

## Article for 071614

So, have you ever been searching and searching for something, only to find it is right in front of you, but you just didn't realize it was there? I know I have, and with the amount of information that is readily available to us every day, how do we know where to find what, what to believe, and when to give up and call someone to find out what we need or want to know!!

I love to "Google" questions just to see what kind of answers I can get! Then, I'm disappointed when they don't come back with the results I wanted to see. For instance, when I Google "electrical permits in Madison County", I get results that look like what I am wanting, but later realize (usually after I click on it) that I should include "Texas" at the end of that search. Even when I do that, I get several vague results. After I carefully read the headlines and sample text that comes up, I can choose more specifically what I think will give me the best information. In this case, I chose "Permits – Madison County" Voila!! I have reached a page on our local county website that brings up forms for all sorts of county permits – Water Line Agreement, Certification of OSSF Requiring Maintenance, Special Road Use Indemnity Agreement and Permit, all the way to School Food Establishment Inspection Application. Ah, ha!! Here is the "Electric Permit Application" I can click to view! See how easy getting the right form can be when you search for the right sequence of words and then choose the right listing on the results page?

Unfortunately, it's not always that easy! However, I can help you understand a little something about our county website and the logical way to navigate through it! If you log onto [www.co.madison.tx.us](http://www.co.madison.tx.us), you are welcomed by a picture of our beautiful courthouse and a list of "Quick links". Most of those Quick links are expandable and have a little arrow out to the side of them. You can click on those arrows and find loads of information, right at your fingertips! The first listing "County Offices" link you into each of the elected county officials sections, including Commissioners Court information. The "District Court" listing links you to "district" level offices, such as the District Attorney, District Judge, and District Clerk. The "Other County Offices" listing offers links to loads of county services, such as Elections, Adult Probation, Veterans Services, Emergency Management, Permits etc. The "Financial Transparency" listing takes you to various reports, such as Budgets, Tax Rate information and even utility reports. The "Public Notices & News" listing brings up a calendar showing court dates and special events, such as Tire Collection going on July 18<sup>th</sup> – 28<sup>th</sup>! You can click on those items and more information appears there. That same listing includes Notices of Estray and Notice of Substitute Trustee Sales, too. There are other listings for "Employment Opportunities", "Relocating", "Bids", "Court Dockets" and others.

You get the idea, and I won't bore you with the details, but sometime when you would normally be Facebooking while you wait for a doctor's appointment, why not browse the county's website and learn more about your county government and all we have to offer! You might be pleasantly surprised at what has been right before your eyes all along! Be Safe Out There!