

People quietly waited their turn

[By BRIDGETTE R. OUTTEN, News Messenger]

Tuesday, February 28, 2006

Waiting and hoping – patiently – a crowd of people stood outside waiting for a chance to speak in the public hearing on the proposed use of former Longhorn Army Ammunition Plant land as an industrial site Monday night.

The crowd was mostly subdued, murmuring among themselves or listening to the KMHT 1450 AM/103.9 FM mobile unit's broadcast of what was going on inside commission chambers at Marshall City Hall.

And while they waited, some signed an impromptu petition opposing the industrial site that was passed around outside to present to the commission.

Despite the fact the line wrapped around the walls of the chambers and snaked out the door, it moved fairly steadily. By the time the meeting, which began at 7 p.m., had been in session an hour, there were no more than 20 people left outside.

Some of those already knew they probably wouldn't be able to address the commission.

"I would (speak) if I got an opportunity to, but I'm not very optimistic and I see this big crowd," said Anne Tindell, who drove from Nacogdoches because she is against the site. "I have visited area for recreational purposes – the Caddo Lake area – and I feel strong enough about it that I wanted to be here tonight."

Ms. Tindell felt strongly enough about her opposition to the site that she sported a bright green sticker that read, "Stick that industrial site...somewhere else!"

The few wild places that are left are in Texas are in "great danger," Ms. Tindell said and the land should be left alone.

"I feel like they can find infrastructure and land somewhere else. There's got to be other places to do that," she said. "There would have to be a better place."

But Joan Lewis, originally from California and now living in Karnack, thinks the industrial site should be placed exactly where it is proposed to increase Harrison County's revenue.

"We need jobs," Ms. Lewis said. "For years, anything that the 'grandfathers' of Karnack could do to keep Karnack economically deprived, they have done. This just doesn't make any sense. The lake is there, the lake will be protected, the

people on the lake can be protected, the land can be protected...why not bring in something that can bring economic development to the community? I don't understand that."

Clarence Broadbank, chief of Karnack's volunteer fire department, has considered both sides of the debate and finds himself somewhere in the middle.

Although wearing bright green anti-industrial park sticker, Broadbank agreed there must be more jobs available, especially in Karnack.

"I support part of it," said the Karnack native, who wanted to speak about what he called the history of the town. "I don't support the chemical side of it; I think that if they put something there, they should put an environmental cleansing plant there or something like that.

Even a wildlife refuge would create jobs and increase tourism, Broadbank said. He also said traditionally Karnack citizens had been "rubbed out" of having a say in economic growth and have not reaped the benefits of their tax dollars.

Broadbank also said the area is too toxic because of the previous plant that was there, and that people are dying of cancer now from having grown up there, he said.

"I work with people and what I say is what they want in Karnack," Broadbank said. "They don't want those chemicals, but they'd love to have it cleaner."

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