

**Williamson County
Commissioner
Terry Cook**

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April 2020 Volume 4 Issue 4

PRECINCT 1



PCT 1





In times such as we are living in now, there can be so much misinformation floating around, some of it purposeful, but much of it forwarded by well-meaning people through email and social media.

Below are trusted sources where you can see updated information as we move forward. *This is by no means an exhaustive list.* Please be sure that when you post or forward any information that it comes from a credible source.

Be safe everyone. Frequently, wash those hands, stay at home as much as you can, and when you have to go out, keep yourself at a safe distance from the next person.

Click on the logos to get more information.



**Williamson County &
Cities Health District**



TEXAS
Health and Human Services

For their statewide dashboard click [HERE](#). Information includes, but is not limited to, cases and facilities by county and region, and numbers of hospital beds and ventilators.

DID YOU KNOW that Commissioner Cook has a Facebook page? Other information regarding responses during this pandemic can be found [here](#).

WILLIAMSON COUNTY AND CITIES HEALTH DISTRICT COVID-19 RESPONSE



Investigates Positive Cases and Identifies Potential Exposures

Hospitals and Clinics notify WCCHD of confirmed COVID-19 positive cases. Epidemiologists contact and investigate each case to determine exposure, travel history, and more.



Monitors Potential Exposures and Ensures Quarantine Adherence

WCCHD has a Persons Under Monitoring (PUM) team that contacts Williamson County residents who have had an exposure to COVID-19. The PUM team conducts daily calls to check for new symptoms.



Analyzes and Reports Data

WCCHD analyzes data and updates a public facing daily dashboard and internal City report to ensure that information is timely and accurate.



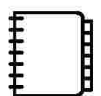
Answers Provider and Public Phone Calls

WCCHD connects public phone calls to the appropriate source and routes healthcare providers to the Epidemiology team when new COVID-19 cases are confirmed.



Issues Control Orders to Ensure Safety

WCCHD's Medical Director and Local Health Authority issues Control Orders which provides legal enforcement to ensure compliance of infection control recommendations.



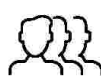
Plans and Conducts Emergency Preparedness Actions

WCCHD plans and prepares for future activities that may occur during COVID-19 response.



Investigates Outbreaks and Provides Infection Control Guidance

WCCHD Epidemiologists monitor outbreaks, conduct site visits, and provide infection control guidance to prevent future outbreaks.



Recruits and Trains Volunteers

WCCHD organizes and trains volunteers through the Medical Reserves Corps.

Williamson County and Cities Health District
www.wcchd.org/COVID-19



The Message



Covid-19's Got Nothing on the 2020 Census

Just in case you weren't aware, the Census for 2020 is still at play and open for business. April 1, 2020 was the official Census count date; however, Covid-19 raised its ugly spikes and certainly diverted attention. The good news is 1) you don't need to go out in public to respond – with your 6"x9" instructions mailed in mid-March to each address, it contains your Census ID that you use to go on-line to my2020census.gov and complete the census for all the individuals in your household. 2) Lost that information before responding? No worries, call 1-844-330-2020.



Williamson County led the counties of Central Texas in response. The Community Impact gave us high marks in mid-April:

As of April 13, Williamson County had the highest percentage of census response among counties in Central Texas as well as in the state of Texas, according to U.S. Census Bureau data. Cheers for the Wilco Complete Count Committee and responsive citizens!

Below, courtesy of Community Impact by [Ali Linan](#) | 10:05 AM Apr. 15, 2020 CDT | Updated 11:41 AM Apr. 15, 2020 CDT

UPDATED: Williamson County leads in census response for Texas



So far, 51.6% of Williamson County residents have completed the census, data shows.

About 48.1% of the nation's households have responded to the census either online or by phone, up from 45.7% a week prior. And in Texas, 43.7% of people have responded, up from 41.1% a week prior, data shows.

Here is a breakdown of Central Texas response rates so far.

- Bastrop County: 39%
- Comal County: 50.1%
- Hays County: 42.4%
- Travis County: 47.3%
- Williamson County: 51.6%

Now, Covid-19 has usurped the headlines leaving the 2020 Census in the February news cycles. On April 13, [the bureau announced it is extending its self-response timeline from July 31 to Oct. 31](#) due to coronavirus concerns. Households can still respond to the census online, by phone or by mail. This does have significant impacts to states and their election schedules and redistricting.

Common Cause reported on April 27 the proposed Census timeline changes forced by the pandemic:

Enumeration (the Count):

Planned Schedule: March 12-July 31

Revised Schedule: March 12-October 31

Apportionment Counts (dividing 435 US House seats among 50 states):

Planned Schedule: March 12-July 31

Revised Schedule: April 30, 2021*

Redistricting Counts (geographically defining state legislative districts):

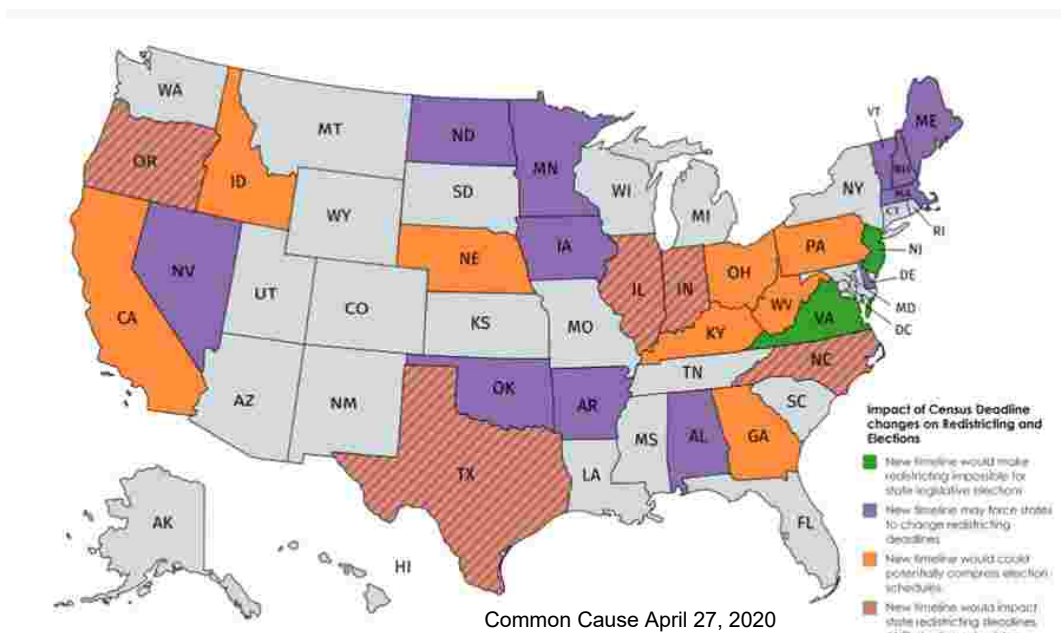
Planned Schedule: by April 1, 2021

Revised Schedule: July 31, 2021*

*Must be approved by Congress

There are significant problems that arise by the proposed shifts in deadlines:

- Virginia & New Jersey have primary elections in 2021 that would precede receipt of the census data and therefore before redistricting.
- 17 states have initial redistricting deadlines that are earlier than the Census Bureau's proposed deadline for giving them the necessary data.
- 13 states have 2022 primary elections in the spring (May 24 or earlier), which could have negative impacts on those states' election schedules.



Each person counted at an address, citizen or non-citizen, could bring federal funding to the local community of \$15,000 over a ten-year period. **The 2020 Census Digital Action Weekend is May 1-3**—do yours if you haven't!

Census data results in government funding for, and representation of, communities. Remember, completing the Census can be done over internet, telephone or by US mail – your choice, COVID-free.

Williamson County & LivePD

On April 28 in Commissioners Court, we commissioners had significant discussion in Executive Session followed by a public condemnation of Sheriff Chody action to recruit Big Fish Entertainment, LLC to return to our county and film for the LivePD TV show on the A&E network. This is a summary of most of our issues.

1. When Williamson County terminated the 2019 Access Agreement with Big Fish, multiple restrictions on Big Fish were specifically listed for their operation in the county:
 - No permission to enter upon and film at offices, facilities or in vehicles
 - No permission to photograph, record or otherwise film names, voices, likeness, images, trademarks, service marks, tradenames, logos, copyrighted materials, or other materials of Williamson County
 - No access to areas with Williamson County facilities to stage operations, recharge batteries or undertake any part of production-activities
2. The Sheriff does not have the authority to contract or otherwise permit use of county (taxpayer-owned) properties to other entities. In this case gifting of county properties are occurring to a for-profit organization. It is well established in Texas that the County Commissioners Court is the governing body of the county, and as such, it alone has authority to make contracts binding on the county unless specifically provided by statute. Only the County Commissioners Court can commit to a contract concerning county assets and services. For instance, when you see patrolmen and their vehicles helping with church traffic, that is done thru a contract with the church approved by the Commissioners Court.
3. No LivePD stops have resulted in prosecutions. Absence of evidence, especially video taken by Big Fish, does not provide a case for the District Attorney's office to pursue.
4. We are under emergency orders due to a major pandemic – non-essential travel and operation of businesses with in-person customers are prohibited. Social distancing and face masks are critical to limit person-to-person spread of Covid-19. You cannot have a Big Fish camera person in a vehicle with an officer and have them 6' apart.
5. Our insurance company for the Sheriff's vehicles, Travelers, informed the county on Monday, April 27, 2020, that the cost of insurance would rise considerably should the department continue to participate in LivePD filming.

While there are many other reasons this activity is inappropriate for the county, I will stop here. Local government code does not list "entertainment" as a duty for the Sheriff's department.

The court voted 4-0, Gravell recused himself, to have our legal counsel send a cease and desist letter to Big Fish Entertainment, LLC this week. Additionally, we voted 4-0 for our counsel to interview potential outside counsel to represent the county to file a lawsuit, if needed. We, the county taxpayers, are not protected from damages and lawsuits as a result of activity of LivePD filming and the behavior of those involved.



Brushy Creek Trail



Because of the pandemic situation we find ourselves in, we cannot go out to the trail to take pictures, so we have to do the next best thing.

At left are examples of what the railings might look like for the trail leading up to the bridge and in some other areas. It will closely match material of the rails already on the bridge over Brushy Creek.



Construction Continues on Wilco Projects

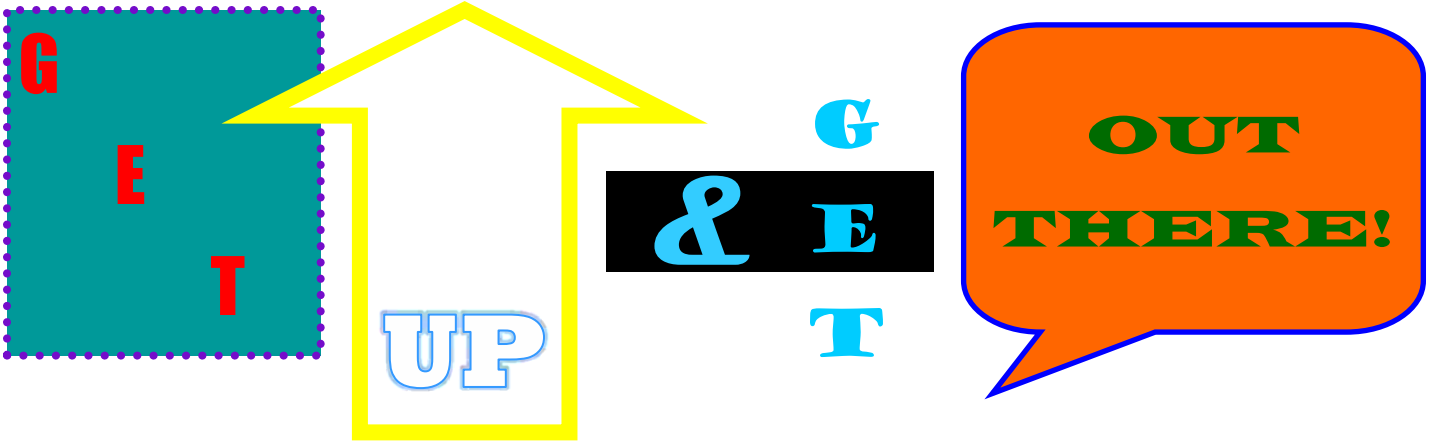


Upper left is the long-awaited (since 2015) new bay for ambulance, Medic 11, which is located at the Jester Annex campus, next to the Sheriff and EMS building, west of the Annex on Old Settlers Blvd. This will allow EMS to store an ambulance with its equipment and supplies inside a structure to get it out of the elements.

Upper right, you can see the new playscape being constructed on the site of the old splash pad at Champion Park. Work continues, including installing a perimeter barrier and placement of material to cushion falls, but it will not be open until county parks reopen when it's safe.



The third picture shows work being done to relocate waterlines for Brushy Creek and Fern Bluff MUDs. This is in anticipation for the Great Oaks bridge replacement. Waterline connections for the Brushy Creek lines happens May 1 and Fern Bluff's is scheduled for May 7.



Commissioner Cook was tasked with keeping up the spirits of the Williamson County staff. She has put together a weekly flier that contains a number of links to things that make you laugh, music, art, virtual tours of all kinds, activities for kids, workouts, and moments of zen.

On this page and the next one are some of those links. Click on the logos, pictures, or where it says "HERE." Hope you enjoy! If you would like to receive these weekly fliers, please email Garry Brown at garry.brown@wilco.org, and he will send you a couple.

Looooooooong moment of Zen [HERE](#)



Works best with Chrome



And the coronavirus



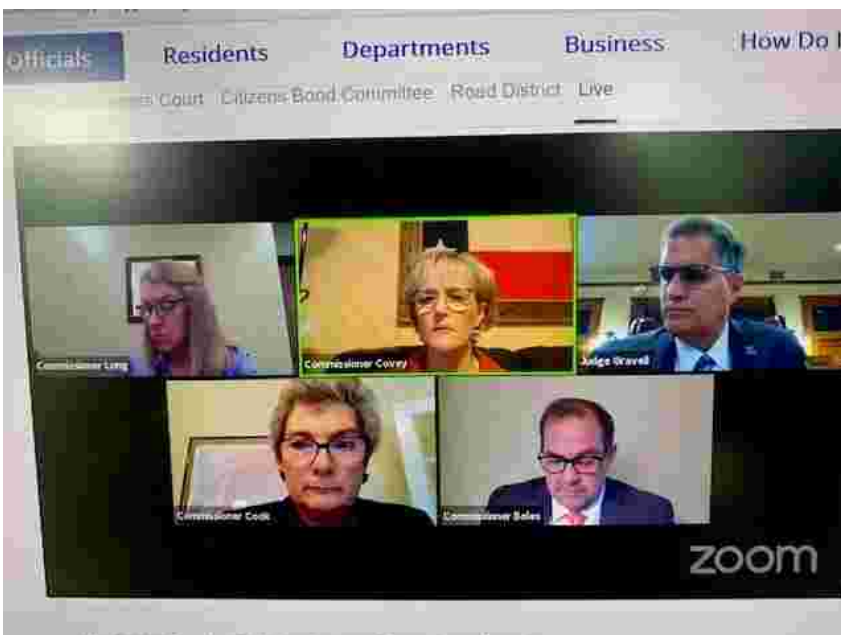


The British Museum

Short Moments of Zen [HERE](#) and [HERE](#)



In Commissioners Court



Aaaaand here they are!

Are you aware that Commissioners Court is still taking place every week at the same day and time during the pandemic?

Every Tuesday morning at 9:30, our Court proceeding is broadcast live on Zoom.

You can see future sessions [HERE](#).

In The News **Cook: Planning sustainable jobs now and after coronavirus**

I offer my condolences to those who have lost loved ones to COVID-19 and prayers for those battling this disease.

As we look toward a brighter future, we must also consider employment, including for those displaced by the coronavirus.

On March 16, the county issued the order restricting gatherings to no more than 50 people to help reduce the spread of COVID-19. Four days before, when we were greeting with elbows instead of shaking hands, I offered the keynote speech at TDIndustries' registered apprenticeship kickoff in Round Rock.

TDIndustries provides a 20-week training program for HVAC and plumbing employees as their first step of apprenticeship. Participants learn the basics of their trade in the first course and receive advanced training in subsequent semesters.

Apprenticeships are geared for occupations, not just skills. According to the U.S. Department of Labor, 94% of apprentices who complete an apprenticeship retain employment, with an average annual salary of \$70,000.

The U.S. Department of Labor can provide guidance and certification for apprenticeships, but programs differ among states and regions. Certified apprenticeships can then become registered, but there are other programs not certified.

Workers over age 45 comprise 53% of skilled trades occupations in this country alone, yet many will be retiring in the next 15 years.

Industries — including every kind of restaurant — are worried. If technical schools could produce twice the current rate of graduates, the demand for skilled workers still would not be satisfied.

In 2018, Deloitte and the Manufacturing Institute conducted a study on the skills gap and future for jobs in many areas of manufacturing.

The study found that manufacturing industries are projecting 2.4 million unfulfilled jobs by 2028, with a potential loss of \$454 billion in loss of product in 2028 alone.

As tuition at four-year colleges and universities escalated through the years, community colleges transitioned from being training grounds for many of the trade skills to becoming prep schools for students wanting to transfer to these four-year institutions, saving students costs overall.

Meanwhile America's colleges and universities have kept pumping out people with limited employment skills beyond minimum wage service industries.

Just look around and notice "Now Hiring" signs on trucks and billboards, on social media (including Facebook ads), at entrances to industrial businesses, and on flyers and nearly every company's website.

Skilled "human-machine" teaming is necessary for the increasingly complicated equipment and processes industries require.

Many are calling this era the "Fourth Industrial Revolution" as machinery and equipment have gotten more sophisticated." In this transformed digital workspace, employers need workers who have critical thinking skills, are creative, pay attention to detail and are problem-solvers.

My brother in North Carolina owns an HVAC business and has been struggling for years to find enough workers with the appropriate soft skills to fill his residential and commercial positions. He now is adding a plumbing group, and his daughter will head that division.

With her bachelor's degree in business, she has helped grow their HVAC company. She's now training and completing an internship in plumbing to develop the skills to competently manage and grow the new plumbing division.

Schools and companies must produce appealing programs to attract the younger generations to the trades to establish a long-lasting workforce.

They must also "sell" the idea of an apprenticeship program to parents by helping them recognize that their kids may be motivated to work using their hands and their heads, and I don't mean just typing.

- continued next page

Although people associate apprenticeships with unions which started these programs, today any business can start or run an apprenticeship program. Many community and technical colleges are now offering apprenticeships.

A business can offer an apprenticeship to train current workers to perform functions differently or to train new workers. Apprenticeships are not just for high school graduates or unemployed people, but also for trade and economically dislocated workers, veterans, disabled people, or college, career and trade school participants.

We pay for registered apprenticeships with our tax dollars. They can create a more flexible workforce through higher skills, cultural and gender diversification, and a talent pipeline of skilled workers for future workforce needs, especially during these trying times.

And the best news is that you get a full-time paycheck while working through an apprenticeship. There are at least three registered apprenticeships in Round Rock: Ventana Glass and TDIndustries for HVAC and plumbing.

Stay safe and well!

DID YOU KNOW that you can see the events that were attended by Commissioner Cook on her official Williamson County office's website? You'll also be able to read her poems, too. Although she's not attending anything right now, you can see all past events [here](#).



Where is Commissioner Cook?



COMMISSIONER COOK AND HER STAFF HAVE BEEN WORKING FROM HOME DURING THE PANDEMIC AND HOPES THAT YOUR JOB ALLOWS YOU TO DO SO, TOO. FOR THOSE WHO ARE ON THE FRONT LINES AND CANNOT STAY HOME TO WORK— GROCERY STORE, CONSTRUCTION, AND SANITATION WORKERS, SMALL BUSINESSES TRYING TO STAY AFLOAT, AND THOSE OF YOU IN HOSPITALS, NURSING HOMES, EMS, AND WORKING WITH OUR MOST VULNERABLE POPULATIONS— THANK YOU SEEMS SO MUNDANE. BUT, OUR COMMUNITY COULD NOT DO THIS WITHOUT YOU. ALL OF US OWE YOU A GREAT DEBT!

ROAD UPDATES

620 at Railroad/Chisholm Trail– Utilities were thought to be clear, but some undocumented ones have been found, and crews are working to relocate them. It will be open for traffic during construction, but might be slow going. Make plans for alternate routes. Estimated completion date is Summer 2022. Initial construction is away from the current lanes.

Great Oaks Bridge at Brushy Creek Rd.– Movement of the waterlines are moving forward despite the rain, and there's hope that this part will be completed by the end of May 2020, weather permitting. There has been some downstream discoloration of the water in the creek, but that is the result of natural processes and has nothing to do with the waterline moves, which are underway. The Texas Commission on Environmental Quality (TCEQ) has given its final approval for the plans for the bridge. 5 utility companies are working on their relocation designs. Roadway designs are being finalized. The old bridge will remain in use during construction. The construction is fully funded through the 2013 bond and is anticipated to begin Fall 2020 and take 18-24 months to complete and set to finish in Spring 2022. Learn more [HERE](#).

Great Oaks Water Line Relocations– The county parks department closed a portion of the Brushy Creek Regional Trail at Great Oaks Drive for this relocation project. Waterlines for Brushy Creek and Fern Bluff MUDs are being relocated prior to the start of the Great Oaks Drive bridge replacement over Brushy Creek. For safety in and around the construction area, the Trail will be closed at the boardwalk at Creekside Park to just east of the Great Oaks Drive and Hairy Man Road intersection. **Fern Bluff water line**: trenching is complete, 12" pipe has been laid, and area has been backfilled. Material has been placed under the bridge over Brushy Creek to keep the bats from roosting there. **Brushy Creek water line**: excavation has taken place and both the 12' and 24' pipes have been laid and completed on the northside. Excavation has begun on the southside. A boring technique is being used to place pipes under the road and tree roots. Substantial completion is anticipated May 2020.

Hairy Man Rd./Brushy Creek Rd. Safety Improvements– Everything you could possibly want to know about this project is at this [website](#). We're still considering a few options in road alignment to maintain as much of the canopy over the road as possible. Design will be revised, then project is ready for bids. Construction start is not slated to begin until late summer.

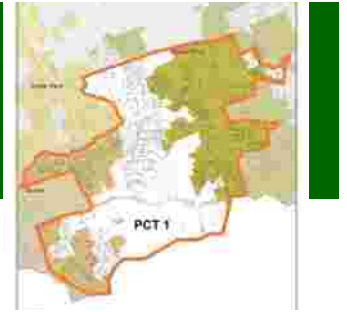
N. Mays St. Extension from Paloma Dr. to Oakmont Dr.– This is a 4-lane bridge project over a flood plain. Bridge rails were formed and poured on north and southbound sides of the bridge. Chip seal and asphalt have been placed on north- and southbound N. Mays north of the bridge. AT&T's work is COMPLETE(!), and Spectrum cleared on south end of bridge and is proceeding on north end and hopefully will be done by mid-May. Commissioner Cook is trying to hurry them along as roadwork cannot proceed until they are clear. The drainage pond is free of utility work and can be completed at Oakmont Dr. This is a joint project of the City of Round Rock and Williamson County that runs parallel to I-35 and will take traffic off of I-35 by supplanting Oakmont Dr. with N. Mays St. across University Ave., to Westinghouse Rd. Substantial completion slated for Summer 2020.

University Blvd. widening from IH-35 to Sunrise Rd.– Design and right of way acquisition are complete, and utility relocation efforts are ongoing. Road construction to start Summer 2020. This is a City of Round Rock project for which the county has contributed \$5M. University Ave., which turns into Chandler Rd., takes you to Texas 95 north of Taylor, making this a very important East-West connector. Project slated to finish in early 2022.

Pond Springs Road Area Drainage Improvements– GOOD NEWS! TxDOT will allow the use of the area's drainage pond pending approval of an agreement between TxDOT, the County, and the City of Austin. Drainage design on the preferred option is advancing, and utility relocations are unknown at this time. Project was on the voter approved 2019 bond list.

Forest North Drainage Improvements Phase III– All easement agreements are done. Waterline designs are with the City of Austin, because they own the lines and thus, are responsible for their design. This project went to bid. The court is expected to approve the selected low bidder next week, and it will be the 1st 2019 Bond Project to start construction, which is anticipated Summer 2020.

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 values that guide the Williamson County Commissioner Precinct 1 office.

CONTACT US!

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EXECUTIVE ASSISTANT: Garry Brown
512-244-8615, garry.brown@wilco.org

SEE US ONLINE!!!

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

Our office's web site- [Terry Cook, Commissioner Pct 1](#)

Non-Emergency Phone Numbers

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!

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