

# THE BROWNFIELD NEWS

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Claude Harrell was enjoying this week's pleasant weather while he mowed the grass Tuesday afternoon on the Terry County Historical Museum grounds. Midnight showers dropped more than half an inch of rain on some parts of the city early Tuesday. Mostly sunny skies were predicted for the remainder of the week with highs in the 80s.

## Annual Farm Tour set Thursday morning

By Jackie Pate

Want to take a ride down the roads of history and have a good time doing it?

The big buses roll again on Thursday for the 57th running of the Terry County Annual Farm Tour.

Agriculture is the center of our community. This is a time where we will celebrate by honoring the Outstanding Farm Family of the Year and the Outstanding Young Farmer of the Year.

Their dedication to conservation and preserving the natural resources has been recognized among the community.

Did you know that the first Farm Tour, in September 1954, was made in private cars and sack lunches were served at the last tour stop?

Did you know the first 'Outstanding Diversified Farmer' was Herbert Hicks in 1958?

The term was changed to 'Outstanding Farm Family' sometime in the 70's.

There's a lot of history written in our Terry County soil and it is all recorded in the pages and the memories of all the years of the Farm Tour and in the lives and the stories and the hearts of our Terry County producers and citizens.

All the drought and the floods and the hot and the cold and the good times and the bad were experienced by those that came before us.

Times have changed for sure, but Mother Nature gives and takes like she always has, thus a history shared between our local farmers of the past and the farmers of the present.

The Terry Soil & Water Conservation District, with the Natural Resources Conservation Service, the Texas AgriLife Extension Agents and Specialists has worked hard to make this year's Farm Tour a very special time for Terry County's farmers, ranchers, businesses and residents.

Stops will include crop varieties northwest of Brownfield, habitats of Lesser Prairie Chickens and a stop at the Landmark Earth Solutions mulch plant west of the city.

The 2012 Farm Tour will be offering CEU's for producers who hold a pesticide applicator's license, and speakers including specialists from the area whom will offer insight on the latest tools to improve local farming operations.

Registration and coffee / donuts will be first thing on the agenda starting at 8 a.m. at the First Baptist Church in Brownfield.

We will have booths on the outside for folks to visit.

The big buses will be idling on the parking lot of the First Baptist Church 9 a.m. departure down the roads of our history.

Roads with the memories of yesterday that have led us to the blessings of today.

Our luncheon will start right after the tour at 12 noon.

We will honor the Outstanding Farm Family and the Young Farmer of the Year during the luncheon.

If you can't come on the tour but would like to attend the luncheon, contact Jackie Pate at the Terry SWCD office and she will have meal tickets for you to purchase for \$12 each.

Terry SWCD can accept credit cards at this time for meals or donations to the Duane Moss Scholarship.

## State sales tax rebate up 18.5 percent

Texas Comptroller Susan Combs announced today that state sales tax revenue in August was \$2.34 billion, up 18.5 percent compared to August 2011.

"The strong business and consumer spending trend boosted the monthly sales tax revenue, as did money remitted at the close of the state's tax amnesty which ended in August," Combs said. "The state's sales tax revenue for fiscal 2012 was \$24.1 billion, about 12.6 percent higher than the previous fiscal year. Collections from business sectors such as the oil and natural gas industry and consumer sectors including retail trade increased sales tax revenue for the fiscal year."

Brownfield's rebate check for the period is \$96,427.

That amount is an almost six percent increase over the same month last year.

So far in 2012, the city has received just over one million dollars in rebates, more than eight percent higher than the same year-to-date total in 2011.

Terry County received \$57,024 for the month, a 57 percent increase over the \$36,328 received last year.

To date, the county's return is up

See TAX REBATE...Page 4

## Meadow citizens petition to remove city administrator

By JOSIE MUSICO  
Staff Writer

A group of Meadow citizens are petitioning to remove their city administrator based on their claims that she has abused her position.

Everett McArthur presented to City Council on Tuesday morning a petition he had collected of 53 signatures from fellow residents dissatisfied with Terri McClanahan's job performance and seeking her termination.

The document claims McClanahan has "used her position to conduct personal vendettas, and to besmirch the characters of multiple citizens" and "has been dishonest in council meetings and in her dealings with the public."

McArthur - one of about 20 residents who attended the meeting - later told the *News* he and some other residents had collected the signatures by knocking on doors during a period of

about two hours Monday, and would probably seek more before taking the next steps with the petition.

Texas Municipal League Executive Director Bennett Sandlin later told the *News* that unlike council members and other elected officials who could be recalled during an election depending on a city's charter, paid staff could be terminated only by those who appointed them - the city council in most cases.

"I've never heard of a Texas city that allowed citizens to remove an employee," he said. "The petition has no legal weight, and the council can do what they want with it."

McArthur acknowledged that he and his fellow citizens had no direct influence over McClanahan's employment, but hoped the petition would bring their concerns to the council's attention.

"We just wanted to present it to

the council so they know there is widespread dissatisfaction with the city administrator," he said.

Councilman Jerry Liles questioned McArthur if the doors he had knocked on were a fair representation of the town, or if he had simply selected homes of residents he had prior knowledge were likely to sign.

"Did you just pick and choose what houses you wanted to go to?" he said.

McArthur responded that the 53 signatures were only a sample of a list he felt would soon grow.

McClanahan declined to comment to the *News* about the petition following the meeting.

Among other agenda items from the monthly council meeting - the first in its recently-rescheduled early-morning time slot - City Attorney Mike Guevara recommended the volunteer fire department update its training and personnel records.

He pointed out that because the city's ordinance code established in June 2009 two-year terms for the fire chief and had not since updated them, the city did not legally have a fire chief. He suggested fire-fighters hold a meeting to elect the chief and assistant chief, obtain confirmation from City Council with their choice and complete and document any training hours they were currently lacking.

"We need to get the chief and the assistant chief in place and start the hierarchy," Guevara said. "There needs to be some structure to it."

Robert Campos, who previously served as chief and in the eyes of many

local residents still informally held the position by default, noted the wording of the agenda item - "Discuss and act on removal of fire chief" - and suggested the timing appeared suspicious.

"In my opinion, it's being brought up right now because of a personal vendetta," he said.

Assistant Chief Christopher Campos questioned if the fire-fighters' votes for a chief would be meaningless if the council overturned their decision.

Mayor Natalie Howard denied both accusations, and Guevara told the *News* there was no reason Campos would not be eligible for reelection.

"The council is not going to vote on your chief," Howard said. "...The way it is now it doesn't have a lot of organization. There's not a vendetta that I know of."

Howard requested Campos return all his city-issued fire-fighting equipment to City Hall by 5 p.m. Wednesday. Guevara responded that he should be able to keep it at least temporarily in case a fire occurs before a fire chief is formally named.

In another agenda item, the council voted 4-0 for Howard to serve as the only contact person between the city and Raw Oil and Gas, with whom the city is contracting for drilling services, after a company representative complained about having to field multiple inquiries from Meadow residents about their activity.

"This is a private oil company that could walk away if the city becomes too much to deal with," Guevara said, adding that Raw is not required to respond to questions as are government

agencies.

McArthur objected before the vote, claiming the entire city council should be able to access that data as well as the mayor.

"By saying there's only one person that can request that information, that's not in the best interest of the citizens because it unduly restricts the elected officials from being able to do their job," he said.

Local resident Israel Huerta expressed concern about what he felt was a lack of communication about Raw's drilling activity and its possible effects on the city.

"You see oil wells and you think, 'Meadow's going to start making money,'" he said. "That's something people need to be informed about ...I think for this size of town it would be easier to let everyone know what's going on."

See MEADOW...Page 4



Meadow Mayor Natalie Howard (right) answers questions from Israel Huerta (speaking, photo at left) and other guests at Tuesday's City Council meeting. A group of residents are petitioning to remove City Administrator Terri McClanahan.



Wed 9/19	Thu 9/20	Fri 9/21	Sat 9/22	Sun 9/23



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