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A space port in West Texas?

Realizing that the supply of oil and gas below is finite, future minded West Texans are looking to the infinite range of outer space.

The Senate Finance Subcommittee on the Spaceport Trust Fund met recently to hear testimony on the Fort Stockton area as the possible site for a spaceport envisioned for the state. Pecos County, the state's second largest in area, is competing with Brazoria and Willacy Counties as the location of the proposed port for future space traffic.

"You could crash something out here and wouldn't hurt anybody," County Judge Delmon Hodges quipped.

Noting that West Texas "is literally moving backwards" because of a decline in the oil industry and lack of water, Brenda Lee of the Midland College Technical Training Center



State Capitol Highlights

By Mike Cox
Texas Press Association

said the space center would foster engineer programs and be advantageous to the entire region.

A major impediment to the development of the center anywhere in Texas is money, but Sen. Mike Jackson, chairman of the committee, seemed impressed with the West Texas presentation.

"It's gonna be a big battle over the money," he said, "but (West Texas is) way out in front."

Money for increased security
Texas has received \$36.7 million

in federal funds to upgrade security at 15 airports across the state, the Governor's Office announced recently.

The biggest chunk of the money will go to Dallas' Love Field, which will receive \$7.6 million for terminal improvement with another \$537,279 for runway rehabilitation.

"As a state with numerous ports of entry, we must take every precaution to keep citizens safe and to keep Texans traveling on business and pleasure," Gov. Rick Perry said in announcing the Federal Aviation Administration grants.

Health Alert Network established

With the anniversary of the Sept. 11, terrorist attacks fast approaching, the state earlier this month activated the Health Alert Network, a secure Internet connection enabling government agencies and Texas' health-care authorities to react rapidly to any situation involving the release of a biological agent.

The Governor's office says 64 local health departments already are connected with 80 more expected to be online by Oct. 1.

Partially funded with money from the federal Centers for Disease Control and Prevention, the network was set up by the Texas Department of Health and the Texas Association of Local Health Officials.

More high-lites

The Texas Parks and Wildlife Department has added 11 new pieces of land in Floyd County for pheasant hunting this Dec. One catch: Hunters must have paid their \$40 public hunting permit. The bad news is that a couple of good Central Texas dove hunting spots leased by the department in recent years for public hunting were not available this year due to changes of ownership or "conversion to other land use not attractive to doves"...

A sobering statistic from the Texas Education Agency: Of 1.8 million Texas schoolchildren who enrolled in grades 7-12 last year 1% dropped out. That's 17,563 children likely not to have a high school diploma. The drop out rate, though not good, at least represented an improvement from the year before, when the rate was 1.3%...

Head 'em up, move 'em out: The Texas Historical Commission has just released a new brochure on the Chisholm Trail, the 19th century cattle corridor credited with resurrecting Texas' post-Civil War economy. A combination map and history lesson, the brochure is designed for travelers interested in the state's colorful past. Seventh in the Texas Heritage Trails Program series, the brochure can be ordered from the commission's web site, www.thc.state.tx.us.

Let's Look Back...

24 & 48 YEARS AGO

Aug. 3, 1978

Nelson J. Schneider of Garwood has been appointed to the three-man Colorado County Farmers Home Administration Committee...

Ervin (Shorty) Rucka announced the opening of his new business Shorty's Welding Service...

James Parke Christenberry is the new Rice Association Manager at Garwood of the American Rice Grower's Cooperative Association, succeeding W.R. (Butch) Martin...

John A. Chisholm Jr. of Little Rock, Ark., has been appointed as the new administrator for the Eagle Lake Community Hospital...

Mr. & Mrs. Rueben A. McDonald of Cedar Creek announced the engagement of their daughter, Carolyn Renee, to 1st Lt. Willie Fitzgerald Jr., son of Mr. & Mrs. Willie Fitzgerald of Columbus. The couple is planning a Sept. 23 wedding...

Funeral services were held July 31 for Antonio Cordova, a long-time resident of this community. He passed away July 29 in the Heritage House in Eagle Lake...

Tommy Balusek, son of Mr. & Mrs. Eddie Balusek of Garwood, added another championship to his long list of honors on the Texas Youth Rodeo Association Circuit...

Benny Miller was installed as the Grand Knight of the local Knights of Columbus Council. He succeeded Monroe Briscoe in that position...

Mr. & Mrs. Larry H. Rodgers welcomed their first child, a son, on July 29. He was born at Gulf Coast Medical Center in Wharton and has been named Justin Hamilton...

Vivian & Deane Fletcher, former residents here when Mr. Fletcher was superintendent of the Eagle Lake schools, were visitors in the community last Wednesday and Thursday, renewing acquaintances with friends in the area. They were enroute to their bay home in Port O'Connor after a visit with the family of their daughter, Darlene, and family in Victoria...

Congratulations to Sandy Jones of the Bernardo area for her selection as Miss Frolic at the Sealy Firemen's Frolic held recently...

Mrs. Dorothy Breithaupt, Mrs. Shirley Seatholm and daughter Karl, and Mrs. Connie Gertson of Eagle Lake and Mrs. Mary Taylor of Weimar visited July 22nd through 25th with Mr. & Mrs. Jerry Henske and children, Kevin and Tanya, in Mission. While there they helped Tanya celebrate her first birthday at a party on July 24th.

Aug. 5, 1954

\$6.62 per barrel was the top bid for first rice offered for sale, Century Patna raised by Ralph Thomas, River Brand Mill was the buyer. Bid was \$2.00 under loan value...

Osmond's No. 1 Frnk-Unit well north of Garwood is a gas distillate completion...

Cecil Peschels of Bellville purchase Lakeview Laundry and Cleaners...

Colorado Valley Little League All-Stars win area tourney in Wharton. Garber of El Campo strikes out 15 in winning title over La Grange...

183 new homes built here since 1946 reports Lloyd Spalinger, president of the Chamber of Commerce...

Eagle Lake area deluged by five inches of rain...

Mill-Bauer Funeral Home gets air-conditioning...

Pvt. Lee Roy Lundquist of Garwood is to attend Cadre Artillery Course. He was named an honor student at Fort Bliss school...

Lion R.L. Cook was awarded the Lion's Master Key for his accomplishments...

New babies born in the city are recognized by merchants plan...

Mrs. Alfred Zahradnick was honored at surprise birthday party...

Pranksters set cars oddes by Hans German, Dallas Hodges and Maurice Goodsons afire at a social at Fayetteville...

A son was born to the Eugene Guyons...

Pfc. Louis W. Stiles Jr. is in basic training at Fort Bliss...

The Edward Causeys are the parents of a son...

Betty Kay Meitzen arrived in England for extended trip...

Judith Meitzen was feted on her third birthday...

Birthday parties also honored Marilyn Meitzen, on her seventh, and Diane Clipson, on her sixth...

Marine Cpl. James Hearn was in Pearl Harbor Ceremony...

Eagle Lake Junior Leaguers opened bid for District 8 title...

O.N. Campbell called for opening of band practice at ELHS.

Water Conservation Districts

By Benard Mitchell, Colorado County Extension Agent, Agri/RR

The purpose of water districts is to preserve, protect and manage the aquifer, not just quantity but also the quality of water that is available. Enabling legislation was provided in 1929 and the first water conservation district (WCD) was formed in 1951 on the High Plains.

Today, over two-thirds of the state has WCDs that have been established or proposed. All water below the soil surface belongs to the state of Texas.

Texas is the only state having the "right to capture". Other states are regulated by Natural Resource Commissions. In Texas we can pump water to the surface and use it for do-

(See Water, Page 3)

To The Editor & You

Szymanskis say thanks

We appreciate the Texas flag and beautiful stand given in memory of Mary Lou Szymanski and Lucille Perry by Larry and Lana Dulany. The Dulany's thoughtfulness will always be remembered by our family. Butch Szymanski and Family

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How Work Affects Social Security Benefits

Dear Savvy Senior,
I am looking to retire in a few months and begin receiving my Social Security retirement benefits. I want to find out how much I can work and earn without reducing my benefits. I want to supplement my retirement, not Uncle Sam's!!! Can you help me?

Thank you for your help. I am looking to retire in a few months and begin receiving my Social Security retirement benefits. I want to find out how much I can work and earn without reducing my benefits. I want to supplement my retirement, not Uncle Sam's!!! Can you help me?

Dear Social,

Supplementing Uncle Sam's retirement is a strong possibility depending on your age and the income you earn!!! Here's the Savvy Social Security Scoop on how work affects your benefits.

As of Jan. 1, 2000, Social Security changed the way to determine how your benefits are affected when you work while receiving retirement or survivor's benefits. When you're working, your benefit amount will now be reduced only until you reach your full retirement age (currently age 65), not up to age 70 as the previous law required.

Savvy Note: A different set of rules apply to people receiving Social Security disability benefits or Supplemental Security Income (SSI) payments. Also, a different set of rules applies to most work performed outside the U.S.

Here's the savvy Social Security formula to determine how much your benefit must be reduced:

•If you're under full retirement age when you begin receiving your Social Security benefits, \$1 in benefits will be deducted for each \$2 you earn above the annual limit. For 2002, that limit is \$11,280.

•In the year you reach full retirement age (currently age 65), \$1 in benefits will be deducted for each \$3 you earn above a different limit, but only for the months before the month you reach the full retirement age. For 2002, this limit is \$30,000. Starting with the month you reach full retirement age, you can receive your full benefits with no limit on your earnings.

Sound complicated??? IT IS!!! Here are some savvy examples of how the rules would affect you:

•Let's say you begin receiving Social Security benefits at age 62 in Jan., and you're entitled to \$600 a

month (\$7,200 for the year). During the year, you work and earn \$20,000 (\$8,720 over the \$11,280 limit). Of that, \$4,360 would be withheld of your Social Security benefits (\$1 for every \$2 you earn over the limit), but you would still receive \$2,840 in benefits.

•Or, let's say you were age 64 at the beginning of the year, but reached full retirement age (currently 65) in Aug. 2002. You earned \$33,000 in the seven months from Jan. through July. During this period, the amount of benefits withheld would be \$1,000 (\$1 for every \$3 you earned above the \$30,000 limit). You would still receive \$3,200 of your Social Security benefits.

Savvy Note: Starting (this month) Aug., (when you reach 65), you would begin receiving your full benefits, no matter how much you earn.

What Income Counts... And When Does Social Security Count It?

If you work for someone else, only your wages count toward Social Security's earnings limits. If you're self-employed, only your net earnings from self-employment are counted. In either case, non-work income such as other government benefits, investment earnings, interest, pensions, annuities and capital gains is not counted.

Savvy Note: There is a "special rule" for the first year you retire... Sometimes, people who retire in mid-year have already earned more than the yearly earnings limit before they retire. That's why there's a special rule that applies to earnings for one year, usually the first year of retirement. Under this rule, you can receive a full Social Security check for any whole month you are retired, regardless of your yearly earnings.

Reporting Changes In Your Earnings:

Social Security calculated your benefit payments based on the earnings estimate you gave when you applied for Social Security or your most recent estimate of earnings. If at any time during the year, you see that your earnings will be different from what you had estimated, you should call

(See Savvy, Page 4)

J. JULIAN MOORE

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