

Eagle Lake Headlight

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VOLUME 103 NUMBER 5

EAGLE LAKE, TEXAS

APRIL 20, 2006

Sales Tax Receipts Up 7.77 Percent

Sales tax payments to the City of Eagle Lake in April were \$14,426, an increase of 7.77 percent from last April, figures from the state comptroller show.

So far this year in Eagle Lake, sales tax payments have totaled \$63,682, a decrease of 16.14 percent over the same period last year.

Texas Comptroller Carole Keeton Strayhorn said today that the state received \$1.36 billion in sales tax revenue in March, a 13.2 percent increase compared to March 2005.

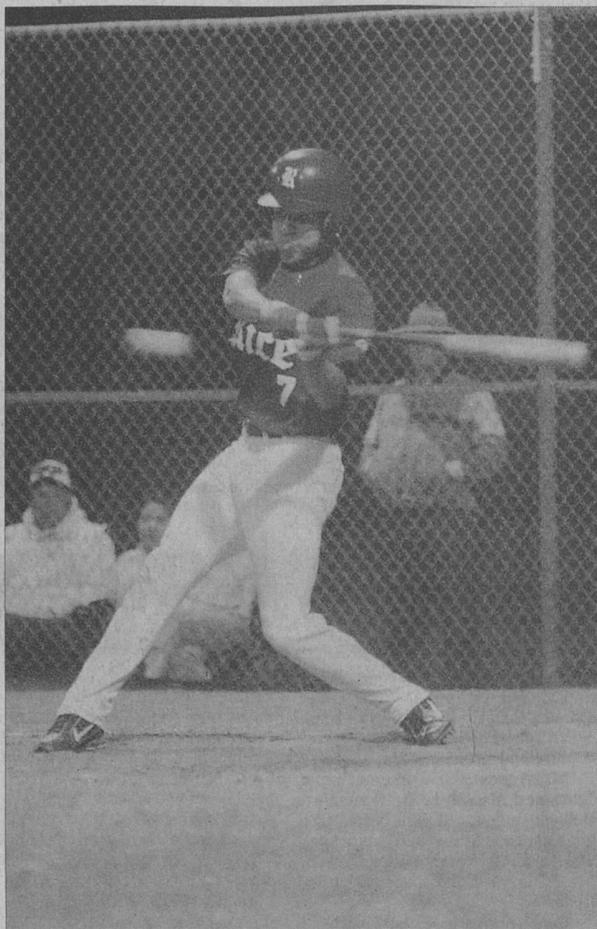
Local sales tax revenues also continue to grow. Strayhorn sent \$368.2 million in April sales tax allocations to cities, counties, transit systems and special purpose taxing districts, an 18.2 percent increase compared to April 2005. So far this calendar year, sales tax allocations to local governments are up 17 percent.

Comptroller Strayhorn sent April sales tax allocations of \$249.3 million to Texas cities, up 17.8 percent compared to April 2005. Calendar year-to-date, city sales tax allocations are running 15.5 percent higher than last year.

Texas counties received sales tax payments of \$22.3 million, up 19.2 percent compared to one year ago. Calendar year-to-date, county sales tax allocations are 18.1 percent higher than last year.

State sales tax revenue for March, and April payments made to local governments today, represent sales that occurred in February.

Continued on back page



Michael Morales takes a cut in the Raiders game against Faith Academy last Thursday. The Raiders can clinch a playoff spot with a win Friday over Navasota. (See story page 5)

CAD Appraiser Youens Gives Report Rice School Board Discusses Upcoming Bond Election

The Rice CISD Board of Trustees heard a report Monday night from Colorado County Central Appraisal Chief Billy Youens on the effects of the proposed bond to tax rates in the district.

He advised that any property under \$15,000 will continue to pay no taxes under that state mandated \$15,000 homestead exemption.

He said a homestead with a previously established over 65-tax ceiling will not increase unless improvements are made to the property.

For property receiving an agricultural valuation, he said an increase of 14 cents per acre could be expected for open-space native pasture.

For open space rice land, the increase would be about 40 cents per acre, he said.

For a home valued at \$50,000, there would be about a \$50 increase, said Youens.

A \$100,000 home would see a tax increase of around \$127 and a \$150,000 home would increase about \$200, he advised.

He said a business property valued at \$200,000 would see an increase of about \$300.

Youens said that all of these calculations are based on the current tax base, exemptions and tax rate and pertain only to school's portion of the overall tax rate.

Youens also advised that the

Appraisal District has collected a large portion of taxes for the year and expects the total percentage of collected money to be a little higher than last year.

Youens also informed the board that he would be retiring and that Billy Mitchell will be taking over his position. He said he feels confident that the appraisal district will be in good hands when he is gone.

In other board action:

-Superintendent Mike Lanier informed the board of an interest expressed by a company seeking to build a facility in the district. The company, American PureTex Water Co., has inquired about the possibility of a tax valuation limitation to build a water bottling plant. Assistant Superintendent Bill Hefner gave a brief presentation to the board about this issue. He said that the tax code allows a district to put a limit on the tax valuation of a business to encourage the company to locate in its area.

The company applying for the limitation must be a manufacturing facility, research and development, clean coal energy facility, or a renewable energy facility.

The jobs created by the plant must be skilled positions and must pay more than minimum wage type jobs.

The company must contribute to the economic development of the area and must make a minimum of

\$10 million investment in the facilities to be built.

The possible benefit to the school, according to Hefner, is that a school district is allowed to negotiate with the company to get a certain amount of the tax money savings back in exchange for agreeing to the tax value limitation.

Hefner said that he had heard of school districts getting anywhere from 15 to 50 percent of the estimated tax savings back.

Colorado County has already denied a request by PureTex for a tax abatement from the county.

Hefner advised that they would be keeping an eye on the situation, and agreed to get the district onto a list of districts with the state that would be willing to entertain offers from other companies looking for a similar tax limitation.

He and Lanier advised that this "loophole" might be closed in the future as the state looks for ways to increase revenue. Lanier said that the provision in Chapter 313 of the tax code was initiated to help spur economic development in rural areas.

The board heard a report from Clark Powers on activities of a committee of citizens that was formed to gather support for the upcoming bond election. Powers advised that they had started an informational ad campaign

Continued on back page

NEWSBRIEFS

E.H. Henry alumni to meet tonight

The E.H. Henry Alumni and Ex-students will hold a meeting Thursday, April 20 at White Cloud Baptist Church.

Gator Swim team registration underway

Gator Swim team registration will be held at Golden Goose Designs, 217 E. Main St. from 10 a.m. to noon Saturday, April 22. Registration fee is \$35 for each swimmer. Registration includes Gator fee, team t-shirt, CCAA dues, and TMF insurance for the regular season. Team swimsuit fittings will be held at registration. The cost of the team swimsuit varies with the gender/size of the swimmer and the additional gear selected for purchase. It will go up after these registration dates.

Appreciation service is April 21 and April 23

Mt. Carmel Missionary Baptist Church (MBC) will celebrate in worship, the second Appreciation Service for Pastor H.O. Williams and wife, Elaine, Friday, April 21 at 7:30 p.m. Pastor Truman Scott Sr. and Greater Rising Star MBC will bring the message. Sunday, April 23 at 3 p.m. Pastor E.G. Williams and Jerusalem MBC of Spanish Camp community will bring the message. Everyone is invited to come and share in this service.

Eagle Lake C of C schedules workdays

The Eagle Lake Chamber of Commerce has scheduled April 22 and 29 (9 a.m. to 5 p.m.); and April 23 and 30 (1 to 5 p.m.) as work days. Volunteers are needed to help complete the Chamber of Commerce Office. Your Chamber Office will soon have a permanent place to call home. Please help us realize this dream. For more information call John Gertson at 234-2200.

Thrift Shop open Saturday

The Prairie Edge Museum Thrift Shop will be open Saturday, April 22 from 9:30 a.m. to 1 p.m. It's not too early to start shopping for mom. They also have lots of spring and summer clothes.

Lissie UMC offering video based study

All are invited to come and explore Christianity and World religions: Wrestling with Questions People Ask, a video based study by Adam Hamilton, April 23-May 28. A six-week look at some of the differences between Christianity and other dominate religions in the world. The course to be held at 7 p.m. at the Lissie UMC Fellowship Hall will cover the following: Week 1: Questions People Ask; Week 2 - Hinduism; Week 3 - Buddhism; Week 4 - Islam; Week 5 - Judaism; Week 6 - Christianity.

ELVFD and auxiliary holding dinner

The Eagle Lake Volunteer Fire Department (ELVFD) and Ladies Auxiliary will be serving chicken fried steak dinners Sunday, April 23 from 11 a.m. to 1 p.m. Drive-thru only will be served at the fire station and tickets are \$6.50 with dessert included. Tickets may be purchased from any auxiliary member. All proceeds benefit the fire department equipment fund.

Eagle Lake KC's to hold crawfish boil

The Eagle Lake Knights of Columbus will hold its 3rd Annual Crawfish Boil and Drawing Saturday, April 29 at the Parish of the Nativity Pavilion on S. Austin Road. All you can eat crawfish tickets are \$20 and the drawing tickets are \$1 each or 6 for \$5. Tickets can be purchased from any KC member. Serving is from 4 to 8 p.m. Crawfish tickets must be purchased by April 24. Proceeds to benefit local charities.

Applicator training starts April 24

There will be a Private Applicator Training and Testing Monday, April 24 at 9 a.m. The cost is \$30 per person that will cover book, lunch and refreshments for the day. The training will take about four hours then the test to follow. The class is open to the first 25 who pre-register.

Garwood holding kindergarten registration

Garwood School is registering students for the 2006-07 kindergarten class April 24-28. To register, go to the school office and fill out registration forms. Return forms with a copy of shot record, social security card and birth certificate. These documents are required by the Texas Education Agency. If you

Continued on back page

Eagle Lake Residents Experience Blackouts

On Monday approximately 570 electricity customers in the Eagle Lake area were left without power for a period of time in the evening due to so-called "rolling blackouts," according to Elgin Janssen of American Electric Power (AEP).

He said that the blackouts were due to higher than expected electricity demand as a result of unseasonably warm temperatures.

He advised that in the spring, power plants are shut down for regular maintenance to ensure proper function.

He said that the plants are shut down during times when demand for electricity is lowest to prevent occurrences like yesterday.

"Unfortunately, we had temperatures yesterday that are more typical of June and that caused a jump in demand," Janssen said.

He said that the Electric Reliability Council of Texas (ERCOT) forced the

outages to keep power running at a minimum strength.

Janssen advised that the majority of customers should not have been without power for more than 45 minutes at any one time with most experiencing blackout for about 30 minutes.

He said that during the peak demand yesterday, about 30,000 AEP customers statewide may have been without power at the same time and a total of 800,000 customers lost power at some point.

Janssen said that some of the power plants that were offline have now come back online, and that there should be no further shortages of power.

He said that ERCOT has urged people to conserve when possible, especially during particularly hot days, but said they are not expecting to have any more blackouts.



Barry Shepard, new director of the Eagle Lake Funeral Home is pictured with his wife, Kim, and daughter, Lauryn.

Shepard New Director At Eagle Lake Funeral Home

Barry D. Shepard is the new director of The Eagle Lake Funeral Home.

Shepard took over operations of the business effective April 1.

Shepard grew up in Schulenburg, graduating from high school there in 1995.

After attending mortuary college, he went to work for Henneke Funeral Home in Columbus where he has worked for the last ten years.

Shepard and his wife Kim have a three-year old daughter, Lauryn. Kim currently works for Drymalla Construction in Columbus.

"I am here to serve the community in a professional and compassionate manner," says Shepard.

He urges anyone with any questions about the funeral industry or anyone who would like to meet him to call or stop by.

City Needs Surveys For Grant Application

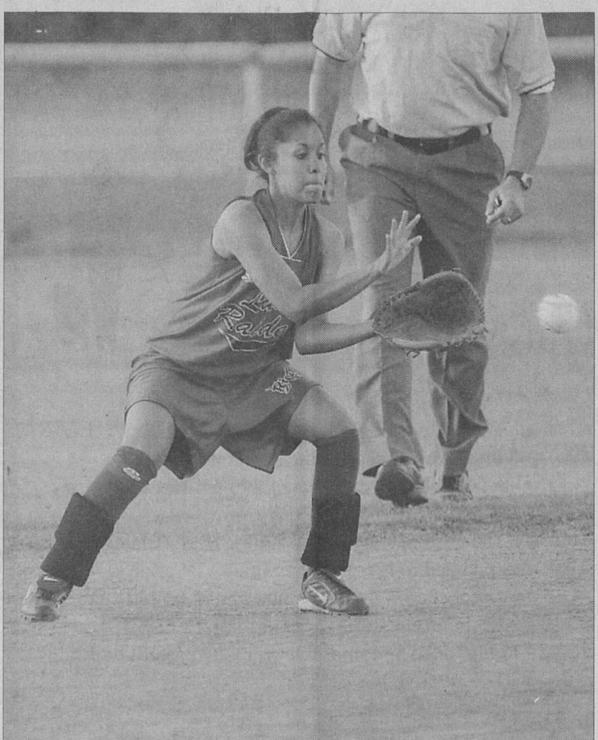
The City of Eagle Lake is applying for a TDHCA Home Program Grant that would build five new homes in Eagle Lake.

The City is in need of five citizen's surveys to include with the application.

If you are interested, please come to City Hall before Tuesday, April 25

to complete a survey.

If the grant is awarded to the City, applications would be taken at a later date in order to determine who is awarded a home. Completing a citizen survey does not guarantee you will receive a new home; it enables the City to submit the application.



Violette Villafuerte looks the ball into her glove to field a ground ball in the Lady Raiders' game against Bellville Monday night.