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PICKING UP WIN

The Paradise Lady Panthers held off Slidell for their first victory.

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HEADED TO NFR

A Chico rancher is supplying livestock for the National Finals Rodeo.

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WISE COUNTY MESSENGER

VOLUME 142 - NO. 93 | FRIDAY, NOVEMBER 19, 2021 | DECATUR, TEXAS | 16 PAGES IN 1 SECTION PLUS INSERTS | $1



SUBMITTED

ROUND UP — A Wise County Animal Control officer works to round up nearly a dozen dogs that were apparently dumped on a highway near Decatur Wednesday.

WISE COUNTY

Dozen dogs dumped on highway

BY BRIAN KNOX
bknox@wcmessenger.com

The Wise County Sheriff's Office is seeking the person or people responsible for dumping nearly a dozen dogs in the median of a busy highway Wednesday.

Sheriff Lane Akin said the office received a couple of phone calls around 6:40 a.m. about dogs in the median of U.S. 81/287 just north of the roadside park between Decatur and Alvord.

The dogs proved difficult to round up.

"All three of our animal control officers went to the scene, and they tried

See Dogs on page 3

DECATUR

Familiar territory

Foerster leads Lady Eagles back to state tournament

BY MICAH MCCARTNEY
mmccartney@wcmessenger.com

For the third time in as many years, a Catherine Foerster team will finish its season at the UIL volleyball state tournament in Garland.

Decatur's state semifinal match Thursday was the coach's second consecutive trip to the final four with the Lady Eagles.

"I think we have a great chance to make a run at the state championship," Foerster said before the match. "We've just got to work on working a few little kinks out here and there. We're a hard team to beat when we're playing

See Foerster on page 10



MICAH MCCARTNEY/WCMESSENGER

BACK AT STATE — Decatur coach Catherine Foerster led the Lady Eagles into the state semifinal match Thursday. Look for an E-edition at wcmessenger.com for a complete recap about the 4A semifinal.

WISE COUNTY

Missing man found, arrested

BY BRIAN KNOX
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The multi-day search for a missing person in south Wise County resulted in the arrest of the man Wednesday.

The Wise County Sheriff's Office was contacted early last week by the family of 37-year-old Leslie Self of Briar saying the man hadn't been seen since leaving a neighbor's house Nov. 7.

Sheriff Lane Akin said they began a search of the area but could not locate Self.

"We hadn't been able to find him anywhere," he said. "He wasn't in any hospital and not in any jails."

After several days of searching for the man, which included the use of a Department of Public Safety helicopter searching the area from above, the sheriff's office called in the assistance of the dog tracking team from the Texas Department of Criminal Justice in Huntsville Wednesday in an attempt the locate Self.

"We were afraid he had walked out in the brambles and briars and maybe died," Akin said.

Searchers got a break when the dogs led them

See Missing on page 11

WISE COUNTY

New approach

BKV dives into Barnett, revives asset

BY KRISTEN TRIBE
ktribe@wcmessenger.com

BKV took a bite out of the Barnett Shale in 2020, weathering a worldwide pandemic, rock-bottom oil and gas prices and a historic winter storm to breathe new life into an idle Devon Energy property in Bridgeport.

"It's only been a year, but time at BKV is like dog years," said CEO Chris Kalnin. "It's one year but feels like seven."

In just 12 months, BKV more than doubled its number of employees, integrated the systems of two companies, increased production and purchased a power plant.

"It's exceeded our wildest expectations," Kalnin said. "We've been off the ground and running since day one. People were so ready for a company to come in with a positive view of the play and the asset.

See BKV on page 3



RICHARD GREENE/WCMESSENGER

ESCALATING BUSINESS — After buying assets in the Barnett Shale, BKV is preparing to invest more into local gas business.

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BKV: Company to resume drilling in 2022

Continued from page 1

"The ground was ripe for what we were planning to do."

Welcome to Texas

Founded in 2015, BKV is headquartered in Denver with large holdings in northeastern Pennsylvania. It is one of the top 20 natural gas producers in Pennsylvania with an interest in 355 active wells with net natural gas production of 160 million cubic feet per day.

Nick Kunze, vice president of operations–Barnett, said the company was evaluating opportunities across the market when Devon announced the sale of its North Texas asset in 2019.

"Everybody knows about the Barnett," he said. "This is where the shale revolution started."

Kalnin said the company's first foray into Texas was strategic on several fronts. He explained some states have become more skeptical of the oil and gas industry in recent years, potentially making it more difficult to operate.

"I think we've always seen Texas as a welcoming state for oil and gas," he said. "There's long-term, continued support for the industry here, and we saw a play that had a lot of potential to take our company to the next level in terms of size, scale materiality, product mix and access to markets.

"This was a 'putting us in the big leagues' type step," Kalnin said.

The purchase diversified the company, put it in a better position to weather a volatile market and provided a base of cash flow that would allow continued growth. The close of the sale was delayed six months, from April to October 2020, due to issues related to the COVID-19 pandemic. But the delay gave BKV leadership more time to study the asset. It includes more than 320,000 gross acres and 4,200 producing wells, making BKV the largest natural gas producer in the Barnett Shale.

Kalnin described it as a "good asset base that had been managed well in the past but had been deprioritized."

Kunze said the first couple of months following the close was spent coordinating processes across the company, doing well reviews and planning for automation on the pads.

"Then we made a conscious decision from there on out to start increasing activity," he said. "Technology has changed a lot so we thought, let's go back into these completions that weren't optimized to today's standards and modernize them."

Kalnin said through using a variety of treatments to restimulate wells, they've "extracted more meat off the bone." Kunze said they had eight wells running at the end of October and planned to increase to at least 10 this month.

Throughout the process, BKV has focused on incorporating ESG (environmental, social and governance) practices, which is a method of evaluating how a company serves all stakeholders including employees, communities, customers, vendors, shareholders and the environment.

"We want to produce gas, but we want to do it prudently," Kunze said.

A giant step on this front is Project Air Jordan, which involves swapping pneumatic valves for compressed air on pad sites to eliminate the release of methane into the atmosphere.

"We're changing all of that out to have valves driven by instrument air or electric ... by the end of next year we'll have everything completely retrofitted," Kunze said. "That's the No. 1 emission source we have, and it's about 70 percent emissions overall for the company. That will all be taken care of by the end of next year."

Kalnin said they're also focusing on solar power.

"The cool thing with that is using solar power is completely green," he said. "We can start to use electrical power from solar panels to run equipment."

Although BKV did not drill in 2021, it is planning to start drilling in early 2022.

"We feel comfortable that we understand the asset very well now," Kalnin said. "We'll be drilling a number of wells and testing ideas that we've been developing technically. We see a steady, long-term reinvestment in the Barnett. It's a program we can maintain and operate with discipline, resulting in cash flow and generating modest growth in our asset."

Prioritizing diversification

Earlier this month BKV closed on the purchase of a power plant in Temple, further diversifying the company.

"Operating a plant is driven by the cost of gas, and we saw an opportunity to combine our gas business ... convert it into electrons and capitalize on the margins," Kalnin said. "The way energy works, everybody has their own sandbox, and you don't get out of it. But we think that doesn't fit with a long-term vision for a 21st century energy company."

Kalnin said customers want to know where their energy is coming from, and while they want competitive pricing, they also want it to be clean.

"That requires us to look at the value chain," he said. "We can supply the gas from [the Barnett] directly to the Temple plant, convert it from natural gas to electricity and ultimately sell it like organic food."

The plant currently provides enough power to fuel 750,000 homes, and it was one of the few facilities that stayed in service during February's winter storm when millions of Texans were without electricity. It's equipped with flexible and efficient combined cycle turbines and features advanced emissions-control technology, making it one of the cleanest natural gas-fueled power plants in the U.S. and enabling BKV to certify its carbon emissions footprint.

"We bought assets we know are bulletproof, and we will continue to make bulletproof, whether it's rain, sunshine or snow," Kalnin said. "At least for a portion of our gas, we're going to have an end market that will consume that gas for the next 30 years. We won't be worrying about selling 100,000 cubic feet of our gas per day ... because we'll send it to the power plant."

While BKV now owns both ends of the power generation process, Kalnin said they will in the future set up a retail business so customers can buy electricity directly from them. Various acquisitions will be required to complete that process and connect everything, but "the big chunks are in place," he said.

View of the world

Kalnin credits the employees, landowners and vendors with helping ensure BKV's success in the Barnett.

"They've welcomed us with open arms, and the way we've all worked together has been phenomenal," he said. "It's allowed us to quickly integrate and make the Barnett part of our overall company and culture."

Kalnin said he focused on culture before ever creating the company.

"So many companies get it backward," he said. "At the end of the day a company is a collection of people who work together for a purpose and if not aligned, everything else will be misaligned."

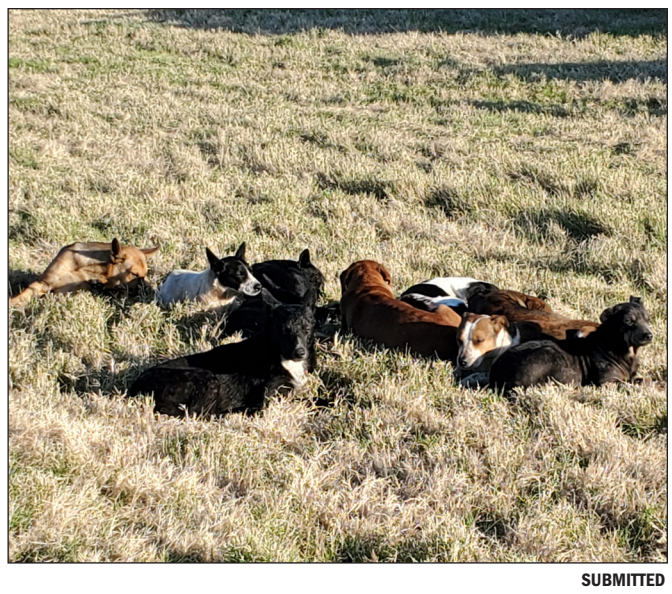
Kalnin is proud that employees from all parts of BKV are supportive of the leadership and their vision.

"We have old, crusty oil and gas guys talking about ESG. They've bought in, and they're on board with that, from the young millennials in Denver to the old oil field guys," he said. "We're proud of the energy industry and proud of what we do, trying to solve a problem that the world has thrown at our feet — global warming."

Kalnin said BKV's momentum is building, and there's "something special" in the air. He recently told the staff they could be bigger than Exxon Mobil one day. That's the goal.

"The world is ready for an oil and gas company like us," he said. "A company where it doesn't matter if you're left or right, just that we're doing a good thing. Everyone wants a team they can rally behind, and that's what we're going to offer the world."

Dogs: Animals abandoned



SUBMITTED

STAYING TOGETHER — Dogs abandoned on U.S. 81/287 huddled together until rescuers arrived.

Continued from page 1

to gather up the dogs, but the dogs kind of packed up and refused to move and got pretty aggressive, so we had to shut down traffic on both the northbound and southbound side as they went about the business of trying to capture the dogs," Akin said.

Once the dogs were safely gathered up, they were taken to the Wise County Animal Shelter in Decatur where they will remain for a period of time before eventually being available for adoption.

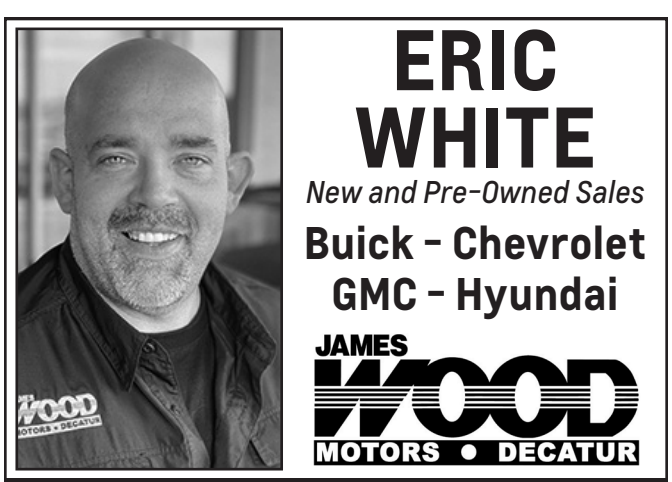
Akin said it does appear the dogs were dumped at the location, and the person responsible could face charges of cruelty to animals or abandonment of animals.

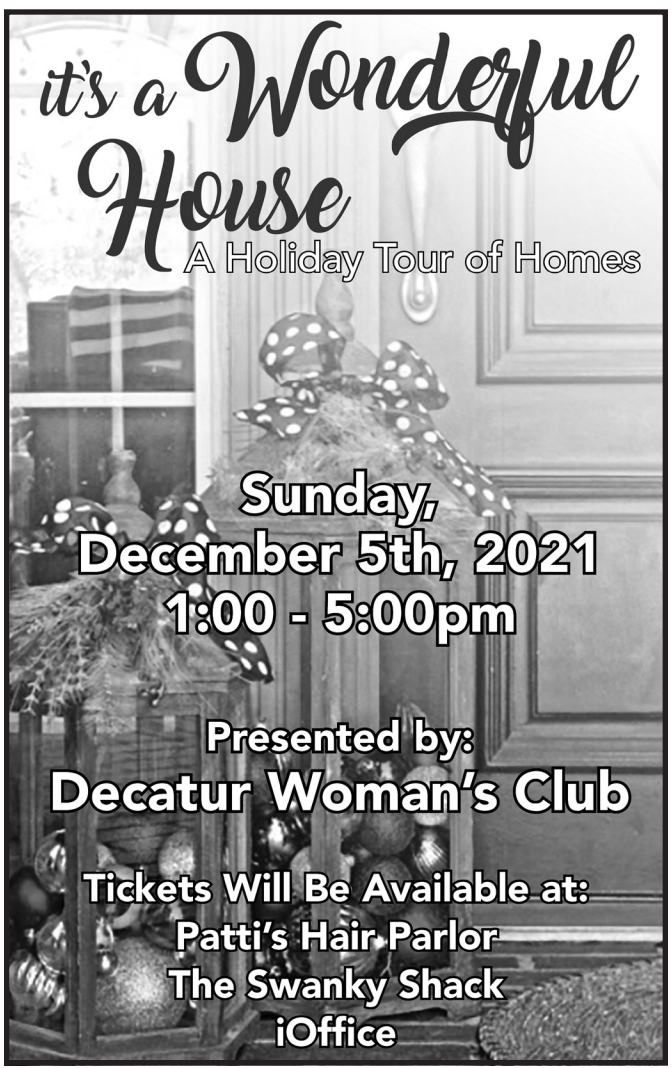
Crime Stoppers of Wise County is offering a reward for tips leading to the arrest of the person or people responsible for leaving the dogs in the median. To report information, call 800-643-8477 or 940-627-8477. Callers will remain anonymous.

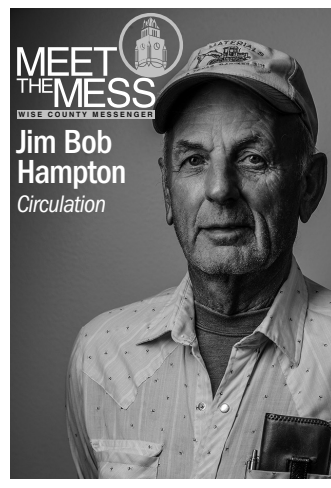
The sheriff said the actions of the person put many people and animals in harm's way.

"It took a lot of our folks trying to prevent any accidents as well as any harm coming to any of the animals," he said.









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