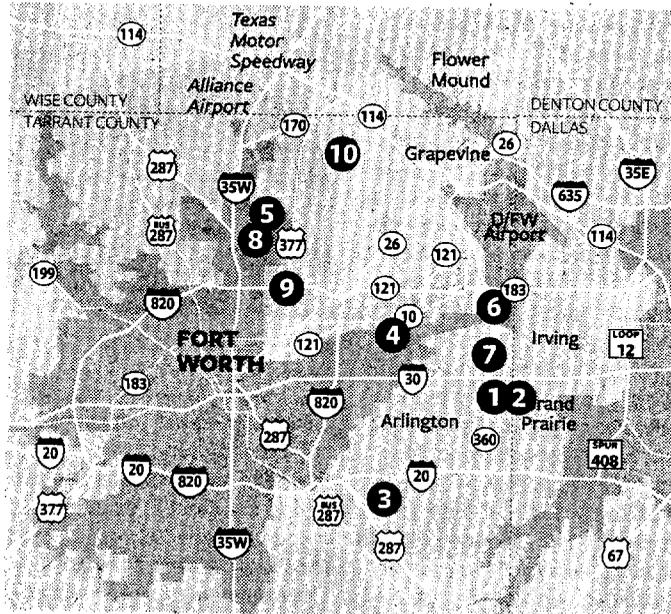


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REAL ESTATE

TRANSACTIONS



STAR-TELEGRAM

Eules

**4. Land sale
Royal Parkway south of
Texas 10**

Daniel and Laura Hewitt have bought 4.33 acres for construction of an office and warehouse.

Broker: J. Searcy of Coldwell Banker Commercial Kelly, Geren & Searcy represented the seller, Green Fields Real Properties.

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CITIES

Crime districts help fund police

Some Arlington council members support funding the district, as officials do in other cities.

By CYNTHIA NEFF cneff@star-telegram.com

Crime tax districts are helping to provide officers and equipment that police departments could not otherwise afford, officials in several cities said.

As police try to keep a handle on crime and meet the needs of increasing populations, many cities have sought voter approval to increase their sales taxes up to a half-cent to raise money for the districts.

Some 22 cities in Tarrant County, including Colleyville, Hurst, Keller and North Richland Hills, already benefit from the districts. Some have been around since 1995. All required voter approval.

"Since the crime control district began, we've been able to reduce priority 1 response times by four minutes with added personnel on streets and improved technology," said Mary Edwards, a spokeswoman for North Richland Hills. Priority 1 calls require an immediate police response. Response times to those calls fell from nine minutes in 1996 to about five minutes in 2006, she said.

Arlington may be next. Some Arlington

council members indicated their support last week for raising the sales tax rate to 8.125 cents from 8 cents per dollar. The money — about \$5.8 million annually — could be used to pay for as many as 50 police officers, equipment and crime prevention programs. The council plans to discuss the measure again at Tuesday's meeting.

Some residents, including in Arlington, want the money used for equipment and programs rather than people. But cities with a crime tax say they set aside money in case voters don't renew the tax. The tax comes up for renewal after five years once it's first put into place. Then cities can try to renew it for five, 10, 15 or 20 years.

"We've put money into a reserve to make sure that all personnel hired through the tax could be continued for two years if the tax failed to give the city time to phase in those positions as part of the general fund or reduce those staff," said Becky Britton, president of the Fort Worth Crime Control and Prevention District's board of directors. "That means that no one would be out of a job the next day."

'A real good program'

In several cities, most of the funds go toward salaries for police officers and other staff including clerks, jailers, and school resource officers.

The crime tax pays for 238 positions in Fort Worth. But it doesn't fund the "front-line" officers, said Lt. Dean Sullivan, Fort Worth police spokesman. "It's school security officers, neighborhood officers," he said. "Additional layers that help us maintain and create a safe environment."

The department has 1,391 sworn officers and 376 full-time civilian employees.

Hurst's tax funds 30 employees, including 12 police officers, said Assistant Police Chief Steve Moore. The tax, started in 1996, brought in about \$5 million in fiscal 2007. If the funding were cut, the city could rely on its transitional fund — but not for long.

If the sales tax is not passed in late 2009, the council could try to raise property taxes or look into cutting programs or officers, said city spokeswoman Ashleigh Whiteman.

Keller is in the minority — it doesn't use the money from the three-eighths-cent tax to pay for personnel, instead favoring capital improvement projects and new technology. "That's a choice the crime control board could make," said Police Chief Mark Hafner.

In Arlington the tax could go to the voters Nov. 6.

"I think people would gladly vote for that," Mayor Robert Cluck said during Tuesday's budget presentation to the council. "We clearly cannot add enough police protection through the general fund without dropping everything else."

A police staffing formula shows that the department should have 294 patrol officers. There are now 240, said Christy Gilfour, police spokeswoman. The department is budgeted for 583 officers but has 553, police said.

Talk of an Arlington crime tax is not new. A former Arlington group, Back the Badge, pushed for the tax for several years, and the council last discussed it in 2003.

Most council members, including the mayor, support creating a crime control district.

"I'm anxious to use as

much as we can to put as many officers as we can on the streets," Cluck said, adding that he would like to hire as many as 60 officers, plus fund community programs. The money would help decrease the city's staffing shortage which began about 12 to 18 months ago with the loss of 113 people through attrition since the 2005 fiscal year, he said.

Cluck said he would support banking some of the money in case the tax were not renewed.

Councilman Steve McCollum has long supported a sales-tax increase for a crime district. When then-Councilman Wayne Ogle asked the council to consider the measure in 2003, McCollum was supportive. But the rest of the council didn't want to use what was left under the sales tax cap.

"These things take time to gel," he said. "Maybe we were procrastinating, but now it's been kind of slapping me in the face."

Councilwoman Lana Wolcott said she supports letting voters decide. "I want a real good program that makes a difference" she said.

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The crime tax

When initiated, a crime tax is put in place for five years. Voters can then renew the tax and crime control district for five, 10, 15 or 20 years, according to a spokesman for the state comptroller's office. Funds can't be used for capital improvement projects with a five-year renewal. In total, the crime tax raised \$63.5 million for the cities in 2006. That doesn't include Grapevine, which created a crime control district this year.

Other cities with a crime tax

Fort Worth: The more than \$40 million raised annually by the half-cent tax will pay for 238 positions, replacements for high-mileage vehicles, a gang unit, a school security initiative and an after school program, among other things, according to the crime control district, which began in 1995.

Colleyville: A half-cent tax approved by voters 1999 will bring in \$1.029 million in fiscal 2008, said Colleyville spokeswoman Mona Gandy. The money has gone to service debt on the Colleyville Justice Center and pay for equipment, vehicles and one investigator. Next year the money will fund two more entry-level patrol officers, she said. A few years ago the tax was renewed for 20 years.

Hurst: A half-cent tax funds 30 employees, including 12 police officers, four dispatchers and four jailers. The money also pays for equipment, utilities and training, said Steve Moore, assistant police chief. The tax, which brought in \$5 million this fiscal year, is up for renewal in late 2009.

Keller: 70 percent of voters favored renewing the crime tax in May 2006 for 15 years. It was first approved in 2002. The money, about \$1.3 million, will be used for equipment, new police cars, new technology and the renovation and expansion of the jail, said Police Chief Mark Hafner. In previous years the tax was used to fund a \$5 million expansion of the police facility, he said.

North Richland Hills: A half-cent tax has raised \$3.9 million this fiscal year, 76 percent of which has gone toward personnel. It's allowed the city to add 29 police officers and 15 support personnel since 1996 and purchase computer equipment, vehicles and a computer-aided dispatch system, said Mary Edwards, city spokeswoman. Voters renewed their crime tax in May 2001 for 10 years.

Crime districts

Area communities with crime districts:

City	Tax
Azle	1/4 cent
Blue Mound	1/2 cent
Colleyville	1/2 cent
Crowley	1/2 cent
Dalworthington Gardens	1/2 cent
Eules	1/4 cent
Everman	1/4 cent
Fort Worth	1/2 cent
Grapevine	1/2 cent
Haltom City	1/4 cent
Hurst	1/2 cent
Keller	3/8 cent
Lake Worth	1/4 cent
North Richland Hills	1/2 cent
Richland Hills	3/8 cent
River Oaks	1/2 cent
Saginaw	1/2 cent
Sansom Park	1/2 cent
Southlake	1/2 cent
Watauga	1/2 cent
Westworth Village	1/2 cent
White Settlement	1/2 cent

Source: State comptroller's office

Staff writer Sally Claunch contributed to this report.

CYNTHIA NEFF, 817-548-5421

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EULESS

Man taken to hospital after fire at residence

Star-Telegram

EULESS — Fire destroyed a Euless mobile home and sent one man to a hospital early Monday morning, an official said.

The man got home about 2:50 a.m., found the home on fire and awoke his parents, possibly saving their lives, Battalion Chief Gary Thompson said.

By the time firefighters arrived at the home at 82 Kevin Drive, it was completely involved, but the residents were outside, Thompson said. The man, who was not identified, was burned and cut when he went back inside to save some pets, Thompson said.

The man was taken to Parkland Memorial Hospital in Dallas but his injuries were not considered life-threatening. The cause is under investigation.

— Mark Agee

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AREA BRIEFS

Country singer to perform at library

EULESS — Country singer-songwriter Verlon Thompson will perform at 7 p.m. Friday at the Euless Public Library, 201 N. Ector Drive. He's written the songs *You Say You Will*, sung by Trisha Yearwood, and *Boats to Build*, sung by Jimmy Buffett and Alan Jackson. The event is free. For reservations, call 817-685-1679.

— Staff reports

Online: www.verlonthompson.com

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BASEBALL

League sues 7 exiting teams

Most of the teams in the Texas Collegiate League decide to take their bats and balls and go home.

By MAX B. BAKER

maxbaker@star-telegram.com

FORT WORTH — The Texas Collegiate League may have played its last game.

Seven of the nine teams in the baseball summer league have told league Chairman and Chief Executive Gerald Haddock that they do not intend to return next year. Haddock has responded by suing the teams.

"We are all under agreement that we are not going to play under this business model," said Jeff Najork, general manager of the Duncanville Deputies. "There is no way any of us will come back. It sounds like to me that we can't lose any more money."

Haddock, a Fort Worth investor and former minority owner and general counsel for the Texas Rangers, said in his lawsuit that the teams' action is a "textbook example of an illegal group boycott" and a violation of Texas antitrust laws.

In the lawsuit, filed in Tarrant County civil court Tuesday, Haddock is asking the court to block any effort by the teams to form a new league using the same concepts as the TCL. Haddock places the value of the TCL at more than \$3 million.

Haddock and his lawyer, Jeffrey Wolfe, declined to comment on the lawsuit, but court documents state that the league "will have no choice but to cease operations" unless other teams are found to take the place of the seven teams.

The teams named in the lawsuit are: Denton Outlaws, Duncanville Deputies, Coppell Copperheads, Colleyville LoneStars, Wichita Falls Roughnecks, Mineral Wells Steam and Weatherford Wranglers. Not included were the Brazos Valley Bombers and McKinney Marshals.

The lawsuit states that the TCL was poised to add teams and possibly enter a televised playoff series with other college leagues. But several teams apparently were striking out financially.

Stacey Hollinger, the LoneStars owner and president, would not say how much money his team has lost. He said the league's fees and other charges made it tough to survive.

MAX B. BAKER, 817-390-7714

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Esther Ruth Russell



FORT WORTH — Esther Ruth Russell, 76, passed away Wednesday, Aug. 15, 2007, in Fort Worth.

GRAVESIDE SERVICE: 10 a.m. Monday in Laurel Land Memorial Park of Fort Worth. Visitation: 6 to 8 p.m. Sunday at Laurel Land Funeral Home.

MEMORIALS: In lieu of flowers, donations may be made to a charity of choice.

Ruth was the youngest child born to Frank Wesley and Lillie May Brodie. She was born in Jermyn on Oct. 27, 1930. By the time she was 8, she was an orphan and was sent to the Masonic Home in Fort Worth. Ruth was a member of Trinity Cumberland Presbyterian Church, where she was an elder and a longtime Sunday school teacher. She was a retired teacher with the Fort Worth ISD and a graduate of TCU. Ruth was a member of the Order of Eastern Star Wedgwood #756 for over 34 years.

Ruth was preceded in death by her parents; her husband, E.H. Russell; a sister, Mildred Hogan; and a granddaughter, Maegen Ruth Elvington.

SURVIVORS: Son, Terry Russell and wife, Gina; daughters, Linda Lux, Sharon Peak and husband, George, and Trina Elvington Lisenbey and Roger Lisenbey; sister, Opal Rolls; brother, Archie Brodie, both of Bowie; 11 grandchildren; and five great-grandchildren.

Laurel Land Funeral Home-Fort Worth

7100 Crowley Road, 817-293-1350

View and sign guestbook at

www.star-telegram.com/obituaries

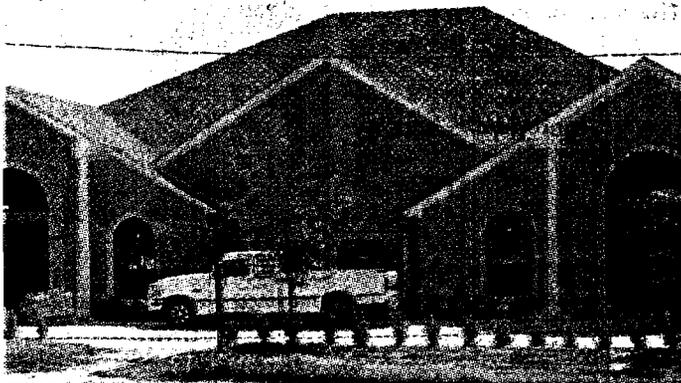
Mother of Parks Secretary
Linda Lux.

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WHAT'S NEW

Euless office complex



Construction is almost complete on the 8,000-square-foot office building at Silver Creek Drive on Westpark Way. Professional Home Health and Hospice Co. has leased half the building, said William Brewer of NAI Huff Partners, who is handling leasing for the remaining space.

STAR-TELEGRAM/R. JEENA JACOB

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SCHOOL SECURITY

Enemy is fake, but lessons are real

The training teaches first-responding officers the tactics to stop a shooter on campus.

By DEANNA BOYD
 dboyd@star-telegram.com

FORT WORTH — A moaning man sits in the hallway to their left. A classroom is to their right.

As two officers search the classroom for a gunman and another keeps watch on the back hallway, Euless patrol officer Rocky Fimbres keeps his gun trained on the moaning man, unsure whether he is a victim or the shooter.

"Keep your hands up, brother. Relax," Fimbres orders the man.

There aren't any students in the school; it's a teacher work day.

Suddenly, a different man's voice bellows from a different classroom at the far end of the hallway.

"Mary, you b----! Where are you?" shouts a man — gun in hand — as he emerges from the classroom, making his way across the hallway toward another classroom.

The four officers run down the hall in a diamond formation, yelling at the man to stop and drop his weapon, but he never even turns around.

Before the officers can reach the classroom and shoot the gunman, he shoots three more victims.

Fortunately, the victims and gunman are really fellow officers, and the "bullets" are capsules filled with blue or pink liquid soap.

But the lessons learned from this and other scenarios last week at Central High School in far north Fort Worth aim to prepare first responders for the real thing and their ultimate mission — get inside and stop the shooter.

It is far cry from less than a decade ago, when the responsibility of the first officers on the scene was to try to establish contact with the shooter until SWAT teams arrived.

"The driving event was Columbine," explained Fort Worth officer Chris Moody, referring to the 1999 shooting in which 45 minutes passed before SWAT officers entered the high school.

"Then it was still get to the scene, set a perimeter, start trying to establish communications and negotiate," Moody said. "Now, when we arrive on the scene, if there's still a suspect actively shooting, we enter the school, office or whatever it may be, and stop the

shooting."

Advanced Law Enforcement Rapid Response Training, a partnership project of Texas State University, San Marcos and Hays County, is funded through state and federal grants and is open to state and federal officers and active military personnel.

This past week's training included Fort Worth marshals, Denton County sheriff's deputies and police officers from Aubrey, Euless and Fort Worth.

Moody, a program instructor, said officers study the pendulum of changing tactics — from the pre-SWAT days of the University of Texas tower shootings to the more recent tragedy at Virginia Tech.

They are taught formations, how to enter, clear and exit a room safely, and how to address a shooter. They are then expected to use that knowledge in drills that mimic real-life shootings, Moody said.

One of the drills involves an extremist group that is armed with guns and pipe bombs and has taken over a school, armed with guns and pipe bombs.

As the team of four officers make their way down the hall, none notice the trip-wire attached to an overturned chair

until they trigger the flash-bang device.

It's a scary reminder to the officers that forgetting to scan the room from ceiling to floor could cost them their lives.

After each drill, the teams of four talk with the instructor about their successes and their mistakes.

Euless patrol officer Ray Hinojosa kicked himself for his team's ill-fated decision not to shoot the gunman in the back as he ignored their shouts and continued walking toward his next classroom of victims.

"If you shoot the wrong guy, you're done. You're it. You're the bad guy now," Hinojosa said. "It's not like the movies. You don't get 15 retakes. You get it one time. That's it. Milliseconds to make that decision."

Instructor Matt Wasko, with the Hays County Sheriff's Department, sympathized with the officers but reminded them that they had every justification in their particular drill to shoot.

"It's all about commitment," Wasko said. "Your child is in this room. Your wife is in this room. Whoever you cherish the most in this world is in this room, and you are going to make it stop."

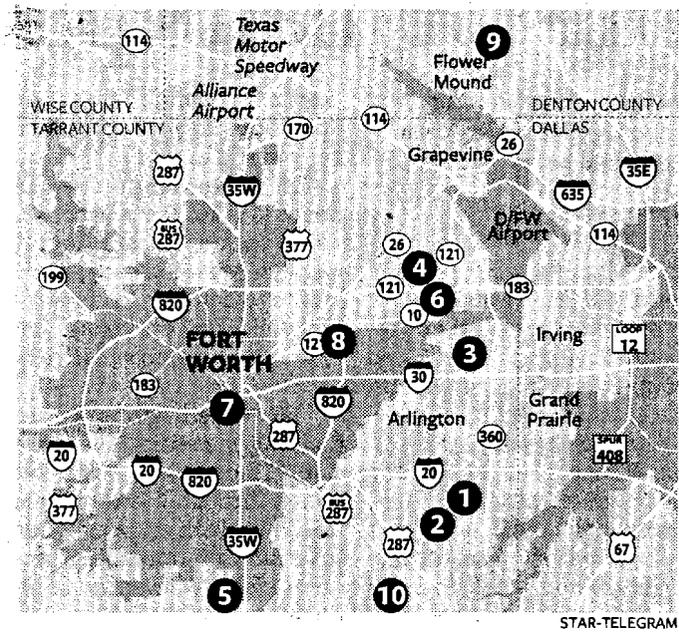
DEANNA BOYD, 817-390-7655

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REAL ESTATE

TRANSACTIONS



Eules

6. Office lease

345 Westpark Way

Professional Home Health and Hospice Co. has leased half of the 8,000-square-foot office building at Silver Creek Drive.

Broker: William Brewer at NAI Huff Partners is handling leasing for the remaining space.

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EULESS

Man fatally wounded after domestic fight

By **MARK AGEE**
rimagee@star-telegram.com

EULESS — A 30-year-old Euleless man who was armed with a knife was shot to death early Monday morning by a neighbor who intervened in a domestic dispute, police said.

Police found Brandon Couey wounded twice in the chest after they received a 911 call at 4:20 a.m. from the Oak Park Apartments in the 100 block of Ash Lane, authorities said.

Couey was taken to Harris Methodist HEB hospital, where he was pronounced dead, according to the Tarrant County medical examiner's office.

Euleless police spokesman Lt. Wayne Pavlik said the incident began with a disturbance between Couey and a woman outside the apartment.

Another man who lived in the apartment complex came outside and asked the woman if she was OK, Pavlik said.

"It appears they all knew each other," Pavlik said.

The neighbor, whose name was not released, told police that he then went back into his apartment.

The argument continued and when the man went outside to check on the woman again, Couey came after him, the man told police.

Couey "had a knife and went into the other guy's apartment," Pavlik said. "That's where our investiga-

tion is pointing right now."

The man fled after the shooting but later went to the Euleless police station, Pavlik said.

No one has been arrested, Pavlik said.

Couey was charged with assault in connection with a 1999 domestic dispute in Arlington, according to Tarrant County court records.

MARK AGEE, 817-685-3821

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CITY GOVERNMENT

Eulesse proposes 2-cent drop in property tax rate

For most homeowners, the decrease would offset rising property values.

By JESSICA DeLEÓN
 jdeleon@star-telegram.com

EULESS — Residents would see almost a 2-cent drop in their property tax rate while the city increases spending under the proposed 2007-08 fiscal year budget. Greater revenue from sales taxes and increased property values are expected to make up the difference.

"The city is in very good condition," Finance Director Vicki Rodriguez said. "This is one of our best years ever."

The tax bill for the average homeowner in Eulesse would drop slightly despite a 3 percent increase in home property values. The proposed \$94.4 million budget, up almost 18 percent from this year, is expected take effect Oct. 1.

The early budget optimism contrasts to last year's budget tensions, when three city councilmen sought to leverage a lower tax rate by initially voting against employee benefits. Carl Tyson, the only one of the three up for re-election in May, was defeated after city workers voiced outrage over the move.

Highlights for the proposed budget:

Proposed tax rate: The tax rate would drop from 48.95 to 47 cents per \$100 of assessed property value.

Good business: The city took into account sales tax revenue from new businesses in The Shops at Vineyard Village at Texas 121 and Glade Road, including Lowe's, LA Fitness and stores slated to open in January.

The 2008-09 fiscal year bud-

Eulesse proposed budget

	2006-07 budget	Proposed 2007-08 budget	Percent change
Total budget revenue	\$83,758,109	\$99,571,265	18.88%
Total budget expenditures	\$80,157,261	\$94,470,418	17.86%
General fund revenue	\$28,680,500	\$33,293,039	16.08%
General fund expenditures	\$28,815,584	\$33,270,986	15.46%
General fund reserves	\$4,352,843	\$4,860,332	11.66%
Proposed new 2006-07 budget items			
Rebates for businesses		\$785,725	
5 percent raise for employees		\$762,395	
Increase in health insurance		\$713,985	
Three new police officers, plus equipment		\$208,648	
Sidewalks, lighting, signalization		\$200,000	
Three firefighters		\$166,880	
Two part-time library jobs into one full-time		\$38,843	
Part-time field tech for parks department		\$25,000	
Part-time utility billing clerk		\$13,210	

What it means to you

The budget is based on a proposed tax rate of 47 cents per \$100 of assessed property value. That is a decrease from the current tax rate of 48.9 cents. The tax bill of the owner of an average-priced house would be \$515.47, down from \$518.99 last year. The calculations include a 20 percent homestead exemption. The average value of a house in Eulesse increased to \$137,094 from \$132,668 last year.

Source: City of Eulesse

STAR-TELEGRAM

Eulesse budget

Aug. 28 The seven-member City Council will conduct a public hearing and first reading on the budget beginning at 7 p.m., Eulesse City Hall, 201 N. Ector Drive.

Sept. 11 Second reading of budget, if needed. The city charter requires that the budget be approved on two readings unless it passes by at least five votes on the first reading.

Oct. 1 Budget takes effect

get is expected to be bolstered by even more sales tax revenue when the Glade Parks shopping center opens across Texas 121 from Vineyard Village, Rodriguez said.

Rebates: The city would give sales tax rebates to the Shops at Vineyard Village, Beall Concrete and Acme Brick. The city also shares revenue with Dallas/Fort Worth Airport. Total cost: \$785,725.

Employee pay raise: Employees are expected to receive 5 percent pay increases, in contrast to the 3 percent of a

percent increases they received in previous years.

"It gives an opportunity to stay level with some of the other cities," Rodriguez said.

New hires: The city would add three police officers and three firefighters. It also would turn two part-time library positions into a full-time position and add a part-time utility billing clerk.

"We were able to add some needed staff," Rodriguez said.

JESSICA DeLEÓN 917 405 2023

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Help in catching thief rewarded

EULESS — The 15-year-old Trinity High School football player who recently tackled a purse snatcher at an area grocery store scored a lot of brownie points — and some cash.

Jonathan Valdez chased the purse-clutching thief out of a Sack 'n Save on Aug. 10, wrestled with him until the thief lost his grip on the purse and ultimately stalled the thief until police caught up with him. The purse owner had recently lost her job and would have been left penniless, she later told Valdez.



Valdez

Jaime Garcia, owner of Pete's Chicken-N-More in Euless, held a fundraiser to reward the valiant teen last weekend. Customers donated \$85, and Garcia threw in \$100 from the franchise to help out with school supplies and clothing.

"We always tell our daughter that there's more good people in the world than bad people," Garcia said. "This is a perfect example of that."

— Melissa Vargas

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Mary Lib Saleh, Leila Khoury, Sandra Crowley and Diane Porterfield



Norann Lustfield, Frances Allen, Laura Satterfield, Sandy Mosser and Kacey Bess

Library foundation members convene

Members of the Euless Library Foundation held a meeting this month at the public library.

SPECIAL TO THE STAR-TELEGRAM/MIKE LEWIS