



NWTHS suicide prevention event raises awareness

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AMARILLO GLOBE-NEWS

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‘Transparency and trust’



Cleaning bottles and a heavily used wash sink sit on a workbench inside the Texas Department of Public Safety crime laboratory in Amarillo during a National Forensic Science Week tour on Sept. 17.

PHOTOS BY MICHAEL CUVIELLO/AMARILLO GLOBE-NEWS

DPS crime lab tour details how chemists analyze seized drugs

Michael CuvIELlo
Amarillo Globe-News | USA TODAY NETWORK

The Texas Department of Public Safety (DPS) Crime Laboratory opened its doors to the public Wednesday, Sept. 17, giving Amarillo residents and local media a rare look at the scientific work that underpins thousands of criminal cases each year. The open house was part of National Forensic Science Week, an annual effort to highlight the behind-the-scenes professionals who turn raw evidence into courtroom facts.

The Amarillo lab serves 26 counties across the Texas Panhandle, stretching from Childress to the Oklahoma border. From September 2024 through August 2025, the lab received 4,160 evidence submissions and returned nearly 2,940 completed cases to law enforcement agencies. In addition, 147 cases were destroyed after courts issued final orders. Evidence technicians manage everything from intake and secure storage to returning items once analysis is complete.

Technician Nancy Arreola, who has worked at the lab for nine years, described her job as being “a custodian of all the evidence that comes in.” She and two colleagues receive everything from seized



Brandon Conrad, manager of the Texas Department of Public Safety crime laboratory in Amarillo, explains how gas chromatography equipment is used to identify controlled substances.

drugs to trace materials and maintain strict chain-of-custody procedures to ensure evidence integrity. While DPS crime labs across Texas test a wide variety of substances, methamphetamine remains the most common drug in the Panhandle, accounting for more than half of Amarillo’s submissions. THC products, particularly vape cartridges, rank second, followed by fentanyl and cocaine. Lab

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Miss Rodeo Texas 2025 Rihanna Santos shares her excitement about bringing the pageant to Amarillo, where she says the city’s Western heritage reflects the spirit of the competition.

MICHAEL CUVIELLO/AMARILLO GLOBE-NEWS

City hosts rodeo queen contest

Michael CuvIELlo
Amarillo Globe-News
USA TODAY NETWORK

Amarillo will host the Miss Rodeo Texas Pageant for the next three years beginning in 2026, bringing one of the state’s premier rodeo queen competitions to a city leaders say perfectly captures Texas’ Western heritage while boosting its tourism brand.

During a press conference Thursday, Sept. 18, Nikki Woodward, state director for Miss Rodeo Texas, announced that the 2026 pageant will run June 16–20, with Amarillo also hosting the 2027 and 2028 events. Pageant activities will be centered at the Embassy Suites Amarillo

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Texas A&M president stepping down

By Jessica Priest
THE TEXAS TRIBUNE

Texas A&M University President Mark A. Welsh III will step down on Friday after more than a week of turmoil sparked by a viral video of a student confronting a professor over gender content in a children’s literature course, the Texas A&M University System announced Thursday.

The video, along with an audio recording of Welsh initially refusing to fire



Professor Melissa McCoul, first circulated online on Sept. 8 after state Rep. Brian Harrison, R-Midlothian, shared it on the social media platform X.

Welsh fired McCoul a day later, but the move did not satisfy Harrison, or Lt. Gov. Dan Patrick, who did not think Welsh handled the situation properly.

“His ambivalence on the issue and his

dismissal of the student’s concerns by immediately taking the side of the professor is unacceptable,” Patrick posted on X last week. “Most parents, students, and Aggie alumni expect Texas A&M to reflect the values of our state and our nation as well as A&M’s rich history. If President Welsh will not or cannot reflect those values, then change needs to happen.”

In a statement on Thursday,

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