



Special Olympics! *Special Olympics was held at Bronte ISD Saturday, March 1, 2014. Nathan Robinson is joined by Coke County Sheriff's Deputy Trey Davis as he carries the torch.*

Letter to the Editor

Dear Editor and Coke County Tax Payers:

I continue to scratch my head when the citizens of Coke County "wring" their hands and publicly criticize the County Commissioners for the lack of tax dollars to ensure the county's financial security and stability – with the most recent discussion about the Coke County Sheriff's Department.

Hundreds of thousands of County tax dollars are collected for the **TWO** nursing homes in the County: the **East Coke County Hospital District** (dba Bronte Health and Rehabilitation Center) and the **West Coke County Hospital District** (dba Robert Lee Care Center). For those who are not aware, Counties in the State of Texas are responsible to provide Indigent Care for their residents. These Hospital Districts were originally formed to satisfy the County's responsibility to care for indigents living in the area, while provide nursing home care for the elderly. **TO BE CLEAR, THERE IS NOT A STATE MANDATE THAT REQUIRES A COUNTY TO CARE FOR THE COUNTY'S ELDERLY – ONLY TO PROVIDE MEDICAL CARE FOR COUNTY INDIGENTS. ALSO, THESE TWO FACILITIES RECEIVE INSURANCE, MEDICARE, MEDICAID AND PRIVATE PAY FUNDS THAT ACCOUNT FOR THE MAJORITY OF THEIR INCOME, WITH COUNTY TAX DOLLARS, FOR THE MOST PART, SUBSIDIZING THEIR EXPENSES.** If you look at the last decade of financial statements for these Hospital Districts, you will see that there have been VERY, VERY limited

tax dollars allocated to indigent care – instead, our tax dollars are used to almost entirely subsidize the operating costs of the Bronte and Robert Lee care facilities, which of course includes patients that are not residents of Coke county.

If Coke County were to assume responsibility to care for the County Indigents with County taxes (approx. \$2,000 annually) instead of through **TWO Hospital Districts**, there could be the potential for **DOUBLE** the amount of tax dollars available for Coke County (approx.. \$800,000 annually), without an increase in the total tax rate to residents (residents would only pay County taxes and have no Hospital District taxes). Indigent expense at approximately \$2,000 annually could be added to the County's operating budget. These two nursing homes create a very complex, expensive AND emotional issue for Coke County residents – but if the county would exercise sound, fiscal responsibility by budgeting for Indigent Care rather than allowing our County Tax dollars to be collected to subsidize **TWO Hospital Districts**, there would be almost a **MILLION DOLLARS** more annually to provide the services that are **ESSENTIAL** to the County.

You want more money to provide County services, either vote to close these Hospital Districts and transition both facilities to private, for-profit organizations, providing State mandated indigent care though the County's budget process, OR, at the very least, consolidate these two facility into **ONE HOSPITAL DISTRICT**, lessening the tax burden to taxpayers for Indigent care while paving the way for additional tax

dollars to be used for County services. The "Status Quo" is crippling our County.

Tom Peters

Five Blackwell students qualify to state FCCLA

On Monday, February 17, 2014, Blackwell FCCLA members competed at the Region II FCCLA Leadership Meeting. The results are below.

FCS Assessments

Abbi Sorrells - (advances to state) Gold

Hailey Bennett - Silver

Chaun Weeks - Silver

Carli Powers - Silver

Charlie Cano - Bronze

Orrin Sirmons - Bronze

Crystal Chavez - Bronze

Jaina Robison - Bronze

Elizabeth Meyer - Bronze

Krista Clower - Bronze

Devin Rasco - Participation

Cade McKee - Participation

STAR Events

Shelby Panzer - 1st place (advances to state) - Food Innovations Jr.

Cambrey Coulter - advanced to state - Entrepreneurship Jr.

Tori Scott - advanced to state - Career Investigation Jr.

April Cole - advanced to state - Teach and Train Sr.

The State FCCLA Leadership Meeting will be held in Corpus Christi on April 9-12, 2014.

... Election Results

(Continued from Page 1)

Coke County agreed with the rest of Texas in the US Senator and Texas Governor races in the Republican Primary. John Cornyn is once again the Republican nominee for US Senator and Greg Abbott is the Republican nominee for Governor. Cornyn's Democrat opponent in November's election is yet to be determined, but Abbott will face Wendy Davis in the General Election.

Incumbent Mike Conaway was a big winner over Wade Brown in the US Representative race in District 11. He does not have a Democrat opponent in the General Election.

Drew Darby, State Representative for District 72, drew the vast majority of votes over Shannon Thomason to retain his seat. He also does not have a Democrat opponent in November.

51st Judicial District Judge Barbara Walther was on the Republican Primary ballot vying for Judge, Court of Criminal Appeals Place 3. She lost this race to Bert Richardson.

On the state level, it looks like there will be run-off elections for both political parties for a number of offices. These nominees will be determined in Primary Run-off Elections on May 27, 2014.

Election dates for the Primary Run-off Elections are listed below.

- Friday, March 28, 2014, is the first day to apply for a ballot by mail.
- Monday, April 28, 2014, is the last day to register to vote.
- Monday, May 19, 2014, is the first day of early voting.
- Friday, May 23, 2014, is the last day of early voting.

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