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**Back to School**

It has been a very busy two weeks since I last wrote you. Almost all of the schools are back in session, and it seems that our older college students are all back to their respective school year homes. I hope things are settling down for you after a great summer and you are looking forward to an exciting fall.

This edition of the newsletter will have lots of very important pieces of information including:

- A Sample of New Laws Effective September 1, 2011
- Lake Houston Water Level Update
- Energy Conservation Measures
- Water Conservation Measures
- District Office Contact Information
- Upcoming Event Information

I hope you will take the time to look over this newsletter. It is shown below, but also attached to this email. There is a lot of important information included and several website links you might want to keep handy.

If you would like to learn more about any of the items listed in this newsletter, please contact my staff at either the District Office, 281-360-9410, or the Capitol Office, 512-463-0520. And remember you can always contact me through the House website at [www.house.state.tx.us](http://www.house.state.tx.us).

Sincerely,

Dan Huberty  
State Representative- District 127

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## New Laws Effective September 1, 2011

Over the 170 days that the Legislature was in session this past Spring, the House and Senate passed a total of 1,119 bills. Governor Perry then vetoed 24 of those bills. We read through large amounts of legislation and analysis and heard from both sides of each subject before our decisions were made. I have chosen to highlight a few of the important issues for you, as they go into effect as law on Thursday, September 1, 2011. Please note, this is only a brief description of some of the bills that went into effect. You can read about the more than 700 bills effective on September 1, by [clicking on this link](#).

Here are a few highlights:

- **Budget-** September 1 marks the beginning of our fiscal year. Our budget is \$172.3 Billion for this biennium. This is \$15 billion less than the last biennium. We had to make tough decisions to keep Texas moving forward.
- **Eminent Domain-** S.B. 18 passed to provide additional protections for property owners. The bill limits eminent domain takings for "public use" only as required by my HB 1062, which requires fair compensation for loss of access and expenses, ends government land speculation, and provides a number of other protections. This legislation is a true victory for private property rights.
- **Sundown Speed Limits-** The state will no longer have separate speed limits for day and night driving. The black nighttime speed limit signs that required motorists to drive 5 mph slower at night will start coming down Thursday, but officials say it will take months to remove all of them.
- **Primary Homestead Exemptions-** Texas homeowners who apply for a homestead exemption on their primary residence must show identification, mainly a driver's license or ID card, and a copy of their vehicle registration receipt. The address on the ID and receipt must match the residence's address. Those without vehicles may submit a notarized affidavit certifying that they don't have a vehicle along with a current utility bill that bears the name and address that is on the homestead exemption application.
- **Guns in Parking Lots-** Most employers will no longer be able to prevent employees who legally own guns and ammo from storing them in locked private vehicles parked in company parking lots during business hours. There are a few exceptions, such as school and federal building parking lots. The law only allows guns and ammunition to be stored in parking lots, garages and other parking areas provided to employees, not work areas.
- **Driver's Ed Instructors-** Driver's education instructors will have to undergo background checks, and the Texas Education Agency may revoke licenses given to people who have been convicted of certain felonies, such as sex offenses.
- **Missing Adults-** Statewide Amber Alerts can now be used to call attention to missing adults with diagnosed intellectual developmental disabilities, in addition to alerting the public about abducted children.
- **Boating Safety Education-** Texas boaters born on or after Sept. 1, 1993, must complete a boater safety education course. Boaters must keep with them a valid ID and documents showing that they passed a boater education course. The new law also says those operating a motorboat with a motor above 15 horsepower must be at least 13 or supervised by someone older than 18 who can legally operate the boat and is on board.
- **Medicine given at Day Care-** This bill was passed in the memory of Nathan King, who died after day-care workers gave him medication that his parents had not approved. Under this bill, day-care workers need written parental permission to give medicine to a child or face prosecution.
- **Paddling in Schools-** Texas parents now have the right to opt-out of paddling as a means of punishment by our school teachers.

For information on any other laws that went into effect on September 1, please contact my office and my staff will assist you.

## Lake Houston Water Level Update

I want to update you on what we have been doing regarding Lake Houston. First of all, we have been working very closely with the City of Houston, Mayor Parker, Councilman Sullivan, Congressman Poe and Harris County on several local issues.

As I am sure you are aware, Lake Houston is at a dangerously low level. A final report has been issued by the City of Houston and Mayor Parker's office. [You can find a link to the report here.](#) As the report mentions, several large pieces have been removed from Lake Houston, including one car, several sets of tires, tree stumps and limbs. The clean-up will continue as items are discovered.

Unfortunately, the report is limited on what can be done to control the new vegetation that has begun to grow in many spots where the lake level has dramatically dropped. Two options were given to the City: mowing or using herbicide to kill the vegetation. Both options are expensive and therefore, not feasible for the City of Houston at this time. However, the vegetation study also mentioned that these species of plants are not detrimental to other plant species and do not pose any threats to the water quality of Lake Houston. Simply stated, once the water rises again, the plants will eradicate themselves.

Lastly, the report addresses several issues with the drainage pipes within the limits of the City of Houston that they plan to address. If you have any further questions about this report, do not hesitate to contact my office, and we will do our best to address your concerns. You can also report areas for clean-up by calling 3-1-1.

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## Energy Conservation Measures

Earlier this week, I posted a link to an article published by The Electric Reliability Council of Texas (ERCOT), regarding power usage in our state and how you can best assist us in conserving energy. As you may know, the Texas power grid is getting close to full capacity. If that happens, ERCOT and the Public Utilities Council (PUC), may have to require rolling blackouts, much like the ones we experienced in February during the freeze. I encourage you to take a look at the press release they issued by [clicking this link.](#) I also hope you will heed the warnings from ERCOT and the PUC and consider implementing some of these energy conservation techniques.

### Energy Conservation Tips

- Turn off all unnecessary lights, appliances and electronic equipment.
- When at home, close blinds and drapes that direct sun, set air conditioning thermostats to 78 degrees or higher, and use fans in occupied rooms to feel cooler.
- When away from home, set air conditioning thermostats to 85 degrees and turn all fans off before you leave. Block the sun by closing blinds or drapes on windows that will direct sun.
- Do not use your dishwasher, laundry equipment, hair dryers, coffee makers or other home appliances during the peak hours of the day, from 3:00 PM to 7:00 PM.
- Avoid opening refrigerators or freezers more than necessary.
- Use microwaves for cooking instead of an electric range or oven.
- Set your pool pump to run in the early morning or evening instead of the afternoon.

If you have any further questions about this or any other issue, please do not hesitate to contact my office.

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## Water Conservation Measures

As I have mentioned before, all City of Houston residents are under Stage Two Water Restrictions. [You can read the full report here](#). If you are a resident of the City of Houston, you are required to follow the watering instructions below:

- Repair all detectable leaks within 72 hours of discovery
- Limit outdoor irrigation to the hours between 12:01 AM and 10:00 AM , and between 8:00 PM and midnight, on NO more than two days per week according to the following schedule:
  - **Sundays and Thursdays for customers with even-numbered street addresses**
  - **Saturdays and Wednesdays for customers with odd-numbered street addresses**

Failure to follow requirements may result in fines. For questions, or to report a violation, please call 3-1-1.

If you are unsure if you live in the City of Houston limits or if you are subject to these restrictions, [click this link and enter your address](#).

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## District Office Contact Information

Our District Office is officially up and running. If you missed our grand opening in July, I hope you will take a chance to come by and get a tour. We are located in the King's Harbor Shopping Center, on the second floor of the parking garage structure in the executive suites, operated by Joseph Chris Partners. The address is 4501 Magnolia Cove, Suite 201A, Kingwood, TX 77345. You can reach us by phone at 281-360-9410, or you can simply stop by at any time. Our office is open daily, Monday through Friday, from 9 AM - 5 PM. We do close briefly for lunch and also follow the federal Holiday schedule. We will be closed on Monday, September 5, in observance of Labor Day.

Our Capitol office is still open and available to you if you need assistance or are just simply visiting our State's Capitol. Feel free to go by our office, located in the Extension, Level Two, Room 712 (E2.712). You can reach this office by mail at, P.O. BOX 2910, Austin, TX 78768-2910 or by phone at 512-463-0520. Both offices share one fax machine that works through email and can be reached at 512-463-1606.

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## Upcoming Events

Please note these upcoming events in our community:

### **Monday, September 5**

Labor Day - Our offices will be closed in observance

### **Wednesday, September 7**

11:00 AM - Kingwood Chamber "Founder's Day" Luncheon - [Find more information here](#).

### **Friday, September 9**

11:00 AM - Kroger of Kingwood "Celebrating our Heroes" Event - [Find more information here](#).

### **Saturday, September 10**

11:00 AM - Military Appreciation Day - Harley Davidson of Kingwood - [Find more information here](#).

11:00 AM - Ashley Payne Benefit - Humble Civic Center - [Find more information here](#).

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