

State government report: trade schools fuel growth

BY GEORGE HATT
HIGHLAND LAKES NEWSPAPERS

When Texas Comptroller Susan Combs visited Llano Friday, she talked about the diversity in Texas's economy—and her concern that the trade schools and community colleges that train a sizeable portion of the workforce are falling by the wayside at the Legislature.

"We have a very diverse economy, which is why we changed. We didn't put all of our eggs in one basket 20 years ago (after the oil and gas sector collapse)," she said. "We began to diversify. I wanted to really analyze the jobs in Texas."

The Comptroller's office published a report in December called "Texas Works: Training and Edu-

cation for All Texans."

The report found that 8.2 million jobs in Texas, or 80 percent, do not require a four-year degree. Almost one million of those jobs require a vocational award or associate degree, and almost 500,000 of them pay more than the statewide average of \$37,187 per year.

"I thought that some of our policies in the state weren't geared toward telling young men and young women that there were a lot of opportunities out there, if you didn't have the money and inclination at the present time to go to a four-year school, that by golly there's a ton of jobs out there with a certificate, with some type of post high school training that you can make thirty, forty, fifty, eighty, a hundred thousand dol-

lars a year," Combs said Friday.

She noted that a barge pilot on the coast can earn \$100,000 per year with the proper training certificate. She also noted that there is an acute shortage of registered nurses in the state, and hospitals and clinics are clamoring for new recruits.

"My point is that I would hope that we fund community colleges, that we would take care of these kids and grownups in the technical schools because there's an awful lot of opportunity there," Combs said. "We think it's very important that every Texan has every conceivable chance to expand his or her horizons to be employed."

Llano ISD Superintendent Dennis Hill agreed.

Report ... see Page 12A



STAFF PHOTO BY GEORGE HATT

Comptroller of Public Accounts Susan Combs talked to Llano County citizens about the economy Friday at the Llano County Courthouse.

Comptroller: Diverse economy saving Texas

BY GEORGE HATT
HIGHLAND LAKES NEWSPAPERS

Texas' economy isn't a one-trick pony, and it's saving the state from the worst effects of the recession gripping the rest of the country, according to Texas Comptroller of Public Accounts Susan Combs.

Combs briefed officials and citizens on the state of the Texas economy during a town hall meeting at the Llano County

Courthouse Friday.

She opened the meeting by painting a dire picture of the national economy based on her morning study of national newspapers.

"In the national economy, we expect the entire country to lose about 3.5 million jobs. We've already lost 2.6 (million) as of a couple of weeks ago," she said. "Texas for the first time lost about 27,000 jobs—and we had been rocking and rolling along

at about 20,000 new jobs a month."

Combs said that from December 2007 to December 2008 Texas brought in 154,000 new jobs, which is 71 percent of all the new jobs nationwide in that same period.

"We have a lot of things to be grateful for being here—you know that," she said.

Combs said that the diverse economy in Texas, coupled with Texans' reticence to jump willy-

nilly into the sub-prime mortgage game, helped the state.

"If you're long in the tooth like I am, you remember that in the 1980's we had an awful implosion in the oil and gas sector," she said. "We lost a couple hundred thousand jobs, and people decided that we needed to be much more diversified - and we have been more diversified."

Texas encouraged the growth of other industries, such as

Diversity ... see Page 12A

Report: Trade schools fuel Texas growth

From Page 1A

"I certainly would agree—and let me give you the caveat that I haven't heard the Comptroller (speak) or seen the report—that trade and technical schools are a vital part of post-secondary education," Hill said. "I would agree that we have a lot of students that, if they take advantage of that opportunity...the end result

is to get increased knowledge and skills so that (their) salability in the market is improved. Whether that's trade and technical schools, an associate's degree, or a bachelor's, master's, or PhD, the end result is the same."

Hill said that the state should exercise caution when it decides where to allocate funds and not neglect funding for four-year

public institutions.

"I think we need to be cautious at the state so that we don't end up with something that has the practical effect of pricing a lot of kids out of the four-year college and university market," he said.

Combs said Friday that an evolving job market requires flexible education opportunities in the state.

"As a mother of three

kids, I have watched the job market change. My middle son just ended up with an advanced degree in mathematics and he said that the UT folks told him that all of the PhD's in mathematics in the financial sector in the last few years do not have jobs," she said. "I just came from Brady—they desperately need two automotive engineers and they'll pay."

Filing: Opens Monday for elections

From Page 1A

to file with City Secretary Kerry Williams for a place on the ballot in upcoming elections.

The council also approved two resolutions authorizing either Mayor Roger Pinckney or City Manager Finley deGraffenried to enter two contracts with the Tech-Line company to replace utility poles and re-route electrical lines at various locations across town, for a total cost of \$58,250.

One contract will deal with the much-needed replacement of the tall, precariously leaning poles in Badu Park that carry electrical lines across Lake Llano. This contract, dealing with the Llano River Crossing Project, totals \$29,475.

The contract to replace other utility poles at strategic sites across town comes to \$28,775.

After a rather lengthy discussion of the upcoming Crawfish Open in Robinson City Park, the council members approved that group's request for \$5,000 from the local hotel/motel tax funds to advertise the annual event.

The council also heard a report from the city manager concerning the used dump truck the city had considered buying. After learning that the vehicle needed repairs to the engine, the city decided not to purchase it. He also reported that at the recent Region K meeting the Texas State Water Development Board had elected him as one of other voting mem-

bers representing small municipalities in the state.

De Graffenried said also that the city had completed its expansion of the animal shelter, and that the Llano VFD had reported that its volume of calls had increased 25 percent over last year, constituting one of the busiest years on record.

In other business, the council approved:

- a resolution expressing support for the Texas Legislature appropriation of funding for the Texas Tech University (TTU) Hill Country Educational Network and the TTU Center at Junction; and

- an inter local agreement between the city and the county for pauper burials in the Llano City Cemetery.

Diversity:

From Page 1A

healthcare, high-tech, energy and information systems.

Add the state's requirement for a balanced budget and discipline in government programs, Combs said, and the result is a state that's in "pretty good shape" while others, such as New York and California, are running multi-billion dollar deficits and face higher taxes and cuts in service.

In the short term, Combs said, Texas will feel the hurt but will soon bounce out of the recession.

"I'm predicting that for the first two quarters of 2009—which means at least really through June and into July—we will lose jobs," she said. "We will then come back, level out, and we'll start picking them back up again in the last quarter."

Combs said that there is a lot of reason for hope in Texas' economy.

"We are absolutely doing better than any other state in the country," she said. "They're in an oxygen tent with pneumonia, and we're certainly going to get the sniffles. (But) we have 10.5 million jobs in the state—and that's a lot."

Mardi Gras Ball

Let The Good Times Roll!

Saturday, February 21 (7:30—11:30PM)

Oestreich's Rose, Llano

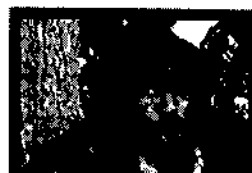
Gold Sponsors:

Bowen's Pharmacy

Buttery Company

Corner Drug

D-Lanes Center, CPA





Sports:

Llano wins war
with Warriors

Page 13A

Come out for dessert

Llano Main Street, Llano Chamber of Commerce, and Llano County Journal will sponsor the "Desserts of Llano" on Saturday, Feb. 14 from 1 to 3 p.m.

Participating restaurants will have their dessert table in front of local businesses. A map will be available for all locations.

Prizes will be drawn for the person who samples all desserts and votes on the best.

To date the following restaurants have agreed to participate:

Fuel Coffee House, Inman's Kitchen and Catering, Jesse's Hungry Hunter, Llaneaux Seafood House, Mom's Cafe, Special-Tea Occasions, and Stonewall's.

Please call the Llano Chamber of Commerce if you wish to display your desserts: 325.247.5354.



around town.

Following a discussion of the upcoming May 9 elections, the council approved a resolution authorizing the Llano ISD and the City Council to hold them at the same polls, using the county's machine. Monday will be the first day for citizens

Filling ... see Page 12A



More than 450 bargain hunters filled the American Legion Hall in Llano Saturday for the City Wide Garage Sale. The next one will be Aug. 15.

COURTESY PHOTO

suspend the renovation and reconstruction from Hurricane Ike in 2008 and transfer treatment of all its patients to other hospitals.

The Houston Chronicle reported that a \$3 billion shortfall in interest to the Shriners Hospital endowment fund had left it with

Delz ... see Page 3A



STAFF PHOTO BY GEORGE HATT
Comptroller of Public Accounts Susan Combs talked to Llano County citizens about the economy Friday at the Llano County Courthouse.

State government report: trade schools fuel growth

By GEORGE HATT
HIGHLAND LAKES NEWSPAPERS

When Texas Comptroller Susan Combs visited Llano Friday, she talked about the diversity in Texas's economy—and her concern that the trade schools and community colleges that train a sizeable portion of the workforce are falling by the wayside at the Legislature.

"We have a very diverse economy, which is why we changed. We didn't put all of our eggs in one basket 20 years ago (after the oil and gas sector collapse)," she said. "We began to diversify. I wanted to really analyze the jobs in Texas."

The Comptroller's office published a report in December called "Texas Works: Training and Edu-

cation for All Texans."

The report found that 8.2 million jobs in Texas, or 80 percent, do not require a four-year degree. Almost one million of those jobs require a vocational award or associate degree, and almost 500,000 of them pay more than the statewide average of \$37,187 per year.

"I thought that some of our policies in the state weren't geared toward telling young men and young women that there were a lot of opportunities out there, if you didn't have the money and inclination at the present time to go to a four-year school, that by golly there's a ton of jobs out there with a certificate, with some type of post high school training that you can make thirty, forty, fifty, eighty, a hundred thousand dol-

lars a year," Combs said Friday.

She noted that a barge pilot on the coast can earn \$100,000 per year with the proper training certificate. She also noted that there is an acute shortage of registered nurses in the state, and hospitals and clinics are clamoring for new recruits.

"My point is that I would hope that we fund community colleges, that we would take care of these kids and grownups in the technical schools because there's an awful lot of opportunity there," Combs said. "We think it's very important that every Texan has every conceivable chance to expand his or her horizons to be employed."

Llano ISD Superintendent Dennis Hill agreed.

Report ... see Page 12A

Comptroller: Diverse economy saving Texas

By GEORGE HATT
HIGHLAND LAKES NEWSPAPERS

Texas' economy isn't a one-trick pony, and it's saving the state from the worst effects of the recession gripping the rest of the country, according to Texas Comptroller of Public Accounts Susan Combs.

Combs briefed officials and citizens on the state of the Texas economy during a town hall meeting at the Llano County

Courthouse Friday.

She opened the meeting by painting a dire picture of the national economy based on her morning study of national newspapers.

"In the national economy, we expect the entire country to lose about 3.5 million jobs. We've already lost 2.6 (million) as of a couple of weeks ago," she said. "Texas for the first time lost about 27,000 jobs—and we had been rocking and rolling along

at about 20,000 new jobs a month."

Combs said that from December 2007 to December 2008 Texas brought in 154,000 new jobs, which is 71 percent of all the new jobs nationwide in that same period.

"We have a lot of things to be grateful for being here—you know that," she said.

Combs said that the diverse economy in Texas, coupled with Texans' reticence to jump willy-

nilly into the sub-prime mortgage game, helped the state.

"If you're long in the tooth like I am, you remember that in the 1980's we had an awful implosion in the oil and gas sector," she said. "We lost a couple hundred thousand jobs, and people decided that we needed to be much more diversified - and we have been more diversified."

Texas encouraged the growth of other industries, such as

Diversity ... see Page 12A

State government report: trade schools fuel growth

By GEORGE HATT
HIGHLAND LAKES NEWSPAPERS

When Texas Comptroller Susan Combs visited Llano Friday, she talked about the diversity in Texas's economy—and her concern that the trade schools and community colleges that train a sizeable portion of the workforce are falling by the wayside at the Legislature.

"We have a very diverse economy, which is why we changed. We didn't put all of our eggs in one basket 20 years ago (after the oil and gas sector collapse)," she said. "We began to diversify. I wanted to really analyze the jobs in Texas."

The Comptroller's office published a report in December called "Texas Works: Training and Edu-

cation for All Texans."

The report found that 8.2 million jobs in Texas, or 80 percent, do not require a four-year degree. Almost one million of those jobs require a vocational award or associate degree, and almost 500,000 of them pay more than the statewide average of \$37,187 per year.

"I thought that some of our policies in the state weren't geared toward telling young men and young women that there were a lot of opportunities out there, if you didn't have the money and inclination at the present time to go to a four-year school, that by golly there's a ton of jobs out there with a certificate, with some type of post high school training that you can make thirty, forty, fifty, eighty, a hundred thousand dol-

lars a year," Combs said Friday.

She noted that a barge pilot on the coast can earn \$100,000 per year with the proper training certificate. She also noted that there is an acute shortage of registered nurses in the state, and hospitals and clinics are clamoring for new recruits.

"My point is that I would hope that we fund community colleges, that we would take care of these kids and grownups in the technical schools because there's an awful lot of opportunity there," Combs said. "We think it's very important that every Texan has every conceivable chance to expand his or her horizons to be employed."

Llano ISD Superintendent Dennis Hill agreed.

Report ... see Page 12A



STAFF PHOTO BY GEORGE HATT

Comptroller of Public Accounts Susan Combs talked to Llano County citizens about the economy Friday at the Llano County Courthouse.

Comptroller: Diverse economy saving Texas

By GEORGE HATT
HIGHLAND LAKES NEWSPAPERS

Texas' economy isn't a one-trick pony, and it's saving the state from the worst effects of the recession gripping the rest of the country, according to Texas Comptroller of Public Accounts Susan Combs.

Combs briefed officials and citizens on the state of the Texas economy during a town hall meeting at the Llano County

Courthouse Friday.

She opened the meeting by painting a dire picture of the national economy based on her morning study of national newspapers.

"In the national economy, we expect the entire country to lose about 3.5 million jobs. We've already lost 2.6 (million) as of a couple of weeks ago," she said. "Texas for the first time lost about 27,000 jobs—and we had been rocking and rolling along

at about 20,000 new jobs a month."

Combs said that from December 2007 to December 2008 Texas brought in 154,000 new jobs, which is 71 percent of all the new jobs nationwide in that same period.

"We have a lot of things to be grateful for being here—you know that," she said.

Combs said that the diverse economy in Texas, coupled with Texans' reticence to jump willy-

nilly into the sub-prime mortgage game, helped the state.

"If you're long in the tooth like I am, you remember that in the 1980's we had an awful implosion in the oil and gas sector," she said. "We lost a couple hundred thousand jobs, and people decided that we needed to be much more diversified - and we have been more diversified."

Texas encouraged the growth of other industries, such as

Diversity ... see Page 12A