

Letter to the Editor
November 2, 2023

I, as many of you, have become aware of illegal activity and immigrants tied to Cartels living and operating in the Texas House District 18 in which we live. Being new to the San Jacinto County area, and a Public Educator for 30 years, I was curious about the strength of the protection we the Tax Paying Citizens of San Jacinto County are receiving. So, I began to research with a tour of the San Jacinto County Jail and Sheriff's Offices. What I discovered alarmed me!

As a result of my research and tour, I am writing to share the following information:

- Did you know that the San Jacinto County Sheriff's budget monies go directly into a General Fund that requires approval for spending?
- Did you know that your County Sheriff's budgetary funding is largely controlled and approved by the 5 men who comprise the San Jacinto County Commissioners' Court? The 4 San Jacinto County Precinct Commissioners and the San Jacinto County Judge must agree with majority approval before the Sheriff is allowed to spend one cent of his budget.
- Did you know that the San Jacinto County Jail accepts prisoners from other counties that pay our hard working Sheriff's Department close to a million dollars per year to house and monitor their inmates?
- Did you know that these monies also go into the General Fund and are not necessarily spent on the Jail Facilities but on other projects at the discretion of the County Commissioners' Court?
- Did you know that the building that the Jail is housed in is in a state of disrepair and said repairs have not been approved by the Commissioners' Court?
- Did you know that the room in which Victims of Crimes are interviewed in is a very small 6' x 8' room that is not soundproof for confidentiality, nor is there a private room for the family of said victim to wait in to support the victim?

- Did you know that currently, detectives share a similar small office space that does not allow quiet thought and evaluation of evidence?
- Did you know that the main computer system that Dispatchers of 911 calls is antiquated and overheats in the closet in which it is stored (even with the door open for ventilation)?
- Did you know that the same antiquated computerized system is used for radio communication that uses radio equipment that is outdated and in poor repair?
- Did you know that the Evidence Room is approximately a 15' x 8' room with two adults working at desks and walls lined with shelves and boxes? Overflow evidence must be housed in a metal barn approximately one mile away that has no air conditioning.
- Did you know that the office area of the jail does not have central air conditioning/heating and relies on space air conditioners and heaters?
- Did you know that the office area that includes the computer closet and evidence room has one way in and one way out with no windows and presents a fire hazard and emergency exit concern?

Space is limited here, but there are more issues of disrepair that have not been addressed at the San Jacinto County Jail and Sheriff's Facilities because money that currently exists in the General Fund will not be released by the 5 member San Jacinto County Commissioners' Court.

This article is a call to action for the Citizens of San Jacinto County:
What can you do?

- 1.) Schedule a visit to the San Jacinto Jail Facilities and witness these unacceptable conditions yourself. Such conditions are hindering the Sheriff's Department to do their best work to protect YOU, the Tax Paying Citizens of San Jacinto County.
- 2.) Contact your San Jacinto County Commissioner according to the Precinct in which you live, pay taxes, and vote. Educate them and ask for them to intervene. Ask them to go on a tour of the facilities themselves!

3.) Contact your San Jacinto County Judge and voice your concerns that money MUST be released to the Sheriff's Department in order for the Sheriff to properly address the issues of disrepair and lack of space for his officers and victims of crime in the County Facilities. The officers and staff are currently working in inferior conditions to provide quality law enforcement in our County. Invite the Judge to tour the facilities as well!

Thank you,
Dee Margrave