



Gavel & Badge

The Official Newsletter for the Justices of the Peace and Constables Association

In This Issue

**Budgets
Across Texas**

**TAC
Legislative
Conference**

**Spotlight
County**

**Chaplains
Corner**

**Education
Event**

**Faculty
Development**

**Executive
Board
@CJCAT**

**Save the Date
Sponsors &
Committees**



Budgets Across Texas

Story by: Judge Sylvia Holmes, Travis County PCT 3

Budgeting in a time of rising prices and decreasing revenues is a challenge that JPCA members met head on during their recent budget cycles. Almost three quarters of offices received budget increases with most funds going to cover salaries and office supplies. Unfortunately, the increases were insufficient to counter the impact of inflation for many: 76% said inflation had harmed their budgets, with 40% having increased costs of office supplies and 16% being unable to pay for trainings and seminars. One respondent shared that “salaries were increased slightly but were inadequate due to inflation and cost of living.” This gap between pay rate and cost of living was reported by 19% of those surveyed.

Another common strain was in the cost of maintaining vehicles and paying to keep gas in their own tanks. “I’m paying approximately \$5,000 out of my salary to cover fuel costs for county business.”

One time funding was the bright spot! 51% of those who sought a one-time funding or purchase were approved in total and an additional 7% received partial funding. The most common one time purchase was for a new vehicle or computer, but law enforcement equipment and office equipment were also frequently sought.

JPCA members had great advice and tips for helping others to achieve their budget goals. The advice ranged from the practical, “Just ask. Whether it gets approved or denied it doesn’t hurt to ask for it” to the specific “Be able to show that you are producing the workload to prove the need for additional employees and the pay raises for current ones. Our civil caseload is so heavy compared to tickets we receive-so all they see is the \$\$\$\$ we bring into the county from tickets-but most of the clerks time is spent on civil and truancy which brings no money to the county. So had to physically take traffic cases and some civil and truancy cases so they could visualize the amount of work that goes into each type of case - It worked for me as I got additional staff” to the creative, “Ask once, then run for the commissioners job.”

2022 Legislative Conference Austin at the Fairmount hotel August 23-26



Pictured: Constable Chris Bates, President Sergio DeLeon, Constable Carlos Lopez, Judge Amber King, Constable Larry Gallardo Jr., Judge Martin Castillo, Constable Justin West, Constable Oscar Ugarte, Judge Sylvia Holmes, Judge Holly Williamson, Judge JR Woolley, Jama Pantel, Judge Wayne Mack, Judge Mark Russo, Judge Chris Macon, Judge Naomi Doyle, TAC's Kelsey Bernstein, Judge Mary Canales

“TAC’s Legislative Conference gives county officials from around the state the chance to get together each year as peers and as community leaders to discuss potential solutions to our shared challenges. It is essential to learning about legislative issues that affect county government and local taxpayers,” TAC Executive Director Susan M. Redford said.

The conference followed last year’s successful hybrid model and allowed participants to gather either in person in Austin or virtually online. County leaders joined federal and state lawmakers, state agency staff members, subject-matter experts and representatives with the National Association of Counties to explore state and federal issues important to counties

The conference included sessions on the state’s new election practices and procedures, property taxes, bail bond reform, behavioral and mental health, the American Rescue Plan Act, the Infrastructure Investment and Jobs Act, and state and federal grant opportunities for counties.

Texas Comptroller Glenn Hegar discussed his outlook for the state’s economy during the conference’s opening keynote address. The closing general session featured a Q&A with U.S. Sen. John Cornyn and a panel discussion of the state’s broadband expansion efforts.

-TAC Legislative Press Release

Spotlight

Gray County

Constable Jason Rushing



Constable Rushing has been in office since 2016 and is enjoying the ride. “I’m here for the people of Gray County; I enjoy what I do and that I’m able to serve the more rural parts of the county.” Constable Rushing saw a need in Gray County for a more proactive community-oriented approach to the position and decided to run. Upon being elected, he immediately went to work with his style of service and, in 2022, won West Texas JPCA Constable of the Year. Rushing credits his approach and success to being around such legendary Constables as Kenneth Martindale and learning from them. Constable Rushing also credits an excellent working relationship with county law enforcement as another key to his success. Rushing credits his relationship with community partners as a significant contributing factor to the Gray County Constables avoiding a massive proposed budget cut for 2022. While Constable Rushing loves what he does and the people he serves, the amount of “politics” involved in the position has surprised him. Nonetheless, Constable Rushing is committed to the citizens of Gray County and is excited about serving them now and in the future!

Judge Karen Goodman

Judge Karen Goodman was appointed in August 2020. Then won the general election in 2020. This however is not the first Judge Judge Goodman has been a Justice of the Peace. She was also a JP in Lipscomb County from 2007-2013 when she and her husband relocated to Gray County.

Judge Goodman's more proud moments are when members of the public come into the office and show off a new license they have gotten, or have paid off their fines. She is proud when they finally start getting things together to have a brighter future.

One of the more challenging aspects of the JP, which most JPs will agree with are the inquests. When there are multiple deaths or young decedents. Speaking with family members is extremely difficult as it can be such a hard time for all the parties involved.

Judge Gray is so thankful for not only her intermediate family, but also heavily relies on her church family to walk with her during the ups and downs of the job.

Judge Karen Goodman also has a prior "claim to fame" that she took the first picture of a moose in the Texas Panhandle (according to the local game warden of her area.) There was a huge wildfire in the Yellowstone area in 1988 or 1989 and some of the wildlife ran a LONG way to get away from it.



Chaplain's CORNER

As we live your Christian life there will be times that our faith is put under pressure for sure. Some Christians think once I became one, everything will go well and grand. We soon realize this is not what happens. Faith does not necessarily mean that we travel a cool and sequestered way. A living faith enables us to grapple successfully with life and its problems.

Faith is not an other-worldly thing. It belongs in the marketplace, in social relationships, in the home, as well as in the church and the heart. Biblical faith is trust – putting your eternal destiny in the hands of Jesus who is the only savior of the world.

Please know this, Christian faith matures by meeting and overcoming life's pressures. Some folks fold under any kind of pressure that comes their way. We are a work in progress with God molding and mending us as we go.

Most will agree that as we all serve in our professions as Judges, Constables, & Clerks there can be certain pressure in the job. The good news is, as Christians, our faith can help us with the pressure at work.

Isaiah 41:10 says: "**10**Fear thou not; for I am with thee: be not dismayed; for I am thy God: I will strengthen thee; yea, I will help thee; yea, I will uphold thee with the right hand of my righteousness."

Constable Dwain Read, Chaplain for JPCA

Training & Education



Judge J.R. Woolley (Waller County) recently attended the Forensic Fire Death Investigation Course at the Forensic Anthropology Center at Texas State University, put on by the Collin County Arson Investigators Association. The course was an in-depth look at fire/arson investigation and the effects of fire on the human body. Judge Woolley will incorporate the information gathered into training for upcoming classes. He is pictured with his team for that week, consisting of personnel from several disciplines from agencies in Texas, Wisconsin, and Maryland.

JPCA Faculty Development



Pictured: JPCA President Sergio De Leon & TJCTC Executive Director Thea Whalen

This year's faculty development met in Galveston. All three committees, JP Education, Constable Education and Clerks Education as well as the staff for the Texas Justice Court Training Center met to review the presentations for this education year. All of the committees and the TJCTC work hard to ensure the information given out in classes is current, relevant and will ultimately serve Texas better.

Executive Board around Texas

JPCA President and Executive Board Members were invited to the 100th year County Judges and Commissioners association annual meeting. President De Leon gave a speech to their association not only to foster better relationships but also give the Judges and Commissioners more information about the JP and Constable office.

Past President, Matt Wylie (not pictured) was also in attendance and taught a class about how the constable office operates and best practices when working with other county offices.



Pictured: CJCAT Past President, Rick Bailey, 3rd Vice Constable Carlos Lopez, 2nd Vice Judge Holly Williamson, and President Judge Sergio De Leon



JPCA COMMITTEES

Committees are the thread that keeps JPCA running. Committee members volunteer countless hours each year to ensure that our association is responsive, informed, and friendly. Click the link below to see all of your committee members.

[CLICK HERE](#)

Interested in joining a committee?

Contact JPCA at jpcsoftx@gmail.com for more information about serving on a committee.

Save THE DATE

We hope to see you in
SAN ANTONIO
June 26 - 30, 2023
for the 79th annual
JPCA Conference



JPCA 2022 Conference Sponsors



mvba
McCreary Veselka Bragg & Allen PC
Attorneys at Law



COLLEGE STATION

SILVER



PERDUE BRANDON
FIELDER COLLINS & MOTT LLP
ATTORNEYS AT LAW



GOLD

LGS
Local Government Solutions



LINEBARGER
ATTORNEYS AT LAW

BRONZE



MALTECH Court