

The Bandera PROPHEET

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Commissioners Court Briefings

*Commissioners consider iPads; county trash collection; tourism;
Sheriff's Office and EMS reports*

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The Bandera Prophet

Necessity is the mother of invention. Requesting the use of the courthouse lawn, Karen Osman has proposed a community rain dance. Set for Aug. 20, from 10 a.m. to noon, the optimistic itinerary includes Native American dancers, as well as traditional Polish song and prayer. The event is open to the public.

"If it starts raining, I promise I'm going to stay past noon," Osman told commissioners, who unanimously approved the event.

~ In other business, commissioners came to a consensus to investigate going electronic, pending approval of the next fiscal year's final budget. In lieu of issuing paper packets with reports and proposals before each commissioners court session, the information may be loaded onto an iPad or Android tablet.

"We kill a lot of oak trees every meeting," Pct. 4 Commissioner Jordan Rutherford said.

County Judge Richard Evans acknowledged there would be pros and cons, however deadlines would need to be firm.

"The main thing for it to work, is we have to get things timely," Evans said.

The cost is expected to hover around \$6,400.

~ The Bandera County Convention and Visitors Bureau Executive Director Patricia Moore reported 75,000 solar eclipse viewing glasses had shipped, in preparation for the two eclipses that will take place in 2023 and 2024. Moore said the glasses will be available to anyone who wants to buy a minimum of 50 at 30 cents each, with a potential resale value of \$2 each.

CVB Board Director Greg Hicks reported international travel was returning to the county, and despite the condition of the river, tourism is doing well.

~ County Auditor Darryl Sadler studied a four-cycle billing report for the county's four garbage compactor stations. Last month, commissioners noted big losses at each station. Sadler said pricing with waste company Republic Services was not the culprit, as their billing had not changed. It appeared the disparity boiled down to the weight and volume of open top containers, versus bagged garbage.

Evans said operators were not supposed to accept commercial waste, only household trash.

"I have seen roofers go out there and dump stuff," Evans said, adding the county may have to look into charging more per cubic yard.

Pct. 2 Commissioner Bobby Harris said the revenue at the Lakehills station had increased, and he attributed the rise to a new operator. Harris said the previous operator was apparently not billing appropriately, charging too little and allowing too much, as customers are not required to weigh what they claim is a cubic yard.

"A cubic yard is not very big," Pct. 1 Commissioner Bruce Elikor said. Evans said he did not want to punish people who bring bagged trash with across-the-board price increases, because of people taking advantage of open-topped garbage.

"This is not a profit making thing," Evans said. "We also don't want taxpayers to subsidize - it should be self-sufficient."

~ In his monthly report, Sheriff Dan Butts said during July, deputies responded to 606 calls for service; travelled 29,779 miles; and averaged

13.35 minutes arrival time from tone to on scene. The Sheriff's Office made six felony arrests; 11 misdemeanor arrests; and investigated 27 property crimes and 43 crimes against a person. Butts said there were 6,159 calls to and from county dispatch; 1,085 incoming 911 calls; and 16 calls county deputies responded to inside the city limits.

"That's more than we normally make," Butts said, adding he was unsure why there was an increase.

Deputies served 84 warrants; booked 56 people into the county jail; and the average inmate population was 69, with six of those being contracted inmates from other counties. Butts said 29 people in the jail, plus three employees, either had or had been exposed to Covid. He said he was holding off on allowing more contract inmates until the situation was under control.

There were 405 animal related calls; 26 dogs and six cats were picked up by animal control; the average dog population in the animal control facility was 15; the average cat population was three.

Giving a two-month report, EMS Director Shannon Griffin said for May, EMTs responded to 256 calls for service; travelled 12,655 miles, clocking 1.05 average minutes for tone to response time, and 9.54 minutes on average for tone to on scene.

In June, EMTs responded to 232 calls for service; travelled 13,258 miles; and clocked 1.13 average minutes for tone to response time, and 10.03 minutes on average for tone to on scene.

Compared to last year, Griffin said the county EMS was about 25 percent higher than last year for service calls.