



Memories of 'Growing Up in South Texas'

Neshya revives family farm, 1B

Yesterday's values. Today's news. Tomorrow's ideas.

Wilson County News

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Appraisal district responds to outcry

By William J. Gibbs Jr.
Wilson County News

In the wake of ongoing controversy regarding a spike in many of the county's appraised property values, the Wilson County Appraisal District has offered a response.

The full text of their five-page letter is available online at <http://www.wilsoncountynews.com>.

According to a five-page typewritten letter, more than 6,000 protests were filed, which has caused the district's staff to review all 2008 values.

In the letter, the appraisal district admits that many appraisals are incorrect and inconsistent, not fairly or accurately reflecting the market values of those properties. The appraisal district has decided to correct appraisals on properties it considers were over-appraised.

tract has suspended all appraisal review board hearings, which are expected to resume within three weeks.

Even if property owners did not file protests, the appraisal district will still review those values.

If the appraised value is found to be too high, the appraisal district will notify the property owner, by mail, within three weeks.

Property owners whose appraisal is under protest will also be asked — if the appraisal district lowers their property value — whether or not they agree with the new determination. If so, they will be asked to sign a waiver, surrendering their right to further protest. The appraisal district has asked that the public act quickly in returning their waivers so they can begin rescheduling appraisal review board hearings.

If the property owner is still not happy with the appraisal district's determination, he or she can continue protesting.

But should property owners who experienced a reduction in their 2008 property value worry that it will be raised?

Not according to the appraisal district, as it says in the letter, the district "will honor the lower estimated 2008 value."

Lastly, the appraisal district is asking for the public's cooperation and understanding in this process. While they are quite busy, appraisers Shauneen Barker, Toni Baird, Danny Fenner, Rebekah Medeiros, Gary Miller, Ruth Seguin, and Wesley Winton will be available to assist anyone who calls the Wilson County Appraisal District Office at 830-393-3065.

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THONHOFF RECEIVES HONOR



Former Karnes County Judge Robert H. Thonhoff is joined by his wife, Victoria, as he is honored with a memorial plaque and a "living memorial" — an oak tree, planted outside the Karnes County Courthouse July 26 — in recognition of his contribution to area, state, and national historical research.

WCN/N. KILBEY-SMITH • Reprints at www.wilsoncountynews.com

Dolly blows through, brings rain, tornadoes

By Nannette Kilbey-Smith
Wilson County News

All eyes were on the Texas coast as Hurricane Dolly made landfall July 23 on South Padre Island and moved inland, bringing high winds and rain to the parched counties of South Texas.

For Wilson County and its neighbors, Dolly brought the relief of much-needed rain, but some tense hours as well, as funnel clouds and tornadoes were spawned July 24 in the hurricane's wake.

The threat of thunderstorms and the potential for tornadoes worried residents of Wilson County and nearby neighbors as Dolly moved inland.

The area was under a tornado watch all day and a tornado warning lasted in Wilson County until 11 a.m. July 24. A tornado warning means a tornado has been spotted or that radar indicates circulation within a thunderstorm that can spawn a tornado. A watch defines an area where conditions are possible for such an event to occur and that residents should be alert to that possibility.

During the middle of the morning, a tornado touched down approximately 6 miles south/southeast of Poth on C.R. 202, according to a report received by the Wilson County Sheriff's Office. The storm twisted an oak tree, lifted a carport, and damaged gutters.

A funnel cloud was reported traveling from Gillett toward Nixon and Pandora, as well, but no damage was confirmed.

Another funnel cloud was spotted in Wilson County 2 miles north of Sutherland Springs about 5:45 p.m. that same day.

"It became rain-wrapped and disappeared," said Mark Lenz of the National Weather Service.

A tornado touched down in south San Antonio July 24, plowing a path a quarter-mile long and 30 yards wide along Steves Avenue, ripping off roofs and leaving other property damage behind.

Later in the day, winds damaged property in the China Grove area. No tornado was reported, however.

"This was all in relation to the remnants of Dolly," Lenz explained. "The feeder bands of showers and thunderstorms formed around the center of what was Dolly and interacted with the landscape. It's common for a tropical storm that makes landfall to spawn weak tornadoes and funnel clouds."

The feeder bands also brought rain to the drought-ravaged area. Sudden, heavy rains brought localized flooding to parts of Bexar, Atascosa, and Comal counties, Lenz said.

There were no injuries or loss of life with any of the tornadoes or flooding.

Unofficial rainfall reports in Dolly's aftermath July 23-24 ranged from 1 inch near Elmendorf to 4 inches in a number of places, including Dewees, Kenedy, La Vernia, and Sutherland Springs. See the rainfall report, page 4D.

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A home off Bernhardt Road near Calaveras Lake is impaled with several pieces of lumber, while the roof of a storage building lies in the yard. High winds and heavy rain resulting from the remnants of Hurricane Dolly moved through the area on the morning of July 24, causing tornado warnings to be issued.

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Edwin Baker receives state recognition as firefighter



Edwin Baker

By Pat Kopecki
Wilson County News

"The best way to help my friends is to help protect their lives and their property, no matter where they live, no matter who they are." These words, one of Stockdale Volunteer Fire Department Chief Edwin Baker's favorite quotes, best describe his life.

In recognition of his commitment to help others in need, Baker received statewide recognition June 11 when he was awarded second place in the State Firemen's and Fire Marshals' Association competition.

Baker advanced to the state level representing the

'Thanks to Edwin, I am still alive to tell this story.'
—Billy Bob Bruner

Guadalupe District by winning the Guadalupe District Firefighter of the Year award. This district consists of 73 cities and 24 counties. Baker placed second out of 16 districts on the state level.

Born and raised in Stockdale, Baker has been with the Stockdale Volunteer Fire Department since the age of 16. He has held every position in the department, and has served his community in the capacity of fire chief since 1996.

Trained as a firefighter and in swift water rescue and

retrieval, Baker is also proficient in communications and apparatus operations.

Baker is not limited to in-the-field activities. He was instrumental in applying for grants from the Texas Forest Service, Federal Emergency Management Agency, and numerous other organizations. Revenue received from the grants aids in training and the purchase of trucks, rescue boat, and equipment and gear needed to assist the firefighters. Grant money received has totaled in excess of \$300,000.

Stockdale Volunteer Fire Department Assistant Fire Chief Billy Bob Bruner outlined Baker's achievements in his letter nominating Baker to the Guadalupe Firefighter's and Fire Marshals' Association.

A fire instructor for the South Texas Coastal Bend Fire Training Academy, Baker has trained other firefighters in

SEE Baker, p. 2A

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TODAY'S WEATHER
Wednesday, July 30
Partly Cloudy
97/76
Precip. Chance 10%
Weather Forecast, Rainfall Report, 4D

OBITUARIES, 8A-9A

Mary Luma Coull	Carroll W. Moseley
Glenn Elden Gaumer	Josefita C. Muñoz
Annette F. Gipson	Mary Sekula
Maria deHoyos Gonzales	Charles L. Soefje
Theresa F. Kowalik	Virginia Ramirez Tanner
Bessie F. Marshall	Le Roy Ziegler Jr.
Severiano Mireles	Maria A. Zuniga

Funeral notices updated daily at www.wilsoncountynews.com

God Bless America
Support Our Troops

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