



**2019-2021**  
**Commissioners Court**  
**Strategic Plan, Mission Statement**  
**and Vision Statement**

**June 2019**  
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Strategic Consulting Services



# 2019 PARKER COUNTY COMMISSIONERS COURT

## TABLE OF CONTENTS

INTRODUCTION.....	3-5
SWOT ANALYSIS.....	6
SWOT ANALYSIS—RANKED & PRIORITIZED.....	7
2019 PARKER COUNTY STRATEGIC PLAN.....	8-9
VISION & MISSION STATEMENT.....	10
COMMISSIONERS COURT VISIONING SURVEY RESULTS.....	11-12
CITIZENS VISIONING SURVEY RESULTS.....	13-14
POSTSCRIPT: OBSERVATIONS & RECOMMENDATIONS.....	15-17

# INTRODUCTION

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## Background

It wasn't very long after new County Judge Pat Deen had been sworn in that he reached out and made it very clear: He thought Parker County could benefit from a strategic planning exercise.

*"In preparing for battle I have always found that plans are useless, but planning is indispensable."*

— Dwight D. Eisenhower

And why wouldn't he? Judge Deen understands the importance, appreciates the value, of upfront planning. Previously as Mayor of Hudson Oaks, Deen and his City Councils had maintained strategic planning as a habit—and they revisited the planning process four times over a 12-year period. He had high hopes the Commissioners Court might be interested in starting out the same way.

## Process

And the Parker County Commissioners Court eventually did choose to act on the Judge's recommendation, engaging Marty Wieder Strategic Consulting Services to help guide them through an interactive Strategic Planning exercise; more specifically, Parker County officials desired that Marty schedule, plan and facilitate a structured Workshop with Commissioners Court and key County Staff professionals. Such an exercise was scheduled and conducted on February 28, 2019. This event included—

1. A reminder for participants of the process—as well as a briefing on the exercise's importance as it relates to Parker County's infrastructure, economic development, and the County's future budgeting and Capital Improvements Program planning (as delivered within a PowerPoint presentation). The introduction also included a review of the exercise Scope of Work.

From the very beginning, Marty noted (and reiterated several times throughout the day) three things related to the strategic planning process:

- A. The importance of working toward and delivering a worthwhile product—and a *living document* (one that can continue to be updated and amended)—to the County (and for that matter, all the *citizens* of Parker County). As originally communicated to Judge Deen and County staff, Marty Wieder Strategic Consulting Services began providing strategic planning process results in an 11 X 17 format years ago so everyone on a City Council or Commissioners Court may measure progress and check off (when completed), rewrite or perhaps even remove certain priorities when necessary. And an end product like this provides the County with a good head start in tackling key follow-up tasks or activities (or any future strategic planning efforts).
- B. The pre-Session Visioning Survey was meant to give the Commissioners Court and County staff professionals a jumpstart on the process—public forums seeking Parker County citizens' preferences enhanced the idea of a Visioning Survey, and results were used to word the draft Vision and Mission Statements since they indicated what was most important to everyone in Parker County.

# INTRODUCTION

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- C. This would not be a plan without a purpose—that ultimately ends up taking space somewhere on a forgotten bookcase. It is critical to keep in mind planning’s importance, and Marty Wieder stressed how it was not worth the time and effort to simply go through such a process without subsequent implementation, achievement—and measurement. Thus, the Plan includes a Postscript of suggestions, based on Marty’s almost three decades of public and related service at the North Central Texas Council of Governments, two Chambers of Commerce and three municipalities—so the County has a blueprint for addressing the citizens’ most pressing needs.

As Marty would also point out at the first convened session, Strategic Planning takes time and effort, helps in budgeting and decision-making and can be managed. And it’s worth doing, especially since Plans —

- Provide *unified and planned governmental decisions*.
- Provide County staff a *functional approach for budget processing*.
- Allow elected and appointed officials to be *entrepreneurial*.
- Determine just how far the County might go in the coming years to reach its goals and objectives.
- Determine projects that *best utilize area resources*.
- *Prepare for grant and other opportunities that may present themselves*.
- *Stimulate public awareness, interest and support*.

2. Conducting a *SWOT Analysis* — with a frank evaluation of Parker County’s Strengths, Weaknesses, Opportunities and Threats. This exercise —

- A. Encouraged everyone who attended to state their items, priorities and concerns. It was critical to draw out comments from all participants, and the pre-exercise Visioning Survey allowed the consultant some insight on the priorities of everyone involved so he could ensure all those issues or concerns were uncovered. And he shared one other important point, as well: “The only bad idea is the one that goes unmentioned.”

Moreover, it allowed him to pass along a few of his observations about Parker County; for instance, he noted how . . .

- The Court has had the courage to take make tough decisions (i.e. to tackle Courthouse roof repair, to prepare for hiring a full-time Fire Marshal, something they’ve subsequently done).
- There appears to be a good base of support for the County within the Mayor’s Council and Economic Development Council.
- It also appears the Court has been instilling a common message of unity and trust, of teamwork and collaboration.
- There is an opportunity for the County to be a collaborative leader when it comes to growth.

# INTRODUCTION

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- B. Asked representatives of all both groups (Commissioners Court and key County management professionals) to rank the SWOT items as to priority; this task facilitated Marty Wieder Strategic Consulting Services efforts to evaluate participants' responses and then combine those into the priorities, which would comprise the resulting Strategic Plan.

Marty Wieder Strategic Consulting Services —

1. Spent subsequent weeks fine-tuning the actual plan with a proposed set of initial action items;
2. Returned to Commissioners Court at their regular meeting on Tuesday, May 28, 2019, when Marty presented the SWOT Analysis and Ranked SWOT priorities that Commissioners Court and key County staff identified at the Strategic Planning Work Session on February 28, 2019—as well as the Draft Strategic Plan and alternatives for the Commissioners Court to consider for their Mission and Vision Statements. Judge Deen made a few suggestions to reword the Mission Statement and Draft Plan, so Marty Wieder took notes and indicated he would amend accordingly.

In summary, the Strategic Plan itself recognizes and acknowledges in four objectives that the Parker County Commissioners Court must (in descending priority)—

- Continue to be the transportation leader and help maintain Parker County's thriving economy;
- Encourage managed growth—and protect Parker County's small town feeling.
- Continue to develop a long-term water solution; and
- Communicate Parker County's spirit of teamwork and collaboration to others—and seek their help and cooperation

## ***Results***

The Strategic Plan that follows is intended to provide a framework for development of a more complete set of tactics in the new Fiscal Year. The ranked SWOT Analysis and complimentary Strategic Plan—based entirely upon the priorities and preferences of County officials—provides Parker County's policy and administrative leaders with the information they need to conduct additional research that quantifies and clarifies preliminary findings. That will allow them to then elaborate on the items identified as being at the top of the Plan with more specific objectives and timetables for completion.

# SWOT ANALYSIS

## STRENGTHS

- Thriving economy
- Hub of leadership
- Financial strength/Bond Rating/Debt ratios/Reserves
- State Park
- Large tracts of developable land near Metroplex
- Low unemployment
- Access to workforce
- Proximity to DFW International Airport
- Willingness to get along
- Development of County roads system
- Good people stepping up to lead
- Good staff leadership
- Good community leaders
- Schools – great asset
- Safety
- Kept tax rate down
- Own airport
- Revenue stream (due to new construction)
- Recent transportation infrastructure
- Upgraded road equip. w/ State grant help
- Quality & quantity emergency service providers/ESDs
- Increased pay for law enforcement officers

## WEAKNESSES

- Safety
- Insufficient State revenues for roads
- Inability to communicate who's responsible for what
- Less State support
- Legislative concerns limiting powers of local government
- Lack of a water plan
- Unfunded mandates
- IH-20 corridor traffic
- Few transportation nodes
- Old roads, substandard construction
- Insufficient road rights-of-way
- Losing small town feeling
- Losing trained law enforcement officers to higher pay



## OPPORTUNITIES

- Share public info on who's responsible for what
- Do informational public relations
- Extend runway and expand airport in Mineral Wells
- Take more active role with Legislature
- New transportation modes
- Foster, encourage managed growth
- Explore ways to protect small town feeling
- Engage Commissioners to communicate w/ Legislators

## THREATS

- SB 2/HB 2
- More unfunded mandates
- Not having a long-term water solution
- Being reactive – not proactive
- hometown feeling
- Bad roads and no money
- Losing footprint of the County
- Overwhelming traffic
- Bad, increasing crime
- Natural disaster
- Drug epidemic
- Human trafficking

Parking Lot\*: Work with the Economic Development Council to weigh, determine “What is a higher wage job?”

*\*Parking lot issues are things that arise during an exercise, but are not strengths, weaknesses, opportunities or threats. These should be addressed sometime later.*

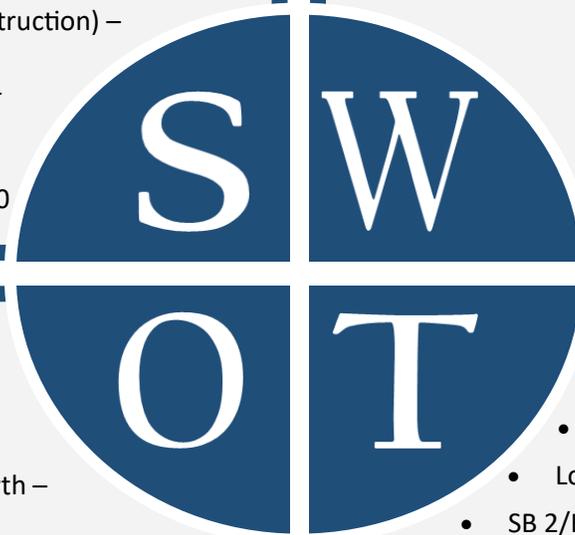
# SWOT ANALYSIS - RANKED & PRIORITIZED

## STRENGTHS

- Financial strength/Bond Rating/Debt ratios/Reserves – 27/10/8-2\*
- Kept tax rate down – 24/8/4-4
- Increased pay for law enforcement officers – 16/5/4-1
- Development of County roads system – 16/5/2-3
- Willingness to get along – 15/5/5-0
- Schools-great asset – 12/3/2-1
- Thriving economy – 11/5/3-2
- Access to workforce – 10/3/2-1
- Own airport – 8/2/2-0
- State Park – 7/2/1-1
- Upgraded road equipment with State grant help – 6/3/1-2
- Recent transportation infrastructure – 4/2/1-1
- Hub of leadership – 4/1/1-0
- Low unemployment – 4/1/1-0
- Revenue stream (due to new construction) – 4/1/0-1
- Good people stepping up to lead – 3/2/1-1
- Good staff leadership – 3/1/0-1
- Good community leaders – 3/1/1-0

## WEAKNESSES

- Losing small town feeling – 32/10/6-4
- IH-20 corridor traffic – 24/7/6-1
- Insufficient road rights-of-way – 13/5/4-1
- Less State Support – 10/4/3-1
- Safety – 10/4/1-3
- Legislative concerns limiting powers of local governments – 9/3/0-3
- Lack of a water plan – 8/4/1-3
- Old roads, substandard construction – 7/2/1-1
- Unfunded mandates – 5/2/1-1
- Few transportation nodes – 2/1/0-1



## OPPORTUNITIES

- New transportation modes – 27/9/6-3
- Foster, encourage managed growth – 25/8/3-5
- Explore ways to protect small town feeling – 8/9/6-3
- Share public info on who's responsible for what – 11/3/2-1
- Do informational public relations – 8/3/1-2
- Engage Commissioners to communicate with Legislators – 5/3/2-1
- Extend runway and expand airport in Mineral Wells – 1/1/0-1

## THREATS

- Drug epidemic – 8/4/2-2
- Losing hometown feeling – 8/3/1-2
- SB 2/HB 2 – 8/2/1-1
- Bad roads and no money – 7/2/1-1
- Losing footprint of the County – 5/2/1-1
- Natural disaster – 2/1/0-1

Parking Lot\*: Work with the Economic Development Council to weigh, determine "What is a higher wage job?" - 5/2/2-0

\*Parking lot issues are things that arise during an exercise, but are not strengths, weaknesses, opportunities or threats. These should be addressed sometime later.



# 2019 PARKER COUNTY COMMISSIONERS COURT

## STRATEGIC PLAN GOALS & OBJECTIVES

*“You can’t do everything well—so you must focus on doing a few things well, the most important things.”*

*-David R. Kolzow, President  
Kolzow & Associates*

1. Continue to be the transportation leader, in collaboration with our Cities and communities, and help maintain Parker County’s thriving economy; it is even more critical in light of existing IH-20 corridor traffic, insufficient rights of way and old roads built in substandard ways (not to mention the threat of overwhelming traffic).
  - A. Start by communicating and celebrating historic development of Parker County’s road system—accomplished while keeping the tax rate down.
    - Share information on continuing responsibilities and assignments, thereby increasing public understanding.
    - Proactively illustrate the impact of reduced State funding and unfunded mandates—as well as provide “informational public relations”, helping Parker County citizens understand who’s responsible for what.
  - B. Explore partnerships and entrepreneurial ways to plan, fund and leverage transportation improvements—thanks to Parker County’s existing financial strength, bond rating, debt ratios and reserves.
    - Foster new transportation modes. Convene discussions with communities and their Mayors; communicate how transportation improvements facilitate investment and economic development—and additional revenues.
    - Engage and collaborate with the Parker County Economic Development Council and financial institutions to assist in examining creative funding methods and approaches, including public/private partnerships. Consider the need for any additional networks or Task Forces—and begin appointing them as necessary to achieve objectives resulting from these discussions.
2. Encourage managed growth—and protect Parker County’s small town feeling. Take advantage of the opportunity to be a collaborative leader when it comes to Parker County’s future growth.
  - Convene City planners and policy leaders—and consider how Parker County and its communities may best manage growth in a unified fashion.
  - Communicate the opportunity to begin mapping and planning based on land use rather than land value.

# STRATEGIC PLAN GOALS & OBJECTIVES

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“We need to engage. Feedback creates a viable plan. We need a road map.”

—Judge Pat Deen

- Consider the need for any additional networks or Task Forces—and begin appointing them as necessary to achieve objectives resulting from these discussions.
  - Maintain pay competitiveness and retain law enforcement and public safety officers. Model that need for Parker County’s communities and the Emergency Services District.
3. Continue to develop a long-term water solution—recognizing how not having one is a major threat to Parker County.
4. Communicate Parker County’s spirit of teamwork and collaboration to others—and seek their help and cooperation.
- The Commissioners Court has been instilling a common message of unity and trust within Parker County; the same thing is needed with the County’s Legislative delegation. Model, even celebrate, Parker County’s willingness to get along—and ask them to do the same.
  - Contact and get to know the leaders of other exurban Counties in Texas that have similar characteristics to Parker County. Communicate and coordinate with them to jointly address challenges like transportation modes, transportation funding and growth management.



# 2019 PARKER COUNTY COMMISSIONERS COURT

*“When we have purpose and believe in a vision, it is fulfilled by who we are and what we do.”*

*-Dan Brokke  
DaySpring Cards*

## 2019 VISION STATEMENT

Parker County, Texas - in collaboration with our citizens and communities - has preserved our “small town” feel, reduced IH-20 congestion, improved and widened roads and addressed the need for a water plan - without limiting our vibrant economy, impacting our financial strength or increasing the tax rate.

## 2019 MISSION STATEMENT

The Commissioners Court understands that Parker County is a great place with a relaxed, “small town” feel—something the Court seeks to protect for its people through leadership, planning, and quality infrastructure.

# COMMISSIONERS COURT VISIONING SURVEY RESULTS

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## **The one *best thing* about *living* in Parker County is...**

- Live without restrictions
- Live where I was born and raised
- Rural lifestyle
- Outstanding schools (public & private) to choose

## **The single most *important issue* is...**

- Losing hometown due to growth
- Water/Infrastructure, especially water due to growth/lack of plan for water—3

## **The single most important issue facing Counties' Cities is...**

- Infrastructure
- Increase in population
- Dealing with growth
- Inability to expand City services

## **The *best thing* about *working* in Parker County is...**

- Not having to commute/deal with traffic
- Good people
- Diversified job market

## **The thing I *appreciate most* about Parker County is...**

- Still rural/not like Metroplex (relaxed)/Rural setting - 3
- Community involvement

# COMMISSIONERS COURT VISIONING SURVEY RESULTS

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## **Most significant way Parker County *has changed* is...**

- Increase in population - 2
- Growth (shops & restaurants)
- Congestion

## **The one, most significant way Parker County *needs to change* is...**

- More law enforcement for Sheriff's Department
- Transportation (roads and highways overcrowded)
- Development of a strategic water plan
- Focus on bringing high-wage jobs to Parker County

## **The one, most important planning *focus for Parker County's immediate future* is...**

- Short & long term effects on water supply/planning for water needs - 2
- Road Situation
- Public Safety

## **In five years, I want people to say about Parker County...**

- Great place to raise a family (a "good and safe place...") - 2
- "A great place to live that has maintained its rural lifestyle"
- A destination

# CITIZENS SURVEY RESULTS

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## **The one *best thing* about *living* in Parker County is...**

- Rural/Country/Small town/Small town feel - 28.87
- Living - 9.86
- City - 9.86

## **The single most *important issue* is...**

- Roads/Infrastructure/Traffic - 28.76
- Growth - 23.3
- Water - 13.01

## **The *best thing* about *working* in Parker County is...**

- Retired / Don't work in county - 25.36
- Commute/Traffic/Close to home - 18.11
- People - 9.42

## **The single most important issue facing Counties' Cities is...**

- Water/Traffic/Road/Infrastructure - 37.86
- Growth/Development/Population - 28.57

## **The thing I *appreciate most* about Parker County is...**

- Rural/Country/Country feel/Small town feel - 19.85
- People - 8.51

# CITIZENS SURVEY RESULTS

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## **The one, most significant way Parker County *needs to change* is...**

- Need (2), Better (3), Roads (4), Water, Traffic - 38.03
- Need Better Growth Planning (1) - 36.62
- Need Better New Growth - 35.21

## **Most significant way Parker County has changed is...**

- Growth/Development/Business - 30.28
- People/Population/Population Growth - 16.9
- Traffic - 11.27

## **The one, most important planning *focus for Parker County's immediate future* is...**

- Short & long term effects on water supply/planning for water needs - 2
- Road Situation
- Public Safety

## **In five years, I want people to say about Parker County...**

- Live/Place live/Great place live/Best Place live - 32.39
- Country/Rural - 12.67



# 2019 PARKER COUNTY COMMISSIONERS COURT

## COLLABORATION, VERBS, CHALLENGES & QUESTIONS: A 2019 POSTSCRIPT OF OBSERVATIONS & RECOMMENDATIONS

*“People support what they help create..”*

*Dr. Kent Gardner, Assistant Director of Student Affairs Emeritus,  
The University of Texas at Arlington*

Among countless hours of graduate school classes, Basic Economic Development Course and Economic Development Institute sessions and American Institute of City Planning continuing education presentations, the phrase I remember and quote the most was something I heard as an undergraduate, in a Student Leadership Effectiveness class 35 years ago: People support what they help create.

And apparently Judge Pat Deen’s now heard me say it so often that he’s come to personify it.

Why else would he take an expanded Visioning Survey we prepared to garner the Commissioners Court’s impressions before holding our first Planning Workshop ... and sort of put it on steroids? Called numerous public meetings and invited Parker County citizens to share their thoughts. Got so many responses that the County needed Joel Kertok to spend a good deal of time tabulating responses. And Joel then went the extra mile to document and illustrate survey responses with a word study, so the County has a tool it could use immediately.

That’s what I call *good stuff*; the extent a good government will go to so citizens are engaged—and partner Cities and communities wish to collaborate.

The one edit (actually it was an addition) to the Draft Strategic Plan dealt with *collaboration*, and Judge Deen has since reiterated that to me with a personal exclamation point. Nothing sustainable will get done without it, and he recognizes the County needs the help of a lot of groups to achieve these objectives. Particularly groups like the Economic Development Council. And at least two members of the Commissioners Court agreed, since their ranking dots of support for the Parking Lot item (a first in all my years of consulting) indicated the need to team up with the EDC on another item.

Likewise you’ll notice that verbs, and specifically *action verbs*, are another common thread. Take a close look at the Strategic Plan. There’s no passivity whatsoever. Convene, listen, share, illustrate, and collaborate. Explore, foster, and encourage. Words indicate the active voice; reiterating the need to be proactive instead of reactive.

And they communicate Parker County’s values, too.

# COLLABORATION, VERBS, CHALLENGES & QUESTIONS: A 2019 POSTSCRIPT OF OBSERVATIONS & RECOMMENDATIONS

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And that's good as well, since this County (and many others in Texas) face massive challenges and questions. I pointed out several during my initial presentation. Consider, for instance that in Parker County's case -

- There's no County Administrator.
- Parker County may be stretched and stressed by desire for more urban levels of public service delivery—compounded by presence of small/almost all general law municipalities, many unincorporated residents, a host of water wells—and the passage of Senate Bill 6 in 2017.
- Does State law provide for a way to hand off the County Judge's probate and magistrate duties (something that's taking up a lot of his time)? Have any other transitioning Counties done this in Texas?
- What are other exurban Counties in Texas that have similar characteristics to Parker County? Are there any efforts to communicate and coordinate with them to jointly address future challenges?
- What are the things often left unsaid about Parker County? Can those things be shared to help build a better brand?
- How can Parker County set itself apart from Tarrant County? From other neighboring Counties?
- What is Parker County's "noble cause"? Do you think the rest of North Texas is even aware of the legacy of Issac Parker?
- What are Parker County's sustainable clusters of economic strength? Is that something the Parker County Economic Development Council has already identified (and that the County and its municipalities are already focused on)?
- Have you ever inventoried Parker County's natural assets? Where are the places in Parker where strangers meet strangers? Might Parker County's proximity to urban visitors seeking alternative spaces stimulate return trips, new sales tax revenues and property investment?
- What are people saying about Parker County right now? Are they saying anything about Parker County outside your County limits?
- What's something everyone thinks would be impossible now—but could someday redefine the Parker County community like never before?
- What does Senate Bill 6 and the new annexation requirements mean for Parker County's Cities—and for associated future demand for County provision of routinely municipal services?
- Judge Deen has been facilitating networks—from the new Mayor's Council to the Economic Development Council. Networks lead to problem solving and innovation. Are there any other networks still need to be established?

# COLLABORATION, VERBS, CHALLENGES & QUESTIONS: A 2019 POSTSCRIPT OF OBSERVATIONS & RECOMMENDATIONS

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I'm sure this isn't an exhaustive list. And the thought of it all appears quite daunting. Because of that, I'm passing along a few suggestions for implementation of the 2019 Strategic Plan and addressing these other items, as well:

**Don't forget that Parker County isn't in this alone.** With the massive in migration and population growth in all of Texas, the need for infrastructure funding is common. And as it relates to this region, funding help locally may actually improve with the creation of the North Central Texas Economic Development District (NCTEDD) a few years ago. Multijurisdictional entities composed of counties, local governments and the private sector, EDDs help implement Combined Economic Development Strategies (or CEDS) that are required by the United States Economic Development Administration (EDA) to establish their existence. The new, North Central Texas version received approval by the EDA earlier a few years ago.

An EDD is beneficial in supporting local government applications for EDA grants. Parker County, your cities and your communities may qualify for public works-related grants; you and they can already receive associated technical assistance and grant funding support through the North Central Texas Council of Governments, the entity which manages NCTEDD. I recommend you get familiar with the NCTEDD—and designate someone to represent Parker County on the District's Board of Directors.

Consider affiliating with the North Texas Commission; NTC took the lead in defending Counties, Cities, School Districts and Special Districts during this last session of the Texas Legislature. I have no doubt they'll do the same in future sessions.

Moreover, reach out and get to know those cousin (exurban) Counties, the ones who resemble Parker County's culture, character and challenges. Seek to team up with them; they may be your best allies, and unity with others like you can help you prepare for both known and unforeseen challenges ahead.

A big part of this work will involve becoming acquainted with people you don't already know. Be bold in these initiatives as the leaders you are here at home in Parker County; I have to believe other Counties will want to work with you—and will be impressed with your chutzpah.