

THE EAGLE LAKE HEADLIGHT



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Coal Plant Supporters Raising Voices As Session Nears

AUSTIN - The public relations war over a proposal to build 19 new coal-fired plants is getting hotter with the next state legislative session around the corner.

The Texas Association of Business stumped at the Capitol Dec. 15 in favor of the plants and a mix of other power-generation options, such as more nuclear power capacity and less reliance on natural gas.

Energy needs for residential customers, businesses and government are growing faster than power can be generated by the current grid of power plants, said Bill Hammond, executive director of the Texas Association of Business.

Hammond mentioned Texas could face rolling blackouts in the next few years if power needs aren't addressed.

Other groups, such as Public Citizen Texas, are emphasizing

the degrading effects on public health and the environment if the state grants coal plant permits that don't require the cleaner, coal gasification process that results in minimal emissions.

Governor hires former senator

Gov. Rick Perry on Dec. 14 appointed Sen. Ken Armbrister as legislative director for the governor's office.

Armbrister, D-Victoria, was elected to the Texas House of Representatives in 1983 and to the Texas Senate in 1986. During his tenure in the Senate, Armbrister has chaired the Natural Resources, Criminal Justice, State Affairs and Intergovernmental Relations committees. Armbrister chose not to seek re-election and will serve out his term of office, which ends when the new legislature convenes, Jan. 9.

Judge orders speaker to reply

An Austin state district judge ordered House Speaker Tom Craddick to provide the court with information that may show whether one of his office calendars contains what is "public information" under the law.

Plaintiff Cris Feldman of Austin is suing for access to Craddick's 2003 political calendar and the first half of his 2004 political calendar.

The inclusive dates cover the period during which Republicans battled with Democrats over redistricting.

State District Judge Margaret Cooper set a deadline of Jan. 12 for Craddick to comply with her order.

Hunting for the blind proposed

State Rep. Edmund Kuempel, R-Seguin, has filed a bill that would create conditions under

which a blind person could hunt legally in Texas.

Kuempel's House Bill 308 would allow a blind hunter, with the aid of a sighted hunter, to use a laser sighting device to hunt game.

Lawmaker files cleanup bills
State Rep. William "Bill" Callegari, R-Houston, has filed legislation to do away with language in state law that created three state agencies.

Those agencies no longer have a function, he said.

H.B. 386 would repeal the portion of the Water Code that created Texas Deepwater Port Authority; H.B. 387 similarly wipes off the Texas National Research Laboratory Commission, which had to do with landing the long-defunct superconducting super collider project; and H.B. 388 would repeal the enabling legislation that launched the Ogallala Water Import Authority.

Callegari also filed a fourth

piece of legislation, H.B. 385, repealing a 1935 law that authorized the Commission of Control for the Texas Centennial Celebrations to condemn property for the use of the state.

Strayhorn unloads re: foster care

State Comptroller Carole Keeton Strayhorn's term of office ends in January, but she's still at work.

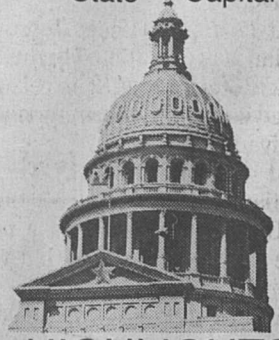
On Dec. 14, Strayhorn released "Texas Health Care Claims Study: A Special Report on Foster Children," which she said raises red flags concerning the state's foster care system.

Among the many red flags, Strayhorn said, are Medicaid claims from 2004 and 2005 that show foster children are being prescribed "powerful, mind-altering psychotropic drugs" at an alarming rate.

She pointed out that Texas spent \$39 million on 436,480 pre-

TEXAS PRESS ASSOCIATION

State Capital

HIGHLIGHTS
By Ed Sterling

scriptions for nearly 24,000 foster children in fiscal 2004.

"Given the distressing findings contained in this report, I hope the state will not delay in adopting recommendations, which have been crafted to help mend this broken system," Strayhorn said in a news release.

The full report is available online at window.state.tx.us.

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Let's Look Back...

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Debbie Vawter accepted the keys to her new automobile from Henry Webb, who chaired the fund drive for the Noon Lion's Club that involved giving the car away for a \$15 donation. The club raised more than \$1,700 on the project...

Kathy Tise Miska, 21, daughter of Barbara and Sammy Tise of Sublime was appointed director of nursing at Edna Hospital. She received the appointment in late November...

William Harrison chairman of community hospital's executive committee received a \$2,000 check from Sammy Tise manager of the Tenneco Oil Co. Plant in Chesterville, as another donation on the hospital's new wing.

Rev. and Mrs. Michael Harrison announced the birth of their first child, a daughter. The seven pound, four ounce made her arrival on Sunday, Dec. 5 in the Woman's Hospital of Texas in Houston. At birth she measured 19 inches. She was named Janna Michelle...

Kevin Hoffman was honored with a party hosted by his parents Mr. and Mrs. Thierry Hoffman

on the occasion of his second birthday Friday, Dec. 10...

Justin Blair Jobe was two

years old Friday, Dec. 17. A party was given for him by his parents, Kelly and Tracy Jobe, at the

home of his grandparents, Vernon and Mary Gertson, of Eagle Lake...

Union Pacific Urges Driving Safety

In the frenzy of holiday bustle that includes family and friends, shopping lists, cooking and travel, Union Pacific urges motorists and pedestrians to take extra time and use extra caution when crossing railroad tracks this holiday season.

"Inclement weather this time of year can make roads dangerous," said Bob Grimailla, senior assistant vice president-safety and environment.

"Please slow down, focus on safety and drive with caution, especially when approaching railroad tracks and grade crossings.

"As people are out traveling in unfamiliar territory, they need to be aware of not only public crossings, but private crossings

as well."

Please remember these important safety guidelines to keep you and your family safe this holiday season:

- Slow down. Everything takes longer on snow-covered roads or in overcrowded parking lots.

- Watch for advanced warning signs (a round yellow sign with the letters RXR) - this indicates that the railroad tracks cross the road ahead.

Slow down or stop before crossing.

- Always be especially careful on icy roads to make sure you will not slide onto the tracks if you need to stop.

- Listen. Snow can muffle the sound of an approaching train. Crack the window, and lower the

sound of the radio and the heater. Hang up the cell phone.

- If your vehicle gets stuck on a railroad crossing, quickly exit the vehicle and move away from the track. Call to report your vehicle's location to law enforcement or a railroad dispatcher. Mention any nearby landmarks (and the DOT number at the crossing if you see it).

- Beware - one train may have passed but another could be behind it, or coming from the opposite direction on the next track. Always look both ways, and then do a quick double take before crossing.

- And please obey the posted signs and stay away from railroad property.

Hefner Completes Continuing Education

Judge Billy Hefner, Precinct 1, Colorado County Justice of the Peace was certified at the recent Stage 1 Foundational Twenty Hour Justice of the Peace Seminar held December 10-13 in Austin.

The seminar was sponsored by the Texas Justice Court Training Center, a division of Texas State University—San Marcos,

with offices in Austin.

The seminar is one of three seminars held for newly appointed Justices of the Peace so they can fulfill their Continuing Judicial Education Requirements of eighty (80) hours of training within the first year of taking office, as set forth in Article 27.005 of the Texas Government Code.

The seminar addressed top-

ics such as Role of the Judge and the Judiciary, Court Structure of Texas, Due Process, Magistrate Duties, Inquests, How to Judges Cases, Justice Court Desk Book Overview and Introduction to Law Books, Trial Procedure, Ethics and the Judicial Conduct Commission, Legal Terminology, Code Construction, Financial Management, and State Agencies.

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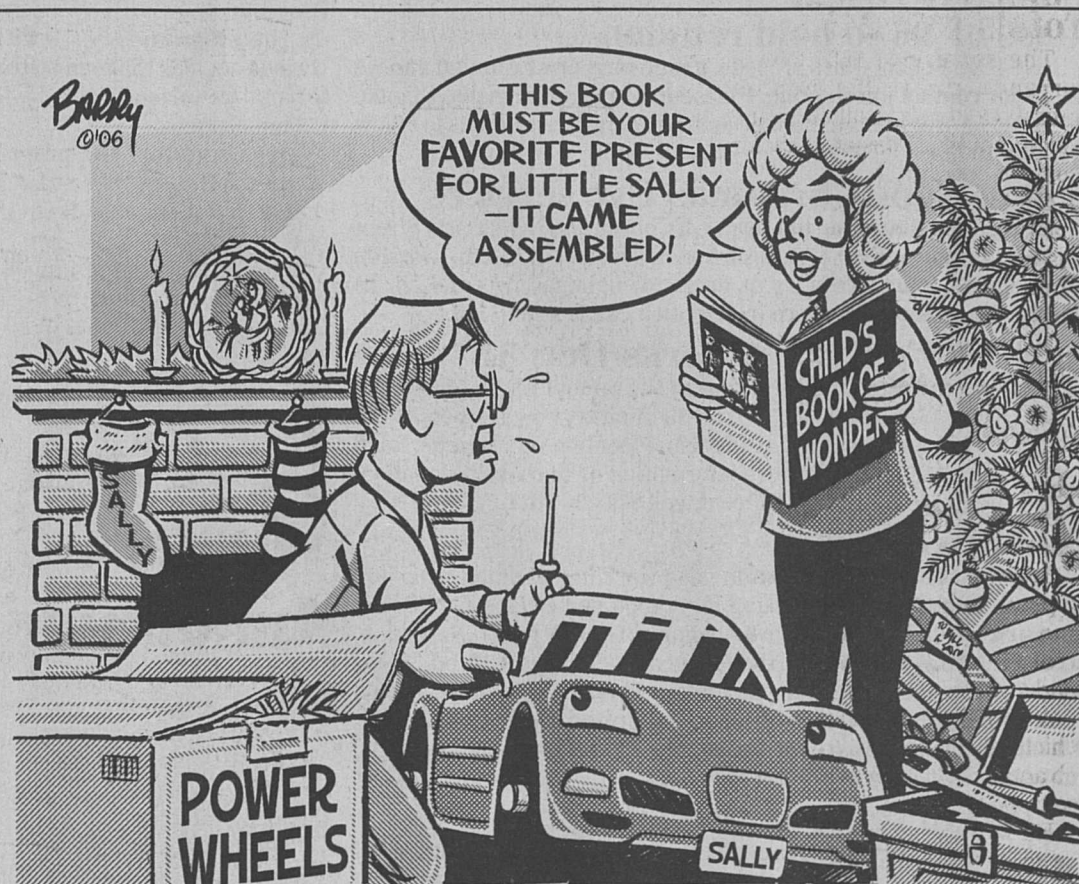
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