

An Agenda for the Future

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CAPITAL COMMENT



U.S. SENATOR
KAY BAILEY HUTCHINSON

There are elections in which everyone knows that "the people have spoken" but they don't always know exactly what the people have said. This November's election was different. Not only did the people speak, they spoke clearly. They supported Presi-

dent George W. Bush and want Congress to do the people's work without political obstruction.

We have important tasks ahead of us. First, we have the War on Terror. President Bush believes this war is not a localized matter confined to a single

country. It is a worldwide struggle. We are battling fanatics who kidnap and behead civilians and shoot fleeing children in the back. There can be no dialogue with such people, and the American people understand this. The War on Terror not only involves providing our troops with everything they need, it also involves making needed reforms to our security agencies to help us defend our homeland.

The voters in this election also delivered a verdict on domestic policies. They decisively rejected obstructionism because they desire Republicans and Democrats to work together.

For instance, the Senate should take action on the President's judicial nominees. For years, qualified candidates have been denied a vote for confirmation despite having the support of a bipartisan majority in the Senate. I will work with my colleagues to ensure these nominees get a vote.

The American people want Congress to make family tax relief permanent. Texans also want us to make the state sales tax deduction permanent. Eliminated 18 years ago, I and my colleagues were able to restore it for 2004 and 2005 and save the average Texas family of four more than \$928 in federal taxes each year.

Tax simplification is also on the agenda. One proposal is the Flat Tax to replace our present multi-tiered system with a single rate. Another option is to adopt a National Sales Tax in place of income and payroll taxes.

Our country also hungers for leadership to ensure the long-term survival of our Social Security system. With 70 million baby boomers in this country on the verge of retirement, we need to take action to shore up the system. President Bush's proposal guarantees those who have already retired, or are close to retirement, will receive the benefits they have been promised. His plan will also let Americans voluntarily choose to deposit part of their Social Security payments in private accounts which have historically yielded higher returns than payments into the Social Security program.

In this uncertain world, Americans want to see our nation move to reduce our dependence on foreign energy by encouraging domestic exploration and production. This will spur the growth of our economy and create jobs. Efforts to move in this direction were blocked in the past, but now we have a chance to move forward.

Another issue of special interest to me is achieving greater fairness in the federal funding of our highway systems. Highway construction is largely funded by the federal fuel taxes we all pay when we fill up our cars and trucks. Unfortunately, federal highway funding has traditionally provided far greater funds to states in the Northeast than in the Southwest, making states like Texas "donor" states because we get back less in highway funds than we send to Washington. Over the past 47 years, Texas drivers have contributed \$5 billion to other states so they can build their highway networks. This is not fair, and makes less sense than ever, because our state has more highway miles than any other state.

When I first came to Washington, Texans only received 76 cents out of every dollar paid on fuel taxes. By increasing that level to 90.5 cents, we gained an additional \$1.23 billion for Texas. If we are successful in pushing the share up to 95 cents, Texas will gain over \$160 million per year additional highway funding.

While Congress and the President still have a great deal of work to do, I am confident we will make progress.

is appropriately named "The Sweetest Story Ever Told".

This tree depicts all the delights of your childhood dreams, remember the tales of Hansel and Gretel, The Sugar Plum Fairy, The Gingerbread Boy? The memories will come flooding back as you gaze upon this beautiful tree which also tells the sweetest story ever told, the birth of baby Jesus.

One more in LaGrange, displayed at Cozy Video, "Starburst" a traditional red and green tree. This traditional tree is a study of elegance. The twinkling mini-lights are one with the 6-1/2 foot tree covered with shimmering red, green and gold ornaments. Its beauty is further defined by the richness of velvet touched ribbon garland weaving its way among the silver starbursts.

Now for the details on how you can be a winner and exactly what the project is. These three communities are working together to raise money for Youth and Family Services whose contributions to our communities are legendary. Some of the services available are: to provide timely assistance to youth and families in order to reduce at-risk situations and stabilize the family, after school programs, OSAR services, Drug and Alcohol Prevention Programs and others. In Eagle Lake tickets may be purchased at Creative Expressions, Golden Goose, Tee-Up Pro Shop, Austin's BBQ and Catering or the First National Bank. The tickets are \$2 a piece or six for \$10. The winners will be drawn and notified on December 4, 2004. For more information call 979-234-5981.

City Council

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that he and his officers would be glad to help in any way necessary. The ordinance will give the violator a time limit to remove the sign and if not removed a citation would then be issued.

After many meetings and plenty of discussion on the rates as far as the renting of the Community Center goes, it will now cost you \$400 to rent the center. That goes along with a \$250 deposit plus the cost of electricity. Security will be another problem that the renter will have to take care of. The fees went into effect immediately, unless a prior agreement had already been signed.

Council then considered a request to approve a plat of the Oak Meadows Subdivision and Hunter's Ridge Subdivision. Seems that when the houses on Heritage Lane were built, the property lines were ignored. As to the houses on Hunter's Lane, everything was moved forward because of a canal belonging to LCRA that is behind the homes. The Council voted to approve the plats. (A private company recently purchased the subdivisions and this gives them the option to sell them to anyone who might be interested).

Next was to consider and act upon a change in pledge account by First National Bank (FNB). It seems the City's deposits at FNB exceed FDIC insurance amounts. The motion to trade out funds in a Dallas bank was made by Councilman Larry Contreras and seconded by Young. Motion carried.

Council then approved the appointment of Steve Henderson to the Colorado County Central Appraisal District Board. There was some discussion by Morales as to there being a chance of conflict of interest since Henderson also serves as hospital administrator. All members reached an agreement. Morales then stated he would contact Henderson to tell him of his appointment to the CCCAD Board and to see if he would accept the position.

The motion to appoint a new alderman for the vacant seat on Council died for lack of a motion. A few weeks ago a council meeting couldn't be held because there was no quorum. If the council seat would be filled a meeting could have been held. Those members of council in attendance stated there should be better communication to avoid another event like that one.

Council then considered and acted upon a holiday schedule and council meeting schedule for the remainder of the year. Council voted to have the day after Thanksgiving off and to hold the council meeting on Nov. 23. The Dec. 28 meeting will be cancelled.

The City will observe Christmas and New Year's on Friday and be

closed since these holidays fall on Saturday.

Council also voted on a 10% one month salary bonus for the city employees. This bonus was already included in the yearly budget.

For those of you who arrived late the City Council meetings will now start at 7 p.m. on the second and fourth Tuesdays of each month during daylight savings time. When the time changes again and it gets darker later the start time will go back to 7:30.

Council then heard the following administrative reports including:

The landfill would remain open until 2005.

They also heard about the road construction being planned. Morales stated that he would like an update on all the roads being done before the process begins.

Councilman Dave Curry bought up the new curbs on Partridge Lane and how people in town were asking him why the street construction wasn't more of a priority. He was told that the street construction would begin soon.

Also the Police Department construction is being completed on schedule and an open house will be held soon.

Contreras stated that with the increase of the rental of the Community Center he would like to see the renovations on it start as well. He was told that bids would have to be taken on this before the project could get underway.

Council then discussed a time limit on public comments. Council members stated it had no real time limit but if the person got to long-winded or

wordy he/she may be asked to come back to the next council meeting by being put on the agenda. All in all the council has the option to stop comments.

Young stated that prior to him being at the council meeting he was at a NIPIT meeting and all went well.

Council then was asked if there was an ordinance prohibiting a sexually oriented business from coming into town. No one new of one, but discussion of having one being put into effect would be on the next agenda.

Rucka announced that the new fire truck would be in Nov. 22.

Morales then finished up the meeting by reading a letter of commendation from the Houston Police Department to the Eagle Lake Police Department (ELPD) and Hallettsville Police Department (HPD). Seems that with the help from the ELPD and HPD the Houston PD was able to solve a very important case.

Hats off to ELPD and HPD! The meeting then adjourned.

This was the first council meeting I have ever attended, since they are held on Tuesday nights. I hope everyone appreciates the effort made since Tuesdays are our busiest time. I really enjoyed it though. If I got any of the information down wrong, please forgive me. I did have City Secretary Sylvia Rucka look over it though and she said all was fine as far as she could see. If I got anything wrong please remember it was late and I had a lot of family stuff going on.

I also realized that if you do the story as soon as you take the notes they are easier to read! I hope you enjoyed the report.

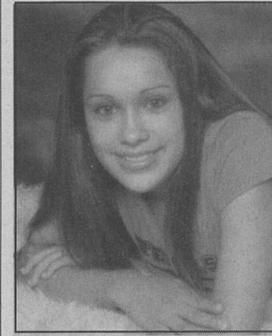
Blinn College

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college district was created in Washington County by election, and Blinn became the first county-supported junior college in Texas.

A request to assist in meeting the educational needs of Brazos County was answered by Blinn in 1970 when it opened its first campus in Bryan. A continued growth in enrollment led to development of the College Station campus in 1982 and the Blinn College Occupational Education Center in Bryan in 1991. A new unified campus in Bryan opened in January 1997. A campus in Schulenburg in Fayette County was opened in August 1997.

With an enrollment of more than 14,000 students, Blinn is the 11th largest of the state's 50 community college districts. It leads the state in the percentage of academic students who transfer to four-year universities and in the percentage who complete their four-year bachelor's degree. In the area of technical training it has a better than 95 percent pass rate on career-focused licensing and board exams.



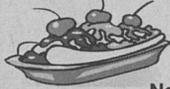
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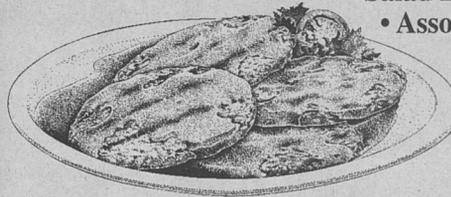
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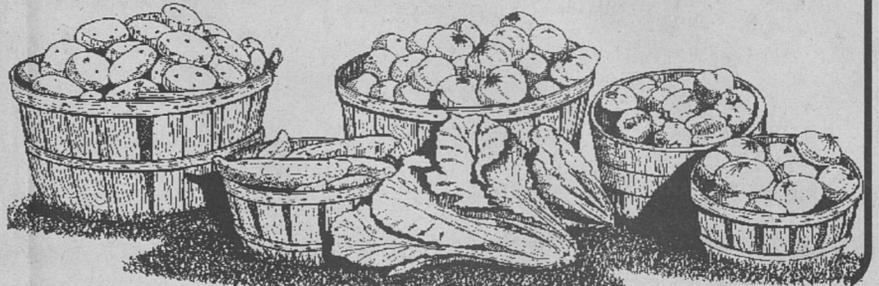
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