

JUNE 15, 2016 5:31 PM

Local officials must be held accountable for higher taxes

HIGHLIGHTS

In Texas, property taxes cannot increase unless elected body decides

Officials know property values, projected tax revenue before setting tax rate

If adopted tax rate brings higher tax bill, it's a tax increase



The Tarrant Appraisal District mailed out about 500,000 notices this year for properties whose value increased by \$1,000 or more. **Brian Lawdermilk** Special to the Star-Telegram

BY RON WRIGHT

Special to the Star-Telegram

To say that Texans are alarmed by ever-rising property taxes would be a grand understatement.

I know.

As [Tarrant County tax assessor-collector](#), I hear from them all the time.

As frustrated as taxpayers are with property taxes, they are more frustrated with not knowing who is responsible for the increases.

Misunderstandings abound.

Restoring clarity and accountability to the process, I believe, is crucial.

Lately, when I speak to groups, I pose two questions:

First, how many of you believe that if **property values go up**, property taxes also go up automatically?

And second, how many of you believe that nobody is accountable for the increase in taxes?

Usually, most people in the group raise a hand in response to the first question, but everybody raises a hand in response to the second.

This should be disturbing to every elected official in Texas. In politics, perception is reality.

The growing perception that nobody is accountable for tax increases undermines the legitimacy of the entire property tax system.

The system is designed so that local elected bodies decide how much property taxes you pay.

It is set up so that the elected officials — not the unelected administrators of an appraisal district — make that determination.

And that is exactly how it works.

Unfortunately, the ink was barely dry on the 1979 Texas law that created **central appraisal districts** when local governments began convincing taxpayers that value, not tax rates, was the problem.

Today, almost everybody believes that higher property values raise taxes.

It is and has always been a myth.

Local elected officials are good people who want to do the right thing for their constituents, but many of them have also fallen victim to the myth.

Incredibly, some believe that if they approve a tax rate that is the same as the year before and values go up, they haven't really voted to increase taxes!

There is nothing automatic about rising property taxes.

Local elected bodies have always had the power to lower their tax rates and slow the growth of government.

Too many too often chose to spend the windfall that comes from higher values.

Only rarely have they shared that windfall with taxpayers in any meaningful way.

These truths about property tax are worth remembering:

In Texas, property taxes cannot increase unless action is taken by an elected body.

Values and projected tax revenue are known *before* the local elected body adopts the tax rate.

No matter if the rate goes up, down, or stays the same as the year before, if the adoption of the tax rate results in a higher tax bill, it's a tax increase.

Appraisal districts, tax offices and local elected bodies should work together to provide as much honesty and transparency in the property tax system as possible.

Blaming value alone for higher taxes should stop.

Property owners should also do their part.

Learn more about the taxes you have to pay, and engage your elected officials.

Many taxpayers [protest their appraisals](#) in hopes of getting their property values lowered.

Still, protesting appraisals is not the end, but the beginning of the fight to lower your taxes.

The end occurs when local elected bodies adopt their tax rates later this year.

Ron Wright is the Tarrant County tax assessor-collector.

Read more here: <http://www.star-telegram.com/opinion/opn-columns-blogs/other-voices/article84018997.html#storylink=cpy>

JUNE 20, 2016 10:15 AM

H-E-B happenings

HIGHLIGHTS

Ham radios will be buzzing in Hurst

Fireworks shows scheduled in Bedford, Hurst

More orange cones, road closures for Euless



Ham radios will be the center of attention at Hurst this weekend.

KELLEY CHINN Star-Telegram archives

HAM RADIOS WILL BE BUZZING IN HURST

The Hurst Amateur Radio Club will mark its 50th anniversary by participating in the national Amateur Radio Field Day exercise throughout the day Saturday and Sunday at Hurst Community Park, at 601 Precinct Line Road.

The two-day event is open to the public and visitors are encouraged to attend between 1 and 5 p.m. Saturday, when an information booth will be staffed, said Denise Lucas, one of the board members of the club.

The event showcases everything you could want to know about amateur radios — also called ham radios — and their operators.

Radio clubs are best known for providing communication assistance in the event of a disaster, “all without needing a cellphone or the internet,” according to a news release.

Information: w5hrc.org.

The field day will demonstrate how ham radios “can work reliably under any conditions from almost any location and create an independent communications network,” according to a news release.

FIREWORKS SHOWS SCHEDULED IN BEDFORD, HURST

Bedford’s 4thFEST Independence Day Celebration is from 3 to 11 p.m. July 4 at Boys Ranch Park.

A ribbon-cutting ceremony for the completion of phase 1 of the Boys Ranch Park renovations will be at 3 p.m., followed by live music, family friendly activities, a class car show, food and fireworks at approximately 10 p.m.

Admission is free, but on-site parking is \$20 (via eastbound Harwood Road entrance) and \$15 at the Bedford Public Library, 2424 Forest Ridge Drive.

Information: bedfordtx.gov.

Hurst will have its 14th annual Stars & Stripes show beginning at 5 p.m. July 4 at Hurst Community Park, 601 Precinct Line Road.

The event is free, but food is available for purchase.

There will be live music beginning at 5:30 p.m., inflatables for kids, face-painting and fireworks at approximately 9:30 p.m.

There is no on-site parking, but a free shuttle service is available at North East Mall, in front of Nordstrom.

MORE ORANGE CONES, ROAD CLOSURES FOR EULESS

In addition to the continued closing/removal/rebuilding of the Main Street bridge across Texas 183 in Euless, road closures scheduled this week are:

- 9 p.m. Friday to 6 a.m. Saturday: The eastbound and westbound frontage roads east of Ector Drive will be closed. Traffic will be directed to follow detours.
- 9 p.m. Sunday to 6 a.m. Monday: The eastbound exit ramp to Industrial Boulevard will be closed.

For updates and other road closures, go to drivemidtown.com.

Read more here: http://www.star-telegram.com/news/local/community/hurst-euless-bedford_news/article84810292.html#storylink=cpy

JUNE 20, 2016 11:48 AM

You can help set a world record at Bedford Splash

HIGHLIGHTS

Aquatic center to participate in world's largest swim lesson

Bedford Splash was part of 2014 record-setting effort

Lessons are critical for child safety in water



A swimming lesson at Bedford Splash in 2013. **Terry Evans** Star-Telegram archives

BY RICK MAUCH

Special to the Star-Telegram

Ever wanted to be a part of a world record? You'll have a chance Friday at the [Bedford Splash Aquatic Center](#) as it attempts to host the world's largest swim lesson.

The event begins at 9:30 a.m. as registration gets underway. The Guinness world record attempt will take place precisely at 10 a.m. as participants team up with hundreds of other locations around the world.

Last summer the attempt fell short of the record that of 36,564 participants of 2014 when 22 countries joined together. Bedford Splash was part of the record-setting group.

The event is an actual lesson, Bedford aquatics director Tyler Sievert said. After completing a short registration form, participants will get in the water with the instructors and begin the curriculum. The lesson will last about 25 to 30 minutes, and is designed to provide and teach a few basic skills that every child needs to learn on the way to becoming efficient enough to save their own life while around water.

“The curriculum is an easy, beginner lesson plan to allow for the broadest participation possible,” Sievert said, adding that NRH₂O in North Richland Hills and the Keller Pointe are also registered for the 2016 attempt.

Participation in the event is free. It is important, though, if you pre-register to be sure and attend. Last summer, more than 40,000 swimmers in 24 countries pre-registered, but that number was not met.

Sievert said statistics show that Texas ranked No. 1 in the nation for child pool drowning, and Tarrant County ranks No. 2 in the state, for the 2015 calendar year. The World’s Largest Swim Lesson is designed to provide local water parks, community pools and other aquatic facilities with an event that draws attention to this issue, encourages participation in swimming lesson programs, and helps spread the word that swimming lessons save lives.

“At Bedford Splash, we are rolling out our new and improved curriculum for our group lessons. Our lessons now feature smaller class sizes, longer lessons and a more detailed level of training invested in our swim instructors,” Sievert said.

“While we would love for our entire H-E-B community to enroll in our lessons, the most important thing parents can do is simply enroll their children somewhere.”

For more information about the event, call [817-952-2323](tel:817-952-2323).

Surf opens season with own meet

The Bedford Surf swim team began its summer season recently by hosting its own meet at the Southlake Natatorium.

Leading the Surf was Nicholas Duderstadt with three gold medals in the 8-Under Boys division. Reggy Berger (15-17 Boys), Oisin Doyle (18-24 Men) and Troy Wakefield (15-17 Boys) each won two gold

medals. Also winning multiple gold and/or silver medals among the boys were Connor Kidwell (8-Under Boys), two silver; Nicklas Aune (15-17 Boys), one gold, two silver; and Jeff Miller (40-Over Men), two silver.

Leading the girls with two gold medals was Tiffani Tanaka (15-17 Girls). Other multiple medal winners included Anna Davis (13-14 Girls), two silver; Kenzie Crews (15-17 Girls), one gold, one silver; and Vicki Ford (40-Over Women), two silver.

The Surf also won two gold medals and a silver with mixed relays.

Calendar

- Friday — Bedford Surf swim team at Weatherford Meet. Contact Tyler Sievert at att Tyler.sievert@bedfordtx.gov or visit the team's website at www.bedfordsurf.com.
- Saturday — Eules Track Team at Little Elm. Contact [817-685-1838](tel:817-685-1838).
- Saturday — Mid-Cities PeeWee Football and Cheerleading Association registration, 9 a.m.-1 p.m. at their offices, 141 Harmon Road. Call [817-282-2930](tel:817-282-2930).
- Saturday-Sunday — Parks at Texas Star USSSA World Series Warm-Up. Entry fees \$395 for 9AA, 11AA and 13AA teams, \$445 for 14U Open 60/90 teams. Gate fee \$125. Contact John Douthit at [817-685-1838](tel:817-685-1838) or jdouthit@eulesstx.gov.
- Monday-June 30 — L.D. Bell Blue Raider Baseball Camp, (choose a week), 9 a.m.-noon, L.D. Bell baseball field. Cost \$90 pre-registration, \$95 for walk-ups. Contact Bell baseball coach Paul Gibson, [817-437-7655](tel:817-437-7655).
- Monday-June 30 — Trojan Girls Basketball Shooting Camp, Trinity High School. Grades 5-9 (incoming), 9-11:30 a.m. Cost \$75, includes T-shirt. The camp is conducted by Trinity coach Sue Cannon (1,090 career wins, District 7-6A Coach of the Year) and Amateur Athletic Union coach, mentor and elite skills trainer Jason Jones. Contact Cannon at [817-399-3673](tel:817-399-3673) or suzancannon@hebisd.edu.
- June 30 — Deadline to register for Eules Men's Summer Basketball Mini-League. Cost \$245 per team. Call [817-685-1838](tel:817-685-1838).
- July 1 — Neighborhood Fishin' catfish stocking, Chisholm Park, Hurst. Call [817-732-0761](tel:817-732-0761).
- July 2 — Ninth Annual Big Apple/NYPD SBW Cup Series Qualifier, Softball World. Qualifier for the championship July 9 and 23. Men's D, Men's E, Coed. Cost \$200. Contact softball.world@ussa.com.

Read more here: http://www.star-telegram.com/news/local/community/hurst-eules-bedford_news/article84824547.html#storylink=cpy

JUNE 21, 2016 7:59 PM

Eules police looking for woman missing since May 31

HIGHLIGHTS

Keon Mayweather, 22, is missing

Police request information about her whereabouts

She left her home May 31 and hasn't been heard from since



Keon Mayweather Eules Police Department

BY MARK DAVID SMITH

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EULESS

Police are trying to find a Eules woman who has been missing since May 31.

The Euless Police Department posted Tuesday on Facebook that it is seeking help finding Keon Deshun Mayweather, 22. Police believe she left her home on the morning of May 31, but hasn't been contact with friends or family since. Mayweather does not drive or have a cellphone and is mentally challenged, according to police.

If you have information about Mayweather's whereabouts, police ask you contact the Euless Police Department at 817-685-1531.

Read more here: <http://www.star-telegram.com/news/local/community/northeast-tarrant/article85174907.html#storylink=cpy>

JUNE 22, 2016 12:58 PM

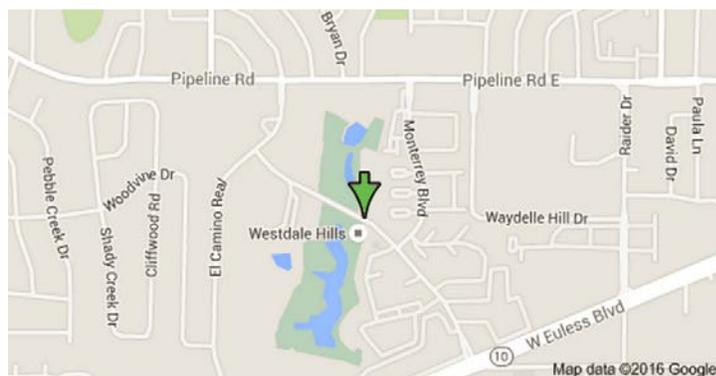
Mentally challenged woman missing from her Euless apartment

HIGHLIGHTS

Keon Mayweather, 22, voluntarily left her home on May 31

Family says missing woman has the mind of a child

Euless police appealed for help to find her



Euless police appealed for help to find a missing mentally challenged woman, Keon Mayweather. She left her Euless home on May 31.

BY DOMINGO RAMIREZ JR.

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EULESS

Keon Mayweather, 22, usually spends her days outside her family's apartment, talking to friends and neighbors.

But the mentally challenged Euless woman left May 31 and hasn't been seen or heard from since.

Mayweather, who family members said has the mind of a child, voluntarily left the apartment in the **1400 block of Sotogrande Boulevard**. Police and family are appealing for help finding the young woman, who doesn't have a car or a cell phone.

“Someone said that they had seen her near our apartment complex where kids wait for the school bus about two weeks ago,” her older sister, Lakeshia Reynolds of Euless, said. “But that has been it. We don’t know where she could be.”

Keon Mayweather lives with Reynolds.

In February, she wandered away and was found by police. Because she couldn’t communicate with them, Mayweather was taken to John Peter Smith Hospital in Fort Worth for observation. Family members were later contacted and picked her up.



Keon Mayweather, 22, of Euless, has been missing since May 31.

Family of Keon Mayweather Courtesy

“I’ve called JPS, but they don’t have anyone that fits her description,” Reynolds said. Another sister, Shakeitha Mayweather of Little Rock, Ark., said Wednesday that her baby sister would have left with someone if they were friendly to her.

“Any grown person would realize in five minutes that her mind is that of a child,” Shakeitha Mayweather said. “She would probably start giggling for no reason.”

Reynolds said that Keon Mayweather stays at the apartment during the day and is unable to work, adding that most of Mayweather’s friends do not drive vehicles.

“We don’t have any other family in Fort Worth or Dallas,” Reynolds said.

A missing person report was filed with police on June 13.

Domingo Ramirez Jr.: 817-390-7763, @mingoramirezjr

Read more here: <http://www.star-telegram.com/news/local/community/northeast-tarrant/article85293142.html#storylink=cpy>

JUNE 22, 2016 1:06 PM

Eules business owners create fund in memory of fallen police officer

HIGHLIGHTS

The Eules Small Business Association wants officers to have money to help people in need

Officer David Hofer withdrew money from his bank account to help a needy family

Hofer was killed in the line of duty



The Eules Small Business Association has established a fund in fallen police officer David Hofer's memory so that officers have money available when they meet someone in need. Courtesy photo

BY ELIZABETH CAMPBELL

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EULESS

Business owners in Eules have established a special fund in honor of fallen police officer David Hofer, who, the story goes, once withdrew money from his own bank account to help a family in need.

Hofer died in the line of duty March 1 while responding to a shots-fired call at J.A. Carr Park.

The money will be part of the Police Department's benevolence fund so that officers can have cash on hand to help people in need while they are out on patrol.

Ron Tipton, president of the small-business association, said that after Hofer's death, he told Police Chief Michael Brown, "We stand to do whatever you need."

"The reason we came up with this idea is that I couldn't get over the fact that Officer Hofer ran into a man, woman and kids living in their car. He withdrew money from the ATM. That's what started us saying, 'You know what, let's raise some money,' " Tipton said.

The association presented a check for \$554 — Hofer's badge number — to Brown during last week's council meeting.

During Hofer's memorial service, Brown told a story about Hofer helping a homeless family who were living in their car. The family was looking for a safe place to park for the night.

"He goes to an ATM machine, takes out \$100 and gives it to the family," Brown said. Another officer called out: "David, what are you doing?" The officer pointed out that Hofer had just recently started his job with the department and added, "You don't have enough money for yourself right now."

Hofer "reportedly smiled that big smile and said: 'Bro, we got a great life here. Sometimes you just gotta share,' " Brown told mourners at the service.

"WE JUST FELT EMPTY. WE WANTED TO DO SOMETHING TO HELP."

Eules Small Business Association President Ron Tipton

Brown said in an interview that he met with the small-business association about a month ago to discuss the idea of creating the special fund called Officer's Helping Hand.

"I think it is awesome what they are doing," Brown said, adding that it's not uncommon for officers to help children and adults they see while patrolling the streets.

Elizabeth Campbell: 817-390-7696, @fwstliz

Read more here: http://www.star-telegram.com/news/local/community/hurst-eules-bedford_news/article85296437.html#storylink=cpy

JUNE 22, 2016 2:02 PM

Eules is getting its first indoor shooting range

HIGHLIGHTS

Shoot Smart opening in former Al's Formal Wear along Texas 183

Attracts millennials, minorities

Third location for the business



Shoot Smart, with locations in north Fort Worth and Grand Prairie, is expanding in to Eules. Courtesy photo

BY ELIZABETH CAMPBELL

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EULESS

A former Al's Formal Wear location along Airport Freeway will soon be home to the city's first indoor shooting range and firearms training facility.

Shoot Smart, with locations in the Alliance Corridor and Grand Prairie, recently got approval from the City Council to open its third location, at 2021 W. Airport Freeway.

There are two buildings on the site, but one was demolished because of the project to widen Airport Freeway.

Roxanne Laney, who owns Shoot Smart along with her husband, James, told council members that the shooting range is a family-oriented business that will have 10 to 20 lanes with room to expand.

Training on how to use firearms safely is a top priority, she said.

“Our purpose is to deliver entertainment through education. The more you know about firearms, the more fun you will have because your skills are better,” Laney said.

The training is primarily oriented to new shooters. “You can start out not knowing anything and get to be very proficient,” she said.

Firearms training is offered to individuals, groups and some corporate customers.

Shoot Smart caters to millennials, women and minorities, Laney said.

At her Grand Prairie location, customers tend to be African-American and Asian, while at the north Fort Worth location near Keller, a higher percentage of customers are Anglo.

“WE WERE DUMBFUNDED AS TO HOW PROFESSIONAL [CITY OFFICIALS] WERE. THAT HASN’T BEEN OUR EXPERIENCE IN EVERY CITY WE WORKED WITH.”

Roxanne Laney, owner of Shoot Smart Indoor Shooting Range

When asked why millennials are attracted to the shooting range, Laney said it is because of Shoot Smart’s heavy emphasis on social media.

“A lot of minorities are focused on their phones. They may not have a computer at home,” she said.

Laney said the 30,894-square-foot, two-story building will have space for the gun range, a training facility and a retail area. The building will have new landscaping and will also be painted to match the design of the other Shoot Smart locations

The renovated building will also have the appropriate noise-reduction and safety features.

“The Euless range is our vision to occupy and renovate a building,” she said.

Laney said Shoot Smart is scheduled to open this fall, and she is looking forward to expanding into Euless.

“We were dumbfounded as to how professional [city officials] were. That hasn’t been our experience in every city we worked with,” she said.

Elizabeth Campbell: 817-390-7696, [@fwstliz](#)

[Read more here: http://www.star-telegram.com/news/local/community/hurst-euless-bedford_news/article85313147.html#storylink=cpy](http://www.star-telegram.com/news/local/community/hurst-euless-bedford_news/article85313147.html#storylink=cpy)