

Pleasanton Express

Atascosa County Judge Weldon Cude Article 8/16/2023

In an inspiring demonstration of the commitment to improving rural communities, I witnessed a notable presentation led by Mr. Curtis Donaldson, the Director of Rural Medicine Outreach at Texas A&M School of Medicine. Mr. Donaldson's presentation opened with excitement and optimism as he outlined his innovative program that seeks to captivate the minds of young students and light the path to a future in the medical field. With its thoughtful long-term vision, this program holds the potential to transform rural Texas, including our very own Atascosa County. The program's driving purpose is to attract future medical professionals and leaders to rural Texas, a vision that aligns perfectly with our county. Mr. Donaldson's presentation showcased a deeply insightful approach to addressing the challenges faced by many rural communities like ours. His program aims to establish a direct and sustained engagement with school students, nurturing their interest in the medical field from an early age. By introducing rural students to a spectrum of opportunities in healthcare, the program aspires to instill a sense of purpose and aspiration among these young minds while simultaneously illustrating to college-level medical students the relationships, influence, and lifestyle of practicing medicine in a rural community. Investing in rural students and fostering a pipeline of skilled individuals who can contribute to and stay in rural Texas is a challenge that every professional field should take on, not only to empower students but as a strategy to revitalize and sustain various professional fields within regions like ours. The heart of this initiative by Texas A&M profoundly resonates with the aspirations of Atascosa County. Rural landscapes across Texas, including Atascosa County, have long desired sustainable solutions to medical professionals and resource scarcity. I am deeply grateful to Methodist Hospital Atascosa for recognizing the potential collaboration with Texas A&M's Rural Medicine program and for bringing this invaluable opportunity to my attention. As County Judge, I am ready for this program to launch and am excited about its potential. It is a rare opportunity to discover a bond that serves our youth's interests and paves the way for a stronger, healthier future for our entire community. By fostering a healthy environment of learning and growth through the program outlined by Mr. Donaldson, we take a significant step towards ensuring that Atascosa County continues to flourish. In pursuit of this program, Mr. Donaldson is spearheading the creation of a Community Stakeholder team comprised of community members to help launch the program and maintain its sustainability

over time. As a community stakeholder, you can help with student recruitment, offer insight for community alignment, and assist with the program's overall success in Atascosa. If you're interested in participating as a community stakeholder, please get in contact with me at countyjudge@co.atascosa.tx.us

As we look forward to working closely with Mr. Donaldson and his team; our shared vision showcases progress, hope, and collaboration. The past challenges have instilled in us the wisdom to recognize opportunity, and Mr. Curtis Donaldson's presentation has undoubtedly opened the door to a brighter future. As county Judge, I sincerely thank Mr. Curtis Donaldson, Methodist Hospital Atascosa, and Texas A&M for its vision and commitment to Rural Texas. Together we are Atascosa Proud!