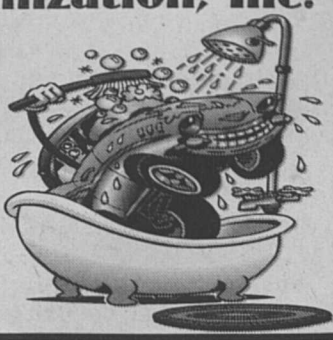


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Saturday, March 28
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Texas Senate Weekly Review

AUSTIN - The 81st Legislature reached a significant mark last Friday, passing the 60th day of session.

Senate rules prohibit most legislation from being considered before this day, so this week the Senate began passing bills not tagged as emergency legislation by the Governor.

Wednesday, the Senate approved a controversial voter ID bill, one that would require Texans to prove their identity before they cast a vote. Voters would have to show one form of photo ID, like a driver's license, or two non-photo forms of ID, like a utility bill and a library card.

Those without accepted ID's could cast a provisional ballot. Proponents of the bill contended that voter fraud is a serious problem in Texas, while opponents argued the bill could disenfranchise certain voters, especially the disabled and elderly.

Another bill passed Wednesday, one that could affect many Texas drivers, would increase penalties for illegally parking in a handicapped spot. SB 52 by Laredo Senator Judith Zaffirini, would increase the fine for a first offense from a maximum of \$500 to a maximum of \$750. Penalties would increase for subsequent offenses, up to \$1,100 and 50 hours of community service for a fourth offense.

Thursday, the Senate passed a bill that would permit needle-exchange programs for drug abusers in Texas. According to Greenville Senator Bob Deuell, the bill's author, Texas is the only state in the nation that prevents such programs.

His bill, SB 188, would allow non-profit groups to offer one-to-one syringe exchanges, in addition to drug abuse counseling and education programs for prevention of communicable diseases.

Deuell said that dirty needles are a real public health issue. "As a physician, I looked at the data," said Deuell, a practicing family doctor, "and I found that it decreases HIV, it decreases Hepatitis B and C, it saves the state money."

The Transportation and Homeland Security Committee considered bills Wednesday aimed at improving the way Texas pays for its roads and highways.

One of these bills, SB 855, would permit metropolitan counties to hold local-option elections to raise money to fund local transportation projects.

The bill's author, committee Chairman Senator John Carona of Dallas, said it's difficult to find funding methods that have broad support. "There are very few things that we can do that we can garner political support for in sufficient amounts to make a meaningful difference," he said. "This, I believe, is one responsible way to get there, because it is voluntary and it does allow voter involvement."

The bill would permit county commissioners' courts to hold elections where voters could decide to raise fees to pay for new transportation costs, from highways and bridges to light-rail service.

Ballots in these elections would have to list each proposed project's cost and time to complete.

While the bill considered before the committee only included the Metroplex, San Antonio and Austin regions, Carona said officials from Houston and El Paso have expressed interest in joining in.

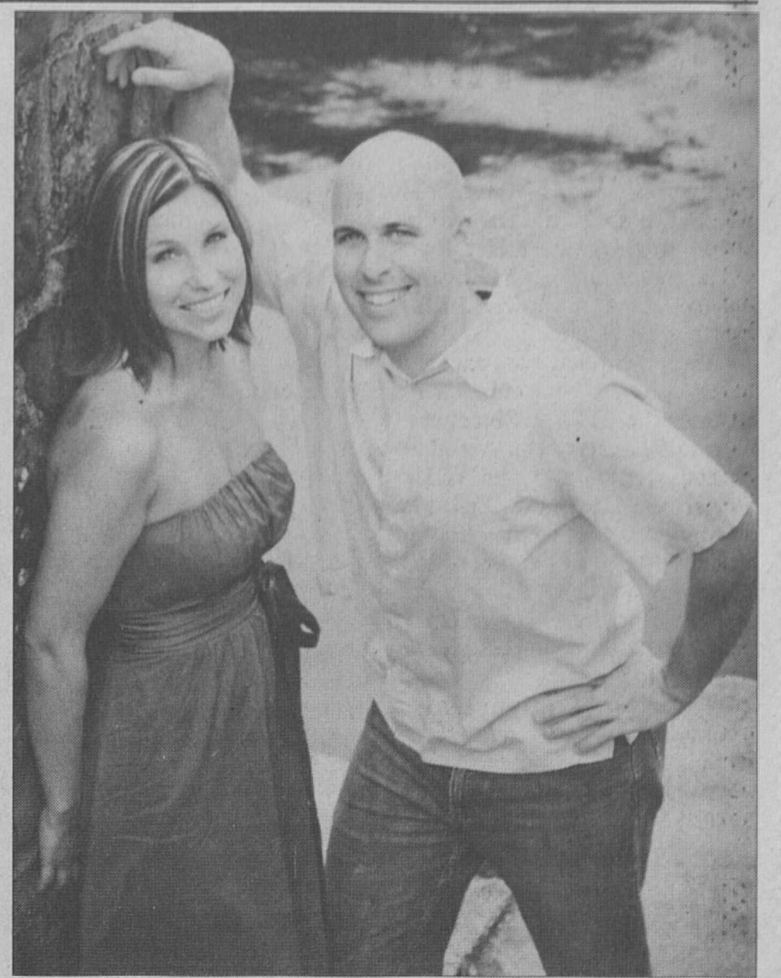
Thursday, the Natural Resources Committee heard testimony on a bill intended to improve air quality in Texas. SB 16, by Waco Senator Kip Averitt, would direct various state agencies that deal with environmental policies to administer a grant program to encourage the development of new, more efficient and greener methods of energy generation and emission reduction in Texas.

The bill would direct these agencies to encourage a transition to more efficient building codes and electric appliances. It would also seek to build the hybrid car market in Texas, offering a \$4,000 rebate for purchasers of plug-in electric vehicles.

Averitt specifically pointed out provisions in the bill that would direct state officials to get involved with emission negotiations at the federal level.

Because the state generates so much energy, and in turn so many greenhouse emissions, he said Texas has a lot at stake when the federal government starts to write environmental regulations. "Texas has so much to lose in that argument," Averitt said.

"It is imperative, in my opinion, that somebody be speaking for our state and helping those folks in Washington, D.C., understand our Texas economy and business, and let them know about the things we're doing here and what ramifications their decisions will have on our state," he added.



Matthys-Hammon To Wed

Eddie and Ann Pavliska of Eagle Lake, along with George and Debbie Matthys of Taylor, are pleased to announce the engagement of their daughter, Kelli Georgianne Matthys to Jeffrey W. Hammon, son of Cliff and Linda Hammon of New Braunfels.

Kelli is the granddaughter of Henry Sunderman and the late Elenor Sunderman, and Laura Matthys and the late George C. Matthys, all of Eagle Lake. She is a 1998 graduate of Rice High School and a 2002 graduate of Southwest Texas State University with a Bachelor's of Business Administration in Marketing. She is the Project Administrator of Sessions, Fishman, Nathan, and Israel LLP in Dallas.

Jeff is the grandson of Billie and Lloyd Stanton of Annandale, Virginia and the late John R. Ward. He is a 1995 graduate of New Braunfels High School and a 2000 graduate of the University of Texas with a Bachelor's of Science in Mechanical Engineering. Jeff is a Supply Chain Manager for the Dr. Pepper Snapple Group in Plano.

The couple will exchange vows on April 25, in Austin. After a honeymoon to New Zealand and Australia, the couple will reside in Dallas.

Rice Special Olympics Spring Fundraiser-Drawing is April 6!

Special Olympic Athletes need your support for their trip to Austin to the Area Track and Field meet on April 25

Purchase tickets with almost 30 chances to win! Prizes include a V-Tech Nitro Bilingual Notebook, Manicure and many restaurant and Wal-Mart gift certificates. There are seven spring baskets with multiple prizes in each basket.



Buy a book of 6 for \$5 or \$1 each
 Get your ticket from an athlete, parent or volunteer.

We appreciate your support.

COMMON MISTAKES THAT THREATEN YOUR BEAUTIFUL, HEALTHY SMILE

MISTAKE #1: SPEED BRUSHING

It is extremely important that brush all of our tooth surfaces. It takes nearly 3 minutes to do this. Yet, most people spend less than 30 seconds brushing their teeth. In the process, they miss spots where bacteria are able to grow wild. Take your time when you brush and try to cover all of your tooth surfaces. Consider using a timer to make sure you brush for a full 3 minutes.

MISTAKE #2: NOT TAKING CARE OF OUR TONGUE

Surprisingly, it may be your tongue that's causing embarrassing bad breath. People go through great effort to produce a sparkling set of teeth, but they ignore the tongue which is literally crawling with odor producing bacteria. To effectively remove these offending bacteria, consider one of several commercially available tongue cleaners (tongue scrapers). These simple devices, usually made of plastic or stainless steel, allow you to quickly remove bacteria, protein and food debris from your tongue, producing fresher, cleaner breath.

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Workzone Awareness Week April 6-10

Navigating construction can be difficult, not to mention risky, for both drivers and workers.

The Texas Department of Transportation (TxDOT) manages more than 1,000 highway projects at any given time on 80,000 miles of Texas roads.

The American Recovery and Reinvestment Act will bring another \$2.25 billion to the state, substantially increasing construction.

As work volumes increase, so do crashes.

TxDOT will join the Federal Highway Administration and other transportation partners the week of April 6-10 to observe the 10th annual National Work Zone Awareness Week.

The event is designed to remember victims and raise safety awareness for workers and motorists.

Each year in Texas, there are more than 20,000 crashes and about 150 people killed in highway construction and maintenance work zones.

Since 1938, there have been 268 TxDOT employees killed in work zones.

Thankfully, in 2007, the Yoakum District had no work zone fatalities, but we did have 72 crashes that occurred in work zones.

More than four out of five fatalities are motorists.

Speeding and inattention are the most common causes cited.

Rear-end collisions account for one in three crashes.

Safety is TxDOT's first priority, no matter what job behind the desk or on the highway.

Following are tips that can

help motorists decrease their chances of being involved in a work zone collision.

—Slow down and follow posted speed limits.

Traffic fines are double in work zones.

—Pay attention.

Workers are often close to

traffic.

—Be patient.

Delays can be frustrating, but it only takes a few minutes to slow down in a work zone.

—Plan ahead.

Leave early to reach your destination.

Drive safe to be safe.

Feeder Cattle Prices Steady On Week

For the week ending March 21, feeder cattle prices at Texas auctions were mostly steady to as much as \$7 higher per hundredweight.

Higher fed cattle prices and seasonally lower supplies contributed to the increase.

Cotton prices were slightly lower on continued uncertainty about global demand.

Grains were higher because of concerns about dry weather on the Plains, wet conditions in the Midwest, good export sales and a weaker dollar.

As for futures markets, feeder cattle, finished cattle, cotton, wheat, corn and lumber were

higher than a week earlier.

Some locations in East and South Texas reported up to an inch of rain last week, but most of the state received trace amounts at best.

Topsoil moisture remains very short to adequate statewide, and pastures are in very poor to fair condition.

Corn planting was 44 percent complete, and grain sorghum was 25 percent planted.

Cotton, rice and soybean planting are also under way.

The winter wheat crop is in mostly fair to very poor condition, with 7 percent of the acreage headed.

Egg Production Down Six Percent From Last Year

February 2009 egg production in Texas totaled 372 million eggs, down 6 percent from February 2008 and down 9 percent from January 2009, according to the monthly report released by the Texas Field Office.

The number of layers during February averaged 18.5 million, down 2 percent from last year and up 1 percent from January 2009.

Egg production per 100 layers averaged 2,009 eggs, down from last year's 2,103 eggs and down from last month's 2,239 eggs.

Texas hatchery production of broiler-type chicks totaled 51.3 million, down 5 percent from last year.

United States egg production totaled 6.98 billion eggs during February 2009, down 3 percent from a year ago.

Production included 5.91 bil-

lion table eggs, 917 million broiler-type hatching eggs and 68 million egg-type hatching eggs.

Nationally, the total number of layers averaged 341 million during February 2009, down 1 percent from a year ago.

Production per 100 layers was 2,023 eggs, down 2 percent from February 2008.

The U.S. monthly hatch of egg-type chicks totaled 36.9 million, down 2 percent from February 2008.

The hatch of broiler-type chicks, at 701 million, was down 9 percent from February of last year.

The leading U.S. breeders placed 7.22 million broiler-type pullet chicks for future domestic hatchery supply flocks during February 2009, down 4 percent from February 2008.

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 TVAC Discount.....\$3,390
Sale Price \$24,000

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'06 Ford Explorer Eddie Bauer, 3rd seat ...\$17,988
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