

ATASCOSA COUNTY JUDGES REPORT

We are thrilled that through the efforts by Senator Zaffirini, Representative Guillen and Congressman Cuellar that Atascosa County has been added to the federal disaster category for private residences as well as businesses. This is, of course, for the freeze disaster we just went through. Register for help online at www.disasterassistance.gov. Use the FEMA mobile app, available at www.fema.gov/mobile-app. Call 7 a.m. to 11 p.m. ET, seven days a week at 1-800-621-3362 (also for 711 & VRS).

The Governor announced that effective March 10 he is lifting all COVID restrictions in Texas. If the local area goes above 15% hospital capacity, the County Judge may reimpose restrictions with certain limitations according to the Governor's EOGA34. This means all bars, restaurants and movie theaters open at 100% occupancy with no limitations on hours on March 10.

The Governor did recommend, and I agree, that people should voluntarily wear masks and socially distance. I recommend this for 30 to 60 more days. I think we need this time to immunize more people in this county. The Governor also did point out it is still legal for businesses to require masks and social distancing in their businesses. I believe in 60 more days we will begin to see the clearing at the edge of the woods to get out of this COVID mess. Vaccination is the key, as I have been saying. So, I implore all the citizens of Atascosa County to use caution for another 30 to 60 days and watch the numbers closely and get vaccinated as soon as possible.

The following was put out by Governor Abbott's office: "A statewide rental assistance and utility assistance program will begin at 8 a.m. on Feb. 15, 2021. You can access – texasrentrelief.com and/or call 1-833-989-7368. Renters and landlords will be directed to set up an account and proceed from there. We understand this will pay rent and utilities that are past due and currently due bills."

Don't forget, if you need to apply for the new business assistance money from the new Congressional COVID funds, go to <https://www.sba.gov/document/sba-form-2483-ppp-first-draw-borrower-application-form>.

Be safe and hang on. The end of COVID is coming.

Thanks for listening.