



Keep up the grass

Experts offer advice on lawn mower maintenance and safety issues.

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Webb: Bixby needs more employees

By JEFF POSTELWAIT
World Staff Writer

Bixby needs more of every kind of city employee, said City Manager Micky Webb.

The city, which has a population of about 18,600 according to 2005 U.S. Census data, has about 100 full-time employees on its payroll, Webb said.

Sand Springs and Sapulpa, cities with a comparable population to

Bixby, each have about 230 full-time employees, plus seasonal, part-time and temporary employees, officials from those cities said.

"We're understaffed, but it's a chicken or egg question. We have to get the funding before we can hire the people. We have a great workforce, and because of that, we can get away with less than some other towns of equal size," Webb said.

One of the main reasons the city has made economic development a

priority in recent years is that about 65 percent of its general fund comes from sales tax revenue, and about 70 to 80 percent of the general fund goes toward employee salaries, he said.

Webb said he wants more of every kind of employee, from administrative and office staff to police and fire.

Bixby's recently approved fiscal year 2008 budget includes money for one new position each in the

police and fire departments, he said, adding that the budget will be re-examined in November to see if there is enough money to add more people.

Webb said the possibility for more hires is mainly a function of sales tax revenues.

"Our sales tax, if you look at what (Sapulpa and Sand Springs) bring in in a year compared to ours, ours

BY THE NUMBERS

Resident-to-employee ratios:

Bixby: 18,600 to 100
Sand Springs: 17,670 to 230
Sapulpa: 20,620 to 230

Source: Bixby City Manager Micky Webb

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Photos by JEFF POSTELWAIT / Tulsa World

Barbara (above, left) and Darrell Mullins said water backs up onto their property between 111th and 113th streets in Bixby about five times a year. At right: The Mullins' driveway is still covered in stormwater. Other members of the neighborhood association said they were unable to enter or leave their homes during the stormwater surge that hit the neighborhood.

The rain came down and the flood came up

Bixby neighborhood seeks city's help with drainage issues

By JEFF POSTELWAIT
World Staff Writer

A combination of steady rainfall and what some have called inadequate stormwater control prompted members of a Bixby neighborhood association to take their concerns to city officials.

Residents from the Southwood neighborhood on 90th East Avenue between 111th and 113th streets in Bixby told the city council on June 25 that something must be done to prevent water from backing up onto people's property in the area — which has prevented residents from entering or leaving their homes on at least one occasion.

The flooding now occurs about five times a year, said Darrell Mullins, a resident of the addition and a member of the Southwood Neighborhood Association.

Mullins and his wife, Barbara, bought land in the area in 1969, before floodplains had been identified in the Bixby area, he said.

After the meeting, which was attended by more than a dozen members of the association, the city council resolved to re-examine the effectiveness of the Oliphant water detention facility, sending city engineer Jared Cottle and public works director Bea Aamodt to study the problem.

Darrell Mullins said he and his association are waiting to see



Street department barriers remain in place after high waters blocked some homeowners inside their homes. The Tulsa World reported May 8 that several downtown streets near Charley Young Park were closed, along with a portion of 111th Street between Mingo and Garnett roads, and a portion of Mingo Road between 121st and 131st streets.

whether anything will be done, adding that this is not the first time they have asked the council for help.

"We've met with the councilors in the past. They listened and were sympathetic, but nothing happened. They've never been negative, but they've never done anything," Mullins said.

After the first few times the city was contacted, a study was



ward that contains Southwood.

At the meeting, most city officials agreed with the residents that the detention facility was not performing as effectively as they originally believed it would.

Mayor Ray Bowen said he wanted to do what he could to solve the problem.

"They really need help in this area. I've been up there and looked at it — there's a lot of water. It's just the right thing to do," Bowen said.

After the meeting, City Manager Micky Webb said he agreed with the association that the stormwater systems in the area were inadequate.

"It is a very significant problem. When we were doing the project, we thought it would provide 500- to 100-year protection as well as five, 10, 15, 25 and 50," Webb said.

The facility was found to be effective at holding back stormwater from larger floods, but based on this year's studies of its abilities, Webb said, it does not appear as effective at handling stormwater from smaller floods.

Compounding the problem, Darrell Mullins said, some developers in the area have not followed city ordinances that require developers to limit the amount of stormwater that flows

commissioned to measure the effectiveness of the stormwater controls in the area. City officials said they were working under the assumption that the situation would improve once the facility was complete.

"I was under the impression that when the detention facility was fully developed, it would handle the drainage," said councilor Joe Williams, who represents the

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Union staff to receive 5.2 percent stipends

Rising enrollment led to windfall

By DAVID SCHULTE
World Staff Writer

Teachers and staff at Union Public Schools will return to class in August with an even bigger smile than normal when they greet their students.

The school board recently approved a onetime, 5.2 percent stipend to teachers and staff members' base salaries — the largest ever given by the district.

Ed Payton, board president, said teachers and staff who began working with the district before Jan. 1 are eligible to receive the stipend, which will be given in August.

"The 5.2 percent stipend is across the board — from bus drivers and maintenance personnel to teachers and administrators," Payton said.

The district has used stipends to reward its employees' efforts to educate children and to keep personnel.

"We try to maintain the highest quality of employees, and you do that through salaries and benefits," Payton said.

Stipends also allow the district to maximize its financial resources while keeping within its budget, he added.

Debra Jacoby, chief financial officer at Union, said the district has approximately 1,700 employees, including about 900 full-time teachers.

The average salary for a teacher in the district is \$38,000, meaning a 5.2 percent stipend equals about \$1,976.

The district typically gives a stipend to its employees, but the amount varies annually.

One year, a shortfall in the state of Oklahoma's budget caused the district to give a low stipend of \$270 to each employee, Jacoby said.

Glenda Puett, president of the Union Classroom Teachers Association, said educators in the district have received a stipend for at least 10 consecutive years, but because it depends upon available funds, they realize it is not guaranteed to them.

"We appreciate the board — they have been very generous with their stipends," Puett said.

Funds for a large stipend became available after the state Legislature notified the district that it would receive an additional \$4.5 million in revenue because its student enrollment has increased since last fall, Jacoby said.

The district has also added about 100 new jobs, including teaching positions, during this time.

The increase in enrollment and staff was largely due to the opening of Rosa Parks Elementary School,

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Glenpool considers establishing industrial park

By KRISTINA DUDLEY
World Staff Writer

Glenpool City Manager Ed Tinker says a potential industrial park could bring in the jobs and tax revenue the city needs.

The idea, still in its infancy, would involve the purchase of 700 to 1,500 acres of property in Glenpool for manufacturing businesses that would ultimately benefit the tri-city area of Glenpool, Jenks and Bixby, Tinker said.

"Glenpool is looking to establish an industrial park which is needed for the city and the county. It would

provide jobs for our citizens and add value to our school system," Tinker said. "For a community to be competitive, it has to have rooftops, retail and jobs. We have a good start on rooftops and retail and are lacking on jobs. We hope to accomplish this with an industrial park."

He hopes enough land can be purchased to lure companies large enough to employ 1,000 to 2,000 people.

Bixby Mayor Ray Bowen said the industrial park in Glenpool would do nothing but benefit all three surrounding cities.

"I think Glenpool has the best loca-

tion for it, being in close proximity to Highway 75," Bowen said.

He said the creation of jobs would benefit people living in Bixby or wanting to locate to the city. It would also benefit retail sales in Bixby.

Funding for the project is still not secured, as Tinker calls the park "a work in progress."

A trucking industry is interested in locating in Glenpool, and Tinker said the city has received inquiries from a steel business and a furniture manufacturer.

Bowen said manufacturing plants, technology or medical industries would benefit by relocating to Glen-

pool.

"It could be a sizeable park," Bowen said.

Tinker said an industrial park in Glenpool is a viable option because other such parks in the Tulsa area are almost at capacity.

"Cherokee Park in north Tulsa is about full, so Tulsa needs a new one," Tinker said.

He added that he is confident the city can secure an industrial park.

"We do have the land and the highway access. The need is there, and the infrastructure is there," Tinker said. "The council realizes the need for it, and we're moving for-

ECONOMIC BOOST

Ed Tinker: The park would bring in jobs and revenue.



ward with it."

Next steps would include pricing land options and securing funding.

Eventually, an industrial trust authority would be established.

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