



## *Enhancing the Quality of*

## *Life for*

## *Rural Texans*

*Would you like to help sponsor a regional conference in your community?*

*You can contact ARCIT Executive Director, Kara Mayer Mayfield at [kara@arcit.org](mailto:kara@arcit.org) for more information.*

*Together we are making a difference for rural and small communities in Texas!*

## 84th Legislature Interim Charges

Since the legislature is in session a limited amount of time, in-depth studies of important issues often are conducted by committees during the interim period. Generally, the lieutenant governor specifies interim charges for senate committees, and the speaker of the house specifies interim charges for house committees. Most interim studies result in a report to the senate or a report to the house containing the committee's findings and recommendations.



There is some overlap between the House and Senate interim charges, such as requests for committees to look at issues such as oil field theft, eminent domain, groundwater issues and the property tax appraisal system. Also, lawmakers are to look further at eliminating the franchise tax paid by businesses.

House and Senate committees will hold hearings in the months ahead and report their findings shortly before the start of the 85th Legislature in January 2017.

ARCIT will monitor interim charges and hearings to make sure Texas' rural and small community voice remains strong.

### House Interim Charges

On November 4, House Speaker Joe Straus issued more than 150 interim charges, directing 36 committees to study a diverse list of issues ranging from the effectiveness of the state's role in border security to the effect of the plummeting cost of oil on the local economy.

The assignments cover many topics, however they all focus on three core priorities: supporting private-sector growth, creating opportunity through education and continuing to make government more transparent and accountable.

The charges focus on agricultural issues such as the state's ongoing water needs, promoting Texas-made products, improving rural infrastructure, and access to health care.

Regulatory and tax hurdles that prevent the growth of small businesses and consider ways to incentivize small business development will be studied by The Committee on Economic and Small Business Development. The Committee on Public Education will continue to look at key elements of the state's school finance system.

For a list of all House interim charges, visit the Texas House of Representatives website at <http://www.house.state.tx.us/>.



## Senate Interim Charges

Since October 8, Lt. Gov. Dan Patrick has issued four batches of interim study assignments to Texas Senate committees.

Specifically, the Natural Resources Committee will study the federal mandates being implemented by the Environmental Protection Agency (EPA) and the impact they will have on the Texas economy. The committee will also review the competitiveness of Texas' permitting process and make recommendations on how to maintain our friendly business climate.

The Senate Agriculture, Water and Rural Affairs Committee will continue to focus on protecting and increasing the water resources of our state while preserving the water rights of all Texans. The Inter-Governmental Relations (IGR) Committee will review and identify concerns related to municipal annexation as well as maintaining the integrity of local ordinances.

<http://www.senate.state.tx.us/>



## TDA Rule Change Notice

On October 9, the Texas Department of Agriculture (TDA) filed regulatory fee changes with the Texas Register. If adopted, fees will be increased for various licenses, renewals, inspections and other activities related to statutory duties of TDA. If adopted, the fee changes will go into effect on December 1, 2015. You may view the full fee structure – previous, current and proposed rates at <https://texasagriculture.gov/NewsEvents/NewsEventsDetails/tabid/76/Article/3078/Recent-Rule-Changes.aspx>

## Update on November 6th Elections



All 7 constitutional amendments passed with overwhelming statewide support.

- Proposition 1— (property tax relief) passing 87% -13%
- Proposition 2— (disabled vet spouses) passing 92% - 8%
- Proposition 3— (state official residence) passing 67% – 33%
- Proposition 4— (sports raffles) passing 69% - 31%
- Proposition 5— (small county private roads) passing 83% -17%
- Proposition 6— (hunting and fishing) passing 81% -19%
- Proposition 7— (highway funding) passing 84% - 16%

In House District 118 Republican John Lujan (28%) will face Democrat Tomas Uresti (22%) in a runoff. A runoff should be held Jan. 19.

Saturday, November 14, 2015 - First day to file for all other candidates for offices that are regularly scheduled to be on the Primary ballot

## In Other News...

- Governor Greg Abbott sent a letter to all Texas Sheriffs informing them that awards of grant funding from the Governor's Criminal Justice Division (CJD) will be conditional on full compliance with Immigration & Customs Enforcement (ICE) notification and detention requests. Under this new policy, any Sheriff's Department that does not fully honor ICE's detention requests will be ineligible for CJD grant funding from the Governor's Office.
- Rep. Kevin Brady (R-Texas) will be the next chairman of the powerful US House of Representatives Ways and Means Committee, succeeding former Chairman Paul Ryan (R-Wis.), who stepped down after he was elected Speaker. The Ways and Means Committee is regarded as one of the most powerful panels on Capitol Hill, with jurisdiction over taxes, trade, healthcare and Social Security.
- Lt. Governor Dan Patrick announced the appointment of seven Senate members to a Select Committee on Property Tax Reform and Relief. The Select Committee on Property Tax Reform and Relief will travel the state holding public hearings and look for ways to improve the property tax process as well as reduce the burden on property owners. This select committee will report their recommendations to the Finance Committee prior to the 2017 85th Legislative Session. The Select Committee on Property Tax Reform and Relief appointments are:
  - Sen. Paul Bettencourt (Chair)
  - Sen. Brandon Creighton
  - Sen. Kelly Hancock
  - Sen. Eduardo A. "Eddie" Lucio, Jr.
  - Sen. Charles Perry
  - Sen. Van Taylor

*Don't forget that as an ARCIT member you have access to a range of programs and services available to your community. Please contact ARCIT at (512) 788-1819 for more details or visit the ARCIT website at [www.arcit.org](http://www.arcit.org).*

*2015-2016 flu season - Flu vaccine is available now, and DSHS encourages people not to wait to protect themselves and their family by getting vaccinated as soon as possible.*

### **2015 ARCIT Board of Directors**

*The Honorable Mike Sutherland, Burlison County*

*The Honorable Byron Ryder, Leon County*

*The Honorable Jimmy Sylvia, Chambers County*

*The Honorable Lee Norman, Garza County*

*Carolyn Gibson Baros*

*Robin Betts, Fire Chief, City of Atlanta*

*Vicky Rudy, City Manager, Oak Ridge North*

*Lynda Pack, Jacksboro Eco. Devo. Corp.*