



## **NEWS RELEASE**

September 9, 2025

### **Commissioners adopt 2025-2026 budget, propose tax rate**

Caldwell County Commissioners adopted the FY 2025-2026 county budget and proposed a 2025 tax rate, optimizing available funds and grant programs, keeping expenses under revenues and continuing to provide necessary services for county residents.

The annual operating budget covers the cost of maintaining and improving more than 436 miles of roads, emergency management services, 9-1-1 emergency communications, public safety and law enforcement, elections, permitting and planning, pursuit of grants and numerous additional programs and benefits.

Commissioners approved a budget that includes \$36,993,916.34 in planned general fund expenses for the period beginning Oct. 1, 2025 and ending Sept. 30, 2026 at their regular meeting on Sept. 9 and proposed a tax rate of \$0.4391 per \$100 property valuation.

Based on the average homestead taxable value of \$262,425, the proposed tax rate will remain the same. The rate represents neither an increase nor decrease compared to the prior year.

A public hearing on the proposed tax rate will be held on Tuesday, Sept. 23.

Employees in all departments will see a pay increase in October and the county will be able to begin making payments on the 2024 Road Bond — 32 projects that will bring enhancements to the transportation network over the next five years and include improvements to existing roadways, planning and construction of new roads, and enhancements to bridges and low-water crossings — that was passed by voters in November.

Caldwell County Judge Hoppy Haden said the budget was the result of hard work by individual departments that are judiciously using resources to help keep county government running.

“We are accomplishing what we set out to do, which is provide necessary services for our county residents while making sure we take care of the hardworking employees that keep things going,” Judge Haden said. “We are also keeping our promise to the voters who helped pass the 2024 Road Bond, which will help ensure our county has the transportation infrastructure it needs as we continue to grow.”

Commissioners voted to approve pay increases for the Caldwell County Sheriff’s Office to help with staff retention and recruitment. Personnel including detectives, captains, lieutenants, sergeants, jailers and patrol deputies will receive an 8% pay raise to help with retention by keeping salaries competitive with local police departments.

Employees in other departments will receive a 5% raise.

The budget also provides necessary funding to continue working toward its goal of paving all county roadways. Of approximately 436 miles of county roads, there are about 70 miles that remain unpaved. The goal is to pave the rest of the roads by the end of the current fiscal year and in FY 2025-2026 — weather permitting.

At the proposed \$.4391 per \$100 property valuation rate, Caldwell County expects to collect an additional \$505,519 in revenue, a 2.14% increase from the previous year. The proposed tax rate will fund general government operations, law enforcement, road and bridge maintenance, as well as debt obligations.

Due to substantial changes brought on by Texas Property Tax Reform and Transparency Act of 2019, the county’s ability to generate revenue and provide taxes by raising the tax rate is limited. Taxing entities like counties can only adopt property tax increases of up to 3.5% without triggering a voter-approval rate election as opposed to the previously allowed increase of 8%.

The county’s portion of total ad valorem taxes (including school districts and municipalities) paid by a property owner are approximately 16%.

The FY 2025-2026 budget also optimizes funding made available by Texas Senate Bill 22, a grant program signed into law in 2023 that provides additional money to qualified sheriff’s, constable’s and prosecutor’s offices in rural counties.

The adopted budget will be posted on the county’s website at [co.caldwell.tx.us](http://co.caldwell.tx.us).