

THE EAGLE LAKE HEADLIGHT

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Budget Makers Looking Ahead To Coming Legislative Session

AUSTIN — Thanks to a growing economy, higher oil and gas prices and an increase in tax collections, state budget estimators say Texas could have about \$15 billion more revenue than expected before the Legislature convenes in January.

But money needed for public education and other commitments would eat up much of it.

The budget estimates come from the Legislative Budget Board, headed by Lt. Gov. David Dewhurst and Speaker Tom Craddick.

In related news, the University of Texas' Lyndon B. Johnson School of Public Affairs and Strategic Partnerships Inc., a consulting firm, co-hosted a state budget conference in preparation for the 80th regular session of the Texas Legislature.

Among top speakers were the Legislature's chief budgeteers, Sen. Steve Ogden, chair of the Senate Finance Committee, and Rep. Jim Pitts, chair of the House Appropriations Committee.

It will be Ogden and Pitts' job to lead the effort to replace \$7 billion in revenue lost when the Legislature lowered school property tax rates for maintenance and operations from \$1.50 to \$1.

The new business activity tax, passed in the 3rd special session of the 79th Legislature, won't take effect until 2008. That tax

came into being as a swap for the property tax cut.

Ogden, R-Bryan, and Pitts, R-Waxahachie, agreed the state's financial condition is good. But both signaled spending demands related to rapid population growth may neutralize the projected record budget surplus of more than \$10 billion in 2007-2008, the next two-year budget cycle.

Simplified, the reason the surplus may not last for long on paper or in the real world is that more people translates to more government services.

Defibrillator funding to be sought

Lt. Gov. David Dewhurst said he plans to seek funding in the coming legislative session for automated external defibrillators in all Texas public schools.

"I want to spare parents, teachers and teammates the horror of watching helplessly as someone's son or daughter fights for their life," he said.

According to Dewhurst's office, only five other states have laws specifically regarding the placement of "AEDs" in public schools, school districts or athletic events.

The estimated average cost of a portable AED is approximately \$2,000.

Awareness of the need for such devices was raised recently, when an Austin-area high school

football player's heart stopped during a game. The skilled use of an

AED was credited with saving the player's life.

Older Texans urged to plan now

If you are 45 to 65 years old, Uncle Sam wants you ... to get on the stick and prepare for your own retirement and long-term care needs.

A planning kit is available free of charge on the Web at www.aoa.gov/ownyourfuture.

If you'd rather talk to a human being about this, you may call 866-752-6582, toll-free.

The kit includes information on subjects such as long-term care insurance, personal finance, home maintenance, legal issues and more, plus an easy-to-follow worksheet to aid in planning.

In promoting the kit, Gov. Perry said many people mistakenly believe that Medicare will meet all their long-term care needs.

Drug plan enrollment to begin

The Texas Department of Insurance announced the annual enrollment period for Medicare Part D, the prescription drug coverage program, begins Nov.

15 and ends Dec. 31.

The voluntary program helps people who have high prescription drug costs and no drug coverage.

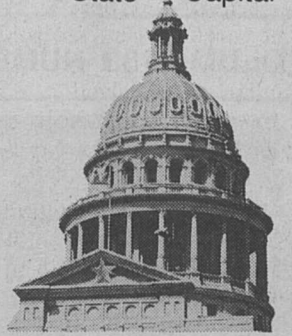
Coverage for persons enrolling during the enrollment period will begin on Jan. 1.

Also, Medicare has released a list of approved plans for 2007. To review and compare plans, the Medicare Prescription Drug Plan Finder is available online at www.medicare.gov.

Additional plans are expected to be added to the list prior to the beginning of the enrollment period.

TEXAS PRESS ASSOCIATION

State Capital



HIGHLIGHTS
By Ed Sterling

Let's Look Back...

24 & 48 YEARS AGO

Oct. 21, 1982

Graveside services were held Oct. 16 for **Florence Field McCaleb** of California former resident of Garwood and Eagle Lake...

Reinhard H. (Red) Wied, a native of the Nada community passed away Oct. 18...

Sportsman's Restaurant opened under the new ownership of **Doug and Janie Schwemm**...

The University of Texas Graduate School awarded a Master of Arts degree to **Thomas Anselin Reed**, son of Mr. and Mrs. Joe

Reed of Eagle Lake...

Mr. and Mrs. **Robert P. Wilcox** and Mr. and Mrs. **Fred R. Frnka** returned in the early hours from a beautiful "Autumn Glory" tour through the New England states...

A speedy recovery to Mrs. **Sam (Alma) Davidson** who is in the Eagle Lake Community Hospital recovering from a fall...

Ernie Sommerlatte was crowned the new golf tournament women's champions while **Brock Ashby** took the men's division...

Leslie Wilkerson, Jr., son of Mr. and Mrs. **Leslie Wilkerson** of Eagle Lake, celebrated his first birthday, Oct. 9 with a party given by his mother at their home...

Mrs. **Mickey (Bernice) Kochwelp** was feted with a new grandmother's surprise shower at Grace Lutheran Church Oct. 10...

Joe and Martha Garcia of Eagle Lake announced the birth

of their daughter, **Jessica Christina**, born Oct. 14 at Eagle Lake Community Hospital...

Coby Shorter, III of Eagle Lake received an honor award from the State Fair Association at an Awards Dinner in Dallas on Oct. 15...

Mr. and Mrs. **Michael Horndt** of Garwood became the proud parents of a baby boy, **Dustin Michael**, born Oct. 12 at Gulf Coast Medical Center...

Mr. and Mrs. **Billy Broesche** announced the birth of their first child, a son, **Kevin Joseph**, born Oct. 12 at Gulf Coast Medical Center...

On Oct. 1, **Ron and Jinx Hayden** became the parents of their first child, a son, **Matthew Neil**...

Mr. and Mrs. **Jerome J. Kubes** announced the arrival of their first child, **Kelli Suzanne**, born Oct. 14 in Conroe.

Oct. 23, 1958

Mrs. **W.S. Strickland**, 82, passed away in a Houston hospital. Funeral services were held Oct. 23...

Sandy Thomas, daughter of Mr. and Mrs. **Ralph Thomas** of Eagle Lake, was crowned "Fairest of the Fair" at the 11th annual Garwood Lions Club Fair Oct. 16...

Leading the Eagle Lake High School Band are **Karen Cook**, **Dolly Stiles**, and **Glenda Altman**; head drum major, **Sandy Thomas**; **Susan Davidson** and **Barbara Ross**...

Winners of the prizes given away at the Universal Motor Company new car show were **W.W. Lee**, a steam iron; **Miss Ann Terrell**, a carafe; and Mrs. **Fred R. Frnka**, a can opener...

Judith Brisco, daughter of Mr. and Mrs. **L.L. Brisco**, was honored on her sixth birthday with a party on Oct. 18.

LETTER TO THE EDITOR

Citizen Voices LCRA Opinion

Dear Mr. Heffley:

Perhaps you are not listening or maybe you just don't want to hear, but let's go over this item-by-item.

1. Land - Mr. Beal has reported several times that they are in discussion with nearly enough people to come up with the acreage needed for the project.

2. Taxes - Again, Mr. Beal and Leah Manning, the Project Manager, have said they will make the taxing entities whole on the land removed from the tax base.

If water for irrigation is not provided for, now and in the future, the taxes collected on rice land will drop to taxes on pasture. This is a drop in tax rate from \$267.00/acre for irrigated cropland to \$94.00/acre for native pasture. This could potentially lead to a

large increase in taxes for all Colorado County citizens.

3. Groundwater - The water wells being discussed will be along the existing canal systems in Eagle Lake, Garwood and Bay City to supplement the irrigation water. LCRA is now talking about leasing more of these wells from farmers than actually owning the wells themselves.

4. Aquifer - I'm not sure what "Groundwater District" you are referencing. If my memory serves me right, a proposed Groundwater District was voted down not once, but twice. In hindsight, this may prove to be a BIG loss for those citizens of Colorado County who voted it down.

Perhaps, you and a few other individuals should actually listen to what is said instead of going on and on about issues that have

already been addressed.

I completely understand the landowner's feelings about possibly losing land that has been in families for generations, but if enough landowners are found who are willing to sell, then this becomes a moot point.

Another thing to remember is that before the project can begin, a lengthy study process must be completed. This process is not yet finished and the results are not yet known. The study can give us valuable information about our aquifer and the use and conservation of water.

The surface water (water in the river) in Texas belongs to the State. When large municipalities need this water, they will ultimately get it.

Vivian Spanihel, Garwood

Letters To Editor Policy Given

Following are the Headlight's general guidelines on letters to the editor.

1. Letters should be as short and concise as possible. Letters should be no longer than 400 words in length.

Preferably, letters should deal with subjects of local interest or concern.

2. All letters are subject to editing for length, libel and good taste. Personal attacks impugning the character of individuals will not

be published. Letters endorsing or criticizing candidates for public office will be accepted only as paid advertising.

3. Letters are published as space and time permit. There is no guarantee that any letter submitted will be used. We give preference to letters that are submitted exclusively to this publication and are not duplicated in other publications.

4. We give preference to Eagle Lake area residents over other individuals in publication of let-

ters.

5. Letters should be submitted by noon Friday before the next week's edition in order to be considered for that edition.

6. Letters should be signed and include a telephone number and address for verification.

7. Anonymous letters, or letters asking that the letter writer's name be withheld, will not be published.

8. Letters of thanks are published as paid advertising.

FB Against Horse Slaughter Bill

"If enacted, the Horse Slaughter Prevention Act will set a negative precedent by banning a livestock product for reasons other than public health or food safety," said Colorado County Farm Bureau President, **Gerald Heintschel**.

The Horse Slaughter Prevention Act would ban the process of horses for human consumption and cause the nation's processing plants to be shutdown. It would also allow unprecedented government authority over animal agriculture, without any scientific justification.

According to the American Veterinary Medical Association, horsemeat is primarily shipped

overseas to countries such as Japan, France and Belgium, where it is considered a delicacy. Over 18,000 tons of horsemeat was shipped this past year, valued at over \$61 million.

While animal rights activists consider the act to be an animal welfare bill, it would be detrimental to the humane treatment of these horses, said Heintschel.

The bill does not allocate funding for providing an estimated 100,000 unwanted horses with proper care, shelter and veterinary treatment, leaving them to neglect and abandonment. The Animal Welfare Council estimated that these costs could reach well over \$200 million in the first year.

Working for YOU!

★ Serving since 2003 as your *full-time* County Treasurer.

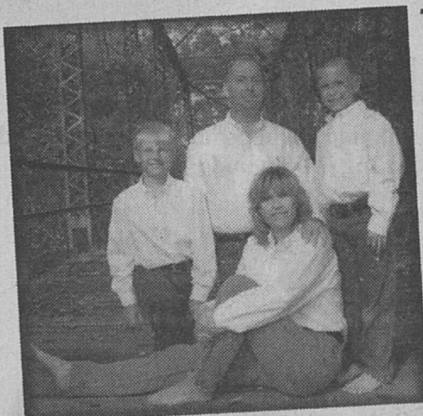
★ Long-time Colorado County resident.

★ Member-St. Anthony's Catholic Church.

★ Member-Colorado County Fair Livestock Committee.

★ Former Treasurer-Colorado County Relay for Life.

★ Married to Scott Matus for nearly 20 years. They have two sons: Dillon, 13, and Colton, 10.



THE MATUS FAMILY
Dillon, Scott,
Colton & Diane



Diane
MATUS
COUNTY
TREASURER

Pol. Adv. Paid for by the Diane Matus for Treasurer Campaign, Chris Stein, Treasurer

Vote and Elect

Dwight

HADLEY

Justice of the Peace
Precinct 4

Absentee voting is Oct. 23 through Nov. 3
General election is Tuesday, Nov. 7

YOUR VOTE WILL BE APPRECIATED

Political ad paid for by Dwight Hadley, Treasurer
314 E. Post Office St., Eagle Lake, TX 77434

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