

Viewpoint

The Jasper Newsboy

Established in 1865

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Our Viewpoint Editorials

JEDCO board slows progress...again

It was all done in the name of economic development.

The Jasper Economic Development Corporation Board set in motion Thursday, Jan. 10, a proposition that would reduce JEDCO's sales tax revenues by one half and create a street maintenance and repair tax.

Gayle Meigs is president of the JEDCO board.

The reasoning behind this decision was to improve the streets in Jasper. Board members rationalized that without good streets, economic development fails.

David Barber is a JEDCO board member.

The decision will virtually cut JEDCO's funding in half all in the name of better streets in the city of Jasper.

Gloria Monzingo is a JEDCO board member.

Board members believe that JEDCO will be able to take care of all its business liabilities and actively pursue economic development interests with half of its current budget.

Rita Cummings is a JEDCO board member.

With this decision, we guess it is safe to believe that the city's street department had been judged not capable of maintaining the streets with the budget it was allotted and needed JEDCO's assistance to get the job done right.

Dr. Willie Williamson is a JEDCO board member.

There is no doubting that the city's streets need to be improved. Anyone can

drive down a city street and drop an axle at any time. But taking away from a corporation who's primary goal is the economic development of the city is just shortsighted.

Meigs, Barber, Monzingo, Cummings and Williamson are the board members of JEDCO, who on Thursday, Jan. 10, said that fixing the streets of Jasper was more important than bringing a new industry to Jasper. They believe new streets will in turn impress all the CEO's of companies seeking to open their businesses in Jasper.

But with half a budget, will JEDCO be able to actively recruit these businesses? The JEDCO board believes industries will just follow the newly paved streets to the Land of Oz...Jasper.

JEDCO has long been criticized for its misses in economic development. But it's not time to give up. This area needs an industry to help it grow. This area needs a JEDCO board that backs economic development.

Roses go to....

▼Jasper Police, for bringing in FBI representatives to help in the Martin Byerly case. The technology just may lead police to closure in this case.

▼To all the area churches who will participate in the Sing With One Voice program Tuesday, Jan. 22 at St. Michael's Church.

▼Judge Cooper, who was named Fireman of the Year at the East End Volunteer Fire Department awards banquet last week.

Guest Commentary One person's viewpoint

Put faith in action on MLK Day in Jasper

By WALTER G. DIGGLES SR.
Jasper

On Monday, Jan. 21, hundreds of thousands of Americans will honor Dr. Martin Luther King Jr.'s vision through a Day of Service that builds broad and diverse relationships, breaks down barriers, and makes our communities the best they can be.

On behalf of the OneStar National Service Commission, I encourage you to join me by putting your faith in action and helping Dr. King's dream come to life by volunteering on MLK Day.

Throughout the weekend leading into King Day, people across our nation - including youth, teachers, parents, community leaders, seniors and even President Bush and our fellow Council Members - will join together in service.

Every act of kindness makes a difference, whether you help a neighbor in need,

refurbish a community center, or take time to pray for positive change and social justice in our nation. I encourage you to volunteer on King Day and make it the beginning of a year-round commitment to service.

Dr. King recognized the power of positive actions inspired by personal faith. s he once said, "Everybody can be great because everybody can serve."

Service, as Dr. King understood from his deeply held religious convictions, is a way for everyone to become better human beings. It allows one to focus on something outside of one's own needs, and to feel the joys of the spirit that come from giving. Others down through history have given us so much.

Please join me and millions of others across Texas and the nation as we celebrate Dr. King's birthday and honor his legacy by volunteering Jan. 21.

Guest Commentary One person's viewpoint

Is primary voting primarily for primates?

The non-system of primaries and caucusing is fascinating, possibly because, like John Kerry's self-invented war record, it is a great mystery. However, after much study one can figure out how the typical primary caucus works.

In the rural South, of course, there is no mystery - One Party, One Primary, One Folk.

But in New England, the home of the bean and the codpiece, a citizen enjoys choices, and those funny little states up there in Robert Frost country entertain the world with an eclecticity of Ye Olde New England gatherings to determine, well, not much of anything.

On the appointed day for a pricus or a caucary, the sturdy New England farmers



Mack Hall

and their wives, and the less sturdy New England investment bankers and their significant others, tramp through the snow carrying blunderbusses and Geneva Bibles to gather in houses, schools, and Farmer Ezekiel's barn to invoke folksy ain't-they-quainte Ye Olde New England votingness.

In one corner of the room the Obama supporters, young and energetic, cluster together in their Dockers and Earth Shoes and cable-knit sweaters and say nice things about Change and Hope and a New Day in America.

In another corner of the room the Hillary supporters, both of them wearing red

See Hall, Page 9A

Your Viewpoint Letters to the Editor

Apostasy out of control as well

By DAVID HARIGLE
Jasper

Pastor Richard read your article of 11-20. Money is not the only thing out of control in our churches. But it all points to Apostasy.

The emerging 'new' Christianity - with its substitution of riches for righteousness, a crown for a cross, and an imitation for a new creation - is shown to be a direct result of the wording in new versions.

New versions will prepare the apostate churches of these last days to accept the religion of the Antichrist.

Look at the shootings in Colorado. The man was expelled from the Mission school,

instead of being lead to the Lord. And the church he went to had armed guards walking the halls, instead of the Holy Spirit. This is what our churches are becoming. Again 'Apostasy.'

If you think Washington is bad now, wait till God says enough is enough and lifts His hand from it. America has turned their back on God.

Help can not be found in the Democratic or Republican party. The only hope is to get back to the God of the Bible, and His word.

Letters to editor criteria set

The Jasper Newsboy would like to publish your thoughts and concerns about issues that are important to you.

All Letters to the Editor should be accompanied with the writer's name and daytime telephone number for verification purposes.

Phone numbers will not be published, but the author's name will be.

Under no circumstances will the author's name be withheld.

"Thank You" letters will not be published and will be transferred the the advertising department for an advertisement. Any letters thanking businesses also will be not published.

All letters are subject to editing for newspaper style and clarity, without changing the meaning of the content.

Letters should be limited to 300 words.

Letters endorsing or opposing political candidates are considered political advertising and will be forwarded to the advertising department.

Deadline for letters is 10 a.m. Monday to

be published in the following Wednesday's publication.

Mail letters to:
The Jasper Newsboy
P.O. Box 1419 Jasper, Texas
75951-1419 or e-mail to:
jgalvan@jaspernewsboy.com

"I must say I find television very educational. The minute somebody turns it on, I go to the library and read a good book."

— Groucho Marx

Capital Highlights A summary of the week's significant events in Austin

UIL adopts rules for athlete drug testing

AUSTIN - Lt. Gov. David Dewhurst on Jan. 10 lauded adoption of rules to conduct mandatory, random steroid testing for Texas high school athletes.

"I'm pleased the University Interscholastic League has taken a giant step forward to save lives by adopting fair and balanced testing rules..." he said.

Students who wish to participate in UIL athletics must sign a statement saying they are aware of the health dangers of taking anabolic steroids and promise not to take them.

Parents and guardians will have to sign a statement that reads as follows: "I have read the above information and acknowledge that a prerequisite of my student's participation in UIL athletic activities is that they refrain from illegal steroid use and agree that, if selected, they will submit to testing for the presence of illegal anabolic steroids in their body. I understand that failure to provide accurate and truthful information could subject

the participant in question to penalties as determined by UIL."

Finger-printing program begins

Texas public school employees now must be finger-printed in accordance with a law passed by the 80th Texas Legislature last spring.

Teachers, substitute teachers and administrators are required to submit to national criminal background checks, and fingerprinting is part of that.

The FBI will analyze data gathered in the background checks and the information will be kept on file.

Dewhurst said background checks and fingerprinting have helped in identifying sex offenders and felons working in Texas schools.

Teacher pay study is released

An annual report on Texas public schoolteacher salaries and benefits indicates that teachers' pay is "up slightly" in 2007-2008.



Ed Sterling
Texas Press Association

The report, compiled by the Texas Association of School Boards and the Texas Association of School Administrators, includes data collected from 747 of the state's 1,031 school districts.

The weighted average teacher salary in responding districts is \$46,336 for 2007-08, up 3.2 percent from the 2006-07 average salary of \$44,897.

Among its many findings, the study shows:

- 465 districts pay stipends to teachers with master's degrees.

- 102 districts reported that teachers could qualify for longevity pay.

- 100 districts paid a bonus to new hires for 2007-2008.

Appellate court rules on NCLB

The issue of unfunded federal mandates strains many Texas school districts, so this may indicate change on the horizon:

The U.S. Sixth Circuit Court of Appeals in Cincinnati on Jan. 7

ruled that the federal government might not force states and school districts to spend their own funds to meet the mandates of "No Child Left Behind."

The Washington, D.C.-based National Education Association and nine school districts filed suit in a Michigan district court against the Secretary of Education, seeking among other relief, a judgment declaring that they need not comply with the act's requirements where federal funds do not cover the increased costs of compliance.

School safety audits are coming

Beginning in September 2008, Texas school districts must report the results of their first campus security audits to the Texas School Safety Center.

Texas law requires schools to conduct these safety audits every three years and practice their campus emergency management plans.

Texas Attorney General Greg Abbott encouraged all school districts to team up with law enforcement to annually practice campus safety procedures:

"Having a plan is important, but executing that plan under stress - when seconds count - is critical to saving lives," Abbott said.

States join in death penalty brief

The attorneys general of 19 states joined Texas Attorney General Greg

Abbott and Texas Solicitor General Ted Cruz in a friend-of-the-court brief to the U.S. Supreme Court in a Kentucky case, *Baze v. Rees*.

Texas argues that the four-step lethal injection protocol used as the primary means to carry out capital punishment in Texas and 36 other states does not violate the 8th Amendment to the U.S. Constitution because when properly administered, it is not "cruel and unusual."

A decision in the case may be announced from the bench any time between now and the end of June.

Ed Sterling is director of member services for the Texas Press Association in Austin.