



## REGIONAL PUBLIC DEFENDER FOR CAPITAL CASES

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June 22, 2012

Dear Judge :

On June 21, 2012, the Texas Indigent Defense Commission approved funding to expand the Regional Public Defender for Capital Cases to the 1st and 8th Administrative Judicial Regions, which includes your county. The purpose of this letter is twofold. First, I want to invite you to participate in one of four town hall meetings to be held on July 9th and 10th to discuss this program, answer any questions, and provide details on what will be needed from your county to participate. I encourage you to bring a county team consisting of you, your county attorney, district attorney and district judge(s). Next, I want to take this opportunity to introduce myself and tell you a little more about the expansion of the current program. I have attached a schedule for the times and locations of the meetings.

At the town hall meeting, you will learn that your county and 47 other counties in the 1st and 8th Administrative Judicial Regions are eligible to participate. Only those counties whose population exceeded 300,000 people on October 1, 2008 are not eligible to participate. Currently, 143 counties in the 2nd, 3rd, 4th, 5th, 6th, 7th and 9th Administrative Judicial Regions have already opted in and are enjoying the budget security this office provides.

I was appointed as Chief Public Defender of the West Texas Regional Public Defender for Capital Cases in November, 2007. I have attached an article that highlights many of the features of the office, but I have discovered while talking with many of the County Judges and Commissioners serving in the existing coverage area that they are better able to express the benefits this office provides to their counties than any article. Please feel free to contact your fellow judges in participating counties and ask about this office. I am certain that the feedback you receive will be positive and something that you can take to your commissioners' court when considering the decision of whether or not to opt in.

Our funding and fiscal year begins October 1, 2012 for your region. The first year is FREE OF CHARGE to your county; it is only necessary that your county opt in by signing the Interlocal Agreement with Lubbock County. During the three months preceding the opening, I will be traveling throughout your area and hope to have the opportunity to meet with you personally. In the event that you believe an informational presentation to your commissioners' court is necessary, please let me know and I will make the arrangements.

I will also be interviewing candidates for the staff openings and securing office space during this period.

Please feel free to contact me with any questions. I do have a power point presentation which details the number of hours staff has spent on cases we have been assigned, and the estimated amount the county would have paid for these same services had it not been participating in the program. If you would like a copy, just let me know and I will forward it to you. We are also in the process of preparing the Interlocal Agreements, and will forward them at your request.

Sincerely,

Jack Stoffregen