

# ***SAM HARLESS***

**State Representative District 126  
September 2020 Newsletter**



*Texas House of Representatives*



**District 126**

**News  
and  
Information**

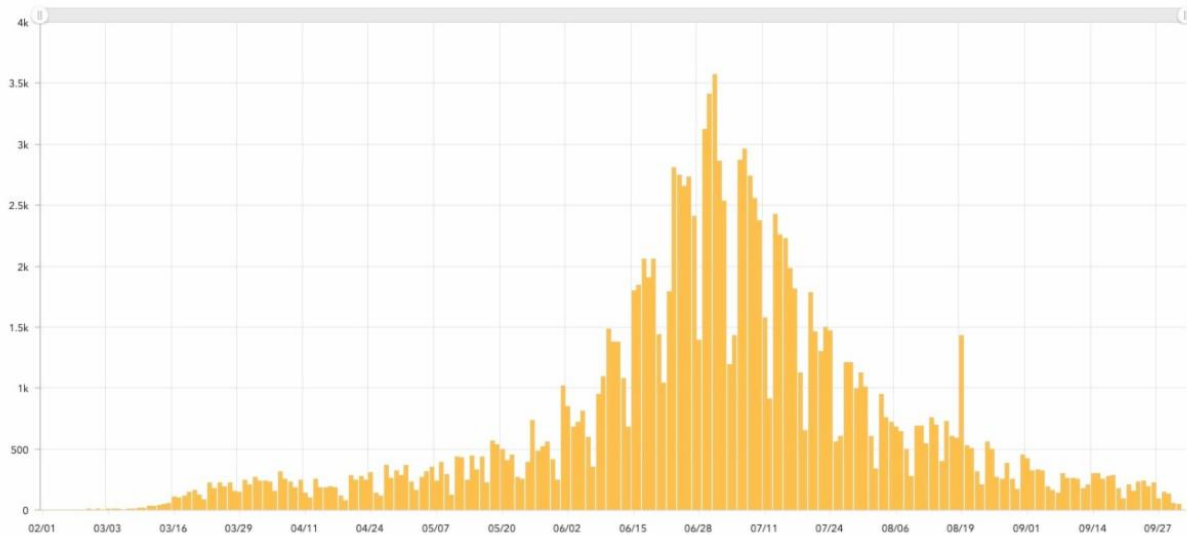


**COVID's Continuing Impact On Texas**

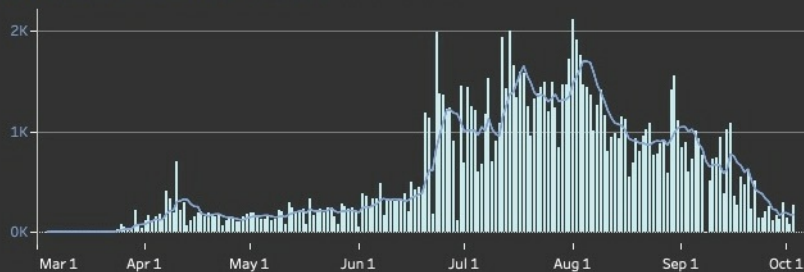
**COVID STATS & INFO**

**Harris County COVID Cases**

Epi Curve of Cases Over Time



Daily New Confirmed Cases in *Harris County*



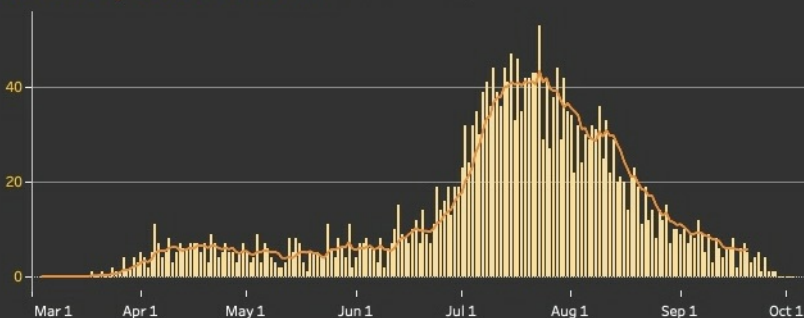
Probable cases are not included in the total case numbers.

1,202 older cases recently reported by labs were included in the statewide total but excluded from statewide and Collin County new confirmed cases (192).

20 older cases recently reported by labs were included in the statewide total but excluded from statewide and Galveston County new confirmed cases (22).

2,438 older cases recently reported by labs were included in the statewide total but excluded from statewide and Harris County new confirmed cases (266).

Fatalities by Date of Death in *Harris County*



Because DSHS is reporting fatalities by date of death, the number of fatalities for recent days will continue to grow as more death certificates are filed for those days.

September demonstrated a continued improvement in the number of positive cases and hospitalizations, providing us a further hope in our recovery from the effects of this pandemic. While Texas has surpassed the **700,000** mark in positive cases and almost **16,000** fatalities, the trend for daily positive cases and fatalities reported continues to drop. **More and more businesses are opening as our economy finds ways to adjust.**

**In District 126,** we have now seen 95 reported deaths and **9,972** reported positive cases as of the end of September. We have also had **9,165** recovered cases in the District.

### Assisted Living Centers

The frustration of family members who have loved ones in assisted living or nursing facilities has been heard by both the Governor and Texas Health and Human Services. Their long term isolation due to COVID restrictions places a tremendous burden on them as patients and on their families and caregivers.

A number of us have reached out to the Governor to ask him to encourage

Texas Health and Human Services to find more ways to allow some type of visitation with your loved ones. There has been limited progress across Texas and we continue to ask for solutions to reducing the isolation and increasing access and visitation.

Link to HHS Visitation Rules - [Texas HHS Visitation Rules](#)

To find a testing site near you, follow this link:

[COVID Testing Locations](#)

## **THREAT LEVEL SYSTEM**

Harris County's Threat Level System, which can be found here:[READY HARRIS THREAT LEVEL](#), provides the current threat status to the County. Judge Hidalgo's executive order remains in place requiring business to have health and safety policies and to have their employees, customers, and visitors wear masks or face coverings. Executive Orders and other COVID related news for Harris County as well as the COVID Dashboard can always be found at [www.readyharris.org](http://www.readyharris.org).

The threat level currently still is set to **RED** signifying a severe and uncontrolled level of COVID-19. This indicates you should minimize individual contact with those outside your family whenever possible in the Harris County area.

While the Harris County COVID Threat Level remains at RED, all but one of the requirements to reduce the threat level have been met. The final requirement that needs to be met is a testing positivity rate of 5% or less. I believe Harris County is currently at 6%.

## **Hurricane Season**

We had an overly active season for hurricanes and tropical storms this summer and our waterways and drainage were tested a number of times by storms dropping fairly dramatic rainfall in our area.

Among the efforts to continue to combat flooding, I signed onto an effort by the Harris County Flood Control District to acquire federal funding to improve water retention areas along Cypress Creek at T. C. Jester Blvd. I sent a letter to Land Commissioner George P. Bush asking for his consideration as Harris County seeks approval of a grant for \$10 million dollars to build an increased water retention capability for an area that was dramatically affected during Hurricane Harvey. Read [Rep Harless' Letter To Land Commissioner](#)

You can sign up for safety alerts and find extremely helpful hurricane preparedness information at [www.readyharris.org](http://www.readyharris.org)

Even though these continue to be challenging times, it remains my honor and privilege to serve the residents of District 126.

## **Sam Harless, State Representative**

Please follow my Facebook page for daily updates and new information at: [www.Facebook.com/samharless126](http://www.Facebook.com/samharless126)

or our Twitter Page at

<https://twitter.com/SamHarless126>

As your State Representative, I continue to maintain contact with our county and state officials and provide you details and updates from those calls. I try to keep you posted on updates to news and announcements about local actions and state efforts to contain this virus and to provide the highlights so you aren't inundated and hope you find our information useful. Like many of you I am concerned about the growing restrictions on our lives and businesses and I hope it yields a continued improvement in the spread of the virus in the coming months.

## Elections

Our November elections are coming up quickly and early voting begins in one week, so it is a good idea to refresh our information about voting. From mail ballots, to ballot drop off locations, and voting locations, the details seem to be ever changing. Whatever the case, please don't let the challenges deter you from fulfilling your opportunity to vote. If you have questions about where you can vote, if you are registered to vote, or specific questions about ballot by mail, please search out the answers.

Here is a short list of voting locations in our area.

Prairie View A&M University Northwest (Room 107) - 9449 Grant Road, Houston, 77070

Lakewood Residents Club - Dance floor 15006 Lakewood Forest Drive, Houston, 77070

Masjid Al Salam Mosque - 16700 Old Louetta Road, Spring, 77379

HCPL Barbara Bush Branch (Multipurpose Room) -6817 Cypresswood Drive, Spring, 77379

Fallbrook Church (Brooks Sports Gym) - 12512 Walters Road, Houston, 77014

New Destiny Praise and Worship Center (Main Room Worship) 4170 West Greens Road, Houston, 77066

(Check the map on link below for locations that allow drive through voting)

Full list of Polling Locations: [Polling Locations & Hours](#)

The Harris County Clerk's Office voting information website: [Harris Votes](#)

Texas Secretary of State Voter Information Website: [Texas Secretary of State Voter Information](#)

### Frequently Asked Questions

#### ***How do I submit my application to Vote by Mail?***

An application to Vote by Mail can be submitted in any of the following methods:

1. Regular residential mail via United States Postal Service;
2. Common or contract carrier (e.g., personal courier, FedEx, UPS, or other contracted mail service); or
3. Fax machine or e-mail. If you choose this option, the Harris County Clerk's office MUST receive your original, completed paper application by one of the above

methods (1-3) within four (4) business days of your email or fax.

***Do I have to apply to Vote by Mail for each election?***

If you are 65 years of age or older, or have a disability, you can apply for an annual ballot – this means that your Vote by Mail option will be registered for that entire calendar year. For example, if you apply now your option will be registered for the November 2020 Election and any additional election through December 31, 2020. You will need to reapply each calendar year for an annual Vote by Mail ballot.

***How do I return my completed ballot to the Election office? Is there a deadline?***

A completed mail ballot MUST be returned to the Harris County Clerk's Office in the Official Carrier Envelope provided to you. It may be returned in any of the following manners:

Regular residential mail via United States Postal Service;

a. Ballot must be postmarked by 7:00 p.m. on Election Day and must be received by 5:00 p.m. on November 4 (the day after Election Day)

1. During regular business hours,
2. During Early Voting period: Mondays through Saturdays from 7 am - 7 pm, and Sundays from 12 pm – 7pm, or
3. On Election Day (November 3, 2020) from 7 am – 7 pm
4. You must present an acceptable form of photo identification
5. If a voter does not possess and cannot reasonably obtain an acceptable form of photo identification, the voter may show a List B identification and complete a reasonable impediment declaration (RID)

***If I complete the ballot by mail, do I have to deliver it to the "Drop Off" Location***

NO, you do not have to deliver it in person. You may use any of the options listed above, including standard postal mail service, as long as it is postmarked by 7:00 pm on Election Day.

There are differing deadlines for mail ballots from overseas or from military service voters.

Can I vote in person if I received a Vote by Mail ballot? What about if I submitted a Vote by Mail application and never received a ballot?

You may vote in person even if you applied for a Vote by Mail ballot, but you can only vote once. To vote in person, take your Vote by Mail ballot to a voting center to surrender it and receive a regular ballot. If you do not have the mail ballot with you, you may still vote in person using a provisional ballot.

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## **COVID-19 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**

District 126 has a population of 190,040 residents with an Unemployment Claim Count of 1,008 during the last thirty days.

### **DPS**

The Department of Public Safety has continued a phased re-opening of Driver's License Offices, offered by appointment only. Appointments can be made here: <https://www.dps.texas.gov/DriverLicense/appointments.htm>

### **DMV (Department of Motor Vehicles)**

The Texas Department of Motor Vehicles (TxDMV) is open for most Regional Service Centers for in-person transactions by same-day or next-day appointment only. Appointments may be scheduled at [www.TxDmv.gov/appointment](http://www.TxDmv.gov/appointment). The temporary waiver of vehicle title and registration requirements remains in effect. TxDMV will notify the public when normal services have resumed. Texans will then have 60 days to complete any overdue vehicle title and registration transactions.

### **TEA (Texas Education Agency)**

The Texas Education Agency now has a COVID-19 support page for student assessment for the STARR test with information about extensions. Here you can find guidance and resources organized by the following categories. Simply click on this link [TEA EXTENSION](#) to be taken directly to those resources below on the page. For questions, please email [disasterinfo@tea.texas.gov](mailto:disasterinfo@tea.texas.gov).

The complete guidelines for business re-opening, with protocols and reopening dates can be found at the Department of State Health Services:

<https://www.dshs.state.tx.us/coronavirus/opentexas.aspx>

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## **Texas Workforce Commission**

### **Unemployment Insurance Claims**

Since the week ending March 14th, TWC has taken over 5.2 million claims for Unemployment Insurance benefits and paid \$31.4 billion in Unemployment Insurance benefits to Texans affected by COVID-19. Of that, \$16.3 billion has been paid in Federal Pandemic Unemployment Compensation (additional \$600 per week), \$2.3 billion has been paid in Pandemic Unemployment Assistance (PUA), \$994.4 million has been paid in Pandemic Emergency Unemployment Compensation (additional 13 weeks of benefits authorized by the CARES Act for those who have exhausted regular unemployment benefits); and \$2.8 billion has been paid in Lost Wage Assistance Program benefits.

### **High Unemployment Period Benefits**

The U.S. Department of Labor has notified TWC that with Texas' unemployment rate falling to 6.8% Texas will no longer have access to additional Unemployment Insurance Benefits that would have kicked in after traditional benefits and extended benefits under the CARES Act are exhausted.

The High Unemployment Period is an extension of benefits for states with an unemployment rate of over 8% for over three months as determined by the U.S. Department of Labor. Texas triggered on to these benefits in June but since the Texas Unemployment Rate fell below the 8% threshold in August, the state lost eligibility.

Almost no Texans are affected by this because the Extended Benefits had not yet been exhausted and Texans are not typically receiving HUP benefits.

For more information and to add or update your information, go to this site:

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

Texas Workforce TeleCenter - 800-939-6631

TWC has a new Chat service on their website in the bottom right of the screen, called "Chat With Us". This new function will be able to answer most general questions from individual.

<https://www.twc.texas.gov>

## Texas Workforce Claims For August

**Week**

**Starting Total Internet Telephone Other**

<b>9/5</b>	66,330*	72,100	16,100	51,900
<b>9/12</b>	49,644*	45,500	14,500	49,800
<b>9/19</b>	47,497*	42,400	15,100	62,000
<b>9/26</b>	40,073*	35,200	14,300	65,700
<b>10/3</b>	94,600	20,700	8,400	65,500

Unless indicated, numbers are estimates based on internal TWC data and are subject to revision.

\* Official Department of Labor Data when available and TWC Estimates.

District 126 has a population of 190,040 residents with an Unemployment Claim Count of 1,543 during the last thirty days. Unemployment claims for our area has dropped and continues to trend downward.

### Top 5 Unemployment Insurance Claim Industries for District 126

1. Limited-service restaurants
2. Full-service restaurants
3. Temporary help services
4. Elementary and secondary schools
5. Electronic Shopping and Mail-Order Houses

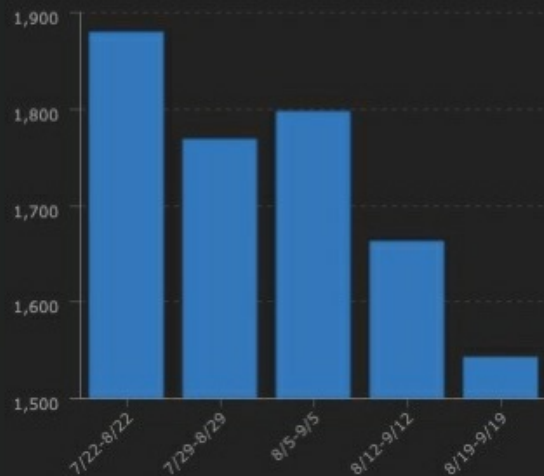
### UI Claimants

Male: 820

Female: 718

Gender Unknown:

Trending Area UI Claims



## Harris County COVID 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, currently there are 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. To find a location near you go here:

[Harris County Testing Location Website](#)

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

**Harris County Fire Marshal** hotline to report businesses who are in violation of the County and State COVID-19 health and safety policies - 832-839-6941

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

People can sign up to receive emergency alerts from Harris County at: [Ready Harris Alert Signup](#).

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.



## 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](#)

## Around The District

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

## School Reopening

Our area school districts and their staff have been busy welcoming students back to school. I can't imagine the challenges that teachers face in dealing with education under COVID. Dealing with students in completely different environments, preparing for in-person, and distance education classes has to be a challenging adjustment and our hearts go out to all of them. We are proud to have dedicated school leadership focused on educating our children safely, while pursuing success for each of them individually.

You can see Klein ISD's Roadmap to re-opening at this link:

[Klein ISD Re-Opening Update 12](#)

Cy-Fair ISD's website details their approach to school reopening in the "Lead Safely" plan available here: [Cy-Fair ISD Re-Opening Plan](#)

Tomball ISD calls their plan "Return to Excellence 2020-2021" and it is available at this link: [Tomball ISD Return to Excellence 2020-2021](#)

## In The District

### Precinct 4 Commissioner Capital Project Status Update

**(Red denotes updated information)**

**Boudreaux Road 3 between Old Boudreaux Lane and Gleannloch Forest Drive at SH 99**

- Summary: Proposed improvements include widening Boudreaux Road to a 4-

lane concrete pavement section with improved drainage accommodations and traffic signal installation/modification as warranted.

- Status: Pre-Planning Phase
- Construction Timeline: TBD
- Construction Cost: TBD

#### **Bourgeois Road between Cutten Road and West Richey Road**

- Summary: Proposed improvements include upgrading Bourgeois Road as a 2-lane concrete pavement section with improved drainage accommodations and traffic signal installation/modification as warranted.
- Status: Study Phase
- Construction Timeline: TBD
- Construction Cost: TBD

#### **Cutten Road between Bavaria Drive and Cossey Road**

- Summary: Proposed improvements include the extension of Cutten Road as a 4-lane concrete pavement section with improved drainage accommodations and traffic signal installation/modification as warranted.
- Status: Pre-Planning Phase
- Construction Timeline: TBD
- Construction Cost: TBD

#### **Cypress North Houston Road between Jones Road and FM 1960**

- Summary: Planned improvements include widening and extending Cypress North Houston Road (formerly Lou Edd Road) as a 4-lane concrete pavement section with improved drainage accommodations and traffic signal installations at Misty Moss Drive, Autumn Mills Drive, and FM 1960.
- Status: Design Phase
- Construction Timeline: Goal to advertise for construction purposes in **early 2021** (barring any unforeseen circumstances).
- Construction Cost: TBD

#### **Hollister Street 4 between Log Hollow Drive and Breen Drive**

- Summary: Proposed improvements include extending Hollister Street as a 4-lane concrete pavement section with improved drainage accommodations and traffic signal installation/modification as warranted.
- Status: Pre-Planning Phase
- Construction Timeline: TBD
- Construction Cost: TBD

#### **Hufsmith-Kohrville Road 2 between Hollow Glen Lane and Ezekiel Road**

- Summary: Planned improvements include widening Hufsmith-Kohrville Road as a 4-lane concrete pavement section with improved drainage accommodations and traffic signal installations at Lacey Road and Ezekiel Road.
- Status: Design Phase
- Construction Timeline: Goal to advertise for construction purposes in **early 2021** (barring any unforeseen circumstances).
- Construction Cost: TBD

#### **Hufsmith-Kohrville Road 3 between Ezekiel Road and Holderrieth Road**

- Summary: Planned improvements include widening Hufsmith-Kohrville Road as

a 4-lane concrete pavement section with improved drainage accommodations and traffic signal installation at Woodland Shore Drive.

- Status: Design Phase
- Construction Timeline: TBD
- Construction Cost: TBD

#### **Fairbanks North Houston Road at Terrace Brook Drive**

- Summary: Planned traffic signalization of intersection as warranted.
- Status: Design Phase
- Construction Timeline: TBD
- Construction Cost: TBD

#### **Stuebner Airline Road at Oakwood Glen Boulevard**

- Summary: Modernize existing traffic signal with pedestrian push button components and ADA-accessible ramps.
- Status: Design Phase
- Construction Timeline: Goal to begin construction in fourth quarter 2020 (barring any unforeseen circumstances).
- Estimated Construction Cost: **\$65,000**

#### **Congestion Mitigation and Air Quality 4 joint participation project with Texas Department of Transportation**

##### **Phase 4-1C – North Eldridge Parkway corridor between Clay Road and FM 1960, and between Grant Road and Spring Cypress Road**

- Summary: **Construction was recently completed for the project on September 30, 2020.** Improvements included installation of new traffic signal systems, battery back-up installation for existing traffic signal systems, extension and installation of turn lanes, and installation of fiber optic interconnection system along the North Eldridge Parkway corridor.
- Status: **Complete**
- Construction Timeline: April 8, 2019 – September 30, 2020
- Construction Cost: **\$4,415,329**

##### **Phase 4-2D – SH 249 corridor between Antoine Drive and Spring Cypress Road, and FM 529 corridor between Greenhouse Road and North Eldridge Parkway**

- Summary: Planned improvements include installation of additional turn lanes, turn lane extensions, and median modifications along the SH 249 and FM 529 corridors.
- Status: Construction Phase
- Construction Timeline: August 2019 – March 2022
- Construction Cost: \$3,618,458

##### **Phase 4-2E – Beltway 8 corridor between West Gulf Bank Road and T.C. Jester Boulevard**

- Summary: Planned improvements include installation of additional turn lanes, turn lane extensions, and median modifications along the Beltway 8 corridor.
- Status: Construction Phase
- Construction Timeline: August 2019 – March 2022
- Construction Cost: \$3,000,244

**Phase 4-2F – SH 6 corridor between West Little York Road and West Road, and FM 1960 corridor between Fallbrook Drive and Kenswick Drive**

- Summary: Planned improvements include installation of additional turn lanes, turn lane extensions, and median modifications along the SH 6 and FM 1960 corridors.
- Status: Construction Phase
- Construction Timeline: August 2019 – March 2022
- Construction Cost: \$2,000,868



**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 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

Visit our House of Representative Website:

**Contact Us**

Capitol Office Phone - 512-463-0496

District Office Phone - 281-251-0194

District Office Address - 6630 Cypresswood Dr #150

Spring, Tx 77379

Ron Hickman

Chief of Staff

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Ashley Hyten

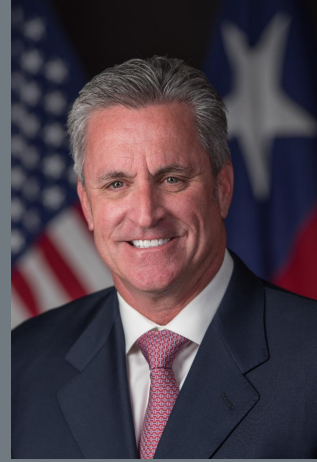
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James Cook

District Director

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