

BROWNFIELD NEWS

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BISD takes anti-voucher stance

Brownfield Independent School District could publicly oppose school vouchers, pending Monday night's board meeting.

The board will consider BISD administrators' proposal to join the Texas Association of School Boards' Anti-Voucher Resolution.

"TASB is urging boards to oppose any diversion of public school funds away from actual public schools," said Assistant Superintendent Steve Osborn. "I think you keep private schools and public schools separate. I respect anyone's decision to send their kids to private schools, but public schools shouldn't have to pay for private schools."

The resolution, available on TASB's web site, claims that vouchers are unnecessary and have not been proven effective in improving student performance.

Among other agenda items, the board will consider the Progress-Based Monitoring Assessment System School Improvement Plan and an option to suspend a rule which counts STAAR end-of-course exams as 15 percent of students' final grades in each subject. They will also consider upgrades for campus computer labs, call for their May board election, formally accept the resignation of High School Principal Jerry Lawrence and consider two facility-use requests and a budget amendment.

The meeting will be held at 7 p.m. in the administration building's board room.

WINE WORKS

wine and fruit processing and grape crushing, among others. Most will require training.

If the company meets those operational goals, BIDCorp. will pay \$1,000 per month toward the cost of the processing facility for five years, and reimburse them up to \$15,000 for the cost of their lateral line from city main line to their building. They will also reimburse 50 percent of their property tax each of the first five years they are in operation, to be capped at \$10,000 per year.

The total value of the five-year incentive package is \$160,000.

"The incentives are performance-based, meaning they must earn them before we pay out on them," Partlow said. "Each incentive, with the exception of the land, has restrictions on it to ensure that we use taxpayer's money wisely. We are obligated to use our citizens' tax dollars as efficiently as possible to bring good, honest businesses to our community to provide core jobs."

TWCC's founders selected Terry County mainly based on its prevalent grape industry. Because this year's anticipated grape harvest of more than 3,000 tons is the largest in the state, the company's founders were surprised about the lack of commercial wine-making in the area, and decided to take the initiative on what could easily become a booming market.

"The overall quality of the wine in Texas stands to improve through this facility," Sipowicz said.

Guided by research that indicates recently-harvested grapes make the highest-quality wines, they wanted to keep the processing facility as close as possible to the grape acreage. Just as France, California's Napa Valley and many other top wine-producing regions are famous for their vineyards with nearby wineries, they felt the Lone Star State could similarly benefit from tighter collaboration between both aspects of the industry.

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CITY	NET PAYMENT THIS YEAR	COMPARABLE PAYMENT PRIOR YEAR	% CHANGE	2013 PAYMENTS TO DATE	2012 PAYMENTS TO DATE	% CHANGE
Brownfield	109,634.05	103,302.16	6.12%	109,634.05	103,302.16	6.12%
Denver City	781,770.56	59,825.69	36.68%	81,770.56	59,825.69	36.68%
Lamesa	123,227.27	107,531.91	14.59%	123,227.27	107,531.91	14.59%
Levelland	295,392.73	240,541.50	22.80%	295,392.73	240,541.50	22.80%
Littlefield	91,505.90	69,838.24	31.02%	91,505.90	69,838.24	31.02%
Plains	15,317.22	7,373.39	107.73%	15,317.22	7,373.39	107.73%
Seagraves	16,757.58	20,572.05	-18.54%	16,757.58	20,572.05	-18.54%
Seminole	135,509.68	115,132.67	17.69%	135,509.68	115,132.67	17.69%

COUNTY	NET PAYMENT THIS YEAR	COMPARABLE PAYMENT PRIOR YEAR	% CHANGE	2013 PAYMENTS TO DATE	2012 PAYMENTS TO DATE	% CHANGE
Terry	49,645.88	38,294.43	29.64%	49,645.88	38,294.43	29.64%

Sales Tax Rebate Chart

Brownfield's first sales tax rebate check of the year is up more than six percent over the same month last year. Statewide, sales tax collections continue to rise, confirming a strong economy.

Oil & Gas News

Drilling Permits: Terry County

9 miles N. of Brownfield, Texas

Cy-Jack (LWCC) Field

Trail Mountain Inc. has a new drill permit for its Lockett Lease, Well No. 4H (API No. 42-445-32362), a horizontal well --- 380' FEL & 330' FSL of Section 22, Block E, EL&RR RR Co Survey, Abstract 411, 10,700' total depth, 6,075.90 acre lease

Oil little changed, investors weigh global economy

NEW YORK (AP) — The price of oil remained close to four-month highs Friday after new data showed China's economy rebounded and a global demand forecast rose.

Benchmark oil for February delivery fell 5 cents to \$95.44 per barrel in afternoon trading on the New York Mercantile Exchange.

Crude finished at \$95.49 a barrel Thursday, the highest since Sept. 17, on more evidence that the housing and jobs market are recovering.

On Friday the global economy took center stage for energy traders. The economy of China, the second largest energy consumer in the world behind the U.S., grew by 7.9 percent in the fourth quarter, up from the previous quarter's 7.4 percent, according to China's National Bureau of Statistics.

The prospect of more oil demand from China helped push up an oil consumption forecast from the International Energy Agency.

Global oil demand is expected to rise to 90.8 million barrels a day this year, according to the IEA in Paris, which released its monthly report Friday.

That's 930,000 daily barrels more than in 2012 and 240,000

more than the agency's previous forecast released in December.

Lingering concerns about the U.S. economy may be weighing on crude prices Friday, with lawmakers wrangling over spending cuts and the nation's debt ceiling.

After a week in which the S&P 500 index repeatedly reached new five-year highs, investors on Wall Street paused. Major indexes were little changed in afternoon trading.

Independent analyst Jim Ritterbusch said the current price for a barrel of oil may be unsustainable.

"The market appears to be sending off signals that some assistance from continued stock market gains and a weakening US dollar will be needed if this advance is to continue."

Natural gas futures rose, however. The price is up about 6 percent in the past week with a chillier forecast pointing to heavier use of the thermostat in many parts of the country.

Energy analyst Addison Armstrong points out that below-normal temperatures are expected in February across the Midwest

and Chicago, the nation's largest gas-consuming region.

Natural gas rose 8 cents on Friday to \$3.57 per 1,000 cubic feet.

Meanwhile, Brent crude, used to price international varieties of oil, rose 66 cents to \$111.76 per barrel on the ICE Futures exchange in London.

In other energy futures trading on Nymex:

- Wholesale gasoline rose 2 cents at \$2.78 a gallon.
- Heating oil rose 2 cents at \$3.03 a gallon.

CONSTRUCTION

Acceleration/Deceleration lanes also will be added to assist in entering traffic safely.

The most noticeable changes included in the project though, are the plans for the city's southern entrance.

The highway department is going to remove the decades-old frontage roads that run along the Seagraves Hwy.

The frontage roads will be replaced with extensive landscaping, to include grassy berms, native plants, trees and eight-foot wide meandering walking and bike paths.

"This could really beautify that portion of the city," Francis said. "Which is either the first or last thing people see of Brownfield."

Drought tolerant grasses would be planted to the berms and landscape areas, which require little watering after establishment and typically need mowing only two to three times per year.

The City of Brownfield maintenance department will be responsible for all upkeep of the newly landscaped areas.

Irrigation will be installed for trees planted along the route.

TxDOT Engineer Frank Philips has said that the highway would be safer without the frontage roads.

"This stretch of highway is unique to our whole district," he said. "We have major high-

ways all over that don't have access roads and they are safer than this is. Removing the access roads won't be the end of the world, I promise you."

All homes and businesses along that portion of the highway will have their driveways extended to the refurbished highway.

The duration of the entire project is expected to be 12 months and the work will be completed by a contractor, Francis said.

The highway will remain open for the vast majority of the project.

The roadway will be closed, two lanes at a time, with traffic routed to the other half of the street.

Intersections will follow the same protocol and if a closure is necessary, detours will be rerouted for no longer than a week at a time.

The city's most dangerous intersection -- where the Seagraves Hwy meets Hwy 137 (14th Street) -- will be altered to more of a 90 degree intersection.

Other changes will include adjusting the curb and gutters and removing the existing center medians at that location.

Colms said the timing of the project will depend on others in the area, including installation of an overpass over Milwaukee Ave. in Lubbock and another recently announced on U.S. 87 near Lubbock Cooper High School.

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