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Coming Tuesday:
An in-depth look at Lometa ISD's proposed \$4.75 million bond issue.

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TIP OF THE WEEK:
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Lampasas Dispatch Record

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Friday, March 21, 2014

75 Cents

WEATHER

Date	High	Low	Rain
March 17	65	35	
March 18	86	45	
March 19	68	45	

2014 rainfall to date: 1.00 inches. Same date last year: 4.88 inches. Normal through this date: 5.86 inches.

Data from the Lampasas Municipal Airport through the National Weather Service.

BRIEFLY

Lometa event

Friends of the Lometa ISD, an advocacy group that supports a proposed school bond issue, will hold a free lunch and informational session Sunday from 11:30 a.m. to 1:30 p.m. at the Lometa Volunteer Fire Department.

Deputy voter registrars will be on hand, and community members can get information on how the bond will affect them.

The bond issue vote coincides with the May 10 election to fill school boards seats.

Congressman

A member of Congressman Roger Williams' staff will be in Lampasas Wednesday from 10 a.m. to 2 p.m. at the Lampasas County Courthouse to visit with constituents.

Residents can share their concerns, request help on a federal issue or ask questions. Appointments are not necessary.

Help also is available at www.williams.house.gov under the "Help with a Federal Agency" tab and then under "Services," or by calling 817-774-2575.

Family Night

Kline Whitis Elementary School will host a Family Night Fiesta Monday from 5-6:30 p.m. Students and families are invited for free nachos and to visit the book fair, watch a music program and participate in other language-learning activities.

LAFTA and the Lampasas Police Department will be present.

Meeting

The Lampasas County Commissioners Court will meet Monday at 9 a.m. in the first-floor courtroom in the county courthouse.

City Council

The Lampasas City Council will hold its regular session Monday at 7 p.m. in City Council Chambers, 405 S. Main St. behind City Hall.

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PHOTO BY LISA CARNLEY

Bark in the park

Lampasas County Relay for Life committee member and volunteer Nanette McCoy, right, ties a purple symbolic bandana around the neck of "Baby," the 12-year-old chihuahua of Nancy Kahlstrom during Saturday's Bark for Life at Campbell Park. A group relay around the park's perimeter, a variety of contests, concessions, free nail clipping and other activities were part of the afternoon. Though the event was cut short due to inclement weather, Mrs. McCoy said she was pleased with the participation for the inaugural event. See related photos, page 12.

Official looks to spur economic development

By DAVID LOWE
Staff Writer

Economic Development Director Kathi Masonheimer began her job in Lampasas just about two weeks ago, but she already has big goals to pursue.

A priority in the effort to promote Lampasas job growth, she said, is getting water and sewer utilities to the business park on U.S. Highway 183 just south of town. Electrical service also may require upgrades, she said.

"We get at least a lead a week from the governor's office, and every one of the prospective companies want land with infrastructure already in



Kathi Masonheimer

place," the new Lampasas official said. "Having available land with infrastructure makes it so much

easier to attract those primary job manufacturing businesses.

"Businesses are looking at locations that offer the most cost-effective development opportunities," she said.

Development goals

As one potential funding source for business park utilities, Mrs. Masonheimer is working on a federal Economic Development Administration grant. The Lampasas City Council and Lampasas Economic Development Corp. would have to approve the grant application, which has a June 13 deadline, she said.

The director also plans to

meet with U.S. Department of Agriculture officials about the possibility of funding for rural economic development.

A conceptual layout of the business park has been prepared for planning purposes, and Mrs. Masonheimer said she spent her first few days in her new job reviewing reports that have been done about potential uses of the property off U.S. 183.

The economic development director said she and City Manager Finley deGraffenried also have discussed ways to capitalize on the railroad tracks that run through Lampasas.

Railroad lines, Mrs. Masonheimer

said, can help a city attract businesses, as she said for many companies rail is an increasingly popular option for product delivery.

"Having railroad availability to a community this size is just a great asset," she said.

The West Texas city of Snyder, for example, is "a success story" because of the rail park it developed, Mrs. Masonheimer said. Next to a railroad spur off the main rail line, Snyder designed an area with ready-for-construction business sites. The rail park helped the city capitalize on the booming energy industry in the shale field, as Mrs. Masonheimer said all the

Please see ECONOMIC, page 5

Several area cities post sales tax gains

By GAIL LOWE
Staff Writer

Lampasas, Lometa and Kempner all posted sales tax gains this period, although for the first time in 16 months Lampasas County saw its monthly sales taxes slip.

Tax figures released by the state comptroller's office represent sales made in January by monthly business filers.

The city of Lampasas recorded a 9 percent increase in March. Its sales tax rebate of \$106,504 gives the entity a 2014 first-quarter total of \$385,972 — up 9 percent from last year for the comparable months.

In Lometa, a 59 percent jump this period was the city's second significant gain of the year. January saw a 53 percent increase in sales tax receipts for the entity. Through the first three months of 2014, Lometa's

revenues are running 34 percent higher than in 2013.

For Kempner, the 2 percent increase it garnered in March was not enough to overcome the 36 percent drop its sales taxes noted in February. Year-to-date receipts are 16 percent below the level posted for last year's first quarter, with a total of \$29,945.

Lampasas County — which levies a half-percent tax on sales within its jurisdiction — saw its allocation decline 3 percent in March, the county's first percentage drop since November 2012. With a check this period for \$42,030, the three-month total for the county stands at \$170,205 — up almost 7 percent for 2014.

Outside the county, the only entities in the surrounding area to record a decreased monthly sales tax payment were Burnet and Hamilton.

The city of Hamilton fell \$127

Please see SALES, page 11



PHOTO BY JEFF LOWE

Rendezvous

Margie Schaller of Rapid City, S.D., sews medicine pouches at the 30th Annual Southwestern Regional Rendezvous in Lampasas County last week. The event was a reenactment of the rendezvous, or meetings, that occurred in the nineteenth century between fur trappers, representatives of fur companies and merchants. Also pictured are pieces of art made from porcupine quills, which were commonly used by American Indians in that time period. Please see related story, page 2.

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