

Demographics reflect changes in education level, income

BY MASON HINES
DISPATCH RECORD

Increasing populations seem to be the norm for the nation, as the life expectancy rates rise and improved living standards are noted within cities.

For Lampasas County, this population trend has proven true as well, with the county seeing an increase in overall population for the last 10 years.

In 2020, the United States Census Bureau confirmed the Lampasas city population at 7,291 people – an increase of roughly 9% from the 2010 Census number of 6,681.

Lampasas County saw a 10% increase in population, on par with what was recorded in surrounding counties such as Bell, Burnet and Coryell. Those entities all saw an increase of 10% or more in their population figures.

The American Community

Survey, taken yearly for demographic purposes, is useful for comparing certain statistics over the past 10 years. Its details on the area's education and earning rates seem particularly noteworthy, considering how the coronavirus pandemic has affected individuals over the past two years.

EDUCATION RATE

Lampasas County has seen a slow drop in the percentage of high school graduates within its boundaries, with 29.4% of individuals over the age of 25 having a high school education or the equivalent. That represents a 2.5% decrease from 2010, when the marker was at 31.9%.

Compared to Mills County and San Saba County, Lampasas County has the lowest percentage of high school graduates. Those

SEE TWELVE, PAGE 7



MASON HINES | DISPATCH RECORD

Central Texans gearing up for New Year's celebrations

Angelina Price of American Fireworks sells products to 16-year-old Ryan Tristan of Killeen. Tristan is one of hundreds of Texans who will buy fireworks for their New Year's celebrations. For information on safety precautions and some rules that govern fireworks usage in the county, see the story on page 2.

Frozen in time

Ten-day winter storm in February tops the news events for 2021

BY GAIL LOWE
DISPATCH RECORD

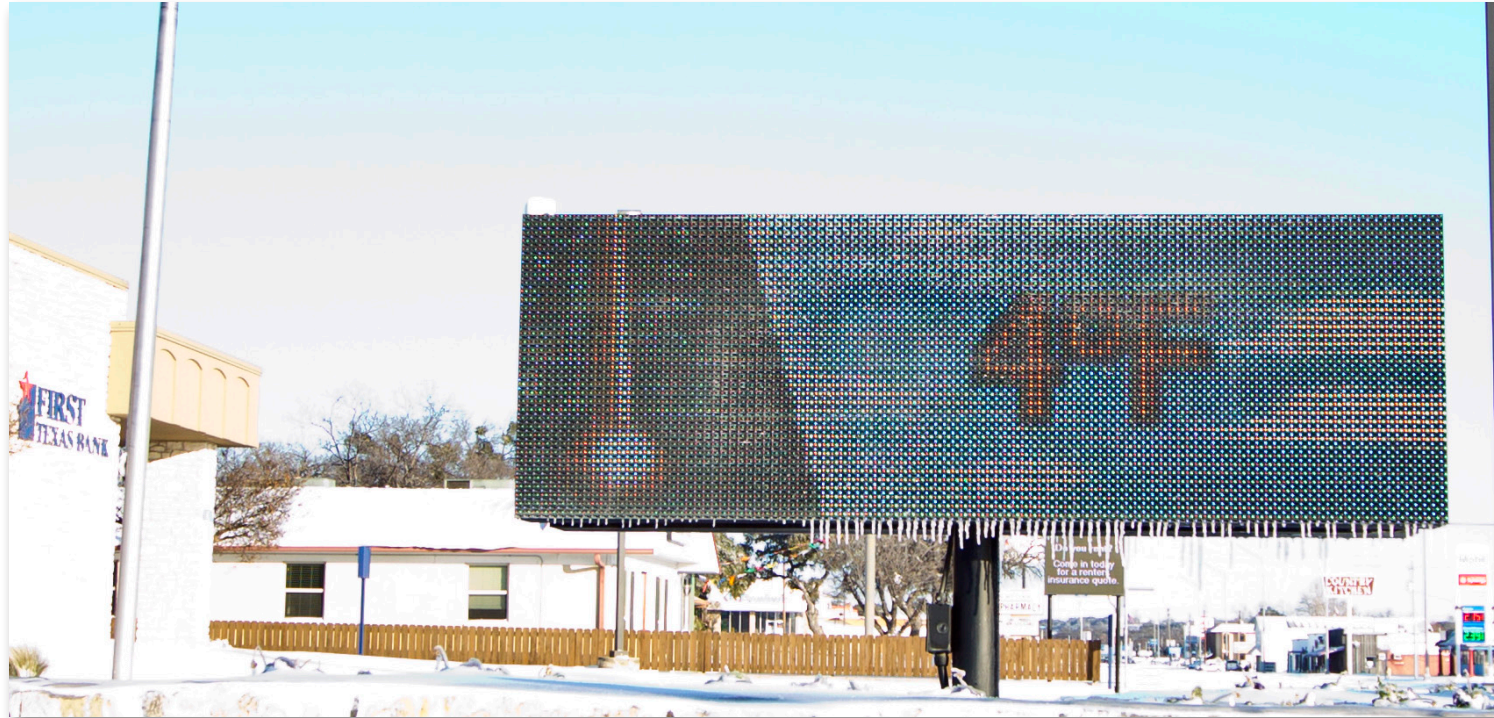
The harsh weather conditions that crippled the state when Winter Storm Uri blasted through Texas in February arguably qualify as Lampasas County's top news events of 2021.

The effects of the arctic blast lingered for weeks.

The storm prompted high-level changes for the state's utility management and transmission system, along with increased oversight by Texas governing bodies. Many residents still are talking about the historic storm and speculating whether the state could be in for a return of those devastating conditions this winter.

January 2021 started with a dusting of snow in Lampasas County. The Lometa and Kempner areas reported several inches on New Year's Eve.

A more widespread snow then fell 10 days later, accounting for 4-5 inches of frozen precipitation. A National Weather Service observer reported the snowfall was Lampasas County's largest accumulation in a 24-hour period since 1973.



FILE PHOTO

The temperature registered 4 degrees on Feb. 15 at the First Texas Bank building on Key Avenue. An arctic storm enveloped Texas in bitter-cold conditions, and Lampasas County endured 10 days of subfreezing temperatures.

For the most part, however, the first half of the 2021 winter was mild and dry. Then came February.

The temperature dropped to 29 degrees on Feb. 9 and didn't get back above freezing until Feb. 19. A third snowfall that arrived on Valentine's Day left up to two inches of snow on

the Lampasas courthouse square, but few residents were out enjoying the precipitation this time.

BITTER COLD GRIPS TEXAS

Ice had arrived Feb. 11, disrupting traffic on highways and city streets. Schools were closed, and many businesses were

shuttered as the strongest cold spell in decades slammed the region.

Gov. Greg Abbott issued a disaster declaration on Feb. 12 for all 254 Texas counties, as the unprecedented arctic blast resulted in a hard freeze all the way to Brownsville in South Texas. Lampasas' early-

morning low of 3 degrees on Feb. 15 was colder than temperatures in Anchorage, Alaska – where the mercury hit 17 degrees before sunrise that day. The Texas Panhandle town of Dalhart recorded minus 12 degrees.

Power outages and frozen or burst water lines were prevalent throughout Texas.

Food-supply shortages were observed, and emergency services were strained.

St. Mary Catholic Church opened as a warming station, as did the Lampasas Fire Station until it lost power and water service. Lometa City Hall had a generator running in its building to help those in dire need, but it was without electricity or water.

Rolling blackouts were experienced across parts of Lampasas, while the electric substations owned by LCRA in Lometa and Evant had no power for a time.

When the temperature finally moved above freezing in Lampasas and hit 44 degrees on Feb. 19, utility services had been restored. The Electric Reliability Council of Texas reported no outages were occurring, and its electric grid reserves had been restored. LCRA, Hamilton County Electric Cooperative and Pedernales Electric Cooperative – which all supply various parts of the county with energy – also showed that their systems and customers had full services again.

WEATHER FOR REMAINDER OF 2021
After the historic plunge

SEE EXTREME, PAGE 3

WEATHER

Date	High	Low	Rain
Dec. 26	77	60	0
Dec. 27	70	61	0
Dec. 28	78	60	0
Dec. 29	77	61	0
Total rainfall for 2021:	28.92 in.		

Data from the Lower Colorado River Authority (site 11 miles west-northwest of Lampasas, near Nix).

BRIEFLY

STOCK SHOW PREPARATIONS

The 85th annual Lampasas County Youth Livestock Show is set to commence on Thursday at the youth livestock center. The show barn is at the intersection of U.S. Highways 183 and 281 in Lampasas. The three-day show will culminate with a Buyers Appreciation Dinner and the premium sale on Jan. 8.

More information about the livestock show will appear in

upcoming editions of the Lampasas Dispatch Record.

CITY, COUNTY OFFICES CLOSED

Lampasas municipal offices, the Citizen Collection Station and the public library will be closed Dec. 31 and Jan. 1. Trash pickup in the city is slated to run on the usual schedule, however.

Lampasas County offices will be closed Dec. 31.

Kempner and Lometa municipal offices also will be closed Dec. 31 for the New Year's Eve holiday.

LAMPASAS MISSION TO REOPEN

Lampasas Mission is scheduled to reopen next week to serve clients and accept donations at its 910 E. Fourth St. facility.

The non-profit service organization announced it would be closed Dec. 17 through Jan. 3.

Happy New Year

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