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Emissions Enforcement Grant approved

Having unanimously approved application for the funding on November 9, 2009, Ellis County Commissioners today accepted \$46,476.38 in grant funding to continue a program that focuses on vehicle emissions. The grant is funded by the Texas Commission on Environmental Quality.

“The program is going well,” said Constable Terry Nay, pct. 2 during November’s meeting. “I never realized what a case of organized criminal activity this was until we got involved. It’s a huge problem. Everything we run across seems to stem back to distribution and manufacture in Dallas County, which stems back to the Valley, which is linked to Mexican drug cartels and organized criminal activity out of Mexico.”

Nay said the program impounded 55 vehicles, issued 412 citations and 253 warnings, and made 25 onsite arrests October 2008 through September 2009.

“We also came up with a program last spring for doing some compliance notices that we put out on vehicles wherever they may be parked,” Nay added. “It says their inspection certificates are out and we would appreciate them voluntarily complying. We put out 192 of those and found that we had an 84 percent compliance rate within two weeks.”

The County’s matching funds requirement was reduced from 100 percent to only 25 percent in the new grant year, for a total of \$11,619.10, due to the successful implementation of the program.

According to Special Projects Director Holly Davis, last year’s grant was substantially larger, allowing the county to purchase two vehicles as well as fund the salary of a deputy constable. This year’s grant will primarily be directed toward the salary.

Although the item had been listed only as part of the consent agenda, Commissioners took time to recognize County Treasurer Judy Burden, who received her certification of achievement as a County Investment Officer through the Texas Association of Counties

A one-year delay was granted to Austin Bridge and Road for its tax abatement agreement, moving the start of the abatement period from January 1, 2010 to January 1, 2011.

“Austin Bridge and Road has not been able to complete construction on the west side of I-35,” said Davis. “They met with the City of Waxahachie and with the Appraisal District to find out what they are to do since they are not ready to start business.”

Davis indicated that significant weather and construction delays found the relocation of the waterline unfinished and construction not yet initiated on the company’s facility.

The Court unanimously reappointed Randy Cox, Charles Morton, Joe Pitts, Calvin Reeves, and Elmo Wade to the Board of Directors of the Ellis County Rural Rail Transportation District for the term October 1, 2009 through September 30, 2011.

“The Ellis County Rail District was created back in 1998 by the Commissioners’ Court through the state auspices of Article 6550,” said Charles Morton, adding that he was one of the original directors and has served continuously since that time. “We have a duty of handling a short line railroad over in Railport and keeping it in working order, and I have a very good team. I’d like to see that team stay intact if you would see fit to leave it that way.”

In other business, Commissioners:

- Took no action on a proposed contract with the Ellis County SPCA;
- Authorized the County Judge to execute a Tax Resale Deed for property acquired by tax foreclosure, namely Lot 144 in the Buffalo Hills Subdivision, Phase II, for the amount of \$7840.41 (taxes due were \$5840.56);
- Accepted the resignations of Frank Hazzard and Ronnie Russell from Midlothian ESD #2 Board of Directors; Dan Keller from Red Oak ESD #4 Board of Directors; Eddie Miner from Ferris ESD #5 Board of Directors; James Self from Waxahachie ESD #6 Board of Directors; Billy Tom Fulton and Ricky Sparkman from Bristol ESD #7 Board of Directors; and Kenny Caldwell from Palmer ESD #9 Board of Directors;
- Reappointed Don Frisbee, Garry Harris, and Norquist Wade to Maypearl ESD #1 Board of Directors; Tom Manning to Midlothian ESD #2 Board of Directors; Jackie Dwayne Cate to Italy ESD #3 Board of Directors; Andy Lancaster and Ernie Martinek to Red Oak ESD #4 Board of Directors; Paul W. Jones to Ferris ESD #5 Board of Directors; Jimmy Roy to Waxahachie ESD #6 Board of Directors; and Julie Hastings, Teaner Johnson, and Sadie Tellez to Avalon ESD #8 Board of Directors for two-year terms effective January 1, 2010 through December 31, 2011;
- Appointed Danny D. Long and Ray Reed to Midlothian ESD #2 Board of Directors; Wayne Ballard to Waxahachie ESD #6 Board of Directors; and Darryl McGee and Don Weldon to Bristol ESD #7 Board of Directors for two year terms effective January 1, 2010 through December 31, 2011 with Long, Reed and Ballard sworn in during the meeting;
- Approved Rodman Companies of Frisco, Texas to provide a rate per square yard for lime stabilization for the parking area associated with the new Adult Probation Building at a cost not to exceed \$7,000; and
- Approved Cap-Form Inc. of Carrollton, Texas to provide a rate per square foot for providing and/or placing concrete parking area, curbs and walkways associated with the new Adult Probation Building at a cost not to exceed \$24,000.