



YEEHAW! RodeoHouston Trail Ride this week, Parade Saturday Downtown. Rodeo Feb. 28 thru Mar. 19

HIGHLANDS

CROSBY

# Star Courier

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VOL. 70, NO. 7 - \$1.00

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THURSDAY, FEBRUARY 23, 2023

P.O. DRAWER 405, HIGHLANDS, TEXAS 77562

## Crosby Firefighter of the Year: Jacoby Patterson

CROSBY – 2022 Crosby Volunteer Fire Department held its 2022 Awards and Recognition Banquet last Saturday, January 21st.

The Department also celebrated its 80th year Anniversary of the Crosby Volunteer Fire Department -- 1942 to 2022. The event was held January 21, 2023 at Fogo De Chao Restaurant in Houston.

*Continued. See Crosby Firefighters, Page 7*



**FIREFIGHTER OF THE YEAR: JACOBY PATTERSON**  
L. Asst Chief Russell White, M. Jacoby Patterson Firefighter of the Year, R. Fire Chief Alan Kulak



**OFFICER OF THE YEAR: JACQUE DARBONNE**  
L. Asst Chief Russell White, Jacque Darbonne Officer Of The Year, R. Fire Chief Alan Kulak



**CAPTAIN OF THE YEAR: WARREN THOMPSON**  
L. Assistant chief Russell White, Captain of the Year Warren Thompson, R. Fire Chief Alan Kulak

### Crosby ISD considers 4-Day Instructional Week

Crosby ISD has hosted more than a dozen meetings to gauge community feedback regarding the consideration of a four-day instructional week beginning in the 2023-2024 school year. The four-day instructional week would be designed to recruit and retain teachers amid a nationwide, statewide, and local teacher shortage.

Crosby ISD said in a statement, "The district is always considering the best ways to provide exceptional teachers in the classrooms with our students. A 4-Day Instructional Week is just one of many options the District is considering. There are many steps in the process of approving an Academic Calendar. We have conducted a series of parent and staff surveys, asking about a variety of ideas. We also hosted a series of meetings with our community and staff members. We expect a decision to be made by the end of the month."

If the four-day instructional week is approved, the district says the school year would begin in August and end in May. Students would attend classes four days a week from September through mid-April. Each school day would increase by 20 to 30 minutes at both the secondary and elementary level.

Currently, more than 40 school districts in the state of Texas operate on a four-day instructional week, with at least three districts more starting the calendar change in the 2023-2024 school year.

## Message from the Crosby Superintendent

Hello East Harris County and Crosby ISD families,

There is nothing that makes this Superintendent prouder than celebrating an academic achievement that puts Crosby ISD students on the map. All our third-grade students have been reading since November 7 to win it all in the Read to the Final Four bracket-style literacy competition. I am so proud to say students at all four elementary schools: Barrett, Crosby, Drew, and Newport made it into the Elite 8. This means, Crosby ISD third graders are in the Top 12% of all the 68 schools that started in the competition. We are also in the Top 5% of all the



**SUPERINTENDENT PAULA PATTERSON**

schools that have recorded minutes, and we're not done yet!

Crosby ISD will host the big announcement for the Final Four schools on Monday, February 27th, as we invite all third graders to return for another huge

reading rally. We'll be live on KHOU Channel 11 around 6:45am. We love elevating literacy to something akin to a major sporting event like March Madness. It's also doubly important, because third grade is such a vital time in the development of our students. Third grade is when they transition from learning to read to reading to learn. I am so proud of the third-grade teachers and our elementary librarian who all scored big assists to get us this far in the competition. Also, thank you to the parents, guardians, big brothers and big sisters, grandparents, and family members who encouraged them to read. Let's keep reading!

Outside of the class-



Third graders take time out during recess to read. All four Crosby ISD elementary schools have made it into the Elite 8 in the Read to the Final Four contest.

room, our students are doing amazing things in the livestock arena. Crosby ISD has several students competing at the San Antonio Livestock Show and Rodeo this month. Crosby High School sophomore

Taylor Veach finished 5th in class for her Commercial Yearling Doe. Barrett Elementary School 4th grader Peyton Givans is

*Continued. See Crosby Superintendent, Page 6*

## STATE OF THE STATE:

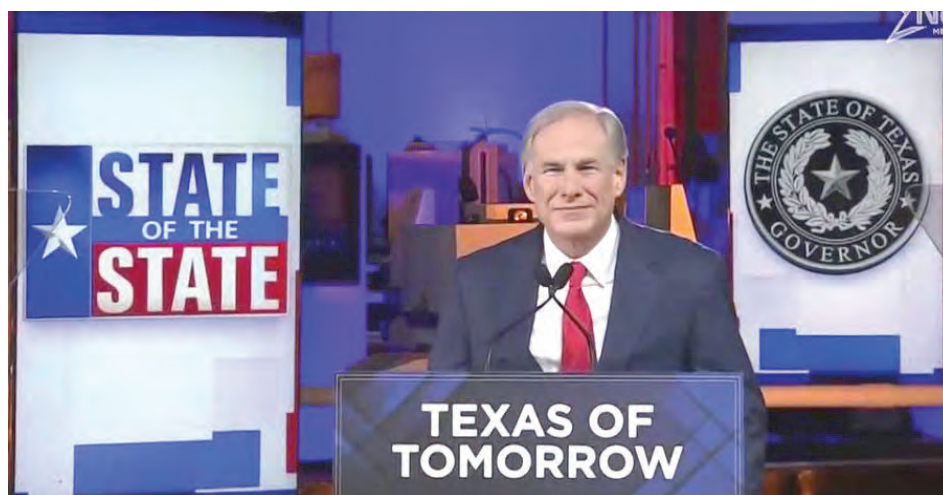
# Abbott lists 7 Legislative Priorities

By Patrick Svitek  
Texas Tribune

SAN MARCOS – Gov. Greg Abbott on Thursday outlined his highest priorities for the legislative session, offering an agenda centered on the economy, schools and public safety, complete with some proposals to push Texas even further to the political right.

During his biennial State of the State speech, the Republican governor named seven emergency items that lawmakers can vote on immediately: cutting property taxes, ending COVID-19 restrictions "forever," expanding school choice, making schools safer, ending "revolving-door" bail policies, securing the state's border with Mexico and cracking down on fentanyl.

"This session, we will



GOVERNOR GREG ABBOTT DELIVERS HIS "STATE OF THE STATE" SPEECH, AND LEGISLATIVE PRIORITIES, AT THE NOVEON MAGNETICS FACILITY IN SAN MARCOS LAST THURSDAY.

ensure Texas remains the leader of this nation as an unflinching force in this world," Abbott said during the speech in San Marcos. "Together, we will build a Texas for the next generation — the Texas of tomorrow."

The legislative session, which began in early January, is Abbott's fifth as governor, and it comes months after he secured a decisive reelection victory for a third term. It also

comes as he has emerged as more of a national political figure for his attention-grabbing efforts to secure the border — and as a possible 2024 presidential candidate.

His speech included two

### ABBOTT'S LEGISLATIVE PRIORITIES:

- ★ CUTTING PROPERTY TAXES
- ★ ENDING COVID RESTRICTIONS FOREVER
- ★ EDUCATION FREEDOM
- ★ SCHOOL SAFETY
- ★ ENDING REVOLVING DOOR BAIL
- ★ SECURING THE BORDER
- ★ FIGHTING THE FENTANYL CRISIS

references to President Joe Biden, a Democrat. Abbott said in one that Texans are rightfully "furious about the lawlessness caused by Joe Biden's open border

*Continued. See Abbott's Priorities, Page 5*

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 Community Resource CREDIT UNION  
CRU.ORG

# GOOSE CREEK CISD NEWS

## Goose Creek CISD Announces Principals of the Year

By: Kristyn Hunt Cathey, APR – Director of Communications

Goose Creek CISD announced their 2022-2023 Principals of the Year during a February 14<sup>th</sup> principal's meeting.

Leah Abbate was selected as the 2022-2023 Elementary Principal of the Year. Abbate is the principal of Alamo Elementary School. Leah has served Goose Creek CISD for 14 years as a

teacher, instructional coach, assistant principal, and principal. She is currently in her third year as the principal at Alamo Elementary.

Earnest Brooks was selected as the 2022-2023 Secondary Principal of the Year. Brooks is the principal of E.F. Green Junior School. Brooks is also a product of Goose Creek CISD. After a year teaching in the St. Louis area in 1999, he returned

to Baytown, where he coached and taught special education at CBJ for 13 years. He served as an assistant principal for five years before accepting the position as the first principal of E.F. Green Junior School.

Abbate and Brooks will be recognized during the district's annual Teacher of the Year and Retirement Banquet on May 18<sup>th</sup>.

All photos taken by Carrie Pryor-Newman:



Dr. Sandy Conklin, Area Executive Director; Susan Jackson, Deputy Superintendent; Leah Abbate, Alamo Elementary School principal and Dr. Randal O'Brien, Superintendent pose proudly during their February 14<sup>th</sup> principal's meeting. Abbate was named the 2022-2023 Elementary Principal of the Year.



Susan Jackson, Deputy Superintendent; Kevin Foxworth, Area Executive Director; Earnest Brooks, E.F. Green Junior School principal and Dr. Randal O'Brien, Superintendent smile as Brooks was named the 2022-2023 Secondary Principal of the Year.

## GCCISD Teachers Honored at HAABSE Event

By: Kristyn Hunt Cathey, APR – Director of Communications

The Houston Area Alliance of Black School Educators held their 36<sup>th</sup> annual Outstanding Teacher Awards and Recognition Ceremony on February 9<sup>th</sup> at the Bayou City Event Center. The primary mission of the organization is to enhance the education of all students and to exercise leadership in providing

valuable professional services and strategies to institutions, agencies, and communities engaged in creating an environment in which students, particularly Black students, can achieve academic excellence. According to their website, the purpose of the ceremony is to say, "thank you" to teachers for the outstanding job they do in working with children, and to provide an opportunity for the community to partic-

ipate in the recognition."

Six Goose Creek teachers were selected by their principals as HAABSE Teachers of the Year. They include: Tomeka Beckham, Bowie; Stacy Lockett, Crockett; Jerrica Johnson, Goose Creek Memorial; Jennifer Cooper-Fontenot, Carver; Rickey Edwards, II; Clark and Trudy Gilbert, E.F. Green.

Photo taken by Kristyn Hunt Cathey:



Tomeka Beckham, Jennifer Cooper-Fontenot, Trudy Gilbert, Stacy Lockett, Jerrica Johnson, and Rickey Edwards, III, received certificates for being named Outstanding HAABSE Teachers of the Year at the HAABSE banquet.

## GCCISD Students Compete and Win Big in History Fair



Ava Flood 6<sup>th</sup> grader from Cedar Bayou Junior School standing by her second-place project named National Association Opposed to Woman Suffrage, at the National History Day Regional Competition.



The exhibit was Yaletzy Pulido, 10<sup>th</sup> at GCM individual documentary, standing by her first-place project named Surrealism: The Art Form That Opened Eyes, at the National History Day Regional Competition



Diego Moreno, 11<sup>th</sup> and Rebecca Currie, 11<sup>th</sup> from IMPACT stands by their first-place project at the National History Day Regional Competition.

By: Faith Longorio, Associate Director for Social Studies

The Lee College Regional History Day contest was held on Saturday, February 4<sup>th</sup>. Nearly 300 students competed from schools and districts across the east and southeast Houston area. Fifty Goose Creek CISD students placed in the top four from Goose Creek and a total of 32 qualified to compete at the Texas History Day competition in April. The winners include:

**Junior Division**  
**Historical Paper**  
**Second Place: Frederick de la Rosa**

Project Title: Harsh Frontier: How African American Explorer Matthew Henson Made Reaching the North Pole Possible  
School: Cedar Bayou Junior School  
Sponsor: Ronald Garrett

**First Place: Maahi Singh**

Project Title: Booker T. Washington v. W.E.B. Du Bois: Frontiers in Black Upward Mobility, Civil Rights, and Economics Stability Challenging Conventional Thinking in America  
School: E.F. Green Junior School  
Sponsor: Jennie McBunch

**Individual Documentary**  
**Second Place: Ainsley Benoit**

Project Title: Instant Messaging: American's First On-line Service  
School: Cedar Bayou Junior School  
Sponsor: Joanne Bell

**First Place: Nikita Gupta**

**Project**  
Title: Revolutionizing a Frontier with Ford  
School: E.F. Green Junior School  
Sponsor: Courtney Rice

**Group Documentary**  
**Second Place: Kollin Pinkerton and Kenzie Pinkerton**

Project title: The WASP: Flying Through the Glass Ceiling  
School: Gentry Junior School  
Sponsor: Patricia Authement

**First Place: Miley Ondap and Advita Shinde**

Project Title: Project Mercury: The First Manned Mission to Space  
School: E.F. Green Junior School  
Sponsor: Allison Alvarez

**Individual Performance**  
**Second Place: Hope Crookshank**

Project Title: Wangari Maathai: A Pioneer in Women and Environmental Rights in Kenya  
School: Odyssey Academy  
Sponsor: Jan Martinez

**First Place: Carson Cook**

Project Title: Hitchcock: The Making of Psycho and Pioneering Hollywood Cinema  
School: Odyssey Academy  
Sponsor: Jan Martinez

**Group Performance**  
**Second Place: William Escobedo, Cristian Monge, Oscar Leyva, and Adison Avilez**

Project Title: Dredd Scott

School: Kranz Junior  
Sponsor: Jeri Joslin

**First Place: Damian Murguia, Johan Jernslettern, and Abram Garcia**

Project Title: Penicillin  
School: St. Joseph School  
Sponsor: Glenn Scheidt

**Individual Website**  
**Second Place: Alexa Cruz**

Project Title: Women in Medicine  
School: St. Joseph School  
Sponsor: Glenn Scheidt

**First Place: Anay Gupta**

Project Title: The North Atlantic Treaty Organization: Uniting as a New Frontier  
School: EF Green Junior School  
Sponsor: Claude Garrison

**Group Website**  
**Second Place: Sadvi Koora and Khloe Campa**

Project Title: Project Gemini: Bridge to the Moon  
School: E.F. Green Junior School  
Sponsor: Jennie McBunch

**First Place: Arianna Ramsingh, Eliana Salazar, and Tania Vazquez**

**Project**  
Title: 1<sup>st</sup> Amendment  
School: EF Green Junior School  
Sponsor: Courtney Rice

**Individual Exhibit**  
**Second Place: Ava Flood**

Project Title: National Association Opposed to Women Suffrage  
School: Cedar Bayou Junior School  
Sponsor: Mary McNeil

**First Place: Michelle Garza**

Project Title: Julieete Gordon Low: Breaking Boundaries and Forming Future Leaders  
School: Cedar Bayou Junior School  
Sponsor: Kristen Ortiz

**Group Exhibit**  
**Second Place: Sharon Lopez and Karen Rodriguez**

Project title: Fighter for Justice  
School: Lomax Junior  
Sponsor: Andrea Berg

**First Place: Jonathan Lewis, Annali Ramirez, Yashvir Singh Gill, and Gabriel Ramirez**

Project title: Got Safe Milk?  
School: EF Green Junior  
Sponsor: Claude Garrison

**Senior Division**  
**Historical Paper**  
**Second Place: Melaney Anthony**

Project Title: Well Known Yet Overlooked: Bayard Rustin's Unrecognized Frontier in Civil Rights  
School: Odyssey Academy  
Sponsor: Jan Martinez

**First Place: Karima Sedtal**

Project Title: The First Female Pioneer in the Modern Medical Frontier – Elizabeth Blackwell  
School: Goose Creek Memorial  
Sponsor: Keesha Luna

**Individual Documentary**  
**First Place: Riley Bloom**

Project Title: The Willing, Working Women of WWII  
School: Goose Creek Memorial HS  
Sponsor: Stephanie Schull

**Group Documentary**  
**Second Place: Addison**

**Hobbs, Connor Shim, and Haley Hillhouse**

Project title: Frontier of the South: The Cotton Gin  
School: First Baptist Christian Academy  
Sponsor: Alice Purcell

**First Place: Tina Chen and Khyati Singh**

Project title: The Baby Boom and Bust: Pushing Ethical Frontiers with China's Family Planning Policies  
School: Goose Creek Memorial HS  
Sponsor: Stephanie Schull

**Individual Website**  
**Second Place: Sunny Boogaard**

Project Title: Creations of the TSA: Frontiering Airport Safety  
School: Odyssey Academy  
Sponsor: Jan Martinez

**First Place: Hieu Tran**

Project Title: Penicillin: Breaking the Medical Limit

School: First Baptist Christian Academy  
Sponsor: Alice Purcell

**Group Website**  
**Second Place: Sebastian Solitaire, Uiin Kim, and Julianna Sciscoe**

Project Title: Apollo 11: Mission to the Moon  
School: First Baptist Christian Academy  
Sponsor: Alice Purcell

**Second Place: Jackson Hughes and Jungho Lim**

Project Title: Lewis Hines & The Frontiers of Photojournalism  
School: First Baptist Christian Academy  
Sponsor: Alice Purcell

**First Place: Laksh Naikale, Manthan More, and Aayush Koora**

Project Title: Black Gold: How Spindletop Changes Texas Forever  
School: Goose Creek Memorial HS  
Sponsor: Stephanie Schull

**Individual Performance**  
**First Place: Anushka Shukla**

Project Title: Labor Laws, A New Frontier of Working Conditions  
School: Sterling HS  
Sponsor: Roxolyn Anson

**Individual Exhibit**  
**Second Place: Kevin Majka**

Project Title: A New Age of Politics: Barbara Jordan's Influence on the Exposure of African American Women in Politics  
School: Odyssey Academy  
Sponsor: Jan Martinez

**First Place: Yaletzy Pulido**

Project Title: Surrealism: The Art Form that Opened Eyes  
School: Goose Creek Memorial HS  
Sponsor: Stephanie Schull

**Group Exhibit**  
**Second Place: Davion Wilson and Cobe Stoever**

Project Title: "The Great Trade Robbery" of 1989  
School: PA Memorial  
Sponsor: Rachel Simmons

**First Place: Rebecca Currie and Diego Moreno**

Project Title: "They Let You Dream Just To Watch 'Em Shatter": Settling a

# Barbers Hill Press

## Dayton

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

VOL. 28, NO. 7 - \$1.00

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THURSDAY, FEBRUARY 23, 2023

MONT BELVIEU, TEXAS 77580

### ON THE HILL

## Baytown visits at the Texas Capitol

Baytown was in the Capitol recently, celebrating the 75th anniversary of its incorporation. It was a treat to have Mayor Brandon Capetillo and Councilmembers Alvarado, Powell & Lester in the chamber! said State Senator Carol Alvarado



### Stephen F. Austin State University Dean's List for Fall 2022

NACOGDOCHES, TX (02/15/2023)— Stephen F. Austin State University recognized the outstanding academic achievements of a select number of students by naming 1,500 to the Dean's List for fall 2022. To qualify for the Dean's List at SFA, the student must have earned a semester GPA over 3.5 in 12 or more semester hours while a full-time, degree-seeking undergraduate student.

Marylee Baltazar of Baytown

Emma Davis of Baytown

Mackenzie Ellis of Mont Belvieu

Limneyiah Green of Baytown

Claire Guarnere of Mont Belvieu

Brooke Kuritz of Crosby

Ana Lopez of Baytown

Grace Murray of Baytown

Paige Nall of Baytown

Ashton Pages of Baytown

Rachel Pounders of Huffman

Kimberly Rice of Cove

Brenden Swope of Baytown

Gracie Thomas of Huffman

Mckenzie Wilson of Baytown

Enrolling approximately 12,000 students, Stephen F. Austin State University offers more than 80 undergraduate majors and 120 areas of study within six colleges - business, education, fine arts, forestry and agriculture, liberal and applied arts, and sciences and mathematics. SFA provides the academic breadth of a state university with the personalized attention of a private school. Visit [sfasu.edu](http://sfasu.edu) to learn more.

### Jordan Jackson for American Heart Association

This is Jordan Jackson, I attend Cedar Bayou Junior High in Baytown. On behalf of the American Heart Association, I am competing as a Teen of Impact Nominee, raising funds to fight heart disease and stroke, the #1 and #2 killers globally. Along the way, I am gaining experiences that will set me apart in my future.

My Papa, David Mourer and my Grumpy, Keith Jackson both suffered from heart disease. I hope that by raising money, I can raise awareness about the importance of heart health.

I would like to ask your company to support my mission by becoming a Gold, Silver or hole sponsor for my charity golf tournament. The tournament will be held on March 25, 2023 at the Chambers County Golf Course.

All donations are tax deductible and will help me and my team maximize our impact for the American Heart Association.

Sincerely  
Jordan Jackson  
Baytown, TX  
281-786-7200  
[abbeyj328@gmail.com](mailto:abbeyj328@gmail.com)

## Black History Month Display at the Jones Public Library

The Jones Public Library would like to acknowledge with appreciation Jamie Wright, Brandy Pruitt, and Lynda Young for their creation of the Black History Month display located at the entrance of the library.

This display includes information about the Divine 9 Sororities and Fraternities, Texas HBCUs (Historically Black Colleges and Universities), and prominent local members of the community.

Stop by the library any time throughout the month of February to view this display.



## Houston Methodist Hospital Baytown

### Heartburn or Heart Attack?

February is American Heart Month, a time when the nation spotlights heart disease, which is the number one killer of Americans. While many of us are familiar with the typical symptoms of a heart issue, such as crushing pain in the chest or numbness in the left arm, other symptoms could indicate you're having a heart attack.

A heart attack didn't even cross the mind of 52-year-old Fred Beaumier of Baytown when he began experiencing what he thought was heartburn.

"It was about two o'clock in the morning, I woke up with a very dry burning sensation in my chest. I assumed I ate something that didn't agree with me and that I was having heartburn. It lasted about 10 minutes, and I just went back to sleep," said Beaumier.

But the sensation returned.

"A few days later I was grocery shopping, and suddenly got the same dry burning feeling, but again, it was over in about 10 minutes. I thought, maybe it's time to change my

diet," said Beaumier.

It wasn't until a few days later, one week after his first bout with the burning sensation, that it returned for a third time. This time Fred suspected something may be wrong.

"I was on my way to work, it hit me again, and it wouldn't stop, it just kept getting worse. That is when I decided to turn around and go to the hospital," said Beaumier.

Fred went to the emergency room at Houston Methodist Baytown Hospital. Tests revealed one of Fred's arteries was clogged. He met with Houston Methodist Baytown cardiologist Dr. Raghunandan Muppidi, who told Fred he required surgery.

Fred was rushed into the cardiac catheterization lab, where cardiologist Dr. Nene Ugoeke placed a stent to help open Fred's clogged artery.

"I was surprised. I didn't experience a sharp pain in my chest or numbness in my arm, so I didn't think it was a heart attack," said Beaumier.

"There are some typical



**Dr. Raghunandan Muppidi** symptoms of a heart attack, but not every patient experiences the same symptoms," said Dr. Muppidi.

Common heart attack warning signs include:

-Pain or discomfort in the chest

-Lightheadedness, nausea or vomiting

-Jaw, neck or back pain

-Discomfort or pain in the arm or shoulder

-Shortness of breath

"Symptoms tend to vary between men and women. Women may experience some of the same symptoms as men but tend to have other symptoms, such as shortness of breath, nausea/vomiting, and back or jaw pain," said Dr. Muppidi.

### CAPITAL COMMENTS

By State Senator Brandon Creighton



## Lt. Governor Patrick's Priority Legislation

Austin, Texas— Senator Brandon Creighton (R-Conroe) offered the following statement:

Lt. Governor Patrick continues to respond directly to the pulse of Texas by advancing a conservative, reform based agenda for the 88th Legislative session. The priority bills he outlined today tackle the critical issues of our growing state, and also reflect the pro-family, pro-Texan values that are fundamental to who we are.

As Chairman of Senate Education, I look forward to advancing legislation that demonstrates our commitment to Texas educators through the Teacher Bill of Rights, and empowers parents to play an active role in their

child's education in the widely anticipated Parental Bill of Rights. Also, the bill package delivers for the 6 million students in Texas schools the necessary funding resources and opportunities to succeed.

On the higher education front, I look forward to continuing our work to strengthen workforce training programs, increasing the number of Texas Tier 1 Research Universities, addressing outdated tenure policies, and returning to a culture of free speech and merit based hiring at public universities by addressing Diversity, Equity and Inclusions programs and Critical Race Theory instruction in Higher Education.

## Pilot Club Gala March 25

The Evening Pilot Club of Baytown cordially invites San Jacinto Pilot Club to our annual fundraising Gala



### TRUCKING ACROSS TEXAS GALA

Saturday March 25, 2023

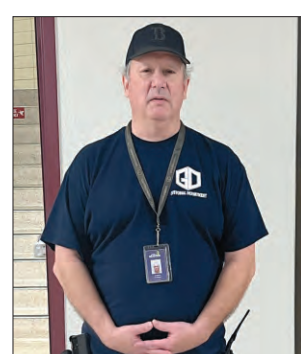
Monument Inn 4406 Independence Parkway South La Porte, Texas 77571

Entertainment: David Glenn

Tickets are \$45.00 from any Evening Pilot Club Member

6:00 p.m. Social, 6:30 p.m. Dinner

Silent and Live Auction at 8:00 p.m.



52-years- Fred Beaumier

Fred is now several weeks into his recovery and is now in cardiac rehab.

"It is well known that people who go to cardiac rehab and workout under supervision are much more confident as they return to their routine and do better in the long run," said Dr. Muppidi.

In addition to the rehab, Fred has also changed his diet and lost some weight. Dr. Muppidi says he's recovering well and points to Fred's case as an example of how symptoms can vary from person to person.

"In Fred's case, he thought he was experiencing heartburn. A close interview with patients can typically clarify whether

this is truly a gastrointestinal issue or a cardiac issue. Generally, if you get the sensation after doing physical activity rather than eating, it may be a symptom of a heart issue. Any pain that seems to occur during or after physical exertion, could be related to the heart," said Dr. Muppidi.

Cardiologists say it's important to seek care if you experience any of these kinds of symptoms. Either see your doctor immediately or head to an emergency room.

Fred Beaumier's trip to the ER saved his life. "I am lucky to be alive. I am so grateful to Dr. Muppidi and his team for saving my life," said Beaumier. He offers this advice to others, "Listen to your body, it is pretty good at telling you when something is wrong, you just have to pay attention."

To schedule an appointment with a cardiologist at Houston Methodist DeBakey Heart & Vascular Center in Baytown, visit [houstonmethodist.org/heart-vascular](http://houstonmethodist.org/heart-vascular) or call 281.837.7587.

OPINION PAGE

OPINION

By BILL KING



The Ignored Majority: Throwing Down-Ballot Candidates Under the Bus

Imagine that you are a Democrat campaigning for a statewide office in Texas, where one in six jobs is tied to the oil and gas industry.

Or imagine that you are running for a local office in Harris County, Texas, as a Republican, where a Democrat has an 8-10 point natural advantage.

Welcome to the world of being thrown under the bus as a down-ballot candidate. There was a time when party leaders at the state and national levels cared about winning down-ballot races as part of building their party, but those days are long gone.

That is because the only elections that matter to most elected officials are primaries, which increasingly have become ideological purity tests.

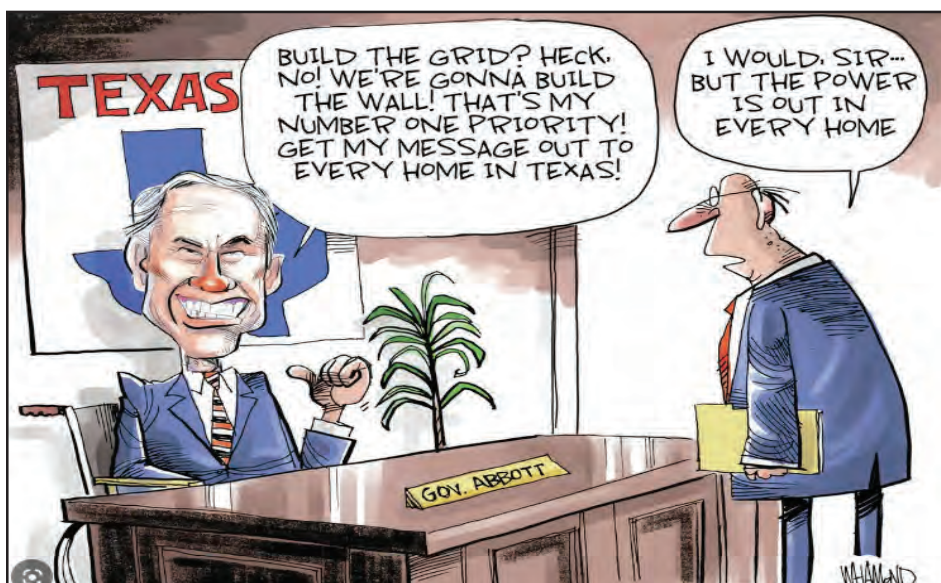
Prior to about 1990, we really had a four-party system, because both parties had conservative- and progressive-leaning wings.

But since 1990, the minority wings of both parties have been virtually eliminated. This is a chart that Lee Drutman's book, Breaking the Two-Party Doom Loop, based on data collected by www.voteview.com, a research project led by UCLA, which shows the demise of the minority wings of the two parties in the U.S. House of Representatives.

With the complete ideological sorting of the two parties, down-ballot candidates who attempt to navigate more moderate policies to appeal to local voters have become sacrificial lambs to ideological purity.

In the process, critically important state and local issues go largely unaddressed in campaigns. In Texas, for example, the failure of Texas Republicans to address the glaring problems with the Texas electrical grid, resulting in the worst blackout in decades, was barely discussed in the statewide elections.

At some point, Democrats in places like Texas and Florida, and Republicans in California, are going to have to accept that their parties' platforms are simply not viable in their states.



STATE CAPITAL HIGHLIGHTS

By Gary Borders



Abbott lays out seven top priorities in State of the State Address

ABBOTT LAYS OUT SEVEN TOP PRIORITIES

Gov. Greg Abbott, in a State of the State address last Thursday, outlined his seven top priorities for the ongoing legislative session before an invitation-only audience at a manufacturing facility in San Marcos, the Austin American-Statesman reported.

The governor, beginning his third term, announced that school safety would also be a legislative priority, while avoiding any mention on curtailing the availability of guns, something Democrats hammered on in their 10-minute rebuttal.

Abbott is proposing that \$15 billion of the state's hefty surplus go toward cutting property taxes.

PATRICK ALSO ANNOUNCES PRIORITIES

Texas Lt. Gov. Dan Patrick a few days earlier released 30 legislative priorities, which also includes property tax relief. Patrick, who presides over the state Senate, also wants to increase the punishment for illegal voting, protect children "from obscene books in libraries" and eliminate tenure at public colleges and universities.

The Houston Chronicle reported other items on Patrick's list include banning critical race theory in higher education and prohibiting COVID-19 mandates.

"Just because a bill does not make the priority list does not mean it is not a priority for me or the Senate," Patrick said in a statement. "We will pass over 600 bills this session. As I like to say, every bill is a priority to someone, otherwise, we would not pass it."

Patrick is also pushing for teacher pay raises, expanding mental health services in rural areas, and strengthening the state's power grid.

BLACK LAWMAKERS BLAST ABBOTT'S HIRING DIRECTIVE

A directive from Abbott



to state agencies ordering them to end the use of diversity, equity and inclusion practices in hiring employees has drawn the ire of the Texas Legislative Black Caucus and the Texas NAACP. Both groups met last week to urge major national sports groups to refuse to hold championship games in Texas if the governor does not reverse his ruling.

The Statesman reported that the groups called on the NBA and MLB to not host All-Star games in the state, the NFL not to hold Super Bowl games, and the NCAA to decline to host championship games in Texas, unless the ruling is reversed.

"I am proud to say that the NAACP urges all citizens of goodwill to join us and our partners in fighting to stop our state from continuing to move back to Jim Crow," NAACP President Gary Bledsoe said. Some employment law experts have said the governor's interpretation of DEI practices is misguided.

The governor's office has said that hiring on factors other than merit violates state and federal law.

STATE PARK TO BECOME GATED COMMUNITY

A popular Texas state park located 90 miles southeast of Dallas will close at the end of the month, the Texas Parks and Wildlife Department announced. After more than 50 years of public use, Fairfield State Park was notified by Vistra, the power company that leased the property to the state, that it is terminating the lease and selling the property to a private developer.

Vistra closed the coal power plant located on the lake in 2018. Despite

months of negotiation, the company would not consider selling just the parkland to the state. The new owner, Todd Interests, plans to develop a high-end gated community with a private golf course, according to The Dallas Morning News.

"This loss is especially unfathomable at a time when we are celebrating 100 years of state parks, yet absent any cooperation or interest in working with us from the developer, we have no other options," said Arch "Beaver" Aplin, TPWD chairman, said.

A number of state legislators have expressed outrage over the park's closing. State Rep. Angelia Orr, R-Hillsboro, whose district includes Freestone County where Fairfield State Park is located, has filed a bill that would allow the state to acquire the parkland through eminent domain. TPWD, however, will remove equipment and relocate staff members after Feb. 28.

SABINE PASS BATTLEGROUND SITE REOPENS

A Civil War battleground and memorial site closed after damage from Hurricane Harvey in 2017 has reopened after repairs were made to the seawall. The Sabine Pass Battle-ground State Historic Site in Port Arthur is now open to the public seven days a week, according to the Texas Historical Commission.

In the battle, Confederate Lt. Richard "Dick" Dowling and 46 men fought back against a Union assault on Sabine Pass, which was the main port for Confederate shipments during the war. The battle lasted less than an hour. Two Union gunboats were destroyed, along with significant casualties and the capture of about 350 prisoners. It kept Union forces from entering the Texas interior in the Civil War, according to THC.

Gary Borders is a veteran award-winning Texas journalist. He published a number of community newspapers in Texas during a 30-year span, including in Longview, Fort Stockton, Nacogdoches, and Cedar Park. Email: gborders@texaspress.com.

THE POSTSCRIPT

By Carrie Classon

"Not Stubby"

My mother has a pet squirrel named Stubby.

He is not, technically, her pet, as he lives outdoors as a wild squirrel. But he spends much of his time sitting on the railing, watching my mother, and my mother spends much of her time sprinkling seeds outside for Stubby, so you cannot deny they have a relationship.

While my husband, Peter, and I were up north visiting, however, Stubby had a visitor. "That's not Stubby!" my mother said, looking out the window at the red squirrel who appeared remarkably at home.

It's easy to identify Stubby since he lost half his tail in some unknown but unquestionably tragic accident. It was shortly after the loss of his tail that my mother took Stubby on as her dependent. The other squirrels disappeared in the winter, but Stubby remained. He dug himself an elaborate network of tunnels through the snow that went under the deck and came out on every which side, keeping him close to his supply of food, but safe from anything that might want to get what was left of his tail.

"Stubby has a great life!" I noted when I came up to visit my parents.

It had been cold, but Stubby looked healthy and well-fed. His tail had not grown back, naturally, but where it had been bitten off, new long, black fur had grown. It was a stylish and distinctive addition to his look. His tail now looked a bit like something you would see on the back end of a pheasant, and he had no trouble racing up and down the trees or balancing on the tiniest branch. Stubby was thriving with half a tail, especially now that he had my mother as his benefactor.

But then, another squirrel showed up.

"That's not Stubby!" my mother repeated, looking at the squirrel who was sitting where Stubby always sat, eating the seeds put out for Stubby.

"Maybe Stubby has a girlfriend," I suggested.

"Maybe this squirrel chased Stubby off?" my mother said, apparently far less optimistic about Stubby's chances for romance.

But Stubby was missing. I just was beginning to believe my mother's theory when we spotted Stubby a short distance off. He was eating pine-cone seeds, giving the visitor a little space, but apparently going about his business as usual.

"It's very odd," my mother concluded, wondering if she now had two red squirrels to support.

But the red squirrel only stayed two days, and then disappeared as suddenly as it had appeared.

We watched intently out the window, looking for any sign of Stubby's visitor (and perhaps spending more time engaged in the activity than four grown adults should), but no visitor returned. Stubby was back on his own, contentedly eating his seeds.

"Who was that, Stubby?" I wondered.

My mother had an aunt who said she liked to visit folks to "see how they have it," and I can't imagine why squirrels might not do the same. We had just been talking about my mother's uncle, Evald, and I decided perhaps this might be some relation of Stubby's, let's call him Evald, someone who had known him before the sad loss of his tail.

"I wonder what old Stubby is up to?" Evald wondered and made the trip to visit. Evald would have found that Stubby had quite a nice setup.

"Oh, he's got it good, that old Stubby!" Evald would report back to the extended squirrel family. "Old Stubby had that terrible accident, but he really landed on his feet!"

At least, that's how I imagine it.

Till next time, Carrie

Photos and other news can be found at CarrieClasson.com.

Advertisement for Star Courier newspaper, including contact information for Gilbert Hoffman and other staff members.

# Body of missing swimmer found in San Jacinto River

HARRIS COUNTY, Texas – A body has been found as officials search for a missing swimmer they say went underwater in the San Jacinto River and has not been seen since.

According to the Harris County Sheriff's Office, the swimmer was last seen near Wallisville and Rio Villa.

It is believed he may have suffered from hypothermia before going underwater and not resurfacing.

The swimmer was described as a Hispanic man wearing a blue tank top.



## Babin Unveils Bill to Ban TikTok from U.S. Campuses

WASHINGTON, DC – U.S. Congressman Brian Babin (TX-36) issued the following statement on his new bill, the Terminate TikTok on Campus Act (H.R. 231).

"For years, the Chinese Communist Party has been hard at work

infiltrating our education system to spy, steal, and cheat to compete with us," said Babin. "TikTok is nothing more than Beijing's latest apparatus to aid them on their quest to supplant us as the world's number one superpower. We cannot let them succeed.

"My bill will protect students and educators, and the work they do, from Communist China's malfeasance by banning the app from institution-owned and institution-issued devices."

# Abbott "State of the State" Priorities,

CONTINUED FROM PAGE 1

policies."

The speech otherwise included a host of priorities that Abbott has been emphasizing for months, like using the state's historic budget surplus to deliver the "largest property tax cut in the history of Texas." He also reiterated he wants to root out "woke agendas" in the classroom and let parents use tax dollars to send their kids to schools outside the traditional public education system. He repeated that he wants to do so through Education Savings Accounts, in which state funds would be deposited to help parents pay for nontraditional education expenses, like home schooling or private school.

That may be the most ambitious proposal that Abbott backed, considering school vouchers have historically run into a wall of opposition from Democrats and rural Republicans in the Legislature.

Texas Democrats responded to Abbott's speech in a 10-minute wide-ranging video that included comments from state and federal lawmakers, as well as Texans who said their lives were negatively impacted by Abbott's policies. The video began with the families of victims of the Uvalde elementary school shooting pleading for state lawmakers to do more to prevent gun violence.

"Since that day we've been begging Gov. Abbott to do what's right and institute the most common-sense gun safety laws, like raising the age from 18 to 21 to be able to buy a weapon of war in Texas, but he didn't listen," said Felix Rubio, whose daughter Lexi was killed during the shooting. Abbott and other Republicans have resisted such proposals.

The Texas House Democratic Caucus responded to Abbott in a news conference Friday morning, accusing him of ignoring a host of issues that are important to everyday Texans. Rep. Ron Reynolds, chairman of the Texas Legislative Black Caucus, said all he heard from Abbott was "red meat for his MAGA base."

Emergency items are proposals that allow lawmakers to bypass a ban on passing legislation before the 60th day of a session — which would be March 10. Thursday is the 37th day of the session.

Among his emergency items, Abbott called for legislation to permanently prevent COVID-19 mandates, like local requirements to wear masks, get vaccines and shut down businesses. While Texas long ago lifted its statewide COVID-19 restrictions, Abbott has kept in place a disaster declaration for the pandemic that has drawn some criticism from his right, and he has promised to end it once lawmakers act.

Notably, Abbott also nudged to conservative pushback by giving lawmakers more of a say in how he responds to the next pandemic.

"We must change how government responds to future pandemics, including requiring the Legislature to convene if another pandemic is ever declared," Abbott said.

In his speech, Abbott alluded to some of the biggest tests of his governorship over the past two years, including the 2021 power-grid collapse. As he did in his inaugural address last month, he said he wants to build a power grid that will endure for many years to come, but he did not designate it as an emergency item. Lt. Gov. Dan Patrick has deemed it one of his highest priorities for the session and has vowed to force a special session if he

does not get his way in the form of adding natural gas plants.

The grid was near the top of a list of 30 legislative priorities that Patrick released Monday. Patrick's priorities featured a number of farther-right ideas that Abbott did not mention Thursday, such as banning "children's exposure to drag shows," outlawing gender-transitioning care for minors and eliminating tenure for public college professors.

Abbott also talked about the most likely policy response to come out of the 2022 Uvalde school shooting: school safety. He did not get too detailed, calling for the "safest standards" and more mental health professionals in schools.

When it came to guns, Abbott focused on getting tougher on crimes involving guns, calling for a 10-year mandatory minimum jail sentence "for criminals who illegally possess guns." That is consistent with a top priority of the lieutenant governor this session.

When it comes to public safety, Abbott has named tougher bail an emergency item before but has struggled to get one proposal across the finish line: a constitutional amendment to expand the circumstances in which a judge can deny bail. Abbott said Thursday that lawmakers "did a lot last session" to tighten bail policies but still must do more.

Finally, on the border, the main proposal that Abbott mentioned was imposing a "mandatory minimum jail sentence of at least 10 years for anyone caught smuggling illegal immigrants in Texas." That is a tougher proposal than the five-year minimum that Abbott suggested as recently as December.

Abbott has taken extraordinary measures to secure the border over the past two years, and he has signaled that his next major front is stopping the flow of fentanyl, a powerful and often deadly opioid. To that end, he reiterated his desire to prosecute fentanyl deaths as murders and increase the supply of Narcan, the life-saving overdose drug.

Harm reduction advocates have been pushing Abbott to go further.

"If the governor wants to confront the overdose crisis as he says he does, access to Narcan only scratches the surface," said Cate Graziani, executive director of the Texas Harm Reduction Alliance, calling for "harm reduction centers, safe use supplies, and supportive housing."

Beyond his emergency items, Abbott peppered his speech with other pet issues. For example, he said "local communities need new economic development tools this session," alluding to an effort to reinvent a popular corporate tax-break program that lawmakers let expire last year.

The governor has typically given the State of the State before a joint legislative session at the Texas Capitol. But Abbott chose to deliver the speech outside Austin for the second time in a row, after giving it in Lockhart two years ago during the COVID-19 pandemic.

This time, Abbott delivered the speech at Noveon Magnetics in San Marcos, a setting that has drawn some controversy. Attendees were initially asked to sign a nondisclosure agreement, with his office citing "national security and corporate espionage concerns," but the request was rescinded, according to the USA Today Network.

Noveon Magnetics, the site where Gov. Greg Abbott delivered his biennial State of the State speech on Thursday, in San Marcos. Credit: Eli Hartman for The Texas Tribune

Reporters were not allowed to cover the speech in person, but it was broadcast live on Nexstar TV stations across the state and streamed online.

Abbott opened his speech by recognizing Noveon as a "cutting-edge business in the critical field of rare earth elements." He warned that China currently dominates the rare earth materials market and that Texas needs to embrace companies like Noveon to become more self-reliant.

"The future of Texas and the United States should not depend on China," Abbott said.

Ahead of Abbott's speech, the head of the Texas House Democratic Caucus, Rep. Trey Martinez Fischer, issued a memo that said "the only emergency the Governor has in mind is that no one wants him to run for president other than himself." Abbott has not ruled out a 2024 White House run, and his aides say it is something he will consider after the session ends in late May.

The Democratic response video, which at times was jarring because of the rapidly changing scripted segments featuring both lawmakers and everyday Texans, also included a nod to Democratic support for oil and energy jobs, responding to Republican attacks against the party. Democrats also promised to vigorously oppose legislation that would take dollars away from public schools for use at private schools and to fight to expand Medicaid, which is a near impossibility in Republican-dominated Texas.

Martinez Fischer closed the response by saying the session would not be easy.

"We can promise you Democrats are going to fight because you, the people of Texas, deserve the opportunity to succeed no matter your race, life background or where in this great state you call home," said state Rep. Nicole Collier, a Fort Worth Democrat.

James Barragán contributed reporting.

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# Crosby Superintendent's Message,

CONTINUED FROM PAGE 1

## BIRTHDAYS

Feb 16-Sandra Gross  
Feb 17- Donnie Cravatt  
Feb 18-Fay Blackmon-Slot  
Ray Blackmon  
Rebecca Nibbe  
Mandy Carwile  
Nakomi Stone  
Billy Nash  
Feb 19-Stephanie Lane  
Lina Hidalgo  
Feb 20-Stormy Fulmer  
Herman Bradford  
Beau McCrary  
Feb 21-Lyndsie Hennigan  
Leah Moyer  
Tera Smith  
Feb 22-Calzin Rutledge  
Diane Currie  
Feb 23-Don Bird  
Audrey Cornman  
Christina Woodall  
Feb 24-Will Oviedo  
Feb 25-Mrs. Charles Marchard  
Beth Phillips  
Cheyenne Ward  
Jackie Rosas  
Feb 26-Alice Etzel  
Shane Tappan  
Feb 27-Joe Price  
Terry Whittaker  
Caleb Wingate  
Kaylin Morgan  
Elise Guidroz  
Feb 28-B.E. Hales

## ANNIVERSARIES

Feb 24-Jim & Linda Hildebrand  
Feb 26-Thomas & Geene Parrish  
Mar 3-Jimmy & Teri Gleason  
Mar 5-Raymond & Mary Helen James  
Mar 16-Yvonne & Dale Browder  
March 31-William & Susan O'Neal

also showing her Santa Gertrudis steer named "Hank." Our students are going up against some of the best junior market steer, goat, and lamb exhibitors in Texas, and we are rooting for them all the way!

The Houston Livestock Show and Rodeo is right around the corner. Don't forget to visit the Hayloft Gallery to see some of the prize-winning artwork by Crosby High School elementary, middle school, and high school art students.

The transition from winter to spring sports is happening as we speak. The Crosby High School boys' and girls' basketball seasons have come to an end. The girls battled their hearts out during a Bi-District playoff game on Valentine's Day. Despite their loss to Friendswood, I know without a doubt the future is bright for the program. The boys' season ended on Senior Night, as we saluted five seniors, several of whom are multi-sports athletes. They excellently balance their obligations on the court, on the field, and in the classroom.

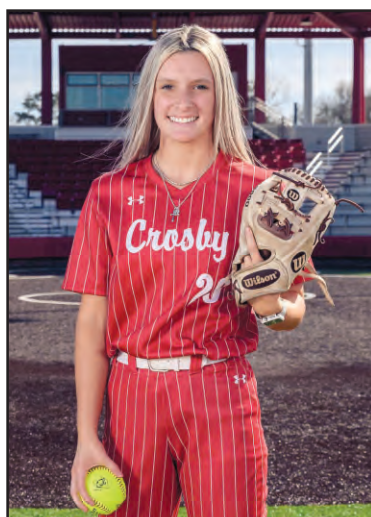
The CHS soccer teams are in the middle of district play. Boys' soccer most recently swept Port Arthur Memorial with a strong finish to the first half of district play. Varsity won 7-2, while JV won 2-0. Girls' soccer started district play with a home victory against Barbers Hill, and their looking ahead to the second half of district play starting this

month. Things look very bright for our baseball and softball seasons. The CHS Softball team defeated all their opponents in the recent Crosby Softball Tournament by a combined total of 55 points to 5. Pitcher, CHS junior Kaelin Hicks, threw a No Hitter in the Tomball game. Wow! We know our Cougars are going far this season. The CHS Baseball team begins district play on March 14th. We hope to see you in the stands at The Ballparks of Crosby for some great family fun this spring.

Our dance teams are growing a deep bench. This month, the Crosby Middle School Star Steppers won eight awards at the American Dance Competition in Goose Creek. Adelyn Lozano took 1st place as a soloist, and the CMS Officers won the Sweepstakes, Judges', Silver, and Best in Class Officer awards. Our Crosby High School Cougar Stars also impressed the judges in Goose Creek. The Cougar Stars won more than 20 awards, including the Sweepstakes Officer award for scoring 90 and above on all three routines. They also won the Team Sweepstakes award and Judges' Awards for Team Pom and Team Open. They came home with a Silver for overall technique.

We're heading into March with a lot of momentum!

We are Better Together!  
Go Coogs!



TEAM PHOTO OF KAELIN HICKS



Crosby Middle School Star Steppers at dance competition this month.

Crosby High School softball pitcher, junior Kaelin Hicks, throwing a No Hitter against Tomball.



Crosby High School Cougar Stars at dance competition this month.

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Notice is hereby given that Original Letters Testamentary for Docket No. 510678; Estate of DOROTHY MARIE CARROLL Deceased; In Probate Court No. 2 of Harris County, Texas, were issued on FEBRUARY 9, 2023.

### MICHAEL CHARLES CARROLL

The residence address of the administrator is in Harris County, Texas. The mailing address is:

c/o Weston Cotten  
1500 E. Wallisville Road  
Highlands, TX 77562

All persons having claims against this Estate which is currently being administered are required to present them within the time and in the manner prescribed by law.

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by WESTON COTTEN  
Attorney for the Estate

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## Crosby Fire Department Awards,

CONTINUED FROM PAGE 1



**2023 CROSBY VFD FIRE OFFICERS**  
Ryan Allen 2nd Asst Chief, Cameron Elles District 81 Chief, Russell White 1st Asst Chief, Alan Kulak Fire Chief, Ben Hathorn District 82 Chief, Jacque Darbonne Fire Marshal, Jeff Stilwell Safety Officer



**FIRE STATION CAPTAINS**  
Jonathan Riker Station 85, Gage White Station 84, Sam Parker Station 81, Brian McClanhan Station 83, Warren Thompson Station 82, (Not pictured John Garcia, Training Captain)



**5 YEAR AWARD: JONATHON RIKE**  
Russell White Asst Fire Chief, Jonathon Riker 5 year service award, Fire Chief Alan Kulak



**15 YEAR AWARD: CAMERON ELLES**  
Russell White Asst Chief, Cameron Elles 15 year service award, Fire Chief Alan Kulak



**20 YEAR AWARD: JACQUE DARBONNE**  
Russell White Asst Fire Chief, Jacque Darbonne 20 year service award, Fire Chief Alan Kulak



**20 YEAR AWARD: MIKE SIMS**  
Russell White Asst Chief, Mike Sims 20 year service award, Fire Chief Alan Kulak



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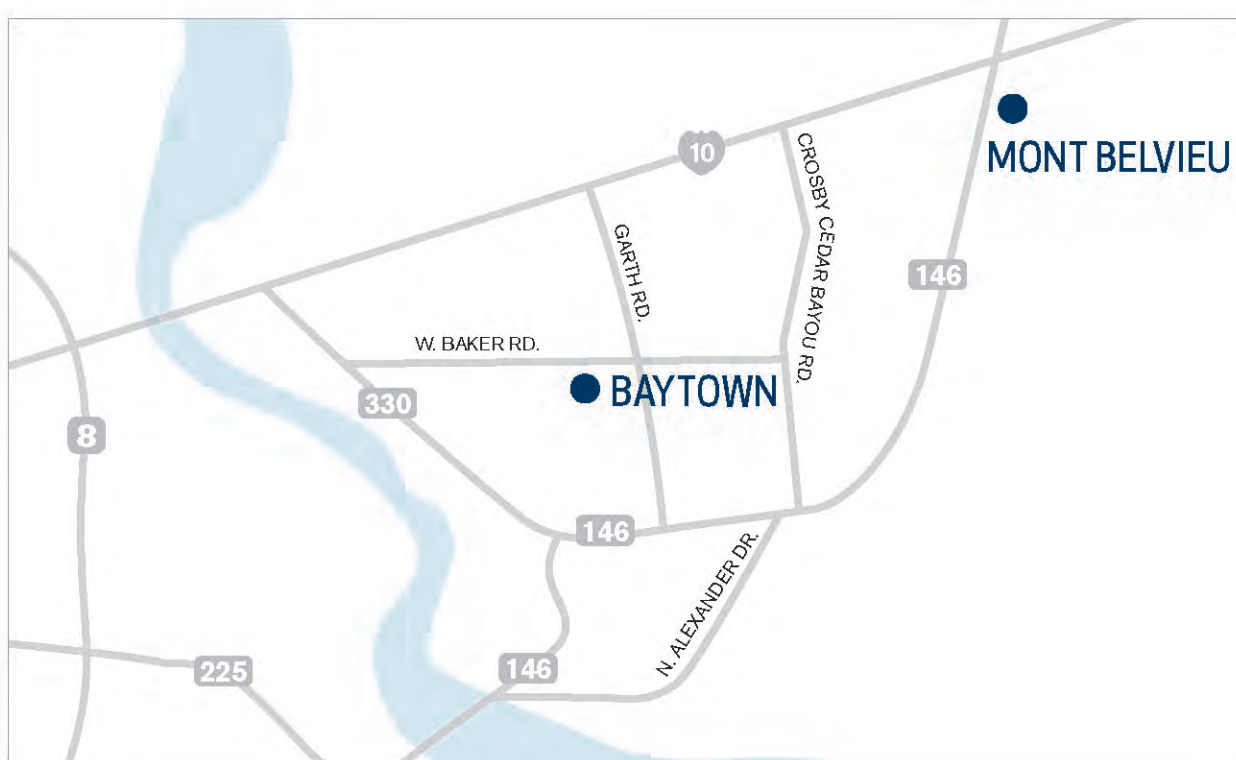
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