

03/20/2018

Greetings Fabulous Fortieth District,

You have heard me repeat this quote numerous times by Theodore Roosevelt, "Far and away the best prize that life has to offer is the chance to work hard at work worth doing."

Friday morning began with Coffee Conversations in Carthage with citizens of my district engaging in discussions such as in-state tuition, second amendment rights, and how blessed we are to live in Tennessee. Every Friday morning these conversations continue with the folks of the fortieth to which I am ever grateful to work for.

Currently I am focused on the Transportation needs of the district. Beginning with Dekalb County, Senator Pody and I met with TDOTs Joe Deering, Assistant Chief Engineer, Wes Hughen, Director of Project Development and Ken Flynn, Director of Operations from the Chattanooga Office headquarters of Region 2. Focusing on two major road projects, it was an open meeting to the public so we could be on the same page concerning dates and the estimated time of what I refer to as "moving dirt" when the machinery shows up to begin the onsite construction. More specifics about the different phases of HWY 56 and HWY 70 will be forthcoming in May or June.

Here are some numbers of interest for Tennessee:

Interstates: 1,104 miles

State Maintained HWY miles: 13,884

Total HWY miles: 95,523

Bridges: 19,721

Waterways: 946 navigable main channel miles

Airports: 74 general aviation, 5 commercial, 142 heliports

Railroads: 18 shortlines (842 miles) 6 class 1 railroads (2,177 miles)

Transit: 28 systems serving all 95 counties

Bicycle: 4,497 miles

Pedestrian: 270 miles of greenways, sidewalks and trails.

In my Transportation Sub committee we passed HB2211 which is an extension of the no hand held devices while driving in a school zone, passed last year to include roads, highway and streets. With the number of fatalities due to texting reaching the number of DUI's or better, many of us believed it was time to make the hard decision that could change the behavior for better behind the wheel.

Over in the Senate, the companion bill SB2539 did not pass. We are going to have to address the seriousness of distracted driving when it comes to our phones. Technology is progressing however unfortunately the sound of a text ding or the ring of a call beckons us to answer. That split second to respond can and has taken lives.

Tennessee continues to trend record low unemployment and record low tax burden in 2018. In fact, Tennessee has officially been ranked as the lowest taxed state in the entire nation according to a organization focused on financial industry called Wallet Hub. Our unemployment rate has remained 3.3% since September 2017. We have been blessed! Since 2011 we have cut taxes by 800M! With keeping more money in the pockets of Tennesseans there is no doubt Tennessee is moving in the right direction attracting job-creators, inspiring entrepreneurs, and putting people back to work. Plus we are ranked number 2 in the country for transportation/road quality and 2nd in cost of living by CNBC.

So in closing we are indeed fortunate. Let us count our many blessings and continue together toward "work worth doing" to make Tennessee even greater!

Honored to work for you,

Terri Lynn Weaver