

A vibrant outdoor garden scene featuring a hanging wicker chair with a white cushion, a wicker sofa with a white blanket and cushions, and a wicker table with a white teapot and cup. The background is filled with green foliage and yellow flowers.

# 2024 Home Improvement & Garden Guide

A 2024 Special Publication By:  
**The Pampa News**



# Top of Texas Pool and Spa

By GENEVA WILDCAT  
reporter@thepampanews.com

Since November of 2019, Top of Texas Pool and Spa has grown from a small, local company servicing the Texas Panhandle to a well-established, nationwide business from California to New York, that still remains humble in its roots. The business's founder and owner, Aaron Hernandez, had been working for another company when he decided

to break away and form his own business in the pool and spa industry, bringing his own hands-on experience. After selling and installing his first pool in February of 2020 in Lubbock and selling the second one that next month in Perryton, Aaron knew that his company wouldn't be solely limited to the immediate surrounding towns closest to home. During the Covid pandemic, the demand for pools and



spas by quarantined homeowners skyrocketed, boosting the new business, but of course not without its hiccups. Because of the pandemic, parts and supplies were hard to come by and what would

normally take a few weeks to come in would now take months, prolonging the job and furthering the customer's frustration. Instead of waiting for the product to come in, Aaron decided to take matters into

his own hands and reached out to the manufacturers himself and drove to the warehouses to pick up the parts, going as far as New York.

**POOL** cont. on page 3

**PANHANDLE  
PLAINS  
REALTY**



420 W. Florida St. | Pampa, TX  
(806)662-1312

*Your Personal  
Connection  
to the Panhandle*



Linda Laycock  
BROKER® GRI



Cassie Cambern  
REALTOR®  
(806)204-0935



Heidi Chronister  
REALTOR®  
(806)663-3034



Gay-Lynn Coutts  
REALTOR®  
(806)662-1474



Gena Davidson  
Agent - Lic #676155  
(806)679-1908



Roy Devoll  
REALTOR®  
(806)896-0000



Valerie Hill  
REALTOR®  
(806) 662-1312



Nita Hogue  
REALTOR®  
(806)663-3900



Katherine Jeffcoat  
REALTOR®  
(580)467-0015



Cindy Kimball  
REALTOR®  
(806) 440-6419



Adilene Montelongo  
REALTOR®  
(806) 440-7828



Christy Ufford  
REALTOR®  
806-662-1474



Taylor Aderholt  
REALTOR®  
(806)662-1312





## Pool

Continued From Page 2

Upon doing that, Aaron created a large network of go-to manufacturers all over the country as well as an impressive reputation as a man passionate about his business and customer satisfaction. Offering new installations, remodels, and DIY kits for pools and hot tubs, both in and above ground for residential or commercial, Top of Texas Pool and Spa guarantees to make anyone's backyard dreams a reality. While some folks would rather put in the work themselves building a pool, the

DIY kit that Top of Texas Pool and Spa offers provides the homeowner the products and information they need to get the job done.

For a more extensive and custom job, the crew will gladly take care of the entire process from start to finish, and according to Aaron, "the only finger the homeowner will have to lift is to write the check."

It's a common misconception that only those who are made of money are able to have the luxury of a pool or hot tub, but rather than looking at it through narrow lenses, Aaron sees it as a long-lasting investment that will continue to provide families with a space for social inter-

action and bonding.

"I think a lot of people think that swimming pools are for only people who have a lot of money, but as expensive as things have gotten nowadays, if you can afford a new Tahoe, you can afford a new pool," Aaron said. "It's well worth the investment and it's something you'll have for a long time."

For more information on the services and products Top of Texas Pools and Spas provides, call 806-576-6628 or visit [lonestarfiberglasspools.com](http://lonestarfiberglasspools.com).

To view their portfolio of projects completed all over the country, visit their Facebook page, Top of Texas Pool and Spa.





# Planning a Private Pool Oasis

Saying goodbye to the public pool and hello to your own backyard oasis is a big step.

Before you get too deep into dreaming of lying poolside just steps from home, however, there are a few things to consider.

## UTILITIES

Look around your yard and see whether there are any overhead wires or other utilities that need to be moved. If so, bear in mind that they will be moved at your expense and on the utility company's timeline. Call about any underground utilities. Check on your original house plans or make a free 811 call to confirm what's under your yard. Check for easements on your property while you're talking to utility companies and the city or county records offices.

## TERRAIN

While you're looking for utility lines, notice how your yard is shaped. If you're on a hill at all or have a dip in the yard, you may have to have a retaining wall or dirt work done before the pool can go in. It's expensive but pales in comparison to having to fix the damage if your pool slides suddenly into your neighbor's yard.

Make sure there's enough room for heavy building equipment to access the area where you want the pool.



© ADOBE STOCK

Dump trucks, concrete mixers and more may need to get into your yard, and this may mean tearing out a fence or wall. Sometimes, contractors can use smaller equipment, but it takes longer and may be more costly.

## PROTECTED AREAS

Research whether your home is in any sort of protected area, such as a historic district or wildlife zone. To put a pool in, you'll need to go through a different approval process involving more boards

than just your HOA. Speaking of homeowner's associations, you'll need to check with them, too.

## ABOVE GROUND, TOO

Just because you're popping up an above-ground pool

instead doesn't mean you can skip these steps. Above-ground pools still may need dirt work to prepare the right pad for the pool to sit on to prevent damage to the pool, to your property and to your neighbors' properties.



# Hiring a Power Wash Company

Pressure or power washing can strip off years of gunk, grime, pollution, leaving your sidewalks, driveways, home exterior, roof and patios looking brand new.

Pressure washing can seem simple, but it can be dangerous. The jet of water can act like a knife, there are often harsh chemicals involved, and there's also climbing on ladders and working in precarious positions. Hiring a professional can get the job done quickly and safely. Here's how and why you should consider hiring professional pressure washers.

## ARE YOU LICENSED AND INSURED?

Always ask the company you're considering whether they're properly licensed and insured in your area. Licensure indicates that the contractor understands their profession. Insurance can cover any potential damage or injuries that may occur. You can also ask whether they're certified by the Power Wash Industry Association, which indicates they have undergone training and testing to conform to industry standards.

## WHAT EQUIPMENT DO YOU USE?

Know what kind of equip-



© ADOBE STOCK

ment will be used at your home, including the detergents, to prevent damage to your home, your property and your family.

Also understand the process, including any pre-cleaning inspections and safety protocols. Ask the contractor about how many people will be at your home and be prepared to offer them facilities for their use.

## WHAT IS YOUR LEVEL OF EXPERIENCE?

Ask about not only the estimator at your home, but also the owner of the business and the members of the crew you'll be working with. Get examples of past work and carefully review before and after photos of previous jobs.

## HOW LONG WILL IT TAKE?

Make sure you understand

how long the crew will be at your home, if you need to be there the entire time, and any work you may need to do before they arrive. This includes moving any patio furniture, trimming landscaping and more.

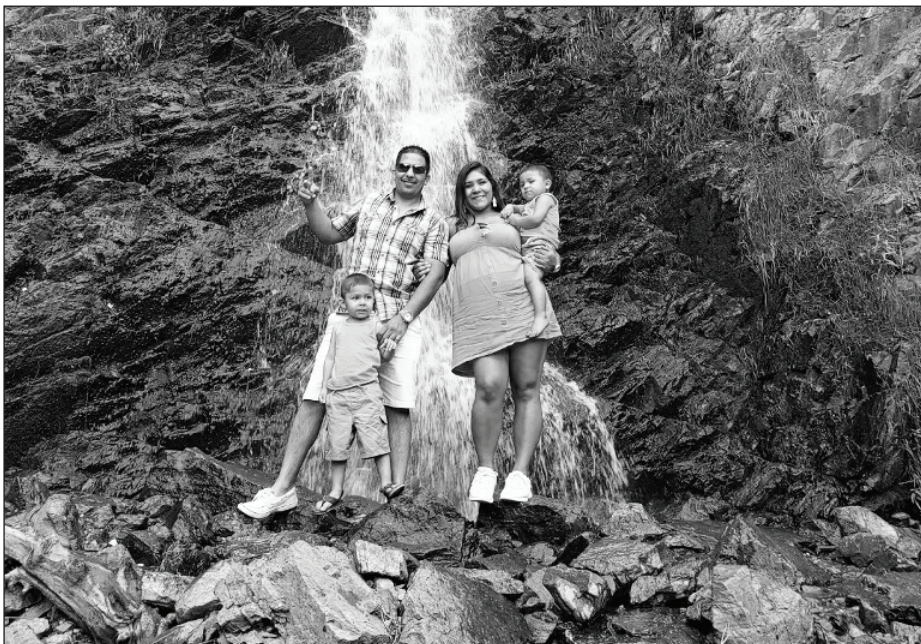
## DO YOU OFFER A SATISFACTION GUARANTEE?

Have reasonable expecta-

tions of what a pressure washing will do at your home. Remember that it's a pressure washer, not a magician. Deteriorated surfaces will be clean and deteriorated when they're done. That said, ask the contractor about what happens if you're unhappy with the finished product. Ask about any warranties they offer and get a detailed estimate before the contractors begin work.



# J&R Construction: Building Dreams



By GENEVA WILDCAT  
reporter@thepampanews.com

For the last eight years, J&R Construction has been remodeling homes and businesses throughout Texas, New Mexico, Oklahoma and Kansas, bringing to life the vision and ideas of many home and business owners.

Jose Leyva worked in the oilfield for nine years until the industry began to tank in 2013, leaving little to no hope for the workers who had dedicated many years to the advantageous, yet unpredictable field.

Leyva then went to work for Frank's Hardware, bringing in what little knowledge he had of home improvement and construction gained during his time helping

members of his family with construction projects as well as embarking on some of his own. While he was grateful for his employment with Frank's Hardware, the wages he earned during his time in the oilfield was incomparable and Leyva knew he needed something more, but his ambition was anything but self-serving.

"I just wanted to do something that I can help people with the whole heart and the whole idea was that I wanted to help people," Leyva said.

"I came up with the idea, but I didn't know what all it would entail. I never went to business classes or anything related to owning a business. But every time I put something on my mind, I place God first."

Not having today's social media platforms to advertise his new business at the time, Leyva hit the streets-walking through every neighborhood, knocking on every door and pitching his jack-of-all-trades skillset to the residents.

"I saw mail carriers going from house to house and thought, *well, I'll just go door to door like that.* I walked this entire town, half of Borger, and all of Canadian. I didn't even have business cards. I had a 5-gallon bucket with my tools in it," Leyva laughed.

"I started with yards then I would fix faucets and stuff like that. The first few years of my company, I was doing it all on my own. I learned a hundred ways on how not to do something before I learned how to do

it right."

Competing with more established construction and home improvement companies, Leyva knew that it was going to take more than being on foot to advertise his business and get his name out to the public, and trying to figure out how to do that was an obstacle he was willing to face, but unsure of what his next move should be.

"Those were hard years and I wanted to give up, but I was determined because I knew I had all I needed: God."

"I was relying on God, but also putting in my effort. God says *help yourself, and I will help you.* He doesn't say *stand still.* Prayer and faith is great, but not followed by any action is worthless."

After a while, the work started to pick up and Leyva knew he needed some help and began the hiring process. The people he would hire on through the years would bring their own knowledge and expertise to the company, therefore furthering its growth.

With the company doing well, Leyva decided he would take on a new endeavor by purchasing properties in need of renovation in an attempt to flip and sell them, but he soon found himself in an upside-down financial situation and he was losing money and employees.

Considering this moment in his career as the absolute rock bottom, he turned to God, asking for help and guidance.

"I made a deal with

**J&R** cont. on page 8

BUDDY'S

HOME FURNISHINGS

BuddyRents.com |

TRUSTED  
BRANDS,  
MORE  
CHOICES

MARCAS DE CONFIANZA Y MÁS OPCIONES

1533 N. HOBART ST. | PAMPA | 806.696.3669

LEASE OWNERSHIP ARRENDAMIENTO FINANCIERO • NO CREDIT NEEDED NO SE NECESITA CRÉDITO



# Keep Your Garage Door Rolling

Regular maintenance keeps your garage door (and, let's face it, your life) moving smoothly.

Here's what you need to do and what you should leave to the professionals.

## SAFETY TESTS

There are several safety tests for you to perform on your garage door. Failing any of these tests warrants a call to a professional for repairs.

Check the balance by disconnecting the garage door from the opener so you can operate it manually. Lift the door about halfway up, then release it. The door should remain in place. If it slips, call in the cavalry.

You can check the mechanical reverse feature by placing a piece of wood or a brick on the floor in the path of the door. Activate the door to close. When the door hits the obstacle, it should reverse. If it doesn't, start dialing.

Lastly, test the door photo-cells. Locate the two photo sensors at the base of the garage door. Check the alignment of the sensors; they should light up when they are properly aligned. Keep adjusting them until they light up. Activate the garage door and as it closes, wave an object across the sensor path. The door should reverse. Test at least three different points in the beam's path.

If your door is more than 20



© ADOBE STOCK

years old, it may lack some of these features and need an upgrade.

## CHECK THE HARDWARE

Twice a year, inspect your garage door and its hardware. Check the tracks and hinges and tighten any loose bolts or fasteners on moving parts. Inspect the rollers for wear. Steel rollers will show worn

bearings and may look lopsided. Nylon rollers tend to crack. Install replacements as needed. Look for wear in the lift cables on the door. If they're excessively rusted, deteriorated or broken, call for service.

## SERVICE YOUR CHAIN OR BELT

Check the drive chain or belt from the opener to the door if

you hear groaning or slapping sounds as the door operates. Start by disconnecting the opener from the power source and raise the garage door to about chest height. Detach it from the opener and close it by hand.

Locate the adjustment bolt that connects to the chain or belt. There should be nuts on either side to adjust the drive

mechanism. Use a wrench to turn the first nut at the side of the assembly counterclockwise. Move to the next nut and turn it clockwise. The chain or belt should pick up slack. Tighten the chain or belt until it is about a quarter inch from the bottom of the rail. Don't overtighten it. Reattach the door to the opener and reconnect the opener to the power supply.





## J&R

Continued From Page 6

God. My offer was *God, if you make this work, I promise to help everyone that I can,*" Leyva said.

Leyva's prayers were answered the very next day when he was made a cash offer to purchase the homes he had worked on.

The big break helped pull Leyva's company out of the financial hole and put them back on the map, allowing Leyva to hire more people and take on more jobs, expanding J&R Construction.

Through many lessons

and moments of trial and error, Leyva recalls the best piece of advice given to him when it comes to running a successful business that even eight years late, still rings true.

"When it comes to business, worry about making one customer happy at a time. And overtime, you'll get to where you want to be."

But as with any business, outside factors can effect its operation such as the Covid pandemic, rising costs and product availability, but Leyva's faith and the support of his family would help him pull his company through anything thrown at it.

"Throughout that whole

amount of time, I know it was God that pushed me. And my wife of course. God, my wife and my children—they are my biggest motivators."

Although home renovation and construction is laborous and strenous at times, Leyva considers it more of a mission than a job, keeping the promise he made to God all those years ago.

"One of the things that I enjoy the most is being able to do what I love and at the same, being able to help families," he said.

With the continued success of the company, Leyva has been able to bless families within the community, from pro-



Treehouse built by J&R Construction

viding 3,000 free meals at Central Park to offering free giveaways for remodels on homes.

"I keep my promise and He keeps His promise

and the business continues to strive that way." For more information about the services that J&R Construction offers, call 806-440-4563

or to view their impressive portfolio on their remodels, go to their Facebook page J&R Construction and Yard Service.



# Trending Exterior Colors

If you're considering sprucing up your home's exterior now that warmer weather is here, consider some of these trending paint palettes to make your curb appeal pop.

The National Association of Realtors says these are some of the top colors to consider for 2024.

## **BENJAMIN MOORE'S 'BLUE NOVA'**

Deep blue with a brush of purple, this blue hue gives homes a fresh energy. Jackie Mosher, cofounder of Dzinly, a virtual design platform, says this color offers distinct charm and character.

"This dynamic color choice exudes energy and contemporary style, making it an ideal option for those looking to infuse their living spaces with a vibrant and modern ambiance," Mosher says. Pair it with a crisp white ("White Dove") and a warm accent ("Brickyard Red").

## **SHERWIN WILLIAMS 'UPWARD'**

Staying in the blue family, NAR then goes with a serene, light blue with Sherwin Williams' "Upward."

"This delicate shade evokes a sense of weightlessness, inviting you to explore the soothing, open expanse of the sky," Mosher says. "It's an excellent choice for exterior siding,



© ADOBE STOCK

where it can infuse your home with a sense of serenity and simplicity."

Dzinly suggests pairing it with "Snowbound" for trim and "Diverse Beige" as an accent.

## **BEHR'S 'INTELLECTUAL'**

Feeling moody? Try Dzinly's color of the year for 2024, Behr's "Intellectual," a sophisticated deep gray with subtle

hints of warm brown.

"Whether applied as a focal point at the front door, to enhance shutters, create contrasting trim or even cover the cladding, 'Intellectual' by Behr proves itself as a versatile option for any part of your home's exterior," Mosher says.

Partner it up with lighter hues such as "Whisper White" or "Swiss Coffee," and accent it

with warm browns such as "Art District."

## **DUNN EDWARDS' 'SKIPPING STONES'**

Back with the blues, "Skipping Stones" from Dunn Edwards evokes the energy of the sea.

"It's an ideal choice for cladding the exterior of a home," Mosher says. "It infuses your

residence with a refreshing and timeless coastal feel, creating a harmonious and revitalizing atmosphere that reflects the collective yearning for calm and equilibrium in the year to come."

Dzinly pairs this color with the tropically inspired "Coconut Grove" for the trim and "Bison Beige" for accent colors.



# Flooring Trends for 2024

When it comes to permanent parts of your home, such as walls and flooring, it's important to find a material that you love.

Here are some trends to keep an eye on for 2024.

## HARDWOOD FLOORS

Hardwood floors are a classic style choice. Big this year are herringbone patterns and parquet floors. Jamie Hammel, owner of hardwood floor specialists The Hudson Company, told "House Beautiful" that complex patterns are coming back in style, whether it's mosaic tile or hardwood laid in intricate patterns.

Also in style are hardwoods with character, such as knots, burls and visible grain.

"Minimalism will probably never go out of style, but at the moment we're seeing clients take risks and embrace flooring with a lot of personality. Wood with lots of character in the right setting can almost be an element of design in its own right: Those natural features draw the eye, they might echo the form of a work of art or a textile nearby," Hammel says.

More and more homeowners are choosing hardwoods or even luxury vinyl planks in longer, wider boards to make spaces feel bigger than they are. Warm, natural colors are also in style, a contrast from the very light or very dark



© ADOBE STOCK

floors of years past.

## TILE FLOORS

The simple black-and-white checkerboard floor is another classic enjoying a comeback, and in more rooms than just the kitchen and bathroom. Don't replicate the pattern

throughout the entire house, designers say, but pick a space where it can have an impact.

While patterns are big in hardwoods, they are booming just as much in tile floors. Again, this isn't a whole-home choice, but intricate tile patterns are a great way to add a

touch of creativity and whimsy to your home.

Just like the longer planks of hardwoods, wider tile can make your space look bigger and give your home a more contemporary look. Bonus: There's less grout to clean and maintain. As for color, biophilic

palettes featuring lots of greens and blues are en vogue and can have a calming effect in the home. Homeowners seem to be moving away from grays, whites and beiges of years past and looking for something more interesting, designers say.



# ERJ Construction

BY GENEVA WILDCAT  
reporter@thepampanews.com

One of Pampa's newest construction and home renovation companies, ERJ Construction, is making quite the big name for themselves.

Started in the summer of 2023, Evan Myers and Joshua Pate with former founder, Robert, started ERJ Construction with the hopes of providing Pampa a home and business renovation option that would allow their craftsmanship skills to shine.

With the landscaping expertise of Myers and the con-

struction and concrete skills of Pate, there's no job that these young men can't do and they both learn from each other.

"I do a lot of the landscaping, but Josh has a mind for building, so the first job they had me come help them with was a concrete patio in Borger. I learned how to tie rebar and how to finish concrete. It's been a learning experience for me," Myers said.

"We've done concrete work, framing, sheetrock, roofing, painting-all interior and exterior," Pate said. "I like when we're able to rip ev-

erything down to the studs and rebuild it all."

Starting a company in a competitive field is no easy feat, especially for young entrepreneurs, but Myers and Pate have had the help and support of other seasoned professionals, from advice to even being given equipment needed for a particular job.

After taking over contract work in Borger, Myers and Pate were able to get their name out there and have since gained a plethora of knowledge and experience

*ERJ* cont. on page 12



**FREE ESTIMATES**

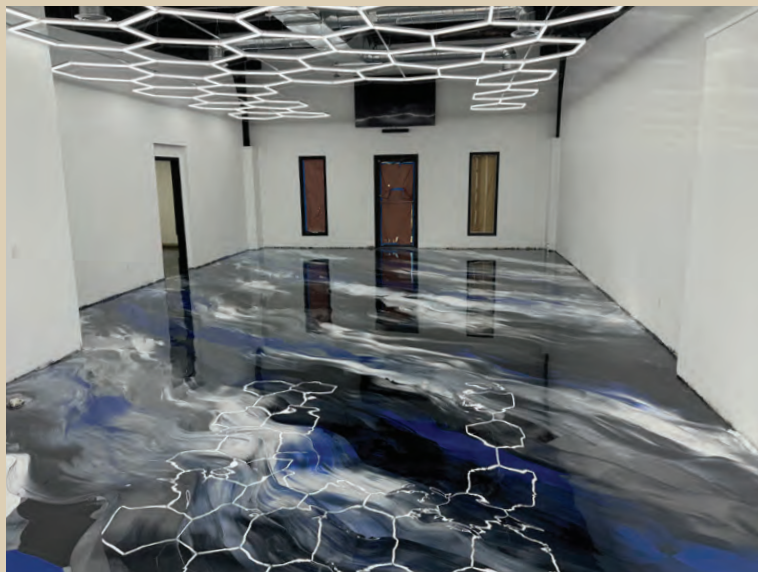
## Anthony's Floor Care



2110 Perryton Pkwy., Pampa  
806-419-1090

106 W. 10th, Borger  
806-273-2467

**CARPET • TILE • GRANITE • WOOD REFINISHING**



*Custom Showers, Luxury Vinyl Planks, Wood Plank Tile, Granite Counter Tops*

Financing Available, 6 months same as Cash!

### MOVE-IN SPECIALS

**CARPET CLEANING**  
*Buy 3 Rooms  
Get 4th Free*

**TILE & GROUT CLEANING**  
*Buy 2 Room  
Get 3rd Free*

*Don't miss out on the Best Prices, Best Installation, & Best Service!  
Over 30 Years Experience*





## ERJ

Continued From Page 11

and the citizens of Pampa have caught on to that fact. Their work is not solely limited to foundational and constructional home improvements, but their vision when it comes to interior renovations is what really stands out and their ingenuity and creativity comes into play.

While the guys enjoy working on outdoor decks and patios, they've found enjoyment working within the walls of a house, transforming the more popular areas of the home, such as kitchens and bathrooms, into spaces more suited to the homeowner's needs and

style.

"We recently did a full remodel on a kitchen here in Pampa. We tore out everything and built custom cabinets from the ground up," Myers said proudly.

The homeowner who requested the remodel, Angie Friend, was very satisfied with the effort and hard work Myers and Pate put into beautifying her kitchen. "The outcome is magazine worthy. They were very nice, knowledgeable and trustworthy, and I would trust these young men with any remodel project," Friend said.

For more information on the services that ERJ Construction offers or to book a free consultation, call 806-677-9903.

**INSIDE  
OR OUT,**  
We have you covered!

- Garage Doors & Operators
- Metal Buildings & Carports
- Replacement Windows
- Entry & Patio Doors
- Residential & Commercial Glass
- Shower & Bath Enclosures



**HIGH PERFORMANCE**  
Doors • Windows • Glass

**1211 S. Price Rd. | Pampa**  
**806.665.8100**

highperformanceexterior.com

**SERVING THE PANHANDLE AREA  
FOR OVER 15 YEARS**



SCAN TO  
LEARN  
MORE!





# Shedding Some Light on Home Solar

Consumers shopping around for home improvement projects may be leaning toward overhauls that can reduce energy consumption and save them money in the long run. This is a driving factor behind a growing number of homeowners investigating solar energy for their residences.

## How does solar power work?

Solar power harnesses the sun's energy and converts it into electricity that can be used in homes. Many people are familiar with photovoltaics (PV), which are the panels that absorb sunlight

and create an electric field across their layers. Another solar technology, known as concentrating solar power, is primarily used in large power plants and is not appropriate for residential use, according to Energy.gov.

According to the Office of Energy Efficiency & Renewable Energy, hundreds of thousands of solar panels have been put in use across the United States since 2008.

## Costs associated with solar

The upfront expense of solar panels is significant, costing

**SOLAR** cont. on page 14



**ACE**  
Hardware

**MORTON LUMBER CO.**

1404 W. Wilson - Borger, TX

**273-2380**

Mon.-Fri. 7:30a-8:00p Sat. 7:30a-6p Sun. 12p-6p

**Lumber, Hardware, Feed and More!**





## Solar

Continued From Page 13

anywhere from \$10,000 to \$14,000 for initial installation. However, comparatively speaking, homeowners can spend \$1,500 or more per year on electricity, so solar panels will pay for themselves over time. Keep in mind that costs may vary depending on energy needs and how many panels will be required to service the system.

### How much electricity can I expect?

The Federal Trade Commission's Consumer Advice says that the amount of power generated from a so-

lar energy system depends on a few factors:

- The average number of hours of direct, unshaded sunlight your roof gets each year;
- The pitch (angle), age and condition of your roof, and the compass direction it faces;
- The size and strength of your system; and
- Environmental factors such as snow, dust or shade that may cover the system.

### Save even more money

Consumers can contact their utility companies to find out if they provide homeowners who produce solar power with "net metering." This program pays the homeowner money or gives credit for excess power the

system produces and returns to the electric grid. Individuals also may be eligible for energy tax credits or other benefits.

Homeowners may find it worthwhile to explore solar energy, particularly if they consume a high amount of electricity.



Get the most out of your summer  
with FirstBank Southwest.

•• **2% OFF** Consumer Loans ••

Whether it's a big project or a long-awaited adventure, we've got you covered. Start your journey today and enjoy the season to the fullest!

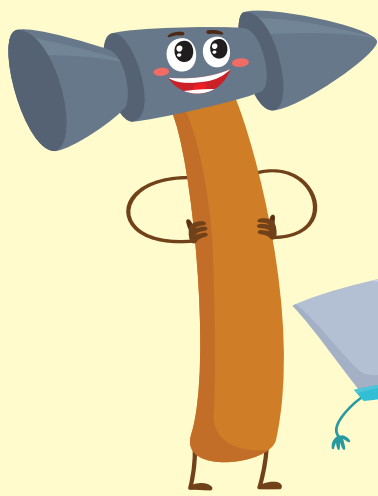
**FBSW.COM**

With approved credit. 2% off our standard rates. Offer does not apply to promotional rates. Excludes unsecured, real estate and CD secured loans. Offer good on new loans only from June 1, 2024 - June 30, 2024.

 **FirstBank  
Southwest**

Member FDIC 





Spring Into

# HOME IMPROVEMENT

Action



## CA SPRAYING

Phone: 806.663.6220  
caspraying@outlook.com



TRANSFORM  
YOUR HOME  
WITH OUR  
FASCIA AND  
SOFFIT  
REMODEL!

upgrade your curb appeal  
with our expert  
installation services

www.erhousesllc.com

Our Services

- Roofing
- Metal
- Siding
- Fascia & Soffit
- Gutters
- Windows

806-440-7588



## KELLEY ROOFING



*\*Free Estimates\**

### 463-7910



At Parsley's Sheet Metal & Roofing we have the experience and knowledge to meet all your roofing needs. Give us a call for leaks, maintenance, or replacement. Serving Pampa & the surrounding area for over 75 years.

214 E. Tyng • 806-669-6461  
parsleysroofing.com



ELECTRIC COMPANY

806-662-6047 & 806-672-7247



Free Estimates  
806-663-3999

locally owned &  
established in Pampa Texas



RoyalLandscapeWorks@gmail.com

### Landscaping Services

**Lawn Care:** Mowing, Fertilizing, Grass, Installation, Sprinklers, Repair  
**Gardens:** Flower beds, Clean Up, Mulch  
**Trees:** Trimming, planting, Removal, Stump Grinding  
**Fencing:** Installation, Repair, Staining  
**Other:** Sell & Deliver Firewood, Snow Removal and Much More..



# Spring is the Time for Texans to ‘Two-Step’ Toward Fire Ant Control

TEXAS A&M AGRILIFE

Spring is an ideal time to take the first step to fire ant control, said a Texas A&M AgriLife Extension Service expert.

“This is the time of year when ants begin foraging for food and when spring rains percolate through the soil and destroy underground fire ant tunnels,” said Robert Puckett, Ph.D. AgriLife Extension

entomologist in Texas A&M’s Department of Entomology, Bryan-College Station. “This causes them to deposit new tunnel soil as a mound on the surface above, making them much easier to locate.” Puckett said the Two-Step Method is AgriLife Extension’s preferred means of fire ant control.

## About the Two-Step method

The Two-Step Method is less labor-intensive, less toxic and more environmentally friendly than most other means of do-it-yourself fire ant control. It can be an efficient, effective and safe way to control fire ants for an individual home, large property or entire community.

The first step involves semi-annual broadcast applications of fire ant bait. The second in-



 **Western Auto**

2225 Perryton Pky • (806) 669-3361

**Pampa's Premier  
Appliance Store  
for 31 Years!**

volves follow-up treatments of individual mounds or “nuisance” ant colonies, such as those in sensitive or high-traffic areas.

• **Step one:** The use of fire ant bait as the first step is effective as temperatures begin to rise and ants begin to gather forage to feed their

new brood.

“Spring and fall are particularly good times to apply baits,” Puckett said. “Once it gets hot and dry, as in the summer months, fire ants become less active, and mounds become less visible as ants go deeper into the soil.”

Broadcasting bait

across a property is also advantageous in that users don’t have to find the fire ant colonies, he said.

“Fire ant colonies can be difficult to locate, especially over a large area, so using a bait is less costly in terms of

**ANT** cont. on page 17





Extension developed the Two-Step Method was to help consumers make sense of all the fire ant control products on the market.

The insecticide label determines where a product can be used, whether it's a lawn, garden, agricultural production pasture or orchard. Users should always read the pesticide label to be sure the site they are treating is listed, then follow all label instructions.

Puckett provided the following suggestions related to fire ant control:

- Do not use gasoline or other petroleum products to control fire

ants. Although these kill fire ants, they are highly flammable and are dangerous to both the user and the environment.

- Don't leave insecticide granules on streets or sidewalks after application. Sweep up any excess product so it doesn't wash into gutters or storm sewers and affect the water table.

- Always follow label directions on the proper disposal of pesticides. Do not pour pesticide leftovers down the drain as they are not easily removed by regular wastewater treatment.

# Ant

Continued From Page 16

time and the amount of product needed for treating larger areas," Puckett said. "Ants pick up the bait and return it to the nest, so they do most of the work for you."

He said the fire ant bait concentration is very low compared to residential insecticides.

"The recommended amount of grains per area is fairly low, so it's not necessary to use a lot of insecticide," he said. "While the efficacy of baits may differ, they all work pretty well."

The baits that work faster are also usually more expensive, so Puckett said homeowners

should determine if the cost is worth the result.

- **Step two:** Because fire ant mounds are most visible this time of year, especially after a rain, they are easier to locate to do the second step. This involves treating the largest or most troublesome mounds with an individual mound treatment, such as a liquid drench or some form of granular, non-bait insecticide or dust.

"Most contact insecticides applied directly to the mound kill the colony in one-to-two days," Puckett said. "If the area has just a few mounds, then it may not even be necessary to apply bait as a first step."

He said it is extremely

important to follow label instructions and not mix too little or too much water if using a liquid insecticide.

"Aside from the label being the law, these products have been tested for efficacy and safety at a particular concentration, so you don't want to guess at what may or may not happen if you vary from instructions," he said.

Wearing proper protection such as gloves and possibly even safety goggles is key if you're mixing chemicals. Puckett said to always be mindful of protecting yourself and the environment.

### Proper use of fire ant control products

Puckett said one of the reasons AgriLife

# Bartlett's Lumber & Hardware

2412 Perryton Pkwy. | (806)440-0142





# Foundational Tips for No-Dig Gardening

TEXAS A&M AGRILIFE

No-dig is a gardening method that has been growing in popularity, and its practice perfectly matches its name. As a low-effort form of gardening, no-dig literally means you do not need to dig or alter the soil.

Joe Masabni, Ph.D., Texas A&M AgriLife Extension Service vegetable specialist from the Texas A&M Department of Horticultural Sciences, said no-dig gardening utilizes adding compost

on top of your soil and letting its microorganisms give your plants the nutrients they need. "It's similar to how nutrients are transferred in a forest," Masabni said. "When leaves fall to the ground, they form a layer above the soil and then they rot, releasing nutrients to the plant roots."

## How to start your no-dig garden

Starting a no-dig garden is not a challenge, especially if you already have a raised-bed garden. When starting your bed, cardboard is

a key component.

Masabni said using cardboard in your no-dig garden creates a physical barrier against weeds for protection. You can also use cardboard on the top of your garden instead of mulch to further prevent weeds.

"If you're starting a new garden, you'll need to build the frame and put cardboard at the bottom, then fill with compost, plant in the bed and then leave it alone," he said.

Already existing gardens with raised beds



just need an addition of compost and plants and for gardeners to refrain from any tilling. Masabni has a variety of video examples online regarding no-dig gardening.

## Best practices for a successful garden

While no-dig gardening is a low-maintenance option for home gardeners, there are still some important practices for caring for your garden. Gardeners should still add fertilizer to their no-dig gardens to help their plants.

"Compost by itself is not enough plant food all season long," Masabni said. "It is important to add additional fertilizer on the top of your garden, whether it be chemical or organic."

Additionally, Masabni

said gardeners should never step on their no-dig garden to avoid damaging the layers of compost. Choosing a location for your garden away from foot traffic and in the right part of your yard can contribute to your no-dig garden's success.

"Gardeners should be mindful of their location to avoid any standing water in your garden; selecting a location away from a low spot in your yard is a good choice," he said. Masabni also said no-dig gardening can be practiced with square-foot gardening and companion planting for expanded benefits.

## Good things come to patient gardeners

When starting their journey with no-dig gardening, gardeners

must practice patience with their yields.

"In the first year or so, a till garden will give you a better yield than a no-till garden," Masabni said. "But over time, the nutrients will build up in the layers of good quality soil and you will have a successful yield without as much effort."

While no-dig gardening takes a different approach, he said reframing your mentality and learning new skills is always a good practice in gardening, especially in the first few years of maintenance.

"Take note of your mistakes and try new things to keep the passion and pleasure of gardening alive, and learn to improve year after year," Masabni said.



**LARRY  
BAKER**

**11780 TX-152  
Pampa, TX 79065**

**PLUMBING  
HEATING  
AIR  
CONDITIONING**

**(806)665-4392**





# What Attracts Pests to a Home?



In fact, certain conditions may be inviting pests to a property.

- **Garbage:** Piles of garbage offer food and shelter to pests. Removing garbage piles and cleaning up food waste promptly can make a difference.

- **Stagnant water:** Mosquitoes breed in standing water, which is water not affected by waves, current or a filtration system. Anywhere water has pooled, mosquitoes may be breeding.

- **Moisture or standing water:** Additional sources of water and moisture may attract pests like gnats, mos-

quitoes, stink bugs, and certain spiders. Damp areas are of particular concern, especially when combined with darkness.

- **Firewood:** Firewood may attract a variety of pests, including termites and weevils. Firewood also may contain eggs that were laid before trees were cut down. If firewood is needed, it should be stacked far away from a home.

- **Clogged gutters:** Ignoring clogged gutters can lead to pest prob-

lems. Mice, squirrels, birds, ants, and spiders may be attracted to damp leaves in clogged gutters. Leaves offer shelter, nesting material and possible food sources of insect life.

- **Dirty dishes and indoor trash:** Leaving food-covered dishes in the sink invites pests. Leftover food attracts cockroaches, flies, ants, and more. Even if time is short, it's best to wash dishes or load them into the dishwasher. Overflowing trash also draws pests

into a home.

- **Clutter:** Clutter provides hiding places for all sorts of rodents and insects, which can hide out in cluttered areas and remain comfortable. Going room to room and clearing out extraneous items may help reduce pest populations. Focus on the garage and basement, in particular.

Pests are attracted to certain conditions, and remedying these issues can help reduce pest infestations.



**Alpha 2**  
overhead door, LLC



Residential & Commercial  
Garage Door Installations

806-669-1188



No homeowner wants pests to invade their homes or their yards. However, it's easy for pests to find their way into and around a home.



# Caring for Patio Furniture

Part of getting ready for summer is getting ready to spend more time outside, lounging in your patio furniture, enjoying the sunshine, visiting with friends and family or cooking out.

Here's how to keep your furniture looking fresh for years to come.

## CLEANING

Regular cleaning plays a big role in caring for your patio furniture. For most materials, mild soap and warm water can work wonders. For some pieces, such as wicker or rattan, run a vacuum with a soft brush attachment over the furniture to remove any loose debris first. Rinse your furniture well to remove any soap residue. Let the furniture completely air dry before using it.

While bleach may cure a variety of conditions, it's not the best thing to use on patio furniture. Not only can it discolor fabrics and cushions, it can also weaken the fabric and shorten your furniture's useful life. If you don't want to use soap, vinegar is generally safe to use; make sure to spot-check whatever cleaner you're using to make sure it doesn't damage your fabrics and other materials. Clean your patio furniture once a month to keep it looking its best.



© ADOBE STOCK

## PROTECTING

Once your furniture is clean, protect it from the elements. Routinely check wood furniture for rotting, warping and cracking. Once repairs are made, seal it with a coat of protective sealant appropriate to the type of wood used in

your furniture.

Rattan furniture can be warped or discolored by exposure to moisture or humidity, so keep these pieces away from water sources and clean up spills or rainwater immediately. Periodically paint metal furniture with a rust-resistant

paint.

Store plastic furniture out of direct sunlight when it's not in use to prevent fading or deterioration.

## STORAGE

When you're not using your patio furniture or during

severe weather, store it in a dry, protected area such as a shed or garage. Store it off the ground and use furniture covers to protect it. If you don't have an indoor storage option, consider using waterproof furniture covers to protect your investment.



# Common Landscaping Fixes

Summer means spending more time outside and that extra time in your garden may mean you'll see problems cropping up.

Here are some common landscaping problems and how to solve them.

## OVERWATERING

Overwatering plants leads to fungus and plant disease, spongy lawns and shallow root systems. Understand the watering requirements of the plants in your garden and carefully manage the amount of water you give your landscaping. Plant native plants to help minimize your watering needs and keep your landscaping looking healthier all year around.

## BARE SPOTS

Bare spots in your lawn can be the result of soil compaction from heavy foot traffic, drought, disease, chemical burns, or weed or insect infestation. To fix these spots, you'll need to first determine the cause. If it's foot traffic, install stepping stones or a pathway to keep pedestrians off the grass. If it's weeds or insects, determine what you have before treating it. Once the yard is treated, you can start growing new grass.

New grass can be grown from seed. Spread straw as a



© ADOBE STOCK

mulch to help keep the young grass moist and safe from foraging wildlife. You can purchase lawn patch products that contain seed, fertilizer and mulch blends. Sod is also an option; keep sod moist until you can install it. Make sure it's level and makes good contact with the rest of the lawn.

## POOR SOIL QUALITY

Sandy, silty or soils rich in clay can adversely affect your landscaping. Clay-heavy soils tend to make it difficult for water to drain or create shifting issues. Clay is great for building on, but could be bad for your garden. Sandy soil allows water

to pass through which makes it good for areas that need drainage improvement.

You can amend your soil to help improve it. The experts at your local home and garden center can give you advice on what types of soil you have and how to best amend it for your landscaping.

## EROSION

Erosion is when soil wears away from water and wind. This can cause loss of fertile topsoil and harm plants, walkways and other landscaping elements. Retaining walls can help hold back soil. Amendments such as mulch and plantings like groundcovers also help.



# Hall's Heating & Air

BY GENEVA WILDCAT  
reporter@thepampanews.com

More than 40 years ago, Hugh Hall started Hall's Heating & Air, an HVAC servicing company that catered to the residential needs of the citizens of Pampa and surrounding areas.

Upon his retirement, he sold the company in 2014 to one of his employees, Rob Hampton who then went on to run the company for another five years.

In February of 2019, Jim Chaney and his wife, Amy, purchased the company and merged it with Steve's Refrigeration to create a powerhouse, bringing the trades of the old into the present with a new look, a new attitude and a bigger vision.

The Chaney's were no strangers to owning and running a business, as their construction, flooring and realty experience was extensive as well as impressive.

"We'd always owned multiple businesses-Chaney Construction was here forever and Floors and More and we had a bunch of residential rental properties. So obviously home servicing and real estate was something we were always passionate about," Amy said.

"At some point we realized that we were going to put all of our eggs into this one basket and we sold all of our other companies, all of our residential rental properties and just got rid of everything and this is all we do now."

"If you had told me years ago that I was going to ever be this passionate about heat-

ing and air conditioning, I would've told you that you were nuts," she laughed. "But we absolutely love it."

Expanding their services all across the Texas Panhandle, from 150 miles commercially and 75 miles residentially, Hall's Heating & Air has gained a reputation as being the go-to HVAC company to the more rural parts of the Panhandle that are otherwise overlooked.

"We're both small town people and I remember growing up in Silverton where there were people that knew how to work on stuff because they would have to wait months and months for a professional to come in, so we really enjoy serving those smaller communities. Somebody's gotta serve them!" Amy said. The Chaney's wanted to make sure that Hall's Heating & Air stood out from the crowd by offering something more than just an in-and-out fix job.

Not only do they have their employees, both technicians and customer service representatives, go through extensive and ongoing training, they also understand that making sure the customer is well-informed on their heating and air cooling systems is crucial.

Using car maintenance as the perfect analogy for the responsibility a car owner has to keep their vehicle in tip-top and smooth-running shape, it can be used for homeowners as well in the sense of having yearly maintenance on their HVAC units by trained professionals results in the same thing: a healthy, operating

system.

"We do a lot of training with our technicians in-house and we also travel all over the U.S. for multiple trainings throughout the year," Jim said. "And we also have a full-blown maintenance program, which is preventative maintenance where the idea is to keep your system top-notch so you don't have any breakdowns."

"It's not just technical aspects-it's also soft skills like making sure you're taking care of the customers and doing an actual assessment of the customers' needs and not just *this is what's wrong with your equipment and we're going to fix it*," Amy said.

Hall's Heating & Air serves as a shining example of how important education in the trade field truly is, HVAC service being a constant need throughout the year and always in high demand.

The Chaney's have since partnered up with Amarillo Tech, a trades and career high school in Amarillo with over 100 vocational courses to choose from.

"It's a fantastic program and we have been in communication with our continuing education directors here in Pampa to try to figure it out," Amy said.

"We serve on the advisory committee at AMTech and we've been in communication with Clarendon College. It's something we are passionate about. My idea is to have an in-house facility where they can come and be trained here like an apprenticeship program to where we are able to work in tangent not just with Pampa High School, but with White Deer High School, Lefors, Mclean-all of those to be



able to have some kind of work program for the high schools to come and learn and be trained in the trades. It's the way of the future."

"It's literally only in the last year or two that you've heard people trying to push trades again," Jim said. "Now there's a panic. I feel like there's just a big gap there and a lot of people have retired and moved on."

Not only have the Chaney's redirected Hall's Heating & Air into a bigger and brighter future, they have recently updated the company's face and logo, Jim being the creative mastermind behind the change.

Shooting for a classic and

nostalgic theme with a modern twist, Jim's now-famous logo can be seen on all of Hall's service vehicles and billboards, the bold orange and blue colors capturing the attention of the public, here and afar.

With a strong set of core values, a powerful mission statement and a unique brand that will carry on gracefully into the future, Hall's Heating & Air is sure to thrive for many more years.

For more information on the services Hall's Heating & Air offer, call 806-669-2437 or visit their website callhalls.com, or visit their location at 801 W. Kingsmill in Pampa, TX.





# YOU'LL DIG THE DIFFERENCE!

For more than 40 years, Pampa has trusted their heating and cooling needs to the cool cats that promise: **Straightforward Pricing and Dependable Service**

## Save Big on Your Energy Bills Today!

Are you tired of opening your energy bills each month and feeling the financial pinch of inefficient heating and cooling systems? It's time to put your half-earned money back where it belongs - in your wallet!



### SOLID REPAIRS

When you trust Hall's Heating & Air with your repair needs, you can trust that we get the job done right the first time. We don't believe in doing anything halfway.

### ON-TIME SERVICE

Don't wait around all day waiting for your heating and AC company. We will keep you updated throughout the day and give you plenty of time to meet us at your home!

### STRAIGHTFORWARD PRICING

We believe in honest, friendly service. That's why we offer price estimates upfront, so you have an idea of what to expect and can make an informed decision about how to proceed.

## Indoor Air Quality

Are you concerned about your home or business's indoor air quality? If the air is stuffy or you notice excessive condensation inside, you are right to worry. These conditions can worsen allergies and leave your family more prone to illness. At Hall's Heating & Air, we have the expertise to find the solution.

## Commercial Heating & Air Conditioning

Keeping the heating and cooling system running efficiently is essential for every business. You can achieve that with our commercial air conditioning and heating services. At Hall's Heating & Air, we have provided commercial air conditioning installation, maintenance, and repair services in Pampa, Texas, for over four decades.



**CallHalls.com**

LIC #TACLA00109088C

# Have it all with Hall's!





# Take care of what matters most to you.

Start with a loan from First Bank & Trust Today.



## Buy Local Loan

Our Buy Local Loan allows you to use the funds for any purpose.

It's the quick and easy way to get your project done. Plus, if you shop local you will also be helping your community.

- › Borrow up to **\$5,000**
- › No origination fee
- › First Bank & Trust checking account required

## Home Improvement Loan

Our Home Improvement Loan is perfect for those small to medium sized projects or needs.

Use the funds for any purpose such as unexpected expenses, home improvement, new appliances, or finishing your next project.

- › Borrow up to **\$5,000**
- › No origination fee
- › First Bank & Trust checking account required

## Home Equity Line of Credit (HELOC)

Not just for home projects!

Establishing a HELOC is like having the money right in your checking account. It is available to you whenever and for whatever you may need. Start using the equity you've built in your home to invest in yourself today!

- › Consolidate your debt
- › Pay for college
- › Increase your home's value
- › Establish emergency savings

## Home Equity Installment Loan

Speed up how quickly you build equity in your home.

A Home Equity Installment Loan can potentially save you thousands of dollars in interest payments.

- › Pay off your home sooner
- › Potentially save thousands in interest
- › Build equity faster
- › Great debt consolidation alternative

› **Speak with a Personal Banker today** to help choose the right loan for you.

Normal underwriting guidelines apply for qualified borrowers. Benefits may differ by borrower. See lender for details.

[firstbanktexas.com](https://www.firstbanktexas.com)

HTLF Bank is MEMBER FDIC and EQUAL HOUSING LENDER