

**Tax Office closed
December 14**

The Coke County Tax Office will be closed Wednesday, December 14, 2016, for Equipment replacement and training. Please make your plans accordingly.

**Vinson to present concert
at RLBC**

Don Vinson will be presenting a Christmas Concert at Robert Lee Baptist Church on Sunday, December 11, at 7 pm. All members of the community are welcome to attend.

**Kickapoo Water Board
Sets Election**

Coke County Kickapoo Water Control and Improvement District #1 will hold an election on January 10, 2017, to elect three directors.

Directors Ronnie Robbins and Mark Duncan have filed for reelection to the board.

The election will be held at Bronte City Hall.

For further information concerning the election, contact Clerk Fran Sonnenberg by 5 p.m. on Friday, December 23, 2016.

**Old Coke County Jail
has new fence**

The Old Coke County Jail now has an iron fence for the next century. The Old Jail building has undergone a restoration project to preserve it for the next 100 years. Both of these events were due to the interest of Charles and Joy Millican Blake who have close family connections to Coke County. It was Joy Blake's vision that the iron fence would define the property of the Old Jail and the Blakes have generously funded the project.

Preservation funds to restore the Old Jail building were secured with the help of Charles Blake, who in Mrs. Robert Cole Johnson's will was appointed to identify and fund from her estate historical restoration projects to be chosen by him. Mrs. Johnson and her husband moved to Brenham, Texas, from Ohio and were very close friends, as well as being next-door neighbors, of the Blakes.

Joy is the daughter of William and Jewie Brown Millican who ranched in the Edith Community. Joy's Grandfather David Frances Millican and his family arrived in Coke County in the 1890's, driving their herd of cattle from Mills County, Texas. Two other bothers of David Francis also arrived and settled in Coke County about the same time.

Charles is the son of Reverend Reuben Blake and Velma Smith Blake. For several years during the 1940's, the Reverend Blake served as Pastor of the First Baptist Church of Bronte and later, upon retirement, he and his wife returned to Bronte where they lived until their deaths. Reverend Reuben Blake's brother, Reverend Fred Blake, was also Pastor of the First Baptist Church of Robert Lee at the same time that his brother, Reuben, served as Pastor in Bronte.

Jeff McCrea, who was the contractor for the restoration project, worked with Steve Clark of Bronte to design and install the fence. Each section was hand-forged by Mr. Clark to

accommodate space for gates and to fit the contours of the Old Jail grounds. In keeping with the historical preservation, the fence will be recognized way into the future as a hand-forged, built in Coke County, piece of history.

The Old Jail and hand-forged fence will stand for the next 100 years as brick and mortar reminders of Coke County history and all the folks who served and lived here in bygone days. The area is a symbol that the world did not begin yesterday, and that local history is part of the big picture.

... Town Hall

(Continued from page 1)

Mr. Knight pointed out that the lease would provide no benefit to the citizens of Bronte and further noted that it was not a legal lease due to it not being temporary. He read the following from Texas Municipal Procurement Laws Made Easy Section 1-5.

Essentially, if the facts of the situation determine that a lease of the real property is for such an extended period that it would almost amount to a sale, the lease may be subject to the requirements for advertising the sale of real property under Chapter 272 of the Local Government Code.

He told of his experience at three previous city council meetings where the council selectively answered citizens during the public comment section, a violation of the open meetings laws.

Knight relayed a visit to his business from Bronte City Council Member Martin Lee where he felt Lee attempted to intimidate him into keeping silent on this issue.

Various citizens during the meeting expressed their displeasure with what they saw as the "good ole boy network". It



New Fence for an Old Jail! Joy Millican Blake, Phelan Wrinkle, CCHC Treasurer, and Charles Blake discuss the hand-forged iron fence outlining Old County County Jail area.

was pointed out that Martin Lee had served a total of 16 years as Mayor of Bronte and was currently a member of the city council and Gerald Sandusky served on the council previously before being elected as Mayor, an office he's now held 12 years.

One citizen in attendance spoke in support of Mayor Sandusky, Councilman Lee and Ronny Loyd. He explained that the city had made enough off the sale of the 71.90 acres that they owned the 18.369 acres free and clear. He further stated that Loyd was supposed to tear down 27 dilapidated houses in Bronte, using the wood and reclaimed materials to build a bed and breakfast on the acreage. The bed and breakfast would be owned by Loyd and used by visitors to Fort

Chadbourne. A water well was to be drilled to possibly provide Fort Chadbourne with water.

Others attending agreed Fort Chadbourne is a positive addition to Coke County, but did not feel the city's planning in this situation was good for Bronte and its citizens.

It was noted that it was a "positive" for the city not to have any money in the 18.369 acres, but if it was advertised for sale, the resulting income would be pure profit into the city's budget. Also, since the city had retained water rights on the 71.90 acres, if sold, they could also retain the water rights to the 18.369 acres.

It was also pointed out that there was no legal contract between the City of Bronte and

Ronny Loyd obligating him to tear down and remove the dilapidated houses, build a bed and breakfast or anything other than paying the \$1 per year lease.

When Mr. Knight was asked what he hoped to accomplish through this process, he replied that he wanted the contract rescinded and the mayor, secretary, and council members who voted for the lease to resign. His statement was met with applause by those in attendance.

A petition was circulated requesting a review and investigation into this matter. It was said that the Texas Ranger for this area had been contacted.

The lease is on the agenda for the city council meeting Thursday, December 8, 2016, at 8 pm.

Christmas in Olde Bronte

Saturday December 17th, 2016

4:00 pm: Live Music from Longhorn Band in the Kickapoo Creek Lodge!

4:30 pm: Story time with Mrs. Claus in the lobby of the First National Bank!

5:00 pm: Santa arrives at Kickapoo Creek Lodge!

7:00 pm: "The Polar Express" Pajama Party at the Texas Theatre! (Free Admission)

Drinks and Holiday Cheer in the Kickapoo Creek Lodge beginning at 4



www.restoringbrontefoundation.org
www.facebook.com/restoringbrontefoundation

Ho! Ho! Ho!

Next Christmas you can make the holidays more enjoyable by opening a Christmas Savings Account now. Save for next year's Christmas bills early and have peace of mind! Come see us. **You'll feel good!**



**Robert Lee
State Bank**

621 Austin Street Robert Lee, Texas

453-2545

MEMBER
FDIC



EVERYBODY IS SOMEBODY TO US!