

Polk County
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American Gas, Tech to bring 900 jobs to Dallas

By Jolene Guzman
The Itemizer-Observer

DALLAS — American Gas & Technology (AG&T) founder Ray Tate Jr. said the company is developing the “21st century gas station” and its vision is as big as the facility it’s remodeling to build its dream.

AG&T, which specializes in the development of liquefied natural gas fueling stations, bought the long-vacant Tyco building in Dallas.

Workers have been busy for months fixing roof leaks and tearing down walls to prepare the building for its new purpose.

“We had so many leaks, we couldn’t count them,” Tate said during a tour of the building Friday.

Soon, roof leaks may not be a concern.

Tate projects a high demand for the company’s technology as the United States looks for cleaner alternatives to oil.

With an abundant domestic supply, natural gas is well-positioned to be a major part of that movement.

“We anticipate seeing the U.S. getting off foreign oil and cleaning up our cities,” Tate said.

Tate said the remodel should be finished in about four months and, after that, will build up to producing 40 fueling station units per month out of the facility.

To begin with, the compa-

ny will focus on converting fleets — such as police, ambulance and taxi services — in several states, including Oregon and California.

Tim Tight, the company’s vice president of finance, said he’s projecting investors will be making a hefty profit, some 13 times their investment within five years.

That figure moves to 18 times including potential government subsidies supporting the development of alternate fuels, he said.

Tight projects AG&T will bring back the jobs lost when the plant went dark nearly 10 years ago.

“Our goal is to bring back the 900 jobs back to this community that was hurt so much by Tyco leaving,” Tight said.

He said there are other plans for investing in the community, including developing a welding school that will offer local students internships to learn the skill.

IN YOUR TOWN

DALLAS

Mr. and Ms. Dallas is seeking nominations for families or individuals in need.

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FALLS CITY

Falls City will put a bond on the ballot to pay for a new elementary school gym.

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INDEPENDENCE

Students at Independence Elementary School were part of an effort, along with Monmouth Elementary School, to raise money to purchase Soccer Balls.

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MONMOUTH

Monmouth must install a \$700,000 water filtration system to be in compliance with surface water treatment requirements.

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SPORTS

Perrydale’s boys basketball team will play at Triangle Lake Wednesday (today) in the first round of the OSAA Class 1A state playoffs.

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Celebrate Dr. Seuss’ birthday

Itemizer-Observer staff report
POLK COUNTY — Libraries and schools throughout Polk County will celebrate Read Across America, in honor of Dr. Seuss’ birthday on March 2.

Events will take place all week to honor the famous children’s author and artist.

Seuss, who died Sept. 24, 1991, would have been 112 this year.

What better way to celebrate the man who changed how children’s books were written — and read — than to read together at a whimsy party?

Seuss wrote and illustrated 44 children’s books.

For more information about Dr. Seuss: www.seussville.com.

For details on reading events at local libraries during Read Across America: www.ci.monmouth.or.us, www.ci.independence.or.us, www.ci.dallas.or.us.

Find all of Polk County’s libraries on Facebook, including Falls City Wagner Library.



Dallas council approves putting \$10 M, 10 year street bond on May ballot

By Jolene Guzman
The Itemizer-Observer

DALLAS — After three years of research on how to best maintain residential streets in Dallas, the issue is headed to voters.

On Feb. 16, the Dallas City Council voted to put a 10-year, \$10 million bond on the May ballot, the first of possibly three steps to address street repair in the face of declining gas tax revenue.

“The road infrastructure is one of those things we just end up taking for granted,” said Dallas City Manager Ron Foggin, calling streets another city utility. “The fact of the matter is, we haven’t figured out a way to charge people to use them.”

All nine city councilors agreed, which immediately took the “no action” option off the table.

The other options included implementing a street utility fee, which could be used to finance a revenue

bond, and a 20-year bond using the existing rate after Polk County’s road bond expires in 2017.

Of those three, the 10-year bond was the option two citizens’ committees endorsed.

It would cost about \$1.09 per \$1,000 of assessed value on properties and would repair or rebuild 22.75 miles of streets. That would cost about \$18 per month for a property with an assessed value of \$200,000.

Foggin added that currently general obligation bonds are receiving very low interest rates. He estimated a 2.4 percent rate, making the actual cost over the life of the bond \$12,312,800.

Passing the bond wouldn’t solve Dallas’ street problem entirely, as about 11.25 miles of streets wouldn’t be repaired.

To address the whole issue, the city would need to implement a street utility or local gas tax to keep

fixed streets in good condition and pass a second smaller bond in 10 years.

“This really is clearly a three-step process,” Foggin said. “It’s not bond for \$10 million and life is good.”

Foggin said to just stay on top of maintenance, the city needs to invest about \$650,000 per year. In the current budget, about \$270,000 is going to streets.

At the council Feb. 1 meeting, it was suggested the city look into implementing just a utility fee charged to each city sewer account for streets and using that revenue, instead of a tax, to finance a revenue bond.

With just a few weeks to crunch the numbers, Foggin provided an estimate on what that would cost and how much work could be completed.

On the plus side, all streets would be repaired and the city would already have a utility fee in place to

address future maintenance needs.

Drawbacks include having to delay repairs a few years while the city collects enough revenue to convince investors the fee will pay for a revenue bond. Foggin said based on his calculations, a revenue bond would be more expensive, costing between \$29.70 and \$31.77 per account.

Foggin said to get exact numbers, the city would need more time.

“We are probably talking about at least six months’ worth of analysis and maybe an outside consultant to help put it together,” Foggin said.

He offered another alternative which he said represented a “middle ground.”

Polk County’s road bond will expire in 2017, and Foggin suggested Dallas could propose to voters to renew the 50 cents per \$1,000 of assessed value currently charged for the next 20 years.

See STREETS, Page 5A

All things ag to come to Polk Fairgrounds

Mid-Valley Winter AgFest to make its debut with family, fun and farm activities

By Emily Mentzer
The Itemizer-Observer

RICKREALL — When the attendance at the annual Polk Home and Garden Show more than doubled last year, organizer Deb Thomas realized it was in part because of the Oregon Poultry Swap that ran concurrently with her event.

Usually, Thomas said attendance has been about 800 people on Saturday during the home show. Last year, it soared to 2,200, most of them coming through the

back door.

“I realized I needed to do something ag related,” she said.

The poultry swap, in need of more space, ran the second weekend of February, leaving the rest of the fairgrounds for Thomas to add the Mid-Valley Winter AgFest, which will run in conjunction with the home show Saturday and Sunday at the Polk County Fairgrounds & Event Center.

The event has been 20 years in the making, Thomas said.

“We’ve been talking about it for years,” she said. “We just weren’t quite sure how to do it.”

After seeing the interest in agriculture from the Poultry

Swap, Thomas said she started working on the ag fest the day after the home show last year.

Thomas said the home show and the ag fest are two separate events, but they share the same location.

The home and garden show will still be free, with free parking. The ag fest costs \$5 cash only admission for those 18 years and older.

Thomas said the response for the agriculture fest has been tremendous.

See AGFEST, Page 5A

Check it out:

What: Mid-Valley Ag Fest.
When: 9 a.m. to 4 p.m. Saturday and Sunday.
Where: Polk County Fairgrounds & Event Center, 520 S. Pacific Highway (99W).
Admission: \$5, cash only.
Of note: At the same time, the ninth annual Polk Home and Garden Show will take place. There is no admission to the home show, which will run from 9 a.m. to 5 p.m. on Saturday and from 10 a.m. to 5 p.m. on Sunday.
For more information: Ag Fest, mwwagfest.com; home and garden show, www.polkhomeandgardenshow.com.

THE NEXT 7 DAYS PLANNING FOR YOUR WEEK

<p>wed</p> <p>Join others at St. Thomas Episcopal Church for its Lenten service, including worship and a soup supper. 5:30 p.m. Free.</p> <p></p> <p>Partly sunny Hi: 58 Lo: 41</p>	<p>thu</p> <p>Listen to new and old love songs at the music jam at the Dallas Senior Center. Bring a snack to share. 6:30 p.m. Free.</p> <p></p> <p>Mostly sunny Hi: 63 Lo: 44</p>	<p>fri</p> <p>Check out the outrageous comedy “Leading Ladies” at Dallas High School, which runs Thursday through Saturday. 7 p.m. \$5.</p> <p></p> <p>Showers Hi: 61 Lo: 45</p>	<p>sat</p> <p>Calmlee’s Bookstore in Dallas will host its first book club meeting. Join others in determining the reading list. 7 p.m. Free.</p> <p></p> <p>Partly Cloudy Hi: 57 Lo: 42</p>	<p>sun</p> <p>Take a stroll in downtown Independence for Last Sunday at River Gallery and see the Wild Woman exhibit. 2-4 p.m. Free.</p> <p></p> <p>Cloudy Hi: 55 Lo: 42</p>	<p>mon</p> <p>Happy Leap Year Day! Feb. 29 is added to the calendar every four years to make up the time it actually takes the Earth to rotate the sun.</p> <p></p> <p>Showers Hi: 55 Lo: 44</p>	<p>tue</p> <p>James2 Community Kitchen serves meals on Tuesdays to all who are hungry at St. Philip Catholic Church. 4:30-6 p.m. Free.</p> <p></p> <p>Showers Hi: 62 Lo: 43</p>
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