

Caddo institute has a new leader; transfer process is still in abeyance

By JULIA ROBB

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KARNACK — Caddo Lake Institute is undergoing a transfer of leadership with the retirement of controversial President Dwight Shellman.

Austin attorney Richard Lowerre, partner at Lowerre and Frederick, has been selected to replace him.

Before a Caddo institute meeting here Thursday night, Shellman, who announced his retirement last year, said he was making good on his promise.

Lowerre, the institute's attorney, said he is "transitioning in" as president and will create a more Texas-based approach to lake advocacy.

Shellman lives much of the year in Colorado.

Shellman said he will continue being active at the institute for 30 to 60 more days.

The new position is salaried, Lowerre said, adding he believes his mission is to "protect and enhance the lake and the lake community, its

economy and its environment."

The Caddo Institute was founded by Shellman and Eagles singer-songwriter Don Henley, who still helps financially support the institute, Lowerre said.

Shellman has been outspoken in lake protection matters, and has been, See CADD0, Page 3A

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and still is, involved in legal disputes with the city of Marshall.

Those disputes include a case now pending with the Texas Supreme Court, which will decide whether the Texas Commission on Environmental Quality must hold a trial-like hearing before granting a water right amendment to Marshall.

The court heard oral arguments in October 2004.

At the meeting, held at the Karnack Community Center, a U.S. Army representative told lake-area residents he believes congressional staffers are now gathering information about a proposed industrial site at the Caddo Lake National Wildlife Refuge and will soon make a decision about the project's viability.

"They are trying to educate themselves," and they have "no intention to let this drag on," said Tom Lederle, director of the Hampton (Va.) Base

Realignment and Closure field office.

Marshall residents Tommy Whaley and Sam Moseley — and others they will not name — have asked U.S. Rep. Louie Gohmert (R-1st, Texas Gov. Rick Perry and Senator Kay Bailey Hutchison (R-Texas) to intervene in a proposed transfer of Longhorn Army Ammunition Plant property to the wildlife refuge.

The men want a portion of the land transferred to the state of Texas for industrial development.

A majority of the Longhorn property has already been transferred to the refuge. But at Gohmert and Hutchison's request, the army has now suspended a process that would have transferred the remaining 2,000-plus acres to the refuge for a 25-year period.

When remaining contaminants left by the Longhorn (munitions) plant have been eliminated, primary

jurisdiction would have been given to the Fish and Wildlife Service.

Lederle told attendees he believes it will take legislation to stop the transfer to the refuge.

The U.S. Department of the Interior could relinquish its rights to the property, he said, but added the agency "has been steadfast in maintaining it wants the property."

Lederle also said he has told congressional staffers he does not believe the property requested for industrial development is suitable for heavy industry.

"There's not much water" in Caddo Lake and industrialists "with a heavy water requirement will come down here and walk away," he said.

Caddo is a shallow lake, with an average depth of about 4 to 5 feet, experts have said.

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