

THE EAGLE LAKE HEADLIGHT

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Economy Makes Budget Tough

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State Capital



HIGHLIGHTS
By Ed Sterling

Stiffer penalties for violators

SB 52 by Sen. Judith Zaffirini, D-Laredo, was approved by the Senate on March 18. The legislation ratchets up penalties for illegally parking in a spot marked for disabled drivers. The fine for a first offense would increase from a maximum of \$500 to a maximum of \$750. Penalties would increase for subsequent offenses, up to \$1,100 and 50 hours of community service for a fourth offense.

Needle exchange bill advances

SB 188 by Sen. Bob Deuell, R-Greenville, was approved by the Senate on March 19. The bill would legalize needle-exchange programs. Deuell said his bill would allow non-profits to offer one-to-one syringe exchanges, plus drug abuse counseling and education programs for prevention of communicable diseases.

Austin growth faster than most

When Texans visit their capital and sense that it's grown recently, there are new statistics to back up the sensation.

The U.S. Census Bureau on March 19 reported Raleigh-Cary, N.C., and Austin-Round Rock, Texas, were the nation's fastest-growing metro areas between 2007 and 2008, based on July 1, 2008, population estimates for the nation's metropolitan and "micropolitan" statistical areas and counties.

Raleigh-Cary saw its population climb 4.3 percent between July 1, 2007, and July 1, 2008, to 1.1 million. Austin-Round Rock experienced a 3.8 percent increase, to 1.7 million.

Voter ID bill passes in Senate

The Texas Senate on March 18 passed Horseshoe Bay Sen. Troy

AUSTIN - Some Texans prefer swift action by the state Legislature because they want to see progress.

Then there are those who don't mind a slow pace and maybe want lawmakers to create as few new laws as possible.

We're now half way through the 140-day 81st regular session of the Texas Legislature and no substantive legislation has been debated on the House floor, although lawmakers filed a record number of bills before the March 13 bill-filing deadline.

Bills that have passed in the Senate and are waiting for House approval are in a waiting line.

There's a reason for it. It's a complicated puzzle to create a budget with the state economy slowing down and disagreement about how, where or if the \$16 billion in federal stimulus dollars should be spent.

One also could factor in that there's an extra learning curve with a new speaker, new committee chairs and new members learning to work as a unit.

Lawmakers want to be sure they understand exactly what is on the table before they offer up a 2010-2011 budget that could cost taxpayers \$170 billion. That is the work of the House Appropriations and Senate Finance committees.

The House Committee on Ways and Means will have to

figure out where the money will come from to fund the budget. That's a rough task when sales and use taxes won't be nearly as high as projected, property values have decreased and the state business activity tax is not producing as anticipated because it is based on businesses' profit margins.

There's a superstition that it's not a good idea to mention the possibility of a special session because it increases chances that the governor will call one, and that kind of talk is percolating.

But Jim Pitts, R-Waxahachie, chair of House Appropriations, and Rep. Garnet Coleman, D-Houston, chair of House County Affairs, seemed to deliver a different message when they talked to reporters March 20 about the progress of the session. Coleman expressed confidence that the House can and will pass a budget during the regular session.

However Gov. Rick Perry stated publicly he would veto an appropriations bill that doesn't meet his standards. And that seems to mean the bill had better not include language that translates to an acceptance of federal stimulus money for unemployment compensation.

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Let's Look Back...

24 YEARS AGO

April 18, 1985

Mr. and Mrs. Gary Briscoe of Austin announce the birth of their third child, a son named Scott Aaron born at 3:07 p.m., February 22, 1985 at South Austin Community Hospital. The baby weighed seven pounds and eight one quarter ounces and was 20 1/2 inches long.

Mrs. Ethel Lucille Swann, 81, of Sheridan, passed away at 7:30 a.m. on April 15 at Eagle Lake Community Hospital. Graveside

services and burial was held at 8 p.m. on Wednesday, April 17 with Rev. Robert Hessong officiating...

Funeral services for Richard Korenek Sr., 99, of Nada were held at 10 a.m. Monday, April 8 at St. Mary's Catholic Church in Nada. Burial was at St. Mary's Cemetery in Nada.

Mr. and Mrs. James H. Ishee

of Eagle Lake are proud to announce the engagement of their daughter, Kathryn Mae to Dale Howard Walker, son of Mr. and Mrs. Ralph G. Walker of Eagle Lake.

Senior graduate, Sharri Kay Webb, was honored Monday, April 8 at noon at a luncheon in Columbus at Schobel's Restau-

rant... Mrs. Joanne Hurley Dalby and Alan E. Dalby of Houston are pleased to announce the engagement of their daughter, Clare Christine to Curtis Edward Wegenhoft, son of Mr. and Mrs. Bill Wegenhoft of Eagle Lake. The wedding is planned for June 8 at Episcopal Church of the Holy Spirit in Houston.

Colorado County Courthouse Report

Twenty-Three Sentenced In County Court

Twenty three individuals were sentenced in Colorado County Court on Wednesday, March 18. They included:

Sonya L. Clayton, theft. Sentenced to one year deferred adjudication, fined \$250 plus court costs.

Juan Gaitan, possession of marijuana. Sentenced to 15 days in jail.

Jose Garza, possession of marijuana. Sentenced to three days in jail, fined \$350 plus court costs.

Natalie Jones, theft of stolen property. Sentenced to two years probation, fined \$250 plus court costs, \$2,692.56 restitution.

Tamara Ellis Murray, assault causing bodily injury. Sentenced to one year deferred adjudication, fined \$150 plus court costs, anger management, FV fee.

Kristen L. Valdez, possession of marijuana. Sentenced to six months deferred adjudication, fined \$250 plus court costs, drug class.

Robert Watson, possession of marijuana. Sentenced to 15 days in jail, fined \$500 plus court costs.

Tawanna Austin, criminal mischief. Sentenced to six months deferred adjudication, fined \$150 plus court costs.

Jose F. Casanova, wrong/fictitious/altared/obscured vehicle registration. Sentenced to 10 days in jail.

John Fuentes, resist arrest, search or transport. Sentenced to 30 days in jail.

Johnny Paul Hernandez, JP Appeal. Fined \$400.

Chase L. Hoelscher, possession of marijuana. Sentenced to one year deferred adjudication, fined \$250 plus court costs, drug class.

Christopher McCoy, possession of marijuana. Sentenced to one year deferred adjudication, fined \$250 plus court costs, drug program.

Ronald Luis McMillian, Jr., possession of marijuana. Sentenced to 20 days in jail.

Ronald Luis McMillian, Jr., possession of marijuana. Sentenced to 20 days in jail.

Leo Burnett Miller, criminal

trespass. Sentenced to 30 days in jail.

Matt Aaron Noska, driving while intoxicated. Sentenced to one year probation, plus court costs.

Jonathan O. Ortiz, driving while intoxicated. Sentenced to one year probation, \$500 plus court costs.

Anibal Roman, Jr., driving while intoxicated. Sentenced to 20 days in jail, fined \$500 plus court costs, \$900 restitution and one year driver's license suspension.

Brent Smith, possession of marijuana. Sentenced to three days in jail, fined \$350 plus court costs.

Karissa A. Talmage, theft of stolen property. Fined \$100 plus court costs.

Johnnie Tatum, possession of marijuana. Sentenced to three days in jail, fined \$500 plus court costs.

Mitchell S. Tavenner, possession of marijuana. Sentenced to one year deferred adjudication, fined \$250 plus court costs, drug class.

Anthony Barrios, resisting arrest/evading arrest. Sentenced to 180 days in jail.

LETTERS TO THE EDITOR

Reader Applauds Fire Department

Three cheers to the Eagle Lake Community and its Volunteer Fire Department for a job well done! And, in particular we want to thank the outstanding young volunteer firemen who responded to our out of control grass fire. They were Sam Castro, Tim Jones, Clint Krenek, Alex Ramirez, Alfred Torres, and Duryel Stevenson.

We have been clearing by bull dozer and chain saws over the past year upland and heavily brushed up river bottom land at my place off Lyle Lane near Ramsey. This land had become

badly overgrown over the past fifty years by unwanted hackberry, huisache, and yaupon. As a result of this work we have about 50 large piles of dry brush, which we decided to start burning last week with the lifting of the burn ban. Unfortunately, we lost control over the burning of one of these large piles and it quickly spread to the grass threatening the nearby dry forested land.

The Eagle Lake Fire Department responded promptly to our 911 call. The firemen were professional, they were prompt, they were respectful of the land,

and they were politely courteous to those of us who caused the fire. They did their job with efficient dispatch and prevented what could have been a destructive mess. And, the new grass fire fighting equipment of the Eagle Lake Fire Department is absolutely awesome!

The Eagle Lake Community should be rightfully very proud of its volunteer fire service and the extremely advanced state of equipment which it now possesses. Thank you all for your excellent service and good work.
 John H. Masey

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