

Thank you for your subscription to Rep. Dan Huberty's Session Newsletter. If you wish to unsubscribe, please use the SafeUnsubscribe option at the bottom of this email.



November 17, 2017

Thank you for subscribing to my newsletter. This edition of my Hurricane Harvey newsletter series contains many positive updates from across the state. In the newsletter that follows, you'll read about a Harvey Housing Update from the General Land Office, U.S. Department of Education Secretary Betsy DeVos's visit to Kingwood High school, Vice President Mike Pence's visit to Texas, and a recently released letter from Governor Greg Abbott to authorities in counties under the disaster declaration.

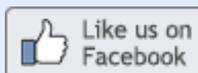
Additionally, this week, the House Committee on Public Education met to discuss displaced students and public school accountability in the wake of Hurricane Harvey. You will be able to learn more about the hearing as you continue reading.

I am pleased to report that the District Office is seeing progress. We should be up and running at our office in Kingwood soon. That being said, **the office remains closed**, but I will update you when we are officially back online.

I want to be sure to remind you that my office is here to help *you and your family*. If you have a matter with which you need our assistance, please call my Capitol office, and they can help you directly, or point you in the right direction.

Sincerely,

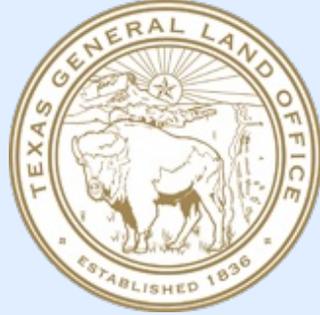
Dan Huberty



## Hurricane Harvey Recovery Resources

### The GLO Rolls Out New Housing Program in Dickinson

The state's land office on Friday announced a new housing repair program focused on longer-term recovery, providing assistance for permanent repairs in badly damaged homes.



Texas General Land Office Commissioner George P. Bush was in town for an event at the home of the first benefactor of the Direct Assistance for Limited Home Repair program: Sharlene Hearne of Dickinson, whose home on Dickinson Bayou was flooded by more than 4 feet of water during Hurricane Harvey.

The program, funded by the Federal Emergency Management Agency and administered by the land office, grants residents who lack flood insurance and qualify for the assistance between \$17,000 and \$60,000 for home repairs.

An assemblage of local elected officials attended, including Dickinson Mayor Julie Masters, County Judge Mark Henry, state Sen. Larry Taylor and County Commissioner Ken Clark.

"If it wasn't for this program I don't know what would happen, we've been brainstorming how to make it all happen" on a budget, Hearne said. "It means a lot to me. It's so surreal. I'm grateful for my government."

Hearne moved back to her childhood home on Pine Oak Street in Dickinson in January and had been renovating it with her fiancé, Tim Shefcik, before Harvey made landfall on the Texas Coast on Aug. 25 and dropped more than 40 inches of rain in Dickinson.

Hearne, a flight attendant, didn't have flood insurance on the home after being denied because the windows weren't to code, she said.

She fled her home in the early morning hours of Aug. 27 as rising waters from the bayou flooded her house, she said. Her son registered her for FEMA assistance the same day, she said. Hearne was selected as the first applicant because her disaster relief application met the requirements, land office spokeswoman Brittany Eck said.

#### **HOW IT WORKS**

Residents apply for the aid by registering for FEMA disaster assistance, agency spokeswoman Erin Gaddis said. To be eligible for the program, the person must lack flood insurance and have damage estimated at less than 50 percent of the market value of the house, she said.

A person may be eligible for the program if they have received other forms of FEMA aid, Gaddis said. The emergency management agency didn't know how much money was available total for homeowners because the total depends on how much disaster relief is approved by Congress, she said.

Harvey victims who have already registered for disaster assistance should not reapply for disaster aid, Gaddis said. The agency is continually reviewing applications for aid, she said.

The program pays for between \$17,000 and \$60,000 in home repairs, depending on need, Gaddis said. FEMA inspected the home before the aid was granted, Eck said.

"This is for limited, but potentially permanent fixes," Eck said.

#### **RESIDENTS STILL WAITING FOR AID**

The land office has so far announced five different housing programs for rapid disaster recovery, but residents and local elected officials have criticized how slowly the programs are rolling out, with many residents still waiting for housing aid.

On Friday, Bush said the land office was taking "due diligence" to ensure the contracting companies awarded work with the grant money are reputable and will not misuse tax dollars, which takes time, he said.

Bush pointed to the much-criticized \$300 million Whitefish Energy Holdings contract awarded for hurricane relief in Puerto Rico as an example of what the land office was trying to avoid. The government has since ended its contract with Whitefish Energy.

"It's an example of why we have to be careful to cross the Ts and dot the Is," Bush said.

"The land office has been following federal procurement requirements for its contracts with disaster relief money, including limits on contractors' profits," said Pete Phillips, senior deputy director of Community Development and Revitalization at the land office.

#### **CHANGES TO LAND OFFICE**

"The land office anticipates it will receive about \$1 billion in federal assistance for housing disaster relief for Harvey, which will be allocated over the next few years," Bush said. "The office was hiring 40 to 60 disaster relief professionals to administer and provide oversight for the housing programs."

## House Committee on Public Education Met to Discuss Hurricane Harvey and Accountability



Chairman Huberty listens to testimony from TEA Commissioner Mike Morath.

The House Committee on Public Education met on Tuesday to discuss Hurricane Harvey and its effects on students, teachers, and administrators.

The committee heard from different stakeholders across the state, including TEA Commissioner Mike Morath as well as educators and administrators from the affected areas.

During the hearing, Chairman Huberty requested that the Commissioner ask the federal government about delaying STAAR tests for affected students. STAAR test performance, tied heavily to the old system of public school accountability, could adversely affect those school

districts who had to miss several days of instruction due to Hurricane Harvey.

"F stands for flood, not a failing district," said Charlotte Baker, director of the TEA's education service center in Victoria, commenting that the current accountability system is unrepresentative of hardship these school districts currently face.

The Texas Tribune, an Austin-based news outlet, published a recap of the hearing. [To read the article in full, please be sure to follow this link.](#)

You can also watch the archived broadcast of the hearing, [here](#). (Please note, there are two recordings for the November 14 hearing due to some technical difficulties.)

## Secretary of Education Visits Kingwood High School



Secretary DeVos at Kingwood High School

Humble ISD administrators expect Kingwood High School to reopen by mid-March, allowing about 2,800 students displaced by Hurricane Harvey to return to their home campus.

District Superintendent Elizabeth Fagen said enough construction projects will be completed in the academic wings of Kingwood High School to send students back on March 19. Updated estimates to repair the building and replace materials now exceed \$70 million.

Kingwood students have shared space at Summer Creek High School since Hurricane Harvey inundated the campus with several feet of water. Kingwood is the largest Texas campus that remains shuttered due to storm damage.

Administrators opened Kingwood on Wednesday afternoon to U.S. Education Secretary Betsy DeVos, who made her second visit to Texas since the hurricane. DeVos toured Summer Creek and Kingwood high schools, meeting with students and district leaders. She was scheduled to speak with about 10 Houston-area

principals in the early evening.

[Read more and watch the broadcast from FOX 26 on the Houston Chronicle.](#)



Governor Greg Abbott and Vice President Mike Pence received a briefing at the Federal Emergency Management Agency (FEMA) Joint Field Office in Austin, Texas regarding ongoing Hurricane Harvey recovery efforts.

During the briefing, **Governor Abbott** and **Vice President Pence**, joined by FEMA Administrator **Brock Long**, Energy Secretary **Rick Perry**, **John Sharp** of the Governor's Commission to Rebuild Texas, and other state and local officials, discussed ways to continue to improve federal and state coordination of resources. The Governor thanked the Vice President for his commitment to the people of Texas following this historical disaster.

"The people of Texas have suffered greatly, but I am hopeful that the response of their federal and state leaders will continue to strengthen their resolve," said Governor Abbott. "I, along with the Vice President, want to assure all victims that they will not be forgotten and we will continue to work to help get their lives back on track."

## Governor Abbott Urges Local Officials to Hasten Recovery



In a recent letter, Governor Greg Abbott encouraged local emergency management directors to exercise their ability to suspend codes and rules at the local level as necessary to help speed up the recovery from Hurricane Harvey.

He began by thanking the officials for their tireless efforts on behalf of their fellow Texans both before and after the storm.

"I write now to recommend that you use the authority granted to you, the emergency management director, by Section 418.1015 of the Texas Government Code, to suspend codes and rules on a local scale as appropriate and necessary to hasten recovery efforts," Governor Abbott wrote. "While regulations for many state-licensed trades have already been streamlined statewide, there are many trades and practices that are regulated only at the local level."

Governor Abbott closed his correspondence with the following reminder: "My office and the Governor's Commission to Rebuild Texas stand ready to help you in this endeavor and will be happy to review any requests to suspend additional state laws or rules that impede your local recovery efforts."

[You can read the full letter here.](#)

## Constituent Resources

### District Office Closure

Please be advised that, due to the flooding in HD 127, the District Office of State Representative Dan Huberty will **be closed until further notice**. Anyone needing immediate assistance should contact the Capitol Office. You can find out how to contact them at the bottom of this newsletter.

## Need Assistance?

Our office is always ready to assist you. Call or email us and we will do our best to help. Many State Agencies also have hotlines or citizen assistance offices to assist you. That contact information is available at this link, in alphabetical order:

<http://www.lrl.texas.gov/genInfo/stateAgencies.cfm>

## House District 127 Live Updates

All of the relevant information our office has gathered in regard to response and recovery of Hurricane Harvey is posted immediately to our Facebook page. Be sure to "like" us so that you can have the most up-to-date information.



## Upcoming Events

### November 2017

See an event you're interested in? Click the links on each date to learn more about the event's details. Under each link, you can find R.S.V.P. information, exact times, locations, and much more.

This color box indicates an event related to Hurricane Harvey.	This color box indicates a general purpose event.
--	---

Sunday	Monday	Tuesday	Wednesday	Thursday	Friday	Saturday
			1 <a href="#">Early Voting</a>	2 <a href="#">Early Voting</a>	3 <a href="#">Early Voting ENDS TODAY!!</a>	4 <a href="#">Harvey Recovery Fair - Atascocita High School</a>
			<a href="#">HCs Human Services and Public Health Meeting Jointly to Discuss Harvey</a>	<a href="#">Biz Com Atascocita</a>		
5 <b>Daylight Savings Time Ends</b>	6	7 <b>ELECTION DAY!!</b>	8 <a href="#">Appropriations S/C on Disaster Impact and Recovery Meeting in Corpus Christi</a>	9 <a href="#">YEP: Professional Development Luncheon: How to Market Yourself</a>	10 <i>Capitol Office Closed</i>	11 <b>Happy Veterans Day!</b>
12	13	14 <a href="#">HC Public Education Meeting to Discuss Hurricane Harvey</a>	15 <a href="#">Select HC Economic Competitiveness Meeting</a>	16	17	18
19	20	21	22	23 <b>Happy Thanksgiving!</b>	24 <b>Black Friday</b>	25 <b>Small Business Saturday</b>

			Capitol Office Closed	Capitol Office Closed	Capitol Office Closed	
26	27 Cyber Monday Capitol Office Reopens  <a href="#">Last Day for TSA Extensions</a>	28	29	30 <a href="#">Last Day to Apply for Disaster Assistance (FEMA)</a>		

## Contact Information

### Staff Contact

### Capitol Office

### District Office

**Representative Dan Huberty**

[Email Dan](#)

**Casey Christman**

**Chief of Staff**

[Email Casey](#)

**Molly Spratt**

**Legislative Director**

[Email Molly](#)

**Physical Address:**

1100 Congress Avenue  
E2.408 Austin, TX 78701

**Mailing Address:**

P.O. Box 2910  
Austin, TX 78768

**Phone:**

(512) 463-0520

**Fax:**

(512) 463-1606

**Address:**

4501 Magnolia Cove  
Suite 201  
Kingwood, TX 77345

**Phone:**

(281) 360-9410

***NOTE: The District Office  
is closed until further  
notice. Please direct all  
calls to the Capitol Office.***

*This newsletter was not sent by State expense.  
Paid political advertising by Friends of Dan Huberty.*