Mailing Address: P.O. Drawer 1200, Seminole, TX 79360 • Email: news@seminolesentinel.com • Web Site: www.seminolesentinel.com • Phone: (432) 758-3667 • Fax: (432) 758-2136

Paper 'n Ink:

How to prepare?

by Lynn Brisendine

Which came first... the chicken or the egg? It's an age-old question posed by people who find it seemingly unanswerable.

A number of cities across Texas are beginning to try and plan for a "coming boom" in the oil patch. And that would be an oil patch that is growing in places where pump jacks work to pull petroleum from thousands of feet below.

The optimistic outlooks for United States oil and gas production are due to new drilling techniques and hydraulic technologies which are seeing oil fields, previously thought to be nearing their limits of production, come back to life with more oil and gas available to be mined.

These new ways of drilling are also bringing other underground formations into play. These shale deposits which not long ago were impregnable have been opened up and now are producing huge amounts of oil and gas.

All of this has the experts predicting that before the close of this decade the United States will be the top oil producing country on the planet, and more importantly "self sufficient." Added to this statement, by the year 2030 the United States will be a major exporter of petroleum products.

Natural gas production is ahead of this schedule as experts claim we will top Russia's supply within the next five years.

Good news for the U.S. of A. Great news for Texas. The new oil rush is offering opportunities of growth right here in West Texas.

Most of those reading this item have been promised by every politician running for office to make this nation energy independent. It is not hard for a baby boomer to recall the predicament this country endured in the early 1970s. Every presidential and senatorial election cycle has seen office hopefuls tell us that they will find a way to lessen the Mideast's grip on our energy needs. We have been impacted many times by what sheiks and emirs far away decide about oil, its price, its availability and in some instances as a blackmail threat.

So, these predictions of "self sufficiency" are some of the best news we have had come our way in many years.

How to prepare for the influx of people, traffic, additional tax income and so much more is the big question hanging over a lot of communities across West Texas.

Growth is the goal of cities trying to secure a place in the future. But how do you build housing, update and upgrade schools, city services, maintain roadways, and a myriad of other amenities it takes to maintain a workable community on a possibilty of a boom ?

Some cities are trying to get a handle on these problems by calling meetings to discuss challenges coming, or at least an assumption of challenges with a rapid influx of new residents.

And with that paragraph comes the "what's first," the new people casting about for housing and services, or government and private entities upgrading in advance?

Nothing in this life is easy. The possibility, and in some instances the probability, of many new citizens over a relative short period has more questions than answers. The only good thing about this process is the need for that process, in other words these are good problems to have.

It would be simple if our city, county and school leaders had crystal balls. But, they don't. And trying to convince home builders to come to the fore with only rumors floating is asking them to gamble a great deal.

We see new hotels springing up all across this area. And in several places of new activity with new businesses blossoming, the knowledge of future growth seems logical.

While our various governing boards are also waiting for the growth, planning for it in advance is a tricky guess.

Still, we West Texans are facing this dilemma and all of our elected officials should at least be studying various ways to upgrade their share of infrastructure.

Like stated earlier...it's a good problem to have.

ON YOUR PAYROLL

PRESIDENT

Barak Obama, The White House, 1600 Pennsylvania Ave., Washington, D.C. 20500; (202) 456-1414

U.S. SENATE

Kay Bailey Hutchison, 284 Russell Senate Office Bldg., Washington, D.C. 20510-4304; (202) 224-5922; email: senator@hutchison.senate.gov

John Cornyn, 517 Hart Senate Office Bldg., Washington, D.C. 20510; (202) 224-2934

U.S. HOUSE District 19

Randy Neugebauer, 429 Cannon House Office Bldg., Washington, D.C. 20515 (202) 225-4005; email through website: http://www.house.gov/neugebauer
District Office: 611 University Ave., Suite 220, Lubbock, 79401;
(806) 763-1611 or toll-free (888) 763-1611.

GOVERNOR

Rick Perry, Room 200, State Capitol, Austin, TX 78711
(512) 463-2000 or (800) 252-9600

Rep. Perry, Charles District 83

Capitol Address: Room E1.418, Capitol Extension P.O. Box 2910 Austin, TX 78768
(512) 463-0542
(512) 463-0671 Fax
District Address: 4216 102nd St. Suite 101 Lubbock, TX 79423 (806) 783-9934 (806) 783-9738 FAX

The Honorable Kel Seliger State Senator

P.O. Box 12068 Capitol Station Austin, Texas 78711
(512) 463-0131 (512) 475-3733 fax

"I MISSED THE AMERICAN IDOL FINALS?"

Football Coverage Can Be a Hazard

Texas Journalist...by Willis Webb

No one could reasonably argue football is not hazardous. Even in junior high school, pulled muscles, bruises, torn knee cartilages and broken bones are continuing possibilities.

But, would you believe that being a newshound and/or photographer on the sidelines at a game carries an "injury threat?"

Not so much to those covering major college or pro football, but if you're a small town newsman — people with titles like publisher and editor — several things make you more susceptible to injury.

First, as publisher and/or editor, you may be the only person to do news and photography (in addition to a multitude of other duties).

As a young newsman, most of the time I was agile enough to get out of the way of running, stumbling, tumbling players coming out of bounds. Necessity — being the only newsperson — sometimes forces even older editor-publisher types into duty on Friday nights. And, while I was young, I was part of the end-of-play jumble on the sidelines on more than one occasion.

But, let's face it — as you get older and slower, "violent" physical contact is more hazardous to your health. And, it just plain hurts more.

Even minor contact with a running or falling football player can bring about an injury that should be reason for medical treatment.

Once, in my advanced years, I was pressed into photography duty at a Jasper High School home game. An opposing player was chased out of bounds by a pair of Bulldogs. I snapped a photo and wisely turned and ran toward the fence. Alas, I was in the older-slower mode in those days and the "enemy" runner dipped his shoulder and caught me just under my shoulder blade.

Though I remained upright, the runner's shoulder pads raised a significant bump on my back. The bruise lingered painfully for a week or so.

Such aches and bruises were not uncommon to those of us laboring at a small town newspaper.

However, a couple of years later, I had a "physical" scare that convinced me my football coverage days should be over.

Jasper, the last stop in my career path, was and is an ongoing winner in high school football.

In 2004, the Bulldogs made it to the Class 3A semifinals. This game was played at Texas A&M University's Kyle Field in College Station.

Since I was writing not photographing this game, I felt safe and unthreatened in the enormous press box above the Kyle Field seats. No players would have a shot at obliterating The Old Man in an out-of-bounds pileup.

That contest was the best football game I've ever seen, but a 49-47 loss for Jasper.

As the score indicates, it was an exciting game from teeing-up to kick-off to an agonizingly fast clock near the end.

It was in those nerve-shattering final ticks that I became aware of my physical challenge. I felt flushed and I could see in the glass front of the press box my face was red as the proverbial beet.

I managed to write down every play and to capture something of the ending of that sensational game but I was not altogether there in that press box.

As the press box emptied, I was mostly oblivious to the remarks of fellow journalists as they filed out. I seemed to be in another world and unable to extract myself.

I recognized my symptoms, later verified by my family doctor, and knew I had to be calm and still because there was no one to help me, save a custodian or two. As the doctor explained, I was in a "stroke mode" and I probably headed it off by sitting absolutely still until the flushed feeling was gone.

Recalling all the stories I'd read and heard about sports fans who'd had heart attacks and strokes, I counted my blessings and determined that if I had to cover football again, I might just take something to keep my nerves calm.

No more was necessary to convince me I should retire from covering sports. A couple of years later, I came to the further conclusion that, at 69, retiring from editing and publishing altogether might add a few years to my life.

Don't let anyone tell you that working as a community journalist isn't exciting....and sometimes hazardous to your health.

Willis Webb is a retired community newspaper editor-publisher of more than 50 years experience. He can be reached by email at wwebb1937@att.net.

'tis the Season for Donation Money... Helping Others

By Jason Alderman

Like many other economic measures, charitable donations in the U.S. have yet to bounce back to pre-recession levels. According to Giving USA's Annual Report on Philanthropy, charitable contributions totaled $298.4 billion in 2011 – up 4 percent from 2010, but still 11 percent below 2007 levels. The vast majority of those contributions (73 percent) came from individuals, demonstrating that even during tough economic times, people still find ways to support organizations that help those less fortunate than themselves.

Because half of all donations typically are made between Thanksgiving and New Year's, this is a good time to highlight precautions you can take to ensure your gift has the biggest possible impact, both on the people you want to help and on your own bottom line; also to remind seniors about a tax policy that has changed since last year:

Contribution eligibility. If you itemize expenses on your 2012 income taxes, any charitable contributions you plan to deduct must be made by year's end. That means either charging your credit or debit card or postmarking a check by midnight on December 31, 2012.

You must have a receipt to claim deductions for cash or property, no matter how small. A cancelled check or credit card statement is fine for contributions under $250, but amounts over $250 require a written statement from the charity. See IRS Publication 526 for details (www.irs.gov).

Confirm tax-exempt status. For your contribution to be deductible, the organization must be recognized as tax-exempt by the IRS. It's important to note that in recent years the IRS has revoked the tax-exempt status of scores of nonprofit organizations because they didn't file annual reports for three consecutive years, as required by law. Use the IRS Exempt Organizations Select Check tool to ensure an organization's eligibility.

Get bang for your buck. Make sure any non-profit to which you donate is well-run. Ideally the organization applies at least 75 percent of contributions to programs that serve its beneficiaries, versus spending on salaries, advertising, fund-raising and other administrative expenses.

Study the organization's website, annual report and mission statement, and ask for a copy of its IRS Form 990, which details how contributions are spent. Speak to staff members or volunteers, or volunteer there yourself. Or, if you know someone who has used its services, ask for their impressions of the organization's efficiency and helpfulness to clients.

Other helpful sites: Charity Navigator's "Top 10" lists and "Tips and Resources" sections provide helpful evaluation tools (www.charitynavigator.org). And GuideStar offers helpful questions to ask potential recipients and tips for choosing a charity (www.guidestar.org).

No more direct IRA distributions. A major tax break for senior citizens regarding charitable contributions expired at the end of 2011. Formerly, people over age 70 could contribute up to $100,000 from their IRAs directly to charity and have it count toward their annual IRA Required Minimum Distribution. This allowed seniors to avoid having to count the funds as adjusted gross income, thereby reaping a tax advantage even if they didn't itemize deductions.

And finally, if you can't afford a cash donation but still want to help, consider donating your time. Numerous organizations can match you up with local charities that suit your interests, including the government's United We Serve site (www.serve.gov), Network for Good (www.networkforgood.org), and Volunteer Match (www.volunteermatch.org).

Jason Alderman directs Visa's financial education programs. To Follow Jason Alderman on Twitter: www.twitter.com/PracticalMoney.

Making a Difference

By Gina Kelly Ellis

As we come to this time of Thanksgiving, I thought I would turn my column over to someone else completely for the first time ever! Today's column comes to you from the hand and heart of God as I just thought I would let you read about thankfulness the way He sees it.

Psalm 30:11-12 Thou hast turned for me my mourning into dancing; Thou hast clothed me with gladness; That my soul may sing praise to Thee, and not be silent. O LORD my God, I will give thanks to Thee forever.

Psalm 69:30 I will praise the name of God with song, And shall magnify Him with thanksgiving

Psalm 100:4 Enter into his gates with thanksgiving, and his courts with praise! Give thanks to him, bless his name!

Psalm 70:4 Let all who seek Thee rejoice and be glad in Thee; And let those who love Thy salvation say continually, "Let God be magnified

Jonah 2:9 But I will sacrifice to You With the voice of thanksgiving That which I have vowed I will pay Salvation is from the LORD."

Colossians 3:15 And let the peace of Christ rule in your hearts, to which indeed you were called in one body; and be thankful.

Colossians 4:2 Devote yourselves to prayer, keeping alert in it with an attitude of thanksgiving

Timothy 2:1 First of all, then, I urge that supplications, prayers, intercessions, and thanksgivings be made for all men

1 Timothy 4:4-5 For everything created by God is good, and nothing is to be rejected, if it is received with gratitude; for it is sanctified by means of the word of God and prayer

1 Thessalonians 5:18 in everything give thanks; for this is God's will for you in Christ Jesus.

This time of the year is such a special time of thanking God for all His blessings upon us. As you enjoy the turkey and the parades and the ball games, please take time with your family to thank God for all that He has done and all He continues to do in your life. It will make a difference.

Your News Leader the Seminole Sentinel