



TRAVIS COUNTY SHERIFF'S OFFICE



MAR 2024 ISSUE 03

### WORDS FROM THE SHERIFF



March is Women's History Month. I enjoyed the perfect lead-in to this month by receiving a visit from someone who became a friend from the moment I met him, Ronnie Erwin. Ronnie and his late wife, Lynn, started collecting antique sheriff badges several decades ago. That led them to what they lovingly referred to as their research adventure of a lifetime.

The fruit of their labor is "Stars Over Texas", a three-volume set of books that detail the history of every sheriff who has served in each Texas county. As I opened the first volume, I was taken aback by the history of women who have served as sheriff across our great state.

I was inspired to learn that Emma Susan Daugherty Banister, appointed in 1918, was not only the first woman to serve as sheriff in Texas, but also the first woman to serve as sheriff in the United States. I'll admit, it came as a disappointment to read that of 7,063 sheriffs in Texas history, only 99 are women.

In the early 1900s, women were appointed sheriff to complete the terms of their husbands upon their deaths. A few of them ended up being "re-elected" when that term expired. I chose to run for sheriff. It was my dream, determination and personal goals that propelled me into the position. What a difference that makes.

On March 27th, I had the honor of joining Austin Police Chief Robin Henderson and University of Texas Police Chief Eve Stephens for a panel discussion at the Women in Criminal Justice Conference in San Marcos. The panel was titled "Grit & Grace: Lessons Learned from Leading Ladies." My heart was full as I looked out on a room full of women who have the grit to pursue careers in criminal justice and the inclination to do this honorable work with grace.

Today, out of 254 counties in Texas, there are eight female sheriffs. Throughout the United States, only 2% of sheriffs are women. We clearly have room for improvement when it comes to women in leadership roles in law enforcement. It did my heart good to join these exceptional women in law enforcement leadership here in Travis County, and to encourage women who will continue the legacy and forge new paths.



### READ ACROSS AMERICA

March is Read Across America month, and Sheriff Hernandez and Major Raul Banasco had the privilege of reading to the students at Hillcrest Elementary School. This year's theme was "Read a Book and Spread Your Wings." Read Across America celebrates diversity through the joy of reading, encouraging youth to learn how stories and books bring us together with words and pictures.



### CITIZENS ACADEMY

The 37th TCSO Citizens Academy began on March 21st. The 12-week program provides participants valuable insights on the criminal justice process and a comprehensive look into TCSO operations and services. Citizens receive classroom instruction by corrections officers, law enforcement deputies, civilians and supervisors who work throughout the department, and will also experience a few tours of our facilities. We're excited to host this diverse group of citizens with representation from all over Travis County.



Congratulations to our recent retirees! Thank you for your dedicated service to this agency and the citizens of Travis County. We wish you the best of luck in your new adventures.

- Wayne Samson – 34 yrs. of service
- Gerald Kim – 33 yrs. of service
- Juan M. Garza – 32 yrs. of service
- Julie Martinets – 30 yrs. of service
- Greg Lawson – 28 yrs. of service
- Lawrence Martin – 28 yrs. of service
- Ralph Cisneroz – 23 yrs. of service
- Maria Valle – 22 yrs. of service
- Scott Rickabaugh – 21 yrs. of service
- Pamela Fojtik – 20 yrs. of service
- Karen Cotton – 19 yrs. of service
- David Tosh – 18 yrs. of service
- Neil Tarrant – 15 yrs. of service
- Dina Lloreda – 8 yrs. of service
- Kevin Patterson – 8 yrs. of service

### HELPFUL TIPS FOR THE SOLAR ECLIPSE

APRIL 8

- Expect strains on traffic and cell service
- Schedule important errands before the eclipse
- Fill your tank and stock vehicle with essentials
- Check the weather regularly; plan accordingly
- Do not stop on roads or shoulders to watch



### WOMEN IN CRIMINAL JUSTICE

As Sheriff Hernandez mentioned in her message above, TCSO was honored to be a part of this year's Women in Criminal Justice Conference. The annual event attracts women who are making strides in the field of criminal justice, giving them an opportunity to learn from each other while also engaging with leaders in the industry. Several TCSO employees were able to attend the conference and a few of them contributed their expertise as instructors.

Even in today's modern world, women continue to experience challenges working in law enforcement. Together, attendees from across the nation discussed the good, the bad and the unique experiences that come along with being a woman in the field of corrections.

### VICTIM SERVICES VOLUNTEERS



On March 2nd, the latest class of TCSO Victim Services Unit (VSU) volunteers wrapped up their classroom training and graduated. They will now complete field training with other VSU volunteers and be ready to serve across the county. With their help, VSU can offer victims comfort, resources and the connection to services they need during what can be difficult times in their lives. Congratulations to our new graduates - we look forward to you joining our team!

VIEW MORE

VIEW MORE

**Handbags for Hope**  
PRESENTED BY ZINDA LAW GROUP

Donate **NEW PURSES, GENDER NEUTRAL TOTES, & DIAPER BAGS** for victims of power-based abuse across TX.

**MARCH 18 - APRIL 15**

All bags are fitted with a discreet tag listing TAP's Legal Line **800.374.HOPE** and information about their **FREE LEGAL & SOCIAL SERVICES**. Bags are sent to shelters, clinics, and crisis centers in TX.

TEXAS ADVOCACY PROJECT 800.374.HOPE

**THRIVE FEST**  
A Showcase Celebrating Youth Well-being

You're invited to Thrive Fest! Join us for a fun, informative festival for young people and their families. There will be live performances by talented students, engaging activities, and inspiring speakers from our community. Plus, you'll have the opportunity to meet with various organizations and explore tangible physical and mental health resources for your family. We can't wait to see you there!

**WHEN?**  
Saturday, April 27th, 2024  
10am to 1pm

**WHERE?**  
Boys & Girls Club of Austin  
6648 Ed Bluestein Blvd  
Parking & a shuttle service will be available at the Delco Activity Center  
4601 Pecan Brook Dr, Austin, TX

RESOURCES | GUEST SPEAKERS | PERFORMANCES | ACTIVITIES

Texas System of Care | AUSTIN | BOYS & GIRLS CLUBS

EMPLOYEE MASTHEAD (L TO R): Sr. Office Specialist Taylor Stephens, Sr. Financial Analyst John Frazell & Sr. Corrections Officer Efram Scipio



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