



My five cents...

A weekly column from Sen. Robert Nichols

by Sen. Robert Nichols, Senate District 3

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On October 2, 1835, fighting began between Mexican soldiers and the Texas militia at Gonzales, officially starting the Texas Revolution. American colonist at Gonzales had refused a request by the Mexican government to surrender a small cannon that had been given to the settlement years earlier to defend against Indian raids. When the settlers declined the request, Mexican soldiers were dispatched to retrieve it. The iconic “Come and Take it” flag was raised above the cannon during the battle, and the moniker was adopted by the Texian rebels.

Here are five things happening around your state:

1. Nederland teacher honored by National Geographic contest

Nederland High School physics teacher Wendy Lapeyrolerie was recognized as a national runner up in a National Geographic essay contest, one of seven teachers recognized nationwide. The “Meet a National Geographic Explorer” contest required participants to submit a 500 word essay describing the importance of bringing the world into the classroom and how it impacts students and connects them to real world content. Because of her great work, her students will have the opportunity to receive a virtual presentation from National Geographic Explorer Malaika Vaz. Vaz is a filmmaker, conservationist, and the CEO of Untamed Planet, a production company that’s made films for National Geographic, BBC, and PBS. She was named to Forbes 30 Under 30, among other honors. Congratulations on a job well done to Wendy Lapeyrolerie!

2. Second special session ends

Early this month, both chambers of the Legislature adjourned the second called special session this year. By the end of the session, the Legislature passed a number of measures, including new camp safety measures and flood funding, new congressional maps, a bill to reform standardized testing in schools, among other measures. There were 20 bills in total that passed both chambers and were signed by the governor, making the second special session very productive given the limited number of days.

3. DETCOG begins broadband assessment with public meetings

The Deep East Texas Council of Governments (DETCOG) is hosting public meetings to initiate an action plan to bring broadband access to the region. This stems from a US Department of Agriculture Rural Development Broadband Technical Assistance Program award received by DETCOG. The study will begin with an online survey, followed by three in-person public meetings and an additional virtual public meeting. To take the survey, follow this link: <https://www.detcog.gov/broadband>. The virtual meeting will take place Monday, September 29 from 1:30 pm to 3pm. The meeting will be available over Zoom and information on how to access the meeting is available on DETCOG's website.

4. Governor Abbott issues executive order regarding THC

This month, Governor Abbott issued an executive order directing various state agencies to further restrict access to hemp-derived products after the Legislature failed to come to an agreement on further regulation during the special sessions. The order directs the Texas Alcoholic Beverage Commission (TABC) and Department of State Health Services (DSHS) to initiate rulemaking to prohibit the sale of hemp-derived products to minors and require age verification at the point of sale. It also directs DSHS to revise testing requirements to ensure tests measure the total THC content of products to get an accurate reflection of how much THC is actually in a product and ensure it is below the legal threshold. The order also requires TABC, DSHS, and other relevant state agencies to conduct a study on further regulatory action and how it could be implemented.

5. Changes for hunting season 2025-2026

Texas Parks and Wildlife Department (TPWD) wants hunters to be aware of changes made before heading into the field this hunting season. Starting this season, TPWD is offering fully digital license options for all recreational hunting, fishing, and combination license and tag types. Additionally, legislation passed during the 89th regular session streamlines the process for non-resident hunter licenses. Now there are only two options: Non-resident General Hunting license, for hunting any legal bird or game animal, and Non-resident Special 5-Day Small Game/Exotic Hunting license, for non-residents looking to harvest exotic animals, small game birds, non-game animals, fur-bearing animals, squirrels, or javelinas. TPWD is also initiating changes for season date changes for mule deer season, quail season, and migratory game bird season. For more information, visit <https://tpwd.texas.gov/>.

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