



The Big Spring Municipal Auditorium — along with the majority of the city's downtown area — got a generous helping of fresh powder this morning with accumulation of 1-3 inches expected through the day.

Moore targets \$3 million for Settles project

By **THOMAS JENKINS**
Staff Writer

The Dallas-based Settles Hotel Development Company asked members of the Moore Development Board of Directors Wednesday night to kick in \$3 million for renovations of the downtown landmark — if it's legal.

The board approved a motion that will begin the process to grant the company a \$3 million, 4A-eligible grant, first requesting a letter of opinion from the economic developer's attorney to confirm the grant is legal, then issuing a letter of intent to pony up the funding for the project.



McLellan



Parker

need to get this letter of opinion from our attorney before we make a motion for a letter of intent," said board member Frank Parker, who joined the meeting via a conference call. "We need to know what parameters we can enter into this thing on before we can commit to funding any particular items for the project. "There is also the ques-

"I really feel like we See **MOORE**, Page 3A

Winter arrives

Ice and snow bring fender benders, close of I-20

By **STEVE REAGAN**
Staff Writer

A cold front with a kick brought winter to Howard County a few weeks early, as snow and ice blanketed the area and forced the closure of a large chunk of Interstate 20.

An extremely powerful low pressure system parked over the Texas Panhandle provided the trigger for the storm system, which began moving through this area Wednesday evening.

"It wasn't a super-complicated system, but it was strong. We saw it coming for days," said David Marsalek, a meteorologist with the National Weather Service. "It kind of got hung up along the Dawson-Scurry-Borden line Wednesday, but once the evening hours kicked in, it came through with a bang."

Temperatures plummeted as the system brought strong winds, snow and ice into the area. The biggest impact was on area roads, which became slick and hazardous under the icy coating.

Numerous accidents have been reported on county roads this morning, although most were minor and did not involve injuries. The sheer number of fender-benders, however, forced officials with the Texas Department of Transportation to close a huge portion of Interstate 20 early today.

James Gilbert, maintenance supervisor for the local TxDOT office, said Interstate 20 was closed from U.S. Highway 87 west to the

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Moore Development board members Richard Steel, left, Raul Marquez, Mike Niklasch and Larry McLellan go over the details of a \$3 million grant for the Settles Hotel Development Company during a conference call with fellow board member Frank Parker.

OPENS SATURDAY

Museum exhibit will feature Christ's birth

By **STEVE REAGAN**
Staff Writer

Heritage Museum will kick off its observance of the Christmas season with "Silent Night, Holy Night — A Walk-Through Nativity" beginning at 5 p.m. Saturday.

The nativity will feature several scenes from the story of the birth of the Christ child, said Museum Curator Tammy Schrecengost.

"Every Christmas, we try to do something different," Schrecengost said. "Earlier this year, I was reading a children's book, and that served as the inspiration for the

"The stories in the nativity will be about nice things that have happened to people during the Christmas season."

—Tammy Schrecengost

nativity." The exhibit will feature artwork by local resident Lenita Fryar and costumes donated by First

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Tammy Schrecengost of the Heritage Museum adjusts a mannequin that will be part of the museum's "Silent Night, Holy Night — A Walk-Through Nativity" exhibit which opens at 5 p.m. Saturday.

Canterbury bazaar full of gifts, eats

By **STEVE REAGAN**
Staff Writer

Call it one-stop shopping — Canterbury style.

The retirement community will hold its annual Christmas Bazaar Saturday, and officials say it offers senior citizens, as well as others in the community, a perfect opportunity to buy all their holiday gifts under one roof.

The bazaar, which will run from 9 a.m. to 3 p.m. at Canterbury South, will feature a variety of items, ranging from Christmas trees to handicrafts, said Shannon Nabors, Canterbury executive director.

In addition, the Canterbury Auxiliary will hold a rummage sale

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LIVING CHRISTMAS TREE

A community Christmas tradition returns this Saturday.

The Living Christmas Tree will be held Saturday and Sunday at First United Methodist Church, located at 400 Scurry St.

This is the 28th straight year for the event, which features more than 100 participants, officials said.

There will be a 2 p.m. dress rehearsal Saturday, followed by regular performances at 8 p.m. Saturday and Sunday.

Admission is free to all showings, but church officials ask that you contact the church at 267-6394 to obtain tickets for the evening performances.

VAMC PLANS ACTIVITIES

The Big Spring VA Medical Center has two annual events planned Friday. The public is invited to both.

At 11 a.m., the health care facility will hold a World AIDS Day ceremony in the chapel. At the conclusion of the ceremony, participants will place ribbons and memorials on the AIDS memorial tree located on the grounds of the VA Hospital. Friday at 6 p.m., the hospital will stage its "VA Lighting of the Lights," in which the annual Christmas lights display is turned on outside and the indoor Christmas tree is lit.

Refreshments will be served and Santa will visit with the children.

RED DRESS LUNCHEON

In the Red Dress tradition, a Red Dress Luncheon will be held at 11:30 a.m. Saturday, Dec. 9, at the Heritage Museum.

Guests are invited to wear their red dresses and a fancy red hat. An award will be given to the woman with the best hat.

Lunch will be provided by the Heritage Museum Events Committee.

Those planning on attending are asked to RSVP by Dec. 6 to reserve a place. Seating will be limited to 60 guests.

For more information, contact the Heritage Museum at 267-8255 or go by 510 Scurry.

MOORE

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tion of liability. If we enter into this agreement and then later on its discovered it's not legal, then our attorney and his insurance company would have to share in the liability."

Troy Tompkins, who was named earlier this week by project leader and Big Spring native G. Brint Ryan as the local liaison for the effort, told the board SHDC was hoping to come away from the meeting with a letter of intent from Moore Development.

Parker urged the board to take the matter one step at a time.

"It's important that we do this right," said Parker. "We have to make sure we follow all of the steps on this, and the first one is to get a letter of opinion from our attorney saying what we can and can't do."

Board President Larry McLellan said it was important to send a message to Ryan that Moore Development was solidly behind the effort.

"I feel like this is a good project for the city of Big Spring," said McLellan, "and I feel like it's a project the people of this city will get behind. I'm very excited with the vision that Brint (Ryan) has for this community. I want him to understand that we are behind him unanimously on this."

A consensus of the board indeed proved members are behind the \$3 million grant.

The board struggled for nearly an hour with the wording of a motion that would accomplish two things — allow the board president to get the letter of opinion from the board's attorney and prepare a letter of intent committing the agency to providing \$3 million for the project — before finally settling on a structure it was comfortable with.

Board member Mike Niklasch also asked that additional verbiage be added to the motion to make it clear the \$3 million was not yet being approved, and would require another vote by the board to seal the deal

with SHDC.

"I want people to understand what we're doing here," said Niklasch. "I don't want them to think we're giving them a \$3 million grant without even knowing if we can. We're simply instructing our attorney to see what we can and can't fund for this project, and if we can do legally do so, begin developing a letter of intent. We're not writing any checks right now."

Cursory estimates for the project — which would renovate the structure into a mixed use commercial and residential complex — were placed between \$10 million and \$12 million. According to McLellan, \$3 million would come from Moore Board, while SHDC — with an undetermined amount of fiscal help from state historic agencies — would cover the remainder of the cost.

Ryan and SHDC agreed to purchase the historic Settles Hotel from the city of Big Spring for \$75,000 nearly two weeks ago, following approval from the city council.

According to a press release issued by Ryan Monday morning, preliminary plans for the historic downtown building include commercial and residential use of the property, with retail space available on the first and second floors.

The 15-story hotel — which opened its doors in 1930 — has been vacant since the early 1980s.

Also during the meeting, the board approved a \$12,000 grant for Forsan High School to purchase a computerized plasma cutting system for its welding trades department.

The board also met in executive session to discuss applications for the executive director position, which became vacant more than a month ago when former executive director Kent Sharp announced he would be leaving for a similar position in Gainesville.

According to McLellan, the list of applicants has been narrowed to approximately six, and he and the board are preparing to begin conducting in-person interviews soon.

SNOW

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Martin County line because of unsafe driving conditions. Westbound traffic was detoured along State Highway 176.

Officials hoped to have I-20 open for traffic again by mid-morning, he added.

Gilbert said reports of slick roads were a common thread for communities ranging from Colorado City to Midland-Odessa.

"We would urge drivers to please drive slow today," he said. "The major problems we've had today is people going too fast."

Coahoma and Forsan schools delayed the start of classes until 10 a.m. today, while Big Spring ISD classes started on schedule, officials said.

Temperatures are expected to reach only into the mid-30s today before plummeting into the upper teens overnight, Marsalek commented. Warmer conditions, with highs in the mid-50s, should prevail Friday and Saturday, he added.

BAZAAR

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at the same site, while Canterbury North will be the site for a surplus sale of maintenance supplies.

"There's a couple of reasons we hold this bazaar every year," Nabors said. "First, it gives our residents a venue to sell their handicrafts. And for seniors, there's a lot of shopping they can do in a small area. It's a good way for seniors — and

everyone else in the community — to do their Christmas shopping."

The bazaar will be held in the public area of Canterbury South. There, residents and outside vendors will sell baked goods and items ranging from baskets, Christmas trees and crosses to crocheted items and kitchen supplies.

"Basically, there will be something for everyone," Nabors said.

The rummage sale, held exclusively by residents,

will raise money for various events held at the retirement community during the year, Nabors said.

The surplus sale at Canterbury North will offer items such as carpet, tile and plumbing supplies.

For more information, call 263-1265.

Contact Staff Writer Steve Reagan at 263-7331, ext. 234, or by e-mail at reporter@bigspringherald.com.

MUSEUM

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United Methodist Church, she added.

At each stop of the exhibit, an inspirational story of true-life stories will be highlighted.

"We have inspirational stories ... in our archive collection," Schrecengost said. "The stories in the nativity will be about nice things that have happened to people during the Christmas season."

The exhibit will take up most of the museum's bottom floor and end near the front door, where museum personnel were

putting the finishing touches on a manger scene Tuesday morning.

The nativity is part of the museum's annual Parade Watch event, Director Nancy Raney said.

This year, the museum patio is being set aside for people to observe the Big Spring Herald's Community Christmas Parade, which will wheel past the museum's loca-

tion Saturday evening.

Raney said refreshments will be served.

For more information, call 267-8255.

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