



Analysis of a disaster

Officials consider new fertilizer regulations in the wake of the explosion in West. 7

➤ State

Sensational Saturday

Antlers basketball team scores pair of impressive wins at this weekend's Tivy Invitational Tournament. 10

➤ Sports



HIGH COST of METH

New meth making method explodes



Gone are the days of methamphetamine manufacturing that required an elaborate lab, hundreds of pills and chemicals cooked over open flames. The relatively new "shake and bake" method that has spread rapidly in recent years requires only a few cold pills and some chemicals that can be mixed up quickly in a soda bottle. While it might be faster, cheaper and a lot simpler to produce, law enforcement officials say the method is highly dangerous and has contributed to a spike in meth use.

Officials: One wrong move could spell disaster in new 'shake and bake' method that can explode on contact

By Mark J. Armstrong
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Between the computer monitors and stacks of files on his desk, Kerr County Sheriff Rusty Hierholzer has a photocopy of a three-page, hand-written set of instructions recently confiscated from an inmate in the jail. The instructions, complete with a list of ingredients and the best places to buy them, reads somewhere between a chemistry experiment and a cake baking recipe. But following these directions won't end up with an overflow of faux lava from a papier-mâché volcano or a yummy dessert to serve at the next dinner party. Follow the instructions and, if all goes well, you'll end up with crystal methamphetamine, commonly known as meth, from little more than a handful of common ingredients, a coffee filter, zip-top bag and a plastic two-liter soda bottle.

Hierholzer has worked in law enforcement for 30 years and said he remembers one of the first organized crime cases in Texas was here in Kerr County. That case, he says, was all about money and meth. "We've always had meth," Hierholzer said. "I can show you pictures of meth labs we took down 20 years ago." While the drug has been a constant, how it is made has changed. When Kerr County Chief Deputy Clay Barton first became a narcotics officer, meth was made in

complicated labs and involved expensive chemicals. Barton said the ether that had to be used was easily detected because of the odor it gave off. The process, he said, involved expensive equipment, beakers, burners and a lot of time. That changed about 15 years ago when a new way of making meth, known as the bath tub method, became popular. This way allowed people to make meth with fewer chemicals and faster.

See **Meth**, page 5

"We've always had meth. I can show you pictures of meth labs we took down 20 years ago."

— Kerr County Sheriff Rusty Hierholzer

HIGH COST of METH



Editor's note: This is the second part in a weeklong series on meth and its effects on our community. Read the full series at www.dailytimes.com.

Coming Tuesday

➤ **Personal toll:** Reporter Sean Batura gives an inside look at the destruction meth use causes on the lives of its users.

About the series

➤ **Reader response:** Read more about this series and what readers are saying. **Page 4**

Your feedback

Share your opinions, information, personal stories with meth and proposed solutions by emailing news@dailytimes.com.

Seeking KISD teachers of the year

Public school foundation accepting nominations of elementary, secondary educators Jan. 8-31

By Marivel Resendiz
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The Kerrville Public School Foundation is seeking community participation in nominating two Kerrville Independent School District instructors for its 2014 Teacher of the Year program. The foundation will accept nominations

Jan. 8 through 4 p.m. Jan. 31. The program was started last year as a way to recognize elementary and secondary campus instructors who present unique ideas, concepts and learning tools in their classrooms. Following the nomination, foundation members will interview teachers, evaluate portfolios and give a \$2,500 monetary award to each recipient. All classroom teachers who have at least

five years of experience in Kerrville ISD, including the 2013-14 school year, are eligible to be nominated. The Kerrville Public School Foundation's focus on effective instruction in this recognition is consistent with KISD's stated goals and emphasis upon excellence in the instructional program. Nominees are required to submit a portfolio and a 10-minute video of classroom teaching for the competition to the Kerrville Public School Foundation office by 4 p.m. Feb. 28. To make a nomination, call the Kerrville Public School Foundation at 257-9282, or email kpsf@windstream.net. The teacher of the year packet is also available for download at www.kpsf.net.

Neighbors react to suspected homicide

Autopsy pending in death of 75-year-old Kerr County woman

By Sean Batura
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Neighbors of a 75-year-old Kerr County woman found dead outside her front door on Christmas Eve are remembering her kind acts and friendly demeanor. Vivian Irene Niemeyer, or Irene, as friends knew her, appeared to have been beaten, although an official cause of death wasn't determined as of Thursday. Her husband, 65-year-old Ervin Dean Lucky, was arrested on a murder charge after an initial investigation that revealed injuries to his hands. He was in the jail as of Thursday on a \$250,000 bond. "My friends are devastated, we are all just devastated," said Linda Knight, a Florida resident who said she's known Niemeyer's children for 37 years from living near them in Miami. "She's just a nice person. We always called her 'Mom.'" Lucky isn't the father of Niemeyer's children; she married him about three years ago, not long after the death of her second husband, Knight said. Niemeyer was somewhat of a snowbird until recently, living at her Sleepy Hollow home in the winter and her North Carolina home in the summer. However, she didn't leave this summer, although it appears she may have wanted to. Knight and some of Niemeyer's neighbors said the elderly woman had been trying to divorce Lucky and move to North Carolina.

See **Murder**, page 5

"It's a very, very sad thing, because the family has been warning her since she met the guy that he was bad news."

Jeff Knight, friend of Irene Niemeyer, who was killed Christmas Eve

CRIME ROUNDUP

Man suspected in biting, car theft

By Sean Batura
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A 33-year-old man is under investigation by local police on accusations he bit his girlfriend and stole her vehicle. According to his 37-year-old girlfriend's statement to police, the pair were at Walgreens, 624 Jefferson St. Tuesday evening when they got into an argument. When she attempted to leave, he reportedly pulled her towards him, bit her and left in her car. After the woman reported the matter to the police at 7 p.m. that day, the man sent her threatening text messages, said Chuck Bocock, police spokesman. Sometime after 11 p.m., officers found her car at Singing Wind Park, which is on the other side of town from her house, Bocock said. The woman also claimed the man choked her at her apartment earlier that day. Choking someone and stealing a car are felonies, while threatening someone with bodily harm is a misdemeanor. The matter is under investigation and charges may be pending, Bocock said.

\$9,200 in jewelry reported missing

A 76-year-old woman reported thousands in jewelry missing from her home in the 500 block of Sand Bend Street. The woman, who reported the matter last weekend, suspected maintenance or construction workers with access to the home may have taken the jewelry, which included a diamond ring valued at \$5,000. The sheriff's office is investigating the matter as a felony theft punishable by as much as two years in state jail and a \$10,000 fine.

Prescription fraud investigation underway

A woman told a police officer she tried to refill her prescription at a pharmacy and discovered someone already had received the medication in her name without her consent. Bocock said the woman, who reported the matter on Dec. 24, knows someone with a drug problem who may have obtained the meds by fraud, which is a felony.

RV reported burglarized

About \$2,000 in household items and electronics were reported missing this week from an RV parked at the Big Texas Inn,

See **Crime**, page 5

➤ Index	
Classifieds	12-13
Comics	9
Nation	2
Editorial	4
Sports	10-11
Obituaries	3
Television	8
Weather	3

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