

Concerned Citizens demand changes to dangerous highway

The last few months of 2014 were marked by four fatalities in accidents occurring on the 1 mile stretch of US Highway 277 just north of Bronte. On January 11, 2015, a three vehicle accident occurred in the same stretch. Fortunately, although one man was airlifted to the hospital and two more transported by ambulance, this head-on collision resulted in no fatalities.

At the January 26, 2015, meeting of the Commissioners Court, Precinct 2 Commissioner Paul Williams asked the Court to authorize a resolution requesting Texas Department of Transportation lower the speed on US Highway 277 within Coke County's borders. At their meeting on February 24, 2015, the Commissioners voted on a resolution to lower the speed limit on US Highway 277 for the three mile stretch from Bronte in each direction (both north toward Abilene and south toward San Angelo). The resolution also addresses the safety signage, or lack thereof, on the curves on this section of roadway.

On March 10, 2015, Thomas R. Johnston, San Angelo District Director of Operations, and Angie Ortegon, San Angelo District Transportation Operations Engineer, representing Texas Department of Transportation, met with concerned citizens at Bronte City Hall. They promised to look at the issues and possibly make

recommendations to the governing board in Austin.

On Saturday, September 12, 2015, David and Misti Bedford, along with their parents, Jerita and Stover Taylor and Everett and Pat Bedford were just leaving Bronte headed north to a volleyball game. A young man traveling south toward Bronte, in his attempt to pass a truck, hit them. Mr. Taylor was airlifted and later died at the hospital. All of the ladies were taken by ambulance to the hospital with serious injuries.

Following this deadly accident, Johnston and Ortegon once again met with citizens. This meeting was held during the September 22, 2015, Commissioners Court. The pair described their plans to increase the safety of drivers between the north city limits and the turn-off to Winters. They brought a map showing the changes they planned and those for which they were requesting approval.

TxDOT crews were out in force Monday, October 5, 2015, adding safety features in the four miles of US Highway 277 just north of Bronte. They first brought in a radar trailer and then cut in rumble strips. The strips run just outside of the white lines and down the center of the highway.

There have been two more bad accidents in the three mile stretch north of Bronte in recent months. Currently, the speed limit signs in this stretch have not been changed.



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