

The 4th of July celebration tent set up in the Robert Lee City Park distributed gift bags, water bottles, and other misc. items. Bricks for Memorial Gardens were available for purchase and membership sign-up was also available. VP encourages membership whether they can physically participate or not and all are welcome.

VP has purchased a golf cart that has been donated to the Robert Lee Golf Course. It is available free of charge to VP members and members of the Robert Lee High School golf team.

Additional street benches are being ordered to help beautify downtown Robert Lee and plaques will be available for dedication on the benches.

The Sons of Pitches Baseball Tournament to be held Wednesday, August 8, at Robert Lee City Park is moving right along. The old concession stand is being updated, cleaned, painted, and new electric and air conditioning by members of VP. Advertising banners will also be available to be placed on the back fences.

The next meeting will be held Monday, August 6 at 6 pm at VP headquarters. All are welcome!

we can all agree, rural communities need jobs, healthcare, schools, and infrastructure.

This is a perpetual struggle in planning rural development ideas. Each of our communities has opportunities for glitter that will attract new traffic, whether it be new restaurants and retail, tourism and cultural events, or some other unique feature. But can that glitter sustain a town? What happens in the inevitable future economic downturn, when luxury items are the first to drop out of the family budget? Will traffic and spending in town dry up? Will sustainable glitter eventually require a larger local population, so that it isn't solely tourist dependent?

But on the flip side, is a little glitter necessary? How do you sustain a town without first having something interesting that attracts people to the town? Whether we like it or not, people are not just going to move to a random town because it seemed like a good idea. Every town needs a sales pitch, the so-called "elevator speech," that explains why a new resident should move there. Jobs are hard to attract without a suitable labor force. Healthcare, schools, and infrastructure are hard to improve without increases in sales tax and property tax spending, which are functions of new spending and construction in town.

These are hard questions without easy answers. If the answers were easy, someone would've unlocked the secret long ago and every rural community with a desire to grow would be booming. But here in the real world, we struggle with these chicken-and-egg questions. Glitter alone might not sustain a place, but you might need a little glitter to catch the attention of the people who WILL sustain you.

James Decker is a lawyer, farmer, and mayor in Stamford, and the creator of the forthcoming "West of 98" podcast and website. He may be contacted through Facebook at facebook.com/james.decker.



New Marker! A new granite marker (second from left) was added at the entrance of Fort Chadbourne on Friday, July 20, to let those who pass by the fort that there is a Gold Star Families Memorial Monument on site. The other historic markers pictured include the Medal of Honor, Fort Chadbourne, and the Butterfield Overland Mail Route.

Commissioners Court meeting minutes told

The Coke County Commissioners Court met in regular session on July 10, 2018, at the County Courthouse in Robert Lee.

Those in attendance included County Judge Roy Blair, Commissioner Precinct 1 Donald Robertson, Commissioner Precinct 2 Paul Williams, Commissioner Precinct 3 Marshall Millican, Commissioner Precinct 4 Joe Sefcik, and County Clerk Mary Grim.

The meeting was opened with the pledge to the flag and prayer was offered by Judge Blair.

Judge Blair announced the presence of a quorum.

Commissioner Millican moved to approve the minutes for June 26, 2018, as written. The motion, seconded by Commissioner Williams, carried.

The Treasurer's Report was presented by Treasurer Hal Spain. Commissioner Sefcik

moved to approve the Treasurer's Report as presented. The motion was seconded by Commissioner Williams and carried.

Commissioner Williams moved to approve the Payroll. The motion, seconded by Commissioner Sefcik, carried.

Commissioner Robertson moved to approve Accounts Payable for Payroll. The motion was seconded by Commissioner Millican and carried.

The Extension Report was unavailable.

Sheriff Wayne McCutchen presented his report.

The Tax Collector's Report was presented by Judge Blair.

County/District Clerk Mary Grim presented her report.

Constable Precinct 1 Marty Boyd presented his report.

Justice of the Peace Precinct 1 Jackie Walker's report was presented by Judge Blair.

The DR Report was unavailable.

The Trapper's Report was not available.

No action was taken on the burn ban.

No action was taken on the funding from MHMR for Coke County Mental Health Officers. There is still no contract.

Auditor Vallery Johnson presented the Line Item Transfers. Commissioner Millican moved to approve the Line Item Transfers as presented. The motion, seconded by Commissioner Robertson, carried.

Commissioner Millican moved to approve the request from Frontier Communications to construct a communication line within the right-of-way of a county road in Coke County as presented. The motion was seconded by Commissioner Robertson and carried.

No action was taken on an Order approving a Tax Abatement Agreement between Coke County and Grape Creek Wind, LLC. Commissioner Williams moved to approve the TAC Insurance Rates for 2018-2019. The motion, seconded by Commissioner Sefcik, carried.

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Glitter and Rust

by James M. Decker

What makes a small town revival? The August issue of Texas Monthly has a feature on this very topic. This piece, titled "How a New Generation Is Reviving Small-Town Texas" tells stories from Lockhart, Brenham, and Alpine, each of which are currently experiencing new growth and enthusiasm. I encourage you to find the article on the Texas Monthly website or on newsstands, because it is an interesting and heartening read. Good things ARE happening in small towns across Texas.

This article has spawned a good discussion on Twitter with several rural-minded Texans whose opinions I respect. Each of these folks comes from a different professional and geographic perspective, but all are passionate about rural Texas.

This discussion, in turn, led me to my central question today: what makes a small town revival?

The Texas Monthly story spotlights several restaurants, bars, and other retail in these towns, most of which could fairly be termed as "trendy". As one of my friends observed, can a rural town revive itself on trendy restaurants, or does too much focus on that aspect of a town become "glitter on rust"? As my friend wrote, and I think



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Join us
for an Open House


Come celebrate with us.

Wednesday, August 8
10 a.m. to 2 p.m.

Edward Jones office at
122 N. 8th, Ballinger

United Blood Services Bloodmobile
will be on site. Consider donating!

Your family and friends are welcome to join us!
Refreshments will be served and prizes drawn.




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Saturday, August 4th

9:00am – 2:00pm

Central Baptist Church

324 S. Franklin St.
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