

ATASCOSA COUNTY JUDGES REPORT

The Sixth Amendment in the U.S. Constitution says that in all criminal prosecutions the accused has the right to assistance of counsel for their defense. As I have mentioned before, we are working to reorganize our Public Defender program. We are working diligently to transition the Atascosa Public Defender's Office management from TRLA (Texas Rio Grande Legal Aid) to a stand-alone office covering our four counties (Frio, Karnes, Wilson and Atascosa). I will be traveling to Austin on July 12 for a meeting to work out the last details to end the TRLA contract.

We have been, and will continue, receiving grant funds to finance the PDO program. The funds are used for not only office supplies, computer equipment and software, lawyers and various office staff, but we are also looking to add two coordinators. They will be visiting inmates to assess their qualifications for indigent counsel. I believe the new PDO organization will be of benefit to the efficiency of our court system. I am hopeful we can have the new board in place by July 15 and take over on Aug 1.

May God bless Atascosa County and all of those who reside here.