



CELEBRATING EXCELLENCE

CISD's Surratt takes home top Best Preps honors...more on 6A.

The Panola Watchman

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SHOP EXPANDS

The Popcorn Place opens downtown location with Chamber celebration

ELIZABETH PINKSTON
Staff Writer

A longtime local favorite is popping up in a new spot closer to the heart of the city.

The Popcorn Place celebrated its recent relocation with a Panola County Chamber of Commerce ribbon cutting April 28, marking its move to a downtown storefront near the Carthage square, across from the Esquire Theatre and Grind and Grain Beverage Co..

Owner Kaylee Ransom said the move reflects both growth and a desire to be more accessible to the community the business has served for decades.

"We recently moved downtown across from the Esquire Theatre, and we offer a wide variety of gifts," Ransom said during the ceremony. "We make our own in-house popcorn, and we're also florists."

The business, which has been part of Carthage for

nearly 40 years, offers popcorn, candy, gifts and floral arrangements for a range of occasions. Ransom, a 2021 Carthage High School graduate, took ownership of the shop last year after previously working there as a teenager.

Since then, she said the store has continued to grow, prompting the move from its previous location to a larger space closer to the downtown square.

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Owner Kaylee Hoell Ransom is joined by Chamber officials and community members during a ribbon cutting for The Popcorn Place's new location on W. Sabine Street. (Contributed Photos)

STATE BOUND

Carthage High School Speech and Debate Team Earns 2nd at Regionals, Advances Multiple Students to State



Carthage High School regional UIL competitors (from left): senior Clayton Elliott, freshman Logan Sherrod, and Senior Brenden Selby. (Contributed Photo)

Special to The Watchman

Carthage ISD is proud to celebrate an outstanding showing by our UIL Speech and Debate team at the 4A Region 2 Meet, where the team earned an impressive 2nd place overall finish against some of the top programs in the state.

Leading the way was freshman Logan Sherrod, who captured 1st place in Poetry Interpretation and is advancing to the UIL State Meet. Logan delivered a remarkable performance, standing out as both the only freshman and the only female finalist in her round. Her composure and talent on a big stage continue to set her apart.

Senior Clayton Elliott also punched his ticket to state, earning 2nd place in Lincoln-Douglas Debate. Clayton's performance reflects years of dedication and preparation,

See DEBATE, Page 3A

STREET PARTY

CROWD FAVORITE

Downtown Carthage draws crowd for Tunes & Tails



Attendees gather in downtown Carthage for the annual Tunes & Tails event April 25, featuring live music, crawfish and community activities. (Elizabeth Pinkston/Panola Watchman)



ELIZABETH PINKSTON
Staff Writer

Downtown Carthage filled with live music, crawfish and community activity Saturday as Downtown Tunes & Tails returned for another year.

The annual event brought attendees to the square April 25 for an evening centered around food, music and local fellowship. While crawfish plates required tickets, the event itself was free to attend, allowing visitors to enjoy the downtown atmosphere and live entertainment.

Romero Bros. Cooking Team served crawfish plates

with corn and potatoes, continuing a popular food tradition tied to the event. Tamales were also available, along with additional food and drink options from downtown businesses and vendors.

Live music served as the centerpiece of the evening, with performances from Mindy Miller and the Dusty Boots Band, along with Chase Dawson & The Southern Impact Band. Miller, a Nashville performer and recent Top 16 finalist on NBC's "The Voice," was featured as a special guest for this year's event.

The event also gave guests



a chance to spend time downtown, with the Esquire Theater, Grind & Grain and Pop's Kitchen among the locations offering additional food, drinks and gathering space throughout the evening.

Downtown Tunes & Tails has become one of Carthage's larger community events, pairing live country music with crawfish and a street-party atmosphere.

See PARTY, Page 4A

LOCAL CONFERENCE

Pineywoods Cattle Congress Field Day set for May 15 in Carthage

Special to The Watchman

The Texas A&M AgriLife Extension Service will host the Pineywoods Cattle Congress Field Day on May 15 at Baker Ranch, 610 County Road 152, Carthage.

The event is hosted by the AgriLife Extension offices serving Angelina, Nacogdoches, Panola, San Augustine, Sabine and Shelby counties.

The hands-on educational program is designed to provide livestock producers and landowners with practical strategies to improve forage production, grazing man-

agement and overall cattle performance. The program will feature a combination of classroom instruction and field demonstrations led by AgriLife Extension specialists and industry professionals.

Registration begins at 8:30 a.m., with the program starting at 9 a.m. Lunch will be held from noon to 1 p.m.

The registration fee is \$20 and includes educational materials and lunch. Attendees must register by May 8 by contacting the AgriLife Extension office at Panola County at 903-693-0380 or email AgriLife Extension

agent Lee Dudley at lldudley@ag.tamu.edu.

Three Texas Department of Agriculture continuing education units will be available — two in integrated pest management and one general.

Wrap-up and evaluations will be held at 2 p.m.

On the agenda

Topics and speakers include:

Managing Forages from the Ground Up: Soil, Grass and Grazing Decisions — Vanessa Corriher-Olson, Ph.D., AgriLife Extension forage specialist and professor, De-

partment of Soil and Crop Sciences.

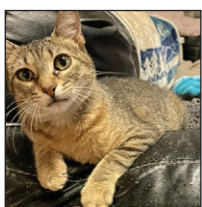
Seeing is Believing: Forage and Pasture Management in Action — Corriher-Olson.

Getting It on Target: Spray Calibration and Drones in Modern Agriculture — Darren Rozell, owner, Rozell Sprayer Manufacturing, Tyler.

Grass to Gain: Forage Decisions That Drive Cow Performance and Calf Pounds — Jason Banta, Ph.D., AgriLife Extension beef cattle specialist and professor, Department of Animal Science, Overton.

NEWS

Fefe, a playful 1- to 2-year-old cat with Kitty Cove Rescue, is social, affectionate and ready for adoption... more on 5A



EAST TEXAS GIVING DAY

NEWS

Fundraising record set following ET Giving Day... more on 5A



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Records.....2A
Briefs.....3A
Sports.....6A
Classifieds.....5B



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