

52nd Annual

# GRAND SALINE SALT FESTIVAL

# 2026

September  
24th - 26th



## 52nd Annual Grand Saline Salt Festival Schedule of Events 2026

### **THURSDAY, SEPTEMBER 24**

6:00 p.m. - 7:00 p.m. **DESSERT BAKING CONTEST TURN IN @ Main Street Office**  
 7:00 p.m. - 9:00 p.m. **GOSPEL & PRAISE NIGHT @ Pavilion with LIVE MUSICAL PERFORMANCES - Free**

### **FRIDAY, SEPTEMBER 25**

10:00 a.m. - 11:00 a.m. **★NEW TIME★ MORNING YOGA @ Pavilion - BYOM - Bring your Own Mat!**  
 11:00 a.m. - 1:00 p.m. **VIRGINIA MILAM OLD FASHIONED SOUTHERN LUNCHEON**  
 \$10 @ Pavilion Take Out & Delivery Available  
 12:00 p.m.-12:30 p.m. **★GRAND OPENING CEREMONIES OF THE EDC PAVILION★**  
 11:00 a.m. - 1:00 p.m. **FLORAL CONTEST DISPLAYS @ Pavilion**  
 1:30 p.m. - 2:45 p.m. **COMMUNITY BINGO (Free) @ Pavilion**  
 7:00 p.m. - 10:00 p.m. **GS INDIAN FOOTBALL GAME at Memorial Stadium**  
 7:30 p.m. - 11:30 p.m. **STREET DANCE on Frank Street | Tickets: \$10 (age 5 and over) | Cooler Fee: \$15**  
**Gates Open 7:00 p.m. - Early Arrivals Not Permitted - Tickets at Gate**  
 Live Music: 7:30 p.m. - 9:00 p.m. Brett Boatman  
 9:30 p.m. - 11:30 p.m. Billie Jo

### **SATURDAY, SEPTEMBER 26**

#### **Downtown**

6:00 a.m. - 8:30 a.m. Vendor Set Up  
 7:30 a.m. - 9:00 a.m. **★NEW★ SALT CITY 5K FUN RUN - All Ages Welcome - Sponsored by Van Run Club**  
 Start & Finish Line @ Salt Palace - Benefiting the Breaking Bread Community Pantry  
 8:45 a.m. - 9:30 a.m. **★ PARADE LINE UP ★NEW TIME★**  
 9:00 a.m. - 5:00 p.m. **STREET VENDORS OPEN**  
 9:00 a.m. - 2:00 p.m. **CAR SHOW - Contact Kerry Phillips, Salt Shakers Auto Club**  
 9:30 a.m. - 10:00 a.m. **★ PARADE ★NEW TIME★**  
 10:00 a.m. - 5:00 p.m. **CORNHOLE TOURNAMENT Downtown, East Texas Cornhole Leagues**  
 10:00 a.m. - 5:00 p.m. **HORSESHOE TOURNAMENT - Location TBD | Contact Cody Akins**  
 10:15 a.m. - Noon **★PHASE 10 TOURNAMENT UNDER THE TENT**  
 10:15 a.m. - 10:45 a.m. **DECORATED PUMPKIN PAGEANT TURN-IN at Main Street Stage**  
 Pre-Designed and Pre-Decorated Pumpkins will be displayed all day at Festival -Secretly judged  
 10:15 a.m. - 10:45 a.m. **★NEW★ SHOWCASE – Dance Dimension Performers**  
 10:30 a.m. - 2:30 a.m. **★ FAMILY FOLLIES & KIDDIE KAPERS in front of Main Street Stage ★NEW TIME★**  
 Sponsored by the Hooker Group with assistance of the Grand Saline High School Cheerleaders  

- Pet Show
- Turtle Races
- Hula Hoop Contest
- Three Legged Race
- Prettiest Eyes
- Best Beard
- Bike & Trike Races
- Balloon
- ★NEW★ Pie Eating Contest
- Pickled Jalapeno Eating Contest
- Sack Hop/Stick Horse Races
- And More!!!

**★NEW★ THE GREAT PUMPKIN RACE - That's right! Pumpkins on wheels!! All ages welcome!**  
**★NEW★ LITTLE PUMPKINS PLAY PATCH - Bounce House/Slide & Petting Zoo**  
 1:00 p.m. - end **★NEW★ MEXICAN TRAIN DOMINO TOURNAMENT UNDER THE TENT**  
 2:30 p.m. - 3:30 p.m. **★NEW★ SHOWCASE - Local Fiddlers and/or Cultural Talents**  
 3:30 p.m. **AWARD WINNERS ANNOUNCED**  
 3:30 p.m. **STREET DANCE AREA CLOSED - Curtains Pulled**  
 5:30 p.m. **SECURITY SWEEP - Street Clearing in Street Dance Area**  
 6:00 p.m. - Midnight **STREET DANCE on Frank Street**  
 Tickets: \$35 Pre-Sale, \$50 at Gate; Cooler Fee: \$25  
**6:00 p.m. - GATES OPEN FOR ALL GENERAL ADMISSION - No Early Set Up**  
 Live Music: 6:30 p.m. - 7:00 p.m. Knox LaPrade  
 7:00 p.m. - 8:00 p.m. Damon Momon & Matt Fisher  
 8:30 p.m. - 9:30 p.m. Heather Linn and the Deacons  
 10:00 p.m. - 11:30 p.m. TRACY BYRD

**BYOL – Bring your Own Lawn Chair! No chairs allowed in the center aisle. BYOB – NO GLASS ALLOWED!**

**SATURDAY STREET DANCE PRE-SALE TICKETS ARE AVAILABLE FOR PURCHASE IN PERSON  
 AT ANY LOCAL BANK, THE SALT PALACE MUSEUM, GS CITY HALL, TRAX, FARMHOUSE, or  
 ONLINE at STUBWIRE**

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## ***Saturday Night Street Dance Performers***

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Headliner, **Tracy Byrd**, is an American country music artist and one of the standout voices of the 1990s country music resurgence, known for his blend of traditional honky-tonk sound and modern country appeal. Born in Beaumont, Texas, and raised in nearby Vidor, Byrd grew up surrounded by country and Western swing influences that shaped his musical style.



Byrd launched his professional career after signing with MCA Nashville in the early 1990s. His breakthrough came in 1993 with the chart-topping hit “Holdin’ Heaven” – his first No. 1 single on the Billboard country charts. This success quickly established him as a rising star in country music.

He has charted **more than 30 singles**, experienced **multiple Top 10 hits**, released **10 studio albums**, earned **multiple gold and platinum certifications**, including the **double-platinum album ‘No Ordinary Man’** and won the **Academy of Country Music Award for Song of the Year** for “The Keeper of the Stars.”

Throughout the 1990s and early 2000s, Byrd produced a string of popular songs, including: ‘Watermelon Crawl,’ ‘Lifestyles of the Not So Rich and Famous,’ ‘I’m from the Country,’ and ‘Ten Rounds with Jose Cuervo’ (No. 1 hit in 2002). His music helped define the era of “new traditionalist” country artists in the 1990.



Byrd is known for traditional country vocals, honky-tonk and dancehall influences, and a balance of upbeat, fun songs and heartfelt ballads. His sound reflects classic Texas country roots while appealing to mainstream audiences. After major label success, Byrd continued recording and touring, releasing independent projects and live albums, including performances recorded at iconic Texas venues.

Tracy Byrd remains a respected figure in country music, maintaining a loyal fan base and bringing his catalog of classic hits to audiences nationwide.

Come out to the Salt Festival Street Dance Saturday night, September 26, and experience a great performance by Tracy Bryd and the opening acts!!



**Heather Linn and the Deacons** are an East Texas-based Southern country rock band known for their powerful vocals, authentic storytelling, and high-energy live performances. Fronted by vocalist Heather Linn, a native of Northeast Texas, the band blends traditional country roots with elements of Americana and Southern rock. Linn developed her passion for music at a young age, growing up immersed in the East Texas music scene and quickly gaining recognition for her strong, soulful voice and commanding stage presence. The Deacons—comprised of seasoned musicians including guitar, bass, and drums—provide a dynamic backing sound featuring twangy guitar work, driving rhythms, and rich harmonies that complement Linn's expressive vocals.

Heather Linn and the Deacons have built a strong reputation across Texas, including nominations at the **East Texas Music Awards**, including Female Vocalist of the Year and sharing the stage with well-known artists such as: Tracy Byrd, Randy Rogers Band, Wade Bowen, Jason Boland, and Thompson Square. Their live shows are known for being energetic, engaging, and deeply connected to Texas audiences.

**Damon Momon** is a local musician known for his vibrant personality and strong connection to the community. A familiar face in the local music scene, Momon has performed at a variety of community events, festivals, and venues throughout East Texas. Momon's style reflects the spirit of country music—blending country, acoustic, and classic influences with a relaxed, crowd-friendly stage presence. Whether performing solo, hosting karaoke nights, or collaborating with fellow musicians, he is known for creating an inviting atmosphere that resonates with local audiences.



**Matt Fisher** is a talented East Texas musician known for his strong vocals, versatile style, and engaging live performances. Growing up in Grand Saline, Texas, Fisher was influenced by classic country artists such as Merle Haggard, Keith Whitley, and Randy Travis, shaping a sound rooted in traditional country with a modern appeal. As a founding member of the band *Whiskeyfish*, Fisher experienced notable success in the Texas music scene, building a loyal following and establishing himself as a respected performer. Since the band's end, he has continued to grow his reputation as a highly sought-after solo artist and collaborator, sharing stages with well-known

musicians and performing at community events, private venues, and regional shows throughout East Texas. Matt consistently delivers a blend of country roots, popular covers, and high-energy live entertainment. His strong connection to Grand Saline and the surrounding communities has made him a staple in local music and festival lineups.

**Knox LaPrade** began his musical journey like many young artists—performing in his family's living room. An early fan of country music, Knox made his first public appearance at just eight years old on the Salty Stage at Salt Lickers Restaurant in Grand Saline. A second-grade student at Grand Saline Intermediate School, Knox is not only passionate about music but also enjoys sports and ranching. His involvement in community events, including the Salt Festival, reflects his growth as a young performer and his strong connection to the Grand Saline community. Knox is the son of Cindy and Ricky LaPrade.



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## ***Friday Night Street Dance Performers***

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**Billie Jo** was born and raised in East Texas, seemingly destined for the stage from the very start. “I was putting on private concerts for my grandparents in their living room when I was just 4 or 5 years old,” she recalls. “They’d sit there for hours and clap after every song.”

That early spark grew into a deep love for classic country, shaped by influences like Shania Twain, The Chicks, Patsy Cline, Ray Price, and Loretta Lynn—

artists whose spirit still lives in her storytelling-driven sound today.

That foundation has led to a remarkable career, with Billie Jo earning **five consecutive Texas Radio #1 singles**, including her latest chart-topper, “*Turquoise & Silver*.” From her breakout hit “*Right Now Kinda Girl*” to fan favorites like “*Whose Tequila Are You Drinkin’*” and “*Flame*,” she has built a reputation for delivering songs that resonate with audiences across Texas and beyond.

Billie Jo gained national recognition as a standout contestant on *The Road*, where she captured a wide audience and finished in the Top 5, establishing herself as a breakout artist to watch. She continues to build on that momentum with new music, including her current single “*Reasons to Call*,” which showcases a more vulnerable and emotional side of her artistry.

With a powerful voice rooted in tradition, a dynamic stage presence, and a sound that feels both timeless and fresh, Billie Jo Jones is proving she is a rising force in country music.

**BRETT BOATMAN** is a fifteen-year-old musician from Sulphur Springs known for his authentic sound, strong vocals, and connection to traditional country and Southern rock influences. He has built a reputation as a reliable live performer, appearing at regional venues, community events, and festivals across East Texas. His music blends classic country roots with a modern Texas country style, appealing to a wide range of audiences. Boatman’s performances feature a mix of country standards, popular covers, and storytelling-driven songs, delivered with a laid-back yet engaging stage presence. He frequently shares the stage with other local and regional artists, contributing to the growing live music culture in East Texas.





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Canton Ford isn't just a business—it's a community partner. From supporting local schools and events, being a Platinum Sponsors of the Grand Saline Salt Festival, to helping families stay on the road, the dealership plays an active role in the greater Van Zandt County Community. In a town where reputation matters, Canton Ford has earned its place as a trusted name by doing things the right way. For the people of Van Zandt County, Canton Ford represents more than a dealership. It's a dependable partner for everything vehicle related.

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## **E Heath Yates: Building More Than Concrete — Building Community**

In East Texas, where hard work and strong values still define success, **Heath Yates** has built a reputation that goes far beyond business. As the owner of **H&M Concrete Services, LLC**, Heath has grown a respected company known for quality craftsmanship, dependability, and a commitment to the communities it serves.



From residential foundations to large-scale commercial projects, H&M Concrete Services plays a vital role in local development—helping bring ideas to life and supporting progress across the region. With a team of highly skilled professionals, the company specializes in foundations, tilt-wall construction, commercial and residential slabs, and a wide range of concrete services. H&M combines small-town integrity with big-project capability, ensuring every job is completed with precision and pride.

A lover of travel, Heath and partner, Tara, spend as much time as possible exploring new destinations, visiting favorite destinations such as Maine, Hawaii, and Mexico, and rooting for the Texas Longhorns. A father and grandfather, Heath can also be found cheering at ballgames or enjoying time at home with his Longhorn herd.

Heath's commitment to service extends well beyond his business. He is currently in his 12th year serving on the Fruitvale ISD Board of Trustees, where he holds the role of President and works to ensure students have access to quality education. Heath has also spent years coaching youth basketball - mentoring young athletes both on and off the court.



A true supporter of community causes, Heath actively contributes to organizations such as the Van Zandt County Children's Advocacy Center, Fruitvale ISD, the Wills Point Educational Foundation, and numerous youth sports programs. He also lends his time, talents, and resources annually to the **Salt Festival Heritage Association**, with **H&M Concrete Services, LLC** proudly serving as a **Platinum Sponsor**.

Heath Yates exemplifies what it means to build something that lasts. Whether through his work, his leadership, or his generosity, he continues to make a lasting impact—proving that true success is measured not just by what you create, but by the lives you influence along the way.

For more information about **H&M Concrete Services, LLC**, visit their Facebook page or call **(214) 325-4086**.

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Owners **Brett Clark and his family** proudly call Grand Saline home, with their children attending Grand Saline ISD. The Clark family believes in investing in the community that supports them. Whether it's sponsoring the rodeo arena, baseball fields, or supporting youth and local organizations, the Clarks take every opportunity to give back. Their dedication reflects a deep commitment to helping the children and families of Grand Saline thrive and succeed.

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- Tommy Clark: 214-502-3977

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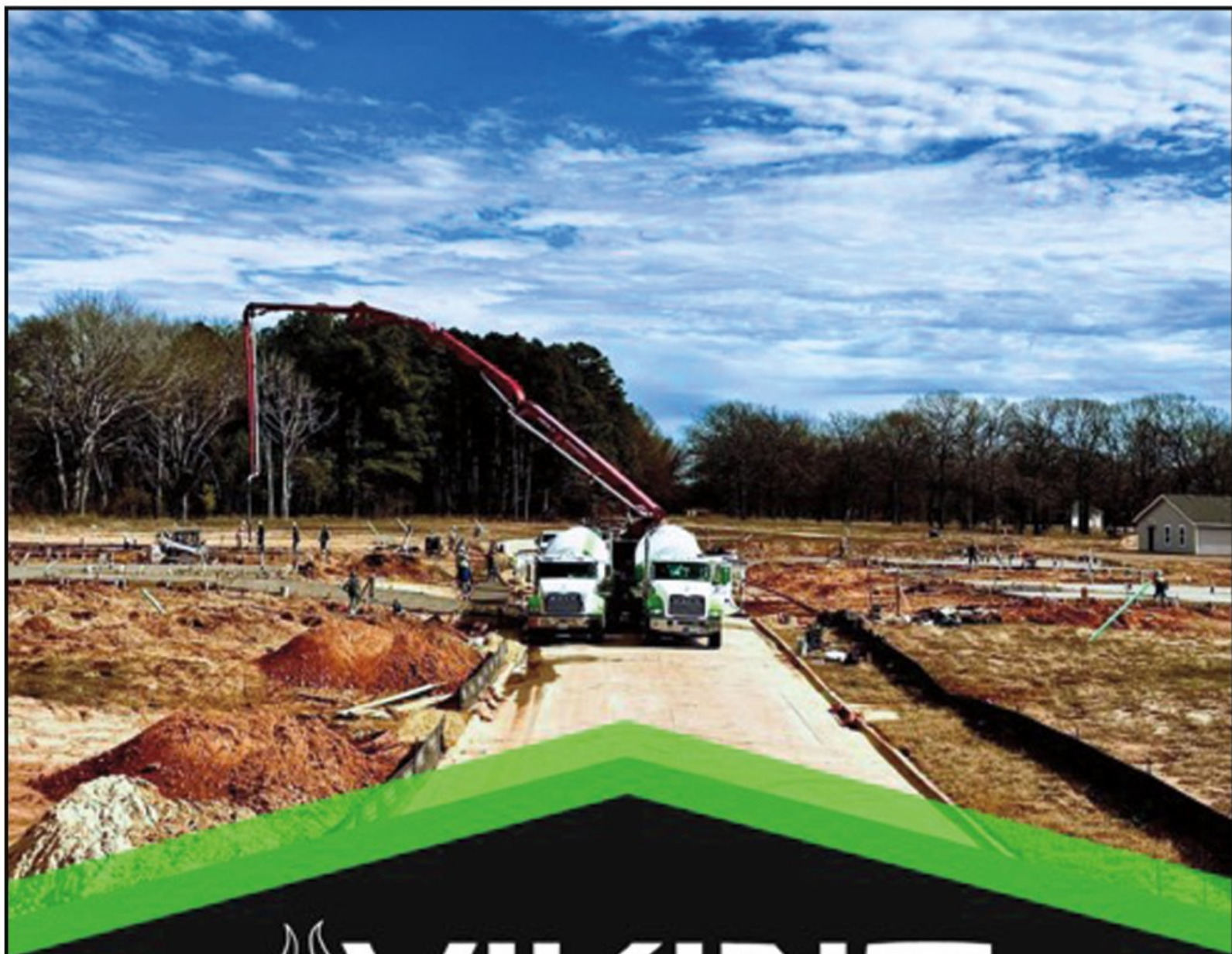
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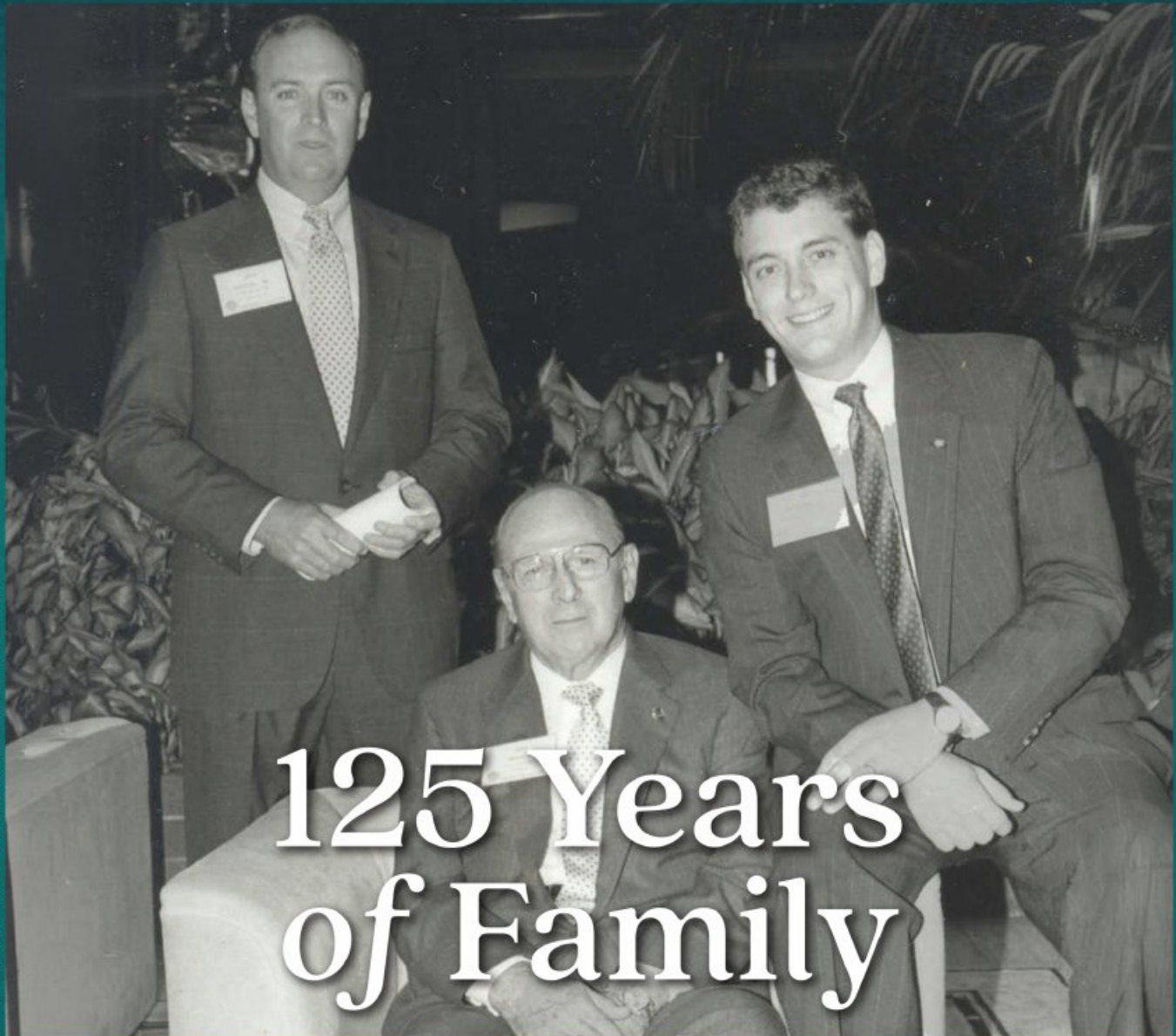
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## WORD LIST

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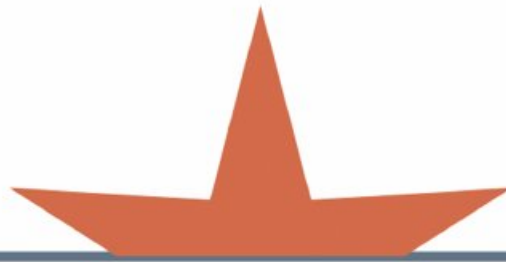
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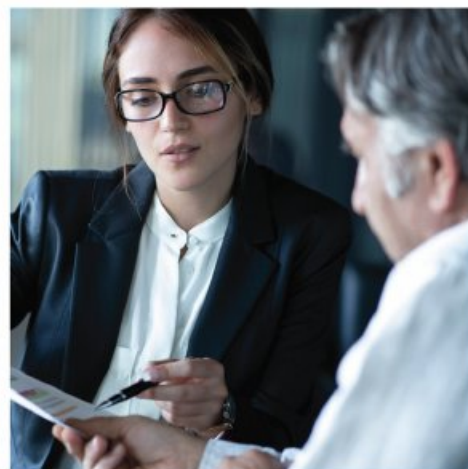
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# 2026 Salt Girls & Boys



1914 Darci Flowers & Knox LaPrade 1921 Maybrie Darcey & Brady Hamessley  
1933 Lucille O'Malley & Easton Bolin 1941 Rynlea Alcalan & Maddox Self  
1956 BreelaMay Mitchell & Anay Milton 1968 Caroline Mercer & Turner LaPrade  
2014 Savannah Fisher & Colt Bahena

## SALT FESTIVAL WORD SEARCH

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*2026 Queen  
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Main Street  
Program



*Faith Newman*

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Indian Band

# Grand Saline Economic Development Corporation



Dedicated to strengthening the local economy by supporting both new and existing businesses, the **Grand Saline Economic Development Corporation (EDC)** is proud to serve as a Platinum Sponsor of the annual Grand Saline Salt Festival and other events.

Through strategic investment and partnership, the EDC works to expand commercial opportunities, increase sales tax revenue, and create meaningful employment opportunities for the citizens of Grand Saline. EDC is excited about the future of Grand Saline, with several new businesses expected to open soon.

We invite you to experience everything Grand Saline, Texas, has to offer. Rooted in a rich history of salt mining and agriculture, Grand Saline blends small-town hospitality with a strong Texas work ethic and a forward-looking vision for growth. Our community provides businesses with a supportive environment, dependable workforce, and leadership committed to creating new opportunities. While home to several major employers, the Grand Saline EDC Board continues working to recruit and support businesses that strengthen the local economy, create jobs, and contribute to the vitality of our city.

As part of that vision, the Grand Saline Economic Development Corporation has entered into a long-term lease agreement with the City of Grand Saline for the city pavilion located at 203 Pacific Street in downtown Grand Saline. The EDC will host its Grand Opening during the Salt Festival Luncheon on Friday, September 25, unveiling a fully renovated and revitalized facility designed to serve both business and civic needs. Improvements include office and conference space for the EDC and the Grand Saline Chamber of Commerce, expanded kitchen and restroom facilities, new HVAC systems, and a reimagined building façade that enhances both the appearance and functionality of the property. The project represents continued investment in the community while supporting collaboration, economic growth, and downtown revitalization.

Grand Saline is a community that values its residents, supports its businesses, and embraces opportunity. With deep Texas roots and a forward-thinking mindset, we invite you to come see firsthand why Grand Saline is truly a great place to live, work, and grow.

The EDC Board is ready to assist you in finding the right location and resources for your business. Working alongside EDC Director Gabrielle Lewis, are current board members Micah Lowe (President), Kyle Thompson (Vice President), Michelle Countryman (Treasurer), Kelly Walker (Secretary), Kerry Kindle, Nikki Rowan, and Laura Hooker.

📍 Office Location: 132 E. Frank Street, Grand Saline, TX

🕒 Hours: Monday–Friday, 8:00 a.m. – 4:30 p.m.

📞 Phone: (903) 962-3122 ext. 2250

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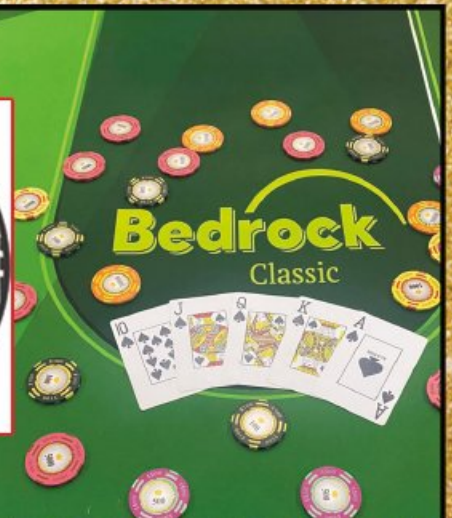
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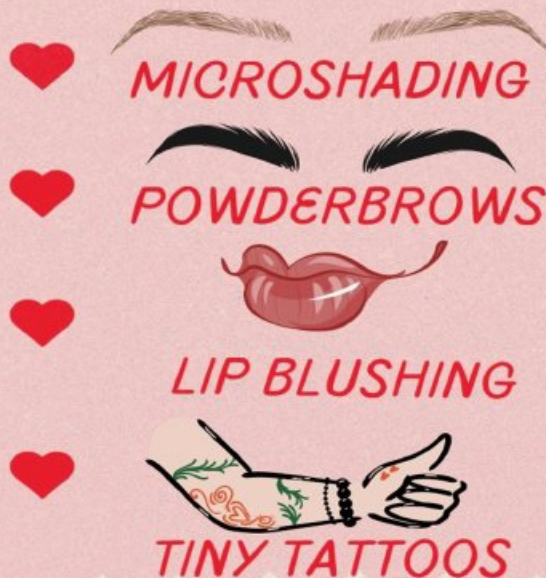


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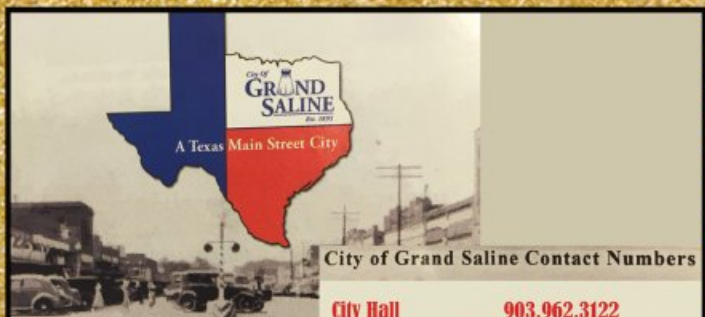
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City of Grand Saline Contact Numbers

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|-------------------|-----------------------|
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| Police Department | 903.962.3146          |
| Fire Department   | 903.962.3145          |
| City Pool         | 903.962.4624          |
| Code Enforcement  | 903.962.3122 Ext. 220 |
| City Court        | 903.962.3122 Ext. 2   |
| Main Street       | 903.962.3122 Ext. 7   |



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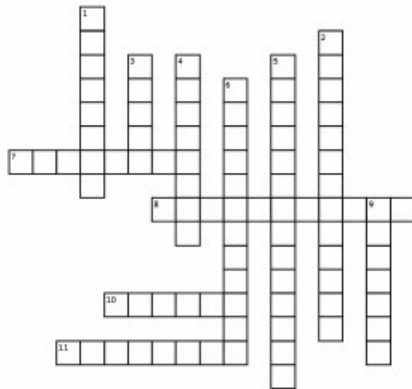
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**214-531-7939**

## Salt Festival



Down:

1. Luncheon Highlight
2. Luncheon Namesake
3. Classic Hall Game
4. Amplified Crowd Favorite
5. Sugar Rush Showdown
6. Fun for Kids
9. Chrome, Polish and Pride

Across:

7. Bag Toss
8. Where Boots Hit Pavement
10. Rolling Celebration
11. Recent Event Feature



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Madison Reed- Stylist

Drea Gamboa- Stylist

Michelle Kistler- Stylist

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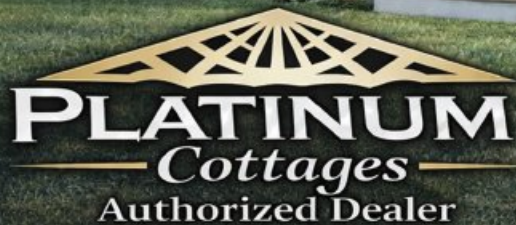
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The Grand Saline Main Street Program will lead the charge to create an appealing destination, expand the volunteer base to ensure a sustainable program, preserve the Salty history of Grand Saline through education and awareness and raise funds to achieve the objectives of the program.

Owen Tiner

Main Street Mgr./EDC Coordinator

132 E. Frank Street

Grand Saline, Texas 75140

Work: 903.962.3122 Ext. 7 Cell: 903.904.7297





903-288-0322

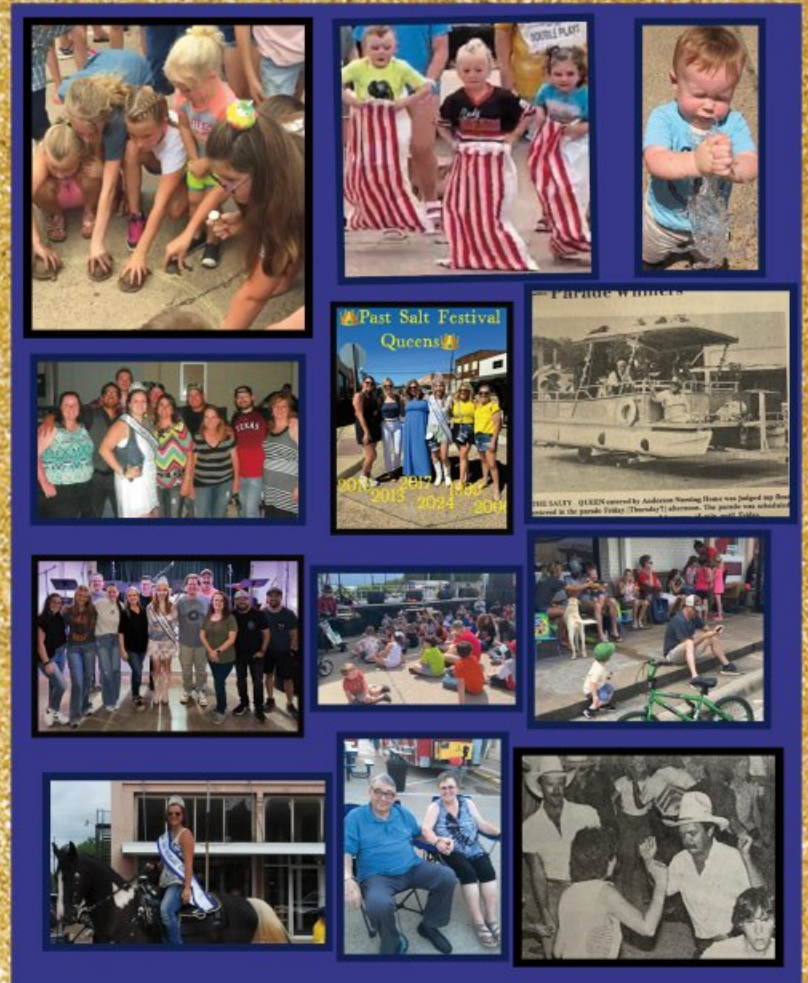
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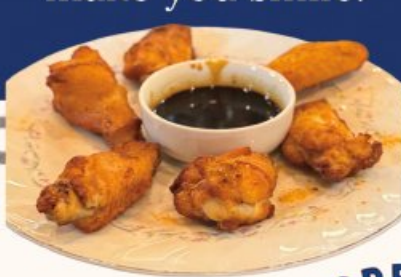
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An illustration of a pair of hands holding a shower of pink petals, with a purple butterfly flying above them. The background is a soft, light blue gradient.

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2003



2004



2005



2006



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2010



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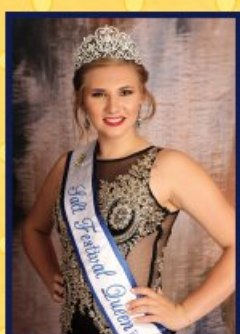
2014



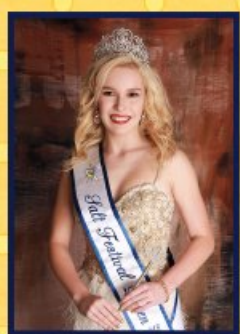
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2016



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2018



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2021



2022



2023



2024



2025



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The **Salt Festival Heritage Association** extends our deepest appreciation to each and every business purchasing an ad or sponsorship. You are the backbone of Grand Saline and make a meaningful difference in our community. This event would not be possible without your continued support and commitment to our community.

A very special **thank you** to our 2026 sponsors:

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In keeping with the Salt Festival Heritage Association's mission to empower graduates and assist in their pursuit of post-secondary education or training, \$5,500 in scholarships were awarded to the following graduating Seniors from Grand Saline ISD & Fruitvale ISD:

- Rynlee Melton - GS
- Kess White - GS
- Macy Barlett - GS
- Taytum Evans - GS
- Grace Cea - GS
- Justin Meroney - GS
- Cameron Martinez - GS
- Lexi Smith - GS
- Kylie Adair - GS
- Cayden Callaway - Fruitvale
- Cayden Goode - Fruitvale

## Grand Saline: The Salt Behind the Name



Even if you've never been to **Grand Saline, Texas**, you've likely experienced it. A simple look in your pantry may reveal a familiar blue box of Morton Salt—many stamped with "GS," signifying their origin in this small East Texas town.

Salt has been essential to human life for thousands of years, valued not only for its practical uses but also for its symbolism of purity, preservation, and hospitality. As early as 800 A.D., Native American settlements in the Grand Saline area harvested and traded salt, recognizing its importance long before modern industry. Later, American settlers saw the region's potential and began developing it commercially.

In the early days, salt was difficult to obtain. Mining was done by hand using basic tools, and workers hauled salt to the surface in wooden carts pulled by mules. By the late 1800s, production in Grand Saline had grown significantly, reaching about 17,000 pounds per day. This growth attracted the Texas & Pacific Railroad, helping establish the town as a center of salt production and innovation, including the first salt well and the first steam-powered salt plant.

In 1920, the Grand Saline Salt Company became part of **Morton Salt, Inc.**, bringing modernization and national recognition. Along with it came the iconic Morton Salt Girl, now one of the most recognizable symbols in American branding.



Today, the **Morton Salt Mine in Grand Saline** operates approximately 750 feet underground and produces more than 350,000 tons of salt each year. The massive underground salt dome spans about 1.5 miles in diameter and contains enough reserves to supply the nation for generations. While some of this salt makes its way to kitchen tables, much of it is used in industries such as road de-icing, water treatment, agriculture, and manufacturing.

Although regular public tours of the mine ended in the 1960s, Grand Saline honors its history through the **Salt Palace**, a unique structure built entirely of rock salt. Inside, a small museum showcases artifacts and stories from the town's rich mining past, and visitors can even take home a souvenir salt crystal. The Grand Saline Chamber of Commerce offers special raffles for the rare glimpse into the mine.

For over a century, Morton Salt has been central to Grand Saline's identity and economy, employing more than 175 people and serving as the town's largest employer. It is one of only three rock salt mines operated by Morton in the United States.



More than just a business, Morton Salt represents a lasting legacy. Since 1848, the company has played a role in everyday American life, and its iconic Salt Girl remains a symbol of quality and tradition. From a small East Texas town to kitchens across the country, Grand Saline continues to leave its mark—one grain of salt at a time.



Proud Sponsor of the  
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SALT FESTIVAL**

**MORTON SALT**