

DIPLOMAS PLUS



Photo by Andy Ellis | Laredo Morning Times

Webb County Sheriff Rick Flores, right, presents Councilman Michael Landeck and the Rotary Club with a check for \$10,000 on Wednesday afternoon. The money, seized from drug traffickers, was donated to the Diplomas Plus program.

Banquet recalls 'P-9' pot pies

SPECIAL TO THE TIMES

Banquet brand frozen chicken and turkey pot pies as well as some generic brand not-ready-to-eat pot pies with the number "P-9" on the package have been recalled by the Food and Drug Administration.

The recall was issued after receiving a warning from the Centers for Disease Control and Prevention linking the Salmonella bacteria to the consumption of the pot pies.

Salmonella can cause gastrointestinal illness primarily fever, diarrhea, and abdominal cramps. Of most concern are persons with poor underlying health conditions or the young who could develop a systemic infection.

Although no cases have been reported in Laredo, the Health Department is urging the public not to consume and to dispose of any chicken or turkey pot pies with "P-9" printed on the side of the box.

Laredo Health Department sanitarians continue to check stores and retailers and ask the public to know if they have this brand number "P-9" to dispose of it, call the Health Department and take the label to your retail-

er where you bought it for a possible refund.

All local retail outlets are being inspected to assure this product is removed from the shelves, a news release from Health Department said. This is a precaution as not all of the pot pies may have salmonella contamination, the release said.

Everyone is advised to follow the cooking instructions on the package (especially those of chicken and turkey) to reduce the risk of illnesses related to Salmonella contamination.

According to ConAgra Foods, the maker of Banquet pot pies,

generic potpie brands recalled include the following:

- Hill Country Fare (sold at H-E-B)
- Food Lion (sold at Food Lion)
- Great Value (sold at Wal-Mart)
- Kirkwood (sold at Aldi)
- Kroger (sold at Kroger)
- Meijer (sold at Meijer)

If anyone has any concerns about Salmonella illnesses consult a physician or call the Health Department and speak to a sanitarian at 795-4904 or call the Epidemiology Division at 795-4950.

Cuatro Vientos back on track

By JULIAN AGUILAR
LAREDO MORNING TIMES

Texas Department of Transportation officials said Wednesday they have been given authority by the Federal Highway Administration to use an estimated \$6 million in federal funds to aid in right-of-way acquisitions for the Cuatro Vientos project.

The Cuatro Vientos project will extend north to Loop 20 at its intersection with Texas 359 and south to U.S. 83 at Espejo Molina Road in Rio Bravo, providing approximately 10 miles of highway as an alternative route to U.S. 83.

The money is part of the federal government's Coordinated Border Infrastructure Program and will go toward the purchase of the remaining right-of-way acquisitions of land that run the length of the proposed project, according to TxDOT Advance Planning Director Melisa Montemayor.

At a recent public meeting to discuss the proposed southern extension of Cuatro Vientos, Mike Graham, the environmental coordinator for the Laredo District Office of TxDOT, said the agency's original plan was for construction of the thoroughfare to coincide with the construction of Mangana-Hein Road. The setback, Montemayor said, was a lack of funds for the land acquisitions.

Tuesday the Webb County Commissioners Court voted to authorize the county engineering department to halt the appraisal

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reviews of Cuatro Vientos parcels because it was thought the appraisals would expire before a funding solution from TxDOT could be found.

Interim County Engineer Mike Cabello said Tuesday the appraisal process should begin again in January. Webb County Judge Danny Valdez said he was hopeful construction could commence as early as fall of 2008.

Montemayor said the funding for the project is split between TxDOT, responsible for 80 percent, and the city and county, which must fund the rest. Leroy Medford, the executive administrator to the county judge, said the city and county would probably split the costs equally because the land in question falls almost equally within county and city limits.

Medford added that the city and county's share of the costs might be decreased even further if the entities qualify for grant money under the Economically Distressed Area Program.

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New book of traditional songs written

SPECIAL TO THE TIMES

Doing his part to promote and preserve traditional children's Mexican songs, Texas A&M International University faculty member Gilberto D. Soto, professor of music education and guitar, wrote and recently released a new bilingual music education book entitled "Music of our World: Mexico" for one of the largest music publishing companies, Hal Leonard Corporation.

"This new bilingual music book features music songs for children that have been passed through generations, these traditional songs intended as a resource for the music teachers, bilingual teachers, children and/or all those who enjoy singing and performing," said Soto.

"The book also includes a professional music CD of each of the songs, with performing/accompaniment recording tracks, and a separate pronunciation track for each song," he added.