

and dry goods stores, but at least we are not bereft of options entirely.

What changed? Why were there so many local businesses then and so few today? Look at the example of New Castle: it has grown in population but the local retail economy has utterly collapsed. I have written about the decline of the rural economy and its connection to the mechanization of agriculture (you can read that on my website in an essay titled "Five Rural Priorities: Economic Development").

If we want to pull our local communities out of the death spiral that rural America has experienced for over a half century, we need to talk more about how and why our rural economies have declined. A long line of leaders from both political parties have contributed. The results have been catastrophic, but we need not remain victims of those decisions.

It is up to us to chart a new course for our local communities.

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.

Death Notice

Boyd

Charles Easton Boyd went to be with our Lord and Savior peacefully surrounded by family at the age of 88 on July 9, 2022, at his home in Shep, Texas.

A graveside service was held Friday, July 22, 10 am at the Shep Cemetery in Shep, Texas.

Charles is survived by his beloved wife of 66 years, Melba Ballard of Shep, Texas; sons, David Boyd and his wife, Tina of Shep, Texas; Royce Boyd and his wife, Melody of Shep, Texas; grandchildren, Brandon Boyd and Michelle of Natalia, Texas; Jennifer and Angel Solis of Shep, Texas; Mindy and Chad Mahon of San Angelo, Texas; Chris Boyd of Blackwell, Texas; 12 great-grandchildren; daughter-in-law, Millie, and David Smith; brothers, Ernest, Mack, and Don and their families.

Farmer

Charlotte Rebecca Sharp Farmer of San Angelo, Texas passed away peacefully in her home with her faithful four-legged companion, Sunny, by her side on Sunday July 17, 2021.

Charlotte is survived by her brother, William Boulden and wife Sandra of Artesia, New Mexico; her sister, Loretta Hicks of San Angelo, Texas; her son, Don Sharp of Robert Lee Texas; her daughter, Becky Dyches and husband Jay of San Angelo; her grandchildren, Kayla Matthews and husband Mickey of San Angelo, Ashley Dyches of McKinney, Texas, Coby Dyches and wife Krysten of San Angelo, Texas, Starzy Lee and husband Rashad of Katy, Texas, Jonathan Brits and husband Ruan of Fairfax, Virginia, Aaron Sharp and wife Janelle of San Angelo, Texas; nephews, Craig Boulden of Artesia, New Mexico, Chad Boulden and wife Kelly of

Weatherford, Texas, Kyle Hicks of Dallas, Texas and Brad Hicks of San Angelo, Texas. She is also survived by 14 great-grandchildren and numerous great nieces and nephews.

Services were held at Harper Funeral Home on Saturday, July 23, at 1 pm. There was a family visitation at Harper Funeral Home on Friday, July 22, from 5 pm to 7 pm. Services were officiated by Pastor Mack Roller and Scott Cotton.

Notes from...



Three Tips to Pick Out a Sweet Watermelon

A good watermelon is a staple, healthy summer snack, so it is important to know how to pick one, regardless of if you are at the grocery store or the local farmer's market.

Watermelon is sweet, juicy and refreshing-but its also good for your body. This sweet treat deserves a spot in your kitchen not just during the summer months, but also all year long. Watermelons provide hydration, part of a balanced diet for weight management, high in Vitamin C, supplies lycopene and contributes carbs to fuel your workouts.

Did you know there are over 1200 varieties of watermelon grown worldwide? At any given time here in the USA there might be 50 varieties in the market, and they might change each year as new varieties are developed by seed breeders (by crossbreeding techniques). Typically, what we as consumers see at the grocery store are "types" and not the actual seed varieties, meaning watermelons are labeled as seedless, seeded, mini, yellow, orange or fresh cuts. Hopefully all watermelon hits the super sweet factor every month of the year!

When it come time to pick the perfect melon, people often make their selection based on three characteristics: presence of seeds or lack thereof, size and ripeness. Determining ripeness requires some knowledge; how can you pick a ripe watermelon?

Tip 1: Find the yellow belly, or

the field spot

Other than cutting open a watermelon to see the inside, the field spot is perhaps the best indicator of the ripeness. This spot on a melon shows where it was laying on the ground while attached to the vine.

If the watermelon is ripe, the field spot should be a large, yellow patch on one side of the melon. If it is ripe, the color should be creamy, almost butter-like yellow. The bigger the yellow belly and the creamier the color means the more time the melon spent ripening on the vine. However, if the spot is smaller or looks more white than yellow, then the melon may not be as ripe.

Tip 2: Tap the underbelly and listen for a deep sound

Another way to find a ripe watermelon is to lightly knock the outside with your knuckles. A ripe melon will have a deeper sound, as opposed to an over-ripe one that will have a more hollow or

flat sound. A duller, more hollow sound can mean the flesh is starting to go soft and spoil.

Tip 3: Look for a dull and heavy watermelon

Although it may not be the most photogenic nor the easiest to carry to your vehicle, the best watermelons will be dull in

appearance and heavier than the rest. A shiny melon indicates the insides are underripe.

The best melon of the bunch will most likely be heavier than the rest. On average, a watermelon is 92% water, which makes them so juicy. The heavier the melon, the juicier it is.



The Colorado River Municipal Water District is accepting applications for following position at Lake Spence:

Park Maintenance Technician - Responsible for general maintenance of park and facilities. Entry to intermediate level position.

For additional information, visit www.crmwd.org.

PUBLIC NOTICE

Pursuant to Texas Local Government Code 152.103(b), Sterling County will set the increased amounts in the 2022-2023 Proposed Budget for Elected Officials as follows at their meeting on August 8, 2022, at 9 am. The meeting will be held at 609 4th Ave, in the Commissioner Courtroom, County Courthouse, Sterling City, Texas, 325-378-3481, at which time the Court will discuss/consider action.

NAME	FY 2021-22	FY 2022-23	Increase
County Judge	\$53,479.00	\$56,000.00	\$2,521.00
County Attorney	\$53,479.00	\$56,000.00	\$2,521.00
County/District Clerk	\$53,479.00	\$56,000.00	\$2,521.00
Treasurer	\$53,479.00	\$56,000.00	\$2,521.00
Tax Assessor/Collector	\$53,479.00	\$56,000.00	\$2,521.00
Justice of the Peace	\$53,479.00	\$56,000.00	\$2,521.00
Sheriff	\$53,479.00	\$56,000.00	\$2,521.00
Sheriff MHMR	\$6,000.00	\$6,000.00	No Increase
Precinct Commissioner	\$20,580.00	\$20,580.00	No Increase

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