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MEADOW vs Follett Saturday in Happy

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✦ Brownfield High School senior Daniella Perez was all smiles upon hearing her name announced as the 2012 BHS Homecoming Queen during the pep rally Friday afternoon in Cub Gym. She was escorted by senior Dylan Huston.

Harvest Festival to have new theme, lots of fun

After months of planning and preparation, one of Terry County's longest standing traditions takes center stage this week.

Harvest Festival is set for next Saturday, with the annual talent show Thursday and a free concert Friday by country star Jody Nix. The 1950s-style theme is "Let's Rock 'n' Roll."

"We're excited about this year," said Brownfield Chamber of Commerce Executive Director Lorena Valencia. "Even with all the changes that are going on, we expect to have as good a turnout or even better than we have in the past."

Some of those changes include new Queen Mother Erica Dill, a past competitor and pageant assistant. Sterling Faught will serve as assistant queen mother.

The six girls competing in this year's Little Miss pageant are selling raffle tickets rather than the candles they sold in past years. Raffle-ticket sales were for the grand prize of a brand-new Apple iPad and for various smaller prizes.

The main festivities Saturday will contain the traditional parade and car show, as well as plenty of fun times catching up with family and friends.

For more information call 637-2564.

Rail expansion again hot topic for West Texas

The idea of expanding the West Texas and Lubbock Railway tracks from their current stopping point in Seagraves southward toward Seminole and into New Mexico has been discussed on numerous occasions over the past several decades.

Thursday afternoon, at Seminole's City Hall, civic and business leaders from Seminole, Gaines County, Brownfield, Hobbs and Lea County, N.M., informally met again on the rail expansion topic.

The meeting spurred the local and area leaders in attendance to, once again, find a way to push the expansion of rail service in West Texas and southeastern New Mexico.

"This is something, I feel, will help our communities and their businesses flourish," said Tommy Cope with Intercontinental Potash Corp., a potash mining business located in far western Lea County, about rail expansion.

Intercontinental Potash Corp., according to Cope, produces 840,000 tons of potash -- a key ingredient in high grade fertilizer -- of which Cope stated a large portion is shipped by rail service.

"Being able to have expanded rail service is something we could all benefit from."

Currently, in the region, rail service is available through the West Texas and Lubbock Railway, which operates a short line from Seagraves to southwestern Lubbock and from western Lubbock County to Whiteface, as well as the Texas-New Mexico Railroad, which operates a line from Lovington, N.M. to Monahans.

"Rail expansion has been discussed by a lot of people in the past, but for whatever reasons, seemed to fizzle out," said Tommy Phillips, Seminole City Administrator and acting Seminole Economic Development Corp. Executive Director. "But, I certainly feel there is enough of a high interest for rail service here that maybe we can get the discussions going again."

Thursday's discussions focused primarily on connecting the West Texas and Lubbock Railway from its Seagraves stopping point to the Texas-New Mexico Railroad line at a location south of Hobbs, Lea County's most populous community.

"We feel, from our standpoint, this would be the best scenario," said Sam Cobb, Mayor of the City of Hobbs in discussing the plans of expanding the rail line from Seagraves to Hobbs, via Seminole.

"Expanding the line south to Seminole, then over to Hobbs would do nothing but benefit not only our communities, but all those along the rail lines from Hobbs to Lubbock."

Bruce Carswell, Vice President of Permian Basin Railways, which owns both the West Texas and Lubbock and Texas-New Mexico Railroad short lines, said in a Sept. 22 story produced by the Hobbs News-Sun "railroad officials are interested in being a part of the line, but that the company was small and couldn't do (rail expansion) on its own."

"I think we have been fairly consistent in saying it is a big project, but we are a small organization," said Carswell. "If there is enough support for it, we will support the effort. The opportunity to increase rail volume for both railroads is pretty well in hand."

Officials from Permian Basin Railways were not in attendance at Thursday's meeting.

Estimated costs of railway expansion, according to sources in Thursday's meeting and Carswell in the Sept. 22 article, range from \$1 million to \$2 million per mile of track installed.

Carswell said: "the best approach right now would be to have a preliminary engineering study conducted to answer many questions about cost, location and viability of putting a track from Seagraves to Hobbs."

Estimated costs for the engineering study was quoted at being \$100,000.

A 2008 study by Cambridge Systematics, Inc. for the Texas Dept. of Transportation's Government and Public Affairs Division, showed it was financially and environmentally feasible to expand the West Texas and Lubbock Railway line from its Seagraves stopping point 16 miles southward to Seminole.

The feasibility study, entitled "Permian Basin Rail Connection" looked at the various financial and environmental impacts associated with the possible expansion of rail service from Seagraves to McCamey, located 80 miles south of Odessa.

"The Seminole area, just 16 miles south of the current (West Texas and Lubbock Railway) terminus at Seagraves, provides the greatest concentration of rail amenable shippers without local rail service," said the report. "The most likely rail shippers from the Seminole area include peanut processors, cotton gins and chemical/fertilizer producers. Each of these industries ship commodities that are rail amenable and rail would offer some savings versus current trucking rates."

The 2008 feasibility study stated the expansion of rail service from Seagraves to Odessa had the potential to divert some 34,000 truck loads off U.S. 385 annually, which represented some 6,600 annual rail carloads. The study also anticipated the cost of expanding the line -- in 2008 -- from Seagraves to Seminole would cost roughly \$44.4 million, or an average of \$2.7 million per mile for a single track, 286,000 lb. capacity line.

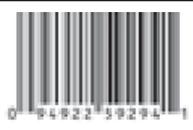
Recently, the West Texas and Lubbock Railway underwent a roughly \$12 million improvement project, while the Texas-New Mexico Railroad shortline saw \$18 million in line improvements. Both lines are considered to be Class III railway lines, as defined by the Surface Transportation Board, and feature an annual operating revenue of less than \$20 million.

Fuel truck overturns, backs up traffic



✦ Friday afternoon a gasoline tanker truck lost control, turning over across the southwest-bound lanes of the Seagraves Hwy a few miles inside the Terry County line. According to authorities, the driver reported that the truck was empty. Traffic was backed up as emergency personnel were sizing up the situation. No further information was available at press time.

Sat 9/29	Sun 9/30	Mon 10/1	Tue 10/2	Wed 10/3



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6:30 PM • Brownfield City Hall
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