

# The Cattleman



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**NEWS BRIEFS**



## New Eminent Domain Legislation Filed

Rep. DeWayne Burns and Sen. Lois Kolkhorst have announced the filing of eminent domain bills HB 991 and SB 421. These companion bills provide desperately needed eminent domain reforms and will create transparency, fairness, and accountability in a process that currently has none.

“Texans deserve better,” said TSCRA President Robert McKnight Jr., at a news conference announcing the filing of the bills. “We deserve an eminent domain process that is open and transparent, that is fair and respectful of our partnership in energy infrastructure, and that holds private condemnors accountable if they don’t do it right.”

Some of the provisions included are mandating a public meeting to ensure property owners understand the process and can have their questions answered, stipulating minimum protections that must be present in the contract and holding condemnors accountable if they offer property owners less compensation than they are owed.

Now that the legislation has been filed, it must be referred to a committee for a committee hearing. In the meantime, McKnight is urging the public to contact their legislators in the Texas House and Senate to ask that they sign on as a co-author to the legislation. You can find who represents you at [fyi.capitol.texas.gov](http://fyi.capitol.texas.gov).

Cattle Raisers Insurance  
[cattleraisersinsurance.com](http://cattleraisersinsurance.com)

TSCRA  
[tscra.org](http://tscra.org)

Law Enforcement  
[tscra.org](http://tscra.org), click on Theft & Law

Cattle Raisers Convention  
[cattleraisersconvention.com](http://cattleraisersconvention.com)

## Register Now to Attend Cattle Raisers Convention and Expo



March 29-31, 2019

Fort Worth Convention Center

Your window to take advantage of special early bird pre-registration prices for the Cattle Raisers Convention and Expo closes on Feb. 15! Come for the day or the weekend — we are certain you will walk away with ideas and energy that will have a profound and profitable impact on your ranching operation.

**NEW THIS YEAR:** School and Convention programs are now open to all attendees! You will no longer be required to register for school programs separate from the convention. School attendees may attend all convention programs and convention attendees may attend all school programs.

**Get answers to your questions at the School for Successful Ranching!** These programs offer high-powered, practical solutions to topics that matter to you. Solve problems and discover ways to improve and enhance what you are already doing. Learn about the essential components of herd health, improve the quality of your forage, and find ways to make or save money on the ranch. We have sessions for everyone!

Visit [CattleRaisersConvention.com](http://CattleRaisersConvention.com) for more information, register to attend and to reserve hotel rooms.



## Reward Offered for Information on Southeast Texas Theft

Authorities are seeking information in connection to the recent theft of an ATV, skid loader and numerous other tools from a Blanchard area property. Operation Cow Thief, an anti-theft initiative led by TSCRA, is offering a cash reward of up to \$1,000 for information leading to the recovery of the items or arrest of the person or persons responsible for the crime.

Investigators say the items were stolen from the property near Blanchard, Jan. 13, 2019. The two most significant items stolen were a red 2018 Case Scout side-by-side all-terrain vehicle, serial No. YDXCE5078, and a 2004 New Holland LS 170 skid loader, serial No. 156232. The ATV was outfitted with an aftermarket LED light bar, and the skid loader had a BDS brush grapple attached. Also stolen were numerous DeWalt hand tools, a cutting torch, oxygen tank, welding hood, air compressor and other assorted items.

Anyone with information is asked to call TSCRA's Operation Cow Thief hotline at (888) 830-2333 or TSCRA Special Ranger Bart Perrier at (918) 847-3231. All information is kept confidential, and tips may be provided anonymously.

## Bond Exceeds \$4.25M for Cattle Theft Suspect

William "Willie" Rittenbaugh, 47, of Mount Calm, is behind bars in Hill County awaiting trial on five felony counts with bonds in excess of \$4.25 million. The charges stem from five separate cases under investigation by TSCRA Special Ranger Marvin Wills and the Hill County Sheriff's Office.

Rittenbaugh's legal troubles began in May 2018 when a Hill County rancher accused him of stealing 11 head of cattle. The missing animals were found in Rittenbaugh's possession, seized, and returned to the owner. Rittenbaugh was charged with third-degree felony theft of livestock.

In September, a separate rancher claimed the suspect had failed to deliver on an agreement he made to manage more than 1,000 head of cattle and split profits. That case led to a first-degree felony charge of misapplication of fiduciary property. He was also charged with third-degree felony theft of livestock in Limestone County in connection to a horse theft and released from custody on a \$5,000 bond.

Rittenbaugh was out on bond when he was arrested by Hill County Sheriff's Deputies Dec. 30, 2018, on a charge of stealing 72 head of cattle from another Hill County victim. His bond was set at \$1 million in that case, and it was turned over to Wills to continue the investigation. After the latest arrest, State District Judge Lee Harris increased his two previous Hill County bonds to \$1.25 million and \$1.5 million respectively.

On Jan. 15, 2019, Wills secured another arrest warrant for second-degree felony misappropriation of fiduciary property. Rittenbaugh's bond, in that case, was set at half-a-million dollars, bringing the total to \$4,255,000.

If anyone has additional information that could help investigators or has been a victim of Rittenbaugh, they are urged to contact the Hill County Sheriff's Office at (254) 582-5313 or TSCRA Special Ranger Marvin Wills at (254) 223-2330. Information can also be provided anonymously through TSCRA's Operation Cow Thief and individuals may be eligible for a cash reward if the information leads to an arrest or indictment.



**CATTLE RAISERS**  
INSURANCE™

Hardworking Insurance for Hardworking Families™

## Are You Eligible for Group Medical Insurance Coverage?

Medical Insurance Tip! Individual medical insurance plans can limit your options. You may be eligible for a group medical insurance plan, which can be much more flexible. Call Cattle Raisers Insurance to see if a group plan will work for you. And, if you do decide to change from an individual policy to a group plan, there is no financial penalty. Just make sure you time the transition from your old plan to the new plan so there is no lapse in coverage.

Let Cattle Raisers Insurance help you explore your healthcare options today! Call 800-252-2849 or visit [cattleraisersinsurance.com](http://cattleraisersinsurance.com) and speak to a representative who understands the unique needs of ranchers.

## TSCRA EVENT CALENDAR

*You Are Welcome to Attend!*

**Feb. 19:** Ranching 101: TSCRA, Fort Worth

**Mar 14:** Cattlemen's Luncheon, Wichita Falls

**Mar. 19:** Ranching 101: TSCRA, Fort Worth

**Mar. 29-31:** Cattle Raisers Convention & Expo, Fort Worth

## TSCRA Members – ask about discounts from the following partners!

American Hat Company Inc.	L&H Branding Irons
Anderson Bean Boot Company	Olathe Boot Co.
Bison Coolers	Power Pipe and Tank Ltd.
Cattle Raisers Insurance	Ranch House Designs Inc.
CattleFax	Rios of Mercedes
CattleMax Software	Rumber
Dell	Staples Business Advantage
Ford Partner Recognition	Stay-Tuff Fence
Greeley Hat Works	Taiga Coolers
Icehole High-Performance Coolers	Tru-Test Inc.
John Deere	Ultimate Wild