

ATASCOSA COUNTY JUDGES REPORT

We are moving forward with several projects I have been informing you on. One is the Public Defender program. We should see the transition beginning from our existing indigent defense to the Public Defender system within a week or so. This will also create jobs within our county and that is never a bad thing.

I should be closing in a few days on the small shop building that can house our expansion needs for document retention and storage. This will finally get the county where it needs to be and save us some money based on the options, we have had available. This means that the JJAEP (Juvenile Justice Alternative Education Program) will stay where it is for the time being. We have no plans to expand it or move at this time. The expensive alternative to putting expanded record retention in the new Justice Center is avoided. We will also pick up a small area to be the workshop for the county maintenance department.

There will be no one in this county happier to quit talking about COVID-19 when it is over than me, but for now I need to continue to warn everyone to be extremely careful. The numbers are scary, and the virus and its results are real. The state is organizing for the roll out of the vaccines in a few weeks and that cannot happen too soon. They have already designated eight to 10 health provider sites to administer the vaccine in our county. This cannot happen too soon for me. In the county we continue to have large numbers of individuals confirm positive and large numbers of positive cases in nursing homes.

I do anticipate increasing frustration over the restrictions, both legal and sensible, required because of COVID-19. I do understand and feel the frustration, too. All I can advise is please keep up the caution and hang on. Let us pray that the vaccine will stop this thing in its tracks.

May God bless you and keep you.

Thanks for listening.