



# TEXAS GENERAL LAND OFFICE

## JERRY PATTERSON, COMMISSIONER

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## PRESS RELEASE

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### **Ariel McFalls wins first Save Texas History Essay Contest**

***Friendswood 12-year-old's writing on the Caddoan Mounds well-researched, interesting***

AUSTIN — Ariel McFalls, a seventh-grader at Westbrook Intermediate School in Friendswood, won top honors today in the first-ever Save Texas History Essay Contest. Ariel was informed of her big win in a live, two-way videoconference with the Houston-area seventh-grader's class.

Ariel's essay on the Caddoan Mounds of East Texas was well-researched and well-written. The essay detailed the rapid decline of the once prosperous Caddos, who built the mounds, and flourished in Texas before the arrival of Europeans.

"When I read Ariel's essay, I learned a lot about the Caddoan Mounds State Historic Site," Patterson said. "This contest called for an essay that told the story of a place not generally recognized as one of the state's premiere historical sites, and Ariel nailed it with her essay."

Ariel's essay was picked from more than 1,000 entries submitted from across the state. The seventh-grader won round-trip airline tickets for four to San Antonio from any Southwest Airlines Texas destination, accommodations for two nights at a hotel near the Riverwalk, a VIP tour of the Alamo, and tickets for additional attractions. Ten finalists also won Save Texas History backpacks, a Certificate of Appreciation signed by Patterson and a historic map replica from the Land Office Archives collection.

Patterson gave special congratulations to Clear Creek ISD, which was represented by an astounding four finalists along with the grand prize winner. Ariel's teacher, Jacqueline Graham, presented the prizes to the winners. Graham teaches three of the essay winners.

While all Texas seventh-grade students study Texas history, Patterson said he hopes that asking students to write about the history of places close to their hearts will help make their stories come alive.

For more details, visit [SaveTexasHistory.org](http://SaveTexasHistory.org) .

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