



State Representative Lyle Larson
TX HD-122

What's new in District 122

After months of discussion on the Transportation Security Administration's (TSA) security procedures and debates on the legislation addressing the issue during the regular and special sessions, my office set up a meeting with the head of TSA for south Texas to discuss Texans' concerns and determine how we can work together to address them. With over 45,000 employees nationwide, the TSA works to meet the challenge of protecting travelers throughout our nation each day. While some mistakes have been made the TSA has done a good job of protecting our citizens.

The TSA has existed for less than a decade, as the agency was created shortly after the terrorist attacks on 9/11, to ensure better protection of travelers. The TSA functions as an arm of the U.S. Department of Homeland Security and exists to protect folks who travel by airplane or train. A very interesting little known fact is that over 50 percent of TSA's national workforce once served in the military. Approximately 60 percent of TSA's San Antonio workforce are military veterans. As you would expect, we met several veterans during our tour.

To begin the meeting, Leo Vasquez, federal security director for the San Antonio International Airport (SAT) and 7 other airports in south Texas, took us through the screening process that each airline passenger undergoes before boarding a flight. As we approached the metal detectors, we were introduced to the TSA staff known as "behavioral detection officers" (BDOs). Like their title suggests, the BDOs are trained to monitor passengers and look for suspicious behaviors. If they notice a passenger acting strangely, they will ask the individual to go through the scanner, like they do in Europe and Israel.

When an individual is screened, the image appears on a computer in an enclosed room several feet away from the screener. A technician looks at the image and

notifies the TSA screeners by radio if there are anomalies on the image. The image looks much like an avatar and the face and body parts are not discernible. If the individual has more than 4 anomalies or an anomaly in the groin area, he or she will be offered the opportunity to pass through the screener again several times. He or she will also be asked to remove jewelry, things from their pockets, or anything that may appear as an anomaly on the screen. If the anomalies continue to appear, they will be asked to undergo a resolution pat down, which is a full body pat down provided by a highly trained TSA employee. According to the TSA representatives at SAT, fewer than 1 percent of travelers will receive a resolution pat down.

After conclusion of the traveler screening process, TSA staff took us to the baggage screening section. As checked luggage passes through screeners, technicians watch screens that show the contents of each bag. When the software detects something that could potentially be hazardous, the bag will be searched by a gloved TSA agent. Roughly 13 percent of bags screened will trigger the alarm in the software requiring a bag search. We saw a few bags get searched because folks decided to bring along some BBQ or Pace Picante Sauce on their trip. Remember, if you must bring your favorite condiment on vacation with you, your bag will likely be diverted and hand searched!

TSA by the numbers

- 2 million people travel through 450 American airports each day
- 12,000 people travel through the San Antonio International Airport daily
- Less than 1 percent will undergo a resolution pat down each day
- 13 percent of luggage screened will be individually checked by TSA staff
- There are 45,000 TSA employees nationwide
- More than 50 percent of TSA's national workforce are United States military veterans



Photos from our meeting with the San Antonio TSA

What development in the Eagle Ford Shale means for San Antonio

To say folks in south Texas are excited about what's happening in the Eagle Ford Shale is an understatement. New technology, in the form of hydraulic fracturing, has created huge economic opportunities for Texans throughout the region. Major energy companies are moving in to develop these natural resources, and everyone from landowners to hoteliers to waiters are realizing the benefits. Developing oil and gas in the Eagle Ford Shale is not only great for the Texas economy, but the abundance of oil collected limits our dependence on foreign oil.

Recently, I toured a well near Carrizo Springs, about 2 hours south of San Antonio. The oil field staff explained the fracturing technology, described the processes used to extract oil from the shale formations and demonstrated how they monitor production using extremely sophisticated software.

As a member of the House Natural Resources Committee during the 82nd Legislative Session, I heard concerns from various individuals about how hydraulic fracturing will affect water quality and quantity in the region. Some contend that the chemicals used in the fracking process are contaminating ground water, worrying individuals and organizations statewide. In an effort to ensure drilling companies use appropriate methods to obtain oil and provide information to the public about these processes, the Legislature passed House Bill 3328, which requires that companies disclose the content of the fluid they use in the fracking process. We hope this bill will allay concerns and ensure that best practices are used throughout the fracking process in the Eagle Ford Shale. We will continue to work with stakeholders to meet any challenges that arise in developing this resource.

We look forward to the continued success of the Eagle Ford Shale play and the promise it presents for our state and our nation.



Touring a well in Carrizo Springs in the heart of the Eagle Ford Shale

District 122 Office Grand Opening

Due to an overwhelming response to our invitation, we are changing the format of the meeting to a meet and greet because of space limitations. TxDOT representatives will not be present at this meeting, but we will ask them to provide an update at our next town hall meeting, which will likely take place in October. Please feel free to stop in any time between 6:00-7:30 p.m. on August 2nd. Light hors d'oeuvres will be served. We look forward to seeing you next Tuesday!

Please feel free to contact me if I may ever be of assistance to you by phone at (210) 402-5402 or lyle.larson@house.state.tx.us.

Best,

A handwritten signature in black ink, appearing to read "Lyle Larson". The signature is stylized with loops and a long horizontal stroke at the end.