

Motorcycle club holds barbecue fund-raiser for Fighting to Rid Gangs. **2B**

Section B

LOCAL

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BOAT SHOW
Jan 20-23RD
**48th Annual Coastal Bend
Marine Dealers Show**
AMERICAN BANK CENTER

Indians bless burial ground

Dozens walk along road construction

BY MATTHEW STURDEVANT
Caller-Times

Ron Teel's brother gave him an American Indian rattle two years ago, but he waited for an appropriate religious event before using it. That important day came Saturday during a blessing march along Ennis

Joslin Road, where hundreds are buried in an ancient Indian cemetery.

"It helps to drive away anything negative," Teel said of the rattle. "We should have done this ceremony before they tore up the road, but this will make everything peaceful."

Teel was dressed in a turquoise ribbon shirt, his long gray hair draped over his shoulders. He was among almost 20 members of the Gulf Coast Indian Confederation who marched Ennis Joslin Saturday afternoon from

South Padre Island Drive to Ocean Drive.

The march was prompted by recent news that a project to widen the road uncovered part of a cemetery that stretches sporadically from Ocean Drive to South Padre Island Drive. The Texas Department of Transportation changed its engineering plan to reduce disturbance to the cemetery, and contacted some American Indians as well as the Texas Historical Commission before construction.

Archaeologists from the

University of Texas at San Antonio have been working with the transportation department to preserve artifacts and skeletal remains found during construction. The project started in June 2000 and is expected to be finished in September.

But local Indians were upset that they were never told of the project until news reports this week.

"It's too late for us to do anything because the road has



Members of the Gulf Coast Indian Confederation travel down Ennis Joslin, blessing the road that covers an ancient Indian burial ground.

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already been made," said Yvonne Martinez, president of the Gulf Coast Indian Confederation. "We ask that people respect our elders and ancestors like they would like us to respect their family members in a cemetery."

During the march, Gloria "Morning Light" Teel walked to the median strip and held up signs to the cars driving by. The

signs had several phrases, including, "Another injustice to the first people of this land." Some children tacked other signs on utility poles next to the new sidewalks. Those signs read, "Would you jog on your family's grave?"

The group's spiritual leader, Larry "Running Turtle" Salazar, led several people in

singing prayer songs during the walk while two men carried and beat a drum. Teel brought up the rear, pulling a red wagon with a seashell that had burning sage, sweet grass, pine needles and local plants. The smell of sage smoke mixed with fresh tar as the group walked over a recently paved area of the road.

Prayer services were given at the beginning, middle and end

of the march. At the end, Salazar addressed the Great Spirit and Mother Earth and said, "Our apologies again for what the whites have done. They mean no harm ... We've taken on the penance with this march ... Do not harm anybody with bad spirits."

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