What is Twitter?
Twitter is an online social networking service that enables its users to send and read text-based messages of up to 140 characters, known as “tweets.” Spaces and punctuation count toward the 140 character limit, so Twitter has its own kind of shorthand that you will learn.

How is it useful?
Twitter is a way to quickly find out what’s going on in your community, county departments, state government and other organizations and businesses of interest to you. Messages from users you choose to follow will show up in your home newsfeed. These can be things like traffic alerts, board meeting updates, general news around your community or updates from friends and colleagues. You can send out tweets to communicate with your residents, the local media, local businesses, county services and more.

How to get started:
- Choose an account name that is easily identifiable. Some variation on your name is best, ours is TexasCounties. Your followers see this every time you send a tweet.
- Tweet important information relevant to county residents, your legislators and other followers, and include links back to official pages for full information.
  - County Commissioners meet tonight 6-9p, 123 Courthouse Rd. 3rd flr., public comments 815p, more info: http://bit.ly/exURL
- Mention another Twitter user by using their handle.
  - Attending the @TexasCounties Legislative Conference. Great info sessions.
- Retweet (RT) messages from others that you think are important. For example, your tweet might look like this:
  - RT @TexasCounties: County Official of the Year Awards presented to 9 county officials for outstanding service. http://bit.ly/19Sbn3P
- Use hashtags (#). Hashtags make it easier to follow an event or topic of conversation in real-time. The official hashtag for discussions of the Texas Legislature, #TXlege, allows anyone who clicks on it to find every tweet on Twitter that contains that same hashtag. Any word can be a hashtag so long as you place a pound sign (#) in front of it.
- Follow Twitter accounts of interest. Chances are your county visitor’s bureau, library, parks department and other local organizations are already on Twitter. And of course—you follow TAC! We’re @TexasCounties.

We recommend following these Twitter accounts:
- Texas Legislature: @TX_Legislature
- Legislative Library: @TexasLRL
- TAC County Relations Officer Lonnie Hunt: @LonnieHunt
- Texas Tribune: @TexasTribune
- Texas DPS: @TXDPS
- Gov. Rick Perry: @GovernorPerry
- David Dewhurst: @DavidHDewhurst
- Texas House of Representatives: @TexasHouse
- Texas Legislature:
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- Texas House of Representatives:

To ensure compliance with the Open Meetings Act, please consult with your county attorney. If you have any questions about social media or would like to learn more about getting started, applying it to your specific needs and using it effectively, don’t hesitate to contact TAC at (800) 456-5974.

Connect with TAC online:
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