

THE TEXAS JAIL ASSOCIATION KEY ISSUES

Vol XXIX, No. 2

Summer 2025



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Summer 2025 Edition

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Message from the President



TJA Past President Brent Phillips — may he rest in peace — took a chance on me and appointed me to his board. With that opportunity I saw the importance of serving the members of TJA. It has been an honor and a privilege to be able to serve the membership.

The corrections officers and support staff are so important to the care of those in our custody. Many of those addicted, down on their luck or in a mental health crisis. These people end up in our county jails and it is up to us to treat them fairly and assist in their recovery. We need to ensure that we also take care of our staff by offering training on trauma-informed care programs. It is important to continue offering great training through collaboration and partnership with the membership. Whether it is at regional trainings or at the conferences, the opportunity to invest in the membership will continue over the next year of my presidency. I will continue to serve the members of this amazing organization with wholehearted commitment.

We had an amazing week of training and networking at the annual conference, and it was great to meet so many of you in person. We set a conference record for registered attendance and saw several first-time attendees. I'm so grateful to Sheriff Sally Hernandez and Jail Administrator Major Raul Banasco for all their support. I would like to thank all the board members for their consistent dedication and commitment to TJA. As well as the instructors who take time out of their schedule to present at the conferences. Thank you to the vendors for their continued support. I would also like to thank immediate Past President Johnny Jaquess for his service over the last year.

Congratulations to Erica Hernandez of Hays County for being elected to 3rd Vice President. Levi Vance of Tom Green County and Sheleana Davis of Robertson County were both elected as Directors. To those that were appointed, thank you for accepting the appointment. Welcome to the board! To the members, I encourage you to run for the board or join a committee. It does not matter what size our jail is, we all have something in common; our jailers are the foundation and heart of corrections.

The Jail Management Issues conference will be on September 8-12, 2025, in Galveston, Texas. The training committee has been working hard to put together some fantastic presenters. I hope to see you all in September.

Stay safe and God Bless!

Past President's Passage



It has been a great year. I hope that you all are as proud as I am at what this board has been able to achieve. It has been an absolute pleasure to have served with these committed professionals who have selflessly volunteered their time and effort to help elevate our profession. We've had an accomplished year. We got the word out about who we are as an association, and what issues we are facing as a profession. We have been a squeaky wheel to bring attention to our jails through the use of video and social media. We have influenced legislative changes. We created a Programs and Re-Entry committee to address the gap of services in all jails, big or small, and to provide additional resources for our civilian staff who share our burdens and struggles. We have increased our training and our members. We have unified our efforts, aligning with state and national associations. Additionally, our association remains financially sound.

I want to say thank you to the board and membership. Thank you for all your support. It has been an absolute honor and a pleasure to have served as your president and I am truly grateful for all of you. I couldn't have asked for better mentors and leaders and I am reminded of a quote from Jordon Peterson, *"Every person carries a piece of you with them. Someone is still using the phrases and words you used. Someone is still telling jokes they learn from you. Someone believes in friendship because they met you. Someone still smiles when they remember a moment with you. Someone is still listening to the music you showed them. Someone still remembers a compliment you gave them and it boosts their self-confidence. Someone admires you from afar and is inspired by you. Someone learned how to love by watching you. Someone is still encouraged by the advice you gave them. Someone has faith in your generation because of you. The world needs you. You may not always see it but your presence changes lives."*

When I teach a class, I will ask the students if they think it's important that their subordinates like them. The usual answer I get is no, that respect is only necessary. I then go through an exercise where they describe a person that has made the most difference in their life. My follow up questions are whether or not they liked them, and why, as leaders, would they not want to be the person others think about in that regard.

I have had a great career. One that I am very proud of. But, I certainly wouldn't be here now if not for all the bits and pieces that I have taken from others and if not for divine intervention. By God's grace and not of my own doing, I have been blessed beyond measure. So, it is now time for me to pass on the gavel, but from the bottom of my heart, thank you all for allowing me to serve. Thank you.

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Call for Articles!



Key Issues invites all members to send articles, photographs, presentations, papers, announcements, challenges, creative solutions or any submission that may be of interest to the TJA membership.

SUBMISSION DEADLINES

Fall Issue
October 1, 2025

Winter Issue
December 1, 2025

Summer Issue
June 1, 2026

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Why Membership in the **Texas Jail** **Association** Matters **MORE** **THAN EVER**

The Texas Jail Association (TJA) plays a pivotal role in shaping the future of corrections in the Lone Star State. With an ever-evolving criminal justice landscape, staying informed, trained, and connected has never been more critical for those working in or alongside Texas jails. TJA offers its members a host of valuable benefits designed to support their professional growth, enhance institutional standards, and advocate for positive legislative change.

A Community of Corrections Professionals

TJA brings together a diverse network of jail administrators, correctional officers, sheriffs, support staff, and other professionals dedicated to the safe and effective operation of Texas jails. This broad membership base creates a unique opportunity for peer-to-peer collaboration, knowledge sharing, and collective problem-solving across different regions and facility types.

Ongoing Education and Training

One of TJA's most significant contributions is its commitment to professional development. Through annual training conferences and regional seminars, members gain access to the

latest industry's best practices, legal updates, and leadership strategies. These events are not only educational but also serve as vital forums for discussing emerging trends and challenges in jail operations.

Influence on State Legislation

TJA also serves as an essential conduit between its members and the legislative process. With regular state legislative updates, the Association ensures that its members are well-informed about proposed laws and policy shifts that impact jail operations and correctional practices. This advocacy function empowers members to engage in the process and helps ensure that the voices of those on the front lines are heard in Austin.

Why Join Now?

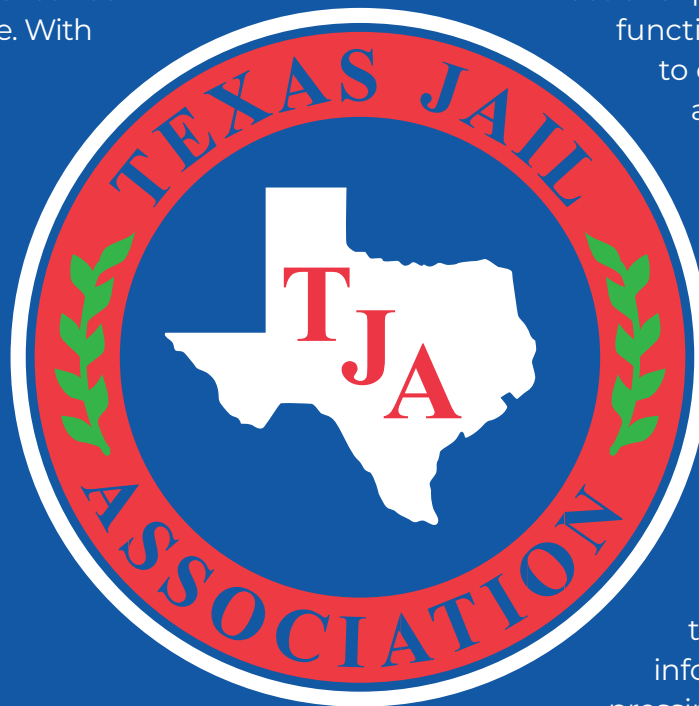
As the demands on correctional facilities grow, driven by issues such as mental health, staffing shortages, and evolving regulatory expectations, the need for unity and informed leadership is more pressing than ever. TJA membership not only supports individual professional development but also strengthens the entire corrections community in Texas.

Whether you're a veteran in the field or just beginning your career, joining the Texas Jail Association is an investment in your future and in the safety, efficiency, and integrity of the institutions we serve.

Together, we are stronger.
Together, we are TJA.

Join TJA online at

www.texasjailassociation.com/join.html



STRONGER TOGETHER:

TJA Membership Hits **Record High**

ABIGAIL MCCLISH,

2nd Vice President & Training Chair,
Texas Jail Association

The Texas Jail Association is proud to announce a historic milestone in its mission to unite and support correctional professionals across the state. As of this year, TJA proudly reports 1,632 Professional Members, 48 Associate Members, and 65 Business Members—a record-setting total that reflects the strength, credibility, and continued growth of our organization.

These numbers are more than just figures—they represent a thriving community of correctional professionals who are committed to excellence, professional development, and supporting one another through the ever-evolving challenges of operating county jails in Texas. This growing membership gives TJA a stronger voice at the state level, provides richer opportunities for knowledge sharing, and expands the network of experience available to every member.

As the TJA community grows, so do the opportunities to maximize your membership.



We encourage every member to make the most of the many resources available through the association:

Training Opportunities

From regional training to conferences, TJA provides access to relevant, affordable, and high-quality educational experiences. These sessions are designed to equip members with the latest knowledge on jail operations, legal standards, mental health care, and emerging technologies.

Technical Assistance

Need expert advice, a sample policy, or help navigating a specific jail management issue? Reach out to TJA’s board of directors and leverage the collective expertise of our board and membership. The association serves as a vital support system for professionals at every level of the organization.

Networking and Listserve Access

Whether you’re seeking insight on jail renovations or wondering how others are managing staffing shortages, the TJA listserv is a goldmine of experience and peer-to-peer support. It’s an easy way to ask questions, share documents, and exchange ideas with professionals across Texas.

Conferences

There’s no substitute for the in-person connection and collaborative learning that happens at the TJA Conference’s. With record attendance

year after year, these events are the cornerstone of our organization—offering members an unmatched opportunity to grow their knowledge, renew their purpose, and build lasting relationships with peers and business partners.

Thank you for being a part of TJA’s success. Now is the time to fully engage: attend trainings, participate in discussions, use the Listserv, and make meaningful connections. If you know a colleague who hasn’t joined yet, encourage them to become part of the momentum.

Together, we are building a stronger, smarter, more connected correctional profession in Texas—and with your continued involvement, the best is yet to come.

MEMBERSHIP NUMBERS
Professional – 1,632
Associate – 48
Business – 65



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Working Together:

How a Dog Program is Improving Life Inside the Jail

JOSHUA HENTHORNE, Compliance Sergeant

In late March 2025, a quiet change began at our facility—one that didn't involve new infrastructure or advanced technology. Instead, it arrived on four paws, often nervous and unsure, but full of potential. Through a collaborative effort between our staff and shelter partners, we introduced a canine care program designed to give overlooked dogs a chance at recovery—and, along the way, offer something meaningful to the people who care for them.

A Lifeline for Shelter Dogs in Crisis

The dogs selected for the program aren't just in need of homes—they need immediate intervention. Most have been pulled directly from euthanasia lists or are showing signs of extreme shelter stress: refusing to eat, circling in kennels, or shutting down entirely. These are the animals that often fall through the cracks, not because they're aggressive or unhealthy, but because they're out of time and options.

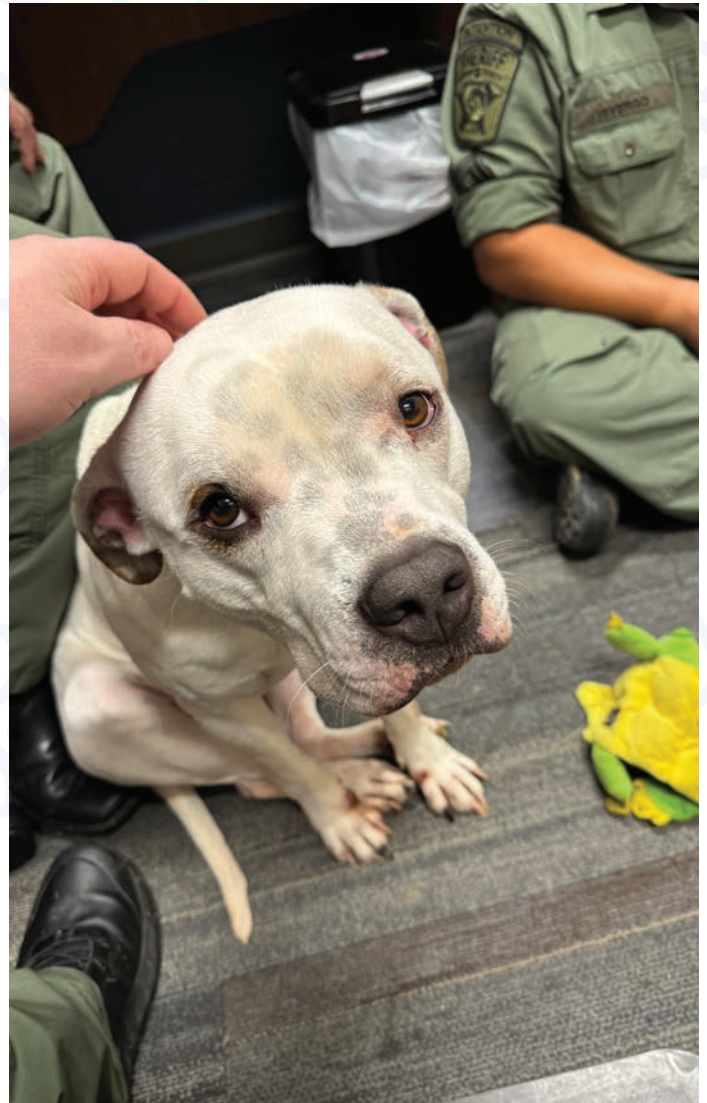
When they arrive at the facility, they don't go into isolation—they move in. The dogs live 24/7 in the jail, surrounded by the consistent presence of staff who offer attention, affection, and structure. The shift in their behavior is often fast and dramatic. Within days—sometimes hours—tails begin to wag, eyes brighten, and even the most anxious dogs begin to engage.

A Program Shaped by Staff Compassion

While the program had early support from leadership—including the jail administrator, sheriff, and head of the shelter—it's the day-to-

day involvement of our correctional staff that makes it work.

There is no designated handler team. Instead, care is provided by the many staff members who've chosen to step in, step up, and make time for these animals during their shifts. Feeding, walking, cleaning, playing—it's all done by people who simply believe in the value of the program.





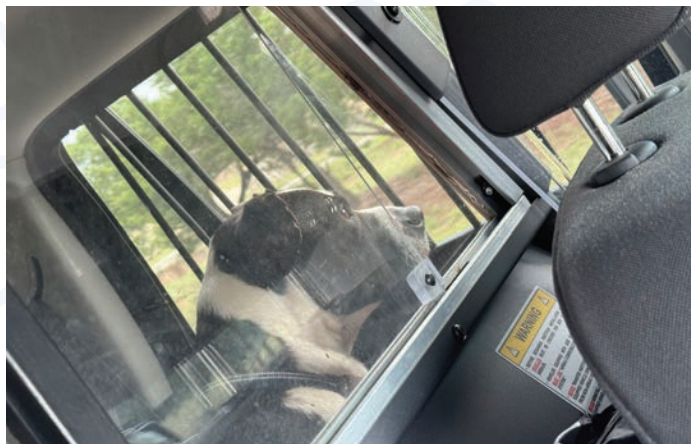
Watching a dog slip and slide down the hallway in pursuit of a ball has become more than just a fun break from routine—it's become a small ritual of relief in an often high-stress environment. And it's not just staff who are affected. When a dog walks through the booking, every inmate in the holding cell usually stops, smiles, and waves. It's a moment of shared lightness in a place that rarely sees it.

Community Connection Through Social Media

Outside the walls, the program has sparked a surprising level of public engagement. By sharing the dogs' progress and adoption stories on Facebook, our facility has seen a wave of community support and encouragement. In one playful twist, dogs who stay longer than two weeks are even featured on the facility's inmate roster—a lighthearted but effective way to raise their visibility and, in many cases,

their adoption chances.

So far, six dogs have found permanent homes through this initiative. While that number may seem modest, for these particular animals—those with nowhere else to go—it represents six lives saved and six families changed.



More Than a Shelter Program

This program isn't a distraction or a side project—it's becoming part of the culture. It's proof that even in environments designed for control and security, there's room for compassion, and growth.

The credit doesn't belong to one person—it belongs to the many staff who show up every day and choose to make space for something good. Their quiet commitment has turned a simple rescue mission into a source of pride and positivity for the entire facility.



Even while writing this article, I've been asked more than once, "When are we getting the next dog?" Our last one was just adopted, and thanks to some heavy rain, I haven't made it out to the shelter yet. But the question alone says everything—it's no longer just a program. It's something people look forward to.



These dogs may come in broken or overlooked, but with steady care and quiet support, they're helping transform the people and the place around them.

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FINDING THE WORDS

LINDSAY OWENS

It was late October of 2024, when we gathered for the initial programs planning meeting for the Collin County Detention Center. All of our community volunteers and attending staff went down to 3C to speak about the vision we shared and the commitment to providing pathways for addiction recovery. It was here that Richard Taylor, an inmate at the facility, had pointed out the advertisement on the screen and inquired about how he could enter the PEN American Prison and Justice Writing Contest. And it was from this interaction that the creative writing program was formed. At conception, the class was to help them create a piece for submitting, but it grew into something larger.

“Everyone’s become like a family.” Taylor states.

“It’s a judge free zone,” Bulent Dzelil adds. “I feel like it’s safe to share anything.”

What was once perhaps a way to get out of their cells is now an anticipated weekly ritual. As Taylor puts it, “When class gets canceled, everyone gets disappointed.”

Writing has allowed them to work through their circumstances, transmuting their unique experiences into art. “I dabbled a lot with writing before, but through the class I’ve been able to take that negativity and turn it into something positive.” Dzelil says.

PEN America’s *The Sentences that Create Us* has been a foundational text for the class. As it was written by formerly incarcerated writers, it gives a perspective that the inmates can relate to, while offering a guideline for crafting specific genres and a pathway to a devoted writing life in jail. And though the book comes

with a discussion guide, I felt that a broader, more genre focused lesson plan would allow for higher engagement.

At its core, the class encourages the exploration of self and adversity. It dissects how we've come to inherently understand traditional writing concepts such as plot through cause and effect of actions. It shows how we've crafted narratives to obtain goals, how we've developed an intrinsic understanding of character through observation, and how we've learned tactics to navigate the world and to effectively communicate with those around us—all of which make for effective writing.

But the most impactful aspect of this class has been the comradery it's built. I've been told stories of how they've worked through

plot holes with their roommates in the middle of the night, witnessed how they've encouraged each other to read in class, watched them tap out a beat of thirty strong while their fellow classmates sang, and seen collaboration despite language and ethnic barriers. Those who've been released ask how they can volunteer, others ask how they can continue with classes on the outside, and the ones that remain pose ideas for the programs they'd love to be involved in.

In truth, each class reaffirms my belief in programs. It's visceral proof of the difference we can make on the trajectory of someone's life. And at the end of the day, their writing remains a stark reminder that we can find art and beauty even in the darkest corners of life.



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Thank you for 40 fantastic years!



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2025-2026

NEW BOARD THANK YOUS



TJA DIRECTOR

SHELEANA DAVIS

Asst. Jail Administrator, Robertson County Sheriff's Office

I am truly honored and grateful for the opportunity to be elected to the Texas Jail Association Board of Directors.

I am excited for the future of this incredible organization and the important work we do together. I strongly encourage all correctional personnel to take full advantage of the outstanding training opportunities the TJA provides and to stay actively engaged in the organization.

Once again, thank you for this wonderful opportunity to serve you. I look forward to contributing to the continued growth and success of the Texas Jail Association.



TJA DIRECTOR

JUSTIN MARINARI

Lieutenant, Brazos County Sheriff's Office

I want to sincerely thank everyone for their support and providing me with the opportunity to be appointed to the Texas Jail Association Board of Directors. I am truly honored to have been appointed to serve on the Board for the upcoming year.

I ran for the Board because I believe in helping others and being a voice for those working in our field every day, and I am incredibly thankful for the opportunity to do exactly that.

I encourage all members to stay involved, share your feedback, and consider running for future leadership positions as your voice matters. It is a privilege to represent you, and I remain committed to working on your behalf.

2025-2026

NEW BOARD THANK YOUS



TJA DIRECTOR
LEVI VANCE

Lieutenant, Tom Green County Sheriff's Office

Thank you! Thank you for what you do for our profession. Thank you for your hard work and dedication. Thank you for caring about our profession. Thank you for electing me as a member of the Board of Directors.

I will strive to serve the membership to the best of my abilities. Without your vote and support I would not be able to continue to entertain you. Once again thank you.



TJA PRIVATE JAIL REPRESENTATIVE
RODNEY COOPER

Executive Director, LaSalle Corrections

I would like to say thank you to President Dembowski for allowing me to serve on the TJA board once again. It has been a true pleasure to serve alongside great people throughout the state who work hard every day to provide training and assistance to fellow jailers across the Great State of Texas! It is an honor to be associated with professionals who have a true desire to provide safe and secure jails for both the citizens they serve and those who are incarcerated. I continue to meet many new people who seek to collaborate and share best practices within the profession. I am looking forward to another great year with the Texas Jail Association.

2025-2026

NEW BOARD THANK YOUS



TJA 3RD VICE-PRESIDENT & MEMBERSHIP CHAIR
ERICA HERNANDEZ

Lieutenant, Hays County Sheriff's Office

Thank you all so much. I am truly honored to have been elected as the Third Vice President of our association, and I want to sincerely thank the membership for their trust and support. It's a privilege to represent our members and my agency, and I remain fully committed to serving the Texas Jail Association with respect, dedication, and integrity.

I would also like to extend special thanks to the entire Hays County Sheriff's Office, especially Sheriff Anthony Hipolito and my command staff for their continued support and encouragement.

The Texas Jail Association is made up of exceptional professionals—men and women whose experience, passion, and commitment to our field inspire me every day. Together, we provide essential training and support to corrections professionals across the great state of Texas. It's an honor to stand alongside you in that mission. I'm deeply grateful to be part of such an incredible organization.

With gratitude, I'm honored to move forward in service to this incredible membership. I look forward to the work we will accomplish together.

THANK YOU to all of those who nominate and vote for the TJA Board!

Your participation helps the Texas Jail Association continue to
"Provide a Distinct & Unified Voice for Corrections Officers in Local Jails."

**If you're interested in serving on the Board or know someone
who would be a great fit, nominations will open early 2026!**

Legislative Update

In this last (89th) Legislative session, a little over 10,000 bills were filed, with thousands checked for any application to our jails. This process identified over 60, many of which could negatively impact our operations.

Issues tackled in these bills included such things as out of state inmate standards and reports, custodial deaths, voting while in custody, public video magistration, pre- and post-natal depression screening, mugshots, and others. As the dust settled, only a few directly affecting us were passed.

There are several bills related to bail reform that may impact population as well as operations. SB 9 gives prosecutors the ability to appeal bad bail decisions made in cases involving the most heinous crimes and repeat felons. SB 40 prohibits the use of public funds to pay a nonprofit organization that will then post bail for criminals. HB 75 requires magistrates to provide a written explanation of why they determined an arrest was made without probable cause. Additionally, a constitutional amendment will be on the ballot in November that will require a judge to deny bail to a defendant charged with the most heinous crimes when the state proves the defendant is a threat to public safety or will not show up for trial.

Veterans in our jails received attention in the form of two bills. The first is SB 2938 that requires verification of veteran status during the booking process, as well as weekly reports. It also has provisions requiring free visits with Veterans Affairs Officials. With that, SB 1563 was passed mandating training for jailers specifically on Veteran Interactions as will be developed.

One of the bills generating the most discussion and one that will impact our operations was SB 8 which deals with the 287g program. Through several rounds, it was not passed until late on the last day. It states:

The sheriff of each county that operates a jail or contracts with a private vendor to operate a jail shall request and enter into an immigration law enforcement agreement to authorize the sheriff and officers, employees, and, as applicable, contractors of the sheriff's department to enforce federal immigration law.

The bill contains bracketed grant amounts to defray the costs and other requirements that will be put out over the next few months, noting this act does not take effect until December 1, 2026.

The Governor has just called for a Special Session to begin on July 21st, and with that, the process will start again. Bail reform is already a listed agenda item. We look forward to having more specific information available through that and of course through our JMI Conference in Galveston.

Billy Bryan, Chair	Kelly Rowe	Abby Belangeri	Shane Sowell
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The Chaplain's Corner

Jason Davis, TJA Chaplain, Sergeant, Brazos County Sheriff's Office

Iron Sharpens Iron: Strength Through Brotherhood in Corrections

Proverbs 27:17 tells us, *"As iron sharpens iron, so one person sharpens another."* In the challenging world of corrections, this verse reminds us that we are not meant to face the weight of our work alone. Whether it's through mentorship, peer support, or daily teamwork, we grow stronger by leaning on one another. The strength of our profession lies in the strength of our relationships.

Every training, briefing, and shift presents an opportunity to sharpen our skills and our character. The Texas Jail Association exists to foster this growth—providing

education, connection, and leadership development that prepares us for the demands of the job. When we invest in each other, we build a safer, more effective, and more united environment.

Let us commit to being sharpeners for one another—challenging, supporting, and encouraging our fellow professionals. In doing so, we live out the spirit of Proverbs 27:17 and strengthen not only ourselves but the entire profession. Together, we stay sharp. Together, we lead.

May God bless you and keep you safe.

— **Jason Davis**

Chaplain of the Texas Jail Association



Training Committee Report

Texas Jail Association members, I would like to express my deepest thank you to all the continued support from our members, agencies, and Sheriff's across our great state. We had a huge success this past year, hosting a record number of regional trainings; this could not have been possible without you showing interest and the Sheriff's support for it. The 39th Annual Conference was a great success and if you weren't able to attend, we hope you will check out our social media and watch our videos to see what took place this year.

This year was full of records. We had a record number of attendance at the 39th Annual Conference, a record number of regional trainings across Texas, and we set a historic high for the total number of members for the Texas Jail Association. We hope that you will continue your support for our association as we strive to continue to grow.

If you are interested in hosting a regional training, please contact one of the Training Committee members for details and scheduling.

Abby Belangeri, Chair	Jason Davis
Marcy Calnan	Rowdee Edwards
Aimee Crockett	Adam Guerrero
Melvin Bowser	Shawn Edwards
Jess Christensen	Chad Hill

UPCOMING REGIONAL TRAINING OPPORTUNITIES

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Hosted by Grayson County Sheriff's Office

Visit www.texasjailassociation.com for more information and to register.

These trainings are free to TJA members. Non-members will pay a \$30 registration fee. Once paid, he/she will receive a complimentary TJA membership. No refunds will be granted for Regional Training.



5

MODERNIZING COUNTY CORRECTIONS: FIVE GAME-CHANGING TECHNOLOGIES

ABIGAIL MCCLISH

2nd Vice President & Training Chair, Texas Jail Association

As county jails across Texas continue to grapple with the complex challenges of rising inmate populations, limited staffing, increased liability exposure, and ever-tightening budgets, technological innovation is no longer a luxury—it's a necessity. From urban detention centers to small rural lockups, modern tools are transforming the way correctional facilities operate, offering unprecedented opportunities to increase efficiency, reduce costs, and improve safety for both staff and inmates. By embracing the right technological solutions, counties can streamline operations, reallocate limited resources, and better serve their communities. Below are five of the most impactful technological innovations that every Texas jail should be considering.

One of the most promising innovations in correctional technology is the implementation of Radio Frequency Identification (RFID) tracking systems. These systems use lightweight, wearable wristbands embedded with RFID chips to track inmate movement in real time throughout the facility. RFID systems create a digital log every time an inmate enters or exits a location—such as housing units, classrooms, medical areas, or the commissary. These logs provide critical data to jail staff and administrators, enabling them to analyze inmate behavior patterns, confirm attendance at required programs, and corroborate staff reports during incidents or investigations. In addition to tracking inmates, many systems include staff RFID badges that can trigger duress alerts and iden-

tify responders' proximity in an emergency.

The efficiency gains from RFID tracking are significant. Staff no longer need to manually log every inmate movement, freeing them to focus on higher-priority tasks. These systems improve headcount accuracy, reduce the potential for human error, and increase visibility into facility operations. From a cost perspective, RFID technology reduces liability by providing precise documentation during investigations or litigation. It also increases operational transparency, supports compliance with audit standards, and can help deter incidents such as unauthorized movement or contraband exchange. Over time, this level of oversight translates into safer environments, reduced staffing pressure, and stronger legal protection for counties.

Equally transformative is the implementation of Electronic Medical Records (EMR) systems and telehealth services. Jails are constitutionally obligated to provide adequate healthcare, but meeting that standard can be particularly difficult in rural areas or smaller counties where access to providers is limited. An integrated EMR system consolidates medical records, tracks treatments, and ensures continuity of care, even if an inmate is transferred or released and later re-incarcerated. When combined with secure telehealth technology, counties can contract with remote providers. This reduces the cost and risk associated with transporting inmates offsite. This not only

reduces overtime and transportation expenses but also minimizes the potential for escape or in-transit incidents. Mental health care, in particular, is more accessible through telepsychiatry services, helping jails address the increasing number of inmates suffering from behavioral health conditions. Furthermore, EMRs improve documentation accuracy, assist with audits and inspections, and reduce liability by demonstrating a clear standard of care.

Another key area of innovation involves advanced surveillance systems—particularly body-worn cameras and facility-based cameras enhanced with artificial intelligence (AI) analytics. While body-worn cameras have become standard in many patrol operations, their use in jail settings is gaining traction due to their proven value in promoting transparency and reducing frivolous litigation. Facility cameras equipped with AI can be programmed to detect specific behavioral patterns, such as sudden movements, loitering near doors, or signs of a fight or medical emergency. These intelligent systems send real-time alerts to control rooms or command staff, allowing for rapid intervention. Such technology not only enhances security but also reduces the burden on staff to constantly monitor live video feeds. Moreover, the presence of reliable video evidence supports

disciplinary hearings, protects officers from false accusations, and reduces the likelihood of costly settlements or legal judgments.

In the booking and classification area, automated intake and risk assessment systems have shown tremendous promise. These systems integrate validated risk assessment tools with the jail management system to guide housing decisions, program eligibility, and classification levels based on objective data. Rather than relying solely on subjective decision-making or overburdened staff, these tools bring consistency and standardization to the classification process, which is essential for safety and liability reduction. By correctly identifying high-risk inmates during intake, jails can better allocate housing resources, avoid housing incompatible inmates together, and reduce incidents of violence or self-harm. Some software also includes mental health and substance use screening modules, enabling early intervention and referrals. These tools not only accelerate the intake process—reducing the amount of time staff spend on booking—but also improve outcomes by aligning classification practices with national standards and evidence-based practices.

Lastly, the foundation of an efficient jail operation lies in a modern Jail Management System



(JMS), and today's cloud-based, mobile-enabled platforms outperform the legacy systems of the past. A JMS integrates all aspects of jail operations—booking, classification, housing, movements, medical records, visitation, commissary, disciplinary actions, and more—into a single, secure digital environment. With mobile access, officers can complete logs, document incidents, conduct rounds, and update inmate records in real-time from housing units or handheld devices. This increases productivity and also improves data accuracy and timelines, eliminating the need to return to a desktop terminal. A cloud-based JMS reduces IT infrastructure costs, improves disaster recovery capabilities, and allows for automatic software updates. Perhaps most importantly, it enhances accountability through timestamped entries, audit trails, and compliance-ready reporting, which is essential for maintaining accreditation

and meeting state and federal requirements.

In conclusion, technology is no longer an optional upgrade for Texas jails—it's a strategic imperative. By investing in these five innovations—RFID tracking systems, EMR and telehealth, AI-enhanced surveillance, automated intake and classification systems, and cloud-based JMS—counties can significantly improve operational efficiency, reduce liability exposure, and realize substantial cost savings. These tools not only lighten the load on over-extended staff but also create a safer, more structured environment for inmates. Forward-thinking sheriffs, jail administrators, and commissioners should view technology not as an expense, but as an investment in the long-term sustainability and professionalism of their correctional operations.

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Travis County Sheriff's Office Corrections Services Intern Program Highlight

FRANCES DEMBOWSKI,
President, Texas Jail Association

The Akins High School Corrections Services Intern Program (CSI) partnership with the Travis County Sheriff's Office Corrections Bureau started in 2011. It affords students the unique opportunity to learn directly from current Correctional Officers at both the Downtown Travis County Jail and the Travis County Correctional Complex in Del Valle. The goal of the Correctional Services Internship is to prepare students ready for a career in corrections by the time they graduate. TCSO currently employs five Akins High School graduates and is proud to introduce the Class of 2024 individuals ready to start their career path with the agency.

Joshua Sturgeon

My transition into the Travis County Sheriff's Office from the Akins Correctional Services Internship has been nothing short of a roller-coaster ride, and participating in the internship allowed me to gain firsthand knowledge in what the true day to day activities look like in the jail. The real-time experience by shadowing the Corrections Officers showed me in depth what goes into being an Officer here at Travis County no matter what building or section you may be in. This collectively prepared me to come here following high school and graduation from Akins Early College High. I do believe that the internship has value in

preparing young adults for the work force that extends beyond school, by giving them real life experience and networking in a professional setting. By consistently seeing the operations of the jail within the buildings and different units, the internship allows you to gauge what it is like to be in the jail. Taking this experience and moving forward, I believe that the internship gives you more than enough of an idea of what working here can be like.

The biggest thing that came as a surprise to me was just how much opportunity there is here at TCSO. In my short time being employed with Travis County, I have had ample opportunity to expand my horizons as well as be pushed to continuously take the next step in my career and or future endeavors. I came to Travis County with already high expectations and was quickly met with them and continue to be surprised.

By far the best thing that has happened to me since coming to Travis County has been the chance to promote early on in my career. While spending a short time in the Security Coordinator Position, I was able to take that experience and strongly present a case that allowed me the chance to promote to Corrections Officer even at a young age. By taking advantage of the opportunities presented to me, I have been able to move around and learn more in depth about what goes on in all operations of Travis County.

Ayden Mireles

My experience with the CSI internship has helped me a lot with my transition into working for Travis County, the job shadowing and visiting the different units and training facilities have shown me a lot of how the system works within the jail and how every unit is different and how they all benefit one and other. Every single job shadow experience was in my opinion very helpful. All the officers, security



coordinators, and field training officers talked about their experiences within the jail and how great of a career this is for me at my age.

I 100% believe that the CSI internship has helped me tremendously prepare to learn about the different duties between officers, security coordinators, and field training officers.

Being able to start this long-term career and just be very blessed to have been a part of the CSI internship to prepare me for this job, I am very grateful and love this job very much.

What has surprised me the most is how differently everything is than how I thought it was, because when you think of a jail you think of jails from tv or movies when in reality it is nothing like that.

Some other information I would provide is for any students at the Akins Early College High School who is interested in this line of work, I encourage them very much to try out the CSI internship this internship has helped me out a lot and has prepared me for the job I have now and

at my age it is the start of a long term career.

Matthew Ybarra

I feel that job shadowing officers and security coordinators when I was a part of the CSI program benefitted me because it helped me network with some of the people that were already working in the jail. It also gave me an upper hand by having known what the job entails as far as how the jail operates and the duties of corrections officers and security coordinators.

The program absolutely helped to prepare me for working in the complex. Without the internship I wouldn't be able to imagine myself behind these walls successfully, it helped me to better understand that everybody in here is human, some just made the wrong decisions, but the people in here are not out for me. It also taught me how to interact with not just inmates but the officers and staff in the jail, which kind of questions I should be asking them and the small things I should be taking note of or paying attention to.

I believe the best thing that has happened to me since joining TCSO has been being granted the opportunity to apply to the Corrections Officer position early in my career. I have been given the opportunity to show my peers that I am deserving of the opportunity and that I am seeking a career within TCSO, and I am more than thankful for that.

What surprised me the most about being here at TCSO is how close the people are. I felt accepted when I first started, everybody had their own bit of advice for me, and I didn't have a hard time from the staff trying to get adjusted to the lifestyle of working here. I was surprised how many people noticed me and I learned that it doesn't take too much to get yourself out there in a positive light.

Overall, I am thankful to be a part of the TCSO

family and I look forward to being able to further my career with TCSO, I truly believe that the Akins CSI program helped me with the transition into working for TCSO and that it truly set me up for a great career at a young age.

The experiences shared by these Akins High School graduates reflect the extraordinary potential of young professionals entering the field of corrections. Their growth, insight, and readiness to serve are a testament to the value of early exposure, mentorship, and structured career pathways. As they transition from students to public servants, they carry with them a foundation rooted in responsibility, respect, and a deep understanding of what it means to work with integrity inside our facilities. The future of corrections is brighter because of their commitment—and the leadership that invested in their success.

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May 29, 2025
Texas Jail Association
Attn: Board of Directors /
Executive Director Sharese Hurst
P.O. Box 8029
Huntsville, TX 77340

Dear Members of the Texas Jail Association Board,

On behalf of the entire LaSalle Corrections team, I want to extend our deepest gratitude for the honor of being named the Texas Jail Association's 2025 Vendor of the Year. We are humbled by this recognition and view it not simply as an award, but as a reflection of the meaningful partnership we have built together over many years.

The Texas Jail Association has long been a cornerstone of professional excellence, advocacy, and education in our state's correctional community. Your steadfast support of the men and women who serve in county jails and detention centers across Texas has created a culture of integrity, professionalism, and resilience.

At LaSalle Corrections, we believe that being a vendor means more than delivering a product or service. It means standing shoulder to shoulder with the professionals who show up every day to do one of the most demanding—and often overlooked—jobs in our justice system. These men and women navigate complex environments, make high-consequence decisions, and protect communities across Texas, often without notice. We are proud to support them.

We remain committed to being a trusted and dedicated partner in this industry; and whether through our facility operations, training initiatives, or shared advocacy efforts, we pledge to continue investing in the people, systems, and innovations that support your mission.

We recognize that this honor was not given lightly. It is both a milestone and a call to action—to continue listening, learning, and serving in ways that elevate the profession and the communities we serve. We accept that challenge with humility and resolve.

Once again, thank you for this recognition and for your unwavering partnership. We look forward to building on this relationship and supporting the Texas Jail Association for decades to come.

With sincere appreciation,
Randall Blake Prince,
Director of Government Affairs
LaSalle Corrections, LLC

Bringing Officer Wellness and Leadership Training Home: Hosting Texas Jail Association Regional Classes

JUDITH BENNETT, Jail Administrator

Given the high rates of PTSD, depression and suicides that our correctional officers face, I want to tell you about the Texas Jail Association Regional Training experience I had at my jail. LaSalle Corrections at Rolling Plains Detention Center (RPDC) in Haskell County hosted two training classes over two days in November 2024. The classes, 'But Did You Die?' and 'Leadership for Jailers,' were conducted in four-hour increments over two days. This allowed us to have visiting agencies and RPDC staff to attend both classes. A total of 162 correctional officers attended, many of whom were new Texas Jail Association members. In December 2024, the LaSalle Corrections unit in Fannin County also hosted these same classes with other agencies attending with a total of 35 attendees.

Collin County Captain Rowdee Edwards (TJA 1st Vice President) and Captain Jess Christensen were our wonderful instructors over the two days of classes.

"But Did You Die?" gave staff a brief look into officer wellness, what if game, games inmates play, off-duty decompression, balancing family/work, coping with horrors, and stress management.

"Leadership for Jailers" was a chance for the officers to have an increased understanding of servant leadership within the jail system. They also got to gain knowledge in the problem-solving process in the jail setting. Jail staff are supervisors from the minute they start working, since they supervise inmates.

Both classes had a lot of interaction with instructors and correction officers, offering suggestions for improvements to each other's facilities. During one of the many interactions, it was great to work with each other, making a list of qualities of a good leader. We still have the postings of those lists in our training room.

I have been in corrections for over 25 years, I have had the pleasure of attending a lot of training around Texas with local counties, COG's, Texas Association of Counties, TJA trainings and conferences but being able to host a Regional training at my jail and seeing my staff attend these classes was an amazing experience. I would encourage any jail that can host regional training to do so.

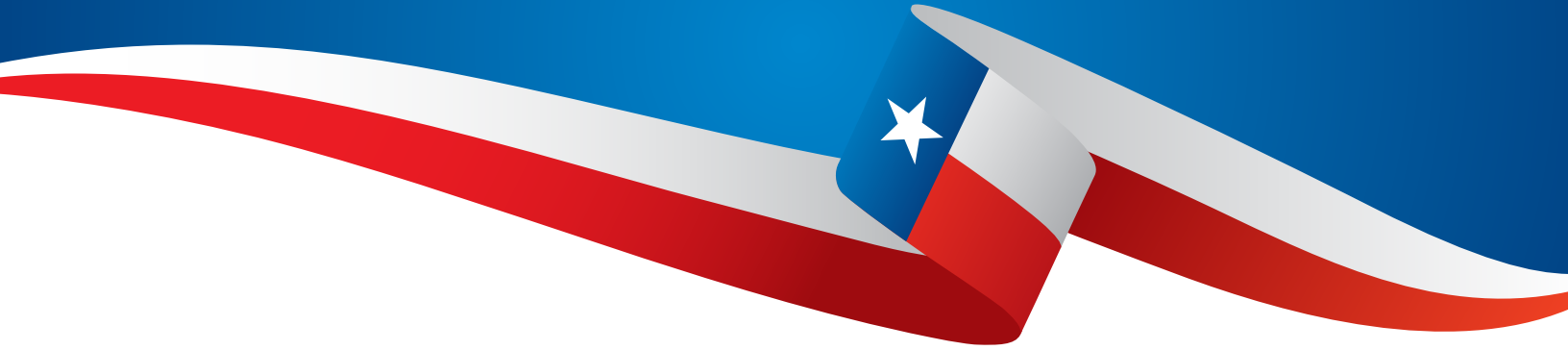
I want to thank Texas Jail Association, Director Sharese Hurst, Past President Johnny Jacques, Captain Rowdee Edwards, Captain Jess Christensen, Executive Director Rodney Cooper, Compliance Manager Carla Stone, Training Sgt. Alisa Garza and all my staff at Rolling Plains for helping make this happen.

Check out upcoming Regional Trainings:
www.texasjailassociation.com/training.html

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JAIL MENTAL HEALTH OFFICERS (JMHOs)

ELROY HOLMES,

Director, Texas Jail Association, Sergeant, Lubbock County

Behind the reinforced walls of Texas jails lies a population that is often overlooked — not just those incarcerated, but those battling invisible battles within themselves. For these individuals, the burden of incarceration is magnified by mental health conditions that can complicate safety, compliance, and rehabilitation. Fortunately, within many of our facilities stands a dedicated group of professionals trained to bridge that gap — the Jail Mental Health Officers (JMHOs).

The Frontline of Behavioral Crisis

Mental Health Officers are more than just correctional staff. They are specially trained observers, communicators, and de-escalators. At any given moment, they may respond to a crisis call, intervene during a behavioral episode, or ensure that an individual suffering from schizophrenia, depression, or PTSD is treated with dignity and caution — not just control.

Their presence reduces the use of force, improves outcomes during high-stress events, and builds a culture where accountability and care can coexist. This is not softness — it is smart corrections. It is safety rooted in strategy.

A Local Mission: Lubbock County's Approach

At the Lubbock County Detention Center, the impact of mental health challenges is significant. Currently, 28 percent of the inmate population is classified as having a Serious Mental Illness (SMI), and 40 percent have a qualified mental illness. This reality demands proactive and compassionate strategies.

To meet this challenge, Lubbock County has implemented a team-based approach by assigning Jail Mental Health Officers as part of the facility's De-escalation Team. During high-risk situations involving individuals with mental illness, these officers are deployed to communi-



Calm the situation before it escalates.

cate directly with the inmate in crisis. Their goal: calm the situation before it escalates.

This approach has yielded measurable results — reducing injuries to both inmates and officers, lowering the frequency of use-of-force incidents, and significantly cutting down on institutional liability. In many cases, one informed conversation from a trained JMO can defuse what might otherwise become a critical incident.

Training for Precision and Compassion

Becoming an JMHO is not just a title. It requires specialized training in mental health awareness, suicide prevention, communication techniques, and crisis intervention. These officers are trained to detect subtle signs — an inmate talking to themselves, changes in hygiene, withdrawal, agitation, or hallucinations. They know when to speak and when silence is more powerful. They understand how to redirect without escalating.

This level of awareness is not innate — it is learned, and it is earned.

Building Trust in a Broken System

Trust is hard to come by in jail, especially from individuals with a history of trauma, mistrust of authority, or cognitive impairments. Yet JMHOs work daily to earn that trust — not through force, but through consistency, listening, and presence.

Inmates suffering from mental illness often say the same thing: “I just want to be heard.” Jail Mental Health Officers give them that voice — while ensuring the facility remains secure. It’s not always about changing behavior instantly — sometimes it’s just about keeping someone safe one more day.

Supporting Officers, Too

JMHOs don’t just protect inmates — they

support their fellow staff. They provide insight when a pod seems more tense than usual. They assist when an officer isn’t sure how to handle an unpredictable individual. And perhaps most importantly, they model emotional intelligence in a field that too often demands us to be “tough” without pause.

Burnout, trauma, and fatigue are real for everyone who wears the badge. JMHOs often serve as silent leaders, reminding others that strength includes knowing when to seek help — and encouraging a culture where mental health is not a weakness, but a reality we must all face together.

The Future is Smart, Not Just Strong

Corrections is evolving. The days of one-size-fits-all discipline are behind us. Today’s jailer must be both protector and professional. The JMHO team represents the future of Texas corrections — one where awareness, strategy, and teamwork save lives, reduce recidivism, and protect officers from unnecessary harm.

In the words of one West Texas JMHO, Lubbock County Detention Center’s JMHO, Deputy Shane Threet: “It’s about helping those who can’t help themselves.”

Salute to the Silent Guardians

To every Jail Mental Health Officer across the state — thank you. You are often the calm in the storm, the insight in the chaos, and the difference between disaster and resolution. You carry more than a radio and keys — you carry compassion, experience, and hope.

To every agency without a JMHO program — consider investing in one. The safety of your staff, the health of your inmates, and the future of our profession may depend on it.

Because in today’s jails, mental health is not just a medical issue — it’s a correctional priority.



What are they saying?



"In a recent surprise jail inspection from the Texas Commission on Jail Standards, our inspector stated, "While most of the jails around the state are providing adequate levels of care, **CorrHealth is doing it right.**" He went on to say, "Their program is spectacular, and it's one the rest of the state should be following."

Zena Stephens, Sheriff, Jefferson County, Texas



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Lisa Patterson, Captain, Wichita County, Texas



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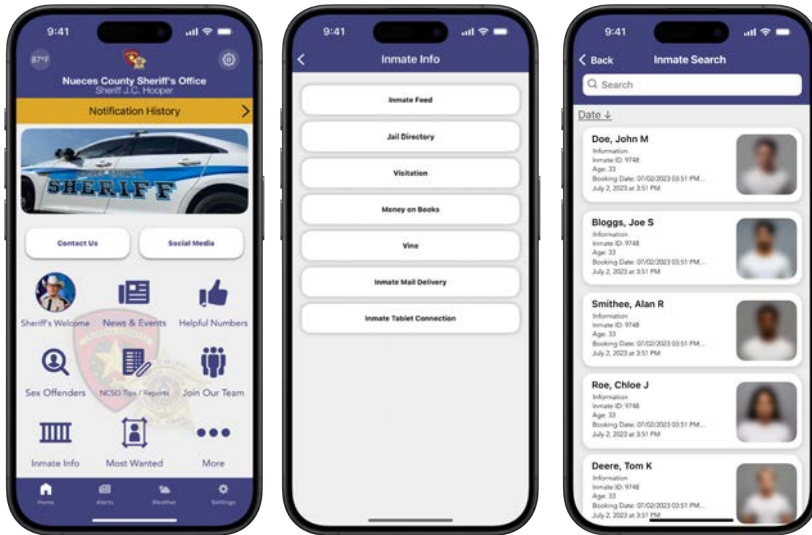
The scholarship is for tuition to a class of the National Jail Leadership Command Academy.

Spring 2026 Semester Deadline	Fall 2026 Semester Deadline
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Sheriff J.C. Hooper
Nueces County Sheriff's Office (TX)

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National Correctional Officers Week 2025

LT. JENNIFER SEGURA

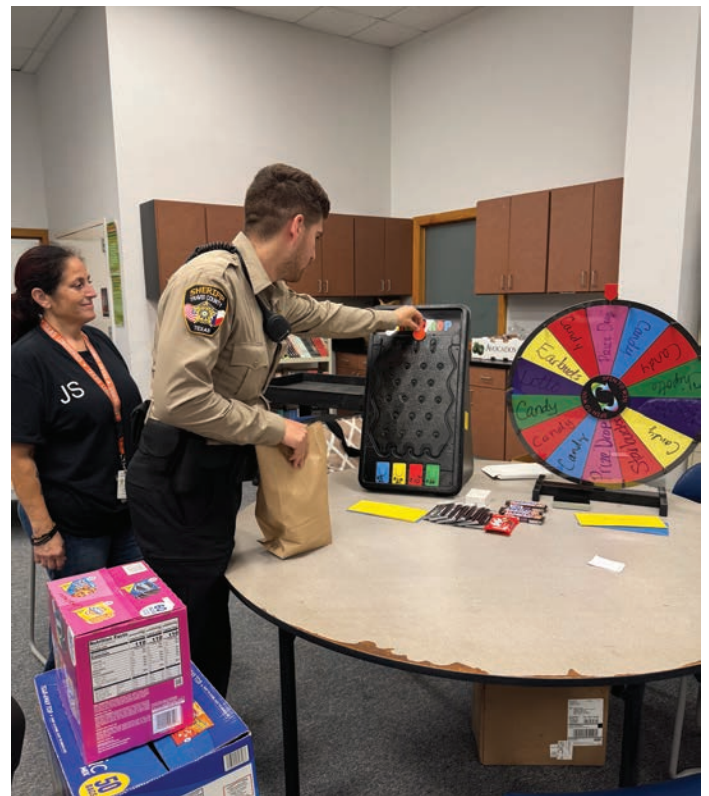
During National Correctional Officers Week, May 4th through May 10th, the Travis County Sheriff's Office implemented a comprehensive celebration to honor their Correctional Officers.

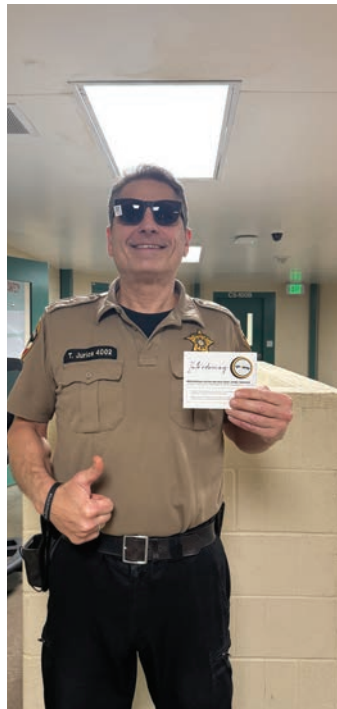
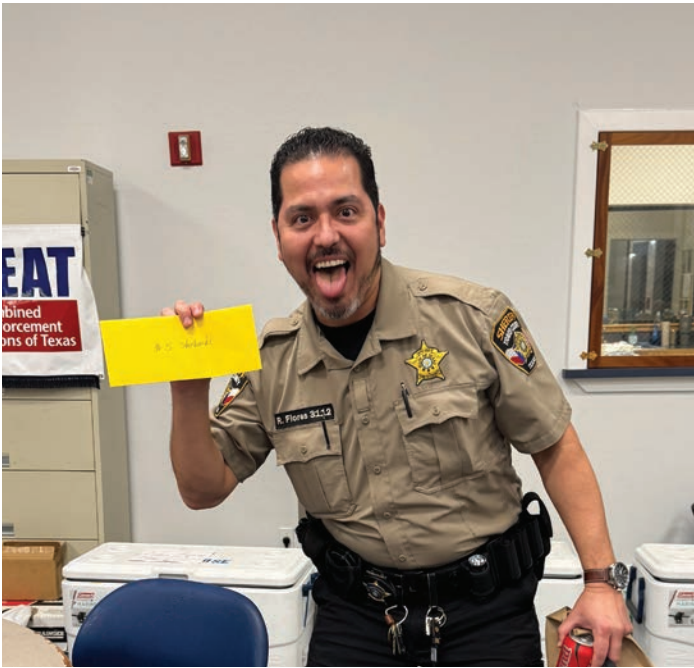
Led by Captain Christina Dail, the committee focused on going “above the norm” to show appreciation, bringing food and activities directly to ensure all staff shifts were included. This included two full days of round-the-clock cooking, preparing fresh burgers and hot dogs for everyone. Interactive games like “Spin the Wheel” and “Lucky Drop” offered opportunities to win prizes, including gift cards valued up to \$50. Chair massages were provided at each jail location, alongside goodie bags, Tiff's Treats

Cookies, and an “Amazing Race” style competition fostering friendly rivalry between sections.

Committee members also conducted daily prize giveaways throughout the facilities, acknowledging staff for their hard work. Significant donations from the Travis County Sheriff's Officers Association, Travis County Sheriff's Law Enforcement Association, CLEAT, and various Lieutenants, Captains, and other Correctional Officers enabled these widespread activities.

The Travis County Sheriff's Office aims to highlight the dedication and service of their corrections officers, as highlighted by other correctional institutions during this week.





THE COURTROOM CHALLENGE

ELROY HOLMES, Director, Texas Jail Association, Sergeant, Lubbock County Sheriff's Office

The Courtroom Challenge was like no other this year. It proved especially challenging due to recent changes in Jail Standards and new approaches to answering questions—not to mention the fierce competition among the teams. The Courtroom Challenge is designed to test participants' knowledge of Jail Standards.

Thirteen teams competed this year. After a long day of intense competition, three teams emerged victorious:

- **1st Place:** Travis County — Alexander Nares and John Fugate
- **2nd Place:** Lubbock County — Cassandra Acevado and Thomas Ames
- **3rd Place:** Lubbock County — JoAnn Moore and Roy Burnett

Congratulations to these outstanding teams!

We highly encourage every county to send a team to compete in the Courtroom Challenge. It is an excellent opportunity to deepen understanding of Jail Standards while fostering teamwork and professional growth.

The Texas Jail Association would like to express its appreciation to the Texas Commission on Jail Standards for hosting this valuable event each year, and we look forward to its continued success.





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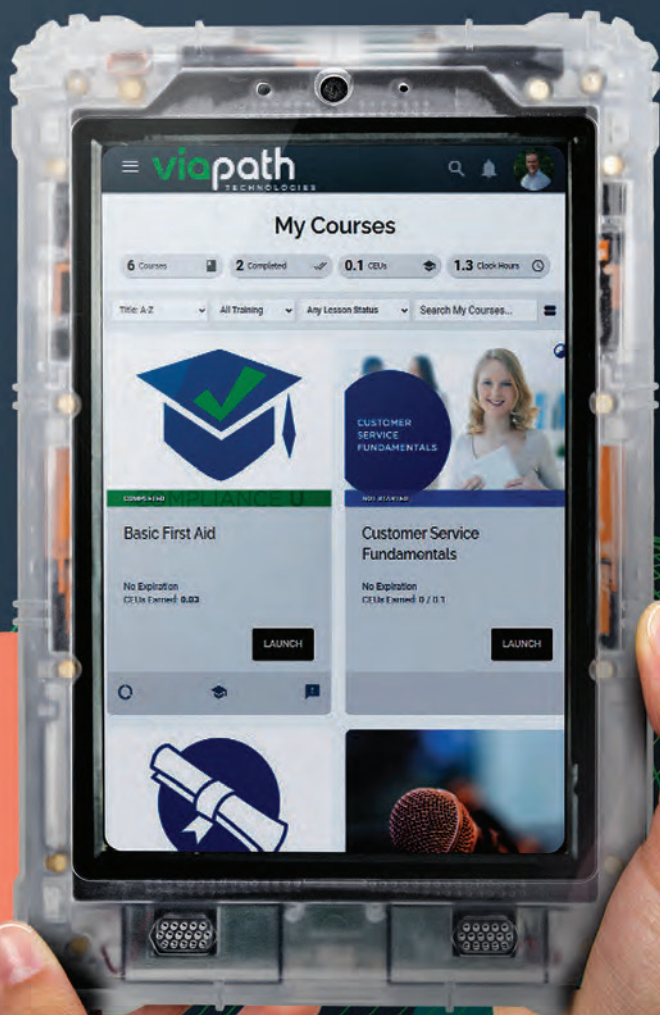
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LEND A HELPING ARM

BLOOD DRIVE

BY: TIM QUINTANA, SOUTHERN HEALTH PARTNERS AND TJA PAST PRESIDENT

The TJA/Southern Health Partners Annual Blood Drive was held April 29, 2025 at the 39th Annual TJA Conference. Once again, the members of our great Texas Jail Association did not let us down. This past blood drive at the TJA conference was the most successful drive we have ever had. We collected enough blood to serve 90 people. The blood center was over the top excited and thankful for our membership who rolled up their sleeves to give.

This marks our 13th blood drive at the jail conference. We plan to continue our efforts in this life saving event. Southern Health Partners is a proud partner with the Texas Jail Association and all our blood drive donors.

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A Night to Remember: Honoring Excellence at the 2025 TJA Annual Conference

MARCY CALNAN, JD, MED., Author and Texas Jail Association Editor

There's something special about seeing a room full of people who give so much finally get the recognition they deserve. That's exactly what happened at this year's Texas Jail Association Annual Conference, where the energy was high, the applause heartfelt, and the sense of pride undeniable. The Banquet night wasn't just a celebration, it was a reflection of the extraordinary courage, leadership, sacrifice and compassion defining our association. We came together to honor individuals who have gone above and beyond to move our profession forward, and it was nothing short of inspiring.

We began the evening by recognizing Officer Edward Gonzales of the Lubbock County Sheriff's Office as the recipient of the Detention Officer of the Year – Professional Service Award. Since joining the agency in 2010, Officer Gonzales has played a pivotal role in the Programs

Division as an Outside Work Crew Officer. His hands-on leadership has empowered inmates to build practical skills, develop strong work ethics, and find meaningful employment upon release—contributing directly to lower recidi-



vism and successful reintegration. In addition to impacting inmate lives, he's deeply invested in the development of new officers, sharing his knowledge generously to help build a strong, value-driven workforce.



The Detention Officer of the Year – Valor Award was presented to Deputies Chavez and Garrett, also of the Lubbock County Sheriff's Office, for their heroic actions on November 8, 2024. While conducting a routine inmate transport in Montgomery County, Tennessee, they witnessed an attempted escape. Deputy Garrett swiftly pursued and intercepted the inmate at a perimeter fence, while Deputy Chavez followed closely behind to assist with the restraint. Their courage and calm professionalism ensured the safety of all involved and demonstrated the very highest standards of valor in our profession.

The Valor Award was also posthumously presented to Detention Officer Isaiah Bias of the Ellis County Sheriff's Office, who lost his life in the line of duty on December 16, 2024, after being feloniously assaulted by an inmate at the Wayne McCollum Detention Center. Officer Bias performed his duties with honor and integrity, and his sacrifice will never be forgotten. His mother accepted the award on his behalf and delivered a heartfelt speech that moved the entire room to tears, reminding us of the profound risks detention officers

face every day—and the love and pride that endures beyond tragedy. We honor his legacy with the deepest respect.



This year's Hall of Fame Award, one of TJA's highest honors, was awarded to Melvin Bowsler, whose decades-long career has shaped the landscape of corrections training across Texas. From his early service as a CIT officer at the Brazos County Sheriff's Office to his influential



role as Mental Health Trainer with the Texas Commission on Jail Standards, Melvin has led with integrity, empathy, and humor. Known for turning mandated training into meaningful dialogue, he has empowered countless corrections professionals and helped improve the way mental health issues are addressed in jails statewide. His involvement with Jail Mental Health Officer training, scenario-based learning, and regional collaboration has made him a cornerstone of progress in Texas county corrections.



Officer Gregory Weiss, of Travis County Sheriff's Office, whose quick thinking and decisive action on January 9, 2025, may have saved a fellow officer's life. When FTO Cook began experiencing a medical emergency during an inmate transport, Officer Aguilar recognized the urgency, rerouted to the hospital, and called ahead to FTO Weiss. Working together, they ensured Cook received immediate care—including a critical procedure—and showed exemplary professionalism and compassion throughout. Medical staff later confirmed that their intervention likely prevented a much worse outcome. Their teamwork and care exemplify the lifesaving spirit behind this award.



The Jerry Baggs Leadership Award went to Sergeant Jason Davis, of Brazos County Sheriff's Office, a leader whose nearly 30-year career has left an indelible mark on every facility, team, and training room he's entered. Whether managing operations, mentoring staff, or volunteering countless hours to TJA, Jason's leadership has always been rooted in humility and service. His influence extends far beyond those he directly supervises—he is the kind of leader whose presence uplifts everyone around him. Jason is known for staying late, stepping up, and quietly making others feel seen and supported. He is the definition of leading by example.

The TJA Lifesaving Award was presented to Corrections Officer Jesse Aguilar and Field Training

The Robert "Bob" Patterson Award was awarded to Assistant Chief Johnny Jaquess of the Collin County Sheriff's Office for his innovative and forward-thinking leadership in county corrections. With over 26 years in the field, Chief Jaquess has taken on complex challenges—including a staffing crisis, facility expansion, and inmate program development—with strategy, integrity, and collaboration. He spearheaded a recovery pod program, developed a robust reentry and education initiative in partnership with Collin College, and secured a \$2.7 million Texas Workforce grant to bring academic and vocational training inside the jail. His leadership continues to set the bar for excellence in operational management and visionary reform.



This year's President's Award, given at the discretion of the TJA President, was presented to Captain Rowdee Edwards, 1st Vice President, of Collin County Sheriff's Office for his outstanding service and commitment to advancing TJA's training mission. Rowdee built a strong, responsive Training Committee, delivered impactful regional trainings, and helped extend the reach of TJA's offerings into rural and underserved areas. His work has played a direct role in record-breaking member engagement and training hours—and reflects his passion for ensuring access to high-quality learning across the state.

Among many heartfelt moments of the evening was the President's presentation of a Distinguished Service Award to Dr. Marcy Calnan, Editor and Board Member, whose contributions to TJA span communication, programming, policy, and engagement. From launching the Programming and Reentry Committee to curating content and leading wellness presentations, Dr. Calnan has helped professionalize and elevate nearly every corner of the organization. Her work with vendors, conference planning, and strategic development has left a lasting impact—and her leadership continues to set a tone of purpose and progress for the association.



Also receiving a President's Distinguished Service Award was Sergeant Elroy Holmes, whose thoughtful, behind-the-scenes work transformed the way TJA manages and delivers merchandise to its members. By helping transition this critical area to a contracted provider, he freed up time and resources while expanding access and improving the member experience. His contribution solved a long-standing challenge for the organization and is a perfect example of strategic leadership in action.



These award recipients are more than leaders—they are the heartbeat of TJA. Their dedication, innovation, and generosity remind us



that this profession is powered by people who go above and beyond, not for recognition, but for the betterment of others. To everyone who showed up, stood out, and supported one another this year—thank you. The 2025 Annual Conference wasn't just a success; it was a powerful reminder that in corrections, as in life, we are always stronger together.

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i3 VERTICALS

What's Happening Around the State?

BROWN COUNTY

Brown County Sheriff's Office Hosts Employee Appreciation Picnic

This past weekend, the Brown County Sheriff's Office held its 10th Annual Employee Appreciation Picnic, bringing together staff and their families for a day of celebration, recognition, and camaraderie. The event served as an opportunity to honor the hardworking individuals who contribute daily to the safe and professional operation of the Brown County Sheriff's Office.

Sheriff Vance Hill and his command staff welcomed attendees and expressed their deep appreciation for the dedication and service of all employees. During the event, service awards were presented to recognize years of commitment, and Co-Workers'

Choice Employees of the Year were honored for their outstanding contributions.

The day was filled with fun, including a lively cornhole tournament and plenty of good food. Over 150 door prizes were given away, generously donated by local businesses and others associated with the Sheriff's Office. The strong support from our community and partners made the event even more meaningful.

The picnic highlighted the strong sense of teamwork and family within our department and served as a well-deserved moment of appreciation for those who go above and beyond in their roles. Thank you to everyone who helped make the day a success—and to all our staff, your service does not go unnoticed.



What's Happening Around the State?

TRAVIS COUNTY Staff Promotions

On January 5, 2025, Travis County **Sheriff Sally Hernandez** promoted three staff members: **Cristina Dail** to Corrections Bureau Captain; **Zainab Brewington Bey** to Corrections Bureau Lieutenant; and,

Michael Suhr to Corrections Bureau Lieutenant.

On March 19, 2025, Travis County Sheriff Sally Hernandez promoted two staff members: **Scott Sanford** to Corrections Bureau Sergeant and **Ian Stamatedes** to Corrections Bureau Sergeant.



Are **YOU** Ready To Lead Your Jail?

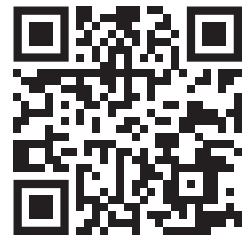
*NJLCA is Developing
Tomorrow's Jail Leaders*



www.nationaljailacademy.org

The National Jail Leadership Command Academy (NJLCA) is designed to provide training for succession preparation, and to develop leadership skills for successful transitioning into senior leadership positions within jails.

Seats are limited and classes fill quickly!
Visit the NJLCA website for more information and apply today.



Join a First-of-Its-Kind Study on Pretrial Policies in Texas Jails

Texas jails have seen major changes in pretrial policies and programming in recent years—shifts driven by new initiatives, COVID-era policies, and evolving system needs. But which strategies have actually made a difference? What policies improved jail operations, public safety, and which ones fell short?

The **Center for Justice Research** at **Texas Southern University** and **Wellbeing & Equity Innovations** are leading this initiative to bring jail leaders together, identify what's working, and provide data-driven insights that support better pretrial decision-making across Texas.

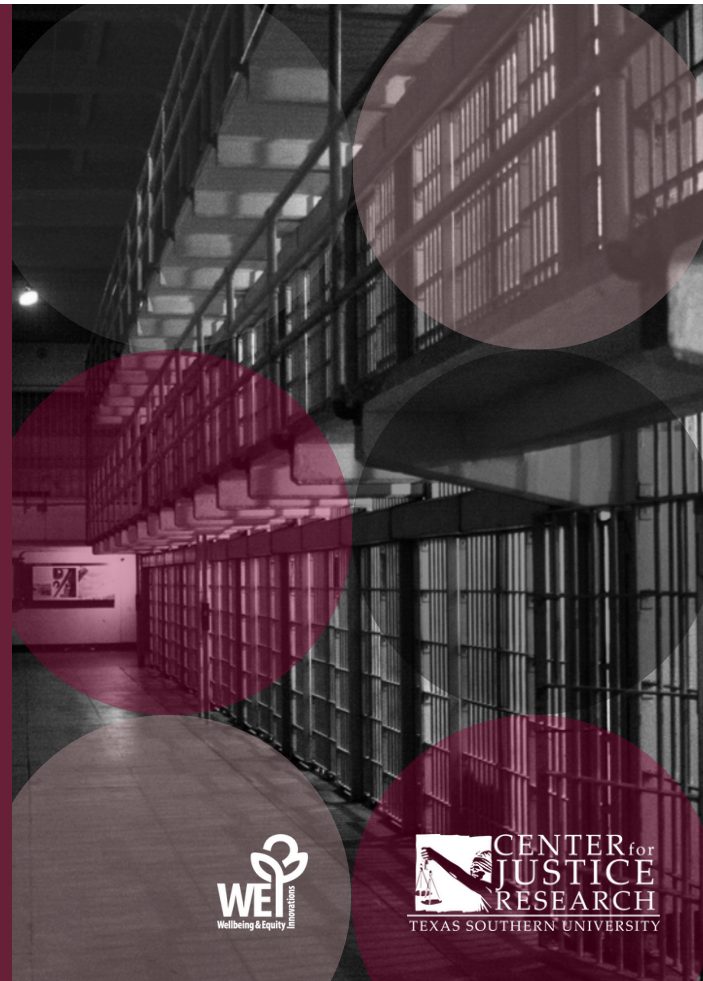
What's Involved?

We know your time is valuable, so participation is designed to be easy and flexible based on your availability and level of interest.

Why Join?

This study is an opportunity for jail administrators and staff to:

- Network with other Texas jails and share lessons learned
- Gain exclusive insights into pretrial strategies for managing jail populations
- Help shape best practices for jails statewide by contributing to data-driven research



Interested? Let's connect! Email justice.research@tsu.edu to learn more about how your county can be part of this important initiative.



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GALVESTON ISLAND CONVENTION CENTER



*February 9-12, 2026
Galveston, TX*

2026 DRUG IMPACT CONFERENCE

JULY 27-30, 2026 / ALLEN, TX

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