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Prepared by: Ellis County Communications  
101 W. Main Street  
Waxahachie, TX 75165

Contact: Diana Buckley, 972-825-5087, [Diana.Buckley@co.ellis.tx.us](mailto:Diana.Buckley@co.ellis.tx.us)

County to hold the line on tax rate

As required under the local government code, Ellis County Commissioners took a record vote indicating their intent not to exceed the current tax rate of \$0.393599 per \$100 of property valuation in the 2010-2011 fiscal year, which begins on October 1. All five members of the Court voted in agreement.

"It is our goal to balance our budget holding that tax rate the same," said County Judge Carol Bush. "We do have one of the lower tax rates, and we provide some really good services for that rate."

Bush noted she is looking forward to hearing input from citizens during the public hearing on the proposed budget that will be held on September 16, 2010, at 10 a.m. The date and time for that hearing were also set during Monday evening's regularly scheduled Commissioners' Court meeting.

Since the proposed tax rate is the same as the 2009-2010 rate, it is not necessary for the Court to hold public hearings regarding the tax rate.

The Court also approved salaries, expenses and allowances of elected officials for budget year 2010-2011.

"There are no proposed increases for the officials that have been listed," Bush told the Court.

In the event any elected official files a salary-related grievance, three citizens were appointed to serve on the 2010 Salary Grievance Committee: Ramon Rife (Red Oak), Sherry Lopez (Midlothian) and Chris Scholz (Waxahachie). Six names were drawn from the grand jury list during a recent meeting of the Commissioners' Court, with these three responding positively.

Due to the resignation of the County's current appointee, Gary Bassett, it is necessary for the Court to appoint a new representative to the Board of Directors for the Lakes Regional MHMR Center.

"I do not have a candidate for you at this time, but I want to throw it out to you," Bush said. "If there is someone who has a special interest in mental health and mental retardation services, if you would, give them a call and see if they are willing to serve."

Interested citizens can contact Bush's office at 972-825-5011 for additional information on the requirements and responsibilities of the volunteer position.

Commissioners did appoint firefighter Billy Getzendaner to the board of directors of Emergency Service District #6, to fulfill the unexpired term of Jimmy Roy, expiring in December, 2011.

Getzendaner, a lifelong resident of Ellis County, has served as a firefighter in Victoria as well as with Waxahachie Rural, and is currently employed with the Cedar Hill Fire Department. He is a resident of the district served by the board and is actively involved in his family's farming business as well.

In other business, Commissioners:

- Approved extension of an existing contract with the Texas Department of State Health Services to provide online computer access for the purpose of issuing state-issued birth certificates by the County Clerk, who is the Local Registrar for Ellis County;
- Authorized the funding of five percent of the total cost to implement structural repairs to Chambers Creek Flood Prevention Sites Number 3, 12, 14, and 15, at an estimated cost of \$57,250 with the other 95 percent of the funding provided through the Texas State Soil and Water Conservation Board's Structural Repair Grant Program;
- Authorized the funding of five percent of the total cost to implement structural repairs to Mountain Creek Flood Prevention Site Number 9, under the existing Watershed Protection Operation and Maintenance Agreement with Dalworth Soil and Water Conservation District, at an estimated cost of \$40,000 with the additional 95 percent of funding provided through the Texas State Soil and Water Conservation Board's Structural Repair Grant Program;
- Approved a contract with the Ellis County Youth Expo to provide youth livestock shows for 2010;
- Approved a standard interlocal agreement with the North Central Texas Council of Governments for 9-1-1 service, equipment, addressing and database maintenance;
- Granted two variances from the Rules, Regulations and Specifications for Subdivisions and Manufactured Homes: one in precinct 4 relating to the requirement for 150 feet of road frontage, and one in precinct 3 relating to location of fire hydrants every 450 feet;
- Awarded the annual contract for Grade 4 Pea Gravel to the lowest bidder, Crouch Sand and Gravel.