



## Justin W. Lewis

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## HILL COUNTY JUDGE

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### Press Release

**Hill County, TX** – Today, President Biden signed an order to partially approve a Major Disaster Declaration for 77 of 254 counties in Texas. Hill County was not on the initial list, but that does not mean it will not be added.

“Hill County has done what we are supposed to at this point to secure aid for our residents and businesses. The County has issued a disaster declaration,” said Hill County Judge Justin Lewis. “We are working with local officials in each community to coordinate recovery efforts and document losses. Collectively, we must show proof of enough financial loss to be qualified and added to the Federal Disaster Declaration for our residents to be able to receive individual aid,” stated Lewis. “In a smaller area, it is sometimes more challenging to reach that threshold, but we will make sure we do our part to accurately represent the hardships our area faced and will continue to face as we begin the recovery efforts.”

“We are in daily contact with our Texas Department of Emergency Management (TDEM) representatives, and we have a number of requests for assistance in various forms that we are tracking and waiting for fulfillment on,” said Lewis. “While this was a challenging week to say the least, the blessing and the curse for us is that our local entities worked tirelessly to bring people back online with power and water and accomplished the task more quickly than other parts of the state. While all systems in Hill County may not be back to full capacity, they are up and operating, and that is not the case in all areas,” stated Lewis. “The emergency status is still in effect for many, and while we are working to receive assistance at a state and federal level, we cannot wait on them to begin our recovery. In Hill County, neighbors helping neighbors is always our first line of defense, and this situation is no different. We will make sure our residents have a voice at the regional, state and federal level, but we must also concentrate on pulling ourselves back up and getting on with the business at hand.”

“During the week and the days prior to the storm hitting, the Hill County Emergency Management team was in contact with TDEM, various other agencies across the state and region, and our federal representatives to gather resources and prepare for the onslaught. Warming stations were brought up across the county to help protect those who endured days without power and water. Requisitions for blankets, water and other supplies were placed through the state emergency request portal and other resources. Local agencies coordinated and used the supplies on hand to cover as many needs as possible. Representatives from Hill County made trips to Waco in treacherous conditions to secure additional supplies from Red Cross, and we worked with local utility companies to monitor the outages in our area and make sure top priority was given to getting our residents back online as quickly as possible. I’m proud of the effort put in by everyone working on this event, but I know that doesn’t diminish the fact that our businesses and residents are still hurting. We will continue to fight until we secure as much assistance as possible, and we will keep you informed to the best of our ability as the status changes. Thank you to everyone who is helping Hill County to recover,” concluded Lewis.