

Town Hall meeting on crime draws large crowd

A cold, rainy evening Tuesday, February 4, 2020, did not deter citizens of Bronte from attending a Town Hall meeting focused on crime within the city. Coke County Sheriff Wayne McCutchen joined Mayor Paul "Buzz" Gohman and City Council members Stormy Vaughn, Ron Cooper, Steve Hines, Lee Womack, and Jim Rodriguez in visiting with the citizens on the current problem and possible solutions.

Sheriff McCutchen provided a handout to citizens upon their arrival detailing the current law enforcement working within Coke County and the financial situation which will not provide for additional deputies. A copy of that handout is on this page. Citizens expressed their frustration and fear of

protecting their families and property from criminals. Most citizens were focused on one suspect who has been creating numerous problems. In fact, one facebook post with security camera footage regarding this man has generated over 800 shares. The Sheriff explained that although the suspect has been arrested more than once, he continues to be released awaiting the court process.

The new Bronte Neighborhood Watch program received a warm welcome and many new members at the meeting. Citizens offered to create a Citizen Patrol group to work alongside local law enforcement to deter criminals from operating in Bronte. City Council members are looking at hiring a night watchman for the city.

Friends of the RLCC meeting held

The Friends of the Robert Lee Care Center met Monday, January 27. President Della Alexander reported that a Christmas tree was purchased for the center in December. It was approved by the Executive Committee. She also reported that Mary Rodriguez had received the oven the auxiliary purchased and that she will be going to a food show soon.

The Gazebo Committee reported that the San Angelo Health Foundation had awarded the organization \$5600, the grant contract had been signed and the check deposited. They also reported that Felipe Rangel was chosen as the contractor for the project. The committee met with him on Monday, January 27. He hopes to start construction by March 1, weather permitting, and believes the project should be

complete in about 30 days.

Beth Prather reported that the Economic Development Board meets February 20. and she will be speaking with them about signage for the Care Center.

Plans were discussed for the Brown Bag Fundraiser to be held Friday, April 24 in the FUMC Family Life Center. Everybody needs to mark their calendars.

President Alexander shared a Wish List of projects and activities for the auxiliary to consider. The list was generated in a meeting with the Care Center Administrator Houston McGuire, Activity Director Mary Rodriguez and Auxiliary member Becky Ross. The members will consider the proposed ideas for future projects.

The FRLCC will meet again on Monday, February 24 at 10 am. Anyone interested in joining us is welcome to attend.



October 2019 -

December 2019 Arrests

Mitcham, Wesley, 10-4-2019, Unauthorized use of a Motor Vehicle X 3, Burglary of a Building, Engaging in Organized Criminal Activity;
 Pluff, Mandy, 10-4-2019, Unauthorized use of a Motor Vehicle X 3, Burglary of a Building, Engaging in Organized Criminal Activity;
 Weddle, Robert, 10-7-19, Unauthorized use of a Motor Vehicle X 3, Burglary of a Building;
 Service, Jay, 10-15-2019,

Terroristic Threat Interrupt Public Place;

Garcia, Sergio, 11-09-19, Driving While Intoxicated;
 Wilmot, Kevin, 11-9-19, Driving While Intoxicated;
 Guerrero, Julian, 12-5-19, Driving While Intoxicated 3rd or More;
 Leal, Alan, 12-5-19, Possession of Marijuana less than 2oz;
 Ho, Keylie, 12-2-19, Possession of Marijuana less than 2oz;
 Ayala, Arnaldo, 12-3-19, Driving While Intoxicated;
 Banks, Ashley, 12-6-19, Driving While Intoxicated;
 Johnson, John Cole, 12-10-19, Bench Warrant;
 Cochran, Jesse, 12-12-19, Local Warrant;
 Bohannon, Latisha, 12-18-19, Motion to Revoke Probation;
 Onyera, Luis, 12-20-19, Driving While License Invalid with Previous Conviction;

(Continued on next page)

Coke County Sheriff's Information Sheet

Coke County Sheriff's Office

Sheriff Wayne McCutchen
 Deputy Sparks Burdett
 Deputy Anthony Lopez
 Deputy Brandon Neal
 Deputy Damian Roberson
 The Sheriff and three of his deputies all hold Master Peace Officer Certifications, the highest certification available.

The deputies are each on 24 hour call, 5 days per week. Due to officer safety requirements, at least two deputies are always on call.

These officers perform a variety of services to the citizens of Coke County. They work wrecks, put up livestock, investigate burglaries, handle domestic disputes, assist EMS on ambulance runs, assist Child Protective Service officers, assist with traffic for funerals, parades, etc., transport prisoners for both county and district courts, act as bailiff for county court, work traffic, assist stranded motorists, check on the welfare of elderly and disabled citizens, assist firefighters, and other assorted acts. They are called upon to be grief counselors, marriage counselors, and are often requested to be the strong parental figure for young people.



Other Law Enforcement

Constable - an elected position with its own duties, responsibilities and budget
 DPS Trooper
 TPWD Officer - These officers work for state agencies with specialized areas of law enforcement and may or may not be on duty in Coke County at any given time.

Coke County covers 928 square miles containing two small cities, a portion of a third small city, two lakes, and three communities. Due to one of these lakes, there are parts of Coke County only accessible by traveling through another county.

The majority of crime in Goke County is theft - both by locals and criminals coming through on the major highway. Coming in second are incidents of domestic disturbances and family violence. Both are often the result of an underlying drug issue. Production of drugs was once a very involved, time consuming, expensive and dangerous process. That is no longer the case.

We are extremely concerned about drug use in our county. In a small community, all officers are known to the local drug users and that is what most are, users. If dealing at all, it's to subsidize their personal use. We have contacted all other agencies available for assistance and had a little success, but once again, our drug community is a pretty closed group of people who won't deal with an outsider unless they come recommended by a trusted associate.

Due to laws designed to protect citizens and therefore also protecting criminals, law enforcement hands are somewhat tied in investigations. Search warrants must show probable cause. Unfortunately in this case, probable cause is not "everyone knows they're a druggie".

Our best and most effective apprehension tactic has been and continues to be traffic stops when the suspect is transporting drugs. However, the amounts of drugs found is seldom substantial because our local users don't have that kind of money. With lesser amounts, come lesser charges which are almost always handled with plea bargains. The penalty the drug user receives is not enough to deter their illegal behavior.

In year's past, things were different. Our culture was different. The people were different. God has been removed in many areas and His absence from the public square and public school has proven to be detrimental to Bronte, Coke County, Texas and the United States.

Accountability and personal responsibility is almost gone. Earlier generations may have wanted to act badly but didn't due to the shame they would bring not only upon themselves, but also to their families. In today's society, "shame" is an ugly word said to cause damage to self esteem.

Why Not More Law Enforcement Officers in the County?

If even one more deputy is employed, labor laws would require overtime to be paid necessitating a conversion to shift work. This conversion would require several more deputies at an annual cost for salary and equipment of approximately \$75,000* each and a first year cost of well over \$100,000** each.

Many counties similar to Coke County with multiple cities have police departments within those cities. These departments focus only on crime within the city limits, freeing that county's sheriff's office to work on the crime occurring in the unincorporated areas.

* Figure includes salary, health insurance, social security, retirement, vehicle expense, radar, cell phone, and continuing education.

** Figure includes salary, health insurance, social security, retirement, vehicle expense, radar, cell phone, continuing education and the expense of a new patrol car.

What Can Citizens do to Discourage Criminals from targeting them and their property?

1. Lighting - motion sensors are best
2. Cameras - the higher the definition, the better
3. Locking vehicles, homes, businesses and other buildings
4. Do not leave valuables visible in vehicles.
5. Know your neighbors and their vehicles. Be a nosy neighbor!
6. If you see something, say something.

Call the Sheriff's Office at 325/453-2717 as soon as you see suspicious people or activity.

Response Time

The national average response time is approximately 20 minutes and Coke County times are in line with the national average. What can you as a citizen do to protect yourself and your family during the time between the 911 call and the arrival of law enforcement?

Under the 2nd Amendment, citizens have the right to keep and bear arms. If you choose to exercise this right, please get the necessary training to be both comfortable and competent when operating your firearm. Know the law and use good judgment when choosing to use your firearm. It is best to only use a firearm to protect your life or another person's life. You could face potential liability if you use a firearm to protect only property.

County	Population	Area in Square Miles	Total Tax Revenue	Median Income	Sheriff Salary	Lowest Paid Deputy	Highest Paid Deputy	Number of Deputies	Number of Police Departments	Population Living in Cities	Population Living in Country
Coke	3,306	928	\$2,071,679	\$36,724	\$40,395	\$35,921	\$37,486	4	0	2,006	1,300
Runnels	10,266	1,057	\$4,428,406	\$32,917	\$51,013	\$43,453*	\$43,453*	5	3	6,986**	3,280
Sterling	1,295	923	\$4,423,978	\$37,813	\$51,921	\$45,841	\$48,812	4	0	993	302
Nolan	14,770	914	\$9,861,917	\$32,004	\$63,731	\$57,609*	\$57,609*	9	2	11,872**	2,898
Menard	2,124	902	\$2,898,781	\$30,872	\$57,090	\$40,506*	\$40,506*	6	0	1,389	735
Glasscock	1,348	901	\$12,279,887	\$43,000	\$64,040	\$57,780	\$57,780	3	0	334	1,014
Irion	1,516	1,052	\$7,496,859	\$45,458	\$59,375	\$53,016	\$55,354	4	0	739	777

* Deputies Salaries are undivided in published county budget.

** Number noted only contains population from cities with a police department.

Population and Median Income information obtained from US Census Bureau.

Tax and Salary information obtained from published 2019-2020 county budgets.

For emergencies, call 911. Coke County Sheriff's Office 24 hour number
 325/453-2717