



City of Benbrook ★ A Texas Star City

Benbrook News

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From the Sports Desk with John English

High School Basketball: Cougars Best Bobcats in District Opener; Lady Bobcats Tackle Castleberry Tournament

The Benbrook and Western Hills boys basketball teams squared off in their district opener last week, and the Cougars emerged victorious.

Western Hills won the game by a score of 72-46, and Benbrook coach Blake Mendez said his team needs to work on putting a whole game together.

“This game was a tale of two halves,” Mendez said. “We struggled with two of our starters out and Western Hills did a great job of getting all of their guys involved. You have to guard everyone on the court when you play them, and they got the best of us.”

Quinton Marshall led the Cougars in scoring with 19 points, while Jordan Jones added 15 points for Western Hills.

Ma'Javion Washington and Da'Marea Jones- Evans scored 11 points each in the game.

Despite the loss, Mendez said he feels like his team is in a good place mentally as the district schedule gets underway.

“Our guys never lack confidence,” Mendez said. “Even with the loss to Western Hills, we are still in good spirits. We know that wasn't our best, and there's still a lot of basketball to be played.”

With the non-district scheduled wrapped up, Mendez said his team was able to face some good competition along the way.

“I feel like it prepared us very well,” Mendez said. “We had some really tough games, especially in tournaments, that we are going to be able to lean on come district. I tell our kids all the time that you don't get better by blowing teams out. You need to face adversity so you can learn to respond.”

Western Hills has improved its overall record to 17-3 and was ranked No. 26 in the state among 4A programs according to MaxPreps heading this week's games.

On the girl's side, the Lady Cats competed in the Castleberry Tournament this past week, and coach Leta Lofton said it was good experience for her team.

“We used the Castleberry tournament to get back into playing form,” Lofton said. “There was good competition that challenged us in fundamentals and conditioning.”

While Benbrook has struggled record-wise in the non-district portion of the season, Lofton said her team has a positive mindset in district competition early on.

“The non district scheduled definitely prepared us for district competition,” Lofton said. “We are now 3-0 in district, and I strongly believe it is because of the tough non district schedule.”

From Fort Worth ISD

Saturday Learning Quest Resumes Jan. 8

There are several more Saturday opportunities for first, second, and third-graders to accelerate learning and have a great time doing it.

The dates of the eight Saturday Learning Quest sessions for next semester are: Jan. 8, Jan. 22, Feb. 12, Feb. 26, March 5, April 2, April 23 and May 7. We hope to see all registered students at each one.

At Saturday Learning Quest, students take part in a day of rigorous, active instruction in literacy and math designed around engaging themes. Young learners also enjoy enrichment opportunities such as classes in art and music, physical activities, labs and visits to the District's mobile STEM (Science, Technology, Engineering, and Math) units. There are incentive prizes for attendance – goody bags for students and chances for parents to win resource baskets filled with tools and essentials for the family. Free transportation is available, and students receive breakfast and lunch each Saturday.

For more information, visit www.fwisd.org/SLQ.

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Around the Town with Denise Honeycutt

Robotics at the Benbrook Library



During the holiday vacation, Arturo and Evander Cardenas created Robotics at the Benbrook Library.

They represent the First Lego League (FLL), a competition using Lego Mindstorm Robots.

Individuals build and program robots to accomplish missions and compete with other teams in North Texas.

Come out to the library and check it out!

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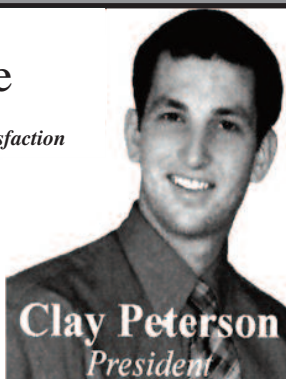


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From Fort Worth ISD

City of Fort Worth and Tarrant County Expand COVID Testing Sites, Hours of Operation

Both the City of Fort Worth and Tarrant County Public Health are expanding COVID testing sites, adding days, and increasing hours of operation.

The City of Fort Worth is making sure that access to COVID-19 testing remains available by opening new testing sites on Tuesdays and Thursdays at Fort Worth ISD's Scarborough-Handley Fieldhouse, as well as the Como Community Center. These sites are in addition to the current testing site at the TEXRail North Side Station, 3001 Decatur Ave.

These sites are all hosted by the City of Fort Worth and are open to everyone. The city is partnering with Vault Health. Saliva tests will be administered at no cost, with or without insurance, and appointments are not needed.

Here are the days and times for the City's new locations:

Tuesdays

FWISD Scarborough-Handley Fieldhouse, 6201 Craig St., • 8-11:30 a.m.
Como Community Center, 4660 Horne St., 1-4:30 p.m.

Thursdays

FWISD Scarborough-Handley Fieldhouse, 6201 Craig St., • 8-11:30 a.m.
Como Community Center, 4660 Horne St., 1-4:30 p.m.

It's anticipated these additional mobile testing sites will remain open for the next several weeks.

Also, announced today, Tarrant County Public Health (TCPH) is expanding COVID-19 testing as demand increases.

Current wait times are not long and results are expected to be given within 24 to 48 hours, according to County officials.

Testing Locations

Beginning, Wednesday, Dec. 29, the following TCPH contracted sites will begin operating seven days a week. They will be closed Saturday, Jan. 1, in observance of New Year Day.

Ben Thanh Market

1818 E Pioneer Parkway Ste., 100

Arlington, TX 76010

Monday to Friday: 9 a.m. to 7 p.m.,
Saturday and Sunday: 7 a.m. to 5 p.m.

Northeast Annex

837 Brown Trail, Bedford, TX 76022
Wednesday to Friday: 9 a.m. to 7 p.m.,
Saturday and Sunday: 7 a.m. to 5 p.m.

Resource Connection – Parking LOT D

1500 Circle Drive
Fort Worth, TX 76119
Wednesday to Friday: 9 a.m. to 7 p.m.,
Saturday and Sunday: 7 a.m. to 5 p.m.

The following TCPH brick and mortar locations will also offer testing as per schedule posted on

www.tarrantcounty.com/covidtesting.

Arlington Adult Health Services

2596 E. Arkansas Lane
Arlington, TX 76014

Monday to Friday: 8 a.m. to 4:30 p.m.
Bagsby-Williams Public Health Clinic

3212 Miller Ave

Fort Worth, TX 76019

Monday to Friday: 8 a.m. to 4:30 p.m.

Northwest Public Health Center

3800 Adam Grubb Road
Lake Worth, TX 76135

Monday to Friday: 8 a.m. to 4:30 p.m.

Southwest Public Health Clinic

6551 Granbury Rd
Fort Worth, TX 76133

Monday to Friday: 8 a.m. to 4:30 p.m.

Watauga Public Health Center

6601 Watauga Road
Watauga TX 76148

Monday to Friday: 8 a.m. to 4:30 p.m.

Additionally, the City of Fort Worth says anyone needing assistance accessing a free COVID-19 test can contact the COVID-19 hotline by mailing COVID19@fortworth-texas.gov or calling 817-392-8478.

For more information from Tarrant County Public Health, visit coronavirus.tarrantcounty.com or call the Tarrant County Public Health information line, 817-248-6299, 8 a.m. to 6 p.m., Monday through Friday and Saturday 10 a.m. to 2 p.m.

From Tarrant County

Jury Services: Reporting for Jury Duty

Jury service plays a vital role in sustaining the American system of justice.

Why was my name drawn for jury service?

The Texas Legislature is responsible for all laws pertaining to jury service. Every other year the Secretary of State receives the Tarrant County voters list, the driver's license and identification card lists from the Department of Public Safety. The Secretary of State then combines these lists and sends Tarrant County their jury list for the upcoming two years. The Tarrant County jury list begins in January of the even years and ends the last week of December in the odd years. Currently, there are over one million names on our jury list and we mail over 200,000 summons annually. The reason some people never receive a summons is because we are not able to exhaust the list before the end of the two-year cycle.

However, it is now easier than ever to report for jury service. Gone are the days of reporting to the Central Jury Room and waiting all day to see if the courts would need a jury. Now you have a choice. You can report in person as summoned to the Central Jury Room. Or, you can use our online system, **eResponse**. As long as you register online at least two business days in advance and confirm your status; we will email your jury service instructions. The date you are summoned to appear will not change. If you receive an online assignment, your time and place will change. By using eResponse, you will be sent an email with instructions regarding your jury service which generally, allows you to bypass the Central Jury Room.

From Suburban Newspapers Staff Writers

City Council Meeting Tonight

The Benbrook City Council meets the first and third Thursday of each month at 7:30 p.m. (with a pre-meeting work session at 7 p.m.) in the City Hall Council Chambers, located at 911 Winscott Road in Benbrook, 76126.

The Jan. 6 agenda is available to view [here](#).

**Benbrook City Council Meeting
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Watch the Meeting Live from Home

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E-Response Online Services Requirements:

- Must have daily email access
- Must have telephone number
- Sign into eResponse using your candidate number and date of birth from the summons.
- Check your email daily
 - You will receive an email to verify your email address.
 - Add juryroom@tarrantcounty.com as safe sender to avoid emails going to the Junk Folder (especially if you are a gmail or yahoo user.)
 - Generally all email notifications are sent out by 5 p.m.
 - Read all emails, remembering to scroll down to read entire email. Follow instructions in the emails.
- Complete two questionnaires:
 1. Qualification questionnaire will determine qualifications along with verification for legal excuses. Read each question thoroughly.
 2. Court specific questionnaire - accessed through email when notified of court assignment -- requires some duplicate information.

If no email is received from Tarrant County Jury Services, then appear at the date and time listed on the summons.

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From Fort Worth ISD

Fort Worth ISD Announces Graduation Schedule for Spring 2022

Venues for this spring's graduation ceremonies include the Wilkerson-Greines Activity Center, Dickies Arena, and the Boulevard Heights Outdoor Facility and will take place May 31 through June 4, 2022.

Fort Worth ISD 2021-2022 Spring Graduation Schedule

Friday, June 3

Benbrook Middle High School
Dickies Arena, 4 p.m.

Saturday, June 4

Western Hills High School
Dickies Arena, 8 a.m.

Different Cultures Observe and Celebrate a New Year *by Dr. Ken Bridges*



A weary world looks ahead to this new year. New Years observances are usually a time of reflection over the past year as news organizations replay the top stories of the previous year and poke fun at the failed predictions for the year while millions of people look back on their experiences of the previous year and ponder their expectations for the year ahead.

The year 2022 will be noted for many things, especially Feb. 22, a day, which will happen to be a Tuesday, which will be all twos: 2/22/22.

Millions of people will make new years resolutions, some will be kept and others will fall by the wayside. The most common resolutions for 2021 were: losing weight/getting into shape, saving more money, traveling more, making new friends, and finding a new/better job. Public opinion polls for new years resolutions for 2022 are not that different: getting into shape, spending more time with loved ones, and saving money.

Observances of the new year date back thousands of years as ancient peoples recognized the regular shifting patterns of stars at night and the sun in the day and their connection to particular seasons. Many ancient cultures would mark the winter solstice, Dec. 21, as the beginning of the year as the days started getting longer and spring approached. In some societies, the vernal equinox, the beginning of spring in March, was seen as the beginning of the year as well as the time to begin planting. The Babylonians were known as early as 2600 BC to mark this day with cel-

ebrations and new year's resolutions.

The earliest observances of Jan. 1 for the beginning of the year began with the Romans around 713 BC. The Romans named the first month of their lunar calendar year January after the Roman god Janus, who supposedly was the god of time and also the god of beginnings and transitions. According to legend, Janus had two faces, one looking into the past and the other looking into the future, reflecting Romans looking back and looking forward with the new year's revelry.

During the Middle Ages, New Years celebrations were largely pushed aside in favor of religious observances, such as Christmas. Pope Gregory XIII restored Jan. 1 as the official observance of New Year's Day in 1582. In most countries throughout the world, Jan. 1 is an official holiday to mark the beginning of the new year. Even many non-western countries will observe Jan. 1 as New Year's Day.

The Chinese New Year, however, will not start until Feb. 1. Under the Chinese Zodiac system dating back many centuries, 2022 will mark the Year of the Tiger. The year 2021 was the Year of the Ox, a symbol of strength; and 2020 was the Year of the Rat, an animal known as a trickster in Chinese mythology. In China, the tiger is a symbol for strength, bravery, and independence and fireworks are set off to mark the new year and to also scare off demons and forces of darkness. Variations on these new years traditions are found in South Korea, Japan, and Cambodia.

Similarly, Feb. 1 will also mark the traditional Vietnamese New Year, known as Tet. The Vietnamese lunar calendar is very similar to the Chinese calendar. By tradition, a great feast is prepared, family reunions are held, and many celebrations are held in cities across the country. Many in Vietnam see Tet as the beginning of spring as well. Cleaning the home is also part of the traditional observances to symbolically clean out the bad spirits from the previous year.

In Orthodox Christian nations, the

Julian calendar is still used for religious observances. Under this calendar, the new year does not begin until Feb. 14. This is most commonly observed in nations such as Russia and Ukraine.

Different types of food are also associated with New Year's celebrations. In India, rice is eaten for prosperity in the new year. In parts of Europe and the United States, leafy green vegetables such as spinach are seen by many as symbolizing money and prosperity for the new year. In the American South, black-eyed peas are eaten for good luck. In Turkey, pomegranates are eaten for luck as a symbol of life and fertility.

There are many other superstitions for luck surrounding celebrations. In France, the weather on New Year's Day is supposed to be an omen for the year's weather. In Denmark, unused plates are smashed against doors to ward off bad luck. Brazilians wear white for good luck.

To this day, New Year's Day is still a time to reflect on the past and look forward to the days ahead. And the world hopes for a worry-free year with 2022. Ahead lies a calendar filled with possibilities.

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Is it Too Late to Reduce Your Mortgage Payment by Refinancing?



Experts say that with mortgage rates beginning to rise, refinancing your home now might be your last best chance to lower your monthly mortgage payment, as rates remain near all-time lows.

Those who refinanced early in 2021 have already reaped the benefits. Borrowers who refinanced their 30-year fixed rate mortgage into another 30-year fixed rate mortgage during the first half of 2021 saved over \$2,800 in mortgage payments on principal and interest annually, according to a recent Freddie Mac research report.

But mortgage rates are rising. Indeed, in October 2021, the 30-year fixed-rate mortgage, which is the most common type of mortgage, rose to its highest point since April, surpassing 3.0 percent. Freddie Mac forecasts that mortgage rates will continue to rise, averaging 3.5 percent for the 30-year fixed in 2022. That's up from an average of 3.0 percent in 2021.

So is it time to refinance your home loan? To help you make an informed decision, here are some answers to commonly asked questions about the refinancing process:

- What does refinancing mean? When you refinance your mortgage, you're applying for a new mortgage to replace your current one, which will result in a new rate, term and monthly payment. The most common type of refinance is a no cash-out refinance, in which you're refinancing the remaining balance on your mortgage.

- When should I consider refinancing? Generally speaking, refinances make the most financial sense when average interest rates are at least half a percentage point lower than the interest rate on your current mortgage. Another reason to consider refinancing is if your financial situation has improved, allowing you to secure a loan with a shorter term and own your home sooner. Finally, if you currently have an adjustable-rate mortgage (ARM) and it's adjusting upward, you may wish to convert to a fixed-rate

mortgage that provides you with the security of consistent payments.

- Is refinancing free? Although refinancing your mortgage could save you money both in the long- and short-term, it isn't free. For the most part, refinancing costs are similar to what you paid when you purchased your home, including a loan origination fee. There are required services involved, such as appraisals, and state and local fees that can vary significantly based on where you live. The average cost to refinance is almost \$5,000, so you should carefully consider how long you plan to stay in your home to ensure the savings to outweigh the costs.

- Who should handle my refinance? You don't have to use your current lender to refinance your loan. In fact, it's in your best interest to shop around and compare multiple lenders' loan estimates in search of the best terms and cost. It may take more time, but even a difference as small as one-quarter of a percentage point can save you thousands of dollars over the life of your home loan. The good news? Rates are often negotiable. In other words, you can ask lenders to match the rate quoted by another lender.

There may be no time like the present to lock in the lowest possible rate and receive the highest monthly savings.

As with any big financial endeavor, you'll want to do your homework, look carefully at your short- and long-term goals, and work closely with your lender to do a cost-benefit analysis.

From Tarrant County

Dial 2-1-1 to Access Free Assistance

Just as 9-1-1 became an easy way to reach emergency medical, police and fire services, 2-1-1 is revolutionizing the way Texans get information about important non-emergency services. (This information can be reached by dialing 817-258-8100.)

Highly-trained information and referral specialists housed at Tarrant County United Way assist callers in an eight-county area. This confidential and nationally-accredited service is available 24 hours a day, 365 days a year.

The information specialists help callers find answers to questions about issues such as: Caregiver Support; Child Care; Financial Assistance; Food; Health Services; Housing; In-Home Services; Legal Assistance and. Transportation.

Tarrant County United Way is one of the Area Information Centers that make up the 2-1-1 Texas network now serving all Texas counties. 2-1-1 Texas is a program of United Way in collaboration with the Texas Health and Human Services Commission.

2-1-1 information is also accessible over the Internet at <http://www.tarrantcounty211.org>.

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Three Day Weekend Forecast



Friday, Jan. 7:

AM - Sunny; high near 51. Light E/SE wind becoming S/SE at 5-10mph in the morning.

PM - Partly cloudy, with a low around 43. South wind around 10 mph.



Saturday, Jan. 8:

AM - Partly sunny; high near 71. South wind 10-15mph, with gusts as high as 20mph.

PM - Mostly clear, with a low around 47.



Sunday, Jan. 9:

AM - Mostly sunny, with a high near 60.

PM - Partly cloudy, with a low around 32.

[Extended Forecast Click Here](#)