



THE EAGLE LAKE HEADLIGHT

(USPS 163-760)
P.O. Box 67 — 220 East Main
(409) 234-5521
CITY OF EAGLE LAKE,
TEXAS 77434-0067
Published Weekly
Every Thursday

Produced By:
Carol Cardenas • Leslie Risk
Jeannine Fearing
Shirley Luedecke • Betty Drymalla

ADVERTISING AND NEWS DEADLINE: 5 P.M. MONDAY

Subscription Rates	
Colorado County (including Lissie and Egypt)	\$12.00
Fayette, Lavaca, Wharton, Austin counties	\$13.50
Other Texas Residents	\$15.00
Outside of Texas	\$16.50

Single Copy Price: 35-Cents
Second class postage paid
at Eagle Lake, Texas

Address Corrections
should be sent to P.O. Box 67,
Eagle Lake, Texas 77434-0067

Auto insurers request rate increases

Auto insurers submitted proposals for 1997 rates before the deadline passed last week.

The Texas Insurance Organization, which represents medium and small auto insurance companies, asked for an 11% increase in standard, or "benchmark" insurance rates. Farmers Insurance Group, a large company, asked for a 7.4% hike.

Mark Toohey, a spokesman for Farmers, said the company's proposed rate increase is tied to higher costs for repairing and replacing cars and because 20 to 50% of Texas motorists are driving without insurance.

But Rob Bordon, a state consumer advocate for insurance, countered the rate increase proposal, calling for a 3.9% cut in benchmark rates.

"We feel strongly that industry losses for auto liability have gone down in recent years," Bordon told the *Dallas Morning News*. "And," he said, "consumers should see their premiums reduced as well."

State law allows insurers to charge 30% above and below the benchmark rate.

Insurance Commissioner Elton Bomer will make a final decision on the rates later this year.

State Capitol Highlights

By Lyndell Williams
and Ed Sterling
Texas Press Association

Victim-Rights Bill Passes

The Senate last week approved a victim-rights bill that would prohibit state appeals courts from throwing out criminal convictions because of minor or technical errors in the trying of cases.

Sen. J.E. "Buster" Brown, R-Lake Jackson, said the measure is intended to spare crime victims from repeated trials that result when convictions are overturned because of "harmless errors."

"Crime victims all across the state are asking the Legislature to make it very clear that while criminals are entitled to a fair trial, they are not entitled to a perfect trial," Brown said.

The bill has moved to the house for consideration.

Bill Broadens Right-to-Carry

Sen. Jerry Paterson, R. Pasadena, is trying to push his concealed handgun bill, which became law in 1995, a few steps further with new legislation that would prohibit handgun bans in many public places.

Patterson's bill would lift the state ban on carrying concealed handguns in churches, nursing homes, amusement parks and hospitals, but would preserve the ban for hospital emergency rooms and trauma centers.

His bill also would allow people convicted of nonviolent felonies who have had their rights restored to apply for concealed handgun permits.

And, under the bill, Texas would recognize right-to-carry permits issued by other states.

A number of state and local municipal and nursing groups oppose the bill.

Counterfeit Trademark Bill

Selling counterfeit goods bearing trademarks meant to make them appear genuine would be a crime under legislation passed by the Senate last week.

"Organized crime syndicates as well as certain terrorist groups are utilizing counterfeit goods to raise money for their various causes," said Sen. Ken Armbrister, D-Victoria.

The goods range from purses and watches to electronic equipment, he said, adding that the sales are a problem primarily in the Dallas and Houston areas. An estimated \$10 million to \$25 million in counterfeit goods are warehoused in the Houston area, Armbrister said.

The bill, which now goes to the House for consideration, would create a range of criminal penalties and provide for seizure of counterfeit goods.

Cashless Welfare Bill Filed

Rep. Harvey Hilderbran, R-Kerrville, filed a bill that would create a cashless welfare system.

Hilderbran, chairman of the house of Human Services Committee, said the measure is intended to ensure that benefits given to welfare recipients are used on behalf of children in families on the welfare rolls.

The bill would expand the list of

items welfare recipients can buy with their monthly welfare checks. But it also would make it impossible for recipients to get cash with the Lone Star Card.

"If recipients could not get cash with the card," Hilderbran said, "they could not use their money to buy cigarettes or alcohol."

Other Capital Highlights

State Sen. Drew Nixon, R-Carhart, was charged last week with soliciting prostitution on Austin's South Congress Avenue after police said he offered an undercover officer \$35 to have sex. Nixon was one of 82 people arrested in one day, as part of a sting operation. Nixon spent one night in jail and was released on \$750 bail.

Agents from the Internal Revenue Service seized the Austin home of prominent atheist Madalyn Murray O'Hair and loaded two moving vans with her furniture and other possessions. O'Hair disappeared 18 months ago, leaving more than \$260,000 in unpaid federal taxes.

Let's Look Back...

24 & 48 YEARS AGO

May 11, 1972

James Whitcomb won his race for attorney while Doc Mueller and Bobby Friedrich will be in the runoff for sheriff on June 3...

Mark Anderson was named president of the Eagle Lake Noon Lions Club at the May 4 meeting. Other officers elected were first v.p., Roy D. VanNort; second v.p., T. Lang; third v.p., Edwin Gay; secretary, Major Benge; treasurer, Phil Richmond; Lion Tamer, Melvin Stancik; Tailtwister, Jim Boudreaux and directors, M.M. Jones, Gene Brown, Joe L. McCreary and Alvin Kohlef-fel...

Recently, the student body at Rice High School elected Ann Williams president and Robin Engstrom vice president of the Student Council. Both girls are juniors and will take office next year...

The Outstanding Future Teacher award was presented to Carolyn Sommer for her untiring efforts and

service to the Rice Chapter. She was honored along with other students for their achievements in a banquet held Friday, May 5...

The Texas A&I University Accounting Society held its spring banquet and awarded scholarships and outstanding awards. Underclassman Billy Joe Briscoe, son of Mr. & Mrs. Monroe Briscoe of this city, was presented the \$500 Arthur Anderson and Co. of Eagle Lake scholarship...

Ronnie Miller was installed as the new president of the Eagle Lake Jaycees on Friday, May 5. Bobby Marsalia was the outgoing president... Candy Farris, bride-elect of Dale Dixon, was honored with a miscellaneous shower on May 1 in Houston...

Kurt Thomas, representative of Rice High School in State University Interscholastic League's Class AAA tennis competition, lost his first round match in Austin last Friday, bowing to an opponent that went on to win the state title...

County Commissioner & Mrs. L.W. (Bill) Stiles Jr. became the proud parents of a baby boy born at 3:15 p.m. Saturday, May 6, at the Eagle Lake Community Hospital. The young man arrived weighing eight pounds, eight ounces and has been named Kelly Floyd...

Mr. & Mrs. Roy C. Chisum of Eagle Lake announced the engagement and approaching marriage of their daughter, Karen, to Thomas L. Edwards, son of Mr. & Mrs. Grady B. Edwards of Lening. The wedding is planned for June 17...

Miss Mary Bachman, bride-elect of George Roswell Burke III, was the honoree at a coffee in the W.J. Brunner home on Saturday, May 6...

Little Miss Patricia Ann Stephens celebrated her second birthday May 5 with a party at her home...

Mrs. Mary E. Selders announced the engagement and approaching marriage of her daughter, Ann Margaret Chappel, to Harold O. Neal Williams. The wedding is planned for two o'clock, May 20 at Providence Baptist Church...

Friends in the community learned with regret the death last Saturday morning of Mrs. Maude Agnes Lindsay Floyd, a resident of this community for over 50 years and a former businesswoman during many of those years...

Two year old Darrell Stancik, son of Mr. & Mrs. Melvin Stancik of Eagle Lake, is in the Texas Children's Hospital intensive care unit recuperating from a rare non-contagious virus disease.

Jan. 14, 1949

The Dr. Pepper Bottling Company, under the management of Roland Campbell, is now doing business in their attractive new building on Lakeside Drive...

In a regular meeting of the Lissie Boy's Club on Friday, Jan. 7, Lester Herman was elected president of the coming year. He takes the office vacated by Gayle Thomas...

Friends of the John Shimek family of Garwood express deep regret over the passing of his brother, Chas. Schimek of the Danevang community...

Mrs. O.S. Campbell, Mrs. Fred G. Frnka, Mrs. W.F. Meitzen Jr., Mrs. H.L. Parker and Mrs. J.C. Lockwood, Girl Scout leaders of Eagle Lake, were in Columbus Tuesday evening to attend the dinner at the Memorial Hall and the area meeting which followed...

Mrs. E.R. Mooney was in Angleton this week to make the acquaintance of her new granddaughter, Linda Kay Stowe, the daughter of Mr. & Mrs. W.G. Stowe...

Mrs. E.J. Konesheck is home from the Wharton hospital and, for the present, with the family of her daughter, Mr. & Mrs. C.L. Richter...

On the recommendations of the coaches of District 33 B, two members of the 1948 Eagle Lake Eagles squad were named to the all district team. They are left end Jack Dodd and back John Perry...

Mr. & Mrs. M.E. Isenhower of Lissie announced the engagement of their daughter, Lillian Ruth, to Rev. Stephen Raby, son of Dr. & Mrs. John B. Wertscho of Ephrata, Pennsylvania...

Among those from Eagle Lake attending the Dallas Symphony Orchestra concert at the Columbus High School gymnasium Wednesday evening were Mr. & Mrs. Frank Mitch-

(See 24 & 48, Page 4)

Gov. Bush outlines property tax plan

From the office of State Representative Robert L. Cook III

After much debate over school funding, Gov. George W. Bush's office released the initial provisions of a new plan designed to reduce school property taxes. The Governor's proposal cuts local school maintenance and operations taxes in several ways.

1) Increasing the Homestead Exemption to \$25,000: The Governor's proposal would call for a constitutional amendment to be voted on by Texans on Aug. 9, 1997, to increase the current \$5,000 homestead exemption to \$25,000. This exemption would apply to the 1997 tax year.

2) Reducing School Tax Rates 20¢ Across the Board: The Governor's plan provides a uniform 20¢ reduction in tax rates to each taxpayer for the 1998 tax year and every year thereafter. Bush's plan calls for strong safeguards to make sure local districts cannot raise their tax rates as a result of reappraisals, without compelling justifications.

3) Texas Business Tax: The Governor proposes the elimination of the corporate franchise tax and the school property tax on business inventory and replaces them with a broad-based Texas Business Tax—a 1.25% tax on sales over \$500,000, less the cost of goods and less capital invested. This provision would take effect for the 1998 tax year.

4) Sales Tax: The Governor's plan would increase the general sales tax and motor vehicle sales tax by one-half percentage points. The current state sales tax rate is 6.25% with voter-approved, local taxes adding as much as 2%.

5) Texas Public School Trust Fund: Gov. Bush's plan calls for all revenues from the Business Tax, the increase in the consumption taxes and all proceeds from the Texas Lottery to be dedicated to public education. A constitutional amendment would create the Texas Public School Trust Fund from which the state would re-

imburse local school districts for local taxes lost due to reductions in their tax base.

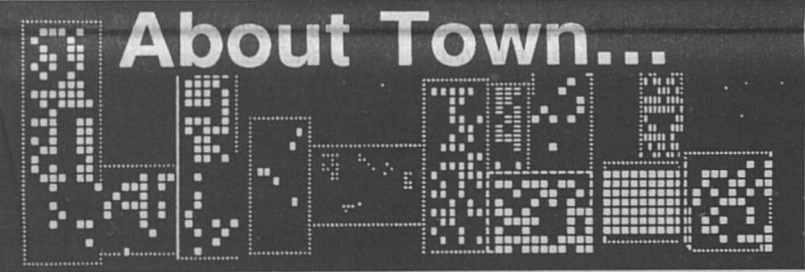
Through these provisions, as well as a \$1 billion reduction in state spending, Gov. Bush believes that local school property taxes would be reduced by \$2.8 billion by the 1998 tax year. At this point, the far-reaching effects of the Governor's plan are unclear. The proposed plan is in its original state and will most likely see major changes as the Legislature works out its provisions.

The Property Tax Cuts and Replacement Revenues Business Worksheet shows what types of changes

business owners can expect if Gov. Bush's proposed plan is written into law. The Governor's office suggests taxpayers work out their own taxes to decide how it will affect them.

Rep. Robert L. "Robby" Cook, whose district includes Bastrop, Colorado, Fayette and Wharton Counties, requests that persons with questions about the tax plan contact the Governor's office at 512-463-2000, or by mail at P.O. Box 12428, Austin, Tx, 78711.

Persons with opinions about the plan should contact Cook at 512-463-0682, or by mail at P.O. Box 2910, Austin, Tx. 78768.



•Fred Frnka is recuperating after knee replacement surgery in Houston on Tuesday morning of this week. The doctor says he now has a perfect knee that should last him 20 years.

Fred is expected to remain in the hospital for about four or five days but hopefully will be home by Monday. Friends can contact home at Rosewood Hospital, Room 212, 9200 Westheimer, Houston, TX 77063.

•Lydia Cardenas was hospitalized overnight Tuesday, Feb. 25, for tests. Seems what she thought was the flu turned out to be a mild heart attack.

Our best wishes for a speedy recovery go out to her.

•The architects drawings of 2- and 3-bedroom duplexes to be built in Eagle Lake are beautiful!

We got a chance to see them Tuesday night at dinner when City Manager Ron Holland was dining at Sport-

man's Restaurant the same time we were feeding our faces.

Hopefully, Ron will remember to drop them off at the office after City Council Tuesday night and we'll have the room and time to reproduce some for you to see.

Bible Verse of the Week

"All things work together for good to them that love God."

—Romans 8:28

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