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Bullock appoints committees to study crucial issues

While Texas Comptroller John Sharp and Agriculture Commissioner Rick Perry dueling in the press last week over who would be best suited to succeed Bob Bullock as lieutenant governor, Bullock had his sleeves rolled up and was hard at work.

Bullock, who has said he will not seek re-election, was busy assembling Senate interim committees to study issues crucial to the future of Texas. He charged special committees to:

- Gauge the economic impact of recent legislation to strengthen the state's business climate and bring in new jobs.

- Review transportation projects and financing to determine whether current plans will meet the demands of increased traffic.

- Evaluate the state's system of se-



State Capitol Highlights

By Lyndell Williams
and Ed Sterling
Texas Press Association

ting title insurance rates, look at rates in other states and determine whether title insurance should be regulated by the state.

- Review state retirement system policies, homeowners associations, laws regulating construction contractors and a recently passed law that protects underground utilities.

- Examine the regulation of home health care and rehabilitation services and the licensing of such.

- Look into concerns over fraud in Medicaid and welfare programs, monitor a new law restricting minors' access to tobacco products and track the proposed settlement between the federal government and tobacco interests.

- Study possible changes in state law concerning sex offenders.

- Study the problem of gang violence among teen-agers and young adults and consider coordination of juvenile justice efforts by law enforcement and school officials on the state and local level.

- Evaluate safety conditions for state prison employees and inmates, and focus on medical and health treatment, projected capacity needs and parole programs.

- Review the process of selecting judges in state district courts, county courts-at-law and probate courts; review costs for filing civil lawsuits, collection of court-imposed criminal fines and ways to improve jury service.

- Look at annexation laws and their effect on county and school district tax bases, and review municipal utility districts.

- Evaluate the impact of the North American Free Trade Agreement (NAFTA) and develop a statewide plan to identify local, state and federal resources to meet NAFTA-related demands.

- Look at federal plans for the 2000 census, legislative and congressional redistricting and possible population shifts identified by the U.S. Census Bureau.

- Study state programs that help give low and moderate-income Texans access to affordable housing.

Nursing Home Suits Filed Daily
Attorney General Dan Morales' office has been filing an average of

two nursing home lawsuits each work day since June, the *Austin American-Statesman* reported last week.

Morales pledged to keep that pace so long as state inspectors find serious health and safety problems in nursing homes.

One reason for the accelerated lawsuit filings, the *American-Statesman* reported, is increased referrals of problem nursing homes by the Department of Human Services, which inspects them. Over the past year, referrals to the attorney general's office have increased almost fivefold.

In the 1997 state budget year, which ends Aug. 31, 53 nursing homes have been referred to the AG's office for litigation; last year, only 11 were referred for litigation.

Earlier this year, an in-depth report by the *American-Statesman* on conditions at nursing homes drew statewide attention. After the report was published, legislators criticized the Department of Human Services and the attorney general's office for lack of enforcement of nursing home regulations.

Sex Offender Notices May Triple

As part of Texas' new sex offender notification laws that go into effect next month, the number of offenders that warrant community notifications could triple, said AG Morales.

While attending the ninth annual Crimes Against Children Seminar last week in Dallas, Morales told the *Dallas Morning News*, "We understand that family violence not only puts our children at risk but also the whole fabric of our community."

At the gathering, law enforcement officials and social service workers discussed what can be done to help victims of child abuse and bring offenders to justice.

Detective Jim Reynolds of Scotland Yard, who spoke at the conference, said pedophilia and child pornography are international problems: "There is an extensive network of child pornography both in England and throughout the world. What is difficult is that these pedophiles are mostly professionals such as doctors, priests and ministers, and they use their unsupervised access to abuse children."

(See Highlights, Page 8)

Let's Look Back...

24 & 48 YEARS AGO

Oct. 26, 1972

Attorney Harry D. Larson announces this week that effective Nov. 1, 1972, he will retire from the general practice of law and income tax work and will close his office at his home on Austin Road. He has been in practice for 38 years in the Eagle Lake community...

Miss Becky Stienke, daughter of Mr. & Mrs. E.H. Stienke of Garwood, was named the Fairest of the Fair at last Saturday's Garwood Lions Club 25th Annual Fair. Rhonda Kochwelp, daughter of Mr. & Mrs. Mickey Kochwelp, was the runner-up...

Three generations of twins from the Parker and Alley families were among the guests at a dinner here Saturday. They are Johnny and Bonnie Parker; Alvin and Thelma (Alley) Perry; John R. Alley and Jean (Alley) Marsalia; and Bonnie and Connie Alley...

Mr. & Mrs. Howard Lobppries of Garwood announced the engagement and approaching marriage of their daughter, Brenda, to Tom Wendel, son of Mr. & Mrs. Donald Wendel of Bryant, Iowa. The marriage will be solemnized Friday, Nov. 24, 1972, at St. Mary's Catholic Church in Nada...

The engagement and approaching marriage of Miss Norma Alvarado and Airman Albert Cazares was announced by her parents, Mr. & Mrs. Frank Alvarado Jr. of Houston. The couple plan a Nov. 11 wedding. The bride-elect is the granddaughter of Mr. & Mrs. Frank Alvarado of Eagle Lake...

Army Specialist Five Obie Williams Jr., age 25, whose parents live in Eagle Lake, recently graduated from the basic leadership school at Camp Same San, Thailand...

On March 11th, Angel Lavon Farrow was invited to play the piano for the First Choir of the Mt. Olive Baptist Church in Eagle Lake. She is the ten-year-old daughter of Mrs. Earma Jean Farrow, both whom were reared by Mr. & Mrs. Gus Farrow of Garwood.

July 15, 1949

Robert Durway will arrive in

Eagle Lake tomorrow to assume the duties of full time pastor of the First Presbyterian Church. He has been supply pastor for the church for the past year...

Mr. & Mrs. Louis Tallas and children of Goliad and Mr. & Mrs. Gus Miller of Victoria spent the weekend visiting relatives here...

Miss Edith Hanly, her mother, Mrs. E.W. Hanly, and Mary Kathryn Hanly, daughter of Mr. & Mrs. Ed Hanly, are leaving early Sunday morning for a vacation trip to the Northwest...

Alice Lou Kveton celebrated her third birthday last Saturday afternoon. The party started at the home of her parents, Mr. & Mrs. Eldin Kveton, at 4 p.m. with the guests later going to Boothe Park for picnic birthday refreshments...

Mr. & Mrs. Louis William Stiles of Eagle Lake announced this week the engagement of their daughter, Mary Catherine, to Jerry Robert Jax of Houston...

A card was received yesterday from Mrs. R.T. Westmoreland sent from Anchorage, Alaska, telling of sending the Anchorage newspaper. Sure enough, she's been around visiting with the Methodists, about which there was a story on the front page of the paper. She reports meeting Bishop Gerald Kennedy, newly elected head of Washington, Idaho and Alaska missions...

Mr. & Mrs. Jack Hough and Mr. & Mrs. R.L. Cook attended the night auto races in Houston Tuesday night...

Mrs. Charles Causey and Jeanette left Friday morning for Pensacola, Fla., where they visited Ensign Wesley Causey...

Mr. & Mrs. Henry Sunderman and Mr. & Mrs. James Dutcher and sons spent Sunday sightseeing en route to Katy and Hempstead...

Mrs. J.C. White, daughter of Mr. & Mrs. Robert Martin, and her two children, Janet and Jack, left Wednesday morning for New York. They will report to Ft. Hamilton where they will be assigned overseas transportation to join Major White in Wiesbaden, Germany...

Mr. & Mrs. R.L. Clipson and Mr. & Mrs. Harland Bell attended the square dance Saturday night in Angleton...

T.P. Dowdy, Cal Gertson and Jimmie Reel broke 25 straight targets at the skeet shoot held at the Colorado County Street Club Sunday...

Mrs. C.P. Boggess was hostess to the Thursday afternoon bridge club last week.

ABOUT TOWN...

•Jackie Bibby, new to this area and managing the new Detox Unit at Rice Medical Center, has a hobby that won him a "World Champion" title (several times).

He is a rattlesnake handler and the World Champion Snake Sacker! He sacked 10 rattlesnakes in 17.2 seconds.

Tuesday of this week he was on the Maury Povich Show and will be appearing in a sitcom, "Austin's Stories", to be aired on MTV Sept. 24.

We would like to welcome him to Eagle Lake and thank him for calling us about his amazing "pastime".

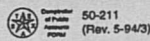
•University of Southern Mississippi staffers Barbara Ross and Vicki Copeland, sister of Sandy Bendy of Eagle Lake, visited Kenya recently.

The two visited Kenyan friends made when that nation's athletes trained in Hattiesburg, Miss., for the 1996 Summer Olympics in Atlanta.

They took gifts to their Kenyan friends and, in return, they gained simple lessons about life.

•Jonathan Villarreal is in much better condition than you'd think after being hit by a train. Of course, there are all kinds of rumors around town, but, to set the record straight, his aunt sent information through another person about his true condition which we included with the facts received in the "Police Report".

A recent survey showed that the average woman would rather have beauty than brains. Maybe that's because the average man can see better than he can think.



1997 Property Tax Rates in Colorado County

This notice concerns 1997 property tax rates for Colorado County. It presents information about three tax rates. Last year's tax rate is the actual rate the taxing unit used to determine property taxes last year. This year's effective tax rate would impose the same total taxes as last year if you compare properties taxed in both years. This year's rollback tax rate is the highest tax rate the taxing unit can set before taxpayers can start tax rollback procedures. In each case these rates are found by dividing the total amount of taxes by the tax base (the total value of taxable property) with adjustments as required by state law. The rates are given per \$100 of property value.

	General Fund	Farm to Market/ Flood Control Fund	Special Road/ Bridge Fund
Last year's tax rate:			
Last year's operating taxes	\$ 2,015,566	\$ 838,527	\$
Last year's debt taxes	\$ 284,484	\$ 0	\$
Last year's total taxes	\$ 2,300,050	\$ 838,527	\$
Last year's tax base	\$711,208,195	\$702,457,795	\$
Last year's total tax rate	\$3.2340 /\$100	\$1.1937 /\$100	/\$100

This year's effective tax rate:			
Last year's adjusted taxes (after subtracting taxes on lost property)	\$ 2,290,501	\$ 834,626	\$
+ This year's adjusted tax base (after subtracting value of new property)	\$767,862,036	\$758,840,236	\$
= This year's effective tax rate for each fund	\$2.9829 /\$100	\$1.0998 /\$100	/\$100
Total effective tax rate 1.03 = maximum rate unless unit publishes notices and holds hearing	\$4.0827 /\$100	\$4.2051 /\$100	

This year's rollback tax rate:			
Last year's adjusted operating taxes (after subtracting taxes on lost property and including taxes for state criminal justice mandate.)	\$ 2,584,725	\$ 834,626	\$
+ This year's adjusted tax base	\$767,862,036	\$758,840,236	\$
= This year's effective operating rate	\$3.3661 /\$100	\$1.0998 /\$100	/\$100
x 1.08 = this year's maximum operating rate	\$3.6353 /\$100	\$1.1877 /\$100	/\$100
+ This year's debt rate	\$0.3870 /\$100	\$ 0 /\$100	/\$100
= This year's rollback rate for each fund	\$4.0223 /\$100	\$1.1877 /\$100	/\$100
This year's total rollback rate	\$5.2100 /\$100		

A county that collects the additional sales tax to reduce property taxes, including one that collects the tax for the first time this year, must insert the following lines:

- Sales tax adjustment rate \$.07407 /\$100

- Rollback tax rate \$4.4693 /\$100