



Gavel & Badge

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

December 2025

MESSAGE FROM PRESIDENT CARLOS LOPEZ

Hello Judges and Constables,

It was a busy start for me as your President of JPCA traveling around the State representing your interests. First to San Patricio County to recognize Judge Karen Diaz as the recipient of the T.A.Vines award in Commissioner's Court. San Patricio is very proud of Judge Diaz as we are as well. Then on to Montgomery County Commissioner's Court recognizing Constable "Rowdy" Hayden as the 2025 Constable of the Year, Deputy Randy Crowder as Deputy of the Year and Tonia Theriot as the Clerk of the Year. I believe this is the first time all three categories were recognized from the same County, Congratulations!



Next I will be travelling to South Padre Island to present to JP's and Constables from STJPCA legislative updates along with Bronson Tucker presenting on the New Eviction laws. I'm looking forward to visiting with all of our S. Texas folks. I will be visiting with the Central Texas JPCA as we begin discussions on Legislative issues we need to address. I'm looking forward to seeing you all this year in Sugarland, Texas for our Annual JPCA conference!

Happy New Year,
President Carlos Lopez

TOP 10 REASONS TO VISIT THE UPDATED JPCA WEBSITE!

1. Training Access – Find continuing education programs and certification opportunities for JPs and Constables

2. Legislative Updates – Stay informed about bills and laws affecting justice and constable offices.

3. Resource Library – Download official forms, deskbooks, and procedural guides.

4. Networking Hub – Connect with over 2,000 peers statewide for shared best practices.

5. Conference Info – Register for JPCA's annual and regional training conferences.

6. Scholarships & Awards – Learn about educational scholarships and member recognition programs.

7. Volunteer Opportunities – Join committees and contribute to JPCA's statewide initiatives.

8. Regional Support – Access region-specific contacts, events, and association resources.

9. News & Alerts – Get the latest updates on events, deadlines, and training requirements.

10. Professional Advocacy – Benefit from JPCA's unified voice representing your office at the Capitol.



CHAPLAIN'S CORNER

*By Deputy Constable Dwain Read,
Ochiltree County*

Where did this past year go? I heard someone comment and go on to say, "I can't believe its that time of year again." Sadly, the reference of the time of year for that person was more about having to buy gifts for everyone.

In Galatians 4:4-5 in the NIV it says, "But when the set time had fully come, God sent his Son, born of a woman, born under the law, to redeem those under the law, that we might receive adoption to sonship."

I trust that you and your family are celebrating this time of year when God decided the time had fully come to send his Son to this earth so that we could have eternal life in Christ.

Yes, it is that time of year again and as Christians we know that this gift we were given is a gift that cannot be bought or found on-line in man's pursuit of gift giving. Jesus came and gave himself to redeem you and me from our enslavement in sin and as illogical it may be this gift does not cost you anything.

In the political world today, there is a lot of discussion of "affordability". Affordability is not an issue with Jesus.

Ephesians 2:8-9 it says, "For by grace are ye saved through faith; and that not of yourselves: it is the gift of God:⁹ Not of works, lest any man should boast."

As you serve this great state of Texas as a JP, Constable, Deputy Constable, or clerk please remember, it is that time of year again, JESUS IS THE REASON FOR THE SEASON!

May God richly bless you and your family as you serve this great State.

SB 1333: Tips from El Paso on Large Scale Squatter Removal

Precinct 2 in El Paso County recently concluded one of the state's largest squatter-related operations, offering valuable insight into the practical realities of SB 1333 and the internal preparation needed to respond effectively. The case, centered on a long-abandoned home, began months before the new statute took effect.

Background of the Case

Throughout several months, deputies received continuous complaints from neighbors about unusual activity at the vacant home, including tents in the yard, late-night noise, and suspected drug activity. Sgt. Deja Pascale, who supervised the response, described the situation as unlike anything their office had encountered. "It was overwhelming, but it went smoothly once we were able to take action," Pascale said.

At the height of the activity, deputies estimate 50–60 individuals had cycled through the three-bedroom residence. In total, 22–25 people were removed with five being arrested on outstanding warrants, and additional arrests were made when narcotics were found on scene. Several dogs and a chicken were also found. Conditions inside the home were dangerously unsanitary. With no running water, occupants had

dug a trench in the backyard to use as a toilet.

Code Enforcement, which had responded multiple times, brought dump trucks and cranes to clear debris—only for the mess to accumulate again within days.



Neighbors used drones to capture footage of squatters and report the situation to law enforcement

SB 1333: Tips from El Paso cont.

During the final operation, Pct. 2 worked alongside DEA, State police, El Paso Police, and other constable offices.

How Pct. 2 Prepared for SB 1333

Even before the law's effective date, Pct. 2 anticipated a surge in filings and began developing internal procedures. Constable Danny Zamora said the office took early steps to ensure they would be ready once the law took effect.

"We've seen this coming since the bill was proposed," Zamora said. "We prepared in advance and requested a checklist from Constable Chad Jordan. That helped us build our entire process."



Backyard trench dug by squatters without running water

Pct. 2 created a checklist—modeled in part on the one shared by Constable Chad Jordan—to help clerks verify whether a SB 1333 complaint meets the statutory requirements. If the owner cannot check all boxes, deputies explain that the matter must proceed through traditional eviction. Pct. 2 incorporated the checklist directly into their complaint form. This reduces paperwork, prevents errors, and standardizes intake.

Once a filing meets the requirements, deputies issue a Notice to Vacate specifically tailored to SB 1333 cases. If occupants cannot be identified, deputies list John/Jane Doe—or "all occupants" when appropriate.

Zamora emphasized that Pct. 2 does *not* accept payment until the filing is fully validated. "We don't take any money until we are sure it meets the criteria," he said. "Property owners can go to another constable, and we want to avoid a situation where someone pays twice." Administrative staff created packets with instructions,

SB 1333: Tips from El Paso cont.

checklists, and required forms for property managers and frequent filers. "Lupita, our office assistant, was a huge help and created the owner packets," said Constable Zamora.

While this particular case predated SB 1333 in practice, several lessons translate directly for constables statewide:

Documentation Standards Must Be Clear

SB 1333 cases rise or fall based on documentation. A uniform checklist protects both the property owner and the constable's office.

Flexibility in Identifying Occupants

Allow space for identifying unknown individuals. Some deputies may rely on "all occupants" when a property is clearly unoccupied or advertised for lease.

Post-Notice Enforcement Planning

When deputies issue a notice to vacate, Pct. 2 enforces it immediately when staffing allows; otherwise, they set a 24-hour window. Offices should create internal guidelines to ensure consistency.

Recognize and Thank Staff

Administrative assistants prepared much of the groundwork that made Pct. 2's process efficient. Zamora credited their efforts, as well as the guidance from Constable Jordan.

Squatter cases continue to rise statewide, and offices should expect more SB 1333 filings in the coming months. For Pct. 2, the Hemmingway Drive experience highlighted the importance of preparation, public education, and interagency cooperation.

"Homeowners are fed up," Zamora said. "SB 1333 gives us a tool, but offices have to be ready when people walk through the door."

Sample of Squatters Checklist



UNAUTHORIZED OCCUPANT(S) REMOVAL COMPLAINT

OFFICIAL USE ONLY

C2-

I _____ (name of complainant), declare under the penalty of perjury that:

Initial each applicable item

1. I am the owner or the agent of the owner of residential real property located at _____ (property address).
2. A person unlawfully entered and occupies a dwelling on the property without the owner's consent.
3. The property was not open to the public when the person entered the property.
4. The property is not the subject of pending litigation between the owner and the person.
5. The owner or the owner's agent has directed the person to leave the property, and the person has not done so.
6. The person is not a current or former tenant of the owner under an oral or written lease and any lease produced by the person is fraudulent.
7. The person is not an owner or co-owner of the property and any title to the property that lists the person as an owner or co-owner is fraudulent.
8. The person is not an immediate family member of the owner.
9. I understand that a person removed from the property as a result of this complaint may bring an action against me for any false statement made in the complaint or for wrongfully submitting the complaint.
10. I understand that I may be held liable for actual damages, exemplary damages, court costs, and reasonable attorney fees in an action described by Item 9.
11. I am requesting that the sheriff or constable immediately remove each person occupying the dwelling without the owner's consent.
12. A copy of my valid government-issued identification is attached and, if I am the owner's agent, a document evidencing my authority to act on the property owner's behalf is attached.

I HAVE READ EACH STATEMENT IN THIS COMPLAINT AND CONFIRM EACH STATEMENT IS TRUE AND CORRECT. I UNDERSTAND THAT A STATEMENT MADE IN THIS COMPLAINT IS MADE UNDER PENALTY OF PERJURY, PUNISHABLE UNDER SECTION 37.02, PENAL CODE.

SUBSCRIBED AND SWORN TO
before me on _____

Complainant Signature

Notary

Service Fee: \$ _____

OFFICIAL USE ONLY

Owner of Record: _____ per EPCAD C2 Clerk Other _____Entitlement Type: Owner Agent Power of Attorney Other _____

Additional Info _____

Signature _____ Title _____ Date _____



GREAT ADVICE FOR YOUR PRECINCT

QUESTION: A certain tissue bank (non-governmental agency) is asking us JP's to give them (within one hour or less of our arrival at an inquest) the deceased's name, age, race, sex, time of death or last known alive time, possible cause of death, name & relationship of legal next of kin or medical power of attorney with contact information, funeral home name, contact person & phone #. Are we allowed to freely provide this information without an open records request and/or to what extent of information may we provide?

Answer: We believe you could provide them with any of the above listed information if you know it, with the exception of the next of kin/medical power of attorney. You could, however, provide those people with the information for the tissue bank. All of the other information is public record, so the only reason not to provide it would be if you thought it was being used for an improper purpose (which does not seem to be the case here). There is no problem with providing the information without a records request. You could require the records request if you wanted to, but that may defeat the purpose if the need for the information is time sensitive.

QUESTION: Can a deputy Constable serve a named defendant on an eviction citation at a location away from the residence they are being evicted from or do they have to be served at the residence named in the eviction citation? (Referencing TRCP 510.4)?

Answer: A named defendant can be served anywhere in Texas, even in an eviction suit. However, they can also be served by leaving the documents with a person over the age of 16 at the defendant's usual residence.

QUESTION: If a Foreign Judgment is filed in my Court with an indigence affidavit, can it be a "free filing"? Can they then file an abstract and all collection Writs free of charge via the same indigence affidavit?

Answer: We are not aware of any rule or statute that would prohibit a party filing a foreign judgment in justice court in order to domesticate and enforce it from filing a sworn statement of inability to pay. Upon the filing of the sworn statement of inability to pay, the party is not required to pay the filing and service fees as in any other case in which a party has filed a sworn statement of inability to pay. Of course, the statement must meet the requirements of Rule 502.3 (or Rule 145) and is subject to contest by the opposing party.

QUESTION: Between what hours of the day can a Constable Deputy serve civil citations?

Answer: Service can occur at any time of day. Note, however, that no process can be served on Sunday, except in cases of injunction, attachment, garnishment, sequestration, or distress proceedings; provided that citation by publication published on Sunday shall be valid. See TRCP 6, 501.2(d).

82nd ANNUAL CONFERENCE: SPOTLIGHT ON SUGAR LAND

Start planning your trip to Sugar Land!

Cullinan Park—explore 754 acres of woodlands, wetlands, and lakes

Sugar Land Town Square—enjoy live music with outdoor seating and evening events

Ape Zipline & Adventure Park—swing from the ropes and seek thrill among the treetops

Natural Science Museum—interact with displays, “Science on a Sphere”, and visit the Hall of Paleontology

Constellation Field—catch a foul ball at a baseball game for the Sugar Land Space Cowboys



2025–2026 TJCTC TRAINING SCHEDULE

Learn about the latest legislation at an upcoming events from the Texas Justice Court Training Center (TJCTC) or the Texas Association of Counties (TAC)! Register today for in-person or virtual training!

Judges - 20 Hour

Round Rock - March 30 - April 2, 2026
 Denton - April 20 - 23, 2026
 Lubbock - May 31 - June 3, 2026

Clerks

Experienced, Galveston—February 23 - 25, 2026
 Experienced, VIRTUAL—March 10 - 12, 2026
 Experienced, San Marcos—April 14 - 16, 2026
 Experienced, Corpus Christi—May 19 - 21, 2026
 Experienced, VIRTUAL—June 9 - 11, 2026
 Experienced, Denton—August 4 - 6, 2026
 New Court, San Marcos—August 18 - 20, 2026

Constables

Denton—February 2 - 5, 2026
 Galveston—May 3 - 6, 2026
 VIRTUAL—April 6 - 9, 2026
 San Marcos—July 26 - 29, 2026

What is the role of a Justice of the Peace? New video highlights the role's responsibilities in Texas counties

The Texas Association of Counties (TAC) has added a new video as part of the Texas Counties Deliver campaign. The educational video spotlights the important and essential roles that justices of the peace fill in counties across the state.

Do you know the year the first JPs were appointed or how many JPs each county may have? This video explains the diverse responsibilities of JPs, from handling small claims and traffic violations to conducting inquests and officiating weddings. JPs are an essential part of the county ecosystem.

The Texas Counties Deliver campaign strives to provide an understanding of the value of county government and the essential services it provides Texans. At TexasCountiesDeliver.org, you can find more informational videos, interactive tools, informative articles and downloadable materials that help explain the structure and function of county government.

Scan to watch:



What is a Constable? Video highlights the important work done by Texas Constable offices

A featured video, *What Do Constables Do in Texas?*, offers a clear and engaging explanation of the vital work constables and their deputies perform every day. Designed with the public in mind, the video breaks down the constitutional foundation of the office and highlights how constables serve as both peace officers and officers of the court.

The video emphasizes the unique dual role of constables: working closely with JP courts while also serving as visible law-enforcement partners. By showing real-world examples of their daily duties, the video helps demystify the position and builds appreciation for their service.

This video is an excellent tool for community outreach, whether used during school presentations, civic-group meetings, or on official websites and social-media pages. Constables can share it to educate residents, strengthen public trust, and highlight the essential functions their offices provide across Texas. As counties grow and evolve, understanding the work of constables becomes even more important — and this video offers a simple, accessible way to bridge that knowledge gap.

Scan to watch:



SCAN HERE



TO REPORT A SECURITY INCIDENT

► **PROTECT**

Yourself and
others in the
courthouse

► **PREVENT**

Future incidents
from occurring or
recurring

► **PROVIDE**

Data to support
increased funding,
training, and
resources

For more information, visit the OCA Court Security Incident Reporting website: <https://www.txcourts.gov/programs-services/court-security/court-security-incident-reporting>

HOW TO CONTACT YOUR 2025-2026 DISTRICT LEADERSHIP

District 1—

Judge Robert Taylor
500 S. Fillmore, Suite 502
Amarillo, TX 79101
Off: 806-379-2390

District 2—

Judge Francisco Gutierrez
904 Broadway, Suite 111
Lubbock, Texas 79401
Off: 806-775-1328

District 3—

Constable Frank Almada
424 Executive Center, Suite 100
El Paso, Texas 79902
Off: 915-273-3058

District 4—

Judge Hilda Lopez
309 Mills ST
Del Rio, TX 78840
Off: 830-774-7581

District 5—

Judge Robert Gonzalez
710 E. Main
Robstown, Texas 78380
Off: 361-767-5205

District 6—

Constable H.D. "Dale" Clark III
100 Weatherford, Ste 460A
Fort Worth, Texas 76196
Off: 817-884-1385

District 7—

Judge Rhonda Redden
211 W. 6th Street
Taylor, Texas 76574
Off: 512-352-4155

District 8—

Judge Willie Leal
2240 N. State Hwy 6
Jourdanton, TX 78026
Off: 832-769-2074

District 9—

Constable Sammy Knapp
920 E. Park Blvd.
Plano, TX 75074
Plano: (972) 881-3070
Metro: (972) 424-1460 ext. 3070

District 10—

Constable Jevonne Pollard
1085 Pearl Street, Room 103
Beaumont, TX 77701
Office: 409-835-8450

