

DISCOVER

Gonzales County | 2017



YOUR GUIDE to

“Come and Take it!”

Check out our history through tales of the cannon that started it all and a map that illuminates the pre- and postwar landscape.

Local events

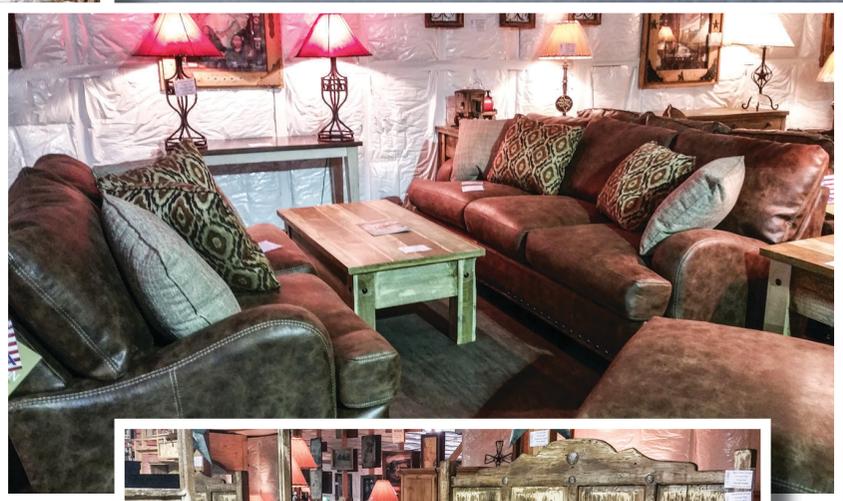
We provide the best information on local and surrounding-area events including the Summer Concert Series, Fiesta Guacamole, and more!



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DISCOVER

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Historical reenactors fight the “Battle of Gonzales” each year as part of the Come and Take It celebration on the first weekend in October. Many visitors are surprised to learn that the Texans suffered no significant injuries in the encounter with the Mexican Army.

INQUIRER FILE PHOTO

'Come and take it!'

Under the leadership of General Santa Anna, the government of Mexico was transformed into a military dictatorship, ignoring the Constitution of 1824, which had cost many lives and had secured liberties not previously enjoyed by the people.

The state of Coahuila did not cooperate with Santa Anna's plans, and the state of Zacatecas rebelled, but was brutally crushed by the military. One of Santa Anna's "reforms" was to reduce the number of the militia to one soldier for every five-hundred inhabitants, and to disarm the remainder. This arbitrary decree was a sufficient justification of Texas for her subsequent acts. Every one who knows the Texans, or who has heard of them, would naturally conclude that they never would submit to be disarmed. Any government that would attempt to disarm its people is despotic; and any people that would submit to it deserves to be slaves!

Stephen F. Austin was jailed in Mexico City, accused of fomenting revolution. In early 1835 Santa Anna reopened the Customs House at Anahuac. He again slapped duties on the colonists. He sent a new man, Captain Antonio Tenorio, to Anahuac to see that the Texans paid up.

The local legislature at Monclova was gone--closed down by Santa Anna after it tried to raise money by selling four hundred leagues of Texas land to hungry U.S. speculators. Most Texans were opposed to this step too--and no one liked being governed from Monclova--but Santa Anna's solution left them even worse off. They now had no government at all, and their representatives were under arrest.

Along the coast Mexican garrisons stepped up their campaign to stop smuggling and collect customs duties. At Galveston they seized the Texas schooner Martha, loaded with supplies for the colonists. A message taken from a careless Mexican courier hinted that even more troops were on the way. Angrily the settlers burned some lumber ordered by Captain Tenorio at Anahuac.

William B. Travis had a better idea. Late in June he raised a company of twenty-five men and marched on Tenorio's headquarters. He dramatically gave the Mexicans fifteen minutes to surrender or be 'put to the sword.' Tenorio quickly capitulated.

The colonists couldn't adjust that easily. They were shocked at Travis' audacity. This wasn't merely a case of smuggling, dodging customs collectors, or playing a practical joke on Colonel Bradburn. This was throwing out the garrison commander. Practically open rebellion. Few were ready to go that far.

Apologies...regrets...stern words for Travis. Repudiated, he lapsed into one of his moody spells. He published a note in the Texas Republican asking people to 'reserve judgment.' He morosely wrote a friend that he felt ashamed.

At this point, Santa Anna overplayed his hand. Deeming Travis' setback a sign of weakness, he decided that this was the time to finish off his enemies. During August he poured more troops into Texas and told his brother-in-law, General Martin Perfecto de Cos, to take personal command. Cos ordered the arrest of Travis and several other Texas troublemakers.

The Mexican leaders completely misinterpreted the situation. The Texans' real goal was to build a secure future without outside interference. They rebuked Travis because he seemed to be inviting a fight. Now they saw an infinitely greater threat--martial law, military occupation, the arrest of good friends. Almost overnight the pendulum swung the other way, and the people of Texas turned violently against Santa Anna.

Committees of Safety sprang up in every town. The highly influential Telegraph and Texas Register hammered away for liberty and freedom. Travis discarded his moody gloom; his letters now sang of 'the hour that will try men's souls.' Then on September 1 came an electrifying development--Stephen F. Austin suddenly reappeared from Mexico.

Next week a thousand people jammed the banquet given in his honor in Brazoria. The Room fell silent as the trusted leader rose to speak. He had always preached moderation; after a year in Mexican jails, how did he feel?

He left little doubt. Santa Anna was destroying the people's rights.... And on the question of Mexican troops in Texas, Austin was even more specific. The people had a strong moral sense that "would not unite with any armed force sent against this country; on the contrary, it would resist and repel it, and ought to do so."

A week later General Cos landed at Copano with 400 men. 'War is our only recourse,' thundered a broadside from Austin. Unfazed, Cos headed for San Antonio. Here the garrison commander Colonel Ugartechea had his hands full, confiscating weapons, searching houses, disbanding suspicious groups that re-formed as fast as he broke them up. Mexican policy was to seize arms and military stores in Texan hands before real trouble started.

Word had just come of a serious problem at Gonzales. The colonists there were shining up a small cannon given them years ago to ward off Indians. Ugartechea, acting under the decree disarming citizens, sent a file of cavalymen riding to Gonzales with an order for the surrender of the gun. Andrew Ponton, the Gonzales alcalde, received the order and stalled for time. He sent a message stating he was absent. He demanded an order from the political chief of the Department of the Brazos before releasing it.

See **COME AND TAKE IT**, p. 26

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WELCOME



Gonzales County

- ✓ Great place to come visit
- ✓ Better place to call home

Located in the heart of South Texas, the county is dissected by the historic Guadalupe River and has a diverse economic base.

History is one of the greatest assets of Gonzales County. This is where the first shot for Texas independence was fired. That shot led to the eventual winning of independence near Houston. Gonzales was critical to the development of the great state of Texas.

Tourists will find Gonzales rich in history and can explore opportunities to learn even more. Whether it's the historic museum on Smith Street, a walk through the courthouse or visiting the Chamber of Commerce, there are many ways to discover the history of Gonzales County.



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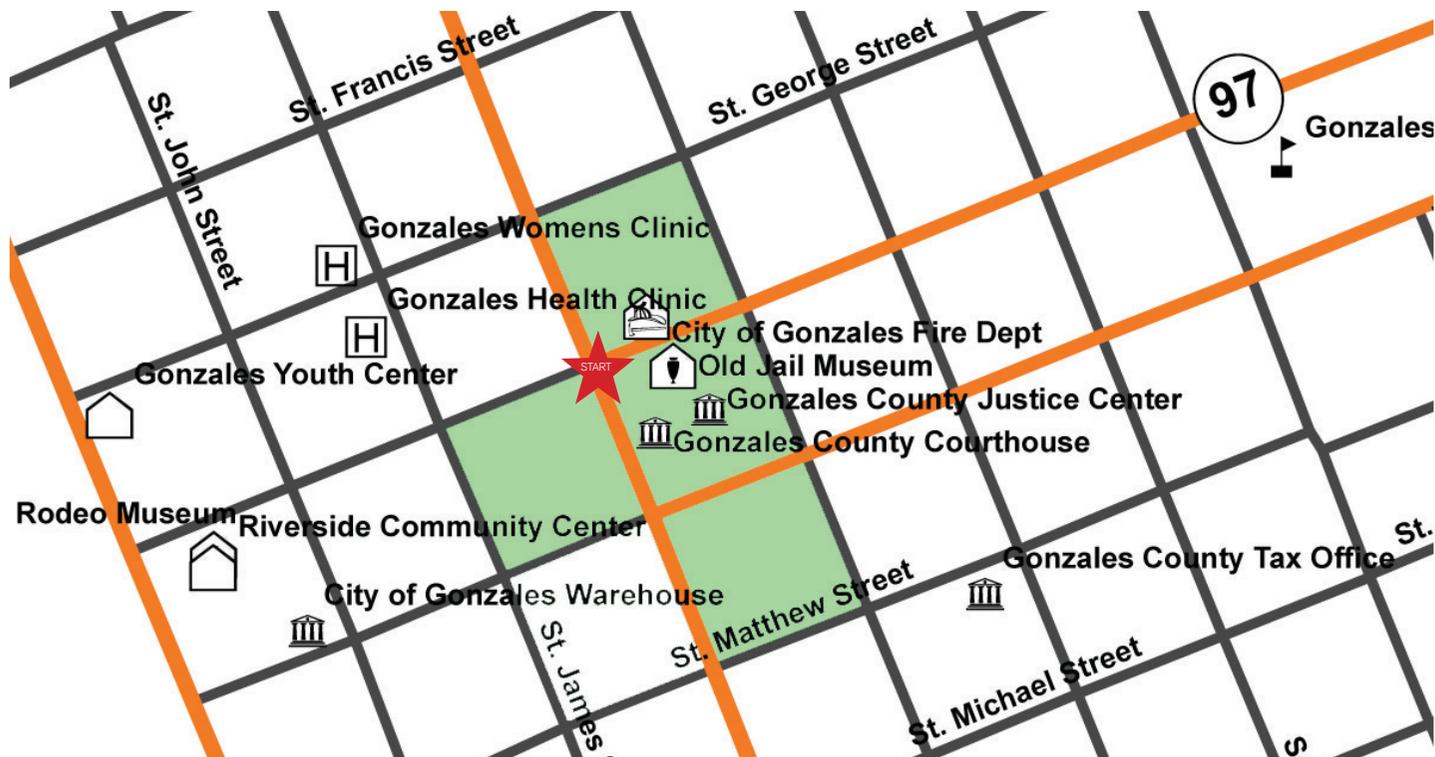
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FULL MENU: 11:00 AM - 9:30 PM
BAR: 11:00 AM - 1:00 AM**



WALKING TOUR



Park your car at the Old Jail Museum at the corner of St. Joseph and St. Lawrence for this 1.3 mile walking tour.

1 Old Jail Museum, 1887, 414 St. Lawrence*
Used as the county jail until 1975, cells and gallows occupy second floor, law-and-order artifacts on first floor.

2 Fire Station and T41 Steer weather vane
The T41 weather vane represents one rancher's brand and his desire to advertise his occupation.

3 Gonzales County Courthouse, 1895*
Designed in form of Greek cross by renowned Texas architect J. Riely Gordon, Romanesque Revival courthouse is listed on the National Register of Historic Places. Visitors may walk through the historic building.

4 Church Square*
First United Methodist Church, 1900
First Baptist Church, 1903
426 St. Paul and 422 St. Paul, respectively. Part of the public lands grant for the City of Gonzales, now permanently leased to First Baptist and First United Methodist Churches. (Gothic

Revival)
5 Edward Lewis House, 1910
605 St. Louis – Mrs. Lewis' grandfather, Andrew Ponton, was Alcalde (mayor) of Gonzales in 1835.

6 Paul Levysen House, 1877
612 St. Louis – Greek Revival/Symmetrical Victorian

7 Randle House, 1898
624 St. Louis – Built by architect W.A. King. Former home of James Polk Randle, prominent Gonzales merchant. (Victorian)

8 J.B. Kennard House, 1895
621 St. Louis – Designed by J. Riely Gordon, this late Victorian residence is one of a few of its type remaining in Texas. Glass and pottery chip mosaics in gables. Queen Anne/Shingle Style. National Register of Historic Places Marker.

9 Episcopal Church of the Messiah, 1881*
721 St. Louis – The oldest public building still in use for its original purpose. Pulpit and altar are of Guadalupe Walnut.

(Gothic Revival)
10 Episcopal Rectory, 1890
721 St. Louis – Rectory and church are on the site of Cemetery Square, as designated in 1832 Mexican survey.

11 Gonzales Junior High School 1940/41
400 N. College – The gym, auditorium and school buildings were a WPS project. The vocational building was built one year before.

12 Gonzales College, 1851*
820 St. Louis – One of the first women's colleges in Texas, it was built with stone from Maurin quarry 10 miles away. It has been restored as a private residence. (Greek Revival/Victorian)

13 Rather House, 1892*
828 St. Louis – Built during the "Cotton was King" era for C.T. Rather, cotton planter and banker. (Greek Revival/Victorian)

14 Charles Hoskins House, 1911*
Architect was Atlee B. Ayres,

designer of the San Antonio Municipal Auditorium and Randolph Air Force Base Tower. (Classical Revival)

15 Sam H. Hopkins House, 1911
912 St. Louis – A.B. Ayres designed this house for Hopkins, an attorney. (Classical Revival/Prairie School influence)

16 Frank Vrazel House, circa 1910
1006 St. Louis – The Vrazel gin was located next door to the house. (Prairie School)

17 P.R.I.D.E., 1890
1034 St. Louis – Residence converted into a daycare center. (Victorian)

18 Guadalupe Apts., 1920*
1118 St. Louis – Built as a hospital by Dr. George Holmes, converted to apartment building in 1978.

19 Memorial Museum, 1936*
414 Smith – Built to commemorate "The Immortal 32" and those who died in service to the Republic of Texas. Houses the iconic Come & Take It

cannon. Murals on the wall by James Buchanan Winn. Hours: 10 a.m.-noon and 1-5 p.m.

20 Midkiff House, 1905*
1222 St. Louis (Prairie School)

21 Eggleston House, circa 1845
1300 block of St. Louis – Oldest standing structure in the city. Built by H. Eggleston on the Guadalupe River, it now sits on City Park. (Dog-run log cabin)

22 DAR House, circa 1930.
Behind the Eggleston House. Mrs. Murphy had the structure built for Boy Scouts by relief workers under the direction of State Park Supervisor Louis H. Scholl. It was later turned over to the Daughters of the American Revolution.

23 Edward Sweeney House, 1926
1109 St. Lawrence – Surrounded by spectacular oaks, this house was built by Edward Sweeney, descendant of J.C. Dilworth, early Texas banker. (Cotswald Cottage or English Tudor)

CITY OF Gonzales Parks and Recreation

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PARKS AND RECREATION

The Gonzales Parks and Recreation Department (PARD) has a lot to offer — scenic river views, downtown parks, a golf course, rodeos and more. Its inventory includes five city parks, three public squares, two cemeteries and the Gonzales Memorial Museum.

To book an event, pavilions or an RV site, contact PARD at (830) 672-3192 or email parks@recreation@gonzales.texas.gov. A full event listing can be found at www.gonzales.texas.gov. The PARD office is at 1920 St. Joseph Street.

INDEPENDENCE PARK

Independence Park is off U.S. Hwy. 183 on the banks of the Guadalupe River. It includes three covered pavilions, softball/baseball fields, soccer fields, basketball and volleyball courts, swimming pool, a golf course, a 21-site RV park, a 2.35-mile hike and bike trail and scenic views of the winding river.

The lower section of the park — known as the “Brickyard” — offers a pavilion, playground, picnic tables, barbecue pits, a scenic river overlook, restrooms, hike and bike trail and excellent fishing spots.

The upper park includes the rodeo arena and show barn, ball fields, playground, two pavilions, swimming pool, volleyball and basketball courts, picnic tables, barbecue pits and restrooms.

SWIMMING POOL

Pool admission for the Gonzales Municipal Swimming Pool is \$2. Reserve the pool for your next event. It's a \$100 fee to reserve the pool from 6-8 p.m. from Tuesday-Sunday. No reservation after dark, minimum of two lifeguards.

Renters are required to pay for more lifeguards if group contains more than 50 people. Each additional lifeguard is \$25 each and payment is due at the time

of reservation. From 1-50 swimmers require two lifeguards (included with initial \$100 fee), 51-75 swimmers require three lifeguards (\$125) and 76-100 swimmers require four lifeguards (\$150).

INDEPENDENCE GOLF COURSE

An attractive 22-acre, nine-hole golf course with pecan trees along the Guadalupe River, the course offers several challenges and is open seven days a week. Monday-Friday, nine holes are \$10, 18 holes are \$15. During the weekend, nine holes are \$15 while 18 holes are \$20. Juniors are \$7.

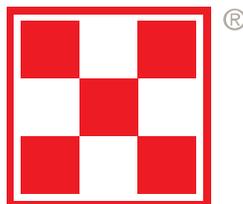
Golf cart rental fees include \$10 for nine holes and \$18 for 18 holes. An annual membership for a single player is \$350, a family membership is \$450. Juniors are \$50. Call (830) 672-1324 for more information.

See **PARKS**, p. 28

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The Independence Golf Course winds alongside the Guadalupe River, treating golfers to some scenic views as they play the 9-hole, 35-par course. The facility also offers a practice bunker, putting green and chipping area. The course is open to the public, memberships are available.



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INQUIRER FILE PHOTOS

LOCAL PLACES & EVENTS

Gonzales Main Street

Gonzales, known for its late 19th and early 20th Century commercial and institutional buildings in the downtown area, was awarded Official Main Street status in 1988. Through the revitalization and restoration efforts of the community, historic downtown Gonzales has become a great place to “Shop, Dine, Play and Stay.”

Visit Gonzales and stay at one of our historic hotels and bed and breakfast in the heart of downtown or in one of our approximately 550 hotel rooms located throughout the community. Stroll through the many antique shops and specialties shops. Enjoy a delicious meal at one of our fine restaurants. Enjoy live entertainment and fine dining at the Running M Bar and Grill. The Come & Take It Sports Bar is the place to watch your favorite sport on one of the big screen TVs while enjoying a drink or a fine meal. Watch a first run movie at the Lynn Theater. Take the walking or self-driving tour and relive the history of Gonzales.

Gonzales Main Street sponsors the Main

Street Concert Series every Friday night in June. From 6-10 p.m. enjoy great outdoor entertainment on Confederate Square. This free event has great music, arts and craft show, food and is just good ol’ family entertainment. The concert series ends with the Star Spangled Spectacular held at 6 p.m. July 4th on Confederate Square. The show ends with a spectacular fireworks display that can be seen throughout the city.

During the Christmas season, downtown shines with lights outlining the buildings and stars adding a holiday sparkle to this historic area of Gonzales. The Christmas season kicks off with a lighted Christmas parade the first Friday in December. Other activities for the Winterfest weekend include breakfast with Santa, arts and crafts show, Historic Homes Tour, Stars in the Village and much more.

Visit historic downtown Gonzales and have a great experience. Shop! Dine! Stay! And Play!

For information, contact the city at 830-672-2815 or MainStreet@gonzales.texas.gov.



Top-notch musicians grace the stage for each Friday night in June for the Gonzales Main Street Summer Concert Series.

INQUIRER FILE PHOTO

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Fiesta Guacamole

If you like guacamole, then you're sure to love Waelder's annual Fiesta Guacamole!

Every year hundreds of folks gather for a mix of live music, games and delicious guacamole at Waelder City Park. This year's installment — the town's 40th opens at noon Saturday, Sept. 2, and runs through midnight Sunday, Sept. 3. If you're new to Gonzales County and have never been to Fiesta Guacamole, you're in for a treat.

A volleyball tournament, which is scheduled to begin at 9 a.m. Saturday, unofficially opens the two-day festival.

Music, food and, of course, guacamole are the highlights for the weekend celebration, sponsored by St. Patrick Church. Bingo will also be available throughout the weekend.

DJ music is always played



throughout the festival, with live bands taking the stage each night.

Sunday's events begin with Mass-in-the-Park at 11:30 a.m. There'll barely be enough time to get a burger or the traditional Mexican plate before the parade sounds and sirens reach the park at 1 p.m. The Guacamole Mash — the fiesta's namesake — takes place at 2 p.m. Sunday, followed by the auction at 3 p.m.

All fiesta activities take place at Waelder City Park with the exception of parade sign-in, which occurs at St. Patrick Church on U.S. 90. All fiesta proceeds go to maintain and support St. Patrick Mission in Waelder.

The food menu for the festival includes tamales, gorditas, fajitas, tacos and hamburgers.

The \$3 gate fee increases to \$6 after 6 p.m., and children under 12 years old are admitted free.

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J.B. Wells House



The J.B. Wells House Museum is now under the care of the Gonzales Chapter of the Daughters of the Republic of Texas. The house remains as it was in 1885.

INQUIRER FILE PHOTO

The J. B. Wells House was built in 1885 and retains much history of the early years of Texas.

Original furnishings continue to grace the 15 rooms of the home. The structure consists of Florida long-leaf pine lumber delivered from the Port of Indianola by oxen to Gonzales.

Typical of Texas in the late 1800s the J.B. Wells (T.N. Matthews) House remains today as it was in 1885, with some of the original wallpaper, drapes and handcrafted Guadalupe River Valley walnut furnishings.

Maintenance of the house is totally under the care of the Gonzales Chapter of the Daughters of the Republic of Texas.

The house, located at 829 Mitchell Street and designated a Texas Historical Landmark, is open 10 a.m. to 2 p.m. on the first Saturday of every month, with group tours available by appointment. Call 830-672-9793.

The house is also open to the public the first weekend in October, celebrating Come and Take It, and during the Christmas holiday season.

COME AND
experience it

When you come to Gonzales, Texas, a world of adventures lay before you. Enjoy a driving or walking tour through our unique historic district from your smartphone. Shop at our specialty stores and boutiques. Have fun at our special events listed on our website. Stop by the Chamber of Commerce & Visitor Center to learn more.

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Leesville Country Fair

Held every year in the second weekend of October, the Leesville Country Fair hosts fun for the entire family.

The annual celebration features an array of events including a horse and buggy ride, children's activities including bouncer, petting zoo, face painting and pumpkin decorations. The Belmont Fire Department is always on hand, providing a fire truck for the kiddos to jump on, as well as a Gonzales County Sheriff's Deputy's patrol car where they can honk the horn and flash the lights.

Kerr Creek Band will provide live music.

Leesville's Happy Quilters — a group of ladies who have met



Among the entertainment at the Leesville Country Fair is this lovely horse and buggy ride that takes guests around the area.

INQUIRER FILE PHOTO

each Monday at the Leesville Methodist Church since 1998 — recently finished work on not two but three quilts for the fair's fundraiser. The quilts will be raffled off during the fair, with proceeds to support the Leesville Cemetery, as well as give scholar-

ships to students of Nixon-Smiley CISD.

"Seventy percent of the money goes to the schoolhouse and cemetery facility, and 30 goes to the schools," said Committee Chairman Pat Meyer, who manages the upkeep on the Methodist Church,

cemetery and old schoolhouse.

Visitors will also be treated to a hearty meal consisting of grilled sausage, beef brisket sandwiches, tamales, Frito pie and nachos, and cornbread and beans. Hamburgers were recently added to the menu as well.

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Pioneer Village

From blacksmithing to butter churning, Gonzales' Pioneer Village Living History Center is a place where folks of all ages can go to learn about life in the late 19th Century.

Known locally as "The Village," the center is an outdoor museum featuring a collection of 1800s houses, outbuildings and businesses. It is located north of the intersection of Business U.S. Highway 183 and U.S. Highway 90A.

Pioneer Village stands as a monument of history with its collection of buildings on a 12-acre tract which is part of the original Spanish cross design for the town of Gonzales. The project started as a way to save endangered historic structures in Gonzales County and has gradually evolved into a living history museum where school children from all over South Texas tour to learn about their heritage.

"It's a place to go and see how people lived at the turn of the century," Frenzel said. "There are few places where you can see a log cabin like the one we have. There's also a ranch house that was built in 1850 by the Gates family."

The 10 buildings restored at Pioneer Village include houses ranging from an 1830s split-log house to an 1890s Greek Revival House, as well as businesses where a blacksmith and broom maker ply their trade on special days. Because all of the buildings that have been brought in and restored are from inside the county only, they are a showcase for the architectural history of this area.

"The village is doing better than it ever has," Frenzel said.



INQUIRER FILE PHOTO

"We recently got three frame buildings — the church, school and Metzler house — new windows and painted them."

On special occasions the village serves as a backdrop for costumed historical re-enactments and skill demonstrations.

"We have things like a blacksmith, dutch oven and a place where people can learn to churn their own butter," Frenzel said. "It's great on popcorn!"

Some of the special events that take place at the village are the Dutch Oven Cook-off and Melodrama, First Shot Battle Recreation and Stars in the Village.

"It's great that people of today can sort of time travel and see how people lived back then," Frenzel said. "We try to stress the fact that at that time, every family had to work to survive," "Pulling together. And that's really what a family is."

The First Shot Battle Recreation takes place during Come & Take It weekend on 3 p.m. that first Saturday. Meanwhile, the Stars in the Village celebration is held during the first weekends of December.

Pioneer Village is open 1-9 p.m. every day except Sunday. Adult

admission is \$5, children 4 to 12 is \$3, and children under 3 get in for free. Special Event admission is \$8 for adults and \$5 for

children ages 4-12. Group tours should be scheduled two weeks in advance. Group tour admission is \$3.50 per person.

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We are a district of six campuses serving nearly 2,900 students. Our newest campus, Gonzales Primary Academy (GPA), opened this past year. This amazing campus houses pre-kindergarten and kindergarten students in a state of the art facility. Architectural details highlight color, space and light offering a prime environment for learning. We are beyond excited to welcome our youngest students to the Primary Academy.

Current additions to Gonzales High School include a brilliant student center designed conceptually like a college campus center. Students will have access to WiFi throughout the space which is set up to provide small group, individual and large group meeting learning areas. The new front office at GHS adds a beautiful and secure entry for wonderful parents, community, and visitors.

North Avenue Intermediate campus has also undergone renovation, additions and expansions. The new kitchen and cafeteria space complete with an internet café provide an upbeat and current lunch room. Supportive, encouraging and motivational signage hangs throughout the room where students can choose their favorite sitting areas at the tables or new booth areas.

The new classroom wing will offer much needed space for learning and blends perfectly with the existing structure. An ornate façade dating from one of the original North Avenue buildings was delicately moved from another location to greet us in the front of the new building. Additionally, the new band hall is an excellent addition to the campus offering students a key structure for the introduction to music and instruments. It will serve students for many years to come in building the GISD band program.

Gonzales Junior High projects began last spring, adding classrooms and a cafeteria renovation in the near future. Our East Avenue Primary and Gonzales Elementary campus will experience new learning spaces as we open the new GPA and restructure grade levels at East Avenue and Gonzales Elementary. East Avenue will serve grades 1 and 2 and the elementary school will serve grades 3 and 4.

So many excited days are ahead! We are fortunate in GISD to have the drive for excellence and a community of support in meeting our goals.



The Victoria College Gonzales Center



The Victoria College's Gonzales Center offers residents an excellent opportunity to attain a college education in their community.

The Gonzales Center, on Sarah DeWitt Drive (U.S. Highway 90A and St. Joseph Street), houses several classrooms and computer labs, a resource room/tutoring center, two science labs and a large, well-equipped nursing skills lab. Students attend day or evening classes, and have access to advising and financial aid services. Adult Basic Education services include GED prep and ESL classes.

The Center opened in May 2007 and expanded east across St. Paul Street in 2014 to add the Gonzales Workforce Training Center. Welding, Electrical, Instrumentation and HVAC training are offered at the GWTC.

"The positive support from the community has been a major factor in the success of the VC Gonzales Center and its students," said Jackie Mikes, VC Gonzales Center Manager.

"Another important factor in the success of VC's Gonzales Center is the dedication and professionalism demonstrated by the many employees who work here as instructors, tutors, proctors and office staff," Mikes said. "It makes a big difference to our students that, when they come into the Center, they are greeted by friendly VC employees who demonstrate their interest in helping students achieve their goals."

The Gonzales Center also offers credit courses, a Commercial Truck Driving course and dual credit courses for high school students.

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The Runaway Scrape

The Alamo fell to Mexican forces under General Santa Anna 180 years ago. Following a series of losing battles, the Alamo's downfall must have felt like a wake for a republic that had just been born. Texas had declared its independence just five days before the worst defeat the Republic had yet suffered. The Goliad Massacre took place three weeks later and was an even worse defeat than the Alamo, leaving 342 soldiers dead. The odds were stacked against the Texans and their fledgling Republic.

Between the fall of the Alamo and the death of Colonel James

Fannin and his men, Texas was defeated at the battles of Refugio and Coleto. Susanna Dickinson informed General Sam Houston of the Alamo's fall on March 11. She gave him the bad news before the defeats at Coleto and Refugio, and still Houston knew he couldn't defeat the Mexican army with the number of troops he had. After the fall of the Alamo, Houston had around 400 men against Santa Anna's 1,400 and felt they were not prepared for the kind of battle Santa Anna sought. The Mexican Army would form up in battle lines and fight in the European style. Houston was skeptical that his army would be able to stand

toe-to-toe with the Mexican regulars.

Houston decided to retreat beyond the Colorado River, an easier position to defend than Gonzales. This was not just for his army, but civilians as well. Thus began the Runaway Scrape; a rearguard action that lasted for a month-and-a-half as Houston zigzagged across Texas until the army turned and fought at San Jacinto. But San Jacinto was more than a month away. The Runaway Scrape was devastating to the new Republic. The order of the day for the Mexican Army was 'no quarter.' Rebellious Texans were treated with no mercy, and fled with

reason.

Local historian Vicki Frenzel gave her own account of the events of the Runaway Scrape, with the most prominent account being that Sam Houston ordered the town to be burned.

"When an invading army is coming through, you don't want to leave them any shelter, supplies or anything they can use to help themselves," Frenzel said. "The men had to burn the town to stop the Mexican army from having any resources as they advanced."

"Margaret Darst, whose husband Jacob died at the Alamo,

See **SCRAPE**, p. 25

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BLOCK LOT

- 1 6 G. Hind's home
- 2 1 Dickinson & Kimble's hat factory
- 2 3 James Hind's home (later Matthew Caldwell's)
- 3 1 Fort
- 3 3 T. R. Miller's home (shaded)
T. R. Miller's store (open)
- 3 5 House - owner unknown
- 3 6 Stephen Smith's home (open)
Stephen Smith's store (shaded)
- 5 1 L.D. Sowell's home

LEGEND

[open box] Houses erected before 1831
[shaded box] Houses erected subsequently

** Note: The Runaway Scrape began March 11, 1836, but on March 14, 1836 only Adam Zumwalt's kitchen on block 11, lot 5 and Andrew Ponton's smokehouse on block 13, lot 1 remained standing.*

BLOCK LOT

- 5 3 James Tumlinson's home
- 6 1 Saddler's shop
- 6 2 J.B. Patrick's home
- 6 3 John Sowell's home
- 6 5 J. B. Patrick's home

BLOCK LOT

- 9 1 Humphries Branch's home (later Sam Lockhart's)
- 9 3 Dr. J.H.C. Miller's home
- 10 3 J.C. Darst's home
- 11 1 Luna home
- 11 3 Turner's hotel

BLOCK LOT

- 11 5 Adam Zumwalt's home & kitchen
- 12 1 G.W. Davis's home (open)
Eggleston's store (shaded)
- 12 3 Eli Mitchell's home
- 13 1 Best's home and smoke house (later Andrew Ponton's)
- 13 2,3 Mrs. John Brown's home
- 15 1 W. Arrington's home
- 28 1 Jo Martin's home

Scrape, from p. 23

was on the runaway scrape,” she said. “She wrote an account saying the people were already starting to drift out of town even before they heard the Alamo fell. They knew it was going to happen; it was just a matter of time.

Fleeing people eventually gathered at the McClure Cabin, where Sam Houston camped under one of the location’s oak trees. During the journey Darst and her son David were riding horseback turned and looked back and saw the town burning. Meanwhile, Isaac Milsap’s widow had taken her children down to the Guadalupe River bottom to hide. But when Houston learned of this, he sent riders down to retrieve the family. Many people walked from here to Sam

Houston, and many died along the way. But there’s no record of how many.

1835 featured one of the coldest and wettest springs in recorded history, with freezing overnight temperatures. This made the mass exodus even tougher.

“Parents had children who of course got sick from wet clothes and being exposed to the elements,” Frenzel said. “Once they got across the Brazos River it was worse because it was flooded. Their moccasins were drenched and they were up to their ankles in water, trudging.”

Houston turned several times to escort groups of refugees, all the while the rank and file soldiers in Houston’s army thirsted for revenge. All the

while, Houston drilled as much as he could. Word of the signing of the Texas Declaration of Independence filtered outward from Washington-on-the-Brazos slowly by word of mouth. When word reached the fleeing masses waiting for a ferry to cross the Brazos, many must have laughed with grim humor as they saw the smoke of their homes and ranches reach into the air. Any flight of refugees from war is attended by misery, tragedy and terror. There were hundreds of tales of heroism and self-reliance, as the women struggled over the muddy roads to the Sabine, without their men, abandoning their homes and the labor of years, with the smoke of the Mexican swathe of destruc-

tion rising behind them. Soon, there was hunger; fever and sickness spread — and babies began to die.

Santa Anna broke up his Army into columns, believing there were not many Texans remaining. He thought the Texans were crushed and that one swift stroke would chase the rest out of Mexican Texas. His campaign was a punishing one — spreading his army wide for maximum destruction. However, Santa Anna would eventually come to regret that decision at a place named for Saint Hyacinth. In the meantime, the dawning of the Republic seemed more like a twilight to be greeted with a hell of fire, smoke, disease and death.



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Come and Take It, from p. 5

The noncommissioned officer in charge of the Mexican cavalry left his men camped at Gonzales and rode back to San Antonio de Bexar for further instructions from Colonel Ugartechea. Meanwhile, Ponton buried the cannon in a peach orchard and sent runners to the surrounding area for armed assistance.

Not long after, the Texans shed all pretense of ever surrendering the cannon. Joseph D. Clements delivered the message to the Mexican army: "I cannot, nor do I desire to deliver up the cannon... and only through force will we yield."

Meanwhile, word was spreading that the Texans at Gonzales needed help.

The 18 men in Gonzales, willing and able to conduct an organized fight, removed all boats from the Guadalupe River, and hid the ferry in a bayou north of town. Next they captured the handful of Mexican soldiers waiting near town--but one man escaped, and rode hallooing back to Bexar.

Meanwhile, volunteers responding to the call to arms rushed to the scene, and the little Texan force of 18 mushroomed to 150 on September 30...167 on Oct. 1.

Also at this time, Sara Seely DeWitt and her daughter Evaline made the flag, back then referred to as the Old Cannon Flag, now called the Come and Take It flag. Depicted on a white cloth was a cannon with a lone star above it, and the words "come and take it"



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“I cannot, nor do I desire to deliver up the cannon ... and only through force will we yield.”

beneath the cannon. It was Texas' first battle flag, and first Lone Star flag.

On Oct. 1, 1835, Capt. Francisco Castaneda arrived from San Antonio with something less than two hundred men. Ugartechea intended a show of force. Castaneda, blocked by the Guadalupe, demanded the ferry be restored, and the cannon handed over. There was some parleying, a demonstration by the Mexican cavalry near the town, and considerable yelling and taunting by the Texans, who dared the Mexicans to "come and take it!", echoing the words emblazoned on their newly created flag flying in the breeze.

That night the Texans silently slipped across the Guadalupe and formed a defensive square.

After an inspiring address from Rev. William P. Smith, the Texans resumed their advance toward the Mexican camp in the fog shrouded dawn of Oct. 2. They were sure Castaneda planned to attack this day; they might as well hit him first. Quietly, very quietly, they edged through the fog. With them was the cannon, dug up from the peach orchard where Albert Martin had buried it. It was loaded with chains and scraps of iron.

The Texan militia blundered into the Mexican pickets, but in the dark and fog there could be no war. Everyone drew back and waited until daybreak.

The fog lifted suddenly as a curtain, showing both forces drawn up on an open prairie. With the Come and Take It flag flying, the Gonzales cannon fired, and Captain Castaneda immediately requested a parley, asking why he was being attacked.

Colonel Moore, commander of the Texans, explained that the Captain had demanded a cannon given to the Texans for 'the defense of themselves and the constitution and the laws of the country,' while he, Castaneda, 'was acting under orders of the tyrant Santa Anna, who had broken and trampled underfoot all the state and federal constitutions of Mexico, except that of Texas,' which last the Texans were prepared to defend.

Castaneda answered that 'he was himself a republican, as were two-thirds of the Mexican nation, but he was a professional officer of the government,' and while that government had indeed undergone certain surprising changes, it was the government, and the people of Texas were bound to submit to it.

Moore then suggested to the Captain, if he were a republican, he should join the revolution against tyranny by surrendering his command, and join them in the fight. Captain Castaneda replied stiffly that he would obey his orders. At this, Moore returned to his own lines and ordered the Texans to open fire. There was a brief skirmish, and the Mexican force immediately abandoned the field and rode back toward San Antonio.

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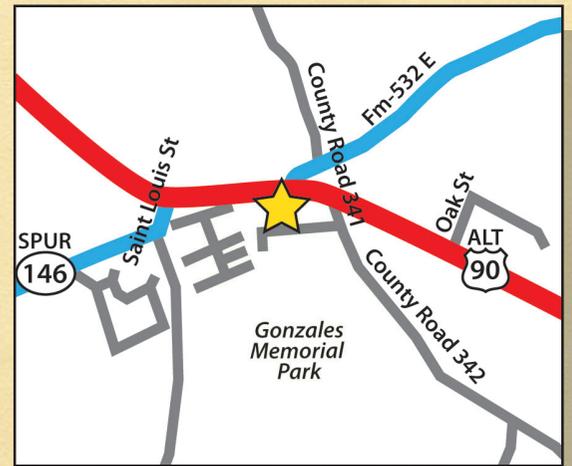
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Parks, from p. 10

INDEPENDENCE PARK AMENITIES

Pavilion rentals include a \$50 fee and a \$50 deposit. To rent the volleyball court, it's a \$25 fee, \$25 deposit and \$30 light fee. Renting the quadruplex baseball/softball fields is a \$50 fee, \$100 deposit and \$30 light fee. Soccer fields rental are a \$50 fee, \$50 deposit and a \$30 light fee.

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Nested along the banks of the Guadalupe River lies a picturesque RV park with 21 sites with utility hook-ups. Rates are \$25 per day, \$140 per week and \$280 for two weeks. Call (830) 672-1324 for reservations.

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J.B. Wells Park is a 169-acre park that has a covered pavilion, multi-purpose show barn, covered rodeo arena, practice arena, a hike and bike trail and 392 RV hook-ups at 2301 CR 197. See page 15 for a complete description of this facility.

KERR CREEK PARK

Kerr Creek Park runs along St. Louis Street from North

Fair Street to Sarah DeWitt Drive. It is home to an 18-hole disc golf course and the historic Oak Forest Bridge. The bridge was built in 1913 on CR 143 over the Guadalupe River. When it was replaced in 2003, the structure was relocated for a pedestrian bridge over Kerr Creek.

The disc golf course was established in 2003. Scorecards are available at the PARD office or Gonzales Chamber of Commerce at 414 St. Lawrence Street.

TEXAS HEROES SQUARE

Located at St. Joseph and St. Lawrence streets, the square honors the men of Gonzales who fought in the Texas Revolution.

The monument, by sculptor Pompeo Coppini, was built in 1910 through the efforts of the Gonzales Chapter of the Daughters of the Texas Republic.

CONFEDERATE HEROES SQUARE

Located at St. Joseph and St. George streets, the square honors the soldiers serving in the Confederate Army during the Civil War.

The monument, by sculptor Frank Teich, was dedicated in 1909 through the efforts of the United Daughters of the Confederacy Chapter 546, Gonzales.

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The Gonzales Inquirer, circa 1945



The Gonzales Inquirer, today

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Founders S.W. Smith and David Darst said it best with their credo in their very first issue on June 4, 1853: "Open to all parties, controlled by none," a motto still observed today.

Whether it was the Smiths and Darsts or those who have followed in their footsteps, the *Inquirer* has continued to give its readers the best product possible, every publication, a commitment evidenced by the number of press association awards the newspaper has earned throughout the years. The staff is engaged in the community by not only observing what happens, but by being active participants in service clubs, churches and community projects.

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ECONOMIC DEVELOPMENT

GEDC committed to downtown revitalization

The Gonzales Economic Development Corporation, a Type B Sales Tax Corporation, funded by a one-half percent sales tax, has funded in excess of \$6 million worth of business, tourism and community projects. Recognizing existing businesses as one of Gonzales' greatest assets, GEDC assists with Business Retention and Expansion, as well as recruitment of new business and industry. More, higher paying jobs lead to a stronger local economy and an enhanced quality of life.

Victoria College – Gonzales Campus, Texas Gonzales and Northern Railway (TXGN), Adams Extract, J. B. Wells Park and Arena, Sleep Inn, Holiday Inn Express, Aspen Beverage, Microtel by Wyndham, Belle Oaks Inn, Hotel Alcalde, Laurel Ridge Inn, Dilworth Inn and Suites, La Bella Tavola Italian Restaurant, SUDZ Car Wash, Storey Jewelers, Come and Take It Bar and



Grill, John's Flower Shop and the historic Lynn Theatre have all completed projects with assistance from GEDC.

The Expo Center at J B Wells, funded by GEDC and Hotel/Motel funds, opened in 2016. Approximately 20,000 sq. ft. provides space suitable for hosting small conferences, weddings, concerts, dances, arts and crafts

fairs and other events intended to bring visitors to experience the history and nature of Gonzales and to stay in the local hotels, motels and Beds and Breakfasts.

Two private business ventures and one public project are the most recent recipients of GEDC funds. All Access Storage is under construction for the development of self-storage units and Sweet B's Dessert Boutique will open in 2017 in a renovated building in the Heart of Downtown. "How sweet it is" to bring home one of Gonzales' own young college grads and entrepreneur to open her Dessert Boutique complete with party space and upper level housing. GEDC's investment in the construction of ten new hangars at the City owned, Roger M. Dreyer Memorial Airport, will expand airport infrastructure and help to supply the demands of a hangar

See **GEDC**, p. 35

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Commitment to the process

BY **JOSÉ TORRES** | GONZALES INQUIRER

When Gonzales ISD athletic director Kodi Crane took on the job in February 2014, the Apaches program was in a state of rebuilding in their non-football sports.

Sure, there was some success with the Apaches varsity football team. A trip to the state quarterfinals is not something to scoff at. But when other sports teams fail to even win a district game then some change is needed.

Enter Crane who comes in with a different philosophy of coaching than previous regimes. Crane believes that it takes a total effort from top to bottom in order for the whole program to have some success, not just one sport.

“There’s a commitment to building our entire athletic program, not only from our coaches and myself but from our administration from our school board, from our high school principal, our junior high principal, everybody,” Crane said.

“They want us to have success. We are putting the foundation together.”

Since then, although powerlifting was starting to grow before Crane was hired, there are more lifters now than there were three years ago. The addition of soccer has also brought in more kids to athletics.

“Our soccer teams that we got started are now in a district and are going to be highly competitive for a playoff push,” he noted.

The boys’ soccer team made it to the regional tournament in the 2015-16 season. Meanwhile, the girls’ team has stayed competitive throughout the district and are in search of their first-ever playoff bid.

A few sports that the Apaches have had some success in had

See **PROCESS**, p. 35

Small town, big dreams

BY **JOSÉ TORRES** | GONZALES INQUIRER

Although there aren't very many students (last year Waelder ISD had less than 15 walk across the stage), athletics is very much a big deal for the Wildcats.

Waelder has offered volleyball and cross-country during the fall but their main attraction comes in the winter during basketball season. The Wildcats have had a lot of success on the boys' side especially with the amount of support they get from the community. Basketball is very much an important part of Waelder.

"Athletics for the community is really big," Waelder ISD athletic director Brandon Howard said. "The community supports the athletic program very well and I think if there were no athletics there would be no camaraderie between the community and faculty and staff at the school."

Waelder basketball for both the boys' and the girls' team has always been one that is under-sized. But they have countered that with quickness and, as Howard describes it, "toughness."

"The players on the basketball team are determined," Howard claimed. "They've been counted out from the start, but they're so determined, they want to prove everybody wrong so they work very hard at what they do."

Even though the Wildcats have been to playoffs year in and year out, due to their size many count out their talent. Despite all this, Howard's program is one built on that key word toughness. They may not be the biggest in any sport, but sometimes grit can overcome it.

For athletes who move into the district, all Howard expects is just hard work, especially if you want to play on his basketball team.

"If he or she works hard and is willing to get on the floor and get dirty and play basketball, we'll welcome them aboard," he said. "But if they don't want to work hard it'll be tough for us to welcome them aboard."

The boys' basketball team made it to the regional tournament in the 2015-16 season. This year the Wildcats are trying to take it a step further.

Regardless of who is wearing that white and blue uniform the Waelder letters, Howard knows this. For the little town that could, these athletes will show their toughness. No matter who steps up to them.





Program on the rise

Nixon-Smiley Mustangs progressing with ‘grassroots’ philosophies

BY **JOSÉ TORRES** | GONZALES INQUIRER

Years ago, when Nixon-Smiley CISD athletic director Carlton McKinney took on the position he had a vision.

“I wanted to make sure kids were held accountable, kids were responsible and kids instill some pride in what they were doing,” he said.

Fast forward to the present and there is definitely a sense of pride the athletes and the community have when talking about the Nixon-Smiley Mustangs.

“In the past what [kids] did at the middle school was a little bit different than the high school,” he acknowledged. “To me, I view it as you would math. To me math comes in stages. If you don’t know basic addition and subtraction, it gets very difficult to get to calculus.”

Nixon-Smiley is classified as a 3A school. At that size, kids play multiple sports. So for a program like the Mustangs to succeed, athletes are going to have to come in with some sort of knowl-

edge of the sport they play.

“The re-teaching is a part that bogs you down,” McKinney said. “If I have freshmen and sophomores that we have to teach — whether it’s in basketball or football or baseball — basic skills that they should have learned in seventh or eighth grade, then it puts us behind the eight ball. Our advantage would be to make sure we develop better athletes and hand-eye coordination and quick feet and all those things and then work our way up to the high school level. We started that and I think we’ve benefitted from that.”

McKinney also coaches the boys’ basketball team that has had some success getting to the postseason and making it past the first few rounds.

“I’m happy with the success that we’ve had up to this point — football, basketball and the other sports as well,” McKinney said, “but I think there’s so much more than we can do. We’re going

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waiting list of twenty.

Committed to downtown revitalization, GEDC provides funding for the Main Street Program's Facade Improvement and Utilities Relocation Grants. And drawing attention to historic downtown is the World's Largest Come and Take It Flag (30 X 60 ft.), funded by GEDC, waving high above Texas Hero Square from a 131 ft. 9 in. flag pole welcoming travelers along Hwy 183. Most days, the Come and Take It Flag pays tribute to the brave men and boys, the "Im-

mortal 32," the only reply to Colonel Travis' pleas for reinforcements to defend the Alamo. On state and national holidays, the Texas and United States flags are flown over Texas Hero Square.

From business retention and expansion, revitalization, reinvestment and recruitment, infrastructure improvement and expansion to creative promotions and marketing, the Gonzales Economic Development Corporation is a resource for economic growth and sustainability.

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been girls' track and field and cross-country. Although the program would like to see more success on both the boys' and the girls' side, there have been many signs of improvement.

A softball program that struggled to keep a head coach as well as win games made it to the playoffs for the first time in years. The boys' basketball team had more district wins in their 2015-16 season than in recent memory. Also, the Lady Apaches were one win away from making the basketball playoffs in 2015-16 and in the 2016-17 season, have clinched a playoff spot, something they haven't done in several years.

Improvement across the board is showing and it starts with head coaches trusting the system that Crane has placed.

"We have coaches that love kids, that love to take care of kids, that will do what is needed to help kids out," Crane explained, "whether it's a struggling kid that we take in or whether it's our best giving them every opportunity to be the best that they can be."

For all of this to work, Crane asks his kids for just one thing. "Commitment," he simply said.

That's the word that he believes best describes the Apaches program. Commitment.

"Being successful does not come easy," Crane said. "We ask our kids to do hard things."

Whether it's getting better on their own time, coming into

the weight room before school or after, the athletic director knows that it's going to take that extra rep, that extra push to ultimately get that win come Tuesday or Friday night.

"We all want that great feeling that we just won a game," he said. "Well that doesn't come without the commitment."

For those coming in new to the district, Crane considers this a golden opportunity. It may be hard to come in fresh to a school, having to meet new people and figure out how you fit. But Crane sees a huge upside.

"You have an opportunity to create the reputation that you want to have," he said. "Nobody knows you, our teachers, our students, nobody knows you. You have the opportunity to come in here ... and get allies for the rest of your life."

"I [want to] make sure that they understand whether it's a young man or young lady that our coaches and I [are] here for you," he continued. "I want new kids that come into this district to understand the opportunity that they have in their life and I also want them to know that they got an ally that they can come to and knock on the door and we can go figure it out."

The Gonzales Apaches are on the rise. That is something you can see by looking at the stat books in the different sports. But what you can't see in the scoreboard are the coaches' commitments to their kids. That is something you'll just have to witness at GISD.

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to push the envelope and push our kids to be better. Better in the classroom, better athletically and just be better people."

"Our whole goal is when they leave here they can go out and have productive lives and be positive members of society," he continued. "For 99.9 percent of our kids that come through here, athletics is going to be a very small part of their lives. But it's huge instilling those values that will have them have productive lives in the future."

One of the values that McKinney is instilling on the field or court is the phrase "hold the rope."

"What that envisions or what the exemplifies is understanding that you don't do this by yourself," he explained. "There's every-

one else that's involved. Sometimes you have to hold the rope for someone else and sometimes someone has to hold the rope for you. But the whole object is making sure that you're giving it everything you got all the time."

"If you truly want to be the best you can be, we're going to make sure that happens," he said. "We're going to give you every opportunity there is to be successful. All we ask is your best every day. Whether it be focus, whether it be physical, whatever it is we just ask for your best and if you give us your best every day you will be very pleased with the results after if it's four years, three years, whenever you come in, whenever your tenure is with us you'll be better for it at the end of it then when you came in."



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