

OUR 2017 PERSON OF DISTINCTION



One of four most surprised winners...

Kim Coker



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HERALDING THE
FUTURE — 2017**

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OUR FIVE UNSUNG HEROES FOR 2017

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**GROWING GREEN MILLEND WESTERN HUNT COUNTY
SPURRING ECONOMIC OPTIMISM**



An emotional Kim Coker (left), the Herald-Banner's Person of Distinction for 2017, walks through an applauding audience at the Landmark on Lee Street to accept her award Tuesday night.

HERALD-BANNER AWARDS PERSON OF DISTINCTION FOR 2017

Coker: 'I always wind up saying 'yes''

By Brad Kellar
Herald-Banner Staff

It would be hard to find a worthy cause in Greenville to which Kim Coker has not dedicated her time and energy, which is why she was chosen as the 2017 Herald-Banner Person of Distinction.

"I do have a problem with no ... and I end up saying yes," Coker admitted as she received the award during a Tuesday evening ceremony at the Landmark on Lee Street.

Coker graduated from Greenville High School. Those who knew her then said that is where her spirit of volunteerism began, as Coker was involved in several programs at the campus.

She was married to Dr. Jerry Coker for many years, caring for him through his long battle with Alzheimer's Disease. After his death, Coker became involved in Remember for Me, a Memory Walk. Coker participated in the third annual event, which was conducted Saturday inside the Greenville High School Indoor Athletic Center, and which was designed for individuals to honor their family members who are currently suffering or have suffered from Alzheimer's.

Coker is also active participant in Greenville Special Olympics, volunteering at each year's Annual Comedy Talent ?? Showcase.

"She is absolutely one of the most caring people I've ever met," said Rick Kohn with the Special Olympics. "She is very involved in just about any civic organization."

Thanks to Coker, donors to the Greenville Municipal Auditorium Seat Campaign who purchased a seat with a

plaque on the back were able to find them easily. Coker, a member of the seat campaign committee, took it upon herself to organize all the names for the plaques that went on the seats so they could be engraved.

And Coker is also dedicated to the arts in the community, taking a very active role with Hunt County Public Art. She served as chairman of the Hearts for the Arts Gala this year, and hosted the auction preview event at her home.

"And she just did an absolutely amazing job with that," said Derek Price with Hunt County Public Art. "She poured her heart and soul into it."

Price noted how Coker frequently donated and purchased items for the auction and is a devoted friend of the organization.

"She doesn't do any of this for recognition, so I think it is great that the newspaper chose her for this honor," Price said. "I really do think the world would be a better place because of people like Kim Coker, who are so generous with their time and money."

Pud Kearns, who went to Greenville High School with Coker, said beyond volunteering her services, Coker donates to multiple organizations.

"And I've never seen her say no to a request for her volunteer time," Kearns said. "She'll put on her working clothes, roll up her sleeves and ask, 'What's Next?'"

Coker was shocked upon receiving the award Tuesday, where she was greeted by a spirited standing ovation.

"I am blown away," she said. "I have

nothing to say but thank you and I love my community."

Coker noted she would never want to live anywhere but Greenville.

"There are so many people and so many things good going on around here," Coker said. "We live in a great community."

And she has an issue with people telling her Greenville is "boring" or that there is "nothing to do" in the city.

"Find something to do," Coker said, recommending anyone who may feel that way get out and become involved, just as she has. "It's out there and it is so rewarding."

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OUR UNSUNG HEROES



Tannie Brooks listens as her name is called as an Unsung Hero at Tuesday night's awards program.

Tannie Brooks

Unsung hero Tannie Brooks has a four-hour, 260-mile commute to her job as a respiratory therapist at the Tomball Regional Hospital.

It's what she does when she's not watching her odometer spin that earned her recognition this year.

Brooks basically works a "one week on, one week off" schedule as a nurse and chooses to spend her weeks off in Greenville, her adopted hometown.

"She's done it for at least 15 years," said nominator Milton Babb. "She hasn't moved to Tomball because she loves Greenville. When she's here, she's home."

And she puts her time in Greenville to good use, even though she normally works 12-hour shifts when on duty at the hospital and might be forgiven if she wanted to spend her weeks off resting and recharging.

Instead, she's been a leading figure in Keep Greenville Beautiful and the Friends of Main Street, always out decorating — usually with flowers — in advance of a community event such as the Rally Round Greenville or Downtown Stroll.

She's also volunteered for projects conducted by Hearts for the Arts and is a past performer and volunteer for the Follies.

Although Brooks grew up in Amarillo, Greenville was the hometown of one of her great grandfathers — who owned the former Beckham Hotel — and a grandmother. Even though it remains only her part-time residence, it's become her full-time home as well.

Amos Lowry

Unsung hero Amos Lowry has been called "a humble, selfless, tireless, giving servant."

Those are the words from Lee Gayle, who nominated his good friend for the award.

"He's just a super, super guy," said Gayle. "I call him my brother, as a matter of fact."

Lowry is a veteran of the Special Forces of the U.S. Army and a retired employee of IBM.

He's used his retirement time for volunteer service in the community. Lowry transports elderly residents to doctors' appointments, locally and in surrounding areas.

He visits people in hospitals and nursing homes, plus patients that are home-bound.

Lowry performs a "tool box" ministry for widows, the disabled and elderly. Gayle said Lowry often provides materials and replacement items at his own expense.

Lowry is active in his church, helping to build and repair church buildings. He's also part of a bus ministry and drives a shuttle for the church.

Gayle said his friend "listens to and is considerate of others," is a "loving father, grandfather and great-grandfather" and is "honest, ethical, moral and gentle in spirit."



Amos Lowry makes some short acceptance remarks after being presented his plaque by Herald-Banner Publisher Lisa Chappell.



Floralshopowner Luanne Dickens steps forward to receive her award at Tuesday night's program.

Luanne Dickens

"She cares for others, has a very soft heart and is always doing things for others behind the scene."

Those are the words that Angela Franklin used to describe her boss, Luanne Dickens.

Dickens is the owner of Greenville Floral and Gifts and her passion for people is evident to all who know her.

Luanne serves people in the community through different non-profit organizations in Hunt County. She donates items for their silent auctions, decorates for events and displays signs in her stores to promote different events.

For the last three years, she organized volunteers for the "Make Someone Smile" event, where members of the community put together and delivered ivy plants for men and flower arrange-

ments for women in local nursing homes.

Dickens also promotes "Good Neighbor Day" by providing 12 roses to each person wishing to give one to a neighbor or relative.

She opened her second store location in downtown Greenville to help promote the downtown area. Not long after becoming a downtown merchant, she was one of the founding committee members of the Downtown Stroll event.

Over the past 20 years, she has served in different leadership roles for the Altrusa Club, including Tour of Homes chair, director and membership chair. She also has served as the board of directors for the United Way of Hunt County.

Dickens is a long-time member of the Greenville Chamber of Commerce and serves as an ambassador.


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OUR UNSUNG HEROES

Paula Backus

Paula Backus has a servant's heart.

Backus has lived in Greenville since the mid 1940s and, before retiring, worked as a health administrator. She monitored multiple facilities across the state that provided care for both young and older aged people.

Backus has served the Greenville community by working for FISH, Hands of Compassion, St. Paul's Episcopal School, one of Lake Regional's group homes and the Hunt County Children's Advocacy Center. Adding on to those organizations, she also plans to join the RAFFA.

Elizabeth Porter, Backus' nominator, said her friend "has a true servant's heart — volun-

teering and offering compassion and energies without a thought for thanks, recognition, paycheck or payback."

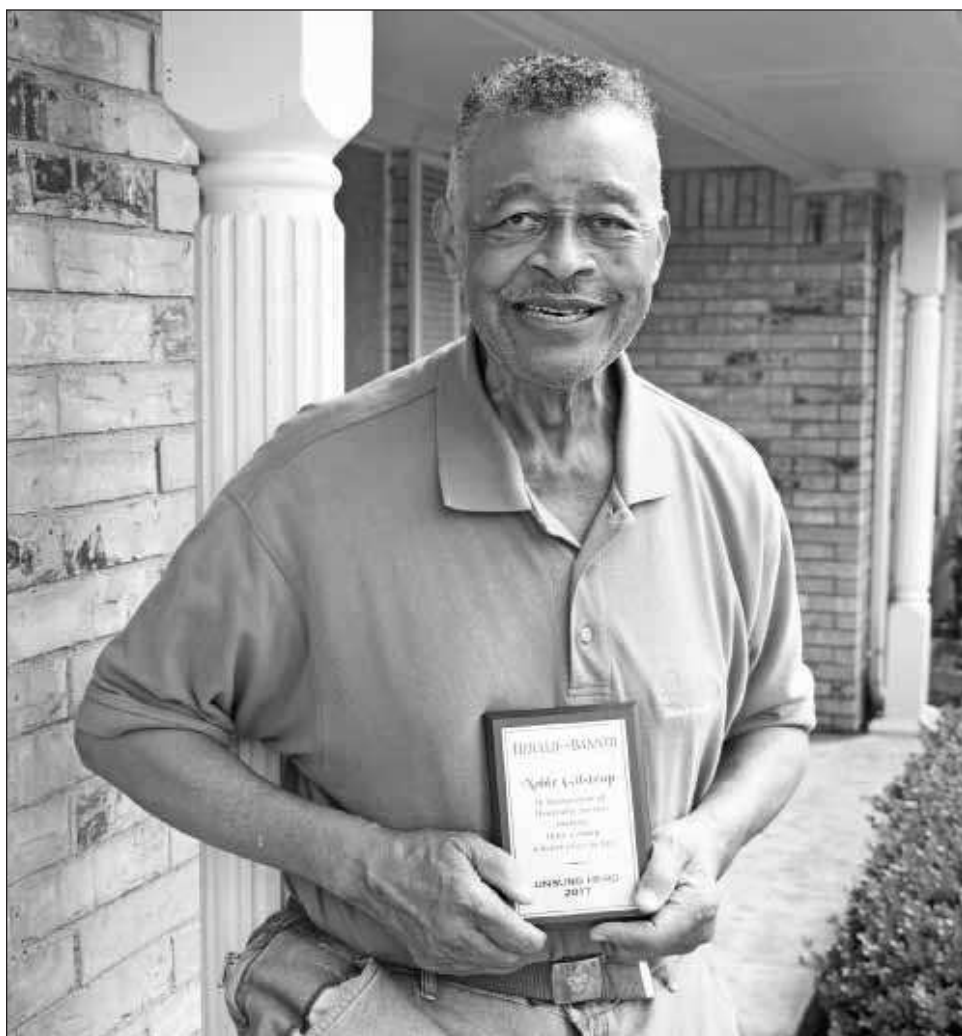
Backus spends time at her church, where she serves as a lay Eucharistic minister, board member and acts as a group mentor for "Education for Ministry" from the University of the South at St. Paul's.

Backus graduated from Greenville High School in the 1950s, but married young and has lived in California, Tennessee, Louisiana and Georgia before returning home to Texas. She enjoys spending time with her two daughters — Brenda and Leslie — and her grandsons and great-grandsons.



Paula Backus was the first of the Unsung Heroes announced Tuesday night.

Noble Gilstrap



BOTTOM: Unsung Hero Noble Gilstrap with friend Melva Hill (left) and nominator Herschel Williams.



Unsung hero Noble Gilstrap is known by his friends and colleagues as a generous and giving person, according to Herschel Williams who nominated him. She said she has known him most of her life.

He was employed by the Boy Scouts of America for 30-plus years, a job he took as a calling rather than a job. He has always worked to inspire youths to be all they can be and constantly encourages them to get an education and give back to their community.

Gilstrap has been a supporter of various churches and nonprofit organizations in our area — FISH, NAACP, Habitat for Humanity, PTAs, Audie Murphy/American Cotton Museum, Boys & Girls Club, Reecy Davis Center and many others.

In 1997 he donated five lots to Habitat for Humanity as a tribute to his late wife,

Dr. Myrna Gilstrap.

Noble also was a driving force in getting previously predominately black schools renamed for educators and prominent individuals who had made significant contributions to the Greenville area.

He was a charter member of the Ross-Washington-Carver Association, which has put together biennial reunions of the three schools for two decades.

He is a lifetime member of Goodwill Baptist Church.

Gilstrap was nominated by Herschel Williams.

Unfortunately, Gilstrap was unable to attend Tuesday night's awards ceremony. Friend Melva Hill appeared on his behalf and Gilstrap was presented with his award at his home on Wednesday morning.

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HERALDING THE FUTURE 2017



A Landmark evening of hugs and awards



TOP LEFT: Unsung Hero Luanne Dickens shared a hug with Herald-Banner Publisher Lisa Chappella. Dickens was presented with the award at Tuesday night's program at the Landmark on Lee Street in downtown Greenville. TOP RIGHT: Dickens with her friends and family members after the ceremonies. BOTTOM LEFT: A large group of supporters turned out to help push on the Unsung Hero Amod Lowry. BOTTOM RIGHT: Unsung Hero Jannie Brooks (third from left) and her group of attendees.

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Illustration of liver under attack by the Hep C virus

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HERALDING THE FUTURE 2017



Friends and family members help Kim Coker (seated) celebrate her selection as the Herald-Banner's Person of Distinction for 2017 at Tuesday night's awards program.



Herald-Banner Publisher Lisa Chappell (farright) addresses a full house of friends and family members of four 2017 honorees at Tuesday night's event.

Credits:

Biographies of this year's Unsung Heroes were written by Herald-Banner staff members Anne Fox, John Markon, David Claybourn, Tate Wingo and Rose Marie Williamson.

All photos of this year's award winners are by John Markon, who also designed this year's "Heralding the Future" supplement.

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HERALDING THE FUTURE GREENMILLEHOMEMARKET:



BRAD KELLAR / HERALD-BANNER

Multiple homes are currently under construction in Greenville, including in this neighborhood off of Roy Warren Parkway.

Housing startssurging

By Brad Kellar
Herald-Banner Staff

It isn't just restaurants and retail centers wanting to locate in Greenville, as the city is in the middle of a surge in residential development.

New homes and new multi-family projects are being announced and started all the time, and there is little evidence the trend will be slowing anytime soon.

The City of Greenville issued 129 certificates of occupancy for homes during 2016, compared to just 31 in 2015.

It has already been a hectic year for local real estate:

- Almost a dozen new units are being added to an existing townhome development in the Hidden Oaks Addition along Jack Finney Boulevard at Baylor Drive.

- More than three dozen townhomes are being planned for a site at 803 Traders Road.

- A multi-family development is being included as part of the Greenville Towne Center.

- A new single family home subdivision is being mapped out off of FM 1570 and Jack Finney Boulevard. Texas Accent Homes South LLC said the planned Ellis Estates will be marketed to employees at the Greenville L3 Technologies plant, who drive along the roadway from the facility to homes west of the city. Ellis Estates subdivision is expected to include some 77 homes on a total of 83 acres.

And the building boom also includes much of Hunt County.

A recent report from North Texas Real Estate Information Services revealed there were 113 new residential listings in the county during February, compared to 96 in February 2016, representing an

>> SEE HOUSING, PAGE C2



BRAD KELLAR / HERALD-BANNER

Several multi-family developments such as this one along FM 1570/Jack Finney Boulevard near the intersection of State Highway 34, are in the midst of construction or have been recently announced.

GREENMILLERETAIL: Kari-Beth expansion underway

By Brad Kellar
Herald-Banner Staff

The Stainback Organization has already established one of Greenville's most successful shopping centers, and planning is already underway for an expansion.

The company was behind the development of the Kari Beth Crossing Shopping Center, which had been anchored by Lowe's and during 2016 added an Academy Sports & Outdoors and a Hobby Lobby, as well as a Chipotle restaurant and a Smoothie King, for a total investment of more than \$10 million.

Construction is also continuing on another building in the center at 3208 Interstate 30, the intersection of the Interstate 30 north service road and Sayle Street, which will feature a Jimmy John's and a Panera Bread and also a

Great Clips outlet.

There will likely be more businesses coming to Kari Beth Crossing, as a 65-foot tall sign raised in front of the newest building includes spaces to advertise up to five more tenants.

For its efforts, the Stainback Organization was recognized by the Greenville Board of Development/4A Corporation during January's annual banquet with a Community Investment Award.

But all that was in the first phase of the project.

Ford Stainback is overseeing the development of Kari Beth Crossing Phase II, which is going to cover a lot of ground, starting across Sayle Street from the existing center and stretching all the way to Monty Stratton Parkway. He said

>> SEE RETAIL, PAGE C2



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BRAD KELLAR / HERALD-BANNER

Construction continues on building in the Kari Beth Crossing shopping center which will house a Jimmy John's, Panera Bread and a Great Clips. A second phase of the shopping center is being planned across Sayle Street. BOTTOM: The Stainback Organization has been recognized for investing more than \$10 million in the development of the Kari Beth Crossing shopping center in Greenville. A second phase of the project is currently in the planning stages.

Retail center expanding again

Continued from page A1

the center is just getting off the drawing board.

"Right now there is nothing new to report yet," Stainback said. "We're still pushing to get as much traction as we can get."

But Stainback added retailers are checking on the proposed center.

"We're definitely getting a lot of interest, but nothing is set in stone at this point," he said.

Local consumers are also noticing all of the new businesses, by doing a lot of

shopping in Greenville during Christmas.

The City of Greenville a sales tax rebate payment of \$916,000 in February, a new record for the month, which also represented an increase of almost 43 percent from the slightly more than \$641,000 collected in Feb. 2016.

The figures represent the city's portion of sales taxes collected at Greenville businesses during December and which were reported to the Texas Comptroller's office in January.

Greenville housing starts up 15%

Continued from page A1

increase of 17.7 percent.

For the year to date, there have been 213 new listings in the county, compared to 184 through the same point in 2016, representing an increase of 15.8 percent.

And they may not be moving to Greenville, but a lot of people are arriving with trailers full of their belongings.

In January, U-Haul International, Inc. issued a report which indicated Greenville ranks No. 12 among the U-Haul Top 25 U.S. Growth Cities for locations with a population of 10,000 to 50,000.

According to the company, U-Haul locations in Greenville saw 55.6 percent of one-way truck rental customers coming into the city as opposed to leaving. Greenville had a 34 percent increase in one-way truck arrivals year-over-year, while departures rose 20 percent over the same span.

U-Haul Growth Cities are calculated by the net gain of one-way U-Haul truck arrivals over departures for a calendar year. Migration trends data is compiled from more than 1.7 million one-way U-Haul truck rental transactions that occur annually.

The company noted while migration trends do not correlate directly to population or economic growth, U-Haul growth data is an effective gauge of how well cities are attracting and maintaining residents.



BRAD KELLAR / HERALD-BANNER

A major new subdivision, Ellis Estates, is being proposed for a site along Jack Finney Boulevard.



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FOCUS ON WESTERN HUNT COUNTY

CADDO MILLS:



Population growth: This time, it's real'

By John Markon
Herald-Banner Editor

CADDO MILLS — Matt McMahan, the former Caddo Mills city councilman who's now in his fourth year as the city manager, describes himself as an "Old Caddo kind of guy."

It's an important distinction, because McMahan is convinced that a very large wave of New Caddo kinds of guys and gals is just around the bend.

"I know we've all heard it for years that growth is on the way," McMahan said, "but this time it's real... it's happening... and it's just about to totally change everything around here."

"The kind of business people we're involved with now don't need to guess about which areas are going to grow — they know. And they know because they make it happen."

While road signs list Caddo Mills' population at the 2010 census level of 1,338, McMahan allows that the city has reached about that number of water meters in service and there could be 1,500 or 1,600 people living inside the city limits today.

"Growth is hard to put on a timetable," he said, "because a lot of the time depends on things like interest rates, gas prices and the health of the national economy. If I had to guess, though, I'd

say we'd be looking at least 7,500 people and maybe 10,000 inside the next 15 or 20 years."

That would be a stunning change for Caddo Mills, which has never been any larger than it is today.

The town's former lifeline was a Katy Railroad depot popular with farmers who liked to ship their produce and livestock by rail. Much of the land around town is still devoted to ranching and agriculture, and many nonresidents' memories of Caddo involve being stuck behind a slow-moving farm vehicle on Highway 66 or Highway 36, which intersect near the center of the city.

There's still plenty of agriculture in

the area, but McMahan notes that it's difficult to tell how many hundreds of acres of farmland have been optioned by developers.

"I think it's a lot," he said. "Options don't always get exercised, but they're a good way for a smart developer not to get frozen out of a hot market, which is what I think we'll be seeing here in the future."

It will be a future that will be somewhat unique to Caddo Mills, primarily because the present town is almost six miles away from Interstate 30, which seems destined to be the focus of all com-

>> SEE CADDO MILLS, PAGE C5

ROYSE CITY EAST:

Overpass project could be key to building boom

By Jim Hardin
Herald-Banner Staff

ROYSE CITY — The Interstate 30/Erby Campbell Boulevard area continues to be Royse City's hot spot for commercial development, but the Hunt County side of the city is beginning to get a share of attention with commercial and residential projects.

The area that appears to be developing into Royse City's next hot spot is I-30 at Farm to Market 2642 in Hunt County.

Highlights include construction of an I-30 overpass at FM 2642 that officially started in February. A Buc-ee's convenience store will be built on the intersection's southwest corner, and a minor league ballpark and adjoining development are in the works for the north-west corner.

The \$23.2 million bridge replacement project covers a 3.9-mile stretch from the Rockwall County line to FM 1565. Construction is expected to last approximately 18 months.

The opening of Buc-ee's is timed with completion of the new bridge. That future opening is being promoted by billboards on I-30, letting eastbound and westbound travelers know which exit to take when the store opens in 2019.

There was a September 2016 announcement involving a brand new independent professional minor league baseball team that will be playing in a brand new, \$12



JIM HARDIN / HERALD-BANNER

Several billboards on Interstate 30 eastbound and westbound travelers know where they will need to exit when the Buc-ee's store opens in 2019. The store is part of a large commercial and residential expansion on Royse City's east side.

million multipurpose stadium in Royse City.

Mark Schuster, chief executive officer of Ventura Sports Group, announced that the stadium will be built on a 17-acre site near the northwest corner of I-30 and FM 2642.

Those 17 acres are part of a 107-acre parcel. The rest of the acreage, he said, will be "part of a much larger development that will be unveiled in the coming months."

City officials have said only that the land is in three counties — Hunt, Rockwall and Collin.

During a November 2016 Royse City Community Development Corporation meeting, Executive Director Larry Lott reported that the developers of this property have agreed to prepare and submit a master plan.

"We have asked them to work with the city and do a master plan," Lott said, adding that city officials want to make that acreage "special" and "have a say-so" on what goes on there.

"What we'd really like to do is make it very entertainment-oriented to supplement the ballpark," he said.

Across the interstate, down FM 2642 — across from Royse City High School — is Union Square, a 500-home subdivision being developed by D.R. Horton.

There's also developmental news involving Vista Oaks, a new subdivision, and Verandah, a 485-acre subdivision that could grow by another 345 acres.

Lott told board members during a Jan. 24 meeting

>> SEE ROYSE CITY, PAGE C5

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PUBLIC HEALTH:

Hunt Regional Healthcare celebrating 5-star ratings

By Tate Wingo
Herald-Banner Staff

The future of Hunt Regional Healthcare is as bright as the two five star ratings the medical center received in 2016.

In the last year, Hunt Regional opened new treatment centers, improved technology and developed new medical techniques.

In March, a new, 15,700-square foot emergency center was opened in Quinlan. The facility houses every component of emergency care, as well as outpatient imaging and lab centers.

The new location made Hunt Regional the primary health care providers over Hunt, Hopkins, Rockwall and Rains counties. Hunt Regional also successfully opened a comprehensive liver disease treatment program for people diagnosed with common liver diseases including Hepatitis C, fatty liver and non-alcoholic cirrhosis. The liver center is located in Greenville.

The Vein Center at Hunt Regional continued to make successful strides over the course of last year. The specialists perform two main types of minimally-invasive treatments for patients with persistent or worsening pain and are now able to relieve symptoms almost immediately.

New technology was instituted to allow doctors and nurses to find veins on the first try.

Events like "Bras for the Cause" are evidence that patient satisfaction is at the heart of many staff members at Hunt Regional. Money raised at the event went towards funding for new vein viewing units, which help to avoid uncomfortable poking and attempts to give some relief to patients with difficult veins or chronic illnesses.

A new dry needling technique for chronic pain was reintroduced to improve and advance rehabilitation services and is able to be performed as an outpatient procedure. The rehab department also welcomed Dr. Alex Burton, who special-

izes in pediatric services, to the team.

Marketing Communications Specialist Chelbie Birdwell said Hunt Regional plans to open more specialty centers in the next year and is working towards a Stroke Center destination. Additionally, the hospital will continue to recruit for new specialists and introduce new services throughout the year, including vascular, gastrointestinal and sports medicine.

Hunt Regional's success in 2016 was recognized at the state and national level:

* The health information management department was one of 48 hospitals in the state of Texas to receive the "Five Star Service Award" from the Texas Department of State Health Services vital statistics unit. It was awarded to hospitals across the state for demonstrating accurate and timely reporting.

* Patient satisfaction was a promising priority for staff members of the home health care department. According to ratings data, the department achieved

the highest grade possible in that category. Because of this, the Centers for Medicare and Medicaid Services awarded Hunt Regional Home Care a 5-star rating – which was only achieved by 1.9 percent of home health agencies across the country.

* The American College of Radiology (ACR) designated Hunt Regional Open Imaging in Greenville as a Lung Cancer Screening Center. To receive this distinction, facilities must follow a series of strict guidelines, be accredited by the ACR in computed tomography in the chest module and undergo a rigorous assessment of lung cancer screening protocols and infrastructure.

* For the third time, the hospital's pharmacy department received the "Complete Pharmacy Award." This award recognizes the top CompleteRx managed pharmacies that have demonstrated above-average company performance and is only awarded to two other pharmacies in the nation.



RYAN SCOTT / HERALD-BANNER

After a series of construction delays, work began in early March at the site of Texas A&M-Commerce's new Nursing and Health Sciences Building, which is scheduled for completion in January of 2019.

HIGHER EDUCATION:

Texas A&M-Commerce expanding growth and influence

By Ryan Scott
Herald-Banner Staff

COMMERCE — Texas A&M University-Commerce has been expanding its influence over the past year, and the growth on campus is a testament to its recent success.

With enrollment hovering around 13,000, the university is enjoying a high point in its history. Interest in the university from incoming students is at an all-time high, with a record 2,000-plus people signing up to attend Mane Event last Saturday. Mane Event is a twice-yearly extravaganza put on by A&M-Commerce that allows prospective students to get acquainted with the campus and faculty.

The college recently celebrated its 100th year as a state institution earlier this month in a ceremony attended by state representatives and Texas A&M System Chancellor John Sharp.

There's also been physical and structural expansion on the campus with some new buildings — most prominently

a new residence hall — going up and some older ones being enhanced.

Dubbed "Phase Three" of a four-phase plan for new living quarters on campus, the residence hall is currently expected to be ready to open by the fall semester this year.

Also under construction has been a new locker room facility for the school's soccer and softball teams, as well as a new multi-activity court being built near the Morris Recreation center. The court is now scheduled to open in April after a few delays, according to Alicia Currin, A&M-C's vice-president for business and administration.

One of the larger projects on campus is the new Nursing and Health Sciences building, which is scheduled to open in January of 2019. Construction began earlier this month.

University sports teams have continued to excel. The Lions' football team won its third consecutive Lone Star Conference Championship and was selected to the NCAA Division II playoffs

for the second consecutive year. The women's soccer team was selected to the NCAA tournament for the fourth straight year, the first A&M-Commerce team to ever accomplish such a feat.

Men's basketball made the NCAA tournament for the second time in three seasons, and the men's track and field team finished ninth overall in the NCAA Championships earlier this month. Dozens of athletes were also honored with all-conference, all-region and national accolades in both athletics and academics.

A big event to look forward to will be the dedication of the Hall of Languages. The building, originally the university library, will be renamed in honor of Dr. D. Arlington Talbot, the first African-American faculty member at A&M-Commerce.

During his tenure, Talbot also served as special assistant to the President for affirmative action, as a professor in the Department of Counseling and Guidance,

and as the director of the Counseling Center. The dedication will take place April 18 with a convocation at 11 a.m. and a ceremony at 2:30 p.m.

Andrew Young, formerly the United States Ambassador to the United Nations as well as Georgia congressman and mayor of Atlanta, and Dr. Robert Green, author of the Civil Rights era retrospective, "At the Crossroads of Fear and Freedom" are both scheduled to attend the event.

Both Young and Green actively participated in the Civil Rights Movement in the 1960s.

University President Dr. Ray Keck, soon to be entering his second year on the job, echoed the general mood of optimism at the 100th anniversary celebration when he said: "This represents a culmination of all of the efforts of those who worked and studied here over the past century. We are continuing a storied history and are looking at a bright future."



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JOHN MARKON / HERALD-BANNER

TOP: Caddo Mills City Manager Matt McMahan has no shortage of plots to review. BOTTOM: One of the next new developments in Caddo Mills will be a 70-lot subdivision located on Highway 36 south of the city named The Mills.



Caddo Mills bracing for development wave

Continued from page C3

mercial expansion and much of the residential development.

“Convenience to the Interstate is always the first thing any developer wants,” McMahan said. “That might change if Highway 66 is ever expanded to four lanes, but I see most of our growth potential as residential. Greenville is and will always be the retail hub in our region. You can see retail expanding there now. I think we’ll always be too close to Greenville to be a real retail or commercial center.”

“Our downtown area is so small that it probably won’t be a focus, although we have a nice park project we’ll develop there some day.”

What McMahan sees in Caddo Mills as a bedroom community unified by young homeowners’ desires to place their children in the city’s highly rated and well-regarded school system.

“I see it the same way,” said Caddo Mills ISD Superintendent Vicki Payne. “People want to get into our schools now, but there’s hardly any rental property in the district and houses tend to sell as soon as the ‘for sale’ sign goes up.”

“It’s let us enjoy steady, predictable enrollment growth in the 3 percent range. We know that may change and we do have a 10-year plan in place. We’re always thinking long range.”

Five classrooms were recently added to Caddo Mills Middle School at a cost of \$1.5 million. Last week, Payne and other school officials met with builders to discuss proposed additions to the high school.

Her long-range plans call for the eventual building of a new high school with the current high school housing seventh and eighth graders and fifth and sixth graders moving to the current middle school.

When and if Payne, who’s been on her job for 16 years and has been a district employee for 35 years, will be able to enact that plan, she doesn’t know.

“The bottom line in our business is that, when the kids show up, you better figure out how to handle it,” Payne said. “We plan to be prepared.”

As does McMahan, whose office in Caddo’s small City Hall on Main Street is dominated by a drawing board and a large cardboard box filled with rolled up plats that detail proposals for future commercial and residential growth.

Some of these projects will never progress beyond the blueprint/pipe dream stage, but new plats are being added to the box all the time.

“In a few weeks,” McMahan said, “we’re planning to announce that one of America’s No. 1 homebuilders will be developing a subdivision that may eventually include as many as 2,000 homes — although it certainly won’t be that big right away.”

“If you assume three people per house, that’s six thousand people, about four newcomers for every person living in the city today. My replacements in this job are going to have a lot more city to manage.”

Eastern Royse City awaiting overpass

Continued from page C3

that Vista Oaks, a 201-acre site off FM 1565, is a subdivision that’s important to Royse City for two reasons.

Lott said it will offer higher priced homes – ranging from about \$250,000 up to \$350,000 or \$400,000. Lott added that Vista Oaks developer David Tucker will run a 12-inch water main from FM 2642 all the way to the subdivision, opening a large adjacent area to future development because Dave Tucker, the developer, will run a 12-inch water line from FM 2642 all the way to the subdivision, opening up other land for development.

“It’s going to be a real nice subdivision,” Lott said, adding that there will be 165 home sites on one-acre lots.

Lott said the property has lots of trees and water features.

Verandah, located in the northeast area of the I-30/FM 2642 interchange, had been the area’s fastest growing subdivision, according to Lott. He added, however, that the subdivision had been “somewhat stagnant for a while.”

With the “very significant” increase in acreage, he said, Verandah will eventually stretch from I-30 all the way to State

Highway 66.

Lott said city officials are talking to Verandah officials about annexation.

He said land in the city limits must be contiguous to land the city wants to annex. Verandah, he said, is “sticking out there,” preventing the city limits from expanding past the subdivision. The city is hopeful that it can get “on the east side of Verandah so we can continue to grow to the east.”

Original plans for Ridge Park, another proposed Hunt County subdivision off FM 35, called for about 300 lots on 100 acres.

The Royse City Council, however, has chosen to not renew the developer agreement citing a desire to add what Lott termed “more value and more high-quality homes” to Ridge Park.

Lott said he, Councilman Clay Ellis and City Manager Carl Alsbrook met with the developer.

“I think it went well,” he said. “We did ask them to do some things with bigger lots and bigger homes and things that would improve quality and, thus, the appraised value of those homes.”



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BRAD KELLAR / HERALD-BANNER

TOP Crews with Gold Medal Pools finished landscaping the new splash park at Ja-Lu Park this month. The new feature is expected to open this summer. MIDDLE: The Ja-Lu master plan. BOTTOM: Greenville's Splash Kingdom water park will open for its second in May.

SUMMERFUN

Ja-Lu's splash pad to open

By Brad Kellar
Herald-Banner Staff

The Ja-Lu Municipal Swimming Pool may be gone, but local residents will still have options available to cool off by getting wet this summer.

The pool's frog slide and the mushroom shower were removed when the pool itself was demolished in January.

Since that time, Gold Medal Pools of Frisco has been installing a multiple feature splash park at the location, the first step in a master plan for Ja-Lu Park, which also includes two new playgrounds.

The landscaping for the new splash park was completed earlier this month and Greenville City Manager Massoud Ebrahim said the rest of the work is on schedule.

"I think we will be ready for the season (in) May or June, depending on the temperature," Ebrahim said. "We'll be ready for the summer."

At least one of the playgrounds was also in the process of being installed this month.

The splash park will cover about 1,400 square feet and will include approximately 11 features, shooting and spraying water from both above and below ground. The above ground water features are designed to be interchangeable.

The overall master plan calls for the eventual addition of a walking trail, basketball and volleyball courts, an amphitheater and a skate park among other features.

Ebrahim is also sure that the smaller splash pad at Graham Park will be up and running this summer.

"We feel confident that it is going to be functional," Ebrahim said.

The popular feature has had its share of issues over the years, but Ebrahim said the pad will be available for use starting Memorial Day.

"We have spent money and we have repaired the sections that were problematic," he said. "It should be ready to go." Meanwhile, Greenville's recently opened waterpark is preparing to open for its second summer, with sneak previews available well before the season.

Officials with Splash Kingdom have announced opening day to the public will be May 27, although a season passholder sneak peek is scheduled May 13 and the park's wave pool will be open for participants in the May 6 DrugFree Greenville Walkathon.

The aviation-themed waterpark along the Interstate 30 South service road in Greenville opened for its first season in June 2016. The park was open daily through Aug. 21, 2016 and then on the next two weekends.

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