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Bronte school evacuated Monday following threat

By Melinda McCutchen, Publisher
What began as a sleepy Monday morning in Bronte quickly became a day for Coke County record books!

At approximately 9:30 am Monday morning, October 22, 2012, a phone call was received on a Bronte Independent School District issued cell phone. The caller only stated "You've got a bomb" before the call was disconnected.

The threat was immediately reported to the Coke County Sheriff's Office, and an evacuation of all students, faculty and staff began.

All of the Junior High and High School students were in the auditorium for a Red Ribbon Week presentation by DPS Public Information Officer Shawn Baxter. Bronte Elementary students were in their classrooms.

In just under 15 minutes from the threatening call coming in, all personnel and students had crossed the creek and were making their way to buses so they could be protected from the weather at the Bronte Community Center.

Sheriff Wayne McCutchen ordered that all houses near the school be evacuated and that roadblocks be set up to prevent anybody from getting within a block of the school property. He also ordered that all gas and electricity at the school be disconnected.

Fortunately, Trooper Baxter was already helping. There was a meeting of all San Angelo area DPS Troopers

being held in San Angelo Monday. These Troopers came to Bronte and helped by manning road blocks and assisting in the sweep of the school.

Once the children were safely at the community center, the utilities were disconnected and the bomb squad had arrived, a gameplan was mapped out and the search began around 12:30.

Joining the bomb squad in the two-hour search were Sheriff McCutchen, BISD Superintendent Alan Richey, DPS Sergeant Marlett, DPS Trooper Baxter and DPS Sergeant Scott Frasier.

Fortunately, the comprehensive search of the school property revealed no explosives.

Sheriff McCutchen and the Texas Ranger assigned to our area are coordinating in the investigation of the origination of the phone call. As of presstime, no additional information on the phone call has been released.

Assisting the Coke County Sheriff's Department with Monday's situation were Coke County Constables Marty Boyd and Marshall Millican, Texas DPS, the Bronte Volunteer Fire Department, Atmos Gas and AEP employees, Coke County Commissioners Bobby Blaylock and Wendell Lee, and Coke County and City of Bronte employees.

Nothing but praise for the BISD administration was heard that day. The evacuation was extremely fast, but also orderly and calm.

(Continued on Page 12)



Sheriff Wayne McCutchen meets (top photo) with the leader of the bomb squad from Goodfellow Air Force Base Monday morning prior to the sweep of the school. The squad's explosive detecting canine (middle photo), began her search with the vehicles in the parking lot. Parents were notified before lunch Monday that students had been evacuated to the Bronte Community Center. County employees monitored and directed traffic over the bridge during the dispersal of the students.



Football Games

BRONTE LONGHORNS
vs.
Menard Yellow Jackets
7:30 • Friday, October 26 • Menard

ROBERT LEE STEERS
vs.
Blackwell Hornets
7:30 • Friday, October 26 • Robert Lee

BLACKWELL HORNETS
vs.
Robert Lee Steers
7:30 pm • Friday, October 26 • Robert Lee

Annual Hunting & Fishing Guide included in this issue of The Observer/Enterprise.

Coke & Surrounding Counties
Hunting & Fishing Guide
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