

Texas House of Representatives



Lyle Larson

State Representative - District 122

What's new in District 122

Now that most school districts in northern Bexar County have ended their school year and temperatures are well into the triple digits, it's evident summer has arrived. While we hope you will have time to relax and vacation this summer, our office won't be slowing down as we continue to stay involved in key state issues and prepare for the 83rd Legislative Session in January. Later this month, the House Natural Resources Committee and the House Energy Resources Committee will hold a joint hearing to discuss the energy-water nexus. If you have any questions or comments about this topic, please feel free to email me at lyle.larson@house.state.tx.us. We'll provide a recap of the hearing in next month's newsletter.

We spent the last month visiting with constituents, various elected officials, and organizations across the state about both water and transportation issues. Last month, we visited with members of the Rotary Club of San Antonio at the Dominion about various state and local issues. In addition, we discussed the importance of water to economic development at a meeting of the Texas South-International Alliance. We also had the opportunity to speak at the San Antonio Chapter of the American Council of Engineering Companies San Antonio as part of a panel on water issues which included San Antonio Water System CEO Robert Puente and San Antonio River Authority general manager Suzanne Scott. Please let us know if you'd like us to attend a meeting of an organization you're a part of. Hope to see you around District 122!

The Psychology of Water

Last week, the San Antonio Express-News and the Austin American-Statesman published an editorial I authored about the psychology of water and the effect of rainfall on the way most people view the need to bolster our water supply. Please take a moment to [read it here](#) and send me a note to share your thoughts.

Also, the New York Times published a great article about desalination in Texas. Read it [here](#).

2012 Joint Primary Election Results and Runoffs

Though it happened almost three months later than usual, the primary election is finally behind us! Many predicted that turnout for the election would be dismal, mostly because of the postponement of the date from early March to late May a result of prolonged redistricting legal fights. In Texas, approximately 11 percent of registered voters voted in

the Republican Primary and almost 4.5 percent voted in the Democrat Primary. Texas currently boasts 13,065,425 registered voters, according to the Texas Secretary of State. Of the 875,288 registered voters in Bexar County, 107,888 folks voted, with 65,455 in the Republican Primary and 42,433 in the Democrat Primary. Our civic duty isn't over yet, however. There are several races that have not been decided, so a runoff election will be held July 31st. With turnout expected to be extremely low, your vote will mean a lot. Make plans now to vote early from July 23-27. Please visit VoteTexas.org for more information.

Transportation Update

As you may have heard, TxDOT has proposed plans for the construction of tolled and non-tolled expansions of US 281 and Loop 1604 that will be discussed and voted on by the San Antonio-Bexar County Metropolitan Planning Organization on June 25 and then by the Texas Transportation Commission on June 28.

Plans for the US 281 project propose a four-lane, non-toll expressway with frontage roads and overpasses at key intersections at Redland, Encino Rio, Evans and Stone Oak/TPC Parkway at a cost of \$170 million. The newly constructed center lanes would be toll lanes. The 281 expansion would also include transit priority lanes from 1604 to Stone Oak, which will allow public transportation and high occupancy vehicles to either traverse the road free or pay a reduced toll rate. **If this plan is implemented, not only will the existing non-toll lanes remain, but the new overpasses will be free as well. This plan ensures that the MPO's Transportation Improvement Plan, passed and approved a decade ago, will be funded and built as we agreed.**

Plans for the Loop 1604 project propose a four-lane, non-toll expressway with frontage roads on a 7 mile stretch from Wiseman to Bandera Road with overpasses at Braun, Guilbeau, Shaenfield, Culebra (FM 471 - existing), SH 151 (Under Construction), and Wiseman. Four additional toll lanes would be included next to the non-toll lanes.

Discussions have also been underway to expand the project southward on 1604 to include overpasses at West Military Drive and Potranco Road (FM 1957). The estimated cost for the additional two-mile expansion from Wiseman to Potranco is \$52 million.

What do you think of the plans? [Tell us in this poll.](#)

A few weeks ago, we met with TxDOT's executive director, Phil Wilson, about TxDOT's recent discovery of \$2 billion, most of which has since been allocated to various regions throughout the state. As San Antonio only received \$146 million - far less than our fair share - we asked Mr. Wilson to reconsider the allocation and find a way to increase our share.

As the 83rd Legislative Session approaches, we look forward to pursuing legislation to help mitigate these never ending funding problems that continue to plague our state. We will again file legislation to end diversions from Fund 6, the state's gas tax fund,

from which construction and maintenance of state roads should be funded. Since 1986, billions have been diverted from Fund 6 for programs and state agencies that are not germane to road construction and maintenance. The legislature's cannibalization of Fund 6 has largely contributed to the funding challenges we face. To view the legislation we filed last session, [click here](#).

BexarMet/SAWS Transition Update

Last month, the Texas Commission on Environmental Quality (TCEQ) [commissioners officially voted to dissolve the Bexar Metropolitan Water District](#). This is the last formal step in the transition process that voters approved in November. San Antonio Water System (SAWS) has been working diligently to finish the transition and integrate the BexarMet system into SAWS. Former BexarMet customers can expect a single billing system by July and other improvements will be forthcoming.

Government Canyon State Natural Area Visit

Last month, my office visited the Government Canyon State Natural Area (GCSNA), located in northwest Bexar County on Galm Road. The Texas Parks and Wildlife Department oversees the park, which includes 40 miles of hiking and biking trails and a protected habitat area that provides a home to the golden-cheeked warbler and includes part of the Edwards Aquifer recharge zone. GCSNA is a beautifully preserved section of nature that Bexar County is extremely fortunate to have. For information about visiting GCSNA, please [visit their website](#).



With Texas Parks and Wildlife staff touring Government Canyon State Natural Area

As always, please feel free to contact me if I may ever be of assistance to you by phone at (210) 402-5402 or by email at lyle.larson@house.state.tx.us.

Best,



Lyle Larson

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