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To The Editor & You

Thank you for your help

The teachers and support staff at Eagle Lake Middle School would like to thank the people who have allowed us to speak at their churches about the needs of our campus.

The fifth grade teachers have visited congregations requesting citizens to come to our campus to volunteer time, ideas and love to our younger generation. It has been wonderful to see the positive community response to our efforts.

The intent of the visits was to inform and involve community and church members in our efforts to provide a positive, nurturing school environment in which our students are able to be successful. We sincerely regret that some misinformation has been circulating about our efforts.

We feel it is very important that everyone understand our goals and anyone who speaks of our efforts does so with first-hand knowledge rather than speaking from assumptions or second-hand information. A representative of our campus will be glad to speak to anyone who has questions about our programs.

The major goal for the presentations was to ask support in a variety of volunteer positions. We are especially proud of our new program, Precious Treasures. It is an adopt-a-child program in which people who are unable to visit the campus provide support to a student through weekly letters or phone calls.

In addition, there are many ways people can help in our school; such as working one-to-one with students to build self-esteem, tutoring, copying material, recording stories, reading stories, and many, many more ways. The gift of yourself is the greatest gift you can give a child. Please come help if you possibly can!

Some people have expressed a belief that we are focusing on the gang issue and feel that there is no reason for us to address the topic at all. Gang activities is only one of our concerns. However, it is an important one. Our concerns stem directly from the casual attitude students show in frequent comments about gang activities and drug use. We feel that early intervention in these social problems must be addressed. Research has proven that children in the 8-12 year old group are prime recruiting targets. The community must not let a misunderstanding over-shadow the needs of our students.

There are some people who will always disagree on how to approach the problems facing all school districts. However, we must all agree that it is the responsibility of the school, churches and the community to provide the safest, most positive, most informed learning environment for all students. This environment can only be provided through community and parental involvement in our schools.

This campaign has been the effort of concerned and caring teachers requesting special people from the community to come forth and help us **fight for our youth.**

Alannah S. Mozisek
Jeanne M. Young
Gwendolyn R. Knight
Patricia Fink
Olivia Maxie

Is there more we don't know?

I was one of many citizens of Eagle Lake, and the surrounding communities, to attend the town meeting on Thursday, April 6, 1995. This meeting was emotional, informative and educational in relation to the Eagle Lake Community Hospital and its financial situation.

I learned the ELCH Board of Directors had a survey run concerning future growth in the area and the need for three hospitals in the county. If I am understanding correctly, this survey was done at least a year ago and yet the information is just being given to us since our hospital appears to be in financial ruin.

The changes in Medicare and Medicaid didn't happen yesterday or even last year, but changes had been implemented years back and the ELCH Board didn't have the insight to predict financial disaster? Is there other information that is being kept from us that might help us make an educated decision on the tax district vote?

I know that no one can predict the future and what it holds for us as a community or as individuals. If someone could predict the future accurately, we could put them on the road and they could make enough money to keep the hospital afloat.

Let's be reasonable! Our hospital is in serious financial condition and the taxing district is asking us to take a big risk and gamble on the future of medical care in Eagle Lake. Since when hasn't an agricultural community taken a risk; the farmers do it every year!

What I thought I heard at the meeting is that there are many individuals who are in favor of a taxing district. Maybe I am wrong in my assumption; however, I would like to see the hospital stay in Eagle Lake and be a provider for those who needs its services.

However, I am in agreement with Don Bendy concerning the tax district boundaries. Garwood and Sheridan feel that they are being forced into this district the same way that they were forced into the Rice Consolidated Independent School District. For the last 25 or so years, there has been no unity between the communities when it concerns our children and their education; and yet, we want these same communities to back a tax district and help supplement the Eagle Lake Community Hospital? I think we are asking too much. The boundaries of the taxing district should be changed slightly to provide enough tax base, but not force the communities into the district.

Persons in Garwood and Sheridan who have given to the hospital in the past probably would again, if they were just asked. My mother always told me you can catch more flies with molasses than you can with vinegar. Don't let the hospital taxing district for ELCH be the vinegar to the communities of Garwood and Sheridan.

Before the vote on May 6, we need to become as informed and educated as we possibly can concerning the hospital and hospital tax district. We need to evaluate everything from the lack of growth in the community and no ambulance service without the hospital to the changes in health care that could force the hospital to close even with a tax district.

It is up to us and no matter what the outcome of the vote, the decision will affect ALL of us.

Ann S. Pavliska
Eagle Lake

Hospital District - School District

Sharing Resources

Submitted by Bill Wilson

It is entirely appropriate that we pause in considering the tax impact of a Hospital District on the residents of our community to take stock of the major obligation that we already have, Rice School District. Certainly the education of our young people must take a position of top priority in the allocation of our resources. Although alternatives have been discussed, it appears certain that we will continue to depend on local ad valorem taxes for a major portion of our school's funding.

Then let us review just what has happened to the tax base of Rice School District in recent years. The information that I am using in this article is from the Central Appraisal District and was presented by Rice School District in open session early this year. For the year 1994 the net tax base for the District was approximately $277 million. Just ten years ago, in 1984, the tax base was approximately $344 million; so there has been about a 20% decline in the net tax base over the past ten years. There are two components of the tax base that I think should be looked at very carefully, because they are the most volatile and the ones in which I think we will see continued change in the coming years.

Oil and gas values were about $151 million in 1984, and they were down to $76 million in 1994, a decline of 50%. Shell Sheridan was down to about $18 million in value, and it is projected that the field will be totally depleted within six years. There is nothing happening in the oil and gas industry these days that would give much hope to adding much to this inventory.

Business inventory in Rice School District was about $35 million in 1984 and was down to $15 million in 1994, a decline of about 57%. One need only to look at the number of businesses that have closed in the District during the past decade and consider the current economic trends for the region to realize that chances of adding significantly to business inventory in Rice School District are not very promising.

I am very sure that Administrators in Rice School District look at these figures with some concern. School taxes for the District were about 71¢ in 1984, and the rate was about $1.42 in 1994, an increase of 100% in ten years. Rice School District required from taxpayers in the District about $4 million in 1994. I don't think there is any doubt that this figure will continue to climb.

So now enters Rice Hospital District. The Hospital Board keeps telling us that although they seek authorization for 400¢ in taxes, they will only seek a 20¢ tax that will generate about a half million dollars per year. They admit that there will be debt transferred to the District, but they say the half million dollars will cover operating shortfalls during the remainder of this year and permit them to service the debt. Well, what happens at the

(See Sharing, Page 3)

We went to learn

My husband and I attended the town hall meeting Thursday night at the Museum to educate ourselves about the proposed hospital district. As landowners and taxpayers, we felt it was to our advantage to learn all we could about the tax district and we feel that both Steve Balas and Bill Wilson were very well informed of the advantages and disadvantages of creating the hospital district.

We were both embarrassed for and ashamed of the two or three persons who we feel were out of line by taking personal shots at Bill (Wilson) instead of listening to and learning all the facts, as presented by both men.

Sincerely,
Catherine Berger
Garwood

Some points left unanswered

The hospital tax district town meeting Thursday night went pretty much in favor of the pro-district foes. They were well prepared with a slide show, a "doomsday" handout and several "how the hospital saved my life" testimonials; even one brought in from out of the county. The meeting, however, left a couple of points unanswered.

First, although finances were discussed, the dollars didn't seem to add up. There was never a clear picture of what the hospital actually owes versus its assets. Likewise, the projected income from the tax district at the proposed 20¢ rate was far short of the stated losses in recent years, These losses have been increasing yearly. Occupancy rates (income) have been declining yearly and will continue to do so. The air conditioning system needs replacing at an estimated cost of $500,000; one year's tax revenue.

Secondly, the hospital (its board of directors) proposes to retain ownership of the hospital and lease it to the tax district to operate. The reason given for this arrangement is that if the tax district board decides to raise the tax rate to an unacceptably high level, the hospital board would refuse to lease the hospital to the district, thereby, protecting, the taxpayers.

Now this sounds kind of like the fox guarding the hen house to me. Why would the tax district board, who is answerable to the taxpayer, be less likely to look out for the taxpayer than the hospital board who is not answerable to the taxpayers? Couldn't the hospital board refuse to lease the hospital to the district for other reasons, too? If the district is going to be responsible for all hospital debt (past, present and future), shouldn't they own, or at least fully control, the facilities?

Hopefully, the hospital will answer some of these questions before we vote.

Phil Willenborg
Rock Island (Colorado County Landowner)

Let's look at economic impact

By Jeannine Fearing, Publisher

For the last couple of weeks, I have stepped back and let you, the readers, along with Bill Wilson, have your say about the hospital tax district. This is not to say your letters won't be published over the next three issues before the May 6 election.

I'd just like to point out a couple of things that have been running around in my head since this all started.

I'm not sure people are considering the economic impact of losing a business (yes, a business) the size of Eagle Lake Community Hospital.

What will happen when the $2 million payroll no longer circulates in what businesses we do have left in town? What will the 84+ employees do? Will they stay and find a job out of town; will they move their families?

If you think you and your business (if you own one) can survive without the Hospital, consider what will happen to hospital-related businesses like Eagle Lake Drugstore and Thomas Clinic. How long can they survive without the Hospital?

So, we lose them, too. That would add another 40 (a guess) or more out of work and who knows what size payrolls lost to this community... not just Eagle Lake, the whole southern end of Colorado County.

Which business(es) will be next? A grocery store; a couple of the convenience stores; a gas station or two... who knows?

What the loss of the Hospital will cause, in my view, is a domino effect throughout this side of the county. Then, all the pride and money in the world won't be enough to save us.

Here, I'll remind you again of all the time, effort and money put forth by numerous persons from **around the county** in their attempt to bring a prison unit to the Eagle Lake area. With no hospital, all that work and money will be down the tubes!

Bill Wilson speaks of school taxes and how high they are. How high will they go before the dominoes stop falling?

This tax is like the premiums on my medical insurance. No matter what you do or how few, if any, claims you file, the costs of medical insurance and care keep going up.

Maybe we should consider the hospital tax as part of that cost.

I have been told, and it has been written by others in this publication, that this situation needs to be looked at from a financial, business-like point of view. Don't vote on emotions, I've been told.

But, how do you make a decision about something as emotional as the loss of someone dear to you? Especially when the loss was the direct result of medical care received... too little or too late.

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Senate version of state budget $2.6 billion higher

State Capitol Highlights
By Lyndell Williams and Ed Sterling
Texas Press Association

An $80.2 billion state budget proposal for 1996-97 was unanimously approved by the Texas Senate last week.

Without raising taxes, the Senate version would increase funding for schools, prisons and health and human services, while giving the state's lowest-paid teachers a modest pay hike and reducing the number of state employees.

The proposal is $2.6 billion more than a state budget bill approved a week earlier by the Texas House.

The Senate budget outspends the House version in three major areas: $1 billion more for health and human services, $757 million more for education and $474 million more for prisons.

$92 Million Teacher Raise

The Senate's proposed pay raise for teachers would cost $92 million, an amount far below the across-the-board hike in pay and benefits teachers sought, which would have required the passage of an $800 million tax bill to fund.

Sen. John Montford, D-Lubbock, chairman of the Senate Finance Committee, said the budget, if combined with the state's 1994-95 budget, puts $3.4 billion in new money into Texas public schools.

"Now," he told the *Houston Chronicle*, "I hope, from the bottom of my heart, that some of that money is filtering down to teachers."

Of the $80.2 billion, $45.5 billion comes from state sales and business taxes and lottery proceeds. Of the $45.5 billion, 59% is going to public and higher education, Montford said.

Regarding anticipated funding cuts in federal welfare programs, Montford suggested the state set aside $250 million. If as expected, the U.S. Congress changes welfare funding to a block-grant method, the Legislature likely would go into special session to consider ways to gain adequate funding, Lt. Gov. Bob Bullock said.

Bullock, who presides over the Senate, told the *Dallas Morning News* that the approval of the budget opens the way for consideration of other bills that have been on hold at the committee level, such as parental notification of abortion.

Telecom Bill Moves Ahead

The House State Affairs Committee voted 15-0 last week to approve a telecommunications bill that would open the door for competition in local telephone service.

The bill, sponsored by Rep. Curtis Seidlits, D-Sherman, is expected to go before the House later this month.

A provision in the bill seeks to expand the number of local calling service areas in which consumers could make unlimited local telephone call rather than pay long-distance charges.

Rep. Steve Wolens, D-Dallas, took issue with a provision in the bill that would let local telephone companies keep "phantom tax" money collected from ratepayers and apply it to their infrastructure commitment. The committee voted 13-2 to table his amendment.

Prior to the committee hearing, AT&T chairman Bob Allen visited with Gov. George W. Bush about the bill. According to the *Austin American-Statesman*, Allen told Bush, "...this is lop-sided bill, and if it's passed without any changes, it's going to keep AT&T out of the local market. That's not good for us and not good for Texas."

Senate OKs Health Bills

The Senate last week passed and sent to the House two bills aimed at increasing the number of doctors practicing in rural areas.

25 Texas counties have no primary health care physicians, and 229 counties have been designated by the federal government as underserved.

The bills would create a program through which the state would match up to $25,000 a year a medically underserved area's grant to recruit a doctor. Up to $250,000 in matching grants would be awarded annually.

Bush Names Two Appointees

Gov. Bush has nominated Austin lawyer Roderick Bordelon his choice for Texas' public insurance counsel.

If confirmed by the Senate, Bordelon, 36, will become the state advocate for insurance consumers, replacing Mark Kincaid, an appointee of former Gov. Ann Richards.

Also, Bush nominated Dallas lawyer David M. Laney to the three-member Texas Transportation Commission which oversees maintenance and construction of state roads and highways.

If confirmed by the Senate, he will replace Ruben Cardenas of McAllen.

Other Highlights

•Under a bill tentatively approved by the Senate, youths (under 18) riding bicycles on public roadways would be required to wear protective helmets. Since the bill does not include penalties, several senators questioned why the measure was needed.

•Gov. Bush has nominated State District Judge Jim R. Wright of Eastland as a justice on the 11th Court of Appeals. Wright, a graduate of Texas Tech law school and a judge since 1979, will replace Justice Bud Arnot, who was elected chief justice of the appeals court.

About Town...

Becky Almanza and a few friends got the chance to meet country singer Doug Supernaw. Becky and friends stopped at Cattleman's Restaurant early Sunday, April 9, in Alleyton and were able to get the singing star's autograph.

Sharing

Continued from Page 2

beginning of next year? I assume there will be more borrowing for operating funds, with the hope that another half million dollars generated next year will again cover any operating shortfall and service debt.

Whatever the financial requirements of the Hospital District, additional strain will be put on the District's resources.

Bill Wilson
Rt. 1, Box 69
Eagle Lake

Early voting requirements

According to County Clerk Darlene Hayek, the qualifications for persons wishing to vote early by mail are:

1. ____ 65 years of age or older;
2. ____ confinement in jail;
3. ____ disability; and,
4. ____ expected absence from county on election day and during clerk's regular office hours for the remainder of the early voting period.

Application must be submitted from outside county if submitted after early voting in person has begun (April 17, 1995). Your ballot must be mailed to an address outside the county.

Persons voting by mail must have their applications in the County Clerk's office by the close of regular business hours April 28, 1995.

Persons wanting to vote early by mail must request their application from the County Clerk's Office for the Rice Hospital District Election. There will be no early voting by personal appearance in the clerk's office for this election (see below).

Persons voting early by personal appearance for the Rice Hospital District election must vote at the Administration Office of the Eagle Lake Community Hospital, Monday through Friday from 8 a.m. to 5 p.m., starting April 17, 1995, and ending May 2, 1995.

Please feel free to call Hayek at 409-732-6561 or 732-2155 for any questions concerning early voting by mail or personal appearance.

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Colorado County Courthouse Report

DEEDS

Deed: Estate of Elenor Earl Sunderman to Elenor Sunderman Family Trust, int. in acres out of the M. Ramsey Survey, A-474; filed 2-23-95.

Deed: Henry Thomas Sunderman to Elenor Sunderman Family Trust, int. in acreage out of the P. Bartleson Survey, A-84, et al; 2-23-95.

Deed: Estate of Elenor Earl Sunderman to Elenor Sunderman Family Trust, acreage out of the P. Bartleson Survey, A-84, et al; 2-23-95.

Deed: Mary Juergens to Eugene A. Juergens, part of lot two (2) in Block 21, Town of Weimar; 2-24-95.

Deed: Leander Pflughaupt, et ux to Carol Ann Globke, two (2) tracts of land, Howard McElroy League, A-32, et al; 2-24-95.

Deed: Leander Pflughaupt, et ux to Larry Wayne Pflughaupt, two (2) tracts of land, Howard McElroy League, A-32, et al; 2-24-95.

Deed: Leander Pflughaupt, et ux to Alan Pflughaupt, two (2) tracts of land, Howard McElroy League, A-32, et al; 2-24-95.

Deed: Leslie E. Brandes, et ux to David C. Langhoff, et ux, 24.794 acres, Michael Andrews Survey, A-68; 2-24-95.

Deed: David Wayne Kotzebue, et al to William H. Smith Jr., 10.956 acres, Samuel M. Williams Survey, A-609; 2-28-95.

Deed: Jerris Kay Zatopek Kulhanek to Dieter Schuhknecht, 116.636 acres, James Cummins Survey, A-14; 2-27-95.

Deed: Estate of Mildred Leona Hajek Vacek to John R. Vacek, int. in land, a part of the 19-3/4 labors of land granted to the heirs of John Dunlavy, A-165, et al; 2-28-95.

Deed: John T. Vacek to Estate of Mildred Leona Hajek Vacek, uns. int. in a part of the 10-3/4 labors of land granted to the heirs of John Dunlavy, A-165; 2-28-95.

Deed: Vivian L. Smith Testamentary Trusts to James P. Berger and Norda Berger, 535.539 acres, I&GN RR Survey No. 33, A-321, et al; 2-28-95.

Deed: Kathryn Ann Schocke and Winton B. Dickey Jr. to James McAfee and Aubrey McAfee, two (2) tracts of land,, Jno. Cheetam Survey, A-733 and the M.E. Conlee Survey, A-691; 2-28-95.

Deed: James McAfee and Aubrey McAfee to Winton B. Dickey Jr. and Kathryn Ann Schocke, 1.00 acres of land, John A. Cheetam Survey, A-733; 2-28-95.

Deed: Winton B. Dickey Jr., and Kathryn Ann Schocke to Cheetam Cemetery Association, 1.00 acre, John A. Cheetam Survey, A-733; 2-28-95.

Deed: James McAfee and Aubrey McAfee to Cheetam Cemetery Association, 1.00 acre, John A. Cheetam Survey, A-733; 2-28-95.

Deed: Veterans Land Board to Wilbert Koehn, 44.24 acres, Colorado County; 3-1-95.

Deed: The First National Bank to John Rodriguez, et ux, 1.452 acre, being Tract No. 5, Lakeside Lots Subdivision, Patrick Reels Survey, A-475; 3-1-95.

Deed: Estate of Charles Herder Jr., to Herder Truck Lines Inc., being 20' off the West die of Lot No. 24, and all of Lot No. 25, 26, 27, 28, 29 and 30, Block 6, Town of Weimar; 3-1-95.

Deed: Robert F. Kalous, et ux to May Lee Till and David Milan, Lot No. 24, Block No. 4, Town of Weimar, on the line of the GH&SA Railway; 3-1-95.

Deed: George S. Harrington, et ux to George Sydney Harrington and Velma Mae Harrington Revocable Living Trust, 84.63 acres, a part of the T. Boatwright Survey, A-91, et al; 3-2-95.

Deed: J. Melvurn Sibley Jr., et ux to Dortha F. Kingsley, 6.681.98 sq. ft. in Block F, Gallahar Addition, City of Eagle Lake; 3-2-95.

Deed: Estate of Glenn Y. Davidson to J. Mark Gresham, all oil, gas and other minerals property in Colorado County; 3-2-95.

Deed: Bernard Wendel, et ux to R. Cecil Marburger, et al, 20' strip, out of the James Honeycutt Survey, A-335; 3-2-95.

Deed: R. Cecil Marburger, et ux to Don L. Jones, et ux, 30.962 acres, J.D. Honeycutt Survey, A-335; 3-2-95.

Deed: Joyce Davison to Julio Cisne and Frank Lumbi, 13.107 acres, Allen Winn Survey, A-624; 3-2-95.

Deed: Melvin R. Huebel to Vernon Schindler, et ux, 0.128 acre, Town of Columbus, part of Original Lot No. 1, Block N, Smith & Jones Addition; 3-2-95.

Deed: Beatrice Hollek Dittrich, et vir to Ewald Friedrich Jr., 3.01 acres, Eli Clapp Survey, A-149; 3-3-95.

Deed: Elizabeth Hollek Field, et vir to Ewald Friedrich Jr., 7.00 acres, Eli Clapp Survey, A-149; 3-3-95.

Deed: David Wintermann to Enemecio Castillo Jr., et ux, 0.242 acre, in Block No. 20, City of Eagle Lake; 3-3-95.

Deed: Thomas J. Guenther and Theresa A. Guenther to Leo J. Wick, et ux, Lots No. 1 and 2, Block No. 82, Huvar Addition, City of Weimar; 3-3-95.

Gift Deed: Mary Wavra to Donnie Ray Wavra, et al, 4 tracts of land in the Henry Krey Survey, A-370, et al; 3-3-95.

Deed: Loren Ellsworth Wylie to Carol Ann Kay, int. in 3.00 acres, Willard Wadham Survey, A-593, et al; 3-3-95.

Deed: Alfred R. Kotrla, et al to Myrtle Kotrla, interest in oil, gas and other minerals in the South half of Lot 2 and part of Lot 3, Block V, Town of Columbus; 3-3-95.

Gift Deed: R.C. Gold to Gordon Richter Jr., et ux, und. int. in 18 acres, W.W. Thompson League; 3-3-95.

Deed: Barbara Le Meredith to Raul R. Flores, et ux, 2.000 acres, Henry Austin Five League Grant, A-4; 3-3-95.

OIL, GAS AND MINERAL LEASES

Robert W. Turner to Alcorn-Texas Properties Inc., 130 acres, J.F. Miller Survey, A-423; 2-27-95.

Virginia Ziegler Treptow to Shell Western E&P Inc., 683.9 acres, H. Fitzroy Survey, A-212; 2-28-95.

Earlene Turner Blenis, et vir to Enron Oil & Gas Co., 80.00 acres, SA&MG RR Survey #11, A-527; 2-28-95.

COUNTY COURT DISPOSITIONS

Joyce Baines, Oakland, driving while intoxicated; defendant plead guilty. Court found the defendant guilty, fined $750 plus court cost, restitution; six months jail time, one year probation.

Leslie Paul Whisnant, Cromwell, Ok., criminal mischief; defendant plead guilty. Court found the defendant guilty, fined $100 plus court cost; five days jail time with credit for time served and restitution.

DIVORCES FILED

Cynthia Carter and Steve Carter; filed 3-31-95.

MARRIAGE LICENSE APPLICATIONS

Clement Ray Kubicek, 41, and Carrie Denise Richter, 27, both New Ulm.

Anthony Edward Stryk, 45, and Elizabeth Ann Easley Hodde, 49, both Flatonia.

Steve Torrez, 22, and Elaine Contreras, 25, both Eagle Lake.

Bob Sousek, 66, and Miroslava Sabotkova, 43, both Columbus.

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