

TEXSAR

DISPATCH



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

March 2026
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Patrick Turck, Director of TEXSAR's Missing Persons Unit, addresses attendees at an event that TEXSAR sponsored at the State Capitol in recognition of National Missing Persons Day on February 3rd. Yellow is the color that is used to recognize the missing persons cause.

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From the CEO



There is one word that summarizes what is happening with all the various TEXSAR activities: “movement,” as in “a group of people working together to advance a shared cause.” (Oxford Dictionary) The group of people that comprise the TEXSAR family are starting a movement fueled by grit and humanity to commit to service above self in a myriad of ways in the search-and-rescue, disaster response and relief, and related fields. Three notable activities in February made this development clear.

Annual leadership retreat: Each year the TEXSAR board and staff convene for a weekend to review the previous year and refine the view of where TEXSAR is going. We are in a transformation phase because of: our teams’ performance during the July floods and the support inspired by their efforts; the expanding and deepening of relationships with agencies and partners across the state and beyond; the development of knowledge and technologies that we are sharing with agencies and organizations in similar fields of work to TEXSAR. During the meeting, one of our board members who has returned after a few years away from a board role, shared his view of the TEXSAR of today: “It is a movement.” Truly, it is. We will share more about what that means throughout the year.

Oklahoma mission: Immediately prior to the retreat, TEXSAR volunteers completed a successful mission that was large, complicated and nuanced. Thanks to our teams’ professionalism and commitment, they were able to provide critical support to the Bureau of Indian Affairs (BIA). You can read more in this [article from the BIA](#).

Opportunity to speak to thousands: The day after the leadership retreat, I headed to Atlanta. I was honored and humbled to be invited to be a presenter and panelist during the “Inspirational Morning” of a major event held by Keller Williams Realty International. They, and their foundation KW Cares, supported TEXSAR during the July floods, and they wanted me to share my perspectives of the floods and the tremendous response by many to this very human tragedy.

TEXSAR sees its successes and developments as greater responsibilities to fill, and not opportunities for glory or the spotlight. Our collective commitment and focus is bringing donors, sponsors, partners, friends and new members to us; together, we are...a movement for the good. Thank you for being part of it.

- Justin McInnis

News and Announcements

Successful Collaboration With Bureau of Indian Affairs Missing and Murdered Unit

TEXSAR members once again showed up by the scores to help with a critical mission, this time in Oklahoma at the request of the Bureau of Indian Affairs. The effort was productive and much appreciated. More information can be found at [this BIA announcement link](#).



Bureau of Indian Affairs Missing and Murdered Unit Conducts Large-Scale Search in Oklahoma: Remains found

Announcement

Dates: February 20, 2020 9:00pm to 5:15pm

The Bureau of Indian Affairs Missing and Murdered Unit and the Chickasaw Lighthorse Police Department, working alongside federal and state partners, conducted a large-scale search operation this week in southern Oklahoma as part of the ongoing investigation into the 2013 disappearance of Misty Miller and Cash Haynes.

The search began Feb. 17 and covered more than 1,000 acres in Love County, Oklahoma. On Feb. 18, search teams operating in an area between Crowell Road, Pike Road and Long Willow Road discovered four sets of human remains. The remains were collected by the FBI Evidence Response Team and the Oklahoma Office of the Chief Medical Examiner for forensic examination and identification.



TEXSAR Sponsors Event for National Missing Persons Day

February 3rd is National Missing Persons Day and Patrick Turck, TEXSAR’s Director of Missing Persons Unit, led the effort for TEXSAR to host an event on the steps of the Texas State Capitol to bring awareness to this critical issue and to the families affected by loved ones who are missing. Allies to the cause from around the state attended the event, including Texas Center for the Missing, Amber Alert Network of Brazos Valley, as well as family members of the missing. The plan is for TEXSAR to encourage search-and-rescue organizations around the country to follow suit in their states so all 50 states will have similar events in 2027.



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\$13,030 Raised \$10,000 Goal 51 Donors

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THANK YOU!

Member Minute

The unforgettable Spring Break of 2025

Leo Cahill is a Candidate with TEXSAR, meaning he has joined and is now going through the various training components to become qualified as a SAR Responder. His way of learning about TEXSAR is one for the record.

"I called my dad and told him that if he didn't hear from me by midnight, to call for help," Leo Cahill said. It is a good thing that he made such provisions because he was unable to call his dad as planned. He was trapped in a pit in the desert with a leg broken in two places, a broken ankle and in conditions perfect for hypothermia.

Leo had different plans for his spring break in 2025 than most young people do. "Most people go to parties or beaches on their break. I wanted to be alone in the desert, exploring caves. I guess my solo adventures have given my parents plenty of times to worry about me," he said. "I won't be exploring caves alone ever again though."

An experienced caver, Leo set out to explore caves in Carlsbad, NM on the second-to-last day of his break, to be followed by a trip to Guadalupe Peak the next day. He never made it to the 8,700-foot mountain; instead, he fell 40 feet while trying to leave a cave through an area that looked like a large pit.



"I could taste the adrenalin, that metallic taste. I ran my finger in my mouth to make sure it wasn't blood, but I wasn't bleeding. Eventually, the adrenalin subsided and the pain kicked in. And the cold. It was 38 degrees and I was wearing a sleeveless shirt and torn jeans. I was shivering which made the pain in my

leg worse and I remember seeing my foot wobbling from the shivering. I prayed, asking God to save me or to bring peace to my family if I died there, and I believed that was quite possible."

Despite attempts to catch the attention of people who were camped not far away, by yelling and casting his flashlight's beam upward, hoping the dusty air would catch the light, he was unable to be heard or seen. Attempts to find a cell signal did not work. Leo was in pain, fearful, alone and cold. To fight the cold, he tried building a fire. "It took me two hours of moving around on one leg, getting the materials for a fire and getting it started. It burned out in five minutes," Leo said.

Sounds he heard during the night turned out to be wind or animals and not help. He even thought he heard the sound of truck doors closing in the darkness. Little did he know at the time...

About 5:00 AM, he called out again because he thought he heard the sound of people. A voice called out his name in return. He was soon about to learn of TEXSAR.

"Two firemen rappelled down to me to load me into an evacuation basket. I had to brace myself with my unbroken leg for the pull up and then the basket got hung up. Another person rappelled down to unhook the basket. I felt terrible that people were having to get into such dangerous situations because of my miscalculations," Leo said.

He met TEXSAR volunteers when he cleared the pit. They took care of immediate needs and carried him, still in the basket, to the ambulance that waited 15 minutes away. There, he received more treatments and pain killers before being flown to a hospital in Carlsbad.

After being released from the hospital, Leo spent about four months in wheelchair, then on a cane from July to October. He felt that his survival was for him to do other things with his life. Joining TEXSAR was to be one of them.

Impressed with the people and performance of TEXSAR volunteers, Leo decided to learn more about TEXSAR and went to a North Texas Division meeting in October even though he was still using a cane. He

introduced himself to a member who said, “You’re the cave guy?!” Leo confirmed so and the member brought North Texas Division Lead Meg Hinkley over to introduce the two. “This is the guy from the cave mission you were on,” served as sufficient introduction.



The mishap has given Leo much to think about. “I know I have more to do, though I don’t know what it is yet. God’s grace let me survive. I’ve learned some things, too, including humility. I remind people to never go on hikes by themselves, do not be over-confident about their skills and ability to be self-reliant, and to be more analytical when preparing for a hike. Most importantly, put your trust in God.” He added with a smile, “And always have an emergency whistle with you. You just never know.”

For more information about safety when hiking, check out Meg Hinkley’s article on page six of [August 2025 issue of TEXSAR Dispatch](#).

Development Corner

See you at the Clay Shoot?

There is something about the smell of gunpowder, the sound of a shotgun firing, the sight of a clay pigeon being shattered into pieces and enjoying the day with friends, old and new. That is the upcoming [9th Annual Memorial Clay Shoot](#) that TEXSAR is having on March 28 at Hog Heaven in Dripping Springs. A big thank you goes to our sponsors, including this year’s Presenting Sponsor, [Briggs Equipment](#).

This is a great opportunity to bring friends, clients, colleagues, customers (and potential customers) out for a fun day that helps assure that TEXSAR volunteers are well-provided for as they remain [Ready for the Call](#).

We hope to see you there.

For more information about how to support TEXSAR, please contact Dion McInnis, Development Officer, at Dion.McInnis@TEXSAR.org.

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<p>Become a Service Above Self Monthly Donor</p> 	<p>Donate today!</p> 

MPU Updates

By Patrick Turck, Director of TEXSAR Missing Persons Unit

Even though February was a short month, we packed in enough activity for several months, and our members continue to represent us in the most professional way possible.

We started the month by hosting the first-ever National Missing Persons Day event at the Texas State Capitol, as noted in the News and Announcement section of this month's newsletter.



Much of February was devoted to planning and executing a mission in Oklahoma in support of the Chickasaw Nation and the Bureau of Indian Affairs. The operation brought close to 100 members as well as a number of TEXSAR assets for a week-long search for two individuals who have been missing for 13 years. Evidence was located, and we hope eventual positive identification will offer some measure of peace to the families of their loved ones. The Chief of Party and North Division Lead did a phenomenal job planning and coordinating the mission. Team members endured difficult field conditions, but morale stayed high and their commitment never wavered.

The MPU has several missions pending in the near future in support of law enforcement agencies, and our continued networking with law enforcement partners continues to pay dividends as agencies increasingly reach out for assistance and recommendations.

The MPU also continues to expand, with three new volunteer investigators being added and we look

forward to sharing more about them and their roles in the next issue of TEXSAR Dispatch. We have also added a new analyst who is already having an impact by assisting with gathering extensive data for a pending cold case.

Great job to all, and thank you to everyone for your continued efforts and support!

**Trained to Respond.
Committed to Bring Them Home.**

Partner Perspective

A partnership born by our clay shoot



[Hog Heaven Sporting Club](#) will again be the location for TEXSAR's [9th Annual Memorial Clay Shoot](#) to be held on March 28th. The location is more than a venue, their team is more than the hosts of the event...together, they are a devoted partner with TEXSAR.

Zanna Ward, Event Coordinator at Hog Heaven, shared that the relationship with TEXSAR began several years ago when she was able to meet TEXSAR volunteers and K9s at one of the early TEXSAR clay shoots that was held at a different location. She was there because Hog Heaven was the home of youth shooting teams.

"TEXSAR invited our teams to join their clay shoot, as participants and volunteers. They did a great job in the competition – okay, they won several of the awards – and enjoyed volunteering with the event. Everyone had a great time. I was impressed by the TEXSAR people that I met and with the abilities of the K9s. It wasn't long after that the clay shoot was moved to Hog Heaven," Zanna said.

Hog Heaven was originally created as a nonprofit to serve the youth shooting team from the Dripping Springs, TX area. According to Zanna, the owner's daughter was on the shooting team and he saw in her the ways that the team helped to develop skills, sense of responsibility, dedication to practice and the boost in self-esteem that comes with accomplishment, so he created Hog Heaven.

There are currently two youth teams, each of about 30-35 people, Zanna said. One is for shotgun and the second is for pistol. "There is more interest by youth who want to be part of the teams, but we need more volunteer coaches to meet the need," she said.

Interest in the outstanding facility continued to grow over the years and it converted from a nonprofit to a membership-based shooting club. "But the leadership's interest in providing youth have not waned. In fact, we are now the home of [Waypoint Academy](#), where students master academics, then

build grit, confidence, and real-world skills through adventure-based learning.," Zanna said.

According to Shannon Smith, Director of Communications and Outreach for TEXSAR, "We have many great supporters, and we are humbled by their generosity of many types. Working with Zanna and Hog Heaven is particularly special because of our shared interests and values. Zanna made connections for us during our response to the floods in July, helping drive important financial support for our work. It is not just the staff at Hog Heaven either; their members believe in TEXSAR and its mission, too. Ours is a partnership through and through."

If you are interested in serving as a coach for the youth shooting teams, or in membership or booking an event, please [contact](#) Hog Heaven Sporting Club. If you would like more information on Waypoint Academy, please email them [here](#).



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Clockwise from top left:

- Sometimes a belly rub is just the ticket for a job well done.
- TEXSAR board and staff at the 2026 Leadership Retreat.
- Missing Persons Unit Director Patrick Turck addresses audience at National Missing Persons awareness event held at the State Capitol. TEXSAR's goal is to encourage search-and-rescue groups in all 50 states to host similar events in 2027.
- New members participate at a Wilderness Search and Rescue (WSAR) training session. Every TEXSAR member must complete this training, and others, before they can be deployed. With more than 1,400 people applying to join TEXSAR since July 2025, there are many WSAR sessions in each of the four divisions that comprise TEXSAR's reach across the state.





TEXSAR members gathered for a weekend full of fun, training and camaraderie during the 2026 Annual Member Appreciation Event. This annual activity is a way for members to come together for TEXSAR's celebration of their work and appreciation for their efforts to make TEXSAR the unique organization that it is. Members heard from several guest speakers who encouraged members for their efforts that benefit agencies across the state, and beyond.



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](#)

["Ready for the Call" video](#)

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

The poster features a background image of a clay shoot. In the foreground, a man in a tan vest and orange cap is aiming a shotgun. To his left, another person in a dark shirt with 'TEXAS SEARCH & RESCUE' on the back is visible. The top left has a logo with '9TH ANNUAL TEXSAR MEMORIAL CLAY SHOOT' and crossed rifles. The top right has a black banner with 'SIGN UP TODAY!' and 'LIMITED TEAMS AVAILABLE'. Below that, the date 'SATURDAY 28TH MARCH 2026' is written in large blue and orange letters, with 'HOG HEAVEN DRIPPING SPRINGS, TX' underneath. A circular logo in the bottom right corner contains the text 'WILDLAND FIRE - SEARCH & RESCUE - FLOOD & WILDLAND RESCUE - TEXSAR SEARCH & RESCUE - DISASTER RESPONSE & RESCUE' around a map of Texas. A blue banner at the bottom reads 'MORE INFO AVAILABE AT: WWW.TEXSAR.ORG/CLAYSHOOT'.

9TH ANNUAL
TEXSAR
MEMORIAL CLAY SHOOT

SIGN UP TODAY!
LIMITED TEAMS AVAILABLE

SATURDAY 28TH
MARCH 2026
HOG HEAVEN
DRIPPING SPRINGS, TX

TEXAS SEARCH & RESCUE

WILDLAND FIRE - SEARCH & RESCUE - FLOOD & WILDLAND RESCUE - TEXSAR SEARCH & RESCUE - DISASTER RESPONSE & RESCUE

MORE INFO AVAILABE AT: WWW.TEXSAR.ORG/CLAYSHOOT