

THE FRIDAY LUFKIN NEWS



LITTLE LEAGUE

Play ball

After a week off, the wait is over for the Lufkin Little League All-Stars as they start action in the Southwest Regional in Waco tonight.

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ELLEN TROUT ZOO

NEW PRINCE



STEVE KNIGHT/The Lufkin News

Beth Wegner, a big cat keeper at the Ellen Trout Zoo in Lufkin, shows a male African lion cub, which was born at the zoo on Saturday. The yet-to-be-named cub is the first of his kind born at the zoo since the late 1970s.

Zoo shows off male lion cub, first born here since late '70s

By STEVE KNIGHT
The Lufkin News

A new "king of the jungle" was born in Lufkin this past weekend.

Officials at Ellen Trout Zoo on Thursday announced the birth of a male African lion. The male cub, which was born on Saturday, is the first of his kind to be born at the zoo since the late 1970s.

According to Zoo Director Gordon Henley, the birth is the result of a recommended breeding by the Association of Zoos and Aquariums lion species survival plan for the zoo's lion pair. He said species survival plans help ensure the sustainability of captive zoo populations of animals while maintaining the desired level of genetic variability within the species.

"We've had lions all the time and didn't attempt to breed them, because of the supply and demand," Henley said. "When they began to formulate the species survival plan, that provided a system where we would have a sustainable collection of lions. It follows a plan for these targeted reproductions with the idea that those

AFRICAN LION FUN FACTS

- A lion's roar can be heard for a distance of up to five miles.
- Although lions readily drink water when available, they are capable of obtaining all their moisture needs from their prey, and even from plants.
- Lions can purr, but it is not very socially important for them. Unlike house cats, they can only make noise while exhaling.

Source: Atlanta Zoo

animals can be placed (at other facilities) in the reasonable future. That gives everybody an incentive to breed."

The cub has yet to be named, but some keepers have been unofficially calling him H.R.H., short for His Royal Highness, but Henley doesn't expect that name to stick. He said the new cub will be put on public display with his mother at some point, but for now, the newest member of Lufkin's animal kingdom will be kept and observed in a holding area, along with his mother and father.

"There are zoos that don't have certain animals, but I can't think of any that don't have a lion," Henley said. "The lion is just a staple in a zoo. You have to have a lion. They are a flagship animal, so we have to breed to maintain that."

Although they are one of the most popular animals with zoo visitors, they are classified as vulnerable by the International Union for Conservation of Nature.

According to the Atlanta Zoo website, male and female African lions stand anywhere from three-and-a-half to four feet tall, but males grow to be longer than females. African lions are anywhere from two to eight feet long, with an additional two to three feet of tail. Adult male lions can weigh between 300 and 500 pounds, and females can weigh between 250 and 300 pounds.

African lions formerly ranged from northern Africa to southwest Asia, west into Europe and east into India. However, because of population declines, their current range is sub-Saharan Africa.

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CRIMINAL JUSTICE

Grand jurors indict 6 men on sex crimes

Editor's note: This story contains graphic language.

By JESSICA COOLEY
The Lufkin News

An Angelina County grand jury indicted six men this week in alleged sex crimes — five against children and one against a mentally disabled man.

The charges indicted range from aggravated sexual assault of a child to indecency with a child by exposure, with possible sentence ranges of two years to life in prison, according to court records.

Miguel Ramos Lopez, 32, of Lufkin has been indicted on a charge of sexual assault on a allegedly molesting a 10-year-old girl. The abuse allegedly began in October 2011 and continued through the spring of 2012. According to previous reports, though she would lock the bathroom door, Lopez would get a key to unlock it and watch her take showers. He also allegedly touched her inappropriately on multiple occasions, previous reports stated.

If convicted, he faces up to life in prison and deportation. According to jail records, Lopez has remained in the Angelina County



LOPEZ

HALEY



RIOS

BALL

Jail since his April arrest on a hold through immigration.

In another case of sexual assault of a child, Albert Charles Haley, 55, of Lufkin, was indicted on accusations he molested a 14-year-old girl.

According to previous reports, Haley was babysitting the girl in

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TROPICAL WEATHER

Emergency officials keeping a watchful eye on Gulf of Mexico

By JESSICA COOLEY
The Lufkin News

All eyes are on the Gulf of Mexico as a tropical storm churns in the Atlantic Ocean.

National Weather Service officials in Shreveport, La., said Thursday that they expect Tropical Storm Ernesto to become a hurricane by Monday afternoon. The system was upgraded Thursday afternoon from a tropical depression with wind speeds up to 39 mph to a tropical storm with sustained wind speeds up to 50 mph.

NWS meteorologist Jeff Hood said officials will know more

about the storm's possible impact on the gulf within the next five to seven days.

"By Tuesday we're projecting it to be approaching Honduras and Cuba. From there it looks probable to approach the gulf," Hood said. "If it makes it that far, we'll be looking at it being in the gulf by mid to late next week."

While their models are forecasting many path scenarios, Hood said on its current west/northwest trek, a Northern Mexico to South Texas landfall is possible.

"People in the southern tip of

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CITY OF ZAVALLA

Zavalla council discusses banking, personnel matters

By STEVE KNIGHT
The Lufkin News

ZAVALLA — The Zavalla City Council conducted a special meeting on Thursday, considering items related to the city's banking account and two personnel issues.

The council, in a 3-2 vote with council members Carlos Guzman and Hulon Miller in opposition, authorized the city to submit a

letter to Huntington State Bank allowing the mayor and council members access to past and present accounts for the past five years, including any debit or credit cards issued on any of those accounts.

Mayor Jimmy Davis then announced that the council would convene into closed executive session to discuss two personnel items: consideration of hiring an attorney to represent and defend

the city in an employment claim and authorizing the mayor to sign and engagement letter; and discussion of renewal and evaluation of the contract of the city judge.

Municipal Judge Bruce Milstead asked that any discussion of him be in open session. Davis replied that the discussion would be limited to the actual position

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EDUCATION

First Tee golf program picks Diboll schools as participant

By NICK WADE
The Lufkin News

The First Tee National School Program announced in a press release that H.G. Temple Elementary in Diboll has been chosen to participate in The First Tee, a program that promotes character development and life-enhancing values through the game of golf.

The National School Program curriculum is based on national physical education standards and utilizes equipment, at no cost to the district,

that is designed to be developmentally appropriate, safe and fun for children and beginners.

"Diboll ISD is excited about the opportunity that First Tee will give the children of our district," Diboll ISD Superintendent Gary Martel said. "We discussed this opportunity with our Mayor, John McClain, and City Manager Dennis McDuffie and feel that it, along with our beautiful Neches Pines Golf Course, will provide a collaborative opportunity for the city and school

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