



August 29, 2016

NEWS RELEASE

FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE

**COUNTY OFFICIALS GATHER TO DISCUSS
UPCOMING LEGISLATIVE SESSION**

Allison Nathan Getz, Tax Assessor-Collector for Jefferson County, was one of hundreds of county officials who gathered in Austin Aug. 24-26 at the Texas Association of Counties (TAC) 2016 Legislative Conference to discuss the upcoming legislative session and the common concerns shared by Texas' local governments and local taxpayers.

"The Legislative Conference is really the one time each year county officials from around the state can get together as peers and as community leaders to discuss common issues and potential solutions to our shared challenges, and to discuss the coming legislative session, the workings of which will undoubtedly affect counties in many ways," said TAC Executive Director Gene Terry. "It is also a perfect opportunity to meet and visit with our colleagues in the legislature before the whirlwind of the session, to discuss the interim and what can be accomplished this session."

During their three days in Austin, county officials heard from their peers, experts and legislators on several hot topics affecting counties, including:

- An update on property tax reform, a central focus of Senate interim hearings;
- An update on current issues in emergency management from county officials affected by the numerous recent floods across the state;
- An examination of rising indigent defense costs and best practices;
- A look at the state's Driver Responsibility Program and calls to reform or even end it; and,
- A candid discussion of transportation and infrastructure issues counties face.

In addition, the conference's General Sessions included presentations by Paul Smith, author of *Lead with a Story*; Texas State House Representative Larry Gonzales, who discussed best practices for county officials engaging in the legislative process; and Chet Garner of PBS's *The Daytripper*, who has been collaborating with TAC on a series of educational shorts about county government.

Other notable speakers included Sen. Robert Nichols and Rep. Andrew Murr who spoke on session panels about transportation issues and indigent defense respectively.

Several county officials and department heads also led discussions and helped educate their colleagues on a number of topics. Those county officials included Tom Green County Commissioner Rick Bacon, Jack County Judge Mitchell Davenport, Nueces County Judge Loyd Neal, Jackson County Sheriff A.J. "Andy" Louderback, Lubbock County Sheriff Kelly Rowe, Limestone County Sheriff Dennis Wilson, DeWitt County Judge Daryl Fowler and Tom Green County District Clerk Sheri Woodfin. TAC works to unite Texas counties together in search of solutions for challenges faced by all counties and to provide services to support county officials in the vital work they do for their local communities.

Media Note: Texas Association of Counties 1-800-456-5974

**Allison Nathan Getz Jefferson County Tax Assessor-Collector
409-835-8714**