



# WISE COUNTY MESSENGER

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THURSDAY, SEPTEMBER 23, 2010 DECATUR, TEXAS

36 PAGES IN TWO SECTIONS PLUS INSERTS 75¢

## WISE COUNTY



Messenger photo by Joe Dady

**EXODUS** — After being diagnosed with dangerous levels of toxins in their blood and organs, Lisa and Bob Parr and their 7-year-old daughter were forced to leave their home in order to escape emissions leaking from neighboring gas well facilities.

## Flight for survival

### Toxic emissions force family to leave home

First in a series examining industrial pollution in Wise County

By **BRANDON EVANS**

They call her the canary. For more than a year, a range of random illnesses plagued Lisa Parr. "I started to get a little sick," she said. "I thought I was getting the flu. I was just tired and achy and started going through some little problems. "Then I started breaking out in a rash. It literally covered my entire body — my scalp all the way down to the bottoms of my feet," Parr recalled. "I made multiple trips to the emergency room. I had six

doctors working on me, and they couldn't figure out what it was." Today, her arms and legs bear peck-like scars from rashes. Lisa first felt sick in fall 2008. As the immense trees across her 40-acre homestead droppd pecans, Lisa accumulated a host of unexplained ailments. The typical remedies didn't work. "I had nine rounds of steroids in six months," she said. "They just blew me up and didn't get rid of the problem." In May 2008, Lisa married Bob Parr on golden-colored stone steps at his country home in east Wise County in the Allieon community. The back porch overlooks a picturesque setting. Horses and cows

graze lazily in a green pasture. Denton Creek winds along the back of the property, bringing with it a lush river of trees along either side. It seems impossible such a scene would provide the backdrop for the poisoning of the Parr family by a laundry list of industrial neurotoxins. Lisa was treated by eight different doctors over the course of a year. A source of the sickness was never determined. In June 2009, after exhausting everything he knew medically, her internal specialist suggested that something in the environment might be causing her various ailments.

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## BRIDGEPORT

### Going green

#### Grant would provide solar energy for school

By **JULIE NEAL**

Bridgeport schools are pushing forward with a grant that would make going green a reality. Bridgeport School Board wants its high school to lead the county in the green initiative. On Monday night, they voted to apply for a \$1 million grant allowing for 586 solar panels on the high school's roof.

The State Energy Conservation office grant fund has \$15 million to award to schools, and Bridgeport is hoping to receive some of that money.

Eric Cotney, business development manager for Axium Solar, has almost completed the application for the grant and explained the project to the board at Monday's meeting.

The solar panels would weigh less than 3 pounds per square foot and would be lighted down to the roof, instead of bolted down. They're made to withstand 120 mph winds and are covered under warranty for 25 years.

The solar energy would offset 12 percent of the high

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## WISE COUNTY

### Fall means time of fun and festivals

By **JULIE NEAL**

Leaves changing color, warm fires and fresh jam signal that Thursday is the first day of fall for Wise County, and there are plenty of events to mark its arrival.

Each city marks the beginning of the changing season with fanfare and celebrations. This Friday in Greenwood, a 12-acre maze of Hybrid Sudangrass opens after much planning and nurturing of the field.

The maze was designed by Kriston Wilson, who said she wished something like this was available when she was a child. Making sure people can find their way out has been a significant problem.

"If you want to make it good, you have to put as much work into it as someone puts into their job in a year," Wilson said.

The maze is open on weekends, with a special haunted maze Oct. 22 through 24 and Oct. 29 through 31. A pumpkin patch will also be open by the holiday.



Messenger photo by Joe Dady

**PEEKING THROUGH** — Kriston Wilson peeks through the sugar stalks that make up a 12-acre maze in Greenwood. The attraction opens this Friday.

The Paradise Main Street Festival is 9 a.m. to 3 p.m. Saturday. See more in a story in today's *All Around Wise*.

The fourth annual Coal Miner's Heritage Festival is always held

the first weekend in October as a good kickoff for fall. The Bridgeport festival will feature a pet parade and a hot dog eating contest in its full day of activities.

The Oct. 2 festival is a good way

to start fall, because it is not too hot or too cold, said Teri Bland who has helped organize the Coal Miner's Days.

"It helps kick off the fall season, and then we roll right into the holiday season," Bland said.

It features a 5K run, pumpkin painting, a petting zoo, the first 4x4 expo, a farmer's market with fall vegetation, a car show, baking contest and the previous Bridgeport 100 winners.

"It's a growing festival," Bland said. "Each year it just gets a little better."

The next weekend, Oct. 9, Greenwood hosts its 13th Fall Festival with a parade and a fish fry.

"I think it is a good beginning (to fall) because the weather has usually cooled off by then, and we usually draw a really good crowd," said event coordinator Marilynn Collins.

Besides the parade and fish fry, the festival boasts crafts, game

Continued on page 3A

## DECATUR

### Cross project will give scout wings

By **MANDY BOURGEOIS**

Tim Cain looked in the trunk of his mother's car. Inside were 250 metal crosses waiting to be painted.

He, his mother and grandfather had painted one side of 150 crosses Monday, and were planning to paint the rest of the week. The back of each cross has a flag holder for the Stars and Stripes to fly on veterans' holidays. A Confederate flag will fly on holidays for the Confederate veterans.

The 400 crosses will be placed at graves at Oaklawn Cemetery in Decatur Saturday.

The project is Cain's last task before earning Eagle

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#### BREATH OF FRESH AIR

A bout with the swine flu last year damaged his lungs, but Bridgeport's Tanner Hannah is now back on the field.

See page 14A



#### DISTINGUISHED ALUMNUS

Decatur's Roy Eaton last week became Northwest's first Distinguished Alumnus.

See page 5A

#### WEATHER

Thu 86/73

Slight chance of a thunderstorm.

www.wcmessenger.com/weather



WISE COUNTY

# Parker County says take care of tickets

Residents from Wise County owe Parker County more than \$85,000 in fines and fees from a total of 398 outstanding cases in the Parker County Justice of the Peace Courts.

Failure to pay traffic tickets will result in arrest, and a warrant roundup will begin next week.

"Those who fail to pay their traffic tickets and court fees are costing the rest of the tax payers," Parker County Judge Mark Riley said. "We are giving those who owe outstanding fines an opportunity to pay now and avoid further action."

Parker County Justice of the Peace Precinct 3 Suzie Merkle said the four

justice of the peace offices will stay open extra hours from 8 a.m. to 7 p.m. Thursday, Sept. 23, and from 10 a.m. to 2 p.m. Saturday Sept. 25, in addition to the regular Monday through Friday hours, in order for those with fines to pay before the warrant roundup begins.

"People with outstanding fines will be able to go to our website, www.co.parkertx.us, and follow a link to check for their name and fine amount," Merkle said. "There will be an opportunity for those who pay their fines and fees during this amnesty period to have a partial reduction in the total amount owed. The delinquent fine listing will show which justice court the payment

is owed, so that you can contact the appropriate precinct."

Payments can be made online at www.trafficpayment.com or in person at the appropriate JP offices:

■ Justice of the Peace Precinct 1, 1020 E. Texas 199, Springtown, (817) 220-5857;

■ Justice of the Peace Precinct 2, 207 Fort Worth Hwy., Weatherford, (817) 598-0496;

■ Justice of the Peace Precinct 3, 1112 Santa Fe Dr., Weatherford, (817) 598-6192; and

■ Justice of the Peace Precinct 4, 5189 East I-20 Service Rd. North, Willow Park, (817) 441-1071.

# DEATH

## Billie Adam Foster 1923-2010

Funeral for Billie Adam Foster, 84, of Krum is at 10:30 a.m. Thursday, Sept. 23, at the First United Methodist Church in Krum with Bobby Cates and Keith Culples officiating. Burial will be at Jackson Cemetery.

Foster died Sunday, Sept. 19, 2010.

Born Jan. 30, 1926, in Decatur to E.R. Foster and Edith C. Foster, he married Billie Louise Leddy March 21, 1958, in Fort Worth. He and his wife founded Foster's Saddle Shop in 1966. Foster supported local 4-H and FFA organizations, International Professional Rodeo Association, North Texas State Fair and other non-profit organizations. He was a hunter, fisherman,

camper and world traveler.

He was preceded in death by his wife on Feb. 18, 2010; and son and daughter-in-law, Buddie and Jeannie Foster.

He is survived by sons, Mark Foster and wife, Madeline, and Brad Foster; daughters, Sandra North and husband, John, of Slidell, Lisa Foster of Little Elm, Christie Enoch and husband, Terry, of Slidell and Tina Foster-Bergbauer and husband, Craig, of Clare, Ill.; 17 grandchildren; 20 great-grandchildren; and other relatives.

Memorials may be made to a favorite charity.

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September 23, 2010

WISE COUNTY

# Flight for survival ...

Continued from page 2A  
els. And it was barely lower than what it was outside our home."

She showed the results to her doctor, who told her to leave her home within 48 hours.

"The doctor told me right then," she said, pausing as her voice cracked and a tear streamed across her left cheek, "I had to move immediately. Because if I did not, we would have to spend more time and money on hospitalization, on chemotherapy and morticians for my whole family."

On Saturday, Aug. 28, the Parris said goodbye to their formerly idyllic home and moved into Bob's office in Denton. They don't know how long they'll have to stay.

"What we are going through is one of the worst things a family could have to go through," she said. "Having to leave this house and explain to my 7-year-old

daughter that we've been lost out of our house."

Bob and Lisa Parr aren't the sickly type. Bob built his home in 2001. He's enjoyed a long career in stone masonry and raising cattle. His home reflects the rugged, outdoor lifestyle he enjoys. Walls bear the trophies of big-game hunting in the wilds of Alaska. Black bear, mountain lions and elk are mounted on high wooden walls.

"We love it here," Lisa said while sitting in a wooden rocking chair on the back porch and gripping her husband's hand. "We're secluded, private. We just wanted to be left alone, and we've been run out of our house. It's not right. What's even more not right is we thought TCEQ would come out and help us — they would clean up this mess."

"We've had no help. We have someone who is contaminating our air. It has affected our cattle. We've

lost pets. We've lost chickens. We're all sick, and we've gotten no help," she said. "I want them to fix it so we can come home. I just want to come home."

Tony Walker, regional director for TCEQ, said his agency can't shut down polluting facilities. However, it can set the wheels in motion to do so.

"We don't have the authority to shut down (a facility)," Walker said. "But if we have to we can contact the attorney general and ask them to step in."

He said TCEQ might do so if a company has a history of non-compliance and "if there is an eminent, substantial endangerment to the public." The term public "can be only one person."

He said he can't comment specifically on this case because the investigation is ongoing.

Several doctors had told Lisa for some time she needed to leave her home, but

she couldn't convince herself to do it until the symptoms began affecting her husband and daughter.

"It had only been affecting me, so we stayed," Lisa said. "They thought I was super-sensitive. They called me the canary."

"I told them, 'That wasn't funny because eventually the canary died.'"

Other people in the Allison community have suffered adverse health effects similar to the Parris. Several residents are working to get a comprehensive health survey, similar to one conducted at DISH in Denton County.


Aruba was contacted for this story, but Chief Financial Officer Jim Lovett directed comments to Sunwest Communications, its public relations firm. Sunwest didn't contact the Messenger prior to press time.

E-mail Brandon at bevans@wcmessenger.com.

Wise Choices Pregnancy Resource Center and the Decatur F.C.A. invite you to join teens from all over Wise County at

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