

THE COUNTY TAX \$ STATEMENT



Volume 15, Issue 1, January 2015

President's Message

By John R. Ames, Dallas County Tax Assessor-Collector



Happy New Year TACA Members!

I know it's been a busy time for Tax Offices across Texas. If you are the Voter Registrar and Elections Administrator, I know you're glad that the fall elections are over and I hope they were all successful. If you collect property taxes, now is when things are exciting – here's to hoping the money has rolled in! For everyone else, Motor Vehicle registrations and title work keep you busy year round.

VG Young was a huge success this year. This was the highest attendance of Tax Assessor/Collectors and Deputies ever at VG Young. Thanks to Scott Cummings and his staff for pulling off a great School for County Tax Assessors. Remember, next year, VG Young is moving to San Marcus to accommodate all the attendees. Take a look at the pictures from the conference elsewhere in this issue.

Congratulations to the 2014 Tax Assessor/Collector of the

Year, the Honorable Kristeen Roe, Brazos County Tax Assessor. Kristy has been a County Tax Assessor for both a small and a medium county and really understands how to run an efficient and productive office while making sure her citizens receive great service. She also serves as the TACA Legislative Committee Chair this year. Additionally, congratulations to all the TACs who were nominated this year. What an honor it is for your peers to nominate you for such a prestigious award.

Don't forget to mark your calendars for the 81st Annual TACA Conference in Lubbock from June 14-18, 2015. We've had planning meetings and we're finalizing all the details. You don't want to miss all the great speakers planned; also the off-site event this year will be awesome! In the meantime, stay focused on **Bridging the Gap** in your county. I can't wait to hear all about the Bridges you've built!

I hope that you're having a great 2015 so far and that you've had a great tax collection season!

Humbly Serving you,
John R. Ames



Welcome to the TxDMV On-Ramp! We appreciate the continued partnership between our agency and the Tax Assessor-Collectors Association. This month we have new leaders to announce and updates on our continuing work to implement new laws.

Vehicle Titles and Registration, Auto Burglary and Theft Prevention Authority Get New Leadership

Jeremiah Kuntz has been named the director for TxDMV's Vehicle Titles and Registration (VTR) Division. Jeremiah previously served as the director for our Government and Strategic Communications (GSC) Division. He held that role since the division's creation in 2011. Prior to his time with TxDMV he worked as Governor Rick Perry's transportation policy advisor, budget advisor to state Senator Todd Staples and transportation analyst for the Texas Senate Transportation and Homeland Security Committee. He also worked for the Texas Department of Transportation and served for six years in the U.S. Marine Corps Reserve. Jeremiah holds a finance degree from Southwest Texas State University, and lives in Austin with his wife Patricia and their sons Connor and Parker. Tim Thompson, who served

(continued on page 4)

Dates to Remember

President's Day
Monday, February 16th

TAAD Annual Conference
Renaissance Austin Hotel
February 15-18

Daylight Savings Time Begins
Sunday, March 8th

Easter
Sunday, April 5th

Memorial Day
Monday, May 25th

81st Annual T.A.C.A. Conference
Lubbock - June 14-18

THE COUNTY TAX STATEMENT

The County Tax Statement is the official publication of the Tax Assessor-Collector's Association of Texas and is published quarterly beginning in January each year for the benefit of its members and interested contributing parties. The purpose of this organization is to promote professional standards, to unify actions for the benefit of its constituents, to be aware and participate in the legislative process, and to provide a vehicle to educate its members in the proper conduct of the constitutional office of the Assessor-Collector of Taxes.

Advertisements in this publication are paid and in no way imply endorsement by this association of products or services.

Articles for printing or information on obtaining display ads of rates should be directed to TACA Newsletter, Teresa McCoy, Hood County Tax Assessor, 1410 W. Pearl St., Granbury, TX 76048, by the 10th day prior to the month of publication. Statements of fact and opinion are the responsibility of the authors alone and are not necessarily the opinion of the editing staff or TACA Board.

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From the Editor

By Teresa McCoy, Hood County Tax Assessor-Collector

Hello All. I hope that you all enjoyed wonderful holidays and have had a smooth collection season!

What a great educational seminar we had with V.G. Young! Thank you to again to our Program Chair for V.G. Young, Luanne Caraway, Hayes County Tax Assessor-Collector, and Mr. Scott Cummings along with all of the other V.G. Young folks who helped make it go so smoothly.

I'd like to offer a special "Congratulations" to Kristeen Roe, Brazos County, on being chosen as the 2014 Tax Assessor-Collector of the Year.

It's only January but time flies when you're having fun so the 2015 T.A.C.A. Conference in Lubbock will be happening before we know it. Jeri Cox and others have been hard at work planning what I know will be another great one so watch for list serve emails about the event details that will start going out before long and start making plans to attend.

I would like to remind everyone receiving this newsletter in print that at our conference in June of last year, the board made the decision to begin sending this publication out digitally to save the cost of mailing hard copies. This issue is being printed and mailed only to the lifetime and honorary members who I have addresses for; after that, it will be digital only. If you are a life or honorary member and you want to continue receiving this newsletter, please submit your email address to me at tmccoy@co.hood.tx.us or 1410 W Pearl St - Granbury TX 76048 so that I can add you to my newsletter contact list. You may also choose to view it on our website, www.tacaoftexas.org as it is now being posted there.

Signing off for this time but if you have any news you'd like to share with the rest of us, want to brag about something or have information or photos from your regional meetings please send it to me via email, tmccoy@co.hood.tx.us, and I'll do my best to get it in the next issue. So that I can get back on track, the deadline for the next issue is March 10th.

I hope you enjoy this issue and will send me lots of news for the next one!



2014-2015 Board: (Left to Right) Director, Paul Villarreal Jr (Hidalgo County) - Past President, Bobby Biscamp (Jasper County) - Secretary/Treasurer, Michelle French (Denton County) – Directors, Monte Shaw (Wise County), Linda Bridge (Bee County) & Cathy Talcott (Comal County) – Vice Pres. Internal, Teri Garvey (Anderson County)– Pres. Elect, Midget Sherman (Angelina County) -President, John R Ames (Dallas County) - Not Pictured, Vice Pres. External, Ronnie Keister (Lubbock County)

Region News

BIG COUNTRY REGION

**Submitted by Josie Dean
Coke County TAC**

The DFW Region (Dallas & Fort Worth) Big Country Region met on October 16, 2014 in Abilene. The meeting was called to order by Tammy Walker, Callahan County Tax Assessor-Collector and President of that regional chapter of the association.

The minutes from the July meeting were read and approved. The Treasurer's report was given by Secretary-Treasurer and Coke County Tax Assessor-Collector, Josie Dean; the report was accepted and approved.

The discussion of "old business" included a reminder for payment of membership dues and then the group moved on to "new business". New business discussions included the V.G. Young Conference on November 17 - 19, 2014 with questions about

reservations at the Hilton for that event. The group discussed education transcripts. The next meeting for this region was set for January 15, 2015 and the meeting was adjourned. Following the meeting the program was presented by Charlie Escobedo, from the El Paso Region, which included title and odometer fraud detection and contact information for DMV Investigator Robert Foster.

EAST TEXAS LUNCH BUNCH

**Submitted by Midget Sherman
Angelina County TAC**

The East TX Lunch Bunch met Wednesday, December 10th from 9:00am to 2:00pm in Houston County. We had representation from Montgomery County, Tyler County, Trinity County, Jasper County, Angelina County, Polk County & Houston County giving us 21 in attendance not counting special guest.

Danette Millican was our host and the meeting was sponsored by Perdue Brandon Fielder Collins & Mott, LLP. We had a "Meet & Greet" from 9:00 to 9:30 and then Danette welcomed everyone and introduced her speakers.

At 10:00 Chuck Lee, DMV Director from the Longview Region gave a presentation on Web-Dealer & an update on Single Sticker, 30 Day Permits, LMS Learning System, RTS Refactoring, new Reports on demand & NMVTIS. Also, present from DMV was Idalia Illa-Lopez, Director of the Beaumont Region.

At 11:00 Tammy McRae, Montgomery County Tax Assessor-Collector presented the class "Ethics for County Tax Assessor-Collectors" a required course for TACA Professional Designation. We took a lunch break and continued with the ethics class until 2:00.

We had a great meeting.

Our Sympathy & Prayers Go Out To...

Family and friends of Linda Huckabee, retired Tax Assessor from Cochran County, who passed away on December 16, 2014. Linda worked in the Tax office for over 31 years and was Tax Assessor for 11 of those years.

Jan Parrish, Yoakum County Tax Assessor-Collector, who's father passed away on December 27, 2014.

The TxDMV On Ramp (continued from page 1)

as the interim director, continues to serve as VTR's deputy director. Adam Shaivitz has been named the interim director for GSC, in addition to his role as TxDMV's public information officer.

Bryan Wilson has been named the new director of the Auto Burglary and Theft Prevention Authority (ABTPA). Bryan comes to ABTPA from the Texas Indigent Defense Commission, where he served as grants administrator, distributing approximately \$30 million in grants annually. Bryan has served the courts and state since 1988. He started as a probation officer, served as administrator for the Texas Department of Criminal Justice (TDCJ) Treatment Alternative to Incarceration Program, and program director for the TDCJ Office of General Counsel. Bryan also established the grant program and supported the Supreme Court Permanent Judicial Commission on Children Youth and Families as grant administrator.

Texas, My Plates Ink Contract

TxDMV amended and renewed its contract with My Plates for a term beginning November 19, 2014 and ending November 18, 2019. The contract includes a \$15 million guarantee in revenue to the state. In the renewed contract, the state gets a larger percentage of the specialty plate renewal fees and some of the existing plate designs will be modified to improve their legibility. TxDMV will continue to inform your offices of new plate designs.

Online Temporary Permits Now Available

As of Sept. 27, temporary permits have been available for purchase and printing 24 hours a day, seven days a week. The online application will significantly improve customer access, especially for those coming to Texas from other states or countries. No changes

have been made to the process for walk-in permit sales. Issuance of permits and reprints from your office will continue as usual. We will provide a press release template announcing the change for use by county offices at your discretion.

Introducing "Two Steps, One Sticker"

As a result of House Bill 2305, passed during the 83rd legislative session, Texas will transition to a "Two Steps, One Sticker" vehicle inspection and registration system. Beginning March 1, 2015, vehicles will no longer be issued an inspection sticker. The registration sticker will serve as a combined proof of registration and inspection. Motorists seeking to register their vehicle on or after March 1, 2015, must have a current, passing vehicle inspection in order to register their vehicle. If there is no record of inspection, or the record shows the vehicle failed inspection, registration will not be permitted. The program is a joint implementation of the Texas Department of Motor Vehicles, the Texas Department of Public Safety (TxDPS) and the Texas Commission on Environmental Quality (TCEQ).

Inspection Verification During Registration

Inspection will be verified electronically at the time of registration. If the vehicle passed inspection but the system is unable to electronically verify it, the motorist may present the current, passing Vehicle Inspection Report (VIR) they received from the inspection station at the time of registration. Upon successful manual verification of the VIR, the motorist will be permitted to register the vehicle. This process is comparable to verifying current auto insurance.

Collection of Inspection Fees During Registration

Beginning March 1, 2015, the state's portion of the inspection fee will be collected during registration. Currently, the state's portion is collected at time of inspection. Motorists will continue to pay the inspection station their fee at the time of their yearly inspection. Under the new system, the share collected at each step will change, but the total amount will remain the same. Any inspection fee owed at the time of registration will be line-itemed on the registration renewal notice for the motorist's convenience.

Transitioning to "Two Steps, One Sticker"

Transitioning to a single sticker requires that expiration dates for a vehicle's inspection and registration match. In the first year of the transition, motorists will be allowed to register their vehicle if their vehicle inspection is current and passing on the date of registration.

From March 1, 2016, onward, motorists will have to obtain a passing vehicle inspection not more than 90 days prior to renewing their registration.

Getting the Word Out

The public outreach campaign for "Two Steps, One Sticker" is already underway. County offices have received educational materials for the program, and a promotional website launched in October. You are encouraged to visit www.twostepsonesticker.com and learn more about how the program will affect drivers across the state. Vehicle registration renewal inserts will be distributed beginning in February 2015, with radio ads coming simultaneously.

The TxDMV On Ramp (continued from page 4)

Training for Counties

While many counties may have had an opportunity to participate in general overviews of the new program, additional training will be offered prior to March 1, 2015. Please be on the lookout for information from TxDMV regarding upcoming training dates and times. Your participation in these events will be critical to the successful implementation of “Two Steps, One Sticker.” Before you know it, it’ll be time to kick up your heels and do the new Texas Two-Step, and TxDMV wants to ensure that you are ready.



Coming Soon: TxDMV System for Dealers Who Sell Used Vehicles

County Tax Assessor-Collectors have been busy! Over 500,000 more titles were issued statewide in fiscal year 2014 compared to fiscal year 2013, an increase of about 7.28 percent according to TxDMV records. Fortunately, the TxDMV webDEALER system makes titling faster and easier than ever. The online application process used by dealers eliminates the need for manual data entry at tax offices, reduces submission errors that delay processing, and allows for quicker turnaround. webDEALER is helping set new standards for how business gets done in Texas, and by early 2015, dealers who sell used vehicles can take advantage of the many benefits webDEALER offers.

Benefits your tax office will see include:

- **Faster, More Convenient Processing**

Processing applications online reduces paperwork, cuts down office visits, and speeds up transactions. County offices can receive vehicle information directly from dealers at any time, 24/7. Most importantly, the webDEALER step-by-step application process eliminates data entry at tax offices and reduces the likelihood of submission errors.

- **Easier Tracking**

Viewing transactions in webDEALER enables counties to track all process steps. Title applications can be monitored as they move from the dealership, to the county, and on to TxDMV. When declining transactions, counties can enter the information explaining why.

- **Better Fraud Prevention**

Checking vehicle titles in webDEALER can help resolve errors and prevent fraud. webDEALER enables dealers to verify that surrendered titles match current Texas records prior to county processing.

- **Improved Fee Calculation**

Ensuring tax and fee accuracy using the webDEALER fee calculator helps dealers reduce transaction returns from county tax offices.

- **Simplified Specialty Plate Transfer**

Transferring specialty plates is easier since fees are provided in the webDEALER system. Local tax offices no longer need to provide dealers with fee information to complete transfers onsite at the time of sale. This convenience saves dealers, customers, and tax offices time.

A selected group of independent dealers is scheduled to begin using webDEALER this winter. TxDMV’s goal is to collect feedback and make improvements before expanding system availability [omitted three words]. By early 2015, all dealers who sell used vehicles can check the Dealer page on TxDMV.gov to see if their county is actively utilizing webDEALER.

TxDmv is continuing to assist and train counties that have expressed an interest in using the system. Once counties have received training and are ready to bring dealers onto the webDEALER system, they will be added to the active county list.

For more information about webDEALER, go to the Dealer page on TxDMV.gov. Click the webDEALER tab in the middle of the page for important updates, resources, and the active county list.

Future releases of webDEALER will include enhancements to accommodate the “Two Steps, One Sticker” initiative and allow for the collection of inspection fees. This will assist dealers with the transition to a single registration and inspection sticker by automatically calculating fees and ensuring the vehicle has obtained an inspection as required.

2014 Tax Assessor-Collector of the Year

By Kristeen Roe, Brazos County Tax Assessor-Collector

The 2014 winner of the Tax Assessor-Collector of the Year Award is Mrs. Kristeen Roe of Brazos County. In the absence of our 2013 winner of this award, Diane Bolin, this year's award was presented by Donna Atzenhoffer of Jackson County, who was the 2012 winner of this award, on behalf of the Tax Assessor-Collector's Association during the V.G. Young School for County Tax Assessor-Collector's in College Station in November.

The Tax Assessor-Collector of the Year award is presented to an individual who displays outstanding professionalism, conducts county business with high ethical standards, and continues his or her education to improve the operations of the tax office. Nominations for this award are submitted by other county tax assessor-collectors in the nominees region of the state and the scoring is done by the Awards Committee of TACA; the person scoring the most points regulated by a set of questions is chosen as the winner. Kristeen was proudly nominated by the Central Texas Region (Waco).

Kristy has been very active in the Tax Assessor-Collectors Association on both the state and regional levels. She has the professional certification of PCC & CTA and is currently working towards the CTOP designation. Kristy is also a member of Texas Association of Appraisal Districts and the Association of Certified Tax Administrators.

On the state level of TACA she worked her way from serving as Director on the TACA Board to eventually becoming President of this association. On the regional level she served as Historian, Vice-Chair and Chair in the TACA Big Country Region and in the Central Texas Region she has served as President.

This year's award winner has also been the recipient of the TACA Distinguished Service Award and was presented with a special certificate of appreciation for her work done during the 77th legislative session.



2012 Award Recipient, Donna Atzenhoffer, and the 2014 Tax Assessor-Collector of the Year, Kristeen Roe.



2014 Tax Assessor-Collector of the Year, Kristeen (Kristy) Roe of Brazos County

2014 Tax Assessor-Collector of the Year (continued from page 6)

When asked to list her outstanding accomplishments this was her reply: While Tax Assessor-Collector in Coke County, she was able to computerize taxes, provide for online tax payments and computerize the voter registration process. When Kristy was elected as Tax Assessor-Collector for Brazos County a major change took place. The contract between the county and appraisal district, which provided the Tax A/C serve as Chief Appraiser was rescinded after 24 years. Kristy was instrumental in the successful separation of data bases, computer systems and the restructuring of the relationships between the appraisal district, tax office and taxing jurisdictions.

Currently, her office collects for 100% of the taxing jurisdictions in her county, and she handles the duties of motor vehicle, beer/liquor licenses and permit fees and voter registration.

On a personal level, she is grateful to her husband of 40 years. They have proudly raised a son who serves our country in the military and is a strong, honest and caring husband and father.

From all of us at TACA, CONGRATULATIONS Kristy; you are very deserving of this award and we thank you for your commitment and your service to us and to the citizens of Brazos County!!



2014 Tax A/C of the Year Nominees



Tax Assessor-Collector of the Year and Staff

V.G. Young School for County Tax Assessor-Collectors

November 17-19, 2014 - College Station



Surprise special guest, the newly elected Comptroller of Public Accounts, Glenn Hegar



Curt Swenson of the Comptroller's office gave a vehicle sales tax update



Whitney Brewster, DMV Executive Director, was joined by Tax Assessor-Collectors Luanne Caraway, Hayes County, Ronnie Keister, Lubbock County, and John Ames, of Dallas County, for a discussion on Two Steps, One Sticker



Ronnie McDonald with Texas A&M AgriLife Extension Service on "Leading with Customer Service"



Tax Assessor-Collectors Tavia Murphy, Guadalupe County, and Kristeen Roe, Brazos County and a local Constable provided a discussion on hot check plate seizures



Dallas County Tax Assessor-Collector and T.A.C.A. President, John R. Ames welcomed the group to the annual Tax A/C of the Year Luncheon



Tavia plays and wins at game night!!



Tammy McRae, Montgomery County Tax Assessor-Collector and Carolyn Etheridge, Montgomery County took on the task of hosting game night, for the unmentionable game we don't play (ha ha) - Thanks Ladies!!



Scott Cummings welcomed everyone to College Station

You Need To Know...

Julie Cox, long-time tax assessor/collector, recently announced her retirement following 28 years of service to the county.

In a letter, drafted July 7, 2014, to the Harrison County Commissioners Court, Cox expressed her intent to retire from her post, effective Aug. 31.

"I have enjoyed the 28 years of service to Harrison County, but now I feel it is time for me to retire," she said.

Cox's decision comes following the recent retirement of her husband Mark Cox, who worked for General Cable, also for 28 years. "My husband and I both retired. It's a fun thing," she said, "We all have our health and we're just going to sit back and enjoy life together now, enjoy our grandkids and do a few trips. "There's some places on our bucket list we want to see and places we want to go," said Cox. "We're just going to enjoy the grandbabies. It's a blessing." "We're very blessed, very fortunate," she said.

"I started here in 1986 and have really enjoyed my time," said Cox.

Cox, who was elected into her second term as tax assessor collector in 2012, has served every position in the tax collector office throughout the years. She started out in the front behind the counter, serving customers by handling registration and titles, boat transfers, liquor licenses and property taxes. From there, she moved into the delinquent tax department and then advanced to the position of auto registration supervisor, where she was answering more rigorous auto registration inquiries. Following that position, she was promoted as chief deputy of the office, serving in a bookkeeping role. "I've learned a lot. I learned a lot about people," Cox said.

"There's been ups and downs, and I've made a lot of good friends — both customers and employees," she said, "I wish them all the best, as well. It's been fun," she said.

In her resignation letter, Cox recommended that the commissioners court consider Veronica King, current Chief Deputy, as the appointed tax assessor collector. "Veronica

has 16 years experience and is a professional county collector as required by the state of Texas," said Cox.

"I put my confidence and trust in her to do the job to the best of her ability."

Harrison County Judge Hugh Taylor said "She'll be missed. No doubt about it," he said of Cox.

This fall, the Texas Department of Motor Vehicles (TxDMV) selected Jeremiah Kuntz as the new director of the Vehicle Titles and Registration Division (VTR). Prior to this appointment, Kuntz served as the director of the Government and Strategic Communications Division, which he created when he joined the agency in 2011.

VTR is responsible for vehicle titling, registration and issuing license plates and disabled placards. It oversees 16 regional service centers and provides policy and procedural support to the 254 county tax assessor-collectors who process registration and title applications throughout Texas. The division also updates and maintains the state motor vehicle database. Currently, there are more than 23 million registered vehicles in Texas.

Kuntz came to the TxDMV with a strong background in public service, having worked for the Office of the Governor of Texas, the Texas Department of Transportation and the Texas Senate. He also served six years in the United States Marine Corps Reserve. He received a bachelor of business degree in finance from Southwest Texas University in San Marcos.

Kuntz's new position began September 1, 2014. TxDMV's public information officer, Adam Shaivitz, is serving as acting director of the Government and Strategic Communications Division until that position is filled.

Mrs. Beatrice (Bea) Westbrook, Brazos County Tax Office, retired effective October 10th. Bea sends a note to express how much she enjoyed being a part of such a great group and that she loved every minute of it. We wish her joy and fun and lots of time to spend with her husband, Jerry, her children and especially those grandbabies!

Allison Nathan Getz was sworn in as Jefferson County Tax Assessor-Collector on November 18th after winning the November general election. Please welcome Allison. Her email address is agetz@co.jefferson.tx.us and she is already a member of the list serve.

Welcome to the newly sworn Peggy Goodall, Henderson County Tax Assessor-Collector, following the retirement of long time TA/C Milburn Chaney.



Julie Cox, Harrison County



Jeremiah Kuntz, Texas DMV

TAX ASSESSOR-COLLECTORS ASSOCIATION

*80th Annual TACA Conference
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