

### 3-14-18 County Judge's Article

#### CONTINUING THE EFFORT

As I'm sure most of you have heard, the proposal that Milam County made to Amazon to try to get them to consider building their proposed new headquarters complex here is no longer in the running, but Austin and Dallas are. Should Austin be the choice, the fact that we were in the mix could still pay off in the long run because there will be many satellite businesses, subdivisions, and the like looking for places to locate all around this area; and as a result of the publicity and recognition that we gained by participating, the availability of property and advantages offered here in Milam County are now known far and wide.

Even if Amazon doesn't come to Austin, many other prospects took note as well, so our effort was well worth the cost, in my estimation. As an example, the marketers of the Alcoa property said that there was a significant increase in inquiries as a result of the exposure that the Amazon proposal received in the media. We also have a well designed package of information touting Milam County available for use with other prospects as well.

I'm especially pleased that the ad hoc team of our citizens that put the Amazon proposal together (this group included several private citizens along with representatives from the Thorndale, Rockdale, Cameron, and County economic development groups, and myself as county judge) are going to continue to work together to promote economic development in Milam County.

The next activity being planned is a program for all business and industry in Milam County that will showcase the Career and Technical Education (CTE) programs that are under way in our public schools in the county. We want you our local businesses to come and see what is going on to prepare our young people to be ready to enter the work force or continue in a post secondary education program of their choosing when they finish high school. This relatively new vocational technical program that is now active in our local schools may surprise you in addition to being a benefit to your business in helping you meet your future employment needs. This is not only a vocational program like many of us think of that includes training that prepare the student to enter the workforce upon completing high school but also includes units to prepare them for continuation in two year as well as four year college programs.

In addition, the CTE program directors in each of our schools (including Rockdale, Cameron, Thorndale ) will be asking you for suggestions on additional things that might be included to make their programs be even better aligned to local business needs.

This program is planned for Friday, April 6 beginning at 8:30 AM with coffee and refreshments at the ALCOA Training Center at Alcoa Lake near Rockdale. All local Milam County businesses are invited to send representatives.

In addition, we are planning a county wide economic development symposium in early fall to discuss the state of the local economy, business and commercial opportunities in Milam County and to showcase

the advantages of doing business in this area. Again all existing businesses and industry leaders will be invited along with any other interested parties.

This team has really brought some enthusiasm and needed additional effort to the critical need that exists to build back our Milam County tax base. We ask for your cooperation and support in the months ahead.