

Judge Weldon P. Cude
Pleasanton Express Weekly Judge's Column, April 5th
Title: Atascosa Proud

Greetings, amigos! My first 90 days in office as Atascosa County Judge have come and gone. People are always asking if it's what I expected, and I'm happy to report that it has been. I've become well-versed in my Judicial obligations **which include functions of the Commissioner's Court, Probate matters, and Juvenile Court.** I've sat in many introductory meetings with internal and external partners, from County Department Heads to Law enforcement agencies, ISDs, Non-profit organizations to Government Officials and Agencies at the Local, State, and Federal level. I'm pleased to see the number of stakeholders who have prioritized sharing their strategies and goals, all for the benefit of Atascosa County residents.

My priorities in my first 90 days in office are to keep Accessibility, Operational Efficiency, Safety, County Budget, and the Legislative Session at the forefront. The County must consistently reassess its processes to streamline work and ensure our offices are easily accessible to the public. By doing so, we have moved my office from the 2nd floor of the Courthouse down to the 1st floor. Additionally, I follow an open-door policy so County Personnel and the Public may know I am here to serve all.

I mention Safety is a top priority as well. Most recently, we held a round table discussion with local Law Enforcement Agencies and the School Districts in the County to understand challenges and work towards finding solutions. The County is also in the final stages of hiring a new EMS Director. Many qualified candidates have submitted for this position, and we are on track to make our selection in the coming weeks. Additionally, the Emergency Management Coordinator's Office is a County Department that I work very closely with. They are a newer staff doing a lot of groundwork to make safety, preparedness, and emergency response strategies their primary scope of work.

We have several months until Budget season; however, I've made it priority to study past County Budgets from the last few years to be better prepared when it comes time to create the upcoming fiscal year's budget. The County must be fiscally conservative with its financial practices as much as possible.

The 88th Legislative Session in Texas is still underway. I've had an opportunity to make one Capital visit to date and have kept close contact with our Congressman, State Rep, State Senators and U.S. Senator's staff. Our County is fortunate to have many hands-on members in our State delegation. As your County Judge, I want to fully understand the challenges in our community and advocate for essential services our residents deserve. Together we are Atascosa Proud!