



House District 1 - Bowie, Franklin, Lamar & Red River counties
District & Capitol Interim Report
October 2016

Around House District 1. This month, I have had the pleasure of attending several area meetings held by various groups including the Rotary Clubs of Texarkana Safety Officer Appreciation Banquet; the Retired School Personnel Association meeting in Mount Pleasant; and, the Region 8 special education directors. I enjoyed meeting with these groups and their members as we look forward to Election Day 2016 and the start of the 85th Texas Legislature in January 2017.

Texarkana designated a "Texas Cultural District." The Texas Commission on the Arts (TCA) has designated Texarkana as a Texas Cultural District, and there will be celebration of this designation at 11 a.m. on October 25, at the Federal Courthouse in Texarkana. Cultural districts are special zones that harness the power of cultural resources to stimulate economic development and community revitalization. These districts can become focal points for generating businesses, attracting tourists, stimulating cultural development and fostering civic pride. According to TAC, the establishment of a cultural district requires a focus on the arts with carefully laid out plans and collaboration among arts organizations, city and county government entities, businesses and citizens. *Congratulations Texarkana!*

Free flu shots for veterans. Walgreens has partnered with the Department of Veterans Affairs to provide free flu shots to veterans who are enrolled in the VA health benefits program. Dependents of eligible veterans are not eligible for these free flu immunizations. This is not a Tricare program; however, if the veteran is enrolled in the VA health benefits program, he or she is eligible to receive the free immunizations. Please check with your local Walgreens Pharmacy for more information. Proper identification is required at the time of getting the flu shot.

TxDOT adding safety features. Late last month, TxDOT announced that it will be adding safety features to five area highways in the next few months. These features include installing texturized pavement methods to centerline areas of these highways to help prevent crossover crashes and along the shoulders to prevent run-off-the road crashes according to Rebecca Wells, TxDOT district traffic engineer based in Atlanta. She said "the texturized pavement methods make noise when vehicle tires run over them, alerting drivers that they are getting out of their traffic lane." These methods will be installed to area roads in Bowie, Camp, Cass, Marion, Titus and Upshur counties.

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REMINDER: Early voting starts Monday, October 24, and runs through Friday, November 4. Polls will be open on Election Day from 7 a.m. to 7 p.m.; be sure to check with your county registrar's office for more information on locations to vote early or where to vote on Election Day. You will need to be



registered to vote so you can cast your ballot for President of the United States, as well as important local elections including those being conducted by Paris Junior College (PJC) and Texarkana College (TC). If you live in the service area of either of these institutions, here are links to both PJC (<http://www.parisjc.edu/downloads/annex-3.pdf>) and TC (<https://www.texarkanacollege.edu/serviceplan/>) so you can acquaint yourself with the issues before going to vote.

Around the Capitol. Agriculture and Livestock and Natural Resources. On October 13, the House Committees on Agriculture and Livestock and Natural Resources held a joint meeting to discuss the sources of water used by Texans in the production of food and fiber, and examine the current water delivery methods and water conservation goals for agricultural use. Legislators weighed in on whether there are more efficient and effective water-usage management practices that could be employed in the agricultural industry, and determined the impact of crop insurance requirements on producers.

Public Education. On October 17, the House Committee on Public Education met to study ways to increase parental choice in education and to review the successes and failures of school choice programs in other states. The committee took testimony on whether an expansion of school choice in Texas is needed and discussed ways to ensure that any school receiving public support is held accountable for its academic and financial performance.

School bus safety week. October 17-21 is National School Bus Safety Week, and the Texas Department of Public Safety (DPS) reminds all drivers that it is against the law to pass a school bus that is stopped and operating a visual signal (a stop sign or a flashing red light). For passing a stopped school bus, drivers can be fined up to \$1,250 and the ticket cannot be dismissed through a defensive driving course.

Texas Faith Summit - November 2. The state Department of Family & Protective Services (DFPS) recently informed my office about an upcoming gathering that focuses on the protection of Texas children. As a lead up to the 85th Texas Legislature, DFPS will host a "Texas Faith Summit" on November 2, at the Texas Capitol. DFPS works with many partners to help ensure the welfare and protection of children. The Texas Faith Summit focuses on opportunities for congregations to engage with families, collaborate with other local partners and prevent families from entering the foster care system. I encourage every congregation within House District 1 consider having someone attend the Texas Faith Summit to learn how they can be an important partner in taking care of and protecting our precious children. Registration is free but space is limited. For more information, please see www.dfps.state.tx.us/faith.

My office is here to help. I thank each of you for letting me serve you as your state representative. Please contact either the District office (903-628-0361) or Capitol office (512-463-0692) if there is anything you think we can do to help you.

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