



HELP US STUFF THE STOCKING!

Christmas Stockings for Overseas U.S. Military

We're sending handmade stockings full of cards, candy, toiletries, games, and more to our service men and women who are serving overseas during the Christmas season. Let's bless those who serve us all by donating items to make and put into the stockings. Please make donations by October 9th.

Come by the First United Bank Colonies location for more information.



THE COLONIES | 45th & Soncy | (806) 677-2060

www.FirstUnited.Bank

Member FDIC



The Independent Bankers Association of Texas recently honored FirstBank Southwest in Amarillo with a Best of Community Banking Award. PROVIDED BY FIRSTBANK SOUTHWEST

FirstBank Southwest wins community banking award

Amarillo Globe-News
USA TODAY NETWORK

The Independent Bankers Association of Texas, the largest state community banking association in the nation, recently honored FirstBank Southwest in Amarillo with a Best of Community Banking Award.

The bank received the Community Spirit Gold Eagle Award in the Bank Culture category for its “Faith Family Bank Fund” entry.

The Faith Family Bank Fund grew from a moment of crisis into a permanent source of support for FirstBank Southwest employees. After an EF3 tornado struck Perryton on June 15, 2023, causing widespread damage

and directly affecting the bank and several of its employees, coworkers and shareholders came together to help those facing immediate needs.

That initial response provided \$11,500 in assistance to employees affected by the tornado, helping with expenses such as groceries, home repairs, property damage, and school supplies. FirstBank Southwest also dedicated an additional \$10,000 to recovery efforts throughout the Perryton community.

The impact of that response inspired the bank to make the Faith Family Bank Fund a permanent employee assistance program.

Employees can now contribute through payroll deduction, with 35

team members currently participating. Requests for assistance are reviewed anonymously by a committee, allowing support to be determined based on individual circumstances and need.

Since its creation, the fund has provided an additional \$12,445 in employee assistance beyond the initial tornado relief.

What began as coworkers helping one another through a devastating event has become an ongoing reflection of FirstBank Southwest’s culture and a way to ensure employees have support when unexpected hardships arise.

See AWARD, Page 2A

Texas power grid beats the heat

Renewable energy helped avoid summer blackouts

Lynn Walker
Wichita Falls Times Record News
USA TODAY NETWORK

The Texas electrical grid made it through a hot summer without conservation alerts or rolling blackouts, according to the Reliable Grid Project, a national network of experts who keep an eye on energy supply.

At an online forum Tuesday, Oliver Bernstein of Reliable Grid Project, said renewables and battery storage played a significant role in enabling the Electric Reliability Council of Texas grid to perform better than other grids across the nation this summer.

Joshua Rhodes, a research scientist at the University of Texas at Austin, said wind provided about 27% of ERCOT’s electricity, and solar provided about 16%.

“Both of those are growing,” he said.

Rhodes said the use of natural gas to make electricity stayed relatively constant while coal showed signs of “getting squeezed out.”

He said while demand for electricity set records multiple times during the summer, both wind and solar usage also set records.

“And then batteries also continued to set a whole lot of records,” he said.

Nikhil Kumar, program director of GridLab, a nonprofit that distributes technical expertise on electrical grids, said parts of the country set heat records during the summer.

See GRID, Page 2A

Man faces charge for soliciting explicit images from teen girls

Gabriel Monte
Lubbock Avalanche-Journal
USA TODAY NETWORK

A 53-year-old Borger man was arrested after a federal investigation into child predators online revealed he used Snapchat to solicit explicit images and videos from teenage girls.

Tharon Thomas Drake appeared Wednesday before U.S. Magistrate Judge Lee Ann Reno for an initial appearance after he was arrested on a federal complaint charging him with receipt of child pornography, which carries a punishment of five to 20 years in federal prison.

His charge stems from a 2024 Federal Bureau of Investigation undercover operation targeting online child sexual predators.

In April 2024, a KiK user, who identified himself as Andrew, contacted an



A 53-year-old Borger man was arrested after a federal investigation into child predators online revealed he used Snapchat to solicit explicit images and videos from teenage girls. GLOBE-NEWS FILE PHOTO

FBI agent posing as a 13-year-old girl.

For several weeks, the KiK user asked the agent, whom he believed was a 13-year-old girl, for full body pic-

tures. The agent sent the man images of an adult woman made to look like a 13-year-old girl.

The conversations continued with Andrew sending the agent sexually explicit messages.

The agent who wrote the complaint indicated the KiK engaged in grooming practices to build trust with the 13-year-old girl with the goal of engaging in inappropriate behavior.

In March 2025, the KiK user tried to move their conversations to Snapchat, a popular communication app that features “self-destructing” messages, which gives online predators a sense of security, the complaint states.

In June, agents obtained the KiK account user’s I.P. Address and traced it to Drake’s home in Borger.

See CHARGE, Page 2A

Subscriber-only eNewspaper

The eNewspaper is an electronic copy of your print newspaper. Enjoy every page by going to amarillo.com/enewspaper or scan this code on your mobile device. You will also find late news and sports in the bonus sections. Check it out today!



Volume 116 | No. 283
To subscribe 806-345-3407
©2026 \$3.00

