

The Newsletter to turn your world upside down?



APRIL

FOOLS!!!



Williamson County Commissioner Terry Cook

N E W S L E T T E R

March 2021 Volume 5 Issue 3



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**The Last Page and sign up for the WIL-
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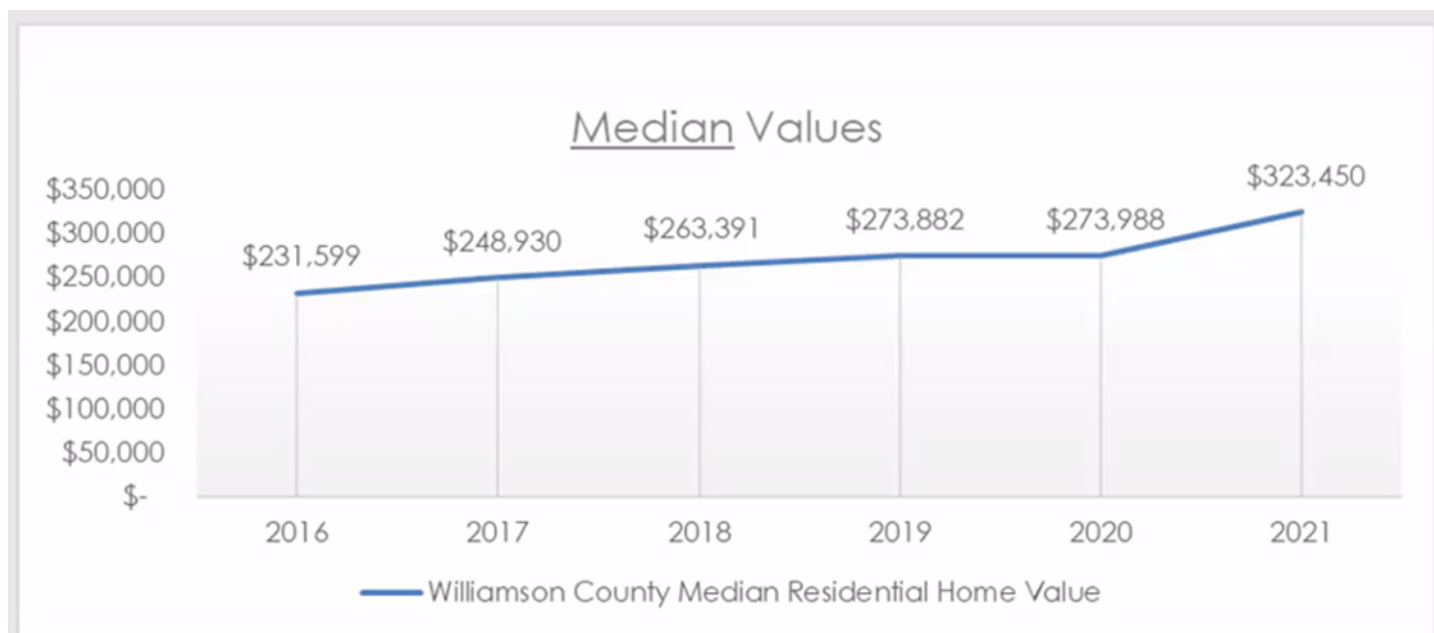


The Message



First, before reading any further, please take a deep breath. Then slowly exhale. Now you may be ready to proceed. Your appraisal notice is being mailed out today, March 31. Remember, it is based on the appraised value as of January 1, 2021.

So, what does Williamson County Median property values look like this year?



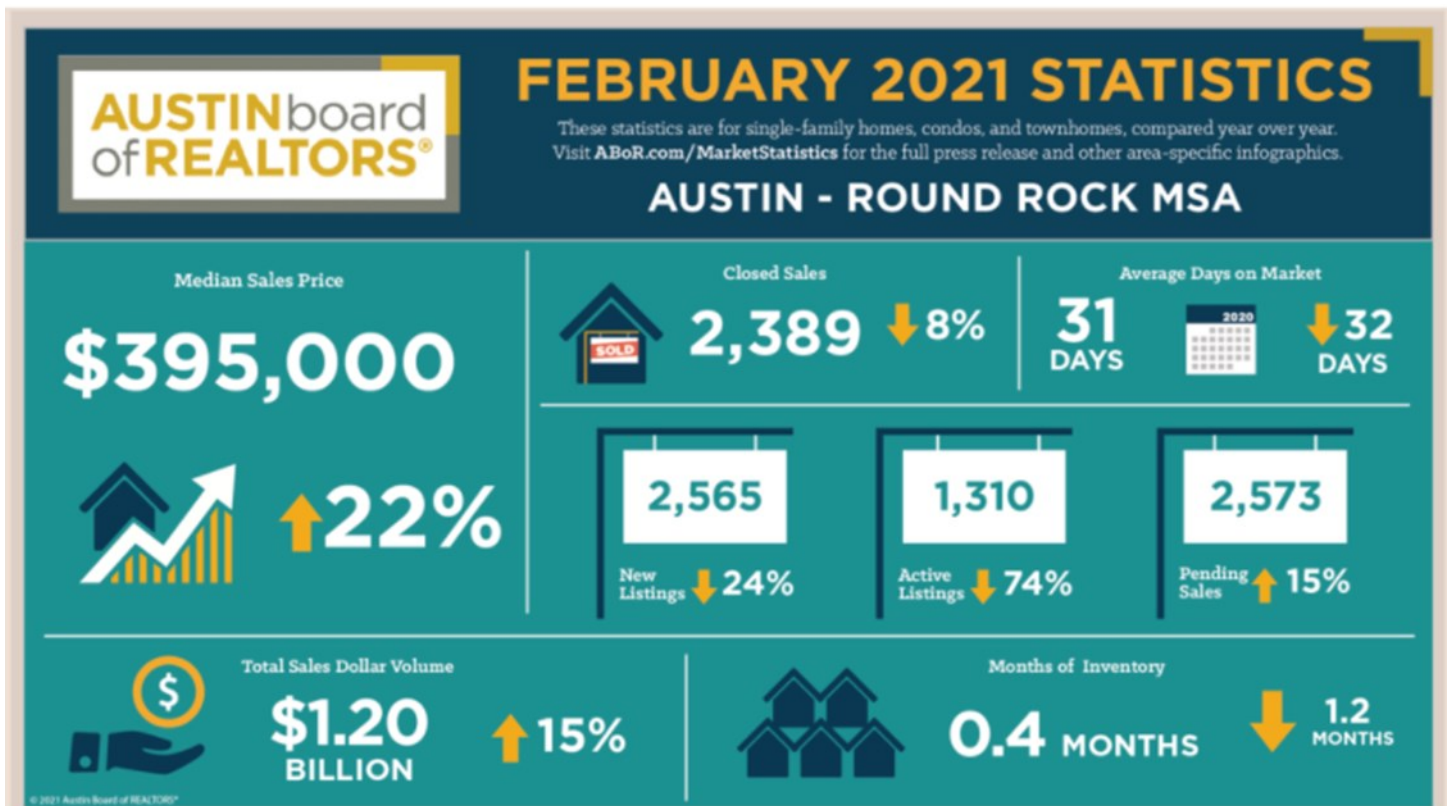
WOW

Here's some published statements concerning this housing boom:

- ❖ **"This is a historical and unprecedented time for our housing market"** – Susan Horton, the new President of the ABOR, said in a written statement – Austin American-Statesman, Shonda Novak, Jan 21, 2021
- ❖ **"New home construction, sales break records in Austin area"** – Austin Business Journal, Parimal M. Rohit and Will Anderson, Jan 27, 2021
- ❖ **"Housing sales and starts are stronger this year than last year in many Williamson County cities. They literally can't be built fast enough"** – Austin Business Journal, Colin Pope, Dec 10, 2020

Alvin Lankford, Chief Appraiser for Williamson Central Appraisal District, referred to our housing market as something he has never experienced before: high demand, low availability and the building industry cannot create houses and apartments fast enough. Further, he said it has not been unusual for the price paid to be \$100,000 over asking price!

This is great if you are selling and moving out of the region, but for the rest of us, a tough time. This is the largest increase in value in a single year ever seen. Built over 2,000 new homes and just not enough. We have more Realtors® than houses in the market.



From the Texas A&M Real Estate Center for Williamson County:

Date	Sales	Dollar Volume	Average Price	Median Price	Total Listings	Months Inventory
Nov 2020	1,110	397,766,715	358,348	326,329	605	0.5
Dec 2020	1,187	434,246,577	365,835	325,000	404	0.4
Jan 2021	740	264,672,373	357,665	323,465	251	0.2
Feb 2021	668	263,288,331	394,144	364,950	271	0.2

That's right, only 271 homes were on the market in Williamson County in February!

Now, back to your personal property tax. As we all know, the increase in appraised value for our homestead in any particular year can be no more than 10% above the previous year unless improvements have occurred on said property (not repairs or normal maintenance). Right now, the appraised values of 90% of the homes in Williamson County are about 19% over 2020 levels. So, the cap brings us a "whew" moment here.

Every homestead property should have at least some of these minimum levels of exemptions:

Appendix C

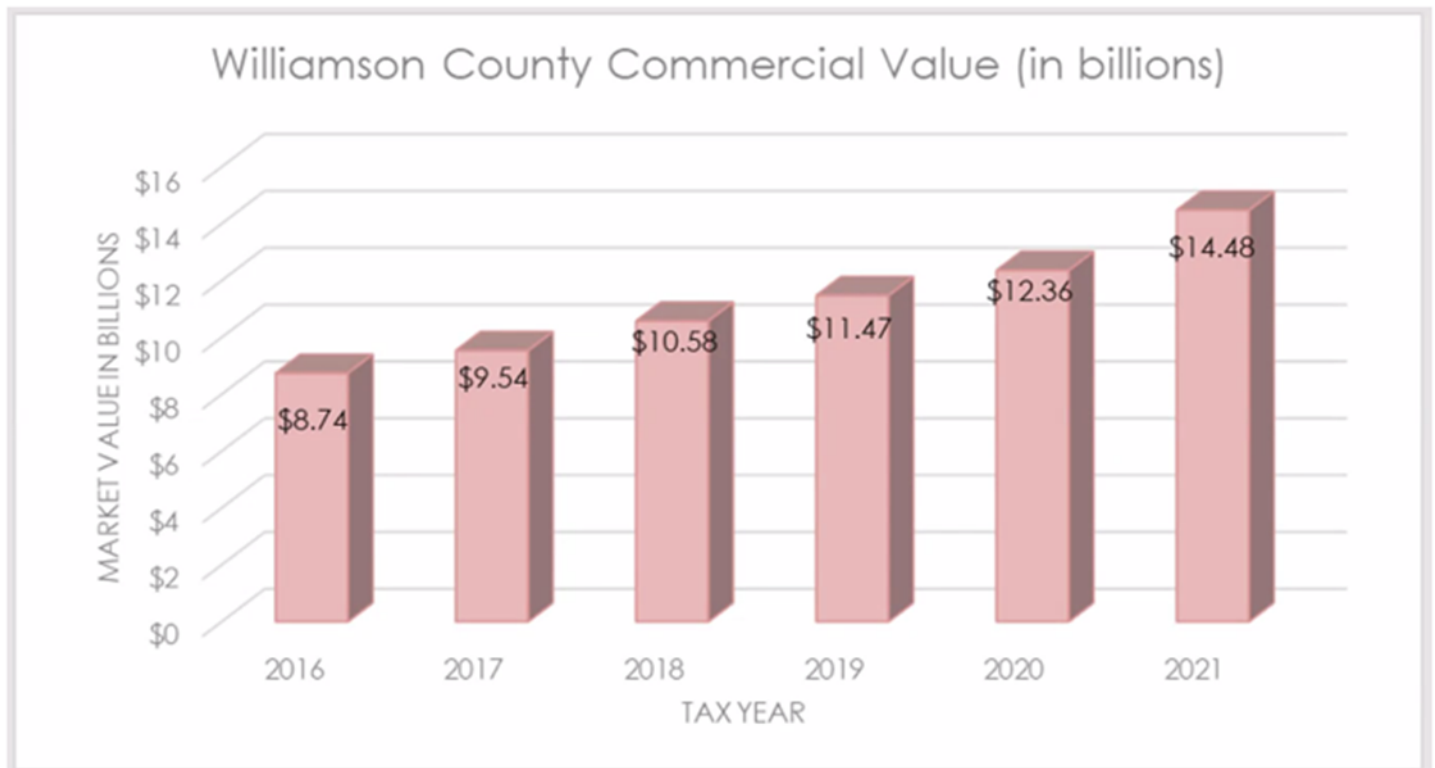
Residence Homestead Exemptions

Exemption	Tax Code Section	Taxing Unit	Total or Partial	Mandatory or Local Option	Amount
General Residence Homestead	11.13(b)	School Districts	Partial	Mandatory	\$25,000
General Residence Homestead	11.13(n)	Cities, Counties, School Districts or Special Districts	Partial	Local Option	An amount up to 20 percent of the property's value, but not less than \$5,000
Farm-to-Market Roads or Flood Control (if collected)	11.13(a)	Counties	Partial	Mandatory (if collected)	\$3,000
Age 65 or Older or Disabled	11.13(c)	School Districts	Partial	Mandatory	\$10,000
Age 65 or Older or Disabled	11.13(d)	Cities, Counties, School Districts or Special Districts	Partial	Local Option	An amount adopted by the taxing unit, but no less than \$3,000
Disabled Veterans	11.22	Cities, Counties, School Districts and Special Districts	Partial	Mandatory	An amount determined by the percentage of service-connected disability
Disabled Veterans with Homes Donated by Charitable Organizations	11.132	Cities, Counties, School Districts and Special Districts	Partial	Mandatory	An amount determined by the percentage of service-connected disability
100 Percent Disabled Veterans	11.131	Cities, Counties, School Districts and Special Districts	Total	Mandatory	100 percent of the property's value
Surviving Spouse of U.S. Armed Services Member Killed in Action	11.133	Cities, Counties, School Districts and Special Districts	Total	Mandatory	100 percent of the property's value
Surviving Spouse of First Responder Killed or Fatally Injured in the Line of Duty	11.134	Cities, Counties, School Districts and Special Districts	Total	Mandatory	100 percent of the property's value

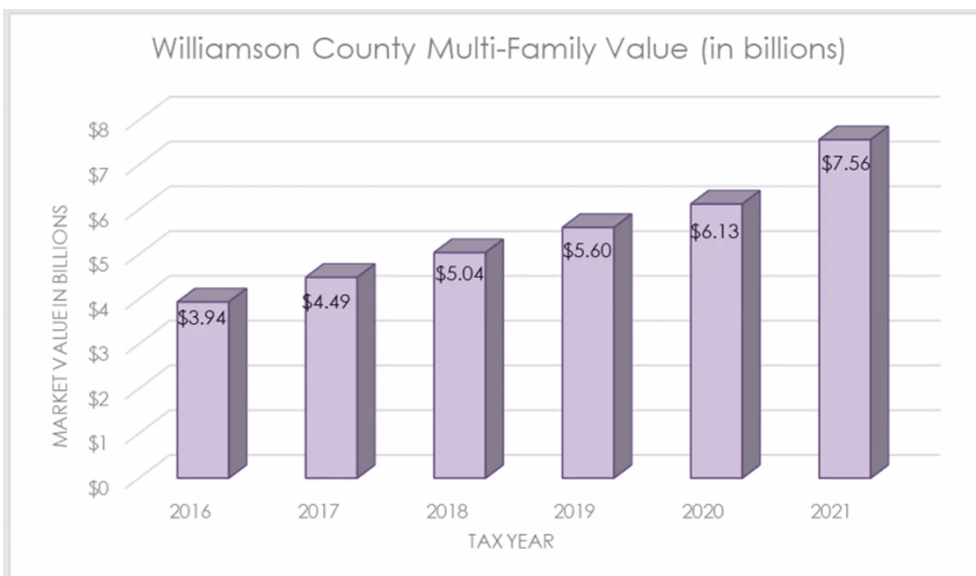
<https://www.wcad.org/wp-content/uploads/2018/03/PropertyTaxExemptionsPublication96-1740.pdf>

Then there's the commercial/industrial market growth that should reduce pressure on homeowners in contributing tax dollars to those taxing entities in the county.

Here's some info:



\$2B more value in 2021 in the commercial marketplace but economic development tax incentives for some of these newer ones do reduce \$\$ to the coffers for some of this commercial entities (I know, I know).

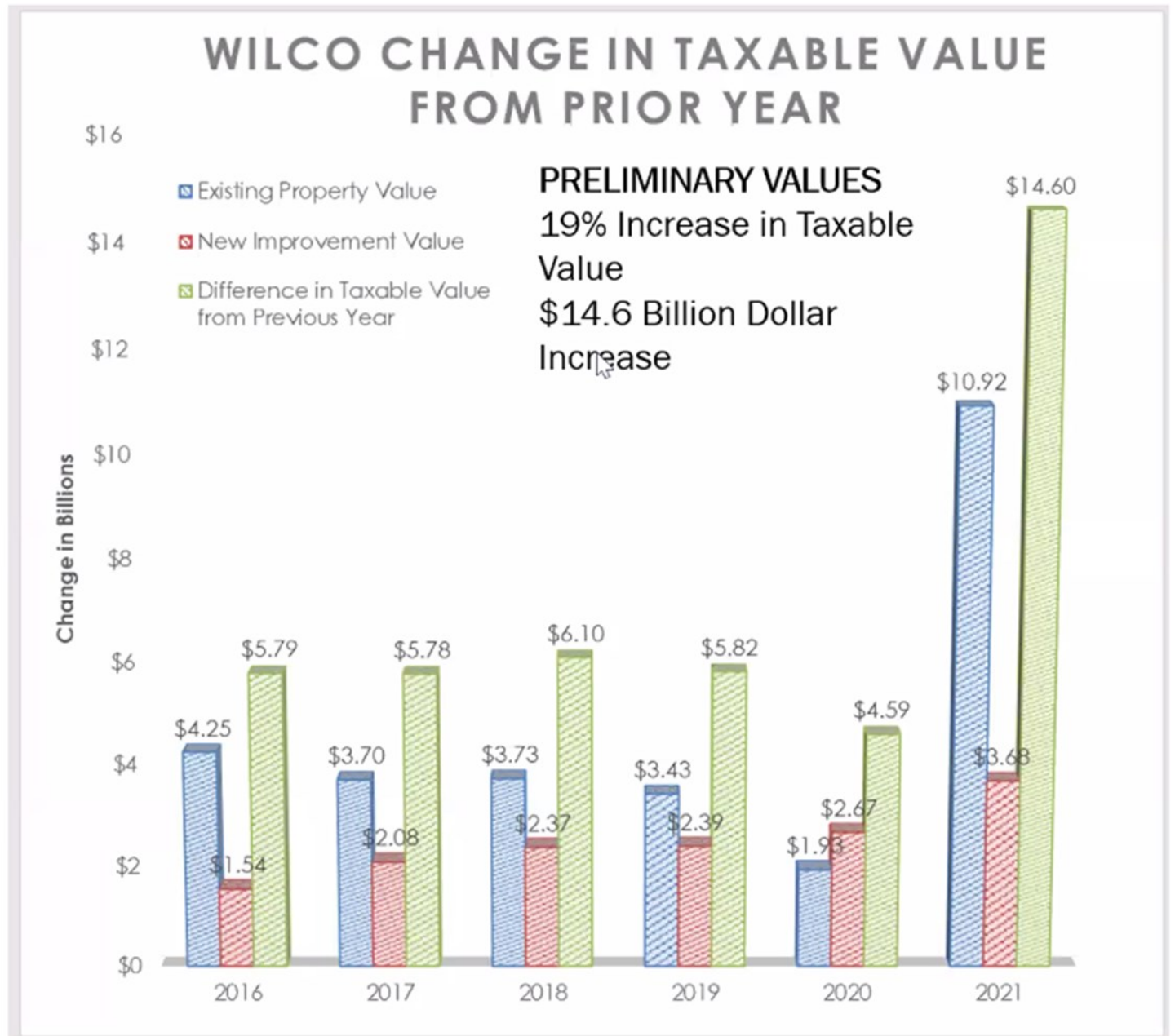


For comparison, at left is the value of multi-family properties across the county. They collectively rose almost \$1.5 billion, with a B, over the previous year.

Lastly, our taxes start with our property values, but are determined by the tax rates of all the taxing entities. Whatever the rates become this year, the 2019 Legislature passed a bill declaring that taxing entities

cannot bring in more than 3.5% more revenue than the previous year (despite the cost of delivering services typically don't follow inflation and many exceed 3.5% in any given year) without the hassle of an election. So, you can probably count on those rates being reduced this year.

This last graph summarizes our market and sorry for my cursor being in the way as I was feverishly snipping and pasting as the WCAD presentation was proceeding.



There is much new information that you will find on the WCAD website when you look up your property and its appraisal. The homes used to establish your value are clearly shown in your neighborhood. Also, WCAD has switched from the less accurate method of appraisal, Market Derived Value, to the stronger accuracy of Multiple Regression Analysis for 2021. Before you protest, recognize that WCAD is certified at a level where only about 50 other appraisal entities in the U.S. are, and is one of 14 in Texas (and I apologize, I didn't get the specific certification written down). Ours has been audited and certified as among the most accurate appraisal roles in the state.

Go to WCAD.org to start your journey into your home's appraisal.

SATURDAY, APRIL 24
RABB PAVILION, OLD SETTLERS PARK

Free event, geared towards all ages, with a wide variety of activities and services!

EARTH DAY



More information at:
WWW.ROUNDROCKTEXAS.GOV/EARTHDAYFEST

There are numerous local elections across Williamson County on May 1.

If you click the word **V**ote on the left, it will take you to the Williamson County Elections page, where you will find all sorts of information regarding election dates and the early voting schedule.



Important election dates for the May 2021 election:

Last Day to Register to Vote: Thursday, April 1

Last Day to Apply for Ballot-by-Mail: Tuesday, April 20

Early Voting Period: Monday, April 19 to Tuesday, April 27

See voting locations and other elections information [HERE](#).

Important Early Voting Changes for this election:

1. The early voting period will only be 8 days, instead of the usual 2 weeks, Monday, April 19th—Tuesday, April 27.
2. NO SUNDAY VOTING!
3. Times for all locations for April 19—April 24 will be 8:00am—6:00pm and on April 26 and 27, the times will be 7:00am—7:00pm.

This would be an excellent time to check your voter registration status, and while you're at it, you can also see your sample ballot, right [HERE](#).

**DO YOU HAVE
UNUSED AND
EXPIRED
MEDICATIONS?**

Syringes and
sharps will not be
accepted

NATIONAL TAKE-BACK DAY

Saturday, April 24

10 am - 2 pm

FREE AND SAFE MEDICATION DISPOSAL

GEORGETOWN:

Legacy Hills Park Pavilion at 200 Del Webb Blvd, Sun City
Williamson County Sheriff's Office, 508 S. Rock, Georgetown

ROUND ROCK:

Round Rock Police Department, 2701 North Mays

CEDAR PARK:

Cedar Park Police Department, 911 Quest Parkway and

LEANDER:

Leander Police Department, 705 Leander Dr.



More information: 512-246-9880
Other locations: DEATakeBack.com

**¿TIENE
MEDICAMENTOS
NO UTILIZADOS
Y VENCIDOS?**

*No se aceptan
jeringas y agujas*

CAMPAÑA NACIONAL DE RECOLECCIÓN DE MEDICAMENTOS RECETADOS

Sabado, 24 de abril

10 am - 2 pm

ELIMINACIÓN GRATUITA DE MEDICAMENTOS

GEORGETOWN:

Legacy Hills Park Pavilion at 200 Del Webb Blvd, Sun City
Williamson County Sheriff's Office, 508 S. Rock, Georgetown

ROUND ROCK:

Round Rock Police Department, 2701 North Mays

CEDAR PARK:

Cedar Park Police Department, 911 Quest Parkway and

LEANDER:

Leander Police Department, 705 Leander Dr.



Para más información visite
DEATakeBack.com



Wilco Forward Grants for the Hospitality Sector

After commencing the Wilco Forward program a year ago and financially helping 1000s of families and businesses across our county make it through the pandemic, the Wilco Forward Small Business Grant Program Phase 2 has begun!

Phase 2 is a second round of small business grants federally funded through the original CARES Act. On March 10, 2021, Commissioners Court allocated \$10 million to a targeted set of businesses in the hospitality sector that have continued to be negatively impacted significantly. The following businesses will be eligible for this financial assistance:

- Food services, such as restaurants, food trucks, and caterers
- Bars
- Hotels and motels, including bed and breakfast

The grant amount includes \$500 per employee, with a maximum total of \$10,000 per business. One purpose of the grant is to assist with the cost of keeping employees during the period of required reduced occupancy under the Governor's COVID-19 executive orders.

To register for a grant and to learn more, go [HERE](#). **The deadline to apply is April 16, 2021.** The Commissioners Court has contracted with an outside firm, McCreary, Veselka, Bragg and Allen, P.C. for the administration of this round of the grant program.

Because we are dealing with federal dollars, you can be subject to an audit, and each recipient of a grant should be prepared for it.

In the original Wilco Forward grant cycle for small businesses, \$35M was allocated to help those county businesses with 100 or fewer employees that were negatively impacted by the pandemic. In its 60-day cycle, May-June 2020, 3,688 businesses were assisted and a total of \$34,285,616 was distributed in grants.

As of March 30, 2021, 84 small businesses in the hospitality sector of Wilco have received \$551,500 in this new round of grants. We anticipate that as many as 500 businesses in the county could take advantage of this new program.

To register for a grant and to learn more, go [HERE](#). The deadline to apply is April 16, 2021.

Williamson Commissioner Cook: Prepare today for tomorrow's emergency

If I had to run out of my house today during an emergency, what would I grab and how quickly?

During our recent severe winter storm, many people had to flee their homes that flooded from busted pipes or just to find a warm place somewhere.

If you weren't fleeing, flushing toilets with melted snow or weathering the elements indoors without lights or heat, you were lucky. And if you had to dig through snow in the dark to find the main water shutoff valve to your home as your busted pipes gushed like Old Faithful inside, therein is a lesson for all of us.

We should all be able to locate our water main, and where to shut off the power and gas as quickly as possible in any disaster at any time of day.

If a big storm or fire is coming through, we now know we'd better have water saved up, flashlights and batteries. Those flashlights will come in handy when you're trying to shut off water, gas or electricity in the dark!

For your ready-to grab bag, consider making copies of legal and important documents like home/auto insurance, house/auto titles, bank accounts, credit cards, licenses, passports, and lists of prescription names with numbers, phone numbers, doctors and passwords.

Items for your emergency kit can include:

- prescriptions
- over-the-counter medicines you use
- small water bottles for drinking
- distilled water required for medical equipment
- phone chargers
- a change of clothes and shoes
- extra eyeglasses if possible
- toothbrushes and toothpaste
- jackets
- snacks
- soap, hand sanitizer, wipes and toilet paper
- diapers, bottles and formula
- face masks
- waterproof bags for items like prescriptions and documents

Emergency centers that opened during the snowstorm in February asked people to bring some of these emergency items.

Be sure to update your kit and documents at least annually but preferably every six months. And at the very least, make a list of items you can't store away but will need in case you have to leave unexpectedly like your CPAP machine or oxygen.

What about Fido and Fluffy? Can't forget our pets! Remember to include pet food, medications, leashes and proof of current rabies vaccine.

For additional ideas, please visit ready.gov/kit and ready.gov/plan.

To access all disaster-related information for the county, download the Wilco Ready Community Preparedness App on your cell through the Android or Apple app store.

Williamson County's CAPCOG Regional Notification System also notifies residents about specific emergencies. Cellphone users must register at warncentraltexas.org to receive the notification system's messages by phone, email and text.

Countywide major emergency information is posted on facebook.com/preparingwilc and at [twitter/PreparingWilco.com](https://twitter.com/PreparingWilco).



These accounts are monitored weekdays during office hours; however, if you require emergency assistance, call 911. Please do not post emergency requests or send emergency messages to county social media accounts.

We have Texas-size reasons to begin emergency preparations yesterday.

Central Texas' wettest months of April and May can bring severe thunderstorms, tornadoes and flooding. Central Texas' Memorial Day Flood 2015 was the highest flood ever recorded in the state's history, causing death and property loss.

Central Texas can catch the tail ends of hurricanes that run from June to November, like Hermine in 2010 that flooded 60 homes in Round Rock West. Wildfires may rage during any extended dry periods.

Hopefully the freezing weather that gripped Texas between Feb. 13-17 was a once-in-a-lifetime event but just in case, let's save a few containers for water and remember you can fill your bathtubs with enough notice.

Team members of Wilco's office of emergency management that coordinates disaster preparedness with the county's municipal governments, emergency service districts, and nonprofit and volunteer first-response organizations are well-prepared.

When called to action during the severe winter storm, these folks grabbed their emergency bags that came in handy as many spent several nights at the county's 911 center in Georgetown sleeping (somewhat) on cots to fulfill rotating shifts to respond to the record number of emergency calls and needs.

My condolences to the families and friends of those who lost their lives during our power and water outages.

In addition to asking our Texas legislators to incentivize or require weatherization for all forms of power plants and wind/solar farm equipment, let's also save lives and reduce misery with preparedness.



ROAD UPDATES

620 at Railroad/Chisholm Trail (Contractor: Bridges and Roads LLC)– The shafts for the first abutment for the eastbound bridge over the railroad tracks has begun. A bridge crew is on site and has already begun building forms for footings and columns. Lots of earth movement continues. Storm sewer pipe is still being laid in various locations. This part is particularly difficult as there is solid rock west of the railroad tracks. Hoping to get our 3rd lane back on Chisholm Trail for that left turn on to Round Rock Ave ahead of the round-about job. This is a City of Round Rock, Wilco & TxDOT project. Estimated completion date is Summer 2022.

Great Oaks Bridge at Brushy Creek Rd.– Still awaiting utility moves before it goes out to bid. Construction could start this summer!!! Estimated cost is \$13.6M. Learn more [HERE](#).

Hairy Man Rd./Brushy Creek Rd. Safety Improvements (Contractor: DeNucci Constructors LLC)– Learn more about this project at this [website](#). Work has started primarily west of Great Oaks Dr and progress is being made along Brushy Creek Rd. Tree removal is occurring along Hairy Man Rd in preparation for roadwork. Note: Hairy Man Rd will have a 30-day closure sometime during this project. This is a 100% county job with estimated cost of \$6.1M. Substantial completion is anticipated in early 2022.

Pond Springs Road Area Drainage Improvements– Agreement with Austin is close to completion (ah, roadwork). Design is being revised to accommodate utility conflicts (telecoms, water, and wastewater). Construction start is still slated to begin Fall 2021. County project with estimated cost of \$4.17M. Those businesses there can't wait for it to start—have you ever seen their backlots?

Forest North Drainage Improvements Phase III (Contractor: DeNucci Constructors LLC)– This project continues to hum along. There is some grumbling on NextDoor but most issues are due to Austin requirements and their inspectors are out checking the work every week. County job, including installing Austin waterlines with reimbursements, for \$4.8M. Substantial completion is anticipated early 2022.

Sam Bass Rd. Interim Signal Project (Contractor– Austin Traffic Signal)– Interim traffic signals will be installed at the intersection of Sam Bass Rd. and Walsh Ranch Trail/Arrowhead Circle and at Sam Bass and Great Oaks. At the Great Oaks intersection contractor drilled into an unmarked waterline on the SE corner but patched the same day. Also found, heavy amount of rock, which necessitated a different drilling bit and rock always takes longer to drill through. Hydro-excavation was performed on the southside of the intersection to determine possible signal locations. We even have overhead conflicts. Still planning on this project being done in April—oh so close. County job for \$320K.

O'Connor Drive Traffic Signals (Contractor: Champion Infrastructure)– Slow, I mean SLOW progress. Many reasons including long lead times on orders of some parts, and then there's those undocumented utilities underground...Owner has committed to additional workers—I'm with you in the BCMUD—it can't be much longer! This project cost is just south of \$1M now—has to end.

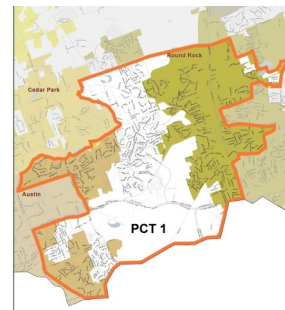
University Blvd. widening from IH-35 to Sunrise Rd. (Contractor: DeNucci Constructors LLC)– *Stay off University if you possibly can!!! It is down to only 2-lanes in each direction causing huge backups.* May I recommend using the N. Mays Street extension if you need to reach Baylor Scott & White. If you need to get to Specs or Chipotle, etc., I suggest N. Mays and exiting on a cross street (I think its Oakmont) to weave thru light industrial to come into that shopping center from the east side just south of Wells Fargo. This is a City of Round Rock project for which the county has contributed \$5M. Project is slated to finish in early 2022.

Wyoming Springs @ Smyers Lane—A left turning lane will be created in the median. Final plans have been completed and an Interlocal Agreement (ILA) with the City of Round Rock has been drafted and has been submitted for the city's review. Construction start is anticipated Spring 2021. This project should have a very short time span for turnaround.

Note: Lights are up on N Mays St bridge!!



The Mission, Vision, and Value Statements of the Williamson County Commissioner Precinct 1 Office



MISSION

To lead pro-actively on the Williamson County Commissioners Court while advocating for the constituents of Precinct 1 and the county at-large from a foundation of collaboration and respect.

VISION

To transform Williamson County government into a more accessible, responsive, transparent, and well-managed organization for our residents, so that we become the community recognized as the best in Central Texas to live and enjoy.

VALUES

Accountability, commitment, integrity, and respect form the values that guide the Williamson County Commissioner Precinct 1 office.

CONTACT US!

LOCATION: Williamson County Jester Annex
1801 E. Old Settlers Blvd., Suite 110

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EMAIL COMMISSIONER COOK:
commissioner1@wilco.org

COMMUNICATIONS/SCHEDULING: Doris Sanchez
512-244-8610, doris.sanchez@wilco.org

EXECUTIVE ASSISTANT: Garry Brown
512-244-8615, garry.brown@wilco.org

SEE US ONLINE!!!

Williamson County's Website! - www.wilco.org

Our office's web site- [Terry Cook, Commissioner Pct 1](#)

Non-Emergency Phone Numbers

Austin Fire Department
512-974-0130

County Judge Bill Gravell
512-943-1550

Jollyville Fire Department (ESD 1)
512-258-1038

Round Rock Fire Department (ESD 9)
512-218-5590

Sam Bass Fire Department (ESD 2)
512-255-0100

Williamson Central Appraisal District
512-930-3787

Williamson County Landfill
512-759-8881

Williamson County Regional Animal Shelter
512-943-3322

Williamson County Sheriff's Office
512-864-8282

Want to know even more
about what's happening in
Williamson County?

Sign up for the WILCOunty
Line E-newsletter! Click
[here](#) to sign up!

Commissioner Cook
keeps meeting with many
MUD Boards and HOAs.
To invite her to your
meeting, contact Doris at
doris.sanchez@wilco.org

**In case of
Emergency
DIAL 911**