

Jefferson Jimplecute

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Council Votes 6-0 to Terminate Kevin Huckabee, Effective Sept. 21.

By **BOB PALMER**, Jefferson aldermen *Jimplecute Editor* voted 6-0 Thursday to terminate City Administrator Kevin Huckabee effective Sept. 10.

The move included a severance pay package of between four and six months "depending on medical insurance."

The action did not please everyone.

Former Alderman Richard Turner was seen shouting on Polk Street in front of City Hall at Alderman Shawn Humphrey who made the motion to terminate Huckabee.

"That's my tax money," Turner screamed, apparently referring to the severance package.

Huckabee saw his separation as a joint agreement with the city.

"The City Council and I mutually reached a unilateral severance agreement. Which relates to no termination of the City Administrator and we mutually agreed that separation would be best for both me and the City," Huckabee told the Jimplecute Friday morning.

Huckabee's dismissal did end several weeks of controversy that included Huckabee secretly recording Mayor Bubba Haggard in order to file criminal charges and citizens presenting a petition with more than 200 names demanding Huckabee's ouster.

Former Mayor Carey Heaster had praised Huckabee for securing grants to help the city move forward.

Turner said Huckabee's accomplishments were "overrated."

A sexual harassment complaint by former Tourism Director Kelli Schilling also clouded Huckabee's time in Jefferson.

In other action the council accepted Pecan Way into the city street system and added the route to this year's paving program.

See more on **HUCKABEE TERMINATION**, page 1



NEWSbriefs

THE PYLAND AFRICAN AMERICAN CEMETERY CHARTER (PAACC) will hold its regularly scheduled Annual Board of Directors meeting September 15, 2018 at 11:00 a.m. at the Pyland African American Cemetery. The public is welcome to attend. Contact us at www.thepaacc.org.

COWBOY REVIVAL, October 4-7, 2018, Cass County Cowboy Church, 7701 Hwy 59, Atlanta, TX. Call or text Shannon Cunningham for more information: (318) 455-2140

2018 MARION COUNTY FARMERS MARKET continues each Saturday through October 27 as long as produce is available. They will again be using the park in front of the First National Bank in downtown Jefferson. There will be a single membership for vendors for the entire season. Dues are \$20. For questions contact Doug Weir at (903) 665-2421 or Myra Smith at (903) 639-2910.

THE ANNUAL FRIENDS OF THE JEFFERSON CARNEGIE LIBRARY Dinner will be held on Monday September 17, 2018 at 6:00 p.m.! Please join us at the library for a delicious Potluck style dinner and show your support for our historical library by joining the Friends of the Library organization. Please bring your favorite covered dish to share. Meat will be provided along with water and tea.



Sophomore Lyrik Rawls (#8) was ejected in the second half for this "helmet-to-helmet" hit. After reviewing the film, the Bulldog coaching staff believes that it was a clean hit. Photo by Wayne Grubbs. See Page 6 for story.

Jefferson Defensive End Commits to play with Texas State University

Senior defensive end, Eric Gipson, has verbally committed to play for the Texas State University Bobcats in 2019. Texas State, which is in San Marcos near Austin, competes in the Sun Belt Conference Team and is led by third-year head coach Everett Withers.

Currently playing for the Jefferson Bulldogs, Gipson runs a 43.8-second 40-yard dash. The talented Jefferson defensive lineman received several other offers for the 2019 season, but chose Texas State after they had been recruiting him for about five months. He told the Jimplecute he has a great relationship with the college coaches and really liked the school. Gipson's parents echoed his sentiments, saying they liked the coaching staff and the way they worked with their talented son.

As a junior, Gipson played in the first team defense of the All-State, All-District, and All-East Texas Smoaky team. In 2017, he achieved 137 tackles, 25 tackles for loss, 10 sacks, as well as an interception, two forced fumbles, and one blocked kick.

Confirming that defense wins championships, Gipson said that while it "can be really complicated

at time, it can change the game really quick" - which he clearly does. In fact, as we reported last week, Gipson and senior linebacker Brennan Varnell led the defensive effort against the Pittsburg Pirates high school football team that resulted in a great 44-35 win for Jefferson Bulldogs.

Asked what his focus was at Jefferson this year, Gipson said he didn't have a specific focus but rather wanted to just keep going. "I just want to come out on top this year... and finish on top with the most tackles."

Ultimately, though, he says he wouldn't be where he is today if it wasn't for his brother who has encouraged him continuously.

Gipson's brother, Jordan, plays at East Central University in Ada, Oklahoma. When Eric was playing cornerback and not getting much playing time, Jordan encouraged him to switch over to defensive end effectively showing how talented he really is.

When asked if Jordan had input into his decision, Eric says no but "without him I wouldn't be going anywhere right now."



From left to right, Michelle Gipson (mother), Eric Gipson, and Charles Gipson (father).

Trains Annoy Some, But Most Jeffersonians Seem Deaf to the Whistle in the Night

By **BOB PALMER**, *Jimplecute Editor* Somewhere Jay Gould is chuckling. The 19th Century railroad baron once predicted grass would grow in the streets of Jefferson, because the city would not cut a deal to bring rail traffic here.

Now the trains Gould saw as the engine of economic progress may actually hurt the local tourism business, some fear. Others disagree.

"I specifically received an email about a month ago from a long-time patron of Jefferson," Jefferson Chamber of Commerce Executive Director Kari Alexander said. They were "disgusted that the train had stopped on the tracks for over an hour. For other visitors, the trains stopping is difficult."

Bed and Breakfast owners say, however, guests may notice the trains, but they have not had a negative impact on business, so far.

"I operated Scarlett O'Hardy's B&B from 2005 until December 9, 2012," Bobbie Hardy recalled. "In all those years, only one guest complained to me about train whistles."

The complaint made an impression.

"I shall always remember the Saturday morning when the lady shook her finger in my face, literally, and said, 'You have to do something about those train whistles!'"

Hardy had a reply ready.

"I explained that I could do a lot about many things, but a train whistle was not on the list. That was the last time I saw the lady and her husband," Hardy said.

Doug Thompson with Angell Manor B&B said few guests have griped about train whistles.

"I do not think trains hurt tourism, but it does restrict a good portion of our city property from expanding or supporting our tourism trade," Thompson said.

"The only complaints we have had about trains causing delays have come from quests coming into town from the north on Hwy 49," Thompson explained. "There has been a couple of times the trains were just setting there for a long period of time."

Train whistles have drawn some remarks.

"We have had guests mention they heard them during the evening or they woke them up last night, but they did not seem to be disturbed," Thompson said. "Some guests have commented that they enjoyed hearing them come through."

Jessica Brooks with Carriage House B&B questioned trains blocking traffic for extended periods of time.

"The train at 49 and 59 delays traffic for at least 15 minutes at a time," Brooks said. "Why do they have to stop at that intersection? Can they not stop before or after?"

"It does not affect tourism unless it's flea market weekend. A lot of people who come from Lake of the Pines to work and who help to support this great community are having to deal with not being able to make it to their jobs on a daily basis on time because of that train intersection."

Jefferson Tourism Director Kevin Godfrey agrees the impact of trains on tourism has been minimal.

"I have to admit that they have no negative impact on tourism at all," Godfrey said. "Trains that traverse the downtown area just add to the old-world charm of the city as they rumble through town."

"The more data I collect shows that most of our visitors are from more urban areas and they are enchanted by the idea of places that have a deep-rooted history and of trains moving through town as part of that," Godfrey concluded.

Mayor Bubba Haggard noted how residents who live close to tracks no longer notice the trains but agrees keeping streets open and reducing noise pollution are projects he will work on.

"People around here just live with it," Haggard said.

Haggard also noted Police Chief Gary Amburn has in the past issued citations to train engineers blocking tracks, but the citations were ignored.

Haggard agreed trains blocking streets could be a dangerous situation.

"It is a bad situation, especially if that KCS train stops across MLK," Haggard said.

Haggard said he will continue to explore ways to silence whistles and keep crossings open.



A Kansas City Southern train blocks the track on Martin Luther King Boulevard Wednesday morning as schools in the area opened for classes.



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5th Oldest Newspaper in Texas