

...Farm Bureau Scholarships

(Continued from previous page)
 TFB's S.M. True Jr. Agricultural Scholar Award offers \$20,000 total to a deserving student who is at least a junior pursuing an undergraduate degree in an agriculture major.

The Rural Veterinary Scholarship is new this year. Four scholarships valued at \$10,000 each will be awarded. To be eligible for the scholarship, students must be a second- or third-year veterinarian student at Texas A&M University or Texas Tech University with a GPA of 2.5 or higher. The applicant must also plan to enter a rural and/or food animal practice in Texas after graduation.

TFB also has made scholarship funds available to first-year and enrolled students attending Texas State Technical College (TSTC). Twenty-five \$1,000 scholarships are awarded on a first-come, first-served basis through the Texan Success Scholarship. Another \$10,000 is available through the "helping hands" scholarship, which is meant to help students with unexpected costs that are not usually covered by traditional scholarships. TSTC scholarships are available at <https://www.tstc.edu/admissions/financial-aid/scholarships/>.

"These scholarships and awards are another way county Farm Bureaus and Texas Farm Bureau invest in the future of our community, state and Texas agriculture," John Ross said.

TFB scholarship applications are due online by March 1, 2022, and County Farm Bureau scholarships are due to the county office by **April 1, 2022**. Applications and requirements for state awards are available at <https://texasfarmbureau.org/youth/youth-opportunities>.

Voter registration deadline nears for 2022 elections

By Julie Tomascik
 Editor
 Texas Farm Bureau

Make sure your voice is heard in the March primary elections by completing your voter registration by January 31.

During the March primary, Texas voters will select the Democrat or Republican candidate for the November General Election. Candidates for governor, lieutenant governor, attorney general, land commissioner, agriculture commissioner, comptroller and railroad commission will all be on the ballot this year.

Voters will also decide which Republicans and Democrats will face off in November for the Texas Legislature, U.S. Congress, the State Board of Education and judicial seats.

If no one candidate receives a majority of the vote in the primary election, the top two candidates will compete in a primary runoff May 24. Voters may not crossover and vote in a

party's runoff if they voted in the other party's primary election.

Voters must be registered to cast a ballot.

Check voter registration status - To check your voter registration status, visit the Texas Secretary of State's "Am I Registered?" page. If you have moved to a new address within the same county or have changed your name, you can update your information online, as well.

Register to vote - Those who are unregistered and wish to vote will need to complete registration by Monday, January 31.

Voter registration applications are available on votetexas.gov and at local election offices. If you print and mail an application, it must be postmarked by January 31.

To register to vote, you must meet the following requirements:

- be a U.S. citizen and be a resident of the county where you submitted the application
- be 18 years old on Election Day
- not be a convicted felon (you may be eligible to vote if you have completed your sentence, probation and parole) and
- have not been declared by a court exercising probate jurisdiction to be either totally mentally incapacitated or partially mentally incapacitated without the right to vote.

To vote - Voters are required to have an approved form of photo identification.

The state accepts seven forms of identification:

- Texas driver's license
- Texas Election Identification Certificate
- Texas personal ID card
- Texas handgun license
- U.S. citizenship certificate with a photo

- U.S. military ID card with a photo

- U.S. passport.

Election Dates - Early voting for the primaries will take place February 14-25. Election Day is March 1.

Polling times and locations vary by county. Contact your county election office for details.

For more information on voter registration, dates or election information, visit votetexas.gov.



More Convenient Seasons

By James M. Decker

Author's note: This is an updated version of an essay I wrote on Martin Luther King Day in 2018. I decided to republish it because I have a larger and more varied group of readers four years later and because I do not think it is a bad thing to republish something that we are proud of.

As I do on or near Martin Luther King Day each year, I sat down to read Dr. King's "Letter from a Birmingham Jail," written on April 16, 1963. If you've never read this letter, I urge you to. It is readily available online. The writing is powerful and soaring. Dr. King makes intense points and offer sharp criticisms, but he never reduces himself to the demeaning and belittling discourse so prevalent in politics today. Instead, he tackles incredibly tough matters (while

sitting in jail!) and leaves you inspired almost 60 years later. There are many things to glean from this letter. But today's topic is particularly important - the frustration with inaction.

Dr. King addresses moderate factions of Southern society who voiced sympathy for his cause but objected to taking major action. To borrow a line that I once heard on a radio show: they cared, but not enough to do anything about it. This was something Dr. King absolutely would not accept. Many times he had been told to "wait." Much like a child hearing the answer "maybe" from a parent, he knew exactly what "wait" meant. It was "no" shrouded in a more polite phrasing. Dr. King had been encouraged repeatedly to wait for a "more convenient season" to tackle the most basic of civil rights.

It is this "encouragement" to which he wrote a searing, accurate, thought-provoking line: "shallow understanding from people of good will is more frustrating than absolute misunderstanding from people of ill will. Lukewarm acceptance is much more bewildering than outright rejection."

As I read these words, I thought of the great frustrations with progress in rural communities that I have heard from aspiring rural leaders over the years. A great idea falls flat. Citizens voice support for events but don't show up. People seem to care, so long as someone else does the difficult work. Dr. King


critiqued a certain group of people who supported freedom and civil rights, so long as it didn't get too difficult. Yet, his words ring loud and clear elsewhere in life, including here in rural America.

Each week, I see "NOW" as the time for action in rural communities, not merely sometime in the future when forces align properly. Now is each community's time to see goals and dreams coalesce into plans of action and for plans of action to be set forth, step by step. Whether it's your plan or someone else's, now is the time. Do you want to be a lukewarm supporter, whose seeming goodwill is worse than outright rejection? We are always busy. Things are always hard. There are always pressing matters elsewhere in life. There are always immediate tasks in rural communities that prevent us from tackling long-term goals. The more convenient season rarely ever comes to pass. As Dr. King wrote, "we must use time creatively, in the knowledge that the time is always ripe to do right."

Let's make NOW the most convenient season for rural America. The time is ripe to do right. How will you use your time creatively?

James Decker is the Mayor of Stamford, Texas and the creator of the West of 98 website and podcast. Contact James and subscribe to these essays at westof98.substack.com and subscribe to West of 98 wherever podcasts are found.

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