Jessop trial to begin Monday in Robert Lee

By Melinda McCutchen,
Publisher

Over the last several years, people in Coke County have been able to watch the FLDS raid and the numerous trials stemming from that raid at a distance. That will change Monday morning, October 31, 2011, when the Coke County citizens summoned to be prospective jurors report to the Courthouse in Robert Lee for the jury selection phase of the State's trial of Frederick Merril Jessop.

Merril Jessop is the father of the 12 year old girl Warren Jeffs was convicted of sexually assaulting this summer. He is accused of performing the unlawful wedding ceremony between his 12 year old daughter and Warren Jeffs in the group's compound on the YFZ Ranch near Eldorado in Schleicher County shortly before Jeffs' arrest in August 2006.

51st District Judge Barbara Walther granted Jessop's request for a change of venue from the Tom Green County Courthouse in early September and ordered the proceedings to be held in Coke County. During this previous hearing, Jessop's attorney Ray Leifeste stated that his client didn't believe there would be sexual contact between his daughter and Jeffs following the wedding. Leifeste compared the marriage ceremony in question to a stage play.

Although there have been several trials previously resulting in convictions, the state must make an individual case against each of the accused FLDS men charged, and each defendant is due the

opportunity for a thorough defense of the charges. In essence, this trial could tie up Coke County's Courthouse for awhile.

Coke County is not footing the bill for this trial. However, Commissioners Court decided Monday to spend almost $4,000 to prepare the courthouse prior to the start of the trial. Citizens having business in the courthouse will be inconvenienced during the trial due to the fact that the doors leading to the parking lot will be locked. Only the front door will be open and security checks will be in place.

According to Coke County Sheriff Wayne McCutchen, "DPS will handle security outside and in the parking lot, while Schleicher County Sheriff's Department and the Coke County Sheriff's Department will handle security inside the courthouse." A meeting is set for this Thursday between these agencies and representatives from the Texas Attorney General's office to finalize security arrangements.

Three hundred jury summons were sent out. County/District Clerk Mary Grim is expecting approximately 100 prospective jurors on Monday. If you were one of those who received a jury summons for this trial and didn't meet exemption requirements, you will need to be in the District Courtroom no later than 10 am Monday morning. Prospective jurors are reminded that security clearance and sign-in is likely to take some time, so early arrival is advised. Proper attire

is required for jurors.

If you are voting early or have any business at the courthouse during this trial, leave your cellphone in your vehicle or at home. They will not be allowed in the courthouse at all during the trial.

Special elections to be held in Bronte and Robert Lee

On November 8, Bronte and Robert Lee will each hold a special election to authorize the use of 1/2 cent sales tax funds for water projects. The wording on the ballot will be as follows:

"The use of Type B sales and use tax proceeds for infrastructure relating to water supply facilities, dams, transmission lines, well field developments, other water supply alternatives, water conservation programs, brush control programs, and programs to replace malfunctioning or leaking water lines."

There will be no increase in the sales tax rate. This will not affect either city's property tax rate.

Early voting is now taking place and will continue through November 4, 2011.

More information is available at Robert Lee City Hall and Bronte City Hall.

Desserts needed for Bronte Barbecue

The annual Hunter's Wild Game Barbecue in Bronte will be held Saturday, November 5, from 11 am until 2 pm.

Coordinator Kerry Hall would like to make an appeal to area cooks to provide a dessert for the benefit barbecue. If you would like to donate a dessert, please call Kerry Hall at 473-2065.

Bronte Health & Rehab to host Trick or Treaters

The Bronte Health and Rehab Center will host Halloween Trick or Treaters Monday, October 31, from 5 to 6 pm at the facility. All area children are welcome to attend.

Potato Bake Luncheon set for November 8th

The Sorosis Study Club will hold its fourth annual potato bake luncheon Tuesday, November 8, at First Baptist Church fellowship hall. The luncheon will be from 11 am until 1 pm.

All money raised from the event will go into the club's high school scholarship fund.

Tickets may be purchased ahead from any club member or at the door. Take-out containers will be available.

Longhorn Golf Club scrambles slated

The Longhorn Golf Club will be hosting 18-hole 2-person scrambles on Saturday, November 5, and Saturday, December 3. Both will begin at 9 am at the golf course in Bronte.

For more information, call 473-2156.

Red Hat Society to meet November 8

The Red Hat Mamas (Red Hat Society) will meet at 11 am Tuesday, November 8, for the Sorosis Club Potato Bake at First Baptist Church in Bronte. There will be a few long tables set up for us Red Hatters. You will get a baked potato, butter, sour cream, cheese, and a selection of delicious salads and desserts, all for a reasonable cost. Money raised from the luncheon will go to the Sorosis club's high school scholarship fun.

FLDS Trial Comes to Coke County! *Frederick Merril Jessop (left) walks with his attorney Ray Leifeste. Jessop is accused of performing the illegal marriage ceremony of his 12 year old daughter to Warren Jeffs in 2006.* *(Photo Courtesy of The Eldorado Success)*

Football Games

ROBERT LEE STEERS
vs.
Water Valley Wildcats
7:30 pm • Friday, October 28 • Water Valley

BRONTE LONGHORNS
vs.
Christoval Cougars
7:30 pm • Friday, October 28 • Christoval

BLACKWELL HORNETS
vs.
Paint Rock Indians
7:30 pm • Friday, October 28 • Paint Rock