



Lampasas County Farm Bureau youths entered a number of contests last year. Winners included, from left, Little Miss Laurcy Belle Bender; Miss Farm Bureau Sara Jackson, Talent Find winner Jamee Smith, and Little Mister Cole Wheeler.

## Leaders recognize community's youths

Lampasas County Farm Bureau leaders have worked with the community's youth in various aspects since the organization was formed.

The local Farm Bureau crowned its first queen in 1949. The organization has not missed a year since 1960 in sponsoring a contest for local girls ages 16 to 19.

Winners in the county contest compete at the district contest. The winner of the district competition receives a \$1,000 scholarship and competes in the state contest.

Many Lampasas Farm Bureau queens have won the district contest, and one was named a state winner. The county also boasts two state runners-up.

The contest not only helps students by providing scholarships, it creates friendships and sharpens the entrants' poise and personality.

Little Miss and Little Mister contests are held in conjunction with the Miss Farm Bureau event for children ages 4 to 6 years.

Also hosted by Farm Bureau is a Talent Find competition for youths ages 16 to 19, with winners eligible to move on to district and state contests to compete for scholarships. Lampasas County has had several state Talent Find winners.

This year's contest will be May 16. For more information, call Christine Groves at 556-5511 or 556-3009.

## FB leader: Time to end Trans-Texas Corridor

The state's largest farm organization is in favor of legislation that would terminate the Trans-Texas Corridor in both name and concept.

Texas Farm Bureau President Kenneth Dierschke expressed support for HB 11 by State Rep. David McQuade Leibowitz (D-San Antonio), which repeals the authority for the establishment and operation of the massive transportation project.

"We hope you will agree with us that it is finally time to kill the Trans-Texas Corridor," Dierschke testified before the House Transportation Committee on April 21.

Although the farm organization recognizes the need to build and maintain Texas' infrastructure, Dierschke said Texas Farm Bureau policy clearly opposes the TTC due to potential losses of agricultural land and the loss of access to rural communities and private property.

"If new highways are needed, landowners should have reasonable access to their property where farms and ranches have been divided," Dierschke said, criticizing TTC's model of limited access. "Or, they should at least be compensated where their property is devalued due to loss of access," said the FB leader.

"Of course, as we have learned through the debate on eminent domain, TxDOT does not compensate property owners for diminished access," he added.

An announcement in January by



**Kenneth Dierschke**

Texas Department of Transportation Executive Director Amadeo Saenz concerning the name change -- from "TTC" to "Vision 2009: Innovative Connectivity in Texas" does not mean the massive transportation project is dead.

"As long as the authority remains in law to construct the TTC, it is merely dormant -- like a weed waiting for the right conditions to grow again," Dierschke said.

"If the TTC is in fact 'dead,' there would be no further need for the authority under Chapter 227 of the Transportation Code for the establishment, designation, construction or operation of a system of multimodal facilities, including toll roads, rail facilities and utilities."

"The sensible course of action is to repeal these laws," he said.

## Locals attend leadership conference

By JOHN DAVIS  
FB Board Member

The Texas Farm Bureau Leadership Conference in January at Austin's Omni Southpark Hotel was attended by Lampasas County Farm Bureau President Mickey Edwards and directors Asa Langford, John Davis and wife Teresa, and Walter and Charlene Ruzicka.

Speakers included Curtis Griffith, chairman of the board of CitiBank in Lubbock. He spoke on the downturn in the economy and the focus to solve the problems that contributed to the downturn in housing (sub-prime lending), unemployment and the default of financial institutions.

Sen. Kay Bailey Hutchison spoke further on the government stimulus package for the private sector of jobs, business incentives and tax cuts.

Dr. Bob Hillman, executive director of Texas Animal Health Commission, shared information on fever ticks that have multiplied rapidly in cattle and wildlife. He said it is not only a Texas problem. Areas from Del Rio to Brownsville are quarantined, and

he recommended treatment of dipping with CoRal.

Hillman also explained about trich in cattle, and that Texas and Kansas are the only states in the West that do not have trich problems. He advocated making trich a "reportable disease" within 48 hours of testing.

Charles Elk, director of Oncor Electric Delivery, reported about wind energy transmission. He noted that renewable energy zones are in competition for location, which will be determined by the Public Utility Commission.

Juan Garcia, state executive director of the Farm Service Agency, discussed the 2008 Farm Bill and its composition of 74 percent nutrition (food stamps, school lunch programs, etc.), 10 percent crop insurance, 8 percent FSA/NRCS, and approximately 9 percent commodities.

FSA programs include SURE, ACRE, DCP and CCP (farm and crop base acres), which is the difference between "target price" and "national average price," and also the Livestock Forage Program.

A TxDOT representative reported that the agency will

strive to use existing routes not to exceed 600 feet in width, and that the Trans Texas Corridor as formerly proposed has ended.

State Comptroller Susan Combs said Texas is in much better financial standing than many other states, with \$2 billion in surplus and a rainy day fund of \$6.7 billion.

The TFB legislative staff -- composed of Billy Howe, Regan Beck, Norman Garza and Steve Pringle of American Farm Bureau Federation -- reported on legislative issues concerning eminent domain reform, water and groundwater rights, and property taxes.

Conference attendees then were directed to the State Capitol for visits with legislators and staff.

Lampasas County FB directors met with staff members from the office of District 54 State Rep. Jimmie Don Aycock and Sen. Troy Fraser. Both legislators were in a joint session with Gov. Rick Perry.

The conference was interesting and informative, and the Lampasas County contingent had enjoyable visits.

## FB supports burn association

By HENRY STONEHAM  
FB Board Member

The Lampasas County Farm Bureau supports the efforts of the Lampasas County Prescribed Burn Association, which was formed to ensure that fire will remain a safe land management tool for local property owners.

Our forefathers found a sea of tall growing grasses when they came to Central Texas. Live oaks, Texas oaks, pecan and elm trees were the predominant trees found in the area, and these were found along the streams.

When settlers moved in, they brought their livestock, built homes, constructed fences and controlled the fires.

Prior to the settlers' arrival, fires had been started by lightning strikes, camp fires and the Indians in an attempt to control buffalo

herds. Fires would burn for many miles until they came to a natural barrier or rain would put them out.

These fires controlled grass growth, brush invasion and the herding effects of the buffalo, deer and other foraging animals.

Because of these effects, the sea of grass developed. Grass cover controlled erosion and allowed the rains to soak into the ground.

When our forefathers arrived, they found beautiful, clear streams full of fish and springs to supply

their water needs throughout the year.

Thousands of acres of brush and other invading plants have replaced the sea of grass because of man's land management.

Prescribed burns have proven to be a safe and low-cost means of brush control and natural resources management.

Henry Stoneham is a retired Iol Conservation Service district conservationist.

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