

## ATASCOSA COUNTY JUDGES REPORT

There appears to be a verbal campaign going around that I am trying to close the County Juvenile Detention Center. That is not true and anyone pushing that is not speaking the whole truth. It has been my initiative for the last several years as County Judge to build programs to bring in revenue and save this center and keep it open. If I wanted to close the center, I would not have put so much effort into saving it.

I am the Constitutional Finance Officer for the County and it is my responsibility to make sure the taxes are spent wisely and in an intelligent manner. Cautious spending is important. So I called "HALT" to the proposed Juvenile Detention Center budget. I do not regret this decision and I think we will make better financial decisions because of closer examination.

We are not required to have a juvenile detention by statute or constitution but **it is a major asset to have when working with our county's juveniles at risk.** Short – term Juvenile Detention Centers have been closing all over the state or converting to long term treatment. Out of 254 Counties in Texas there are only approximately 50 centers left and most of those are in large population centers. It is possible to operate without one. Most of our sister counties that are our size in South Texas do not have one. **I am totally about keeping our detention center open, but it must be done at a reasonable cost.**

I called a budget workshop on this past Monday to air this and for Commissioner's Court to decide. The commissioner's wisely decided to keep it open by approving a \$2.2M budget with conditions. Conditions that require the management of the Juvenile Department to report to us every 90 days (or 3 months) with progress made in refining the expenditures. Another condition is that the Juvenile Detention must have a treatment pod open by June 30 (six months) or they will close the facility. These are very reasonable conditions that can be easily met.

Quote, "Anger is an acid that can do more harm to the vessel in which it is stored than to anything on which it is poured." Mark Twain

Thank you for listening. 😊

We want you to be proud of your county government.