

March 2017 Progress Report

As always, we're all extremely proud of the tremendous accomplishments of our Carlsbad youth.

Recently, the CHS Band was accepted into the nationally-televised 86th annual Hollywood Christmas Parade. This parade only accepts about ten high school bands per year, so you have to be one of the very best to even be considered. The Caveman wrestling program was a powerhouse this year and will be for many years to come.

The Cavemen and Cavegirl basketball program recently concluded another great season that included two trips to the playoffs. The Cavegirls were nationally ranked throughout the season. For the Cavemen, Brendon Boatwright had an outstanding year and was recently named the Gatorade New Mexico 6A boys basketball player of the year. (First one for Carlsbad).

Upcoming this spring, while the eyes of visiting scouts will be on Carlsbad ace Trevor Rogers, the truth is that the Cavemen and Cavegirls have a huge number of weapons on the baseball and softball teams. It should be an exciting run.

Another outstanding young person, Stormi Barnes, was recently crowned Miss Carlsbad 2017. Stormi is a member of the CHS Dance Company, BPA and AAUW at Carlsbad High School and is a dance teacher at the Just Dance Studio. She interns at Farm Bureau Insurance. Congratulations to Stormi, and we look forward to introducing her to Carlsbad City Council at our next meeting.

Prom and graduation are just around the corner. This year went by very quickly, and we hope all of our students will have a safe semester.

This year, Rep. Cathrynn Brown and Sen. Carroll Leavell each introduced two bills aimed at moving forward with remedying the cavity beneath the South Y brine well. One bill establishes a state Brine Well Authority (a group tasked with resolving the issue) while the other bill called for an appropriation of \$500,000 needed for that authority's expenses. The \$500,000 would be used to formulate a plan and an RFP for filling the well.

The Brine Well Authority bill passed, but the financing bill ran into money issues. A number of legislators from northern New Mexico seem to forget that it is the state's responsibility to protect all of its citizens, not just those who live around the Albuquerque and Santa Fe area. The financing bill has been changed multiple times- and each time the City of Carlsbad and Eddy County have been asked to pay a larger sum of money.

Additionally, Legislation passed in 2010 by Representative John Heaton generated approximately \$11 million that was supposed to be used for remediating the brine well, but it was squandered on other uses.

The City of Carlsbad will do everything it can to protect its citizens, but the state's avoidance of its responsibility continues to be troubling. Keep in mind that the state has been the primary authority figure and primary regulatory agency from the start. The state has also benefitted a great deal from the

oil and gas industry – Southeastern New Mexico pays considerably more than its share in terms of money from taxes.

Like many of you, my perception is that the state wants the benefits and it wants to be in charge, but when it comes to footing the bill, then this is suddenly a regional issue? I believe our city and county officials are happy to do whatever we can to help, but first telling us we need to put in \$50,000 and then amending that to us needing to put in \$125,000 certainly feels like we are being played. We will continue to do what we can to resolve this issue.

At our last council meeting, Carlsbad's City Council renewed its contract with FTI Consulting. We're extremely satisfied with their services, especially with FTI's Jeff Murray, a former Carlsbad resident who has provided us with top-notch expertise. We make frequent trips to Washington D.C. each year to advocate on issues related to WIPP, the oil and gas industry, potash, airlines, the National Park System and many other topics. The situation in D.C. is always changing, even when it isn't an election year, so having "boots on the ground," is essential. This is an important investment to this community and we've seen a lot of success related to policies friendly to our area's important industries.

We are excited about Holtec International submitting its application to the NRC for the Eddy Lea Energy Alliance consolidated Interim Storage Facility by the end of this month. The Eddy Lea Energy Alliance (ELEA) is a limited liability company owned by the City of Carlsbad and Hobbs and Eddy and Lea County. ELEA owns property about halfway between Carlsbad and Hobbs. Holtec has been working very closely with ELEA to produce this very safe, secure project which will diversify our economy and create 150 jobs in our area.

Finally, congratulations to Nicholas Melbourne for moving forward with Marion's New American Restaurant. The story behind the restaurant was very touching, and we're all looking forward to it. And grab on to your parrots and peg legs, because another highly-successful local couple will soon be "sailing" into a new business venture. We can't wait to hear all about it.

If you have any questions or suggestions, please call (575)-887-3798.

"TAKE PRIDE IN CARLSBAD"