

# Active-shooter drill tests local agencies

By Jolene Guzman  
The Itemizer-Observer

INDEPENDENCE — At 10:21 a.m., Tuesday the first calls for help came in.

A shooter is at Central High School. Shots were being fired in the women's restroom and main hall of the school.

Police cars from all local agencies converged on the school within minutes, officers leaping from their cars, armed with rifles.

They scrambled, looking for an open door to the school.

Inside is panic. Teachers are trying to keep students safe and out of the path of the shooter. Students and staff hide and barricade themselves. But some were too close and had to play dead to escape with their lives.

This was just a drill. But the urgency, the simulated panic and injuries, the unpredictable behavior of students, and communication breakdowns with emergency responders were all realistic — and will teach emergency crews what to do if the real thing were to happen.

Independence Police Chief Bob Mason, part of the



JOLENE GUZMAN/Itemizer-Observer  
**Medics pretend to treat critically injured students during a drill at Central High School on Tuesday.**

command group on the scene, said officers and paramedics arrived only knowing what had been dispatched to them. It stayed that way throughout the exercise.

About 45 minutes into the drill, he said it was going well.

"The shooter had been brought out and the injured are being brought out," he said. "Most of that is going well."

On the radios behind him, someone calls in that they

have found a group of students in a barricaded room and they are trying to get them out.

"We haven't done a secondary sweep yet," he said. "I'm guessing in the secondary sweep they will find some who hid really well. The kids get into this."

Ethan Davis and Taylor Buccello were two student volunteers who participated. They were caught in the main hall and told by a



JOLENE GUZMAN/Itemizer-Observer  
**First responders wait for the all-clear and police escort to enter Central High School and help any wounded during an active-shooter drill on Tuesday.**

teacher to hide under the benches. Neither thought that was a good idea because they were in the open and near the shooter, but obeyed anyway.

"We had to play dead instead of actually being able to hide," Buccello said.

Their friend had a gash on her leg and Buccello had to use her jacket as a tourni-

quet. They waited for police to escort them to safety, having to carry their friend to paramedics for treatment.

Buccello said if that had been a real scenario, they believe they would have been shot.

"I would have ended up dead if I did what I did," Davis said.

He probably wouldn't have listened to the teacher.

"I would have followed whatever my gut instinct told me to do," he said. "I probably would have been all the way to Salem by now."

But that was all part of the process.

What did they learn from the drill?  
"To take care of the injured and go over my (first aid) more often," Davis said.

## Falls City high school maple trees removed

By Jolene Guzman  
The Itemizer-Observer

FALLS CITY — Two maple trees that adorned the entrance of Falls City High School for at least a century were taken down earlier this month after they were determined to be a safety hazard.

A year ago, the district had them evaluated by an arborist with R&R Tree Service. The resulting report gave a three word recommendation: "Remove and replace."

The sad, but necessary job was completed in stages this month, first with the trees being cut and then with the stumps ground down.

"Both the trees were rotten inside," said Superintendent Jack Thompson.

He said one of the trees had only about eight inches of living tree around the outside, the rest of the core was



FALLS CITY EDUCATION  
rotten. Strangely, that tree had another one growing inside of it.

"Everybody in town was understanding," Thompson said, especially after people could see the rot inside the trees. "Still, it was a sad day."

The work was done not a minute too soon.

Recent wind storms may have proven too much for the poor, bedraggled trees.

"When we had that big wind storm, we were all saying how glad we were that the trees were down because we could have had some pretty good sized branches

breaking off in the wind," Thompson said.

He said conversations are ongoing about what should replace the trees, but nothing has been decided yet.

On Nov. 17, the Falls City School Board turned its attention to buildings, specifically the proposed gym at Falls City Elementary School.

The board voted to hire an architect, AC + Co Architecture, to help the district with cost estimates and plans.

Thompson said, thus far, he and the board haven't heard any objection to the idea of building a gym, but have heard plenty of questions.

"People have been saying 'We like the idea, but what is it going to cost and what will it look like?'" Thompson said.

He said the architect will help answer those questions.

## Dallas seeks new owner for building

By Jolene Guzman  
The Itemizer-Observer

DALLAS — The city of Dallas is looking for a new owner for the long-vacant former Carnegie Library building in downtown Dallas.

The city issued a "request for proposals" for purchase and redevelopment of the building located at 187 SW Court St. Proposals are due by Dec. 3.

Built in about 1911, the building has three levels and a total of 4,838 square-

feet. The city of Dallas is the current owner.

"Originally, the building was constructed as a public library based on a grant the city received from the Carnegie Foundation," the proposal read. "The building served as the Dallas Public Library until 1990. Since that time, it has served as the Polk County Historical Museum and offices for local parks and recreation program services."

City officials have said even if an acceptable pro-

posal isn't submitted through this process, maybe the city will find good ideas for what to do with the old vacant building.

A committee designated to evaluate proposals is estimated to have its findings finished by mid-January.

Have an idea? For more information about what is required to submit a purchase and redevelopment proposal, go to [www.ci.dallas.or.us/CivicAlerts.aspx?AID=390](http://www.ci.dallas.or.us/CivicAlerts.aspx?AID=390).

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Dallas Yoga & Balance Studio ..... Sue Zdun  
Domino's Pizza ..... Joline Davis  
First American Title ..... Irma Hernandez  
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