

Howdy!

2014 Annual Conference

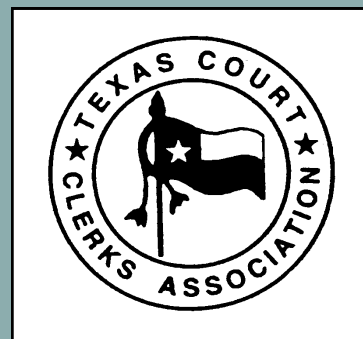


College Station's Court Administrator, Di-anne Eberhardt, and Court Supervisor Marie Barringer receive the Host City Award from TCCA's President-Elect Lisa Howard, and current President, Tammy Odom.



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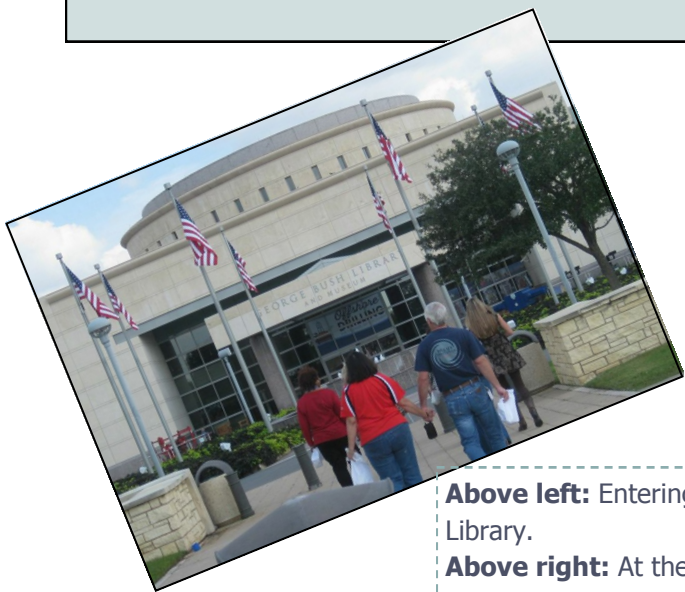
2014 Conference Recap

The 2014 TCCA Conference, hosted by the City of College Station, offered its delegates a combination of high quality education, networking opportunities, ample time to visit with vendors and learn about their products and solutions, and of course, some time for fun!

Education topics included court-specific subject matter such as teen court, court security and technology, and judicial ethics, as well as a variety of professional and leadership topics that included motivation building, handling difficult people, and generations in the workplace.

The evening events and entertainment were top notch as well. A self-paced tour of the George Bush Presidential Library provided delegates with an in-depth look at the life and presidency of our 41st President. Then, at Tuesday night's Annual Awards Banquet, delegates were treated to a special performance by the Texas A&M Singing Cadets, a premier men's chorus from the University, internationally known as the "Voice of Aggieland".

For more conference-related info, awards/elections, see pages 3 & 19.



Above left: Entering the George Bush Presidential Library.



Above right: At the Annual Awards & Banquet

Below Right: TCCA President-Elect Lisa Howard and current TCCA President Tammy Odom

Below: The Texas A&M Singing Cadets perform





Board of Director's Award

Shona Bohan, Midland (left)

Excellence Award

Jeanne Wilson, Big Spring (above)



**Congratulations
Award Winners!**



Distinguished Service:

Brittany Rychlik, Sugarland
 Lucy Winterfeld, Dickinson
 Lei Holder, Weatherford
 Richard Piggatt, DeSoto
 Cindy Vasquez, South Padre
 Jill Laffitte, Longview
 Norma Rodriguez, Brenham

Patty Stav, Webster
 Cathy Leloux, Georgetown
 Lana Vidakovic, Hurst
 Jeremy Leonard, DeSoto
 Connie Crenshaw, Luling
 Maricruz Stagg, Katy
 Dianne Eberhardt, College Station

**Extraordinary
Achievement:**

Frederick Garcia, San Antonio
 Sherri Brandt, Katy
 Renee Flores, Bellmead
 Katy Tagg, Arlington

2014 Conference Fun





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Collection Services Since 1976***

For more information about our law firm, visit our Web site
at www.lgbs.com or call (800) 262-7229, Ext. 3740.

Principal Office: Austin, Texas.

The attorney responsible for the contents of this advertisement is Mike Vallandingham.

Important Education and Certification Announcements

Automatic Clerk Renewals for TMCEC Attendees

Starting September 1, 2014, clerks who attend Live/In-Person TMCEC training will no longer be required to submit a certification renewal application. The Record of Attendance completed at the end of a TMCEC seminar will serve as verification of hours.

PLEASE NOTE: Clerks who acquire hours through TMCEC Archived Webinars, or with other approved providers, **must still** submit a renewal application, as well as copies of all training certificates.

Verification of Renewal Status

To verify the status of your certification renewal, clerks should log onto <http://register.tmcec.com/web/online> four to six weeks after attending a TMCEC seminar or submitting certification renewal paperwork. Once logged in, click on the "Certification Renewal" tab to show the most current year renewed. If you have already renewed for FY14 it will say "2013-2014 Yes". Letters confirming renewals **will no longer** be sent as clerks are encouraged to verify their renewal status online.

*Individuals no longer working in a court may not check their renewal status online.

Prep Session Minimums

TMCEC Prep Sessions are now contingent upon a minimum of four people, per level, registering two weeks prior to the start date of the seminar.

Online Learning Center (OLC)

TMCEC now offers numerous learning tools through the Online Learning Center (OLC), such as practice exams, flashcards, and quizzes. Online, interactive prep sessions will also be added soon.

In addition, the OLC hosts a Discussion Forum for anyone participating, or wanting to participate, in the Clerk Certification Program. If you are looking for a study partner, need a little motivation, or have a question about something you read in a study guide, post it on this discussion page.

New Level III Book Added

Starting September 1, 2015, "The 5 Levels of Leadership: Proven Steps to Maximize Your Potential" by John Maxwell will be added to the Level III Reading List. This book does not replace any books, but is an addition to the existing books. Testing over this book will not begin until September 1, 2015.

Increase in Certification Testing Fees

Beginning September 1, 2015, testing fees will increase to \$75.00 for TCCA and TMCA members and \$150.00 for non-members. Please budget accordingly if you will have staff participating in the certification program.

**As a reminder, all testing fees are non-transferable and non-refundable. *(continued on pg. 7)*

Important Education and Certification Announcements *(continued from pg. 6)*

Year End Review

The Certification Program ended the 2014 education year with the following number of clerks being certified at each level:

Level 1 – 544

Level 2 – 399

Level 3 – 51 (active)

The Committee approved 125 hours of education credit and issued 978 certificates of attendance.

Annual TCCA Conference

156 participants attended the Annual Conference in College Station. A total of 10 scholarships (5 paid for by TCCA and 5 paid for by the Committee) were awarded to the following TCCA members to attend the conference:

Maricruz Stagg,	Katy	Shawna Goerlitz,	Washington County
Tina Morgan,	Burnet	Karen Lemay,	Seabrook
Patty Stav,	Webster	Miguel Zavala,	Arlington
Nikki Ashley,	Hudson Oaks	Donna Butler,	Lake Dallas
Jeanie Roumell,	Bartonville	Stephanie Llanas,	Irving <i>(continued pg. 16)</i>

MVBA

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Ways to Improve Your Time Management Skills at Work

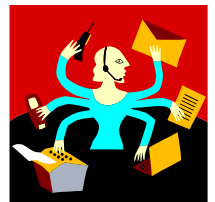
In our daily lives, it can be difficult to balance work and our personal life. Most days you may feel like there is never enough time in the day to get everything done; especially at work. You may be faced with multiple deadlines while trying to juggle your regular duties, staffing issues, etc. We all face these challenges on a daily basis. Some people seem to handle them effortlessly, while others seem to be drowning beneath their workload. Are there days that you feel as if you can barely keep your head above water? Well, maybe you need to reevaluate your time management skills.

What is time management and why is it important?

Time management is a vital skill that we must possess in our professional careers. It is the act of planning and determining how much of our time is spent on specific tasks. When you improve your time management skills you can increase effectiveness, efficiency and/or productivity. Once you have control over your time it will help reduce your stress and improve your energy level.

6 Time Management Skills to Help You Improve Your Performance

Skill #1: Organize your work area



One of the first things you need to do to help improve your time management skills is organize your work area. If your desk or office is unorganized you are setting yourself up for failure. It takes people longer to complete a task when they are working in an unorganized work space because they are consistently wasting time looking for things in that space.

Believe it or not, having a clutter-free work space will actually help you think clearly. So, instead of keeping a handful of sticky notes everywhere, try keeping your notes in one centralized space. For example, keep your notes on one notepad, or on an electronic document that you can quickly retrieve when you need it.

Skill #2: Successful people plan each day by updating their to-do list

It is a good practice to review your to-do list in the morning when you arrive to work. This allows you to see what tasks you need to accomplish that day. Reviewing your to-do list will help you stay on track so that you will not deviate from your plan. Mapping out the tasks that you need to accomplish will help you see where challenges may occur during your day. You may also discover that certain tasks on your calendar may need to be rearranged so that you can make sure other deadlines are completed.

In the evening, before you leave the office you should take time to reflect upon your day and update your to-do list. Remove the tasks that you accomplished and add the new tasks that you need to complete. The process of updating your to-do list at the end of the day will give you a sense of accomplishment as you reflect back on your productivity. *(continued on pg.14)*



TMCA 2015 Conference

TEXAS MUNICIPAL COURTS ASSOCIATION

Sets **NEW** 2015 Annual Conference Date

Corpus Christi, Texas

Sunday-Tuesday, August 2-4, 2015



On the heels of the 84th Legislative Session wrapping up, TMCA invites you to attend its 2015 Annual Meeting in sunny Corpus Christi. Be one of the first to learn how the 84th Legislative Session affects Municipal Courts. The first and only TMCA and TMCEC Legislative Update planned in Corpus Christi. The agenda will consist of a preview of the 84th Legislative Session and additional educational programs.

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**VISIT WWW.TXMCA.COM FOR AGENDAS, ONLINE
REGISTRATION & HOTEL INFORMATION.**

The Omni Hotel Corpus Christi will be the host hotel. A Special Room Rate of \$103 single and \$139.00 double has been secured for those attending the TMCA Annual Meeting and Conference. Last year's room block sold out at this low, special rate so register and reserve your room early. Contact the Hotel directly at 1-800-THE OMNI and mention our group and date for the special rate.

If you have any questions, please contact Judge Sharon Hatten, Chairperson of the Annual Meeting Committee at shatten2018@yahoo.com.

TMCA Annual Conference offers:

- FIRST Legislative Review of the 2015 Legislative Session
- PLUS additional Speakers and Topics
- Group Activities for You and Your Guests!
- MCLE Credit for Attorney Judges & Prosecutors.
- SBOT CLE Applies to the College of the State Bar and Board of Legal Specialization in Criminal Appellate Law, Criminal Law & Juvenile Law.
- Satisfies Annual Level I, II and III Continuing Clerk Certification Hours.
- Vendors on hand displaying court management tools like Video Technology, Collections, Court Security, Case Management Software, Electronic Citations and Imaging.



Save the Date!

TMCA is a TMCEC Approved Judicial Education Credit Hours Provider!

The Boundaries of Juvenile Justice (Part I)

AS many of us working in Texas municipal courts know, a 'juvenile,' for purposes of juvenile court jurisdiction here in Texas, is categorized as being between the ages of 10 and 16 years old. This is a topic often discussed, debated, agreed with, or disagreed with by many. So, where does Texas fall on the national 'juvenile age boundary' spectrum? In this article, the term 'juvenile' is used solely as it relates to juvenile court jurisdiction and not for any other purpose.

Upper Age

Regarding upper age, Texas falls in the minority. In [Jurisdictional Boundaries](#), the Juvenile Justice, Geography, Policy, Practice & Statistics Group (JJGPS) noted that as of 2013, only nine states had the upper age set at 16 years old. These include Georgia, Illinois, Louisiana, Michigan, Missouri, New Hampshire, South Carolina, Texas, and Wisconsin. However, two of these states, Illinois and New Hampshire have recently put in place laws that will raise the upper age to 17. Two other states, Massachusetts and Connecticut, only raised their upper age limit from 16 to 17 within the past few years. Finally, two other states, New York and North Carolina, have set their upper age at 15 years old, meaning that once a person turns 16 years old, they may be considered an adult for purposes of criminal court.

According to the Schuyler Center for Analysis and Advocacy (SCAA) in [Raising the Juvenile Justice Jurisdiction Age: Treating Kids as Kids in New York State's Justice System](#), nearly ¾'s of all crimes committed by 16 and 17 year olds in New York are misdemeanors. However, due to the state's upper age limit, these youth must go through the adult court system. It is important to note that while the age limits listed above are the standard limits set in these states, there are certain extended age or statutory exceptions that do exist.

Lower Age

As for the lower age limit of juvenile court jurisdiction, a child under the prescribed age is generally believed to be unable to have the requisite intent to commit a criminal act. On this end of the spectrum, Texas is on the same page as 10 other states, in that the lowest age for juvenile court jurisdiction is generally defined as 10 years old ([Jurisdictional Boundaries](#)). It is important to note that there are exceptions here as well. For example, here in Texas, in the 83rd Legislature, an amendment was made to Texas Penal Code Section 42.01 which prohibits a person younger than 12 years of age from being charged with Disorderly Conduct that occurs at school during school hours.

Two states have set the lower age limit at eight years old, four states have set it at seven years old, and 1 state (North Carolina) has set the lower age limit at six years old! However, according to The National Research Council's Panel on Juvenile Crime in [Juvenile Crime, Juvenile Justice](#), it is rare even in these states, to see a child under 10 years old appear in court for some type of delinquent behavior. While 17 of the 50 states have statutorily set age minimums, the remaining 33 states do not have a statutory age limit set. Rather, those states likely rely on case law or common law in determining the minimum age ([Jurisdictional Boundaries](#)).

To Be Continued: More in the next issue of The Scribe





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Principal Office: Austin, Texas.

The attorney responsible for the contents of this advertisement is Mike Vallandingham.

Training & Testing

TCCA Training Opportunities

Current info regarding local training is posted on the TCCA website as it becomes available

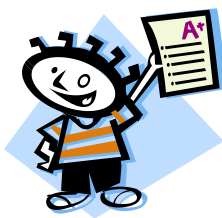
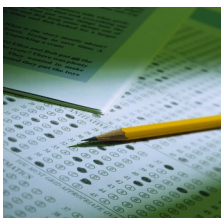
Date:	Education:	City:	Chapter:
December 5, 2014	TBD	Hollywood Park	Freedom Trail
December 12, 2014	Time Mgmt, Who Wastes the Most Time at Work?	Missouri City	Gulf Coast
December 17, 2014	Ethics and The Commission	College Station	Central Texas
January 9, 2015	TBD	Temple	Central Texas
January 21, 2015	TBD	College Station	Central Texas
February 25, 2015	TBD	College Station	Central Texas
March 13, 2015	E-Cigarettes	Cameron	Central Texas
March 25, 2015	TBD	College Station	Central Texas
April 15, 2015	TBD	College Station	Central Texas
May 8, 2015	TBD	Leander	Central Texas
May 20, 2015	TBD	College Station	Central Texas
June 24, 2015	TBD	College Station	Central Texas
July 10, 2015	TBD	Bastrop	Central Texas
July 22, 2015	TBD	College Station	Central Texas
August 26, 2015	TBD	College Station	Central Texas
September 11, 2015	TBD	Gatesville	Central Texas
November 13, 2015	TBD	Georgetown	Central Texas

UPCOMING PREP SESSIONS

January 5	San Antonio
January 11	Galveston
Jan. 13 (Level I only, 8am-12 & 1pm-5pm)	Texas City
February 4	Addison
March 15	Houston
March 29	Austin
April 7	Amarillo
April 27	South Padre
June 8	Abilene
June 21	Austin

UPCOMING TESTING

January 7	San Antonio
January 13	Galveston
January 26	Austin
February 4 (8:30am-12:30pm)	Texas City
February 6	Addison
March 17	Houston
March 31	Austin
April 9	Amarillo
April 29	South Padre
June 10	Abilene
June 23	Austin
June 28	Austin



Just For Fun!

Fun Dates in December:

December 5th—**Bathtub Party Day**
 December 15th—**Cat Herder's Day (?!?!)**
 December 19th—**Underdog Day**
 December 30th—**Bacon Day**

See for yourself!

<https://www.daysoftheyear.com/>



Take a Break!

Feeling stressed, worn out, and overwhelmed? Take a break! Studies have shown that taking breaks (within reason of course!) actually improves our health, productivity, concentration, and creativity. Hmm..

Next Month:

We want to know! What was your first job?

My first real job was to ride a chair-lift to the top of a mountain at a Colorado ski resort to wash and prepare giant baked potatoes for hungry skiers. Brrr!!

~April Christiansen, Cedar Park

Send your responses for the next issue of *The Scribe* to april.christiansen@cedarparktexas.gov

As we all know Fall and Winter are extremely busy times of the year. There's football, cheerleading, soccer, rodeo, Thanksgiving, Christmas, shopping, gathering, baking, cooking, and did I mention work, kids, family, laundry, cleaning and running errands....you name it...it has to be done in the fall. With all the hustle and bustle we must still fit in the everyday task of cooking for our families. In this issue we thought we might add a little corner of ease....quick fixings for the family, the office pot luck, the church social,....the team. Here are some quick and easy ways to have a few moments to take a breath, freshen up and maybe even have a few quick minutes to yourself before rushing around to get something whipped up and served. Hope they make your life a little simpler, even if only for a moment. ~ **Carol Blackwood, Springtown**

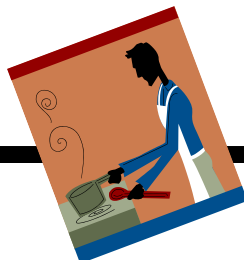
Chicken Tortilla Soup

1-2 lbs chicken cubed or shredded
 (can be rotisserie or even canned)
 1 Can Cream of Chicken Soup
 1 Can Cream of Celery Soup
 1 Can Rotel
 1 Can Black Beans
 1 lb shredded cheese – Monterrey or cheddar (any kind you like is fine)

Dump all ingredients in the crock pot...cook 4-8 hours depending on setting.

Top with cheese before serving.

Serve with Tortilla Chips



Taco Soup

1 LB cooked hamburger (or meat of your choosing)
 1 Can Pinto Beans (Ranch Style Beans)
 1 Can Red Kidney Beans
 1 Can Rotel
 1 Can Corn
 1 Package of dry Ranch Dressing Mix
 1 Package of Taco Seasoning
 ½ cup Ketchup

Dump all in crock pot and cook on low until ready to serve....this can stay in crockpot on low for 8 hours. Serve with tortilla chips, or cornbread.

**The Forever
 Faithful
 Crockpot**

Ways to Improve Your Time Management Skills at Work

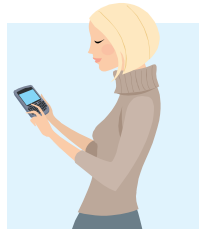
(Cont. from page 8)

Skill #3: Prioritize Your Tasks

When reviewing your to-do list you should prioritize your tasks. The order of the tasks can be based upon upcoming deadlines, or in the order of what is most important to the department. You should refrain from procrastinating and putting off tasks that you should be performing right now.

Skill #4: Maintain a Calendar

It is important to keep track of meetings and deadlines on your calendar. Your calendar should be readily available to you. You should keep track of your calendar either on a personal planner, or by utilizing the technology that is available to you. For example, consider using the calendar on your smart phone so that you always have access to your calendar.



Skill #5: Stay Focused on the Task at Hand

Throughout the day we have constant interruptions that can distract us from our job duties. It is imperative that you do not allow yourself to be susceptible to distractions, whether the distraction is work or non-work related. Of course some distractions are unavoidable and you have to stop what you are doing to address the situation, especially if you are in a management role. For individuals who have to deal with interruptions throughout the day, make sure to schedule a period of time each day that you will not allow interruptions. This window of time is when you can finish critical deadlines and tasks.

Skill #6: Effectively Manage Your Emails

Responding to and creating email messages can easily take up a significant amount of time in your workday. Emails can also become very distracting, especially if you try to answer email messages each time you receive a message.

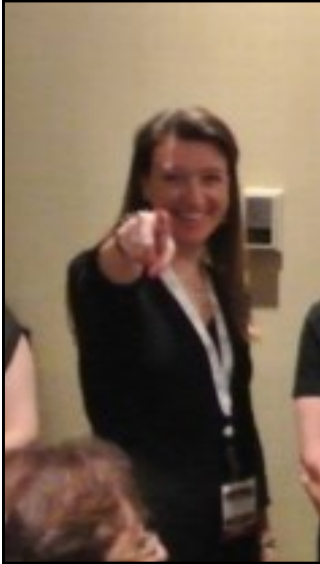


As part of your workday you should schedule time to respond to email. At the beginning of your workday you should quickly assess which emails are of importance and answer those messages earlier in your day. You may want to handle emails that need moderate attention after lunch and respond to less important emails the last 30-45 minutes of your day. This ensures that you are not trying to tackle all of your emails all at one time.

Final Thoughts

Once you have improved your time management skills you will be able to maintain a balance between your work and personal life. By having this balance it will reduce your stress level, which will improve your overall health. You will discover that you have more time to take care of yourself and more time to spend with your family and the people you love.

Get Involved!



Are you interested in joining one of TCCA's Committees? If so, DO WE HAVE A COMMITTEE FOR YOU!

Are you a rule follower? Does 'by the book' describe you to a 'T'? The **By-laws Committee** may be for you.

Do you love your Chapter and want to help others find a Chapter to love? Contact our **Chapter Steering Committee** to see how you can help!

Want to help spread the word about TCCA and help encourage others to join? Our **Membership Committee** may be just the ticket.

Please see page 20 for a complete listing of Committees and existing Committee Members.

Love to Take Pictures??

Do you carry a camera with you everywhere you go? TCCA's Historian Committee might be for you! To see more about what the TCCA Historian does, click on the link below!



Duties of the Historian

Committee Chair: Donna Dugger,
Center Municipal Court
ddugger@ci.center.tx.us

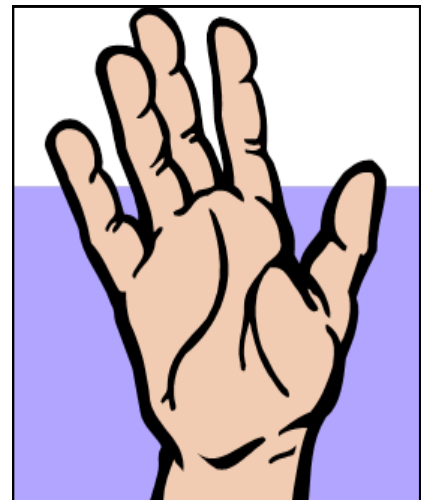


We Want to Know What YOU Want to KNOW!

Please tell us if you have a suggestion, topics or issues that you would like to see covered in a future edition!

The next edition of TCCA's newsletter **The Scribe** will be published in June 2015. **The Scribe** will be published on the TCCA's website. The deadline to submit an article for this edition is May 15th, 2015.

If you would like to contribute an article or you would like to see a topic covered in a future edition: Please email April Christiansen at april.christiansen@cedarparktexas.gov.



Important Education and Certification Announcements *(continued from pg. 7)*

Remote Training Sessions

****NEW****

The Education & Certification Committee will sponsor remote training sessions in areas of Texas where local chapters may have a difficult time providing education hours to its members.

The first training was held in Corpus Christi on November 7th (see photo on right). A total of 46 attendees participated in the training which included sessions on Court Costs, Cash Handling, OCA Collection Improvement Plans, Dissecting Deferred Dispositions, and Surviving an Active Shooter.

The Committee is planning a remote training session in the West Texas area in 2015. Additional information on this training will be posted online and via email.



News from TCCA's Conference Planning Committee

February 2014

The committee made the decision to rotate future conference sites, rather than take selected bids from across the state. This process is similar to the one used by the Texas Municipal League, and will hopefully help meet the needs of our membership and allow the Association to build strong working relationships with hotels and local visitor bureaus and obtain more competitive pricing. We chose Corpus Christi as the 2017 conference site.

The committee began using an Event Management program offered by Cvent to assist us with the conference site selection process. It is a user friendly web-based program – free of charge – and allows the committee to enter specific criteria for the annual conference to help select an area hotel that will best meet our needs. It also allows us to identify services offered by the local visitors bureau.

May 2014

Requests for proposals from the Cvent program for the 2017 conference site closed on May 8, 2014. Three proposals were received from area hotels: Emerald Beach Hotel, Holiday Inn Corpus Christi Downtown Marina and Omni Corpus Christi Hotel.

(continued on pg. 17)

Conference Planning Committee News

(continued from pg. 16)

After careful consideration, the committee voted to approve the proposal submitted by the Omni Corpus Christi and negotiated a final contract for the Annual Conference. A Mid-Year contract will be negotiated as well.

2017 Hotel Details:

- Located in the downtown Marina District
- 475 guest rooms
- 23,000 square feet of meeting space
- Single room rate of \$97 (subject to change based on current per diem)
- Double room rate of \$137
- Triple room rate of \$147
- Quad room rate of \$157
- Complimentary hotel shuttle service from the Corpus Christi International Airport
- Complimentary wireless internet service in all guest rooms
- Complimentary meeting space
- Group room rates offered three days prior and three days after
- 50% discount for self-parking fees
- Vendor booth tables for \$35 each
- Business Center
- Fitness Center
- Complimentary convention services from the

Visitor's Bureau:

- Name badges
- Lanyards
- Convention bags
- Visitor guides and maps
- Postcards
- City mementos
- PR support
- Registration assistance
- Event planning assistance

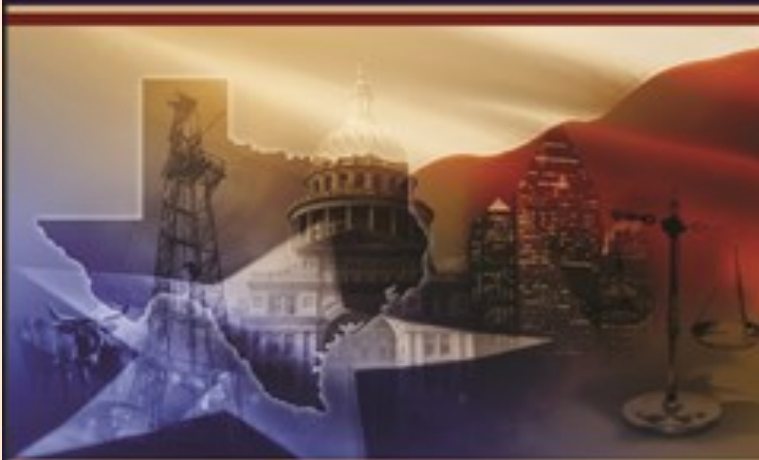
Future Conference Sites/Dates:

- 2015—Allen (October 12-14)
- 2016—San Marcos (October 10-12)
- 2017—Corpus Christi (October 9-11)
- 2018—Dallas/Ft. Worth area (Oct 8-10)
- 2019—Central Texas (October 7-9)



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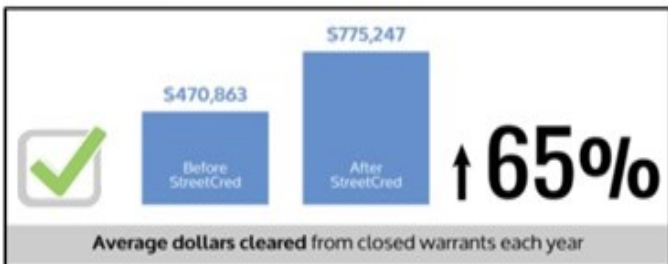
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Visit us at www.pbfc.com

TCCA at TML



How Did This North Texas Court Increase Its Warrant Clearance By 65% in One Year?



Oh yeah, one more thing: that's on top of what *their* collections agency did.



Visit Our Booth At TCCA, or <http://streetcredsoftware.com>

TCCA participated in the 2014 Texas Municipal League Conference and Vendor Exhibition held in Houston September 30th to October 3rd by sponsoring a vendor booth and an education session.

The 2000+ attendees were given information about TCCA as well as the Court Clerk Certification Program. Art Camacho, City Secretary for Haltom City, won the drawing for a Kindle Fire.

The Education and Certification Committee sponsored a 2 hour education session entitled "Municipal Court Operations and How They Interface with the Elected and Appointed Official". The class was taught by Hilda Cuthbertson (retired TCCA member) and Cathy Riedel of Bojorquez Law Firm.

Many thanks goes out to Constance White (Burluson), Kimberly Jozwiak (Corpus Christi), and Elaine Brown (retired TCCA member) for working the booth!

2014 Officer Elections

Greetings TCCA Members:

Election results for the offices of President, Secretary, and three Director's At Large were announced at the Business Meeting of the 2014 Annual Conference in College Station.

Results were as follows:

President: Lisa Howard, Hurst

Secretary: Melissa Pace, Haltom City

Director At Large: Gloria Carter, Dallas

Director At Large: Luevada Posey, Killeen

Director At Large: April Christiansen, Cedar Park

***By vote of the Board of Directors, the vacant Director At Large position was filled by Brandi Hodges of Desoto.*

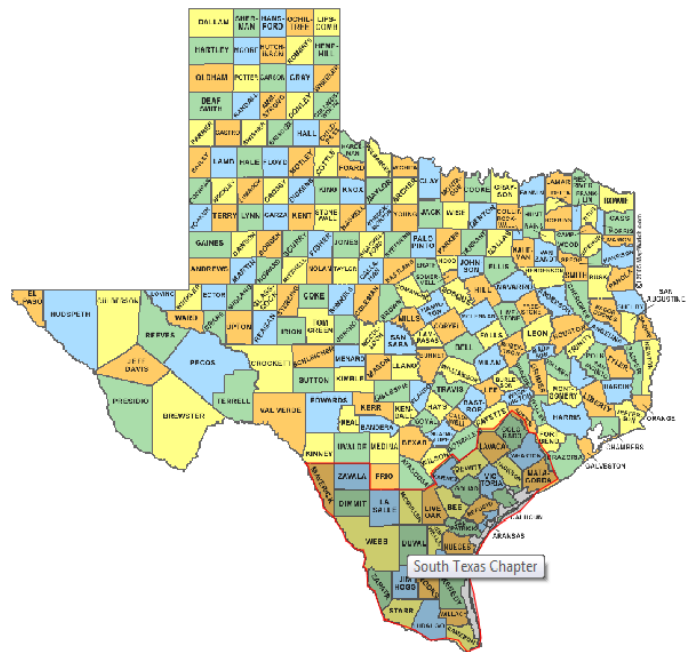


THEY'RE BAAAACCCKKK!

Good news for those of you down South!
The TCCA's South Texas Chapter is up and running again for the first time since 2011!

Kimberly Jozwiak, Municipal Court Director for the City of Corpus Christi has taken on the role of Chapter President.

To learn more about the new South Texas Chapter, you can contact Kimberly at kimberlyj@cctexas.com, or check TCCA's website in the near future for more information!



TCCA Board Members

Executive Board:

President	Lisa Howard, Hurst	lhoward@hursttx.gov
Vice President	Rhonda Kuehn, Brenham	rkuehn@cityofbrenham.org / TML Rep., Certification & Education
Immediate Past President	Tammy Odom, Texas City	todom@texas-city-tx.org / Conference Planning Chair
Treasurer	David Preciado, Arlington	david.preciado@arlingtontx.gov
Secretary	Melissa Pace, Haltom City	mpace@haltomcity.com

Directors At Large:

April Christiansen, Cedar Park	april.christiansen@cedarparktexas.gov
Paul Rex, Jersey Village	prex@ci.jersey-village.tx.us
Luevada Posey, Killeen	lposey@killeentexas.gov
Gloria Carter, Dallas	g.carter@dallascityhall.com
Brandi Hodges, DeSoto	bhodges@desototexas.gov
Jaime Brew, Sugarland	jbrew@sugarlandtx.gov

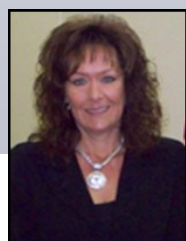
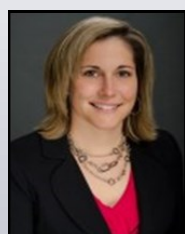
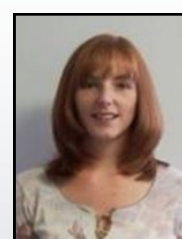
Committee

Publications Chair, Legislative
 Public Relations Chair, Bylaws Chair
 Vendor Chair
 Chapter Steering Chair

 Certification & Financial Program Mgr.,
 Education, Membership, Publications, PR

Chapter Presidents:

Phyllis Mathison, Bastrop	pmathison@cityofbastrop.org	Central Texas Chapter, Legislative Chair
Landra Solansky, Seguin	lsolansky@seguintexas.gov	Freedom Trail Chapter, Membership Chair
Rhonda Kuehn, Brenham	rkuehn@cityofbrenham.org	Gulf Coast Chapter
Kimberly Kierce, Richardson	kimberly.kierce@cor.gov	North Texas Chapter, Website Chair
Donna Dugger, Center	Ddugger@ci.center.tx.us	Northeast Texas Chapter, Historian
Jeanne Wilson, Big Spring	jwtilson@mybigspring.com	West Texas Chapter, Nominations Chair
Kimberly Jozwiak, Corpus Christi	kimberlyj@cctexas.com	South Texas Chapter, Merchandise Chair



*Kimberly Jozwiak:
Photo Not Available*

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Managing Case Inventory

Can you imagine never cleaning out your closet of old or unused items? I would venture to say that at least once a year most folks do take the initiative. One may sort out what is still good and wearable while other items are grouped into a discard pile to be thrown away or donated. In any case, the goal is to know the condition of the items and what is in the closet.

So, why not follow or apply this practical process to your court case files? Why not effectively manage the case inventory with the goal of knowing where each and every case is physically or (for paperless courts) electronically? Is the status for the case up to date? Can it be moved to closure? Can you reconcile the court case file with the matching arrest document? How many cases are being carried on the Office of Court Administration (OCA) Monthly Report?

Perhaps, it is time to take a look at why there are so many cases in the outstanding case inventory. Two reasons quickly come to mind. Most municipal courts retain aging cases until they become stale. Also, city management is not comfortable with or willing to purge cases as they deem them as potential revenue....but are they really?

Normally, courts have two types of cases; adjudicated and un-adjudicated. Adjudicated cases have a signed judgment with a fine assessed, payable by the defendant. This is truly a case where money is owed to the Court/City. These cases, if not paid in full, will most likely have a *capias pro fine* warrant processed and issued for the arrest of a defendant. These cases are truly collectible and due to the City. For the purpose of the OCA report, if there is a judgment rendered, the case is considered disposed. This means once a judgment is rendered, the case is to be counted as having a final disposition whether or not the fine assessed is paid. These cases are reported *only* in the additional Court Activity Section. However, the term final disposition in the clerk's world means having collected every cent due on the case and a code of a final disposition is recorded in the computer system.

The other type of case is the un-adjudicated cases with un-served arrest warrants. The defendant has never appeared personally in court, in writing, or by his attorney. Therefore,

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Managing Case Inventory

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there is no judgment. If a case does not have a judgment rendered there isn't any assessment of a fine and court costs. Courts process an arrest warrant for the defendant hoping to locate them and bring them to court. These individuals still can exercise certain options on their cases. The question here is how long should the cases be kept in inventory? How long is a case in warrant status truly viable in today's very mobile society?

The two scenarios described above are ones in which your fellow court partners (prosecutor and Judge) and City Management need more education. They need to have a solid understanding of the types of cases the court has in its case inventory.

Let's assume your City Management understands the types of cases. Education is still needed to set up a process where every year cases that are stale/aged can be purged. This requires cultivating relationships within your city so this task can be accomplished. Where do you start?

Begin the education process with your judge, prosecutor, and supervisor. Explain to them the monthly statistical report and how cases are reported. Sharpen the focus on the inactive case inventory. If a court continues to add to the inactive case inventory, it will grow exponentially depending on the size of the court.

There are costs associated with keeping up with a large case inventory... storage space, filing cabinets or boxes, dividers of some sort, staff time and effort in maintaining the case inventory, i.e. reconciling the case packet with the outstanding arrest document. These are a few of the associated costs which come to mind. Cases eventually become uncollectible. For some courts, it may be after five years. Five years of maintaining a case is sufficient time to locate the defendant and also sufficient time for a collection agency to locate the defendant if one is contracted. After five years, the case is aged and stale.

For justice and municipal courts, the Texas State Library set the retention period for un-served arrest warrants at four years after issuance (local schedule LC). The caveat here is the un-served arrest warrants pertaining to un-adjudicated cases may be purged. However, this process must be done in a manner permitted by law. This means, the prosecutor shall make a recommendation to dismiss and the Judge must approve the motion for dismissal. This may be achieved with a prosecutorial standing order pertaining to the cases with the matching un-served warrants. If un-served warrants are purged prior to the four year period they must still be retained until the expiration of the retention period.

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Managing Case Inventory

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Thus, the recommendation of five years provides an identical retention period to the adjudicated cases.

Now, let's fast forward. Time has passed and all of the court partners have been educated regarding court processes. All the pieces fall into place and there is an established procedure to have the oldest cases in the case inventory purged. Keep in mind the process will entail pulling the case packets, recalling them back from OmniBase, and/or the collections agency, if either are used, and matching it with the corresponding warrant document.

The cases need to be reviewed to ensure all the case components have been gathered. The prosecutor shall make a recommendation to dismiss the un-adjudicated cases and the Judge must approve the recommendation to dismiss. For the adjudicated cases, the same process applies; the Judge may close the cases administratively since they are no longer viable and collectible. These cases will need to meet the record retention schedule for closed cases which is five years from the date of final disposition of the case according to the Texas State Library LC schedule. Not only is it essential to have a good relationship with your finance department and/or internal auditor, it's important for them to have a well-rounded understanding of how the municipal court functions.

Courts also need to remember the corresponding case data must also be purged from the computer data base. If there is a request for information regarding a case and the court has data regarding the case it will be subject to be released. The whole purpose of managing the case inventory is to remove all trails of information regarding the purged cases.

This process can be repeated on an annual or bi-annual basis to maintain a well-managed case inventory. The intent is to keep case packet integrity intact, matched and to be easily located when it must be retrieved for processing. For some courts, this will be a massive undertaking and time consuming from start to finish. For others, this process may only take a few weeks. The goal is to have a clean, well-managed closet.....I mean case inventory.



Letter From the President

TCCA President

Dear Friends,

As 2014 draws to a close, so does my time as your President. Four years ago I would have never dreamed that we would be where we are now. This organization has grown in so many ways thanks to the hard work of so many of you. Here are just a few:

- 1) WE now have online nominations and voting, giving a voice to each of our nearly 900 members.
- 2) WE have an amazing website that has made things so streamlined and easy.
- 3) WE have an active voice in the legislature via Texas Municipal League.
- 4) WE have the ability to electronically nominate our peers for awards honoring their hard work.
- 5) WE are capturing photos at different events and putting them in a format we can share for years to come.
- 6) WE have expanded our merchandise line and are offering fun new products.
- 7) WE have not only improved the quality of our education but are offering hundreds of hours of education to clerks across the state.
- 8) WE are reaching out to underserved areas of the state through remote trainings.
- 9) WE have reinstated the South Texas Chapter.
- 10) WE have created a new committee to plan all future conferences starting in 2016.
- 11) WE are financially healthy.
- 12) WE have instituted a new records retention policy to ensure our records are safe.
- 13) WE continue to review our bylaws to ensure we are in compliance.
- 14) WE have grown our conference by providing great education, networking, vendor exhibits and fun to more than 150 members a year.
- 15) WE have established an Ethics Committee who is hard at work on a Code of Ethics for Clerks.
- 16) WE have worked to shore up our financial policies with the help of our Internal Audit Committee.
- 17) WE have put a new face and format on The Scribe making it a great resource for clerks.

As you can see "WE" have been very busy. I would like to express my heartfelt thanks to "WE", the amazing folks that I have had the privilege of working with on this board. If I were to try to name them all and all of the wonderful things they have accomplished we would have to dedicate a whole edition just for that.

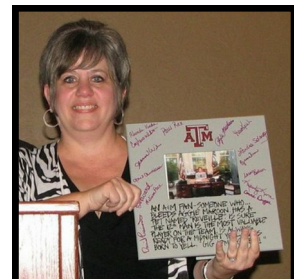
I also want to take this opportunity to congratulate and welcome our new President, Lisa Howard, and the other new Board Members Gloria Carter, Luevada Posey, and Brandi Hodges. I don't know about you but I can't wait to see what "WE" will achieve in the future!

It has been an honor and a privilege to serve you all!

Smiles,

Tammy

Smiles



2015 Great Texas Warrant Round Up

It's time to get started with the **2015 Great Texas Warrant Round Up**, the 9th statewide event!

The deadline to register is January 23, 2015. This year, you may submit the paper registration form OR **register online** at http://www.austintexas.gov/warrant_round_up/AMC_2015_Warrant.cfm. Even if you join every year, please have someone register. A link to the registration form and a "paper" copy of it and a weekly list of participants will be online at www.austintexas.gov/court, select "Warrant Round-up" located on the right side of the home page.

For questions please contact:

Rebecca Stark

Kim Chadwick

Austin Municipal Court Director

Austin Municipal Court Operations Manager

Rebecca.stark@austintexas.gov

Kimberly.chadwick@austintexas.gov

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