

MAYOR CITY CNCL CITY ATTNY CRIM MCKAMIE RIDGWAY(2) DECK BROWN
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ENTERTAINMENT

Putting the blues back in Bedford

The once-popular Bedford blues festival is back on the schedule for Labor Day.

By TERRY LEE GOODRICH
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BEDFORD — A Bedford blues festival that made a national name for itself before cratering will make a return Labor Day weekend, and city officials say they will announce the headliners in the next few weeks.

The outdoor city festival, which brought in such big-name blues and non-blues headliners as Keb' Mo', Buddy Guy, Joe Ely, Robert Cray, Al Green and Pat Green, debuted in 1995 and attracted nearly 80,000 people at its peak, city officials said.

But the three-day event, originally managed for the city by a professional events producer, struggled financially in years when 100-plus degree temperatures and heavy rains kept crowds away.

In its rebirth, it will not only offer blues and other music genres but will hedge its bets with a barbecue cook-off expected to bring in top competitors from across the country, said James Hughes, director of the city's parks, recreation and special events.

"We were known nationwide and even internationally for the blues, and we wanted to go back to what we were known for," Hughes said. "As for the barbecue cook-off, there is a big following for that. There are people that do that all year long, and it's their passion."

The reborn event will be called the City of Bedford Labor Day Blues and BBQ

Festival and will last two days. It will be held, as were the other concerts, at a field near Texas Health Hurst-Euless-Bedford hospital.

Hughes said the city is finalizing deals with well-known musicians as well as area groups with an established following.

When the event began as Bedford Blues Festival, many were skeptical that the suburb would be a hotbed for blues musicians and blues lovers.

But it grew steadily, peaking in 2001 when more than 78,000 people attended, city officials said. The city took over as producer in 2000 and the event went through two name changes, eventually becoming Bedford Blues and Music Festival and expanding to include several music genres.

The festival was initially funded by a tourism budget, sponsorships and food sales, but it began charging admission and was cut to a two-day event to offset financial losses.

"I was here during one when it was 114 degrees and also during the one when Pat Green made his first video and we had to roll out hay" atop the mud at the fest site, Hughes said.

Only about 16,000 people attended in 2004. The city discontinued the festival in 2005 and tried an arts festival in October of 2007, but it

was not successful, Hughes said. The council decided in November 2008 to "give a blues festival another try. The event will be funded by the tourism budget, city officials said.

Blues musician Sumter Bruton, who owns Record Town in Fort Worth, said the return of the blues festival is promising.

"The blues scene around here has been a little slow," he said. "I hope the festival does well and the weather is nice. It depends on the weather. More power to them."

This report includes material from Star-Telegram archives.

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Eules festival

■ Bedford follows in the footsteps of neighboring Eules, another city that changed its strategy when its outdoor festival fell on hard times. Arbor Daze featured well-known oldies such as the Beach Boys and Herman's Hermits and typically attracted about 200,000 people during its heyday, costing as much as \$500,000 to produce, city officials said.

■ The free festival began in the late 1980s as a lawn and garden show promoting conservation with tree giveaways. But it struggled financially during years when bad weather kept the crowds away, said Ray McDonald, director of Eules parks and community services.

■ The festival was not held in 2006, but it was revived in 2007 as a community festival featuring tree giveaways, local musicians and performers, arts and crafts, concessions and children's activities.

■ Rather than depending on proceeds from vendors' fees, concessions, a carnival and souvenirs, it is still free, funded primarily by the city's hotel-motel tax fund, said Vicki Rodriguez, finance director for Eules.

■ The community festival is not intended to be a fundraiser or even a break-even event, McDonald said. The event was cut back to a day and a half and attracts about 5,000, he said.

— Terry Lee Goodrich

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REAL ESTATE

TRANSACTIONS

Arlington

1. Lease expansion

2225 E. Randol Mill Road

College Admissions Assistance has added 776 square feet to the 4,243 square feet renewed at Arlington Downs Tower. The office building is 88,000 square feet.

Broker: Ryan Evanich of Stream Realty Partners L.P. represented Arlington Downs Tower in lease negotiations on behalf of the owner, J & F Investments Group.

Eules

2. Industrial lease

1109-F. S. Airport Circle

Commercial Food Service Repair has leased 6,000 square feet.

Broker: Steve Koldyke with CB Richard Ellis represented the landlord, CRP-2 West Dallas.

Fort Worth

3. Office lease

Seventh and Main streets

Texas Electric Utility Construction has leased 4,078 square feet in the Oncor Building.

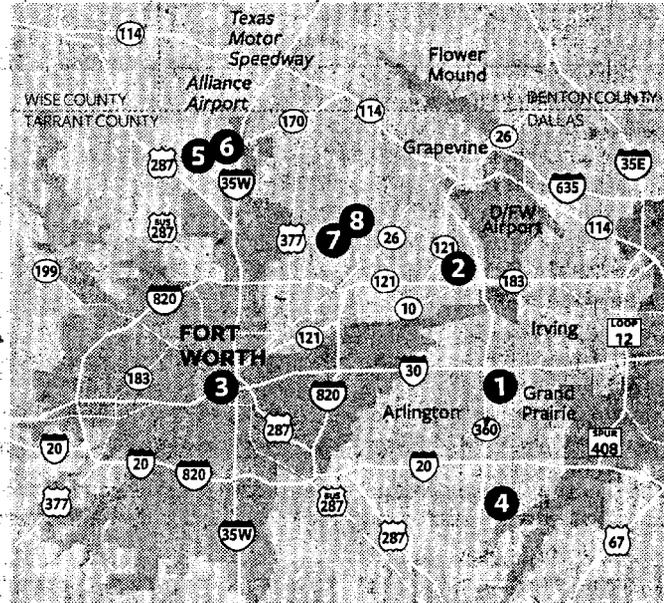
Broker: Theron Bryant with SCM Real Estate Services represented the landlord.

Grand Prairie

4. Office lease

5103 Magna Carta Blvd.

Re/Max Pinnacle Group II, a residential real estate company, has leased 1,800 square feet at Camp Wisdom Plaza I.



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Broker: Jennifer Gray of Integrity Commercial Realty represented the landlord.

Haslet

5. Industrial lease

850 W. Blue Mound Road

Tommy Thomas has leased 900 square feet for a cabinet shop.

Broker: Marissa Collins is the agent for the owner, Ron Sturgeon Real Estate.

6. Industrial lease

1150 W. Blue Mound Road

Brian Linder has leased 1,250 square feet for a heating, ventilation and air-conditioning company.

Broker: Marissa Collins is the agent for the owner, Ron Sturgeon Real Estate.

North Richland Hills

7. Retail lease

5326 Rufe Snow Drive

Jirah Beauty & Salon has leased 1,528 square feet in the Meadowcrest Corners shopping center. The store will open in March.

Broker: Bryan Dyer with The Woodmont Co. represented the landlord, Pinehurst Group.

8. Commercial sale

5616 Davis Blvd.

Rathole Llc. has purchased a 2,750-square-foot property.

Broker: James Keoghan with Re/Max Commercial represented the buyer, and Russell Webb with Stream Realty Partners represented the seller.

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OUTDOORS

Don't just watch the birds — count 'em

The nationwide Great Backyard Bird Count will be Friday through Monday.

By **LANCE MURRAY**
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Tarrant County bird-watchers can join the nationwide Great Backyard Bird Count on Friday through Monday to help create "a real-time snapshot of where the birds are across the continent," according to the event's Web site.

Participants are asked to spend at least 15 minutes on one or more of the four days counting and noting the species of birds in their neighborhoods.

The count is a joint project of the Cornell Lab of Ornithology and the Audubon Society. Fort Worth society members will be at several Tarrant County parks to help people with their counts, said Gail Morris, president of the group.

Those locations include River Legacy Parks in Arlington, where the "Family Fun Saturday: We Love Birds!" event will be from 10 a.m. to 2 p.m. Saturday at the Living



Bird-watchers are encouraged to count the birds they see, such as purple finches.

STAR-TELEGRAM/LANCE MURRAY

Science Center, 703 NW Green Oaks Blvd. Other activities include Birding 101 workshops, guided bird walks, art activities and story times.

Bird-watchers in Northeast Tarrant County could go to the Bob Jones Nature Center in South-

lake.

After counting birds, participants are asked to submit a list to the organization's Web site, which will display national, state and local numbers.

In Texas in 2008, participants reported 410,911 birds and 333 different species. Nationally, 9,807,216 birds were counted among 634 species. Participants submitted 85,787 checklists.

Nationally, the 10 most-spotted birds were the northern cardinal, mourning dove, dark-eyed junco, downy woodpecker, American goldfinch, blue jay, house finch, tufted titmouse, black-capped chickadee and the American crow.

Snow geese and Canada geese were spotted in the greatest numbers.

Southlake participants reported 111 birds; Fort Worth, 93; Arlington, 80; Grapevine, 63; Colleyville, 29; and Trophy Club, 16.

Online: www.birdsource.org/gbbc

LANCE MURRAY, 817-390-7541

Help with your bird count

Fort Worth Audubon Society members will also be at these locations to help with the Great Backyard Bird Count:

Arlington: Village Creek drying beds, Green Oaks Boulevard, one block west of Davis Boulevard, 9 a.m. to noon Saturday, at the top of the rise.

Benbrook: Pecan Valley Park, 7801 Memorial Oaks Drive, off Winscott Road, 9 a.m. to noon Friday. Meet at the picnic tables.

Euless: Bob Eden Park, 901 Mid-Cities Blvd., one block east of Farm Road 157, 9 a.m. to noon Sunday. Meet in the parking lot.

Fort Worth: Foster Park, 4800 Trail Lake Drive, one mile north of Interstate 20, 9 a.m. to noon Saturday. Meet in the parking lot.

Grapevine: Oak Grove Park, Oak Grove Loop South in the Acorn Woods Picnic Area, 7:30 to 10:30 a.m. Saturday.

Source: Fort Worth Audubon Society, www.fwas.info

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STATE HOUSE

Tarrant area gains 3 committee chairmanships, but loses 2 others

But even those who lost leadership roles are pleased with their assignments.

 **Find more online**
Read the full-length version of this story at star-telegram.com/extras

By DAVE MONTGOMERY
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AUSTIN — Tarrant County's clout in the state House seemed to be bolstered Thursday when Speaker Joe Straus announced committee assignments, giving three chairmanships to members of the delegation.

Two other North Texas lawmakers lost chairmanships they had held in the 2007 legislative session.

Rep. Charlie Geren, R-Fort Worth, will head the House Administration Committee. Rep. Todd Smith, R-Euless, will head the Elections Committee, which has oversight over elections, campaign finance and related issues.

Rep. Vicki Truitt, R-Keller, a six-term member, will head the Pensions, Investments and Financial Services Committee, an expanded version of the panel she led in the last session.

Geren's leadership role

Geren, one of the dissident Republicans who helped engineer the ouster of former



Straus Craddick

Speaker Tom Craddick, R-Midland, is considered one of Straus' closest allies.

Straus, who replaced Craddick after the 2009 Legislature convened, said he "wanted to make sure" that Geren had a leadership position.

"In my mind, he's a leader in the House and certainly close to me in my time here," Straus, R-San Antonio, said.

Geren was also assigned to three other sought-after committees: State Affairs, Licensing and Administrative Procedures, and Calendars, the clearinghouse for sending bills to the floor.

Volatile issues for Smith

Smith, who was also openly critical of Craddick, has been in the House for seven terms and ranks high in seniority.

As head of the Elections

Committee, Smith will be at the center of a hot partisan issue — legislation requiring photo identification for voters. Smith has supported the legislation, but said Thursday that he will "do everything within my power" to craft a bipartisan compromise to avoid disenfranchising poor, elderly and minorities, a concern of Democrats.

Straus said Smith "would do a good job" in leading a committee facing "volatile issues." He called Smith "a very skilled attorney and negotiator and a strong Republican."

Truitt brings continuity

Truitt, who was a Craddick ally and briefly flirted with a run at the speaker's post, could have lost her chair after her committee was realigned. But Straus said he wanted an experienced leader for a committee charged with overseeing investments and pensions at a time of economic uncertainty.

"She did a good job last session, and I thought continuity was important," Straus said.

Chairmanship losses

Rep Phil King, R-Weatherford, was left without a chairmanship after his Regulated Industries Committee was merged with other panels.

And Rep. Rob Orr, R-Burleson, was removed as chairman of the Land and Resources Management Committee but remains on the panel.

"Every time we get a new president, they pick a new Cabinet," said King, one of Craddick's lieutenants, "and that's what happens when you have a new speaker."

King, however, said he was "delighted" to be named to the tax-writing Ways and Means Committee, where he can pursue reforms of property taxes and the 3-year-old revised business tax.

Similarly, Orr, said, he will still be able to push eminent-domain legislation as a member of Land and Resources Management Committee.

Most of the Tarrant County delegation got a seat on at least one of the committees they requested, which lets them pursue pet issues and serve the interests of their constituents.

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Rep. Charlie Geren, R-Fort Worth, will head the House Administration Committee.

Rep. Todd Smith, R-Euless, will head the Elections Committee.

Rep. Vicki Truitt, R-Keller, will lead the Pensions, Investments and Financial Services Committee.

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BRIEFS

Grade school evacuated in grenade scare

EULESS — Oakwood Terrace Elementary School was evacuated briefly Thursday morning after a student walked into a classroom about 9 a.m. with what looked like hand grenade, officials said. A teacher placed the grenade on a desk and then notified school officials. After police arrived, they found that the grenade had a hole in the bottom of it, police Lt. John Williams said. "It had a pin and everything," Williams said. "But the guts were taken out." No charges will be filed, police said.

— Domingo Ramirez Jr.