

News

Llano ISD earns first 'exemplary' rating

By MICHAEL FREEMAN
HIGHLAND LAKES NEWSPAPERS

For the first time in district history, the Llano Independent School District earned the highest accountability rating available from the state.

The Texas Education Agency gave LISD an "Exemplary" district rating Friday after its annual assessment of Texas public schools and school districts. It also bestowed "Exemplary" campus ratings to Llano Elementary School and Llano Junior High School. Llano High School

and Packsaddle Elementary School in Kingsland received "Recognized" ratings.

"I'm really touched," said Dennis Hill, LISD superintendent. "It's a wonderful thing. The staff and district has come so far. I feel good for everybody."

LISD is one of 239 districts across the state to receive an "Exemplary" rating this year. There are more than 1,200 school districts in Texas.

"The community ought to feel proud," said Tim Glover, LISD assistant superintendent. "The school district is a reflection of the

community."

Glover and Hill said the district's staff, teachers and students should feel commended from Friday's honor.

A school can receive one of four possible rankings: "Exemplary," "Recognized," "Academically Acceptable" and "Academically Unacceptable."

Last year, LISD was rated as "Recognized," while Packsaddle Elementary and Llano Elementary earned "Exemplary" ratings, and Llano Junior High and Llano High School received "Recognized" ratings.

MFISD: 'Recognized' in 2010 accountability ratings

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Highland Lakes Elementary School and Marble Falls Middle School were also recognized campuses, the second highest rating, while Marble Falls High School, recognized in 2009, was academically acceptable in 2010. Falls Career High School also received an academically acceptable rating—though alternative schools in Texas only receive acceptable or unacceptable ratings.

The TEA assigns one of four accountability ratings to school districts and individual campus-

es based on student test scores factoring graduation and dropout rates.

To earn exemplary status in a Texas school district, at least 90 percent of students must pass the TAKS exams, 95 percent of high school seniors must graduate or continue a fifth year, and the dropout rate for middle school students must be 1.8 percent or less. Recognized status requires a total TAKS passing rate of 80 percent, graduation or continued education rates of 85 percent, and a middle school dropout rate of 1.8 percent—each of which were slightly raised from 2009.

However, the state also began factoring in projected future TAKS success this year that helped boost accountability ratings statewide.

Under the Texas Projection Measure (TPM), the TEA can project passing scores for students that did not meet passing standards on current year TAKS tests.

The calculations combine a student's performance on a current TAKS, their previous year's performance, and TAKS scores from all other students on that campus to formulate a growth measure.

The equation may be one factor why 67.6 percent of Texas school districts earned an exemplary or recognized

accountability rating in 2010—the first year more than half earned either since a reintroduction of the ratings in 2004—and more than 19 percent earned an exemplary rating in 2010, a 100 percent increase from last year's 9.5 percent and first double-digit percentage since 2004.

The projection measure may not last, however. The TEA has already notified districts the TPM may be revised because of recent criticism.

"From what I hear the state is receiving a lot of criticism for the TPM," said Dr. Jim Boyle, MFISD interim superintendent. "The Texas Education Agency is looking into adjusting the use of the TPM in the future."



PHOTO BY GRANT BLACK/CALGARY HERALD
Barrel Racing champion Savanah Reeves celebrates her \$100,000 winnings at the Calgary Stampede in July.

Racer: Wins Stampede

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to be in Nampa at 7 a.m. on the 19th," her mother said.

Her mom and sister being gone wouldn't have been a big problem, but Reeves' husband Matt was in Salinas, Calif. competing in another rodeo. She ended up sharing her celebration with her good friend Lindsay Sear, who finished second in the barrels.

"It was still exciting," Reeves said in reference to not having her family there. "I was kind of in shock that I had won it. I was speechless at the moment. It would have been cool if someone had been there though."

Just as shocking as winning the Stampede at such a young age is that she won it on the back of a horse she hadn't ridden consistently. Last year her main horse Moon broke a leg in a "freak accident in the pen," Stevens said, and they were forced to put the experienced animal down. Luckily, she had a very solid backup in Thunder, a family horse she rode last year in Calgary.

"I rode Thunder the whole time. I just got him back a couple of weeks ago. He came on really strong at that arena. He really likes it there," Reeves said. "Thunder and Moon are different horses, but I know what I need to do on him."

The trip finally ended on Friday when Reeves landed her highway rig back at home in Cross Plains, southeast of Abilene. After six weeks on the road she was ready to be home, and she said her horses would be happy to be back on solid ground every day, too.

"It's always less stressful at home. They (her horses) are more comfortable there. They travel well, but all the miles are hard on them," Reeves said. "They will be happy to get home to see some green grass."

Other than running in the Texas Circuit finals in January, Reeves should be grounded for a while, but that doesn't mean she won't be working.

"I don't really have any big plans," Reeves said. "But I'm working as a nurse whenever they need me at the hospital."

LakeFest volunteers needed

If you want to be part of the party Aug. 13 to 15 when LakeFest 2010 transforms Lake Marble Falls into its alter ego as roaring racetrack, plenty of spots are still waiting to be filled on the volunteers list.

The Marble Falls/Lake LBJ Chamber of Commerce just asks that you provide your name and

contact information for organizers.

One to five hour shifts at the front and back gates and at drink and token booths are open

Volunteers in the latter need to be comfortable using a cash register.

Chamber offices are located at 916 Second St., Marble Falls or you can call 830.693.2815.

G'Shoals Pancake Breakfast Saturday

The semi-annual Granite Shoals Volunteer Fire Department Auxiliary Pancake Breakfast Fundraiser will be held 7 to 11 a.m. Saturday, Aug. 7 at the fire station, 8410 RR. 1431 W.

The cost of a breakfast with side meats, fruit juice and a drink is \$5 for adults and \$3 for children age 3 to 12. Younger children eat free.

A feature of this year's benefit for the GSVFD is a raffle, tickets \$5 each or \$20 for five. Prizes come from a long list of local businesses including

'Crazy Games' day camp at LBJ park

Hill Country Memorial Wellness Center's "Crazy Games" summer day camp will take place through Aug. 6 at Lady Bird Johnson Park.

For children ages five through 12, the camp runs from 7:30 a.m. to 5:30 p.m. Daily swimming at the park's pool is included.

The final session that runs from Aug. 9-13 will be camping and fishing.

Parents should call the Wellness Center at 830.997-1355 or stop by 1006 S. SH 16 for more information or to enroll their children.

Chili's, Showbiz Cinemas, Rockhoppers, Pro-Cuts, Traditions Cabinetry, Mustang Lube, Bach's Backyard Outfitters, Horseshoe Bay Resort, Party Makers, Walker's Artistic Granite and Alexis Granite Design.

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