

Williamson County Commissioner Terry Cook

NEWSLETTER

March 2022 Volume 6 Issue 3



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Williamson County
closes on April 15

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sign up for the WIL-
COunty Line E-
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The Message

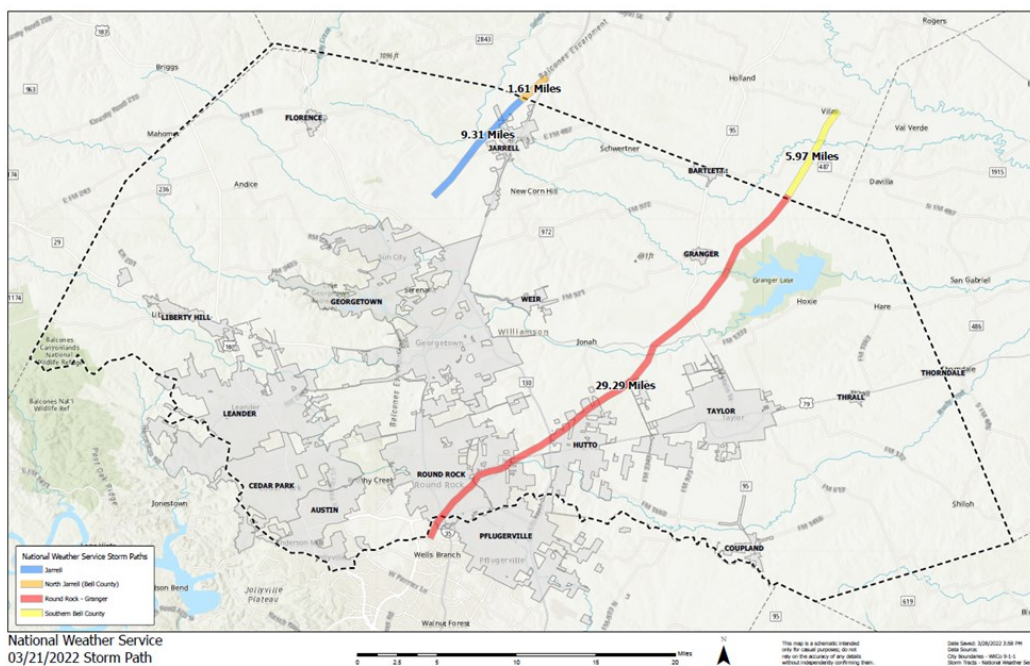


Nature's Fury Unleashed

Just over a week ago, nature gave Williamson County, as well as many others, a lashing. Miraculously, no one died amidst the destructive paths of numerous tornadoes.

The tornado that began in Round Rock at SH45 and I-35 spun and turned over numerous vehicles and ripped through the glass fronts of many stores hopped northeastward ripping through several long-established neighborhoods on its rampage toward Kalahari where it caused little building damage but smooshed rows of vehicles. It then proceeded to the Round Rock wastewater plant but skipped it and came down behind the Walmart on Redbud at SH79 and roared down the north-side right-of-way during rush hour where eastbound traffic is bumper-to-bumper. It did take out Eli's Roadside Market where the food trucks and the produce market have long fed the masses. Rose up to just drop down on a new subdivision development, Cottonwood Farm, in Hutto. This tornado was assessed as an F2 on the Fujita scale or EF2 on the Enhanced Fujita scale, a significant or strong tornado with winds from 111-135mph for an unusually long distance of 35.26 miles.

The second Williamson County tornado began just west of the northern-most corner of Sun City and traveled 10.92 miles through the northern side of Jarrell into Bell County. This was determined to be an EF3 with winds of 136-165MPH. Much farmland, barns, equipment and homes were destroyed.



We held a special Commissioners Court to extend the Disaster declaration out a month to provide extended access for those affected to obtain services and needed assistance. But testimonials today in court gave evidence of communities rising up to assist those who lost much in those storms. AL Clauson trash hauler started distributing rollofs immediately, the Granger Cotton Club became a distribution center for tarps, food, water, and nearly anything else needed. Honey Buckets began distributing port-o-lets. All Constable offices are involved in damage assessment along with our

Emergency Management personnel and the cities truly engaged in helping their residents. Round Rock established a Multi-agency Response Center (MARC) out at Dell Diamond and the County opened the Expo in Taylor for the last days of March as a MARC. Round Rock had trash services continuously moving through the affected areas of Round Rock (no small feat – narrow roads and pickup trucks everywhere with crews working).

The Commissioners Court voted to terminate a variety of fees at our county dump for those bringing in destruction debris with special coupons now being handed out. This kind of debris is very tough for the dump to handle because so much shredding is necessary to compact the trash.

For information as to how you may help, please go to Wilco.org and scroll down the page to see the most current list. Round Rock Cares has been activated to raise funds for those affected. Donations can be made through the Round Rock Community Foundation, rcommunityfoundation.org.



Where is Commissioner Cook?

Community Medical Services

Clinic Description

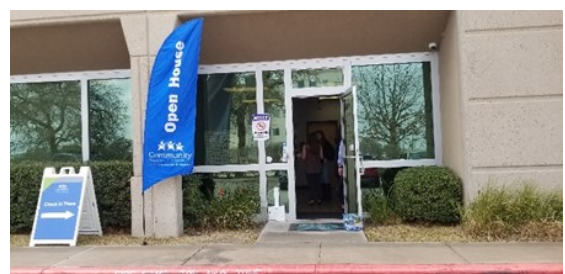
On March 21, the second grand opening was held to celebrate the greatly enlarged space of Community Medical Services, 1101 Arrow Point Dr in Cedar Park, just off Whitestone Blvd. This is Central Texas' only medical assisted treatment, MAT, for opioid addiction. Overdose from opioid use is the primary leader in deaths for adults under 50.



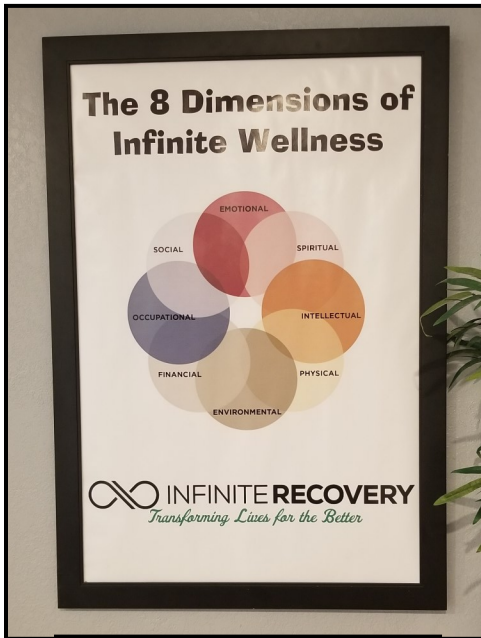
Community Medical Services Cedar Park expansion provides numerous counseling rooms and expanded treatment space for their clients and the dedicated staff committed to solving issues relating to substance abuse and addiction. Like other methadone clinics in Texas, they have developed a healing approach that considers patients' needs. This methadone clinic has an approach that provides a mixture of medication, counseling, and community-based outreaches. Using these three treatment methods, they provide definite and holistic treatment. The success of Community Medical Services Cedar Park is also due in no small part to the committed staff and medical professionals. These people have given themselves to helping people come off substance use. Passion for people and their wellbeing allows them to continue creating progressive healthcare solutions. This FDA-approved daily medication helps to alleviate withdrawal and cravings, allowing the patient to focus on positive behavior changes. Appointments begin at 6AM to facilitate individuals with opioid addiction receive treatment in time to report to their jobs.



If you know someone with opioid use disorder, guiding them to Community Medical Services is a first step to their recovery.



InfiniteRecovery



A Cedar Park Chamber-supported ribbon cutting was held for the second InfiniteRecovery Center in Central Texas on March 2. Located at 1201 Arrow Point Dr.

With on-site therapists and counselors guiding clients towards emotional healing, clients learn productive tools and practices to manage overwhelming emotions and stress. This center provides in-house residential treatment for those suffering from alcohol or drug addiction. Incorporating stress-reducing techniques and practices ensures emotional obstacles in life are lessened and, when ready, learned coping mechanisms allow clients to thrive outside of treatment. Furthermore, recognizing addiction causes strain in relationships and clients learn how to be empowered to cultivate and maintain healthy relationships moving forward. Their desire is to see every client flourish when transitioning out of treatment and thus make it priority to ensure they are successful in reaching this goal.



Above: Yliana and Michael Dodasha, founders, with Commissioner Cook

SH79 – SH45 I-35 TxDOT Project

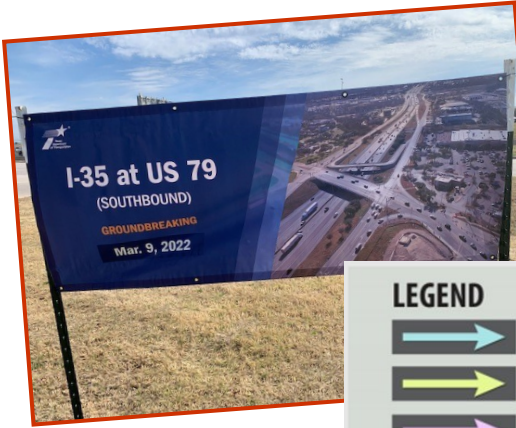
Goal: Reduce merge conflicts with extended entrance and exit lanes

How: Median barrier shifts and re-stripe southbound lanes

When: Groundbreaking 3/9/22

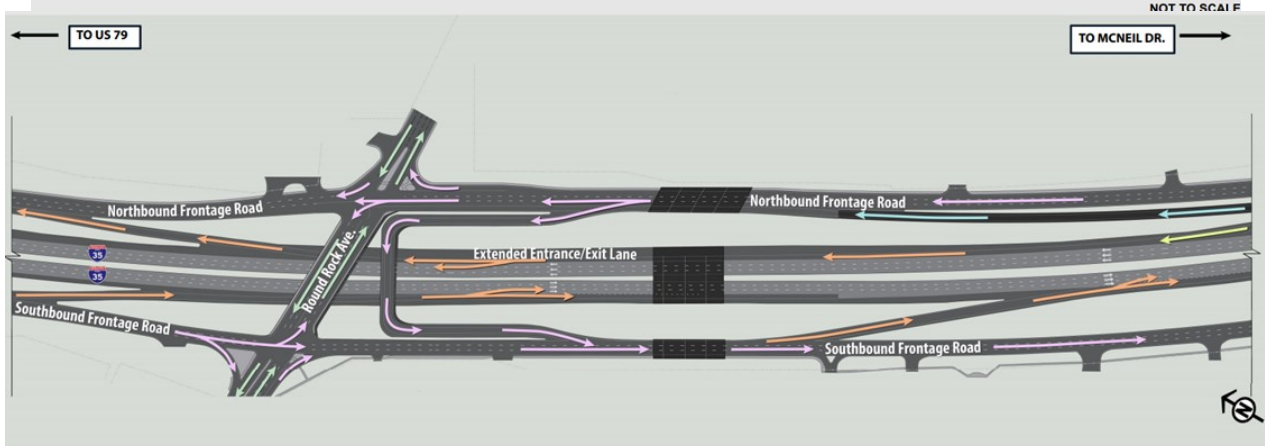
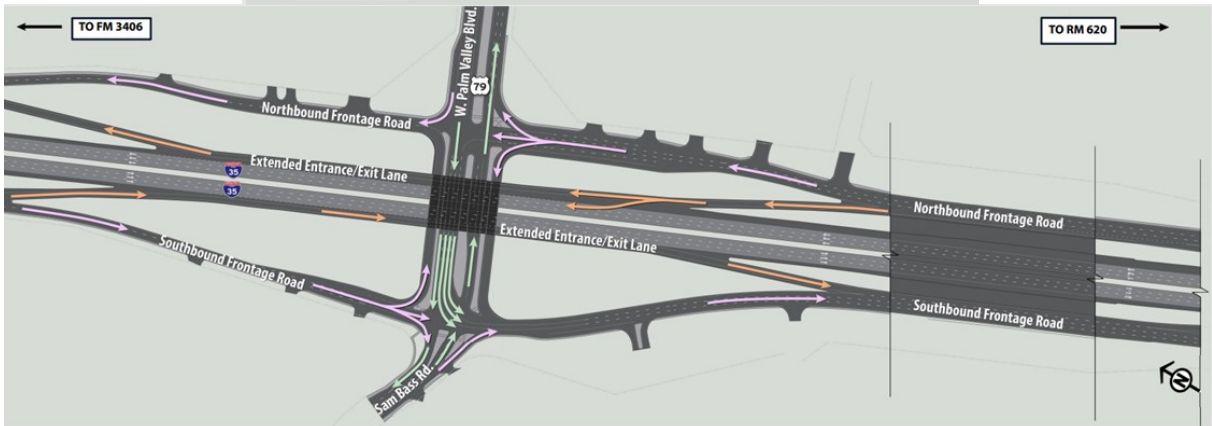
Finish: By 2023 – fast project

Let's hope it works!



LEGEND

- Braided Ramp Traffic from I-35 Mainlanes
- Braided Ramp Traffic to I-35 Mainlanes
- Frontage Road Lanes
- Cross Street Lanes
- Traffic to/from Extended Entrance/Exit Lane





IN COMMISSIONERS COURT

**50th Anniversary of the Older Americans Act Nutrition Program, Purchasing Office recognition, the Big Pink Bus and
and
Congratulations to the Cedar Park High School Girls Basketball Team**



March 2022 marks the 50th anniversary of the Older Americans Act Nutrition Program. It is the federal legislation that helps fund community-based programs like Meals on Wheels by amending the Older Americans Act of 1965 to include a national nutrition program for seniors 60 years and older.

With so many discussions on how government does not work, we can all agree that Meals on Wheels is a program that works very well.

In Williamson County, Opportunities for Williamson and Burnet Counties is the non-profit organization that handles the Meals on Wheels program, and they do a great job! Their work addresses food insecurity and malnutrition, combats social isolation, enables independence, and improve health for many seniors. And, it's even more amazing that this was done during the pandemic!

Another month, another award given to a county department!

For the 22nd consecutive year, the Williamson County Purchasing Department received the Achievement of Excellence in Procurement Award for 2021. It recognizes our department as one of the top organizations at all levels of public purchasing.

Our purchasing department is one of 45 agencies in Texas and one of only 41 counties in the nation to receive this honor!

Congratulations to Joy Simon-ton (at far right in front), our Purchasing Agent, and the Wil-co Purchasing Department!

Thank you for your diligence!





Last December, Commissioners Court approved using CARES ACT funding to upgrade a mobile mammography unit with 3D imaging technology. The "Big Pink Bus", operated by Lone Star Circle of Care (LSC), provides breast cancer screenings for eligible women.

To qualify for services provided by "Big Pink Bus" in Williamson County, women must be Williamson County citizens living at or below 250 percent of the federal poverty level. Women must also be 40 years of age or older and cannot have had a mammogram in the last 12 months.

Appointments are required. For more information, or to make an appointment, call 1-844-PINK-BUS (746-5287) or email BigPinkBus@lscctx.org



On March 22, Commissioners Cook and Long co-sponsored an agenda item proclaiming March 22 as Cedar Park High School Girls Basketball Day in Williamson County.

What this team has done is extraordinary:

- Two state championships back-to-back
- 62-0 game win streak, the 3rd longest active girls basketball win streak in the country, and a 64-1 two-year record
- 5 consecutive undefeated district championships, including an overall district record of 68-0 in the last 5 years
- Defeated regular season opponents this year by an average score of 64-33 and their playoff opponents by a 31-point average



Congratulations Timberwolves on your extraordinary achievements!

IN THE NEWS

Kids soar with mentoring through juvenile justice programs

[Williamson County Commissioner Terry Cook: Kids soar with mentoring through juvenile justice programs \(statesman.com\)](https://www.statesman.com/story/news/local/2021/03/15/williamson-county-mentoring-juvenile-justice/7048440002/)

Once, kids ordered to Williamson County's Juvenile Justice Center by a judge were met with a military academy culture that focused on building self-discipline and increasing compliance with rules.

Despite some gains, recidivism rates were high, with many youths penetrating further in the justice system. Executive Director Scott Matthew and Assistant Director Matt Smith looked for a better way. Their search led them down several paths, and one was to Round Rock Starry, a local nonprofit known for supporting youths and families in the Child Protective Services and foster care system. Recognizing that kids in the Starry programs have experienced significant trauma, its leadership implemented the internationally recognized Trust-Based Relational Intervention framework.

TBRI, the brainchild of the Karyn Purvis Institute of Child Development at Texas Christian University, offers innovative approaches for working with traumatized children.

A look at the backgrounds of the youths at the juvenile center revealed that 83% of its residents had been in the CPS system, with 27% of those youths previously removed from their homes.

Recognizing that youths in both systems have similar backgrounds and that many touch both systems, in 2016 Matthew and Smith sought TBRI training for the staff at the juvenile center. Their previous approach wasn't addressing root causes in most kid's lives; the staff wanted to make a positive long-term difference in the lives of the kids placed in their care.

Through TBRI training, juvenile agency staff learned how adverse childhood experiences impact normal brain development when toxic stress levels are daily occurrences for children.

So how do children with brains geared for survival operate normally in this world? They struggle. TBRI practitioners blend nurture and structure as they work with kids on their behavioral responses to events and pressures in their lives. The focus is on teaching these youths appropriate coping skills. Mentoring and teaching, not punishment, brings improvement and positive change for the children. Lives can be changed. In many cases, time spent at the juvenile center can be the best thing in these kids' lives to date.

When comparing 2019 data to that of the 2016 military structure, youth grievances were down 83%, suicide watches down 93%, use of physical restraints down 31% and program completions were up 45%.

Additionally, two Williamson County district judges involved with youth dockets, Family Court Judge Betsy Lambeth and Juvenile Court Judge Stacey Mathews, were trained, along with their staff in TBRI and hosted a legal conference in 2017 that focused on it. With the TBRI approach, probation violation revocations fell from 86 cases in fiscal year 2016 to 26 cases in fiscal year 2019. (Data from fiscal years 2020 and 2021 are too distorted by COVID-19 to include).

Further, Mathews challenged the juvenile center staff to meet the needs of some of their toughest cases to reduce the number of kids committed to the Texas Juvenile Justice Department, the state correctional facility. Indeed, the TBRI approach and refined collaboration among the staff even reached those kids, and in fiscal year 2019, only one child was committed to the state facility, keeping youths in residential services closer to

home in Williamson County.

This work is not limited to the kids in juvenile services. TBRI is being taught to families, schools and community providers by staffers of the juvenile center to further support progress for these kids as they transition to home and their communities.

On Feb. 15, Juvenile Services was recognized by the Commissioners Court for being designated as a TBRI Ambassador Organization, the fifth group in the world and first juvenile justice agency to receive such a designation from the Karyn Purvis Institute.

That's not all. There's another connected axis of approach with these kids. It's referred to as "finding their spark(s)." The Search Institute, a nonprofit that promotes positive youth development and advances equity, explored why some young people thrive while others don't. The institute defines interests and passions as "sparks," lighting a child's life when encouraged to pursue them. Anyone can support a child in discovering their sparks known to promote positive developmental and academic outcomes. The Search Institute's research indicates more avenues to these sparks would lead to greater school success as kids connect with the programs and commit to them.

Juvenile services staff work alongside parents and youths to identify each child's spark, find a pathway for them to participate in it, and then support it. They encourage the families of these kids to join outings to share in the experience, like simple picnics where there may be canoeing, fishing and biking. Others may be painting, writing, music and athletics. Juvenile services staff reach out to the community with needs, and businesses and citizens respond by providing musical instruments, reduced fees for lessons, free gym memberships, and even purchasing and delivering basketball goals to homes.

Addressing trauma as the root cause and developing sparks is changing the trajectory of these kids' lives, thanks to the courage to seek change and be that change at Williamson County Juvenile Services.

Williamson County is hosting two public meetings for its Atlas 14 Floodplain Mapping Study.

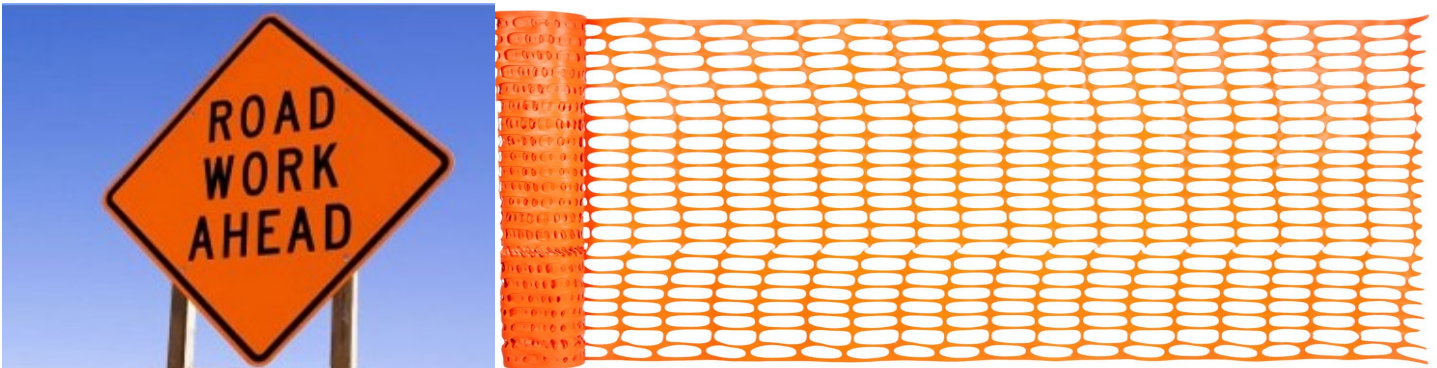
The county has suffered from severe flooding numerous times in the past. These events have reinforced the importance of knowing where flood risks are located and where mitigation measures are needed. The Atlas 14 Floodplain Mapping Study is being funded via the Texas Water Development Board and will update rainfall data throughout the county, map streams and waterways, and identify where flood risks are located.

At the public meeting, attendees will have the opportunity to learn more about the study, speak with team members and share anecdotal information about flooding on their property .

Click [HERE](#) to learn more!



So what is Atlas-14? This study, and the name "Atlas 14", was developed by federal scientists in the Hydrometeorological Design Studies Center of the National Oceanic and Atmospheric Administration (NOAA). This study is now the official US government source of precipitation frequency estimates based on historical rainfall. An atlas is typically a collection of maps, and that is traditionally how this rainfall data was provided; now this data is in an interactive format online. As far as the number "14", perhaps this is just a sequential study within NOAA.

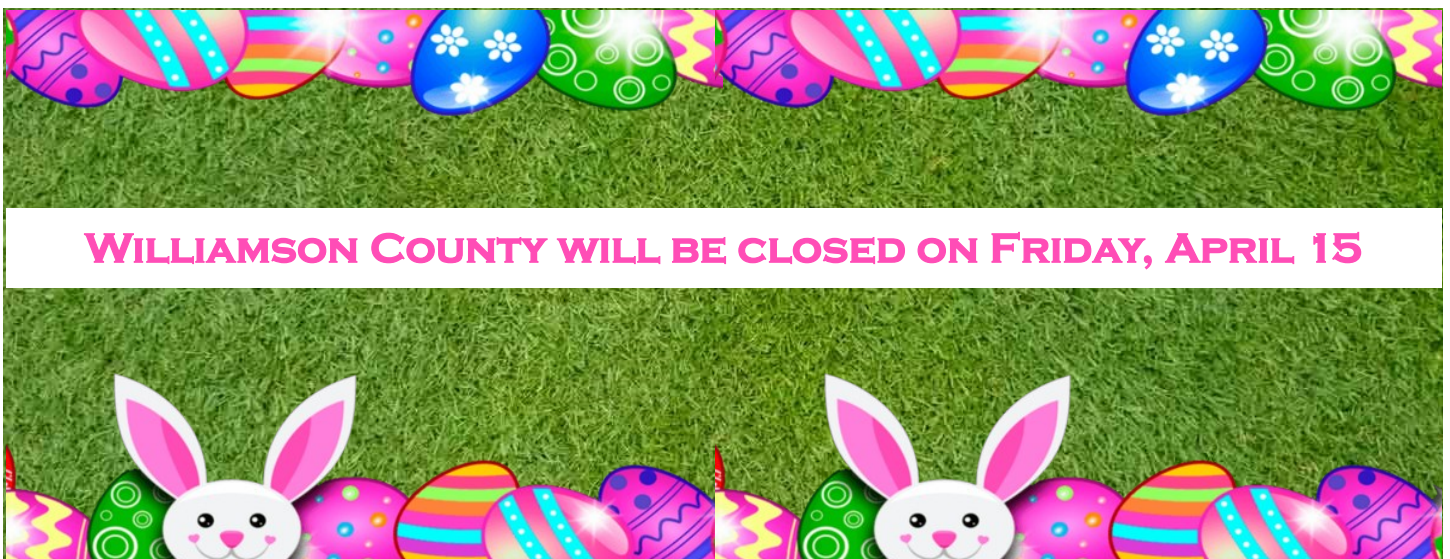


620 at Railroad/Chisholm Trail (TxDOT with primary contractor Bridges and Roads LLC)– At Deep Wood Dr., a new water line is complete and installation of a storm sewer has begun. The setting of concrete bridge beams is tentatively scheduled for 3/26-3/28. Between the railroad tracks and Brentwood St., curb and gutter is being constructed for the future frontage road. A retaining wall is going up north of RM 620 and east of N. Lake Creek Dr. Go [HERE](#) to learn more. This is a \$27.5M TxDOT project. Estimated completion date is summer 2023.

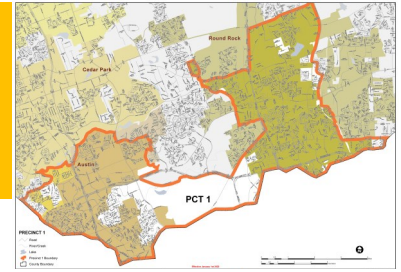
Pond Springs Road Area Drainage Improvements– Gather ‘round for a small learning lesson. The acronym PS&E is used frequently on these projects. It stands for Plans, Specs, and Estimates, and they are usually referring to the design step of a project, and there are varying levels of completeness with PS&E. The 60% PS&E for the updated design to divert water flows away from Woods Pond was submitted on March 10 and is currently under review. The cost of the project is anticipated to be significantly less expensive, going from \$4.17M to approximately \$3.25M, although that amount is not set in stone yet. This initial review will give us some indication of how much lower the cost will be. Fingers crossed! Construction start is anticipated Spring 2023.

Forest North Drainage Improvements Phase III (Contractor: DeNucci Constructors LLC) – DONE!!! Except for final invoices to be paid. Great work everybody! One final note, our Road and Bridge Department has scheduled the streets in Forest North for resurfacing in 2023. We tried to get them to do it this year. Sorry!

University Blvd. widening from IH-35 to just east of Sunrise Rd. (Contractor: DeNucci Constructors LLC)– *Still a good idea to stay off University if you possibly can!!!* Much work around the Sunrise Rd. intersection. The traffic on the northside of the intersection has been shifted to the northbound lanes, and the northbound lanes on the south side of the intersection are down to one lane. At the northeast corner of that intersection, concrete paving has been poured and formed, in addition to the sidewalk nearby. A City of Round Rock project with some County funding, it is slated to finish in Spring 2023.



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



MISSION

Providing strong, thoughtful, and collaborative leadership on the Williamson County Commissioners Court through a time of great change and growth in our county

VISION

Upholding a local governmental entity that is centered around best-practices throughout the organization and focused on timely and respectful responses to our citizenry

VALUES

The guiding principles of the Williamson County Commissioner Precinct 1 Office continue to be respect, reliability, and dedication to Precinct 1 constituents, while being open to ideas for positioning Williamson County for the future

CONTACT US!

LOCATION: Williamson County Jester Annex
1801 E. Old Settlers Blvd., Suite 110

MAIN PHONE: 512-244-8610

EMAIL COMMISSIONER COOK:
commissioner1@wilco.org

COMMUNICATIONS/SCHEDULING: Doris Sanchez
512-244-8610, doris.sanchez@wilco.org

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](http://www.wilco.org)

Non-Emergency Phone Numbers

Austin Fire Department
512-974-0130

County Judge
512-943-1550

Cedar Park Fire Department (ESD 11)
512-401-5220

Jollyville Fire Department (ESD 1)
512-258-1038

Round Rock Fire Department (ESD 9)
512-218-5590

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 WIL-
COunty Line E-
newsletter! Click [here](#) to
sign up!

Commissioner Cook
keeps meeting with many
MUD Boards and HOAs.
To invite her to your meet-
ing, contact Doris at doris.sanchez@wilco.org or
512-244-8610