



Date:
Contact:

February 13, 2008
Joe Stinebaker
Communications Director
O) 713-755-4027
C) 713-503-2610
Joe.Stinebaker@cjo.hctx.net

NEWS RELEASE

HARRIS COUNTY JUDGE ED EMMETT INTRODUCES CITIZENS TASK FORCE ON ETHICS

*Task Force, Other Recommendations Unveiled
As Part of Emmett's Ethics Reform Package*

Harris County Judge Ed Emmett officially introduced his Citizens Task Force On Ethics on Wednesday afternoon, continuing a series of initiatives designed to increase transparency in Harris County government and boost the public's confidence in its elected and appointed officials.

Emmett introduced four members of the panel, explaining that other members would be added in coming weeks, allowing the task force to begin work right away. The four task force members introduced Wednesday are: James W. Crownover and Mallory Caldwell of the McKinsey & Company management consulting firm; Laura Blackburn, the president of the Houston Area League of Women Voters; and Lawrence D. Finder, a former federal prosecutor and a partner in the Houston law firm of Haynes & Boone.

"The Citizens Task Force is the cornerstone to genuine ethics reform in Harris County government," said Emmett. "I appointed these task force members because I know them to be among the most honest and civic-minded residents in all of Harris County. I have asked them to search nationwide for the best practices in local government ethics and to recommend the necessary actions and legislation to adopt strict and effective measures here in Harris County."

Emmett also passed on to the task force a list of proposals he hopes the panel will consider, including reforms involving financial disclosure, lobbyist registration, revolving-door legislation and campaign practices.

"It's unfortunate that the publicity surrounding allegations of misconduct by one or two current or former county officials can tarnish the reputation of some 16,000 dedicated employees doing their jobs with pride every day," Emmett said. "I'm hoping this task force and other reforms I've proposed in recent months can help restore the public's confidence, so our residents can again see that county government is the most efficient and effective level of government working for them."