

Williamson County Commissioner Terry Cook

NEWSLETTER

April 2023 Volume 7 Issue 4

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The Message

Creation of a Wilco-based Fentanyl Task Force

The Commissioners Court began discussion of the dire impact of fentanyl-laced street drugs, including marijuana, in Williamson County the last Tuesday of April. On May 2, we voted to create a new position in the Sheriff's Office to provide a detective to the joint efforts of just about every law-enforcement, medical, and recovery entities you could think of: DEA, Texas Rangers, National Guard, Sheriff's department, local law enforcement personnel, FBI, District Attorney, and County Attorney's offices, Bluebonnet Trails Community Services, recovery non-profits, and regional hospitals to pursue and prosecute any dealers and suppliers of illegal drugs under local, state and federal law.

This task force is in response to startling statistics: 45% of deaths in America are fentanyl-related, the #1 killer in America. We, in Wilco, average 2 deaths/week that are fentanyl related. There are essentially no street drugs that are not laced with fentanyl. Parents are urged to discuss the lethal risk associated with acquiring any pills from anywhere that is not a licensed pharmacy, or from anyone dealing in street drugs, including your child's best friend. The pills may look legit but are most probably not the real deal. Our Emergency Medical Services teams of paramedics have treated overdosed individuals with Narcan (naloxone, injectable or nasal forms) 420 times in 2022 alone, not always successfully.

Overdoses are not limited to youth, but we know the cartels are introducing fentanyl-laced pills resembling candies, such as sweet tarts. We know a substantial percent of our youth are dealing with anxiety and are seeking self-medication.

Members of this task force will show up on site each time there's a 911 call or radio request for help with an apparent overdose. Detective work is critical in pursuing the root source of the illicit drug. Even those schoolmates supplying that illicit pill will be prosecuted. With the slogan "One Pill Will Kill", the efforts within Williamson County will be one cog in the National Sheriff's Association's #1 initiative. Should a person found overdosed survive, services will be available to help with immediate and long-term recovery.

Our youth have one life to live; let it be one that leads them into the old age of wisdom!



Williamson County will be closed May 29 for Memorial Day

THE SIX:EXHIBIT



LINDA CAMPBELL V...VAUGHAN KICH MA RICARDO ROBLES JOHN WEST LISA LAWRENCE

A COLLECTION OF WORKS FROM SIX OF CENTRAL TEXAS' BEST ARTISTS

6
ARTISTS
56 DAYS

A Round Rock Arts Exhibit
RoundRockArts.org
APRIL 24 THROUGH JUNE 19 2023

J.B. & Hallie Jester Williamson County Annex
1801 E. Old Settlers Blvd, Round Rock, TX 78664

ROUND
ROCK
ARTS



Art Contest Winners!

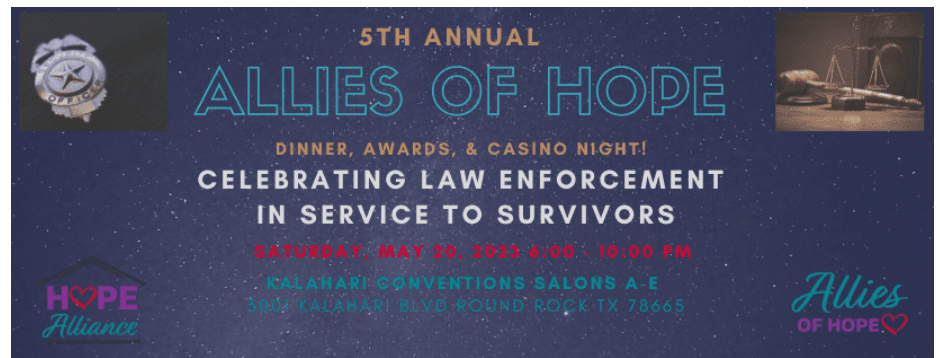
Each commissioners precinct had 2 winners— one from grades 3-5 and the other from grades 6-8.

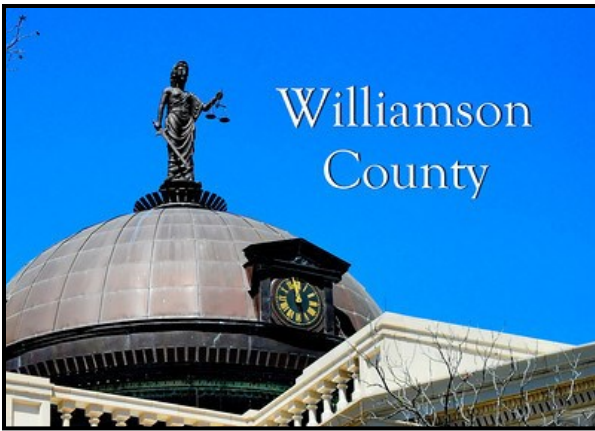
Our 2 winners from Precinct 1 came from the same family!

Grades 3—5 Nihara Epa Seneviratne

Grades 6—8 Chantal Seneviratne

*Congratulations to all
of our young artists!!!*





In Commissioners Court

Up until recently, Terron Evertson was mostly known as the Wilco County Engineer. He actually was doing two other jobs in addition to being the County Engineer– Deputy Director of Infrastructure and Director of the Road and Bridge Division.

Enter Adam Boatwright (Far right in picture). He's been serving as the Development & Drainage Division Director. He has now taken on the additional role of County Engineer. We are lucky to have him take on this additional role!

Photo by Connie Odom, Communications/Media Relations Director



Williamson County's Friends of the Child Welfare Board Raises Awareness of Abused Children

April is National Child Abuse Prevention Month



The Williamson County Child Welfare Board hosted a Child Abuse Prevention Event on April 6th at the CPS office in Round Rock at 4:30 pm. The board “planted” 810 pinwheels to recognize the 810 Williamson County child victims of abuse and/or neglect in FY2022. That’s 810 “known” abused/neglected kids in the county last year.

Additionally, the Friends of the board also organized and hosted a highly attended fundraising gala at the EXPO center on Saturday, April 22.

The Friends of the Child Welfare Board and some of the staff from the Child Advocacy Center came to court to bring awareness concerning their work with abused or neglected children in Wilco.

National Crime Victims' Rights Week, April 23-29, 2023



The proclamation began with the term “victim” has legal standing and protections that go with it. Williamson County has a large number of victim advocates: offices of the district attorney, county attorney, Sheriff, larger municipal police departments, Children’s Advocacy Center (state mandated for each county) and the non-profit, Hope Alliance (domestic abuse) train volunteers and hire full-time advocates. The number of victims is rising across the county as is the population. These advocates have huge hearts and are re-charged daily with sheer determination to help victims recover and see justice served.

Williamson County Working to Elevate, Engage, Effect Change Georgetown Annex Survivor Voices Art Exhibit and Advocate Recognition Program

On Wednesday, April 26, The District Attorney’s office hosted a formal program and victims’ art show to celebrate the work of victim advocates with the art show of works generated by victims of crime. The awards program yielded the following recognitions of outstanding service by victims’ advocates:



Cedar Park Police Lt.
Kristy Whitley pre-
sents to Larry
Bond



Wilco Child Advocacy Center
Angel Martinez presenting to
Leslie Alamo



CA's Corby Holcomb pre-
sents to Brooke Hall



DA Shawn Dick pre-
sents to Mike Wald-
man

Hope Alliance Dr. Rick
Brown presenting to
LaBrica “Bree” Jackson

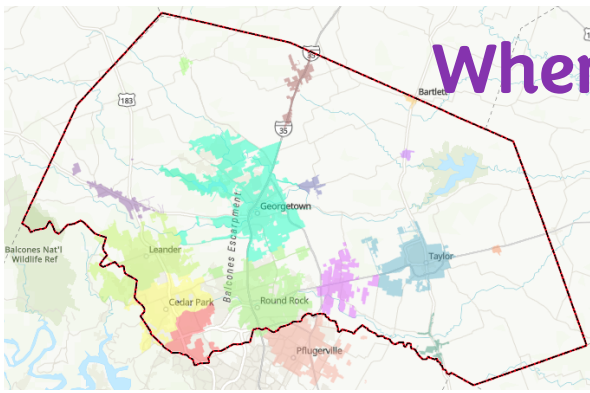
RRPD Lt. Justin Davis
presenting to Tracy
Lyke

Taylor PD
Chief Henry
Fluke pre-
sents to
Aaron Koch

Georgetown PD Chief
Cory Tchida pre-
sents to Michael
Morris

WCSO Sgt. Robert Tijeri-
na and Judy Velasquez
presenting to Priscilla
Moreno





Where is Commissioner Cook?

Dell Children's North Campus is Now Open

Located on the SE corner of 183 N Frontage Road and Avery Ranch Blvd, parents here in Williamson County can avoid the slow slog down I-35 to the Austin location with a sick or injured child – *whew*. There was a grand opening party and door christening (no ribbon cutting – it is an Ascension-Dell endeavor). By the time I reached the event, coming from the Austin Chamber's Mobility Summit at 4:30PM, it was a 20mph crawl to Cedar Park. I was late for the 4:30 event and parking was at a premium so I just joined all the law enforcement vehicles parked along the red-painted curb behind the hospital. HEB was serving up drinks, popcorn, hot dogs and water to the crowd. Activities everywhere for the kiddos and the outdoor surface areas were packed (does everyone work from home now?). There were the obligatory oratory presentations from elected officials and hospital staff. Then, I believe it was Bishop Joe Vásquez of the Diocese of Austin who blessed the facility, christened the main front door, and opened the hospital to the public. We were welcomed by comic book heroes and our own local heroes with *real weapons (gulp)* and what began as an organized tour became a guide-yourself free-for-all. Each different procedure area had walls covered in murals of fantasy scenes to lend whimsy to what could be a scary environment for a child. Upon exit from the tour, I hit the food line and gulped down two of those all-beef hotdogs and a fully-sugared Dr Pepper. Great end to a hot, long day!





Raindrop Foundation Delivers 964lbs of Food to the Round Rock Area Serving Center

The Turkic Community, thru their Raindrop Foundation and with their own compassion for the less fortunate, met Garry and I at the Round Rock Area Serving center to deliver bagged food items, ready for distribution, on Wednesday, April 19th. We didn't realize that the fresh food distribution occurred on that same day. When Garry and I arrived, the cars were stacked up back onto Main Street for distribution. The need is so great. Please don't hesitate to donate \$ to

this center – all contributions are very thoughtfully spent providing for those dependent on them. P.S. – in June, expect a groundbreaking for the new addition to be constructed on the West side of the drive-thru that will house the Veterans Services office and their Treasures Gift Shop. The gift shop move will allow them to reconfigure the Serving Center food pantry and services areas. The capital campaign is still on-going for the new addition. August 5 is the date for their annual Karamu fundraising event at Kalahari – reserve yourself a spot!



From left to right: Ahmet Nalcaci, Yetkin Yildirim, Corey Aiken, John Mims (both of RRASC), Lori Scott (Ex. Dir of RRASC), Kadir Akkus, and Terry Cook. Donation was so smartly organized! This is not the first time the Raindrop Foundation has donated to RRASC, but they are so very compassionate of the less fortunate and believe in serving their community.



Multi-faith Iftar Dinner in the Jester Community Room



We had great conversation making new friends and a fabulous tasty dinner prepared and delivered by members of the Raindrop Foundation (Turkic Community) on Monday, April 10. This was the inaugural Iftar multi-faith event for us. I'll certainly host next year. It was free and open to the public. I was worried that the response might be slim, but boy was I wrong. Ahead of sundown and the meal, a member of the Turkic community, Erdem Balikci (a Dell S/W engineer and artist) gave a presentation on Ramadan and the Iftar dinner, then we dutifully lined up – no jostling for position, to partake in the delicious meal. Sunset was at 7:52PM.

Hello Morningside Meadows, Section 6 HOA



I had the pleasure to visit Morningside Meadows' annual HOA meeting the last week of April. The residents streamed in, and by 7:05PM, chairs from the back of the sanctuary were moved into service. The president, Donna Balshaw, and I had met in the fall about the plight of their neighbors during rush hour traffic. This neighborhood is off Red Bud Lane and south of Gattis School Road area, just outside of the City of Round Rock. During those hours, there are no protected left-hand turns, traffic backs up on Red Bud, and impatient drivers pull off onto private property to get around the turning vehicles (driving in someone's front yard – no curbing, this is rural territory). Red Bud is a narrow 2-lane road. Round Rock has plans in development to widen their section of Red Bud, essentially from SH79 down to Gattis School Road to provide for dual

lanes, curbing, and safe lanes for left-hand turns.

The county portion is probably less than .5 mile. I sent a synopsis of the problem to Bob Daigh, our Senior Director of Infrastructure, who was working on potential road projects for a future proposed bond program suggesting that we pay Round Rock to add our short portion to their plans, we pay them to widen our section, and then, Round Rock adds the entirety of Red Bud to their inventory of roads to maintain. Bob was game; next stop would be Gary Hudder, Round Rock's Director of Transportation. The city and county often have joint projects. As Red Bud travels toward SH 45, it becomes a divided roadway of 4 lanes and is renamed Heatherwilde Blvd. in Pflugerville. Indeed, not only was Gary interested in tackling the project with our checkbook, but also agreed that it made sense for the City of Round Rock to assume maintenance responsibility for the entire stretch of Red Bud Lane.

Now we need a new bond program to pay for it. One step at a time.



Annual Easter Egg Hunt in Rattan Creek



April brought the neighborhood out for their annual Easter Egg Hunt and neighborhood picnic. While it was cool, it was dry and without wind. The volunteer Rattan Creek Neighborhood Association organizes this family event on a shoestring budget. Someone, somewhere, stores all the empty eggs until this one day of the year. The timing of events is relative – hey it Rattan Creek time – relax. There's even a parade with decorated bikes, wagons and strollers and the Jollyville ESD1 fire vehicles. Everyone, nearly, joins in for the short parade, then restlessly awaits the actually egg hunt – it's a mob scene with shouts of glee. Surprisingly, few plastic eggs become crushed underfoot and are gathered up dutifully by all and returned to their containers until released next year. Then the competition of decorated forms of human-powered modes of transportation takes place with a random selection of judges – even the pets get to join in.

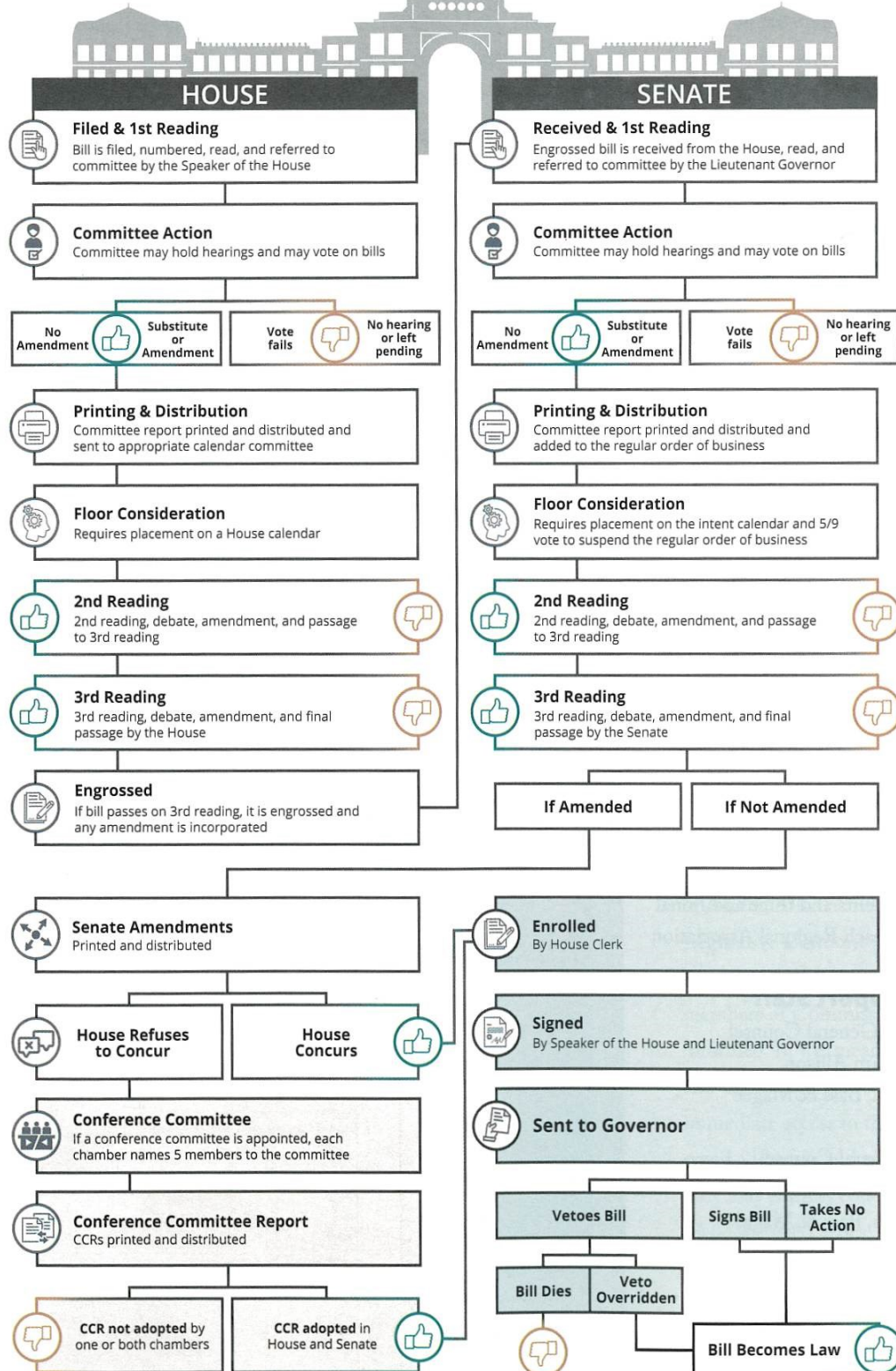


Process for House Bills

Texas Legislature



Scan here for the Senate's Process.



In The News

Williamson Commissioner Cook: The EV Diaries

[Williamson Commissioner Terry Cook: The EV Diaries \(statesman.com\)](https://www.statesman.com/story/news/2023/02/08/williamson-commissioner-terry-cook-the-ev-diaries/12345678901)

This past summer, I had to consider that my 2000 Sienna van may be reaching its expiration date with the mileage approaching 380,000. I knew I didn't want to invest in another internal combustion engine, yet it is still early for an electric vehicle adoption.

I hit the internet and Consumer Reports shopping for prospects and reviews. Early on I was drawn to the 2022 Hyundai Ioniq 5 with its designation of 2022 Car of the Year (not just EV car of the year). The videos were strong selling points. I was sold on a car I'd never touched nor ridden in. I wasn't even sure of the interior, other than the center console could be pushed back, freeing valuable floor space.

My husband and I visited Round Rock Hyundai for pricing and availability. Well, high and long were two descriptors — quite the price and an eight- to 10-month wait list. Regardless, I put \$500 down — my husband thought it was crazy — and we hoped for the best.

Next, I explored what all these charging stations for garages are all about and if we had the ability to add a 240V line to our power panel for a charger. I contacted an electrical contractor to do the analysis and lo and behold, we had a breaker slot that could accommodate the 60 amp/2 pole 120/240V circuit breaker. This is not a Home Depot item. Off to Elliott Electric Supply I went, but this breaker was in short supply, so I had to go to a Bastrop location to pick it up: \$32.48 + gas + time.

Another research project informed me the level 2 charging station was the most affordable and practical. What brand? We settled on the ChargePoint Home Flex EV Charger from Amazon costing \$810.79 with tax. We took our 100-foot climbing rope we brought from Colorado and routed it through our attics and to an exterior wall with the circuit panel (outdoors) to estimate how much power line we needed. Again, Amazon Prime came through for us and delivered the incredibly heavy power line. My husband was game to do this himself, or should I say on the cheap?

Next, where to install it? Last available wall space was also the perfect spot for the charging unit. Down came the drywall as hubby had to create a very strong framing assembly to support the charger and a long cable that could reach the car even if it was backed into place. We even purchased a fire extinguisher and mounted it as you walk into the garage from the house, as if it's really going to make a difference should a fire occur. We also threw the circuit breaker, and nothing blew up. Then we waited, and waited; fortunately, the van kept running.

I did check in with the salesperson twice over the following four months. The bulk of the orders were for models that I wasn't ordering, nor my color, the lone wolf on the prowl. Then on Feb. 8, as I pulled into the parking lot near the Homerun Dugout at Dell Diamond, my phone rang — strange number — however, I answered. My now new salesperson announced that my long-awaited 2023 car would arrive about Feb. 28. My eureka moment flooded my soul! It's actually going to happen! I was nearly dancing as I waltzed into the Workforce Solutions' Skills

Development Awards program. I made sure this salesperson was saved in my contacts. The next call came two weeks later, and the car had arrived early on Feb. 23, but I didn't have time until that Saturday afternoon, Feb. 25, to close the deal.

That car was a technology shock for me. The salesperson was so patient as he led me through the options. Think about it: a leap from 2000 to 2023 technology. But I'll add, just because they could add a feature doesn't mean they should.

And let me be clear, your smart phone is a big part of this transition. My phone now has a car app specific to Hyundai, the car charger app; the phone becomes an electronic key if the fob is not available; and the car communicates with my phone as it shares data and reads messages and lets me know when charging is complete. I have set my charging to stop at 80% full charge for battery longevity on my phone app. I plug in the car about every other night after I've let the batteries cool from driving and unplug it in the morning. I learned early on that the car will not go into gear if the charger is still connected (no drive-in movie speaker episodes – smart programming).

Now for the driving experience. It's exhilarating to say the least. The car can go from zero to above the speed limit in seconds, it's hard to hold a steady speed without the aid of cruise control and it was day four of driving before I figured out how to set and release that feature. It is so quiet and responsive the driver must be alert at all times. I even have to wear a pair of "driving" glasses to read the many screens, buttons and options (I am of that age) on the dash.

I have had two things occur for which I don't have an explanation:

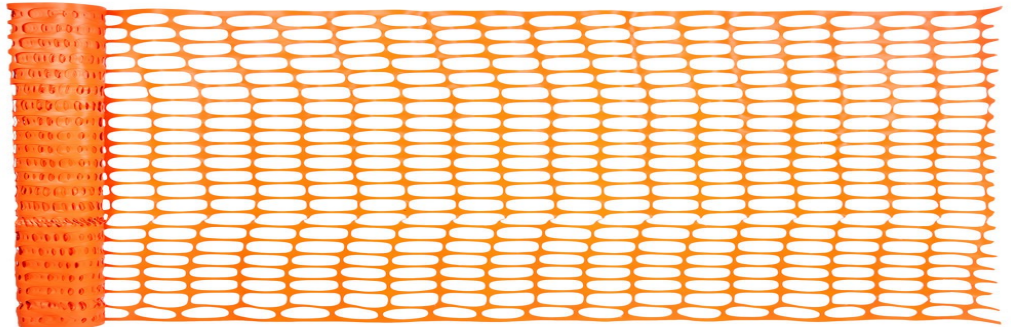
1) I was driving with cruise control set at 65 mph in the middle lane of south MoPac one Sunday morning. Three cars in succession came flying by in the left lane exceeding 70 mph, and I felt my car speed up. I looked at the screen's cruise control designation, and it was now set for 70 mph. I thought, "You are not a dog, no need to chase those cars." It was probably in the code to not hold up traffic but to go with the flow. I had to reset the cruise speed.

2) It knows (or thinks it does) the local speed limit and warns you should you choose to exceed it by a considerable amount. There is a school zone between my house and Old Settlers Boulevard. The school zone sign has the times during which drivers are to observe the school zone. Well, one morning the car decided the speed limit was 21 mph and was beeping up a storm as I tried to go 30, the actual speed limit. I had to nearly press the accelerator to the floor to get to 30 and got worried about turning onto Old Settlers where the speed limit is 50 mph. Fortunately, after a short while on Old Settlers, the car did pick up on the real speed limit and let me go. It hasn't happened a second time; maybe the car was just having a moment.

I love not being concerned with the price of gasoline. I pay a steady rate for electricity so "when" I charge isn't limited, and I don't fret about the number of miles left to drive as I did in the first week.

But on day 35, while waiting at a stoplight on Old Settlers just west of the Mays Street intersection, I was smacked by a Ford Mustang as the young driver attempted to pull right to get into the right-turn-only lane for Mays Street. It rearranged my right rear panels, and the software is alerting me that there are problems with the cross-traffic safety monitoring and a few other things. One sensor is now realigned in an unplanned direction and the software system seem to be beside itself. Oh, technology.

Good news: the van is still running!



Great Oaks Bridge at Brushy Creek Rd.- Conduit for the traffic signal poles on the northeast and southwest corners have been installed. The north section of the parking lot under the bridge, last part, has been poured. All remaining bridge beams on all spans have been set and deck panels are being prepared to be placed. The bridge is so close to being finished that planning for a ribbon cutting is beginning to happen for possibly the end of June!

Pond Springs Road Area Drainage Improvements- 90% of the design package has been delivered and is being reviewed, and a meeting with Austin Water is being scheduled for April- early May to discuss results. The cost of the project has come down again! This time to \$2.65M from \$3.2M! Construction start looks early 2024 to last 90 days

University Blvd. widening from IH-35 to just east of Sunrise Rd.- (Contractor: DeNucci Constructors LLC)- This project is now substantially complete! Still has about 30 days of clean up work, including some pavement striping throughout the project. Ribbon cutting is being planned!! This project seemed like forever! Too many utilities.

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

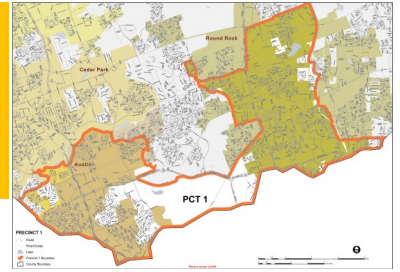
620 at Railroad/Chisholm Trail (TxDOT with primary contractor Bridges and Roads LLC)- *Lots of switched traffic around this project, so please be aware of the surroundings.* There's been a traffic switch to the new westbound frontage road from the railroad tracks to the west. Panels and retaining walls on the east and west end of Lake Creek Dr. 2nd overpass is still being constructed. Go [HERE](#) to learn more. This is a \$27.5M TxDOT project. According to TxDOT, substantial completion is now Fall 2023. It's unbelievable that all of RM620 is nearly complete in Round Rock after all these years.

183 North Project (a CTRMA project) - The 183 North Mobility Project will include the construction of two express lanes in each direction and the addition of a general-purpose lane where needed to bring the number of non-tolled lanes to four in each direction along a 9-mile stretch of US 183 between SH 45 North and MoPac. Construction began in early 2022 and the overall design-build project timeline elapsed is 44.8% through February 2023. There will be continued work with high-mast lighting installation/energizing and the removal of existing median lighting, diamond-grinding of the general-purpose lanes, bridge substructure and superstructure work, median drainage and pavement work, overhead sign structure work, utility adjustments, and sidewalk and driveway work. The overall design-build project has expended approximately 28.9% of the budget and is anticipated to be fully open to traffic in 2026.

Learn more: [183 North Mobility Project](#) Sign up for updates [HERE](#).

SPEAKING OF ROADS: The county has formed a citizens bond committee, and they are researching road and park projects for a possible bond election this November. The next meeting of the Williamson County Citizens Bond Committee will be on Monday, May 10, at the Williamson County J.B. and Hallie Jester Annex, 1801 Old Settlers Boulevard, Round Rock. The meeting starts at 5 p.m. To view previous meeting minutes and presentations. go [HERE](#) for more information.

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!

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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
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 or
512-244-8610