

THE KAUFMAN COUNTY UPDATE

MONTHLY NEWS BRIEFS FROM THE COUNTY SEAT

March 2023

Vol 2, ISSUE 3

Broadband Update



During the COVID pandemic, schools, businesses, and individuals in Kaufman County quickly discovered how broadband coverage in Kaufman County is far from perfect. In fact, many school districts had to equip busses with Wi-Fi transmitters and drive them to remote areas throughout the county just to allow students to participate in remote learning. Why? Because so much of Kaufman County is underserved with high-speed internet, and in some locations, it does not exist.

Not only does this lack of coverage affect our students, but anyone working from home, and even large corporations are experiencing inadequate Wi-Fi and high-speed internet.

With this problem staring us right in the face, Kaufman County formed a group of community leaders in all areas of government, school districts, and business who are concerned about broadband coverage, or the lack thereof, in Kaufman County. This de facto broadband coalition started out small but has grown to join efforts to investigate ways to improve broadband in the county. The Federal government has set aside \$62 Billion which is earmarked to improve broadband coverage to every county in the nation. The State of Texas also formed a Broadband Office to work in that direction. Once the funds are allocated to states, the state will have the chore of dividing up the funds proportionally to the counties who need it the most.

Kaufman County is preparing to ask for its share of the funding based on data collected. So far, the County, with the help of Connected Nation, a non-profit organization focusing on broadband improvements, has conducted a county-wide survey to find out who does and who does not have the service they need. The Independent School Districts are sharing their information with the coalition and now we are prepared to seek funding as soon as the process is determined.

We need your help. Anyone who would like to join the coalition is welcome to attend and share whatever information and date they may have.

For more information about the Broadband Coalition, please contact Donna Simmons, Kaufman County Communications & Economic Development Coordinator at donna.simmons@kaufmancounty.net. Watch here for meeting dates and updates.

Local Chapter of the General Federation of Women's Clubs Visit Justice Center



Pictured above are 86th District Judge Casey Blair with: Front Row: Betty Hendrickson, Lynn Evans, Carole Aga, County Clerk, Laura Hughes Back Row: Barbara Harvey, County Judge Jakie Allen, Pat Brown, Candy Countryman, Carol Altom, Alison Hunt, Laura Marsh, Sharon Jennings, Anita Hall

March 8, 2023

Kaufman County was honored to host 11 members of the Clover Club, the local chapter of the General Federation of Women's Clubs (GFWC) on Wednesday, March 8 for a tour of the new Justice Center and courtrooms led by County Judge Jakie Allen.

The Clover Club is in its 126th year and were instrumental in starting the Kaufman County Library in the late 1800's. This progressive club continues to provide support, stay informed and offer strong resources to the community. The GFWC website outlines the history and mission of the organization as "the heart the communities in which they live and work."

The organization has more than 60,000 members in affiliated clubs in every state, and around the world. She explained that GFWC members work in their own communities to support the arts, preserve natural resources, advance education, promote healthy lifestyles, encourage civic involvement, and work toward world peace and understanding.

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County Moves Forward to Add New District Court

The Commissioners' Court voted unanimously on Tuesday, March 7 to move forward with a plan to add an additional District Court. Currently the 86th District Court and the 422nd District Court are serving the Kaufman County area, but with the flurry of growth in the county, Commissioners support the idea of pursuing the addition of another.



Kaufman County currently has more than 154,000 residents, and the US Census Bureau has verified that it is the fastest growing county in the nation.

"With the growth we are experiencing, it is imperative that we start

the process of adding another District Court," said Judge Casey Blair, 86th District Court Judge. "With the tremendous growth within our County, comes increased crime, court trials and the need to handle more cases." "We want to ensure the courts are always available to the people of the county," Judge Blair said.

The process to add another District Court takes approximately two years, starting with a vote by the state legislature. Judge Blair has already met with the Office of Court Administration and State Representative Keith Bell to ensure that the process of adding another District Court is done properly and expeditiously.

State District Courts handle the following:

- cases involving original jurisdiction in civil actions.
- over \$200
- divorce
- title to land
- contested elections.
- original jurisdiction in felony criminal matters
- juvenile matters

Currently 13 district courts in Texas are designated as criminal district courts while others are directed to give preference to certain specialized areas. There are 395 districts containing one county and 97 districts containing more than one county.

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<https://www.youtube.com/channel/UCRazIqMurP7AERqecBweIAA>

COMMISSIONERS' COURT MEETINGS

March 7, 14, 21, 28

April 4, 11, 18, 25

Tuesdays @ 9 a.m. - 100 N. Washington St. Meetings are live streamed on www.kaufmancounty.net.

County Holiday

Good Friday - April 7, 2023

All courts and offices closed.



Roadwork Underway

- **Terrell** - Highway 34 between Airport Road various lanes closed and down to 1 lane.
- **I--20 and Highway 205 @ US 80** - Intersection improvements.
- **Forney** - Elm Street at US 80 Service Road - closed for drainage project.
- **Kaufman** - FM 1895 between 1836 & Bus. US 175 - daily lane closures and CR 153 closed to thru traffic.