

...West of '98

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If we build stronger, better citizen-government relationships on the local level, our communities will begin to view our local offices as something to aspire for, rather than something to be forced into (which is a view that I've attempted to dispel here in Stamford). When we do that, our citizens demand more from our local leaders and make their voices known at the polls. When they do that, they start to expect more from their state and national leaders as well. One community cannot change the tide of American institutions, but one community can rise up and

inspire other communities to follow suit.

There's an old biblical adage that one can put a thousand to flight and two can put ten thousand to flight. Put that in the context of leadership in our American institutions. If just a few rural communities decide to fix our broken institutions, what great leaders might we see rise up in America's future?

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

Parents may apply for pandemic benefit

Parents may apply for Pandemic Electronic Benefit Transfer (P-EBT), which helps families get the food they need during the current pandemic by providing a one-time benefit of \$285 per eligible child.

You will have one year from the date the benefits were issued to use your P-EBT benefits. P-EBT benefits are non-transferrable. Immigration status and the public charge rule will not affect eligibility when applying for benefits.

Children who have been approved for free or reduced-price school meals or attend a school that offered free meals to all students through the National School Lunch Program can receive P-EBT benefits.

Eligible families that DID NOT receive SNAP benefits for the month of March 2020 must apply for P-EBT.

Eligible families that did get SNAP benefits for March 2020 do not need to apply for children ages 5 - 18 as of May 17, 2020. Benefits were loaded on to your existing Lone Star

Card by May 22.

If you have eligible children under 5 and/or between the ages of 19 - 21, you will need to fill out an application.

If you are approved, funds will be loaded on to your current Lone Star Card.

If you do not currently get SNAP benefits and your child is approved for P-EBT, you will be mailed a P-EBT card loaded with benefits.

Applications can be found at <https://yourtexasbenefits.com/Learn/PEBT> (the URL is case-sensitive). No applications will be accepted after August 21, 2020. You will need to include your child's school ID number and social security number when applying to help to determine if your child is eligible. It is also important to give a valid phone number on the application as Texas Health and Human Services staff may need to call to verify information.

For more information, please visit <http://hhs.texas.gov/pebt>. For questions regarding eligibility or if you need help applying, contact the P-EBT Call Center at

833-613-6220 Monday through Friday, 8 am - 6 pm (Central Time). If you applied for benefits and think your child was denied in error, you will need to call either the P-EBT Call Center or send an email to AES_PEBT_Complaints@hhsc.state.tx.us within 10 days of receiving the denial notice.

CFAP accepting applications through August 28

The U.S. Department of Agriculture (USDA) Coronavirus Food Assistance Program (CFAP) provides much-needed financial assistance to farmers and ranchers who have suffered a five-percent-or-greater price decline or who had losses due to market supply chain disruptions due to COVID-19 and face additional significant market costs.

The program, announced by U.S. Secretary of Agriculture Sonny Perdue in mid-April, is currently accepting applications, and Coke County Farm Bureau urges eligible farmers and ranchers to apply.

"Our farmers and ranchers are hurting right now," Coke County Farm Bureau President John Ross Copeland said. "The pandemic has damaged the agricultural economy, and without some assistance, some of our food growers may be out of business forever."

How to apply

Farmers and ranchers should apply through their local Farm Service Agency Service (FSA) office. FSA is working with farmers and ranchers by phone and using email and online tools to process applications. Call the FSA county office to schedule an appointment.

Applications can be submitted electronically either by scanning, emailing, or faxing, according to USDA.



Fashion Show! Grace Jernigan brought home five first place wins for Coke County 4-H at the District 7 Fashion Show, held July 14, 2020, in Burnet, Texas. She held the top spot for her lap quilt, throw pillow, shoulder bag, decorative placemats, and dresswear.

Farmers and ranchers self-certify when applying for CFAP, FSA said. Documentation is not submitted with the application. Additional documentation to support the certification of eligible commodities may be requested later, however.

Other materials may be necessary. Please check with FSA for further details.

For more information on CFAP, visit <http://farmers.gov/cfap>.

A CFAP Call Center is available for farmers and ranchers who would like additional one-on-one support with the CFAP application process. The number to call to speak directly with a USDA employee is 877-508-8364.

"Don't wait to sign up for


CFAP," John Ross said. "We appreciate the amount of funding made available, but it's not going to be enough to go around, so we are urging eligible Texas farmers and ranchers to get their applications in as soon as possible."

Applications are due on August 28.

Partial Closure of Big Bend Ranch State Park

The interior of the Big Bend Ranch State Park Complex will be closed for the safety of park visitors during wildlife surveys Aug. 9 - 16. During the surveys, staff will be counting desert bighorn sheep by helicopter and performing the lethal removal of non-native aoudad (barbary sheep) when encountered.

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**Please Pray for our Communities,
Our County, Our State and Our Country**



And Don't Forget to Pray for Rain!