

Van Horn ADVOCATE

The Weekly Newspaper Serving the Crossroads of West Texas

10,000 year clock project will begin near Van Horn



- The Long Now Foundation (www.longnow.org) will be starting geologic testing this month for an underground space to house a 10,000 Year Clock. The Clock design, headed up by computer scientist Danny Hillis of The Long Now Foundation, has been in progress for over fourteen years. The Clock will be all



This prototype 10,000 year clock has already been constructed at Long Now Foundation's headquarters in California. The real clock will be located in hills, near here, which are virtually water free and have the geological formations to still be standing 10,000 years from now. It is designed to be a mechanical clock, not digital, and it will be, for the most part, driven by the sun. Danny Hillis did tell the Advocate that you will be able to walk up to the clock and wind it by hand in order to hear the bells and whistles. A very real challenge to long-term thinking. The Clock will be all mechanical, designed to keep ticking for at least 10,000 years, and will keep track of many calendric and astronomic events. The first eight-foot-tall prototype of the Clock resides in The Science Museum in London. The idea behind the Clock is to be an inspiration for long-term thinking, to help make thinking long term automatic and common, instead of difficult and rare. It is hoped to be an artifact to connect its visitors to the future in the same way relics from ancient civilizations connect us to the past. The Clock project in Texas, called Clock One, will be the first Clock built at monument scale by The Long Now Foundation, which also owns a potential site in eastern Nevada. The Clock will be almost entirely underground, and only accessed by foot traffic from the East once complete. The construction site and access is on property owned by Amazon.com founder Jeff Bezos, who is also funding the construction of the project. The Clock site overlooks the valley where his space company, Blue Origin, has its launch site.

A book by Stewart Brand, *Clock of the Long Now*, describes how the project began and philosophy behind it. Another good perspective can be found in an independent article written by Pulitzer prize-winning author Michael Chabon in "The Omega Glory". Further and more current details about The Long Now Foundation and their projects can be found at: <http://www.longnow.org>.

Commissioners adopt an order prohibiting outdoor burning

The county has not had much rainfall this year. In fact, in town, we've only had .30 inches since the 1st of January.

The result is the entire county is a virtual tinder-box just waiting for something to ignite it. The Texas Forest Service says, "The fire danger is very real and very critical." And, that information is further backed up by the National Weather Service.

Armed with this information, Culberson County Commissioners, during their meeting Monday, passed as order prohibiting outdoor burning within the county for a period of 90 days.

The burn ban can only be lifted sooner if the fire danger subsides as determined by the Texas Forest Service and county commissioners.

The order is so serious that it also provides that a violation of the order is a Class C Misdemeanor punishable by a fine of up to \$500.

Commissioners also took notice of some deficiencies in their equipment which needs immediate attention.

In fact, Commissioners Lyndon McDonald reported that the parking brake is not functioning on the front end loader and it is a serious matter, since it is used almost daily by county employees.

The estimate to get the loader's brake fixed is \$4,400.

At the same time, Commissioner McDonald reported that the county's dozer is billowing white smoke, an indication that the cylinders are about to fail.

The estimate to put new sleeves in the dozer is \$5,500. McDonald stated, "We either fix it or we will be confronted with the need to buy a new one at a far greater cost."

Commissioners approved some \$10,000 to repair this equipment with the money coming from commissioners court contingency funds.

And, while commissioners were approving things, they also approved the Clerk's request to purchase computer and software upgrades for her department.

The computer wand related hardware will come from Dell Computers while the software and license will come from I-Docket. The estimated cost will be around \$23,468 with another \$1,000 needed to set the system up. That \$1,000 will go to Tech-Mojo, the county's computer company.

Commissioners approved the Clerk's use of her Records Preservation Fund for the purchase which will ultimately benefit her clients, the public.

And, commissioners also approved some pre-jail inspection items, fencing and a carport installation for the sheriff's department.

Chief Deputy Beto Urias was present and reported that the jail inspection is slated for next month and these repairs need to be made. The repairs amount to some \$2,700 and County Attorney Steve Mitchell will draft a contract for Badillo Construction to sign.

With regard to the fencing and carport, the sheriff will pay for these items out of his budget and commissioners approved the expense not to exceed \$10,000.

With regard to other agenda matters considered by commissioners, the following actions were taken:

- * With regard to the Youth Activity Center Phase II grant, commissioners approved payment of the final expenses including the final payment to the builder.
- * With regard to the Youth Activity Center Phase III/Food Bank grant, Commissioners noted that the design work was done and they approved \$2,500 out of the capital projects fund for surveying of the property for the food bank facility.
- * And, commissioners learned that the construction bid process should begin very soon for the Border Colonia initiative.
- * An item on Historic Texas Cemetery Certification was tabled by commissioners after Commissioner McDonald said, "Mr. Stuckey is out of line here. I recommend we don't do anything until we investigate it further."
- * After tabling action on the Trans-Pecos Weather Modification effort, commissioners heard the monthly activity report from Lainie Koch, County Extension Agent.
- * After accepting the treasurer's continuing education hours, commissioners adopted two resolutions in support of state legislation as they impact television and electronics recycling so those items don't end up in landfills and a soil and water conservation district supported item.
- * Commissioners, at the request of Commissioner McDonald, will look at how the county pays longevity pay at a future meeting.
- * And, they held a behind closed doors meeting on the purchase of real estate. When they reconvened in open session, County Judge Molinar reported that no action would be required.
- * And commissioners approved budget amendments to allocate \$1,500 to spray spider mites at the cemetery and to put \$1,000 additional money in the Constable, Precinct 2's fuel account.
- * Under submitted county reports, commissioners opted to have Nutrition Center Manager Hortencia Sanchez come before them next month to explain her numbers.
- * And, they approved bills and payrolls amounting to \$258,049.

This is an on-line publication of
The Van Horn Advocate

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