



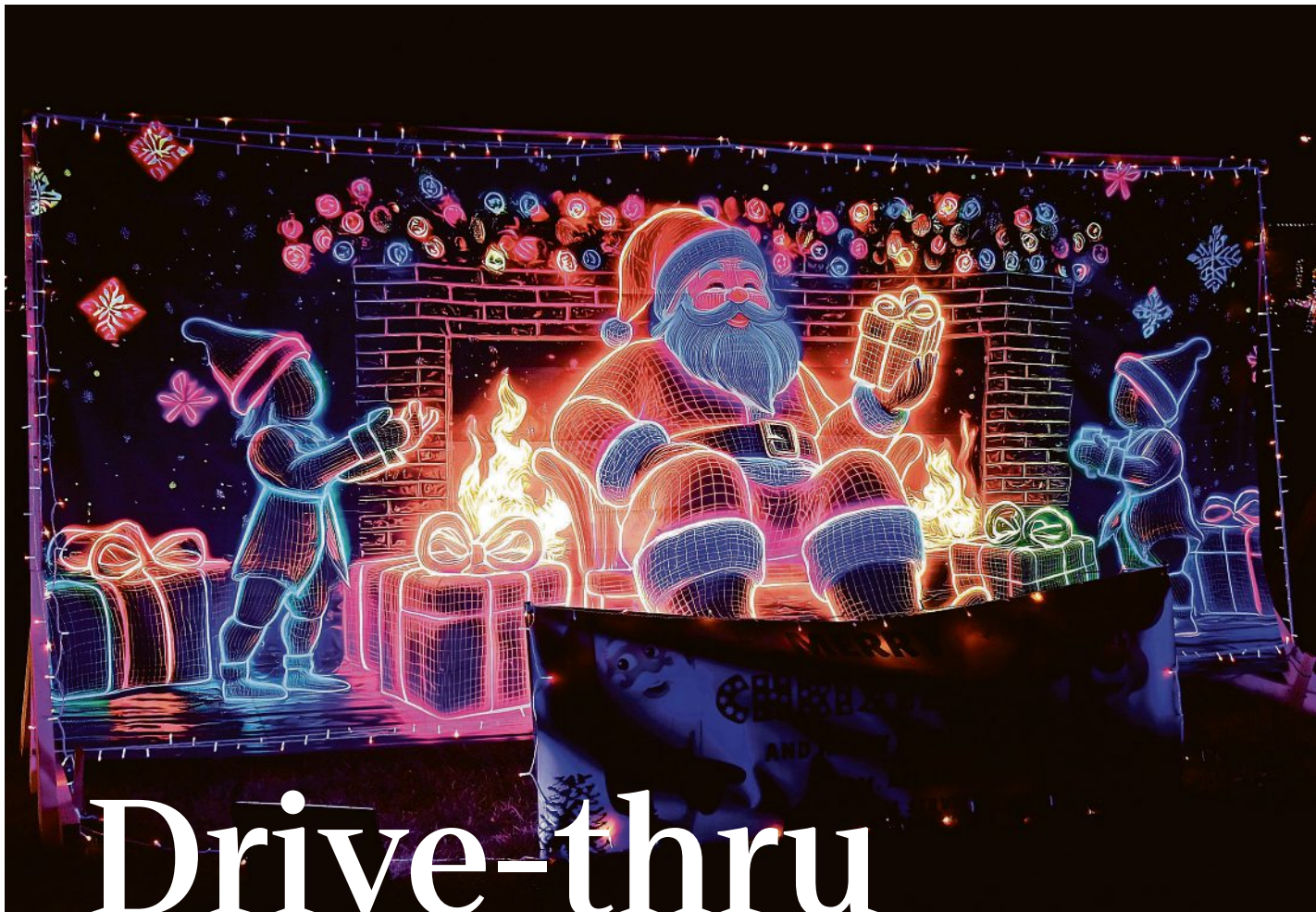
Holiday cheer on a budget: How Thriftmas saves cash, the planet

BUSINESS, 7B

Abilene Reporter-News

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Drive-thru Christmas

Family-favorite holiday tradition
celebrates 36th year at Abilene SSLC

A glowing Santa scene is one of the displays at the Abilene State Supported Living Center's Christmas Lane Dec. 6. This is the 36th year for the drive-through holiday exhibit.

"I just invite everybody up to Christmas Lane. Come out and enjoy it. We've made it for Abilene and the Big Country."

Bill Gilliland
Chairman, Abilene State Supported Living Center's Christmas Lane

Ronald W. Erdrich Abilene Reporter-News | USA TODAY NETWORK – TEXAS

A family-favorite holiday tradition has returned to the Big Country. The Abilene State Supported Living Center's Christmas Lane, now in its 36th year, will be open nightly on the SSLC's campus. • If you've never been, visitors enter the lighted display from the gate at 2501 Maple St. in Abilene and then drive slowly through a wandering path of illuminated Christmas scenes sponsored by Big Country businesses. • The display begins after sunset, and drivers are advised to dim their lights and tune their radios to an FM frequency playing holiday music for the tour.



TOP: A gingerbread man waves to passing motorists.
BOTTOM: Mrs. Claus leans in to plant a kiss on her husband's cheek, one of the many dolls from the collection of Dave and Ada Collins on display.

PHOTOS BY RONALD W. ERDRICH/REPORTER-NEWS

At the end, visitors can either exit or park and enter the Christmas Lane HQ for more Christmas fun. It will be open nightly until Dec. 24 with activities in the headquarters 6-9 p.m. during school and 6-10 p.m. on weekends and when the holiday break begins. Outdoor light displays only will be featured 6-10 p.m. Dec. 24-28.

Bill Gilliland, who has been dubbed "Mr. Christmas," is the chairman of the holiday program. He described this year's displays and what visitors can expect.

"The displays change some each year. We have some new ones, and we have some that have been here forever," he said. "Like Jackson Brothers (Feed) down here, they've been here nearly as long as we have."

At least 120 holiday displays are arranged for the event. A Santa's workshop building is a new addition to Christmas Lane.

Gilliland said volunteers put it together in time for this year's display.

And speaking of the big red guy, kids have the opportunity to call his workshop directly thanks to the North Pole Hotline phone booths outside the headquarters entrance.

Gilliland said they had set that up

See **CHRISTMAS**, Page 3A

Man arrested in connection with wife's homicide

Trish Choate

Abilene Reporter-News
USA TODAY NETWORK – TEXAS

An Abilene man has been charged with murder in connection with the stabbing death of his wife, Desree Dominique Sanchez, on Dec. 6, according to a media release from the Abilene Police Department.

Anthony Emilio Sanchez was being held Wednesday evening in the Taylor County Jail on a \$1million bond, online jail records show.

The murder charge is a first degree felony carrying a punishment of up to life in prison.

About 10:18 a.m. Dec. 6, Abilene police were called for an injured person in the 700 block of Swift Water Drive, APD said in an earlier media release. A caller told police someone had been stabbed, and the suspect was no longer there.

Officers arrived to find 32-year-old Desree Sanchez unconscious, police said. Emergency personnel transported her to a local hospital where she was pronounced dead.

After the stabbing, Anthony Sanchez fled the scene with a 1-year-old child, leading to a law enforcement pursuit involving outside agencies, according to allegations in the media release. The chase ended south of Stamford when Anthony Sanchez crashed his vehicle.

He was transported to a local hospital and treated there until Wednesday, police said. Desree Sanchez's 1-year-old son was also in the vehicle when it crashed, police said. The boy sustained minor injuries, but he is safe.

Agencies involved in the pursuit and crash are filing charges related to those incidents, the APD said.

Detectives from APD's Major Crimes Bureau are continuing to investigate, police said.

The APD thanked the Anson, Stamford and Hamlin police departments, the Jones County Sheriff's Office and the Texas Department of Public Safety for their assistance, according to a media release.

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