

“I just learned two words last week,” he says. He points just above his temple for “heads” and puts the palm of his right hand over the top of left hand and wags his left index finger for “tails.”

Goodnight says deaf players do a good job avoiding late hits. “Coaches say you play to the whistle,” he says. “Deaf players understand you play till the end of the play.”

**A Load of Toads**

By Shane Torno

I must have been 8 or 9 years old one summer when I commented to my grandmother that recent rains at our house in Corpus Christi had created a population explosion of toads in our backyard.

She was an avid gardener and always liked finding ways to use natural approaches to improve her yields.

For example, she actively brewed and used something she called “barnyard tea” to water her garden. She created the concoction by pouring water over cow manure to fill 50-gallon drums. After the “tea” had steeped for days in the summer sun, she applied it to her produce and flowers.

She was very interested in my story of the ongoing toad extravaganza and asked if I would be willing to catch the surplus amphibians for delivery to her garden in Sinton, up the road from Corpus Christi. She explained that toads eat lots of garden pests and could help her grow better vegetables and flowers (in fact, the U.S. Department of Agriculture estimates that a single adult toad can slurp up 10,000 insects in a single summer).

I was happy to have a way to help my grandmother out. My sister and cousin were just as enthusiastic to help once they heard the plan.

The next day we started early and collected toads of varying sizes all day long.

We used the garden hose in our overgrown flower beds to flush them out, and we sorted them according to size, placing them in 5-gallon buckets. By midafternoon we had a bucket for large toads and a bucket for small toads.

My mom got us loaded into the dark green—toad-colored—family van, and we set off for the 40-minute drive to my grandmother’s house.

We hadn’t even made it out of the neighborhood when my mom had to swerve abruptly to avoid an accident. This was before seat belt laws, and none of us kids were buckled in. In fact, my cousin and I rarely sat in the seats at all. We often laid on the seats or in the back cargo area.

And that’s where we were, the back cargo area, when the ride came to a sudden and unsettling stop. Mom avoided a collision, but the evasive maneuver sent the buckets of toads rolling around in the back with Keith and me in the mix.

It wasn’t until that moment that I realized just how many tiny toads fit into a 5-gallon bucket. The big toads were easy to catch, but there seemed no end to the task of rounding up the little ones. Mom had to pull over so everyone could help wrangle the amphibians.

It turns out that a 1980s full-size

van had many nooks and crannies that could hide tiny toads (some of those little guys evaded us for days). After several minutes of frantic work, we were satisfied that we had most of the toads back in the buckets and continued our journey.

When we arrived at our grandmother’s house, we told her the story of the hard-earned amphibians. She was very thankful

for our labors and took the buckets out to the garden to release the toads into her neatly groomed rows.

To avoid handling the stressed little guys, she turned on the garden hose and rinsed all the little ones out of the bucket. As they came out of the bucket and washed into the straw, they acted strangely.

Instead of jumping about with

all their might, as they had done in the van, they turned over on their backs and made no attempt to hop away at all. They just piled up on top of each other in an ugly heap. They were dead.

We didn’t understand what had happened until we felt the water coming from the hose. It was burning hot.

The late afternoon Texas sun had heated the hose water to

almost boiling.

The toads had made it so far—only to die at the cusp of freedom. We were devastated at the loss, but there is no use crying over killed milk, or something like that.

To this day, I never turn on the garden hose for any reason without testing the water temperature and sadly thinking of those tiny toads.

## NOTICE OF PUBLIC HEARING ON TAX INCREASE

A tax rate of \$0.285910 per \$100 valuation has been proposed by the governing body of EAST COKE COUNTY HOSPITAL DISTRICT.

PROPOSED TAX RATE	\$0.285910 per \$100
NO-NEW-REVENUE TAX RATE	\$0.274612 per \$100
VOTER-APPROVAL TAX RATE	\$0.285916 per \$100

The no-new-revenue tax rate is the tax rate for the 2024 tax year that will raise the same amount of property tax revenue for EAST COKE COUNTY HOSPITAL DISTRICT from the same properties in both the 2023 tax year and the 2024 tax year.

The voter-approval rate is the highest tax rate that EAST COKE COUNTY HOSPITAL DISTRICT may adopt without holding an election to seek voter approval of the rate.

The proposed tax rate is greater than the no-new-revenue tax rate. This means that EAST COKE COUNTY HOSPITAL DISTRICT is proposing to increase property taxes for the 2024 tax year.

A PUBLIC HEARING ON THE PROPOSED TAX RATE WILL BE HELD ON September 5, 2024 AT 8:00 AM AT 900 South State Street, Bronte Health and Rehab Center, Bronte Texas.

The proposed tax rate is not greater than the voter-approval tax rate. As a result, EAST COKE COUNTY HOSPITAL DISTRICT is not required to hold an election at which voters may accept or reject the proposed tax rate. However, you may express your support for or opposition to the proposed tax rate by contacting the members of the EAST COKE COUNTY HOSPITAL DISTRICT of EAST COKE COUNTY HOSPITAL DISTRICT at their offices or by attending the public hearing mentioned above.

YOUR TAXES OWED UNDER ANY OF THE RATES MENTIONED ABOVE CAN BE CALCULATED AS FOLLOWS:

$$\text{Property tax amount} = (\text{tax rate}) \times (\text{taxable value of your property}) / 100$$

<b>FOR the proposal:</b>	Michael Bohensky	Everett Bedford
	Gina McCutchen	Jerita Taylor
	Kavin Tinney	

**AGAINST the proposal:**

**PRESENT** and not voting:

**ABSENT:**

Visit [Texas.gov/PropertyTaxes](https://Texas.gov/PropertyTaxes) to find a link to your local property tax database on which you can easily access information regarding your property taxes, including information about proposed tax rates and scheduled public hearings of each entity that taxes your property.

The 86th Texas Legislature modified the manner in which the voter-approval tax rate is calculated to limit the rate of growth of property taxes in the state.

The following table compares the taxes imposed on the average residence homestead by EAST COKE COUNTY HOSPITAL DISTRICT last year to the taxes proposed to be imposed on the average residence homestead by EAST COKE COUNTY HOSPITAL DISTRICT this year.

	2023	2024	Change
<b>Total tax rate (per \$100 of value)</b>	\$0.290458	\$0.285910	decrease of -0.004548 per \$100, or -1.57%
<b>Average homestead taxable value</b>	\$39,993	\$44,137	increase of 10.36%
<b>Tax on average homestead</b>	\$116.16	\$126.19	increase of 10.03, or 8.63%
<b>Total tax levy on all properties</b>	\$803,427	\$841,914	increase of 38,487, or 4.79%

For assistance with tax calculations, please contact the tax assessor for EAST COKE COUNTY HOSPITAL DISTRICT at or , or visit . for more information.