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Local area schools fare well in latest TEA ratings

By Ken Vargas

Earlier this month, the Texas Education Agency (TEA) released its annual accountability rating of school districts in Texas.

All of the public schools in the area covered by the Slaughter Creek Reporter ranked Academically Acceptable or higher and six schools improved their scores from 2007.

Four area elementary schools earned TEA's highest rating of Exemplary, including Baranoff, Clayton and Kiker schools in Austin and Elm Grove Elementary in Buda.

Bowie High School raised its rating by TEA to "Recognized," as did

Menchaca Elementary School in Austin and Barton Middle School and Buda Elementary School in Buda.

But some schools ratings fell too.

Both Bailey and Small Middle Schools were rated as "Recognized" in 2007 but only "Acceptable" this year.

Cunningham Elementary School also fell to "Acceptable."

The Texas Education Agency (TEA) releases yearly accountability ratings for all school districts in Texas and this year rated the Austin Independent School District (AISD) as Academically Acceptable.

For a list of local area ratings and their TEA scores, see page 2.



Baranoff Elementary School is one of four local schools to earn the Texas Education Agency's highest accountability rating of "Exemplary." Other local schools earning TEA's highest rating include Kiker and Clayton Elementary Schools in Austin and Elm Grove Elementary School in Buda.

As Hays County works to fund FM 1626 expansion, Travis County must wait on the State Legislature to do the same

By Tamirra Stewart

On Highway 1626 from Bliss Spillar to IH-35, numerous signs advertising new housing and business developments are staked onto the shoulders, their presence establishing the rapid growth of the areas surrounding the Travis County portion of the highway.

This month, Hays County Commissioners are expected to propose a bond package for voters to approve to begin the expansion of FM 1626 from FM 2770 to the Travis County Line. If voters approve the measure, which would be on the November ballot, TXDOT would reimburse Hays County the majority of the cost of the project.

Now Travis County residents will have to wait to see if they can get a similar deal with TXDOT.

Acknowledging the need to expand the width of 1626, among other much



This intersection at FM 1626 and Manchaca Road may turn into a bottleneck if the Travis County portion of FM 1626 is not widened to match Hays County's plan to widen its side of that road. Travis County has asked TXDOT to fund the project, but was told that the State Legislature must first approve the deal.

needed repairs, a bond approved by the Commissioner Court of Travis County now sits in the hands of the Texas Department of Transportation according to Bob Moore, executive assistant to Travis County Commissioner Gerald Daugherty. "The Commissioner was

Continued on page 2

City of Austin adopts updated floodplain maps; Urges residents to check to see if their home or business is affected

The Austin City Council formally adopted new floodplain maps August 7.

Residents living near area creeks should pay close attention to the new maps, as it may mean they will have to decide to add or drop flood insurance.

If the property is shown in the floodplain on the new maps, owners and renters should consider purchasing flood insurance now. In some cases, purchasing now will allow them to receive the lowest "Preferred Risk Policy." However, if they wait until after September 26, 2008, to purchase flood insurance, their policy will cost significantly more. September 26 is when the new maps become effective.

These maps have been digitized and updated with more accurate data and computer models. They reveal changes in Austin's floodplains. For instance, there are some subdivisions that are no

longer in the floodplain, mainly due to Capital Improvement Projects. But there are also businesses and houses now in the floodplain that were previously thought to be outside of it.

For example, some residents living on Tecate Trail in the Shady Hollow neighborhood are now "in" the floodplain, where as before they were not.

Being in the floodplain is significant. This is because of the risk to life and property. There are also different development regulations, and lenders with federal financing require flood insurance for property in a floodplain.

Homeowners, business owners and renters who live near a creek should check whether their home is in a floodplain by calling their insurance agent or going online to www.cityofaustin.org/watershed/flood.htm. If the property is

Continued on page 2