

SPJST (April Vestnik Project) - Learning About Our Heritage

This project earns 1 point in the SPJST Youth Clubs Merit Points System. Mail completed project no later than May 10, 2009 to:
SPJST Youth Program c/o SPJST Home Office • P.O. Box 100 • Temple, Texas 76503

Name _____ Age _____ Lodge _____

The Texas State Capitol: Where It All Comes Together

Just as SPJST lodges and youth clubs are governed by their elected officers, so too are the people of Texas governed by their elected officials. The Governor, the Lieutenant Governor, the Speaker of the House, Senators and Representatives all have their offices at the Texas State Capitol in Austin. The Capitol is one of the most important building in Texas. It is important for its architecture, its history and its function as the center of Texas government.

The Texas State Government is divided into three groups. Each branch plays an important role in making sure that the State of Texas runs smoothly. The three branches of government are as follows: The Executive Branch, The Legislative Branch and the Judicial Branch.



The Texas State Capitol is located in Austin. It took six years to build the fantastic four-story building completed in 1888 at a cost of more than \$3 million. The building also has an extension that is completely underground.

The Governor is head of the Executive branch and the leader of the State. The Governor works with the 31 State Senators and 150 State Representatives to pass laws that will help the State and citizens of Texas. The Governor's job includes representing Texas at various ceremonies. Before any bill can become a law, it must pass through the Governor's office, where it will be signed into law.

The Judicial branch is made up of different courts located throughout the state. The court leaders decide the meaning of laws, how they are applied, and whether they break the rules of the Constitution. If a person or group is found guilty of breaking a law, the Judicial system decides how they should be punished.

The Legislature is the lawmaking branch of the government. With so many people living in Texas, it is important to have some rules that everyone must follow. These rules are called laws, and they are designed to help everyone live together. The Legislature is the branch of government that votes on whether or not a bill should be included in the Texas Constitution as a new law.

The Texas Legislature meets every two years to do its job. When the representatives and senators meet, it is called being "in session." The 81st Session of the Texas Legislature was called to order on January 13, 2009. This is a busy time at the Capitol as many people are in and out of the building every day, touring the facility as well as meeting with the senators and representatives and helping them to write the laws that will govern our state. The session will end on Monday, June 1, 2009.

Sources: <http://www.senate.state.tx.us>, <http://www.kids.house.state.tx.us>

Time to put on your thinking caps! If you were elected to serve as a state senator or representative, what are some of the laws that you would like to see passed? Use the back of this sheet to write your answer. Select responses will be printed in the Vestnik.