

Lampasas Dispatch Record

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TUESDAY, JULY 19, 2022

75 CENTS



MONIQUE BRAND | DISPATCH RECORD

One cloudy day and little rain

Lampasas and parts of Central Texas experienced a short rain storm late Thursday afternoon, but the shower produced only .03 inches of moisture here, according to the Lower Colorado River Authority weather station.

TxDOT holds public meeting to discuss U.S. 183 widening project

BY MASON HINES
DISPATCH RECORD

The Texas Department of Transportation's Brownwood Division hosted a public meeting for Lometa residents last Tuesday on the project to widen U.S. Highway 183. The project would begin just south of Lometa at the U.S. 190 intersection and end at the U.S. 281 intersection in Lampasas. A similar meeting was offered Thursday evening in Lampasas. The purpose of the meetings was to give citizens an opportunity to ask questions, see models and better understand how the highway project will affect them as it progresses. Approximately 32

people, many of whom were landowners, attended the Lometa meeting. The proposed U.S. 183 widening project includes adding pavement width where necessary for a total of four travel lanes, two in each direction; dividing the roadway with a flush median; adding a center-turn lane for vehicles making left-hand turning movements; improving shoulders and guardrails; improving drainage by upgrading culverts; and reducing the slope or steepness of ditches. Lisa Tipton, TxDOT's public information officer in Brownwood, highlighted the necessity of this project, but she said the process to begin is a slow one. "Right now, we're looking to increase mobility and

safety on the roads," Tipton said. "This project will add two lanes of highway and have safe left-turn-capable spaces. "As with most construction projects, adjoining property owners will be temporarily inconvenienced during construction; however, many attendees were very positive, seeing the benefits of the project design which includes adding additional pavement width, dividing the roadway with a flush median and adding a center-turn lane for making left-hand turns," she said. The contract for the project has not been awarded yet, and Tipton noted it may not occur for several years. "The date that construction

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Report shows sales tax receipts dipped in July

BY GAIL LOWE
DISPATCH RECORD

The city of Lampasas has recorded its first monthly percentage decline in sales taxes in nearly three years. When Comptroller Glenn Hegar's office released July allocation statistics for the cities, counties and special-purpose taxing districts across the state that levy a local sales tax, the numbers showed Lampasas down 8% this month. Its last monthly decline was posted in August 2019. Lampasas earned a rebate in July of \$233,645 – about \$19,000 short of the \$252,670 it collected for July 2021. July allocations are based on sales reported for May by businesses that file

monthly reports with the comptroller. Through seven months of 2022, Lampasas has received almost \$1.62 million in sales tax revenue to maintain a 9% annual advantage over last year. Lometa and Kempner recorded nice gains in July. Lometa garnered a check for \$7,876, which gave it a 9% increase for the month. Its payments to date are running almost 18% ahead of those for 2021. Sales taxes were up 17% this period for Kempner, which enjoys a 13% advantage in terms of annual gains over the previous year. Lampasas County – which levies a half-percent sales tax – saw its revenues slip in July, but with a negligible effect. Sales

taxes for the month were down only 0.1%. Payments to date for the county total \$799,773 – up 15% over the comparable months in 2021. Besides the city of Lampasas, the only other neighboring city to see sales taxes falter for July was Goldthwaite. Its receipts have been down two consecutive months: 11% this period and 13% in June. A hefty payment in January, however, has kept Goldthwaite running ahead for 2022. In Coryell County, Copperas Cove and Gatesville posted gains of 10% and 8% this month, respectively. Copperas Cove shows a seven-month total of \$4.04 million, and Gatesville has collected \$1.54 million thus

far in 2022. The city of Burnet earned a July rebate of \$295,871, which pushes its current year total to \$2.06 million – a 16% increase over 2021. Marble Falls boasts an 18% annual gain over last year. The city holds cumulative sales taxes of \$7.87 million for 2022. In Hamilton County, Evant and the city of Hamilton are up 9% and 12%, respectively, over the revenues they collected last year through July. Evant had the highest percentage increase this month among neighboring cities at 31%. In San Saba, the city is running 14% ahead of 2021 sales levels. It received a July check of \$52,674 to push it ahead by 20% for the month.

Sales Tax REBATES			
July Payments to Area Cities			
Lampasas Dispatch Record			
Burnet	up	8%	\$295,871
Copperas Cove	up	10%	\$561,267
Evant	up	31%	\$5,509
Gatesville	up	8%	\$219,337
Goldthwaite	down	11%	\$44,741
Hamilton	up	14%	\$68,187
Kempner	up	17%	\$11,696
Lampasas	down	8%	\$233,645
Lometa	up	9%	\$7,876
Marble Falls	up	11%	\$1,147,980
San Saba	up	20%	\$52,674

DISPATCH RECORD GRAPHIC
Only the cities of Lampasas and Goldthwaite saw their sales tax revenues drop this month when compared to the payments they received in July 2021.

Lampasas council begins preliminary FY23 budget talks

BY ALEXANDRIA RANDOLPH
DISPATCH RECORD

The Lampasas City Council began the first of its preliminary discussions last week on the upcoming fiscal year. City staff provided preliminary budget numbers to the city finance department on Friday. Staff will work to finalize the proposed Fiscal Year 2022-2023 budget for council

members' review later this month. "We are financially healthy," City Manager Finley deGraffenried told the City Council. "Our general fund is about \$3.8 million in fund balance." According to preliminary figures, the city has \$3.88 million in the general fund, including both assigned and unassigned funds. The city has \$1.38 million in Hotel Occupancy Tax

fund balance, including committed and unrestricted funds. The city's water and wastewater fund sits at \$2.16 million, and the electric fund is at \$6.16 million. Both balances include restricted and unrestricted funds. The city's reserve funds are healthy, deGraffenried reported. "We've got a little over 40% in fund balance," he said. "Our policy says we

need 35% in fund balance so we can adjust for capital projects. "Overall, we've got some work to do, but our budget bottom line is positive," deGraffenried said. "We're in a good position in the event you want to use a portion of your reserve. Money we didn't spend in 2022, we can pull out of reserves and spend in 2023." Considerations for this year's budget included pos-

sible increases in employee salaries and increases to enterprise funds such as water and wastewater, deGraffenried said. "There has been an increased cost of water rights reservation with BRA [Brazos River Authority], but also an increase in debt load," he said. "Lots of recent improvements have been water and wastewater related." Recent and ongoing water

and wastewater projects include improvements at the wastewater plant, water line looping in the area of Live Oak Street, sewage line replacement in the area of Pecan Street, and upper-pressure-plane improvements. Several of these projects have been paid for through American Rescue Plan Act funding. There also has been an

SEE PROPOSED, PAGE 10

WEATHER

Date	High	Low	Rain
July 13	104	74	0
July 14	104	67	0.03
July 15	101	67	0
July 16	103	71	0
Total rainfall for 2022:	7.29 in.		

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

BRIEFLY

KEMPNER'S BIRTHDAY

The city of Kempner will celebrate its 25th birthday on Aug. 6 with a celebration from 1-3 p.m. at Kempner City Hall, 12288 U.S. Highway 190. A brief history of the city will be provided by officials. Light refreshments will be served. To RSVP for the event, email citysecretary@kempnertx.gov.

LOMETA PRE-K REGISTRATION

Students new to the Lometa ISD can register a child for preschool or kindergarten by calling Tiffany Smart at 512-752-3384 or emailing tsmart@lometaisd.org. The child's birth certificate, Social Security card and shot record are needed.

COUNTY ROAD 2200 CLOSURE

Starting this week, drivers will

experience lane closures on County Road 2200 due to roadwork. Precinct 3 Commissioner Lewis Bridges said the project will be ongoing.

FOOD PANTRY

St. Mary Catholic Church's Food Pantry Ministry will hold its monthly drive-through food pantry on July 29 from 9:30-11 a.m. at the church parking lot at 701 N. Key Ave.

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