



# Texas Building Branch Capitol Roundup

December 17, 2018

**Inside this edition of Capitol Roundup:**

**Rep. Alvarado wins special election to Houston's state Senate District 6 seat**

**Former AGC-TBB chair Mike Novak named executive director of Texas Facilities Commission**

**Rep. Dennis Bonnen builds a team of staffers as he prepares to step into House Speaker position**

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**Archives**

## Quote of the Week

"We're going to miss you. Your decency, sincerity, and kind soul will stay with us forever. Through our tears, let us know the blessings of knowing and loving you, a great and noble man, the best father a son or daughter can have. And in our grief, let us smile knowing that Dad is hugging Robin, and holding Mom's hand again."

**-George W. Bush**



Former president George W. Bush gave a tearful eulogy for his father, George H.W. Bush, this month. The 41st President passed away at his Houston home on Friday, Nov. 30. [Click here](#) to view the full eulogy.

## Alvarado wins special election to state Senate seat in Houston

State Rep. Carol Alvarado (D-Houston) prevailed last Tuesday in a four-candidate race to fill the Senate District 6 seat vacated by Sen. Sylvia Garcia (D-Houston).

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Alvarado won just over half of the vote - 50.4 percent - to narrowly avoid a runoff election against her House colleague Rep. Ana Hernandez (D-Houston), who received 24.3 percent. Senate District 6 covers Houston's north and southeast sides.

Republican candidate Martha Fierro finished in a close third place with 23.2 percent. The fourth candidate, Democrat Mia Mundy, received 2.1 percent.



**Rep. Carol Alvarado**

Alvarado's election means there will be a special election to fill her seat in House District 145 on a date to be decided by Gov. Greg Abbott.

It was the second time Alvarado had run for the seat, after first losing to Garcia in a 2013 special election. Alvarado will assume office when Garcia's term officially ends in January. Garcia resigned from the position last month after winning a special election to replace U.S. Rep. Gene Green, also a Democrat from Houston.

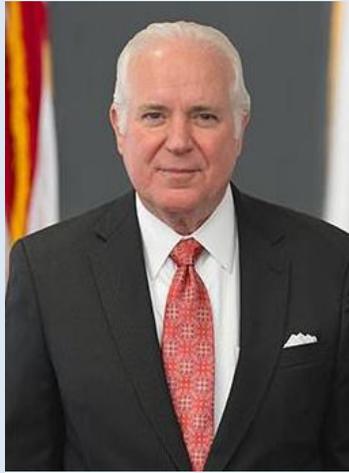
#### **Former AGC Texas Building Branch chairman Mike Novak named Texas Facilities Commissioner**

The Texas Facilities Commission has named former AGC-TBB chairman Mike Novak to be its next executive director. Novak served on the commission from 2011-2018 and replaces interim Executive Director John Raff.

After the commission had gone nearly a year without naming a leader, it finalized an offer last month to Novak, a former Bexar County Commissioner and long-time San Antonio contractor. "It has been an honor and a privilege to serve with you for seven years now," Novak told his colleagues. "I look forward to this challenge."

[South Texas AGC](#)

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Novak founded and Novak Group, LLC, a construction management and energy solutions firm, and has more than 30 years of industry experience in construction management. Novak has also served as chair of the Alamo Area Metropolitan Planning Organization and as president of the San Antonio AGC chapter.

**TFC Executive Director Mike Novak**

As executive director, Novak will lead the \$581 million Capitol Complex Project. The first phase

of the Capitol Complex Master Plan is the construction of the Texas Mall, with five levels of underground parking, plus the addition of two new state office buildings.

Commissioner Patti Jones said the board wanted a leader in place in time for the legislative session and to assure employees of the direction of the agency.

"At this point in time, we've been without a leader for most of this calendar year," Jones said. "That leaves people wondering. Nobody really knows the direction you're going."

**Bonnen's staff appointments signal impartial, even-handed approach**

Since gathering the votes to become speaker of the Texas House, Rep. Dennis Bonnen (R-Angleton) has spent the last month making new appointments to his team, which he hopes to model after a former Democratic speaker.

Bonnen has said he hopes to emulate the leadership style of former House Speaker Pete Laney (D-Hale Center). Known as a strong leader who encouraged his members to vote their district, Laney was well received among the majority of House members during his time as speaker.

In building his team, Bonnen first named Brian McCall as the head of his speaker's transition team. McCall, a former GOP House member from Plano and current Chancellor of the Texas State University System, has been overseeing the recruitment of candidates, the planning of a swearing-in ceremony, and other responsibilities in preparation for the upcoming session.



Bonnen named Gavin Massingill as his chief of staff. Massingill, of Gatesville, is a former contract lobbyist and chief of staff to Rep. Charlie Geren (R-Fort Worth). Massingill has also worked under former Rep. David Lengefeld (D-Hamilton).

Bonnen named Shera Eichler, his aide of 16 years and legislative chief of staff, as the Director of the Speaker's Office. Bonnen has also named Houston attorney Gardner Pate as the speaker's Policy Director and General Counsel. Pate served on Gov. Abbott's campaign committee for attorney general. More recently, Pate worked as a lobbyist focusing on campaign ethics and finance.

One of Bonnen's first moves was also to name a 10-member working group to vet candidates for House parliamentary positions. The committee, consisting of five Republicans and five Democrats, came to their decision this week, as it announced Sharon Carter and Hugh Brady to the post.

Carter was Laney's parliamentary and had a reputation among members for remaining fair and impartial even when tensions arose in the often discordant lower chamber. Since leaving that position, Carter has worked as an independent consultant, lobbying on behalf of both Democrats and Republicans.

Hugh Brady has spent several years publishing Texas House Practices, which has become the dominant source for the history and context of rules in the House. This will be Brady's first time serving in the position.

Bonnen, who has served in the Texas House since he was 24 years old, amassed 109 pledges of support for speaker last month, from Republicans as well as 31 Democrats. Members will officially vote on the speakership in January when the Legislature convenes in Austin.



**Rep. Dennis Bonnen, left, and outgoing Speaker Joe Straus**

While some members support Bonnen because they believe he will work well with Lt. Gov. Dan Patrick, who leads the Texas Senate, others want him to hold the gavel because they believe he's willing to push back against

some of Patrick's positions. Bonnen, a 46-year-old bank executive, has chaired committees under two speakers and served as speaker pro tempore when former House Speaker Joe Straus was absent.

Bonnen also recently received a nod of support from Republican Caucus Chair Rep. Dustin Burrows (R-Lubbock). "Texas House Republicans have full faith in Representative Dennis Bonnen as he has committed his Speakership to supporting and empowering our members of the Texas House so they may dutifully represent the values and principles of their districts," Burrows said.

### [2019 AGC Texas Building Branch Calendar](#)

#### **January 2019**

MON 8th - First Day of 86th Legislature

FRI 18th - Board meeting

#### **February 2019**

FRI 15th - OCAs submission deadline

TUE 26th - Legislative Day

**April 2019**

FRI 26th - TBB Board meeting

**May 2019**

MON 27th - Last Day of 86th Legislature

**June 2019**

WED 5th - SAT 8th - Convention @ Jackson Hole, WY

**August 2019**

THU 22nd - OCA awards @ Georgetown, TX

FRI 23rd - Board meeting

**November 2019**

FRI 15th - Board meeting

8 - First Day of 86th Legislature

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