

Press Release: Gaines County Courthouse

For Immediate Release (June 26, 2008)

Gaines County's drought condition has slowly been driven down with recent rains. According to the Texas Forest Service, the Gaines County average Keetch-Byram Drought Index (KBDI) is down to 469 out of a maximum score of 800. This is a nice reduction from Monday, June 23, when the KBDI was 522. Unfortunately, there are still some very dry spots within the county. Within Gaines County there are spots that are as high as 693, so we need to continue to be careful. However, Robert Barrett, the Gaines County Emergency Management Coordinator reports that there has been only one burning related fire since the burn ban was lifted. As long as the citizens of Gaines County continue to be responsible and we continue to get beneficial rains, we have reason to hope the burn ban season for 2008 is behind us.

However, the counties to the south have not been so fortunate. Andrews (KBDI average 657), Ector (KBDI avg. 649), Martin (KBDI avg. 601), and Winkler (KBDI avg. 711) have all been forced to declare a state of emergency and ban the sale and use of all fireworks for at least 60 hours. All of these counties have petitioned the Governor to extend the state of emergency and ban all fireworks in their counties until July 5th. So many Gaines County citizens do business in our southern neighbors. We would ask you to be as responsible there as you have been at home, maybe more so since they are in much worse drought conditions than Gaines County has experienced this year.

Because the drought is so much worse, the rules in our southern neighbors may be much stricter than we experienced in Gaines County. If you are working with welding or cutting tools, double check for restrictions in the county where you are working and make sure you comply with all local regulations. Be careful not to drive over, or park in dry grassy areas. Do not throw cigarette butts or any other burning or smoldering items from your vehicle. Let's be good neighbors.