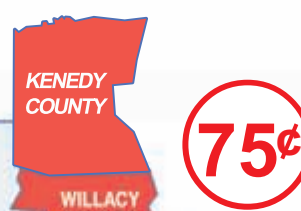


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Local Weather

Week ending January 31, 2010

Temp:	Max.	Min.	Rain
Monday	77	43	
Tuesday	76	43	
Wednesday	76	54	
Thursday	74	65	
Friday	78	69	
Saturday	69	39	
Sunday	60	38	

U.S. Weather Observer
Dickey Caldwell

This is our 90th year, thanks to you!

Raymondville Chronicle

Willacy County News

USPS-456-040

E-mail: ChronicleNews@msn.com

VOL. 90 NO. 5 WEDNESDAY, FEBRUARY 3, 2010 SIXTEEN PAGES IN ONE SECTION 192 N. 4TH ST., RAYMONDVILLE, TEXAS 78580 • (956) 689-2421 • FAX: (956) 689-6575

BOREDOM LED TO \$25,000 IN DAMAGE TO PROPERTY RISD Police charge 4 with vandalism in Myra Green Middle School case

Four local teens have been arrested by Raymondville ISD School Police and charged with the January 23 vandalism of the new Myra Green Middle School, now under construction, and the high school football stadium. School police chief Oscar Gutierrez said two of the teens are considered adults based on their ages while the others are juveniles. And 3-of-the-4 who painted graffiti in red and black paint at the school are girls.

Jamie Lynn Moreno, 17, who lives at La Luz Apartments is one of the girls arrested and charged with two counts of felony destruction of school property. Her bond was set at \$40,000 and she remains in the Willacy County Jail following her arrest.

Also arrested and charged with two counts of felony vandalism is Raven Villegas, 18, of North Third Street and San Francisco. She is also being held in Willacy County Jail on bonds set at \$40,000.

A 14-year-old girl and a 15-year-old boy were also arrested in connection with these crimes and both were sent to the Darrell Hester juvenile facility in Harlingen where they are being held.

Chief Gutierrez said the motive for the vandalism which did damage estimated at \$25,000 to the new middle school and the football stadium was "boredom".

The teens, Gutierrez said,

were celebrating the 17th birthday of Jamie Lynn Moreno and they decided to attack the school with spray paint.

City police investigator David Robles commented, "Some buy balloons and a cake, others break into the school," to celebrate a birthday.

Chief Gutierrez said, "Things have changed, kids have changed. I'm 40, I was raised on the Thomas Ranch north of town. We were poor and we rode the school bus to school and back. We didn't have airconditioning and it was hot. We ate rice and beans but we fed the horses and later I learned to fix windmills. God forbid that you would sass a teacher. You gotta appreciate Mr. Knipp and Mr. West (Myra Green principal and high school principal). I do."

Gutierrez said he had an idea who might be responsible for the graffiti painting spree based on personal knowledge gained in five years.

"Then we got a lead and gathered enough evidence for probable cause to bring them in."

The chief said that a new law took effect in Texas in Sept., 2009 which enhances (doubles) the punishment for vandalism when schools or churches are involved.

Willacy County District Attorney Bernard Ammerman recently announced tougher punishment for these crimes and his message is on page 15

of this newspaper.

Meanwhile, city police charged a 15-year-old boy with four counts of vandalism after he admitted spray painting the old Cashway laundromat building at 300 West Wood Ave., the old Whitewing Hotel building at 400 east Hidalgo Ave., an Allied waste dumpster at 240 south King (La Luz Apts) and the Professional Insurance office at 185 S. 8th Street. The teen was charged and then turned over to his parents after an investigation by Lyford Police resulted in a statement that he did the damage.

In the Myra Green vandalism the buildings were painted at "twilight" on a Saturday evening by the girls who were loitering at the construction site of the new \$20 million middle school next to the football stadium.

Chief Gutierrez said more youth activities might help to prevent such senseless acts of vandalism from kids who have no respect for the property of others but, "I don't blame the community. Maybe Boy Scouts and Girl Scouts might help. I don't know."

Pct. 2 Justice of the Peace George Solis is active in repair-ing property damage from spray paint and he uses kids on juvenile probation to do the work with the city and individuals providing the paint and brushes. Property owners who need this kind of help may contact Judge Solis at the American Legion 689-1903.

City manager concerned about drop in sales tax revenue

Raymondville city manager Eleazar "Yogi" Garcia gave a sobering report on declining sales tax revenue at last week's city meeting.

During the first four months of fiscal 2010 (Oct. - Jan) city retail sales tax revenue is off by a combined 9.6 percent. That figure represents a decline of \$39,540 from the amount collected during the first third of 2009.

Expected sales tax revenue for the current year planned in the city budget is \$1.265 million and if retail sales in the city continue at just under 10 percent below last year, the city will have a combined \$121,440 budget short fall for the year.

The sales decline is also bad news for city retailers who have enjoyed sales gains every year since 2005. Stores use retail volume to determine how many employees they can afford to have, how much merchandise they can buy for resale and a host of other expenses.

To Garcia the slumping sales caused by a poor economy is a yellow caution light and not a reason for panic.

"Who knows what may happen?"

It may be that sales will recover and match or exceed those of previous years. I'm bringing this to the commissioners as a matter that should be considered. There is a possibility that we may have \$121,440 less money to spend than was budgeted."

Garcia said that commissioners should keep close eye on the budget and no extra spending should be considered. In fact, the city manager is looking for areas in which spending can be reduced.

When one of the commissioners mentioned paving Garcia replied that city crews will be limited to filling pot holes with calichi and that's it, there will be no money for street paving unless something turns up in the Obama federal stimulous budget.



HALL OF FAME INDUCTEES were Mr. and Mrs. Joe Pennington. Shown l to r are Mitch Thomas, Mr. and Mrs. Pennington, Eddie Rodriguez, President of the Stock show.



STOCK SHOW QUEEN MICHELLE ROMO AND FIRST RUNNER UP CARI KLOSTERMANN

Sebastian man, who threatened wife with a gun, chased down and arrested after hitting deputy's car

At 11:10 a.m. Tuesday Willacy County Sheriff's deputies were called to a disturbance in Sebastian in reference to a man with a gun. When officers arrived at the scene they were informed that the suspect, Eric Vasquez, had left the area in a red Grand Am and was in possession of a weapon, type or caliber unknown. The wife of the suspect stated he threatened her with the weapon. Officers searched the area but were unable to locate the suspect. He was believe to be headed to Harlingen where he has relatives.

About 15-20 minutes later a deputy was on his way home for lunch and was headed East on FM 490 when he saw the suspect's vehicle coming West on FM 490. As the vehicle passed the deputy, he made a U-turn and the suspect's vehicle accelerated and the chase began. The suspect's

vehicle continued West on FM 490 to Expressway 77 and on to Bus. 77 where it turned South and raced into the City of Lyford. At this time other units took up the chase as well, including DPS, Deputies, and Constables units.

The suspect's vehicle drove into Lyford in the area of 2nd and Park St., where it circled the block several times before going to County Road 200 then South to Sebastian where the suspect continued south until he reached CR 200 and FM 506 then he turned west. He drove west on FM 506/FM 2629 until he reached FM 1425 (Kika De La Garza Rd./Sugar Mill Rd.) At FM 1425 suspect turned south until he reached the levy where he turned east.

He then headed east on the levy at a high rate of speed with units in pursuit. Some units broke away from the chase to race toward the Expressway to try and cut the vehicle off at the

other end of the levy. As they arrived at the floodway and Exp. 77 and went under the floodway they could see the suspect's vehicle approaching from the west. As the suspect's vehicle exited the levy he drove around one vehicle and hit a deputy's car head-on, causing damage to the front end of the patrol car. All the other units arrived and the suspect was taken from the vehicle at gunpoint and placed under arrest. The deputy was taken to the hospital to be checked out, but was treated and released.

While searching the suspect's person for weapons he was found to have marijuana and a substance believed to be cocaine. The suspect was transported to Willacy County Jail for processing and his vehicle was impounded. The weapon was not found, it was believed to have been tossed out. However, a clip containing

See **Sebastian man...** on Page 4



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