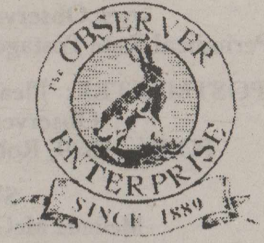


THE OBSERVER/ ENTERPRISE

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Friday, February 9, 2018



Candidate Forum! Runnels County Judge Barry Hilliard (above) was the moderator at a Candidate Forum in Bronte Thursday evening, February 1, 2018. Among the candidates speaking to the many voters in attendance were County Judge candidates, Hal Spain and Sherry Davidson; Justice of the Peace candidates, Russell Johnson and Jackie Walker; County Commissioner Precinct 2 candidates, Paul Williams, Robert Feil, and Henry Chisholm; County Clerk candidate, Monica Reyes; and County Treasurer candidate, Therese Emert. The event was sponsored by the Coke County Republican Party. For voters unable to attend the Forum, a video is available on the Facebook page of The Observer/Enterprise.

WEEK AT A GLANCE

Friday, February 9

High School Basketball -
Bronte at Veribest, 5 pm,
JV and Varsity Boys
Blackwell vs Sterling City at Blackwell, 5 pm,
JV and Varsity Boys

Saturday, February 10

Junior High Boys Basketball District Tournament, Veribest

Monday, February 12

Alcoholics Anonymous Meeting, 6 pm,
First Baptist Church, Bronte

Tuesday, February 13

Commissioners Court Meeting, 9:30 am,
County Courthouse, Robert Lee

High School Basketball -
Bronte vs Robert Lee at Bronte, 5 pm,
JV and Varsity Boys

Thursday, February 15

Bronte City Council Meeting,
6:30 pm, Bronte City Hall

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Filing for Local Entity May elections to end February 16

The filing period for the May 5, 2018, local government entity elections will end Friday, February 16, 2018.

The City of Robert Lee will hold an election for the position of mayor and for three council members. The offices are currently held by Mayor Leroy Casey and council member Shaunna Grantham. Also open are the council member positions formerly held by Toni Rainwater and Joe Longoria. As of press time, no one has filed.

The City of Bronte has terms

expiring for mayor and two council positions. These are two year terms. The offices are currently held by Mayor Gerald Sandusky and council members Wade Stautzenberger and Paul Gohman. As of press time, no applications have been filed.

Bronte ISD will hold an election to elect three members to the Board of Trustees. These are three year terms currently held by Ashley Braswell, David McWright, and Blake Braswell. David McWright has filed for re-election and Bill Torres has also filed for a place on the board.

Robert Lee ISD will also hold an election to elect three members to the Board of

Trustees. These are three year terms currently held by George Grim, Tom Sawyer, Jr., and Wes Washam and all have filed for re-election.

West Coke County Hospital District has three two year terms expiring for their Board of Trustees. The terms of Pat Stephens, Pat Carwile and Sarah Green are expiring and all have filed for re-election.

East Coke County Hospital District Board of Trustees has three two year terms expiring. These offices are currently held by Howard Baker, Lanette Fletcher, and Everett Bedford. Lanette Fletcher and Everett Bedford have filed for re-election.

HIGH FIRE DANGER

BURN BAN IN EFFECT.

THE OBSERVER/ENTERPRISE

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SUBSCRIPTION RATES

Per Year in Coke County ... \$30.00
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**Midessa Boat, RV,
Sport, & Gun Show
slated for Feb. 9 - 11**

The 36th annual Midessa Boat, RV, Sport & Gun Show will be held at the Ector County Coliseum Complex, Odessa, Texas, February 9 - 11, 2018.

Those attending can see the new 2018 model RV's and Boats and receive the best buys of the season. Visit the new expanded gun show, and a variety of booths including resort areas, jewelry, ladies apparel, motorcycles, ATV's, veterans services, home décor, specialty foods, kayaks, African Safari Guides and used boats and RVs. Let the kids fish in the Army Bass Anglers Kids Fishing Tank sponsored by All American Chevrolet of Odessa.

Register for a \$500 vacation cash giveaway and a \$500 shopping spree.

A free tram will be provided to transport people from building to building.

**Early Voting for March
Primary Election to
begin February 20**

Early voting for the March 6, 2018, Primary Election is set to begin Tuesday, February 20, 2018, and will run through Friday, March 2, 2018.

Offices up for election in Coke County include County Judge, currently held by Roy Blair; County Treasurer, currently held by Hal Spain; Justice of the Peace, currently held by Jackie Walker; County/District Clerk, currently held by Mary Grim; Commissioner Precincts 2, currently held by Paul Williams; and Commissioner Precinct 4, currently held by Joe Sefcik.

As of the filing deadline, below are the candidates that have filed for a place on the ballot. Hal Spain, current County Treasurer and former owner/publisher of The Observer/Enterprise, has filed for County Judge and will be joined on the ballot for by Sherry Davidson. Therese Emert has filed for County Treasurer. Emert is a retired Verizon Sourcing Manager. Russell Johnson filed for Justice of the Peace, as well as incumbent Jackie Walker. Johnson is currently serving as a deputy with the Coke County Sheriff's Office. Monica Reyes has filed for County/District Clerk. Reyes is currently a deputy in the

Clerk's Office. Three men have filed for Commissioner Precinct 2, Henry Chisholm, Robert Feil, and incumbent Paul Williams. Chisholm is a retired law enforcement officer and Feil previously served as Commissioner Precinct 2 in years past. Joe Sefcik has filed for reelection as Commissioner Precinct 4.

**West Texas
Rehab Telethon
raises \$1.32 million**

The West Texas Rehabilitation Center's (WTRC) 48th annual telethon and auction Saturday, January 20, 2018, raised over \$1.32 million to support its mission of providing top quality patient care in West Texas, regardless of a patient's ability to pay. Along with the live show, the evening included an online auction featuring over 486 items, live phone bank, children's activities, and even an indoor mechanical bull!

President and CEO Steve Martin expressed thanks to everyone who had a hand in

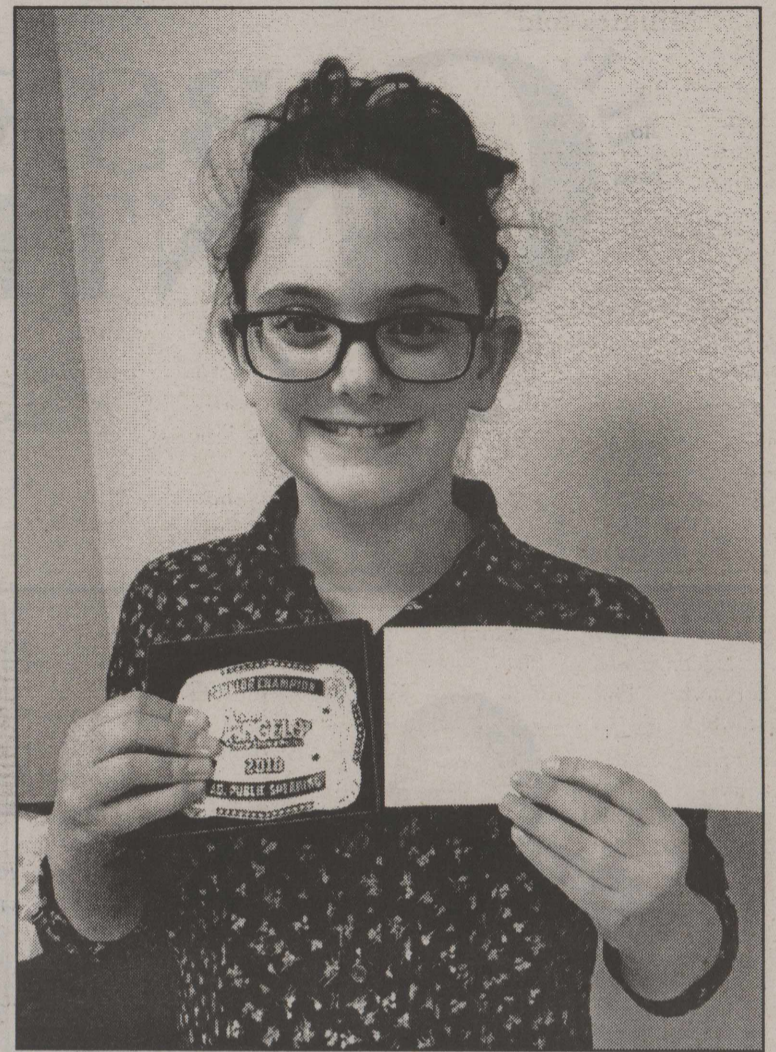
helping WTRC raise the funds that go to support patients at facilities in Abilene, San Angelo, and Ozona. Martin said "We continue to be amazed and very grateful for the tremendous community support Rehab receives. Everyone's generosity means we can continue to provide exceptional care to those who need our services, regardless of their financial situations."

Local efforts were conducted by Ava Lou Davis and the 64 Study Club which have raised over \$4,800 so far. Ava Lou said it was a great night for the local Phone Bank and they are still seeing money come in. "We enjoy calling our friends and family and encourage them to support the Rehab, it is a great way to give back to an organization which means so much to many of us!"

The live telecast, which was broadcast into 9 television markets, featured up and coming country music artist Carly Pearce and Country Music group Little Texas, along with host Charlie Chase, Red Steagall, Braid Blanks, Jennifer Douglas Smith, Brad Maule, and Twyla Foreman.

The telethon's Official Sponsor this year was Capital Farm Credit and Suddenlink Communications. The Toteboard Sponsor was Decker Capital Investments.

For those who won auction items in the online auction, auction distribution began Tuesday, January 23, at the WTRC Administration building at 1925 University in San Angelo. Questions can be directed to the WTRC Donor Relations Department at (325) 223-6364.



Junior Champion! Kathryn Richter, daughter of Adam and Kari Richter, was named Junior Champion for Ag Public Speaking at the 2018 San Angelo Stock Show and Rodeo last week. Kathryn's presentation on Dorper sheep earned her a beautiful buckle and a cash prize. She did an excellent job speaking to the judges and presenting points for her topic. Kathryn's father, Adam, is a former Coke County Deputy and her mother, Kari, taught at Bronte ISD. They still have close friends and family in Bronte and come to visit when they can.

Area Churches

Invite You to Worship

- | | |
|--|--|
| <p>Bronte
Bronte Church of Christ
PO Box 346
118 S. Jefferson • Bronte
Preacher David Lewis
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 & 5 pm Worship
First Baptist Church
424 S. Washington • Bronte
(325) 473-2331
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. Everette Boyce, Pastor
Sun. 10:00 am Sunday School
11:00 am Worship
Forgiven Ministries
117 W. Main, Bronte
Russ Frasier, Pastor
Sun. 10 am
Tuesday 6 pm Table Time
St. James Catholic Church
215 N. Washington, Bronte
(325) 365-2687
Rev. Yesu Mulakaleti, Jr., Pastor
Sunday Bilingual Mass 8 am
4C Cowboy Church
Texas Theater, Downtown Bronte
Pastor James Brunson
Sunday, 10:30 am</p> | <p>Robert Lee
Bible Baptist Church
PO Box 938 • 9th & Austin
Robert Lee, John Fiore, Pastor
Sun. 10 am Sunday School,
11 am Worship,
Emmanuel Pentecostal
PO Box 683 • 1019 Colorado City Hwy
Pastor Kevin Millstid 453-2360
Sundays 10 am, Wednesdays 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 pm Choir Practice
Iglesia Bautista Betel
101 Houston • Robert Lee
Sun. 9:45 am • Sunday School
11 am Service • Bible Study Wed. 6 pm
Southside Church of Christ
PO Box 698 • 8th & Houston
Robert Lee (325) 453-2176
Recardo Reyes, 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. Yesu Mulakaleti, Pastor
Saturday Vigil Mass 5 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
(325) 453-2208, PO Box 638
6th & Houston, Robert Lee
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</p> |
|--|--|

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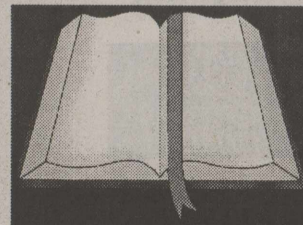
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Commissioners Court Minutes told

The Coke County Commissioners Court met in regular session at the County Courthouse in Robert Lee on January 9, 2018. Those in attendance included County Judge Roy Blair, Commissioner Precinct 1 Donald Robertson, Commissioner Precinct 2 Paul Williams, Commissioner Precinct 3 Marshall Millican, Commissioner Precinct 4 Joe Sefcik, and County Clerk Mary Grim.

The meeting opened with the pledge to the flag and prayer was offered by Judge Blair.

Commissioner Williams moved to approve the minutes for December 22, 2017, as corrected. The motion was seconded by Commissioner Robertson and the motion carried.

The Treasurer's Report was presented by Treasurer Hal Spain. Commissioner Sefcik moved to approve the Treasurer's Report. The motion, seconded by Commissioner Millican, carried.

Commissioner Williams moved to approve the payroll. The motion was seconded by Commissioner Sefcik and the motion carried.

Extension Agent Morgan Runyon presented her report and Agent Kandice Everitt's report.

Sheriff Wayne McCutchen presented his report.

The Tax Collector's Report was presented by Judge Blair.

County/District Clerk Mary Grim presented her report.

Constable Precinct 1 Marty Boyd's reports for November and December was presented by Judge Blair.

Justice of the Peace Jackie Walker's report was presented by Judge Blair.

The DR Report was not available.

The Trapper's Report was not available. Judge Blair reported that the county has a new trapper.

Commissioner Williams moved to reinstate the burn ban. The motion, seconded by Commissioner Millican, carried.

Commissioner Williams moved that the Employer Rewards from Texas Association of Counties Healthy County Program in the amount of \$555.56 be deposited in the General Fund and designated as supplement for flu shots. The motion, seconded by Commissioner Robertson, carried.

Commissioner Millican moved to contact the Federal Aviation Administration (FAA) to do a temporary closing of the airport. The motion was seconded by Commissioner Robertson and the motion carried.

County/District Clerk Mary Grim presented the Joint Primary Resolution to the Court. Commissioner Williams moved to approve the Joint Resolution and Statistical

Information for Joint Primary. The motion, seconded by Commissioner Sefcik, carried.

Commissioner Williams reported on the ARB Review Board.

Commissioner Robertson reported that Park Caretaker Abbey has resigned, effective January 22.

Judge Blair reported that Senior Citizen Coordinator Susan Milligan will be retiring. He also reported on wind generators and Pipeline meeting on February 8.

There being no private road work requests, no action was taken.

Commission Millican moved to pay the bills. The motion was seconded by Commissioner Robertson and the motion carried.

Judge Blair adjourned the meeting at 9:55 am.

WCCHD Board Meeting minutes

by Pat Stephens

The Board of Directors of the West Coke County Hospital District met in regular session on January 30, 2018. President Pat Stephens called the meeting to order at 9:30 am and declared a quorum was present. Board members present were Sarah Green, Pat Carwile and Noel Tinkler. Houston McGuire, RLCC Administrator, Roger Alexander, WCCHD Administrator, Chris Martin, Consultant, Janie Munoz, BOM, and Becca McGuire, DON, were also present at the meeting. The invocation was given by Roger Alexander. There were no visitors. Absent Board members were excused from the previous meeting, and the Board minutes from that meeting were approved.

Stephanie Steager, Social Worker, gave an update on indigent care from seminar she had attended.

There are 31 residents in the Care Center as of the meeting date. The facility is currently fully staffed.

Accounts Receivable were discussed and the Board was informed that Janie will set aside every Wednesday to address only the A/R aging accounts, which have been very problematic in the past.

The onsite portion of the State Audit has been completed and Roger informed the Board the auditor will send a report when he has finalized his portion. Roger also gave the Board an update on the financials. They were accepted as stated.

There is nothing major occurring with building maintenance at present.

Reports were given and discussed concerning QIPP (state sponsored quality improvement program), and also the DSO.

Changes to the employee handbook were discussed and approved by the Board, and they will go into effect upon completion.

The Board approved Houston's request for a Leave Donation Program, which will



Governor Visits! Texas Governor Greg Abbott (center) visited with Coke County Commissioner Precinct 2 Paul Williams, Republican Party Chairperson Susan Williams and Lane Horwood during his visit to our area last week.

be beneficial to the employees.

The Board voted to call an election for the expiring terms of 3 members of the Board of Directors. All three have filed for reelection.

The resignation of Patsy Cason from the Board of Directors was accepted. The Board would like to thank Patsy for her service in this capacity and for her years of loyal devotion to the Care Center.

Future agenda items were discussed and the next regular Board meeting will be February 27, 2018. Everyone is invited and encouraged to attend.

February's calendar started off with a shopping trip for residents to San Angelo last Friday, and church services provided by the Assembly of God Church on Sunday. On Thursday, February 8, Ellen and Cynthia from the San Angelo Symphony will be entertaining the residents at 3:30 pm. On February 10 at 3:30 pm, everyone will be enjoying Sunshine Saturday with Brandon. On February 12 and February 26 at 3:30 pm, members of the Methodist church will be entertaining at the facility. The monthly birthday party, sponsored by AON, will be on February 13. Happy February birthdays to Jewell Wallace and Emma South! Sing-Along with Pat and Roger will be on February 19 at 3:30 pm and everyone is invited to come and join the fun! On February 20 there will be a bodacious Valentine Party at 3:30 pm, and the word on the street is that ELVIS will be there. The names of the Valentine King and Queen will be announced at the party. Jim Gross will be entertaining on February 23 at 3:30 pm, and the residents will usher the month of February off the calendar on February 28, with morning exercise, current events and nails and tales. Here's wishing everyone a blessed February, and a very happy Valentine's Day!

February VP meeting held

Vision With A Purpose held their monthly meeting Thursday, February 1 at Family Life Center in Robert Lee. A meal was also provided.

Nancy Wilson, President, called the meeting to order. Debbie Childers opened with prayer. Minutes from December and January were discussed and approved. Crystal Stanford gave the Treasurer's Report, which was discussed and approved.

The standing committee reports were presented. Floyd Pettit gave a brief update on the

building headquarters. It appears the building is still 2 months away from completion.


Allyson Crenshaw will be the Small Town Christmas committee chair for 2018.

Dianne Hefner gave a report on the Beatification meeting held January 18. The budget for the committee was discussed; flowers for pots, new brochures for brick sales, new poles for Breast Cancer Awareness flags along with new stakes for flags. Other projects being considered are pavilion for Memorial Park, lights added to entrance to park, directional signs, and seasonal banners throughout the town.

(Continued on page 5)

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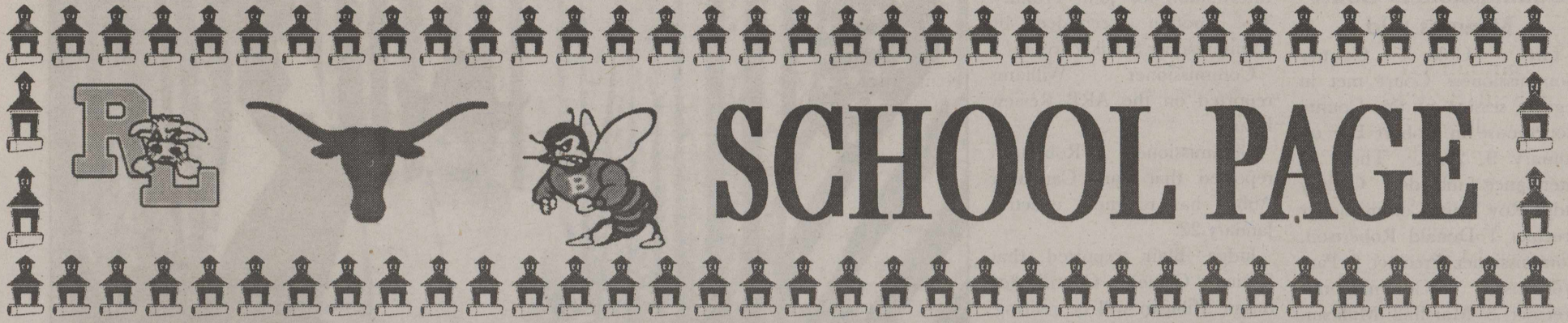
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SCHOOL PAGE



Food and Nutrition! The Coke County 4-H Food and Nutrition teams competed in the San Angelo Stock Show and Rodeo and 4-H District 7 Food and Nutrition Challenge recently. There were 105 teams that competed from all over the state. The Coke County 4-H Intermediate Team (left photo) won 5th place in the District 7 competition.

Evans Scholarship to be awarded

The Bronte United Methodist Women has announced that applications for the Sid and Bernice Evans Scholarship are now being accepted. The Evans' were long time members of the Bronte First United Methodist Church. The Scholarship Foundation was established by their family.

The scholarship is for students 20 years of age and older and applications are available from Lanette Fletcher at Glenn-Bivins Insurance (123 W Main Street in Bronte).

Applications must be returned to Lanette by February 16, 2018, with the scholarship recipient announced by March 15, 2018.



Robert Lee ISD

Breakfast

Monday, February 12
Breakfast pizza, fruit, juice, milk

Head Start - Same as above
Tuesday, February 13

Chicken-n-biscuit, fruit, juice, milk

Head Start - Same as above
Wednesday, February 14

Hamburger, baby carrots, garnish, cucumber slices, cinnamon applesauce, milk

Biscuit, gravy, eggs, bacon, fruit, juice, milk

Head Start - Same as above
Thursday, February 15

Pancake wrap, yogurt, fruit, juice, milk

Head Start - Pancakes, sausage, fruit, juice, milk
Friday, February 16

Cinnamon roll, sausage, fruit, juice, milk

Head Start - Biscuit, sausage, fruit, juice, milk

Lunch

Monday, February 12
Taquito, queso, salsa, charro beans, seasoned corn, seasonal fruit, fruit crisp, milk

Head Start - Taquito, queso, charro beans, seasoned corn, sliced fruit, milk

Tuesday, February 13
Chili cheese combo, veggie cup, mixed fruit, milk

Head Start - Same as above
Wednesday, February 14

Asian stir-fry, flatbread, salad, apple slices, milk

Head Start - Asian stir-fry, flatbread, apple slices, milk
Thursday, February 15

Pizza, corn, red bell pepper strips, tomato cup, fruity gelatin, milk

Head Start - Pizza, seasoned corn, fruity gelatin, milk
Friday, February 16

Hamburger, baby carrots, garnish, cucumber slices, cinnamon applesauce, milk

Head Start - Hamburger,

garnish, cucumber slices, cinnamon applesauce, milk

Bronte ISD

Breakfast

Monday, February 12
Breakfast pizza, fruit, juice, milk

Tuesday, February 13
Donut holes, fruit, juice, milk

Wednesday, February 14
PB&J, fruit, juice, milk

Thursday, February 15
BK Tornado, fruit, juice, milk

Friday, February 16
Sausage, biscuit, fruit, juice, milk

Lunch

Monday, February 12
Steak finger basket, fries, rolls, gravy, carrot coins, apple slices, milk

Tuesday, February 13
Tex-Mex stack, Spanish rice, refried beans, salsa, tomato cup, hot cinnamon apples, milk

Wednesday, February 14

Chicken Alfredo, Tuscan vegetables, garden salad, breadstick, fruit, cookie, milk

Thursday, February 15
Hamburger, sweet potato fries or tots, cucumber cup, apple slices, milk

Friday, February 16
Popcorn chicken, mashed potatoes, gravy, green beans, roll, apple-pineapple, milk

Blackwell CISD

Breakfast

Monday, February 12
Poptart, fruit, juice, milk

Tuesday, February 13
Breakfast burrito, fruit, juice, milk

Wednesday, February 14
Breakfast pizza, fruit, juice, milk

Thursday, February 15
Ham, egg, and cheese combo bar, fruit, juice, milk

Friday, February 16
PBJ or oatmeal round, yogurt, fruit, juice, milk

Lunch

Monday, February 12
Taco Salad Bowl (shell, ground beef, cheese, lettuce, tomatoes), pinto beans, Spanish rice, fruit, milk

Tuesday, February 13
Cold cut sub sandwich, chips, fruit, milk

Wednesday, February 14
Hornet Chicken Bowl (popcorn chicken, mashed potatoes, corn, gravy, cheese), hot roll, fruit, milk

Thursday, February 15
Sloppy Joe, chips, baby carrots, fruit, milk

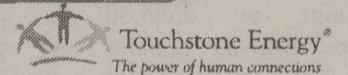
Friday, February 16
Hamburger or cheeseburger, garnish, fries, fruit, milk

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**Distict Alignments
announced
for 2018-2020**

The Football and Basketball District Alignments have been announced for 2018 through 2020. They are listed below.

Football

Conference 1A Division 1, 6 - Man, Region 4 - District 13
Bronte, Eden, Paint Rock, Robert Lee, Veribest

Conference 1A Division 2, 6-Man, Region 2 - District 6
Blackwell, Loraine, Moran, Trent

Basketball

Conference 1A, Region 2 - District - 11
Blackwell, Bronte, Mertzon Irion County, Robert Lee, Sterling City, Veribest, Water Valley

A New Series

[Editor's Note: The following is the sixth in a series of articles submitted by Brandon Broadbent.]

Prayer

Does prayer really work? People tell us all the time "I will pray for you." Sometimes, maybe you are in a desperate situation, you may even blast out a prayer as a final attempt to get some control over it.

I would like to start with yes, prayer works and is real, and one of the most powerful weapons at our disposal. I know this from my own life and the people that God has placed in my life. I have seen the miracle of cancer being gone when someone went in for surgery and they ran one last test. A life so drastically changed that the person became a complete new person. I have seen people that were given up for dead and no hope make a miraculous change and be healed in just a few days. God is real folks and wants to do mighty and marvelous things in your life.

James 5:16 - "Confess your faults one to another, and pray one for another, that ye may be healed. The effectual fervent prayer of a righteous man availeth much." Faith in God is

a must when it comes to praying. Hebrews 11:6 - "And without faith it is impossible to please Him, for he who comes to God must believe that He is and that He is a rewarder of those who seek Him."

Mark 11:24 - "Therefore I tell you, whatever you ask in prayer, believe that you have received it, and it will be yours."

This short scripture contains a lot of information. Ask, that means that you must speak your request to God. Believe, means there is no doubt, you stand on the word of God and you know it will happen. Now you must receive it. Know that it is underway and done.

I challenge you to pray big. Pray for what others think impossible. Pray so big that it wouldn't be possible without God doing it. God created the very matter that everything is made of. Nothing is too big for God! Stand and live the abundant life that God has given you to live. Pray, Pray, Pray!

2 Chronicles 16:9 b. - "for the eyes of the LORD run to and fro throughout the whole earth, to shew himself strong in the behalf of them whose heart is perfect toward him."

Is that not a big Wow statement? Our God is on the throne. He is alive and well. If you have given your life to Christ then you are a joint heir, a child of the king. The King's children are well taken care of.

Love y'all. Tell someone what Jesus has done for you

**...VP Meeting minutes
(Continued from page 3)**

A sign-up sheet was passed around for members to put out flags for the coming year.

Kelly Baker discussed a "Drop Box" app so members could communicate with each other through text messaging. Kelly also presented a new membership structure, which was approved by members. New dues will be dependent on three different levels:

Time - 5-10 hours/month to the organization plus a \$30 fee

to cover any expenses the club would incur (supplies, etc.);

Talent - time spent donating special talents and/or abilities plus the \$30 fee;

Treasure-anyone that is unable to give Time or Talent, but would like to help the organization monetarily (\$100 minimum).

Exciting ideas and programs are happening with VP this new year. Community involvement is necessary and we welcome all who want to keep Robert Lee alive and thriving. Please join us at our next meeting, Thursday, March 1, at 6pm at the Family Life Center.

**People of Words...
And Action**

by James M. Decker

The recent State of the Union Address got me to thinking about this topic. I will readily admit: I did not watch the speech or any of the associated hubbub. It's a history thing with me. What we call the "State of the Union Address" is a creation of modern entertainment, aided and abetted by rah-rah needs of both political parties. It is not prescribed in the U.S. Constitution, which requires only that the President "shall from time to time give to the Congress Information of the State of the Union, and recommend to their Consideration such measures as he shall judge necessary and expedient."

Until 1946, this task was simply called the "Annual Message." Thomas Jefferson eliminated the in-person address to Congress, believing it "too monarchical." His tradition of a

written report submitted to Congress continued until Woodrow Wilson returned to an in-person address. A primetime television address seems like tradition to us now, but only began in 1965. For the vast majority of American history, the Annual Message was merely an administrative update on things that had transpired and a request of things that were needed.

In 2018, what is our expectation from the State of the Union Address? A President (no matter the party) draws grand, sweeping conclusions about accomplishments, takes credit where it may or may not be due, and makes ambitious requests for the future. His party cheers. The other party does not. The speech begins and ends full of pomp and circumstance. The opposition party gives a rebuttal, relying on standard talking points detached from the content of the President's speech. Commentators breathlessly analyze it all. It's all more monarchical than President Jefferson would've cared for.

But then what happens? Life goes on. Congress doesn't begin a fit of inspired legislative frenzy. The President doesn't pursue half of the requests that were made. 12 months later, whether the same party is in control of the White House or not, it's rinse and repeat.

The State of the Union Address is merely a symptom of the American civic climate. We value words and entertainment over action and accomplishment. Fixing that in

Washington DC is a tall task, but it's a climate present in our rural communities as well. We talk—whether it be in city council meetings, the café, or with friends—about what needs fixing and, if we have some level of influence, we might even say what we're going to do about it. But do we? How many things have you vowed to take action on in the last 12 months, and how many of them have actually seen action taken? How many items have seen real success or substantial progress towards success? We cycle back around to the same topics at the next month's board meeting, the next year's budget discussion, or the next conversation at the café, and oh yeah, we once again talk about what needs to be fixed and how we're going to fix it.

Life is short. The months and years seemingly pass quicker and quicker. Words are important. We must illustrate the ideas and goals that we have and set an agenda for accomplishment. But we must be more than words. We can talk all about how we're going to fix this or that, but until we actually have something to show for those promises, we're no better than the fevered-yet-futile discourse we complain about in Washington. So, reader, I leave you with this: what have you been vowing to fix or take action on? And how will you REALLY do it?

James Decker is a lawyer, farmer, and city councilman in Stamford, and the creator of the forthcoming "West of 98" podcast and website. He may be contacted through Facebook at facebook.com/james.decker.

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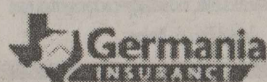
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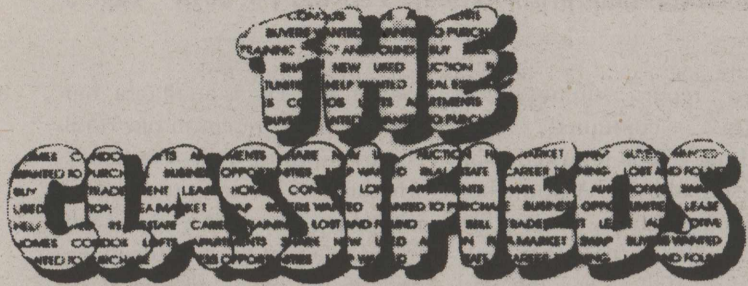
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NOTICE OF FILING DEADLINES
The West Coke County Hospital Board of Directors hereby gives notice of filing deadlines for the May 5, 2018, Election. Three Directors will be elected for a term of two (2) years each. Candidates may file applications for inclusion on the ballot between January 17, 2018, and February 17, 2018. Applications and petitions may be obtained at The Robert Lee Care Center during normal business hours, 8 am to 4 pm, Monday through Friday. Any questions may be addressed to Houston McGuire.

31-2tc

NOTICE OF INTENT AND PUBLIC HEARING TO FILE APPLICATION
The City of Bronte, Coke County, Texas intends to file an application with the U. S. Department of Agriculture, Rural Development for financial assistance for Community

Political Calendar

The Observer/Enterprise had been authorized to make the following announcements for the political offices in Coke County. Each candidate or the campaign treasurer has paid for his or her announcement.

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FOR SALE - 56+ Lake **SOLD** Cove Addition, Robert, Lee, Texas.

FOR SALE - 112 W. 12th Street, Robert Lee, Texas. 3BR/2B home, 1800 sq. ft. Living Area, Central Heat and Air, Hardwood Floors, Attached Garage, Large Patio and Backyard, Storage Building. Close to the school!

FOR SALE - 224 Riley Street, Bronte, Texas. Good Starter Home! Close to the school!

FOR SALE - 1120 acres, southwest of Robert Lee, Texas. Good ranch land with good hunting for deer, turkey, dove, and quail. Easy access, electricity, wells, and surface tanks.

FOR SALE - 201 acres, close to Robert Lee, Texas. Good hunting with highway frontage and a creek running through the property.

Facilities. A Public Hearing will be held Thursday February 15th, 2018 at 6:30 pm in the City of Bronte Council Chambers located at 114 South Washington Street, Bronte, Texas.

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ROBERT LEE ISD is holding a Public Hearing on the 2016-2017 Financial Integrity Rating System of Texas (FIRST Rating). Hearing to be held on Thursday, February 22, 2018 at 11:00 a.m.

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ROBERT LEE ISD is holding a Public Hearing on the Annual Performance Report of RLISD which includes the final TAPR report. The hearing will be on Thursday, February 22, 2018 at 11:00 a.m.

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Single digit license plates to be auctioned

MyPlates.com, the state's vendor for marketing specialty and personalized license plates in Texas, has revealed the plate messages to be auctioned during their first single-digit license plate auction. The rare low digit numbers of "3" and "8" will be auctioned as well as the tenth letter of the alphabet "J".

Fun facts for the number "3":

- "3" was Joe Montana's number when playing for Notre Dame.
- Dale Earnhardt drove the #3 car.
- It is the first odd prime number in mathematics.
- In science, the Roman numeral three stands for a giant star.
- It is considered a good number in Chinese culture because it sounds like the word "alive".
- The phrase "third time's the charm" refers to the superstition that after two failures in any endeavor, a third attempt is more likely to succeed.
- For those that are interested in numerology, then those that walk a Life Path with the Number "3" have unlimited creativity and almost superhuman abilities.

Fun facts about the number "8":

- The number "8" has no ending and loops back upon itself, thus represents Infinity and everything good in the universe which is infinite, such as infinite love, infinite supply, infinite energy and infinite time. In other words, "8" represents complete and unending abundance.
- "8" was the number worn by TCU legendary QB Davey O'Brien, for whom the nation's top quarterback award is named after.
- "8" was also worn by Cowboys Hall of Fame QB Troy Aikman.

The number "8" is considered to be a lucky number in Chinese and Asian cultures, because it sounds like the word meaning to generate wealth.

Fun facts about the letter "J":

- It is the 10th letter in the modern English alphabet.
 - In English, it is pronounced jay.
 - The "J" can be used as a smiley face icon in the wingdings font.
 - "J" is a high-level general-purpose programming language developed in the 90's
 - "J" is the metric system's symbol for a "joule" energy unit.
 - Its origin stems back to Roman Numerals as a swash letter I and was added to the Italian language during the early 1500's.
- "We are truly excited to make available to the market these three rare single-character license plates by auction for the first time" said Steve Farrar, President of My Plates.

The auction is now active and bids are being accepted. Texans wishing to bid can register at <http://www.mylates.com/auction>.

10 reasons rural community development is hard to do

by Michael Holton, Center for Rural Affairs

1. People don't understand what community development is. Community leaders and resource providers tend to put characteristics in with community development that constrict the definition. Often it is confused

with other development ideas such as economic development, infrastructure, schools, and business development.

Community development is all of these things, but not packaged separately. Contrary to the belief that any one of these can fix or solve problems that need to be addressed, it takes all of them to complete the puzzle we call community development.

The definition of community

development can be stated as, "The process of improving the social, economic, and cultural conditions of a village or small town." Even this definition may come up short, but at least it addresses other facets of what the community is all about.

2. Differences between rural and urban. Agencies and funding sources often try to address community development as if what worked for urban areas will

also work for rural areas. This very seldom happens as they are two different beasts.

Where do we separate the two so that we can all grasp the differences? Maybe we don't have to. This is an area of understanding and perception, so it all leads back to the fundamental, yet simple, conclusion that rural is anything urban is not.

(Continued on next page)

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...Rural Communities

(Continued from previous page)

While this is easy for some of us who live in smaller rural townships, it is not as easy for agencies addressing development and providing funding. Fair or not, this becomes one of the reasons why community development in rural areas is so difficult.

3. Understanding community gate keepers. Rural communities are made up of a social group called the gate keepers. This may prove to be one of the most difficult aspects of community development in small rural towns.

Gate keepers are usually people who have lived in the community for years, often clear back to the time when small rural communities were thriving. They made a living and prospered while raising their children. The community was and is still good to them. They do not want to see new community development come in and take away what they have acquired.

These people often resist big changes with statements like, "We don't need that!" or "It was good enough for me when I was growing up." The key to dealing with the gate keeper plight is to involve them from the beginning in the discussion and work.

4. Change is not comfortable. Like the gate keeper mentality, change is also a barrier to community development. Comfort levels and routine are easier to understand for most

community members. Large-scale change is uncomfortable and often hard work.

When you are dealing with buildings, you may have destruction and construction going on all around the community that disrupts routine. When you are dealing with people and politics, elections bring new leadership, but they also may bring change to the community.

New business brings competition which communities may view as healthy, but to existing business that must now compete for the shrinking rural dollar, it is not. Communities are made up of people first and structures second. Change must be addressed in those terms.

5. Parochial attitudes. You hear the term parochial brought up in discussions regarding rural communities, even with those trying to work together regionally. Many people do not know what parochial means or why it is used in the context of community development.

Parochial attitudes in small rural communities address the ability for these areas to shut themselves off from the outside. Communities, particularly small rural communities in the Midwest, have the notion that they have always managed to do it on their own, and they don't need any outside help. It is this independent desire of the people that is reflected in local institutions and their way of doing business.

The problem with this attitude today is that small rural

communities cannot do it on their own as we transition from a local to a global economy. This reflects change and upheaval in the traditional sense of economic and social development.

6. Lack of resources and capacity. Due to depopulation, the changing face of agriculture, and dwindling businesses in towns, the ability to find what we need locally has diminished. We are forced to look to outside resource agencies for help and to find the resources we once found locally.

Viewing this in economic terms creates a bleak picture, but not one without hope. Choices become clearer when we understand the realities. We may still need to buy products out of town, and we may need to ask for help from outside agencies. But when we make our own community development choices, we can strengthen the local economy based upon the diversity our choices bring.

7. Negative attitudes. It is easier to be an art critic than it is to be an artist. In small rural community development, we all know what we will hear from many of the residents of a town. I often say in meetings in small rural communities that I can find out everything that is wrong with the community in one hour at the local coffee shop. It takes me much longer to get people to talk about what is good about their community.

We need to focus on positive contributions of the community

and its people to the world as we know it.

Asset-Based Community Development (ABCD) is an approach that works well in identifying positive attributes of our communities and starts the conversation in a positive direction.

8. Lack of participation across generations. This question is always brought up in two ways. The lack of volunteers for community events causes an outcry, yet youths and senior citizens complain of not being asked to participate in a meaningful way. I often hear, "Why should I voice my opinion, they don't care anyway?" This is brought up by both young people and the elderly.

Small communities talk about the crisis in the dwindling number of volunteers for special events and the burnout that occurs with the volunteers they do have. So why are the elderly and youth left out? Communication is a big key to crossing generations and finding a meaningful way to include all of the community rather than a few overworked individuals. An inclusive, open communication process benefits all.

9. Purpose of existence. Community identity is often clouded by confusion over the true motive for the community's existence. Every small town in America, rural or not, has an identity and a purpose. This is part of the culture that is passed from one generation to the next. Communities have forgotten why they exist, and when change

has altered that reason, they have not learned to adapt to the change.

History plays a large role in establishing the purpose and ultimately the pride we feel towards our hometown. The key to survival is to not live in the past. The truth is that history is not static; it is dynamic.

We are making history in our communities every day. History is the change we make to our communities to make them better. In the end these changes serve a purpose for the community's very existence.

10. Leadership capacity. Of all of the factors and indicators of small town demise, I see the lack of leadership as the biggest of all. We are changing, and leadership is needed to address these conditions. The very definition of change is the ability to bring people and ideas together without coercion or force. I heard a leader in one of the rural communities I work with say to me, "Why should I take leadership training, I am already a leader!" What this said to the community was that he was unwilling to lead the town in a positive direction. There is untapped leadership in every community, and our goals should be looking for those resources.

Once communication and dialogue begins, real change can occur. With a little help we can all be part of our community's development. Maybe then we can create a real chance for the vigorous, prosperous life we dream of in small rural communities across the country.

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