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Search continues for man missing in Coke County

Brandon Lawson of San Angelo continues to be listed as missing through presstime Wednesday. What began as a simple stranded motorist call early Friday morning developed into much more over the weekend.

The original call from a passing motorist came into 911 and was passed onto the Coke County Sheriff's Office at 12:58 am Friday, August 9, 2013, reporting a stranded motorist. Just after 1 am, Chief Deputy Brandon Neal arrived at a disabled vehicle south of Bronte on Highway 277. Upon finding it abandoned with no keys inside, Deputy Neal turned on the vehicle's flashers and locked the doors.

Cell phone records revealed the missing man, Brandon Lawson, was speaking to his brother, Kyle Lawson, just after 1 am. During subsequent interviews with Kyle Lawson, he revealed he had been on the phone with his brother, Brandon, when Deputy Neal arrived at the disabled vehicle and was hiding in the brush watching Deputy Neal inspect his truck. Further investigation determined that Brandon Lawson had served stints in Texas Department of Correction facilities and currently has an outstanding felony warrant for Possession of a Controlled Substance with Intent to Distribute from Johnson County Sheriff's Office in Cleburne, Texas. The last contact with Brandon Lawson's phone was a text message at 1:19 am warning him about

police sent from a phone belonging to Kyle Lawson's girlfriend.

Due to the potential traffic hazard the abandoned vehicle posed, Deputy Neal chose to have it towed. At approximately 8:30 am Friday morning, Best Connection arrived at the abandoned vehicle on Highway 277 and towed it to their facility.

Sometime after 7 am Friday morning, Kyle Lawson purchased gas in a gas can from Stripes. The empty gas can was found in the back of the abandoned vehicle.

In the beginning, Coke County Sheriff's Office was only aware of an abandoned vehicle until family members began making contact with local law enforcement sometime later. As the investigation progressed, family members retracted original statements made to law enforcement, explaining they felt the need to protect Brandon from possible arrest.

On Sunday morning, August 11, 2013, a small group (approximately 15-20 people) accompanied Chief Deputy Neal in a search of the surrounding properties. According to Ladessa Lofton, the search came upon the place where it appeared Brandon Lawson watched Deputy Neal inspect his truck. Kyle Lawson did not assist with this search.

A Department of Public Safety helicopter assisted with a search of the area Tuesday afternoon. Unfortunately, the search was unsuccessful.



Search for Missing Man! A Department of Public Safety helicopter (top photo) prepares to touch down at the airport near Robert Lee to pick up Coke County Chief Deputy Brandon Neal Tuesday afternoon as the search for Brandon Lawson continues. Lawson (middle photo) was last heard from early last Friday morning near Bronte. Coke County Sheriff Wayne McCutchen (bottom photo, from left) confers with Texas Ranger Nick Hanna, Chief Deputy Brandon Neal, DPS Tactical Flight Officer Gahagan and DPS pilot Sgt. Greenwood before the aerial search Tuesday afternoon.

