



Senator Birdwell's 'Capitol Update' **3-9-15**

Greetings from your Texas Capitol! The last few weeks have been busy, and we're still one week short of the constitutional 60-day mark at which we can begin hearing legislation (other than gubernatorial-declared emergency items). Let's get right into it!



Honoring Hood County and the City of West

Since our last Update, I had the distinct privilege to honor two very important groups of people representing two communities which are very special to me.

Pictured first (left) are the representatives of the Hood County Tornado Recovery Committee; Marilyn Luton, Committee Chair and President of the United Way of Hood County; Toni Brown-Balew, Executive Directive United Way of Hood County; Lance Terry, President of the Board of Directors, Mission Granbury; Mary Flores, former Case Manager Mission Granbury; and Sunny Erwin, Texas Neighborhood Services. I was proud to honor this group with a resolution for the tireless efforts in helping our community recover from the devastating tornado in May of 2013—all on a volunteer basis.

Pictured second (right) are some of the local leaders of the City of West; Mayor Tommy Muska, Mayor Pro Tem Steve Vanek, Councilman Bryan Muska, and City Secretary Shelly Nors. My friend and colleague, Representative Kyle Kacal, is pictured to the far right. On West Day, I was humbled to be able to recognize this group with a resolution for the citizens of West, all of whom have made great strides in rebuilding their wonderful community after the West Fertilizer Plant Explosion in April of 2013. That could not have been done without this great leadership team.

Updates on Filed Legislation

In recent Updates, we have been sharing summaries of some of the bills I have filed thus far, as well as key bills that I have co-authored with my Senate colleagues. Here are a few more additions to that list:

SB 525 – Requires that a tax lender to notify any mortgage servicer, holder of a recorded preexisting lien encumbering the property, and collector for any taxing authority that holds a tax lien, that the property owner has authorized the said lender to pay off their taxes. The enhanced disclosures and notices will ensure that all parties are aware of the tax lien transfer.

SB 557 – This legislation creates the framework for counties impacted by a tolling authority—even if in a limited capacity—to be part of the authority's advisory council. The North Texas Tollway Authority, for example, is traditionally governed by its four "member" counties in the Metroplex, but part of its road system touches Johnson County. This bill would ensure that citizens with a small stake in a tolling authority's roadways (e.g. Johnson County) would get a seat at the leadership table. We're working this bill with Rep. DeWayne Burns (R-Cleburne).

