



Winter 2014

# COUNTY JUDGE Quarterly

News & Notes from the Tarrant County Judge  
and important information from Tarrant County

## TARRANT COUNTY OUR NORTH TEXAS HOME



They say cold weather kills next year's bugs. Well, I wouldn't want to be a bug in North Texas this winter. If the December ice storm didn't wipe them out, the Polar Vortex blasts that plunged temperatures below 20 degrees in January and the early February snow probably did.

That's the way it is in Tarrant County these days. The bugs get chased away and the people keep coming. Our county grew 21 percent from 2003 to 2013, to 1.9 million people. By mid-century, Tarrant County could nearly double in size, to an estimated 3.6 million. Good jobs, affordable housing and excellent quality of life are a winning combination, but we have to keep it that way.

For a county to be successful, it must evolve and adapt. Tarrant County is no exception. With a significant increase in population around the corner, we face a lot of changes and challenges in the coming years.

That means easy access to county services, sufficient transportation options, great schools that stay great and strong economic development.

To ensure that over the next 30 years Tarrant County can do the customer service job it needs to for our residents, we have expanded and modernized our courts, jail and sub-courthouse facilities and we continue to look for new ways to use our existing space efficiently.

We are committed to using the newest technology to make it easier and faster for residents to access county services. A good example is the County Clerk's website where you can get copies of marriage licenses as well as birth and death certificates around the clock, complete with safeguards to secure documents and protect personal privacy.

By keeping up with the advances of the digital age we can improve service and hold the cost of government down.

We have made great strides improving our roads. The 27-mile Chisholm Trail Parkway, from Fort Worth to Burleson is

scheduled to open this spring. The DFW Connector north and west of DFW Airport is done. The North Loop 820 - Airport Freeway rebuild is nearing the finish line. Improvements to I-35W from downtown north to Alliance have begun. Some of these projects were made possible through public-private partnerships, another way to reduce government costs.

That's great news, but we had better figure out how to move our 1.7 million new neighbors across Tarrant County and the Metroplex. We will need to get much smarter and evaluate the prospect of enhanced bus service, passenger rail and study a multi-modal approach to mass transit.

One reason we have good schools is because of strong family participation. The dramatic population increase will pose a great challenge to our schools. Our families and communities must continue to play a vital role.

If we provide top-notch county services, have good transportation, good schools and keep our taxes low, then new businesses will be drawn to Tarrant County and our sterling record of economic development will continue.

I will continue to do my part to make sure Tarrant County is ready for the future. Join me in this effort to keep our county and the home that we cherish a great place to live, work and raise our families.

B. Glen Whitley  
Tarrant County Judge



Photo: Imwillis

*This winter the panther by the Tarrant County Administration Building became a snow leopard.*



## American Red Cross ❖ Chisolm Trail Chapter

***Support Our Red Cross Service to the Armed Forces***  
***Come celebrate Red Cross Month***

# The B\*A\*S\*H

**Saturday, March 1, 2014, 2—6 pm**  
**The Shack at Panther Island Pavilion**  
**395 Purcey St. Fort Worth, TX**

**This event benefits Red Cross' service to the military, veterans and families which includes emergency communication services, deployment resources, financial assistance and more.**

- Wear camouflage, army green or a Red Cross vintage T-shirt
- Great eats from some of Cowtown's most popular food trucks
- Listen and dance to live music



**BIG THANKS TO:** Honorary chair Mayor Betsy Price  
 Event co-chairs Alice Victoria, Andrea Puente and emcee Deborah Ferguson from NBC 5

**\$20 General Admission / \$150 VIP Admission (including food & drink)**  
**FREE to members of the military**

Visit [RedCross.org/DFW](http://RedCross.org/DFW) for more information.

## Historic Tarrant County Courthouse South Entry To Close

Although the south entry to the historic courthouse on Weatherford Street will be closed for several months, the public will still be able to access the courts and offices through doors on the east side of the building.

The closure is necessary to replace tiles and bricks around the steps of the courthouse that face Main Street. Work on the south side of the historic courthouse will be concurrent with the restoration of the portico on the west side of the building.

During the renovation, to be completed by early 2015, the Americans With Disabilities Act (ADA) entrance also will be moved to the east side of the courthouse. When the renovation is finished, the ADA entrance will be moved permanently to the west side and new ADA parking spaces will be provided along Houston Street.





The new and the old. The Sheriff's Posse, civilian riders who hold fast to Western traditions, on Fort Worth's new West Seventh Street Bridge.

### **Historic Tradition and New Technology**

## **Tarrant County Sheriff's Office**

Tarrant County Sheriff Dee Anderson reveres the heritage and lore of the Texas lawman and western history. He is proud of the mounted patrol that hails from the 19th century.

But make no mistake, the Tarrant County Sheriff's Office is a modern, urban law-enforcement agency that uses the newest technology and the latest crime-fighting tools.

"We always remember where we came from, but we stay up on technological advances and use anything that gives us an edge," said Anderson, Tarrant County's top peace officer.

The Sheriff's Office has 1,440 employees and a budget of nearly \$110 million. It operates four jails, serves warrants and court papers, provides bailiffs for the courts, looks for fugitives and patrols the unincorporated county.

When livestock get loose and those steers wander down the road, it's Tarrant County deputies who round them up. When a motorist stalls out or has a flat on a freeway, the Sheriff's Courtesy Patrol is there to help. The sheriff even has an environmental enforcement division that tracks and busts shops that do fraudulent smog tests and forged inspection stickers.

But the top job for the county's top cop is the jail.

When it comes to the jail, Anderson is the keeper of the keys. About two-thirds of the sheriff's annual budget goes toward operating the county's four correctional facilities that can house 4,975 inmates, though it usually averages about 3,300 prisoners.

Two years ago, the \$78.6 million state-of-the-art maximum-security Lon Evans Corrections Center opened in Fort Worth.

Evans was a legendary lawman and six-term sheriff.

"That new jail is built to house the worst of the worst," Anderson said. Those prisoners who act up don't have privileges to mix with the general population, he said. Locked in their cells, they get a choice of watching an exercise video by Jack Lalanne, or one by Richard Simmons.

The new jail also houses a new medical facility and has a new kitchen that cooks up about 3.6 million meals annually.

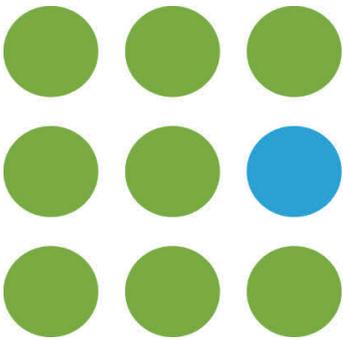
The Sheriff's Office contracts to provide police service to Haslet and Edgecliff Village and partners with many of the police departments in the county's 41 cities.

Providing support and specialized technical expertise to the municipal police agencies is an important function of the Sheriff's Office, Anderson said. The department has a special narcotics unit and auto-theft task force where deputies work with officers from the other cities.

The Tarrant County Sheriff's Office recognizes the diversity of the county and works to build trust with all citizens, Anderson said. "We run an open and honest agency, and citizens and critics can always communicate problems, issues, or concerns with to me or any of my staff," he said.

This year, the Tarrant County Sheriff's office will host the annual meeting of the National Sheriff's Association in June, said Anderson, who is elected to a four-year term. "It is a huge honor for us to be able to show off all the great things about Fort Worth and Tarrant County," he said.





# TARRANT CARES

one resource, countless solutions

## Tarrant Cares Celebrates it's 3rd Year Anniversary this March

Tarrant Cares is a great way to access information about local health and human services that you or your family may need. Just go to the [TarrantCares.org](http://TarrantCares.org) website on the Internet. It's quick and easy for individuals, families, caregivers and agencies to find relevant information online to make the most informed decisions regarding care in their lives.

On the website you'll find faster and easier access to comprehensive community services, information, support, advocacy, news and assistance on a local level. It's a great database that enables consumers to quickly find local programs and services. You can also create personal health records.

### Children and Families:

- Health • Child care • Physical and Mental illnesses
- Parenting • Mentoring programs • Life skills
- Counseling • Community services • Case management • Substance abuse and addiction recovery • Emergency and crisis supports
- Recreation and leisure

### Community Corrections:

- Correctional Facilities and Juvenile Detention Centers
- Community-based services • Courts • Adult and juvenile probation • Victim services • Youth programs and services

### Domestic, Sexual and Other Violence:

- Support for crime/abuse victims including children, families and significant others • Crisis services
- Counseling, including individual, group, family and trauma-specific • Housing • Legal issues • Law Enforcement and Criminal Justice systems • Child Protective Services • Prevention and education
- Medical resources • Resources for offenders

### Intellectual and Developmental Disabilities:

- Developmental disorders (Autism spectrum, Asperger's, and Rett's Disorder) • Childhood Disintegrative Disorder • Intellectual Disabilities
- Developmental disabilities • Down Syndrome
- Learning disabilities • Developmental delays

**Thanks to our Sponsors:** Texas Health Resources, Baylor All Saints Medical Center at Fort Worth, JPS Health Network, MHMR of Tarrant County, Methodist Mansfield Medical Center, United Way of Tarrant County, Cook Children's, UNT Health Science Center, Cigna HealthSpring, and Mental Health Connection

### Mental/Behavioral Health:

- Mental health care • ADHD • Depression • Anxiety
- Bipolar disorder • Schizophrenia • Substance abuse and addiction recovery • Family support • Psychiatric evaluation • Medication management • Case management • Psychosocial rehabilitation services
- Veterans' resources

### Prenatal to Age 5:

- Prenatal development • Parenting • Infant development • Child care • Pre-school education
- Health • Hearing and vision • Social, emotional and behavioral issues • Early childhood illnesses
- Community services • Disabilities

### Public Health and Healthy Communities:

- Communicable diseases • Prenatal care • Emergency preparedness • Injury prevention and safety • Health insurance and benefits • Financial assistance • Housing and shelter • Public records • Food Assistance
- Chronic Disease • Breastfeeding

### Seniors/Adults with Disabilities:

- Caregiver supports • Alzheimer's disease/dementia
- Fall prevention • Medicare • Prevention of abuse

### Veterans, Service Members and Their Families:

- Veterans/military services • Support groups • Post-traumatic stress • Depression, anxiety and other mental health issues • Medical care • Substance abuse and addiction recovery • Financial support • Housing
- Insurance and benefits

*Check it out !!*

[www.TarrantCares.org](http://www.TarrantCares.org)



**Black History Month**

**L. Clifford Davis: Civil Rights Pioneer**



*Photo: Imwillis*

**L. Clifford Davis**

L. Clifford Davis is a history maker. His legal petitions in the 1950s led to the desegregation of the Mansfield and Fort Worth school districts.

At 89, the retired Tarrant County state district judge shows no signs of slowing down. Why should he. He has been on the go since he got his law degree in 1949. He still shows up at his Fort Worth law office every weekday morning at 9 a.m.

In the early 1950s, Davis was involved in school desegregation cases in Pine Bluff, Arkansas. That’s when he got to know future Supreme Court Justice Thurgood Marshall, who at the time was the NAACP legal director.

“We kept trying to get improvements, and we got some as we went along,” Davis said.

He left Arkansas in 1954 to practice law in a larger urban area and moved to Fort Worth, one of only two black lawyers in the city.

Davis got to know Marshall much better in 1956, after the Texas attorney general filed a lawsuit in Tyler to ban the NAACP and had armed state troopers seize the group’s records. Davis fought to preserve the NAACP in Texas.

“They were trying to put the NAACP out of business in Texas,” he said.

When Davis arrived in Fort Worth, black students who wanted to go to high school could attend only one school, I.M. Terrell, in the city center. Students came from Arlington, Bedford and from as far away as Weatherford to go to school, he said.

The Supreme Court decision that desegregated schools said that students should be able to go to school in their

neighborhood.

“I have to give credit to Fort Worth because they started to do something,” Davis said. Some middle schools were converted to black high schools – a school in Como on the west side, Dunbar on the east side and Kirkpatrick on the north side.

In 1959, Davis was instrumental in the filing of a desegregation lawsuit against the Fort Worth school district. Even so, desegregation was slow. It wasn’t until the early 1960s that the city’s schools became integrated. But the effort to desegregate schools prompted the desegregation of public spaces.

“Some businesses and stores made adjustments,” Davis said.

Leonard’s department store took down its “white and colored” signs by water fountains and bathrooms in 1960. The Greyhound Bus station did away with its separate dining rooms. Even the zoo, where black people could only visit one day a year, had to be desegregated.

“They responded well, so much better than so many other areas.”

Davis was appointed a state district judge in 1983 by then Governor Mark White. He served until 1988 and then continued as a visiting judge.

In 1997, he received the Silver Gavel Award from the Tarrant County Bar Association and he is also a member of the National Bar Association Hall of Fame.

“There has been progress, but let’s be candid enough to say changes have been made and there is still a lot of room for growth,” Davis said. “We are a lot better off than we used to be.”

Davis said his greatest honor is that a Fort Worth elementary school bears his name.

“I go over there at least once a month,” he said. “I want the students to say, ‘I knew him, the man this school was named for.’ ”

There are about 16 languages spoken at that school, he said

“I am glad everybody in the world is not like me. I want variety,” said Davis. “I’m just trying to be a human being and recognize others as human beings.”



*Photo: Imwillis*

*L. Clifford Davis greets children at the school that bears his name*





## TARRANT COUNTY OBESITY PREVENTION POLICY COUNCIL

In Tarrant County and across the United States health problems resulting from unhealthy eating and limited physical activity can cost the U.S. economy as much as \$117 billion each year, according to the Wellness Council of America.

It is estimated that 66 percent of adults in Tarrant County are either overweight or obese. Children are following the pattern of the adults with an estimated 32 percent of children aged 2 to 14 in Tarrant County estimated to be overweight. In addition, less than one-third of adults in the United States eat the recommended amounts of fruits and vegetables.

These unhealthy behaviors lead to costly and debilitating chronic diseases. Many people talk about these statistics but do not consider this data as a “call to action” for lifestyle changes. In response to these statistics, the Obesity Prevention Policy

Council was formed to look at environmental and policy changes that could help.

The members of the council represent colleges and universities, local governments, businesses, health professionals and community agencies. The council recognizes that education alone is not the answer. The goal is to develop policies that change the environment in the workplace, schools, faith-based organizations and other Tarrant County locations to facilitate healthy choices and active lifestyles.

Learn more about the OPPC and how involvement may benefit your business, place of worship or community group by visiting <https://www.tarrantcounty.com/eHealth/site/default.asp> or email [arespinoza@tarrantcounty.com](mailto:arespinoza@tarrantcounty.com).

You can become a part of this effort and help make Tarrant County a place that supports healthy lifestyles.



## UNITED WAY OF TARRANT COUNTY TAX ASSISTANCE

Volunteer Income Tax Assistance, VITA, is an IRS-supported free income tax preparation program for qualifying families in Tarrant County. In 2013, VITA volunteers prepared 4,353 returns, helping Tarrant County families receive \$3.3 million in Earned Income Tax Credits, moving them down the path of financial stability. The IRS estimates that as much as \$100 million in Earned Income tax dollars are not collected in the county.

The program needs volunteers: intake specialists to screen taxpayers and make sure documents are in order; tax preparers; interpreters and quality reviewers. For more information or to help individuals and families claim all the tax credits for which they are eligible, please email: [VITA@unitedwaytarrant.org](mailto:VITA@unitedwaytarrant.org).



*The IDD Needs Council of Tarrant County invites you to attend special training and education sessions on:*

## UNDERSTANDING AUTISM



### *Recognizing and Responding to Citizens with Autism*

Featuring Dennis Debbaudt, international expert on Autism risk and safety management for law enforcement and emergency responders.

**Wednesday, April 2, 2014**

**6 p.m. – 8 p.m.**

Education targeted for Family Members, Care Providers, Educators, Day Care Workers, Social Workers, and Supporters.  
**Certificates of Attendance & CEUs Available**

Register at:

[understandingautism-april2.eventbrite.com](http://understandingautism-april2.eventbrite.com)

**Thursday, April 3, 2014**

**8 a.m. – 12 p.m. (check-in begins at 7:30 a.m.)**

Education targeted for First Responders  
*(Law Enforcement, Firefighters, Emergency Medical Personnel, LPCs, LMFTs, LCDCs, Social Workers, etc.)*

**Education Credits Available**

Register at:

[idd-understandingautism-april3.eventbrite.com](http://idd-understandingautism-april3.eventbrite.com)

Sponsors and Co-Hosts: Texas Autism Research & Resources Center, Texas Dept of Aging and Disability Services, Cigna-HealthSpring, MHMR of Tarrant County START program, United Way of Tarrant County, Tarrant County Sheriff’s Office, and Office of the Medical Director EPAB





**To learn more or to RSVP\* for the Expo:**

- [www.TarrantCounty.com](http://www.TarrantCounty.com)
- 817-884-1234

**\*RSVP to receive a free boxed lunch**

# Senior Synergy Expo 2014

**Thursday, May 8, 2014 • 8:00 am - 2:00 pm**

**Will Rogers Memorial Center**

**3401 West Lancaster Avenue • Fort Worth, TX 76107**

**Are you 50 years of age or better? Then Tarrant County Judge Glen Whitley invites you to the 2014 Senior Synergy Expo. Come learn about the services available in Tarrant County that will empower you to live a healthier lifestyle. Also, participate in health screenings and workshops—all for FREE.**

## Senior Synergy Expo 2014 Sponsors:

Bank of Texas • Blue Cross Blue Shield of Texas • River Oaks • ONCOR • Brookdale  
 United Way of Tarrant County Area Agency on Aging • Vitas Innovative Hospice • The Stayton  
 Texas Health Care, Dr. Larry Tatum • STL Medical Plaza Medical Senior Clinic

# Cowtown Cleanup set for Saturday, March 22

Fort Worth is Tarrant County’s largest city and sometimes it needs a little TLC.

Pitch in and join the 29th annual Cowtown Cleanup on Saturday, March 22, from 8 a.m. – 11 a.m. Grab friends, family, co-workers or neighbors and help clean your favorite Fort Worth location.

The city will provide trash bags, gloves and T-shirts to all volunteers registered by March 10. After scrubbing, scouring and picking up, plan to attend the volunteer celebration and Earth Day kick-off in Sundance Square from 11 a.m. – 2 p.m. There’s a free lunch for cleanup volunteers.

Most litter and debris can be taken to the Cowtown Cleanup Drop-Off Sites. But, not everything.

Most items like automobile batteries or tires; contractor remodeling and demolition debris like shingles or wallboard; electronic equipment such as computers; household appliances with coolant, gasoline or chemicals; and paints or hazardous waste go to other permanent drop sites and not to the collection sites on cleanup day.

Prizes will be awarded for the most bags of trash, most bags of recycling, the wackiest trash, the most miles of roadway cleaned and the most miles of waterway cleaned. Awards will also go to the neighborhood association, the business and the Boy Scout and Girl Scout troop with the greatest participation. There are other award categories, too.

## Earth Party 2014

After the Cleanup, come celebrate the Earth in grand style at Fort Worth’s premier environmental education event, the Earth Party, held at Sundance Square Plaza from 11 a.m. to 2 p.m. Saturday, March 22, 2014. There will be live music by the band, Vocal Trash.

For more information about the Cowtown Cleanup and Earth Day visit the Keep Fort Worth Beautiful site at [www.FortWorthTexas.Gov/KFWB](http://www.FortWorthTexas.Gov/KFWB).



## TARRANT COUNTY CONTACTS

### GENERAL INFORMATION 817-884-1111

#### County Clerk

Criminal / Misdemeanor Records .....	817-884-1066
Probate Courts .....	817-884-1770
Records Intake / Deeds .....	817-884-1062
Records Library .....	817-884-1069
Vital Records: Birth/Death Certificates, Marriage Licenses, and Business Records/DBA's.....	817-884-1195

District Attorney ..... 817-884-1400

#### District Clerk

Civil Records.....	817-884-1240
Criminal Records .....	817-884-1342
Family Court / Divorce Records.....	817-884-1265
Jury Services .....	817-884-3820
Passports .....	817-884-2520

Elections..... 817-831-8683

Fire Marshall ..... 817-838-4660

Human Services..... 817-531-5620

Public Health..... 817-321-4700

Resource Connection ..... 817-531-7600

#### Tax Assessor-Collector

Auto Tag Renewal / Property Taxes .....	817-884-1100
<u>Texas A&amp;M AgriLife Extension</u> .....	817-884-1945
<u>Veterans Services</u> .....	817-531-5645
<u>Sheriff's Office</u> .....	817-884-3009
Jail Information .....	817-884-3116
Victim Information.....	877-894-8463
Warrant Division .....	817-884-1320

**Commissioners Court meets every Tuesday at 10 am  
Tarrant County Administration Building  
100 E. Weatherford Street, 5th Floor**

County Judge, Glen Whitley .....	817-884-1441
Commissioner Roy Brooks, Precinct 1 .....	817-531-5600, 817-370-4500
Commissioner Andy Nguyen, Precinct 2 ....	817-548-3900
Commissioner Gary Fickes, Precinct 3 .....	817-581-3600, 817-481-8234
Commissioner JD Johnson, Precinct 4.....	817-238-4400

For additional information, visit: [www.tarrantcounty.com](http://www.tarrantcounty.com)

