

# Bidders vie for piece of historic Texas ranch

By Betsy Blaney  
THE ASSOCIATED PRESS

DALHART, Texas — As a young girl, Susan Shamburger Bagwell rode on horseback across the vast land that her family owned, land that once was part of a legendary West Texas ranch.

The XIT Ranch once spanned 3 million acres of the Texas Panhandle and spilled over into Oklahoma and New Mexico. It helped finance the state Capitol in Austin.

On Wednesday, Bagwell and other family members watched as dozens of buyers placed bids on all or portions of one of the largest remaining parcels of the old XIT, the 37,000-acre C.D. Shamburger Ranch.

"It will always be part of my life," said Bagwell, 56, who now lives in the wealthy Dallas enclave of Highland Park. "I love this land, this property, the history, the wildlife. It's just soul nourishing. That's all you can say about it."

Some Texas history buffs were melancholy about the prospect of one of the last large pieces of the XIT being chopped up.

"It's a very sad chapter in the history of the XIT Ranch because that division is just going to disappear," said William Green, curator of history at the Panhandle-Plains Historical Museum in Canyon.

"It's kind of the end of an era," Green said he couldn't even bear to go the auction; it was too sad an occasion.

Bidding on the Shamburger land began Wednesday morning and continued into late afternoon. Bids were accepted on individual tracts or the whole ranch, with the land to be sold in the manner resulting in the highest sales price.

By late afternoon, the top bids totaled nearly \$8 million, or about \$210 an acre.

More than a century ago, the land sold for 50 cents an acre in exchange for a new state Capitol in Austin.

In 1879, the patriarchs of

Texas wanted a new Capitol but didn't have money to build it. The Legislature set aside 3 million acres of land in the Panhandle to finance a new building. The need became more urgent in 1881, when the old Capitol burned to the ground.

The next year, an Illinois contractor agreed to build a new home for the Legislature in exchange for the land. The contractor later sold his interest to a group that eventually became known as the Capitol Syndicate, which financed most of the cost of the new Capitol and established the XIT Ranch.

The syndicate owners fenced the entire range with 6,000 miles of barbed wire — an audacious move in the days of the open range — and brought in up to 150,000 head of cattle. About 100 cowboys tended the range and livestock for \$30 a month and all they could eat.

Legend has it that the XIT name stood for "10 in Texas," because the 220-mile-long spread the size of Connecticut covered 10 Texas counties. Others say it was chosen because the XIT brand was harder for cattle rustlers to cover.

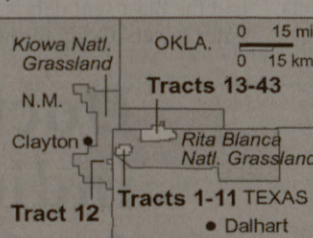
The syndicate began selling off the land around 1901 for \$6 an acre. The last XIT cattle were sold in 1912 and the ranch went out of business.

C.D. Shamburger, a Wichita Falls lumber yard owner, began buying Panhandle land in the 1930s. He completed his 120,000-acre ranch with the 1943 purchase of a parcel from the Capitol Freehold Land Trust, which had taken control over the old XIT land.

Over the years, the Shamburger Ranch shrunk to the 37,000 that were auctioned Wednesday by his heirs. Bagwell, Shamburger's granddaughter, said family members decided to sell because they have less connection to the land and other ideas about investing their money.

## History for sale

At least 37,000 acres of land in three states are on the auction block Wednesday in Dalhart, Texas. The parcels were once part of the famed XIT Ranch.



SOURCES: Associate Press; ESRI AP

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## NEWS IN BRIEF

### Perry fights to close state tax loophole

AUSTIN (AP) — A loophole that allows some businesses to avoid paying state franchise taxes is unfair and should be done away with, Gov. Rick Perry said Wednesday.

Perry, after speaking to the Texas Association of Business, said that the so-called "Delaware Sub" loophole should be closed.

Under the practice, companies incorporate on paper in Delaware or in other states where taxes are lower. Then they legally organize into a virtually tax-free partnerships here. Dell Computer Corp., SBC Communications and some large Texas newspapers are organized this way and avoid state taxes.

### Policy

Continued from page 1

the parents are informed of that decision, Cannon said.

Student athletes are tested randomly throughout the year, including the summer. With any reasonable suspicion, the department can request an athlete to give a sample for a drug test, he said.

If a drug test is positive, and it is a student's first offense, the student is suspended from the next competition period, a time period not to exceed 10 percent of the total sport contest, Cannon said. Students must participate in a mandatory counseling session and pass a follow-up drug test which can occur at any time the following year. Parents are also informed of the offense, Cannon said.

A second offense results in immediate suspension of the athlete from the program, and reinstatement is determined by a substance abuse committee, Cannon said.

Similar to the first offense, students will be tested at any time and parents are again notified, Cannon said.

A third offense will immediately suspend the student from the athletic program for one year, and the student will lose eligibility for grants and financial aid, Cannon said.

Steroids are a performance-enhancing drug that the Athletic Department does not tolerate.

Watkins gave no new updates on Slocum's suspension this week, nor did he say how long Slocum's suspension might last or whether Slocum would return before the basketball season ends.

The office of the U.S. Drug Control and Policy's Web site says steroid use can result in health risks such as liver cancer, heart attacks and elevated cholesterol levels. Also, withdrawal symptoms such as increased irritability and aggression can occur.

Margaret Griffith, health education coordinator for the A.P. Beutel Health Center, warns students against needless use for steroids.

"Because needles for steroid use are only available with a prescription, people tend to share them and HIV is transmitted this way," Griffith said.

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