



# *Capitol Comments*

Volume XI

April 16, 2014

## IN THE DISTRICT

### Lewisville City Manager Claude King to Retire

Claude King is retiring as city manager of Lewisville at the end of this month, concluding a distinguished career in municipal government that has spanned 25 years. Mr. King became city manager in 1998, and served in this role longer than any of his predecessors. Over the last 16 years, Mr. King oversaw significant growth and community milestones including the approval of the Medical Center of Lewisville Grand Theater, the construction of a new city hall, and the opening of Toyota of Lewisville Railroad Park.

Through his professionalism and commitment to excellence, Claude King helped make Lewisville an even better place to live and work. I hope you will join me in congratulating Claude King on his retirement as city manager of Lewisville and on a career well spent.

### Upcoming Local Elections

The May 10 joint and May 27 primary runoff elections are fast approaching. Regardless of your political affiliation, I hope you all take this opportunity to exercise your right to vote. If you have any questions or concerns regarding the elections, please feel free to contact my office. We stand ready to serve and look forward to hearing from you soon.

#### May 10 Joint Election Active Contests

##### Lewisville Independent School District:

- LISD Trustee, Place 6, Three Year Term
  - Mary Smith
  - Kristi Hassett
  - Krista Stone
- LISD Trustee, Place 7, Three Year Term
  - Carol A. Kyer
  - Tracy Scott Miller

##### City of Lewisville General Election:

- Lewisville City Council - Place No. 1
  - Mary Ellen Miksa
  - Leroy Vaughn

##### Carrollton-Farmers Branch Independent School District:

- C-FB ISD Trustee, Place 1
  - Karin Webb
  - James Goode

##### City of Carrollton General Election:

- Carrollton City Council - Place No. 2
  - Young Sung
  - Anthony Wilder
- Carrollton City Council - Place No. 6
  - Rick Pfeil
  - Steve Babick

## May 27 Primary Runoff Election Candidates

### U.S. Senate, Democratic:

- David M. Alameel
- Kesha Rogers

### Agriculture Commissioner, Democratic:

- Jim Hogan
- Richard "Kinky" Friedman

### Lieutenant Governor, Republican:

- Dan Patrick
- David Dewhurst

### Agriculture Commissioner, Republican:

- Sid Miller
- Tommy Merritt

### Attorney General, Republican:

- Ken Paxton
- Dan Branch

### Railroad Commissioner, Republican:

- Ryan Sitton
- Wayne Christian

### Staff Changes

I am pleased to announce the hiring of House District 65's new District Director, Ebony Daughtry. Ebony graduated from the University of North Texas and received her MBA from Texas Women's University. Prior to joining my staff, Ebony worked as a home and community based services coordinator at Denton County MHMR. Ebony is also a Staff Sergeant in the US Air National Guard, serving part-time since 2003.

Hayley Orr served admirably in her part-time role as District Associate/ Scheduler. She is now focusing full-time on her studies at the University of Texas at Dallas. Hayley is a true team player, always diligent to complete any task assigned to her. I wish her all the best as she works towards college graduation and begins her career.

Zach Flores, a long-time Capitol Office intern, is taking over Hayley's scheduling duties in his part-time role as Legislative Aid/ Scheduler in my Capitol office. Zach is a senior at the University of Texas, set to graduate in May with a double-major in Government and Spanish. He has been in my Capitol office since the 2013 Legislative Session.

Ben Lancaster continues to serve as my Chief of Staff.

### Town Halls Coming Soon

Be on the look-out for invitations and information on my upcoming town hall meetings. I plan to host at least three town halls before the end of the year on topics such as health care reform, education, and transportation.

If you have specific issues concerning these topics that you would like addressed during the meetings, or have other topics of interest, please share them with me. I am always looking for input from my constituents and want to be sure that these town hall meetings are as informative as possible.

### **AT THE CAPITOL**

#### Appointment to the Transportation Select Committee

Earlier this month I was appointed to the House Select Committee on Transportation Funding, Expenditures and Finance. This committee was created by House Bill 1 (passed back in August, 2013 to end the 3rd Special Session) to study and evaluate, among other things, transportation funding sources and the original purpose of the economic stabilization fund. As you may recall, it took the entire 83rd Regular Session and three special sessions before the Texas Legislature was able to come to a consensus on how to increase funds for future transportation infrastructure projects.

Our efforts to address transportation funding during the first two special sessions made me realize how necessary it is for the Texas Legislature to research the issue in greater depth if we ever want to truly fix the problem. That is why I proposed an amendment to House Bill 16 (the 2nd Special Session's transportation bill) that created a joint committee for the purpose of studying current transportation funding methods and permissible uses of the economic stabilization

fund. This amendment was adopted by the House, but the bill was not passed before the 2nd Special Session came to an end.

However, a very similar provision, resulting in the creation of the House Select Committee on Transportation Funding, Expenditures and Finance, was included in House Bill 1. So I am very pleased to be one of the nine members of the Texas House appointed to this committee which is responsible for preparing the entire House to lead on transportation issues when the next legislative session begins.

As I have said many times before, we do not have a revenue problem in Texas – we have a spending priority problem. With over 1000 people moving to Texas every day, it is incumbent upon the Texas Legislature to prioritize the needs of the state and address issues like funding for transportation infrastructure projects during the upcoming 84th Legislative Session.

I look forward to working hard with my fellow committee members to find meaningful and lasting solutions for Texas' unique transportation needs.

*The committees created by HB 1, including the House Select Committee on Transportation Funding, Expenditures and Finance, are required to provide a written report of the committees' recommendations on the reviewed subjects to the legislature not later than November 1, 2014.*

### **Autism Awareness Day**

Tuesday was the second annual Texas Autism Awareness Day at the Capitol! For the second year in a row, it turned out to be a great event. In addition to yesterday's efforts to raise awareness about autism at the Capitol, Governor Rick Perry issued a proclamation calling for April 2014 to be recognized as Autism Awareness Month in Texas. Representative Larry Gonzales and Senator Eddie Lucio joined me in hosting a group of families and leaders from Autism Society, Autism Speaks and Horse Boy Foundation who visited their Texas Capitol building to commemorate this important event.



The day began with breakfast at the Capitol where the families, advocacy group leaders, and legislators came together to break bread and get to know each other. We also gathered together with the families for a press conference bringing greater awareness to autism and recent legislative accomplishments concerning treatment and screening, HB 3276 and SB 1484, authored by myself and Senator Kirk Watson respectively. Ryan Bearden of Johnny Carino's capped off the press conference with a cardboard check presentation to Autism Society.

## **SUNSET**

Through the Sunset review process, **every Texan** has the opportunity to suggest ways in which the mission and operations of any agency under review can be strengthened.

The Texas Sunset Act provides that the Sunset Commission, composed of legislators and public members, periodically evaluate each state agency to determine if the agency is still needed and to explore ways to ensure the agency's funds are well spent. Based on the recommendations of the Sunset Commission, the Texas Legislature ultimately decides whether an agency continues to operate into the future.

The following noteworthy agencies are currently under review by the Legislature as required under the Texas Sunset Act:

- Health and Human Services Commission (HHSC)
- Department of Aging and Disability Services (DADS)
- Department of Assistive and Rehabilitative Services (DARS)
- Department of Family and Protective Services (DFPS)
- Department of Health Services (DHS)
- Texas Workforce Commission (TWC)
- University Interscholastic League (UIL)

Click here to see the full list of agencies currently under review: <https://www.sunset.texas.gov/reviews-and-reports>

The Sunset review involves three steps.

1. **Sunset Staff Evaluation** - Sunset Commission staff evaluates the agency and issues a report recommending solutions to problems found. Input from the public is considered in this evaluation.
2. **Sunset Commission Deliberation** - The Sunset Commission meets to hear public testimony on the agencies and the recommendations of the Sunset staff. Based on public input and the Sunset staff reports, the Sunset Commission will adopt recommendations for the full Legislature to consider when it convenes in January 2015.
3. **Legislative Action** - The full Legislature considers Sunset recommendations and makes final determinations.

If you would like to exercise your right to have your input and suggestions considered in this process, please send an email, letter or fax to the address below or use the [comment form](#) on the Sunset Commission website.

Sunset Advisory Commission  
P.O. Box 13066  
Austin, Texas 78711  
512-463-1300  
Fax: 512-463-0705  
Email: [sunset@sunset.state.tx.us](mailto:sunset@sunset.state.tx.us)

Information about the Sunset process, Sunset Commission meetings, and how to receive Sunset Commission email updates is available at: [www.sunset.state.tx.us](http://www.sunset.state.tx.us).

## **Vietnam Memorial**

I could not send out a new edition of Capitol Comments without mentioning this historic event.

The Texas Capitol Vietnam Veterans Monument was unveiled and dedicated on "Vietnam Veterans Day" Saturday, March 29, 2014. While I was not able to attend myself, members of my staff were present for the ceremony. Vietnam veterans from all branches of the military, many of whom from Denton County, filled the ceremony alongside their proud family and friends. Governor Perry, Lt. Governor Dewhurst and Congressman and former POW Sam Johnson of Dallas were among those who addressed the crowd of thousands. The centerpiece of the monument is five bronze infantry figures. Dog tags personalized for the 3,417 Texans who died or were unaccounted-for are inside the monument.

The ceremony took place 41 years to the day that the last American soldier left combat in Vietnam. The way these brave men and women in uniform were treated in their homecoming marks one of the saddest chapters in American history. Thankfully, that chapter is now closed, with the new monument on the northwest part of the Capitol grounds standing as evidence.



Next time you are in Austin, take the opportunity to visit the monument and reflect on what it represents. As Calvin Coolidge once said, "the nation which forgets its defenders will be itself forgotten."

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As always, please stay in touch with me and feel free to drop by my District Office, follow me on [Facebook](#), or find me on the [House Website](#) to hear about upcoming events.

Thank you. It is truly an honor and a privilege serving you.

Best regards,

Ron Simmons  
State Representative  
House District 65

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