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### Bridges slated for replacement in Precinct 3

Four of Ellis County's bridges are slated for replacement, with funding coming through the federal off-system bridge program administered by the Texas Department of Transportation.

"This is a program that comes around every few years and is designed to repair or replace bridges that are structurally deficient or functionally obsolete," said Commissioner Heath Sims, pct. 3. "We have 67 bridges in precinct 3, and most of them are still wooden bridges."

Under the agreement, approved during Monday evening's regularly-scheduled meeting of the Ellis County Commissioners' Court, TXDOT will replace the bridges on Richland Bend Road, Whiskers Road, and Cowan Road, at an estimated cost of \$1.24 million. The County has agreed to an in-kind match of approximately \$67,000, which will be used to replace the bridge on Holder Road.

Other bridges have been repaired or replaced utilizing this program in the past as well.

No action was taken in relation to a ban on outdoor burning. The item is likely to continue to appear on the agenda.

A capacity crowd attended Monday evening's meeting, largely in response to the possibility of Magnablend Corporation buying the former Superconducting Super Collider facilities from their current owner, Collider Data, LLC. At the January 9 meeting of the Court, a discussion-only item centered on proposed increases to the weight limits on Arrowhead Road in precinct 3, adjacent to the property in question.

"I would like to clear up any misconception that may be out there tonight," said County Judge Carol Bush. "There is no agenda item relating to Arrowhead Road on tonight's agenda. You may have read the press release that was on our website about this."

Bush added that the Court took no action at the January 9 meeting and that Magnablend had subsequently withdrawn its request to have the weight limits on Arrowhead Road increased.

"So I'm sorry to say if that is the item you are here to address, there is no forum for that discussion this evening, because it is not up for consideration," she concluded.

Attendees addressed items on the consent agenda, questioning the clarity of verbiage on a simplified plat and asserting that tax dollars should not be used for the annual employee appreciation dinner. Boyce Whatley of Midlothian asked the Court to add an open forum for citizens to its agendas and to place all agenda back-up materials on the County's website prior to meetings.

In other business, Commissioners:

- Accepted the application of Gary F. Sportsman to serve as a commissioner for ESD #7, effective immediately, with Bush issuing the oath of office during the meeting;
- Approved interlocal agreements with the City of Ferris, the City of Palmer, and the Palmer ISD;
- Recessed to convene for a short executive session to consult with counsel regarding the possible sale or lease of real property and regarding Cause No. 84,227, petition of Carl H. Watson requesting deposition before suit, which is presently pending in the 40<sup>th</sup> Judicial District Court of Ellis County.