

DEATHS

Mr. Cockrell

Chet Cockrell, 57, of San Saba died in Lea Regional Hospital in Hobbs, New Mexico on July 19, 2018. He lost his battle with lung cancer. He was residing in Hobbs while he sought treatments.

Charles Chester Cockrell Jr. was born in San Angelo on Aug. 20, 1960. He grew up in Lometa and graduated from Lometa High School in 1978.

He joined the Navy and afterwards followed in his father's footsteps as a carpenter. He resided in San Saba for the past 15 years, as his job took him to different locations throughout Texas and Mississippi.

He was a longtime member of the Lometa Church of Christ. The things he loved the most besides carpentry were his music and playing golf.

Chet was preceded in death by his father, Charles Chester Cockrell Sr., in 1999.

He is survived by his mother, Peggy Cockrell Jones, of Hobbs, New Mexico and his stepfather, Ron Jones. He is also survived by his siblings, Shawna Bell and husband Randy of Belton, Wayne Cockrell and wife Becky of Oakwood, Texas and Tywila Kelley of Copperas Cove; and numerous nephews, nieces and other family.

A memorial service will be held Aug. 11 at 10 a.m. at Long Cove Cemetery near Lometa, with Aubrey Rodgers to officiate. The service will be followed by a luncheon at the Lometa Church of Christ annex building.

Memorial donations in Chet's name may be made to Friedrich's Ataxia Research Alliance to honor his nephew Tye Bell, who is battling this rare disease. Donations may be made at www.curefa.org or sent to FARA, 533 W. Uwchlan Ave., Downingtown, PA 19335. Please have

acknowledgement of the gift sent to prjones3945@gmail.com.



Mr. McKinney

Billy M. McKinney, 80, of Lampasas died July 24, 2018 at Spring Oaks Nursing and Rehabilitation in Lampasas.

A memorial service will be held Aug. 9 at 10:30 a.m. at Memory Park, 2823 E. Marshall Ave. in Longview, Texas. Sneed Funeral Chapel in Lampasas has charge of arrangements.

Mr. McKinney was born Nov. 15, 1937 in Kilgore to Owen Lee McKinney and Ruby Jewel (Reynolds) McKinney.

He had a career in the grocery store business, working for Minyard Food Stores in Dallas. He retired as store director after working for them for many years.

Mr. McKinney enjoyed watching his grandchildren grow up and play sports. He was an avid fan of the Texas Rangers and Dallas Cowboys. He also enjoyed fishing. He was raised a Baptist.

He is survived by three children, Steven McKinney of Lampasas, Bill McKinney Jr. of Irving and Vickey Pope of Irving; a brother, Owen Lee McKinney Jr. of Missouri; 11 grandchildren; and three great-grandchildren.

He was preceded in death by his son, Mark McKinney;

a granddaughter, Jessica; an infant sister Carolyn; and by his brother, Robert.



Mr. Wren

Lampasas native James Ray Wren Sr., a railroad worker for 40 years, died in Arlington peacefully on July 29 from an extremely aggressive type of early-onset dementia. He was 65.

Funeral services for Mr. Wren will be at 10 a.m. Aug. 4 at Sneed Funeral Chapel in Lampasas. An informal family visitation will precede the service.

Burial will be in Oak Hill Cemetery in Lampasas.

With only minor memory challenges, Mr. Wren had been suffering from the dementia disease for more than two years. He was under hospice care in Arlington Residence and Rehabilitation Center at the time of his death and previously had lived in a Lampasas nursing home.

Mr. Wren was born Nov. 3, 1952 in Rollins Brook Hospital to Johnnie Mae Lunsford Wren and Worth S. Wren Sr.

James R. Wren was a

Baptist, but he embraced other denominations as well, attending churches across several states.

After attending Lampasas public schools, Mr. Wren graduated from San Angelo Central High School in 1971. He later completed a bachelor's degree in education at Angelo State University.

Mr. Wren chose to follow his father's career path into railroad maintenance work and joined the Santa Fe Railway Co. He stayed with the company after it was merged into the Burlington Northern Railway Co. He worked variously as a machine operator, truck driver and trackman, and sometimes in all three roles on railroad/track ties, rails and sections at numerous locations across Texas, New Mexico, Louisiana, Oklahoma and other states. During his career, he resided in several cities, including San Angelo and Stephenville.

On Sept. 1, 2016, during medical leave, Mr. Wren retired from BNSF.

He was preceded in death by his parents.

Survivors include his four children: son James R. "Jamie" Wren Jr. of Dallas, daughter Jennifer Wren White and her husband Michael of Royce City, son Michael Wren of San Angelo and son Christopher Wren of San Angelo; two grandchildren, Bryce and McKenzie White of Royce City; three siblings, brother Worth Wren Jr. of Fort Worth, sister Ann Wren Harmon of Kempner and brother Carl Wren of Manchaca; five nieces and nephews; three grand-nephews; and many other relatives.



Lometa police chief discusses training goals, inter-agency cooperation

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another patrol vehicle to the three that currently are in service.

She would like for her officers to obtain more training in investigations, drug interdiction and evidence custodian – which deals with legal requirements of managing evidence.

Cantu volunteers as a reserve officer in Kempner, which has an even smaller

police force. Kempner's full-time Police Chief Jesse Cerda also is a Lometa police officer, so that relationship helps cooperation between departments.

Lampasas County Sheriff's Office and the Texas Department of Public Safety also help cover the city of Lometa.

"If we ever do need backup, they are quick to respond to help," Cantu said.



DAVID LOWE | DISPATCH RECORD

Utility work continues on West Avenue E

A crew from M&C Fonseca Construction Inc. of Granite Shoals searches Tuesday for the one-inch water service line that feeds Family Medicine Clinic's specialty facility on West Avenue E. Van Sims, the city's water/wastewater operations manager, explained that workers were trying to find the old service line so they could make a one-inch tap on the newly installed eight-inch main and tie it into the new line closer to the building. Fonseca has replaced an old sewer line on West Avenue E. Now, the company is installing utility taps for the residences and businesses along the street.

Entities seek to attract highly qualified chamber of commerce executive director

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invited the Lampasas City Council to have one or more members participate in the interview process, as the city will fund 40 percent of the salary for the position.

During a budget discussion Monday, chamber board member Zachary Taylor told the City Council that the board would like the two entities to agree about who will be the next chamber director. The council and chamber board have not taken that approach in the past, he said.

"But if we're going to say y'all are 40 percent [of the funding], then y'all should have at least 40 percent say," Taylor told the council.

The city provides hotel-motel occupancy tax funding for chamber expenses that promote tourism, thereby attracting patrons to Lampasas lodging establishments.

For the upcoming fiscal year, which will start Oct. 1, the city is scheduled to pay 40 percent of the cost in most of the chamber of commerce's budget categories. Funding percentages varied for different categories in the past, but Cooley and Taylor said now they will be standardized at 40 percent. That amount, Cooley said, is the chamber's best estimate of the percentage of its total resources that it spends on events, Visitor Center operations and tourism functions -- as opposed to services specifically for the chamber's membership.

Salaries account for the largest portion of the chamber's proposed budget. In addition to the executive director, the chamber has one other regular staff member, plus seasonal help on Saturdays from March through December.

For the current fiscal year, the approved salary budget for the executive director and the other regular staff member was about \$45,000 total. Of that amount, the executive director's salary was \$36,000, Taylor said. The national average for a chamber executive director is \$49,000, he said.

The chamber board plans to increase the executive director salary to attract experienced, qualified applicants, Taylor said. The position does not include health insurance, and city Finance Director Yvonne Moreno said the director cannot be added to the municipality's insurance plan because the person is not employed by the city.

To recruit a qualified and experienced executive director, the chamber board plans a substantial increase in the salary for the position.

The board considered raising the salary to \$45,000, Taylor said early in Monday's meeting. After discussion with the City Council, however, the chamber board decided later in the week to add \$5,000 more of its own funds. That would yield a salary of \$50,000.

The council is considering a proposal to

add \$10,000 to the amount of city funding the chamber would have requested had the salary been set at \$45,000. If the council approves the \$10,000 addition, the executive director salary would be \$60,000.

Based on the approved budget for the current fiscal year, which will end Sept. 30, the city is set to pay \$31,177 of total chamber of commerce-related expenses.

If the council provides enough city funding to yield a \$60,000 chamber executive director salary -- and makes other, smaller budget adjustments that have been suggested -- the city's total chamber-related costs in 2019 would be \$45,152.

There could be additional expenses in 2019 for advertising -- outside the local area -- to promote Lampasas as a desirable destination. On Monday, the council discussed a potential city cost of \$5,309, but more exact estimates will be presented later.

Extended discussion Monday among council and chamber representatives related what the entities might accomplish by raising the executive director salary substantially.

Mayor Pro Tem TJ Monroe told chamber board members she does not think \$45,000 would be enough to attract the right candidate. It might take \$60,000-\$70,000, she said.

Monroe and Mayor Misti Talbert said the executive director role is not just a 40-hour-per-week job. At times, such as during special events, the director may work 80 hours a week, Monroe said.

Talbert said she would be willing to boost the city's contribution toward the executive director salary. She and Councilman Chuck Williamson emphasized the importance of the city and chamber working together as a partnership.

"If we're going to give more money," Talbert said, "I look at it as an investment in order to get somebody qualified in there that creates this ongoing relationship that we've just now decided to form and that sticks around for you ..."

Staff turnover creates stress for the chamber and its board, the mayor said. Talbert said without stability in the director role, people could be discouraged from serving on the chamber board because of how much work they would have to do.

"That position has proven to be the one position that dictates how all of these things go, and if we can't put the right person there, all of this is for nothing," the mayor said. "I don't think any of us want it to be like that again."

Chamber board member Mark Storm agreed with the mayor that the executive director position is very important.

Councilman Robert McCauley, who sometimes has questioned the amount the city spends on various chamber-related items, asked how deeply the city plans to be

involved in the chamber.

"How much do we want to run this?" he asked.

Monroe and Talbert said the city does not want to run the chamber -- which is why officials are seeking a qualified executive director.

"We would like them to come tell us when they need some HOT [hotel-motel occupancy tax] funds for their events," Monroe said. "I think that's all the involvement we really want, but we do want you to be successful. I want you to be successful."

Williamson said for the future of Lampasas, the city and chamber need to make the recruitment of an executive director a priority.

Talbert, however, said if the City

Council increases its funding and still is

not satisfied with chamber operations, "that's when we start saying, 'OK, we have literally given everything we can give to the situation to help out, and it's just not going to work.'"

Despite that caveat from the mayor, participants in the meeting reiterated their strong desire to find the right person to serve as executive director.

"I'm very serious that I think there should be a qualified person in this position," Monroe said.

Taylor said the chamber board concurs.

An agreement will be presented to the City Council for consideration so city officials can finalize funding amounts, deGraffenried said. The council's next regular meeting will be Aug. 13.

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