

Danish, toast, fruit, juice, milk

Thursday, October 15

Pancake on a stick, fruit, juice, milk

Friday, October 16

Cereal bar, fruit, juice, milk

Lunch

Monday, October 12

School Holiday

Tuesday, October 13

Spaghetti, plain sauce or meat sauce, green beans, garlic bread stick, milk

Wednesday, October 14

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

Thursday, October 15

Homemade beef/cheese enchiladas, refried beans, Spanish rice, salad, milk

Friday, October 16

Chicken Alfredo, steamed broccoli, garlic toast, milk

...West of '98

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It is not a “fun” topic, but it is critical that our rural leaders lead a conversation about it in our communities, rather than pretend that domestic violence does not exist in our communities. Here is the truth: 33% of American women and 25% of American men have been or will be victims of domestic violence at some point in their lives. That is one in three women and one in four men. Those statistics are staggering, but lest you believe that they come from “other” people, that is not the case. According to the Noah Project (the wonderful, Abilene-based domestic violence support and advocacy organization), these statistics hold essentially true throughout American society, no matter the demographic or community.

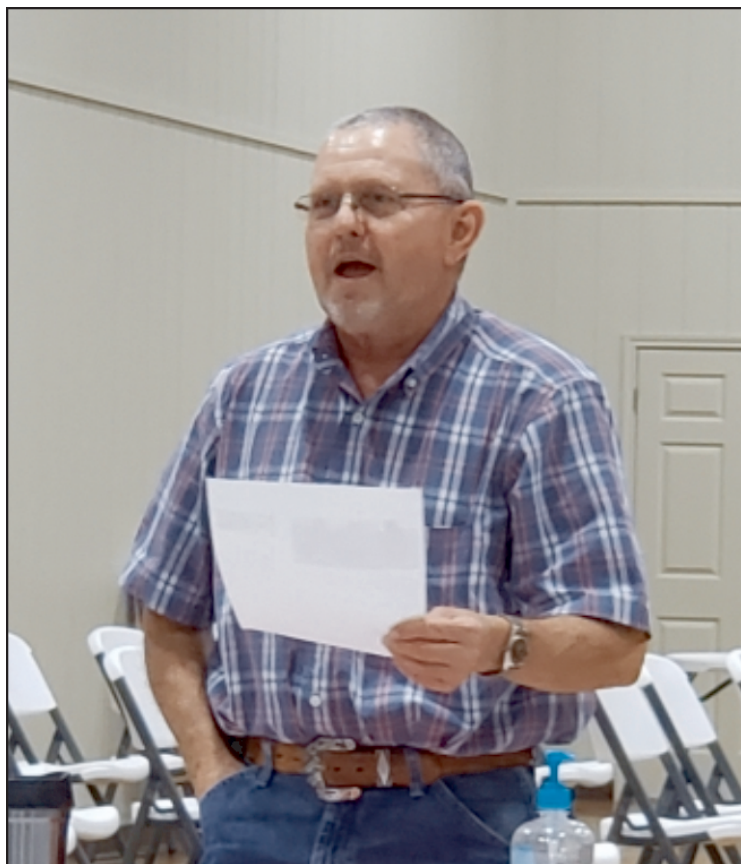
According to the National Coalition Against Domestic Violence, intimate partner violence accounts for 15% of all violent crime. 19% of domestic violence involves a weapon. Domestic violence victims lose a total of 8 million paid days of work each year. Between 20% and 60% of domestic violence victims lose their jobs due to reasons stemming from their abuse. Domestic violence victims experience a higher rate of depression and suicidal behavior.

Simply put, domestic violence is sapping America’s physical, mental, and economic health. Look around you at work, at the store, and at church. 1/3 of the women you see and 1/4 of the men you see are victims of domestic violence. Imagine the toll that it takes all day, every day, on each of those people, their other loved ones, their other relationships, and their jobs. In Proverbs 31:8-9, King “Lemuel” (actual identity unknown, but believed to be Solomon) admonishes us:

“Speak up for those who cannot speak for themselves, for the rights of all who are destitute.

Speak up and judge fairly; defend the rights of the poor and needy.”

It is easy to pass off domestic



Community Watch Meeting! Robert Lee Community Watch held a meeting on Tuesday, September 15, 2020. County Judge Hal Spain (above left) and Robert Lee Mayor Pro Tem Jason Moran spoke to those in attendance.



violence as a law enforcement matter. In most cases, those actions DO break the law. But as I’ve said many times, law enforcement is a reactive tool, to be used after something has already occurred. It is incumbent on our community leaders to be proactive BEFORE law enforcement is needed.


How do we create a culture in our communities such that domestic violence is not an outlet for our people? And if they are so inclined, how do we establish a culture that does not tolerate domestic violence? Like many of the other issues I raise in my essays, I am not sure I have a good answer yet. But I do know that people like you and me must speak up for those who cannot speak for themselves. We must defend those in need. Psalms 31:8-9 has a lot of applicability throughout our communities, but domestic violence is surely at or near the top of that list. We must lead by example, support the organization who are the hands and feet of God, and show the world that for our people in our communities, we will be the

voice and the defenders of those in need.

Let us use this October’s significance as Domestic Violence Awareness Month to stand up and do our part to bring an end to domestic violence in America.

James Decker is a lawyer, farmer, and mayor in Stamford, and the creator of the forthcoming “West of 98” podcast and website. He may

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