December VP meeting held

Vision With A Purpose held its monthly meeting Thursday, December 6, 2018, at 6 pm at their headquarters in downtown Robert Lee. Floyd Petitt opened with prayer and a meal was served.

Millican read the Sheri minutes from the November meeting and Jeffie Roberts gave the treasurer's report. Both were approved.

The Executive committee gave a report on their meeting held prior to the general meeting. Bylaws are being tweeked.

Jeffie Roberts presented the results of the Hunter's BBQ held in November. A lot of hard work with lots of outside help made for another successful event. Community involvement was the key to its success.

Debbie Childers, chairman, gave the latest update on Small Town Christmas, which was to be held Saturday, December 8. Decorations for the Event Center were almost complete and VP was looking forward to opening its doors for the Robert Lee Open House, held on Friday, December 7, and then again on Saturday, December 8, for Small Town Christmas. Decorations were under the supervision of Nancy Wilson, president. With her knowledge and vision, Robert Lee was transformed, outside up and down the street, and inside the headquarters. Also, the gazebo and park were sights to behold.

The meeting closed with prayer led by Debbie Childers. The next meeting will be held Thursday, January 3, 2019. A meal will be provided. All are encouraged to join this community-minded organization.

... Robert Lee Council Minutes

(Continued from page 7) and was seconded by Council Member Ann Hedges. Vote 4-0; Motion carried.

Mayor's Report

TML - Returned from TML Annual Conference.

Atmos - Provided status update on Atmos Energy Corporation's

City Secretary's Report

CodeRED - Form will be provided on the back of the utility bills

Audit - Eckert & Company are tentatively scheduled to perform audit the first week of December

Payment Arrangement - One current payment arrangement

City Superintendent's Report

Acme Iron and Metal, Co. -Purchase receipt was provided in the amount \$468.35, which was deposited into the City's account. Previous scrap metal sales were not deposited into the bank but were placed in a container in City Hall. Scrap metal sales receipts were found in excess of \$3,500.00 with no accountability of spending.

Drying Beds - Two layers of rock have been applied

Employees - Hired two new employees

TCEQ - Reports have not been submitted the previous two years. TCEQ issued a violation notice for failure to submit reports within required time frame. Notice will be mailed to the citizens informing them of the violation. Reports have now been submitted.

Request of Future Agenda Items includes Water Deposit Rate, Senior Citizen Rate, Coke County Intergovernmental Agreement, Budget and Amendment.

A motion was made by Council Member Janie Munoz to adjourn the meeting at 9:16 pm; and was seconded by Council Member Ann Hedges. Vote 4-0; Motion carried.



An Outward Expression of Christmas

By James M. Decker Last week, I wrote about the seemingly inevitable exhaustion, and annoyance of Christmas season. I encouraged each of us to focus on hope—the hope provided by the birth of Jesus Christ and the hope that we can find in our own lives. In his classic song "If Through Make It December," Merle Haggard has very few obvious reasons for hope, but he still has hope all the same. If he can find hope, in the context of that song, we too can find hope in our lives.

On my mind today is how we can actually express that hope that underlies Christmas. How can we end the cycle of holiday exhaustion, annoyance? It shouldn't have to be inevitable. We shouldn't have to fight it. We shouldn't have to find reasons to take a step back and escape it. It's easy to blame "society" for

commercialization of Christmas and encouraging obsession in pursuit of holiday perfection. But society is a "we," not a "they." Even if we are but a tiny fraction of society, we're still part of the that creates and society exacerbates those feelings in each of us. We can't and shouldn't wait on "them" to improve society, we must look for ways that "we" can improve society.

We can and should start in our own homes and communities. This goes even beyond my encouragement last week to worry less about trying to provide the perfect Christmas for friends, family, or community. For many in our communities, perfection in Christmas isn't even a consideration. For numerous reasons, folks are merely trying to survive Christmas.

Christmas is expensive. The cost of Christmas gifts, trees and ornaments, maybe even a few outside decorations and lights, is staggering. That's before we get to the cost of a Christmas dinner for a family. For families living from paycheck to paycheck, it's an impossible task that results in greater financial hardshipcredit card debt or high-interest short-term loans—or simply doing without.

However, struggling for survival Christmas crosses socioeconomic lines. It touches every demographic in our community. Many of our family, friends, and neighbors will face their first Christmas without a loved one, whether parent, spouse, sibling, child, or otherwise. Without that person, the holidays can go on, but they will never be the same. For others, it is not the first Christmas without a loved one, but the second, third, or tenth without them is still difficult. Some may have strained or distant relationships with family, so the concept of being "together" at Christmas simply doesn't exist.

Others are already struggling with depression and other mental health issues. The pressures associated with the holidaysobligations for family, friends, work, church, and communitycan be completely overwhelming. There's a reason why mental health concerns become bigger during the holidays. Too many of our friends and family are not sure if they CAN make it through December. Do we even realize that?

Last year, I wrote about Stamford's Christmas Dinner. This year, for the 31st year, we'll serve fellowship and a full Christmas dinner to anyone and everyone who desires it. Some come out of need for a hot meal. Others come to avoid loneliness. Many simply desire the good community-wide fellowship. Last year, over 700 people were served with the simple mission that, no matter your lot in life, you shouldn't have to be alone on Christmas

With three weeks before Christmas, there are many opportunities for us to improve the Christmas season by changing our own piece of society. It doesn't require a large event serving a meal to your community. It may be as simple as taking an evening to spend time with an older neighbor. It might mean a quick trip to Walmart to purchase a toy for a local toy drive. It might be pressing a \$10 bill into the hand of a clearly-struggling mother doing her shopping at the store one day.

Whatever the case may be, I hope and pray that each of us will look across our community, at familiar faces and strangers, and find a way to make Christmas something happy, not merely a struggle for survival.

James Decker is a lawyer, farmer, and mayor in Stamford, Texas, and the creator of the forthcoming "West of 98" podcast and website. He may be contacted through Facebook at facebook.com/james.decker.

... BCISD Menu

(Continued from page 4)

Monday, December 17 Chicken Quesdadilla, refried beans, corn, salsa, milk

Tuesday, December 18

Sloppy Joe, chips, baby carrots,

Wednesday, December 19

Corn dog, mac n cheese, baked beans, milk

Thursday, December 20

Frito Pie with chili and cheese, chili beans, milk

Friday, December 21 Sack Lunch - early release, milk

"Paint the Town"

Improvement Project

The RL4Restoration Foundation is accepting applications for the "Paint the Town" Improvement Project. Since home is where the heart is and their hearts are for Robert Lee, the foundation decided their first project should be geared towards the homes and people in our town. The "Paint the Town" Improvement project is an opportunity to receive assistance in repainting or cleanup of homes in the community.

The project will be carried out by volunteers of the RL4Restoration Foundation and volunteers from groups or individuals that feel led to contribute their time and efforts.

Applications are being accepted through December 31, 2018, for project houses in 2019. You can fill out an application for your own property or nominate a neighbor. This is a great way to help each other make the town a better place to live and for future generations.

For more information on the project or about RL4Restoration Foundation, you can join their Facebook group or feel free to contact Crystal Stanford or Erin Oleksiuk through their Facebook



CHRISTMAS DINNER

December 25, 11 am to 1 pm or until we run out

We will not take reservtions. Plates will be served on a first come, first served basis. Drive through, to go plates only. We will only give out plates to those present in the vehicle.

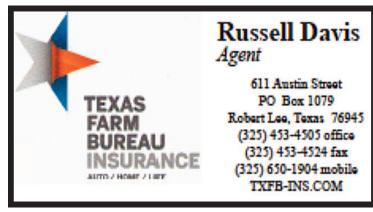
Meal to include ham, mashed potatoes, gravy, dressing, green bean casserole, and a roll.

NOEL & Co.

11200 W. St. Hwy 158, Robert Lee Approximately 6 miles west of Robert Lee on the right.

> For further information, call 453-2149 or 763-8890.

Merry Christmas from our kitchen to you!







Tommy E Neal, AAMS® Financial Advisor

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Edward **Jones**

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