



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

Around House District 1. On December 14th, Tamii Whitworth, HD 1 Christmas ornament design winner, visited Austin to see her ornament hanging on the 20-foot Christmas tree in the House of Representatives Chamber at the Texas Capitol. Tamii was accompanied by her Texarkana College art instructor, Valerie Owen, and received a tour from myself on the House floor where we discussed the daily routine of members during session.



Pictured (l-r): Tamii Whitworth, Rep. VanDeaver, and Valerie Owen

Tamii has shown her art in two Spring Art Exhibits at Texarkana College. She has also won awards in the Four States Fair and has recently been commissioned to do works for private collectors. Recently, Tamii participated in painting murals for the Domestic Violence Center in Texarkana. Tamii plans to continue her art education at Southern Arkansas University at Magnolia, Arkansas, where she will earn a bachelor's degree in art education. I want to thank Tamii for the time she dedicated to this project and allowing my office to share her artwork.



Pictured left: Tamii Whitworth's winning designed ornament that is hanging on the House Chamber Christmas tree.

Around the District. *TxDOT continues work in HD 1.* The Texas Department of Transportation (TxDOT) recently informed my office about two projects that will be coming to roads near you in Bowie County. TxDOT will replace lighting, at the cost of \$1.8 million, at several interchanges along I-30 located at FM 561, FM 990 and SH 98. According to the TxDOT office in Atlanta, the 15-month project is scheduled to begin in February 2017.

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Earlier this month, TxDOT resumed work on a flood-delayed bridge project over the Red River on US Highway 259 that originally began in late 2014 and had to be put on hold due to record flooding. TxDOT reports that the flooding caused the river to widen, deepen and migrate more toward the Texas side, which forced TxDOT to re-evaluate its original bridge design. After studying the situation further, changes had to be made in the design of the bridge's foundation. Work began on December 5 and will continue until the summer of 2018.

Around the Capitol. The 85th Texas Legislature convenes in just a few weeks at noon on January 10, 2017. Anticipation in Austin is building for the 140-day session and most people feel it will be a difficult session in part due to significantly reduced revenues coming into the state due to the continued depression in the oil and gas industries, as well as reduced sales taxes generated from ancillary businesses dependent on oil and gas production. The state comptroller will release the official Budget Revenue Estimate (BRE) the day before session starts, and this document gives legislators the amount of available revenue for the 2018-19 biennium.

As press time, I have already filed four bills in the House of Representatives: House Bill (HB) 486 (relating to school district ad valorem tax rates); HB 515 (relating to eliminating certain state-required assessment instruments and certain end-of-course assessment instruments not required by federal law); HB 539 (relating to the ability of certain students to enroll full-time in courses provided through the state virtual school network); and HB 594 (relating to procedures for the dissolution of a county hospital authority). I look forward to working with my colleagues in the House and Senate to try and pass these bills for the benefit of all Texans. Here is a link to the Texas Legislature Online so you can keep up with all of the happenings during the next session: <http://www.capitol.texas.gov/>.

Reaching out. As you receive this monthly newsletter from my office, I invite you to feel free to share it with other people you know in House District 1 (Bowie, Franklin, Lamar & Red River Counties) who may be interested in hearing directly from their state representative. I also invite people you share the newsletter with to contact my office to sign up for it via email if they currently do not receive it, so we can add them to our email list. You can reach my Capitol office at 512-463-0692 or my District office at 903-628-0361. I will start sending out e-newsletters twice a month during the first couple of months of the 85th regular session (January and February) and then send them out weekly beginning in March until session ends on May 29.

Christmas & New Year's Wishes. As we come to the end of another year, let all of us pause and count our many, many blessings. I hope that each of you have a very Merry Christmas and joyous New Year.

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.