

ANNUAL STATE OF THE COUNTY ADDRESS

WILLIAMSON COUNTY
JULY 23, 2025

THANK YOU FOR TAKING TIME TO COME TODAY AND THANKS TO THE CHAMBER FOR THE ANNUAL OPPORTUNITY TO SHARE WITH YOU A SNAPSHOT OF INFORMATION ABOUT WILLIAMSON COUNTY GOVERNMENT.

IT IS ALWAYS AN HONOR FOR ME TO HAVE THE OPPORTUNITY TO ASK THOSE IN THE AUDIENCE WHO ARE VETERANS TO STAND AND BE RECOGNIZED WHILE WE SHARE A ROUND OF APPLAUSE TO EACH OF YOU FOR YOUR SERVICE.

WE ALSO HAVE WITH US A NUMBER OF PUBLIC SERVANTS WHO DEVOTE THEIR TIME AND ENERGY TO OVERSEEING THE OPERATIONS OF FEDERAL, STATE, COUNTY AND CITY GOVERNMENTS. IF YOU ARE AN ELECTED OFFICIAL, WOULD YOU PLEASE STAND AND ALLOW US TO SHARE A MOMENT OF THANKS TO YOU.

OUR COUNTY'S GROWTH DOES NOT COME WITHOUT GROWTH PAINS. OFTEN YOU HEAR RESIDENTS EXPRESS CONCERNS THAT GROWTH AND THE RELATED INCREASED TRAFFIC DO NOT KEEP PACE WITH INFRASTRUCTURE IMPROVEMENTS. I AGREE.

IF I MAY TAKE A FEW MOMENTS TO SHARE SOME GOVERNMENTAL STATISTICS WITH YOU.

WILLIAMSON COUNTY HAS A TOTAL OF 584 SQUARE MILES.

THROUGHOUT OUR COUNTY, THERE ARE SIX (6) MUNICIPALITIES. EACH OF THOSE CITIES HAVE CITY STREETS THAT FALL WITHIN THEIR RESPECTIVE JURISDICTIONS.

THE REMAINING 1,057 COUNTY ROADS, CONSISTING OF 741 ROAD MILES, ARE THE RESPONSIBILITY OF THE COUNTY'S HIGHWAY DEPARTMENT UNDER THE DIRECTION OF HIGHWAY SUPERINTENDENT, EDDIE HOOD AND HIS OUTSTANDING CREW!

IT IS UNDERSTANDABLE THAT BECAUSE A ROAD IS LOCATED WITHIN THE BOUNDARIES OF THE COUNTY, IT IS OFTEN THOUGHT THAT THE COUNTY SHOULD WIDEN IT, ADD TURN LANES OR OTHERWISE MAINTAIN OR REPAIR THE ROAD.

HOWEVER, BASED ON STATE LAW, THE COUNTY'S HIGHWAY DEPARTMENT CANNOT CONDUCT WORK ON STATE OR CITY ROADS, WITHOUT A SPECIFIC INTERLOCAL AGREEMENT, PERMITTING THE COUNTY'S HIGHWAY DEPARTMENT TO DO SO.

WITH THE RECENTLY ADOPTED FISCAL YEAR BUDGET, THE HIGHWAY DEPARTMENT OPERATING BUDGET IS \$15.9 MILLION.

WHAT YOU MAY NOT HAVE REALIZED IS THAT NONE OF YOUR COUNTY AD VALOREM PROPERTY TAX DOLLARS ARE UTILIZED TO FUND THE OPERATIONS OF THE COUNTY HIGHWAY DEPARTMENT. THESE OPERATIONS ARE FUNDED VIA A PORTION OF THE WHEEL TAX AND BUSINESS TAXES; THE MINERAL SEVERANCE TAX; GAS AND MOTOR FUEL TAX; PETROLEUM SPECIAL TAX AND STATE REVENUE SHARING.

THE STATE DEPARTMENT OF TRANSPORTATION (TDOT) IS CHARGED WITH THE MAINTENANCE AND IMPROVEMENTS OF ALL STATE ROADS THROUGHOUT ALL 95 COUNTIES ACROSS THE STATE.

THEY HAVE AN OPERATING POLICY TO 'PAY AS THEY GO' SO AS NOT TO INCUR ANY DEBT ON ROADS THROUGHOUT THE STATE.

AS A RESULT OF THIS POLICY, IT IS MOST DIFFICULT FOR THEM TO ADDRESS THE AMOUNT OF ROAD MILES INFRASTRUCTURE NEEDS, BRIDGES AND OTHER PROJECTS THROUGHOUT OUR STATE.

IN OUR COUNTY, THE TENNESSEE DEPARTMENT OF TRANSPORTATION HAS 16 STATE ROUTES, CONSISTING OF A LITTLE OVER 189 ROAD MILES.

ADDITIONALLY, THERE ARE 3 INTERSTATES, WHICH RUN THROUGH WILLIAMSON COUNTY, TOTALING APPROXIMATELY 63 MILES.

IN RECENT YEARS, TDOT OFFICIALS HAVE GIVEN MORE ATTENTION TO STATE PROJECT NEEDS AT THE LOCAL LEVEL IF, AND WHEN, THE LOCAL JURISDICTION CAN COME TO THE TABLE WITH "FUNDS IN HAND" TO ASSIST WITH THE PROJECT.

THIS TYPE OF PARTNERSHIP ALLOWS THE TDOT DOLLARS TO BE MORE WIDELY SPREAD AND HELPS GET THE LOCAL PROJECT UNDERWAY IN A TIMELY MANNER.

AS STATED EARLIER, WILLIAMSON COUNTY DOES NOT COLLECT ANY AD VALOREM PROPERTY TAX FUNDS FOR OUR HIGHWAY DEPARTMENT OPERATIONS. THEREFORE, IT IS INCUMBENT UPON LOCAL LEADERSHIP TO IDENTIFY SOURCES OF INCOME THAT COULD BE SPECIFICALLY EARMARKED FOR STATE ROAD PROJECTS IN OUR COUNTY.

MEMBERS OF THE STATEWIDE COUNTY MAYOR'S ASSOCIATION, THE COUNTY COMMISSION AND OUR MUNICIPAL PARTNERS HAVE SUPPORTED A MULTI-YEAR EFFORT TO ENSURE HALF OF THE REAL ESTATE TRANSFER TAX PAID GOES TOWARD A PROJECT IN THE COUNTY WHERE THE TAX IS COLLECTED.

THIS EFFORT WAS SUPPORTED BY THIS CHAMBER WHO SECURED OVER 10,800 SIGNATURES FROM THOSE IN SUPPORT, INCLUDING BUSINESS AND COMMUNITY LEADERS, SUCH AS YOURSELVES. THANK YOU; YOUR SUPPORT IS APPRECIATED!

WHEN THIS LEGISLATION IS PASSED, I AM COMMITTED TO EARMARKING 50% OF THE RETAINED FEES TO THE FURTHERANCE OF TDOT PROJECTS IN WILLIAMSON COUNTY.

THIS LEGISLATION IS SPONSORED BY SENATOR JACK JOHNSON (SB1080) AND CO-SPONSORED BY 6 ADDITIONAL CO-SPONSORS IN THE SENATE. THE HOUSE COMPANION BILL HAS 27 SPONSORS.

WHEN THE GENERAL ASSEMBLY AJOURNED EARLIER THIS YEAR, SB1080 HAD ADVANCED FROM THE SENATE'S STATE AND LOCAL COMMITTEE WITH AN 8-0 VOTE AND IS CURRENTLY

SITTING IN THE FINANCE COMMITTEE IN BOTH HOUSES, WHERE IT MUST BE INCLUDED IN THE BUDGET TO ADVANCE FURTHER.

IN COLLABORATION WITH THE MAYORS OF ALL OF OUR CITIES, THE PRIORITIZED PROJECTS IDENTIFIED WERE IMPROVEMENTS NORTH AND SOUTH ON I-65 THROUGH WILLIAMSON COUNTY, AS WELL AS A NEW INTERCHANGE AT MOORES LANE ON I-65.

RECENTLY, TDOT OFFICIALS HOSTED A MEETING TO UPDATE WILLIAMSON AND MAURY COUNTY ABOUT REGION 3 DEVELOPMENT AND CONSTRUCTION PROJECTS.

ON THIS MAP, THE BLUE ROUTES INDICATE PROJECTS THAT ARE IN THE ENGINEERING DEVELOPMENT STAGES AND THE RED ROUTES INDICATE PROJECTS IN CONSTRUCTION.

ALONG WITH VARIOUS BRIDGE PROJECTS, OF PARTICULAR INTEREST WE LEARNED THAT THE I-65 CORRIDOR PROJECT IS A PRIORITY INVESTMENT, CURRENTLY IN THE PLANNING STAGE.

THE WIDENING OF COLUMBIA AVENUE FROM GOOSE CREEK BY-PASS TO SPRING HILL IS ON SCHEDULE FOR THE ENGINEERING PHASE IN FY 2026, RIGHT OF WAY ACQUISTION IN 2029 AND ESTIMATED CONSTRUCTION IN FISCAL YEAR 2033.

THE I-840 INTERCHANGE AT I-65 IS ON SCHEDULE FOR THE ENGINEERING PHASE AND RIGHT OF WAY IN 2028 AND CONSTRUCTION IN FY 2029.

IN RED, THE CONTRACT IS IN PLACE FOR RESURFACING CARTER'S CREEK PIKE FROM MILE END ROAD AT SOUTHLAND TO THE MAURY COUNTY LINE WITH AN ESTIMATED COMPLETION OF NOVEMBER OF THIS YEAR.

THIS MEETING WAS HELPFUL AND INFORMATIVE AS TDOT OFFICIALS OUTLINED THE PROJECTS IN WILLIAMSON AND MAURY COUNTIES, TOTALING OVER \$315 MILLION, EXCLUDING PAVING AND PRESERVATION PROJECTS IN OUR REGION.

JUST LIKE LOCAL GOVERNMENT, THERE ARE ONLY SO MANY DOLLARS AVAILABLE TO BE SPREAD THROUGHOUT THE NEEDS OF THE REGION AND IT WAS HELPFUL TO LEARN THE STATUS OF OUR ROAD NEEDS AND THE SIGNIFICANT INVESTMENTS THEY ARE MAKING THROUGHOUT OUR AREA.

THERE ARE VARIOUS MUNICIPAL WATER DISTRICTS AND PRIVATE WATER UTILITY DISTRICTS THAT OPERATE WITHIN OUR COUNTY.

HOWEVER, WILLIAMSON COUNTY GOVERNMENT IS NOT IN THE WATER OR SEWER BUSINESS AND DOES NOT MAINTAIN OR SERVICE THESE FACILITIES AND RELATED INFRASTRUCTURE NEEDS. NO COUNTY TAX DOLLARS ARE ANNUALLY EXPENDED FOR WATER OR SEWER SERVICES IN WILLIAMSON COUNTY.

OFTEN TIMES, IT IS MISUNDERSTOOD THAT SUBDIVISION DEVELOPMENT IN THE RURAL AREAS ARE PERMITTED ON LESS THAN FIVE (5) ACRES BECAUSE THE COUNTY IS PROVIDING SEWER. HOWEVER, IN THOSE INSTANCES, IT IS BECAUSE THE DEVELOPER HAS WORKED WITH THE TENNESSEE DEPARTMENT OF ENVIRONMENT AND CONSERVATION (TDEC) TO GET A PERMIT FOR AN ON-SITE TREATMENT SYSTEM THAT SPECIFICALLY SERVES THAT DEVELOPMENT.

OVER THE PAST SEVERAL YEARS, THE COUNTY AND EACH OF THE 6 CITIES WITHIN THE COUNTY WORKED TOGETHER TO CREATE A NEW GROWTH PLAN, WHICH, AMONG OTHER THINGS, RE-DREW THE URBAN GROWTH BOUNDARIES (UGBS) THAT SURROUND THE CITIES AND THE PLANNED GROWTH AREAS (PGAS), TO BETTER REFLECT WHERE NEW

DEVELOPMENT SHOULD OCCUR, BASED ON GROWTH PROJECTIONS AND WHERE INFRASTRUCTURE CAN BE PROVIDED.

THIS WAS AN UNPRECEDENTED PROCESS OF COLLABORATION BETWEEN EACH OF THE 7 JURISDICTIONS.

ON NOVEMBER 13, 2024, THE UPDATED GROWTH PLAN WAS APPROVED BY THE STATE'S LOCAL GOVERNMENT ADVISORY PLANNING COMMITTEE.

THE COUNTY-WIDE GROWTH PLAN HAD NOT BEEN UPDATED SINCE THE STATE MANDATED PROCESS IN 2001.

REPRESENTATIVES FROM ALL CITIES AND THE COUNTY WORKED DILIGENTLY FOR MANY MONTHS TO IDENTIFY NEXT STEPS FORWARD. ULTIMATELY, EVERYONE AGREED TO A REVISED GROWTH PLAN, AS WELL AS AN INTERLOCAL AGREEMENT RESTRICTING ANNEXATION OUTSIDE OF THE UGBS AND CREATES A COLLABORATIVE ADVISORY GROUP TO CONTINUE THE COMMUNICATION BETWEEN THE JURISDICTIONS.

THIS ADVISORY GROUP IS THE GROWTH MANAGEMENT ROUNDTABLE, WHICH CONSISTS OF THE MAYORS OF EACH JURISDICTION AND IS SUPPORTED BY KEY STAFF MEMBERS OF THE JURISDICTIONS.

THIS GROUP WILL MEET AT LEAST QUARTERLY TO DISCUSS COMMON ISSUES AND OPPORTUNITIES AS THEY ARISE THROUGHOUT OUR COUNTY

THE ROUNDTABLE HAS MET TWICE SO FAR, AND TRANSPORTATION HAS BEEN IDENTIFIED AS THE FIRST TOPIC FOR DISCUSSION.

WILLIAMSON COUNTY GOVERNMENT FUNDS THE PUBLIC SCHOOL SYSTEM IN OUR COUNTY, CONSISTING OF 29 ELEMENTARY, 1 K-8, 11 MIDDLE AND 11 HIGH SCHOOLS, FOR A TOTAL OF 52 SCHOOLS. CITY GOVERNMENTS ARE NOT RESPONSIBLE FOR FUNDING OUR COUNTY SCHOOLS.

THE FRANKLIN SPECIAL SCHOOL DISTRICT IS OFTEN THOUGHT OF AS BEING OPERATED BY THE CITY OF FRANKLIN.

THE BOUNDARY LINES FOR THE FSSD WERE ESTABLISHED BY PRIVATE ACT AND DO NOT EXPAND AS THE CITY OF FRANKLIN ANNEXES ADDITIONAL PROPERTY WITHIN THE CITY LIMITS.

THE PUBLICLY ELECTED WILLIAMSON COUNTY SCHOOL BOARD MEMBERS REVIEW, APPROVE AND SUBMIT AN ANNUAL OPERATING BUDGET FOR THE COUNTY'S SCHOOL SYSTEM.

HOWEVER, THE LEGISLATIVE BODY, THE PUBLICLY ELECTED 24 MEMBER COUNTY COMMISSIONERS, ARE THE FUNDING BODY FOR THE COUNTY'S SCHOOL SYSTEM.

THEY CANNOT LINE ITEM THE REQUESTED SCHOOL BUDGET; THEY CAN ONLY APPROVE A FUNDING AMOUNT.

THE SCHOOL BOARD MEMBERS DETERMINE HOW THAT MONEY IS SPENT AND SET POLICIES FOR THE DAY TO DAY OPERATIONS OF OUR AWARD WINNING PUBLIC EDUCATION SYSTEM IN OUR COUNTY.

WITH THE RECENTLY ADOPTED BUDGET, THE SCHOOL SYSTEM'S OPERATIONAL BUDGET IS OVER \$562.5 MILLION WITH A SPECIFIC TAX RATE OF 75 CENTS OF THE RECENTLY APPROVED \$1.30 TOTAL TAX RATE.

I WANT TO EXPRESS MY THANKS TO THE COMMISSION MEMBERS OF THE BUDGET COMMITTEE, CHAIRED BY COMMISSIONER JUDY HERBERT, ALONG WITH MEGHAN GUFFEE, DAVID O'NEIL, AND MARY SMITH. BASED ON THE NEEDS OF OUR COMMUNITY AND THE REAPPRAISAL PROCESS, IT WAS A VERY DIFFICULT PROCESS AND THEIR SERVICE IS GREATLY APPRECIATED.

WHEN YOU COMBINE THE GENERAL AND RURAL DEBT SERVICE FUNDS THAT ARE DIRECTLY ATTRIBUTABLE TO SCHOOLS, YOU CAN EQUATE THAT TO KNOWING THAT APPROXIMATELY 90 CENTS (OR 69%) OF THE \$1.30 TAX RATE IS EARMARKED FOR THE OPERATIONS AND RELATED CAPITAL EXPENSES OF THE COUNTY-WIDE SCHOOL SYSTEM.

THE FUNDING SOURCES FOR THE 2025-26 COUNTY'S BUDGET ARE DERIVED 1% FROM FEDERAL GOVERNMENT REVENUES, 24% FROM STATE REVENUES AND 75% FROM LOCAL REVENUES.

THIS IS ONE OF THE REASONS WHY IT IS IMPORTANT TO SHOP LOCAL, SO THAT YOUR LOCAL SALES TAX DOLLARS CAN BE LOCALLY SPENT AGAIN. THE SCHOOL'S BUDGET RELIES ON THIS REVENUE SOURCE, WHICH FUNDS APPROXIMATELY 24% OF THEIR OPERATING BUDGET.

CITIES ALSO DO NOT OPERATE, OR FUND, THE COUNTY JAIL. WHEN AN INDIVIDUAL IS ARRESTED IN WILLIAMSON COUNTY, THEY ARE TAKEN TO THE COUNTY'S JAIL. THE JAIL IS UNDER THE DAY TO DAY JURISDICTION OF THE COUNTY SHERIFF, JEFF HUGHES.

THE RECENTLY APPROVED OPERATING BUDGET FOR THE COUNTY SHERIFF'S OFFICE IS \$25.9 MILLION, WITH AN ADDITIONAL \$11.8 MILLION FOR THE OPERATIONS OF THE JAIL.

AS YOU MAY BE AWARE, THE COUNTY COMMISSION HAS APPROVED THE CONSTRUCTION OF A NEW JAIL, SHERIFF'S OFFICE, JUVENILE COURT AND JUVENILE SERVICES FACILITY.

THE TOTAL DEBT OBLIGATION CURRENTLY PROJECTED FOR THIS PROJECT IS \$325 MILLION. IN SEPTEMBER, 2024, THE BOARD OF COMMISSIONERS HAS AUTHORIZED THE EXPENDITURE OF UP TO \$280 MILLION FOR THESE PROJECTS.

HOWEVER, THESE FUNDS WILL BE BORROWED IN PHASES, AS NEEDED, SO AS NOT TO INCUR INTEREST ON THE BORROWED FUNDS UNTIL SUCH TIME AS ADDITIONAL FUNDING IS NEEDED ON THE VARIOUS PROJECTS.

THIS WAS AN INTENTIONAL AND CONSERVATIVE BUDGET DECISION AND AN IMPORTANT ONE TO HELP PROTECT THE COUNTY'S TRIPLE A (Aaa) BOND RATING ISSUED BY MOODY'S INVESTOR SERVICES. THE COUNTY'S BOND RATING IS THE EQUIVALENT TO OUR HOUSEHOLD CREDIT SCORE.

OBTAINING THAT BOND RATING BACK IN FEBRUARY 2008 WAS A MONUMENTAL MOMENT FOR THE COUNTY AND PROTECTING IT HAS BEEN, AND WILL CONTINUE TO BE, A PRIORITY OF MINE AS WE BALANCE THE COUNTY'S NEEDS AND THE FINANCIAL OBLIGATIONS NEEDED TO RETAIN QUALITY OF LIFE FOR OUR RESIDENTS.

THE COUNTY ENDED FISCAL YEAR 2025 WITH APPROXIMATELY \$1.1 BILLION IN TOTAL DIRECT DEBT AND \$939.8 MILLION IN NET DEBT. THE FY 2025 TAX BASE IS ESTIMATED TO BE APPROXIMATELY \$105.2 BILLION. BASED ON THOSE FIGURES, THE TOTAL DEBT RATIO IS 1.07% AND THE NET DEBT RATIO IS TO BE .89%

THIS MEANS THE CALCULATED “DEBT BURDEN RATIO” IS ACTUALLY MUCH LOWER NOW THAN IT WAS 22 YEARS AGO. THE TOTAL DEBT AND NET DEBT HAVE INCREASED BY 3.64 TIMES AND 3.26 TIMES, BUT THE TAX BASE HAS INCREASED BY 7.74 TIMES.

TO FURTHER PUT THIS IN PERSPECTIVE, BOTH THE TOTAL DEBT RATIO (1.07%) AND THE NET DEBT RATIO (0.89%) ARE AT, OR NEAR, THE LOWEST LEVEL EVER IN THE PAST 30 YEARS OF DATA COLLECTED

TOURISM EXPENDITURES ARE ANOTHER SOURCE OF REVENUES FOR OUR COUNTY THAT ARE NOT DERIVED FROM PROPERTY TAXES.

IN 2023, THE LAST YEAR FOR WHICH STATE NUMBERS ARE CURRENTLY AVAILABLE, WILLIAMSON COUNTY’S TOURISM DIRECT SPENDING FROM VISITORS, TOTLED OVER \$1.3 BILLION AND RANKED 6TH IN THE STATE.

IN CELEBRATION OF OUR STATEWIDE AMERICAN 250 CELEBRATION, THE CONVENTION AND VISITORS BUREAU IS WORKING DILIGENTLY WITH COMMUNITIES AND BUSINESSES TO

PROMOTE TOURISM IN A BIG WAY THROUGHOUT THE COMING MONTHS AS WE MOVE INTO THE BIG CELEBRATION NEXT YEAR.

MANY OF YOU MAY RECALL THAT WILLIAMSON COUNTY AND THE CITY OF FRANKLIN WERE FOUNDED IN 1799; SOME OF YOU MAY RECALL THAT FRANKLIN WAS NAMED AFTER BENJAMIN FRANKLIN.

BENJAMIN FRANKLIN WAS ONE OF THE FOUNDING FATHERS OF THE UNITED STATES, A DRAFTER AND SIGNER OF THE DECLARATION OF INDEPENDENCE AND THE FIRST POSTMASTER GENERAL.

AS WE MOVE IN TO THE 250TH CELEBRATION, WILLIAMSON COUNTY WAS GIFTED A BRONZE STATUE OF BENJAMIN FRANKLIN TO BE PLACED AT THE LOUISE G. LYNCH ARCHIVES AND MUSEUM.

THIS STATUE WILL BE FACING DOWNTOWN FRANKLIN AND LOCATED ADJACENT TO THE HISTORIC FIVE POINTS POST OFFICE AND WILL BE PLACED AND REVEALED NEXT SUMMER.

PLEASE JOIN ME IN A ROUND OF APPLAUSE FOR THIS GENEROUS DONATION PROVIDED BY PAM LEWIS.

WITH THE APPROVAL OF THE COUNTY COMMISSION, WILLIAMSON COUNTY CONTRACTED WITH A PART-TIME GRANT WRITER AS ANOTHER MEANS OF WORKING TO SECURE ANY AND ALL STATE AND FEDERAL GRANT FUNDS AVILABLE FOR OUR COUNTY.

AS PREVIOUSLY NOTED, THE COUNTY RECEIVES APPROXIMATELY 1% IN FEDERAL REVENUES FOR OUR BUDGET; THEREFORE IT IS ENCUMBENT UPON US TO SEARCH OUT ALL REVENUE SOURCES WHICH MAY BE AVAILABLE TO LOCAL GOVERNMENTS.

SINCE HER HIRING, BETH LOTHERS HAS TEDIOUSLY AND SUCCESSFULLY ACQUIRED GRANT FUNDS FOR WILLIAMSON COUNTY PROJECTS RELATED TO SAFE STREETS AND GREENWAY PLANNING, SOLID WASTE PROJECTS, PARKS AND RECREATION PROJECTS, BROAD BAND CONNECTIVITY, ARTS AND VOLUNTEER FIRE FIGHTING EQUIPMENT, JUST TO NAME A FEW.

THROUGH HER EFFORTS AND WORKING WITH STAFF, LAST YEAR, WE WERE AWARDED \$2.2 MILLION IN GRANT FUNDS FOR OSBURN PARK IN NOLENSVILLE AND CASTLE PARK IN TRIUNE.

JUST THIS PAST WEEK WE WERE AWARDED \$3.5 MILLION FOR PHASE 2 OF THE WILKINS BRANCH MOUNTAIN BIKE PARK AND THE NEW COLLEGE GROVE PARK. THE APPRAISED VALUE OF THESE TWO COUNTY PARKS SERVED AS THE GRANT MATCH FOR THE AWARD.

WORKING WITH OUR VARIOUS ELECTED OFFICIALS AND DEPARTMENT HEADS, BETH HAS SUCCESSFULLY BROUGHT A TOTAL OF \$7.5 MILLION ADDITIONAL GRANT FUNDS TO THIS COUNTY.

ASIDE FROM HER GRANT WRITING SUCCESS, WILLIAMSON COUNTY EXPENDED OVER \$9.9 MILLION THROUGHOUT THE VARIOUS DEPARTMENTAL BUDGETS THAT WERE REIMBURSED BY GRANT FUNDS IN THE 2023-24 FISCAL YEAR,

IN THE 2024-25 FISCAL YEAR THAT JUST ENDED, THAT NUMBER INCREASED TO \$14.2 MILLION IN FEDERAL AND STATE FUNDS TOWARDS OUR OPERATIONS.

THIS IS IMPORTANT FOR YOU TO KNOW THAT LOCAL GOVERNMENT DOES NOT ALWAYS JUST LOOK TO LOCAL PROPERTY TAXES FOR FUNDING OUR OPERATING AND CAPITAL EXPENDITURES.

AS YOU MAY BE AWARE, THE COUNTY'S PARKS AND RECREATION TEAM NOW PRODUCE THE TENNESSEE RENAISSANCE FESTIVAL AT CASTLE PARK. FOR THE PAST TWO YEARS, THIS EVENT HAS RETURNED APPROXIMATELY \$2.2 MILLION TO THE COUNTY GENERAL FUND BALANCE.

THE COUNTY'S ANIMAL CENTER CONTINUES TO REFLECT ANOTHER PICTURE OF SUCCESS FOR OUR COMMUNITY. THE 2024 CALENDAR YEAR STATISTICS REFLECT THAT THE STAFF AND VOLUNTEERS TOOK IN OVER 3,300 CATS AND DOGS, ASSISTED WITH OVER 1,990 ADOPTIONS AND COLLECTIVELY ADVOCATED, EDUCATED AND OBTAINED A LIVE RELEASE RATE OF 95% !!!! – applause -

NOT ONLY DO THE EMPLOYEES OF THIS DEPARTMENT TAKE GREAT STRIDES TO ENSURE EVERY INTAKE HAS A HAPPY ENDING, BUT THE VOLUNTEERS AT THE FACILITY ARE TO BE COMMENDED AS WELL!

WITH OVER 27,240 HOURS OF VOLUNTEER TIME DOCUMENTED IN 2024, THIS VOLUNTEER TIME REFLECTED THE EQUIVALENT OF 11.5 FULL TIME STAFF MEMBERS FOR OUR FACILITY!

PLEASE JOIN ME IN A ROUND OF APPLAUSE FOR THESE VOLUNTEERS WHO DEDICATE THEIR TIME TO OUR ANIMAL CENTER NEEDS!

WE HAVE SO MUCH TO BE THANKFUL FOR IN THIS COUNTY.

OUR PROPERTY ASSESSED VALUES ARE AT AN ALL-TIME HIGH. THE RECENT COUNTY-WIDE REAPPRAISAL RESULTED IN THE COUNTY'S TOTAL ASSESSED VALUE TOTALING OVER \$29 BILLION, REPRESENTING A 53.5% INCREASE, AT \$10 BILLION MORE THAN THE 2024 ASSESSED TOTAL VALUES.

GOING FORWARD, WILLIAMSON COUNTY'S BOARD OF COMMISSIONERS HAVE APPROVED THE REAPPRAISAL PROCESS TO BE PERFORMED EVERY THREE YEARS, AS OPPOSED TO THE CURRENT PROCESS OF EVERY FOUR YEARS. THIS IS BEING DONE TO ALLOW THE ASSESSOR'S OFFICE TO STAY ATOP OF THE MARKET MORE OFTEN IN AN EFFORT TO AVOID LARGER ASSESSED IMPLICATIONS ON THE FOUR YEAR PROCESS.

OUR ASSESSED PROPERTY VALUES HELP KEEP OUR PROPERTY TAX RATE LOWER THAN OUR NEIGHBORING COUNTIES AND OTHER STATES.

ONE PENNY ON THE COUNTY'S TAX RATE GENERATES WILL GENERATE APPROXIMATELY \$2.7 MILLION.

THE PROPERTY TAX RATE IS THE PRIMARY SOURCE OF REVENUE TO HELP FUND THE OPERATIONS OF ALL COUNTY SERVICES, INCLUDING THE SCHOOL SYSTEM.

IN A JUNE 11TH PUBLICATION OF THE ON-LINE NASHVILLE BUSINESS JOURNAL, IT REFERENCED A GREATER NASHVILLE REGIONAL COUNCIL REPORT THAT THE NASHVILLE HOUSING MARKET IS IN A SLUMP, STATING THAT THE GREATER NASHVILLE REALTORS REPORTED A 9% DECREASE IN CLOSINGS FROM THIS TIME LAST YEAR.

THE ARTICLE GOES ON TO STATE THAT DAVIDSON, CHEATHAM, MAURY, ROBERTSON, RUTHERFORD AND SUMNER COUNTIES EXPERIENCED AN AVERAGE DECLINE OF 18%. HOWEVER, WILLIAMSON COUNTY, ALONG WITH DICKSON AND WILSON COUNTIES, REMAINED STEADY WITH NO CHANGE IN CLOSINGS COMPARED TO THE PREVIOUS YEAR.

THIS IS IMPORTANT BECAUSE IT INDICATES THAT OUR ECONOMY IS STRONG. WITH A STEADY HOUSING MARKET, JOBS AND LOW PROPERTY TAX RATES, OUR CITIZENS CONTINUE TO HAVE THE OPPORTUNITY TO LIVE, WORK AND PLAY IN A CONSERVATE LED ENVIRONMENT.

THE SMARTASSET'S PUBLIC RELATIONS TEAM RECENTLY RELEASED THE RESULTS OF THEIR LATEST STUDY FOR THE TOP PLACES FOR FAMILIES IN THE U.S. FOR FAMILIES. BASED ON FOUR CATEGORIES – HOUSING EQUITY, STUDENTS' ACADEMIC PERFORMANCE, RECREATION AND COMMUNITY CENTERS PER 1,000 PEOPLE AND CHILD CARE COSTS. THIS STUDY REVEALED THAT WILLIAMSON COUNTY RANKED **NUMBER ONE** IN THE BEST PLACES IN TENNESSEE TO RAISE A FAMILY.

JUST AS IMPORTANT AS A STEADY HOUSING MARKET, STEADY EMPLOYMENT IS VITAL TO OUR ECONOMY. IN MAY, WILLIAMSON COUNTY HAD THE LOWEST UNEMPLOYMENT RATE AT 2.6%, IN COMPARISON TO THE STATEWIDE UNEMPLOYMENT RATE OF 3.5%. RATES DECREASED IN THREE COUNTIES THROUGHOUT THE STATE FROM APRIL TO MAY, WHILE UNEMPLOYMENT RATES INCREASED IN 92 COUNTIES.

THESE STATISTICS RE-ENFORCE THE IMPORTANCE OF THE STRENGTH OF OUR BUSINESS COMMUNITY AND THE WORK OF THIS CHAMBER AND THE ECONOMIC DEVELOPMENT DEPARTMENT.

HOW VERY FORTUNATE WE ARE TO LIVE IN A COUNTY WITH A TOP-NOTCH, AWARD WINNING AND NATIONALLY RECOGNIZED HOSPITAL.

WILLIAMSON MEDICAL CENTER WAS RECENTLY NAMED AMONG AMERICA'S 2025 BEST HOSPITALS IN FIVE DIFFERENT CATEGORIES BY THE *WOMEN'S CHOICE AWARD*, AS FOLLOWS:

- HEART CARE
- OBSTETRICS
- MAMMOGRAM
- WOMEN'S SERVICES
- MINIMALLY INVASIVE SURGERY

THIS RECOGNITION IS A REFLECTION OF THE EXCELLENT STAFFING AND LEADERSHIP OVERSIGHT AND THEIR INDEPENDENT DESIRE TO ENSURE OUR COUNTY HAS EXCELLENT HEALTH CARE FACILITIES FOR OUR RESIDENTS.

OF COURSE, SOME SAY THE WOMEN'S CHOICE AWARDS MEAN MORE THAN SOME OF THE OTHER AWARDS BECAUSE WE ALL KNOW THAT WOMEN MAKE THE MAJORITY OF HEALTHCARE DECISIONS FOR THEIR FAMILIES.

YOU MAY HAVE ALREADY HEARD THAT LAST WEEK THE WILLIAMSON HEALTH BOARD OF TRUSTEES ANNOUNCED IT IS ENGAGED IN A COMPREHENSIVE STRATEGIC PLANNING PROCESS.

JUST AS ALL SUCCESSFUL AND FORWARD-THINKING ORGANIZATIONS DO, WILLIAMSON HEALTH IS THOUGHTFULLY AND STRATEGICALLY PLANNING FOR A STRONG FUTURE IN A CHANGING HEALTHCARE LANDSCAPE.

THE BOARD IS EXPLORING ALL OPTIONS — INCLUDING PATHWAYS TO REMAIN INDEPENDENT AS WELL AS THE POSSIBILITY OF A CHANGE IN OWNERSHIP — BUT NO DECISIONS HAVE BEEN MADE AT THIS TIME, AND IT IS BUSINESS AS USUAL — NOTHING HAS CHANGED.

WILLIAMSON HEALTH IS CURRENTLY IN A STRONG FINANCIAL POSITION, SO THIS PROCESS IS NOT ABOUT SURVIVAL — IT IS ABOUT ENSURING OUR LOCAL HEALTH SYSTEM THRIVES FOR MANY YEARS TO COME. IN THE END, THE BOARD IS COMMITTED TO CHOOSING THE BEST POSSIBLE PATH FORWARD TO ACHIEVE WILLIAMSON HEALTH'S MEANINGFUL MISSION OF CARING FOR OUR COMMUNITY — WHICH INCLUDES ITS EMPLOYEES, MEDICAL STAFF, AND PATIENTS.

IF YOU HAVE NOT ALREADY DONE SO, I WANT TO ENCOURAGE YOU TO SIGN UP AND BECOME A VOLUNTEER FOR AN ORGANIZATION WHOSE MISSION IS TO PROVIDE A FAMILY FRIEND FAIR, PROMOTE AGRICULTURE, BRING COMMUNITIES TOGETHER AND CELEBRATE THE TRADITIONS OF WILLIAMSON COUNTY.

SUMMER NIGHTS AND FAIR DELIGHTS ARE ONLY 10 SHORT DAYS AWAY!! THE 21ST ANNUAL WILLIAMSON COUNTY FAIR IS THE LARGEST SINGLE EVENT IN OUR COUNTY. THERE IS SOMETHING NEW, FUN AND EDUCATIONAL FOR VISITORS OF ALL AGES TO ENJOY.

DURING THE PAST 20 YEARS OF THE FAIR, IT HAS PROVIDED A CUMULATIVE ECONOMIC IMPACT OF OVER \$89 MILLION DOLLARS, PROVIDED OVER \$59,000 IN SCHOLARSHIPS AND DONATED OVER \$400,000 TO CENTENNIAL AND PAGE HIGH SCHOOL BAND BOOSTERS.

THESE NINE DAYS OF FUN ARE VOLUNTEER INTENSIVE. EVEN WITH OVER 1,200 VOLUNTEERS PULLING TOGETHER, WE ARE LIKE NUMEROUS OTHER ORGANIZATIONS, WE ARE DOWN OVER 1,000 VOLUNTEERS IN THE PAST FIVE YEARS.

OUR VOLUNTEERS ARE THE HEARTBEAT OF THE FAIR AND YOUR VOLUNTEER SERVICE IS MUCH NEEDED!

TODAY, I HAVE SHARED WITH YOU NUMEROUS STATISTICS, NUMBERS AND DIFFERENT INFORMATION ABOUT WHAT MAKES WILLIAMSON COUNTY GREAT.

ALL OF THIS INFORMATION SHARED WITH YOU TODAY IS REFLECTIVE OF THE LEADERSHIP THROUGHOUT OUR COUNTY AND THAT INCLUDES THE CITY LEADERS OF OUR SIX CITIES AND TOWNS. LIKEWISE, THERE ARE NUMEROUS COMMUNITY LEADERS THAT STRIVE TO KEEP THE IDENTITIES RELEVANT THROUGH PRIOR GENERATIONS AND THOSE TO COME.

IF YOU ARE ONE OF MY DEPARTMENT HEADS, PLEASE STAND.

I WANT TO THANK YOU FOR YOUR TIRELESS WORK AND THE CONTRIBUTIONS YOU EACH PROVIDE TO MAKE GREAT THINGS HAPPEN WHILE SERVING OUR RESIDENTS.

WILLIAMSON COUNTY'S LEADERSHIP TEAM IS STRONG. AND LIKE THE PIECES OF A QUILT, THEY ARE WOVEN TOGETHER BY THEIR OWN STRENGTHS AND IDENTITIES.

NOT ONLY DO THEY REACH OUT AND PARTNER WITH ONE ANOTHER, THEY ARE ALWAYS WILLING TO LEND A HELPING HAND TO OTHER COMMUNITIES AND STATES WHO ARE IN NEED.

FOR EXAMPLE, OUR ANIMAL CENTER TOOK IN LOST PETS FROM THE EAST TENNESSEE AND NORTH CAROLINA HURRICANE FLOODS.

OUR EMERGENCY MANAGEMENT TEAM RESPONDED TO THAT NATURAL DISASTER. LAST WEEK, EMA STAFF MEMBERS, BUTCH COULTER, JUSTIN RILLING AND KATE BROCK WERE DEPLOYED TO KERRVILLE, TEXAS TO PROVIDE COMMUNICATIONS, SEARCH AND RESCUE ASSISTANCE.

IT IS SO REWARDING TO HAVE A LEADERSHIP TEAM THAT STAYS ON TOP OF TRAINING AND IS SOUGHT OUT TO BE OF ASSISTANCE WHEN NEEDED.

JUST LIKE MY TEAM, THE INDIVIDUAL CITIES AND TOWNS LEADERSHIP TEAMS THROUGHOUT THIS COUNTY ARE ALSO A PART OF THE WOVEN FABRIC OF THIS COUNTY.

WILLIAMSON COUNTY HAS A LONG HISTORY OF GREAT LEADERS, STARTING WITH OUR NAME SAKE, DR. HUGH WILLIAMSON, WHO WAS A SIGNER OF THE UNITED STATES CONSTITUTION.

IT IS IMPORTANT TO REFLECT ON THE STRENGTH OF OUR FABRIC, THE QUILT THAT WAS WOVEN TOGETHER IN OCTOBER, 1799.

IT IS OFTEN EASY TO BE THE ARMCHAIR QUARTERBACK, KNOWING THAT YOU WOULD HAVE ADDRESSED A SITUATION DIFFERENTLY THAN THOSE WHO DID.

HAVING BEEN INVOLVED IN WILLIAMSON COUNTY GOVERNMENT SINCE 1986, I AM **PROUD** TO STAND HERE TODAY AND TELL YOU THAT THIS COUNTY HAS BEEN BLESSED WITH GREAT LEADERS THROUGH NUMEROUS DECADES. I CAN SAY THAT OUR COUNTY CONTINUES TO HAVE GREAT LEADERS, TODAY.

DO NOT LET ANYONE TELL YOU IT IS EASY.

LEADERS IN WILLIAMSON COUNTY WILL TELL YOU PUBLIC SERVICE IS DEEP THOUGHT PROVOKING; IT IS SELFLESS AND IT IS IMPORTANT.

AND LIKE THE THREADS THAT ARE WOVEN INTO THIS WILLIAMSON COUNTY QUILT, WE ARE STRONGER TOGETHER. – pause --

THANK YOU FOR COMING TODAY - MAY GOD CONTINUE TO BLESS THE THREADS OF THIS COUNTY QUILT.

MAY WE BIND TOGETHER – NOT APART.

MAY GOD CONTINUE TO BLESS THIS GREAT COUNTY, BLESS OUR TROOPS AND GOD BLESS AMERICA.

