COUNTY JUDGE Uattended Uattended News & Notes from the Tarrant County Judge and important information from Tarrant County

Winter 2015

TARRANT COUNTY: OUR NORTH TEXAS HOME

Tarrant County Welcomes 2015



Tarrant County Judge B. Glen Whitley

What a grand way to celebrate New
Year's Eve: 7,500 people jammed
shoulder-to-shoulder in Sundance Square
Plaza. It's not Times Square, but it
speaks volumes about how Tarrant
County has grown and of its bright
future. We are coming off a wonderful
2014 with accomplishments and heading
into a year that holds great promise forTarrant Coun
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hold that post.
In the months
Legislature. T
Governor Greg
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all of us who live and work and raise our families here.

Tarrant County is the eighth fastest growing county in the nation and Fort Worth is the fastest growing large city, according to US Census figures. Folks, there are lots of reasons people want to call Tarrant County home.

Our economy is strong and unemployment is under 5 percent. That mighty economic engine of industrial, retail and residential development – Alliance, Texas – celebrated its 25th anniversary last year. Alliance, which is only half developed, provides nearly 40,000 jobs at about 400 companies.

New roads were a big 2014 story. The 27.6 mile Chisholm Trail Parkway, connecting Cleburne with downtown Fort Worth was opened as well as the North Tarrant Express along Loop 820 North and State Highway 183. I-35W is getting a muchanticipated makeover from downtown going north almost to the Tarrant County line. New bridges are being built across the Trinity River on Henderson and North Main streets and White Settlement Road.

Making Tarrant County's name in the sports world, Arlington hosted the first-ever national collegiate football championship, a game TCU just missed out on.

In November, the USS Fort Worth departed San Diego on its first deployment, a 16-month mission to the Western Pacific.

Speaking of the military, in 2015 we must continue to promote innovative programs and services for our heroes. Our community, home to the Fort Worth Naval Air Station Joint Reserve Base, should do what it can to meet the needs of our veterans and their families.

A new civil courthouse building is expected to open in May and we are restoring the west end of our historic 1895 county courthouse using pink granite from the Marble Falls quarry in Central Texas that supplied the stone more than a century ago. A grassy promenade will match the east side of the courthouse. Tarrant County also has a new Criminal District Attorney, former state District Judge Sharen Wilson, the first woman to hold that post.

In the months ahead, we need to pay close attention to the Texas Legislature. There is a changing of the guard in Austin, with new Governor Greg Abbott and Lieutenant Governor Dan Patrick at the helm, among other newly elected state officials. It will be important to protect local governments from unfunded mandates imposed from above, because county and municipal governments provide many of the vital services Texans receive.

We have much work ahead of us, but the Tarrant County spirit of collaboration is our great resource. Working together in Tarrant County for the betterment of the community is our style.

As we greet 2015 and the opportunity it holds for us, let's appreciate our good fortune. Let me wish everyone in Tarrant County and North Texas a New Year filled with the blessing of peace, health and happiness.

B. Glen Whitley Tarrant County Judge



Tarrant County greets the new year in Sundance Square Plaza.



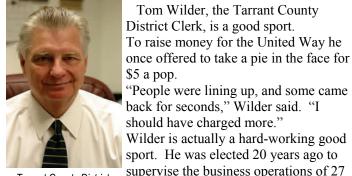
Tom Wilder, the Tarrant County

state District Courts in Tarrant County

that hear family, civil and felony

Managing the County's State District Courts

Tarrant County District Clerk's Office



Tarrant County District Clerk, Tom Wilder

criminal cases.

There are another 15 associate judge and magistrate courts appointed by the elected judges under his purview and the office has a staff of 148 full-time workers and 25 part-time workers.

"The volume and complexity of the cases has grown substantially in the last 20 years, from 39,000 cases to about 61,000 cases a year," Wilder said.

The office maintains and manages the records and money for court fees and fines that are collected, over \$20 million dollars in roughly four thousand custodial accounts which are invested for the benefit of minor children on orders from the courts, bail bond forfeitures and all tax lawsuits.

The office also produces court documents, including civil citations, criminal warrants, criminal judgments and sentences, and performs other duties.

The District Clerk's office implemented remote filing for lawsuits in 1995, with the approval of the Texas Supreme Court and Board of District Judges. In 2004 the office began offering web-based access to images of court case documents, many of the courts' computerized records, and other information of use to employers, attorneys, and the general public. This service won a Best Practices Award from the Texas Association of Counties in 2004.

The office successfully implemented a new and mandatory, as of January 2014, e-Filing requirement for attorneys in the Tarrant County Civil and Family District Courts. It is an example of another unfunded mandate from the legislature or the Texas Supreme Court, Wilder said.

Everything, court documents and all the other records use to be on microfilm, Wilder said.

"The new technology is wonderful and it allows the public easy access to look at records and documents," Wilder said. "The biggest challenge we have is getting people trained fast enough."

Passports Made Easy

The District Clerk's Office performs all the tasks required to process an application for a United States passport, including taking a passport photograph. The office has six passport offices in Tarrant County: one is in downtown Fort Worth and the others are in sub-courthouses across the county.

Helpful Hints to get a U.S. Passport

Citizenship: You must provide proof of U.S. citizenship: A previous U.S. Passport, a birth certificate, or a naturalization . certificate. The birth certificate must have a seal from the city, county, or state and show it was filed within one year of birth. Hospital birth certificates are not acceptable.

Passport Photos: You must provide two 2-inch square color passport photos taken within the last six months. The photo must be a full-face view, neutral expression, against a white background and the head must be between 1-inch and 1 3/8 from the chin to the top.

Valid identification: You need a drivers license, state issued I.D., or military ID to process a passport application.

Social Security Number: You must have the Social Security number of the person applying for the passport, including children.

Applicants younger than 17: Must appear in person with a parent or legal guardian.

Applications for minors younger than 16 must be made in person by both natural parents named on the birth certificate.

Fee schedule and processing: Routine processing takes about six weeks and the payment, two fees, must be by check or money order. Expedite the order and get your passport in three weeks. Those fees run between \$100 and \$200 dollars.

Need to check on the application? Once you have applied call the National Passport Information Center at 1-877-487-2778.

Arlington Sub-Courthouse 700 E. Abram St., Suite 204 Arlington, Texas 76010

Mansfield Sub-Courthouse 1100 E. Broad Street Mansfield, Texas 76063

Southlake Sub-Courthouse 1400 Main Street, Suite 340 Southlake. Texas 76092

Justice Center 401 W. Belknap, 3rd Floor Fort Worth, Texas 76196

Northwest Sub-Courthouse 6713 Telephone Road Lake Worth, TX 76135

Southwest Sub-Courthouse 6551 Granbury Road Fort Worth, Texas 76133

For more information:

http://access.tarrantcounty.com/en/district-clerk/ services/passport-information.html or call 817-884-2520



Forum Explores Intellectual and Developmental Disabilities

"Celebrating Community: Shared Gifts. Shared Service. Shared Lives."

A Faith-Based Symposium Hosted by the Intellectual and Developmental Disabilities Needs Council of Tarrant County

The conference is focused on increasing awareness of Intellectual and Developmental Disabilities (IDD) and on building relationships among persons with disabilities, their families and the faith community.

A nationally recognized keynote speaker will address the forum, along with a panel of local faith leaders who have been instrumental in developing faith-based inclusion programs in Tarrant County. There will also be a panel of individuals and families who will share personal stories of how their lives have been enriched by inclusion in their faith communities.

The IDD Needs Council recognizes the bond that faith creates and hopes to empower people to nurture that connection. The conference is for leaders and members of all faiths as well as individuals and family members.

Intellectual disabilities, once called mental retardation, is a below-average cognitive ability with significant limitations in adapting and carrying on everyday life activities such as selfcare, socializing or communicating. It often is apparent at an early age.

Developmental disabilities, also often detected at an early age, but not necessarily an intellectual disability, can cause many difficulties in language, mobility, learning, self-help, and independent living. It can persist over a lifetime.

In recent years there has been significant funding and programming to help people with disabilities to live in their communities. The local mental health authority, MHMR Tarrant, is the point of intake to access IDD services in Tarrant County. For more information, visit <u>www.MHMRtarrant.org</u> or call 817-569-4141.

Community Dialogue

On Thursday evening from 6 p.m. to 8 p.m. on January 29th, the IDD Needs Council will host *Exceptional Lives: Belonging, Believing and Becoming,* an informal community dialogue on

intellectual and developmental disabilities, at University Christian Church, Room 207, 2720 S. University Drive in Fort Worth. A question and answer session will follow.

Friday Symposium

On Friday, January 30th, the daylong symposium, *Celebrating Community: Shared Gifts. Shared Service. Shared Lives,* " will begin at 8:30 a.m. at the Riley Center, 1701 West Boyce Avenue, in Fort Worth. Breakfast, lunch and a snack will be provided to those who register in advance at <u>www.IDDNeedsTC.org.</u> All attendees get a packet of resource information and tools and some books.

Friday's keynote speaker, Erik W. Carter, a professor at Vanderbilt University and author of *Including People with Disabilities in Faith Communities*, has focused on community and educational inclusion for people with disabilities, with an emphasis on transition-aged youth.

Panel Discussions

A panel of individuals, families and faith members from Tarrant County will share the benefits and spiritual impact of inclusive faith-based communities. Individuals will share their personal stories of how their lives have been enriched by inclusion.

Another panel will include faith representatives who have led the way in developing local inclusion programs. Conversations will include the journey taken to initiate, sustain and implement an inclusive ministry.

Register Today

Visit <u>IDDNeedsTC.org</u> for more information, to answer questions and to register for both events. Limited transportation and respite scholarships are available for participants who preregister. Requests should be sent to <u>CelebratingCommunityTarrant@gmail.com</u>

IDD Pre-Event

Exceptional Lives: Belonging, Believing and Becoming An informal, interactive discussion

1/29/15

University Christian Church Room 207 2720 South University Drive Fort Worth, Texas CELEBRATING COMMUNITY Streed Lines - Shared Gifts - Shared Servee Registration at www.IDDNeedsTC.org



IDD Faith-Based 2015 Symposium

Celebrating the bond that faith creates and the importance of a spiritual community inclusive of individuals with IDD.

> 1/30/15 8 a.m. registration 8:30 a.m. to 4:30 p.m. conference

> > The Riley Center 1701 Boyce Avenue Fort Worth, Texas

Community Health

Flu Grabs Hold in Tarrant County and Texas

We are in the middle of a severe flu season, which could stick around for another couple months, say health officials.

"We need to be protected," said Vinny Taneja, Tarrant County Public Health Department director.

The number of flu cases reported, have declined in the last couple of weeks, but there could easily be another rise, Taneja said. Texas is "a high activity zone" for influenza and the state, after a slight decline in the flu, is currently seeing a resurgence in respiratory illness, which is probably flu-related, Taneja said.

Nationally, the Centers for Disease Control and Prevention (CDC) says that it is too soon to say whether influenza activity has peaked this season, according to a mid-January report. While the incidence of positive tests for flu declined slightly, severity indicators used to track hospitalizations and deaths rose sharply, according to the report.

Complicating matters are early indications that this year's flu vaccine is not working as well as usual against the predominant strain of the virus. The majority of flu cases this season have been a mutated strain of H3N2 (Influenza A). H3N2 seasons are generally worse than others, and this year's flu vaccine is not a good match, the CDC said.

Each year, the flu vaccine is reformulated, based on the best guess of experts about which flu strain will be the biggest problem. Those decisions are made months before the flu season starts, so that pharmaceutical companies have time to make enough vaccine. This year's formula did not include the mutated strain of H3N2 virus as it emerged after the vaccine had already gone into production. That strain tends to cause more hospitalizations and deaths, particularly in the elderly.

Even so, some protection is better than none, say health officials. Other influenza viruses circulate later in the season and the vaccine is designed to protect against several of those flu virus strains.

People who are at high risk for serious complications – the very young, the elderly and those with underlying medical conditions – should seek treatment with flu antiviral drugs as soon as they become ill, at the first sign of symptoms. It can make a

difference in the severity of the infection. The overall hospitalization rate is highest for senior citizens, followed by children under the age of five years old.

CDC officials say people should still get a flu shot this year. The flu season in the U.S. usually peaks in January or February, but people can continue to get sick for months.

- Flu Facts and Prevention Tips -

What is the Flu? It is a contagious, respiratory illness caused by an influenza virus that infects the nose, throat and lungs. It can cause mild to severe illness and even hospitalization or death. People at risk for complications include the elderly, young children, pregnant women and people with health conditions such as asthma, diabetes, suppressed immune systems or heart disease.

Flu symptoms? People who have flu can have fever, chills, a cough, a sore throat, a runny or stuffy nose, muscle aches and body aches, headaches or fatigue.

How does Flu spread? Flu spreads when sick people cough, sneeze or talk and tiny droplets land on people. Flu can spread by touching a surface that has virus on it and then touching the mouth, eyes or nose.

How long is someone contagious? One day before symptoms develop and up to seven days after. Young children and people with weakened immune systems can infect others for a longer time.

How to prevent Flu? Get a flu shot. Wash your hands often and cover coughs and sneezes. If you get sick, keep your distance from others and stay home from work, school and errands.

For more information, call 817-321-4700

Website: http://health.tarrantcounty.com

Facebook: www.facebook.com/tarrantcountypublichealth







Peer Counseling Programs

Veterans Helping Veterans to Come Home

Peer to peer counseling for veterans works. It can be tough on a man or woman returning from a combat zone who is trying to find comfort and a successful way to reconnect with their family and their community.

There are a lot of obstacles to work through and many veterans stumble into drug and

alcohol abuse, depression, domestic violence, even homelessness and suicide.

Veterans helping veterans get their bearings is proving to be a successful way to help our heroes, and Tarrant County has led the way in Texas.

"We set up the template that the state uses," said Michael Killam, program manager for veterans services at MHMR Tarrant, the county's community based health and human services provider.

Killam is a Vietnam veteran who hit bottom and learned about the salvation that counseling, therapy and peer support can bring.

"It wasn't easy, that's an understatement, living with the mix of anxiety, post-traumatic stress and depression," he said.

Killam finally ended up as a patient for nine months at the Bonham VA Medical Center Combat Trauma unit. It started him on the path to recovery. He spent four months at the central Texas VA, where he met and began working with Dr. Wayne Gregory, a clinical psychologist, and then returned to Bonham.

"Part of my treatment was to establish a 12-step facilitation groups for veterans," he said.

That, he said, set the stage for his leadership role in peer to peer counseling. Killam went to college and got a drug and counseling certificate. He started the Phoenix group in Sherman, Texas, to help veterans with post-traumatic stress disorder and substance abuse.

He became intrigued by groups facilitated by veterans and one-on-one veteran counseling.

Killam was hired by MHMR in 2010 after the Texas Department of Health Services began providing funding for veterans care. Soon he was training other facilitators.

At the same time, he helped to establish Texas Lawyers for Texas Veterans, a pro bono program that started in Tarrant, Dallas, Denton and San Antonio and now has about 120 chapters in Texas.

Once Killam began working with MHMR, he met state healthcare and veterans support officials and the state said they wanted MHMR to set up peer counseling programs across North Texas, said Susan Garnett MHMR chief executive officer.

"The state was having such a hard time getting going, that they turned to Tarrant County for help, she said.

One of Killam's virtues is that he has a very strong sense of what people need, Garnett said.

"It's really about allowing people to emerge, the counseled



Veterans Program Manager Michael Killam with his mentor, clinical psychologist Dr. Wayne Gregory.

and the counselors. People facing challenges often don't realize they get better when working with others, that they find healing through helping," she said

Just a few years ago, people were coming back from service with nowhere to go, Garnett said. Now there is better support from the Department of Veterans Affairs, the Texas Veterans Commission, the peer counseling system, and the Legislature.

Today, it is estimated by the Departments of Defense and Veterans Affairs that there are 1.6 million veterans in Texas, with 250,000 having served in Afghanistan and Iraq. It is estimated that about one-fifth of them need mental health services.

In the 83rd Legislature, state lawmakers increased funding for veterans' access to mental health professionals, appropriating an additional \$4 million to the <u>Department of State Health</u> <u>Services</u> budget to help support peer counseling programs.

"We are going like gangbusters now," Killam said. "We started in 2010 with 13 regions and regional coordinators in the state and we now have 37 regions."

In North Texas, the Military Veteran Peer Network has volunteers trained in facilitation and suicide prevention. There are about 35 group meetings a month at 17 different locations, along with efforts to help homeless veterans.

"People who get some recovery learn that one of the ways to keep OK is by volunteering and working with vets who need help," Killam said.

http://www.milvetpeer.net/ http://www.mhmrtarrant.org/Services/Addiction-Services/Veteran-Services



Measles Case Confirmed in Tarrant County

County, state and federal health officials are chasing down airplane and community contacts of a Tarrant County resident who returned home through DFW Airport from a trip to India with a case of measles, a highly contagious disease to those who are not vaccinated against it.

The federal Centers for Disease Control is determining the number of exposed passengers on the flight. Tarrant County health officials are investigating who might have been exposed in Tarrant County. So far, there is a limited exposure to area residents, county health officials said.

The passenger from India had a stop in Dubai, arriving at DFW Airport on January 6. The infectious period ended on January 7.

Measles is an airborne disease spread by coughing and sneezing. It causes a reddish rash, high fever, cough, runny nose and watery eyes and can last one to two weeks. The rash begins on the face and head and moves to the hands and feet.

USS Fort Worth Deploys to Sea and is Pressed into Action

The USS Fort Worth sailed out of its homeport of San Diego on November 17th heading to the Western Pacific for a 16-month deployment.

No sooner did it arrive at its home away from home, Singapore, than the speedy warship was sent to look for the remains of the missing AirAsia Flight 8501.

The USS Sampson, also part of the Java Sea team of ships looking for the missing Airbus A320 with 162 people on board, recovered six bodies near the crash.

It is a vaccine-preventable disease. Adults who have received the measles vaccine are considered immune, and those born before 1957 are considered immune because chances are high they were already exposed to it and have developed immunity. Those who have not been immunized against Measles, or have never had Measles, should contact their healthcare provider.

For children, an initial dose of the vaccine is recommended at one year and a second dose between the ages of four to six years. The last recorded case of Measles in Tarrant County was in July 2014.

This case has no apparent ties to the current Disneyland-related measles outbreak in California. About 85 cases have been confirmed from an exposure that began at the Magic Kingdom before Christmas, including cases in Colorado, Utah, Washington state and Mexico.

Domestic transmission of the disease had been considered eliminated from the United States, but travelers and a growing anti-vaccination movement in the United States, remain a problem.



The USS Fort Worth LCS 3

The Fort Worth, commissioned in September 2012, is the fastest warship on the seas, well-suited for a search and rescue mission. The 390-foot ship can do 40 knots and still make high-speed turns. The highly maneuverable Fort Worth is part of the Navy's new fleet of Littoral Combat Ships. It has a minimal hand-picked crew of about 50. It has a shallow draft and works close to shore, around islands and out at sea.

The ship has no propeller, no rudder and no wheel to steer it. Gas-powered turbines, the same as those on a Boeing 777, push one million gallons of water out of the boat's backside every minute. Water jets steer the ship and the hull design allows it to rise and nearly ride on top of the water.

When the Fort Worth deploys, it has a 23-member air detachment to fly and maintain a helicopter and a drone and 19 crew members to run two high-speed 40-foot boats, for search-and-seizure boardings and to fight piracy.

While in Singapore, the ship will patrol the Western Pacific and work and train sailors and ships' crews from navies that work with our Navy. The ship won't return to San Diego until 2016, but the crew will swap with sailors from a sister ship every four months, allowing them to rest while the Fort Worth stays on station.



A health and lifestyle expo for boomers, seniors and caregivers



Will Rogers Memorial Center 3401 West Lancaster Ave. Fort Worth, TX 76107

Tarrant County Judge Glen Whitley and Cigna HealthSpring invite you to the 2015 Senior Synergy Expo. Come learn about the services available in Tarrant County that will empower boomers, seniors and caregivers to live a healthier lifestyle.

Free

- Admission
- Health Screenings
- Workshops
- Parking and lunch* *Must register before April 30th to guarantee lunch

Register

To attend the Expo, register today at:

- www.SeniorSynergyExpo.com
- 817-884-1234
 - klrotter@tarrantcounty.com

EXPO SPONSORS:



Kindred Hospital Tarrant County

Emerald Hills Funeral Home and Memorial Park • Home Instead Senior Care Livens Law • Sullivan & Sullivan – Keller Williams Realty • United Health Care



84th Texas Legislature Opens its Doors

The 84th session of the Texas State Legislature started in mid-January. The Lone Star state's always interesting and never predictable governing body will meet for 140 days, until the very first day of June. It is a new era in Austin after a dozen Rick Perry years. Greg Abbott is the new governor, Dan Patrick is the new Lieutenant Governor. There are a host of other newly elected statewide officeholders and there will be a slew of new appointments to boards and commissions.

The county is well represented by 11 state representatives and 4 state senators. Many of them have a demonstrated record of leadership for the citizens of Tarrant County. Several members of the Tarrant County delegation are well-seasoned and in critical leadership positions on key legislative committees. The statewide turnover of members means that the veterans in our delegation will likely move up in the ranks of leadership and power this year. The three newly elected "freshmen" members have already indicated a strong desire to work with the county on behalf of our shared constituencies.

The initial legislative agenda includes work on education, the economy, property tax reform, border security and infrastructure improvements.

Tarrant County Legislative Delegation

Texas House		
District 90 Representative: Ramon Romero, D-Fort Worth,	512-463-0740	www.house.state.tx.us/members/member-page/?district=90
District 91 Representative: Stephanie Klick, R-Fort Worth	512-463-0599	www.house.state.tx.us/members/member-page/?district=91
District 92 Representative: Jonathan Stickland, R-Bedford	512-463-0522	www.house.state.tx.us/members/member-page/?district=92
District 93 Representative: Matt Krause, R-Fort Worth	512-463-0562	www.house.state.tx.us/members/member-page/?district=93
District 94 Representative: Tony Tinderholt, R-Arlington	512-463-0624	www.house.state.tx.us/members/member-page/?district=94
District 95 Representative: Nicole Collier, D-Fort Worth	512-463-0716	www.house.state.tx.us/members/member-page/?district=95
District 96 Representative: Bill Zedler, R-Arlington	512-463-0374	www.house.state.tx.us/members/member-page/?district=96
District 97 Representative: Craig Goldman, R-Fort Worth	512-463-0608	www.house.state.tx.us/members/member-page/?district=97
District 98 Representative: Giovanni Capriglione, R-Southlake	512-463-0690	www.house.state.tx.us/members/member-page/?district=98
District 99 Representative: Charlie Geren, R-Fort Worth	512-463-0610	www.house.state.tx.us/members/member-page/?district=99
District 101 Representative: Chris Turner, D-Grand Prairie	512-463-0574	www.house.state.tx.us/members/member-page/?district=101
Texas Senate		
District 9 Senator: Kelly Hancock, R-North Richland Hills	512-463-0109	www.hancock.senate.state.tx.us
District 10 Senator: Konni Burton, R-Colleyville	512-463-0110	www.burton.senate.state.tx.us
District 12 Senator: Jane Nelson, R-Flower Mound	512-463-0112	www.nelson.senate.state.tx.us.
District 22 Senator: Brian Birdwell, R-Granbury	512-463-0122	www.birdwell.senate.state.tx.us

TARRANT COUNTY CONTACTS

County Clerk

Texas House

County Clerk		Resource Connection	817-531-7600
Criminal / Misdemeanor Records	817-884-1066	Tax Assessor-Collector	
Probate Courts	817-884-1770	Auto Tag Renewal / Property Taxes	817-884-1100
Records Intake / Deeds	817-884-1062	Texas A&M AgriLife Extension	817-884-1945
Records Library	817-884-1069	Veterans Services	817-531-5645
Vital Records: Birth/Death Certificates, Marriage		Sheriff's Office	817-884-3009
Licenses, and Business Records/DBA's	817-884-1195	Jail Information	817-884-3116
District Attorney	817-884-1400	Victim Information	877-894-8463
District Clerk		Warrant Division	817-884-1320
Civil Records	817-884-1240	Commissioners Court Meets Tuesday at 10 am 100 E. Weatherford Street, 5th Floor	
Criminal Records	817-884-1342		
Family Court / Divorce Records	817-884-1265	County Judge, Glen Whitley	817-884-1441
Jury Services	817-884-3820		
Passports	817-884-2520	Commissioner Roy Brooks, Precinct 1	817-531-5600
Fire Marshal	817-838-4660	Commissioner Andy Nguyen, Precinct 2	817-548-3900
Human Services	817-531-5620	Commissioner Gary Fickes, Precinct 3	817-581-3600
Public Health	817-321-4700	Commissioner JD Johnson, Precinct 4	817-238-4400

GENERAL INFORMATION 817-884-1111

For additional information, visit: www.tarrantcounty.com