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Dallas softball team takes second in state



LUKAS EGGEN/Itemizer-Observer

Dallas High School girls softball team took second place in the state championships Saturday. For more on the story, see Page 13A.

IN YOUR TOWN

DALLAS

Dallas council approves budget including the recreation coordinator position.

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FALLS CITY

Students learn life and work lessons through FACES program.

»Page 3A

INDEPENDENCE

Little Free Library dedicated on Friday at Mount Fir Park's Inspiration Garden.

»Page 2A

MONMOUTH

Los Angeles Chargers wide receiver and WOU alum Tyrell Williams will help with a youth football camp.

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EDUCATION

Falls City High School Class of 2017 graduated Friday.

»Page 15A

Fire causes damage to home in Perrydale

Itemizer-Observer staff report
PERRYDALE — A lawn debris fire got out of hand Monday night, damaging a house in Perrydale.

Firefighters were called to a home in the 800 block of Perrydale Road at 7:27 p.m. after a fire the homeowner thought he had put out reignited and caught a hot tub on fire.

"He and a neighbor were trying to put it out," said April Welsh, spokeswoman for Dallas Fire & EMS.

By the time firefighters arrived, the fire had reached the home. Complicating matters were nearby powerlines that needed to be shut off for firefighters to safely fight the fire.

"The house and contents are a 50 percent loss," Welsh said.

The man living in the house is staying with family.

Firefighters responded from Southwest Polk, Dallas Fire & EMS and Polk Fire No. 1. Crews were on scene for about two hours. No injuries were reported.

Monday proved to be an active night for emergency crews in the area.

See FIRE, Page 6A

Sheriff talks online 'stranger danger'

By Jolene Guzman
The Itemizer-Observer

INDEPENDENCE — Online safety for children is a lot more complicated than "don't talk to strangers."

That's still critical advice, but Polk County Sheriff Mark Garton had much more to tell fourth- and fifth-graders at Independence Elementary School about safe internet use and cyberbullying during a presentation May 31.

He started with explaining why children shouldn't chat with people they don't know while gaming.

"Stop doing that," Garton said. "I will tell you why. That's really scary because you don't know who you are talking to. If the other person is grown up and they are talking to you, sometimes that can be bad."

He added to pay attention when downloading a game.

"A lot of times when you download a game to your phone or your tablet, it will ask to look at your contacts or use your camera or use GPS," Garton said.



JOLENE GUZMAN/Itemizer-Observer

Polk County Sheriff Mark Garton leads a presentation on online safety for fourth- and fifth-graders at Independence Elementary School on May 31.

Garton said never allow GPS to be activated.

"Because it can track you, right?" he said. "If the police can figure out where you are

by tracking your phone, so can bad guys."

No less crucial is avoiding arranging to meet in person strangers they've met online.

"Just don't meet anyone that you've met online," he said. "You just don't do it."

The presentation is part of a program the sheriff's of-

fice started last year emphasizing safety and drug prevention education for children and parents. The program consists of presentations and school visits from a deputy dedicated to working in schools — or sometimes, the sheriff himself.

Garton stresses education, but also positive interactions between police and children.

"When I was their age, the only time a cop ever showed up, it was for something bad," he said. "It's neat to have kids come up to you and not just look at you and turn around. That is what school resource stuff is all about, connecting."

That worked at IES. After his presentation, Garton was mobbed with questions from children who were supposed to be headed back to class.

Nina Bravo, the school's counselor, had to encourage them to get back on schedule.

"Boys, boys. Class," she said, then laughing after they disappeared down the hallway.

See SAFETY, Page 5A

Program quiets cycle of repeat crime

By Jolene Guzman
The Itemizer-Observer

DALLAS — Polk County's new Mental Health Court, or Friday Court, helped give Anthony Brown and Kelly Fields their lives back.

Brown and Fields are the first two graduates of Friday Court, which began April 1, 2016. It was formed to help those charged with crimes whose actions were caused in part by symptoms of mental illness.

A team including representatives from Polk County Circuit Court, the Polk County District Attorney's Office, Polk County Behavioral Health, Community Corrections, the Polk County Board of Commissioners,

and law enforcement and defense attorneys, met for about a year to design Friday Court, modeled after similar programs in Marion and Clackamas counties.

Polk County Circuit Court Judge Norm Hill said the intent was to break the cycle of defendants committing crimes, getting sentenced to probation, failing to get treatment, and then committing more crimes.

Friday, during Brown and Field's graduation ceremony, Hill said he's seen proof that has worked.

Fields, 38, the first participant in the program, started when he was in recovery and receiving treatment with the help of his family.

"But this is not easy. Kelly, you

struggled with some personal things," Hill said. "You had challenges that you overcame. You never looked back. You moved forward through each of the steps. I know other members of the program looked up to you as a role model."

Robin Rogers, Field's mother, said that stands in contrast to where her son was not that long ago.

"Kelly was here in the Polk County Jail for six weeks and, during that time he was, in my opinion, psychotic," she said. "He had delusions and he heard voices. He had all the symptoms of schizophrenia. At that time, the program hadn't started yet."

During his time in jail, he wasn't receiving treatment and had to be

placed in solitary confinement, said Robin's husband, Brett Rogers, Field's stepfather.

"I said, 'How is it that this kid was locked up when he obviously had significant mental illness issues,'" Robin recalled thinking then. "At that time, that was what happened."

He was released, but found himself in the system again later. This time, he was placed with Friday Court.

"It was amazing. I just can't say enough good things about the program," Robin said. "My son today — through their help, their guidance, through their medication management — they have just turned him around. I'm so grateful to this."

See COURT, Page 5A

THE NEXT
7
DAYS
PLANNING
FOR YOUR
WEEK

wed

Knitters and crocheters meet monthly to make clothing and accessories for those in need.
3-5 p.m. Free.



Mostly cloudy
Hi: 76
Lo: 56

thu

See what's new and fresh at the Polk County Bounty Market on the corner of Academy and Main streets.
10 a.m.-3 p.m. Free.



Showers
Hi: 65
Lo: 47

fri

Donate blood, save a life at the American Red Cross blood drive at the Polk County Fire District No. 1 Station 90.
Noon-5 p.m. "Free."



Showers
Hi: 62
Lo: 46

sat

Soar with the Young Eagles and take a free flight in an experimental aircraft at the Independence airport.
8:30-11:30 a.m.
Free for ages 8-17.



Chance thunder
Hi: 61
Lo: 46

sun

Skip cooking and head to Buell Grange Hall, on Mill Creek Road, just off Highway 22, for breakfast.
8-11 a.m. \$6.



Cloudy
Hi: 64
Lo: 46

mon

Today is National Loving Day, marking the Supreme Court decision to overturn laws banning interracial marriages.



Partly cloudy
Hi: 68
Lo: 45

tue

The Independence Riverview Farmers Market adds Tuesdays starting today at the top of Riverview Park.
1-6 p.m. Free.



Mostly sunny
Hi: 66
Lo: 46

