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THE KNOX COUNTY News-Courier

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THURSDAY, JUNE 5, 2014

KCNEWSCOURIER.COM

75 CENTS

Commissioners hear presentation on cloud seeding

By Geoff Baumgartner
The Knox County News-Courier

BENJAMIN — Knox County Commissioners met in special session to listen to a presentation and consider a proposal on cloud seeding.

Commissioners recently considered joining the Joint County Cloud Seeding Project led by Wichita Falls County during an open session in February. Back then, the commissioners voted to table the idea until more research could be done. Commissioners now have examples of highly successful cloud seeding research, much of which has taken place right here in the state of Texas.

No longer considered a pseudo-science, as was the case in the mid-20th century, cloud seeding is a proven scientific process and form of weather modification. Today it is considered a mainstream tool to improve rain precipitation and snow.

George W. Bomar, State Meteorologist for the Texas Department of Licensing and Regulation in Austin was on hand with an hour long presentation over the various successful cloud seeding

See SEEDING, Page 6



Photo by Geoff Baumgartner/The Knox County News-Courier

The Millers Creek Reservoir outside of Munday has been steadily evaporating since the onset of the drought three years ago. Last week's rainfall did little to refill any portion of the main Miller Creek reservoir, which now sits at less than 12%.

Millers Creek not on receiving end of recent rain

By Geoff Baumgartner
The Knox County News-Courier

MUNDAY — Millers Creek Reservoir, the body that supplies fresh water to Benjamin, Knox City, Munday, and as far away as Aspermont, was not really affected by last week's downpour throughout the county.

According to the North Central Texas Municipal Water Authority, while some portions of the county received several inches of rain, such as Benjamin, others were not so fortunate, Munday and Millers Creek included.

"It just did not affect Millers Creek at all. It did not generate enough runoff where it needed to go to get to the creek," said David Kuehler General Manager of the North Central Texas Municipal Water Authority.

"While Knox City received over 2.42 inches of rain this month, much of it coming from last week, Munday only received .85 of an inch of rain. The lack of rain is one of the major reasons we don't have a public pool this year," Kuehler continued.

Kuehler along with several members of the Munday City Council and other county commissioners will be meeting in special session to hear the proven scientific benefits of cloud seeding, as all possible options for future water production and importation are being discussed.

Municipal pools to remain closed

By Geoff Baumgartner
The Knox County News-Courier

Both Knox City and Munday City Council's have voted not to open the municipal swimming pools this year. The cause of the pool closures? You guessed it, extreme drought.

While rain recently fell in Knox County, it did not cover the entire county and did not last long enough to fix any real problems. With Munday receiving less than an inch, and Knox City receiving less than two inches, neither city will be able to open or operate a pool this year.

Munday City Administrator Ricky Ake was not enthusiastic about the drought or the problems it has caused the area, such as the pool closures.

See POOLS, Page 6

Class of 2014



Knox City Senior Zach Carter addresses his fellow graduates during his speech for valedictorian. Carter also won several other awards throughout the evening.



The entire 2014 Munday High School Senior Graduating Class. In all, Munday had 25 students graduate this year, which was the largest of any school in Knox County.

Classes of 2014 say goodbye

By Geoff Baumgartner
The Knox County News-Courier

KNOX COUNTY — Several schools throughout the Knox County area held graduation ceremonies this past week, and each were very well attended by local family and community members. All in all, Knox City High School, Munday High School, and Benjamin High School graduated several dozen seniors on to bigger and better opportunities in West Texas and beyond.

Both the Munday and Benjamin graduation ceremonies took place on May 30 while the Knox City graduation took place the following evening on May 31 at the W.R. Baker Auditorium. All graduations commenced at 7 p.m. This year, the Benjamin School graduated five seniors, while Knox City graduated 19 seniors and Munday High School graduated an impressive 25.

Each ceremony was traditional for that institution. First invocation, then a video presentation highlighting the senior athletic accomplishments, followed by Salutatorian and Valedictorian addresses. A special guest speaker addresses the audience and then the presentation of the diplomas by

either Principal or Superintendent. Benediction, recess, and done.

Although each graduation ceremony is similar, it is the students graduating and administrators who care that make them truly unique, as each Knox County ceremony was.

It was all business for Knox City Principal Rick Moeller and wasn't until he had to announce the Salutatorian Award Plaque for his daughter Tanna to receive that he became slightly emotional, in a comedic way.

"Try watching your baby walk across this stage after 18 years and not react this way," said Principal Moeller jokingly as he handed Tanna her Salutatorian Plaque. He quickly returned to form.

Proud too was Munday Superintendent Robert Dillard, as he urged the graduates to not forget Munday and the values they learned there while out in the bigger world.

"I really enjoyed watching and helping the Class of 2014 grow into responsible young men and women. I hope they remember where home is, but never doubt that they can be successful anywhere in the world. Congratulations to you all!" Superintendent Dillard exclaimed.



Top: The Knox City Municipal Swimming Pool sits empty this summer. The Knox City Council has voted to not open the pool this year, given the cost and the recent drought.

Bottom: The Munday Municipal Swimming Pool sits empty this summer. Extreme drought condition is what has prompted the Munday City Council not to open their pool as well.



Knox Notes

Events are listed free of charge as a service by this newspaper for nonprofit groups, civic organizations, churches, schools and select community events. Listings should be submitted at least two weeks in advance and will run as often as possible through the date of the event. News staff does not guarantee placement of events. Emailed submissions are preferred to kcnewscourier@gmail.com.

KC Homecoming

The Knox City-O'Brien Homecoming is scheduled for June 6-7. Registration fee is \$20 the day of the event beginning at 3pm at the KCHS Cafeteria or can be mailed to Knox City-O'Brien Ex-Students Assoc. PO Box 724, Knox City, TX 79529. Picnic supper, Elvis imitator and music and dancing. Contact the administration office @ 940-657-3521 for more information.

Benjamin Homecoming

The Benjamin Homecoming is scheduled for June 13-15. Registration begins Friday, June 13, at 3pm. Raffle tickets will also be available during that time and all day Saturday, June 14. Raffle donations are accepted. Rodeo, parade, dancing and music. Contact Gladene Green or Jan Carver for more information, 940-459-3551.

Vacation Bible School

St. Joseph's: Set your sail to SonTreasure Island VBS, June 16th -18th; Ages 3- Grade 6 (this year's). Adult & teen helpers needed. Contact Janet Dillard 940-422-4484.

Knox County Veterans Memorial

Four more monoliths will be added to the Memorial by 11-11-2014. Those eligible to have their name engraved must have an honorable discharge and lived or buried in Knox County. Please call 940-459-2229 from 1:00 to 5:00 P.M. on Tues. - Fri. or e-mail kchc@srcaccess.net to receive application and information forms. All applications must be in the office of the Museum by Aug. 1, 2014.

Knox County Adventure Days

The 4th Annual Knox County Adventure Days 5K is scheduled for June 21st at 8:00 a.m. in downtown Munday. In addition to the 5K, other activities during Adventure Days are scheduled: Amazing Grace Race, Bus Tours around Knox County, an art exhibit and demonstrations and more. For additional information, contact Jimi Coplen at 940-459-4121 or email kcvg@srcaccess.net.

Golf Tourney

The Bill Baker Memorial Golf Tournament and Scholarship Award Events are planned for July 4-5 in Knox City. The KC EXES Association will award three \$1,000 Scholarships. To sign up for Golf or Volleyball teams or to buy a ticket to the Award Dinner/BBQ/Silent Auction, please call Patti at 325-721-3001 or Michelle Stanfield at 940-256-0318. All proceeds will go to future Scholarships.

Corrections

If you spot an error of fact, contact kcnewscourier@gmail.com.

News on the go

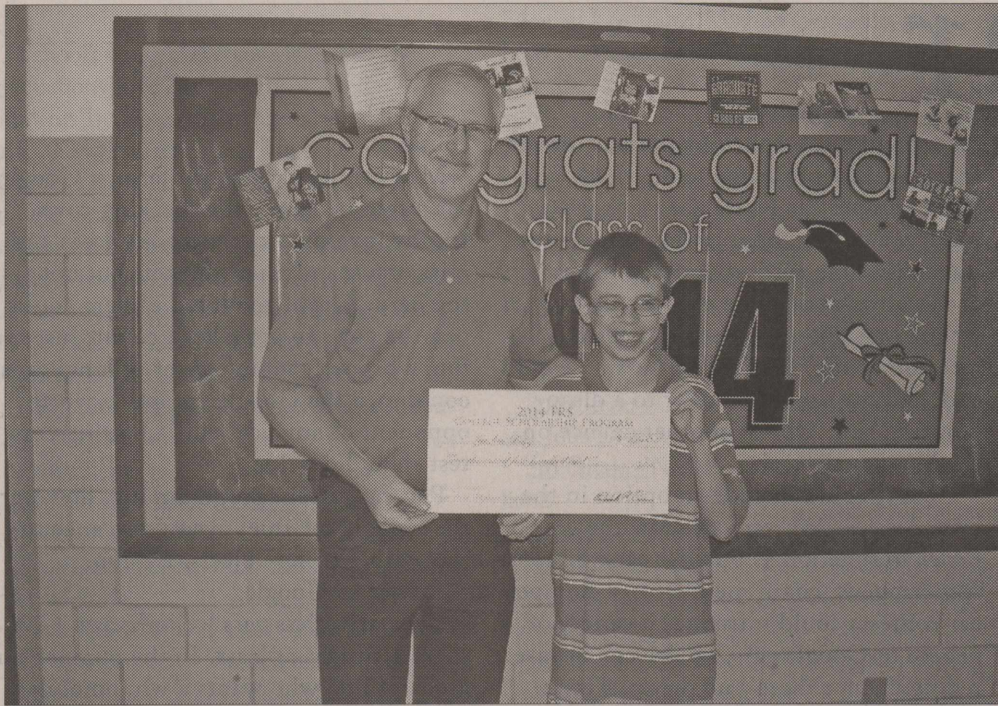


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Baty one of 36 Santa Rosa Scholarship Winners



Lyndon Baty

Special to the News-Courier

VERNON — Santa Rosa Telephone Cooperative is pleased to announce that Lyndon Baty of Knox City is the recipient of a \$2,500 college scholarship from Santa Rosa Telephone and the Foundation for Rural Service (FRS) the philanthropic arm of NTCA-The Rural Broadband Association.

The FRS scholarship program awarded over \$98,000 in scholarships to rural youth across the United States. Out of over 1,500 applications received this year, 36 scholarships were awarded. The goal of the scholarship program is to help further higher education opportunities among rural high school students. Santa Rosa Telephone Cooperative strongly supports the youth of our community and is thrilled to sponsor this worthy program.

Scholarship recipients were selected by an independent team of reviewers from the education field. To be eligible, recipients must

be sponsored by a NTCA member system, and must indicate a desire to return to their rural communities once their collegiate studies have been completed.

"We are thrilled to offer this program, with the goal of leveling the playing field for rural students who often face financial obstacles in their pursuit of higher education," said Kirk Petty, General Manager. "The FRS scholarship program enables rural telecommunications providers to show their support of the youth living in the communities they serve. It is a source of tremendous pride for us and for the entire community of Knox City."

The scholarship program is open to all graduating high school seniors that receive local telecommunications service from Santa Rosa Telephone Cooperative. Applicants must be enrolled in an accredited two-year or four-year college or university, or vocational technical school, and have at least a C-grade point average.

Blood drive June 17 in Munday

Special to the News-Courier

The American Red Cross encourages eligible blood donors to make and keep donation appointments to maintain the summer blood supply and help prevent a shortage. Donors of all blood types are currently needed, especially those with type O negative, B negative and A negative.

June 17, Knox County residents will have the opportunity to donate from 9:30 a.m. to 3:30 p.m. at Munday High School, 911 W. D in Munday.

While the need for blood remains constant during the summer, donations drop. Between June and August, on average, two fewer donors give blood at each Red Cross blood drive than what hospitals need. This seasonal decline could be overcome if just two additional donors — above what is expected — give blood at each drive.

Every two seconds someone in the United States needs blood. Recently, a patient needed 79 blood products after injuries sustained during a car accident. Thanks to blood donors who gave in the days and weeks prior, blood products were readily available for this patient and thousands of others at approximately 2,700 hospitals and transfusion centers across the country supported by the Red Cross.

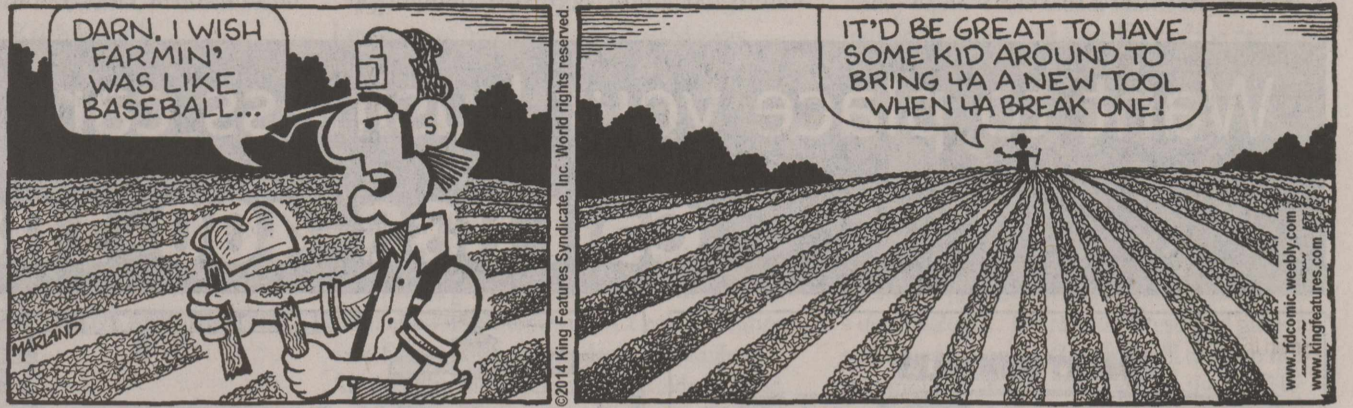
This summer, there are 100 chances to give hope with the Red Cross by giving blood. Visit redcrossblood.org or call 1-800-RED CROSS to learn more and make an appointment.

How to donate blood

Simply call 1-800-RED CROSS (1-800-733-2767) or visit redcrossblood.org to make an appointment or for more information. All blood types are needed to ensure a reliable supply for patients. A blood donor card or driver's license or two other forms of identification are required at check-in. Individuals who are 17 years of age (16 with parental consent in Oklahoma), weigh at least 110 pounds and are in generally good health may be eligible to donate blood. High school students and other donors 18 years of age and younger also have to meet certain height and weight requirements.

R.F.D.

by Mike Marland



Final Notice and Public Explanation of a Proposed Activity in a 100-year Floodplain

To: All interested Agencies, U.S. Fish and Wildlife, U.S. Corp of Army Engineers, Texas Commission on Environmental Quality, Texas Department of Agriculture, Groups and Individuals

This is to give notice that the City of Benjamin has conducted an evaluation as required by Executive Order 11988 and/or 11990, in accordance with HUD regulations at 24 CFR 55.20 Subpart C Procedures for Making Determinations on Floodplain Management, to determine the potential affect that its activity in the floodplain will have on the human environment for 2013 Texas Community Development Block under TDA STEP Contract 713036. The proposed project(s) is located in Benjamin, Knox County, Texas on:

- City Lake Road and across private property from Pump Station to Oxford St
- Goree St from Oxford St to Cooper St
- Cooper St from Goree Street to the Elevated Storage Tank
- Cedar St from the Elevated Storage Tank to Hinton St
- Stewart St from Cedar St to US 82
- Hinton St from Cedar St to US 82

A map of the proposed area is available at City Hall. The Grantee shall replace the existing 6" cast iron lines from the pump station to the tower and 8-inch from the tower to distribution. It is proposed to replace these lines with approximately 9,700 linear feet of new C-900 PVC water lines. Contractor shall acquire the right-of-way needed for part of the water line replacement. **Approximately 1300 linear feet, or .09 acres, of transmission line are located in Floodplain Zone A.**

The City of Benjamin has considered the following alternatives and mitigation measures to be taken to minimize adverse impacts and to restore and preserve natural and beneficial values: The City's waterlines are aged and deteriorated, resulting in water loss and frequent maintenance issues. (i) Alternative considered: move the project away from or around the floodplain. However, the floodplain transects the land in between the pump station near Lake Benjamin and the City's water plant and it would therefore be impossible to avoid (ii) No Action alternative. This option would result in continued deterioration of the water lines, eventually resulting in a water loss detrimental to the City's citizens. Alternate material and methods are considered, but the project engineer has determined the items proposed are best suited for the project and in the best interest of the environment (iii) The following mitigation measures will be taken to minimize adverse impacts and to restore and preserve natural and beneficial values: Follow best soil erosion management practices and a water pollution prevention plan; Take necessary safety precautions during construction. The project will comply with state and local floodplain protection procedures.

The City of Benjamin has reevaluated the alternatives to building in the floodplain and has determined that it has no practicable alternative. Environmental files that document compliance with steps 3 through 6 of [Executive Order 11988 and/or 11990], are available for public inspection, review and copying upon request at the times and location delineated in the last paragraph of this notice for receipt of comments. This activity will have no significant impact on the environment for the following reasons:

Modification of the floodplain is anticipated to be incidental. According to the project engineer, the project improvements will not alter the drainage runoff flow. Therefore, the disturbed floodplain will return to its preconstruction state. Additionally, the project will not increase the

amount of runoff because additional impermeable surfaces will not be created. Therefore, impacts to the floodplain will be negligible.

There are three primary purposes for this notice. First, people who may be affected by activities in the floodplain and those who have an interest in the protection of the natural environment should be given an opportunity to express their concerns and provide information about these areas. Second, an adequate public notice program can be an important public educational tool. The dissemination of information about floodplains can facilitate and enhance Federal efforts to reduce the risks associated with the occupancy and modification of these special areas. Third, as a matter of fairness, when the Federal government determines it will participate in actions taking place in floodplains, it must inform those who may be put at greater or continued risk.

Written comments must be received by the City of Benjamin at the following address on or before June 12, 2014: Benjamin City Hall, 303 S. Hinton, P.O. Box 286, Benjamin, Texas 79505 and (940_459-3131, Attention: Tami Gaddis, City Secretary during the hours of 8:00 am to 4:00 p.m., Tuesday through Thursday. Comments may also be submitted via email to Benjamin_texas@yahoo.com.

Date: June 5, 2014

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The 501 Driverless Car

Google is showing off its driverless car prototype. Google? Why not? For a company already known as a powerful search engine, the venture is a fit. Vroom!



HANABA MUNN WELCH

But credit where credit is due. My mother introduced the concept. OK. Not really. Not exactly. But when she drove to town, people would look twice at the big blue Chrysler that seemed to be moving along with no driver. The car drew the most attention when approaching things like bridge abutments. Mother was in the driver's seat, of

course. She gripped the big steering wheel with both hands and peered through it rather than over it to see the road ahead. The car was like a parade float that moves along majestically with no visible driver.

When the final battery died on that car, my mother's excursions ended. The only thing that kept going was charges on Mother's Texaco and Phillips 66 cards, thanks to the criminal side of our part-time home health worker. I digress.

Back to Google's driverless cars. They look like classic bumper cars to me. I haven't read much about the new vehicles, but one headline says they have no brakes. If those old bumper cars had brakes, I don't remember it. Google cars, of course, are designed to miss instead of hit, and their bumpers are foam. Hmmm. Sounds like a non-aggressive bumper car

that can't be controlled by the non-driver. In a way, except for the foam, that's like every bumper car I ever got stuck with. I still remember those jarring hits, but it was mostly me getting rammed instead of me hitting someone else. Then, just when I was about to crash successfully into somebody, the 25-cent session would end, and my car would slow to a disappointing halt. Oh for another chance on the bumper car rink.

Google could include an option in the driverless car software to allow the vehicles to function as bumper cars. Simple. If it happens, count me in. Bumper car contests could introduce a variety of people to Google cars, no driver's license required since there's no driver. Retirement villages would be ideal places to stage Google bumper car free-for-alls. At the end of each event, the cars could be sold to the elderly, and the fun could

continue. Meanwhile, back at the farm, a Google car might be handy for checking cows. Ideally it would skirt mesquite trees and miss draws and plum thickets but not the herd. A roof-mounted camera could pan the cows to get a head count. Just for fun, a properly mounted set of longhorns could turn the Google car into a worthy opponent of any bovine if a butting contest should develop.

Per the current programming, however, the Google car shies away from encounters with moving objects. No fun.

Advice to Google: Your driverless cars lack pizzazz. Give them attitudes at least. In the bumper car arena of life, who wants a wimpmobile? Better Mother's old Chrysler.

Hanaba Munn Welch is a columnist and contributor for the Blackburn Media Group family of newspapers.

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Benjamin News

By Gladene Green

School's out, and everyone is happy! The graduations were Friday night at the Ex-Students' Building. They were all combined this year - Kindergarten, Junior High, and High School. I found that after last week's news went in. The kindergarten were first to present their program, then receive their diplomas into first grade. Members of that class were: Will Pierce, Lainee Braden, Angela Doran, Aidenn Garza, Jaycee Holmes, Naveah Martinez, Addison Meinzer, Evan Pulido, and Tyler Reagan.

The Junior High Commencement followed. Their program was as follows:

Processional
Salutatory Address - Daniel Jackson
Valedictory Address - Caleb Barrientez
Presentation of Awards - Supt. Olivia Del Hierro Gloria
Presentation of Diplomas - Pam Duke
Closing Remarks - Superintendent Gloria Hailie Macias and J C Espinal were in charge of programs and were ushers.

The eighth grade graduates were: Jacob Armendariz, Caleb Barrientez, Brandon Harris, Daniel Jackson, Steven Lyles, Joseph Masias, and Kaleb Whittle.

The High School Commencement concluded the evening. Following the processional, Elisa Sepeda gave the Salutatory address, after which Kimberly Marentes gave the Valedictory speech. Superintendent Gloria presented the awards, then Pam Duke gave each graduate their diploma. Dametria Masias voiced the benediction, and following the recessional, a reception was held to honor all graduates. The building was filled to capacity with friends and family sharing their support for all these students' accomplishments.

Members of the senior graduating class were: Morgan Lemmons, Michael Grimaldo, Kimberly Marentes, Dametria Masias, and Elissa Depeda.

Several awards were given following the High School Commencement. The A-Honor awards - given to those who maintained a 90 or above average for the entire year were as follows:

1st Grade - Jaiden Brunkow, Hudson Cates, Electra Estrada, Krystian Garcia, Jerry Grayson, Polina Haam, Triston Meinzer, Taylor Morris, Carver Tankersley, Nathan Tighe, Alexis Wilson

2nd Grade - Celeste Carmona, Hallie Everson, Jolie Everson

3rd Grade - Nicholas Stovall, Landon Williams

4th Grade - Dal Everson, Kinsey Benson, Grant Jackson, Maggie Kuehne, Teresa Carmona, McKayla Morris, Gannon Pryor, Woody Siewert

5th Grade - Madison Barrientez, Jeonnie DePippo, Betheny Ledesma

6th Grade - Jalen Barrientez, Braden Garza, Dylan Kuehne, Abraham Nevarez

7th Grade - J.C. Espinal, Taryn Strickland

8th Grade - Caleb Barrientez, Brandon Harris, Daniel Jackson, Kaleb Whittle

9th Grade - Devin Harris, Chris McGhee, Justin Rainwater, Benjamin Vanderpol

11th Grade - Kelsey Brown

12th Grade - Kimberly Marentes

The following were neither absent nor tardy during the school year:

4th Grade - Maggie Kuehne

6th Grade - Dylan Kuehne, Abraham Nevarez

7th Grade - Hailie Macias

8th Grade - Caleb Barrientez, Joseph Macias

9th Grade - Justin Rainwater, Benjamin Vanderpol

And students receiving the trophies for high point average for the year were—from Junior High - Benjamin Vanderpol. Their averages are not available, but they must have been pretty high as there were a lot with good averages. This speaks well of our teachers as well as these "smart kids." Congratulations to all of them.

Cheerleaders Selected

In tryouts for both Junior High and High School Cheerleaders last week, the following were selected for the coming school year. Those leading the yells in high school are Hayden King, McKenzie King, Alyssa Casillas, Lee-Anna Magee, and Sierra Boyd. The mascot is Joslynn Harris. The Junior High girls selected to be cheerleaders are Madison Barrientez, Grace Estrada, Betheny Ledesma, Breanna Pryor, Hailie Macias, and Taryn Strickland. Sounds like two good groups to get the spirit going when the season rolls around.

Sympathy Extended

My sincere sympathy to the family of Jackie Lowrance of Munday. Jackie passed away Sunday. Services are pending at this time. Also sympathy to the family of Weldon Skiles of Knox City, who passed away Sunday morning. His services are also pending.

Here'n There

Betty Lyles was pleased to have three of her out of town granddaughters and some of their families for a weekend visit last week. Visiting were Sara and Leo Gonzales and Camile of Austin, Susanne Breckeen and children, Reed and Adelle of Gunter, and Stephanie Granberry,

Payton and Payne of Prosper. Joy Lynn and Kip Pool of Benjamin joined them for a fun filled couple of days.

Milanie and Clay Conner and little girls of Lubbock visited with Hazel Stockton on Saturday night.

Blaine Conner Neal's daughter, Shea, is back in Cooks Children's Hospital in Fort Worth for more surgery. This is a result of the four wheeler accident she was involved in a few months ago.

Mary Young spent last weekend in Round Rock with her son, Jack, Jr. and his wife Cindy. She said they did a little fishing but didn't have any luck, but the thing she enjoyed the most was just getting some good rest. She also visited with Butch and Letha Young in Saginaw before returning home.

Carol Dickson was back in Abilene for another chemo treatment last Tuesday, and she just has 2 more left. She's doing fine, and of course, very anxious to put these frequent trips to Abilene behind her. She only goes every 2 weeks - not as often as some - but that gets tiresome.

Mike and Debi Moorhouse attended the high school graduation in Throckmorton on Friday night. Their friend, Trevor Moore, son of Jody and Dianna, was a member of the graduating class.

Debi and Mike and grandson, Dillon Keys, were in Dallas Thursday for Dillon to see his doctor. He's had a few problems develop but hopefully with the newer treatment and medication, he will start to improve. He's already feeling better and is back at work.

Betty Bohannon was in Abilene Friday to see a dermatologist. He ran some tests and gave her some medication and hopes it will clear up the skin problem she has developed in the last few weeks.

USDA Awarding \$6 Million to Prepare Farmers for Programs

Farm Bill Implementation Continues at Brisk Pace with Universities and State Cooperative Extension Programs Now Set to Help Educate Farmers

WASHINGTON, May 29, 2014 - Agriculture Secretary Tom Vilsack today announced that the U.S. Department of Agriculture (USDA) is awarding \$6 million to universities and cooperative state extension services to develop online decision tools and other materials and train experts to educate producers about several key farm bill programs. The new Web tools will help farmers and ranchers determine what participation in programs established by the 2014 Farm Bill will mean for their businesses.

The University of Illinois (lead for the National Coalition for Producer Education), along with the Food and Agricultural Policy Research Institute (FAPRI) at the University of Missouri and the Agricultural and Food Policy Center at Texas A&M (co-leads for the National Association of Agricultural and Food Policy), will receive a total of \$3 million to develop the new online tools and train state-based extension agents who can in turn help educate farmers.

"Helping farmers and ranchers understand new Farm Bill programs and what the programs mean for their families is one of USDA's top priorities," said Vilsack. "With the resources we're providing, university experts will help ensure farmers and ranchers are highly educated as they make critical decisions about new programs that impact their livelihoods. The new tools that will be developed will empower farmers and ranchers to select the plan that best fits their unique needs."

The new resources will help farmers and ranchers make an educated choice between the new Agriculture Risk Coverage (ARC) program and the Price Loss Coverage (PLC) program. Using the new online tools, producers will be able to use data unique to their specific farming operations combined with factors like the geographical diversity of crops, soils, weather and climates across the country to test a variety of financial scenarios before officially signing up for the new program options later this year. Once a producer enrolls in the ARC or PLC program, he or she must remain in the program through the 2018 crop year.

New tools will be provided for other programs as well. Sign-up for the newly

established Margin Protection Program for Dairy (MPP) begins late this summer and enrollment for "buy-up" provisions under the Noninsured Crop Disaster Assistance Program (NAP) will begin early next year. An online MPP tool will be available when sign up begins and the NAP buy-up provision resource will become available to producers in the fall for the 2015 crop year.

The University of Illinois, as lead for NCPE, and FAPRI at the University of Missouri and AFPC, at Texas A&M, as co-leads for NAAFP will develop the ARC and PLC Web tool program. The University of Illinois will also develop the online resources for MPP and NAP.

USDA will also award \$3 million to state cooperative extension services—a nationwide network of experts based at land-grant universities—for outreach and education on the new Farm Bill programs. Funds will be used to conduct public education outreach meetings where producers can speak with local extension agents and Farm Service Agency (FSA) staff. Outreach meetings will begin late this summer to help farmers and ranchers understand the new programs and their options.

While universities work to create new on-

line tools, producers now have access to a preliminary website that gives them a chance to begin familiarizing themselves with the new programs and the type of information they will need to consider when deciding which program options work better for them. At this site, farmers and ranchers can view ARC and PLC projected payments, ARC guarantees, and PLC payment rate projections. These tables are available on the FSA website.

Today's announcement was made possible through the 2014 Farm Bill, which builds on historic economic gains in rural America over the past five years, while achieving meaningful reform and billions of dollars in savings for taxpayers. Since enactment, USDA has made significant progress to implement each provision of this critical legislation, including providing disaster relief to farmers and ranchers; strengthening risk management tools; expanding access to rural credit; funding critical research; establishing innovative public-private conservation partnerships; developing new markets for rural-made products; and investing in infrastructure, housing and community facilities to help improve quality of life in rural America. For more information, visit www.usda.gov/farmbill.

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SEEDING

From Page 1

projects that have already taken place since 1990. He also explained how the Texas Weather Modification Act of 1967 was enacted to regulate cloud seeding through licensing and permits. Furthermore, he presented certifiable Doppler Radar readouts of areas that have been seeded, as opposed to those areas that have not. The difference was quite obvious.

"Since I work for the state regulatory body, I cannot promote, only explain cloud seeding to the commission today," explained Bomar on being a non-bias government employee.

The Wichita Falls joint county project will come with a cost of approximately \$40,000 a month from each county, not including fuel and iodide crystal flares (which may bring the cost to \$45,000). Knox County is considered a target area for the project which began in April. Knox County has already sent the permit in for state approval of the cloud seeding and the Munday City Council has already begun raising funds for the project. Six counties have already been included in the joint-project, with Nolan and Scurry Counties considering joining as well.

Cloud seeding is done by a chemical process of dropping either silver iodide or dry ice particles into the formation of existing clouds by airplane or projecting them into the clouds via rocket, forming minute ice crystals within the cloud which in turn causes more precipitation to occur. While cloud seeding does not create rain from thin air, it is a method of producing more rain from clouds already conducive to rainfall.

New technology combined with years of research has produced reliable results that make cloud seeding a dependable and affordable water producing strategy for as many as 11 states that have recently developed cloud seeding programs. This is backed by years of

various university researches and numerous governments throughout the world successfully utilizing the practice. Over the course of the last seven years, the state of Texas alone has appropriated more than \$146 million toward cloud seeding projects.

The research has proven that cloud seeding most definitely works, and according to State Meteorologist

"Cloud seeding should be done during a drought, but more importantly, cloud seeding should be done during times of non-drought, to prevent them from occurring," concluded Meteorologist Bomar.

POOLS

From Page 1

"Yes, the extreme drought is what is responsible for the pool being closed this year," Ake said.

Coach Charles Steele, who supervises the pool for Knox City, was also disappointed about the drought.

"There just wasn't the water this year to operate the pool. We have used well water in the past, but that can be damaging to the system," Steele explained.

Knox City Mayor Kent Deville had a few more reasons in addition to the damage the well water can cause.

"The City Council voted to not open the pool simply because it costs too much to get it into compliance and up to state code," said Mayor Deville. "The state has given our pool a waiver in the past, but that has since expired. In addition to the cost, the pool will lose about 20,000 gallons of well water every day it is operational, which is a lot, and there is no other alternative given the extreme drought."

For now or until the drought officially ends, kids from both cities are looking at hot, dry summers with only the prospect of snow cone stands to cool them down.

Miller's Creek Level

	Date	Percent Full	Water Level (ft)	Height Above Conservation Pool (ft)	Reservoir Storage (acre-ft)	Conservation Storage (acre-ft)	Conservation Capacity (acre-ft)	Surface Area (acres)
Today	2014-06-03	11.4	1,313.24	-20.76	4,346	3,063	26,768	544
Yesterday	2014-06-02	11.5	1,313.26	-20.74	4,356	3,073	26,768	544
2 days ago	2014-06-01	11.5	1,313.29	-20.71	4,373	3,090	26,768	546
1 week ago	2014-05-27	11.6	1,313.33	-20.67	4,394	3,111	26,768	547
1 month ago	2014-05-03	12.7	1,313.83	-20.17	4,673	3,390	26,768	565
3 months ago	2014-03-03	15.0	1,314.89	-19.11	5,291	4,008	26,768	601
6 months ago	2013-12-03	16.9	1,315.72	-18.28	5,801	4,518	26,768	628
1 year ago	2013-06-03	21.2	1,317.48	-16.52	6,963	5,680	26,768	695

* Percent Full is based on Conservation Storage and Conservation Capacity.

Texas Quail Index takes flight

Source: AgriLife Today

The Texas Quail Index, a statewide effort by the Texas A&M AgriLife Extension Service to monitor wild quail population dynamics, has taken full flight.

"There are going to be more ears cocked skyward listening to the bobwhite's iconic whistle this month than ever before," said Dr. Dale Rollins, AgriLife Extension wildlife specialist in San Angelo and statewide coordinator for the Reversing the Quail Decline Initiative. "The scope of the Quail Decline Index is impressive - it's a mass effort to help landowners and other 'students of quail' understand what I refer to as the 'quail equation' on their respective properties."

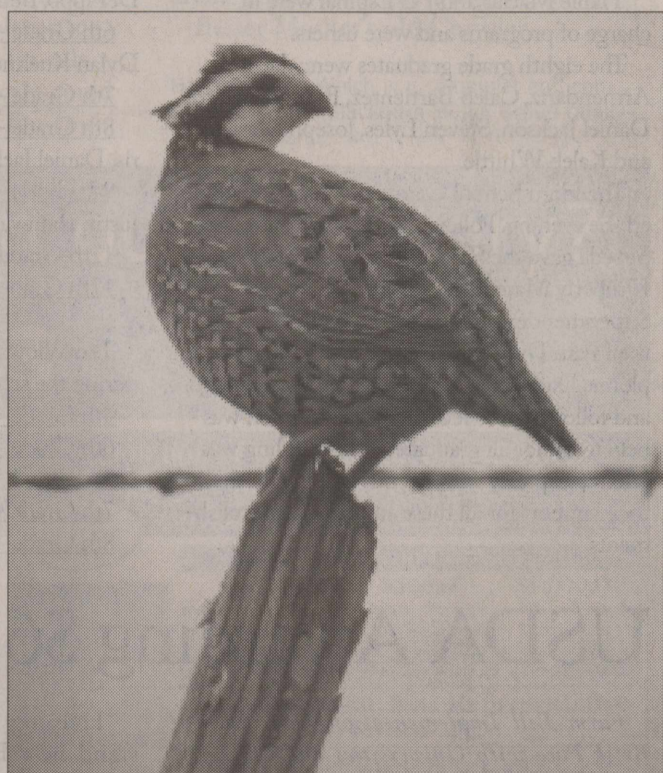
Rollins said the last month's focus has been on training AgriLife Extension agents and volunteers who are now implementing the demonstrations on sites across the state. The index was initiated in April in 43 counties and seven Texas Parks and Wildlife Department (TPWD) wildlife management areas. AgriLife Extension agents were among the 50 index leaders who were trained in the proper methods of counting quail and assessing habitat at the Rolling Plains Quail Research Ranch near Roby.

Participating AgriLife

Extension agents will be the leaders and points of contact in their respective counties. Rollins said they are well-versed in implementing the index, which involves multiple counts of quail, including whistle counts, roadside counts and the measurement of related habitat conditions. The ultimate goal is to determine if any of the various counts will reliably predict how successful the upcoming quail season will be.

Rollins said the various index protocols being implemented are comprehensive in scope. "Along with the counts, we'll be assessing nesting habitat, a key limiting factor for quail, using what are called dummy nests. At each site AgriLife Extension agents will oversee the placing of 24 of these simulated nests and check their status at 14 and 28 days. They'll use game cameras along the transects to depict what the predator community is at each site. Then, they'll post the results and pictures from each of the 57 sites as they come in."

Rollins said funding for the work is part of a special appropriation made to AgriLife Extension through a partnership with the Texas Parks and Wildlife Department during the 83rd Legislature to address the decline of bobwhite and scaled quail in Texas. The funds were allocated to ad-



Bob White Quail

dress both research issues and outreach education. To date, 13 different research proposals have been funded.

AgriLife Extension outreach efforts include both adult and youth education efforts. The Quail Appreciation Days held across the state join the Texas Quail Index as adult educational components, while youth educational efforts include activities like Bobwhite Brigade Wildlife Leadership Camps.

"We're really excited about the Texas Quail Index and the enthusiasm the project has garnered thus far," Rollins said. "The con-

cern for the declining population of bobwhites and scaled quail means a lot to our local ranchers, business economy and area hunters. Past AgriLife Extension studies have shown that a typical quail hunter from Dallas spends about \$8,500 annually in pursuit of his or her sport with about half of that being spent in the local economies. So when quail hunting drops off, the ripple effects impact lots of folks."

For more information about the Texas Quail Index, see wildlife.tamu.edu/quail/texas-quail-index or on Facebook at www.facebook.com/TAMUQDI.

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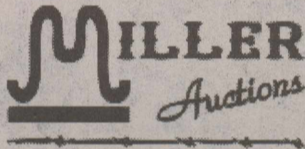


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top ten

Girl Baby Names

- Sophia
- Emma
- Olivia
- Isabella
- Ava
- Mia
- Emily
- Abigail
- Madison
- Elizabeth

Source: Social Security, 2013

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MMA comes to Munday

By Geoff Baumgartner
The Knox County News-Courier

MUNDAY — Mixed Martial Arts has come to Munday now that it has its first MMA style gym. The ever entertaining sport has gained world renowned popularity through organizations such as the Ultimate Fighting Championship (UFC), which have virtually taken over pay-per-view and Las Vegas fighting venues.

The gym is called A & R Mixed Martial Arts and Fitness Center and the man who owns the facility is Munday native Robert

Thomas. Thomas graduated from MHS and after spending roughly eleven years in New Mexico, where he picked up the sport, he returned to Munday to raise his son and open his own gym, as he knew the Big Country was lacking any good MMA facilities. He took over the building located at 1000 N. Cedar, which used to operate as a Laundromat back in the 1950's. The gym is just north of Dairy Queen and has been repainted, retrofitted, and redone outside and in.

The place is completely professional not only in terms of MMA, but as a gym facility in and of itself, with an abundance of top

notch work-out machines. Not only is A & R MMA a fight training facility, it also holds several fitness classes as well. Adult MMA, Children's MMA, and even Women's Self Defense classes are offered.

So far, it has been a great turn out for Mr. Thomas, as his class schedule has been steadily filling up with local supporters as people have been steadily training and learning MMA.

"The turnout has been really good so far. People are really embracing MMA these days. There have been a lot of people come so far," said Thomas.

Even as the interview was being conducted

a family piled out of an SUV to take fitness classes at the gym.

"It is a good place for kids and parents to come and get exercise," says Munday fourth grade teacher Mary Willison, who ironically teaches Thomas' 9-year-old son at Munday Elementary School.

So whether you are interested in learning Mixed Martial Arts, want to know how to defend yourself as a woman, or just want to have a nice friendly place to work off the calories, A&R MMA and Fitness Center can accommodate all Munday and Knox County training needs.



Munday native Robert Thomas stands next to a UFC brand punching bag in his MMA gym here in Munday, A & R Mixed Martial Arts and Fitness Center.

Geoff Baumgartner/The Knox County News-Courier



Thomas stands in the main weight room of his Mixed Martial Arts style gym. From free weight, to standardized professional gym machines, A & R Fitness Center has it all.



Thomas standing with Munday Elementary local teacher and mother Mary Willison, as she just arrived with her kids to get in a work out. Willison teaches Thomas's 9-year-old son Dejan.

The Spats

by Jeff Pickering



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