

Gladewater Mirror

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Thursday, June 20, 2024

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1 Section, 8 pages

50¢

WOISD Super resigns, Parker named interim Board, super move forward, separately

By James Draper

No details have been provided about what led White Oak Superintendent Dr. William Paul and the WOISD School Board to part ways, but the conclusion became public Friday afternoon – the trustees officially accepted the district chief's resignation June 14, less than 15 months after he was hired.

A joint statement released after Friday's special session includes thanks and praise from both sides but no substantive information about the apparent impasse between the school's chief executive and its elected officials. Both sides say they won't comment beyond the agreed-upon message.

According to the release, "An Agreement has been reached which allows Dr. Paul the ability to pursue other interests and permits the Board to pursue hiring another Superintendent," the statement reads. "The Board and Dr. Paul have entered into the Agreement believing it is in their respective best interests and in the best interests of the District."

Hired in March 2023, it's been a little more than a month since Paul took an indefinite personal leave, and there's been little public information shared since. Meanwhile, Asst. Supt. Jack Parker was tapped to handle the district's day-to-day business as 'acting' superintendent and, as of Friday's meeting, he's now the official interim.

On Monday, the trustees spent the better part of four hours behind closed doors before returning to open session. After approving supplemental pay for Parker and fielding criticism from community members about the lack of information on the leadership issue the past month, they adjourned for the night.

Shortly after noon the next day came the announcement of Friday's special meeting and the anticipated resignation.

On June 14, after opening the meeting at 12:02 p.m. the board entered 'executive session' within two minutes and remained behind closed doors until 12:58 p.m.

The rest of the meeting took just a couple of minutes.

Upon their return to open session, the board members asked if any audience members wanted to comment. With no takers, the group proceeded into two votes – there was no public discussion on either.

Trustee David Trest moved to approve Paul's resignation, effective June 30, under the terms agreed upon in closed session, authorizing WOISD Board President Lance Noll to sign the relevant resignation and release agreement.

Seconded by Board Secretary Donna Stagner, the motion was unanimously approved and followed by a motion from trustee Jessica Hughes to appoint Parker the district's interim chief.

Per Hughes' motion, the board opted to table, for now, the search for a permanent successor.

Seconded by trustee Ricky Bodovsky, the motion was likewise unanimously approved before the board adjourned at 1 p.m.

Noll apologized to the various members of the media for being reticent about the development, noting the school board members have been instructed not to comment.

WHITE OAK INDEPENDENT SCHOOL DISTRICT JOINT STATEMENT OF THE BOARD OF TRUSTEES AND DR. WILLIAM PAUL

Dr. William Paul has announced his resignation as Superintendent of Schools for the White Oak Independent School District. An Agreement has been reached which allows Dr. Paul the ability to pursue other interests and permits the Board to pursue hiring another Superintendent. The Board and Dr. Paul have entered into the Agreement believing it is in their respective best interests and in the best interests of the District.

On behalf of the entire District, the Board of Trustees expresses its sincere appreciation to Dr. Paul for his efforts while serving as Superintendent of this great school district and its wonderful students, parents and administrators, and for the many achievements and accomplishments of the entire District team during Dr. Paul's tenure as Superintendent.

Dr. Paul thanks the present and past Board of Trustees for providing him with the opportunity to serve in the White Oak Independent School District. A school district is measured by the commitment of the Board, staff and community to its children and their achievement. This District is indeed so committed. Dr. Paul would like to express his heartfelt appreciation to the staff and community for their support of the District's programs and services during his term as Superintendent.

Success requires hard work, dedication, leadership and vision. The Board and Dr. Paul wish to acknowledge and recognize the teachers, principals, administrators, staff, students, parents and patrons who have all contributed to the District's accomplishments.

The Board extends its best wishes to Dr. Paul in his future endeavors. On its part, the Board will soon begin its search for a new Superintendent as not to disrupt the District's operations.



Gray Scott fishes off the Lake Gladewater pier as other anglers take to the water Monday morning. It may be hot, but its never too hot to enjoy fishing on Lake Gladewater.

Photo by James Draper

White Oak kicks off new comprehensive plan project at no cost to community

A grant of up to \$300,000 of storm recovery dollars is slated to fund a new comprehensive plan for White Oak to help steer the city's progress for the foreseeable future.

During their monthly meeting June 11, council members officially chose GrantWorks to administer the monies and develop the plan – at no cost to the city.

In other business, the group approved a variance for a carport and took a series of votes paving the way for a new housing addition.

Tuesday's meeting also included a new oath of office for Place 5 Councilman Kevin Hood and the swearing-in of council newcomer Danny Kinsley, appointed by the council to Place 1 after Dana

Mizell stepped away from the seat to become White Oak municipal judge.

According to GrantWorks' Nick Finan, the coming plan will cover all aspects of city infrastructure – parks, water, sewer, drainage, etc. – in a "living document" to be updated every five years as the

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GW Council weighs update to panhandling regulations

By James Draper

Some out-of-town nonprofit panhandlers are in the clear as far as local ordinances are concerned, but the Dallas-based group's recurring solicitations at the intersection Hwy. 80 and 271 has prompted complaints and a proposed tightening of Gladewater rules.

It's worth repeating that the visitors from the Voices of New Life outreach haven't violated any state or local regulations. Wearing high-vis clothing, carrying buckets emblazoned with their mission, smiling and asking for donations, they've endured the heat to collect on drivers' generosity toward their religious-exempt North Texas ministry.

Their efforts are covered by Gladewater's permitting exemption "for a charitable, educational, patriotic, philanthropic, or religious purpose." That said, there have been scores of calls and concerns to city officials about roadway panhandling, and relevant new rules are on tap for council deliberation this week.

Gladewater Building Inspector Al Harrison wears multiple hats at City Hall, and he's been working with Police Chief Kyle Ready and other local leaders to update regulations that would, at least to some degree, curtail the solicitation of donations in the city limits.

It's just a proposal right now, Harrison emphasized Monday: the draft code change is poised for council review, revision and consideration during the group's monthly meeting Thursday evening at Gladewater City Hall.

Basically, "We're going to change it so only locally-recognized groups can have an exception from paying the permit fee. Anybody else, they want to do it, it's a \$500 fee."

CURRENT CODES

According to the relevant portions of the Texas Transportation Code's Sec.552.007 regarding Solicitation by Pedestrians, "A person may not stand in a



A Voices of New Life panhandler collects donations for the Dallas-based religious nonprofit at the intersection of Hwy. 271 and Hwy. 80 June 7. Currently, the out-of-area solicitors aren't required to apply for a \$500 permit from City Hall, but a proposed rule change is up for council consideration Thursday.

roadway to solicit a ride, contribution, employment, or business from an occupant of a vehicle, except that a person may stand in a roadway to solicit a charitable contribution if authorized to do so by the local authority

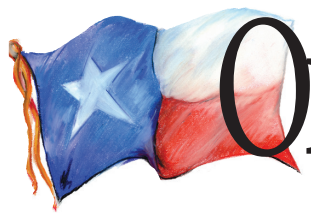
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\$1.1B in monthly sales tax revenue distributed

AUSTIN — Texas Comptroller Glenn Hegar announced today he will send cities, counties, transit systems and special purpose districts \$1.1 billion in local sales tax allocations for June, 6.8 percent more than in June 2023.

These allocations are based on sales made in April by businesses that report tax monthly. Gladewater slipped slightly in the latest stats again, but remains ahead of last year - 3.11%. White Oak also slipped - 0.90%.

County	City	Rate	Net Payment This Period	Comparable Payment Prior Year	% Change	Payment YTD	Prior Year Payment YTD	% Change
Gregg	Clarksville City	1.000%	\$8,425.92	\$8,944.28	-5.79%	\$55,082.32	\$57,458.74	-4.13%
Gregg	Easton	1.000%	\$7,670.51	\$4,903.74	56.42%	\$29,877.47	\$29,114.51	2.62%
Gregg	Gladewater	1.500%	\$126,936.79	\$137,164.28	-7.45%	\$862,896.28	\$836,816.43	3.11%
Gregg	Kilgore	1.500%	\$756,161.18	\$722,977.48	4.58%	\$4,671,001.66	\$4,954,239.28	-5.71%
Gregg	Lakeport	1.500%	\$21,768.59	\$21,390.16	1.76%	\$141,720.03	\$149,504.18	-5.20%
Gregg	Longview	1.500%	\$3,523,762.93	\$3,396,258.65	3.75%	\$22,575,600.51	\$23,408,431.84	-3.55%
Gregg	Warren City	1.000%	\$1,225.61	\$2,560.51	-52.13%	\$9,440.67	\$10,079.32	-6.33%
Gregg	White Oak	1.500%	\$126,244.29	\$127,396.89	-0.90%	\$789,986.29	\$811,504.69	-2.65%
Upshur	Big Sandy	1.250%	\$23,223.69	\$19,131.16	21.39%	\$150,590.12	\$143,992.47	4.58%
Upshur	East Mountain	1.000%	\$3,929.52	\$3,541.00	10.97%	\$29,073.50	\$27,257.62	6.66%
Upshur	Gilmer	1.500%	\$199,705.18	\$208,938.88	-4.41%	\$1,408,456.55	\$1,353,065.53	4.09%
Upshur	Ore City	1.250%	\$16,328.06	\$15,373.48	6.20%	\$105,087.56	\$100,787.97	4.26%
Upshur	Union Grove	1.000%	\$537.61	\$426.31	26.10%	\$4,697.72	\$2,738.64	71.53%



OPINION/COMMENTARY

THE FIRST AMENDMENT: Congress shall make no law respecting an establishment of religion, or prohibiting the free exercise thereof; or abridging the freedom of speech, or of all the press; or the right of the people peaceably to assemble, and to petition the government for a redress of grievances.

Gary Borders Capital Highlights



Drought conditions ease slightly while heat dome returns

Drought conditions across the state dropped a percentage point in May compared to the previous month, with 26% of the state in some stage of drought, primarily in West and South Texas and parts of the Panhandle.

Massive storms in late April and into May caused flooding and wind damage in East and North Texas but did pull those regions out of drought. Some parts of Central and East Texas received three times their average rainfall in May, according to Mark Wentzel, hydrologist with the Texas Water Development Board.

Meanwhile, Texans are staring down another miserably hot summer and wondering if it will be as bad as last year's, which was the second hottest on record. A heat dome, which is a high-pressure system that traps heat and keeps it sticking around, is making its way across the state. It has already heated the waters of the Gulf of Mexico to about the same temperatures as last year, according to a report in the Texas Standard.

The heat dome is also driving up temperatures on land. San Antonio last week saw a record heat index of 117 degrees. Some South Texas cities are already seeing heat temperatures broken, and not just by a small amount.

"They usually might beat it by half a degree and maybe, at most, 1 degree," said Victor Murphy of the National Weather service. "So, to see 120-, 150-year records shatter by 2 to 3 degrees is pretty significant. It shows you the magnitude and the strength of this heat ridge."

On the somewhat-bright side, Murphy said summer in Texas is not likely to be quite as bad as last year, which brought 45 days straight of triple-digit heat to much of the state.

Election officials acknowledge holes in ballot secrecy

During a Texas House Election Committee hearing last week, election officials acknowledged holes in election laws that have exposed some ballots cast by Texas voters to public scrutiny, The Dallas Morning News reported.

A group of activists suing the Texas secretary of state claim they have created an algorithm that can match any voter to an anonymous ballot, though their legal filing redacted details on how their hack of ballot security works.

The secretary of state's office, which oversees the state's elections, has sent guidance to county election officials on how to adopt procedures to ensure ballots available for public inspection are scrubbed of any identifying information, The News reported.

"Every Texan has the right to a secret ballot, and that right must remain sacred. It is unacceptable for any voter to have their ballot choices publicized," Secretary of State Jane Nelson said. "I am issuing emergency guidance to protect the privacy of Texas voters."

Most schools still don't have armed guards, despite law

Despite a law that went into effect nine months ago requiring an armed officer at every public school in Texas, most schools have not done so, the Houston Chronicle reported.

Hearst Newspapers, owner of the Chronicle and other Texas newspapers, conducted an analysis of 100 randomly selected school districts around the state and found that at least half adopted an exception provided in the law to avoid having to hire an armed guard. Just one fourth of the surveyed districts had an armed security guard at each campus, while another 22 did not respond.

Some district leaders told the newspaper they were struggling to both pay for the added security or find people to take the jobs. Graford ISD Superintendent Brandon Perry said his single-campus district west of Fort Worth got about \$18,500 in state dollars but needed \$80,000 to hire an officer. "They require us to hire armed security, hire a school resource officer, but they did not attach additional funding to pay for that expense," Perry said.

State Sen. Robert Nichols, R-Jacksonville, was one of the bill's backers. He acknowledged that legislators had "set a standard that is not attainable," largely because there aren't enough qualified officers willing to take the positions.

"There's physically not enough law enforcement in the state of Texas trained to this level to fill all the positions," he said, making the exemption clause necessary. Otherwise, campuses would be forced to shut down.

Peace like a river ...

As I went to church by car radio Sunday morning and celebrated the Creator's beauty in His natural cathedral, I had a moment of connection with a young buck grazing on the edge of the woods. He was sleek and beautiful and apparently fearless. Just last week I saw a newborn fawn sunning in the woods with its little spots shiny and precious.

A few nights ago I heard a ka-thunk on the deck and found two masked bandits (raccoons) on my deck stealing cat food I had put out for the feral cats that live around our country home. There are also a couple of friendly possums that love my flowerbed fruit and vegetable composting. Then there is, as Mr. Bardwell clearly points out, 'Suzie's Cat', a wildy I tamed that loves to wend its way around my feet. She enjoys loudly demanding to be fed on the front porch resulting in the name 'Front Porch Kitty'. Despite the fact hubby says he doesn't like cats he feeds them while proclaiming the only reason he does is to keep snakes, mice and rats away.

King the 80-pound rescue Rough Collie chases the feral cats with glee but regularly goes nose-to-nose with FPK in a game of chicken before one hisses and one backs off. That little 2-pound kitty knows who's the boss and it ain't the ginormous Lion King Wonder Dog. FPK often tauntingly sits on the porch railing and slowly grooms herself near a window so King has something to hoarsely bark at from his den cell. It is a 40 foot porch and the only place the cat sits on the railing is where King can see her. Devious, and smart.

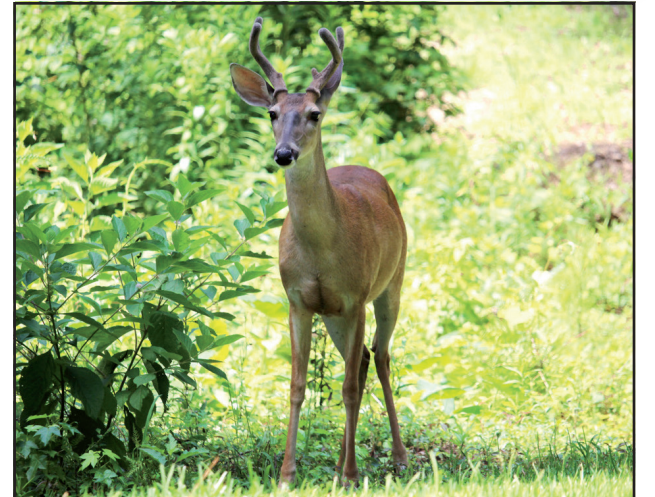
Despite the wild cats, birds abound in our East Texas jungle of a yard. We have multiple bird and hummingbird feeders, bird baths and birdhouses. We also happen to be saps who have a problem cutting down trees. Maybe it is the fact that we are both country kids who bought a country house that is now surrounded by other homes. So our place looks a little 'shady', pardon the pun, as we have withdrawn behind our green curtain.

Foolish tree lovers, we even allowed a dreaded Sweet Gum tree to grow in our front yard which now shades us from the hot west sun.

Too bad King's tail acts as velcro when it comes to the much hated sweet gum balls. And with Chewbacca King that means we often discover them in the middle of the night as we shuffle in the dark.

Ah well, our fuzzy monster dog and our Sweet Gum

The Best of Suzanne Bardwell



tree will both remain important parts of our lives. And I will continue to reprimand Mr. Bardwell for his salty talk when he steps on those prickly little suckers in the middle of the night.

With the threat of COVID-19 growing, the politicization of every word written and posted, and phenomenally inaccurate information regularly shared on social media platforms, I need more of Creation and less technology. I need more nature and less anger. I need more Creator and less me. Ah, there it is, the source of peace in the midst of chaos. Maybe I need to go sit by the river. Water does give me peace. Peace does not mean life is going to be 'still', it means that peace washes over you, like a river.

So friends and neighbors, how about taking a break from social media platforms, assumptions, worries, finger pointing, anger, arguing, justification and rationalization. Come and sit beside me on the 'river bank' and let's be still and see what we see...together. We might just be surprised.



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GIVE ME THAT "FEEL GOOD" RELIGION

Today, entertainment is expected in religion. Parents ask: "What kind of programs do you have for our children? Do you have special music or church league sports teams? Are there parties and social meals, and trips planned for our youth and senior citizens? In other words, what does the church have for ME and MINE?"

Entertainment in religion is utilized to make people feel good, to draw in the people, and to keep up attendance numbers. But understand, what you win people WITH is what you win them TO! For example, a church in Ohio rented a movie theater for their worship, or rather their entertainment, services. One member said: People don't come in with quiet reverence, it's just like going to the movies. Instead of popcorn and soda, as at the movies, people just grab cups of chocolate-flavored coffee and jelly doughnuts on their way into worship." The report says, The service starts out with a skit about golfing and religion, and moves into rock n' roll with a heavy drum beat that brings nearly everyone out of their seats... There's dancing instead of kneeling... Scripture often still plays a role but in less formalized readings."

Why do we assemble? Is it for what is in it for ME and MINE, or is it to honor and praise God? We badly need to teach ourselves and our children that it is not all about ME and MINE, but it is about the great "I AM." Only when our priorities are in the right order will we find ourselves walking into the worship assembly focused on God rather than on ourselves. Sadly, many churches today are offering what will attract the crowds, by offering various programs and activities that will attract the most people, rather than centering on Christ and His Word. When will men learn that the worship of God is regulated by the God we worship? One said: "When we believe that we should be satisfied rather than God be glorified in our worship, then we put God below ourselves as though He had been made for us rather than that we had been made for Him."

Acceptable worship is God-ordained, not humanly constructed. It has naught to do with human thought or injunction, rather, it requires us to rise above the thoughts and ways of man to the thoughts and ways of God (Isa.55: 8-9). It is His will, not our own (Matt. 7: 21; Lk. 6: 46). Think on these things.

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WHAT'S HAPPENING

Juneteenth's freedom celebration returns June 22

Each summer, Americans across the United States celebrate Juneteenth, commemorating the day – June 19, 1865 – when Gen. Gordon Granger reached Galveston Bay with 2,000 Union troops and decreed the emancipation of slaves.

The announcement arrived more than two years after the Emancipation Proclamation. Another 150 years later and the date was ultimately commemorated as a federal holiday in the Juneteenth National Independence Act.

The Gladewater MLK/Juneteenth Committee's annual celebration is scheduled for Saturday, June 22.

The 'Freedom Day' event begins with the annual parade through downtown Gladewater with newly-installed Mayor Brandy Flanagan serving as Grand marshal.

Parade participants will gather at 9:30 a.m. in the 100 block of East Commerce Street before rolling out at 10 a.m. and turning South on Hwy. 271. Following Main Street, the caravan will turn along Coach Cooksey Street before coming to a stop at Bumblebee Park.

The park's festivities will



Gladewater Rotarians and president Darla Ferguson heard from Steve Marshall, President & CEO at Caldwell Zoo, at last week's meeting. He spoke about remodeling at the zoo, like the Amazon River's Edge addition.

get underway at approximately 10:45 a.m. – hopefully later, Alexander says, if a healthy influx of parade participants keeps it rolling longer.

"Everyone in the community is invited to come out," Alexander said. "We're going to be giving away free food, there's going to be music, a bounce house for the kids and hopefully some other activities for the kids."

There's no specific plan for vendors, she noted, but they're welcome to join the event by calling in advance.

To register a parade float, sign up as a car show participant or reserve a vendor spot, call 903-806-5443 or 903-237-9740.

Church's 'Boot Camp' set July 27

Sit 'Em Down Cowboy Church's annual Kids for Christ B.O.O.T. Camp returns July 27 at 231 PR 3487 in Big Sandy.

The 'Biblical Outlook & Outreach Training' is crafted for children who have completed Pre-K (4 years-old) through those who have finished 5th grade.

"We want you!" the church announced, "to come join us for an action-packed day at B.O.O.T. camp learning how to put on the full armor of God daily as we fight spiritual battles!"

"Soldiers, grab your Bibles and be a part of the Lord's army!"

Themed around Ephesians 6:10-18, the camp begins with registration at 8 a.m. then runs 8:30 a.m. to 4:30 p.m. Breakfast and a hot dug lunch will be provided.

Children should dress in clothes to get wet/dirty and should bring a towel, spray sunscreen, "and an open heart to hear about Jesus!"

An additional waiver will be required upon arrival. Armbands will be provided for each children and the adult responsible for pick-up. Learn more on the SDCC Youth Facebook page.

Storytime Thursday

Two books will be read to small children Thursday

(June 20) at both of the Upshur County Library's "Storytime" sessions in Gilmer.

To be presented at the 10 a.m. and 4:15 p.m. gatherings are "A Fox Named Fox" by Dima Eichhorn, and "Little Red Fox Has Feelings" by Didi Dragon, illustrated by Maria Mau.

A craft involving a fox-related theme will follow each reading at the library, 702 W. Tyler (which is also Texas 154). While the events are free to the public, children under 12 must be accompanied by an adult.

For more information, call the library at (903) 843-5001.

Shake, rattle & Roll

A '50s and '60s show group is ready to getting things rockin' come August. The national and international award-winning women of Shake Rattle & Roll will be performing at 2 p.m. Saturday, Aug. 3, at the invitation of Gladewater Former Students' Association.

Tickets are \$25 per person for the concert in the GFSA Building at 2509 Hendricks St. All seats are General Admission, and free for children younger than 12.

For more information, call 903-845-2631.

Blood drive set

Carter BloodCare of Tyler will hold a "Gilmer community blood drive" Thursday, June 20.

The event, sponsored by the Upshur County office of the Texas A&M AgriLife Extension Service, is set from 10:30 a.m. to 4:30 p.m. at 101 E. Cass. (The site is near the Dollar General Store and the old Gilmer National Bank motor bank, which now houses the county government's information technology equipment.)

For more information, contact County Extension Agent Julie York at 903-680-8128, julie.york@ag.tamu.edu, or the blood center at 800-366-2834.

Dr. Ray Perryman

THE ECONOMIST

Y'all Street ...

The announcement of the proposed new Texas Stock Exchange (TXSE) and filing of the regulatory paperwork has made quite a splash recently. The fact that two of the heaviest hitters in the investment world, BlackRock and Citadel Securities, are behind the initiative lends instant credibility. In addition, the TXSE is a clear indication of how the financial landscape is changing.

One goal of the TXSE is to be more "CEO-friendly." The New York Stock Exchange (NYSE) and NASDAQ have implemented cumbersome and expensive regulations which are viewed by many company executives as excessive. By providing a viable alternative, the TXSE may garner a notable share of the market. While the exchange itself will be electronic, it will have a physical presence in Dallas.

Several similar efforts have been attempted over time, most with only limited success. The movement from New York to Texas would, however, be reflective of a broader trend, both in banking and finance and the economy more generally.

There are two major industry groups comprising the activity that people generally think of as "banking." One is banks and their branches, credit unions, and similar financial institutions. The other is securities, investment firms, and investment banks (Wall Street types). For several years, Texas has far outpaced New York in employment in the first category and is growing rapidly in the second. When added together, the differential between the two states now is extremely small.

New York has seen just 16% growth in investment banking/securities jobs over the past 20 years, while Texas has experienced 111% expansion. Behemoths such as JPMorgan Chase and Goldman Sachs already have tens of thousands of employees in Texas. New York City remains the corporate center for the industry, but Dallas is second and gaining rapidly.

In addition to solid economic performance, the Lone Star State has had far more major corporate locations and expansions than any other for 12 years in a row and is home to the most Fortune 500 company headquarters. Moreover, Texas and the Sun Belt are rife with firms backed by private equity that will be launching public offerings in the coming years.

Regional exchanges were the norm for many years, dating back to Philadelphia in 1790 (Wall Street came along two years later). Communications advances such as the telegraph and later the telephone made it efficient to consolidate much of the activity to New York. Somewhat ironically, the latest generations of technology have made such concentration unnecessary.

It remains to be seen how listings and trading volumes will fare on the TXSE. Nonetheless, the mere fact that major players are aggressively pushing forward is an unmistakable sign that Texas is already a major financial powerhouse. Stay safe! When child care is extremely expensive, the incentives to remain in the labor force are greatly diminished. As labor shortages abound (there are presently more than 800,000 unfilled jobs in the state), the last thing we need is another obstacle for working parents. Texas has taken some tentative steps to improve the situation, but there is much more needed. Stay safe!

Dr. M. Ray Perryman is President and Chief Executive Officer of The Perryman Group (www.perrymangroup.com), which has served the needs of over 3,000 clients over the past four decades.



Gladewater Lions Club President Judy Van Houten presented the GHS May Student of the Month awards to Corey Stanley and Jessica Perez.



Gladewater Lions Club President Judy Van Houten presented the GMS May Student of the Month awards to Chevy Sisson and Alayla Grooms.

Manufactured homes, vacant buildings on council's plate

Vacant buildings, manufactured housing, panhandling – council members will weigh a variety of local ordinance issues this week.

The housing discussion is an ongoing dialogue stemming from a developer's proposal earlier this year to build a shipping container home on the shores of Lake Gladewater, an idea that initially drew backlash from council members.

The group's regular monthly meeting begins at 6 p.m. Thursday evening at Gladewater City Hall, opening with comments from Mayor Brandy Flanagan, the City Manager's Report from Charlie Smith and Citizens Comments, the city's scheduled 'public forum' – notably, updated state laws permit regulated public comments before or during the deliberation of any agenda item throughout the meeting.

Meeting minutes and a standard firefighting service agreement are on the council's regular consent agenda ahead of a public hearing and vote on a Special Use Permit for a Wine & Malt Beverage Retailers Permit for Chad's at 809 E. Broadway Ave. In addition to designating a law firm for the collection of delinquent taxes, fines and fees, the council members will consider a resolution tied to a Texas Parks & Wildlife grant for improvements at Lake Gladewater Park.

In their first code update of the evening, the elected officials will consider an ordinance that repeals and amends local regs related to manufactured housing.

As written, the proposal repeals current mobile home standards and adds rules defining and regulating the placement and installation of shipping container homes and modular homes as well as mobile/manufactured.

Notably, the changes include a rule that "Before a modular/container home is placed in the city, it must have a value equal to or greater than the median taxable value for each dwelling within 500 feet of the property line of the proposed installation site."

If approved, the updated ordinance will officially restrict mobile/manufactured homes to a specific housing district (prohibiting them from Single-Family District).

Find a PDF with all the proposed changes (and other documents tied to Thursday's agenda) at GladewaterMirror.com

After the manufactured housing discussion, the council members will consider regulations tied to panhandling – find a separate story on the topic in today's issue. The council will also consider a street drainage issue at 2807 Guy Street ahead of a discussion – no action anticipated – of the city's current vacant building ordinance (also available for review online).

The final items are on the night's agenda are a closed session and possible vote on the purchase, exchange, lease or value of real property such as the community ballpark.

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- 4 Boneless Pork Chops (5 oz.)
- 4 Gourmet Jumbo Franks (3 oz.)
- 4 Potatoes au Gratin (2.8 oz.)
- 4 Caramel Apple Tartlets (4 oz.)
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Newspaper & Public Notice Advertisement

White Oak ISD will be accepting Requests for Proposals for its Property and Liability insurance coverages. A proposer's questionnaire may be obtained from the district's consultant Robert V. Reim Company, by e-mailing bobreim@robertreim.com. Completed Questionnaires must be returned by 2:00 p.m., July 1, 2024. Proposers will be qualified, and insurance companies will be assigned. If you have any questions, please call Mr. Reim at (512) 345-8921. Final proposals will be due July 25, 2024. The district's current coverage expires September 1, 2024.



PUBLIC HEARING

There will be a public hearing before the City of Gladewater Planning & Zoning Commission on July 11, 2024, at 5:30 p.m. to consider a Specific Use Permit request for a Package Store Permit (P) at AB 7 T ALLEN SUR TR 16-04, more commonly known as 1706 N. Main, Gregg County Parcel ID #193304.

There will be a second public hearing held by the Gladewater City Council on July 18, 2024, at 6:00 p.m.

All interested parties are invited to attend and participate in these public hearings. If you are unable to attend these meetings you may send written comments to Judy Van Houten, City Clerk, City of Gladewater, PO Box 1725, Gladewater, Texas 75647.

LEGAL NOTICE

THE STATE OF TEXAS
To: The Unknown Heirs of Endia Howard

You and each of you are hereby cited, required and commanded to appear before the County Court at Law #2 of Gregg County, Texas, to be held in the County Court at Law #2 court room in the courthouse of said county in the city of Longview, Gregg County, Texas, such appearance to be at or before ten o'clock a.m. of the first Monday next after the expiration of ten (10) days from the date of service, exclusive of the day of such service, which day and elate of service shall be the date of publication that this newspaper bears, and which appearance shall be at such time on such Monday, by filing written answer to the

application hereinafter mentioned, contesting same, should they or any of them desire to do so, which application will, at such 10 o'clock hour and such place be acted on, said application having been filed by Stephanie Howard in said court on the 14th day of June, 2024, and now pending there, in a proceeding on the probate docket of said court, styled In the Estate of Endia Howard the file number of which application and the docket number or which proceedings is 2024-0229-E, the nature of such application being for:

Determination of Heirship and Application for Independent Administration

If this citation is not served within 90 days after date of its issuance, it shall be returned unserved.

Witness, Michelle Gilley, Clerk of the County Court at Law #2 of Gregg County.

Given under my hand and the seal of said court, at office in the City of Longview this the 14th day of June, 2024

MICHELLE GILLEY
Clerk of County Court at Law #2

Gregg County, Texas
By: Aimee Belding
Deputy



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NOTICE BY PUBLICATION

THE STATE OF TEXAS §
COUNTY OF GREGG §

TO: THE HEIRS AND/OR DEVISEES OF THE ESTATE OF MARY MARIE MEDLIN AKA MARY MARIE REAGAN, WHOSE NAMES AND WHEREABOUTS ARE UNKNOWN; THE HEIRS AND/OR DEVISEES OF THE ESTATE OF VELMA JIMMERSON, WHOSE NAMES AND WHEREABOUTS ARE UNKNOWN; THE HEIRS AND/OR DEVISEES OF THE ESTATE OF BERTHAL BURGIN, WHOSE NAMES AND WHEREABOUTS ARE UNKNOWN.

You are each hereby notified that a hearing will be held at 10:00 o'clock a.m., on the first Monday after the expiration of forty-two (42) days from the date of issuance hereof, that is to say Monday, the 15th day of July, 2024 and at 101 E. Methvin Street, Longview, TX 75601, to assess the damages of the owner of the property being condemned.

The undersigned special commissioners appointed to assess the damages in the above proceedings, having met on this date to set a time and place for hearing the parties to said proceeding, find that the 15th day of July, 2024, is the earliest practicable date for hearing the parties; that the most convenient place in this County to hold the hearing is 101 Methvin Street, Longview, TX 75601 and that the hearing shall commence at 10 o'clock A.M.

Participants who are unable to attend in person may attend via a concurrent telephone or video conference.

Said telephone or video conference may be accessed by calling 346-248-7799 and entering access code 856 0988 9675, followed by the pound (#)symbol.

Said telephone or video conference may also be accessed on the internet using the information below:

Meeting specific URL: <https://us02web.zoom.us/j/85609889675?pwd=QkpTaHkxWU9MSOh2L25XV05xdysvUT09>

Meeting number: 856 0988 9675

Meeting password: 849543

Notice is also given that this telephone or video conference may be recorded and/or transcribed.

The State of Texas filed a *First Amended Petition for Condemnation* with the Judge of the County Court at Law No. 2 of Gregg County, Texas, on the 5th day of April, 2024, in Cause No. 2024-296-CCL2 which is styled The State of Texas v. The heirs and/or devisees of the Estate of Mary Marie Medlin aka Mary Marie Reagan, whose names and whereabouts are unknown, et al.. The Plaintiff is the State of Texas. The Defendants are: **THE HEIRS AND/OR DEVISEES OF THE ESTATE OF MARY MARIE MEDLIN AKA MARY MARIE REAGAN, WHOSE NAMES AND WHEREABOUTS ARE UNKNOWN; THE HEIRS AND/OR DEVISEES OF THE ESTATE OF VELMA JIMMERSON, WHOSE NAMES AND WHEREABOUTS ARE UNKNOWN; AND THE HEIRS AND/OR DEVISEES OF THE ESTATE OF BERTHAL BURGIN, WHOSE NAMES AND WHEREABOUTS ARE UNKNOWN, and, if any of them be deceased, their respective heirs and legal representatives, if any; WILLIE ANN BAYER.**

The name and address of the attorney for Plaintiff is **Cassandra K. Kassis**, Assistant Attorney General, P.O. Box 12548, Austin, Texas 78711-2548.

This suit is an eminent domain proceeding in which the State of Texas is condemning a tract of land located in Gregg County, Texas, containing 0.0012-acre (51 square feet) parcel of land situated in the Thompson Allen Survey, Abstract No. 7, located in Gregg County, Texas, and being out of and a part of a called 0.393 acre tract of land conveyed to Mary Marie Reagan, now known as Mary Marie Medlin, described in the Decree of Divorce executed August 19, 1985 between Albert Maurice Reagan and Mary Marie Reagan, recorded in Volume 1661, Page 233 of the Deed Records of Gregg County, Texas, such property being fully described in Exhibit "A" of Plaintiff's *First Amended Petition for Condemnation* filed under the above-referenced cause number.

The interests of these Defendants are that they either own or claim an interest in said property, subject to unpaid accrued taxes.

You are further notified that you may appear at the hearing before the special commissioners and present evidence you desire on the issue of damages to be assessed against the State. If you do not appear at the hearing, the Special Commissioners may proceed to assess the damages of the owner of the property being condemned.

If this Notice is not served within ninety (90) days after its issuance, it shall be returned forthwith.

ISSUED this 9th day of April, 2024.

DocuSigned by:
Frank Chaney
AF548A09D5E04CD...
DocuSigned by:
Thomas Usage
10295E91E09C41B...
DocuSigned by:
Daryl R. Atkinson
372C8DCE177D41A...
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Eight arrested by Upshur special unit

By Phillip Williams

The Special Investigations Unit of the Upshur County Sheriff's Office arrested eight suspects on various charges in May, Sheriff Larry Webb said last week.

Details of the arrests, all resulting from vehicle stops, were as follows and all suspects were taken to the county jail in Gilmer, he said:

Jonathon Shelby Eddington, 54, of Gladewater, was arrested May 1 on a Gregg County warrant alleging he violated probation he was on for felony possession of controlled substance.

The unit, performing drug interdiction in the Union Grove area, stopped his vehicle on U.S. 271 at the Upshur-Gregg County line in the Gladewater area.

Luther Jefferson Holeman II, 33, of Gilmer, was arrested May 1 on a felony charge of tampering with physical evidence.

The SIU was performing drug interdiction in the Pritchett area when it stopped his vehicle at the intersection of Lemon Road and FM 1404. While the vehicle was in the process of stopping, the driver threw an item out the driver's window which was later found to be drug paraphernalia, resulting in the tampering charge.

In yet another May 1 case, two Gilmer residents were arrested on separate drug-related charges in the Gladewater area, where the unit was performing drug interdiction.

The passenger, Wanda Kay Coleman, 57, was charged with felony possession of a controlled substance (methamphetamine.) The driver, a 59-year-old man, was charged with misdemeanor possession of marijuana. The unit found the drugs inside a vehicle

it stopped at a private driveway on White Pine Road.

Amber Nycote Rosenbalm, 33, of Gilmer, was arrested May 7 on three Gregg County warrants charging her with violating probation she was on for three felonies--theft, possession of controlled substance, and fabricating physical evidence.

The fabrication charge resulted from her attempt to destroy a drug.

The unit was working drug interdiction in the Camp Joy area when it stopped a vehicle Rosenbalm occupied at the intersection of Oliver and Arthur Streets.

Joseph David Simonek, 47, of Mineola was arrested May 21 on a Wood County warrant charging he violated conditions of bond on a felony theft charge. The unit stopped his vehicle at the intersection of Texas 154 and Mimosa Road in the Rosewood community area.

Jonathan Christopher Hunter, 28, of Harmony community, was arrested May 21 on a Grayson County warrant charging him with felony stalking.

The unit was performing drug interdiction in the Gilmer area when investigators stopped a vehicle in which Hunter was a passenger at the intersection of Sorrells and Buffalo Streets.

Walter Scott Field, 58, of Big Sandy, was arrested May 23 on a felony charge of possession of controlled substance--methamphetamine.

The unit was performing drug interdiction in the Gladewater area when it stopped the vehicle Field was driving in the 5000 block of Mesquite Road and discovered he possessed 1-4 grams of the drug.

"Coot's Corner"

By Coot Putley

Bad Bet

What is America's favorite sport? I would propose that it is gambling. At a time when baseball is nearing the All-Star break, the NBA Finals are going on and the NFL is engaged in preparation for another season, some of the biggest sports stories involve gambling.

The biggest headlines recently involved Ipeei Mizuhara. The former translator for superstar Shohei Ohtani pleaded guilty to stealing 17 million dollars from his employer to cover bets and debts with illegal bookmakers. As Ohtani's interpreter, confidant, and trusted advisor Ipeei had full access to his financial accounts and took full advantage.

In April, NBA player Jontay Porter was suspended for life for his admitted involvement in disclosing confidential information to gamblers and placing bets on his own team to lose games. Just a few days ago San Diego Padres infielder Tucupita Marcano received a lifetime ban from baseball for betting on games while being on a major league roster. In addition, four minor league players got one-year bans for betting on major league games. One of them reportedly wagered less than \$100 on his bets - and lost. Talk about a bad bet!

Gambling is obviously a huge problem in sports. The reason for clamping down is obvious - protecting the integrity of the games. As baseball commissioner Rob Manfred recently stated, players have to understand that the privilege of playing baseball comes with the responsibility of not participating in activities that are legal for other people.

It's an interesting dynamic. All major league sports are engaged in ac-

tively promoting gambling. You can't watch or listen to a ballgame without hearing a commercial for online betting companies like Fan Duel or Draft Kings. Every broadcast features discussions of betting lines and over/unders. This can be tempting for athletes.

Remember the steroids controversy of the 90's? We now know that the powers-that-be were slow to respond. The obvious problems were ignored in order to promote the game

as sluggers hit home runs at a record pace. The scandal created a situation that still taints the performances from that era.

Now officials are trying to prevent a new controversy from affecting the game. They are using more effective means to detect involvement. They may find that they have only discovered the tip of the iceberg. I may be wrong, but if I were a betting man.....

That's one man's opinion - what's yours?

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My name is **Taylor Campbell** and I am proudly representing Beta Sigma Phi as one of the East Texas Yamboree Queen candidates. I am the daughter of Robert and Leslie Campbell, sister to Brinley. I have attended Union Grove ISD since kindergarten and currently a member of the National Honor Society and participate in varsity sports. I am a member of First Baptist Church Gilmer and work at my family's business, Trendsetter Construction, Inc. After graduation, my plans are to attend college and study kinesiology. I embrace the opportunity to help raise money for the East Texas Yamboree festival because it is an event that fosters community and promotes higher education through scholarships it grants to East Texas high school graduates. As the sole Gladewater candidate, I ask for your support through donations or purchasing of raffle tickets, barn dance tickets, or coronation vouchers. The queen's race runs June 17th - 28th, please visit taylorcampbell4queen.com for more information.

Union Grove's Ava Wightman has been selected as the Greater Texas Ford Dealers 2A Female Athlete of the Year.



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Bluegrass on Ballard - Wylie, TX, Sat. June 29. Arts & Crafts, Car Show, Music, Food & Fun in Historic Downtown Wylie on Ballard Ave. For more info or to pre-register for car show, visit DiscoverWylie.com.

ICA's 50th Annual Convention & Trade Show, July 1-3, San Marcos, TX. Cattle producers don't want to miss this! Top industry speakers, BQA certification, 4-5 CEU credits for pesticide applicator license, live cattle handling, 50+ vendors, golf tournament, and more. 512-620-0162, ICATexas.com.

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ACROSS

1 TX Tommy Lee 1978 film: "Eyes of Laura ___"

5 TXism: "chew ___ awhile" (ponder)

6 San Antonio "Roadrunners" univer.

7 classic western: "High ___" (1952)

8 basic cable net.

9 "it don't ___ up" (makes no sense)

12 seat of Callahan County on I-20

17 position of Texas legend Nolan Ryan

19 TXism: "got as much chance as ___ in a packing plant"

21 TXism: "___ a goose"

22 apprehended

23 popular TV dog

28 "Monahans ___ hills State Park"

29 TX Joe Don Baker 1991 film: "Cape ___"

30 one name for the earliest country in Texas

31 Cowboys have won the "___ Bowl" five times

35 TX-born Evelyn Keyes book: "Scarlett O' ___ Younger Sister"

36 TXism: "three ___ wind" (drunk)

42 large hairy spider

44 Karmann ___ (old Volkswagens)

46 melons grown in the Rio Grande Valley

48 Cowboys hated New York foe

49 Assoc. Press TV News (APTN) bought this internat'l agcy. in 1999

50 large tub

51 poker stakes

52 dir. from Andrews to Cross Plains

53 Dallas and Houston have ___ transit

54 Rio Grande in Mexico: "Rio Bravo del ___"

56 "neither's" sidekick

57 TXism: "that's a boldface ___"

58 gotta gain these to get TDs

11 physicians (abbr.)

12 legally prohibit

13 TXism: "nervous ___ frying pan"

14 TXism: "let ___" (leave it alone)

15 singer McEntire from Texas' northern neighbor

16 ___ Park, Texas

18 southern states gov. in Civil War

20 ave. or st., e.g.

23 Chris ___Doux is in the "Texas Trail Hall of Fame"

24 Texas cosmetics founder Mary Kay

25 expectorated

26 ___ T. Hughes swore in LBJ on Air Force One in 1963

27 TXism: "get your ducks ___"

32 Austin univ.

33 Xbox competitor (abbr.)

34 martian? (abbr.)

36 pigpen

37 Paul Newman 1963 film about Texas Panhandle

38 7-___ (Texas convenience store)

39 TXism: "___ the unvarnished truth"

40 Texas Southern sprinter Jim who won 1968 gold in Mexico City

41 TXism: "___ high on the hog" (rich)

43 Rangers drafted this Robb in 1987

45 Jeremy Pena's pos. with the Houston Astros

47 this promotes the growth of muscles and is banned in most pro sports

48 TXism: "boring as a fishing trip with a ___ warden"

55 TX ZZ Top breakthrough album: "___ Hombres"

See Answers On This Page

Woman sentenced to 20 years for 2021 murder

A Gladewater woman was sentenced to 20 years in prison last week after pleading guilty to a 2021 murder. Regina Marie Massie, 40, was sentenced in Judge Alfonso Charles' courtroom. She and Brandon Allen Gilliam, 42, of Longview, were both charged with murder in connection with the killing of Steve McDowell, 66, of White Oak. According to an arrest affidavit, McDowell's body was found in his bedroom on May 4, 2021, by a neighbor who was concerned when McDowell's dogs were left outside in the rain. Massie was arrested the same day, and Gilliam was arrested on May 13, after the neighbor told investigators he had seen the two going in and out of the home. Massie pleaded guilty on May 6, 2024, and has been sentenced to 20 years in prison. Gilliam pleaded guilty on May 20 and also accepted a sentence of 20 years.

Alleged scammer arrested

On June 9 an 85 year old Upshur County resident contacted the Sheriff's Office. He advised that several days prior he was contacted by persons claiming to be with the Securities and Exchange Commission, the S.E.C. They advised him there were warrants for his arrest and convinced the gentleman that in order to avoid further problems he had to pay them cash money. The gentlemen turned over \$70,000.00 to the scammers over several days, but became suspicious when they re-contacted him wanting more money. On June 12, The Sheriff's Office investigators listened in on the man's conversations with the scammers, and this led to deputies doing surveillance at the victim's home place, waiting for the scammer to come pick up the money. When the scammer arrived, he was taken into custody by deputies along Hwy 271 in north Upshur County. Davang Patel, 38 years of age, of Melissa, Texas was booked into the Upshur County Jail on a charge of Theft over 30,000 less than 150,000 against the Elderly, a second degree felony in Texas. Justice of the Peace Lyle Potter set bond at \$1 million, with bond conditions that include the surrender of his passport pending disposition of this case.

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GPD Activity Report

Table with columns: CALL DATE, CALL DESC, CFS#, CALL TIME, BUSINESS NAME, ADDRESS. Lists various incidents such as 'DISTURBANCE-OTHER', 'EMERGENCY', and 'MISCELLANEOUS' across multiple dates from 6/9/24 to 6/12/24.

Continuation of GPD Activity Report table, listing incidents and addresses like '1717 W MAIN ST', '317 N MAIN MAIN', and '1298 E BROADWAY BROADWAY AVE'.

Continuation of GPD Activity Report table, listing incidents such as 'EMERGENCY', 'MISCELLANEOUS', and 'FIRE DEPT' with corresponding addresses.

WOPD Police Activity

For the reporting period of June 10th through the 16th, 2024, officers for the White Oak Police Department responded to, or initiated, 231 calls for service and assistance. Some of the most common calls were; Animal Complaints, Suspicious Activities, and Community Relations (burn permits, welfare checks, vacation home security checks, etc.).

GPD Arrest Report

Arrest Report table with columns: ARREST DATE, ARREST DATE, TIME, FULL NAME, RACE, SEX, OFFENSE, LOCATION ADDRESS1, JUVENILE. Includes entry for WYLIE, ALYSON TAYLOR.



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HLH DESIGN BUILD, INC. advertisement. Text: 'ARCHITECTURE. DESIGN. CONSTRUCTION.' Includes phone number 903-757-7202.

Edward Jones advertisement. Text: 'Partnering throughout the years to reach your financial goals.' Includes Dallas D Long, CFP® and website edwardjones.com.

EAST TEXAS FOOD BANK advertisement. Text: 'FREE GROCERY ITEMS AVAILABLE. No eligibility requirements, paperwork or ID required.' Includes distribution schedule: 3rd Tuesday of each month, 10:00 am to Noon.

East Texas Pool Patrol advertisement. Text: 'Danny Gale Owner'. Includes phone number (903) 452-2491 and website Djgaler@aol.com.

Consumer Cellular advertisement. Text: 'NO HIDDEN FEES. NO HIDDEN ANYTHING.' Includes phone number 855-493-3803.

Bud's DISCOUNT TIRES advertisement. Text: 'Highway 80 East Gladewater. 845-5186. YOUR HOMETOWN TIRE STORE.' Includes name BUD MAHAFFEY.

Mamma's Designs advertisement. Text: 'Handcrafted Jewelry, Painted Gourds, Custom Paintings, Pet Portraits.' Includes phone number 903-387-2831.

GET YOUR BUSINESS NOTICED HERE!
CALL 903-845-2235 JUST \$15/WEEK FOR 13 WEEKS



The Gladewater Chamber of Commerce held a ribbon cutting at AWESOME YOUTH SPORTS in Gladewater last week with owners Lisa and Kevin Ray. The children were excited to participate and to provide a tour of the facility.

Photo by Darla Ferguson



The Gladewater Chamber of Commerce held a ribbon cutting at DOUG'S PAINT AND BODY in White Oak Monday morning. The chamber welcomes them to the chamber family.

Photo by Darla Ferguson

White Oak kicks off new comprehensive plan project at no cost to community

Continued from Page 1
community continues to develop. The last such plan was crafted in 1999.

"That will hopefully guide you for the next 20 years or so," Finan said.

Crafting the plan – currently estimated at about \$261,000 – will take up to 24 months. It depends on how often GrantWorks personnel interface with citizens groups during the process.

The firm's 13 percent administrative fee (not a flat rate as previously stated) is covered within the grant funds in addition to the expense for analysis, engineering and more.

"The funds, 100 percent of them go to the development of that plan, that and the administration," Finan said. "It won't go for actual capital."

After unanimous approval of the grant project, the council held a public hearing (with no speakers) then unanimously approved Henry Hoffman's request for a Special Use Permit to build a wood-frame carport on Lake Harris Road.

Regarding the housing project, after another brief public hearing the council signed off on Thompson Builders' request to rezone 9.5 acres from Agriculture to Single Family (8). Subsequent to another hearing, the group approved a variance to reduce the road easement from 60 feet to 50 but declined to change lot sizes from 8,000 square-feet to 7,000 at the North White Oak Road development of 32 anticipated homes.

In his city coordinator

report, Jimmy Purcell discussed various business gains before noting the Hwy. 42 utility relocation is currently estimated at \$3.7 million, leaving the city \$1 million short. Meetings on the project are in the works.

Meanwhile, the installation of 1,000 new water meters is coming soon: "We're going to start with the ones who need it," Purcell said. "Hopefully by doing that we should be better on radio reads instead of having to go out there and do it by hand."

The city's audit should be completed at the end of the month ahead of presentation by Albert Garcia of Mays & Associates in July, Purcell said. He closed his report with praise for a number of city employees across multiple departments.

GEDCO investigates hotel feasibility

By James Draper

Global hospitality consulting firm HVS will be performing a hotel feasibility study on Gladewater in the near future through funding by Gladewater Economic Development Corporation.

The group is based in Dallas, interim GEDCO Executive Director Scott Owens told the organization's directors last week.

"This is kind of what they specialize in," he said.

The work from HVS will cost \$6,375 upfront and plus another \$2,125 on delivery. Another firm under consideration, Core Distinct Group out of Wisconsin, calculated the project at \$17,500.

"That's a big difference," said Jim Bardwell, board vice president and *Gladewater Mirror* publisher. He's keen to see if the analysis coincides with local expectations: "They may also give us information we don't have."

According to Owens, the overall goal is to study the viability of bringing a hotel into the community without looking at any specific site.

"If the feasibility study is saying what we all think we need," he said, "it'll give us a tool to be able to recruit one.

"We're looking, as a community, at whether we can support it."

Per Bardwell, the recent Gladewater Round-Up Rodeo was a good example of a destination event that could have pointed numerous room nights toward a hotel.

"We had people working on the rodeo who were staying in Tyler and Kilgore and Longview because our places here were not available," he said. As for the cost of the study, "It's not an expense, it's an investment."

The GEDCO directors unanimously approved the project 5-0.

Bardwell, who is also a rodeo director, also thanked the GEDCO board for their \$6,000 promotional contribution to the rodeo and said

the funds made a measurable difference.

"The rodeo was a great success," he added. "We exceeded last year's numbers and I really attribute it to the advertising campaign based on the money you guys did."

"I just wanted to thank y'all."

Owens, former Gladewater mayor, is in his second month guiding GEDCO while the board seeks a permanent chief.

The group spent a good portion of the June 12 meeting streamlining office procedures and tying up loose ends for efficiency's sake during Owens' six-month tenure.

"Scott, I'm hearing good comments," said board member and former mayor John Paul Tallent.

Upshur hears courthouse project eleven percent complete

By Phillip Williams

The overseer of the multi-million dollar renovation of the Upshur County Courthouse told the county commissioners court Friday that the project is "moving along," but only 11% complete with "a whole lot of unknowns" about what workers may yet face.

Marion County Judge Leward J. LeFleur, hired by Upshur County as what he

jokingly called "the courthouse renovation czar" since his own courthouse in Jefferson underwent such a project, also warned commissioners against using funds set aside for the renovation to grant certain county offices' budget requests.

He told the court, meeting in Gilmer, to "be very, very mindful" that such action would be "a very, very dangerous thing."

City weighs update to panhandling regulations

Continued from Page 1

having jurisdiction over the roadway."

Notably, per part (c), "In this section, 'charitable contribution' means a contribution to an organization defined as charitable by the standards of the United States Internal Revenue Service."

CharityNavigator.com lists a Voices of New Life nonprofit based in Duncanville. Apparently headquartered in Dallas today, members of the group carrying the same name solicit donations throughout Texas and this area, ostensibly circulating through various communities.

As far as the current Gladewater City Ordinance, 11.15.050 Permit Required notes, "No person shall engage in, transact, or conduct the business or occupation of a solicitor or as agent, servant, or employee of any other person, without first having obtained a permit therefor, unless such person is exempt, under the provisions of this chapter, from having to obtain such a permit. The provisions of this section shall not apply where the solicitation is for a charitable, educational, patriotic, philanthropic, or religious purpose. A permit is not required where the solicitor is on the property by express, prior invitation of the person residing on such premises."

As a registered religious nonprofit, the New Life representatives are within their rights to solicit organizations under Gladewater codes – currently. They're exempt from applying for a permit.

PROPOSED CHANGES

"We made exceptions for charitable organizations, educational, religious," Harrison echoed. "Now, those will only be exceptions for locally-recognized groups."

"This group coming out of Dallas, that's not what we meant when we said church groups are able to panhandle in our city."

Notably, neither the New Life solicitors nor other out-of-area organizations are banned from seeking driver donations. Rather, if the code change is approved, they'll have to go through the permitting process that's exempted for similar, local groups.

Among other restrictions – the draft ordinance creates 'safe zones' within five feet of a curb and 20 feet of a business entrance as well as prohibiting panhandling in a crosswalk – the proposed regulation is also crafted to prohibit so-called 'aggressive panhandling,' Harrison added.

"Different things of that nature," he said, derived from specific complaints that have



Inviting donors to "Help Us Help Others," the Voices of New Life charity is apparently active across the state, and representatives circulate throughout this area, seeking donations to provide "Food, Housing & Clothing" to others.

reached city leaders – for example, some drivers have reported panhandlers knocking on windows, demanding larger donations and, allegedly, impeding traffic.

Harrison doesn't have a specific count of the complaints: "Quite a few people called City Hall. Some called the police department," he said. "Some called me. I don't know the total amount. I probably got about 20 different people that complained to me about them."

Under existing codes, the visiting panhandlers have not committed any violations, Harrison confirmed, beyond – again, allegedly – not always staying within the public right-of-way. Interactions with police officers saw no citations issued.

Moving forward, if the proposed ordinance is approved with no significant changes this week, non-local would-be solicitors, including registered non-profits, will have to apply for a panhandling permit and pay a \$500 processing fee.

"It's covering our costs," Harrison said. "The application is you have to fill out the form, submit it through the chief of police. You have to submit everyone that's involved so he can run a background check on everyone involved. If he signs off it has to come to me so I can see that it agrees with local ordinances and zoning then I sign off on it."

"We also have to issue each person involved a wallet-sized card showing that they have a permit."

Panhandling without a local exemption or a permit will incur a fine not to exceed \$500 per violation.



C.A.S.T. for Kids volunteers welcome children with special needs to Lake Gladewater June 1, inviting the amateur anglers to 'Catch A Special Thrill.' The foundation enriches the lives of children with special needs, supports their families, and strengthens communities through the sport of fishing.



Several offices have requested certain funding which County Auditor Connie Williams has said would have to come from funds set aside for the courthouse.

LeFleur also told the court that the project, as of now, is slated for completion Dec. 31, 2025. JC Stoddard Construction of San Antonio is in charge of the renovation.

Workers have begun remov-

ing the clocks at the outside top of the courthouse to replace them with historical ones, which are being manufactured, LeFleur noted. (The project is designed to restore the courthouse much to its appearance when constructed in 1937.)

The overseer also said that although the project's plans include a \$200,000 fire suppressor system—consisting of such items as a sprinkler system, fire

and smoke detectors, and an evacuation plan—"it is a huge waste of money if our engineer says we do not need it."

"There's nothing to catch fire. It's all concrete or metal" inasmuch as the county clerk's records have been permanently moved to another building, LaFleur added. Moreover, he pointed out that the Gilmer Fire Department was close by (one block south).