

Vision with a Purpose holds monthly meeting

Vision with a Purpose met Thursday, February 4, with some in attendance in person at the VP headquarters and some on a conference call. Eleven members participated. Larry Carter opened with prayer.

Items discussed were Trade Days, scheduled for Saturday, May 1, if it's safe to proceed by then. This is a community-wide event with outdoor sales at various homes and businesses.

VP is also planning a Mother's Day Bake Sale to be held May 7 at the Robert Lee State Bank.

New officers for years 2021 and 2022 were elected. The following officers include

President - Beverly Hawkins, Vice President - Nancy Wilson, President Emeritus - Debbie Childers, Secretary - Sheri Millican, Treasurer - Floyd Pettitt, IT - Kelly Baker, Executive Member at Large - Larry Carter, Reporter and Sargeant at Arms, Dianne Hefner, and Parliamentarian - Jeffie Roberts.

VP will be doing ribbon cuttings for three new businesses in the near future. Watch for more information.

The next meeting will be held Thursday, March 4, and may be held at their headquarters on Austin Street in Robert Lee if conditions continue to improve. Watch for further information.



A Post-Pandemic Rural Mindset

By James M. Decker
Eventually, our country will get past the COVID-19 pandemic. Vaccines, herd immunity, and therapeutics will help us move forward with some semblance of normalcy. To be sure, certain things will never be “the same,” particularly for those who lost loved ones to this awful virus. But in the end, as we move forward, we see how our economy and society will change. That is what I want to discuss today.

“Work from home” and “remote work” have become increasingly popular concepts in recent years. But without question, the pandemic set into overdrive the idea that a worker need not have a physical office presence to work in many traditional “office” jobs. Businesses of all sizes - from the small to the Fortune 500 - have recalibrated their business models to accommodate flexible work schedules and work environments. Many companies have made this an indefinite if not outright permanent shift.

A variety of people - from rural leaders to national journalists - have observed that, in a more flexible work environment, American workers can live in more and different places than ever before. They can live in smaller cities. They can even live in rural

communities. The American worker has spent much of the post-WWII era migrating to urban centers and their suburbs for better jobs, as a matter of necessity. But what if it was no longer a necessity? What if good jobs were available and you now had the flexibility to live where you wish?

We might be reaching that place in America. As our country emerges on the other side of the pandemic, our rural community leaders need to consider how large-scale changes in our economy and society present opportunities to our communities. Our rural community leaders need to plan how to turn those opportunities into real, tangible growth.

To be clear, these opportunities are not going to just happen without any effort. We can't just hold up a sign that says “MOVE HERE” and expect people to flock to town. As I have previously written, community leaders should consider *why* people want to live here - in fact, ask yourself, why do YOU want to live here - and figure out how that translates to others. It can translate in certain ways to folks who have a connection to our community and might be looking to move back. It can also translate to others who have no pre-existing connection but are looking for a community like ours. But if you do not consider why people want to live here, it's hard to convince them that they should move here.

Once we figure out the “why,” we need to consider the “how.”

What do we need in our community to start to attract more people? Is there a desperate shortage of something that, without a remedy, you would be hard-pressed to attract new residents? It is no secret that reliable high-speed internet is a problem in many rural communities. This is the first of the “how” items that needs fixing in many communities, Stamford included. More on that is coming soon, but what else are you missing in your community? How can that be remedied?

I am a perennial believer in making lemonade out of lemons. We cannot hop in a time machine like Marty McFly and undo the pandemic, but we CAN make the best of the opportunities that are set before us. A post-pandemic world is coming. That world just might present an exciting future for rural America.

James Decker is the Mayor of Stamford, Texas and the creator of the “West of 98” website and forthcoming podcast. Contact James and subscribe to these essays at westof98.substack.com.

Scholarship opportunities available for upcoming graduates Lone Star Ag Credit

Lone Star Ag Credit will be awarding six graduating seniors a \$2,500 scholarship in 2021. In addition, the FFA chapter or 4-H club of the the scholarship winners will also receive \$500. Applicants must be graduating in the spring of 2021 and submit their application no later than March 16, 2021 (must be postmarked by this date).

(Continued on page 5)

Robert Lee Cemetery Donations and Memorials

Memorials

Bobby Hood
Clarise Peake
Karen Maddox
Tama Cole
Kire Swenor
William McCutchen
Jack and Helen Ashcraft and Family

Foy and Lawana Askins
Barbara and Jo Adkins
Yvonne Devoll
Wesley and Wanda Gibbs
James an Mary Shield
Sid and Kathy McCown
Kaye Pitcock
Tom and June Wilkes
Michael G. McWilliams
Leslie and Rob Wigley
Richard and Suzann Johnson
Dub and Kay Sparks
Shelley Emmons
Torrey Clay

Nellie Mac Ross
Barbara Adkins
Jo Adkins
Richard and Suzann Johnson
Kelly Ross Smith
Mary Ross McDonald
Roy Preston Ross II

Sue Wojtek
Jeffie and Bobby Roberts
Cheryl Devoll
Yvonne Devoll
Horton and Alvie Devoll
Yvonne Devoll
Lendy Devoll
Yvonne Devoll
Robert Mac Kirchman
Yvonne Devoll

Russell and Chanda McBroom

John and Marilyn Knight

Bill and Eva McCutchen

Yvonne Devoll

Nellie Simpson

Margaret M. Simpson

Jerry Gibbs

Yvonne Devoll

Memory of All Walker Relatives

Walker Reunion

Donations

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McCabe Ranch - Dolores Seal
Jamie Washam - Unaka



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In Observance Of
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*Valid for the month of February only