

NEW BRAUNFELS Herald-Zeitung

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GROWTH

Group: County didn't do enough

Residents say more needed in quarry fight

By Keri Heath
The Herald-Zeitung

A resolution passed by Comal County Commissioners Court on Thursday urged the Texas Commission on Environmental Quality (TCEQ) to fully review an air quality permit submitted by Vulcan Materials Company for a portable crushing facility at a proposed Comal County quarry.

But that action did not go far enough for members of the Friends of the Dry Comal Creek, a citizen-led group opposing the construction of the quarry, to be located on Farm-to-Market 3009 and Highway 46.

Milan Guckian, a member of the organization who has been opposing the Vulcan Comal quarry since the summer, would have preferred the county commissioners to pass a resolution that requested a contested case hearing.

"The wording on the resolution is not as strong as we would have liked," Guckian said. "After the public meeting, they closed public comment and so they missed the deadline."

A contested case hearing is like a "legal proceeding similar to a civil trial in a

Strait honored



George Strait, second from left, was presented with the 2018 Texan of the Year Award on Friday afternoon at the conclusion of the 52nd annual Texas Legislative Conference that took place at the New Braunfels Civic/Convention Center. Standing with Strait are, from left, Advisory Committee Chairman Doug Miller, Gruene Historic District Co-owner Mary Jane Nalley and Greater New Braunfels Chamber of Commerce board President Robin Jeffers.

Country music legend George Strait smiles as he holds up his 2018 Texan of the Year award on Friday afternoon during the 52nd annual Texas Legislative Conference at the New Braunfels Civic/Convention Center. Standing next to him is Mary Jane Nalley, Gruene Historic District co-owner, who presented the award to him. Photos by **KEITH E. DOMKE** | Herald-Zeitung

Musician walks away as Texan of the Year

By Will Wright
The Herald-Zeitung

Of the dozens of awards country music legend George Strait has received over the years, he said none topped the one he accepted Friday as Texan of the Year.

"I'm so proud to be here today to accept this unbelievable honor," he said. "I want to thank the Texas Legislature for this. It's a great day for me and my family."

STRAIT

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Strait's award capped the 52nd annual meeting of the Texas Legislative Conference, a nonpartisan organization of Texas business and political leaders at the New Braunfels Civic/Convention Center.

The Greater New Braunfels Chamber of Commerce sponsored the event, which included a Thursday night reception, opening session and three hour-long seminars that addressed public policy issues — mainly the aftermath of Hurricane Harvey, which caused \$125 billion in damages along the Texas coast last August.

Strait's award as Texan of the Year stemmed from his association with Rebuild Texas, which grew after his concert — held in San Antonio only days following Harvey's destruction — raised \$14.5 million in one night and millions more since.

After being introduced by Gruene Hall co-owner Mary Jane Nalley, Strait was presented as a "Prince of a City of a Prince" by Chamber Chair of the Board Robin Jeffers.

"I'm unbelievably honored by such a huge thing. So many amazing, talented and smart people live here," Strait said. "Now I'm on that list. How did that happen?"

Strait fondly recalled his Texas roots.

"I'm so proud to have grown up in the great state of Texas," he said, recalling his hometown of Poteet and growing up in Pearsall. "I've been all over and there's no greater place than right here."

Strait thanked his fami-

ly, especially his wife of 46 years, Norma, who attended the presentation along with their son, daughter-in-law and one of their two grandchildren.

"There's no doubt I wouldn't be up here accepting this honor without her continued support of me and my career through all of these years."

Then Strait addressed Harvey, which caused billions in damage — from the state's coastal bend and eastward to the Louisiana border.

"As everybody knows, last year was a tough one for our great state," he said. "Hurricane Harvey caused flood and wind damage and devastated a huge part of our state. We're still continuing to recover, and with the help of many, many loyal and kind-hearted Texans we will get those communities back on their feet again."

"It's a tough process but we're getting there. A little slower than I'd like to see, but we're getting there."

On Sept. 12, Strait's "Hand In Hand: Texas" concert at San Antonio's Majestic Theater was tied to a nationally televised fundraiser that immediately raised more than \$20 million to benefit Harvey victims.

Strait thanked promoter Louie Messina for organizing it all.

"When I told Louie that we had to help in some way, his team was all over it," Strait said. "I can't imagine how we got so much accomplished in such a short period of time without him and his amazing team."

Strait also thanked the Majestic for donating space for the concert, and extended the same to co-performers Chris Stapleton, Miran-

da Lambert, Lyle Lovett, Robert Earl Keen and Chris Stapleton.

The event spawned donations from everywhere, raising the total for the Rebuild Texas effort to more than \$50 million.

"We were able to raise millions and millions of dollars that are still being used to get businesses and folks in need back on their feet," Strait added.

Strait said he was honored to get help from all corners of the country.

"It's always amazing how generous the American people can be in times like these," he said.

Strait, known as the "King of Country Music," launched his career in 1981. He has recorded more than 60 No. 1 singles, more than any other artist in any genre, and is the only act with a Top 10 hit each year for more than three decades.

Strait's 33 platinum or multi-platinum-selling albums rank third across all genres behind only The Beatles and Elvis Presley. He has sold over 70 million albums and earned more than 60 major entertainment awards, and was inducted into the Country Music Hall of Fame in 2006.

Strait recalled the blessings he's had throughout his career.

"It's something I never could have dreamed of in a million years," he said. "And I've gotten a chance to do and experience many incredible things because of it. I've been supported by my great home state of Texas throughout it all."

"This honor today, my friends, is at the very tip-top of that list ... it makes me beam with pride to be named as your Texan of the Year."