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Three Rice Raiders qualified for the State Track Meet May 11-12 in Austin. Josh Williams on first in the pole vault. LaQuendra Thomas, left, won second in the discus and Cunneisha Foster won three gold medals, the long jump, triple jump and the 200 meter dash.

Rice School District Bond Election Q&A: Part Two

Voters will go to the polls on Saturday, May 12 to decide on a bond election for Rice CISD.

The election will ask voters to decide yes or no on two bond propositions totaling about \$16.65 million.

The first proposition will ask for just over \$12 million for construction of 16 classrooms, two science labs, two computer labs, a library, gym, administrative area and band hall. This area will be used for seventh and eighth grade for the entire district.

The second proposition asks for an additional \$4.6 million for construction of a 500-seat auditorium with a lobby-type area that would be used as an eating space for the seventh and eighth grade. The area would also include space for a kitchen if the district wanted to add one later.

The Rice board passed a resolution effectively tying the two propositions together. The resolution specifies that if only the second proposition passes, then the district will not go forward with the project.

The election was called in early March after a series of special meetings were held to discuss district facility issues that needed to be addressed after the failure of last May's bond election.

Trustees have said that they feel this election package is a compromise with voters who narrowly defeated a bond election a year ago.

Following is the second of a two-part question and answer on the bond issue with Rice Superintendent Michael Lanier. The second part will appear next week.

Q: How will the existing campuses in Eagle Lake be used after the new facility is completed?

The plan is to return the Johnny D. Hutchins Drive campus to a PreK - 3rd grade facility as it was intended. The East and North wings of the Tate Street campus would be demolished, and a library and two additional classrooms would be constructed allowing this campus to house the 4th, 5th, and 6th grades for Eagle Lake.

You will notice that this reorganization, demolition, and construction are not part of the bond election. This portion of the project will be paid for by any remaining funds from the junior high bond construction and monies currently in the RCISD Fund Balance.

Q: What will happen to the Garwood and Sheridan campuses if the bond passes?

The Garwood and Sheridan campuses will continue to house and educate PreK - 6th grades in each community. The schools are an important part of each of our communities.

The development of each of the proposals was undertaken keeping that importance as a focal point while still moving toward academic advancement and meeting the mandates from both the state and federal governments at the secondary level.

No discussion has taken place, nor will it in the foreseeable future, to do anything with the Garwood and Sheridan campuses that does not include solidifying their role as a part of the community and providing the best education possible for our students.

Q: Why not use the RCISD Fund Balance to pay for part of the bond?

I have heard comments in the communities about using more of the Fund Balance to fund the proposed bond.

These monies have, for the most part, been accumulated over the past five years due to the increase in oil and gas demand and prices.

Long time residents of the district and those familiar with school finance will quickly admit that oil and gas revenues periodically spike and most probably what we have experienced over the past several years is one of those periodic spikes.

We have set aside those funds in anticipation of the possibility of a plunge in prices and revenues. We currently generate approximately \$500,000 per year through the investment of those funds.

This revenue has enabled us to do much needed maintenance on our current facilities and to fund above base pay, critical academic needs stipends to attract highly qualified secondary educators, and the recently implemented 457(b) retirement fund for all of our employees.

Without those monies generated by the Fund Balance we would be forced to go to the tax payer each year and ask them to fund these endeavors. The bottom line is once it is spent we may not have the ability to restore the Fund Balance.

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NEWSBRIEFS

Garwood School Pre-K program

The Garwood School is looking for students to attend a Pre-K program for the 2007-2008 school year. It will be a half day program and will require ten students to make the class. Students must be 4 years old by September 1 and must live in the Garwood School attendance zone. Student should also qualify as economically disadvantaged or live in a non-English speaking home. If interested in registering or if you have any questions regarding the program, please contact the school at (979) 758-3385.

Programa de Pre-K

La escuela de Garwood es a buscando estudiantes que atiendan el programa de Pre-K para el año escolar 2007-2008. Este programa sera un programa de medio dia. Se requieren diez estudiantes para completar la clase. Estudiantes deben de tener cuatro años para el primero de Septiembre, 2007 y deben vivir en la area de Garwood. Si usted esta interesado en registrar a sue nino/nina, o tiene otras preguntas del programa, por favor do llamar la escuela a (979) 758-3385.

Senior Citizen's Dance is Friday

A Senior Citizen's Dance will be held Friday, May 4 from 8 to 11 p.m. at the Community Center in Eagle Lake. Daniel and The Country Boys will provide the music. For more information call 979-234-2903.

Mt. Sinai Ministries Fish Fry May 5

Mount Sinai Evangelical Ministries will hold a fish fry Saturday, May 5 from the residence of Mr. and Mrs. Urdy, 501 East Waverly across from the airport. The menu will consist of fish, potatoes, green beans, cake and bread. Plates will be available starting at 9:30 a.m. for a donation of \$6. To place an order or for more information contact Telesia Urdy at 979-234-5650. Thanks for your support!

"Old skool" car wash is May 5

The "Old Skool" Organization will hold a car wash Saturday, May 5 from 9 a.m. to 1 p.m. at Brookshire Brothers in Eagle Lake. They are accepting any size vehicle with a \$5 donation. The first 50 children will get a free kite. The car wash benefits the youth of Eagle Lake. For more information call Kevin Earls at 979-232-0470 or Norman Henderson at 979-559-0195.

Dance set for Saturday

The Sealy Dance Club will host a dance Saturday, May 5 at the American Legion Hall in Sealy from 7:30 to 11:30 p.m. Daniel and the Country Boys will provide the music. Theme: "Derby Day". At the Kentucky Derby men wear derby hats and women wear large hats with feathers. Put yours on and come dance. Free cake, coffee and door prizes. The public is invited.

Brune 47th Reunion to be held on May 6

We are trying something new for the 47th annual Brune reunion to be held on May 6 beginning at 2 p.m. The reunion will be held at the home of Kenneth and Arline Brune on FM 109. The address is 2449 FM 109. We will begin with visits and a short meeting and BBQ to be served at 5 p.m. So come out and bring a side dish, a lawn chair, and something for a silent auction...BBQ, drinks and eating utensils will be furnished. The Brune home 9 miles from Columbus and 4 miles from Frelsburg. Let us have a fun day and a large crowd.

Fifth grade parents meeting is May 8

Rice CISD invites you to the ELJH cafeteria on May 8 at 7 pm for an informational meeting about band. If you would like for your child to take band in the 2007-08 school year this meeting will give you all the information that you will need to know. Sixth grade is the only year a student may begin band.

Reception to honor Brunner planned

The First Presbyterian Church of Eagle Lake will honor the life and 96th birthday of Ted Brunner at a reception in the Fellowship hall of the church, Sunday, May 6 from 1 to 2 p.m. The public is invited to attend and to wish Mr. Brunner "Happy Birthday".

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City Council Votes To Pursue Hangar Project

The Eagle Lake City Council, during their regular meeting Tuesday, April 24, voted to proceed with plans to construct new hangars at the airport.

The project will construct two 8,800 square foot hangars at an estimated cost of \$329,000. A grant from the Texas Department of Transportation will cover approximately \$263,000 of the cost. The city must pay a match of around \$68,000.

City Manager Ron Holland said that the airport fund should have close to \$40,000 at the end of the fiscal year in the fall. He said that money could be used and borrow the additional \$28,000 or so from the utility fund to be paid back later.

He said this has been done in the past and has not been a problem. The two new hangars would rent for \$600 per month each and bring in about \$14,000 per year in revenue.

He also advised that although Eagle Lake has been approved for the grant money, if it is not used and the program is cancelled that the money would disappear.

He said that he had been told that the program would definitely come to an end, but no definite time has been given as of yet.

Council was advised that there is currently a waiting list for hangars at the airport.

"The more money we can bring in rental income at the airport, the less of burden it will be on taxpayers later," said Holland.

He said that the goal is to make the airport self sustaining or even profitable, and that he felt this project would help in that endeavor.

He also added that council has final approval on the project later and that until they approve a contract it is not a done deal.

Chriss Schiurring made a motion to go ahead and Larry Contreras seconded it. The motion passed by a 3-2 vote with John Young, Contreras and Schiurring voting for and Dave Curry and Jane Meldahl against.

In other council action: -Council discussed ambulance driver licensing and agreed to have the city attorney look over the ordinance.

-Designated Arnold Cardenas as the Rabies Control Authority for the city.

-Agreed to appoint Leonard Peters as Associate Municipal Judge for the city.

Regional Track Results

Following are final results for the regional track meet for Rice athletes.

Girls
200 Meter Dash-1, Foster, Cunneisha, 25.21.

100 Meter Hurdles-5, Cooper, Juanisha, 16.12.

4x100 Meter Relay 2A-3, Cooper, Juanisha; Foster, Cunneisha; Weeks, Clarenca; Toliver, Desiree; 49.75.

4x200 Meter Relay-4, Davis, Royshaniqua; Foster, Cunneisha; Weeks, Clarenca; Stevenson, Britt'nee; 1:46.04.

4x400 Meter Relay-8, Johnson, Hillary; Dota, Rebecca; Thomas, Katlyn; Woods, Marneikwa; 4:21.65.

Long Jump-1, Foster, Cunneisha, Rice, 17-08.50.

Triple Jump-1, Foster, Cun-

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Lightning Strikes Man South Of Columbus

A 22-year-old man was struck by lightning Monday, April 30, south of Columbus when strong thunderstorm moved through the county.

The man was identified as Greg Boswell of Kirkville, N.Y. He was at the Country Camp, which is connected to the Texas Bible Institute, on County Road 101.

A spokesman for the Colorado County Sheriff's Office, Troy Neisner said, details about the accident that occurred at 3:45 p.m. were sketchy, but the man was reported to be walking across a field when he was struck.

At one point, he said, the victim stopped breathing, but was

revived. He was taken by private automobile to Columbus Community Hospital and later transferred to Hermann Hospital.

The storm produced heavy rains and strong winds.

Neisner said there were scattered reports of downed trees and power lines and a road washed out in the Sheridan area.

The National Weather Service issued a tornado warning at one point, saying there were indications of a tornado east of Sublime in Lavaca County, moving east, but there were no reports of a tornado touching down.

There were reports of pea-sized hail in the Rock Island area.



A storm took out the branch of this tree on State St. on Monday afternoon. The branch knocked down a power line.