

HAXTUN-FLEMING HERALD

"What can we reason but from what we know?" —Alexander Pope

Haxtun, Colorado

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This Weeks' Features ...

Phillips County Commissioners update on pavilion project

The Phillips County Commissioners gave a recent update on the progress of the pavilion project at the fairgrounds. According to a release from Randy Schafer, County Administrator, a gala to raise funds held in December netted over \$18,000.

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Senate passes bill to make oil and gas tampering a class six felony

A bill to make tampering with oil and gas operations a felony has cleared the Republican-controlled State Senate, but House Democrats signaled almost immediately what they intend to do with it by assigning it to a "kill" committee.

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(Courtesy photo by Brian Bieseimer)

A PROPANE tank and a pile of rubble are what remains of a garage that once stood at the home of Lynn Seger after a fire ravaged through northeastern Colorado Monday afternoon, March 6. As of Tuesday morning, 80 firemen from 17 departments continue to battle the blaze.

Northeast Colorado plains devastated by Monday afternoon wildfire; four homes lost

By Candie Salyards
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Devastation swept through the plains of northeastern Colorado Monday afternoon as a wildfire raged from east of Sterling to north of Haxtun. Fire crews from all over the State are still battling blazes that have taken four homes; three in Logan County and one in

Phillips.

The fire, which was reported just before noon on Monday, began near Proctor, just east of Sterling and quickly spread southeast. The flames jumped Interstate 76, raging over the Crook/Fleming highway, through the wind farms and wrecking havoc north of Haxtun where damage is incomprehensible as of Tuesday morning. Parts of Highway 59 still

remain closed as firemen continue to battle the fire with winds at upper speeds of 60 miles per hour.

Haxtun and Fleming volunteer fire departments were first called, along with 10 others, to assist with the fire near Proctor. Teams traveled with the fire as it spread across the plains causing evacuations in Fleming, Dailey and eventually Haxtun. Fleming and Caliche schools were evacuated, as was Haxtun. Haxtun students were bussed south to Lone Star Schools and were eventually returned in the early evening once evacuation threats were lifted. Over 900 residents were called to evacuate east of Logan County Road 49 on Monday afternoon.

As of Tuesday morning, fire officials said the raging fire has charred over 30,000 acres and over 80 firemen and 17 fire departments are working to contain the blaze and additional resources are on the way. Seven fire engines stayed on location of hot spots throughout the night to attempt to keep control. Matt Branch, with the Colorado Division of Fire Prevention and Control, said as of Tuesday morning the fire is only 50 percent contained.

In a press briefing at the Haxtun Community Center on Tuesday morning, Branch said the day's goals for fire crews were to locate hot spots in trees and brush and to knock them down and douse flames. Plans are to find heat sources that remain and gain control before

(See Fire, page 12)



(Herald photo by Candie Salyards)

A stack of hay burns late into the night on Monday at the home of Matt and Jessica Firme four miles north of Haxtun. A wild fire sparked around noon in Proctor spread across the plains damaging homes, land, outbuildings and equipment and killing a large number of cattle and other livestock, animals and wildlife.

\$35/year within 50-mile radius; \$40/year outside 50-mile radius

Fire

from page 1

winds cause pop out fires that could run aggressively with high winds that continue to blow across the area.

Firemen from all over Colorado remain in Haxtun as of Tuesday morning along with local farmers with tractors and water trucks, county crews with road graders and local community members with bulldozers and other equipment ready to battle anything that may spark back up.

Phillips County Sheriff Rob Urbach and Branch said they are confident that crews would gain more containment on the fire throughout Tuesday but windy conditions and blowing smoke and dirt create dangerous conditions for firemen. Visibility, Urbach said, at times is less than two feet. Officials said their number one concern is for safety of firemen in conditions that

are often dangerous due to large plumes of black smoke that can be seen and smelt for miles.

As of Tuesday, no major injuries were reported. Urbach said firemen are mostly dealing with smoke and dirt in their eyes.

According to a community Facebook page set up to assist local families affected by the fire, monetary donations may be made at the Haxtun Community Federal Credit Union for general fire relief or for specific families. There are also GoFundMe pages set up for Haxtun residents Jared and Sara Firme and Pam Adams who lost their homes in the fire on Monday night. Keith Sagehorn, from Holyoke, added that the Colorado Farm Bureau is currently working to set up a relief fund for local residents and additional information will be released in the future. For more information

on that, contact Sagehorn at (970) 854-3199.

Material donations may be taken to Pro-Till/Old Smith Hardware building on Colorado Avenue in Haxtun. Any unused donations will be given to Retread Threads once affected families have what they need. According to relief organizers, affected families are overwhelmed with the love and support shown over the past 24 hours, but ask that all donations be given and or taken to one location. The families also ask that food donations be given to firemen and those assisting in battling the fire.

Local churches have opened their doors for residents displaced by the fire and for firemen in need of support and aid.

For more information on donations visit Haxtun Community Fire Relief on Facebook.



(Courtesy photo from Haley Harms)

FIRE TRUCKS from all over the State line the streets of Haxtun on Monday night, waiting for their next assignment and to relieve others fighting a wildfire that has now burned over 30,000 acres as of Tuesday morning.

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