

BROADBAND:
HELPING YOU WORK



MAY/JUNE 2020



VTX1 Companies

COMPASS

VOL. 1, NO. 3

RELIVE DAYS GONE BY

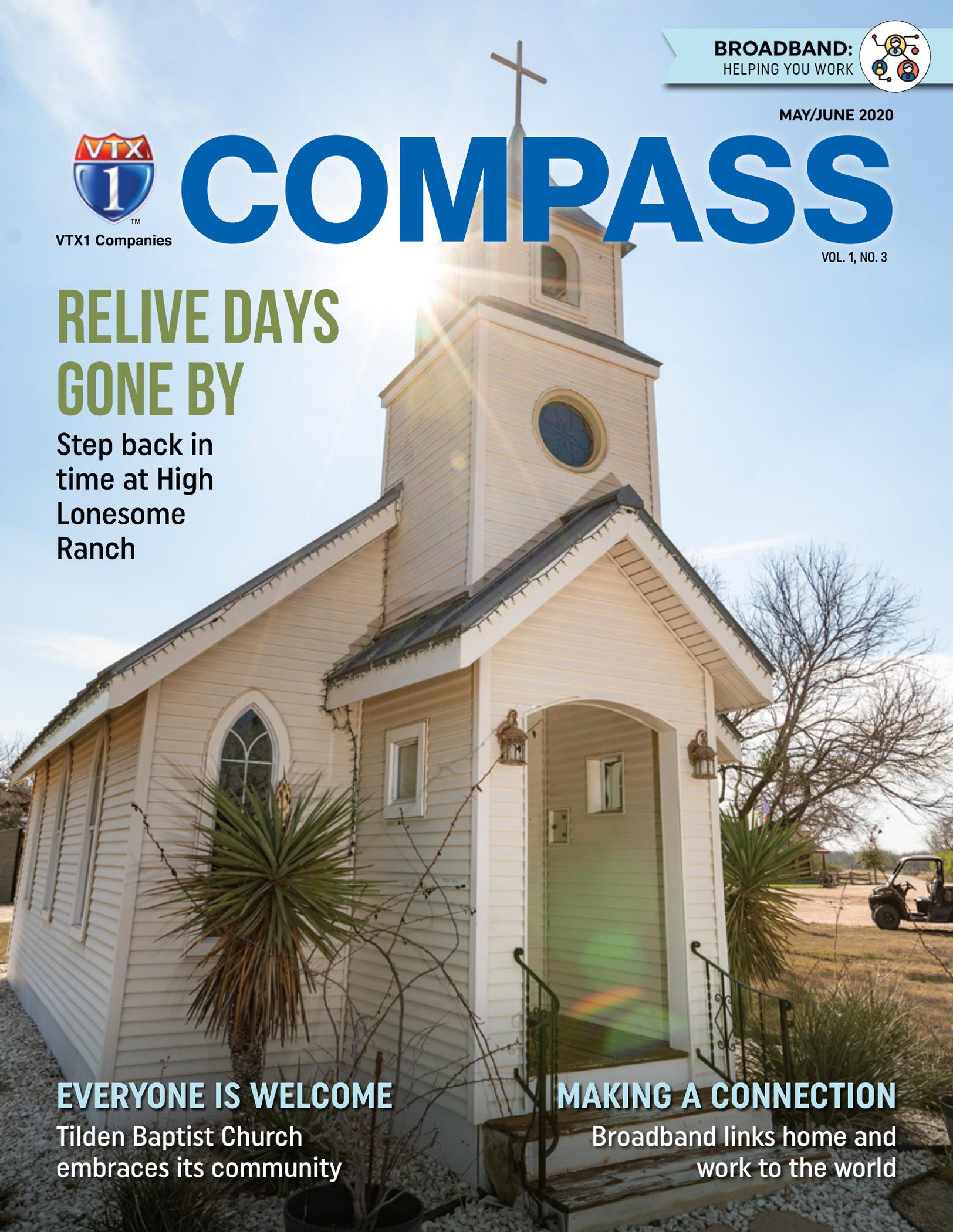
Step back in
time at High
Lonesome
Ranch

EVERYONE IS WELCOME

Tilden Baptist Church
embraces its community

MAKING A CONNECTION

Broadband links home and
work to the world



Essential services? Look at broadband

Early this year, we didn't necessarily have any reason to consider what "essential" goods and services were. As we know, that changed in March when many "nonessential" workers were sent home and we were urged to only leave home for "essential" trips.



DAVE OSBORN
Chief Executive Officer

Amidst this unprecedented time, two things have become crystal clear to me:

1. Broadband and communications services are essential for our community.
2. When our community counts on our team at VTX1, our employees shine.

I'd like to share how proud I am of our employees. These men and women helped navigate demand for our services, our cooperative, communicated changes to our members and made sure our network did its job connecting all of you.

I'm also proud of our community and would like to sincerely thank the medical personnel, grocery store workers, first responders, civic leaders and others who are still working

tirelessly to keep our community running. Additionally, I would like for everyone affected by the economic impact of the virus to know we have joined the FCC's "Keep Americans Connected Pledge" to ensure our members can stay connected during this COVID-19 crisis.

ESSENTIAL CONNECTION

Part of the reason our team continues to work so hard is we realize the value and importance a broadband connection means to our community.

Very early on in the coronavirus crisis, we saw government officials, school administrators, pastors and even entertainers embrace digital content. Some of that information was critical to help students continue learning and keep people safe. In other instances, it may have been purely for entertainment. I believe that when we were asked to remain in our homes, having access to all quality entertainment options broadband provides was a blessing.

Industry statistics I've seen certainly indicate people are putting communication networks to work. National carriers reported seeing a 25% increase in voice phone call activity and a 15% rise in call duration during the first couple of weeks after leaders began encouraging people to stay home. At that same time, estimates indicate web traffic grew between 13% and 40%.

At your home, that increase may have been children taking virtual field trips or accessing school resources. Worshippers all across our region went online on Sunday mornings to stream church services. Many people worked from home over their broadband connection — teleconferencing platforms saw a 300% increase in traffic, according to reports in Wired Magazine. Maybe you called a friend or family member to catch up, instead of visiting in person.

From an entertainment standpoint, networks like ours also saw a surge. Nielsen, the company famous for its TV ratings, said that people staying home led to an almost 60% increase in the amount of TV we watch. Traffic to Netflix reportedly increased by between 54% and 75%, and online gaming sites reported a 400% increase in traffic.

All the facts support the communication network we provide is an essential service both when times are dark and in the brighter days I know are coming soon. ☎



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On the Cover:



Visitors at High Lonesome Ranch in McMullen County can explore the Church of the Leoncita in Lonesome Dove Village. See story Page 12.



The 2020 VTCl Calendar Photo Contest will begin soon.
Be watching for more details!



COMPASS Magazine

The latest issue is now available online!

Visit www.vtx1.net/compass-magazine



HEY TELEMARKETERS:

DO NOT CALL!

It's easy to add your number to the Do Not Call Registry.

Register online at www.donotcall.gov
or call 888-382-1222.
For TTY, call 866-290-4236.

You must call from the telephone number you wish to register.



ARE YOU READY FOR HURRICANE SEASON?

May 3-9 is National Hurricane Preparedness Week. Here's a list of steps you can take now to ensure you and your family are ready for the hurricane season that runs from June 1 to Nov. 30.

MAKE AN EVACUATION PLAN: Find activated evacuation routes at DriveTexas.org or by calling 800-452-9292. To learn if you live in an evacuation zone, call 211.

SIGN UP FOR EMERGENCY ALERTS: Make sure your device is able to receive Wireless Emergency Alerts, or WEAs.

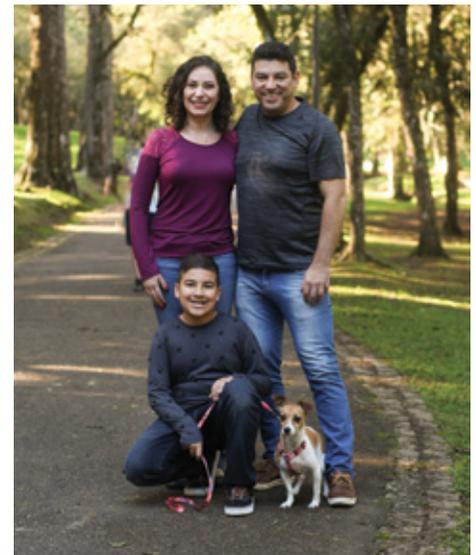
PREPARE AN EMERGENCY SUPPLY KIT: Go to ready.gov/kit for a list of vital emergency supplies and tips for building and maintaining an emergency kit.

REVIEW YOUR HOME INSURANCE POLICY. Make sure you understand the details of your home, auto or rental insurance policies. And keep copies in a safe place.

REGISTER WITH THE STATE OF TEXAS EMERGENCY ASSISTANCE REGISTRY — STEAR: Visit tdem.texas.gov/stear or call 211 if you live in an evacuation zone, you have a disability or medical needs, and you do not have a vehicle to use in evacuation. Or, reach out if you have a disability or medical needs and do not have friends or family who can help you during an evacuation. All registry information collected by STEAR is confidential.

HURRICANE PREPAREDNESS ONLINE RESOURCES:

- Texas Division of Emergency Management — dps.texas.gov/dem
- Texas Department of State Health Services — texasready.gov
- American Red Cross — redcross.org
- U.S. Department of Homeland Security — ready.gov
- Office of the Texas Governor Greg Abbott — gov.texas.gov



*Thanks,
Mom + Dad!*

Don't forget Mother's Day is
Sunday, May 10, and
Father's Day is Sunday, June 21.

OFFICES CLOSED

VTX1 offices will be closed on
Monday, May 25, in observance
of Memorial Day.

Get social safely

Social media is a great way to be informed, stay in touch and keep track of what friends and family are up to. But as more and more of our lives are posted on Facebook or captured on Instagram, it's important to be aware of the pitfalls and to know how to best protect your online security.

Consider the following tips on how to stay safe on your favorite social media platform.

- Set a strong password. No password is unbreakable, but don't make it easy on a potential hacker by using a common word or phrase. Use combinations of numbers, uppercase and lowercase letters, and special characters. Also, use different passwords for each social media account.
- When given the option to set up security questions to recover your password, make sure the questions you select are not easy for someone to know the answer to, such as where you went to school, the street you grew up on or the name of your first pet. You can also answer those same questions with random words — just make sure you remember them.
- Activate two-factor authentication, which most social media platforms, including Twitter, Instagram and Facebook offer. When you access your account from a device or browser your social media service doesn't recognize, it will ask you to input a code it sends to you via email or text to confirm your identity. The extra step may be annoying if you access your accounts from different computers or usually block cookies in your browser, but it's a mild inconvenience for security.
- Know who your friends are. Especially on Facebook, it's important to only accept friend requests from people you know. A recent trick is for scammers to take a photo and name from someone you're already friends with and then send you a friend request. You accept and unknowingly give a stranger access to your private posts.
- Know your audience. When posting, Facebook allows you to select who might see your post. If you want something to



reach the widest audience possible, choose “public” in the privacy settings, but don't forget to set it back to “friends” once you're done.

- Reconsider taking that personality quiz. Of course you want to know how much of a Libra you are or which Disney character is your spirit animal. But before you go clicking and sharing, make sure you read the fine print on how the information you're giving this application will be used. Most of these quizzes are harmless fun, but giving away some of your data is the price of admission. 🗨️

APP OF THE MONTH



Do your business contacts ever read your social media posts, requiring you to make sure your grammar is perfect? Or does your English whiz friend give you grief if a comma lands in the wrong spot? Consider Grammarly, an online copy editor that can integrate with your web browser. The free account is robust, and a premium version offers additional writing tips and tools for less than \$12 monthly, if you pay for a year in advance.



‘We just want to be a lighthouse’

Find a welcoming spirit at Tilden Baptist Church

Story by ANDREA AGARDY
Photography by DAVID PIKE

Everyone is welcome at Tilden Baptist Church. Jennifer Wheat, minister of discipleship, recalls her conversation with someone who was worried his tattoos might be a stumbling block. “I was just laughing, she says. I took my jacket off, and I have three visible tattoos. I said, ‘Does it make you feel better to know that I’m actually on payroll and I have tattoos? God looks past that stuff.’”

The church has embraced a “come as you are” approach. “We’re not fancy. If you show up in a suit and tie, you will be the only one in a suit and tie, for sure,” Wheat says.

REACHING OUT TO THE YOUNGER GENERATION

Youth Bible study nights once drew about 40 attendees each Wednesday. Now, it’s up to around 70. “McMullen County is huge. There’s lots of land but not a lot of people,” Wheat says. “For us to have about 65 to 70 kids, that’s crazy. We make four trips to the school in the van to pick kids up.”

The Bible study leaders create an environment where the students can speak their minds. “That’s their safe place where they can just walk in and be real and raw,” she says. “There’s no judgment, but there’s a lot of truth that’s spoken. Our leaders have definitely lived life and made mistakes, given their lives to Christ and then fallen off the wagon and come back.



We don’t just open up books. We open up God’s word. It’s a place of truth where they can ask real questions.”

HOW BROADBAND HELPS

Wheat says the strong and reliable broadband service from VTX1 Companies is a valuable asset. “Whatever tools the Lord gives us and places in front of us, I’m using,” she says, citing social media as just one example. “There’s just not enough time in the day to go out and do what we do if we didn’t have service.”

Social media helps get the word out about upcoming events, and it gives church members a way to keep up with one another and extend a hand to someone who may be struggling. It also allows the church to stay in touch with missionaries it sponsors across the world.

COMMUNITY OUTREACH

Tilden Baptist’s efforts to help aren’t limited to its congregation. For example, a mobile dental service recently set up shop outside the church. “They come in and provide dental care, and we help with finances if people need it,” Wheat says.

Through Community Changers, congregants complete projects like repairing porches. And during the holiday season, dozens of children had gifts under the tree thanks to Tilden’s Angels, a successful program through which community donations go toward Christmas gifts.

“When we help people in the community, we don’t ask if they’re church members,” Wheat says. “We just want to impact people like the Lord would. We just need a command center to do that at, and that’s what the church is. We just want to be a lighthouse. We just want to shine bright.”

Want to learn more?

Tilden Baptist Church
Worship Center: 306 TX-16, Tilden
Office: 200 Water St., Tilden
361-274-3330 | tildenbaptistchurch.org

Stepping back in TIME

High Lonesome Ranch brings Old West to South Texas

Story by ANDREA AGARDY | Photography courtesy of DAVID PIKE

Fans of old Westerns and hunters hoping to bag the limit have a haven awaiting them in McMullen County. Visiting High Lonesome Ranch is like stepping into the pages of a Larry McMurtry novel. Owners Nancy and Charles Hundley have turned their 4,300-acre spread into an outdoor lover's paradise, complete with its own village.

When the Hundleys purchased the property in the 1990s, they kept the existing cow-calf operation going — breeding calves for sale — and set about expanding. “We started a hunting operation for white-tailed deer, which is very big in South Texas,” Nancy Hundley says. “We fenced the whole ranch with high fencing and started a management program with our deer hunting.”

While the deer were abundant, accommodations were not. “We had very limited facilities for our hunters as far as places to stay,” Hundley says. “We started with a little village, very small buildings just adequate for them to overnight without having to sleep out under the stars.” As interest in the ranch grew, the owners decided to upgrade, and their tribute to the Wild West began.

LONESOME DOVE VILLAGE

The couple built their own little Old West town, dubbed Lonesome Dove Village, that offers 16 guest rooms within its unique shops and buildings. “We tore down some of our little cabins, and we built a hotel, a saloon, a church and some other sleeping facilities,” Hundley says.



Nancy and Charles Hundley purchased the ranch in the 1990s.

“We built them in the form of shops that would be typical in a little Western town. They’re decorated similar to the building, whether it’s a schoolhouse, post office or the general store.”

Hundley handled decorating duties herself, curating a Victorian West style. “All of our rooms are decorated with antiques typical of that time period,” she says. While the buildings and decor look like they’re from the 19th century, guests enjoy the modern conveniences of heat and air conditioning, private bathrooms, and Wi-Fi. There’s restaurant service in the Longhorn Cafe, and there’s even a pool, complete with a Victorian-style pool house.

The village’s chapel and wedding venue, Church of the Leoncita, can accommodate about 40 people with its antique pews. For larger weddings, hay bales are used for seating on the lawn, and the church steps serve as an altar.



Red Horse Saloon





Guests at the ranch stay in rooms decorated with antiques in Lonesome Dove Village.

ON THE HUNT

High Lonesome Ranch offers a variety of hunting packages with game ranging from white-tailed deer to doves, hogs, quail, turkey and more. Anglers can choose from more than 40 ponds and tanks.

With the exception of the bass stocked in the lakes and tanks, all the animals on the property are there naturally. “We don’t import anything. It’s actual, real hunting,” Hundley says. “We do not have exotics, and we do not pen-raise our deer.”

The Hundleys have earned accolades for their management plans for the land and the wildlife. The couple received the National Wildlife Management Award in 2001 and the Lone Star Land Stewardship Award for the South Texas Ecoregion in 2008.

Hunters have several options regarding the game they kill on the ranch; they can take it home or leave it behind to be put to good use. “We have a lot of out-of-state hunters,” Hundley says. “A lot of them can’t take the meat with them, so they will donate it to people in the area. Most of them take it with them. If they’re flying, what our guys will do is cut it up for them in quarters and put it in ice chests. Or sometimes they have it shipped. Sometimes they take the deer before it has been butchered, and they take it to the taxidermist.”

BROADBAND MAKES IT BETTER

The ranch has two websites, highlonesomeranchtx.com and highlonesomehunting.com, where prospective guests can browse the accommodations and hunting packages.

Hundley says the ability to keep those sites up to date is vital. “We don’t advertise a lot. It’s all usually by word of mouth or on the internet,” she says. “People can look up our facilities and check everything out, so it’s really important we have that.”

High Lonesome Ranch has also become a destination for many corporations and businesses, thanks in part to the strong and reliable broadband service the ranch receives from VTX1 Companies. In fact, VTX1 “has been one of our very best guests for years,” Hundley says. “They’re wonderful people and do a wonderful job for us.”

The ranch is an attractive location for companies looking to hold meetings, training sessions and even holiday gatherings. Broadband access is part of the allure, as well as the interaction the environment promotes between attendees.

“They like it, because they say, ‘We’ve gone to nice retreat places and we’ve been to really nice hotel facilities, but we like this because it’s different. After we’ve had dinner everybody is still on the ranch, so we get to know each other that way,’” Hundley says. ☺



Longhorn Cafe

Learn more about it...

For more information on High Lonesome Ranch and Lonesome Dove Village, visit highlonesomeranchtx.com and highlonesomehunting.com or call 210-492-1216.





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