



Providing a Vision for Nolan County and her Constituents

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Lion's Club Speech 2-10-2026

The Lion's Club is truly a special organization with over 50,000 chapters worldwide that in researching its effectiveness the international statistics are incredible to a person that didn't know much about the organization. The membership boasts 1.4 million members globally and serves over 200 countries and regions, and receives over 1.3 billion dollars in

grants to help serve the global population in the quest to see the light. In 1925, only 8 years after the Lion's Club was established Hellen Keller gave a challenge at the Lion's club international convention in Cedar Point, Ohio. The challenge was a call to be the "knights of the blind in the crusade against darkness." This is a profound statement on multiple levels because the scriptures make this same call and I quote:

["But ye are a chosen generation, a royal priesthood, an holy nation, a peculiar people; that ye should shew forth the praises of him who hath called you out of darkness into his marvellous light:" 1 Pet. 2.9]

The challenge is no different when it comes to Leading a County into the light. When a child who is born perhaps with some blindness and they put glasses on them their reaction is priceless. The eyes widen and the smiles flex and their laughter is infectious because they now can see the beauty that God has created more clearly. In like manner, a County that's identity has grown dim and clouded simply needs a cleaning of the lens and a vision that all are able to experience the beauty that God has created it to be. A natural question arises to ask: what needs to be cleaned and what is the beauty that God has created Nolan County to be? These are great questions that should be asked and answers should be given. The most noble way to answer these questions is to go to the beginning. The significance about the word "see" helps to navigate the answer to our questions. The original language of scripture, specifically Greek helps to understand that this word "see" is actually our English word transliterated "historeo, i.e., history" (cf. Gal. 1.18). The scripture describes "...Paul went up to "see" Peter..." This wasn't just to look upon Peter physically but rather to visit for information, to examine, to find out by inquiry. So, Paul having spent time in Arabia wanted to make sure their histories lined up with one another. We perhaps need to revisit our history as a County and determine together whether or not the core identity is the same, needs to adapt, or needs to be made new.



Cloudiness happens when we are confused about who we really are? This is true even for counties.

The Cloudiness of our Identity

My dad was an educator and loved English, Literature, etc.... He wasn't fun to grow up with in that regard, because my papers as young boy always came back with the marking of a **red pen**. However, he also was the historian of the family, meaning he was the one to go to for information and he would in



detail tell all you wanted to know and more. I will abbreviate the history for time. In researching for this presentation I was able to develop a timeline of basic events that through those basic events a core Identity will rise to the top. The mission for each of you this afternoon is to “see” if you can discover it.

Timeline



1790s

Irish Adventurer, Philip Nolan came to the territory



1877-89

Buffalo-Hunters Frontier to a Ranching and Agricultural center, along with various Railroads and Commodities (cotton, oil, gypsum, etc.)



1980s-present

Wind energy arrives and adaptation of new modern technologies but all the while keeping with Traditional ranching and farming

What we “see” is that early on Nolan County carries with it an identity of adventure and grows its identity to one of Ranching. In all of the research this is what it declares: Nolan County's core identity is in ranching. This makes sense because Nolan County is comprised of 914 square miles and 912 square miles is land give or take a few square miles. The research even through economic expansion of the railroads, cotton, gypsum, wheat, oil, training center for Pilots, wind energy, and has continued to be the core identity of Nolan County, “ranchers.” Ranchers are described as managers of herds that roam the open pastures, managers that utilizing vast grasslands not suitable for crops (creativity), managers of the food production and cultural heritage, common in North America, South America, and Australia. Currently there are approximately 8,305 acres of land for sale according to the Zillow listings. In another place there

is \$76 million of land and ranches available to buy. What does this mean if anything about the identity of Nolan County? Question: do we keep the core identity as Ranchers, do we modify it, or do we make it new? If we hold to it then as a community we have to embrace its importance. Particularly to the coliseum and make it the centerpiece of the community where everything happens educating our children and the future generations of its importance. Thus, demonstrating the identity of Nolan to the world through Ranching. Or perhaps we ought to expand our identity to include all commodities because when we look around and “see” i.e., examine there is truly nothing that lacks in West Texas nor in Nolan County. To see the beauty of the plan would be to catch up our infrastructure (includes all aspects) through various means such as grants and good fiscal management. Stewardship is an accounting exercise that one should be prepared to give no matter the person asking (cf. Lk. 16.2). This is the power of the people. The people of Nolan need to ask for that account more and more to have transparency and accountability. The reason for good fiscal management is because it creates surpluses. These surpluses with the approval of the commissioner’s court can help with repurposing the excess to infrastructure to include roads, signs, emergency services, libraries, solving problems like water, energy, etc. that benefits the people of Nolan County. This brings us to a brief vision of the future...

Imagine a different County

Imagine a forward-thinking County Governance that has an identity that is founded in good values (excellent fiscal management), coupled with commodity-based thinking (utilizing our strengths to bring about good changes), and utilizing our identity to create a lasting presence in the Texas and in the US. Effectually Making Nolan County Great! It seems that we have in some ways in West Texas, Nolan County been forward thinking and have maintained our roots. And so, if we expand to commodities and these become our roots and we continue our efforts to find sustainable energy sources, technologies, etc. and we continue to expand our growth in bringing more jobs, more competition, better housing, which drives down prices, this creates affordability, and a place that is designed for adventure. What beauty can God create if we work together in bringing Nolan County to the greatness that God has in store for it?