



# GARY VanDeaver

## State Representative

**86th Legislature Report - House District 1**  
**Bowie, Franklin, Lamar & Red River counties**  
**October 2019**



*Rep. VanDeaver at the Mt. Vernon Town Hall meeting.*

Thanks to everyone who attended my town hall meetings earlier this month in each of the four counties in House District 1. A very special thank you to the sponsors and hosts of these meetings that gave me the chance to talk face-to-face with my constituents to hear their concerns about issues affecting their families, jobs, communities and state.

These meetings are very important to my staff and me so that we will know more about the every day challenges of my constituents and how our office can work to address these concerns. Not only did I have a chance to go over major activities and accomplishments from

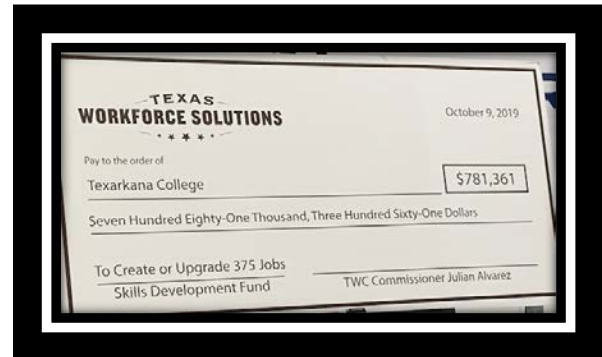
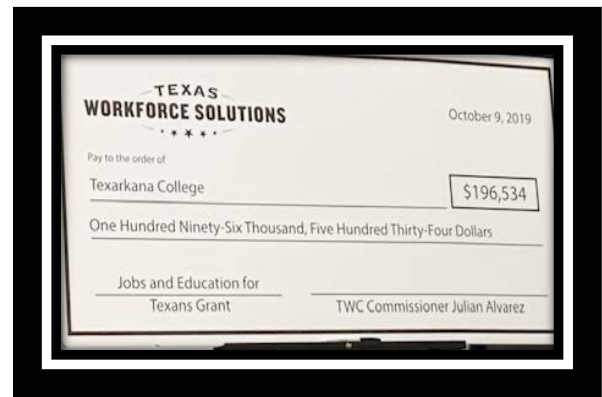


*Rep. VanDeaver speaking at Texarkana meeting.*

this year's legislative session, I also heard about unfinished business needing to be addressed in the 2021 legislative session. If you have any questions about issues discussed at these meetings, please contact either of my offices.

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**Texarkana College awarded grants.** Texas Workforce Commissioner Julian Alvarez, III, this month presented Texarkana College (TC) with two awards totaling almost \$1 million in Jobs and Education for Texans Grant and a Skills Development Fund Grant Award.



These awards will allow TC to help create and/or upgrade almost 400 new jobs in our area. Congratulations to TC, and a big "thank you" to Commission Alvarez and the TWC!

**Grants from Texas Commission on the Arts.**

Congratulations to the Mount Vernon Music Association, Paris Community Theatre and Texakana Symphony Orchestra for receiving grants from the Texas Commission on the Arts (TCA) for their 2019-20 seasons. These grants are invaluable opportunities for



these artistic organizations to continue enriching the lives and experiences of Northeast Texans through concerts, music education, outreach programs, clinics and theatrical experiences. All of these efforts expose not only adults but our youth to cultural offerings they might not otherwise have the chance to experience. Thanks to all of the individuals and local groups working so hard to put on their performances, but also to the TCA for helping fund such important cultural activities and organizations in our area.

**District events in October.** In addition to this month's Town Hall meetings, I had the pleasure of participating in these activities throughout House District 1:

- ✓ Spoke to the 3rd & 4th grade classes at Hubbard ISD;
- ✓ Attended the Bowie - Cass Electric Coop Annual meeting;
- ✓ Dedication of the Cuthand Cemetery as a Texas Historic Cemetery;
- ✓ Celebration of Clearwater Baptist Church's 150th anniversary in Scroggins;
- ✓ Attended Farm Bureau conventions in Red River & Bowie counties;
- ✓ Presented flag and resolution to retiring Bowie County Judge James Carlow;
- ✓ Spoke to the Region 8 meeting of the Texas Retired Teachers Association;
- ✓ Celebration of Campbell Soup's 150th anniversary in Paris; and

- ✓ Spoke to the Northeast Texas Transportation Summit.

I appreciate the invitations and opportunities to engage with these groups and applaud each of them for what they contribute in making Northeast Texas a great place to live, work and raise a family!

**Around the Capitol. TPWD prescribed burns.**

The Texas Parks & Wildlife Department (TPWD) recently announced that it will conduct one or more prescribed burns in the Pat Mayse Wildlife

Management Area between November 1, 2019 and January 29, 2020. The TPWD said it will notify local officials, nearby water utility officials and owners of any utility infrastructure within the prescribed burn area prior to any burns being conducted. Additionally, the department will also notify city and/or county emergency services dispatch centers, local area fire departments and the Texas Commission on Environmental Quality to ensure proper, prior notifications occur. For more information, visit their website at:

[http://tpwd.texas.gov/landwater/land/wildland\\_fire\\_management/](http://tpwd.texas.gov/landwater/land/wildland_fire_management/).

**TWC relaunches its "WorkInTexas" job site.** In addition to handing out awards like the ones made to Texarkana College earlier this month, the Texas Workforce Commission is working hard to put job seekers and employers together. At a time when the state and country's jobless rates are at almost 50-year



lows, it can be difficult for people seeking a job to match up their

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skills with the right employer. Anyone looking for a new job or any business looking for a new employee should take advantage of this invaluable resource: [www.WorkInTexas.com](http://www.WorkInTexas.com).

**TRS under Sunset review.** The Teacher Retirement System of Texas (TRS) is being reviewed by the state's Sunset Advisory Commission (SAC) during this interim between



*Rep. VanDeaver speaking at the TRTA meeting at Region 8 on October 17.*

legislative sessions. All state agencies are required to undergo a "sunset review" at least once every 12 years to determine if the agency still needs to exist and if so, what changes are needed to ensure it is efficient and provides its required services to Texans. Part of the sunset process is for the agency under review to solicit feedback from the people or groups it serves. Recently, TRS announced several ways the public can submit comments that will be considered by Sunset staff during the review process that include:

- Email: [sunset@sunset.texas.gov](mailto:sunset@sunset.texas.gov);
- Submit comments online: [www.sunset.texas.gov](http://www.sunset.texas.gov);
- Send a letter to Sunset Advisory Commission, Attn: Tamara Aronstein, P.O. Box 13066, Austin, Texas 78711; or
- Call (512) 463-1300 to speak to Tamara Aronstein, project manager of the TRS review.

Please note that December 6, 2019, is the deadline to submit comments about TRS. The sunset process also requires the agency under review to do a thorough self evaluation of its operations and management that will be reviewed and taken under consideration by the 10-member SAC as it makes recommendations for any needed changes to be considered by the 87th Texas Legislature in 2021. Here is a link to the TRS self evaluation: <https://www.sunset.texas.gov/reviews-and-reports/agencies/teacher-retirement-system-texas>. The SAC makes it easy to stay informed about the TRS review by signing up for email alerts to receive information from Sunset staff about the review and of notifications of Commission meetings on TRS. Go to [www.sunset.texas.gov](http://www.sunset.texas.gov) to sign up and stay informed.



#### **Comptroller's Fiscal Note publication - "State of Broadband in Texas' Rural Communities."**

The office of state comptroller, the Honorable Glenn Hegar, recently released its *Fiscal Note* publication that delves into the state of broadband availability in rural Texas. The report states that as of 2016, more than two million Texas households did not have access to high-speed internet service. The report states that ". . . Texas' vast rural areas are especially underserved. As of 2016, only 69 percent of rural Texans could access high-speed internet. This digital divide has serious implications for education, telemedicine, agriculture and small business." Fortunately, several bills passed this year to help address these challenges. House Bill 1960 established the governor's Broadband Development Council; House Bill 2422 requires the Texas Department of Transportation to notify broadband providers of certain highway construction projects to see if they can piggyback onto trenching activities to lay fiber; and Senate Bill 14 that allows electric coops to use existing easements for broadband and fiber.

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Here is a link to the full report:

<https://comptroller.texas.gov/about/media-center/news/2019/191023-fiscal-notes.php>

**Constitutional amendments on November 5, general election ballot.** Remember that Texans will head to the polls on Tuesday, November 5, to vote on various local and state measures including 10 proposed amendments to the Texas constitution. Here is a link to an in-depth analysis of these proposed amendments:

<https://hro.house.texas.gov/pdf/focus/amend86.pdf>



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**November 1 - early voting deadline.** If you do not want to wait to vote until the official Election Day on November 5, you can vote early. Please note that the early voting period ends on Friday, November 1.

**Veterans Day.** Please take a moment on November 11, to thank our veterans for all they have done for and sacrificed in keeping our country safe and secure. We owe them an



enormous debt of gratitude and respect for their selfless service to our state and country. Thank you and God

bless our veterans!

**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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