

TITUS COUNTY COMMISSIONERS' COURT

Public Participation Form

Instructions: Fill out all appropriate blanks. Please print or write legibly.

NAME: Danny Woodson — Robert Rolsten

ADDRESS: Titus County Courthouse

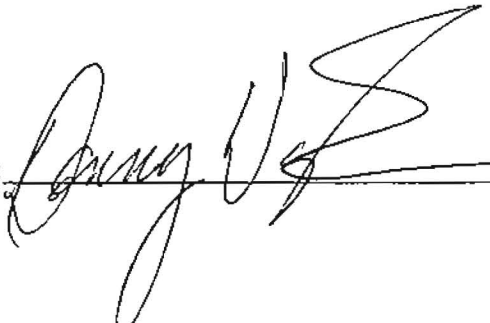
Do you represent any particular group or organization? District Court

If you do represent a group or organization, please state the name of such group or organization?

Which agenda item (or items) do you wish to address? #7

Do you wish to make an inquiry under Section 551.042 of the Open Meetings Act?

No

Signature:  Date: 4/22/2013

Note: This Public Participation Form must be presented to the County Clerk prior to the time that the agenda item (or items) you wish to address are discussed before the Court.

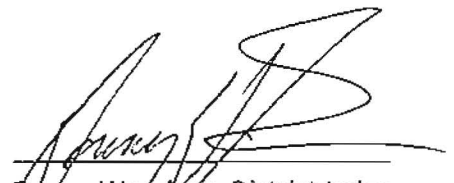
COMMENTS OFFERED BY DISTRICT JUDGES
DANNY WOODSON AND ROBERT ROLSTON
AT APRIL 22, 2013 COMMISSIONER'S MEETING
REGARDING AGENDA ITEM NO. 7

Regarding the proposal to "Consider and Possibly Hire Chris Basham with ENGAGE Concept Development Services to Produce a Design Build Package for Four Projects" which would include a "Remodel" of the Courthouse Annex, please consider the following comments:

1. As State Judicial Officers, who have the privilege of serving the citizens of Titus County and the other Counties in our respective Districts, we have no authority and would not be presumptuous enough, to suggest to the Honorable Commissioners of Titus County what expenditures of the taxpayer's funds they should or should not make as it relates to any of the projects under consideration.
2. However, if the Commissioners deem it appropriate to expend funds to explore renovating the Courthouse Annex, we believe our respective Courts, and thus the citizens of Titus County, would benefit from such expenditures if those expenditures, if made, could be allocated in such manner as to improve the administration of our respective Courts.
3. Historically, the 76th and 276th Judicial District Courts have utilized the same Courtroom to conduct jury trials, not because that is necessarily the best system, but because that is the only option available, since Titus County has only one District Courtroom (Courtroom A) available to try jury cases. Courtroom B is not configured in such manner so as to allow jury trials to be conducted and is currently used to assemble jury panels for jury selection and the trial of non-jury matters only. The Judges of the respective Courts have rotated their dockets and jury weeks in such manner so as to avoid scheduling conflicts, that is, to avoid scheduling jury weeks in Titus County during the same weeks. This rotating system was also due in part to the legislature have statutorily designated the Terms of the respective Courts in each County comprising the multi-county districts of the 76th and 276th Judicial Districts. In 2011, the legislature changed the law so that the Terms of Court in each county of a multi-county district would begin January 1, and July 1, of each year. This change in the law has provided the 76th and 276th Judicial District Courts more flexibility to schedule Court in their respective Counties in order to best serve the case loads in each County. The 76th Judicial District is composed of Camp, Morris and Titus Counties, and the 276th Judicial District is composed of Camp, Morris, Titus, and Marion Counties. If the proposed renovations resulted in the creation of an additional District Courtroom in which jury trials could be conducted in Titus County, the largest County for both the 76th and 276th District Courts, the respective Courts could schedule Court during the same weeks. Our respective District Courts also compete with Courtroom availability with AG Court, CPS court and the necessity of making a Courtroom available for Judges who may be assigned to various cases due to conflicts that prevent the 76th/276th or both from hearing. Additionally, a second Courtroom could be used by the County Judge and County Attorney to try Jury cases.

4. Titus County, having the largest population in the multi-county districts of both Courts, has, by far, the largest felony docket. As the Titus County general population continues to increase in coming years, it is inevitable that the criminal population will also increase. It will become increasingly more significant that both Court's provide more trial time dedicated to the trial of criminal cases. Two Courtrooms configured in such manner as to provide the conduct of jury trials in each Courtroom will become commensurately more important. It would seem renovating and re-allocating existing space in the Titus County Courthouse Annex would be the least expensive manner in which to address these needs which should include consideration of expanding Courtroom B to allow larger jury panels to be assembled. Anyone who has been summoned for jury service in recent months can appreciate how cramped and crowded Courtroom B can be.
5. Finally, it is hoped, that if, there is authorization granted to develop plans for renovating the Titus County Courthouse Annex, that some consideration be granted to providing space for a law library. In past years there was some space dedicated for this purpose, but that space has evidently been subsumed by other uses. Titus County has monies allocated from each filed case to provide funds for a law library.
6. In conclusion, the District Judges for the 76th and 276th Judicial District Courts, present these remarks, not to suggest to the Honorable Titus County Judge and Honorable Titus County Commissioners that they should or should not authorize expenditures for the development of renovation plans, or eventual renovations, those decisions resting solely within the purview of the authority of the Commissioner's Court, but only to provide our thoughts as to the benefits the Citizens of Titus County could realize from such plans and renovations if approved; that being the more effective and efficient administration of the Titus County judicial system. Can the 76th and 276th Judicial Courts "get by" with what is available presently? The answer is yes; we will make it work. Will what is available now continue to work for Titus County in the near and distant future? Most likely not. Would the renovations be beneficial to the citizens of Titus County? Hopefully the foregoing remarks have conveyed that such plans and renovations would be beneficial.

Thank you for your kind consideration of these remarks.



Danny Woodson, District Judge
76th Judicial District Court



Robert Rolston, District Judge
276th Judicial District Court