

lowing campaigns: Ted Cruz; 815 A Brazos, PMB 550, Austin, Texas 78701. Citizens for Josh Mandel (Senate Candidate in Ohio); 50 West Broad Street, Suite 1900, Columbus, Ohio 43215. Connie Mack (Senate Candidate from Florida); FOCM, P O Box 14-1129, Coral Gables, FL 33145.

Remember, October 9th is the last day to register to vote, and early voting starts October 22, 2012.



by Jan Yanez
Cooperative
Extension Agent

National 4-H Week October 7-13, 2012

For more than 105 years the 4-H program of Texas has been engaging youth in activities that help develop skills for a lifetime. These skills range from communication to community service and from goal setting to leadership. Regardless of the skill learned, the benefits gathered from a young person participating in the 4-H program is priceless.

The 4-H program is nationwide youth development program that has more than 6.5 million youth involved in it annually. Administered in Texas by the Texas A&M Agrilife Extension Service of the Texas A&M system. 4-H serves youth in all 254 counties in the state through a network of 250 county extension offices. 4-H is managed mostly by both a professional and volunteer staff. Texas 4-H, the largest 4-H program in the country has more than 640,000 youth members and more than 23,700 volunteers working together to deliver the more than 95 projects, opportunities, and events offered annually through the program.

4-H is unique in that it offers experiences to the most urban young person and youth in rural areas by providing the opportunity to participate in community 4-H clubs, learning experiences in school classrooms, day and overnight camps, and other special interest opportunities. Texas 4-H also serves sons and daughters of our military personnel through the 4-H military program located through the state, primarily on military bases.

Youth members can participate in a variety of projects in the areas of technology, human sciences, animals and household pets, science and engineering, natural resources, and wildlife. Beyond the leadership conference, travel the world, become involved in their community through service and meet new friends in a safe and comfortable setting. A young person's experiences in 4-H

makes a difference for lifetime by allowing them to grow and appreciate the importance of being a good citizen, a strong leader and person of character. If you would like to learn

more about 4-H or have a family member wanting to join 4-H contact your local county extension office or visit the Texas 4-H and Youth Development website.

General Information for Property Owners in the Coke County Appraisal District

The Coke County Appraisal District appraises taxable property for Coke County/FMFC, Cities of Bronte, Robert Lee and a portion of Blackwell, East Hospital District, West Hospital District, Coke County Underground Water District, Kickapoo Water District, Bronte ISD, Robert Lee ISD, and a portion of Water Valley ISD and Blackwell ISD. The District has approximately 17,000 taxable properties in the county. The district also administers exemptions and special appraisals, such as productivity valuation of qualified agricultural land, and determines taxable status of property. The chief executive officer of the appraisal district is the chief appraiser.

The governing body of the district is the appraisal district's board of directors. The appraisal district also has an appraisal review board, which hears property owners' protests regarding values and other related matters, as well as an agricultural advisory board who assists the chief appraiser in compiling information to calculate an agricultural value per acre.

Board of Directors Functions

A board of six directors (including the tax assessor, who by law, must be a member of the board) governs the appraisal district. Board members select the chief appraiser, adopt the district's annual budget, appoint the Appraisal Review Board and name the chair and secretary of said board, and ensure that the district follows policies and procedures set by law. The board does not appraise property or make decisions that affect the appraisal records. Members of the board may not discuss appraisal matters with the chief appraiser except in open meetings or forums or in closed meetings held for the purpose of discussing pending litigation.

The Chief Appraiser and Property Appraisals

The board appoints the chief appraiser, who serves at the pleasure of the board and is directly accountable to the board. All other personnel of the appraisal office are employed by and accountable to the chief appraiser. The chief appraiser manages and directs the operations of the appraisal district. The board does not participate in the appraisal function itself nor does the board direct the activities of the appraisal district staff. If you have a concern about property appraisal, you should discuss it first with the appraisal district staff. Complaints that cannot be resolved at the staff level should be addressed by written protest to the appraisal review board.

Appraisal Review Board (ARB)

The ARB is a group of citizens appointed by the appraisal district's board of directors to serve as the judicial part of the protest system. The ARB is a separate body from the Coke County Appraisal District and serves a different function. The ARB hears and resolves disputes over appraisal matters based on evidence provided both the taxpayer and the appraisal district. The ARB duties and a property owner's right to protest are more thoroughly explained in the pamphlet entitled Property Taxpayer Remedies, which is available at the appraisal district's office or the Texas State Comptroller's website.

Public Access to the Board of Directors

It is the policy of the board of directors to provide the public with a reasonable opportunity to address the board at any regular meeting concerning appraisal district and appraisal review board policies and procedures and any issue under the board's jurisdiction. Generally, the board's statutory duties and jurisdiction involve:

- Adopting the district's annual budget;
- Contracting for necessary services;
- Selecting the chief appraiser and assigning responsibilities to the position
- Adopting general policies regarding the operation of the district; and,
- Appointing appraisal review board members and officers.

Speaking at Board Meetings

Board meetings are held on the third Monday of the month with meetings held at least once quarterly, more frequently as warranted. The meetings are held in the jury room of the courthouse on the second floor, west end. At each meeting the chairman will ask if anyone present wishes to address the board. The time allowed for each speaker will be determined by the amount of business to be conducted and the number of persons wishing to address the board. The chair will stop the speaker if the speaker is taking so much time that it will affect the ability of the board to complete its business and adjourn its meeting at a reasonable time. The board may refuse to hear any person who attempts to speak on a subject unrelated to the board's lawful jurisdiction.

Interpreters

It is the specific policy of the board that any person who wishes to address the board at one of its meetings may do so. Non-English speaking persons or persons who communicate by sign language who need an interpreter may request that the board furnish an interpreter by making a written request to the chief appraiser at least seventy-two (72) hours before the meeting. The board shall seek to obtain a translator from the members of the board, the district staff, or the community at large.

Access by Disabled Persons

Persons with a physical, mental, or developmental disability may request assistance for access to the board by making a written application to the chief appraiser at least seventy-two (72) hours before the meeting. A parking space for the disabled is located in the front of the courthouse as well as the back parking lot however the only ramp available is in the front of the courthouse. Doors are wheelchair passable and an elevator is located on the west end of the first floor. Restrooms on the first floor are handicapped equipped.

The chief appraiser will coordinate with the chairperson to make every effort to arrange the meeting place and time to accommodate any special needs necessary for full access to the board in a public forum

Policies for Resolving Conflicts

The board will consider written complaints about the policies and procedures of the appraisal district, appraisal review board, and the board of directors and any other matter within the jurisdiction of the board of directors. The board will not consider complaints addressing any of the grounds for challenge and protest before the appraisal review board. The board of directors has no authority to overrule the chief appraiser or the appraisal review board's decision on value, correction or protest.

A written complaint may be filed with the secretary of the board at:

Secretary, Board of Directors
Coke County Appraisal District
P O Box 2
Robert Lee, Texas 76945

The board will consider the complaint at the first regular meeting after the complaint is received. If a complaint is filed that the board has authority to resolve, the board, at least quarterly and until final disposition of the complaint, shall notify the parties to the complaint of the status of the complaint unless notice would jeopardize an investigation.

Board deliberations concerning complaints will comply with provisions of the Texas Open Meetings Act, Chapter 551, Government Code.