

MEDINA VALLEY TIMES

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\$1

County joins EAA in water battle

Sasha D. Robinson
Staff Writer

Medina County as well as two cities join a lawsuit against the Edwards Aquifer Authority (EAA).

On July 23, an injunction was filed against

EAA for transferring process moving water in the Edwards aquifer region.

The county joins EAA and cities of Castroville and Hondo in the battle against the Uvalde County Underground Water

Conservation District's (UCUWCD) lawsuit that wants to change the 2001 conversion rule.

County Judge Chris Schuchart said the county hasn't determined the amount they would con-

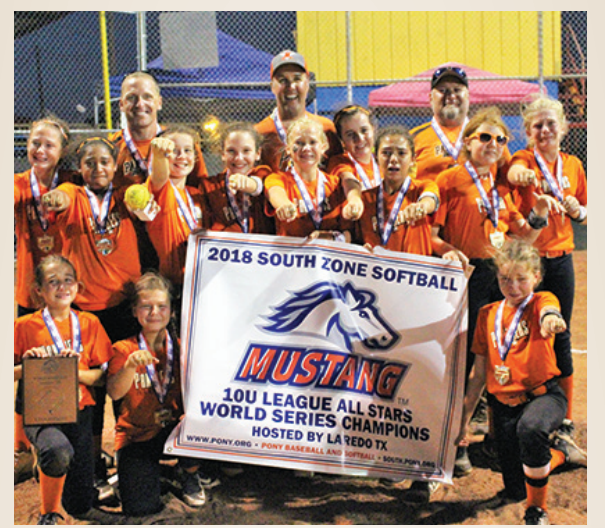
tribute to the help fund legal fees in the EAA's defense of the conversion rule. Castroville authorized the contribution of \$5,000.

"We will work through

See "Grant" on page 2



On Saturday, the Medina County Fair Association crowned its queen, Brianna Gonzales (middle), a junior from Medina Valley High School. In the picture from left to right are first runner up Victoria Juarez, Princess Neeley Frazier, Gonzales, Duchess Trinity Wanat, and Miss Congeniality Aubrey Chernak. The girls were selected from a group of eight contestants. The queen's court will go on to represent Medina County in the upcoming Medina County Fair in September as well as other events around the county until next year. (Photo by Sasha D. Robinson)



World Series champs
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Farm aid set
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Election Results

TEXAS SENATE District 19 2018 SPECIAL ELECTION

Candidate	Absentee Voting Total	Early Voting	Election Voting	Election Totals
TEXAS SENATE, District 19				
Democrat				
Pete Gallego (D)	106	170	91	367
Roland Gutierrez (D)	38	65	38	141
Charles Urbina Jones (D)	10	21	11	42
Tomas Uresti (D)	7	9	5	21
Republican				
Jesse Alaniz (R)	11	40	8	59
Peter Flores (R)	156	822	748	1,726
Carlos Antonio Raymond (R)	30	61	23	114
Liberetarian				
Tony Valdivia (L)	10	12	7	29

RESULTS ARE UNOFFICIAL UNTIL CANVASSED

•••NEWS BRIEFS•••

Devine Golf Course safe for six months

After an outpouring of support from community members and council members, Devine formally agreed Tuesday to help the golf course survive while it explores other options.

City council authorized interim city administrator Dora Rodriguez to enter into a six-month lease agreement with the now defunct Devine Golf Association (DGA).

The lease agreement states that the city will take over the Devine Golf Course with the intent to acquire all assets of the DGA.

The six-month period will allow the city to explore all available options including any outside investors that would like to make an offer on the course. City attorney Tom Cate said it also allows the city time to tie up any loose ends like outstanding equipment leases, the nine golf course employees and any city business.

Whether those employees continue working for the golf club is left up to the terms settled upon by the city and DGA.

The lease agreement came after an hour long public hearing where residents and former DGA board members voiced their support for the city taking over the golf course.

Councilman Steve Lopez originally made a motion to take over the golf course for two years, but residents shot the idea down because the lengthy term crippled outside investors from making offers. It also called on the DGA to remain active, which board members like Eileen Woolsey opposed.

"The association alone has already gone through enough," Woolsey said. "Enough is enough. Association and city council-- it shouldn't be like that anymore."

Ernest Munoz, who said he has a group that wants to make an offer on the course, suggested the city put out a request for proposals for the golf course within those six months.

Local attorney Tommy Ramirez said there were still some issues he had with the lease agreement, but overall seemed hopeful.

"I think in the end, I think we're ready to make an offer to the city if the city is ready to hear one," Ramirez said.

Ramirez also told council members that the city can legally decline to take on the DGA's debt since the group is in the process of dissolving.

Ramirez also made an offer to purchase the golf course in 2017, but the DGA board selected Shannon Rackley-Rangel's offer.

Mayor William Herring said the city will negotiate with the intent of keeping the property an 18-hole golf course.

"The main thing city council wants is to have a golf course," Herring said. "We must have a golf course. Without it-- that'll separate the city."

The Medina Valley Times will publish a follow up story next week with additional comments from the public hearing and any other updates on the golf course next week.

Medina Lake debate continues

Kenric Ward
Contributing Writer

Is Medina Lake half empty or half full? Are water levels steady or falling?

A long-running skirmish over these questions resurfaced recently when a conservation group accused the Bexar Medina Atascosa (BMA) Water Control and Improvement District of mismanaging the lake-reservoir.

"This lake is dropping fast," declares Henning Eilert-Olsen, president of Save Medina Lake (SML). "What we don't know is how much is due to natural leakage, evaporation or [open] gates."

The Texas Water Development Board rates Medina Lake as 49 percent full. With a capacity of 254,823 acre-feet, its current conservation storage is 125,265 acre-feet.

The U.S. Geological Survey (USGS) listed the official water level eleva-



tion at 1,038.14 feet on July 25. The lake began the month at 1,040.12 – meaning a drop of 1.98 feet across the surface of the 18-mile-long lake during that span.

Since August 2017, reservoir storage at Medina has dropped precipitously – from 205,000 acre-feet to under 130,000 acre-feet, according to USGS.

"Due to the current drought, natural leakage and one of the valves in the Medina Lake dam being open, the lake is losing approximately 500 acre-feet per day," Eilert-Olsen contends.

An important recharger for the giant Edwards Aquifer and a recreational gem for the region, Medina Lake's water levels are closely watched by conservation groups. Over the years, SML has filed numerous public-records request seeking information on district policies and operations.

BMA office manager Bonnie Tapp reported that 119.01 acre-feet are discharged daily through irrigation canals. She said the Natalia-based district has permits to release 46,026 acre-feet for irrigation annually.

"BMA wants a full reservoir just as much as any waterfront owner or business," Tapp said. "We strive to improve efficiency, keeping water conservation a priority all while ensuring farmers have the water they need when they need it."

SML counters that irrigated acreage in the district has been in steady decline. The group says water sales in 2017 covered less than 10,000 acres, roughly one-third what the BMA water permit allows.

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Above is the Medina Valley 10U All-Stars team including Ashlynn Farris, Mikayla Zinsmeyer, Addison Friesenhahn, Anistan Stivors, Kynlee Crisp, Kayla Guinther, Kylie Schutze, Charliann Slaughter, Morgan Castiglione, Avery Nash, Arielle Chichester, and Isabel Abitz. This group is coached by Matt Castiglione, Blane Nash, and Keith Guinther. (Courtesy Photo)

MVYBA earns World Series title

The Medina Valley Youth Baseball Association (MVYBA) girls entered the World Series undefeated with a record of 8-0.

The Medina Valley 10U All-Star Softball Team made MVYBA history this summer, bringing home the coveted championship title from the 2018 PONY South Zone World Series tournament. In early June, the 10U team traveled to Schertz, Texas to compete in the PONY South Zone Sectional Tournament.

The girls brought home the sectional championship and advanced on to the PONY South Zone Central

Texas Regional Tournament in Georgetown, Texas. On the first day of the regional tournament, the girls lost to the Hutto Hippos, forcing them to win four games back to back on Saturday, followed by three games back to back on Sunday to win the tournament. This included beating Hutto twice in the championship game.

Charliann Slaughter was named tournament MVP for her work behind the plate, catching all 9 games throughout the tournament.

Over the course of the eight World Series games, the team only gave up 12

runs and scored 57 runs. Nash pitched 34 innings, with 64 strike outs.

The Medina Valley 10U All Star softball team had a season record of 20-2. With only 56 runs allowed and 180 runs scored they boasted a team batting average of 0.371 for the all-star season. Nash pitched a total of 87 innings, with 174 strike outs and earned the MVP title of the World Series tournament.

This team of girls made history not only by winning the PONY World Series but also by bagging gold medals in both the Regional and Sectional tournaments.

Other cities join the fray against Uvalde

Continued from page 1

them to try and get this rule to stay intact," Schuchart said.

Schuchart said the EAA rule states if property has one acre foot of water that is used for agricultural purposes, that same one-acre foot can be converted and sold if the land is purchased used for a different purpose like industrial use.

"Uvalde is saying EAA does not have the authority to make the rule and the rule is invalid," said Schuchart. "Farmers should not be able to use that base water for other uses if they sell or change the use of their land."

Roland Ruiz, general manager of EAA, said the UCUWCD brought the lawsuit against EAA because it believes the conversion rule will put a strain on other aquifers in the area that sustain municipal uses.

"Their position is our board acted outside of its authority by adopting the rules," Ruiz said. "We addressed their concern and as long as they are in the Edwards region, they can get water."

In 2001, Ruiz said the changing landscape of the economy region has dictated we consider water use.

"We are trying to protect

the property rights of the people who have Edwards rights," Ruiz said.

He said farmers are allowed two acre feet of water for every acre of land the farmer uses for agricultural purposes.

"So if you got 100 acre farm, they would get 200 acre feet of water," Ruiz said. "The catch is one acre foot of land would always have to stay with the farm, but the other acre of water could be marketed or sold."

Ruiz said the conversion rule was created because EAA wanted to know what happened to the water when farm land was sold to businesses or to subdivisions.

"Our concern was if the water stayed with the land, no one can use it," said Ruiz. "17 years ago, the board adopted rules for land owners to sell the water or apply it somewhere else as long as they can prove the land had changed its purpose of use."

Water rights historically were used for agriculture can be transferred to others uses, such as businesses or residential. Schuchart said the county will lose out on an economic boon if the rule is eliminated.

"I think if they would have done this in [1993], they would never have believed the growth in Bexar and Medina coun-

ties," said Schuchart. "If EAA loses it does not affect them because their rule just goes away. The people in Medina and Bexar counties lose if we do not do something about this."

Luana Buckner, chairperson for the EAA board, encouraged the county to get involved with the lawsuit.

"We are just defending the act," said Buckner. "This is a property right. We need permit holders in this lawsuit."

Schuchart said he has talked to Bexar County Judge Nelson Wolff and Comal County Judge Sherman Krause and both said they did not know about the law suit.

Lake level at below half

Continued from page 1

As part of its reservoir and irrigation improvement program, BMA has installed more than 33,420 feet of piping so far this year. An additional 16,065 feet are scheduled to be in place by year-end.

While they may not see eye to eye on much, BMA and SML agree that pipes are far more efficient than exposed canals, which lose water to evaporation.

From 2002-2017, the water district said it spent \$17,136,122 on capital improvements in and around the lake.

As for those "dam valves," Tapp said the Medina Lake gates were closed from Aug. 7, 2017 to May 29, 2018. During that time, water storage capacity dropped 54,100 acre-feet.

"That is an average of about 183 acre-feet per day while Medina valves were closed," Tapp noted.

SML suspects that open valves are exacerbating the lake's water loss.

"The main problem with BMA is that they do not measure the water

released from Medina Lake. They only measure what is released from [the smaller] Diversion Lake into the irrigation canals, which of course is meaningless as long as the gates in Medina Dam remain open," Eilert-Olsen wrote in an e-mail.

Tapp responded with a detailed explanation:

"The Medina Reservoir is part of our irrigation reservoir system. This system transports irrigation water to a release point where the water is measured as it goes into the canal system. This measurement is then reported to the Texas Commission on Environmental Quality (TCEQ) and is the only required measurement that BMA must report. We follow TCEQ regulations on measuring and reporting all water taken and used under our permit for allotted water."

Tapp went on to say: "It is unfortunate that SML is unable to grasp this two-reservoir system with proper metering of legal use of water under our permit. SML has been supplied this information in an open records

request." Tapp suggested that BMA's critics look northward.

"It is our hope that SML would be concerned about the damming of tributaries in the recharge basin, and the effects this has on the inflow into the Medina Reservoir. SML has been myopic and refuses to look into the Medina River Watershed and the damming of the relatively small recharge basin of 634 square miles," Tapp said.

Eilert-Olsen credits the current BMA board with being more responsive in recent months, but his group isn't convinced that people are getting the full story about conditions at the lake.

"We urge the public to contact their local and state representatives to make sure BMA is forced to have policies in place to prevent draining Medina Lake," SML said in a statement last month.

Tapp encourages residents to check the agency's website - bmawater.org -- for updates on projects, status of the canal system and general information.

HUNT HONDO

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AUGUST 11 AT PALOMA PACHANGA

Agents of Medina County

TEXAS FARM BUREAU INSURANCE

AUTO / HOME / LIFE

PALOMA PACHANGA

HONDO HOME Sweet HOME

THIS IS GOD'S COUNTRY

8am

Outrun the Gun 5K

9am - 1pm

Skeet Shooting
Kids Fishin'
Archery Competition
Dove 101 Seminar

10am

Kids Camo Contest

7pm

Parisa Pachanga & Dove Dance featuring
Landry Scott Ritter & Double Bogey

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My name is **Lori (Burriss) Orr.** My family and I grew up in Lytle, Texas. I have been diagnosed with a rare endocrine disease called **Cushing Syndrome.** I am asking for your thoughts and prayers. I'm currently in University Hospital awaiting treatment.

A website has been established to assist with medical expenses. My husband took a leave of absence from employment to help me. We have no medical insurance. You can contact us at one of the following:
Dan or Lori Orr • P.O. Box 431 • Lytle, TX 78052
texassweetpea71@yahoo.com

[gofundme "LoriOrrCushingSyndrome"](https://www.gofundme.com/LoriOrrCushingSyndrome)

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