

# When government fails, officials rarely say, 'My fault'

By KEN PAULSON

When government fails, it's the rare public official who says, "Oops. My fault." That's human nature, particularly for officials in the public eye who may have to run for office again. No one wants to be held directly responsible for letting the public down.

Case in point is the recent catastrophe in Texas, when unexpected winter storms left 4 million homes without power, ruptured pipes and tainted the water supply for many.

Texas' energy grid essentially collapsed. While Texas Gov. Greg Abbott was quick to blame frozen wind turbines, the cause was much more complex than that. To truly understand how things went so terribly wrong will require time, study and research.

So, too, with the

coronavirus vaccine distribution. In this state and others, residents are frustrated with the slow rollout of vaccines. Is it poor distribution? Politics? A flawed strategy? These are literally matters of life and death.

But how do you get to the truth when public officials so rarely step up to take direct responsibility for failures? The answer is public records. And public meetings. And access to the information that taxpayers deserve.

States throughout the country have laws that guarantee access to government records and meetings. But the details vary widely and there are many statutory exceptions. New challenges to access emerge every year in virtually every state.

The need to fight for

government transparency is reaffirmed each year during Sunshine Week, a national awareness event overseen by the News Leaders Association and keyed to the March 16 birthday of James Madison. The fourth president of the United States drafted the Bill of Rights -- including the guarantee of a free press -- in 1791.

That journalism connection reflects the role news media play in the free flow of information, but it unfortunately can also leave the public with a sense that Sunshine Week reflects the concerns of a single industry.

To the contrary, access to government information is critical to every American who cares about the quality of his or her community, state and nation.

It's important to see government employees --

including elected officials -- as the people we hire through our tax dollars to do a good job for all of us. If you run a business or hire a contractor, you wouldn't hesitate to demand a full understanding of how something went wrong. That should be exactly our relationship with government.

Getting that information, though, requires public meetings where residents can ask questions. It also means access to the documents that led to a poor decision. Words on paper can be much more forthright than the dissembling of politicians.

It's critical that we hold government accountable, for better or worse. (It's also important to acknowledge when government leaders are doing a good job.)

How can you help? I have two suggestions.

First, keep doing exactly what you're doing at this moment. Read and support your local newspaper. Local journalists, more than anyone else, will stand up for your right to information. Facebook will not be going toe-to-toe with your mayor.

Second, when you believe government isn't doing its job, demand an explanation. Ask to see the documents. Attend public meetings. And above all, support legislative efforts to make government more transparent.

It's too easy for officials who have failed us to point fingers, blame the media and wait for their side of the partisan fence to rally to their defense. We deserve better. We all pay taxes to support the work of government. We should get our money's worth.

*Ken Paulson is the director of the Free Speech*

*Center at Middle Tennessee State University, a lawyer and a former editor-in-chief of USA Today.*

## Our duty as cadets

JROTC  
Continued from page 8

do. They do not know of the smiles and the tears that were shared between these walls. Ignorant to the love and bonds we hold with each other. The ups and downs, the success and failures.

I never anticipated that I would come to care for this family more than my own actual family. I could never hope for a better group of people to surround myself with. To respect, to love and to serve. This is our duty as JROTC cadets.

## LEGALS

(continued from page 11)

Vehicle will be auctioned on the 13th day of APRIL 2021 @ 10 a.m. at Thomas Chevrolet 2128 S. Byron Butler Pkwy, Perry, FL (850)584-6221 per F.S. 713.78.

**TDA 21-001  
NOTICE OF APPLICATION  
FOR TAX DEED**

NOTICE IS HEREBY GIVEN, that Comian XII Tax Lien Fund, LLC the holder of the following certificate has filed said certificate for a tax deed to be issued thereon. The certificate number, year of issuance, description of the property and the names in which the property was assessed are as follows:

Certificate Number: 320  
Year of Issuance: 2014  
Description of Property:  
Parcel Number: R03178-100  
West Brooklyn Subdivision Lot 12 Block 49. Located in Section 23 Township 04 Range 07 Containing .15 acres MOL Recorded in Taylor County official record 694, page 754.

Parcel Number: R01766-530  
Part of Tract 3, Commence at the Northwest corner of section 23 then run South 88 degrees East 701.71 feet then run South 1 degree west 2340.87 feet for a point of beginning, then run North 73 degrees East 399.55 feet then run South 1 degree West 114.76 feet then run South 73 degrees West along right of way 399.55 feet then run North 1 degree East 114.77 feet to point of beginning. Located in Section 23 Township 02 Range 07 Containing 1.29 acres MOL Recorded in Taylor County official record 598, page 145.

**NOTICE OF REQUEST FOR PROPOSAL (RFP)**

The Taylor County Board of County Commissioners is soliciting proposals for TAYLOR COUNTY RIVER ENTRANCE LIGHTS SYSTEM MAINTENANCE SERVICES. Qualified firms or individuals desiring to provide the requested services must submit their proposal package in an envelope or similar package marked "Sealed Proposal for 'TAYLOR COUNTY RIVER ENTRANCE LIGHTS SYSTEM MAINTENANCE SERVICES' to the Clerk of Court, 1st Floor Courthouse, 108 North Jefferson Street, Perry, Florida 32347 to arrive no later than 4:00 PM, local time, on Thursday, April 1, 2021. All proposals MUST have name and mailing address clearly shown on the outside of the envelope or package when submitted. Proposals will be opened, and respondents announced at 6:00 PM April 5, 2021 local time, or as soon thereafter as practical, at Taylor County Administrative Complex, 201 East Green Street, Perry, Florida 32348. The County reserves the right, in its sole absolute discretion, to reject any or all proposal, to

cancel or withdraw this RFP at any time waive any irregularities in the process. The County reserves the right to award any contract(s) to the bidder/respondent whom it deems to offer the best overall service, therefore, the County is not bound to award any contract(s) based on the proposed costs. The County, in its sole and absolute discretion, also reserves the right to waive minor defects in the process and to accept the bid/proposal deemed to be in the County's best interest. The County, in its sole and absolute discretion, also reserves the right to assign a local business preference in the amount of five percent (5%) of the bid/proposed costs. No faxed proposal will be accepted. For additional information and RFP package contact Victor Blanco Taylor County and University of Florida Extension Agent 203 Forest Park Drive Perry, FL 32348 (850)838-3508 victorblanco@ufl.edu

**BID PACKAGES MAY ALSO BE OBTAINED FROM** www.taylorcountygov.com.

**NOTICE IS HEREBY GIVEN** that OPTIMUM LOW VOLTAGE LLC, OWNER, desiring to engage in business under the fictitious name of OPTIMUM FIRE & SECURITY located at 6624 GORDON ROAD, SUITE L, WILMINGTON, NORTH CAROLINA 28411 intends to register the said name in TAYLOR county with the Division of Corporations, Florida Department of State, pursuant to section 865.09 of the Florida Statutes.

**AUCTION SALE NOTICE**

To: Isaac Nelson, Unit H-13  
Helene Haldi, Unit 2-35  
Richard Twons, Unit 4-41  
Victoria Ard, Unit 4A-19  
Kim Cummings, Unit 4A-36  
Taylor Storage Center, 3498 Hwy 19 S., Ste. 1, Perry, Fla., 32348, has possessory lien on all the goods stored in the prospective units above. All these items of personal property are being sold pursuant to the assertion of the lien on April 3, 2021, at 10 a.m. in order to collect the amounts due from you. The sale will take place at 3498 Hwy 19 S., Ste. 1, Perry, Fla., 32348.

## Prices Good March 17-23, 2021

# Save a Lot

## These deals are better than Gold!

<p><b>Heavy Western Beef T-Bone Steak</b> FAMILY PACK</p> <p><b>\$5.99</b> /LB.</p>	<p><b>Fresh Bone-In Split Chicken Breast</b> FAMILY PACK</p> <p><b>99¢</b> /LB.</p>
<p><b>Fresh Pork Country Ribs or Steaks</b> FAMILY PACK</p> <p><b>\$1.49</b> /LB.</p>	<p><b>Fresh Pork Spareribs</b></p> <p><b>\$1.99</b> /LB.</p>
<p><b>Fresh Pork Neckbones</b> FAMILY PACK</p> <p><b>\$1.29</b> /LB.</p>	<p><b>Smoked Pork Chops</b> FAMILY PACK</p> <p><b>\$3.29</b> /LB.</p>
<p><b>Boneless Pork Boston Butt</b></p> <p><b>\$1.49</b> /LB.</p>	<p><b>Portside Cooked Shrimp</b> 31-40 ct 16 OZ</p> <p><b>\$6.99</b> /LB.</p>
<p><b>Fresh Pork Finger Style Ribs</b> FAMILY PACK</p> <p><b>\$2.29</b> /LB.</p>	<p><b>Fisherboy Fish Sticks</b> 90 ct. 45 oz.</p> <p><b>\$1.99</b></p>

**HOT DEALS!**

**MARCH 19th-20th**

**Fresh Pork Boston Butt Roast**  
2 PER PKG  
**89¢** /LB

**Fresh Ground Beef**  
MEGA PACK  
**\$1.99** /LB

<p><b>Roma Tomatoes</b> <b>79¢</b> /LB</p>	<p><b>Red Seedless Grapes</b> <b>\$1.49</b> /LB</p>	<p><b>Limes</b> <b>5/\$1</b></p>	<p><b>Coca-Cola 2 Liters</b> <b>4/\$5</b></p>	<p><b>Coca Cola Coffee and Energy 4 PACKS</b> <b>2/\$8</b></p>
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**State Street Chicken Nuggets**  
5 LB BAG  
**\$5.99** /EA