

USDA To Hold Rural Development Office Day April 6

Representatives of USDA Rural Development will be holding an Office Day for residents of Colorado County on Thursday, April 6, to provide information, assist with applications, and answer questions regarding the Housing, Community, and Business & Cooperative Programs offered by the agency. The event will be held at the USDA Farm Service Agency Center, 2209 Walnut Street (Hwy. 90 West), in Columbus, from 9:30 a.m. until 12:30 p.m.

Housing Programs that are offered by USDA Rural AZGuaranteed Housing Loan Program, Direct Housing

Loan Program, Home Repair and Rehabilitation Grant Program, and the Self-Help Housing and Technical Assistance Program. Assistance is available to low and moderate income families that live in rural areas.

USDA Rural Development's Community Programs are designed to enhance the growth and economic opportunities of rural areas by providing the means for construction, expansion, or enhancement of community facilities, telecommunication and distance education programs, and water and waste disposal systems. Since 2001, USDA Rural Development's Community Programs have awarded \$868 million for these purposes, and touched the lives of more than 840,000 rural residents in the process.

Entrepreneurship plays a vital role in the economic stability of rural Texas. With USDA Rural Development's Business and Cooperative Programs,

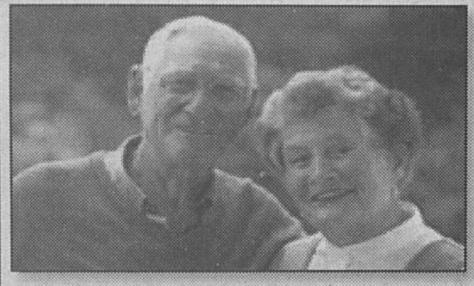
rural businesses can gain access funds that normally would not be available to them. With the help of the Business and Industry Guaranteed Loan Program, Rural Business Enterprise Grant Program, Rural Business Opportunity Grant Program, and the Cooperative Development Grant and Technical Assistance Program, businesses and cooperatives in rural areas can increase the economic opportunities in rural areas throughout Texas.

USDA Rural Development strives to ensure that rural citizens can participate fully in the global economy by providing technical assistance, funding, and other programs that help rural Americans build strong economies to improve their quality of life. For further information, please contact the Bastrop Local Office at 512-321-3428, Ext. 4, or visit us on the web at <http://www.rurdev.usda.gov/tx/>.

Eagle Lake Lions Club
Bar-B-Q Chicken Dinner
\$6 per plate

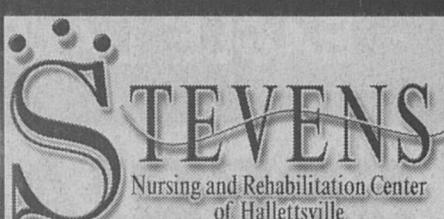
Sunday, April 2, 2006
Serving from 11:30 a.m. to 1:00 p.m.
at the Eagle Lake
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Cattle On Feed Up Twelve Percent In State

Cattle and calves on feed for slaughter market in Texas feedlots with capacity of 1,000 head or more totaled 3.01 million head on March 1, up 12 percent from a year ago.

According to the monthly report released by the Texas Field Office, the estimate was down one percent from the Feb. 1 level.

Producers placed 360,000 head in commercial feedlots during February, up six percent from a year ago, but down 33 percent from the January 2006 total.

Texas commercial feeders marketed 370,000 head during February, up three percent from last year but down 12 percent from last month.

On March 1, there were 2.52 million head of cattle and calves on feed in the Northern High Plains, 84 percent of

the state's total.

The number on feed across the area was up 12 percent from last year, and down slightly from the February total.

February placements in the Northern High Plains totaled 306,000 head, down 34 percent from the January total. Marketings were down 11 percent from last month to 306,000 head.

Cattle and calves on feed for slaughter market in the United States in feedlots with a capacity of 1,000 head or more totaled 12.0 million head on March 1. This inventory was eight percent above March 1, 2005.

Placements in feedlots during February totaled 1.60 million head, five percent above February 2005.

February placements of cattle and calves weighing less than 600 pounds totaled 355,000 head; 600-699 pounds totaled 300,000 head; 700-799 pounds totaled 510,000 head; 800 pounds and greater totaled 433,000 head.

Marketings of fed cattle during February totaled 1.61 million head, one percent below 2005.



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Nestled among the rolling hills and picturesque country-side of Hallettsville, Texas lies Stevens Nursing and Rehabilitation; a facility with roots as deep as the majestic trees that line the streets in the quaint city of 2,345. Stevens has been the facility of choice for generations of families in Lavaca County and the surrounding areas. The facilities' reputation for old-fashioned, personalized care continues along with its emphasis on the most up-to-date technological and medical advances in long-term and rehabilitation care.

Stevens prides itself on meeting the physical and social needs of the residents, which is why community and family members are included in the overall care of the residents. In addition to nursing services, Stevens also provides:

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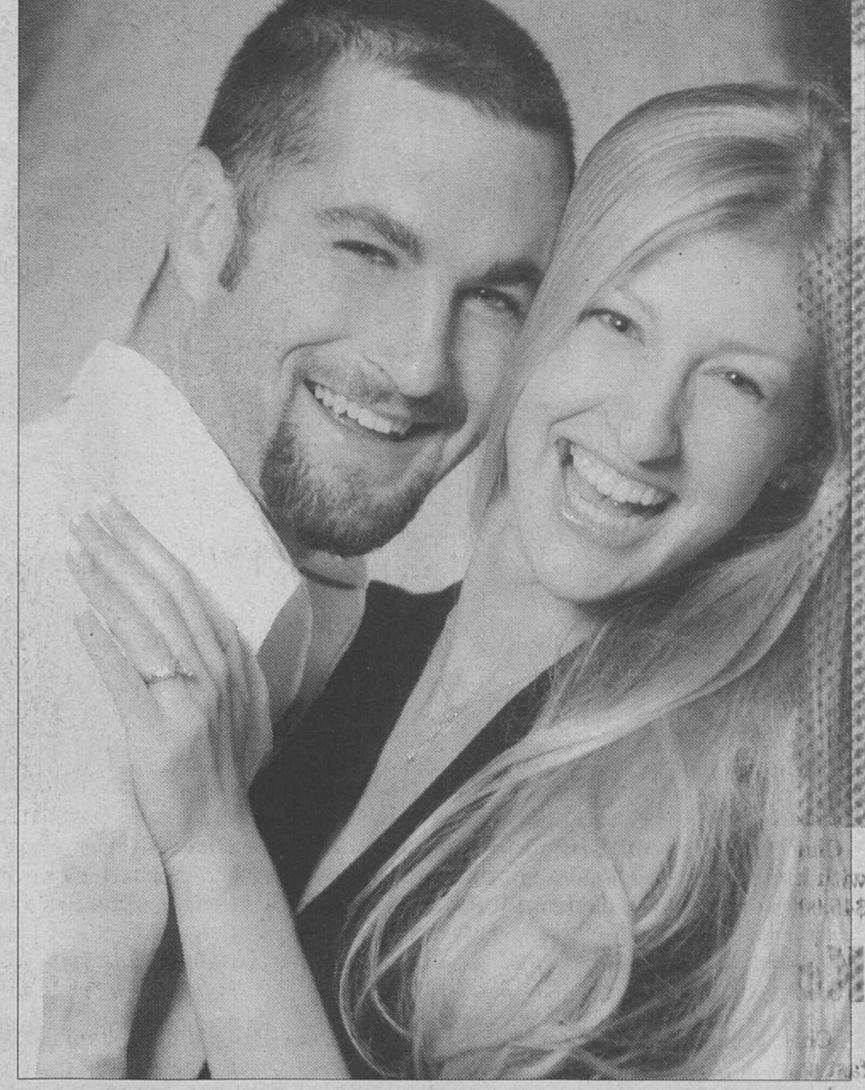


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News for Southern Colorado County, Texas — The Eagle Lake Headlight



Manning, Lehrer To Wed

Mr. and Mrs. Stephen Brainard Manning of Kingwood announce the engagement of their daughter, Laura Manning of Kingwood, to William Dudley Lehrer of Garwood, son of Mr. and Mrs. William Paul Lehrer of Garwood.

The bride-to-be is a 2000 graduate of Kingwood High School and a 2004 graduate of Texas A&M University where she was a member of Zeta Tau Alpha sorority. She is currently employed as a sales representative with Glazer's Distributing in Houston.

The future groom is a 1999 graduate of El Campo High School and will complete his undergraduate degree in agricultural engineering at Texas A&M University in May 2006.

He is a member of Phi Delta Theta social fraternity.

The couple will be married at 7 p.m., May 27, 2006 at St. Vincent de Paul Catholic Church in Houston.

\$8.9 Million In Grants Available For Broadband

Bryan Daniel, USDA Rural Development State Director, announced that \$8.9 million in broadband grant funds are available for connecting essential community facilities to high-speed telecommunications in rural towns and communities where broadband service does not exist.

"The expansion of these technologies will better equip our rural communities to enhance opportunities for overall economic development," said Daniel. "The funds from this program will provide community-oriented broadband transmission service that delivers enhanced educational, health care and public safety services for rural Texas communities."

More than \$39 million in four years have been invested by USDA Rural Development through the Community Connect Broadband Grant Program.

To date, 109 communities have participated in the program to connect essential services of police and fire protection, local government, hospitals, libraries and schools to broadband service.

For their part of the project, the communities will make at least 10 computers available to the public with set hours and instructions available for use on the internet.

Broadband transmission service is vital to the economic development, education, health and safety of rural

Americans.

The purpose of the Community Broadband Connect Grant Program is to provide grant funds to eligible applicants that will provide currently unserved areas with broadband transmission services.

Incorporated organizations, federally recognized Indian tribes, state, or local governments, profit and non-profit corporations are eligible to apply. Grant funds may be used for the construction, improvement, or the expansion of a community center that furnishes free access to broadband Internet service.

The minimum award per grant is \$50,000, and there is no maximum.

Applications must be completed and submitted no later than May 15, 2006 to U.S. Department of Agriculture, 1400 Independence Avenue, SW, Room 2844, Stop 1559, Washington, DC, 20250-1599. For more information on the Community Connect Broadband Grant Program, please contact Paco Valentin, Community Programs Director, 254-742-9789, or visit the website at <http://www.rurdev.usda.gov/rus/telecom/comconnect.htm>.

USDA Rural Development's mission is to deliver programs that will increase economic opportunity and improve the quality of life of rural residents. As a venture capital entity, USDA Rural Development has invested over \$50 billion since the beginning of the Bush Administration to provide equity and technical assistance to finance and foster growth in homeownership, business development, and community and technology infrastructure.

As a result, over 800,000 jobs have been created or saved through these investments. Further information on rural programs is available at a local USDA Rural Development office or by visiting the website at <http://www.rurdev.usda.gov>.

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