



My five cents...

A weekly column from Sen. Robert Nichols
by Sen. Robert Nichols, Senate District 3

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One hundred and eighty-six years ago this week, the Texas Revolution began at Gonzales. On October 2, 1835 fighting broke out at Gonzales between Mexican soldiers and Texas militiamen. When the Mexican military commander in Texas received word that the American colonists refused to surrender a small cannon that had been gifted to the settlement in 1831 as a defense against Indians, he dispatched a small contingent to retrieve it. The struggle feature the iconic "Come and Take It" flag and ended in a Mexican retreat.

Here are five things happening around your state:

1. **Texas House releases redistricting maps, holds hearing**

Last week, the Texas House of Representatives released their initial maps for their newly draw districts. After the Census Bureau released their official count, the ideal number of Texans in each House district increased to 194,303. With these changes in mind, the House Redistricting Committee held a public hearing this week and made some alterations to their map before voting it out of committee. It will come before the entire chamber early next week for a final vote. After it leaves the House, the Senate will have an opportunity to vote on those maps.

2. **T.L.L. Temple Foundation launches medical school loan repayment program**

The T.L.L. Temple Foundation announced it has negotiated a grant agreement for a medical school loan repayment program in an effort to increase the number of East Texas health professionals. The program will be run in conjunction with the State Office of Rural Health at the Texas Department of Agriculture. The funding amount of over \$1 million is included for the first cohort of eight participants. The max award will be \$30,000 per year for four years per participant. The program will be run by the State Office of Rural Health, which will administer the application process, reporting, and tax compliance. Participants will be required to serve for at least one consecutive year at an approved eligible site to qualify for the loan repayment award. Those eligible sites include clinics, local mental health authorities, public health facilities, and other nonprofits in the 23 rural counties the T.L.L. Temple Foundation covers and have a primary focus of serving the underserved, including Medicaid, CHIP, Medicare, and other low-income uninsured or under-insured populations. Applications are due to by 5 pm on November 30th and can be found online at <https://form.jotform.com/211393847074157>.

3. Tenth annual veteran statewide hiring event announced

This week the Texas Workforce Commission announced its tenth annual Hiring Red, White, and You! event. This event focuses on connecting veterans, transitioning military members, and military spouses to employers across the state. In the ten years since its inception, this event has worked with over 18,000 employers, connected over 100,000 job seekers to meaningful employment opportunities, and helped facilitate over 2,800 same-day hires. The statewide event will be on November 4 and have locations across the state. The Deep East Texas regional event will be in Lufkin at the Lufkin Memorial VFW Post 1836. The East Texas regional event will be in Longview at the Holiday Inn Longview - North Infinity Center.

4. Hazard mitigation plan grants available

The Texas General Land Office (GLO), Texas Division of Emergency Management (TDEM), and the Texas Water Development Board (TWDB) are encouraging local entities eligible under federally declared counties or zip codes affected by Hurricane Harvey, the 2015 floods, or the 2016 floods. There is \$25 million in grants available to help assist eligible entities in developing or updating FEMA-approved local hazard mitigation plans. These plans help local communities recognize the risk and hazards that currently exist, identify ways to reduce or eliminate these risks, and qualify communities for additional grant-funded programs. Local jurisdictions may be eligible for awards of up to \$100,000 from the GLO to develop a new Local Hazard Mitigation Program. Communities can also be eligible for a smaller amount to update an existing plan. Local entities can apply at <https://recovery.texas.gov/mitigation/lhmpp.html>.

5. Border security ten-point plan

This week, Governor Abbott outlined a ten-point plan that he is urging the Biden Administration to follow in order to bring the border crisis under control. That plan includes:

- Continue the Title 42 public health restrictions
- Fully reinstate the Migrant Protection Protocols
- Finish securing the border
- End catch-and-release
- Clear the judicial backlog
- Resume the deportation of criminals
- Dedicate federal resources to eradicate human trafficking and drug trafficking
- Re-enter all agreements with our Northern Triangle partners and Mexico
- Send a clear message to potential migrants
- Deploy more federal law enforcement officers

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