

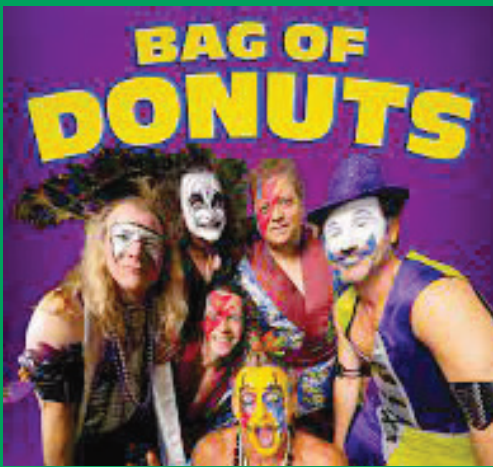
HIGHLANDS

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Crosby Fair & Rodeo -- Friday, June 2

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THURSDAY, MAY 18, 2023

P.O. DRAWER 405, HIGHLANDS, TEXAS 77562

## IN THE STARS

### EVENTS

#### Highlands Chamber Public invited Jun. 9 to plan its future

Highlands Lynchburg Chamber of Commerce is seeking community input and actions for its future. The meeting will be held Friday, June 9, 2023 at 12:00 noon at Highlands Community Center located at 604 Highlands Woods Dr, Highlands TX 77562. It is important for the Public to come and Participate. Info or suggestions, Randy Casey 832-984-4651

#### North Shore Rotary Annual FISH FRY May 20

48th Annual Catfish Fry and Crawfish Boil, Raffle for a new Toyota Tacoma pickup or Toyota Camry car or 20 other valuable prizes. Silent Auction, Live auction.

Saturday, May 20 from 11am to 3pm at the Rotary Pavilion on Wallisville (behind the courthouse).

Raffle Tickets \$100 which includes two fish fry meals. Dinner Tickets alone \$15. Everyone welcome! Call 713-450-3600 for tickets, or purchase from any North Shore Rotarian. In Crosby, available from Turner Chevrolet or Crawfish Shack.

#### Crosby Fair & Rodeo Schedule

**JUNE 2,3 Friday, Saturday**  
BBQ COOKOFF  
**JUNE 2, Friday**  
22s  
BAG OF DONUTS, 7:30pm  
**JUNE 3, Saturday**  
PARADE 10pm  
SUNNY SAUCEDO, 7:30pm  
**JUNE 8, Thursday**  
BUYER'S DINNER 4pm  
LIVESTOCK AUCTION, 6pm  
**JUNE 9, Friday**  
TYLER HALVERSON  
CREED FISHER, 7:30pm  
**JUNE 10, Saturday**  
LITTLE WRANGLER, 10am  
AUSTIN MEADE  
GIOVANNIE & THE HIRED GUNS, 7:30pm

#### NOW OPEN New Laundromat opens in Highlands

Well known local businessman Bill Bagi has opened a new Laundromat in Highlands, known as 501Laundromat. Bagi said that the new store has the latest Wascomat professional washers and dryers, and because of their extra large size can clean 60 lbs of laundry in an hour. The new store is now open, and operates 7 days a week, from 8am to 9pm. More details and photos on page 2 of this paper, or stop by with some laundry. Located at 501 S. Main Street, Highlands.

# Rotary awards \$37,500 in Scholarships 21 students from area schools

HIGHLANDS – The Rotary Club held their annual Scholarship Banquet last Monday night, May 8th, and awarded 21 scholarships totalling \$37,500.

The venue of the Highlands Community Center was festive and full with scholarship recipients, family and friends, and Rotarians and their families.

The featured keynote speaker was Goose Creek CISD Superintendent Dr. Randal O'Brien. He gave the award recipients "A few words of wisdom" as he termed it. He told a few stories about people who went through life with a positive attitude, believing they could accomplish anything. These examples were Henry Ford, Mark Twain, and Mother Teresa. O'Brien told a quip from Twain, "The two most important days of your life--the day you were born, and the day you find out why." He ended with the challenge, "never stop moving forward."

The scholarships are a



SCHOLARSHIP RECIPIENTS AT LAST WEEK'S AWARDS BANQUET. IN ADDITION TO THE SCHOLARSHIP WINNERS, ALSO SEEN AT LEFT REAR IS ANDY SCOTT, ROTARY PRESIDENT; AT RIGHT REAR DR. LARRY WHITE, ROTARY SCHOLARSHIP CHAIR; AND AT FAR RIGHT DR. RANDAL O'BRIEN, KEYNOTE SPEAKER.

result of the funds raised primarily at the club's Annual Chili Feast in February. At this event, a new vehicle is raffled off to a \$100 ticket holder, along with 13 other prizes, and the net proceeds are used for the scholarships and other community projects.

Over the years, these projects have included supporting such groups as the Bay Area Homeless, Baytown Youth Fair, Bras for the Cause, Cody Stephens Foundation, Crosby Fair & Rodeo, Highlands Food Pantry, Harris County Stratford Library, Harris

County Seniors program, Highlands Horizons Miss Highlands Pageant, Highlands Little League, Highlands Volunteer Fire Department, Hurricane Relief, Methodist Church, Northshore Rotary, Partners in Education, Share Your Christmas, Stratford

Library Summer Reading Program, Community Tree Lighting ceremony, Wreaths Across America, Thanksgiving Turkeys for needy families, and Precinct2gether, as well as

*Continued. See Rotary Scholarships, Page 7*

## FROM THE CROSBY SUPERINTENDENT:

# New High School addition planned; Graduation Friday, May 26th

Hello East Harris County and Crosby ISD families,

I want to share with you the news that Crosby ISD is moving forward with a major construction project that has been on hold since 2018. In the next few months, new construction will begin at Crosby High School, as we add a wing for additional classrooms. The addition will expand CHS capacity by 600 students, and it is expected to be completed in the winter of 2025. No additional taxpayer money will be needed. The District is using bond funds that were approved by voters in November 2017. In the past few months, 21 of your fellow citizens joined discussions with my administration as a "CommUNITY Construction Committee." We outlined what the top priorities were in 2017, and what our top priorities are today. They closely aligned. The high school expansion was at the forefront, followed by middle school relief, and a new elementary. The Committee's recommendation was to prioritize the high school expansion. So, in a few short months, construction crews will begin their work. Construction is not expected to interrupt or impede classes on the rest of the CHS campus. I



SUPERINTENDENT PAULA PATTERSON

will continue to update you on the progress and next steps as we ensure our students have the space they need to receive an exceptional learning experience.

Congratulations to the Crosby High School Class of 2023! The graduation ceremony is set for Friday, May 26 at 7:30pm at Cougar Stadium. I'm looking forward to hearing from the Class of 2023 Valedictorian, Tristen Flores, and the Salutatorian, Kerigan Smith. Tristen enjoyed math and calculus theory classes during his time at Crosby High School. He was also the woodwind section captain in the high school band, and he traveled to New York City last Thanksgiving to perform in the Macy's Thanksgiving Day Parade. A first for our Cougars! Tristen is

headed to Rice University to study mechanical engineering.

Kerigan is also a proud member of the band, and she loved playing the flute! She also made a difference, serving in the National Honor Society and enjoyed community service during her time at CHS. Her favorite class was biology, because she was able to do many hands-on lab experiments, including separating DNA and injecting glow-in-the-dark genes into bacteria. Kerigan will attend UT-Austin this fall to study biochemistry. Her goal is to someday cure genetic diseases. How cool! We also want to high-



VALEDICTORIAN Tristen Flores

light the 2022-23 Teachers of the Year from each Crosby ISD campus: Ms. Ashley Kolarik, Crosby High School; Ms. Lateesa Cox, Crosby Middle School; Ms. Ruth Carrillo, Barrett Elementary; Ms. Alyse Ben-



SALUTATORIAN Kerigan Smith

nett, Drew Elementary; Ms. Kim Houser, Newport Elementary; Ms. Miranda Koen, Crosby Elementary; Ms. Raquel Steed, Crosby

*Continued. See Crosby Superintendent, Page 7*



TEACHERS OF THE YEAR from each campus in Crosby ISD. From Left to Right: Ms. Ashley Kolarik, Crosby High School; Ms. Lateesa Cox, Crosby Middle School; Ms. Ruth Carrillo, Barrett Elementary; Ms. Alyse Bennett, Drew Elementary; Ms. Kim Houser, Newport Elementary; Ms. Miranda Koen, Crosby Elementary; Ms. Raquel Steed, Crosby Kindergarten Center, with Superintendent Patterson.

### RACHEL'S DINER

Southern Cooking Buffet -- Coming Soon  
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281-462-7349

### AUTO & HOME INSURANCE



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[jtr@jeremyrosenkranz.com](mailto:jtr@jeremyrosenkranz.com)



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# GOOSE CREEK CISD NEWS

## SHSU Signs Partnership Agreement with Goose Creek



By: Mikah Boyd, Sam Houston State University Communications Manager-Special to the News

University president Alisa White and campus administrators, traveled to Baytown to sign the official agreement between Sam Houston State University and Goose Creek Consolidated Independent School District.

The agreement, known as the Bearkat Advantage Program, will offer ten scholarships to students in the district, establish closer ties with counselors within the district and encourage students to continue their education through SHSU. Thanks to the closer ties with district counselors, GCCISD students will have more scholarship opportunities, information about services such as advising and admission, notifications regarding deadlines and application waiver days.

“The point of this meeting today is to really celebrate the idea that you can go forward in your education regardless of that starting point, whether it’s right after high school,

where it’s a lot of hours with your dual credit, whether it’s a pathway through a community college,” White said.

Each scholarship winner was awarded \$1,000 towards their education at SHSU. They include: Alaysia Pena, Liliana Ramirez, Malaysia Harris, Yasmine Jonbaptiste and Leona Little of Goose Creek Memorial; Alejandro Cardenas of Sterling; Naomi Medrano of IMPACT and Katia Smith, Emanuel Garcia and Johanna Reyes of Lee High School.

Dr. Randal O’Brien, GCCISD superintendent expressed his excitement about partnering with his alma mater in hopes of encouraging students within the district to reach for the stars, just as he was encouraged by those in the College of Education as a former student in the past.

“I remember meeting Genevieve Brown, the dean of the College of Education at that time and I was made to feel welcome, and I remember her words were, you can do anything, you can be anything,” O’Brien said. “They en-

couraged me to continue on and get my degree, which is ultimately how I ended up where I am today.”

O’Brien shared that partnerships such as these are instrumental to his goal of putting GCCISD graduates on the path that is meant for them, be it continuing education or practicing a trade. He explained that students in the district hypothetically follow one of three paths, continued education, workforce entry or trapped in indecision. His goal with the partnership is to encourage half of his student body to take dual credit courses and find the path that is right for them before graduation.

“I’m driven to provide opportunities for the students of this community,” O’Brien said. “I’m so blessed to have the partnership we have with Lee College and SHSU. To have ourselves, Goose Creek CISD, recognized as a distinguished educational program that higher education wants to partner with just thrills me to no end.”

## Education Foundation Makes IMPACT in the Community for the Past 14 Years



(L-R Front Row): 2023 Students Choice winners: Amy Kaminski, Sofia Cantu, Jordan Estrada, Angela Johnson, and Jorge Granados (Back Row): Kyla Gijan, Yoanna Isas, Eric Henrichsen, Sophia Leyva, and John Lowrance.



(L-R Front Row): 2023 Students Choice winners: Cassie Rogers, Debany Gomez, Hector Rangel, Anh Nguyen and Karen Del Real. (Back Row): Clym Gatrell, Keith Brown, Kelly Congdon, Anna Faina and Crystal Grabill.



(L-R Front Row): 2023 Students Choice winners: O’Rian Bell, Allison Helm, Brianna Caballero, Samantha Perez, Xitlaly Ruiz and Tiffany Silverthorne. (Back Row) Ronald McDowell, Terri Marrs, Timothy McCarthy and Ilija Milovanovic.

By: Kristyn Hunt Cathey, APR – Director of Communications

The Goose Creek CISD Education Foundation held their 14<sup>th</sup> annual Students Choice Awards banquet on April 4<sup>th</sup> at IMPACT Early College High School. The event showcased 15 district teachers who made a difference in the lives of students during their school careers. Seniors from the district’s five high schools were asked to write a letter nominating one teacher who impacted their school experience in a positive way. After more than 200 entries were carefully reviewed, 15 students from across the district were chosen for the 2023 Students Choice Awards.

The 2023 Award winners include: Keith Brown, IM-

PACT teacher and Debany Gomez, IMPACT student; Kelly Congdon, SCTHS teacher and Hector Rangel, SCTHS student; Anna Faina, Sterling teacher and Anh Nguyen, Sterling student; Clym Gatrell, Sterling teacher and Cassie Rogers, Sterling student; Crystal Grabill, IMPACT teacher and Karen Del Real, IMPACT student; Eric Henrichsen, Austin teacher and Jordan Estrada, Sterling student; Yoanna Isas, Sterling teacher and Sofia Cantu, Sterling student; Angela Johnson, GCM teacher and Sophia Leyva, GCM student; Amy Kaminski, Baytown Junior teacher and Kyla Gijan, IMPACT student; John Lowrance, Baytown Junior teacher and Jorge Granados, IMPACT

student; Terri Marrs, Sterling teacher and Allison Helm, Sterling student; Timothy McCarty, Stuart teacher and Brianna Caballero, Stuart student; Ronald McDowell, Sterling teacher and O’Rian Bell, Sterling student; Ilija Milovanovic, IMPACT teacher and Samantha Perez, IMPACT student; and Tiffany Silverthorne, Gentry Junior teacher and Xitlaly Ruiz, IMPACT student.

The Foundation has awarded over \$1.7 million in innovative teaching grants and designated donations for special projects. Of that \$1.7 million, \$222,830 was awarded to educators through the Foundation’s grant program.

All photos taken by Carrie Pryor-Newman:

## Goose Creek Administrators Selected for Black Expo Award



Dr. Demetrius McCall

By: Kristyn Hunt Cathey, APR – Director of Communications

Dr. Regina Patrick Sims, Bowie Elementary School principal, was re-

cently named the 2023 Texas Black Expo Outstanding Educator and Dr. Demetrius McCall, Deputy Superintendent for Administrative Services, was named the 2023 Outstanding Superintendent. They received these awards based on their exemplary achievements in education. They will be recognized at the organization’s 20<sup>th</sup> year celebration, May 19-21<sup>st</sup> in Houston, with the formal recognition taking place at their profession-



Dr. Regina Patrick Sims

al networking luncheon on May 19<sup>th</sup>. Along with the luncheon, they will also attend a private reception featuring Earvin “Magic” Johnson.

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THURSDAY, MAY 18, 2023

MONT BELVIEU, TEXAS 77580

## ON THE HILL

### Baytown Man Sentenced to 60 Year in Prison for Robbing, Killing Elderly Man Who Used Wheelchair



Marcus Donnell Gilbert, 41

A Baytown man was sentenced to 60 years in prison on the eve of trial after pleading guilty to murder for robbing and killing a 68-year-old man who used a wheelchair, Harris County District Attorney Kim Ogg announced.

"It is important to remember that our elderly and disabled neighbors are vulnerable to scams, schemes and violence," Ogg said. "This kind and generous man was killed by people who took advantage of him just because they could."

Marcus Donnell Gilbert, 41, was scheduled to begin trial this week, but instead he pleaded guilty on Friday to murder in the death of John Henry Fernandez, who was found on Jan. 2, 2018. His hands and feet had been bound and his mouth had been taped shut. He had suffocated.

Gilbert, who was known as Skunk, and his girlfriend had moved into Fernandez's Baytown apartment more than a month earlier. Fernandez, who was known throughout the apartment complex as a gentle, grandfatherly type, did not have family in the area and needed help.

Gilbert's girlfriend agreed to provide that help in exchange for a place to live. Instead of helping, she allowed her boyfriend to routinely visit, culminating in the planned robbery and killing of Fernandez on Christmas Day 2017.

After concerned neighbors alerted apartment management, maintenance workers found Fernandez's body locked inside his bedroom. Investigators tracked down Gilbert and his girlfriend and learned they had taken Fernandez's television, ATM card and cellphone.

Gilbert told police that his girlfriend had killed Fernandez and tied him up after he was dead.

The girlfriend, whose murder case is still pending, told police that Gilbert beat, kicked and tied up Fernandez, killing him by stuffing a bedwetting pad in his mouth and using duct tape to close his mouth and eyes. She said they watched Fernandez die and left with the television and other belongings.

Both were arrested by the Baytown Police Department and charged with capital murder. Gilbert was facing life in prison without parole, so he pleaded guilty to murder in exchange for 60 years in prison. He must serve at least 30 years before he is eligible for parole. He cannot appeal the conviction or the sentence.

Assistant District Attorney Chris Handley, a chief in the Trial Bureau of the DA's Office, handled the case with Nancy Ta, a prosecutor in the DA's Homicide Division.

"The neighbors were concerned because they hadn't seen him in a while," she said. "They thought he might have died of natural causes, but the reality was too horrific to imagine."

Handley noted Gilbert has had time to think about his actions while awaiting trial and perhaps finally decided to take responsibility.

"They hatched the plan on Christmas Eve and killed him on Christmas Day," Handley said. "At the end of the day, he knew the cruelty of what they did. I think he finally came to terms with the sobering reality of the justice that would be served."

## Birdz Bitez celebrates Chamber of Commerce Membership with Ribbon Cutting

**BAYTOWN** - Birdz Bitez recently celebrated their Chamber of Commerce membership with a Ribbon Cutting ceremony.

Birdz Bitez is a mobile BBQ Trailer offering delicious BBQ and Caribbean dishes. From Jerk or BBQ chicken and turkey legs, brisket and pork ribs to stew or curry chicken, oxtail, handcrafted salads and over a dozen types of specialty items; they offer

something for everyone! Owner Shana Joseph and her Pit Master husband, Trevor provide exceptional customer service and delicious food that you will enjoy and come back for. Birdz Bitez serves Harris and Chambers Counties and is available to cater events for 20-200 people. Shana also serves on the ACE (Art, Culture and Entertainment Council) District board and believes in

the revitalization of the Downtown Arts District.

You can find them at the next Market at Town Square on Saturday, May 20<sup>th</sup> from 10:00 a.m. - 2:00 p.m. (213 W. Texas Avenue, Baytown).

Check out their website event calendar for other dates and locations or reach out to them via email at [info@birdzbitez.com](mailto:info@birdzbitez.com) or by phone at 346-399-1525. You can also visit their website at [www.birdzbitez.com](http://www.birdzbitez.com) or follow them on Facebook at "Birdz Bitez".



Jeff Walters, Carmen Parris, Terri George, Karla Opryshek, Pit Master Trevor Joseph, Jasmine Gates, Owner Shana Joseph, Charlotte Oldbury, John Mayes, Blythe Adam, Mike Nebgen

## Magnum Staffing Services opens with Ribbon Cutting Ceremony

**BAYTOWN** - Magnum Staffing Services celebrated their Chamber of Commerce membership with a Ribbon Cutting ceremony. Magnum Staffing Services has been a leader in workforce strategy, plan implementation and talent management in the Houston area for more than 25 years. They have recently opened their newest location at 2705 N. Alexander Drive in Baytown. They were designated as



one of the top 10 staffing firms in Houston for 2022 by the Houston Business Journal. Owner, Caroline Brown says "I am proud to be one of the top-ranked staffing firms in Houston. We could not have done it without the long-term loyalty of our clients!" Each hiring manager at Magnum is a Certified Temporary Staffing Specialist (CTS). This

means you get access to a team of only the best and highly qualified hiring professionals at your disposal.

Welcome to Baytown and welcome to the Chamber! For more information, please visit their website [www.magnumstaffing.com](http://www.magnumstaffing.com) or follow their Baytown office on Facebook at "Magnum Staffing Services Baytown".

**Baytown Chamber Ambassadors and Magnum Staffing Services employee's surround business owner, Caroline Brown as she prepares to cut the ribbon.**

May 4th was the National Day of Prayer, and churches across the country opened their doors specifically so that Christians could gather to lift this nation up to God. It was well-orchestrated, with Scripture-based prayer point suggestions that allowed all who chose to reach out and ask God to intervene in specific areas (Government, Military, Media, Business, Education, Church, and Family).

This event, focused on the children of God coming together to pray fervently and effectively in unity, was a great opportunity to fulfill 2 Chronicles 7:14: "...if My people who are called by My name will humble themselves, and pray and seek My face, and turn from their wicked ways, then I will hear from heaven, and will forgive their sin and heal their land." It was a powerful



## THOUGHTS FROM HILLSIDE CHURCH

By Dr. Mark Trice



## The Importance of Prayer

event. It was also a timely reminder of an eternal truth: Prayer is vitally important in the life of a Christian.

Please hear this: Prayer is much bigger and more personally important than most Christians understand. It goes far beyond showing up for big events like this one, bowing our heads in church services, and saying blessings over our meals. Prayer is as life-giving to a Christian's soul as breathing oxygen-rich air is to our bodies. Nothing

surpasses the importance of a strong relationship with God, our Creator, our Savior, and nothing can build that strong relationship like conversation can.

When you get right down to it, that's what prayer is. It's carrying on a conversation, both speaking and listening, with One who is important to you. Prayer doesn't have to be complicated, but it does have to happen. Look at a married couple that never communicates, never

spends time in close fellowship, and you see a couple whose marriage is in danger of destruction. More than once the Bible reminds us that our relationship with Him is much like a marriage.

"Christian" isn't just a label we wear. It is a declaration that we are pursuing a life that is Christ-like. Becoming Christ-like doesn't happen instantly when we are born again. It starts when we accept Him as Savior, make Him the Lord of our

lives, and dive into a relationship that is more rewarding, more life changing, more powerful than any of us can truly comprehend.

The Christian's road only begins at the cross. We move forward from there, walking and talking with Jesus as He leads us down the right path, teaching us along the way. The more time we spend in His presence, in God's presence, the more like Him we become. Yes, Genesis 1:27 says we were created in God's image, but if we also want to exhibit His character, His nature, the fruit of the Spirit (Galatians 5:22-23 - love, joy, peace, forbearance, kindness, goodness, faithfulness, gentleness and self-control), we must spend intimate time with Him.

Prayer is that important.

## Houston Methodist Hospital Baytown

## When to Worry About Varicose Veins

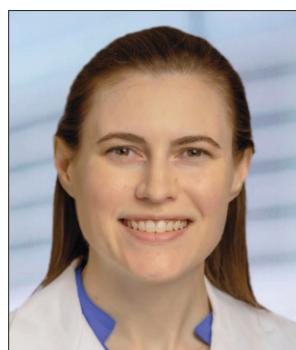
You've seen those veins your whole life, like the one in your upper forearm that's often used when you need blood drawn. But what about that unusual clump of veins that's recently — quite literally — popped up on your legs or somewhere else on your body? Should you be worried about these veins?

"That is a common question that I get in my office, and usually, the answer is no, these won't hurt you at all," said Dr. Margaret Jackson, a vascular surgeon at Houston Methodist DeBakey Heart & Vascular Center at Baytown.

### VARICOSE VEINS VS. SPIDER VEINS

Varicose veins are those red, purple, or blue ones that seem to lie just under the skin and don't go away with massage, change in position, hot, cold, or anything you do. They are veins that have become diseased over time, usually due to genetics, age, or having a job where you stand on your feet or sit at a desk for long periods. Spider veins are the smaller version of varicose veins.

"When the veins are damaged, blood will pool in your legs. If this happens, you will notice that your legs are heavy, tired, achy, and maybe even swollen at the end of the day," said Jackson.



Dr. Margaret Jackson

This condition is called chronic venous insufficiency, and it can progress over your lifetime if it isn't treated. The result of many years of untreated venous insufficiency can be lymphedema, which is swelling that doesn't resolve, or even open sores on

your skin.

### TREATMENT OPTIONS

Things you can do at home to relieve your symptoms:

- \*Wearing compression socks
- \*Exercising leg muscles
- \*Elevating your legs
- \*Avoiding sitting or standing for long periods

"Here in my office, we start with compression and an ultrasound which will evaluate the valves in your legs. If we see that your valves are so leaky that they are letting a lot of blood pool in your legs, you could benefit from a procedure called an ablation, where we close a leaky vein from the in-

side," Jackson said.

Smaller spider veins can be treated with an injection.

### WHEN TO SEE A SPECIALIST

If you have heaviness in your legs or swelling at the end of the day, it's time to make an appointment. If you have swelling that never goes away or open sores, it's **definitely** time to make an appointment. The specialists at Houston Methodist DeBakey Heart & Vascular Center Baytown are here to help answer your questions. To schedule an appointment, visit [houstonmethodist.org/heart-vascular](http://houstonmethodist.org/heart-vascular) or call 832.556.6625.



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OPINION

By BILL KING



# Metro has fewer Passengers now than 25 years ago

Recently, I have been asking people if they think Metro is carrying more or fewer riders than it did 25 years ago. Universally, they have assumed it must be much more. After all, Harris County has grown by about 50% over the last quarter century, so it only stands to reason that Metro must have, at least, grown proportionately.

But the sad fact is, after taxpayers have invested nearly \$9 billion in Metro and it has run up \$2.3 billion in debt over the last twenty-five years, in 2022 Metro carried 38% fewer riders than it did in 1998. To be fair, transit ridership globally has been dramatically affected by the pandemic for the last three years. But even before that pandemic, Metro's ridership was about 7% lower than 1998.

In 1998, when Metro relied exclusively on buses, it carried 96.6 million riders. It gradually increased ridership over the next several years, exceeding 100 million riders for the first time in 2000. But ridership swooned in the wake of the economic downturn in the early 2000s before gradually recovering. By 2006, Metro's ridership had grown to 103 million riders.

However, that would turn out to be the all-time high for Metro. For the next two years, ridership drifted lower then turned down dramatically with the financial crisis in 2009, hitting a low of 81 million riders in 2010. Over the next decade, ridership increased very gradually. It reached 89 million in 2019 before being slammed by the pandemic. Metro's ridership numbers have mostly reflected the trends for national transit ridership.

I think there are two principal takeaways from this data.

The first is that light rail did absolutely nothing to increase Metro's ridership. While ridership on the light rail has increased whenever Metro has opened a new line, there has been an almost identical, corresponding decrease in bus ridership. So, the only thing we accomplished by spending billions of taxpayer dollars on light rail was to change the mode of conveyance for some riders from a cheaper, more flexible alternative to a more expensive, inflexible one.

The second takeaway is that we still do not have a clear idea of what the mission of Metro is. Most people think that the purpose of transit is to reduce traffic congestion. But Metro has a very minimal effect on the traffic congestion because it accounts for such a tiny fraction of our daily trips.

The U.S. Department of Transportation estimates that the average American makes four trips per day. Harris County had about 4.6 million residents, so that comes out to about 18.5 million trips per day. Before the pandemic, Metro was averaging about 250,000 trips daily or about 1.3% of all trips in Harris County each day. That is not enough reduction in daily trips to make any noticeable dent in traffic congestion.1

However, Metro does provide transportation to thousands of our neighbors who either cannot afford an automobile or who are not physically capable of operating one. It is an important and critical service to our community.

I think we would have better results at a more affordable cost if we were focused on that aspect of Metro's role instead of building grandiose vanity projects that end up doing little to help the people that need reliable and convenient transportation. Like say, for example, spending \$200 million on luxury, dedicated bus lanes in the toniest neighborhood in Houston that ends up having almost no riders.

**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.*

METRO'S SUMMER OF FUN PROGRAM

Students Ride

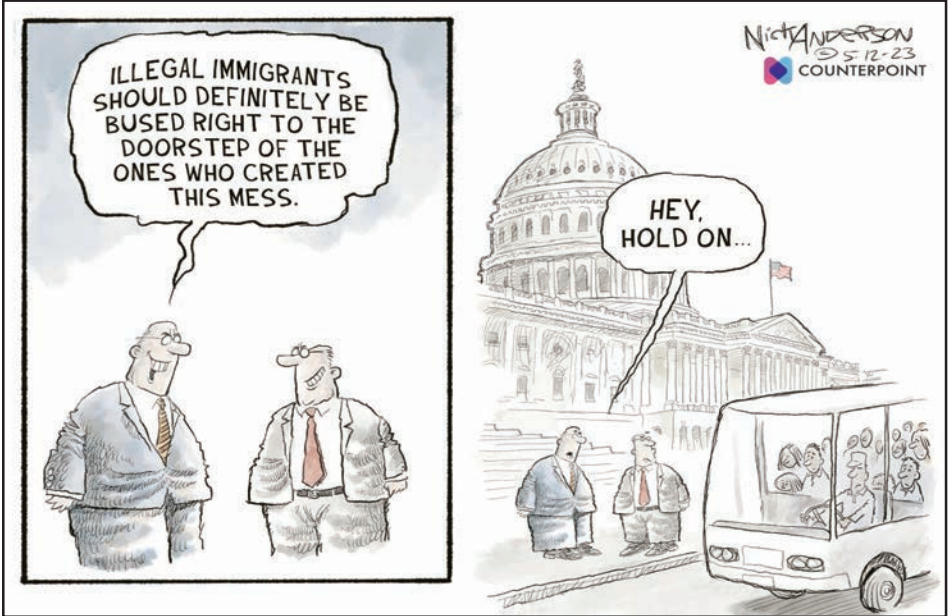
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★

STATE CAPITAL HIGHLIGHTS

By Gary Borders



# Fort Hood Renamed After Korean, Vietnam War Hero R. E. Cavazos

It's official. Fort Hood, named for a high-ranking Confederate officer in the Civil War, has been renamed Fort Cavazos, in honor of native Texan Richard E. Cavazos, the country's first Hispanic four-star general. Fort Cavazos is the Army's largest armored, active-duty military installation, according to a report in the Austin American-Statesman. It is one of nine that are being renamed around the country, based on recommendations from a naming committee commissioned by Congress to remove the names, symbols and displays that honor the Confederacy.

Cavazos was widely decorated for his service during the Korean and Vietnam wars, receiving two Distinguished Service Cross medals during his military career. He died in 2017 at 88.

## STATE REP EXPELLED FROM TEXAS HOUSE

The Texas House voted 147-0 to expel state Rep. Bryan Slaton after an investigating committee determined he engaged in inappropriate behavior with a 19-year-old legislative aide. Slaton, R-Royce City, was found to have had sexual intercourse with the aide, who works in his office, and to have supplied alcohol to an underaged person on at least three occasions, the Statesman reported.

Slaton resigned the day before the vote to expel him but would have remained an officeholder and been paid until a successor was elected through a special election.

"Expulsion of a member of this body is rare," House Speaker Dade Phelan said. "Mr. Slaton's predatory behavior merits such a consequence. I am proud of my colleagues for holding each of us accountable."

Slaton is the first House member to be expelled



since 1927, according to the Statesman.

## TEXANS ENJOY A COOLER-THAN-AVERAGE APRIL

The state enjoyed somewhat cooler temperatures in April than in years past, according to Dr. Mark Wentzel, a hydrologist with the Texas Water Development Board. The eastern half of the state experienced above-average rainfall, though drought conditions persisted in the central part of the state, from Laredo to the Panhandle.

"Precipitation varied considerably, with half the state, East and coastal Texas, experiencing well-above-average rainfall, while the other half, West Texas and the Panhandle, received well-below-normal precipitation," Wentzel wrote.

Drought conditions dropped 12 percentage points compared to the end of March, with 55% of the state now under drought. The arrival of the El Niño weather system by fall is forecast to bring above-average rainfall to the state and lead to widespread drought relief by the end of 2023.

## EIGHT MORE COUNTIES ADDED TO DISASTER DECLARATION

The Federal Emergency Management Agency has added eight more Texas counties to a disaster declaration after an early February ice storm caused considerable damage

across wide swaths of the state, Gov. Greg Abbott announced last week.

"This update will help support ongoing recovery efforts in Texas communities impacted by Winter Storm Mara in February," Abbott said.

The eight added to the 13 already approved by FEMA are Falls, Hopkins, Red River, Anderson, Gillespie, Kerr, Kimble and Limestone counties. The counties are now eligible for federal funding for debris removal and repairs to infrastructure.

## HOUSE CONSIDERS MODIFIED VERSION OF SENATE VOUCHER BILL

An 80-page version of the Senate's school voucher proposal is now before the House education committee, the Texas Tribune reported. This version would cut the number of students eligible for the program, modify the state's standardized testing program, and eliminate the Senate bill's restriction on teaching about gender and sexual orientation.

A move to get the bill quickly out of committee failed after state Rep. Ernest Bailes, R-Shepherd, questioned why the committee wanted to move forward without holding a public hearing.

"You're trying to bring an 80-page substitution to this body and force a vote without thoughtful deliberation," Bailes said. House committees have until May 20 to vote on Senate bills to advance them to the full floor.

The Senate version of the bill would give parents who opt out of the public school system up to \$8,000 in taxpayer money to pay for a child's private schooling and related educational expenses, such as textbooks or tutoring.

## CASINO BILL DIES; SPORTS BETTING ADVANCES

The bid to bring casino gambling to Texas is again officially dead, the Texas Tribune reported.

"Members, I do know when it's time to fold 'em," state Rep. Charlie Geren, R-Fort Worth, said Friday as he postponed consideration of House Joint Resolution 155 until Jan. 12, 2027. A related bill sponsored by state Rep. John Kuempel, R-Seguin, was also postponed until after the session.

A separate bill to legalize online sports betting barely made it out of the House. Both measures required a two-thirds majority to be put on the ballot as proposed constitutional amendments. The Tribune reported that bill faces long odds in the Senate, where Lt. Gov. Dan Patrick, the presiding officer, has said his chamber does not have enough votes to pass it.

★

THE POSTSCRIPT

By Carrie Classon

# "Happy Place"

I have a sticker that says "My Happy Place," and I kept it for a while, wondering where to put it. In the end, I stuck it near my desk so I could see it while I write. I am usually happy when I'm writing.

On Monday, however, I was not happy. I had a major technology breakdown, and I had no idea what I had done wrong. As it turned out, I had done nothing wrong (which is rare, when it comes to technology). Microsoft had a failure that lasted for almost two hours. During the technology breakdown, I had an accompanying emotional breakdown. For two hours, I was not in my happy place.

Only after it was over did I look back on the experience and realize how easy all this annoying technology makes my life every day.

I've heard of writers who use old typewriters, or write entire novels by hand, and then type them up on their computers. They even have a device that only lets you see a couple of lines at a time and has no access to the internet. I guess this is because some writers consider the internet an obstacle to writing. This seems very silly to me. Without the internet, how would I know that avenues run perpendicular to streets and that lanes can run in either direction? How would I find funny cat videos?

I hear writers complain that they would get more done if they were in a cabin in the woods like Henry David Thoreau, but they forget Thoreau had somebody copying his manuscript for him and his sister bringing him lunch every day. All our imaginings of how the past might have been better for writing are romantic nonsense. Right now, at my little desk, I know I have it better than any previous generation of writers ever has.

I had a chance once to see an original manuscript written by Charles Dickens. It was behind glass, and I no longer remember which novel it was. But it was thrilling to see, in his handwriting, how he had come up with his stories, just like anyone else.

And like anyone who writes, he had circled sentences and entire paragraphs and drawn an arrow to where he wanted them moved. Of course, this was all done with a goose-quill pen. It must have taken Dickens a long time to finish anything, even if he got some help. I wondered if he would have written more if he'd had a computer. My hunch is that we would have at least one more novel by Dickens if he'd had word processing.

Now, a lot of people are concerned about how artificial intelligence might replace writers. I am not terribly worried. I suspect AI will be another tool—like word processing. It's unimaginable to us now, but we'll learn it and then wonder how we ever got along without it.

I don't think we'll give computers the job of telling stories because we like telling stories too much. Telling stories to one another is about the most human thing there is. A story comes from one person and is told to another person. We've been figuring out ways to do this since we were gathered around a fire. I don't think anything will stop us—no matter how much that storytelling changes.

In the meantime, I'll keep writing. Microsoft sent me a nice note explaining that what happened on Monday was their fault. I'm thinking of having it framed—and hanging it in my happy place.

Till next time,  
Carrie

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TEXAS COMMISSION ON ENVIRONMENTAL QUALITY



NOTICE OF RECEIPT OF APPLICATION AND  
INTENT TO OBTAIN WATER QUALITY PERMIT RENEWAL  
  
PERMIT NO. WQ0002712000

**APPLICATION.** Altivia Oxide Chemicals, LLC, 1100 Louisiana Street, Suite 4800, Louisiana, Texas 77002, which owns an industrial organic chemical manufacturing plant, has applied to the Texas Commission on Environmental Quality (TCEQ) to renew Texas Pollutant Discharge Elimination System (TPDES) Permit No. WQ0002712000 (EPA I.D. No. TX0095559) to authorize the discharge of treated wastewater and stormwater at a volume not to exceed a daily average flow of 200,000 gallons per day via Outfall 001 and the discharge of stormwater at an intermittent and flow-variable volume via Outfalls 002, 003 and 004. The facility is located at 16503 Ramsey Road, Crosby, in Harris County, Texas 77532. The discharge route is from the plant site via Outfalls 001, 002 and 004 to an unnamed ditch paralleling Crosby-Dayton Road; thence to Jackson Bayou; and via Outfall 003 to an unnamed ditch paralleling Ramsey Road; thence to an unnamed ditch paralleling Crosby-Dayton Road; thence to Jackson Bayou; then all to the San Jacinto River Tidal. TCEQ received this application on March 22, 2023. The permit application will be available for viewing and copying at Crosby Library, 135 Hare Road, Crosby, Texas prior to the date this notice is published in the newspaper. 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://gisweb.tceq.texas.gov/LocationMapper/?marker=-95.053055,29.921666&level=18>

**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://www14.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 Altivia Oxide Chemicals, LLC at the address stated above or by calling Mr. Jason Patrick, ESH Manager, at 740-532-3420.

Issuance Date: May 10, 2023

★  
OBITUARIES

JOYCE YVONNE BROWN

Joyce Yvonne Brown, age 96, passed away on Tuesday, May 9, 2023 at Peach Creek Assist-ed Living Facility in College Station, Tx. From her birth in Huffman, Tx, on March 6, 1927, to her death, she was one of the strongest women ever who inspired everyone to be better and en-couraged hard work to achieve everything.



She was born to Emery and Fannie May and was number 7 of 9 children. By high school, she had a strong determination to achieve and started learning twirling on her own and became an avid athlete playing sports. She was a drum major in the Crosby High School, a basketball player, and softball player.

While still a senior, she met Felton Warren Brown, who had just come back from the Pacific while serving as a SeaBee in the Navy during WWII. She knew this was the man she would marry and 6 months later it was confirmed when they married on December 21, 1945. She and Felton started a family and eventually had 5 children, Benita, Myra, Verna, Dirk, and Darla.

Joyce was self-taught in twirling, tap dance, and piano and started teaching children until she had developed an extensive group of students that spanned many years, until she taught her last twirling lesson at the age of 87. Many girls took lessons from her, as well as their children, grandchil-dren, and great-grandchildren. Teaching twirling and dance was just the

start.

She was a long time 4-H leader, helped direct the Highlands Jamboree Pageant for over 20 years, barrel horse rider, retail businesswoman for 40 years, and long-time member of Highlands First Baptist Church. She was a great cook, gardener, farmer and rancher, and hay hauler. She could do just about everything!

She is preceded in death by her husband, Felton, and her daughter, Myra, but she leaves her 4 other children and many grandchildren and great-grandchildren, as well as many people that she would help whenever possible.

Funeral and Burial services will be held on Tuesday, May 16, 2023 from 1:00-3:00 pm at Sterling-White Funeral Home in Highlands, Tx. The family will greet friends from 5:00-7:00 pm on Monday, May 15 at the Sterling-White Funeral Home. Sincere thanks to the Peach Creek Assisted Living Facility staff for the love and care they gave to her in her final days. In lieu of flowers, please make donations to the Highlands Little League, Highlands First Baptist Church, and/or Peach Creek Assisted Living in College Station, Tx

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# Rotary awards \$37,500 in Scholarships

## 21 students from area schools

CONTINUED FROM PAGE 1

many other projects. The club estimates that since it started awarding scholarships, it has given out over \$550,000 in scholarships to college bound students. Awards are from \$1500 to \$2500 per school year.

The Scholarship committee had a large field of 59 applications to review. The Review Committee consisted of 8 Highlands Rotarians, with Dr. Larry White as chair. Dr. White explained that they were evaluated on grades, an essay, extra curricular activities, and recommendations. At the banquet, scholarships were presented by Denise Smith and Diana Weaver.

Scholarship Awards this year went to the following:



Keynote Speaker Dr. Randal O'Brien, Goose Creek CISD Superintendent

**From Goose Creek Memorial High School:**

- Amy Chen
- Xiomara Gamez
- Kaitlyn Gindratt
- Keren Gonzalez
- Adriana Herrera
- Jazmyn Koenst
- Sophia Leyva
- Austin Martinez
- Haylie Ochoa
- Alysia Pena

**From Impact Early College High School:**

- Priscilla Cerino

**From Ross S. Sterling High School:**

- Madelyn Garza
- From Chinquapin Preparatory School:**
- Christian Palomo
- College Students:**
- Francisco Trujillo, HCC-UH
- Tanishqa Kharat, UT



Presenters at the head table, Diana Weaver, Denise Smith, Weston Cotten, Dr. Randal O'Brien, and Larry White.

Bird Marshal to Eveline Perez of Chinquapin Preparatory School;

**Chester Stasney Scholarship**, presented by his best friend Johnny Gaeke and his widow Marie Stasney, to Liliana Ramirez of Goose Creek Memorial High School; Chester passed away three years ago, but he was known for his famous Chili recipe that is served annually at the club's Chili Feast. This honor has passed to the presenter, Johnny Gaeke.

**Pat McPhee Scholarship**, presented by his widow Barbara McPhee to Tristen Flores of Crosby High School.

**Tony Irwin Scholarship**, presented by Andy Scott to Haleigh Shaver of Crosby High School.

The Rotary Club of Highlands, and president Andy Scott, say Congratulations to all!

## From the Crosby Superintendent,

CONTINUED FROM PAGE 1

Kindergarten Center. Two of these educators will be selected as the Crosby ISD Elementary and Secondary Teachers of the Year at our End of Year Staff Convocation. Good luck!

As we wrap up May, we are watching our Cougars do extraordinary things. Crosby High School senior Braden Womack won the bronze medal by finishing third in the Long Jump in the UIL 5A State Track & Field Meet. Braden jumped 23 feet, 2 inches to finish in third place. Braden is leaving a legacy as a skilled multi-sport athlete in the annals of CHS.

On the baseball front,

the Crosby High School varsity team just wrapped up a successful season. The Cougars finished second in the 17-5A District and went on to win the Bi-District Championship against Santa Fe. The team ended as Area finalists after a hard-fought Round 2 series against Fulshear. We are extremely proud of all that was accomplished this year. This summer we'll also see baseball player Sean Bazmore compete in the Texas High School Baseball Coaches Association All-Star Game in Round Rock. He is one of only about 50 players chosen for the honor. Let's Go, #23!

I mentioned graduation,

but we also want to celebrate our 48 seniors who will graduate with an Associate's Degree or Industry Certification before they graduate from Crosby High School. Our Class of 2023 Lee College graduates are: Payton Barrett, Jakob Beck, Cali Carden, Sarah Hartline, Cassandra Macias, Zion Parker, Lexi Perez, Allison Prince, Joel Rodriguez, Haleigh Shaver, Dan Creek Thomas, Emily Valencia, Daren Dornak, and Donald Ray Watson.

Our Class of 2023 San Jacinto College graduates are: Subhi Abulawi, Kendyll Bailey, Allison Bennett, Yash Chauhan, Emily Cortez, Alexandra

Diaz, Tristen Flores, Kenady-Kate Fontenot, Sebastian Godinez, Hannah Harrison, Gil Hernandez, III, Allison Holst, Amelia Horsford, Aylin Jaimes, Madison Lemond, Brady Lengacher, Noah Lozano, Alejandro Martinez, Mia Reid, Alexis Sendolla, Abigail Trevino, McKenna Westberry, Brodey Young, Laisha Gomez-Pineda, Valerie Guillen, Nevaeh Martinez, Elvira Munguia, Amanda Muniz, Jessie Patino, Samantha Segovia, McKenna Tauber-Mansfield, Kiara Valenzuela, Victor Kegley, and Delberto De La Garza.

It really is something for high school students to walk across the stage at



Crosby High School senior Braden Womack (with medal) who placed third in the Long Jump during the 5A UIL Track & Field Meet.

Cougar Stadium already holding a college degree or an industry certification. They are all starting their

future ready and ahead of the competition!

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As the weather warms up and the flowers begin to bloom, there's no better time to start enjoying all that life has to offer. We at The Lodge at Pine Creek provide a range of amenities and activities that are perfect for those who want to make the most of your retirement years.

The Lodge at Pine Creek is a resort-style community designed to provide a comfortable and welcoming environment for seniors who are looking to live life to the fullest. Whether you're interested in socializing with other residents, participating in fitness classes, or experiencing our market unique executive dining program, we have everything you need to have All of The Fun & None of the Chores™ this season.

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832-572-5592  
LodgeAtPineCreek.com

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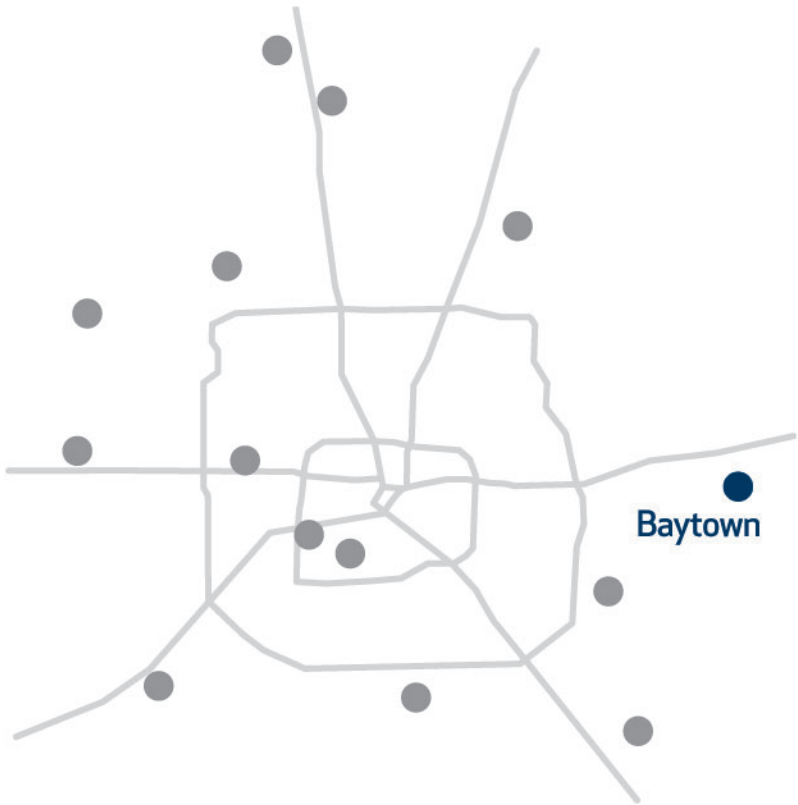




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- Physical therapy to improve mobility and range of motion
- The latest technology, including minimally invasive surgical techniques that help reduce recovery time



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