



HIGHLIGHTS
By Chris Cobler

New House speaker lays out challenges

The 87th session of the Texas Legislature opened Tuesday with COVID-19 encompassing every aspect of what the lawmakers do, according to new House Speaker Dade Phelan.

"COVID, obviously, it will be a blanket over the entire session," Phelan told his hometown TV station, KFDM Channel 6, in Beaumont. "We will deal with it in every aspect of policy. It will be a huge determining factor in the budget."

Before the pandemic hit, Phelan said, legislators "were supposed to come into this budget cycle with a surplus, and now we're coming into it with a deficit..." Money will be even tighter for the next two-year budget lawmakers write during the session, he said.

"The No. 1 goal is to get the economy back on track," Phelan said.

For opening day, Lt. Gov. Dan Patrick and State Rep.

Charlie Geren, R-Fort Worth and chair of the administration committee, laid out safety protocols for lawmakers and visitors to follow at the Capitol, which recently reopened after closing in March because of the pandemic. The opening ceremony was scheduled to be shorter than usual to reduce time spent gathering.

"It's always been difficult to be speaker. It's never been easy, but going into this session, the 87th, given the budget deficit, redistricting, and the fact that we have the first pandemic in 102 years in which to operate, I'm exceptionally proud they've given me this honor," Phelan said of the bipartisan coalition of lawmakers that voted for him to be the new speaker.

Phelan, a Republican, stressed the bipartisan spirit of Texas and cited how well former Gov. George W. Bush worked with Democratic Lt. Gov. Bob Bullock during their time serving together at the Capitol.

"That is the Texas model. We've always worked that way," Phelan said. "If you're sitting at the speaker's dais and you're looking at all the chairs in the House chamber, there is no left side or right side, red, blue, like there is in Washington, D.C. We all sit amongst each other."

Lawmakers are scheduled to be in session until May 31.

TRYING TO SPEED UP
Texas is going big with its approach to COVID-19 vaccinations this week. Most of the doses avail-

able this week are going to 28 larger providers that can vaccinate at least 100,000 people, Texas Department of State Health Services officials said in a statement. Some doses also will be going to smaller providers in more rural parts of the state.

"We are working hard to improve the vaccination process for everyone," Dr. John Hellerstedt, state health commissioner, said in a statement explaining the pivot to the larger vaccination hubs.

Providers that receive the larger amounts of vaccine will vaccinate health care workers, people 65 and older, and those who have a medical condition that increases

their risk of severe disease or death. They also agree to provide a registration phone number and website and to vaccinate people from surrounding areas.

The Texas Department of State Health Services surveyed vaccine providers about their capacity to operate large, community vaccination sites and on Sunday published a list of vaccine hub providers. The hubs will receive a total of 158,825 doses this week.

An additional 38,300 doses will go to 206 providers. Of Texas' 254 counties, 104 will receive vaccine shipments this week.

State health officials stressed that people need to

register in advance for the shots and should not just show up at one of the hubs. Officials also urged patience as supplies remain limited.

MODEL BEHAVIOR

The small city of Dickinson set an example for how to handle a close election.

The race for mayor ended in a tie, but the two candidates didn't duke it out. Instead, candidates Sean Skipworth and Jennifer Lawrence followed state law, which calls for a random selection in the unlikely event of a tie.

Election officials in Dickinson, population 21,000 in Galveston County, put the candidates' names on ping-

pong balls placed in a tophat. Even though her name wasn't drawn, Lawrence didn't demand a "Hunger Games"-style trial by fire.

Mayor-elect Skipworth described a decidedly different scene to KHOU-TV: "We get up there, one of us wins, one of us loses, and we give each other a hug or whatever, say, 'Good job' and wish you the best. Hopefully that's how it's going to be in the country in the future going forward."

Chris Cobler is a board member and past president of the Freedom of Information Foundation of Texas. He welcomes email at ccobler@texaspress.com.

City Sales & Use Tax Comparison Summary-Jan. 2021

City	Net Payment This Period	Comparable Payment Prior Year	Percent Change	2021 Payments To Date	2020 Payments to Date	Percent Change
McGregor	\$108,824.10	\$70,699.20	53.92%	\$108,824.10	\$70,699.20	53.92%
Crawford	\$11,715.13	\$8,403.15	39.41%	\$11,715.13	\$8,403.15	39.41%
Oglesby	\$13,126.54	\$967.71	1,256.45%	\$13,126.54	\$967.71	1,256.45%
Moody	\$11,825.21	\$9,727.39	21.56%	\$11,825.21	\$19,727.39	21.56%
Valley Mills	\$10,780.75	\$8,953.27	20.14%	\$10,780.75	\$89,53.27	20.14%
Clifton	\$65,846.50	\$58,066.59	13.39%	\$65,846.50	\$58,066.59	13.39%
Robinson	\$136,849.03	\$112,450.07	21.69%	\$136,849.03	\$112,450.07	21.69%
Gatesville	\$196,968.77	\$179,530.71	9.71%	\$196,968.77	\$179,530.71	9.71%
Waco	\$3,329,481.92	\$3,157,356.11	5.45%	\$3,329,481.92	\$3,157,356.11	5.45%

McGregor Sales Tax Allocations shows 53.92% increase for January

Oglesby records state's largest sales tax revenue increase compared to 2020

By: Hope Lenamon

Data from Texas Comptroller Glenn Hegar shows \$783.2 million in local sales tax allocations will be sent to cities, counties, transit systems and special purpose taxing districts across Texas for January.

This means the month's sales tax allocations—which reflect November sales by

businesses that report tax monthly—increased 2.6% statewide when compared to 2020.

But, local cities boast an even greater increase.

The City of Oglesby recorded the highest increase in the state for year-over-year comparisons in the month of January.

Oglesby will receive about \$13,000 this month

compared to the \$1,000 sent last year—a nearly 1,300% increase.

For McLennan County, December allocations actually increased about 10% when compared to 2020.

McGregor, however, saw a nearly 54% increase in revenue compared to this time last year—the second highest increase in the county.

This news comes after the city saw one of the highest year-over-year decreases in tax revenue in the county last month, recording a 19% drop compared to December 2019.

McGregor is set to receive about \$109,000 in sales

tax revenue for January 2021 compared to the \$71,000 it received in January 2020.

Crawford recorded the county's fourth highest revenue increase when compared to 2019. The city also had the sixth highest revenue increase in the county for November and December 2020.

The city will receive roughly \$12,000 in sales tax revenue for January 2021, an almost 39% increase from the \$8,000 received in December 2019.

Moody also saw a 22% increase compared to last year.

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THE Garden Club
of McGregor, Texas

The McGregor Garden Club will meet on Thursday, January 21st at The Exchange at 9:00 a.m. The program will be presented by Cassie Thomas, who manages the complex. She will be showing the club how the funds the club donated are being used to landscape the property.

Members will also be bringing bird feeders to be donated to Westview Manor to be hung outside residents windows. Face masks and social distancing will be required.

Bid Notice

LEGAL NOTICE

Accepting sealed bids for the property located at 505 Ave D, Valley Mills, TX. Legal: Valley Mills OT BLOCK 13 LOT 14(PT) & 15-17. Sealed Bids can be dropped off at the City Secretary's office located at City Hall, 101 Ave E, Valley Mills, TX 76689. Sealed Bids can be mailed to PO Box 641, Valley Mills, TX 76689. Please mark envelope "Bid For 505 Ave D".

Sealed bids will be accepted until 1:00 p.m. on January 29th, 2021 and will be opened publicly at the City Hall. The City reserves the right to reject any offer.

For additional information please contact Lori Tims, Broker, with HomeLand Realty at (254) 337-1433.

McGinley Memorial Public Library Hours:
Monday—Closed;
Tuesday—Open 2-7
Wednesday—Open 8:30-1:30;
Thursday—Open 12 -5pm
Friday—8:30a to 1:30p

PUBLIC HEARING NOTICE

McGregor ISD will hold a Public Hearing to discuss the District's Annual Report, including the Texas Academic Performance Report.

The Public Hearing will be held on Thursday, January 14, 2021, at 7:00 p.m. at H.G. Isbill Junior High located at 305 S. Van Buren.

The public is invited to attend.

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