



The Commissioner's

Correspondence

News from the office of
Jen Crossover,
Comal County
Commissioner Pct 4

VOL2, ISSUE 2: APRIL-MAY 2016

A note from Jen: Moving at the Speed of Government



Sounds like a joke, doesn't it? Well, it kind of is, but it's very true — there's something painfully slow about "the speed of government."

I was approached several months ago (last November, in fact) by a frustrated resident who wanted to spearhead a clean-up effort on the county road he lives on. He had a group of friends who were available to "adopt the roadway," but were coming up with dead ends as they tried to figure out how to complete that step of the process—so he called me.

I started researching his request to find out how and why our program was discontinued. I also researched what other counties do, both near and far. After a lot of research and meetings with different county staff, we finally came up with something to present to the rest of Commissioners Court for approval. On April 7, we unveiled and approved the newly revamped Adopt A Roadway program for Comal County.

The new program will have a 2-pronged approach. It will have the long-term road adoption option for people, and there will also be a "Clean Sweep" option for groups preferring a "one time," spear-headed attack on the litter in a chosen area.

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Comal County Road Department

Comal County
Road Department
195 David Jonas Drive
New Braunfels, TX 78132
830.608.2090 • CCEO.org

Meet the Comal County Road Department Team

Front Row L to R: John Hood, Brandon Hoevel, Kari Mallett, Chris Anders, Charles Cusack, Chris Braun, Matt Abbott, Troy Schuetz, Joe Hill, Geary Martin, Melvin Williams, Mike Mascari, Travis Praker, James Dean, Tim Tucker, Alex Lynch, Elmer Barnett, Emilio Morales, Clint Martin, Richard Neubert, Gene Szakacsy **Middle Row L to R:** Tom Hornseth, Clay Collins, Mike Lowrie, Chris Fonda, Ernest Knodel, Danny Ybarra, Tate Bequette, Shannon Bauer, Guadalupe Villa, Taylor Smith, Samuel Martinez, Jonathan Chapman, Efrain Gallegos, Jose Garza, Justin Hernandez, Fausto Aguirre, Wayne Bauer, Richard Urrutia, James Perrine, Keith Granado, Russell Bading, Steven Leos, Andrew Velasquez, Secondina Carrillo, Manuel Morales **Top Row L to R:** Matthew Brown, Edward Rodriguez, Rinaldo Simpson, Wesley Magley, Steven Kubena, Jamie Ranft, Daniel Aris, Chuck Birkner, Brandon Olvera, Mark Olvera, Dennis Ranft, Kevin Collins, Derek Koutz, Wallace LeMore, Steven Hawkins, Leah Edmonson, Kevin Hoke, John Doege, Reyes Villarreal, Gary Long, Francisco Contreras, Ty McFarlin, David Sotelo

DEPARTMENTAL
Highlighter

Story on page 2

Departmental Highlighter: Comal County Road Department

In most counties in Texas, county commissioners have direct supervision over the roads in their precinct. They have their own crews, equipment, and run their own schedules for tending to their roads. In Comal County, we are on a unit system, which is a centralized system for road management. While each commissioner still has input as to which areas need attention, all of that is funneled through our Road Department.

At one time, we did have a precinct system for our roads, but in the interest of saving taxpayer money and reducing duplication of work, it was streamlined into the system we have now.

Our Road Department is under the purview of the County Engineer. Its 77 employees handle everything from resurfacing roads, patching roads, cutting brush, drainage and right of way maintenance (including mowing), and mapping (GIS), to running a sign shop and a full-service mechanic shop to keep our machines and vehicles working in tip-top shape.

Fortunately, with our mild climate, these men and women can be productive year-round. Of course, each season lends itself to better conditions for different parts of the road building and maintenance process. Winter, for instance, is generally an excellent time for cutting back the trees and brush that often infringe into the right of way. It's also the perfect time to prep roadways for spring and summer maintenance projects. Drainage maintenance is also an ongoing project, but focusing on areas where road prepping for summer resurfacing is the general goal of the "off season."

Of course, as we are in "flash flood alley," anytime there is a large rain event, the schedules and focuses get shuffled to tend to the things that are the most pressing, especially those that are safety concerns. Many times during rain events, new potholes surface and drainage areas get silted in, so they must be cleaned out to be ready for the next rush of water that comes through.

Many of the right-of-way maintenance projects follow the TxDOT schedule. Mowing, for instance, generally happens twice a year, unless there is a very wet season, which may be cause for an additional mowing in between. Herbicide applications are also modeled after TxDOT, and are generally targeted at nuisance grasses and blood weeds. These non-native grasses can choke out the native, beneficial species and cause other problems with regard to the right-of-way maintenance.

Recently, questions have come up about fogging for mosquitoes. The short answer is that the county does not typically fog for mosquitoes, as it is not as effective in the more spaced-out unincorporated areas of the County as they are in a city setting, where homes and buildings are closer together, and closer to the road. Concerns about Zika virus have brought the question to the forefront recently, and most of the answers come back to prevention. Anything residents can do to prevent breeding places for mosquitoes (eliminating standing water around your home and property) is the best defense against these nasty blood-suckers, no matter what virus they are carrying.

As far as road paving projects, there are sometimes misconceptions about how we maintain our roads versus other jurisdictions. The preferred method of resurfacing roads in Comal County is by seal-coating our roads. At about 1/3 the price of "hot mix," it requires about the same amount of maintenance, and has approximately the same lifespan.

After the road has been thoroughly prepared, the chip-seal process utilizes an emulsion (like a glue) binding agent with a gravel coating over the top that is rolled into the binding agent to solidify the surface of the roadway.

QUICK STATS:
 Comal County has 815 miles of County roads
Breakdown by Precinct:

| PRECINCT 1 | PRECINCT 2 | PRECINCT 3 | PRECINCT 4 |
|------------|------------|------------|------------|
| 298 miles | 159 miles | 19 miles | 362 miles |

A HUGE thank you to all of the people who have stepped up to keep this newsletter in print format to reach more people! I really appreciate the support!



Thank you to:

- Carolyn & Jerry Besselman
- Linda & Carl Conger
- Debbie England - *Rock Bottom Automotive*
- Henri Farmer
- Jaynellen & Toby Kerr
- Jim Klein
- Richard & Kim McFarland
- Constable Shane Rapp & Leslee Martz
- Mark & Karen Schmalz
- Bill Womack - *AlamoGrid Concrete*

If anyone else would like to contribute, please let me know. JenCrownover@MyComalCounty.com. The support of the community will keep this newsletter going strong!

*Comal County Road Department,
Continued...*

This process is best performed in the warm summer months, and is a very time-sensitive process.

We have agreed to work with a contractor to carry out this year's resurfacing schedule, to try to make the budget stretch to cover more miles than it would by doing everything in-house. The added benefit of contractors supplementing the road work is that our crews can continue with road prepping, and we can cover more.

The typical life span of these roads is about 10 years. As much as possible, our Road Department tries to resurface roads on that schedule and maintain them in between. The past several years, Road Superintendent Gene Szakacsy has worked hard to get all 815 miles of roads in our system onto that revolving schedule.

In driving around through several counties, I think we can all have pride in our roads and be very thankful for the capable hands who are so dedicated to keeping our roads safe and in tip-top shape.

For more information about the Comal County Road Department, and the other departments within the County Engineer's Office, please check out their website at CCEO.org.



Did you know?

Official Public Records (OPR) are now available online!

Our County Clerk's Office is making OPRs available online dating back to 1974. This is the first step toward the eventual online availability of all records housed in the Comal County Clerk's Office from the county's 1846 establishment to the present.

The OPRs currently available include deeds, deeds of trust, liens and lien releases, affidavits, water rights, easements and assumed names. Other record categories will be available before the end of the year.

Please contact the County Clerk's Office for more information at 830.221.1230 or MyComalCounty.com/cc.htm.

A note from Jen, continued from page 1...

One option will feature permanent road signs, and the other will feature temporary signs to acknowledge the participating group. Both will come with supplies provided by the County Engineer's Office, and the garbage pickup will be handled by the Road Department.

The online part is still in the works, including an interactive map of available roadways—but stay tuned! It's moving along—at the speed of government.



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. Commissioners Court selected HDR Inc. to be the architects for the project. In the coming weeks, Commissioners Court will also select a project manager to oversee the project.
- The new and improved Bulverde satellite office is in its final stages of construction and will be opening very soon! Stay tuned to the Comal County website for details.
- A new Adopt-A-Roadway program was implemented for county roads. It is a two-pronged approach to community cleanup efforts—one option for residents/groups to use for long-term adoption, and one option for one-time, spearheaded cleanups. We are still working on the website and GIS mapping for the program, but hope to have that portion unveiled soon.
- The Fischer Store Bridge, which connects the communities of Fischer and Wimberley was re-opened and re-dedicated in late February.
- The U.S. Army Corps of Engineers held a public input meeting and conducted a survey for community input on updating the Canyon Lake Master Plan. The results of those surveys will be made available to other entities to improve their operations as well. The full report and updated master plan should be available towards the end of the year.
- New seasons were approved in Court for the sale of fireworks in Comal County. This was authorized by the State Legislature, which passed HB1150, allowing for the sale of fireworks for the Texas Independence Day, San Jacinto Day, and Memorial Day seasons.

BIG 50

Canyon Lake is turning 50!

Join us for the Big Birthday Celebration!

Saturday, May 21

10:30 a.m.

at Overlook Park (at the dam)

for a ceremony, hot dogs & birthday cake, and other fun festivities!

Parking will be limited. Please park at the CRRC Rec Center and use the shuttle provided.

Primary Runoff Voting Times and Locations

Early Voting May 16-20, 2015 7am-7pm each day



Main Election Office, 178 E. Mill St., Suite 101, New Braunfels
 Bulverde/Spring Branch Library, 131 Bulverde Crossing, Bulverde
 CRRC Building, 1909 FM 2673, Canyon Lake
 Garden Ridge City Hall, 9400 Municipal Parkway, Garden Ridge*
 *Garden Ridge location will close at 4pm on Tuesday, May 18

Election Day May 24, 2016, 7am-7pm

Locations including Precinct 4

| | |
|--|--|
| 102, 106, 405 | Bulverde/Spring Branch Library, 131 Bulverde Crossing, Bulverde |
| 402, 403 | Church in the Valley, 14181 FM 306, Canyon Lake |
| 304, 305, 401, 404, 406 | Christ Presbyterian Church, 1620 Common St. New Braunfels |

For other precincts and sample ballots, please see VoteComal.com

Dates of Interest:

- April 22 1-4p.m., Infant Immunization Event at Comal County **Public Health Dept**, 1297 Churchill Dr., New Braunfels or 830.221.1150 for more information.
 - April 25 Last day to register to vote in the 2016 Primary Runoff
Go to VoteComal.com for more information.
 - May 5 PASSPORT Night at the **District Clerk's Office**
EXTENDED HOURS until 7pm, for your convenience.
 - May 14 9a.m.-2p.m. **Extension Office** Open House! Come learn at mini gardening sessions, see cool vendors, get interesting how-to information, and so much more!
 - May 16-20 Runoff **Election** Early Voting--See above
 - May 21 10:30a.m. Canyon Lake 50th Birthday Celebration at Overlook Park
 - May 24 Runoff **Election** Day--See above
 - May 30 Comal County offices closed for Memorial Day
 - June 7 Comal County Property Tax Sale
 - June 11 9-11a.m. **Extension Office** DIY Saturday: "Pickle Perfect!"
 - July 9 9-11a.m. **Extension Office** DIY Saturday: "Catching Rainwater"
 - August 13 9-11a.m. **Extension Office** DIY Saturday: "Bat Frenzy"
 - September 10 9-11a.m. **Extension Office** DIY Saturday: "Fall Gardening"
 - October 8 9-11a.m. **Extension Office** DIY Saturday: "Herbs Galore!"
 - November 12 9-11a.m. **Extension Office** DIY Saturday: "Gifts from the Kitchen"
- All DIY Saturday classes are \$15/person. Please call to register in advance: 830.620.3440. Classes take place at the Comal County AgriLIFE Extension Office, located at 325 Resource Drive (next to the Comal County Recycling Facility).*



Need to get in touch with Jen?

It's easy!

EMAIL:

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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!

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