

# East Texas water group submits \$231,000 budget

20-county region's planning effort includes conservation and drought measurements

The East Texas Regional Water Planning Group (Region I) will submit to the Texas Water Development Board a \$231,510 budget for planning purposes in 2008-09. The budget includes \$88,050 for population and water demand projections, the identification of water needs, the selection of water management strategies and the impact of the strategies on water quality. The 20-county region's planning efforts will also include \$10,000 for conservation and drought management,

\$10,000 for ways to achieve consistency in long-term protection of natural resources, \$15,000 for the identification of unique reservoir and stream segments, \$9,400 for water infrastructure and funding and \$109,000 for the adoption of the plan, administration and public participation. The group also discussed ways to identify small water users in a category of their own, but agreed the region needs more information. Group chairman Kelley Holcomb of Lufkin said, "The challenge is that there is no

cohesive strategy to track small water groups or their usage." Temple McKinnon of the Texas Water Development Board said the state agency is getting better at tracking small water usage but doesn't survey the users and doesn't have sufficient information. Group members agreed there isn't enough data from farming, poultry, cattle uses and other agriculture users to develop strategies. In outlining the group's 17 planning strategies, engineering consultant Gary Graham of Beaumont said he has identified 186 water users in the region. He said 56 of the users have deficiencies in water sup-

plies and 18 have deficiencies in water storage facilities. The \$231,510 budget will be submitted to the state agency, but the legislature will have to approve the funds during its 2009 session starting in January. In other business, the group: • Heard a presentation on groundwater management from Len Luscomb of the Rusk County Groundwater Conservation District. Mr. Luscomb said groundwater planning is difficult "because it is only an approximation" and depends on variables such as rainfall amounts, evaporation, transpiration, spring flows, pumpage and the aquifers' recharge abilities.

• Gave approval to the City of Diboll for seeking an amendment to its water management strategies. City Manager Kenneth Williams said the city wants to seek permission to use groundwater from the Yegua-Jackson groundwater aquifer at Eason Lake northwest of the city to supplement the city's current water supplies. • Reviewed copies of water management strategies by the TWDB. group chairman Mr. Holcomb said, "While the strategies may be good for other parts of the state but are not necessarily good for East Texas." Mr. Holcomb also introduced

Lila Fuller and Stacey Corley from the City of Nacogdoches, which has become the group's administrator, replacing the Deep East Texas Council of Government in Jasper. Mr. Holcomb also called the group's attention to its new web site: etexwaterplan.org, and selected Wednesday, June 4 for its next meeting at the Nacogdoches Recreation Center. Region I serves all or parts of Anderson, Angelina, Cherokee, Hardin, Henderson, Houston, Jasper, Jefferson, Nacogdoches, Newton, Orange, Panola, Polk, Rusk, Sabine, San Augustine, Shelby, Smith, Trinity and Tyler counties.

## CHEROKEE COUNTY COMMISSIONERS

# County buildings to get an extreme makeover

Rusk, Alto buildings to be expanded

By GLORIA JENNINGS  
STAFF WRITER

Cherokee County Commissioners authorized Garrett & Associates General Contractors Ltd. to ask for bids for three projects at Monday's meeting in the county courtroom.

Mike Leinbach of JML Architects and Randy Garrett and Wes McClure of Garrett & Associates General Contractors Ltd. presented an update of projects planned for the county.

Plans are to renovate the tax office in Jacksonville; construct an evidence room and three offices at the county jail in Rusk; and extend the county building in Alto to allow space for a courtroom.

Projected cost of the three projects is \$858,362.

The renovation in Jacksonville is expected to cost approximately \$365,000.

Commissioner Byron Underwood, Precinct 4, asked if the county could construct a new building cheaper.

Mr. Leinbach replied that he thought it would be cheaper to renovate the existing building. "The life expectancy of the building is for a long time and the only thing that you will need to replace in several years will be the air conditioning."

The Alto project calls for closing in a drive through window area for the courtroom. A new foundation will be laid because the concrete is cracked.

Motion to seek bids was made by Moody Glass Jr. and seconded by Mr. Underwood. Also voting for the motion were Commissioners Mary Gregg, Kevin Pierce and County Judge Chris Davis.

In other matters, commissioners will seek bids to purchase a used Pulverize-mixer for one or more precincts. Also, one or more precincts were authorized to purchase a Cat Motor Grader.

A lease transfer for Hanger

33 at the Cherokee County Airport was approved from Forrest Crawford to Dennis Spence.

Commissioners approved a resolution and tax resale deed for conveyance of previously struck off property.

The property will be placed back on the tax rolls.

The courthouse lawn will be used for a National Day of Prayer rally on May 1 and July 4 for Fourth of July Celebration and parade.

A plat in the Bonnie D subdivision will be accepted when the anticipated filing releases are received.

A deadline of three weeks was set.

Items on the consent agenda approved included reports from Lynn Kelley, Constable Pct. 1; Ricky Moore, license and weight officer's report for March; and a plat in Andy's subdivision.

Attending the meeting were County Judge Davis; Commissioners Gregg, Pierce, Glass and Underwood; County Clerk Laverne Lusk; and County Auditor L.H. Crockett.

## RUSK ISD

continued from pg. 1A

school principal. He previously coached at Slocum and Abbott. "My years in Rusk have been good years and I have enjoyed my association with the district," he said.

Mr. Robbins has 20 years with Rusk ISD and nine years at Jacksonville. He expressed his appreciation to Rusk and to the school for all the support given him and his family.

Also retiring are Mike Kellogg, assistant band director; Christi Tillman and Vito Bondi, teachers.

Resignations were accepted from five teacher/coaches and four teachers.

Coaches resigning are Jason Barnes, Josh Faucett, Matt Garvin, Dusten Mackey and Kirk Rebeck. Teachers resigning are Christina Carlisle Ault, Billy Harrell, Dana Holland and Tammy Lawson.

Employed for the remainder of the school year was Rebecca Blankinship, nurse.

The board is expected to meet at 6 p.m. Monday, April 28, to consider applicants to fill some of the vacated positions.

In another matter, Dr. Jim Largent, superintendent, reported that trees will have to be removed at the new gym site.

Charlie McCreight, maintenance director, presented his department's report at the meeting.

There are eight employees in the department and they have handled 427 work orders this year.

The district purchased a new riding lawn mower and a pickup truck during the last year. He expressed his and his staff's appreciation

for these items.

New metal fences have been added around the softball and baseball fields. A concrete floor was added inside the batting cages.

Restrooms have been enlarged on the home side of the football field. New tables have been added at the science lab and awning at the elementary.

All athletic fields are mowed three times per week.

Three or four students are employed each summer to help with work of the department.

Board members attending the meeting were David Fulton, president; Dr. Anthony Holcomb, vice-president; Frances Long, secretary; and Roy Cavazos, Rodney Hughghins, Britt Patterson and Mike Ross.

## RUSK CITY COUNCIL

continued from pg. 1A

boards.

Mayor Angela Raiborn said "This is something we need to look at for the future."

Councilman Sam Florian said, "These billboards are in competition to our business, but I think we ought to leave them alone."

Mr. Florian suggested that the city survey Rusk's business people to see what they think of billboard regulations.

During the city manager's report, Mike Murray showed sample plaques that might be used for the James Long Municipal Court Building. One plaque was made of bronze and the other of aluminum.

Dedication of the building is anticipated the first part of June.

A new roof is needed at city hall. This expense is expected to cost approximately \$15,000. The insurance company will be contacted to determine if help could be provided for roof hail damages.

Code Red expenses are expected to be approximately \$5,000 instead of the \$10,000 originally budgeted.

The Code Red project will call local citizens in the event of a disaster.

A person will be designated as the disaster representative to key in information for the

program.

The Texas Department of Transportation project on U.S. Highway 69 through Rusk has been delayed. Workers have found springs beneath the roadway and French drains will be installed to help with the water problems and road buckling.

The city is seeking bids for cemetery and swimming pool maintenance.

Attending the meeting were Mayor Raiborn; Councilmembers Kris Morgan, Walter Session, Don Jones, Mr. Florian and Donald Woodard; City Manager Murray; and City Secretary Fran Wendeborn.

# Glass wins Pct. 3 runoff



MOODY GLASS JR.

Incumbent Commissioner Moody Glass Jr., Pct. 3, won the Democratic nomination for his position in the April 8 primary election.

He received 52.75 percent of the votes. His opponent, former Commissioner F.E. Hassell received 47.25 percent.

Of the 527 votes cast, Mr. Glass had 278 and Mr. Hassell, 249.

In the March 4 primary, Mr. Glass led the

ticket with 720 votes or 47.52 percent, compared to 437 votes and 28.84 percent for Mr. Hassell and 358 votes or 23.63 percent for Randall Bonner.

Mr. Glass expressed his appreciation to all who voted for him in the primary.

"I will need your support again in November," he said. He will face Republican challenger Katherine Pinotti in the Nov. 4 General Election. Ms. Pinotti was unopposed in the Republican primary.

## ALTO CITY COUNCIL

continued from pg. 1A

take vacation.

"What I need more than anything is someone full-time," Chief Barron said.

Mayor Pro-Tem Annie Walker suggested the council ask Municipal Judge R. E. Christiansen to look for reserve officers at the Angelina College Police Academy.

"Mrs. Mayor, why are you talking to the judge? Does he run the police department? Or do I?" Chief Barron asked. "Most departments have reserves who ride with the full-time officers. Otherwise, they work football and basketball games. They do not patrol."

He explained that he was not interested in taking on more reserve officers. No action was taken.

The city of Alto faces more challenges from the gas system, as gas lines which service the Alto Housing Authority are constructed out of PVC pipe, a material which becomes breakable as natural gas moves through it. Utilities Supervisor Brandon Tyer told the council the breakable PVC lines created a safety hazard for housing authority

residents as gas leaks could potentially infiltrate the sewage system.

Councilman Monty Collins made the motion to bid out the replacement of the PVC lines, with Councilman Kenneth Brethouwer making the second. The council approved the measure 5-0.

In addition to facing leaky gas lines, utilities personnel are subject to unsafe working conditions when they retrieve supplies from the building known as "Old City Hall."

"Utility workers are working in unhealthy, unsafe conditions," Mrs. Walker said. "The roof is caving in more and more."

Mrs. Walker and Mr. Tyer cited black mold buildup and large holes in the roof as safety issues. Mrs. Walker suggested renting a garage or temporary storage facility until permanent arrangements can be made.

The council tabled the issue to gather information on possible storage until the next council meeting.

In other action, the council approved the minutes from

the March 10, Feb. 11, Jan. 23 and Jan. 14 meetings and approved accounts payable. The council voted to bid out a contract for the mowing of city property as Carey Palmer will no longer be able to provide the service due to health reasons.

Also approved were the closing of the front office from noon until 1 p.m. for lunch, getting estimates on installing a security door in the hallway of city hall and plexiglass in the front office, and a resolution declining a 1.46 percent utility rate increase from the Public Utilities Commission.

Denied were actions to lower the \$100 reconnect fee on city utilities, changing the terminology of "utilities deposits" to "connection fees," an ordinance banning LED signs from highways inside the city limits and action to sell the city's Dodge Intrepid police car.

Councilmen Robert Pearson, Mr. Brethouwer, Earl Clark, Mr. Collins and Mrs. Walker were present for the meeting.

# Dems, GOP approve delegates, resolutions for state conventions

Both parties approve resolution supporting the Neches River National Wildlife Refuge over proposed Lake Fastrill

By LELAND ACKER  
STAFF WRITER

Efforts to support the Neches River National Wildlife Refuge were given a boost in the recent Cherokee County Democratic and Republican conventions. A resolution in support of the refuge over the Fastrill Reservoir passed in both conventions, meaning the resolution will be presented at the state party conventions.

"I have already sent it to (the state party)," said Josie Schoolcraft, Cherokee County Republican party chairman. "If approved, it will be taken to the national convention."

Caesar Roy, chairman for the Cherokee County Democratic party, said the resolution passed the Democratic county convention.

Dr. Michael Banks, co-chair for the Friends of the Neches River, a group which has supported the refuge and opposed the construction of the Fastrill

Reservoir, said the county convention votes were just another step in the political process.

"It was just a continuation of having resolutions go up the ladder in the process," he said.

Dr. Banks added for the resolution in support of the Neches River National Wildlife Refuge to even be brought to the floor at the state conventions, representatives from the local parties will have to promote the resolution before the state's resolutions committee.

"They get hit with hundreds of resolutions," he said. "John Ross will promote it in the Democratic convention. I don't know who will promote it in the Republican convention."

When the resolutions were presented at the precinct level, Dr. Banks said his goal was to send a message to the legislature.

"I think we've accomplished

that," he said. "We want to keep it in front of the public."

The local parties also elected delegates to represent Cherokee County at the state conventions.

The Republicans will send 16 delegates and 16 alternate delegates to the state Republican convention June 12-14 in Houston. All are committed to presumptive Republican Presidential Nominee John McCain.

Local Democrats will send 14 delegates to the state Democratic convention June 6-7 in Austin. Nine of those delegates are pledged to Barack Obama and five are pledged to Hillary Clinton.

Delegates at both state conventions will elect delegates to represent Texas at the national Republican and Democratic conventions, as well as approve resolutions to propose at the national conventions.

## Buying a home?

Check out the real estate listings on

# www.THECHEROKEEAN.com