

FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE April 27, 2009

Prepared by: Ellis County Communications  
101 W. Main Street  
Waxahachie, TX 75165

Contact: Diana Buckley, 972-825-5087, [Diana.Buckley@co.ellis.tx.us](mailto:Diana.Buckley@co.ellis.tx.us)

County to apply for grant funding

Following through with a decision made on March 20, Ellis County Commissioners voted Monday evening to approve application for Edward Byrne Memorial Justice Assistance Grant funding in the amount of \$76,950.

In March, County Auditor Mike Navarro advised the Court of the potential for the funding, and several law enforcement officials, including Sheriff Johnny Brown and Constable Terry Nay, registered their support for the idea. Chief Sheriff's Deputy Dennis Brearley was asked to take charge of writing the grant application, which asks for funding to add technology to County law enforcement vehicles to improve both safety and efficiency.

"What Sheriff Brown wants to do is to improve communications, where we can electronically dispatch our officers out in the field," said Captain Charles Laubach. "In an instant, a glance at a screen will tell them where the officer is, and which one is closer to an individual call."

Brearley told the court that the proposed system is large enough to handle all of the Sheriff's Department units as well as Constable's units and more.

"We are looking to see if it would be of benefit to the Italy's, the Milford's, the Maypearl's, the whoever's, if they want to pay their portion," he said. "So it will not just take care of this number of units."

Commissioner Bill Dodson, pct. 2, said he and Commissioner Heath Sims, pct. 3, had an opportunity to see a similar system in use when they met with CareFlite last year.

"They can track their vehicles around a three or four county area – it was very good," Dodson said.

The JAG application process included a requirement for a public hearing, which was held during the regularly scheduled meeting of the Commissioners' Court on Monday, April 13. No members of the public addressed the Court at that time regarding the funding.

Commissioners also found it in the best interest of the County to allow Sheriff Brown to declare a number of weapons as surplus and offer them as trade-in through GT Distributors in order to obtain newer weapons.

"We want to go to one type of weapon, one caliber, that will be department issue and will put us in line with other agencies," said Brearley. "Midlothian and Waxahachie are already assigning these types of weapons."

Brearley indicated the change would provide the department with the ability to purchase ammunition at a lower price, and would also allow officers to exchange ammunition magazines with other peace officers in the field if the situation called for it.

GT Distributors is a federal firearms licensed dealer and expects to offer the traded firearms for sale.

“They said that generally their customers are smaller police agencies that maybe can’t afford the latest and greatest stuff,” Brearley said. “They will often contact this distributor for those used items.”

Deputy Sergeant Peter Steuer was the third Sheriff’s Deputy to approach the Court during Monday’s meeting, requesting a review of regulations concerning overweight trucks and trucks carrying hazardous materials. Following the discussion, the Court asked Steuer to meet with representatives of the District Attorney’s Office and to bring a proposal to the Court in the near future.

Commissioners took time to honor the Italy Gladiators Basketball Team for advancing to Regional Finals, a feat that has not been accomplished since the late 1990’s. Sims read a proclamation naming each member of the successful team, most of whom were present in the courtroom.

“This has been a great year,” said Coach Kyle Holley. “We have some young guys, so we look forward to great things in the years to come.”

Commissioners also approved a proclamation declaring the week of April 27 through May 2, 2009 as “Moral Courage Week” in Ellis County. The Moral Courage Foundation, a non-profit organization founded in Ellis County, also met Monday evening to honor the following nominees for a \$25,000 scholarship: Anna Allen, Christina Armstead, Anneliese Barnes, Allison Dooley, Jennifer Fiedler, Emily Gore, Reginald Levingston, Jr., LaStaria Murray, Sharilyn Mutulo, David Nealy, Alan Ritchie, Jr., Marcus Shortes, Catherine Sullivan, and Megan Timmerman. The Foundation seeks to “inspire young people to live up to the moral standards of the Bible, and to encourage young people to courageously promote those moral values in our society.”

In other business, Commissioners:

- Appointed Julie Hastings to the board of Avalon Emergency Service District #8, to fill the unexpired term of Dave Bundrick, which expires on December 31, 2009;
- Took no action on a proposal by Constable Jimmie Ray, pct. 3, to apply for Tobacco Compliance Grant funding;
- Approved the purchase of property owned by Kenneth and Linda Wallace along Franks Road in Precinct 3, in association with the Federal Bridge Replacement Program approved in 2006 and funded within the precinct’s current budget;
- Established the Safety Initiative Network, an informal committee made up of variable members from among regular employees of Ellis County, with the purpose of reviewing accidents and injuries in order to recommend training or workplace modifications that will help to prevent further accidents;
- Granted a one-time variance along Zmolek Road in Precinct 2 relating to the road frontage requirement;
- Approved a contract with Fisk Electric in an amount not to exceed \$357,842 (which includes the portion the City of Waxahachie will pay) for security camera and access control systems associated with the bond program;
- Approved a contract with Infinity Sound in an amount not to exceed \$284,000 for audio visual systems associated with the bond program;
- Rejected the bids for construction of the Ellis County Sub Courthouse to be located in Ennis in order to make design changes that will bring the project within budget.