

TPA LEGISLATIVE OUTREACH SERIES

The oil and gas industry, of which pipelines are an integral part, is vital to the economy of Texas and the nation. TPA has reached out to Texas state legislators to inquire about the importance of the industry to the residents and businesses of their districts. Here, Texas State Rep. Tom Craddick (R-Midland) speaks about his West Texas district. Rep. Craddick is Chair of the Land & Resource Management Committee.



REP. TOM CRADDICK ON HOW PIPELINES DELIVER PROSPERITY TO HIS TEXAS HOUSE DISTRICT

Q. A successful entrepreneur, you sought and won political office at a very young age, winning a seat in the Texas House of Representatives as one of only nine Republicans in the 150-seat house. In 2003, you made state history when you became the first Republican Speaker, serving in that capacity until 2009. Tell us more....

A. I have been a member of the Texas Legislature for 51 years. I was elected in my mid-20s to represent the Midland area. At the time, I was one of very few Republicans serving in the Texas House. My beginning years as a legislator in the minority taught me many valuable lessons. Over this brief time in the Legislature, it has been interesting to watch the change in values, the emphasis on the oil and gas industry in our state and the change in the overall House membership.

My wife, Nadine, and I have been married for more than 50 years. We have two children, Christi and Tommy, and the true joy of our family is our three grandchildren Tripp, Claire and Catherine.

Q. You mentioned the state's oil and gas industry. What benefits does it provide to West Texas?

A. House District 82 includes the Counties of Crane, Upton, Midland, Martin and Dawson. Each of these counties sees a significant economic impact from the oil and gas industry. So many small businesses in this district are made to serve the industry. Many people do not realize the industry pays taxes and other fees, which are used to fuel the economic stabilization fund, as well as public primary and secondary education. Texas is absolutely dependent on the natural resources of both oil and gas. Beyond educational funding, this industry provides jobs. As we have seen in the recent COVID-19 pandemic, these jobs are vital to the economic success of West Texas.

Q. How have recent events affected the industry in your area?

This industry is not only a substantial source of jobs and tax revenue, but it is also the heartbeat of our communities. Most of our jobs in the district are somehow connected to the oil and gas industry's success. In 2020, we have been hit with more than just the COVID-19 pandemic. There have also been the ongoing price wars with other countries. While the price wars appear to be subsiding, the lack of demand caused by the pandemic has stifled the recovery. We have seen unemployment numbers surge. When demand returns, it is my hope the people who previously worked in the industry can quickly return to work.

Q. What are the advantages of an adequate pipeline infrastructure?

A. Pipelines are vital to the overall success of the industry. A product without a manner to get to market is not worth much. Pipelines move to market more product and at a faster rate than any other method of transportation. In addition, pipelines are safer than trucks, while preserving our already strained road infrastructure for passenger vehicles.

Over the years I have enjoyed working with the pipeline industry. As the oil and gas industry as a whole is faced with newfound hurdles, I look forward to working with TPA and its member companies to ensure the best possible outcome for Texas.