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Harvest *from Page One*

County growers received this year were timely and the majority of irrigation water was used to boost the local peanut crop, which could be the best ever seen locally.

"This week and the weather problems aside, it's probably one of the better years for peanut production we've had,"

he said.

The cotton crop isn't faring as well, the agent said, but it still is better than last year.

"We know it's better because we actually have some dry land cotton to harvest this year," he said. "Last year there was none. We have guys expecting to make a half to three-quarters of a bale per acre on their dry land farms this year. It's not great, but it's not terrible."

Bishop said irrigated fields could expect higher yields, but the best crops are on farms utilizing drip irrigation.

"With the price of cotton down and the price of peanuts up when we were planting, we saw a whole bunch more acres go to peanuts this year," he said. "And when our farmers had to decide where to apply their water, most of them decided to pamper the peanuts more and let the cotton fend for itself."

Local gins have reported modules arriving on their yards and expect to begin running next week.

Business *from Page One*

onstrate the economic vitality of the community and revitalize commercially zoned areas of the city.

The help from the city comes in the form of financial assistance up to 50 percent of the cost of improvements, not to exceed \$2,500.

The monies are available on a cost reimbursement basis only. No funds will be paid up front or advanced prior to the completion of the projects.

Additional funds, not to exceed \$2,500 may be available for corner buildings or lots where improvements will be made to multiple frontages.

Properties and businesses that qualify will be located in the local retail, central business, general commercial and light/heavy industrial areas of the city as displayed on zoning maps.

"The thing I like best about this program is that most, if not all, the money spent on these property improvements will be paid to local contractors," Partlow said after the council approved it. "Most of the property improvement contracts will run around \$5,000 each or less, so I believe most jobs will be done by local contractors instead of out of town contractors. So a total of \$50,000 of direct spending will be put in the pockets of local businesses."

City Manager Eldon Jobe said the program was designed to help a wide variety of businesses and property owners with enough regulations to protect the tax payers and make sure the work is done.

"We think this will help foster businesses in our town," he said at last week's council meeting. "We designed it for business owners and also to help property owners who want to improve their building to help sell it."

Suspension *from Page One*

"As soon as we found out we checked his TCLEOSE license," Gallegos said. "Nothing was on his record regarding Kermit. Unless he has a conviction or a pending charge - which he didn't - it's not admissible in court."

Gallegos also expressed concern that even if unintentionally, the case against Williams could unfairly exploit the victim in the Barnett case.

"Whatever Darrel did has nothing to do with the fact that that little girl was sexually assaulted," he said.

According to the News staff's notes from the July trial, Williams testified that he had worked for BPD since 2006 and for Kermit for about a year previously, which Hamilton later suggested gave a misleading impression that he came to Brownfield immediately afterward rather than 11 years later. The News archives from July also indicate that Hamilton accused Williams of not fully investigating the Barnett case because he did not directly interview the victim, to which Williams responded it was standard for the Children's Advocacy Center rather than the police to interview minor witnesses.

"If the case was aggravated sexual assault of a minor and the lead officer of the case had also been accused of aggravated sexual assault of a minor, of course he didn't do much investigation because he's been in the same situation," Hamilton said at the new hearing. "...Had we known he was licensed in 1994 and had to give up his license, that would have created a different way to cross-examine the police officer."

Accompanied by his attorney, Trey Didway, Williams pleaded the fifth from the witness stand in response to direct inquiries from Hamilton about whether he had worked for Kermit, been accused of sexual assault and agreed to surrender his license.

Overstreet described what he had discovered about Williams' time in Kermit, including an investigative report from the Texas Rangers and an indictment for felony theft that was later dismissed through restitution payments.

Retired Kermit Police Chief David Norwood - Williams' boss during his stint in Kermit - testified that when he heard the accusation that Williams had sex on multiple occasions with a teen girl, he eventually formed an agreement with the district attorney, Williams and the child's father to keep the matter away from a grand jury in exchange for Williams to forfeit his license. That the offense was statutory rather than forced influenced their decision, he said.

"At some point it was decided that because of the consensuality, he would be allowed to resign and surrender his license permanently and never be licensed in the state of Texas again as a peace officer," he said.

Norwood was surprised to learn that Williams had somehow been able to find another job in law enforcement, he said,

particularly given the thorough background checks applicants must pass to become employed in that field.

"I couldn't believe it when I heard it," he said. "Somehow it got through, and it shouldn't have."

Former Winkler County District Attorney Mike Fostell, also now retired, confirmed previous testimony about terms of the agreement, and testified that Williams had sent him two letters sometime after it was made requesting it be overturned and his license reinstated, which Fostell denied.

The victim's father - whose name the News chose not to disclose in order to protect her identity - said he agreed not to pursue criminal charges against Williams after he learned how explicit the trial testimony would likely become, and described how upset he was to learn about his current law-enforcement employment.

"I blew a gasket - I couldn't believe what I'd heard," he said. "I wanted to know how he was allowed to become a police officer again, and no one could answer my questions. There was no doubt in my mind that he was supposed to be permanently barred."

Brownfield Chief Serbantez testified during the new-trial motion that Williams was already employed as a patrol officer when he was appointed chief in March 2007, and has since been promoted to detective. He learned about Williams' past from the victim's parents, he said, and then made multiple calls to TCLEOSE, the Texas Rangers, the city and county attorneys and the city manager to further investigate, but discovered the officer's license appeared to be intact.

"There was nothing on file with TCLEOSE saying his license had been terminated," Serbantez said. "He was a commissioned peace officer."

Hamilton presented to the court Williams' application for employment at BPD, which he noted did not mention Kermit PD as a past employer and left blank answers to questions regarding if he had ever been subject to criminal investigation and if any incidents in his life history might influence the department's hiring decision. He questioned Serbantez, "Do you feel he was truthful and honest in the application?"

The chief responded, "No." Hamilton continued, "Do you have concerns about this officer's truthfulness as a member of your police department," to which Serbantez responded, "Yes."

Williams is a past president of the Terry County Girls Softball Association and currently serves as secretary for the Boys and Girls Club of Brownfield. Board President Sheryl Vaughan told the News it would be up to the entire board whether to allow him to remain in that position.

Note - This story was originally published Wednesday morning at www.brownfieldonline.com.

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