit:  
<https://portal.usac.org/suite/Form 470 Application Number: 250001246>  
 Please see RFP at  
<https://erate.esc12.net/R12/>



**SPACE RADIO PALS** -- Jim Kinter of Cedar Park helped Lee County ARES participate in last weekend's world-wide Winter Field Day exercise. Using a handheld antenna, Kinter attempted to contact the International Space Station as it flew over Fireman's Park during its orbit. Though the astronauts often talk to ARES operators, they did not on Saturday. The station is on Russian time, so they may have been asleep.

**Two vehicles in crash on Hwy 77**

There were no injuries reported in a two-vehicle accident Sunday, Jan. 19 at 3:20 p.m. Involved in the collision were a 2024 Ford Escape driven by Patrick Michael Howland, 33, of Cameron, and a 2023 Buick Enclave sedan driven by Andrew Maxwell Rorschach, 56, of Schulenburg. The Escape was stopped at a stop sign on the exit ramp off Hwy 21 when the driver failed to yield the right-of-way and collided with the Enclave, which was traveling south on Hwy 77, said DPS Trooper Shane Cappelletti. The front of the Escape struck the right side of the Enclave, according to the trooper. Howland was issued a citation for Failure to Yield Right of Way at Stop Sign.

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