

# TEXSAR DISPATCH



North Texas Division Leader, Meg Hinkley, is joined by TEXSAR K9s at the recent conference held by Texas Division of Emergency Management.

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

**June 2026**  
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## From the CEO



At TEXSAR, we stand together as a team that stands with our partner agencies, critical infrastructure partners, and those affected by conditions that require our services. A few years ago, we used this phrase as the message of the year: “One team; one family; one mission.” Beyond a slogan, it is how and why we operate.

By standing together, we also stand apart. From our newest member to our seasoned volunteers, from each member of the staff, our commitment is in humble service to those who need what we can provide. We act in response to the needs of others, be they partners or donors. Our organizational culture of responsiveness permeates everything we do and how we do it. Such a culture precludes us from chasing media opportunities or developing “drive through” opportunities for video clips. Our response is a sign of commitment, not a search for the spotlight.

These distinctions, delivered by skilled people at all levels of TEXSAR, have created an ever-increasing demand for our time and resources. We are humbled by the opportunity to respond. And we are now better able to do so than at any time in our history.

Our number of members is more than twice what it was 11 months ago. We have added staff in strategic ways to ensure that TEXSAR can continue to adapt to the needs of Texas, and beyond. Our attention to organizational resilience ensures stability and sustainability. We want to be sure that when your grandchildren, and their children, need what TEXSAR uniquely provides...we are there.

We recently learned that TEXSAR is now the largest independently funded nonprofit in the nation in the emergency response space. While this development is a source of pride, it also raises the bar for us in terms of accountability, responsibility and integrity.

The TEXSAR team continues to grow in scope and capabilities. It is for you because someday you may need us on what could be the worst day of your life.

- Justin McInnis

# News and Announcements

## Meg Hinkley Highlighted in Texas Monthly

We're proud to share this Texas Monthly [article](#), featuring TEXSAR volunteer Meg Hinkley, whose dedication to serving others reflects the heart of our mission. She also serves as TEXSAR's North Texas Division Leader. This photo is from the photo shoot for the article.

A special thank you to our friends and partners at [McCoy's Building Supply](#) for supporting TEXSAR and helping tell stories like Meg's. We're grateful to the partners who recognize the impact of volunteers across Texas.



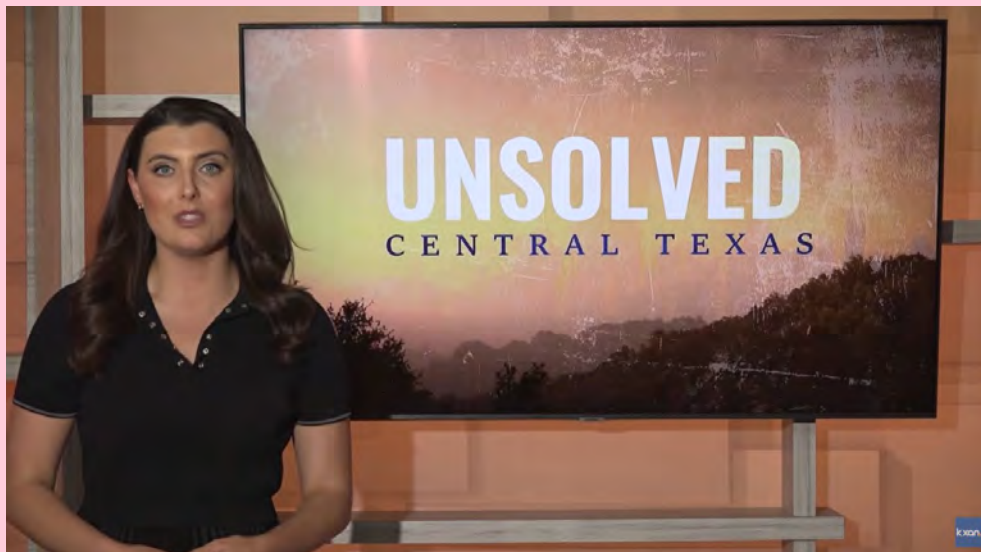
## New Hires

TEXSAR has added several positions that are critical to its growth, expansion of services and support of volunteer members as they prepare for and respond to the call for service. You can learn more about these outstanding individuals by clicking the link

- [Smith Tennyson. Chief Operations Officer](#)
- [Michael Duffek. Director of Field Operations](#)

## MPU Director, Patrick Turck, Interviewed on KXAN

KXAN's Avery Travis sits down with Patrick Turck, Director of TEXSAR Missing Persons Unit, to learn more about the MPU's work supporting missing person investigations and search efforts across Texas. The interview can be found [here](#).



## Development Corner

*By Dion McInnis, Director of Development*

We will soon complete TEXSAR's first-ever, comprehensive schedule of donor recognition and acknowledgement categories. Our intent is to create a program where we can continue to grow relationships with our donors. We also hope to create an environment where relationships develop between donors, helping them increase their business among kindred spirits.

There will be two categories, each of which includes several levels. The categories are *Investor* for those who support our vision at significant levels and *Sponsor* who helps ensure that we are ever-ready to deploy with fully supported, professionally trained volunteer members with services that requestors receive for free. In addition to these elements, we are anxious to work with donors who are interested in naming opportunities, endowments, program or event support, bequests and other forms of creating maximum effect that align with your philanthropic goals.

There is always a place for anyone who wants to find a way to support TEXSAR. Remember the story of the young girl who sold lemonade and flowers to support our K9 team (page 6 of the [February 2026 TEXSAR Dispatch](#))?

For more information about how to support TEXSAR, please contact Dion McInnis, Development Officer, at [Dion.McInnis@TEXSAR.org](mailto:Dion.McInnis@TEXSAR.org).

## MPU Updates

*By Patrick Turck, Director of TEXSAR Missing Persons Unit*

The Missing Persons Unit is proud to announce its newest volunteer Investigator, Jeff Hill. Jeff is a retired Detective with 30 years of law-enforcement experience. His addition to the team brings us up to four volunteer investigators along with a volunteer analyst and the director.

We are actively working three cold cases across the state and Jeff will be assigned a case soon as we continue to blaze our own trail and increase our investigative capabilities.

While traditional investigative methods remain critical, we also recognize the importance of evolving with technology. We are excited to announce a new partnership with Moxxy Forensics, a nonprofit DNA organization based in the Houston area. Their team will work alongside our investigators on DNA-related cases and provide support through forensic investigative genetic genealogy (FIGG).

Our investigators have also continued supporting Division Leadership on urgent missions, including one recovery mission completed in May.

There are several missions in the planning stages and we hope to provide answers to the law-enforcement agencies and families on those cases.

In addition to casework, we continue strengthening relationships with law enforcement and first responder organizations across Texas through partnerships, meetings, presentations, and conferences.

Stay tuned as we work on updating our web page to make it more interactive and functional.

### **Never stop searching.**

*Below: MPU Director, Patrick Turck, drops breakfast to local police departments for Memorial Police Officers Week.*



# Safety in an Unpredictable World

By Shawn Hohnstreiter, TEXSAR Co-founder

*Summer means more time on or near the water. Fun can be found there, but it is not free of danger. TEXSAR members too often encounter situations that could have been prevented. Based on those lessons, we share insights about water safety.*

In Search-and-Rescue (SAR), water is always a concern on nearly every lost person search we deploy to. Many Lost Person Behavior categories, such as persons with dementia or on the autism spectrum, are drawn to water and it is one of the first places we must search as time is of the essence when water is involved. Recent rain events have resulted in multiple swiftwater emergencies across Texas. Six inches of moving water can knock down an adult. A child or loved one may be swept beyond our reach in the blink of an eye. If traveling, one foot of water may be enough to float vehicles off the road. Do we have a plan and tools to be able to exit our vehicle? Hurricane season is now upon us and can create water risks that we have never anticipated. If rising waters force us into an attic, do we have an axe or method of exiting through the roof, if necessary? Having a family emergency plan is paramount.



As we approach the hot Texas summer months, recreational water activities only increase this everyday risk. Drowning remains one of the leading causes of accidental death worldwide, yet it is often preventable. It is a quiet, rapid event that contradicts

the dramatic splashing and screaming often depicted in movies.

For young children, adult supervision is required at all times. Distractions can create dangerous gaps in monitoring and it only takes a moment for a fun summer day to become tragic.



Physical barriers provide the next essential layer of defense. For residential pools, a fence at least four feet high with self-closing and self-latching gates is critical. An isolation fence must completely separate the pool from the house and yard, preventing curious toddlers from unnoticed access. Pool alarms and secure safety covers provide additional security when the water is not in use.

Formal swimming lessons significantly lower drowning risks, especially for children aged one to four. Survival swim training teaches basic competencies, such as floating on the back, treading water, and navigating back to the edge. However, swim lessons do not make anyone “drown-proof.” Even proficient swimmers can experience muscle cramps, exhaustion, or sudden medical emergencies, meaning supervision remains mandatory regardless of skill level.

In open water environments like lakes, rivers, and oceans, different hazards emerge. High winds, hidden debris, sudden drop-offs, and powerful rip currents can quickly overpower even strong swimmers. Before entering open water, individuals should check local

weather forecasts and water conditions. Swimming only in designated areas monitored by lifeguards provides the safest environment. When boating, kayaking, or participating in water sports, everyone should wear a properly fitted U.S. Coast Guard-approved life jacket, regardless of swimming ability. Inflatable toys and foam noodles are pool toys, not necessarily lifesaving devices. The color of our swimwear may be a lifesaving fashion decision. Wearing bright colored swimwear, especially neon yellow, neon orange and neon lime green drastically improves visibility on the surface as well as submerged underwater. Those precious seconds saved while locating a loved one may make the difference on how your fun outing ends.

Alcohol consumption drastically escalates water hazards. Alcohol impairs judgment, balance, coordination, and swimming capabilities while increasing risk-taking behavior. It also slows reaction times for adults who are supposed to be supervising children. This is often a factor in many water tragedies. A sober responsible adult should always be present when on or around the water.



Finally, emergency preparedness can save a life when prevention fails. Parents, homeowners, and aquatic enthusiasts should learn CPR and basic water rescue techniques. Bystander CPR administered immediately after rescue offers the highest chance of recovery before emergency medical services arrive. In a drowning event, the victim is lacking oxygen and needs to receive good rescue breaths prior to starting chest compressions, according to 2024

[advice](#) from the American Heart Association.

Providing rescue breaths immediately upon bringing the victim to the surface, dramatically increases their survival chances.

Water safety is not defined by a single action, but by a combination of constant vigilance, physical barriers, education, and proper equipment. By treating water with respect and establishing strict safety protocols, families can enjoy aquatic activities safely and help mitigate tragic risks.

## BeforeDuringAfter

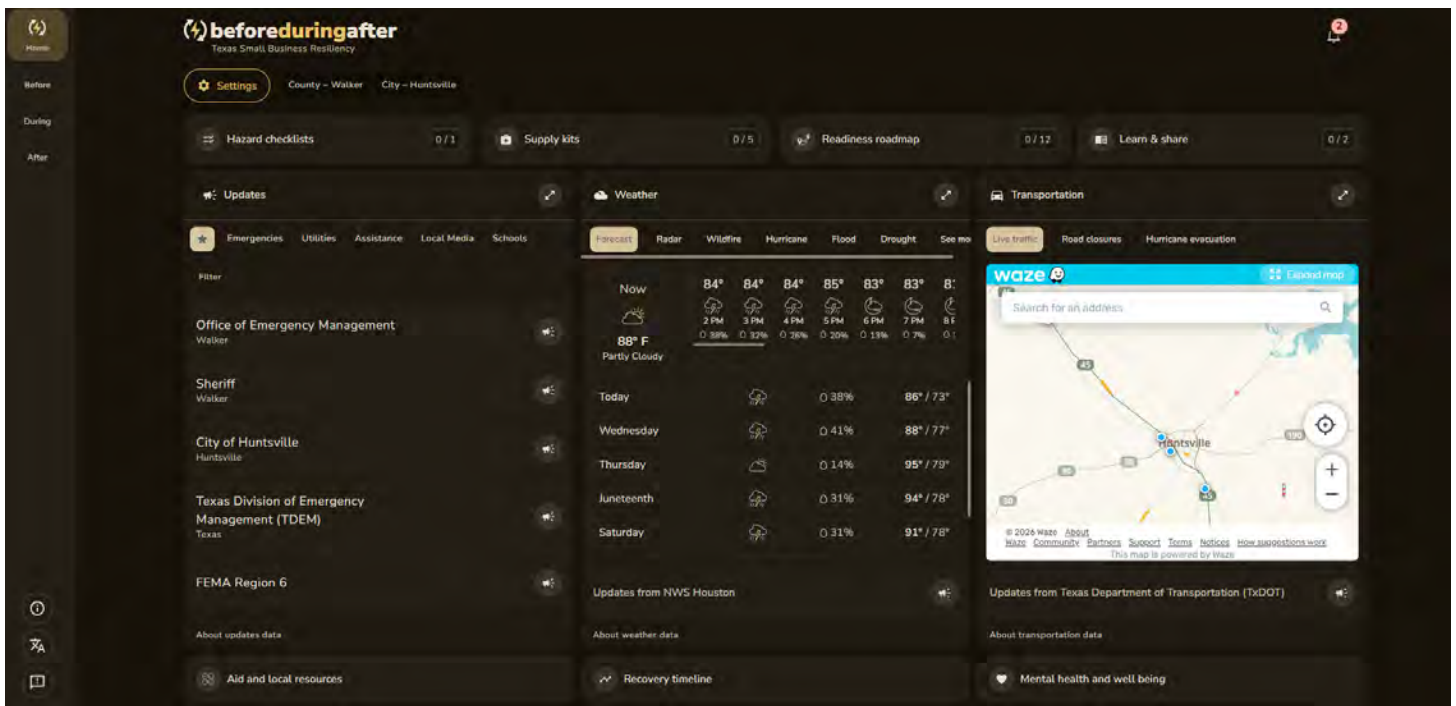
*By Michael Rojas, Director of BeforeDuringAfter*

*In Texas, about 99% of businesses qualify as small businesses. In 2021, TEXSAR partnered with Texas Mutual Insurance to begin development of a resource in conjunction with Institute for Government Innovation at Texas State University. Three years*



*in development, the low-bandwidth, location focused, free online resource called [BeforeDuringAfter](#) was officially released in Summer 2024 thanks to the support of Texas Mutual Insurance and partners such as Wells Fargo and Federal Reserve Bank of Dallas. Interest in the program continues to grow as it becomes a go-to resource. In May 2026, Michael Rojas joined the TEXSAR team as the new director of BeforeDuringAfter. He brings important experiences and a personal connection to the mission. Here he shares his thoughts on this new role. Future columns will provide updates on the progress of the platform and the partnerships being developed.*

In my life, I have consistently found what I like to call “defining moments.” These moments set the timeline of my life, whether by accomplishing something great



*BeforeDuringAfter is a one-stop, online, low-bandwidth, location-based resource to help small businesses prepare for, cope with and recover from disasters and emergencies. This example from a computer in Huntsville, TX reveals the type of information, resources and links that are provided. There is also a Spanish language version.*

or by carrying great personal value for growth or professional development, whether through great effort or serendipitous elation. When visualized, these moments are like transparent circles on our timeline of life that we can always point back to and say, “Yes, that was the moment when...” We all have our “first riding the bike moment” or something comparable that had us so far outside our comfort zone, but we peddled on.

I have always wondered in my years of direct service and emergency management what those moments were for the people around me. Whether they were a helper, a supporter, a survivor, or a responder. Those moments in each individual’s respective timelines are equally unique, equally important, and equally valued. As I write this, I wonder what those moments may look like for you; I’m sure maybe some have popped to mind already, or if not, take a few moments of reflection on them. I’m sure some of those came through volunteering with TEXSAR during some inspiring times. The sum of all of our parts guides us;

propelling us to answer the call ringing out for support on someone’s worst day and meeting that challenge head on.

I am both privileged and humbled to step into this role alongside all of you incredible individuals.

This opportunity to serve Texans, as the new Director of BeforeDuringAfter (B4DA), is the pinnacle of those defining moments in my life. To see a culmination of efforts from our partnerships and to be entrusted with the mantle is an honor I do not take lightly. I’ll be looking forward to providing updates on the incredible work happening here at B4DA and all things related to our resiliency efforts.

It takes a great group of individuals to make incredible things happen; for if it is not us, then who?

Service above self, always.

TEXSAR was recently invited to present at the Bulverde Chamber of Commerce and was given a certificate of appreciation afterwards.



TEXSAR representatives proudly accept a proclamation from the Hays County Commissioner's Office for SAR Week in May.



TEXSAR was well represented at the recent Texas Division of Emergency Management conference where representatives had the pleasure of meeting old friends from many agencies while also meeting new ones. Being visible to requesting agencies is an important part of getting the word out about TEXSAR and its many services...all of them at no charge to requestors.





TEXSAR members on a ground search are easy to spot.



UAVs are an important resource that TEXSAR brings to missions. Our pilots regularly train to develop their skills.



TEXSAR members participated in the Cops and Kids event in New Braunfels.



TEXSAR members are committed to ongoing training, whether in the field or in the classroom.

## 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)**



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