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Wells located in Fairfield . . .

XTO modifies gas drilling plan

Saying they listened when Fairfield citizens voiced concerns in January about drilling in the city limits, officials with XTO Energy returned here Thursday night for a town hall meeting and presented a new and improved plan to city administrators and the two dozen or so com-

munity members who attended.

The public meeting was held to review amended proposals to the natural gas well permit requests made by XTO earlier this year, and presented to council members for approval. The city tabled the requests until ques-

tions about the health and safety of city residents could be answered.

At the January meeting, XTO personnel recorded the list of concerns with plans to return and provide answers.

"We listened," says Bobby Stark, environmen-

tal manager for the eastern division. "And the next morning we met and went to work."

New program objectives were presented and promised to "minimize the impact of development and production operations on the citizens of Fairfield; to drill, complete, and operate all wells safely and

effectively; to adhere to all city ordinances; and to maintain good relationships in and around Fairfield."

Major change for the company is the intent to drill 14 new wells, but install only one new surface location.

"When we were first

here we had three L.V. Jones wells, No. 4, No. 6, and No. 3 scheduled," says drilling engineer Derek Gibson. "Those did not sit well with the citizens of Fairfield."

Location of L.V. Jones No. 6 was a concern to

See XTO, p2-a

Deputies arrest 5 on drug charges

An observant husband and wife Freestone county deputy sheriff team made five arrests on drug charges within 20 minutes as they were on their way home in the Dew area.

Making the arrests were Robert and Diana Willis who noticed what they thought was a drug transaction taking place at Dew Truck Stop as they exited I-45 at Dew.

The deputies drove up to a vehicle that they had seen at the truck stop and that

was driven a short distance then stopped, Sheriff Ralph Billings.

Willis and Willis identified themselves and asked permission to search the vehicle, a pickup, and found a small amount of suspected narcotics residue, two pills and a digital scale, the sheriff says.

The deputies arrested Robert Dale Brown, 70, Linwood Dean Durham, 43, and Andrea Norris on

See DEPUTIES, p2-a

Motorcycle wreck kills 53-year-old

A 53-year-old Fairfield man, Ricky Ray Thompson, died Saturday night in a motorcycle crash on FM 488 north of town.

The wreck occurred 5.7 miles north of Fairfield at about 11:20 p.m.

Department of Public Safety Trooper Kyle Purnell reports that Thompson was northbound on a 2001 Harley Davidson motorcycle when he failed to negotiate a left turn on FM 488 and took abrupt corrective action that caused the motorcycle

to flip several times.

The 53-year-old was pronounced dead at the scene by Peace Justice Deborah Hamilton, precinct two.

Purnell reports that Thompson was not wearing a helmet.

Thompson was a native of Gilmer and was a supervisor for EFC Valve Company.

He is survived by a son, brother, sister and two grandchildren.

Funeral services were held Wednesday at Gilmer.

Fairfield cowboy wins state all-around

Fairfield high school junior student Cooper Vandiver combined points from three events to win the All Around Cowboy title last month at the Texas High School Rodeo Association finals and earned a spot in the National High School Rodeo Association finals this month.

Vandiver competed at the THSRA finals at Abilene in team roping, calf roping and cutting.

He placed eighth in the first round of calf roping but failed to make the short go, was 11th in the first round and fourth in the second round to make the short go in team roping and claimed third place in cutting.

Points from the Region IX seasons and state finals added up to the All Around title, for which Vandiver received a trophy saddle and belt buckle.

"I'm going to ride the saddle and I'm wearing the All Around buckle," he says.

He also picked up a buckle for finishing third overall in cutting, which qualified him for the national finals, and for placing second in a go-round—he also receives shirts from Wrangler, a pair of Ariat boots and a Resistol hat.

The FHS junior student is the heeler for team roping partner Shawn Mark Hudson of Tennessee Colony.

Vandiver reports that this is the first year he has made it to the short round in any event at the state finals, which he attributes to practice and the luck of the draw.

"I practiced the same as I always have. This time it worked out," he declares.

The cowboy practices roping 2-3 times a week and, because the cutting horse he rides is owned by a man in Corsicana, he tunes up that part of his game just prior to a competition.

The national rodeo, July 19-25 in Farmington, N.M., features more than

See FAIRFIELD, p8-a



FAIRFIELD HIGH SCHOOL junior student Cooper Vandiver won the All Around Cowboy title last week at the Texas High School Rodeo Association finals in Abilene and qualified to advance to the national finals this month at Farmington, N.M., in cutting.

FCS agent gets quick workload

New Freestone county extension family and consumer sciences agent Sara Mote knows what it means to hit the ground running.

Miss Mote began work June 8, just a week before the 85th annual Freestone County Fair and only days after graduating from Denton's Texas Women's University.

The new agent applied for the position in April and on April 20 her application was approved by county commissioners.

After meeting with commissioners, she traveled back to Denton to complete her course work and in May she received her bachelors degree from TWU with a major in nutrition-food science in business and a minor in business administration.

A few days after graduation, Miss Mote attended a three-week training course where she was mentored by Navarro County extension family and consumer sciences agent Paula Butler.

During this time, she was given the opportunity to watch Mrs. Butler prepare programs for the community and observe the daily activity of a working agent.

"I think normally the training is six-weeks long but with the county fair approaching my training was a bit more intensive," comments Miss Mote.

But she isn't complaining. In a time of rising unemployment nationwide, Miss Mote feels fortunate to have

See FCS, p5-a

Trustees okay teacher raises

Fairfield Independent School District board of trustees approved raises last week of \$1,000 each for all teachers, a step toward bringing salaries up to the state average.

In addition, trustees boosted pay for paraprofessional teacher aides who also hold teaching certificates by \$1,000 a year and added a step on salary schedules for administrators and teachers.

FISD teachers have been paid more than state minimums, but less than the state average, and trustees started a discussion a few months back on bringing salaries up to the average.

The step taken last week is toward getting equal with average pay for teachers in Class AAA districts over three years.

"Due to finances, you

are going to have to chip away at it," superintendent Katie Ryan says. "A \$1,000 raise is a positive step, yet also fiscally responsible."

Cost of the salary increases is roughly estimated at \$250,000.

The district, however, may get some assistance funding the pay raises through federal stimulus money.

The state legislature approved use of federal stimulus money for teacher raises of \$870 per year. The FISD superintendent says the governor has signed off on the legislative action and it is now awaiting federal approval.

Stimulus money would be helpful for the district, but not necessary.

"If we don't get any fed-

See TRUSTEES, p3-a



FAMILY AND CONSUMER science county agent Sarah Mote hit the ground running when she started work just before the Freestone County Fair.

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