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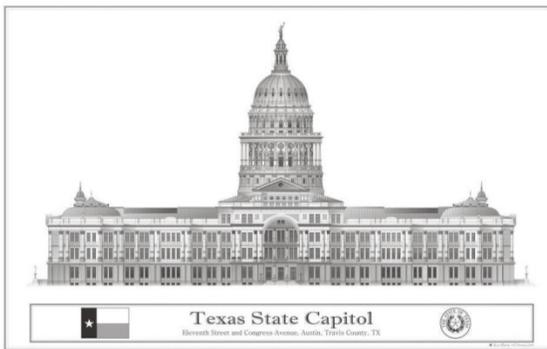
VanDeaver

STATE REPRESENTATIVE



House District 1 - Bowie, Franklin, Lamar & Red River counties District & Capitol Report - 85th Legislature

March 2018



Around the District. Prescribed burns. Between April and June 2018, the Texas Parks and Wildlife Department (TPWD) will conduct one or more prescribed burns in the White Oak Wildlife Management Area (WMA) in Bowie, Cass, Morris and Titus counties. The TPWD will publish a notice in the *Mount Pleasant Tribune* prior to this burn period, and the Department will also use its website, social media outlets and group text messaging to ensure that the public is informed before the burns occur. If you want to receive a text message prior to the burn, text number 81010 this message: "@W727." For additional information, contact Luke Baker, area manager for the White Oak Creek WMA, at luke.baker@tpwd.texas.gov or 903-884-3800.

Lamar County Leadership visits the Capitol. I was happy to welcome members of the Lamar County Leadership group on March 28, as they visited the Capitol where we

talked about how important it is for citizens to be involved in the legislative process. From voting to voicing their opinion on various issues, it is vitally important to me as a state legislator to know what my constituents are thinking.



Rep. VanDeaver speaking at the Capitol with the Lamar County Leadership group.

We also discussed local efforts to promote Lamar County as a destination for economic and business development and how important Paris Junior College is to those efforts to expand the area's economic base.

Opportunity zone nominations in HD 1. Governor Abbott recently nominated 628 census tracts in 145 Texas counties to the United States Treasury Department (the Department) as possible "opportunity

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zones" as allowed under the new Tax Cuts and Jobs Act that was signed by the President in late 2017. Governors can nominate census tracts where the poverty rate is at least 20 percent and where the median family income is no more than 80 percent of the region's median income. Governor Abbott nominated seven tracts in Bowie County, one tract in Franklin County and five tracts in Lamar County. If approved by the Department, local communities can develop these tracts into prime business development areas to expand the area's economic development opportunities and create more jobs that will grow local economies.



Rep. VanDeaver and members of the Bowie County Farm Bureau at their meeting on March 8.

Around the Capitol. House Select Committee on Opioids and Substance Abuse. The House Select Committee on Opioids and Substance Abuse held its first meeting on March 27 at the Capitol. The committee heard testimony from various oversight state and federal agencies and professional associations to help the members grasp the scope of opioid and substance abuse in Texas. As a member of this committee, I am anxious to learn more about this serious issue and how these drugs affect many people across the state, as well as help craft recommendations for consideration by the 86th Legislature that convenes in January 2019. Here is a link to the proclamation from House Speaker Joe Straus when he appointed this committee in October: <http://www.house.state.tx.us/media/pdf/PROCLAMATION-Select-Committee-Opioids-and-Substance-Abuse.pdf>. You can follow information about the work

of this committee at www.capitol.texas.gov or <http://www.house.texas.gov/committees/committee/?committee=C394> where you can find video links to archived, current and future meetings scheduled for April 17, May 15, June 26 and August 7 & 8.

April is Distracted Driving Awareness Month. The National Safety Council recently announced its *Just Drive* campaign for April in hopes that all drivers shut off their phones and disconnect from social media when driving. So, please turn off your communication devices to help keep other drivers and pedestrians safe and reduce distracted driving! Here is a link to important information relating to how deadly distracted driving is and common myths about distractions and driving: <http://www.nsc.org/learn/NSC-Initiatives/Pages/distracted-driving-research-studies.aspx>. Remember that the state of Texas now has a statewide "texting while driving" ban that was enacted last year by the legislature. With the passage of House Bill 62 (85, R) that became effective September 1, 2017, Texas became the 47th state to ban reading, writing or sending an electronic message unless your vehicle is stopped.

April 2 is the deadline for filing property tax renditions. The comptroller's office reminds business owners that for many property types, April 2 is the deadline to file property tax renditions with their county appraisal districts. Please note that different deadlines may apply in certain appraisal districts and for certain regulated properties. Be sure to check with your local county appraisal districts for any county-specific information. A rendition is a list of furniture and fixtures, machinery, equipment and other property owned or managed as of January 1 each year that may be used by the local county appraisal district to set local property taxes.

Taxes on damaged property. The comptroller's office also reminds the public that if they own property that was damaged by storm, flood or fire last year they can file a special decreased value report that indicates the condition of the property on January 1, 2018. Filing the decreased value report could lower their final tax bills for 2018. Rendition forms and other information can be

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obtained at local county appraisal district offices or downloaded from the comptroller's property tax forms webpage at:

<https://comptroller.texas.gov/taxes/property-tax/forms/>. More information can be obtained from the comptroller's Property Tax Assistance Division at 800-252-9121 (press #2 for the menu and then press #1 for the Information Services Team). Their website is <https://comptroller.texas.gov/taxes/property-tax/valuing-property.php>.

Official DPS websites. The Texas Department of Public Safety (DPS) is cautioning all Texans that it only has two official websites for license/ID card and driver record transactions. These websites are www.texas.gov and www.dps.texas.gov. DPS wants to give Texans the necessary tools when interacting with the agency so you can protect your personal information online and to avoid paying unnecessary fees. There are unofficial websites that mimic official government websites where people can unintentionally share private information that can later be used to steal your identity or drain your bank accounts. DPS cautions Texans to enter the official DPS websites in the toolbar (URL address line) rather than linking from a search engine such as Google. If you or a loved one believes you have encountered a fraudulent website, contact the Texas Attorney General's Consumer Protection Division at 1-800-621-0508.



Happy Easter! I wish you and your family a blessed Easter as we observe this most solemn, yet joyful event. May we all take a moment to give thanks for the many blessings in our lives and hope for the future.

Social media. Please follow me on both my Facebook and Twitter accounts!

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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