



The Commissioner's Correspondence

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

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A note from Jen: Educating & Empowering



Over the past 18 months, I've had the privilege of being one of 11 county judges and commissioners chosen from across the state to participate in a Commissioners Court Leadership Academy, sponsored by the Texas A&M AgriLife Extension Service's V.G. Young Institute of County Government.

In August, we wrapped up the program with a graduation ceremony in College Station.

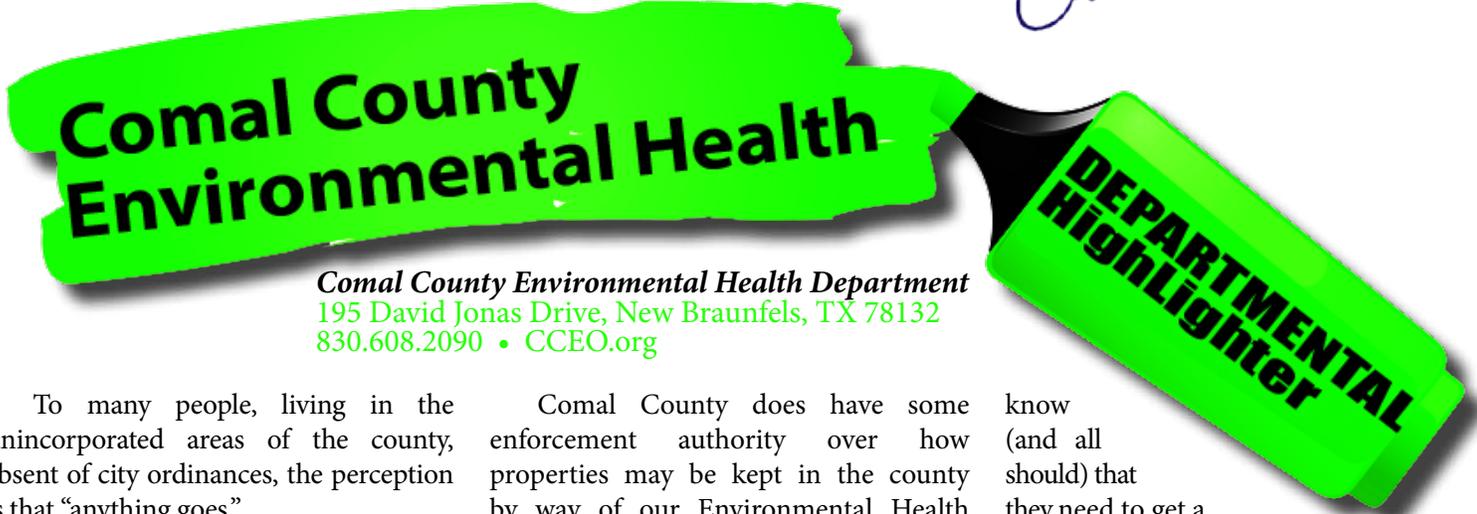
Over the course of the Academy, we spent time in Austin, Washington D.C., Corpus Christi, and College Station. Each session had different learning opportunities, ranging from improving communication skills, leadership and team building, navigating state

and federal government, interlocal collaboration, disaster management, and exposure to the diversity of other county and state structures.

The experience was extremely enlightening and rewarding, and I am very thankful that I was one of the very few chosen for this prestigious program. There is no doubt that the time spent in the academy and the skills that I learned help me serve you, my constituents, in a more efficient, knowledgeable, and effective manner.

Inside this Issue:

- A note from Jen
- Departmental Highlighter:
Environmental Enforcement
- Polling locations, dates, and times for the November General Election
- County Snippets
- Property tax facts and updates
- Dates of interest



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

To many people, living in the unincorporated areas of the county, absent of city ordinances, the perception is that "anything goes."

Not so.



Comal County does have some enforcement authority over how properties may be kept in the county by way of our Environmental Health Department. Governed by the Texas Health & Safety Code, we have the authority to oversee environmental health concerns in four general categories: sanitation nuisances (ch 341), Public Nuisance (ch 343), litter (ch 365), and on-site sewage facilities (ch 366).

On-Site Sewage Facilities (OSSF) is likely the most common part of our Environmental Health Department that the public interfaces with. Most people

know (and all should) that they need to get a septic permit whenever they are building or altering a residence or other structure in the county that will deal with any kind of wastewater. The county will then review the plans, and even do a physical inspection of the work to ensure quality construction and desired impact to the environment.

Any time a complaint arises in the County about a system malfunctioning, an unpermitted alteration of an existing system, or otherwise, we investigate. If

Story continued on page 3



something comes of the investigation, violation notices can be sent out. If the concerns are not immediately addressed, these issues could turn into criminal matters against the violators.

In addition to OSSF regulatory authority, we can also address public nuisance, sanitation nuisance, and litter concerns.

These Health & Safety Code violations can range from raw sewage discharge to dilapidated structures, abandoned properties, junk and trash hoarding and storage, or mosquito hazards. Even overgrown grass (over 36”) is considered a nuisance under the code. If you ever have questions on what might qualify, it never hurts to ask.

Once a complaint is received by our office, and we average about 30-50 calls per week, we investigate each of them by sending an inspector out. Pictures are taken of the offense(s), then violation notices are sent out.

Typically, the property owner is given 30 days to bring the property into compliance. If that does not happen, further enforcement may occur, including the filing of a criminal complaint against the alleged violator.

One common misconception by property owners is the “my land, my business” attitude. Many carry in junk, waste, or trimmings from their business(es) and store them on their property, not always knowing that this is

simply not allowed. Unfortunately, this is a common trend in my precinct, but it is still breaking the rules. The simplest way to state it is this: If you didn't originate the waste, you can't store it—and if you did originate it and it's trash, get rid of it.

As defined in Health & Safety Code Chapter 365, items considered to be litter are as follows: discarded or worn-out manufactured materials and machinery, including motor vehicles, parts of motor vehicles, and decayable waste. Litter is also tires, building or construction materials, appliances, furniture, rubber, tin or aluminum cans, plastics, yard trimmings, leaves, paper, rags, cartons, wood, aircraft, farm implements, and scrap metal.

Fortunately for most of the messes in the area, there are simple solutions. The Comal County Recycling Center accepts electronics—basically anything with a cord. They also accept clean yard waste and household recyclables. If most people would comply with that alone, they would have very little other waste to deal with. In the area, there are many reasonable garbage carriers as well—just ask a neighbor, and I'm sure you'd get a good recommendation.

We realize that not everyone is interested in winning “yard of the month” status, but being neighborly and following simple rules can go a long way in keeping you “off the naughty list” or the “wall of shame.”



Want to get involved?
The Comal County Office of Public Health Emergency Preparedness is recruiting people for their volunteer program. Participation involves monthly meetings for training, and willingness to help in the event of an emergency in our county. Call 830.221.1150 for more information.



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

- The jail architect, HDR, Inc., has begun its preliminary work on our Jail project.
- The county hired Broadus & Associates to be the project manager for the jail project.
- Commissioners Court approved the 2017 budget & tax rate. The budget can be found on our webpage: www.co.comal.tx.us/aud.htm
- The county purchased a piece of property adjacent to the current county jail property for further expansion in years to come. For now, the current tenant of the property will lease it back from the county.
- The county is working on hiring an architect to design a remodel of the former “TCOR” building, just down Seguin Ave. from the Courthouse and Annex for our new Elections Center.
- Commissioners Court adopted an updated version of the Comal County Facilities Plan. More on this can be found at http://www.co.comal.tx.us/CCT_Agendas/2016/09-22-2016/8%20Facilities%20Plan.pdf

Recently, one of the board members of the Comal-Trinity Groundwater Conservation District resigned to become the district's general manager. This has left an opening on the board

that I need to fill. Anyone interested in stepping up for this



position should email a resume and a letter (or email) as to why you may be the right person for the job. Please send it to JenCrownover@MyComalCounty.com. To learn more about the Comal-Trinity GCD, please see ComalTrinityGCD.com.

“I think a hero is an ordinary individual who finds strength to persevere and endure in spite of overwhelming obstacles.”

~CHRISTOPHER REEVE

A Note from Cathy Talcott

Comal County Tax Assessor-Collector

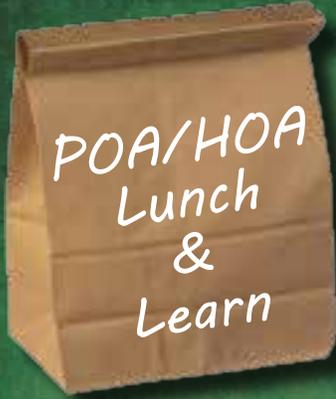
The Comal County Tax Office is preparing the 2016 property tax statements for mailing in October. Payments are due on receipt, and are delinquent if not *paid or postmarked* by **January 31, 2017**. If mailing at the last minute, be sure your envelope is postmarked on or before January 31.

Here's a reminder: It is the Comal Appraisal District, and not the Tax Office or Comal County, that determines the value of your property. Even though the Comal County tax *rate* has not increased for the 2016 tax year, your bill may be higher if there was an increase in your property *value*. For property value information, call the Comal Appraisal District at 830-625-8597.

You may conveniently pay your taxes by the following methods: online via credit, debit card or by echeck; scanning the QR Code with your mobile device; dropping off your check in any of the convenient drive-through drop boxes in New Braunfels, or Sattler, or at the Garden Ridge Municipal Building; at the walk-up drop slots at the tax offices; mail your payment; or pay in person at the New Braunfels, Sattler or Bulverde locations, or at the Customer Service desk at any HEB in the county.

A note from the Attorney General's Office in conjunction with TxDMV: Effective September 1, 2016, if a motor vehicle owner is 6 or more months delinquent in their child-support payments, their vehicle registration cannot be renewed.

For more information, visit ComalCountyTaxOffice.net or call 830-221-1353.



This "Lunch & Learn" event is designed to educate POA/HOA board members and other interested residents on state laws and rules that have to do with their communities. The Community Association Institute (CAI) will be on hand for a presentation and Q&A session. Representatives from Comal County will also be on hand to educate participants on county government and the county's role as a whole, and in neighborhoods, especially in the unincorporated areas of the county, including topics such as law enforcement, roads, and other topics of interest.

Please RSVP and submit your questions in advance online at www.comalcountyforms.com/lunchandlearn.htm so we can make this a great learning experience for all involved.

*FREE at the Tye Preston Memorial Library
Friday, October 21, 2016
10a.m.-1p.m.*

A Tale of 3 Houses...and their property taxes by location in Precinct 4 of Comal County...

The combined property tax rate for Comal County (\$0.342921 per \$100 valuation) is ranked 20th **lowest** out of all 254 counties in Texas. Statewide, county property tax rates range from \$0.14 to \$1.20. Below are examples based on the average (rounded) home price in Comal County.



HOUSE A
Located in the City of New Braunfels, inside NBISD.
Appraised at \$250,000.
Property Taxes Calculated:

ENTITY	RATE	AMOUNT
Comal County	0.292821	\$732.05
Lateral Road	0.0501	\$125.25
NBISD	1.339	\$3,347.50
City of NB	0.49823	\$1,245.58
Total		\$5,450.38

The examples above are based on 2015 property tax rates, and are for the sake of example only, and meant only to help you

*understand your property taxes, and which entities receive them. It does not take into consideration homestead exemptions or any other calculation—just the raw rates. *City of Spring Branch tax rate will not go into effect until the 2016 property tax assessment.*



HOUSE B
Located in unincorporated Canyon Lake, in CISD.
Appraised at \$250,000.
Property Taxes Calculated:

ENTITY	RATE	AMOUNT
Comal County	0.292821	\$732.05
Lateral Road	0.0501	\$125.25
CISD	1.39	\$3,475.00
ESD #2	0.06	\$150.00
ESD #3	0.08	\$200.00
Total		\$4,682.30



HOUSE C
Located in Spring Branch, in CISD. Appraised at \$250,000.
Property Taxes Calculated:

ENTITY	RATE	AMOUNT
Comal County	0.292821	\$732.05
Lateral Road	0.0501	\$125.25
CISD	1.39	\$3,475.00
City of Spring Branch*	0.12*	*\$300.00
ESD #1	0.0851	\$212.75
ESD #4	0.06	\$150.00
Total		*\$4,995.05



Thank you to the following sponsors of this newsletter. Your support makes it possible to keep this newsletter in circulation to residents who may not otherwise have access.

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*, Tom Harris - *Jet Tax Service*

If you're interested in contributing, please let me know at JenCrownover@MyComalCounty.com.

Support from the community is what keeps this newsletter going strong!

General Election Voting Times & Locations

Early Voting October 24-November 4, 2016 **Locations**



- Main Election Office, 178 E. Mill St., Suite 101, New Braunfels
- Bulverde/Spring Branch Library, 131 Bulverde Crossing
- WORD Office, 1928 FM 2673, Sattler
- Garden Ridge City Hall, 9400 Municipal Parkway

Please see VoteComal.com for specific times at each location.

Election Day November 8, 2016 7a.m.-7p.m.	
401	Eden Hill Communities, 631 Lakeview Blvd, New Braunfels
402	Church in the Valley, 14181 FM 306, Canyon Lake
403	North Shore United Methodist Church, 23880 N. Cranes Mill Rd., Canyon Lake
404	Cross Lutheran Church, 2171 E. Common St., New Braunfels
405	Rebecca Creek Baptist Church, 11755 Hwy. 281 N., Spring Branch
406	Christ Presbyterian Church, 1620 Common St., New Braunfels

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

For further information about candidates/etc, please see Vote411.org.

Dates of Interest:

- Sept 30 Last day to register your neighborhood with the Sheriff's Office for National Night Out 2016
- Oct 1(ish) If you requested a ballot by mail for the November 8 election, please look for it in your mailbox soon!
- Oct 4 National Night Out!
- Oct 8 9-11a.m. **Extension Office** DIY Saturday: "Herbs Galore!"
- Oct 11 LAST DAY to register to vote for the November 8 election.
- Oct 15 9a.m.-noon Keep Canyon Lake Beautiful Clean-up Event, meet at CRRC Rec Center
- Oct 21 10a.m.-1p.m.: "Lunch & Learn" for POA/HOAs at the Tye Preston Library on property issues from the POA & county perspectives
- Oct 24-Nov 4 Early Voting. See locations above.
- Nov 8 Election Day! See locations above.
- Nov 11 Veterans' Day - County Holiday
- Nov 12 9-11a.m. **Extension Office** DIY Saturday: "Gifts from the Kitchen"
- Nov 24-25 County offices closed for Thanksgiving
- Dec 23-26 County offices closed for Christmas

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 Center).



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!

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 County Annex 20470 Cougar Bend	8a.m.-noon at the Recycling Center 281 Resource Dr.
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.					