



ATTORNEY GENERAL OF TEXAS  
GREG ABBOTT

June 16, 2009

Ms. Janice Childers  
Record Clerk  
Rusk County Sheriff's Office  
210 Charleviox Street  
Henderson, Texas 75652

OR2009-08292

Dear Ms. Childers:

You ask whether certain information is subject to required public disclosure under the Public Information Act (the "Act"), chapter 552 of the Government Code. Your request was assigned ID# 346386.

The Rusk County Sheriff's Office (the "sheriff") received a request for information pertaining to any arrests and booking of three named individuals in the Rusk County Jail for the past seven years. You state that you understand the requested information to be confidential. We have considered your claim.

We must first consider the sheriff's obligations under the Act. Section 552.301 of the Government Code prescribes the procedures that a governmental body must follow in asking this office to decide whether requested information is excepted from public disclosure. Pursuant to section 552.301 of the Government Code, the governmental body is required to submit to this office within fifteen business days of receiving the request a copy of the specific information requested or representative samples, labeled to indicate which exceptions apply to which parts of the documents. Gov't Code § 552.301(e)(1)(D). The request reflects that the sheriff received this request on April 13, 2009. However, as of the date of this letter, you have not submitted to this office a copy of the specific information requested or representative samples of the requested information. Consequently, we find that the sheriff failed to comply with the procedural requirements of section 552.301.

Pursuant to section 552.302 of the Government Code, a governmental body's failure to comply with the requirements of section 552.301 results in the legal presumption that the requested information is public and must be released unless the governmental body

demonstrates a compelling reason to withhold the information from disclosure. *See id.* § 552.302; *Hancock v. State Bd. of Ins.*, 797 S.W.2d 379, 381-82 (Tex. App.—Austin 1990, no writ); Open Records Decision No. 319 (1982). A compelling reason exists when third-party interests are at stake or when information is confidential by law. Open Records Decision No. 150 (1977). By failing to comply with the procedural requirements of the Act, the sheriff has waived any discretionary claims against disclosure. *See* Open Records Decision Nos. 665 at 2 n.5 (2000) (discretionary exceptions generally), 663 at 5 (1999) (untimely request for a decision resulted in waiver of discretionary exceptions). Further, although the sheriff appears to raise a mandatory exception to disclosure that may not be waived, you have not submitted any information for our review. Therefore, we have no basis for finding any information confidential. Thus, we have no choice but to order the sheriff to release the requested information. If you believe the information is confidential and may not lawfully be released, you must challenge this ruling in court pursuant to section 552.324 of the Government Code.

This letter ruling is limited to the particular information at issue in this request and limited to the facts as presented to us; therefore, this ruling must not be relied upon as a previous determination regarding any other information or any other circumstances.

This ruling triggers important deadlines regarding the rights and responsibilities of the governmental body and of the requestor. For more information concerning those rights and responsibilities, please visit our website at [http://www.oag.state.tx.us/open/index\\_orl.php](http://www.oag.state.tx.us/open/index_orl.php), or call the Office of the Attorney General's Open Government Hotline, toll free, at (877) 673-6839. Questions concerning the allowable charges for providing public information under the Act must be directed to the Cost Rules Administrator of the Office of the Attorney General at (512) 475-2497.

Sincerely,



Laura E. Ream  
Assistant Attorney General  
Open Records Division

LER/dls

Ref: ID# 346386

Enc. Submitted documents

c: Requestor  
(w/o enclosures)