

Giovanni's Journal

A publication of Texas State Representative Giovanni Capriglione

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Texas Economy Continues to Grow, State Budget Constraints on the Horizon

Originally written for, and printed in, the Texas Blaze News.

Last month, our Texas House Appropriations Committee met to discuss two interim charges: look at possible fiscal policy challenges or economic disruptions, including the long-term impact of price declines in oil and gas on the Texas economy, and to monitor the accumulation of available funds within the Economic Stabilization Fund, a.k.a. the Rainy Day Fund.

A few points stood out:

- Despite low oil and gas prices, the Texas economy is doing okay. The Texas economy is the most diversified it has ever been - oil and gas revenues are the third largest contributor to the state's Gross State Product, behind the manufacturing and financial industries, respectively. However, future growth may be impacted if current market conditions persist.
- Sales tax revenue grew 2.1 percent from March 2015 to March 2016, which is proof of the economy's current durability.
- Though 100,000 jobs were lost in the mining and industrial industries, 185,000 jobs were gained. Understandably, the most recent job losses were in the oil and gas industry. As job growth outpaces job decline, healthcare jobs, in particular, are expected to increase.

Despite Texas' economy remaining stable during some challenging circumstances, there are still several outstanding issues that may upset the budget in the next cycle, especially if oil and gas prices remain as low as they are. Additionally, a few pending lawsuits may impact policy making, and therefore the allocation of resources to cer-

tain programs.

One of these lawsuits pertains to the state's foster care system. Reforming the foster care system will require new policies and ways of thinking, and may require additional funding.

Another is the school finance lawsuit, for which a decision from the Texas Supreme Court will come later this year. The decision could have tremendous consequences for the way we fund schools, and could require a significant increase in state funds for schools.

"[These issues] come at a time when our state continues to grow rapidly, bringing more children into our schools, more cars on our roads, and an overall greater demand for state resources. At the same time, we do not want to abandon the commitment to low taxation and overall fiscal discipline that has put our state in such a sound budgetary position," said Speaker Joe Straus in a letter to the House Appropriations Committee on April 19. "Over the last two sessions, the House has led on decreasing the use of dedicated accounts to help balance the budget, eliminating hundreds of millions of dollars in fees and reducing the reliance on these accounts by nearly 40 percent."

While we're hoping Texas continues to do well, it doesn't mean our work as budget writers can become any less sharp. Our job as a committee is to keep a close eye on factors affecting the budget and prepare for these potential issues before next session.

As always, if our office can be of any assistance, please do not hesitate to call: 817-431-5339. Our office is located in Keller Town Hall on the second floor, and we would love to hear from you.

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Congrats to Lone Star Artist Itze Cuevas

This year marks the 4th anniversary of the Lone Star Artist Award. The award was created as a way to showcase the young talent in our district. I am honored that my office can be a part of this amazing festival each year and that we can help support all the philanthropic causes supported by the Southlake Women's Club.

This year's winner is Itze Cuevas of Keller, who is a senior at Westlake Academy, for her piece "Chepe" an oil painting inspired by her pet bird.

Itze will have her artwork displayed for a week in the Texas Capitol this summer. Lone Star Artist award winners receive a VIP behind the scenes tour of the Capitol for them and their family. Kids Matter will provide hotel accommodations and spending money for the winner as well. Congratulations, Itze!



Lone Star Artist Itze Cuevas with her winning painting, "Chepe."

Rep. Capriglione Named To Two Select Committees

House Speaker Joe Straus named Representative Capriglione to two select committees this interim: the House Select Committee on State Real Property Data Collection, Reporting & Assessment, and the Joint Interim Committee to Study the Issue of Advertising Public Notices.

The House Select Committee on State Real Property Data Collection, Reporting & Assessment follows the passage of House Bill 3750 during the 84th Regular Session. The purpose of the committee is to study the potential ways to ensure the state is able to identify, track, and maintain information on the location, condition, and replacement value of all real property owned by the state.

The Joint Interim Committee to Study the Issue of Advertising Public Notices will study issues relating to the posting and advertising of legally required notices to the general public.

Both committees will report their findings to the Legislature ahead of the 85th Regular Session, which begins in January.

May Events in District 98

- **May 3: 10th Annual Keller Rotary Charity Golf Tournament** at Sky Creek Ranch. Registration required at kellerrotary.golfreg.com. All proceeds will be distributed evenly to the Keller Rotary Foundation, Keller ISD Education Foundation, and Community Storehouse.
- **May 4: Keller's City Chat** 8 - 9 a.m. at Keller Town Hall. Join us to learn everything you need to know about starting and growing your business in Keller. At this City Chat, the Community Development Department will guide you through the process of planning, applying for business development, and receiving approval.
- **May 7: Old Town Keller Founders Day Celebration** 1 - 4 p.m. at the Wild Rose Heritage Center at 133 Bates Street in Keller.
- **May 7-8: Southlake's Spring Family Campout** 4 p.m. - 9 a.m. at Bob Jones Park at 3901 North White Chapel Boulevard. Cost is \$15 for campsite. Each additional camper is \$10. Children must pre-register with at least one adult. Campers must provide their own tent, sleeping bags, and camping gear. To register, please visit www.southlakeparksandrec.com.
- **May 12: Southlake's Meet the Mayor** 5:30 - 7 p.m. at the Tile Shop at 2921 East State Highway 114 in Southlake.
- **May 14: RISE Adaptive Sports Kicking Off the Summer Bash** 9 a.m. - 3 p.m. at Meadowmere Park in Grapevine. Sample the latest in adaptive equipment for the physically challenged: water skiing, fishing, hand cycling, basketball, and more. The event is free for qualified participants and their families. Complimentary food, beverages, and live music will be provided. For more information about RISE, visit riseadaptivesports.org.
- **May 14: MasterWorks Concert** featuring BluPrint 7:30 - 9 p.m. at the Rustin Pavilion in Southlake Town Square.
- **May 24: Keller's Heritage Quest** 2 - 3 p.m. at the Keller Public Library. A representative from Pro Quest will be at the library to demonstrate ProQuest, a free genealogical research site. Attendees must have a Keller Public Library card. Seating is limited, so registration is required. Please call 817-743-4840 or email library@cityofkeller.com.
- **May 27: Grapevine's Fourth Friday Films** 8 - 11 p.m. at Heritage Park in Grapevine. Bring your lawn chairs, blankets, family, and friends to enjoy a film under the stars! The movie begins at dusk.



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