

Local Farm Bureau leaders work on national issues in Washington, D.C.

Leaders of the Coke County Farm Bureau traveled to the nation's capital April 11-14 to discuss issues of importance to Texas agriculture. It was part of the National Affairs Awards Trip organized by the Texas Farm Bureau.

Local Farm Bureau officials earned the trip by meeting contact and communications goals with elected officials. The farmers and ranchers met with U.S. Sen. John Cornyn, members of U.S. Sen. Ted Cruz's staff and with other members of the Texas congressional delegation and their staff.

"We focused on three primary issues," said John Ross Copeland of Coke County Farm Bureau. "International trade, preventing cuts to crop insurance and the biotechnology labeling bill were discussed."

Though the Trans-Pacific Partnership (TPP) will not likely be considered by Congress in this election year, it's still important to farmers.

"The TPP is going to lock up 40 percent of the world's trade," John Ross said. "We can't leave that on the table. It would be leaving the trade market in that part of the world to the Chinese."

John Ross said the Farm Bureau hopes to avoid further cuts to crop insurance to protect the already weakened food security safety net in America. Labeling of biotech or GMO crops is also of concern. John Ross said the Farm Bureau favors voluntary labeling.

"We are told all the time that farmers and ranchers have to tell our own story to our elected officials," John Ross said. "That's what our trip to Washington, D.C. was all about."

One hundred sixty-five Farm Bureau leaders from 70 counties traveled to Washington, D.C. to work with their elected officials as part of the National Affairs Awards Trip.

Fort Chadbourne Foundation awarded Friend of Conservation

By Erin Oleksiuk, District Technician Coke County SWCD

On May 3, 2016, the Fort Chadbourne Foundation was awarded First Place at the Area II awards banquet in Wall, Texas. Garland and Lana Richards are the owners of the Chadbourne Ranch and were accompanied by Ann Pate, Director and Researcher and Brent Bryan, Ground and Maintenance Supervisor.

Garland and Lana Richards started the Fort Chadbourne Foundation in 1999 to preserve and restore the fort's rich history. Since then the Richards, along with many others, have spent countless hours working on the Chadbourne Ranch. They have restored many of the buildings including the Officers Quarters or Fountain House, the Butterfield Stage Station, and the Enlisted Men's Barracks. One building that was not restored was the Hospital, but there has been archeological studies to provide information on the building and life on the fort. Over 500,000 artifacts have been recovered from digs, many of which are now on display for all visitors to the fort to see.

The fort first opened its doors to the Coke County Soil and Water Conservation District in 2007, when they hosted the annual meeting of the West Texas Association of SWCD's. In 2010, the fort welcomed Coke County students to enjoy their SWCD Field Day learning about history and conservation. Since then, every other year Fort Chadbourne invites students to "ride on in" for a fun filled day of activities. The fort has extended an invitation to area schools for the past 15 years to step back in time with hands on learning during their Living History event.

Coke County SWCD is proud to honor the Fort Chadbourne Foundation for all their hard work in conserving the fort and bringing history alive to adults and children alike. Thank you,



Fort Chadbourne Honored! Garland and Lana Richards (center) are shown with Ann Pate, Director and Researcher, and Brent Bryan, Grounds and Maintenance Supervisor, at the Texas Area II Soil and Water Conservation awards banquet held in Wall, Texas.

Garland, Lana, Ann, and Brent! We look forward to working with them in the years to come and encourage everyone to pay them a visit.

Commissioners Court minutes posted

The Coke County Commissioners Court met in regular session April 12, 2016 at the courthouse in Robert Lee. Members of the court present included County Judge, Roy Blair, Commissioner, Pct. #1 Troy Montgomery, Commissioner Pct, #2 Paul

Williams, Commissioner, Pct. #3 Gaylon Pitcock, Commissioner, and Pct. #4 Joe Sefcik. Deputy Clerk Martha Ratliff was also in attendance.

The meeting opened with prayer given by Judge Blair and pledge to the flag was recited.

Judge Blair announced the presence of a quorum.

Comm. Williams made a motion to approve the minutes for March 22, 2016, as presented. The motion was seconded by Comm. Sefcik. Motion carried. Commissioner Montgomery made a motion to


approve the minutes for March 24, 2016 as presented. The motion was seconded by Commissioner Pitcock. Motion carried. Commissioner Williams sustained.

The Treasurer's Report was presented by Treasurer Hal Spain. Commissioner

Montgomery made a motion to accept the Treasurer's Report as presented. The motion was seconded by Commissioner Williams. Motion carried.

County agent Morgan Runyan presented her extension report


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