



JIM LOWE | DISPATCH RECORD

Adamsville Volunteer Fire Department Capt. Dean Watson helps extinguish flames that spread to a tree near the east fence at the Underwood Ranch on Wednesday.

No tax rate hike set

Officials, however, consider increasing utility charges

BY DAVID LOWE
DISPATCH RECORD

The Lampasas City Council plans to leave the property tax rate unchanged in the upcoming fiscal year, which will start Oct. 1.

The council, however, is considering whether to increase water, sewer and/or electric rates.

Officials discussed budget options during a meeting earlier this week. The council plans to continue budget discussions in a special session Monday at 5:30 p.m. in Council Chambers, 405 S. Main St. behind City Hall.

The city's property tax rate has been at the current level — \$0.395218 per \$100 valuation — since 2011, Finance Director Yvonne Moreno said. Multiple council members

SEE CITY, PAGE 5

Blaze torches more than 250 acres north of town

BY JIM LOWE
DISPATCH RECORD

The general condition of Central Texas — including Lampasas County — over the past couple of weeks perhaps can best be summed up with these words: fires, fires and more fires.

Extremely dry weather and blistering temperatures have transformed the region into a tinderbox.

The latest evidence of that: a blaze late Wednesday afternoon that scorched more than 260 acres on the Underwood Ranch, about 8.5 miles north of town.

Units from the Lampasas Fire Department were dispatched to the high-fenced, big-game ranch off U.S. Highway 281 about 4:30 p.m. The last unit cleared the scene about 1:45 a.m. yesterday,

Lampasas Fire Chief Reece Oestreich said.

Firefighters were back at the location later Thursday morning to deal with “hot spots” in what was termed a small active fire. Firemen planned to check on the ranch the rest of the week as a precaution, Oestreich said.

The Lampasas fire chief said he assumes Wednesday's fire was started by a vehicle.

RELATED STORY, PAGE 9: County deals with rash of fires.

The blaze began in the southbound right of way and soon spread onto the fenced property to the west of U.S. 281, he said.

Initially, there were four fires, and three of them converged, leaving “two main bodies of fire,” Oestreich said.

Seven fire departments battled the blaze: Lampasas Fire Department, volunteer fire departments from Adamsville, Kempner, Lometa, Burnet and Oakalla, and Copperas Cove Fire Department. In

SEE NUMEROUS, PAGE 10

Precinct 4 constable resigns

BY DAVID LOWE
DISPATCH RECORD

Precinct 4 Constable Forrest Spence has submitted a notice of resignation from his county office.

The notice came in an email on the evening of July 20 to County Judge Wayne Boultinghouse's administrative assistant Di- anne Miller. Spence asked that his message be forwarded to the



Forrest Spence

SEE POLITICAL, PAGE 10



ALEXANDRIA RANDOLPH | DISPATCH RECORD

Students have fun at STEAM camp

Kemry Ybarra, Charlie Jackson and Julia Ybarra -- front row from left -- and Nate Wallace, rear center, show off the slime they made during a chemistry segment of STEAM Camp at Lampasas High School on Wednesday. STEAM stands for Science, Technology, Engineering, Art and Mathematics.

Council approves quote for audio-visual system at new meeting venue

BY DAVID LOWE
DISPATCH RECORD

The Lampasas City Council voted Monday for Azbell Electronics Inc. to install an audio/visual system for the new City Council Chambers.

The council meeting area will be located in the old City Hall building at the corner of East Third and South Main streets. The building, constructed in 1931, is being remodeled.

The council approved a total expenditure of \$94,675. That includes a base price of \$88,434, a one-year warranty and service plan for \$4,050, and a hearing assistance option for \$2,190.

A three-year warranty would have cost the city \$25,338 -- 10 percent less

than it will cost to pay for separate one-year warranties each of the next three years. Nevertheless, Information Technology Director Monica Wright recommended purchasing the one-year warranty and service plan. City Manager Finley deGraffenried said he agrees with that recommendation.

Councilman Mike White cast the lone dissenting vote, as he said he does not see the need for the hearing assistance option and wants to save money. White said if the meeting room has a balanced sound system, he does not see the value of a hearing assistance option.

When the council voted on the motion to award

SEE COUNCIL, PAGE 5

WEATHER

| Date | High | Low | Rain |
|---------|------|-----|------|
| July 22 | 107 | 76 | 0 |
| July 23 | 109 | 77 | 0 |
| July 24 | 99 | 80 | 0 |
| July 25 | 100 | 72 | 0 |

2018 rainfall total: 9.45 in.
Same date last year: 17.21 in.
Normal through July 25: 19.11 in.

Sources: Lower Colorado River Authority, National Weather Service and weather.com.

BRIEFLY

CONSTABLE POST

The Lampasas County Republican Party is accepting resumes from anyone interested in the Precinct 1 constable position, which will be on the November general election ballot. Send resume to B.R. “Skipper” Wallace, P.O. Box 886, Lampasas, TX 76550 to be considered for the nomination.

Interviews will be conducted Aug. 21 at 5:15 p.m. at the Lampasas County Office Building on the

downtown square. For more details, call 512-734-2040.

BLOOD DRIVE

An American Red Cross blood drive will be Aug. 6 from 11:30 a.m. to 5:30 p.m. in the fellowship hall at First Street Church of Christ.

Types A, B, and O blood are in short supply. To schedule an appointment to donate blood, call 800-733-2767, or visit redcrossblood.org. On the day of the drive, donors may go to

redcrossblood.org/RapidPass to pre-register for an appointment and answer the questionnaire. This will speed up the donation time.

FOOTBALL SEASON TICKETS

Fans who had Badger football season tickets in 2017 can purchase 2018 tickets Monday through Thursday next week from 9 a.m. to 3 p.m. at the high school athletic office. Ticket sales will open to the public the following week, Aug. 6-9, at the same time and place.

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