

VP's headquarters. A meal will also be served. Vision with a Purpose is in need of members, old and new. If you're interested in helping our community, please join. They would love to welcome you.

Prior to the VP meeting, the Small Town Christmas committee held a 3:30 pm meeting to discuss the upcoming event to be held Saturday, December 3. Santa will arrive by fire truck to pass out gifts to the children. Snacks will be offered. Letters to Santa and decorating ornaments will be some of the activities. Memorial Park Christmas lights will be turned on at dark.

Again VP is asking the community's help with this huge undertaking. Contact any member or come to the next meeting on Thursday, August 4.



Local Independence

By James M. Decker

What does it take to actually revitalize a rural community?

This is obviously a question that I have wrestled with for quite some time. "Attract more people" is the easy answer, right? In a way, yes, but that answer is both incomplete and insufficient. People don't move to a new place in droves without a reason, usually an economic one. It is one challenge to get them to move there. It is an entirely different challenge to get them to stay. There is a trail of wreckage across the American West of boomtowns that failed to present a lasting reason for the population to stay and then quickly turned to ghost towns, usually worse off than they were before the people came.

There's another factor as well. If a community explodes in size but the growth changes its very essence, it wasn't truly revitalized. It was replaced by something different altogether. Countless suburbs across America have faced this very phenomenon. After years of

sprawl and growth, they retain only a shred of their original character.

A few days ago, someone asked me to sum up my vision for Stamford in a single sentence. Setting aside my wife's reasonable concern that I could do it in a single sentence, I arrived at the following:

"To restore Stamford's ability to thrive independent of outside forces and provide opportunity for all its citizens."

Substitute Stamford for your community's name and I think this is a reasonable vision for most rural communities. There are two key components of this vision.

The latter component is providing opportunity for all citizens. They say that a rising tide lifts all boats and it often does. But a rising tide can also drown some of the boaters. Across the American West, many communities are booming but the cost of living and housing is soaring too. It has made those communities unaffordable for the blue collar and service workers that keep the communities operable. Justin Farrell's 2020 book "Billionaire Wilderness" is a great read on this conundrum that often accompanies growth.

The other component is the title of this essay: independence. In 1831, Alexis de Tocqueville toured America and studied its political system, writing the classic "Democracy in America" as a result. He observed that local town meetings were the quintessential spirit of American liberty. In those settings, people learned how to use and enjoy this notion of liberty that was such a radical idea to the political order at the time. 1830s America was far from perfect, don't misunderstand Tocqueville or myself. Government at all levels was mostly confined to landowning white men. The rest of the citizenry was excluded.

The underlying notion remains critical, however. At the local level, people understand their individual needs and circumstances. People in one small town use the tools of democracy and liberty to make decisions for themselves based on their needs and circumstances. As a result, those decisions may be very different than decisions in a similar small town in another part of the country. If each makes wise

decisions based on their individual situations, then both communities may well flourish and prosper.

This concept is economic as well as political and the idea of local economic independence may be even more important. If a local economy serves its people, the economy is oriented around the needs of those people. The people provide jobs to one another and sell goods and services to each other and the wider world. If the people's needs change, they adjust the local economy accordingly.

If you want to know why rural economies and populations have cratered in the last half century, here's your answer. New technology and other changes in the world ushered in an era in which local economies ceased to serve local people. As a result, the prosperity of the local people no longer mattered.

This is no Luddite call to dispense with technology and bring back the mythical "good old days." In fact, it's much the opposite. But rural communities cannot thrive independently again without local economies serving their people.

James Decker is the Mayor of Stamford, Texas and the creator of the West of 98 website and podcast. Contact James and subscribe to these essays at westof98.substack.com and subscribe to West of 98 wherever podcasts are found.



June 2022

The Coke County Sheriff's Office answered 335 calls for the month of June 2022.

- Burglary of Vehicle - 1
- Burglary of Habitation - 1
- Accident Reports - 5
- Criminal Mischief - 1
- Criminal Trespass - 1
- Sexual Abuse of a Child - 1

- Theft - 1
- Unauthorized Use Motor Vehicle - 1
- Warrant Service - 1
- Public Service (includes funerals, court, motorist assist, alarm calls, etc) - 239
- MHMR Interactions - 1
- Civil Process - 0
- Prisoner Transport (including arrest and to and from court) - 4
- Warrants Served - 1
- Livestock Calls - 17
- Accidents - 5
- Blue Forms Issued - 1
- Accident Assist - 2
- Traffic Stops - 50
- Traffic Stops Resulting in Citations - 2
- Total inmates in jail as of Monday, July 11, 2022: Male - 1

'Deep in the Heart' celebrates Texas wildlife

By Jessica Domel
TFB Multimedia Reporter

From the mysterious blind catfish to endangered ocelots and the elusive mountain lion, the new film *Deep in the Heart* celebrates the wildlife and landscapes that help make Texas unique.

The family-friendly film, directed by Texan Ben Masters, is in theaters now.

"*Deep in the Heart* is a three-year film that myself and my team made that's similar in style to *Planet Earth* but based entirely in Texas. Instead of David Attenborough and his British voice telling you about the lions

killing the wildebeest in East Africa, we've got Matthew McConaughey telling you about Bracken Cave, ocelots and all these really amazing wildlife species that we have in our state," Masters told the Texas Farm Bureau Radio Network.

Deep in the Heart, Texas' first wildlife film, gives audiences an opportunity to observe animals and behaviors not often seen.

"It's a love letter to Texas in a sense, and it's just this visual journey across the state, seeing these different animals doing their thing in these really cool habitats," Masters said.

(Continued on next page)

**ANNOUNCING
NEW MEDICAL
PROVIDER**

**Sterling County
Family Clinic**

**304 4th Street
Sterling City, TX
76951
325.378.2100**

SCFC IS UNDER NEW
MANAGEMENT, COMMUNITIES
OF TEXAS HEALTHCARE, LLP

Effective August 15, 2022

Hours of Operation:

**Sterling County Family Clinic
announces the addition
of Donna Paul, APRN, FNP-C**

**Monday through
Friday**

**In addition, Patricia Gailon Huseman, ARPN,
FNP-C will continue as a part time provider.**

8:00 am to 5:00 pm

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appointment. Same day
appointments available.**

**Closed on major
holidays.**

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