

Reactions vary to speed limit increase

Residents of a rural town are concerned with the possible raise in legal driving speeds.

ROPEVILLE, Texas (AP) — Traffic raced along the Lubbock-Odessa highway Wednesday morning as residents of this town spoke out against faster driving. Here in Ropesville — from Pay's Drive-In to the cotton gin just off U.S. 62 — people are voicing qualms about the likelihood that 70 mph will become a legal driving speed by next month.

The three-member Texas Transportation Commission meets Thursday morning in Austin to decide whether to make the speed-limit change on most rural and divided highways in the state.

"I don't think it needs to go up. I just think there'll be more wrecks," said Faye Jonas, serving lunch at her diner. "Seventy is pretty fast."

You're going to have more accidents and higher insurance rates," warned farmer John Smith at the gin.

President Clinton on Tuesday signed the National Highway System bill, which ends the federal speed limit laws that began in 1974 to save energy.

Removal of the federal speed cap Dec. 8 puts a 1963 Texas law back into effect. State law set the maximum speed limit at 70 mph in the daytime and 65 mph at night for passenger vehicles.

Officials suggest that drivers keep a light touch on the gas pedal.

"The best advice for motorists is to abide by the posted speed limit," said Major E.C. Sherman of the Department of Public Safety's enforcement division. "Some areas will stay 55 mph, so motorists should not assume the speed limit is any higher than the posted limit."

The Texas Department of Transportation said new speed limit signs are not expected to start going up until mid-December.

Complete installation could take until May, the agency said.

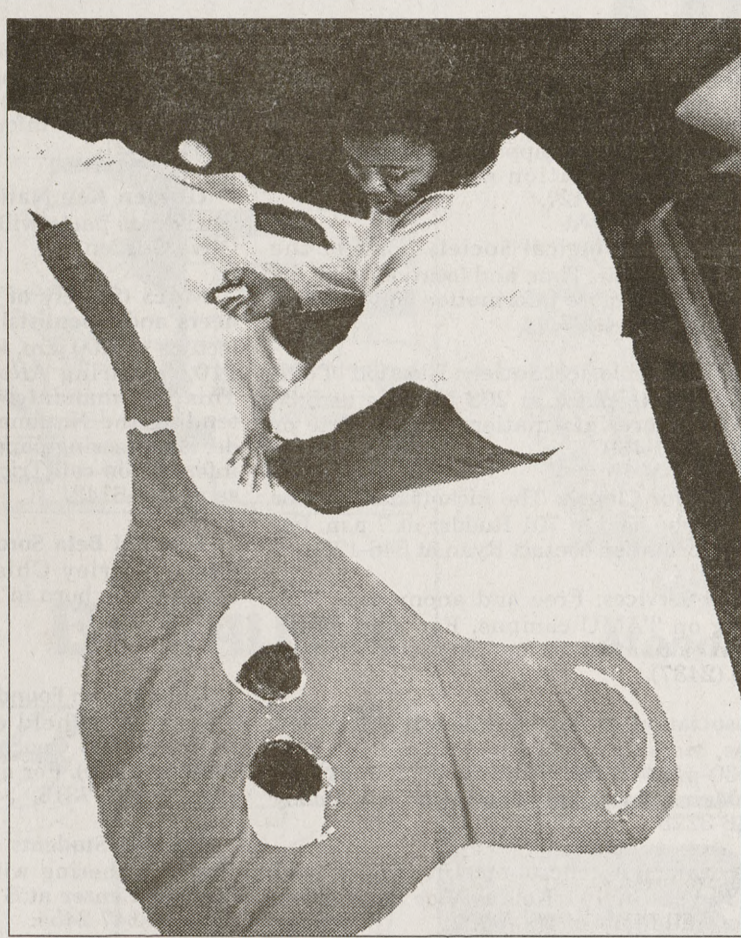
Opponents of high speed fear an increase in traffic deaths. Texas accounted for 3,142 traffic fatalities last year.

But supporters of 70-mph speed limits say most people already drive that fast anyway.

"Seems like you're traveling too slow," said 19-year-old Candy Pena, hanging a strand of Christmas lights Wednesday at Ropesville City Hall.

The DPS alone issued 526,637 speeding tickets last year, an agency spokeswoman said.

Ropesville police officer Rick Wooton said he writes more than 50 speeding tickets a month in the town about 15 miles west of Lubbock.



Amy Browning, THE BATTALION

SAW VARSITY'S HORNS OFF

Jackie Price, senior construction science major from Houston, paints Bevo's horns as sawed off for the Rudder Hall spirit sign Tuesday night.

Belfast building barriers instead of tearing them down

President Clinton will visit the Short Strand today.

BELFAST, Northern Ireland (AP) — As President Clinton will see Thursday, a year's experimental peace in Belfast has not brought its walls tumbling down.

Eighteen perversely named "peace lines" of brick, steel and barbed wire separate Protestants and Catholics, monuments to a quarter-century's bloodshed. Many locals want to keep them up.

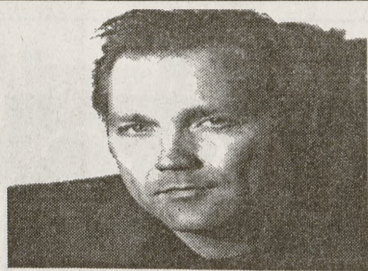
Clinton may see several of them during visits to a factory near the Springfield-Springmartin peace line and a small business center in Protestant east

Belfast near another wall protecting the vulnerable Catholic enclave, the Short Strand.

"There's still a psychological fear within people and it applies in all areas where there have been a lot of murders or attempted murders — people living on the edge of the troubles," said Brenda Murphy, a short-story writer who lives on the Catholic side of a wall.

Work began on Belfast's biggest and most solid wall yet on the same day that the Irish Republican Army announced a cease-fire 15 months ago.

The walls running through Belfast's most downtrodden districts draw comparisons with yesterday's Berlin and tomorrow's Sarajevo, and provide a marker for how difficult reconciliation will be.



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Marquise Cut

Carat	Color	Clarity	Price
.31	I	SI1	\$475 ⁰⁰
.31	H	VS2	675 ⁰⁰
.47	I	SI1	1,700 ⁰⁰
.49	J	SI2	1,150 ⁰⁰
.49	G	SI1	1,519 ⁰⁰
.50	F	SI2	1,475 ⁰⁰
.54	F	SI2/SI1	1,674 ⁰⁰
.57	K	SI1	1,150 ⁰⁰
.68	J	VS2	1,900 ⁰⁰
.69	K	VVS2	1,750 ⁰⁰
.71	H	VS2	3,100 ⁰⁰
.71	G	VS2	2,900 ⁰⁰
.76	F	SI3	2,250 ⁰⁰
.83	H	SI1	3,150 ⁰⁰
.84	K/L	SI1	2,150 ⁰⁰
.94	K	SI1	2,650 ⁰⁰
1.01	I	SI1	4,500 ⁰⁰
1.21	K	SI3	3,750 ⁰⁰
1.86	J/K	SI3	4,350 ⁰⁰

Emerald Cut

Carat	Color	Clarity	Price
.43	L	VVS2	\$750 ⁰⁰
.71	H	SI2	1,675 ⁰⁰
.74	H	SI3	1,500 ⁰⁰
.83	H	SI3	1,575 ⁰⁰
.88	G	SI2	1,750 ⁰⁰
.93	G	SI3	1,950 ⁰⁰
1.28	I	VS2	4,650 ⁰⁰

Round Diamond

Carat	Color	Clarity	Price
.41	H	SI2	\$495 ⁰⁰
.44	J	SI1	\$750 ⁰⁰
.64	H	VVS2	1,990 ⁰⁰
.70	I	I2	\$850 ⁰⁰
.70	I	SI1	2,100 ⁰⁰
.71	H	SI1	2,200 ⁰⁰

Round Diamond

Carat	Color	Clarity	Price
.72	I	SI1	2,160 ⁰⁰
.72	I	VVS2	2,875 ⁰⁰
.91	J	SI2	2,960 ⁰⁰
.95	I	I1	2,275 ⁰⁰
1.00	G	I1	2,600 ⁰⁰
1.03	H	SI3	3,450 ⁰⁰
1.11	F	SI1	3,950 ⁰⁰
1.16	J	SI1	3,950 ⁰⁰
1.64	I/J	SI1	6,600 ⁰⁰
1.89	K	SI3	4,350 ⁰⁰

Pear Shape

Carat	Color	Clarity	Price
.47	F	SI1	\$1,300 ⁰⁰
.49	H	SI1	1,253 ⁰⁰
.50	F	SI2	1,100 ⁰⁰
.79	K	SI1	1,675 ⁰⁰
.92	K	VS2	2,300 ⁰⁰
1.02	J	SI1	3,250 ⁰⁰

Princess

Carat	Color	Clarity	Price
.49	K	SI1	\$875 ⁰⁰
.53	K	VS1	975 ⁰⁰
.72	H	I1	1,475 ⁰⁰
.80	J	I1	1,375 ⁰⁰
.80	H	I1	1,475 ⁰⁰
1.00	H	SI3	2,325 ⁰⁰
1.42	H	SI3	3,900 ⁰⁰

Oval

Carat	Color	Clarity	Price
.40	J	VS1	\$675 ⁰⁰
.50	I	SI2	1,383 ⁰⁰
.81	I	VS2	3,225 ⁰⁰
.93	I	SI2	2,860 ⁰⁰
1.00	G	I1	2,700 ⁰⁰
1.53	I/J	SI1	5,800 ⁰⁰

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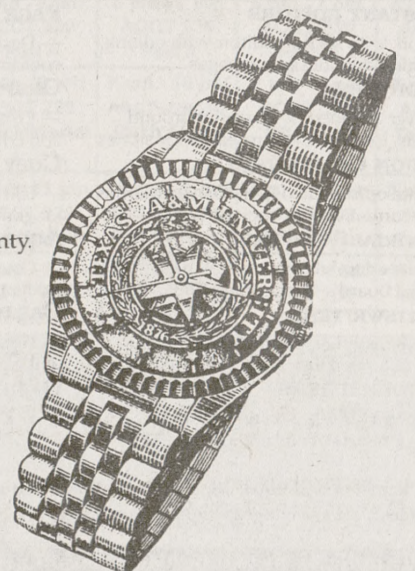
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