

## ANNUAL STATE OF THE COUNTY ADDRESS

JULY 26, 2023

THANK YOU TO EACH OF YOU FOR TAKING TIME TO BE HERE TODAY AS I DELIVER MY ANNUAL STATE OF THE COUNTY ADDRESS TO PROVIDE INFORMATION ABOUT WHAT IS GOING ON IN WILLIAMSON COUNTY AS IT RELATES TO LOCAL GOVERNMENT.

IF YOU ARE A COUNTY COMMISSIONER PRESENT TODAY, WOULD YOU PLEASE STAND AND BE RECOGNIZED? I WANT TO SAY THANK YOU TO THE BUDGET COMMITTEE MEMBERS, CHAIRMAN JUDY HERBERT, MEGHAN GUFFEE, ERIN NATIONS AND MATT WILLIAMS WHO WORKED DILIGENTLY THROUGHOUT THE PAST TEN MONTHS REVIEWING BUDGET REQUESTS OF A RAPIDLY GROWING COMMUNITY. THEY RECOMMENDED, AND THE COUNTY COMMISSION APPROVED, A \$723.5 MILLION OPERATING BUDGET WITH NO PROPERTY TAX INCREASE FOR OUR RESIDENTS.

IF YOU ARE A WILLIAMSON COUNTY ELECTED OFFICIAL, WOULD YOU PLEASE STAND AND BE RECOGNIZED? I WANT TO RECOGNIZE EACH OF OUR ELECTED OFFICIALS WHO MANAGE THEIR INDIVIDUAL BUDGETS IN A FISCALLY CONSERVATIVE MANNER.

AND I MUST ALSO RECOGNIZE MY RESPECTIVE DEPARTMENT HEADS AND THEIR STAFF MEMBERS WHO ALSO PLAY AN ESSENTIAL ROLE TO HELP ENSURE THE TAXPAYERS' DOLLARS ARE SPENT WISELY. WOULD YOU PLEASE STAND AND BE RECOGNIZED?

IF THERE ARE ANY VETERANS IN THE AUDIENCE, WOULD YOU PLEASE STAND AND LET US THANK YOU AND RECOGNIZE YOU FOR YOUR SERVICE. I HOPE THAT EMPLOYERS PRESENT WITH US TODAY WILL

TAKE A FEW MINUTES TO VISIT THE CAMPBELL STRONG INFORMATION TABLE AND LEARN ABOUT HOW YOU CAN WORK WITH THEIR WORKFORCE PARTNERSHIP TO SUPPORT OR HIRE A VETERAN.

WILLIAMSON COUNTY HAS LONG BE RECOGNIZED FOR HAVING OUTSTANDING **QUALITY OF LIFE** ATTRIBUTES. WHAT EXACTLY DOES THAT MEAN?

AS DEFINED FROM OXFORD LANGUAGES, “QUALITY OF LIFE” IS THE STANDARD OF HEALTH, COMFORT AND HAPPINESS EXPERIENCED BY AN INDIVIDUAL OR GROUP.

TODAY, I WANT TO REVIEW A LITTLE BIT ABOUT WHY IT IS THAT PEOPLE ASSOCIATE THAT PHRASE WITH WILLIAMSON COUNTY.

LET'S START WITH **PUBLIC EDUCATION**. WILLIAMSON COUNTY'S PUBLIC SCHOOL SYSTEM WAS RECENTLY RANKED AS THE THIRD BEST SCHOOL DISTRICT OUT OF 126 DISTRICTS IN THE STATE OF TENNESSEE. THIS RANKING WAS IN A 2023 NICHE REPORT – A DATA AGGREGATOR THAT CONNECTS PEOPLE AND FAMILIES TO THE BEST SCHOOLS IN THE COUNTRY. THE TWO DISTRICTS LISTED AS NUMBER ONE AND TWO WERE THE CITY SCHOOL DISTRICTS OF MARYVILLE AND JOHNSON CITY.

THIS TYPE OF EXCELLENCE AND RECOGNITION DOES NOT HAPPEN WITHOUT THE SUPPORT AND COLLABORATION OF THE SCHOOL ADMINISTRATION AND THE ELECTED REPRESENTATIVES ON THE SCHOOL BOARD. WILLIAMSON COUNTY'S BOARD OF COMMISSIONERS IS THE FUNDING BODY FOR THE

SCHOOL DISTRICT AND HAVE CONSISTENTLY VOTED TO APPROPRIATE APPROXIMATELY 71 CENTS OF EVERY DOLLAR OF YOUR COUNTY PROPERTY TAXES TO FUND SCHOOL OPERATIONS AND CAPITAL EXPENSES FOR PUBLIC EDUCATION.

THE RECENTLY APPROVED 2023-24 FISCAL YEAR BUDGET INCLUDES OVER \$517.5 MILLION IN FUNDING FOR OPERATIONS OF THE WILLIAMSON COUNTY SCHOOL DISTRICT. WITH THIS FUNDING, SCHOOL BOARD MEMBERS AND SCHOOL ADMINISTRATORS ARE ABLE TO IMPLEMENT AND PROVIDE PROGRAMMING AND INSTRUCTION THAT ENABLES OUR STUDENTS TO BE TOP PERFORMERS!

ACCORDING TO SCHOOL SUPERINTENDENT, JASON GOLDEN, A TOTAL OF 3,241 ACT EXAMS WERE TAKEN BY WILLIAMSON COUNTY SCHOOL STUDENTS THIS PAST SCHOOL YEAR AND THE AVERAGE SCORE IN THE DISTRICT WAS 24.7, AS COMPARED TO THE STATE AVERAGE OF 19.1.

I WOULD BE REMISS IF I FAILED TO ACKNOWLEDGE THE IMPORTANT ROLE THAT PARENTS PLAY IN THEIR CHILDREN'S EDUCATION, AS WELL. AS PARENTS, OR GUARDIANS, IT IS IMPORTANT TO NOT OVERLOOK THE IMPORTANT ASPECTS OF A CHILD'S EDUCATION – SOMETHING THAT IS MUCH MORE IMPORTANT THAN OUR OWN IDEAS FOR THEIR SUCCESS IN LIFE.

WHETHER SCHOOL IS IN SESSION OR NOT, OUR WILLIAMSON COUNTY **PUBLIC LIBRARY SYSTEM**, WITH ITS MAIN BRANCH BEING CENTRALLY LOCATED NEAR DOWNTOWN FRANKLIN HAS 5 COMMUNITY BRANCHES THROUGHOUT THE COUNTY. THEY OFFER MANY RESOURCES AND SERVICES FOR ALL AGES BY OFFERING EDUCATIONAL SUPPORT THROUGH THE SUMMER READING PROGRAM, A ROBUST

COLLECTION OF BOOKS AND E-BOOKS, HOMEWORK HELP, TECHNOLOGY CLASSES, WIFI, AND INTERNET ACCESS. THE PROGRAMMING FOR YOUNG CHILDREN AT THE LIBRARY IS BUILDING THOSE EARLY LITERACY SKILLS WHICH ARE ESSENTIAL FOR FUTURE SUCCESS IN SCHOOL. THEY ARE ALWAYS OPEN, 24/7, WITH MANY SERVICES AVAILABLE THROUGH THEIR DIGITAL RESOURCES.

PUBLIC LIBRARIES PLAY A VITAL ROLE IN ADDING **QUALITY OF LIFE** VALUE TO OUR COMMUNITIES BY PROVIDING ACCESS TO INFORMATION AND RESOURCES FOR PEOPLE OF ALL AGES AND BACKGROUNDS. THEY SERVE AS A HUB FOR LEARNING, CREATIVITY, AND CONNECTION. OVERALL, LIBRARIES ARE AN ESSENTIAL RESOURCE FOR PROMOTING LITERACY AND LIFELONG LEARNING.

GOVERNOR LEE RECENTLY ANNOUNCED THAT THE STATE HAS ITS FEWEST DISTRESSED COUNTIES IN TENNESSEE'S HISTORY. IN 2019, HIS ADMINISTRATION TOOK ON THE MISSION TO EXPAND OPPORUNITIES FOR TENNESSEANS WITH STRATEGIC WORKFORCE AND INFRASTRUCTURE INVESTMENTS.

EACH YEAR, THE APPALACHIAN REGIONAL COMMISSION (ARC) PREPARES AN INDEX OF COUNTY ECONOMIC STATUS FOR EVERY COUNTY IN THE UNITED STATES. ECONOMIC STATUS DESIGNATIONS ARE IDENTIFIED THROUGH A COMPOSITE MEASURE OF EACH COUNTY'S THREE-YEAR AVERAGE UNEMPLOYMENT RATE, PER CAPITA MARKET INCOME, AND POVERTY RATE. BASED ON THESE INDICATORS, EACH COUNTY IS THEN CATEGORIZED AS DISTRESSED, AT-RISK, TRANSITIONAL, COMPETITIVE OR ATTAINMENT.

BASED ON THE 2023 FINDINGS OF THIS STUDY, I AM VERY PROUD TO SHARE WITH YOU TODAY THAT WILLIAMSON COUNTY IS THE ONLY COUNTY OUT OF TENNESSEE'S 95 COUNTIES TO HAVE BEEN FOUND IN ATTAINMENT!! THIS QUALITY OF LIFE STATUS DOES NOT OCCUR WITHOUT THE CONCENTRATED AND SUCCESSFUL EFFORTS OF BUSINESSES, LIKE THOSE REPRESENTED HERE TODAY, AND ELECTED OFFICIALS WHO WORK DILIGENTLY TO ENSURE OUR COUNTY AND CITIES ARE FINANCIALLY SOUND AND FISCALLY RESPONSIBLE.

AS IT RELATES TO PRIORITIZATION ON CAREER AND TECHNICAL EDUCATION, THE GOVERNOR'S INVESTMENT IN THE VOCATIONAL EDUCATION ("GIVE") ACT, HAS EXPANDED ACCESS TO INNOVATIONS IN MIDDLE AND HIGH SCHOOL WORK-BASED LEARNING, APPRENTICESHIP PROGRAMS AND DUAL ENROLLMENT COURSES FOR TRADE AND TECHNICAL PROGRAMS.

THE WILLIAMSON COUNTY SCHOOL SYSTEM IS SCHEDULED TO RECEIVE \$15.5 MILLION IN GRANT FUNDING TO BE UTILIZED TOWARDS THE COST OF CONSTRUCTING AN "INNOVATION CENTER CAMPUS", ADJACENT TO FRANKLIN HIGH SCHOOL. IF APPROVED, THIS CAMPUS IS PROJECTED TO INCLUDE HEALTH SCIENCES, HVAC AND AVIATION OPPORTUNITIES FOR OUR HIGH SCHOOL STUDENTS

SECONDLY, LET US DISCUSS THE IMPORTANCE OF **PUBLIC SAFETY AND HEALTH** AND HOW THEY AFFECT OUR QUALITY OF LIFE.

PUBLIC SAFETY IS A VITAL COMPONENT OF A HEALTHY ENVIRONMENT. PSYCHOLOGIST, ABRAHAM MASLOW WHO DEVELOPED THE *HIERARCHY OF HUMAN NEEDS* STATED THAT SAFETY IS ONE OF THE MOST FUNDAMENTAL NEEDS – NOT ONLY PHYSICAL SAFETY BUT ALSO SECURITY OF OUR HEALTH, MONEY, BELONGINGS, JOBS AND FAMILIES. RESIDENTS WHO HAVE ACCESS TO HEALTH CARE, HOUSING, EMPLOYMENT, GOOD SCHOOLS AND WELL PLANNED INFRASTRUCTURE ARE MORE LIKELY TO FEEL SAFE AND LESS LIKELY TO SUFFER FROM CHRONIC CONDITIONS, STRESS AND POOR MENTAL HEALTH ISSUES. THE DECREASE IN THESE RISK FACTORS CONTRIBUTE TO THE COUNTY'S LOW CRIME RATE, WHICH IS MUCH LOWER THAN THE NATIONAL AVERAGE. SAFE AND HEALTHY RESIDENTS LEAD TO A STRONGER COMMUNITY.

ALONG THE LINES OF A HEALTHY COMMUNITY, THE WILLIAMSON COUNTY BOARD OF COMMISSIONERS MET IN SPECIAL SESSION IN DECEMBER, 2017, AUTHORIZING A LEGAL SERVICES CONTRACT CONCERNING LITIGATION AGAINST CERTAIN PHARMACEUTICAL MANUFACTURERS.

SHORTLY THEREAFTER, WILLIAMSON COUNTY JOINED A NATIONAL LAWSUIT SETTLEMENT WITH MANUFACTURERS, DISTRIBUTORS AND PHARMACIES. THE SETTLEMENT PAYMENTS HAVE BEGUN AND NATIONALLY, THE AGREEMENTS WILL PROVIDE NEARLY \$50 BILLION IN PAYMENTS FOR STATES AND LOCAL GOVERNMENTS. WILLIAMSON COUNTY IS SLATED TO RECEIVE OVER \$5.2 MILLION IN OPIOID SETTLEMENT FUNDS OVER THE NEXT 18 YEARS.

I HAVE APPOINTED THE REQUIRED OPIOID TASK FORCE WHO WILL ESTABLISH THE GUIDELINES FOR APPLYING AND DISTRIBUTING THESE FUNDS IN OUR COMMUNITY WHICH WILL BE UTILIZED FOR OPIOID REMEDIATION EFFORTS. THESE EFFORTS INCLUDE CARE, TREATMENT AND PROGRAMS DESIGNED TO (1) ADDRESS THE MISUSE AND ABUSE OF OPIOID PRODUCTS, (2) TREAT OR MITIGATE OPIOID USE OR RELATED DISORDERS, OR (3) MITIGATE OTHER ALLEGED EFFECTS OF THE OPIOID EPIDEMIC.

THROUGHOUT THE PAST SEVERAL YEARS, SHERIFF DUSTY RHOADES HAS BEEN PART OF SHERIFFS STATE-WIDE WHO HAVE BEEN FACING CRITICAL PERSONNEL SHORTAGES AND CHALLENGES. WITH SUPPORT FROM THE COUNTY COMMISSION IN THE PAST TWO FISCAL YEARS, AN IMPROVED CLASSIFICATION AND COMPENSATION PROGRAM HAS BEEN IMPLEMENTED TO HELP WITH ATTRACTING AND RETAINING SHERIFF'S OFFICE STAFFING.

ACCORDING TO A RECENT STATE-WIDE SURVEY CONDUCTED BY THE UNIVERSITY OF TENNESSEE'S COUNTY TECHNICAL ASSISTANCE SERVICES, THE WILLIAMSON COUNTY SHERIFF'S OFFICE NOW OFFERS THE HIGHEST STARTING PAY IN THE STATE, OUT OF THE 91 COUNTIES WHO PARTICIPATED IN THE SURVEY.

LAW ENFORCEMENT PERSONNEL WORK HARD EACH DAY TO ENSURE WE LIVE IN A SAFE COMMUNITY CERTAINLY AND PLAY A BIG PART IN OUR QUALITY OF LIFE IN WILLIAMSON COUNTY AND WE ARE THANKFUL FOR THEM! (APPLAUSE)

ANOTHER SECTOR OF PUBLIC SAFETY RELATES TO FIRE PROTECTION SERVICES THROUGHOUT THE COUNTY. MANY OF YOU MAY BE UNAWARE THAT 77% or 450 SQUARE MILES IN OUR RURAL AREAS ARE SERVED BY VOLUNTEER FIREFIGHTING SERVICES.

THE 2023-34 BUDGET INCLUDES AN ADDITIONAL \$340,000 FOR OPERATIONAL EXPENSES AND \$9.6 MILLION IN CAPITAL FUNDING FOR THE VOLUNTEER FIRE SERVICES. WILLIAMSON COUNTY'S PUBLIC SAFETY GOAL IS TO HAVE VOLUNTEER FIRE PROTECTION SERVICES WITHIN A FIVE MILE RADIUS OF ALL HOMES IN THE UNINCORPORATED AREAS OF THE COUNTY.

ACCORDING TO THE LAND TRUST FOR TENNESSEE, THERE ARE CURRENTLY 65 PROTECTED PROPERTIES, CONSISTING OF 7,790 ACRES IN WILLIAMSON COUNTY THAT PERMANENTLY LIMITS DEVELOPMENT OF THIS LAND TO PROTECT ITS CONSERVATION VALUES. THE MOST RECENT ADDITION WAS AN APPROXIMATE 131 ACRE CONSERVATION EASEMENT ON PARKER BRANCH ROAD IN DECEMBER, 2022. THE LARGEST ACREAGE CONSERVATION IN OUR COUNTY IS THE PUBLIC BOWIE PARK IN FAIRVIEW, WHICH WAS CONSERVED IN 2008, CONSISTING OF 681 ACRES.

BRAD COLEMAN, WILLIAMSON COUNTY'S PROPERTY ASSESSOR REPORTS THAT AS OF JUNE 30<sup>TH</sup> OF THIS YEAR, WILLIAMSON COUNTY OFFICIALLY REACHED OUR ONE HUNDRED THOUSAND-TH (100,000<sup>TH</sup>) REAL PROPERTY PARCEL, TOTALING AN APPROXIMATE COUNTY-WIDE ASSESSED VALUE OF OVER \$66 BILLION!!

EVEN THOUGH THERE WERE 1,637 INDIVIDUAL NEW PARCELS ADDED FOR THE 2023 APPRAISAL YEAR, WILLIAMSON COUNTY STILL HAS 57% (214,876 ACRES) OF ITS 373,979 ACRES STILL IN THE GREENBELT.

ANOTHER **QUALITY OF LIFE** ATTRIBUTE IN WILLIAMSON COUNTY IS OUR **COMMUNITY'S PARKS AND LEISURE SERVICES**. THE PARKS AND RECREATION DEPARTMENT CONTINUES TO RESPOND TO THE PUBLIC DEMANDS FOR THESE SERVICES THROUGHOUT OUR COUNTY, WHILE BALANCING ACTIVE SPORTS WITH PASSIVE SPORTS AND PRESERVING GREEN SPACE.

TIMBERLAND PARK CONTINUES TO BE A FAVORITE FOR RESIDENTS AND TOURISTS WHO FREQUENT THE NATCHEZ TRACE PARKWAY. IN THE PAST 12 MONTHS, VISITORS WHO HAVE SIGNED THE GUEST REGISTER INCLUDE REPRESENTATION FROM 27 STATES, AND 13 COUNTRIES.

THE OUTDOOR MOUNTAIN BIKE TRAIL OPERATED BY THE PARKS AND RECREATION DEPARTMENT FEATURES SIX MILES OF MOUNTAIN BIKE RIDING TRAILS AND HAS SEEN APPROXIMATELY 32,000 VISITORS IN THE PAST FISCAL YEAR!

THE NEWEST COMMUNITY CENTER UNDER CONSTRUCTION IN THE BETHESDA COMMUNITY, WILL PROVIDE OUTDOOR RECREATIONAL FACILITIES INCLUDING SIX SOCCER FILEDS, FOUR TENNIS COURTS, SIX PICKLE BALL COURTS, TWO SAND VOLLEYBALL COURTS AND A WALKING TRAIL.

ADDITIONALLY, THERE WILL BE NEW SENIOR CITIZENS FACILITIES IN THE NEW COMMUNITY RECREATION CENTER AND A NEW COMMUNITY BRANCH LIBRARY.

IT IS EASY TO SEE THAT OUR RESIDENTS LOVE AND APPRECIATE OUR NATURE PARKS, COMMUNITY SERVICES AND PROGRAMS AND THE EFFORTS OF OUR PARKS AND RECREATION STAFF.

ELECTED OFFICIALS, DEPARTMENT HEADS AND STAFF ALL CONTINUE TO WORK DILIGENTLY WITHIN THEIR RESPECTIVE BUDGETS TO SERVE OUR GROWING COMMUNITY. ONE OF THE GREATEST PARTS OF MY JOB IS SERVING THE PEOPLE AND WORKING HAND IN HAND WITH OTHERS WHO ALSO SERVE. WHETHER IT IS A COLLABORATION BETWEEN STAFF MEMBERS, DEPARTMENTS HEADS, ELECTED OFFICIALS FROM OUR CITIES, STATE OR THOSE IN WASHINGTON, THE RELATIONSHIPS AND THE DESIRE TO SERVE IS THE COMMON DENOMINATOR THAT EXIST TO MAKE OUR COMMUNITIES STRONGER TOGETHER!

JANUARY, 2023 BEGAN THE FIRST CALENDAR YEAR AFTER THE STATE REQUIRED PURCHASE OF A NEW LICENSE PLATE FOR ALL TENNESSEE RESIDENTS. SINCE THE FIRST OF THE YEAR, COUNTY CLERK, JEFF WHIDBY REPORTS THAT THE SIX (6) KIOSKS LOCATED AT OUR VARIOUS PARKS AND RECREATION FACILITIES HAVE BEEN WIDELY UTILIZED. THESE KIOSKS ARE CONVENIENT FOR OUR RESIDENTS AND PROVIDE RURAL ACCESS TO VEHICLE REGISTRATION RENEWALS.

SINCE THE BEGINNING OF THE 2023 CALENDAR YEAR, 9,090 RENEWALS HAVE BEEN MADE THROUGH THE KIOSKS, WHICH EQUATES TO APPROXIMATELY 11% OF THE REGISTRATION RENEWALS IN THE FIRST SIX MONTHS OF THIS CALENDAR YEAR. THIS TELLS ME THE OTHER 89% OF YOU LIKE STANDING IN LINE!

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WILLIAMSON COUNTY HAS RECEIVED \$46.3 MILLION IN AMERICA RESCUE PLAN ACT (ARPA) FUNDING FROM THE FEDERAL GOVERNMENT SINCE IT WAS ENACTED IN MARCH, 2021. THESE FUNDS COME WITH RESTRICTED USES AND MUST BE EXPENDED BY 2026. WITH THESE FUNDS, WILLIAMSON COUNTY WAS ABLE TO HIRE COMMISSIONER PAUL WEBB, A CERTIFIED PUBLIC ACCOUNTANT, TO ENSURE THAT THESE PROJECTS WERE ACCURATELY QUALIFIED AND FUNDS EARMARKED AND EXPENDED IN THE MANNER SET FORTH BY THE FEDERAL GOVERNMENT.

THESE FUNDS HAVE BEEN ALLOCATED THROUGH THE COUNTY COMMISSION, AS FOLLOWS:

\*COVID TESTING AND MEDICAL INSURANCE COSTS FOR COUNTY EMPLOYEES

\*WI-FI ACCESSIBILITY AND INSTALLATION COSTS

\*ENHANCED BROADBAND SERVICES

\*PURCHASE OF AUTOMATED EXTERNAL DEFIBRILLATORS AT VARIOUS COUNTY FACILITIES

\*UPGRADED HAND DRYING EQUIPMENT

\*UPGRADED PHONE SYSTEM

\*UPGRADED DRINKING FOUNTAINS

\*IMPROVEMENTS TO THE LOCAL HEALTH DEPARTMENT

\*BRIDGE REPLACEMENT AND STORMWATER ASSESSMENTS AND INSPECTIONS; AND,

\*IMPROVEMENTS TO SOLID WASTE EQUIPMENT AND STRUCTURES, TO NAME A FEW.

TWELVE MILLION DOLLARS WAS APPROPRIATED TOWARDS THE CONSTRUCTION OF AN IMPROVED EMERGENCY DEPARTMENT AT WILLIAMSON MEDICAL CENTER AND AN ADDITIONAL FOUR MILLION-ONE HUNDRED THOUSAND (\$4,100,000) FOR THE PURCHASE OF ADDITIONAL AMBULANCES FOR THE COUNTY'S EMERGENCY MEDICAL SERVICES.

WILLIAMSON HEALTH, WHO OPERATES THE COUNTY'S EMS SERVICES, HAS A NEW EMS UNIT ON DISPLAY OUTSIDE THE CONFERENCE CENTER AND I ENCOURAGE YOU TO STOP AND SPEAK WITH EMS FIRST RESPONDERS AND THANK THEM FOR THEIR SERVICE. ACCESS TO **QUALITY HEALTH CARE** IS ANOTHER IMPORTANT ATTRIBUTE IN OUR **QUALITY OF LIFE** SERVICES FOUND THROUGHOUT OUR COUNTY.

I ALSO WANT TO HIGHLIGHT THE USE OF THREE MILLION DOLLARS IN ARPA FUNDS THAT ARE BEING UTILIZED TO ASSIST IN COUNTY-WIDE EFFORTS TO BECOME THE BEST CONNECTED COUNTY IN OUR STATE. IN PARTNERSHIP WITH THE TENNESSEE DEPARTMENT OF ECONOMIC DEVELOPMENT FUNDING, OUR ARPA BROADBAND FUNDING WAS EARMARKED TO COLLABORATE WITH UNITED COMMUNICATIONS AND MIDDLE TENNESSEE ELECTRIC, TO PROVIDE ACCESS, OR ENHANCE, INTERNET SERVICES THROUGHOUT OUR COUNTY. THE COUNTY'S INVESTMENT WILL RESULT IN OVER TWENTY MILLION DOLLARS (\$20,000,000) OF BROADBAND INVESTMENTS BY OUR PARTNERS IN THE UNDERSERVED AREAS OF THE COUNTY.

WE KNOW THAT ACCESS TO THE INTERNET HAS BECOME CRITICAL FOR MANY BUSINESSES AND IN OUR PERSONAL LIVES; HOWEVER, THE LACK OF THE AVAILABILITY OF THESE SERVICES IN MUCH OF OUR RURAL AREAS IN THE COUNTY WAS CERTAINLY HIGHLIGHTED DURING THE PANDEMIC. IMPROVEMENTS TO BROADBAND AND HIGH SPEED INTERNET SERVICES WILL HELP MANY OF OUR RURAL CITIZENS TO BE ABLE TO WORK FROM HOME AND ALLOW SCHOOL CHILDREN TO PARTICIPATE IN ON-LINE LEARNING.

BOTH NATIONALLY AND IN WILLIAMSON COUNTY, FARMERS ARE ALSO RELYING MORE AND MORE ON TECHNOLOGY TO HELP MAXIMIZE SUCCESSFUL YIELDS ON THEIR AGRICULTURAL PRODUCTS.

UPON ENTERING MY NEW TERM OF OFFICE LAST SEPTEMBER, I SET A GOAL TO LOOK AT ALTERNATIVE SOURCES OF REVENUE THAT MAY BE AVAILABLE TO THE COUNTY THAT WOULD BE OUTSIDE THE COLLECTION OF SALES TAX AND REAL PROPERTY TAX SOURCES, WHICH ARE OUR TWO MAJOR SOURCES OF OPERATING REVENUES.

IN AN EFFORT TO DO SO, WE HAVE CONTRACTED WITH A PART-TIME GRANT WRITER WHO IS DEDICATED TO IDENTIFYING AND SECURING FEDERAL AND STATE GRANT FUNDS FOR WHICH ANY OF OUR DEPARTMENTS MAY BE ELIGIBLE. FORMER COMMISSIONER, BETH LOTHERS IS FILLING THIS POSITION AND IS LEAVING NO STONE UNTURNED IN HER EFFORTS!

LIKEWISE, WITH THE HELP FROM LEGAL COUNSEL AND COUNTY COMMISSION APPROVAL, WILLIAMSON COUNTY HAS CONTRACTED WITH VULCAN MATERIALS TO ALLOW THEM ACCESS TO MINE UNDER THE COUNTY'S QUARRY PROPERTY. THIS AGREEMENT INCLUDES AN ADDITIONAL REVENUE

SOURCE TO THE COUNTY BASED ON THE SELLING PRICE PER TON OF THE STONE THAT IS QUARRIED, PROCESSED AND REMOVED FROM THE PREMISES.

IN FOLLOWING THE GOAL TO PROVIDE A SUCCESSFUL INTERNET HIGHWAY FOR OUR RESIDENTS, WE HAVE BEEN WORKING WITH VOGUE TOWERS TO LAUNCH A COUNTY-WIDE TOWER BUILD PROGRAM THAT PROVIDES RENTAL INCOME FROM VARIOUS CELLULAR PROVIDERS TO CO-LOCATE ON CELLULAR TOWERS THROUGHOUT OUR COUNTY. THESE TOWERS WILL PROVIDE ENHANCED COMMUNICATION SERVICE CAPABILITIES FOR OUR FIRST RESPONDERS IN THE RURAL AREAS, AS WELL AS ENHANCE SERVICE TO OUR RURAL RESIDENTS.

JUST RECENTLY, WILLIAMSON COUNTY WAS AWARDED A WATER/SEWER GRANT FROM THE STATE OF TENNESSEE FOR APPROXIMATELY \$5.2 MILLION. THE COUNTY'S MATCHING FUNDS WILL BE DERIVED FROM ARPA FUNDS AND THESE GRANT WILL PROVIDE FUNDING FOR EMERGENCY GENERATORS FOR THE CITY OF BRENTWOOD WATER AND SEWER DEPARTMENT TO MAINTAIN WATER AND SEWER OPERATIONS IN THE EVENT OF A POWER OUTAGE.

SOME UNITS ARE PORTABLE ALLOWING THEM TO BE SHARED WITH OTHER UTILITY DISTRICTS AND EMERGENCY RESPONDERS IN THE COUNTY. HARPETH WASTEWATER CO-OP WILL USE THE GRANT FUNDS TO IMPROVE THEIR OVERALL ASSET MANAGEMENT PLAN AND MAKE SYSTEM IMPROVEMENTS FOR THEIR CUSTOMERS.

H.B. & T. S. UTILITY DISTRICT WILL USE THE GRANT FUNDS TO BUILD A NEW WATER TANK PROVIDING MUCH NEEDED CAPACITY IN THEIR GROWING DISTRICT.

MILCROTON UTILITY DISTRICT WILL BE USING THE FUNDS TO EXTEND WATER LINES IN THEIR UNSERVED AREA.

MALLORY VALLEY & NOLENSVILLE-COLLEGE GROVE UTILITY DISTRICTS HAVE TEAMED UP TO USE THE GRANT AWARD TO FUND WATER LINE CONSTRUCTION IN THEIR FAST GROWING SERVICE AREA OF WILLIAMSON COUNTY.

AS IT RELATES TO NEW CONSTRUCTION, YOU MAY BE AWARE THAT THE COUNTY APPROVED THE PASSAGE OF THREE PRIVATE ACTS IN 1987. CHAPTER 120 OF THE 1987 PRIVATE ACTS, IS KNOWN AS THE EDUCATION IMPACT FEE. THESE ARE FEES THAT ARE CHARGED AT THE TIME OF THE ISSUANCE OF A BUILDING PERMIT FOR NEW RESIDENTIAL CONSTRUCTION AND WERE APPROVED BY THE COUNTY LEGISLATIVE BODY AS A MEANS OF HELPING NEW RESIDENTIAL GROWTH PAY FOR THE COSTS OF PROVIDING CERTAIN LOCAL GOVERNMENT EDUCATION CAPITAL NEEDS, OR BRICKS AND MORTAR CONSTRUCTION.

THE REVISION WAS THE RESULT OF MONTHS OF PLANNING AND PUBLIC MEETINGS AND HEARINGS, LED BY AN OUTSIDE CONSULTANT, TISCHLER-BISE. THE RESULTS OF THE STUDY SHOWED THE NEED FOR A REVISION IN THE FEE SCHEDULE AND RESULTED IN SOME INCREASES AND SOME DECREASES, BASED ON SQUARE FOOTAGES. THE NEW SCHEDULE TOOK EFFECT MARCH, 2023.

GROWTH IS NOT A NEW SUBJECT FOR OUR COUNTY OR FOR THE STATE OF TENNESSEE. ACCORDING TO THE U. S. CENSUS BUREAU, TENNESSEE GREW 140,553 NEW RESIDENTS FROM 2020-2022, MAKING IT THE 7<sup>TH</sup> FASTEST GROWING STATE IN THE UNITED STATES WITH A POPULATION OF OVER 7 MILLION RESIDENTS.

FIVE TENNESSEE COUNTIES WERE IN THE TOP 100 IN THE UNITED STATES FOR GROWTH BY THE NUMBERS SINCE 2020, AS FOLLOWS:

- #43 WAS RUTHERFORD COUNTY, UP 19,138
- #60 WAS KNOX COUNTY, UP 15,593
- #67 WAS MONTGOMERY COUNTY, UP 15,207
- #75 WAS WILLIAMSON COUNTY, UP 13,082 AND
- #89 WAS WILSON COUNTY, UP 10,808

WILLIAMSON COUNTY'S CURRENT POPULATION OF A QUARTER MILLION PEOPLE IS EXPECTED TO DOUBLE BY 2040 TO ONE-HALF OF A MILLION RESIDENTS.

THOUGH GOVERNMENT MAY OFTEN BE CRITICIZED **FOR PLANNING AND ZONING ORDINANCES**, WE KNOW THAT ZONING LAWS CAN PROTECT AND ENHANCE THE VALUE OF REAL ESTATE AND PREVENT INCOMPATIBILITY OF DIFFERENT LAND USES AS WELL AS HELPING TO STIMULATE ECONOMIC GROWTH, WHICH ALSO CONTRIBUTE TO THE OVERALL **QUALITY OF LIFE** IN A COMMUNITY. AS OUR POPULATION EXPANDS, THE DESIRE TO PRESERVE **GREEN SPACE** BECOMES INCREASINGLY IMPORTANT TO OUR CITIZENS.

IN NOVEMBER, 2021, THE COUNTY'S BOARD OF COMMISSIONERS APPROVED A RECOMMENDATION BY THE COUNTY'S REGIONAL PLANNING COMMISSION WHICH AMENDED THE WILLIAMSON COUNTY ZONING ORDINANCE. THIS AMENDMENT ESTABLISHED A MAXIMUM RESIDENTIAL DENSITY OF ONE HOME PER FIVE ACRES IN THE UNINCORPORATED AREAS OF THE COUNTY. WITH THIS ADOPTION, IT IS HOPED THAT MOST CONSTRUCTION WOULD OCCUR WITHIN THE VARIOUS MUNICIPAL LIMITS WHERE

THE INFRASTRUCTURE IS IN PLACE, OR PLANNED FOR, TO ACCOMMODATE THE HIGHER DENSITY CONSTRUCTION.

CURRENTLY, WILLIAMSON COUNTY AND EACH OF ITS MUNICIPALITIES ARE IN THE PROCESS OF UPDATING THE 2001 GROWTH PLAN. THIS 20+ YEAR OLD GROWTH PLAN WILL UPDATE THE AREAS THROUGHOUT THE COUNTY WHERE GROWTH IS ANTICIPATED TO OCCUR. THIS PROCESS WILL INCLUDE A SERIES OF PUBLIC MEETINGS AND PUBLIC HEARINGS SEEKING TO ESTABLISH NEW URBAN GROWTH BOUNDARIES AROUND MUNICIPALITIES AND PLANNED GROWTH AREAS IN THE RURAL AREAS OF THE COUNTY. THE GROWTH PLAN COORDINATING COMMITTEE MEMBERS TASKED WITH THIS PROCESS ARE PRESCRIBED BY STATE STATUTE. THEY WILL WORK COLLABORATIVELY TO STUDY FUTURE GROWTH AND WHERE THAT GROWTH CAN BE BEST SUPPORTED BY THE PROVISION OF ADEQUATE INFRASTRUCTURE AND PUBLIC SERVICES. IT IS ANTICIPATED THAT THE ADOPTION OF THE GROWTH PLAN BY THE COUNTY AND EACH MUNICIPALITY SHOULD BE COMPLETED IN EARLY 2024.

ANOTHER **QUALITY OF LIFE** ATTRIBUTE IS **GETTING INVOLVED** IN YOUR COMMUNITY! IT IS INDEED AN HONOR TO SERVE AS YOUR MAYOR AND I CHALLENGE EACH OF YOU WHO MAY NOT BE INVOLVED IN YOUR COMMUNITY IN SOME WAY TO DO SO!! WHETHER IT BE AT YOUR SCHOOL, YOUR LIBRARY OR YOUR FAVORITE NON-PROFIT, I ENCOURAGE YOU TO GET INVOLVED! WILLIAMSON COUNTY NEEDS DEDICATED LEADERS WHO SHARE A COMMON DESIRE TO MAKE A DIFFERENCE.

FOR ME, IT WAS BECOMING INVOLVED IN FUNDING PUBLIC EDUCATION NEEDS THAT STARTED MY CAREER IN THE COMMUNITY OVER 35 YEARS AGO. TODAY, I AM BLESSED TO SAY THAT WILLIAMSON

COUNTY IS HOME AGAIN TO MY THREE CHILDREN, THEIR FAMILIES AND MY NINE GRAND CHILDREN. THEY KEEP ME MOTIVATED TO CONTINUE TO WANT TO MAKE A DIFFERENCE.

SPEAKING OF COMMUNITY INVOLVEMENT, I WANT TO REMIND EVERYONE THAT NINE DAYS OF FUN STARTS THE FIRST FRIDAY IN AUGUST! THE WILLIAMSON COUNTY FAIR RUNS FROM AUGUST 4-12 AND CONTINUES TO PLACE AN EMPHASIS ON AGRICULTURE, EDUCATION AND ENTERTAINMENT. OUR VOLUNTEERS ARE PUTTING THE FINAL TOUCHES ON THE 19<sup>TH</sup> ANNUAL COUNTY FAIR. WITH A THEME OF "LIVIN' FOR THE RIBBON" YOU ARE ENCOURAGED TO GET INVOLVED, JOIN THE FUN AND SPUR ON SOME FRIENDLY COMPETITION WITH YOUR FRIENDS AND NEIGHBORS ON WHO CAN BRING HOME THE BEST OF SHOW RIBBON IN ONE, OR MANY, OF OUR NUMEROUS COMPETITIONS!

I HOPE THAT I HAVE BEEN ABLE TO REMIND EACH OF YOU THAT THERE ARE HUNDREDS OF REASONS WHY WE ENJOY SUCH A WONDERFUL **QUALITY OF LIFE** IN WILLIAMSON COUNTY. THERE ARE HUNDREDS OF PEOPLE WHO PLAY, AND HAVE PLAYED, A LARGE PART OF WHY WE ARE SUCCESSFUL AND GLOBALLY RECOGNIZED!

WE LIVE IN A GREAT COMMUNITY THAT DID NOT JUST HAPPEN OVER NIGHT. IT IS IMPORTANT THAT WE CONTINUE TO RECOGNIZE AND ELECT DEDICATED MEN AND WOMEN WHO BROUGHT US TO THIS SUCCESS. IT IS IMPORTANT THAT WE WORK TOGETHER TO FIND SOLUTIONS FOR THE CHALLENGES WE FACE AND THAT WE, AS A COMMUNITY, PUT ASIDE OUR DIFFERENCES AND CONTINUE TO WORK TOGETHER TO PRESERVE OUR SUCCESSES.

IT IS MY HOPE THAT YOU HAVE ENJOYED TODAY'S PRESENTATION AND OUR NEW FORMAT OF USING THE LIGHT UP BRACELETS TO DEMONSTRATE THE PARTICIPATION LEVELS, OR PERCENTAGES, OF THE VARIOUS TOPICS. PLEASE JOIN ME IN THANKING TOM ATEMA, JUSTIN HESTER AND OTHER MEMBERS OF THE AP LIVE TEAM FOR THEIR PRODUCTION WITH TODAY'S SPEECH.

THANK YOU FOR SHARING YOUR TIME WITH ME HERE TODAY. MAY GOD CONTINUE TO BLESS OUR COUNTY AND OUR UNITED STATES OF AMERICA.