BSERVER/ TERPRISE Serving Coke County



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Friday, August 2, 2013

Coke County Sheriff's Office participates in manhunt

County.

graduate of Concho Valley County and the children Academy, is accused of

Coke County Sheriff killing Keri Berry, 36, and Deputies were deployed Brandon Block, 31, and Sunday evening, July 28, seriously wounding Susan 2013, on roads in Coke Block, 26, at a home in County searching for the Wall, Texas. Following suspect in a double homi- the shooting an Amber cide which had occurred Alert was issued for his earlier in Tom Green two children, ages 7 and 9.

The suspect was taken Brian Jones Berry, a into custody in Andrews Enforcement were recovered unharmed.

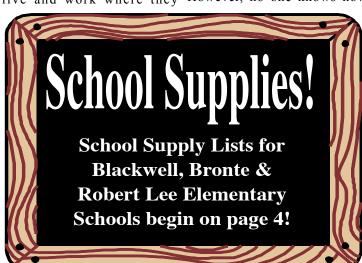
Coke ment within our county.

for the 2013-2014 budget to move from Coke County. year, it will be almost There have been many area department or the oil- and no one put in an applitions with another depart- was an applicant. During ary hikes of between McCutchen chose to constill vastly under the salary hunt last Sunday night. schedules of other small Currently, Coke County departments in our area.

It is again budget time or their families are from. County As it is, though, even the Commissioners Court and Sheriff has been receiving once again, the Court has job offers with huge salary failed to recognize the increases from neighboring importance of law enforce- counties. They are even offering to provide a car At the proposed salary where the men won't have

impossible to hire quali- times over the last few fied personnel should we years when employment lose another deputy to an advertisements were issued field. Last year alone, two cation. After the loss of deputies left to take posi- one deputy last year, there ment in our area with sal- the reference check, Sheriff \$15,000 and \$20,000 per tinue running the employyear. In the 2012-2013 ment ad rather than hire the budget, no salary increase man who applied. If he had was given. Currently the hired this applicant, we Court is looking at a sal- would be facing this week ary increase. However, what Wall is currently even with the proposed facing following the douincrease, Coke County is ble homicide and man-

has a good Sheriff's Office Currently, two of the and we've avoided falling deputies have ties to Coke victim to the truth "you get County and have chosen to what you pay for". live and work where they However, no one knows how



.. Not Just Livestock Calls!

Texas Seven Manhunt & Roadblocks - 2000 & 2001

(Sheriff's Office sets up numerous roadblocks and make a number of traffic stops over a period of months searching for the seven dangerous escaped convicts.)

Robert Lee Hostage Situation -2002

(Man takes hostage on Highway 208 in Robert Lee. After negotiations, hostage released and suspect taken into custody.)

• 2011 Fires

(The Sheriff's Office was responsible for discovering routes for firefighters leading into the fires.)

Bronte ISD Bomb Threat - 2012

(Sheriff's Office accompanies bomb squad in search of school.)

Pickup Theft & Recovery - 2013

(Pickup stolen from Stripes in Bronte recovered 15 minutes from the initial report called in. Suspect in custody.)

Berry Double Homicide & Kidnapping Manhunt - 2013

(Deputies deployed to cover roads leading into Coke County in search for suspect and kidnapped children.)

These are just a few of the highlights since 2000 showing there are real threats to our safety here in Coke County and we need to ensure our law enforcement is given all they need to continue protecting our citizens.

long we can beat the odds.

As the oilfield traffic continues to grow on our county's roadways, deputies are kept increasingly busy working accidents, oilfield theft cases, residential burglaries and issuing citations. When asked about the increase in tickets, Sheriff McCutchen attributed the uptick in citations to the increase in oilfield traffic a n d remarked that if the traffic kept increasing, he could need additional personnel. Will our Commissioners Court take this probability seriously and try to consider possible options to deal with this problem or will the men of the Court refuse to address this issue? Our Coke County Law Enforcement officers are trained professionals with years of education and experience under their belts. These are not minimum wage positions, nor should they be. The safety of Coke County's citizens and property is what is at stake. Unfortunately, it's not 1950 and we no longer live in Mayberry.

However, it's not just Coke County's Law Enforcement that is significantly underpaid. Our County Clerk is responsible

for all of the legal filings (deeds, licenses, etc.) done in Coke County. Treasurer and Tax Assessor are responsible for the County's finances, both incoming and outgoing. Do we really want these officials able to qualify for public We are assistance? incredibly fortunate to have the quality of individuals we have in these offices. But, it won't be long before retirement will look better to them than appreciated for the sacrifice instead of potholes? they are making. The County mentioned here because of the state supplements they receive. The County Auditor is also not mentioned because this position is not elected, but totally under the control of District Judge Barbara Walther.

It's time for citizens of Coke County to determine what they want, need and expect from their county government. Do you want to maintain the status quo we've had for so many years? Or do you want to express to the Court that they are elected to keep the best interests of the citizens of Coke County at the top of their priorities.

Law enforcement and

other salaries are only one budget area in which the Court fails. Recently, many citizens have been told the roadways leading from the state maintained highways could not be repaired because the budget was completely depleted from salary expenditures. If this is the case with the budget, would it not make sense for our county to institute a unit road system leaving our commissioners to feeling like they are not focus on budget concerns

If you want to express Judge and Attorney are not your concerns, please call County Judge Roy Blair a n d your County Commissioner.

> Precinct 1 Gene Montgomery Precinct 2 Wendell Lee Precinct 3 Gaylon Pitcock Precinct 4 Bobby Blaylock

Hot Dog Supper gives first look at new stadium

Robert Lee's 2014 Project Graduation will hold a Hot Dog Supper August 15, Thursday, 2013, immediately following the Steers' final two-aday practice.

This community wide celebration and fundraiser is the first opportunity for the public to get a look at the new stadium.