

Eagle Lake Headlight

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EAGLE LAKE, TEXAS

JULY 12, 2007



Recent heavy rains caused a large tree on the golf course to topple over. Not even two weeks into July, Eagle Lake is well over the average rainfall for the month.

Rain 10 Inches Above Normal On Year

While it may have seemed like Eagle Lake received an unusual amount of rain in June, rainfall totals, while above average, were nowhere close to records.

Rainfall for the year is at just over 30 inches and is outpacing the average by 10 inches.

5.65 inches of rain fell during June, which is almost exactly an inch more than the average June rainfall.

The record for rain in June is a whopping 20.20 inches in 1993.

So far in July it has rained 5.51 inches, which is already nearly three inches above average. The record for July is 10.25 inches set last year.

January was three inches above average with 6.57 inches while February was more than two inches behind with less than half an inch total.

March picked back up with 6.55 inches, nearly four inches above average and April was an inch and a half above average with 4.96 inches.

May saw rainfall two inches above average with 6.73 inches.

All rainfall figures courtesy of the David R. Wintermann Rice Research Station Texas A&M University System Research and Extension Center at Eagle Lake.

County Finishes Budget Workshops With Eye On Three Percent Raises

Colorado County commissioners, meeting Monday, tentatively agreed to earmark three percent pay raises for county employees next year as they wound up budget discussions.

The raises for all employees, including elected officials would total \$95,000.

County Auditor Raymie Kana said the commissioners had approved about \$500,000 in additional spending overall.

The budget does not project a change in the tax rate at this point, Kana said, but noted it does not include funds for possible courthouse restoration, which commissioners had said earlier could increase the tax rate by two to four cents per \$100 valuation.

She noted that total spending for the general fund is projected at approximately \$8.5 million, with income from all sources, including taxes and fees at \$7.5 million.

Kana said that in 2006, the county had projected a \$992,000 deficit in the general fund, but ended with a deficit of only \$87,000.

She said that a hearing on salaries for elected officials and the tax rate will be held in August, with a hearing on the budget in September.

She said that general fund is projected to receive an additional \$253,000 in revenue due to increased tax valuations.

The commissioners also finished going through the requests of several departments.

Following were some of the actions taken, subject to final approval.

--Put in the budget \$7,500 for a rain harvest system as a pilot project by the county extension agent.

The system would gather rainwater that could be used for irrigation.

County Agriculture Agent Dale Rankin said he would like to use the agriculture building, but County Judge Al Jamison said that might not be feasible if there is courthouse reconstruction and construction of a new annex.

No decision was made on the location of the project.

--Increased the county's contribution to Colorado Valley Transit from \$2,500 a year to \$5,000 a year.

--Agreed to put in the budget \$4,000 as mileage reimbursement for septic tank inspections. It was noted that records must be kept of mileage.

--Approved adding a clerk for the sheriff's department and additional clerk for justice of the peace precinct No. 2 for next year at a cost to the county of approximately \$30,000 per position, including cost of benefits.

--Agreed to include the purchase of 20 rifles in the sheriff's department budget for \$22,500.

--Agreed on additional funds to commissioner precincts for road maintenance. Kana said funds are traditionally allocated based on road mileage.

She said that Precinct 1 is earmarked for an additional \$50,000, Precinct 2 for an additional \$45,000, Precinct 3 for an additional \$55,000 and Precinct 4 for an additional \$44,000.

County Will Apply For Courthouse Grant

After hearing a presentation from an architect specializing in historic courthouse restoration, Colorado County commissioners voted Monday to apply for a grant of up to \$6 million for renovation work.

Originally, the commissioners had discussed spending \$3.3 million to fix the roof, windows and electric system.

They were told the grant would provide more funds for a complete restoration, but there were also some strings attached.

Those include removing part of the first floor offices of the tax assessor collector and county clerk, amounting to about 2,300 square feet.

Commissioners discussed building an annex to make up for that space and to provide for future expansion.

They noted that the county would still have to spend about \$3.3 million for the annex and costs associated with a complete renovation.

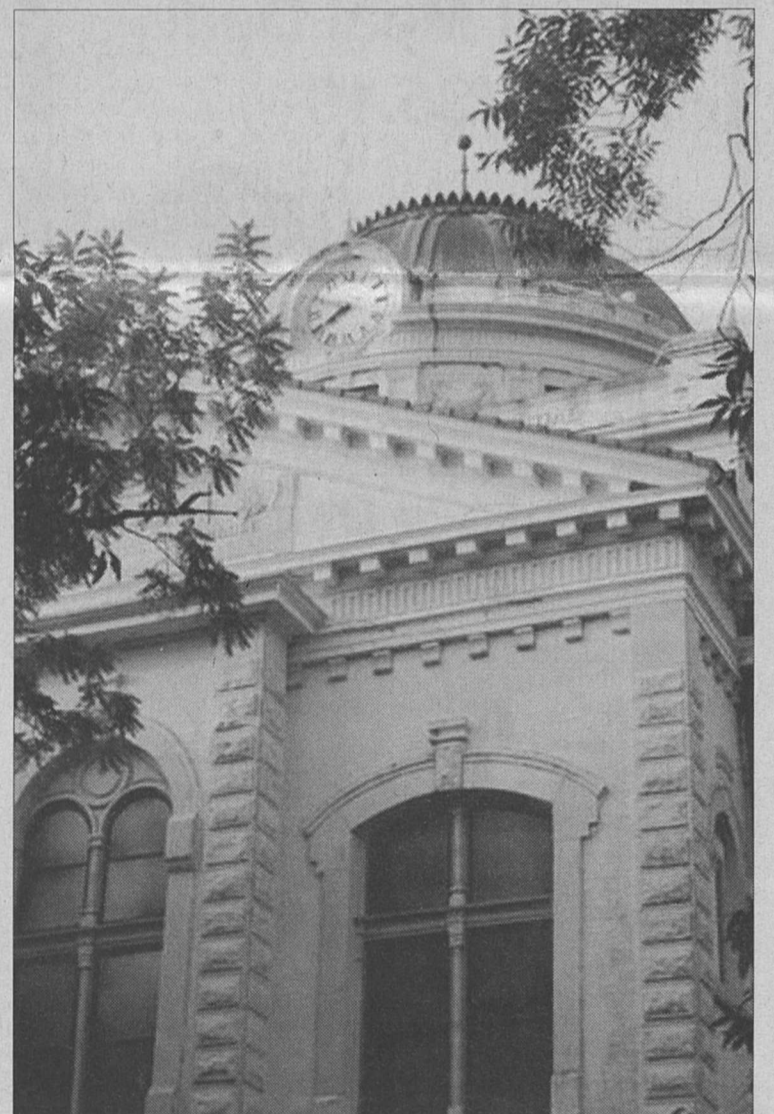
To raise the funds, commissioners had discussed earlier a tax increase of 2 cents to 4 cents to pay for work.

County Judge Al Jamison said the courthouse would probably have to be vacated for a period of as long as 18 months to two years.

Tere O'Connell, an architect with Volz and Associates, told the commissioners that the county stood "an excellent chance" of getting a grant if it agreed to remove the additions to the courthouse made in 1951 that included the first floor office space.

She also said the clock mechanism that is currently on the first floor would also have to be moved back to the top of the courthouse.

She estimated that total restoration costs for the courthouse would be in the range of \$7 million and the county could possibly get



The Colorado County Courthouse may soon undergo a major renovation. County Commissioners agreed to pursue a \$6 million grant for restoration. The county would spend about \$3.3 million in the process.

a grant of \$6 million.

Jamison said he felt that an annex to house offices displaced at the courthouse would be in the range of \$2 million.

He and commissioners noted that the county would still have to spend about \$3.3 million, but a grant would allow restoration of the courthouse and building an annex.

Without the grant, the county would pay \$3.3 million and not obtain additional office space.

Commissioners were also told that the county would have to spend \$50,000 to \$60,000 for a master plan for the courthouse as part of the grant application.

If the county obtains the grant, Jamison said, the county spent \$300,000 the county spent to repair the ceiling in the district courtroom would be applied to the county's 15 percent share of the project costs.

Commissioners agreed to hire Volz to draw up a master plan and apply for a grant from the state.

They tabled for later consideration, action on approving certificates of obligation to fund the courthouse work.

Jamison noted that the state Historical Commission will tell the county what has to be done if the grant is approved.

In other action, commissioners:

--Received an update on the county's 4-H program.

--Acknowledged a \$5,000 donation from Keith Lawyer to the sheriff's department to purchase a dog to detect narcotics.

--Kept the county's road and bridge fee unchanged at \$10 per vehicle.

--Agreed to explore use of a cooperative purchasing system for electricity at the county owned buildings and for the Precinct 4 justice of the peace.

--Approved an application of Anna Powell for a 42.03 acre subdivision in Precinct 3.

--After a closed session on personnel, approved allowing the Precinct 2 Peace Justice Richard Luhrs to hire part-time help at a cost of about \$6,400 for the remainder of the year.

--Increased the rate for the county to house jail inmates from outside the county by \$5 to \$40 a day.

NEWSBRIEFS

RCISD Summer office hours announced

Rice CISD Administration summer office hours are as follows: Monday through Wednesday, 7 a.m. to 5 p.m.; Thursday, 7 a.m. to 4:30 p.m.; Friday, CLOSED. Regular office hours resume Monday, August 20, 8 a.m. to 4 p.m.

Lexi's Benefit to be held Saturday

Lexi's Benefit to help Bobby and Brenda Meyer fight for grand-parents rights is to be held Saturday, July 14 at J'S Tree House. Meal will cost \$7 per plate and it will consist of brisket, butter potatoes and beans you can dine in or get it to go. Live auction will start at 3 p.m. and a drawing will take place at 8 p.m. For more information or to make a donation call 979-758-1512 or 979-758-1151. All proceeds go to help with legal fees.

Bernardo VFD barbecue is Sunday

The 42nd Bernardo Volunteer Fire Department will hold their chicken and sausage BBQ Sunday, July 15 at the Mentz Parish Hall. Dine-in adult plates are \$7; child's plate, 12 and under, \$3.50; drive thru plates, \$7. Serving starts at noon, coffee and tea included. Meat to go at the pit, drive thru line for plates to go. Music and entertainment all day. Stay and enjoy music by Johnny Underwood Solo Sounds. Drawing and auction at 1 p.m.

Men's softball league to get underway

The men's softball league will play their first game on Sunday, July 15. If you're not already registered do so by calling 281-989-2555. A lot of interest from out of town teams to play against our hometown teams has been shown. So sign up today.

Munke-Laux-Oeding reunion is July 15

The Munke-Laux-Oeding reunion will be held July 15 from 10 a.m. to 3 p.m. at Swiss Alp Farm Bureau Hall in Hwy. 77 between LaGrange and Schulenburg. The host family will provide meat, bread, and tea. Attendees are asked to bring side dishes or dessert. Advance reservation is requested. Call Imogene Williams, at 210/533-1746 or mail 4001 Skyridge Ave, San Antonio, TX 78210. The hosts will provide some items of interest to bid on. All are invited to donate items for this fun event. Bring an item(s) of interest to exchange and have the opportunity to choose from items others have brought in exchange. Appropriate items would be home canned products, crafts, needlework, unique glassware, etc., etc. Donations will also be accepted for the upkeep of this family cemetery. Hosts this year are Leo and Barbara Wick and Roy and Imogene Williams.

Parish of Nativity fundraiser is Sunday

The Parish of the Nativity will have a Fundraiser July 15 from 11 a.m. until 1 p.m. BBQ chicken with all the trimmings and the cost is \$7 per plate curb service or eat at the pavilion. A drawing with wonderful prizes will be held at 2 p.m. Come and join us and spend the afternoon with family and friends. Please help us support our parish.

WOW to meet Sunday

Woodmen of the World (WOW) Youth Lodge 4234 will meet at the Columbus High School parking lot on Sunday, July 15 at 2:30 p.m. for carpooling and to go to summer camp in Bellville. For information call 979-733-3636.

Bible School at First Baptist July 16-20

Vacation Bible School (VBS) will be held July 16-20 at First Baptist Church (FBC) in Eagle Lake. This year's theme is, "Game Day central: Where Heroes Are Made". VBS will run from 5:30 to 8 p.m. and is open to children who have completed kindergarten - 6th grade. For more information call the church office at 234-2571 or Scarlett Owen at 234-3166.

Cheerleading Mini Camp July 16-18

RHS cheerleading are sponsoring a mini camp for our future cheerleaders. It will be July 16-18 from 9 a.m. until 10:30 a.m. Cost is \$15 per person and \$10 every extra sibling (Age group 3-11). A tee shirt will be given to each participant. Camp will be held at the Eagle Lake Elementary School, Garwood School and Sheridan School. For more information call Katlyn Thomas at 979-234-3251.

Census Estimates Show Growth

The latest population estimates from the U.S. Census bureau show Eagle Lake's population rose to 3,723 as of July 2006.

Those figures were released last week. They mark an increase of 59 people since the 2000 census, or an increase of 1.6 percent.

The county, meanwhile, is showing growth of about 2.1 percent. The population for July 2006 for the county was 20,824, compared to 20,390 in the 2000 census.

At the same time, Fayette county's population grew 3.3 percent, according to the estimates, with a July 2006 population of 22,521.

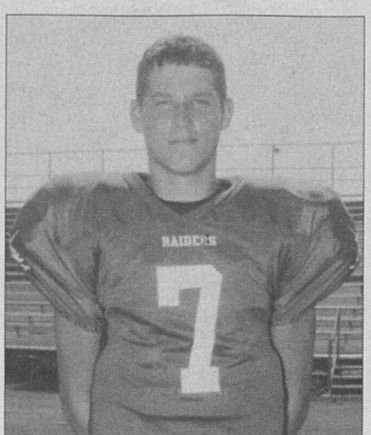
In Columbus, population estimates for the same period, show only a slight growth of 10 people to 3,916, from the 2000 census of 3,926.

Population estimates for the state of Texas for July 2006 were 23,507,783, an increase of 12.7 percent from the 2000 census.

Following are census estimates for several area cities and counties. The July 2006 is listed first, with the 2000 census figure in parentheses.

- Schulenburg 2,713 (2,699).
- Weimar 2,024 (1,981).
- La Grange 4,645 (4,478).
- Hallettsville 2,538 (2,345).
- Austin County 26,407 (23,590), 11.9 percent increase.
- Lavaca County 18,970 (19,210) 1.2 percent decrease.
- Wharton County 41,475 (41,188) .7 percent increase.

Cook Wins Statewide Punt Competition



Taylor Cook

Rice quarterback Taylor Cook won the punting competition Saturday at the 2007 Lone Star Kicking Challenge in San Marcos.

Cook finished first in the preliminary round and defeated Ryan Doerr from Katy in the final.

Cook averaged 41-yards per punt last season for the Raiders and was an All-State selection as a punter.

Cook, who will be a senior, has made a verbal commitment to attend the University of Miami in the 2008-09 school year.

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