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HIGHLANDS

CROSBY

# Star Courier

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VOL. 71, NO. 3 - \$1.00

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THURSDAY, JANUARY 18, 2024

P.O. DRAWER 446, HIGHLANDS, TEXAS 77562

## IN THE STARS

### EVENTS

#### Waste Pits Meeting 1/23

The San Jacinto River Coalition will hold an important update meeting Tuesday, Jan. 23 at 6:30 pm at the Highlands Community Center. THEA will announce changes in the Superfund Clean-up.

#### TXDOT I-10 East Public Meetings Jan. 23-31

The Texas Department of Transportation (TxDOT) is engaging the community in a study to identify current and future transportation needs along I-10 East from I-69/US 59 to SH 99 (Grand Parkway). TxDOT is hosting a VIRTUAL public meeting with IN-PERSON options in multiple locations to share project information and receive input from the community.

In-Person Open Houses are from 5 - 7 p.m. TUESDAY, JAN. 23 Houston Food Bank Conference Center 535 Portwall St. Houston, TX 77029

WEDNESDAY, JAN. 24 Lee College PAC 805 W. Texas Ave. Baytown, TX 77520

TUESDAY, JAN. 30 North Channel Branch Library 15741 Wallisville Rd. Houston, TX 77049

WEDNESDAY, JAN. 31 Barbers Hill ISD Leadership Support Center 9600 Eagle Drive Mont Belvieu, TX 77523

The public meetings will be conducted in English and Spanish.

View the Virtual Public Meeting and take the online survey beginning Tuesday, Jan. 23, 2024 at 5 p.m.: www.txdot.gov/projects/hearings-meetings.html Or scan the QR code Questions? Please contact: (713) 802-5837 | Stephan.Gage@txdot.gov

# Carsner new Highlands Fire Chief

## Chief Little Retires; Honored as Firefighter of the Year

HIGHLANDS— Members of the Highlands Fire Department held their 2024 Recognition and Awards Banquet last Saturday evening, at the Monument Inn in Deer Park. For the first time in 31 years, a new Fire Chief, Mike Carsner, was in charge of the event. After 36 years with the department, and 31 years as Fire Chief, the dinner marked the retirement of Chief Harvey Little.

Little was also honored by the department, as ESD#14 president Jim Strouhal presented the Firefighter of the Year award to him. This award is given in memory of Cecil Kelly, who volunteered with the Highlands VFD for over 42 years before retiring in 1996. The recipient chosen by vote of the



At the Highlands Fire Department's Annual Banquet, Retiring Fire Chief Harvey Little, center, receives the Firefighter of the Year Award from new Fire Chief Mike Carsner, left, and ESD#14 President Jim Strouhal, right. Chief Little was also congratulated for his 36 years as a member of the Highlands FD, and 31 years as Chief.

membership is a firefighter who performed above and beyond the call of duty.

A large crowd of firemen and families, friends, community supporters, and board members attended the dinner. Fire Chief Mike Carsner emceed the ceremony, introducing awards, guests, and honorees. Special Awards included Citizen of the Year Claudia Birdsong, Business of the Year Luna's Tire Shop, Rookie Firefighter Zante Oliver, and 2024 Mascot Hunter Alford.

Chief Carsner reviewed the history of the department for 2023. He noted that there were a total of 3,765 calls for service, com-

Continued. See HIGHLANDS FIRE DEPARTMENT, Page 2

# Rotarians prepare for Chili Feast & Car Raffle

## RAFFLE WINNER GETS A 2024 CHEVY SUV

HIGHLANDS – With only two and a half weeks until the Rotary Club's 49th Annual Chili Feast, club members are busy with arrangements for the dinner, the silent and live auctions, and of course selling the 700 tickets for prizes in the Raffle.

The top prize is a new 2024 Chevrolet SUV, either a TRAX or Trailblazer from Turner Chevrolet in Crosby.

Tickets for the Chili Feast are going fast, but still available from any Rotary Club member, local banks, businesses, and Turner Chevrolet, too. The



Highlands Rotarians display one of the Chevy SUV autos that will be raffled off at their 49th Annual Chili Feast to be held Saturday, Feb. 3rd at St. Jude's Social Hall. Raffle tickets are \$100 and available from all Rotarians and many local businesses. SEEN ABOVE, Rotarians Denise Smith, GayLynn Milliorn, Dr. Larry White, Cora Ann Miller, Jennifer King, Andy Scott, Weston Cotten, Diana Weaver, and Turner Chevrolet Manager David Mendez.

number of tickets is limited, so you have a better chance of winning one of the 17 valuable prizes.

And of course, you get two delicious chili meals, cooked by Johnny Gaeke and his cooking team. The secret recipe for the great taste dates back to Chester Stasney early in the days of the first chili feasts. Now it is a tradition that the whole community anticipates.

Every year the club uses the proceeds of the event for community projects and scholarships. Last year they awarded \$37,500 for 21 scholarships.

# Gov. Abbott stumps for Briscoe Cain

AUSTIN — Governor Greg Abbott called on Texans in House District 128 to support Representative Briscoe Cain for re-election at a campaign reception held at Battleground Golf Course in Deer Park on Friday.

"Briscoe Cain is the conservative champion House District 128 needs representing them in the Texas Legislature," said Governor Abbott. "The thing about Briscoe is when he's talking, he's not just giving you words—he's giving you what's coming from his heart, values, and beliefs that are deep within him that he fights for in the Texas House. In Texas, we



Governor Abbott appeared with Briscoe Cain and his family at a Campaign Reception held last Friday in Deer Park. MORE on Page 6.

will not let Bidenomics destroy our mighty economy. We need Representative Briscoe Cain back in Austin to help protect the Texas economy from being

damaged by Bidenomics, and I ask Texans to join me in supporting him for re-election."

Continued on Page 6.

# Crosby ISD's 2024 Kickoff: Marathon & Student Achievements

Hello East Harris County and Crosby ISD families,



We are off to a running start in 2024! Kudos go out to our weekend warriors who tackled the Houston Marathon weekend. The Crosby Elementary School Run Club competed in the "We Are Houston 5K" race on January 13. Two district employees ran in the Chevron Houston Marathon on January 14. Coach Cindy Whigham, PE instructor at Crosby Elementary School, ran the full marathon. It is her 12th year raising money for the Sunshine Kids in Houston, an organization for children with cancer. Ms. Holly Lamb, social studies teacher at Crosby High School, ran her 11th half marathon. In all, Ms. Lamb has run 14 years in a row. She



Crosby Kindergarten Center Principal, Ms. Herlinda Minor, cheers on the Crosby Elementary School Run Club during the "We Are Houston 5K" on Saturday, January 13.

Continued. See CROSBY SUPERINTENDENT, Page 7

**RACHEL'S DINER**  
Southern Cooking Buffet -- NOW OPEN  
14280 FM 2100 (Across from Walmart)  
281-462-7349

**AUTO & HOME INSURANCE**  
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281-426-3512  
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# HIGHLANDS Fire Dept. 2024 Awards Banquet

## HIGHLANDS VOLUNTEER FIRE DEPARTMENT

Continued from page 1

pared with last year's 3,381. Of these 2,465 were EMS calls compared with 2,385 the previous year. Life Flight was called 34 times, compared with 45 the previous year. There were 1,191 calls for fire responses, compared with 993 in 2022, a significant increase. The department responded to 186 Motor Vehicle Accidents in 2023, compared to 196 the previous year. It was noted that all but the last category showed significant increases year to year.

Chief Carsner reported on accomplishments in the last year. Response times remained low, crew staffing was good, and an insurance grant from TFS was received. Pre Fire plans for 25 businesses in Highlands were completed. Part Time paid fire crew staffing was increased from 3 to 4 per day, funded by ESD#14. Two new emergency response vehicles were purchased and will soon be put into service, replacing D70 and SQ17.

The department held training sessions at the Baytown, Sheldon and Deer Park facilities. Combined training was held with Crosby and Mont Belvieu at the Sheldon Fire Field, and Houston training field.

The EMS report included placing in service a new Frazier-built ambulance Medic 17. Two personnel received CPR instructor certification, and CPR training for the community was initiated. The department is now staffing 2 ambulances 24/7/365 and working towards adding a Paramedic Squad (SQ77) full time due to increased call volume.

Membership in the HVFD stands at 76, up from 69 last year. Of these 29 are regular, 5 apprentices, 1 junior firefighter, 16 retirees (not in the total), 8 EMS full time paid, 17 EMS part-time paid, and 16 part-time paid firemen.

Highlands Fire Department is funded in part by Harris County Emergency Services District #14. Board members are Jim Strouhal, Johnny Gaeke, Jerry Ickes, Mark Taylor, and Elaine Marshall. Weston Cotten is their legal advisor.



MASCOT 2024 Hunter Alford



ROOKIE of the Year Zante Oliver



1 YEAR SERVICE AWARD, Zante Oliver, Tommy Phillips, Adan Garcia, Marcus Jamison, Sultan Batiste, Allison Stanley, Sahar Barezai, Timothy Malta, Robert Morris



5 YEAR SERVICE AWARD, Thomas Coward



10 YEAR SERVICE AWARD Ruben Lopez, Jr.



20 YEAR SERVICE AWARD, to Joy Jones with Chiefs Carsner and Little.



20 YEAR SERVICE AWARD, to Josh Alford



APPOINTED SERVICE AWARD, to Chad Lowery, Ruben Lopez, and Nate Scott.



CITIZEN of the Year, Claudia Birdsong



BUSINESS of the Year, Luna's Tire Shop



ELECTED OFFICERS include Ryan Lopez, Tim Covington, Nate Scott, Guy Gauthier, Jr., Patrick Brown Asst. Chief, and Mike Carsner Fire Chief.



BOARD OF DIRECTORS include Thomas Coward, Matt Bennett, Josh Alford, Tanner Scarbrough, Glenn Chisholm, Daniel Grabill, and Pablo Camargo.



TOP TEN RESPONDERS in the HIGHLANDS VOLUNTEER FIRE DEPARTMENT 2023 include Tanner Scarbrough 532, Patrick Brown 424, Matthew Bennett 267, Christopher Contreras 258, Thomas Coward 175, Pablo Camargo 143, Mike Carsner 124, Ryan Hotchkiss 104, Guy Gauthier, Jr. 102, Ben Coward 101.



ESD #14 BOARD OF COMMISSIONERS, Jim Strouhal president, Johnny Gaeke, Jerry Ickes, (Mark Taylor, Elaine Marshall), and Legal Advisor Weston Cotten.

CONGRATULATIONS  
to Fire Chief  
**HARVEY LITTLE**  
on his Retirement



Thank You for 36 Years  
of Service to the  
HIGHLANDS COMMUNITY  
and the  
HIGHLANDS VOLUNTEER FIRE  
DEPARTMENT

Best Wishes from ESD #14  
Emergency Service District #14

ESD#14 BOARD OF COMMISSIONERS:

- Jim Strouhal, President
- Johnny Gaeke, Treasurer
- Jerry Ickes, Secretary
- Mark Taylor, Member
- Elaine Marshall, Member
- Weston Cotten, Attorney



Highlands  
Rotary Club's  
49th Annual



# CHILI FEAST

Raffle & Auction

St. Jude's Catholic Church  
808 S. Main Street, Highlands

11 a.m. to 3 p.m. Live Auction Noon-3

Saturday, February 3, 2024

Win a new Vehicle. Your choice of  
2024 CHEVY TRAILBLAZER or 2024 CHEVY TRAX  
from Turner Chevrolet



Raffle Tickets \$100.00 Donation  
Meal Tickets \$10.00

Raffle Tickets purchased by Jan. 9, 2024 will be eligible for \$300 Gift Card Drawing.  
Winners need not be Present to Win!  
Payment of all local, state and federal taxes will be the responsibility of the winner.  
Proceeds donated back to our Community for Scholarships & Community Programs.

TICKETS AVAILABLE  
FROM ALL  
HIGHLANDS ROTARIANS



TICKETS AVAILABLE  
FROM MANY AREA &  
HIGHLANDS STORES

ADDITIONAL PRIZES:

- Early Drawing ..... \$300 Gift Card
- 1st Ticket Drawn ..... \$200 Gift Card
- 50th Ticket ..... 32" Smart TV
- 100th Ticket ..... Portable Ice Maker
- 150th Ticket ..... \$200 Gift Card
- 200th Ticket ..... Air Compressor/Battery Charger
- 250th Ticket ..... Beats Solo 3 Wireless Headphones
- 300th Ticket ..... \$200 Gift Card
- 350th Ticket ..... Air Fryer

- 400th Ticket ..... 65 Qt. Artic Cooler
- 450th Ticket ..... Shotgun
- 500th Ticket ..... \$200 Gift Card
- 550th Ticket ..... 28" Black Stone Cooker
- 600th Ticket ..... Outdoor Propane Fire Pit
- 650th Ticket ..... 22-250 Rifle
- 699th Ticket ..... 55" Smart TV
- 700th Ticket ..... 2024 Chevy Trailblazer or 2024 Chevy TRAX

(Color & Model may vary from Pictures)

Posters Courtesy of the Highlands STAR-Crosby COURIER



# Barbers Hill Press

## Dayton

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

VOL. 29, NO. 3

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THURSDAY, JANUARY 18, 2024

MONT BELVIEU, TEXAS 77580

### ON THE HILL

#### Friends of The Jones Library Book Sale

The Friends of the Jones Public Library will be hosting a BOOK SALE inside the library from January 22nd - 27th. Stop by throughout the week to find some great deals on gently used and previously loved books! The friends are clearing inventory to make room for the 2024 donations so the deals will be abundant! All proceeds go directly back into the library.

Jones Public Library  
801 S Cleveland St Ste A  
Dayton TX 77535

The mission of the Jones Public Library is to enhance the scholarly pursuit of knowledge, to foster intellectual curiosity, to promote life-long learning, and cultural programs. Social development improves and enriches the lives of our users through information, education, and recreation. The Library values the citizens of Dayton Texas and responds to their needs by providing clean and inviting space, well-organized and up-to-date collections, friendly professional service, and well-trained staff who are committed to the Library vision. "A thriving Library that is an integral part of the lives within our community"

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North Channel Branch Library  
15741 Wallisville Rd.  
Houston, TX 77049

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Or scan the QR code  
Questions? Please contact:  
(713) 802-5837 |  
Stephan.Gage@txdot.gov

## City of Mont Belvieu Holds Eagle Pointe Recreation Center Master Plan Meeting

MONT BELVIEU - With Mont Belvieu continuing to grow at a fast pace, the City of Mont Belvieu's Parks and Recreation Department is planning ahead by developing a master plan for the popular Eagle Pointe Recreation Center. The Eagle Pointe Recreation Center has faithfully served the Mont Belvieu area since 2001; now it is time for the facility to grow and adapt to the community's changing needs. City staff feels it is vitally important that

the public have direct input on the future of Eagle Pointe and how it will be programmed.

To facilitate public input, the City of Mont Belvieu hosted a master plan meeting and design charrette on Tuesday, January 16 from 6:00 to 7:30 p.m. in the Magnolia Room at the Eagle Pointe Recreation Center. During the meeting, the public was able to interact with city staff and give their input on proposed programs and features for the future Eagle

Pointe Recreation Center.

City staff and residents interacted during the design charrette, with members working together in the gym.

Participating were Mont Belvieu city manager, Parks & Recreation Director, Mont Belvieu councilmembers, architectural firm representatives, EPRC members, and residents.

About Eagle Pointe Recreation Center: The Eagle Pointe Recreation Center

(EPRC) opened to the public in 2001 and has been a jewel of the City of Mont Belvieu. Over the past two decades, the facility has remained dedicated to its mission to promote health, wellness, and fun to its members and the community. EPRC features a weightlifting and cardio training gym, group exercise class studio, spin class room, an indoor lap and recreation pool, two full-sized basketball courts, large locker facilities, The Pointe Grill restaurant,

and the very popular Eagle Pointe Wave Pool.

Event Date/Time: Tuesday, January 16, 2024 from 6:00 - 7:30 p.m.

Event Location: Eagle Pointe Recreation Center - Magnolia Room - 12450 Eagle Pointe Dr., Mont Belvieu, TX 77523

Contact: For additional information City of Mont Belvieu Communications & Marketing Director Brian Ligon at bligon@montbelvieu.net or 281-974-0384 (cell).

## Goose Creek CISD Returns with Enthusiasm for Learning in 2024

By Norma Martinez

Goose Creek CISD schools were back in full swing on Monday, January 8, fostering excitement for learning in 2024. Staff at GCCISD were excited to be back in action and the students (and parents) were equally eager to have school resume after winter break.

In Ms. Shuttlesworth's room at De Zavala Elementary, students worked in their small groups to identify the plot elements in fictional literature. The atmosphere is filled with curiosity and collaboration



De Zavala Elementary Students in Ms. Shuttlesworth's 2nd grade classroom identifying story elements. (By Norma Martinez)



Students in Mrs. Roberts' 3rd grade ELA class at Highlands Elementary work to understand characters and inferring.

as these young minds work alongside their teacher to unravel the intricacies of storytelling. Ms. Shuttlesworth's dedication is evident as she guides her students through the fascinating world of plot development, ensuring that each child is not only learning but also having fun in the process.

Across the district, at Highlands Elementary, Mrs. Roberts' 3rd-grade students were actively delving into the realm of characterization and inferring. The room was alive with animated discussions and creative roleplay as these young scholars strive to unravel the complexities of characters and their relationships within a narrative. Mrs. Roberts, with her passion for teaching, skillfully nurtures an environment where critical thinking and creativity flourish, allowing her students to grasp these essential literary concepts with eagerness and confidence.

## Calpine's Baytown CCS project Selected by the Department of Energy

BAYTOWN - Calpine announced that its Baytown Decarbonization project has been selected by the Office of Clean Energy Demonstrations within the Department of Energy (DOE) to negotiate to enter into a cost-sharing agreement to build a commercial-scale carbon capture and storage (CCS) project that will capture and store approximately two million metric tons of carbon dioxide each year. In a related announcement, DOE also selected Calpine's carbon capture project at its Sutter Energy Center in California. These decisions validate and accelerate Calpine's work as an industry leader advancing CCS infrastructure, support private investment in CCS, protect good-paying clean energy jobs, build on Calpine's strong community partnerships, and foster momentum of Calpine's CCS program. The parties expect to negotiate the terms of agreement over the coming months.

Following on the success of several pilot programs focused on testing advanced CCS technologies, the DOE is administering the Carbon Capture Demonstration Projects Program to significantly improve the ef-



iciency, effectiveness, environmental performance, and scale of CCS systems.

Located in Baytown, Texas, the Baytown Energy Center is an existing 896-megawatt natural gas combined heat and power facility that provides steam and power to the adjacent Covestro chemicals manufacturing facility as well as power to the Texas electric grid. Adding post-combustion carbon capture equipment to this facility will reduce the carbon dioxide emissions intensity of two of its three combustion turbines at a design capture rate of 95%, resulting in low CO2 steam and power for chemicals manufacturing and power for the electric grid. After being captured, the CO2 will

be permanently sequestered.

"We are very pleased and honored that the DOE has recognized the quality of this project and the strength of Calpine's CCS program," said Thad Hill, CEO of Calpine Corporation. "We are looking forward to working with the DOE to finalize the cost-sharing agreement and with our other stakeholders to advance the development of the Baytown Decarbonization Project. Carbon capture is an important technology for decarbonizing the electricity sector and the economy. Calpine is very grateful for the commitment and support for the project by our stakeholders."

The Baytown Energy Center is located near oth-

er significant CO2 sources in the heavy industrial Houston Ship Channel area and is proximate to multiple developing CO2 storage resources along the Texas Gulf Coast. Moving forward with this project will foster momentum and infrastructure and for broader carbon reductions in the area.

"Cogeneration facilities like Baytown provide firm, dispatchable, non-duration-limited electric and steam supply to reliably power the electric grid and industry. Facilities like Baytown will be part of our energy infrastructure for the foreseeable future, and now with CCS technology, we can decarbonize them. Calpine would like to thank the DOE as well as our state and local officials and community partners for their ongoing support," said Caleb Stephenson, Calpine EVP Commercial Operations. "We look forward to continuing our work with the federal government and the communities in which we operate on the next phase of our company's longstanding role in the energy transition."

The Baytown facility's customer and site host, Covestro, voiced its support for the project. "This is a critical step towards

decarbonizing Calpine's facility, which is located on our Covestro Baytown site," said Demetri Zerovoudis, Covestro head of operations for North America and Baytown site general manager. "Carbon capture and storage technology is an important tool for the chemical industry to reduce carbon emissions, and it is encouraging to see Calpine at the forefront of this transition."

The Baytown Decarbonization Project is being developed in partnership and consultation with local stakeholders in East Houston. As part of the development process, Calpine will continue robust efforts to provide local community benefits such as expanding the number of full-time local jobs, enhancing workforce development programs (including opportunities for apprentices), targeting procurement with diverse and small business enterprises, and working with local K-12 schools and Minority-Serving Institutions. These benefits reflect Calpine's longstanding history and commitment to the communities in which Calpine operates.

For more information go to

Calpine.com



★ OPINION PAGE ★

**COUNTY MATTERS**  
Harris County Attorney Christian Menefee



### Menefee pushes for EPA to Strengthen Air Quality Standards

Houston, Texas – Harris County Attorney Christian D. Menefee submitted formal comments to the Environmental Protection Agency (EPA) advocating for stronger national air quality standards for fine particulate matter (PM2.5), which is airborne pollution typically emitted in large quantities at refineries and plants, construction sites, and other industrial facilities. PM2.5 exposure can lead to respiratory issues, irregular heartbeat, death in people with heart or lung diseases, and aggravated asthma.

“This is an environmental justice issue. Study after study has shown that air pollution has a greater impact on lower-income communities, and Black and Hispanic people,” said Harris County Attorney Christian D. Menefee. “There are many communities in Harris County where people live a stone’s throw away from industrial and toxic waste facilities. Every level of government should be doing all we can to protect them. I’m grateful that the Environmental Protection Agency is considering strengthening this air quality standard, and I fully support making sure every person living in Harris County has clean air and water.”

In a pivot from an April 2020 decision by the EPA under the Trump administration, the EPA in January 2023 announced a proposal to lower the threshold of acceptable annual PM2.5 emissions. If adopted, this rule would impact the Texas Commission on Environmental Quality’s (TCEQ) process for issuing permits to industrial facilities, as the TCEQ is the state agency charged with ensuring that the permitted emissions in Texas do not rise to a level that is harmful to human health and welfare.

The EPA’s comment period has now closed, and the agency has stated it plans to issue final standards later .



Home Country  
with Slim Randles

### Street Party. It must have been the weather

It began the way most miracles do: by accident or the hand of God, take your pick. It might have been the weather, at least partly. For December, the day had been almost balmy and warm. You know, sweaters instead of heavy coats. No mittens in sight.

Then there were Christmas lights on the stores, and that little bunch of Girl Scouts out raising money in front of the Read Me Now bookstore. Jasper Blankenship was inside going through the books to fortify his cabin’s library for winter and sat, listening with a smile to the girls as they laughed and waited for customers that weren’t really coming along too briskly.

“It’s a shame there aren’t more people out today for those girls,” said Sarah McKinley, behind the counter. Jasper nodded and paid for his books, then walked out to the truck. He stopped and thought for a while, then brought out his violin, rosined the bow, and walked over to the sidewalk next to the girls.

“You girls like fiddle music?” he asked.

Carla Martinez was driving down the street, headed for the Soup ‘R Market when she saw the Girl Scouts dancing with each other in front of their table to Jasper’s music. Before he’d had time to finish that tune, she’d returned with her guitar and joined the fun. Jim Albertson, the elementary school principal, showed up with a harmonica, and he wasn’t bad at it.

Dud got out his accordion and was able to at least do the bass buttons as accompaniment.

By this time, it was getting dark in the street, and several people turned headlights on the area in front of the bookstore. Older people had joined the Girl Scouts dancing in the streets, and Delbert Chin from the Chinese restaurant across the street sent one of his girls out with a huge pot of coffee and paper cups.

The party was on.

It lasted until the cars’ headlights began to wear down the batteries, but during its brief lifetime, the street dance and mid-winter party cast a blessing on us all.

It must have been the weather.

In loving memory of times we spent with Polka Dan Zantek and Herman the German Hastreiter. No one could get a street party started more quickly.



**THE POSTSCRIPT**  
By Carrie Classon

### Sharing a Story

My nephew, Beau, keeps me on my toes.

Keeping on my toes is a good way to develop balance and agility. It is also a good way to fall on my face and embarrass myself. But since I don’t spend a lot of time with teenagers—and not nearly enough with Beau—I am trying.

Right now, he’s trying to convince me that I need a mechanical keyboard for my computer. I am old enough to remember typing class in high school. The “thunk, thunk, thunk!” sound of hitting keys is not a pleasant memory. My parents gave me a state-of-the-art typewriter when I left for college, and it had (wonder of wonders!) a self-correcting function, which was a huge improvement over the machines from high school, but it was still messy and time-consuming.

Then I didn’t write anything for years and, by the time I wrote again, I was using a wireless keyboard and wireless mouse with a great big monitor. Now, when I see typewriters, rather than experiencing a pleasant nostalgia, I feel something closer to dread. But Beau is trying to tell me that a mechanical keyboard is the way to go, and I am trying to keep an open mind.

“It’s really easy to use,” he assures me. “And it will last much longer than a membrane keyboard.”

“Hmmm.”

“And you can adjust it to any touch you want.”

“Uh-huh.”

In addition to his interest in computer peripherals, Beau is also a voracious reader. I gave him a book over Christmas, and he texted me a few days later saying he wanted to discuss it with me. The problem was, I hadn’t read it. (I had no idea I was expected to actually read the books I gave to him at Christmas.) So I went back to my local bookstore to buy a copy. As I approached the front desk, I saw a collection of books and a sign that read “Signed Copies.” I then realized one of the books on the table was the meditations of Marcus Aurelius, who died in A.D. 180.

“I guess you wouldn’t have a signed copy of Marcus Aurelius,” I said to Patrick, who works the front desk.

“Well, we wouldn’t have three for sure!” Patrick replied. Patrick is a smart aleck.

Also displayed in front was an old typewriter, much older than any I was forced to use. “I feel lucky to be writing now,” I told Patrick. “I bet we would have three more novels by Charles Dickens if he’d had word processing.”

“A lot of writers back then had their wives transcribe their manuscripts!” Patrick noted, disapprovingly.

“I’ve heard he read his books to his daughter,” I told him.

“You can tell,” Patrick said. “His writing sounds like a story you would tell aloud.”

I left the bookstore with the book I gave Beau and a copy of Marcus Aurelius. I thought how fortunate I was to be able to buy a book so easily and to have all these tools that make writing so effortless.

But as different as it all seems, I know that reading and writing have not really changed all that much. Whether the story was written with a quill pen or on a fancy computer, whether it was read off a stone tablet or an electronic one, it is still just someone sharing a story.

I’m going to give Beau’s mechanical keyboard a try. It will keep me on my toes. And it will remind me—once again—that there is no one right way to tell a story.

Till next time,  
Carrie

**STATE CAPITAL HIGHLIGHTS**  
By Gary Borders



### Quakes Prompt Officials to Limit Disposal Wells

The Texas Railroad Commission has suspended nearly two dozen permits that allow oil and gas companies to inject saltwater into the ground, which regulators say has contributed to increased earthquakes of greater magnitude in West Texas.

The Austin American Statesman reported the 23 disposal wells hold hundreds of thousands of barrels of produced water, which is a toxic brine. A 2022 report said the state generated 3.9 billion barrels of produced water from extracting oil and gas.

The RRC instructed major companies to no longer dispose of saltwater in Reeves and Culberson counties, which had seven earthquakes last year, including a 5.2 magnitude temblor that was the fourth highest in state history.

Meanwhile, the RRC has developed a framework for pilot programs to recycle produced water “safely and economically.”

“Operators will apply for authorization to conduct pilot studies, and RRC will issue a permit or letter of authorization if the application meets requirements. The operators would compile data of how treated produced water can be reused in certain activities that are safe and protective of human health and the environment,” the news release said.

The goal is to reduce the amount of produced water injected back into the ground, reducing earthquake incidents.

“This framework opens up the potential to use treated produced water in ways that have never been seen before in Texas, which is a win-win for conserving water resources, and protecting the environment and Texans,” Wei Wang, executive director, said.

#### LAST YEAR WAS HOTTEST EVER FOR TEXAS

It likely comes as no surprise to all of us who endured last summer, but 2023 was the hottest ever recorded in Texas, according to data from the National Oceanic and Atmospheric Administration



and reported by the Texas Tribune.

The average temperature in the state measured 68.1 degrees last year, beating the previous 2012 record by 0.3 degrees. Every year since 2000 in Texas has been warmer than the 20th century average, said John Nielsen-Gammon, state climatologist. Last year was 3.5 degrees hotter than the 20th-century average in the state.

“That consistent warmth is because of climate change,” Nielsen-Gammon said.

Texas wasn’t alone in feeling the heat. Since federal record keeping began in 1895, last year was the fifth warmest in the contiguous United States, not counting Hawaii and Alaska.

“You can think of (2023) as kind of a preview of the future and it’s not pretty,” Andrew Dessler, professor of atmospheric sciences at Texas A&M University, said.

#### PAXTON ASKS HIGH COURT TO SHIELD HIM FROM DEPOSITION

Attorney General Ken Paxton is asking the Texas Supreme Court to keep him from being deposed in a long-running whistleblower lawsuit filed by four former employees at the agency.

The aides claim they were wrongfully fired after complaining to the FBI about Paxton’s conduct concerning a prominent campaign donor.

The Statesman reported Paxton filed the motion with the high court after an appeals court rejected his attempt to avoid being deposed. That ruling allows the

whistleblowers to continue their suit, which comes after a \$3.3 million settlement agreement last year imploded when the Legislature refused to pay for it.

An investigation into the whistleblowers’ claims led to an investigation that resulted in the House impeaching Paxton, who was acquitted in the Senate. Paxton contends he complied with the non-monetary terms of the settlement agreement, which included retracting a disparaging news release, and that the Legislature’s refusal to fund the settlement does not warrant continued settlement talks or a trial.

“The Legislature considered and rejected OAG’s request for funding, and even added a rider to the appropriations bill forbidding OAG from settling this case with taxpayer funds,” the attorneys for the whistleblowers wrote in their response.

#### HOMELESSNESS IN TEXAS ON THE RISE

Homelessness in Texas grew by more than 12% last year, according to the U.S. Department of Housing and Urban Development. The Tribune reported more than 27,000 Texans were unhoused when homelessness advocates conducted their annual Point-in-Time count last January, with 43% of those living on the streets.

Higher rents and the end of pandemic-era safety nets such as federal rent relief funds and a moratorium on evictions are being blamed for the increase. Homelessness rose in nearly every demographic group, according to the Point-in-Time estimate.

“We’re in a huge affordability crisis,” said Eric Samuels, president and CEO of Texas Homeless Network. “There’s a lot of people out there at risk of homelessness. And if they fall into homelessness, we have a lot fewer units to help them escape homelessness.”

#### RABIES VACCINE BAIT AIRDROP MARKS 30 YEARS

Planes are taking to the air in South Texas to kick off the 30th annual oral rabies vaccine airdrop, according to the Texas Department of State Health Services.

“Our goal is to vaccinate coyotes and gray foxes along the border to maintain herd immunity against rabies and keep new or previously eliminated rabies variants from becoming established in Texas,” said Kathy Parker, project director. “We will be distributing vaccine baits over 18 border counties this year.”

The project is expected to last two weeks. Vaccine baits are dropped along half mile intervals. More than 820,000 oral vaccine baits will be dropped. Since the airdrop program began, the number of animal rabies cases caused by the variants found in South Texas dropped from 122 cases in 1994 to zero cases by 2000.

There have been no human cases of rabies attributable to the rabies cases found in that region since the program began.

HIGHLANDS CROSBY

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Entered as Periodicals Class at Highlands Post Office, Highlands, TX 77562. Under the Act of Congress of March 3, 1879. Published 50 weeks per year, on Thursday, by Grafikpress Corp., 5906 Star Lane, Houston, TX 77057. Opinions in this paper are those of the authors, and not necessarily this newspaper’s. Any erroneous statement which may appear will be corrected when brought to the attention of the publisher. Liability for errors is limited to the reprinting of the corrected version. Submissions are encouraged, in person, by mail, by Fax, or by email, to grafikstar@aol.com.

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PET MATTERS

In Memory of Susan Hoffman



Houston Petset and L3 design deliver 50 dog houses to BARC ahead of Freezing Temperatures

The houses will be stored at BARC and distributed to pet owners who are unable to provide adequate shelter for their outside pets.

HOUSTON, Texas (Jan. 12, 2024) - Houston PetSet, a local nonprofit organization working to end Houston's homeless animal crisis...

Houston PetSet and L3 Design have been working with leadership at BARC to address the influx of reports made about dogs left outside in the cold.

Built by Houston PetSet's exclusive landscaping and outdoor living partner L3 Design with lumber donated by Gabriel Home Builders...

"With temperatures dropping and thousands of pets left without shelter, Houston PetSet is happy to be able to partner with BARC and the rescue community to distribute dog houses to those in need."

are grateful for this exclusive partnership with L3 Design and the generosity of Gabriel Home Builders."

"At L3 Design, we are all pet people," said Owner and Chief Growth Officer Lauren Olenius. "They are members of our family and we feel obligated to do what we can for dogs that are on their own and don't have a family to love and take care of them."

"As BARC's staff works hard to prepare our shelter pets for the incoming cold front, we urge the public to care for their own pets, bring them indoors, and provide them with proper safety from next week's hard freeze."

Houston PetSet reminds the public to use straw to insulate dog and cat houses instead of blankets, as fabric can hold moisture and make pets even colder than the ambient air temperature.

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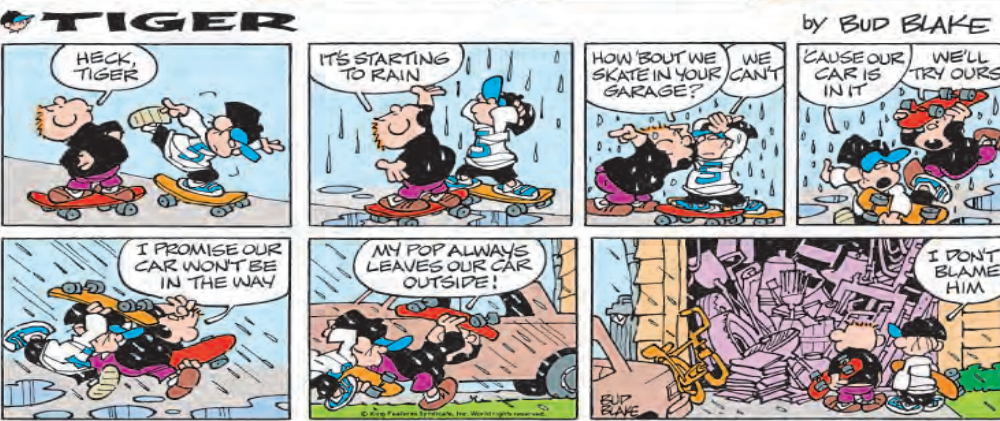
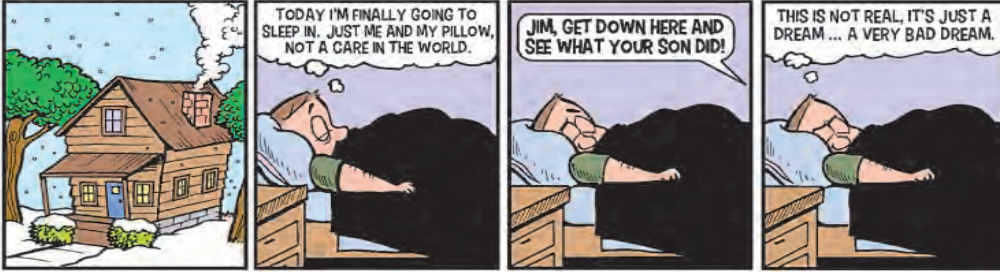
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ENTERTAINMENT

Amber Waves



Weekly SUDOKU by Linda Thistle. Includes a 9x9 grid and difficulty level: Moderate, Challenging, HOO BOY!

HOCUS-FOCUS BY HENRY BOLTINOFF. Find at least six differences in details between panels.

January 15, 2024 Posting Date King Crossword

Crossword puzzle grid with clues for Across and Down. Includes a list of 47 clues and the grid layout.

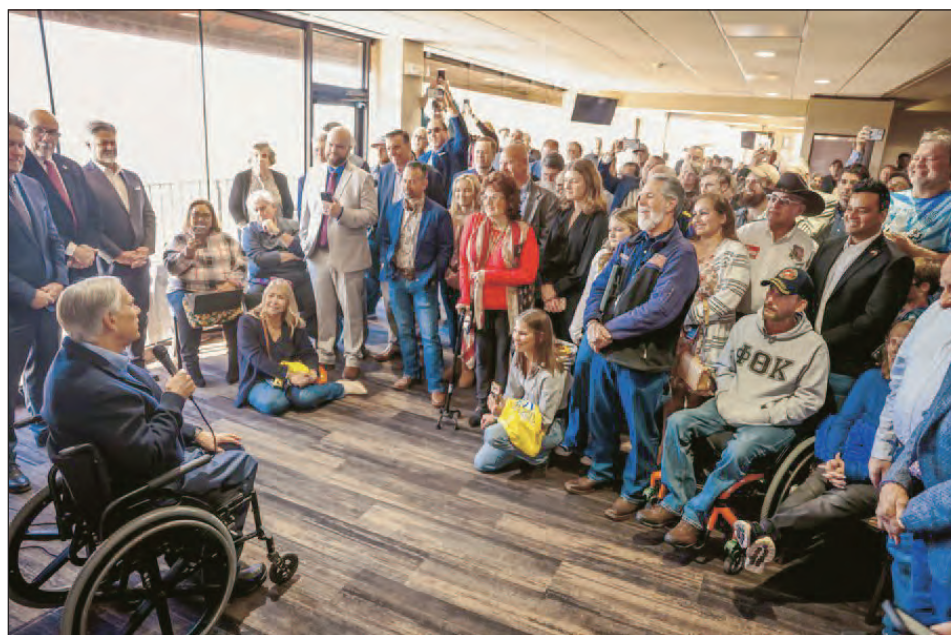
Trivia test by Fifi Rodriguez. 10 trivia questions covering movies, geography, U.S. presidents, music, history, science, and games.



# Abbott supports Cain,

CONTINUED FROM PAGE 1

During the campaign stop, the Governor touted Representative Cain as a strong conservative fighter who Texans in House District 128 need back at the Texas Capitol in Austin, noting that the Representative will continue the fight against the woke leftist mob and President Biden's dangerous open border policies.



Governor Abbott addresses Briscoe Cain supporters last Friday at the Battleground Golf Course in Deer Park.

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Notice of Public Sale pursuant to Chapter 59 of Texas property code to satisfy a landlord's lien. Sale to be held for Foley Road Boat Camper & Mini-Storage at 1432 Foley Rd, Crosby, TX 77532 on storagetreasures.com starting, 1/18/2024 at 9:00am CST and ending on, 1/25/2024 at 5:00pm CST. \$100 Cleanup deposit is required. The Seller reserves the right to withdraw the property at any time before the sale. Property includes the contents of spaces of the following tenant and is primarily household items.

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Notice is hereby given pursuant to Chapter 59 of the Texas Property Code that CROSBY BOAT, RV & MINI STORAGE, located at 15118A FM 2100, Crosby Texas 77532, will hold an online sale from January 22nd to January 29th until 10:00 o'clock a.m., at the following link <http://wbauctioncrosby.hibid.com/auCTION/current> to sell for cash only the contents of Unit I-17, Jason Terry in order to satisfy a Landlord's Lien. The property to be sold is Medical Equipment, Toys, Games, Small Electronics and etc.... #2-2t

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# Crosby Message,

CONTINUED FROM PAGE 1

shared this piece of advice for anyone thinking about running: "Don't compare yourself to anyone else. Just get out there and do it!" We are so proud of all our Cougar runners!

Crosby ISD staff got back into the swing of things with a Professional Development Day on January 5. We call these days "Red Box Fridays," because they are a red square on the Academic calendar. To give just one example: Drew Elementary School Assistant Principal, Ms. Rogers, guided teachers through training on the TELPAS (Texas English Language Proficiency Assessment System). Then Technology Services staff stopped by to demonstrate the powerful app known as "Apple Classroom." Teachers can enhance instruction and classroom work by syncing the students' iPads and guiding students as one team. It's one example of next-level instruction, and it's fun to watch.

January is School Board Recognition Month. I want to thank our Board of Trustees for their many years of volunteer service. Trustees devote their time and their talents to making the best decisions for the students, staff members, and families of Crosby ISD. In all, our Team of 8 has 20 years of combined experience serving on the Board of Trustees. Thank you to: President JR Humphries (Proud Crosby High School graduate), Vice President Jennifer Roach (career-long educator), Secretary Heather Barrett (Proud Crosby High School graduate and career-long educator), Assistant Secretary Kea Lynn Lewis (accomplished singer and law enforcement advocate),

Trustee Karen St. Julian-Thomas (community center director), Trustee Lisa Kallies (retired Crosby ISD educator), and Trustee Phillip Chapman (Proud Cougar Baseball dad and business owner). Our Board members are a powerful force for good in our communities.

Let me share our first student shout-outs of the new year. Over the break, Crosby High School Band student, Cortez Calzoncin, earned a spot in the Texas 5A All-State Band. It's the 10th year in a row the CHS band has been represented at All-State. Cortez is a senior and plays the bass clarinet. We are so proud of him! Our student-run Floral Design business, "The Red Rose," created more than 80 centerpieces and arrangements for the "Texas Dance Educators Association" Recognition Luncheon in downtown Houston this month. Cougar Stars sponsor, Ms. Godoy, worked with CHS Floral Design instructor, Ms. Walton, to show off the imagination and creativity of our CTE (Career and Technical Education) students. The Crosby High School girls' basketball team is on a hot streak! The varsity team has won 6 games in a row, and the Lady Cougars are now 6-1 in district play. Way to go! The boys' team is 3-2 in district play as we move into mid-January. From basketball season to Spelling Bee season, Barrett Elementary kicked things off with their campus-wide Spelling Bee last week. Students at our other elementary schools will be competing over the coming weeks, before the top two winners at each campus travel to the District-wide Spelling Bee on February 13.

Thank you to the Cros-



Crosby High School girls' basketball team is on a 6-game winning streak. This month, the Lady Cougars celebrated three varsity players: Savannah McKinnerney and Lamaya Clark for achieving 500 points in their high school basketball careers. Senior Emori LaSalle also celebrated a milestone of 800 points in her career



Crosby High School Floral Design students and teacher, Ms. Jacquelyn Walton, created more than 80 centerpieces for the "Texas Dance Educators Association" Recognition Luncheon in downtown Houston this month

by High School football team and Cougar Canine veterinary tech students who volunteered to serve at the first grocery distribution of the new year. Each Thursday, families in need can drive up to Cougar Stadium to receive free groceries, courtesy of the Houston Food Bank. Our Mobile School Market is run by students

as we seek to instill the idea of selfless service in our future graduates.

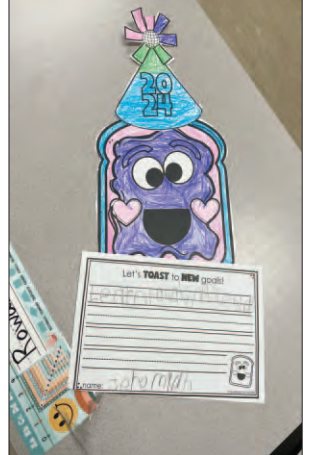
Did you make any New Year's resolutions? Some of our students did! Students in Mrs. Ramirez's class at Crosby Elementary School toasted their new goals by coloring paper toast and sharing their dreams for 2024. Jeremiah wrote that he

would like to "learn to play basketball," while Mayvis wrote "learn to play soccer." We have some budding student-athletes already in first grade!

This month, I'm also encouraging our District Leadership Team to share the One Word Challenge for the third year in a row. The One Word



First-grade students at Crosby Elementary School "toast" the new year by creating resolutions for 2024.



First-grade students at Crosby Elementary School are dreaming of becoming student-athletes in 2024.

Challenge is simply choosing one specific word that will guide you throughout the year as you make decisions and pursue your goals. Last year, words included: "Progress," "Growth," "Perspective," "Perseverance," and "Thrive." I can't wait to see what our leaders' vision is for their personal development this year.

What a great year 2024 will be! Crosby ISD will celebrate our 105th birthday in June. The District was founded in 1919 by an act of the Texas Legislature, and we've been teaching students for more than a century now. We celebrate our tradition by also looking forward to the future. I know there's so much in store for 2024, and we can't wait to celebrate the news with you.

We are Moving Forward! Go Coogs!

# Precinct 3 Commissioner Tom Ramsey Kicks Off \$17.8 Million in Drainage Improvement Projects for Barrett Station

HARRIS COUNTY, TX – Precinct 3 Commissioner Tom Ramsey's Office is investing in Barrett Station's future with \$17.8 million in projects to fortify the area against flooding.

Projects will improve street and drainage infrastructure in Dreamland Place, Barrett Settlement and St. Charles Place subdivisions

Construction recently began in the Dreamland Place subdivision as Phase 1 of the drainage improvement projects. This will benefit 80 homes and include installing a pumped detention basin, upgrading culverts, and regrading 23,000 linear feet of ditches (equivalent to 77 football fields) for better drainage.

Several Dreamland Place subdivision streets will also be extended, including E. Broussard Avenue, Lullaby Lane, Sandman Avenue, Jean La Fitte Drive, and Parish Road. Lullaby Drive and E. Broussard Avenue will extend westward to Jean La Fitte Drive, and Sandman Avenue will stretch to Parish Road. Jean La Fitte Drive at Fontain Lane will extend north to E. Broussard Avenue, while Parish Road will connect to Sandman Avenue. When completed, the roadways will link multiple sections of the neighborhood.

The \$6.5 million Dreamland Place subdivision project is set for completion by the second quarter of 2024.

Phase 2 of the drainage improvement projects will begin in the Barrett Settlement and St. Charles Place subdivisions during the first quarter of 2024 and benefit approximately 450 homes. This will include installing culverts with increased water-carrying capacity, regrading 68,000 linear feet of ditches (equivalent to 226 football fields) for better drainage, and constructing a new detention basin. The \$11.3 million phase will conclude in the first quarter of 2025.

"We are committed to creating a resilient and safe environment for our communities," said Precinct 3 Commissioner Tom S. Ramsey, P.E. "These improvements represent a crucial investment in Barrett's future, strengthening the area's flood resilience and enhancing our residents' quality of life."

The projects underscore Precinct 3's dedication to improving street and drainage infrastructure to support strong communities. In addition to these drainage improvement projects, Commissioner Ramsey's Office actively seeks funding to improve safety with over 300 new streetlights for Barrett Station. Ongoing maintenance efforts include mowing, tree trimming, pothole repair, ditch maintenance, and more.

For additional information about these projects or others throughout Precinct 3, please email [pct3servicedept@pct3.hctx.net](mailto:pct3servicedept@pct3.hctx.net).



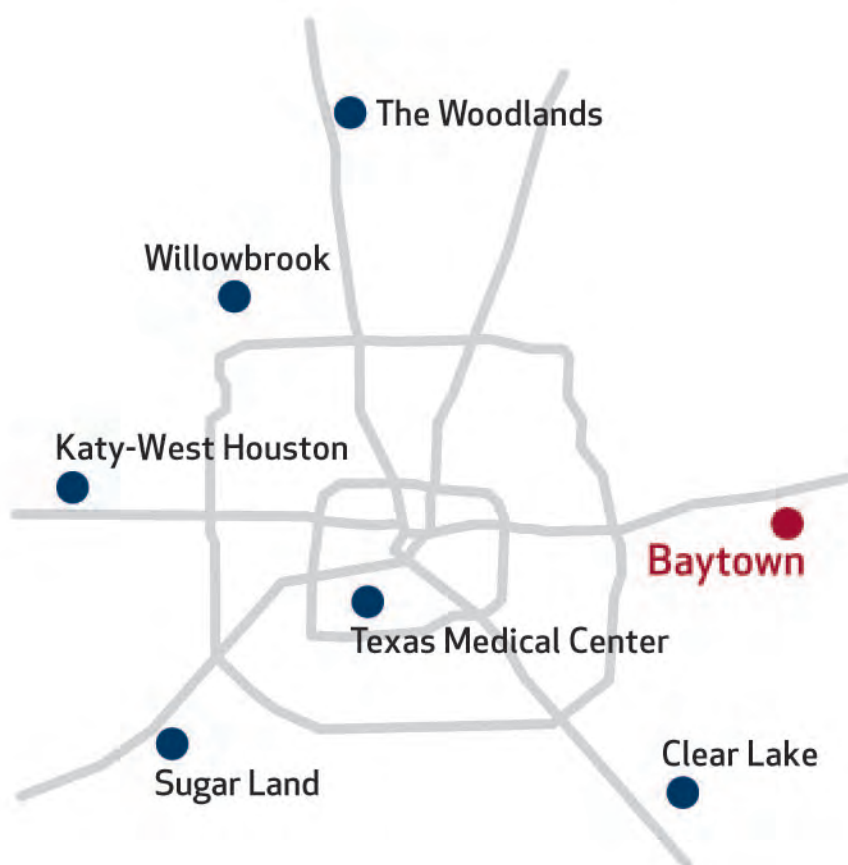




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