



# Benbrook News

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*From the City of Benbrook*

## **Christmas Tree Lighting and Fireworks Show Saturday**

The Benbrook 33rd Annual Christmas Tree Lighting and Fireworks Show will be held Saturday, Dec. 14 at 7 p.m., at Dutch Branch Park.

*Benbrook Council Action by John English*

## **Dec. 5 Meeting Review**

The Benbrook City Council meeting was held on Dec. 5 as scheduled. Mayor Jason Ward called the meeting to order and announced that this meeting would be the first ever in the new city hall building. An invocation was followed by the Pledge of Allegiance. Time was then allowed for citizen comments on any agenda item, but there were none.

The minutes for the meeting held on Nov. 21 were then approved unanimously.

The first item of the evening was a public discussion of the Floodplain Management Report. FEMA provides the data and the City of Benbrook determines the effectiveness of the flood insurance projects. Benbrook currently has 1,235 properties within the floodplain and 302 have insurance policies. The City of Benbrook will continue to provide flood insurance outreach in the form of mailings, the city web site and social media, and the plan will be reassessed every five years.

Storm water-related Capital Improvement Projects in the 2024 report include a storm water system evaluation, which began in 2022 and will be completed in 2025, im- (continued on page 3)

*From the Benbrook Public Library*

## **10th Annual Holly Jolly Celebration Saturday**

You are cordially invited to the 10th annual Holly Jolly celebration at the Library on Saturday, Dec. 14 from 10:30 a.m. to 3 p.m. Experience a variety of winter entertainment, sip hot cocoa, connect with your community, and create memories with your family at this free event!

*From the Sports Desk with John English*

## **Basketball: Bobcat Teams Face Losses, Cougar Teams Gain Wins**

The Benbrook girls basketball team came up short against Hallsville last Thursday, and coach Leta Lofton said the Lady Cats needed that type of game to get ready for the rigors of 8-4A competition.

“The Hallsville game was a tough one,” Lofton said. “Even so, we are using this Pine Tree Tournament as a preparation for district.”

Lofton said she did have a couple of stand out performances in the game.

“Grace Klaerner continues to lead the team in the offensive department,” Lofton said. “Having Gianna Lucero back from pneumonia in the point guard role also helps us tremendously.”

Benbrook starts district this coming week, and Lofton said she feels the non-district schedule has done a good job of getting her team ready for district competition.

“I feel that the losses we had in the past were against top-rated teams,” Lofton said. “We are confident that the plan set in place will boost our confidence and game during district play.”

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Over at Western Hills, the Lady Cougars defeated Castleberry by a score of 25-16 on Saturday.

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On the boy's side, Benbrook lost to Brock by a score of 58-35 last week and coach Blake Mendez said he was well-aware heading in that his team would have their work cut out.

“Brock was a really good test for us to see where we are in our development this year,” Mendez said. “They are always a powerhouse in basketball. I thought our defense was solid, we just couldn't get enough shots to fall to keep it close late. Sophomore guard Cael Denson had a great game and tournament,” Mendez said. “We knew he could play as a freshman, but he's starting to get used to the pace of the varsity game and will really contribute this year.”

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Over at Western Hills, the Cougars defeated Trimble Tech by a score of 63-25 on Saturday.

## Gift Wrapping Tonight!

For those who need time and space to do holiday gift wrapping away from prying eyes, the Library is offering the space to wrap!

Wrapping days will be held Thursday, Dec. 12 and Tuesday, Dec. 17 from 4:30 to 7:30 p.m., the Library will provide wrapping paper, tape, scissors, and ribbon to help make your presents sparkle. For more information, visit [benbrooklibrary.org](http://benbrooklibrary.org), or call the Benbrook Public Library at 817-249-6632.

From the City of Benbrook

## Holiday Trash Collection and Recycling Schedule

Republic Services is adjusting trash and recycling collection dates for the holidays.

Trash and recycling service for Christmas will be moved to Thursday, Dec. 26. Service normally provided on Wednesdays will shift to Thursday, Jan. 2, 2025, due to the New Years holiday.

The bulk pick-up schedule is not affected by these holiday changes.

For more information, contact Republic Services Customer Service at 817-332-7301.

### Legal Notice

Application has been made with the Texas Alcohol Beverage Commission for a BG Wine and Malt Beverage Retail Dealers on-premise by Family Pho Restaurant LLC dba Pho House Asian Kitchen, to be located at 9400 Clifford St. Suite 130, Fort Worth, TX 76108 - Tarrant County Texas. Officers of said corporation Family Pho Restaurant LLC are Ky Lam - Owner.



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## Council Action (continued from page 1)

provement to drainage at Dutch Branch Park and the Timberline Drainage Project and Cedar Creek Town home Project. The goals are to reduce flood losses and increase the policy count, continue to attend NFIP/CRS users meetings and continue to develop a City-wide disaster team. The City also wants to ensure flood insurance rate maps are updated and maintained, to acquire, elevate and relocate structure in flood prone areas, improve the city's CRS rating and design, construct and maintain drainage improvement projects.

The next item of the evening was a motion to approve the finance report for the period ending Oct. 31. Revenues for the general fund for the month of October totaled \$862,609 and expenditures totaled \$1,968,307. Revenues for the Economic Development Corporation for the month of October totaled \$213,854 and expenditures totaled \$29,369. Investments for the City of Benbrook totaled \$30,296,594 and investments for the EDC totaled \$6,515,703.

The finance report was accepted unanimously.

Next was a proposal to consider approval of the 51st Year Community Development Block Grant (CDBG) followed by a public hearing. The application for the project is due Dec. 20, must benefit low or moderate-income residents and eligible projects include public facilities and improvements, removal of architectural barriers and rehabilitation and preservation activities. Tarrant County indicated that there were four residences on the list and there is no cost to the residents of Benbrook or the city. A public hearing followed, but there were no comments.

The proposal was accepted unanimously.

The next agenda item was to consider adoption of an update on the Capital Improvements Program. The updates for 2024-25 would be a storm drain condition assessment, Cedar Creek Town homes and Timberline Drainage project and a low water crossing design (replacing culverts). For fiscal year 2025-26, updates would include low water crossing construction (replacing culverts) and a Plantation East channel.

The revised Capital Improvements Program was approved unanimously.

Time was then allowed for informal citizen comments, and resident Lynette Spence, dressed as Mrs. Claus approached the podium. She said she loved the new building, and brought her chief elf with her to keep her out of trouble. She then invited everyone to come and see a Christmas fireworks display, which will be held at 7:30 p.m. on Saturday Dec. 14 at Dutch Branch Park.

Resident Jim Wilson then approached the podium and praised the building and commended the council members and staff for their work to build "such a great facility."

Time was then allowed for council member and staff comments, and Renee Franklin clarified information about a picture-taking event last week.

Ward then expressed his gratitude for all the work that has gone into preparing for the new building over the last seven years.

The meeting was then adjourned.

From the North Central Texas Council of Governments

## 511DFW Phone App Offers Timely Travel Information

As the population in Dallas-Fort Worth continues to grow, so does the need for dependable and accurate travel information. Since the 2017 launch, the North Central Texas Council of Governments' (NCTCOG) free trip-planning mobile app and website, 511DFW, have helped residents and visitors alike with real-time information on traffic and transit routes.

An extension of the 511 phone number, which provides callers information about highway travel conditions, the 511DFW app and website are intended to help travelers make better decisions about their mode of transportation, time of travel and route.

Both the app and website have undergone recent upgrades that have made them more helpful to local travelers. The website now includes updated information about traffic speeds, electric vehicle charging stations, bike paths and toll lane facilities. Additionally, users can now view traffic camera snapshots. Users of the app can request roadside assistance, report transportation issues such as potholes, and access routes and services from other local agencies.

The travel data fueling 511DFW comes from other apps, such as Google Maps, Waze and Apple Maps; local municipalities provide event and traffic data.

A new location-based roadside assistance feature, available to travelers on highways and toll roads only, allows users to connect with an agency that can best address their needs, whether they run out of gas or have a flat tire.

An email account is required to sign up to use the app or website, and signing up takes less than a minute.

Mindhop, a New York-based software development company, built the new 511DFW website and designed the mobile app.

The app is available for both iOS and Android devices in English and Spanish.

For more information, visit [www.511dfw.org](http://www.511dfw.org).

From 4PAWS & Benbrook Animal Shelter

## Reba is Available for Adoption



This is **Reba**, a one year old shepherd mix who is super friendly and smart. She weighs 42 pounds and is already learning commands! She is available for adoption at the Benbrook Animal Shelter, located at 469 Winscott Road. Adoption hours are Tuesday, Wednesday, Friday and Sunday from 11 a.m. to 3 p.m., and 10 a.m. to 2 p.m. on Saturday.

Visit [www.4pawsinc.org](http://www.4pawsinc.org) or call 4 PAWS volunteers, Ursula at 817-262-3086 or Lynda at 682-279-0760, to get more information about any dogs available for adoption.

From the Benbrook Senior Citizen Center

## Senior News

Winter is here, and the Benbrook Senior Citizen Center has plenty of exciting indoor activities to keep seniors warm and entertained. The Senior Citizens Center hosts a Senior Dance on the fourth Friday of every month from 7 to 9 p.m.

Seniors are also invited to participate in the other activities, such as: Bridge on Mondays and Thursdays at 9 a.m.; Canasta on Thursdays at 9 a.m.; Chair Yoga on Thursdays from 11 a.m. to noon; Dominoes 42 on Tuesdays and Fridays at 9 a.m.; Hand and Foot daily at 9 a.m.; Mexican Train Dominoes on Tuesdays and Thursdays at 1 p.m.; and Spinners Dominoes on Fridays at 9 a.m.

The monthly calendar is posted on the Benbrook Senior Citizens Center Facebook page.

For more information, call the Benbrook Senior Citizens Center at 817-249-6300.



From the Alzheimer's Foundation of America

## High School Seniors Impacted by Alzheimer's Invited to Apply for AFA's Teen Alzheimer's Awareness Scholarship

The Alzheimer's Foundation of America (AFA) is offering scholarships of up to \$5,000 to college-bound high school seniors affected by Alzheimer's disease or other dementia-related illnesses as part of its annual Teen Alzheimer's Awareness Scholarship. Entries can be submitted at [www.alzfdn.org/scholarship](http://www.alzfdn.org/scholarship) and must be received by Saturday, March 1 at 5 pm (eastern time).

Eligible teens are invited to apply for the scholarship by submitting an essay, 1,500 words maximum, or submitting a video no more than four minutes long describing how Alzheimer's disease has impacted their lives, what they have learned about themselves, their family and/or their community through their experience with Alzheimer's, and how they plan to advocate or raise awareness in the future.

Examples of ways that Alzheimer's impacted a student's life can include:

- Having a loved one with Alzheimer's disease or another dementia-related illness
- Helping care for someone with Alzheimer's disease or another dementia-related illness
- Volunteering or working in a care setting that serves individuals with dementia
- Raising Alzheimer's awareness in their school or community
- Conducting Alzheimer's research

The program is open to current high school seniors living in the United States who will be attending a U.S. college or university

From National Crime Prevention Council

## Seniors Can Stop Scammers

Financial fraud can be difficult to recognize and can include identity theft, fake check and wire transfer scams, investment and credit card fraud, and bogus online charitable solicitations.

**The National Crime Prevention Council offers the following tips:**

- It's shrewd, not rude to hang up on a suspicious telemarketer.
- Don't give personal information to people you don't know unless you initiated the contact.
- Don't let yourself get pressured into a verbal agreement or signing a contract.
- Be skeptical of online charitable solicitations and other online offers. If interested, ask to receive the information in the mail and check to be sure the company is legitimate.
- Never agree to pay for products or services in advance.
- Get estimates and ask for references on home repair offers and other products or services.

If you suspect fraud, contact your local law enforcement agency immediately. To learn more about protecting yourself from financial fraud, visit the [National Crime Prevention website](https://www.nccpc.org/).



From the National Fire Protection Association

# NFPA Urges Added Caution: Christmas Day and Christmas Eve Among Leading Days for U.S. Home Fires

Many hallmarks of the holiday season, including Christmas trees, holiday decorations, and festive meals present potential fire hazards that contribute to an annual increase in U.S. home fires at this time of year. According to the National Fire Protection Association (NFPA), Christmas Day and Christmas Eve are among the leading days of the year for home fires.

“December is a leading month for home fires, in large part because many of the activities we engage in during the holiday season reflect leading causes of home fires year-round,” said Lorraine Carli, NFPA vice president of Outreach and Advocacy. “Plus, as colder temperatures impact much of the country, use of heating equipment increases significantly.”

Fortunately, Carli notes, the majority of winter fires can be prevented with a little added awareness and planning.

“By knowing where potential fire hazards exist and taking some basic safety precautions to prevent them, people can enjoy a festive, fire-free holiday season,” said Carli.

The [NFPA Winter Holidays page](#) offers a wide variety of tips and resources to reduce the risk of fires, while the latest NFPA statistics underscore the increased risk of fire during the holiday season and beyond:

## Christmas Trees

- An estimated average of 160 home fires involving Christmas trees caused two civilian deaths, 11 civilian injuries, and \$12 million in direct property damage per year between 2016 and 2020.

- Some type of electrical distribution or lighting equipment, including decorative lights, was involved in more than two of five (44 percent) of home Christmas tree fires. Nearly one in five Christmas tree fires (19 percent) were started by decorative lights.

- The majority (74 percent) of Christmas tree fires occur in December and January.

## Decorations

- An estimated average of 790 home fires that began when decorations (other than Christmas trees) caught fire caused an average of one civilian death, 26 civilian injuries and \$13 million in direct property damage per year between 2015 and 2019.

- One in five home decoration fires occurred in December.
- Year-round, 35 percent of home decoration fires began with candles; in December, the number jumped to 45 percent.

- In more than two of every five fires (44 percent) involving decorations, the decoration was too close to a heat source such as a candle, cooking or heating equipment.

## Candles

- An estimated average of 7,400 home fires (2 percent) started by candles caused an average of 90 civilian deaths (three percent), 670 civilian injuries (6 percent), and \$291 million (4 percent) in direct property damage per year between 2015 and 2019.

- Candle fires peak in December and January with 11 percent

of candle fires in each of these months.

- In three of every five candle fires, the candle was too close to something that could catch fire.

- Christmas is the peak day for candle fires with roughly 2.5 times the daily average; Christmas Eve ranked second.

- Falling asleep was a factor in 10 percent of the home candle fires and 12 percent of the associated deaths.

## Cooking

- Cooking is the leading cause of reported home fires (49 percent) and home fire injuries and the second-leading cause of home fire deaths.

- Unattended cooking is the leading cause of home cooking fires.

- Thanksgiving is the peak day for home cooking fires, followed by Christmas Day and Christmas Eve.

Fires caused by heating equipment, the second-leading cause of U.S. home fires year-round, peak during the winter months, when temperatures drop and more people use heating equipment to keep their homes warm. Put a Freeze on Winter Fires, an annual NFPA campaign with the U.S. Fire Administration (USFA), works to educate the public about ways to stay safe during the colder months, offering tip sheets and other resources to help reduce the risk of heating fires and other winter hazards.

About the National Fire Protection Association® (NFPA®)

*Founded in 1896, NFPA is a global self-funded nonprofit organization devoted to eliminating death, injury, property and economic loss due to fire, electrical and related hazards. The association delivers information and knowledge through more than 300 consensus codes and standards, research, training, education, outreach and advocacy; and by partnering with others who share an interest in furthering the NFPA mission. For more information, visit [www.nfpa.org](http://www.nfpa.org). All NFPA codes and standards can be viewed online for free at [www.nfpa.org/freeaccess](http://www.nfpa.org/freeaccess).*

The offices of Suburban Newspapers, Inc. will close for the holidays from Monday, Dec. 23 through Friday, Dec. 27, and Wednesday, Jan. 1.

**There will be no newspapers on Dec. 26.**

The deadline to appear in the Jan. 2 digital publications is Friday, Dec. 20 at 4 p.m.

The office will reopen Monday, Dec. 30 at 10 a.m.

Texas History Minute, by Dr. Ken Bridges

# American General, Engineer, and Author - Henry M. Robert

Galveston, once the most important port city in Texas, suffered a crushing blow with the hurricane of 1900.

Once the waters receded and the extent of the damage became clear, the city faced the overwhelming task of rebuilding.

One of the most important tasks, surviving residents decided, was to ensure that such a disaster never repeated itself. This meant the construction of a seawall along the coast to shield the city from the full fury of future storms. To design the wall and oversee its construction, Galveston recruited a team of the best engineers they could find, led by one of the most respected names in engineering at the time, Gen. **Henry Martyn Robert**.

How so many people died in the 1900 hurricane was never fully established. Some fled the devastation in the days afterward, and many others were washed out to sea, their fates never to be known.

As many as 8,000 people were dead, and just as many were left homeless. The entire city was in ruins. The city was unable to function, and the government effectively collapsed. Once order was restored under a new commission form of government, the first in the nation, the city began the work of constructing the seawall, which would require tremendous effort and imagination. The city turned to Gen. Henry M. Robert, who readily accepted the task.

Robert was born on the Atlantic coast on the southern tip of South Carolina in 1837. His father, a preacher, educator, and president of Morehouse College, was an outspoken abolitionist and left South Carolina because of his stands. The younger Robert grew up in Ohio and was nominated to the U.S. Military Academy at West Point in 1853. His grades at West Point were excellent as he studied engineering. He graduated in 1857 with a commission as a lieutenant.

The Army Corps of Engineers was responsible for not only building military fortifications but also river and port improvements, bridge construction, and even military railroad construction. His position had him traveling often. Among his first assignments was building fortifications near Vancouver, British Columbia, in 1859 as a border dispute between Great Britain and the U.S. threatened to escalate. This incident was known as the "Pig War" as a war nearly began due to an argument between an American and Irish farmer, over a pig in a garden.

Matters much more serious would dominate the next stage in his career. During the Civil War, he helped design, build, and maintain defensive fortifications for Washington, DC, and Philadelphia. He



also helped improve defenses for New England ports against any possible surprise Confederate attack.

After the war, he worked on river improvements in Washington and Oregon as Engineer for the Division of the Pacific. He would spend six years afterward working on improving harbors for Wisconsin and Michigan along the Great Lakes. Later, he would help build a series of locks and dams on the Tennessee and Cumberland rivers to help barge traffic and help control flooding.

Robert was used to the order of military briefings and the chain of command, but he was inexperienced with civilian crowds. Presiding over a meeting over harbor improvements for the city of New Bedford, Mass., at First Baptist Church in 1876, the meeting disintegrated into a screaming match. He immediately researched parliamentary procedures to make sure future meetings would run more smoothly. After researching protocols in Congress and the state legislatures, he wrote a book that eventually became known around the world as "*Robert's Rules of Order*."

In 1895, Robert became part of the Board of Engineers, a group of officers who oversaw the Corps of Engineers, leading the board until 1901. It was here that he studied ways to possibly deepen the southern end of the Mississippi River to improve traffic. In his final act in his long army career, he was promoted to Chief of Engineers in April 1901. He would serve for three days before retiring after 48 years in the army.

Galveston invited him in 1901 to head a board of engineers to design and build the new seawall that included Alfred Noble and H.C. Ripley. The city, county, and state would all pitch in on financing. The wall would be built on wood pilings and concrete, designs Robert carefully examined. But the seawall was not enough, Robert and the other engineers realized. The city itself needed to be raised. Every building in the city was raised eight feet, building by building and block by block with whatever dirt, sand, and debris was available. All of this was done by hand. In October 1902, construction on the first mile of the seawall began. By July 1904, the seawall ran for 3.3 miles along the Gulf Coast at a height of 17 feet.

The city's first major test was the 1915 hurricane. A storm at least as powerful as the disastrous 1900 storm scored a direct hit, but the areas behind the seawall faced little damage. The seawall worked, and Galveston became a major tourist destination again by the 1920s. Robert died at his home in western New York in May 1923 at age 86.

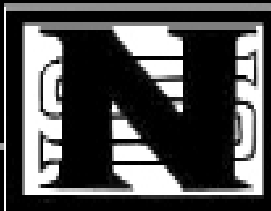
In the meantime, "*Robert's Rules of Order*" has become the standard rules for holding meetings across the United States and many nations around the world for civic clubs, schools, and even government meetings.

Between 1904 and 1963, the seawall was extended even further, ultimately running ten miles. Discussions on improving the sea wall have circulated in the community for several years.

The beach has faced problems from erosion and increasingly powerful hurricanes. In spite of a century of hurricanes, the wall has continued to keep the city safe from the deadliest storms from the sea.



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## Weekend Forecast



### Friday, Dec. 13:

**AM** - Cloudy, with a high near 66. S/SE wind around 15 mph, with gusts as high as 30 mph.  
**PM** - A slight chance of showers. Mostly cloudy, with a low around 52. S/SE wind 10 to 15 mph becoming W/SW after midnight. Winds could gust as high as 20 mph. Chance of precipitation is 20%.



### Saturday, Dec. 14:

**AM** - Mostly sunny, with a high near 66. W/SW wind 5 to 10 mph becoming north in the afternoon.  
**PM** - Mostly clear, with a low around 42. North wind around 5 mph becoming east after midnight.



### Sunday, Dec. 15:

**AM** - Mostly sunny, with a high near 68. S/SE wind 5 to 10 mph.  
**PM** - A 20% chance of showers and thunderstorms after midnight. Mostly cloudy, with a low around 55.

**Extended Forecast [Click Here](#)**