

Williamson County Commissioner Terry Cook



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N E W S L E T T E R

October 2019 Volume 3 Issue 10

Terry's Message

Two momentous accomplishments have occurred this past month: The Safe-Routes-to-School initiatives have been established for Pearson Ranch Middle School and Elsa England Elementary and the pedestrian bridge was "raised" 18' above Brushy Creek and mounted on its abutments.

Pearson Ranch Road Safe-Routes-to-School

Parents from Avery Ranch, my office, the County Engineer, Austin City Council Member Jimmy Flannigan's office (for Austin in Wilco), RRISD representatives, and a RRISD Trustee met in Avery Ranch on June 25, 2018 to discuss speeding on Avery Ranch Blvd., the unsafe Avery Ranch Blvd @ Pearson Ranch Rd. intersection, and congestion and lack of safe crossing across Pearson Ranch Rd. at the two schools.

Another meeting was held refining the regional desire for safety requirements and on February 15, 2019, I attended an entire morning at TxDOT in Austin in a Safe-Routes-to-School training for the grant program. Turns out that program really funds things like sidewalks (or widening) and bike paths/bike racks. Well – these schools had all these things but the students in every case had to cross Pearson Ranch Road which was inadequately planned from the beginning of time, and some middle schoolers had to cross Avery Ranch Road to reach Pearson Ranch Middle School.

Jimmy and I returned to our respective offices and started searching for money to fund making it safer to cross Pearson Ranch Road and Avery Ranch Road. After more meetings with Austin Traffic Engineer Dipti Borkar and much emails with all the shareholders, we had a final requirements meeting and the following happened:

- Jen Duthie, Austin Traffic Engineer, produced the design for Pedestrian Hybrid Beacons (PHBs) for crosswalk
- Jimmy, I, Terron Evertson, our County Engineer, and Hal Hawes, the Commissioners Court lawyer, hashed out an Inner-Local Agreement between Austin and the County.
- Garry Brown, my executive assistant, got it on the Court's agenda, and the Commissioners Court approved it in June.
- Garry got the signed agreement over to Jimmy's office where his staff got it through the Austin review process and Austin City Council's approval process. Then, it was the height of vacation season and it sat for review by legal (I'm assuming) for a while. Jimmy was able to get it cut loose and the work got started!

I want you to know the Austin team of engineers, Jimmy's office, our Road and Bridge workers and Austin's subcontractors teamed up like a well-oiled machine and made huge strides. Last step was working with Pedernales Electric Cooperative on electrical breaker, metering, final inspections and approval! We were more than anxious to celebrate and each day towards the end seemed longer and longer.

On October 25, 2019, we all got emails announcing that the PHBs should be turned on for school release that day. I was down in San Marcos at a Community Advancement Network symposium on education initiatives for preparing students for the workforce. I tore out of the event as soon as it was over and went straight to Pearson Ranch Middle School. I got there just in time to observe the elementary stragglers and vehicular traffic's response to the PHBs! The two crossing guards and I had our own small celebration!

Next, what will RRISD Traffic and Safety do about the over-burdened campuses sharing single roads for all those vehicles? In the three years of the middle school's existence, the population is now approaching capacity and the elementary school is way past capacity. The traffic patterns designed are no longer sufficient. Only RRISD can solve that.

We haven't forgotten about the traffic light going in at Pearson Ranch Rd. and Avery Ranch Rd. Much of the pre-work has been done. Just waiting on the mast arms on which the lights will be mounted to come in. Due to steel tariffs and only 3 manufacturers in the US, we will have to wait a few months before they arrive.



Brushy Creek Regional Trail, Phase 5

Oh, the saga, cheers for the progress. BCRT expansion from Round Rock to Fern Bluff was only partially funded with the 2013 Park Bonds program. It took acquiring a CAMPO grant (thru TxDOT) to complete the funding, however, there was a catch. The grant funding was by the mile of trail land the county owned by an early TxDOT deadline in February 2018.

This section of the BCRT was the trickiest with 24 parcels of property, much of them with commercial owners. Our right-of-way team from Sheets and Crossfield worked long hard days – they acquired 18 of the parcels and closed on them by early February. I was working with Randy Bell, our former Park Director, on negotiating with a Faith Missionary Baptist Church deacon on possible passageways across the property when the hammer fell on the deadline. We had 6 parcels with two property owners to go, so, between the cost of the ROW and the length of the fully funded, owned-by-the-county trail ROW, the length of the trail was reduced from 2.7 miles to .931 miles. Fern Bluff would remain a distant vision.

Then an intern writer from Community Impact wrote an ever-so brief article and included the phrase “the project will beginand end just before reaching Faith Missionary Baptist Church ...” Well, all heck broke loose on social media with the Church being publicly condemned. It wasn’t their fault – we hadn’t finished negotiations; certainly couldn’t go to closing prior to the TxDOT deadline. Furthermore, the Church owned both sides of Brushy Creek. This trail expansion was going to greatly change their pastoral setting, and we wanted to be careful and thoughtful about a route across their property.

The fervor that erupted became a roadblock and both sides of the negotiations took a hiatus.

The project went out for bid in early 2019. The project was awarded to Round Rock’s own Chasco Constructors and on March 18, they were given notice to proceed. The initial run from behind the old 620 Café west to the first river crossing for the trail looked like a scene in an equatorial country – dense vegetation made it hard to see where you were going, and the entire crew got poison ivy, oak and sumac! Then the monsoons of the spring and early summer further taxed the team. However, they were seasoned professionals and not easily daunted.

The excitement surged with the arrival of the pedestrian bridge created in two parts in Colorado and transported via two trucks/trailers to Round Rock on the morning of October 18. The combined weight was over 35 tons, 121 ft long when assembled, 16.5’ wide – imagine the ire of the drivers on the road with this taking 2 lanes. They had to plan the route accordingly. Once down on the north shore of Brushy Creek, a very large crane lifted each section off and with over 350 bolts the two sections were joined. Then, using only four cables, the crane lifted the bridge and slowly transported it higher and higher as each end was pulled into place on the abutments – still takes muscle and rope – and lowered into place right as the sun was dropping in the horizon. Fall colors were ablaze (as much as they do here). There is a video posted under “Hot Topics” on the [Commissioner 1 webpage on Wilco.org](#). On that page, be sure to click on “Read More” to see the video!

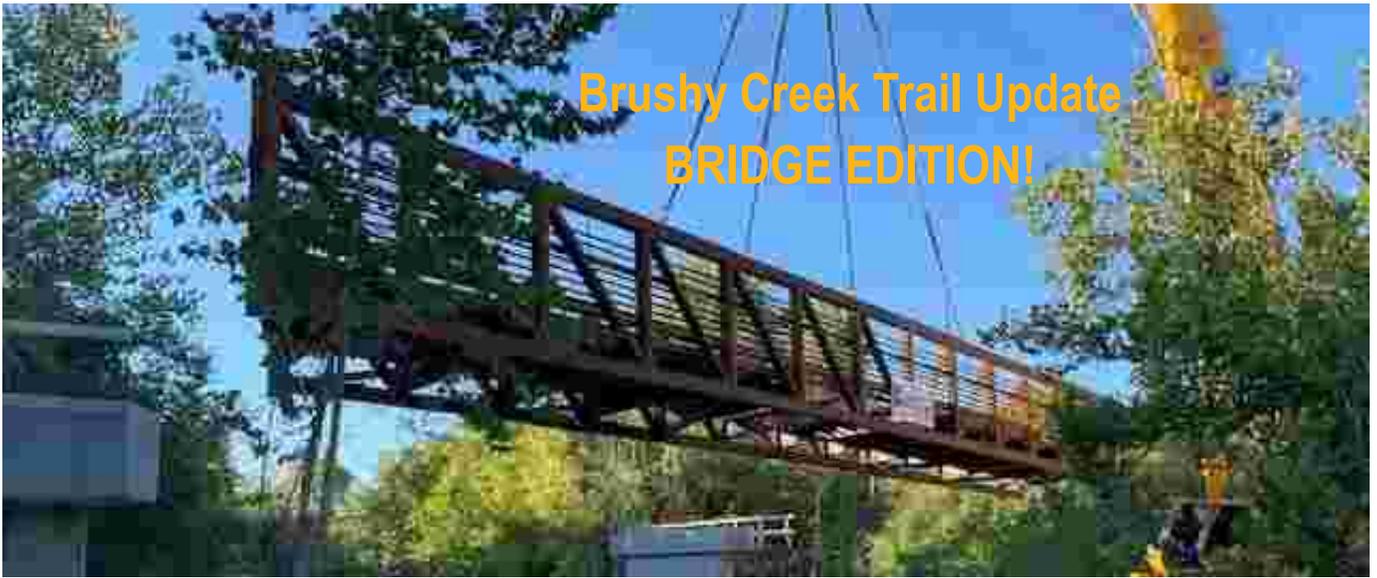
This week they started pouring concrete and developing the boardwalks which will be ADA compliant to get you onto the bridge.

This trail section may be completed in March; yes, it does terminate at Faith Missionary Baptist Church. Please stop and turn around for now. It is to connect with the Round Rock trail to allow you to journey eastward across Round Rock along Brushy Creek. Currently, I have no construction data on that.

PS – we are working on a win-win scenario with the church. I have high hopes. Then to the last property owner, which is now two.

This month, Commissioner Cook, her staff, and a few other county employees witnessed a new trail bridge being put into place. The bridge was hauled down from Colorado in two pieces, bolted together on site, then lifted into place. As you can see in some of these pictures, it was a very tight fit coming around corners and into the staging area. LCRA had to be called in because the crane was near the powerlines. The people getting the bridge into place were consummate professionals. No major issues getting it into place!

It spans 121 feet and sits 18 feet above the surface of Brushy Creek. When this bridge opens, you’re going to feel like you are walking amongst the tree tops! Enjoy this sneak peek!



Brushy Creek Trail Update BRIDGE EDITION!



Extension education in Williamson County is finally at full staff! Two new employees have been hired to serve the people of Wilco:

1. Hilary McClellan will work in 4H and youth development. Ms. McClellan holds a B.S. in Animal Production from Tarleton State University, and she has teaching experience in Frisco and Lovejoy ISDs.

2. Gary Pastushok will be the Agriculture and Natural Resources Extension Agent. Ms. Pastushok is an accomplished agricultural and biological research scientist who has worked in Canada and the United States.

Opportunities for Community Involvement



Williamson County Brown Santa appreciates your support in our efforts to assist families during the Holiday season. Please place a new, unwrapped toy in the Brown Santa barrels at the following locations:

- Williamson County Historical Courthouse**
710 Main St., Georgetown
- Williamson County Sheriff's Office**
508 S. Rock St, Georgetown
- Wilco Emergency Management**
911 Tracy Chambers Ln., Georgetown
- Williamson County Justice Center**
405 MLK Jr St., Georgetown
- Williamson County Inner Loop Annex**
301 SE Inner Loop, Georgetown
- Williamson County Regional Animal Shelter**
1855 SE Inner Loop, Georgetown
- Williamson County Pct 1**
1801 E Old Settlers Boulevard, Round Rock Suites 105 and 110
- Williamson County Pct 2**
350 Discovery Blvd, Cedar Park
- Williamson County Pct 3**
100 Wilco Way, Georgetown
- Williamson County Pct 4**
211 W 6th Street, Taylor
- Williamson County Tax Office**
904 S Main St., Georgetown

BEGINS OCTOBER 28th 2019 - NOVEMBER 22nd, 2019

Williamson County Sheriff's Office has joined the Coat Drive Competition. Help us support Coats for Kids and win this year's competition by dropping off new or gently used coats in a COATS FOR KIDS bin at one of the following locations: In Jester Annex: Suites 105 and 110

Williamson County Sheriff's Office -508 S. Rock St. Georgetown, TX 78628	McCoy Elementary School -401 Bellaire Dr. Georgetown, TX 78628
Williamson County Jester Annex -1801 E. Old Settler R.R., TX 78681	Village Elementary School -400 Village Commons Blvd, Georgetown, 78628
Williamson County Inner Loop Annex -301 S.E. Inner Loop Georgetown, TX 78626	Liberty Hill Intermediate School -101 TX-332 Loop. Liberty Hill, TX 78642
Williamson County Annex (Taylor Location) -412 Vance St. Taylor, TX 78574	Rahdall's Sun City Georgetown -5721 Williams Dr. Georgetown, TX 78633
Williamson County Annex (Cedar Park) -350 Discovery Blvd. Cedar Park, TX 78613	Gold's Gym at Round Rock -2400 S. IH-35 Frontage Rd. R.R., TX 78681
Ford Elementary School -210 Woodlake Dr. Georgetown, TX 78633	Round Rock Christian Academy -301 N. Lake Creek Dr. Round Rock, TX 78681

Hope Alliance
Survive Thrive Prevent 5K
Saturday, November 16, 2019
9:00AM

Hope Alliance's mission is to assist those whose lives have been affected by family and sexual violence by providing services and developing partnerships that lead to hope, healing, and prevention.

To learn more about the race and register, click their logo.



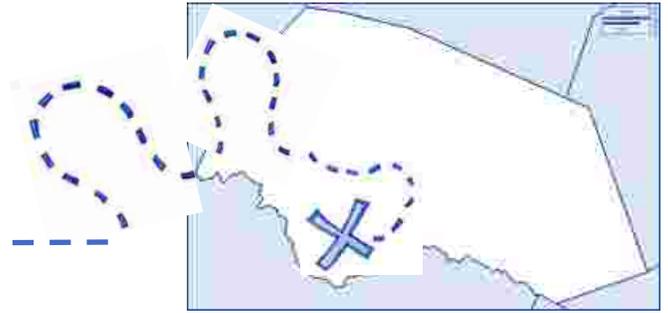
The 10th Annual Fur Ball, presented by the Williamson County Regional Animal Shelter and Fans of WCRAS will be held on Saturday, November 23, from 6 p.m. to 9 p.m. at the Sheraton Georgetown Texas Hotel & Conference Center located at 1101 Woodlawn Avenue in Georgetown. To purchase tickets and for more details, click the logo!



- Pavilion's 2nd Birthday Open House – Thursday, November 7 from 10 am to 2 pm at 1420 Palm Valley (St. Richard's Episcopal Church) in Round Rock. Come help us celebrate and learn more about all of the work we are doing and plan to do!

- 3rd Annual Williamson County Mental Health/Substance Abuse Community Forum sponsored by Pavilion and open to the public– This important event (last year's event sparked some changes in our county) will be held on Monday, November 18 at Celebration Church from 7 p.m. to 9 p.m. We have a great panel lined up as we address the family issues surrounding mental illness and substance abuse in our community.

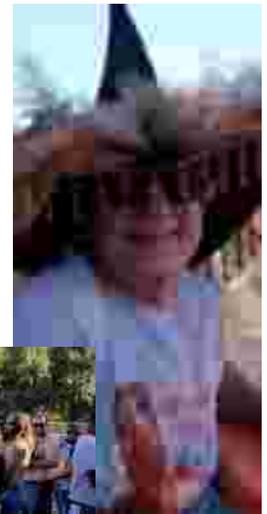
Where is Commissioner Cook?



The Heart of Round Rock HOA invited Commissioner Cook to speak to their residents about the projects on the 2019 bond election. Great discussion!



The Round Rock Chamber, as well as Commissioner Cook, helped welcome Workforce Solutions and their new office to Round Rock.



Commissioner Cook was a judge of the Hairy Man Contest at the Hairy Man Festival recently. This was the 2nd time that she has been a judge. Once in a while, you get to let your hair down as Commissioner. (pun intended!)



#WESTWOODVOTES 2019

Austin City Council Member Jimmy Flannigan invited Commissioner Terry Cook and Texas Representatives John Bucy, Celia Israel, and Vikki Goodwin to encourage Westwood High School seniors to register to vote. The League of Women Voters helped students determine which county they lived in to determine in which county to register. A similar rally was held at McNeil High School last month. This was the 2nd year that voter registration rallies were held at each high school.



FINAL
EDITION

Times

EXTRA!
EXTRA!

Cook: Central Texas' aging population, caregivers need more services

According to the U.S. Census Bureau, the Central Texas regions hosts the second fastest growing population of adults 65 and older and the fastest growing population of adults 55 to 64.

The Aging Services Council of Central Texas reports that by 2040 more than a half-million seniors, or 517,772, will live in Bastrop, Caldwell, Hays, Travis and Williamson counties and comprise nearly 18 percent of the Central Texas population.

Many seniors already do or will rely on adult caregivers, who are often family members.

AGE of Central Texas, a nonprofit, operates licensed activity and health service centers in Round Rock and Austin for seniors. The Thrive Social and Wellness Centers provide daytime care for older adults with physical or cognitive needs, with 90% suffering from memory loss or dementia.

These centers also provide caregivers who are still in the workforce a place that is safe, engaging and active for their senior loved ones. They also serve as a place of respite for other caregivers.

On a typical day at one of the centers, members enjoy coffee, breakfast and conversation until about 10 a.m. After that, they can participate in activities scheduled throughout the day focused on both mental and physical stimulation.

The centers are open weekdays from 7 a.m. to 5:30 p.m.

In a 2018 survey conducted by AGE of 400 Central Texas residents, one in 10 consider themselves a caregiver to an older adult and three in 10 say they will be one in the future, while almost one in five are not sure.

To read the rest of the story, click [here](#).

IN COMMISSIONERS COURT



For the 3rd year in a row, the Rotary Club of Georgetown will host the Annual Field of Honor in Central Texas. It is held November 9–17 at the San Gabriel Park Activity Field where over 12500 full size U.S. flags will be on display ready for purchase and dedication. It is quite a site! To learn more, click [here](#).



October 6–12 was proclaimed as National 4-H Week in Williamson County. A few 4-H students across the county came to Commissioners Court to help celebrate.



Did you know that addiction is one of the most rapidly growing epidemics? Only 1.4% of people age 12 or older received treatment in 2018. 22.2% of Williamson County adults report excessive drinking.

October is Substance Abuse Prevention Month, and the week of October 24 -31 is Red Ribbon Week promoted by the LifeSteps Coalition, which encourages #iLiveRed- Resilient, Empowered, and Drug-free lives. Commissioner Cook was happy to sponsor this proclamation.

Road Updates

620 at Railroad/Chisholm Trail– Right of Way acquisition and design are complete. This is a TxDOT project with county and City of Round Rock financial assistance (cash only). STILL waiting on utility relocation, although we've been told this should be finished this month. Construction start is anticipated in early 2020.

Great Oaks Bridge at Brushy Creek Rd.– All plans are to be 100% completed in November. Drainage is being re-evaluated to meet federal newly released rainfall intensities in accordance to National Oceanic and Atmospheric Administration's (NOAA) ATLAS 14. US Army Corps of Engineers have approved the plan, but other approvals will be coming this fall. The construction is fully funded through the 2013 bond and is anticipated to begin Spring 2020.

Hairy Man Rd./Brushy Creek Rd. Safety Improvements– The Brushy Creek MUD, Fern Bluff MUD, and Commissioners Court have approved the Interlocal Agreement (ILA). Additional hydrologic and hydraulic mitigation of the project is completed. Right of way acquisition nearly completed for this 2013 bond project. Design work is done and under review. This is a safety project. The construction is fully funded, and the start is anticipated early 2020 pending right of way acquisition.

N. Mays St. Extension from Paloma Dr. to Oakmont Dr.– Embankment work at the south end of the project continues. The bridge, a long, 4-lane project over a flood plain, is being constructed; concrete beams and bridge deck panels are being installed. A wastewater line was installed to the north of Paloma Dr. and a concrete pipe was installed at the north end of the project. This is a joint project of the City of Round Rock and Williamson County that runs parallel to I-35 to take some traffic off of the interstate, and give the proposed Nutty Brown venue a 2nd entrance/exit. Substantial completion slated for Spring 2020.

University Blvd. widening from IH-35 to Sunrise Rd.– Design and right of way acquisition is complete, and utility relocation efforts are ongoing. Construction start is anticipated in late 2019. University Ave., which turns into Chandler Rd., takes you to Texas 95 north of Taylor, making this a very important East-West connector.

Pond Springs Road Area Drainage Improvements– A meeting with the City of Austin, TxDOT, and the Central Texas Regional Mobility Authority (CTRMA) has taken place to discuss shared use of a retention pond already in the area. The CTRMA is determining the maximum drainage capacity of that pond. Commissioner Cook made this one of her top 4 priority projects in Precinct 1 for the 2019 bond list. This has been a long-time drainage/flood area issue.

Forest North Drainage Improvements Phase III– A geologic assessment, karst survey, and an endangered species report have been finalized, as has a survey. Easement agreements are on-going, and meetings with residents to discuss and answer design questions continue. This project is Commissioner Cook's #1 Priority in Precinct 1 for the 2019 Bond Program. It is to complete the massive drainage program in this flat, slightly sloping neighborhood established in the 1970's and subject to flooding. **Anderson Mill zone is complete, and where sod was placed was at the suggestion and expense of the contractor. The additional work at Tottenham Ct. has begun with the excavation for the underdrain pipe. Substantial completion is anticipated Fall 2019.**



Friday, November 1 is the last day to vote early. Tuesday November 5 is Election Day.

- **10 State Constitutional Amendments**
- **Williamson County Road and Park Bond Election**
- **Other possible municipal propositions**

See the League of Women Voters voting guide on the state constitutional amendments [here](#).

Find your nearest polling location [here](#).

The Mission, Vision,
and Value Statements
of the Williamson
County Commissioner
Precinct 1 Office

MISSION

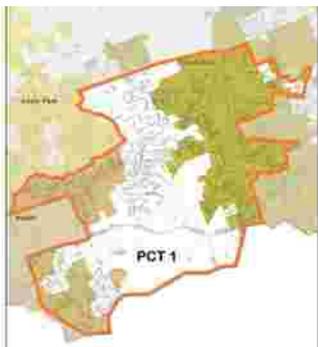
To lead pro-actively on the Williamson County Commissioners Court while advocating for the constituents of Precinct 1 and the county at-large from a foundation of collaboration and respect.

VISION

To transform Williamson County government into a more accessible, responsive, transparent, and well-managed organization for our residents, so that we become the community recognized as the best in central Texas to live and enjoy.

VALUES

Accountability, commitment, integrity, and respect form the core values that guide the Williamson County Commissioner Precinct 1 office.



CONTACT US!

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SEE US ON THE INTERNET!

Williamson County's Website! - www.wilco.org

Our office's web site- Terry Cook, Commissioner Pct 1

Commissioner Cook
keeps meeting with many
MUD Boards and HOAs.
To invite her to your
meeting, contact Doris at
doris.sanchez@wilco.org

In case of
Emergency
DIAL 911

Important Phone Numbers (non-emergency)

Austin Fire Department	512-974-0130
County Judge Bill Gravell	512-943-1550
Jollyville Fire Department (ESD 1)	512-258-1038
Round Rock Fire Department (ESD 9)	512-218-5590
Sam Bass Fire Department (ESD 2)	512-255-0100
Williamson Central Appraisal District	512-930-3787
Williamson County Landfill	512-759-8881
Williamson County Regional Animal Shelter	512-943-3322
Williamson County Sheriff's Office	512-864-8282

Want to know even more about what's happening in Williamson County?

Sign up for the WILCounty Line E-newsletter! Click [here](#) to sign up!