



Carol L. Bush

ELLIS COUNTY JUDGE

I strongly believe that Ellis County is a community that prefers to deal in facts rather than speculation or sensationalism. These are the facts:

A decision was made by the United States Department of Health and Human Services Office of Refugee Resettlement to activate the Lakeview Camp and Retreat Center, located between Waxahachie and Maypearl, to serve as a temporary shelter for the housing of unaccompanied Central American children apprehended along the U.S. / Mexico border. This was an arrangement between the federal government, Baptist Children's Family Services and the Assemblies of God Church, which owns and operates the Lakeview Camp. Ellis County was never a party to the agreement.

My office was informed of the federal government's plan only after the decision had been made and the arrival of the unaccompanied children was already imminent.

I have been in close communication with Congressman Joe Barton and other federal, state, and local officials. Based on the information that has been received, we do not anticipate any issues resulting from Lakeview's accommodation of these children. During this 21 day period of temporary housing, the Ellis County Sheriff's Office will provide additional security at the facility utilizing off-duty deputies. They will be paid as contractors by Lakeview Camp and Retreat Center.

Ellis County officials, law enforcement, and emergency management personnel are tasked with the responsibility of preparedness on a daily basis. That is a routine duty which will continue as we work in partnership to ensure the safety of the public as well as that of the unaccompanied minor children temporarily in our community.

The U.S. Department of Health & Human Services, Administration for Children and Families, Office of Communication has provided a contact number for general inquiries. They can be reached at 202-401-9246.