

The Dragon's Not Gone, Just Asleep.

By Mark Sides, RLVFD

Smoke on the wind this morning generated a lot of phone calls and questions. North winds brought smoke from fires near Amarillo as far as the Concho Valley and Permian Basin. Two fires in the Panhandle have consumed approximately 125,000 acres, and are still active.

This is just a reminder that Wildcat, Dos Amigos, and Whitehat became household names in Coke County during 2011. Wildcat, Rockhouse, Deaton-Cole, Possum Kingdom and others made national headlines.

Above average temperatures, large amounts of dry fuels, low relative humidity, and strong winds could again set the stage where a careless spark, a lightning strike, or an arcing power line become the opening number in a Texas Firestorm.

Robert Lee, Bronte and outlying communities are no different from other rural Texas towns where rangeland, pastures, and CRP may be near or immediately adjacent to homes and businesses.

These are a few simple items that will reduce the chances of your home going up in smoke:

1) Routinely clean gutters, especially in the fall. Keep your yard clean of leaves, limbs, and dead grass.

2) Remove tree limbs that extend over the eaves of the roof or within 10-15 feet of the chimney

3) Keep your grass mowed to a 4" height or less, and if possible, well watered during periods of extreme drought. Prune tree branches at least 10 feet from the ground.

4) Landscape using deciduous trees and shrubs such as oaks, agarito, eastern redbud, desert willow, and sages. Avoid junipers, pines, and other evergreens unless they are planted 100 feet or further from the house.

5) Make sure your house number and street number are clearly posted to provide firefighters easy identification.

6) Maintain at least 30 feet of open space between your home and the surrounding brush line or CRP field.

7) Avoid concentrations of shrubbery or ornamental grasses up against the house.

8) Have garden hoses

connected at all times and long enough to reach around the house.

9) Store firewood at least 15 to 30 feet away from the house.

10) Maintain roads and entrances to provide easy access and adequate turnaround space for emergency equipment.

11) Exercise extreme caution and keep a reliable, pressurized water source handy when doing any outdoor burning or welding.

12) Don't allow tall grass and debris to accumulate against your house or under your porch or deck.

These items alone may not guarantee that your home will survive, but they will give your home and responding firefighters a fighting chance.

City of Bronte to sell trust properties

The City of Bronte, in conjunction with the Texas Communities Group, LLC, will begin placing FOR SALE signs on available Trust Property within the City of Bronte in the coming days. This project is a part of the clean-up effort spearheaded by the City of Bronte and the participating entities.

Trust properties are lots and tracts of land which have been foreclosed upon to collect a tax lien due the local governmental entities, the City of Bronte, Coke County, Bronte ISD, East Coke County Hospital District and Coke County Underground Water Conservation District.

These properties were put up for auction and went unsold at the tax sale. The properties are then "struck-off" to the entities.

The placement of the signs on available property will identify the properties available for purchase. There will also be catalogs disbursed within the community.

Anyone over 18 years old can submit a bid for a property. However, a successful bidder CANNOT owe delinquent taxes on other property in the county, owe an unpaid fine or fee to the city and/or county, and/or own other property in the city/county that is subject to existing penalties for codes enforcement.

Bids may be placed online at www.texascg.com or www.brontetexas.org or you can simply go to Bronte City Hall and submit a bid, which is the price you would consider paying for the property you wish to buy. Should you meet the requirements listed above and your bid is sufficient and accepted by all entities, the property will be deeded to you upon receipt of the payment of your bid amount and fees to cover the cost of the deed and recording fees, which are minimal.

There is a saying, that one person's trash may be another person's treasure! This is certainly the case with Trust Property. If you are interested in a property, there certainly is value to you. Maybe the

property is next door and you can expand your yard or build a garage. Perhaps a property with a structure can be rehabbed into a profitable rent house. Never underestimate the power of an entrepreneurial mind! So, please notice the signs, look through the catalog, or go online and scroll through the properties.

The process to purchase these Trust Properties is relatively simple, submit the winning bid! The paperwork and recording is done for you. Returning property back to the taxpaying citizens of the community is one of the focal points of this joint effort

Walk Across Texas to kick off next month in Robert Lee

Walk Across Texas! is a 12 week program for teams of 8. Teams have a friendly competition to see who can log the most miles walking, jogging, or biking. You can even log miles by dancing, doing aerobics, or riding a stationary bike! Everyone's miles are recorded on the Texas map posted in a public place so everyone can see your progress. The team that walks the farthest "across Texas" will win, but everyone who participates will take home a healthy habit-walking for fitness! Start forming teams today!!

Join Us at our Walk Across Texas! Kick-Off event Thursday,

April 6. Here, you will sign your team up or have the chance to join a team, sit in on a 30 minute talk about goal setting, and have the chance to explore different "health booths." Doors open at 5 pm with the program starting at pm.

On May 11, we will meet for a mid-program update where teams will check-in and update everyone on their progress. There will also be a 30 minute presentation on the importance of staying hydrated during physical activity. Multiple healthy recipes will be demonstrated and be available for tasting. Doors open at 5:45 pm with the program starting at 6 pm.

The program will end June 22. At this meeting, we will "celebrate" the accomplishments we made and tally up the final count of miles that were walked! Doors open at 5:45 pm with the program starting at 6 pm

The program is free of charge and incentive items will be distributed throughout the program!

Kick-Off event, mid-program update, and Celebration Ceremony will be held at the Robert Lee Rec Hall.

For questions or more information, please contact Kandice Everitt at 325-453-2461 or by email at kandice.everitt@ag.tamu.edu.

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