

## **ATASCOSA COUNTY JUDGES REPORT**

I would like to continue my previous column on accomplishments during my term as County Judge to date. Before I list any, I want to clearly say that nothing was achieved by me alone. I felt responsible to provide the leadership. I have been blessed with supportive commissioners from day one and they share in these achievements. My staff have worked hard with me on all issues.

Early on, I established a wellness initiative for all county employees. After several years of watching the county self-insurance program steadily losing big sums, I decided to find a good group health program for county employees. In my first three years, I observed our losses on the existing program vary from \$500,000 to over \$1,000,000 per annum. To cap our liabilities, I felt we needed a good group program and found that with Blue Cross. That program is in place for the second year and is going well. I led the initiative for a countywide animal control program to improve the quality of life for our residents. By working with the cities, we have extended this to all. People were in danger from roving packs of wild dogs. There were also many stray and dangerous dogs roving the county with no way to stop them. Through this program, serious dog attacks on citizens are a drastically reduced threat to the safety of our citizens.

I also led the initiative to finance, build and complete the Atascosa County Justice Center and complete significant expansion of the Atascosa County Jail. We now have enough extra beds that we can rent the space to other counties. The last report showed enough revenue from renting these cells to pay the note payment with a substantial amount left over per annum.

I pushed through a grant from TIDC to fund a public defender program for Atascosa, Wilson, Karnes and Frio Counties. This is in place now and working well. The public defender program should be saving the county a minimum of \$750,000 and up to \$1,000,000 per annum. Another grant I successfully brought in was a county road repair grant of \$200 million. More to come ...

Thank you. I pray that God will bless Atascosa County and all its citizens.