



HOOD COUNTY EXPRESS

TRUTH. ACCOUNTABILITY. COMMUNITY.

MARCH 28, 2026

WEEKLY / MARCH 21-27 IN REVIEW

HOOD COUNTY, TEXAS

COUNTY GOVERNMENT 02 / CITY NEWS 03 / SCHOOLS 04 / COUNTY SPORTS 05-06

BUS SAFETY UPGRADE FACES FUNDING GAP

Granbury trustees make state reporting determination.

86

Buses in district fleet

27

Have three-point belts

59

Need three-point upgrades

\$1.93 MILLION

Estimated retrofit cost / 59 buses

\$9.22 MILLION

Estimated replacement cost / 59 buses

HCE STAFF WRITER

Granbury ISD trustees voted 7-0 March 23 to notify the state that the district lacked funds to replace 59 buses for three-point seat-belt compliance.

The meeting packet listed 86 buses: 27 with three-point restraints, 44 without seat belts and 15 with lap

belts. The latter two groups account for the 59 buses needing upgrades.

Staff estimated retrofitting all 59 at \$1,933,387 and replacing them at \$9,220,000. The presentation cautioned that some retrofits could void manufacturer warranties.

A district memo explained that the budget determination triggers reporting to the Texas Education Agency, with fleet and cost information due May 29. The vote did not authorize a bus purchase or award a retrofit contract.

Source: Granbury ISD approved March 23 minutes; Granbury ISD March 23 bus presentation; Granbury ISD school-bus memo

TRUSTEES APPROVE ELECTION-POLICY UPDATES

HCE STAFF WRITER

Granbury trustees voted 6-1 March 23 to approve local policies BBB and BDAA, matching the board-term

election resolution passed the previous month.

Stuart Neal made the motion and Calvin Lawrence seconded it. Tim

Bolton cast the lone dissenting vote, according to the approved minutes.

Source: Granbury ISD approved March 23 minutes

COUNTY GOVERNMENT

02

COUNTY DELAYS DATA-CENTER VOTES



Hood County Courthouse, June 2018. File photo; cropped. Photo adaptation: creativecommons.org/licenses/by-sa/4.0/. | Michael Barera; perspective correction by Jim Evans / CC BY-SA 4.0

HCE STAFF WRITER

Hood County commissioners unanimously postponed action on Projects Red and Yellow on March 24 to allow more information to be gathered and reviewed.

Commissioner Nannette Samuelson made the motion, and Commissioner Dave Eagle seconded it. Discussion included the relationship between developer Starwood and MARA,

along with residents' concerns about water use and infrastructure. The vote left the two proposed data-center projects awaiting further county review.

Source: Texas Scorecard, March 25

RAIN LILY LETTER DENIED WITHOUT PLAN

HCE STAFF WRITER

Commissioners also unanimously declined to let County Judge Ron Massingill sign a Rain Lily Solar letter without a concept plan. Samuelson asked project representatives to put their technical information into a plan for review.

The action concerned the proposed letter and planning requirements; it did not amount to a blanket ban on solar development.

Source: Texas Scorecard, March 25; Proposed Rain Lily county letter

THE UNSIGNED LETTER

HCE STAFF WRITER

The proposed letter, addressed to Rain Lily project developer Brooke Taylor, described the project as exempt from platting because it would not subdivide land or establish public streets. It asserted that no county approval or permit had been required when the company first inquired, except for development in a designated flood-hazard area.

The text still called for state and federal approvals and consultation with the county fire marshal and emergency management on hazard mitigation. The court did not approve the proposed letter March 24.

Source: Proposed Rain Lily county letter

CITY NEWS & PUBLIC SERVICE

03

CITY WARNS OF UTILITY-PAYMENT SCAM



Granbury City Hall, June 2018. File photo; cropped. Photo adaptation: CC BY-SA 4.0, creativecommons.org/licenses/by-sa/4.0/. | Michael Barera / Wikimedia Commons

HCE STAFF WRITER

Granbury issued a March 27 warning after a resident reported a caller demanding an immediate payment to avoid losing electricity. The caller directed the resident to a

store or another payment location under a short deadline.

The city said its utility providers do not demand immediate phone payments, require gift cards or retail payments, or threaten shutoff within

hours without prior notice. Residents were urged to hang up, withhold money and personal information, and call Utility Billing at 682-205-2777, option 7.

Source: City of Granbury, March 27

RESIDENTS QUESTION THE CITY MANAGER

HCE STAFF WRITER

Granbury's March 24 resident-question session brought City Manager Chris Coffman to the City Hall council chambers. The city invited questions in person and by email for the 2 p.m. gathering at 116 W. Bridge St.

Coffman said the new wastewater plant was expected to operate by the end of May, according to the Hood County News. He also described a draft data-center ordinance set for discussion April 7 at a joint council and Planning and Zoning Commission meeting. Those dates were projected milestones.

Source: Granbury session notice, March 18; Hood County News, March 28

ALERT TEST ANNOUNCED FOR APRIL 2

HCE STAFF WRITER

Granbury posted notice March 24 that Hood County would participate in a statewide emergency-alert test Thursday, April 2, at 10 a.m. The city repeated the information in its March 27 newsletter.

Residents outdoors might hear warning sirens, while test messages could also arrive by telephone, text or email. The city said no action would be required for the exercise and asked residents to share the notice with others.

Source: Granbury alert notice, March 24; City of Granbury, March 27

SCHOOLS & STUDENT ACHIEVEMENT

04

DISTRICT ANNOUNCES
LEADERSHIP CHANGESEMMETT WHITEFIELD
ANNOUNCES RETIREMENT

HCE STAFF WRITER

Granbury ISD announced Chief Financial Officer Emmett Whitefield's retirement March 24, marking the close of 27 years in public education, including 25 school years with the district.

Whitefield began as a Granbury staff accountant in February 1999. He later held accounting and financial leadership jobs in Granbury and Weatherford before becoming Granbury's chief financial officer in 2021.

The district credited his tenure with supporting financial accountability. Its announcement reported 10 consecutive years of Superior Achievement ratings, including three straight perfect scores.

Whitefield earned the Registered Texas School Business Administrator designation in 2011. Granbury ISD said it would begin the search for its next chief financial officer and share updates with staff and the community.

Source: Granbury ISD March 24 announcement

MAGGIE WALTON
NAMED TO DISTRICT ROLE

HCE STAFF WRITER

Granbury ISD named Acton Elementary Principal Maggie Walton its director of strategic initiatives March 23. She was scheduled to begin the new role after the 2025-26 school year.

Walton brought 16 years in education, including 14 at Acton Elementary and four as its principal, the district said.

Her new responsibilities include coordinating district priorities with board goals and the strategic plan, supporting instructional approaches, strengthening leadership development and working across campuses and departments.

The position serves the district's four focus areas: student achievement, human capital, culture, and stewardship of resources and facilities. The district planned to begin selecting Acton's next principal and provide families with updates.

Source: Granbury ISD March 23 appointment

TRUSTEES CELEBRATE STUDENT ACHIEVEMENT

HCE STAFF WRITER

Granbury ISD's March 23 board meeting celebrated students whose accomplishments reached state and national levels.

The Granbury Middle School Robotic Eels were recognized for their Unified Robotics state championship. Team members Alem Webb, Mateo Alvarez, Mason Collado and Finn Burton also helped present

the pledges. Misty Ingmire coached the team.

Trustees honored Granbury High School senior Shanice Gibson for selection among the Regeneron Science Talent Search's Top 300 Scholars, and recognized nine state-finalist swimmers alongside coach Charles Overton.

Cameron Ward received the Shottenkirk Senior of the Month recognition. A swimmer, Ward also led the Junior Optimist Club and the UIL Social Studies Team. The district's March 24 recap highlighted the students' achievement and service.

Source: Granbury ISD March 24 board recap

ROBOTICS / REGENERON SCIENCE / STATE SWIMMING

TOLAR SPORTS

RATTLERS DROP TWO CLOSE GAMES

PEASTER 9

TOLAR 7
March 24 / At Tolar

PEASTER 11

TOLAR 10
March 27 / At Peaster

HCE STAFF WRITER

Tolar lost two close baseball games to Peaster during the week, falling 9-7 at home March 24 and 11-10 on the road March 27.

In Tuesday’s game, Tolar erased a 5-0 deficit with five runs in the fifth inning, then added a run in the sixth to move ahead 6-5.

Peaster scored four times in the top of the seventh. Tolar answered with one run but finished two short. The Rattlers collected eight hits.

Source: MaxPreps March 24 baseball box score; Star-Telegram March 24 baseball scores; Star-Telegram March 27 baseball scores

LADY RATTLERS SHUT OUT COMANCHE

TOLAR

14

SOFTBALL / MARCH 24

COMANCHE

0

AT TOLAR

HCE STAFF WRITER

Tolar defeated Comanche 14-0 in softball March 24 at home.

The Lady Rattlers kept the visiting team off the scoreboard while posting a double-digit run total.

Source: MaxPreps March 24 softball result; Star-Telegram March 24 softball scores

NINE-RUN FOURTH PROPELS INDIANS

LIPAN

14

BASEBALL / MARCH 24

GRAFORD

4

FIVE INNINGS

HCE STAFF WRITER

Lipan broke a 4-4 tie with nine runs in the fourth inning and defeated visiting Graford 14-4 in baseball March 24.

The Indians scored twice in each of the first two innings. Graford’s four runs came in the second, leaving the teams level until Lipan’s fourth-inning surge.

Lipan added a run in the fifth to end the game under the run rule. The Indians finished with 11 hits, while Graford had seven.

Source: MaxPreps March 24 baseball box score

LIPAN SOFTBALL WINS AT HOME

5-1

Lipan over Graford

March 24 / Softball

TWO HOME WINS

Baseball and softball

Lipan vs. Graford / March 24

HCE STAFF WRITER

Lipan’s softball team defeated Graford 5-1 at home March 24.

Both Lipan diamond teams earned home wins over Graford that day, with baseball also recording a 14-4 victory.

Source: Star-Telegram March 24 softball scores; MaxPreps March 24 baseball box score; MaxPreps dated Graford game entry

LAKE GRANBURY MEASURES 99% FULL



Lake Granbury in NASA World Wind. Public-domain geographic archive uploaded in 2006; not a March 2026 photograph. | NASA World Wind / Wikimedia Commons

692.48 FEET

Lake elevation / March 25

132,115

Acre-feet stored / March 25

HCE STAFF WRITER

Lake Granbury stood at 99 percent full in the Brazos River Authority's March 25 reservoir report. The authority listed the lake's elevation at 692.48 feet and its stored volume at 132,115 acre-feet.

The same report put BRA's main-stem storage at 90 percent of capacity, with 657,764 acre-feet in storage. Possum Kingdom, Granbury and Whitney are operated together as a subsystem, and the report bases

their drought-trigger storage levels on that collective capacity. Granbury's percentage therefore describes the individual lake, while the main-stem figure describes the authority's managed storage group.
Source: Brazos River Authority, March 25

PANCAKES SUPPORT FIRE VOLUNTEERS

NEARLY \$10,000

North Hood County VFD fundraiser
March 21 / Warren's Backyard

HCE STAFF WRITER

North Hood County Volunteer Fire Department's March 21 pancake breakfast at Warren's Backyard raised nearly \$10,000, Hood County News reported.
The department planned to replace aging gear lockers and possibly add day-room recliners for firefighters resting while on call. Firefighters prepared and served the meal. The fundraiser began in 2024 as a way to meet more community members.
Source: Hood County News, March 28

ARTS & ENTERTAINMENT

08

ANYTHING GOES
FINAL SCHEDULED WEEKEND

Granbury Opera House, June 2018. File photo; cropped. Photo adaptation: CC BY-SA 4.0, creativecommons.org/licenses/by-sa/4.0/. | Michael Barera / Wikimedia Commons

HCE STAFF WRITER

March 21-22 marked the scheduled final weekend of Granbury Theatre Company's *Anything Goes* at the historic Granbury Opera House. The company's published run stretched from February 27 through March 22.

The theatre's own *Acting Up* with GTC podcast identified Jay Lewis as director, with Sophie Warren playing Reno Sweeney and Jake Hamilton playing Billy Crocker. The Cole Porter musical's story follows an

Atlantic crossing filled with romantic complications and disguised identities.

Source: Granbury Theatre Company podcast; TheaterMania production calendar

WATERCOLOR WORKSHOP PLANNED

HCE STAFF WRITER

Watercolor artist David Tripp described preparations for a March 27-28 workshop with the Lake Granbury Art Association in a March 25 post on his art blog. He wrote that he would spend the following day gathering materials for the Friday-Saturday teaching session.

Tripp also announced plans to attend a 4 p.m. reception Saturday, March 28, for a new show including his work at Barons Creek Vineyards on the Granbury square. His update discussed an interest in giving his watercolor compositions more open space.

Source: David Tripp, March 25

RETROSPECTIVE EDITION

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