

## 8-16-17 County Judge's Article

### COUNTY TAXES SHIFT, DID NOT RISE OVER SEVEN YEARS

In preparing for my presentations for this year's community meetings on the 2018 budget, I've been reviewing the county ad valorem tax rate and collection history and our county expenditures all the way back to 2011, the year that I became county judge.

In 2011 we collected \$11.22 million in county property taxes; this year we've collected \$11.05 million and are projecting to collect \$11.19 million in next year's budget plan. In other words, Milam County tax payers are still paying the same total amount of county taxes today as they were 7 years ago.

The bad news is the county tax rate is now 70 cents, back then it was 60 cents. That's because the county's tax base has dropped 17% from \$1.76 billion to some \$1.46 billion (freeze adjusted taxable).

Our general fund expenditures are on average about \$500 thousand per year higher now with those spending increases having been covered by income from other sources than taxes, primarily by fees from housing inmates in our jail from other counties. So any increases in costs including any pay and benefit cost increases have not resulted in any additional annual Milam County property taxes.

So any increases any of you have experienced in your taxes these seven years (I'm speaking of county taxes only, not school or city taxes) primarily has been as a result of the decline in value of certain other properties, the county has NOT charged any additional taxes for seven years.