

**...Hunting, fishing licenses**

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The app also allows hunters to complete their on-site registration for many TPWD public hunting lands. Hunters can hunt on more than one million acres of public land with the purchase of an Annual Public Hunting Permit.

When buying their license, resident hunters and anglers may wish to purchase an entry in the Lifetime License Drawing. Three lucky winners will each win a Lifetime Super Combo License and never need to buy a Texas hunting or fishing license again. Entries are \$5 each and can be purchased online, by phone or at any license retailer. The first entry deadline is Sept. 30.

When making their purchase,

license buyers can also add a donation of \$1, \$5, \$10 or \$20 to help support the Hunters for the Hungry program or the Fund for Veterans Assistance. Donations to the Hunters for the Hungry program provide hunters with a way to donate legally harvested deer to participating processors. The processed meat goes to local food banks to feed Texas families in need. Donations to the Fund for Veterans Assistance program provide grants to veteran service organizations and nonprofit charitable institutions, assisting veterans and their families at the community level throughout Texas.

For frequently asked questions about Texas hunting and fishing licenses, visit the TPWD website.

**SOFA Challenge cultivates ag advocates**

By Emmy Powell  
TFB Communications  
Specialist

High school students who are members of Texas 4-H or Texas FFA are eligible to participate in the 2023 Speak Out For Agriculture (SOFA) Challenge.

This is the third year for the contest, which is sponsored by Texas Farm Bureau (TFB) and hosted by the Heart O' Texas Fair & Rodeo.

Students should be interested in agriculture, membership organization involvement or public policy.

"SOFA is different than any other contest offered to 4-H and FFA members as it combines stand-and-deliver and discussion formats into one contest. This allows students to use skills they have developed through other contests in a way that's applicable to a real-world scenario," McKenna Bush, TFB Youth Outreach coordinator, said.

The contest gives students an opportunity to develop problem-solving and communication skills, while also

learning more about agriculture. The challenge will help students stimulate logical thinking and foster a desire for accurate information, and it helps students network with their peers from across the state.

"The topics will challenge the students to think about issues facing agriculture and to develop solutions to those problems," Bush said. "Plus, it's an opportunity to receive feedback from industry representatives and learn how to incorporate those suggestions into their communication styles."

The challenge includes an oral reasons style competition and a discussion meet style competition.

The first two rounds are the oral reasons competition where all participants will be asked a pre-selected question. Students will have time to prepare their response and deliver a 90-second answer to the judges.

Scores from rounds one and two will be used to determine the Sweet 16, which is a discussion meet style competition.

In the Sweet 16 round, contestants will participate in a

discussion for 20 minutes on another topic. The final round will be a 25-minute discussion on one of the remaining topics.

The contestants are responsible for the exchange of ideas and information to solve the problem addressed in the topic and to develop action plans for the solution.

"It's important to be able to effectively communicate with others in a variety of settings, including digital spaces and in-person. Through this event, students can strengthen their agricultural advocacy skills and learn how to be better communicators," Bush said. "Students can also walk away with scholarship money as early as their freshman year in high school by participating in SOFA."

The winner will receive a

\$2,500 scholarship, jacket and banner. The runner-up will receive a \$1,500 scholarship, jacket and banner.

Two finalists will receive \$750 scholarships and jackets, and the top 16 contestants will each receive a \$125 gift card.

Registration closes Sept. 15.

Former SOFA Challenge winners are not eligible to compete.

The contest will be held Sept. 30 and Oct. 1 at the BASE at Extraco Events Center in Waco.

The discussion questions and topics, additional program details and a link to the online registration are available on [texasfarmbureau.org/youth/youth-opportunities](https://texasfarmbureau.org/youth/youth-opportunities).

Contact [youthactivities@txfb.org](mailto:youthactivities@txfb.org) or call 254-399-5037 for questions about the contest.

experiencing the same tragedy.

"I just wanted my father to walk me down the aisle or my mom to be there when I had babies," said Bowers.

Drive Sober. No Regrets. is a key component of #EndTheStreakTX, a broader social media and word-of-mouth effort that encourages drivers to make safer choices while behind the wheel to help end the streak of daily deaths. Nov. 7, 2000, was the last deathless day on Texas roadways.

**Texas Freshwater Fishing Hall of Fame accepting nominations**

The Texas Freshwater Fishing Hall of Fame committee is seeking nominations of individuals and organizations who've made important contributions to fishing in Texas for next year's induction into the hall of fame. Applications are being accepted through November 1.

"The Texas Freshwater Fishing Hall of Fame is made up of a growing list of 38 individuals and organizations who have made a significant impact on freshwater fishing in the state," said Dan Kessler, TFF Hall of Fame Committee Chair. "Whether it's an outdoor writer, pro angler, fishing club or industry leader, we look forward to continuing to honor and recognize everyone helping to make Texas fishing the best it can be."

The nominees will be evaluated by the Hall of Fame committee made up of anglers, industry professionals, fisheries biologists and organizations involved in Texas freshwater fishing. The committee will choose the inductee based on the following criteria: ethics, leadership and commitment, unselfish contributions to the sport, scope of impact on freshwater fishing and fishing/fisheries management expertise and overall impact.

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**TxDOT, law enforcement step up effort to curb drunk driving**

As Labor Day approaches, TxDOT is reminding all Texans about the dangers of drunk driving. The National Highway Traffic Safety Administration has announced an increased enforcement period from Aug. 18 to Sept. 4. Texas law enforcement agencies are among those that will increase their efforts to pull over motorists suspected of drunk driving.

"Too many people are killed on our roads each year — especially during holidays — due to impaired driving. These crashes are inexcusable and 100% preventable," said TxDOT Executive Director Marc Williams. "If you spend time with friends or family and decide to drink, make the right decision and plan ahead for a sober ride by taking a rideshare, taxi, public transit or designated driver."

The harsh reality is people continue to choose to drive after drinking. Last year, there were 345 DUI-alcohol related traffic crashes over the Labor Day holiday weekend alone, resulting in 20 fatalities and 62 serious injuries. Over the course of the year, a person was killed every 7 hours and 17 minutes in Texas because of a DUI-alcohol-related traffic crash, resulting in 1,203 people losing their lives.

The increased enforcement period comes as a new law is set to take effect on Sept. 1 that will require someone convicted of intoxication manslaughter to pay child support if they kill a parent with young children.

Erin Crawford Bowers was six-months old when her parents were killed by a drunk driver. She is now a married mother of two living in New Braunfels. She is sharing her story across Texas to prevent other families from

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Our County, Our State and Our Country**



***And Don't Forget to Pray for Rain!***

**For our Robert Lee  
customers'  
convenience, there  
is a Drop Box at  
COKE COUNTY  
FEED & RANCH  
SUPPLY.**