



THE EAGLE LAKE HEADLIGHT

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To THE EDITOR & YOU

'Deputy Santa' says thanks

Dear Participants of and Contributors to the Deputy Santa Program:

This letter goes out to you in great appreciation for your help in the 2003 Deputy Santa Program which took place Dec. 17-18.

With your generous contributions and support, we were able to provide over 750 wrapped gifts this year to those children throughout the Colorado County area who might have otherwise had a less fortunate Christmas.

The Deputy Santa Program requires a lot of hard work, but is well worth seeing the expressed joy that the children portray when receiving a gift from

Deputy Santa.

A drop box was placed, with permission, at Wal-Mart in Columbus for convenience of the citizens who wanted to contribute.

On Dec. 13, Deputy Santa Wrap Day was underway with approximately 20 volunteers, devoting their time and effort to wrapping each gift individually with care and love.

Numerous hours and hard work were given by each of the workers and a heart-felt thank you goes out to each of them.

I want to extend a great thanks to those citizens and businesses in the

community who helped in contributing to the Deputy Santa Program.

It surely would not have been a great success without all the great generosity and thoughtfulness that was shown this Christmas season.

With your help, we have enlightened hundreds of youngster's hearts and homes this holiday season.

Again, thanks for your help in making this year's Deputy Santa Program a huge success.

Wishing you a Merry Christmas and a Happy New Year.

Sheriff R.H. Wied and Staff

Commission paves way for toll roads

Looking down the road toward Texas' transportation future, there's a toll booth not too many figurative mile markers ahead. Or maybe a toll tag on your vehicle's windshield, right there above your registration and inspection stickers.

The three-member Transportation Commission voted unanimously last Thursday to institute a new policy that will lead to a new way of building highways faster than currently possible through the use of gasoline tax revenue.

The policy the commission approved requires the Department of Transportation to study every controlled-access highway project - either in the planning or construction phase - to see if it could be converted into a tollway.

"We are just developing guidelines on the best way to collectively figure out how to solve the [transportation] problem and evaluate which roadways should be considered [for tolls]," Commissioner Ric Williamson said before the vote.

Commissioner Robert L. Nichols noted that the gasoline tax, which has paid for Texas highways since the 1920s, is "inefficient." On the other



State Capitol Highlights

By Mike Cox
Texas Press Association

hand, he said, "Tolling ... allows us to build roads years, if not decades, faster."

John W. Johnson, commission chair, stressed that public input would be sought long before any toll booths go up. And converting segments of highways will take a vote by county commissioners.

But the fundamental change seems to be coming — there are no "free" roads.

Speaking of transportation...

Gov. Rick Perry appointed two new members to the Transportation Commission on Dec. 15: Hope Andrade of San Antonio and Ted Houghton Jr. of El Paso.

Once the commissioners are sworn in by the secretary of state, the policymaking body will be up to its new five-member strength. The Legislature in-

creased the size of the panel last spring.

Andrade is vice president of OptimaCare Inc. and has prior experience as a member of the Texas Turnpike Commission (since folded into the Transportation Department.) Houghton is an El Paso insurance executive.

Something for the teachers...

One measure that got little or no attention during the 78th Legislature was House Bill 1844. But if you teach school, or go to a public school in Texas, the bill has resonance.

Essentially, the new law allows the Texas Education Agency to grant eligible schools up to \$200 per teacher so they can be reimbursed for any classroom supplies they buy with their own money.

School districts must match the money with local funds.

Teachers may use the money at their discretion, providing it benefits their students.

Easier than the shots...

Flu vaccine is a lot harder to get these days than an attack from the viruses the shots protect against, but there is another way to protect yourself - wash your hands.

Texas Commissioner of Health Eduardo Sanchez recently recommended a two-step flu control program: Cover your mouth when coughing or sneezing and wash your hands frequently.

Simplistic as that sounds, that's how the flu spreads, Sanchez said.

Bad December for the Grinch...

"Last year, the Grinch stole Christmas," Comptroller Carole Keeton Strayhorn said recently. "We were seeing declining sales tax revenue at both the state and the local level, and tough economic times were also taking a toll on other revenue sources."

But this year, she said, the Grinch isn't going to get Christmas. Sales tax revenue is up compared to last year.

In fact, Strayhorn said, sales tax revenue is up for the sixth month in a row compared to last year. The last time that happened was in 2001, prior to the terrorist attacks of Sept. 11 that year.

Let's Look Back...

24 & 48 YEARS AGO

Dec. 16, 1979

Vincent Harris, Bishop of the Austin Diocese, was the guest of honor of a covered dish supper at the Community Center...

Helping to perfect their skills in welding and carpentry by building a duck blind were Ag students Donny Dierschke, Thomas Kallina and Russell Wick...

Mr. & Mrs. Leslie Wilkerson are the pleased parents of a daughter born, Nov. 29 in Wharton. Erica Nicole weighed eight pounds, four ounces...

Winners named in the pool tourney held at Sarah's Lounge were Alvin Sosa, first; Gabriel Corona, second; Richard Lujan, third; and Julian Ca-

stillo, fourth...

Funeral services were held for Norman L. (Dutch) Clark on Nov. 26...

Named County 4-H Gold Star Girl was Cynthia Evans...

Students named to the Jr. High Honor Band were Richard Klekar, Billy Cook, Temple Thomas, Sharri Webb, Patrick Isenhower, Janet Anderson, Renae Dierschke, Brandon Cope, John Adkins, Michael Mota, Ann Scholton, Shawn Spanihel and Jeff Argo...

Mr. & Mrs. Sidney Struss announced the arrival of a daughter, born Nov. 17. Named Stephanie Elise, she was welcomed home by her sister, (See 24 & 48, Page 5)

*Filled With
Best Wishes*



*Time's running out
to let you know how
much we've enjoyed
every minute of
serving you this
past year. We look
forward to seeing
you again soon.
Happy New Year!*

Furniture Shoppe

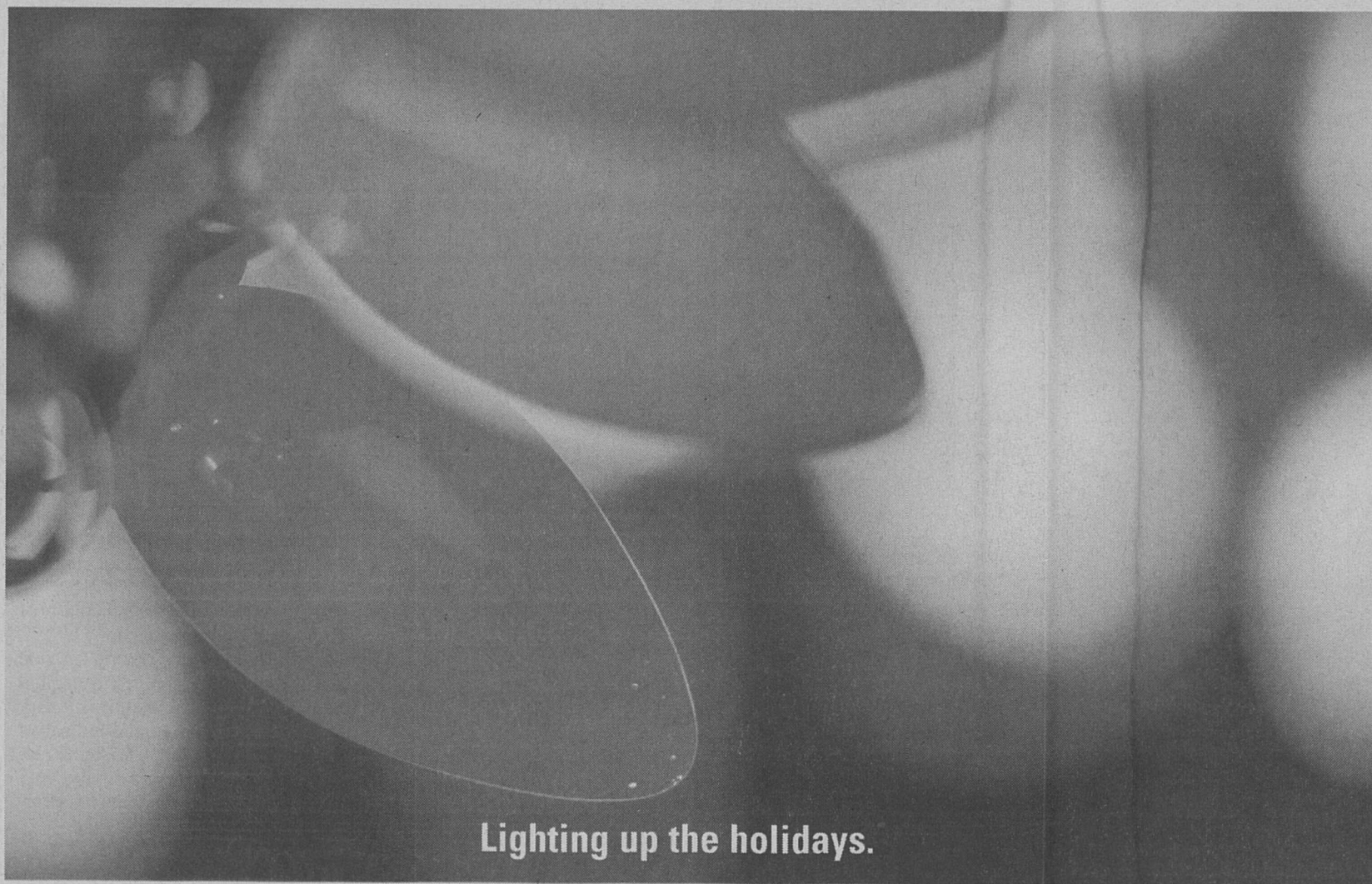
Melvin & Joyce Stancik
Darrell Stancik, Louis Matthews, Lupe Cano



**HAPPY 5TH
BIRTHDAY
Jadelynn**

Dec. 27
Love, The Almanza & Shorter Families

5:35 p.m. Thursday



Lighting up the holidays.

As you begin using decorative lighting in and around your home this holiday season, AEP reminds you to keep safety in mind. Check light strings for frayed cords, and use only UL-approved lights and extension cords. Remember not to overload circuits, and remind children not to touch lights or outlets. And on behalf of all of us here at AEP, please enjoy a safe, bright holiday season with your family and friends. **AEP is there, always working for you.**



For more information about
electrical safety, visit aep.com

HAPPY NEW YEAR!

With Our Gratitude At The New Year

This past year has been a challenging one, it is true. But we owe our success to each one of you. Without your support we wouldn't be here. So thanks for your visits throughout the year.

Best Wishes For A Happy and Healthy 2004 From All Of Us To All Of You.

YOUR COLORADO COUNTY OFFICIALS...

Lawrence Berger Constable, Pct. 1	Mary Jane Poenitzsch Tax Assessor-Collector
Larry Dulany Justice of the Peace, Pct. 4	Darrell Stancik Constable, Pct. 4
Darrell Gertson Commissioner, Pct. 4	Harvey Vornsand District Clerk
Darlene Hayek Colorado County Clerk	Doug Wessels Commissioner, Pct. 1
Diane Matus County Treasurer	R.H. "Curly" Wied Colorado County Sheriff
Ivan Menke Constable, Pct. 3	

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