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# River Oaks News

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*From the Sports Desk with John Loven, Photo Courtesy Allison Pierce*

## Castleberry Lions Bow Out of Football Playoffs

Under clear skies and mild November temperatures, the Castleberry Lions opened the first round of the Class 4A playoffs Thursday, Nov. 13, against a tough Decatur squad at Birdville ISD's Fine Arts and Athletic Complex.

Castleberry, the third-place finisher in District 6-4A, faced a Decatur team that entered the postseason with a 7–3 record and two losses to undefeated, state-ranked opponents. Despite hopes for a competitive matchup, the Eagles controlled the game from start to finish, defeating the Lions 63–14.

**First Quarter**

Decatur took the opening kickoff and needed only six plays to score. Three straight completions moved the Eagles to the Castleberry 23-yard line, and three consecutive rushing plays finished the drive with a 13-yard touchdown. The point-after-touchdown (PAT) gave Decatur a 7–0 lead with 10:11 left in the first quarter.

Castleberry answered with an impressive 15-play drive from its own 26. Senior running back Isaiah Ford converted a fourth-and-3, and junior receiver Bryan Ceniceros pulled in a nine-yard catch on fourth-and-8. But the Lions' drive stalled at the Decatur 23 when a fourth-down pass fell incomplete.

Decatur responded quickly, scoring again in just three plays. A 45-yard screen pass set up runs of 12 and 20 yards for a touchdown. The Eagles led 14–0 with 2:24 left in the opening quarter.

Castleberry went three-and-out on its next possession. Decatur then marched 64 yards in eight plays, ex- *(continued on page 3)*

*From the City of River Oaks*

## *River Oaks Event Center Announces Holiday Food Distribution Dates*

The River Oaks Event Center, located at 5300 Blackstone Drive, has released its holiday food distribution schedule, with events set for Nov. 21, Dec. 12 and 19, according to the City of River Oaks website.

Only one food order per vehicle will be allowed during the holiday distribution period. Organizers emphasized that cars may not begin lining up earlier than 9 a.m.

The traffic flow will begin on Blackstone Drive, where signage will direct vehicles to the official starting point. The City urges participants to avoid blocking driveways and cross streets to ensure access for police and emergency services.

For additional information, residents may call 817-732-5885.

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• ***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.

# Sports Desk (continued from page 1)

tending its lead to 21–0 early in the second quarter.

**Second Quarter**

The Lions' next possession delivered one of the night's highlights. After an inadvertent whistle gave Castleberry a replay of fourth down, the Lions executed a fake punt. Ceniceros, lined up as an up-back, took the snap and scrambled 14 yards for a first down.

Castleberry converted two more fourth downs, one on a five-yard run by Ford and another on a 32-yard pass from senior quarterback Ethan Chappell to Ceniceros. Ford finished the 78-yard, 17-play drive with a 3-yard touchdown run, narrowing the score to 21–7 with 4:36 left in the half.

Decatur immediately took the momentum back. On the next play from scrimmage, the Eagles broke free for a 62-yard touchdown run, pushing the lead to 28–7.

Castleberry fumbled on its next possession, and Decatur capitalized. After a 14-yard sack by freshman linebacker Lewis Rodriguez briefly stalled the drive, the Eagles converted a fourth-and-10 and scored moments later. Decatur carried a 35–7 lead into halftime.

**Third Quarter**

Castleberry opened the second half with a fourth-and-1 attempt from its own 34, but Ford was marked just short of the line to gain. Decatur scored on the next play to make it 42–7.

The Lions went three-and-out on back-to-back drives, while the Eagles added two more touchdowns to extend their lead to 56–7 by late in the third quarter.

**Fourth Quarter**

Castleberry put together its final scoring drive early in the fourth. Chappell connected with Ceniceros for 33 yards to set up first-and-goal from the 10. Ford punched in a 1-yard touchdown on fourth down, cutting the deficit to 56–14 with 11:19 remaining.

Decatur answered with one final 65-yard touchdown drive, all on the ground, pushing the final to 63–14.

**Season Recap**

Despite the difficult playoff loss, several Lions turned in standout performances. Ford carried the ball 48 times for 204 yards and both Castleberry touchdowns, a single-game workload that may be a school record. He finished the season with 1,747 rushing yards and 21 touchdowns.

Ceniceros recorded eight receptions for 111 yards, closing the season with 1,024 receiving yards and 17 touchdowns.

Castleberry finished the year 6–5, earning back-to-back playoff appearances.

Go Lions!

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*From HolidaysAndHeros.Org*

# Holidays & Heroes Calls on Community to Help Support Local Military Families

Holidays & Heroes, a North Texas nonprofit, is urging community members to get involved in its seasonal mission of supporting enlisted military service members and their families.

Based at Naval Air Station Joint Reserve Base Fort Worth (NAS JRB), the organization provides Thanksgiving meals, Christmas gifts, and year-round community support during military-supported events.

**How to Help**

• Volunteer: The group needs help at its large Thanksgiving distribution and Christmas party each season.

• Donate: Financial contributions allow Holidays & Heroes to continue serving military families in need.

• Sponsor a Family: Local individuals or businesses can be paired with a military family to provide holiday gifts or other support.

**About Holidays & Heroes**

Founded in 2015 by Kerre Randel Ortegel, Holidays & Heroes began as a small "party with a purpose" and has grown into one of Dallas–Fort Worth's most recognized military holiday organizations.

The nonprofit is governed by a six-member board and operates under the motto "Serving those who serve us."

Ortegel was inspired to start the organization due to her proximity to NAS JRB Fort Worth, where she saw firsthand the needs of enlisted families.

Holidays & Heroes is recognized for its transparency and accountability, holding a Platinum status on GuideStar. Since its founding, it has served more than 4,500 individuals, more than 1,100 military families, with the help of over 200 community volunteers.

**Impact on the Community**

According to officials, Holidays & Heroes helps deliver the message that military families, especially those in the lower enlisted ranks (E-1 through E-6), are not forgotten by the community.

Through its efforts, the nonprofit strengthens the bond between civilians and the military community, turning a simple holiday gesture into meaningful, year-round outreach.

For more information or to get involved, visit the Holidays & Heroes website.

*From Cook Childrens*

# *Rising Virus Cases Prompt Push for Childhood Vaccinations*

With the holidays, and a surge of respiratory viruses, right around the corner, Cook Children's is urging parents to make sure their children are fully up to date on all AAP-recommended vaccinations. That includes flu shots and RSV protection for eligible infants, ideally before families hit the road or gather for Thanksgiving.

Getting vaccinated is easier than ever. Parents can call their child's primary care doctor, check with their local health department or visit a neighborhood pharmacy to find out where vaccines are available.

Thanksgiving often kicks off a season of crowded stores, packed airports and busy family get-togethers, all of which help viruses spread quickly. Cook Children's experts say immunization remains the strongest defense against severe illness, hospitalization and complications caused by respiratory infections.

There are already signs the season is heating up in North Texas. Between Nov. 9 through 15, Cook Children's Medical Center Fort Worth tested 757 children for Flu A, Flu B and RSV. Positivity rates reached 2.9 percent, 0.8 percent and 7.8 percent respectively, highlighting the need for preventative steps now, not later.

"Holiday preparation should be more than making a list and checking it twice," said Laura Romano, D.O., a hospitalist at Cook Children's. "It should include making sure your children are fully protected against the flu and RSV. Vaccines not only shield your kids from severe illness, but they also protect vulnerable family members like grandparents or a newborn cousin, and even the people you pass in a store or sit next to on a plane."

*From Val Lopez, Texas Department of Transportation*

# North Texas SH 199 Project Hits Milestone

A major transportation upgrade is underway in northwest Tarrant County, as TxDOT advances a significant bridge and roadway expansion project on SH 199 over Lake Worth.

The project hit a key milestone last month, when traffic was shifted to the newly constructed eastbound SH 199 bridge. This traffic switch marks a major step forward in the broader project, which also includes improvements to surrounding roadways and cross streets.

The project is part of TxDOT's Texas Clear Lanes initiative, a statewide program focused on reducing congestion in the state's largest metropolitan areas.

The new westbound bridge opened to motorists in May. The existing bridges will remain in service and be repurposed as frontage road bridges, helping to maintain traffic flow and connectivity throughout the construction process and beyond. East of the lake, TxDOT will add new main lanes to further boost traffic capacity.

TxDOT awarded the $104 million contract to Sema Construction Inc. in June 2020. Substantial completion is expected by Spring 2026.

***About Texas Clear Lanes***

Backed by dedicated funding approved by Texas voters in 2014 and 2015, the Texas Clear Lanes program targets the state's 100 most congested roads with strategic planning and construction.

For more information on the Texas Clear Lanes initiative and upcoming projects, visit Texas Clear Lanes.

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*Around the Town with Denise Honeycutt*

# *Annual Holly Daze Craft Fair at Arlington Heights United Methodist Church was a Success!*

The 30th annual Holly Daze holiday market was held Saturday, Nov. 15 at Arlington Heights United Methodist Church, drawing shoppers eager to kick off the Christmas season.

Vendors showcased a variety of handcrafted items, including woodwork, handpainted gourds, pottery, holiday wreaths, and knitted and crocheted goods.

Organizers said the event was a major success, attracting a large crowd and providing a festive atmosphere for visitors to shop, celebrate, and support local artisans.

"This market has become a cherished tradition for our community," vendor Melissa Holloway said. "It's wonderful to see so many people coming together to get into the holiday spirit."

The market offered attendees a chance to find unique gifts while enjoying the sights and sounds of the season.

Director of the Handbell Ministry Frank Shroyer and Kakkie Cunningham assisted in coordinating the event.

Camille Thomason displayed her colorful gourds.

Melissa Holloway and Diane Gleaton brought their amazing wreaths.

Penny Stevens and Annette Havermann shared their treasures.

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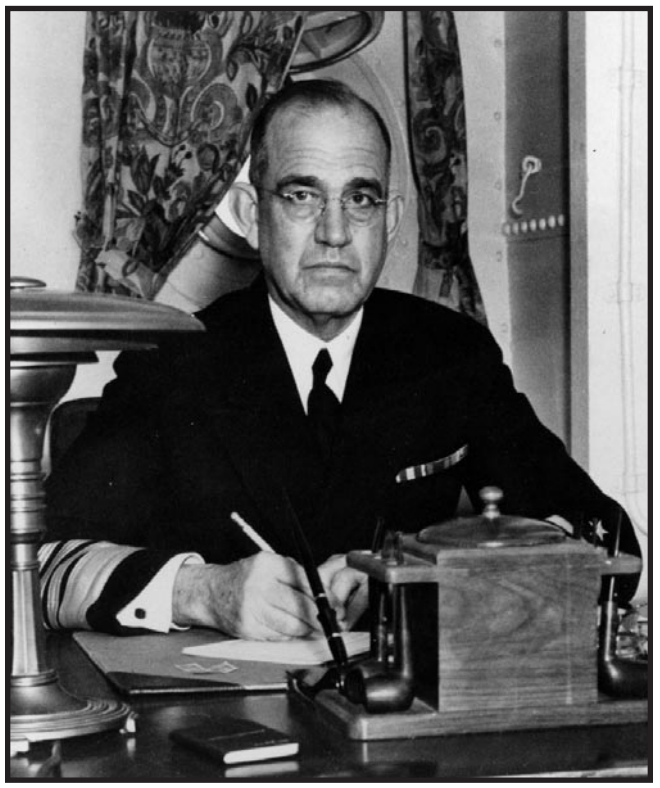
*From the City of River Oaks*

# First Annual Holiday Light Contest

The City of River Oaks will host its first annual Holiday Light Contest in December, inviting residents to nominate themselves or their neighbors for standout seasonal displays. Nominations will be accepted through Dec. 11. Participants can enter by completing this Google Doc. Winners will be recognized during the River Oaks City Council meeting on Dec. 16 at 6 p.m.

*Texas History Minute by Dr. Ken Bridges*

# The Texan Who Tried to Warn America: Adm. Richardson's Fight to Protect the Pacific Fleet



The Japanese sneak attack on Pearl Harbor in 1941 has been studied at length by military minds and academics for decades. The naval officer in charge of the Pacific Fleet in the months before the attack was a Texas native, Admiral James Otto Richardson. As the United States began preparing for war in 1940, Richardson pointed to weak defenses at Pearl Harbor that he feared would lead to disaster.

Richardson was born in Paris in September 1878. After he graduated from high school, he did not immediately attend college. In 1898, he instead received a congressional appointment to attend the United States Naval Academy in Annapolis, Maryland. He excelled in his studies, graduating fifth in his class in 1902.

His first assignment was with the Asiatic Squadron helping with naval support of American attempts to suppress a rebellion in the Philippines. He was transferred to the Atlantic Fleet in 1905. He came to command two small torpedo boats in 1907, the USS Tingay and the USS Stockton. In 1909, he was tapped to enter the Naval Academy's special graduate engineering school, part of the first group of officers selected for this special training and education program. By 1914, he rose to head the Bureau of Steam Engineering, responsible for monitoring the navy's fuel supply.

Richardson had an honorable record and steadily moved up the ranks. He served as executive officer of the battleship USS Nevada during World War I. He then rose to command the USS Asheville, a gunboat, by 1922 when he led the navy's patrols of the South China Sea. Periodically, his service was interrupted by further studies at the naval academy and the Naval War College. He commanded the heavy cruiser USS Augusta from 1931 to 1933. While serving as Budget Officer with the Navy Department, he was promoted to rear admiral in 1934.

As Assistant Chief of Naval Operations in 1937, he was at the forefront to the navy's response to two events that riveted the world's attention. When famed aviator Amelia Earhart disappeared in the Central Pacific, Richardson helped coordinate the navy's search operations. He also helped formulate the information and response to Japan's sinking of an American gunboat, the USS Panay, in China's Yangtze River. Japan's invasion of China and steady expansion in East Asia became a grave concern to the United States.

In January 1940, Richardson was named commander-in-chief of the United States Fleet, one of the senior-most positions in the navy, which also put him in command of the Pacific Fleet. In June 1940, President Franklin D. Roosevelt ordered the Pacific Fleet to move its headquarters to Pearl Harbor. Roosevelt believed that the nation must begin preparing for a possible war. He also believed that while Pearl Harbor was still thousands of miles from the Japanese sphere of influence, the presence of the fleet in the Central Pacific sent a strong message of disapproval to Japan and might dissuade Japan from further incursions in the Far East. In the meantime, the United States continued to negotiate with Japan for it to cease its military actions, negotiations that continued until December 1941.

Richardson was respected as an expert on Japanese military tactics throughout the military and by civilian politicians. He expressed grave fears over headquartering the Pacific Fleet at Pearl Harbor, especially since Japan had a history of engaging in sneak attacks. He looked at the situation from a careful tactical standpoint. Pearl Harbor was a good natural harbor that had been under American control for decades. But Hawaii was more than two thousand miles away from mainland naval bases at San Francisco and San Diego, far from any emergency support, and unprepared for an attack. He brought his pointed criticisms of the situation to Secretary of the Navy Frank Knox and Admiral Harold Stark, the Chief of Naval Operations. Twice he went to Washington to explain his position in person, to no avail.

He pushed for increased air patrols and for bolstering the defenses of the facility. He coordinated with his army counterparts on war game scenarios to practice for a possible invasion, a practice begun by previous Pearl Harbor commanders. He was discouraged when army forces on the island were never able to repel a naval invasion.

Years after World War II, Richardson said that he never believed that a carrier-based attack on the base would happen. He had anticipated a more traditional naval invasion with battleships, destroyers, and landing troops. In 1940, however, the United States still had very few military resources to spare in spite of increasing preparations. In February 1941, Richardson was relieved of command in favor of Adm. Husband E. Kimmel.

Richardson was assigned to the Navy General Board, an advisory body within the Navy Department in Washington. Like the rest of the nation, he was shocked and horrified by the attack on Pearl Harbor on Dec. 7, 1941. He stepped down from the position in October 1942. He spent the remainder of the war working with the Navy Relief Society, a navy charity designed to help sailors and Marines and their families. He also worked as senior member of a special committee to reorganize America's defenses.

After his formal retirement from active duty in 1947, he lived the rest of his life quietly in Washington, DC, occasionally writing on his naval experiences. In 1973, he released his memoirs, *On the Treadmill to Pearl Harbor*.

He died at his home in 1974 at the age of 95.

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# Weekend Forecast

## Friday, Nov. 21:

AM - Sunny, with a high near 74. West southwest wind 5 to 10 mph, with gusts as high as 20 mph.

PM - Mostly clear, with a low around 49. West northwest wind around 5 mph.

## Saturday, Nov. 22:

AM - Mostly sunny, with a high near 66. North northwest wind around 5 mph.

PM - A 20 percent chance of showers. Partly cloudy, with a low around 48.

## Sunday, Nov. 23:

AM - A 30 percent chance of showers. Mostly sunny, with a high near 67.

PM - A 40 percent chance of showers. Mostly cloudy, with a low around 51.

## Extended Forecast Click Here