

News-Sun

JAL EUNICE HOBBS LOVINGTON TATUM SEMINOLE DENVER CITY

Trashy road target of Toss No Mas

BETH HAHN
NEWS-SUN

Highway 18 between Eunice and Hobbs received a dubious distinction this year as one of the state's trashiest roads.

"Highway 18 is a heavily littered highway," Manon Arnett, spokeswoman for the state Department of Transportation, said Thursday morning.

Throughout the year, DOT employees across the state gather litter and weigh it. Areas with the largest amounts of litter

are then scheduled for annual Toss No Mas events, Arnett explained.

About 50 volunteers joined DOT employees Thursday morning to gather garbage spread along Highway 18 between Eunice and Hobbs. Arnett said the ideal number of volunteers would be about 100, but was pleased to see the turnout Hobbs and Eunice put forth.

By the end of the morning, DOT patrol supervisor Tim Gomez estimated volunteers bagged six tons of trash.

"They filled all of my trucks," he said during a lunch break. "And we still have more to pick up."

Volunteers included the Hobbs Hispano Chamber of Commerce, City of Eunice, Kimble and Associates, Guidance Center of Lea County, City of Hobbs, Hobbs Fire Department, Hobbs Downtown Lions Club, Keep Hobbs Beautiful and Therapy Services Association.

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Jacky Byrd and Jimmy Baker load litter into a Department of Transportation dump truck as part of Thursday's Toss No Mas cleanup between Hobbs and Eunice.



BETH HAHN
NEWS-SUN

Building design approved

MARIE WADSWORTH
NEWS-SUN

The Hobbs School Board approved a one-story building design for its new Freshman Academy and Alternative High School at a special board meeting Thursday night.

At its October meeting, the board had approved a one- or two-story design for the \$1.5 million Alternative High School to be built near the high school campus and the separate \$28.5 million Freshman Academy to be built on the Hobbs High School campus.

Both projects are in the \$47 million bond that Hobbs voters approved in April.

Frank Mackay of Greer Stafford of Albuquerque, the architect for the projects, presented the two design options, which were narrowed down from seven design schemes the Hobbs Schools bond oversight committee started with.

Safety was a primary reason Hobbs Freshman School staff preferred a one-story building, said Gene Strickland, assistant principal at Hobbs Freshman School.

"From my experience working in a two-story school, the problems wouldn't happen in the hallway, they'd happen in the stairwell," Strickland said.

In an emergency situation, there are some potential problems evacuating handicapped students from a two-story building, he added.

The proposed one-story version will have 116,000 square feet for each building.

Mackay said although there's a \$100,000 savings going with a two-story concept, it falls to \$80,000 when the stairs and elevator are added to the facility. Less roof space is the biggest reason for the savings with a two-story building.

"When I first saw these two schemes I was leaning toward the (two-story) scheme," said Hobbs School Board member Lance Wiseman. "I always believe it's easy to see what you'd like to see, but the one-story version will address the needs of the students and faculty who put

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AP PHOTO

Curtis Irwin holds a .50 caliber rifle to show at a gun shop in Fort Worth. The Cheaper Than Dirt gun store recorded a record day of gun sales the day after the election of President-elect Barack Obama and is having trouble keeping up with the demand for assault rifles.

Stores say gun-control fears spur sales

FORT WORTH, Texas (AP) — While watching Republican presidential candidate John McCain's concession speech, gun owner AJ Sullivan had a sinking feeling.

"Liberals like to ban guns. That's what it comes down to," said Sullivan, 25, a Texas Christian University student.

Sullivan was among hundreds scrambling to buy a weapon Thursday at the gun store Cheaper Than Dirt! — which sold \$101,000 in merchandise the day after the election, shattering its single-day sales record, said store owner DeWayne Irwin.

Stories were similar across Texas, where residents are fiercely protective of their Second Amendment rights and now fear stricter gun-control laws under Democratic President-elect Barack Obama.

"There's a mindset here of freedom, and you've bitten off more than you can chew if you think you can come after Texans' guns," said Charliisa Stokes, co-owner of Panhandle Gunslingers, an Amarillo shooting range and gun store where sales have doubled the last few days.

At Houston's Memorial Shooting Center, gun sales are up 70 percent and "the whole wall of assault rifles is gone," said manager Richard Poulis.

Fort Worth's Cheaper Than Dirt! reported about

'Liberals like to ban guns.'

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TCU student and gun owner

\$480,000 in sales in October 2007 but \$890,000 last month, jumping to \$1 million including the first four days of November, Irwin said. About half of the sales are guns, mostly assault rifles and other weapons that would be subject to the assault-weapons ban if it is reinstated, he said.

President Bush and Congress allowed it to expire in 2004, 10 years after President Clinton signed the ban into law.

"A few weeks before the election most customers were younger and weren't old enough to buy guns in '94 when the assault-weapons ban took effect, but they'd heard stories from their parents," Irwin said. "On Wednesday, the older folks woke up and said, 'Oh, crap. McCain didn't win, and Obama's going to ban guns,' and they came in here. There's also a Democratic Congress, so they're saying it's going to happen."

Obama has said he supports an individual's rights to own guns with reasonable restrictions, so it seems that a "narrow subsection" of gun owners are afraid of being denied access to assault weapons, said Doug Pennington, spokesman for the Brady Campaign, which supported the weapons ban.

National Rifle Association spokesman Andrew Arulanandam said it does not track U.S. gun sales, but anecdotal evidence at stores in recent weeks indicates many residents "didn't buy Obama's spin." The 4 million-member NRA had distributed literature claiming Obama would be "the most anti-gun president in American history" and said anti-gun groups endorsed him.

Mark Mendiaz, 35, said he voted for Obama because he felt the country was headed in the wrong direction and never heard the candidates discuss gun control. But Mendiaz, a Navy veteran who owns a handgun and rifle, said he started thinking about it after receiving NRA postcards.

On Thursday Mendiaz bought an AR-15, a semi-automatic rifle similar to what soldiers use, for target practice or to sell later, he said.

"If there's going to be a ban, it just creates a market," Mendiaz said. "The bad people probably have them, and the honest people will probably get left out."

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OIL PRICES

West Texas intermediate		
Spot	\$60.77	- 4.53
Posted	\$57.25	- 4.50
Sour	\$51.25	- 4.50
N. Gas	\$6.979	- .270

Summit addresses high incidence of asthma in area

GABRIELA MUÑOZ
NEWS-SUN

The people with asthma in southeast New Mexico could pack two football stadiums the size of Watson Stadium in Hobbs.

According to health promotion program manager Jeff Lara of Roswell, because of the high numbers of asthmatics in the area, the New Mexico Department of Health decided to host an asthma health summit in Lea County Thursday. The summit was geared to families of children with asthma, teens with asthma, health educators, school health staff, health councils and community organizations.

"Within the last year there have been six asthma summits around the state," Lara said during the introduction. "We broke it down in specific groups ... and the numbers really stood out in south-

eastern New Mexico, and in Lea County those numbers stood out even more so in some aspects."

Currently there are 24,000 adults and 10,200 children diagnosed with asthma in the southeast region, which includes Lea, Eddy, Chaves, Roosevelt, De Baca, Curry, Quay and Harding counties.

"Rates of hospitalization are higher in this area than they are in other parts of the state," added Alfredo Vigil, cabinet secretary for the New Mexico Department of Health.

To get the sense of what it is to be asthmatic, Vigil urged people to put a



Whorton

ASTHMA FACTS

- Asthma and allergies strike one out of four Americans
- Nine million U.S. children under 18 have been diagnosed with asthma.
- There are approximately 5,000 deaths from asthma annually.
- The prevalence of asthma increased 75 percent since 1984.
- About 40 percent of children who have asthmatic parents will develop asthma.

it really does explain why it's so important for us to be doing the best job we possibly can. It is a very uncomfortable thing to have."

The New Mexico Department of Health's asthma program and the New Mexico Asthma Coalition have developed an asthma plan to address the disease. The goals of the coalition are to assess the burden on New Mexico residents, develop and promote the education of health care professionals, educate parents, reduce the barriers to asthma care in the state and reduce environmental causes and triggers of asthma.

During the summit, asthma epidemiologist Brad Whorton discussed the questions surrounding the disease, with a presentation titled "Pediatric

coffee straw in their mouth, pinch their nose and breathe through the straw for five-10 minutes.

"It's pretty dramatic," Vigil said, "but

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