

THE OBSERVER/ ENTERPRISE

Serving Coke County



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Robert Lee faces revenue challenges

As the new officials at Robert Lee City Hall continue to work to correct issues, more problems are being discovered. It was explained to city council members Monday evening, July 30, 2018, that revenue was being lost from incorrect billing.

Robert Lee residents and business owners receive a "utility" bill each month from the city. This bill includes charges for water, sewer and sanitation (trash). Each of these departments is designed to be self-supporting. The trash company charges the city a certain amount per dumpster or roll cart and this charge is passed on to the consumer in their utility bill each month.

As of Monday evening, audits of the sanitation charges and sewer charges had begun. They are estimating that approximately 75% of the people who have dumpsters are not being charged the dumpster rate appearing to be due to a staff coding error from the past. If a resident has been provided with a dumpster and is only being charged for a roll cart, that costs the city approximately \$40 per month for each discrepancy. These figures have really added up and look to total over \$60,000 for 2018 alone.

Other lost revenue appears to be from uncharged and uncollected late fees and ordinance violation fines, in



Home Destroyed in Bronte! This home at 401 South State Street in Bronte was completely destroyed by fire early Tuesday afternoon, July 31, 2018. It could have been much worse, but thanks to two local men, Don Bailey and Rusty Corley, authorities were alerted and the youngster inside was rescued.

WEEK AT A GLANCE

Friday, August 3

RL Mini Cheer Camp, 9 am - 11 am,
Robert Lee High School

Saturday, August 4

Ladies Retreat, 10 am - 2:15 pm,
Robert Lee Baptist Church

Sunday, August 5

Bronte High School Band and Color Guard Car Wash Fundraiser,
1 pm - 5 pm, First National Bank Parking Lot

Bronte Elementary School Supply Distribution,
2 pm - 4 pm, Bronte Church of Christ

Monday, August 6

Robert Lee Care Center Auxiliary Meetings, 10 am and 6 pm,
Robert Lee Care Center

Vision with a Purpose Meeting, 6 pm,
VP Headquarters, Austin Street, Robert Lee

Bronte Evening Lions Club Meeting, 7 pm,
First United Methodist Church, Bronte

Tuesday, August 7

Robert Lee - Silver Lions Club Meeting, 6:30 am,
Old Jail Annex, Robert Lee

addition to uncollected pet registration fees. They have also begun to determine that a large number of customers are not being charged the correct sewer charge each month, if they are being charged for sewer at all.

Most residents' bills should run \$110 or more, depending on their water usage. This is for basic residential water, residential sewer, and a roll trash cart. A small business would pay at least \$50 for base water, \$52 for a dumpster and \$17.81 for sewer. In addition, the city collects \$5.02 for the water debt fund and \$1.25 for the capital improvement fund.

In the past, customers have donated \$2 for the Robert Lee Volunteer Fire Department each month. New forms must be signed if a resident chooses to continue making a donation each month to RLVFD and EMS.

Restoration Foundation formed for Robert Lee

A foundation has been formed in Robert Lee called "RL4Restoration Foundation". This foundation was built on the idea to work with several organizations in the community that have the same passion to see community-wide improvements and restorations for the next generation of Robert Lee.

Leaders from various organizations in Robert Lee have come to work together and have formed the first Board of Directors of the foundation. They include Crystal Stanford - President, Erin Oleksiuk - Secretary, Brandi Sawyer - Treasurer, Inga Elliott, Shaunna Grantham, Skyler Rainwater and Kayli Rose.

The foundation is in the process of filing for its 501c3 tax status and the first major project

that the foundation will be working on is to raise funds for the playground at Coke County Park. There are many other amazing ideas this board and others have begun coming up with.

Crystal Stanford will be speaking at the next Community Watch meeting set for Tuesday, August 21, and will be explaining more about the foundation and how the community can participate in fundraising and ideas for the foundation.

During the Robert Lee Junior High Cheerleaders Color Run on Saturday, August 25, RL4Restoration Foundation will have a booth set up to talk to those interested one-on-one with the board members of the foundation.

If you wish to donate to RL4Restoration, you can do so by mail at PO Box 581 Robert Lee, Texas 76945.

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