

THE EAGLE LAKE HEADLIGHT

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Lawmakers Put Property Tax Cut On Fast Track

AUSTIN – The Texas Senate on Feb. 14 passed a resolution to break the state's constitutional spending cap.

This was done in order to move a step closer to delivering school property tax relief required by legislation passed a year ago in the 3rd called session of the 79th Texas Legislature.

Senate Concurrent Resolution 20 by Sen. Steve Ogden, R-College Station, establishes that the existing need for lower school district property taxes constitutes an emergency for the people of Texas.

The resolution also makes it so state tax revenues not dedicated by the Texas Constitution for fiscal years 2008 and 2009 may be in an amount not to exceed \$14.2 billion more than authorized.

On a simple majority vote and with none of the usual floor debate that regular legislative bills receive, the resolution quickly moves property tax relief ahead of

other items on the agenda. Once passed by the full Senate, SCR 20 shifted over to the House for consideration.

The House Appropriations Committee approved it too. Next, the resolution is subject to a vote of the full House on Feb. 20. It is predicted to pass on a Republican party line vote, or something close to it.

\$14 billion surfaces over & over

Fourteen billion dollars keeps popping up here and there in the world of state finance.

As previously mentioned, via SCR 20, the Legislature is close to giving itself permission to spend \$14 billion more in the next budget cycle.

In early January, newly installed state Comptroller Susan Combs pegged the state budget surplus at more than \$14 billion.

The third reference to \$14 billion: Gov. Rick Perry says financial experts put a conservative

estimate of the sale price of the Texas Lottery at \$14 billion.

If sold for \$14 billion, Perry said, the money may generate about \$1.3 billion annual interest based on an average return of 9 percent, or \$300 million more than the Lottery currently returns, per year.

Perry said he would use the annual interest to create trust funds for cancer research, public education and an assistance program for Texans with no health insurance.

Senate to consider Jessica's Law

Lt. Gov. David Dewhurst on Feb. 14 announced the filing of Senate Bill 5, the Texas version of Jessica's Law, part of his Texas Children First plan.

SB 5, sponsored by Sen. Bob Deuell, R-Greenville, who also is a medical doctor, would do the following:

- Require mandatory 25 years to life sentences for a first-time violent sexual offense against a child under age 14;
- Require lifetime GPS monitoring for child sex offenders;
- Allow prosecutors to seek the death penalty for a second sexually violent offense against a child under age 14; and
- Double the statute of limitations on sexual crimes against children from 10 to 20 years.

Jessica's Law is named for 9-year-old Floridian Jessica Lunsford. In March 2005, she was abducted from her Florida home, raped and murdered by a convicted sex offender. Since then, more than two dozen states have enacted toughened sex offender laws in memory of Jessica.

Texas Tomorrow Fund update

A new report commissioned by

state Comptroller Susan Combs recommends that the Texas Tomorrow Fund remain closed to enrollment.

The prepaid college tuition program begun under then-Comptroller John Sharp in 1996 has been closed to enrollment since 2003.

The size of the fund will be \$3 billion short of the demand on it in 20 years, and with today's leaping tuition costs, a much greater shortfall is possible.

Combs said funds contributed by the 158,000 families who are already enrolled are safe.

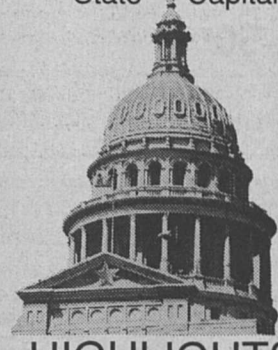
Lawmaker addresses high tuition

In the wake of Comptroller Combs' report, state Rep. Garnet Coleman, D-Houston, called for an end to tuition deregulation.

Coleman said that since tuition deregulation was enacted by the

TEXAS PRESS ASSOCIATION

State Capital



HIGHLIGHTS
By Ed Sterling

Legislature in 2003, tuition has gone up an average of 37 percent at Texas' 35 public colleges and universities.

He said unless something is done, families that already have invested in the fund cannot be guaranteed the money will be there when their kids need it.

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Let's Look Back... 24 & 48 YEARS AGO

February 24, 1983
 The First Baptist Church of Eagle Lake has been notified that Cathy Lanyon, Leslie Harrison, and Michael Sibley have been selected by audition to sing in the 1983 Texas Baptist All State Youth Choir...

The pretty home of Mrs. Robert P. Wilcox, Jr. was the setting for a Rice Bag Brunch beginning at 11 a.m. Saturday, Feb. 19 honoring Miss Denise Wiese, bride-elect of Robert C. Marburger. Miss Wiese is the daughter of Mr. and Mrs. A.F. Wiese and Robert is the son of Dr. and Mrs. R.C. Marburger of Columbus...

Ralph Stienke of Garwood announced Monday that he has filed to become a candidate for the board of trustee election for Rice CISD...

Friends were saddened to hear of the passing of Maxine Griffith's mother last week. Deepest sympathy is expressed to Maxine and her family...

Ethel Balusek and Debbie and Kyle Walker recently enjoyed a pleasurable 3-day weekend in New Orleans...

Rick and Melba Higgins were the guests of Rick's parents, Mr. and Mrs. Frank Higgins last weekend. Rick and Melba are reported to be enjoying their new home and friends wish them the best...

Funeral services were held Tuesday at 4:30 p.m. for J.R. "Coby" Reed, Sr., of El Campo, services were conducted from the Wheeler Chapel in El Campo with Rev. Jim Campbell officiating. Interment followed at the Oaklawn Memorial Park...

Walter Adolph Wied, 71, of Chesterville died Monday at the Methodist Hospital in Houston

following a brief illness. Funeral services were held at 3 p.m. Wednesday from the Chapel of the Mill-Bauer Funeral Home with Rev. Bill Couvillion officiating. Interment followed in the Lehrer Cemetery in Garwood...

February 19, 1959
 Mrs. William Farris announces the opening of her new business; Helyn's Flower Basket next Monday, February 23 and is located at the Farris home at 801 N. Warwick Street...

Eagle Lake Cub Scouts will gather at the Community Center next Monday night for their annual Blue and Gold Banquet...

Harrison and Leonard Walker will show their 21-month-old Appaloosa Stallion, "Smoky Joe," in the San Antonio Livestock Exposition during March 18 through 22...

Army Private Alfred P. Berger, son of Mr. and Mrs. Alfred P. Berger of Garwood, completed

the eight-week administration course February 7 at Fort Chaffee, Ark...

Eagle Lake High School girl's basketball team defeated a team of exes 29-26 while the high school boys nosed out the team of faculty members 38-29 in the Eagle Lake gym Monday night in benefit games...

Clyde Gold and Joe Lee McCreary attended the meeting of the Arabia Temple Shrine in Houston Monday night. Mr. Gold is president of the Colorado Valley Shrine Club and Mr. McCreary is secretary...

Miss Jo Ann Woodruff became the bride of James Bunge, Jr. in the Garwood Methodist Church February 14 with Rev. Paul Grout, Jr. pastor of the Garwood Church officiating...

Mrs. William Farris has completed a course in modern floral designing at the Benz School of Floral Design in Houston...

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Colorado County Sheriff's Report

The Colorado County Sheriff's Department reported the following calls and cases for the period ending Feb. 1.

Friday, January 19
 At 9:38 am, Deputy Craneck responded to the Budget Inn east of Columbus in reference to a lost credit card. An attempt to locate an owner was unsuccessful. The card company was contacted and the account was cancelled. The card was subsequently destroyed. Case closed.

At 6:45 pm, Deputy Thumann responded to a residence on 90A near Eagle Lake in reference to a Burglary. On arrival, evidence was collected and two suspects were developed. After further investigation, Edie Diane Henry, 35 of College Station, and Kiara Monet Roy, 17 of Eagle Lake, were arrested on warrants for Burglary of a Habitation. Case closed.

At 7:30 pm, the San Antonio Police Department arrested Webster Eugene Crader, 40 of Missouri, on a warrant for Aggravated Kidnapping, which occurred a week earlier at a residence on IH-10 near Columbus that was investigated by the Colorado County Sheriff's Department.

At 10:45 pm, Deputy Thumann and Sgt. Edman responded to a residence in Sheridan for a welfare check on two children. After further investigation, Spring Evon Gray, 30 of Sheridan, was arrested for Possession of Drug Paraphernalia. Case closed.

Saturday, January 20
 At 11:54 am, Deputy Craneck responded to San Bernard Electric on Hwy 71 in reference to possible Criminal Mischief. On arrival, it was determined that the teller drawer had been damaged. It is unknown if the damage was intentional. A report was filed and the case is pending further investigation and review of surveillance video.

Sunday, January 21
 At 1:28 am, Deputy Slubar responded to a subject on Hwy 71 and FM 109 attempting to flag down other vehicles. On arrival, the subject was located and found to be intoxicated. After further investigation, Jason Jess Caviness, 28 of Columbus, was arrested for

Public Intoxication and Assault of a Public Servant. Case closed.

At 3:50 am, Sgt. Edman initiated a traffic stop on Hwy 71 and CR 101 south of Columbus. After further investigation, Sergio Flores Jr., 23 of Pearsall, was arrested for Driving While License Invalid. Case closed.

At 10 am, Deputy Pardo and Deputy Savino responded to FM 2761 east of Columbus in reference to Criminal Mischief. On arrival, it was discovered that someone had rutted up the ditches and caused property damage. The muddy tire tracks led Deputies to a residence where the suspect was identified. The Texas Department of Transportation was contacted to assess the damages, but declined to pursue charges. Case closed.

At 1:55 pm, Deputy Mieth responded to Coy road near Weimar in reference to loose horses. After further investigation, the owner was located and the matter was resolved. A report was filed and the case is closed.

At 6:15 pm, Deputy Thumann responded to a residence in Sheridan in reference to an allegation of child abuse. After further investigation, it was determined that the injuries were sustained during visitation with another parent in Gonzales County and may not involve abuse. The incident was documented and the complainant was referred to the proper jurisdiction for investigation.

At 7:06 pm, Deputy Thumann responded to the Sheridan Bus Barn in reference to a Theft of gasoline. A report was filed and the case is pending further information.

At 7:22 pm, Deputy Thumann responded to a residence in Sheridan in reference to a disturbing phone call. The complainant only wanted documentation in case something happens in the future. No offense was committed at this time and the case will be closed.

Monday, January 22
 At 3:30 pm, Deputy Pflughaupt met with a complainant at the Sheriff's Office for a reported Theft in Sheridan. After further investigation, the incident was determined to be a civil matter. A report was filed and the case

is closed.

Tuesday, January 23
 At 5:25 am, Deputy Staff initiated a traffic stop on Hwy 71 and Hildebrandt Road. After further investigation, Luis Nino Beltran, 21 of Houston, was arrested for No Driver's License. Case closed.

At 9 am, Deputy Pflughaupt responded to Attwater Prairie Chicken Road in reference to a Theft. Evidence was collected and the case is pending further investigation.

At 9:33 am, Deputy Hudson spoke with a complainant from New Ulm about a Theft of personal information, which possibly occurred in Columbus. A report was taken and the case will be closed.

At 10:52 am, Lt. Busby met with a complainant at the Sheriff's Office about an internet scam involving a counterfeit US Treasury check. A report was filed and the case was turned over to the Houston Area Fraud Task Force.

At 11:45 pm, Deputy Hudson responded to Hwy 71 near Columbus in reference to a Theft. The complainant reported that two jet skies were stolen. The missing jet skies were entered into the State and National database as stolen. Case is pending recovery of stolen property and development of suspect(s).

At 12:15 pm, Deputy Pflughaupt responded to Yett Street near Eagle Lake in reference to a death investigation. Justice of the Peace Pct. 4, George Cason arrived to conduct the Inquest. An autopsy was performed, which revealed the death was from natural causes.

Wednesday, January 24
 At 3:45 pm, Deputy Pflughaupt responded to the Pct. 1 County Barn in Rock Island in reference to a wallet found on CR 274 near Garwood. The owner was located and notified of the found wallet. Case is pending return of wallet.

Thursday, January 25
 At 11:45 am, Deputy Pflughaupt responded to a residence in Garwood in reference to Theft and Trespassing. The suspect was identified and the case is pending further action.

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