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TAPS 2nd Annual Conference—2015

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The Texas Association of Pretrial Services (TAPS) *Second Annual Conference and Training Institute*, which took place at The Woodlands (outside of Houston) on April 16th and 17th, came off without a hitch. It was an excellent venue. There were some last minute changes and substitutions but everyone who attended came away with more knowledge and understanding of Pretrial than they arrived with. In fact, every attendee came away with a certificate of attendance, issued by the *Correctional Management Institute of Texas (CMIT)* that credited the person with **9 hours of**

Continuing Education Units (CEUs). The certificate was an indication that what they attended was not just a conference at which to gain valuable information but an opportunity to procure required *professional development training* hours as well. In the coming months there will be additional opportunities for members to acquire CEUs by attending TAPS sponsored training seminars throughout the state, so be alert for announcements and stay in touch. Obtaining CEUs for future TAPS events is just one of the many benefits you will enjoy as members of the Texas Association of

Pretrial Services. Plans are already in the works for next year's conference and training institute. In fact, numerous committees are being formed to address membership and further enhance the TAPS agenda for the next year and beyond. An article further into this newsletter addresses the various committees and positions that are available. Join TAPS and join a committee. Be a part of making TAPS the best statewide pretrial association in the country!



A Word From The National Association of Pretrial Services

Greetings from NAPSA!!

Words cannot begin to describe the pride I have in the great state of Texas!

Your accomplishment in creating TAPS is one that has not gone unnoticed. It took an incredible amount of work to make this happen and it should be a great source of pride for each of your members!

TAPS begins its great work at an exciting time in our nation. Pretrial justice reform is on the lips of most

every stakeholder in the criminal justice field. There is more research that is being developed and tested than ever before that will inform decision-making from release, to diversion to supervision practices. As pretrial practitioners our professional associations will be instrumental in keeping us abreast of best practices and in providing the tools and education for continuous professional development. Being actively involved in your local and national associations also provides the opportunity to be an integral part of what

this field looks like for years to come. TAPs is poised to do great things in Texas and NAPSA is here to support you every step of the way!

Congratulations on a successful conference and best of luck on your journey to pretrial justice reform in Texas! You have much reason to be proud!

All my best,

Penny Stinson,
NAPSA President.

Special points of interest:

- NAPSA Letter from the President—pg 1
- NAPSA Executive Director —pg 2
- Webb County—In the Spotlight—pg 2
- El Paso—A Pretrial Office is Created - pg 3
- Executive Forum of Criminal Justice Planners Mtg. pg 4 & 5

Meet Your Neighbors



"You need to be part of the next wave of change heading our way."

Jim Sawyer, NAPSA
Executive Director



A Word From The National Association of Pretrial Services

It is an exciting time to be a member of NAPSA and TAPS!

Discussion and awareness of the need for pretrial services and the professionals that perform those services is at an all-time high. Organizations such as the Public Welfare Foundation, Laura and John Arnold Foundation, and John D. and Catherine T. MacArthur foundation are investing, creating and sustaining pretrial service programs in jurisdictions throughout the nation. In addition, NAPSA is partnering with federal agencies and other like-minded organizations to increase our impact on the national discussion of the need for pretrial services to benefit pretrial professionals at the local, state and federal levels.

You need to be part of the next wave of change heading our way. The 2015 NAPSA conference will feature research, information and training that is presented or sponsored by these Foundations and other partners, such as the National Institute of Corrections and the Pretrial Justice Institute, to elevate the national discussion of the need for pretrial services and the incredible work being done by pretrial professionals at the local, state and federal levels. Please join us in Indianapolis as we recharge our passions, network with our peers and lead the charge for Pretrial Justice. You won't want to miss it! You can register online at www.napsa.org.

Also, please consider helping NAPSA and TAPS grow by getting more involved in the discussion about pretrial services and becoming a member. We need you to help us make a difference for pretrial justice professionals.

Jim Sawyer
Executive Director
National Association of
Pretrial Services Agencies (NAPSA)

**Webb County Pre-Trial Services
Indigent Defense Services**
By Cornell Mickley

Our office is a standalone department, separate from the probation office. One unit under this department is the indigent defense component. This unit appoints attorney's to adult and juvenile offenders who qualify to receive such appointments.

Our office consists of 8 personnel: Three judicial bond officers, one magistrate assistant, one judicial clerk, one office assistant, one supervisor-investigator and a director. Our judicial bond officers serve five justices of the peace, four district

courts and the two county courts.

Drug testing, GPS monitoring, sober links units and counseling referral are a few services that the courts have to call upon for the offenders who are released to our custody as a condition of bond.

Webb County recently entered into a contract with Tyler Technologies to revamp our justice software system. Our current judicial software is over twenty

years old. This new software will have the capabilities of electronic documentation and supervision control of our client base. We have been told that the software will be on-line within twenty four months. This overhaul will cost the county over 2 million dollars and hopefully make our daily office business operations much simpler.

"Webb County recently entered into a contract with Tyler Technologies to revamp our justice software system."

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The Buy in, for Pretrial Service Professionals is to understand the focus of county commissioners and assist them in understanding the mission of a pretrial services agency.

One of her greatest desires for Pretrial Service is to assist in changing the inequality of the Criminal Court System by replacing the archaic system of monetary bonds.

The new department is expected to help expedite the process of identifying inmates who are indigent, and who qualify for personal recognizance bonds...and identify inmates who require mental health assistance.

TAPS Conference Speakers—Spotlight on Chris Rogers by Jeremiah Cocking

Smart Justice Initiative- “Buy in”, Chris Rogers is a former NACO president and current County Commissioner for Douglas County Nebraska. Mr. Rogers’ key focus for his discussion on Smart Justice was obtaining “buy in” from county commissioners. During the presentation he discussed his history with Pretrial Services within Douglas County, Nebraska and how it

shaped his perception of jail overcrowding and the indigent. It was a perspective that was not only influenced first by the county’s overburdened financial obligation to house pre-adjudicated citizens but also by a need to offer equality for citizens, regardless of their financial ability to pay for their release. The *Buy in, for Pretrial Service Professionals* is to un-

derstand the focus of county commissioners and assist them in understanding the mission of a pretrial services agency. Knowing the financial numbers to open the commissioner’s door is important, however; even more important is putting a face and story to the individual languishing in jail for a nonviolent offense simply because they cannot afford to pay their bond.

TAPS Conference Speakers—Spotlight on Elizabeth Simoni by Jeremiah Cocking

Pretrial 101- Elizabeth Simoni is the Northeast Director for the National Association of Pretrial Services (NAPSA) in Washington D.C. She is also the Executive Director of Maine Pretrial. Ms. Simoni was a lively and engaging speaker who exhibited a quick wit and passion for pretrial. She discussed, “Who we are and why are we here?” Ms.

Simoni detailed how Pretrial Services collects and analyzes defendant information for use in determining risk, to make recommendations to the court concerning conditions of release and to supervise defendants who are released from secure custody during the pretrial phase of court. Ms. Simoni was enthusiastic about the changes that have

been made over the years in her home state of Maine but even more so in the changes to come in the future. One of her greatest desires for Pretrial Service is to assist in changing the inequality of the Criminal Court System by replacing the archaic system of monetary bonds.



NEWS FROM AROUND THE STATE

El Paso Creates a Pretrial Services Program

Despite opposition from area bondsmen, EL Paso County Commissioners Court approved the creation of a pretrial services office to be effective October 1, 2015. According to an article in the *El Paso Times*, “The new department (which will be called the Office of Criminal Justice Coordination) will consolidate the county’s pretrial functions into one department.” The pretrial functions are presently spread out through several different departments. “Staff will gather information about newly arrested defendants and will make it available to magistrates to help them decide under what conditions, if any, the defendant should be released from jail prior to trial...” and “The new department is expected to help expedite the process of identifying inmates who are indigent, and who qualify for personal recognizance bonds.” The new pretrial office will also be responsi-

ble for screening and identifying inmates who require mental health assistance. The motion was passed 4 – 1 with only one commissioner (Andrew Haggerty) voting against the measure.

The motivation behind the change came after a visit to Bexar County in which delegates from El Paso County, including County Judge Veronica Escobar, Commissioner Vince Perez (author of the initiative), County Court Judge Alma Trejo and several other

members of El Paso County government had the opportunity to see what a well-organized, high functioning, efficient and effective pretrial office can do to bring positive change to a community.

To see the entire article press Ctrl & click here: http://www.elpasotimes.com/news/ci_28048584/county-commissioners-court-approves-establishment-pretrial-services-office

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The Executive Forum for Criminal Justice Planners By Gerald Rodriguez

The overarching idea behind these meetings was that the urban counties have similar issues, problems and solutions. This forum is an opportunity to bring criminal justice leaders together on a regular basis to discuss and attempt to find solutions to these issues.

The commercial bail industry has a strong influence in the area which limits the ability to release on personal bond. Referring to Dallas County

Interviews are limited by a list of excluded offenses developed by the criminal court Judges. Referring to Tarrant County

The Executive Forum for Criminal Justice Planners invited pretrial release professionals to their most recent meeting on 5/27/15 to 5/29/15. This group brings together executive managers from counties across Texas who are responsible for overseeing the criminal justice system in their jurisdictions. The group meets twice yearly and is sponsored by the Correctional Management Institute of Texas (CMIT) at Sam Houston State University campus in Huntsville, Texas. The planners represent the five largest counties: Harris, Dallas, Tarrant, Bexar, and Travis – as well as small counties through representatives from The Texas Association of Counties (TAC). The overarching idea behind these meetings was that the urban counties have similar issues, problems and solutions. This forum is an opportunity to bring criminal justice leaders together on a regular basis to discuss and attempt to find solutions to these issues. Bob Wessels, the program coordinator for the Executive Forum for Criminal Justice Planners, facilitated the meeting. Also on hand to contribute to the discussions was Doug Dreke, the Executive Director of *Correctional Management Institute of Texas (CMIT)*.

Participants were encouraged to invite pretrial directors or other senior pretrial release staff familiar with the county's pretrial release processes. The agenda included a group discussion of pretrial release services from the individual county's perspective. Each county represented at the meeting was given an opportunity to provide a brief summary of their organization and how pretrial release is coordinated in their area. It was striking how distinct pretrial release is handled in the various counties. The following is a brief summary of some of the items mentioned in the counties' description of their organizations and other topics discussed at the meeting.

Bexar County has a large operation with about 70 staff which

operates 24/7. Their department is part of Judicial Services under the Commissioners Court. Bexar County uses a risk assessment similar to Harris County. They supervise defendants who are released including defendants released on surety bond with conditions. They are currently working on a variety of initiatives. They are working to develop a proxy risk score with Dr. Fabelo. They have a mental health public defender project to provide timely representation to the mentally ill and to encourage participation in available programming. They have coordinated with homeless services for the use of 30 beds.

Dallas County has a small office with about four officers. They initially screen for bond interview based on the offense. The commercial bail industry has a strong influence in the area which limits the ability to release on personal bond. Pretrial releases are handled through the Dallas County Sheriff's Department. They are able to release a handful of individuals weekly. They are looking at ways to build up their pretrial release program and are moving towards using a validated risk assessment.

Tarrant County is a small operation with about 15 staff. They interview a limited number of cases (3,500 annually) during regular weekday business hours. Interviews are limited by a list of excluded offenses developed by the criminal court Judges. Offenses on the list are excluded for pretrial release interviews. Tarrant County Pretrial Services supervise all defendants released to their program. Pretrial release on personal bond is not often used. Tarrant

County offers reporting by mail for misdemeanor defendants and they have a strong appearance rate.

Harris County has a large operation which interviews around the clock seven days a week. They complete interviews for the majority of defendants using a locally developed risks assessment. Annually they complete around 70,000 interviews. Few that are interviewed are released on personal bond. There are about 2000 defendants out on bond at any given time. They have strong appearance rates and these are calculated both by defendants and by appearance. Rates calculated by defendant determine the number of defendants who appear/fail to appear. Rates calculated by appearance incorporate the number of court settings. They no longer supervise defendants released with a surety bond.

Travis County has a large operation with over 75 staff which includes a Drug Diversion Court. They are a division of the Adult Probation department. They interview about 20 hours daily and release about 19,000 defendants annually. They use the ORAS-PAT risk assessment. Recommendations are made using the risk score which is then factored into a detailed decision making process. About 63% of the defendants that are eligible for a personal bond interview are released. They do not directly supervise all defendants released on personal bond; however, at any given time there may be over 4,000 defendants under direct supervision of the department.

(Continued on page 5)

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The Executive Forum for Criminal Justice Planners By Gerald Rodriguez

(continued from page 4)

In addition to discussions on the various programs, there was a presentation on the County Recidivism Project. The goal behind this project was to compare data across counties using a uniform definition of recidivism. Data was collected from large urban counties and analyzed using a Standard Follow-up Period Controlling for Risk Profile in order to make comparisons across counties. The project studied re-arrest each year for three years. During this session a data point stood out to the group. The study indicated that 50% of state jail felons released in 2011 were arrested after two years. This may indicate a need to begin conversations regarding the effectiveness of this program and its impact on county jail populations.

Ramey Heddins provided an update on Tarrant County's implementation of a Mental Health Docket. They received funding through Texas Correctional Office on Offenders with Medical or Mental Impairments (TCOOMI) and 1115 Waiver money. The program began with a pragmatic goal, to reduce the likelihood of an individual from being re-arrested. Reducing one arrest a year can save thousands of dollars in jail costs. A docket was created on Tuesdays for high consumers of jail resources with mental health issues. Lists of the recently incarcerated are compared to a database of individuals identified to have mental health issues. If

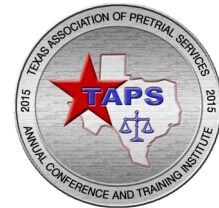
the individual has more than two previous arrests they are considered for the docket. Defendants meeting these criteria are assessed to identify their needs and a discharge plan is created which can address how the needs will be addressed. This information is then shared with the court at the docket. The program operates on a two tier system. The first tier is comprised of individuals with severe mental health issues who can get wrap around services. The second tier is for those individuals who are competent to stand trial and can be considered for release with a discharge plan. A caseworker was hired to provide treatment services and to monitor compliance and track outcomes.

During the meeting, the group got a sneak peek at the plans for new Harris County Joint Processing Center. The Texas Indigent Defense Commission provided information regarding their work during the recent legislative session, new attorney reporting requirements, and information regarding limits to the number of appointments to indigent cases that an attorney can accept. Preliminary information suggests the presumptive maximum number of cases is 226 misdemeanor and 128 felony cases annually. Bob Wessels provided an update on E-filing. The court clerks for 178 of the 254 counties have taken steps to go paperless. The rest are expected to go on-line in 7 months. Similar initiatives for the criminal courts will be permissive rather than mandatory. However, the language for the processes will be similar to that

of the civil courts. The meeting continued with discussion regarding how counties have implemented specialized courts/dockets and an update on the 84th legislative session. In addition an update on the 2nd annual Mental Health Conference was provided. The conference is scheduled for 10/26/15 to 10/19/15 in Montgomery, TX. It is expected to surpass the success of the previous conference.

The meeting was exceptionally productive, well organized and generated a multitude of ideas. I want to thank CMIT and its leadership for hosting this meeting and for providing this important forum. In addition, special thanks to the pretrial leaders from the various counties who provided their insights in order to enhance our criminal justice system.

How are things done in your county? Let us know. Send an email providing information on your department, how it's structured, how things work and what you do. Part of working as a team is getting to know your teammates. So come on, share your story! wlongoria@bexar.org



TAPS THANKS YOU FOR YOUR SUPPORT



The study indicated that 50% of state jail felons released in 2011 were arrested after two years.

Reducing one arrest a year can save thousands of dollars in jail costs.

The court clerks for 178 of the 254 counties have taken steps to go paperless. The rest are expected to go on-line in 7 months.





**TEXAS ASSOCIATION OF PRETRIAL SERVICES
YOUR Association.**

Are you energetic, passionate and looking for a way to get involved in your professional organization?



**JOIN the MEMBERSHIP COMMITTEE.
YOU CAN MAKE A DIFFERENCE!**



The Texas Association of Pretrial Services (TAPS) is looking for members to serve on the Membership Committee. *Membership is the lifeblood of every organization.* Come be involved as we strive to grow the membership of our professional organization, *the only state organization dedicated specifically to the pretrial services field.*

Send your name, email address, phone number, agency name and position to:

Michelle Brown
TAPS Membership Committee
mbrown@tarrantcounty.com
phone: 817-884-2561

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Nolan Bushnell*

*In my life I do a lot of things but I never forget my training.
Haile Gebrselassie*

Free Training Opportunities

CRIMINAL JUSTICE NEWS

Evidence-Based Practices for Supervisors

As mentioned at the conference, TAPS will do our best to make you aware of training opportunities for you staff.

First-line supervisors are key players in implementing the changes required of organizations committed to evidence-based service delivery. The first-line supervisor must perform supervisory duties that support the new role of staff as they impact offender behavior in the community and institution. Often, these new roles for line staff and line officers are not clearly defined, resulting in unclear expectations for job performance. The role of the first-line supervisor is crucial to assisting staff in making this adjustment in their approach to offender supervision, including dynamic risk assessment, offender case management, linkage to appropriate interventions and quality assurance.

Where: Online on the internet

When: Always available

Go to this link (<http://nicic.gov/training/nicwbt13>) and follow the directions provided.

NAPSA's Education Committee will offer a Level One Pretrial Diversion Certification Test later this year for pretrial diversion practitioners. Please click [here](#) for information about the Pretrial Diversion test. Please forward this message to any of your staff or colleagues who are seeking to be certified and look for the announcement of dates and times.

The National Institute of Corrections (NIC) is offering *Orientation for New Pretrial Executives* Aug. 09, 2015 - Aug. 14, 2015—Extensive training that enhances the effectiveness of pretrial executives in maintaining and capitalizing existing services.

As the premier training for pretrial leaders, NIC's Orientation for New Pretrial Executives engages participants in a comprehensive 40-hour instructor lead course of study aimed at the unique issues, challenges and opportunities within the pretrial field. An experienced and diverse faculty of pretrial, performance management, evidence based practice, and legal experts lead orientation participants through study and discussion on the legal foundations of pretrial justice, professional standards for pretrial release and diversion, legal and evidence-based release and diversion practices, organizational leadership, performance measurement and communication and messaging. Instruction is completely interactive and participants have opportunities throughout the week to work with one another and with faculty to build a long term professional networks. Faculty members and NIC staff also work with and help participants problem solve, through peer interaction and discussion, their individual key challenges.

Pretrial release agency professionals with decision making responsibilities and who have a minimum of one year of experience in a high level management position may apply.

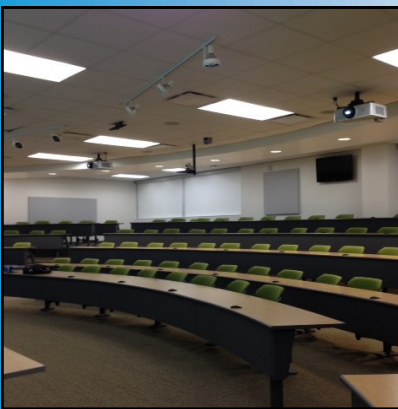
This training is offered twice a year so if it closes, look for the next announcement.

TAPS THANKS YOU FOR YOUR SUPPORT





Sam Houston State University at the Woodlands is a state-of-the-art, first-class facility and we were extremely lucky to have acquired it for our conference. .



The Sam Houston State facility at the Woodlands was terrific!

*Confidence comes from discipline and training.
Robert Kiyosaki*

2nd Annual Taps Conference—2015 (Editor's notes)

For it being only the second time, the Texas Association of Pretrial Services Second Annual Conference and Training Institute went smoothly. Sure there were the usual obstacles to overcome (last minute speaker changes) but, as it turns out, things went pretty darn good. The presenters were all fantastic and those in attendance were better for having been there.

We couldn't have asked for a better setting. Sam Houston State University at the Woodlands is a state-of-the-art, first-class facility and we were extremely lucky to have acquired it for our conference. The facility, combined with the hospitality extended to us by Doug Dretke (Executive Director of the Correctional Management Institute of Texas/Sam Houston State University) and his staff was tremendous. Many thanks to Mr. Dretke and Sam Houston State University.

Special thanks must be given to Elizabeth Simoni, the Executive Director for Maine Pretrial and Northeast Director for the National Association of Pretrial Services

(NAPSA). Elizabeth was already scheduled to provide two presentations and enthusiastically took on the "Keynote Speaker" job as well when NAPSA Executive Director, Jim Sawyer, regrettably was unable to attend.

Finally, we honored one of our own. The 2015 Pretrial Pioneer Award winner Michelle Brown is the Program Director for Tarrant County Pretrial Services and past President for the National Association of Pretrial Services (NAPSA). Michelle has been working in the Pretrial arena for 28 years. She has also served as a member of the National Institute of Corrections' Pretrial Executives Network and as a member of the Board of Trustees for the Pretrial Services Resource Center (now the Pretrial Justice Institute). Michelle played a vital role in the establishment of TAPS in 2014.

Thank you Michelle! wL



Elizabeth Simoni speaks to TAPS Members.



Our "Pretrial Pioneer" award winner, Michelle Brown thanks the board.

TAPS Board of Directors

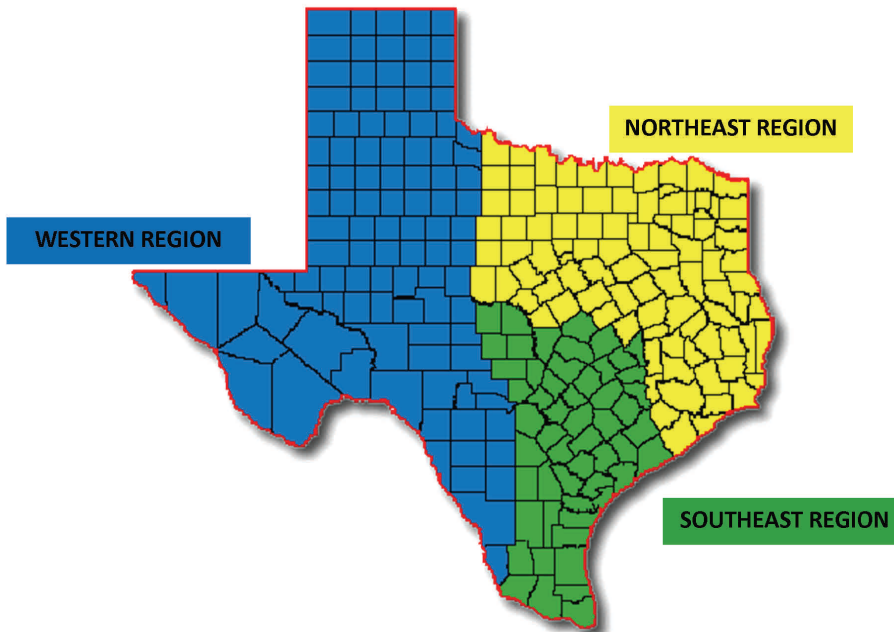
Your Texas Association of Pretrial Services Board of Directors.

Starting from the left: Vice President, **Gerald Rodriguez**. Northeast Regional Representative, **Myra Smith**. Pretrial Pioneer Award winner, **Michelle Brown**. President, **Mike Lozito**. Legal Counsel, **Grace M. Uzomba**. Western Regional Representative, **Cornell J. Mickley**. Secretary, **Linda D. Ingraham**. Southeast Regional Representative, **William Longoria**.





TEXAS ASSOCIATION OF PRETRIAL SERVICES REGIONS



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Floyd	Medina	Wheeler
Foard	Menard	Winkler
Frio	Midland	Yoakum
Gaines	Mitchell	Zapata
Garza	Moore	Zavala
Glasscock	Motley	

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Cass	Hunt
Chambers	Jack
Cherokee	Jasper
Clay	Jefferson
Coleman	Johnson
Collin	Kaufman
Comal	Lamar
Comanche	Lampasas
Cooke	Leon
Coryell	Liberty
Dallas	Limestone
Delta	Madison
Denton	Marion
Eastland	McLennan
Ellis	Mills
Erath	Montague
Falls	Montgomery
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Fort Bend	Nacogdoches
Franklin	Navarro
Freestone	Newton
Galveston	Orange
Grayson	Palo Pinto
Gregg	Panola
Grimes	Parker

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Titus
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Upshur
Van Zandt
Walker
Waller
Wichita
Wilbarger
Wise
Wood
Young

Southeast Region

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Atascosa	Mason
Austin	Matagorda
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Bee	McMullen
Bell	Milam
Bexar	Nueces
Blanco	Refugio
Brazos	San Patricio
Brooks	San Saba
Burleson	Starr
Caldwell	Travis
Calhoun	Victoria
Cameron	Washington
Colorado	Wharton
Comal	Willacy
Dewitt	Williamson
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TEXAS ASSOCIATION OF PRETRIAL SERVICES

TAPS Annual Membership Form

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NAME:		TITLE:	
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TYPE OF MEMBERSHIP

- \$ 35 **Professional** *(An individual employed in the field of Pretrial Services)*
- \$ 25 **Associate** *(An individual not employed in the field of Pretrial Services who subscribes to the purposes and goals of the Association)*
- \$ 25 **Student** *(Full-time Students of criminal justice, law or other related discipline)*
- \$200 **Organizational – Level I** *(A Pretrial Services Agency with 1 – 25 Employees)*
- \$250 **Organizational – Level II** *(A Pretrial Services Agency with 26 – 50 Employees)*
- \$300 **Organizational – Level III** *(A Pretrial Services Agency with over 50 Employees)*
- \$500 **Corporate** *(Person, Association or Business that supports and/or subscribes to the purposes and goals of the Association)*

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