

Every day I hear people complain about what's happening to our country and what's going on in Washington. Well let me tell you, those very same things are going on right here in the Titus County Courthouse.

Our Commissioners & County Judge spent \$150,000 of "unbudgeted" money to purchase the Riddle Street building. If you look at this year's budget, there was nothing budgeted for "courthouse capital outlay". But they transferred some money out of thin air to that account! In the "Texas Local Government Code" Sec. 111.010, it states that the Commissioners Court may spend county funds only in strict compliance with the budget, except in an emergency. An emergency is when there is a grave public necessity or to meet an unusual & unforeseen condition that could not have been included in the original budget.

The \$150,000 was not budgeted. There was no "emergency". The Commissioners & Judge are just spending money with a total disregard to the budget.

Now, they have leased the building to a private entity, Texas Workforce Solutions, without holding a public auction as required by Texas law. Section 263.001 of the Texas Local Government Code, provides that a commissioners court, "by an order entered in its minutes, may appoint a commissioner to sell or lease real property owned by the county. The sale or lease must be made at a public auction held in accordance with this section." And, if the building is not used for a constitutional "county purpose" then the building must be placed on the tax rolls and property taxes must be paid by the county. Leasing office space to a private entity is not a "county purpose".

According to Susan Combs, our State Comptroller's web site, out of 254 counties, we have the 6th largest debt per capita, in the entire state. Titus County's debt is \$148,685,000. Yes, almost 150 MILLION DOLLARS! I guess if you add the Riddle Street remodel, the courthouse annex remodel and the Ratliff building remodel,

we'll probably be number one in the state, and that's a heck of a reputation to have.

The Commissioners and the Judge should stick to the budget and to the law. They need to hold a legal auction to lease or sell the building and not spend any more money on it.

Riddle St.