

MEMBER  
2006

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THE EAGLE LAKE HEADLIGHT

(USPS 163-760)

P.O. Box 67 - 220 East Main

CITY OF EAGLE LAKE, TEXAS 77434-0067

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Published Weekly-Every Thursday

Produced and  
Distributed By:

Lynda Beal • James Sweet

Carol Cardenas • Doug Beal

Wendi Myers

Advertising and News Deadline: 5 P.M. Monday

Subscription Rates

Colorado County (including Lissie & Egypt) ..... \$15.50

Fayette, Lavaca, Wharton & Austin Counties ..... \$17.00

Other Texas Residents ..... \$18.50

Outside of Texas; Inside U.S. .... \$20.00

Foreign Rates Available By Request

Single Copy Price : 50¢

Second class postage paid  
at Eagle Lake, Texas

Address Corrections

should be sent to P.O. Box 67

Eagle Lake, Texas 77434-0067

# John Sharp's Tax Reform Plan Ready For Legislature

AUSTIN — John Sharp has delivered, and soon it will be the Texas Legislature's turn.

On March 29, Gov. Rick Perry praised the bipartisan tax reform plan shepherded by Sharp, the former state comptroller who chaired the 24-member Texas Tax Reform Commission

appointed by Perry last fall.

The commission held a series of public hearings around the state beginning in January, receiving input from private citizens, businesses and local governmental bodies.

Perry has summoned the Legislature to Austin to convene April 17.

Tax reform will be at the top of the agenda.

Sharp's plan boasts a \$6 billion property tax cut, and spreads the pain by initiating a business tax of 1 percent on gross receipts. If adopted by the Legislature as recommended, no business, not even doctors and lawyers, will escape this new form of taxation. And gone will be the current business franchise tax.

Also under the plan, more tax liability will be heaped on smokers. The tax on a pack of cigarettes will increase to \$1.41 from the present rate of 41 cents.

Perry said the plan would make homeownership possible for more Texans by lowering property taxes, generate more revenue for public education, and stimulate job growth.

Already, business groups are signaling support for the Sharp plan. Among them are the newly formed Texas Manufacturers Association and the Texas Builders Association.

The Texas Supreme Court has placed a June 1 deadline on the Legislature to act on tax reform.

**Students march on Capitol**  
Following the example of the half-

million people who gathered in downtown Los Angeles a few days earlier to protest pending federal immigration legislation, hundreds of Austin-area high school students walked out of classes March 30 and made their way to the state Capitol to stage a peaceful demonstration.

Students marched up to 15 miles to speak in support of amnesty for undocumented immigrants, and of the ways society benefits from their families' presence in Texas.

Sen. Gonzalo Barrientos, D-Austin, met students on the Capitol grounds to tell them he appreciated the reasoning behind their act of civil disobedience. He assured them they had been heard and then asked them to return to school.

**Abramoff to serve prison term**  
A federal court in Miami sentenced Washington, D.C., lobbyist Jack Abramoff to nearly six years in prison for fraud and conspiracy in the purchase of a Florida-based gambling cruise ship line.

Abramoff's dealings with Texas lawmakers are still under investigation.

On March 31, Tony Rudy, a former

top aide of U.S. Rep. Tom DeLay, R-Sugar Land, and lobbyist with "Team Abramoff," pleaded guilty to an Abramoff-related conspiracy charge and is cooperating with federal investigators.

Meanwhile, U.S. Rep. Lloyd Doggett, D-Austin, filed the Stealth Lobbyist Disclosure Act.

Doggett said his act, which he originally filed in 2002, would close a loophole that lets lobbyists "spend millions trying to influence legislation while hiding behind empty coalitions to conceal their real clients' identities."

**Ethics agency lets 'check' stand**

On March 24 the Texas Ethics Commission ruled that a donation to a state official need only be reported as a check, and not a dollar amount.

Bill Ceverha, a former state representative and current member of the Texas Employee Retirement Commission board of directors, received a check from homebuilder Bob Perry.

State Rep. Lon Burnam, D-Fort Worth, asked to know the amount, but the Ethics Commission ruled

## TEXAS PRESS ASSOCIATION

State Capital

HIGHLIGHTS

By Ed Sterling

otherwise.

**Group submits rail-building bid**

The Texas Department of Transportation accepted a bid from Cintra Zachry to build six Central Texas toll roads for \$7.2 billion. The 600-mile project will run from the Texas-Oklahoma border to Mexico, with completion scheduled for 2010.

The consortium also is bidding on a high-speed freight railway to operate in the "Trans Texas Corridor."

Cintra is based in Madrid, Spain, and Zachry is based in San Antonio.

## Let's Look Back...

## 24 & 48 YEARS AGO

**April 1, 1982**  
Mrs. C.H. (Laurina) Matthews was honored by Alpha Delta Phi and Xi Pi Psi Sororities by being named "Lady of the Year" for 1982...

**Deputy R.H. "Curly" Wied** was pictured on the front page of the *Headlight* modeling the new uniform worn by the officers of the Colorado County Sheriff's Department...

**Mr. and Mrs. Jose Hernandez** of Eagle Lake became the proud parents of a baby boy, **Ray Alfred**, on March 23 at Eagle Lake Community Hospital...

**Kathy Tise Miska** received word from the Board of Nurse Examiners for the State of Texas in Austin

that she passed the licensing exam. She is a 1979 graduate of Rice High School...

**Becky Bengel and Elizabeth Garza** won the San Bernard Electrical Coop competition with a personal resume and represented Rice in the finals held in Bellville...

Several Rice High School students were winners in the Literary Meet held in Ganado. They were **David Adkins**, **Kitty Thomas**, **Jeffrey Psencik**, **Elva Ann Romo**, **John Lee Korenek**, **Melissa Wilcox**, **Shawn Spanihel**, **Shelia Dabney** and **Anthony Williams**...

**Mr. and Mrs. Joe Herbert McCreary** are the proud parents of a baby boy, **Christopher Lee**, born March 29 at Gulf Coast Medical Center in Wharton...

**Miss Janet Wied** of Garwood bride-elect of **Al Mahalite**, was complimented with a Tea Shower March 27 in the home of Mrs. Raymond Lee Kohleffel...

Mrs. Lena H. King, 90, longtime

resident of Eagle Lake passed away in Kingsville on March 27. Funeral services were held at Providence Baptist Church in Eagle Lake...

**Mr. and Mrs. Wendell Ward**, recently married, were entertained by the Thomas Clinic staff with a shower and picnic lunch at the home of **Dr. and Mrs. Raymond Thomas**...

**Mr. and Mrs. Jerry D. Williams** announced the arrival of a son, **Jason Derek**, born March 25.

**April 3, 1958**  
**Harold Walker Thomas** was re-elected mayor of the City of Eagle Lake for his fifth term. Citizens elected a new councilman, **Sam J. Davidson** and reelected incumbent **Leonard L. Walker** to his fourth term on the council...

**Frank Faldyn**, employee of Central Power and Light Company, is in the Laughlin Hospital from burns received Tuesday morning when he came in contact with an energized 7200 volt electric power line. He received severe burns on his shoulder

and his feet....

Funeral services for **E. E. (Bill) Davis**, 41 year old, were held Sunday from the First Baptist Church with burial in the Lakeside Cemetery...

**Mrs. Lucy Digs** of Egypt, who had been living in San Antonio with her son, passed away at his home. Funeral services were held in San Antonio Saturday...

Placing in the events of the District Spring Meet Literary events held in Missouri City from Rice High School were **Hope Moreno** who won second place in extemporaneous speaking; **Walter Jones** and **Judy Ware** won second in typing; **Noble Whitley** won second in poetry reading; in the girls' declamation, **Donna Lou Thomas** won second and in the boys' **David Jochetz** won third...

**Mr. and Mrs. Edgar Green** of Garwood announced the approaching marriage of their daughter, **Mary Catherine** to **Lawrence Allen Berger**, son of Mr. and Mrs. Henry Berger of Columbus. The wedding will be held on June 21.

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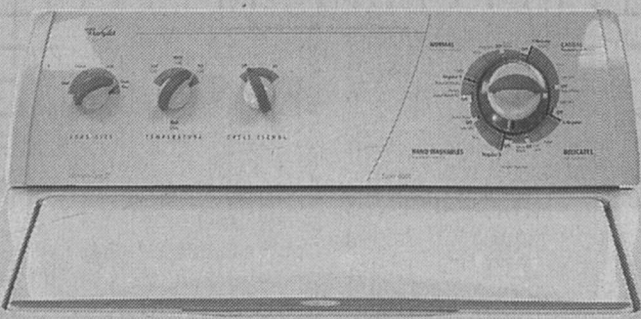
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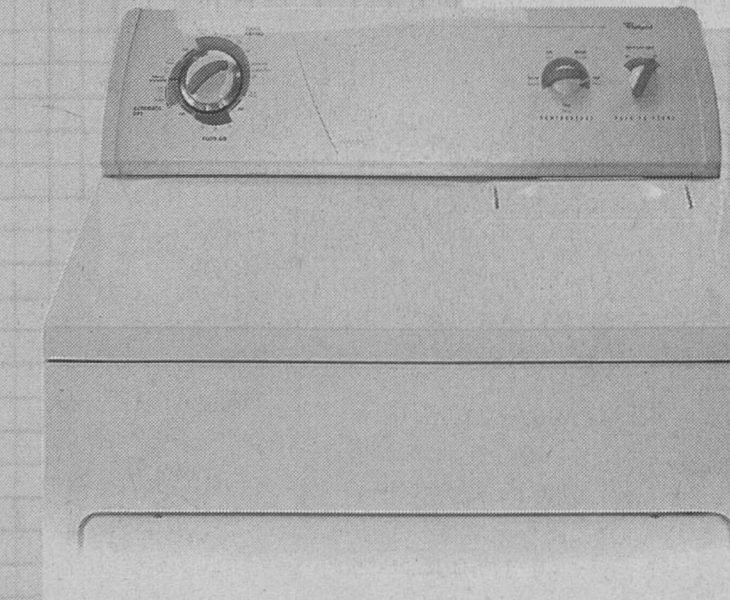
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