

Local

Bryan officials trying to cope with paving problem

Potential loss of revenue-sharing funds has officials worried about future

By MARY ANN HINNANT
Battalion Reporter

While driving down a section of Pierce Street in Bryan, it's difficult to avoid the many holes and bumps in the road which could be used as a testing ground for tire wear. Poor drainage increases the chances for getting stuck after a rain and cars parked on both sides of the narrow street allow only enough room for one car to pass.

This section of Pierce Street, like many other streets in Bryan, has no concrete topping or curb and gutter

for drainage purposes. Driving down an unpaved street is one thing, living on one is another.

Nellie Garrett lives only two blocks from Pierce Street on Legion Court which is also unpaved.

"I've been living in this house for about 12 years," she said, "and the street gets messier every time it rains. I don't even like to cross the street."

Loretta Navarro lives several miles from Pierce and Legion Court on Bluegrass Street, which is also unpaved.

"Not only is the road messy when it rains, but it gets dry and dusty during the summer and the dirt blows into the house," she said. "If they would just come and grade it every once in a while, that would be a big help."

These streets, like many others in the same areas, are all unpaved and are all located in the lower-income neighborhoods of Bryan. Presently, there are about 30 miles of unpaved streets in Bryan. But the number used to be higher.

According to Bryan Public Works Director Jack Cornish, in 1970 there were 38 miles of unpaved streets in Bryan, and the majority of these were in low-income neighborhoods.

The 15-member committee is selected by the Bryan City Council and the majority of these members live in the low-income areas.

The Advisory Committee selects the streets to be paved by using a basic set of guidelines which were set up by Craften, City Engineer Jay Page and Street Superintendent Vince Nuche.

Unpaved streets are rated on a numeric scale based upon factors such as cost for paving the street, roughness of the street, if the street is a connector (joining two paved streets), or a collector (collecting traffic from a residential area and carrying it to a main artery).

After the committee has selected the streets to be paved, the city council has the final say and may either approve or reject any of the committee's proposed streets.

"This can take a couple of weeks or a couple of months, depending on how quickly the Advisory Commit-

tee can make a list of streets which need to be paved," Craften said.

Craften said there is also the problem of sometimes acquisitioning land in order for the street to be paved.

"We have to buy land from the property owners in order to widen the street and pave it," she said. "There is often the problem of finding the legal owner of the land. This is the reason that some streets which need paving are often put off."

The paving of the streets finally gets underway after the council has approved the list and the CDP hires a contractor for the street construction.

"When the funds are available, we do as much as we can," Craften said, "but paving a street is very expensive."

According to City Engineer Jay Page, the cost for paving one foot of street in 1974 was about \$45. Now the cost per foot is anywhere from \$60 to \$80.

Since the beginning of the CDP in 1975, \$1.3 million has been spent to pave 6.6 miles of street, leaving 31.4 miles of unpaved streets. However, not all of these unpaved streets are in low-income areas in Bryan.

Money allocated to the city through bond elections was designated for general street repair and maintenance, with some money to go to the paving of those streets which had become major thoroughfares.

A bond election in 1970 provided the city money to pave six streets in 1972 including Briarcrest Dr. and Villa Maria which were anticipated to become major thoroughfares.

This bond election also provided money for petition paving in which the residents of the street which has

been petitioned to be paved must incur approximately two-thirds of the cost of paving the street. The city pays for the remaining one-third.

Under the petition paving program, 51 per cent of the residents living on the street must sign a petition for the street to be paved. If the petition is accepted by the city, even those residents who did not sign the petition must pay.

Other than the money from bond elections, petition paving is also funded by the revenue sharing program. Federally funded money by the Department of the Treasury is given to the city on the basis of the population and may be used for any legal city services.

In 1971 and 1972, 24 streets were paved through petition paving using the funds from the 1970 bond election. In 1976 half as many streets had been paved by petition, the reason

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With the beginning of the Community Development Program in Bryan in 1975, the streets in the low-income neighborhoods which had been neglected were to undergo some facelifting. Through the use of federally funded money, this program was to improve the conditions of the low-income neighborhoods. Projects were started, such as park development, sidewalk construction, fire hydrants for safety precautions and street improvement and repair. Over 50 percent of the allocated money was to be spent on the paving of streets in these designated areas.

The first major street construction project began in 1975 in the Castle Heights area in north Bryan, where virtually no paved roads existed. After two years and approximately \$330,000, the street construction in Castle Heights has been completed.

"That was a severe problem area and one which we thought we should

as quickly as possible," said Audrey Craften, director of the CDP. "But it isn't always that easy."

A Citizens Advisory Committee compiles a list of those streets which need to be paved in the low-income areas.

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In 1971 and 1972, 24 streets were paved through petition paving using the funds from the 1970 bond election. In 1976 half as many streets had been paved by petition, the reason

being the depletion of the bond money.

Between 1974 and 1977, 36 streets had been paved by petition through the use of the revenue sharing funds.

With the beginning of the CDP, unpaved streets in low-income neighborhoods were scheduled to be paved with federal funds, but the

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Water important to town-namers

By MARY ANNE SNOWDEN
Battalion Reporter

Well, seems like of Joe Sixpack and his fiancée Wilma Winebottle want to start a distillery in Texas, but they aren't sure where.

Sixpack, reading the November newsletter from the Texas Water Resources Institute — located at Texas A&M University — said the letter claimed the importance of water to the history of the state the names that Texans have given their towns.

Names which describe the local water situation, such as Sour Lake, Shallowater, Redwater and Oyster Creek sounded suspiciously like Long Lake, Big Lake, Blue Lake, Silver Lake, Clear Lake and Little River.

Winebottle noted towns with many springs and wells.

Sure 'nuf, if the town founders were luckless to be lakeless, they were bound to be a spring or a well around; hence Roaring Springs, Dripping Springs, Big Spring, Mineral Wells, Springtown, Sulphur Springs and Walnut Springs. Winebottle said the last one should be a wonder to see.

Sixpack said he doubted if he'd ever pop a top in Swamp Creek, Liverpool, but added he was sure the folks residin' there were nice.

The newsletter revealed 41 Texas towns named after springs and another 37 having "lake" in their names; and 17 towns named creeks, rivers or brooks.

The water resources institute has learned that even if a town is named after a water source or a water description, there is a chance that the street the Sixpacks will end up living on is.

But they haven't quite made up their minds where their own spring of brew will be sprung yet.

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