

Easing the Burden on Closing Auto Dealers, Employees, & Communities

By Senator Kay Bailey Hutchison

On May 13, 2009, Russell Aubrey Whatley received a letter that would change his life. In the perfunctory letter, Chrysler informed Mr. Whatley that he would have less than a month to close down the dealership his family has profitably operated for three generations. His business has contributed to the livelihood of Mineral Wells, Texas through commerce and community involvement for the last 90 years.

The Russell Whatley Motor Company – one of the oldest car dealerships in Texas – was not the only business to find itself dragged into the worsening predicament of the U.S. auto industry, most recently punctuated by the bankruptcies of Chrysler and General Motors. Across Texas, 50 Chrysler dealers have been slated for closure. Nationwide, 789 dealers are being forced to close their doors – through no wrongdoing of their own. They did not make the business decisions that have placed the domestic auto industry in this position.

In fact, when ailing

Chrysler in February urged its dealers to purchase additional inventory in a final, futile attempt to stave off bankruptcy, most of the dealers complied. And many of those who were subsequently terminated were flush with inventory Chrysler executives pushed them to buy, potentially burdening them with significant losses.

Upon learning of Mr. Whatley and other Texas dealers' plight, I was shocked that Chrysler could dismiss these loyal dealers, with whom the company had partnered for so many years, with little concern for the well-being of the employees, customers, and communities they serve. I disagree that these profitable dealers should close at all. On May 21, I introduced an amendment to deny Chrysler additional Treasury funding, which it has been receiving to help maintain solvency, unless it gave dealers slated for closing adequate time to do so. In a matter of hours, my colleagues signed on to the legislation until we had 39 Senators from both sides of the aisle calling for equitable treatment of the terminated dealers. Our calls were heed-

ed when the Chrysler CEO Jim Press personally assured me that Chrysler was taking steps to help automotive dealers across the country.

This was a welcome development, but as Ronald Reagan was known to say, "Trust. But verify."

As Senior Republican on the Senate Commerce Committee, I worked with Chairman Jay Rockefeller to verify that Chrysler would, indeed, provide each impacted dealer ready access to necessary resources to close down its operations with as little pain as possible under the circumstances. On June 3, we held a committee hearing in which Mr. Press and GM CEO Fritz Henderson testified alongside the very dealers they were dismissing, including Mr. Whatley.

Mr. Whatley made it clear in his testimony that Chrysler's decision to discontinue its relationship with him was not just the failure of a business venture. For him and his family, it was the end of three generations of personal investment and enterprising spirit. He said, "My grandfather opened this dealership in

1919, and it kept open during the Depression, World War II, and countless economic setbacks. In the 90 years that we have been [in Mineral Wells], 36 other new car dealerships have come and gone in our town."

During the hearing, I probed Chrysler's actions on two critical points. First, would Chrysler repurchase or help redistribute the cars left on closed dealers' lots and remaining parts inventory? And second, would closed dealers receive first consideration for buying into a new dealership if Chrysler reentered their markets? Mr. Press pledged at the hearing that dealers could count on Chrysler's help as they closed, and on June 12 I received formal assurances in a letter. He confirmed that 100 percent of closing dealers' inventory will be purchased at cost, minus a \$350 fee, and Chrysler will work with closing dealers to redistribute or buy back remaining parts inventory. Furthermore, if Chrysler elects to reenter the Mineral Wells market, for example, Mr. Whatley will have first consideration for the new dealership.

Ultimately, what Chrysler has promised me is not nearly as important as the promises Chrysler must honor for its closing dealers, 50 of which are in Texas: a fair process that will limit the economic damage on businesses and the communities they have faithfully served. Amidst our nation's eco-

AG Groups Weigh In On EPA's Endangerment Finding

USCA (June 19, 2009) - Nearly two-dozen farm and ranch organizations sent a letter today to the Environmental Protection Agency opposing its proposal to classify greenhouse gases as a public health risk.

"Farmers and ranchers would be exposed to potential legal liability under such a plan," explained Jon Wooster, president of the U.S. Cattlemen's Association (USCA), which spearheaded the joint letter effort.

"In today's economy, we've got enough to worry about without having to look over our shoulder for increased litigation from those that want to sue us for a range

of reasons from methane gas expelled by livestock to the diesel that powers tractors," he said.

Even small farmers and ranchers would be subject to the EPA's onerous regulation, according to a 2008 analysis by the U.S. Department of Agriculture.

Wooster says one look at the letter's signers shows that this is an issue that cuts across regional and even political divides, with groups ranging from agribusinesses, to livestock, row crop and Native American producers, who are joining forces to urge the EPA to extend its comment period on the endangerment finding beyond the June 23 deadline.

Leon County Sheriff's Report

by Chief Investigator Victor Smith
for Leon County Sheriff Jerry Wakefield



Jerry Wakefield

6/10/09

Skip Young responded to Jewett for the report of a theft of a trailer. Sheriff Wakefield, Brent Walter, Kevin Ellis, David Sales, Victor Smith, Paskel Foster and Jerry Regis responded to the Trinity River at CR 112 for the report of a submerged

white dually pickup that was reported to have a body underneath it. No body was found and it was discovered the truck had rolled into the river accidentally.

Jack Tomlinson responded to Jewett for the report of threats.

Bart Dorman responded to CR 289 for the report of a house fire.

Reashelle Chatham responded to Marquez for the report of a theft.

Bart Dorman responded to Centerville for the report of panhandling.

Jack Tomlinson responded to Leona for the report of loose livestock.

Bart Dorman responded to Flynn for the report of an alarm.

Brent Dorman responded to Buffalo for the report of a house fire.

Jack Tomlinson responded to

Marquez for the report of a stolen 40 foot trailer.

6/11/09

Reashelle Chatham responded to Centerville for the report of a road hazard.

Jerry Grimes responded to Marquez for the report of criminal trespass.

Jack Tomlinson responded to PR 2010 for the report of criminal trespass.

Jerry Grimes responded to Jewett for the report of criminal trespass.

6/12/09

Jerry Grimes responded to Marquez for the report of someone making threats.

Jerry Grimes responded to Jewett for the report of an animal complaint.

Bart Dorman responded to Normangee for the report of child endangerment.

Reashelle Chatham and Bart Dorman responded to Oakwood for the report of a dis-

turbance.

Bart Dorman responded to Buffalo for the report of a disturbance.

Reashelle Chatham responded to Centerville for the report of a disturbance.

6/13/09

Brian Stafford responded to Oakwood for the report of the burglary of a habitation.

Chris Nash, Sean O'Reilly and Brian Stafford responded to Jewett for the report of an assault.

Chris Nash responded to Buffalo for the report of loud music.

6/14/09

Sharon Williams responded to Normangee for the report of an animal complaint.

Sharon Williams responded to Normangee for the report of animal cruelty.

Jerry Grimes responded to Jewett for the report of an alarm.

Chris Nash responded to CR 139 for the report of trespassing.

Chris Nash responded to Marquez for the report of a disturbance.

6/15/09

Jack Tomlinson responded to Normangee for the report of people arguing.

Jack Tomlinson responded to Centerville for the report of a civil matter.

Chris Nash responded to Jewett for the report of a disturbance.

6/16/09

Chris Nash responded to Centerville for the report of a prowler.

Jack Tomlinson responded to Marquez for the report of suspicious activity.

Jack Tomlinson responded to Buffalo for the report of an animal complaint.

Jack Tomlinson responded to Leona for the report of crimi-

nal mischief.

Jack Tomlinson responded to Jewett for the report of suspicious activity.

Bart Dorman responded to CR 490 for the report of animal cruelty.

Chris Nash responded to Centerville for the report of an unwanted person.

Reashelle Chatham responded to Centerville for the report of criminal mischief.

Jail Population 30

Sheriff Wakefield would like for the citizens of Leon County to know that is very helpful to the Deputies in recovering stolen property if the owner has the serial numbers off of the items if the items have one. Also photos of the property are also helpful. A good idea might be to record the serial number to valuables and photograph them and put the list and photos in a safe place.

Freestone County Sheriff's Report

by Sheriff Ralph Billings



Ralph Billings

Okay, it is official now.....The Freestone County Fair is going full swing. We all know that, because 'most everybody in the County seemed to be present for the Fair Parade. It was a hot evening, thank Heavens for that good south breeze.

As has become the norm, this year's parade was a long one. I do believe that it was the safest Fair Parade that we've had in several years..... The big secret to this?.... Not throwing candy from the parade vehicles to the kids on the curb..... Simple as that!

This year folks walked down the street, handing the candy to the Little Ones, instead of throwing it from the vehicles. Much, much safer. Oh, there were a few who hadn't gotten the word on the change, but very few. I've always been on pins and needles in past Parades with toddlers darting out to pick up the candy, always fearful that one would get run over. Yep, this year was much better.....I do like this new method.

The same thing would work in Teague....hint, hint! And say, before I forget, those free bottles of cold water passed out by First Baptist.....Much appreciated!

DPS and Fairfield VFD to roll-over, Mile 194. FEMS to Cotton Gin, wife

ill. Another vehicle egged in Teague. FEMS to Boyd Unit, Inmate has self-inflicted cut.

Young man out of control on Peachtree, broken glass and injury to Grandma, arrested by FPD Kinson, Assault Family Violence. Also arrests another at gas station.

FEMS to Sunnyvale, Lady in bad pain. Couple doing what they shouldn't be, in plain view, Lake Limestone, Limestone Co. S.O. advised.

Streetman VFD to IH-45 car fire. Small child in roadway, US-84. Bad elevator troubles, Methodist Church. Wortham Firefighters to assist Mexia Fire, grassfire, Hwy. 14. Loose Pit Bulls, near Library, Fairfield. FEMS to MotorCross, head injury. Donie VFD and THDEMS to Cowart Street, older Lady very ill.

FEMS to FCR-1290, Lady fell, hip injured. 911 Call advises man on US-84 driving wife to Hospital, she's in labor, full blast, 10 miles out of Palestine, started from Teague. Anderson County S.O. and Hospital both advised. THDEMS to Tyler street, man dizzy. Prowler scare in Lakewood. Butler VFD and FEMS to FCR-340, problems with a trach.

Lady 911's, troubles with Ex-Husband at Fair Grounds. One man assaults another with knife at County Fair in Horseshoe pitching area, one arrested, Aggravated Assault With A Deadly Weapon. Believe this connected to two sentences back. Victim to ER, later flown out by Doctor Chopper as seriously cut. Same thing going on in Teague, Wasington Street, one receiving two stab wounds, the other arrested, brought to Jail, Agg Assault/ Deadly Weapon.

Deputy Robert Willis to loose cows, FM-3059. Butler and Fairfield VFD's to grassfire, East FM-489. FPD to College Street, someone

just got hit by a 4-Wheeler. Kids reported on 4-Wheelers, FM-27, by the Clinic. Both of these incidents sound suspiciously like they have a connection with the Fair Parade. Okay.....maybe I bragged too quick on the Fair Parade! Nope, I'll still stick by what I said in the first paragraph.

FEMS to Fair Ground, man with chest pains. TPD Solly to people problems on Ash. FEMS and Dew VFD to chest pains, FCR-471. FPD Green arrests woman at local business, Non-Payment of Child Support, FPD Gasaway arrests drunk man involved in disturbance, West 84. Deputy Aldrich arrests man on Warrant, Probation Revocation.

Congratulations Mr. and Mrs. Dusty Cockerell as you begin your new life together. Dew VFD and FEMS to FCR-380, chest pains. TxDOT to five dead hogs, Old 75. One Boyfriend complains that his Boyfriend had beat him up. Yep, now before you get off thinking, "Oh, he made a mistake, a simple typo".....Well, no, I didn't, you read it right. Anyway, TPD Sykora accompanies the complaining party to their residence. Yep, there were all the signs of a brawl, both "friends" involved, both arrested.

Two big dogs chasing walkers down S. 6th, TPD to same. DPS, THDEMS and Teague VFD, two vehicle accident in front of Training Center, one through our newly new fence. Loose Pit Bull, Elm Street. Assault victim at Valero, FPD to same. Young man named Caleb exercises newly learned ability at dialing 911. TPD Sykora arrests man on Hot Checkin' Warrant. Deputy Travis Robertson to/from Anderson County, prisoner transport. Deputy Shipley recovers three headstones stolen from Cotton Gin Cemetery, returned. THDEMS assisting el-

derly Lady on Barbara. THDEMS to Mulberry, man fell. FPD to Travis, family troubles over moving. Man on Cypress thinks he has a snake down his kitchen drain. Suggest turn on the hot water..... and have a meat cleaver in your hand! Wortham Firemen giving a little assistance to Mexia FD. Lady Diabetic having difficulties, East 84, a little Dextrose puts it all right. Quick, too! Unwanted visitor, Wortham.

Wild Cow milking at Rodeo a bit unique when cow does headstand on top of Cowboy's shoulder. FPD Irion arrests man for Theft at Fair Grounds. Officer Laudasau arrests male and female motorist, IH-45, Streetman, Controlled Substance. Donie VFD to grassfire, FM-80. FEMS to US-84, man can't move legs. FPD to unwanted visitor on Travis.

Man at LaQuinta having medical scare, FEMS to same. Passerbys reported taking pictures repeatedly of a house on N. Keechi. Report of man illegally hunting gators, Game Warden advised. Worthamite bit by spider three spots yesterday, feeling poorly today. FEMS and Fairfield VFD to Lady with chest pains, FM-833. Deputy Travis Robertson to/from Austin, prisoner transport. Deputy Diana Willis arrests man, Assault/Family Violence. TPD Solly arrests female on Ash, Failure To Identify.....trying to keep from getting arrested on a Warrant. By the way.... the Steen Family of Teague getting better news daily on Charles.

FEMS to West Main, Lady squirting blood. FPD Kinson to S. Fairway, brother just tried to stab sister. Employee passed out Centerville, Leon County advised. Tree down, FCR-601, Commissioner Oakes contacted. Deputy House arrests man at Rodeo, Warrants for Con-

tempt of Court and not paying Child Support. TPD Reed arrests motorist, Elm Street, Marijuana cigarette in ash tray of car. Sykora jails the other occupant, a small amount of Cocaine.

TPD Noll and Martin arrest two men for Assault on N. 9th. Deputy McClelland to/from Ft. Bend County, prisoner transport. While TPD Solly has motorist detained, he swallows the Cocaine in his mouth. Deputy Shaw to burned vehicle on private property, FCR-781, found to have been stolen in Houston. Man calls, coming in from Richland Chambers Reservoir, fish hook in hand, where is the hospital? Info supplied. Gas stolen out of vehicle on Atwood, Teague.

Missing Juvenile located in Waco. Motorcycle wrecked out, FCR-961, abandoned. Family being threatened, FCR-237. TPD to Freestone Apts., man in one, not at invitation of resident. 911 call jumps right over the top of Limestone Co. S.O., comes in at our Dispatch.....Two in car stopped at red light, Hwy. 164 at 14, Groesbeck. Nope, they weren't stopped by the Police.....They had apparently stopped because the light was red.....But, then they promptly passed out or fell asleep, still at the red light! It cycled a few times according to the caller; red, green, red, green.....they never moved, their chins drooped to their chests in peaceful slumber....I'm sure until a Groebeck PD unit arrived.....'Cause we called 'em!

Deputy Harrison stops driver for speeding, US-84, a little gal with a Marijuana Cigar. I guess she likes her Mary Jane King-Sized! In Jailhouse now. Be a good time for her to quit smoking, tobacco or Marijuana! DPS Zotto gets another, same charge, IH-45. TPD Noll and Martin arrest man for Burglary at Freestone

Apts., entered with a key, without permission, while resident had another male guest. The man with the key grew enraged that another was cutting in on his territory. He chased the visitor, got his wallet somehow, then went to the Oak Tree Apts. to hide. Found at that location. Inside the apartment at Oak Tree was the wallet just lifted at the Freestone. In Jail. Good Heavens....We of the people species can surely do some dumb things.

Our thoughts and prayers are with the Chris Martin Family this week. Wife Cari gave Chris a big scare this week. Things looking brighter now. Hurry up and get on out of the hospital Cari, the big galoot is wasting away, needs a home-cooked meal! Loose Hoss reported trailing on a rope, FCR-1220. Cell phone call advises friend just bit by snake in Teague area, not familiar with area, directions given to local hospital. FEMS to FCR-506, older Lady with possible stroke. Reckless truck reported on Moody. More of same in Wortham. Deputy Elom assists man with flat tire who had accidentally locked keys in car, IH-45. Loose mule, Williford Street.

TxDOT to Old 75, "blue stuff" reported spilled on roadway.

Well, that about wraps up another long week. Myself and the last two Deputies pulled out of the County Fair at 1:03AM. It was a long week for all. Very few incidents over all. Only one that would classify as extremely serious. The Carnies started shutting down an hour early on Saturday. Not enough business they said to keep their machines running. By that time, late Saturday night, everybody was tired.....even the little ones.

Until Next Week.....
Ralph Billings