

# SPECIAL OIL & GAS SECTION



## *Workover Rig Southeast of Robert Lee*

By Melinda McCutchen, Publisher

Many Coke County citizens view the oil boom potentially coming to our county with mixed emotions. We welcome the economic benefits to both tax coffers and local businesses, while yet still having significant reservations about a boom's downside.

In this special section, we'll look at both the pros and cons of what is already happening and what may be coming. We'll also look at what may lie underneath Coke County and how developers plan to extract it. We'll discuss how this may affect the future of Coke County, Texas and the United States.

However before we begin this exploration, let me apologize in advance. First, I want to apologize because my talents lie in the written word and marketing ... and most definitely not in anything which could be considered a science.

Second, I now know that dealing with people in the energy industry must be similar to interviewing CIA agents. In fact, the CIA agents might be more forthcoming. This may not always be the case, but industry officials are being extremely guarded in releasing any information of what they're finding in their exploration of the "Cline". If they did say something, it was almost immediately followed by "Please, don't quote me".

I sincerely hope readers will find the information contained in this section interesting and that it will assist them as we all face this new era in Coke County.

After all the research and interviews, I have drawn a couple of conclusions in which several "oil" folks agree.

The Cline exploration and production will affect the west side of Coke County most. The east side is probably limited to re-entry of fields first discovered in the 1950's - 1990s. Some producers are hitting it big by using new technology, perforating different zones or going deeper in wells previously

thought tapped out, deemed unrecoverable or just too expensive to mess with. The field just west of Bronte is a perfect example as daily production has jumped to over 600 barrels per day.

*[Editor's Note: One man I interviewed related how at first it was believed the Eagle Ford shale in south Texas was 7 miles wide and only 100 miles long. It is now known to be approximately 100 miles wide and the length is undetermined because of it stretching down into Mexico.]*

Another conclusion deals with the lack of a precious resource in which our county is more than familiar - water. The oil industry has to have water to drill. The fracking process requires even more. One local energy industry employee urged me to encourage our elected officials in both Bronte and Robert Lee to contract for all the wells they can, because "if they don't, the oil companies will snap them up before they know it."

After speaking with both city and county officials, I learned the following.

- Sales tax revenues have already increased from previous years and show continued growth.
- Tax rolls are increasing. Oil industry companies may already be the largest taxpayers in the county.
- Population has increased, but not by much. Water could be an issue for both communities.
- Both communities are in a good position to serve as bedroom communities for families moving into the region because of the oil and gas activity.

I had originally planned to include an article on what landowners need to know before signing a lease for their property. Following extensive research, I have concluded that landowners unfamiliar with leasing agreements consult a professional in that field before signing on the dotted line.

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