

1st Term Accomplishments of Pope County Judge Ben Cross:

Courthouse Operations –

- Fiber Optic Service to all county facilities
- New Interactive website: *popecountyar.gov*
- Obtained a Government Domain for Pope County
- New VOIP phone system (Local vendor – Service Plus)
- Creation of a dedicated I.T. Coordinator position
- Sole service provider of Internet / Phone / TV (*Ritter Communications*)= \$30,682 in annual savings
- Implemented numerous security enhancements, including lockdown measures / I.D. Cards / Camera System / AED's(*defibrillator*) / Stop the Bleed Training / RAVE Panic Button System
- Only County Judge in history with Law Enforcement certification

Road Department -

- Restructured the entire organization from the ground up, eliminating five appropriated, yet unfilled, positions, spreading those appropriated salaries across existing employees to become competitive and retain employees
- Implemented an Asset Manager for the entire county to keep and track inventory at a central point of contact for auditing compliance
- Replaced numerous pieces of heavy equipment that had become too costly to repair
- Implemented a leasing program that projects all the maintenance costs back onto the provider
- Contracted with an independent firm to map out and provide a diagnostic approach to road maintenance, to be proactive rather than reactive

Only Judge who is also a State Licensed Contractor / Class A CDL / Heavy Equipment Operator

Veteran Service Office -

- Achieved accreditation as only 1 of 3 in the State of Arkansas to be credentialed access to the National Military Archives in St. Louis
- Oversaw accreditation to perform “E-Filing” for veteran claims
- Collaborated and provided assets to complete Veterans Park
- Established coordination point for all veterans groups (*American Legion / V.F.W. / D.A.V. / Marine Corps League / AMVETS / M.O.A.A.*)

County Judge who is a U.S. Army Combat Veteran / Member American Legion, VFW, and DAV

Pope County E.M.S. –

- Purchased first new purpose designed rescue unit since 1986
- Implemented a CAD (*Computer Aided Dispatch*) upgrade to all stations in the county for faster response times
- Opened a fifth sub-station to handle call volume in the city of Russellville

Only County Judge who is a past EMT with Combat Life Saver certification

Pope County Office of Emergency Management (O.E.M.) –

- Restructured the department by adding an Assistant Director position to coordinate pandemic response
- Implemented Fleet rotation of all O.E.M. apparatus
- Implemented coordination of all FEMA grant initiatives and FEMA compliance reporting
- Only County Judge in Arkansas ICS Certified (*Incident Command*) from ICS 100-900 (*Judges must at least be certified to the 300-400 level*), making Pope County “NIMS” (National Incident Management System) compliant for federal assistance.
- Only County Judge who is also a Certified Firefighter

Pope County 911 –

- Successfully lobbied at the state capitol for more state level funding of 911 PSAP's (*Primary Service Answering Point, i.e. a 911 Center*)
- Implemented a CAD upgrade for Enhanced 911 capability
- Only County Judge in history who has also been an ACIC, (*Arkansas Crime Information Center*), certified Telecommunications Operator and supervised a 911 call center as a state police commander

Election Commission / Poll Workers -

- Increased security protocols for poll sites
- Included all election workers into critical infrastructure designation for hazard pay

Pope County Library System –

- Appointed new Director with a focus on re-branding PCLS
- Coordinated with the Chamber of Commerce and Russellville Regional Alliance for Economic Development to designate the Library System as a Workforce Development Center
- Recouped \$170K in misguided funds back into the Library Capital Development fund

Pope County Senior Activity Center –

- Purchased a new walk-in freezer doubling the capacity of the old one, which was over 18 years old
- Established contract grounds maintenance to save money
- Provided support to keep meals on wheels active throughout the pandemic

Miscellaneous:

- Created \$434K in new unanticipated and unappropriated revenue first year in office

(Judge salary \$74,119 / \$434K = 5 years/10 months of funding)

- Constructed a new First Responder Training Facility
- Constructing Pope County's first ever Coroner Facility
- Constructing a new Central E.M.S. Facility in a collaborative effort with ATU
- Served in a judicial capacity in multiple cases of taxation and assessment appeals
- Signed a cooperative broadband agreement worth \$24 million to bring fiber optic internet service to rural Pope County
- Brought Pope County into the Top 10 in most transparent business practices by government (*#9 out of 75 counties as rated by Access Arkansas*) as opposed to the mid 30 percentile of my predecessor