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THE KNOX COUNTY News-Courier

THURSDAY, AUGUST 15, 2013

KCNEWSCOURIER.COM

75 CENTS

Wind farm to power thousands of homes

By Wayne Hodgkin
 The Knox County News-Courier

BENJAMIN — A 300-megawatt wind farm soon will dot the skyline between Knox and Baylor counties, bringing with it enough power to provide thousands of homes and businesses throughout the region with electricity.

David Savage, the project's lead developer of Austin-based Pioneer Green Energy, said the announcement is about three years in the making.

"For the last several years, we've been actively seeking the financing for this project while working toward leasing land and ensuring its feasibility for both Knox and Baylor counties," Savage said. "We're eager now to get rolling on these tax abatements that will propel this project into reality."

On Monday, Knox County Judge Travis Floyd asked commissioners to take the first step in moving that process along in voting to retain the services of the Underwood Group to help negotiate them through the tax-abatement

process.

"I was advised that it would be best if we sought out the services of our own attorney for this tax abatement in case some conflict of interest were to come up," Floyd said.

Only about 1/3 of the project will have a foothold in Knox County with the remainder falling into Baylor County, and Knox County would be the only local government entity to reap profits from the project as it does not fall into any school district lines.

Savage said the project is still in its early stages.

"We've still got quite a bit of work to do before we break ground, but we hope to begin construction no later than mid-2014 with the turbines up and running by 2015," he said.

To put into perspective just how big a 300-megawatt wind farm is, Savage said each turbine, depending on their size, generates anywhere from 1.5 to 3 megawatts of power.



See WIND, Page 6 File photo

Knox Notes

Events are listed free of charge for nonprofit civic organizations, schools and community events. Submit listings at least two weeks ahead of the date. Listings will run through the date of the event. Emailed submissions are preferred to kcnewscourier@gmail.com.

Alzheimer's seminar

The North Texas Chapter of the Alzheimer's Association will present a seminar on managing challenging behaviors of people suffering from some sort of dementia. This free workshop will discuss triggers and communication techniques. Class is ideal for patients, caregivers, family and friends and will be at 6:30 p.m. Aug. 20 at the Munday Nursing Center, 421 W. F St. Call Ronda Thompson at 940-422-4541 for information.

Gospel theater

"Saint John & The Televangelist" is staged at 7:30 p.m. each Friday and at 3 p.m. Saturday through Sept. 14 at the Ragtown Gospel Theater north of Post. Tickets are available and show information online at Ragtown.com or call Ragtown Theater at 877-724-8696.

New exhibit

The OS Museum, 201 E. Main St., Post, offers "The Many Faces of Art" as its 2013 summer exhibit. Viewing hours are 10 a.m. to noon and 1 to 5 p.m. Monday through Saturday. The exhibit will close Sept. 28. For information, call Marie Neff at 806-495-3570.

Veterans benefits

War-time veterans or surviving spouses may be entitled to monthly income from the U.S. Department of Veterans Affairs. For information, contact Marsha Mahurin at West Texas Senior Resources at 806-781-3901 or email marsha.mahurin@yahoo.com.

Tour of Homes

The Knox County Visioning Group is seeking local homes to feature in the annual tour of homes in December. For information, call 940-459-4121.

Senior citizens musical

The monthly musical fundraiser for the Knox County Aging Center is from 7 to 9 p.m. the first Monday of the month. Local musicians and talent. Bring your own snacks. Tea/coffee will be served. Donations will be accepted for the upkeep of the building. All funds benefit the Aging Center. For information, contact Cassandra Sheedy at 657-3618.

Corrections

If you spot an error of fact, contact Editor Wayne Hodgkin at kcnewscourier@gmail.com.

News on the go



Use your smartphone to scan the quick response, or QR, code to visit us online.

KC Historical Commission receives award

A Distinguished Service Award from the Texas Historical Commission was presented to the Knox County Historical Commission on Monday, August 12, at the Knox County Commissioners Court meeting by County Judge, Travis Floyd.

The Knox County Historical Commission board members attended the award presentation. These men and women volunteer their time and hard work to preserve our county's history by presenting programs that educate citizens and generate interest in Knox County history. They also plan and bring about the fundraisers for the Wichita Brazos Museum where our historical items and information are held. Many volunteer hours are spent by these diligent.

See AWARD, Page 6

Expert says opportunity slipping away

By Kay Ledbetter
 Special to the News-Courier

AMARILLO — Producers holding wheat or feed grains have a great opportunity to cash in on an extremely strong basis for any stocks of wheat and/or feed grains on hand, said a Texas A&M AgriLife Extension Service economist.

Steve Amosson, AgriLife Extension economist in Amarillo, said the wheat basis, which is the cash price minus the futures' price, is around 10 cents.

"This is a unique marketing opportunity," Amosson said. "I checked the data back to 1976 and we have never had a positive basis for wheat at this time of year."

"The average for the previous five years is a negative 70 cents. I'm recommending producers go ahead and market any wheat they have on hand to capture this extremely strong basis. If they think prices are going to rise, they can re-own the wheat by buying the board or buying a call using the December contract. That will allow a producer to capture the extremely strong basis and remain in the market if they wish."

Amosson said he believes this is happening because the supply pipeline for feed and other uses is basically empty.

"End users are scrambling for anything they can use and are willing to pay a premium," he said. "I expect the basis to fall as the new crop corn, which is anticipated to be at a record level, gets harvested. I don't think this marketing opportunity will be around much longer since corn harvest has already started in South Texas."

Amosson said the same advice applies to any supplies of feed grains producers might have on hand. The current corn basis is around \$1.45/bushel. That is approximately \$1.30 to \$1.40 above the normal basis for the region.



File photo

Tourism



Hanaba Munn Welch/Stonewall Courier
 Charles Smith, Quannah Parker Trail arrow maker, and Barbara Brannon, Texas Plains Trail Region director, present an award Thursday in Canadian to Danyl Parkurst recognizing her two-year stint as TPTR president. The plaque featured a miniature arrow crafted by Smith, not easily discernible against Parkhurst's patterned clothing. Parkhurst is on the staff of Cal Farley's Boys Ranch at Tascosa. Brannon works from Lubbock, and Smith's studio is at his home in New Home. The presentation occurred at the annual TPTR Tourism & Preservation Round-up in Canadian.

Promotion, promotion, promotion

Hanaba Munn Welch
 The Knox County News-Courier

The Texas Plains Trail Region celebrated its 10th anniversary at the 10th Annual Tourism & Preservation Round-up in Canadian last week. Promotion was an unspoken theme as representatives of chambers of commerce, economic development corporations, Main Street organizations, convention and visitors bureaus, museums and special initiatives -- namely the Quannah Parker Trail -- met to share information and promote their own interests to their counterparts in the business of building Texas tourism and preserving Texas history.

The conference included a where-we've-been-and-where-we're-going presentation from former board member Lana Barnett of Tulia, where the organization held its formative meeting.

But more than a congratulatory time to rest on laurels, the meeting featured presentations designed to inspire participants to keep on promoting the region, not just with strategies that have worked in the past but with new approaches too. (Statewide, the region is one of ten heritage tourism regions overseen by the state historical commission.)

John Erickson of nearby Perryton, author of the "Hank the Cowdog" book series, talked about his first book, "Through Time and the Valley" and how hard it was for him to get his words into print.

"Through Time and the Valley" tells the story of the Canadian River. The book has preserved some stories about the region that could have faded away with time if Erickson hadn't included them in his book. Notable are his tales about the moonshiners who ran stills and bottled "canyon rum" during the days of Prohibition.

When Erickson wrote the book, it was his first step toward a new career after spending time working toward a master's in theology at Harvard Divinity School, stopping two hours short of the degree. Becoming a writer was a big step not easily taken.

"If I was going to be a writer I needed to just jump off the cliff so that's what I did," he said. "We were living in Austin."

Neither Erickson or his wife were pleased with Austin's growth spurt at the time.

"We didn't like what it was becoming," he said. "We stopped in Perryton to visit my folks and somehow never left."

Erickson first found a job as a bartender. "A bartender in a dry county," he said. "We're very clever at circumventing our laws on temperance."

Erickson studied other Texas writers and formed relationships with some, including the late John Graves, who wrote his own book about a river -- "Goodbye to a River," about the Brazos, with photographs by Wyman Meinzer.

Erickson teamed up with a local aspiring photographer friend and set out to capture the story of the Canadian River, not by canoe like Graves but on horseback.

"You can't get far on the Canadian River with a canoe," Erickson said, referring to the general lack of water flow in the river compared to the Brazos.

Erickson not only delved into the history of the Canadian already in print, but he also gathered lesser known stories from people along the narrow winding river in the big valley.

See PROMOTION, Page 6

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DEADLINES
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Training



There was a great turn-out at the Republican Party of Texas Central Plains Regional Training held at Hunter Welcome Center (ACU) in Abilene Saturday, August 10, 2013. Attending were Lou Vail (right), Knox County Republican Chairman of Knox City; Exa Lee Smith, Precinct 301 Chairman, and Joel Smith of Munday. Some of the subjects covered were Party Structure, Primary Election Process and County Party Function.

The Paperboy Water woes will worsen with population shift

As you've noticed, there is a population shift taking place in the United States. More than 1,000 people a day are moving to Texas alone. That number is increasing.

There are still illegal immigrants coming into Texas. There are babies born in Texas. This population growth coupled with a long drought has the state needing water.

The bottom line is this: Texas needs an enormous amount of water. While neighboring states Oklahoma, New Mexico and Louisiana are also experiencing growth, they are not in the poor position Texas is concerning our most precious resource.

Consider this, by 2030, just 17 years, Amarillo will grow by 57,000. That's about a 29 percent jump. And it's a drop in the bucket. Take a look at the following:

CHRIS BLACKBURN

Metro Area	Population Increase
El Paso	308,000
San Antonio	690,000
Austin	900,000
Rio Grande Valley	627,000
Dallas-Fort Worth	2,500,000
Houston	1,936,000

The rate of growth is incredible. Texas will surpass California sometime in the next decade to lead the United States in population. In fact, according to data from the Texas Water Development Board, here in the next few years, you'll see more than 1 million people a year moving to the Lone Star State.

A few weeks ago I wrote a column about the increase in oil and gas production and stated Texas, Oklahoma and Louisiana would continue to boom amassing great wealth in the process. Just add water.

In researching the TWDB website, of which there is a dizzying amount of data, it becomes clear quickly the urgent need for water. Basically, Texas needs double the water it has access to.

We've known for a while that we were going to need water. But the brutal drought that has affected such a huge area really brought the need to light.

It's crucial that Texas' water needs be met. I expect a number of things will take place the more people talk about it. I can envision reservoirs, well fields, buying water from other states, desalinization plants and aqueduct systems.

I'm thankful there are brains smarter than mine working to figure this all out.

It would be fantastic if we had a few harmless floods in between now and 2030. Lord knows we're going to need it.

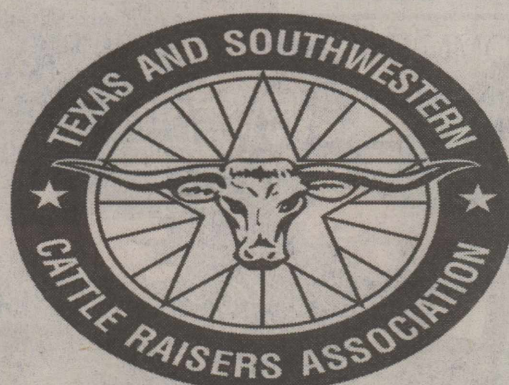
Christopher Blackburn is publisher of this newspaper and CEO of Blackburn Media Group.

Cattle Raisers to Host Ranch Gathering in Jacksboro

FORT WORTH - The Texas and Southwestern Cattle Raisers Association (TSCRA) will host a ranch gathering Thursday, Aug. 22, at the Twin Lakes Community Activity Center in Jacksboro. Registration begins at 5:30 p.m. followed by a complimentary beef dinner. The activity center is located at 1114 State Hwy 59.

"TSCRA ranch gatherings are a great time for ranchers to get together and discuss what's going on in the cattle business," said Pete Bonds, rancher from Saginaw and TSCRA first vice president.

"These gatherings aren't just for TSCRA members. Anyone interested in the



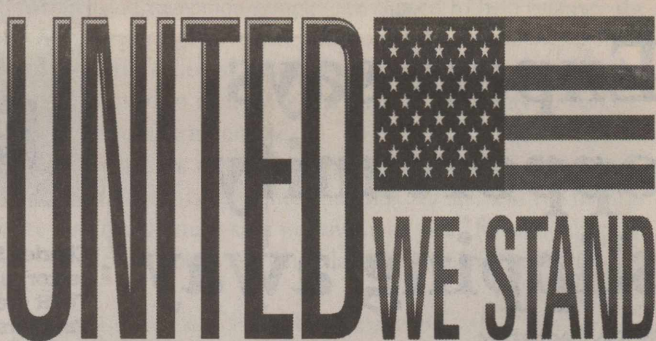
cattle industry is invited to attend."

TSCRA Special Ranger John Bradshaw will update ranchers on cattle thefts in the area and how they can better protect themselves

from thieves. A legislative update will also be given to update ranchers and landowners on important issues.

The event is open to the public. All members of the press are invited to attend. Please RSVP to 800-242-7820, ext. 192, or rsvp@tscra.org.

The gathering is sponsored Novartis Animal Health, Capital Farm Credit and Wellington State Bank Bowie Branch. Attendees that sign up as a TSCRA member at the gathering will receive a free metal gate sign courtesy of Bayer Animal Health.






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We deeply appreciate all our friends for their thoughts, prayers, food, cards, flowers and memorials during the loss of our mother. Your love and kind gestures have helped us through a very difficult time. We are also grateful to those of you who assisted us during this time of sorrow.

May God Bless all of You,

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- ~ Macky, Janet Yates & Family
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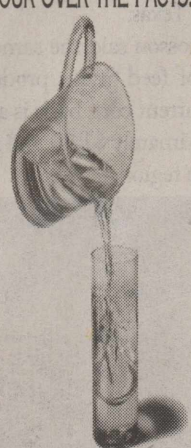
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Benjamin News

By Gladene Green

Well we had another little "cotton shower" last night—Not really enough to do much good, but at this point, any amount is mighty welcome. And this Monday morning is cooler. Probably warm up pretty good by afternoon, though. That seems to be the way it's been going.

Encouraging reports on the ailing in the community. Randolph Barnett continues to improve after his recent knee surgery. He's still staying in pretty close and doing his therapy. Hopefully, before long, he will be out and about again.

Philomae Roberson is also improving, although she, too, is staying pretty close to home. Her leg and back problem is much better, and the cataract surgery on her eye was successful. Today she is having the "other" one done. She hopes she won't have to wear glasses at all after having surgery on both of them.

Bud Conner is still having some health issues. The pacemaker he got a few weeks back has apparently not done what he expected it to do, even though his cardiologist says everything is fine. He keeps hoping every day, things will begin to improve, and maybe they will.

Imagean Young is feeling some better after several days of really feeling bad. Doctors have omitted some of her medication that they thought might be causing some of her problem. Maybe that will get her on the road to better days.

Sympathy to the families who have lost loved ones this past week. On Tuesday Dorothy Cooks of Munday, Perry Rogers of O'Brien, and LaVerne Rogers of Rochester passed away. Their funerals were all on Friday. They all leave many family members and friends who will miss them greatly.

Here 'N There

Debi Moorhouse is in Abilene this week caring for baby Noah, son of Jessica and Brandon. Jessica is going back to work today, and her baby sitter is not available until next Monday, so Debi got the chance to spoil the baby a little. I'm sure she doesn't mind at all getting to her "own thing" with him.

Weekend guests of Debi and Mike were Teresa Washington of Flomont and Alicia Patterson and Candice of Childress.

Charles Griffith enjoyed a few days deep sea fishing in the Gulf last week as a guest of his brother, Marty Griffith. He and his son-in-law, Rickey LaShomb of Lubbock made the trip together along with Charles' grandson, Matt Tyson, student at Texas Tech School of Law. Matt became ill shortly after leaving on the boat in Freeport and had to return to Lubbock, but the others stayed and reported a good time and catching a lot of fish. They returned home late Thursday night.

Roger and Betty Bohannon were in Abilene Thursday and Friday for doctors' appointments. Betty said about all the social life they have any more is going back and forth to doctors for checkups, tests, etc. However, as long as there's no problem, they don't mind the trips.

I just received word this afternoon (Monday) that Dee Stamps, former Benjamin resident who now lives in Post, is in very serious condition and is in Hospice care. Prayers are requested for Dee and his family.

News is scarce this week. I'm sure lots of folks were school shopping this past weekend, and other than that, nothing much is going on. See you next week.

Gladene Green is the longtime Benjamin correspondent for the Knox County News-Courier.

The 501 Urban farming a cure for downtown blight

Some things tend to deteriorate from the inside out. I just cut into a mango I should have eaten last week. A little discoloration in a place or two near the seed didn't keep me from cutting up the rest. It'll go with lunch.

Cities usually follow the same pattern. Core downtown buildings and old neighborhoods near city centers are problematic. If not maintained, they lose value and usefulness. It's often easier for businesses and residents to move out and to settle elsewhere, relocating to newer commercial locations and to the suburbs, respectively.

Years ago, maybe in this column, I proposed a solution: If a downtown deteriorates beyond salvation (although I myself don't take myself seriously enough ever to believe a downtown and surrounding residential neighborhoods are beyond salvation), then clear downtown and farm it.

Leave the nearby residential neighborhoods intact, even if they are deteriorating. Substandard housing is all some people can afford anyway. Let them stay in their vintage neighborhoods, conveniently close to what used to be downtown, and give them city-center garden spots. Idyllic.

Have you seen those railroad right-of-way gardens in Europe? Not only do people work the narrow plots; they relax in lawn chairs, soaking up the sun or enjoying the shade of a big garden umbrella. It's the next best thing to the beach. And they get to watch trains go by.

Similarly, community gardens already exist in many American towns — sometimes in vacant lots and sometimes elsewhere. But no big city has turned downtown into a truck farm. Maybe Detroit should try it. They've gotta do something. Hmmm. That pun snuck up on me.

Here's another fact (and I know it's a fact because I heard it today on TV): Food banks tend to lack fresh produce.

So, there you have it. What better place to grow fresh fruits and vegetables to distribute via food banks than close to where the needy reside?

INTERNET RESEARCH PAUSE. Sure enough, Detroit is already into urban farming in a big way — everything from regular gardens to a 140-acre hardwood farm. And I thought it was my idea.

That's how it goes with good ideas. They're already taken.

So here's a bad idea instead: Compare an old house to a city. When the house begins to deteriorate and everything needs redoing and closets offer no more space, just abandon the main living area and build more rooms and closets all around and add a porch or two. No garage sale needed to get rid of stuff. You just keep it all. And the expansion of the house footprint means less lawn to mow.

The newer outer rooms are like the suburbs. Ignore and avoid the central part of the house. Eventually, once you can't even remember what's in the old closets or why you need the original living room since you never go in it, consider demolishing the original part of the house to make way for a courtyard. With any luck, you'll have room for a garden.

Hanaba Munn Welch is a columnist and contributor to the Blackburn Media Group family of newspapers.



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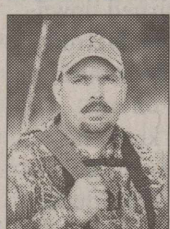
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Assignment: Texas

Take Me Out to the Ballgame

I've long had a love affair with baseball. From my days playing on little league teams in Bonham, Texas and playing high school ball at Dodd City, Texas, the



RUSSELL GRAVES

game has always been a source of fascination for me. To this day, I still love to play, watch, and coach whenever I can.

Baseball is as timeless a sport as we have in the United States. Since it's beginnings the game has virtually unchanged no matter the age of the players or the league. It's beauty is in it's simplicity.

Two weeks ago, I was introduced to a group of people who take the love of the game to a level in which I've never witnessed. Headed by league organizer Wendel Dickason, the Texas Vintage Baseball League is comprised

of volunteers who play simply for the love of the sport - no accolades, no doping scandals, and no pay. They play for fun.

One caveat, however: they play under the 1860's era rules that harken to when baseball was still in its infancy.

On a steamy Saturday morning I met Wendel and members of three teams at the Farmers Branch Historical Park in Farmers Branch, Texas. While the entire squads weren't present, members of the Waxahachie Baseball Club, the Farmers Branch Mustangs, and the Carrollton Elites (I am told the pronounced is e-LITES and they get their name from a local, historic store) are on hand to play a game of baseball for the gathered crowd of a dozen or so.

With their permission, I suited up for the Waxahachie squad and played with them. My uniform is a far cry from anything I've ever worn. A loosely fitting white shirt with loose sleeves and a simple, buttoning V-neck collar in

which I wore a crimson scarf tied in a bow. The cap was loosely fitting with a scant leather bill. The pants were black knickers with string ties that cinched below the knee and above the calf. My feet were covered in solid crimson leggings. The only modern attire I wore are dark athletic shoes that I brought for the occasion.

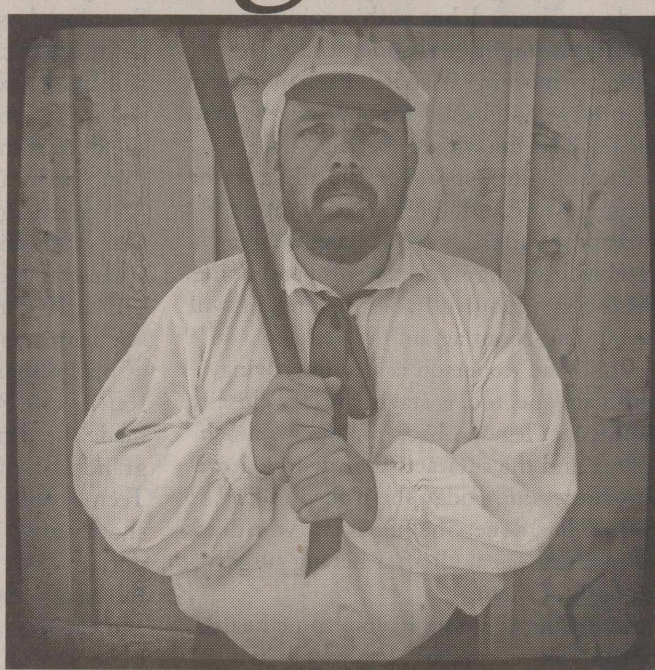
While the game is virtually the same as today, 1860's rules do have some variations. Most notably:

The baseball used to play is a little larger than a modern baseball with a different stitching pattern and a bit softer in feel; The wooden bats are heavier than the modern versions and the thick handles are nearly as beefy as the barrels; The ball is pitched underhand; When hit, a ball caught off of a single hop results in the same outcome as catching a fly ball or line drive. It's an out; Defensive players wear no gloves; Game play is a bit less competitive than modern baseball; The

umpire is present to keep the game flowing and not be a necessary arbiter of balls and strikes or called outs for that matter.

During the game I speak often to Wendel who is the umpire and tells me that the squads often play exhibition games at various historical reenactments around the state. He also reminds me that unlike the hyper competitive nature of modern major league baseball, vintage baseball is played in a gentlemanly manner with deference to historical accuracy and a respect for the original rules of baseball. A such, people don't argue calls.

That's a good thing. After starting the game on offense, the Waxahachie club switched to defense where I am playing first base. A ballist (that's what a player in 1860's rules baseball is called) from the Farmers Branch club, adorned in his blue uniform and gripping a darkly stained ash bat, hits a fast roller to the short stop. He fields the ball



cleanly and flings it to me.

Instinctively I place my right foot on the corner of the bag and stretch out with my left hand leading the way. I quickly remember that I am not wearing a glove and have to two hand catch the ball that's thrown hard from across the infield.

As soon as I adjust my feet, the ball is on me. I cradle it

to the bottom of my sternum, catch the ball cleanly, and step back quickly. As soon as my foot hits the bag the runner is there as well. I don't know who touched the base first and am not sure he does either. With no umpire to mitigate the situation we shake hands and begin to talk about the play in a calm fashion - just like the game expects.

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Dixie Divas Small town life

Around the corner, out in the country where we live, is a hardware store owned by a guy I have known since the day I was born. Our bassinets were next to each other in the hospital nursery.

Down the road a piece is a dairy co-owned by a guy whose bassinet was on the other side of mine in the nursery. When I need a helping hand with a lawn mower stuck in the thicket or a pasture that needs bush-hogging, I call that guy and he is Jerry-on-the-spot to help.

Tink is somewhat amazed by small-town living and the perks that come with it. He came in from the hardware store one day, a place he has come to love because we simply sign for what we buy then pay for it at the first of the month.

He shook his head. "When I checked out, she laughed and said, 'She's writing about your family now!'"

He likes this kind of friendliness and familiarity.

Of course, she knows that because every Tuesday when the newspaper arrives, the ladies at the hardware store pass around my column and discuss it. Then, they never fail to comment when I drag in, my hair in a messy ponytail and my face smudged with dirt from some garden project.

At the Farmers Exchange where we were purchasing horse feed and other farm needs, the manager said, "Why don't we just open an account for you?"

There was no credit check, no extensive form to fill out, just a paper signed that said we would pay. The manager said, "I know you will anyway. I know you, and I know your family." Then he grinned and winked. "But if you don't, we'll just charge it over to Rodney."

In big cities, they tend not to trust on a handshake and your family name.

Living in the small town where I was

born, raised, educated and, Lord willing, will die and be lowered beneath six feet of my beloved soil, is an archive of my life. It is a collection of the people and places that have taken me to other places and other people.

No one, I believe, is self made. We are all made by the efforts of many and, without question, I am a creation of those who believed in me, prayed for me and, on occasion, made me answer for my failings and shortcomings.

"Right there," I will point out, "is the radio station where I had my first job. I had a radio show called 'Rendezvous with Ronda' on weekends."

There are many landmarks throughout the town that chronicle my life in periods that are divided between before I left to find myself and the time I returned home to reclaim my heart. But it isn't the buildings or the pieces of ground that mean the most. It is the people, the ones who have loved me through the ups and downs and turn arounds.

There's Erin at the bank, across the street from the hardware store, the sight of whom I shall never forget on that hot summer's night. Our beloved Charlie Horse was stricken with colic and as the vet and I battled against it while Tink was out of town, she showed up in her business clothes and said, "I can't let you go through this by yourself." When we had to cross the creek to take him to the barn, she pulled up the legs of her dress pants and waded across.

And that woman at the hardware store who teased Tink about his family? That's Miss Hazel. While her son and I shared the nursery, she and Mama shared a hospital room.

You can't buy history like this. You can't earn it, either. You just have to thank the good Lord for giving you the gift of a small town family.

Ronda Rich is Southern humorist, storyteller and best-selling author. Her latest book, "There's A Better Day A-Comin'," is available at rondarich.com.



RONDA RICH

The Idle American The smile that started something

Man's inhumanity to man is well documented. Goodwill toward others, however, often goes unnoticed, unheralded and unappreciated.

Teachers, on the cusp of another school year, play major roles in helping others daily. Following the "do unto others" admonition, most of them routinely toil beyond duty's call.

We owe ongoing salutes to committed educators, and to all folks who offer smiles daily as they celebrate life.

One such celebrant is Megan Harris, a 23-year-old Amarillo woman. She worked at Pak-A-Sak Express that opened a few years back in an unoccupied Starbucks building. Smaller than the 18 other Pak-A-Saks, it has a drive-thru window. Thus, "Express" is tacked on.

Megan knows the window well. For two years, she arrived there at 5 a.m. for eight-hour weekday shifts, with much of her time given to dispensing 99-cent soft drinks. Last year, many of her "regulars" were teachers and staffers from the nearby Amarillo Area Center for Advanced Learning, which offers specialty training in half-day blocks for students from the city's four high schools and other area districts.

AACAL teacher Sue Sanborn, who daily purchased the 44-ounce, jump-starting drinks, mentioned Megan to her colleagues in February. "Have you noticed how she smiles every single time we stop?" Another pointed out that Megan was pregnant with her first child.

Few knew her name; none knew her circumstances. They didn't know she dreamed of starting a family, or that it was "start-over time" for her and husband, Aaron. Two years ago, a wildfire destroyed their home and most others in the neighborhood.

The couple, now married four years, has clung to Christian values. The fire took all — "just things," though, claims Megan, a graduate of San Jacinto Christian Academy and former Amarillo College student.

Neither did the educators know that for more than a year, she also worked four hours daily at a clothing store, stretching workdays to a dozen hours. And they weren't aware the couple lived with her parents for 714 days after the fire. It takes a while to build a house when one person does it. Aaron, a fulltime Xcel Energy employee, worked late most nights and weekends on their home. His dad and father-in-law pitched in, and it was ready four weeks before the baby arrived.

The AACAL folks wanted to do something for the "redhead," as several called her. Quickly, they planned a "drive-thru baby shower."

On the day before Valentine's, they

organized an 18-vehicle caravan. From the first car, Tammy Newsom handed the stunned honoree an invitation to the drive-thru shower. Occupants in the second car offered a corsage made of baby hats, and the third, punch and cupcakes.

Gifts from educators in the remaining 15 vehicles included diapers, clothes and gift cards. Then, they crowded inside to celebrate. Laughter, with some crying, ruled.

Readers of the Amarillo Globe News read Jon Mark Beilue's excellent account with thanksgiving. It's good news well worth sharing with my readers 'round about.

Much more has occurred since that unique act of goodwill. Computer science students, inspired by a guest speaker from "Snack Pak 4 Kids," designed a logo for the local charity—a simple "hug" design on its website.

Realizing many of their classmates are from "hungry homes," students continue their "give back" spirit with a school pantry. From there, food is sent home discreetly in students' backpacks. The Student Council has spear-headed campaigns to collect thousands of food items, and health science students have helped with public service announcements about teen hunger.

And the beat goes on. What about Megan and Aaron? Well, their daughter arrived safely on March 13 — two weeks before the Easter due date. Weighing in at 5-lb, 11-ounce, Phoenix Renee is a "stay at home" baby. Her mom's there, too, in her dream come true.

The "joy bundle," or "cuddle bunny" as her mom calls her, is doing fine. And she



Courtesy photo

Megan Harris with daughter Phoenix Renee.

has her mother's smile.

Their folks can be proud of this well-grounded couple. So can their "adopted family" at Pak-A-Sak. So can citizens whose taxes make schools possible. And so can you, gentle reader. Wish a school employee well in this new year, even if only with a smile. And offer prayers for them and the students entrusted to them.

Don Newbury, former chancellor of Howard Payne University in Brownwood, is a Christian humorist and motivational speaker.



DON NEWBURY

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WIND

From Page 1

"So we're not talking about a small-time project here," he said. "We'll be constructing anywhere from 100 to 200 turbines. Even by Texas standards, this project is big."

Savage said the site between Knox and Baylor counties was chosen based on a number of factors.

"That area produces quite

a bit of wind, and it's also located along the path of a transmission line so the power harvested could be transmitted right onto the country's electrical grid," he said. "In addition, the typography is perfect — it's flat. There are a number of wheat fields, cotton fields and cow pastures."

Savage said area residents shouldn't start looking for a reduction in their power bills just yet.

"We don't look at it from a

standpoint of a reduction in the cost of electricity more than we do helping to bring stability to the energy market," he said. "The cost of electricity isn't going to go down, but we can help keep it from going up and keep the market fluctuations more stable through wind energy. Wind farms cost a lot to get them up and running, but not much to maintain. In addition, wind isn't a commodity — oil, coal and natural gas are."

of Texas to receive this award from the Texas Historical Commission.

The Knox County Historical Commission appreciates the hours of work and participation by the citizens

throughout the county who help with our fundraisers and support our efforts to maintain the Wichita Brazos Museum. This Distinguished Service Award is also an award to each of you.

AWARD

From Page 1

gent board members.

There were 88 counties out of the 254 in the State

PROMOTION

From Page 1

"Most of these stories were stories that had never been heard by anybody but people who lived on the river," Erickson said.

Careful not to intimidate his interviewees, Erickson simply listened to their stories.

"I didn't use a tape recorder or take notes," he said. "I would make one reference, maybe just one word to remind me of five paragraphs of story. ... When I would gather a piece of a story from someone, then I would ask other people about it."

Erickson's audience listened to his presentation and also to his advice about getting the stories of their own areas into print — not necessarily by finding a publisher to take the financial risk.

"The people who pay the bills determine what qualifies as a good movie or great literature," he said. "If you have enough money to pay the printer bill, you can assert your power to tell a story that you think is important. That may be the only way we have to record our culture."

"Too regional" was the excuse Erickson heard from publisher after publisher when he first tried to get "Through Time and the Valley" published, he said — even from the late Luther Thompson of Shoal Creek Publishers, who ultimately published the first edition in 1978, now a collector's edition.

Erickson decried the notion that any regional story is too regional to be good.

"We need great artists to tell that story, record it in movies, in painting, in novels and in history," he said. "We have to give our kids confidence that they can do it. Maybe they will stay home and do it in their hometowns."

For anyone who chooses to self-publish, the project can start small, he said.

"It's a lot easier to self-publish a book now," he said. "You can try 10 books and see how they go. After you've sole one to all your kinfolks, you can reorder another 10 and start on the church."

After Erickson's talk, Bill Cole, manger of the newly rehabilitated Settles Hotel in Big Spring, talked about the \$33 million project and how owner Brint Ryan has made it all happen.

More than promoting the Settles, Cole described the challenges of the restoration and renovation of the historic hotel. Now that it's open again, the vintage 1930 is promoting itself, getting widespread attention with stories in magazines like "Texas Highways," "Texas Parks & Wildlife" and "Texas Monthly." Cole displayed copies of some of the recent publicity.

"No two rooms are exactly alike," Cole said.

Nor are most of the rooms like they appeared in 1930. Most have been expanded in size, meaning that the hotel has gone from 150 rooms to 65, Cole said. But the third-floor rooms are essentially the same as the original rooms — a feature designed to preserve history.

Despite the magnitude of the Settles Hotel rehabilitation project, the issues discussed by Cole are the same issues faced by the owners and managers of smaller historic properties. One conference participant asked Cole about asbestos abatement.

"A half-million or maybe a little more" was Cole's estimate of dollars spent for asbestos abatement, a necessary step in most building rehabilitations if the letter of the law is followed.

At the end of his remarks, Cole drew the name of Kathy

Beach for a free night at the Settles. Post resident Beach was at the round-up as a board member of the TPTR.

In a roundtable discussion, people from different communities shared tips for promoting tourism.

Kristine Olsen described a method employed by Dalhart to raise money for special events, such as fireworks on the Fourth of July. Residents pay a dollar a month extra on their water bills, unless they choose to opt out.

"How many of you have a hard time raising money to blow money up in the air, up in smoke?" she asked, referring to fireworks expenditures.

Dalhart also uses the money for a fiddlers' contest, Christmas lights, a downtown block party and other community projects, Olsen said.

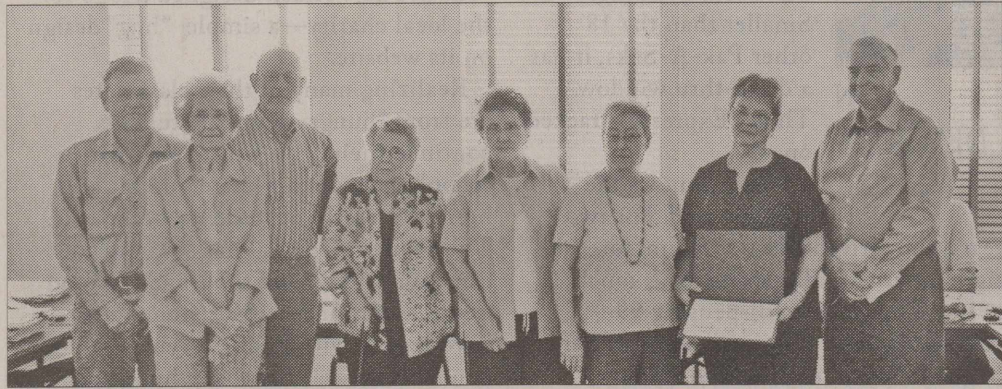
Lynn Hopkins described ways Borger has utilized museum guides published by TravelHost magazine to draw people to the local museum. The local funeral home, a place where out-of-towners often visit, is one place the guides are distributed and appreciated, Hopkins said.

"I would encourage you to develop your own travel guide, your own museum guide," Hopkins said.

The conference ended with an evening with Bob Phillips of "Texas Country Reporter" at The Palace, the old movie theater in downtown Canadian, now also a place for live events, followed by a tour of the town led by philanthropist Malouf Abraham, retired physician and one of Canadian's chief promoters.

For more information, see www.texasplainstrail.com. For information about the Quanah Parker Trail, one of the most visible promotional projects of the TPTR, see www.quanahparkertrail.com.

More Photos on Page 7



Pictured from right to left: Charles Griffith, Doris Crownover, Dennis Duke, Mary Cartwright, Mary Birkenfeld, Jan Kilgore, Mary Jane Young, Judge Travis Floyd.

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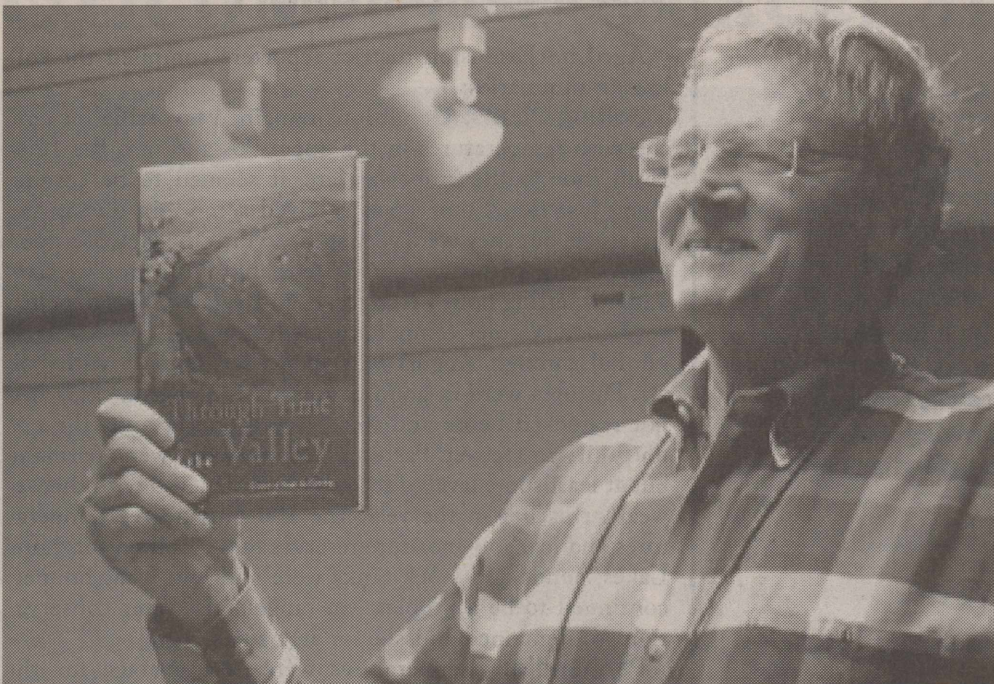
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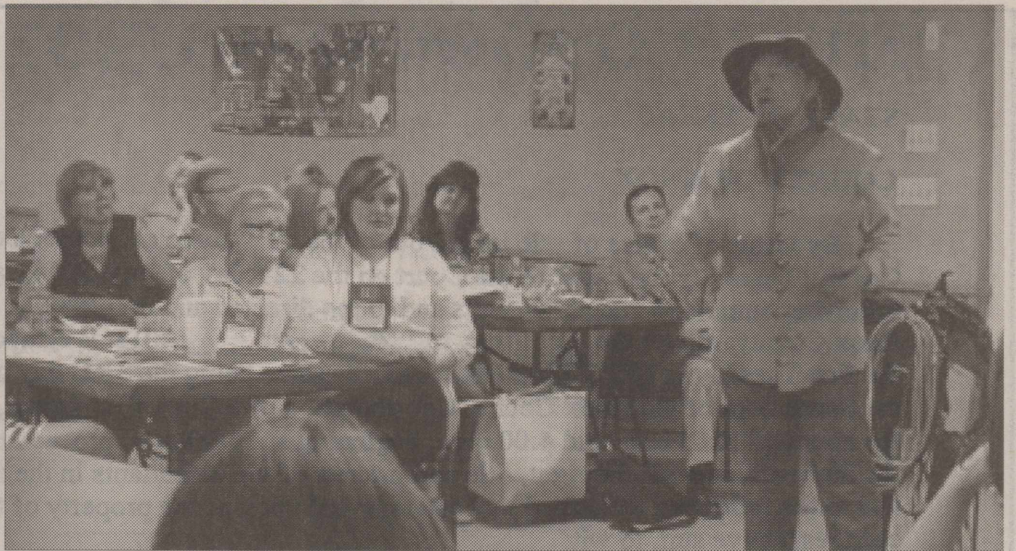
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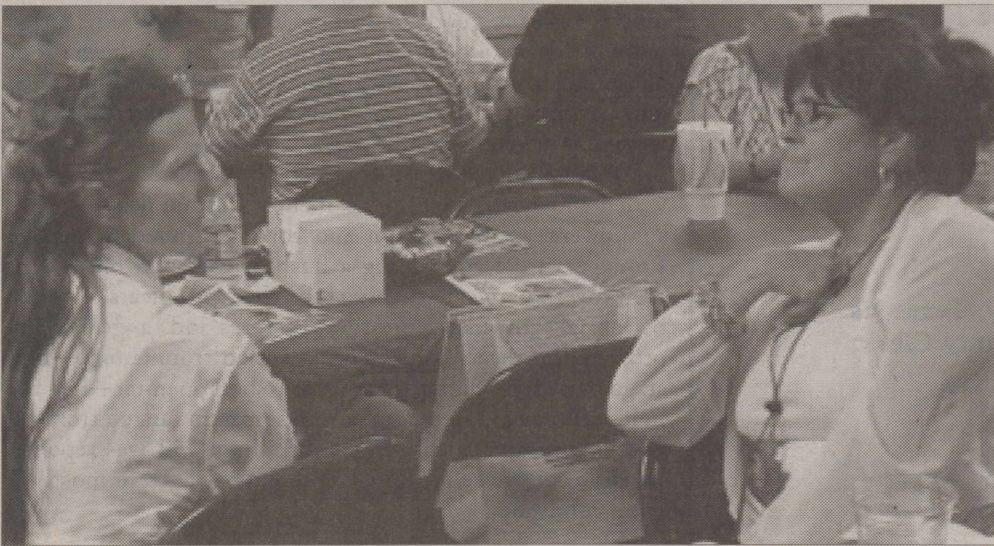
PROMOTION Photos Cont.



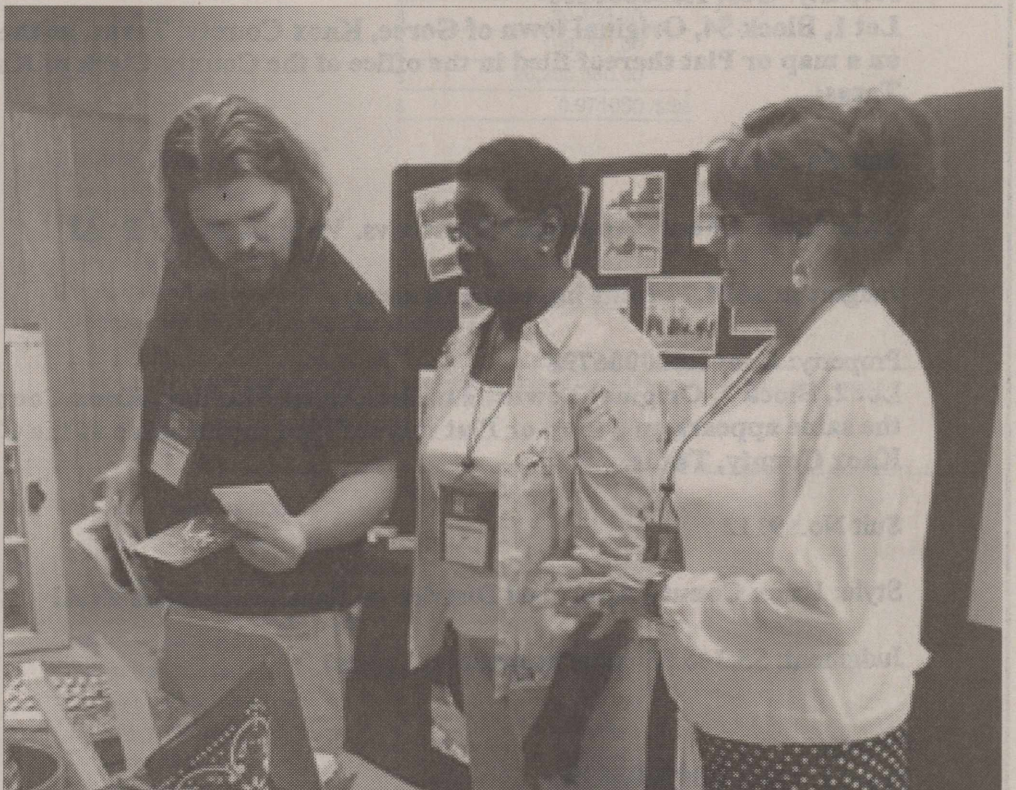
The cover of the latest edition of John Erickson's book "Through Time and the Valley," University of North Texas Press, features a photograph of the Canadian River by Wyman Meinzer of Benjamin. Renowned for his landscape photography, Meinzer's photographs of the Brazos River are featured in "Goodbye to a River" by the late John Graves, a book that inspired Erickson to write about the Canadian. Erickson talked about his book Thursday at Canadian at a Texas Plains Trail Region conference.



Joyce Thierer, scholar-performer from the Kansas-based troupe "Ride Into History," takes on the persona of Calamity Jane Thursday in Canadian to demonstrate the art of telling history from a first-person point of view. Thierer was on the agenda the second day of the Texas Plains Trail Region's 10th Annual Tourism & Preservation Round-up. At the nearer table in the background are, from left, Kathy Beach and Rosa Latimer of Post and Honnah Taylor of Big Spring. After her monologue, Thierer answered questions from the audience, keeping her hat on if she could remain in character to answer the question and taking it off when required to step out of the past into the present. At Thierer's elbow is Bill Cole, manager of the historic Settles Hotel in Big Spring. Cole gave a presentation Thursday about the \$33 million restoration-renovation of the Settles, a tall downtown landmark.



Holle Humphries of Lubbock, left, a coordinator of the Quanah Parker Trail, talks Thursday with Linda Puckett, Garza County Museum director, during a break at the Texas Plains Trail Region's 10th Annual Tourism & Preservation Round-up in Canadian. At the round-up, Humphries reported that 69 arrows have been installed in the region with only ten TPTR counties lacking arrows to date. Many of the arrows have legends carved in granite markers to explain their particular significance to the sites in question. Among other places with Quanah Parker Trail Arrows are Blanco Canyon in Floyd County, Benjamin, Wellington, Memphis and Turkey.



Josh Paulson, a musician from Pampa who entertained Wednesday at the 10th Annual Tourism & Preservation Round-up of the Texas Plains Trail Region last week in Canadian, gathers promotional materials Thursday from a display set up by Pat Cruse, center, and Linda Puckett of the Garza County Museum in Post. Several exhibitors set up tourism displays at the event.

Benjamin ISD announced its policy today for providing free and reduced-price meals for children served under the attached current income eligibility guidelines. Each school/site or the central office has a copy of the policy, which may be reviewed by anyone on request.

Benjamin ISD will mail letters to the households of the children in the district about eligibility benefits and any actions households need to take to apply for these benefits. Applications also are available at Benjamin ISD.

Criteria for Free and Reduced-Price Meal Benefits

The following criteria will be used to determine a child's eligibility for free or reduced-price meal benefits:

Income

1. Household income that is at or below the income eligibility levels

Categorical or Automatic Eligibility

2. Household receiving Supplemental Nutrition Assistance Program (SNAP), Temporary Assistance for Needy Families (TANF); or Food Distribution Program on Indian Reservations (FDPIR)

Program Participant

3. Child's status as a foster child, homeless, runaway, migrant, or displaced by a declared disaster
4. Child's enrollment in Head Start or Even Start

Income Eligibility

For those households that qualify for free or reduced-price meals based on income, an adult in the household must fill out free and reduced-price meal application and return it to Benjamin ISD. Those individuals filling out the application will need to provide the following information:

1. Names of all household members
2. Amount, frequency, and source of current income for each household member
3. Last 4 digits of the Social Security number of the adult household member who signs the application or, if the adult does not have a social security number, check the box for "I do not have a Social Security number"
4. Signature of an adult household member attesting that the information provided is correct

Categorical or Program Eligibility

Benjamin ISD is working with local agencies to identify all children who are categorically and program eligible. Benjamin ISD will notify the households of these children that they do not need to complete an application. Any household that does not receive a letter and feels it should have should contact the school at (940) 459-2231.

Any household that wishes to decline benefits should contact the school at (940) 459-2231.

Applications may be submitted anytime during the school year. The information households provide on the application will be used for the purpose of determining eligibility. Applications may also be verified by the school officials at any time during the school year.

Determining Eligibility

Under the provisions of the free and reduced-price meal policy, Benjamin ISD will review applications and determine eligibility. Households or guardians dissatisfied with the Reviewing Official's eligibility determination may wish to discuss the decision with the Reviewing Official on an informal basis. Households wishing to make a formal appeal for a hearing on the decision may make a request either orally or in writing to Benjamin ISD P.O. Box 166 Benjamin, TX 79505.

Unexpected Circumstances

If a household member becomes unemployed or if the household size increases, the household should contact the school. Such changes may make the children of the household eligible for benefits if the household's income falls at or below the attached current income eligibility guidelines.

Income Eligibility Reduced-Price Guidelines—July 1, 2013–June 30, 2014					
Family Size	Annually	Monthly	Twice Per Month	Every Two Weeks	Weekly
1	\$21,257	\$1,772	\$886	\$818	\$409
2	\$28,694	\$2,392	\$1,196	\$1,104	\$552
3	\$36,131	\$3,011	\$1,506	\$1,390	\$695
4	\$43,568	\$3,631	\$1,816	\$1,676	\$838
5	\$51,005	\$4,251	\$2,126	\$1,962	\$981
6	\$58,442	\$4,871	\$2,436	\$2,248	\$1,124
7	\$65,879	\$5,490	\$2,745	\$2,534	\$1,267
8	\$73,316	\$6,110	\$3,055	\$2,820	\$1,410
For each additional family member add:					
	+\$7,437	+\$620	+\$310	+\$287	+\$144

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NOTICE OF PUBLIC MEETING TO DISCUSS BUDGET AND PROPOSED TAX RATE

The KNOX CITY-O'BRIEN CONSOLIDATED INDEPENDENT SCHOOL DISTRICT will hold a public meeting at 7:00 P.M. AUGUST 29, 2013 in CENTRAL ADMINISTRATION OFFICE,
606 EAST MAIN STREET, KNOX CITY, TEXAS. The purpose of this meeting is to discuss the school district's budget that will determine the tax rate that will be adopted. Public participation in the discussion is invited.

The tax rate that is ultimately adopted at this meeting or at a separate meeting at a later date may not exceed the proposed rate shown below unless the district publishes a revised notice containing the same information and comparisons set out below and holds another public meeting to discuss the revised notice.

Maintenance Tax	\$ 1.17	/ \$100 (Proposed rate for maintenance and operations)
School Debt Service Tax	\$ 0.065	/ \$100 (proposed rate to pay bonded indebtedness)

Comparison of Proposed Budget with Last Year's Budget

The applicable percentage increase or decrease (or difference) in the amount budgeted in the preceding fiscal year and the amount budgeted for the fiscal year that begins during the current tax year is indicated for each of the following expenditure categories:

Maintenance and operations	4.4	% increase	or	0.0000	% (decrease)
Debt service	1.9	% increase	or	0.0000	% (decrease)
Total expenditures	4.3	% increase	or	0.0000	% (decrease)

Total Appraised Value and Total Taxable Value (as calculated under Section 26.04, Tax Code)

	Preceding Tax Year	Current Tax Year
Total appraised value* of all property	\$ 167,206,480	\$ 161,055,730
Total appraised value* of new property**	\$ 1,543,010	\$ 110,880
Total taxable value*** of all property	\$ 104,766,879	\$ 96,810,073
Total taxable value*** of new property**	\$ 1,543,010	\$ 110,880

* "Appraised value" is the amount shown on the appraisal roll and defined by Section 1.04(8), Tax Code.
 ** "New property" is defined by Section 26.012(17), Tax Code.
 *** "Taxable value" is defined by Section 1.04(10), Tax Code.

Bonded Indebtedness

Total amount of outstanding and unpaid bonded indebtedness* \$ 330,000.00
 * Outstanding principal.

Comparison of Proposed Rates with Last Year's Rates

	Maintenance & Operations	Interest & Sinking Fund*	Total	Local Revenue Per Student	State Revenue Per Student
Last Year's Rate	\$ 1.17000	\$ 0.06500 *	\$ 1.23500	\$ 4851	\$ 6972
Rate to Maintain Same Level of Maintenance & Operations Revenue & Pay Debt Service	\$ 1.70790	\$ 0.08126 *	\$ 1.78915	\$ 6055	\$ 6089
Proposed Rate	\$ 1.17000	\$ 0.06500 *	\$ 1.23500	\$ 4,199	\$ 6275

* The Interest & Sinking Fund tax revenue is used to pay for bonded indebtedness on construction, equipment, or both. The bonds, and the tax rate necessary to pay those bonds, were approved by the voters of this district.

Comparison of Proposed Levy with Last Year's Levy on Average Residence

	Last Year	This Year
Average Market Value of Residences	\$ 34,454	\$ 32,385
Average Taxable Value of Residences	\$ 19,454	\$ 17,385
Last Year's Rate Versus Proposed Rate per \$100 Value	\$ 1.2350	\$ 1.2350
Taxes Due on Average Residence	\$ 240.26	\$ 214.70
Increase (Decrease) in Taxes		\$ (25.56)

Under state law, the dollar amount of school taxes imposed on the residence homestead of a person 65 years of age or older or of the surviving spouse of such a person, if the surviving spouse was 55 years of age or older when the person died, may not be increased above the amount paid in the first year after the person turned 65, regardless of changes in tax rate or property value.

Notice of Rollback Rate: The highest tax rate the district can adopt before requiring voter approval at an election is 1.235. This election will be automatically held if the district adopts a rate in excess of the rollback rate of 1.235.

Fund Balances

The following estimated balances will remain at the end of the current fiscal year and are not encumbered with or by a corresponding debt obligation, less estimated funds necessary for operating the district before receipt of the first state aid payment:

Maintenance and Operations Fund Balance(s)	\$ 2,432,281.00
Interest & Sinking Fund Balance(s)	\$ 0.00

NOTICE OF SALE

STATE OF TEXAS

COUNTY OF KNOX

By virtue of orders of sale issued out of the 50TH Judicial District Courts of Knox County, Texas, by the Clerk of the Court on the 22nd day of July, 2013, and in the following numbered and styled suits and to me directed and delivered, I, as Sheriff of Knox County, did on the 1 day of August, 2013, levy upon and will, on the first Tuesday in SEPTEMBER, 2013, the same being the 3RD day of such month at the South door of the Knox County Courthouse, in the City of Benjamin, Texas, between the hours of 10:00 a.m. and 4:00 p.m., beginning at 10:00 a.m. proceed to sell for cash to the highest bidder all the right, title and interest of the defendants in the following suits in and to the following described real estate levied upon as the property of the defendants in each respective suit, to wit:

Suit No.: 9509

Style: Knox County Appraisal District vs. Marion Limon Estate

Judgment: \$104.80 (plus interest and costs)

Property: Geo: R000005153

Lot 1, Block 54, Original town of Goree, Knox County, Texas, as the same appears on a map or Plat thereof filed in the office of the County Clerk of Knox County, Texas;

Suit No.: 8858

Style: Knox County Appraisal District vs. Virginia Pruitt Et Al

Judgment: \$894.72 (plus interest and costs)

Property: Geo: R000006798

Lot 2, Block 2, Original Townsite to the City of Munday, Knox County, Texas, as the same appears on a map or Plat thereof filed in the office of the County Clerk, Knox County, Texas;

Suit No.: 9112

Style: Knox County Appraisal District vs. Sam Santisteven Et Al

Judgment: \$5,346.53 (plus interest and costs)

Property:

Tract 1: Geo: R000003699

Lot 7 & 8, Block 19, Original Townsite of Goree, Knox County, Texas, as the same appears on a map or Plat thereof filed in the office of the County Clerk of Knox County, Texas;

Tract 2: Geo: R000006003

Lot 3, Block 73, Original Townsite of Benjamin, Knox County, Texas, as the same appears on a map or Plat thereof filed in the office of the County Clerk of Knox County, Texas;

Suit No.: 9369

Style: Knox County Appraisal District vs. Rosabelia Serrato Et Al

Judgment: \$1,451.29 (plus interest and costs)

Property: Geo: R000001968

The South 65 feet of Lots 6,7, and 8, Block 55, Lee Addition to the City of Munday, Knox County, Texas, as the same appears on a map or Plat thereof filed in the office of the County Clerk of Knox County, Texas;

Suit No.: 9521

Style: Knox County Appraisal District vs. Donna Stuckey

Judgment: \$8,481.50 (plus interest and costs)

Property: Geo: R000008729

Block A, Lot 13, Reeder Addition, Knox County, Texas, as the same appears on a map or Plat thereof filed in the office of the County Clerk of Knox County, Texas;

Suit No.: 8937

Style: Knox County Appraisal District vs. Arvill Williams Et Al

Judgment: \$1,331.74 (plus interest and costs)

Property:

Tract 1: Geo: R000009129, 1037, 1515085

Lot 9, Block 38, Elander Addition, Town of Truscott, Knox County, Texas as the same appears on a map or Plat thereof filed in the office of the County Clerk of Knox County, Texas;

Tract 2: Geo: R00000025, 41

Lot 1, Block 98, Elandel Addition, Town of Truscott, Knox County, Texas as the same appears on a map or Plat thereof filed in the office of the County Clerk of Knox County, Texas;

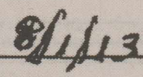
Tract 3: Geo: R000008541, 1515091

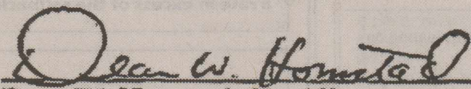
Lots 1 and 3, Block 67, Elandel Addition to the Town of Truscott, Knox County, Texas as the same appears on a map or Plat thereof filed in the office of the County Clerk of Knox County, Texas;

Tract 4: Geo: R000001428, 1515105

Lot 26, Block 23, Original Townsite to the Town of Truscott, Knox County, Texas, as the same appears on a map or Plat thereof filed in the office of the County Clerk of Knox County, Texas;

All the property sold will be subject to the owner's right of redemption. The redemption period is two years for homestead, minerals and agricultural use property and six months for all other property. Purchasers shall receive a Sheriff's Deed that is without warranty. Bidders should satisfy themselves concerning title and location of the property and improvements on the property prior to sale.

Signed: 


Dean W. Homstad, Sheriff
Knox County, Texas

Area Crop Report

AgriLife Extension district reporters compiled the following summaries:

Rolling Plains: Conditions remained favorable for cotton with temperatures in the upper 90s and into the 100s. Even though the crop was late, it seemed to be coming along just fine. Some areas received some rain during the last week, but they were very spotty. With the lack of a good general rain, cotton farmers were thankful the crop was late and not setting bolls yet in the heat. Irrigated cotton looked very good. Cooler temperatures—below 100 degrees—and rainfall through August will be needed to help with boll set. Pastures were in good condition as some ranchers had not restocked herds and were giving grass stands the opportunity to recover. Pastures in some areas went dormant but at least some level of recovery was achieved with the weather earlier in the year. The 100-plus degree temperatures and low soil-moisture reserves took a toll on sorghum. Lakes, ponds and stock tanks were still low. Grasshopper continued to be a problem on rangeland. Water conservation still remained an issue for area cities.

Panhandle: Temperatures were near average for the week, but most of the region received rain. Amounts ranged from a trace to as much as 3.5 inches. Deaf Smith and Gray counties reported hail damage to crops. Deaf Smith County also reported winds in excess of 70 mph, with damage to buildings and a few center pivots. Corn was maturing rapidly. Insect pressure was rising. Sorghum and soybeans were mostly in fair to good condition. Cotton progressed, though many fields were behind in maturity. Some producers took advantage of recent rains to plant winter wheat. Rangeland and pastures continued to improve after the rains. Cattle were in good condition.

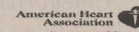
South Plains: Most counties received rain. Amount varied widely, 0.1 inch to 1.5 inches. Cotton, peanuts, peas, sunflowers, grain sorghum and corn continued to mature. Producers were controlling a flush of weeds. More hoeing crews were being used this year. Most producers have experienced light insect pressure. Pastures and rangeland improved after recent rains. Cotton varied from cutout—final stage of cotton plant growth prior to boll opening—to a few fields still not yet in bloom. Grain sorghum ranged from the vegetative stage to coloring. Verticillium wilt was reported in some cotton fields. Rangeland and cattle were mostly in good condition.

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ALL
EQUIPPED
WITH
LIFE
SAVING
DEVICES**

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**NOTIFICATION OF NONDISCRIMINATION
IN CAREER AND TECHNICAL EDUCATION
PROGRAMS**

Benjamin Independent School District offers career and technology education in programs in Agricultural Science, Computer Applications, and Business Education. Admission to these programs is based on grade level and desire of the student.

It is the policy of the Benjamin Independent School District not to discriminate on the basis of race, color, national origin, sex or handicap in its vocational programs, services or activities as required by Title VI of the Civil Rights Act of 1964, as amended; Title IX of the Education Amendments of 1972; and Section 504 of the Rehabilitation Act of 1973, as amended.

It is the policy of Benjamin Independent School District not to discriminate on the basis of race, color, national origin, sex, handicap, or age in its employment practices as required by Title VI of the Civil Rights Act of 1964, as amended; Title IX of the Education Amendments of 1972; the Age Discrimination Act of 1975 as amended; and Section 504 of the Rehabilitation Act of 1973, as amended.

Benjamin ISD will take steps to assure that lack of English language skills will not be a barrier to admission and participation in all educational and vocational programs.

For information about your rights or grievance procedures, contact the Title IX Coordinator, Olivia Del Hierro Gloria, at P.O. Box 166, Benjamin, TX 79505; telephone- (940) 459-2231.

**NOTIFICACION PUBLICA DE NO
DISCRIMINACION EN PROGRAMAS
VACACIONALES**

Benjamin ISD ofrece programas vocacionales en Agricultura Science, Computer Applications, y Business Education. La admision a estos programas se basa en nivel y el deseo de el estudiante.

Es norma de Benjamin ISD no discriminar por motivos de raza, color, origen nacional, sexo o impedimento, en sus programas, servicios o activades vocacionales, tal como lo requieren el Titulo VI de la Ley de Deprechos Civiles de 1964, segun enmienda; el Titulo IX de las Emiendas en la Educacion, de 1972, y la Seccion 504 de la Ley de Rehabilitacion de 1973, segun enmienda.

Es norma de Benjamin ISD no discriminar por motivos de raza, color, origen nacional, sexo, impedimento o edad, en sus procedimientos de empleo, tal como lo requieren el Titulo VI de la Ley de Derechos Civiles de 1964, segun enmienda; el Titulo IX de las Enmiendas en la Educacion, de 1972, la ley de Discriminacion por Edad, de 1975, segun enmienda, y la Seccion 504 de la Ley de Rehabilitacion de 1973, segun enmienda.

Benjamin ISD tomara las medidas necesarias para asegurar que la falta de habilidad en el uso de la lengua ingles no sea un obstaculo para la admision y participacion en todos los programas educativos y vocacionales.

Para informacion sobre sus derechos o procedimientos para quejas, comuniquese con el Coordinador del Titulo IX, Olivia Del Hierro Gloria, P.O. Box 166 Benjamin, TX 79505, (940) 459-2231.

Urich brothers excel at regional rodeo events



Courtesy photo for the News-Courier

Stewart Urich won first place in the ranch bronc event at the Seymour and Lamesa rodeos.

Aaron Urich of Rochester and his team took first prize in the double-mugging event at the rodeo in White Deer on July 27. Aaron is a senior at Haskell High School.

Stewart Urich of Rochester won first place in the ranch bronc event at the Seymour and Lamesa rodeos, placed second the same event at the Seminole rodeo and is ranked No. 1 in the Texas Cowboys Rodeo Association ranch bronc standings. The Uriches are sons of Ricky and Faye Urich and grandson of Sharon Mullino, all of Rochester, and grandson of Ann Lindsey and Jerry Clem, both of Jayton.

The News-Courier

2013 Property Tax Rates in MUNDAY CITY

This notice concerns 2013 property tax rates for MUNDAY CITY

It presents information about three tax rates. Last year's tax rate is the actual rate the taxing unit used to determine property taxes last year. This year's effective tax rate would impose the same total taxes as last year if you compare properties taxed in both years. This year's rollback tax rate is the highest tax rate the taxing unit can set before taxpayers can start tax rollback procedures. In each case these rates are found by dividing the total amount of taxes by the tax base (the total value of taxable property) with adjustments as required by state law. The rates are given per \$100 of property value.

Last year's tax rate:

Last year's operating taxes	\$ 166,644.00
Last year's debt taxes	\$ 30,153.00
Last year's total taxes	\$ 196,797.00
Last year's tax base	\$ 20,266,560.00
Last year's total tax rate	\$ 0.971050 /\$100

This year's effective tax rate:

Last year's adjusted taxes (after subtracting taxes on lost property)	\$ 195,650.00
+ This year's adjusted tax base (after subtracting value of new property)	\$ 20,981,670.00
= This year's effective tax rate	\$ 0.932480 /\$100

(Maximum rate unless unit publishes notices and holds hearings.)

In the first year a hospital district or city collects the additional sales tax to reduce property taxes, it must insert the following lines unless its first adjustment was made last year:

- Sales tax adjustment rate	\$ 0.000000 /\$100
= Effective tax rate	\$ 0.000000 /\$100

This year's rollback tax rate:

Last year's adjusted operating taxes (after subtracting taxes on lost property and adjusting for any transferred function, tax increment financing, state criminal justice mandate, and/or enhanced indigent health care expenditures)	\$ 165,495.00
+ This year's adjusted tax base	\$ 20,981,670.00
= This year's effective operating rate	\$ 0.789750 /\$100
x 1.08 = this year's maximum operating rate	\$ 0.852930 /\$100
+ This year's debt rate	\$ 0.140870 /\$100
= This year's total rollback rate	\$ 0.993810 /\$100

A hospital district or city that collects the additional sales tax to reduce property taxes, including one that collects the tax for the first time this year, must insert the following lines:

- Sales tax adjustment rate	\$ 0.000000 /\$100
= Rollback tax rate	\$ 0.000000 /\$100

For a taxing unit with additional rollback rate for pollution control, insert the following lines:

+ Additional rollback rate for pollution control	\$ 0.000000 /\$100
= Rollback tax rate	\$ 0.000000 /\$100

STATEMENT OF INCREASE/DECREASE

IF CITY OF MUNDAY ADOPTS A 2013 TAX RATE EQUAL TO THE EFFECTIVE TAX RATE OF \$0.932480 PER \$100 OF VALUE, TAXES WOULD INCREASE COMPARED TO 2012 TAXES BY \$1840.00

Schedule A - Unencumbered Fund Balances

The following estimated balances will be left in the unit's property tax accounts at the end of the fiscal year. These balances are not encumbered by a corresponding debt obligation.

TYPE OF PROPERTY TAX FUND	BALANCE
GENERAL FUND	-0-

This statement of Increase/Decrease notice was prepared by Mitzi Welch, Tax Assessor

2013 Property Tax Rates in KNOX COUNTY GENERAL & SPECIAL

This notice concerns 2013 property tax rates for KNOX COUNTY GENERAL & SPECIAL

It presents information about three tax rates. Last year's tax rate is the actual rate the taxing unit used to determine property taxes last year. This year's effective tax rate would impose the same total taxes as last year if you compare properties taxed in both years. This year's rollback tax rate is the highest tax rate the taxing unit can set before taxpayers can start tax rollback procedures. In each case these rates are found by dividing the total amount of taxes by the tax base (the total value of taxable property) with adjustments as required by state law. The rates are given per \$100 of property value.

Last year's tax rate:

	General Fund	Farm to Market/ Flood Control Fund	Special Road/ Bridge Fund
Last year's operating taxes	\$ 1,137,205.00	\$ 0.00	\$ 221,565.00
Last year's debt taxes	\$ 0.00	\$ 0.00	\$ 0.00
Last year's total taxes	\$ 1,137,205.00	\$ 0.00	\$ 221,565.00
Last year's tax base	\$ 185,122,050.00	\$ 0.00	\$ 181,432,040.00
Last year's total tax rate	\$.61430 /\$100	\$.00000 /\$100	\$.12212 /\$100

This year's effective tax rate:

Last year's adjusted taxes (after subtracting taxes on lost property)	\$ 1,135,525.00	\$ 0.00	\$ 221,946.00
+ This year's adjusted tax base (after subtracting value of new property)	\$ 182,031,390.00	\$ 0.00	\$ 179,204,050.00
= This year's effective tax rate for each fund	\$.62398 /\$100	\$.00000 /\$100	\$.12388 /\$100
Total effective tax rate	\$.74788 /\$100		

(Maximum rate unless unit publishes notices and holds hearings.)

In the first year a county collects the additional sales tax to reduce property taxes, it must insert the following lines unless its first adjustment was made last year:

- Sales tax adjustment rate	\$.00000 /\$100
= Effective tax rate	\$.00000 /\$100

This year's rollback tax rate:

Last year's adjusted operating taxes (after subtracting taxes on lost property and adjusting for any transferred function, tax increment financing, state criminal justice mandate, and/or enhanced indigent health care expenditures)	\$ 1,134,731.00	\$ 0.00	\$ 221,786.00
+ This year's adjusted tax base	\$ 182,031,390.00	\$ 0.00	\$ 179,204,050.00
= This year's effective rate	\$.62398 /\$100	\$.00000 /\$100	\$.12388 /\$100
x 1.08 = this year's maximum operating rate	\$.67390 /\$100	\$.00000 /\$100	\$.13380 /\$100
+ This year's debt rate	\$.00000 /\$100	\$.00000 /\$100	\$.00000 /\$100
= This year's total rollback rate for each fund	\$.67390 /\$100	\$.00000 /\$100	\$.13380 /\$100
This year's total rollback rate	\$.80770 /\$100		

A county that collects the additional sales tax to reduce property taxes, including one that collects the tax for the first time this year, must insert the following lines:

- Sales tax adjustment rate	\$.00000 /\$100
= Rollback tax rate	\$.00000 /\$100

For a county with additional rollback rate for pollution control, insert the following lines:

+ Additional rollback rate for pollution control	\$.00000 /\$100
= Rollback tax rate	\$.00000 /\$100

STATEMENT OF INCREASE/DECREASE

IF KNOX COUNTY ADOPTS A 2013 TAX RATE EQUAL TO THE EFFECTIVE TAX RATE OF \$.62398 PER \$100 OF VALUE FOR THE GENERAL FUND, TAXES WOULD DECREASE COMPARED TO 2012 TAXES BY \$5,157.00
IF KNOX COUNTY ADOPTS A 2013 TAX RATE EQUAL TO THE EFFECTIVE TAX RATE OF \$.12388 PER \$100 OF VALUE FOR THE SPECIAL FUND, TAXES WOULD DECREASE COMPARED TO 2012 TAXES BY \$1,149.00

Schedule A - Unencumbered Fund Balances

The following estimated balances will be left in the unit's property tax accounts at the end of the fiscal year. These balances are not encumbered by a corresponding debt obligation.

TYPE OF PROPERTY TAX FUND	BALANCE
GENERAL FUND	0.0000

This statement of Increase/Decrease notice was prepared by Mitzi Welch, Tax Assessor

Rolling Plains Groundwater Conservation District P.O. Box 717 Munday, Texas 76371 Office: 940-422-1095 Fax: 940-422-1094

The Rolling Plains Groundwater Conservation District will hold a meeting at the North Central Texas Municipal Water Authority, 135 N. Munday Ave., Munday, Texas on August 22, 2013 at 7:00 P.M. to consider adopting a proposed tax rate for tax year 2014. The proposed rate is \$.0198 per \$100 of value.

The proposed tax rate would increase taxes in the Rolling Plains Groundwater Conservation District by 0.00%.

2013 Property Tax Rates in KNOX COUNTY HOSPITAL

This notice concerns 2013 property tax rates for KNOX COUNTY HOSPITAL. It presents information about three tax rates. Last year's tax rate is the actual rate the taxing unit used to determine property taxes last year. This year's effective tax rate would impose the same total taxes as last year if you compare properties taxed in both years. This year's rollback tax rate is the highest tax rate the taxing unit can set before taxpayers can start tax rollback procedures. In each case these rates are found by dividing the total amount of taxes by the tax base (the total value of taxable property) with adjustments as required by state law. The rates are given per \$100 of property value.

Last year's tax rate:

Last year's operating taxes	\$ 686,063.00
Last year's debt taxes	\$ 0.00
Last year's total taxes	\$ 686,063.00
Last year's tax base	\$ 185,122,050.00
Last year's total tax rate	\$ 0.370600 /\$100

This year's effective tax rate:

Last year's adjusted taxes (after subtracting taxes on lost property)	\$ 681,077.00
+ This year's adjusted tax base (after subtracting value of new property)	\$ 182,031,390.00
= This year's effective tax rate	\$ 0.374150 /\$100

(Maximum rate unless unit publishes notices and holds hearings.)

In the first year a hospital district or city collects the additional sales tax to reduce property taxes, it must insert the following lines unless its first adjustment was made last year:

- Sales tax adjustment rate	\$ 0.000000 /\$100
= Effective tax rate	\$ 0.000000 /\$100

This year's rollback tax rate:

Last year's adjusted operating taxes (after subtracting taxes on lost property and adjusting for any transferred function, tax increment financing, state criminal justice mandate, and/or enhanced indigent health care expenditures)	\$ 680,358.00
+ This year's adjusted tax base	\$ 182,031,390.00
= This year's effective operating rate	\$ 0.374150 /\$100
x 1.08 = this year's maximum operating rate	\$ 0.404080 /\$100
+ This year's debt rate	\$ 0.000000 /\$100
= This year's total rollback rate	\$ 0.404080 /\$100

A hospital district or city that collects the additional sales tax to reduce property taxes, including one that collects the tax for the first time this year, must insert the following lines:

- Sales tax adjustment rate	\$ 0.000000 /\$100
= Rollback tax rate	\$ 0.000000 /\$100

For a taxing unit with additional rollback rate for pollution control, insert the following lines:

+ Additional rollback rate for pollution control	\$ 0.000000 /\$100
= Rollback tax rate	\$ 0.000000 /\$100

STATEMENT OF INCREASE/DECREASE

IF KNOX COUNTY HOSPITAL ADOPTS A 2013 TAX RATE EQUAL TO THE EFFECTIVE TAX RATE OF \$.374150 PER \$100 OF VALUE, TAXES WOULD DECREASE COMPARED TO 2012 TAXES BY \$1,524.00

Schedule A - Unencumbered Fund Balances

The following estimated balances will be left in the unit's property tax accounts at the end of the fiscal year. These balances are not encumbered by a corresponding debt obligation.

TYPE OF PROPERTY TAX FUND	BALANCE
GENERAL FUND	0.0000

This statement of Increase/Decrease notice was prepared by Mitzi Welch, Tax Assessor

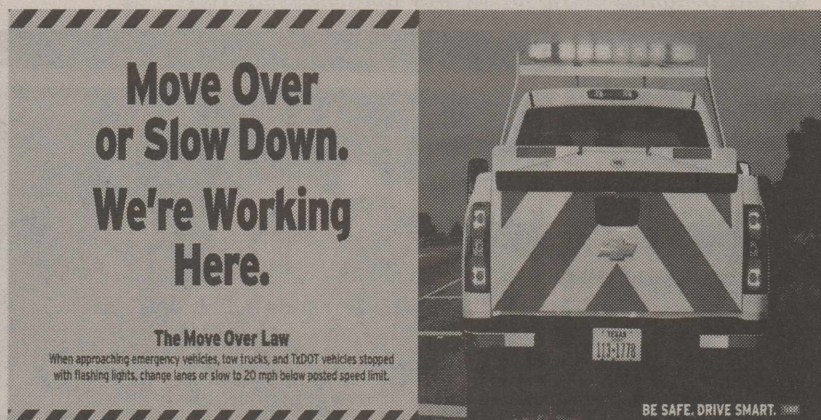
Motorists required to move over/slow down for TxDot crews

AUSTIN — September not only brings the start of fall, but also the start of a new requirement for Texas drivers. The state's Move Over/Slow Down law, which traditionally has required drivers to yield to police, fire and emergency vehicles, has now been expanded to provide that same protection for Texas Department of Transportation workers. Effective Sept. 1, drivers must move over or slow down when approaching TxDOT workers and vehicles that are stopped with overhead flashing blue or amber lights.

"We are very pleased the Legislature recognizes the dangers our employees face each day while working to maintain and build the state's vast highway network," said

Phil Wilson, TxDOT's executive director, noting that more than 100 TxDOT employees working in construction areas have been struck and killed by motorists since 1938. "We are hopeful that this new protection for our crews will lead to fewer preventable deaths and injuries."

The new addition to the Move Over law requires motorists to move out of the lane closest to the TxDOT vehicle when possible or reduce their speed to 20 miles per hour below the posted limit. If the road does not offer multiple lanes, the driver must slow down. On roadways with posted speed limits of 25 miles per hour or less, drivers must reduce their speed to 5 miles per hour. Violators can be fined up to \$2,000.



2013 Property Tax Rates in GOREE CITY	
This notice concerns 2013 property tax rates for GOREE CITY	
It presents information about three tax rates. Last year's tax rate is the actual rate the taxing unit used to determine property taxes last year. This year's effective tax rate would impose the same total taxes as last year if you compare properties taxed in both years. This year's rollback tax rate is the highest tax rate the taxing unit can set before taxpayers can start tax rollback procedures. In each case these rates are found by dividing the total amount of taxes by the tax base (the total value of taxable property) with adjustments as required by state law. The rates are given per \$100 of property value.	
Last year's tax rate:	
Last year's operating taxes	\$ 30,968.00
Last year's debt taxes	\$ 0.00
Last year's total taxes	\$ 30,968.00
Last year's tax base	\$ 2,305,750.00
Last year's total tax rate	\$ 1.343000 /\$100
This year's effective tax rate:	
Last year's adjusted taxes (after subtracting taxes on lost property)	\$ 32,663.00
+ This year's adjusted tax base (after subtracting value of new property)	\$ 2,501,650.00
= This year's effective tax rate	\$ 1.305600 /\$100
<i>(Maximum rate unless unit publishes notices and holds hearings.)</i>	
In the first year a hospital district or city collects the additional sales tax to reduce property taxes, it must insert the following lines unless its first adjustment was made last year:	
- Sales tax adjustment rate	\$ 0.000000 /\$100
= Effective tax rate	\$ 0.000000 /\$100
This year's rollback tax rate:	
Last year's adjusted operating taxes (after subtracting taxes on lost property and adjusting for any transferred function, tax increment financing, state criminal justice mandate, and/or enhanced indigent health care expenditures)	\$ 32,663.00
+ This year's adjusted tax base	\$ 2,501,650.00
= This year's effective operating rate	\$ 1.305600 /\$100
x 1.08 = this year's maximum operating rate	\$ 1.410000 /\$100
+ This year's debt rate	\$ 0.000000 /\$100
= This year's total rollback rate	\$ 1.410000 /\$100
A hospital district or city that collects the additional sales tax to reduce property taxes, including one that collects the tax for the first time this year, must insert the following lines:	
- Sales tax adjustment rate	\$ 0.000000 /\$100
= Rollback tax rate	\$ 0.000000 /\$100
For a taxing unit with additional rollback rate for pollution control, insert the following lines:	
+ Additional rollback rate for pollution control	\$ 0.000000 /\$100
= Rollback tax rate	\$ 0.000000 /\$100
STATEMENT OF INCREASE/DECREASE	
IF CITY OF GOREE ADOPTS A 2013 TAX RATE EQUAL TO THE EFFECTIVE TAX RATE OF \$1.3056 per \$100 OF VALUE, TAXES WOULD DECREASE COMPARED TO 2012 TAXES BY \$1.00	
Schedule A - Unencumbered Fund Balances	
The following estimated balances will be left in the unit's property tax accounts at the end of the fiscal year. These balances are not encumbered by a corresponding debt obligation.	
TYPE OF PROPERTY TAX FUND	BALANCE
GENERAL FUND	0.0000
This statement of Increase/Decrease notice was prepared by Mitzi Welch, Tax Assessor	

2013 Property Tax Rates in BENJAMIN CITY	
This notice concerns 2013 property tax rates for BENJAMIN CITY	
It presents information about three tax rates. Last year's tax rate is the actual rate the taxing unit used to determine property taxes last year. This year's effective tax rate would impose the same total taxes as last year if you compare properties taxed in both years. This year's rollback tax rate is the highest tax rate the taxing unit can set before taxpayers can start tax rollback procedures. In each case these rates are found by dividing the total amount of taxes by the tax base (the total value of taxable property) with adjustments as required by state law. The rates are given per \$100 of property value.	
Last year's tax rate:	
Last year's operating taxes	\$ 26,107.00
Last year's debt taxes	\$ 0.00
Last year's total taxes	\$ 26,107.00
Last year's tax base	\$ 4,160,540.00
Last year's total tax rate	\$ 0.627490 /\$100
This year's effective tax rate:	
Last year's adjusted taxes (after subtracting taxes on lost property)	\$ 25,540.00
+ This year's adjusted tax base (after subtracting value of new property)	\$ 4,349,190.00
= This year's effective tax rate	\$ 0.587230 /\$100
<i>(Maximum rate unless unit publishes notices and holds hearings.)</i>	
In the first year a hospital district or city collects the additional sales tax to reduce property taxes, it must insert the following lines unless its first adjustment was made last year:	
- Sales tax adjustment rate	\$ 0.000000 /\$100
= Effective tax rate	\$ 0.000000 /\$100
This year's rollback tax rate:	
Last year's adjusted operating taxes (after subtracting taxes on lost property and adjusting for any transferred function, tax increment financing, state criminal justice mandate, and/or enhanced indigent health care expenditures)	\$ 25,532.00
+ This year's adjusted tax base	\$ 4,349,190.00
= This year's effective operating rate	\$ 0.587230 /\$100
x 1.08 = this year's maximum operating rate	\$ 0.634210 /\$100
+ This year's debt rate	\$ 0.000000 /\$100
= This year's total rollback rate	\$ 0.634210 /\$100
A hospital district or city that collects the additional sales tax to reduce property taxes, including one that collects the tax for the first time this year, must insert the following lines:	
- Sales tax adjustment rate	\$ 0.000000 /\$100
= Rollback tax rate	\$ 0.000000 /\$100
For a taxing unit with additional rollback rate for pollution control, insert the following lines:	
+ Additional rollback rate for pollution control	\$ 0.000000 /\$100
= Rollback tax rate	\$ 0.000000 /\$100
STATEMENT OF INCREASE/DECREASE	
IF CITY OF BENJAMIN ADOPTS A 2013 TAX RATE EQUAL TO THE EFFECTIVE TAX RATE OF \$0.58723 per \$100 OF VALUE, TAXES WOULD DECREASE COMPARED TO 2012 TAXES BY \$541.00	
Schedule A - Unencumbered Fund Balances	
The following estimated balances will be left in the unit's property tax accounts at the end of the fiscal year. These balances are not encumbered by a corresponding debt obligation.	
TYPE OF PROPERTY TAX FUND	BALANCE
GENERAL FUND	0.0000
This statement of Increase/Decrease notice was prepared by Mitzi Welch, Tax Assessor	

2013 Property Tax Rates in KNOX COUNTY DRAINAGE	
This notice concerns 2013 property tax rates for KNOX COUNTY DRAINAGE	
It presents information about three tax rates. Last year's tax rate is the actual rate the taxing unit used to determine property taxes last year. This year's effective tax rate would impose the same total taxes as last year if you compare properties taxed in both years. This year's rollback tax rate is the highest tax rate the taxing unit can set before taxpayers can start tax rollback procedures. In each case these rates are found by dividing the total amount of taxes by the tax base (the total value of taxable property) with adjustments as required by state law. The rates are given per \$100 of property value.	
Last year's tax rate:	
Last year's operating taxes	\$ 14,934.00
Last year's debt taxes	\$ 0.00
Last year's total taxes	\$ 14,934.00
Last year's tax base	\$ 20,168,320.00
Last year's total tax rate	\$ 0.074050 /\$100
This year's effective tax rate:	
Last year's adjusted taxes (after subtracting taxes on lost property)	\$ 14,951.00
+ This year's adjusted tax base (after subtracting value of new property)	\$ 21,097,540.00
= This year's effective tax rate	\$ 0.070860 /\$100
<i>(Maximum rate unless unit publishes notices and holds hearings.)</i>	
In the first year a hospital district or city collects the additional sales tax to reduce property taxes, it must insert the following lines unless its first adjustment was made last year:	
- Sales tax adjustment rate	\$ 0.000000 /\$100
= Effective tax rate	\$ 0.000000 /\$100
This year's rollback tax rate:	
Last year's adjusted operating taxes (after subtracting taxes on lost property and adjusting for any transferred function, tax increment financing, state criminal justice mandate, and/or enhanced indigent health care expenditures)	\$ 14,934.00
+ This year's adjusted tax base	\$ 21,097,540.00
= This year's effective operating rate	\$ 0.070860 /\$100
x 1.08 = this year's maximum operating rate	\$ 0.076539 /\$100
+ This year's debt rate	\$ 0.000000 /\$100
= This year's total rollback rate	\$ 0.076539 /\$100
A hospital district or city that collects the additional sales tax to reduce property taxes, including one that collects the tax for the first time this year, must insert the following lines:	
- Sales tax adjustment rate	\$ 0.000000 /\$100
= Rollback tax rate	\$ 0.000000 /\$100
For a taxing unit with additional rollback rate for pollution control, insert the following lines:	
+ Additional rollback rate for pollution control	\$ 0.000000 /\$100
= Rollback tax rate	\$ 0.000000 /\$100
STATEMENT OF INCREASE/DECREASE	
IF KNOX COUNTY DRAINAGE ADOPTS A 2013 TAX RATE EQUAL TO THE EFFECTIVE TAX RATE OF \$0.07086 per \$100 OF VALUE, TAXES WOULD INCREASE COMPARED TO 2012 TAXES BY \$18.00	
Schedule A - Unencumbered Fund Balances	
The following estimated balances will be left in the unit's property tax accounts at the end of the fiscal year. These balances are not encumbered by a corresponding debt obligation.	
TYPE OF PROPERTY TAX FUND	BALANCE
GENERAL FUND	0.0000
This statement of Increase/Decrease notice was prepared by Mitzi Welch, Tax Assessor	

2013 Property Tax Rates in KNOX CITY	
This notice concerns 2013 property tax rates for KNOX CITY	
It presents information about three tax rates. Last year's tax rate is the actual rate the taxing unit used to determine property taxes last year. This year's effective tax rate would impose the same total taxes as last year if you compare properties taxed in both years. This year's rollback tax rate is the highest tax rate the taxing unit can set before taxpayers can start tax rollback procedures. In each case these rates are found by dividing the total amount of taxes by the tax base (the total value of taxable property) with adjustments as required by state law. The rates are given per \$100 of property value.	
Last year's tax rate:	
Last year's operating taxes	\$ 201,607.00
Last year's debt taxes	\$ 0.00
Last year's total taxes	\$ 201,607.00
Last year's tax base	\$ 29,622,870.00
Last year's total tax rate	\$ 0.700000 /\$100
This year's effective tax rate:	
Last year's adjusted taxes (after subtracting taxes on lost property)	\$ 211,375.00
+ This year's adjusted tax base (after subtracting value of new property)	\$ 29,879,570.00
= This year's effective tax rate	\$ 0.707420 /\$100
<i>(Maximum rate unless unit publishes notices and holds hearings.)</i>	
In the first year a hospital district or city collects the additional sales tax to reduce property taxes, it must insert the following lines unless its first adjustment was made last year:	
- Sales tax adjustment rate	\$ 0.000000 /\$100
= Effective tax rate	\$ 0.000000 /\$100
This year's rollback tax rate:	
Last year's adjusted operating taxes (after subtracting taxes on lost property and adjusting for any transferred function, tax increment financing, state criminal justice mandate, and/or enhanced indigent health care expenditures)	\$ 210,133.00
+ This year's adjusted tax base	\$ 29,879,570.00
= This year's effective operating rate	\$ 0.707420 /\$100
x 1.08 = this year's maximum operating rate	\$ 0.764010 /\$100
+ This year's debt rate	\$ 0.000000 /\$100
= This year's total rollback rate	\$ 0.764010 /\$100
A hospital district or city that collects the additional sales tax to reduce property taxes, including one that collects the tax for the first time this year, must insert the following lines:	
- Sales tax adjustment rate	\$ 0.000000 /\$100
= Rollback tax rate	\$ 0.000000 /\$100
For a taxing unit with additional rollback rate for pollution control, insert the following lines:	
+ Additional rollback rate for pollution control	\$ 0.000000 /\$100
= Rollback tax rate	\$ 0.000000 /\$100
STATEMENT OF INCREASE/DECREASE	
IF CITY OF KNOX CITY ADOPTS A 2013 TAX RATE EQUAL TO THE EFFECTIVE TAX RATE OF \$0.70742 per \$100 OF VALUE, TAXES WOULD INCREASE COMPARED TO 2012 TAXES BY \$1321.00	
Schedule A - Unencumbered Fund Balances	
The following estimated balances will be left in the unit's property tax accounts at the end of the fiscal year. These balances are not encumbered by a corresponding debt obligation.	
TYPE OF PROPERTY TAX FUND	BALANCE
GENERAL FUND	193,653
This statement of Increase/Decrease notice was prepared by Mitzi Welch, Tax Assessor	

Beef industry showcases sustainability

Source: beefboard.org

The beef industry has improved its sustainability by 5 percent in just 6 years according to the results of the checkoff-funded Beef Industry Sustainability Assessment, released Aug. 8 during the 2013 Cattle Industry Summer Conference.

Richard Gebhart, cow-calf producer from Claremore, Okla., also served on the sustainability advisory panel. He explains that the beef sustainability assessment is the most detailed examination of a commodity value chain ever completed, taking into account every aspect of beef production from the growth of feed to the disposal of packaging by the final consumer.

"We examined all the inputs and outputs required to produce a pound of boneless, edible beef and we did that for the 1970s, 2005 and 2011," says Gebhart, explaining that the 1970s and 2005 each represents major shifts in beef production practices, while 2011 represents present-day.

Improvements in crop yields, better irrigation, innovations in the packing sector, improvements in technology and better animal performance are examples of innovations that have all played a role in advancing industry sustainability, according to Kim Stackhouse-Lawson, Ph.D., director of sustainability for the National Cattlemen's Beef Association, a contractor to the Beef Checkoff Program.

"The completion of the life cycle assessment (LCA) project provides the industry, for the first time, the science-based evidence necessary to lead conversations about the sustainability of beef," says Stackhouse-Lawson. "The Beef Checkoff and the Beef Promotion Operating Committee had the foresight 3 years ago to see the importance of this work and make it a priority for the industry. By completing the LCA, the checkoff positioned beef as a leader on the topic of sustainability."

Stackhouse-Lawson says the project was extensive. "We examined millions of individual data points and then created models to simulate specific aspects of beef production practices so that this data and these results are truly representative of beef production in the United States."

Gebhart and Stackhouse-Lawson agree

that the completion of the project represents an outstanding opportunity for cattlemen and cattlemen to tell their own stories of sustainable beef production, rather than letting those outside the industry do it.

"The results of this work show the beef industry is becoming more innovative and efficient, while also doing an excellent job protecting the resources with which they have been entrusted," says Gebhart.

Stackhouse-Lawson explains that during the 6 years between 2005 and 2011, the beef industry has:

- Reduced environmental impacts by 7 percent
- Improved its overall sustainability by 5 percent
- Reduced emissions to soil by 7 percent
- Reduced greenhouse gas emissions by 2 percent
- Lowered acidification potential emissions by 3 percent
- Reduced emissions to water by 10 percent
- Lessened occupational accidents and illnesses by 32 percent
- Reduced resource consumption by 2 percent
- Decreased water use by 3 percent
- Decreased land use by 4 percent
- Lowered energy use by 2 percent

"The results of the Beef Industry Sustainability Assessment, which was just certified by the National Standards Foundation (NSF), show the industry is on a path of continuous improvement," says Stackhouse-Lawson, who explains that the certification by NSF lends third-party credibility to the work, making it more acceptable to non-governmental organizations and other potential partners in the sustainability arena.

"When we talk about the sustainability of an industry, that's what it's all about, getting better over time. As an industry, beef is doing a good job at making progress on the path toward a more sustainable future. The certification of these results confirms that," she says.

For more information about your beef checkoff investment, visit MyBeefCheckoff.com.

Reduce your taxes with miscellaneous deductions

Special to the Courier

DALLAS — If you itemize deductions on your tax return, you may be able to deduct certain miscellaneous expenses. You may benefit from this because a tax deduction normally reduces your federal income tax.

Here are some things you should know about miscellaneous deductions:

Deductions Subject to the Two Percent Limit. You can deduct most miscellaneous expenses only if they exceed two percent of your adjusted gross income. These include expenses such as:

- Unreimbursed employee expenses.
- Expenses related to searching for a new job in the same profession.
- Certain work clothes and uniforms.
- Tools needed for your job.
- Union dues.
- Work-related travel and transportation.

Deductions Not Subject to the Two Percent Limit. Some deductions are not subject to the two percent of AGI limit. Some expenses on this list include:

- Certain casualty and theft losses. This de-

duction applies if you held the damaged or stolen property for investment. Property that you hold for investment may include assets such as stocks, bonds and works of art.

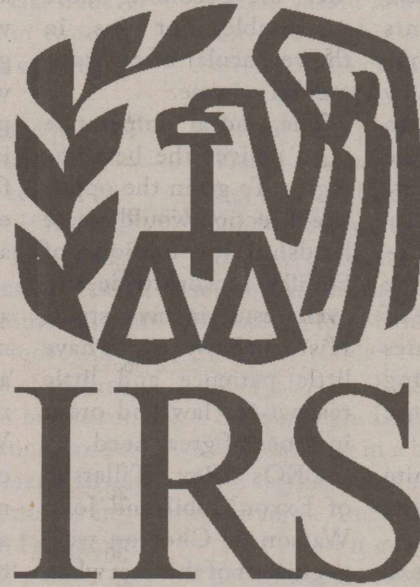
- Gambling losses up to the amount of gambling winnings.

• Losses from Ponzi-type investment schemes.

Many expenses are not deductible. For example, you can't deduct personal living or family expenses. Report your miscellaneous deductions on Schedule A, Itemized Deductions. Be sure to keep records of your deductions as a reminder when you file your taxes in 2014.

"Retain receipts, canceled checks, financial account statements and other documentary evidence of your deductions," said Clay Sanford, an IRS spokesman in Dallas. "You should usually keep the records supporting items on your tax returns for at least three years."

For more information, see IRS Publication 529, "Miscellaneous Deductions," available at www.irs.gov.



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DRIVE NOW TEXT LATER

Thank You

There is no place like home, and it's good to be back in Munday.

While away for surgery and recuperation, each of you made me feel like I was home with your phone calls, cards, flowers and visits.

The food that has been brought to me since my return home has been delicious.

I thank each of you for your prayers and all you have done for me.

May God bless each of you.

Rhiney Redder

THANK YOU to all of the sponsors and helpers for the Watermelon Festival that was held in Knox City on July 26th & 27th. The event sponsors were:

- Citizens Bank
- Lewis Paint & Body Shop
- Knox County Hospital District
- Jeremy Eaton Equipment Services
- Pumpers Supply & Equipment
- Five Star Construction
- Lawrence Brothers
- Baker Hughes
- First Bank Texas/Munday Branch
- Bill Stewart Insurance
- Crop Production Services
- Knox City Florist
- Lynn Electric
- Lions Club

Without the event sponsors it would not be possible to hold the festival and they have our sincere thanks. We would also like to thank the T-shirt ad sponsors and all of the kind people that donated their time to help us this year.

The Knox City Chamber of Commerce Board of Directors

NEWS RELEASE

Special Education Child Find, 3-5 year olds Screening dates set

ATTENTION PARENTS: If you are a resident of any of the following school districts:

- Benjamin ISD
- Knox City-O'Brien CISD
- Munday CISD
- Paint Creek ISD or
- Rule ISD

Haskell-Knox Shared Service Arrangement in cooperation with the school districts it represents (see above) are holding some screenings for children 3-5 years of age whose parents have concerns of the developmental level(s) where their child functions.

If you have concerns in any of the following areas* with your child who is 3 or older and not yet in kindergarten:

- *Mental
- *Learning
- *Speech
- *Motor, and/or
- *Emotional skills...

Please call HKSSA to set up an appointment. The office number is 658-3587. Knox City ISD, Benjamin ISD - August 13th & 14th Munday ISD - August 22nd & 23rd Rule and Paint Creek - Contact office

Once an appointment time is set, you will be asked to bring your child's birth certificate, social security card and immunization record with you and the child on the day of the appointment.

If your child is under the age of 3 years old and you have concerns with their development; then you are encouraged to contact Little Lives - ECI @ 1-800-852-2193 for their program.

BACK TO SCHOOL Drive

Give back to local schools and let Santa Rosa give back to you!

Donate basic school supplies to the school district of your choice and receive waived standard installation on any new or additional SRTC service.

A complete list of school supplies needed can be found at all Santa Rosa Offices, online at www.srcaccess.net or on Santa Rosa's Facebook page. Donations accepted at all SRTC locations.

Santa Rosa Telephone Cooperative

Some restrictions may apply. Services where available. Up to three connections waived, additional connections \$20 each.

VERNON OFFICE 7110 US Hwy 287 E Vernon, TX 76384 (940) 886-2217 (888) 886-2217	HASKELL OFFICE 113 N Ave. D Haskell, TX 79521 (940) 863-1125 (888) 863-1125	SEYMOUR OFFICE 310 W California Seymour, TX 76380 (940) 889-1125 (877) 889-1125
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Opinion

Demoralize the Anti-Oil Fringe

By Robert L. Bradley

It has become a familiar scene at major oil company annual meetings. Protestors, some of whom have purchased token amounts of stock to appear, confront the proceedings by asking oil companies to exit their business in the name of the environment.

According to this fringe, oil companies have a responsibility to protect the planet from the scourge of fossil fuels. Oil companies are portrayed as pushing their product while the planet overheats.

This black-and-white view of energy policy puts the global warming issue into a moral context. It assumes everyone who believes in catastrophic climate-change theory is good, and those who don't are bad. It also asserts that replacing fossil fuels will make the world better and "sustainable."

How wrong! Oil, gas,

and coal are increasingly abundant, clean, and consumer-friendly. Real climate is refuting warmist climate models. Fossil fuels are becoming more sustainable, not less, in the vernacular of environmental science.

The moral imperative is to deliver the best energies. To go in the opposite direction would create hardship for millions of families worldwide—and even result in civil strife. History shows people have little patience and little respect for law and order in times of great need.

CEOs Rex Tillerson of ExxonMobil and John Watson of Chevron were cognizant of this fact when they explained the importance of balanced energy policy at their recent annual meetings. They offered reason in the face of ecological zealotry.

Tillerson urged continued oil and gas development to support a growing

world population. He demoted scary climate models as "not competent." He dismissed wind, solar, and biofuels as wanting. He asked his critics: "How do you want to deal with that great social challenge to what good is it to save the planet if humanity suffers in the process of those efforts when you don't know exactly what your impacts are going to be?"

Chevron's Watson said an effective energy policy must balance energy availability and cost and environmental considerations. While "some progress on carbon emissions" can be made, "it's going to take a lot longer than people think," he added.

Rather than subsidizing today's alternative energy resources, Watson called for economical efficiency gains and investments in breakthrough technologies. He noted that subsidizing wind, solar and other alternatives has

"raised the cost of energy for consumers."

This brings the discussion to Obama energy policy and his infamous statement about how electricity prices would "necessarily skyrocket" under his carbon-dioxide cap-and-trade plan. If his policy was centered on consumer welfare rather than ideology, his Administration would approve rather than delay construction of the Keystone XL pipeline, for example.

The privately funded \$5.3 billion project would create thousands of jobs and deliver more than 800,000 barrels of Canadian oil per day to U.S. refineries on the Gulf Coast, providing the feedstock for the fuels and products essential to the U.S. economy and American families.

With political energy and leadership failing, it is refreshing to see leaders of global energy companies defend their moral right and financial oppor-

tunity to serve consumers with affordable, reliable energies. Energy education is well served—and corporate responsibility enhanced—by debunking the tired arguments of climate alarmism and rejecting government energy planning.

Robert L. Bradley Jr. is CEO of the Institute for Energy Research and author, most recently, of Edison to Enron: Energy Markets and Political Strategies (John Wiley & Sons).

TDA Market Recap

		Week Ending Aug. 10, 2013	Previous Week	Previous Year
Texas Cash Markets:				
Feeder Steers	(\$/cwt)	163.88	166.13	147.45
Fed Cattle	(\$/cwt)	120.97	119.00	119.14
Slaughter Lambs	(\$/cwt)	91.00	97.50	100.00
Slaughter Goats	(\$/cwt)	167.00	167.00	155.00
Cotton	(¢/lb.)	86.25	82.50	70.25
Grain Sorghum	(\$/cwt)	9.84	10.02	14.22
Wheat	(\$/bu.)	7.00	7.10	8.61
Corn	(\$/bu.)	6.08	6.19	8.44
Watermelons	(\$/lb.)	0.15	0.18	0.13
Futures Markets:				
Feeder Cattle	(\$/cwt)	153.85	153.72	139.47
Fed Cattle	(\$/cwt)	122.50	120.65	120.60
Cotton	(¢/lb.)	89.05	85.32	72.90
Wheat	(\$/bu.)	6.97	7.07	8.93
Corn	(\$/bu.)	4.66	4.76	8.00
Lumber	(\$/MBF)	308.50	307.40	303.20

MBF = thousand board feet

All cash prices above are market averages for locations covered by the USDA Market News program and do not reflect any particular sale at any specific location. Feeder cattle prices are for 500-600 pound medium and large No.1 steers at the Oklahoma City National Stockyards. Futures prices are quoted for the nearest month contract on the last trading day of the week. Timber prices are from the Texas A&M Forest Service, bimonthly "Texas Timber Price Trends."

For additional information, contact TDA at 800-835-5832 or visit our website, www.TexasAgriculture.gov.

NOTICE OF PUBLIC MEETING TO DISCUSS BUDGET AND PROPOSED TAX RATE

The BENJAMIN INDEPENDENT SCHOOL DISTRICT will hold a public meeting at 7:00 PM - AUGUST 26, 2013 in BENJAMIN ISD LIBRARY - 300 HAYS STREET BENJAMIN, TEXAS. The purpose of this meeting is to discuss the school district's budget that will determine the tax rate that will be adopted. Public participation in the discussion is invited.

The tax rate that is ultimately adopted at this meeting or at a separate meeting at a later date may not exceed the proposed rate shown below unless the district publishes a revised notice containing the same information and comparisons set out below and holds another public meeting to discuss the revised notice.

Maintenance Tax	\$ <u>1.17</u> / \$100 (Proposed rate for maintenance and operations)
School Debt Service Tax	\$ <u>.00</u> / \$100 (proposed rate to pay bonded indebtedness)

Comparison of Proposed Budget with Last Year's Budget

The applicable percentage increase or decrease (or difference) in the amount budgeted in the preceding fiscal year and the amount budgeted for the fiscal year that begins during the current tax year is indicated for each of the following expenditure categories:

Maintenance and operations	<u>00</u> % increase or <u>00</u> % (decrease)
Debt service	<u>00</u> % increase or <u>00</u> % (decrease)
Total expenditures	<u>00</u> % increase or <u>00</u> % (decrease)

Total Appraised Value and Total Taxable Value (as calculated under Section 26.04, Tax Code)

	Preceding Tax Year	Current Tax Year
Total appraised value* of all property	\$ 222,526,060	\$ 225,005,580
Total appraised value* of new property**	\$ 736,420	\$ 539,770
Total taxable value*** of all property	\$ 30,756,940	\$ 29,449,020
Total taxable value*** of new property**	\$ 736,420	\$ 539,770

* Appraised value is the amount shown on the appraisal roll and defined by Section 1.04(B), Tax Code.
 ** "New property" is defined by Section 26.01(17), Tax Code.
 *** "Taxable value" is defined by Section 1.04(10), Tax Code.

Bonded Indebtedness

Total amount of outstanding and unpaid bonded indebtedness* \$ 0000

* Outstanding principal.

50-280 (Rev. 6-06/2) (Back)

Comparison of Proposed Rates with Last Year's Rates

	Maintenance & Operations	Interest & Sinking Fund*	Total	Local Revenue Per Student	State Revenue Per Student
Last Year's Rate	\$ 1.17000	\$ 0.00000 *	\$ 1.17000	\$ 4,849	\$ 7,932
Rate to Maintain Same Level of Maintenance & Operations Revenue & Pay Debt Service	\$ 1.43262	\$ 0.0000 *	\$ 1.43262	\$ 5,397	\$ 7,928
Proposed Rate	\$ 1.17000	\$ 0.0000 *	\$ 1.17000	\$ 4,356	\$ 8,099

* The Interest & Sinking Fund tax revenue is used to pay for bonded indebtedness on construction, equipment, or both. The bonds, and the tax rate necessary to pay those bonds, were approved by the voters of this district.

Comparison of Proposed Levy with Last Year's Levy on Average Residence

	Last Year	This Year
Average Market Value of Residences	\$ 26,593	\$ 27,429
Average Taxable Value of Residences	\$ 11,593	\$ 12,429
Last Year's Rate Versus Proposed Rate per \$100 Value	\$ 1.17000	\$ 1.17000
Taxes Due on Average Residence	\$ 135.64	\$ 145.42
Increase (Decrease) in Taxes		\$ 9.78

Under state law, the dollar amount of school taxes imposed on the residence homestead of a person 65 years of age or older or of the surviving spouse of such a person, if the surviving spouse was 55 years of age or older when the person died, may not be increased above the amount paid in the first year after the person turned 65, regardless of changes in tax rate or property value.

Notice of Rollback Rate: The highest tax rate the district can adopt before requiring voter approval at an election is 1.17000. This election will be automatically held if the district adopts a rate in excess of the rollback rate of 1.17000.

Fund Balances

The following estimated balances will remain at the end of the current fiscal year and are not encumbered with or by a corresponding debt obligation, less estimated funds necessary for operating the district before receipt of the first state aid payment:

Maintenance and Operations Fund Balance(s)	\$ 376,800.00
Interest & Sinking Fund Balance(s)	\$ 0.000

NOTICE OF PUBLIC MEETING TO DISCUSS BUDGET AND PROPOSED TAX RATE

The Munday CISD will hold a public meeting at 6:00 PM August 26, 2013, in Munday CISD Board Room, Administrative Building, 811 West D St. Munday, Texas. The purpose of this meeting is to discuss the school district's budget that will determine the tax rate that will be adopted. Public participation in the discussion is invited.

The tax rate that is ultimately adopted at this meeting or at a separate meeting at a later date may not exceed the proposed rate shown below unless the district publishes a revised notice containing the same information and comparisons set out below and holds another public meeting to discuss the revised notice.

Maintenance Tax	\$1.17000 / \$100 (Proposed rate for maintenance and operations)
School Debt Service Tax	\$0.00000 / \$100 (Proposed rate to pay bonded indebtedness)

Comparison of Proposed Budget with Last Year's Budget

The applicable percentage increase or decrease (or difference) in the amount budgeted in the preceding fiscal year and the amount budgeted for the fiscal year that begins during the current tax year is indicated for each of the following expenditure categories:

Maintenance and operations	0.000% (increase) or 0.000% (decrease)	0.000000% (decrease)
Debt service	0.000% (increase) or 0.000% (decrease)	0.000000% (decrease)
Total expenditures	0.000% (increase) or 0.000% (decrease)	0.000000% (decrease)

Total Appraised Value and Total Taxable Value (as calculated under section 26.04, Tax Code)

	Preceding Tax Year	Current Tax Year
Total appraised value* of all property	\$139,092,510	\$187,121,040
Total appraised value* of new property**	\$390,560	\$234,770
Total taxable value*** of all property	\$54,811,010	\$55,471,600
Total taxable value*** of new property**	\$390,560	\$234,770

* Appraised value is the amount shown on the appraisal roll and defined by Section 1.04(B), Tax Code.
 ** "New property" is defined by Section 26.01(17), Tax Code.
 *** "Taxable value" is defined by Section 1.04(10), Tax Code.

Bonded Indebtedness

Total amount of outstanding and unpaid bonded indebtedness: \$0

Outstanding principal

Comparison of Proposed Rates with Last Year's Rates

	Maintenance & Operations	Interest & Sinking Fund*	Total	Local Revenue Per Student	State Revenue Per Student
Last Year's Rate	\$1.170000	\$0.000000 *	\$1.170000	\$1,682	\$8,547
Rate to Maintain Same Level of Maintenance & Operations Revenue & Pay Debt Service	\$1.23314	\$0.000000 *	\$1.23314	\$1,631	\$8,604
Proposed Rate	\$1.170000	\$0.000000 *	\$1.170000	\$1,742	\$8,546

* The Interest & Sinking Fund tax revenue is used to pay for bonded indebtedness on construction, equipment, or both. The bonds, and the tax rate necessary to pay those bonds, were approved by the voters of this district.

Comparison of Proposed Levy with Last Year's Levy on Average Residence

	Last Year	This Year
Average Market Value of Residences	\$29,261	\$30,357
Average Taxable Value of Residences	\$14,261	\$15,357
Last Year's Rate Versus Proposed Rate per \$100 Value	\$1.170000	\$1.170000
Taxes Due on Average Residence	\$166.85	\$179.68
Increase (Decrease) in Taxes		\$12.83

Under state law, the dollar amount of school taxes imposed on the residence homestead of a person 65 years of age or older or of the surviving spouse of such a person, if the surviving spouse was 55 years of age or older when the person died, may not be increased above the amount paid in the first year after the person turned 65, regardless of changes in tax rate or property value.

Notice of Rollback Rate: The highest tax rate the district can adopt before requiring voter approval at an election is 1.170000. This election will be automatically held if the district adopts a rate in excess of the rollback rate of 1.170000.

Fund Balances

The following estimated balances will remain at the end of the current fiscal year and are not encumbered with or by a corresponding debt obligation, less estimated funds necessary for operating the district before receipt of the first state aid payment:

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MISC

Notice of Budget Hearing: Notice is hereby given that a public hearing on the proposed budget for fiscal year beginning October 1, 2013 and ending September 30, 2014 will be held on Monday, August 19, 2013 at 7:00 p.m. at Knox City Clinic Meeting Room, 712 South Fifth Street, Knox City, Texas. Stephen Kuehler, Administrator, Knox County Hospital District. 081513c

Rolling Plains Management Corporation is seeking applicants for the position of part-time Teacher Aide at the Munday Child Development Center in Munday, TX. All applicants must be at least 18 years old, possess a high school diploma or its equivalent, and be willing to obtain CDA Credential. Interested persons may call 940-684-1571 or 800-633-0852 for an application to be mailed to you. Applications may also be downloaded from our web site at: www.rollingplains.org. Applicants must be received on or before August 8, 2013 at 5:00 pm. Rolling Plains Management is an equal opportunity employer M/F. 080813c

The Munday and Knox City Housing Authorities have apartments available for immediate occupancy. It the intent of both to rent the units to high income households when there are no eligible low or very low income applicants on the waiting list. Flat rent is \$200 for 0-1 bedroom units and \$250 for 2-4 bedroom units. Income based rent may be lower. Call Munday at 940-422-4941 or Knox City at 940-657-3612 for more information. Both are equal opportunity providers. 071113-tfnc



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Environmental Concerns Rise as Brazos Levels Fall

Elizabeth Koh
The Texas Tribune

GLEN ROSE — At 840 miles long, the Brazos River is a lifeline for municipalities that pump water, industries that use the water for manufacturing plants and farmers who have relied on the river to irrigate their crops. But like many other rivers in the state, it has seen the drought take its toll.

"It's still beautiful," said Ed Lowe, a Granbury resident and president of Friends of the Brazos, as his canoe scrapes along the bottom of the Brazos riverbed on a humid August afternoon. But, he said, "in terms of the flow, it's just lower." Along some parts of the river, it is too shallow to canoe.

And concerns over water levels in the Brazos, which stretches from Texas' South Plains to the Gulf of Mexico, have sparked debate over who gets to use it, how much should be used and how much should be left to keep the river healthy.

Two-thirds of the state is experiencing severe to exceptional levels of drought, and state reservoirs are at about 60 percent of their water capacity. Some water users on the Brazos have already seen water pumping suspensions and other cuts. Amid the struggle to divvy up water, environmental activists have raised concerns that issues regarding threatened wildlife and damage to the river's ecosystem are being pushed to the backseat.

Like many of Texas' rivers, the Brazos is controlled by agencies that parcel water out to users based on when they first laid claim to the river water, and water rights holders increasingly fight over how much each deserves.

Environmental advocates have fought for decades to ensure that rivers retain the amount of water that they say maintains their ecological health.

In 2007, lawmakers passed a bill that set up a system to determine the necessary environmental streamflows in Texas rivers. But Texas Commission on Environmental Quality officials also say that they have a legal duty to protect the rights of water holders.

The TCEQ has had to strike a balance between where rights holders can be accommodated and where cutbacks are needed, said Ken Kramer, the water resources chairman for the Lone Star Chapter of the Sierra Club. In some cases that balance has been skewed, he added, saying that TCEQ's recently determined flow standards for the Guadalupe-San Antonio river basin were "not adequate" to care for fish and wildlife as well as the area's river systems.

TCEQ officials say that the standards they set are adequate for maintaining the health of the rivers.

The Brazos' environmental flow standards are set to be decided next year. They will come from recommendations made by a commit-

tee comprising representatives of different users along the river and a team of scientists.

The push and pull between water rights and environmental needs on the Brazos are "sort of a microcosm of a lot of the water issues we're dealing with in Texas right now," Kramer said.

Because of the Brazos' length, the drought and growing water needs of Texas' population particularly strain the river's ecosystems by decreasing its amount of flow.

Instead of contributing to the river's environmental streamflows, much of the water is being used for needs like irrigation and industrial cooling, especially in the summertime, said Gene Wilde, a biology professor at Texas Tech University. These season-specific demands are changing when and how strongly rivers flood, damaging the surrounding environment and wildlife, he added.

Because of the length of the Brazos, "how extreme this is varies from area to area," Wilde said.

Low flows in the river increase salinity levels and decrease oxygen levels, which can make the water hostile to native species and help invasive ones — like golden algae, which releases damaging toxins — thrive.

The toxins are particularly damaging for fish such as the sharpnose and smalleye shiners, Wilde said. The sharpnose and smalleye shiners, which are minnow fish that live in the upper region of the Brazos basin, have also been threatened by the lower flows in the river, he added.

"[The fish] spawn eggs that have to be kept afloat to hatch — they're not quite buoyant," he said. "They'll settle to the bottom if there isn't any current" and die, he added.

As a result, the two species have struggled to maintain a toehold in the river despite recent conservation efforts during the last two years, said Cindy Loeffler, the water resources manager for coastal fisheries with Texas Parks and Wildlife. The fish nearly went extinct during the height of the 2011 drought, when the upper Brazos dried up.

Human activities along the Brazos have also been curtailed. The drop in water levels on the Brazos has meant fewer opportunities to boat, fish and enjoy other forms of recreation, Lowe said.

Residents around North Texas' Lake Granbury, one of three lakes created by damming on the Brazos, have also seen their riverfront properties dry up as the lake levels receded this summer.

But the struggle to balance water uses shows no signs of receding. The Brazos River Authority, a quasi-public state agency that controls much of the water in the river, has filed for a systems operations permit that would draw an additional 125,000 to 150,000 acre-feet of water from the river.

The permit, if approved, would hurt both the environment and humans who have al-

ready suffered from low flows, opponents say.

"I can walk all the way across the lake and not go over the waist [in water]," said Lake Granbury resident Keith Favre at a public hearing on the permit in Waco last month.

Favre, who lives on the lake, has seen the value of his property drop, he said. "I don't know if I'm ever going to recover from it," he added. "How are you going to protect my portion of the water?"

Matt Phillips, a spokesman for the river authority, said that although the condition of the reservoirs does not look good, "at the end of the day, these reservoirs were functioning for the purpose they were created."

"We've got to continue to supply water ... to meet people's basic human needs," he said. "There's really not a choice."

Phillips stressed that the Brazos River Authority had worked with the TCEQ and Texas Parks and Wildlife to preserve necessary environmental flows.

"When having to make the decision between providing water and allowing people to ride Jet Skis and boats, we don't have the ability to let people go without water," Phillips said.

Farmers along the Brazos are also clashing with the TCEQ over a water suspension order that has left some irrigated farmland along the river dry.

Some environmentalists suggest the path to preserving the Brazos and its surrounding ecosystems lies in greater water conservation efforts among all water users.

"We are in a water crisis that is caused by drought and made worse by wasteful water use," said Luke Metzger of Environment Texas, an advocacy group. Conservation efforts — from subsidizing more efficient appliances to fix leaks in municipal water systems — is "the cheapest thing we can do, it's the fastest thing we can do," he said. "It's the top priority."

But environmental advocates agree that substantial changes are unlikely without drastic change.

"Rivers are just so many things and they have value to human beings but I think that some people...see it as a commodity," Lowe said. "We have some responsibility as citizens to pass it on to future generations."

The real struggle to keeping the Brazos healthy is "balance," Loeffler said. "It will take sitting down and thinking about things differently, and actually planning for both, rather than getting all the water that you can at this point."

Neena Satija contributed reporting to this article.

texastribune.org
http://www.texastribune.org/2013/08/13/environmental-concerns-entangled-fight-over-brazos/

Burn-detection system will help identify wildfire threats

Source: AgriLife Today



Texas A&M AgriLife Research photo
Wayne Hamilton, Texas A&M AgriLife Research range scientist, examines vegetation on rangeland as part of a burn detection modeling system project.

A burn-risk-detection modeling system in development by a consortium of Texas A&M University System researchers will help predict potential wildfire threats throughout the Lone Star State, according to its developers.

The modeling system will be used by the Texas A&M Forest Service. Researchers with the Center for Natural Resource Information Technology, part of Texas A&M AgriLife Research, are developing the modeling program. One of those researchers, Dr. Richard Conner, also an AgriLife Research economist and professor in the department of agricultural economics at Texas A&M, said the system is a modification of several modeling projects developed a decade ago.

"This current modeling system measures the amount of forage fuel load in a county and is used to predict potential fire danger," he said.

The modeling system will provide real-time information on fuel loads using vegetation and National Oceanic and Atmospheric Administration weather information for regions susceptible to wildfire.

"In the wildfire predictive services arena, one of the hardest things to get a handle on is herbaceous fuel load across the state," said Tom Spencer, head of fire predictive services, Texas A&M Forest Service. "It's challenging to determine the condition and amount of it. There's no good way to do that through remote sensing. It's always been the case where someone has to physically go out and look, then make a judgment call."

"This project will help determine if it is possible or not. We think it is, but we still need to determine if the science supports it," Spencer said. "Overall, we are looking forward to seeing how this helps us understand potential fire season severity, which will help us assist local governments to better plan ahead. It's a huge deal if this works out."

The project has received \$125,000 in funding by a federal fire plan grant. So far, the project has been implemented in three counties — Stephens, Palo Pinto and Jack. In these counties, researchers have identified major plant communities and developed field monitoring sites to be included as part of an overall web interface monitoring system.

"We will delineate land areas into ecological sites for an inventory to be used in the modeling system," Hamilton said. "Ecological sites are areas of the landscape that produce similar kinds and proportions of plant species and total annual yield. This will allow us to expand our field sampling information across similar areas (ecological sites) and save time and costs in the inventory process."

Ecological sites also provide "state and transition models" that help identify plant communities and changes likely to occur from management inputs, he said. "What we are hoping to do is to provide vegetation information that the Forest Service can use to monitor potential wildfire threats across regions of the state."

"We are also using NOAA data with the other information on soils and plant communities we have collected to help predict how much vegetation is growing in a particular area," he said.

Angerer said vegetation samples are clipped to help calibrate the model. A similar system was developed during a research project at Fort Hood. The collected data, along with remote-sensing information, will be used to identify similar sites in the county so that the entire county can be monitored.

"Once we get the model working, the model will provide a base view of vegetative characteristics of a particular site, and can use this to see how many similar sites we have in an area," he said. "We then can model these points and build landscape maps of potential fire threats."

The project uses the PHYGROW modeling system, which computes grass, herb and shrub growth, forage consumption by livestock, and hydrologic processes. The project also uses the Burning Risk Assessment Support System, or BRASS, which is a decision support tool that provides a continuous means for land managers to assess vegetation and weather to support decisions related to prescribed burning and/or the risk of wildfire by utilizing near real-time weather conditions and fuel loads.

"The PHYGROW model is capable of simulating growth of multiple species of plants subject to selective grazing by multiple animals on a soil with multiple layers for indefinite periods of time," Conner said.

The new modeling tool will aid Forest Service personnel in tackling the challenge of changing range conditions throughout Texas, especially since land has changed ownership through the years and traditional management practices vary.

"Some land is not grazed as heavily as a tract, say, next door where there may not be any cattle on the property," Conner said. "There's fuel build up there and an increasing risk of wildfires. There's more risk than there used to be, due to people having more land and using it for purposes (other) than cattle production to make money."

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