

FILED FOR RECORD

_____ O'CLOCK _____ M

AUG 27 2026

VANESSA JAMES, County Clerk
JACK COUNTY, TEXAS

BY _____ DEPUTY

Brian Keith Umphress
County Judge of Jack County, Texas

August 25, 2026

The Honorable Greg Abbott
Governor of Texas
c/o Chief
TGEM
P.O. Box 4087
Austin, Texas 78773-0001

RE: Jack County Declaration of Local State of Disaster – Ross Fire

Dear Governor Abbott:

On behalf of the citizens of Jack County, Texas, I am transmitting the enclosed **Declaration of Local State of Disaster** arising from the **Ross Fire**, a rapidly developing and dangerous wildfire emergency affecting our county.

The Ross Fire originated in Palo Pinto County and spread overnight into the southwestern and southern portions of Jack County. Current conditions indicate that approximately **25,000 to 30,000 acres have burned**, with the fire presently reported at or near **zero containment**. The fire continues to threaten residents, homes, ranches, livestock, agricultural operations, roadways, utilities, and other critical infrastructure.

Extreme fire-weather conditions, including critically dry vegetation, high temperatures, low relative humidity, and wind, have created conditions conducive to rapid and unpredictable fire growth. The movement of this fire across county lines demonstrates the regional nature and severity of this emergency.

Our volunteer fire departments, emergency management personnel, law enforcement officers, first responders, and neighboring agencies are working aggressively to protect lives and property. However, the magnitude and continuing expansion of this incident have the potential to exceed locally available resources.

Accordingly, pursuant to **Chapter 418 of the Texas Government Code**, I have declared a **Local State of Disaster for Jack County** and respectfully request the continued assistance and support of the State of Texas.

Specifically, Jack County requests that the State make available all appropriate resources necessary to support this emergency response, including assistance through the **Texas Division of Emergency Management, Texas A&M Forest Service, Texas Department of Public Safety**, and other state agencies as circumstances warrant. This may include additional firefighting personnel and equipment, aviation assets, incident-management resources, evacuation and sheltering assistance, law-enforcement support, heavy equipment, communications resources, and other emergency assets necessary to protect life and property.

We also respectfully request that the State assist Jack County in documenting and evaluating damages and emergency-response expenditures associated with this incident and in identifying any state or federal disaster assistance for which Jack County, its political subdivisions, residents, agricultural producers, and property owners may become eligible.

Jack County has a long history of neighbors helping neighbors and volunteer first responders answering the call when our communities are threatened. Today, firefighters and emergency personnel from across this region are once again standing together against a significant threat. We are deeply grateful for their courage, professionalism, and sacrifice.

Governor, Jack County stands ready to work closely with your office, the Texas Division of Emergency Management, the Texas A&M Forest Service, and all responding agencies until this emergency is brought under control and our citizens are safe.

Thank you for your leadership and for the continued support the State of Texas provides to rural communities during times of disaster.

Respectfully,

Brian Keith Umphress
Jack County Judge
Jack County, Texas

Enclosure:

Declaration of Local State of Disaster – Ross Fire



COUNTY OF JACK
STATE OF TEXAS

FILED FOR RECORD

O'CLOCK ____ M

AUG 25 2026

VANESSA JAMES, County Clerk
JACK COUNTY, TEXAS

DECLARATION OF DISASTER FOR JACK COUNTY
ROSS FIRE WILDFIRE EMERGENCY

WHEREAS, Jack County, Texas, is presently experiencing an emergency resulting from the **Ross Fire**, a rapidly spreading and destructive wildland fire that originated in Palo Pinto County, Texas, on or about August 24, 2026, and subsequently spread overnight into the **southwestern and southern portions of Jack County**; and

WHEREAS, the Ross Fire has grown rapidly under extreme fire-weather conditions and is presently estimated to have burned approximately **25,000 to 30,000 acres**, with the fire reported at or near **zero containment**, and continues to threaten additional acreage, structures, livestock, agricultural operations, critical infrastructure, and the health and safety of residents; and

WHEREAS, the Ross Fire has crossed county boundaries and continues to present an immediate and substantial threat to portions of Jack County, requiring the deployment and coordination of local, regional, and state firefighting, emergency management, law enforcement, evacuation, sheltering, and public-safety resources; and

WHEREAS, the continuing combination of **extreme heat, prolonged dry conditions, critically dry vegetation and fuels, wind, low relative humidity, and other adverse weather conditions** has created an extraordinary danger of additional wildland fire ignition and rapid fire spread throughout Jack County; and

WHEREAS, the Ross Fire and the existing extreme fire conditions have caused, and continue to threaten to cause, widespread and severe damage, injury, loss of property, loss of livestock and agricultural resources, disruption of transportation and utilities, and potential loss of life; and

WHEREAS, residents in threatened areas of southern Jack County have been directed to evacuate, roadways have been closed or restricted because of fire conditions, and emergency sheltering and other protective measures have become necessary; and

WHEREAS, the magnitude and continuing nature of this emergency create conditions that may exceed the capability of Jack County's local resources and require additional assistance, equipment, personnel, funding, and other resources from the State of Texas and other governmental and emergency-response agencies; and

WHEREAS, **Section 418.108 of the Texas Government Code** authorizes the presiding officer of the governing body of a political subdivision to declare a local state of disaster when conditions warrant such action;

NOW, THEREFORE, I, BRIAN KEITH UMPHRESS, COUNTY JUDGE OF JACK COUNTY, TEXAS, DO HEREBY DECLARE A LOCAL STATE OF DISASTER FOR JACK COUNTY, TEXAS, AS FOLLOWS:

SECTION 1. DECLARATION OF DISASTER

A **Local State of Disaster** is hereby declared for **Jack County, Texas**, due to the Ross Fire, the continuing threat of uncontrolled wildland fire, extreme fire-weather conditions, and the resulting threat to life, property, livestock, agricultural resources, critical infrastructure, and public safety.

SECTION 2. ACTIVATION OF EMERGENCY MANAGEMENT PLAN

The Jack County Emergency Management Plan is hereby activated, and all appropriate emergency management, firefighting, law enforcement, evacuation, sheltering, public works, communications, and other emergency-response measures are authorized as necessary to protect life and property.

SECTION 3. AUTHORITY TO TAKE EMERGENCY ACTION

Jack County officials and emergency management personnel are authorized to take all lawful and necessary actions to respond to this disaster, including coordinating evacuations, establishing shelters, controlling access to threatened areas, closing or restricting roadways when necessary for public safety, coordinating firefighting resources, protecting critical infrastructure, and requesting mutual aid and state assistance.

SECTION 4. REQUEST FOR STATE AND OTHER ASSISTANCE

Jack County hereby requests all assistance that may be available from the **State of Texas**, including the Texas Division of Emergency Management, Texas A&M Forest Service, and other appropriate state agencies, as well as mutual-aid resources from other political subdivisions, fire departments, emergency service districts, and emergency-response organizations.

Jack County further requests that all eligible costs, damages, losses, and emergency protective measures associated with the Ross Fire be documented and considered for any available state or federal disaster assistance and reimbursement.

SECTION 5. PUBLIC SAFETY AND EVACUATION

Residents of Jack County shall comply with evacuation orders, road closures, emergency warnings, and other lawful instructions issued by Jack County Emergency Management, the Jack County Sheriff's Office, incident command, fire officials, or other authorized emergency personnel.

Residents are strongly urged to remain alert to rapidly changing fire conditions and to be prepared to evacuate immediately when instructed.

SECTION 6. DURATION

Pursuant to **Texas Government Code § 418.108**, this Declaration shall take effect immediately upon issuance and shall continue for a period not exceeding **seven (7) days** from the date of issuance unless continued or renewed by the Jack County Commissioners Court.

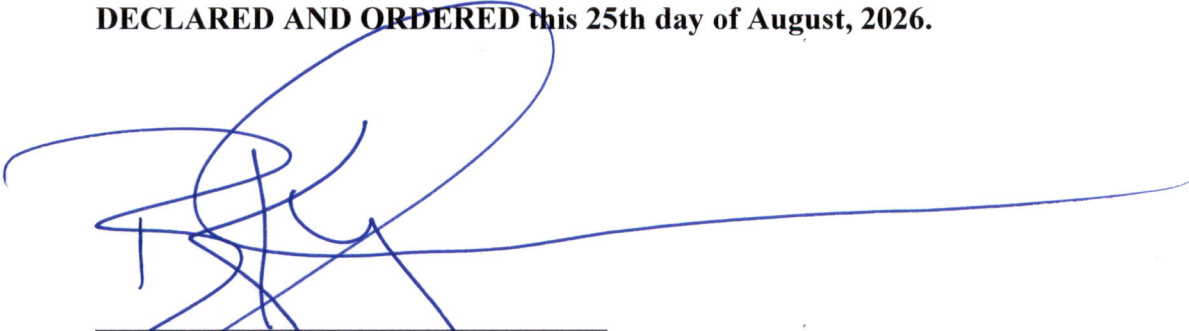
SECTION 7. PUBLICITY AND FILING

This Declaration shall be given prompt and general publicity and shall be filed promptly with the **Jack County Clerk**, as required by Texas law.

SECTION 8. EFFECTIVE DATE

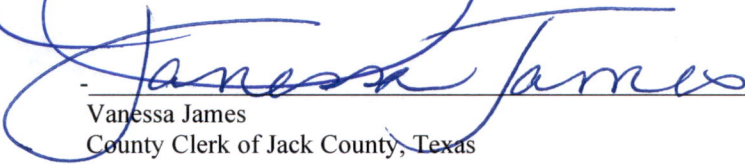
This Declaration is effective immediately upon execution.

DECLARED AND ORDERED this 25th day of August, 2026.



Brian Keith Umphress
County Judge of Jack County, Texas

ATTEST:



Vanessa James
County Clerk of Jack County, Texas

By: _____
Deputy Clerk



COUNTY OF JACK

STATE OF TEXAS

AUG 31 2026

VANESSA JAMES, County Clerk
JACK COUNTY, TEXAS

BY _____ DEPUTY

ORDER OF THE JACK COUNTY COMMISSIONERS COURT

CONTINUING LOCAL STATE OF DISASTER, RATIFYING EMERGENCY ACTIONS, AND AUTHORIZING DOCUMENTATION OF COSTS AND RECOVERY ACTIVITIES RELATED TO THE ROSS FIRE

On this 31st day of August 2026, the Commissioners Court of Jack County, Texas, convened in a duly called Emergency Meeting with a quorum present, and considered the continuing emergency conditions, response activities, financial impacts, and recovery operations associated with the Ross Fire.

The Commissioners Court, after receiving information concerning the Ross Fire and the continuing response and recovery operations, makes the following findings and enters this Order:

FINDINGS

WHEREAS, Jack County and the surrounding region have experienced an extraordinary and destructive wildland fire known as the Ross Fire, which originated in Palo Pinto County and subsequently spread into Jack County; and

WHEREAS, the Ross Fire has burned approximately 85,000 acres between Palo Pinto and Jack Counties, resulting in a substantial threat to life, health, public safety, homes, ranches, agricultural property, livestock, pastureland, stored hay, infrastructure, natural resources, and other public and private property; and

WHEREAS, the magnitude of the Ross Fire required a significant emergency response involving Jack County, Palo Pinto County, the City of Jacksboro, rural and volunteer fire departments, law enforcement agencies, emergency medical services, emergency management personnel, mutual-aid resources, state agencies, private contractors, volunteers, landowners, and numerous other governmental and nongovernmental organizations; and

WHEREAS, Jack County Judge Brian Keith Umphress, acting as the presiding officer of the governing body of Jack County and pursuant to Texas Government Code §418.108, issued a Local Disaster Declaration for Jack County because of the imminent threat to life and property presented by the Ross Fire; and

WHEREAS, the Governor of the State of Texas, Greg Abbott, has issued an applicable disaster declaration or proclamation providing state recognition and assistance concerning the disaster conditions affecting Jack County and other affected areas; and

WHEREAS, Texas Government Code §418.108 authorizes the presiding officer of the governing body of a political subdivision to declare a local state of disaster; and

WHEREAS, Texas Government Code §418.108(b) provides that a declaration of local disaster may not be continued or renewed for a period of more than seven days except with the consent of the governing body of the political subdivision; and

WHEREAS, although substantial progress has been made in responding to the Ross Fire, continuing governmental action is necessary for fire operations, public safety, damage assessment, recovery, financial accounting, documentation, reimbursement, coordination with responding agencies, and other consequences resulting from this disaster; and

WHEREAS, the Commissioners Court recognizes that substantial expenses have been incurred, and may continue to be incurred, by Jack County, the City of Jacksboro, Jack County rural and volunteer fire departments, mutual-aid departments, emergency-response agencies, and other participating governmental entities in protecting lives and property and responding to the Ross Fire; and

WHEREAS, accurate and comprehensive documentation of those expenditures and resources is necessary to protect the financial interests of Jack County and participating emergency-response organizations and to support any applications or claims for local, state, federal, mutual-aid, insurance, grant, disaster-relief, or other reimbursement or financial assistance that may become available; and

WHEREAS, the Commissioners Court finds that it is in the best interests of the citizens of Jack County to continue the Local State of Disaster and to authorize coordinated response, recovery, documentation, and financial-accounting activities arising from the Ross Fire.

NOW, THEREFORE, BE IT ORDERED

The Jack County Commissioners Court hereby ORDERS as follows:

SECTION 1. CONTINUATION OF LOCAL STATE OF DISASTER

Pursuant to Texas Government Code §418.108(b), the Jack County Commissioners Court hereby CONSENTS TO, APPROVES, CONTINUES, AND RENEWS the Local Disaster Declaration previously issued by the Jack County Judge concerning the Ross Fire.

The Local State of Disaster shall remain in effect until terminated or modified by lawful action of the Jack County Commissioners Court or as otherwise provided by applicable law.

SECTION 2. RATIFICATION AND CONFIRMATION OF EMERGENCY ACTIONS

The Commissioners Court hereby ratifies, confirms, and approves, to the extent authorized by law, the lawful emergency actions previously taken by the Jack County Judge, Jack County Emergency Management, Jack County departments and officials, and other authorized County personnel in response to the Ross Fire and pursuant to the Local Disaster Declaration.

Nothing in this Order shall be construed as ratifying an action beyond the lawful authority of Jack County or any County official.

SECTION 3. CONTINUED EMERGENCY RESPONSE AND RECOVERY

The Commissioners Court authorizes the continued coordination of emergency response and recovery activities reasonably necessary to protect the health, safety, and welfare of the citizens of Jack County and to address the consequences of the Ross Fire.

Such activities may include coordination with:

- Jack County rural and volunteer fire departments;
- the City of Jacksboro and Jacksboro Fire Department;
- neighboring counties and municipalities;

- mutual-aid fire departments and emergency-response organizations;
- law enforcement agencies;
- emergency medical services;
- emergency management organizations;
- the Texas Division of Emergency Management;
- the Texas A&M Forest Service;
- other appropriate agencies of the State of Texas;
- federal agencies, when applicable;
- utility providers;
- nonprofit and charitable organizations;
- agricultural and livestock organizations; and
- other public or private entities providing authorized disaster-response or recovery assistance.

SECTION 4. DOCUMENTATION OF ALL ROSS FIRE COSTS

The Commissioners Court hereby directs and authorizes the establishment of a comprehensive record of all identifiable costs and resources associated with the Ross Fire response and recovery.

Jack County shall request and compile appropriate documentation from participating entities, including, where applicable:

A. Personnel Costs

- regular personnel hours attributable to the incident;
- overtime;
- emergency call-back time;
- volunteer personnel hours where documentation is appropriate;
- benefits and other eligible personnel-related costs.

B. Apparatus and Equipment

- fire engines;
- brush trucks;
- tankers and tenders;
- command vehicles;
- law-enforcement vehicles;
- ambulances;
- heavy equipment;
- road equipment;
- tractors;
- trailers;
- generators;
- pumps;
- communications equipment; and
- other equipment used in response or recovery operations.

Documentation should include equipment identification, dates of service, hours of operation, mileage when applicable, and the agency or entity owning the equipment.

C. Fuel and Operating Expenses

- gasoline;
- diesel fuel;
- lubricants;
- equipment maintenance;
- repairs attributable to emergency operations; and
- other documented operating expenses.

D. Supplies and Materials

- firefighting supplies;
- personal protective equipment;
- hoses and related equipment;
- food and water for responders when eligible;
- medical supplies;
- emergency shelter supplies;
- traffic-control materials;
- communications supplies; and
- other materials consumed or utilized during emergency operations.

E. Contracted Services

- heavy equipment;
- earth-moving equipment;
- water-hauling services;
- transportation;
- temporary facilities;
- communications;
- debris-related services;
- emergency repairs; and
- other contracted goods or services associated with the disaster.

F. Other Disaster-Related Costs

Any other documented expenditure or use of resources reasonably attributable to the response to, mitigation of, or recovery from the Ross Fire.

SECTION 5. FIRE DEPARTMENT COST DOCUMENTATION

Jack County specifically requests that each rural, volunteer, municipal, mutual-aid, or other fire department participating in Ross Fire operations maintain and submit complete documentation concerning its response.

Such documentation should include, to the extent applicable:

- department name;
- incident or run number;
- dates and times of deployment;
- personnel responding;
- apparatus responding;
- equipment hours;
- mileage;
- fuel consumed;
- supplies consumed;
- damaged or lost equipment;
- meals and lodging where applicable;
- invoices and receipts;
- mutual-aid documentation;
- TIFMAS or other applicable deployment documentation; and
- any other records necessary to establish the department's actual costs of responding to the Ross Fire.

SECTION 6. CITY OF JACKSBORO

The Commissioners Court specifically requests that the City of Jacksboro and Jacksboro Fire Department identify and document all costs, personnel, equipment, materials, fuel, supplies, contracted services, and other expenditures associated with the Ross Fire.

Jack County shall coordinate with the City of Jacksboro to ensure that such costs are appropriately documented and preserved for any available reimbursement, disaster assistance, grant, mutual-aid, insurance, or other recovery program.

SECTION 7. CITY OF BRYSON

The Jack County Commissioners Court hereby specifically recognizes and acknowledges the emergency assistance and resources provided by the City of Bryson in support of the response to the Ross Fire, including the provision of municipal water, municipal facilities, logistical support, and other resources utilized by Jack County rural fire departments, state agencies, mutual-aid organizations, and the Jack County Fire Command during emergency response operations.

The Commissioners Court finds that the resources provided by the City of Bryson constituted an important component of the coordinated emergency response to the Ross Fire and served the public purpose of protecting life, health, safety, livestock, agricultural property, homes, businesses, infrastructure, and other public and private property threatened by the disaster.

A. MUNICIPAL WATER SUPPLY

The Commissioners Court specifically recognizes the City of Bryson's provision and use of its municipal water supply in support of Ross Fire suppression and emergency-response operations, including water supplied to or utilized by:

- Jack County rural and volunteer fire departments;
- municipal and mutual-aid fire departments;
- the Texas A&M Forest Service and other State of Texas agencies;
- firefighting apparatus, tankers, tenders, and water-hauling equipment;
- Jack County Fire Command;
- contractors or other authorized resources supporting fire suppression; and
- other local, regional, state, or mutual-aid emergency-response resources engaged in the Ross Fire.

The City of Bryson is requested to identify and document, to the extent reasonably practicable, the quantity and estimated or actual cost of municipal water supplied for Ross Fire operations, together with any additional pumping, treatment, electrical, personnel, equipment, maintenance, infrastructure, or other costs reasonably attributable to providing that water.

B. SUPPORT OF JACK COUNTY FIRE COMMAND

The Commissioners Court specifically recognizes the assistance provided by the City of Bryson in supporting the Jack County Fire Command and the unified and coordinated response to the Ross Fire.

The City is requested to document personnel, facilities, equipment, utilities, supplies, administrative assistance, communications support, logistical assistance, and other municipal resources provided in support of the Fire Command, responding fire departments, state agencies, and other emergency-response organizations.

SECTION 8. PRESERVATION OF RECORDS

All Jack County departments, officials, and employees participating in Ross Fire response or recovery operations are directed to preserve records reasonably related to the incident, including:

- invoices;
- receipts;
- purchase orders;
- time sheets;
- payroll records;
- equipment logs;
- fuel records;
- dispatch records;
- incident reports;
- mutual-aid records;
- photographs;
- maps;
- damage assessments;
- contracts;
- procurement records;
- communications concerning expenditures or resource deployment; and
- other supporting documentation.

Such records shall be maintained in accordance with applicable records-retention requirements and made available for disaster-recovery and reimbursement purposes.

SECTION 9. CENTRALIZED DISASTER COST ACCOUNTING

The Commissioners Court authorizes Jack County to establish a separate Ross Fire disaster accounting, project, or cost code, if appropriate, for the purpose of identifying and tracking County expenditures associated with the incident.

County departments shall identify Ross Fire-related expenditures separately from ordinary operating expenditures whenever reasonably practicable.

SECTION 10. REIMBURSEMENT AND DISASTER ASSISTANCE

The County Judge and other appropriate Jack County officials and personnel are authorized, within their respective lawful authority, to coordinate with appropriate local, regional, state, and federal agencies concerning:

- disaster assistance;
- emergency management assistance;
- fire suppression assistance;
- reimbursement programs;
- mutual-aid reimbursement;
- grants;
- agricultural disaster assistance;
- infrastructure assistance;
- emergency protective measures; and
- other available disaster-response and recovery programs.

Nothing in this Order independently authorizes the expenditure of County funds, execution of a contract, or acceptance of an obligation requiring separate Commissioners Court approval under applicable law.

SECTION 11. DAMAGE ASSESSMENT

Jack County Emergency Management and other appropriate officials are authorized and directed to continue gathering and preserving information concerning damage resulting from the Ross Fire, including impacts to:

- residences;
- businesses;
- ranches and agricultural operations;
- livestock;
- fencing;
- pasture and grazing land;
- stored hay and feed;
- barns and agricultural structures;
- vehicles and equipment;
- County roads and infrastructure;
- utilities;
- public facilities; and
- other public and private property.

Such information may be used to support local, state, and federal disaster-assistance requests and recovery efforts.

SECTION 12. PUBLIC PURPOSE

The Commissioners Court finds that the actions authorized by this Order serve a legitimate and substantial public purpose by protecting public health and safety, preserving County financial resources, supporting emergency-response organizations, documenting the effects of the disaster, facilitating recovery, and protecting the citizens and taxpayers of Jack County.

SECTION 13. SEVERABILITY

If any provision of this Order is determined to be invalid or unenforceable, the remaining provisions shall remain in full force and effect to the extent permitted by law.

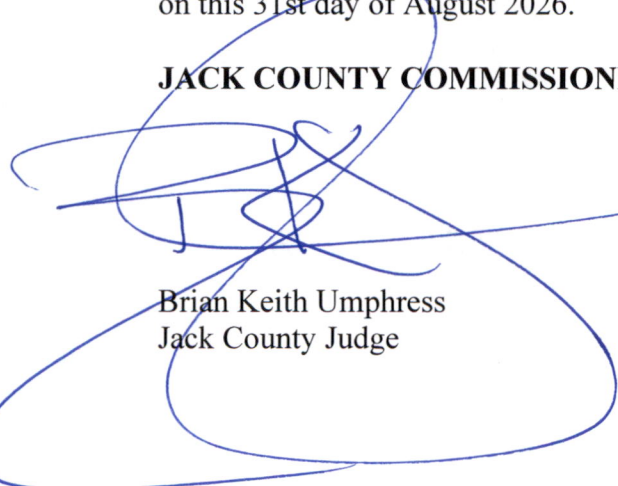
SECTION 14. EFFECTIVE DATE

This Order shall become effective immediately upon its adoption by the Jack County Commissioners Court.

ORDERED AND ADOPTED

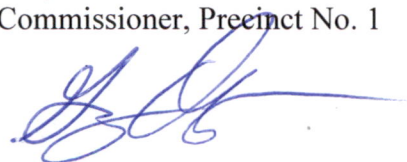
ORDERED, APPROVED, AND ADOPTED by the Jack County Commissioners Court on this 31st day of August 2026.

JACK COUNTY COMMISSIONERS COURT



Brian Keith Umphress
Jack County Judge

Gary Oliver
Commissioner, Precinct No. 1



Ronald Fitzgerald

Ronald Fitzgerald
Commissioner, Precinct No. 2

Henry Birdwell, Jr.
Commissioner, Precinct No. 3

Terry Ward

Terry Ward
Commissioner, Precinct No. 4

ATTEST:

Vanessa James

Vanessa James,
County Clerk of Jack County, Texas

Date: *8/31/2026*



CERTIFICATION

I, the undersigned County Clerk of Jack County, Texas, certify that the foregoing Order was considered and adopted by the Jack County Commissioners Court at a meeting held in accordance with applicable law and that the foregoing is a true and correct copy of the Order appearing in the official records of the Court

Vanessa James

Vanessa James,
County Clerk of Jack County, Texas

