

CLAY COUNTY LEADER

In the Spirit of the Pioneers, est. 1932

THURSDAY, OCTOBER 29, 2015 | \$1⁰⁰

ALMANAC

	THURSDAY 10/29 Partly Cloudy High: 75 Low: 51
	FRIDAY 10/30 Rain High: 64 Low: 54
	SATURDAY 10/31 Chance of Rain High: 67 Low: 47
	SUNDAY 11/01 Partly Cloudy High: 70 Low: 48
	MONDAY 11/02 Clear High: 78 Low: 54
	TUESDAY 11/03 Clear High: 78 Low: 59
	WEDNESDAY 11/04 Partly Cloudy High: 76 Low: 62

Weather RECORDS

DATE	HIGH	LOW
Tuesday, Oct. 20	85	60
Oct. 21	84	65
Oct. 22	73	64
Oct. 23	74	65
Oct. 24	69	58
Oct. 25	72	51
Oct. 26	72	49
Rainfall this week	2.28	
Rainfall to date	33.54	
Rainfall 2013	21.00	
Rainfall 2012	21.62	
Rainfall 2011	23.16	

Clay County 50 YEARS AGO

Clay County Future farmers of America and 4-H youths took one purple, nine blues, and six red ribbons at the junior livestock show last week at the Texas State Fair, Dallas.

The purple ribbon went to a dairy cow entered by Nancy Liggett of Vashti.

Blue ribbons were captured by Harold Reese, David Aday and Gary Peters, all of Byers, with steer entries.

Guy Mayo of Petrolia also showed a blue ribbon steer at the fair.

A steer entered by Kim Childs of Midway took a blue ribbon, and Kay Studdard of Bellevue shoed a blue ribbon dairy heifer.

Elmer and Benny Smith, both of Bellevue, showed blue ribbon dairy heifers. Also entering a blue ribbon winner from Bellevue was Erwin Davenport.

Red ribbons went to Elaine Denson and David Den-

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Rains help end grass fire threat

Martin Aldridge
Clay County Leader

"In Texas we actually have two fire seasons," claims Clay County Emergency Management Coordinator Billy Carlton. "The first six months of the year, and the second six months."

The recent rains, however, have put at least a temporary stop to the grass fires that have plagued Clay County since the deluge stopped in June, which really helped the vegetation grow high, which made lots of people happy, but which also in turn really increased the danger from fire.

"We didn't receive any measurable amount of moisture," said Carlton, "so things really dried out."

The grass also remained high, said Carlton, because many ranchers had sold off or moved their cattle to other pastures during the drought years, so the pastures weren't being grazed.

But what might have seemed the perfect formula for a really bad few months of grass fires never materialized. Instead, Carlton said the county averaged about one call a day - sometimes going 2-3 days without a call before receiving three in one day - and bad fire seasons can sometimes have up to four or five calls a day.

"The people of Clay County are smart enough to know when not to burn their brush," said Carlton.

Not that the present fire season hasn't been bad. A couple of weeks ago 17 fire departments had to be called out to contain a fire on Taylor Road and last month 2,100 acres went up in flame along the Jack and Clay county lines.

A forecast for more rain through next month should help keep the fires at bay, and help

with wheat and cotton crops, said Carlton. But when the second fire season begins - typically after the first freeze - those same crops might also mean more fuel for fires.

One of the worst fires in recent history, in fact, occurred on New Year's Day of 2009 when a power line snapped and 35 mph winds helped the fire race across Clay County, through Ringgold and all the way to Nocona. Ringgold took most of the damage, said Carlton, with several homes and outbuildings lost, as well as the post office.

The relatively wet weather Clay County is currently experiencing should give the 11 all-volunteer fire departments (VFDs) time to fix damaged and broken equipment, Carlton said, but many challenges still lie ahead, everything from aging volunteers with no sign of replacements to a communications system that needs updating.

Clay County, however, is taking steps to meet those challenges.

In November a team from the Department of Public Safety will arrive to help coordinate all the radios used by the various departments to make sure they are all on the same band and frequency.

"To our knowledge we're going to be the first one they do," said Carlton. The initiative is part of a \$60 million fund set aside by the state to fix this very problem and the program will not cost the county a thing, and he hopes the updates as well as new protocols regarding how communications are to be routed will help the dispatchers, who currently have to try and juggle every call from the Sheriff's Office, the VFDs and other

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'TIS THE SPOOKY SEASON



Kendra Bennett/Courtesy Photo

Students at Henrietta Elementary got a head start on fall and Halloween with a variety of fun projects. TOP: Jae-Cee Bull Bear and Kinsley Peterson show off their hand-made costumes. BOTTOM: First graders (l-r) Petyon Seigler, Kaysen Taylor and Annika Johnson show off their fall hand-print trees. See more photos on page 8.

Martin Aldridge/Clay County Leader



Stolen dogs found by Midway ISD staff

A teacher at Midway ISD, 52 year-old Lee Allen Miller, was arrested Friday for tampering with physical evidence after he allegedly took two dozen mostly Italian Greyhounds from a temporary shelter in Wichita County Thursday morning.

The dogs were located when a coach at Midway heard dogs whimpering and school employees called the Iowa Park Police Department Thursday afternoon, the same day they were discovered missing.

According to Iowa Park Police Department Lieutenant Jimmy Eaton, the whole series of events started when the Iowa Park PD seized around 34 dogs on October 19 after a complaint of ani-

mal cruelty. The animals were being kept in metal buildings with no lights or ventilation, often with several dogs in a single pet carrier.

"Some of them had never walked on grass before," said Eaton.

The dogs were transferred to a temporary shelter just outside Iowa Park city limits. When employees discovered the dogs missing, they contacted the Wichita County Sheriff's Office, which has jurisdiction in that area.

According to a press release from the Wichita County Sheriff's Office, the locks had

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Petrolia CISD saves money by refinancing bonds

PETROLIA - At the Petrolia CISD Board of Trustees meeting on September 28th, the Trustees took action to authorize the Administration to proceed with refinancing the existing bonds to lower the interest rate and to provide interest cost savings. \$3,520,000 in bonds were refinanced, according to a press release from the Petrolia Consolidated Independent School District.

During the process of issu-

ing the refunding bonds, the District was assigned a credit rating of "A" by Standard & Poor's Ratings Services. Additionally, the bonds were rated "AAA" based upon the Permanent School Fund Guarantee.

The District conducted a competitive sale on October 20th and received seven bids from investment banks

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The Value of Wind

Group looks to stop Wind Farms in Clay

Martin Aldridge
Clay County Leader

Becky Johnson remembers the first time she saw a wind farm years ago in Colorado.

"I just thought 'I hope they never come down here,'" she said, struck by how intrusive they were on the landscape.

Now Johnson, whose grandfather started the Burns ranch in southern Clay County near Shannon decades ago, can see wind turbines from her back window - five miles away.

And Johnson doesn't like what she sees. She can't imagine anyone being happy with having these artificial 400-foot tall structures looming over their property.

Yet wind turbines are popping up everywhere. A wind farm in Jack County can be seen from the site in Shannon, and those wind turbines are over 20 miles away, claims Johnson.

She said she was against the wind farm project from the beginning. She says it makes her sad to see how they've destroyed the beautiful rural setting she was raised on and continues to work and live on.

The current project - which is scheduled to begin operation in January - was stopped from spreading across Watson

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Martin Aldridge/Clay County Leader

Becky Johnson of CCAWF says the Shannon wind farm has damaged the rural atmosphere of those who live nearby.

Wind

Road by landowners like herself and Wilson Scaling, who said no to offered lease contracts when they were offered. Her efforts and those of her neighbors who opposed the original wind farm were ignored, she feels, but now she hopes to stop more wind farms from being built in Clay County.

One of the biggest concerns of wind farm opponents is the effect erecting huge turbines – up to 400 feet high, and growing – will have on property values. And not just the value of the property the wind turbines are located on, but especially surrounding properties.

A 2013 study supported by the U.S. Department of Energy looked at more than 50,000 home sales in nine states of homes within 10 miles of 67 different wind facilities with almost 1,200 of those sales within one mile of a turbine. The study looked at property values well before the announcement of the wind farms to well after their construction and tried to account for a variety of other factors.

The conclusion? “(W)e find no statistical evidence that home values near turbines were affected,” the study claimed, “in the post-construction or post announcement/pre-construction periods...the property-value effect of wind turbines is likely to be small, on average, if it is present at all...”

CCAWF and other wind farm opponents question the validity of such studies, saying the conclusions are likely influenced by government agencies and other groups that support wind energy development. In response, CCAWF recommended talking to real estate agents in Texas counties who have had first-hand experience in dealing with the transition from not having wind farms to having wind turbines sprout up everywhere.

Bob Maddox has been a realtor in Jack County and surrounding areas for 25 years, and he said many potential buyers simply go elsewhere when they see turbines within sight of the property they were considering. “I call it visual pollution,” he said. “Some of these tracts I don’t think they’ll ever be able to sell.”

He says properties with turbines nearby have dropped \$300-\$600 in value since the 120-150 turbines were erected 7-10 years ago.

“It all popped so quick,” he said, “before anyone knew it, it’s a done deal.”

And it’s not like people interested in surrounding properties are necessarily interested in living there. Instead he said many of his potential clients are from Southlake, Argyle, Fort Worth and other communities and are simply looking for land to use for recreational purposes, such as hunting retreats.

Yet 80-90% don’t like to look at the wind turbines, he said. Other problems he claims to have noticed are the blinking red airplane warning lights all



Becky Johnson/Courtesy Photo

The wind turbines as seen at sunset from a back window of Becky Johnson's ranch.

coming on at night at the same time and the noise the turbines make for anyone within 200-300 yards.

“Sad thing is,” Maddox concluded, “very few families benefit and the rest have to suffer.”

Vann Stanford says he has had a similar experience in Brown County, even though currently Brown County has no wind farms – but surrounding counties Comanche and Mills do.

In fact, within the last few months, a Wind Farm in Comanche County started operating right against the Brown County line.

“I was a pro-wind guy,” Stanford said, before he got into real estate and before he attended a meeting where he heard people talking about the drawbacks of wind energy.

“We lose deals because of the wind farms,” he said.

Another big concern for Stanford is how it will affect hunting. An avid hunter himself, he says he has already seen a noticeable drop in hunting on properties with and near wind farms.

He says he has been hunting at the Baldwin ranch (Juli and Forrest Baldwin are members of CCAWF) for 15 years and spends thousands of dollars each trip.

“If they put (wind turbines) up, I’m probably not coming back,” he said.

And that, he says, could result in a major loss of revenues for counties and landowners who have historically depended on hunting.

“(Wind farms are) not going to come into Brown County,” he vows.

Of course, landowners with wind turbines on their property might benefit, and a whole cottage industry has sprung up to take advantage of selling and trading these rights. But what objective evidence is there that neighbors and other residents in a county are negatively impacted by large wind energy generating projects?

A 2012 research paper appearing in the journal “Energy Economics” looked at how wind farms affected rural areas in 1,009 counties across 12 states, including Texas, from 2000 to 2008. After attempting to eliminate other factors, such as distance to urban areas and a

Continued from Page 1

county’s natural amenities (lakes, mountains or rivers), the study found wind farm projects generally benefitted the counties they were located in, with more turbines translating into greater benefits.

“In absolute terms,” the researchers said, “the average estimated increase in annual personal income from wind power development for the top quartile of counties (in terms of percentage impact, i.e., 0.86% and above) was estimated to be \$2,552,679 over the sample period.”

Regarding jobs, the researchers found employment rose an average of 1.4% in the same top counties, or about 132 jobs.

However, the researchers concluded, “Whether the local economic development impacts of wind power are sizable enough to be policy relevant on a local, state, or national level is open to debate.”

Again, opponents say research like this can’t be trusted, that the facts are distorted and discredited since much of the research is supported by wind energy advocates, either in the business sector or the government. Wind energy supporters, on the other hand, say opponents can’t be trusted to give unbiased and factual information about wind energy because they are often supported by such competing concerns as the fossil fuel industry.

But Johnson is sure of one thing: the wind farm in Shannon is something she never wanted to have to look at.

“I’ve seen thousands of beautiful sunsets from my back window,” she said. “Now that’s gone.”

CCAWF will be holding its first meeting open to the public on Tuesday, November 3, at 7 p.m. at the Rock Barn, 100 E. Wichita, in Henrietta. CCAWF members say they welcome not only opponents but those who are uncertain about wind energy, supporters of wind energy, the County Commissioners and the County Judge as well to attend.

Bonds

throughout the United States.

By lowering the average interest rate of 4.23% on the existing bonds down to an average interest rate yield of 1.99%, the District was able to save \$583,757 in interest cost over the remaining life of the

bonds.

Due to the very low interest rate market, the savings achieved by the District was well above the early projection amount of \$350,000.

Of particular interest to PCISD taxpayers, the District

also refinanced bonds in 2006

for a savings of \$503,461. The interest savings for the new high school now totals \$1,087,218. SAMCO Capital Markets, Inc. provided the financial assistance for the refunding of bonds for the school district.

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Fire

volunteers.

“I can’t say enough good things about our dispatchers,” Clayton said.

Another big program about to begin is the Certified Emergency Response Team (CERT), composed of volunteers who will help with record keeping, medical aid, communications, and mass emergency situations. Each member will be trained and given a backpack of equipment to keep with them at all times. A Junior CERT is also in the works, and Carlton is hoping this program will encourage high school students to consider

joining one of the VFDs once they come of age. Many of the volunteers now, he said, are in their 60s, 70s, and even 80s, so new members are desperately needed.

“We can’t thank the business owners enough,” said Carlton of those owners who allow their employees to answer emergency calls. Many of those owners, he said, were once volunteers themselves.

Clay County also recently received a 28-foot Department of Homeland Security communications command center trailer from Foard County

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which Carlton believes will be a big asset for future emergencies. The trailer is equipped with onboard computers, radios, HAM radios (in case all other forms of communications are lost), and its own generator.

In the meantime Carlton said he’ll continue to monitor conditions that both help and hurt when it comes to fires and other emergencies, and gives a reminder that much of the success of the Clay County VFDs is thanks to the residents.

“If we can just keep folks sending in the donations,” he said, “we’ll be fine.”

Dogs

been broken and the containers had “PETA WF” written on all sides. The Sheriff’s Office contacted a member of PETA, who said they had nothing to do with it.

Miller, owner of the dogs, has his own website – www.texasitaliangreyhounds.com – where he shows off his ability as a breeder and champion shower of Italian Greyhounds. The site also claims “AKC Champion and Grand Champion sired puppies... available to good homes.”

The Iowa Park PD took an additional 17 dogs into cus-

tody Thursday after they were surrendered by Miller’s family, though these dogs will not necessarily be involved in the animal cruelty case.

Miller is being investigated for animal cruelty and the dogs are currently evidence in a civil case against him. According to the Wichita County Sheriff’s Office, his bond was set at \$25,000.

A spokesperson for Midway ISD said the school had “no information at all” about the incident at this time.

Miller also told Wichita County officials that about five Ital-

Continued from Page 1

ian Greyhounds escaped at the Midway location when a door broke off one of the containers. Some of these dogs have been recovered, but the Iowa Park PD asks if anyone finds one of these dogs to contact their department at 940-592-2181.

Italian Greyhounds are small, usually not over a foot tall, and look much like a miniature version of their bigger Greyhound cousins, according to the American Kennel Club. The breed was officially recognized by the AKC in 1886 and is considered to be part of the “toy” group.

Petrolia Festival - Thank You

Petrolia Curb Appeal would like to thank the following individuals and businesses for making our 7th Annual Petrolia Festival Motorcycle Fun Run a Great Success!!

Because of the success we were able to make donations to: **Petrolia VFD \$1,250, Petrolia Senior Citizens \$1,000, Petrolia CISD \$500, Katy’s Dog Place \$250**

SPONSORS

Atmos Energy, Fidelity Bank, McGinnis Welding Supply, Progressive Waste Solutions, and WEMSCO

GUIDANCE, PUBLICITY & SPECIAL EVENTS

Buddy Alexander, Josh Cox, Andy Harding, Guy McDonald and Johnny Simmons

CONCESSION & COOKS

Jill Anderson, Sandy Beechler, Christy Bogard, Lisa Davis, Chad Fleming, Marty Fleming, and Theresa Harrison

Special thanks to everyone in the community that made homemade sweets.

ENTERTAINERS & HEALTH

Wendy Coker, Rusty Dillard, Tracey Frerich, Casey Pilgreen, Krista Reese, Shantell Band (Myka McDonald, Guy McDonald, Rodney Reese, and Bobby Faulkner) Clay County Home Health

PETROLIA CISD

FFA and National Honor Society

MOTORCYCLE REST STOPS

C & S Fun Center and UPS

MEDIA

Clay County Leader, Cumulus Broadcasting, KFDX, and The Bob FM

DONATIONS, RAFFLE & SILENT AUCTION SPONSORS

Jill Anderson, Heather Baber, Carol Baird, Bill’s Catfish, Bread and Butter Stop, Builders Lumber, C&S Fun Center, Coty Chase, Angela Cummings, Davis Automotive, Cindy Davis, Colleen Davis, Haylee Davis, Steve Davis, Barbara Dillard, Eddie Hills Fun Cycle, Beaver Elledge, Four Stars Auto Ranch, Bobby Garcia, Barbara Harvey, Henrietta Pharmacy, Angie Hicks, Clint Hicks, Shelby Hicks, Holiday Inn Express WF, Krishandi Houck, Jason’s Deli, Christi Knight, Julie Lindsey, Margie Linton, Dina Mataska, Barbara Mayo, Mary Ann Mayo, M. Lynne Designs, Rhonda Moser, Beverly Moss, On The Border, Orange Leaf, Pathology Associates, Carol Pearson, Petrolia Athletic Booster Club, Pierce Sales, Raising Cane’s Chicken, Red River Harley-Davidson, Red Threads, Rib Crib, River Creek Golf Course, Marsha Smith, Sondra Smith, South Texas Moulding, Stewart Title, Taco Casa, Texoma Fleet, Sharon Tucker, Stacy Tucker, United Supermarket-Market Street, Wholly Frijoles, and Jeff Widener

CLEAN-UP, SET-UP, SIGNS, & SILENT AUCTION

Buddy Alexander, Cindy Davis, Haylee Davis, Mike Davis, Steve Davis, Emily Gravitt, Shelby Hicks, Lawana Hutson, Petrolia Volunteer Fire Department, Petrolia Jr. High & High School Students, Grace Rivers, and Jeromy Stacy,

Petrolia Curb Appeal would like to give special thanks to all of the individuals in our community who gave donations. The Dueberry Family would also like to publicly thank everyone who contributed to the Silent Auction. We appreciate the community support, encouragement, and enthusiasm! Thanks also to the motorcycle riders and vendors who helped make our 7th Annual Petrolia Festival and Motorcycle Fun Run a Great Success!

We would like to thank everyone involved. We hope that we did not accidentally leave anyone out. We sincerely appreciate each and every one of you!

**Petrolia Curb Appeal
P.O. Box 155 Petrolia, TX 76377**

Breast screening comes to you

Fully funded mammograms for women who qualify.

When: Saturday, April 18
Time: 8:00 a.m. – 6:00 p.m.
Where: Graham Regional Medical Center
1301 Montgomery Road
Graham, Texas 76450

You must call
800.405.7739
to schedule an
appointment.

