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Produced By:
John & Jeannine Fearing
Marilyn Mueller
Shirley Luedecke
Kay Clipson
James Shane

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State explains taxing process

From the
State Property Tax Board

Many local governments are in the process of adopting property tax rates — important to property owners because these are the basis for revenue to fund county, city, school and water district budgets each year.

The Texas Property Tax Code contains "truth-in-taxation" laws which ensure that taxpayers will be informed of tax increases. For example, advertisements in local newspapers notify taxpayers of public meetings they can attend to become involved in the tax rate adoption process.

The first step in the truth-in-taxation process is calculating an effective tax rate. The taxing bodies in this area already have published those notices. The tax assessor for a taxing unit calculates this rate and publicizes it.

The effective tax rate is a key element of the truth-in-taxation process because it is a benchmark by which tax increases are measured. Generally, the effective tax rate will produce sufficient funds to make next year's payments the taxing unit's debts and provide approximately the same revenue as last year for maintenance and operation purposes.

"The effective tax rate prevents tax bills from rising automatically after a reappraisal or due to increasing property values," said Ron Patterson, executive director of the State Property Tax Board. "In those situations, the effective rate will decrease to offset property value increases."

"Conversely, the effective rate increases when the property values in a taxing unit decrease," Patterson explained. "In 1987, many taxing units have less taxable property value than they had in 1986. Taxpayers in those units could easily see a higher effective tax rate than in the past."

The effective rate calculation uses current-year taxable property values to generate approximately the same revenue as last year.

Around August 7, or soon after, the unit's assessor calculates the effective tax rate using property values which the appraisal review board has approved and the chief appraiser has certified. The assessor will publicize this rate, the calculations used to figure it, and an estimate of the unit's unused funds (Called its "unencumbered fund balance") from the most recent financial year.

After publicizing the effective tax rate, governing bodies of taxing units must decide the type and level of services on which to base their budgets and what tax rate will be needed to provide these services.

Members of the taxing unit's governing body (school board, commissioner's court, city council, board of directors) have two choices: 1) Adopt a rate less than or equal to the effective tax rate, plus an optional increase of up to three percent over the effective tax rate, or 2) Adopt a tax rate more than three percent greater than the effective tax rate.

If they decide to keep the tax rate within three percent of the effective rate, the governing body is not required to notify the public.

If the governing body intends to raise taxes by more than three percent above the effective tax rate, they must publicize their intent and hold a public hearing for taxpayers to air their views on the proposed tax increase. They will do so by publishing a quarter-page newspaper ad before the public hearing and before the meeting to adopt the tax rate.

Cities and counties that are increasing taxes to provide additional indigent health care services to their citizens will use a special quarter-page newspaper advertisement specifying the percentage of increase needed for these services.

(For taxing units publishing ads after August 30, these quarter page newspaper advertisements will include additional information for taxpayers. New legislation passed in the 1987 regular session of the legislature requires the governing body to disclose how the proposed tax increase will affect an average home in the taxing unit.

In the advertisement, the taxing unit will compare for 1986 and 1987: appraised and taxable value of an average home in the taxing units, general homestead exemptions available, proposed tax rate and the percentage of increase and proposed taxes.)

If the governing body adopts a tax rate which exceeds the effective rate by more than eight percent, voters in the taxing unit can petition for an election to roll back the tax increase.

After a successful election, any taxing unit **other than a school district** would have its tax rate reduced immediately to eight percent above the effective tax rate. **A school district** would have its tax rate limited to the eight percent level in the following year.

New legislation has extended the rollback protection for increased indigent health care costs. Taxing units which are budgeting for additional costs will have the amount above the eight percent threshold protected from a rollback election. In addition, those funds will be dedicated to only indigent health care.

The property tax system in Texas gives all property owners several opportunities throughout the year to attempt to influence the amount of property tax they pay.

"Open meetings and budget hearings allow taxpayers to express opinions about how their tax dollars are spent," Patterson said. "Appraisal review board hearings give them the opportunity to make sure that their property appraisals are fair compared to other property in the taxing unit. And, truth in taxation and the rollback election provision allow taxpayers a say about tax rate proposals that may increase tax bills."

More information is available for taxpayers through a pamphlet called "Taxpayers, Rights, Remedies, Responsibilities." Copies are available at local appraisal district offices or from the State Property Tax Board in Austin. The Austin address is P.O. Box 15900, Austin, TX 78761-5900.

Lets Look Back... 48 Years Ago

(August 18, 1939)

The1939 high school Eagles will have five lettermen to form a nucleus for the team. The lettermen are Franklin Reese, all-district end last year; Franklin Tise, all-district guard of last year; Roland Campbell, guard; Lester Schindler, end, and Charles Braden, back. Others who are expected to make a strong bid for the team this year will be the following linemen: Wesley Causey, J.C. Willis, Jack Ham, Frank Mazac, Howard Wiese, Harold Sunberg, Raymond Kohleffel, Burnell Handley, Daughtry Roberts, Phil Brown, David Sunderman, Paul Barnett and a few others. For the backfield Coach Hinton will have Ernest Frnka, Delno Forbes, Earl Rodgers, Duane Sheridan, Dick Obenhaus, Marvin Hutchins, Billie Stapleton, Robert McMillan, George Causey, Gordon Causey, Barnett and Fred Estlinbaum...

Misses Louise Seaholm and Eleanor Reese and Mr. and Mrs. J.H. McCreary spent Wednesday visiting Mr. and Mrs. W.E. McRee... Mrs. J.R. Laughlin and son, Dick, left Wednesday for a week's visit with her parents, Mr. and Mrs. Garrett of Hempstead... Miss Elizabeth Westmoreland returned to her studies at the University of Texas in Austin Sunday after spending the weekend with relatives here... Vernon Gertson, Mr. and Mrs. A.A. Gertson, Bernice, James and Ralph Gertson enjoyed a visit to Galveston recently... Mr. and Mrs. R.E. Altman spent the weekend in New Ulm where they visited his mother, Mrs. Emma Altman...

Mr. and Mrs. Harold Thomas, Dr. and Mrs. J.R. Laughlin, Mr. and Mrs. Doyle Browning, Mr. and Mrs. Harry Rand and Miss Mary Ethel Hight and Ralph Thomas enjoyed a swimming party at the Weimar swimming pool Sunday night... Mr. and Mrs. L.D. Roberts left Wednesday morning for a visit to San Antonio and Laredo... Mr. and Mrs. Victor Engelhard left Tuesday morning for a two weeks' visit to Monterrey, Mexico.

Defender position a reality

To the Editor:
(Reprinted from the September 3rd edition of Banner-Press.)

After reading in the local media that Colorado County would have a public defender I found it hard to believe that this had happened.

Even if saving the county money was a major factor in deciding to establish that office, it is still a step in the right direction. Also the fact that a young member of the legal profession is in the forefront shows signs that a long awaited promise will become a reality.

The young barristers call it "delivery of service to the community." I see it as a concern for the common interest and welfare of the community, justice, that is.

The common interest and welfare of the community are part and parcel of the great reality, the republic for which our country stands, a nation under God with liberty and justice for all.

Public defender is one of the many thankless jobs in our society and Mr. Fling will face many trials and tribulations. I wish him well and hope the community will support him in all kinds of weather good or bad.

Thomas V. Ontiveros
Columbus, Texas 78934

Saunders reviews state financial picture

A brief update on the Texas financial situation was presented on Thursday of last week to members of the Eagle Lake Lions Club.

Robert Saunders, state district representative from La Grange, was the speaker.

Between the special session and regular sessions, it seems like we were in Austin for two years, Saunders said. Later he did say that legislators worked in Austin ten of the last 12 months because of the need to shape the state's legislative future.

In detailing how the state arrived at its most recent spending and taxing plan, Saunders told Lions members that business people were telling him to "tax where we can see it."

While proposals for spending plans varied, the one that finally was agreed upon was more than five billion higher than revenue estimates. That was with the stipulation that temporary taxes enacted last year would end this year as planned.

To finance the budget, the legislators agreed to extend those temporary taxes, and increase the sales tax to a round number of six percent. Also, the sales tax was extended, to cover what Saunders called "soft services," like landscaping, pest control, etc. But, it wasn't extended to cover other professional services, such as medical.

A problem with the spending plan is that the state is being forced to spend more and more money housing the state's criminal convicts. He pointed to decisions made by appointed federal judge William Wayne Justice of Tyler. A ballot question this November is whether the state should build 1,000 more prison beds. Even if it doesn't pass, Saunders indicated the state will have to expand the prison system anyway.

In the future, another federal judge is telling the state to improve care for the mentally ill.

Eagle Lake help

On the positive side, Saunders said the legislature approved his move to change the hunting license situation for out of state hunters. Effective this year, a out of state hunter can purchase a five-day license for $25. Last year the cost was $75.

He said he doubts it will double or triple business, "But I think that's going to help." It should boost the local economy during hunting season.

Saunders now is chairman of the house environmental affairs committee where the bill was generated. The committee is responsible for the state parks and wildlife department, as well as the land commissioner and air control board.

Another action taken by the legislature that was helpful for the District Saunders represents concerns a city's annexation powers. He said they took the "limited annexation" option away from Austin. The city was trying to annex an area where an airport is being discussed. Limited annexation allows cities to increase their city limits, but also allows them not to tax the new land areas nor offer city services.

Saunders is serving his fourth term in the legislature.

Agricultural development bill establishes new programs which will benefit Texans

Dear Friends of Texas Agriculture:

On August 6, 1987, Governor Clements signed a landmark agricultural development bill, House Bill 49. This bill establishes two new programs in the Texas Department of Agriculture — the Texas Agricultural Finance Authority and the Texas Agricultural Diversification Program — which together have the potential to produce almost $1 billion in new sales and create 30,000 new Texas jobs over the next four years.

HB 49 has become law because of enormous, bipartisan efforts on the bill's behalf by supporters in all parts of Texas. Farmers, ranchers, small businesses, community organizations, bankers, investors, county judges, mayors, city managers, councils of government, community colleges, 4-year colleges, and many other individuals and institutions helped conceptualize this bill and persuade both houses of the legislature to vote unanimously for its passage.

The breadth and workability of HB 49 shows the benefit of this unified effort. It is the most comprehensive agricultural development legislation to be passed in recent years by any state legislature. This bill will provide the essential tools that the Texas agricultural community can use to generate a grassroots economic revival.

These tools include an array of grants and loans. Grants are available for research and innovation, agricultural business assistance programs, and business incubators. The authority has powers to guarantee bank loans, provide loans directly to borrowers, issue up to $500 million in revenue bonds, and issue up to $45 million in general obligation bonds.

Some of these powers require passage of two constitutional amendments on the November 3 ballot. I hope you will work with us during September and October to win voter approval of these two propositions.

Comments or suggestions about implementing this legislation are also welcomed. To share ideas and get additional information, please contact our office at (512) 463-7569.

I have attached additional materials describing this legislation.

Best regards, Sal Valdez

HB 49 has two new programs

The most significant piece of agricultural legislation in recent Texas history, HB 49, was signed by Governor Clements on August 3, 1987. This bill creates two new programs administered by the Texas Department of Agriculture — the Texas Agricultural Finance Authority and the Texas Agricultural Diversification Program. The purpose of these programs is to promote economic growth through agricultural development.

HB 49 is designed to strengthen agricultural diversification efforts in lending institutions and non-profit or educational organizations, such as local governments, chambers of commerce, community groups, councils of government, and community colleges. Particularly, HB 49 will support efforts to assist farmers, ranchers and entrepreneurs who are producing non-traditional crops, developing agricultural processing facilities, or exporting Texas agricultural products. It authorizes an array of new financial tools and grants.

The Texas Agricultural Finance Authority (TAFA) has broad statutory powers to finance agricultural businesses. These include the powers both to guarantee bank loans, when lenders are unwilling to accept all the financing risk, and to provide loans directly to borrowers. The authority can issue up to $45 million in general obligation bonds, backed by the credit of the state, to generate a pool of capital to support these loan guarantees, direct loans and other programs. Businesses eligible for this financing include aquaculture production, blueberry production, vineyards, pork processing plants, cattle export programs and many others.

TAFA can issue up to $500 million in revenue bonds for eligible agricultural businesses enabling them to tap the low-interest, long-term capital available in national bond markets.

The Texas Agricultural Diversification Program creates three grant programs and a pilot "linked deposit" financing program. Most non-profit entities are eligible to apply.

The research and innovation program offers grants for applied research into new techniques, products and technologies. Its purpose is to get new ideas about agricultural diversification into the hands of producers and small businesses. Grants may be awarded in amounts up to $30,000.

The business assistance program offers grants to community and regional organizations to help them deliver managerial training and other assistance to agricultural businesses. Its purpose is to improve the entrepreneurial skills of producers, small businesses and cooperatives, and seed community-wide programs for agricultural development. Up to $30,000 is available.

The small business incubator program offers seed funding for self-financing agricultural incubators. These are non-profit, community-run organizations which provide concentrated business services to innovative, start-up agricultural enterprises. Up to $100,000 is available for agricultural production and up to $250,000 is available for agricultural processing or marketing.

Constitutional authority for use of general obligation bonds and the provision of grants, direct loans and linked deposits require approval by voters in November, 1987. This will appear on the ballot as two amendments authorizing the legislature to provide for "state financing of the development and production of Texas products and businesses" and, "assistance to encourage economic development in the state.

Lets Look Back... 24 Years Ago

(August 22, 1963)

Eagle Lake school board adopts a $517,327 budget at a hearing Monday night... Mrs. Eva Flores Olvera, 25, was killed in a head-on crash on Hwy. 90A Sunday morning... Funeral services were held for Mrs. Mattie Woolridge, long time resident of Eagle Lake, on Thursday, August 22... M.M. Jones was elected the city's new court recorder and corporation judge at a special meeting of the Eagle Lake City Council Friday. Applications for the office of city manager were also be taken...

Boy Scout Troop 323 of Sheridan completed a week of supervised camping at the Tall Times Area in Camp Strake near Conroe... Miss Diane Duncan, daughter of Mr. and Mrs. Gardner C. Duncan of Eagle Lake, is one of 750 American students attending the summer school session at the Instituto Technologico in Mobterrey, Mexico... Roy Dean Van Nort, son of Mr. and Mrs. Roy A. Van Nort, will receive his bachelor of science degree in civil engineering technology at the University of Houston on August 24... Col. Jack C. White of the U.S. Air Force, stationed in San Salvador, El Salvador, was a weekend visitor with his mother-in-law, Mrs. Robert Martin and Robert Samuel Martin... Kathy Ruether celebrated her ninth birthday August 14 with a swimming party at the American Legion swimming pool. Her actual birthday is September 2... Carol Joyce Konesheck and Monroe Ripper announce their wedding plans scheduled September 10 in St. Roch's Catholic Church in Mentz... Our Lady of Perpetual Help Catholic Youth Council went to Matagorda Sunday crabbing. Those going were Mrs. Jack Grieves, David and Randy; Mrs. V.J. Kana, Betty and Phil; Mr. and Mrs. Willie Emmel. Barbara and Judy; Mrs. John Beseda, Carol and Pat; Mr. Sommer and Margaret; Judy Garza; Shirley and Linda Breithaupt; Cynthia Mascheck; James Glueck, and Father A.W. Didner.

Annual Day Program Sunday at Friendship Baptist Church

Friendship Baptist Church of Eagle Lake announces its Brotherhood Annual Day Program to be held this Sunday, September 13 at 3 p.m. The guest speaker will be Rev. A. A. McCardell of Houston. Everyone is invited.

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		20X20	37.31

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Our United States of America Constitution

The first word in my title is "Our." The first three words of the Constitution are "We the People," so you see it really belongs to us, and we are to use it to prove and protect our rights as citizens.

There have been many wonderful programs about this great document presented by the media, and within the next week there should be many more.

Elizabeth Boothe, reporter

Colorado County Courthouse Report

MARRIAGE LICENSE

Richard James Tucker, 41, and Sandra Marie Schmidt, 18.

DIVORCES FILED

Michael A. Hilscher and Carolyn Dowdy Hilscher.

REAL ESTATE DEEDS

Deed, Emelie Pauline Popp to Edward F. Jr. and Carol Moeller, and Edward F. and Lillian Sablatura, undivided interest in 66.5 acres, Asia McClure Survey; 8-28-87.

Deed, Jeffery Dee Hildebrand and Bradford Glenn Hildebrand to Paul M. Dirks, Schilling No. 1 Well, I&GNRR Section No. 14; 8-21-87.

Deed, Alice Sharon Obenhaus to Thomas W. and Judy K. Rowland, part of original lot 1, block 32, Columbus.

Deed, Joe L. and Eleanor R. McCreary to Bobby C. and Mary J. Semora, 3.6581 acres, James M. Steiner Survey; 8-24-87.

Deed, Josephine Schobel to Oscar Schobel Sr., undivided interest in .504 acre. H. Austin Five League Grant; 8-25-87.

Deed, David L. Brennan Jr. to Wilfred A. and Beatrice M. Kahl, lot 122, Lake Sheridan Estates Subdivision, 8-26-87.

Deed, John M. Brennan to Wilfred A. and Beatrice M. Kahl, lot 122, Lake Sheridan Estates Subdivision, 8-26-87.

Deed, Jo Ann Vornsand to Donald P. and Regina G. Cox, 39.8 acres, Alfred Kebo Survey; 8-26-87.

Deed, Vernon A. Wolter to Veterans Land Board of Texas, 24.94 acres, Williams Reney Survey; 8-26-87.

Deed, Colorado County to Elizabeth Sorsby Wiesner, trust, .716 acre, Ludwig Lindstrand Survey; 8-26-87.

Deed, Rocky and Bonnie A. Roesler and Ronnie J. and Susan Zatopek to Michael O. Maertz, 5 acres, William R. Hunt League; 8-26-87.

Deed, Emma Cassell to Elbert L. Cassell and Elsie C. Lancios, part of original lot 6, block 3, Columbus; 8-26-87.

Deed, Jane Dobson, Revocable Trust Agreement, to Jane Dobson, undivided interest in 640 acres, GH&H Railway Co. Survey No. 1; 8-27-87.

Deed, Alice Hinze to Vickie Ann Hinze Arndt, Rida Chovanetz and Cheryl Kay Orchard, undivided interest in 84.55 acres, E.S. Wooley Survey; 8-27-87.

Deed, Dorothy Grance Johnson and Gerald Staffel to Herbert O. and Lillian Guenther, 7.16 acres, Joseph Thompson Survey; 8-28-87.

Deed, Herbert O. and Lillian Guenther to A.J. Jr. and Ruth Riedel, 7.16 acres, Joseph Thompson Survey; 8-28-87.

OIL, GAS LEASES

Kaiser-Fraport Irrevocable Trust to Cico Oil and Gas Co., 336 acres, J. Hays Survey; 8-24-87.

E.J. and Mary Richter, estates, et al, to Zapata Exploration Co., 176 acres, Conrad Gurgens Survey; 8-25-87.

John A. and Martha Hajovsky to Speedwell Oil and Gas Co., 130 acres, Joseph Tinkler Survey, et al; 8-26-87.

George H. and Natalie Holup to Speedwell Oil and Gas Co., 76.55 acres, J.G. O'Farrell Survey, et al; 8-26-87.

Edwin W. and Willie Mae Holub to Speedwell Oil and Gas Co., 76.55 acres, J.G. O'Farrell Survey, et al; 8-26-87.

Elizabeth Hahn Bosl to Murphy H. Baxter, 25 acres, F.A. Zimmerscheidt Survey; 8-27-87.

W.B. Hahn to Murphy H. Baxter, 25 acres, F.A. Zimmerscheidt Survey; 8-27-87.

Lowe named area manager

Southwestern Bell Telephone has named Diane Lowe area manager for community relations in Eagle Lake as part of a reorganization to better serve this area.

An important part of her job is to maintain direct contact with the community leadership in Eagle Lake. In addition, she is responsible for media contacts and coordination of the company's community relations programs throughout the territory.

Lowe, who's new responsibilities also include the Columbus area, currently directs the telephone company's community relations efforts in an eight-county area that includes Austin, Leon, Madison, Polk, Robertson, Walker, Washington and Waller counties.

"I'm particularly pleased with this opportunity," Lowe said. "Eagle Lake is an important part of Southwestern Bell Telephone's service area and I feel fortunate to have been asked to participate in many of the excellent programs and projects that will have an impact here.

"We understand that we are more than just a company doing business here. Our employees are productive citizens who care about the communities in which they live. That's why I'm excited about helping support this process."

Lowe said she will, and other Southwestern Bell Telephone employees will, be active in a variety of areas related to economic development and community service.

Lowe, who has 21 years service with Southwestern Bell, began as a service representative in Beaumont. She was promoted to a business office supervisor and then moved to the division staff in Beaumont. She later moved to Nacogdoches as a supervisor and was manager of the business office in Huntsville until she was named area manager of community relations in October 1986.

She is a member of the Huntsville Business and Professional Women and chairman of the organization's Issues and Management Committee.

Lowe is a member of the City of Huntsville Joint Development Council and is an alumna of the Huntsville Leadership Institute.

She is a board member and former president of the Huntsville United Way. In addition, she is a former board member and was second vice chairman of the Huntsville-Walker County Chamber of Commerce.

Harrison, Smith visit with Hightower

During the economic development conference in Eagle Lake two weeks ago, Bill Harrison Sr. and T.J. Smith visited with state agriculture commissioner Jim Hightower. Hightower gave the keynote address at the day-long conference, and Harrison manned a booth showing historical information from the Prairie Edge Museum. Smith is heavily involved in agriculture through his regional capacity with Moorman's.

Summer reading, moving program enjoyed by many Sheridan children

The Sheridan Parents and Teachers reading and movie club met every Friday from June 5 through August 28 at 10 a.m. in the Sheridan Community Center. An average of 27 children enjoyed the movies and checked out books at each meeting. There were a total of 59 children enrolled in the reading club, including pre-schoolers in the "read to me" program.

Lea Ann Spangenberg, a third grade this fall, received a prize for reading 31 books for the summer, the most read by any single reader. A total of 487 books were read by all participants in the program.

PTS reading and movie program coordinator Carolyn Brisco thanks all those involved in helping make the program a success, including Natalie Dupre, librarian of Sheridan Memorial Library, and Becky Mills, librarian for Wintermann Library in Eagle Lake.

Hilario Solis Diaz

obituary

Hilario Solis Diaz, age 92, of Eagle Lake, passed away Tuesday, September 1 at approximately 3 p.m. at his residence, following a sudden illness. He was born in San Antonio on June 26, 1895 a son pf Hilario S. Sr. and Martina Solis Diaz. He had lived in Eagle Lake for over 60 years and chose a career in carpentry. He was a member of the Gethsemani Baptist Mission of Eagle Lake and a member of the American Legion for over 63 years. He had a distinguished service record with the U.S. military serving with the U.S. Army in World War I serving in France and again with the U.S. Army during World War II as a medic.

Prayer services were held from the Dulany Funeral Home Chapel at 7:30 p.m., Thursday, September 3. Funeral services were conducted at 3 p.m. Friday, September 4 from the Gethsemani Baptist Mission in Eagle Lake with Rev. Roger Rodriguez, of Rosenberg, officiating.

Military graveside services and burial followed in Lakeside Cemetery in Eagle Lake, under the auspices of the US Army Military Honors and Ceremonies Section from Ft. Sam Houston, Texas.

He was preceded in death by his wife, Elizabeth on November 27, 1980.

Survivors include four daughters, Sarah Flores and Esther Contreras of Eagle Lake; Martha Sosa of Missouri City; and Rachel Braswell of Madison, Florida; three sons, Manuel Diaz of Houston, Bobby Diaz of Eagle Lake and David Diaz of Dallas; a sister, Angela Wesler and a brother, Porfilio Diaz of San Antonio; 29 grandchildren, 31 great grandchildren, seven great, great grandchildren and numerous nieces and nephews and other relatives and friends.

Grandchildren served as pallbearers. Sympathy is extended to the family in their loss.

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