



**HYE CHAMBER
OF COMMERCE**

PO Box 231, Hye, TX 78635

HYE HAPPENINGS

Feb 2026
Issue 10

The latest happenings, news, and announcements.



Pictured (Front Row L-R): Chamber Directors Heather Watson, Mike Kump, Charlotte Siems and Judge Candidate Stephanie Fisher. (Back row L-R) Hye Chamber Board President Patrick Watson, Judge Candidate Brett Bray, Pct 2 Commissioner Candidate Kemp Elliott, Chamber Director Craig Eckhardt, Judge Candidate Ray Bible, Pct 2 Commissioner Candidate Todd Swift, Chamber Directors Katy Smith, Cass Lutes, Misty Watson, and Michael Poole.

Candidate Forum Held January 27

Compiled by Kenneth Welch

Hye Chamber of Commerce hosted a Blanco County Candidate Forum for the upcoming election on January 27 at Black Chapel Brewing. All five candidates, the two for County Commissioner, Pct 2 and the three running for County Commissioner Judge position attended.

The format was in a questions and answers style with the questions coming from the audience then presented to the candidates via a moderator. The following is a summary of the candidates' positions for your review.

Precinct 2 Commissioner Candidates

Todd Swift

Communication: Believes communication has deteriorated and must improve across all formats-text, email, websites, and face-to-face. Stresses understanding constituent concerns and working as a team within the Commissioners Court.

Groundwater: Supports the Groundwater District and stresses the importance of monitoring and managing groundwater as wells run dry.

Countywide Decisions: Plans to communicate with Precinct 2 residents and bring their issues to the full Court while working collaboratively with other commissioners.

Roads: Focuses on road safety, paving, and long-term planning. Notes that maintenance costly and requires prioritization.

Economic Development: Wants to build local job opportunities to encourage people to return to and stay in the community.

Growth: Supports adopting and consistently applying development rules. Variances should be rare and well-justified. Encourages moderate, proactive growth.

Kemp Elliott

Communication: Commits to personally meeting with residents, understanding their issues, and getting them answers. States will vote his conscience and stand up for constituents.

Groundwater: Expresses concern about

groundwater strain from new subdivisions. Advocates wise, responsible growth, including encouraging native plants and improving subdivision road standards.

Countywide Decisions: Says constituents' voices guide his decisions. Will present their views in Commissioners Court and is willing to say no when necessary. Believes compromise within the Court is important

Roads: States that road maintenance is the top issue, noting that some areas of the county have been neglected. Emphasizes coordination with other commissioners and acknowledges budget constraints.

Transparency: Highlights the need for better communication with residents and ensuring they receive clear information.

Growth: Questions the long-term cost of allowing developers in without stronger requirements. Supports rainwater collection and potential subsidies for new homeowners. Encourages managing cedar growth to protect water resources.

County Commissioner Judge

Candidates

Brett Bray

Economic Development & Growth:

Growth is inevitable; county has an economic development plan with a focus on growth along major corridors, not county roads or ranchland. Supports wineries, breweries, and similar job creating industries. Notes county lacks incentives and regulatory authority. Encourages wineries and breweries for the jobs they provide.

Tax Reduction: 2025 taxes increased about \$20 from prior year. Judge does not set taxes, Commissioners Court sets rate and budget. County tax rate is at the lowest 25% in Texas. Courthouse renovation is being funded from reserves rather than debt. Encourages understanding reasons behind line-item increases.

Transparency: Supports public access; county website provides information. Says transparency is often misunderstood due to legal complexity. Open to new ideas.

Immediate Priorities: Infrastructure tied to growth, including precinct yards. Road improvements; pursuing a \$750k grant. General infrastructure upgrades.

Support for Wine Industry: Supports using HOT funds for wineries, distilleries, and breweries.

Water: Counties have limited authority over water regulation. County depends on the Groundwater District, but he questions when the Groundwater District will stop issuing permits.

Stephanie Fisher

Economic Development & Growth:

Growth planning must involve cities, Chambers, ESDs, and TxDOT. Supports creating a countywide economic development plan.

Tax Reduction: To reduce taxes, spending must be cut. Plans to review budget line by line with Treasurer.

Transparency: Government power comes from the people. Proposes one Commissioners' Court meeting per month after 5 p.m. Will maintain an open-door policy.

Immediate Priorities: Improve government responsiveness, openness, and accessibility. Allow departments more autonomy.

Support for Wine Industry: Supports organic growth; warns against over regulation. Supports using HOT funds for wine industry.

Water: Align county development rules with groundwater rules. Coordinate regarding threat of data centers.

Ray Bible

Economic Development & Growth:

Concerned growth is becoming too large and unsustainable. Opposes large companies buying ranchland without water resources. Supports small subdivisions that match available resources. Commissioners must work together to guide growth.

Tax Reduction: Tax cuts require reducing spending. Notes some budget lines have increased dramatically. Believes these increases drive tax hikes.

Transparency: Strong open-door policy. Believes some agenda items appear predetermined. Wants direct engagement with speakers.

Immediate Priorities: Increase openness. Address outside companies buying land for battery farms. Preventing large subdivisions with hundreds of homes.

Support for Wine Industry: Support the industry to grow the income from the industry. Work with them to be sure they are using the water responsibly.

Water: Strengthen collaboration with Groundwater District and region to improve reporting for long term water planning. Encourage rainwater harvesting and builder participation.



ANNOUNCEMENTS

We love celebrating with our community! Share your birthdays, anniversaries, milestones, or other fun news with us, and we'll include it in the next newsletter. Send your submissions to hychamberofcommerce@gmail.com.

Let's spread the joy together!

CLASSIFIED ADS: Are you having a Garage Sale? Domino Tournament? Special Event and want to invite the community? Need a helping hand or a new employee? Email us and we will include it in the next newsletter!

TELLS US! What do you want to see more of? Send us your news and updates, your suggestions and questions! We want to make this a resource for all things Hye!

HYE HERTIAGE 140th BIRTHDAY BASH

Hiram G. "Hye" Brown settled in this area in the late 1870s and built a small store and home in 1880 at the site of present-day Hye. As the community grew, Brown applied for and received approval to establish a U.S. Post Office on April 16, 1886, operating it from his general store. The town ultimately took its name from Brown's nickname, "Hye," because locals would say they were going to "Hye's place." Brown also served as the first postmaster, a position he held until 1917, further shaping the early identity and development of the community.

This year, Hye proudly celebrates 140 years since becoming officially known as Hye, Texas. To honor this milestone, the Hye Chamber is hosting a 140th Birthday Bash on April 18, 2026. Our goal is to celebrate Hye's rich history and warm hospitality with an afternoon full of family-friendly activities, food and entertainment for all ages.

While plans are still being finalized, we warmly welcome anyone who would like to assist in planning this special event. There is much to do, and volunteers will be greatly appreciated. If you are interested in helping us bring this celebration to life, please contact us at info@hyetxchamber.com.



WHERE TO GO AFTER 5PM

Contrary to popular belief, Hye does not roll up the sidewalks at 6pm. Food, music and beverages are available for a nice relaxing evening out. If your place is open and you would like to be a part of this list let us know at info@hyetxchamber.com.

You just gotta' know where to go...

SILVER DOLLAR WINERY & ITALIAN BISTRO
Fri-Sat 11am-8pm

REDDY WINES
Fri-Sat 11am-10pm

RANCH ROAD BURGERS
Wed-Sun 11am-8pm

HYE MEADOW WINERY
Friday 11am-6pm,
Saturday 11am-9pm

FEATHERSTONE RANCH VINEYARDS
Friday – Saturday 11am-6pm

FAT BOY BURGERS
Tues-Wed 11am-8pm,
Thurs-Sat 11am-9pm

COORDINATES VINEYARD
Wed-Sun 12pm-7pm

CHARLESTON TAYLOR WINERY AND BLACK CHAPEL BREWING
Thurs 12pm-8pm, Fri 12pm-9pm, Sat 11am-9pm, Sun 12pm-8pm, Mon 12pm-7pm

CARTER CREEK RESTAURANT
Mon-Thurs 5pm-9pm
Fri-11am-9pm
Sat-Sun 9am-9pm



Join Us

The Hye Chamber of Commerce is proud to support Blue Lotus Winery for the 2nd Annual Enchanted Village Renaissance Faire! Step into a world of knights, queens, merchants, and merriment as we celebrate and support our local non-profit groups right here in Hye country.

Feast & Support:

The Hye Chamber will be cooking up delicious turkey legs and sausage links for all to enjoy. Bikers Against Child Abuse (B.A.C.A.) will also be on site supporting the event.

Admission:

Bring non-perishable food items equal to the cost of a ticket and get in FREE, OR purchase a ticket for \$10 per person to help support the Johnson City Christian Food Pantry.



When & Where:

February 21–22
Texas Mead Works, Hye

What to Expect:

A weekend filled with food, artisan vendors, live entertainment, and Renaissance-themed fun for all ages. Don your garb, raise a goblet, and join the festivities as we step back in time together.

UPCOMING EVENTS

FEBRUARY 11 • 6pm
Hye Chamber Board Meeting, Pleasant Hill Schoolhouse

February 14 • 7pm
Sparkling Rose Release Party, Coordinates Vineyards, Hye
Join us this Valentine's Day as we celebrate the release of our brand-new Sparkling Rosé! This bright, elegant bottle is full of lively bubbles and festive charm, making it the perfect way to toast love, friendship, and great wine. Food: Cousins Maine Lobster serving their signature lobster dishes. Live music: Shane Fitzgerald 2pm-4pm.

FEBRUARY 21 • 10am-12pm
FREE! Sauer-Beckmann Living History Farm at LBJ State Park
Ever wondered how to make sausage the old-fashioned way? At the Sauer-Beckmann Farm you can see for yourself how to grind meat, stuff sausage, and use smoke or brine or lard to preserve your family's meat supply. This is a hands-on program!

FEBRUARY 21-22 • 10am-6pm
Enchanted Village Renaissance Faire: Experience the best music, food and fun at the Enchanted Village Renaissance Faire. Hosted by Texas Mead Works and Blue Lotus Winery. Immerse yourself in a magical world filled with live entertainment, delicious feasts, and unforgettable merriment for all ages.

If you have an event you'd like included on this calendar, please email details to hychamberofcommerce@gmail.com by the 10th of each month.

Business Member Directory

4B Ranch & RV Park
9726 Hwy 290 W
Hye, TX 78635
830-998-0030

Deike's Garage
10222 Hwy 290 W
Hye, TX 78635
830-644-5513

JC Wash n' Fold
505 S Hwy 281, Suite C
Johnson City, TX 78636
512-910-7102

Reddy Wines
14746 US 290
Stonewall, TX 78671
830-213-2355

Adega Vinho Winery
1000 Ranch Rd 1623
Stonewall, TX 78671
830-265-5765

Fat Boy Burgers
104 US Hwy 281
Johnson City, TX 78636
830-868-0264

Johnson City Bank
100 E Pecan Dr
Johnson City, TX 78636
830-868-7131

Silver Dollar Winery
Hye Cider
8264 W Hwy 290 W
Johnson City, TX 78636
830-308-7750

Black Chapel Brewing Co.
6212 US 290
Johnson City, TX 78636
830-307-1095

Featherstone Ranch
Vineyard
870 Klein Rd
Stonewall, TX 78671
830-992-8058

Johnson City Chamber of
Commerce
PO Box 485.
Johnson City, TX 78636
830-556-4518

Stonewall Chamber of
Commerce
PO Box 1
Stonewall, TX 78671
830-644-2735

Blanco County
Conservation Initiative
(BCCI)
PO Box 1355
Johnson City, TX 78636
830-992-9030

Friends of Lyndon B
Johnson NHP
PO Box 1831
Johnson City, TX 78636
512-644-2624

Johnson City Sign Shop
PO Box 955
Johnson City, TX 78636
830-868-5277

Summit CMO Solutions
PO Box 271
Hye, TX 78635
512-766-5131

Blue Lotus Winery
TX Mead Works
8500 Hwy 290 W
Hye, TX 78635
830-379-9463

Hill Country Beef
PO Box 191
Hye, TX 78635
830-307-4305

Leon Rentals
793 Lange RD #244
Hye, TX 78635
830-385-9271

TX Hill Financial Group
PO Box 235
Dripping Springs, TX 78620
737-777-0323

Carter Creek Winery
Old 290 Brewery
4064 Hwy 290 W
Johnson City, TX 78636
210-485-9680

Hill Country Wine Tours
267 Hacienda Amor Way
Johnson City, TX 78636
512-815-1900

Luckenbach Texas
412 Luckenbach Town Lp
Fredericksburg, TX 78624
830-997-3224

Transportation Star
512-569-2502

Coordinates Vineyards
417 E Main St
Fredericksburg,
TX 78624
830-307-7740

Hilmy Cellars
12346 US Hwy 290
Fredericksburg, TX 78624
830-644-2482

Mason Metal
389 Lange Rd
Hye, TX 78635
512-771-0679

Untamed Wine Estates, Inc
202 Ranch Road 1320
Johnson City, TX 78636
830-208-8692

Corridor Title
PO Box 1110
Dripping Springs, TX
78620
512-894-0187

Hye Meadow Winery
10257 Hwy 290 W
Hye TX 78935
830-308-8551

Mother Luck Ranch
3514 Ranch Road 1320
Johnson City, TX 78636
512-537-0496

Watson Farm Tree Nursery
141097 E US Hwy 90
Stonewall, TX 78671
830-644-2616

Covington Cellars
8262 US 290
Hye, TX 78635
830-347-9313

Hye Pipe & Feed
10243 US 290
Hye, TX 78635
210-995-1066

Obsidian Innovations
356 N Ranch Road 1623
Stonewall, TX 78761
830-285-0989

White House Winery &
West Wing Brewery
11247 US 290
Hye, TX 78635
830-992-8547

D&D Mini Storage
215 Morning Glory Dr.
Fredericksburg, TX 78624
830-997-4876

Hye Springs Ranch
9361 US Hwy 290
Hye, TX 78635
817-964-5112

Pronto Andiamo
121 S Hwy 16, Ste 550
Fredericksburg, TX 78624
830-429-4114

William Chris Vineyards
10352 US 290
Hye, TX 78635
830-998-7654

Hye Time LLC
PO Box 201
Hye, TX 78635
830-456-5698

Ranch Road Burgers
52 RR 1623
Stonewall, TX 78671
830-383-0900

Wrenwood Ranch
6214 US 290
Johnson City, TX 78636
254-218-8221

For more information, visit hyetxchamber.com.

To submit news or events happening with your business in the next newsletter, email hyechamberofcommerce@gmail.com