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Ryan Moore hands the ball off to Kevin Ellis during the Raiders scrimmage against Columbus August 13.

Rice Board Adopts Budget; No Change On Tax Rate

The Rice CISD Board of Trustees voted to adopt a balanced budget of \$12,162,208 during its regular meeting on August 24.

Last year's budget was slightly larger at \$12.335 million.

They also voted to set the tax rate at \$1.28542 per \$100 of valuation. The tax rate is the same as the current tax rate.

"It is a tight budget, but I think we have taken care of everything," said Assistant Superintendent Bill Hefner.

The board also got a report on TAKS scores for last year.

The district as a whole was rated as Academically Acceptable.

Rice High School, Eagle Lake Junior High and Eagle Lake Elementary were rated Academically Acceptable. Sheridan received an Exemplary Rating and Garwood was rated Recognized.

Superintendent Michael Lanier said that the district was rated on 24 out of a possible 25 categories and that 16 of those

categories had a 90 percent passing rate or better.

He said the Garwood campus was one category away from being Exemplary and that Eagle Lake Elementary was two categories from being recognized.

He said that the students, parents and staff in the district deserve the credit because everyone has worked very hard to bring the scores up in the last couple of years.

"Everyone has done a tremendous job," said Lanier.

He said that the district's progress is especially impressive given its nearly 70 percent economically disadvantaged population and the fact that the standards get tougher every year.

"There are more unacceptable districts and campuses statewide this year than ever," he added.

Lanier also reported that everything went exceptionally smooth on the first day of classes, especially considering all the changes that have taken place

since the end of school in the spring.

In other board action: Trustees heard an update on Rice Junior High. Trustees were told that they are working on finishing up the last touch-ups and that there were just a few things here and there that needed to be taken care of. Hefner said that the school is basically complete and that they came in under budget and did not have to use any contingency funds.

Trustees got an update on the Eagle Lake Intermediate School project. They were told that groundwork is underway and that the foundation would be going in soon.

The board voted to designate \$500,000 of its fund balance for future construction.

The board also voted to purchase a monument and plaque to be dedicated to the veterans of Rice CISD. It will be installed at the site of the new flagpole in front of the high school. The monument and plaque will cost \$4,875.

Rice Opens Season In Wharton

The Rice Raider football team kicks off the 2009 season in Wharton on Friday night.

Game time is set for 7:30 p.m.

The Raiders come into 2009 with back-to-back state semifinal berths on their resume and will look for more of the same this

season.

Rice is ranked No. 6 in the state by Dave Campbell's Texas Football Magazine and is the No. 5 team on the Associated Press Pre-Season Poll.

Texas Football Magazine predicts Rice as the winner of District 26AA, with East Bernard and Schulenburg rounding out the playoff spots.

The Raiders last year had the most successful season in school history going undefeated until the state semifinal loss to Kirbyville.

Key returning players for the Raiders on offense are QB Myles Dumont and WR Mario Hull. Dumont threw for over 2,000 yards and 31 touchdowns last year and Hull had nearly 800 yards and nine touchdowns. Linemen Jared Kastor and Ryan Korenek will anchor the offensive line.

Defensive players to watch are LBs Damien Steven, and Kevin Ellis; DBs Carlos Sosa and Francisco Vasquez; DT Chris Dorsey and safety Cody Lantelme.

Weimar QB Brixx Hawthorne is picked as pre-season Offensive MVP by Texas Football Magazine and Rice's Stevens is the Defensive MVP pick.

County Commissioners To Vote On Budget, Tax Rate Sept. 14

Colorado County commissioners, meeting on Monday, Aug. 24, agreed to hold a public hearing on Sept. 14 on a proposed budget with expenditures of \$13.7 million for the fiscal year, starting Jan. 1.

The budget is proposed to be funded by a tax rate of 46.429 cents per \$100 valuation.

That is an increase of 1.529 cents per \$100 valuation, or 3.4 percent from the current rate.

The rate is what is termed the effective rate, which is designed to bring in the same amount of revenue in 2010 as in 2009 on property that was on the tax rolls both years.

There was little discussion at Monday's meeting.

At an earlier meeting on Aug. 10, commissioners had voted for the proposed rate by a 4-1 vote.

Voting in favor were Commissioners Herbie Helmcamp, Doug Wessels, Darrell Gertson and Tommy Hahn, with County Judge Al Jamison opposed.

Jamison had proposed a rate of 48 cents per \$100 valuation, a 6.9 percent increase, from the current rate.

However, that motion did not receive a second.

County Auditor Raymie Kana said the final vote on the tax rate would take place in September.

The 46.429-cent rate will bring

in an additional \$169,159 in tax revenue in the coming year, according to estimates by Kana.

Kana said she had taken out of the budget approximately \$2 million for courthouse renovations and repairs, since that was not an expenditure that will reoccur.

County officials had earlier noted that the county is faced with a loss of about \$110,000 from lower oil and gas values.

They also pointed out that the county would receive about \$180,000 less in interest due to lower interest rates.

The budget contains no pay increase for county employees, but it does have funds to increase the amount the county provides to employees retirement.

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

Commissioners had discussed contributing \$2 for every \$1 an employee contributes.

Increasing that funding will cost \$184,000.

In other action, commissioners:

--Approved a proclaiming designating Sept. 10 to 13 as "Colorado County Fair Days," and approved the use of county personnel at the fair grounds during working hours.

--Authorized applying for a grant of \$24,880 from the state for

the home-delivered meal grant operated by Wharton County Junior College.

--Approved an agreement to backup computer data from the county clerk's office at an offsite location for \$4,319.

--Approved renewing an inter-local agreement for a regional auto theft enforcement task force.

--Set sheriffs and constables fees for 2010, the same as currently.

--Were told that it would take about eight weeks to get parts to repair the courthouse elevator and would take about five weeks for the actual work. A portable handicapped accessible restroom will be rented until the repairs are made.

--Were told that repairs to the courthouse dome and roof should be complete in November and the removal of the scaffolding around the courthouse should start next week.

--Received and reviewed the audit for the past fiscal year.

--Appointed the county judge to execute a contract for electricity through the Houston Galveston Area County energy-purchasing program.

--Authorized consolidation of voting precincts, reducing them from 12 to 8 for the November constitutional amendment election.

NEWSBRIEFS

Cheerleader uniforms to be sold

Rice JH cheerleaders will be selling previously worn uniforms at Thursday and Friday home games until stock is sold. Come by the table and suit your little cheerleader up in style!

Farmers Market Open Thursday's

The Eagle Lake farmers' market will be open on Thursday at the community center pavilion from 4-6:30 p.m. Gardeners and farmers, come share your locally grown food with your neighbors. Just show up and set up under the pavilion roof. You are welcome if you have a lot to sell, or just a little. Contact Randall Spalinger at rwsal@elc.net or call 979-243-4261. Late season produce is still available, as are home canned items.

Mt. Sinai musical Aug. 29

Mt. Sinai Evangelical Ministries celebrates their annual musical on Saturday, August 29 starting at 6:30 p.m. and Church pre-anniversary celebrating three years on Sunday, August 30 starting at 3 p.m. with Rev. T. Scott as the guest speaker. We are inviting all churches to be a part of this. Please bring your choir praise team, singing, groups, soloist, etc. Please contact Rachel Flowers for more information at 979-234-3803.

White Cloud workshop Aug. 29

White Cloud Baptist Church (WCBC) will be having a Women's Day Workshop on Saturday, August 29. Registration will be at 9 a.m. and program will be at 10 a.m. The women's day program will be held Sunday, August 30 at 11:30 a.m. All is welcome please come out to worship with us in Jesus name.

Barchak benefit is Aug. 29

A benefit for funeral expenses for Darlene Meyer Barchak (mother of Brandi Barchak and David Allen Meyer and sister of Bobby Meyer) will be Saturday, August 29 at the Tree House on Glen Flora Rd., Eagle Lake. A barbecue meal will be served from 11:30 a.m.-1 p.m. Plates to go or dine in. Live auction starts at 3 p.m. Music will be provided by Wild Fire. Donations may be given directly to Kubena Funeral Home, 507 South Main Street, Hallettsville, Texas 77964. For more information call 979-758-1512 or 758-1151.

Lamb and goat clinic Aug. 29

There will be a lamb and goat clinic at the fair grounds on August 29 at 10 a.m. Sam Contos from Santa Fe will be in attendance to help every exhibitor with their animal. Bring your project so you can get help with showing, feeding and any other questions you may have.

Garwood Meet the Teacher night Aug. 31

Garwood Elementary will be having Meet the Teacher night on Monday, August 31 from 5:30-7 p.m.

Mandatory safety meeting set

A mandatory safety meeting for 4-H Archery Project - Colorado County Shooting Sports will be held at the Columbus High School Cafeteria on Sept. 3, from 7-8 p.m. All area folks that wish to participate in the 2009 - 2010 4-H Archery Project must attend this safety meeting. Participants must be either nine years old, or be in the 3rd grade through 18 years of age. Bows, arrows, targets all provided. Cost is \$1 per archer for the entire season.

St. Mary's parish festival is Sept. 6

St. Mary's Parish annual festival and homecoming will be held on Sept. 6 at the Nada Community Center. BBQ beef and sausage dinner served from 11 a.m.-1:30 p.m. Adults, \$7.50, children under 12, \$4 includes tea and dessert. Drive-thru plates to go will be available until 1 p.m. Enjoy dinner music while you dine in the air-cooled hall and see what the ladies have to offer in the bazaar and pastry booths. An auction begins at 1 p.m. Food and refreshments will be served all day and evening. Activities throughout the day include bingo, variety walk, kids games, train ride, bouncing buddies, special appearance by "Rainbow the Clown," and entertainment by DJ "Big Mo" and karaoke by Frankie C. Antique tractor and equipment exhibition from 10 a.m.-4 p.m.; parade of tractors at 11:30 a.m. and 4 p.m. A drawing at 8:30 concludes the festivities.

Immaculate Conception homecoming set

You are invited to attend the annual bazaar and homecoming of Immaculate Conception Church, at the KC Hall in Sealy, Sunday. Continued on back page



County Proclaims Fair Days September 10-13

Colorado County Commissioners, meeting Monday, approved a resolution designating Sept. 10 to 13 as "Colorado County Fair Days." Front, from left: Darrell Gertson, Tommy Hahn, Judge Al Jamison, Herbie Helmcamp and Doug Wessels. Back: Jerry Henneke, Darlene Hayek, Kim Dyer, Diane Matus, Pamela Potter, Jane Meldahl, Margaret Besch and Raymie Kana.