

# LOCAL

## Bullard Banner News

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## Bullard Banner News

We want you



to submit your story ideas.

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# Firefighters improve after taxes

## Firefighters asking for donations

Bullard volunteer fire department is doing their annual fundraiser and will be coming around to businesses and residents asking for donations for rescue tools and bins.

The fire department is asking for \$30 donation from families or businesses. In return, those who donate will be taking family portraits again this year.



Before the Bullard Volunteer Fire Department received funding from a recent tax in Smith County, the department used the self-made, grassfire truck pictured on the left. After the tax, the Bullard VFD was able to purchase the truck on the right for brush fires. Not too long ago, Bullard volunteer firefighters would search a house the old-fashioned way - on their hands and knees. The Bullard Volunteer Fire



department only had one thermal imaging camera. And if they had calls on more than one fire at the same time, one of the crews would be without a camera. This meant a firefighter would slowly crawl from one room to another in a burning building, while trying to find where the fire started or if people were trapped in the blaze. The old-fashioned way seemed archaic compared to the cameras. "It was like night

and day," Bullard Volunteer Firefighter Gary Newburn said. "With the camera you can see everything just like daylight. But without it, you can have four or five foot of visibility or barely be able to see your hand in front of your face." But now with the tax revenues they can purchase more items and receive training. But they still lack tools needed to promote safety.

## CITY COUNCIL

Continued from Page One

maturity and experience to participate in unlawful activities and to be victims of older perpetrators of crime."

### City looks into warning system

Bullard elected officials are thinking of purchasing an emergency warning system that can alert residents of severe weather and other threats.

Officials worry that managing the system could give the city a "black eye," as was the case for Tyler. The City of Tyler did not turn their system on during a storm recently and many residents were upset. Plus the system is not in the budget.

"I don't know that we can afford it and I don't know if we can manage it right now," Bullard City Manager Larry Morgan said. "This is a budgetary item for next year."

Morgan is in the beginning stages of researching and learning about the warning system, and will report what he finds to the city council during the next city meeting.

The City of Whitehouse recently installed a warning system. Whitehouse City Manager Ronny Fite said it has been activated since the start of the year.

The system has capabilities to send an alert of bad weather through police dispatch and cell phones. Fite said even county dispatch is able to activate the warning system if needed.

Whitehouse's system also has different tones urging the

city's residents of an emergency and encourages them to listen to their local media immediately. Whitehouse has five sites for its emergency system, with an across the board cost of \$115,000.

### Bullard, Tyler continue negotiations

Bullard's negotiations with Tyler over its ETJ does not look like it is going to get serious enough to go to court, City Manager Larry Morgan said. The ETJ, or extraterritorial jurisdiction, allows a governing body to exercise its authority beyond its official city limits. The ETJ is where cities can eventually annex.

Tyler is surveying all areas of its ETJ after a 2005, Tyler-sponsored study declared the city has more than 100,000 inhabitants in city limits, Tyler Planning and Zoning director Barbara Holley said. By state statute a population of more than 100,000 inhabitants allows the city to expand its ETJ by two miles.

Tyler officials are also seeing where Bullard's ETJ stops. If negotiations failed, Tyler could eventually surround Bullard as in the case of Noonday and New Chapel Hill. But Morgan does not think that will happen.

"I think there will be room to grow north and to grow south," Morgan said.

### City card stolen, charges of \$10,000

A Bullard administrator

said a stolen city credit card has charges for one month of fuel charges, which could be \$10,000.

Bullard alleges that a man who was doing work for the city through a temp agency had stolen the card. City Manager Larry Morgan said the card was stolen from a utility office desk.

"We're still adding it up, but its going to be about \$10,000," Morgan said.

### City races to fill grant requirements

Jim Epperson Bullard Banner News

Bullard officials are trying to meet a deadline to receive a state grant for a project that will hook 40 homes to Bullard's sewer system and could pave the way for future development.

Homes and most businesses on the east side of State Highway 69 run on cisterns. But a new \$250,000 grant from the Office of Rural Community Affairs (ORCA) will help low to middle income residents hook up to the main sewer system.

"The bidding is delayed to get some of the easement acquisitions taken care of," City Engineer Brian Capps said.

In June of 2007 Bullard was awarded the grant from ORCA, and the city has a finite deadline of June 2009 to finish the project. But so far no construction has started as the city is trying to gain easements from the school district and property owners. Once this is completed, construction will start.

The design of the project is complete and the city is "We will be working right up to the deadline," Capps said.

### Developers propose outlet mall

Jim Epperson editor@bullardnews.com

A national developer wants to build an outlet mall outside Bullard city limits, but the project is indefinitely on hold due to the economy and infrastructure issues the city must complete before construction can begin.

William Adair, a developer from Tennessee, is eyeing Bullard because of its proximity to Tyler, its good schools and its low city taxes. He is also a close friend of Kiepersol Estates developer Pierre de Wet.

"Everything is purely speculative," Adair said. "It could take 10 years for the economy to rebound."

The two men spoke to the city council last Tuesday, offering to put the money up front to build a sewer system that would pump half-a-million gallons a day, and could "easily" be expanded to a system that could handle three-million gallons a day.

This option is attractive to the city because the city must build a new plant or expanding its existing sewer treatment plant to stay in compliance with the Texas Commission on Environmental Quality. The city must begin expand sewer capacity or they could face penalties from the TCEQ.

In return of building a sewer plant the city would be required to pay the developers back, which could be done through sewer fees. The city would not be in debt burdening taxpayers, Adair said.

Adair also said that since the development would not be in city limits, the two developers would agree to voluntary annexation once the multi-million dollar outlet mall is completed.

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