

'Eyes Were Opened'

Committee members surprised by schools' conditions

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As members of an advisory committee toured the Brownsboro Independent School District's campuses, some were surprised to see the conditions of at least two of the schools, officials told the Statesman.

"The people were going, 'I didn't know,' and 'I didn't realize,'" Parent Involvement Coordinator Perry Eaton said. "People's eyes were opened."

The advisory committee

of more than 60 people, charged with finding the most ideal and cost-effective way for the district to expand, has met three times since Feb. 22 and is scheduled to meet at least seven more times over the next four months.

An election is being planned for November, when voters will decide whether to raise taxes to finance improvements of some campuses or build others.

"I think they're going about it right to try to get the

BROWNSBORO INDEPENDENT
SCHOOL DISTRICT

input of the voters," Eaton said. "They've been really pleased about the meetings, and hopefully that will continue."

The oldest of the district's six campuses — Brownsboro Elementary School, Chandler Elementary School, Brownsboro High School, and Brownsboro Junior High School — need extensive renovations or expansions. The elemen-

tary schools, though, are in the worst condition of the four and expanding them again does not appear to be feasible.

Committee members have toured each campus in Brownsboro and are scheduled to visit the two schools in Chandler during their next meeting on March 22. Texas School Planning President Dr. Arnold Oates said the committee appeared

especially bothered by conditions at Brownsboro Elementary and Brownsboro Junior High.

"I think they were surprised at the junior high school as to how much the students had to go from so many different locations," he said. "That was one of the biggest surprises. Also, I heard some comments about the corridors being dark. At the elementary school, they were surprised at the drainage and parking situations, the cafeteria, and the library, which is just a

classroom, basically."

Chandler Elementary was built in 1969 and expanded five times between 1977 and 1995. Brownsboro Elementary was built in 1968, and it was expanded four times between 1972 and 1995.

While the Chandler campus could expand again if it removes its playground area, Brownsboro Elementary cannot even do that. The school is situated

See CONDITIONS • 7

Edom's street fair set

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Edom's fifth "old fashioned street fair" is set this year for April 17-18, and many of the same vendors and attractions are expected to return, event organizer Robin Marshall said.

"Every year, it has grown bigger and better with more visitors and better vendors. We have many return vendors who participate in both of our festivals and love coming to Edom. We also have a few vendors who offer unique retail products, such as gourmet jams and jellies and salsas, and unique fashion you can't find just everywhere."

April in Edom started in 2006, joining the Festival of the Arts as the town's premier annual events.

It is "a dream to some of the local townspeople to have another venue in Edom for all the artists and crafters who don't normally get approved for fine arts festivals to have an outlet to display and offer their hard work to the public," Marshall said.

"It only seemed appropriate to have it in the Spring when the weather is great, the East Texas countryside is beautiful with trees leafing out and wild flowers blooming, and everyone ready to get out of the house."

April in Edom drew more than 4,000 people last year despite rain. In 2008, over 9,000 showed for the two-day event that features a pet parade and contest, children's activities, and entertainment.

"Overall, April in Edom has drawn at least 25,000

See FAIR • 7

TALKING TULIPS



Courtesy Photo

Kathleen Cunningham, director of the Dallas Arboretum Speakers Bureau, will talk Spring tulips and gardens during a meeting of the Henderson County Master Gardeners on Wednesday. Story on Page 8.

50TH ANNIVERSARY CELEBRATION

Tony Douglas and The Shrimpers to perform in Chandler

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Country-music band Tony Douglas and The Shrimpers of Athens is scheduled to perform during Chandler's 50th-anniversary celebration in July, city secretary Shirley Parmer said.

Inspired by Hank Williams, Lefty Frizzell and others, Douglas, 80, has performed and recorded music for more than 50 years.

His appearances included "The Louisiana Hayride," the Jimmie Rodgers Memorial Festival in Meridian, Miss., and the "Cowtown Hoedown." In 1957, he turned down a contract offer to perform



Douglas

at the Grand Ole Opry in Nashville.

"We're excited to have him for the celebration," Parmer said.

The event marking 50 years of Chandler's incorporation is set for July 10 at Winchester Park, and money raised will help finance the creation of a city museum.

See CHANDLER • 7

KBB hopes to install park equipment by July 4 event

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Keep Brownsboro Beautiful is hoping to install playground equipment at City Park by its July 4 celebration, but the organization still needs more than \$100,000 for the project, Pam Clayton said.

"We're building a city park that's for the children, and we're serious about it. We're going to spend some money and put a sign by First State Bank here to show what the playground equipment looks like."

KBB is working with Miracle and webuildfun,

inc. on the purchase and installation.

"We want something up by July 4, for Sparks in the Park," Clayton said.

Last year, about 300 people attended Sparks in the Park, the city's first. Country and rock band Southern Made of Van Zandt County performed, and money was raised by selling event T-shirts and old Brownsboro High School baseball uniforms.

In its second year, KBB has raised about \$900 from \$1 optional donations on

See PARK • 7

Unemployment in Henderson County soars, figures show

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Unemployment numbers in Henderson County are soaring, according to figures released by the Texas Workforce Commission.

The jobless rate sprinted past the 9-percent mark in January, coming in at 9.5 percent, a jump of eight-tenths of a percentage point from the previous month.

The agency's report is based on a "snapshot" of a single day during a month, the Web site says.

Unemployment reached 3,376 in Henderson County, according to the report — the highest number record-

ed in the past two years, as was the percentage of unemployment.

January's figures mark the eighth consecutive month Henderson County's jobless rate was at or above the 8-percent mark. December 2009's 8.7 percent was the previous high-water mark for unemployment in the previous two years.

January's numbers also continued a deepening unemployment trend for the first month of the year. January 2007's rate was at 4.9 percent; January 2008 was at 5.2 percent; and January of last year was at 7.5 per-

See SOARS • 7

Growth mandates change at public library

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As Chandler organizes a celebration marking the city's 50 years of incorporation to raise money for its public library, the Statesman takes a look at what the Henderson County branch

means to the area. Librarian Nancy Bertholf completed this Q&A with the newspaper:

How long have you been involved with the library?

I started doing children's programs in the early 1990s at the library when it was located on Broad Street.

After we opened the new library, I was hired by the county on a part-time basis to organize and facilitate operation at the new site.

I have a masters of library and information science, and have been a school librarian for 30 years. Prior to that, I taught history and

english.

Is the library generally running out of space, or do you simply need more room for the historical collections?

The library's growth has been phenomenal. When we opened at the new location in 1997, we were circulat-

ing 40 books per month and had about 700 users registered. Today, we circulate an average of 1,500 books per month and have over 4,000 registered patrons.

Our collection, however,

See LIBRARY • 7



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