JEFFERSON COUNTY LINE

WINTER 2025 EDITION





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On December 1, 2025, the employees of Jefferson County gathered together to witness the lighting of the Christmas tree in the atrium of the Courthouse. Those in attendance were entertained by the West Brook Senior High School Choir, and greeted by Santa Claus and his helper. The tree was lit by Emma & Ellie Rosales (Ages 10 & 8), daughters of Alex & Verenice Rosales, the Director of Human Resources & Risk Management for Jefferson County.





On December 4, 2025, Jefferson County employees gathered at the Sub-Courthouse in Port Arthur to enjoy the 8th Annual Christmas Tree Lighting Ceremony. Attendees were entertained by Wheatley Elementary and Booker T. Washington Elementary School Choir & Cheer. The tree was lit by Jurnee Keyes, daughter of Kenneth Keyes & Semaj Nichols. She is the granddaughter of Road & Bridge, Pct. 3 employee, Shenita Keyes.

Employee Assistance Program
1-800-324-4327

<u>Deferred Compensation</u> 1-877-677-3678 United Health Care

Risk Management 409-835-8672 <u>Liviniti</u> 1-800-710-9341

Employee Health 409-784-5881

Christmas with the Constable

Constable Christopher Bates hosted his 11th Annual "Christmas With The Constable" Toy Drive on Thursday, December 4th in Port Arthur. Guests brought toys to benefit the Port Arthur Salvation Army's Angel Tree Program. Guests also enjoyed fellowship, delicious gumbo, and holiday singing from youth recording artists "The Barnes Boyz" and Constable Bates himself! Constable Bates stated, "I'm honored to have the support of the community with this event for the past 11 years. This is the true meaning of love and family." Over 100 people attended this year's event.



Pictured above is Constable Bates and staff from the District Clerk's Office.

Merry Christmas

Costumes Across the County



What's Happening at 'The Ben'? An update from your friends at the Ben J. Rogers Regional Visitors Center

As 2025 winds down, we're grateful for the many fall festivals and community gatherings that filled Jefferson County with familiar faces, shared laughter, and the kind of moments that remind us why traditions matter.



This season also brought another meaningful Veterans Day observance ceremony, hosted here at the Visitors Center by Vietnam Veterans Chapter 292. The service honored those who have served this great nation with courage, sacrifice, and unwavering dedication. It was a moving tribute, and we hope you join us on Veteran's Day next year. Looking ahead, we invite the community to mark their calendars for our next observance ceremony on March 29, 2026, in honor of Vietnam Veterans Day, as we once again come together in gratitude and respect for those who gave the ultimate sacrifice.

As the holidays approach, there's no better time to shop small and local, supporting the hometown businesses that give our county its charm, character, and a little extra sparkle you just can't find anywhere else. Be sure to check out the Museum of the Gulf Coast, the Art Museum of Southeast Texas, and the Spindletop Gladys City Boomtown Museum.

These gift shops provide a fantastic array of items that reflect the culture and history of our region. Shopping locally not only helps support these incredible institutions but also ensures your gifts are meaningful and special.





If your family is coming in from out of town, we'd love for them to stop by our Visitors Center! We're here to provide ideas for things to do, places to explore, and events happening in Jefferson County. It's the perfect starting point to make the most of your time here. If they can't make it here, tell them to check us out online at ExploreJeffersonCountyTX.com!

We hope this season brings joy, connection, and the chance to explore everything Jefferson County has to offer. Wishing you and your loved ones a wonderful holiday season!

Jefferson County Gives Back

This November, the Jefferson County Tax Office & District Clerk's Office partnered together to host a community Food Drive benefiting the Southeast Texas Food Bank. Thanks to the incredible generosity of those who contributed, the event brought in a total of 608 pounds of food for the Southeast Texas Food Bank. This translates into 506 meals for local families in need. We are proud to work alongside such a compassionate and generous community!



Pictured above: District Clerk Jamie Smith, Tax Assessor/Collector Kate Carroll, and staff.



"It takes a village. Every can, every package of food helps someone in need. The representatives from the Food Bank were so appreciative! We are proud to partner with the District Clerk's Office to raise awareness and do our part to stop anyone from going hungry."

-Kate Carroll, Jefferson County Tax Assessor/Collector



2026 Jefferson County Weight Loss & Fitness Challenge

The Employee Health Clinic will be kicking off the New Year with a challenge for employees

The Employee Health Clinic will be kicking off the New Year with a challenge for employees!

- * We will be forming teams of 4.
- * The goal is to log in the miles you walk per week as a team and how many ounces of water you drink per week as a team.
- * We will start logging in teams and their weights the week of January 5th.
- * It will be a 90 day challenge.
- * The teams must be made up of employees of Jefferson County either full-time or part-time.
- * Members can be from your own department or a mix of several departments.
- * You are encouraged to walk with your team members, but can also log solo miles.
- * The main goal is to get employees to move more to create better cardiovascular health and drink more water to flush out the impurities in our bodies.
- * Team members are encouraged to weigh in regularly. This can be done in the Employee Health Clinic or on the same scale at home once a week.
- * The first 10 teams that register will receive free water bottles to measure their daily intake.
- * An email with a team registration form has been sent out. If you did not receive a form, please contact Employee Health.

There will be door prizes for the team that walks the most miles, loses the most combined weight, and drinks the most water at the end of the challenge. An individual prize will also be given to the person who walks the most individual miles.

Call the Employee Health Clinic at (409) 784-5881 with any questions you may have.

Risk Management Reminders Winter 2025

Do you have any money left in your United Healthcare (UHC) Healthcare Flexible Spending Account (FSA)?

If you are enrolled in the **UHC FSA Health Care Account,** you have a grace period through March 15, 2026, to incur expenses. At myUHC.com, you can submit a claim form electronically or print a manual claim form for submitting via fax or mail. You have until March 31, 2026, to submit claims for reimbursement. If you are enrolled in the **UHC Dependent Daycare Care Account,** any money left in your account at the end of the plan year (December 31, 2025) will be forfeited.

Benefit changes made during Annual Enrollment will take effect on January 1, 2026. Your 1st pay stub in January will reflect any changes in your deductions. You will also receive a Benefits Statement in January to confirm your 2026 benefits enrollment.

Making Changes? Other than Annual Enrollment, the only time you can add or drop dependents from your Medical and/or Dental coverage is with a HIPAA Special Enrollment Event or IRS Section 125 Change of Status. However, you must enroll or change coverage within 30 days of the event or change of status and submit the required documentation to prove dependency (marriage license for a spouse, birth certificate for children, etc.) and proof of other coverage loss/addition. Examples of Special Enrollment Events and Change of Status are:

- ⇒ Change in Legal Marital Status due to marriage, divorce, or death of a spouse
- ⇒ Change in Number of Dependents due to birth, adoption, or death of a dependent
- ⇒ Change in Employment Status of employee, spouse, or dependents
- ⇒ Dependent Child reaches age 26
- ⇒ Changes in Coverage or Cost for spouse or dependent under another plan
- ⇒ Eligibility or Loss of Eligibility for Assistance under State Medicaid or Children's Health Insurance Program (CHIP)

All enrollment changes are made through the Employee Navigator Benefits Portal at: https://www.employeenavigator.com/



Injured on the job? County Policy states that you must notify Risk Management within 24 hours of any on the job injury or illness by completing an On the Job/Injury Illness form (located on the Risk Management page of the County website) and submitting it to the Risk Management Department.

More Questions about your benefits? The Risk Management page of the County website has detailed information on all of the County benefits, along with Quick Links to the MyUHC, Express Scripts and OnlinEnroll web portals. You can access the website at: https://jeffersoncountytx.gov/riskman/

Merry Christmas and Happy New Year from your Risk Management staff!



HATS OFF TO YOU!

Ben J. Rogers Visitors Center

Congratulations to Victoria Shultz from our Visitors Center for earning first place in the Business Category at the John Jay French Museum's Pumpkin Walk. Her bird-watcher themed pumpkin, featuring "Betty the Birder", stood out for its thoughtful design and festive charm, showcasing the creativity and community spirit of the Visitors Center.



It's that time of year to make your nominations for the **2025 Employee Excellence Award**. A copy of the nomination form can be found as an insert in this newsletter. Please return the form to Human Resources no later than **Friday**, **January 30**, **2026**. For more information, or if you have any questions, please contact Human Resources at 409-839-2391.



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2026 County Holidays

- ◆ January 1st (Thursday) New Year's
- ◆ January 19th (Monday) -Martin Luther King, Jr. Day
- ◆April 3rd (Friday) Good Friday
- ◆ May 25th (Monday) Memorial Day
- ◆June 19th (Friday) Juneteenth
- ◆ July 3rd Observed (Friday) Independence Day
- ◆September 7th (Monday) -Labor Day
- ◆ November 11th (Wednesday) Veteran's Day
- ◆November 26th & 27th (Thursday & Friday)
 Thanksgiving
- ◆December 24th & 25th (Thursday & Friday) -Christmas

The members of
Commissioners' Court would
like to take this opportunity
to thank all of the employees
of Jefferson County for their
continued dedication,
support, and
contributions.

We wish you and your families a very Merry Christmas and a Happy New Year!

Please join us in welcoming our newest Jefferson County Employees!

Adult Probation: Laikin Young

Airport: Harold Mouton

Auditor's Office: Christina Bozeman, Jasmine Gunner

Commissioner, Pct. 1: David Trahan

Commissioner, Pct. 3: Francisco Almaguer

Constable, Pct 1: Tyquisha Murray

County Clerk: Christy Johnson

District Attorney: Nicolas Jeter, Kaneshia

Moore

District Clerk: Lolita Senigaur, Jennifer

Trenbeath

Human Resources: Erin Garsee

Juvenile Probation: Justin Applestot, Emanuel Berry, Heather Bobb, Bredged Guill, Alexus Potts

MIS: Jacob Bourgeois

Public Health: Hannah Bragg, Nerissa Lacy

Sheriff: Deseri Bruno, Matthew Escalera, Leandra Guerrero Roman, Kassidei Hemler, Juan Huerta, Shellby Johnson, Adam Mathews Jr., Khai McGhee, Angelina Northcutt, Phillip Perkins, Marco Powell, Landon Stephens, Brooke Thibodeaux, Gerardo Valencia Jr., Jacob Webster

We wish all our retirees well in their future endeavors!

Congratulations!

October Retirements

Donald Champagne

November Retirements

Loretta 'Kay' Havard Calista Collins-Eaglin

December Retirements

David Cantue Cathy Dollinger William 'Bill' Holland Willard 'Jody' Jannise Jamie Miller

Happy Retirement!

REMINDERS FOR RETIREMENT

Contact McKenna Bertrand in Human Resources, to schedule your appointment to retire and to receive a list of required documents.

If you do not already have access to your online portal you will need to contact Human Resources for your account number.

(409) 839-2391

The Jefferson County Line is published quarterly by the Human Resources Department. News Editor: Verenice Rosales. Publisher, Kellsey Rodrick If you have an article that you would like to include in the next newsletter, please send it to the HR Department.

2025 JEFFERSON COUNTY EMPLOYEE EXCELLENCE AWARD NOMINATION FORM

Name of Nominee:		
Position Title:		
Division/Department:		
Number of years employed with	h Jefferson County:	
Briefly outline nominee's curren	nt job responsibilities:	
All items belo	ow must be completed. Attach additional pages if necessary.	
Describe at least three qualities to excellence in his/her work:	s and/or characteristics which reflect the nominee's professionalism and de	edication
Cite specific example(s) of the n	nominee's actions or attitudes which underscore his/her dedication to the jo that he/she is committed to the highest standards of moral, ethical and pro	
Cite examples of nominee's inte others:	eraction with co-workers/citizens that show self-confidence, courtesy and re	espect for
Submitted by:		
Department:	Date:	

Return completed form to the Human Resources Department no later than Friday, January 30, 2026.

GUIDELINES FOR THE

JEFFERSON COUNTY AWARD FOR EMPLOYEE EXCELLENCE

- I. What are the criteria?
 - ➤ Personifies at all times the highest ideals of personal integrity, professionalism and excellence.
 - > Sets personal and work standards which are outstanding and continually strives for excellence and perfection.
 - Consistently performs tasks, interacts with others, and presents him/herself in such a manner as to be a credit to his/her department and Jefferson County
 - ➤ Is self-motivated and self-directed with a thorough knowledge of his/her job and demonstrates the ability to initiate creative, goal oriented projects and carry them through to successful completion.
 - ➤ Shows pride in his/her work and dedication to duty; consistently does nothing less than the best possible job in every detail.
 - Treats coworkers and the public with respect and courtesy.
- II. Who is eligible?

All full-time regular county employees (other than elected officials) who have been employed for at least one year are eligible to be nominated for this award. **Please submit the name of one employee per nomination form**.

III. How will the recipient be selected?

Nominations for the recipient can come from any County employee. All nominations must be received in the Human Resource Department by a specified date. A panel made up of five county employees will be responsible for selecting the finalists and the ultimate recipient. This panel will review all nominations and select three finalists. These finalists shall be rank-ordered for purposes of selecting the award winner.

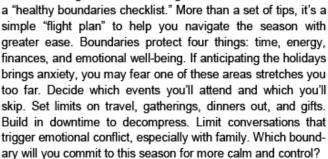
IV. How will the recipient be recognized?

A cash award of \$700.00 will be presented to the award winner during Commissioners' Court. The award winner will also receive a resolution from the court and have his/her name displayed on a plaque in the courthouse lobby. The first finalist will receive a cash award of \$350.00 and the second finalist will receive a cash award of \$300.00. Both the winner and the finalists will also receive a certificate of merit stating they were a finalist for the award.



Create a Healthy **Boundaries Checklist**

Tf December feels overwhelming, consider creating





Social Drinking Pressure and Safe Holiday Travel

None of us like feeling vulnerable to social pressure, especially when avoiding alcohol before a long drive. But it takes more than willpower. Holiday parties that include a manager, an influential coworker, strong group

norms, or simply the expectation to "join in" can weaken your resolve and make drinking harder to wave off. Add a bit of after-work fatigue, stress, or that end-of-the-week desire to relax, and you're suddenly underestimating your level of impairment at the end of the evening. Planning ahead is far more effective than relying on moment-to-moment judgment trying to fight these challenges. Choosing a designated driver, arranging a rideshare, or one of the best-ever ideas—bringing a non-alcoholic beverage to keep in hand—will reduce social pressure and help you stay in control of your decisions.

Learn to "Read and Work the Room"

A room full of people you don't know can be intimidating, but being able to "read and work the room" at a business gathering will seriously enhance your value as an employee. Here's how to do it: (1) Avoid the panicky "Yikes! I don't know anyone here!" reaction. (2) Take a few minutes to observe conversation topics, body language, and the general mood. This allows you to be more confident, identify influencers, and consider those with whom you may want to build a relationship. (3) Notice the pace and enthusiasm of how people speak. Adjust your tone and body language to fit this flow. (4) Spot who's leading conversations and who people gravitate to. Who's keeping discussions moving? These may be well-networked individuals worth knowing. Approach those you wish to engage with a relevant question, brief comment, or question that adds value, or mention a shared interest. Working a room takes a bit of practice. It's an acquired talent. With experience, you'll discover the power of reciprocal relationships and new opportunities for you and your employer. Learn more: How to Work the Room by Susan

RoAne

The "Attention Economy" Wants You

here is your attention going? Michael H. Goldhaber, a physicist and futurist,

wrote about "The Attention Economy" in 1997. His argument: human attention, like time, is a limited resource, easily grabbed and manipulated. Being aware of the attention economy can help you improve focus, be more intentional with decisions, and stay in control amid daily digital bombardment. Not managing your attention can leave you vulnerable to interruptions, scattered thinking, and reduced productivity. So awareness is your first power, but it's a continually developing skill. The first step is understanding that your attention is what market forces seek to influence. Your decisions, values, and sense of what matters most all are targets. Recognizing this gives you pause, allows refocusing, and enables choices rather than being pulled into a vortex of agendas. Feeling in control gives you the satisfaction of directing your attention where you want.



WELLNESSOMINUTE

December 2025



UNDERSTANDING HOLIDAY STRESS: CAUSES AND SOLUTIONS

The holiday season, while often filled with joy and celebration, can also be a significant source of stress for many people. Understanding the causes of holiday stress and finding effective solutions can help you enjoy this special time of year more fully.

CAUSES OF HOLIDAY STRESS

Several factors contribute to holiday stress. The pressure to meet expectations, whether self-imposed or from others, can be overwhelming. Financial strain from gift-giving and travel expenses adds to the burden. Additionally, the disruption of routines and the demands of social gatherings can lead to fatigue and anxiety.

SOLUTIONS FOR MANAGING HOLIDAY STRESS

Managing holiday stress involves a combination of planning, self-care, and realistic expectations. Here are some strategies to consider:

- Set a Budget: Plan your holiday spending in advance to avoid financial stress. Stick to your budget and consider homemade gifts or experiences instead of expensive presents.
- Prioritize Self-Care: Make time for activities that

relax and rejuvenate you, such as reading, taking a walk, or practicing meditation.

- Plan Ahead: Create a schedule to manage your time effectively. Prioritize tasks and delegate responsibilities when possible.
- Practice Mindfulness: Stay present and focus on enjoying the moment rather than worrying about the future or dwelling on the past.
- Set Boundaries: Learn to say no to activities or events that cause unnecessary stress. It's okay to prioritize your well-being.

By understanding the causes of holiday stress and implementing these solutions, you can reduce anxiety and enhance your enjoyment of the season. Remember, the holidays are about connection and joy, so take steps to ensure they remain a positive experience for you and your loved ones.

Sources:

- American Psychological Association Holiday Stress https://www.apa.org/topics/stress/holiday
- Mayo Clinic Stress Management https://www.mayo.dinic.org/healthy-lifestyle/stress-management/in-depth/stress/art/20047544
- Healthline Haliday Stress https://www.healthline.com/health/halidayetress



MINDFULNESS TECHNIQUES TO STAY CALM DURING THE HOLIDAYS

The holiday season can be a whirlwind of activities and emotions, making it easy to feel overwhelmed. Practicing mindfulness can help you stay grounded and calm amidst the chaos, allowing you to enjoy the festivities more fully.

MINDFUL BREATHING

Mindful breathing is a simple yet powerful technique to bring your focus back to the present moment. Take a few minutes each day to sit quietly and focus on your breath. Inhale deeply through your nose, hold for a moment, and exhale slowly through your mouth. This practice can reduce stress and increase relaxation.

Body Scan Meditation

Body scan meditation involves paying attention to different parts of your body, noticing any sensations or tension. Lie down comfortably, dose your eyes, and slowly bring your awareness to each part of your body, starting from your toes and moving up to your head. This technique promotes relaxation and body awareness.

GRATITUDE JOURNALING

Keeping a gratitude journal can shift your focus from stress to appreciation. Each day, write down three things you are grateful for. This practice can enhance your mood and help you maintain a positive outlook during the holidays.

MINDFUL EATING

During holiday meals, practice mindful eating by savoring each bite and paying attention to the flavors and textures of your food. This can help you enjoy your meals more and prevent overeating.

Incorporating mindfulness techniques into your daily routine can help you navigate the holiday season with greater ease and enjoyment. By staying present and focused, you can reduce stress and create more meaningful holiday experiences.

- Mindful.org How to Practice Mindfulness https://www.mindful.org/mindfulness.how.to-doit/
- Psychology Today Mindfulness
- wpsychologytoday.com/us/basics/mirdfulness Harvard Health - Mindfulness Meditation https://www.health.harvard.edu/mind-and-mood/mindfulness-medita

COMFORTING HERBAL TEA BLENDS FOR RELAXATION

As the holiday season approaches, finding moments of calm can be challenging. Herbal teas offer a soothing way to unwind and relax. Here are some comforting herbal tea blends to help you manage holiday stress and promote relaxation.

CHAMOMILE AND LAVENDER TEA

This classic blend combines the calming properties of chamomile with the soothing aroma of lavender. It's perfect for winding down in the evening.

- 1 tablespoon dried chamomile flowers
- 1 teaspoon dried lavender buds
- 1 cup boiling water

Steep the chamomile and lavender in boiling water for 5-7 minutes. Strain and enjoy.

MINT AND LEMON BALM TEA

This refreshing blend is ideal for a midday break. Mint invigorates the senses, while lemon balm helps reduce anxiety.

1 tablespoon dried mint leaves

- 1 tablespoon dried lemon balm leaves
- 1 cup boiling water

Steep the mint and lemon balm in boiling water for 5-7 minutes. Strain and enjoy.

GINGER AND TURMERIC TEA

This warming blend combines ginger's antiinflammatory properties with turmeric's calming effects, making it perfect for chilly days.

- · 1 teaspoon grated fresh ginger
- 1 teaspoon grated fresh turmeric or 1/2 teaspoon ground turmeric
- · 1 cup boiling water
- · Honey and lemon to taste

Steep the ginger and turmeric in boiling water for 10 minutes. Strain, add honey and lemon to taste, and enjoy.

These herbal tea blends offer a simple and natural way to relax during the busy holiday season. Enjoy them as part of your self-care routine to help manage stress and promote a sense of calm.



GENTLE YOGA FLOW TO RELIEVE HOLIDAY TENSION

The holiday season can be a busy and stressful time. Incorporating a gentle yoga flow into your routine can help alleviate tension and promote relaxation. This sequence is designed to calm the mind and ease the body.

MOUNTAIN POSE (TADASANA)

Begin by standing tall with your feet hip-width apart. Ground your feet into the floor, engage your core, and relax your shoulders. Take a few deep breaths to center yourself.

CAT-COW STRETCH

Move to all fours on your mat. Inhale as you arch your back and lift your head and tailbone (Cow Pose). Exhale as you round your spine and tuck your chin to your chest (Cat Pose). Repeat for 5-10 breaths.

CHILD'S POSE (BALASANA)

From all fours, sit back on your heels and stretch your arms forward, resting your forehead on the mat. Breathe deeply and hold for 5-10 breaths, allowing your body to relax.

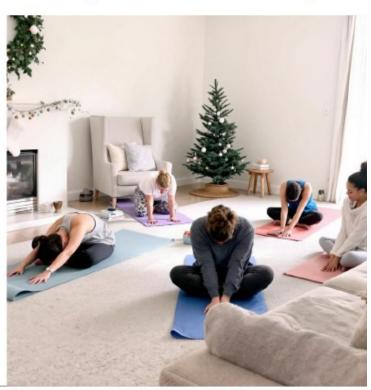
SEATED FORWARD BEND (PASCHIMOTTANASANA)

Sit with your legs extended in front of you. Inhale and lengthen your spine, then exhale as you fold forward, reaching for your feet. Hold for 5-10 breaths, feeling a gentle stretch in your back and legs.

CORPSE POSE (SAVASANA)

Lie flat on your back with your arms at your sides, palms facing up. Close your eyes and focus on your breath, allowing your body to fully relax. Stay in this pose for 5-10 minutes.

This gentle yoga flow can be practiced daily to help relieve holiday tension and promote a sense of calm. Remember to listen to your body and modify poses as needed to suit your comfort level.



Your EAP Can Help

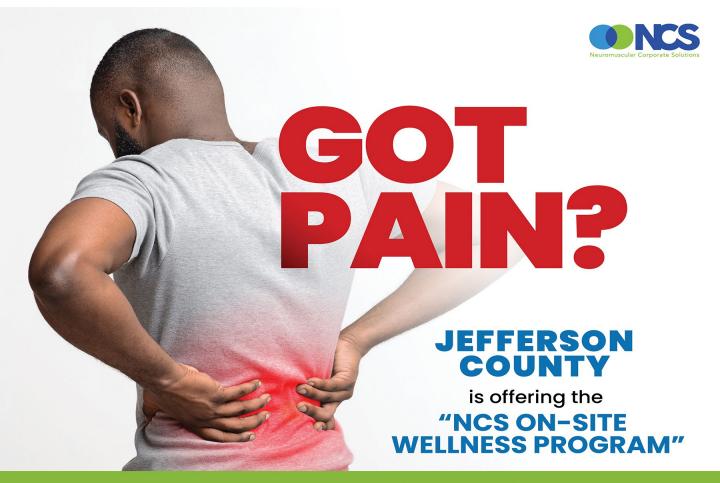
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- 1. Go to www.NMCSOnline.com/SETGEBP
- Select "Create New Account"
 Complete your medical questionnaire
- 4. Select "Appointment"
- 5. Choose a time and follow the prompts.



or scan qr code

Sign Up Now

Need help? Please contact your NCS on-site coordinator. Additional assistance is available: support@ncshealing.com or (817) 380-4183.

Downtown Annex 215 Franklin Street, Suite 202 Beaumont, TX 77701 Monday and Wednesday 1:00 PM to 5 PM Risk Management Room in the Annex

Mid County 7933 Viterbo Road, Unit 4 Beaumont, TX 77705 Tuesday and Thursday 8:00 AM to 10:00 AM