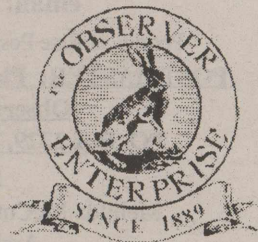


THE OBSERVER/ ENTERPRISE

Serving Coke County

Single Copy 50¢



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Vol. 126, No. 25

Friday, December 27, 2013

2013 Year in Review Issue

by Melinda McCutchen

Publisher

We are rapidly approaching the end of yet another year. As the clock ticks down on 2013, I hope readers enjoy this look back at a few of the stories which made headlines this year.

While combing through all of the 2013 issues, I quickly realized that there was no possible way to include everything. I'll apologize in advance if a story important to you was omitted.

Also, we have not included any of the school activities other than a group picture of the 2013 graduating classes from Blackwell, Bronte and Robert Lee. Our area students are extremely talented, earning honors in academics, sports, UIL, and other extra curricular

activities. There would be no way to include all of the honors earned in 2013 by these students.

Several weather pictures didn't make the cut. This year seemed closer to normal in temperature and precipitation than recent years. However, the current month has definitely been a lesson in winter precipitation for us. We are more familiar now with freezing rain, freezing fog, sleet and just plain old freezing temperatures!

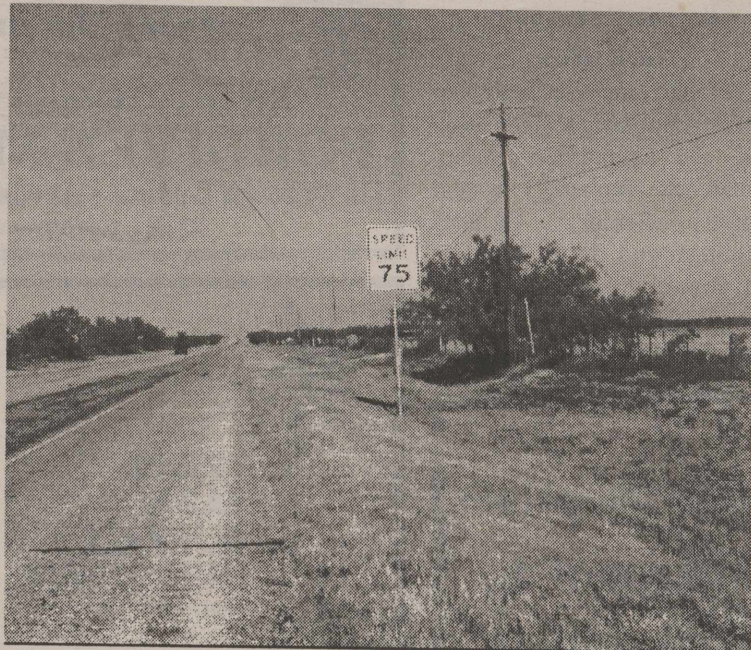
The Observer/Enterprise is celebrating our 127th birthday in 2014. This anniversary would not be possible without loyal readers and advertisers. I sincerely want to thank our readers, contributors and advertisers for your support this last year.



Oil Boom Creeps Into Coke County! Coke County has experienced a few changes due to the oil boom, but nothing like Tom Green, Sterling, Glasscock and Reagan counties. Some of the most noticeable changes have been the increased oilfield traffic on our roadways. This, combined with the speed limit change from 70 to 75 mph, has made it necessary for citizens to be much more aware while traveling in our county.



Extraordinary Beginning! Robert Lee ISD opened the 2013 football season in a new stadium. However, that was not the only extraordinary event that happened on Friday evening, August 30, 2013. The Robert Lee Steers hosted the Longhorns of Meeteetse, Wyoming, for their first game of the new season! The unusual matchup occurred following Eden's cancellation of their upcoming game with the Steers. After posting the opening with no teams stepping up to fill the vacancy, Coach Shay Avants attended a coaching clinic in Wyoming and proposed the game to the coach from Meeteetse. The Meeteetse Longhorns arrived in Robert Lee on Thursday afternoon prior to the BBQ supper. Team members enjoyed some of our good Texas barbecue before attending the game that evening between the Robert Lee Junior Varsity Steers and the Eden Bulldogs. The Wyoming visitors were housed with families of the RLHS Steers both Thursday and Friday nights. On Friday morning, the visitors attended classes at Robert Lee High School. That afternoon, a dual pep rally was held. Since the Meeteetse team had no cheerleaders, the Robert Lee Junior High Cheerleaders filled that role for them at the pep rally and later at the game. The Robert Lee Sports Boosters hosted a dance following the game. Meeteetse is located in Park County, Wyoming, and has approximately 330 residents. The Steers won the game that night against the Wyoming team, but the Meeteetse Longhorns went on to take the Wyoming State Championship in their division.



*Wishing Everyone a
Blessed & Prosperous
2014!
Happy New Year!*

THE OBSERVER/ENTERPRISE

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email: o-e@wcc.net

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Melinda McCutchen, Publisher/Editor
Amber Sawyer

SUBSCRIPTION RATES

Per Year in Coke & Sterling Counties.....\$25.00
Per Year Elsewhere in Texas.....\$30.00
Per Year Outside of Texas.....\$32.00

Current News

Holiday Closings noted

Robert Lee City Hall will be closed Thursday and Friday, December 26 and 27, and Wednesday, January 1.

The Coke County Courthouse will be closed Thursday, December 26, and on Tuesday, December 31, they will be open from 8 am to 3 pm, and closed again Wednesday, January 1.

Bronte City Hall will be closed Thursday, December 26, and Wednesday, January 1.

Early deadline announced

Due to the New Year's holiday, the deadline for the January 3, 2014, issue of the Observer-Enterprise will be 12 noon Monday, December 30, 2013.

The Observer/Enterprise office will be closed the entire week of Christmas. There are several ways to turn news and ads in during this week. The email address is o-e@wcc.net. There is a drop box by the front door of the office in Robert Lee and also a box at Bronte Hometown Hardware, LLC.

January 2 is first day to rent county facilities

The first day to rent the Robert Lee Large Recreation Hall, the Bronte Community Center, the Robert Lee and Bronte Senior Citizens Buildings, and the Robert Lee and Bronte Pavilions will be Thursday, January 2, 2014. The Coke County Judge's Office

will open at 7 am to begin booking rentals. For more information, please call Lorrie at 325-453-2641.

San Angelo Area Foundation Scholarship Application Available January 1, 2014

The San Angelo Area Foundation's 2014 scholarship application is now available through March 1, 2014, for students attending college in the fall of 2014.

Interested students can apply at www.saafound.org, by clicking on the "Scholarships" tab.

The San Angelo Area Foundation manages over 80 scholarship funds, created by generous donors for the benefit of students. The student need only complete one online application and each scholarship is awarded based on a variety of qualifications unique to each scholarship fund. Scholarship awards are announced in early May.



Bronte Chamber Banquet! Ed Cumbie was honored Tuesday evening, April 30, 2013, at the annual Bronte Chamber of Commerce banquet as the Citizen of the Year. He is surrounded by his wife Jane, his children, grandchildren and great-grandchildren attending. They include (from left) Jodie Arrott, Linda Gladden, Dawn Cumbie Burwick, Payton Arrott, Paul Williams, Jael Williams, Jane Cumbie, Susan Williams, Pat Gladden, Shelly Hallman, and Nick Arrott. Great-grandchildren Addie and Mac are in front. Teachers and teachers aides at the Bronte Independent School District were honored with the Hometown Hero award. Tom Scates, owner of Tom's Tire, was honored with the award for Business of the Year. Nathan Fillman and Kaitlyn Braswell were honored as Students of the Year.

If you have any questions during the application process, please contact our office either by email, scholarship@saafound.org or by calling (325) 947-7071.

Kickapoo Water Board sets election

Coke County Kickapoo Water Control and Improvement District #1 will hold an election on January 14, 2014, for the purpose of electing two directors.

Directors filing for re-election to the board are Jack Corley and Bob Ragsdale. The election will be held at Bronte City Hall.

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Email: nick@deckerarrott.com Website: www.deckerarrott.com

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Bronte Church of Christ
PO Box 346 • 118 S. Jefferson • Bronte
(325) 473-3291
Preacher John V. Driegers
Sun. 10 am & 6 pm, Wed. 7 pm
Central Baptist Church
324 S. Franklin • Bronte
(325) 473-4811
Dale Patterson, Pastor
Sun. 10 am Sunday School
11 am & 6 pm Worship
Wed. 6 pm
First Baptist Church
424 S. Washington • Bronte
(325) 473-2331
Bro. Corey Cornutt, Pastor
Sunday 9:45 am Sunday School,
10:55 am Worship,
5 pm Worship
6 pm Youth
Wednesday 7 pm Prayer Meeting
First United Methodist Church
Corner of Washington & Holmes
Bronte
(325) 473-3281
Rev. Everett Boyce, Pastor
Sun. 10:00 am Sunday School
11:00 am Worship
Forgiveness Ministries
117 W. Main, Bronte
Russ Frasier, Pastor
Sun. 10 am
St. James Catholic Church
215 N. Washington, Bronte
(325) 365-2687
Rev. Hubert Wade, Jr., Pastor
Sun. 5 pm

Coke County

Pecan Baptist
PO Box 542 • 12 miles West of
Robert Lee on Sterling City Hwy
(325) 453-2065, Bill Hood, Minister
www.pecanbaptist.org
Sun. 10 am, Sunday School
11 am & 7 pm, Worship
United Christians Fellowship
PO Box 938 • Robert Lee Rec Hall
(325) 453-2468
Ed Zimmerman, Minister
Sunday 10 am Sunday School,
11 am Worship
Robert Lee
Emmanuel Pentecostal
PO Box 683 • 1019 Colorado City Hwy
Robert Lee • (325) 453-2360
Sun. 10 am & 6 pm, Wed. 7 pm

First United Methodist Church
PO Box 144 • 9th & Chadbourne
Robert Lee • (325) 453-2417
Cyndi Weidner, Pastor
Sun. 10 am Sunday School
11 am Worship
5:00 pm Choir Practice
Iglesia Bautista Betel
101 Houston • Robert Lee
Sun. 9:55 am • Sunday School
11 am • Service & Children's Church
Fri. 7 pm • Bible Study
Southside Church of Christ
PO Box 698 • 8th & Houston
Robert Lee
(325) 453-2176
Jordan Arnold, Preacher
Sun. 10 am, Sunday School
11 am & 6 pm, Worship
Wed. 6 pm, Worship
Northside Church of Christ
PO Box 508
9th & Chadbourne • Robert Lee
(325) 453-2685, (806) 543-2118 or
(325) 473-1053
Services: Sun. 10 am
Our Lady of Guadalupe Catholic
Church
601 W. 10th, Robert Lee
(325) 365-2687
Rev. Hubert Wade, Jr., Pastor
Sat. 6 pm
Robert Lee Baptist Church
PO Box 493 • 22 W. 11th
(325) 453-2724
Danny White, Pastor
Sun. 9:45 am, Sunday School
11 am & 7 pm, Worship
Wed. 7 pm, Prayer Meeting
Victory Assembly of God
PO Box 638
6th & Houston, Robert Lee
(325) 453-2208
Rev. Irving Smith, Pastor
Sun. 9:45 am, Sunday School
10:45 am & 6 pm, Worship
Wed. 6 pm, Bible Study

Tennyson

Tennyson Baptist Church
Hwy 277 • Tennyson
(325) 473-2040
Sun. 9:45 am, Sunday School
11:00 am & 6 pm, Worship
Wed. 6:00 pm Prayer Meeting

Come As You Are

Sunday Mornings • 10 am

Recovery Meetings • Monday 7 pm

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Russ Frasier, Preacher



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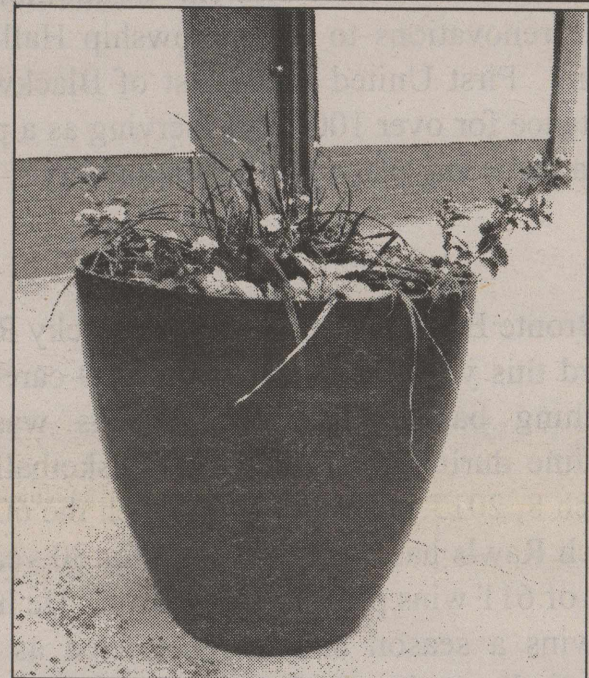
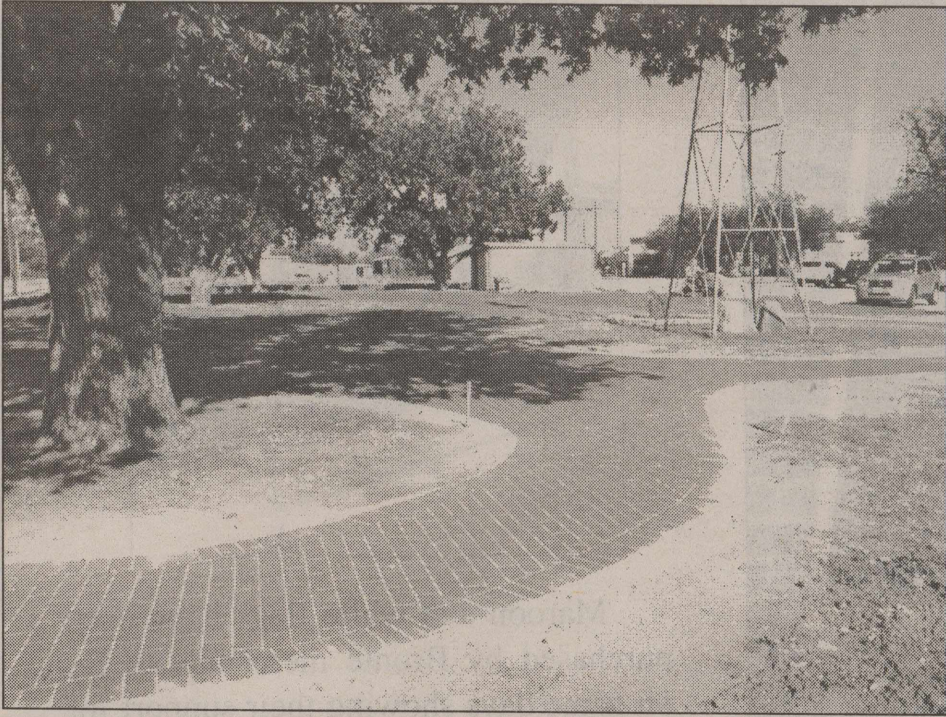
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Robert Lee Vision with a Purpose



Robert Lee's Vision with a Purpose has set out to improve the lives of all those who call Robert Lee home. This group is responsible for the new Coke County Memorial Garden and the new benches and flower containers dotting downtown Robert Lee. Their volunteers (in their green shirts) are often seen manning various community concession stands and serving tables. They have landscaped and maintained the Wilson Bryan Memorial Mini Park. Their contributions to Robert Lee are too numerous to mention individually. Most recently, you can see their efforts in the wonderful light displays at the Mini Park and on the courthouse lawn.

To quote the group's president, Debbie Childers, "Robert Lee - the little town that can!"

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Highway 158 East
PO Box 898

Robert Lee, Texas 76945

Email:

LastLegBBQ@cox.net

HOLIDAY CLOSING NOTICE

Holiday Hours:
All facilities of this bank
will be closed
Wednesday, January 1, 2014.

In Observance Of

New Year's Day

Happy New Year!

Please plan your banking requirements during regular banking hours to avoid any inconvenience.

Robert Lee State Bank

Member FDIC

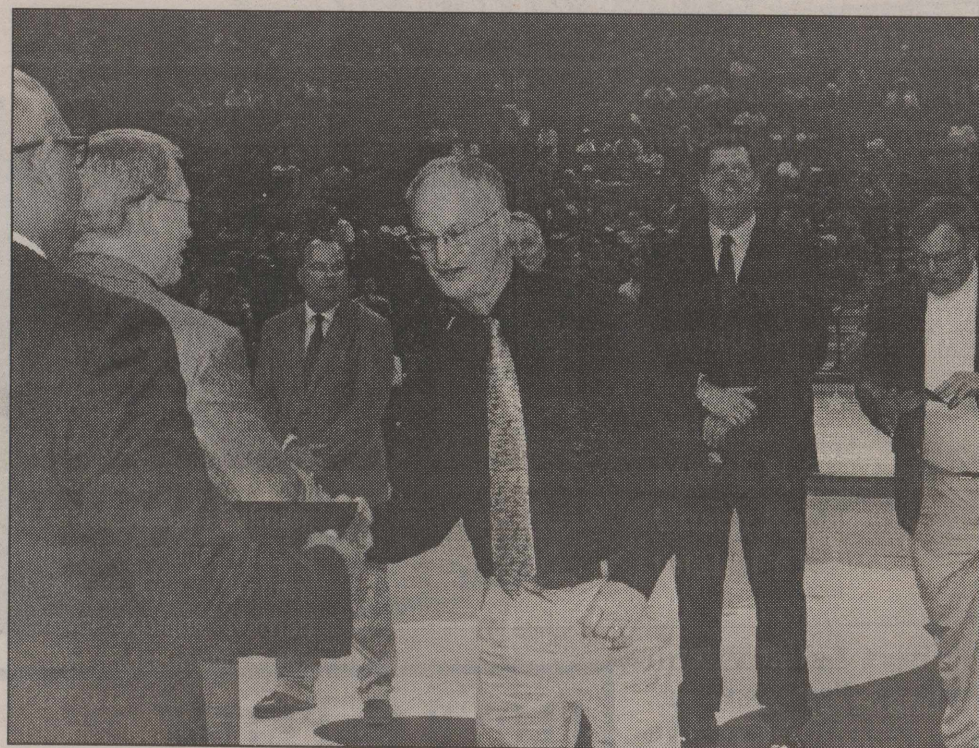
453-2545

Robert Lee, Texas

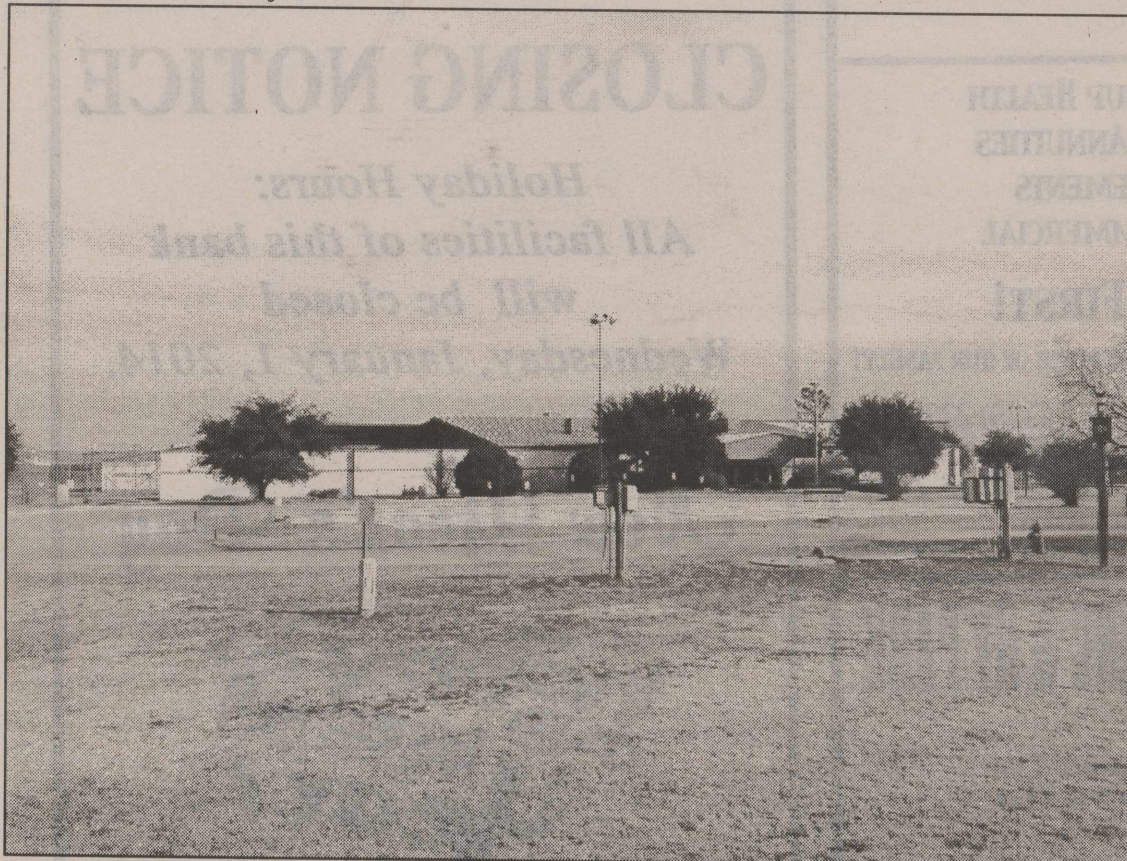


New Windows in Blackwell! After months in the making, Whitworth Stained Glass came to Blackwell to install new windows in the sanctuary of First United Methodist Church. In addition to the windows, members have made renovations to the Fellowship Hall and the Prayer Room. First United Methodist of Blackwell has been in existence for over 100 years, serving as a place of worship and a gathering place for the community.

Bronte Boys Basketball Coach Rocky Rawls received an award this year for reaching the 600 career win milestone coaching basketball. Coach Rawls was recognized at halftime during the Boys State Basketball Tournament on March 8, 2013. It is unique to reach the 600 win milestone. Coach Rawls has been in Bronte for 30 years and has had a total of 611 wins prior to this season. He has averaged over 20 wins a season and is recognized as one of the best basketball coaches in Texas. Coach Rawls was joined by his wife, Terri and sons Logan, Dakota and Kerwin for the awards ceremony.



Maroon and white flags have been purchased by Bronte merchants to fly on game days showing their support for the Longhorns.



On December 28, 2012, GEO Group donated the detention facility at the edge of Bronte to Coke County. Since it became apparent Coke County would not be able to put in a prison at the facility, Judge Blair has been searching for a buyer. A company has made an offer of just under \$200,000 for the buildings and 38 acres.

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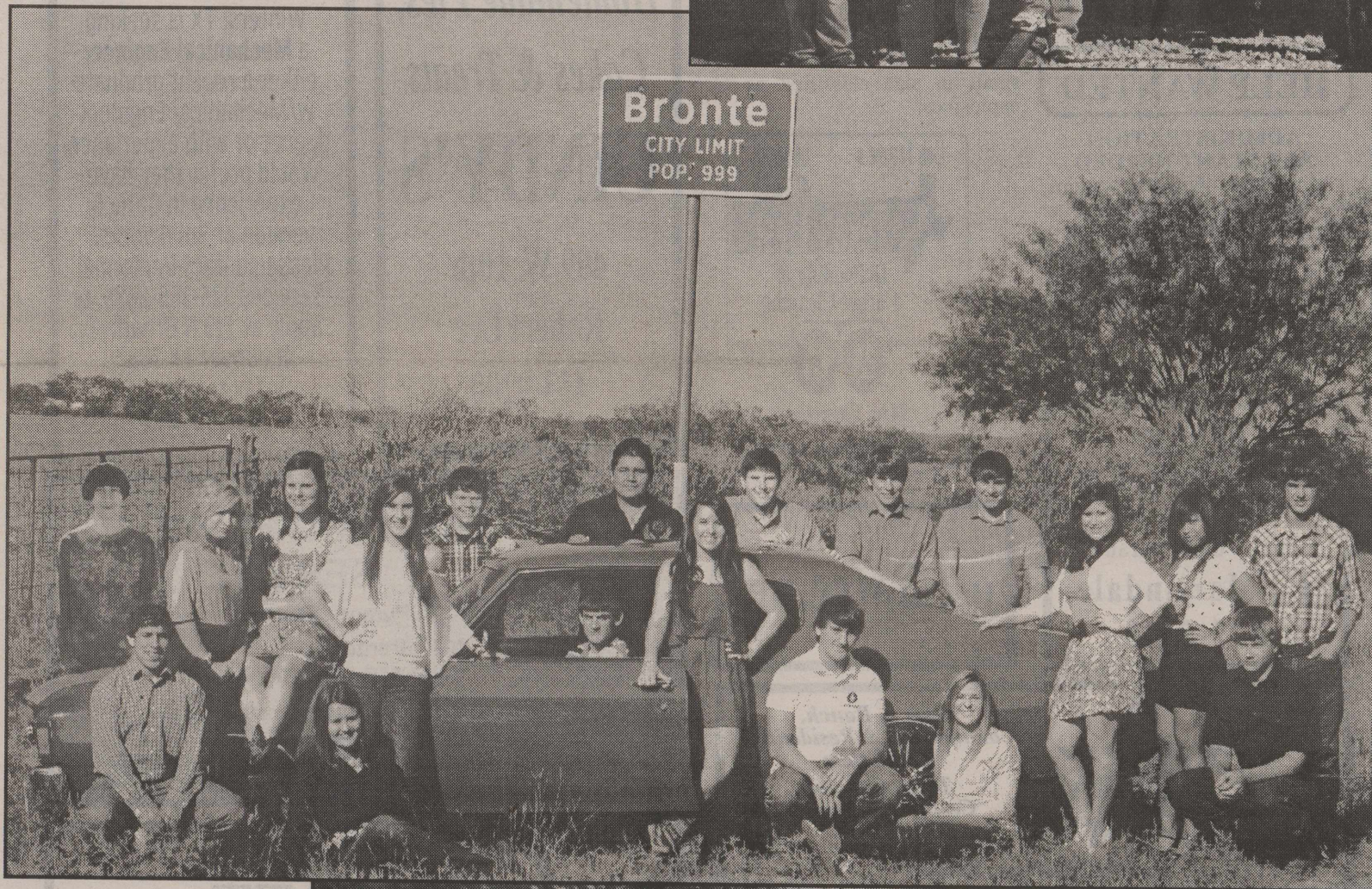
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Classes of 2013

Members of the Robert Lee High School Class of 2013 include Josh Barnes, Beanca Bower, Dawson Brisbin, Drew Davis, Jordan Gartman, Justin Gartman, Kelsey Hewitt, Sean Hildebrand, Dusty Howard, Sara Lara, Lubbock Roe, Paige Royall, Zachary Sanchez, Zach Skinner, Bailey Smith, Blake Smith, and Ashlie Wheat.



Members of the Bronte High School Class of 2013 include Brooke Bedford, Kaitlyn Braswell, Brett Broadbent, Thoren Charles, Nathan Fillman, Mikayla Fraune, Mason Hoyt, Kyle Kelton, Brayde Knight, Nathan 'Newt' McGinnis, Erika Puentez, Michelle Rhodes, Beau Rousseau, Ethan Sedden, Jared Smith, Juan Tapia, Zach Taylor, and Jael Williams.

Members of the Blackwell High School Class of 2013 include Bethany Breaux, Leonor Castelo, Randon Eubanks, Ashely Jeter, Mark Monroe, BreAnne Richardson, Elizabeth Rozzlle, Cody Shamblin, Elizabeth Shults, and Chase Sorrells.



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Rates when paid in advance.

20¢ Per Word
\$4 Minimum

Legal Notices:
25¢ Per Word

A service charge will be added to all ads which must be billed.

ADVERTISING DEADLINE
Tuesday at 12 noon

PUBLISHER'S NOTICE:
All real estate advertising in this newspaper is subject to the Fair Housing Act which makes it illegal to advertise any preference, limitation or discrimination based on race, color, religion, sex, handicap, familial status or national origin, or an intention, to make any such preference, limitation or discrimination. Familial status includes children under the age of 18 living with parents or legal custodians, pregnant women and people securing custody of children under 18.

This newspaper will not knowingly accept any advertising for real estate which is in violation of the law. Our readers are hereby informed that all dwellings advertised in this newspaper are available on an equal opportunity basis. To complain of discrimination, call HUD toll-free at 1-800-669-9777. The toll-free telephone number for the hearing impaired is 1-800-927-9275.

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NOTICES

STATE OF TEXAS
COUNTY OF COKE
ORDER PROHIBITING
CERTAIN FIREWORKS
IN UNINCORPORATED
AREAS OF COKE
COUNTY, TEXAS

WHEREAS, the Texas Forest Service has determined that drought conditions exist in Coke County; and

WHEREAS, on the 9th day of December, 2013, the Commissioners Court of Coke County has determined that the normal danger of fire in the unincorporated areas of Coke County is greatly enhanced by the extremely dry conditions now existing;

NOW, THEREFORE, the Commissioners Court of Coke County adopts this Order prohibiting the sale or use of restricted fireworks in the unincorporated areas of Coke County.

A. No person may sell, detonate, ignite, or in any way use fireworks classified under 49 C.F.R. part. 173.100(r)(2) (10-1-86 edition), as "skyrockets with sticks" and "missiles with fins" in any portion of the unincorporated area of Coke County.

B. This Order does not prohibit:

1. common fireworks, small in size classified as C explosives;

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45-tnc

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14-tnc

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211 N. Lombard. Thursday and Friday. 9-5. Avon Independent Sales Rep. 650-1970.

03-tnc

NOW OPEN IN BRONTE
The Dog House animal grooming. Call anytime Monday-Friday. (325) 234-1599.

22-4tp

HELP WANTED

ADMINISTRATION ASSISTANT NEEDED
Mitsubishi Power Systems, Sterling City, TX Wind Site. Excel experience is a must, with at least 2 years' experience in administrative positions. Qualified Candidates may email their resume to lahr@mpshq.com.

17-tnc

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2 Sections in Reagan County, House, 3 Wells \$695/acre.
632.1 Acres North of Robert Lee on Sanco Road, 3 BR, 2 BA House, 2 Water Wells \$1,375/acre.
4 Sections in Reagan & Upton Counties, 7 Water Wells, Good Hunting, \$685/acre.
50 Acres on Hwy 208 12 Miles North of Robert Lee \$125,000 Owner will drill well & provide electricity!

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Tony Smith, Owner

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1120 acres - Remote - County Road ends at property line. Views, Great Hunting
New Listing - 1122 acres, High-fenced Ranch, Elk - Axis Deer - Other Exotic Animals. Excellent water. (See website for more information)

156 acres **SOLD** on

2 BR, 2 BA, inside updated, lots of closet space, 2 car carport, privacy fence in back. Storage buildings, large lots.

Brick House on 2.6 acres

Runnels County • 794.5 acres river front property

2. large fireworks devices designed primarily to produce visible or audible effects by combustion, deflagration, or detonation and classified as Class B explosive by the U.S. Dept. of Trans. [TEX. OCC. CODE, Chapter 2154].

C. A person commits an offense if the person knowingly or intentionally violates a prohibition established by this Order. An offense under this order is a Class C.

Misdemeanor.

APPROVED THIS THE 9th DAY OF DECEMBER, 2013, BY THE COKE COUNTY COMMISSIONERS COURT.

Roy Blair
County Judge
Attest:

Mary Grim, County/District Clerk

23-2tc

APPLY TODAY

Winters, TX is seeking a **Mechanical Engineer** either a recent graduate w/Mechanical Engineer degree or with experience. Would prefer they have experience in Catia 5 version or Solidworks. Please contact Personnel Services 325-365-8880 or apply at 119 N Broadway, Ballinger TX 76821 Or fax resumes to 325-365-4222

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****HILLCREST ADDITION****SOLD****with 2 Living Areas!****Island in Kitchen!****Screened porch!****Fenced yard!****Corner lot!

****NEAR PARK/C****SOLD****3 Bedroom Home!****Hardwood floors!****Central Heating/Cooling****2 Car Garage & Storage!

****PRICE REDUCED!****3 Bedroom 2 Bath Home on 2 lots!****2 Car Garage and front porch extending length of house!****Kitchen Appliances may stay!****\$9,500!!!

****PRICE REDUCED!****Hillcrest Addition!****3 Bedroom 2 Living Areas!****Hardwood floors and Built-in shelves & cabinets!****Fireplace!****Sunroom!****Apartment!****\$125,000!!!

****APPROX 1 ACRE!****2 Bedroom 1 Bath Home!****Recently remodeled and updated!****Kitchen Appliances may stay!****2 Carport & Storage!****Fenced yard!****79,900!!!



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...More Classifieds

NOTICES

ROBERT LEE ISD NOTICE OF TRUSTEE ELECTION

Applications for candidates to apply for a position on the Robert Lee ISD Board of Trustees may be picked up at the Robert Lee ISD Administration Office beginning Wednesday, January 29, 2014 during the hours of 8:00 am-3:30 pm Monday thru Friday. The deadline for filing a candidate application is Friday, February 28, 2014 at 5:00 pm. Election day will be Saturday, May 10, 2014.

Requirements for filing are that you must have lived in the state for one year and six months in the school district prior to filing, be at least 18 years of age, and be a registered voter at time of election.

Robert Lee ISD will need to elect two places for full three term years. The three year terms of Jeffie Roberts and Irma Torres are expiring. There is also an unexpired three year term with one year left currently held by George Grim that will need to be filled.

24-2tc

BRONTE ISD NOTICE OF TRUSTEE ELECTION

Applications for candidates to apply for a position on Bronte ISD Board of Trustees may be picked up at Superintendent's office beginning Wednesday, January 29, 2014 during the hours of 8:00 am-4:00 pm Monday thru Friday. The deadline to file is Friday, February 28, 2014 at 5:00 pm. Election day will be Saturday, May 10, 2014.

Requirements for filing are that you must have lived in the state for one year and six months in the district prior to filing, be at least 18 years of age, and a registered voter at time of election.

Bronte ISD has two places for full three year terms. The terms of Paul Williams and Ray Barnett are expiring.

24-1tc

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4



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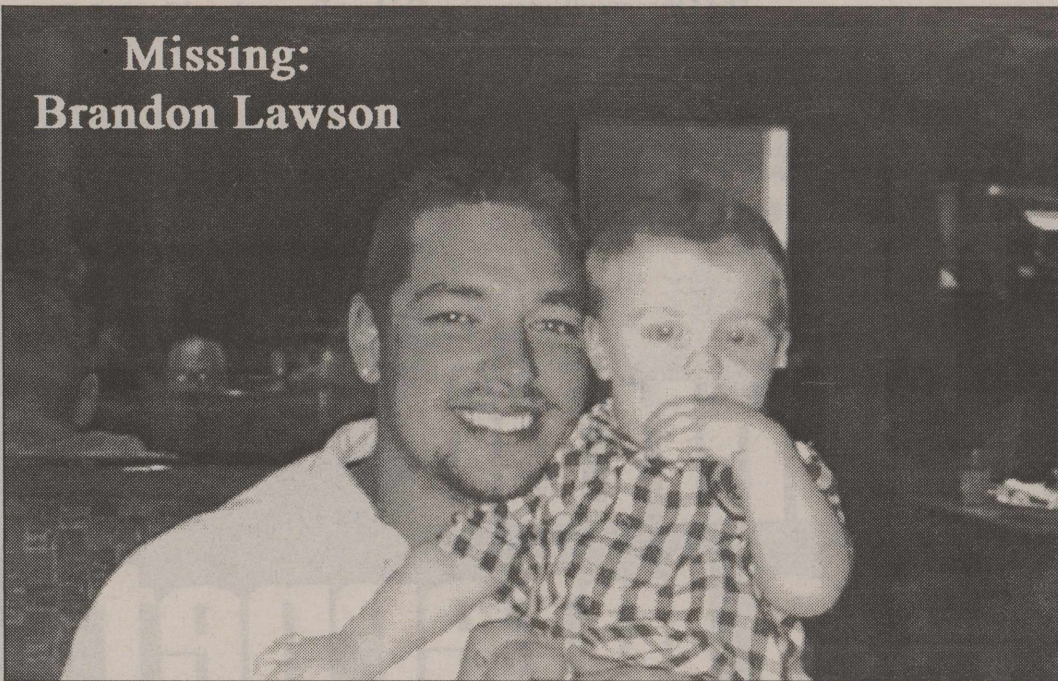
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Missing: Brandon Lawson



One of the darker stories of 2013 involves a man who apparently went missing in our county in the early morning hours of August 9th. It began with a 911 call about a stranded motorist just south of Bronte on Highway 277. The driver was not at the vehicle when Chief Deputy Neal arrived just after 1 a.m. However at this time, investigation has revealed that Brandon Lawson was hiding in the brush (due to an outstanding felony warrant) watching Deputy Neal while speaking to his brother, Kyle Lawson, on his cell phone. According to Ladessa Lofton, no one has heard from Lawson since this time.

Law enforcement officials conducted an aerial search the following Tuesday afternoon, August 13. Although the helicopter flew just 30 feet above the

ground and Lawson was reported to be wearing a yellow shirt at the time of his disappearance, nothing was seen of the missing man.

The next major search began early Thursday morning, August 29, 2013, as law enforcement conducted a comprehensive and exhaustive search of over 2,500 acres surrounding the site where Brandon Lawson's truck was abandoned south of Bronte. Officers widened their search to include "likely lines of travel", such as river beds, etc., leading away from the main search area. Thursday's search turned up no sign of Brandon Lawson. Assisting with this search were members of the Coke County Sheriff's Office, Texas Rangers, San Angelo Fire Department, Tom Green County Sheriff's Office, Department of Public Safety Highway Patrol, Department of Public Safety Criminal Investigative Division, and a Search and Rescue Tracker. Carl Beal of Texana Ranch provided all terrain vehicles to assist those searching. Officers who participate in undercover investigations are not pictured.

To rule out the possibility that Lawson had become lost in the brush and died, Coke County Sheriff Wayne McCutchen approved a search using cadaver or human remains (HR) dogs. This final search was held Thursday, October 24th. Members of Texas Search and Rescue and various law enforcement agencies began arriving the night before the massive search for Brandon Lawson. Members of Texas Search and Rescue provided six HR dogs, handlers and flankers in addition to numerous support and logistics personnel for this search. According to Greg Pyles, TexSAR Chief Executive Officer and Incident Commander, TexSAR expended approximately \$25,000 for

this search. TexSAR is a non-profit organization completely supported by private and corporate donations. The group only conducts law enforcement approved searches.

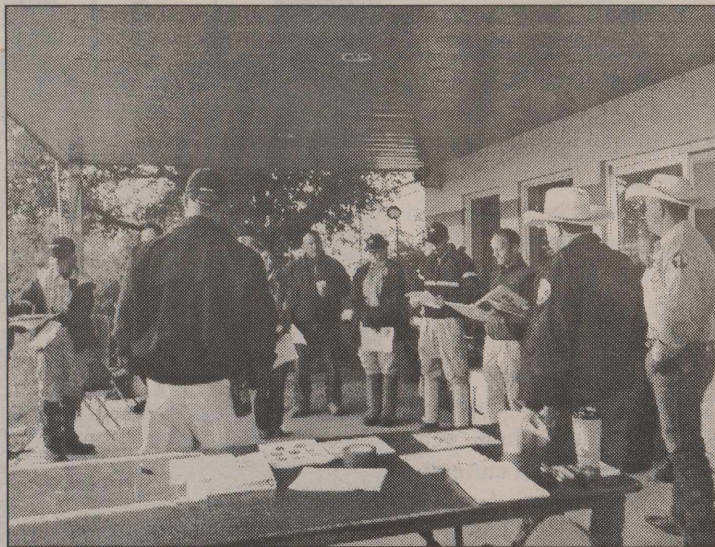
TexSAR uses "math and science" based upon information provided by the family to determine the size and area to be searched. The organization has a great track record with a 95% success rate. Their findings and reports have proven accurate and have stood up under scrutiny when used in court cases.

TexSAR's team included officers with Texas Division of Emergency Management, Cen-Tex Search and Rescue and the Lewisville Police Department. They also brought in two game wardens with Texas Parks and Wildlife.

The TexSAR canines are highly trained. These HR dogs will not "hit" on varmint carcasses. However, dead hogs sometimes prove a distraction to HR animals. Each handler wears a gps device which provided an extremely detailed analysis of all area covered.

The search was extended to the northeast following one HR dog showing slight interest. However even with the extension, the search revealed no sign of Brandon Lawson - no remains, no clothing, no wallet, no cell phone, and no keys.

Following a conversation with Sheriff McCutchen and Ranger Nick Hanna, the investigation has turned elsewhere and will not include any further searches unless new detailed information arises. Currently, tips to Crime Stoppers have investigators searching for Lawson in other areas.



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