

Rep. Perry looks to Legislature session

Contributed by the Snyder Daily News

When the Texas Legislature reconvenes in January, State Rep. Charles Perry hopes the first 30 days are smooth.

But he knows that may not be the case with budget issues and other major topics on the docket. But the new Terry County representative hopes one thing will change.

"The last session, there was a lot of sitting and waiting," he said. "I hope we get our committee assignments early and get to work on the budget early."

The budget will be one of the biggest issues facing lawmakers in Austin. Texas law dictates that the legislature approves a balanced budget. But there are many factors in doing that, including the current lawsuit covering school finance. The court hearing the case is currently on break and will hear state witnesses beginning Jan. 7.

Perry said he is in the minority when it comes to the

outcome of that case. He said he feels the legislature should dictate the budget for public education and not the court.

The federal government's sequestration could also cause problems with the budgeting process. Perry said the bigger concern is the effect of the economy and consumer spending. He said sequestration could cause Texas to lose more than \$1 billion in federal funding.

"We have to be mindful of the budget process," he said. "I do not see a lot of new funding."

The top issues Perry said he would be pursuing include funding public education, water issues and the Medicaid entitlement reform.

The state representative said public education has changed and the state needs to look at the career and technical avenues of education. He said the system of preparing everyone for college is no longer valid.

Perry also said that water

issues need to be discussed and new resources need to be found.

"It is time to have a serious discussion about water," he said.

Medicaid entitlement reform needs to be looked at from the angle of how to administer the money, Perry said. He said he hopes to leave the session by saving money for Texas through new technology.

Another topic during the session will center on redistricting. Federal courts are reviewing the maps, which have been challenged. Temporary maps were used for the November election.

Also scheduled for discussion is eliminating the 15 percent end-of-course rule for current public education students.

At issue is whether 15 percent of the student's final grade should come from the STAAR test.

Perry said bills have been filed to eliminate the rule, but the question is whether or not Gov. Rick Perry will sign off on what the legislature passes.

"There was an end-all, be-all put on that and it was not right," Perry said of the 15 percent rule.

When discussing the entire session, Perry said many rural lawmakers feel they are making laws for the metro areas of the state.

He said he likes to make sure the legislation targeted for those areas does not affect the rural districts.

"Any time we can add language to exclude our smaller counties would be good, especially in West Texas," he said.

Overall, Perry said he feels like "it will be a good session."

Part Two of this interview will appear in the next issue of the Brownfield News.



Oak Grove Elementary School second-grader Brianne Franco was named December's Student of the Month for Brownfield Independent School District. Brianne is the daughter of Jeremy Franco and Alisha Gonzales and the granddaughter of David and Rachel Franco and Lupe Gonzales.



(ABOVE) Oak Grove Elementary School special education teacher Barbara Lomeli was named December's Employee of the Month for Brownfield Independent School District. Lomeli has worked for the school district for five years. She is shown accepting the honor with BISD trustee Randy Anthony.

Offices announce holiday schedules

Most local businesses and government agencies will be closed Monday in observance of Christmas Eve, and nearly all will be closed Tuesday for Christmas Day.

Terry County agencies such as the health department, sheriff's department and offices previously housed in the courthouse will be closed both days and remain closed Wednesday, Dec. 26.

Brownfield City Hall, 201 W. Broadway St., will also be closed Monday and Tuesday. Maintenance staff will collect garbage Monday only from their business routes - certain places such as restaurants that generate large amounts of trash - and not at all Tuesday. Residential routes will resume Wednesday at an earlier-than-normal start time and remain two days behind schedule the rest of the week.

Brownfield Independent School District released early Friday with times varying by campus. Teachers will return to work Monday, Jan. 7 for a staff-development work day. Students will return to classes Jan. 8. The administration building closed noon Friday and will reopen Jan. 7.

The Brownfield branch of the U.S. Post Office will continue its normal mail-delivery schedule every day except Tuesday. Retail windows will close at noon Monday.

United Supermarket, 1401 Tahoka Rd., will close at 7 p.m. Monday in observance of Christmas Eve, then remain closed all day Tuesday. Wal-Mart, 1405 Tahoka Rd., will close at 8 p.m. Monday and remain closed Tuesday.

All emergency services such as police and fire will continue their 24-hour operations.

WEATHER from Page One

Names and conditions of other people injured were not available, according to the Associated Press as of Wednesday.

Locally, no accidents or reports of damage were made to the Brownfield Police or Fire departments or the Terry County Sheriff's Office.

The highest sustained winds and gusts were recorded north of Brownfield.

The highest gust recorded in the area was 72 mph at 6:40 p.m. in Floydada.

Lubbock experienced peak winds of 59 mph just before 1 p.m.

Lubbock Mayor Glen Robertson said the city partially activated its emergency operations center to monitor and coordinate a response to power outages across the city.

Xcel Energy spokesman Wes Reeves said more than 500 customers in Levelland were without power after a transmission line was damaged around 2 p.m.

According to the Preston Smith International Airport website, five departing flights and five arriving flights were delayed Wednesday.

James Loomis, director of aviation at Preston Smith International Airport, said low visibility — not wind — is the cause.

"In weather like this, typically it causes delays," he said, "even cancellations on occasion."

No reports of delays were reported from Midland International Airport as of Wednesday evening.

Wind speeds reached as high as 85 mph at Pine Springs, according to TTU weather resources. Pine Springs is located in a remote portion of Culberson Co., near Guadalupe Pass.

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BROWNFIELD NEWS

Established July 29, 1904

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Periodicals Postage
Paid At Brownfield, TX 79316

Publication No. 067-880
Postmaster Form 3579
send to
Brownfield News,
P. O. Box 1272 • 409 W Hill St
Brownfield, TX. 79316

Phone: 806-637-4535
Fax: 806-637-3795
www.brownfieldonline.com

Published Every SUNDAY & WEDNESDAY
at 409 W. Hill St.,
Brownfield (Terry County) TX 79316

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