

ATASCOSA COUNTY JUDGE

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WELDON P. CUDE is the Atascosa County Judge. You may reach him at countyjudge@co.atascosa.tx.us.

Looking back on 2023, my tenure as your County Judge has been quite the journey. Starting fresh on Jan. 1 with a new team and diving into new responsibilities; it's been a year of growth and teamwork. From learning the ropes in Commissioners Court to understanding probate and juvenile hearings, each step has been a learning experience. Organizations near and far pitched in, offering valuable insights into our county. Education became a top focus—I attended numerous conferences to bring back knowledge. Establishing committees, like the policy and procedure committee, was a big move towards better governance. Unsurprisingly, collaboration has been key through it all. Partnering with department heads and elected officials, we tackled challenges head-on, always with our taxpayers top of mind.

I'm hugely grateful for the support and dedication of our Commissioners Court—Commissioner Gillespie, Commissioner Bowen, Commissioner Perez, and Commissioner Riley—who have tirelessly contributed to the county's progress. Alongside our County Auditor Tracy Barrera, we've successfully managed the county budget and reduced the tax rate, alleviating the burden on taxpayers. One standout initiative this year was the creation of the County Judges Border Security Coalition, a huge effort with Texas county judges across the state, working together for a safer border. This project started in mid-

summer and the efforts continue to this day; I'm excited to continue the work into the new year.

Our inaugural State of the County event was another milestone, highlighting our history and direction—I'm so grateful for the participation and engagement we received at this event. Do you know that we're eager for your input on next year's State of the County? If you haven't already connected with me on social media, I hope you consider following my county Facebook page "Atascosa County Judge Weldon Cude" to keep up with my activity and, of course, share your thoughts and feedback. My compass this year: fiscal responsibility, safety, support our growing population and transparency has guided every decision. Huge kudos to the teams across our county offices—your commitment made this year remarkable. Atascosa County, your support, feedback, and involvement in 2023 was amazing, and I hope we keep the momentum together in 2024.

One last thanks to the dedicated team at the Pleasanton Express. I am so fortunate that you've welcomed me to a space to share my thoughts each week. You are all truly amazing people and I'm forever grateful for your support.

Stepping into the new year, I remain committed to serving you and striving for a better, more prosperous Atascosa County. Thank you for an incredible 2023.