

# State Representative Gary VanDeaver



HD 1

87th Legislature  
Bowie | Franklin | Lamar | Red River

## 87th Legislature Report - House District 1 Bowie, Franklin, Lamar & Red River counties

### November 2021

**Around the District. Texarkana College groundbreaking.** On November 9, Texarkana College (TC) broke ground for the construction of its new McCollough Industrial Technology Center.



Breaking ground for the new TC Center including Kaye Ellison (TC Board President), Rep. VanDeaver and Texarkana, AR mayor Allen Brown.

According to the news release by TC, the Center will house its Electrical Technology and HVAC programs, as well as a new state-of-the-art data center "to serve as an anchor for expansion of broadband access providing more reliable, high-speed



Rep. VanDeaver talking with Bowie County Judge Bobby Howell and Don Morriss, Texarkana, TX.

internet throughout our region. This new space will also allow for expansion of existing workforce programs and the addition of new technical training programs in the future, including plumbing."

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**Upcoming Town Hall meetings announced. Christmas Town Hall and Shoes & Socks Drive (Paris).** Everyone is welcome to attend our upcoming Christmas Town Hall and Shoes and Socks Drive on **Sunday, December 5th, 2021, from 2:00 - 3:30 pm** in the Workforce Training



Center Room 1202 at Paris Junior College located at 2505 Clarksville Street, Paris. We are collecting shoes and socks in children's youth sizes 1-12 to

benefit the Boys and Girls Club of the Red River Valley. The town hall will include light refreshments and small raffle prizes, a short presentation by Rep. VanDeaver and a time to ask questions. If you would like to donate but cannot make it to the event, feel free to drop off your donations at our District office in the Bowie County Courthouse at 710 James Bowie Drive, New Boston; 903-628-0361.

**New Year's Town Hall (Texarkana).** We will



also be hosting a town hall meeting in the New Year on **Tuesday, January 11th, 2022, from 5:00 - 6:30 pm** in the Patman Room at the

Texarkana College's Truman Arnold Student Center located at 2500 North Robison Road in Texarkana. The event will also feature light refreshments, a short presentation and time for questions.

**Questions?** If you have any questions about either of these town halls or the shoes and socks drive, please contact our Legislative Director, Grace Kelly, at (512) 463-0692.



**House District 1 Christmas Photos.**

We would love to fill our social media with Christmas experiences

from House District 1, so we're looking for photos from our residents that showcase the unique people, places, landscapes, decorations, foods and traditions of our district. Please message us or send us an email with your photo(s) along with your full name, the names of everyone in the photo (if anyone), a description of the photo, the date it was taken and the location within the district. If you send a Christmas recipe or craft, be sure to include instructions, and if you're sharing a memory, please be as detailed as possible. We will be sharing these on our social media to spread Christmas joy!

**Construction assistance for area universities.**

In the last special session that adjourned on October 19, SB 52 (87, 3rd Called) passed that



authorized the issuance of bonds to fund construction projects for the state's higher

education institutions not including community and public junior colleges that finance their construction projects with property taxes approved by local voters in bond elections. I am pleased that approximately \$45 million of bonding authority was authorized for both Texas A&M - Texarkana and Texas A&M - Commerce. I worked closely with the chairman of the House Committee on Appropriations, the Honorable Greg Bonnen, to include the funding authorization for construction projects at both of these universities that serve students and communities in House District 1. Texas A&M - Texarkana was authorized to use its funding for



the construction of a new business, engineering and technology building while A&M - Commerce can use its bonds for an

Agriculture Multipurpose Education and Training Center. In 2015 during my first session, I helped A&M - Texarkana receive \$32 million in bonding authority for the construction of its academic and student services building when the legislature passed HB 100 (84, R). As before, I look forward to monitoring the construction of these new facilities to see how they will expand educational and economic opportunities for our area.

**House District 1 Ornament.** This year we had our very own in-house constituent and newly promoted Legislative Aide, Miller Hornsby

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*Texarkana resident, UT-Austin student and the legislative aide for Rep. VanDeaver, Miller Hornsby, displays his finished Christmas ornament for this year's House Christmas tree.*

from Texarkana, decorate the annual HD 1 Christmas ornament for the tree that stands in the House Chamber over the

holidays. Miller has been with the office since May. His design

included the skies and pine trees of Northeast Texas, the Paris Eiffel Tower, an old steam locomotive and some black steers. We are glad this year's ornament is the work of a young, hard-working HD 1 resident.

***Around the Capitol. Forensic audit of 2020 elections approved & funded.*** On November 19, the Legislative Budget Board (LBB), that includes the governor, lieutenant governor and speaker of the House of Representatives, approved a \$4 million funding request from the legislature to establish a new, permanent



division within the Secretary of State's office to be known as the Elections Audit Division (EDA). The EDA will conduct the largest forensic audit in

the country of the results of the 2020 elections. Officials said the results of this forensic audit will restore Texans faith in their electoral system in future elections.

***Interim charges.*** Regular legislative sessions are short (140 days in odd-numbered years) and the work is very intensive. There always seems to be more work to be done than the

time available so the period between regular sessions, known as "the interim," is often used to study issues more in-depth to see what recommendations should be considered in future sessions. The 87th session was no different than its predecessors in directing that members take a deep dive into issues that have not been thoroughly examined and to explore solutions to address ongoing concerns.

The Texas Legislative Council just released its biennial report on the interim studies created during the regular and special sessions legislative sessions in 2021. Find the report at: [https://tlc.texas.gov/docs/sessions/InterimStudies\\_87R.pdf](https://tlc.texas.gov/docs/sessions/InterimStudies_87R.pdf). The Council's report says that "it covers studies to be conducted by state agencies, joint legislative committees, and other state governmental entities but not studies by standing or special legislative committees conducted solely as a result of charges issued by the lieutenant governor and speaker of the house." There were 91 bills enacted by the legislature this year that called for further study of key issues and recommendations to be submitted to the subsequent session in 2023. The state's general appropriations bill (SB 1) for 2022-23, also included 49 topics calling for further work by either joint legislative committees or state agencies.

***VanDeaver appointed to the Texas Commission on Community College Finance.***

An example of the type of interim work mentioned above includes a study of funding for the state's community colleges as required in SB 1230 to make recommendations to the next legislature. House Speaker Dade Phelan appointed Rep. VanDeaver as one of his three appointments to the new commission that held

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its first meeting on November 15. Regarding his appointment, VanDeaver said:

"As someone who attended community college and has been a lifelong supporter of their efforts, as well as a vocal advocate throughout my time in office, I feel uniquely prepared for this appointment. I know the task before us is immense, for it impacts the lives of millions of Texans across our state, but I am honored to be a part of the process and can't wait to get to work!"



L-R: Rep. VanDeaver, Senator Creighton, Commissioner Keller & Chair Woody Hunt.

During its first meeting, the Commission heard presentations from experts with the comptroller's office, Texas Workforce

Commission, Higher Education Coordinating Board, State Demographer's office, Legislative Budget Board and Texas A&M University's Bush School of Governance and Public Service. The next commission meeting is December 13, in Austin, and its findings and recommendations are due no later than December 1, 2022.

**Happy Thanksgiving!!** As we prepare to celebrate Thanksgiving, I want to express my heartfelt thanks for my family, friends and



constituents who I work hard to serve every day. I am so blessed to live and work in our part of Texas where we care about and help one another to be the best

that we can possibly be. I wish you and your family a blessed and safe Thanksgiving.

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**Office schedules.** The legislature was in session about 10 months this year. My staff and I had many long days and nights. The record for the longest legislative day for us was an almost 20-hour public hearing at one of the House Public Education Committee meetings that began at 10 a.m. on August 24 and adjourned about 6 a.m., on August 25. If interested, here is the video:

[https://tlchouse.granicus.com/MediaPlayer.php?view\\_id=46&clip\\_id=22335](https://tlchouse.granicus.com/MediaPlayer.php?view_id=46&clip_id=22335). In recognition of my staff's extra hard work this year, the District and Capitol offices will be closed Wednesday - Friday (11/24-26) for Thanksgiving. These offices will also be closed from December 23 through January 2, and reopening at 8 a.m., on January 3, 2022.

**Need something to do?** Bored after Thanksgiving's feasting? Do you need someplace new and exciting to go? Check out **Christmas in the Parks** recommendations from the Texas Historical Commission for fun and new adventures either close by (Paris, Cooper Lake or Daingerfield) or across Texas in places like Big Spring or the Rio Grande Valley: [https://tpwd.texas.gov/publications/pwdpubs/media/pwd\\_if\\_k0700\\_0602b.pdf?utm\\_medium=email&utm\\_source=govdelivery](https://tpwd.texas.gov/publications/pwdpubs/media/pwd_if_k0700_0602b.pdf?utm_medium=email&utm_source=govdelivery).

**Social Media.** Please follow me on both my Facebook and Twitter accounts!

**My office is here to help.** I thank each of you for letting me serve you as your state representative. Please contact the District office (903-628-0361) or Capitol office (512 463-0692) if there is anything you think we can do to help you.