

Subdivision Change

County Leaders Remove Portion of Development Policy to Clarify Right-of-Way Issues

Gaines County Commissioners made a minor change to their recently revised subdivision guideline policy, in action taken by county leaders in their regular semi-monthly meeting held Monday morning at the Gaines County Courthouse.

At the request of Pct. 2 Commissioner Craig Belt, members of the Court approved the removal of "Page 15" of the 28 page subdivision guideline policy, pertaining to easement requirements for subdivision development.

Belt, following Monday's meeting, told the *Seminole Sentinel* the reasoning behind the approved request was to help simplify easement requirements for landowners and developers.

"Under the old guidelines, we required a defined easement around the property for utility companies to have access to for the properties," said Belt. "But, if you have someone

who may purchase two lots side-by-side in a subdivision, and wants to put their house in the middle of those two lots, then they would have to go back to the utility companies and try to negotiate getting that easement back. This just simplifies that."

Belt added the deletion of the guidelines would now allow for utility companies and developers/landowners to negotiate their own specific easement terms for right-of-way usage.

"The utility companies have right-of-way access through the County's (right-of-way), so this again just simplifies the process," said Belt.

In mid-January, Gaines County Commissioners adopted three major changes to its subdivision guideline policy, which include the following:

- Gaines County officials will consider overtaking roadway maintenance on subdivision roads after they have been paved -- to

county specifications -- and in place for a two year period;

- All subdivision residences/structures with septic systems and water wells shall meet the specifications of the Texas Commission on Environmental Quality, and if possible, the recommended placement as recommended by the South Plains Public Health District (water wells to the back of the property, septic systems closer to the home site); and

- Each tract of subdivided land shall have at least 40 ft of right-of-way access to a public or private roadway (for emergency/first responder access and 9-1-1 addressing).

Gaines County leaders, in April 2006, first adopted a 28-page subdivision/rural housing development policy for landowners and developers for the establishment of subdivisions or individual home sites in the unincorporated portions of Gaines County, and have made minor adjustments to the policy over the years.

Since the inception of the subdivision policy guidelines in April 2006, Gaines County Judge's office officials stated in November, that 45 application packets have been picked up from the office, which are signed for by the property developer at the time of the pick-up.

County figures for the 2012 calendar year show that 10 of those packets were picked up thus far, compared to a combined five packets picked up through the office in the 2010 and 2011 calendar years.

Gaines County's growth in subdivisions in unincorporated areas of the county can directly be contributed to the county's growth over the past several years.

According to April 2010 census figures, Gaines County boasted a population of 17,526 persons, which was a 21.14 percent increase -- or a growth of 3,059 persons -- from April 2000's population county of 14,467 for the county.

In March 2010, officials with the United States Census Bureau released preliminary figures which

News Briefs

J.P. Baucum Completes 20-Hour Judge Class

SAN ANTONIO -- The Honorable B.W. Baucum, Gaines County Justice of the Peace, Pct. 2, recently met certification requirements following completion of a 20-hour Justice of the Peace seminar held in late January and hosted by the Texas Justice Court Training Center, a division of Texas State University -- San Marcos.

The seminar was held for elected Justices of the Peace, so they could fulfill their continuing judicial education requirements, as set forth in Article 27.005 of the Texas Government Code.

The seminar addressed topics such as enforcing criminal judgements, tenants' remedies, criminal procedure, civil procedure, technology and social media, evictions, civil online resources, enforcement in juvenile cases and juvenile case managers, service and return of process, pretrial motions, commercial motor vehicle offense, inquests, contract law, administrative hearings, evidence, traffic law, credit card cases, personal injury and property damage, family violence and magistration, and reducing the incidence of driving while intoxicated.

Applications for '14 Farm to School Grants Available

WASHINGTON -- US Dept. of Agriculture Deputy Secretary Kathleen Merrigan announced recently the release of a request for applications (RFA) for the latest round of USDA's Farm to School grants.

These grants help eligible schools improve the health and wellbeing of their students and connect with local agricultural producers.

"USDA's Farm to School grants connect schools with their local farmers, ranchers and food businesses, providing new economic opportunities to food

producers and bringing healthy, local offerings into school cafeterias," said Merrigan. "USDA continues to make improvements to the nutrition of food offered in schools, and investing in farm to school programs is yet another important opportunity to encourage our nation's kids to make lifelong healthy eating choices."

This year, three different kinds of grants will be available.

Planning grants are intended for schools just getting started on farm to school activities, while implementation grants are available for schools seeking to augment or expand existing efforts. Additionally, eligible non-profit entities, Indian tribal organizations, state and local agencies, and agriculture producers or groups of producers may apply for support service grants in order to conduct trainings, create complementary curriculum, or further develop supply chains, among other activities. Proposals are due at midnight EST, April 24, 2013.

To assist eligible entities in preparing proposals, USDA will host a series of webinars related to the application process:

- March 5, 2013, 1:00 EST -- Planning Grants
- March 6, 2013, 1:00 EST -- Implementation Grants
- March 7, 2013, 1:00 EST -- Support Service Grants

The Farm to School Grant Program is part of the Healthy, Hunger-Free Kids Act, which authorized and funded USDA to assist eligible entities, through grants and technical assistance, in implementing farm to school programs that improve access to local foods in eligible schools.

The Act provides \$5 million annually to support grants, technical assistance, and the federal administrative costs related to USDA's Farm to School Program.

In this funding cycle, USDA anticipates awarding up to \$5 million in grants.

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Sandyland Meeting Set for February 28th Locally

The annual Sandyland Agricultural Conference will be held Thursday, Feb. 28, at the Gaines County Civic Building in Seminole.

Registration will begin at 8 a.m. with the program beginning at 8:25 a.m. and concluding at approximately 3:45 p.m.

According to officials with the Texas AgriLife Extension Service's Gaines County office, this year's conference will focus on the Production of Cotton and Peanuts as it relates to minimum rainfall and irrigation.

Irrigated & Dryland Cotton Production, Peanut Fungicides & Disease Control, Water Quality & Quantity, Weed Control, Herbicide Damage, Insect Management, Variety Trials, and Fertility are just a few of the cotton and peanut topics that will be discussed.

Those attending will also gain information on the Economic Timing of Irrigation, Pesticide Applicator License Requirements, Pesticide Laws and Regulations, and industry updates.

Program Presenters will include Dr. Mark Kelley - Agronomist, Dr. Jason Woodward - Plant Pathologist, Charles Stickler - Retired Extension Agronomist, Dr. Peter Dotray - Weed Specialist, Dr. Dana Porter - Agricultural Engineering Specialist, Dr. Terry Wheeler - Plant Pathologist, Dr. Jackie Smith - Extension

Economist, Management, Terry Millican - Gaines County Agricultural Extension Agent, Manda Anderson - Gaines County IPM Agent, Jay Yates - Economist/Risk Management, all with the Texas AgriLife Extension Service. Other Presenters include Debbie Slocum - Texas Department of Agriculture.

Licensed pesticide applicators will receive Continuing Education Units (CEUs) toward their Pesticide License Requirements for attending this conference.

Local and surrounding businesses will be allowed to set up booths with educational and promotional information. Anyone wanting to sponsor this program or reserve a booth space should contact the Gaines County Extension Office at (432) 758-4006 ext. 140.

The Sandyland Ag Conference is sponsored by The Texas A & M AgriLife Extension Service and the Agricultural Committees in Gaines, Yoakum, Andrews, and Cochran Counties.

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With that in mind, there will be certain times that there will be limitations to news stories, letters to the editor and briefs, and their appearance in our publication to you.

The *Sentinel* does reserve the right to edit and restrict pre-produced stories and information for space limitations, editorial purposes, and time restrictions.

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