

ATASCOSA COUNTY JUDGES REPORT

The County's tax rates for 2023 are in the books. We have not finalized the budget, but preliminarily it looks good. We should be able to reduce the tax rate by approximately 8 cents per hundred, from \$.61 to, hopefully, \$.53. We have a lot of challenges to get there, but we are 99% there. Remember, the rate decrease may not mean your taxes will go down. It will depend on what valuation the appraisal has set for your property this year. If they did not increase your value, you would see a decrease. If they increase value, you can only hope to stay even or experience a slight increase. It all depends on the ACAD 2023 valuation, your local government entities, and their 2023 tax rate.

Please remember it is the Texas state government's program, lock, stock and barrel. It would be lovely if the state government would end it and replace it with a fair tax, but I fear that is not likely. For decades I have written letters and gone in person to plead for a better system, to no avail. To make a significant tax change like that would take vision, intestinal fortitude, and intelligence. Those attributes are in scarce supply in the state legislature. A favorite writer, Molly Ivins – who has been gone from treading this celestial orb for some time – once said, "If the legislature were to get any dumber, we would have to give them plant food and water them." I love it! Of course, there are a few good legislators on all sides, just not enough.

On another note, fuel prices are dropping just as I predicted in this column. We already see some supply chain inflationary issues reducing. Wheat is shipping out of Ukraine now, thank goodness. We need to hope for the tensions in the world (Russia, China) to relax, and things can start getting better.

Thanks for reading. May God bless us all!