

ATASCOSA COUNTY JUDGES REPORT

Last week I promised to tell you about happenings with the County Juvenile office. I have been very concerned about the county's practice of sending juveniles off to long term placement or releasing them on probation to live in a home that will not properly supervise them. Long term placement is very expensive to the county and many times the juvenile is better served if we can find a proper home for them to get the supervision they need. The motto of the State Juvenile Office is "the treatment is better closer to home". But we have no place to put the in-between juveniles (those not bad enough for long term placement but no decent home to get well in). Our Juvenile Probation Officers can work with these kids up to as many visits such as a daily basis, but they must have the kids in an environment where their work has an effect.

That is why I am convinced we need a Title 4a home here in Atascosa County (sort of a half-way house whose expenses are reimbursed by the state. There are no others between Bexar's southern border and all the way to Corpus, Laredo or San Diego. And, most of those are long term, lock-up facilities. What I have in mind is a non-lock up alternative positive living space where the juveniles receive that necessary supervision. They would have strict rules to abide by or they would go back to detention and long-term placement. But they would have a chance to stand up and get their lives straightened out.

The other thing we are working on is to put a juvenile rehab center in the unused portion of our detention center. We are going to San Benito to look at how they have done exactly that.

All of these ideas have been germinating for a long time and it is now time to bring them to fruition. It is not the reason to do them but it is a nice by-product that all these actions will ultimately save us money and / or bring in revenues from other nearby counties our size and smaller. We can provide a great service to our neighboring counties.

Thanks for listening.

We want you to be proud of your County Government.