

# THE OBSERVER/ENTERPRISE

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 (325) 453-2433 (325) 473-8863 Cell  
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## STAFF

Melinda McCutchen, Publisher  
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only way to grow a labor force is to attract more people to town and the only way to attract more people to town is to provide employment opportunity, so it is something of a chicken-or-the-egg proposition.

That brings me to small business. The federal Small Business Administration (SBA) defines "small business" as any business with less than 500 employees. This encompasses 99.9% of businesses in the United States in 2021. The SBA reported that small businesses created 64% of American jobs between 1993 and 2011. Small businesses employ approximately one-half of the American labor force. But the same SBA studies found that small business job creation is in decline and has been declining for three decades.

This decline is partly due to a key reason: it is getting harder to start a small business in several ways. Federal and state burdens (licensing, taxes, and more) can be a challenge. Aspiring business owners often do not know where to start and may be frightened of running afoul of regulators. In some jurisdictions, local regulations are just as burdensome. That is not the case in Stamford and many other rural communities. If you'd like to start a business here, the local burden is remarkably easy. Then there's the cost of overhead. Unless you have pre-existing financial independence, investing in a new business can be challenging, particularly if that requires the purchase of real estate,

equipment, and/or inventory. Banks are not always willing or able to loan money to a start-up that has limited collateral and no guarantee of future success.

This brings me back to the farmer's market. Bet you didn't expect that plot twist, huh?

Over the years, smart cities of all sizes have discovered that farmer's markets are fantastic incubators for small businesses. A local retail start-up may have a fantastic product with incredible potential, but what if they cannot invest six figures to renovate a downtown building? What if they cannot realistically afford the rent that would be required for someone else to renovate the building for them? Well, they might be able to pay the rent on a stand at a local farmer's market.

I was awakened to this potential several years ago when I ate at Pecan Lodge in Dallas, one of Texas' foremost barbecue restaurants. Their collard greens are worthy of their own essay, but I digress. You see, Pecan Lodge started as a part-time business at the Dallas Farmer's Market. With that limited overhead, they built a business and became renowned among Texas barbecue junkies. Today, they have a gorgeous restaurant in the heart of Dallas' revitalized Deep Ellum

district. Would that have been possible without a farmer's market helping incubate their start-up business? That market continues to serve myriad other small artisans and food-based businesses. Some are there to stay and others are on their way to a larger business, but the farmer's market helps each of them find their footing.

It's not the only one. The National Main Street Center recently did a feature on their website entitled "Farmers Markets as a Transformation Strategy for Main Streets," sharing a variety of examples in cities of all sizes. I would encourage you to look that up, because the examples are incredible and a model for communities all over.

Our communities need a thriving climate for small businesses. We cannot attract large businesses if we cannot attract small businesses. And if you want to help small business thrive, the farmer's market might be the incubator that makes it possible.

*James Decker is the Mayor of Stamford, Texas and the creator of the West of 98 website and podcast. Contact James and subscribe to these essays at westof98.substack.com and subscribe to West of 98 wherever podcasts are found.*

# Obituaries

## Andrewson

Monti Charles Andrewson passed away at home August 8, 2022, in Bronte.

He was born July 7, 1944, in Concordia, Kansas, to Arnold and Darla Andrewson. He was one of eight children.

Monti served this great country in the United States Army during the Vietnam War. Army all the way! He was a lifetime member Veterans of Foreign Wars. He worked hard and loved crossword puzzles.

Monti was very blessed to have two families; daughters, Angela Cavazos (Joe) and Denise Venegas (Robert) and children; wife, Johnnie, and Rosemarie Arthur (Fred), Mae Baldwin; three grandkids, Kristin Moore, Johnathan (Julie), and Tristan Moore; and 7 great-grandkids that were Monty's life.

He will be buried at the VA Cemetery (7457 West Lake Road, Abilene, Texas), Saturday, September 2, at 2 pm. In lieu of flowers, please send memorials/donations to Salt of the Earth Ministry of Bronte.

09-1tc

# Death Notice

## Diaz

Rafael Diaz, 91, of Sweetwater passed away Tuesday, August 16, 2022 at Rolling Plains Memorial Hospital.

A Memorial service was held 10 am, Tuesday, August 23, 2022, at McCoy Chapel of Memories with Rev. Frankie Santiago officiating and military honors performed by the U.S. Air Force Honor Guard. Services were under the direction of McCoy Funeral Home.

He is survived by his wife, Lupe Diaz of Sweetwater; son, Ralph Diaz of Colorado Springs, Colorado; daughter, Evelyn Diaz of Fort Worth, Texas; son, Larry Doyle Bailey of Bronte, Texas; and daughter, Anjel Heinze of Fort Collins, Colorado.



## Incubating Business

By James M. Decker

We all want more businesses in our towns. More businesses mean more jobs for our people, more children in our schools, more families participating in activities like church and youth sports, and generally speaking, more people and money in town.

Last summer, I wrote about the desire to attract "good jobs" and the futility of attempting to attract a large employer without having a local labor force that can supply that employer. The



**CONCHO VALLEY COMMUNITY ACTION AGENCY**

**Tues. Sept. 6th**  
 Bronte Church of Christ  
 1pm-3pm

**Wed. Sept. 7th**  
 Robert Lee Food Distribution  
 2pm-4pm

We will be set up to answer your questions and take your applications

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# Area Churches

## Invite You to Worship

### Bronte

#### Bronte Church of Christ

PO Box 346  
 118 S. Jefferson • Bronte  
 Sun. 10 am & 6 pm, Wed. 7 pm

#### Central Baptist Church

324 S. Franklin • Bronte  
 (325) 473-4811  
 Dale Patterson, Pastor  
 Sun. 10 am Sunday School  
 11 am & 5 pm Worship

#### First Baptist Church

424 S. Washington • Bronte  
 (325) 473-2331  
 firstbronte@gmail.com  
 Pastor George Cooper  
 Sunday 9:45 am Sunday School,  
 10:30 am Worship  
 Wednesday 6 pm - 8 pm  
 Children and Youth

#### First United Methodist Church

Corner of Washington & Holmes  
 Bronte • (325) 473-3281  
 Rev. Stacy Sprinkle, Pastor  
 Sun. 10:00 am Sunday School  
 11:00 am Worship

#### St. James Catholic Church

215 N. Washington, Bronte  
 (325) 365-2687  
 Rev. Timothy Hayter, Pastor  
 Sunday Bilingual Mass 8 am

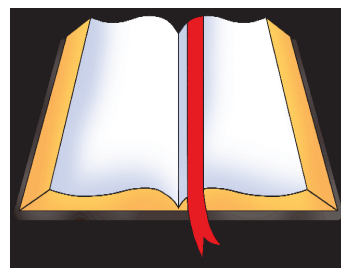
#### 4C Cowboy Church

Drawer R • Bronte • (325) 895-4080  
 Robert Lemmond, Pastor  
 Sunday, 10:30 am - Texas Theater  
 Wednesday Bible Study 6 pm -  
 4C Feedlot Youth Building

### Coke County

#### Pecan Baptist

PO Box 542 • 12 miles West of  
 Robert Lee on Sterling City Hwy  
 (325) 453-2065, Bill Hood, Pastor  
 www.pecanbaptistchurchrl.com  
 Sun. 10 am, Sunday School  
 11 am & 7 pm, Worship



### Robert Lee

#### Bible Baptist Church

PO Box 938 • 9th & Austin  
 Sunday 10 am Sunday School,  
 11 am and 5 pm Worship,  
 Wed 5 pm Bible Study

#### Emmanuel Pentecostal

PO Box 794 • 1004 Hillcrest  
 Pastor Brantly Robertson  
 (972) 841-2009

Sundays 10 am, Wednesdays 7 pm

#### First United Methodist Church

PO Box 144 • 9th & Chadbourne  
 Robert Lee • (325) 453-2417  
 Cyndi Weidner, Pastor  
 Sun. 10 am Sunday School  
 11 am Worship,  
 5 pm Choir Practice

#### Iglesia Bautista Betel

101 Houston • Robert Lee  
 Sun. 9:45 am • Sunday School  
 11 am Service • Bible Study Wed. 6 pm

#### Southside Church of Christ

PO Box 698 • 8th & Houston  
 Robert Lee (325) 453-2176  
 Recardo Reyes, Preacher  
 Sun. 10 am, Sunday School  
 11 am & 6 pm, Worship  
 Wed. 6 pm, Worship

#### Northside Church of Christ

PO Box 508  
 9th & Chadbourne • Robert Lee  
 (325) 453-2685, (325) 763-2118  
 or (325) 473-1053

Services: Sun. 10 am

#### Our Lady of Guadalupe Catholic Church

601 W. 10th, Robert Lee  
 (325) 365-2687

Rev. Timothy Hayter, Pastor  
 Saturday Vigil Mass 6 pm

#### Robert Lee Baptist Church

PO Box 493 • 22 W. 11th  
 (325) 453-2724  
 Chris Walls, Pastor  
 Sun. 9:45 am, Sunday School  
 11 am & 7 pm, Worship  
 Wed. 7 pm, Prayer Meeting  
**Victory Assembly of God**  
 (325) 453-2208, PO Box 638  
 202 E. 6th Street, Robert Lee  
 Rev. Rocky Youngblood, Pastor  
 Sun. 9:45 am, Sunday School  
 10:45 am & 6 pm, Worship  
 Wed. 6 pm, Bible Study