



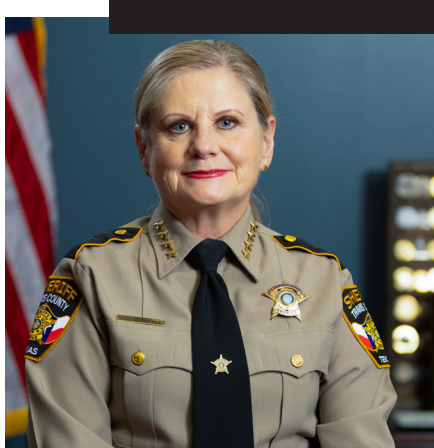
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FEB 2025

TRAVIS COUNTY SHERIFF'S OFFICE

NEWSLETTER

WORDS FROM THE SHERIFF



I love to share good news and this month I get to share some great stuff.

I've offered information to you on various occasions about our agency-wide efforts to attract new employees and eliminate staff shortages in Corrections, Law Enforcement, Dispatch, Nursing and Counseling.

One of the innovative relationships that came about through these efforts is our partnership with the [Department of Defense's Skillbridge Program](#). The program allows military members who are exiting to engage in specific training, apprenticeships or internships during their last 180 days of service.

We've enjoyed the opportunity to bring these veterans in and train them in the field of corrections while they're still employed and paid by the military. The training allows them to obtain hands-on experience in multiple areas of the job. Once they finish their service with the military, they're able to transition into full-time employment here at TCSO.

So far, three veterans have onboarded with TCSO, one is in training and two are about to start training. Officer Shaneel Wilson was our very first Skillbridge hire, and you can watch her story in this newsletter. I'm sure you will find it as inspirational as I do.

At TCSO, we love to hire veterans. The skills and knowledge they obtain while serving our country are an excellent fit for the work we do. The ability to work well with and lead people of all kinds of cultures and backgrounds that is inherent to military life makes them a perfect fit for the diverse population in our care and custody.

Over the last year alone, TCSO has seen vacancy rates in Corrections go from 31% to 23% and vacancies in Dispatch go from 31% to 7%. We currently have only 3 vacancies in Medical and 2 vacancies in Counseling. We have 37 vacancies for Law Enforcement Deputies, and at our Law Enforcement Cadet Testing event the weekend of February 15, over 100 candidates took the physical and academic tests necessary to begin the process of entering our Basic Peace Officer Course.

Your Travis County Sheriff's Office is well on its way to recovering from "The Great Resignation of 2021." I look forward to sharing even more good news in the months ahead.

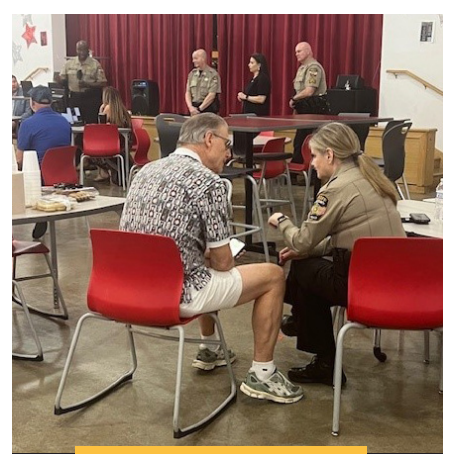
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BLACK HISTORY MONTH

TCSO celebrated Black History Month by participating in a variety of activities. We attended the 25th annual Travis County Black History Festival as well as hosted Minister Barbara Brooks-Shirley at the Travis County Correctional Complex for a presentation to our inmate population. These events highlight the importance of celebrating, educating, and supporting efforts that uplift Black voices and preserve vital history for future generations.

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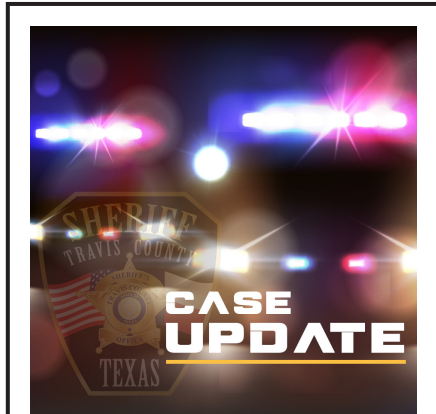
TOWN HALL

On February 5, TCSO hosted a town hall for the Shadow Glen community in Manor. We value the importance of maintaining strong relationships with the communities we serve and it's our goal to enhance engagement, promote transparency and work together to create safer neighborhoods. If your neighborhood is interested in hosting a town hall, please contact the [TCSO Community Outreach Unit](#).

SKILLBRIDGE RECRUITING INITIATIVE



[Skillbridge](#) is a program that allows veterans transitioning out of the military to train on the job with TCSO during their last 180 days of service. Learn more about it by watching Officer Shaneel Wilson's story.



In the early morning hours of April 9, 2022, Leonel Ayala, 31, of Port Arthur and Raul Molina, 44, of Manor were gunned down execution style as they sat in the cab of a pick-up truck in the 1700 block of FM 1100. The two were taken from their young families who were utterly devastated by the loss.

TCSO's investigation led to the arrest of Abel Bermudez-Ornelas a week later. Detectives charged him with Capital Murder of Multiple Persons. In January of 2025, Bermudez-Ornelas went on trial for two counts of Murder (first-degree). He was found guilty on both counts by a jury and sentenced to 60 years in prison.

The hard work and dedication of TCSO's Homicide Detectives and Crime Scene Specialists provided the evidence necessary to convince the jury of Bermuda-Ornelas's guilt. They never forget the victims or their families as they painstakingly investigate each case.



MOTORS COMPETITION

Our Motors Unit participated in the [Sports Capital of Texas Motorcycle Rodeo](#) February 26-March 1 at the Dell Diamond in Round Rock. Deputies Eric Gaskamp, Carl League, Richard Riggsby and Tim Williams competed alongside approximately 100 motors officers from around the country. The event showcases the abilities of motorcyclists in a competitive setting and allows the community to come out and learn about their skills in a fun, thrilling way.

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SPREADING LOVE

Who doesn't want to be remembered and made to feel special on Valentine's day? TCSO once again celebrated the day with local senior citizens across Travis County, sharing teddy bears, cards and games. This year, we invited the residents of Longhorn Village to "come on down" for a game of The Price is Right and an ice cream social. Then, we did a Cupid shuffle over to Belmont Village and the Travis County Community Center in Del Valle to play bingo, pass out bears, hugs and Valentines to all residents who came out to say hi. Love was definitely in the air!

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TEXAS JAIL ASSOCIATION VISIT



TCSO was honored to host the [Texas Jail Association](#) Programs Committee's first-ever site visit and collaborative meetings at the Travis County Correctional Complex. The event brought together representatives from seven counties—Collin, Hays, Harris, Tarrant, Lubbock, Bexar and Travis to exchange ideas and strategies on innovative jail programming, reentry best practices, funding opportunities, and community partnerships.

During the visit, attendees toured classrooms and housing units and engaged in meaningful discussions on improving rehabilitation programs and enhancing outcomes for incarcerated individuals. These conversations are vital for fostering collaboration, knowledge-sharing and progress in correctional programming across Texas.



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