



The Choctaw Sun
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News/Events

www.choctawsun.com
choctawsun@millry.net

CCDC, Pinebelt get deeds to property ■ School Board makes personnel, other decisions

By Dee Ann Campbell
The Choctaw Sun

BUTLER — Deeds for the former East Choctaw Junior High School property were approved for transfer to the Choctaw Community Development Center and Pinebelt Wireless during the April 3rd meeting of the Choctaw County Board of Education.

Nearly two years after the initial agreement to sell the property, the BOE voted unanimously to grant deeds to the purchasers, but with an amendment to the original agreement.

In July of 2005, the BOE agreed to sell the ECJH property for \$65,000 to the CCDC, minus five acres that were to be sold to Pinebelt Wireless for \$10,000. Deeds for the properties were held pending payment by the purchasers.

At Tuesday's meeting, Supt. of Education Sue Moore asked for authorization to execute the deeds. But with both purchasing parties in

agreement, the acreage purchase was changed to three acres for Pinebelt instead of the original five, with the other two acres to be included in the property purchased by the CCDC.

The Board also voted to change the mileage rate for staff members traveling on behalf of the school system from 44.5 cents per mile to the 44.8 cents now being used by the state. The new rate will become effective on May 9.

Items still on standing on the old CCHS football field were listed as surplus, including lights, posts, and fencing, and older model vehicles belonging to the school system were also listed to be sold to the highest bidder.

Board members received the March financial statement and voted unanimously to approve it. The exact details of the report were not made available to the public during the meeting.

In other business, the BOE voted to adopt new textbooks as recommended by the Textbook

Committee, and also approved the installation of an air conditioning unit for the agri-science building at Southern Choctaw High School for \$15,000, the amount stated in the only bid offered for the project.

The Board also made the following personnel decisions:

- approved resignations for Rachael Beaty, special education teacher at Southern Choctaw High School, and Dr. Charles Shepherd, agri-science teacher at SCHS.
- approved retirement for Theda O'Neil from the Central Office
- approved the employment of Louise Boney as reading teacher at Choctaw Co. High School.
- approved coaching positions for Roderick Menger — assistant baseball coach at CCHS, and Bennie Moss — assistant softball coach at CCHS.
- approved leave of absence for Robbie McKenzie, teacher at Choctaw Co. Elementary, for the next school year.

Silas Mow Down races set for May 19th

SILAS — Get those riding lawn mower engines tuned up and bring 'em on down to Old Town Silas on Saturday, May 19th for the fourth annual Mow Down. Registration for the races will be held from 11 a.m. until noon in front of Town Hall, with the races beginning at 1:30 p.m. First-, second-, and third-place prizes will be awarded, and the winners will also get their pictures on the front page of *The Choctaw Sun*. Sponsor fee is \$50 per mower (8-22 HP engines).

In addition to the mower races, which are

always fun, music will be provided by American Jukebox, and a car and truck show (antiques to late models) will be hosted by the Choctaw County Cruisers.

Space will be available for food and crafts vendors (\$20 and \$25), and there will be an 18-foot slide for the children.

Other activities may be added prior to the date. Proceeds from the event will be used to help renovate the Silas Auditorium. For more information, readers may call 251-542-9505 or go by Town Hall.

EMA Director hoping to get grant for six new tornado warning sirens

By Tommy Campbell
The Choctaw Sun

BUTLER — Bill Gibson, Director of Choctaw County's Emergency Management Agency, on Monday again asked the Choctaw Co. Commission to pass a resolution from U.S. Sen. Richard Shelby formally requesting an appropriation of \$688,000 for several items ranging from an emergency generator to a new roof for the Courthouse.

Gibson, who first brought the matter to the board's attention in February, said the grant — if approved and fully funded — would be used for a storage building that could be used to house emergency supplies; a portable 75-kw generator that can be used by local utility systems during a major power outage; a mobile services operations vehicle; six additional tornado warning sirens; and funds to replace the Hurricane Katrina-damaged roof on the Courthouse.

If the entire grant amount is not funded, Gibson said at the April 9th meeting, the county can then come back and decide which items are more of a priority. Normally, Gibson said, such federal grants are 100% funded, meaning that no local matching money is required.

A motion by Commissioners C.D. Ruffin and Henry Lovette to submit the resolution passed unanimously.

In other matters, Gibson likewise again asked the board to approve the acceptance of \$11,075 from the Alabama Emergency Management Agency as the state's portion of funding for the Choctaw County office.

The money, he said, is an administrative grant to help run the EMA office and requires a 50 percent match.

"We have already spent more than our 50 percent, because the clock starts ticking on Oct. 1," he said. "You just have to accept the state's portion in order to get it."

A motion by Lovette and Ruffin to accept the grant passed unanimously.

Gibson said that the EMA office last year began a grant process toward getting six additional tornado sirens and possibly some emergency generators for local public water utilities.

"We are coming up now on the third review as the state decides how to spend these hazard mitigation funds," Gibson said. While many proposed projects are dropped during the first "review", he said, Choctaw County's has survived and made it through the third evaluation, which is usually a good

sign that funding for a project may be approved.

"Now we need to submit a formal resolution to apply for these hazard mitigation funds," Gibson said. If money is provided, 75 percent would come from the state with the matching 25 percent coming from local sources.

The 25 percent "match" can be made up of cash or 'in-kind' services, he said.

"In this case, fire departments and utilities will basically contribute the matching services and will help to maintain them in coming years," he said.

If approved, the project would put new warning sirens in the communities of Isney, Scott Mountain, Cromwell-Halsell, New Hope, Lavaca and Pleasant Hill.

It would basically complete a project that began in 2003 when the county decided that 19 warning sirens were needed around the county.

A resolution to authorize Gibson to formally finalize the application and to define how the in-kind services will be obtained was approved.

"What this means is that we will get six additional sirens at no cost to the county," Gibson said.

All of the sirens are activated by remote control from the E-911 dispatch center whenever a tornado warning is issued for the area.

"Aquila is kind of isolated, sitting over there by itself, and I was wondering, is there anything you could do down that way?" Commissioner Clyde Dixon asked.

"In future years, yes, or if Sen. Shelby's appropriation is approved, the system can be expanded as far as you want it," Gibson said, adding that a second siren is needed on Riderwood Drive at the two new Butler schools.

"The Edna community also needs one," Commissioner Dandy Brown said.

In other matters, Gibson reminded the board that last week he brought up the fact that FEMA is offering for sale to local governmental agencies new and like-new travel trailers and mobile homes.

The Katrina-surplus trailers range from \$1,500 up to \$3,000.

Gibson said that about \$1,000 is left over in the Choctaw Area Response Team fund, and that local law enforcement agencies have chipped in to come up with enough money to buy one of the 30-foot travel trailers for outfitting as a mobile command center.

A motion to allow the purchase was made by Commissioners Lovette and Ruffin and passed unanimously.

Gibson also briefly discussed some correspondence from FEMA regarding changes in the manner in which the federal agency will reimburse counties for debris cleanup and removal after a major storm such as a tornado or hurricane.

"It appears that FEMA will be giving us some incentives to have pre-disaster contracts and plans in place," Gibson said. "The Commission decided last year to not do this, but the Feds appear to be raising their share of payments for future disasters and are looking at reimbursing straight-line costs of man-hours for salaries and benefits. That could be a tremendous benefit to us and I'd just like for us to consider this and be thinking about it."

Gibson said he would be discussing the matter with the county's new engineer Garry Grantham, who began work on Monday.

"Basically, FEMA doesn't want counties and municipalities utilizing the services of the Corps of Engineers for debris removal," Gibson said, adding that it won't cost anything to get bids and to have a pre-disaster contract in place.

"You can decide when the time comes if you want to activate the contract or do the work yourselves," he said.

Grantham, who came to Choctaw from Wilcox County, said that if such a contract is in place, all it takes is a phone call to activate it.

Grantham also asked that the county pay the annual engineer's dues and to approve his attending the annual engineer's conference in Orange Beach on May 1-2.

The board, on a motion by Commissioners Lovette and Ruffin, voted to pay the dues and to approve his attending the conference.

"We are off and running," Grantham said of his first day on the job. "I'm looking through paperwork to see what grants and projects are outstanding and preparing for the upcoming bridge review."

Grantham said that engineering department employee John Pedro Diamond wants to discuss something with the Commission, but commissioners tabled that request until the next meeting.

Also, in regard to Grantham, the board — on a motion by Ruffin and Lovette — voted to waive the usual 90-day waiting period for him to obtain health and dental insurance, and the usual 30-day waiting period for life insurance coverage. Grantham will be eligible for the coverage beginning May 1st.

Sun Country Calendar

There is no charge to list an upcoming non-profit or charitable event for your church, school, civic group, fire department, etc. Meetings of governmental entities may also be included. Send your announcement as far in advance as possible. Calendar items may be mailed, faxed, emailed, delivered in person to our offices in Butler or Gilbertown, or left in our drop box at The Country Corner in Butler.

Entire month of April

BOOK FAIR, Choctaw Co. Public Library, order on-line at www.noendbooks.com. Click on "Choctaw County Public Library" on the right before shopping. If you are local, you may order at the either the Silas or Butler library for no shipping fee. The Library will get up to 50% back in free books.

Wednesday, April 11th

ALABAMA-TOMBIGBEE REGIONAL COMMISSION semi-annual meeting, Ezell's Fish Camp, 6 p.m.

CHARPS meeting, 5 p.m., Choctaw Co. Health Dept. conference room.

Thursday, April 12th

CHOCTAW CO. LION'S CLUB meeting, 8 a.m., Old Buddies Restaurant, Butler.

Thurs., April 12th – Sun., April 15th

WOMEN'S CONFERENCE, A.O.H. Church of Christ, Silas, 7:30 p.m. on April 12th-13th, and 9 a.m. on April 14th with prayer, plenary sessions, and fun activities for the ladies, ending April 15 with a 1:30 p.m. program. On Dan Road in the Shady Grove Community. Contact Sis. Nancy Nettles at 251-575-4044 or Sis. Annette Mitchell at 251-843-5256.

Saturday, April 14th

BEAUTY REVIEW, South Choctaw Academy, 5 p.m. General admission tickets \$5. Reserved seating will \$7 and will go on sale in the gym on Monday, April 9 at 8 a.m.

BUTLER DIXIE YOUTH OPENING DAY, Zack Rogers Park, opening ceremonies at 11:30 a.m., first games at noon.

FAMILY AND FRIENDS of the late Hattie Abston James are invited to the Gilbertown Nutrition Center, beginning at 10 a.m., for an old-fashioned dinner to celebrate the birthdays of Christine James and Ferrell James. Bring a covered dish and any photos and histories you would like to share. Meal served at noon.

THE GILBERTOWN BASS CLUB will sponsor an open bass tournament at Coffeerville's Service Park off Hwy. 84. Entry fee is \$80 per boat, which includes the luncheon and lunch fee. First place is \$1,000. The tournament will begin at safe light and conclude at 3 p.m. For more information call Ben Etheridge at 251-276-3449 or Mike Thorn at 251-843-2668.

ROBERT CARNEY'S CHITTERLINGS will be sold at Scott Mountain Vol. Fire Dept., Rock Springs community (CR 20), from 11 a.m. until they are gone. Fried or boiled, come and get 'em! For those not interested in this delicacy, fish plates will also be available! For more information contact Josh Lewis at 205-398-3269.

Sunday, April 15th

MOSLEY-BOSWELL CEMETERY CLEANING Beginning April 7th thru April 14th. Please come get your old flowers off the graves. Service at the Tabernacle on April 15th at 10:30 a.m. For more information call 251-843-5239.

RIBBON CUTTING AND RECEPTION, Walking Trail, Toxey Town Park, 2 p.m.

COLORAMA PROGRAM, Mt. Olive Baptist Church of Butler, 2 p.m. Rev. Bobby Ray Bolton, guest speaker. Rev. Cleo McGrew, Sr. pastor.

FAMILY AND FRIENDS DAY, St. Mary United Methodist Church, 2:30 p.m., Rev. Theodis McSwain, Pastor of Gilfield Baptist Church, Pushmataha. Rev. Joseph Mason, Pastor.

100 WOMEN IN HATS DAY, Greater New Hope A.M.E. Church, Millry, 3 p.m. Guest Speaker Minister Sherry Kay Taylor. Pastor Ivory James.

MISSIONARY MESSAGE, Alabama Line Association, White's Chapel Baptist Church, Cullomburg, 11 a.m. Minister Sherry Kay Taylor.

Monday, April 16th

CHOCTAW COUNTY PARKS AND RECREATION BOARD meeting, 5 p.m., Courthouse.

Tuesday, April 17th

HEALTH COUNCIL MEETING, noon, Extension Office. Call 205-459-2133.

PEDDLIN' FOR A CURE BIKE-A-THON, leaves Chatom for Gilbertown, Butler and Meridian. Proceeds will be donated to Relay For Life. For more information contact Michael Martin 251-843-5446.

Friday, April 19th – Sunday, April 21st

SPRING BREAK SHOOTOUT, 3 on 3, sponsored by Joshua Victory Assembly, Haguewood Park, Pennington, 2-4 p.m. For boys and girls ages 12-18. Signup through April 18; non-refundable entry fee of \$10 per team. For more information contact Pastor Thomas Jackson at 205-654-2254.

Saturday, April 21st

TOXEY REUNION, 9 a.m. till 3 p.m., at the Toxey Town Park between the Vol. Fire Station and the restored Masonic Lodge.

AIMWELL CEMETERY MEMORIAL, Marengo County.

RELAY FOR LIFE GOLF TORUNAMENT, sponsored by Butler VFD, registration 11:30 – 12:30. Tee off at 1 p.m. Contact Little Bruce Taylor or Kim Edwards.

GOSPEL SINGING, featuring The Revelators, Glory Road Quartet and others, South Choctaw Academy Gym, Toxey, 6:30 p.m. Concessions available.

ROADBLOCK FUNDRAISER sponsored by New Hope Relay for Life Team, 4-way stop, intersection of U.S. 84 and Ala. 17 in Silas.

Sunday, April 22nd

FOREIGN MISSIONS SERVICE, First United

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