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Unemployment from Page One

while another goods-producing industry, Mining and Logging, expanded by 1,600 jobs during this time. Service-providing industries that also showed positive growth over the month included Education and Health Services, Other Services, and Trade, Transportation, and Utilities.

"Private sector employers in Texas added 257,400 jobs since December 2011 for an annual growth rate of 2.9 percent," said TWC Commissioner Representing Employers Tom Pauken. "Texas is leading the way in helping to make the United States energy independent. Our robust energy sector not only is creating good paying jobs for many Texans in that industry but also is spurring job growth in many other industries."

The Midland Metropolitan Statistical Area (MSA) had the lowest December unemployment rate in the state at 3.1 percent. The Odessa MSA came in second at 3.7 percent, and the Amarillo MSA third at 4.1 percent (not seasonally adjusted).

Locally in Gaines County, the 4-per-

cent December 2012 jobless rate was an improvement from the county's 4.8-percent jobless rate seen in December 2011.

A Look Nationally

According to the US Dept. of Labor Statistics, regional and state unemployment rates were generally little changed in December.

Twenty-two states recorded unemployment rate decreases, 16 states and the District of Columbia posted increases, and 12 states had no change, the U.S. Bureau of Labor Statistics reported recently. Forty-two states and the District of Columbia registered unemployment rate decreases from a year earlier, six states experienced increases, and two states had no change. The national jobless rate, 7.8 percent, was unchanged from November and was 0.7 percentage point lower than in December 2011.

In December 2012, nonfarm payroll employment increased in 27 states and the District of Columbia and decreased in 23 states. The largest over-the-month increase in employment occurred in

New York (+35,100), followed by New Jersey (+30,200), Georgia (+14,400), and Missouri (+10,200). The largest over-the-month decrease in employment occurred in California (-17,500), followed by Florida (-15,300), Louisiana (-11,400), and Michigan (-10,600).

New Jersey experienced the largest over-the-month percentage increase in employment (+0.8 percent), followed by Kansas (+0.6 percent) and Alaska, Georgia, Missouri, and New York (+0.4 percent each).

Hawaii experienced the largest over-the-month percentage decline in employment (-0.7 percent), followed by Louisiana and Wyoming (-0.6 percent each).

Over the year, nonfarm employment increased in 44 states and decreased in six states and the District of Columbia.

The largest over-the-year percentage increases occurred in North Dakota (+3.6 percent) and Utah (+3.0 percent). The largest over-the-year percentage decrease in employment occurred in West Virginia (-1.8 percent).

BISD from Page one

Among other agenda items, the board agreed to join the Texas Association of School Boards in a political battle against education vouchers, certificates issued by the government for use at private rather than public schools. The board approved TASB's Anti-Voucher Resolution with a 6-0 vote, with trustee Shane Hord absent.

TASB Assistant Director of Governmental Relations Julie Shields later told the *News* her agency does not support vouchers because they unfairly divert public funds away from the public schools for which that money was intended.

"The membership of the Texas Association of School Boards has been opposed to the diversion of taxpayer dollars to private schools that do not meet state and federal academic requirements," Shields said. "Taxpayers don't know the type of education students are getting in private schools on taxpayer dollars. Basically, it's to send a message to the legislature to support their public schools and focus on the majority of Texas students in our public schools."

The school board gave another unanimous vote to follow TEA in suspension of a requirement to count end-of-course STAAR exams as 15 percent of a student's final grade in each subject. That 15-percent rule would not be feasible as intended due to the delay in the availability of STAAR results, educators had determined. For instance, a student with a borderline passing grade could have to wait until the November following the May exams to learn if he or she had indeed passed.

"You run into problems with students not knowing if they're going to graduate or advance to the next level," Osborn said.

The board also approved the Performance-Based Monitoring Analysis System, which the Texas Education Agency uses to monitor school districts' special programs. Osborn announced that the report had yielded minor deficiencies in BISD's special education program, which he felt was unfair.

"We're frustrated because it's not an indication of our special education program," he said. "We do have an outstanding special education program."

In personnel matters, Osborn announced the resignation of High School Principal Jerry Lawrence for "health and family concerns." A mid-term resignation would typically require the board's acceptance, Osborn said, but was unnecessary in this particular case with Lawrence already gone.

Osborn later told the *News* that Paul Coronado was still serving as interim principal, with assistance from history teacher Ben Prowell and Athletic Director Bryan Welps. The search for a new principal was on hold pending the hiring process for a new superintendent, he added.

"We're not going to actively search on other administrative positions until the superintendent's job is filled," he said.

In other business, they formally called for their board election May 11 and approved a request from CFO Vaughan to increase the general fund's budget by \$193,879 to reflect last month's holiday stipends, \$75,000 worth of upgrades for campus computer labs and facility-use requests for the Chamber of Commerce's annual banquet and Encore Dance Academy's spring recital.

BUDGET from Page One

The budgeting process begins with two bills in the Texas Senate and House, named SB 1 and HB 1, respectively. Senate Finance Committee Chair Tommy Williams, R-The Woodlands, introduced SB 1 with \$88.9 billion in spending, and House Appropriations Committee Chairman Jim Pitts, R-Waxahachie, introduced HB 1 with \$89.1 billion.

For the next 128 days lobbyists, advocacy groups and everyday citizens will try to convince lawmakers to change these 959-page bills to better suit them. The draft bills will change dramatically as they move through subcommittees to full committees to floor debate and into conference committees before a final vote, usually in the last hours of the session.

In the Senate, Lt. Gov. David Dewhurst has promised a very conservative budget, which no doubt is intended to improve his standing after Ted Cruz defeated him for the U.S. Senate by labeling him a moderate.

"This session, we will again balance our budget without raising taxes on Texas families and businesses, while keeping spending as low as possible," Dewhurst pledged.

In the House, Speaker Joe Straus takes a slightly more hands-off approach, promising to allow the Republican majority to come up with the bill lawmakers want. But since a budget is ruled by math as much as politics, there are a few simple truths.

State Comptroller Susan Combs certified that the Legislature has \$101.4 billion to spend this session, which include \$8.8 billion in unexpected revenue in this budget cycle and \$96.2 billion in revenue forecast for the 2014-2015 fiscal years. About \$3.6 billion of the next biennium's revenue will automatically go into the Rainy Day Fund, so that's hands off without a four-fifths majority vote.

The first problem lawmakers face is that they did not appropriate enough money in 2011. Therefore they need to spend \$5.2 billion to settle a budget deficit by March or the state can't pay its bills. That leaves \$96 billion to spend.

If the Center for Public Policy Priorities is correct in its estimates, that number is exactly what Texas needs to spend just to maintain the current level of government services after inflation and population growth. To spend any less, advocates for the poor say, would be cutting funds for the poor, young and disabled.

There is little chance, though, that Republican leaders would ever increase spending that much. Perry and Dewhurst have promised to limit government spending increases to population growth plus inflation, a rate estimated at 9.85 percent. Based on spending during this budget cycle, that puts the limit for the next budget at \$94.8 billion.

Theoretically then, lawmakers can add another \$5 billion to the current draft budget bills. The fight is on to see how that money might be spent.

Obituaries



ABE LANCE FURLOW (1915-2013)

The family of Abe Lance Furlow announces that he went to be with his savior on January 20, 2013. Funeral services will take place on Saturday, January 26, 2013, at Second Baptist Church of Lamesa with Jim Wright and Daniel Armstrong officiating. A private burial will follow in Lamesa Memorial Park under the direction of Branon Funeral Home.

Lance was born on September 19, 1915, in Alto, TX, and was the last survivor of the 5 children of Abe and Betty Furlow. His family moved to Dawson County from East TX, arriving on Lance's ninth birthday. He started school at McCarty and then graduated from Lamesa High School in 1934. After graduation his family moved to Littlefield, TX, where he met Amelia Rietman. Her stunning good looks and kind heart won him over and they married on December 6, 1936. Their honeymoon lasted 69 years.

As a young man he took up baseball and softball and was still the family pitcher in his 80's. In 1959 Lance and Amelia moved to Durango, Co. Lance and his family enjoyed fly fishing, trap shooting, hunting, golfing and many family picnics. The Furlow's returned to Lamesa in 1986 where he resumed farming. At this

time he renewed his childhood love of rattlesnake hunting and fishing. He and Amelia patrolled the Borden County roads and Lance was proud to be able to finish a snake with one shot to the head.

He is survived by sons, Steve Furlow of Brownfield, TX, Claudia Furlow of Brownfield, TX, Mark Furlow and wife Carmen of Lamesa, TX; daughters, Marilyn Staggs and husband Jerry of Ackery, TX, Brenda Isgar and husband Jim of Durango, CO, Sheila Hensley of Camp Verde, AZ, and Barbara Jasper and husband Norman of Austin, TX; grandchildren, Scott, Adam and Andrew Furlow, Sarah Brown, Kevin Furlow, Amy Furlow, Jordan Hall, Anna Wilson, Caleb Loos, Garrett Hensley, Erin Arnett, Matt Jasper, Stacey Geisler and Lisa Jasper; and 18 great grandchildren.

Lance is preceded in death by his parents, Abe and Betty Furlow; siblings, Nadeen Blair, Oscar, A.B. and Rudolph Furlow; son-in-law, Bryce Hensley; daughter-in-law, Lisa Furlow and most importantly, his wife Amelia.

The family suggests memorials be made to the American Cancer Society, P.O. Box 22718, Oklahoma City, OK, 73123 or to a charity of one's choice.

To send condolences online please visit www.branonfuneralhome.com



LOTTIE DARLENE LASITER

Oct 19, 1929 - Jan 21, 2013

Services for Lottie Darlene Lasiter, 83, of Brownfield will be at 10 a.m., Friday, January 25 at Brownfield First Christian Church with Rev. Ken Reeder officiating. Burial will be in Terry County Memorial Cemetery under the direction of Brownfield Funeral Home.

There will be a family visitation on Thursday from 5-7 p.m. at Brownfield Funeral Home.

Our beloved "Nana" went to be with the Lord on Monday, January 21, in Seminole. She was born October 19, 1929 in Rule. She graduated from Brownfield High School in 1947. Darlene married W. V. "P John" Lasiter on July 15, 1946 in Lovington, NM.

He preceded her in death on September 30, 1984. She and her husband farmed in the Tokio and Johnson area. She was active with the Ladies Aux of the Brownfield VFW. She enjoyed serving deserts at the nursing homes with the Aux Ladies.

Darlene is survived by 3 daughters, Linda Riley and husband Bill of Seminole, Becky Breshers of Waco and Kathy Hudnall of Ft. Worth; 6 grandchildren, Will Riley and wife Nickie of Burkburnett, Jabe Riley and wife Chanda of Katy, Misty Breshers of Lufkin, Latisha Hudnall and John Hudnall of Ft. Worth and Shirley Reeves and husband Alex of Waco; 7 great-great grandchildren; a sister Shirley Wells of San Benito.

The family suggests memorials to the American Cancer Society, in care of Hope Lodge, 3511 10th Street, Lubbock, TX.

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