

# THE BROWNFIELD NEWS

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12 PAGES - PLUS SUPPLEMENTS

VOLUME 108, NO 94

SUNDAY, NOVEMBER 25, 2012

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Varsy Andrade, a Wal-Mart associate, stacked toys in a basket to be returned to store shelves Friday morning. Early hours paid off for the national retailer who saw record-breaking crowds in Brownfield, along with other local chain-stores Bealls and Sears, on Thanksgiving evening, getting a head start on the traditional Black Friday start of the shopping season.

## Shoppers flood local stores on Thanksgiving

Shoppers across the nation started the Christmas season a few hours earlier than normal as stores opened their doors on Thanksgiving evening this year, rather than wait until the wee hours of the morning on Black Friday.

Deal-hungry shoppers in Brownfield were lined up outside of local retailers after the Thanksgiving leftovers were put away.

Wal-Mart, Bealls and Sears welcomed a rush of local shoppers for the early opening.

Katy Richins said the Brownfield Sears store was "crazy busy" Thursday night.

"We were insanely busy (Thursday) and we have sold a lot of tools," she said of the locally-owned store on the square. "We expect it to continue and sell even more of our door busters before that special ends."

People began arriving at Wal-Mart around 4 p.m. in anticipation of the 7 p.m. start to the national retailer's heavily-advertised Christmas season.

"We were open all day, but we had people start showing up and staking out their place at about 4," said Helen Martinez, assistant manager at the Brownfield Wal-Mart. "It felt like there were a lot more people here this year, than last year. The lines were very long and the parking lot was full, from front to back and side to side."

Indeed, overflow shoppers were parking in lots belonging to First Christian Church on the shopping center's east side and Prosperity Bank on the west.

Brownfield Police helped with traffic, both outside the store and inside, Martinez said.

"The police were wonderful and I think helped to keep the calm," she said. "There were some tempers with people trying to get items and get places in line, but nobody got out of hand."

Martinez said the Brownfield Wal-Mart employs almost 90 people and most of them were on hand Thursday to work the holiday rush.

TVs and electronics were the hot items this year.

To avoid congestion or accidents, customers were given vouchers to protect the large-screen televisions, then drove behind the store to present their receipt and load them.

The hottest kid's item this year is the Nabi

tablet computer that makers say will "grow as your child does."

Likewise, tablets like the iPad were some of the best-selling items for adults again this year.

The surprising sell-out item at the store this season: bath towels.

"We had to create a special line for people waiting on the towels," Martinez said. "They went very fast."

More than 100 people were waiting in line outside Bealls when the department store opened at 8 p.m. Thursday.

Store supervisor Bernice Riojas said it was the first time the store had opened on Thanksgiving and customers took advantage.

"We did really well (Thursday) night, but we had fewer people here on Friday morning," she said.

Another supervisor, Cindy Breedlove, said she thought a lot of people shopped Brownfield on Thursday night and then went to Lubbock for more shopping on Friday morning.

"But I think they'll come back here again when they get back to town," she said.

All of the local store managers commended the overall attitude Brownfield shoppers and also the hard work of their employees, who gave up a portion of their Thanksgiving holiday.

"They were awesome," Martinez said of Wal-Mart's workers. "We have a great team and they all pitched in to make it a good day."

The earlier hours are an effort by stores to make shopping as convenient as possible for Americans, who they fear won't spend freely during the two-month holiday season in November and December because of economic uncertainty.

Many shoppers are worried about high unemployment and a package of tax increases and spending cuts known as the "fiscal cliff" that will take effect in January unless Congress passes a budget deal by then.

At the same time, Americans have grown more comfortable shopping on websites that offer cheap prices and the convenience of being able to buy something from smartphones, laptops and tablet computers from just about anywhere.

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## Drought continues locally, worsens nationwide as more of U.S. impacted

The worst U.S. drought in decades has deepened again after more than a month of encouraging reports of slowly improving conditions, a drought-tracking consortium said Wednesday, as scientists struggled for an explanation other than a simple lack of rain.

While more than half of the continental U.S. has been in a drought since summer, rain storms had appeared to be easing the situation

week by week since late September. But that promising run ended with Wednesday's weekly U.S. Drought Monitor report, which showed increases in the portion of the country in drought and the severity of it.

The report showed that 60.1 percent of the lower 48 states were in some form of drought as of Tuesday, up from 58.8 percent the previous week. The amount of land in extreme or exceptional drought — the two worst classifications — increased from 18.3 percent to 19.04 percent.

Locally, Terry County remains well below average rainfall totals.

The city of Brownfield has received almost twice the precipitation that fell in 2011, but that amount is barely half of the community's yearly average.

As of Friday, the Texas Tech Mesonet weather station located near the city's landfill had accumulated 9.96 inches of rain so far in Brownfield.

Only 4.15 inches was received here in all of 2011.

The city's annual rainfall average is 18.9 inches.

The Drought Monitor's map tells the story, with dark red blotches covering the center of the nation and portions of Texas and the Southeast as an indication of where conditions are the most intense.

Terry County is in one of the deep red regions on the map, designated as D3-D4, or "extreme."

Those areas are surrounded by others in lesser stages of drought, with only the Northwest, Florida and a narrow band from New England south to Mississippi escaping.

A federal meteorologist cautioned that Wednesday's numbers shouldn't be alarming, saying that while drought usually subsides heading into winter, the Drought Monitor report merely reflects a week without rain in a large chunk of the country.

"The places that are getting precipitation, like the Pacific Northwest, are not in drought, while areas that need the rainfall to end the drought aren't getting it," added Richard Heim, a meteorologist with the National Oceanic and Atmospheric

Administration's National Climatic Data Center. "I would expect the drought area to expand again" by next week since little rain is forecast in the Midwest in coming days.

He said there was no clear, scientific explanation for why the drought was lingering or estimate for how long it would last.

"What's driving the weather? It's kind of a car with no one at the steering wheel," Heim said. "None of the atmospheric indicators are really strong. A lot of them are tickling around the edges and fighting about

who wants to be king of the hill, but none of them are dominant."

The biggest area of exceptional drought, the most severe of the five categories listed by the Drought Monitor, centers over the Great Plains. Virtually all of Nebraska is in a deep drought, with more than three-fourths in the worst stage. But Nebraska, along with the Dakotas to the north, could still see things get worse "in the near future," the USDA's Eric Luebbehusen wrote in Wednesday's update.

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### Terry County Bale Count

As per tradition, the *Brownfield News* will monitor the harvest with weekly bale counts from the county's gins.

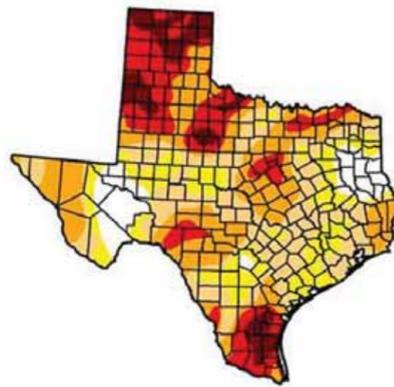
Lone Star.....	14,320
Meadow Co-op.....	15,721
Southwest.....	25,211
Terry County.....	19,835
West.....	4,291
Needmore.....	10,649
<b>Total.....</b>	<b>90,027</b>

Cotton Harvest continues

### U.S. Drought Monitor November 20, 2012

	Drought Conditions (Percent Area)					
	None	D0-D4	D1-D4	D2-D4	D3-D4	D4
Current	8.55	91.35	75.84	49.09	23.06	7.66
Last Week (11/13/2012 map)	10.54	89.46	69.59	36.99	18.92	6.12
3 Months Ago (09/21/2012 map)	11.75	88.25	73.61	38.48	14.08	1.16
Start of Calendar Year (12/07/2011 map)	0.01	99.99	97.83	84.81	67.32	32.36
Start of Water Year (09/25/2012 map)	9.13	90.87	78.73	57.41	24.91	5.18
One Year Ago (11/19/2011 map)	0.00	100.00	100.00	97.57	88.76	65.11

**Intensity:**  
 D0 Abnormally Dry  
 D1 Drought - Moderate  
 D2 Drought - Severe  
 D3 Drought - Extreme  
 D4 Drought - Exceptional



The Drought Monitor focuses on broad-scale conditions. Local conditions may vary. See accompanying text summary for forecast statements.

http://droughtmonitor.unl.edu

USDA  
 Released Thursday, November 22, 2012  
 National Drought Mitigation Center,

Sat 11/24	Sun 11/25	Mon 11/26	Tue 11/27	Wed 11/28



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