

TARRANT COUNTY

NEWS & INFORMATION



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Counties share Juvenile Justice Database

For the first time in Texas, two counties began sharing a common juvenile justice database this weekend with the rollout of the new, jointly developed software program. Tarrant and Dallas Counties have joined together to implement the Juvenile Case Management System (JCMS), which can track individuals entered into the database by either county.

"This is a major accomplishment and a great milestone achieved," said Tarrant County Administrator G.K. Maenius. "We have been able to develop a major software package that is specifically designed for Texas Juvenile Probation programs."

The JCMS has three benefits. First, now both counties can see database information across jurisdictions – allowing juvenile justice officials of one county the ability to determine if an individual has records in the other county. Second, it streamlines the operations of juvenile probation in both counties – decreasing paperwork and increasing person-to-person contacts. Third, counties have the ability to allow local law enforcement agencies to access the database.

"We have limited our development costs by partnering with Dallas and Bexar counties, along with the Texas Juvenile Probation Commission," said Maenius.

"Because we own the software and other Juvenile Probation departments across the State want this software, we will be able to sell it to them. This will result in literally millions of dollars in savings for Tarrant County because we will be sharing the development costs with other participating entities," he said.

"The JCMS could not have been accomplished without the help of many people," said Maenius. "Randy Turner and the staff at Tarrant County Juvenile Services were great. Information Technology (IT) Director Steve Smith was one of the visionaries who saw that a juvenile justice system could be developed. Finally, the Texas Conference of Urban Counties development team was indispensable. This has been a great team and we should all be proud of the work they did."

The JCMS is part of the TechShare program, a major effort involving the state's most populous counties to develop a common justice information system that can be used throughout Texas. In 2005, Tarrant County initiated the effort through the Urban Counties, which has been working to develop the standards and build systems that meet the unique needs of Texas counties. Tarrant County has maintained a leadership role in the TechShare program, providing much of the technical support in the development of new software programs.

Earlier this month, the TechShare Program received a national Digital Government Achievement Award from the Center for Electronic Government for its intergovernmental cooperation.

Fight the Flu

Even healthy people can get the flu, and it can be serious. The flu shot offers protection for you and those around you. Everyone 6 months and older should get a shot. The flu vaccine is plentiful this year and there are numerous places in Tarrant County to get a flu shot.

After getting a flu shot, there are several other prevention measures to use:

- Keep yourself healthy by eating right and getting enough rest and exercise.
- If you are sick, stay at home and don't go to work, school or other places where germs can be spread to others.
- In crowded areas and at home, keep your distance from people who are sick, and don't get close to them if you are not well.
- Keep your hands away from your eyes, nose and mouth.

Finally, there are two common-sense measures to practice year-round:

- Cover your mouth and nose with a tissue when coughing or sneezing. It may prevent those around you from getting sick.
- Wash your hands often to help protect yourself from germs and to reduce their spread.

Flu season in Texas usually runs from October to March with the majority of cases occurring in January and February.

People can check the Tarrant County Public Health (TCPH) Web site: <http://health.tarrantcounty.com> or visit our Facebook page for a list of TCPH locations and special community events that provide flu shots.

Burn Ban Extended for Tarrant County

The Tarrant County Commissioner's Court has extended this summer's ban on outdoor burning through December 20, 2011. All outdoor burning in Tarrant County is prohibited.

The unincorporated areas of Tarrant County have been determined to be under drought conditions by the Texas Forest Service, and the Tarrant County Fire Marshal requested the ban on outdoor burning in an effort to protect lives and properties of the residents in Tarrant County.

The National Weather Service (NWS) in Fort Worth has informed the Fire Marshal's Office that for Tarrant County to recover from the drought, it would need between 12 to 15 inches of rain. The NWS also stated that their forecast for fall, winter and early spring show higher than normal temperatures and lower than normal rainfall.

A violation of the Court Order prohibiting outdoor burning is a Class C Misdemeanor and punishable of a fine up to \$500.

Residents in the rural areas of Tarrant County should make sure they keep an area of about 30 feet mowed around their homes and out buildings to prevent a fire from reaching these structures.

For more information about the burn ban, please call the Fire Marshal's Office at 817-838-4660.

Outdoor Cooking During a Burn Ban

Many Tarrant County residents are rightfully concerned about how a burn ban affects their plans to cook outdoors. The Tarrant County Fire Marshal's Office urges all residents to use common sense when handling flammable materials during a burn ban.

Here are a few guidelines to follow for outdoor cooking:

- Gas grills are the safest outdoor cooking option. Please keep the flames covered during the operation of your gas grill.
- If you want to use a charcoal or wood-burning grill, it must be placed on a concrete, gravel or dirt surface well away (5 feet) from any combustible materials. Please keep the cover on the grill during use.
- Smokers can be used if they are placed on a concrete, gravel, or dirt surface well away (5 feet) from combustible materials. Keep the flames covered during use.
- Be sure to have a water source like a bucket of water or a garden hose nearby in case of emergencies.