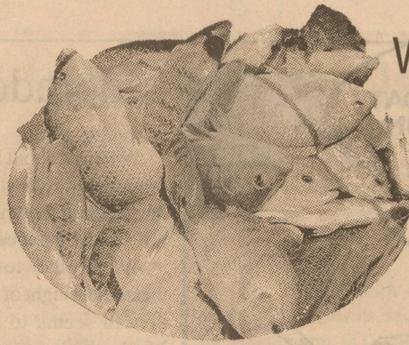


A new Crossword
Puzzle with a
hometown slant
...see Page 2



Why is Eldorado
stocking fish in
the Sewer Plant?
...see story Page 5



EL DORADO SUCCESS

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VOLUME 98, ISSUE 28

"The Voice of Eldorado and Schleicher County Since 1901"

JULY 15, 1999

Inside This Issue:

- Beautification Projects Continue...6
- Birthdays & Anniversaries...3
- Crazy Legs Contest...6
- Crossword Puzzle...2
- Editorial & Guest Columns...2
- EMS Gets New Facility...4
- Focus on the Family...6
- Forts Trail Fall Festival...6
- Landfill Brings Dollars to City...3
- Meals for Friends Menu...4
- Meals for Friends Program...4
- New approach at Sewer Plant...5
- Progress at SCISD...5

F.Y.I.

For Your Information

Seniors Hotline

State Attorney General John Cornyn announced the following hotline phone numbers:

To report Medicaid fraud or abuse of a Medicaid recipient contact the Attorney General's Medicaid Fraud Control Unit at 512-463-2011 or fax 512-320-0974. Email to: mfcu@oag.state.tx.us

If you suspect that an elderly or disabled person is neglected or abused call 9-1-1 or local law enforcement if the person is in immediate danger. You may also call the Texas Dept. of Protective and Regulatory Services 24-hr. tollfree hotline at 800-252-5400. For consumer complaints contact the Attorney General's Consumer Protection hotline at 800-621-0508.

Eldorado Tidbits

Eldorado's first school yearbook, titled "The Divide" was printed in 1923. That same year, the Boy Scouts were organized in Eldorado. Don McCormick and E.W. Brooks were Scoutmasters. Eldorado's first Girl Scout troop was organized in 1935. Its first leaders were Annie Herbert and Mrs. Palmer West. The earliest record of Cub Scouts in Schleicher County was in 1941. Buster Gunn was listed as Cubmaster.

On This Date

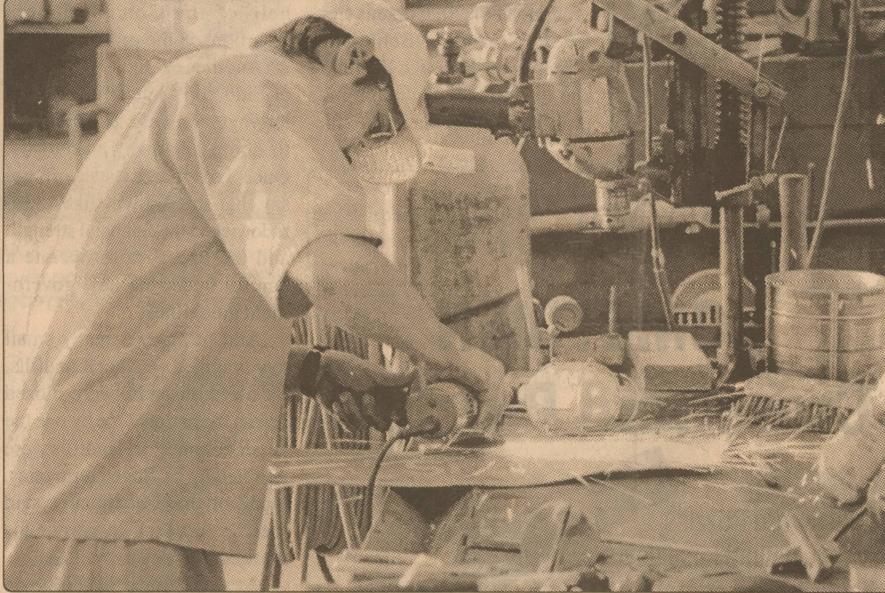
On this day in 1912 Jim Thorpe won the decathlon in the Olympic games in Stockholm, Sweden. In 1922 the duck-billed platypus was first seen in America. It arrived at the Bronx Zoo in New York City. In 1965 the spacecraft "Mariner IV" sent back the first close-up pictures of Mars. In 1968 commercial air travel between the United States and the U.S.S.R. began. In 1973 Nolan Ryan, on the mound for the California Angels, threw his second no-hitter of the season.

Birthdays of note include: 1606 artist Rembrandt (Van Rijn); 1779 poet Clement Moore; 1931 author Clive Cussler; 1944 actor Jan-Michael Vincent; 1946 singer Linda Ronstadt.

Odds and Ends

Dog lovers may be offended but, humans are the only animal with the ability to smile. Not even chimpanzees have mastered this trick.

The Mexican volcano Paricutin has the ability to spew as much as 4 million pounds per minute of rock and ash into the atmosphere. It almost never gives a warning before blowing its top.



Making the sparks fly — Inmate Johnny Atwell worked on a street sign recently at the Schleicher County Sheriff's Department's Field Operations Unit on FM 915.

Sheriff: Inmate Work Program benefits outweigh cost to taxpayers

by Randy Mankin

Schleicher County Sheriff David Doran says his department's Inmate Work Program is good for the county. "We're able to get a lot of work done on public projects that couldn't or wouldn't be done otherwise," Doran said. "The inmates are happier and less disruptive...and, I think the taxpayers prefer that they be out working instead of laying around the jail."

Doran noted that the program is beginning to attract attention from police and sheriff's departments around the state. "Usually, small departments like ours don't take on a project of this size or complexity," Doran said. "But we've been able to make it work, and now others are looking at us as a model to be copied in their communities."

One key to the program's success was the creation of a Field Corrections Officer position. Last year, Doran struck a deal with the Schleicher County Commissioners Court, his department would take over meal preparation for the Meals for Friends program and in return, Doran's budget was increased to fund a field corrections

officer. David Olivan, who worked in the department as a jailer/dispatcher was promoted to Field Corrections Officer during the December of 1998. Since that time he as supervised the inmate work crews.

"For the program to work, the inmates had to be supervised," Doran said. "It was essential that the citizens feel secure and have confidence in the program. That's why I pushed for David Olivan's position to be created."

"The inmates are happier and less disruptive...and, I think the taxpayers prefer that they be out working instead of laying around the jail."

Sheriff David Doran



Doran noted that all inmates serving in the program have volunteered for the duty. "I won't allow violent offenders in the program," Doran said. "Inmates are evaluated for risk, aptitude and skills before being assigned to the work detail."

A major stumbling block came shortly after the program started. "In a very short time we had more work to do than we could handle with our facilities," Doran stated. "I still had a Sheriff's Depart-

ment to run...prisoners to transport in and out of the jail and our sally port was constantly in use as a shop for the work detail," Doran continued. "It was like we were victims of our own success."

So, Doran set out to find a building to serve as a headquarters for the work program. That building turned out to be a vacant shop building, just outside the Eldorado city limits on FM 915.

"I was able to rent the building at nominal cost to the county and we've obtained government surplus tools and equipment to outfit a work shop," Doran said. The building, called the Field Operations Unit,

or Field Ops. for short, is now in use six days a week with work details coming from and going to various projects around the county. Inside the shop, inmates have taken over routine service of the Sheriff's Dept. vehicles. Oil changes, lube and wash jobs which once were taken to outside shops are now performed in-house. With the recent addition of a tire machine, inmates are now able to fix flats, rotate and balance tires. The Eldorado Volunteer Fire Department also takes its vehicles to Field Ops for service.

Inmate work crews have assisted with sidewalk improvements at the library. They're working on awnings for the grandstands at the little league baseball fields and are fabricating new street signs for the City of Eldorado.

"With the decline in oil and gas, next year's budgets are going to be tough for everyone," Sheriff Doran said. "If we can help the county, city, hospital or school save money with inmate labor, then I'm all for it."

After county road department employees used heavy equipment to push brush on land adjacent to the Eldorado Cemetery, inmate work crews set about cutting the

Fixing Eldorado's Streets

by Randy Mankin

Eldorado Mayor John Nikolauk is happy about the street repairs going on around the school and those about to commence on East Street. "Yeah, I'm glad to see it," Nikolauk said. "I was beginning to think it might never happen."

For years, Nikolauk has welcomed new members of the city council, all of whom seemed eager to repair the streets, with a series of loaded questions.

"What's more important, making sure your toilet flushes, or fixing the streets?"

"What's more important, making sure good clean water comes out when you open a faucet, or fixing the streets?"

"What's more important, having your garbage picked up and taken away from your home, or fixing the streets?"

"What's more important, seeing to it that people have gas to heat their homes in the winter, or fixing the streets?"

Then Nikolauk, along with experienced council members, would explain the financial dilemma the city faced and the other needs which always seemed to push street repairs onto the back burner.

But this year, all that changed. As the city retired debt on its sewer plant, money for street repairs became available.

"The first priority were the streets around the school," Nikolauk said. "They were in terrible shape and we knew it. We just didn't have the money to fix them until now."

New funds for street repairs may be rolling into city coffers soon from money the landfill is generating.

"Boy, that was a big one," Nikolauk said of the battle to keep

the landfill open. "Now that its over some of that money can go to repairing the streets." (see related story page 3)

Nikolauk went on to say that the street repairs underway around the school have been designed to address the drainage problems that Eldorado has always faced.

"Our town is basically flat and water doesn't run off as it does in other places," Nikolauk commented.

So, drainage gutters are being constructed to help direct water off and away from the streets.

In all, the two projects will cost the city about \$450,000.00. A portion of that is being offset with a Community Development Block (CDB) grant through the Concho Valley Council of Governments.

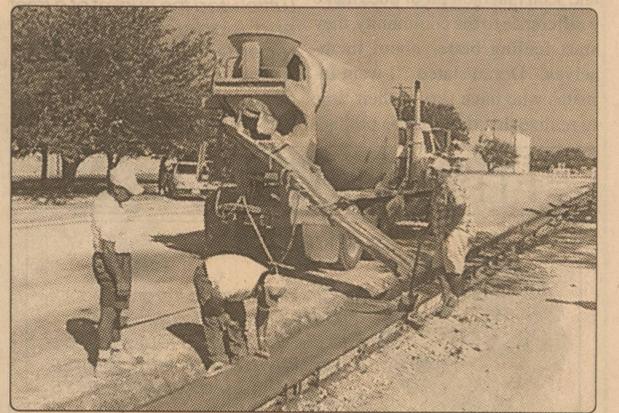
For several years, the city was prohibited from applying for a CDB grant to fund street repairs. The reason: it had already received grants for other projects.

"We received grants for the new water tower and for enlarging the wastewater treatment plant. While those were working we weren't allowed to apply for a street repair grant," Nikolauk said. "You only get one bite at the apple during each funding cycle."

Last year, the city finally received a street repair grant and work should begin on East Street this summer.

"We want to do more and we plan to do more," Nikolauk continued. "We'll just have to wait until we get a little more money."

Nikolauk said the city will continue to seek grants to fund additional street repairs. In the mean time, he hopes Eldorado's citizens will understand that the Mayor and City Council drive on the same streets. "We have to dodge potholes, too," Nikolauk concluded.

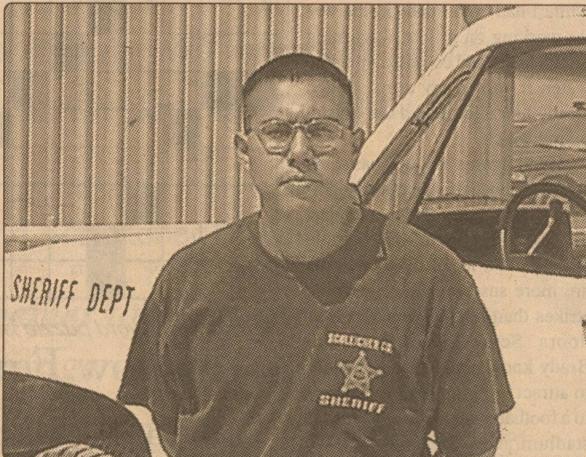


Streets of Eldorado — Cement contractors working for Seidel Construction poured a gutter down the center of Fields Street this week as street repairs continued around the school.

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Guard duty — Field Corrections Officer David Olivan supervises inmates in the Sheriff's Dept. Inmate Work Program.

CONTINUED ON PAGE 2

J.P. Doodles



BOAT REPAIR

Eldorado...there's a lot here to take pride in

What is it about Eldorado that brings out the best in people? I don't know...but there's more to this place than meets the eye.

While other towns crumble under the weight of adversity, Eldorado seems to thrive on it. Maybe that's due to the pioneering spirit that is still very much in evidence here.

"I'm just plain stubborn," an oldtimer once told me about himself. "I wasn't in school the day they taught us how to quit."

He isn't the only one around here with that kind of grit and determination.

Take the Meals for Friends program at the Sr. Citizens Center, for example. Schleicher County's tax base was declining and the cost of maintaining the program was escalating. Some-



OVER THE BACK FENCE

by Randy Mankin

thing had to give. That's when Sheriff David Doran stepped in and offered to cook the meals at the jail.

At first, his idea seemed too easy...and folks begin to shoot holes in it. But, one by one, Doran answered the critics, plugged the holes and, with the help of the Commissioners Court, made the program work.

Another example is the City of Eldorado's landfill. A changing regulatory climate appeared to doom small town landfills. Once, I overheard a state official say that small towns like Eldorado lacked the financial strength and the expertise to operate a landfill under the new government guidelines.

And, it appears many small towns agreed with her. Landfills, by the thousands, were closed across the nation. One by one the larger commercial landfills were gobbled up by huge companies. None of these companies said they were trying to corner the market, but they were.

At same time, the Eldorado City Council decided to keep our landfill open, even expand it, and

purchased 75 acres adjacent to the site.

Now, neighboring towns like Sonora and Ozona have no landfill and are paying handsomely to have their trash hauled away. Where does it go? Much of it goes into the Eldorado landfill and the cash register at City Hall rings every time a truckload crosses the scales.

At the school, officials have decided that Eldorado's location in rural West Texas should not hinder its students from receiving a first-rate education. So, innovative solutions have been sought there, as well.

A distance learning lab which connects students, via high speed data link, to college instructors in far off cities, is but one of the tactics being employed. Another, is a back to basics approach in elementary which emphasizes building students' reading skills.

Finding a way around, over or through a problem seems to be what folks in Eldorado do best. It isn't always pretty and the transitions aren't always smooth, but the stubborn stick-to-itiveness of Eldoradoans is undeniable.

Necessity very well be the mother of invention, but in Eldorado, adversity has proven to be the father of innovation. Stubbornness and innovation... now there's a combination that's hard to beat.



photo by Kathy Mankin

Groundskeeper — Inmate Jimmy Herring mowed one of Schleicher County's baseball fields recently using a mower acquired through the government surplus equipment program.

Sheriff measures worth of Inmate Work Program

CONTINUED FROM PAGE 1

wood and transporting it to the Field Ops where it is being sold to the public for firewood. Proceeds from the wood goes to offset operating costs of the work program.

Among scores of jobs taken on by the inmates are mowing in the parks, helping with flower beds and landscaping at the hospital, construction and erection of signs for the hospital's emergency room, clean up of courthouse grounds before and after public functions and clean up at the rodeo arena.

Doran notes that a side benefit of the program is the boost in the inmates' self-esteem. "Once they've worked on a project or two and seen that their labor does make a difference to the community, they start feeling better about themselves," Doran stated. "I want inmates who have served their time to realize that they can be produc-

tive members of society. Maybe that way they won't be as likely to return to jail."



photo by Randy Mankin

High wire act — Inmate Joe Lee Luttrell used the bucket of a front end loader as an elevator recently while welding the frame of a new awning at Schleicher County's Legion Field baseball park.

INTRODUCING HOMETOWN Crossword Puzzles®

Crossword Puzzles with a distinct local flavor. Each puzzle contains several clues and answers directly relating to Eldorado and Schleicher County!

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ROLLING ALONG

WITH TUMBLEWEED SMITH

The Human Lightning Rod

Geral Cox of Brady has been struck by lightning three times. He has had several near misses, like the time he and his dad were riding horseback and a storm came up. They decided to put some distance between them, so his dad rode on ahead a bit. He had no sooner got about 10 feet in front of Geral when a lightning bolt struck the ground between them.

Geral was a small boy the first time he was struck by lightning. It occurred on a ranch near Valentine, where he grew up. "Granddad and I were spraying cattle. A storm rolled in and it was the first time I had ever seen that blue light come across the cattle horns. It came on through the sprayer and hit me and knocked me over about ten or fifteen feet. I ended up flat on my back."

That same lightning storm threw a bolt of lightning through a window of the house and burned the kitchen stove. "It ruined a batch of biscuits my grandmother was cooking."

Geral's second lightning strike occurred while he was moving some farm equipment on a highway near Waco. "All I can remember is just jumping up and down and shaking. I could hear the sound of bacon frying and I could smell rubber and hair burning. The metal clips on my shirt melted and cauterized in my arm and went clear to the bone. I was burned badly across my chest and bit three quarters of my tongue off. It was hanging on by just a little piece of it."

Geral was conscious, but couldn't move for a few minutes after he was struck. His son was

also hurt in the incident. "I told him just to lie still for a while until our bodies settled down. After about thirty minutes we stopped shaking."

Some fellow workers took Geral to a hospital where he underwent several different tests, but they could find nothing wrong.

"A few days later, back at home, a thunderstorm came up. My wife woke up and screamed. She told me to go look in the mirror. I did and I was glowing like a fluorescent light. And there for a long time when those thunderstorms would come up, I could spread my fingers apart and see the electricity go between my fingers."

The last time he was struck by lightning happened about five years ago. "I was working on a water trough. Storm came up and dang if it didn't hit right there while I had both hands in the water working on a float. Lightning hit the fence and come down to the water. It burned my arms, singed all my hair and melted the crystal on my watch."

Geral figures his body has some sort of magnetism that makes lightning seek him out. He is outside a lot doing ranch work and people who spend a lot of time outdoors are more susceptible to lightning strikes than people who work indoors. Several people around Brady know about Geral's ability to attract lightning. When he goes to a football game in Brady's metal stadium and a storm comes up, people move away from him.

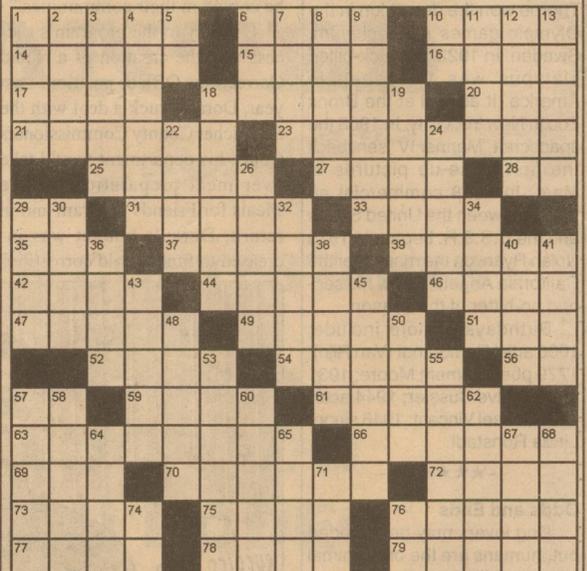
Lightning kills more people each year than tornadoes.

CROSSWORD PUZZLE

- | | | |
|---|---|---|
| ACROSS | 56. Local sports initials | 22. Trickle |
| 1. Barrels | 57. Ante meridian | 24. Horse collar connections |
| 6. Primitive aquatic organism | 59. Miseries | 26. Strategic arms treaty |
| 10. Boundary | 61. Sedate | 29. Hamburger |
| 14. The hunter | 63. Eldorado's founder | owned early day eatery in Eldorado |
| 15. Same type of article | 66. Experience | 30. Hinged joint |
| 16. Fibrous lignified substance | 69. Eastern philosophy | 32. Philippine mahogany |
| 17. Regretted | 70. Eat at home | 34. Decoy |
| 18. Check | 72. Awful | 36. Ceremonial place in office |
| 20. Provide with a nickname | 73. Flightless birds | 38. Malodors |
| 21. (with 51A) of the _____ where Eldorado sits | 75. Afrikaans | 40. Wild plum |
| 23. Derives moisture from the air | 76. Emulsifying gum | 41. Consume alcohol |
| 25. British peers | 77. Be carried on an animal | 43. Frown |
| 27. Horselaugh | 78. "Duke of _____" early rock & roll hit | 45. Schleicher County fiber crop |
| 28. Older of two persons (abbr.) | 79. Inclines | 48. U-shaped bone |
| 29. A radioactive element | DOWN | 50. Bring up |
| 31. Bloodwood tree | 1. Insulated conductor | 53. Of people from Near East or N. Africa |
| 33. Appendage | 2. Barbary sheep | 55. Enigma |
| 35. Units of length | 3. Strainer for separating lumps | 57. Fall-blooming herb |
| 37. Tower | 4. Alaskan brown bear | 58. Algonquian |
| 39. Slightest | 5. Radio ratio (abbr.) | 60. Yemen's largest city |
| 42. Robert E.'s descendants | 6. Veneration | 62. Condescend |
| 44. Ancient Greek school of philosophy | 7. Former | 64. Garish |
| 46. Cylindrical storage tower | 8. Plot a curve | 65. Almost |
| 47. Percolate | 9. Antenna | 67. Dry |
| 49. Certain | 10. Military acronym for electronic warfare | 68. Optical device |
| 51. _____ of the (with 21A) Eldorado's perch | 11. Drilled first water well in Schleicher County | 71. Unhealthy |
| 52. Playthings | 12. Spanish, Angora and Boer | 74. Direction from which Callender Ave. approaches Memorial Bldg. |
| 54. Subsequently | 13. One who trims a garment | 76. Expressing a rate |
| | 18. Plateau _____, local races | |
| | 19. British doctorate | |

This week's solution on Page 4

Hometown Crossword



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THE ELDORADO SUCCESS

Masthead Photo



The City of Eldorado introduced 1300 lbs. of these Talapia Perch into the sewer plant recently in hopes of combating the growth of algae. ...see story on Page 5
by Kathy Mankin

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MEMBER 1999
TEXAS PRESS ASSOCIATION

Trash is big business for City of Eldorado

by Randy Mankin

A little over seven weeks ago, the City of Eldorado began to benefit from the City Council's decision not to close its landfill. That's when a garbage truck from Duncan Disposal arrived at the landfill's gate house. The truck was weighed and the driver was instructed where to dump his load. On the way out of the facility, the truck was weighed again. The tally...just over seven tons of garbage. The benefit...\$190.00 revenue for the city.

"That was a big day for us," Eldorado Mayor John Nikolauk said. "It was the first load of garbage we accepted from out-of-county and the first since we contracted with Duncan Disposal to allow them to dump in our landfill."

Since that initial load, Duncan has been a regular customer at the landfill. In the first five weeks of operation the city billed Duncan more than \$13,077.76 in "tipping fees".

The City of Eldorado operates the landfill, 5 miles west of town, under a permit from the Texas Natural Resource Conservation Commission (TNRCC), which regulates the facility and inspects it periodically.

Presently, the city's permit allows no more than 20 tons of garbage per day to be deposited in the facility.

"That's 20 tons per day, averaged over 365 days per year," Nikolauk explained. "We're not in any danger of exceeding our permit."

Under pressure from State and

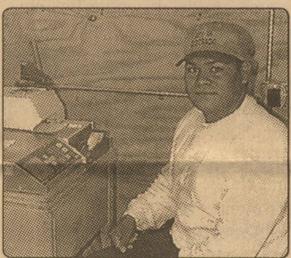


photo by Kathy Mankin
Gate keeper — City employee Rudy Saldivar weighs loads of incoming garbage and enforces the city's new tarp law at the landfill.

Federal regulations, small towns across the nation began closing their landfills a few years ago. And, larger facilities had to change their operations in order to conform with the new rules.

"For years the city operated the landfill any way it wanted," Nikolauk said. "First the feds outlawed burning then they implemented Subtitle-D regulations which changed everything."

For a time it appeared that Eldorado would be forced to close its landfill, as well.

"At first the rules were way too stringent," the Mayor explained. "The EPA (Environmental Protection Agency) placed the same requirements on us as the big metropolitan areas back east."

According to Nikolauk representatives from municipalities across the state lobbied TNRCC for relief from the restrictions.

"The folks from Austin were on our side but they had to sell it to the EPA in Washington," Nikolauk said.

It was at this point in the debate that the Eldorado City Council voted not to close the local landfill.

"At that time, when just about every town in the area was closing its landfill, we decided to sit tight," Nikolauk stated. "A lot of folks thought we were crazy."

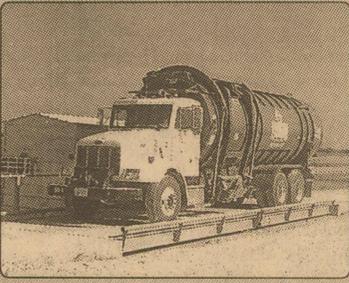
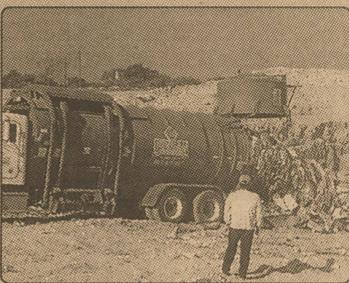
But Eldorado's gamble began to pay dividends a year later when the TNRCC, arguing on behalf of small West Texas communities, convinced the EPA to exempt landfills in arid regions of the country from many of the Subtitle-D restrictions.

"The arid exemption was a Godsend for us," Nikolauk said. "It's the only way we could have remained open."

To be designated as an arid exempt landfill, a facility must be located in a portion of the state which receives less than 18 inches of rain per year, on average. According to TNRCC maps the line delineating the wet areas, over 18 inches of rain per year, from the arid areas, less than 18 inches, lies

Land office business at the landfill — A garbage truck from Duncan Disposal was weighed when it arrived and again as it departed Eldorado's landfill recently. Each truckload of garbage, averaging 14,000 lbs. generates approx. \$185.00 in "tipping fees" for the City. Over the 5-week period since the landfill began accepting garbage from out-of-county, the city has realized \$13,077.76 in revenue. The scales pictured at right were purchased with a \$30,000.00 grant from the Concho Valley Council of Governments.

photo by Kathy Mankin



about 70 miles east of Eldorado, at Brady.

The arid exemption lifted the burden of installing a clay liner, or other barriers in the landfill cells.

"The liner never was a big deal to us," Nikolauk said. "The clay which other landfills must purchase and install as a liner, is the very stuff that we have occurring naturally."

Another thing weighing in Eldorado's favor is the depth of potable water...over 200 feet down.

"I don't know anyone who wants to see our water supply jeopardized," Nikolauk said. "The City Council has taken the issue very seriously and we have spent a lot of money on engineering studies to ensure that there is no threat to the water supply from the landfill."

Nikolauk points to a water well located on the grounds of the cur-

rent landfill.

"Our landfill has been where it is for more than 30 years. For most of that time there were very few restrictions as to what we could or couldn't dump there," Nikolauk explained. "Over that time, the water in the well located at the landfill hasn't been affected."

The city recently received a permit for a new 75 acre landfill, immediately north of the existing facility. It should be open for business in early September.

"The new landfill should meet our needs for the next several decades," Nikolauk said. "Even if we put 20 tons a day in it, which is the limit, our engineer predicts the new site will last more than 80 years."

Nikolauk expressed his appreciation to the city staff and all current and former council members who worked on the landfill project. "We've had the benefit of some farsighted folks who understood that it was in Eldorado's best interest to keep the landfill open."

When asked what the city planned to do with the revenue it would be receiving from the landfill, Nikolauk answered, "One word...streets. We're going to work on the streets."

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16th Lula Mae Clark, Jackie Barrera, Luby Trevino, Lisa Wade, Farah Fennern, Landon Neal, Lula Mae Clark
17th Jeremy Clark, Marcelina Ramon, William Edmiston, Dale Lipsett, Helen Ledbetter, Fred Logan, Joe Max Edmiston, Stacy Haynes
18th Carol Estrada, Linda Thomas, Wade Rinehart
19th B.J. Dacy, Bud Arendt, Chance Meyer
20th Keith Nolen, Larry Mitchel, Crystal Vallejo, Juan Jesus Martinez, Jake & Angie Avila, Harvey Hill Jr., Jereme Ussery, Sabrina Samuels
21st Jeff Johnson, Bobby Helmers, Clint Sykes, Kara Sue Garlitz, David Nolen, Kenneth Hight, Landry Broome, Martin Iglesias Sr.

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- JULY**
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photo by Kathy Mankin

Accurate to the inch — Measuring slopes and grades are important when diverting runoff water around and away from landfill pits. Here, city employee Mariano Fuentes used a transit to establish a level line while other workers constructed a ditch to channel water away from sensitive areas in the landfill site.

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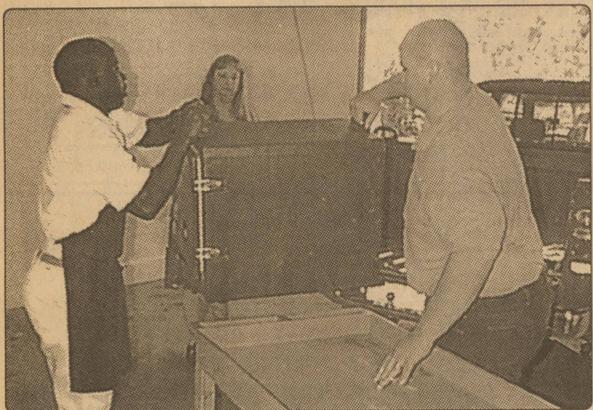


photo by Kathy Mankin

Make mine to go — Containers of hot food were loaded into the back of a pickup recently at the Sheriff's Dept. for transportation to the Sr. Citizens Center. Pictured above are (L-R) Sr. Center Director Cindy Stuckey, TDC inmate Ernest White and dispatcher Jeffery Whitaker.

by Randy Mankin

Every weekday, a little before noon, Sr. Citizen Center Director Cindy Stuckey goes to jail...where she picks up piping hot meals and delivers them to back to her clients at the Sr. Center. The unusual arrangement is Schleicher County's way of addressing a problem most rural counties face, how to fund a meals program for its elderly citizens.

For several years, meals for the program were prepared in Junction and transported to Menard where they were picked up and driven back to Eldorado. But escalating costs threatened to kill the program and sent County officials scrambling to find a solution.

That's when Schleicher County Sheriff David Doran dropped a bombshell on County Commissioners. Doran offered to take over meal preparation in the jail, provided that the commissioners would fund one additional employee, to oversee his inmate work details.

"It just made sense," Doran said. "For the cost of the extra employee, the Commissioners could eliminate the money they were sending to Junction each year. Plus, the county could receive funding from the C.O.G. which had for years been going to Kimble County."

Doran noted that winning the Commissioners over was easy compared to convincing District Judge Barbara Walther.

Walther's blessing was needed since she was the only one who could issue a bench warrant requiring a TDC (Texas Dept. of Corrections) inmate be transferred to the local jail. Not just any inmate, either, but one trained as a cook.

"Judge Walther had legitimate concerns about the idea," Doran said. "But, after we went over the plan with her and explained, in

detail, how we expected it to work, she agreed."

TDC inmate Ernest White was transferred to the Schleicher County Jail on Walther's warrant and Doran set about upgrading some of his kitchen equipment. He also went to work on the public relations end of the equation.

"I was concerned that some of the senior citizens might not want to eat meals prepared by an inmate," Doran said. "So I visited with as many as I could and explained that the prisoners in the jail, and the cook himself would be eating the same meal for lunch...that seemed to satisfy most people."

On Monday, February 1, 1999 the first meals were prepared in the jail and served at the Senior Citizens Center. The reaction was overwhelmingly positive.

"I just loved the baked ham with the pineapple on top. Everything was great!" Lois Etheredge said of the meal.

Others seem to like the food, as well. Cindy Stuckey indicates that attendance at the meals has improved and client donations from the Senior Citizens have increased.

"The food is better and it's fresher and the seniors like the idea that the money is staying in Schleicher County," Stuckey said.

There are currently 45 meals per day being served through the Sr. Center. Many of those are delivered to homebound clients who can't come to the center each day. Stuckey also reports that there are 9 people who would like to join the program that were put on a waiting list. "We're hoping to increase the number of meals we serve next year," Stuckey said.

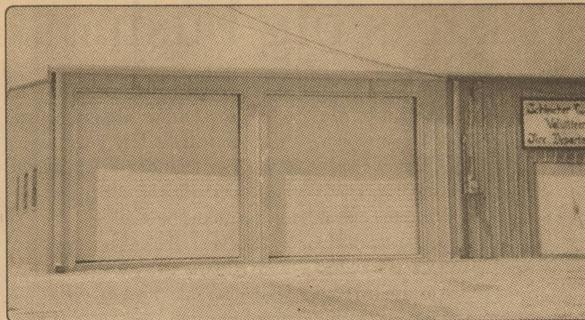


photo by Kathy Mankin

Almost ready — The new home of the Schleicher County Volunteer EMS, adjacent to the Fire Hall on E. Murchison is nearly complete. The service should move into the facility in August.

EMS volunteers plan for move into new home

by Randy Mankin

After years of moving its business office from place to place, the Schleicher County Volunteer Emergency Medical Service is finally getting a permanent home. Thanks to a grant from the San Angelo Health Foundation, the EMS began construction last in May on its new headquarters, located on the east side of the Fire

Hall, on East Murchison Ave.

The new building, actually attached to the Fire Hall structure, will not only house the service's business office, but two ambulances, as well. The ambulances will be moved out of the Fire Hall where they have been kept for years. Currently, the service's business office is located at Schleicher County Medical Center in a clinic area donated by the hospital district.

Bobby Andrews, President of the EMS thinks the location will be a good one. "We work so close with the Fire Department that it makes sense for us to all be located at the same place."

Construction of the EMS facility became possible when voters last year approved a half-cent Health Services Sales Tax. Funds from that tax have been going to the EMS to help fund its operations. Currently, Melissa Stanford works as the service's business manager. There are also plans to hire a paid paramedic to help staff the service.

EMS volunteers have stayed very busy during the construction, of their new home, making 150 ambulance runs through the first six months of 1999.

Stanford indicated that the EMS plans to offer CPR training to the public as soon as the service moves into its new home. "We will also be hosting EMT classes on a yearly basis for anyone wanting to become trained in emergency medical care."



photo by Kathy Mankin

Finishing touches — Cory Lawson of San Angelo was one of the contractors working on the new EMS building. Here he is shown painting a door.

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Tuesday, July 20
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Wednesday, July 21
 Steak Fingers w/Gravy, Whipped Potatoes, Steamed Broccoli, Wheat Rolls, Peach Cobbler, Milk

Thursday, July 22
 Oven Baked Pork Chops, Zucchini/Yellow Squash Medley, Corn With Red Pepper, Wheat Rolls, Tossed Salad, Fresh Fruit Parfait, Milk

Friday, July 23
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Something fishy is going on at Eldorado's sewer plant

by Randy Mankin

For years, the City of Eldorado has had problems with its wastewater treatment plant. Soaring temperatures in the summertime promote algae growth in the ponds, which in turn, causes high readings of TSS (total suspended solids) in the samples sent to the lab. The Texas Natural Resource Conservation Commission, (TNRCC) which monitors the sewer plant, has on

several occasions found it to be out of compliance with guidelines.

There have been numerous attempts made at solving the problem. Adding enzymes to neutralize the algae growth didn't work, neither did enlarging the sewer plant. In fact, a larger sewer plant only made more room for algae to grow.

"It's a problem which has perplexed experts all over Texas,"

Eldorado Mayor John Nikolauk said.

Nikolauk has been an outspoken critic of the way TNRCC regulates wastewater treatment plants. "They need to devise a TSS test which differentiates between algae, which hurts nothing, and the bad stuff," Nikolauk said.

One option the city has studied is to install a "Rock/Reed" system at the sewer plant to filter the wastewater before it is discharged.

"A rock/reed system would be great. In fact, Johnson City has one and they say it works fine," Nikolauk said. "Unfortunately, we don't have the money to operate the way Johnson City does."

About a year ago, the City Council began discussing the possibility of introducing algae-eating fish into the plant. Grass Carp were discussed, as were Talapia Perch, or Nile Perch. In the end, because of cost and availability the Council opted to try Talapia Perch.

Approval for the plan was sought from the Texas Parks and Wildlife Dept. (TPW), which oversees the use of the fish, and after a few weeks of waiting on the paperwork, the fish were delivered to

Eldorado. Another delay came when TPW required the city to install stainless steel screens between ponds in order to keep the fish in the pond.

Finally, on June 10th of this year, a truck from Arms Bait Company & Fish Farm, in Dublin, Tx., arrived at the sewer plant with 1,300 lbs of Talapia Perch. The fish were dipped from tanks on the truck in baskets and poured into the sewer pond.

Since that time, city personnel have continued to monitor algae growth in the sewer plant.

"So far, so good," reports Nikolauk. "This may not be the total solution to our problem, but it appears to be working for the time being."

It should be noted that Talapia Perch are not considered to be cold weather fish.

"The experts say that we can expect a die off each winter, but they aren't sure," Nikolauk said. "But if these things work the way we think they will, then we won't mind buying more each year. And, maybe a hardier fish that will do the same thing."



photo by Kathy Mankin

Algae hungry fish — This basket of live Talapia Perch was but one of many poured into Eldorado's sewer ponds on June 10th of this year in the hopes of combating algae growth during hot summer months.

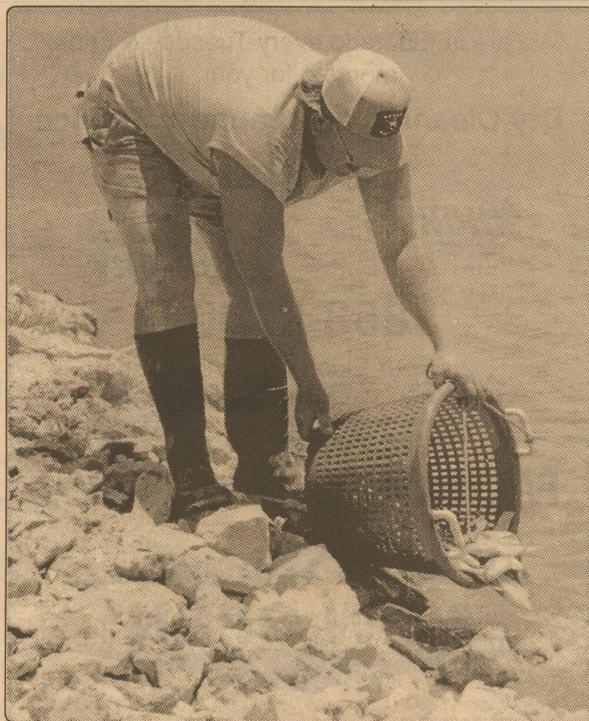


photo by Kathy Mankin

Welcome to your new home — Monty Greenwood poured a basket of Talapia Perch into Eldorado's sewer plant recently. The city hopes the fish will help control the growth of algae during hot, summer months.

Schleicher County ISD, expecting excellence...and getting it

by Randy Mankin

Schleicher County I.S.D. has an appropriate motto, "Excellence is the norm."

All three of SCISD's main campuses have been honored by the Texas Education Agency (TEA), as has the district, itself. SCISD was rated "Exemplary" by the TEA last year. The High School and Middle School campuses were also rated as "Exemplary". Eldorado Elementary's campus received a "Recognized" rating from the TPA.

One measure of achievement is the TAAS (Texas Assessment of Academic Skills) Test. With a large number of students identified in the lower socio-economic levels, SCISD has continued to defy the trends and excel in TAAS scores.

But, SCISD isn't resting on its laurels. Technology is changing rapidly, making a greater number of educational opportunities available to local students.

One such opportunity is in the Distance Learning Lab where school employees have remodeled a meeting room and installed computers and video equipment. Soon, students will be able to sit in a classroom in Eldorado, and interact with a professor at Texas Tech

University in Lubbock, in real time.

Superintendent Hal Porter explained that the Distance Learning Lab will allow for two-way communication between student and teacher. "Not only will the students be able to see and hear the instructor, but the instructor will be able to see and hear the students," Porter said.

Other innovative things happening at SCISD include the Rural Challenge Program, which is funded with grant money from the Annenberg Foundation. Rural Challenge is a 3-year program designed to address the specific challenges faced by isolated, rural districts.

Last year, SCISD opened a fourth campus, the AEP (Alternative Education Program) campus, in a house across Fields Street from the school administration building. At risk students and students with other special needs now attend school on the AEP campus. Recently Bob Wanoreck was promoted to Principal of the AEP campus. He announced to the school board at a recent meeting that his students would be making use of the "Plato" system, a self-paced computer aided learning



photo by Kathy Mankin

How about a little O.J.T. — There's more to learning than sitting in a classroom all day. These students are getting some O.J.T. (On the Job Training) with summer jobs through the Concho Valley School to Work Program. They are (L-R) Kayla Case, Jason Brock, Tana Williams, Aaron Fuentes, Johnny Herrera and Mr. Mark Marshall, Rural Challenge Coordinator.

program, in the morning. In the afternoons, AEP students will be given the opportunity for vocational training.

Supt. Porter explained that SCISD attempts to educate every child. "We don't want any child falling through the cracks," Porter told a recent meeting of the SCISD board of trustees.

Excellence is the norm at SCISD. Maybe that's because excellence is expected.

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Texas Forts Trail Fall Festival gets boost from THC grant

by Randy Mankin

Only last year, Eldorado was included on the Texas Forts Trail, a pilot project of the Texas Department of Tourism. This year, in recognition of that honor, a Texas Forts Trail Fall Festival is being planned for Eldorado in October.

Those plans received a big boost recently when the Texas Historical Commission (THC) awarded a \$3,500.00 Heritage Tourism Partnership Grant to the Schleicher County I.S.D. Rural Challenge Program to help fund the festival. The grant is one of many, created as part of the THC's Texas Travel Trails Program, to encourage heritage sites to work with the tourism industry to plan and execute the projects.

"The THC awarded a total of \$37,525.00 to nine organizations," reported Mario L. Sanchez, director of the THC's Heritage Tourism Program. The THC's Heritage Tourism Committee reviewed, graded and selected the grant recipients.

The Texas Forts Trail Fall Festival is intended to promote tourism in Eldorado in connection with the Texas Forts Trail. The trail covers much of West Central Texas and includes stops at Ft. McKavett, Ft. Concho in San Angelo and Ft. Griffin, near Albany. Those forts, and others along the trail protected Texas' western frontier during the 1800's.

The THC designed the grant program for communities like Eldorado to fund projects that will

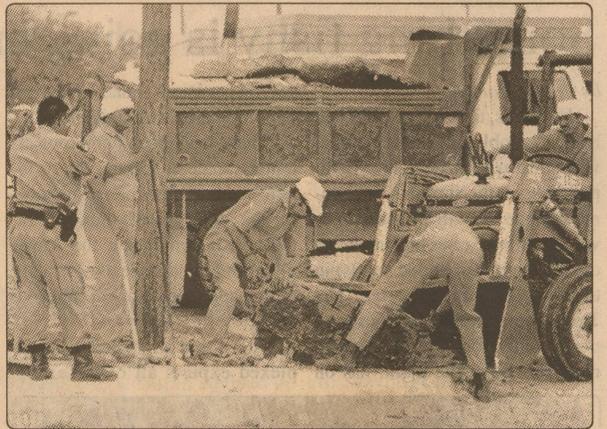
enhance the visitor experience to cultural historic sites and events in the Texas Forts Trail region.

"Communities and heritage tourism organizations were eligible to receive grant money to be used for projects that promote this region as a heritage tourism destination," said Sanchez. "Projects could include: interpretive exhibits, events highlighting historic sites, brochures that take travelers off the beaten path, and educational materials."

The Texas Travel Trails Program is a regional heritage tourism initiative providing training, education and technical and financial assistance to a targeted region. In 1998, the THC introduced the Texas Forts Trail in West Central Texas, one of the 10 Texas Travel Trails, originally developed by the Texas Department of Tourism, as the pilot project of the program. The THC has a brochure available that highlights the Texas Forts Trail. To receive a free copy, call the San Angelo Convention and Visitors Bureau at 800-375-1206 or the Abilene Convention and Visitors Bureau at 800-727-7704.

The Texas Historical Commission is the state agency for historic preservation. The agency administers a variety of programs to preserve the archeological, historical and cultural resources of Texas.

More details about the Fall Forts Trail Festival will be published as they become available.



Hard labor — Field Corrections Officer David Olivan supervised an inmate work detail recently as they removed a portion of the old sidewalk beside the Schleicher County Library.

Eldorado's facelift continues

by Randy Mankin

It was full steam ahead for beautification efforts in Eldorado. Projects involving the Chamber Pride Committee, the Texas Department of Transportation (TxDOT), Schleicher County, the City of Eldorado, the Schleicher County Library Board and the Schleicher County Sheriff's Department, proceeded at the intersection of U.S. 277 and U.S. 190 near the courthouse and alongside the Schleicher County Public Library.

Earlier beautification efforts, spearheaded by the Chamber Pride Committee resulted in winning the Governor's Community Achievement Award. With that award came a grant from TxDOT which was used this year to complete land-

scaping at the intersection of U.S. 277 and U.S. 190 in the center of town. A prior Community Achievement Award, and the accompanying grant, had paid for the landscaping along two sides of the Schleicher County courthouse square. This year's TxDOT grant went toward landscaping the remaining three corners of the intersection.

Not to be outdone, the Schleicher County Library Board pushed ahead a project to replace a deteriorating sidewalk along the side of the library building. The new sidewalk, recently completed maintains the style of the Pioneer Memorial Walk, completed for Eldorado's Centennial in 1995, along the first block of Southwest Main Street.

The renovation was partially paid for by Library fund-raisers with the remainder coming from Schleicher County and the City of Eldorado. The City's portion of the funding came from oil and gas royalty holdings under the original Eldorado townsite. That royalty was recently donated to the city last year by First National Bank of Eldorado.

Work on the library sidewalk project was planned and supervised by Harris Napier, who also performed much of the labor.

Other labor for the project was donated by the City of Eldorado and the Schleicher County Sheriff's Department which assigned inmate work details to the job.

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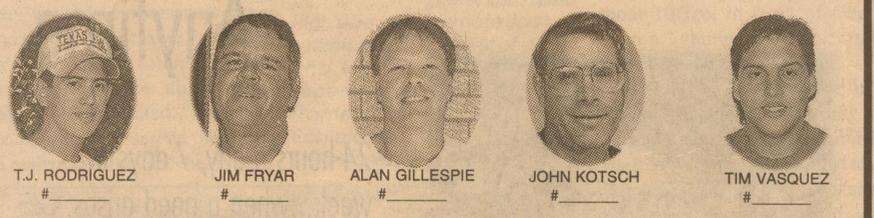
Solution to puzzle on Page 2

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