

TEXAS SILVER-HAIRED LEGISLATURE
Jonell Sims, Chairman, Senior Americans Committee

When TFRW President, Toni Anne, asked me to investigate the Silver-Haired Legislature, what the organization did etc..., I accepted the challenge. Little did I know then what I was getting myself in to.

First of all, Texas became a member of the Silver-Haired Legislature in 1984. This is the 12th Session as it meets every two years. The TSHL is made up of 116 Legislators from around Texas.

I am in the Permian Basin district which covers 14 counties; not a lot of people, but a lot of area! After applying for membership in February, approval came in June, but as a TSHL that group comes under the Area Agency on Aging (AAA). On June 12, 2008, the Permian Basin Planning Commission approved my appointment to the Permian Basin Aging Advisory Council, which means more meetings. Talk about a chain reaction!!!

Now back to TSHL. On July 7-10, 2008, the Legislators met in Austin for the first session of the 12th TSHL. Members were sworn in by a member of the State Department in the House of Representatives chamber at the Capitol. There were four days of intense training to prepare the TSHL members for writing resolutions to present to the Legislature in January. These resolutions will be bills that will be of interest and helpful to the senior citizen. Members were given committee assignments to research and write resolutions pertaining to the needs of the aging.

In September, the TSHL will convene for 5 days at the Capitol to finalize resolutions that will be presented to the members of the House and Senate during the regular session in January 2009. Many resolutions will be presented; some will never make it out of committee, some will never be assigned a date on the calendar; and possibly a few will be voted on and passed during the Legislative Session.

In addition to the regular business of training etc..., new officers were elected for the 12th Session. A Speaker, Speaker Pro-Tem, Deputy Speaker Pro-Tem, Secretary and Comptroller are the offices of the TSHL. The new officers are truly a dedicated group and are anxious to get to work and care for the needs of the aging population. It appears that there are a few vacancies in the TSHL, so if anyone is interested in applying, check your district and determine if there is a vacancy and apply at the next election in 2010. The web site is www.txshl.org.

More information will follow after the September Session!!!!