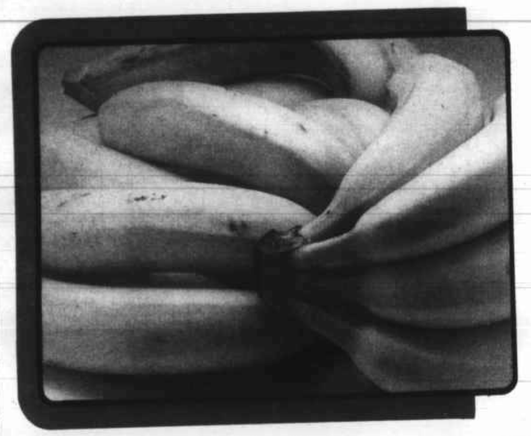

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Petition for SWB circulated

Petitions designed to let Southwestern Bell Telephone understand that Eagle Lake wants better telephone service were distributed this week in advance of a visit next Tuesday by a SWB representative.

The petitions were discussed Monday at the chamber's monthly board meeting, attended by a record 30 people with Anna Lee Higgins (Anna Lee's Kitchen) catering the meal in her home. The group heard from an LCRA representative, and listened to a report from police chief Ben Johnson on the developing Crime Stoppers program here.

Chamber president Don Bendy urged chamber members to attend city council's meeting Tuesday. The chamber opened the door with the telephone company by investigating whether the city was in line for new telephone switching equipment that would provide the area with several benefits. Council joined in and invited representative Paul Johnson to next Tuesday's meeting, providing the forum for discussion of Bell's plans.

The petitions were made Monday afternoon, and have been distributed to several stores and businesses in town. **A reproduction of the petition appears on this page, and further discussion of Council's meeting also is on this page.** If readers are unable to sign the petition in stores, or if they can't make it to council's meeting, they can clip the replica at right, and mail or bring it to the Headlight. Editor John Fearing is coordinating the petition.

The idea of the petition is a positive one, Fearing said, echoing president Bendy's comment that if our community doesn't make its wishes known, Bell might never invest in equipment here.

The LCRA representative was Don Chovanec of La Grange who is in governmental affairs, after serving on that city's council and was former president of the Chamber there.

He briefly brought members up to date on the water availability, the Shaw's Bend reservoir project, and other LCRA matters. He said his job was to let communities along the Colorado know that "LCRA as a whole wants to become more involved in your community...We are asking how can be be of assistance?"

On Shaws bend, he said the LCRA board would be making a decision in a few months on whether to proceed with project planning. He emphasized that in 1984, there were 780,000 acre-feet of water used from the river, and that today, the availability this year is about that amount.

"Water is going to be in great demand in the future," he said, adding that the priorities for its use first goes to municipal systems, then to industry while agriculture ranks third. His figures indicated that a Shaws Bend reservoir would hold about 128,000 acre feet. "This will help in the future if the dam is found feasible to construct," Chovanec said.

Chovanec said LCRA is trying to start a customer and community relations department. One concept of such a department would be to refer businesses who contact LCRA looking for plant sites where water is available. He also talked about the Stacy Dam on the upper Colorado, and said that if LCRA demands it, half of the water Stacy holds would be released into the Highland Lakes system feeding the Lower Colorado.

Chief Johnson's remarks informed members about the reason Crime Stoppers was begun. It helps overcome apathy of citizens toward reporting crimes, and helps them overcome the fear that criminals will retaliate against them if they speak up.

Johnson said chambers of commerce usually help support a Crime Stoppers program, and after his presentation, Bendy suggested that the chamber make a decision on that in 30 to 60 days.

He suggested a pledge card be printed in The Headlight, seeking donations. Johnson and Fearing agreed, and will develop one. "I think it (Crime Stoppers) is something we can use as a community," Bendy said.

One member asked Johnson if such a program could be effective here, in a small town. He said that instead of having a crime of the week publicity program, as is done in large cities, Eagle Lake probably would feature a crime of the month. Fortunately, Johnson said, Eagle Lake doesn't have that many crimes to be featured on a weekly basis. Darrel Appelt, general manager of KULM and a board member of Columbus Crime Stoppers, said the program has been effective there.

Sign this petition

We, the undersigned residents of the City of Eagle Lake and its environs, appreciate the efforts of the Southwestern Bell Telephone Company in its consideration of modernizing the switching equipment serving the area.

We urge that you follow through with such a modernization program. New equipment not only will improve service for current Southwestern Bell customers, but also provide the area with another key to its future. Local businessmen have donated their time, and pledged their financial resources toward creating an atmosphere for growth.

Since Southwestern Bell is such an ingrained part of the community's present and past, we hope that will continue in the future with the installation of modern electronic telephone switching equipment.

(This petition organized by the EAGLE LAKE CHAMBER OF COMMERCE)

NAME _____ ADDRESS _____

Public opinion on issues needed now

If there ever was a time for you to speak up at an Eagle Lake city council meeting, next Tuesday is the time.

At least four major issues will be on the agenda, and council is seeking the direction of city residents, before decisions are made. The meeting will be July 23 at 7:30 p.m. in the Municipal Building

The issues concern: Commerce St. and whether it should become one-way north; the municipal airport and whether the runway ought to be lengthened and the facility rejuvenated; Southwestern Bell telephone and whether local equipment ought to be modernized, and the state department of highways and whether a signal light should be installed on Main St., and whether FM 102 should be re-routed.

It is rare when an issue comes before council that public opinion is so widely sought, let alone so many issues at one time. However, council and several groups in town see the opportunity to show strength in seeking improvements.

The airport issue, for instance, is a priority item with the Industrial Foundation, and council has the opportunity to apply for state funding, although much of the work would be at the city's expense. Time is running out for foundation members who have made personal financial pledges to help secure new employers in the city, in an effort to provide a new source of revenue for all businesses. They now feel it is the city's turn to lends its financial strength.

An improved airport, foundation members believe, will provide another incentive for businesses that might like to locate here.

Following the same reasoning, the foundation and the chamber also are urging their members to speak up at council when Paul Johnson, a Southwestern Bell representative, is scheduled to discuss the telephone company's future for the Eagle Lake switching station. Some believe the company is deciding where to spend its new equipment money, and they want to make sure residents of Eagle Lake make it known that new switching equipment is needed and wanted here. Not only would it improve local service and make touch tone service available, but also it could be another sales point in attracting new companies who might make use of telephone lines for computer communications.

The commerce street one-way issue is being brought up again, because council apparently feels those who make left turns out of the First National Bank drive-up windows are endangering themselves and others. The problem is that a policeman would have to be glued to the spot to enforce a no-left-turn ordinance and to issue tickets to offenders. Also, there is a problem of where to place signs so drivers see them.

Last week, council discussed making the street one-way from Main to the left turn behind the municipal building's Post Office. That unnamed street would be one-way west, giving drivers easier access to the mail boxes there. Council feels a one-way street is more enforceable, because motorists would be more aware of it, but they are leery since a similar issue has failed to be accepted at least three times in the past decade. Those who favor it aren't that vocal, and those who oppose it speak up with such comments as: Eagle Lake is too small a town for a one-way street, or simply why change things.

The fourth item almost is a moot question. Council unanimously wants a signal light installed at FM 102 (Lakeside Drive) and Main St. (U.S. 90-A) at the Lake Oil Mobile station. The highway department wants it installed a block west, at Allen. Council has unanimously rejected that idea, and the highway department says that the intersection at Lakeside doesn't qualify for a light because there isn't enough traffic, and that the railroad tracks and the location of Beaks St. makes it too complicated. Mayor Elmer Struss is attempting to set up another meeting with the district highway engineer from Cuero, even, he said, if they have to meet half way in Hallettsville.

Also, the highway department is trying to find a way to solve the problem of the narrow lanes of FM 102 at its intersection with McCarty, next to the Farris 1912. The railroad apparently never gave right of way for the road to be located there, and isn't about to grant one now so the road can be widened to make it safer for large trucks making right turns onto McCarty. Widening also would eliminate the mud-hole blight at the corner of the Farris property.

The highway department has suggested FM 102 leave its present course at Stevenson, cross the railroad tracks at that point, then be routed along main street to the flashing stop-light at McCarty. It is unlikely that ever will receive local approval, and council hopes enough people will complain so the highway department will relent on the light location, and the railroad will relent on its right-of-way.

The four issues combine into one. If residents will speak up for their city, opinion will be swayed. If they don't, it is unlikely anything will be done.

—John Fearing

Slo-pitch softball tournament scheduled

The Eagle Lake Knights of Columbus have made plans to host their seventh annual Men's Slo-Pitch Softball Tournament on the weekend of July 26-28 in Eagle Lake.

The 16 team, double elimination tournament, will be held at the City Ball Park in Eagle Lake. Trophies will be awarded to the top four teams along with Most Valuable Player, Golden Glove and 10 all tournament.

This annual event held by the Knights of Columbus has provided some fine competition between many local and area teams over the last few years. Any persons or teams interested in entering the tournament should call the following for more information: "Pinto" Broesche 234-3335, Darrell Gertson 234-5488, or Steve Almanza 234-5622.

Harvest starts in Eagle Lake

The Eagle Lake area rice harvest started last week with Henry Sunderman's farm claiming the first lot at Eagle Lake Rice Dryer. With all the thunderstorms in the area, Sunderman said Tuesday, "we thought it best to start getting it in." His crews started the first cuting last Wednesday, July 10, of his Labelle and on Tuesday moved into the start of his second lot, also Labelle. The rice on the levees in that field is still a little green, he said, so crews were just cuting between the levees. Moisture content of the first lot delivered to Eagle Lake Rice Dryer averaged 22 percent. Yield figures were unavailable. Powers Farms Partnerships started cuting Tuesday, and Nelson Isenhower was expected to start Tuesday or Wednesday. Bob Cook cut a sample Tuesday afternoon in anticipation of getting started. Louis Schorlemmer of Rice Industries' dryer, said he expected farmers to start delivering their harvests to his dryer early next week. Last week, E.L. Wiedd of Garwood finished the first lot of the county, averaging 33 barrels per acre and 19.9 percent moisture. Schorlemmer agreed that the harvest will be more staggard this year, for several reasons. Foremost was that the spring planting season was so spread out, and second because there are about four varieties being grown and each has different maturing dates. As for the weather, rice farmers would like to see the clear blue skies continue, without rain. Because of heavy rice heads, a thunderstorm could knock the stalk the the ground decreasing yield and increasing harvest problems. In fact, Schorlemmer added, a rice farmer doesn't want rain at all after his fields begin growing well. Heavy rains wash out levees, and some believe rains lower rice quality and yield when it is in the blooming and heading stage.

News Notes:

New Town residents are asking their neighbors to give $4 a month to keep the street lights in the community. "If every family doesn't pitch in our streets will be dark," one resident said. The feeling is that lighted streets deter burglaries and assaults.

In business: There are two items of note. Lake Oil Co., formerly Ashby Oil, now owned by Bobby Weishuhn is offering area motorists a greater opportunity to keep the tires on their cars safe. Check his Goodyear tire ad in this issue on Page 10. Then a bit further down the street J&K's Corner held its official opening. There's a photo on Page 14.

Students that are new to the Rice school district, and who will be attending Rice High this fall, need to register July 29, 30 or 31. Just report to Principal Fred Grahmann's office from 8 a.m. to noon. This does not include St. Mary's students from Nada who already have registered.