



2025 International Dark Sky Community (IDSC) **Annual Report**

Submitted to DarkSky: January 30, 2026

(NOTE: The reporting period for this report is January 1, 2025 thru January 30, 2026; the organization of this report follows DarkSky-International's required template)

GENERAL INFORMATION

- * International Dark Sky Place Name: *BLANCO, TEXAS, USA*
- * International Dark Sky Place Category: *COMMUNITY*
- * Designation Year: *2022*
- * Guidelines Version: *2015*

- * Your Name: *Wayne Gosnell, President Blanco County (Texas) Friends of the Night Sky*
- * Email address: GosnellTexas@Gmail.com; info@blancocountynightsky.org

- * Primary Contact: *Same as above*
- * Primary Contact Email: *Same as above*
- * Primary Contact Phone Number: *(+1) 210-557-6127*

Secondary Contact: *Vicki Guidry, Vice-President, Blanco County (Texas) Friends of the Night Sky*

Secondary Contact Email Address: guidryvicki@gmail.com

Secondary Contact Phone Number: *713-302-0860*

Place Manager Name: Warren Escovy, City Administrator;
cityadmin@cityofbancotx.gov; 830-833-4525
Management Agency: City of Blanco, Texas, USA

- * What is the physical address of the Place? 300 Pecan Street, Blanco, Texas, USA
- * Is the site currently under Provisional Status?: No
- * Are you an DarkSky Delegate, Affiliate or Chapter representative? No

The Blanco County Friends of the Night Sky (BCFNS), a grassroots, 501(c)3 non-profit organization, continues to serve as the Executive Agent for the City of Blanco's night sky preservation and light pollution abatement efforts and for the maintenance of its status as an International Dark Sky Community (IDSC). Both the City of Blanco and the Blanco Chamber of Commerce fully support these efforts.

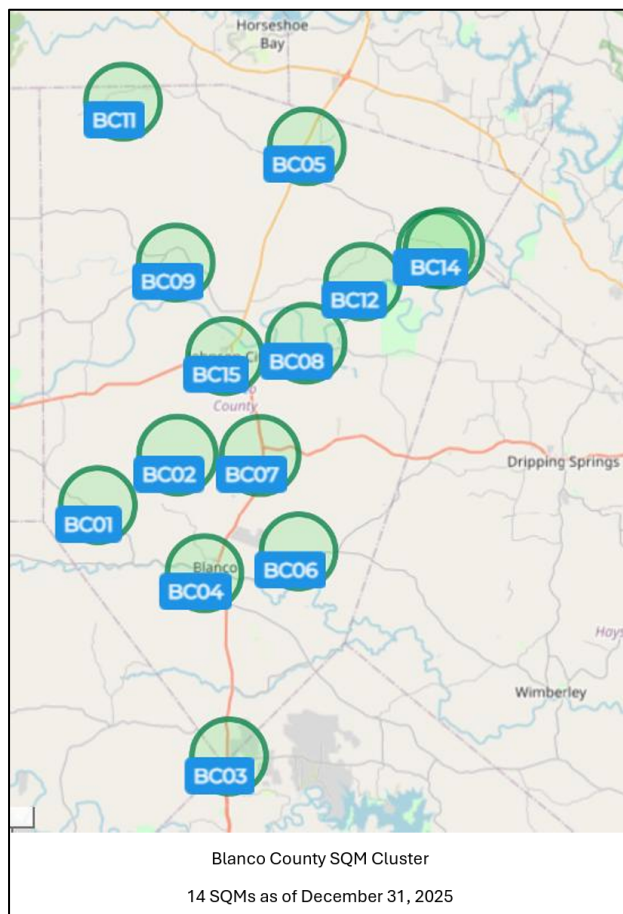


Night Sky Quality Monitoring

Night Sky Quality Monitoring

NEW INITIATIVE. In 2025, acknowledging that light pollution does not stop at the Blanco City Limits, the Blanco County Friends of the Night Sky (BCFNS), on behalf of the Blanco International Dark Sky Community (IDSC), initiated a major project to purchase and install in various locations around the county sixteen (16) permanently mounted Unihedron Sky Quality Meters (SQM). There units are **SQM-LU-DL-R2** models. The total cost of this project is approximately **\$8,000**, paid for by a cooperative effort of the BCFNS, the Texas Hill Country Alliance (HCA), the LBJ National Historic Park, and several individual landowners in Blanco County.

SQM (Sky Quality Meter) Measurement sites: As of December 31, 2025, fourteen (14) units had been installed. The remaining two units will be in place in early 2026. The map below shows the locations of the 14 units installed to date.



We are supplying SQM data to DarkSky-Texas, the Globe at Night organization at the University of Hong Kong, and landowners on whose property the SQMs are located.

Although Blanco County is a sparsely populated rural county, the City of Austin to the east, San Antonio to the south, and the burgeoning I-35 connecting corridor produce an abundant amount of light pollution. Their sky glow on the nighttime horizon to our east and south is a constant reminder of our task to protect the night skies above Blanco County.

Summary of Night Sky Quality above the City of Blanco:

Prior to 2025, sky quality measurements at the BC04 location inside the Blanco City Limits were taken with the handheld SQM and, later, an SQM-L unit. Those handheld SQM readings were as follows:

10/04/07	20.71	baseline established by averaging 4 readings over 5 months
3/15/10	20.22	
2/1/11	20.71	
9/9/12	20.71	
7/12/18	20.71	
7/25/19	20.89	
12/16/19	20.74	
8/7/20	20.65	
9/20/22	20.46	
12/10/23	20.43	
12/27/24	20.41	

*As part of the county-wide SQM Custer Initiative, in March 2025 a single continuous-read unit was installed within the City Limits of Blanco at the **BC04 location**. This continuous-read unit yields more reliable data than do hand-held measurements and is a substantial improvement over our former Sky Quality Measurement procedures in that it removes the human factor and cloud conditions from the measurements. The unit gives readings every 15 minutes, dusk to dawn, in all kinds of weather. The darkest reading for any given month is when there is no moon on a night devoid of clouds of any sort.*

The continuous-read SQM allows us to obtain these measurements and make better assessments of the true darkness of the night sky. The higher the read, the darker the sky. It is a logarithmic scale with the lower numbers (17 and below) being typical of the center of a large metropolitan area while the higher numbers (up to 23) are seen in remote, night sky preserves.

*The **BC04** continuous-read SQM unit was installed at the above location inside the City Limits of Blanco in March 2025. The darkest reading it recorded that month was **20.79**. In October 2025, the darkest reading was **21.18**. The darkest reading for the last month for which data is available, December 2025, was **20.81**.*

Conclusion: Comparing the measurement for the last month for December 2025, **20.81**, with the 2007 baseline measurement at the same location, **20.71**, it appears that the darkness of the night sky has somewhat improved. The darkest reading of the year, **21.18**, was substantially darker than the baseline reading or any subsequent readings.

This conclusion surprised us in that we had expected to see a deterioration of the darkness of the night sky because of new developments in the surrounding area and the bright lights of several local businesses. However, the data seems to support unsolicited anecdotal comments made by several local residents that they felt the sky was getting darker. The SQM data suggests that it is. **Perhaps we are actually making progress!**

Bortle Scale: The City of Blanco sits at roughly a 4.0/9 on the Bortle Scale, part way between a suburban sky (5) and a rural sky (3). The near-term goal is to return it to a true rural sky, a Bortle 3 sky.

Quality of the Night Sky throughout Blanco County:

Because light pollution neither starts nor stops at the City Limits, we are working throughout Blanco County to preserve the night sky and combat light pollution. The SQM Cluster Initiative is county-wide (see map above and data below). There is a wide variance in SQM measurements across the county.

Blanco County Data: As of the date of this report, data from only three (3) of the fourteen (14) continuous-read SQM units had been extracted and transcribed onto an Excel spreadsheet. The three locations form a triangle in roughly the center of Blanco County. BC01 is a remote location on the western edge of the county; BC04 is in the City Limits of Blanco (**yellow highlight in the spreadsheet below**); and BC08 is a few miles east of Johnson City. The average reading for the three locations was **21.71**. Note that BC01, located in the far western part of the county, has readings substantially darker than those of BC04 in the City Limits of Blanco. This is attributed to the absence of commercial businesses in the vicinity of the BC01 measuring unit and the remoteness of the site from the encroaching sky glows of Austin and San Antonio.

When the rest of the data is extracted and transcribed, we'll have a better idea of the state of the night sky above the entire county and will be better able to focus our efforts.

as of: 19Jan2026

SQM CLUSTER DATA, 2025 Blanco County, Texas Darkest Reading for each Month													
SQM #	JAN	FEB	MAR	APR	MAY	JUN	JUL	AUG	SEP	OCT	NOV	DEC	AVERAGE
BC01	22.78	21.43	22.44	22.37	22.86	22.18	22.49	21.59	21.75	21.42	22.73	22.00	22.17
BC02													0.00
BC03													0.00
BC04			20.79	20.87	20.84	20.92	20.65	20.96	20.93	21.18	20.82	20.81	20.88
BC05													0.00
BC06													0.00
BC07													0.00
BC08			22.63	22.68	23.07	21.47	21.98	21.43	21.39	21.82	22.7	21.59	22.08
BC09													0.00
BC10													0.00
BC11													0.00
BC12													0.00
BC13													0.00
BC14													0.00
BC15													0.00
BC16													
COUNTY AVERAGE													21.71
NOTE: All measurements extracted from data recorded by SQM-LU-DL-R2 continuous read units measured at the zenith above each location.													

Changes in Night Sky Quality from Time of Certification to the Present:

The City of Blanco submitted its IDSC application in December 2019. Measuring the night sky quality at eight (8) locations in and around the city using a hand-held SQM, the average SQM reading for the month was 20.43. The reading at the BC04 location within the Blanco City Limits was **20.74**.

The darkest SQM reading for the new SQM Custer unit BC04 inside the City Limits in December 2025 was **20.81**, an actual improvement in the quality of the night sky within the City Limits in the six years Blanco has had its IDSC certification. The average at this location for the entire year is **20.88**, an even better improvement.

This improvement may be attributed to PEC changing out all of Blanco's streetlights to fixtures of 3,000 and 2,700 Kelvin and the on-going work to retrofit business with night sky friendly outdoor lighting. As PEC is now shielding our streetlights and the Blanco Outdoor Lighting Administrator is working with several other businesses to retrofit their non-compliant outdoor lights, we are hopeful we will see a further improvement in the night sky darkness in the coming year.

Lighting Compliance

Changes in compliance rate from time of certification to the present:

- **Year of Certification:** 2022
- **Compliance % in Original Application:** Approximately 10%
- **Current Compliance %:** *Approximately 20%*
- **Anticipated % for Next Reporting Period:** *25%*

Actions taken to meet the Lighting Management Plan/Policy requirements:

In the last three years, the Pedernales Electric Co-op (PEC), has replaced Blanco's approximately 100 streetlights with DarkSky-approved fixtures of 3,000 Kelvin and 2,700 Kelvin color temperature. The City changed its Kelvin requirement half-way through the project, but all replacements made since then have been 2700 Kelvin.

The City has received a commitment from PEC to shield all of these fixtures to come into compliance with Blanco's Outdoor Lighting Ordinance (OLO). In a major show of corporate cooperation and community support, PEC has agreed to do this work free of charge to the City of Blanco. These streetlights should be shielded before the end of 2026.

All Blanco Independent School District (ISD) legacy facilities continue to have problematic lighting. The District's Superintendent, however, supports night sky preservation efforts. The ISD installed night sky-friendly lighting on their new High School tennis courts in 2023 and, in 2025, the Athletic Support Facility at the Blanco High School stadium and the new Educational Center for the Arts both were constructed with night sky friendly outdoor lighting in full compliance with Blanco's Outdoor Lighting Ordinance. The Blanco County Friends of the Night Sky (BCFNS) has permission to do a complete audit of the district's existing outdoor lighting with an eye on developing a plan to retrofit non-compliant legacy lighting district wide.

In a major new initiative, the City is working to enforce the City's Outdoor Lighting Ordinance (OLO) through citizen-driven code violation complaints and direct observation. Because the City had no code enforcement officer of staff, in 2025 the City has signed a Memorandum of Agreement to allow the Blanco County Friends of the Night Sky to fund a part-time, contracted code enforcement officer dedicated to enforcing Blanco's OLO. A member of the BCFNS donated \$1,200 to partially fund this initiative. This officer's title is "Outdoor Lighting Administrator." His duties are to work with businesses to make them aware of violations on Blanco's OLO and assist them in finding satisfactory solutions that will bring them into compliance with the ordinance. The Outdoor Lighting Administrator reports to the City Administrator and meets with representatives of the Blanco County Friends of the Night Sky twice monthly to review complaints and remedial actions.

Blanco's goal for 2026 is to attain 25% compliance for all publicly owned outdoor lighting (including that owned by the Blanco Independent School District). We intend to accomplish this by 1) continuing to work with PEC to shield the streetlights, 2) bringing all city-owned lighting into compliance with the OLO to include lighting on the City's new Water Treatment Plant, 3) working with the Blanco ISD to retrofit non-compliant legacy outdoor lighting and 4) aggressively working with non-compliant businesses within the City Limits to bring them into compliance with the Outdoor Lighting Ordinance.

Examples of lighting changes made:

Thanks to the efforts of Blanco's Outdoor Lighting Administrator, businesses have begun to retrofit their non-compliant outdoor lighting.

The first to do so in 2025 was the local NAPA auto parts facility. As is often the case, the manager had no idea their outdoor lighting was causing a light pollution problem. Once this was pointed out by Blanco's Outdoor Lighting Administrator, new lighting was quickly installed and now the business serves as a model for how to do it right. NAPA will soon receive a Blanco Chamber of Commerce Night Sky Friendly Business Certificate of Merit.



NAPA Before



NAPA After

Trinty Lutheran Church in Blanco needed more lighting for their new parking lot beside the church. They had the City's electric provider, Pedernales Electric Co-op (PEC) install a new 2700 Kelvin LED streetlight at the corner of the lot. They asked PEC to install a three-way glare shield on the fixture to minimize light falling off the property



*Streetlight with Glare
Shields Installed*

Light shines only where it is Needed

The church needed more light on the parking lot closer to their building, so they purchased backward bent gooseneck fixtures with 2700 Kelvin bulbs and mounted them on the church's white wall bordering the parking lot. The reflected light was sufficient for their needs with minimal light escaping into the night sky.



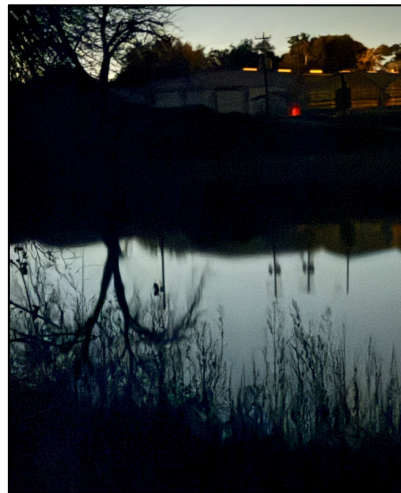
Blanco's Gem of the Hills Community Center replaced its previously poorly lit entry gate with one that is both attractive and friendly to the night sky.



Sometimes, all it takes to correct aberrant outdoor lighting is a phone call or email to the owner of the offending facility. A nursery on the Blanco River had an outdoor light that glared off property to irritate the neighbors and pollute the night sky. The owner had no clue that his light was causing problems. Within a few days of a polite email, he had it on a working motion detector that turned the light on when he had nighttime deliveries and off when the outside motion ceased.



Before



After

Utilization of fixtures from DarkSky's Fixture Seal of Approval (FSA) Program:

Pedernales Electric Co-op continues to use DarkSky-approved streetlight fixtures that are fully compliant with the City's Outdoor Lighting Ordinance.



We continue to encourage the use of retro-look gooseneck fixtures throughout the city. Many businesses have adopted gooseneck-type fixtures that reflect Blanco's rural heritage (see example of Trinity Lutheran Church above).



The Blanco County Friends of the Night Sky gives away flat bottomed, 2700 Kelvin LED bulbs from Sunco Lighting Company as part of its night sky preservation efforts. As these bulbs shine down instead of outwards, glare is considerably reduced.



Blanco continues to require downward shining flagpole illumination on all non-residential facilities. The local American Legion Post 352 installed such a fixture in 2025.



The flag beside the America Legion Post 352 in Blanco now has downward illumination

Factors impacting Blanco's ability to meet its lighting compliance requirements:

The Pedernales Electric Co-op, the City's electricity provider, may require careful monitoring to ensure they follow through on their generous promise to shield Blanco's streetlights (so they will be in compliance with the City's Outdoor Lighting Ordinance) at no cost to the City of Blanco.

The limited ability of the Blanco Independent School District to fund the retrofitting of non-compliant legacy outdoor lighting fixtures on all its facilities may delay full compliance with Blanco's OLO.

The limited non-taxpayer resources available to fund Blanco's new Outdoor Lighting Administrator may pose a problem in that the available funds may not provide enough man-hours to address all the filed complaints and necessary direct nighttime observations.

Changes to Blanco's outdoor lighting ordinances:

There has been no change to Blanco Outdoor Lighting Ordinance since the last reporting period.

In January 2023, the Blanco City amended the 2018 OLO to require a maximum color temperature of 2700 Kelvin on all outdoor lighting (with limited exceptions) within the City Limits.

The 2018 amended OLO contained various "grandfathering" provisions for existing outdoor lighting as well as amortization provisions that allowed businesses to get a full ten years use from their investment in non-compliant outdoor lighting. The time for most of those provisions has expired. The OLO, therefore, needs to be amended to expunge the non-applicable verbiage from the ordinance. Additionally, DarkSky-International has updated its outdoor lighting ordinance recommendations. There are unconfirmed reports that DarkSky-International may change its Correlated Color Temperature Kelvin recommendations. We would like these to be incorporated into a revised Blanco ordinance. We anticipate proposing a revised ordinance to the Blanco Planning and Zoning Commission and the City Council in 2027.

The amended OLO that is currently in effect is available on the City's website at <https://cityofblancotx.gov/ordinances-and-resolutions> (Amended Outdoor Lighting Ordinance 2023-O-002).

Outreach, Education, and Media

Outreach, education, and media activities in support of Blanco's International Dark Sky Community (IDSC) designation are conducted largely by the City's Executive Agent for night sky matters, the Blanco County Friends of the Night Sky (BCFNS). Both the City of Blanco and the Blanco Chamber of Commerce fully support these efforts.

The President of the BCFNS also serves as the Night Sky Advisor to the Blanco Historic Preservation Commission and the Blanco Comprehensive Master Plan Working Group. The City of Blanco is currently revising the Comprehensive Master Plan and continued presence of a night sky representative is essential to ensuring that night sky preservation is duly considered.

As of January 2026, the BCFNS has **162 total paid-up memberships**, distributed as follows: **188 Annual Household Memberships**; **27 Lifetime Household Memberships**; **13 Annual Business Memberships**; and **4 Lifetime Business Memberships**.

Types and methods of dark-sky and light pollution-related outreach, education, and media:

-Name of event/program: *In-Person Night Sky PowerPoint/Dramatic Presentations, 2025*

-Number of times offered: **11**

-Estimated number of attendees for each event: Range = **18-40**; Average = **20**; Total = **approximately 220**

-Name of event/program: *Star Parties, 2025*

-Number of times offered: **2** (*April 29, BCFNS Annual Gathering and December 6, Blanco State Park*)

-Estimated number of attendees for each event: Attendees = **30**; Total attendees = **approximately 60** (*April 29 event was held but only the Stellarium portion was done due to clouds; Dec 6 event went well*)

-Name of event/program: *Night Sky Information Booths, 2025*

-Number of times offered: **6** (*March 22, Founders Day; April 8, CoAPT Event at Blanco High School; May 8, Blanco State Park; August 2, Johnson City "Back to School" event; September 27, Twin Sisters "Rise the Roof" event; December 6, Blanco State Park Star Party*)

-Estimated number of attendees for each event: Range: **30-300**; Average = **40**; Total = **approximately 400**

-Name of event/program: *Night Sky Art Contest, 2025*

-Number of times offered: **1**

-Estimated number of attendees for each event: Total = **98 entries** (**6th-12th grades**)

- Name of event/program: *Night Sky Poetry Contest, 2025*
 - Number of times offered: *1*
 - Estimated number of attendees for each event: *Total = approximately 2,390*
(# of unique visitors to the BCFNS website in January 2025, the month of the poetry contest)

- Name of event/program: *Night Sky Friendly Business Recognition Program*
 - Number of times offered: *Annually*
 - Estimated number of attendees for each event: *Total to date = 41; Total recognized in 2025 = 6*

- Name of event/program: *Night Sky "Media Blitz"*
 - Number of times offered: *2*
 - Estimated number of attendees for each event: *8,711 per mailing x 2 mailings*
Total = approximately 10-12K + reached, most twice

- Name of event/program: *Presentation to Olympic Peninsula Night Sky Preservation organization, Washington State*
 - Number of times offered: *1*
 - Estimated number of attendees for each event: *Total = approximately 50*

Promotion of DarkSky and its mission during Blanco's outreach programs/events:

We routinely use DarkSky (formerly IDA) brochures in our educational outreach efforts. These include use as handouts at presentations and information booths. We also use DarkSky pop-up displays for our information tables. We have included the new DarkSky IDSC Logo on the design for Blanco's IDSC Entryway road sign.

The Blanco County Friends of the Night Sky holds its Annual Membership Gathering in April during DarkSky-International's Dark Sky Month. Representatives of the BCFNS attend DarkSky's Annual "Under One Sky" world-wide teleconference and share information learned.

In support of the Hill Country Alliance's Night Sky Month (October) BCFNS volunteers secured proclamations supporting the Night Sky from the elected governing bodies of Blanco County, the City of Blanco, and the City of Johnson City.

A Night Sky Story Time was conducted for children at the Blanco City Library.

The Wizard of the Night Skytm gave night sky education presentations in October to the Kendall County Commissioners Court in Kendal County and to the City of Liberty Hill in celebration of the city being designated as an International Dark Sky Community.

Programming blending the arts and/or culture with dark skies:

*In 2025, we continued our yearly Night Sky Art Contest for Blanco County Middle School age and High School age students. With the enthusiastic support of the art teachers, these contests generated **98** entries in 2025. Cash prizes of **\$790** were awarded to the winning entries. Not only have these contests engaged the students and their families, but they have also been covered extensively in the two local newspapers and on social media, thereby giving publicity to the night sky preservation movement in Blanco County.*

In May 2025, the BCFNS again sponsored a hole at the annual Rotary Club of Blanco County Golf Tournament. Seeing the night sky logo prominently displayed on the golf course has generated increased recognition of the night sky movement.

In October, BCFNS sponsored a hole at the Senior Women's West Texas Championship golf tournament at the Vaaler Creek Golf Club in Blanco.

In November, the BCFNS sponsored a local girl engaged in rodeo barrel racing. The BCFNS logo will be displayed on her horse trailer.

A \$200 contribution was made to the Blanco Educational Foundation to purchase a commemorative paver with the BCFNS logo. The paver was installed at the entrance to Blanco High School's new Educational Center for the Arts as a reminder to all who pass by that the night sky is important.



In 2025, we continued our efforts to create a “bandwagon” effect for night sky preservation, by actively encouraging the purchase and display BCFNS Membership signs. Anyone seeing the sign displayed on a neighbor’s property is visually notified that

*the night sky is important to them and worthy of protection. We feel this is the best advertisement the night sky can have. To date, we have we have distributed **181** BCFNS membership signs (in all categories of membership) for display on private property throughout Blanco County and beyond.*



Visitors' experiences with Blanco's night sky programs and outreach efforts:

While there has been no formal survey of visitors' perception of Blanco as an International Dark Sky Community, there continues to be ample anecdotal evidence that interest in night sky preservation is growing. The City's Visitor Center in the Old Blanco County Courthouse reports that they routinely run out of night sky preservation brochures provided by the Blanco County Friends of the Night Sky (BCFNS).

Many of the visitors at the Annual "Raise the Roof" fundraising event at the historic Twin Sisters' Dance Hall come from throughout Blanco County as well as areas outside Blanco County and continue to be interested in the night sky preservation information booth manned each year by BCFNS. In 2025, we again donated an auction item to the event that prominently included the BCFNS name and logo. The BCFNS was also recognized as an event sponsor with its name and logo displayed at the event and promoted on the Twin Sisters' social media feeds, all of which kept the idea of night sky preservation visible to the attendees.



In 2025, the BCFNS website averaged 3,500 unique visitors a month, a number that has steadily increased over the course of several years. An undetermined number of these visitors are from outside Blanco County as evidenced by the fact that we routinely receive requests for assistance in night sky preservation matters from other areas in Texas and from other states. In response to several requests to include “student-provided” links to night sky resources, we have created a special tab on the website to accommodate such requests as are deemed useful for others. The tab can be seen here: <https://www.blancocountynightsky.org/student.php>

Representative photos of night sky events and outreach efforts in 2025:

Below are five representative photos of 2025 night sky events. DarkSky-International limits submitted photos to five. For additional photos, please see the 18-item “2025 Media Coverage,” attached, as well as the BCFNS Newsletters at <https://www.blancocountynightsky.org/newsletters.php>



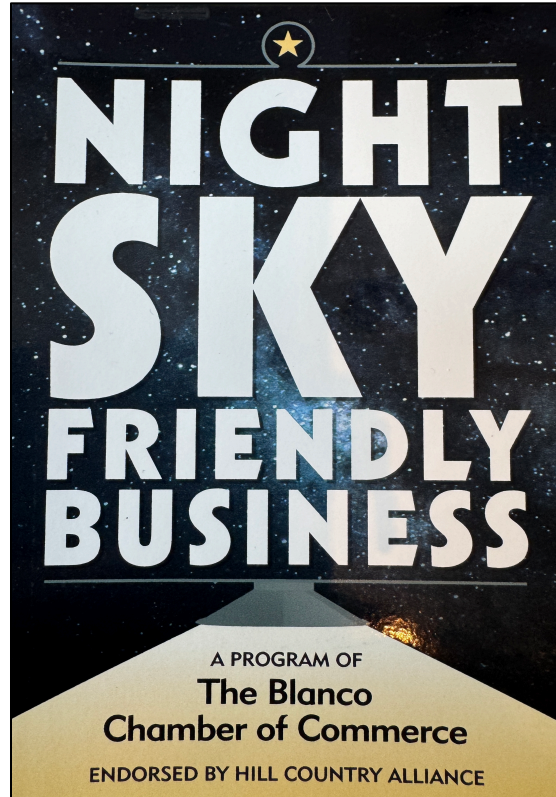
Night Sky volunteers Elizabeth Miller and David Loose distribute literature and explain the evils of light pollution at a Blanco State Park community event on May 10, 2025



Volunteers from the Blanco County Friends of the Night Sky participate in a May 22, 2025 informational event sponsored by the Hill Country Alliance's Night Sky Team at Blanco's Gem of the Hills Community Center



The Wizard of the Night Sky, Blanco State Park, March 7, 2025



The Night Sky Friendly Business Recognition Program continued in 2025 with six new recognitions



BCFNS Board Members and Volunteers judge entries in the 2025 Night Sky Student Art Contest

Social media handles or website links used to promote dark skies are:

The City of Blanco official website is at:

<https://cityofblancotx.gov/>

The Blanco Chamber of Commerce website is at:

<https://www.blancochamber.com/>

The Blanco County Friends of the Night Sky website is at:

<https://blancocountynightsky.org/index.php>

The Blanco County Friends of the Night Sky Facebook Group is at:

<https://www.facebook.com/groups/BCFNS>

The Blanco County Friends of the Night Sky Instagram page is at:

<https://www.instagram.com/blancofriendsofthenightsky/?hl=en-gb>

Social media stats as of January 17, 2026 are:

BCFNS Facebook Group Members – 1,219

BCFNS Instagram Followers -- 581

Average Monthly Visitors to the BCFNS Website in 2025 – 3,500

Newsletter. A monthly newsletter with updates on night sky happenings was distributed via email to 638 recipients as of December 2025. On the average, 66% of the emails were opened by the recipients with 61% opened in December.

Additionally, the websites of the City of Blanco and the Blanco Chamber of Commerce prominently note that Blanco is an International Dark Sky Community. However, as the websites themselves are not dedicated exclusively to night sky preservation, the number of visitors to the websites is not included in this report.

Blanco and its night sky advocates participated in DarkSky-led initiatives as follows:

Blanco participated in the DarkSky-led International Dark Sky Week by publicizing the week on Blanco County Friends of the Night Sky social media and timing the Night Sky Art Contest for middle schoolers and high school students to coincide with Dark Sky Week (judging was April 15, 2025).

Additionally, each year we participate in a related and complementary celebration, the Hill Country Night Sky Month in October, sponsored by the Hill Country Alliance. In 2025, we again secured resolutions supporting the night sky from the Blanco City Council, the Johnson City City Council, and the Blanco County Commissioners Court. These resolutions are essential in securing continued political and administrative support for the night sky.

Media coverage:

Blanco's night sky preservation and light pollution abatement efforts were the subject of 16 stories/photos with cutlines/ads in the Blanco County News in 2025. Several of the stories were also published by the Johnson City Record Courier. Please see "2025 Media Coverage", attached.

Signage with the DarkSky label:

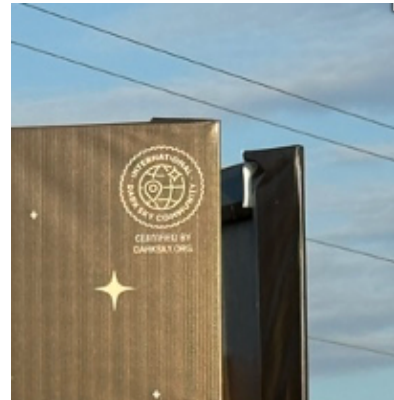
Shortly after receiving its International Dark Sky Community (IDSC) designation, the Blanco City Council approved the design of IDSC signage for the City's gateways. The sign is prominently displayed in the public area of the Blanco City Office, on the official website of the City of Blanco, on the website of the Blanco Chamber of Commerce, and the website of the Blanco County Friends of the Night Sky.

The sign has since been modified to show the new DarkSky IDSC logo and the attribution that the designation is "Certified by DarkSky.org."



The City of Blanco has tried for several years to secure permission from the Texas Department of Transportation (TxDOT) to erect International Dark Sky Community signs on the four TxDOT-controlled entryways into the city. Unfortunately, TxDOT continues to maintain that this is not possible as only "directional" signage can be placed in the right-of-way. As one could not point to a physical location of Blanco's IDSC status, a sign acknowledging that will not be allowed.

Avoiding the TxDOT right-of-way, in 2024, a large banner was erected in a prominent place on private property along the main highway leading into Blanco from the south. The sign reads “Welcome to Blanco...An International Dark Sky Community.” The new DarkSky-International IDSC logo was printed in the upper right-hand corner of the sign. This continues to be the only visible indication to the traveling public that Blanco is, in fact, an International Dark Sky Community.



A current initiative to secure “pole banners” to install on utility poles outside the Blanco Historic District to highlight Blanco’s IDSC status is on-going. These will be modeled on similar banners currently in use in Dripping Springs, Texas, also an International Dark Sky Community. We will seek to fund this effort through Hotel Occupancy Tax (HOT) funds, administered by the City.



TxDOT may one day install a consolidated “Community Pride Welcome Sign” in the TxDOT right-of-way as it has done in countless other cities across Texas. If this comes about, we will design and purchase an International Dark Sky Community sign to be displayed on the Welcome Sign.

Provision and use of night sky educational materials:

In 2025, we continued to use Night Sky-related educational materials routinely in our night sky preservation educational efforts. These include brochures provided by Dark Sky, the Blanco County Friends of the Night Sky information brochure, informational flyers, informational postcards, advertisements for night sky events, bumper stickers, souvenir stickers, business cards, etc. There are distributed via Night Sky Information booths at community events, direct mail, handouts at night sky presentations, and direct, one-on-one contact. In addition, materials have been distributed via paid newspaper ads, free newspaper and magazine articles and photos, and social media to include Facebook and Instagram.

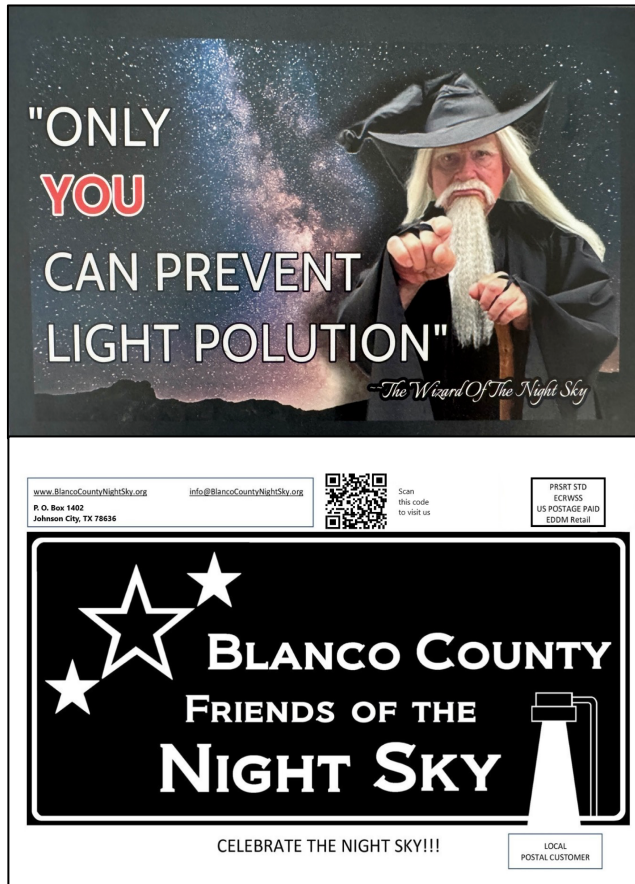
Examples of original educational materials that have been used in Blanco’s night sky education initiatives:

In 2025, based on the success of the 2023 and 2024 efforts, we twice mailed 8,711 6” x 9” postcards to every U.S. Mail customer in Blanco County in 2025. One iteration, “All Creatures,” was done in May 2025 with a second one “The Wizard of the Night Sky™,” done in October. These cards were designed to be read at a glance to quickly convey the anti-light pollution message in the 3 seconds it takes the average person to look at the card on the way to the trash can. To reemphasize the message from the postcards, paid advertisements were taken out in both Blanco County newspapers. This effort cost the BCFNS over \$3,000 dollars but is considered one of our most effective initiatives.



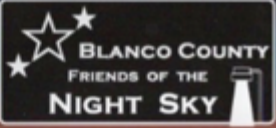
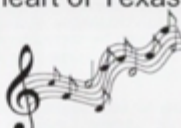
Night Sky Awareness postcards were mailed to every postal customer in Blanco County. There were two mailings in 2025,

We have had several reports of recipients actually posting the card in the homes. Additionally, with the membership information, to include a QR code on the reverse side of the card, the cards have motivated several individuals to become new members of the Blanco County Friends of the Night Sky.



We intend to continue the Media Blitz initiative in 2026, albeit only once due to resource constraints.

Other original materials used for night sky preservation education are:

		
A wealth of information can be found on our website: blancocountynightsky.org. ★ What is light pollution? ★ The effect of light pollution on our health and that of all living things ★ Lighting guidelines ★ City ordinances ★ Night sky videos and newsletters ★ How to deal with neighbors ★ Volunteer opportunities ★ Links to other resources ★ Much more	Blanco County Friends of the Night Sky P. O. Box 1402 Johnson City, Texas 78636-1402 *** info@blancocountynightsky.org blancocountynightsky.org facebook.com/groups/BCFNS/ instagram.com/blancocountyfriendsofthenightsky *** BCFNS is a 501(c)3 not-for-profit organization <i>Revised 05/17/2023</i>	The stars at night are big and bright, deep in the heart of Texas...  but for how long?
 It's a line in a song. The stars really are big and bright in Texas, and we want to keep it that way. But our state & Blanco County have grown and with that growth has come a most unwelcome new neighbor... ALAN (Artificial Lights at Night) that causes sky glow and makes it hard to see the stars. To keep ALAN in check, we must act now! Blanco County Friends of the Night Sky (BCFNS) is an association of neighbors who want to protect the dark sky so we and all future Texans will be able to enjoy our view of the stars. Our goal is to help people realize the benefits of proper selection and management of outdoor lighting. If you are interested in preserving the night sky, please join us, spread the word, and help us protect those stars!	 Scan this code for more information. Protect the Night Sky ★ LIMITED - Use Lights only when needed ★ TARGETED - Shield & Point Lights Down ★ CONTROLLED - Use Timers/Motion Detectors ★ COLOR - Use Warm Color Lights ★ GET INVOLVED - Join a Night Sky Group! <i>Revised 05/17/2023</i>	Membership is open to any adult in Blanco County and the Hill Country. Annual dues are \$20 per household and \$50 for businesses. Lifetime memberships are available for \$500. We offer a membership sign at our cost... the best advertising our night sky can have. It tells our friends, neighbors, and anyone passing by that you value the night sky and want to protect it.  Go to our website, www.blancocountynightsky.org, to learn more about membership options and how you can purchase a sign.
<i>The <u>Night Sky Preservation tri-fold brochure</u> was updated in 2023 to provide basic information on night sky preservation to include a QR code taking readers to the night sky advocacy website for more information.</i>		



[Home](#) | [About Us](#) | [Light Pollution](#) | [Lighting Guidelines](#) | [Light Bulb Basics](#) | [Types of Lights](#) |
[Glossary](#) | [Neighbors](#) | [Membership](#) | [Calendar](#) | [Volunteers Needed](#) | [News](#) | [Newsletters](#) |
[Products](#) | [Ordinances](#) | [Businesses](#) | [Education](#) | [Fashions](#) | [Resources](#) | [Accomplishments](#) |
[Song Contest](#) | [Essay Contest](#) | [Videos](#) | [Contact Us](#) |

Hold On, Pardner. That's Tresspassin'!

Folks 'round here pride themselves in being good neighbors. We watch out for each other's places and, if anyone is ever in need of assistance, we all pitch in and help. But there's one thing that some of us are not so good at, and that's trespassing onto our neighbors' property. No, not physically intruding because everyone in Texas knows that can get you shot (or close to it). But, unfortunately, there is a form of trespass that goes on around here a lot. While it's not a shootin' offense, it can be downright annoying. It's called light trespass.

A lot of us moved out here to get away from the city and enjoy country living. For many of us, part of that enjoyment is being able to sit back and enjoy our still wonderfully dark nighttime sky and the peaceful, rural countryside around us.

But, boy oh boy, it can sure be annoying when that view is destroyed by that one neighbor down the way who has a bright light that shines off his place and onto yours! His light **trespases** onto your property to your great annoyance and spoils both your view of the countryside and your enjoyment of the night sky.

The thing about it is... that neighbor probably doesn't have a clue that his light is bothering you. But it is. His light is trespassing onto your property and you just plain don't like it..

But have you said anything? How does he know? If you'll just mention it to him, you'll probably discover that he had no idea that his light bothers you and he will be most eager to correct it, especially if you offer to pay for it. That's what good neighbors do.



If you have a light of your own that you're not sure about, just go out at night and stand on your property line. If you can see the direct light coming from the fixture — oops! — that light is shining off your property and is probably trespassing onto someone else's place. Whether your neighbor mentions it to you or not, go ahead and do the right thing — shield the light or reposition it so it shines down and stays on your own property. If we all do that, we'll all be able to continue to enjoy those beautiful nights we have out here.

Here in the Texas Hill Country, let's all work together to keep the Stars at Night, Big, and Bright!

A one-page handout entitled "Hold on, Pardner. That's Tresspassin'!" and aimed at city people who move to the country with no appreciation of the concept of light trespass. The handout was available on the BCFNS website and routinely passed out at Night Sky Advocacy Information Booths.



QUICK GUIDE TO BLANCO'S AMENDED 2018 OUTDOOR LIGHTING ORDINANCE

PURPOSE: To provide an easily understandable guide to the major provisions of the Outdoor Lighting Ordinance passed by the Blanco City Council that came into effect on October 9, 2018, and amended by the City Council on January 31, 2023.

BOTTOM LINE: In general, you can have as many lights on your property as you want, and they usually can be as bright as you want as long as they meet two criteria:

1. The light cannot shine off your property onto another property or a city or state right of way, and
2. The light must have a Correlated Color Temperature of not more than 2,700 degrees Kelvin.

PURPOSE OF THE OUTDOOR LIGHTING ORDINANCE: To protect the night sky from light pollution coming from lighting that shines upwards into the night sky; to reduce annoying and dangerous glare for drivers, pedestrians, and neighbors; to preserve the night sky for the enjoyment of residents and visitors; to protect the health of Blanco citizens; and to encourage the astro-tourism industry in and around Blanco.

WHAT IS "CORRELETED COLOR TEMPERATURE?"

This is a measure of where the light falls in the visible spectrum. It is now federal law that the packaging for all consumer bulbs must show information about the color temperature of the bulb. This is often labeled "Light Appearance" and ranges from "Warm" to "Cool." An American Medical Association study warns that light with a Correlated Color Temperature above 3,000K inhibits the body's ability to produce melatonin at night. Melatonin is a hormone that, among other things, helps the body ward off cancer. Additionally, it has been shown that light above 2,700 Kelvin scatters more readily in the atmosphere and worsens light pollution. Hence, the City of Blanco requires that outdoor lights be no more than 2,700K both as a public health imperative and an environmental issue.

Lighting Facts Per Bulb	
Brightness	800 lumens
Estimated Yearly Energy Cost	\$1.08
Based on 3hrs/day, 11¢/kWh. Cost depends on rates and use.	
Life	22.8 years
Based on 3hrs/day	
Light Appearance	Warm ————— Cool
	2700K
Energy Used	9 watts

To facilitate compliance with Blanco's Outdoor Lighting Ordinance, an abbreviated "Quick Guide" was produced. The City Secretary provides this Guide to anyone seeking a Building Permit from the City, thereby ensuring that the outdoor lighting requirements are fully known by anyone likely to erect new lighting.

Items developed for sale or free distribution:

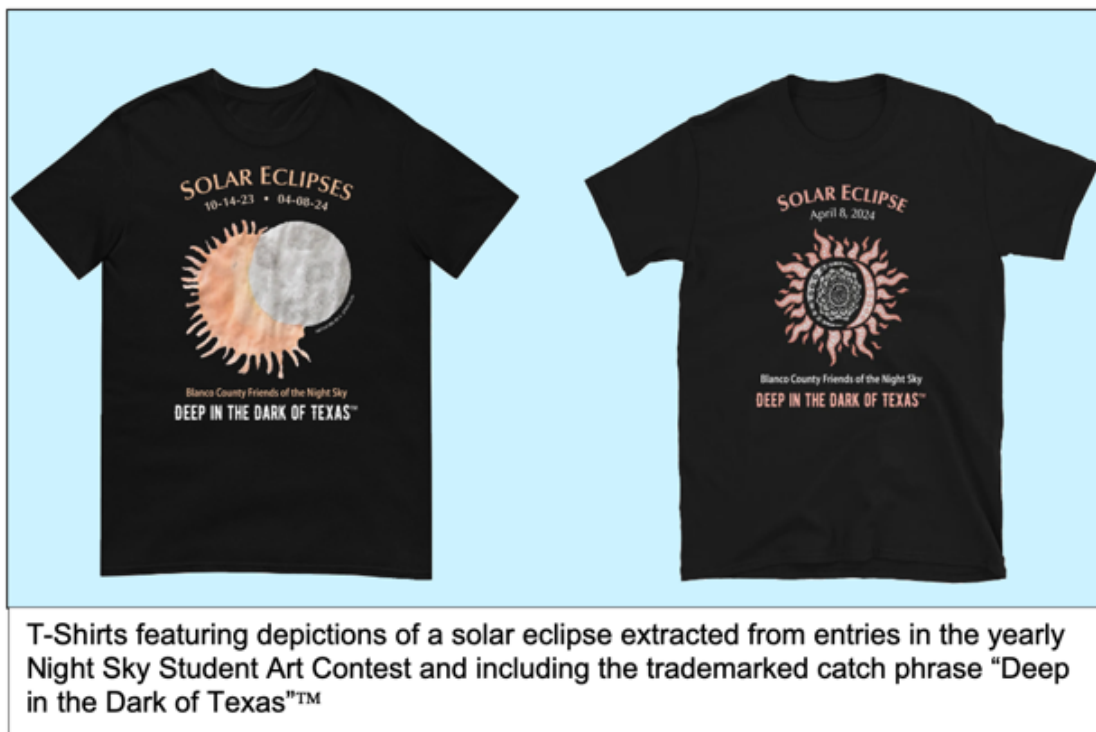
In 2024, the Blanco County Friends of the Night Sky produced t-shirts for the total eclipse of the sun. These t-shirts incorporated artwork from our annual student night sky art contest and featured the trademarked catch phrase, “Deep in the Dark of Texas[™].” Although not actively marketed in 2025 or 2026, these items are still available for special order.

The Blanco County Friends of the Night Sky sells or gives away night sky-themed polo shirts, caps, and shopping bags. The Night Sky Songwriting Contest several years ago produced a CD of 13 original night sky songs that is given free of charge as take-aways at presentations, information booths, and art contests.

The membership signs for the Blanco County Friends of the Night Sky are sold at cost, \$35/sign, which includes a free one-year household membership.

The BCFNS has numerous items featuring its logo that a used for its various initiatives. The logo is used consistently to build the brand” such that anyone who sees it will immediately know that it is all about night sky preservation...point the lights down to keep the stars.

Photos of items developed for sale or free distribution:



These are some of the locally developed items use to promote night sky preservation.



Efforts to reach new audiences:

The demographic trend noted in last year's report has continued. Although there has been some growth within the city limits of Blanco, the city is surrounded by several large developments that are growing by leaps and bounds. The Highway 281 transportation corridor that is coming north from San Antonio continues to grow. As other transportation improvements are made radiating out from Austin and San Antonio, the Blanco area becomes more and more attractive to those wanting to escape the city environment. These new residents too often bring their city lights with them. A key demographic for our outreach efforts remains recently arrived city people who have yet to develop an appreciation for or even an awareness of the night sky. This will be an on-going task into the foreseeable future.

Partnerships

Partners with whom Blanco and its night sky advocates work to promote the dark-sky movement:

Blanco's dark sky initiative remains a collaborative partnership between the City of Blanco, the Blanco Chamber of Commerce, and the Blanco County Friends of the Night Sky (BCFNS), the local night sky advocacy group.

*The BCFNS and the Blanco Chamber of Commerce run the Night Sky Friendly Business Recognition Program. As of January 2026, **41** businesses within the Blanco City Limits have been so recognized.*

We work closely with the Night Sky Team of the Hill Country Alliance (HCA), a 501(c)3 environmental advocacy organization. This has been a rich collaboration with many solid results ranging from night sky quality measuring and mapping to state-level legislative initiatives to protect the night sky.

*We have also worked with HCA to proliferate the number of Friends of the Night Sky advocacy groups throughout the Texas Hill Country. Using the model of the Blanco County Friends of the Night Sky (BCFNS) as the first county-wide friends' group, there are now **17** such groups in the Texas Hill Country.*

*We also worked with HCA to develop a Night Sky Friendly Neighborhood program aimed at new developments in the Texas Hill Country. In 2025, we developed a cooperative understanding with the Blanco County Conservation initiative to avoid duplication of effort. To date, **nine (9)** developers in Blanco County have been approached and restrictions have been secured from **seven (7)**.*

We continue to conduct events and star parties from time to time in conjunction with Blanco's Gem of the Hills Community Center, Blanco State Park, and the Hill Country Astronomers.

We worked with the Science Mill in Johnson City and the LBJ National Historic Park/Ranch unit to install continuous-read SQMs on their property.

We have assisted Blanco's Public Library and the Johnson City Public Library with children's programs and have conducted night sky preservation programs in their facility.

We worked with the Selah/Bamberger Ranch Preserve to install a continuous-read SQM unit near the Reserve's observatory.

We work with the Keep Blanco Beautiful organization and the Blanco Historic Preservation Commission on lighting options in Blanco's Historical District.

We routinely coordinate efforts with DarkSky-Texas, the state affiliate of DarkSky-International. The coordination is especially close in conjunction with our SQM Cluster initiative. We also supply SQM data to the Globe-at-Night Program at the University of Hong Kong.

Grants or funding for night sky preservation projects:

The BCFNS received a \$1,000 grant from the Brown Foundation in Houston, Texas specifically to purchase night sky friendly light bulbs to be distributed as part of its on-going educational outreach efforts. Several dozens of these bulbs have been distributed. This program continues into 2026 with **\$248** remaining in the fund.

In 2025, six individuals donated \$500 each to purchase continuous-read Sky Quality Meters (SQMs) for the BCFNS SQM Cluster Project.

In 2024, we received a **\$2,500** reimbursable grant from the Hill Country Alliance (HCA) to support the county-wide Unihedron SQM Cluster Initiative. These funds were used in 2025 to purchase several continuous-read SQM units. Additional HCA grants of \$2,192 were received to purchase Night Sky Business Award material and two Oppele Light Meters; and \$750 to support the application of Johnson City for designation as an International Dark Sky Community (IDSC). These projects are on-going.

On January 21, 2026, the BCFNS received a **\$1,000 reimbursable** grant from the Hill Country Alliance's Night Sky Preservation Fund to help support another iteration of our successful "Media Blitz" in which night sky preservation-themed postcards will be produced and distributed to every mail address in Blanco County, followed-up by paid newspaper ads in both county newspapers.

Working with the Hill Country Alliance, several years ago we were able to secure State-level legislation that enabled the City of Blanco to use Hotel Occupancy Tax (HOT) funds for night sky preservation. Only five municipalities in the State currently have this authority, with Blanco being the only that has actually used it. In 2024, we worked with the Hill Country Alliance to help draft legislation to extend that authority state-wide. However, in 2025, there was no local project that qualified for use of the HOT fund legislation. We intend to apply for these funds in 2026 purchase and install IDSC banners on utility poles in the City of Blanco and, possibly, purchase and install a top-mounted flagpole light at Blanco's Historic Cemetery.

The majority of funding for the Blanco County Friends of the Night Sky, comes from membership dues, which are \$20 per year per Household yearly membership; \$50 per year for a Business yearly membership; and \$500 per Household or Business for a Lifetime Membership. As of January 2026, the BCFNS has **162** total paid-up memberships, distributed as follows: **118** Annual Household Memberships; **27** Lifetime Household Memberships; **13** Annual Business Memberships; and **4** Lifetime Business Memberships.

Collaboration with DarkSky-related entities:

As noted above, we routinely coordinate with DarkSky-Texas on all matters relating to fighting light pollution. On occasion, we also contact DarkSky-International HQ in Tucson on technical matters, the most recent being communication with Mr. James Brigagliano, Lighting Program Manager, in January 2026 to clarify how to compute “Lumens per Net Acre,” a key parameter essential to Blanco’s Outdoor Lighting Ordinance enforcement efforts.

*We often collaborate with the Hill Country Alliance’s Night Sky Team, the Comal County Friends of the Night Sky, the Hays County Friends of the Night Sky, and the Kendall County Friends of the Night Sky. Additionally, we routinely help other night sky advocacy groups in the Texas Hill Country and beyond get up and running. There are now **17** such organization up and up and running in the Texas Hill Country.*

On August 9, 2025, a BCFNS volunteer gave a presentation entitled “How to Form a Night Sky Advocacy Organization” to a burgeoning night sky advocacy group on Washington State’s Olympic Peninsula.

Ongoing conservation and/or research programs with which Blanco and its night sky advocates collaborate:

The Blanco County SQM Cluster Initiative, run by the Blanco County Friends of the Night Sky, is the major night sky-related research project currently underway. Once the complete cluster of sixteen (16) continuous-read Sky Quality Meters is installed, we will be able to document the darkness of the night sky throughout Blanco County. This, in turn, will enable us to focus our light pollution abatement effort more precisely.

The Blanco County Conservation Initiative (BCCI), begun in the fall, 2023, is dedicated to environmental education and conservation activities in Blanco County. Though the focus of the BCCI is broader than just night sky preservation, many members of the Blanco County Friends of the Night Sky hold dual memberships and support the combined effort.



Night sky volunteer, Bob Heinonen, explains the workings of a Unihedron Sky Quality Meter (SQM) at a gathering of the Blanco County Conservation Initiative

The Hill Country Alliance (HCA), with whom we routinely collaborate, has numerous conservation and research programs throughout the Texas Hill Country. The Blanco County Friends of the Night Sky is an organizational member of HCA's Night Sky Team and collaborates with HCA on all matters involving the night sky.

Future plans to engage with existing and new partners and expand the dark-sky movement:

In addition to continuing the projects enumerated in the section below, in 2026 we intend to:

- Work collaboratively with the Hill Country Alliance, DarkSky-Texas, and DarkSky-International to enhance and expand our educational efforts in support of night sky preservation and light pollution abatement*
- Work with DarkSky-Texas and the Hill Country Alliance to seek State-wide Outdoor Lighting Regulations.*
- Work with the Blanco County Conservation Initiative on mutually supportive projects.*
- Work with the Science Mill in Johnson City and the Selah Bamberger Ranch Preserve to incorporate night sky reservation initiatives into their ongoing programs.*
- Work with Keep Blanco Beautiful and Keep Texas Beautiful to emphasize that keeping the night sky beautiful is part and parcel of their ongoing beautification and preservation efforts.*
- Work with other county level night sky preservation groups on mutually supportive initiatives.*

Success in Light Pollution Control, Leadership, and Future Threats

New or ongoing projects and/or renovation activities that have taken place in Blanco:

On-going projects of note are:

- Finish installing the county-wide, continuous read SQM Cluster of 16 units and establish a protocol for routine collection and reporting of the data*
- Work with Johnson City to help them begin the road to becoming an International Dark Sky Community*
- Approach the City of Round Mountain to ascertain their readiness to seek IDSC designation.*
- Conduct our fourth Annual "Media Blitz," sending 6" x 9" postcards supporting night sky preservation to every U.S. postal customer in Blanco County, supplemented by paid advertising in the two Blanco County newspapers*

- Continue Blanco's Night Sky-Friendly Business Recognition Program and work to establish that program in Johnson City
- Continue making Educational Presentations to a variety of audiences, often featuring the "Wizard of the Night Sky™," an original, costumed character actor dedicated to protecting the night sky.
- Host Night Sky Information Booths at community events
- Conduct Night Sky Art Contests for middle school and high school students in both Blanco and Johnson City
- Continue publishing our monthly newsletter
- Post news of our activities and news about the night sky in Social Media to include our Facebook group and Instagram account.
- Improve and expand the BCFNS website, (<https://www.blancocountynightsky.org/index.php>)
- Submit news items to the two Blanco County newspapers
- Encourage new members to purchase a BCFNS Membership Signs to display on their property
- Participate in DarkSky's International Night Sky Month in April and the Hill Country Alliance's Hill Country Night Sky Month in October.
- Secure Night Sky Proclamations of support from the three municipalities in Blanco County as well as the Blanco County government.
- Install pole-mounted Blanco IDSC banners on selected utility poles within the Blanco City Limits
- Install a downward-shining, Night Sky-friendly flagpole light on the flagpole at Blanco's Historic Cemetery
- Monitor the installation glare shields on the approximately 100 city-owned streetlights in the City Limits of Blanco
- Refine the BCFNS Policy and Procedures Manual to ensure organizational continuity.
- Replace 3-4 retiring Board members of the Blanco County Friends of the Night Sky and transition the organization into its next phase

The status of previously identified "threats" to Blanco's night sky:

Since receiving its IDSC designation in 2022, the "threats" to Blanco's night sky remain essentially unchanged but the severity has increased, i.e., 1) encroaching sky glow from Austin and San Antonio, 2) burgeoning residential developments in the immediate area, 3) continuing pollution from unshielded outdoor lighting within the Blanco City Limits.

Despite those increasing threats, it appears that the darkness of the night sky above the City of Blanco is improving slightly. We remain optimistic.

Changes to the previously identified “threats” to Blanco’s night sky:

The metropolitan area of Austin/San Marcos/New Braunfels/San Antonio is one of the fastest growing areas in the country. With that growth has come increased light pollution and sky glow. As the sky dome above that area grows ever larger, it is certain to impinge on the relatively dark sky above the City of Blanco and Blanco County.

We will continue to fight light pollution wherever we can at the local level while working with partners to effect outdoor lighting controls at the state level.

Anticipated management of “threats” to Blanco’s night sky in the coming year:

As TxDOT continues to expand the carrying capacity of Highway 281 through Blanco County in the coming years, we anticipate that aberrant light will follow the new highway into Blanco County.

We will continue our night sky preservation education efforts countywide and will encourage citizens living within the Blanco City Limits to file Outdoor Lighting Ordinance code violation complaints with the City.

We will continue to work with the Hill Country Alliance and the Blanco County Conservation Initiative (BCCI) to refine and expand the Night Sky Friendly Development Program to encourage responsible outdoor lighting in new residential developments in Blanco County.

We will continue working with other night sky advocacy groups in the Texas Hill Country to achieve an area-wide reduction in light pollution.

We will continue working with DarkSky-Texas and the Hill Country Alliance to seek state-wide outdoor lighting restrictions, specifically legislation to give all 254 counties in Texas the authority to regulate outdoor lighting and to enact and use Hotel Occupancy Tax (HOT) funds to support light pollution abatement and enforcement efforts.

Change in Ownership, Place Size, or Access

The total size of the City of Blanco: 3.2 Sq Miles/8.4 Sq Km

The current population:

*The official 2020 U.S. Census credited the City of Blanco with a population of **1,682** in 978 households, and 530 families residing inside the City Limits.*

*The latest U.S. Census Bureau estimated population for the city is **2,336-2,340**. If accurate, this would be a 39% increase in population in just 6 years, more than ten times the 2020-2025 national population increase of 3.7%. This would be an astonishing 3.03%-8.8% annual increase in population. The implications of such rapid population growth are many, not the least of which is the potential for increased light pollution.*

Changes to the physical size of Blanco:

There has been no increase in the physical size of the Blanco City Limits in several years. Nor is it anticipated to grow in the future as the Texas Legislature removed the ability for any municipality in the state to do involuntary annexation of property, even property in its Extraterritorial Jurisdiction (ETJ). It is doubtful that property owners adjacent to the City of Blanco will apply for voluntary annexation as the City is unable to provide requisite services.

On the contrary, there currently several applications pending by property owners to “de-annex” their property from the City. Their petitions center on the lack of City services on their property that is located within the Blanco City Limits.

Additional Information

The greatest single benefit of the Dark Sky Community certification to Blanco:

Obtaining the International Dark Sky Community (IDSC) designation has given a significant boost to our efforts supporting night sky preservation and light pollution abatement. It has increased our credibility with key audiences such as governmental bodies and legislators and has given the community-at-large something in which they can take justifiable pride.

Due to increased traffic on Highway 281, the Texas Department of Transportation is actively considering building a bypass around Blanco. In order to avoid municipal atrophy due to diverted traffic, Blanco will need to market itself as a destination city in order to attract tourist business to keep the city’s businesses alive.

Night Sky tourism will play an important role in this and Blanco's IDSC designation will support that effort.

Additional information submitted to DarkSky for the 2025 IDSC Annual Report:

REPORT AUTHORSHIP: Blanco's IDSC application was the result of the collaborative work of three mutually supporting entities: the City of Blanco, the Blanco Chamber of Commerce, and the Blanco County Friends of the Night Sky (BCFNS). The BCFNS continues as the City's Executive Agent for all actions relating to night sky preservation to include filing the IDSC Annual Report with DarkSky-International. Please address questions to Wayne Gosnell, President, BCFNS, (210) 557-6127; GosnellTexas@Gmail.com; info@blancocountynightsky.org

TRADEMARKS. The character "The Wizard of the Night Skytm" and the phrase "Deep in the Dark of Texastm" are both trademarked by the Blanco County Friends of the Night Sky and cannot be used without the written permission of the BCFNS. All other materials, to include original materials produced by the BCFNS may be used for any purpose relating to night sky preservation without explicit permission.

Attachment: 2025 Media Coverage

2025 Media Coverage
Blanco County News

January 1, 2025

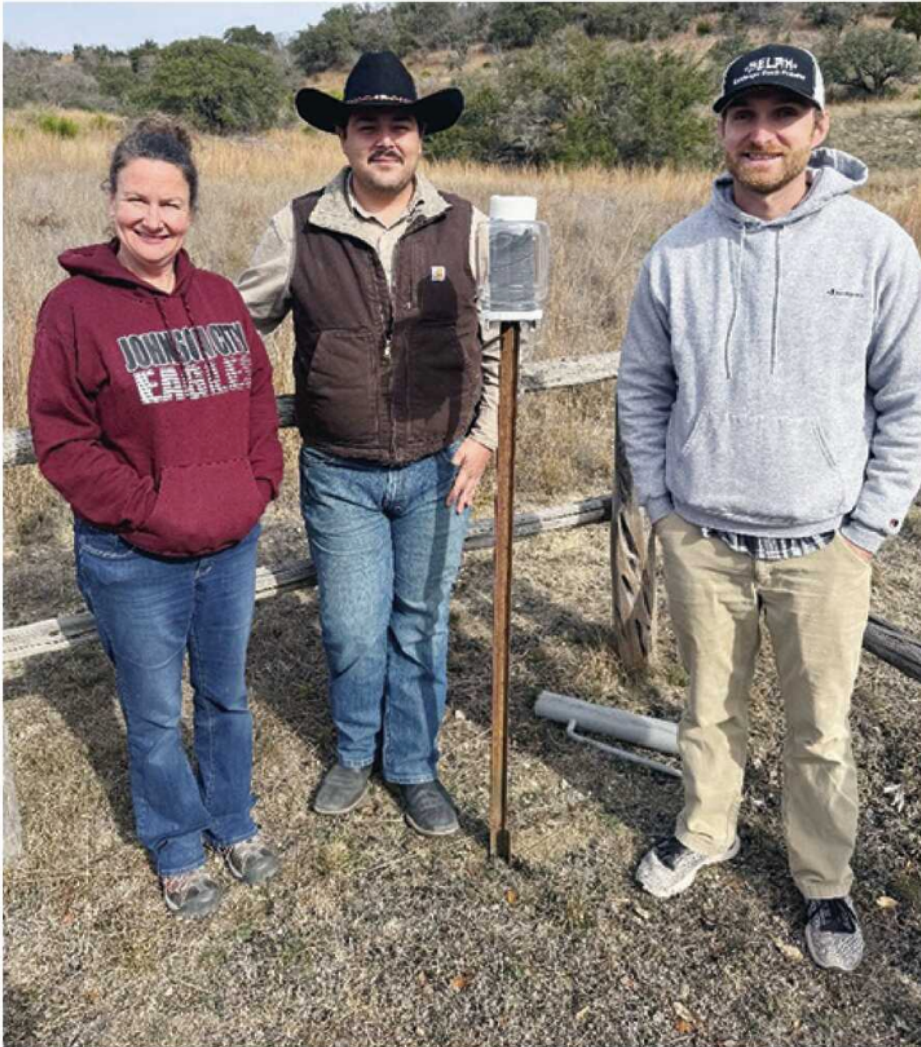
Seeing stars in the park



Blanco State Park hosted an event educating the public about the night sky on Saturday. Park interpreter Kathryn Tiedemann coordinated the event, which included an appearance by The Wizard of The Night Sky from Blanco County Friends of The Night Sky, and three volunteer astronomers with telescopes from the Hill Country Astronomers club which holds monthly meetings in Fredericksburg. (Photo by Stefanie Wright)

January 22, 2025

NIGHT SKY MONITORING



The second sky quality meter was recently installed in Blanco County by the Blanco County Friends of the Night Sky. This monitor was placed at the Bamberger Ranch near Johnson City. It's one of 13 monitors that BCFNS will install to monitor dark sky quality in the county. Pictured above, April Sansom, Bamberger Ranch executive director, BCFNS volunteer Samuel Lartigue and Drew Neyland, Bamberger Ranch research coordinator, after the meter is installed. See more on page 3. (Contributed photo)

January 22, 2025

Second sky quality meter installed in county

Blanco County Friends of the Night Sky has begun installation of a sky quality meter cluster in Blanco County.

BCFNS will install and maintain at least 13 sky quality meters across the county as a part of its 10-year action plan to monitor sky darkness. Data from the meters is uploaded to the DarkSky Texas database for analysis and to the Globe At Night University of Hong Kong database for integration into global data analysis.

Selah Bamberger Ranch Preserve chose to become a part of the meter cluster and installed SQM BC02 next to its observatory. April Sansom, executive director of the preserve said, "We are really excited to have the SQM as a part of our monitoring and teaching experience."

"We love the enthusiasm for this project," said Bob Heinonen, BCFNS project manager for the sky quality meter cluster project. "The



Samuel Lartigue, left, a BCFNS volunteer, with Drew Neyland, Bamberger Ranch research coordinator, attaching SQM solar assembly to T-post. (Contributed photo)

first continuous read SQM (BC01) was purchased through a generous donation as a proof-of-concept installation. It proved out and now we are looking for private citizens to donate use of just a few square feet on their property. All we need is a clear straight up look at the sky and a place to drive a T-post. There is no cost or work for the property owner."

A \$2,500 grant from the Hill Country Alliance is being used to purchase 5 of the SQM's.

For more information or to ask about having a sky quality meter on your property, contact dba@blancocountynightsky.org. For information on the equipment, take a look at www.unihe-dron.com.

February 26, 2025

Sky quality meters

Dear editor:

The people of Blanco County have been amazing in their love and support of the night sky, and we'd like to thank them one and all. The latest example of this is the continuous-read Sky Quality Meter (SQM) Cluster Project we are now installing across the county. Twenty-four landowners have volunteered to have these instruments on their property and several of those have even donated the \$500 per unit cost themselves!

When complete, the SQM Cluster will let us accurately and continually measure the darkness of the night sky in all parts of the county. Thus, we will be able to monitor the progress we are making (or not making) in our fight against light pollution.

To all who participate in or support this effort to preserve the night sky above Blanco County, thank you!

Wayne Gosnell
President, Blanco County Friends of the Night Sky

March 5, 2025

HCRE becomes lifetime member of BCFNS

Candy Cargill, owner of Hill Country Real Estate and a member of the Blanco city council, adjusts her new sign signifying lifetime membership in the Blanco County Friends of the Night Sky (BCFNS). Hill Country Real Estate joins three other Blanco County lifetime member businesses and 25 lifetime member households. The \$500 lifetime memberships enable the BCFNS to continue its night sky preservation education efforts throughout the county. The fight against light pollution in Blanco County is vital to preserving the rural heritage of the area as well as protecting the health and safety of its residents and the well-being of its wildlife. (Photo by Wayne Gosnell)



March 12, 2025

Star Party held at Blanco State Park



Jack Petersen, left, and John Watson of the Hill Country Astronomers adjust the counterweight on one of the telescopes used in the March 7 “Star Party” hosted by Blanco State Park. Katy Tiedemann, park interpretive ranger, provided an appreciative audience of 25 attendees with a non-technical overview of astronomy, while Bob Heinonen of the Blanco County Friends of the Night Sky, aka, the Wizard of the Night Sky, explained the problems of light pollution and how to help the night sky remain dark. Blanco State Park hosts a variety of programs each month on topics ranging from fishing in the river to exploring the craters of the moon. (Photo by Wayne Gosnell)

March 12, 2025

Night Sky lifetime members



Gillespie County residents and both halves of the Him and Her musical duo, Michael D'Eath and Brenda Freed, receive their Blanco County Friends of the Night Sky (BCFNS) Lifetime Membership sign on March 6. The \$500 Lifetime memberships enable the BCFNS to carry on their night sky preservation education efforts and support the fight against light pollution in the Texas Hill Country. "Light pollution doesn't stop at the county line," stated D'Eath, "We're happy to support the Blanco County group because what they do helps keep our own night sky dark. The Blanco County Friends of the Night Sky has led the way in preserving what we hold so dear in these valleys – the night sky." (Photo by Wayne Gosnell)

May 14, 2025 (a paid ad)

"If I can see
your outdoor
lights at night,
you are
harming me."

~ All Creatures



P. O. Box 1402, Johnson City, TX 78636

Did you get our postcard and our message?

May 21, 2025



Ribbon cutting held for The Pearl Handle

The Blanco Chamber of Commerce held a ribbon cutting for The Pearl Handle, a high-end barbershop founded by Master Barber Aimee Perkins. It is located at 714 4th Street #103 in Blanco. Call 830-833-3057 to make an appointment, which is encouraged, but walk-ins are also accepted. The shop offers haircuts, hot lather straight razor shaves and additional services.

May 28, 2025 (a paid ad)

"If I can see
your outdoor
lights at night,
you are
harming me."

~ All Creatures



BLANCO COUNTY
FRIENDS OF THE
NIGHT SKY



P. O. Box 1402, Johnson City, TX 78636

Did you get our postcard and our message?

July 30, 2025

SQM placed at Science Mill

Samuel Lartigue, a volunteer SQM Cluster Project Manager for Blanco County Friends of the Night Sky (BCFNS), and two Science Mill staff members installed a Sky Quality Meter (SQM) at the Science Mill in Johnson City. This is the 14th SQM installed in Blanco County.

Bob Heinonen, board member of BCFNS said, having a SQM at the Science Mill accomplishes several important things. He said it helps BCFNS fulfill the first item of its action plan, which is to measure the darkness of the night sky at strategic places over Blanco County for at least the next 10 years. "Are we gaining ground or losing ground?"

The central location of the SQM in Johnson City, according to Heinonen, will provide data about night sky



George Clement, exhibits coordinator of the Science Mill, and Quaid Thompson, exhibit technician of the Science Mill, pose with the newly installed BCFNS SQM. (Photo by Samuel Lartigue)

darkness that can be included with an application to Dark-Sky International for Johnson City to become an International Dark Sky Certified Community. The SQM measures an area of over 4 miles across the city.

Heinonen said that in the future, the SQM may be updated to provide data for integration into the Science Mill's educational program. BCFNS will work with the

Science Mill on the integration project.

"We are very happy the Science Mill agreed to be part of our Blanco County SQM cluster," he said. "This will make a significant difference monitoring our night sky."

The SQM at the Science Mill was purchased by BCFNS; the SQM will be both maintained and monitored by BCFNS for the next 10 years.

August 13, 2025

2 businesses receive night sky friendly recognitions



On behalf of the Blanco Chamber of Commerce and Blanco County Friends of the Night Sky, Michael Green presented the Night Sky Friendly Business Certificate of Merit to Buchanan's Coffee House and Relax in Blanco on Aug. 5. This program is meant to encourage the practice of responsible outdoor lighting by preventing light from escaping above the horizon into the night sky and off premise glare. At left, Julie Shacklett, owner of Buchanan's Coffee House, with Blake Harrison and Hannah Teller, receives her certificate of merit. At right, Elissa Barker and Megan Breeding receive their award. The Night Sky Friendly Business Certificate of Merit program, which is sponsored by the Blanco Chamber of Commerce, endorsed by the Hill Country Alliance and supported by the Blanco County Friends of the Night Sky, is open to any business or organization in the Blanco area. Chamber membership is not a requirement. (Photos by Linda Whitlow)

September 24, 2025

2 businesses honored for protecting the night sky in Blanco County



The Blanco Chamber of Commerce and Friends of the Night Sky recently honored two local businesses for their commitment to responsible outdoor lighting. On Sept. 18, Elizabeth Miller presented certificates of compliance to Mark Dean, DDS, left, and to Christophe and Sandra Barbee Zaleski, owners of 419 Bistro. These businesses were recognized for implementing lighting practices that reduce sky glow, glare and light pollution. The recognition program is sponsored by the Blanco Chamber of Commerce, endorsed by the Hill Country Alliance, and supported by the Blanco County friends of the Night Sky. The program's goal is to promote outdoor lighting practices that prevent light from escaping above the horizon, ensuring the Hill Country night sky remains a natural treasure. Participation is open to all businesses and organizations in the Blanco area, regardless of chamber membership. (Contributed photos)

October 1, 2025

Blanco Valley WMA hosts night sky presentation

Submitted by BVWMA

In keeping with goals of the Blanco Valley Wildlife Management Association to educate and encourage conservation practices among the more than 18-member small ranches and properties located primarily along Ranch Road 165 and Middle Creek Road (FM410), The Wizard Of The Night Sky (Bob Heinonen) gave a superb, animated presentation

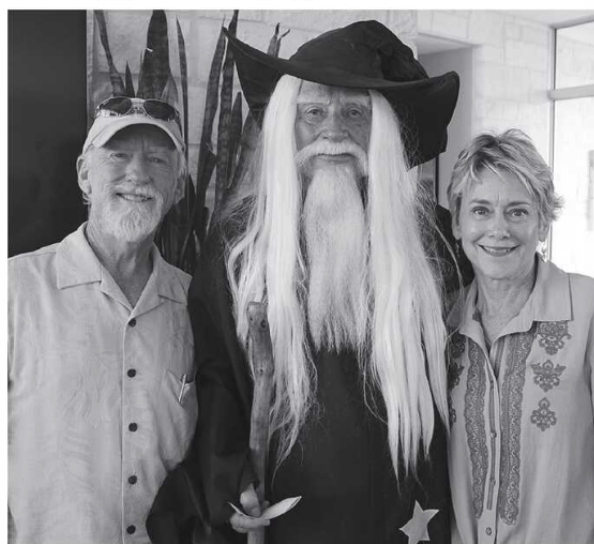
of the ways and policies for preserving the night sky.

BVWMA President James Robinson and his wife Nancy praised the many actions of the Blanco County Friends of the Night Sky, which have elevated the prestige and positive attention to the county for their leadership in preserving the precious night skies.

The large, eager to learn, group of members were hosted by Lenka and Larry Wat-

ters at their contemporary, environmentally friendly home surrounded by conservation responsive gardens and ponds that attract a wide variety of butterflies, dragon flies, birds and other wildlife. Heinonen's presentation provoked vigorous discussion among members while enjoying a lovely meal. Principle among the discussion was the night sky friendly practices and devices to be used for residences and commercial establishments to curtail light pollution of the night sky.

The meeting concluded with Heinonen describing the very positive results that have been achieved by implementing a plan for installing sky quality monitors (SQMs) throughout Blanco County to monitor light pollution. As described on the Friends of the Night Sky website, more than 16 SQMs have been installed on properties throughout Blanco County and others are planned. Mitzie Wittliff, member of the BVWMA, was recognized for funding the installation of the first proof of concept SQM. Samuel Lartigue, a technology proficient mem-



The Wizard of the Night Sky, Bob Heinonen, with the BVWMA President James Robinson and his wife, vice president Nancy Robinson.

ber of the board of directors, periodically visits each of the SQM installation sites and downloads the night sky data recorded on each SQM. Then

he and Heinonen, as database administrator, transfer the collective results for Blanco County to the Dark Sky Texas SQM page. The actions of

the BVWMA and the Friends of the Night Sky are having a very positive impact on the quality of living in Blanco County.



October 22, 2025

Businesses recognized for night sky friendly lighting



The Blanco Chamber of Commerce and Friends of the Night Sky recently honored two local businesses for their commitment to responsible outdoor lighting. Michael Green is shown presenting certificates of compliance to Noel and Richard Ketay, at left, owners of The Feed Store, and to Crystal Spybuck, Brian Fields and Katie Gentry of the Blanco Library. These Blanco businesses were recognized for implementing lighting practices that reduce sky glow, glare and light pollution. The recognition program is sponsored by the Blanco Chamber of Commerce, endorsed by the Hill Country Alliance, and supported by the Blanco County Friends of the Night Sky. The program's goal is to promote outdoor lighting practices that prevent light from escaping above the horizon, ensuring the Hill Country night sky remains our natural treasure. Participation is open to all businesses and organizations in the Blanco area, regardless of chamber membership.

November 5, 2025

BCFNS makes donation to Blanco ISD



Vicki Guidry, vice president of the Blanco County Friends of the Night Sky, presents a \$200 check on Oct. 24 to Kris Baker, Blanco Middle School art teacher, in appreciation for the participation of his students in last year's annual Night Sky Art Contest. This year's contest theme will be "Animals Need the Dark," emphasizing the effect of light pollution on animals and how important the night is to their survival. Witnessing the presentation are Blanco ISD Superintendent Clay Rosenbaum and Blanco Middle School Principal Jordan Leverett. (Photo by Wayne Gosnell)