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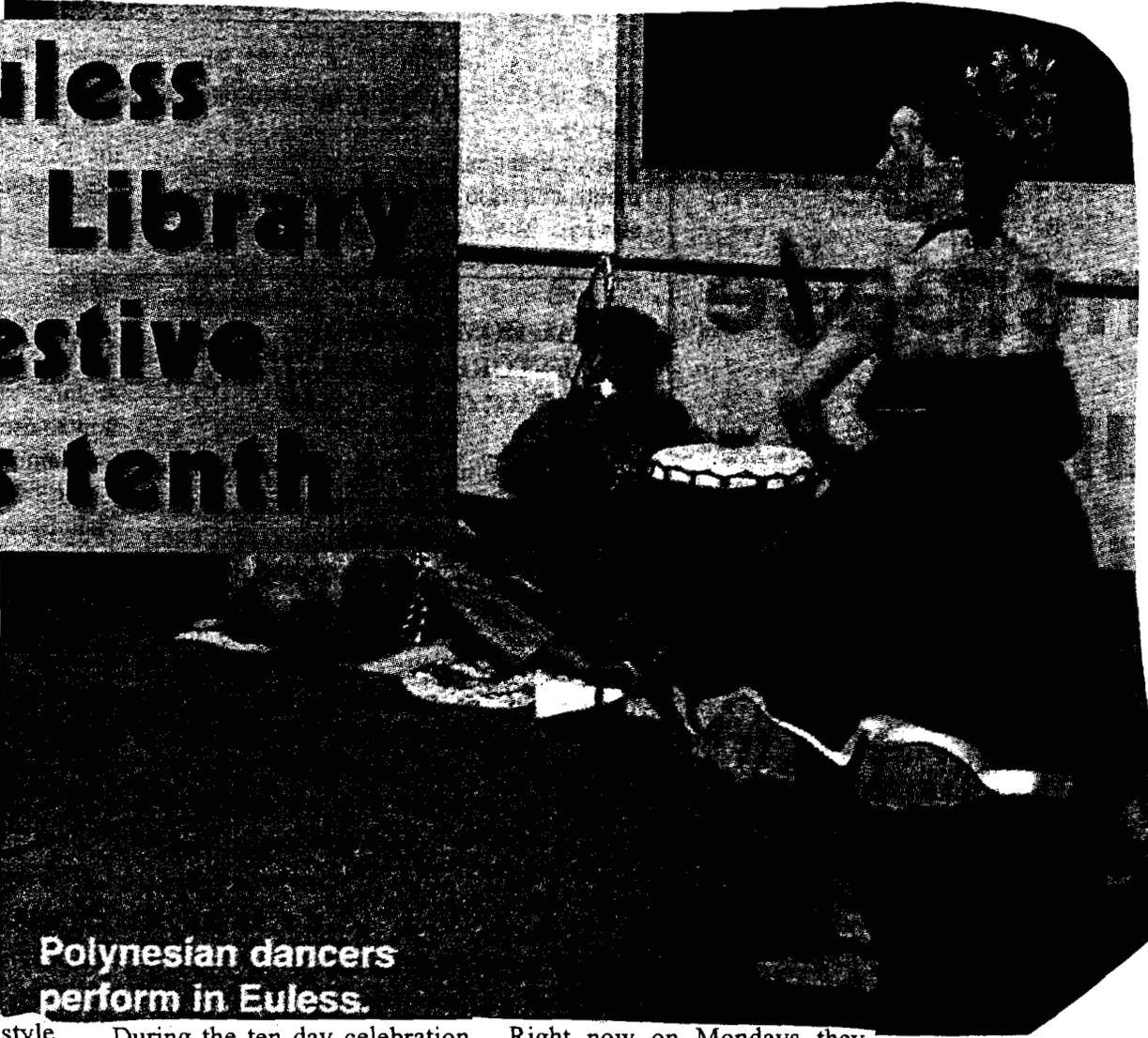
The Euless Public Library gets festive for it's tenth

BY ERICA HOLLAND

On July 1, 1996 the city of Euless unveiled the new public library and ten years later it's still going strong.

Starting on July 11th the library started its ten days of celebration, which will run through the 21st. From cupcakes to dancers, genealogy to the police and fire departments, the library celebrated in grand style. All week they had the citizens of Euless tell why they love the library. All the entries are entered to win in a drawing, which occurs on Friday July 21, and the winner wins a copy of the DVD *Dumbo* plus other goodies.

On Monday night the library held a program featuring the Polynesian Dance group. With their colorful costumes and beautiful dancing, it was a wonderful treat for anyone who came to watch them perform. It also proved to be an educational experience, by the group teaching the audience about their culture and the origin of their dances.



Polynesian dancers perform in Euless.

During the ten day celebration the library is offering a trade out for those with library late fines. If a patron of the library happens to have an over due book, instead of paying a fine they are given the option of bringing in a can of food which will be a dollar off of late fees. The food is being donated to the Northeast Emergency Distribution, or N.E.E.D.

Of course in addition to the celebration the library is also continuing with their normal summer and year round programs.

During the summer the library is offering a Summer Reading Club which ends on July 26 with an ice cream finale.

Right now on Mondays they have "Movie Monday" at 2pm and at 11am at Tuesdays they have "Crafty Tuesday".

Throughout the year they offer story times on Tuesdays and Wednesdays for preschoolers in the morning. During the school year, Monday Family Night is offered on the first Monday of each month. Also as part of their youth services they offer homework help and even have teen volunteers help out.

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PAGE 2 OF 2

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Not only does the Eules Library offer a wide array of programs for the youth of the city but they also have programs for the adults. There is a monthly book club that holds meetings during the months of September through June. When tax time rolls around, they offer free tax help along with volunteers from the AARP. On the second and fourth Tuesdays of every month the Service Core of Retired Executives (SCORE) are on hand to give free advice to current or potential small business owners from 6pm to 9pm. It is by appointment, so be sure to call ahead of time.

The Eules Library is also one of many libraries that participated in the North East Tarrant reads program.

For more information on the Eules Library visit www.eules.org/library or call 817-685-1480.

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REGION BRIEFS

Florida man gets life in aggravated robbery

FORT WORTH - A Florida man was sentenced to life in prison Wednesday after being found guilty of stealing a Euless woman's car in 2003 after he held a knife to her baby's head and got the keys from her. The man was an escaped prisoner from Florida. James Patrick Minos, 42, of Boca Raton, Fla., was found guilty of aggravated robbery with a deadly weapon. The robbery happened Sept. 1, 2003, in the 1800 block of Fuller-Wiser Road in Euless. Minos and an Illinois man escaped Aug. 21, 2003, when they overpowered a guard from a private extradition company transporting them to a jail in Tampa, Fla., according to police reports. They left the guard and a female prisoner at a church in Baton Rouge, La., then drove away in the company's van, reports stated. A few days later, Minos forced his way into the Euless apartment of the woman and demanded money, but she didn't have any. He held a knife about an inch from the back of her baby's head when he demanded the keys to her 2001 Honda Civic. Minos was arrested about two weeks later when he crashed in Walker, La., in another vehicle he had stolen.

- Domingo Ramirez Jr.

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BUSINESS ITINERARY

Cities, States Are Piling On Rental Car Taxes

By James Gilden
Special to The Times

August 5, 2006

Every time you rent a car at Dallas/Fort Worth International Airport, you are paying a tax that helps reduce local property taxes in Euless, Texas, the airport's home city. You are also paying for new NHL and NBA arenas.

Renting a car in Charlotte, N.C.? Your taxes go to fund a downtown arts center. In Milwaukee, the latest municipality to increase car rental taxes, where is the money going? Toward a study to make recommendations about local mass transit options.

All told, 83 state and local governments since 1976 have instituted some form of rental car tax on top of any sales or vehicle licensing taxes, according to the National Business Travel Assn.

Where does this tax money end up? Public projects and studies of all kinds, but currently these local taxes are being used or proposed to finance 35 stadiums and convention centers around the country.

Anyone who has ever rented a car knows that by the time the taxes, fees and insurance the car rental agencies try to sell are added into the final cost, the advertised rate can easily double.

And though consumers can avoid the unnecessary insurance, taxes are another matter entirely.

Texas has the highest taxes. In 1997, then-Gov. George W. Bush signed legislation allowing local governments to raise funds for sports venues by imposing rental car taxes.

According to a 2005 study by Internet travel agency Travelocity, Texas has four of the top 10 airports with the largest difference between base rate and final total price.

By contrast, California had the lowest taxes, with seven of its airports ranking in the top 10 for lowest difference.

For example, renting a car at Dallas-Fort Worth will cost more than 60% over the base rate in taxes and fees; at Houston's Bush Intercontinental, 66%.

To get a dollars-and-cents perspective, I did a comparison of what it would cost to rent an economy car for three days at Dallas-Fort Worth versus what it would cost at Los Angeles International Airport, where renters pay only the standard sales tax.

When I checked last week, for instance, Payless offered a base rate of \$61 to rent a Hyundai Accent for three days at LAX. A similar car at DFW went for \$57 for three days.

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But when taxes were added in, the LAX car cost \$66; the DFW car, \$93. That's a \$27 difference, or 41% more for the same type of car.

"We're not opposed to car renters paying their fair share," said Bill Connors, executive director of the business travel association. His group lobbies state and federal officials on issues of importance to business travelers.

But in the localities that have instituted such taxes, the average tax rate is 26%, he said. "That's higher than [for] handguns, alcohol and tobacco.... And we don't think business travel is a sin."

New taxes are under consideration in at least 24 states, according to a study by economists William Gale and Kim Rueben commissioned by Enterprise Rent-A-Car Co.

The taxes have become popular with cash-strapped municipalities because the perception is that the taxes are paid by tourists or business travelers and not by local residents.

But that perception is misleading, according to the Gale-Rueben study. The majority of customers rent cars at off-airport sites, and the vast majority of those customers are locals.

Even local companies are affected by the taxes.

"It is companies that have their headquarters in those cities that are paying for those high taxes," said Carol Devine, director of strategic sourcing for Fort Worth-based BNSF Railway Co.

The numbers add up. In Milwaukee, a \$2 fee is expected to generate \$800,000 a year — just to fund a report. In Eules, the 5% tax on rental cars generated \$10.7 million in 2005.

Eules splits the tax revenue with the cities of Dallas and Fort Worth, keeping \$3.5 million — about 4% of its annual budget.

In all, the business travel association estimates that these taxes have cost consumers and companies more than \$3 billion since they were first instituted.

In some locations, the taxes are a fixed amount per day. In Kansas City, Mo., for example, it is \$4 a day, regardless of the cost of the car.

The fee has driven car rental customers over the border to Kansas City, Kan., just to avoid the tax, according to Gale and Rueben. They contend that such taxes are in effect higher on lower-priced cars.

So what's a business traveler to do? You have to go where you have to go, regardless of the taxes. But there are some things that individuals, companies and meeting planners can do to mitigate these tax costs.

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Consider renting from an off-airport location. Many airports carry higher fees that can be reduced by renting off site (14.1% versus 25.8% at airports, according to Travelocity). But there aren't always savings. I compared renting at DFW with renting at a downtown Dallas hotel Hertz location. The higher base rate downtown more than offset any potential tax savings. But it is worth investigating.

Companies at high-tax locations can share their concerns with local elected officials, letting them know that the burden of the taxes is falling disproportionately on local businesses.

Meeting and convention planners can ask that companies vying for their business make known all the special local taxes, including rental car and hotel taxes, that are being piled on top of normal taxes. The business travel association is planning on asking for that information in deciding where it will hold its national conference (which in 2006 had more than 5,000 attendees) in the future, said Executive Director Connors.

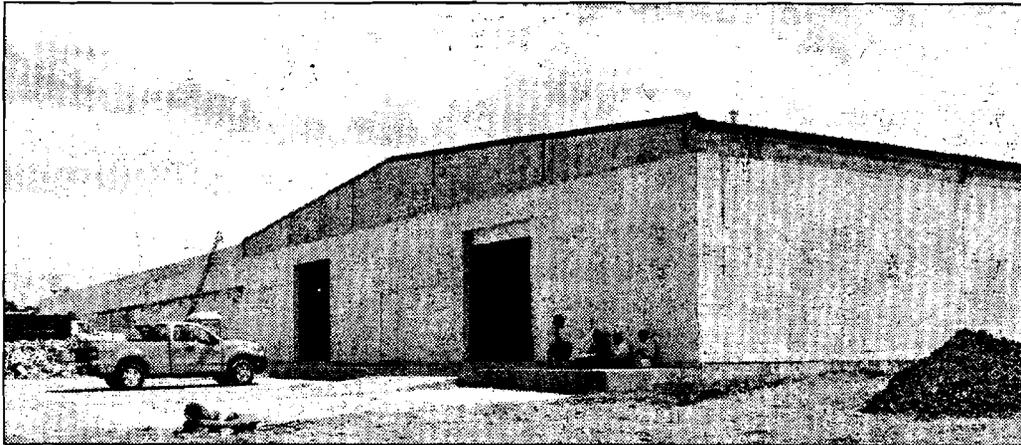
"Three years ago it was a nuisance," he said. "But now it's the No. 1 traveler complaint."

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WHAT'S NEW

Professional Turf Products

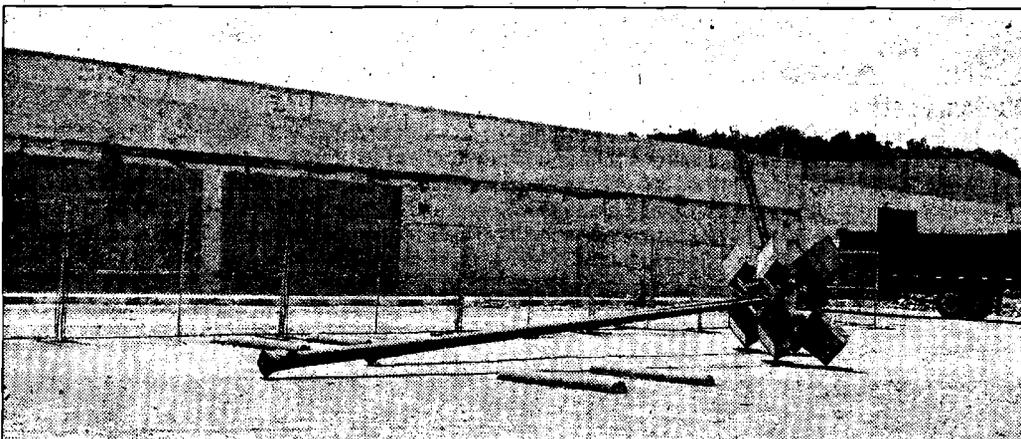


STAR-TELEGRAM/EMILY HUGHES

The landscape equipment dealer is moving to the former Sutherlands building at 1010 N. Industrial Blvd. in Euless. The business is currently on the north side of Dallas/Fort Worth Airport. Renovation of the 50,000-square-foot Euless building will be completed in the fall, according to a company official. The business is a dealer of Toro lawn equipment and sells mainly to users of commercial landscaping equipment, such as airports and golf courses.



STAR-TELEGRAM/EMILY HUGHES



STAR-TELEGRAM/EMILY HUGHES

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Top public salaries

Figures are base salaries for fiscal 2005-06 and do not reflect pay raises for the coming fiscal year. The hire date represents the year the employee started working with the city.

School superintendents and city managers are the highest-paid public employees in greater Northeast Tarrant County. And with good reason – they must be experts in several areas, and they are subject to the political whims of school boards and city councils.

CITY EMPLOYEES

\$160,030.00

TOWN MANAGER
Westlake



Trent Petty
Hire date: 1999

\$153,000.00

CITY MANAGER
Grapevine



Bruno Rumbelow
Hire date: 1998

\$150,700.00

CITY MANAGER
Hurst



Allan Weegar
Hire date: 1981

\$150,277.00

EXECUTIVE DIRECTOR, CVB
Grapevine



Paul McCallum
Hire date: 1987

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Petty was city manager for Grapevine and Lubbock before coming to Westlake in 1999, Bradley said. Since then, Petty has overseen the town's departments and obtained the charter for Westlake Academy, the only municipally run charter school in the state. He also served as the school's chief executive officer until this year.

Petty said his salary isn't as high as it appears. He said he works under contract and pays almost \$3,000 a month for his own health insurance. He also does not receive perks such as a car allowance, mileage reimbursement or deferred compensation.

"I have no car allowance, so take another \$6,000 off my salary," he said.

Petty also pointed to his 20 years of experience as a manager and the innovative ways he has helped hold down costs for Westlake, which has no property tax.

"It's never fun to be at the top, because you're the person everyone wants to shoot arrows at," he said.

Bland, the UNT professor, noted that although Westlake is small, it has the resources to pay high salaries. The town has a general-fund budget of \$3.7 million for fiscal 2005-06, spending about \$5,257 per resident — the highest in the region.

Grapevine, population 45,600, has two employees in the top 10 for Northeast Tarrant and southern Denton counties: Rumbelow and Paul McCallum, executive director of the Grapevine Convention & Visitors Bureau. McCallum earns \$150,277, placing fourth.

"They are exceptional people," Grapevine Mayor William D. Tate said. "Exceptional people bring the top of the market."

Rumbelow was named city manager last year after working for Grapevine since 1998. McCallum has spearheaded Grapevine's rise as a major tourist site since he came to the city in 1987. Tourism generates more than \$1 billion annually for the city, with such lures as Lake Grapevine, wineries, historical sites, the Palace Theatre, the Gaylord Texan Resort & Convention Center and Grapevine Mills mall, according to the visitors bureau.

Not always on top

The city manager was not the highest-paid employee in every community.

Haslet, population 1,400, has no city manager, making Public Works Director David Rogers the highest-paid worker, at \$59,072. In Trophy Club, finance manager Roger Unger, who served as interim town manager for five months this fiscal year, earns \$103,600. Because of his longer tenure, Unger makes about \$3,600 more than Emmons, the town manager.

City managers oversee large staffs and overall city operations — much like a chief executive officer in the business world, although they do not have such extensive powers.

"You have to be a jack-of-all-trades when it comes to your knowledge base," said Weegar, who has worked for Hurst since 1981. "You can't be totally adept at everything. You have to know enough about everything to make sure you're making the right decisions for your organization and community."

City managers also serve as the official representative to other governments and try to obtain other sources of money besides taxes.

They chart the course of the city, which requires planning. And they have to balance politics with administrative duties and set the ethical tone of the administration, Bland said.

"If anything goes wrong, guess who gets blamed?" Bland said.

Staff writer Terry Webster contributed to this report, which includes material from *Star-Telegram* archives.

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 jdeleon@star-telegram.com

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SCHOOL EMPLOYEES

Complex duties drive salaries of superintendents

By **TERRY WEBSTER**
 STAR-TELEGRAM STAFF WRITER

For school district superintendents, the hours are long, the politics can be brutal, and the pressure to improve student test scores is intense.

Their duties are also complex: Superintendents are expected to be versed in state law, legal issues, curriculum and many other areas. School districts often compete to find the best candidates and pay competitive salaries to get them.

Topping the list of base salaries for 2005-06 among Northeast Tarrant County superintendents was Birdville's Stephen Waddell, who earned \$194,569 to run the 22,300-student district. Gene Buinger, superintendent of the 19,500-student Hurst-Eules-Bedford district, was second on the list, with an annual salary of \$180,568.

Grapevine-Colleyville Superintendent Kay Waggoner was third, at \$180,250. Her district has 13,792 students.

The *Star-Telegram* based its ranking on 2005-06 salaries and did not factor in perks such as car allowances, bonuses, or housing and relocation expenses, variables that can increase or decrease the total cost of a superintendent's contract.

Waddell's contract, for example, does not include deferred compensation, a bonus, a cell phone or a car allowance, according to district records.

Superintendent pay in Northeast Tarrant County ranges from about \$166,000 to about \$195,000.

"Salary depends on the nature of the district and the size and type of the district," said Johnny Veselka, executive director of the Texas Association of School Administrators in Austin.

"Salaries are typically higher in the larger districts in urban and suburban areas. And there is difficulty in finding quality candidates. When a school board finds a quality candidate, they want to make sure they can keep that person for an extended period of time."

Turnover is fairly high. Superintendents across the state reported being in their positions an average of four years, according to a survey by the Texas Association of School Boards in Austin. Waddell has led his district for four years, Buinger for seven and Waggoner for two.

The average superintendent salary in Texas for 2005-06 was \$100,027, according to the state survey. Salaries ranged from as little as \$72,280 in districts with fewer than 500 students to \$249,320 in districts with more than 50,000 students.

On average, the pay for greater Northeast Tarrant County's six school superintendents is higher than the average pay for the area's 15 city managers, based on the *Star-Telegram* survey. The average annual salary among the top-paid school officials was \$161,543.

In the Texas Association of School Boards survey, superintendents of districts with enrollments between 10,000 and 24,999 had an average salary of \$163,569 in 2005-06.

Birdville "is at the larger end, so you'd expect the salary to be above average," said Mary Barrett, the association's assistant director for compensation services.

Waddell and other officials said the superintendent position has become increasingly complex over the past five years.

"You get hit from a lot of different directions," Veselka said.

In addition to running what amounts to a large company, superintendents are often expected to visit classrooms, become involved in school and community activities, and be experts in curriculum and predicting trends in education.

And everything they do is scrutinized by parents, taxpayers, and the state and federal governments.

"When I came here, there was not a TAKS test or No Child Left Behind," Waddell said. "Those are two major things. Since the TAKS test was put into place, the passing standards have continued to rise every year."

With the increasing expectations, Birdville has seen its student population grow from about 28 percent economically disadvantaged to around 45 percent over the past few years.

"There are a lot of pressures with that, and it doesn't matter," Waddell said. "You're expected to perform just like any other district does, at the same level."

But one of the pluses of being a superintendent is the diversity that comes with the job duties, Waddell said.

"You can be dealing with a legal issue one minute, a facility issue the next, and then an instructional issue, or taking a call from a reporter," he said. "It never stops."

Before joining the Birdville district in February 2002, Waddell was superintendent of the Tulos-Midway school district in Corpus Christi. Before that, he was superintendent of the Sunray school district from 1995 to 1998.

The lowest-paid superintendent of the six Northeast Tarrant

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districts was James Veitenheimer, who made \$165,950 for leading the 25,850-student Keller district. He has been at the helm for two years.

Waddell said area salaries have actually gone down in some cases because new superintendents have been hired at lower salaries than their predecessors.

Information provided by school districts included some of the perks that superintendents receive, which vary by district and are negotiated on an individual basis.

For example:

■ Karen Rue of the Northwest district receives an annual car allowance of \$7,200, in addition to a base salary of \$180,000.

■ Veitenheimer receives an annual \$5,000 contribution to a tax-sheltered retirement plan, a \$625 monthly car allowance and a \$150 monthly cellphone allowance.

■ Waggoner, of Grapevine-Colleyville, receives a \$7,200 car allowance, a \$1,200 phone allowance, a \$901.25 contribution to a 401A pension plan, and \$5,000 in deferred compensation.

■ Carroll Superintendent David Faltys receives an \$1,800 cellphone allowance, a \$7,200 car allowance and a \$5,000 housing allowance, in addition to a \$168,000 salary.

District size is a strong predictor of salary, but so is a candidate's level of expertise in specialized areas, officials said.

For example, Barbara Brizuela, who heads the 325-student Westlake Academy, is the eighth-highest-paid school official, with a salary of \$136,500 and no perks.

Westlake Mayor Scott Bradley said Brizuela fits the mission of Westlake Academy, the only municipal, open-enrollment charter school in Texas.

Brizuela has lived in four countries and has in-depth knowledge of the International Baccalaureate program, which uses an advanced curriculum. Westlake Academy was recently authorized to teach the curriculum in kindergarten through sixth grade.

Administrators plan to obtain authorization for grades seven through 10 by spring 2007, along with grades 11 and 12 for the 2008-09 school year.

"Our academy is a world-class school, and you would expect to have experience," Bradley said.

Staff writer Jessica DeLeón contributed to this report, which includes material from Star-Telegram archives.

Terry Webster, 817-685-3819
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\$194,569.00

SUPERINTENDENT
Birdville



Stephen Waddell
Hire date: 2002

\$180,568.00

SUPERINTENDENT
Hurst-Euleless-Bedford



Gene Bulnger
Hire date: 1999

\$180,250.00

SUPERINTENDENT
Grapevine-Colleyville



Kay Waggoner
Hire date: 2004

\$180,000.00

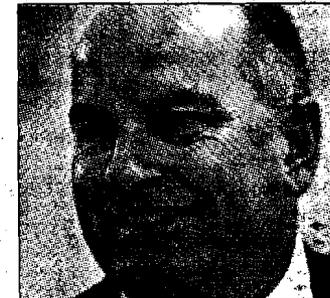
SUPERINTENDENT
Northwest



Karen Rue
Hire date: 2005

\$168,000.00

SUPERINTENDENT
Carroll



David Faltys
Hire date: 2006

\$165,950.00

SUPERINTENDENT
Keller



James Veitenheimer
Hire date: 2004

\$138,783.96

DEPUTY SUPERINTENDENT
Hurst-Euleless-Bedford



Lynne Riggs
Hire date: 1999

\$136,500.00

HEAD OF SCHOOL
Westlake Academy



Barbara Brizuela
Hire date: 2003

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\$135,693.96

DEPUTY SUPERINTENDENT
Hurst-Euless-Bedford



Steven Chapman
Hire date: 1996

\$135,110.27

DEPUTY SUPERINTENDENT
Grapevine-Colleyville



John Allison
Hire date: 2004

Highest-paid principals: James Bannister and Andrew Cargile, of L.D. Bell and Trinity high schools, \$107,640.12

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JPS board member elected chairman of statewide association

Dallas Business Journal - 3:46 PM CDT Monday

A former Euless mayor and immediate past president of the **JPS Health Network** board has been named chairman of **Texas Healthcare Trustees** board.

Harold Samuels' appointment is effective Sept. 1.

He succeeds Peggy Allison of Methodist Healthcare System of San Antonio.

The Texas Healthcare Trustees is a statewide organization of governing board members from hospitals or health systems. It evaluates and endorses services and companies used by Texas hospitals, offers a group purchasing program, insurance services and a retirement plan.

Samuels, president of **Samuels & Associates**, a manufacturers' representative firm in Euless, was mayor of Euless for 18 years. He also has served as district director for U.S. Congressman Joe Barton.

Web site: www.tht.org

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THINGS TO DO

See stars on college road trip: The Planetarium at the University of Texas at Arlington is going on the road. From 9:30 to 10:30 p.m. Aug. 25, the City of Euless and the Planetarium will present a free program, Stars over Euless, in Bob Eden Park, 901 W. Mid-Cities Blvd. Robert Bonadurer, Planetarium director, will point out stars and planets in the nighttime sky and telescopes will be available for gazing into outer space. The public is invited to bring a flashlight and blanket and enjoy a great evening of educational fun. A projection screen will be used in case of cloudy skies. For more information, visit www.euless.org.

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Construction at Trinity and 360

The construction going on at the northeast corner of Trinity Boulevard and Texas 360 is road construction — for now.

But it will make way for hotels and shops in a mixed-use development along the **TRE** rail line, said **Bill Guthrey**, senior vice president of marketing for **Koll Development Co.**

So far, a **Starbucks** with a drive-through, a **Quik Way** convenience store with a **Shell** gas station and a **Quiz-nos** have signed on to the retail portion, Guthrey said. **Dickerson Development** is in charge of retail development.

"The roads aren't even done yet — it's very encouraging," Guthrey said.

Also expected are a 142-room **Holiday Inn** and a 172-room **Candlewood Suites at Centreport**, he said. **Sava Group** is in charge of hotel development.

— Andrea Jares

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Honoring customers July 25

Fine Line Production held a customer-appreciation day in conjunction with its 20th anniversary. The guest speaker was state Sen. Kim Brimer.

PHOTOS BY JON P. UZZEL



Randy Bohannon, Angela Hough and Bill Ridgway



Gerard Smith, Linda Martin, state Sen. Kim Brimer and Richard Smith

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Chad Edward Ellis pleaded guilty to animal cruelty after scalding a dog in a washing machine.

COURT

Man pleads guilty to hurting dog

■ A friend took the injured Labrador mix to a shelter where it was euthanized.

By DOMINGO RAMIREZ JR.
STAR-TELEGRAM STAFF WRITER

EULESS — In a fit of anger, Chad Edward Ellis placed a black Labrador mix in his washing machine filled with hot water and turned it on.

The dog was scalded before managing to escape, but Ellis caught her and locked the injured 35-pound dog in a closet for several days. Eventually, a guest found the dog and, believing the dog was a stray, took her to the Grapevine animal shelter.

The Labrador was euthanized after antibiotics failed to stop the swelling from the burns.

Ellis, 32, pleaded guilty last week to a charge of animal cruelty in Criminal District Court

No. 4 in Fort Worth and faces up to two years in jail.

"The viciousness shown in scalding a helpless animal and leaving him to suffer with untreated wounds must not go unpunished," said Dan Paden of People for the Ethical Treatment of Animals in Norfolk, Va., who has been following the case. "Area residents have reason to be concerned and should never leave their animals outside unattended."

Paden said that people who abuse animals are often repeat offenders.

Ellis is scheduled to be sentenced in four to six weeks after a pre-sentence investigation is complete, a prosecutor said Tuesday

Ellis remained in the Tarrant County Jail on Tuesday, with bail set at \$2,500 on the animal cruelty charge. He was being held without bail on unrelated charges.

The case came to light in February after Euless police began checking reports of missing dogs from a neighborhood near the Euless-Grapevine border.

As investigators canvassed the neighborhood, a resident told police about a suspicious man who walked around with leashes. Investigators traced the man to the 2900 block of Kathleen Lane in Euless.

A woman invited Euless police into the home, where they found three dogs that had been reported missing, authorities said. Ellis was arrested shortly after police searched the house; the dogs were returned to their owners.

During the search, the woman told police about finding the injured Labrador in a closet.

In addition to the animal cruelty charge, Ellis pleaded guilty last week to four counts of burglary of a building and two counts of theft of \$1,500 to \$20,000. The crimes occurred last summer in Euless and Grapevine.

Ellis faces a maximum on two years in jail on each charge.

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REGIONAL ROUNDUP

Guilty plea could bring jail time in dog case

A Euless man is facing jail time after pleading guilty last week to charges that he severely injured a dog by placing it in a washing machine. Chad Edward Ellis, 32, pleaded guilty to one count of animal cruelty during his appearance before District Court Judge Mike Thomas. Mr. Ellis also pleaded guilty to four counts of burglary of a building and two counts of theft. Police said Mr. Ellis placed the stray, a black Labrador mix, inside a washing machine in January and turned on the hot water cycle, police said. The dog was taken to a Grapevine animal control officer by a woman who said the animal had been hit by a vehicle. The dog never improved and was euthanized after three days, Grapevine officials said. A sentencing date has not been set. Mr. Ellis faces up to two years on each count but also could receive probation.

Debra Dennis

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COMMUNITY CALENDAR

BICYCLE RODEO: The city of Euless will have its third annual Bicycle Rodeo from 10 a.m. to 1 p.m. Aug. 19 at The Parks at Texas Star, 1501 S. Pipeline Road. The Euless Police Department will have a safety course for children to ride along with an officer to learn about road safety. The free event also will include a 1-mile Treasure Ride, inspections on the air, brakes and chain on bikes by Mad Duck Adventure Sports, bounce houses, face painters and free refreshments. For information, call 817-685-1666 or visit www.euless.org.

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TRAFFIC SAFETY

Abandoned cars targets for burglary, vandalism

■ Abandoned cars sit on freeways an average of four days, and sometimes up to two weeks, police records from seven cities show.

By GORDON DICKSON
 STAR-TELEGRAM STAFF WRITER

Abandoned cars are not only a safety hazard on highways, they're crime magnets.

Nearly a third of abandoned cars that were towed from area highways in 2005 had been burglarized or vandalized, a review of a year's worth of police records in seven cities shows. Many were stripped of stereos and speakers, with windows shattered and even rims and steering wheels removed.

In April 2005, for example, a red Cadillac was parked for four days on the inside shoulder of Texas 360 in Arlington. By the time police called a wrecker, the car was up on blocks — and all four wheels had been stolen.

WHAT DO YOU THINK?

Post a comment on this report at www.star-telegram.com

Transportation leaders say that removing unattended cars from highways quickly helps keep traffic moving, and in Houston mandatory towing has reduced crashes 11 percent.

But immediately towing abandoned cars can be controversial because it often

sticks the owner with high towing and impound fees.

A review of police reports clearly shows that cars left by the roadside attract mischief. And police in most cities don't consider removing abandoned cars a priority.

It's not uncommon for the vehicles to be parked by the roadside for up to two weeks.

"The longer a car sits out there, the more likely it is to be victimized by crimes such as theft and vandalism," North Richland Hills police Chief Jimmy Perdue said.

The *Star-Telegram* reviewed towing records for Arlington, Bedford, Euless, Grapevine, Haltom City, Hurst and North Richland Hills and found that 197 abandoned cars were towed from controlled-access freeways in 2005.

The total includes only abandoned cars, not those towed after arrests or accidents.

Figures for Fort Worth were not available. Records officers in Fort Worth said they could not sort data electronically to provide the *Star-Telegram* with abandoned car reports.

In the cities where records were available, an average of about four days elapsed before a wrecker was called to move the car — and in most cases, that was after a sticker had been placed on the vehicle giving the owner 48 hours to claim it.

In 11 cases, the cars were abandoned for at least seven days before an officer finally called a wrecker.

In Grapevine, for example, a 1987 Chrysler New Yorker was left on Texas 121 for 15 days. And in Arlington, a 2000 Ford Escort sat on the shoulder of Interstate 20 for 14 days — and by the time a tow truck arrived, the back window was smashed.

In North Richland Hills, Perdue led the effort this year to toughen an ordinance in his city, giving officers more discretion to tow abandoned cars immediately.

But most cities are far less responsive. One of every 20 abandoned cars sits for more than a week before an officer calls a wrecker, the analysis of records from the seven cities shows.

Arlington City Councilman Robert Rivera said his community should look into the problem.

In some situations, officers mistakenly believe that they're required to wait 48 hours. State law defines an abandoned car

as one left unattended for 48 hours, but the law also gives officers power to immediately have any vehicle towed that they consider a public hazard.

"I believe that regardless of whether they're parked in a lane or on a shoulder, they are traffic hazards. People are naturally distracted, and their attention is naturally attracted to vehicles not moving on the highway," Perdue said.

There's plenty of anecdotal evidence that Fort Worth — home to about half the county's freeway miles — has the same problem as neighboring cities.

Craig Turns of Weatherford says he routinely drives past the same cars on Interstate 30 in Fort Worth, and also just west of the city near the Tarrant-Parke county line.

Examples from police re-

IN THE KNOW

Abandoned vehicles

The *Star-Telegram* reviewed police reports for abandoned vehicles towed from controlled-access freeways in seven Tarrant County cities in 2005. Each department reported the information differently, so the amount of detail varies.

	Cars towed	Days left abandoned before towing (average)	Cars left a week or more	Most days elapsed	Cars burglarized or vandalized
Arlington	113	3.6	6	14	43
Bedford	24	n/a	n/a	n/a	3
Euless	3	n/a	n/a	n/a	n/a
Grapevine	20	5	5	15	7
Haltom City	12	n/a	n/a	n/a	6
Hurst	7	4.6	0	6	1
N. Richland Hills	18	4	0	5	2
Total	197	3.9	11	-	62

SOURCE: Police records

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ports:

■ On Dec. 13, an Arlington officer called a wrecker for a 2002 Ford F-150 pickup abandoned on Interstate 20, which he believed had been parked there for at least five days. The damaged white pickup was parked the wrong way against a concrete median, facing traffic.

"I located three Budweiser cans inside, with two being empty and the third can resting open, upside down in a cup holder in the front seat. This can was nearly full, with some of the beer also sitting in the cup holder," the officer wrote in a report.

■ On Aug. 14, a Grapevine officer on his way to work passed an abandoned 1993 Mazda MX-6 on Texas 114. Four hours later, while on duty he decided to check out the Mazda again — and noticed the driver's side window had been shattered by a large rock.

"Window was intact ... when I passed it on the way to work," he wrote in his report.

The Mazda had been there at least eight days. On Aug. 6, a different officer had tagged the vehicle with a 48-hour warning sticker but apparently had not followed up.

■ On April 12, 2005, an Arlington police officer placed a bright orange tag on a 1987 Nissan Maxima along Interstate 30 — giving the owner 48 hours to remove it. The Nissan had been damaged by fire.

Six days later, the officer passed by the car again and found evidence that the owner had returned to the scene — but instead of taking the car, decided to try and give it away.

"The orange tag had now been pulled off the back window," the officer wrote. "As I looked into the vehicle to see if there was anything of value inside, I found the keys in the ignition along with the blue title that had been signed over by the owner."

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PAYCHECKS

Performance counts

■ Northeast Tarrant public officials get good pay and should be held accountable.

Readers of Sunday's Northeast Tarrant County *Star-Telegram* saw the newspaper's survey of salaries paid to their top public officials. It showed that, at least compared with most of the population, city managers, school superintendents and their chief lieutenants are pretty well paid.

No surprise.

It's a juicy bit of information for water-cooler talk to know that Trent Petty, the town manager of Westlake, earns \$160,030 a year. Or that Stephen Waddell, superintendent of the Birdville school district, gets paid \$194,569 a year. Public officials such as these have to put up with the fact that everyone gets to know what they're paid, because they're paid with tax dollars that are taken from the pockets of the people they serve.

So, talk about them all you like.

It's also useful to compare one to the other. Why, for instance, does Petty get what he gets to run a town with 700 residents, while Larry Cunningham gets paid significantly less (\$149,734) to be city manager of North Richland Hills, population 63,500? Or why does Waddell get his \$194,569 a year to supervise the edu-

cation of 22,500 students, when James Veitenheimer gets \$165,950 a year as superintendent of the Keller school district with responsibilities for its nearly 28,000 students?

Those are good questions for their bosses — the elected council and school board members.

In the end, though, the most important question is not how much these people are paid.

The real issue is whether they deliver the results that they are paid to deliver. Their jobs are all challenging, but they hold those jobs and they are paid what they are paid because they each hold themselves out as someone who can surmount those challenges.

At any time, when a simple majority of the city council or school board — typically, four or five people — decides that the challenges are winning that battle, they can fire the city manager or school superintendent. It's that simple, and it should be.

The people who elect the school boards and city managers get to know how much they pay their top hands. They also get to demand results. That means good city services and schools that do a good job of educating students. They pay these hands well, and they should not be shy about requiring performance.

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NORTHEAST CLICK



Gus Moreland and Sarah Younk



Steve Johnson, Susanne Johnson, Anne Powers and Phil Powers



Sally Bustamante, Don Shaver, Leah Shaver, Jodi Sanders and Mark Sanders



John Crisler and Cindy Crisler



Bob Hamilton, John Fletcher and Gary Terry



Mary King, Debbie Cavasos and Phoebe Dill



Karin Newell, Jeff Young and Renova Williams



Rusty Daniels and Alton Wells

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Nick Sanders, Scott Bradley, Bill Lawford, Mary Lib Saleh, Vern Stansell, David Ragen, Richard Helmick and Richard Ward

'Taste' takes over mall

North East Mall was the site of the seventh annual Taste of Northeast, a benefit for ARTS-NET. Area restaurants offered tastings of their specialties, while attendees enjoyed entertainment throughout the mall.

SPECIAL TO THE STAR-TELEGRAM/
MIKE LEWIS

Linwood Henderson,
Jon Pape and Ty Thoren



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GOLF

**COLLEGIATE PLAYERS TOUR
 NATIONAL CHAMPIONSHIPS**

Wednesday's results at Eules

MEN

1, Bill Allcorn, Abilene, 72-64-136; 2, Drew Lethem, Overland Park, Kan., 70-67-137; 3, Jeff Howard, Plano, 71-67-138; 4, Jeff Gerlich, Austin, 68-70-138; 5, Jordan Woolf, Fort Worth, 71-69-140; 6, James Terrebonne, Galliano, La., 71-70-141; 7, Ryan Zamorano, Dallas, 72-69-141; 8, Josh Irving, Mansfield, 72-69-141; 9, Bryce Benson, Arlington, 71-71-142; 10, Nathaniel James, Keller, 71-71-142. Others — 18, Travis Woolf, Fort Worth, 72-73-145; 42, Marc Campbell, Southlake, 75-80-155.

WOMEN

1, Sharla Cloutier, Niceville, Fla., 68-72-140; 2, Christy Carter, Tulsa, Okla., 72-73-145; 3, Stephanie Godare, Houston, 74-73-147; 3, Melissa Eaton, Baton Rouge, La., 73-74-147; 5, Carrie Morris, Tyler, 74-73-147; 6, Sydney Liles, Phoenix, Ariz., 78-75-153; 7, Mallory Fraiche, Metairie, La.,

75-79-154; 8, Renee Cloutier, Niceville, Fla., 76-80-156; 9, Elisa Gomez, Carrollton, 79-77-156; 8, Hillary Zeigler, Beaumont, 79-77-156. Other — 19, Kelli Montigel, Fort Worth, 87-89-176.

**COLLEGIATE PLAYERS
 TOUR**

NATIONAL CHAMPIONSHIPS

Thursday's results at Eules

MEN (PAR 70)

x-won in sudden death playoff.
 1, x-Bill Allcorn, Abilene, 72-64-73-209; 1, Drew Lethem, Overland Park, Kan., 70-67-72-209; 3, Jeff Howard, Plano, 71-67-72-210; 4, Jeff Gerlich, Austin, 68-70-73-211; 5, Josh Irving, Mansfield, 72-69-71-212; 6, Jordan Woolf, Fort Worth, 71-69-75-215; 7, Bryce Benson, Arlington, 71-71-74-216; 7, Nathaniel James, Keller, 71-71-74-216; 9, James Terrebonne, Galliano, La., 71-70-76-217; 9, Jerrett Hamilton, Richardson, 74-70-73-217; 9, Dillon Gooch, College Station, 72-70-75-217; 9, Matt Spina, Kildeer, Ill., 70-74-73-217. Other — 21, Travis Woolf, Fort Worth, 72-73-78-223.

WOMEN (PAR 71)

1, Sharla Cloutier, Niceville, Fla., 68-72-71-211; 2, Carrie Morris, Tyler, 74-73-75-222; 2, Christy Carter, Tulsa, Okla., 72-73-77-222; 4, Stephanie Godare, Houston, 74-73-76-223; 5, Melissa Eaton, Baton Rouge, La., 73-74-78-225; 6, Renee Cloutier, Niceville, Fla., 76-80-73-229; 7, Elisa Gomez, Carrollton, 79-77-75-231; 8, Sydney Liles, Phoenix, Ariz., 78-75-79-232; 8, Anessa Thompson, Kyle, 81-76-75-232; 10, Mallory Fraiche, Metairie, La., 79-79-79-233.

GOLF

Baylor's Allcorn wins in playoff

■ Bill Allcorn of Baylor wins the Collegiate Players Tour championship despite a late bogey.

By CHARLES POLANSKY
 STAR-TELEGRAM STAFF WRITER

EULESS — In last summer's Collegiate Players Tour National Championship, Bill Allcorn of Baylor shot a final-round 74, which allowed Drew Lethem of Odessa College to pass him and win.

In Thursday's third and final round of this year's championship at Texas Star Course, Allcorn stumbled at the last again — bogeying the 18th hole to fall into a first-place tie with Lethem after a final-round 73.

"We hadn't really played that well," Allcorn said of the final threesome, which included himself, Lethem and Jeff Howard of St. Edward's. "We knew if any of the guys in front of us shot in the 60s, we were going to lose."

Allcorn broke Texas Star's competitive course record with a 64 in the second round and led by one after 36 holes. He thought he needed to make birdie at 18 and got "cute" with his approach, leaving his shot short. Meanwhile, Lethem parred the final hole for a final-round 72.

Fortunately for Allcorn, the only player to break par in the final round was Michael Lee, who shot 66 but was well off the lead after two rounds.

Given a second chance to play the closing hole, Allcorn took advantage in a sudden-death playoff. A few minutes after Lethem's second shot hit a tree and bounced into the water hazard, Allcorn sank a 15-foot birdie putt to clinch the title.

"That's just unfortunate for him," Allcorn said. "When that happened, he wound up with about a 15-footer for par and I thought, 'Don't do anything stupid.'"

Allcorn ended the suspense by making his birdie putt.

"Not only did Allcorn, who will be a sophomore at Baylor this fall, battle soaring temperatures, but he played this week with a searing case of poison ivy, the result of helping a friend clear some brush last week.

"It's getting pretty nasty," Allcorn said. "I just want to get in a pool somewhere."

In stark contrast, the women's division was a runaway. Princeton senior-to-be Sharla Cloutier began the final round with a five-shot advantage and won going away. She shot even-par 71 — the best women's round of the day by two shots — in the final round and won by 11 strokes over Carrie Morris of TCU and Christy Carter of Oral Roberts.

Cloutier, who is from Niceville, Fla., added the Tour championship title to the Florida State Amateur title she won in mid July.

Cloutier said she never "cruises" on the course and didn't allow herself to begin celebrating until the very end.

"Maybe the approach shot on 18," she allowed.

With such a big lead, Cloutier just wanted to avoid big numbers, which isn't always easy on courses with environmentally safe areas like Texas Star.

"I had girls in front of me that I figured were going to go pretty low," Cloutier said.

None of them did, and Cloutier carded two birdies and two bogeys in the final round.

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