

The Official Publication of the Tax Assessor-Collectors Association of

# THE COUNTY TAX \$STATEMENT



Volume 21, Issue 1 – March 2021

# #BeTheDifference



# The County Tax \$tatement

The County Tax Statement is the official publication of the Tax Assessor-Collectors Association of Texas and is published four times each year for the benefit of its members and interested contributing parties. The purpose of the 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.

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# Greetings from our President

**Tammy McRae, PCAC  
Tax Assessor-Collector  
Montgomery County**

Hello Friends!

I hope everyone is doing well and recovering from the Texas Snowmageddon 2021! Never in Texas history has all 254 counties been under a winter storm advisory at the same time. I don't know about you but I'm looking forward to spring!



The 87<sup>th</sup> Legislative Session is in full swing! The bill filing has ended and hearings have begun. Kevin Luedeke,

Kieschnick- Nueces County TAC, Shay Bell County TAC, Donna Willis- Lynn County TAC and I were at the Capitol this week. While it was business as usual, it was definitely a different atmosphere. COVID testing is required to enter & social distancing enforced. Shay, Donna & I testified on SB 876. Our testimony made an impact! Thank you to everyone that submitted information. Shay also testified on HB 1105.



*Please help us, Father, to be the children You want us to be.*





We even ran into some friendly faces from TxDMV while at the Capitol, Caroline Love & Clint Thompson and had the opportunity to meet our new VTR Director, Roland Luna!

Are you ready for the June Conference in beautiful Corpus Christi? It's right around the corner!

We've been busy planning an awesome event with lots of educational opportunities for you & your staff! Thank you to Jefferson County TAC, Allison Getz & Madison County TAC, Karen Lane for working so hard to put together a quality program. We couldn't have a successful event without the help of Amy Lawson & Megan West at Texas Association of Counties and Sarah Lazarowitz at County Progress. I also want to thank all of our sponsors and exhibitors. Without them, none of this would be possible. Please be sure to visit them all while at the conference and thank them for their partnership & generous support of our association. Allison Getz, Larry Gaddes, Amy Lawson, Kim Roe and I were in Corpus this week planning the off-site event. As you can see, we made some new friends while there. The flamingos were quite chatty & the sharks curious!





We look forward to meeting our new Tax Assessor-Collectors at the conference. Be sure to welcome them & #BeTheDifference as they navigate the conference. As of the most recent report, we have 361 attendees representing 184 counties! This may be a record for the most counties represented!

I would like to thank all of our committee chairs, vice-chairs and members for your dedication to our association this year. It's been a year like none other but we are still stronger together. A special thank you to the TACA Officers & Directors for their leadership and support. They work tirelessly behind the scenes to ensure the association runs smoothly.

Lastly, I would like to thank each of you for allowing me to serve as your President. It has truly been a privilege and an honor to represent you and serve this great association.

In Service to You!

Tammy McRae, PCAC  
Montgomery County Tax Assessor-Collector  
President- Tax Assessor-Collectors Association of Texas

### Dates to Remember

April 2	Good Friday
April 4	Easter Sunday
April 21	Administrative Professionals Day
May 31	Memorial Day
June 5-10	TACA Conference in Corpus Christi
July 4	Independence Day

**TEXAS SMARTBUY MEMBERSHIP PROGRAM**

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Contact: Karen Cyphers, [members@cpa.texas.gov](mailto:members@cpa.texas.gov)  
**512-463-3368**

\*\*Scattered throughout the newsletter will be some information from some of the new Tax Assessor-Collectors. Pictures are included when available.



A Note from the Editor,

Billie Page, PCAC, Angelina County

Hello Everyone:

My prayers are that each of you are well and feeling blessed.

So... 2021 is certainly another interesting year so far, right? First Covid 19 and then Snovid 21. Snow on the beaches? Really? To mask or not to mask? What's the right answer?

A new president and our first female vice-president are in office, and we have received 3 stimulus checks from the government in just the last few months.

April 14th, sales tax and registration penalties will be back in place; maybe it won't cause too much havoc in our offices. Between stimulus checks and income tax refunds, cars are selling like crazy. Our auto registration/vehicle titling lines are out the door!

Through it all, though, we have been truly blessed and are doing more than just surviving. We are prevailing and doing our best to "#BeTheDifference".

God bless every one of you.

In love and peace,

*Billie Page*

From New TAC:

New TAC here! First 90 days have gone very smoothly! I have been in the Tax office for a couple of years but am new to a lot of stuff. TACA has done great to give me plenty of information and many people have reached out to offer support. I definitely have felt very welcomed and part of a great group!

Thank you!



Amy McCauley  
Tax Assessor-Collector  
King County



# Rest in Peace



*Be joyful in hope, patient in affliction, faithful in prayer. Share with God's people who are in need*

Romans 12:12-13

*In Memory  
Dexter Clay*

Dexter Clay, 75, of Spur, TX, passed from this life Friday, December 18, 2020, in Lubbock, TX.

Dexter was born April 21, 1945, in Croton, Dickens County, to Oma and Velma (Gunnels) Clay. He graduated from Spur High School in 1963. He married Judy Arnold on November 26, 1965 in Spur. They were married for 55 years.

Dexter began his military career in the United States Air Force in 1965. After serving in San Antonio and Wichita Fall, in 1969 Dexter was sent to Vietnam. After coming home a civilian, he moved to Amarillo and attended West Texas State University and worked part-time. He found, though, he missed the military life and re-entered the Air Force in 1971. He stayed in Germany and Holland for a total of 9 years, before moving back to the States in 1981.

After retiring from the Air Force in 1993, he continued working, including serving two terms as Dickens County Tax Assessor & Collector, before retiring in 2006.

Those left to cherish his memory are his wife, Judy of Spur; a son, Mike Clay (Paula) of Saginaw, daughter, Melanie McCormick (Philip) of Spur; four grandchildren, Garrett, Wyatt, Wylie and Sydney; one brother, Alford Clay (JoAnne) of Granbury; five sisters, Jean Shaw (Dennis) and Gail Robert of Dickens, Kathy Higginbotham of Wellington, Colorado, Martha Shipman (Clifford) of Brownwood and Patricia Hart (DeWayne) of Granbury, and one sister-in-law, Karla Clay of Blum; numerous nieces and nephews.

Dexter was preceded in death by his parents, Oma and Velma Clay and one brother, Johnnie Clay.

In lieu of flowers, donations may be made to: Spur Sr. Citizens, 210 Burlington, Spur, TX 79370; Dickens Co. EMS, 201 6th St. Spur, TX 79370

Online condolences may be at:  
[www.zapatafuneralhome.net](http://www.zapatafuneralhome.net)

## Marsha P. Gaines

Former Fort Bend Tax Assessor-Collector Marsha P. Gaines passed away October 30, 2020. Services were held November 15 in Sugarland. A life member of TACA, Marsha served as Fort Bend County TAC from January 1, 1985 through Dec 31, 2004.

*Ro-Vin Garrett*

## Ron Wright

It is with a heavy heart I inform you of the passing of one of our former TACs, Ron Wright, Tarrant County. Ron passed after an 18-day battle with COVID-19. Ron served as Tarrant County Tax Assessor-Collector from 2011 through 2018, when he stepped down to run for Congress. He proudly served the 6<sup>th</sup> Congressional District until the time of his passing. Our thoughts and prayers are with his family during this difficult time.

*Tammy McRae*

*May we meet again in heaven...*



# Tax Assessor-Collectors Association of Texas



Our TACA conference is scheduled for June 6-10 in Corpus Christi at the Convention Center. We already have 400+ people registered and are able to take additional participants. There is plenty of room for social distancing – the convention center is a massive complex. We will start with the advanced class on Sunday and officially open Monday morning at 9:00 with a dynamic nationally known speaker - Jan Hargraves - followed by a Motor Vehicle Theft Panel. Our luncheon will spotlight new TACs, present educational certificates and honor those we have lost in the past year. Title fraud training (advanced reservation required) will occur in the afternoon along with how to write a press release, Compassionate Collections, Voter Registration, working the web and ending with a panel of media experts. Tuesday begins with TxDMV general session followed by roundtable discussion of auto and property topics. Our luncheon will highlight our sponsors and we will sit with our region to bond with those that live close to us. We will have roundtable discussions by region following the meal to share best practices. After a break, we have a general session highlighting HR issues and break for dinner followed by BINGO later that evening. Wednesday is our TACA business meeting and deputy sessions. Lunch is “on your own” and we have breakouts in the afternoon: Customer service from the Lobby, Tx Parks & Wildlife, Communications CUBE highlighting social media, webDealer FAQ and ending the day with a tale of fraud presented by President Tammy McRae.

The offsite event will be at the Texas State Aquarium which is breathtaking. We will wrap up Thursday with a Legislative update and 3 classes for credit, Ethics, SIT or TNT. Don't forget to bring door prizes and feel free to contact me if you have any questions (agetz@co.jefferson.tx.us). My vice chair, Karen Lane, and our program committee along with President Tammy and your BOD have worked hard to provide an innovative conference in a tropical location that is ideal to bring your family. Come join us this summer – dress comfortable in anticipation of some warm weather, wear shoes that will enable you to get in your steps and get ready for some great fellowship. #bethedifference

Allison Getz, Program Chair  
Tax Assessor-Collector  
Jefferson County

From New TAC:

My name is Nancy Shanafelt and I am the newly elected Tax Assessor Collector for Trinity county. I was born and raised in Trinity county, graduated and went to Texas A&M University and graduated in 2006. My husband is one of the 3 Trinity county game wardens. We have 2 sons that keep us on the go.

My first 3 months in office have definitely been filled with learning, learning and more learning. I can pick any topic and soak up as much as I can hold. I added credit card processing to both of my offices and the public has really responded in a great way to such convenience. I also added boat registration and titling as well. I am very impressed with how helpful my fellow TAC are. There is a great amount of knowledge within our TAC family that I am very thankful for.

*Nancy Due Shanafelt*  
Trinity County Tax Assessor Collector  
(936) 642-1637



# COMPTROLLER'S TAX POLICY CORNER

## STANDARD PRESUMPTIVE VALUE (SPV) AND CERTIFIED APPRAISALS, MOTOR VEHICLE TAX REFERENCES: GUIDES AND PUBLICATIONS, AND THE END OF THE MOTOR VEHICLE TAX PAYMENT PENALTY WAIVER EXTENSION PERIOD

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TALIEA POCAIGUE | TEXAS COMPTROLLER OF PUBLIC ACCOUNTS | TAX POLICY DIVISION

We know County Tax Assessor-Collectors (CTACs) and their staff often have questions about motor vehicle taxes, and there are many topics we can write about. We also know that, every once in a while, a refresher on a topic you may already be familiar with can be helpful.

In this article, we will provide information about Standard Presumptive Value (SPV), how a customer can obtain a certified appraisal, and what documentation is required from the customer. We will also provide some information about useful motor vehicle references, and the expiration of the motor vehicle tax penalty temporary waiver extension period.

### Standard Presumptive Value (SPV) on Private-Party Transactions

SPV procedures may apply to motor vehicles acquired or purchased in a private-party transaction. A private-party transaction refers to a sale of a motor vehicle when neither party is a dealer. Private-party transactions include sales between family members, neighbors, businesses, certain trusts and other parties.

Motor vehicle tax is calculated and due on the either the sales price, or SPV, whichever is greater, unless a valid certified appraisal is provided.

#### Valid Certified Appraisal

To overcome SPV, a purchaser may obtain and present to the CTAC a certified appraisal within 30 calendar days after the date of sale; or, if purchased out of state, within 30 calendar days after bringing the motor vehicle into Texas for use (60 calendar days for active duty military personnel).

For a purchaser who paid less than 80 percent of the motor vehicle's SPV, motor vehicle tax is calculated on the appraised value, *provided the appraised value is not less than the sales price or total consideration paid*, and the appraisal is obtained and presented to the CTAC within 30 calendar days (60 calendar days for active duty military personnel) from the date of sale or first use in Texas.

#### Required Documentation and Guidelines for Accepting a Certified Appraisal

To accept a certified appraisal as valid, the CTAC must confirm specific guidelines are met by using the checklist below.

- Is the certified appraisal on [Form 14-128, Used Motor Vehicle Certified Appraisal Form](#)?
- Is the *date of appraisal*, on Form 14-128), within 30 calendar days (or 60 calendar days for active duty military personnel) from the vehicle's date of sale or first use in Texas?
- Are there any alterations to Form 14-128? Note: An altered form is invalid.
- Is Form 14-128 completed in full?



- Is it documented whether a motor vehicle dealer licensed for that category of used vehicle or a licensed insurance adjuster performed the appraisal? Note: When in doubt, check with the state licensing agencies through the license number shown on the appraisal. For licensed dealers, check with the Texas Department of Motor Vehicles ([TxDMV](#)). For licensed insurance adjusters, check with the [Texas Department of Insurance](#).

You must [retain records](#) of the accepted certified appraisal for four years from the end of the current fiscal year in which the appraisal was presented and accepted.

### **SPV and Form 130-U, Application for Texas Title and/or Registration**

In TxDMV's RTS system, the CTAC will check for a vehicle's SPV. The CTAC will note the SPV in the upper-right corner of [Form 130-U, Application for Texas Title and/or Registration](#).

If the purchaser has provided a valid Form 14-128, the CTAC will note that certified value in the upper-right hand corner of Form 130-U.

Box 38 of Form 130-U, titled "*Sales and Use Tax Computation*," will not change. The CTAC will not change the sales price in this section to the SPV or certified appraised value.

SPV may not be available for some vehicles, trailers, and recreational vehicles. If the SPV is *not available*, then require an appraisal from a dealer, insurance adjuster, or – at the discretion of the CTAC – someone who would have special knowledge of the vehicle's value. Such a person may include an antique dealer or antique appraiser. The Comptroller's appraisal form may be used but is not required.

The CTAC should tell the purchaser the amount that is 80 percent of the SPV retrieved from RTS. If the purchaser disagrees with the SPV and decides to obtain a certified appraisal, the CTAC can cancel the transaction.

The tax receipt issued to the purchaser will state the value to compute the motor vehicle tax.

For more information about private-party transactions, you can visit our [Publication 96-254, Motor Vehicle Tax Guide – Standard Presumptive Value \(SPV\) on Private-Party Transactions](#), webpage.

### **Refunds**

Purchasers who have paid motor vehicle tax on SPV, but choose to obtain a certified appraisal, may seek a refund of the difference in the tax if they provide a favorable appraisal within 30 calendar days of the purchase date or the date the vehicle is brought into Texas.

When seeking a refund, a purchaser must complete [Form 14-202, Texas Claim for Motor Vehicle Tax Refund](#), and mail the requested documentation as stated on the form; along with proof of tax paid to Texas and a copy of the purchaser's certified appraisal on Form 14-128, to the Comptroller's office:

Texas Comptroller of Public Accounts  
111 17th St.  
Austin, TX 78774-0100

## **Motor Vehicle References: Tax Guides and Publications**

### **2020 Motor Vehicle Tax Guide**

Speaking of the [Motor Vehicle Tax Guide](#), for those who may not be aware, the new guide is available on the Comptroller's website. Our hope is that it has become your primary source of information for motor vehicle tax, although we know that it may take some time to get used to the new online format, as it is no longer available as a PDF document. This format, however, allows for easier updating (as laws change) to ensure the most accurate information is provided to you in a timely manner.

We understand that you may need to print information from certain pages of the guide to provide to a customer, or as a desk reference. We want you to be aware, however, that if there are any changes made to a particular section of the tax guide, the information previously printed may no longer be correct. Please be sure to advise the customer, when printing any pages of the guide for them, that the information you are providing to them is accurate as of that date.

### **2021 Motor Vehicle Rental Tax Guide**

We also have the [Motor Vehicle Rental Tax Guide](#) available on our website for you to use as a reference. The guide was published February 2021.

### **Agriculture and Timber Exemptions Publications**

We are currently working to update Publication 94-101, *Texas Agricultural Exemptions*, which will be separated into two publications: one, focused on agriculture exemptions, will provide information on the taxability of motor vehicles purchased for use in agriculture production; the other, focused on timber exemptions, will provide information for vehicles purchased for use in timber production. Both publications will be reliable references for CTACs, so stay tuned for them!

## **End of the Motor Vehicle Tax Payment Penalty Waiver Extension Period**

We have also recently received a few requests for clarification regarding the expiration of the temporary waiver period for motor vehicle tax payments. The information provided below is available on our [Motor Vehicle – Sales and Use Tax](#) webpage.

The temporary waiver issued for motor vehicle tax payment will end on April 14, 2021. The ending date is consistent with the [announcement](#) by the TxDMV to end the temporary waiver for title and registration on certain vehicles.

If a motor vehicle is purchased on or after April 14, 2021, the purchaser must remit motor vehicle tax to their local CTAC within 30 calendar days after the vehicle is delivered to the purchaser. For example, if tax is due on May 14, 2021 – the CTAC will assess a 5 percent penalty if the tax is paid 1-30 days *after* that date, or a 10 percent penalty if tax is paid more than 30 days after that date.

For motor vehicles purchased on or before April 13, 2021, CTACs will continue to waive the motor vehicle tax penalty in the Registration and Titling System (RTS), provided the tax is remitted to the CTAC within 60 days of April 13, 2021 (i.e., within 60 days of June 12, 2021).

If you have any questions regarding the expiration of the penalty waiver extension period, or any of the topics mentioned in this article, please do not hesitate to reach out to us. You can contact our CTAC Assistance Section at 800-803-2573, Monday through Friday (except on [state holidays](#)), from 8 a.m. until 5 p.m. You can also submit a request for assistance to [Tax Help](#).

From New TAC:

My name is Chris Jackson and my term as Tax Assessor Collector began in June of 2020 as Debbie Ford decided to take early retirement. I had worked as the Chief Deputy with Debbie for 16 years. I hear over and over that stepping in would have been very easy as I have been here that long. I would say it was helpful, not easy.

The effective tax rate was the hurdle I had to get over first. It was not easy, but I did learn a lot. It has always been said that there is a network of people to reach out to that are always willing to help. I am finding that to be true now, but being appointed early, I did not find that. I contacted a previous employee and a current employee of Pritchard and Abbott Inc and they helped me to navigate the effective tax rate process.

Since January 1, 2021, I have found that I had just fallen in the cracks. Now we seem to be on the right track. I have two employees and they are new to the office also. We are learning together. Jennifer Davis is my Chief Deputy and she will be attending the conference in June with me. Truly, my saving grace, is Joy Ridgway who took on the part time position. Joy has over 40 years of experience with motor vehicle and agreed to help with training the new staff.

Our office is doing very well now. I believe the stress level is minimal and our customers and taxpayers seem pleased with the way we are conducting business.

Thank you for asking.

Chris

Hemphill County Tax Assessor-Collector







# Boat Titling & Registration Updates

## **RBFF BOAT REGISTRATION RENEWAL NOTICES**

The Recreational Boating and Fishing Foundation (RBFF) has provided funding and services again this year to print and mail a second registration renewal notice to Texas boat owners with lapsed registration.

- Two different RBFF renewal notices mail April 1; 1) a two-page color version focused on boating, and 2) a two-page color version focused on fishing. These notices can be used in lieu of an application (PWD 143M) or the standard green renewal notice.
- If the ownership has been transferred, the link to the online ownership transfer notification application has been provided on the notice. If the applicant would prefer not to go online, there is a section on the notice allowing owners to provide notice of this change to the department, along with applicable purchaser and sales information.

## **COMPLIANCE AUDITS FOR FY 2020**

The TPWD Boat Titling & Registration Section will not be conducting or producing compliance audits for the FY 2020 peak season due to staffing shortages and workload backlogs created during the initial pandemic shut down last year. FY 2021 compliance audits are currently planned but are dependent on workload and staffing availability.

## **OUTBOARD MOTOR – IN-SERVICE DATE**

The TPWD Boat Titling & Registration Section is currently working on program changes that would allow for the collection of an “In-Service” date for new outboard motors when a Model/Program year has not been provided by the manufacturer on the Manufacturer’s Statement of Origin (MSO).

Modifications to the Boat Registration Information and Titling System (BRITS) are currently being tested, and revisions to the Outboard Motor Application (PWD 144) and Outboard Motor Maintenance Application (PWD 144M) are in progress. Implementation is expected mid-late April 2021. Additional information covering all related program changes will be sent out to all participating offices prior to implementation.

## **DEPARTMENTAL OPERATIONAL ADJUSTMENTS/OFFICE CLOSURES**

A complete list of operational adjustments, including TPWD Law Enforcement office and other temporary site closures, is available at <https://tpwd.texas.gov/about/coronavirus>.

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*If you have any questions about any of the information provided by TPWD in this newsletter, or about any other aspects of the Boat Titling & Registration Program, please contact a TPWD Boat Field Liaison at (512) 389-4393 for assistance.*

From New TAC:

I have actually been working in the tax office here in Victoria County for the past 14 years. I was lucky enough to have my predecessor Rena, help and show me a few of the ropes. The first month of my term was incredibly stressful, beyond imagination, it seemed like it was one problem after another with software and all the accounts changes. Property tax payment were being mailed in nonstop, but we weathered the storm as a team and made it through. Now things are running much more smoothly! All in all I have a great group of women behind me, helping keep this office efficient and professional.

Sincerely,

*Ashley Hernandez*

Victoria County Tax Assessor Collector  
205 N Bridge St Ste 101  
Victoria, TX 77901  
Ph# 361-576-3671 Fax 361-576-0477

Amarillo Region

I really do not have anything new for the Amarillo Region, but I would like to welcome the TAC's that are new in the Amarillo Region.

Collingsworth County- Honorable Sharon Chisum  
Donley County- Honorable Chanze Fowler  
Hartley County- Honorable Chris Jackson  
Moore County- Honorable Chris Rivera

Thank you,

Christina McMurray  
Randall County TAC  
Amarillo Regional Coordinator



## Regional Coordinating Committee

The Committee had a chance to meet at November's V G Young Conference in Waco. With the COVID-19 pandemic, it has been a struggle to hold the quarterly Regional Meetings. Some have tried virtual meetings. The biggest concern is the low attendance to meetings prior to COVID-19. Some Regions are so large that it is hard for all counties to participate. Topics were discussed on how to increase interest in meetings and to maybe spread out these meetings. There was also a discussion on how to earn much-needed CE's – your Tax Attorneys can give legislative updates and TAC has ideas, resources and speakers.

The latest email update to the Coordinators (February 2021) included topics for upcoming deadlines:

1. TDHCA – 2016 tax liens scheduled for removal – deadline to preserve midnight 04-15-21.
2. TDHCA – recording new tax liens (spoke to TDHCA, informed that they now only use Microsoft Internet Explorer 11, not 8 as stated in instructions).
3. TABC – billing county portion of fees (4x6 cards) and County's 5%.
4. June 5-10, 2021 – 87<sup>th</sup> Annual TACA Conference #BeTheDifference: Conference will be held in Corpus Christi. More info found at [www.county.org](http://www.county.org); early registration is before May 5, 2021.

Please contact your Regional Coordinator for more information, to discuss your ideas for topics or if you are interested in hosting a meeting. You may also contact me at [sdmueck@milamcounty.net](mailto:sdmueck@milamcounty.net).

Hope to see you all in June,

Sherry Mueck, PCC, CTOP  
Regional Coordinating Committee - Chair



## TxDMV TACA Newsletter Submission March 2021

### VTR Welcomes New Division Director



Please join the agency in welcoming our new director of the Vehicle Titles and Registration (VTR) Division, Roland Luna, Sr. Roland began his state service with the Texas Department of Public Safety as a state trooper and then promoted into other positions, including an agent on the protective detail for then Attorney General Greg Abbott, a criminal investigation sergeant, and a lieutenant in Internal Affairs. Roland has served in various directorships for state agencies and the Williamson County State District Courts.

During his career, Roland has developed and implemented statewide compliance, monitoring, regulatory, and investigative initiatives, served on various committees and advisory boards, and provided instruction at conferences, academies, and universities.

Roland earned a bachelor of business administration from Sam Houston State University and a master of arts in legal studies from Texas State University. He is certified in mediation and legal research, holds a Texas Commission on Law Enforcement Master Peace Officer License, and is a certified Inspector General.

### COVID-19 Update

Due to the COVID-19 pandemic, Governor Abbott granted a temporary waiver on March 16, 2020, to comply with certain title and registration requirements. Many Texas motorists took advantage of this waiver and delayed renewal of their vehicle registrations. After almost 13 months, the waiver will end on April 14, 2021, and all motorists must be in compliance by this date to avoid a law enforcement citation. Additional information about the waiver end can be found on the TAC hub at [www.txdmv.gov/tax-assessor-collectors](http://www.txdmv.gov/tax-assessor-collectors).

All regional service centers are open and serving customers by appointment and are also transitioning to accepting walk-in customers. The department continues to prioritize the health and safety of the motoring public by practicing social distancing and performing routine cleaning and disinfecting.

### Certified Copy of Texas Title (CCO) Issuance Initiative for Fiscal Year 2021

Title Services and Regional Services finalized the business requirements and design with the Information Technology Services Division that will provide the ability for regional service centers (RSCs) to remove liens at the time of a CCO request by the owner and for the batch printing of CCOs by the department's print vendor. Programming changes to the Registration and Title System (RTS) and coordination with the department's print vendor, title paper vendor, and county tax assessor-collectors will be required to implement this initiative. Discussions continue with the department's vendors regarding needed changes, with Title Services continuing to work towards completing project milestones with an anticipated deployment of this enhancement in June 2021.

Currently, a vehicle owner must submit a title, original release of lien and title application to a county tax assessor-collector's office to remove a lien from a vehicle record. If the vehicle owner lost the original title, a CCO must be obtained prior to applying with a county tax assessor-collector's office to remove the lien.

Applications for CCOs are processed by the RSCs by mail and in person. Processing of mail-in applications is mainly centralized at the Wichita Falls RSC; however, the other 15 RSCs also process any applications they receive by mail. Staff print the CCOs and physically mail them to applicants, along with any original documents such as a release of lien.

Currently a recorded lien is not removed from a CCO even though an original release of lien is required to be submitted as part of the application.

This initiative will eliminate the requirement for a vehicle owner to submit a title to a county tax assessor-collector's office to have a lien removed when there is no ownership transfer. As a result, vehicle owners will no longer be required to obtain a CCO to remove a lien when the original title is lost. In addition, this initiative will revise CCO issuance by facilitating the removal of liens and batch printing of these titles through the department's print vendor, eliminating the requirement for RSC staff to mail documents to applicants. This initiative will result in a reduction of workload and reduced processing time for the department and cost savings for vehicle owners.

## **RTS Practice and Learn (PAL)**

The Texas Department of Motor Vehicles (TxDMV) launched an initiative to build and provide a training environment, commonly referred to as the "sandbox," that simulates Registration and Title System (RTS) functionality for many of the current RTS transaction types and functions. The department's intention was to provide an environment where new employees, and employees expanding their current skill sets, can conveniently practice processing the types of transactions they will be performing in their new or expanded role as a county customer service representative. The new RTS training system for county users is known as RTS Practice and Learn (PAL) and was released to county tax offices Feb. 4, 2021.

PAL is an RTS training environment with the following features:

- Does not update transactions in the actual RTS database.
- Is not used to conduct regular business.
- Has print functionality disabled to prevent accidental misuse.
- Is not integrated with transactions and systems outside of RTS, such as NMVTIS.

Users will encounter new functionality in PAL in advance of each scheduled RTS release, which will allow county users to practice and test these new features before they are available for use in RTS.

Five webinars, offered over the span of two weeks, were attended by 395 users. Additionally, the department added several resources on the TAC hub, under the "Training" tab for reference, including FAQs and test record data.

## **Pinnacle of Excellence Award**

The Regional Services Section of the Vehicle Titles and Registration (VTR) Division has many outstanding employees who deserve recognition for their dedication and contributions. Each year, RSC managers can nominate one employee from their office to be recognized for their exceptional performance. One of these nominees is recognized annually for the Pinnacle of Excellence Award.

The 2021 winner is Customer Service Representative Jessica Kelley of the Longview RSC.

Jessica is a native east Texan from Ore City and graduated valedictorian from her high school. She received her associate of science degree from Northeast Texas Community College in 2006, and shortly after joined the United States Navy. Jessica was lucky



*Chuck Lee (Longview RSC Manager) is presenting Jessica Kelley (Longview CSR) with the Pinnacle of Excellence Award.*

enough to be stationed in sunny San Diego, California, for her whole tour working as an Information Systems Technician (IT). After leaving the Navy in 2011, she went to work for the Gregg County Tax Assessor-Collector's office for a short period and then joined TxDMV in 2013. Jessica has promoted her way up to an A-17 and serves as Longview's main trainer and mentor to new employees, as well as the office webDEALER expert. She is a people person and enjoys helping the public. Away from work, Jessica is 14 years happily married to a fellow Navy veteran, Guy, and enjoys taking on new adventures together from camping or hiking to renovating their house. They have two fur babies, Sadie and Molly, who take center stage of their home.

**Adam Shaivitz** | | Public Information Officer  
**Texas Department of Motor Vehicles**  
**Government and Strategic Communications Division**

### Some photos of New Tax Assessor-

### Collectors Found on TACA Website



Chanze Fowler



Kristen Hoyt



Shonda M. Porter



Kristy Christopher



Kristin Bulanek



Irma G. Longoria



Michelle Matus



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