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Twenty-Two New State Laws To Take Effect On January 1

AUSTIN -- The 80th Texas Legislature last spring passed 22 pieces of legislation enacting state laws to take effect Jan. 1.

Here is a whittled down version of what just a few of those new laws do, based on analyses published by the House Research Organization and the Senate Re-

search Center.

* HB 271 by Rep. Veronica Gonzales, D-McAllen, amends the Property Code by requiring a home seller to disclose to a buyer whether they are aware of any previous use of the residence as a methamphetamine lab.

* HB 310 by Rep. Tony

Goolsby, R-Dallas, amends the Transportation Code so that a vehicle's license plate and registration transfer with the person selling or trading in that vehicle.

* HB 481 by Rep. Jim Jackson, R-Carrollton, amends the Transportation Code to allow the seller of a used vehicle to report the sale to TxDOT through the agency's Web site within 30 days, in lieu of filing a written and signed transfer notice. The bill also increases the penalty for the buyer of a used car that did not transfer the title within the 20 business-day grace period.

* HB 538 by Rep. Bill Callegari, R-Katy, amends the Tax Code to allow a property owner to postpone their appraisal protest one time without showing cause, and increasing the postponement period from 15 to 30 days.

* HB 1751 by Rep. Ellen Cohen, D-Houston, amends the Business and Commerce Code and Government Code by imposing a fee of \$5 on a sexually oriented business providing live nude entertainment. Up to \$25 million in money generated by the fee, per fiscal biennium, goes to the state's sexual assault program fund. The amount of money received from the fee in excess

of \$25 million goes to the state's general revenue fund.

* HB 3495 by Rep. John Otto, R-Dayton, amends the Tax Code regarding the notice of an open meeting at which a governing body of a taxing unit will vote on a tax increase.

The notice now must include:

- Dates on which the first and second public hearings on the proposed tax increase were held;
- Total tax revenue raised at last year's tax rate;
- Amount of total tax revenue proposed to be raised excluding tax revenue to be raised from new property added to the tax roll;
- Amount of total tax revenue proposed to be raised including the tax revenue to be raised from new property added to the tax roll;
- The proposed tax rate; and
- The mailing address of the location where the meeting to vote on the tax rate will be held.

A complete listing of new laws taking effect on Jan. 1 can be found by using the bill search function at www.legis.state.tx.us/.

Murdock named Census director

The U.S. Senate on Dec. 20 confirmed Steve H. Murdock as director of the U.S. Census

Bureau.

Nominated for the federal agency post by President George W. Bush, Murdock has been based at the University of Texas at San Antonio, serving as director of the Texas State Data Center.

State agency warns of scammers

The Texas Department of Insurance cautions seniors to beware of suspicious sales practices by scammers who represent themselves to be insurance agents.

Be especially cautious of unsolicited contacts in which someone tries to obtain information by asking another to complete studies or surveys or asks nursing home personnel to gather the information, the state agency said.

Agents and companies must be licensed in Texas to sell insurance. To verify a license, call toll-free, 800-252-3439.

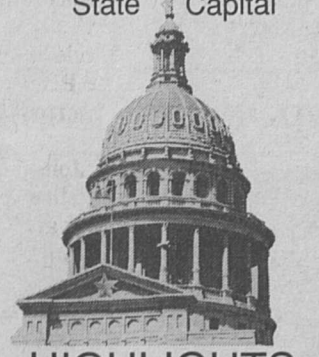
TCEQ approves penalties

The Texas Commission on Environmental Quality on Dec. 19 approved penalties totaling \$593,897 against 76 regulated entities for violations of environmental regulations.

Among those many violations were 13 for air quality, 14 for mu-

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State Capital



HIGHLIGHTS
By Ed Sterling

nicipal waste discharge, 10 for public water system and seven for water quality.

Warning: think before giving drink

Alan Steen of the Texas Alcoholic Beverage Commission reminds folks it is against the law to give alcohol to anyone under 21 (other than your child) even in your own residence, even with parent's permission. Maximum criminal penalties for violators include up to a \$4,000 fine, up to one year in jail and an automatic suspension of a driver's license for six months upon conviction.

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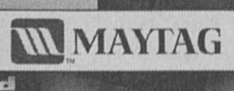


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Let's Look Back...

December 15, 1983

Lucille Marie Mascheck and Jerry Wayne Gilmore exchanged wedding vows in a double-ring ceremony Saturday, November 19 at 4 p.m. in Our Lady of Perpetual Help Catholic Church in Eagle Lake. The Reverend R.J. Widacki officiated...

The annual VFW Christmas dinner held Wednesday, Dec. 7 was enjoyed by 42 members of VFW Post 8783, according to Post Commander Melvin Stancik...

Kevin Hoffman, son of Therry and Lisa Hoffman of Nada celebrated his third birthday December 8 at 3:30 in his home.

January 7, 1960

Garwood Postmaster W.X. (Dickie) Priesmeyer will become Rural Mail Carrier beginning Jan. 9 succeeding M.L. Neiman who retired on August 31 after 37 years of service...

46.55 inches of rain in 1959 was recorded at the lake plant of the Lakeside Irrigation Company...

Lester Bunge of Garwood was appointed by the 11 Annual San Antonio Stock Show and Rodeo as Official Ambassador to the Exposition...

Ford Motor Company will begin selling Falcon Station Wagons in spring...

Eagle Lake Eagles opened

district play with a 49 to 46 victory over Sealy host Dulles Friday. Gerry Clippson led scoring with 24 points and Billy Uzzell hit 22, and Walter Sommer, three.

24 & 48 YEARS AGO

Sheriff Thanks For Santa Program

Sheriff R.H. Wied would like to thank everyone that contributed in making the 2007 Deputy Santa Program a great success.

With your generous contributions and support we were able to collect 147 bicycles during the bicycle drive that was held the first of December.

These bicycles, scooter, tri-cycles and wagons were given to children throughout the Colorado County area, who might have otherwise had a less fortune Christmas.

The Deputy Santa Program requires a lot of hard work, but without support in donations of cash and bicycles, the program would not be successful in enlightening the children in our County that need the help.

The program has been a huge success, since Sheriff R.H. Wied began the program 10 years ago.

In allowing Deputy Santa the chance to give a child a bicycle, which in the past has been asked for over and over, this year we were able to make a lot of wishes come true.

The expression of joy, tears and love shared by the children and parents that were recipients

meant more that any one person could ever know.

Sheriff R.H. Wied would like to also extend a great thanks to the following businesses, organizations and individuals in the Community that also helped in contributing to the Deputy Santa Program: Jim and JoAnn Bunge, TD Landscape, Mr. and Mrs. L.A. Dittlinger, Marilyn Urban, David and Elvera Schmidt, James Young, Steven Lorentzson, Larry and Laura Bugeja, Pat Bonsal, Mary Ordner, Columbus RV Park, Leopold Grain, Inc., Wal-Mart Distribution Center, KULM and KNRG, Weimar Mercury, Nada Knights of Columbus No. 3371, Gus and Susie Strauss, Sheridan Dairy Delite, Ken Sparks, David and Jennifer Peacock, B&D Services, Inc., Senior Citizens of 1513, Larry Wiese, Corcoran Limousin Ranch, Michael Waligura, Action Bail Bonds, Gina Valdez, Sam's Club #4764, K.J.Z.T. Lodge No. 17,

Banner Press Newspaper, Eagle Lake Headlight, Michael and Kelly Korenek, Don and Charlene Morrison, Ralph and Charlene Broadstone, Tim and Bonnie Roberts, James and Barbara Weishuhn, Jeanette Nance, Todd and Lisa Korenek, Tri-County Realty, LLC, GiGi Daley, Milentz Self-Storage, Columbus Post Office Employees, Columbus Wal-Mart, David and Irene Wavra, Colorado County Citizen, and Robert and Donna Shafer.

This program has grown to be what it is because of all the contributors that give year after year.

Also, thanks to all the workers and volunteers that organize and work so hard to make this program a continued success.

Again, thanks for your help in making this year's Deputy Santa Program a huge success.

R.H. Wied, Sheriff and Staff

Never Too Late To Improve Your Health

A new study has an important message for the elderly: It's not too late to improve your health through diet and exercise, even if you've had an unhealthy lifestyle in the past.

Published in the "American Journal of Clinical Nutrition," the report found that adult aged 65 and older can have significant health improvements with simple and realistic lifestyle changes.

The study found that risk can be reduced for many diseases -- including obesity, cancer, cardiovascular disease and osteoporosis.

"I think this is an extremely important and positive message. Many elderly people feel that it is too late for them to improve their health, but that is simply not true," said the paper's lead symposium editor, Dr. Richard S. Rivlin, professor of medicine at Weill Cornell Medical College and attending physician at NewYork-Presbyterian/Weill Cornell.

Dr. Rivlin analyzed how the elderly can ward off risks to their health late in life by improving body composition -- lowering fat and boosting muscle mass.

Adhering to a low-calorie and low-fat diet high in vegetables and fruits - combined with a regular exercise plan -- can help the elderly stave off the diseases of aging.

"When measures to combat chronic disease are started in

one's 60s and 70s, there are still definite benefits. But older adults must realize that there is no quick fix. They must change their lifestyles," said Dr. Rivlin.

Here are his specific findings:

Lowering high blood pressure or hypertension -- a major risk for cardiovascular disease -- through improved diet and exercise had more dramatic health benefits for the elderly than for any other age group. Control of hypertension could potentially prevent one-fifth of coronary heart disease cases in men, and 30 percent in women.

Older adults who adhered to a low-calorie diet with regular exercise had lower rates of cancer. In one study, risk was reduced by nearly 50 percent.

Benefits of weight training include increased ability to burn calories and prevention of osteoporosis.

Calcium and vitamin D supplements for seniors helped slow rates of bone loss and reduce the number of bone fractures.

"Our study reviews and presents the most up-to-date information showing the influence a healthy lifestyle may have on cardiovascular disease, cancer and osteoporosis," said Dr. Rivlin. "I also believe that the risk for other diseases, like diabetes and pulmonary disease, can also be avoided through later intervention. But, the earlier, the better."

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