

# The Buffalo Press



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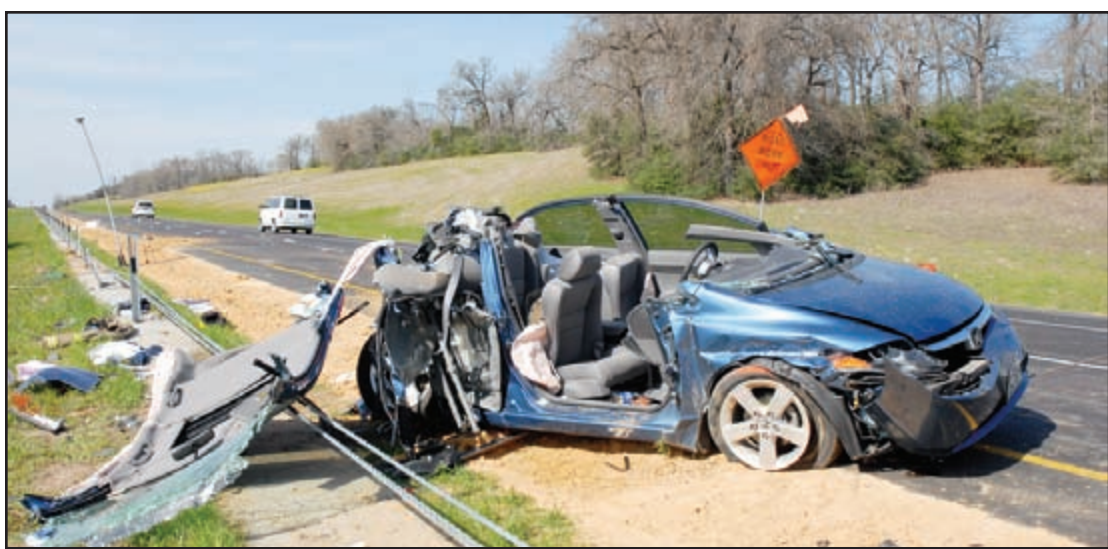
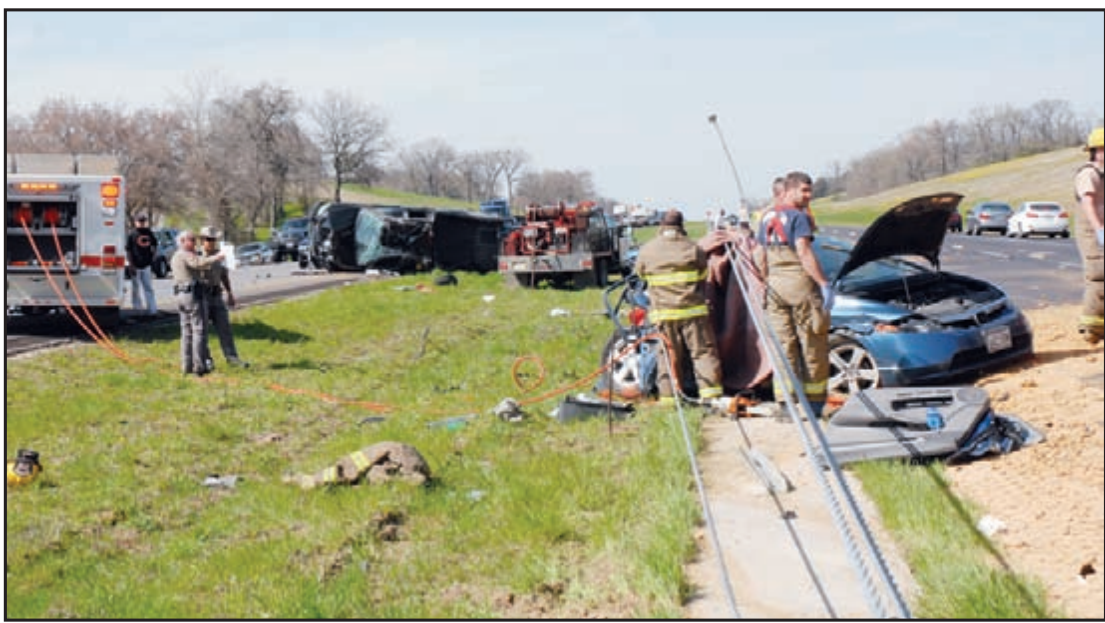
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## I-45 crash kills two, injures three



Photos by Mac Shadix

On Monday afternoon, March 15, a two-vehicle collision on northbound I-45 five miles north of Centerville resulted in two deaths and three

people being transported to area hospitals. The driver of a blue Honda civic was John Millemon (59) of Dallas and the passengers were Celia

Millemon (63) and Mary Merrill (64), of Kansas. The two women were killed. The black 2006 Dodge pickup was driven by William Edens of

Waynesville, Missouri, and his passenger was Madison Ann Edens, age 3. All involved were reported to be

### Looking for something different to do? Broadway's "Little Women" comes to Palestine



"Little Women" performers (L-R) Jared Cook, Chaundra Dantin, Lori Brownlow, Dixie Curtis and Haley Cook in a lively musical number from the upcoming production by the Palestine Community Theatre. *Van 'Go' photo*

## Census 2010 -- What are you waiting for?

By Vanessa Goodwyn

This year the month of March brings more than spring rains and blustery winds our way. It is time for the 2010 U.S. Census, when officials are attempting to get an accurate count of every person in the United States. In our country, the census is a decennial event -- meaning it happens only once every ten years. Census surveys were mailed out in early March, and if they are not returned, it becomes the duty of more than 140,000 census workers across the country to knock on doors and gather some simple information on each

resident: things like name, age, gender and race. The basic information they obtain is confidential and protected by law\*. This means the Census Bureau cannot give out information that identifies you or your household -- even to law enforcement or tax collection agencies. It is not used to identify persons who are here without citizenship papers.

While some people object to what they consider an infringement on their privacy, an accurate census is actually beneficial to the area. More than \$435 billion in federal funds will be distributed each year, based upon the population count. The money will

fund services for children and the elderly, roads, and many other local needs. We need an accurate count in order to receive our fair share of these funds. Additionally, our state's representation in Congress is determined by these figures. How much has our county's population grown? Are we entitled to more tax money? More senators or congressmen? Only an accurate census will tell.

Now that you know how important it is, you can help ensure that the census is successful. If you have not mailed in your survey, do so at once. If you have misplaced it, expect a call or visit from a census taker. Rural areas like ours make their job harder, so be sure that your 9-1-1 address is plainly visible.

Still, we are constantly warned never to give strangers our personal information, fearful of identify fraud, etc. So how can you be sure that you are talking to a legitimate census worker? The Better Business Bureau offers these guidelines.

- Every U.S. census worker will be wearing a badge and carrying a Census Bureau canvas bag, a confidentiality notice and a computer

equipped with GPS software. They should be happy to comply if you ask to see their identification and badge before answering any questions.

- True census workers do not ask for money or solicit donations. They will not ask for your Social Security number, bank account or credit card numbers.

- Census workers will NOT contact you by e-mail. Never click on a link or open any attachments in an e-mail that claims to be from the Census Bureau.

For more information, visit the U.S. Census website: [www.census.gov/2010census](http://www.census.gov/2010census)

\*Census data becomes public after 72 years, and this information can be used for family research. On a personal note, when my husband and I were researching his family tree, we discovered that we were not the first Goodwyns to live here in Leon County. The 1860 census showed his great-grandfather, Leonidas Duane Goodwyn and his brother, Samuel, lived close to Centerville--just a few miles from our home. We were sure glad Grandpa completed that survey when the census taker knocked on their door!



Councilman David Neel listens intently as David Bailey, our area's General Manager of the Mid-East Texas Ground Water Conservation District, tries to explain why he wants the city to pay a 4-year-old past-due bill. *Photo by Melissa Missildine*

### Oakwood Council has questions for Ground Water District Manager

By Melissa Missildine

David Bailey, General Manager of the Mid-East Texas Ground Water Conservation District, attended the March meeting to address a billing issue with the members of the Oakwood City Council. According to the records of the District, Oakwood had failed to pay three years of regulatory fees. The Council had many questions for Bailey.

The first question they had was, what is the Mid-East Texas Ground Water Conservation District?! Bailey explained that they were a regulatory program started in 2001 designed to ensure "desired future conditions" of the aquifers in the state of Texas. He went on to explain that they help to regulate area wells to make sure that everyone has their equal share of ground water without going over a set limit that would either infringe on someone's

water rights or endanger the future of ground water in a given area. Well use is registered and monitored at the state level by breaking it up into districts. Any well that produces over 50,000 gallons of water per year, must obtain a permit to do so. The fees attached to that permit vary but are a maximum of 17 cents per acre foot. Currently that fee is 4 cents per acre foot. Anyone abusing their permit guidelines, is subject to a \$10,000 a day fine and/or can be shut down. For some undetermined reason, the district received all of the appropriate reports but the City of Oakwood did not pay the fees for 2004, 2005, or 2006.

Next, Councilman Barry Olive asked, "Why did you wait so long to tell us we didn't pay this bill?" Bailey just recently came onto staff and it was after he came on

## Comptroller says sales tax losses moderating

(AUSTIN) — Texas Comptroller Susan Combs said today the state collected \$1.60 billion in sales tax revenue in February, down 8.8 percent compared to February 2009.

"After eight straight months of double digit declines, sales tax losses have begun to moderate," Combs said. "Sales tax revenue continues to be down in major sectors such as retail, oil and gas production and construction. However, there was a slight uptick in the manufacturing sector. We will keep

monitoring the revenue, and as we have recently noted we expect further declines in the near term before a return to sales tax revenue growth later this year."

On Friday, Combs will deliver \$404.4 million in March sales tax payments to Texas cities, counties, transit systems and special purpose taxing districts. Local sales tax allocations are down 6.7 percent compared to March 2009. So far this calendar year, local sales tax allocations are down 8.4 percent compared to the first three

months of 2009.

State sales tax revenue for February and March payments made to local governments represent sales that occurred in January.

Combs will send March sales tax payments of \$271.3 million to Texas cities, down 6.8 percent compared to March 2009. Texas counties will receive sales tax payments of \$24.4 million, down 11.2 percent compared to one year ago.

The 166 special purpose taxing districts around the state will get \$15.8 million

in sales tax revenue, down 8.4 percent compared to last March. Ten local transit systems will receive \$92.7 million, down 4.7 percent.

For details of March sales tax payments to individual cities, counties, transit systems and special purpose districts, locate the Monthly Sales and Use Tax Allocation Comparison Summary Reports on the Comptroller's Web site at <http://www.window.state.tx.us/taxinfo/allocsum/compsum.html>.

Leon County	Current Rate	Net Payment	Comparable Payment Prior Year	% Change	2010 Payments To Date	2009 Payments To Date	% Change
Buffalo	1.500%	41,320.42	55,544.54	-25.60%	151,859.73	209,094.56	-27.37%
Centerville	1.500%	17,746.36	20,523.17	-13.53%	59,671.00	68,010.70	-12.26%
Jewett	1.500%	17,986.20	27,118.69	-33.67%	54,150.35	80,687.18	-32.88%
Leona	1.000%	490.40	387.47	26.56%	1,867.43	2,178.41	-14.27%
Marquez	1.500%	6,005.02	3,759.98	59.70%	29,112.20	20,417.54	42.58%
Normangee	1.250%	5,529.32	4,225.89	30.84%	23,548.28	21,204.52	11.05%
Oakwood	1.000%	974.91	2,236.95	-56.41%	4,203.80	8,421.35	-50.08%
County Total		90,052.63	113,796.69	-20.86%	324,412.79	410,014.26	-20.87%

SEE Oakwood, page 5A