



Fall 2019

COUNTY JUDGE Quarterly

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

Vol. 7, No. 2

Current Fiscal Year to Date (Oct. 1 - 8, 2019) Unreimbursed Property Taxes Spent on the State's Prisoners Left is OUR Jail \$229,650



Tarrant County Judge
B. Glen Whitley

Bearing Too Much of the Burden

If you haven't received your property tax bill, you will soon. We constantly hear how high property taxes are in Texas and for good reason! Of all the taxes collected in Texas, property taxes account for over 50%.

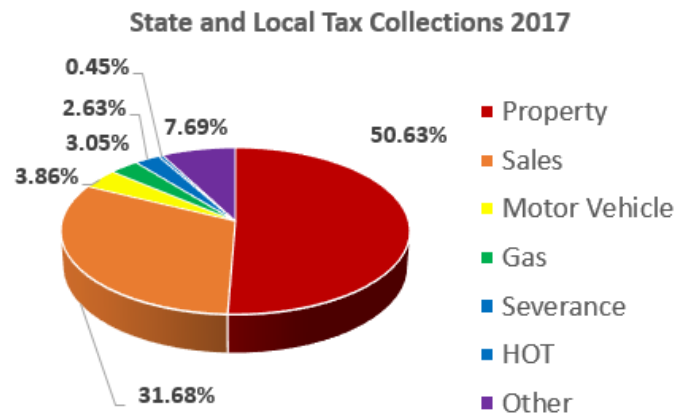
Can't we shift at least some of the burden from property taxes to sales, hotel, severance, gas or one of the other taxes collected by the state? If so, who and how could these changes happen?

Why taxes at all? Police, fire, public education, roads and bridges, water, trash, courts, elections, parks, senior centers, etc. are just a few of the services provided by our state and local governments. We pay for these services, for the most part, by the collection of taxes and by fines and fees.

You should also know and be proud of the fact that when we take the total of all state and local taxes collected as a percentage of our personal income, Texas ranks 37th among the 50 states. The low cost for the high quality of life services provided by our state and local governments is just another reason why folks are moving here from all over the country.

Now to taxes. Our State Legislature decides which taxes can be used to pay for what services. Hospital districts, community colleges, counties and special districts are allowed to collect property taxes to pay for the services they provide. Schools, also use property taxes to pay their share, while the State uses the taxes it collects to pay its portion of public education. Cities are permitted to use a limited amount of sales, hotel occupancy tax (HOT) and property taxes to pay for the services they provide. **The one tax we don't collect and never should is an individual state income tax!**

Total state and local tax collections by type for 2017 were as follows:



It's easy to see that property taxes are bearing too much of the overall burden.

Property and severance taxes are paid only on personal and real property in Texas, while most other taxes are paid on goods and services purchased by anyone living in or visiting our state.

Gas taxes have not been changed since 1993 and aren't indexed for changes in the price of a gallon of gas. But at least this tax is paid by everyone buying gas in Texas. Even visitors from other states or those driving through our state pay a portion of this tax.

Encourage our legislators to shift taxes to those which are at least partially paid by people who visit or drive through our state. Consider allowing local governments to reduce property taxes by allowing them to collect these other types of taxes.

While we are 37th in taxes collected to pay for government services, property taxes are bearing too much of the load. Talk to your legislators and find out where they stand. It's time for property taxes to come down!



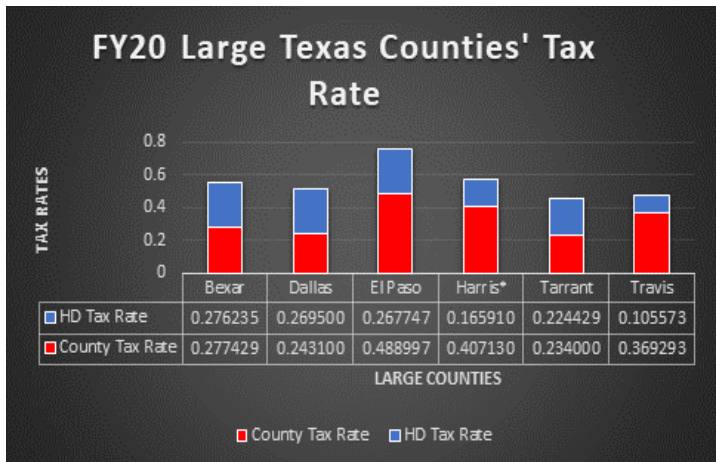
Tarrant County Approves FY2020 Budget

Budget season has come and gone and while there was a desire to lower the tax rate, as Tarrant County has done consistently over the past three years, it just didn't work out this year. However, Tarrant County still has the lowest tax rate of the major urban counties and the fewest number of employees.

This year there were requests for over 150 new employees, but ultimately the Court approved 63. Of these positions, 45 were in the area of public safety and included employees in the District Attorney's office leading to the creation of a Sexual Assault Unit as well as positions in the Sheriff's Office and the Juvenile Services Department. The County is also moving forward with renovations and additions to our juvenile detention center. Elected officials and department heads received a 3% merit pool of funds to be used as part of the performance evaluation process.

The County's bond rating remains at AAA and, therefore, will continue to maintain recommended reserves as well as continue to attempt to lower the un-

funded pension liability which was 11.7% as of December 31, 2018. The budget process begins in February of each year and all departments take the process very seriously. The County will continue its practice of fiscal conservatism by always being good stewards of our taxpayers' hard earned money.



Dickies Arena Grand Opening



Outside view of Dickies Arena as final preparations continue inside for the November 2019 opening.

Dickies Arena will hold a grand opening ribbon cutting ceremony on Saturday, October 26th. After the ceremony, guests will be able to get a glimpse inside the arena and see first hand the incredible architecture and state-of-the-art spaces during a self-guided tour. The all day celebration will include activities outside in the Simmons Bank Plaza as well as performers from Hot Wheels Monster Trucks Live's Bigfoot, a Harlem Globetrotter, and Cirque Du Soleil.

In just over two years after the ground breaking, the venue will officially open in November with events designed to engage all ages and interests. Twenty

One Pilots will be the first scheduled event on November 8th. Later in November the venue will be host to none other than George Strait for two performances.

The Dickies arena will be host to a variety of events from concerts, sporting events, and, of course, the Fort Worth Stock Show and Rodeo performances as well as other major equestrian events. Other confirmed events include the 2022 NCAA Men's Basketball First and Second Rounds, the 2020-2022 NCAA Women's Gymnastic Championships and the 2020-2022 American Athletic Conference Men's Basketball Championships.

Dickies Arena is a remarkable entertainment venue resulting from a public-private partnership collaboration with the City of Fort Worth, Tarrant County, the State of Texas as well as a number of private sector participants, foundations, individuals and organizations. The new Arena will offer the community the highest quality entertainment and provide an unforgettable experience for visitors to Fort Worth.

For more about this remarkable venue and exciting upcoming events, visit the [Dickies Arena](https://www.dickiesarena.com) website.



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their Family Members & the General Public
with area Employers looking for qualified
candidates for a variety of positions.**

THURSDAY

**NOVEMBER 7, 10:00 AM
to
2:00 PM**

**Globe Life Park in Arlington
1000 Ballpark Way, Arlington, TX use Center Field Entrance**



<https://hrwyjobseeker.eventbrite.com>

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Equal Opportunity Employer/Program. Auxiliary aids and services are available upon request to individuals with disabilities. Relay Texas: 800-735-2989 (TTY) and 711 (Voice). texasworkforce.org

JPS Health Network Emergency Department Expansion Opens



**Centered in Care
Powered by Pride**

JPS Health Network, Tarrant County's public healthcare provider, is pleased to announce a new expansion to the Emergency Department is now open.

The \$4.2 million expansion adds 12 patient care spaces to the Emergency Department at John Peter Smith Hospital to help manage increasing numbers of patients seeking treatment. The eight-month construction project was completed on time and is projected to be under budget.

"It was designed with the patient in mind. This increased space will allow us to improve how quickly we can see patients, even as the number of patients continues to increase," said Jesse DeWaard, Executive Director, JPS Emergency Services Division.

The new patient rooms include upgraded stretchers with bed scales for accurate medication administration, bed alarms for reducing patient falls, and electric controls which allows patients to adjust themselves. The bed mattresses are also designed to help prevent pressure injuries. Each room has a television and individual thermostat controls.

The 7,663-square-foot space is adjacent to the existing Emergency Department, and includes a dedicated patient waiting area with 14 recliners and two televi-

sions. An open nurse/provider work station has 23 spaces to foster for improved communication and collaboration among members of the patient care team.

The current Emergency Department has 56 patient care rooms, including eight dedicated trauma bays to treat severely injured patients. JPS typically sees 370 patients each day in the ER, up from 175 patients per day in 2008. About 33,000 patients were treated in the Emergency Room in the past three months alone.



New work station allows nurses and providers of the patient care team to collaborate effectively.

Tarrant County Donates 12 Acres for Texas State Veterans Home

On August 6, 2019, Tarrant County Commissioners unanimously approved the donation of 12 acres of land to the Texas Veterans Land Board for the purpose of operating a skilled nursing facility benefitting our Texas Veterans.



Rendering of a skilled nursing facility to be constructed near the Tarrant County Resource Connection.

The Veterans Land Board in the Texas General Land Office operates the Texas State Veterans Homes serving veterans who are over 65 and in need of affordable skilled nursing home care who have a service-connected disability. Currently there are only nine other similar facilities throughout the State.

With approximately 84,000 veterans 65 years of age and older living in Dallas and Tarrant Counties, this much needed 120 bed skilled-nursing facility will serve our qualified veterans in and around Tarrant County. "The county will benefit from this facility because it will allow a loved one to stay closer to their home since other state Veterans' homes are not located near north Texas and are spread throughout the state," Thomas Belton III, Director of Tarrant County Veterans Services stated.

The design phase has begun on the new facility which will be conveniently located next to the Veterans hospital and Tarrant County Resource Connection where Tarrant County Veterans Services is located.



Tarrant County Elections

Making the Voting Experience Better for Voters



Starting in November 2019 Tarrant County residents will vote using the new Hart InterCivic Verity Voting System, a hybrid system which provides a paper trail for every voter and uses the latest advancements in digital security.

In September 2018, the Commissioners Court was briefed on the types of voting equipment available on the market. After a lengthy discussion, the Court expressed a preference to find a solution which provided a paper trail for the voter to review, and to serve as an added layer of security and redundancy for future audits. The Elections Department then set on a mission to find the best option available, and published a request for proposal (RFP) inviting vendors to offer the "Hybrid" technology solution.

A Hybrid voting system is one where the voter makes the selection on a digital terminal - a.k.a. DRE machine - but unlike the traditional DRE, these terminals do not record the voter's selections. Instead, those choices are printed on a paper ballot for the voter to review and confirm. Once the voter is satisfied with the contents of the printed ballot, the ballot is inserted into a separate machine - an optical scanner - which counts the ballot and then deposits it in the ballot box.

On August 13, 2019, Tarrant County selected HART InterCivic to replace the current voting technology with the new hybrid system. Below are some of the reasons Tarrant County chose this technology:

It provides a paper trail.

From the beginning, Tarrant County wanted to ensure voters would have the ability to confirm their selections before the vote was recorded. Early voters will also have a paper ballot to verify and thus there will no longer be different voting experiences between early and election-day voting.

Enhanced digital security.

This system incorporates the latest information security techniques and tools, on both hardware and software levels. As required by law, it has been tested and

certified by both the Federal Government (Elections Assistance Commission) and the Texas Secretary of State.

It eliminates voter interpretation.

Unlike the older hand-marked ballots, citizens will never have to wonder again if the scanner read the voter's selections correctly. Except for absentee by mail voters, every voter in the County can now rest assured that if they read "John Doe" on their ballot, it will be counted as a vote for "John Doe". The days of mismarked ovals or circled names which could have affected the outcome during a manual recount are over.

It is accessible.

With the new technology, voters with disabilities have the exact same experience every other voter has. Voters with disabilities no longer have to wait for a special machine because every voting machine is now an accessible device. Voters will also be pleased to see they can tailor their experience - like changing the language on the screen or the size of the text - without any help from the a poll worker.

Additionally, the Secretary of State approved Tarrant County's application to participate in the County-wide Polling Place Program or Vote Centers. This means, beginning in November, voters will be able to vote at any polling location on election day just as during early voting. This will allow voters more accessibility to voting locations on Election Day.

You can learn more and even view a video demonstration of how to use the new voting equipment on the [Tarrant County Elections](#) webpage.

If you have questions about our new voting system or would like to find out more about becoming a poll worker, please call the Tarrant County Elections Office at 817-831-VOTE (8683).



New voting stations to be used for November elections.



Domestic Violence Awareness Month



October is recognized as Domestic Violence Awareness Month in an effort to bring awareness to the staggering number of people affected by domestic violence. Unfortunately, it is typically only when a celebrity is seen or reported to have abused someone does this serious issue plaguing our society receives attention. But, domestic violence is not limited to celebrities.

Domestic violence, also known as intimate partner violence, occurs in households *every single day*. This also extends far beyond the home affecting family, friends, neighbors, coworkers and our community as a whole.

Abuse is not only physical. It can also be sexual, emotional or a combination of all three. Women and children are the most commonly known victims but abuse occurs between all sorts of people in a variety of relationships. Domestic violence occurs across all social classes, ethnic groups, cultures and religions. One in three women in Tarrant County will be affected by intimate partner violence or domestic violence at some point in their lifetime. Regretfully, it goes mostly unreported.

Solving the problem is a community effort. In Tarrant County, there are several agencies and advocacy groups committed to helping put an end to domestic violence by providing a variety of services for those in crisis. [SafeHaven of Tarrant County](#), for example, has sixty-three calls that come into their 24-hour emergency hotline *every day*. [The Women's Center of Tarrant County](#) had 2,332 people call the Rape Crisis and Victim Services Hotline in 2018.

These same agencies have developed educational and outreach programs specifically designed to bring awareness to and prevent violence. In 2001, [One Safe Place](#) launched the Imagine No Violence campaign. Initially 1,200 high school students came together to discuss their ideas around Imagine No Violence. Participating students came up with the idea of

promoting non-violence through artwork resulting in the Imagine No Violence art contest. Since then, thousands of powerful pieces of artwork have been created promoting an end to violence.

To help combat this problem, Tarrant County Commissioners Court approved the Intimate Partner Violence Unit in the Criminal District Attorney's Office. This unit specializes in prosecuting intimate partner violence. In addition, the Protective Order unit assists victims seeking protection. Lower-level domestic violence offenses are handled by one of the County's Misdemeanor Courts.

Domestic violence is the number one criminal and misdemeanor offense in Tarrant County surpassing DUI offenses. The current number of cases handled or being handled by the Intimate Partner Violence unit is 1,101. Additionally, 1,982 cases are being or have been handled by the County Misdemeanor Court.

Putting an end to domestic violence is truly a community wide effort. We can all take part by voicing domestic violence is **NEVER** okay at every opportunity we have. Let's stand united and put an end to domestic violence. By participating in educational opportunities, volunteering, and saying it is not okay, we will be doing our part to end this serious and prevalent problem plaguing our communities.

If you or someone you know is a victim of domestic violence, you are not responsible for the violence. You are not alone. In Tarrant County, there is help including shelters, protective orders, legal services, and counseling services all ready to support you.

**IF YOU ARE IN IMMEDIATE DANGER,
CALL 9-1-1**

**[SafeHaven](#) Crisis 24 Hour Hotline
1-877-701-7233**

**[Child Protective Services](#) 24 Hour Hotline
1-800-252-5400**

**[The Women's Center](#)
Rape Crisis 24 Hour Hotline
817-927-2737**

**[One Safe Place](#)
Family Justice Center
817-916-4323**



Arlington Selected as location for Medal of Honor Museum



Tarrant County Judge
Glen Whitley with
Colonel Jack Jacobs

The National Medal of Honor Museum Foundation announced on October 4, 2019 that, following a national search launched in October 2018, Arlington, Texas has been selected by the Foundation's Board of Directors as the site for the future National Medal of Honor Museum. Planned for construction near Arlington's Globe Life Park and AT&T Stadium, the first national museum of its kind will open to the public in 2024.

The Medal of Honor, the nation's highest and most prestigious military honor, has been awarded to more than 3,500 military service members since the first medal was presented in 1863. The National Medal of Honor Museum will offer an experience that draws personal and emotional connections to Medal of Honor recipients and their inspiring stories, while shedding light on the stories of heroism and the values that the Medal of Honor represents.

In making its decision, the National Medal of Honor Museum Foundation first evaluated a range of factors, including the city's location, size and number of visitors, as well as community support – both overall and patriotic – for our nation's history. The Foundation then engaged in detailed discussions with leading members of the community and evaluated a timeline for conveyance of a potential museum location, the potential support of private individuals and organizations, and programmatic possibilities.

"Arlington, Texas is honored to be entrusted as the home of the National Medal of Honor Museum," said Arlington Mayor Jeff Williams. "Located in the heart of our nation, we look forward to commemorating the stories of the 3,500 Medal of Honor recipients to educate, inspire, and motivate our youth to understand the meaning and price of freedom. We are excited and humbled to provide a national platform to spread this message throughout our great country."

The National Medal of Honor Museum will provide an unrivaled visitor experience with state-of-the-art permanent, interactive experiences and rotating exhibitions. Serving as a national landmark - and located in America's heartland - the Museum will illustrate the historical thread of sacrifice, patriotism and courage that runs through all U.S. military service members, past and present. The National Medal

of Honor Museum will also include an education center aimed at character development in our nation's youth. A critical part of the museum's mission will be to use the stories of Medal of Honor recipients to inspire young people, and motivate them to be their best selves.

The National Medal of Honor Museum and its array of programs will be available to hundreds of thousands of students across North Texas, as well as more than 60,000 at The University of Texas at Arlington.

"Building a permanent home for the National Medal of Honor Museum in Arlington ensures that the Foundation will be able to share the stories of the more than 3,500 Medal of Honor recipients to the more than 51 million visitors that are warmly welcomed to the region a year," said Colonel Jack Jacobs, President and CEO of the National Medal of Honor Museum Foundation. "Putting our roots down and establishing a permanent home for the Museum in Texas, a state that has unmatched ties to the military and military service, will allow us to create an experience that inspires a true strength of character."

In addition to building its Arlington home, the National Medal of Honor Museum Foundation looks forward to working with the United States Congressional Delegation from Texas to create the first-ever monument in Washington, D.C., dedicated to honoring the more than 3,500 Medal of Honor recipients. The Congressional Medal of Honor Memorial will join other national landmarks in the nation's capital, and draw a maximum level of visibility and support from every corner of the United States.



The Medal of Honor Museum opening to the public in 2024 in the heart of Arlington's entertainment district.



TARRANT COUNTY CONTACTS

<u>County Administrator</u>	817-884-1267	<u>Public Health</u>	817-321-4700
<u>County Clerk</u>		<u>Resource Connection</u>	817-531-7600
Criminal / Misdemeanor Records	817-884-1066	<u>Sheriff's Office</u>	817-884-3009
Civil Records	817-884-1101	Jail Information	817-884-3116
Passports	817-481-8190	Victim Identification	817-884-8463
Probate Courts	817-884-1770	Warrant Division	817-884-1320
Records Intake / Deeds	817-884-1062	<u>Tax Assessor-Collector</u>	
Records Library	817-884-1069	Auto Tag Renewal / Property Taxes	817-884-1100
Vital Records: Birth/Death Certificates, Marriage		<u>Texas A&M AgriLife Extension</u>	817-894-1945
Licenses, and Business Records/DBA's	817-884-1550	<u>Veterans Services</u>	817-531-5645
<u>Criminal District Attorney</u>	817-884-1400	<div>Commissioners Court meets every Tuesday at 10 am</div> <div>Tarrant County Administration Building</div> <div>100 E. Weatherford Street, 5th Floor</div>	
<u>District Clerk</u>			
Civil Records	817-884-1240		
Criminal Records	817-884-1342		
Family Court / Divorce Records	817-884-1265		
<u>Jury Services</u>	817-884-3820		
<u>Fire Marshal</u>	817-838-4660	County Judge, Glen Whitley	817-884-1441
<u>Human Services</u>	817-531-5620	Commissioner Roy C. Brooks, Precinct 1 ...	817-370-4500
		Commissioner Devan Allen, Precinct 2	817-548-3900
		Commissioner Gary Fickes, Precinct 3	817-581-3600
		Commissioner JD Johnson, Precinct 4	817-238-4400

GENERAL INFORMATION 817-884-1111

For additional information, visit: www.tarrantcounty.com

Tarrant County Legislative Delegation

Texas House

<u>District 90 Representative: Ramon Romero, D-Fort Worth</u>	ramon.romero@house.state.tx.us	512-463-0740
<u>District 91 Representative: Stephanie Klick, R-Fort Worth</u>	stephanie.klick@house.state.tx.us	512-463-0599
<u>District 92 Representative: Jonathan Stickland, R-Bedford</u>	jonathan.stickland@house.state.tx.us	512-463-0522
<u>District 93 Representative: Matt Krause, R-Fort Worth</u>	matt.krause@house.state.tx.us	512-463-0562
<u>District 94 Representative: Tony Tinderholt, R-Arlington</u>	tony.tinderholt@house.state.tx.us	512-463-0624
<u>District 95 Representative: Nicole Collier, D-Fort Worth</u>	nicole.collier@house.state.tx.us	512-463-0716
<u>District 96 Representative: Bill Zedler, R-Arlington</u>	bill.zedler@house.state.tx.us	512-463-0374
<u>District 97 Representative: Craig Goldman, R-Fort Worth</u>	craig.goldman@house.state.tx.us	512-463-0608
<u>District 98 Representative: Giovanni Capriglione, R-Southlake</u> ...	giovanni.capriglione@house.state.tx.us ...	512-463-0690
<u>District 99 Representative: Charlie Geren, R-Fort Worth</u>	charlie.geren@house.texas.gov	512-463-0610
<u>District 101 Representative: Chris Turner, D-Grand Prairie</u>	chris.turner@house.state.tx.us	512-463-0574

Texas Senate

<u>District 9 Senator: Kelly Hancock, R-Westlake</u>	kelly.hancock@senate.state.tx.us	512-463-0109
<u>District 10 Senator: Beverly Powell, D-Fort Worth</u>	beverly.powell@senate.state.tx.us	512-463-0110
<u>District 12 Senator: Jane Nelson, R-Flower Mound</u>	jane.nelson@senate.state.tx.us	512-463-0112
<u>District 22 Senator: Brian Birdwell, R-Granbury</u>	brian.birdwell@senate.state.tx.us	512-463-0122

