

# Freshman Marchin' Cats prepare for 2023-24



THE  
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COUNTY

# LEADER-NEWS

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## Daily Scripture

*Do not rebuke an older man harshly, but exhort him as if he were your father.*  
—1 Timothy 5:1

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## Potato breeding field day set July 18 near Springlake

*Texas A&M AgriLife field day to feature 134 potato varieties*



ISABEL VALES, PH.D., Texas A&M AgriLife Research potato breeder, shows off a new variety during the 2022 field day. More than 134 potato clones will be on display at the field day on July 18 near Springlake. (Texas A&M AgriLife photo by Kay Ledbetter)

By KAY LEDBETTER

The annual Texas A&M Potato Breeding Program Field Day, hosted by Texas A&M AgriLife Research and Bruce Barrett Farms, will be July 18.

No registration is required for the free program. Participants will assemble at Springlake Potato Sales, located off of Texas Highway 385 between Littlefield and Springlake, at 10 a.m. and then go to the field, said Isabel Vales, Ph.D., AgriLife Research potato breeder in the Texas A&M Department of Horticultural Sciences within the College of Agriculture and Life Sciences, Bryan-College Station.

"We always look forward to the field day because it allows everyone involved in the industry, including researchers, commercial and seed growers, processors and retailers to discuss their experiences this season," Vales said. "We also look forward to discussing the potatoes being released from our program."

**A potato for all reasons**

This year there are 134 potato

clones — russets, chippers, reds, yellows, purples, smalls and fingerlings — including Texas-released varieties, advanced selections and some advanced clones from other collaborating breeding programs.

Jeff Koym, senior research associate with AgriLife Research, Lubbock, said this growing season has had mild temperatures and more rain than average. The heat did not come on until the end of June, so that has helped the crop.

But potatoes grown in Springlake are typically prone to abiotic stresses like heat and drought that can reduce yield and quality, Vales said. Most Texas-released varieties and advanced selections are tolerant to heat stress since they have been selected under high-temperature growing conditions.

"Recently, we have conducted studies that validate this fact," Vales said. "Industry members nationwide and internationally are

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## United Supermarket of Littlefield supports Workforce Solutions South Plains Earn & Learn Program

by Ann Reagan  
News Writer

The Texas Workforce Commission's Earn & Learn Program for young adults with disabilities had faced no businesses in Littlefield willing to participate. But then they contacted the United Supermarket of Littlefield who stepped up. When asked how many people are you wanting to place, the Workforce commission replied, "seven". United Supermarket told them to bring them all over. According to Allison Roberts the Director of Communications for Workforce Solutions South Plains "They came through in a big way for us this summer and we are wanting to really highlight how wonderful they are and how much we appreciate them."

The workforce Commission partners with local employers to create meaningful work opportunities for students with disabilities aged 14-22. The program is five weeks long during the summer. Through work based learning, students earn a paycheck while acquiring new skills and gaining professional experience. Employers benefit from the addition of engaged and enthusiastic team members at no additional cost to the business since the program is wholly or in part federally funded. On the job coaches are also provided upon request.

This summer the United Supermarket of Littlefield offered a vital opportunity for seven special young adults.



JD Pence, United store manager; Guillermo Quintana; Jonathon, Store Director; Aiden Scaff, Adam Scaff, Serena Charles, Abraham Montalvo, with A&M Employment Services, and Jennifer Cordero, Job Trainer. (Photo by Ann Reagan)

## Lfd. Jr. High Top Students 2022-23



LJHS 'A' HONOR ROLL— Eighth graders Brianna Aleman and Boston Haltom. (Not pictured) Seventh grader, Craig Jennings. (Submitted Photo)

## Legislature approves largest property tax cut in State History

The average Texas homeowner could see annual property tax savings close to \$1,300 if voters approve an increase in the homestead exemption in the upcoming November election. That's part of the sweeping tax cut package passed by both houses of the Legislature on Thursday, ending a months-long impasse on how to distribute \$18 billion in state revenue surplus set aside in this session's budget. "We have a Texas-sized property tax relief package that is unparalleled in the world," said bill author and Houston Senator Paul Bettencourt. As in previous versions, the legislation continues the ongoing reduction of local school property tax rates begun in 2019 and doubles the franchise tax exemption, but the final version sent to the governor includes two new significant provisions.

The first provision would answer the House's demand for a limit to property appraisal growth. Current law caps yearly home value growth to no more than 10 percent of the previous year, but the House passed leg-

islation during the regular session to lower that number to five percent and extend it to all real property. This was one of the major sticking points between the chambers, as Lt. Governor Dan Patrick held that such caps may allow taxing entities to raise rates in a way that they cannot under revenue growth limits passed in Austin in 2019. Ultimately, the chambers agreed on a 20 percent appraisal growth cap for all real properties with a valuation of no more than \$5 million. Homeowners would still be under the 10 percent cap set for homesteads. This provision is set to expire in 2026, allowing legislators to gauge the impact of the new caps over the next three years.

The second provision seeks to add more public input into the appraisal process by adding three elected members to the boards of each appraisal district in counties exceeding a population of 75,000.

The third measure in the tax cut package would cut the number of small and medium business. See PROPERTY, Page 4