

The

Borden Star

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USDA Announces Cotton Ginning Cost-Share Program

Texas Stories

A Showcase of the Texas Spirit
Tumbleweed Smith

Michael Morton: Innocent in Prison

By Mary Jane Buerkle
Cotton growers across the Cotton Belt received some good news on Monday as the U.S. Department of Agriculture announced the Cotton Ginning Cost-Share program, which will provide an estimated \$300 million in much-needed assistance to growers across the Cotton Belt.

"We greatly appreciate U.S. Secretary of Agriculture Tom Vilsack and the USDA for listening to the concerns of cotton producers and coming up with a viable short-term solution that will help us face some of our challenges," PCG President Johnie Reed, a cotton producer from Kress, said.

This one-time payment will be available upon signup, which will begin June 20 and run through August 5. USDA officials say that producers should receive a form in the mail from the Farm Service Agency that is pre-filled with certified acreage information the producer has reported to FSA, along with the payment amount. The producer can sign the form and either mail it or take it to their local Farm Service Agency office. According to a USDA news release, payments are expected to begin in July.

Qualifying payments will be determined by a producer's 2015 cotton acres reported to FSA, multiplied by 40 percent

of the average ginning cost for each production region. Payments to Texas producers will be \$36.97 per acre.

One question many people have asked is about the difference in the amount of the cost-share. Ginning costs per planted acre are published annually by the USDA's Economic Research Service. The cost-share generally will be relative to the average yield per planted acre and ginning costs in each region.

The program has the same eligibility requirements as were used for the 2014 Cotton Transition Assistance Program, including a \$40,000 per producer payment limit, requirement to be actively engaged in farming, meet conservation compliance and a \$900,000 adjusted gross income limit. Producers will not need to have a 2016 AGI cer-

tification in place if they already have an AGI form for 2015 that represents tax returns from 2011, 2012, and 2013.

"We had hoped for some flexibility in the payment limit, but we are grateful for the assistance, because our producers certainly need it," Reed said, noting that the program is a short-term solution. "We recognize that this is a program for the near term, and we remain committed to working with Congress and others in trying to establish cottonseed as an 'other oilseed' under Title I of the 2014 Farm Bill, which would provide long-term stability for our industry."

PCG has provided several links with more information on the Cotton Ginning Cost-Share program at their website, <http://www.plainscotton.org>.

Town Hall Meeting With Rep. Dustin Burrows July 1st

Texas Representative Dustin Burrows will in Gail at the Borden County Courthouse on Friday, July 1st from 2:30

to 4:00 p.m. to discuss issues concerning the residents of Borden County.

Michael Morton spent 25 years in prison for a crime he didn't commit.

"I went in on March 4, 1987," he says, "and I got out on October 4, 2011. It's a different world, a subculture. Prisoners have their traditions and code words and the way they do things. It's not like you see on TV. It's not law and order. Almost all of my friends fell away, turned their backs on me, some of my family did the same thing."

He was found guilty of murdering his wife and sentenced to life in prison. What set him free was a bandana found near the crime scene.

"There was my late wife's DNA on this bandana along with the DNA of a man. They eventually found he was in the database and was a convicted felon with a long history of criminal stuff."

He was convicted in Williamson County. The prosecutor withheld evidence about the bandana that would have set Michael Morton free.

"While I was inside the prosecutor became a district judge. After an investigation he was removed from the bench, lost his law license forever, was fined and did some jail time. What happened to me resulted in the state legislature passing bills to require prosecutors to turn over evidence."

Before he went to prison, Michael Morton had just started his own business and it was beginning to do well. Then he was arrested.

"No state in the union has a better compensation package for the exonerees. I was paid 1.9 million dollars when I was set free. I don't have to work any more, but I've written a book, do a lot of speaking engagements and do some writing. Life is good."

When he went to prison he was considered a monster. Even his son thought so.

"Everybody hated me. I was on TV, the radio, newspapers as this murderous pervert. I was the bogeyman, the bad guy. Nobody liked me. When I came out, it was like I was a golden child. Some of the journalists who had written or spoken bad words about me had tears in their eyes."

When he was released, he had no idea what experiences were ahead for him.

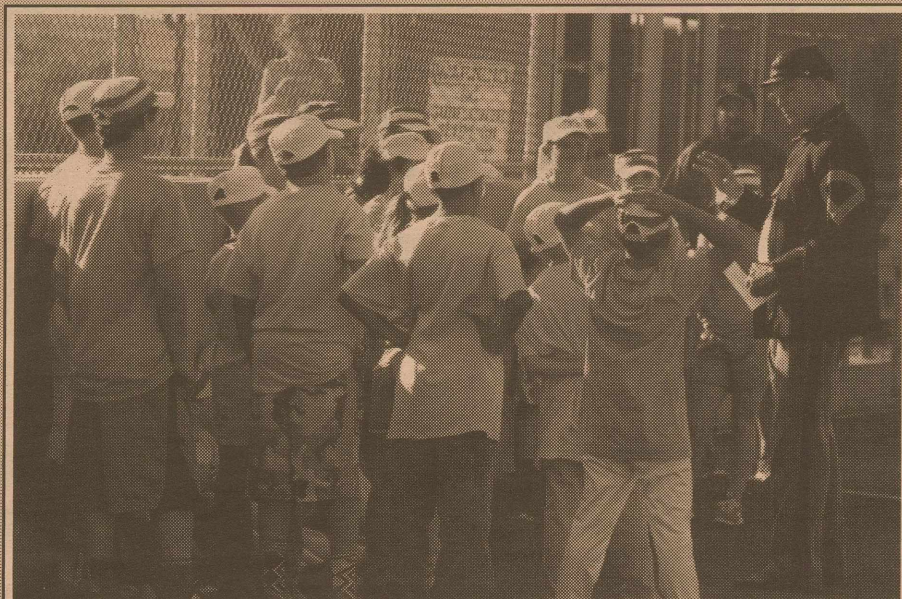
"It was one of those things that you hope for, you pray for and look forward to, and yet you have no idea what it's going to be like."

He noticed some changes when he got out, like the way men dress in public.

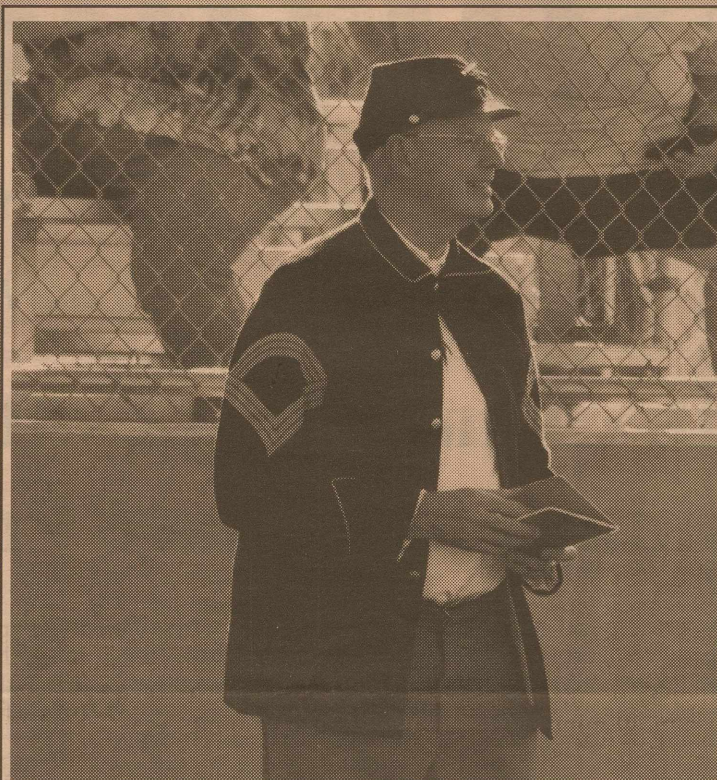
"I went to a nice restaurant and while the women were

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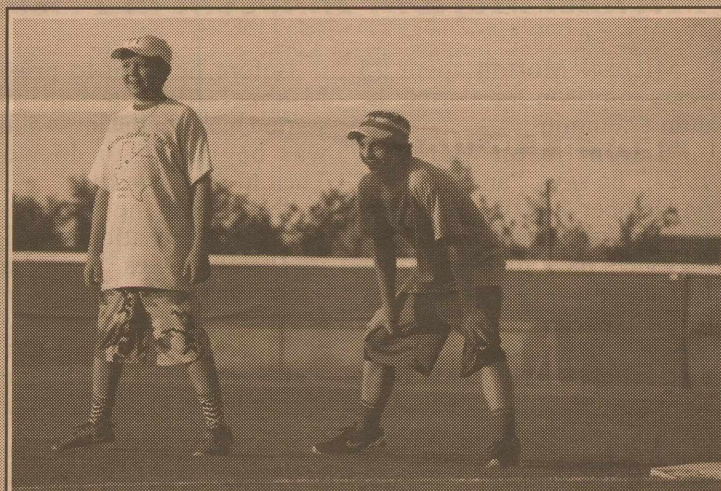
Heritage Day Celebration 1890's Baseball Game



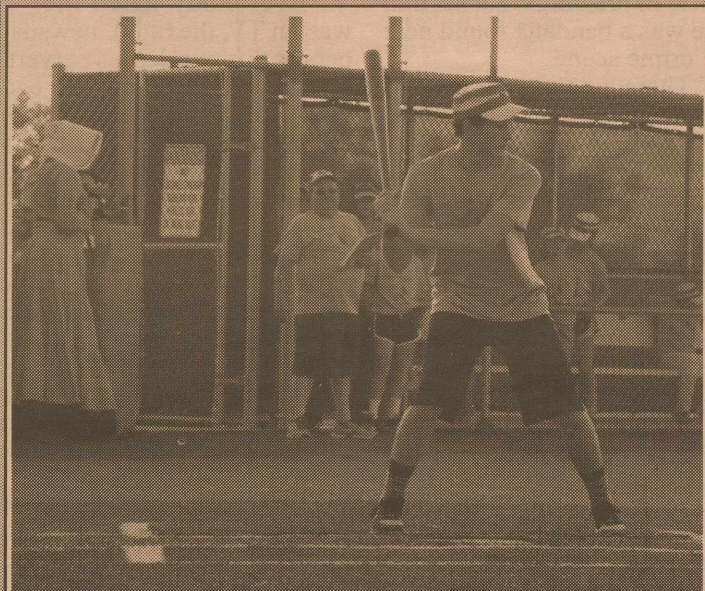
Bob Bluthardt, (far right), director of Fort Concho in San Angelo, recites 1890's baseball rules to the teams playing in the Heritage Day celebration baseball game this past Saturday.



Director of Fort Concho in San Angelo, Bob Bluthardt, umpires the Heritage Day baseball game.



Justin Willborn (left) and Jake Avey play a game of 1890's baseball!



Berry Flat Buffaloe player, Mason Cole stands ready to hit the ball in hopes to score for the team.



Borden County students playing in the Heritage Day Vintage baseball game are (back left to right) Charli Snell, Savannah Avey, Brooklyn Gray, Jadeyn Merrill, Jason Robinson, Justin Willborn, Trey Edwards, Mason Cole, Jake Avey, MaKenzie Milhauser, Haddie Flanigan, Kaitlyn Cribbs, (front row left to right) Jose Zorola, Haley Carpenter, Shelby Milhauser, Dallie Miller, Kassi Collins, Kasen Oaks, Kaden Castillo and Thomas Snell.

TEXAS A&M
AGRI LIFE
EXTENSION

Heart and Home...



Julie Mumme Smith

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Keeping Kids Safe: Children, Cars and Heat

The West Texas heat is definitely upon us! Each year, we hear news reports of children dying from heat strokes after being left in hot cars. Many children have died when left in a hot car. In Texas, this is a problem throughout the year, but especially in the spring and summer. *Texas has a law that prohibits children being left unattended in cars.*

Temperatures in cars soar quickly. When the outside temperature is 93 degrees Fahrenheit, even with a window cracked, the temperature inside a car can reach 125 degrees in just 20 minutes. It can reach 140 degrees in 40 minutes. In these extreme conditions, children can die or suffer a permanent disability in a matter of minutes.

The National SAFE KIDS Campaign, warns parents to be especially careful about their children's safety on says when temperatures are 80 degrees or higher. They offer the following safety precautions:

- * Keep cars locked at all times, even in the garage or driveway.

- * Teach children not to play in or around cars.

- * Never leave your child in an unattended car, even with the windows down.

- * Always make sure that all child passengers have left the car.

- * If your child gets locked inside a car, get him/her out and call the EMS immediately (806-759-5111).

- * Make sure you check the temperature of the car-seat sur-

face and safety belt buckles before restraining you children in the car.

- * Use a light covering to shade the seat of your parked car. Consider using windshield shades in front and back windows.

- * Be wary of child-resistant locks. Teach older children how to disable the driver's door locks if they become trapped in a car.

- * Car trunks can be especially hazardous! Children can get in, but can't always get out.

- * Keep the trunk of your car locked at all times, especially when parked in the driveway or near the home.

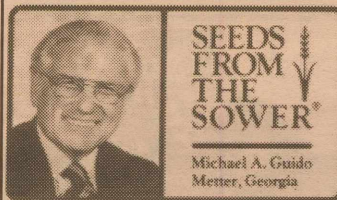
- * Keep the rear fold-down seats closed to help prevent kids from getting into the trunk from inside the car.

- * Put car keys out of children's reach and sight.

- * If not already equipped, contact your automobile dealership about getting your vehicle retrofitted with a trunk release mechanism.

Keeping children safe is everybody's business! If you would like more information about keeping kids safe, contact the Extension office, or visit the Keeping Kids Safe is Everybody's Business Web site at <http://www.itsupto you.org>

Information adapted from: *Child Abuse Prevention Kit: Keeping Kids Safe is Everybody's Business*, sponsored by the Texas Department of Protective and Regulatory Services, The Children's Trust Fund, and Prevent Child Abuse Texas.



Last night at our dinner table a little boy prayed before eating his meal, "Please, God, can't you put vitamins in pie instead of broccoli?" I like his faith!

There is nothing too ridiculous or too remarkable to take to God. We can ask Him things that we could never ask others. Everything about you and me matters to Him.

There is nothing about us that is too small or too insignificant. If something is big enough to worry about, it is big enough to pray about. Nothing that we have done is too shameful to take to God. We can tell Him the worst as well as the best. There is nothing that we have done or can do that will make Him love us more or less. We have His Word that He loves us!

Have you a burden on your heart, a problem troubling your mind, a decision that is difficult? Talk to Him right now. Whatever concerns you concerns Him and He can correct it. Whatever is a problem for You can bring a solution from Him and He can perfect it.

Talk. He is listening!

Visit us at: SowerMinistries.org

Thought for the Day

The sermon of your life in tough times ministers to people more powerfully than the most eloquent speaker.
-Bill Bright

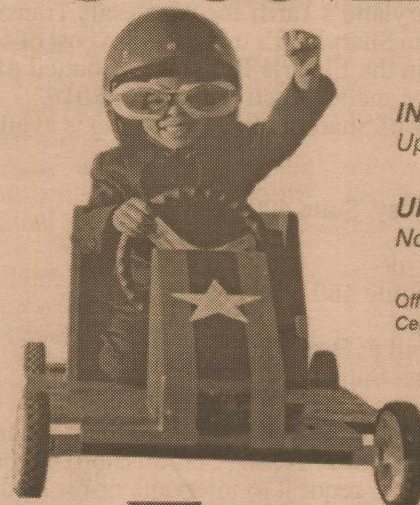
Flint Roberts Receives Scholarship



Borden County graduate, Flint Roberts recently received a \$1000 Scholarship from the Big Spring Area Community Foundation. Presenting the award is Diane Brooks.

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dressed in heels and hose and wore nice dresses, a lot of the men were in flip flops and shorts."

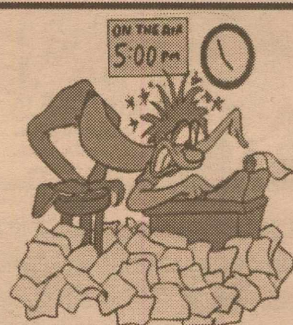
Michael Morton has since re-married and lives with his wife at Hideaway, a commu-

nity near Tyler. He and his son are now close. The title of his book is *Getting Life*. He gives away copies of it at his speeches.

Contact Tumbleweed at ts@tumbleweedsmith.com

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**BORDEN CO
806/759-5111**



Got News?

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Email:

kdean@bcisd.net

or call

806/756-4313
ext. 275

Commissioners Court

THE STATE OF TEXAS
COUNTY OF BORDEN
WHEREAS, on this the 24th day of May, 2016, the Commissioners' Court of Borden County, Texas, convened in Special Session in the Commissioners Courtroom at the Courthouse in Gail, Texas the following members of the Court being present to-wit: ROSS D. SHARP, COUNTY JUDGE, PRESIDING; MONTE SMITH, COMMISSIONER, PRECINCT NO. 1; RANDY ADCOCK, COMMISSIONER, PRECINCT NO. 2; ERNEST REYES, COMMISSIONER, PRECINCT NO. 3; JOE BELEW, COMMISSIONER, PRECINCT NO. 4 and JANA UNDERWOOD, COUNTY CLERK AND EX-OFFICIO OF THE COMMISSIONERS COURT, constituting a quorum, when the following business and other proceedings were had, in accordance with the posted agenda:

Other officers present: Marlo Holbrooks, County Attorney; Benny Allison, Sheriff and Tax Assessor/Collector; and Shawna Gass, County Treasurer

CALL TO ORDER

Judge Sharp called the May 24, 2016, special session of the Commissioners Court to order at 8:35 A.M.

APPROVE MINUTES

Commissioner Adcock made a motion to approve the minutes of May 10, 2016 as presented. Commissioner

Reyes seconded the motion. Motion carried.

BORDEN COUNTY APPRAISAL DISTRICT BOARD MEMBERSHIP

Discussion was held on membership of the Borden County Appraisal District Board. Judge Sharp presented different scenarios on the possible reduction of members to the board.

UTILITY CABLE/ PIPELINE CROSSINGS

No Applications

PRIVATE ROAD CONSTRUCTION/ MAINTENANCE

No Applications

SOIL CONSERVA- TION WORK

No Applications

COMMUNITY INPUT

None

BUDGET WORK SESSION

Budget work session

held

FUTURE AGENDA ITEMS

None

CURRENT ACCOUNTS

Commissioner Belew made a motion to approve and pay said accounts. Commissioner Adcock seconded the motion. Motion carried.

ADJOURN

Commissioner Reyes made a motion to adjourn. Commissioner Belew seconded the motion and approved unanimously.

NOTICE OF RATE CHANGE REQUEST

On April 29, 2016, as required by order of the Public Utility Commission of Texas ("PUCT" or "Commission") in Docket No. 45414, Sharyland Utilities, L.P. ("Sharyland"), a regulated electric utility company, filed an application with the PUCT titled *Rate Filing Package of Sharyland Utilities, L.P. and Statement of Intent to Change Rates* ("Application").

The above-referenced proceeding is the first in which Sharyland's rates will be set on a system-wide basis. The Application is based on a twelve-month test year ending December 31, 2015, and supports an increase over adjusted test-year retail base rate revenues of approximately \$107 thousand or 0.11 percent, exclusive of riders. Sharyland's system-wide cost-based retail base rate revenue requirement is \$100.7 million, plus an additional \$1.95 million that Sharyland is seeking to recover on an annual basis through certain riders. This includes a proposal to recover \$30 million for deferred costs associated with construction of the electric system in the McAllen division during its initial years of operation. In addition, Sharyland is proposing a \$3 million rate credit to all of its residential customers, which would result in an overall revenue decrease as compared to adjusted test year base rate revenues for residential customers. As proposed, monthly delivery rates for an average residential customer consuming 1,333 kWh in the Stanton, Brady, and Celeste divisions will remain unchanged, but in McAllen and Mission will increase by approximately \$55. The Application also supports a total wholesale transmission cost of service of \$145 million, plus an additional \$3.4 million that Sharyland is seeking to recover on an annual basis through certain riders.

The Application potentially affects all customers and classes of customers in Sharyland's Stanton, Brady, Celeste, and McAllen divisions. The Application also affects all customers taking service under Sharyland's Tariff for Wholesale Transmission Service. In addition, the result could be a change in Sharyland's transmission cost of service rates, which would impact all load serving entities in the Electric Reliability Council of Texas. Sharyland has proposed that the requested rates be made effective June 18, 2016.

A complete copy of Sharyland's Application is available for inspection at the following locations:

Sharyland
1031 Andrews Highway, Suite 400
Midland, Texas 79701

-or-

1807 Ross Avenue, Suite 460
Dallas, Texas 75201

Sutherland Asbill & Brennan LLP
600 Congress Avenue, Suite 2000
Austin, Texas 78701

Persons who wish to intervene in or comment upon these proceedings should notify the Public Utility Commission of Texas (Commission) as soon as possible, as an intervention deadline will be imposed. A request to intervene or for further information should be mailed to the Public Utility Commission of Texas, P.O. Box 13326, Austin, Texas 78711-3326. Further information may also be obtained by calling the Public Utility Commission at (512) 936-7120 or (888) 782-8477. Hearing- and speech impaired individuals with text telephones (TTY) may contact the commission through Relay Texas by dialing 7-1-1. The deadline for intervention in the proceeding is June 28, 2016.

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