

Congressman Carter, Members of the Sunset Advisory Committee, and distinguished guests.

You have heard the reports from two Village leaders who are very much in touch with 5-years of pain, frustration, and heart-break. Every word written and spoken is true without exaggeration or manipulation.

Unless you lived in a community that has suffered like Salado, you cannot feel the pain of a good friend going broke; elderly people so frustrated they cannot get from place A to place B; parents taking children to school 30-minutes early so they would not be late; ridicule by newspapers and other towns; visitors saying "it is too dangerous, we will not return; and the loss of hope and self confidence. The moths of poor management, untruths, broken schedules, and not caring have eaten the fabric of our very soul.

It is easy to point fingers and proclaim "your fault." It accomplishes nothing. Yes, the contractor was 90% at fault but all of us carry some part of the blame. In the end, it was Congressman Carter, Governor Abbott and TXDoT leaders – James Bass, Randy Hopman, Terry McCoy, and Bobby Littlefield that made a difference along with one Regional Engineer, Rick Lewis. "Thank you" is hardly enough to express our appreciation.

Even with these words of appreciation. Salado, the gateway to Austin, is in trouble. Businesses are so damaged they are not holding on by a shoe-string but a cobweb; there is no money to repair roads, to buy Police equipment and vehicles, or to keep current staff. No one has received a cost of living raise in 3-years. While other communities are doing well, we are drowning.

As the Mayor, I am fighting for the soul of a great Village. Hear me well with no emotion or threats. Salado does not deserve what has happened. We are citizens of the great State of Texas and we do not treat each other this way. Your financial help is needed and, honestly, expected. Five million of the fines charged the contractor is not too much to ask. I plead with you, find a way to help us. And, if you do, we will remember the kindness and return it to you 10-fold with our actions and our citizenship.

Thank you for your time and your consideration.

Skip Blancett, Mayor