

Business

Retail sales continue at torrid pace for Jasper

Jasper continued its torrid pace of retail sales gains in reported sales tax rebates to cities released by the office of Texas Comptroller Carole Keeton Strayhorn Friday.

The city, long established as a retail trade center for a four-county area, enjoyed a robust 33.87 percent gain in its November 2006 rebate check from the state compared to the same period as last year.

While the figure would be naturally expected to be higher than last year, it is merely another link in a chain of expanding retail sales in since Hurricane Rita in the fall of 2005.

November's rebate check to the city was for \$331,272.52 compared to

\$247,445.08 for the same 2005 period. The tax rebate is based on retail sales in September (Rita hit on Sept. 24, 2005), reported in October and paid to cities and other taxing entities in November.

Essentially, Jasper retailers were shut down in the final week of September 2005 plus at least two weeks of October. However, the healthy increases since that time have averaged 24.14 percent for the city. That cycle has been driven by a rebuilding and repairs to Rita-damaged property but are also part of a statewide increase of 12.2 percent in rebates to cities.

Jasper's year-to-date rebates are at \$3,767,134.60

compared to \$3,034,345.21. Only one month in the past 12 has been a single digit increase and that was just below 10 percent.

In the county, Kirbyville had an exceptional 51.10 percent jump in its November rebate check from a 2005 figure of \$17,185.89 to \$25,969.48 for this year. For the year, that city is ahead by 18.80 percent, \$251,987.20 against \$212,096.76. These gains have come despite Kirbyville losing one of its two supermarkets to Rita.

In the four counties that comprise the Jasper Retail Trade Area, all showed healthy increases in the November rebate.

Newton continues to stay over 30 percent ahead for the

year and had a significant 36.13 percent leap in November 2006. That city is ahead 32.03 percent.

Despite Hemphill's drop of 2.96 percent in its November rebate check, that city and Sabine County remain solidly ahead for the year. County seat Hemphill is up 27.61 percent year-to-date and the county 24.81 percent.

Pineland's November rebate jumped 35.05 percent (keeping Sabine County up for the month) and that city is up 16.24 percent for the year.

In Tyler County, fueled by Woodville's huge 44.40 percent rise, the November increase is 44.02 percent and year-to-date, 23.39 percent.

Ten of the 12 counties,

including the Jasper Retail Trade Area, that comprise the Deep East Texas Council of Governments (DETCOG) show significant gains for November 2006 with all being up for the year-to-date.

Additional counties, their principal city and each's percent gain/loss for November and year-to-date are:

- Angelina, +13.90 and +14.26; Lufkin, + 14.67 and +14.09.
- Houston, +15.23 and +11.73; Crockett, +7.45 and +8.85.
- Nacogdoches, + 27.24 and +13.16; Nacogdoches +26.35 and +12.96.
- Polk, +21.25 and +15.09; Livingston, +23.95 and +16.70.

• San Augustine, -3.65 and +20.78; San Augustine, -4.04 and +20.79.

• San Jacinto, +12.04 and +2.75; Shepherd, +13.58 and +0.64.

• Shelby, +15.58 and +12.08; Center, +18.51 and +12.43.

• Trinity, -3.75 and +5.92; Trinity, -6.61 and +6.26,

In neighboring counties with retail activity akin to the Jasper Retail Trade Area:

- Hardin, +52.34 and +26.84; Silsbee, +49.24 and +24.81.
- Jefferson, +39.29 and +32.28; Beaumont, +34.62 and +32.60.
- Orange, +41.5 and +32.99; Orange, +34.91 and +38.28.

Seasonal employment rises in Texas by 27,900 jobs

Seasonally adjusted non-agricultural employment in Texas increased by 27,900 jobs in October, the second largest gain this year.

The Texas economy grew by 215,300 jobs over the last 12 months.

Texas employers now have added jobs for 25 consecutive months and 38 of the last 39 months.

A total of 704,400 jobs have been added since July 2003.

October's seasonally adjusted unemployment rate remained steady at 4.8 percent from September and is down from 5.4 percent in October 2005.

The Midland Metropolitan Statistical Area (MSA) experienced the lowest unemployment rate in the state at 3.4 percent (not seasonally adjusted).

The Amarillo MSA was second at 3.6 percent, followed by the Austin-Round Rock, College Station-Bryan and Lubbock MSAs at 3.7 percent.

"The Texas labor market continues to gain momentum, bringing

"Texas employers again demonstrated strong job growth in many areas of the state."

— Ron Lehman

more good news for employers and job seekers as we approach the end of the year," said Texas Workforce Commission (TWC) Chair Diane Rath. "Jobs grew again this month, and the unemployment rate at 4.8 percent remains at its lowest point in five years."

The construction industry gained more ground in October, adding 9,000 jobs and contributing to 17 consecutive months of growth.

The industry has grown by 7.8 percent since October 2005, adding 44,800 jobs.

Leisure and hospitality grew by 8,700 jobs and manufacturing rose to its highest level in more than three years.

This month's gain in manufacturing of 4,000 jobs represents nearly half of the industry's 9,300 jobs added since October 2005.

"Texas employers again

demonstrated strong job growth in many areas of the state and many industries," said TWC Commissioner Representing Employers Ron Lehman. "Ten of 11 major industries had gains over the past 12 months, including growth of 7.8 percent in construction and 6.1 percent in natural resources and mining."

Natural resources and mining posted its fifth consecutive month of gains, with 900 jobs in October.

The industry's annual growth rate has climbed to 6.1 percent, bringing 10,400 jobs to Texas since October 2005.

"The labor market in Texas continues to grow more favorable for all Texans," said TWC Commissioner Representing Labor Ronny Congleton. "This month, the number of workers in jobs reached a record level at 11,047,800."

Initial claims for unemployment compensation in October 2006 were 54,918, down 24 percent from October 2005, when hurricane-related claims jumped significantly.

Axley and Rode celebrates opening



Newsboy photos/ Sharon Kerr

CPA ERNEST KING discusses the finer points of complex rules with Melinda Coziar, tax accountant, in the new offices of Axley and Rode on East Houston Street.

Axley and Rode, LLP celebrated the grand opening of their new location at 247 East Houston Nov. 16.

The firm does taxes, auditing and accounting. The Jasper office employs one full-time and three part-time employees.

They also have offices in Crockett, Jasper, Livingston, Lufkin and Nacogdoches, and have been in business since 1949.

They moved into the building next to First National Bank.

A historical marker in front of the building says that location was the site of Parker and Pruet's Tavern in the early 1800's, and then an inn and stagecoach stop.



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The non-commissionable classified word/line rates are: 20-word minimum for each ad for each issue. Minimum charge is \$3.20 for first run, 16¢ per word; 13¢ per word for second run; 12¢ per word for third run; 10¢ per word for fourth run and

subsequent runs of the same ad.

Classified Display Advertising Rates

The open classified display advertising rate is \$5.70 (non-commissionable) per column inch for The Jasper NewsBoy and NewsBoy Plus Classified pages are nine (9) columns wide by 21-1/2 inches deep.

Classifications

1. Card of Thanks
2. Services Offered

3. Help Wanted
4. Instruction
5. Medical Help Wanted
6. Wanted
7. Work Wanted
8. Business Opportunity
9. Notices
10. Personals
11. Want to Buy
12. Want to Rent
13. Lost and Found
14. Garage Sale
15. For Rent
16. For Lease
17. Lease Wanted
18. Apartments for Rent

19. Houses for Rent
20. Mobile Home Spaces for Rent
21. Mobile Homes for Sale
22. For Sale
23. Travel Trailers for Sale
24. Pets
25. Building Materials
26. Houses for Sale
27. Autos for Sale
28. Motor Homes for Sale

29. Trucks for Sale
30. Motorcycles for Sale
31. Automotive
32. Auto Repair
33. Auto Care
34. Boat Storage
35. Boats for Sale
36. Farm Equipment
37. Property for Sale
38. Land for Sale
39. Deer Lease
40. RV Spaces
41. Livestock for Sale
42. Furniture for Sale

draft permit, if approved, would establish the conditions under which the facility must operate. The Executive Director has made a preliminary decision that this permit, if issued, meets all statutory and regulatory requirements. The permit application, Executive Director's preliminary decision, and draft permit are available for viewing and copying at Brookeland Independent School District, Superintendent's Office, Intersection of Loop 149 and 165 in Sabine County, Brookeland, Texas.

PUBLIC COMMENT/ PUBLIC MEETING. You may submit public comments or request a public meeting about this application. The purpose of a public meeting is to provide the opportunity to submit comments or to ask questions about the application. TCEQ holds a public meeting if the Executive Director determines that there is significant degree of public interest in the application or if requested by a local legislator. A public meeting is not a contested case hearing.

OPPORTUNITY FOR A CONTESTED CASE HEARING. After the dead-

line for submitting public comments, the Executive Director will consider all timely comments and prepare a response to all relevant and material, or significant public comments. **Unless the application is directly referred for a contested case hearing, the response to comments will be mailed to every-one who submitted public comments and to those persons who are on the mailing list for this application. If comments are received, the mailing will also provide instructions for requesting a contested case hearing or reconsideration of the Executive Director's decision.** A contested case hearing is a legal proceeding similar to a civil trial in a state district court.

TO REQUEST A CONTESTED CASE HEARING, YOU MUST INCLUDE THE FOLLOWING ITEMS IN YOUR REQUEST: your name; address, phone; applicant's name and permit number; the location and distance of your property/activities relative to the facility; a specific description of how you would be adversely affected by the facility in a way not common to the general public; and the

statement "[I/we] request a contested case hearing." If the request for contested case hearing is filed on behalf of a group or association, the request must designate the group's representative for receiving future correspondence; identify an individual member of the group who would be adversely affected by the proposed facility or activity; provide the information discussed above regarding the affected member's location and distance from the facility or activity; explain how and why the member would be affected; and explain how the interests the group seeks to protect are germane to the group's purpose.

Following the close of all applicable comment and request periods, the Executive Director will forward the application and any requests for reconsideration or for a contested case hearing to the TCEQ Commissioners for their consideration at a scheduled Commission meeting.

The Commission will only grant a contested case hearing on disputed issues of fact that are relevant and material to the Commission's decision

on the application. Further, the Commission will only grant a hearing on issues that were raised in timely filed comments that were not subsequently withdrawn. **TCEQ may act on an application to renew a permit for discharge of wastewater without providing an opportunity for a contested case hearing if certain criteria are met.**

EXECUTIVE DIRECTOR ACTION. The Executive Director may issue final approval of the application unless a timely contested case hearing reconsideration is filed. If a timely hearing request or request for reconsideration is filed, the Executive Director will not issue final approval of the permit and will forward the application and request to the TCEQ Commissioners for their consideration at a scheduled Commission meeting.

MAILING LIST. If you submit public comments, a request for a contested case hearing or a reconsideration of the Executive Director's decision, you will be added to the mailing list for the specific application to receive future public notices mailed by the

PUBLIC NOTICE TEXAS COMMISSION ON ENVIRONMENTAL QUALITY NOTICE OF APPLICATION AND PRELIMINARY DECISION FOR TPDES PERMIT FOR MUNICIPAL WASTEWATER RENEWAL PERMIT NO.

WQ0013092001 APPLICATION AND PRELIMINARY DECISION. Brookeland Independent School District, Route 2, Box 18, Brookeland, Texas 75931-9701, has applied to the Texas Commission on Environmental Quality (TCEQ) for a renewal of TPDES Permit No. 13092-001, which authorizes the discharge of treated domestic wastewater at a daily average flow not to exceed 4,000 gallons per day. TCEQ received this application on March 6, 2006.

The facility is located on the east side of State Highway Loop No. 149, approximately 1000 feet south of the intersection of State Highways 149

and 165 in Sabine County, Texas. The treated effluent is discharged to a natural drainage ditch; thence to Sam Rayburn Reservoir in Segment No. 0610 of the Sabine River Basin. The unclassified receiving water uses are no significant aquatic life uses for the natural drainage ditch. The designated

uses for Segment No. 0610 are contact recreation, public water supply, and high aquatic life use. All determinations are preliminary and subject to additional review and/or revisions.

The TCEQ Executive Director has completed the technical review of the application and prepared a draft permit. The