

THE OBSERVER/ENTERPRISE

Serving Coke County



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Friday, July 28, 2017

Central Baptist Bible Camp set for July 29

Central Baptist Church in Bronte is holding a one day Bible Camp from 9 am to 2 pm Saturday, July 29, 2017. The church is located at 324 S. Franklin in Bronte.

Children attending will enjoy a camping experience while learning about "God's Survival Kit".

For more information or to RSVP, call (325) 473-4811 or text (325) 650-1212.

Red Hat Society to meet August 3

The Red Hat Society will meet Thursday, August 3, 2017, at 11 am at Beefmaster Steakhouse, located at 1608 N. Broadway in Ballinger. Get your red hat and meet the ladies there. This is a group who likes to eat and have fun!

VP meeting set for August 3

A Vision with a Purpose meeting will be held Thursday, August 3, at 6:30 pm at the

Family Life Center of the First United Methodist Church in Robert Lee. A free meal will be served and free babysitting will be available.

Farm Bureau annual convention/dinner slated for August 10

The Coke-Sterling County Farm Bureau Member Appreciation Dinner and Annual County Convention will be held Thursday, August 10, 2017, at the Robert Lee Recreation Hall. The evening's activities begins with a steak dinner at 6 pm.

Door Prizes will be awarded to some lucky members.

Bronte Lions preparing annual program

The Bronte Evening Lions Club is gearing up for this year's Longhorn football season by beginning preparations for the 2017 football program.

If you would like to be a part of this program, available at each home football game, please contact a member of the Lions Club or call Lions Club President Reese Braswell.

Letter to the Editor

Editor:

If you are tired of your property taxes constantly going up, then this message is for you. In the special called session of the Texas Legislature, we finally have a chance to fix at least part of the problem.

First, some background information. In the Texas Constitution, the County Tax Assessor-Collector was an elected position, so that he would be held accountable to the voters. But in the 1980's, SB 621 was introduced into the Texas Legislature. The bill itself was not so bad; it was designed to consolidate all the separate taxing entities- school, hospital, etc.- into one central appraisal entity. The problem came with the way it was implemented. It allowed an appointed state board to dictate to the counties how they had to set their appraisal values. The state board then took it upon themselves to demand that all the counties re-appraise all their properties. At the time I was president of our Farm Bureau, and another member approached me with some concerns about possible results. So we did some research on the subject, went to Austin where we met with the Farm Bureau attorney, and went to work fighting it. In an open meeting, I asked the appointed head of the state property tax board three times where in the law it gave him the authority to tell every county that all their property had to be re-appraised. His sole excuse was that it didn't specifically say that in the law; he just thought it needed to be done. We lost the battle to amend SB 621, and of course everyone's values and taxes went up. Once a bureaucracy is created, it is impossible to dismantle, because bureaucrats are hired or appointed rather than elected, they do not have to answer to the voters, and

their main function is to see that their positions are perpetuated, so they make their rules and claim "it's the law."

For years the Tax Assessor-Collector position consisted of two people in one office. Now the Assessor (appraiser) - Collectors are at least six people in two offices, complete with computers and technology they were told they had to upgrade to match the bigger counties so they could be more "efficient." The Appraiser is hired by a board whose members are appointed. That makes the position twice removed from the voters. Not only that, they all have to go to Austin to be "certified" as qualified to do their job and educated on how to "legally" take money from the public. On top of that, the State Property Tax Board visits the County Appraiser regularly and tells her that she has to raise their appraisal values to match the other counties, or they will revoke her license and thus cause her to lose her job. Either that, or money will be taken away from the school district. (If we did that, it would be considered blackmail; how can the bureaucrats get away with it?)

The Tax Assessor-Collector's office claims that they don't raise the tax rate. But when the appraised value of your property goes up, and the inflation rate is factored in, your taxes will naturally go up. So we now have what our Founding Fathers objected to: taxation without representation. The only thing you can do about it is to file a protest and appear before the Appraisal Review Board, which is basically a waste of time. In some counties, the board members either are employed by some branch of the government or they draw government retirement, so naturally since they are feeding

from the public trough they won't be inclined to lower the tax rates. All they do is look at the information you bring and decide that they can't change the appraisal value because "it's the law."

What needs to happen is this: we need to do away with the State Property Tax Board and get the control of the tax appraisals back into the electorate so the voters will once again have some say in what happens. Mineral appraisal values need to be set based on what was actually produced in the previous year, with allowance made for depletion, not based on some big city firm's formula for what they think is under the ground. (If a well is plugged, it ceases to have any appraisal value.) Ag values need to be set based on what farmers and ranchers in our area can actually produce, instead of on what someone in Austin thinks. The special session of the Texas Legislature is supposed to address the property tax code. Please contact your State Representative, your State Senator, and Governor Abbott, and ask them to stand with us and get the runaway tax appraisals out of the hands of appointed bureaucrats and back into the hands of the citizens.

Governor Greg Abbott
P.O. Box 12428
Austin, TX 78711

State Representative Drew Darby
P.O. Box 2910
Austin, TX 78768

State Senator Charles Perry
P.O. Box 12068
Austin, TX 78711

Please do not miss this opportunity to let our voices be heard.

James B. Pentecost
4001 N. State Hwy. 208
Robert Lee, TX 76945

WEEK AT A GLANCE

Friday, July 28

RLBC Vacation Bible School Pool Party,
5:30 pm - 8:30 pm, Robert Lee Pool

Saturday, July 29

Bible Camp, 9 am - 2 pm,
Central Baptist Church, Bronte

Monday, July 31

Alcoholics Anonymous Meeting, 6 pm,
First Baptist Church, Bronte

Water Aerobics, 6:30 pm,
Bronte Pool

Thursday, August 3

Red Hat Society Meeting, 11 am,
Beefmaster Steakhouse, Ballinger

Vision with a Purpose Meeting, 6:30 pm, Family Life Center
at First United Methodist Church, Robert Lee

Water Aerobics, 6:30 pm,
Bronte Pool

Friday, August 4

High School Volleyball Scrimmage,
Bronte vs. Bangs at Bangs

"Sons of Pitches" Midnight Madness Co-Ed Softball Tournament,
Robert Lee Softball Fields

Saturday, August 5

High School Volleyball Scrimmage, 11 am,
Bronte vs. Jim Ned at Jim Ned

"Sons of Pitches" Midnight Madness Co-Ed Softball Tournament,
Robert Lee Softball Fields

Provided
By



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Public Profiles Inside!

As people move to Coke County, it's sometimes difficult to determine where to go and who to talk to at the local government offices. Each week, *The Observer/Enterprise* will highlight one or more of these offices. These highlights will include the services performed at that office and an introduction to the people who make that office work.