

**87<sup>th</sup> Session of the Texas Legislature** - The 87<sup>th</sup> session of the Texas Legislature was kicked off at noon on Tuesday, January 12, 2021. As prescribed by the Constitution, the regular session of the legislature will last for 140 days. The last day of the session will be May 31, 2021.

**GOVERNOR:**

**Welcoming Senate and House Members** – Governor Greg Abbott made welcoming speeches in both the Senate and House chambers on Tuesday. He said, “I am looking to seeing the innovative solutions that you are able to provide to the challenges that the people of this state are facing. I look forward to working with you this session just as effectively as we did last session. Let’s be clear, last session was a tremendous success. Among other things the we accomplished, we passed sweeping reforms to our school finance system. And, we made major investments in our students and in our teachers. But now, new challenges await us this session. Over the past year, Texans have been challenged like never before. But, Texans are resilient and our state will emerge from this episode stronger than ever before and in our typical superior fashion. To do that, however, we all need to come together and work together over the next 140 days exactly like we did last session. Over the next 140 days, we have the opportunity to put Texas on a trajectory to make our state even more extraordinary.” **The Governor discussed his priorities including:**

- Tackling COVID challenges;
- Ensure better access to health care for all Texans;
- Support law enforcement officers and keeping communities safe;
- Safeguarding freedoms for all Texans; and
- Getting Texans back to work.

He concluded by saying, “When we do this, we will create a healthier, safer, freer, and more prosperous future for every Texan. Now, more than ever, Texans need you to succeed this session. But equally important, now, more than ever, America needs Texas to lead the way. May God bless you in your efforts. And, may God forever bless the great State of Texas.”

**SENATE:**

Lt. Governor Dan Patrick gavelled in the Texas Senate. Texas Supreme Court Chief Justice Nathan Hecht administered the oath of office to the 16 senators elected in November, 2021. Two new Senators had been previously sworn in – Sarah Eckhardt (D-Austin) and Drew Springer (R-Muenster).

**Election of President Pro Tempore** - The Senate unanimously elected Senator Brian Birdwell (R-Granbury) as the President Pro Tempore for the Senate.

Senator Birdwell was nominated by Senator Jane Nelson. Senator Birdwell will officially serve as Governor on occasions when both the Governor and Lt. Governor are out of the state.

**Senate Resolutions** – On Wednesday, the Senate adopted **SR 1** by John Whitmire (D-Houston) the **caucus resolution**, which addressed several housekeeping items including:

- naming Senate officers;
- limiting seating in the gallery to ensure social distancing and requiring a wristband demonstrating a negative COVID-19 test for entry to the gallery;
- requiring members and staff to be COVID-19 tests each day they attend a Senate session or a committee hearing;
- requiring staff to be tested the first day of the week and daily before accessing the Senate Chamber or attending a committee hearing;
- allowing each senator to have one staff member on the floor at a time while the senate is in session;
- allowing Senators to determine whether to require a wristband demonstrating a negative COVID-19 test for entry into the member's office;
- requiring Senate members to wear masks while on the Senate floor except when alone at their desks; and
- requiring the public to have a wristband demonstrating a negative COVID-19 test to enter a committee hearing.

**Note:** *The resolution has a provision stating, “The Senate leadership will confer with leadership of the House of Representatives to determine procedures for members of each house visiting the other house’s chamber. Should the House of Representatives approve a less secure standard of COVID-19 procedures than the Senate, the Senate may take appropriate measures to address that issue.” On Thursday, the House took a position that COVID-19 testing is available but not required. Therefore, it appears additional negotiating will be necessary.*

**Lt. Governor Dan Patrick** told members that although the COVID-19 protocols in the Senate rules only apply to spaces under the jurisdiction of the Senate, he believes similar standards should be applied to the whole capitol.

Also on Wednesday, the Senate adopted **SR 2** by Bryan Hughes (R-Mineola) the Senate Rules. The major change was the number of votes required to suspend the regular order of business to bring up a bill for consideration by the Senate from three-fifths (19) to five-ninths (18). That provision was voted on separately, and it was adopted on a party line vote of 18 “ayes” (Republicans) and 13 “nays” (Democrats). The rest of the rules were unanimously approved.

**Changes in Senate Committees included:**

- The Committee on Agriculture was eliminated;
- A new Committee on Jurisprudence was created with five members;

- The Committee on Intergovernmental Relations was changed to the Committee on Local Government and expanded from seven to nine members;
- The Committee on Natural Resources and Economic Development was decreased from eleven to nine members;
- The Committee on Nominations was increased from seven to nine members;
- The Committee on Property Tax was eliminated; and
- The Committee on Water and Rural Affairs was renamed the Committee on Water, Agriculture and Rural Affairs and increased from seven to nine members.

And, on Wednesday, the Senate passed **SR 4** by Joan Huffman (R-Houston), establishing **procedures for consideration of redistricting bills**. It:

- requires the Special Committee on Redistricting to hold regional hearings to solicit public input on redistricting, including local communities of interest;
- allows the committee to conduct a regional hearing in any location in the state that the chair determines appropriate to encourage participation from all areas of the state;
- allows the committee to use two-way videoconferencing to facilitate testimony from the general public during a regional hearing held in the capitol;
- requires a witness testifying by videoconference to be clearly visible and audible to the committee members, and requires a committee member questioning a witness by videoconference to be clearly visible and audible to the witness and the committee members;
- requires witnesses testifying by videoconference to submit a witness affirmation form before testifying;
- allows the chair to provide procedures for the orderly participation of witnesses and to reasonably limit the time for registration of witnesses, the order of appearance, and the time allotted for each witness in order to provide all witnesses the opportunity to be heard in a timely manner;
- prohibits the committee from considering or taking formal action on a specific bill, resolution, or other nonprocedural matter during a regional hearing, except for the adoption of permanent rules at an initial meeting held in the capitol; and
- requires 72-hour notice for a regional hearing during the regular session or in the interim between sessions, and 48-hour notice during a special session.

**New Senate Members** – The Texas Senate has four new members:

S-14 – Sarah Eckhardt (D-Austin) (previously sworn in)

S-19 – Roland Gutierrez (D-San Antonio)

S-29 – Cesar Blanco (D-El Paso)

S-30 – Drew Springer (R-Muenster) (previously sworn in)

**Partisan Numbers** - In 2019, the Texas Senate had 19 Republicans and 12 Democrats. This session, the Texas Senate has 18 Republicans and 13 Democrats. Republican Senator Pete Flores of Pleasanton was defeated by Democrat Roland Gutierrez in Senate District 19.

**Next Week:** The Senate will not be in session next week. The Senate will reconvene at 2:00 p.m. on Tuesday, January 26, 2021.

## **HOUSE:**

The House was convened by Secretary of State Ruth Hughs. She presided over the House until the Speaker was elected. Robert Haney, Chief Clerk of the House, administered the oath of office to 145 House members. (*The House has a vacancy in House District 68 due to the resignation Drew Springer, who won the December 19, 2020 Special Election Run-off in Senate District 30. Special election information on House District 68 is below.*) Four House members were sworn in separately.

**Election of Speaker** - The first order of business after the swearing in was election of the Speaker of the House. Representative Dade Phelan (R-Beaumont) was elected by a record vote of 143 to 2. The two “no” votes were freshman members Jeff Cason (R-Bedford) and Bryan Slaton (R-Royce City). Representative Slaton said, “I can't vote in favor of a speaker who has refused to articulate to Republicans whether or not he believes we should have a true conservative session.”

In his acceptance speech, Speaker Phelan outlined his priorities:

**Public Education** – “In order to unleash our state’s full potential and emerge from this challenge, Texas children and educators must continue to be at the forefront of our legislative agenda this session. When the House last adjourned, we celebrated landmark property tax and school finance reform. But now, Texas children are at risk of falling behind because of disruptions caused to this state as a result of the pandemic. We cannot fail them when they need us the most.”

**Health Care** – “To get Texans back to work, we must protect our citizens’ health and safety. Telemedicine has made health care accessible in every corner of the state.”

**Economic Recovery** – “Texans are resilient, flexible, and capable of incredible feats when they are allowed to do their jobs, operate their businesses and live their lives as they see fit. We must revitalize our economy. We must reduce burdensome regulation that impedes our business climate. We can do all this, while balancing the budget without shifting the financial burden or the recovery onto our hardworking families.”

**Regulatory Reform** – “The pandemic has magnified the antiquated ways that we conduct business and deliver services in Texas. It has soon transformed every facet of our lives including our government to respond under overwhelming adversity. In a matter of days, businesses across the state stepped up to help where it was needed the most, Members, the red tape cut by Governor Abbott

was a life-line to Texas small businesses. And, 51 years after putting a man on the moon, we finally figured out how to sell a margarita to go. We now enjoy more freedom and economic opportunity. The Texas Legislature should embrace the regulatory changes. Learn from them, and eliminate unnecessary burdensome regulations from our statutes once and for all.”

**House Rules** – On Thursday, the House was in session for four hours debating and ultimately unanimously passing **HR 4** by Todd Hunter (R-Corpus Christi) the permanent **House rules**. 23 amendments were debated and all failed except the author’s perfecting amendment.

**Changes to House Committees included:**

- removing the San Jacinto Historical Advisory Board from the jurisdiction of the Committee on Culture, Recreation and Tourism;
- removing the Texas Private Security Board from the jurisdiction of the Committee on Homeland Security and Public Safety;
- adding the Texas Behavioral Health Executive Council to the jurisdiction of the Committee on House Administration and the Committee on Public Health;
- adding the new name of the Texas Board of Professional Engineers and Land Surveyors and deleting Texas Board of Professional Surveying to the jurisdiction of the Committee of Licensing and Administrative Procedures;
- reducing the Committee on Pensions, Investments and Financial Services from eleven to nine members;
- changing the name of the Office of Southern Regional Education Compact Commissioner to the Southern Regional Education Board in the jurisdiction of the Committee on Public Education;
- deleting the Interagency Obesity Council and adding the Texas State Board of Examiners of Marriage and Family Therapists and the Texas Child Mental Health Care Consortium to the jurisdiction of the Committee on Public Health; and
- changing the name of the Office of Multistate Tax Compact Commissioner for Texas to the Multistate Tax Commission in the jurisdiction of the Committee on Ways and Means.

Special rules during a declared disaster were added including:

- providing that if the speaker and permanent speaker pro tempore are both unavailable for any reason, the chair of the Committee on State Affairs is authorized to convene the house and preside over its deliberations and authorizing the speaker to provide the chief clerk with a list of members in priority order authorized to preside;
- requiring face masks at committee meetings, although a member of the House or a witness can temporarily remove the mask only while speaking from a microphone, however, if clear barriers are installed on the dias in a meeting room, a member, officer, or employee may remove the face

- mask when the person is protected by the barriers if other persons who are not protected by the barriers are at least six feet away;
- requiring committee meeting notices to include instructions related to public access to the meeting location and health and safety protocols for attending the meeting and instructions for individuals who wish to testify in person at the hearing or electronically submit public comments without testifying;
  - allowing two members of a committee to constitute a quorum for the sole purpose of taking testimony during a public hearing, and allowing other committee members to participate through an Internet or other videoconferencing system if two-way communication has been enabled to allow all committee members to be clearly visible and audible to each other and to the testifying witness;
  - requiring committee chairs, when inviting witnesses to testify at a public hearing, to make a reasonable effort to invite witnesses representing different viewpoints on the measures and other matters;
  - allowing member of the committee to submit a request to the chair to extend an invitation to not more than two witnesses to testify on a particular measure;
  - requiring the committee to allow persons domiciled in the state to electronically submit comments to the committee on matters included on the notice for the public hearing;
  - designating an area in the gallery for media access during House proceedings;
  - requiring persons admitted to the House floor or gallery to wear a face mask, but a member of the House can temporarily remove the member's face mask only while speaking from the front or back microphone or from the speaker's desk; and
  - allowing legislators to cast a vote from the gallery.

**Note:** *The initial proposal to allow for a “consensus calendar” and provisions requiring pre-filing of amendments to bills on the Emergency or Major State Calendars were removed in the author’s perfecting amendment.*

**New House Members** – This session, the Texas House has 16 new members:

- H-2 Bryan Slaton (R-Royce City)
- H-10 Jake Ellzey (R-Midlothian)
- H-25 Cody Thane Vasut (R-Angleton)
- H-26 Jacey Jetton (R-Richmond)
- H-28 Gary Gates (R-Rosenberg) (previously sworn in)
- H-59 Shelby Slawson (R-Stephenville)
- H-60 Glenn Rogers (R-Graford)
- H-74 Eddie Morales (D-Eagle Pass)
- H-76 Claudia Ordaz Perez (D-El Paso)
- H-92 Jeff Cason (R-Bedford)
- H-96 David Cook (R-Mansfield)
- H-100 Jasmine Felicia Crockett (D-Dallas)

H-119 Elizabeth “Liz” Campos (D-San Antonio)

H-138 Lacey Hull (R-Houston)

H-134 Ann Johnson (D-Houston)

H-148 Penny Morales Shaw – (D-Houston)

**One former member returned to the House:**

H-132 Mike Schofield (R-Katy)

**Partisan Numbers** - In 2019, the Texas House had 83 Republicans and 67 Democrats. The House currently has 82 Republicans and 67 Democrats. In the 2020 election, the Republicans picked up one seat in Houston (House District 132 where former Representative Mike Schofield defeated Representative Gina Calanni), and the Democrats picked up one seat in Houston (House District 134 where Ann Johnson defeated Representative Sarah Davis). Since there are currently 149 members, the count is 82 Republicans and 67 Democrats.

**Dade Phelan Staff Announcements** –House Speaker Dade Phelan (R-Beaumont), has made several staff announcements since November including:

- **Julia Rathgeber**, Chief of Staff
- **Mark Bell**, Deputy Chief of Staff
- **Kelly Mitchell**, Executive Director of Speaker Operations
- **Jay Dyer**, Director of Policy
- **Zach Johnson**, Special Advisor and Chief Director of District Operations
- **Enrique Marquez**, Director of Communications
- **Cait Meisenheimer**, Senior Advisor for Communications
- **Andrew Blifford**, Director of Budget
- **Sydney Watts**, Director of Administration
- **Margo Cardwell**, General Counsel (She will advise on issues related to Judiciary & Civil Jurisprudence)
- **Andrea Chavez**, Policy Advisor for Transportation, Local Government, County Affairs, and Urban Affairs
- **Kory Curtis**, Policy Advisor for Energy Resources, Environmental Regulation, International Relations & Economic Development, and Licensing & Administrative Procedures
- **Molly Czepiel**, Policy Advisor for Human Services, Public Health, and County Affairs
- **Ross Giesinger**, Policy Advisor for State Affairs and Elections
- **Danny Mitnacht**, Policy Advisor for Insurance, Pensions, Investments & Financial Services, and Business & Industry
- **Marissa Patton**, Policy Advisor for Natural Resources, Agriculture & Livestock, Land & Resource Management, and Culture, Recreation & Tourism
- **Shakira J. Pumphrey**, Policy Advisor for Criminal Jurisprudence, Corrections, Juvenile Justice & Family Issues, Homeland Security & Public Safety, and Defense & Veterans' Affairs
- **Jimmy Skipton**, Policy Advisor for Ways & Means

- **Daniel Warner**, Policy Advisor for Higher Education and Public Education

**Next Week:** The House will not be in session next week. Committee preference cards are due to the Speaker's office by 3:00 p.m. on Friday, January 22, 2021. The House will reconvene at 1:00 p.m. on Tuesday, January 26, 2021.

## **BUDGET:**

**Biennial Revenue Estimate** – On January 11<sup>th</sup>, Comptroller Glenn Hegar released the Biennial Revenue Estimate (BRE), showing the state is projected to have \$112.5 billion in revenue available for general-purpose spending during the 2022-23 biennium. The revenue estimate represents a 0.4 percent decrease from funds available for the 2020-21 biennium. This decline is a direct result of the COVID-19 pandemic, which caused revenue collections to fall well short of what was expected when the legislature approved the 2020-21 budget; **the ending 2020-21 balance will be close to a negative \$1 billion.** Comptroller Hegar said, "As is always the case, this estimate is based on the most recent and precise information we have available. It represents our efforts to provide lawmakers with the most accurate forecast possible as they craft the budget for the 2022-23 biennium and the supplemental spending bill to address the remainder of the current biennium. The forecast, however, remains clouded with uncertainty. The ultimate path of the pandemic and the behavior of consumers and businesses during a resurgence are difficult to gauge. It's also unclear how they'll respond once the pandemic is fully under control. As a result, **there is a wide range of possible outcomes for state revenue through the end of fiscal 2023, with the possibility of revenue falling short of this forecast but also a chance revenue could exceed it, perhaps substantially.** In any case, the legislature will again face some difficult choices to balance the budget. While savings from agency spending cuts and federal funding could help erase the projected shortfall for this biennium, a substantial supplemental appropriations bill could increase it, thereby reducing revenue available for the next biennium."

**General Revenue-Related Funds** - The \$112.5 billion available for general-purpose spending includes 2022-23 collections of \$119.6 billion in General Revenue-Related (GR-R) funds. These collections will be offset by an expected 2020-21 ending GR-R balance of negative \$946 million. In addition,

**Set-Asides** - \$5.8 billion must be reserved from oil and natural gas taxes for 2022-23 transfers to the Economic Stabilization Fund (ESF) and the State Highway Fund (SHF); another \$271 million must be set aside to cover a shortfall in the state's original prepaid college tuition plan, the Texas Tomorrow Fund.

**State Agency Cuts and Federal Funds** - **The projected shortfall does not account for any GR-R expenditure reductions resulting from the state leadership's instructions for most state agencies to reduce spending by 5 percent of their 2020-21 GR-R appropriations. Nor does it incorporate the effects of substituting federal funds provided as pandemic-related assistance for some GR-R pandemic-related expenditures. Official action on either of those items could eliminate the projected shortfall, which must be made whole by the 87<sup>th</sup> legislature.**



**Sales Tax Collections** - Sales tax collections make up the state's largest source (62 percent) of GR-R revenues in 2022-23. The BRE projects sales tax revenues will increase by 5.1 percent from the 2020-21 biennium, reaching \$64.1 billion for the 2022-23 biennium after \$5 billion is allocated to the SHF.

**Other Sources** - Other significant sources of GR-R revenues in 2022-23 include:

- motor vehicle-related taxes, including sales, rental and manufactured housing taxes, which are expected to reach \$10.1 billion, up 5.1 percent from 2020-21;
- oil production tax collections, which are projected to generate \$6.5 billion, up 10.1 percent from 2020-21;
- natural gas tax collections, which are expected to raise \$3.5 billion, up 66.9 percent from 2020-21; and
- franchise tax collections, which are projected to generate \$6.3 billion, up 5.1 percent from 2020-21; for all funds, franchise tax revenue is estimated to generate \$9 billion, up 4.4 percent from 2020-21.

**Rainy Day Fund** - The ESF (the state's "Rainy Day Fund") currently contains about \$10.5 billion, not counting currently outstanding spending authority. Absent any legislative appropriations, the ESF balance is expected to total \$11.6 billion at the end of 2022-23.

**All Funds Revenue** - State revenue from all sources and for all purposes is expected to reach \$270.5 billion for the 2022-23 biennium, including about \$98.2 billion in federal receipts, along with other income and revenues dedicated for specific purposes and therefore unavailable for general-purpose spending.

**Conclusion** – Comptroller Hegar concluded by saying, “We must keep an eye on several things that could impact this forecast, including the spread of the COVID-19 virus and the possibility of renewed reduction in customer-facing economic activity. In addition, we must carefully monitor the nascent recovery in energy markets as further shocks on either the demand or supply side could threaten recent positive developments for prices and production. On the other hand, household savings have increased during the pandemic, while credit card debt has declined; this could support increased consumer spending once people feel safe to return to pre-pandemic activities. So, while there are numerous potential concerns, my economic forecast assumes a further moderate decline in economic activity in fiscal 2021, followed by a return to growth in the 2022-23 biennium at rates somewhat higher than those experienced during the last decade.”

## **PUBLIC EDUCATION:**

**Optional Beginning-of-Year Assessments** - After the cancellation of the end of the school year 2019-2020, State of Optional Texas Assessments of Academic Readiness (STAAR®) tests due to the COVID-19 pandemic, the Texas Education Agency (TEA) offered optional beginning-of-year (BOY) assessments so schools across the state could measure how well students learned the prior grade-level's knowledge and skills. With that information, schools and teachers could make adjustments to curriculum and instruction for the fall of the 2020-21 school year, adjustments that would be necessary to help maximize student learning given the

disruptions caused by COVID-19 in the spring of 2020. Students were able to access the assessments as a printable PDF or by using an online platform either at home or at school. Results cannot be tabulated for those who used the printable PDF version of the assessment. 648,609 students from 334 different school systems took the optional BOY assessments online. Researchers were able to use statistical techniques to extrapolate this sample to the entire state, effectively allowing results from the BOY to measure the extent students lost academic knowledge and skills relative to normal years as a result of the COVID-19 shutdowns from March through early fall 2020. The results of the study, released January 14, 2021, indicate students experienced 3.2 months of instructional loss from the closures, in addition to the typical 2.5 months of summer learning loss. BOY assessments were available from July 27, 2020, until October 16, 2020 and were designed to diagnose student understanding of the Texas Essential Knowledge and Skills (TEKS) from the previous school year. Therefore, the BOY assessments were administered to students based on their prior year enrolled grade level. The BOY assessments covered the same grades, subjects and courses that are provided for STAAR and were constructed from previously released STAAR test items. Examining changes from 2019 to the 2020 BOY tests is intended to provide a useful starting point to quantify the impact on learning that COVID-19 has had on Texas students as of the beginning of the current school year. Results from STAAR tests taken at the end of this year will provide a more complete picture of COVID's ongoing impact during the 2020-21 school year. The Texas Education Agency (TEA) is not using data from the BOY assessments for any accountability purposes. Results for individual students and campuses were used by school systems and teachers to plan and implement any necessary instructional adjustments for the 2020-21 school year. Aggregate results of the data were used in the research study.

[Here](#) is a link to the BOY assessment report.

#### **STATEWIDE – COVID-19 RESPONSE:**

**COVID-19 Vaccination Hubs** – On January 11<sup>th</sup>, Governor Greg Abbott toured the Tarrant County large vaccine hub at the Esports Stadium Arlington & Expo Center in Arlington and then held a press conference. He gave some statistics (as of January 11, 2021):

- 1,580,400 vaccines have been shipped to providers in Texas,
- 802,507 first doses have been administered,
- 83,538 second doses have been administered,
- 777,897 doses have either not been reported or are waiting to be administered,
- An additional 487,500 doses have been provided to CVS and Walgreens for administration at nursing home and long-term care facilities,
- 75,312 of those have been administered,
- 412,188 are either not yet reported or waiting to be administered,
- The combined numbers show 2,067,900 doses have been provided in the state,

- 877,815 have been administered,
- 158,825 doses are being shipped this week to the hubs, and
- Just over 38,000 doses will go to 206 additional providers across the state, including several in rural counties that until recently had not received allotments.

The numbers are changing daily. There is usually about a two-day lag time in vaccine reporting (similar to COVID-19 case data). State officials have discovered that some providers have been holding vaccines for second doses. They have been instructed to stop holding second doses and get those distributed as first doses to people who have not had a vaccine. Plenty of second doses will be provided. Also, CVS and Walgreens are moving slowly in vaccinating residents of nursing homes and long-term care facilities. They have been instructed to “pick up the pace.” **The governor showcased Arlington and reported that the state is shifting its distribution model from a large number of distributors to a smaller number of large hubs.** As of January 11<sup>th</sup>, 28 large-scale hubs have been set up. 206 smaller locations across the state also have vaccines to distribute. The state is continuing to make the process more efficient and quicker. 104 counties have vaccines available this week. Other counties will use previously received vaccines. Individuals in all 254 counties have received the vaccine. The state is limited by the number of vaccines they receive from the federal government. The state has no control over that. The governor said the state is expecting to receive each week this month:

- 310,000 first doses, and
- between 320,000-500,000 second doses.

That number does not include doses provided directly for nursing home and long-term care facilities. **He expects the supply to increase rapidly.** He also said the state is working to reduce hospitalizations by setting up anti-body therapeutic administration centers in 13 sites across the state in the short-term expanding to additional locations in the longer-term. Anti-body therapy is most helpful if administered at the early stage of the virus. He asked people to seek it at the point of diagnosis so it will be more effective.

**Texas is First State to Administer One Million Vaccines** – On January 14<sup>th</sup>, Governor Greg Abbott and the Texas Department of State Health Services (DSHS) announced that that **State of Texas has administered more than 1 million doses of the COVID-19 vaccine - making Texas the national leader in vaccinations.** This milestone comes exactly one month to the day after the first doses arrived at vaccine providers in the state on December 14, 2020. According to the latest Centers for Disease Control and Prevention (CDC) data, the Lone Star State has administered more doses than any other state. Among the top 20 states for doses distributed, Texas ranks number one for percentage of doses administered. Governor Abbott said, “Texas is leading the way for our nation once again. This is the biggest vaccination effort we have ever undertaken, and it would not be possible without the dedication and tireless efforts of our healthcare workers. We still have a long road ahead of us, but Texans continue to prove that we are up to this challenge.” Voluntary vaccination continues throughout the

state for front-line health care workers, residents at nursing homes and assisted living facilities, and Texans over 65 or with a chronic medical condition to aid in reducing hospitalizations and protect the health of those in these vulnerable populations. Texas receives more vaccine from the federal government each week and expects the weekly amount to increase in the future.