

TEXSAR

DISPATCH



Survivor of the 2015 Wimberley flood event, Jonathan McComb, reminds members at the annual membership meeting how important they are and how grateful he is for them.

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

January/February 2025

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From the CEO

You probably noticed there was not a January issue of this newsletter. We did not miss getting it out. It was critical for everyone involved in producing the newsletter to have a chance for some down time at the end of our record-setting 2024. We are all excited to share that information with you here and in the upcoming annual report.



We will continue our 20th anniversary celebration into May when we officially turn 21. There were several important milestones achieved during 2024 and I appreciate everyone who helped make these achievements possible. Thank you! Here are just a few:

Most Missions

We set a goal of 100 missions for 2024. We wrapped up the year with 126. The number of missions is the product of networking and building trust with agencies and partners since we never self-deploy. TEXSAR's reputation continues to open doors thanks to the commitment, professionalism and selflessness of our volunteers.

Most Deployable Members

We finished the year with the most deployable members in our history. TEXSAR members are not deployable until they have completed minimum required training that takes about six months for most newcomers. Thanks to our growing volunteer base we are able to bring more people and skills in service to Texas.

New Counties Served

TEXSAR volunteers were called upon in 13 counties that we had never before served. That brings the total number of Texas counties that TEXSAR has served to 104.

Most Funds Raised in a Year

It takes money to accomplish the many things that TEXSAR has achieved. Equipment, supplies, maintenance, fuel...a long list of expenses accompany our efforts. In 2024, TEXSAR secured more funding than ever before thanks to contributions, grants and sponsorships.

BeforeDuringAfter

After three years of collaboration with Texas State University and Texas Mutual Insurance, TEXSAR launched [BeforeDuringAfter](#), a resource to help small businesses prepare for and recover from disasters. In December, we hired Justen Noakes to serve as the Executive Director of the initiative. This resource is already catching the attention of small businesses across the state.

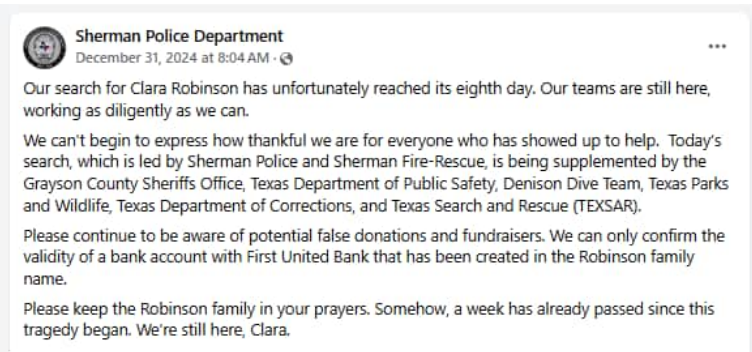
There is actually more to share, and it will be in our annual report. 2024 was truly a great year, but **it does not mark a goal achieved. It marks a waypoint on a quest** as TEXSAR continues to provide service above self as "Texans helping Texans." [TEXSAR never stops.](#)

- Justin McInnis

News and Announcements

TEXSAR CEO Named Co-Vice Chair of VOAD

TEXSAR President and CEO, Justin McInnis, has been selected as the co-vice chair of [Texas VOAD](#) (Voluntary Organizations Active in Disasters). TEXSAR has been an active partner in VOAD for years and McInnis previously served as a board member at-large with the organization.



Thank You for the Kind Words Sherman PD

Sherman Police Department sought the help of TEXSAR on a recent, high-profile mission. Thank you to all the volunteers who earned this sort of appreciation and respect from the department.

TEXSAR Annual Memorial Clay Shoot Coming Soon

TEXSAR's always popular Memorial Clay Shoot is coming up! Sponsorships and registrations can be completed [here](#). Join us March 29 in Dripping Springs.



Amplify Austin — A Great Time to Support TEXSAR

Amplify Austin, “the biggest giving event in Central Texas” is happening on March 5-6. This is a great opportunity for TEXSAR. Check out our page [here](#).



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 MISSION MILESTONES

250 + MISSIONS
JOE H.

100 + MISSIONS
KEN J.

75 + MISSIONS
AUGIE G.

50 + MISSIONS
LINNA S.
BECKY P.
GREG F.

25 + MISSIONS
ANDREW R. AMY JO S.
TERI C. DORINA H.
ART S.

Well done, TEXSAR volunteers! Speaking on behalf of all of Texas, and sometimes beyond, thank you for your dedication.

In early January, TEXSAR held its annual retreat for volunteers that included fun and celebration for the volunteers who make it possible for TEXSAR to embody our belief of "Texans helping Texans" with service above self. Part of the celebration involves presenting awards to the members who elevate service above self to extraordinary levels. We honor them again here. Great job, volunteers!

Overall Awards

Shawn H. *President's Award*
Becky P. *Spirit of Service Award*
Andrew R. *Commitment to Excellence*
Meg H. *Outstanding Leadership*
Charlie G. *Distinguished Service*
Tim D. *Behind the Scenes Hero*
Joe H. *Most Missions*
Linna S. *Carine Chalfoun Service Above Self Award*

Central Texas

Jamie G. *MVP*
Allen R. *Behind the Scenes Hero*
Kristi P. *Most Spirited*
Tim W. *Rookie of the Year*

South Central

Caryne E. *MVP*
Hannah T. *Behind the Scenes Hero*
Julia S. *Most Spirited*
Andrea G. *Rookie of the Year*

North Texas

Becky P. *MVP*
Amy Jo S. *Behind the Scenes Hero*
Augie G. *Most Spirited*
Taylor M. *Rookie of the Year*

Gulf Coast

Linna S. *MVP*
George C. *Behind the Scenes Hero*
Josh N. *Most Spirited*
Abe S. *Rookie of the Year*

Division Updates

2024 was a record breaker for TEXSAR and none of it would have been possible without the hard work, dedication and commitment of all the volunteers throughout the four divisions that comprise TEXSAR. While the "records" are nice to have, TEXSAR takes even greater pride in the number of people it has helped, whether they are individuals saved, families supported or agency personnel assisted. The numbers are wonderful, but TEXSAR does it for the people.



Spotlight on Supporters



Our [8th Annual Clay Shoot](#) will occur in Dripping Springs. While attendees are having fun and busting clays, new friends are made, old acquaintances become family, and the enthusiasm for TEXSAR's mission grows.

A special thank you to this year's sponsors: Gold Cart: La Cima; Silver: Honorable Judge Beth Smith and GCS Technologies, Inc.; and Bronze: Dynamic Solutions, Inc. Thank you!

There are other good times you can sponsor while getting to know more of the TEXSAR family, supporting the TEXSAR mission and having a great time in the process!

September 20 —TEXSAR 10th **Annual Search Party**, TEXSAR's premier fundraising event.

For more information, contact Shannon Smith, Director of Communications and Outreach, at Shannon.Smith@TEXSAR.org.

Development Corner

How can you donate more money to a nonprofit over time, lower your tax exposure and end up giving more than you had to begin with? (This article presents ideas to explore with your financial advisor and does not constitute financial, legal or tax advice.)

The answer: Put the funds into something that grows in value. That sounds simple enough for personal gain, but it also works with your philanthropic plans.

Money invested in publicly traded stock that grows in value provides a great opportunity to donate the appreciated stock directly to a nonprofit which enables you to avoid capital gains tax. Of course, TEXSAR welcomes such donations!

Another, longer-term approach, is to purchase a life insurance policy with your chosen nonprofit selected as a beneficiary. There are additional ways that policies can be used for your benefit and the benefit of your chosen charity(ies). This [article](#) provides a good start before talking with your advisor(s).

There are many creative ways to make your philanthropic goals a reality. Thank you for thinking of TEXSAR regarding your decisions on giving. The process of to whom to support in ways that support your philanthropic goals can be a challenge. We are here to listen and provide answers to your questions.

Please contact our development officer if you would like to discuss any of these options, or other ways to support TEXSAR, such as named endowments, legacy gifts, retirement distributions: Dion.McInnis@TEXSAR.org or 512-956-6727.

Partner Perspective



From personal tragedy can come positive change. Chris Branham's family describes how the foundation in his honor came to be and why.

On June 24, 2020, 26-year-old Christopher Branham was reported missing by his family. Within days, the Round Rock, TX police department determined that Chris had become the victim of an armed robbery and had been killed. They also knew who had committed the crimes. However, Chris was still missing and the suspects were not cooperating, so after forensic investigations into the possible location of the murder, the police involved TEXSAR. On July 3, 2020 the first major search took place. The family was present and very thankful, and shared they were impressed by the size of the operation and the fact that the volunteers had traveled from all over to look for Christopher, on a holiday weekend at the height of the Pandemic. The volunteers were in uniform and gathered around a command vehicle to get instructions for the day before setting out with their dogs. The Branhams had brought a photo of Christopher to show the searchers whom they were looking for. In 100-degree heat, the volunteers searched many cornfields, shrubs, and snake-infested overgrown ditches, and even stayed longer than originally planned. Though Christopher wasn't found that first day, the family was hopeful their son would be found soon. They had to cling to that hope a bit longer as for the next four weeks, they saw additional ground searches, watched helicopters and planes go up, and saw boats in the water. On July 31, 2020, Christopher's body was ultimately found by a farmer in a cornfield near the original search area. Within days, the police then captured and arrested the criminals and charged them with Capital Murder.

In 2021, Christopher's family, together with close friends, established the Chris Branham Foundation as part of the Central Texas Community Foundation.



They are an all-volunteer nonprofit in support of causes that were important to Chris. While also attending the many individual court hearings for the 5 criminals involved in Christopher's death in 2021 and 2022, their volunteer work quickly became a positive and welcome distraction, and a labor of love. The Foundation focuses on awarding grants to Search and Rescue/Recovery organizations to support searches for missing persons, trade school scholarships for local high school graduates, and youth sports scholarships. Growing up, Chris was an avid baseball and football player and continued to play golf and softball as an adult. He also attended a trade school and was a small business owner and young father. To celebrate Christopher's life, the Foundation organizes golf tournaments as fundraisers in his memory, as well as Christmas Bingo and corn hole tournaments.



TEXSAR reps at the Foundation's golf tournament

Mission Matters

TEXSAR served in 13 counties for the first time in 2024. In its history, it has now served in 104 of the 254 counties of Texas since its inception. Find 'em all here.

B	K	K	I	N	N	E	Y	L	B	E	X	A	R	V	A	N	Z	A	N	D	T	L	F	A
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P	K	O	P	A	N	O	L	A	I	A	R	S	B	R	C	V	Y	P	S	R	Q	N	O	S
G	U	A	D	A	L	U	P	E	N	R	I	T	S	T	A	R	R	H	O	O	D	A	N	O
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| Anderson | Burnet | Culberson | Gregg | Jefferson | Llano | Potter | Trinity |
| Angelina | Calahan | Dallas | Grimes | Jim Wells | Lubbock | Presidio | Upshur |
| Aransas | Caldwell | Denton | Guadalupe | Jones | Matagorda | Real | Uvalde |
| Austin | Calhoun | Ector | Hardin | Kaufman | Medina | Reeves | Van Zandt |
| Bandera | Cameron | El Paso | Harris | Kendall | Midland | Robertson | Victoria |
| Bastrop | Cass | Fayette | Hays | Kimble | Milam | Rockwall | Walker |
| Bell | Chambers | Fort Bend | Henderson | Kinney | Montgomery | San Jacinto | Webb |
| Bexar | Cherokee | Freestone | Hidalgo | Kleberg | Nacogdoches | San Patricio | Wharton |
| Blanco | Coke | Galveston | Hill Country | Knox | Newton | Starr | Williamson |
| Brazoria | Coleman | Gillespie | Hood | Lamar | Nueces | Tarrant | Wise |
| Brazos | Collin | Gonzales | Houston | Leon | Panola | Taylor | Wood |
| Brewster | Comal | Gray | Hutchinson | Liberty | Parker | Tom Green | Young |
| Burleson | Crane | Grayson | Jack | Live Oak | Polk | Travis | Zavala |

In the puzzle, counties with two names do not have a space between the two words.

Gallery of the Month



The annual member appreciation retreat was held the second weekend of January. It provided a great time to come together, celebrate TEXSAR's wonderful volunteers and present awards for outstanding accomplishments in 2024. They helped make 2024 a great anniversary year.





Page 8: Right-hand column from the top: awardees Meg H. (Outstanding Leadership); Charlie G. (Distinguished Service); Linna S. (Carine Chalfoun Service Above Self); and Becky P. (Spirit of Service). See all the awardees on page 4.

Page 9: Left-hand column from the top: President/CEO Justin McInnis presents awards; Charlie G. describes new drone capabilities with recently acquired upgraded UAVs; and K9 star Hootie enjoys his reward for good work demonstrating his ability to locate human remains.



Important Links: Stay in Touch!

[Become a Member](#)

[Donate today!](#)

[Service Above Self Monthly Donor program](#)

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

PLEASE JOIN US FOR THE

BELT BUCKLES FOR 1ST & 2ND PLACE TEAMS AND TOP MALE & FEMALE SHOOTERS.

ALL SHOOTERS WILL RECEIVE AN EVENT T-SHIRT, FREE RAFFLE TICKET, LUNCH, DRINKS, AND CRAFT ICE-CREAM.

FLURRY, SILENT AUCTION, AND SHOTGUN RAFFLE ON SITE.

PLEASE BRING AMMO, EAR, AND EYE PROTECTION.



SPONSORSHIP OPPORTUNITIES AVAILABLE

INDIVIDUAL SHOOTER

\$250

SHOT GUN START

10:00 AM

TEAM (4-PERSON)

\$850

SATURDAY, MARCH 29, 2025 🇺🇸 HOG HEAVEN - DRIPPING SPRINGS, TX 🇺🇸 WWW.TEXSAR.ORG/CLAYSHOOT