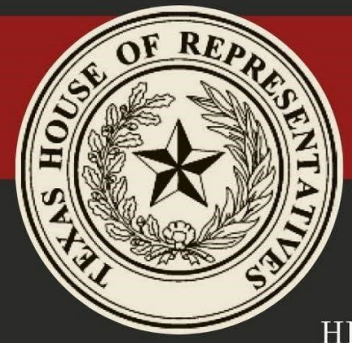




# State Representative Gary VanDeaver



87th Legislature  
Bowie | Franklin | Lamar | Red River

HD 1

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

**August 2022**

### ***Around the District. Congratulations to NETT!***



The Texas Department of Transportation (TxDOT) recently announced it was awarding the Northeast Texas

Trail (NETT) approximately \$7.5 million to finalize the eastern portion of the trail through Northeast Texas. Since 2012, the Northeast Texas Trail Coalition has advocated turning this previously unused land into a comprehensive system of parks, paths and protected natural areas; under the group's vision, the NETT will be one of the longest pedestrian, bicycle and equestrian trails in Texas, and it will link population centers, public facilities and neighborhoods across the region that stretches from Farmersville to New Boston. In the last two regular sessions, I filed HCR 64 (86th) and HCR 3 (87R) relating to funding, expanding and studying the NETT. Though these resolutions were not adopted by the legislature, I want to acknowledge the hard work and dedication of the supporters of the NETT.

***Schools are back in session. DPS tips for safe driving.*** Now that students are back in school, it's time to brush up on our safe driving skills to keep everyone safe and protected from avoidable accidents. The Texas Department of

Public Safety (DPS) recently published these safe driving tip reminders:



- Give students extra room and don't assume they are paying attention to traffic. Students are frequently distracted by mobile devices or listening on electronic devices and may not be paying attention to their surroundings.
- Don't block a crosswalk when stopped at a red light or stop sign.
- Follow the directions of school crossing guards.
- Watch for children on bicycles traveling to and from schools.
- Reduce your speed when you spot a school bus and know children may unexpectedly step into the road without checking for oncoming traffic.

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- Be careful around railroad crossings; school buses are required to stop.
- Know laws regarding school buses. According to Texas law, if a bus has alternating flashing red signals visible from the front or rear, drivers **MUST** stop before reaching the bus. Drivers can **only** proceed if the flashing lights are no longer activated, the driver signals you to proceed, or the bus has resumed driving. Approaching drivers do **NOT** have to stop for a school bus that is operating a visual signal if the road is separated by a physical barrier or an intervening space. If a highway is **only** divided by a left-turn lane, it is not considered divided and drivers **must** stop for school buses.
- Drivers who illegally pass a school bus face fines up to \$1,250 for the first offense. For people convicted of the offense more than once, the law allows for the person's driver license to be suspended for up to six months. A ticket for this offense **cannot** be dismissed through defensive driving classes. Criminal charges are possible if a driver causes someone serious bodily injury.
- Always obey speed limits and traffic laws in school zones.
- Remember, texting while driving is illegal in Texas.

***T.L.L. Temple Foundation donates \$2.2 million to improve education outcomes.*** Earlier this month, the T.L.L. Temple Foundation (the Foundation) announced its donation of \$2.2 million over the next five years to improve postsecondary and employment outcomes for students in rural East Texas. This generous donation was made to the Texas Success Center, a division of the Texas Association of

Community Colleges (TACC), to, according to its press release, "support workforce ecosystem partners, including East Texas community colleges, local workforce boards, economic development corporations, multiple critical employers, 4-year transfer universities, and independent school districts."

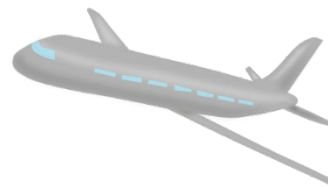
For the last year, I have served on the Texas Commission on Community College Finance that is doing a deep dive into the structure, funding and purposes of community colleges that are so critical to the economic health and well-being of Texans and the state's continued economic successes. Philanthropic gifts such as this one from the Foundation can make such a difference in the lives of students to be able to earn a credential of value from local educational institutions that jump start their careers and let them go on to successful, rewarding lives for themselves and their families. I want to thank the Foundation for making this investment in the ongoing and future successes in East Texas.

***Local airports to receive RAMP grants.*** On August 30, the Texas Transportation Commission awarded its annual Routine Airport Maintenance Program (RAMP) funding to Texas

airports. RAMP provides local government grants up to \$50,000 in match funding for maintenance to airside and

landside needs, with a local government match of 50 percent of actual costs plus any excess of \$100,000 total costs. The following HD 1 airports were awarded these grants:

- Hall - Miller Municipal - Atlanta



- Greater Morris County - Daingerfield
- Webb Field - Texarkana
- J.D. Trissell Field - Clarksville
- Franklin County - Mount Vernon
- Cox Field - Paris

The Commission also approved funding for its Aviation Capital Improvement Program (CIP), and three of the above locations (Atlanta, Clarksville and Paris) will receive funding in its 2023-25 plan. The CIP provides a plan for general aviation development across Texas including potential projects based on anticipated federal, state, and local match funding. These funds will allow local airports to anticipate needs, plan for scheduled projects' implementation and accommodate changes in project scope, cost and schedule. These aviation dollars can help our region become even more attractive to businesses looking to relocate to Texas and can help leverage investments in our local economy.

***Around the Capitol. Governor's announcement about iWatch Texas.*** Earlier this month, Texas Governor Greg Abbott released information about *iWatchTexas*, a tool to help keep our kids and schools safe. *iWatchTexas* School Safety is



an invaluable resource for reporting (and ensuring law enforcement in partnership

with school systems quickly and effectively responds to) suspicious activity in schools and communities. *iWatchTexas* is the entry point for reports to enter the Texas Suspicious Activity Reporting Network (TxSARNet), a single, statewide reporting system that ensures tips from different parts of the community are integrated in order to link critical data.

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*iWatchTexas* includes functionality that permits district police and other campus security personnel to directly access submitted reports related to their campus/district.

Tips can be reported anonymously via the [iWatch School Safety website](#), the free [iOS](#) and [Android](#) mobile apps or by calling 844-643-2251. All reports are confidential. *iWatchTexas* is offering bi-weekly virtual overview briefings that will last approximately 30 to 45 minutes to help school districts answer questions about this service. School districts are encouraged to register for an [iWatchTexas School Safety Overview Briefing](#). Use the [iWatchTexas](#) School Safety website for more information.

***Texas x Texas.*** The state of Texas recently launched a new website portal to access and interact with state agencies. Whether you need to register your vehicle or renew your driver's license, next time do this online at <https://www.texas.gov/texas-by-texas/>. It is user-friendly and a quick way to take care of issues where you need to interact with your state government. It's government just the way you want it - powerful, personalized and in your pocket. Create your account now at [txt.texas.gov](https://txt.texas.gov).

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