



The Commissioner's

Correspondence

News from the office of
Jen Crossover,
Comal County
Commissioner Pct 4
VOL2, ISSUE 1: JANUARY 2016

A note from Jen: A Year of SWOT ~



Strengths, Weaknesses, Opportunities, & Threats

And so, my first year in office is in the books. It's been a wonderful year of learning, observing, working hard, networking, and getting involved. I hope that I have made you proud in the strides I have made in serving the community.

Most teenagers probably haven't had the pleasure of knowing what a SWOT Analysis is, but mine would likely roll their eyes (all teenagers do that) and tell you that I'm a walking SWOT. I'm constantly challenging them to analyze their performance in any given venture no matter how big or small. Whether it be their school work, sports, Scouts, or how well they did on mowing the yard--I always encourage them to look for ways to improve their performance, their efficiency, or their outcomes. I do the same thing with myself constantly--at home, in the community, and at the office.

I remember as a student at TLU, sitting in Dr. Utecht's class as he explained the SWOT. He always encouraged us to analyze things, not just from a textbook perspective, or as an obligation, but with a bigger purpose in mind. He was a wonderful man, and always had a way of bringing the academic lessons back to how they applied to our lives. I learned a lot in his classroom that still goes way beyond the business degree.

I welcome your feedback on the job I'm doing for you...my strengths and weaknesses, as well as opportunities and threats to and for the job I'm doing.

Have I been accessible and responsive when you've needed something or had questions?

Have I been proactive with communication?

Have I increased the transparency of this office by making it easier to access opportunities to get involved?

Are there any opportunities I'm missing out on, that I could be reaching more of you, or information I've not gotten out as effectively as I could have?

Are there ways I can do more, ways I can do better? Of course, the answer is always yes, but the how is not always as obvious. If there is one thing I can assure you of, as the citizens I serve and work for, it's that I am always open to those ideas and way I can improve my service to you.

Thank you for allowing me the amazing privilege to serve.

*People grow through experience
if they meet life
honestly and courageously.
This is how character is built.
~Eleanor Roosevelt*

ELECTION DAY NOTICE:
Precinct Polling Locations for
403 and 406 have changed!
Precinct **403** will be voting at
North Shore United Methodist Church,
NOT Fischer Store.
Precinct **406** will be voting at
Christ Presbyterian Church
on Common Street,
NOT Faith United Church of Christ.

Inside this Issue:

- A Note from Jen
- Departmental Highlighter:
Comal County Veteran Service
Office
- Property Tax Information
- Polling Location Updates for
Precincts 403 & 406
- County Clerk Update
- District Clerk Update
- County Snippets
- Dates of Interest



The Scope of Comal County Road Department Operations:

Did you know we have:

1503 public roads,
totaling 802 miles and
3683 acres of
public right-of-way
Over 48,000 road signs
9 public access boat ramps
375.67 of those county road
miles are in Precinct 4.

Comal County Veterans' Services

Comal County Veteran Service Office

MyComalCounty.com/VET.htm

1297 Church Hill Drive, Suite 209

New Braunfels, TX 78132

830.221.1170



Comal County Veteran Service Officer Michaelle Davis and Assistant County Veteran Service Officer Frank Ontiveros

Meet Michaelle Davis and Frank Ontiveros. Comal County is fortunate to have this dynamic duo as our Veterans Services Representatives. They are tasked with the duty of helping our veteran residents find and obtain the benefits they are eligible for.

Do all counties have a Veterans' Services Office? No. Under Texas Government Code, Title 4, Subtitle C, Chapter 434, Subchapter B; all counties with a population of over 200,000 are required to have one, but counties below that population threshold are not.

Our Veteran's Office was established by Commissioners Court in 1944. A gentleman named Albert Hoffman was the very first Veteran Service Officer, and was paid a grand salary of \$900 per year for the job. Commissioners at that time saw a need for the service, due to all of the soldiers coming back from WWII and had the vision to take the necessary action to establish this office. It was a good thing, too!

Today, our office reports almost 16,000 veterans in Comal County who are receiving some sort of benefit they have earned as a result of serving our country. These benefits, stated monetarily, equate to about \$127.5 million--from VA home loans to DV benefits to GI Bill tuition help and all other military benefits!

Our Veteran Service Office is about a lot more than the bottom line, though. They are trained and certified by the Texas Veterans Commission, and participate in continuing education throughout the year to keep up with changes to legislation and benefits for veterans.

Michaelle and Frank's impact goes beyond the veterans, however. They also assist spouses and/or surviving spouses and dependents in obtaining VA benefits, and assist with filing claims.

Health care benefits are a common issue for their office. Michaelle and Frank help with every part of the process, as needed and requested, from the securing of benefits to scheduling of appointments and coordinating transportation.

The benefit process is complex and many find it to be intimidating. Our Veteran Service Office works with families to come up with a game plan to obtain the necessary benefits, and often times, they will break the process up into smaller, more manageable steps for families, so that the paperwork does not seem so daunting for folks. Our Veteran Service Office prides itself in helping our vets navigate the benefit system, and helping from start to finish.

There are also situations that warrant the coordination of aid from outside agencies--such as fulfilling needs for food, clothes, and monetary benefits for vets in crisis situations.

Not all of their work is done from the office at Comal County's Goodwin Annex. In addition to home and nursing home visits when needed, our Veteran Service Office sets up shop on Wednesdays in other County locations in Bulverde, Garden Ridge, and Sattler for better accessibility.

For more information, please check out their website or stop by the Veteran Service Office at the Comal County Goodwin Annex.

More Veteran News--Veteran Treatment Court is IN SESSION!



On Monday, January 4, an open house and ceremony was held to kick off the Comal County Veterans Treatment Court. This court was established by Commissioners Court in August and held its first session after the open house. It is a specialized court designed for veterans charged with misdemeanor offenses to receive help for addiction, PTSD and/or other mental disorders potentially connected to their military service. A veteran may enter the program as part of a pre-trial diversion to dismiss the charges or as a condition of post-conviction probation. This Court takes place in Judge Stephens' County Court at Law #2. The kick-off ceremony was a packed house of supporters and members of the community, eager to see this happen in our community.

Jeff Kelley's EMERGENCY {management}

October 30 Flood Stats for Comal County:

- Approximately 120 homes were damaged in Comal County and have received more than \$450,000 from FEMA and the SBA, *and still counting.*
- On that day, the County Judge declared a state of disaster for Comal County.
- On November 20, Comal and 14 other counties were declared a state of disaster by Governor Abbott.
- On December 31, we also met the threshold for declaration as a disaster by the President.

Comal County Tax Assessor-Collector
Cathy C. Talcott
offers these simple solutions for paying your Property Taxes:

- Mail your payment, along with the stub, in your enclosed envelope. Please write Property ID # on your check.
- Pay online with your credit card, debit card, or echeck at www.comalcountytaxoffice.net.
- Call toll-free 866-550-0031 to make an automated payment.
- Drive through the drop box lanes located in the New Braunfels and Sattler parking lots, and the Garden Ridge Municipal Building.
- Drop your payment in the door slots at the Bulverde, Sattler or New Braunfels offices.
- Pay in person with credit, debit, check, cashiers check/money order or cash at our New Braunfels, Bulverde or Sattler offices.

Questions?

Call the Tax Office at 830-221-1353.

Taxes Collected by the
Comal County Tax Office

Many people do not realize that their property tax bill contains the taxes assessed by several different entities. Each entity has their own tax rate which is charged per \$100 valuation of property. Below are those that affect residents of Precinct 4:

Taxing Entity	Adopted Tax Rate
Comal County <i>including Lateral Road Tax</i>	\$0.343
Comal ISD	\$1.390
ESD1	\$0.085
ESD2	\$0.060
ESD3	\$0.080
ESD4	\$0.060
ESD7	\$0.078
City of NB	\$0.498
NBISD	\$1.339

More on this can be found on the tax office website:

taxes.mycomalcounty.net



Listed are a few items of public interest that the County has taken action on in the past few weeks:

- The Jail Bond Issue passed in the November 2 Election. The County is currently working on securing bids for architects on the project.
- A petition to incorporate the City of Spring Branch was passed by voters in the November election.
- Voter Registration Cards were issued in late December, but first and middle (or maiden) names were reversed. The cards will be reissued later this month. None of this will affect anyone's eligibility to vote. The rolls are correct.
- Welcome to new ESD #2 board members Mike Hayes, Archie Dishman, and Jim Whitcomb. A complete list of ESDs and their board members can be found on my website under "Boards & Commissions." Thank you to everyone who currently serves, and to all who applied!
- We are still out of mulch at our Recycling Center. Please continue to bring in your brush and plant clippings. We hope to have the contractors back for mulching in mid to late February.
- The GIS mapping software has been updated on the County Engineer's website. If you haven't used it yet, it's much easier to navigate than the old mapping service. Check it out at CCEO.org.



Many of you have expressed that this newsletter and other communications I do are important to you, and that you look forward to receiving them. In the past several months, the print version of this newsletter has come under fire, and continuing the print version, which reaches many people in the County may not be able to continue, due to lack of funding.

I personally believe that it is too important to simply eliminate.

This is where I'm asking for help--according to Local Government Code Sec. 81.032. **ACCEPTANCE OF DONATIONS AND BEQUESTS.** The commissioners court may accept a gift, grant, donation, bequest, or devise of money or other property on behalf of the county, including a donation under Chapter 36, Government Code, for the purpose of performing a function conferred by law on the county or a county officer. (such as the Precinct 4 newsletter). If this is something that you, too, feel is worth supporting, please consider chipping in so that this valuable communication can continue in an uninterrupted manner.

If you would like more details on how to donate to this line item, please don't hesitate to contact me.

Thank you, *Jen*

New in 2016

**District Clerk
Heather Kellar**

The office of the District Clerk would like to announce that beginning January 1, 2016 our NEW office hours will be:

Monday ~ Friday 8am to 5pm

Also, you may not know we are a United States Passport acceptance agency with bilingual acceptance agents available for Spanish speaking applicants, no appointment necessary. Coming soon, we will be hosting a "Passport Night" with extended hours to better serve Comal County.

**County Clerk
Bobbie Koeppe**

To better serve our community, starting January 11, the County Court at Law Office of the County Clerk, located in the "Landa Building" downtown will be open through the lunch hour (it was previously closed for business between noon and 1pm).

Also starting this month, the Comal County Clerk's office will be implementing eRecording. This will provide a faster, more efficient and cost saving service to record documents digitally for multiple parties who do business with the County Clerk's office (ie: title companies, banks, attorneys...etc). It's a win win situation providing savings on postage, courier services, paper and time. Contact our office for further details!

Birth Certificates: Did you know as long as you were born in Texas, any qualified applicant can obtain a birth certificate at the County Clerk's main office or the satellite office in Sattler (and soon to be in the new Bulverde satellite office, too!)?



Need to get in touch with Jen?

It's easy!

EMAIL:

JenCrownover@MyComalCounty.com

PHONE:

830.221.1104

WEB:

www.co.comal.tx.us/

Comal_County_Precinct_4.htm

FACEBOOK:

[www.facebook.com/](http://www.facebook.com/ComalCountyPct4)

ComalCountyPct4

Also, there is a calendar on my website that features my Canyon Lake and Spring Branch hours. Come see me at either location if it is more convenient!

Dates of Interest:

Jan 18	ALL Comal County offices closed for Martin Luther King Jr. Holiday
Jan 31	Last day to pay 2015 Property Taxes without penalty.
Feb 1	Last day to register to vote for eligibility to vote in the Primary.
Feb 15	ALL Comal County offices closed for Presidents' Day
Feb 16-26	Early Voting for Primary Election
Feb 19	Last day to request a ballot by mail.
Mar 1	Primary Election Day -- remember, many local races are decided by primaries!
Mar 25	ALL Comal County offices closed for Good Friday/Founder's Day
Apr 5	10 a.m. Tax Sale at the Historic Courthouse, first floor courtroom
May 16-20	Runoff Election Early Voting
May 24	Runoff Election Day
May 30	ALL Comal County offices closed for Memorial Day

Jen's County Hours:

**Canyon Lake
Fire Station #1**
1074 Scissortail
1st & 3rd
Tuesdays
10a.m.-3p.m.

**Bulverde/
Spring Branch
Fire Station #2**
2016 Puter Creek Dr
2nd & 4th
Tuesdays
10a.m.-3p.m.

Comal County Recycling Schedule ~ For more information: co.comal.tx.us/rec.html

Mondays	Tuesdays	Wednesdays	Thursdays	Fridays	Saturdays
6:30a.m.-11:30a.m. Spring Branch Fire Station @ 281/311	6:30a.m.-11:30a.m. Garden Ridge City Hall on FM 3009 AND Canyon Lake Fire Station #2 (Oblate/Startzville)	6:30a.m.-11:30a.m. VFW in Sattler River Road @ FM 2673	6:30a.m.-11:30a.m. Mystic Shores Boat Ramp 22100 N Cranes Mill Road	6:30a.m.-11:30a.m. Bulverde at the JP #2 Building	8:00a.m.-noon at the Recycling Center
Also, you can come by the Recycling Center anytime Tuesday-Friday from 7:00a.m.-noon or 12:30p.m.-3p.m. to drop off recyclables or pick up mulch.					