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Strayhorn's Tax Calculator Gives Idea Of Future Tax Liabilities

AUSTIN — Business owners don't have to wait to see how the Texas Legislature's rewrite of the tax code might affect their bottom line. They can go to the state comptroller's Web site, type in a few financial figures and get an idea of how much "business activity tax" they'll be paying to the state of Texas in 2008.

Comptroller Carole Keeton Strayhorn, who is running as an independent against Republican incumbent Gov. Rick Perry, said, "More than 200,000 Texas businesses that currently do not pay taxes will have to pay or file taxes under the new law. Texans need to know how much they will be paying and begin preparing today by setting aside dollars for the

new tax." But the governor's office said the comptroller's tax calculator doesn't take into account the lower property tax bill businesses will be paying and other factors.

State Sen. Tommy Williams, R-The Woodlands, also criticized the comptroller's take on the new tax law, saying, "As a member of the Senate Finance and Education committees, I have learned not to trust information that comes out of this politically driven comptroller's office. I would urge the Texas business community to do the same."

Despite Strayhorn's assertion that more businesses will be taxed — and pay much more in taxes than under

the former franchise tax — Bill Hammond, executive director of the Texas Association of Business, has spoken out in favor of the Perry tax plan.

Agriculture Commissioner Susan Combs, a Republican who is running to succeed Strayhorn as the state's chief financial officer, said that if elected, she will review and rewrite the new tax law. She said there is "growing sentiment among legislators" that the tax law will need to be "tweaked" during the regular legislative session, which convenes in January.

No flood insurance hurts parks
Because flood insurance is a condition of reimbursement, the Texas Parks and Wildlife Department will not receive full reimbursement from the Federal Emergency Management Agency.

The Parks and Wildlife Department expected FEMA funding to repair flood-related damages brought

about by Hurricane Rita, which struck East Texas on Sept. 24, 2005. A number of state parks sustained serious damage.

AG putting away sex criminals
Attorney General Greg Abbott's office has obtained convictions against 42 men on child pornography charges since he began hunting them down in December 2004. Online solicitation of a minor, attempted sexual assault of a child and possession of child pornography are third-degree felonies punishable by two to 10 years in prison and a fine of up to \$10,000.

State repays workplace costs
Businesses who employed at least two but not more than 50 employees each business day of calendar year 2005 may be reimbursed by the Texas Department of Insurance's Division of Workers' Compensation for up to \$2,500.

Pay-outs may be authorized for costs of workplace modifications,

equipment, tools, furniture or devices, or other related costs paid to bring an injured employee back to work in a modified duty or alternate duty capacity.

Troops prepare for border duty
Gov. Perry signed a memorandum authorizing the deployment of Texas National Guard soldiers to the U.S.-Mexico border as part of Operation Jump Start.

National Guard troops in Texas will be under Perry's command, but the deployment will be federally funded.

We're not tops in volunteerism
In a national state-by-state comparison of volunteerism, Texas ranked 34th among its peers with 28.3 percent of residents putting in some time as volunteers between 2003 and 2005.

Top ranked among states was Utah, with 48 percent of its adults com-



HIGHLIGHTS
By Ed Sterling

mitting personal time as community volunteers.

Nationally, women volunteer at a rate of 32.4 percent while men volunteered at a rate of 25 percent. Among women, those with children at home volunteered most (40 percent).



Happy 3rd Birthday, Livvy Shorter!
Love, Daddy, Momma, Brothers, & Your Grandparents

Let's Look Back...

24 & 48 YEARS AGO

June 17, 1982
Melissa Hunt was crowned the new Colorado County Farm Bureau Queen...
Abel Gonzales was installed as the new Lion's Club president...
Griffith M. Thomas received an M.D. degree from the University of Texas Medical School on June 12. He is the son of Dr. and Mrs. Raymond R. Thomas of Eagle Lake...
Friends in the community learned with great sadness of the death of Mrs. Josie Castellanos on June 12 at M.D. Anderson Hospital in Houston...
The children of Mr. and Mrs. C.A. Rees held a family reunion June 5 at the home of Mr. and Mrs. Boyd Rees...
Leon Pustejovsky, son of Jerry and Mandy Pustejovsky celebrated his fourth birthday on June 12 with an ice cream party. His actual birthday is June 9...
The third annual Malek Family Reunion was held June 13 in Garwood at Paul Phillips' Sr. camp...
Mr. and Mrs. Larry Waddell of Eagle Lake proudly announced the arrival of a daughter, Sharla Renee, born June 11 at Eagle Lake Community Hospital...
Consuelo (Hope) Martinez with 35 years service to Eagle Lake Com-

munity Hospital was one of 12 employees honored during the weekend. Also honored were Jewel Fling, Virginia Janak, Dorothy Newsom, Wilma Shorter, Mary J. Thacker, Yvonne Wagner and Juanita Waligura, for five years; Judith Brisco for 10 years; and Geraldine Flowers, Lovie Girndt and Olivia Maxie for 15 years...
Brenda Kay Williams, daughter of Mrs. Dorothy R. Williams, and a 1969 graduate of Garwood High School, was chosen as one of the top ten teachers in the Austin ISD for the 1981-82 school year...
Miss Nita Dye bride-elect of Michael E. Crow, was the honoree at a kitchen shower and luncheon at The Farris 1912 on June 5...
Tim Luedecke, Jr. (TJ) celebrated his fourth birthday with a party

given by his parents, and sister, Judy and Tim Luedecke and Kristie, on June 13. His actual birthday is June 10...
Mr. and Mrs. Michael R. Addicks of Eagle Lake announced the arrival of a son, Edmond Ray, born June 11 at Eagle Lake Community Hospital.

June 26, 1958
Entered in the 1958 Colorado County Farm Bureau Queen contest are Misses Karol Kallina, Jeanette Labay and Elizabeth Schoellmann of Garwood and Rita Tait of Columbus...
Funeral services were held for J.L. Walker, 82, on June 22 at Colly Memorial Methodist Church with interment in Lakeside Cemetery...
Mr. and Mrs. V.A. Hayden will celebrate their Golden Wedding An-

niversary on July 29...
Marvin Tyler of Altair, Ernest F. (Beans) Frnka of Bridgeport and Anthony Kallina of Garwood landed 219 nice-sized speckled trout Monday on a fishing trip in Rockport...
The First Baptist Church was the setting for the marriage of Miss Carol Joy Longmire daughter of Mr. and Mrs. George Longmire, and Herbert Dromgoole, son of Mr. and Mrs. H.A. Dromgoole on June 5...
Debbie Wiese, daughter of Mr. and Mrs. Alvin Wiese, was complimented with a party on the occasion of her seventh birthday June 17 at her home...
Eagle Lake Little League's whipped the Columbus Little League 7 to 2 behind Bob Ware's two hit pitching.

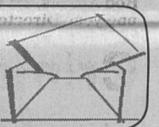
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LETTERS TO THE EDITOR



'A School Is Not A Set of Buildings'
I believe the present proposal for consolidating the RCISD junior high schools is wrong and is a needless waste of our financial resources. I also believe several serious administrative decisions have been made that can be corrected and vastly improve our schools:

1. Amassing a surplus of approximately \$8 million. At least half of this money should have been used for salary increases and/or additional medical coverage for the faculty and staff. In the past years, RCISD attracted and kept well-qualified teachers because it paid as much as \$3,000 above the state level in salaries. This premium has been eroded until it no longer exists. Rice has lost too many dedicated educators to neighboring districts who pay better salaries. And

these same educators still make their homes in the Rice District.

2. Swapping schools in Eagle Lake. One building was reported to be a little crowded. Complete plumbing replacements and other costly adjustments had to be made; and Eagle Lake Junior High students had no gymnasium. Wouldn't it have been simpler and certainly cheaper to move one class?
3. Neglecting building and plant maintenance. It seldom makes sense not to repair and replace worn out equipment. My house is more than 30 years old and I certainly would not go into debt to build a new one simply because a bathroom did not function properly or an air conditioner needed to be replaced.

Why are we trying to enlarge our plant for a school population that is actually shrinking? Rumor has it that consolidating the Junior High Schools

is for the major purpose of fielding a bigger and better athletic squad. Let us never forget the purpose of a school. What percentage of students actually participate in athletics? What percentage participate in math, English, history, science?

Let's put our money where it can do the most good—in classroom instruction, not construction. If one campus lacks a teacher in a particular discipline, let's move a teacher—not 300 children.

One of the great and wonderful things about being an American is that we can disagree with our friends and still remain friends. This letter will disagree with many people whom I like and admire. I hope you will accept my thoughts and consider another side of the proposal.

Helen F. Craig, Retired
(RCISD teacher for 27+ years)
Eagle Lake

the seventh annual
WHARTON COUNTY FREEDOM FEST
June 23-24, 2006
ON THE SQUARE IN WHARTON, TEXAS

corporate sponsor
H-E-B

JOIN US FOR A WEEKEND OF OLD-FASHIONED, SMALL TOWN FUN!

FRIDAY, JUNE 23
Barbecue Cookoff and Dance at Riverfront Park AND Wharton Waves Softball Tournament at Pleasure Park (continues all weekend)

SATURDAY, JUNE 24
Farmers' Market on the Square ☆ Helicopter Rides ☆ The Wizard of Oz live at the historic Plaza Theater ☆ Veterans' Parade and Salute ☆ Food and Craft Booths ☆ Antiquing and Other Shopping ☆ Fine Dining ☆ Kids' Rides ☆ Street Dance with NO LIMIT and

SOFTBALL TOURNAMENT
HELICOPTER RIDES
VETERANS' PARADE & SALUTE
DANCING IN THE STREETS!
B-B-Q COOKOFF
THE TRIUMPHS & FIREWORKS!

YOU REALLY GETTIN' 100 MILES PER GALLON?

SURE AM — IF YA DON'T COUNT MY LAST FIVE DRIVE-OFFS!

NEWS ITEM: GAS STATION DRIVE-OFFS FUELED BY HIGH PRICES...

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