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Earthquake rattles Parker County again

By Christin Coyne ccoyne@weatherforddemocrat.com Jun 23, 2017

For the first time since a swarm of earthquakes shook up northeast Parker County in late 2013 and early 2014, area residents felt a 2.8- magnitude earthquake on Wednesday.

“When I was sitting at the house, I felt it rolling up from the southwest,” Reno Mayor Eric Hunter said. “It kind of sounded like a bowling ball coming in. Then the tremor part of it hit.”

Hunter said it felt different from earlier earthquakes that he previously experienced in the area. Those felt more like quick pops, he said.

There were a couple reports of cracked glass and the remnants of a burned out structure finished falling down, but there were no injuries or significant property damage, Hunter said.

“I think we’re just kind of taking a wait and see if another one comes up [approach],” Hunter said. “If it does, we’ll probably need to start looking at it.

While one occurrence is important, Hunter said he doesn’t believe there is much the city can do to address it.

From November 2013 through January 2014, 27 earthquakes ranging in magnitude from 2.1 to 3.6 in intensity shook the Azle and Reno area.

Prior to 2008, only one felt earthquake, occurring in 1950, has been recorded in the Fort Worth area, according to seismologists.

Residents and city officials reported property damage due to the seismic activity at the time, including a crack that ran through Reno City Hall.

Following a crowded and angry town hall meeting at Azle High School attended by former railroad commissioner David Porter in early 2014, the Texas Railroad Commission voted to hire a seismologist.

The commission tasked with oil and gas industry oversight for Texas had previously done little to acknowledge the possibility of seismic activity induced by oil and gas activity, which was recognized by seismologists and the USGS at the time.

The commission also later amended the permitting rules for disposal wells to try to prevent induced earthquakes.

A group of researchers, including scientists from Southern Methodist University and the University of Texas at Austin, in April 2015 published a study concluding that the the Azle-area earthquakes were likely caused by oil and gas activity in the area.

However, in November 2015, despite scientists' findings, the Texas Railroad Commission declined to shut down the two area disposal wells operated by XTO and EnerVest.

The Weatherford Democrat asked the Texas Railroad Commission if officials are looking into the issue or taking any action in response to the earthquake Wednesday.

Commission spokesperson Ramona Nye – who confirmed that the two disposal wells operated by XTO and Enervest are active – sent the following statement:

“The commission takes the issue of induced seismicity very seriously and has in place some of the country’s most stringent regulations on disposal wells. These rules were developed with guidance from the commission’s seismologist based on sound science and best practices regarding induced seismicity.

“Since seismicity-related disposal well rules went into effect Nov. 17, 2014, the Railroad Commission has received 82 disposal well applications in areas of historic seismicity. Of these, 46 permits have been issued with special conditions, such as requirements to reduce maximum daily injection volumes and pressure and/or to record volumes and pressures daily as opposed to monthly. Twelve applications were returned or withdrawn. Six applications were protested and sent to hearing. Eleven permits were issued without special conditions, and seven applications are pending.

“The commission continues to work with the University of Texas’ Bureau of Economic Geology on the implementation of its TexNet program. The \$4.47 million program is deploying dozens of seismometers around Texas to gather better, more precise data on seismic activity. This data will help scientists better understand seismicity and induced seismicity in Texas.

“The Commission’s highest priority is protection of public safety and the environment, and we will continue to work with TexNet to gather, analyze and understand seismic data that will lead to even greater understanding of seismicity in Texas and if determined necessary, address our rules.”

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- Thu **Summer Mission: Home Rehabs**
- 6 **Mineral Wells, TX**
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Christin Coyne





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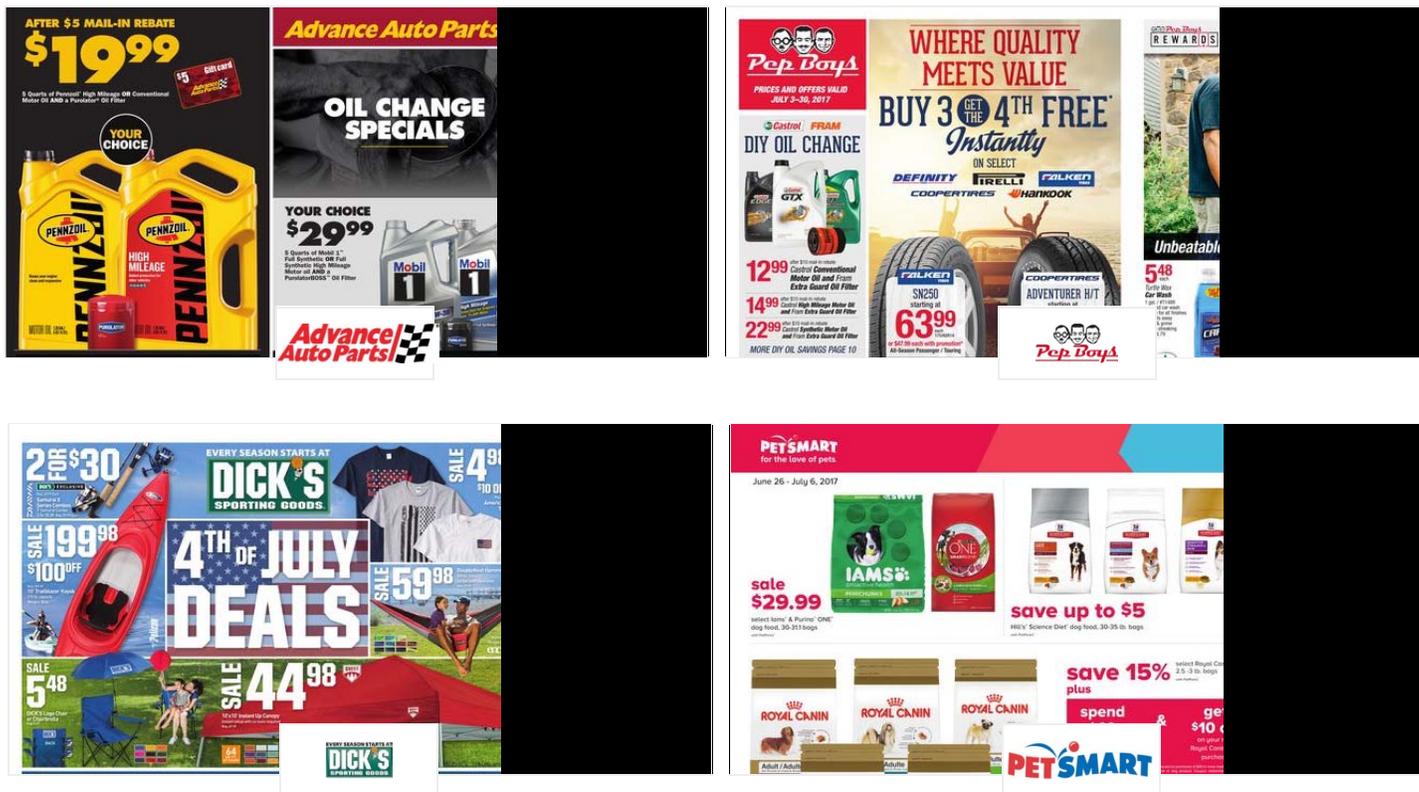
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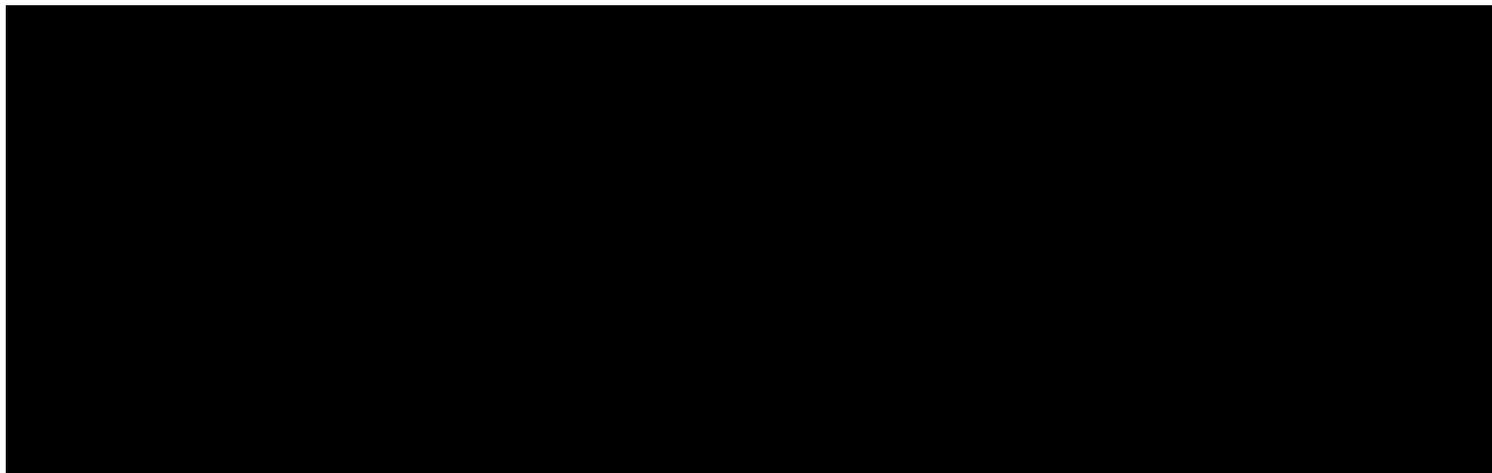
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33rd annual Peach Festival Saturday



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VFW unveils remodeled banquet hall



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