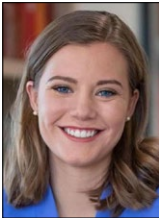


BUZZ

May 2026



State Representative **CAROLINE FAIRLY** has been appointed to the **TEXAS ENERGY FUND ADVISORY COMMITTEE**, effective immediately. The appointment was made by Texas House Speaker Dustin Burrows in accordance with state law. The Texas Energy Fund Advisory Committee plays a

critical role in supporting the state's efforts to strengthen its electric grid. The committee provides recommendations to the Public Utility Commission of Texas regarding the use of funds dedicated to the construction, operation, and improvement of electric facilities across Texas. It also conducts regular reviews of the fund's structure and effectiveness. "The Texas Energy Fund's success depends on strong oversight, accountability, and strategic policy direction," said Speaker Dustin Burrows. "Representative Caroline Fairly has been a leading voice for energy investment and economic growth in the Texas House. I am confident she will play a key role on the fund's advisory committee, helping guide the state's investment priorities and infrastructure planning to position Texas for continued growth and competitiveness."



THE RANGE, a dedicated economic engine designed to secure research funding, drive innovation, and position the Texas Panhandle as a global leader in food production, announced that **FLOYD HARTMAN** has joined their team after retiring from a distinguished career with

the City of Amarillo. He served more than 20 years with the city in roles spanning planning, operations and strategic water supply management. That last bucket of experience—water supply—will be his focus with The RANGE. Hartman's official title is **PRINCIPAL INVESTIGATOR OF WATER STEWARDSHIP**. In that capacity, he will lead the priority area focus on water stewardship, which our supporters are well aware is a cornerstone issue for the long-term resilience of the Texas Panhandle. "Water leaders across the Panhandle know Floyd, and they trust his depth of experience," says **MATT GARNER, Ph.D.**, Executive Director of The RANGE. "He is one of the leading water experts in the Texas Panhandle, and arguably in the state and nation. We are fortunate to have him helping us explore smarter, more sustainable ways to

manage and steward this vital resource." Hartman also has roots as a rancher in the Panhandle. During his time with the City of Amarillo, Hartman held multiple leadership roles, most recently as Special Advisor to the Water and Sewer Utilities teams, overseeing water supply for a community of more than 200,000 residents. He played a central role in planning and executing water-related projects with a combined value estimated between \$600 million and \$1 billion. He has experience as a stakeholder with the Canadian River Municipal Water Authority and personally was able to secure the city's access to 400 million acre feet of water. With recent announcements of data center developments near Amarillo and elsewhere in the Panhandle, the public is paying close attention to local water sustainability. Hartman's leadership will be critical as our region navigates long-term planning and collaborative solutions.



FIRSTBANK SOUTHWEST recently announced its long-anticipated entry into the Canyon market, marking an important milestone for a community the bank has long considered home. While this is FirstBank Southwest's first physical location in Canyon, the bank's ties to the

community are well established. Many employees live in Canyon, others are alumni of Canyon Independent School District and West Texas A&M University, and long-standing customer relationships already connect the bank to the heart of the community. A temporary Canyon branch will open soon at 305 15th Street, Canyon, offering full-service banking while the bank builds its permanent home along 4th Avenue. Canyon Market President is **PAUL DE LEON**, who joined FirstBank Southwest in October of 2025. Born in Amarillo and raised in Canyon, De Leon is a graduate of Canyon High School and began his banking career in his hometown shortly after graduation as a part-time teller with Happy State Bank while completing his undergraduate studies. After earning his degree from West Texas A&M University's College of Business, De Leon moved into commercial credit in March 2017, where he built a strong foundation in credit analysis and underwriting. In June 2023, De Leon graduated from the Southwestern Graduate School of Banking at Southern Methodist University, further strengthening his leadership and commercial banking expertise.

The **TEXAS TECH UNIVERSITY SYSTEM** (TTU System) announced a transformative partnership with **NVIDIA** to deploy next-generation accelerated computing infrastructure, positioning TTU at the forefront of artificial intelligence, high-performance computing, and advanced research. By moving directly to the NVIDIA Blackwell Ultra (B300) platform—bypassing current-market H100 and B200 hardware—Texas

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Tech has leapfrogged all other universities and secured one of the most advanced supercomputing architectures not just in higher education, but across all industries. The acquisition includes NVIDIA's cutting-edge GB300 NVL72 systems, powered by Grace CPUs alongside a new cluster of B300 accelerators, forming a secure, next-generation supercomputing environment built not only for academia, but for broad industry application. "This investment reflects the kind of strategic decision that strengthens Texas Tech University's trajectory as a preeminent research university," said Texas Tech University President **LAWRENCE SCHOVANEC**. "It will create a new level of AI research capacity that enhances our existing strengths while deepening engagement with external partners. It also supports our AAU aspirations, faculty recruitment, and our workforce development efforts. Chancellor **BRANDON CREIGHTON'S** vision and engagement throughout this process were critical in making it possible." Following early adoption at the U.S. Naval Academy Postgraduate School, Texas Tech will be the first R1 public university in the country to own and operate a system built for Agentic AI—putting the TTU System at the forefront of how intelligent systems are designed, trained and deployed. Purpose-built for scale, resilience, and security, the architecture will accelerate innovation across critical sectors, including: Healthcare, Energy and agriculture, Finance, Advanced manufacturing, and National security and defense. With this investment, Texas Tech is not merely expanding research capacity — it is establishing itself as a national hub for industrial-scale AI development and advanced computational discovery. Beyond its research impact, the platform is expected to serve as a significant revenue generator for the TTU System. Through strategic partnerships and shared services, Texas Tech will provide advanced computing access to private sector partners — supported by a highly secure, Texas-based AI cloud infrastructure designed to meet the needs of industry and government partners. By expanding access to industrial-scale AI infrastructure, Texas Tech will accelerate commercialization and job creation across critical sectors.

DANIEL AND MEGAN ROSENBACH, the developers of **HELIUM HEIGHTS**, located off the old Route 66 near I-40 West, have already broken ground on their renovation of the historic Helium Plant. They envision transforming the space into a variety of attractions – a wedding venue, a café, a bakery, plus retain shops. Anticipating the upcoming Route 66 Celebration,

plans are in the works for a **HELIUM HEIGHTS ROUTE 66 CENTENNIAL MARKET**, open June 5-6. Look for artisan goods, boutiques, local farmers' produce, baked goods, bands, food trucks, and kid-friendly entertainment for this special family event.

WHITAKER REAL ESTATE announced the addition of **AIDEN WHITAKER** to the firm. Aiden has been involved in agriculture his whole life, and will complete his degree in Ag Economics at WTAMU in 2027. He represents the third generation of Whitakers to specialize in the marketing of farm, ranch, and recreational real estate with Whitaker Real Estate. This year marks 52 years in the industry for Lewis and 28 years for Lee.



Lee Whitaker, Lewis Whitaker, Aiden Whitaker