

ATASCOSA COUNTY JUDGES REPORT

It looks like we will receive a grant we applied for improving county roads. The state has made it available and we should be awarded the grant by October 1 of this year. The amount of the grant, after administration costs, will be a little over \$2 million. It will certainly be worth the work to get that help. We are struggling with the budget to get it balanced in a very difficult year. The ability to pave more county roads just takes us that much closer to better roads. The county has, for decades, spread base and graded. But that just washes out and has to be redone every year. In the last five years we have newly paved many miles of roads and this grant will be a big stretch of the county's money for paving more roads in the coming year. This is a real blessing.

I have told you about the application we have made for a "Public Defender" office for Atascosa, Wilson, Frio and Karnes. This will change how the indigent defense program in our county is set up and provide consistent and thorough legal representation for defendants and prisoners who cannot afford their own lawyer. These folks need advice on the complicated judicial system; including bail bond handling, early evidence discovery, and trial advice as well as the actual court representation. If we get it approved, court management should smooth out for the Judges in all courts, from county up through district. A wonderful extra benefit is that this grant will save up to \$250,000 a year for indigent defense. My meeting with TIDC (Texas Indigent Defense Commission) last Friday indicated that we passed the first phase in the first batch of applicants and would be unanimously recommended for approval. We will have the final word on Aug. 27.

Quote of the week, "If you look at what you have in life, you'll always have more. If you look at what you don't have in life, you'll never have enough." -Oprah Winfrey

Thanks for listening.

We want you to be proud of your County Government.