

The Bandera PROPHEET

January 28, 2022

Countywide burn ban in effect

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The Bandera Prophet

Bandera County commissioners yesterday unanimously approved a burn ban yesterday. Although KDBI (Keetch Byram Drought Index) measurements place Bandera mid-range for dry conditions, Fire Marshal Jason Rutherford said the numbers are deceiving.

“In my opinion it’s become a public safety hazard,” Rutherford said. Referencing a fire two Saturdays ago on Hwy. 173 N., Rutherford said the county dodged a bullet.

“We got lucky,” Rutherford told commissioners, adding the blaze started from a burn pile started four days prior.

Rutherford said the Texas A&M Forest Service have been monitoring the county, sharing his concerns about 100-hour fuels, which are measured by the Texas Fire Danger map. Produced by the National Fire Danger Rating System, the map factors weather, topography and ground fuels to predict a five-day fire danger rating map. When the fuels get below 50 percent, it’s pretty serious, Rutherford said, recommending the burn ban.

“Being new, you don’t know that every time we put a burn ban on we get rain,” Pct. 2 Commissioner Bobby Harris said prophetically, as the county received overnight showers. “You’ll get the phone calls, but it’s not safe.”

Expressing a personal thank you to Rutherford and the volunteer fire departments, County Judge Richard Evans said the Hwy. 173 fire was between the Sheriff’s Office and his home.

“They evacuated my wife...the fire went through my fence about two feet,” Evans said, adding if the fire had jumped the highway, it would

have placed houses in Indian Waters in peril. “The fire departments cannot be thanked enough for the job they did.”