Being proactive key in possible oil boom

CONTRIBUTED BV THE SNYDER DAILY NEWS

People in West Texas have heard a lot about the Cline Shale and other oil plays in our region of the state.

While questions still remain on how the possible oil boom will play out, Rep. Charles Perry said West Texas cities in the region are doing the right thing.

"I am encouraged by [the cities] being proactive," the state representative said.

Perry said a recent town-hall meeting in Snyder and others held or planned in other area cities help show a unity among leaders.

Meetings being held by Scurry, Mitchell, Nolan and Fisher county leaders have shown that the region atop the Cline Shale wants to be ahead of the labor issues which may come if the boom hits.

Perry said the region can learn from other communities that had a boom where the biggest concerns were water and housing.

With the possible boom, Perry said the focus of lawmakers should be the labor force.

He said the notion that high school students graduate and then attend four-year universities is relevant, but many students are taking the community or technical college route.

"We have to look at the career tech route. We have to get ahead of the labor issues before they happen," he said.

Perry noted that he loves the community colleges in his district — Western Texas College in Snyder and South Plains College in Levelland.

He said the colleges will have to look at the career-tech route to help the workforce.

"Career-tech has to be regional. In West Texas, kids need to know how to run the farm," the lawmaker said.

He also hopes community colleges continue the dual-credit opportunities with area high schools.

Concerning the rising cost of tuition, Perry said that issue needs to be discussed. He said the legislature "let the genie out of the bottle" with tuition deregulation and thinks it will fall on the legislature to find a solution to the steep climb in tuition rates.

"College tuition has outpaced inflation," he said.

Two other areas Perry addressed were roads and prisons.

Conflicting messages have been received by Perry concerning road projects. One message is there is not enough money to do projects while another is that revenue from bonds is still on the shelf not being used to fund projects.

Perry said before voting on any road issues, he plans to do his homework.

He said he did not want to see the state step up the gas tax to fund road projects if money is already available.

"You have to be real careful how you affect Joe's pocketbook," he said of taxpayers. "We have to pay attention to the people who live paycheck to paycheck."

Concerning prisons, where there has been an ongoing shortage of correctional officers, Perry said staffing has been an ongoing problem, especially in West Texas.

While Perry said the state is not losing most employees to the oil field, he knows officers are heading that way.

"We have always had problems with prison guards," he said.

But one thing that does need to continue, according to Perry, is educating inmates through trade. He said he would not support closing the Windham School, which is the agency that educates inmates.

Perry said he hopes to be on a budget committee during this session. "I think that is one route with my financial background," the CPA said.

He also will be among the seasoned veterans during his second session. In the House, 80 representatives will have served two sessions or less.

One of the first decisions will be voting on a Speaker of the House. Perry said he will listen to the candidates, which right now are Joe Straus and David Simpson. He said one key will be to have a speaker who will not stand in the way of passing legislation needed for his district.

"The speaker is the pathway to the House," he said.

Perry has already filed some legislation, including fiscal legislation. He said residents who have concerns about what is happening during the session can call his Austin or Lubbock offices to discuss it with the staff.

The lawmaker also plans to visit the district throughout the session. "I love to come out (to the district) for events," Perry said.

News Briefs

City Council - Brownfield City Council will meet at 7:30 a.m. Thursday, Jan. 2 at City Hall.

Radio fans - If you are interested in joining an antique radio club, contact Stan Baker at 559-4679.

GED classes - Brownfield Independent School District offers GED classes from 5-8 p.m. Tuesdays and Thursdays at the middle school.For more information call 637-2591.

To register for daytime GED classes, contact Ginger Stuart at 637-4234 or visit Workforce Solutions, 1321 B Tahoka Rd. Classes meet from 8:15 a.m. to 1 p.m. Monday through Thursday.

Readers - The *Brownfield News* will try to publish information about upcoming nonprofit events that are open to the community. Call Josie with news tips at 637-4535 or email josie@brownfieldonline.

Kidney Dialysis Safety Warning
Reports of heart attack and death led the FDA to recall Granuflo Concentrate and Naturalyte Liquid, which are commonly used drugs during dialysis.
These products have been shown to increase levels of sodium bicarbonate in the blood which can lead to:
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