

Representative Trent Ashby in Woodville



Five-term Texas Representative Trent Ashby spoke to over 60 attendees during the Tyler County Forest Landowner Association’s Spring Meeting at the Pickett House Restaurant on Saturday, March 12, 2022. Per redistricting, Rep. Ashby is now running for reelection from the new District 9 which includes Tyler County. Rep. Ashby stated that with each census the population shifts even more to the cities and that the number of representatives from rural areas of the state decreases. As their numbers decrease, he and other representatives from rural areas must work harder to ensure that our interests are addressed.

Of particular interest for forest landowners, Rep. Ashby was one of the authors of legislation which limits the liability and sanctions for prescribed burns. Frivolous lawsuits were being filed for unrelated accidents within a ten-to-fifteen-mile range of a burn. The new law reduces the area to 300 feet.

More transparency with eminent domain is now law. Low-ball offers are not allowed, and damages incurred on other property because of eminent domain must be considered. The condemning entity must convey easement terms at the first meeting. The Landowner Bill of Rights is expanded to include the right to file a complaint against a registered easement or right-of-way agent. Rep. Ashby encourages landowners to contact his office with any issues they may encounter with eminent domain as there is more that may need to be done.

Lawsuits against truck drivers and trucking companies are frequently filed – even when the truck driver is clearly not at fault. Rep. Ashby stated that legislation is being considered to “try to bring sanity to these lawsuits”.

Rep. Ashby stated that we will see progress with the implementation of broadband within the next five years. He, an author of legislation to expand broadband service to underserved areas in the state, stated that Texas should receive significant federal funds which have already been appropriated for this purpose.

Rep. Ashby encourages voters to vote “yes” on May 7 for Constitutional Amendment Proposition 1 which addresses public school taxes for elderly and handicapped persons and Proposition 2 which increases the residence homestead exemption for public schools from \$25,000 to \$40,000.