Serving the Cities of River Oaks and Westworth Village

River Oaks News

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86th Year, No.51 • 7820 Wyatt Drive, White Settlement, Texas 76108 • suburban-newspapers.com • January 1, 2026

Suburban Newspapers, Inc. Enters 86th Year Serving Local Voices

Suburban Newspapers, Inc. is turning the page on its 86th year of community journalism, continuing a legacy rooted in local voices, hometown pride and the belief that small-town news still matters.

Founded nearly nine decades ago, Suburban Newspapers, Inc. (SNI) publishes three digital community newspapers: the *White Settlement Bomber News*, the *River Oaks News* and the *Benbrook News*. Together, the publications provide consistent coverage of city government, schools, public safety, local sports, community events and the everyday moments that define life in these cities.

In addition to reporting on municipal news in their namesake communities, the publications cover athletics and activities from the White Settlement Independent School District, Fort Worth Independent School District and Castleberry Independent School District, ensuring families, students and residents stay connected to the people and institutions shaping the future.

At a time when many local newspapers across the country have shuttered or gone behind paywalls, SNI has remained committed to free access. Each weekly edition is available at no cost to readers, and residents are encouraged to sign up for a free subscription to have the latest issue delivered to their email inbox every Thursday.

That accessibility, SNI staff members say, is intentional.

"Our goal has always been to make sure everyone can stay informed, and that our local advertisers have a dependable and affordable source to compete against larger entities," said SNI bookeeper, Vee Horn.

While the publications are free to read, SNI relies on advertising partnerships with local businesses to sustain operations. The company offers competitive advertising packages designed for small businesses and organizations looking to reach neighbors who live, shop and spend locally.

For 2026, advertising rates were adjusted for the first time in a decade, increasing by just $1 per column inch, a modest change aimed at keeping pace with rising costs while remaining affordable for community partners.

Behind each edition is a very small staff, supported by a network of readers, organizations and community members who submit photos, announcements, sports scores and story tips. That collaboration, SNI says, is essential to accurately reflecting the communities it serves.

"We rely on the people who live here," staff writer Denise Honeycutt said. "They are our storytellers and our greatest resource."

As SNI enters the new year, the mission remains unchanged: to strengthen community spirit, support local economies and preserve the stories that might otherwise be lost. From championship seasons to council decisions and milestone celebrations, local newspapers serve as living records, archives that future generations will look back on to understand where they came from.

In small towns, those stories matter.

"Local newspapers are more than headlines," Editor in Chief, Emily Moxley said. "They are memory keepers, community connectors and a cornerstone of thriving local economies."

With nearly a century behind it and a new year ahead, Suburban Newspapers, Inc. continues to prove that community journalism, fueled by local pride and shared stories, still has a vital place in the digital age.

From Suburban Newspapers Staff Writers

River Oaks Water Plant Resumes Full Operations Following State Approval

The River Oaks Water Plant has returned to full operation after receiving authorization from the Texas Commission on Environmental Quality (TCEQ), city officials recently announced.

TCEQ approved the facility to resume full operations after determining it meets the minimum requirements of Title 30 of the Texas Administrative Code, Chapter 290, which governs public water systems. The approval became effective Dec. 12.

With the authorization in place, the city is no longer receiving water from Fort Worth and is now operating entirely on River Oaks' municipal water supply, officials said.

City leaders credited water plant operators and project consultants for their work to bring the facility back into compliance.

The River Oaks Water Plant provides drinking water to residents and businesses throughout the city and operates under state oversight to ensure public health and safety.

Officials said the return to full operations reflects months of coordination, testing and regulatory compliance.

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Suburban Newspapers, Inc.

~ Veteran Owned ~

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These newspapers are published and delivered digitally every Thursday.

Deadlines are Friday at 4 p.m., prior to the following Thursday's edition.

The publisher/editor reserves the right to reject or edit all copy submitted for publication. Advertising and Letters to the Editor do not necessarily reflect the opinions, editorial policies or beliefs of the Publisher, Managing Editor or staff of Suburban Newspapers, Inc.

• ***All Letters to the Editor*** must not be over 250 words, and include the author's name, address and phone number. *Only the name will be included.*

• ***Engagement Announcements*** must be published four weeks prior to the wedding. ***Wedding Announcements*** have a 350 word limit. ***Anniversaries*** are limited to 150 words.

• ***Obituaries*** are limited to 250 words and cost $100.

Mistakes in stories or ads must be reported by Friday at 4 p.m. following Thursday's edition for corrections. Payment for advertising is due by 10 a.m. Monday.

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From CASA of Tarrant County

CASA of Tarrant County Looking for Volunteers

CASA (Court Appointed Special Advocates) of Tarrant County is an organization of volunteer advocates who stand up on behalf of abused and neglected children.

The Children We Serve

Each year, thousands of children in Tarrant County are confirmed victims of child abuse and neglect. These children have experienced terrible trauma, and their lives are turned upside down. Child Protective Services takes legal responsibility for them, and may place them in a foster home or other facility. Due to too few foster homes, siblings are often split up into different places. Children are rarely able to stay in their own schools, day cares, or communities. Everything they have known is gone. Through no fault of their own, these abused children have become a part of an overburdened child welfare system. They deserve a voice in the courtroom. They need a CASA volunteer.

Our Volunteers

CASA of Tarrant County has over 300 active volunteers who come from all walks of life. They span all age ranges. Some are just beginning in the workforce, and others are retired. Over half our volunteers work full-time and have families. Some have backgrounds in the criminal justice system, social work, or child welfare. Other volunteers have no such experience at all.

The History

In 1977, a Seattle Superior Court Judge named David Soukup was concerned about trying to make decisions on behalf of abused and neglected children without enough information. He conceived the idea of appointing community volunteers to speak up for the best interests of these children in court. He made a request for volunteers; 50 citizens responded, and that was the start of the CASA movement. In 1983, Judge Scott Moore, presiding judge of the 323rd Judicial District at that time, along with community volunteers Rhoda Bernstein and Monna Loftis, and CPS Director Wayne Hairgrove, formed the original steering committee that brought the CASA concept to Tarrant County.

Through the years, CASA of Tarrant County has shown consistent growth in the number of children served each year. The ultimate goal is to provide every child in foster care who needs one with a highly trained CASA volunteer. CASA of Tarrant County provides an unduplicated service in our community. Our program is highly respected within the judicial system and maintains an excellent working relationship with all parties associated with the legal process. Additionally, CASA of Tarrant County is an affiliate in good standing with both National CASA Association and Texas CASA.

For more information, or to apply to become a CASA Volunteer, visit the CASA website: https://www.speakupforachild.org.

From Suburban Newspapers Staff Writers

White Settlement Public Library to Host "Movies at the Library" Screening Jan. 17

The White Settlement Public Library will host a family-friendly movie screening as part of its ongoing "Movies at the Library" program.

The library, located at 8215 White Settlement Road, will show *Lilo & Stitch* (2025) at 11 a.m. Saturday, Jan. 17. The event is open to the public and will take place inside the library.

The movie series is designed to provide free entertainment for residents of all ages while encouraging community members to visit and engage with library services. No admission fee is required.

For more information about library programs and upcoming events, patrons are encouraged to contact the White Settlement Public Library directly or visit during regular business hours.

From Tarrant County

Avoid Penalties! Pay Property Taxes by Jan. 31

The deadline to pay 2025 property taxes without penalty or interest is Friday, Jan. 31, 2026, according to the Tarrant County Tax Assessor-Collector's Office. Tarrant County has the largest number of property tax accounts in Texas.

Taxpayers can now use a newly updated online property tax payment portal designed to simplify searches and payments.

Links to the previous system have been deactivated, and users are encouraged to update bookmarks. Creating an online profile is no longer required to make a payment, though most existing profiles have been migrated and may require a new password.

Payments by mail must be postmarked by Jan. 31 to avoid penalty and interest.

The U.S. Postal Service cancellation stamp is considered the official postmark; metered postage dates do not qualify. Accepted forms include checks, cashier's checks and money orders, payable to Rick D. Barnes, Tax Assessor-Collector. Mailed payments should be sent to PO Box 961018, Fort Worth, TX 76161-0018. A $25 service charge applies to returned checks.

Taxpayers may also pay by phone by calling the county's third-party payment processor at 817-884-1110. Debit and credit cards, as well as electronic checks, are accepted.

E-checks do not carry a fee, though processing may take one to three days. Tax office staff cannot accept payments directly by phone.

Drop box payments are available during normal business hours outside the Arlington Subcourthouse, 700 E. Abram St., and the Mansfield Subcourthouse, 1100 Broad St. Checks only are accepted, and an account number must be included. A self-service payment kiosk is also available inside the downtown Fort Worth tax office lobby at 100 E. Weatherford St.

Additional processing fees may apply depending on the payment method.

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From the Project Linus Blanketeers

First Monday Quilt Club
Project Linus Volunteers Needed

Start off the New Year by joining in the fun and fellowship of the First Monday Quilt Club which meets on the first Monday of each month at Bethany Christian Church, located at 1500 Meadow Park Drive in White Settlement from 10 a.m. to 1 p.m.

Instead of a potluck lunch, ladies are asked to bring brunch or snack items. Their next meeting is on Monday, Jan. 5!

Project Linus is a non-profit service organization, and the members of this group are Tarrant County Chapter Project Linus volunteers who create handmade quilts and blankets that provide love, warmth, and comfort for local children who have suffered trauma, tragedy, or illness.

Volunteers also make coverlets for veterans, nursing home residents, and the homeless. Unfortunately, the need for these blankets increases each month. They desperately need volunteers with portable sewing machines to help assemble the quilts.

No experience is needed - there is a place for you. Anyone can help if you can follow instructions, sew, tie a knot, crochet a blanket, or tell a good joke. Volunteers have lots of fun and develop fantastic friendships.

High school students can receive community service credits for participating. Materials (fabric, batting, thread, and yarn) are provided. Donations of fabric, yarn, thread, or money to purchase materials are greatly appreciated.

Come join the fun and have fellowship with the Quilt Club volunteers while you make a difference in our community by being a blessing to others.

For more information about the mission of Project Linus, visit www.projectlinus.org.

For more information on this group and meetings, call Virginia Biela at 817-244-1263.

Texas History Minute by Dr. Ken Bridges

Britain's Quiet Ally: Charles Elliott and the Diplomacy That Helped Shape the Republic of Texas

The movement of Texas from the territory of Mexico to independent country to statehood took careful diplomacy. The Republic of Texas found an unexpected ally in a dangerous time from the British ambassador, Charles Elliott. As the British representative in Texas, Elliott became one of the few friends that the Republic of Texas had in a time when it was cast adrift in the tides of diplomacy.

Charles Elliott was born in 1801 in Dresden in what became Germany. His father served British ambassador to Saxony. Raised with the idea of the importance of service to the English crown and love of country, he enlisted in the navy at age 14. Such youthful enlistments were not unusual for the time. He spent the next 13 years in the Royal Navy before entering the civil service.

In 1830, he was named to a special post in British Guiana overseeing slave sales and treatment of slaves. He was appalled by the brutality and sent his protests to London. Elliott became an important voice among the rising chorus of Britons determined to abolish slavery. As a result, in 1833, Great Britain banned slavery in all its territories across the globe. Elliott was commended by his superiors for his service and credited with helping slavery end in the British Empire.

Soon afterward, Elliott was assigned to trade posts in China, eventually becoming Chief Superintendant of all British trade in the area. However, the British insisted he was too conciliatory toward China in the events leading up to the Opium Wars. Though he helped secure Hong Kong for Britain, Elliott was fired.

In 1842, he was given a chance to redeem himself. Britain had just recently recognized Texas independence from Mexico and established an embassy in Austin. The British saw great potential in establishing trade with the Texas Republic and hoped to derail Texas annexation to the United States. Elliott was named ambassador.

Like many politicians who had come to Texas in those years, Elliott arrived in disgrace and looked for another chance. For Elliott, the assignment to Texas was a demotion. For the people of Texas, being sent an ambassador from one of the world's most powerful nations was a great distinction. It was a sign that the plight of Texas was taken seriously in distant capitals around the globe. He quickly established a rapport with Texas President Sam Houston, and the two conversed on many different issues.

Trade was an invaluable lifeline to the world for Texas, and British factories bought huge amounts of Texas cotton, thanks to Elliott's efforts. Elliott also became an effective intermediary between Mexico and Texas when Texas had little clout with the Mexican government and even less military might to respond effectively to any use of force.

In 1843, he was able to secure the release of nearly two hundred renegade Texas troops from the disastrous Mier Expedition of 1842. The troops had disobeyed orders, raiding along the disputed Rio Grande border, and were captured by Mexico. It was a diplomatic and military embarrassment at a time when Texas could afford neither.

Elliott also pressed Texas to end slavery, but there were very few Texans interested in ending it. The slavery issue increasingly dominated politics in the United States, imperiling Texas annexation as much as any potential war with Mexico.

By 1844, Texas was moving toward an annexation treaty with the United States. For Britain, a Texas leaning on British support offered far more potential rewards than a rival United States with the many resources of Texas added to it. Houston, and his successor, President Anson Jones made preparations for Texas to move in either direction depending on the outcome of annexation.

Elliott tried to impress the advantages of Texas independence on both, hoping offers of British trade and protection could dissuade them. Jones carefully considered Elliott's words in his correspondence with him, but events were moving too swiftly between Texas and the United States.

Elliott negotiated a treaty offer with Mexico in 1845. In this proposal, Mexico offered permanent recognition to Texas independence and peace between the two in exchange for the promise of Texas not to seek annexation. Texas officials declined the treaty and instead cited it as Mexican recognition of Texas independence.

Texas was officially annexed and granted statehood on December 29, 1845, as the 28th state.

As J. Pinckney Henderson took the oath of office as the first governor of the new State of Texas on February 19, 1846, Great Britain quietly closed its embassy.

Elliott was recalled to London in the process, but he did not stay out of service for long. Within months, he was sent back to the New World as governor of the British colony in Bermuda. He was assigned to two other colonial posts and eventually given the honorary rank of admiral.

In 1869, Elliott retired from the civil service and returned to Britain to enjoy his retirement.

He died at his home in England at the age of 74 in 1875.

BUSINESS DIRECTORY

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Weekend Forecast

Friday, Jan. 2:

AM - Sunny, with a high near 73. W/SW wind 5 to 10 mph becoming NW in the afternoon. Winds could gust as high as 20 mph.
PM - Mostly clear, with a low around 45. North wind around 5 mph.

Saturday, Jan. 3:

AM - Sunny, with a high near 67. North wind around 5 mph.
PM - Mostly clear, with a low around 43. North wind around 5 mph becoming calm.

Sunday, Jan. 4:

AM - Mostly sunny, with a high near 69. Light and variable wind becoming S/SE 5 to 10 mph in the morning.
PM - Partly cloudy, with a low around 50. South wind 5 to 10 mph.

Extended Forecast Click Here