

The Bandera PROPHECY

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In memory of Mike, Bridlegate residents pick up on the roads

By Robert Brischetto

Mike Stiborik and his neighbors from the new Bridlegate Ranch were fed up with people throwing trash out as they drove by their subdivision along Bottle Springs/English Crossing Road. Since trash pickup along a road right-of-way is not a service provided by the county, they knew it would require neighborhood volunteer action. In January of 2022, they organized a dozen neighbors for a road pickup.

Mike led the Bridlegate residents to the county commissioners' regular monthly meeting and proposed a voluntary road-adoption program for county roads similar to the one that the Texas Department of Transportation (TxDOT) had been doing since 1985 on state highways. More than 3,800 groups of volunteers are reported as participants in the state's Adopt-a-Highway program, 26 of them in Bandera County. Bandera County Judge Richard Evans responded to the request by Bridlegate residents by appointing a committee of residents to work with Commissioner Bruce Elikor and Roads Superintendent John Andrade to set it up. Following the TxDOT model, the committee fashioned an Adopt-a-County-Road program. Andrade noted the county maintains 430 miles of county roads. That's a lot to cover, but the roads near Bridlegate Ranch were a place to start.

Following the lead of Mike's group, the Bridlegate Trash Pandas adopted a two-mile road segment with Mark Lacy as coordinator. Another group organized by Bridlegate board member Barbara Harris adopted a county road segment near their subdivision. Madrona Ridge residents had been picking up along Whartons Dock Road for a couple of years at the entrance to their subdivision with Dan Wethor as coordinator. They adopted two two-mile segments.

It took two years to work its way through the county bureaucracy, but Mike was able to witness the adoption of 10 miles of county roads before he died on Aug. 18 of this year, at age 67, after an operation. On Oct. 25, 43 people gathered at the entrance to Bridlegate Ranch to honor Mike's vision, cleaning the six-miles of adopted roadway. Among the participants were Mike's widow (Linda Stiborik), Mike's sister (Theresa Fontana) and friend (Margaret Ferguson), his daughter (Kelley Stilman), and granddaughter (Kaylee Stilman).

Andrade added a sign memorializing the Bridlegate road adoptions in Mike's name. He also committed to have the county follow the cleanups with mowing.

If you'd like to complete the vision that Mike had for Bandera County: identify or form a volunteer group and contact John Andrade (jandrade@banderacounty.org) to adopt two miles of a county road segment. Or adopt a state highway segment by contacting the area coordinator, Priscilla Vasquez at 210-615-5912 or email Priscilla.Vasquez1@txdot.gov. In either case, you can contact us locally by email for assistance: dontmakewatebandera@gmail.com.