

# Campuses' construction highlights first half of year

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lier meeting.

Kempner City Council appointed two new members to the Building Standards Commission. Former Councilman Rex Hooten and Kempner resident Larry Bishop joined Ray Upp on the commission.

Lampasas County commissioners unanimously approved \$4 million in tax notes to fund expansion of the Lampasas County Office Building, or "annex." The seven-year notes were approved at a 3.35 percent interest rate and became effective without an election.

Former Lampasas standout athlete and Olympic gold medalist Johnny "Lam" Jones was inducted into the Texas High School Football Hall of Fame.

Several Lampasas County projects were delayed by the Texas Department of Transportation, which cited inflation, federal funding recisions and other priorities as the culprits.

## MAY

The Lampasas Major Crimes Assistance Unit and Burnet County Special Operations Unit joined DPS agents and SWAT personnel to serve a federal warrant on major drug suspects at a residence east of Oakalla near the Bell County line. The home's occupants were charged with possession of a controlled substance, more than 50 grams and less than 100 grams.

Commissioners voted to demolish the former Brooks Supermarket building to make way for expansion of the Lampasas County Office Building and approved schematics that call for a two-story addition just north of the existing annex.

The Board of Trustees of the Lampasas Independent School District hired Kelly Dunn as principal of Taylor Creek Elementary, the campus which is slated to open in the east end of the county in time for the next school term.

The slowing economy had little effect on Kempner, which for the fourth consecutive month recorded a triple-digit increase in sales tax revenue.

Incumbent Wesley Crow fought off a challenge from Luther Hensley for a seat on the Lampasas Independent School District Board of Trustees, while Lampasas City Council incumbent Wanda Bierschwale successfully held onto her seat, defeating challenger Dayton Carpenter by just four votes.

Lometa City Council had a big turnover as two of its members lost their re-election bids.

Incumbents George Watson and Kyle Walton failed to garner enough votes, while incumbent Cynthia Kirby kept her spot on the council.

At-large council seats were successfully won by Betty Poe, Mario Maldonado and Chuck Lymber.

A storm brought heavy rain and minor flooding to Lampasas County, but the area avoided tornado damage. Lampasas County was under a tornado warning until about 10:15 p.m. Although Bell County reported flooding and wind damage, particularly near Salado, Lampasas County did not sustain severe damage.

City and county officials approved sharing an expenditure of \$58,000 to cover a contract for architectural services on a new animal control facility. The entities have agreed to split the cost to build and operate the facility.

## JUNE

The Texas Department of Transportation looked at realigning some area offices or reducing their functions, but the department had not decided the Lampasas Area Office's fate yet. The ruling likely will not be finalized until the next legislative session, which begins in January.

The capital murder trial of Chaka Romain Johnson, 32, of Lampasas ended with a guilty verdict for the July 2007 death of Hidi Ann Gower, a 31-year-old Copperas Cove woman murdered at the Kempner VFW in east Lampasas County.

Johnson received an automatic life sentence with no possibility of parole.

Lampasas Independent School District officials agreed to a 2.5 percent pay increase for district



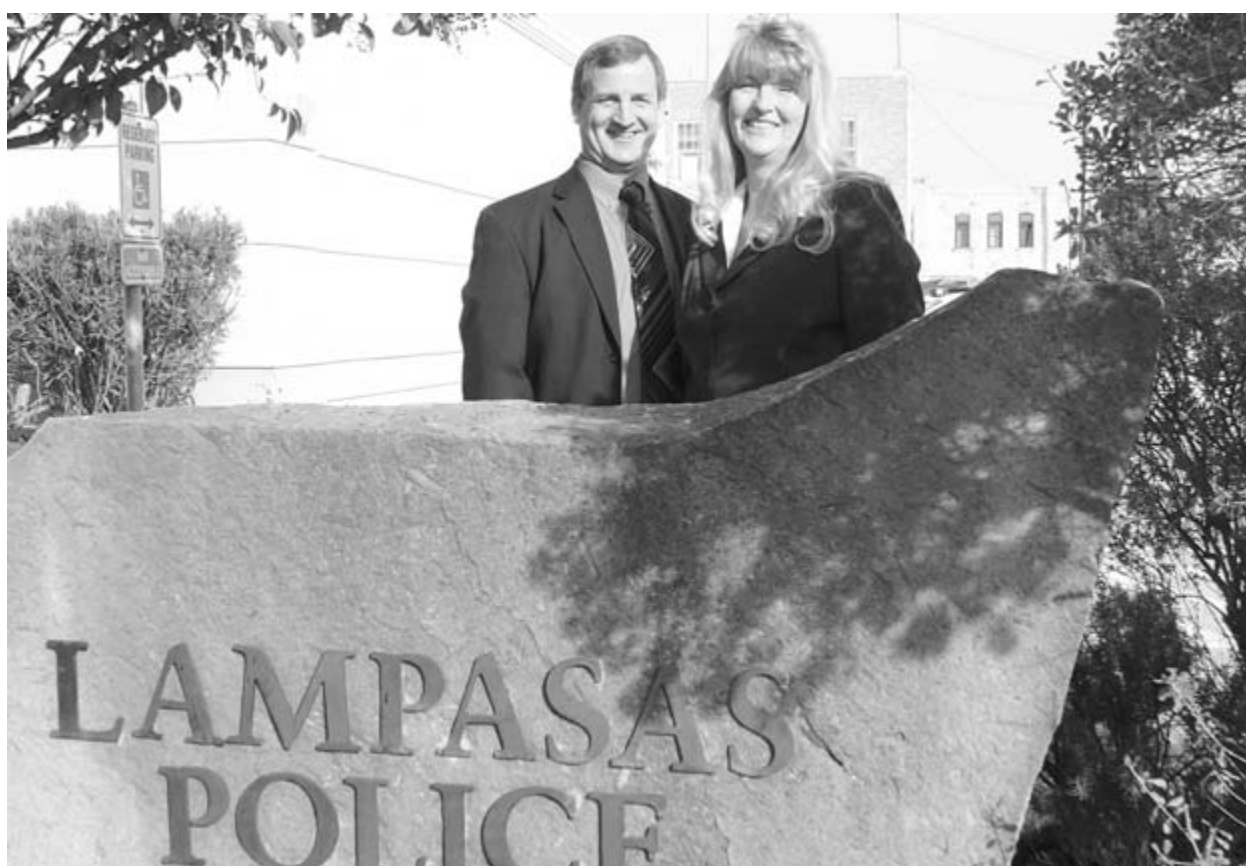
Repairs to the Hanna Springs Swimming Pool were ongoing throughout last year.

personnel that translated into a raise of approximately \$1,100 annually per teacher, while other employees were to receive a lesser amount based on their salary.

Lometa Independent School District Trustees agreed to replace the football field lighting system at a cost of just over \$125,000. Though Lometa plays six-man football, it was agreed the new system would be built to 11-man specifications to accommodate the possibility of a division change in future realignments.

Four public hearings were scheduled by Lampasas Independent School District officials to gather information about where to draw zoning lines for each of the county's three elementary schools. The sessions were for information gathering and public opinion.

The city of Lampasas asked its customers to participate in voluntary water conservation efforts due to maintenance by Central Texas Water Supply Corp. at one of its water plants at Stillhouse Hollow Lake.



Sammy Bailey, right, Lampasas assistant chief of police, attended the FBI Academy in March for a 10-week session. She is shown with Phillip Gadd, an FBI supervisory special agent based in Austin.

## Hearing set for land conflict

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though, would have required the city to build extra line and follow Sulphur Creek, which would have made power lines susceptible to flood damage, he added.

"There's not a lot of ways around without adding considerable costs to our customers," he said.

Mrs. Garrett and city staff both obtained appraisals of the easements' values and of the amount of easement-related damages to the rest of the property.

Mrs. Garrett's attorney, Richard Hammett, declined comment on the matter. "We feel it is inappropriate for us to comment on this matter, as it is now an ongoing civil proceeding," Hammett said. "We respectfully refer you to the proceeding, which has been filed in the 27th District Court of Lampasas County, Texas."

Following advice from the city's legal counsel, Stoldt declined to comment on the disparity between

the appraised values gathered by the city and by Mrs. Garrett.

An easement had been planned before the Lampasas Independent School District obtained land for a new high school and before Mrs. Garrett owned the 145 acres, Stoldt said.

City staff first contacted Mrs. Garrett about the easement around May of 2008, Stoldt said.

The city has been a party in two recent commissioner hearings about land-related issues. In one instance, the family involved did not contest the city's use of eminent domain because no heir with a claim to the property could be found.

The property owner involved in the other matter did not appear at the hearing.

Stoldt said city staff hope for a quick resolution to the current eminent domain effort.

"We hope it will be settled that day," he said of the Jan. 15 hearing.

## USDA announces 2009 DCP signup

Don Riggs, executive director for USDA's Farm Service Agency in Lampasas/Burnet County, announced that enrollment for the 2009 Direct and Counter-cyclical Payment Program for farms with base acres continues online and at local USDA service centers until June 1, 2009.

"This service makes DCP more accessible to the public, and I encourage producers with Internet access to use the system," Riggs said.

However, producers can still visit any USDA Service Center or their administratively assigned center, to complete their 2009 DCP contract.

The June 1 deadline is mandatory for all participants. USDA will not accept late-filed applications. The electronic DCP service saves producers time, reduces paperwork and speeds up contract processing at USDA Farm Service Agency offices and is available to all producers who are eligible to participate in the DCP program.

It can be accessed at [www.fsa.usda.gov/dcp](http://www.fsa.usda.gov/dcp). To access the service, producers must have an active USDA eAuthentication Level 2 account, which requires filling out an online registration form at [www.eauth.egov.usda.gov](http://www.eauth.egov.usda.gov) followed by a visit to the local USDA Service Center for identity verification.

USDA computes DCP program payments using base acres and pay-

ment yields established for each farm.

Eligible producers receive direct payments at rates established by statute regardless of market prices. For 2009, eligible producers may request to receive advance direct payments based on 22 percent of the direct payment for each commodity associated with the farm. USDA began issuing advance direct payments in December.

Counter-cyclical payment rates vary depending on market prices and are issued only when the effective price for a commodity is statutorily set below its target price.

The effective price is the higher of the national average market price received during the 12-month marketing year for each covered commodity and the national average rate for a marketing assistance loan for the covered commodity.

Producers who are eligible for the DCP program also will be eligible to enroll in the Average Crop Revenue Election Program.

The enrollment period for the ACRE Program will begin in the spring. Producers may first enroll in the DCP program, elect to receive advance direct payments and then later modify their enrollment to include the ACRE program, or they may wait and elect to enroll in DCP and ACRE at the same time in spring 2009.

The optional ACRE program provides a safety net based on state revenue losses and acts in place of the price-based safety net of counter-cyclical payments under DCP.

A farm's payment is based on a revenue guarantee calculated using a five-year average state yield and the most recent two-year state price for each eligible commodity.

An ACRE payment is issued when both the state and the farm have incurred a revenue loss. The payment is based on 83.3 percent (85 percent in 2012) of the farm's planted acres, times the difference between the state ACRE guarantee and the state revenue, times the ratio of the farm's yield divided by the state expected yield.

The total number of planted acres for which a producer may receive ACRE payments may not exceed the total base on the farm.

In exchange for participating in ACRE, in addition to not receiving counter-cyclical payments, a farm's direct payment is reduced by 20 percent, and marketing assistance loan rates are reduced by 30 percent.

The decision to enroll in the ACRE program is irrevocable. The owner of the farm and all producers on the farm must agree to enroll in ACRE. Once enrolled, the farm shall be enrolled for that initial crop year and will remain in ACRE through the 2012 crop year.

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