

Eagle Lake Headlight

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EAGLE LAKE, TEXAS

JULY 30, 2009



Parents, faculty and students, led by Superintendent Michael Lanier, tour the new library at the junior high campus in Altair.

Commissioners Eye Possibility Of County Tax Rate Increase

Colorado County commissioners, during a budget workshop Monday, discussed the possibility of a tax rate increase for the coming year.

No specific amount was agreed on, but most of the discussion was on amounts ranging from 3.4 percent to 6.9 percent.

County Auditor Raymie Kana said the certified tax roll is \$1.642 billion, a decrease of \$16 million from last year's roll.

The current tax rate is 44.9 cents per \$100 valuation.

She said the effective tax rate, which would impose the same total taxes as last year if you compare properties taxes in both years, is 46.42 cents per \$100 valuation.

That is an increase of 3.4 percent.

She said that amount would generate an additional \$169,000 above the current rate.

Kana said the rate at which the county would be subject to a rollback election is 50.5 cents, or an increase of 12.4 percent.

She said that commissioners

would need to decide by Aug. 10 whether they are interested in raising the tax rate.

"If we don't raise taxes we will dig into our reserves," Jamison said.

Kana said projected revenue for the county's general fund is down \$300,000.

Of that amount, approximately \$212,000 is due to lower interest rates.

She also said projected revenue for commissioner precincts for road maintenance is projected to be down by \$175,000.

She said that a tax rate of 48 cents or a 6.9 percent increase would generate an additional \$300,000 for the general fund and \$103,000 for the road and bridge fund.

Jamison said it was his opinion that the commissioners "most likely will raise taxes."

Anticipating possible negative reaction from some taxpayers, he said:

"I would ask the citizens to tell us what services to cut," he said. Kana said spending for the

general fund for 2010 is projected at \$9.7 million, almost exactly the same as this year.

Spending from road and bridge funds is projected at \$3.1 million, down slightly from \$3.2 million this year.

The budget will also include \$1.5 million left from \$5 million in certificates of obligation issued to fund courthouse restoration and road improvements.

About \$1 million of the remaining funds are currently earmarked as a contingency for a courthouse annex and \$500,000 for road improvements.

After the meeting, Kana said there are funds in the budget to increase the amount the county provides to employees' retirement.

The commissioners had earlier talked about increasing the county's contribution rate to provide \$2 for every \$1 an employee contributes.

Currently, the county provides \$1.50 for every \$1 an employee contributes.

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NEWSBRIEFS

Farmer's Market Open Thursday's

The Eagle Lake Farmers Market is open on Thursday's from 4-6:30 p.m. under the community center pavilion. Bring your fresh produce to sell, or come to buy fresh, locally grown produce and homemade food. See our ad in this week's Headlight. For information about the market, call 979-243-4261.

Colorado County Fair broiler pickup

Colorado County Fair Exhibitors who ordered broiler chicks for the 2009 fair must pick them up at M-G, Inc. in Weimar on Thursday, July 30. The rules and regulations, record books and entry forms will be available to be picked up at the same time. Contact Chairman Lee Hasse at 979-263-4254 for more information. Broiler chicks must have been ordered and paid for at the Colorado County Extension office prior to getting the chicks.

Sts. Peter and Paul festival Aug. 2

Sts. Peter and Paul Catholic Church of Frelsburg will hold its annual festival Sunday, Aug. 2. The church is located 10 miles north of Columbus off FM 109, at 1031 Church Lane. A meal of fried fish, buttered potatoes, hush puppies, coleslaw, pinto beans, bread, pickles and tea will be served at 11 a.m. Meal tickets will be \$8 for a large plate and \$5 for a small plate. Throughout the day, listen to great music provided by Douglas Polasek. Hamburgers, nachos and snacks will be available at 3 p.m. The day will conclude with a free dance with music by the Red Ravens from 4-8 p.m. Come one, come all, to Frelsburg for a fun time!

CCA Banquet is Aug. 6

The CCA banquet will be held Aug. 6 at the Columbus KC Hall. The meal will consist of boiled shrimp, sausage, corn, potatoes and salad. Grilled chicken breast with sides will also be available. Tickets are \$30 pre-sale, \$35 at the door, youth 12 and under, \$10. Corporate tables available: \$600, Gold; \$400, Silver; Bronze tables, \$300 (reserved only). Tickets may be purchased from board members or at Johnny's Sport Shop, Drymalla Construction, Heffley's Mill, Columbus State Bank, Columbus Butane, Weimar Manufacturing and Main Package Store. For more information call Trey Barfield, 979-732-2074, DeWayne Kotria, 732-3615 or Ellen Labay, 979-733-6045.

Senior citizen's dance is Aug. 7

A senior citizen's dance will be held Friday, Aug. 7 at the Eagle Lake Community Center from 8 to 11 p.m. The Lazy Farmers will provide the musical entertainment. For more information call 979-234-2903.

FPC to celebrate 100th birthday

The First Presbyterian Church (FPC) in Eagle Lake invites everyone to come and celebrate the 100th birthday celebration. The program starts at 10:30, Aug. 9. Rev. John Howard Reed, former member and Pastor of the Central Presbyterian Church in Houston will be guest speaker. A program will follow with a BBQ lunch and signing of Sidney Struss's 4th historical book publication, The First Presbyterian Church of Eagle Lake - 100 Years. Only those books bought at the church will have a discounted pre-release price. Spread the word and make this a grand homecoming for the church! If you have any questions, please contact Mike Cooper at 979-234-2937.

RHS schedule pick up Aug. 12-13

Students attending Rice High School (RHS) can pick up their schedule in the main office on August 12 and 13 from 8 a.m. to 12 p.m. and from 1 to 4 p.m.

GMOBC Back to School explosion Aug. 14-15

Back to School Explosion "Armed for Battle" hosted by Greater Mt. Oliver Baptist Church (GMOBC) and Pastor D. Curry will be held August 14-15. Youth and young adults come on out and join us! Friday, August 14 session 3-6 p.m. Saturday, August 15 session 10 a.m. - noon, fun and fellowship noon - 4 p.m., praise and worship rally, 6 p.m. We are currently in need of sponsors to donate school supplies. If you or someone you know is interested in being a sponsor or for more information please call Paula Richardson at 979-234-7062.

Free youth camp at WCBC

Free youth summer camp hosted by SOAH ministries. Join us at White Cloud Baptist Church (WCBC) in Eagle Lake thru August 21, Monday-Friday 9 a.m. - 6 p.m. Ages up to 18 years old. Meals will be served. Program activities include youth forums, life skills, arts and crafts, reading and math enrichment, dance/music, table games, and physical fitness. For more information call 832-677-6320 or 832-483-2521.

Rice CISD Hosts Junior High Open House July 28

By Cameron Miculka

On Tuesday, July 28, Rice School Superintendent Michael Lanier hosted an open house for the new junior high school campus in Altair.

"This is incredible," said Peter Canaris, a parent who toured the school.

At the first of two sessions, there were about 40 parents and faculty.

Lanier first showed parents and faculty the new commons area for the junior high and high school area where students will eat.

He also showed visitors the new kitchen area that was built behind the commons area.

Following that, visitors went into the new auditorium, also to be shared between the high school and junior high school.

According to Lanier, the auditorium can seat 500 people, making it able to accommodate the entire high school.

Furthermore, every fifth chair along a row has a small foldout writing table.

The purpose of this, according to Lanier, is to permit the school to host tests such as college entrance examinations.

He also pointed out new features that were added such as a 24-foot descending screen, which allows for presentations to be made by faculty members.

Theatre department director Brennan Jobe demonstrated the new sound system.

Regarding it, Lanier said, "We didn't shortchange anything at all."

"This is really top of the line."

Visitors then followed Lanier on to the stage where they got the opportunity to see the new backstage area of the auditorium as well as the new light system that runs on a system of motors that allow the lights to ascend and descend electronically.

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Candidates Sought For Rice CISD Special Election

The resignation of Betty Schirring who occupied Position #6 on the Rice CISD Board of Trustees resulted in the Board of Trustees calling for a Special Election to fill the remaining term, which expires in May of 2011.

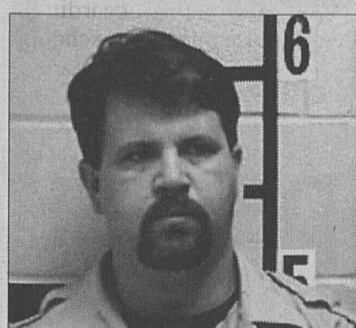
The Special Election was called for November 3, 2009. Any interested, eligible candidates may register for a place on the ballot beginning Monday, August 3, 2009 at the Rice Administration Building between the hours of 8:00 AM and 3:30 PM.

The last day to file for a place on the ballot is Wednesday, September 2, 2009 at 5:00 p.m.

Please call Melissa Peterson at 979-234-3531 ext. 1032 for more information.



The Eagle Lake Police Department and members of the Eagle Lake Volunteer Fire Department responded to a call Tuesday afternoon at 3 p.m. on Calhoun Road. What was thought to be a vehicle in a culvert, turned out to be a stolen vehicle that was dumped, stated Department of Public Safety Trooper, Clint Tipton.



Anthony McConnell Bigamist Receives Jail Term After Four Year Search

A convicted bigamist who ignored his probation requirements for four years was sentenced to spend 365 days in the county jail.

Anthony P. McConnell, 35, of Highlands and a former resident of Sheridan, was found guilty of bigamy following a one-day jury trial in 2005.

While still legally married to his common law wife of 11 years, he married Rita Gold.

The couple then resided together in Colorado County as husband and wife.

During this illegal marriage, McConnell spent over \$10,000 of Gold's money before deserting her.

At McConnell's punishment hearing four years ago, Colorado County Judge Al Jamison sentenced him to a one year term of probation, a \$2,000 fine, and the payment of \$10,000 restitution to Gold. McConnell appeared for his initial meeting with his probation officer but was never heard from again.

The Court issued a warrant for McConnell's arrest, but he eluded authorities for approximately three and a half years until his arrest on May 22, 2009.

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Giant Cicadas Seen Moving into County

By Cameron Miculka

Imagine sitting on a porch taking in another gorgeous Texas sunset when your ears are suddenly pierced by a constant, high-pitched whistle.

What you just heard was the call of a giant cicada, an insect that just recently moved into the Colorado County area.

Giant cicadas, characterized by their high-pitched calls, have recently migrated from surrounding counties into this county over the past year.

Chris Sansone, extension entomologist with the Texas AgriLife Extension Service explained how these cicadas are different from their smaller cousin, the dog-day cicada.

Sansone explained that these giant cicadas are not simply regular cicadas that happened to grow to a larger size.

"They're an entirely different

species and genus," explained Sansone.

He explained that giant cicadas are larger and have a longer life span.

Whereas dog-day cicadas only grow to be one and a half inches, a giant cicada can grow to be nearly two and a half inches.

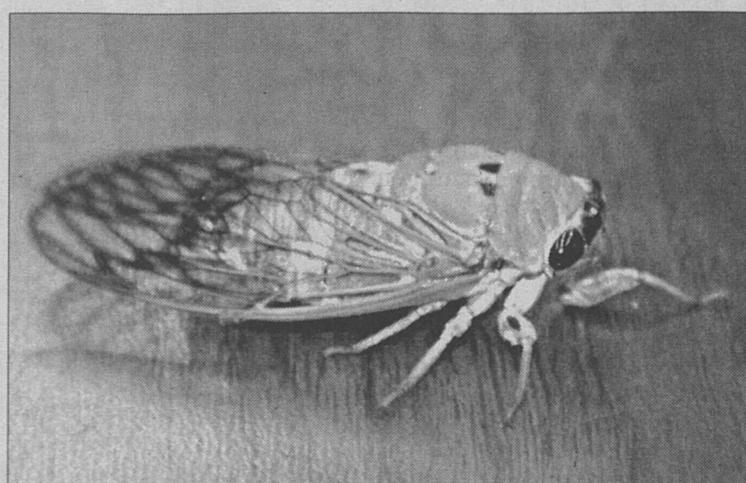
Also, dog-day cicadas have a life cycle of four to five years while giant cicadas can live for up to 17 years.

After a giant cicada lays its eggs, the eggs hatch and the larvae fall and begin burrowing into the ground.

There they feed on tree roots and plant matter for up to seven years when they come out of the ground and lay eggs, starting a new generation of cicadas.

The reason that the cicadas are so active now, says Sansone, is because the females are laying

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Above is a giant cicada, a species of cicada that has been heard "singing" in Colorado County.