

## ***News from the Helotes Heritage Association***

Dear Readers,

I would like to alert you to Proposition 4 which is to be voted on Tuesday November 6. Proposition 4 includes \$52 million dollars to the Texas park system. Following is a commentary by Peter Holt, Chairman of the Texas Parks and Wildlife Commission, that explains this important proposition. Your vote on this issue is critically needed.

Sincerely,  
Ron Green, President  
Helotes Heritage Association

### **Comment: Proposition 4 can help fund state's repairs**

Web Posted: 10/19/2007 05:52 PM CDT

#### **Peter Holt**

On Nov. 6, San Antonio voters will consider Proposition 4, one of 16 proposed constitutional amendments set before voters by the Texas Legislature.

For our city, there is much at stake.

Proposition 4 would fund major repairs for the San Antonio State Hospital, which provides intensive inpatient diagnosis, treatment, rehabilitation and referrals for seriously mentally ill people from South Texas regardless of their financial status. Bonds would fund \$2.7 million to repair and replace roofs, air-handling units and exterior windows and doors for client residences; replace steam distribution piping; and make other repairs.

It would also mean \$3.2 million for major repairs at Kerrville State Hospital, which provides care for people with serious mental illnesses who need the safety, structure and resources of an inpatient setting. This would repair and replace roofs, replace the air-conditioning cooling tower serving client residences and addresses other areas of concern.

Furthermore, Proposition 4 would provide additional dollars to restore and renovate many of our state historic sites and county courthouses. San Antonio has a spectacular example of the power and importance of this effort; our Bexar County Courthouse, the oldest and largest continuously operated historic courthouse in Texas, was rededicated in 2003 after restoration was kick-started by a \$2.8 million Texas Historical Commission grant. An estimated \$250 million in state funds is needed to restore 121 other courthouses across Texas that have submitted approved master plans.

But beyond the immediate impacts on San Antonio, Proposition 4 has broader statewide implications that will be of great interest to our citizens.

The 80th Texas Legislature significantly increased funding for Texas state parks. For that, all of us who value the recreational, environmental, educational and economic benefits our parks provide are most grateful. However, part of that new funding now depends on voter approval.

If approved, Proposition 4 would provide \$52 million in 2008-2009 for major repairs throughout the state park system. This includes \$25 million for the Battleship Texas, which saw action in both world wars. The remaining \$27 million, coupled with additional funds from an earlier bond issue, would give the Texas Parks and Wildlife Department the financial tools to begin addressing a repair backlog. Some 30 state parks across Texas would see much-needed improvement.

For example, just west of our city, Proposition 4 would provide \$1.5 million for popular Garner State Park. This would repair damage to walls, windows, floors and doors caused by foundation failures at 17 park cabins built by the Civilian Conservation Corps in the 1930s. Bond funds would also repair roof problems, door breaks and peeling paint on 22 screen shelters; and renovate and enclose old group shelters.

Anyone can learn more at [www.proposition4.org](http://www.proposition4.org). This Web site explains Proposition 4, including where and how bond dollars are currently proposed to be spent. It also offers information about early voting, which begins Monday.

I urge our citizens to learn about Proposition 4 and make an informed decision on Nov. 6.

---

*Peter Holt was originally appointed to the Texas Parks and Wildlife Commission by Gov. Rick Perry on Aug. 26, 2003, to a two-year term. On May 9, 2005, he was reappointed to a six-year term and was named commission chairman in July.*