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FROM THE OFFICE OF
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County Eye Newsletter

Spring has finally arrived in the Texas Hill Country although a bit chilly and windy on its arrival. The bluebonnets, wisteria and mountain laurel are blooming all over the county and trees are covered with blooms of all variety.

This Easter weekend has an abundance of activities to participate in as a family including egg hunts, the annual Easter festival at Flat Rock Park and lots of activities at churches and other venues. Spring is a time to reflect on the blessings we share living in this beautiful part of Texas.

Putting aside all the political intrigue at the national level and even a bit at the local level, we really are blessed with so many opportunities to express our opinion at the ballot box. With the upcoming city elections and the run-off elections in late May, it's time to study the candidates and the issues and vote for your choice of leaders.

County officials are busy working with experts to plan the final construction details for the addition to the Kerr County Jail...with construction set to begin later this spring. Equally important is the right-of-way acquisition for the new wastewater system project slated to begin construction soon in East Kerr County.

If you've been to the lower level of the courthouse annex in the past week you saw a much smaller construction project underway. Completion of the project is expected in the next couple of weeks.

Almost eight years ago when Kerr County moved the county's indigent health program from offices at Peterson Hospital to the courthouse two offices were built in the annex to house that program and the victim services program. In recent years the screening of applications for court-appointed attorney has been added to the responsibilities of the staff and the program re-named indigent services.

The area was once a part of the jail when the jail was located in the annex. The victim services program had been housed in the basement of the older historic courthouse from 2004 when it began until Oct. 2008 when the new offices were completed. That area is not handicapped accessible and the new offices built addressed that issue.

Both programs have prospered in the area once used by the old jail but requirements for records retention over the years helped both offices outgrow the original area. Additionally there was limited space for a volunteer to work.

The new office being built will provide an area for a volunteer to work, a secure waiting area for clients for both programs and additional storage space. Often attorneys also use the area for family consultations in juvenile cases being heard in the courtroom in the downstairs annex and even occasionally in probate cases being heard.

The area will still be available for those consultations, as needed, but will be an enclosed area instead of the previous open limited security waiting area.

The best part of the story is the new office, like the previous two offices, is being built by staff in the county's maintenance department.

We are lucky to have very talented people who work in that department who possess the skills to do this type of construction at a significantly reduced cost to the county. The new office will be finished to match the rest of the décor of the lower level and will serve the needs of the two programs for many years ahead.

Stop by and check out our new area when you come to the courthouse...you will be impressed with the quality of construction and the efficiency of our staff. Thanks go to Lonnie and Sarah.