

I was recently accused of being responsible for ACAD employees' purported low salaries. I do not know why that would or could be the case, as I am not an operating member of ACAD or on their board. However, I am the Chief Budget Officer for Atascosa County, and I am aware of what each entity pays ACAD for its services.

"I appreciate the needs of the workers at the Atascosa Central Appraisal District (ACAD). I have just recently been made aware that some of their pay categories (office jobs – clerks) may be below similar positions in other appraisal districts

Further, since I have been county judge, our annual C-O-L-A increases have approximately been the same as the Atascosa Central Appraisal District (ACAD) as admitted to me by the Appraisal District. This indicates that this low-wage problem existed before I became County Judge. The problem did not develop overnight or in just one year (ten years is noted in the Pleasanton Express article of June 29). As a business person with decades of varied experience, I can tell you that if I were in such a position with my employees, I would be loud and insistent on working with the financial authority to find a solution.

I believe that by throwing all perceived budget problems of the past ten years into one year, resulting in a 19% increase to the entity's budget costs, the appraisal district risks getting the whole budget voted down, hurting the employees. I would hate to see that.

I plan to work on a salary study of similar CADs based on population, job positions, housing units, number of employees, etc. I support developing a plan to raise the positions to a reasonable market level with comparable appraisal districts and meeting with other governmental entities in the County (i.e., Jourdanton and others who wish to work on it). It may have to be a two-year plan, but I think it is essential to address it to make sure that the appraisal district employees are paid fairly. It is necessary to ensure it is fair to the taxpayers' dollars spent on funding the appraisal district.

My message to the appraisal district employees is that I am supportive of your needs and plan to try to work out a plan with the other entities and your board."