Serving the Cities of River Oaks and Westworth Village

River Oaks News

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From the City of River Oaks

River Oaks Details Updated Animal Control Procedures

City officials recently announced that the City of River Oaks entered into an agreement with the City of White Settlement to provide animal control support as its shelter facilities and staffing are better equipped to deliver reliable and humane care for animals taken into custody. The change aims to improve service quality while maintaining the same point of contact for residents.

The City of River Oaks is reminding residents that animal-related calls and requests for service should continue to be routed through the River Oaks Police Department dispatch line, despite the city's newly established partnership with White Settlement for animal control services.

Under the agreement, the White Settlement Animal Control team will patrol River Oaks daily. However, all service requests must still originate from River Oaks Police Department dispatch at 817-626-1991, which continues to operate 24 hours a day. Residents are asked not to contact the White Settlement Animal Shelter directly. To encourage continued dialogue, the City Council will discuss the partnership during its Dec. 16 meeting, where residents may voice concerns or ask questions.

For now, residents with animal-related concerns should continue using the established procedure and contact River Oaks Police Department dispatch at 817-626-1991.

From the American Red Cross

Red Cross Urges Donations for Possible Winter Shortage

The American Red Cross is warning of a potential blood shortage this winter and is urging eligible donors to make appointments now to help prevent disruptions in lifesaving medical care.

Blood supplies typically decline after the holidays, and this year has been no exception. Winter weather, travel and busy schedules have made it difficult to maintain a steady flow of donations, putting pressure on hospitals that rely on blood products for trauma care, surgeries and cancer treatments.

Without an increase in donations, doctors may be forced to make difficult decisions about which patients receive blood transfusions and which must wait, Red *(continued on page 3)*

From Suburban Newspapers Staff Writers

River Oaks to Host Community Q&A on Feral Cat TNVR Program Jan. 15

River Oaks residents are invited to attend a community question-and-answer session focused on a Trap-Neuter-Vaccinate-Return, or TNVR, program aimed at humanely managing the city's feral cat population.

The event will be held Thursday, Jan. 15, at 6 p.m. at the River Oaks Event Center, 5300 Blackstone Drive. City personnel will be on hand to explain how the program works, answer questions from residents and gather public input as the city explores long-term solutions for free-roaming cats.

TNVR programs are widely used by municipalities to stabilize feral cat populations by humanely trapping cats, having them spayed or neutered and vaccinated, and then returning them to their original location. City officials say the approach is intended to reduce nuisance behaviors such as fighting and spraying, while improving the overall health of the animals.

In addition to the discussion, demonstrations will be held to show how trapping equipment is used *(continued on page 3)*

From Castleberry ISD

Castleberry ISD Board of Education to Meet Monday, Jan. 12

Castleberry ISD's School Board is scheduled to hold a Regular Meeting on Monday, Jan. 12 in the Castleberry Board Room, located at 5228 Ohio Garden, Fort Worth, TX 76114.

Business items and presentations will begin at 6 p.m. followed by campus and program recognitions at 7:30 p.m.

The meeting agenda is available online at cisd.info/BoardAgendas.

Unable to attend in person? The meeting will be livestreamed on YouTube, and a recording will remain available afterward: https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=7WXoflZadGo.

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• ***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.

Feral Cat TNVR (continued from page 1)

safely and effectively. Organizers hope the hands-on portion of the event will help educate residents and encourage community involvement.

City staff are also seeking volunteers willing to assist with various aspects of the program, including monitoring colonies, helping with trapping efforts and supporting outreach and education. Officials say volunteer participation is critical to the program's success.

Residents who have concerns about feral cats in their neighborhoods are encouraged to attend and share their experiences. City leaders say community feedback will help shape how the program is implemented and ensure it reflects local needs.

The meeting is open to the public, and no prior experience is required to attend or volunteer. Those interested in learning more about TNVR or becoming involved in humane population control efforts are encouraged to participate.

For more information, residents may contact River Oaks City Hall at 817-626-5421.

From Tarrant County Sheriff's Office

January Marks National Human Trafficking Prevention Month

January is recognized nationwide as National Human Trafficking Prevention Month, a time dedicated to raising awareness about human trafficking and encouraging communities to take action to prevent it.

Human trafficking is a serious crime that exploits adults and children through force, fraud or coercion for labor or commercial intercourse. Law enforcement agencies, advocacy organizations and community members all play a role in identifying trafficking, supporting survivors and holding offenders accountable.

The Tarrant County Sheriff's Office is joining the national effort by promoting awareness and sharing resources available to the public. Officials emphasize that education and vigilance are key tools in combating trafficking, as victims often go unnoticed in everyday settings.

The sheriff's office encourages anyone who suspects human trafficking or related criminal activity to report it. Tips and information can be shared with the TCSO Human Trafficking Unit at 682-382-1690 or anonymously through Crime Stoppers of Tarrant County at 817-469-TIPS (8477).

In addition, the National Human Trafficking Resource Center Hotline is available 24 hours a day at 1-888-373-7888. The hotline provides confidential support, connects victims to local resources and allows the public to report tips nationwide.

Throughout January, law enforcement and advocacy groups urge residents to educate themselves, share information and remain alert.

Blood Donations (continued from page 1)

Cross officials said. Donors with type O, A negative and B negative blood are especially needed.

Residents can schedule a blood or platelet donation by visiting RedCrossBlood.org, using the Red Cross Blood Donor App or calling 1-800-RED CROSS.

January is National Blood Donor Month, and for the seventh consecutive year, the Red Cross is partnering with the National Football League to encourage donations during the critical post-holiday period. Those who donate between Jan. 1 and Jan. 25, 2026, will be automatically entered for a chance to win a trip to Super Bowl LX in Santa Clara, California.

The prize includes game tickets for the winner and a guest, access to official pregame events, round-trip airfare, three nights of hotel accommodations and a $1,000 gift card. Details are available at RedCrossBlood.org/SuperBowl.

The Red Cross is also teaming up with professional football champion Saquon Barkley to raise awareness about the ongoing need for blood donations.

"The best offense against a winter blood shortage is making and keeping blood donation appointments," Barkley said. "It only takes about an hour, and once you realize how much help it can bring in that short time, it's a beautiful thing."

How to donate blood: simply download the American Red Cross Blood Donor App, visit RedCrossBlood.org.

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From 4PAWS & Benbrook Animal Shelter

Kick off the New Year with a New Furry Family Member!

Arabelle is a 2-year-old, 70 pound Great Pyrenees. She is super sweet and likes slow walks on the leash.

Adoptions are available at the Benbrook Shelter, located at 469 Winscott Rd., Tuesday through Friday from 10 a.m. to 3 p.m. or Saturday 10 a.m. to 2 p.m.

Visit www.4pawsinc.org or call 4 PAWS volunteers Ursula at 817-262-3086, or Lynda at 682-279-0760 to set up a meet-and-greet or to get more information about any of the available dogs.

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Gardening in Texas: A Month-by-Month Guide From Winter to Spring

No matter the season, there's always something Texans can do to keep a garden healthy. The level of effort is flexible, ranging from simple maintenance to larger projects, depending on time, experience and lifestyle. This month-by-month guide outlines key tasks from winter through early spring to help gardens thrive year-round.

January

Leave perennials unpruned. Their stems and seed heads provide protection and habitat during colder months. Fallen leaves should also stay put, where they act as natural mulch and enrich the soil as they decompose.

Scatter wildflower seeds outdoors so they receive the cold exposure needed for spring germination. Move freeze-sensitive potted plants indoors before temperatures drop too low, and cover vulnerable in-ground plants to protect them from frost.

Turn off sprinklers unless conditions are unusually warm or there has been no rainfall for an entire month. With average rainfall, native plants and high-water-use areas such as lawns typically do not need supplemental irrigation.

Use the slower pace of winter to plan ahead. Tackle large earth-moving or construction projects, sketch out landscape changes and note which plants need replacing. Begin designing spring vegetable gardens, order seeds and create a planting timeline so you're ready when warmer weather arrives.

February

Continue caring for vegetable seedlings started indoors. During warm spells, gradually move them outside to acclimate to sunlight. Finalize plans for spring vegetable beds and harvest any winter crops that are ready.

Complete major projects before spring growth begins. Check compost piles, turning or watering them as needed so they'll be ready for use.

Avoid watering unless conditions are dry and unusually warm. With normal rainfall, irrigation is generally unnecessary for both native plants and lawns.

Pruning typically begins this month, with temperature, not the calendar, as the guide. Valentine's Day is a common benchmark, but waiting for consistent warmth allows pollinators time to emerge from winter cover. Cut dead or brown growth back to a few inches above the soil and add it to the compost pile.

Clear leaves from garden beds and compost them, or mulch them with a mower and return them to the soil. Finish by applying native hardwood mulch and pruning evergreens as needed.

March

Harvest remaining winter vegetables and clear beds for spring planting. Work finished compost into the soil.

Plant vegetable seedlings once the risk of freezing has passed. Covers can extend the growing season, but some risk remains. Remove old plant material and add it to the compost pile, turning the pile after removing compost for garden beds.

After planting, mulch vegetable beds and water deeply. Bring plants that overwintered indoors back outside once temperatures are safe.

Watering is usually unnecessary unless new plants or mulch have been added, rainfall is absent or temperatures are unusually warm. Without rain, native plants may need about 0.3 inches of water per week, while lawns and other high-water-use areas may require about 0.7 inches.

April

As spring progresses, begin planting native perennials. Some may not be available until May plant sales. Sow seeds for fall wildflowers.

Plant vegetables delayed by cold March weather and water and fertilize them using organic methods to support healthy growth.

Irrigation is generally unnecessary unless establishing new plants or mulch, rainfall is scarce or temperatures are unusually warm. With average rainfall, native plants typically need no supplemental water, while lawns may need about 0.2 inches per week. Without rain, native plants may require around 0.4 inches weekly, and lawns and other high-water-use plants about 0.9 inches.

Measure sprinkler output and coverage, especially if changes were made over the winter. Calculating output and ideal watering times now will prepare you for the summer watering season, and addressing any uneven coverage early will help ensure efficient, healthy watering later on.

May

Enjoy spring blooms and mild weather before summer heat sets in. Plant later-season vegetables and keep crops evenly watered. Apply organic fertilizer as needed to support healthy growth. Begin harvesting early-maturing vegetables, continue seeding for fall wildflowers, and deadhead spent flowers to encourage continued blooming.

Water only as needed, based on rainfall and temperature. With average rainfall, neither native plants nor high-water-use areas such as lawns typically need supplemental irrigation. During dry periods, native plants may require about 0.45 inches of water per week, while lawns and other high-water-use plants may need up to 1 inch.

As temperatures rise, shift watering to evening or nighttime hours to reduce evaporation and minimize stress on plants.

Texas History Minute by Dr. Ken Bridges

More Than a Symbol: The History and Meaning Behind America's Flag Traditions

The American flag has long been a great symbol of pride for the nation. For centuries, flags have been used as powerful symbols to not only inspire patriotism and a sense of community but also as a form of communicating triumph or tragedy.

In 2025, Americans saw the Stars and Stripes symbolically lowered to half-staff several times as a sign of mourning. This show of respect is part of American naval traditions dating early into the nation's history.

While flags are most widely used as symbols of nations, states, cities, and even military units, businesses, and athletic teams, they can have far more uses. Flags have long been used by ships to communicate with one another for a variety of reasons. Before the age of radio, flags would identify ships at long distances as either friend or foe, as the voice is often no match for the sea. Even close up, the sound of shouting would be eclipsed by the roar of the waves.

British Captain Frederick Marryat developed his Code of Signals in 1817 using flags of different shapes and colors to signal other ships. This became the standard system before the International Code of Signals was adopted in 1857. The International Code of Signals has undergone many revisions since that time to simplify the system. Another code, the flag semaphore code, was developed in 1866 and used two flags held at various angles to send messages between ships or between ships and the shore. The system is still used by the navy and by civilian sailors today.

The tradition of flying a flag at half-mast began with a British ship in 1612. The captain of the Heart's Ease had died, and the crew lowered the flag half-way down the mast as a show of mourning and respect. Other ships throughout the British Empire began following the tradition, including American colonial ships. The lowering of the flag represented symbolically making room for an invisible "flag of death."

When President George Washington died in 1799, the U. S. Navy ordered flags on all ships to be lowered to half-mast to mourn the Father of the Country. The tradition continued for many decades.

Other important symbols for flags emerged over time. Historians noted that in both China and the Roman Empire, the white flag was seen as a symbol of surrender since the second century AD. The use of the white flag spread across Europe in the Middle Ages as surrender or offers to negotiate as it stood out in contrast to brightly-colored military or royal flags.

In naval traditions, simply lowering all flags became an accepted symbol of surrender by the late 1700s, known as "striking the colors." In 1899, the Hague Convention, a meeting of diplomats from around the world and including the United States, declared that the white flag would become an international symbol of surrender, thus firing on surrendering troops was considered illegal under international law.

Flying the flag upside down similarly originated during the American colonial era. Flying the flag upside down became a quick way to signal to other ships or the shore that the ship was in immediate danger, such as from fire or sinking or collision with an iceberg or sandbar.

Though it is meant as a sign that someone is in imminent danger, its use as a distress signal has long been adapted as a sign of political protest as well.

Over time, confusion over how to display the flag emerged. To ensure that the United States flag is displayed with the proper respect, Congress first passed the Flag Code in 1923.

During World War II, the updated United States Flag Code became federal law. The modern flag code emerged in 1954 that included rules on when the flag is to be lowered, with a number of modifications made since that time. Under the flag code, it is considered improper to use it to carry or deliver anything, use it as clothing, or use it in advertising. If a flag should become torn or tattered, it should be retired. The flag should never be dipped to any person or other flag. Since no flag can fly above the American flag, state flags are also to be lowered in a time of mourning when the Stars and Stripes is lowered.

Typically, the flag is to be lowered for 30 days after the death of a current or former president, for 10 days after the death of a vice-president, for the day of death and the day after for a member of Congress, on Memorial Day until noon, and on Sept. 11.

The president can also make a proclamation that the flag be lowered in honor of a prominent figure or a specific occasion, such as Pearl Harbor Remembrance Day. During this time, the flag is to be brought fully up the flag pole first before being lowered to half-staff. Governors can order flags to be lowered in their states when a member of the armed forces from their state has died.

In 2025, Americans saw the flag lowered after the deaths of former President Jimmy Carter and former Vice-President Dick Cheney. Many other nations have their own traditions and laws regarding the lowering of their flags. In days of joy or sorrow, the American flag is a symbol for which Americans and the world always take notice.

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Weekend Forecast

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AM - Mostly sunny, with a high near 69.
SW wind 5 to 10 mph becoming W/NW in the afternoon.
PM - Mostly clear, with a low around 38. N/NW wind 10 to 15 mph, with gusts as high as 20 mph.

Saturday, Jan. 10:

AM - Sunny, with a high near 55. N/NW wind 10 to 15 mph, with gusts as high as 25 mph.
PM - Mostly clear, with a low around 35. W/NW wind around 5 mph.

Sunday, Jan. 11:

AM -Sunny, with a high near 56. NW wind around 5 mph becoming N/NE in the afternoon.
PM - Mostly clear, with a low around 33.

Extended Forecast Click Here