



State Representative **GARY VANDEAVER**

March 2022 E-Newsletter



HD 1

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

Around the District. Meeting with Lamar County officials about the auto-theft prevention program. On March 1st, we met with the Lamar County Tax Assessor-Collector's office at our Paris office in the Workforce Training Building at Paris Junior College to discuss the funding mechanism for the auto-theft prevention program, and how it has affected the Northeast Texas area.



District Office in Paris, Haskell Maroney, Lamar County Tax Assessor-Collector and Rep. VanDeaver, March 1st, 2022.

Currently, the personnel available to provide necessary preventative auto theft inspections are so limited that residents in Bowie County must make long drives to get their inspections. We discussed several policy options for resolving this issue, including advocating for future appropriations to the area and introducing newly trained inspectors associated

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with law enforcement departments. This continues to be an ongoing discussion between stakeholders in the region.

Liberty-Eylau ISD Community Breakfast. On March 2nd, we attended the Liberty-Eylau ISD's Community Breakfast at Liberty-Eylau Elementary School. The event brought together community leaders and public education advocates for a morning celebration of our students, teachers, administrators, and the valuable local supporters who make our public schools a daily priority. Students from multiple programs were responsible for decorating the cafeteria, providing host services, cooking the food, and singing for entertainment.



Liberty-Eylau ISD Community Breakfast, Middle School Caf , March 2nd, 2022.

Congratulations Maud Public Library! The Texas State Library and Archives Commission, through the Institute of Museum and Library

Services, has awarded a competitive American Rescue Plan Act (ARPA) Grant to the Maud Public Library! They have been awarded \$20,000 through the Texas Supports Libraries 2022 Grant Program for Digital Literacy Programming. A total of 40 grants were awarded throughout the state of Texas, and we are so proud of Maud for their success!



Photo of Maud Public Library, Maud, TX, 2021, Credit to the Friends of the Maud Public Library.

Around the Capitol.



Hubbard ISD Archery Team; Ms. Traci Drake, Superintendent, Hubbard ISD, Rep. Gary VanDeaver, Texas Capitol South Steps, March 24, 2022.

Hubbard ISD Archery Team Visits the Capitol in Austin. On March 24th, we had the pleasure of welcoming a team of fourth through eighth grade students from Hubbard ISD to the Capitol

for a tour following their successful performance at an archery competition in Belton, TX. For almost all students present, this was their very first time visiting their state's Capitol, and they were full of questions for their tour guide. If you ever plan a visit to the Capitol as an individual, family, group, or event, please reach out to my office so we can schedule a tour for you and ensure the House photographer captures the memory.



Ending the Streak. In 2021, 4,480 people were killed on Texas roads, reflecting a deadly nationwide trend of increased road fatalities. Texas fatalities have increase 15 percent between 2020 and 2021. "Driver behavior is one of the causes, but also one of the most important solutions," Transportation Commissioner Laura Ryan said. "For instance, in 2021, a total of 1,522 people were killed because of speed, and a total of 1,219 people were killed because they were not wearing a seat belt. These were decisions made by people that could have potentially saved 2,741 lives." #EndTheStreakTX is a statewide effort to encourage drivers to make better decisions behind the wheel - wear a seat belt, don't speed, don't text, don't road rage (even if you didn't start it), and do not drive under the influence. The last day Texas had with zero road fatalities was November 7, 2000.

#EndTheStreakTX asks all Texans to make a conscious commitment to driving safer. [Link: <https://www.txdot.gov/inside-txdot/media-center/psas/end-streak.html>].

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TDHCA launches Texas Homeowners Assistance Fund. The Texas Department of Housing and Community Affairs has announced that it is administering around \$840 million in American Rescue Plan Act of 2021 (ARPA) funds to Texans through the Texas Homeowners Assistance Fund. This fund helps qualified homeowners to pay past due mortgages and related expenses due to financial hardships caused by COVID-19, including paying property taxes, insurance, and delinquent HOA fees. Homeowners in need of assistance should visit www.texashomeownerassistance.com for information on eligibility and to submit their application, or for additional assistance homeowners can call 1-833-651-3874.

Texas Rent Relief Program Update. Last fall, TDHCA announced that all funding for the state rent relief program had been used up, and the TRR was closed. This week the U.S. Department of Treasury has released an additional \$47.8 million. TDHCA will continue to process current applications until all funds are allocated, with eviction applications prioritized. Unfortunately, even with the additional funding not everyone who has a TRR application on file will receive assistance. They will not be accepting new applications at this time.



SWEPCO Rate Changes. SWEPCO recently completed a year-long rate process at the Public Utility Commission (PUC). The PUC

approved the new rates retroactive to March 2021, so for approximately the next six months customers will be billed a surcharge to retroactively provide SWEPCO with its newly approved higher rate as if that rate was in place March 2021. After the "catch-up" period, rates will decrease. SWEPCO's press release about the rate change was reported in the *Texarkana Gazette* when it was filed in October 2020. The final increase is about half of what it was forecasted to be. See SWEPCO.com for additional information.



Early Childhood Texas with Texas Workforce Commission (TWC). TWC is proud to unveil Early Childhood Texas as the new one-stop shop for Texas parents! Access free or low-cost services for: child health & development; child care & education; parenting tips and activities. Learn more at:

<https://www.twc.texas.gov/news/twc-partners-multiple-state-agencies-launch-website-streamline-early-childhood-services-texas-parents>



Comptroller's Listening Tour on Broadband. Over the next two months, Texas Comptroller Glenn Hegar will continue a listening tour to hear from Texans about internet access and to collect valuable input that will be used to develop the state's broadband plan as required by House Bill 5 (87, R) adopted in 2021. The Northeast Texas listening stop will be on **April**

6th, 2022, at 2:00pm at The University of Texas at Tyler, Soules College of Business Building, Room 180, 3501 Liberty Ln. Tyler, TX 75701. If you can't attend, you can still complete their online survey. [Survey Link: <https://www.surveymonkey.com/r/Texas-BDO-2022>] to provide your input, or even submit testimony/comments to them at broadband@cpa.texas.gov



2022 Heroes for Children Award. The State Board of Education (SBOE) recognizes 15 outstanding Texans every year for its Heroes for Children Award. The person must be a Texas resident who gives their time, services, or support to public schools and students. Recipients will be recognized at the September SBOE meeting. Have questions? Email heroes@tea.texas.gov or call (512) 463-9007.



REMINDER: April 15 is Deadline for Filing Property Tax Renditions. The Comptroller's Office reminds business owners that **April 15th** is the deadline to file property tax renditions with their county appraisal districts (CADs). A rendition is a list of the taxable inventory, furniture and fixtures, machinery, equipment and other property owned or managed as of Jan. 1 each year. The CAD may use the information to set property values. A rendition allows property owners to record their opinion of their property's value and ensures that the CAD notifies property owners before changing

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a recorded value. Owners with property damaged by storm, flood or fire last year may file a special decreased value report indicating the property's condition on Jan. 1, 2022. Rendition forms and decreased value report forms are available from CAD offices. For assistance, contact the Property Tax Assistance Division at 800-252-9121 (press 2) or visit the division's website.



Safe Driving Scholarship. The North East Texas Regional Mobility Authority (NET RMA) is an independent government agency created to accelerate the development of area transportation projects. For the second year, it is providing the Linda Thomas Safe Driving Scholarship to award 10 eligible students \$1,000 each for college expenses, totaling \$10,000. Eligible students must: (1) be a graduating senior already accepted to a 2- or 4-year college/university or an accredited trade school and enrolled full-time this fall; (2) reside within NET RMA's 14 counties, including Bowie and Cass. All applicants must complete the online application on netrma.org/scholarship and include the required uploads. The deadline to apply is Sunday, **May 1, 2022** at 3:00 pm CT. Winners will be announced **May 9, 2022**.



The May Uniform Election is May 7th. The Deadline to Register to Vote is April 7th. There is just one week remaining for Texans to register to vote before the Uniform Election, which means its Election Day is right around the

corner. Below are the critical dates ahead of the election.

- **Thursday, April 7** - Last Day to Register to Vote
- **Monday, April 25** - Early Voting Begins
- **Tuesday, May 3** - Early Voting Ends
- **Saturday, May 7** - Election Day

While there are many local races and initiatives to vote on, there are two propositions on the ballot. Both of these important constitutional amendments were adopted by the Texas Legislature last session, but it is now time for voters to approve or reject these propositions. Proposition 1 allows the school property taxes of disabled individuals and the elderly to be frozen and lowered as the state's share of public education funding increases. Proposition 2 increases the residence homestead exemption for school property taxes from \$25,000 to \$40,000. Visit www.votetexas.gov to learn more about how you can register or update your registration. You can also check on the status of your voter registration on the Secretary of State's website at <https://teamrv-mvp.sos.texas.gov/MVP/mvp.do>.



March is Texas History Month! In 2003, the 78th Texas Legislature unanimously amended the Texas Government Code to read Section 662.102: "**TEXAS HISTORY MONTH.** (a) March is Texas History Month in honor of those

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Texans who helped shape the history of the State of Texas and in recognition of events throughout Texas' history." Some notable events include the birth of Sam Houston on March 2nd, 1793, and the signing of the Texas Declaration of Independence at the Convention of 1836 at Washington-On-The-Brazos on March 2nd, 1836. On March 6th, 1836, the Alamo fell to the Mexican army under Santa Anna, and Texas lost Colonel William B. Travis and its Alamo defenders. Also on March 2nd, but in 1861, Texas seceded from the United States against the wishes of Governor Sam Houston, and joined the Confederate States of America. On March 30, 1870, the United States Congress readmitted Texas into the Union following the Civil War. We are so proud to be from a state with such a rich and vibrant history, and will continue to work to ensure all future generations know and appreciate the sacrifices our American and Texas forefathers made for our freedoms.



Contact Us!

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 either the District office at (903) 628-0361 or the Capitol office at (512) 463-0692 if there is anything you think we can do to help you.