

May 2015



*Commissioner Grady Prestage's*  
**PRECINCT 2 COMMUNITY NEWSLETTER**

"Commissioner's Corner" (May Edition)



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## **National Hurricane Preparedness Week: May 24 - 30**



Hurricane season starts June 1 and runs through November 30. To prepare for a hurricane and other disasters, here are 4 tips to remember:

### **1. Buy enough insurance**

- Get enough insurance to rebuild your home and to replace all of your personal belongings. If you have made a major alteration or improvement to your home, or you have made significant purchases, notify your insurance agent so that the increased value is reflected in your policy.

### **2. Get the right type of policy**

- Ask about flood insurance. Flood damage is not covered under standard home insurance policies. Insurance is available from the National Flood Insurance Program (NFIP) and can be purchased from the same agent or broker who provided your home or renters insurance. Additional information on flood

## **Fort Bend County "Saved by the Bell Program"**



**Pictured from L to R: Brad Slater-Director Field Services, Bruce Bell-Lead Truancy JPO, Desmond Davis-Truancy JPO, John Boutte-Truancy JPO, William Bates-Truancy JPO, Judge Cannata, Judge Shaw, Judge Janssen, Crystal Gonzalez-Truancy JPO, Leonard Pralour-Truancy JPO, Kyle Dobbs-Juvenile Probation Department Executive Director, Osborne Winston-Truancy JPO, Jimmy Winfrey-Truancy JPO**

When most of us think of the phrase "Saved by the Bell," we think of the early 90's NBC hit TV show. From the catchy theme song to the misadventures of the characters at Bayside High School, this show will always be a classic for many viewers. However, in Fort Bend County, the phrase "Saved by the Bell" has taken on a completely new meaning.

"Saved by the Bell" is a truancy reduction program created by the Fort Bend County Juvenile Probation Department in partnership with area schools. It provides support for students who regularly miss school to encourage them to get to class.

insurance can be found at [www.floodsmart.gov](http://www.floodsmart.gov). Excess flood insurance is also available from some private insurance companies if you need more coverage than the \$250,000 for property and \$100,000 on contents that the NFIP provides.

### 3. Create a Home Inventory

A home inventory will help ensure that you have purchased enough insurance to replace your personal possessions. It can also speed the claims process and substantiate losses for income tax purposes. A detailed home inventory is also helpful should you need to apply for disaster aid.

To make creating a home inventory easier, the I.I.I. provides free Web-based software at [KnowYourStuff.org](http://KnowYourStuff.org). Know Your Stuff allows you to organize easily and list your possessions, as well as add digital photographs of your valuables and upload scanned receipts. The program provides free, secure storage of your inventory on Amazon Web Services. Storing your inventory online gives you the ability to access it from any computer in the event your own computer is damaged or destroyed.

### 4. Prepare an Evacuation Plan

Plan ahead and practice so that your evacuation is safe, smooth and fast. In an emergency you may have only a few minutes to gather your important papers and leave your home, possibly for good. Have the following ready to go:

- Medicines, prescriptions, comfort items and a change of clothes.
- Emergency supplies such as flashlights, radio, batteries and water.
- Computer hard drive or laptop.
- Photographs.
- Insurance policies; birth and marriage certificates; wills; deeds; financial information such as account numbers, recent tax returns, stocks, bonds and other negotiable certificates; driver's licenses and other personal identification.

The program started in 2008 with six Fort Bend County ISD schools and all Katy ISD schools under the jurisdiction of Judge Kenneth Cannata. It was then expanded in late 2011 and again in 2012. Judge Gary Janssen serves Lamar Consolidated and Needville ISDs and Judge Ruby Shaw serves Fort Bend ISD.

The goal of this innovative program is to apply pro-active casework management strategies together with meaningful sanctions in order to address truancy issues and ultimately reduce delinquency.

Of the 1742 students identified for the program since 2008, 86% have improved attendance rates. Better attendance results in a decrease in suspensions and school write ups, and an increase in grade point averages for those students.

Juvenile probation officers act as liaisons for truant students for the purpose of coordinating and providing follow up with the judicial system, as well as working with school truancy officers, counselors and community resources to address the social factors behind trancies.

Since the program started in 2008, "Saved by the Bell" has served 1742 students in Fort Bend County school districts including Fort Bend ISD, Katy ISD, Lamar Consolidated ISD, and Needville ISD. The efforts of the program have decreased In-School Suspensions by 81%, decreased out of school suspension by 75% and increased grade point averages by 49% for those students involved.

For more information on the "Saved by the Bell" program, please visit the Fort Bend County Juvenile Probation Department page at [www.fortbendcountytexas.gov](http://www.fortbendcountytexas.gov).