Heartworker! *Clark Tinkler is February's Heartworker of the Month for Robert Lee's Vision with a Purpose. Debbie Childers made the presentation at a recent meeting of the organization. Photo courtesy of Leta Caston.*

New Librarian! *Claire Giudici is the new librarian at Coke County Library in Robert Lee. Make sure to stop in, check out book and say hello to Claire. The library is open Tuesday morning, Wednesday morning and afternoon and Thursday afternoon. Photo courtesy of Leta Caston.*

… Water

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gravel roofs are not "appropriate" for catchment systems meant for human consumption. This does not mean the water cannot be used for irrigation purposes, such as watering lawns and gardens. The smoother the surface is the better for catchment purposes. Metal roofs are ideal for these systems. Slate is also a good, though expensive, choice. Clay and concrete tile roofs will work for a rainwater system, but experts advise a 10% loss due to texture, inefficient flow and evaporation. Homeowners must find the square footage of all roof area intended to contribute to the system.

Gutters

Many homes have gutters. Many older gutters had lead in the gutter solder and water could be contaminated. New gutter prices are determined by the size, pitch and design of the roof and also by the type of gutter chosen and number of downspouts. According to TWDB, the most common materials for gutters and downspouts are half-round PVC, vinyl, pipe, seamless aluminum, and galvanized steel.

Instead of the normal downspouts, first-flush diverters (cleanout pipes made of PVC) route the first flow of water from a rain away from the storage tank, carrying with it leaves and debris which may have been collected on the roof or in the gutters. PVC pipes at the end of the gutter system nearest to the collection tank will provide a way for the rain to travel to the storage system.

Storage

Homeowners will usually find the storage tank(s) to be the most expensive part of the project. A number of factors need to be considered when deciding the capacity of storage. These include annual precipitation, amount of water used by household, size of catchment area, and personal preference choices such as budget and appearance.

TCEQ's formula has .5 gallon of water being caught for every square foot of roof area per inch of rain. For example under this formula, a 2500 sq. ft. catch area will provide 1250 gallons of water for a 1"rain.

TWDB maintains that collection systems will only collect 85% of the rainfall. However, this formula uses .62 for every inch of rain. Using their formula, a 2500 sq. ft. catch area will provide 1317.5 gallons of water per 1" rain.

There are a number of materials used to make these tanks. They include fiberglass, polypropylene, wood, metal, concrete and ferrocement. Metal and wood tanks will have a plastic liner.

All water storage tanks must be opaque to inhibit algae growth; must have never been used to house toxic substances; and must be impenetrable to mosquitos.

Tanks must have a proper pad to avoid damage when full. Concrete is acceptable, but not always necessary. A solid packed ground covered by a pad of sand, chat or pea gravel may be sufficient.

Pumps and Pressure Tanks

A pump and pressure tank are the normal means for getting the water from the tank and into the house with sufficient pressure. Standard municipal water pressure ranges from 40-60 psi (pounds per square inch). The pump and pressure tank will maintain the same standard for the homeowner. There is also a new on-demand pump which combines all the functions of a pump and pressure tank into one device. Some of these new pumps are specifically designed to be used with these rainwater systems.

Treatment

If the system is to be used for human consumption, filters and UV lights are necessary to remove sediments and disinfect the water. According to TWDB, the most popular disinfection system in Texas includes two in-line sediment filters followed by ultraviolet light. This system is places after the pressure tank or on-demand pump. Others in Texas have chosen to disinfect their water with ozone, reverse osmosis or chlorination.

Throughout the coming weeks, we'll take a closer look at all of these components of a rainwater catch system – the choices, the costs, and the benefits.

CCRTA meeting detailed

The Coke County Retired Teachers Association met at the First Baptist Church in Bronte on Monday, March 21, for a potluck meal and meeting.

Health Care Chairman Brenda Hines presented ways to overcome barriers to exercising. Paul Gothard reported that TRTA meeting were being held in Austin concerning pensions, health care, and social security issues.

A March 30 meeting will be held in Austin and members who might be interested were urged to contact President Merle Kelso.

Also, it was reported that veterans will be honored at the next TRTA convention in Austin and veterans were asked to provide information for the meeting.

Officers for the coming year were announced: President, Merle Kelso; First Vice President, Janet Wommack; Second Vice president, Beth Prather; Treasurer, Charlotte Jackson; Secretary, Cristie Bagwell. Committee chairmen from last year will stay in place.

Members attending were William Hood, Cristie Bagwell, Wanda Brewer, Kay and Paul Gothard, Brenda Hines, Ann Hamilton, Merle Kelso, Mary Lawhon, Kathy McCown, Beth Prather, Gerald Sandusky, and Jerita Taylor.

All retired school personnel are invited and encouraged to join TRTA. Active membership in TRTA is a show of support for issues pertaining to retirement.