

Seized Cash Will Take Two To Six Months Says County Attorney

It is expected to take two to six months before \$742,000 in cash seized last week as contraband becomes the property of the Weimar Police Department and the Colorado County Attorney's Office.

That was the estimate of County Attorney Ken Sparks.

"Obviously, it will be a high priority," he said.

The money was seized last week when Weimar Police received a tip that a bus would be moving through the area carrying a large amount of cash derived from criminal activity.

A bus matching a description of the one in the tip was stopped, and the cash, believed to be proceeds of illegal drug sales, was found in a search of the vehicle.

Three men on the bus denied knowledge of the money and were questioned and later released.

Sparks said it is doubtful the owners of the money will claim it because of the questions they would face.

Sparks filed a civil suit last week to have the money forfeited as contraband.

If it is not contested, he said, the money could be forfeited in as little as 60 days.

By a written agreement, the Weimar Police Department as the law enforcement agency that handled the case will get 70 percent or \$519,624.

By a written agreement, the county attorney's office, which handles the court suit and any criminal case, will get 30 percent, or \$222,696.

There is no set amount that would be given to any other agencies, such as the Eagle Lake Police Department, which provided the drug dog that "alerted" on the area where the cash was found.

Weimar City Manager Randal Jones said he was interested in provided "an equitable amount" to agencies that assisted, but said there has not been any discussion of what that would be.

He said once the case is finalized, he and Livingston would bring to the city council a recommendation on amounts to be paid to other agencies.

Jones said the money by law must be used for in the city's law enforcement.

Jones said the money can not be used to pay salaries. He said it could be used for in areas such as equipment, including vehicles.

Sparks also said he has not decided how to use the money his

office could receive.

He said that it can be used to supplement salaries of employees in his office, but not his own salary.

It can be used for "official purposes of the office," he said.

He said it can be used for office equipment or investigative equipment. He said it can be used be

used to purchase equipment for law enforcement agencies working in the county.

The money was placed in an interest bearing account. County treasurer Diane Matus said the money is in a variable interest account and is drawing 1.065 percent for the first month.

Sparks said his office is looking

at whether to pursue a legal case to forfeit the bus. He said the owner of the bus is known, and the bus has a lien on it.

He said he was told the bus was valued roughly at \$60,000 to \$85,000, and the bus has a \$19,000 lien on it.

Sparks said he was told the bus was leased.

Ex- Day Care Worker Guilty In Theft

A Columbus woman was placed on community supervision, ordered to spend 30 days in jail and pay restitution of over \$29,000 for embezzling money from a local day-care center.

On Nov. 17, Cathy E. Sturm, 48, admitted her guilt and was placed on 5-years deferred adjudication for embezzling money from the St. Paul Lutheran Creative Child Care Center of Columbus while employed as its director from 2004 to 2006.

She was ordered to pay restitution of \$3,000 up front and thereafter at the rate of \$500 per month.

The child-care center will

receive \$4,294.50 from the initial restitution payments for losses not covered by its policy of insurance.

District Judge W.C. Kirkendall also granted a restitution lien of \$25,333.20 in favor of the insurance company that insured against the loss.

The restitution lien is equivalent to a judgment in a civil suit.

The child-care center determined that cash payments

received by Sturm were pocketed instead of being deposited in the bank.

The discovery was made when the financial records were being reconciled after Sturm was discharged in early 2006.

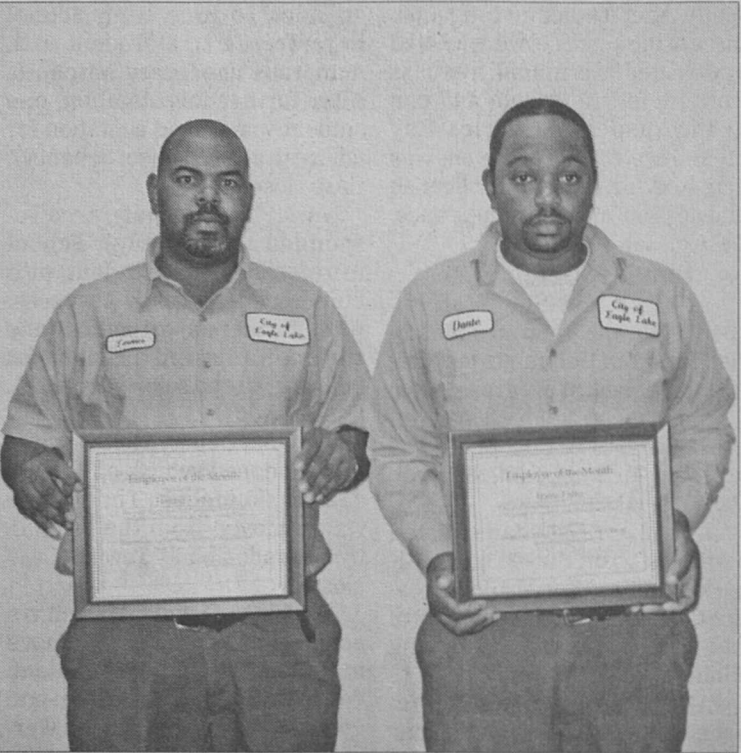
Colorado County Attorney Ken Sparks praised the work of Lt. Ron Myers of the Columbus Police department who spent long hours investigating the case and taking witness statements.

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EAGLE LAKE WEATHER REPORT

Information Courtesy of Texas A&M University System Agricultural Research and Experiment Station, Eagle Lake

Date	Temp (H/L)	Rainfall(in.)
Mon. 11-10-08	78/62	0.09
Tue. 11-11-08	82/59	2.00
Wed. 11-12-08	71/55	0.02
Thu. 11-13-08	69/55	0.00
Fri. 11-14-08	80/51	0.03
Sat. 11-15-08	61/33	0.00
Sun. 11-16-08	63/39	0.00



Thursday evening October 16, the City of Eagle Lake Public Works Department was host to the Guadalupe Valley Water Utilities Association meeting, held at the community center.

The members of the association are public works employees from eleven cities from Eagle Lake to Lockhart. As part of the program, each city has the opportunity to recognize employees who excel in public works.

On the recommendation of the Public Works Director, for their dedication and job performance, the members of the Sanitation Department were awarded the Employee Of The Month Award. Pictured are two of the department members, Terence Carter, left, and Dante Fuller.

Veterans Day Marked

Continued from page 11

the 6th grade students in singing the "Star Spangled Banner" and the student council presented a timeline of the American Wars. Then the 3rd, 4th, and 5th graders recited "Take a Moment to Thank a Veteran" and the Kindergarten and 2nd graders sang "My Country Tis of Thee". After the song, the 1st graders presented each veteran with a thank you card.

Mr. Meisner thanked all of the students and staff at Garwood for the wonderful program. He also invited everyone to view the Veteran's Memorial at the intersection of Hwy. 71 and Lion's Park Drive. Mr. Korenek also thanked everyone for inviting the veterans to the program. Mrs. Meisner then named all of the veterans in the local area and introduced

the veteran's that attended the program.

The veterans' and their spouses were invited to a cookie and punch reception held in the Garwood cafeteria.

Following is a list of all veterans at the program: Charles Pavlovsky, Alfred Prihoda, Leon Meisner, Bernard Kristynik, Jodie Kallina, Lawrence Berger, Lowell Miller, John Hester, Lydia Cooper, Meth Hoffman, Dale Hunt, Clem Korenek, Lawrence Pavlu, Frank Popp, Tony Schneider, Lawrence Shimek, and Edmund Zbrank.

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The holidays are a wonderful and very busy time of year. With all the parties, family gatherings, shopping, and baking, it can be easy to overlook one very important year-end task. Maximizing your dental benefits before January, especially if you've already met your deductible, can save you hundreds of dollars on necessary dental work. Most plans have a dental maximum that you are allowed per calendar year. If you don't use your benefits, you lose them. If you only used \$500 of a \$1,000 dental maximum, you will lose \$500 in benefits that you will never get back. On very extensive treatments plans, it is more cost effective to maximize dental benefits this year, and maximize next year's benefits to save more of your out of pocket expenses. Remember that dental plans help cover the cost of treatment - it will not cover the full cost of the specific treatment you may require. If you have been putting off your dental work, and want to use your dental benefits, now is the time to call your dentist to make an appointment. Most dental offices get very busy at the end of the year, and you want to allow enough time to complete your treatment. If you have any questions about how to maximize your insurance, call your dental office.

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The Eagle Lake Christmas



Sponsored by the Eagle Lake Chamber of Commerce & Agriculture, Inc. Visitor's Bureau and Office of Economic Development

Saturday, December 13, 2008

Please submit your entry by: Wednesday, December 10, 2008

Lineup: 5:00 pm-6:00pm Judging: 6:00pm- 6:30 pm Parade Starts: 6:45 pm

The Chamber Office will open at 5:00pm to sell baked goods, hot chocolate & light-up necklaces!

Entry Forms can be mailed, faxed or emailed to you.

Contact Information

Chamber@elc.net
979-234-2780
www.VisitEagleLake.com

Return completed entry form to:

Eagle Lake Chamber of Commerce
303 East Main Street
Eagle Lake, Texas 77434

The Chamber Office will be open before, during and after the parade. We will be selling Hot Chocolate, Baked Goods and Necklaces for the Kids! There is no fee to enter the parade; donations will be graciously accepted to offset expenses. Contact the Chamber office Tuesday thru Friday 8:30am-12:00noon for your entry form.

Real benefits found in live Christmas trees

Article reprinted by permission of the author, Sandra Bretting. The article originally appeared in the Houston Chronicle.

To dispel the notion that live Christmas trees deforest America, as well as to combat competition from sellers of fake Christmas trees, two Oregon growers have launched the "Coalition of Environmentally-Conscious Growers."

The coalition seeks to educate the public about what they see are the benefits of live trees. Their "Get Real, Go Green" public relations campaign, launched in late August, hopes to convince the public that live trees are the environmentally friendly option. According to the National Christmas Tree Association, between 30 million and 35 million real Christmas trees are sold in this country each year.

Conversely, 10 million fake trees were imported from China last year, which is the product's major manufacturer, according to the U.S. Department of Commerce. Houston's Kim Hooper, vice president of Houston Garden Centers, serves as a local spokesperson for the "Get Real, Go Green" campaign.

Hooper, 33, spoke with Chronicle correspondent Sandra Bretting about the reason for the campaign and what the group hopes to accomplish. Here are the excerpts.

Q: Lives trees still outsell fake ones each year. Why the need for the campaign?

A: Because artificial trees last forever, and people need to realize that they're bad for the environment. Most of the trees coming from China, which is having problems with lead products, as we all know. Plus, once you throw a fake tree in a landfill there's no telling how long it'll take to decompose, if ever.

On the other hand, real trees are good for the environment. Not only in the growing process - once you cut one down others are planted in its place - but after they're cut. They provide oxygen, and once they're recycled they can be used for mulch, barriers to stop soil erosion and other things that are good for us.

Q: Why now? Why launch the debate about real versus fake this year?

A: It's something we've been trying to get together for a long time. The growers and the coalition have been working on this for 10 to 15 years, but it's always been a matter of resources.

Q: How did Houston Garden Centers become involved in the campaign?

A: The coalition knew that we do TV ads and print ads, and they asked us to be a spokesperson because of that. Our family has been in this business for a very long time. My father started in it 45 years ago.

Q: What about people who say that to grow live trees, which usually take six to seven years to mature, also requires resources, like water, that could be better spent.

A: Nothing could be further from the truth. It doesn't take many resources to grow live trees and they provide so much. Real trees have two lives. Once you buy a tree, another is planted in its place. The misconception has always been that trees are cut from the forest. They're not, and they can be used for other things once you're done with them.

Q: We're almost at the Christmas season. How many trees will Houston Garden Center's sell at its 20 locations?

A: We'll sell about 100,000 trees between all of them.

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# OF SELLERS - 203	
PACKER COWS	
Higher dressing utility & cutter cows	44-50
Lower dressing utility & cutter cows	32-42
Thin Cows	14-30
PACKER BULLS	
Heavyweight bulls	50-58
Utility cutter bulls	45-50
STEERS	
#1	#2
150-300 lbs	108-123
300-400 lbs	95-126
400-500 lbs	90-116
500-600 lbs	80-104
600-700 lbs	79-89
700-800 lbs	75-85
HEIFERS	
#1	#2
150-300 lbs	93-120
300-400 lbs	84-108
400-500 lbs	91-108
500-600 lbs	80-100
600-700 lbs	77-87
700-800 lbs	73-83
STOCKER COWS	
Good Stocker Cow/	
Calf Pairs	750-875
Medium Cow/calf Pairs	550-800
Common Cow/calf Pairs	500-650
Good Stocker Cows & Heifers	625-850
Medium Stocker Cows & Heifers	425-625