



# TEXSAR DISPATCH



TEXSAR volunteers are committed to ongoing training to be ready for any condition in which they may need to serve.

Each issue of the DISPATCH is dedicated to sharing the mission and passion of TEXSAR, and insight into its people.

## November 2024

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## From the CEO



October was a very busy one for TEXSAR and its growing number of members. In this month of Thanksgiving, a few key messages from recent activities stand out.

### **Life is Precious**

Our lives or those of family, friends or neighbors can end in an instant. Whether a force of nature or a criminal act, self-inflicted or simple accident, there are many ways that life ends. Relish each moment of life.

### **Life is Complicated**

A lot of missions that TEXSAR is called upon must, and will always, remain private and confidential. There are a lot of reasons, ranging from respect for the privacy of those involved (victims, agency partners, TEXSAR volunteers, etc.). Some involve criminal cases. All of them remind us that life is complicated. Not everything can always be understood, and we have to be okay with that.

### ***Life is Unpredictable***

One day we are lounging with family and the next day we are evacuating from raging waters. The stories of horrific flooding from hurricanes Helene and Milton remind me of the Memorial Day Wimberley Flood event of 2015 that brought TEXSAR into the spotlight of many agencies. People's lives can be changed forever in totally unpredictable ways.

### ***People Make the Difference***

As I watch TEXSAR volunteers serve in all the situations described above, and much more, I am thankful for their skills, knowledge, commitment and empathy, and the humility to serve. In life, it is people who make the difference. [TEXSAR Never Stops](#) caring.

These truths don't give us less to be thankful for. On the contrary, there is much for which we can give thanks. From the TEXSAR family to yours, have a wonderful, peaceful, thankful, and safe Thanksgiving.

- Justin McInnis



# News and Announcements

## Adobe



A big thanks to Adobe for their generous contribution through their Employee Community Funds grant program. Adobe team members nominate nonprofits to apply for grants. TEXSAR emphasized in its application its use of technology and original software tool, [Automated Drone Image Analysis Tool](#) (ADIAT). We will use Adobe's important support to help develop TEXSAR's technological assets, including drones that can be used in searches, recoveries and damage assessments for our critical infrastructure partners after disasters. Thank you, Adobe!

## Combined Federal Campaign Season

Again this year, TEXSAR is part of the Combined Federal Campaign (CFC) effort that provides opportunities for federal employees to support their charities of choice with paycheck deductions. Please consider supporting TEXSAR through this convenient program if you are a federal employee. Spread the word! Our CFC number is 35805.



## Academy Sports + Outdoors Honors First Responders

October 28<sup>th</sup> was National First Responders Day and Academy Sports and Outdoors invited TEXSAR representatives to their store in Sunset Valley, TX as a way to celebrate first responders, from those who take the calls of those in need to those who work on the scene of emergencies and disasters. Along with kudos, Academy presented TEXSAR volunteers and the organization with gift cards. Thank you, Academy! See photos in the Gallery section of this newsletter.



## Land Rover update

If you subscribe to this newsletter, you likely received several emails asking for your votes to help bring a Land Rover Defender 130 to TEXSAR. Thank you for your patience with all that. We have an update for you. Alas, we did not make it to the finalist stage this year, but the process was good for TEXSAR. We gained many new followers, subscribers and friends. Thank you to all who joined in the fun by voting and encouraging others to do the same.



Click [here](#) if someone forwarded this newsletter to you and you'd like to subscribe! Or you can use the "Subscribe" QR code. We look forward to keeping you apprised of all the great things happening at TEXSAR. Please forward to your friends and network, too!

## Member Milestones

TEXSAR's history of service above self is oftentimes best explained through the stories of its volunteer members. As part of TEXSAR's 20th anniversary, we are creating profiles of members who represent our past, present and future. This is an excerpt of the profile of [Allen Robinson](#). His complete story, and others that exemplify the people of TEXSAR and the history of the organization over the two decades of service can be found [here](#).



When you understand stunt work and search-and-rescue (SAR) work, it makes sense that someone who excels in one could excel in another.

Allen Robinson, a TEXSAR volunteer since 2014, found work as a stuntman thanks to a newspaper ad in 1985. His sense of adventure and athletic skills found a home in the stunt field. He has appeared in more than 160 movies and television shows and has been the stunt double for many famous actors, including Tom Hanks (in *Forrest Gump* and six other films), Jim Carrey, Clint Eastwood and Anthony Perkins, to name a few.

There are many similarities and crossovers in stunt and SAR work, he said.

*"The more you know, the more you work."* Learning

more skills provides the opportunity for more work and the opportunity to serve in more ways.

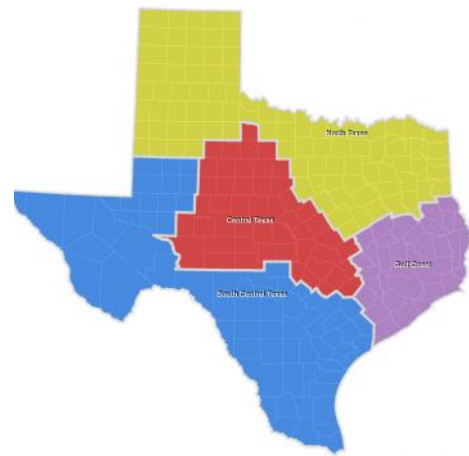
*"Your work is for the overall success of the team, not for individual glory."* Service does not seek fame, but accomplishment of the mission.

*"Focus on the task at hand, not the possible consequences."* Some tasks involve risks that have the potential for severe, negative consequences. Focus on the task, not the negative potential.

*"The role you play is not the whole story."* You are often in a role that serves something much bigger than yourself and is part of something larger than your role.

*"Some things you are simply called to."* Allen learned the concept of service from his dad, who was a Green Beret during the Vietnam War, and other family members who were in the military. He felt the call to serve, in whatever way possible, early in life.

Perhaps the most poignant similarity that Allen finds between stunt and SAR work is more philosophical. "We are ultimately frail and vulnerable. Life is not assured. Give joy when you can."



## Division Updates

A common occurrence in TEXSAR's four divisions is training; it is an ongoing requirement and commitment to assure that volunteers are ready when the call to serve comes. Training also builds camaraderie, a powerful force when volunteers find themselves as team members in challenging conditions.



## Central



Several members from Central, Gulf Coast and North Texas divisions served as part of the mission to Florida for Hurricane Milton (see additional photos in the Gallery section of this issue).

Ongoing training is a critical element in TEXSAR's uniqueness as a search-and-rescue organization. At the October division meeting, members developed their medical skills to be sure they are prepared for all types of needs of people they encounter on missions.



## Gulf Coast

The Gulf Coast Division's recent member meeting was the best-attended ever, with more than 40 members and six guests in attendance. The group



went through medical skills training, one of the areas that members must retain readiness.

TEXSAR volunteers provided water rescue support at the Greens Bayou Regatta in the Houston area. The organizers counted on the services of 16 TEXSAR members and three rescue boats to provide rescue, medical and ground support when needed.





## North

In October, North Texas Division held an advanced training at an Army Corps of Engineers location at Benbrook Lake State Park in Fort Worth. Almost 20 members attended the weekend training which included navigation challenges, drone search support, and culminated in a mock night search. The Division is looking forward to offering this training several times a year and including other divisions.



## Giving Thanks for First Responders

*The Thanksgiving season reminds us that every season, month, day and moment are times for giving thanks. The TEXSAR family pauses to think about our volunteer first responders, and those they work alongside from agencies and infrastructure partners...and to say thank you to them and their families who support them.*

*"I've always seen first responders as unsung heroes and very special people because, when everyone else is running away from danger, they run into it." – Dwayne Johnson*

*"There are certain people who react well in life-threatening situations, and our military and our law enforcement and our first responders tend to be those types of folks." – Dean Cain*

*"What I've noticed is not only in the military but in the first responder's community, that when you reach out your hand to help one of them, they almost always grab your hand with only one of theirs, because they're using their other hand to reach behind them and pull up somebody else with them." – Taya Kyle*

*"Whether it's police officers, firefighters, first responders, or 911 dispatchers, many dedicated Americans work long hours, and often in difficult conditions, to make sure that when someone's in need, they can help." – Ajit Pai*

*"Be Prepared... the meaning of the motto is that a scout must prepare himself by previous thinking out and practicing how to act on any accident or emergency so that he is never taken by surprise." – Robert Baden-Powell*

*"You have to keep the body going until the brain and the heart recover enough to go on their own." – Joe Connelly*

(Quotations come from [www.quotesguides.com/first-responder-quotes](http://www.quotesguides.com/first-responder-quotes))



## South Central

Training was the order of the day for the South Central Division, too. It, like all of TEXSAR, is actively encouraging people to consider volunteering. Explore the opportunities [here](#).

## Spotlight on Supporters

We had a great turnout at our 9th Annual TEXSAR Search Party ([here](#) is the expanded gallery of images) and one of great attractions was the range



of resources and assets that TEXSAR volunteers utilize. Viewers likely noticed a logo that appeared a couple of times as they walked around the room, that of Firehouse Subs Public Safety Foundation. Thanks to their support over the years, we were able to acquire these two very important pieces of equipment, a utility terrain vehicle (UTV) and a shallow-water rescue boat. In fact, the boat became a part of the TEXSAR fleet just a few months ago. Thank you, Firehouse Subs Public Safety Foundation!



## Development Corner

### Gifts that keep giving.

People donate to their favorite causes because they want to make a difference. At TEXSAR, you have options to make contributions that make a difference today, tomorrow and in perpetuity.

In keeping with TEXSAR's commitment of service above self, our [Service Above Self](#) monthly giving program offers a great way to fit TEXSAR support into your budget while helping provide us with consistent funding. There are two levels of support – Lone Star (\$25.40 or more per month) and Silver Spur (\$254 or more per month). The amounts are our gentle reminder that TEXSAR will deploy to any of the 254 counties of Texas.

Waypoints are important when mapping out a direction in a search. They mark where you are and serve as a guide to where you are going. TEXSAR created a special donor initiative during its 20<sup>th</sup> anniversary year to help mark where TEXSAR is in its history and cast a trajectory for its future. Waypoint donors commit \$50,000 (or more, payable over two years), with 20% available to current needs and 80% placed in an invested quasi-endowment fund to help assure TEXSAR's future. Donations may be in cash, publicly held stocks or from retirement distributions. Please contact Dion if you would like to discuss this unique opportunity.

[Dion.McInnis@TEXSAR.org](mailto:Dion.McInnis@TEXSAR.org) or 512-956-6727.

Thank you for your support that assures that TEXSAR never charges for its service. "Texans helping Texans."



## Partner Perspective

This column is reserved for TEXSAR's partners to share their perspectives on what it means to them to be part of the TEXSAR family. For this issue, however, being the month of Thanksgiving, we thought it to be a good time to give thanks to our partners and the reasons we value partnership so much.



### Partnership Matters

We love our friends, donors, sponsors, collaborators and supporters. From that family comes partners. The agencies and infrastructure partners who call on TEXSAR are our partners, as are the people and businesses that support us, enabling TEXSAR to send professionally trained, background-checked volunteers to provide service above self as "Texans helping Texans." Everyone at TEXSAR appreciates that we are in relationship with our partners; we do not see our involvement as transactional, but in relation to those who need TEXSAR. TEXSAR treasures its partners.

### Partnerships Are Mutually Beneficial

We appreciate that our partners are interested in doing good for their communities while doing well in their business. We are working diligently to provide value to our partners beyond the good feelings of





knowing they are helping others. For our collaborators, we provide dedicated volunteers, as well as expertise, connections and assets. For our supporters, we provide engagement, exposure and opportunities to become more involved in TEXSAR doings. Together, we can do good while doing well.

### Rain or Shine, Partners Stick Together

Just as TEXSAR volunteers deploy in a variety of conditions, yet stay the course and complete their assignments, partners stick together, no matter the conditions. We are fortunate to have partners who stick with TEXSAR come rain or shine. Economic conditions change, and our partners remain; agency budgets are under pressure, and our partners remain; blue skies yield to hurricanes and tornadoes, and our partners are there. And we are there for them.

### We're in the People Business

Perhaps, what bonds TEXSAR and its partners together is that, collectively and individually, we realize that we're all in the people business. People need us and we need them. For that, we are grateful and thankful for all of our partners.

<b>Subscribe to TEXSAR Dispatch</b> 	<b>Read TEXSAR Dispatch</b> 
<b>Become a Service Above Self Monthly Donor</b> 	<b>Donate today!</b> 



# Mission Matters

## Hurricane Milton

TEXSAR responds to requests from other disaster response nonprofits. Our services were requested for the aftermath of Hurricane Milton. TEXSAR volunteers responded with a variety of assets to be able to handle whatever they might encounter. Thankfully, the conditions for which TEXSAR was requested turned out to not be as bad as projected. TEXSAR was still able to provide some assistance to new friends and partners and learn several important lessons along the way.



## High Profile San Antonio Case

TEXSAR has been involved in a recent, high-profile mission in San Antonio that caught the attention of various media sources, including the opportunity for Jeff Conrad, Director of Field Operations, to [share how TEXSAR assists](#) in missing persons cases. Suffice it to say, TEXSAR volunteers are selfless in their service; they will continue to support requesting agencies as deemed best. Our thoughts and prayers for all affected by this case.

## TEXSAR Trivia

Remember the old television game show, “The Price is Right,” where contestants competed by guessing the price of certain items? Let’s try that, TEXSAR-style! How much do you think these items cost? (Answers are on the back cover)

### LMTV tire (not including installation)

\$1,000   \$3,000   \$5,000

### 25 HP outboard motor

\$3,500   \$4,500   \$5,500

### Fully stocked “hasty bag” (medical emergency bag)

\$200   \$400   \$600

### Personal Flotation Device

\$100   \$200   \$300

### Throwbag

\$25   \$50   \$75



(You can help defray these costs by making a donation to our [annual appeal](#). Thank you!)

## Gallery of the Month



### 9th Annual TEXSAR Search Party, September 21, 2024

Since there is still a buzz about the Search Party, it seems timely to share even more photos from our record-setting event. We could not have accomplished this to highlight our 20th anniversary without the help of the donors, sponsors and volunteers who assured that a great time was had by all.

**Thank you! Please put Search Party  
in your plans for next year!**







**Left column:** TEXSAR was called upon to help with a strategic partner's needs in Florida after the arrival of Hurricane Milton. Camaraderie and proper training go a long way to making a team successful.

**Right column:** Academy Sports + Outdoors invited TEXSAR representatives to be celebrated on First Responders Day (October 28). Academy generously provided gift cards to the representative volunteers and to TEXSAR.





# Important Links: Stay in Touch!

[Become a Member](#)

[Donate today!](#)

[Service Above Self Monthly Donor program](#)

[2023 Annual Report](#)

Social Media: [Facebook](#), [LinkedIn](#), [X](#), [YouTube](#)

[20 Years, 20 stories](#): TEXSAR's 20th Anniversary Celebrated  
Through Stories of Its Members

["TEXSAR Never Stops"](#) video

**[www.TEXSAR.org](http://www.TEXSAR.org)**

Trivia answers from page 9:

LMTV Tire, uninstalled: \$3,000; 25 HP outboard: \$5,500; Fully stocked "hasty bag": \$600; Personal Flotation Device: \$300; Throw Bag: \$25. How did you do?

## RIP Bouton

**Bouton was an HDR K9 who served on the team for 7 years.**

**Thank you for your service.**



Forever my teammate,  
My teacher, my friend  
My heart dog. ❤️  
~ Ruth

"He was a big talker and would carry on a conversation, even with someone on the phone! He didn't know a stranger. He loved everyone he met. Children, at the safety fairs, loved to pet him and he loved them, too. At searches, he worked tirelessly.

*I will miss my K9 partner."*