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THE Pampa NEWS

MONDAY, APRIL 15, 2002

NEWS

Vol. 98 No. 319 • Pampa, Texas
50 cents Daily • Sunday \$1



Pampa Cyber Net
Internet Power for the New Miller
Dialup or dedicated T-1, and more

WEATHER & WEATHER
Chance of storms later this afternoon
HIGH 90 LOW 61

LOCAL
ACCORD to view Bill Moyer video

Bill Moyers' PBS video on the subject of water and the future of the Texas Panhandle will be shown at 7 p.m., April 18, at the Lovett Memorial Library North meeting room. This is sponsored by Active Citizens Concerned Over Resource Development in Agriculture, Inc. (ACCORD). The meeting is open to the public. Copies of the video may be borrowed by local organizations or civic groups for viewing by calling 665-8516 or 665-7659.

LISD board calls meeting April 17
LEFORS — A special meeting of the Lefors Independent School District board of education has been called for 6 p.m., Wednesday, April 17, in the high school library, 209 5th St.

STATE
Commemorative coin finalists down to five
SAN ANTONIO (AP) — Designs including the Alamo and a lone star are among five quarter finalists emerging from thousands of entries for the state's new commemorative coin.

Final design concepts for the Texas quarter, which will be issued in 2004, are the choices of the Governor's Quarter Dollar Coin Advisory Committee.

DEATHS
Sarah Pauline Reid Sidwell, 95, former Pampan.

INSIDE...
Classified 7
Comics 4
Sports 5

West Texas LANDSCAPE
Residential & Commercial
669-0158 mobile 663-1277



(Pampa News photo by Kate B. Dickson)

Pampan Roy Hendricks, right, joined millions of others who mailed their income taxes today on the April 15 deadline. Hendricks, who handed off his form to postal clerk Robert Schwab, says he "always" waits until the deadline because he's self employed. Hendricks is a painting contractor. The post office window will close at 5 p.m. today, its regular time, said Postmaster Tim McNair. All mail deposited by 4:30 a.m. Tuesday in the collection boxes behind the post office will be postmarked April 15, he said.

Taxing times

Filing taxes more complex; fewer audits; — and the middle class are paying less

By CURT ANDERSON
AP TAX WRITER

WASHINGTON (AP) — The wealthy and low-income people stand a better chance of being audited than the typical middle-class family, which is paying the lowest share of its income to the Treasury since 1957.

Rich, poor and the middle class all are affected by one tax trend — the 17,000-page, 2.8 million-word tax code is more complex than ever. One estimate is that it now takes 28 hours and six minutes to tackle the Internal Revenue Service's 1040 form and do the necessary record keeping.

This year's filing deadline is midnight Monday for most of the country.

IRS data and reports from several tax research organizations depict a tax system that does not treat everyone equally but is, by far, the single biggest source of government paperwork and red tape.

"An abomination," Treasury Secretary Paul O'Neill calls it.

Consider IRS audits. Individuals making \$100,000 or more and those making \$25,000 or

less are much more likely to face an audit than the tens of millions in between. High-income people tend to have more complicated returns that invite more audits; about 0.69 percent of all these returns were audited in 2001.

Those making under \$25,000 usually have simple returns, yet about 0.40 percent were audited last year. That is almost twice the rate of taxpayers in the middle-income range and is largely attributable to the earned income tax credit, effectively a low-income refund program on which the IRS has focused attention to cut down on mistakes and fraud.

When audits related to that tax credit are not included, the rate for those earning under \$25,000 drops to 0.15 percent, the IRS says.

For all taxpayers, the audit rate in 2001 was 0.58 percent, a slight rebound from the year before but far lower than in previous years. One reason for that is the 1998 IRS reform law that attempted to make the agency friendly to taxpayers.

"We don't see the unreasonable and harassing tactics we saw in the past," said Jennifer Prager Sodaro, an attorney who specializes in (See TAXES, Page 3)

City asks AG opinion on right of oversight

By KATE B. DICKSON
ASSOCIATE PUBLISHER

An attorney general's opinion, due by Sept. 23, is expected to solve the question of whether the city has approval authority over the plan of dissolution of the Pampa Economic Development Corporation.

"It's really a question of whether it (dissolution) changes any of the rules," City Manager Bob Eskridge said today.

Voters in Pampa voted on Nov. 6, 2001, to dissolve the PEDC which continues to be funded by a half-cent city sales tax until its obligations are satisfied.

State Rep. Warren Chisum made the formal request for the opinion and included with it a letter from Pampa City Attorney Don Lane which outlines the issues. The AG's office replied in a letter last week it will have an opinion by Sept. 23.

First issue
Does the City of Pampa, as the creating unit, have approval authority over the plan of dissolution of the PEDC including, but not limited to, the terms of the sale of assets?

Second issue
May a reserve account be established to meet future financial commitments after the outstanding obligations have been paid?

At the time of the election, the PEDC had several notes payable relating to projects it had funded as well as assets including a commercial building subject to a lease with an option to purchase, a section of land, a 213-acre tract of land which was to be developed for industrial sites, and some personal property, Lane wrote.

Additionally, there is one project which has possible financial obligations which may accrue because of increased employment criteria (See CITY, Page 3)



(Pampa News photo by Dee Dee Laramore)

Lamar first grader, Julia Soto, shows her family, from left, Rosa Soto, Ureil Soto, and Julia Chavez, her painting of a clown now on display at Carver Center.

Energy answer

May be blowin' in the wind

By DAVID BOWSER
STAFF WRITER

AMARILLO — Walter Hornaday, president of Cielo Wind Power, L.L.C., told officials from five states recently that local communities, like White Deer, benefit economically and psychologically from projects like Cielo's wind farm.

Speaking to the Great Plains Symposium here on air and water resources, Hornaday expounded on the benefits to local communities.

Cielo Wind Power, L.L.C., established the wind farm at White Deer last year.

White Deer has about 500 people, Hornaday said. As Cielo built the 80 megawatt wind farm just outside of town, the company brought in construction crews that numbered about half the population of White Deer.

"During peak construction, we had 250 people on site," Hornaday said. "It does do a lot for bringing business into areas and the more wind projects that come about, you start to develop a new job base and a new revenue source in these areas."

He said that about 10 percent of the amount spent on establishing a wind farm goes to local suppliers and labor.

The price of wind power right now is in the three to four cents per kilowatt hour range.

"That's less expensive than new nuclear power," Hornaday said. "It's less expensive than new coal power. It's about even with new natural gas power plants."

In a commodity market, he said, the only thing that gets built is the lowest priced item.

"Right now, about nine out of every 10 power plants are natural gas power plants," Hornaday said. "We're at least

creeping in and getting one out of 10 or one out of 20 power plants that are powered by wind."

For land owners, he said, the attractiveness is a land lease that yields a supplemental income.

"It's not like an oil and gas lease where you retire after you get it," Hornaday said, "but it's a nice supplemental income. One wind turbine only takes about an acre of land out of production and provides a good boost to income."

A section of land with 20 turbines on it, a land owner could gain some revenue and only lose about 20 acres of land from the production base out of the 640 acres.

Hornaday said wind farms also help with the local tax base.

"Upton County is where we've done quite a bit of our work, south of Odessa," Hornaday said. "It was the second largest oil and gas county in the state. Now, wind power has overtaken oil and gas for the tax base in that county."

That, of course, can be a double-edge sword.

"One of the bad things about wind projects from the standpoint of developers and owners," Hornaday said, "and good for the county is that property taxes for our projects exceed all of our operating expenses combined."

The more money spent on capital investment in the State of Texas, the higher the property taxes.

"That's why we come in a lot of times to a tax district and ask for a break to get our taxes on par with conventional power plants," Hornaday said.

In addition to the economic benefits to a community, there is a certain amount of home (See WIND, Page 3)

Budding artists

PISD displaying students' efforts at Carver Center

More than 50 students and Pampa Independent School District's Artist-in-Residence received special recognition at the PISD Board of Education meeting Thursday.

Before the meeting, the students and family members attended a reception and viewed their artwork now displayed at Carver Center, the school district's administration building. Students, grouped by schools, then received certificates of achievement from school officials.

Kay Crouch, PISD artist-in-residence and former long-time Pampa teacher, was also honored at the event.

"This is part of the Texas Commission on the Arts," explained Superintendent Dr. (See ARTISTS, Page 3)

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TAXES

representing people accused of tax crimes. The middle class is enjoying the lowest tax burden in decades, according to the Center on Budget and Policy Priorities, a government research group focused on the lower and middle classes.

Using government data, the center projects that a family of four making exactly the median income — \$64,600 a year in 2001 — paid 6.8 percent of its earnings in federal income taxes. That compares with 10.3 percent during the 1980s for the same median-income family and is the lowest rate since 1957.

The decline was taking place before Congress passed President Bush's 10-year, \$1.35 trillion tax cut, which further reduced the middle-class burden in the early years of that cut. In his Saturday radio address, Bush said taxpayers have already benefited from \$57 billion in tax relief from that law and "the best news is that tax relief is continuing this year."

Average tax refunds this year are running about 12 percent above the year before, in part because the child tax credit targeted at middle-income people was raised from \$500 to \$600 by the tax relief legislation. The average refund through April 5 was \$1,954.

Taxpayers at all income groups must deal

with an ever more complex tax system. The White House budget office estimates that in 2001, Americans spent 1.5 billion hours on federal paperwork — 80 percent of it dealing with tax forms.

Roger Harris, an enrolled agent licensed by the Treasury Department to practice before the IRS, said the 10,000-member National Association of Enrolled Agents is seeing more clients than ever.

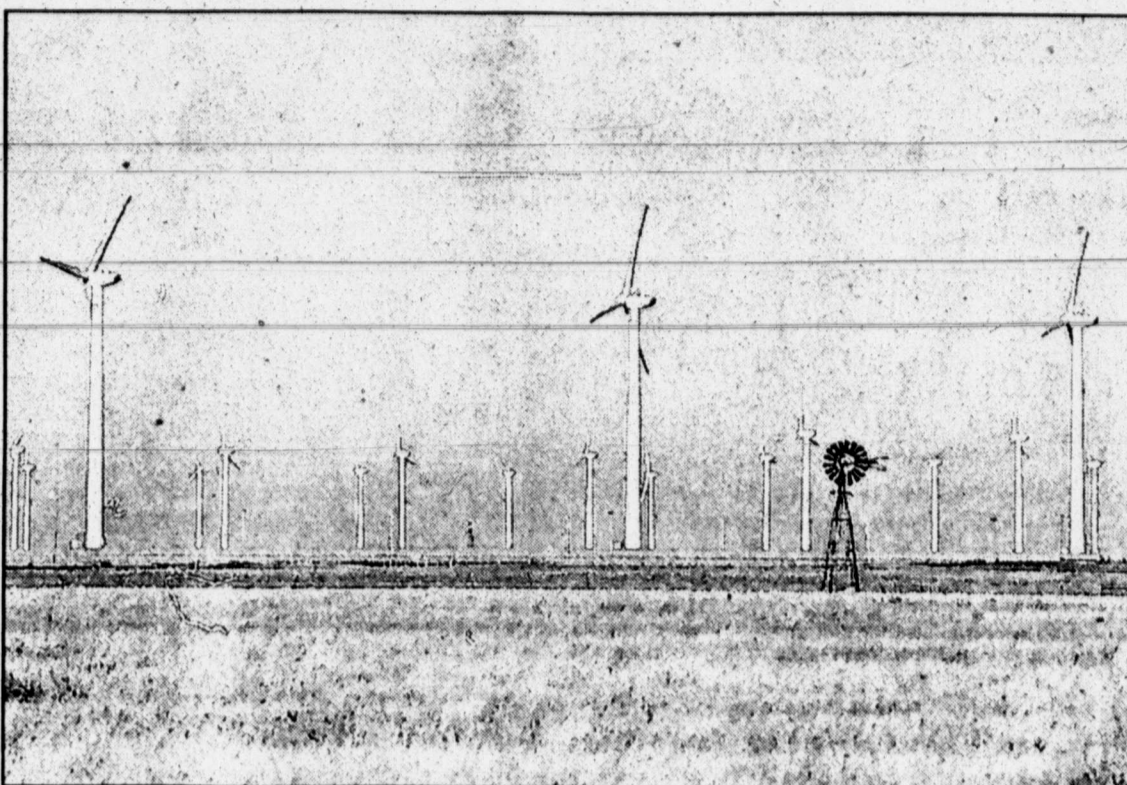
H&R Block, the nation's largest tax preparation firm, recently reported a 4.4 percent increase in returns prepared, with fees running 12.1 percent above last year.

"More and more, taxpayers are opting to leave return preparation to the professionals because continued tax law complexity makes it difficult for them to prepare their tax returns with confidence," Harris said.

The single new line on the tax forms about how to account for last year's tax rebate checks of up to \$600 has triggered more than 4 million errors, according to the IRS.

The National Taxpayers Union, a nonpartisan group that advocates lower taxes, calculated the 1040 form preparation and record keeping time, including commonly used schedules, of 28 hours, six minutes. That's an increase of more than an hour compared with last year and 40 percent more time-consuming than in 1997.

Old and new



(Pampa News photo by David Bowser)

Ultra-modern wind generators surround an old-fashioned wind mill at Cielo Wind Farm near White Deer.

CONTINUED FROM PAGE ONE

WIND

town pride involved.

"White Deer's name" is becoming synonymous with the project that's out there," Hornaday said, "and we like working with local communities."

As part of their community outreach program, Cielo will have their first Earth Day cel-

ebration April 22, in White Deer. They will have school buses take tours from White Deer out to the wind farm northwest of town.

"There is a lot of interest in people going out to see the project," Hornaday said.

The worst part of the wind power energy, Hornaday said, is where he is selling, but no one is buying.

"There is plenty of wind power, but it's hard to find somebody to buy the electricity from it," Hornaday said. "Right now, there is a glut in wind power."

He said too many power plants were built recently as a knee jerk reaction to a shortage of power plants for years.

"Right now, prices are very low," Hornaday said.

CONTINUED FROM PAGE ONE

CITY

after all the indebtedness of the PEDC is satisfied, the city attorney wrote. He was making reference to United Medicorp.

"It is my opinion that the current law is unclear on the relationship of a creating unit and the board of directors of an EDC which is being involuntarily dissolved," Lane wrote.

However, Lane said he believes the 1992 state act that created EDCs "... reflects oversight authority by the creating unit (city) of an EDC."

Citing a portion of the act, Lane then says, "... It is quite clear, in my opinion, that the creating unit has oversight authority of the EDC's board regarding projects and the expenditures of money and its budget. It does not seem consistent that, upon an involuntary dissolution, that the City has lost all of its oversight authority."

The second issue, about a

reserve account, pertains to United Medicorp and questions if a reserve account may be established to meet commitments. That would be in place of continuing the sales tax revenue until the end of the project commitment — something Lane said would far exceed the amount of money needed.

PEDC Board President Dalton Lewis said the PEDC does not plan to submit any briefs on its own to the attorney general with regard to the opinion request. He added the board will abide with the opinion, regardless of its contents.

"It was supposed to be our request anyway," Lewis said today. "We paid for Don (Lane) to go to Austin ... but it doesn't make any difference, it needs to be done."

Lewis was making reference to a trip Lane made to Austin to learn more about legalities concerning the dissolution of an EDC. Pampa is the first city in the state to vote for a dissolution.

Lane, who at one time was serving as city attorney and counsel to the PEDC, recently resigned his PEDC counsel position saying he could not serve as city attorney, too, without there being a potential conflict of interest.

Meanwhile, the PEDC's search for its own lawyer has been meeting with dead ends, Lewis said.

"We've asked about every lawyer in Pampa," he said, "but they've all turned us down."

Lewis said the local attorneys have done so citing ties to people who have a relationship with the PEDC through entities financed by the PEDC or through persons/ businesses connected with the entities.

He said two Amarillo attorneys have been approached but he said each wanted to research the PEDC from its inception.

"We don't have that kind of money," Lewis said with regard to the legal research costs. "It would cost a fortune. Besides, we want to go forward."

CONTINUED FROM PAGE ONE

ARTISTS

Dawson Orr. The state organization pays approximately half of the PISD art program, he said, adding that local foundations and organizations also provide a major part of the funding.

Each year, artwork by students from each of the elementary schools and Pampa Middle School is chosen to be framed and displayed at the school's administration building for one year. The art is then returned to the student.

This year, 56 students were selected to have their artwork shown at Carver Center: T.J. Waldi, Ashley Stucker, Jacob Frost, Amber Chavarria, Ashley Hernandez, Laci Hernandez, Dustin Neef, Kelby McKinney,

Ryan Thompson, Miguel Tapia, Taylor Aderholt, Emily Barrett, Danielle Towles, Norman Rodgers, Jacob Howard, Shelby Clay, Christa Holt, Leonal Madrid, Kiana Nelson, Emily Nicklas, Eric Ortiz, Sissy Palmer, Taylor Ranney, Jose Resendiz Jr., Oscar Salazar, Laci Sailor, Julia Soto, Chelsey Sides, Colten Adams, Vanessa Angiano, Olivia Chairez, John Luke Covalt, Christina DiTirro, Danny Estep, Cody Hollswell, Alex Hutto, Alina Kveline, Kristen Kuhn, Alexandra Martinez, David Moore, Skylar Mundell, Daisy Perez, Megan Porter, Shonda Roberts, Amber Shepard, Kelly Silva, Kelly Smith, Layce Smith, Ryan Smith, Keith Stevens, Shane White, Stephanie Allen, Tyler Jones, Atziri Murgado, Tristin Reeves, and Jordan Still.



LEN SLESICK

"I've Got Good News!" Livingston Extends Hours for Citizens of Pampa

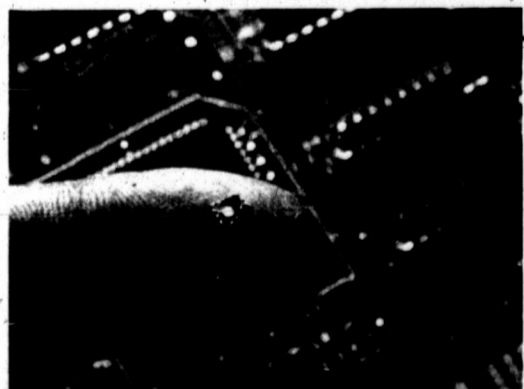
Livingston Audiology & Hearing Aid Center has extended its hours in Pampa! Call today and schedule an appointment for a free hearing check-up and meet hearing instrument specialist, Craig Smith, formerly with Beltone. Beltone has merged with Livingston to form West Texas' largest audiology and hearing aid dispensing practice. The Livingston office is located inside the Chamber of Commerce building, 200 N. Ballard (corner of Kingsmill and Ballard). Call today for your appointment: **1-800-834-0831**. Be sure to take advantage of the money saving coupons in this ad. Livingston offers a selection from over 18 national brands of hearing aids.



From left: Craig Smith, formerly with Beltone shakes hands with Richard Davila, Practice Administrator with Livingston Hearing Centers.

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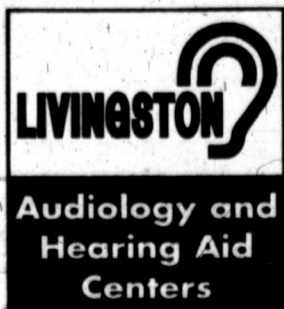
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Dear Members,

We have now moved through one quarter of the year already. So far we have had two very interesting luncheons and our first Prayer Breakfast of 2002. Looking ahead we have the Pampa Partnership Golf Tournament coming up on May 18th and 19th, the next Prayer Breakfast on June 4th, the Business Expo on Saturday, June 22nd; and the Tri-State Seniors Golf Tournament during the week of July 21st through 25th. As you can see there is a full slate of events upcoming.

In addition, tomorrow's Chamber luncheon will be interesting as we will have several speakers from the City of Pampa filling us in on current city business. Those speakers include Mayor Lonny Robbins, City Manager Bob Eskridge, Fire Chief Kim Powell, Police Chief Charlie Morris and Director of Public Works Richard Morris. We hope that you can make it, but please call early for reservations.

Most of you probably saw in *The Pampa News* where Chamber board member Ben Watson and I attended a wind energy conference at West Texas A&M University last month. The following week, Chamber Chairman John Curry, Mayor Lonny Robbins, Chamber Board members Pat Montoya and Chuck White, as well as myself, attended a second wind energy conference in Guymon, Okla. We gained a good amount of knowledge from these two conferences and we realize that wind energy will probably play a major role in the energy industry sometime in the future. We will be keeping abreast of future developments and potential opportunities.

Please note that we are now listing Chamber members from several categories in this and in future Chamber Pages. We want to promote our members as often as possible and this is one additional way of doing so. We will go through the categories alphabetically so it will take awhile to get through the entire membership.

In closing, we have several members who are celebrating milestones in their businesses this year. Please join us in congratulating Quentin Williams Realty on 50 years and Culberson-Stowers Inc., on 75 years of business and community service in Pampa and the surrounding area. Both of these businesses have been outstanding Chamber supporters for decades. Let us know of your business milestones so that we don't miss anyone.

Sincerely,

Clay Rice

Clay Rice

P.S. Kudos to *The Pampa News* for another excellent "Pampa Pride" edition. If you missed it, stop by the Chamber office and pick up a copy.

Welcome New Members!

Kevin Hucks Insurance Agency, Kevin Hucks, 1318 N. Hobart
SK Investment, Neal Scott, Amarillo, Texas
Realty I, Charles Buzzard, 106 E. Francis



(Chamber photo)

Top O' Texan Goldcoats representing Pampa in the Shamrock St. Patrick's Day Parade are, from left, Mary McDaniel, Jack Reeve, Linda Daniels, and Goldcoat President Bob Marx.

APRIL LUNCHEON

Tuesday, April 16, 2002 at 11:45 a.m.
M. K. Brown Room of the Pampa Community Building.

Program: City of Pampa including Mayor Lonny Robbins, City Manager Bob Eskridge, Fire Chief Kim Powell, Police Chief Charlie Morris and Director of Public Works Richard Morris.

Caterer: Dos Caballeros

Sponsor: Pampa Nursing Center

Cost: for lunch is \$7.

Call the Chamber office at 669-3241 for reservations.

Fifty years ago



(Chamber photo)

This photograph goes back to Gray County's 50th Anniversary Parade on Oct. 13, 1952. Pictured is the First National Bank float. Several Pampa citizens said an old unidentified parade photo published earlier was of the St. Patrick's Day Parade in Shamrock in 1966. However, we were unable to identify the people in the photograph.

CONGRATULATIONS!

Quentin Williams Realty for their 50 years in business in Pampa

Culberson-Stowers Inc. for their 75 years in business in Pampa

Support our Chamber businesses

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Edith Hill

Great Plains Title Co., Inc.
112 W. Kingsmill
669-3281
Jim Howell

Guaranty Abstract & Title
1224 N. Hobart, Suite 100
669-2899
Shelly Cook

Certified Public Accountants

Brown, Graham & Co., P.C.
2225 Perryton Parkway
669-3367
Douglas E. Ware

Grantham, Cory & Heare, P.C.
420 W. Florida
665-8429
Tom Grantham

Sharon Haynes, C. P. A.
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665-0823

Lewis Meers, C. P. A.
1501 N. Banks
665-7164

Billy Smith, C. P. A.
2225 Perryton Parkway
665-4843

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665-2161
Patsy Pierce

Financial Planning

Michael R. Ruff, C. F. P.
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665-2507

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Ethridge Claims Service
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Marian Stroup

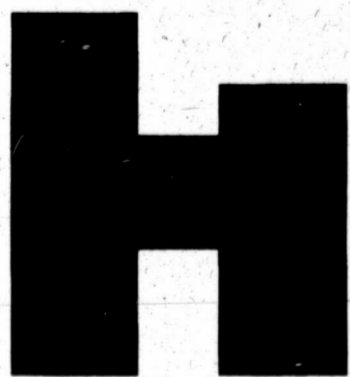
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669-0211
Robert L. Neslage

Pampa Partnership Golf Tournament is scheduled for May 18th and 19th at Hidden Hills Golf Course and Pampa Country Club. T-Box signs are available. Call the Chamber for details at 669-3241.



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