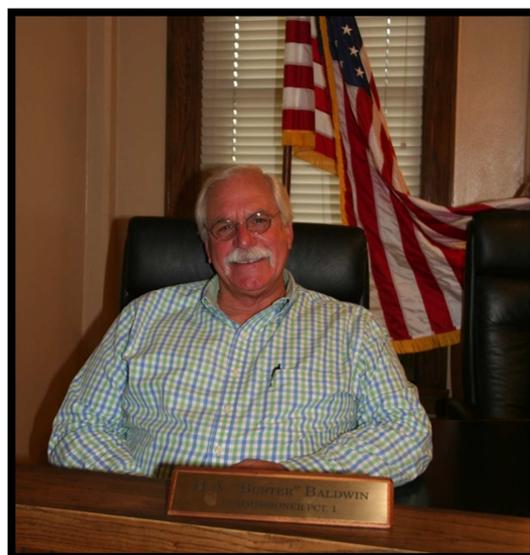


October 14, 2015

FROM THE OFFICE OF
ROSA LAVENDER
KERR COUNTY VICTIM'S
RIGHTS COORDINATOR
700 MAIN ST.
KERRVILLE, TX 78028

County Eye Newsletter



With the 2016 Republican primary in the horizon one familiar name will not appear on the ballot next March. Precinct 1 Commissioner Buster Baldwin has announced his retirement at the end of his term in December 2016.

“Representing the citizens of Kerr County all these years has been a fun experience,” Baldwin said, “but my dad always told me I would know when it was time to go...and it’s time to go.”

Baldwin has spent most of the last 30 years representing Kerr County interests in the public sector. He was elected commissioner in Precinct 4 in 1986 and served in that capacity for one term until 1990. Then after relocating he was elected Pct. 1 Commissioner in 1996 and has been re-elected every four years.

In the brief interim he served as the district director for State Representative Harvey Hilderbran for five years.

Baldwin is the only commissioner in Kerr County history to serve two different precincts and when he completes his term he will have served 24 years as a commissioner matching the longest tenure of the late Pct. 3 Commissioner Adolph Bartel who also served 24 years from 1953 to 1976.

Another unique credit on his resume came when he served as the president of the South Texas Association of County Judges and Commissioners when Kerr County was affiliated with that organization and then later served as the president of the West Texas Association of County Judges and Commissioners when Kerr County changed affiliations.

The West Texas Association of County Judges and Commissioners covers a vast geographic area and includes 119 counties. The year Baldwin was president the association's annual conference was held in Kerrville.

Some of the major accomplishments that occurred during Baldwin's time on the commissioners' court include the establishment of the unit road system in Kerr County during his first term as Pct. 4 Commissioner.

"That decision created a really quality department to build and maintain roads and bridges throughout the county," Baldwin said, "and commissioners no longer had to be responsible for maintenance in their respective precincts."

The renovation of the courthouse annex after the jail moved to the current location in the late 1990's and the creation of the new district courtrooms and adjacent office areas and renovation of the old courtroom into the district clerk's office occurred in the early years of Baldwin's term as Pct. 1 Commissioner.

In recent years the renovation of the historic Turtle Creek School and associated property and cleaning up the Turtle Creek Cemetery spearheaded by Baldwin led to the property and cemetery being turned back to the community by the county fathers.

"The improvements to the Hill Country Youth Event Center that have been completed have made the center a premier facility in the state," Baldwin said, "and will serve the needs of this community for many years to come."

During his tenure the county purchased the Kerr County Juvenile Detention Center from the private firm that built it originally. Baldwin is proud to have been a part of the passage of the recent jail bond to renovate and expand the Kerr County Jail facility earlier this year.

Baldwin also served on the six member Kerr Emergency Medical Service Advisory Board while working for Hilderbran in the early 1990's which led to the recommendation that the Kerrville Fire Department take over as the emergency medical provider countywide.

"My biggest disappointment has been the continued problems with the city/county relationship," Baldwin said. "I hope by the time I retire that relationship will be much better."

Baldwin also said he always dislikes having to raise taxes but realizes sometimes it has to be done to keep county government operational.

"It's been an incredible ride and it's been truly an honor to serve the citizens of this great county," Baldwin said. "If you aren't a true servant at heart don't get around this job because it will eat your lunch."

Retirement plans include gardening, camping and fishing and spending time with family.

"God has blessed Debbie and I with eight grandchildren and we want to spend more time with them," he said, "and I plan to plant a garden big enough to feed the neighbors too."

With candidates now lining up to file for the Pct. 1 Commissioner position in the March primary election Baldwin says he will enjoy the last year of his term.

"I wish the best of luck and God's blessings to whoever wins the election next year."