

HIGHLANDS

CROSBY

# Star ★ Courier

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THURSDAY, FEBRUARY 24, 2022

P.O. DRAWER 405, HIGHLANDS, TEXAS 77562

## IN THE STARS

### EVENTS

#### THU. FEB. 24 C/H Chamber Nite at the Races

Annual Awards Banquet  
"A Nite at the Races"  
February 24, 2022  
5:00pm-9:30pm  
The Hundred Oaks Event Center  
1110 Indian Shores Rd  
Crosby, Texas 77532  
We will be installing our  
Board of Directors  
and awarding our:  
EMPLOYEE OF THE YEAR  
AMBASSADOR OF THE YEAR  
NON-PROFIT OF THE YEAR  
CITIZEN OF THE YEAR  
BUSINESS OF THE YEAR  
Entertainment will be  
"Nite at the Races"  
Live Horse Racing! Okay-Just Kind  
of...We will have recorded  
professionally called horse races,  
programs, betting windows, and  
funny money available for  
purchase for your wagering fun!  
Also a Derby Hat Contest so wear  
your most fabulous creative hat  
you can find!  
Please call Chamber at  
281-328-6984 or email us at  
[chamber@crosbyhuffmancc.org](mailto:chamber@crosbyhuffmancc.org)  
for more information!

#### SAT. MAR 5 Crosby Historical Society Meeting

The Crosby Historical  
Society will be holding a  
public meeting on  
Saturday, March 5, 2022,  
at 2 p.m. at the Crosby  
Brethren Church, 5202  
First Street, Crosby, TX.  
Guest speaker will be  
local historian, Chuck  
Chandler. Topic will be  
early Methodist Churches  
and Penn Family.  
Chandler is past vice  
president of the Baytown  
Historical Preservation  
Association.

### BIRTHDAYS

Feb 24--Will Oviedo  
Feb 25--Mrs. Charles  
Marchard  
Beth Phillips  
Cheyenne Ward  
Jacqueline Rosas  
Feb 26--Alice Etzel  
Shane Tappan  
Feb 27--Joe Price  
Terry Whittaker  
Caleb Wingate  
Kaylin Morgan  
Elise Guidroz  
Feb 28--B.E. Hales  
Mar 2--Jennifer Abbott  
Robert Harper  
Dorothy Holy  
Jennifer Moye  
Michelle Phillips  
Gen. Sam Houston  
Mar 3--Theresa Abbott  
Irene Fleming  
Jahnise McKee  
Jerry Thompson  
Mar 4--Evelyn Banks  
Cathie West  
Jamie Yarbrough  
Eric Wood

### ANNIVERSARIES

Feb 14--Larry &  
Jeannie Kelly  
Feb 24--Jim & Linda  
Hildebrand  
Feb 26--Thomas &  
Geene Parrish  
Mar 3--Jimmy & Teri  
Gleason  
Mar 5--Raymond &  
Mary Helen James

## Highlands Chamber holds Awards Banquet

### Ryan Hotchkiss named Terry Davis Award recipient

HIGHLANDS – A large crowd of Highlands/Lynchburg Chamber members and guests assembled last Thursday evening, Feb. 17, at Monument Inn in LaPorte for the Annual Installation Banquet and Community Awards presentations.

Chamber executive director Jessica Woods introduced guests and later the awards to outstanding citizens of the community.

In her opening remarks, she mentioned that Highlands is a "small but uniquely positioned community, and the struggle for our identity is real!" She continued, "East Harris County is experiencing growth at an unprecedented rate, and we are reaping the benefits of that growth... our primary concern is creating and maintaining an environment for positive social and economic growth through proactive leadership."

Woods then introduced her Board of Directors, responsible for implementing her remarks, and Judge Lucia Bates proceeded to swear in the



HIGHLANDS/LYNCHBURG CHAMBER OF COMMERCE BOARD OF DIRECTORS, being sworn into office by Judge Lucia Bates, right. Above, L to R, Gary Guy, Ana Clark, Weston Cotten, Betty Brewer, Randy Casey, Sarah Davis, Patrick Courtney, Kathy Jaeger, Sherry Lee, LaNelle McKay, Kathryn Saenger, John Vann. (Not pictured, Gretchen Knowles, Teah Rice, and Jaime Ruiz). MORE PHOTOS PAGE 2



Ryan Hotchkiss receives the Terry Davis Award from Chamber Director Jessica Woods.

board and the new president, Randy Casey. Judge Bates was the featured speaker for the evening. As Justice of the Peace for Precinct 3, Place 2 she administers to Highlands and Baytown areas. In her talk, she recounted her career moves from advertising executive to judicial responsibilities. In addition she has been an active volunteer for a number of community organizations, and served as board chair for the North Channel Chamber.

Judge Bates also described the workings of her court, which she characterized as "the People's Court." Some innovations and duties of her court include mental health counseling, teen court, veterans' appreciation, eviction workshop, delinquency cases, and an upcoming Teen Summit. Her message to the audience was the value of community service, and the quality of listening to others for ideas that

can improve public service.

Jessica Woods presented the community awards, as follows:

Firefighter of the Year, Ben Coward. 9 years of service to the Highlands VFD, and presently board chair of the department.

Constable Deputy Award, to Jose Gomez. Actively patrols in the community with drug and felon arrests.

Sheriff's Deputy Award, to Jonathan Parks. Serves on the CRU Crime Reduction Unit, and is responsi-

*Continued. See Highlands Chamber, Page 2*

## New Initiatives to fight Crime

### Houston announces \$44 million "One Safe Houston"

HOUSTON - Mayor Sylvester Turner has announced "One Safe Houston: the Mayor's Public Safety Initiative to Combat Violent Crime," which focuses on four key areas:

- Violence Reduction and Crime Prevention
- Crisis Intervention, Response and Recovery
- Youth Outreach Opportunities
- Key Community Partnerships.

The plan outlines a commitment to put more officers on the streets through overtime and cadet classes and creates a \$1 million gun buyback program. It also provides \$1.5 million in additional funding to the Houston Forensic Science Center to address backlogs and funds domestic violence programs with an additional \$3 million to provide more services for survivors and prevention efforts.

"This plan represents a holistic approach to combatting violent crime on

the streets while being responsive to the needs of victims and building healthier communities in the process," said Mayor Turner. "Law enforcement efforts alone will not sufficiently address the symptoms of crime. We are faced with a public health crisis, and it will require all of us, working together to overcome it."

Mayor Turner also announced:

--\$2.5 million for the implementation of the CURE Violence program in targeted communities. The Cure Violence model trains and deploys outreach workers and violence interrupters to mitigate conflict on the street before it turns violent.

--Increased support for the Community Re-Entry Network Program. The program helps formerly incarcerated individuals with successful communi-

*Continued. See One Safe Houston, Page 7*

### Harris County allocates \$50mil for "Clean Streets, Safe Neighborhoods"

HARRIS COUNTY – County Judge Lina Hidalgo and Precinct 2 Commissioner Adrian Garcia announced a Major Crime Prevention and Neighborhood Safety Initiative.

The Proposed \$50 million smart on crime program is to target areas with high rates of violent crime driven by gun violence.

Judge Lina Hidalgo revealed details of the new \$50 million proposal to prevent violent crime and improve neighborhood safety across Harris County. The new initiative will target distressed county neighborhoods where blight and neglect are driving violent crime. The program will improve street lighting, sidewalks, and visibility in residential areas, address longstanding blighted and abandoned structures, restore vacant lots, and implement other improvements shown to enhance public safety.

During Judge Hidalgo's tenure, commissioners court has increased the law enforcement budgets for every law enforcement



Judge Lina Hidalgo with Sheriff's deputies to announce the new "Clean Streets, Safe Neighborhoods" program.

agency, including the district attorney's office, by 13% since 2019. This brings the total funding for law enforcement in fiscal year 2022 alone to \$966 million.

#### CLEAN STREETS, SAFE NEIGHBORHOODS PROGRAM

*By Judge Lina Hidalgo*

Harris County has passed a new \$50 million Clean Streets, Safe Neighborhoods program: a crime prevention and neighborhood safety program that uses data to target county neighborhoods where de-

cay and abandonment are driving violent crime. The program will improve street lighting, sidewalks, and visibility in residential areas, address longstanding blighted and abandoned structures, restore vacant lots, and implement other improvements shown to enhance public safety. We know this approach works due to studies by the Centers for Disease Control and Prevention (CDC), the Man

*Continued. See County Crime Program, Page 7*



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# Highlands Chamber holds Awards Banquet

## Ryan Hotchkiss named Terry Davis Award recipient



Firefighter of the Year Ben Coward



Constable Deputy of the Year Jose Gomez



Sheriff's Deputy of the Year Jonathan Parks



Organization of the Year San Jacinto Community Center. Pictured Tonya Kostka, Patty Thierry, Donnie Victor. (Not pictured, John Bell)



New Chamber president Randy Casey



Banquet Speaker, and Installation Official Judge Lucia Bates.

★

Greater Highlands-Lynchburg Chamber of Commerce	
TERRY DAVIS COMMUNITY SERVICE AWARDS	
1983	Dr. W. L. Herndon
1984	M. L. Bishop
1985	Alton Neatherlin
1986	Lloyd Dunn
1987	Kenneth Pace
1988	Luther White
1989	Judy Barrow
1990	Lynn Sorrells
1991	Joe Hausberger
1992	Dr. Joe Ed Sutton
1993	Raymond Gonzalez
1994	Jim Strouhal
1995	Barbara Reeves
1996	Pat Lohan
1997	Harvey Little
1998	Charlie Ward
1999	Beverly Culbreath
2000	Henderson Cooking Team
2001	Wanda Asbeck
2002	Deacon Tittel
2003	Margie Elliott
2004	Betty Michalsky
2005	Betty Brewer
2006	C.R. "Dickie" Woods
2007	James Brazzil
2008	Alan Hanagriff
2009	Ed Wotipka
2010	Jessica Woods
2011	Phillip Morris
2012	Sampson Lodge
2013	Weston Cotten
2014	Jim Wadzinski
2015	Archie Bickley
2016	Mike Parrott
2017	Don Coffey
2018	Highlands Rotary Club
2019	Randal O'Brien
2020	None (Pandemic/Freeze)
2021	Ryan Hotchkiss

CONTINUED FROM PAGE 1

ble for apprehension of several persons in a local homicide case.

Organization of the Year, San Jacinto Community Center. Under the direction of Tonya Kostka, the center not only serves seniors on a daily basis, but also hosts community events and meetings. In spite of the pandemic limiting some activities, the center also led with food drives, National Night Out, movies and concerts, and more. The staff includes Tonya Kostka, Patty Thierry, John Bell, and Donnie Victor.

Terry Davis Award, to Ryan Hotchkiss. This

was the major award of the evening, and continues a tradition of recognizing outstanding community service by these individuals. The award has been given for 37 years (See accompanying chart). It recognizes community service, selflessness, and making Highlands a better place to live. It was named for a former resident who gave his life in a volunteer service accident.

The recipient Ryan Hotchkiss is a HVFD firefighter and EMT tech-

nician. He has been with the department for 14 years, and served as Fire Marshal, Station Chief, and currently is Assistant Chief. He is also a supporter of the Baytown and Houston Livestock shows.

Closing remarks were made by the incoming president, Randy Casey. He spoke about being a native of Highlands, and currently a businessman in Baytown. He saw challenges for the Chamber in the area of economic development, reduction of crime, traffic safety, help for the homeless population, and development of a new Management District.

# A team of primary care providers

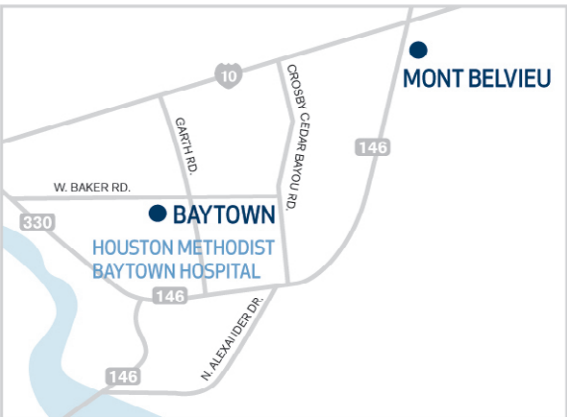
# COMMITTED TO YOU

## Houston Methodist Primary Care Group in Baytown and Mont Belvieu

Our providers are committed to keeping you healthy every day. That's why we are available to safely see you — in person or virtually — accept most major insurance plans and offer flexibility to manage your care with access to electronic medical records and online scheduling.

With two Houston Methodist Primary Care Group locations dedicated to our Baytown communities, our providers are proudly bringing quality care and services closer to home. Our expertise includes:

- Acute and chronic care
  - Annual physicals and health screenings
  - Children's health
  - Diabetes management
  - High blood pressure
- Men's health
  - Minor procedures
  - Preventive care
  - Weight management
  - Women's health



**Baytown**  
1677 W. Baker Rd.  
Outpatient Center, Suite 2701  
Baytown, TX 77520

**Mont Belvieu**  
8608 N. Highway 146  
Baytown, TX 77523

### Baytown



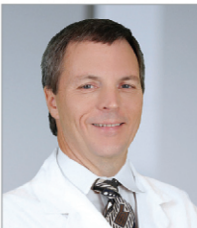
**Mohammad Ahmed, MD**  
Family Medicine



**Irfan Dadabhoi, MD**  
Family Medicine



**Pooja Kulkarni, MD**  
Family Medicine



**Gregory Terry, MD**  
Family Medicine

### Mont Belvieu



**Dinara Abdueva, MD**  
Internal Medicine



**Eleazar Flores, MD**  
Family Medicine



**Adolat Mirzaeva, MD**  
Family Medicine





# Barbers Hill Dayton Press

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

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THURSDAY, FEBRUARY 24, 2022

MONT BELVIEU, TEXAS 77580

## ON THE HILL

### Annual CC Youth Livestock Show and Ranch Rodeo this March through April.

The planning committees and Chambers County staff have been working feverishly to prepare for the events associated with the show and we are proud to invite you out to see their hard work come together.



Chambers County Youth Livestock Show and Ranch Rodeo Pageant  
Saturday, March 26, 2022

Ranch Rodeo  
Friday, April 10, 2022 | Cook Off, Women's Ranch Rodeo  
Saturday, April 11, 2022 | Cowboy Church, Ranch Rodeo  
Sunday, April 12, 2022 | Team Roping  
Chambers County Youth Livestock Show  
April 27 through April 29, 2022

Chambers County Youth Livestock Auction  
Saturday, March 30, 2022

### COVID-19 Shots available in Chambers County

Chambers County Public Health will be offering several COVID-19 vaccine clinics in the coming weeks at no cost to the public. Please visit bit.ly/chamberscovaccines to register for an appointment. Appointments are required.

First, second, third and booster doses of vaccine will be available at each clinic.

For reference, please see the below distinction between booster and third doses:

- Third doses are available in the Moderna and Pfizer vaccine only for persons who are immunocompromised
- Booster doses are available only in the Pfizer vaccine and are recommended for:
  - People aged 65 years and older
  - Residents aged 18 years and older in long-term care settings
  - People aged 50 to 64 years with underlying medical conditions
- Booster doses of the Pfizer vaccine are also available for:
  - People aged 18 to 49 years with underlying medical conditions
  - People aged 18 to 64 years with an increased risk for COVID-19 exposure and transmission

If you have questions regarding vaccines or your eligibility, please call Chambers County Public Health at 409-267-2931 or email vaccines@chamberstx.gov.

## Frost Bank honors the Lee College Foundation, donates funds

Frost Bank honored the Lee College Foundation for its sustained support and service to Lee College students throughout greater Baytown. The bank added a \$2,500 gift to the recognition presented at the Frost Bank Baytown Financial Center February 17, 2022. In addition to the Lee College Foundation, the celebration event also recognized the Senior Citizen Project of Chambers County.

"The Lee College Foundation is pleased to be recognized by Frost Bank for helping more area residents realize their dreams of higher education," said Stephen DonCarlos, chair of the Lee College Foundation Board of Directors. "We sincerely appreciate this partnership and look forward to deepening our relationship as Frost Bank grows throughout the college's service area."

The Lee College Foundation was established in



Pictured in the photo, L-R: Blythe Adam, community leader and business banking officer; David LePori, regional president, Houston area; Gilbert Santanta, chair, Lee College board of regents; Dr. Lynda Villanueva, president, Lee College; Dr. Angela Oriano-Bradshaw, vice president of college advancement, Lee College; Stephen DonCarlos, chair, Lee College Foundation

1968 to support Lee College students, which the Frost Bank gift recognizes and celebrates. Last year alone, the Lee College Foundation awarded more

than \$600,000 in scholarships, and an additional \$100,000 in emergency assistance, to Lee College students.

"As the needs of our stu-

dents continue to evolve, gifts to our Foundation help us meet those needs so all our students can be successful," said Dr. Lynda Villanueva, president of Lee

College. "We share common values with Frost Bank, as we are also committed to making people's lives better, which their gift will amplify our ability to do."

This is the first partnership between the Lee College Foundation and Frost Bank. "Frost is proud to partner with and support Lee College Foundation as we celebrate our new Baytown Financial Center, said Blythe Adam, business banking officer and community leader. "We appreciate all the amazing work done by the people at the Foundation."

Lee College in Baytown, Texas offers more than 100 degrees and certificates that lead to successful, high-demand careers at four locations in Harris, Walker, and Liberty Counties. Founded in 1934, Lee College is known for its commitment to student success and achievement. Learn more about Lee College at lee.edu.

## "Stuart Technical High School: The Best Kept Secret in Baytown; But Not For Long"

Baytown—(November 8, 2021)—"This is the best kept secret in Baytown, but if I have anything to do with it, it won't be for long," Rotarian Jim Farris said as he toured the Stuart Career Technical High School. The native Baytownian was aware of the campus, but by the end of the tour, his mind was made up that he would share the successes of the program with everyone he knew.

SCTHS was named after John Stuart, who served the district in various capacities for 40 years. Originally the Stuart Career Center, which opened in 1974; Stuart Career Technical High School opened its doors in 2017 and graduated the first class four years later. The campus held their first tour of the year on November 4th. Lee College Regents, district employees, Board members and representatives from Sam Houston State University and Huntsville ISD were given a first-hand look of the facility through the eyes of its campus



ambassadors (student representatives of the campus academies). Dr. Randy O'Brien, GCCISD Superintendent of Schools, touted the updated look of the campus. "This current (newer) building we are standing in is built between two older buildings," O'Brien told the crowd. "Blending the heritage of our past focus on vocations within our innovative mindset of career certifications and other initiatives designed to add value to each student's educational experience!"



The building, which currently houses 418 students, is in its fourth expansion stage that will see the campus grow to over 900 students.

"While the Academies at our comprehensive high school campuses serve as a school within a school model, every student at SCTHS belongs to an academy. The Academies include: Advanced Automatic Academy, Academy of Agriculture Science, Academy of Culinary Arts, Man-

ufacturing and Industrial Maintenance Academy, Academy of Information Technology, and Digital Communications Academy in Audio/Video Production. The equipment the students use and the knowledge they receive will provide them with a clear pathway to the work force or entrepreneurship; if they so choose. The core academic plan allows students to fulfill a high school diploma and a career pathway certification. College credit in core classes can transfer to public colleges, universities and even some private institutions.

"Our program is application based and we are in the midst of that process right now," Dr. Cap Roder, SCTHS principal said.

"Our student ambassadors are just a small representation of the great students we have here at Stuart Career Tech." Roder wants to see the program grow to its fullest potential and he wants the public to be aware of the services his students provide to the community. "All of our academies are designed to provide services that could be used by our community," Dr. Demetrius McCall, Deputy Superintendent stated. "From pet grooming to preparing a four-course meal; our students can do it all and we want our community to look to us to fulfill those needs."

"We are working hard to publicize our programs, but we need your help," Roder stated. "We have some major projects coming very soon and I can't wait for the community to get to experience them with us."

For more information on SCTHS or to schedule a tour of the campus, please call 281-420-4550.

### Houston Methodist Hospital Baytown

## Benefits of Bariatric Surgery

BAYTOWN—(Feb 16th, 2022)

### 4 BENEFITS OF BARIATRIC SURGERY

Are you ready to transform your life and lose weight? If you have weight-related health problems and are unable to lose pounds with diet and exercise alone, bariatric surgery may be an option. Weight loss surgery reduces the size of the stomach, so you feel fuller faster and eat less.

Here are four ways surgical weight loss can help you get on a path to better health and well-being:

1. Changing how you eat. "Bariatric surgery changes the anatomy of the gastrointestinal tract, restricting the amount of food you can eat or changing the route food takes through your body," said Dr. Laura Choi, a board-certified bariatric surgeon and medical director of the Center for Weight Loss & Bariatric Surgery at Baytown. Weight loss surgery is



Dr. Kendell Sowards

a tool to help you lose weight, but it's up to you to maintain a healthy diet and exercise plan for long-term success. Participating in an after-care program with support through nutrition, exercise and counseling can help you stay on track.

2. Controlling appetite. "Some types of bariatric surgery involve removing a portion of the stomach where hormones that stimulate appetite are produced," said Dr. Kendell Sowards, a board-certified bariatric surgeon at Houston Methodist Baytown

Hospital. "As a result, bariatric surgery may reduce the production of hormones that drive appetite and desire to eat." It's important to recognize the changes to your body and emotions, so you can build a healthy relationship with food.

3. Reducing health risks. "If you have health problems associated with being overweight, the benefits of weight loss surgery aren't just measured in pounds," said Sowards. "Instead, success may be measured by improvement of health numbers like blood pressure, cholesterol and blood glucose levels." Losing excess weight can help your health in many ways:

- +Blood pressure and cholesterol – numbers can return to normal or near normal.
- +Cardiovascular health – reduced risk of death from heart attack and stroke.
- +Diabetes management – reduced need for insulin and related medications.



Dr. Laura Choi

+Joint pain – taking pressure off joints improves mobility and may allow reduced need for pain medications.

+Sleep apnea – some people no longer use a CPAP machine at bedtime.

4. Improving quality of life. "Surgical weight loss can give you a new outlook on life," shared Choi. "Losing weight may improve self-esteem and boost confidence in social interactions." Feeling good about losing weight can also improve emotional health and reduce depression. You may have increased energy

levels, and the ability to engage in more physical activity, which helps fuel weight loss even more.

### PROVIDING COMPREHENSIVE CARE ON YOUR WEIGHT LOSS JOURNEY

Taking control of your weight can empower you to do things that once seemed impossible. The weight loss team at Houston Methodist Center for Weight Loss & Bariatric Surgery at Baytown, including bariatric surgeons, doctors, dietitians, mental health professionals and endocrinologists, specializes in helping people achieve a healthier weight — and keep it off. To learn more about our weight loss programs or to schedule an appointment at the Houston Methodist Center for Weight Loss & Bariatric Surgery at Baytown, visit [houstonmethodist.org/weight-loss-surgery](http://houstonmethodist.org/weight-loss-surgery) or call 346.292.1470.



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OPINION PAGE

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OPINION

By BILL KING



### Poll Shows Widespread Support For New Texas Voting Law

Last August, the SAM party conducted a survey of its members and other members of the community about their opinions of the major provisions in the Texas voting bill (SB1), which was at the time, grinding its way through the Legislature. Our survey was clearly not a scientific poll but found that at least a plurality of respondents supported all the major provisions of the bill.

In October, after SB1 had passed, the University of Houston and Texas Southern University conducted a poll asking voters their opinions about its provisions. The UH/TSU poll found even stronger support for all the major provisions in the bill than the SAM survey did, with support ranging from 58%-86%.

What is particularly surprising about the poll results are the racial crosstabs.<sup>1</sup> While Democratic officeholders and their media surrogates constantly argued that the bill would adversely affect minority voters, they did not see it that way. While white voters supported each provision at a higher level than did Latinos or African-Americans, Latinos also supported all the propositions and African-Americans supported six of the nine.

Support for voter identification on mail-in ballots was particularly strong across all groups (whites +57, Latinos +30, African-Americans +17). It was also clear that voters really dislike ballot harvesting, with wide majorities in every group supporting severe criminal penalties (whites +66, Latinos +43, African-Americans +38).

I was surprised that all groups also supported more freedom of movement for poll watchers (whites +28, Latinos +14, African-Americans +14). Most people I talked to did not seem to care much for that idea.

Since the SAM survey and the UH/TSU poll, an issue has arisen regarding a glitch in the process for providing identification on mail-in ballots which has gotten widespread coverage. I intend to write more about this as we see how this issue unfolds during the election. But it appears to me that a relatively small number of voters will be affected and I cannot see how any particular group is disproportionately disadvantaged. Seems likely to me to be a case of Hanlon's Razor.

You certainly would not know the new law had such widespread support from the media coverage on it, like this ABC News story that appeared on Monday. It leaves the impression that voters were upset about the new rules. The only story I saw that reported the actual results of the UH/TSU poll was this story by Jasper Scherer in the Houston Chronicle on October 30.

In all, the poll to me represents the same sort of Texas common sense that we saw in the SAM survey. The vast majority of Texans want everyone to be able to vote and for it to be reasonably convenient to do so. But they also want to ensure that elections are fair and that the rules are followed. And unlike the hyper-partisans on either side, their responses indicate they care more about fair elections than they do about who wins an election.

**EDITOR'S NOTE:** *Opinions expressed here are not necessarily that of this newspaper or its staff. YOUR OPINION is welcome. Send a letter for possible publication to Grafikpress Newspapers, 5906 Star Lane, Houston TX 77057 or an email to GRAFIKSTAR@aol.com. Please limit your words to about 200. Letters will be subject to editing. Thank you.*



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STATE CAPITAL HIGHLIGHTS

By Gary Borders



## Mail-in ballots applications rejected at high rate

### MAIL-IN BALLOT APPLICATIONS REJECTED AT HIGH RATE

Mail-in ballot applications for the March 1 primary are being rejected by almost 40% — largely because of a missing ID number, which is now required after a new voting bill passed the Legislature last year.

The Houston Chronicle reported that nearly four in 10 Harris County mail ballot applications had been rejected as of last week. Early voting began Feb. 14, and the deadline for mail ballot requests is Feb. 18.

Other counties across Texas also reported high rejection rates, including Travis, Williamson, Hays and Bastrop counties, the Austin American-Statesman reported. Those seeking to vote by mail must include a driver's license number, a state ID number, or in some cases the last four digits of their Social Security number. If what the applicant provides doesn't match the applicant's individual voter registration information, the application must be rejected.

Texas has one of the strictest vote-by-mail requirements in the country. Registered voters are eligible to vote by mail if they are 65 years or older; sick or disabled; out of the county on election day and during the early voting period; expected to give birth within three weeks before or after election day; or confined in jail but otherwise eligible.

Early voting continues through Feb. 25.

### DROUGHT CONDITIONS IMPROVE SLIGHTLY

The latest drought map for the state shows a slight improvement as of Feb. 1, with 84% of the state experiencing some level of drought, down three percentage points from the previous month. Dr. Mark Wentzel, hydrologist with the Texas Water Development Board, said there were some improvements in the last month, mainly in East Texas. Additional rainfall in

### TEXAS PRESS ASSOCIATION



STATE CAPITAL HIGHLIGHTS  
By Gary Borders

early February, mainly in East Texas and Central Texas, should improve conditions by the next report in March.

Wide swaths of the Panhandle and the Great Plains are experiencing the worst drought conditions.

### TEXAS TOP EXPORTING STATE FOR 20TH YEAR

Data released last week by the U.S. Census Bureau showed Texas as the top exporting state in the nation for the 20th consecutive year. The state exported \$375.3 billion in goods last year, more than California and New York combined. The state also led the nation in tech exports for the ninth year in a row.

"Made in Texas is a powerful global brand, and the Lone Star State continues to dominate the nation in exports, thanks to our unrivaled and productive workforce, robust infrastructure and welcoming business environment," Gov. Greg Abbott said.

### FUNDING AVAILABLE FOR CLEAN SCHOOL BUS PROGRAM

An estimated \$13 million in grant funding is available under the Texas Clean School Bus Program to replace or retrofit school buses to reduce exposure to their diesel exhaust. The Texas Commission on Environmental Quality is accepting applications from school districts statewide.

Grants are given on a first-come, first-served basis. Dis-

tricts can be reimbursed for all of the costs to retrofit buses, or 80% of the costs to replace older buses with newer, cleaner models, according to TCEQ.

Only buses used daily are eligible. While the deadline is in October, funding typically runs out when enough applications are received. More information can be found at [www.terpgrants.org](http://www.terpgrants.org).

### POWER GENERATORS UNDER INCREASED SCRUTINY

During early February's winter storm, the state's electrical grid withstood increased demand, with few outages reported. Regulators are crediting increased inspections by the Electric Reliability Council of Texas during December.

The Dallas Morning News reports ERCOT inspected 324 generators and transmission systems in December; the Public Utility Commission handed down \$7.5 million in fines for companies not filing weatherization plans by the deadline.

"We've been working for the last year to make sure that this grid is more reliable than it ever has been in the past — and it is," interim ERCOT CEO Brad Jones said a few days before snow and sleet hit.

In addition to increased inspections, legislation passed last regular session required power generators to winterize their plants. Additionally, alternate fuel sources are required if natural gas isn't available. While this year's storm wasn't nearly as severe as Winter Storm Uri in 2021, thus far the grid has stood up to increased demand.

The state's largest power generator, Vistra, is spending up to \$80 million to ensure its plants keep generating electricity despite whatever Mother Nature throws at them, The Morning News reported.

### COVID-19 CASES CONTINUE TO DROP SHARPLY

It is beginning to look as if the omicron variant of COVID-19 really has peaked, with new cases in the state during the past week dropping to 109,990, according to the Coronavirus Resource Center at Johns Hopkins University. That's a decrease of 75% in the past month, while new deaths at 1,398 were essentially unchanged.

The Texas Department of State Health Services reported a total of 8,140 COVID-19 hospitalizations, down 23.6% from the previous week. The number of Texans who are fully vaccinated topped 17 million, or 58.6% of the state's population. Just more than 6 million Texans have also received a booster dose, which has proven effective in preventing more serious symptoms from the omicron variant, researchers say.

☆

THE POSTSCRIPT

By Carrie Classon

### "Listenin to the Bells"

The bells ring more or less all the time here.

My husband, Peter, and I are in San Miguel de Allende, Mexico, a city filled with old churches. Every old church has at least a couple of old bells, and all the bells are rung frequently. Since there is so much I do not understand when I travel to another country, I assumed that the bells rang according to some sort of system that everyone else understood and I did not. (This is an assumption I've made about a lot of things over the course of my life, but that's another story.)

As it turns out, none of the English speakers in town have any idea what is going on with the bells.

"I thought it was military time because it rang more than 12 times," someone said. "But then it rang 34 times!"

"There is no rhyme or reason," someone replied. "They don't ring on the hour and they don't ring any number of times that makes sense!"

"Well, they are all rung by people," someone else added. "It's not automated. Maybe they just ring them when they feel like it?"

So now I'm listening to the bells.

I was right in the center of town, near the largest, oldest church, when the bells started. "One... Two... Three... Four." They stopped. I checked the time on my phone. It was exactly 4 o'clock.

"Well!"

Now I'm thinking the bells are just rung to get our attention. Maybe we would pay more attention to them if we knew they were right all the time.

The roosters in town operate on a similar principle. Every town in Mexico I have ever spent a night in has had multiple roosters alerting me to the first hint of sunrise. But at our temporary home here, we have one who has decided to up his game. He lets us know that it is 4 o'clock in the morning and that sunrise is only a couple hours off, in case we were interested.

None of the other roosters are following his lead. I suspect the other roosters think this guy is a showoff, crowing his head off in the dark. But he keeps it up. It gets our attention, and I guess that is the point. He's letting us know that he is keeping track of the time. It's not morning yet, but morning is on the way.

We have lots of ways to keep track of time and, honestly, I'm not sure why it is so important that the bells ring at any particular time. Peter and I are not meeting anyone at a given time. We have no appointments to keep. This idea that we need to keep track of time is a little odd, given the circumstances.

And yet, nearly every day, Peter or I will say, "Can you believe it's 2 o'clock already?" as if 2 o'clock had some special significance. As if we had something special we had to prepare for at 3 o'clock.

I am rather pessimistic that I will ever solve the mystery of the bells. I think they will keep ringing when I least expect, at odd intervals, for an indeterminate amount of time. But every time they ring, I will be reminded of the time—even if it's not the actual time. Even if I have nowhere to go.

They'll remind me that time is passing and will pass. They remind me that sometimes the very best thing I can do with my limited time is to stop whatever I'm doing and listen to the bells.

Till next time,  
Carrie

Carrie Classon's memoir is called "Blue Yarn." Learn more at [CarrieClasson.com](http://CarrieClasson.com).

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### TEXAS COMMISSION ON ENVIRONMENTAL QUALITY



NOTICE OF RECEIPT OF APPLICATION AND INTENT TO OBTAIN WATER QUALITY PERMIT RENEWAL

PERMIT NO. WQ0010195001

**APPLICATION.** City of Jacinto City, 1301 Mercury Drive, Jacinto City, Texas 77029, has applied to the Texas Commission on Environmental Quality (TCEQ) to renew Texas Pollutant Discharge Elimination System (TPDES) Permit No. WQ0010195001 (EPA I.D. No. TX0053970) to authorize the discharge of treated wastewater at a volume not to exceed an annual average flow of 1,640,000 gallons per day. The domestic wastewater treatment facility is located at 12202 Market Street, Jacinto City, in Harris County, Texas 77029. The discharge route is from the plant site directly to Hunting Bayou. TCEQ received this application on December 28, 2021. The permit application is available for viewing and copying at Jacinto City Hall, 1301 Mercury Drive, Jacinto City, Texas. This link to an electronic map of the site or facility's general location is provided as a public courtesy and not part of the application or notice. For the exact location, refer to the application.  
<https://tceq.maps.arcgis.com/apps/webappviewer/index.html?id=db5bac44afbc468bbddd360f8168250f&marker=-95.222777%2C29.766111&level=12>

**ADDITIONAL NOTICE.** TCEQ's Executive Director has determined the application is administratively complete and will conduct a technical review of the application. After technical review of the application is complete, the Executive Director may prepare a draft permit and will issue a preliminary decision on the application. **Notice of the Application and Preliminary Decision will be published and mailed to those who are on the county-wide mailing list and to those who are on the mailing list for this application. That notice will contain the deadline for submitting public comments.**

**PUBLIC COMMENT / PUBLIC MEETING.** You may submit public comments or request a public meeting on this application. The purpose of a public meeting is to provide the opportunity to submit comments or to ask questions about the application. TCEQ will hold a public meeting if the Executive Director determines that there is a significant degree of public interest in the application or if requested by a local legislator. A public meeting is not a contested case hearing.

**OPPORTUNITY FOR A CONTESTED CASE HEARING.** After the deadline for submitting public comments, the Executive Director will consider all timely comments and prepare a response to all relevant and material, or significant public comments. **Unless the application is directly referred for a contested case hearing, the response to comments, and the Executive Director's decision on the application, will be mailed to everyone who submitted public comments and to those persons who are on the mailing list for this application. If comments are received, the mailing will also provide instructions for requesting reconsideration of the Executive Director's decision and for requesting a contested case hearing.** A contested case hearing is a legal proceeding similar to a civil trial in state district court.

**TO REQUEST A CONTESTED CASE HEARING, YOU MUST INCLUDE THE FOLLOWING ITEMS IN YOUR REQUEST:** your name, address, phone number; applicant's name and proposed permit number; the location and distance of your property/activities relative to the proposed facility; a specific description of how you would be adversely affected by the facility in a way not common to the general public; a list of all disputed issues of fact that you submit during the comment period and, the statement "[I/we] request a contested case hearing." If the request for contested case hearing is filed on behalf of a group or association, the request must designate the group's representative for receiving future correspondence; identify by name and physical address an individual member of the group who would be adversely affected by the proposed facility or activity; provide the information discussed above regarding the affected member's location and distance from the facility or activity; explain how and why the member would be affected; and explain how the interests the group seeks to protect are relevant to the group's purpose.

Following the close of all applicable comment and request periods, the Executive Director will forward the application and any requests for reconsideration or for a contested case hearing to the TCEQ Commissioners for their consideration at a scheduled Commission meeting.

The Commission may only grant a request for a contested case hearing on issues the requestor submitted in their timely comments that were not subsequently withdrawn. **If a hearing is granted, the subject of a hearing will be limited to disputed issues of fact or mixed questions of fact and law relating to relevant and material water quality concerns submitted during the comment period. TCEQ may act on an application to renew a permit for discharge of wastewater without providing an opportunity for a contested case hearing if certain criteria are met.**

**MAILING LIST.** If you submit public comments, a request for a contested case hearing or a reconsideration of the Executive Director's decision, you will be added to the mailing list for this specific application to receive future public notices mailed by the Office of the Chief Clerk. In addition, you may request to be placed on: (1) the permanent mailing list for a specific applicant name and permit number; and/or (2) the mailing list for a specific county. If you wish to be placed on the permanent and/or the county mailing list, clearly specify which list(s) and send your request to TCEQ Office of the Chief Clerk at the address below.

**INFORMATION AVAILABLE ONLINE.** For details about the status of the application, visit the Commissioners' Integrated Database at [www.tceq.texas.gov/goto/cid](http://www.tceq.texas.gov/goto/cid). Search the database using the permit number for this application, which is provided at the top of this notice.

**AGENCY CONTACTS AND INFORMATION.** Public comments and requests must be submitted either electronically at <https://www.w14.tceq.texas.gov/epic/eComment/>, or in writing to the Texas Commission on Environmental Quality, Office of the Chief Clerk, MC-105, P.O. Box 13087, Austin, Texas 78711-3087. Please be aware that any contact information you provide, including your name, phone number, email address, and physical address will become part of the agency's public record. For more information about this permit application or the permitting process, please call the TCEQ Public Education Program, Toll Free, at 1-800-687-4040 or visit their website at [www.tceq.texas.gov/goto/pep](http://www.tceq.texas.gov/goto/pep). Si desea información en Español, puede llamar al 1-800-687-4040.

Further information may also be obtained from City of Jacinto City at the address stated above or by calling Mr. Kyle Vincent, P.E., LJA Engineering, Inc., at 713-657-6024.

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INVITATION TO BIDDERS

Sealed Bids, in duplicate, on Bid Forms provided, addressed to the President and Board of Directors of Harris County F.W.S.D. No. 6, Channelview, Texas, Harris County, will be received at Harris County F.W.S.D. No. 6, 15902 Market Street, Channelview, Texas 77530 until **10:00 A.M., Friday, March 4, 2022**, and then publicly opened and read for construction of the "Natural Gas Generator at Water Plant No. 2"

Accompany Bids with acceptable Cashier's or Certified Check in the amount of five percent (5%) of the total amount bid, payable without recourse to the District, or a Bid Bond of like amount from an approved surety company, as a guarantee that bidder will enter into a contract.

Secure Plans and Specifications from LJA Engineering, Inc., at <https://bids.lja.com> for One Hundred Dollars (\$100.00 non-refundable plus cost of delivery) (\$50.00 for electronic copy) for each set of documents, which sum will not be refunded. A printed set can be picked up at LJA Engineering, Inc., East Houston Office, 11821 East Freeway, Suite 360, Houston, TX 77029.

Examine documents at the East Houston office of LJA Engineering, Inc, Amtek Plan Room, Dodge Data & Analytics, AGC of Texas, Construct Connect and the District.

A Mandatory Pre-Bid Conference will be held on Thursday, February 24, 2022, at 10:00 A.M. at the Harris County F.W.S.D. No. 6, Conference Room, 15902 Market Street, Channelview, Texas 77530. Bids from Firms other than the Mandatory Pre-Bid Conference Attendees **WILL NOT BE ACCEPTED.**

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REQUEST FOR PROPOSAL NOTICE – RFP #22-004

The Barbers Hill Independent School District is accepting proposals for:

2022 DISTRICT PROPERTY INSURANCE PROGRAM  
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Interested parties may contact the BHISD Business Office for a copy of the specifications which can also be obtained at the District website. Please direct all proposal questions to Amy Presley, Purchasing Coordinator, (281) 576-2221 ext. 1268.

RWL Group will assign markets to agents beginning on Monday, February 28, 2022.

The school district reserves the right to accept or reject any or all proposals, waive any formalities and/or technicalities in the proposal and award the contract to the best proposal that serves the interests of the district. The district may negotiate with vendors that submit viable proposals.

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# County Crime program,

CONTINUED FROM PAGE 1

hattan Institute for Policy Research, and others that show that investments like these not only reduce crime, but save taxpayer dollars. We also issued a resolution in support of the addition of two courts to our justice system to help us get through the court backlog that has slowed justice in our county to a crawl.

All across America, violent crime has increased — and sadly Harris County has not been immune to this national trend. It's no secret what is driving crime both here and across the nation — the economic consequences of the pandemic and the widespread availability and use of guns on our streets. COVID-19 has left more than just a body count in its wake. A secondary consequence has been victims of crime and a criminal court backlog that continues to delay justice for too many. The very same neighborhoods

that have long been ignored by the county, by private investment, and by so many other institutions are the same ones that have been victimized the most by rising crime and gun violence. Blighted buildings, dark streets, and unsafe and abandoned structures serve as incubators of crime and gun violence.

The good news is that we are not powerless against this challenge. Over the past three years we've made historic anti-crime and neighborhood safety investments. Each year, we've increased the budgets for every law enforcement agency in the county, including the District Attorney. We've freed up law enforcement to focus on the most violent criminals by reinforcing them with public health experts who can cover them for non-violent, routine calls. We've launched crime interruption programs

designed to break the cycle of gun violence through community policing and outreach. We've allocated millions to tackle the unacceptable backlog in criminal court cases in our county, hiring more judges, expanding jury operations, and allocating more than \$17 million for overtime and equipment to speed court cases along. We've invested millions to support our law enforcement as they focus on the most violent crimes.

We owe it to the law enforcement officers and communities we serve to put skin in the game — to have tools at the ready to help them and our courts prevent and fight violent crime from all sides. There is no silver bullet, but by working smart and investing in solutions that fight the root causes of crime in our community, we can make a difference now and for years to come.

# Crosby Historical Society meeting on March 5

The Crosby Historical Society will be holding a public meeting on Saturday, March 5, 2022, at 2 p.m. at the Crosby Brethren Church, 5202 First Street, Crosby, TX. Guest speaker will be local historian, Chuck Chandler. Topic will be early Methodist Churches and Penn Family.

**Biography**

Chuck Chandler was born and raised in Baytown, and, other than graduating from Texas A&M and 10 years' service in the Navy as a helicopter pilot, has lived in or near the city all his life. He is retired from ExxonMobil and after retirement, worked another 14 years as an Instrument and Electrical designer. He taught Industrial Instrumentation as an adjunct instructor at Lee College for 10 years.

He is past vice president of



CHUCK CHANDLER

the Baytown Historical Preservation Association and currently serves as a member of the Harris County Historical Commission. He has written Texas State historical marker narratives for four markers in Baytown, the City of Pelly, the 1876 Mary Jones School, the Gaillard-Mitchell Cemetery, and Brickyards on Cedar Bayou, and a Historic Texas Cemetery designation

for Hill of Rest. He has completed another two narratives which will be submitted this year; the Goose Creek Oil Field, and a cemetery marker for Hill of Rest. He is also an Admin for the Hamman's Baytown History...with a Twist Facebook site.

Chuck has written over 120 historical columns for the Baytown Sun and his paper on the early history of Cedar Bayou Methodist Church appeared in the 2021 Heritage Journal, an annual publication of the Texas United Methodist Historical Society.

He is currently working on a book of Baytown history with Arcadia Publishing, which will come out in January, 2023.

Outside of his historical endeavors, he enjoys playing Old Time and Irish fiddle.

# One Safe Houston,

CONTINUED FROM PAGE 1

ty reintegration including workforce development, mental and behavioral health resources and housing and other basic needs referrals and resources. Reducing recidivism is critical for increasing long-term public health and safety and lowering corrections costs. The proposed \$1 million dollar increase will allow a 50% increase in participants to grow from 500 to 750 annually.

--A proposed ordinance for council approval requiring security cameras on certain classes of businesses where the increase in crime in concentrated.

--A proposed ordinance for city council approval requiring that a bail bond company charge a premium which is equal to at least ten percent of the amount of the bail bond set by the court.

"This is a comprehensive approach to lowering the crime rate that focuses on police initiatives and touches on the true causes of violent crime such as social issues. I am grateful that Mayor Turner is committing not just to HPD but also to social service agencies in our city."

This is a public health crisis and as a City, we will and must address the cri-

sis through law enforcement, public health practitioners and community partners working together. NO ONE CAN ESCAPE ACCOUNTABILITY.

The strategy we outlined today is a blueprint for the City that can guide us beyond 2022.

With the collaboration of all stakeholders, including business owners, faith-based leaders, and organizations that work with those experiencing family violence and mental illness, I am confident that we will reduce violence and emerge as One Resilient City – One Unified City – One Safe Houston.

# Crosby HS Film Students make it to State Finals!

(Crosby, Texas) – Another first for Crosby High School! CHS CTE Audio Video Production students have made it to State in the 2022 UIL State Young Filmmakers Festival.

The A/V students are Division Two Finalists. Their film "The Crescendo" is nominated in the Best Narrative category. Only 48 films were chosen out of 600 submitted. There are three judging rounds which lead to the State Finals. This is the first time Crosby High School students have achieved the honor of having a film selected in the finals of the state-wide UIL film competition.

The 2022 UIL State Young Filmmakers Festival awards ceremony will



be Wednesday, February 23 in Austin. Students who place at State receive points that count toward the overall Academic Championship and State Theatre Championship. Read more here; List of Division Two finalists here; Watch film here.

A/V Production is one of the more than 20 CTE (Career and Technical Education) programs currently available for students at

Crosby High School.

**Crosby ISD**

Crosby ISD serves the needs of more than 6500 children in the communities of Crosby and Barrett Station in East Harris County, Texas. Our mission is to produce literate, responsible citizens capable of learning and applying academic and social skills successfully in any life setting. For more information, visit [crosbyisd.org](http://crosbyisd.org)

We are accepting new deposits!

All eligible residents and employees have received the COVID-19 vaccine. Health screenings are performed for guests.

Ready to upgrade your senior living experience? Offering Independent Living cottages and apartments, and a host of amenities and services, our resort-style community is surprisingly affordable.

**THE LODGE AT PINE CREEK**  
BY ABBY SENIOR LIVING

INDEPENDENT & ASSISTED LIVING | MEMORY CARE

825 Hunt Road | Baytown, TX 77521  
832-572-5592 | [LodgeAtPineCreek.com](http://LodgeAtPineCreek.com)

Follow us on Facebook  
@LODGEATPINECREEK

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LEASE BY FEBRUARY 28<sup>TH</sup> AND RECEIVE 1 MONTHS FREE RENT AND 24 MONTH FREE COMMUNICATION PACKAGE!\*

*New Year New Adventure*

**NOW OPEN**  
BAYTOWN'S NEW FAVORITE OPTION IN SENIOR LIVING

*As I Am*

YOUR JOURNEY OF COURAGE, LIFE, & RELATIONSHIPS

BROUGHT TO YOU BY *Abby* SENIOR LIVING

LEASE BY FEBRUARY 28<sup>TH</sup> AND WE'LL WAIVE YOUR COMMUNITY FEE!\*

We are accepting new residents with special COVID-19 precautions in place.

The Lodge at Pine Creek offers a perfect blend of senior living options, including a secure and caring environment for residents with Alzheimer's or other memory-related diseases. Also offering Independent Living cottages and apartments, single-story Assisted Living homes, and a host of amenities and services, in a resort-style community. All this at surprisingly affordable rates.

INDEPENDENT LIVING  
ASSISTED LIVING | MEMORY CARE

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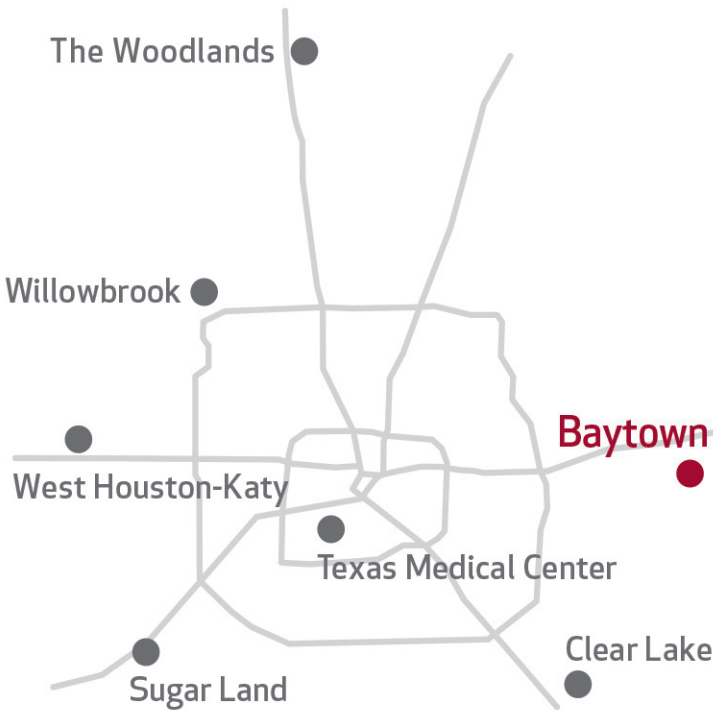




# THERE'S A BETTER APPROACH TO CANCER CARE in Baytown

At Houston Methodist Cancer Center, we treat every aspect of your cancer. Leading oncologists work with our specialists across disciplines to minimize cancer's effects on major organs. One comprehensive team — dedicated to your individual care — uses the latest research, treatments and technology to stop your cancer. From infusion and clinical trials to surgery and reconstruction, our innovative care is available in Baytown.

**That's the difference between practicing medicine and leading it.**



HOUSTON  
**Methodist**<sup>®</sup>  
CANCER CENTER

281.428.2273  
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