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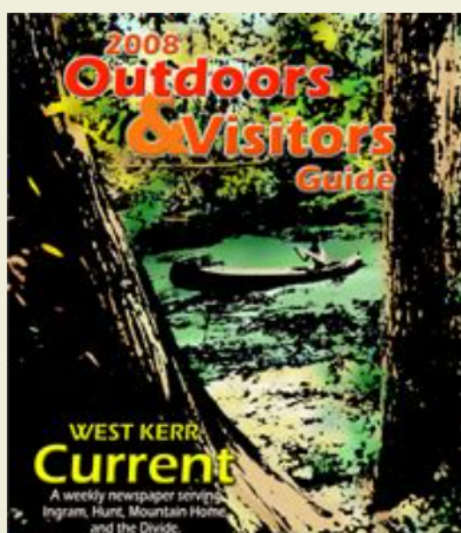
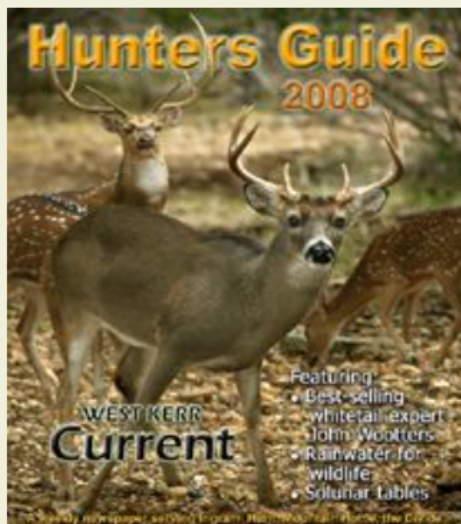
Thu, 17 Sep, 2026

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WEST KERR Current
Serving Ingram, Hunt, Mountain Home, the Divide
Thursday
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Harris suspends JP 4 campaign

Commissioners to name replacement before Jan. 1

By Rosa Lavender
Special to the Current

In a letter to Kerr County Republican Party chair Helen West earlier this week, Pct. 4 Commissioner Don Harris announced that he has ended his campaign for the Justice of the Peace Pct. 4 office on the Nov. 3 general election ballot. Harris ran in the March Republican primary to succeed retiring JP Bill Ragdale and garnered the most votes over three other candidates for the office.

Since his decision was made after the deadline for changes to the ballot, which was Aug. 24, Harris' name will still

appear on the November ballot. Kerr County Commissioners Court will appoint someone to take office on Jan. 1. That decision process will be a future action by the court after they agree on a process.

"It is with sincere regret that I am writing to inform you of my decision to resign as the Republican nominee for Justice of the Peace, Precinct 4. I have determined that personal circumstances now require me to step away from my candidacy for this office. This was not a decision I made lightly," Harris wrote in his letter to West.

Harris expressed his appreciation for the support and confidence that the Republican voters had shown him.

"I have spent many years serving the

people of Kerr County, and that service has always been important to me. This is simply a decision that I believe is right for me at this time," Harris said.

In a separate letter to donors who contributed to his campaign with which he enclosed a check reimbursing them for their campaign contributions Harris said, "I hope you will understand and respect my decision. Most important, I want you to know how much I appreciate your friendship, your encouragement, and your support. I am proud of the opportunity I have had to serve the people of West Kerr County over the years, and I am deeply appreciative of everyone who supported me along the way."

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Pct. 4 Commissioner Don Harris who was the Pct. 4 Justice of the Peace-Elect announced late last week that he has suspended his campaign for JP in the November general election. Harris' name will appear on the Nov. 3 ballot, but commissioners court will name a replacement for the office before Jan. 1.

County adopts budget, tax rates

By Louis Amestoy
Special to the Current

Kerr County Commissioners Court unanimously adopted its FY26-27 budget and 2026 tax rates Monday, closing out a process delayed since late August, while also signing off on a new flash-flood emergency plan, an expanded warning siren rollout, and a renewed inmate healthcare contract. Monday's vote finished business the court couldn't wrap up on Aug. 31, when a calculation error in elected officials' salary figures forced a delay while the numbers were corrected and republished.

With that fixed, the court approved the FY26-27 General Provisions and adjusted salary language to reflect the county's new

salary study structure, which removes traditional pay steps, then unanimously adopted elected officials' salaries.

County Auditor Tanya Shelton presented final true-up adjustments before the budget vote, closing out Fund 17 (Animal Shelter) and Fund 30 (ARPA) and folding in a \$1.2 million FEMA-approved dam wing wall project.

A last-minute proposal from Commissioner Jeff Holt to add \$30,000 for a 10 percent raise for volunteer fire departments was set aside so as not to delay the statutory budget deadline. The adjustments passed as presented, and the county's final projected ending fund balance landed at 25.63 percent of expenditures — above the 25 percent target.

See Budget, Page 10



Flippin' flapjacks

Melton Lippman expertly prepares a delicious freshly made pancake at last Saturday's pancake supper at the Ingram Volunteer Fire Department station. The supper was a fundraiser to benefit Ingram VFD.

Photo by Irene Van Winkle

Bat found in Ingram positive for rabies

A bat found in Ingram has tested positive for rabies, becoming Kerr County's 8th case of 2026.

Kerr County Animal Control was first advised on Wednesday, Sept. 9, of a bat located under a vehicle on a property in the 200 block of Hwy. 39 in Ingram, according to KCAC Director Reagan Givens.

An animal control officer collected the specimen the same day, preserved it for the zoological lab and sent it for testing on Thursday, Sept. 10.

"We received confirmation that the results were positive for rabies on Friday, Sept. 11," Givens said. No human exposure was recorded with this incident.

"You never know when or where you or your pets might encounter a carrier of this terrible, neurological disease," Givens said, adding that people should never attempt to pet or feed any unfamiliar animals, including stray dogs and cats.

Additionally, anyone who notices an animal behaving abnormally is asked to make a note of its physical description, its exact location, which direction it may be heading and call that information in as soon as possible to Kerr County Animal Control at 830-257-3100. If it is after business hours, please report the sighting to the sheriff's office at 830-896-1216.

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Commissioners weigh purchase of old KPD building

By Irene Van Winkle
West Kerr Current

Extensive discussions regarding purchase of a city property due to flood damage at the courthouse were held at Kerr County Commissioners Court Monday, and a new flood action manual by the Emergency Management Coordinator Shorey Harmon.

Local realtor "Pablo" Brinkman shared his thoughts on how the county could find a location to replace the old courthouse whose basement was badly damaged in the 2026 flood.

He said he was a broker for a build-

ing at 319 Sidney Baker, the former Kerrville Police Department offices. He said there were "a lot of rumors" about the price and other matters.

"The letter of intent is a handshake, and there is no legal obligation by the county to purchase it," he said.

Should the parties go further, they can later take the next step to vote on what's there, and could pay an option fee to keep it for 60 days.

Brinkman said he was all for efficiency, and showed slides of possible images of what renovation might look like. This could include fixing the restrooms, replacing aging A/C units, and dealing with any asbestos that might

appear.

He noted that while price rumors were floating around, \$1,875,000 is the listed price he told commissioners court.

The old courthouse was going to lose 16,000 square feet and the old KPD building was 15,000 square feet. It includes a parking lot all around which is already contiguous to county parking.

Brinkman said that it would be closer to what other counties are doing, that is, creating a campus-style layout of their departments. It would be more efficient.

The building has an elevator that would remain in place.

The lower floor would have the offices for the county judge, his administrator and offices for the four commissioners. There would be new ceiling tile and lighting installed. Once the LOT is complete, there would be an agreement for a purchase sale agreement.

Brinkman also included some creative photos showing new images with closed glass sides, to modernize the parapet wall.

The court favored going into executive session with limited content to dis-

Mountain Home ESD proposes tax rate

By Karl Short
West Kerr Current

Kerr County Emergency Services District No. 2 met Aug. 13 at the Mountain Home Volunteer Fire Department and unanimously proposed in a "voice vote" a tax rate of \$0.099 per \$100 valuation — a decrease of \$0.001 from the 2025-26 budget.

ESD 2 President Lee Hall presided over the meeting and presented the treasurer's report for Commissioner Jack Clarke, who was absent. Hall

reported an account balance of \$243,639.25 which the commissioners unanimously approved. No bills were submitted for approval.

MOHVD representative Rex Brand presented the call report indicating 66 calls for the year with 17 calls made since the July 9 meeting: 7-12 — motor vehicle accident in the 200 blk. of Big Sky; 7-15 — assisted Junction VFD with a motor vehicle accident at I-10 and mile marker 472; 7-16 — motor vehicle accident at I-

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Some of what you've missed