

# COURTYARD

*Here for all of Wood County*



January 17, 2022

Dear Friends,

Happy New Year! What a year this has been, full of unprecedented challenges and what I like to call "opportunities for advancement." Through it all, our county government and our community have come together, confirming that this county is a great place to live, work, play and grow.

The upcoming year is our opportunity to continue supporting one another through current challenges and creating new solutions for future challenges, whatever they may be. As the past year has taught us, community is everything and we are all connected. If we are all connected, then there is nothing we cannot do if we are doing it together.

In his book, *Why Some Communities SUCCEED, Why Some Fail, And What To Do About It*, author Brian Cole says that communities must have strong souls, hearts, minds and bodies in order to thrive and create significant change.

Whatever your personal resolutions might be this year, let's all strive for strong souls, hearts, minds and bodies so that we can all thrive this year and create the change we choose. What is it that you want for Wood County? Let me hear from you. My door is always open and I am always grateful for the opportunity to serve you. Have a Happy and Prosperous New Year!

*Judge Lucy*



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## Tips for Lower Winter Electric Bills

Winter brings lower temps and higher electric bills. Prepare now—before another polar vortex settles over Texas—and manage your energy use. Here are some tips to help you lower your winter electric bill:

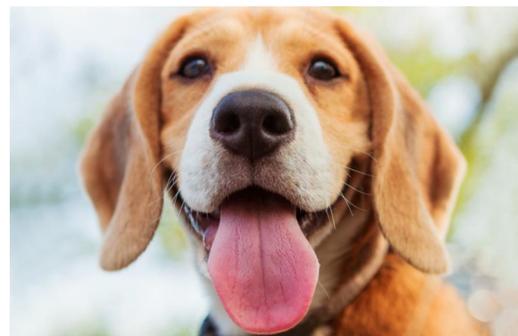
- Seal any gaps that create drafts in your home, and augment your insulation if needed.
- Keep an eye on the thermostat and set it as low as comfortably possible. Bundle up with sweaters, socks and slippers while in the house.
- Keep shades, curtains and blinds closed at night to keep out cold air, but open window coverings during the day to bring in the sun's warming rays.
- Always turn off lights you don't need, and avoid using electric space heaters whenever possible as most use a lot of electricity.

Read the [full article from Texas Co-op Power](#) for more great ways to save.

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## Safe Outdoor Dogs Act

The Safe Outdoor Dogs Act (SB 5) goes into effect on January 18, 2022. The Safe Outdoor Dogs Act does not prevent owners from tethering dogs. The law requires that unattended dogs are tethered in a way that keeps them and the people around them safe, and there are several exceptions to the law.



The Safe Outdoor Dogs Act does not apply to dogs who are:

- Attached to a cable-tie out or trolley system.
- Camping or using other public recreational areas.
- Herding livestock or assisting with farming tasks.
- Hunting or participating in field trials.
- In an open-air truck bed while the owner completes a temporary task.

"The passage of the Safe Outdoor Dogs Act is a critical step toward protecting restrained dogs and improving public safety, while still respecting the freedoms of Texas dog

owners," said Stacy Sutton Kerby, Director of Government Relations for THLN (Texas Human Legislation Network).

The Safe Outdoor Dogs Act will ensure dogs have access to drinkable water and can move around without being trapped in standing water or any other dangerous substance. Along with preventing exposure to extreme weather, the Safe Outdoor Dogs Act removed the 24-hour waiting period that previously prevented animal control and law enforcement officers from taking immediate action. Going forward, officers will be able to assist tethered dogs in distress as soon as they arrive on the scene.

Additional information and fact sheets about the Safe Outdoor Dogs Act can be found on [THLN's website](#).

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## **East Texas Real Estate is HOT, HOT, HOT!**

This has been a record-breaking year in many respects, including for the real estate market. "The East Texas market has seen a dramatic impact since the pandemic with a majority of our buyers coming in from out of state to escape the blue states and mandates," says Tristan Mosher, a local realtor with DWELL Realty, [www.dwelleasttexas.com](http://www.dwelleasttexas.com) in Tyler, Texas who grew up in the Mineola area.

Viewing the statistics from November 2021, compared to this same time last year:

- Home sales in Wood County have decreased 11% although active listings were up 18.2%
- Monthly housing inventory increased to 2.6 months compared to 2.3 months
- Number of days on the market decreased to 28 days
- Median home prices were up 15.9% to \$204,500
- 60% of the listings that sold were in the \$100,000-299,999 range

Mosher adds, "The market tends to slow down around the holidays and typically picks back up in February. In Mineola especially, inventory is currently very low. I predict continued sales growth in the Wood County area as many people are still relocating to this area and some aren't able to afford areas like Tyler."

### **What does this Mean to You?**

For buyers, there is some inventory out there currently and by February there should be more to choose from, in the price range you are looking for and at competitive

prices. Properties are moving quickly, but the market is not so competitive as to require you to act too quickly.

For sellers, our East Texas area is still in demand and is a desirable area to relocate to. Many people are anxious to leave the urban areas in search of a better quality of life and reasonable living costs. Many sellers are getting offers at asking price and with desirable terms and short closings.

“The upward trend will continue which is a great thing for the expansion of the local economy in our smaller towns,” concludes Mosher.

For more information, visit Texas A & M’s [Texas Real Estate Research Center website](#).

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## **FREE PRODUCE ITEMS AVAILABLE**

**No eligibility requirements, paperwork or ID required.**

### **Bud Moody Stadium**

**Morris Avenue - Quitman, TX 75783**

***(Enter from West Side Drive from Cliff Street)***

**Distributions: 3rd Wednesday of each month**

**10:00am to 12:00pm**

while supplies last



## **Reminder of Food Distribution - East Texas Food Bank - JAN. 19**

The East Texas Food Bank (ETFB) started monthly food distribution in December. These distributions are available on the third Wednesday of each month from 10 a.m. – 12 p.m. (while supplies last) at the Bud Moody Stadium in Quitman.

Those in need should enter on the west side from Cliff Street. There are no eligibility requirements, paperwork or ID requirements.

### **Volunteering Opportunity**

Volunteers are needed to help with the ETFB food distributions. Any individuals, families, or groups wanting to help can visit [www.easttexasfoodbank.org](http://www.easttexasfoodbank.org) or go to <http://vhub.at/quitman> to sign up or get more information.

Thank you to the East Texas Food Bank for providing this great service to our community!

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## Wood County—How Many Bars Do We Have?

Got your attention, right? However, the topic is broadband so the bars are referring to “connectivity” and not beverages.

Pre-COVID it was evident that having reliable wireless and broadband coverage in Wood County was a challenge depending upon where you are in the county. Many in rural America know firsthand of the gaps in coverage, but this gap was not evident in the data that the Federal Communications Commission is using.

Accurate mapping is important so that government knows where to send investment dollars to build out infrastructure. After the last two years, it's become even more apparent that broadband is critical to building future-ready communities in Texas. Without access to high-speed internet, Wood County, and many other rural communities, are becoming increasingly ...

[Read the full article](#)

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*“I like the dreams of the future better than the history of the past.”*

*Thomas Jefferson*

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## Sabine River Authority - Grant to Wood County

In December, the Sabine River Authority announced a community grant to Wood County for the upcoming Bassmaster Elite Fishing Tournament to be held May 19-22 at Lake Fork in Quitman. This year's tournament hopes to be the biggest event for anglers and families/visitors that the area has seen in many years. The amount of the generous grant was \$85,000, which is a tremendous help to the county and to the Wood County Economic Development Commission who host the event each year.

Be on the lookout for more information on this event in the coming months.

  
 **Register**   
**to vote by**  
**★★★★ January 31st ★★★★★**

**VOTETEXAS.GOV**  
POWERED BY THE TEXAS SECRETARY OF STATE

## Upcoming Primary Elections—Your Vote Counts!

Voting in the Primary Elections is critical in Wood County as the results often determine the winners of the overall election. There are several county offices up for election in 2022 as well as numerous state and federal offices. Get to know the candidates and show up to make your vote count.

**Where can I find a voter registration application?**

Applications are always available at the Elections Administration office located at 200 W. Bermuda St, Quitman, TX. You may also print a [voter registration application](#) and send it to PO Box 970, Quitman, TX 75783. Applications can also be found at local libraries, post offices, the sub-courthouse and Justice of the Peace offices.

For more information on how to register and vote in Wood County see the [Election FAQs](#) on the county's website.

[Click here](#) to check and see if you are registered to vote.

Important dates:

- **Register to vote deadline - January 31, 2022**
- Early voting - February 14-25, 2022
- Primary elections - March 1, 2022



Images courtesy of the Winnsboro Center for the Arts

## AROUND THE COUNTY

The Winnsboro Center for the Arts is hosting The Magic of Light exhibit featuring Barbara & James Mason from January 28 - February 28. Also, check out the 9th Annual Men in the Arts Exhibition before it ends on January 24th.

For more information on these exhibitions and to see their great lineup of concerts, classes, workshops and more for 2022 visit

<https://winnsborocenterforthearts.com>.



The Mineola Historical Museum is honoring Black History Month by hosting a special presentation by The Pleasant Hill Quilt Club on February 5th at 10 a.m. The event will be held at the First United Methodist Church Ministries Center - 612 N Newsom Street in Mineola. Admission is free. For more information contact Sharon Chamblee at 903-520-9795.

Mineola's Historic Select Theater, the longest continuously operating theater in Texas, is seeking the community's help to preserve its iconic neon tower. A fundraiser is scheduled February 5 with proceeds benefiting the theater and Kindness Kottage, both local nonprofits. See the flyer below for more information and visit <https://lakecountryplayhouse.com> for more information.

**SAVE**   
**THE NEON TOWER** 

**The 101 Year Old Historic Select Theater  
needs your help to save the iconic neon tower!**

**We are gratefully accepting your donation of  
product, coupons, services, antiques, or  
collectibles. Items do not need to be new, but in  
good condition for the 1st ever CHARITY AUCTION.**

**February 5, 2022 in the Theater Annex at  
119 N. Johnson Street.**

**In exchange for your donation, you will receive  
public thanks through our social media/website  
and during the auction.**

**Contact our Executive Director at  
[george@lakecountryplayhouse.com](mailto:george@lakecountryplayhouse.com) or send him a  
TEXT to 903-707-0927**

***THE HISTORIC SELECT THEATER 114 N. JOHNSON ST, MINEOLA, TX 75773***  
A 501C3 Non-Profit

Wood County Judge  
**LUCY  
HEBRON**

100 Main St., Quitman, TX 75783 • (903) 763-1236 • [www.mywoodcounty.com](http://www.mywoodcounty.com)

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STAY IN TOUCH



Lucy Hebron | 100 S. Main Street, Quitman, TX 75783

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