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Commissioners okay computer purchases

Colorado County Commissioners' Court authorized the purchase of computer equipment for the justice of the peace offices at a cost of \$19,665 during Monday morning's regular monthly meeting. The County approved \$7,900 for the software and \$8,425 for five computers from Apollo and \$3,340 for three printers and four tape backups, surge protectors and power supplies from Blaze of Glory. The only discussion was whether to purchase a total of six or four computers. Precinct 1 Justice of the Peace Dodie Dungen had requested three computers for his office with two replacing existing computers. Plans called for those computers to be upgraded and moved to the county judge's and public defender's offices. Commissioners, especially Richard Seifert and Jerome Wicke, continued to stress that they were under the impression that the County was only to purchase four computers. "I think the money paid by these offices will more than offset the cost of these computers. Plus, we will save money on docket books," said Dungen. "The only way we can judge the JP office is the amount of money raised. That is probably our problem for not getting more information, but that is the only reason I bring up the amount of revenue raised," said Seifert. "We can only raise (money) on what's (citations) brought on us. We take care of the citations once they are brought to us. I just don't think our office should be judged strictly on the amount of revenue it generates," said Dungen. The Court agreed on five computers with two being purchased for Dungen's office and one each for the other JP offices. Dungen will not receive one of the three new printers since his office already had a printer. County Judge Vince Siminski also announced that the County Ambulance Corps had received an anonymous grant in the amount of \$45,879 from a foundation, through the efforts of Debs Martin, for the purchase of a Type III ambulance. Seifert said the County's Ambulance Committee would make a recommendation to the Court on which corps would receive the new unit. The County also strongly supported a resolution opposing House Bill 1390 for a Quail Stamp Fee and House Bill 2102 on the number of fishing tags on trotlines at the request of the Texas Sportsman's Association. The bills call for a \$7 fee to hunt quail and a \$1.50 fee for each tag for a throwline or jugline and \$7 for each tag for each 300 feet of line. These fees are in addition to the regular hunting and fishing license. The Court also received notification that Colorado County has been declared an area quarantined due to animal rabies by the Texas Department of Health. Game Warden David Perry of the Texas Parks and Wildlife Department said all animals must be vaccinated and it is illegal to transport animals without proper vaccination. Violation is a Class C misdemeanor which carries a \$500 fine for each violation. In other business, the Court: •Authorized the advertisement for a public defender; •Authorized the advertisement for proposals on radio console equipment and radios, as well as the installation, at the new Colorado County Detention Facility; •Authorized the advertisement for the construction of four bridges in Precinct 3, two on New Ulm Road and one each on Mentz and Bernardo Roads; •Agreed to hold a county auction Saturday, April 22, at 9 a.m. at the Precinct 2 Barn in Weimar; •Adopted a resolution in opposition of a house bill which proposed a constitutional amendment to limit the time an elected officer can hold county or precinct offices; and •Received a verbal commitment that Jack Hunter has accepted the position of county extension agent-agriculture, effective May 1.

Police

State Street in reference to a disturbance. Subjects were located in the street, advised of the loitering law and to return to their homes. The subjects complied. On April 8 at 2:03 a.m., Officer Johnson was dispatched to David Street in reference to a residence being egged. A report was taken and the case is under investigation. Also on April 8 at 2:24 a.m., Officer Johnson was dispatched to South Austin Road in reference to a subject trying to break into an apartment. The case is under investigation. A call of a family disturbance was reported to Officer Johnson on April 8, at 3:34 a.m. After meeting with the subjects, the problem was solved. On April 8 at 10:47 a.m., Officer Hart responded to a 9-1-1 call on Hwy. 90A in the county. Hart took control of the scene and stood by to assist the county deputy. On April 8 at 1:06 p.m., a complainant called the police department to report the theft of a purse. The purse was later returned and no further action was taken.

Continued from Page 1

On April 8 at 1:05 p.m., Officer Eric Bilbo served an outstanding warrant on James Lee Roy Jr., processed him at the police department, then transported him to the county jail for confinement on terroristic threat charges. On April 9 at 3:57 a.m., Officer Johnson was dispatched to North McCarty in reference to a family disturbance. A juvenile who was involved was detained and transported to a juvenile facility. Officer Johnson was dispatched to a disturbance on Pendleton Street on April 9 at 12:26 a.m. Subjects were advised to keep the noise down and no other action was necessary. On April 10, at approximately 9:30 p.m., Ahmad Sims fled officers who were attempting to arrest him for loitering and disorderly conduct. He was captured moments later at his residence by Officer Jack Knox and Sgt. Hassin, transported to the police department for processing and then transported to the county jail for confinement. In the Police Department's March report, a total of 69 calls were answered; 33, miscellaneous, 12 disturbances, six assaults, six burglaries, five criminal mischief, four thefts and three accidents. Officers handled 11 criminal cases and cleared 27. They made 18 arrests; 15 for misdemeanor and three felony. 119 citations were issued.

Lordy, Lordy... Look Who's 40!

April 15

Benefair

Continued from Page 1

you can adopt your very own "Derby Duck" to compete in the Benefair's very first Duck Derby. For more information, call Traylor Walker at 409-234-3921, days, or 234-3937, nights.

Birth

Continued from Page 5

have worked out, "former Our Lady of Perpetual Help parishioner Pearl Meitzen said. "We knew it would be practical, but I was afraid a lot of the Spanish traditions would be lost. There was a real feeling of the Holy Spirit at Our Lady of Guadalupe."

This month, the Virgin Mother of Guadalupe gave her Child of Eagle Lake to Catholics as she continues to provide them with perpetual help. Indeed, as Marcy Salinas said, "The Lord is rejoicing."

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No opposition for May 6 election candidates

The City of Eagle Lake will have only two candidates on the ballot for the three council positions in the May 6 general election; the seats of René Cooper-Scott, Mike Duane and Joe Frazier. The deadline for candidates to declare themselves as write-ins has passed and no additional candidates came forward. Cooper-Scott has filed for re-election and J.W. Shavers added his name to the ballot. According to Texas law, when there is a single vacancy, members of City Council will be called upon to appoint a person to serve until the next general election (next spring). At that time, the vacant position will be added to the ballot along with those scheduled. The list of candidates for the Rice CISD Board of (See Election, Page 10)

Eagle Lake Headlight

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City okays garbage rate increase

By Lynda Appelt Contributing Writer Eagle Lake City Council adopted an ordinance amending garbage rates as approved in the 1995-96 budget at its meeting last Tuesday, April 11. The increase in garbage rates as budgeted is 15.79% which means an increase of \$1.50 per month per household, from \$9.50 to \$11 per month. Commercial rates will increase by the same percentage rates. The rate increase is attributed to an increase in landfill rates a year ago and a probable increase expected in Oct. City Manager Ron Holland told Council the City is playing "catch up" because it didn't go with an increase when landfill rates increased and unexpected repairs on the trash truck. According to Holland, future plans are being made to re-evaluate all businesses and try to come up with some hard, fast system for establishing commercial rates. "It may be a savings for some and reveal that others are not paying their share," said Holland. Council authorized the drafting of a new sidewalk sale ordinance, eliminating the proof of an insurance clause and time limit. The request to amend or repeat the ordinance was made by Judy Stewart who owns Judy's Treasures. Stewart recently requested a permit for a sidewalk sale and was rejected because of insufficient insurance. Council postponed action at a previous meeting in order to study the City's liability. It was learned that the City will not be liable for any accident that might happen at a sidewalk sale. Therefore, the ordinance changes were authorized. Council approved a request by Sgt. Steve Hassin of the Eagle Lake Police Department recommending that a yield sign be installed on Commerce Street for northbound traffic at Post Office. At present, the only traffic control sign at this intersection is a stop sign for southbound traffic on Commerce. Council considered a stop sign at this location last year when the stop signs on Commerce at the railroad crossing were removed, but rejected it because of the limited distance between the railroad tracks and Post Office. "A yield sign will be a good compromise at this intersection," said Holland. Council postponed a recommendation by Hassin to remove the stop signs on Stevenson Street at the railroad crossing because they pose a safety hazard on Farm-to-Market Road 102. The stop signs were erected at the recommendation of the Texas Department of Transportation because the crossing has been identified as a hazardous crossing and is scheduled to get crossing gates. Hassin cited observation of several near accidents. "You must decide which is greater... the probability of rear-ending or a railroad accident," Hassin said. The recommendation will receive further study by Council. "We don't want to have caused a worse problem," Mayor Robby Cook said. A request by the police department to change City policy on sale of excess property to allow weapons held by the police department to be offered for sale by auction to police personnel was postponed in order to obtain legal opinion. Hassin reported that he and dog catcher Arnold Cardenas conducted a dog "roundup" April 3 in which several citations were issued. According to Hassin, other (See Council, Page 10)

Questions and answers

Submitted by Eagle Lake Community Hospital Administration and Board Members This week we promised questions and answers from the public. The following are topics of questions from Mr. Bruce Johnson Jr. and his answers. Question: Pay cuts Answer: The Board has studied salary reduction as an option and denied it inadvisable for several reasons: (a) The salaries and wages paid by ELCH tend to be below average for the state and well below average for the Houston market. Asking employees to accept a 5% pay cut will likely run off the Hospital's best and brightest staff. (b) Pay cuts, in general, demotivate to staff morale which dominates into mediocre productivity and patient care. (c) The employees at ELCH have voluntarily contributed nearly \$20,000 to the Hospital the past several years. Their fund raising efforts refurbished the lobby and spruced up the nursery and delivery area. They also put in many hours of volunteer effort to these projects. Question: Ownership of Hospital Answer: As proposed, the present Hospital corporation will lease the Hospital and all current assets to the Tax District for a dollar a year and assumption of the Hospital's liabilities and goodwill. The Tax District Board of Directors will have virtual control of all assets. The ELCH Corporation will retain ownership simply to receive control back from the Tax District should it ever be dissolved. This situation seemed to work well between the Columbus Community Hospital's corporation and Tax District. Legal expenses and transaction costs were kept to a minimum. (See Hospital, Page 10)

Council down to 5 possibilities...

New police chief may be chosen next week

Eagle Lake City Council interviewed five applicants for the position of police chief in executive session during a special meeting last Saturday. Six interviews were scheduled; one candidate was a no-show. The City received 38 applications for the position and the Selection Committee, chaired by Councilwoman René Cooper-Scott, narrowed the list to 11. City Manager Ron Holland then sent packets to those 11 applicants with six returning the final papers. The candidates interviewed Saturday were: •Keith Webb; presently employed as a homicide crime scene investigator with the Houston Police Department. Webb and his wife, Wanda, reside in Rock Island. •Ray Scholten; presently employed as an investigator with the Austin County Sheriff's Department. Scholten was assigned to the Texas Department of Public Safety in Columbus from 1969-76 and Texas Ranger in Austin, Colorado and Fayette Counties from 1976-79. Scholten and his wife, Connie, reside in Stafford. •James Dobbins; presently employed as a deputy-instructor with Precinct 6 Constable's Office in Harris County. Dobbins and his wife, Elaine, reside in Humble. •George White; employed as chief of police of Portland Police Department from 1974-94. White and his wife, Patricia, reside in Portland. •Steve Hassin; presently sergeant in charge of the Eagle Lake Police Department. Hassin and his wife, Beth, reside in Eagle Lake. Council is expected to make the decision which will fill the position at its meeting April 25.

Disturbances keep EL police busy

The Eagle Lake Police Department reported the following calls during the week ending April 17. Officer Jeremy Moore was dispatched to Eagle Lake Community Hospital Emergency Room on April 11 at 10:55 p.m. in reference to an assault. A report was taken; charges are to be filed. On April 12 at 12:32 a.m., Officer Clem Johnson was dispatched to a report of a disturbance on E. State Street. A report was filed and the case has been referred to the judge. On April 12, at 2:52 a.m., Officer Brian Ochoa was dispatched to E. State Street in reference to a domestic problem. Demont Edmond Holloway was arrested for criminal mischief, processed at the police department and transported to the county jail for confinement. A warrant for disorderly conduct was served on Holloway while he was at the jail. Officer Jake Garcia was dispatched to a residence on Center Street on April 14 at 7:05 p.m. in reference to criminal mischief. A report was filed and the case is under investigation. On April 15 at 7:40 p.m., Officers Brian Baklik and Ochoa arrested Dwight Anthony Stovall on outstanding warrants. Stovall was processed at the police station, then transported to the county jail for confinement. On April 16 at 1:45 a.m., Jesus Eloy Sepulveda was arrested by Officer Russell Dunn at the KC Hall for public intoxication. He was processed and transported the county jail for confinement. Clarence Pickett of Austin was arrested, processed and transported to the county jail for confinement. Officer Bilbo was dispatched to an alarm at Apex Traffic Supply on April 15 at 10 a.m. The alarm was set off by mistake, was reset and the building was secured. On April 15 at 7:40 p.m., Officers Brian Baklik and Ochoa arrested Dwight Anthony Stovall on outstanding warrants. Stovall was processed at the police station, then transported to the county jail for confinement. On April 16 at 1:45 a.m., Jesus Eloy Sepulveda was arrested by Officer Russell Dunn at the KC Hall for public intoxication. He was processed and transported the county jail for confinement. License.

Meeting

cently, receiving extensive head injuries. He was transported by Unit #803 to ELCH. She extended her thanks to the emergency room staff, Dr. Russell Thomas and the Eagle Lake Volunteer Ambulance Corps members for the care and treatment he received during the "golden hour" (that time when the patient's condition could go either way depending on the speed and accuracy of treatment received). Eisell told of losing her older son at another hospital due to the lack of medical attention and what it meant to her to have Cory cared for so well. She also passed along words of praise for Eagle Lake's hospital and ambulance corps from staff members at Hermann Hospital in Houston where her son is on his way to recovery. The microphone was passed to those wishing to speak. Most related stories of how having a hospital so close has saved a life (or lives). Ambulance Corps President Joe Lee Perez brought the probability of the Corps' collapse if the Hospital closes due to the increase in time necessary to transport patients. Among the others commenting was Bob Chapman who said, after reiterating three near tragedies in his family over the last five years, "I don't like tax, but this is one tax I'll vote for. I need this hospital!" Louis Schorlemmer added, "Going out every Saturday night can blow a lot more than what the hospital district is asking. All you'll have to give up is one Saturday."

Board

Continued from Page 1 Wood, honor graduates. In other action, the Board: •Approved 1995-96 out-of-district transfer requests for 36 students; •Approved 1995 summer school programs with both the elementary and middle level summer programs to be conducted at Eagle Lake Middle School due to the repairs anticipated to occur at the Eagle Lake Primary School facility during the summer; •Approved a budget amendment requested by Jeanette Knigge for an increase of \$38,823 in federal funding; •Approved bids for petroleum products from Meizen's Oil Company for gasoline and diesel at the pump in Eagle Lake and Colorado County Oil Co. for bulk delivery of gasoline and diesel, as well as for Phillips Products on motor oil, transmission fluid and grease; •Approved 1995-96 alternative campus proposal for Vox Populi campus; •Reviewed Rice High School graduation plans for May 25; •Approved substitute teachers Tracey Alley and Margaret McTeer; and •Received notification that employee recognition awards will be presented at an employee picnic, scheduled for May 26, at which time the Board of Trustees will cook for the entire district staff.

Continued from Page 1

corps from staff members at Hermann Hospital in Houston where her son is on his way to recovery. The microphone was passed to those wishing to speak. Most related stories of how having a hospital so close has saved a life (or lives). Ambulance Corps President Joe Lee Perez brought the probability of the Corps' collapse if the Hospital closes due to the increase in time necessary to transport patients. Among the others commenting was Bob Chapman who said, after reiterating three near tragedies in his family over the last five years, "I don't like tax, but this is one tax I'll vote for. I need this hospital!" Louis Schorlemmer added, "Going out every Saturday night can blow a lot more than what the hospital district is asking. All you'll have to give up is one Saturday."

Eagle Lake Chamber of Commerce President Doug Schwemmer stated, "This is something we cannot lose. Go out and vote. Vote yes!" Past Board President Helen Ferris, who resigned recently when her terms expired, also voiced opposition to the taxing district. She emphasized the need for voters to know more about the Memorial Hospital System study. One point Ferris stressed was Memorial's conclusion that the entire county would need only 15 hospital beds by the year 2000 since medical care is going toward out-patient treatment. Balas reminded Ferris and the audience of the Board's plans to look into turning at least one section of the Hospital into a specialized care unit. Long-time resident, Mrs. Laura Thomas, said, "I've paid school taxes every year without complaint and I haven't had anyone in school since 1933. Why can't we pay a little tax to keep our hospital which we need?"

George Cason of Eagle Lake came well prepared with written questions concerning past information on the Hospital's financial situation and the taxing district. Unfortunately, due to time constraints, he left with some questions unanswered. Bill Harrison Jr. reminded the crowd of all the time, effort and money that has been spent to "make Eagle Lake the number one choice of the Criminal Justice Board."

Harrison, who is heavily involved in economic development (both on the local and regional levels) continued, "We'll have zero chance (of being selected for a prison site) if we don't have a hospital!" Rev. David Mann of First Baptist Church, related the story of what happened when Caldwell (his previous assignment) rejected a taxing district.

Hospital

there is still one. If the Board receives no offers, they will have no choice but to close the Hospital. What happens to the physicians after that depends on what is left and who owns it. The most likely scenario is that physicians will leave and choice of physicians is reduced. Another potential casualty if the Hospital closes is the emergency medical services (volunteer ambulance corps). Already strapped for qualified volunteers, many of the current EMTs will fill less slots on the schedule because of the conflicts that will occur between their jobs and families and their EMS obligation. The county may have to reallocate their resources or raise more taxes to address this problem. Ultimately, the choice is up to the voters on May 6. Next week the Hospital will answer questions that are submitted by Friday, April 14, to its administration office. The address is P.O. Box 277, Eagle Lake TX 77434; telephone 234-5571; fax 234-5176.

Eagle Lake Pilot Club's 10th Annual Chicken Spaghetti Supper Tuesday, April 18 Eagle Lake Community Center Serving 5 to 7 p.m. \$4.50 per plate ADVANCE SALES ONLY! Tickets Available from Any Pilot Club Member Benefits Pilot Community Projects

Continued from Page 1

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Eagle Lake's sales tax rebate takes HUGE jump

Year-to-date ahead 25+%... Eagle Lake's sales tax rebate takes HUGE jump. The City of Eagle Lake received a check in the amount of \$13,705.23, a whopping 91.15% higher than the \$7,169.78 in April 1994. "Employment in the Houston metro area grew by 3.3% in the last year, with the largest gains in the service sector, which added 20,700 jobs," Sharp stated. "The April rebate to El Paso was \$2.61 million, virtually unchanged from the April 1994 rebate of \$2.60 million. Other cities in our area, the amounts of their sales tax rebates this month, along with the change from this month last year are: Columbus, \$27,125.55, +10.21%; Weimar, \$6,829.49, +18.19%; Sealy, \$33,199.05, +26.63%; Bellville, \$16,720.38, +2.85%; El Campo, \$104,360.06, +10.57%; and Wharton, \$66,529.75, -16.31%. Year-to-date totals (based on the date rebates were issued) for the above cities are: Columbus, \$136,722.85, +11.72%; Weimar, \$37,187.89, +7.55%; Sealy, \$151,981.34, +16.97%; Bellville, \$79,589.33, +6.06%; El Campo, \$494,598.46, +10.15%; and Wharton, \$316,099.91, -4.23%. On the county level, Colorado County's April check was for \$30,964.20, up 15.73% from last year, giving a year-to-date total of \$171,809.06, up 26.36%. Wharton County received \$75,362.51, down 1.45%; year-to-date, \$346,486.03, up 3.24%. Austin County received \$47,748.27, up 19.15%; year-to-date, \$205,137.44, up 8.22%. The next sales tax allocation is scheduled for Friday, May 12. Publisher's Note: If an additional 1/2¢ sales tax were levied countywide, as the Board of Directors of Eagle Lake Community Hospital would like, and divided among the three hospitals in Colorado County, each would have received \$10,321.40 as their share of the sales tax collected in Feb. and distributed this month.