

HIGHLANDS

CROSBY

# Star Courier

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THURSDAY, SEPTEMBER 26, 2019

P.O. DRAWER 405, HIGHLANDS, TEXAS 77562

## These stories in the PRESS:

- Tornado hits Baytown, Dayton
- Beach City News
- Chambers County Recovery
- .....And more, Page 3

## IN THE STARS

### EVENTS

SAT., OCT. 5

#### JAMBOREE!

Highlands Annual Parade, Festival, and 5K Run. Don't miss it. Details at Chamber 281-426-7227.

SAT., OCT. 6

#### Sacred Heart Czech Fest

Polka music, live auction, arts, crafts, live entertainment, food, games. At Crosby Fairgrounds, 14920 FM 2100, Crosby, Tx 77532, 11:30 a.m. - 6:00 p.m.

THUR., OCT. 10

#### The Wisdom of Preplanning

Free dinner and complimentary educational seminar. Limited seating, please call 281-426-3555 to reserve. 6:30 p.m. - 8:00 p.m. at Baytown Seafood, 14226 FM 2100, Crosby, TX 77532.

SAT., OCT. 12

#### Miss & Jr. Miss Highlands

Miss & Jr Miss Highlands pageants are October 12th at Highlands Jr School....Jr Miss at 2pm & Miss at 7pm!

#### BIRTHDAYS

Sep 26—Karen Elkins  
W.F. Hosea  
Sep 27—Julia Becker  
Lee Filer  
Sep 29—Monica Barnett  
Elizabeth Epperson  
Sammy Yarbrough  
Sep 30—Tammy Veach  
Oct 1—Krista Essen  
Brian Filkes  
Lauren Slovak  
Venita Smith  
Oct 2—Reecie Bobalik  
Jana Creel  
Debbie Zadraba-King  
Taylin Woodall

#### ANNIVERSARIES

Sep 27—Rev. Sam & Jewell Purkhiser  
Sep 28—Deacon & Sarah Tittel  
Mr. & Mrs. G.C. Slaughter  
Leon & Barbara Bowen

#### DEATHS

Richard Frederick Arfmann  
Noah Lafayette Pruett

## T.S. IMELDA FLOODING PARALYZES HOUSTON

### 20" of Rain in 24 hours; 1500 High Water Rescues

By Gilbert Hoffman

HARRIS COUNTY — Tropical Storm IMELDA never reached hurricane status, but it ended up doing more flooding than Hurricane Harvey two years ago, according to authorities.

The storm came ashore near Freeport on Tuesday evening, and by Thursday had dropped massive amounts of water on Harris County and counties to the north and east of Houston, all the way to Beaumont.

See Imelda, Page 8



Huffman and Crosby were inundated in flooding. Pictured above is a rescue by boat in Huffman. Houston sent 3 high water vehicles to Crosby to help the fire department. Harris County authorities had to tow over 1600 autos to clear major highways.



Many rescue operations were required in the Deer Run neighborhood in Crosby last week as the accumulation of water began to enter houses and threaten residents. Neighbors and personnel from Crosby Volunteer Fire Dept. and HCESD#5 were involved in the efforts.

## EPA holds update session in Highlands

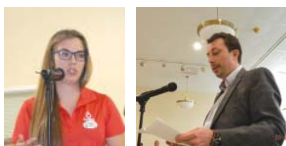
Representatives of the Federal Environmental Protection Agency (EPA) were in Highlands last Tuesday evening, to tell a large crowd what progress has been made on removing the Waste Pits from the Superfund site in the San Jacinto River.

A lengthy presentation by EPA Project Manager Gary Baumgarten was very technical in nature, covering testing, strategies for planning the removal of the toxins, and schedules for the work.

Baumgarten also covered the subject on everyone's mind, the run-away barges in the rain swollen river, and the damage to the I-10 bridge. He covered the details of the incident, the damage to the site, and the fact that no pollution from the site or the barges has been detected. One

barge was on top of the pits, though, and after it was removed Sunday more testing for damage must take place, he said.

With wry humor, he quipped that he had never worked on a site that had so many things happen to it, including floods, an 18 wheel crash,



Jackie Young and Sean Matula were among about 20 persons that spoke.

and barge strikes.

Baumgarten spoke about the schedule of work, noting that the

Continued. See EPA, page 8



A large crowd of concerned residents filled the hall of the Highlands Community Center.

## Crosby original found murdered

Ralph "Lee" Leroy Machala the proprietor of Pooky's Bar was found a victim of a brutal murder in Chambers County on Sept. 21, apparently he had been shot to death.

Locals say he was last seen at Pooky's on Tuesday, Sept. 17 and reportedly his Jeep was seen in his neighborhood on Sept. 18. That Jeep is now reportedly missing.

Machala had recently self reported having diversified into concrete pouring, purchasing a portion of a bar near the Mexican border, and buying RVs in Chambers County and flipping them to individuals in Crystal Beach.

The 1979 Crosby High School graduate was an avid benefactor of the Shriner's Children's Hospital and several times paid for funeral expenses of local friends that had hit hard times.

See "Crosby original found murdered" in the Barbers Hill Press, Page 6.



Ralph Leroy Machala

## BARGE STRIKE DAMAGES I-10 BRIDGE, SHUTS TRAFFIC

Tropical Storm Imelda brought widespread flooding to many areas to the north and east in Harris County, and bayous and rivers rose rapidly.

In the San Jacinto River, nine barges loaded with petroleum products broke loose from their moorings near the Waste Pits Thursday morning about midnight, and travelled downstream with two of the barges striking support columns of the I-10 bridge over the river.

The extensive structural damage caused TxDOT to close the bridge to all vehicular traffic in both directions, and announced that they would remain closed until the waters receded and the supports could be examined.

With very few alterna-



This aerial drone photo, furnished by the EPA, shows one of the two barges that struck the I-10 bridge supports, shearing them from the beams above, and totally destroying the structural integrity. The damage can be seen on the columns supporting the westbound lanes of the highway, but TxDOT will send divers and engineers to examine supports of both east and west arteries before deciding whether to reopen them for traffic.

tive east/west routes, a tremendous traffic jam occurred on the east side of the county, affecting thoroughfares and local roads. Alternate routes SH225/146/330, and US90 were jammed with traffic that also blocked FM2100 for miles. This condition lasted for six days, until TxDOT decided they could use the eastbound side of the highway for two-way traffic, and re-opened with a concrete divider and new striping for two lanes in each direction.

However, it still is unclear what long term repairs will be required for the damaged spans, and how long this might take. Earlier this year a barge hit and damaged a column, and it took three months for repair work.

### AUTO & HOME INSURANCE



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COMMUNITY NEWS

★

# Mayor, Harris County Judge urge support for Imelda Assistance Fund

Harris County, Texas - Houston Mayor Sylvester Turner and Harris County Judge Lina Hidalgo yesterday urged residents to consider donating money to the Imelda Assistance Fund. The Fund was established in the hours following Tropical Storm Imelda's landfall to meet the needs of those who were displaced and/or whose homes were damaged by the flooding that followed.

The effort between Mayor Turner and Judge Hidalgo is in cooperation with the Greater Houston Community Foundation (GHCF), an organization with deep knowledge of the community and expertise in disaster relief charitable work. GHCF previously administered the Hurricane Harvey Relief Fund (HHRF) on behalf of the City of Houston and Harris County after Hurricane Harvey struck the region in August 2017. The fund will work with nonprofit organizations that are vetted and have experience to deliver support to affected residents.

"While the giving spirit of the Houston area knows no bounds, storms such as Tropical Storm Imelda and Hurricane Harvey never observe government boundaries. Imelda displaced people and damaged homes on both sides of the city limits. It is crucial that the city and county move forward as one to help coordinate charitable assistance to the victims. That's why I am joining with Judge Hidalgo to launch this campaign," Mayor Turner said

"All of us have a role to play in helping our community recover from Tropical Storm Imelda," said Harris County Judge Lina


Hidalgo. "Today, there are dozens of communities across the county still digging out from this disaster, and they deserve all the support we can offer. For those who can help, please consider donating financial assistance through this fund. It is one of the most powerful things you can do to help survivors get back on their feet."

Recovery resources for residents are available at ReadyHarris.org. Residents can also dial 211. Additionally, the County has opened two Local Recovery Centers (LRCs) to provide residents an additional way to learn about various recovery programs that may be able to assist them in their recovery efforts. The Centers will be open from 9 a.m. to 6 p.m. Monday through Friday and from 9 a.m. to Noon on Saturdays at the following locations:

- Kingwood United Methodist Church, 1799 Woodland Hills Drive, Rm K 105, Kingwood, TX 77339
- Grayson Community Center, 13828 Corpus Christie St., Houston, TX 77015

At the LRCs, staff are available to answer specific questions about recovery programs and resources. This includes information about where residents can find access to food and temporary housing, support for cleanup and debris removal, legal services, and guidance on how to file insurance claims.

Residents should continue checking ReadyHarris.org or dialing 211 for support and the latest information on additional resources that are being made available.



**Precinct 2**  
**Debris Removal Update**

**Debris removal crews will be in the following subdivisions/roadways starting Monday, September 23rd - Friday, September 27th. Please be sure to place your items out on the curb. If you do not see your area listed below, please call 713-274-3880.**

**ALDINE AREA**  
Aldine Village  
Hill Rd. W.  
Aldine Gardens  
Fairgreen  
High Meadows East  
Sherwood Place  
Castlewood North & South

**BAYTOWN/HIGHLANDS AREA**  
Apache Ln.  
Highland Terrace  
Hunters Village  
Highland Shores  
Kings Colony  
Meadowlake Village  
Cedar Bayou Park W.


**BARRETT STATION**  
Dreamland Place  
Barrett Settlement  
Arcadian Gardens  
St. Charles Place

**CROSBY**  
Riverdale Subdivision  
Hadden Rd.  
Highland Estates Subdivision  
Highland Ridge  
Holy Rd.  
Lake Shadows Subdivision  
Foley Rd.  
Indian Shores Subdivision  
Rustic Acres Subdivision  
Newport North, West, & South

**HUFFMAN AREA**  
Lockshire Subdivision

**PLEASE NOTE:**  
Debris collectors will make three passes in your area.

**TO REPORT DEBRIS REMOVAL, CALL THE HARRIS COUNTY RESIDENTIAL DEBRIS AND DAMAGE ASSESSMENT HOTLINE AT (713) 274-3880**



WWW.HCPS.COM

# Chamber’s Nite at the Races Oct. 12

“And there off!” Please join the Crosby Huffman Chamber of Commerce as they host a “Nite at the Races” on Saturday, October 12th at the Crawfish Shack at 5 pm. Its FREE, BYOB and open to the public.

It’s a great night full of fun, food, and horse racing. Your free entry gets you

\$10 in play money to bet on the 10 races. Extra play money will be for sale. At the end of the night you use your play money to bid on over 35 awesome auction items.

There will be a Kentucky Derby Hat contest for the ladies that pays \$100 cash to the winner.

It’s also a kid friendly event and they are encouraged to dress up if they come. There will also be several card draws during the event.

The Chamber has sponsorships available. You can also purchase a horse for \$25. You get to name the horse, owner, and jockey

and it will be in the official race program the night of the event. Plus if you are in attendance and your horse wins, you win \$50 in play money.

If you have any questions, or want to purchase a reserved table for \$50, please contact the chamber office at 281-328-6984.

# WATER DISTRICT NOTICE OF PUBLIC HEARING ON TAX RATE

The HARRIS COUNTY W.C.I.D. #36 will hold a public hearing on a proposed tax rate for the tax year 2019 on October 8, 2019 at 4:00 p.m. at 903 Hollywood, Houston, TX 77015. Your individual taxes may increase or decrease, depending on the change in the taxable value of your property in relation to the change in taxable value of all other property and the tax rate that is adopted.

**FOR** the proposal: Ronald S. Holder, Gerardo Parra, Maria E. Koukoulakis, Felix Eddy, Edbert Cantu

**AGAINST** the proposal: None

**PRESENT** and not voting: None

**ABSENT:** None

The following table compares taxes on an average residence homestead in this taxing unit last year to taxes proposed on the average residence homestead this year.

	Last Year	This Year
Total tax rate (per \$100 of value)	\$.35000/\$100	\$.32000/\$100
	Adopted	Proposed
Difference in rates per \$100 of value	\$ .03000/\$100	
Percentage increase/decrease in rates(+/-)	-8.57%	
Average appraised residence homestead value	\$ 64,871	\$ 70,135
General homestead exemptions available (excluding 65 years of age or older or disabled person's exemptions)	\$ 12,974	\$ 14,027
Average residence homestead taxable value	\$ 51,897	\$ 56,108
Tax on average residence homestead	\$ 181.63	\$ 179.54
Annual increase/decrease in taxes if proposed tax rate is adopted (+/-)	\$ -2.09	
and percentage of increase (+/-)	-1.15%	

## NOTICE OF TAXPAYERS' RIGHT TO ROLLBACK ELECTION

If taxes on the average residence homestead increase by more than eight percent, the qualified voters of the district by petition may require that an election be held to determine whether to reduce the operation and maintenance tax rate to the rollback tax rate under Section 49.236(d), Water Code.

**Bob Leared Interests 713-932-9011**

# WATER DISTRICT NOTICE OF PUBLIC HEARING ON TAX RATE

The HARRIS COUNTY F.W.S.D. #51 will hold a public hearing on a proposed tax rate for the tax year 2019 on October 9, 2019 at 12:00 p.m. at 367 Queenstown, Houston, Texas 77015. Your individual taxes may increase or decrease, depending on the change in the taxable value of your property in relation to the change in taxable value of all other property and the tax rate that is adopted.

**FOR** the proposal: Jerry Dominy, William Bowes, Cary Stephens, Mike Bilnoski and Les LeBleu

**AGAINST** the proposal: None

**PRESENT** and not voting: None

**ABSENT:** None

The following table compares taxes on an average residence homestead in this taxing unit last year to taxes proposed on the average residence homestead this year.

	Last Year	This Year
Total tax rate (per \$100 of value)	\$.25000/\$100	\$.25000/\$100
	Adopted	Proposed
Difference in rates per \$100 of value	\$ .00000/\$100	
Percentage increase/decrease in rates(+/-)	.00%	
Average appraised residence homestead value	\$ 138,203	\$ 148,877
General homestead exemptions available (excluding 65 years of age or older or disabled person's exemptions)	\$ 27,641	\$ 29,775
Average residence homestead taxable value	\$ 110,562	\$ 119,102
Tax on average residence homestead	\$ 276.40	\$ 297.75
Annual increase/decrease in taxes if proposed tax rate is adopted (+/-)	\$ 21.35	
and percentage of increase (+/-)	7.72%	

## NOTICE OF TAXPAYERS' RIGHT TO ROLLBACK ELECTION

If taxes on the average residence homestead increase by more than eight percent, the qualified voters of the district by petition may require that an election be held to determine whether to reduce the operation and maintenance tax rate to the rollback tax rate under Section 49.236(d), Water Code.

**Bob Leared Interests 713-932-9011**



# Barbers Hill ★ Dayton Press

Serving Mont Belvieu, Dayton, Baytown and surrounding communities since 1995

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## ROUND-UP

### City of Dayton events

-9/27 Storytime at Parker Park: 10:30 am - 11:30 am, Parker Park, 1090 N Winfree St.  
- 9/27 Food Truck Friday: 11 am - 2 pm, The CrossRoads, corner of 90 and Church St., More info  
-9/28 Movie Day @ Jones Public Library: 11 am-Noon, Jones Public Library, 801 S. Cleveland St., Admission Free; Movie TBA

### Dayton Celebrates National Night Out With Free Event

Dayton Municipal Court and the Dayton Police Department will host a National Night Out gathering on Tuesday, October 1 from 6 pm-9 pm in the Community Center parking lot (801 S. Cleveland St.) All are welcome to attend this free event. There will be information booths from organizations including the Texas Department of Transportation, the Dayton Fire Department, the Dayton Police Department, and more. Dayton Municipal Court and Police Department staff will be available to answer questions about their role in the community. They will also be giving away free traffic safety materials and other goodies.  
Food and drinks will be available for purchase. Free parking is available in the Community Center Parking lot.  
National Night Out is an annual community-building campaign that promotes the collaborative efforts of courts, city governments, and residents to make Dayton a safer place to live.

For more information, or to sign up for a booth, contact Britni Vestal with the Dayton Municipal Court (936) 258-5312.

### Goss Memorial Library events

These are the events going on at the Sam and Carmena Goss Memorial Branch Library the week of Monday, September 30, 2019.  
•Tuesday, October 1 - 10:00 am, Baby & Me (ages 0-24 mos)  
•Tuesday, October 1 - 6:30 pm, Cork Dork Book Club at Yopez Vineyard discussing Beneath a Scarlet Sky by Mark Sullivan  
•Friday, October 4 - 10:30 am, Story Time (ages 0-5 yrs)  
Call Sam and Carmena Goss Memorial Library, Mont Belvieu at 281-576-2245 with any questions.

### Annual Veterans Day

Judge Lucia Bates would like to invite local Veterans to a free breakfast at the courthouse, 701 W. Baker Rd., Suite 101 Baytown. Please reserve by calling 713-274-0904 by Friday, Nov. 1

## Heavy rain, tornados rip Baytown, Dayton

BAYTOWN – The area around FM 1942 and Garth Road has had an exceptionally tough time since Tropical Storm Imelda first splashed onshore.

On Wednesday a tornado blew through scaring everyone nearby, destroying a porch completely, damaging a roof, downing fences and freeing some local cattle.

The bright side of that scene was that local neighbors rushed to help those that had been hit by the storm as neighbors tried to recover, fix fences and roofs before a massive rain would hit.

Of course Thursday was a complete wash out deluge from up to 32 inches of rain.

Friday saw the intersection as crossroads of the world as Interstate 10 closed due to being struck by crafts moored within the river.

Monday a Crosby ISD bus was struck at Garth Road and Barbers Hill Road at 4:40 p.m. when traffic was less than desirable.

Tuesday, at about 4:05 p.m. a motor vehicle accident was being worked by ambulance crews and firefighters from Crosby at nearly the same location.



Gene Hicks Jr. of Crosby saw the tornado only seconds after a radio tornado warning sounded for the area of Hick's Farms on FM 1942. "I got in the truck and started surveying the damage, all I found at first was a few trees down but later I found one of my neighbors who asked for help."



The above tornado was photographed at 4:45 p.m. on Wednesday travelling eastbound in the direction of petrochemical plants and Mont Belvieu it lasted about ten minutes. As the tornado rose up into the clouds a second tornado warning came over the radio. the storm would cross Garth Road and FM 1942 causing some but minimal damage.

## Beach City News you need to know

### BEACH CITY PRIDE!

Litter and debris is a continuing issue along FM 2354 and other streets in Beach City. I believe that we have become desensitized to seeing trash along our streets and tend to not notice the severity of the problem. I am asking that we all pitch in and help keep our roadways clean. The City Council has formed a "Beautify Beach City" committee to initiate a campaign to address the litter issue. One thing we all can do is secure our loads in pickup trucks. It is very common to be following behind a pickup and witness paper products flying out of the bed of a pickup truck. I will be

discussing this topic often in the future. I am proud of Kayla Dagley for taking pride and the initiative to do her part by picking up trash on FM 2354. I don't recommend children collect trash along the roads without supervision though. If you have a picture of someone picking up trash on the side of a road in Beach City, please send it to me to share in the newsletter. send their name(s) also.

### BEACH CITY CIVIC CLUB

This newly organized group of citizens is recruiting members. If you would like to get involved in improving the quality of life

in Beach City you can contact me at 281-414-7613 or email me at mayor@beachcitytx.us. You can also contact Dana Colquitt at 832-262-0620 or email her at ttbooboo@hotmail.com. I know that everyone is busy so we will not require a time commitment but any level of involvement is appreciated. Share your ideas and visit with your fellow citizens. The first project that the BCCC will focus on is to join the TxDOT 'Adopt a Highway' program. Application to Adopt 2 miles of FM2354

See Beach City News, Page 6

## Crosby original found murdered



In the aftermath of Tropical Storm Imelda as a realtor endeavored to show a house she discovered a body at the 8000 block of Tri-City Beach Road (FM 2354) property. The body was that of popular Crosby Tavern owner, Lee Machala. The body was flown by a Jefferson County helicopter to the medical examiner's office in Beaumont because roads were flooded. Early reports indicate that it seems apparent the body was moved to the Beach City area after a violent episode concluding in a single gunshot wound.

As if the Storm Imelda were not hard enough on locals, finding the body of a murdered man in a quiet and peaceful area is disturbing.

Sheriff Brian Hawthorne said, "History does in fact have a tendency to always repeat itself as once again, in the midst of a natural disaster, deputies are faced with another perplexing investigation."

Machala was wearing blue jean shorts and an orange colored T-shirt when discovered. There were cuts on the body.

Justice Larry Cryer declared the body deceased, an autopsy has been ordered.


Sterling Funeral Home tried to transport the body to the Medical Examiner's

Office however due to flooding, detectives had to call upon the Jefferson County Sheriff's Office to fly the body by helicopter from Chambers County to Beaumont.

"Special thanks to Jefferson County Sheriff Zena Stephens for the use of the helicopter for the transport of the body," said Hawthorne.

Several leads had been developed by detectives into recently business affiliates.

Sheriff Hawthorne asks if anyone believes they may have information concerning this investigation that they call the Chambers County Sheriff's Office at (409) 267-2500 or CrimeStoppers at (884) 860-8477.





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## Brighter Days

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The LHS friends came by to play games and paint with the residents.




### 5.8 Acres with Farmhouse in Beach City



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★

STATE CAPITAL HIGHLIGHTS

By Ed Sterling

# Governor declares disaster in Imelda-affected counties

AUSTIN — Gov. Greg Abbott on Sept. 19 declared a state of disaster in counties impacted by Tropical Storm Imelda, which first hit the upper Texas Gulf Coast on Sept. 15.

Counties listed in the declaration include Brazoria, Chambers, Galveston, Hardin, Harris, Jasper, Jefferson, Liberty, Matagorda, Montgomery, Newton, Orange and San Jacinto.

The declaration ensures that local officials have access to any state resources they may require to respond.

The state worked with local officials and emergency personnel in the named counties on problems caused by Imelda's heavy rains, high winds and catastrophic flooding.

## Safety select panel meets

The House Select Committee on Mass Violence Prevention and Community Safety met in the Capitol Sept. 17.

The panel is assigned to study mass violence, recommend ways to prevent future occurrences, reinforce public safety in Texas and address any shortcomings. Over the next few months, the panel will meet in Amarillo, Dallas, El Paso, Houston and Odessa.

"In the wake of recent shootings in El Paso and then in Midland-Odessa, it goes without saying that Texans are hurting," the panel's chair, Rep. Drew Darby, R-San Angelo, said. "We've lost friends, family members and co-workers from these acts of mass violence. And I say we because these tragedies and this loss of precious life are felt by everyone in our state, whether or not you knew the victims personally. Texans deserve better and they expect and demand our earnest work to deliver sensible solutions."

Col. Steven McCraw, director of the Texas Department of Public Safety, testified that there have been 12 mass casualty attacks in 53 years in Texas and that six of those attacks occurred in the past three years, resulting in the deaths of 82 people.

Discussion included topics such as social media postings, internet use, hotlines, tips and purchases of weapons and ammunition. Panelists also discussed how law enforcement entities can share databases that contain information on criminal activities and suspicious behavior.

## AGs keep after opioid makers

Purdue Pharma and affiliated U.S. companies filed for bankruptcy last week under Chapter 11 in the United States Bankruptcy Court for the Southern District of New York.



After the filing, Texas Attorney General Ken Paxton said his office for more than a year has worked "to hold Purdue Pharma accountable for its deceptive marketing of prescription painkillers like Oxycontin, which has fueled our opioid epidemic."

Paxton said in a news release that the bankruptcy filing was not unexpected "and is consistent with the framework structure agreed upon by a bipartisan group of 29 attorneys general and Purdue Pharma to obtain those resources to help the communities impacted by opioid misuse and addiction."

## Pipeline inspections increase

The Texas Railroad Commission, the state's energy-regulating agency, on Sept. 17 announced that in fiscal year 2019, which ended Aug. 31, its inspectors completed more than 4,800 pipeline safety inspections and issued more than 2,500 citations for violations.

In contrast, Railroad Commission inspectors completed 3,294 pipeline inspections, resulting in 2,444 cited violations in fiscal year 2018.

"Protection of public safety and our environment is our highest priority," said Stephanie Weidman, director of the commission's pipeline safety section. "Thanks to support from the 86th Texas Legislature, we boosted our inspector numbers from 63 in Fiscal Year 2018 to 70 positions in FY 19. This will help us keep pace with the state's new pipeline infrastructure being constructed to transport Texas' booming oil and gas production."

## Property claims at new high

Texas Comptroller Glenn Hegar on Sept. 18 announced his office approved and paid a record \$308.4 million in unclaimed property claims during the past fiscal year.

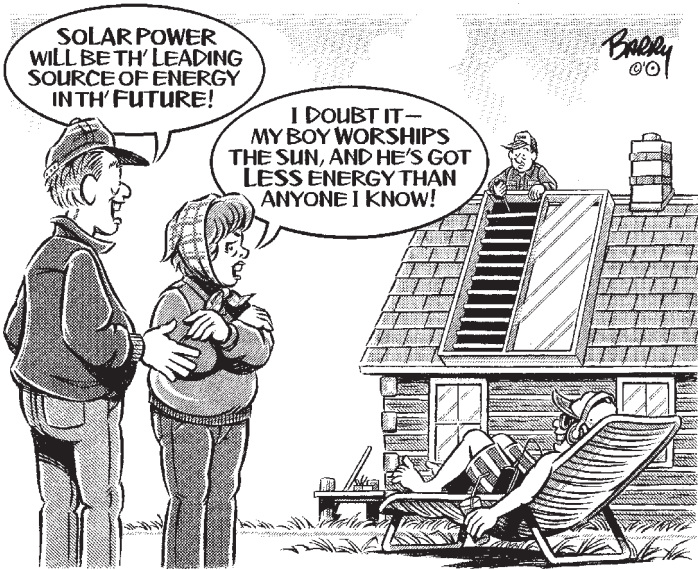
This is the first time the comptroller's office has returned more than \$300 million in unclaimed property in a fiscal year, breaking the previous record of \$281 million returned in fiscal 2017, Hegar said.

There is no statute of limitations for unclaimed property the state holds, which means there's no time limit for owners to file a claim, Hegar added.

## Write-in filing deadline to hit

The Secretary of State's 2019 election law calendar identifies Sept. 26 as the 40th day before Election Day — Tuesday, November 5.

Texans who wish to file declarations of write-in candidacy for most local offices have until 5 p.m. on Sept. 26 to do so. More information is available at sos.texas.gov.



# Reps. Brian Babin and Randy Weber request POTUS deliver an immediate Federal Disaster Declaration for Regions of Southeast Texas

WASHINGTON, DC — September 19, 2019 - U.S. Congressmen Brian Babin (TX-36) and Randy Weber (TX-14) released the following statement after sending a joint letter to President Donald J. Trump requesting he immediately deliver a Federal Disaster Declaration to the regions of Southeast Texas impacted by Tropical Storm Imelda once in receipt of such a request.

"Ensuring that the residents of Texas's 36th Congressional District are safe and have access to the resources they need during and after this storm is my top priority at this time," said Babin. "Tropical Storm Imelda gave our

folks little to no time to prepare, especially for the amount of rainfall the region is currently receiving. Many are still recovering or had just recovered from Hurricane Harvey — which left utter destruction in its wake. Reports indicate that, in many areas, the damage Imelda is expected to leave will be worse than that left by Harvey. I pray that everyone remains safe, and please know that my office and I will continue working tirelessly to make sure our citizens have the necessities and assistance required to weather this storm. I have no doubt that President Trump will act swiftly to deliver a Federal Disaster

Declaration once he receives a request from Governor Greg Abbott to do so."

"Southeast Texans are once again facing life-threatening weather conditions — in some areas, the destruction is worse than Hurricane Harvey," said Weber. "Our first priority must be to ensure residents have access to essential supplies and rescue services. A delay in issuing a Federal Disaster Declaration will inhibit access to life-saving federal resources. We are confident the Administration will work closely with the State of Texas to ensure the health and safety of our citizens."

# Water District Notice of Public Hearing on Tax Rate

Harris County Fresh Water Supply District No. 47 will hold a public hearing on a proposed tax rate for the tax year 2019 on October 10, 2019 at 5 p.m., at 210 Brookview, Channelview, Texas. Your individual taxes may increase or decrease, depending on the change in the taxable value of your property in relation to the change in taxable value of all other property and the tax rate that is adopted.

<b>FOR</b> the proposal:	Dennis Hamala, Jack Dauzat, Alan Wolcik, G W Gunter,
<b>AGAINST</b> the proposal:	None
<b>PRESENT</b> and not voting:	None
<b>ABSENT:</b>	Nick Shankle

The following table compares taxes on an average residence homestead in this taxing unit last year to taxes proposed on the average residence homestead this year.

	Last Year	This Year
Total tax rate (per \$100 of value)	\$0.95/\$100 Adopted	\$0.918/\$100 Proposed
Difference in rates per \$100 of value		\$0.032/\$100
Percentage increase/decrease in rates (+/-)		-3.36%
Average appraised value	\$93,016	\$103,944
General exemptions available (excluding senior citizen's or disabled person's exemptions)	\$9,302	\$10,394
Average taxable value	\$83,714	\$93,550
Tax on average residence homestead	\$795.28	\$858.79
Annual increase/decrease in taxes if proposed tax rate is adopted (+/-) and percentage of increase (+/-)		+\$63.51 +7.98%

## NOTICE OF TAXPAYERS' RIGHT TO ROLLBACK ELECTION

If taxes on the average residence homestead increase by more than eight percent, the qualified voters of the district by petition may require that an election to be held to determine whether to reduce the operation and maintenance tax rate to the rollback tax rate under Section 49.236(d), Water Code.

The Harris County Fresh Water Supply District No.47 proposes to use the tax increase for the purpose of making improvements to the water and wastewater system.

★

LETTERS To The Editor

# Comments on I-10 closure and barges

Sad this is the only east/west highway there is, why hasn't another ever been built?

--Commgar on Twitter

\* \* \* \* \*

I bet they do the same thing they did after the 1990's flood. They made one bridge with 2 super narrow lane each way. They had so many wrecks that car parts were scattered on both sides.

--Sam Tucker on Twitter

\* \* \* \* \*

Sell the barge that hit the I-10 bridge until they pay for the bridge, negligent big time.

--sf3 on Twitter

\* \* \* \* \*

Regarding I-10 bridge over San Jacinto River:

Many of you have asked what can be done to hold the barge company accountable.

Please know that I have spoken to the Texas Attorney Generals office about this. They are looking into the matter to determine what can be done to hold them accountable.

Per a call I just had with TxDOT (1:25pm):

- if fault is found the State does seek reimbursement for the repair costs.

- US Coast Guard is investigating

--Briscoe Cain on Twitter

\* \* \* \* \*

Briscoe, I was in your office earlier this year and spoke to Theresa about this problem and the traffic at spur 330/I-10. I was in contact with Whitmires office and his assistant, Luther Jones... crickets from all of you. Talk the talk, now let's walk the walk.

--Craig Srls, on Facebook

\* \* \* \* \*

We need barges on both sides moved out of the area! They've proven time and time again they are incompetent.

--Evelyn Hale on Facebook

\* \* \* \* \*

Shouldn't allow those barges to be tied around/ near the I-10 bridge.

--Terry Edwards on Facebook

\* \* \* \* \*

Fix it... yes, of course. More importantly... keep it from happening again. Critical infrastructure should not be so susceptible to be easily damaged any day of the week. Nothing else it's causing the problems except the barges. Remove them and the problem is solved.

--David Brumit on Facebook

\* \* \* \* \*

This is so damned frustrating! The last time this happened, it was a huge inconvenience and a HEADACHE... for a LONG time. No telling how long it will take this time. Lessons should've been learned a long time ago. When the rest of us know a storm is coming, we PREPARE for it. NO EXCUSES FOR THIS... A FEW HEADS OUGHT TO ROLL. Incompetence at it's finest.

--Day Linley on Facebook

\* \* \* \* \*

We need the Market Street Bridge back.

--Jerry Smith

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OBITUARIES

**Richard Frederick Arfmann**

Richard Frederick Arfmann, 89, of Crosby, Texas, passed away on Saturday, September 21, 2019. He was born in Higginsville, Missouri on June 26, 1930 to George Fredrick Arfmann and Leona W. Tagtmeyer. He was a fun, loving, steady, strong, gentle, courageous and loyal man. Richard proudly served in the Navy in the Korean Conflict. Later he retired as a pipefitter. Richard enjoyed gardening, socializing and volunteering at VFW Post 9761. "Papa" never missed sending a birthday card. He was the "rock of his family," that held everyone together. He will be dearly missed by everyone who knew and loved him.

He is preceded in death by his wife of 44 years, Cheryl Lynn Higley Arfmann; parents, George and Leona Arfmann; brother, Dale Arfmann; and sister, June Arfmann.

Richard is survived by his children, Teresa McAlexander and husband Mark, Bertha Rush and husband Jeff, Micheal Arfmann, Leah Frye and husband Donny, Tammy Holst and husband Charlie, and Matthew Arfmann and wife Kelli Baker; best friend and running buddy, Tom Devlin and wife



Nancy; brother, James "Jim" Arfmann and wife Janet; sister, Donna Campbell and husband John; many grandchildren and great-grandchildren.

Richard and Cheryl were united December 21, 1968, and were reunited September 21, 2019.

A visitation for family and friends was held on Tuesday, September 24, 2019, from 5:00pm to 7:00pm at Sterling White Funeral Home. A Celebration of Richard's Life began at 7:00pm. Arrangements were entrusted to Sterling White Funeral Home, 11011 Crosby-Lynchburg Rd., Highlands, TX 77562. To share memories and offer condolences please visit [www.sterlingwhite.com](http://www.sterlingwhite.com).

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**Noah Lafayette Pruett**



Noah Lafayette Pruett, 91, of Baytown, Texas died on September 11, 2019. He was born in Balmorhea, Texas in Reeves County on April 5, 1928 to the union of the late Verde E. and Mary E. Pruett. Noah served his country through the Army in 1946. He was a Customs Inspector for the US Customs and retired after 40 years of service. He attended the Crosby Church of Christ. In 2000 he met Joan M. Perry and on April 6, 2001 they were united in matrimony. Noah enjoyed dancing. He enjoyed it so that every Thursday morning he and Joan would go dancing at the Baytown Community Center. He and Joan would also go every Friday to the Highlands Community Center and participate in various activities. He would travel every year to Treasure Lake Camp Ground in Branson, MO. He is preceded in death by his parents and a brother, Elmer Pruett. He is survived by his wife of 18 years, Joan and a daughter, Catherine Furnace and two grandchildren.

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VETERANS

★ POST ★

by Freddy Groves

**Reducing the Rate of Military Suicides**

In a joint venture to reduce suicides, the Department of Veterans Affairs, the Department of Defense and the Vet Centers have hooked up to provide counseling and outreach to the National Guard on drill weekends and during training. In 2017, the National Guard had the highest rate of suicide of all the military.

Now, however, the rate of National Guard members using the Vet Centers has risen 38%, and the suicide rate has fallen to its the low-

est level in five years. It's thought that the increased use of the Vet Center services could be the reason.

Meanwhile, the Defense Suicide Prevention Office's most recent report saw 2018 deaths-by-suicide numbers that were mostly higher than the year before: Air Force 60, Army 139, Marine Corps 58, Navy 68, Reserves 216 and National Guard 135.

As the VA continues to try to understand the reasons for veteran suicides, it's looking at limited access to health care and isolation. Up until 2016, Vermont had

the nation's highest rate of veteran suicide. By this year, it was reported in Congress that Montana had the highest rate. First thoughts point to rural living and cold weather, yet in California, sunny and warm San Diego has the highest rate for that state.

If you think you might be in trouble, or if you know a veteran who is, call the Veterans Crisis Hotline 24/7 at 1-800-273-8255 or go online to [www.veteranscrisisline.net](http://www.veteranscrisisline.net). You also can send a text to 838255.

Besides the 24/7 hotline, National Guard and Reservists are eligible to use the services of the Vet Centers (there are 300) and Mobile Vet Centers (there are 80). To find out more about what the Vet Centers do, or to find one in your area, go online to [www.vetcenter.va.gov](http://www.vetcenter.va.gov).

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**TOP TEN MOVIES**

1. It Chapter Two (R) Jessica Chastain, James McAvoy
2. Hustlers (R) Constance Wu, Jennifer Lopez
3. Angel Has Fallen (R) Gerard Butler, Frederick Schmidt
4. Good Boys (R) Jacob Tremblay, Keith L. Williams
5. The Lion King (PG) animated
6. Fast & Furious Presents: Hobbs & Shaw (PG-13) Dwayne Johnson, Jason Statham
7. Overcomer (PG) Alex Kendrick, Shari Rigby
8. The Goldfinch (R) Oakes Fegley, Ansel Elgort
9. The Peanut Butter Falcon (PG-13) Shia LaBeouf, Dakota Johnson
10. Dora and the Lost City of Gold (PG) Isabela Moner, Eugenio Derbez



**BIBLE TRIVIA**

by Wilson Casey

1. Is the book of Levi in the Old or New Testament or neither?
2. From Proverbs 29, what happens when the wicked have authority? People mourn, Heavens blackened, Masses kill, Taxes abound
3. "Blessed are the meek, for they shall" do what? Obtain mercy, Inherit the earth, See God, Be called children of God
4. In what book of the Bible do we find the good Samaritan parable? Matthew, Mark, Luke, John
5. From Numbers 22, what animal did God allow to speak? Lamb, Donkey, Camel, Ram
6. From 2 Chronicles, what did Solomon ask for? Wealth, Long life, Wisdom, Honor

ANSWERS: 1) Neither; 2) People mourn; 3) Inherit the earth; 4) Luke; 5) Donkey; 6) Wisdom

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save me & I will be saved,  
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--Jeremiah 17:14

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*...I say to you, love your enemies, bless those who curse you, do good to those who hate you, and pray for those who spitefully use you and persecute you, that you may be sons of your Father in heaven; for He makes His sun rise on the evil and on the good, and sends rain on the just and on the unjust.*

MATTHEW 5:44-45

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**ROMANS 8:18**

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★ ASK THE EXPERTS ★

# Chambers County path to recovery

To All Chambers County Residents,

In the aftermath of Tropical Storm Imelda, it is essential that homeowners report damage to their homes so that Chambers County can meet its threshold for a Federal Declaration of Disaster.

Chambers County is attempting to get a count of homes damaged by Tropical Storm Imelda. Please call 409-267-2441 to report damage.

Chambers County is also compiling a list of homeowners who need assistance from volunteers with cleanup efforts. Please call 409-267-2441 to be added to the volunteer-run cleanup assistance wait list.

Please only call to report damage to your own home when possible.

PLEASE NOTE: This phone line will only be operated during regular business hours of 8 a.m. to 5 p.m.

Thanks,  
Ryan Holzaepfel  
Chambers County  
Fire Marshal Safety

## ROAD CLOSURES AND PUBLIC SAFETY

•The County Engineer reports that SH99 tolls are waived in Chambers County until further notice.

•I-10 is open through Chambers County to the TX/LA line. It is closed at the San Jacinto River Bridge. FM 1663 closed from FM 1410 to FM 1406. SH 65 closed from FM 1410 to SH124. SH 73 Winnie to Port Arthur is still closed.

There will be increased Law Enforcement presence throughout the County.

Sheriff, Brian Hawthorne is doing everything possible to add additional security to the flooded communities.

East Chambers County/ Winnie Stowell Area and the Hankamer Area Curfew Order by County Judge, Jimmy Sylvia is still in effect. (W/S within the boundaries of EC-CISD Hankamer North of IH 10 and East of FM 563). The curfew is from 10:00 p.m. to 7:00 a.m. daily. Chambers County Judge Jimmy Sylvia Issued: September 22, 2019

There is also a prohibition against price gouging. This order will remain in effect until terminated by Commissioners' Court or the County Judge.

## IMELDA DAMAGE SURVEY

Chambers County Emer-

gency Management Officials have begun recovery efforts. To provide assistance to Chambers County citizens in the most efficient and accurate way we are asking each citizen affected by Tropical Storm Imelda to complete the IMELDA DAMAGE SURVEY located on Chambers County's website [www.co.chambers.tx.us](http://www.co.chambers.tx.us).

The objective of this survey is to:

- Assess and identify damages and needs within the community
  - Effectively allocate money, materials, and resources
  - To pinpoint areas most affected for priority response
  - Provide disaster relief organizations with an accurate list of affected homes
- Citizens need to understand this survey:
- Will NOT register you with FEMA
  - Does NOT replace your personal insurance claim
  - Does not guarantee assistance to your property
  - Will be shared with our disaster relief organizations database for relief distribution.

Facebook Page, search for: Chambers County Office of Emergency Management.



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## Beach City News,

CONTINUED FROM PAGE 1

from Fisher Rd. south has been submitted. Come join the fun.

### Sales and Use Tax Townhall Meeting

The Citizens Sales and Use Tax Committee will be hosting a Townhall Meeting on Tuesday, October 8 at 6:30PM. If you have questions, concerns or want to express your thoughts then please attend. This measure will be

on the November election ballot. Be an informed voter.

### NOVEMBER 5th, 2019 ELECTION information

Last Day to Register to Vote: Monday, October 7, 2019  
First Day of Early Voting: Monday, October 21, 2019  
(17th day before election day falls on a Saturday, first day moves to next business day)  
Last Day to Apply for Ballot by Mail:

(Received, not Postmarked) Friday, October 25, 2019

Last Day of Early Voting: Friday, November 1, 2019

Last day to Receive Ballot by Mail: Tuesday, November 5, 2019 (election day) at 7:00 p.m. (unless a late-arriving deadline applies)

Jackey Lasater,  
Mayor, Beach City



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# T.S. Imelda "worse than Harvey,"

CONTINUED FROM PAGE 1

The storm took five lives, three in Beaumont and two in Harris County. Authorities said a man drove into high water on Will Clayton Parkway in Humble, and another body of Rene Salas, 52, was found in a ditch near W. Mt. Houston.

Houston recorded as much as 10" of rain in a 24 hour period, and a total of about 20" in three days. Northeast Harris County, including Crosby and Huffman, recorded about 30" in that period, and a record was set in Winnie, in Chambers County, of 43" total for a storm.

Many of the same houses and neighborhoods that were under water two years ago after Hurricane Harvey suffered the same damage this time. Many who were interviewed expressed despair and depression over this continued personal disaster, and asked why the government had not done more. Last year the county passed a \$2.5 billion bond issue to improve the flooding situation, but



High water at the East Freeway at Wayside stopped traffic. This was typical all over Houston area highways.



High water rescues were common throughout the county. Above, deputy Sheriff's rescue some residents from their flooded homes.



County judge Lina Hidalgo urged motorists not to drive into high water, and to call 211 if they needed help. Pct. 2 Adrian Garcia sent trucks to help rescue.



Three workers were injured when part of the roof of the main Houston Post Office on Aldine Bender collapsed.

County Judge Lina Hidalgo stated that flood relief projects took time to plan and build. Some detention ponds and larger drainage bayous are under construction, and the county voted recently to accelerate the schedule.

The Red Cross has established shelters in 19 locations, and Gallery Furniture, North Freeway and Lakewood Church opened as shelters.

Harris County announced Local Recovery Centers at:

- Kingwood United Methodist Church
- Grayson Community Center, Channelview

Almost all school districts were closed on Friday. Authorities said that over 1500 high water rescues had been made in two days. Bush Airport was closed in incoming flights, and many others were delayed or cancelled.

Residents needing help can call 211 to be connected to resources.

## EPA update,

CONTINUED FROM PAGE 1

Phase 2 Remedial Design had started on September 4th. The schedule now calls for final design to be completed by November 2020, and actual removal of the toxic wastes in the first quarter of 2021.

The Coast Guard was the onsite coordinator for the removal of the barges, Baumgarten said, and they have now all been moved to a safe location south of the bridge.

This week a bathymetric survey will be conducted, using sonar to determine if any damage to the cap can be detected. A probe with metal rods will also determine if any rock ballast is missing.

The technical presentation by Baumgarten was followed by a Question and Answer session, which also included many comments from the residents that were present.

Speakers seemed to express a displeasure and frustration with the EPA, blaming them for everything from slow performance on the waste pits removal, to permitting barges to be stored on the north side of the bridge, and therefore contributing to the damage and the large traffic jams.

EPA project director John Meyer patiently explained that much of the circumstances of these incidents was not within the jurisdiction of the EPA, but actually was controlled by other agencies such as the

Coast Guard, Corps of Engineers, TCEQ, and TxDOT.

Speakers included Sean Matula, who grew up on a family farm overlooking the waste pits site. He said he suffers from about a dozen illnesses related to the toxicity, and asked for a stop to permitting and 3rd party oversight of the removal of the pits.

Many speakers blamed the Corps of Engineers for siding with the barge businesses, to the detriment of residents. Cynthia Garcia spoke vehemently against big business having more say than individuals. One speaker noted that only a few years ago there were no barges north of the bridge, and they should be removed now.

A recurring theme in the questioning was who permits the barges, and why no one wants to be responsible for them. And how an average citizen can have a say about them.

Frustrated speakers asked for immediate protection from future barge strikes, not more studies and planning.

Baumgarten said that the barges were owned by Canal Barge Company, but operated by San Jacinto River Fleet, who is an applicant for more barges.

EPA's John Meyer said that excessive barge traffic was one reason they had decided to remove the waste material in the pits.

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