

SAM HARLESS

State Representative District 126
April 2020 Newsletter



Texas House of Representatives



District 126

**News
and
Information**



Coronavirus Changes the World

Once again, our news is all about the pandemic. It's hard to believe we've been living with the COVID-19 this long. This historic pandemic has affected our lives and businesses beyond measure. The Texas Capitol has been closed for over a month and many people are working from home. Harris County has been living under a "Stay Home" order since March 24th and as Texans, we've adapted to the changes in our personal lives, and businesses and schools remain closed through the end of this academic year. I can't say enough about how well Klein, Cy-Fair, Spring, and Tomball School Districts have transformed their educational models to serve students outside the traditional classroom through innovative distance education. We are blessed to have outstanding school leadership and teaching staff! Many high school and college seniors have had their final school year interrupted, proms, and athletic activities cancelled that will not have that opportunity again. Our hearts go out to them with encouragement that life will not always be like this.

We continue to hear from residents about the difficulties in getting claims filed

through the Texas Workforce Commission and my staff has been successful in helping a number of those who contacted us directly. Another thing that's come up is the mental stress for everyone dealing with social isolation, family, or financial pressures as an impact of the virus on our society. It is important to stay in touch with your places of worship, friends, family, and co-workers so we can all stay "connected"

COVID TESTING IN TEXAS

As of April 29th, over 300,000 people have been tested, with the vast majority of tests performed by private labs. Total statewide positive case count stands at 26,171 in 207 of Texas' counties as of that date with 690 deaths statewide. Harris County has 5,986 positive cases to date. Almost 2,000 of those cases are from residents who live in the Northwest Quadrant of the County.

Reopening Texas Businesses: Governor Abbott issued the order allowing limited reopening of specific businesses effective May 1st. Some businesses like restaurants will likely choose to remain closed due to the 25% capacity rule. I'm sure it takes a larger capacity in some cases to reach a "break-even" point in covering their overhead. Barbershops, hair and nail salons have been authorized to open on May 8th, and others like gyms can open May 18th, providing they all adhere to the reasonable health precautions outlined by Texas Department of State Health Services and the Center For Disease Control. Factors that officials will consider before beginning Phase 2 will include hospitalization rates, coronavirus death rates, and if there are hot spots in different parts of the state.

As your State Representative, I continue to maintain contact with our county and state officials. I try to keep you posted on updates to news and announcements about local actions and state efforts to contain this virus. I try to provide the highlights so you aren't inundated and hope you find our information useful. Please follow my Facebook page for daily updates and new information at: [Facebook.com/samharless126](https://www.facebook.com/samharless126)

We know the full impact of this pandemic on families, businesses, as well as the State of Texas will not be fully realized for months to come. I've continued to engage on behalf of our constituents on important issues and speak out when necessary. I remain focused on the challenges that lie ahead as we face the long term economic impact the virus will have on Texas resources for the next budget year. It is probably safe to anticipate some reduction in the State's revenues with the falling oil prices and lower overall production. How that translates to challenges for the next session will keep us all busy from now until then.

Sam Harless, State Representative

COVID-19 News and Resources

State of Texas Resources

Governor Abbott's Website for News

<https://gov.texas.gov/news>

Executive Orders (Proclamations)

<https://gov.texas.gov/news/category/proclamation>

Texas Unemployment Commission

As of April 27th over 9,000 residents in District 126 have filed unemployment claims

with Texas Workforce and I'm sure many more remain in processing. Over 57% of these claims have been from women, which tells us a lot about who is being affected. I know many of you have had your jobs affected by the pandemic and even more tragic is the backlog of people trying to file unemployment claims with the Texas Workforce Commission. In an effort to help, two of my employees donated their assistance to help with the problem. The Texas Workforce Commission is now open twelve hours a day, seven days a week, from 7am to 7pm and has been overwhelmed by unemployment claims, So far since March, they have taken 2.1 million claims and paid out 3.3 billion dollars. It is our hope, that as Texas begins to re-open and people get back to work, we will see a reduction in that backlog.

“The Texas Workforce Commission (TWC) encourages individuals previously deemed monetarily ineligible for unemployment benefits to reapply online starting Sunday, April 5, 2020. This date marks the beginning of a new quarter and as such the base period for unemployment benefits and those previously ineligible may now qualify.”

TWC now has over 1,000 staff helping support unemployment insurance services and more staff is expected to be hired in each of its unemployment benefits call centers.

TWC Website to Apply for Benefits: [TWC Unemployment Benefits](#)

Texas Workforce TeleCenter - 800-939-6631

Department of Emergency Management - <https://tdem.texas.gov/covid-19/>

Texas Department of State Health Services - [DSHS Coronavirus Website](#)

Texas Attorney General Price Gouging Complaints: [AG Price Gouging](#)

With reports of elevated scams and fraudulent activity preying on the public and consumers disguised as COVID-19 relief and assistance, local, state and federal response includes guidance, investigation, and prosecution. See links below:

🔗 Federal Trade Commission: <https://www.ftc.gov/coronavirus>

🔗 Federal Bureau of Investigation: <https://www.fbi.gov/coronavirus>

🔗 Texas Attorney General: <https://www.texasattorneygeneral.gov>

🔗 US Attorney's Office: <https://www.justice.gov/usao-ndtx/report-covid-19-fraud>

🔗 Federal Communications Commission: <https://www.fcc.gov/covid-scams>

Harris County Resources

Harris County and Harris Public Health has a lot of information available.

Harris County Public Health - [Harris Health Confirmed CoronaVirus Cases](#)

Harris Public Health Self Assessment Tool: [Self Assessment Tool](#)

Stay Home Order: <https://www.readyharris.org/stay-home>

Testing Sites

In Houston and Harris County, there are currently 6 testing FEMA supported sites with a capacity of 1,400 tests per day with enough supplies to last 20 more days. There are many times more tests being done by private labs outside the public testing sites. Along with their two permanent and four mobile testing sites, Harris County has partnered with Walgreens to create two additional drive through testing sites. These

sites are a partnership project and are managed by Walgreens and results are available within 24 hours.

ReadyHarris Website: <https://www.readyharris.org/#resources>

Harris County Fire Marshal hotline to report businesses who are in violation of the “Stay Home, Work Safe” - 832-839-6941

Precinct 4 Commissioner Community Assistance - [Pct 4 Community assistance](#)

People can sign up to receive emergency alerts from Harris County at bit.ly/ReadyHarrisAlerts.

Also, 2-1-1 is a resource hotline set up by Harris County. If someone is in need of resources fast they can call that number and they will be connected to resources in their community. They can also text CV19 to 888-777. This hotline is available 24/7.

City of Houston

Houston Public Health Dept - <https://houstonemergency.org/covid19/>

Federal Resources / Websites

CDC- Center for Disease Control: [CDC Coronavirus](#)

Small Business Administration: [SBA](#)

SBA Paycheck Protection Program - [Paycheck Protection Loans](#)
An SBA loan that helps businesses keep their workforce employed (during the Coronavirus (COVID-19) crisis.)

FEMA Corona Response: [FEMA CoronaVirus](#)

Community Resources

Northwest Assistance Ministries (NAM is a non-profit, community-based, multi-program social service agency that serves part of the Northwestern are of Houston. They provide assistance through a variety of ways including food, shelter (i.e. rental assistance, & health. Here is a link to their support services page where individuals can find more information and signup for services: <https://www.namonline.org/help>

H-E-B has launched community care efforts to assist those in our communities that are most vulnerable. This includes a partnership with Favor Delivery to help individuals who are 60 years or older order and receive essential food and supplies. The Favor Senior Support Line will operate from 11am - 3pm each day and can be reached at 1-833-397-0080. Seniors can also place orders through Favor’s website or by downloading the Favor app and searching for “H-E-B”. More information and links can be found on the H-E-B website here: newsroom.heb.com/h-e-b-launches-community-care-efforts-across-the-state-to-assist-our-most-vulnerable-neighbors/

Favor website: favordelivery.com/order-delivery/h-e-b-5/

Houston Food Bank and its Partners provide essential services and will continue to remain operational. While there aren’t any service locations within the immediate area of the District they have a map showing where these locations are and also provide information for those in need of food assistance. As the COVID-19 situation

continues they will also be in need of any possible donations. Their website and food assistance information can be found here: <https://www.houstonfoodbank.org/covid19/>

Southern Smoke Foundation is a nonprofit foundation with the primary purpose of assisting those in the food and beverage community. While that may be their primary focus they have a COVID-19 resource page that contains helpful information for everyone. That page can be found here: <https://southernsmoke.org/covid-19-resources/>

Champion Forest Baptist Church website to give or get help: [Champion Forest Baptist](#)

Volunteer Houston: <https://volunteerhouston.org>

Around The District

Local Business Philanthropy



ONE MINUTE

Hand, Foot and Body Care Products

Another business using their facilities to provide much needed products to help their community is "The One Minute Manicure". I would like to take the time to recognize and thank them, like any business that is stepping up to help out our community in this time of need.

"The One Minute Manicure", run by Rosie and Neal Herman, has been a locally owned and recognized business in the 1960 area for many years and their hand and skin care product line has been a staple in many of our homes.

Be sure and tell them how much we appreciate them by your patronage of their businesses.

One Minute Manicure Website: oneminutemanicure.com

One Minute Manicure Facebook Page: facebook.com/oneminutemanicure

If you've heard of other outstanding businesses in our community, please email us and let us know so we can properly recognize them.

News For Harris County Precinct 4 Road And Capitol Project Update

The majority of Harris County's engineering staff and engineers of record are working

remotely from home on capital improvement projects in the Study or Design phase. Precinct 4 and the Harris County Engineering Department utilize various avenues of communication to maintain a projects schedule and technology promotes continued collaboration. The engineering community is able to communicate with the county's Project Managers and the decision making process or guidance during project development is not hindered.

Construction is considered an "essential" industry under the Stay Home, Work Safe Order; therefore, roadway construction efforts are ongoing.

Following are the capital improvement projects being pursued within District 126:

Construction Projects:

Following are the capital improvement projects being pursued within District 126:

- **Congestion Mitigation Air Quality Project – Phase 1A: Spring Cypress Road corridor between Telge Road and Louetta Glen Drive**
- The Spring Cypress Rd corridor was a joint participation project between Harris County and the Texas Department of Transportation. Improvements included the installation of new traffic signals, battery-back up systems to existing traffic signals, turn lane extensions and installations, and fiber optic interconnect along the corridor. The project was deemed substantially complete on March 11, 2020. Construction cost: \$5,522,835
- **Champions Drive from FM 1960 to Cypress Creek** Improvements included upgrading Champions Drive, from a 2-lane asphalt roadway to a 2-lane concrete pavement section with an improved drainage system. The roadway was opened to the traveling public the first week of April 2020 and the Contractor remains onsite to complete remaining work items. Installation of the landscape plantings should start within a few weeks. This is a Joint Participation project between Harris County Precinct 4 and Champions Municipal Utility District.

Projects in the Study/Design Phase:

- **Holderrieth Road Section 3 between Hufsmith-Kohrville Road and SH 99 at Champion Forest Drive:** The Holderrieth Road project is currently in the Study Phase and a timeline to continue project development including the construction effort has not yet been determined. The funding source for the project is Harris County, and the estimated cost of construction is TBD.
1. **Hufsmith-Kohrville Road Segment 2 between Hollow Glen Lane and Ezekiel Road**
 - Planned improvements include upgrading the corridor as a 4-lane concrete boulevard with improved drainage accommodations, traffic signalization at Lacey Road and Ezekiel Road, and all components necessary for realizing a complete project. The Project is currently in the Design phase and Harris County will bid the project for construction purposes upon completion of project development.
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 1. **Hufsmith-Kohrville Road Segment 3 between Ezekiel Road and Holderrieth Road**
 - Planned improvements include upgrading the corridor as a 4-lane concrete boulevard with improved drainage accommodations, traffic signalization at Woodland Shore Drive, and all components necessary for realizing a complete project. The Project is currently in the Design phase and Harris County will bid the project for construction purposes upon completion of project development.

In The District



Greater Tomball Area Chamber of Commerce

Transportation and Mobility Committee

2nd Tuesday of each month
Meeting Location:
29201 Quinn Rd.
Tomball, Texas 77375
Upstairs Conference Room

[Tomball Government Affairs
Committee](#)

Cy-Fair Chamber of Commerce Transportation/Government Affairs Committee

The committee meets the 1st Thursday of each month to discuss governmental issues that confront their Cy-Fair area. They meet at the Chamber offices located at 8711 Highway 6 North, Ste. 120 Houston, TX 77095.



[Cy-Fair Chamber Website](#)



Houston NW Chamber Public Safety Forum

Public Safety Forum Meeting:
4th Thursday each month
8:30 am - 9:30 am
Champions Emergency Services
District
12730 Champion Forest Dr.
Houston, TX 77066

[Houston NW Chamber Website](#)

[Visit our House of Representative Website:](#)

Contact Us

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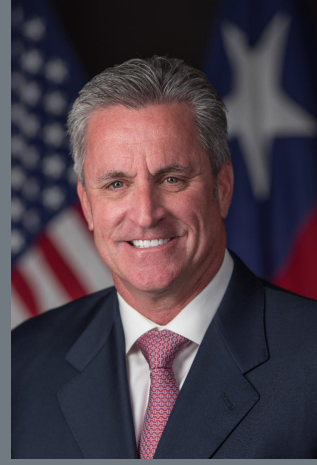
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