



VOL 5: ISSUE 4



MESSAGE FROM SHERIFF HERNANDEZ

I'll admit I'm not a technology buff. In fact, when it comes to gadgets, I'd rather have someone who understands the device show me how to use it rather than figure it out on my own. I won't say I went into the last year of virtual meetings kicking and screaming, but it certainly wasn't my favorite thing. After over a year of communicating on digital platforms, I'm rather impressed with the results.

Our morning briefings have taken on new life. Not only are we able to hear the voices of supervisors and staff, but we can see each other. TCSO has over 1,650 employees, spread out across the county in various buildings and patrol vehicles. Connecting via video bridges the distance gap.

Our [Building Bridges](#) program has been growing in both audience and presenters. We've been able to engage in meaningful conversations on a wide range of relevant topics. The people who've taken the time to speak with us have truly enriched us with their knowledge and insights. I encourage you to follow us on social media or visit our [event calendar](#) where you can see what's coming up.

Earlier this week, we hosted a virtual Town Hall meeting for residents in neighborhoods around FM 969. I enjoy

these meetings so much because we not only get to hear the concerns of residents, we get to work together on solutions to problems. We get to know each other better and explore the needs of neighborhoods and the investigative processes of TCSO in a collaborative setting.



Now, don't get me wrong; I cannot wait until we can meet again in person! I believe we will soon, but until that day comes, I'm grateful for these opportunities to stay connected and committed to each other. Your Travis County Sheriff's Office cares and we'd love to hear from you if you're interested in arranging a meeting for your neighborhood.



ANTI-ASIAN RACISM DIALOGUE



Earlier this month, TCSO hosted two [Building Bridges](#) Community Dialogues on the topic of anti-Asian racism. "A Panel Discussion on Standing & Speaking up Against Anti-Asian Racism" was a powerful presentation from Jennifer Harless, Office of Civil Rights, City of Austin. We're grateful to the following panelists who shared personal stories and provided great insight: Jenny Marshall, Human Trafficking Prevention Specialist; Pastor Jon Eng, [Gateway Church](#); CJ Zhao, President of [Asian Pacific Islander American Public Affairs APAPA Austin Chapter](#); Sonja A. Shah, MA, Culture & Arts Education Manager, [Asian American Resource Center](#), City of Austin Parks and Recreation.

We also thank Amy Wong Mok, Founder & CEO of the [Asian American Cultural Center](#) and the President of the Asian American Community Partnership for her presentation "Asian Americans | Messages We Have Received: They Matter."

TELECOMMUNICATORS WEEK



The week of April 11th - 17th was [National Public Safety Telecommunicators Week](#). The week honors work that mostly goes unseen by 911 call takers and dispatchers, affectionately known by some as "headset heroes."

TCSO has dozens of 911 telecommunicators working 24 hours a day, every day of the year. They work at the Combined Transportation, Emergency & Communications Center (CTECC) in Austin, alongside telecommunicators from other local law enforcement, EMS, and fire agencies.

Our telecommunicators go through a minimum of 32 weeks of training and are fully cross-trained to take 911 calls and dispatch deputies to those calls.

Most years, their colleagues from across the Sheriff's Office visit, but due to COVID-19 restrictions at the CTECC they were unable to; instead, we honored our telecommunicators by sending meals.

SEXUAL ASSAULT AWARENESS



April is Sexual Assault Awareness Month. TCSO's Sex Crimes Unit (pictured above) is comprised of three detectives who specialize in these sensitive cases. Their sergeant oversees the Sex Crimes and Homicide Units.

If you've been the victim of sexual abuse, you have options and we're here to help. Some people want to file charges, some decide to file a report, others just want someone to listen. Please reach out to us. No one should have to face these situations alone.

TCSO Tip Line: 512-854-1444
 Contact a TCSO Detective: 512-854-9770
 TCSO Victim Services: 512-854-9709

CRIME VICTIMS' RIGHTS WEEK



April 18th - 24th was [National Crime Victims' Rights Week](#), which was established in 1981 as a way to recommit to serving survivors of crime and celebrating the many people who provide critical services to survivors as they navigate challenging periods in their lives.

Our Victim Services Unit worked to spread the word within our agency and our community about the [Crime Victims' Bill of Rights](#). It offers a reminder that victims should be empowered and have the right to be kept informed about their cases, to provide information to the court about how crime impacted them, to be present at public hearings, and to as much privacy as possible, among other rights.

CHILD ABUSE AWARENESS MONTH



April is [National Child Abuse Prevention Month](#), and at TCSO, we are so proud to be able to partner with the wonderful people at the [Center for Child Protection](#). Our Child Abuse Unit joins forces with additional agencies such as the District Attorney's Office, the Austin Police Department, and Child and Family Unit Protective Services (pictured above) to fight each day for the wellbeing of children in our community. Child sexual abuse, physical abuse, and other violent crimes in families cause trauma and put some of our most vulnerable community members at great risk. The Center for Child Protection offers workshops and tips on spotting and preventing abuse, which include encouraging open conversations, minimizing opportunities for abuse, and recognizing the signs.



On March 2, 2018, Austin Jeweler Theodore Shaughnessy was murdered in his home. His wife, returned fire against the intruders and survived. An extensive investigation by TCSO detectives revealed a murder-for-hire plot that resulted in the arrests of the couple's son, Nicolas Shaughnessy as well as Jaclyn Edison, Johnny Leon and Arion Smith.

On April 7, 2021, Shaughnessy and Smith plead guilty to murder. On April 14th, Leon also plead guilty to murder. All three men accepted 35 year sentences.

THE LINKS, INC. FORUM



On April 6th, Sheriff Hernandez participated as a keynote panelist for a discussion presented by [The Links, Inc.](#) (Austin, TX Chapter). "Know the Facts: Staying Safe During Times of Civil Unrest" was a sincere and rich conversation that ranged from law enforcement, to community relationships, to fostering trust.

TROOPER WALKER'S PROCESSION



Deputies with our TCSO Motors Unit participated in the funeral procession for Texas DPS Trooper Chad Walker in his hometown of Groesbeck, TX on April 7th.

Walker, 38, was shot on March 26th while responding to a disabled vehicle near Mexia, TX. He died a few days later at a Waco hospital.

Six TCSO deputies, along with law enforcement from across Texas and beyond, formed the 1,000-vehicle procession to honor Walker that went from his hometown high school to a cemetery outside of town.

COMMUNITY TOWN HALL



On April 27th, TCSO hosted a town hall for the Austin's Colony, Chaparral Crossing and Forest Bluff Home Owners Associations in southeast Travis County.

The area surrounding FM 969 is booming with development to include the Tesla factory. We reached out to these residents to ask what concerns they have, and we were able to address topics such as staffing, crime prevention and community policing. We extend our thanks to [Travis County Precinct One Commissioner Jeff Travillion](#) for joining the discussion.

If your neighborhood is interested in a community meeting and/or a neighborhood safety presentation, please contact our [Community Outreach Unit](#).

AUSTIN ANIMAL CENTER



Now that the [Austin Animal Center \(ACA\)](#) is back open for adoption appointments, they've invited our deputies to participate in a social media campaign to help find forever homes for animals in their care.

ACA provides shelter to more than 16,000 animals annually plus animal protection and pet resource services to Austin and unincorporated parts of Travis County.

You can now schedule an adoption appointment [online](#) or call 311 to visit their animals in person!



Congratulations!

Administration & Support Bureau: The [190 employees](#) who reported for duty during the February ice storm.

Corrections Bureau: Senior Corrections Officer Michael Sargent

Law Enforcement Bureau:
 Central Command | Detective Greg Pasak
 East Command | Senior Deputy Cody Taylor
 West Command | Senior Deputy Luis Garcia

