



FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE May 9, 2011

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Burn ban lifted

Due to recent soaking rains, as well as the need of many residents to safely and efficiently dispose of downed trees and other plant debris after the storms, Commissioners voted unanimously to rescind a ban on outdoor burning approved at the April 26 meeting.

“The KBDI is 296 this morning, and fire danger is moderate to high,” said Fire Marshal’s Investigator Jim Pharr. “We have had some counties that have already rescinded their burn bans.”

Pharr said he would still encourage citizens to call the Sheriff’s Dispatch line (972-937-6060) before burning, to learn if there are any particular fire dangers as well as to alert first responders in case a problem should develop. He also noted that a link to the Forest Service website has been added to the county’s website (www.co.ellis.tx.us) for convenience.

The Court also voted to award the property insurance for the County to Hibbs-Hallmark for the period of one year, beginning on May 23, 2011, adding an increase in deductible to the auto liability and auto physical damage line items. The company was also asked to review the list of covered automobiles to make a recommendation regarding removal of the physical damage coverage on older vehicles. Overall, the policy will cost approximately \$20,000 less than last year.

In other business, Commissioners:

- Approved a one-time variance from the county’s Rules, Regulations and Specifications for Subdivisions and Manufactured Homes relating to the 30-foot building set-back requirement in precinct 4;
- Approved the option to extend the contract agreement for Emulsion Asphalt for the period of eight months, running May 4, 2011 through December 31, 2011;
- Awarded the annual bid for Lightweight Road Surfacing Aggregate for the period of May 9, 2011 through December 31, 2011 with two (2) one-year options to extend the term;
- Rejected the bid for Unscreened Pit Run Gravel due to low usage;
- Approved a contract with the Texas Health and Human Services Commission to provide reimbursement to the County and District Attorney’s Office for prosecution of cases involving fraud, waste and/or abuse of funds related to the following programs:

Temporary Assistance to Needy Families; Food Stamps; Supplemental Nutrition Assistance Program; Medicaid; Women, Infants and Children; and Children's Health Insurance Program;

- Approved work orders for the City of Garrett and the Palmer Independent School District under existing interlocal agreements.