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## Driving Simulator Improves Employee Safety

The Texas Association of Counties is providing specialized safety training for Ellis County employees this month, utilizing a driving simulator that offers county employees a unique experience to prepare for unexpected driving situations.

“This is just one piece of our comprehensive employee health and safety initiative,” said County Judge Carol Bush. “The initiative has helped our employees take charge of their own well-being, and it has saved significant tax dollars in terms of the cost of our workers’ compensation and health insurance benefits over the last three years.”

The cost of vehicle accidents can be high, not just economically, but personally as well. In law enforcement, for instance, one out of every 100 pursuits results in death. Four out of every 10 pursuits results in a collision. TAC is working to reduce collisions among county drivers through its innovative driving simulator.

“My goal is to use the driving simulator to reduce cost to the county by reducing collisions and injuries to county drivers,” said Don Courtney, driving simulator specialist with TAC.

TAC’s driving simulator offers professional county drivers the opportunity to experience real-world driving conditions in a high-tech environment that replicates situations drivers may actually encounter while on the road. Studies have shown that driver-training programs effectively reduce risks while educating drivers on safe-driving measures.

“Drivers tend to slip into old habits behind the wheel,” Courtney said. “From the very beginning, I can tell whether they are used to driving with a seatbelt on. I can tell if

they steer the wheel one-handed or two-handed, whether they use their signals and mirrors.”

Since TAC launched its driving simulator in 2000, more than 6,000 county drivers in 225 Texas counties have used the simulator to enhance their ability to make life-saving, split-second decisions in often dangerous driving conditions.

The simulator has logged more than 60,000 miles, traveling across the state and training drivers at no cost to the county. For more information on the driving simulator and other services TAC provides to counties, visit [www.county.org](http://www.county.org).