



**October 2016**

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### **PUBLIC EDUCATION JOINT HEARING**

On September 29th, 2016 I attended a Public Education Committee hearing held jointly with the House Committee on Appropriations to consider interim charges related to school finance including, but not limited to, school facilities. The charge is listed below:

Evaluate the current state of school district facility needs and debt. Determine what constraints or limitations exist across the state, particularly in communities experiencing rapid growth, to fund facilities at the local level. Examine state laws, rules and best practice models for facility efficiency and long term taxpayer savings. Review the current facility funding programs, the Instructional Facilities Allotment (IFA) and the Existing Debt Allotment (EDA), to address school districts' facility needs and provide property tax relief.

### **COASTAL BARRIER SYSTEM JOINT HEARING**

On October 5th, 2016, the Joint Interim Committee to Study a Coastal Barrier System, which I am Co-Chairman of, met to discuss the desirability and feasibility of constructing a coastal barrier system. The Texas Gulf Coast is an important aspect of Texas' economy. Unfortunately, it's location makes it susceptible to damaging weather catastrophes such as hurricanes. There are many studies being conducted on coastal protection, and it is critical that we find a suitable coastal barrier system.

### **TEX-21**

On October 13th-14th, 2016, I will be attending and speaking at TEX-21's Quarterly Meeting at Lamar University in Beaumont, Texas. I want to thank TEX-21 for inviting me to attend their series of meetings throughout the state; it is a great honor to be apart of their efforts to improve Texas' transportation systems. Transportation is an important factor in economic development, and efficient transportation systems can provide more economic opportunities for everyone. This

event focuses on the expansion of the Panama Canal and Texas ports, and the effect it has on U.S. 287. The goal of the meeting is to have U.S. 287, one of the only highways to stretch from the Gulf of Mexico to Canada, designated as an Interstate Highway. I will be speaking on the economy in Jefferson County, and the possible growth that may occur if the Texas ports are expanded to accommodate the post-Panamax ships, and U.S. 287 is expanded to withstand the increased traffic if granted Interstate status.

**Topics to Include:**

Tour of Port of Beaumont

Tour of Port Arthur

Transportation Funding Panel

Third Coast, Panama Canal Trip, and Panama Canal Expansion Panel

Connectivity of US 287 between sea ports and inland ports

Designation as an interstate highway

Special Report on Center for Advances in Port Management

**TEXAS GENERAL LAND OFFICE ESSAY CONTEST**

The Texas General Land Office is accepting entries for their annual “Save Texas History” essay contest. All public, private, and home-schooled 4th and 7th grade students in Texas can write about something special in their community worth saving. When writing their essay, students should address the question, “What history in your community, or in Texas, is worth saving?” There will be one grand prize winner from each grade level, as well as ten finalists from each grade level. Entries must be received by October 31st, 2016.

**4th Grade**

200-300 Words

Typed or handwritten in essay format

Include original title

Bibliography as separate page required

**7th Grade**

500-800 Words

Typed only, in essay format

Include Original title

Bibliography as separate page required

Additional information and applications for the contest can be found at:

<http://www.glo.texas.gov/save-texas-history/pdf/STH-EssayContest2016.pdf>

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