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■ **Wanda Wadsworth**, 80, Midlothian  
 ■ **Henry Swaengen**, 85, Midlothian  
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**TODAY'S EDITION**  
 /WHAT TO DO

**Jan. 5** Community dance at Optimist building, 219 Patrick St., Waxahachie. Admission \$5.



# Powerball fever

## \$400 million jackpot drawing lines at Texas lottery retailers

**BY ANDREW BRANCA**  
 DAILY LIGHT STAFF WRITER

People lining up to purchase Powerball tickets from local gas stations Monday were thinking of

only one thing — what they could do with \$400 million.

The drawing for the \$400 million jackpot takes place Wednesday — one of the biggest pots of all time with the game's largest

jackpot winner claiming \$590.5 million in Florida, according to the Powerball website.

Powerball is played in 44 states along with Washington D.C., Puerto Rico and the U.S.

Virgin Islands. The odds at winning the grand prize are one in 292,201,338.

RaceTrac co-manager Davidson Sylvester said the excitement **SEE JACKPOT, PAGE 9**

# #ROISDStrong



Red Oak ISD Superintendent Scott Niven speaks with more than 40 teachers at a staff meeting Monday morning. As administrators went over what to do on Tuesday, the first day back to school after winter break and after an EF-3 twister damaged an elementary campus, the teachers were surprised with \$250 gift cards each from CNB.

## Shields staff readies new campus for students



Shields Elementary Principal Shondra Jones wipes tears from her cheek as she talks with her teachers about the support the campus received after the Dec. 26 tornado.

## District, community unite after tornado damages school

**BY SHELLEY CONLON**  
 MANAGING EDITOR

**RED OAK** — As Shields Elementary Principal Shondra Jones stood in front of more than 40 of her teachers, she tried to hold back the tears. She tried to save face, because the same she led were the same people providing her support in one of Red Oak ISD's most vulnerable weeks of the school year.

"When I look at them, I see strength. That's where I get my strength from because I know

they're looking to me, but I look to them. I don't know if they realize that, but I get my strength from them," Jones said. "Knowing that we're all coming together for the good of the students and for each other, when I saw that, I said 'You all look great.' It's because I know that's the strength."

She was referring to the T-shirts, auburn with #ShieldsStrong printed in white on the front and the white shirts with #ROISDstrong printed in the same red on the

**SEE SHIELDS, PAGE 2**

## GOP forum tonight

Event to showcase Republican candidates vying for county office

**FROM STAFF REPORTS**

The Ellis County Republican Women will host a candidates forum on Tuesday evening at the Waxahachie Civic Center for all Ellis County candidates running in the March Republican Primary.

The forum will be moderated by KBEC AM 1390 and the Waxahachie Daily Light.

The event will begin at 6 p.m. with a meet-and-greet, allowing community members the opportunity to visit with each of the candidates. The formal program will begin at 7 p.m. with candidates in each race answering a series of questions pertaining to their specific race.

Candidates in each race will be given three minutes for opening remarks; three minutes to address the issues facing the office they are seeking and explain their plans to address those challenges if elected; and three minutes for closing remarks. Prior to the forum, candidates will draw numbers for speaking order.

The forum will be broadcast live on KBEC Radio and the Daily Light will provide coverage from the event in its Thursday, Jan. 7 edition.

There is no admission to the event and community members are encouraged to attend.

Candidates in contested races seeking the Republican nomination for

**SEE FORUM, PAGE 9**

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## SHIELDS

FROM PAGE 1

back, worn during a staff meeting Monday morning. With the hashtag, teachers presented a united front as they sat in the library of the Shields on Live Oak campus, converted from an empty middle school to a temporary elementary campus about a week ago by more than 700 community volunteers after an EF-3 tornado severely damaged the Donald T. Shields Elementary building, located at 223 W. Ovilla Road in Red Oak, the night after Christmas.

While the teachers discussed plans on how Tuesday, the first day back at school from winter break, would go, they didn't expect the financial surprise from Citizen National Bank employees. In the amount of \$250 each, CNB representatives gave 43 gift cards to teachers to make their classrooms as comfortable as possible as the children transitioned onto the new campus. The amount matched the \$250 given by the school district to each teacher and staff member last week for the same purpose, said Caroline Ford, CNB's marketing director.

"When we first heard about it, everyone at the bank was asking what we could do," Ford said, adding CNB representatives reached out to Red Oak ISD Superintendent Scott Niven to see how to help. "We said let's do it for the teachers that way the most people could be impacted in the classrooms. I've taught school, and you put so much money and time into it, and we thought this could help them replace some of things they lost as well. I teared up. You could see on their faces they were appreciative and it meant a lot to them."

When the storm blew through, the original campus took a direct hit, according to a previous Daily Light article.

"There are some walls that were blown out, some A/C units are gone, the roof," Niven said in the article, adding some of the missing brick walls made it possible to see straight into classrooms. "Everything back to the iron structure will have to be redone in some places."

Volunteers spent hours painting and revamping the Live Oak campus, moving furniture into the building and bringing supplies and books to help



Red Oak ISD Superintendent Scott Niven speaks to Shields Elementary school teachers, who will begin holding classes in the newly renovated Live Oak site today. The campus will be called Shields on Live Oak. The campus was made ready by more than 700 volunteers within a matter of days after Dec. 26's EF-3 tornado severely damaged Shields Elementary.

Photos by Scott Dorsett/The Daily Light



As last minute work continued (right) Shields Elementary principal Shondra Jones (above) embraces CNB Marketing Director Caroline Ford after the local bank matched Red Oak ISD's 43 \$250 gift certificates for the relocated teachers to purchase supplies for their new classrooms.

make the building ready for incoming children. Even the school's website and building front reflect the change to make the transition as smooth as possible, with the new address posted and a new banner standing out front.

During the meeting, teachers were even presented with any salvageable nameplates to hang over classroom doors. Not all were saved, and some were bent and bowed from the 145-155 mph winds

that came through. Red Oak ISD officials even presented a slab of wood from the original campus to the teachers, hand painted with "Shields Strong." The sign and others saved from the debris will hang throughout the main office and cafeteria, Jones said, adding the sign placed in the cafeteria will go on a wall honoring all the volunteers.

"That was huge. I've been surprised a lot today," Jones said. "They

hadn't finished it. That's just how it was. I think that's important."

As teachers wiped their eyes, hugged and headed back to their classrooms to prep for Tuesday morning, Jones said the way the community came together to help the school recover was the epitome of not only being #ShieldsStrong, but #RedOakStrong.

"#ShieldsStrong means we're resilient. We don't alter in the face of

SEE SHIELDS, PAGE 7





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## SHIELDS

FROM PAGE 2

destruction. We stand together no matter what. #ShieldsStrong means family," Jones said. "When I first heard about the damage, my reaction was 'Thank goodness there was no one in that building.' I knew there was no one in that building for a fact, because when I knew the storms were coming, I texted my staff and they all checked back in with me. Just from our district's stand point, I knew what family meant, because we've come together before in other ways. To see the outpouring of the community, the outpouring of love and prayers, I was overwhelmed. I am very grateful, and very humble. I think when I saw my students in that building, helping because they wanted to be there, that showed what it's all about. Ultimately, it's about them and they wanted to be apart of that and that's their home. To see them there, I knew we were all doing the right thing and we would be



In a surprise to everyone, three portions of wood from the destroyed Shields Elementary school were displayed at Monday's meeting. The precious salvaged signs will be put on display throughout the new Shields on Live Oak campus.

Photos by Scott Dorsett/The Daily Light

fine." The children will also receive #ShieldsStrong shirts either on the first day back or throughout the week, Jones said, adding this too was a surprise from the district. She

laughed and said she'll have to remind teachers and students that the stay at the Live Oak campus is only temporary — an extended field trip or an adventure. And while the staff, administrators, stu-

dents and parents finish the next six months at the revamped campus, Jones said next fall, everyone will return to the original campus, but finding familiarity in the halls of Shields on Live Oak is just

as important as ever, for both teachers and students.

That familiarity even includes the school's quiet room, dedicated to Mickey Elrod, a Shields Elementary instructional coach

and teacher who lost her life to cancer early in the year. The room has now been set up in the temporary campus' library in her honor.

"She was our cheerleader. She was our inspiration, and so her room became a memorial, where you could go in and just meditate or sit quietly and think," she said. "That was important for our staff. It was important for our healing, and I wanted that to come here because we have more healing to do. We've suffered a lot this year, and I wanted everything to be as normal as possible, because we're not just Shields strong. We're not just Red Oak ISD strong. We are Red Oak strong, and I want the community to know I am very, very grateful for everything they have done — for the outpouring of support and the commitment made to us."

Contact Shelly Conlon at 469-517-1456 or email sconlon@waxahachie.tx.com. Follow her on Twitter @shellyconlonwdl. Like the Daily Light on Facebook at https://www.facebook.com/waxahachiedailylight or on Twitter @WaxahachieNews.

## LETTERS

FROM PAGE 3

hinders the growth of our agriculture industry and our entire economy.

The men and women who work the land to provide us with food and fiber deserve a seat at the table in Washington, D.C. That's why I recently visited our nation's capital — to provide a voice and advocate for hardworking agricultural producers against overreaching, bureaucratic policies.

Over the course of the three-day trip, I talked with our partners at the U.S. Department of Agriculture (USDA), National Association of State Departments of Agriculture and U.S. Chamber of Commerce. I was pleased to sit down with USDA Deputy Secretary Krysta Harden to discuss economic development and emerging international markets. There are so many diverse markets for Texas products across the globe, and by tapping into them, we can open the doors to grow our economy, and especially, our agriculture industry. That's a win in my book.

I also met with Sen. John Cornyn, Chairman Kevin Brady, Chairman Lamar Smith, Chairman Mike Conaway and Congressman Randy Weber to talk about federal agriculture policy and the steps Congress can take to strengthen the industry.

As elected representatives for the state of Texas, these members understand the serious impact the federal government's actions can have on our agriculture industry. I was grateful for the opportunity to give them a firsthand perspective from back home.

One issue I shared was the struggle many Texas shrimpers are facing with a flood of foreign, farm-raised shrimp entering the U.S. market. Much of this imported shrimp is raised in less-than-ideal circumstances, and the shrimp are pumped full of antibiotics and steroids to help them grow and keep them alive. We've also seen recent stories highlighting questionable labor practices associated with some of these shrimp producers in Asia. When this shrimp arrives in the U.S., only two percent are inspected by the Food and Drug Administration (FDA). That means the majority makes it into our grocery stores, thereby forcing out higher quality, wild-caught Gulf shrimp.

This issue is not un-

like one faced by the U.S. catfish industry recently. A quirk in federal law required USDA to inspect all farm-raised food, while the FDA inspected all seafood regardless of origin. It took eight years for legislation to pass and require USDA to inspect all imported, farm-raised catfish. This was a major step forward. Unfortunately, our Texas shrimpers cannot wait nearly a decade for something to change. These mom-and-pop operations are struggling daily to compete with an inferior, imported product. That is unacceptable.

We can all agree that food safety is a top priority, but to protect the well-being of American families and the American economy, we need to be smart about our regulations. I'm hopeful that the recent meetings I had in D.C. will help begin the process of leveling the playing field for local shrimpers — much like what has been done for the American catfish industry — so we can all have access to healthy, quality Gulf shrimp and

protect this important segment of Texas' agriculture industry.

Another topic that was fresh on everyone's minds was the Environmental Protection Agency's (EPA) new Clean Water Act rule, also known as the Waters of the United States (WOTUS) rule. This is an illegal attempt by the federal government to expand its regulation of waters on private lands across the country. WOTUS threatens private property rights, individual freedom and economic growth in Texas. Not only is this an unprecedented federal overreach, but the Government Accountability Office has found that EPA acted illegally in using social media to promote WOTUS, essentially employing propaganda to further its activist agenda. The Texas Department of Agriculture (TDA) is at the forefront of this fight, and I'm proud to say that we have the support of many of our congressional members. Our lawsuit has resulted in a stay of the rule, and I'm confident the courts will rule that

WOTUS cannot stand.

Unfortunately, WOTUS is not the only attack by the federal government on private property rights. Farmers and ranchers along the Red River know this all too well, as they continue to fight against the Bureau of Land Management's (BLM) attempt to seize their land without survey. Much of this land has remained in families for generations, but antiquated laws and policies have opened the door for bureaucrats at the BLM to attempt a land-grab. Like many of the landowners in this area, I am not buying what BLM is selling. This land is private property, period. Owning land is one of our most cherished and valued rights as Americans, and is critical to growing the food and fiber that sustains our nation and the world. I'm proud that a bill has already passed the U.S. House of Representatives, which will require a survey of the land before any action is taken by the BLM, despite President Obama's threat of a veto. Agriculture is essential

to our national security and our prosperity. While the federal government can lose sight of its impact on the daily lives of Texas agricultural producers, I'm proud to say that the work we do at TDA helps sustain our farmers and ranchers.

Whether I'm in D.C. or here at home in Texas, I'm always fighting for Texas agriculture, working to protect our farmers and ranchers, and spreading the word that Texas agriculture matters. Much promise lies ahead in 2016. It's a new year with new opportunities, and I look forward to another great year for Texas agriculture — one that involves far less overreaching federal policy.

**Sid Miller,**  
Texas Agriculture  
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