

March 4-H meetings cancelled

There will be no 4-H meetings in Bronte or Robert Lee during the month of March. The agent will be gone during the Robert Lee 4-H meetings to attend the Houston stock show. Bronte 4-H meetings will not be held due to Spring Break. All 4-H meetings will resume in the month of April. If you have any concerns please contact the county extension office.

U.S. agriculture exports reach record high

Despite encountering historic natural disasters, including the epic Texas drought, American agriculture posted a record high \$136.3 billion in exports last year, according to the U.S. Department of Agriculture (USDA).

"Last year, farmers and ranchers battled a ton of obstacles, especially here in Texas. Even with those challenges, American agriculture remains a bright spot in an otherwise bleak economy," said John Ross Copeland, president of Coke-Sterling County Farm Bureau.

Strong exports, coupled with domestic demand, have strengthened the agriculture sector and boosted American jobs. The USDA estimates that every \$1 billion in exports produces 8,400 American jobs. Based on this statistic, American agriculture exports supported more than one million American jobs last year.

In 2011, agriculture exports in nearly every commodity category increased, including grains, cotton, dairy and pork. U.S. beef exports also reached an all-time high with \$5.4 billion in beef and beef product sales.

"Record agriculture exports reflect the confidence other countries have in

our products and the strong demand for quality, American-grown food and fiber," John Ross Copeland said. "That's something our farmers and ranchers-and all Americans-can be proud of."

Artist to speak at WTRC benefit

Internationally acclaimed artist Luis Sottit will deliver an "Art Talk" Saturday, March 24, at historic Fort Concho during the 13th annual Stribling Art Extravaganza benefiting West Texas Rehabilitation Center.

Sottit's presentation will offer a personal glimpse into his development as an artist, his motivation to share his creative passion with young people as well as his "Naturalismo" painting technique he uses today by blending gold leaf and natural pigments in layers to attain greater luminosity.

Sottit will speak at 2 p.m. in the Living History Stables classroom. Seating space is limited, interested attendees are urged to call 325-223-6414 as soon as possible.

San Angelo is a focal point of Sottit's journey as he lived here in the late 1980's and had his very first art show at the Calla Lily gallery. Today his works are included in more than 2,000 private and corporate collections worldwide. He is represented in more than 20 galleries, including one of his own at Walt Disney World in Orlando, Florida.

This year's Stribling Extravaganza will feature approximately 280 works by 165 local and area artists. Mediums include oils, acrylics, watercolors, bronzes, metal, ceramics, wood and stone and all may be viewed at the Fort Concho's Commissary and Quartermaster buildings.

Ben and Beverly Stribling are underwriting the show and sale which showcases the talents of current and former residents of San Angelo and

the Concho Valley. Additional funding for Extravaganza activities also is provided by Travis and Kam Stribling.

Hours for the free, public show are 10 a.m. to 7 p.m. March 23 and 24 and noon to 4 p.m. March 25. Additionally, the young artists' display, sponsored by Jud Gray, may be viewed at the Living History Stables. This unique exhibit features the works of local and area high school students and affords them an opportunity to experience public recognition of their talents.

Also, at 10:30 a.m. Saturday, March 24, guitar virtuoso Paul Finley will per-

form selections from his extensive repertoire in the Commissary while devotees view the weekend show. An Austin resident, he is appearing in San Angelo as a guest musician for the Cultural Affairs Council.

Since 1953, West Texas Rehab Center's mission has been to improve the quality of life for children and adults with disabilities, regardless of their financial circumstances. A private, non-profit organization, WTRC has outpatient rehabilitation facilities in Abilene, San Angelo and Ozona.

More information is available about the art show or WTRC services by calling

325-223-6300 or by visiting the Center's website at WestTexasRehab.org.

Organization offers free trees

The Arbor Day Foundation is making it easier for everyone to celebrate the arrival of spring through planting trees.

Join the Arbor Day Foundation in March 2012 and receive 10 free white flowering dogwood trees.

"White flowering dogwoods will add year-round beauty to your home and neighborhood," said John Rosenow, chief executive and founder of the Arbor

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