

# Williamson County Commissioner Terry Cook

## NEWSLETTER

September 2022

Volume 6

Issue 9

It's that  
time of  
year!



### In This Issue

The Message

Put This On Your Calendar

**THERE IS AN IMPORTANT  
ELECTION COMING UP!**

Road Updates

In Commissioners Court

The Last Page and sign up for the  
WILCounty Line E-newsletter

Where is Commissioner Cook?

Coming soon!





# The Message



## Aggregate Mining Operations in Wilco

Did you know that Williamson County has the most aggregate mines of any county in Texas? I had the opportunity to tour some mining areas along with Garry Brown, my executive assistant, Michael Spano, a Williamson County resident in that area, and Jill Shackelford, a former asphalt and mining company owner in Bastrop County. She now consults on best practices, which can still make an mining operation profitable, and works with TxDOT and TCEQ. Michael is a member of the Coalition for Responsible Environmental Aggregate mining, CREAM.

We met with a property owner whose property has been encroached by JB Stone's cut stone mining operation. This quarry operates heavy equipment 7 days a week including Thanksgiving and Christmas; consequently this family has not had a quiet meal, or any time, since either 2020 or 2021. Cut stone quarries expand much faster than crushed stone quarries. All quarries are to leave a fifty-foot border of natural growth between their operations and the property line. This has not occurred with JB Stone as shown in the picture and the fence line.



Further, in picture to the left, you see a large sawing piece of equipment – no dust control. Cream has air particulate monitors installed in the region, generally on residential properties. The majority of the dust is from blasting operations. This particular quarry is over the Edward Aquifer recharge zone – that comes with additional restrictions including an operation can't go lower

than 30 feet from surface. Oops in next picture:





Water pollution can occur with mining. They have been alerted that a violation has occurred, yet here they are, continuing operations. The second picture shows what seems to be their feeble attempt to re-establish the 50' perimeter border – however they're just moving dirt from one end of the operation to another side...after all the

stone has been removed. Sigh. Texas should do better. Jill is to retrieve their permits and re-view them for violations. She has specific contact in each of the regulatory bodies to reach out to. I'd vote for this operation to be shut down and no opportunity to be re-opened under anyone else.







**ELECTION DAY IS TUESDAY, NOVEMBER 8, 2022**

**Voter Registration Deadline:** Tuesday, October 11

**Early Voting Period:** Monday, October 24 to Friday, November 4

**Last Day to Apply for Ballot by Mail:** Friday, October 28

(Received, not postmarked)

**Dates and Times for Full-Time Locations and Limited Ballot Voting**

**Monday, October 24 through Saturday, October 29:** 7:00 am to 7:00 pm

**Sunday, October 30:** 12:00 pm to 6:00 pm

**Monday, October 31 through Friday, November 4:** 7:00 am to 7:00 pm

**SEE A LIST OF VOTING LOCATIONS —> [HERE](#)**



# IN COMMISSIONERS COURT

**Domestic and Teen Dating  
Violence Awareness Month**

**EMS Re-accreditation**

**And Other County Department News**



October is Domestic and Teen Dating Violence Awareness Month. Commissioner Cook was honored again this year to read the proclamation.

The work of Williamson County Domestic Assault Response Team, made up of a partnership between local law enforcement and Hope Alliance, cannot be overstated in how important their combined roles are.

In 2021:

- 8,178 hotline calls
- 446 online chat requests
- Services to over 949 survivors

[HopeAlliancetxt.org](https://www.HopeAlliancetxt.org)

**Or 24 hour hotline**

**1-800-460-7233**



**Congratulations to Williamson County EMS on their re-accreditation by  
the Commission on Accreditation of Ambulance Services,  
Top 11 of 744 Texas EMS agencies; top 194 of 21,000 in the nation!  
That's our TEAM**



## Changes Coming to Veterans Services

Commissioners Court appointed Beatriz Bocanegra as Assistant County Veterans Services Officer. At left, Beatriz is in the middle, and she is flanked by Cathy Jo Johnson, Office Manager, and Juan Amaya, Veterans Services Director.

Veterans Services is expanding offices! They will have a small office right here in the Jester Annex by October 14. We look forward to having them as neighbors!



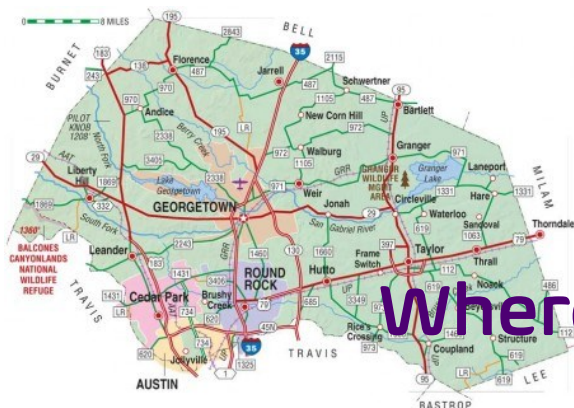
## JP3 Earns TAC County Best Practices Award

The Texas Association of Counties (TAC) has named Williamson County a 2022 County Best Practices Award recipient for Justice of the Peace Precinct 3's program "What Every Teen Should Know About Texas Law."

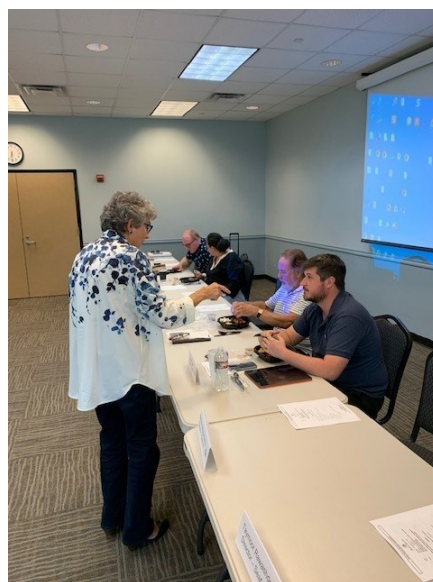
The program was developed by Williamson County Precinct 3 Justice of the Peace Evelyn McLean in August 2021. It is an eight-week program offered to high school juniors and seniors in preparation for adulthood. Every student receives a free copy of the book *What Every Teen Should Know About Texas Law* written by Gainesville, Texas Municipal Court Judge Christopher Cypert. In addition, Dell Children's Health Plan provides dinner every week. "What Every

Teen Should Know About Texas Law" costs both taxpayers and the participants nothing.

Every other year, TAC's County Best Practices Awards Program recognizes noteworthy innovations and solutions that increase efficiency, improve operations or overcome obstacles facing county governments. These innovations and solutions help Texas counties better serve their residents. They also serve as models that other counties can duplicate to fit their own needs.



# Where is Commissioner Cook?



From Left to right: Yetkin Yildirim, Esra Tombul, Terry Cook, Suzan Saltik, Kadir Akkus and Erdem Batikci

## Wilco's Turkic Community

What? We have a "Turkic" Community – how did I not know? Those known as Turkic are part of a diaspora of persons, primarily speaking the Turkic language, largely from SE Asian regions and are predominately Sunni Muslims. Travis and Williamson Counties have Turkic Community Centers, ours is off Gattis School Road. I was contacted by a member and invited to participate in a brunch – let's talk good eating! It was prepared by three female members.

We were joined by two male leaders and spokespersons for the community.

This group has a non-profit, Raindrop Foundation, whose mission is to cultivate friendship and promote understanding of diverse cultures through its unique services to the community. This community has been very involved in helping Afghani refugees resettle in this area. The members I met with are from Turkey and cannot return there due to oppression and persecution by President Erdogan. Many are separated from their families and cannot even contact them. This was a most engaging and friendly group.

Their organization sponsors outreach to the Wilco community with food events: some for tasting dishes from different regions of Turkey, some for teaching the art of Turkish cooking. My hand went up for either.

So how can we reach out? They want a voter registration time at their resource center – TBD. Could use some volunteers when I hear when they'd like to do it, probably in conjunction with an event they hold. Also if you have household goods or clothing, especially long-sleeved tops for women, it all goes to a good cause. You can get it to me (home or office) and I'll take it to the community center when I know someone will be there.



## Cedar Park 9/11 Remembrance



On Sunday early morning, I joined many residents for the 9/11 Remembrance Ceremony at Veterans Memorial Park. This is a very well-done program recognizing all veterans of each branch of our military with the ringing of the bell timed with major occurrences on September 11, 2001. The American Legion Hunter-Morris Memorial Post 9/11 sponsored the ceremony. This park has a stage and arena seating, high on a hill, and behind the seating is also a statue honoring the brave, then, unbeknownst to me, is a Gold Star Family Memorial slightly east and was the very first one in the entire state of Texas! I encourage you to visit the park and make sure you walk around the Gold Star family memorial. It's very well done.

This is a very sobering service. The Keynote speaker, Sarah Sheriff of Vandergriff High School reminded us that she had not yet been born when the horrific events occurred. She further stated that attending these remembrance services is necessary to give her generation exposure to, and knowledge of, the events of 9/11 – lest we forget.

## Taylor 9/11 Remembrance



Taylor begins their annual 9/11 Remembrance with an evening parade of county first responders. The cities and towns responded with one vehicle led by a drum and bagpipe muster; even the small communities of Weir and Coupland were represented. The parade came down Main Street (SH 95), passed by Heritage Square Park then turned to allow the personnel to join others on the stage of the Park. Chris Connealy, the County's Senior Director of Emergency Management, was the keynote speaker and reminded us that it was the first responders that did not turn and run, but ran into the twin towers seeking to save other's lives. Many today are living with the negative medical problems caused by the resulting poor air quality and physical disabilities from the collapsing structures. He reminded us also of the first responders for the crash of United Airlines Flight 93 moving thru the dense smoke rising from the massive gash in the Pennsylvania field and those at the Pentagon trying to save lives and treating injuries of those, including a 3-yr old, with the collapse of the ring structure. In total, 2,977 persons died, 343 of them were fire and medical first responders, 60 were law enforcement. Lest we forget.



# Taylor's Pre-Legislative Summit at the Expo

On Wednesday, Sept 7, the first state of the county was held in Taylor. It was a 6-hour summit with 4 panels of experts: Water & Electricity Resources, Economic Development, Infrastructure and Workforce Development. It was a bold plan and as we found out, each of the panels

could have been a six-hour event. Tia Stone, President of the Taylor Chamber and her team pulled the speakers together. From those pre-registered for the event, she requested questions for the panelists – we sent a boatload to her. It was a sold-out event.

Because time was short for each panel, questions from the public didn't generally occur. I did shout out a question of "are we prepared for the myriad of electric car chargers coming our way hard and fast" to the Water and Electricity Panel? Of course these guys are major lobbyists in their respective arenas and had made the world sound fine and well for us. The responses from LCRA, power producer, Oncor, power distribution, and PUC, power oversight were essentially "There, there, little lady, all is going to be just fine" – humph. Of course the front page story in the Statesman on Sep 14 concerned many seeking oversight on natural gas industry (our major power production fuel) and the pushback from that industry of "don't get in my business". Very little improvements were made from the last legislative session's marching orders to that industry.

Other pet peeves – no mention of broadband expansion under Infrastructure and no mention of need to FIX daycare under Workforce development despite the known fact that many are at home instead of in the workforce due to lack of available and/or affordable daycare. Maybe on another day!



## PRE-LEGISLATIVE SUMMIT

PRESENTED BY

# SAMSUNG

8:30. Light Breakfast  
Sponsor: **Temple College**

9 A.M. **GREETINGS**  
Welcome  
Landscape of the Day  
Sponsor: **Tia Rae Stone, Mayor Brandt Rydell, Drew Scheberle**

9:30 **WATER & ELECTRICITY RESOURCES**  
Moderator: Brian LaBorde, City of Taylor  
Panelists: Will McAdams, Public Utility Commission  
Tom Oney, LCRA  
Liz Jones, Oncor  
Gary Westbrook, Post Oak Savannah GCD  
Sponsor: **Terry Cook, WilCo Pct. 1**

10:30 **ECONOMIC DEVELOPMENT**  
Moderator: Mark Thomas, Taylor EDC  
Panelists: Dale Craymer, Tx Taxpayer Research Assoc.  
Tony Bennet, Tx Assoc. of Manufacturers  
Stephanie Matthews, Tx Assoc of Business  
Regina Carlson, Taylor EDC  
Sponsor: **TSTC**

11:30 Lunch  
Keynote Speaker: **Adriana Cruz**  
Director of Economic Development and Tourism  
The Office of Governor Greg Abbott  
Sponsor: **City of Taylor**

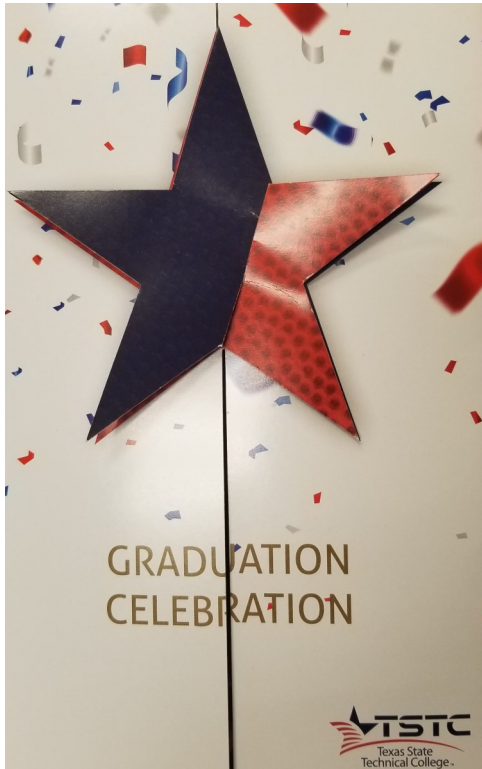
1p.m. **INFRASTRUCTURE**  
Moderator: Russ Boles, WilCo Pct. 4  
Panelists: Greg Conte, Tx Broadband Development Office  
Ashby Johnson, CAMPO  
John Peters, TxDOT  
Dave Marsh, CARTS  
Sponsor: **Russ Boles, WilCo Pct. 4**

2 Refuel & refresh break  
Sponsor: **Taylor Press & East Wilco Insider**

2:15 **WORKFORCE DEVELOPMENT**  
Moderator: Dr. Devin Padavil, Taylor ISD  
Panelists: Brian Daniel, Texas Workforce Commission  
Monica Martinez, Tx Education Agency  
Nora Linares-Moeller, Housing Works Austin  
Kwee Lan Teo, Samsung  
Sponsor: **Oncor**

3:15 **BUILDING STRONG PARTNERSHIPS**  
Final remarks  
Jesse Ancira  
Tia Rae Stone





## Texas State Technical College celebrates its East Williamson County grads in style

I had the pleasure of attending yet another Texas State Technical College commencement ceremony – actually a celebration event, this time at the Marriott Convention Center in Pflugerville. Graduates are initially celebrated with a hearty reception in which faculty and staff mix with the graduates, followed by a raucous entry by the graduates to a pounding soundtrack. The audience is encouraged to join in with clapping and shoutouts. I once attended a rural high school graduation in North Carolina where the principal would not even let families celebrate. Talk about power issues – I'll bet that person was fun at a dinner party.

The commencement program itself was even unique. There is not just one TSTC, but many across Texas: Abilene, Breckenridge, Brownwood, Fort Bend County, Harlingen, Marshall, North Texas, Sweetwater and Waco, and online graduates in addition to the East Williamson County location. Each has its own set of degree programs that are

driven largely by industry needs in the area. This year, TSTC developed one commencement program design covering all campuses. The programs used QR codes for attendees to then use their smartphones to look up all the commencement candidates, degrees and certificates in their specific area.

Our location in Wilco still leads the other TSTC programs in the number of awards garnered by students in technical school programs in the national competition SkillsUSA. In 2020, our medals included gold in Commercial Baking for Karen Hendrick, and silver in CNC Milling for Brian Gannon and Culinary Arts for Julio Diego Vasquez. In 2021, medals included gold in Commercial Baking for Lisette Straiton and bronze in Culinary Arts for Jacob Bunch. And in this year's competition, Adam Cox came home with a bronze medal in CNC Milling.

Our TSTC programs have received strong recognition from industry, and it is rare that graduates haven't already accepted jobs prior to graduating. Some industry representatives attended the commencement ceremony looking for potential employees, and indeed there was at least one job interview going on after the program. If a graduate doesn't have a job lined up, TSTC's Career Services department can help them with resumes and job placement as part of TSTC's goal of placing more Texans in great-paying jobs.







## Ribbon Cutting of Sculpture Garden at Leander's Lakewood Park

On Saturday, September 17<sup>th</sup>, the labor of love to acquire space, produce trails, and acquire a significant number of sculptures (23) culminated in a ribbon cutting as part of the Lake Fest celebration. The City of Leander set aside thirteen acres of space within their new Lakeside Park. Located at the terminus of Artesian Springs Crossing off Crystal Springs Parkway between Ronald Reagan and SH 183A, there are 3 shredded mulch trails off a broad concrete shared-use path that wind thru the trees and reveal large, impressive structures. Artists hail from as far as Marfa and Dallas or as close as Round Rock. On a day cooler than that Saturday was, I encourage you to meander along the three paths and take in the sights. For the more adventuresome, there's also the paddle board and kayak self-checkout pavilion nearby, where at \$18/hour, you can enjoy the lake.

## Rattan Fest







Click on the logo or picture  
for more information

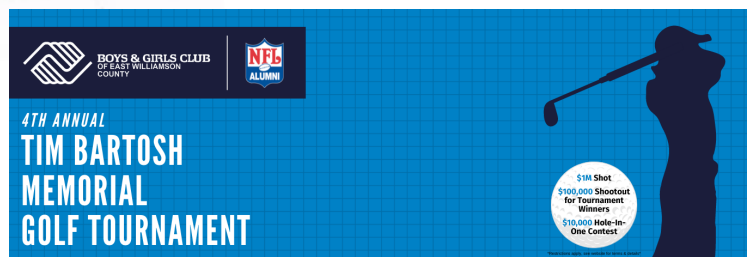


Race is this Saturday, Oct 8 at San Gabriel Park in Georgetown. You can register at the race—great time—good messages and fun participants.



United Way for Greater Austin

Fall Day of Caring  
October 7, 2022



OCTOBER 6TH THE GOLF CLUB AT STAR RANCH



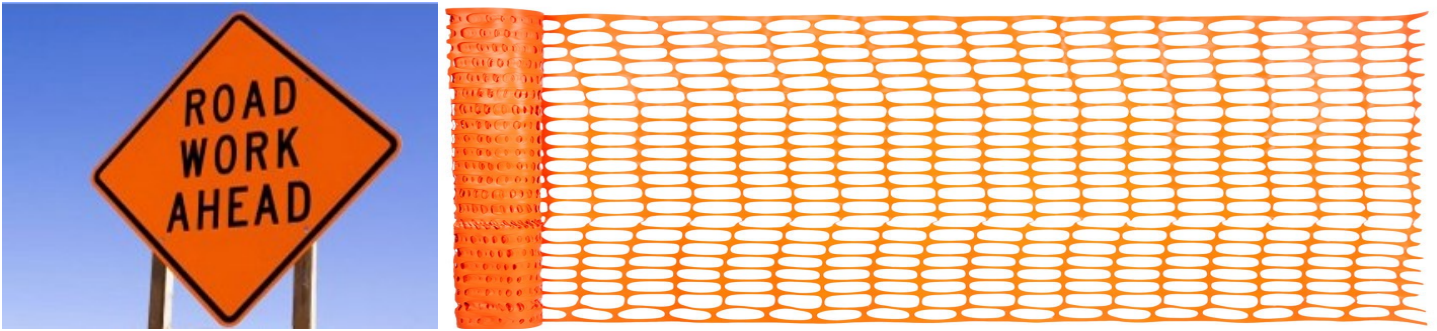
October 16, 2022



October 26-29, 2022







620 at Railroad/Chisholm Trail (TxDOT with primary contractor Bridges and Roads LLC)– *Lots of switched traffic around this project, so please be aware of the surroundings.* In several areas, base materials for the actual road are being placed. The curb and gutter is being poured for the roundabout under the bridge. Slabs for walls and rails on the bridge are being set up. The first asphalt has been used to pave the east and west ends of the bridge, on the westbound widening on the far west end of the project, the roundabout, and eastbound access road under the bridge. Go [HERE](#) to learn more. This is a \$27.5M TxDOT project. According to TxDOT, substantial completion is now going to be Fall 2023, instead of next summer.

Pond Springs Road Area Drainage Improvements– This project is to provide relief to a long-time problem of flooding in the area. Many years ago, the county tried to fix it by digging a deep ditch and by restructuring the road. However, the area still floods and so many of the businesses located here have put up their own dams and other items to try to divert the water away. Utility coordinators have completed the placement of test holes to verify the location of City of Austin water and wastewater lines. A meeting with Austin Water Utility is being scheduled for August->September->October to discuss the results of the test holes. However, the design of the project is moving forward, and 90% of that design is anticipated in October. The cost of the project is \$3.2M. Construction start is anticipated Spring 2023.

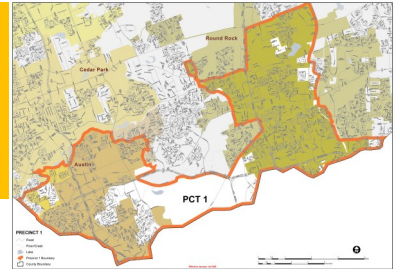
University Blvd. widening from IH-35 to just east of Sunrise Rd. (Contractor: DeNucci Constructors LLC)– To begin work on the southeast side of N. Mays St., traffic was switched to the southwest side. Base materials of asphalt has been placed on the eastbound lanes from east of N. Mays St. Concrete has been poured for the travel lanes at the intersection of University Oaks Blvd. and Cypress Blvd. Sidewalks on the southeast side of N. Mays St. has been formed. Can't wait for this project to be done, and I bet the businesses along that part of University can't wait too. Completion anticipated in spring 2023, but don't count on that yet.

I-35 at US 79– There are weekly updates from TxDOT that you can sign up for [HERE](#).

Great Oaks Bridge at Brushy Creek Rd.– The good news is that Hairy Man Rd. may open at the end of October! Panels, slabs, and work around retaining walls continues. The sidewalk on the east side is completed, and the median section for the center section of the new bridge has been poured. Bad news is that Great Oaks traffic may soon have to complete a maze to continue onto Brushy Creek Road. Completion is anticipated in Spring 2023.

*The 183 North Project has begun! According to the Central Texas Regional Mobility Authority, aka CTRMA, it "aims to improve mobility, reduce congestion and provide more reliable travel times for transit and emergency responders along the nine-mile stretch of US 183 between SH 45 North and MoPac. The project includes the construction of two express lanes in each direction and the addition of a general-purpose lane to bring the number of non-tolled lanes to four in each direction. Express lane direct connectors will be constructed with MoPac to the south. The project also includes operational improvements to southbound MoPac, new shared use path connections, new sidewalks and cross-street connections for bicycles/pedestrians."* Learn more: [183 North Mobility Project](#) Sign up for updates [HERE](#). (PS—I drove this northbound in rush hour traffic last Thursday—not for the faint of heart)

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



## **MISSION**

Providing strong, thoughtful, and collaborative leadership on the Williamson County Commissioners Court through a time of great change and growth in our county

## **VISION**

Upholding a local governmental entity that is centered around best-practices throughout the organization and focused on timely and respectful responses to our citizenry

## **VALUES**

The guiding principles of the Williamson County Commissioner Precinct 1 Office continue to be respect, reliability, and dedication to Precinct 1 constituents, while being open to ideas for positioning Williamson County for the future

### **CONTACT US!**

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

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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](http://www.wilco.org)

Our office's web site— [Terry Cook, Commissioner Pct 1](http://Terry Cook, Commissioner Pct 1)

### **Non-Emergency Phone Numbers**

Austin Fire Department  
512-974-0130

County Judge  
512-943-1550

Cedar Park Fire Department (ESD 11)  
512-401-5220

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

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

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 WIL-  
CO County Line E-  
newsletter! Click [here](#) to  
sign up!

Commissioner Cook  
keeps meeting with many  
MUD Boards and HOAs.  
To invite her to your meet-  
ing, contact Doris at [doris.sanchez@wilco.org](mailto:doris.sanchez@wilco.org) or  
512-244-8610