

Burglars target downtown businesses

It's estimated that every minute there are four burglaries in the U.S. - and it doesn't matter if you are in a large or small town.

Over the past two months more than a dozen Gladewater merchants - the majority of which were downtown - have been hit by burglars. Some were successfully entered and some were thwarted by alarms.

Burglars have struck businesses at: 800 E. Broadway, 101 W. Upshur Ave., 204 S. Loop 485, 414 W. Marshall Ave., 318 W. Quitman, 712 Virginia Dr., 201 E. Quitman St., 210 N. Dean St., and 1601 Lake Shore Dr. (where \$700 in the city's boat ramp fees were stolen). Many vehicle burglars have also been reported throughout the city.

Are you prepared, ready and protected against this potential threat? How do you help keep

your business from becoming a statistic? Security experts say "think like a burglar."

What would you notice if you were approaching a property with ill intent? Are there windows or doors that provide easy access? Does the security system appear to be easily disabled? These are just a few of the assessments being made by potential intruders. By thinking like a burglar you can identify potential weaknesses that make your business an easy target. Here are nine things a potential burglar hopes you won't do:

*** Conceal The Wiring Outside Of Your Business Facilities** - Burglars will often cut wires on the outside of a building in an attempt to disable security and other means of communication. Make the task challenging by concealing all of your exter-

nal wiring (Electrical, security, telephone, cable, etc.), using cable conduits or other means.

Double-check Basic Business Protocols - Make sure authorized employees know how to use your business security systems, and are aware of the proper protocol for arming and disarming. Failure to arm or properly use your security systems can leave your business vulnerable.

*** Keep Cash And Valuables In A Secure Location** - If your business keeps cash on hand overnight, or has high-value inventory of any kind, make sure these assets are securely stored. Small items can be placed in a commercial-grade safe bolted in place. For high-value inventory items, consider added layers of protection with additional access control partitions and locked



doors.

Protect Your Premises With A Monitored Security System - Installing a security system is

one of the best things you can do to protect your business. Making sure your business is monitored 24 hours a day is essential in achieving the highest level of protection. A monitored system increases your chances to interrupt and apprehend perpetrators.

Be Smart With Video Surveillance - Selfies aside, no one likes being caught on camera. Video can be one of your best deterrents. Make sure your video surveillance system adequately covers every part of your facility. Pay particular attention to entrances and exits as well as other sensitive areas of your or-

ganization.

Shred Sensitive Business Information - Don't make it easy for criminals to take advantage of account numbers, customer information, employees file, sales data, vendor documentation or other information contained within your business. Instill a strict policy regarding shredding and processing.

Maintain A Closed-Door Policy - Open warehouse doors left unattended can be an invitation for potential criminals. Open doors could also allow would-be burglars to identify vi-

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Arrests made for non-payment of child support

The Gregg County Sheriff's Office in conjunction with the Texas Attorney General's Office, coordinated a multi-agency operation made up of Gregg County Sheriff's deputies and the Longview Police Department Monday to arrest people for non payment of child support.

Gregg County Sheriff Maxey Cerliano said the operation

began at 4 a.m. with teams of local law enforcement officers attempting to locate individuals that owed delinquent child support.

The teams received information provided by the Texas Attorney General's Office and began serving active warrants simultaneously.

The warrant roundup teams

arrested six people, gained location information on other wanted persons, and on multiple cases, teams worked with OAG staff to collect on arrears.

The individuals arrested in this morning's roundup were: Patrick Blanton, Armando Flores, Jr. (also arrested in a 2015 roundup), Clint Harris, Alejandro Rosales, Johnny Youngblood, and

Felipe Zamarippa.

Cerliano said deputies will continue efforts to locate the individuals that were not arrested during this first warrant sweep, adding "Anyone with a child support warrant is encouraged to contact the Office of the Attorney General before you are visited by one of our roundup teams."



The Gladewater High School Bear Marching Band performed at Universal Studios in Orlando, Florida during their Spring Break band trip. The band is directed by Jeff Smith and assisted by Rhett Pilcher. Courtesy Photo

District judge hands down sentences

By Phillip Williams

GILMER--115th District Judge Dean Fowler sentenced 23 defendants on felony charges and one for a misdemeanor offense between Feb. 20 and March 4, Upshur County District Attorney Billy Byrd's office said last week.

Details were as follows, and all defendants pleaded guilty or, in cases where probation was revoked, admitted violating terms of probation, the office reported:

Brandon Dale Pitman, 22, of Gladewater, was placed on 10 years "deferred adjudication" probation Feb. 20 for indecency with a child. ("Deferred adjudication" means no final conviction appears on

a defendant's record if he/she successfully completes probation. However, if such probation is revoked, the defendant can receive up to the maximum sentence for the offense.)

The Upshur County Sheriff's Office investigated the April 1, 2017 case.

David Lee Gray, 52, of Gladewater, was placed on five years probation of a two-year state jail term Feb. 20 for theft of property less than \$2,500 with two or more previous convictions.

Gilmer police probed the May 19, 2018 offense.

James Edward Choate III, 44, of Gladewater, received five years

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Commissioners approve U. Grove water well grant

By Phillip Williams

GILMER--Upshur County Commissioners Court last recently approved four proposals related to a state grant which the Union Grove Water Supply Corporation is seeking to build a new well.

The proposed Texas Community Development Block Grant, which would be funneled through the county government from the Texas Department of Agriculture, would help finance the proposed well, which the corporation hopes to locate on Bob-O-Link Road.

If approved, the grant would cover \$350,000 of the \$407,700 project cost while the corporation pays the rest, David Beavers, the corporation's general manager, said Monday.

However, the corporation must also pay related costs in addition to the \$57,700, including the full price of buying two acres for the well site and part of the cost of installing a water line to tie into an existing line going to the WSC's main plant, he added..

The well is proposed because two of the corporation's five wells were drilled in the 1960s and thus "very old," Beavers said before last week's meeting. Union Grove WSC hopes the proposed well would put out 200 gallons per minute and be built within a year, he added.

Traylor and Associates Inc., a Tyler grant management firm headed by former Gilmerite Gary Traylor, is handling the grant application.

The court on Thursday nullified/rescinded a resolution it approved last Nov. 30 awarding a contract to Hayes Engineering Inc. of Longview for engineering services related to the application. (That resolution was approved before three of the court's current five members took office Jan. 1).

In a separate vote, the court passed a resolution approving a Selection Committee's recommendation to award such a contract to Stephens Engineering of Longview.

Melinda Smith of Traylor and Associates told the court that the Hayes firm once had more engineers on staff, including one who had worked with Union Grove WSC and who no longer works for Hayes. She also said the county had not actually signed a contract with Hayes and that procurement related to the grant was redone.

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Sales tax revenue slips

Texas Comptroller Glenn Hegar on March 4 announced state sales tax revenue totaled \$2.796 billion in February, an amount 7 percent more than he announced in February 2018.

"Growth in sales tax revenue was led by remittances from the construction, manufacturing and services sectors. Receipts from information services and restaurants also grew significantly. Receipts from oil- and gas-mining firms remained about the same as a year ago," Hegar said.

On March 6 Hegar announced the comptroller's office would send cities, counties, transit systems and special-purpose taxing districts \$711.7 million in local sales tax allocations for the month. The amount is 6.1 percent more than the amount reported a year ago. These allocations are based on sales made in January by businesses that report tax monthly.

Gladewater's local monthly sales tax revenue dipped for the first time in months, posting a -14.75-percent this reporting month - \$65,861.31 compared to \$77,264.73

For the year, Gladewater is -2.80-percent behind last year - \$240,676.72 compared to \$247,629.52.

City	Net Payment This Period	Comparable Payment Prior Year	% Change	2019 Payments To date	2018 Payments To date	% Change
GREGG COUNTY						
Clarksville City	1.000%	\$2,911.28	\$3,356.12 -	13.25%	\$11,012.96	\$10,701.53 2.91%
Easton	1.000%	\$2,472.75	\$2,718.56	-9.04%	\$5,178.68	\$7,604.33 -31.89%
Gladewater	1.500%	\$65,861.31	\$77,264.73	-14.75%	\$240,676.72	\$247,629.52 -2.80%
Kilgore	1.500%	\$892,277.06	\$663,053.39	34.57%	\$2,635,041.49	\$2,272,614.29 15.94%
Lakeport	1.500%	\$17,573.27	\$14,867.62	18.19%	\$48,376.67	\$41,217.29 17.36%
Longview	1.500%	\$2,368,663.09	\$2,402,723.94	-1.41%	\$8,555,617.00	\$8,334,986.01 2.64%
Warren City	1.000%	\$1,350.75	\$1,306.30	3.40%	\$5,823.33	\$3,083.88 88.83%
White Oak	1.500%	\$88,524.19	\$76,537.56	15.66%	\$271,885.64	\$207,981.62 30.72%
UPSHUR COUNTY						
Big Sandy	1.250%	\$12,963.02	\$18,798.31	-31.04%	\$52,976.06	\$79,892.74 -33.69%
East Mountain	1.000%	\$4,095.74	\$1,761.49	132.51%	\$8,773.09	\$5,850.93 49.94%
Gilmer	1.500%	\$138,130.30	\$131,043.93	5.40%	\$471,893.93	\$440,139.74 7.21%
Ore City	1.500%	\$14,372.22	\$17,032.88	-15.62%	\$45,531.06	\$45,820.99 -0.63%
Union Grove	1.000%	\$529.22	\$237.00	123.29%	\$1,505.69	\$1,344.26 12.00%