



State Representative Gary VanDeaver

May 2023 E-Newsletter



88th Legislature Report - House District 1 Bowie | Cass | Lamar | Morris | Red River

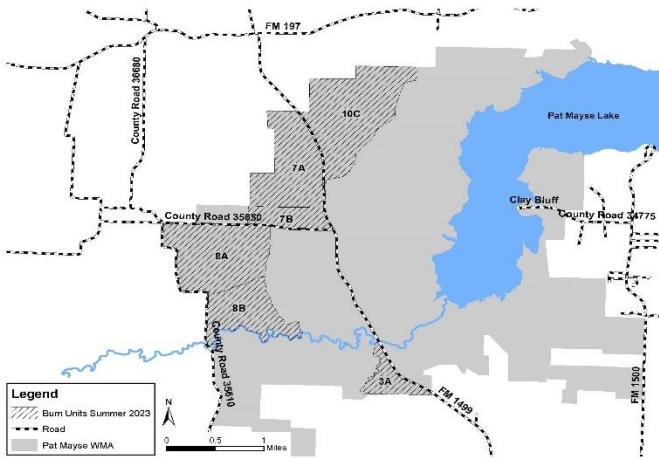
District Update



The United States National Cemetery. Photo from the United States Census Bureau.

Memorial Day. Originally called, “Decoration Day.” In 1869, the head of an organization of Union veterans, Major General John A. Logan, established Decoration Day as a way for the nation to honor the graves of those who died in the Civil War with flowers, according to the U.S. Department of Veterans Affairs.

In 1971, Congress declared Memorial Day a national holiday, placing it as the last Monday in May. I want to thank all the veterans who have served in our military and recognize their bravery in protecting our freedoms and independence.



Map provided by the Texas Parks & Wildlife Department

In Lamar County prescribed burns are coming soon. The Texas Parks and Wildlife Department (TPWD) has notified my office that prescribed burns will occur in July and September in Pat Mayse Wildlife Management Area (WMA). Burn opportunities depend on weather, vegetation conditions, current and expected fire danger and many other considerations, so the timing may change.

Prescribed burns are a management tool to restore forest and prairie habitats that were periodically burned by natural fires. Prescribed burns also reduce the potential damage a

wildfire could cause by reducing available fuels such as dead trees, leaf litter and other flammable vegetation on the landscape. Prescribed fires in state parks are conducted by TPWD personnel who have extensive fire training and meet national wildland firefighting and incident management standards. The WMA staff will also work with local fire and emergency management officials to plan and conduct the prescribed fire.

"The Texas House of Representatives is an Equal Opportunity Employer and does not discriminate on the basis of race, color, national origin, sex, religion, age or disability in employment or the provision of services. This newsletter is available in alternate forms upon request. Please call 1-800-241-1163."

If you want to receive notifications before the burn, text 81010 with this message: @pmburn. Texas has a history of naturally occurring wildfires, making prescribed burns very important to maintaining habitat in WMAs. Private landowners should consider implementing wildfire mitigation efforts on their lands to preserve property and way of life before a wildfire event starts. Additional information can be found at: [Wildland Fire Management](#)

TxDOT to resurface Northeast Texas highways. TxDOT recently announced that about 160 miles of highways in the area will soon receive new surfaces. Contractor Missouri Petroleum Products Company of Bullard, Texas, was awarded the contract to seal coat highways in all nine counties within the Atlanta District at a cost of \$10.8 million. The Atlanta District includes Bowie, Camp, Cass, Harrison, Marion, Morris, Panola, Upshur and Titus counties. See the following list of designated highways to be resurfaced that is expected to take about six weeks, weather permitting:

- Bowie County, FM 2149, from 2.3 MI W. of SH 8 to SH 8. 2.3 miles
- Bowie County, FM 3287, from 1.33 MI W. of FM 989 to FM 989. 1.3 miles
- Bowie County, SH 98, from US 82 to FM 1840. 2.5 miles
- Bowie County, FM 2878, from FM 559 to IH 30 Frontage Road. 2.4 miles
- Cass County, SH 77 from FM 250 to 0.3 miles W. of FM 994. 3.0 miles
- Cass County, SH 43 from RxR overpass to Marion County line. 9.9 miles
- Cass County, FM 249 from FM 249W to Arkansas state line. 2.4 miles
- Morris County, FM 144 from US 67 to US 259N. 2.9 miles
- Morris County, SH 77 from US 259 to Cass County line. 5.9 miles
- Titus County, US 67 from 0.1 MI E. of FM 1734 to 0.1 MI W. of US 271. 6.2 miles
- Titus County, US 67 from Morris County line to BU 271. 9.3 miles
- Titus County, FM 899 from 0.05 MI E. of Blackland RxR to SH 49. 2.7 miles
- Titus County, FM 4000 from US 271 to FM 1735. 5.0 miles
- Titus County, FM 1896 from US 271 to Franklin County line. 2.2 miles



Rep. VanDeaver with students and faculty from Avery ISD. Photo taken by House Photography.

Students from Avery, Texas, visit the Capitol. I had the privilege to host students from Avery Independent School District at my Capitol office while they were in Austin visiting this month. It was great answering their questions and getting to know their aspirations.

2023-2024 Texas Armed Services Scholarship Program Nomination Applications are now open. Due July 15, 2023! In 2009, the 81st Texas Legislature created the Texas Armed Services Scholarship Program (TASSP) to encourage students to participate in Reserve Officers' Training Corps (ROTC),

programs at Texas institutions of higher education. Every year, each member of the House of Representatives may appoint one student to receive a TASSP. Students must meet specific requirements to be eligible for nomination and to receive a scholarship. Our office is accepting applications through July 15th, 2023. The students must meet two of these four academic criteria:

"The Texas House of Representatives is an Equal Opportunity Employer and does not discriminate on the basis of race, color, national origin, sex, religion, age or disability in employment or the provision of services. This newsletter is available in alternate forms upon request. Please call 1-800-241-1163."

- Has graduated or is on track to graduate high school with the Distinguished Achievement Program.
 - High school GPA of 3.0 or higher.
 - College readiness score on SAT of 1070 or ACT of 23.
 - Ranked in the top one-third of the senior class.
 - Enroll in an eligible Texas institution and an eligible ROTC program
 - Agree to complete four years of ROTC training
 - Graduate no later than six years after enrollment date, and enter into a four-year commitment with the Guard Service or contract to serve as a commissioned officer in any branch of the armed services
 - Meet the satisfactory academic requirements set by the institution
 - Agree to repay the scholarship if the requirements are not met.
- Additional eligibility requirements:
- Be registered with the Selective Service or be exempt.
 - Be appointed by a state legislator or by the governor or lieutenant governor.

In order to apply, please send an email to district1.vandeaver@house.texas.gov with the following materials and information by July 15, 2023:

- Contact information, including full name, address, date of birth, email and phone number;
- Resume;
- Cover letter;
- High school and/or college transcript(s);
- Three references with contact information; and
- Letter of recommendation.

If you would like more information, please refer to the information at this link: [Texas Armed Services Scholarship Program](#).



*The Lennox Home, Clarksville, Texas.
Photo: The Lennox Foundation.*

Historic preservation in Clarksville. In the 2024-25 budget there are two miscellaneous provisions associated with the Texas Historical Commission (THC) on page IX-112 in Sec. 17.21, subsections (c) and (d) for the Lennox Home and DeMorse Home in Clarksville. These two subsections provide a \$1 million grant for each home for preservation efforts.

State appropriations bill and Northeast Texas. The final version of the state budget for the 2024-25 biennium has some items of interest for Northeast Texas. One of these items includes a "rider" (a directive to a state agency) for the Texas Water Development Board (TWDB). The rider directs the executive administrator of the agency to conduct a feasibility study about the construction of the Marvin Nichols Reservoir. Rider #28 (Reservoir Project Feasibility Review) on page VI-69 states:

“The TWDB shall evaluate the feasibility of the proposed Marvin Nichols Reservoir project to be located on the Sulphur River and upstream of the confluence of the White Oak Creek in Franklin, Titus, and Red River Counties. The review shall



*The DeMorse Home, Clarksville,
Texas. Photo: Texas Time Travel.*

"The Texas House of Representatives is an Equal Opportunity Employer and does not discriminate on the basis of race, color, national origin, sex, religion, age or disability in employment or the provision of services. This newsletter is available in alternate forms upon request. Please call 1-800-241-1163."

analyze the implementation timeline, associated costs, land acquisition considerations, and the economic impact of the proposed project. A report regarding the findings of the review shall be prepared and submitted by TWDB to the Legislative Budget Board and Governor no later than January 5, 2025.”

State Update



View of new Texas Capitol Mall; photo by Texas Facilities

Update: Texas Capitol Complex - Phase II begins.

Long-time recipients of my monthly e-newsletters will recall reading about the plans to move state agencies from leased space across Austin to state-owned office buildings in a more central location. The three-phase Master Plan of the Capitol Complex project was approved during my first session in the legislature in 2015; Phase I of the complex is now completed and work has begun on Phase II.

Phase I included the construction of two new state office buildings just north of the Capitol in downtown Austin.

The George H.W. Bush State Office Building is located at 1801 Congress and the Barbara Jordan Building is located at 1601 Congress. In addition to these new buildings, Phase I projects also included new underground parking and a three-block green space known as the Texas Capitol Mall. State agencies began moving into these new buildings in the spring of 2022. The move to these new state-owned and -managed buildings will consolidate agencies and over 7500 state employees previously housed in leased commercial space across Austin at an annual cost of \$37 million.

Work recently began on the Phase II portion of the Master Plan that will add two additional office buildings along 15th Street just west of Congress Avenue. The project is being managed by the Texas Facilities Commission. Use this link to watch the progress on this exciting addition to the Capitol Complex and take a virtual construction tour: <https://www.tfc-ccp.org/virtual-construction-tour/>.



Chair VanDeaver and the Article III subcommittee hard at work.

Wrapping up work in the Appropriation Committee.

This session, I was appointed chairman of the House Committee on Appropriation's Article III subcommittee that includes agencies and programs for public and higher education and the Teacher Retirement System (TRS). "Articles" in the state budget can easily be thought of as "chapters," which makes an almost 1000-page document easier to organize and manage.

This budget has afforded Texas the unique opportunity to make historic investments in Article III. Provided below is a breakdown of the money appropriated to public and higher education according to the conference committee

report adopted by both the House of Representatives and the Senate.

Public education:

- Provides \$17.6 billion for property tax relief, including \$12.3 billion above amounts required by current law, contingent on the enactment of legislation.
- Fully funds the Foundation School Program (FSP) under current law, including increases of \$3.2 billion to fund projected enrollment growth; \$2.4 billion for increases in the golden penny yield; and \$60.0 million for the New Instructional Facilities Allotment. HB1 also increases funding to districts and charter schools for technology and instructional materials by \$307 million.
- Increases funding for school safety measures by \$1.4 billion (\$300.0 million in HB 1 and \$1.1 billion in SB 30), including grants to districts and charter schools and new statewide initiatives.
- Includes \$1.6 billion for a one-time supplemental annuity payment for certain TRS retirees and \$3.4 billion to provide a cost-of-living adjustment to eligible TRS retirees, contingent on passage of SB 10 and approval of HJR 2 by Texas voters in November 2023.
- Provides \$588.5 million to the Teacher Retirement System (TRS) to maintain health insurance premium increases below 10 percent each year for TRS-ActiveCare participants.

Higher education:

- Provides a state focus on student affordability for general academic universities and a revamped public junior college state finance program – HB1 provides \$9.9 billion, which is a \$1.1 billion increase to the current biennium, to fund the formulas at our higher education institutions:
 - \$4.8 billion to General Academic Institutions, Lamar State Colleges and Texas State Technical Colleges; \$2.9 billion to Health-Related Institutions and \$2.2 billion to community colleges.
- Provides for long-term investments in higher education through the establishment of the Texas University Fund and the permanent instruction in Manufacturing and Technical Workforce Operations Funds (\$1.05 billion corpus in HB1), contingent on the enactment of legislation and approval of HJR 3 by voters in the November 2023 elections.
- Bolsters Texas' healthcare workforce:
 - \$233.1 million for graduate medical education to maintain a 1.1 to 1.0 ratio for residency slots; \$280.5 million for the Texas Child Mental Health Care Consortium; and \$124.8 million for other related workforce programs.
- Includes \$1.54 billion for financial aid programs:
 - \$950.3 million for TEXAS Grants program; \$195.8 million for the Tuition Equalization Grants program; \$222.0 million for Texas Educational Opportunity Grants (TEOG) – Public Community Colleges \$22.2 million for TEOG –State and Technical Colleges and \$149.3 million for Student Financial Aid to be allocated to TEXAS Grants, Tuition Equalization Grants, Texas Leadership Scholars Program and TEXAS Transfer Grants.

The Legislative Budget Board (LBB) is a permanent joint committee of the Texas Legislature that develops budget and policy recommendations for legislative appropriations, completes fiscal analyses for proposed legislation, and conducts evaluations and reviews to improve the efficiency and performance of state and local operations. A summary of the 2024 – 2025 biennium budget prepared by the LBB is available at this link: [Highlights on the budget for the 2024-2025 biennium.](#)¹

¹ The money appropriated in the figures above may be contingent on passage of legislation and/or approval by the voters for constitutional amendments.

Interested in more budget details? Here is a link: [House Bill 1, the General Appropriations Act for the 2024-25 biennium](#). Though both Chambers have adopted House Bill 1 (the budget bill), the budget still has to be certified by the comptroller's office to ensure that it is balanced since the Texas Constitution prohibits deficient spending in the state's biennial budget. Once the comptroller certifies that the budget is balanced, the governor can then exercise his line-item veto authority to remove specific items in the budget that he does not approve. Please feel free to contact the office if you have any questions about the budget.

Representative VanDeaver's legislation. This session, I filed 25 bills ranging from local issues to bills that have broad statewide implications. As happens in every session, some of my bills never get a committee hearing while others make it across the finish line to the governor's desk for signature. Some of the bills I filed this session were bills that I filed in 2021 but were not passed; however, this session some of them have fortunately had a different fate. Here is a list of the bills I have passed this session and have been sent to the governor.

HB 8 – The community college finance bill - is the culmination of over 18 months of meetings, hearings, discussions and debate about what role our state's community and public junior colleges have in preparing Texans for today's job market and the jobs that are coming in the future. HB 8 transitions the funding model to focus on the colleges' student outcomes while also recognizing the importance that credential and certification programs play in reskilling and upskilling our workforce. HB 8 also creates the Financial Aid for Swift Transfer (FAST) Program so eligible high school students can take dual credit courses in pathways to set them on their road to success so they can complete their training programs more quickly and successfully enter the work force.

HB 422 – Remote proceedings for juvenile cases - will allow courts to order that juvenile court hearings be conducted virtually. A virtual hearing can be ordered without the consent of the parties. The Office of Court Administration will review any plan to conduct virtual juvenile proceedings. The original idea for the bill came from a judge in House District 1. The original version allowed a juvenile court to be conducted virtually, but the Senate changed it so only hearings can be virtual.

HB 430 – Volunteer Rural Fire Department (VFD) Program/Texas Forest Service - this bill requires the Texas Forest Service to consider the age of fire fighting apparatus when making awards in the rural fire department assistance program. The

idea for this bill was also brought to me by a constituent with a rural fire department that had not recently been awarded equipment from the TFS's rural VFD assistance program.

HB 433 – Commercial fleet bill – this bill amends the Transportation Code to decrease the minimum number of motor vehicles to be designated as a commercial fleet from 25 to 12. A local constituent discussed this issue with me in 2022, and my office worked to make the change happen.

SB 1187 (Hughes/VanDeaver) – TexAmericas bill - amends certain laws for TexAmericas Center so it can provide services or operate facilities inside or outside the center's boundaries and the state to promote, enhance, develop, or assist a person in the creation of a new business, industry, or commercial activity in the center's boundaries with the expanded powers. S.B. 1187 expands the type of projects for which the center may undertake.

HB 3009 – Guardianship proceedings – this bill allows advanced practice registered nurses to examine a ward or potential ward for guardianship determination by a court. The idea for this bill was also brought to me during the interim by a family lawyer who has grappled with guardianship issues and a lack of healthcare professionals who can perform these examinations.

HB 4375 – AED bill – This bill requires that students in grades 7 - 12 receive training in the use of AEDs at least once before graduation.

SB 2314 (Hughes/VanDeaver) – Single-member LLC bill - SB 2314 amends the Business Organizations Code to establish that statutory

provisions relating to a membership interest in a limited liability company subject to a charging order apply to both single-member limited liability companies and multiple-member limited liability companies. The bill expressly is intended only to clarify existing law concerning the applicability of charging orders to limited liability companies.



Rep. VanDeaver with Rep. Burns, Rep. Ashby and Rep. Murr.

Sine Die. Today is known as “sine die” at the Texas Capitol, which means without a day and the end of the 140-day regular session. With this, the focus and action shifts from the work of the Texas House and Senate to the governor who has until June 18 to veto, sign or let bills become law without his signature. My June newsletter will include a more thorough review of bills that passed and will soon become law. For more information before then, refer to the [Texas Legislature Online](#).

Contact Information

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 or the Capitol office if there is anything we can do to help you. Follow me on Facebook, Twitter, and Instagram for more updates!

District Office
Bowie County Courthouse
710 James Bowie Drive
New Boston, Texas 75570
(903) 628 - 0361

Capitol Office
Room E1.304
P.O. Box 2910
Austin, Texas 78768-2910
(512) 463 - 0692

**State Representative Gary
VanDeaver**
[Email Gary](#)

Useful State Government Websites

- Governor of Texas www.gov.texas.gov
- Texas Senate www.senate.texas.gov
- Texas House of Representatives www.house.texas.gov
- State of Texas www.texas.gov
- Texas Legislature Online www.capitol.texas.gov
- Office of the Attorney General . . . www.texasattorneygeneral.gov
- Health & Human Services Commission . . www.hhs.texas.gov
- Medicaid, Food Stamps, & TANF . . www.yourtexasbenefits.com
- Child/Elder Abuse Reporting www.txabusehotline.org

- Texas 2-1-1 (United Way) www.211.org
- Texas Education Agency www.tea.texas.gov
- Texas Department of Motor Vehicles www.txdmv.gov
- Texas Department of Transportation www.txdot.gov
- Texas Department of Public Safety www.dps.texas.gov
- Texas Department of Insurance www.tdi.texas.gov
- Texas Parks & Wildlife Department www.tpwd.texas.gov
- Texas Workforce Commission www.twc.texas.gov
- Texas Veterans Commission www.tvc.texas.gov

"The Texas House of Representatives is an Equal Opportunity Employer and does not discriminate on the basis of race, color, national origin, sex, religion, age or disability in employment or the provision of services. This newsletter is available in alternate forms upon request. Please call 1-800-241-1163."