



HIGHLANDS CROSBY Star ★ Courier

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P.O. DRAWER 446, HIGHLANDS, TEXAS 77562

IN THE STARS

Harris County Debris Drop-Off

Residential debris drop-off sites are now open for Harris County residents to take their vegetative, construction, and demolition debris free of charge.

7am to 7pm Daily Crosby Sports Complex 6800 Miller Wilson Road Crosby, TX 77532

IT May Park 2100 Wolf Road Huffman, TX 77336

Lindsay/Lyons Park 2310 Atascocita Road Humble, TX 77396

For more information, call 713-274-3100.

Rotary Washer Tourney set for Sept. 14

Highlands Rotary Club will hold their annual 3-Hole Washer Board Charity Tournament on Saturday, September 14, 2023 from 1:00pm to 5:00pm. THE PUBLIC IS INVITED TO PARTICIPATE.

The Tournament starts at 1:00pm Sharp, at Charlie's Ice House, 906 N. Main Street in Highlands.

All teams must register and sign in no later than 12:30pm the day of the tournament.

TEAMS: 2 person teams, \$50 per team entry, Double Elimination rules. Awards and Prize Money for the top 3 teams, \$150, \$100, and \$50.

SPONSORSHIPS: Board Sponsors at \$100 and \$200; T-Shirt Sponsors at \$150 and \$250; Major Sponsor available at \$500 with benefits.

Event includes a Raffle for a Liquor Wagon.

Contact Gay Lynn Prescott Million gaylynn@yourtxhome.com or Denise Smith niecy1616@gmail.com, or Patricia Scott plscott1957@gmail.com to enter or for info.

Proceeds benefit Rotary Foundation and Polio Plus.

CenterPoint warns of continuing outages

May occur while working on resiliency Initiative

By David Taylor Managing Editor

Fed up with CenterPoint, many customers and community leaders have expressed their exasperation with the unfulfilled promises to be better. So was Governor Greg Abbott. In a meeting with the governor, Jason Wells, president and CEO for CenterPoint, promised to build the "most resilient coastal grid anywhere in the country because that is what the state of Texas and our customers in the Greater Houston area de-



serve." Abbott gave Wells an Aug. 31 deadline to get the job done and meet an accelerated timeline. With it comes more outages, some lasting as much as four to eight hours as crews and contractors begin work on their Greater Houston Resiliency Initiative following substantial damage by

Hurricane Beryl. "While we cannot erase the frustrations and difficulty so many of our customers endured, I, and my entire leadership team, will not make any excuses," Wells told Abbott in a letter to the governor. "We will improve. We will act with a sense of urgency." Lawmakers also want-

ed to see immediate action when Wells faced the House of Representatives Committee on State Affairs.

"CenterPoint's lack of preparedness and response to Hurricane Beryl is extremely troubling and raises many questions about their priorities," said State Rep. Ana Hernandez, vice chair of the committee in a statement to the Star Courier newspaper. "We owe it to our constituents to seek answers, hold CenterPoint accountable, and take meaningful action."

During a hearing of the Committee on State Affairs in Austin, Wells testified before the committee and answered lawmaker's questions.

Lon Squyres, city manager for Jacinto City, testified before the committee at the invitation of Hernandez and outlined his disappointments including poor communication.

"What little bit we got in the way of briefings was literally a daily telephone call, not a Zoom meeting, not a Teams meeting, no videos, no explanations, other than a very crude, archaic phone call," he said. "We had very little chance for a Q and A or anything else."

Squyres learned at the meeting that as his crews were out on the streets of Jacinto City collecting and picking up trees, limbs,

Continued. See CENTERPOINT OUTAGES, Page 6

Lockwood to head CUIC Expansion

By David Taylor Managing Editor

A worsening economy, a growing homeless population, and exponential growth in the Crosby-Huffman area have increased the pressure on Churches United In Caring to keep up with demand.

The need to fulfill their mission of helping has forced the organization to reevaluate their volunteers-only policy and look for help. They found it in their backyard.

"We have some faithful volunteers who come in and do their two or three hours a week and they're gone and that's fine," said Board Vice President Shirley Ellisor. But there's also a group of volunteers who have been pulled into a near full-time job.

"We're all getting older and none of us want to do that," she said.

The problem, and it's a



Churches United In Caring board members and volunteers gathered last Friday to hear the announcement of the first hire to lead the organization. Lee Ann Lockwood, in the black and white blouse and white pants, is the new coordinator to head the organization.

good one at that, is that they continue to grow, receiving more donations than ever, the thrift store is selling more, but the need from the community has also grown considerably.

"We have toyed with the idea of how in the world we

could get a coordinator to lead and organize the volunteers and run the ministry," Ellisor said. Up until now they have resisted the idea of salaried positions outside of a cashier for consistency's sake, putting every penny they could back into the minis-

try and meeting needs.

On Friday morning, August 9, 2024, they made history announcing the hiring of Lee Ann Lockwood as their first coordinator to run the ministry.

"We'll mentor her through the next several months to get her prepared

to take over the reins completely," Ellisor said.

Instead of waiting to secure a grant to pay for her salary, a group of private donors have stepped up with the funds to get them

Continued. See CUIC EXPANSION, Page 7

"Kids Kicking Cancer" benefit in Crosby Friday & Saturday

Concerts on two nights, BBQ Cookoff, games, Car Show, Mutton Bustin, Cornhole Tournament, and More at Rock'n C Arena

By David Taylor Managing editor

West McCauley beat cancer. The spunky 5-year-old from Huffman was diagnosed with bilateral retinoblastoma at 10 months old, a rare form of eye cancer, in January of 2020 and five years later, he's still free and clear of cancer. On Friday and Saturday, his parents and the community will join for a Kids Kicking Cancer event to raise money for other children with cancer at the Crosby Rodeo and Fair Rockin' C Arena.

The diagnosis led to a

tearful letter penned by his father Steven to his son on Facebook that garnered more than 20,000 comments in a few days. It also led them to a doctor in New York, a specialist, and hope that they could save his eye.

"The left eye was too far gone and so they removed it," his dad said, and West endured three rounds of chemo.

One year later, the cancer returned in the right eye and warranted another trip to New York. West lost that fight and is legally blind, but his dad says he is in the best of spirits.



West is asking everyone to join him and his family at the Third Annual Kids Kicking Cancer event this weekend at the Crosby Fair and Rodeo grounds beginning Friday at 6:30 p.m. and Saturday at 10 a.m. His family, from left, Steven, Waverly, Brooke, Whitney, and Wimberly in the front.

"I'm glad school started back because I work from home," he said. "My summer has been filled listening to episodes of Peppa Pig and fire sirens," his dad grinned.

Three years after the cancer treatment, West is a little dude singing, playing, and doing normal things.

"We have to guide him around a bit and he's a little interdependent, and unfortunately, that's the way he'll be the rest of his life. He's still inspiring," Steven said.

He loves baseball and the neighborhood kids play

beeper ball with him.

McCauley said he's a full-fledged kindergartener this year and rides the bus to school.

During those early years, through the pandemic, one organization kept reaching out to the McCauley family.

"Throughout that journey, I knew we had so much help from organizations and people. I wanted to pay it back or pay it forward. Addi's Faith Foundation was relentless. They never stopped calling

Continued. See KIDS KICKING CANCER, Page 7

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# GOOSE CREEK CISD NEWS

## Goose Creek CISD Invites Community to Join ‘Goose Talks’ for Insightful Engagement and District Dialogue

Goose Talks at Goose Creek CISD offers a dynamic community experience, providing members with comprehensive insights into District operations and organizational dynamics through behind-the-scenes glimpses into District activities. Throughout the year, we invite the community into various district facilities for roundtable discussions, facility tours, staff, and student panels, talks with our Superintendent, and more to ensure that the voices of our community are heard, valued, and integrated into the planning and decision-making process.

Over the last year, Goose Talks met 4 times and had the opportunity of hearing speakers from various district departments, chosen based on feedback gathered from committee members at the program's outset. We aim to expand our group and extend an invitation to parents and community members to join us as we engage in significant discussions.

This year's tentative dates are as follows:  
 September 6, 2024  
 October 4, 2024  
 November 1, 2024  
 December 6, 2024  
 February 7, 2025  
 April 4, 2025  
 May 2, 2025



The 2024-2025 Goose Talks Committee poses at the end of a meeting (Photo by Carrie Pryor-Newman)

If you're interested in learning more about Goose Talks for the upcoming school year (2024-2025), feel free to email [norma.veguillamartinez@gccisd.net](mailto:norma.veguillamartinez@gccisd.net)! We're eager to engage as many people as we can.

## Goose Creek CISD Welcomes Nearly 24,000 Students for the New School Year “Our Giant Story” Unfolds Across 32 Campuses

By Norma Martinez

On Monday, August 12, Goose Creek CISD welcomed close to 24,000 students. From the early learning academies, where 4-year-olds may be setting foot in a classroom for the first time, to the secondary campuses, where students are getting ready for their life after graduation, the excitement could be felt across the district in the 32 schools. GCCISD is back to school and in a Giant way!

“I am so excited for you!” Denise Urias told her children, Paislee and

Waylin, as she snapped their picture at the Highlands Elementary School “Welcome Back” wall. A few steps further down, Principal Blanca Capetillo was welcoming parents and students into the library and helping them with the registration process. She explained “We have been working hard to receive your students since April and cannot wait to get to know our new Hawks!”

Eleven miles away, Cedar Bayou Junior School's new principal, Dr. Roger Cardona walked the halls welcoming students back to



Parent Denise Urias takes a picture of her students at the Welcome Back wall at Highlands Elementary (Photo by Carrie Pryor Newman)

school. “I am excited about joining Bear Country, I know that together we will continue to grow Giants!”

This year, the district

is embracing the theme “Our Giant Story” – spotlighting the personal stories, values, and campus cultures within the district. “Our Giant Story” is



Cheerleaders welcome students at the car rider line at Baytown Junior School (Photo by Carrie Pryor Newman)

an invitation to everyone to share their journey, highlighting the diverse paths that create the Goose Creek community.

To learn more about Goose Creek CISD or the “Our Giant Story” theme, please visit the webpage: [gccisd.net](http://gccisd.net)

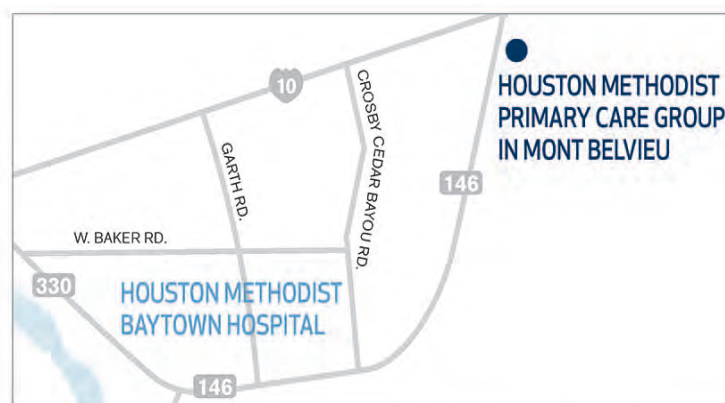
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# Barbers Hill Dayton Press

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## ON THE HILL

### CenterPoint Holding 16 Community Open House Events to Get Feedback from Customers

By Michelle Homer

As CenterPoint continues efforts to improve customer service in response to outrage after Hurricane Beryl, they want to hear from you.

The events are being held to give customers a chance to provide feedback concerning the company's response to Hurricane Beryl. CenterPoint team members will also share details and answer questions about the 40 actions they're taking to improve future storm response.

The actions include:  
**\*Installing stronger and more storm-resilient poles:** CenterPoint is replacing approximately 1,000 wooden poles by August 31 with stronger fiberglass poles that can withstand winds up to 132 mph.  
**\*Trimming or removing vegetation from power lines:** CenterPoint has doubled its vegetation management workforce in order to remove higher-risk vegetation near power lines by August 31.

**\*Installing automated devices:** CenterPoint will install approximately 300 automated devices, known as trip savers. These devices mean that fewer customers experience outages, and quicker restoration times for those who do. The devices automatically re-energize the line in certain outages to help keep the power on for customers.

CenterPoint has taken a lot of heat for its storm preparedness and response after Beryl left over two million customers without power for days and in some cases weeks.

#### CenterPoint Community Open House schedule

Tuesday, August 20, 4 P.M. - 7 P.M.: Pledger Community Center at 17817 3rd St in Pledger (Matagorda County)

Thursday, August 22, 4 P.M. - 7 P.M.: Pasadena Convention Center at 7902 Fairmont Pkwy. in Pasadena

Saturday, August 24, 10 A.M. - 1 P.M.: Metropolitan Multi-Service Center at 1475 W Gray St. in Houston

Tuesday, August 27, 4 P.M. - 7 P.M.: Waller County Community Center at 21274 FM 1098 in Prairie View (Waller County)

Wednesday, August 28, 4 P.M. - 7 P.M.: Wharton Civic Center at 1924 N. Fulton St. in Wharton (Wharton County)

Wednesday, September 4, 4 P.M. - 7 P.M.: Dayton Community Center at 801 S. Cleveland St., in Dayton (Liberty County)

Thursday, September 5, 4 P.M. - 7 P.M.: West Side Complex Building at 8138 FM 3246 in Baytown (Chambers County)

Saturday, September 7, 10 A.M. - 1 P.M.: Wright Cuney Recreation Center at 718 41st St in Galveston (Galveston County)

Wednesday, September 11, 4 P.M. - 7 P.M.: Knights of Columbus Hall at 1310 Hwy 90 West in Sealy (Austin County)

Thursday, September 12, 4 P.M. - 7 P.M.: Eagle Lake Community Center at 100 N. Walnut Ave. in Eagle Lake (Colorado County)

Saturday, September 14, 10 A.M. - 1 P.M.: Missouri City Landmark Community Center at 100 Louisiana St. in Missouri City (Fort Bend County)

Saturday, September 14, 10 A.M. - 1 P.M.: Dow Academic Center at 500 College Blvd in Lake Jackson (Brazoria County)

Wednesday, September 18, 4 P.M. - 7 P.M.: Bayland Community Center at 6400 Bissonnet St. in Houston

Wednesday, September 25, 4 P.M. - 7 P.M.: Magnolia Event Center at 11659 FM 1488 in Magnolia (Montgomery County)

Saturday, September 28, 10 A.M. - 1 P.M.: George H.W. Bush Community Center at 6827 Cypresswood Dr. in Spring

## New Development Initiatives in Baytown are topic at Chamber luncheon

By David Taylor  
Managing Editor

Thomas Reeves, director of public affairs for the city of Baytown has one job—promote Baytown. While the growing city sometimes doesn't get the respect Reeves believes they deserve, he's hoping to change that dynamic.

"I'm really proud of the team that I've assembled in tourism, marketing, legislative affairs and community engagement and we're trying to change people's minds about what we're doing here," he said.

A big step toward that goal could be accomplished with the completion of the San Jacinto Marketplace, formerly San Jacinto Mall, owned and operated by Fidelis. With the announcement that the city now has five sets of site plans to review and approve, the possibility of moving dirt could begin as early as the fourth quarter this year, according to both the Fidelis and city of Baytown websites.

Fidelis purchased the mall in 2015 with hopes of returning the space into a premiere shopping

destination with an open green area with patio restaurants centered around prominent retail shopping. The 34-year-old mall was razed and has sat absent of any progress until a new agreement was reached in 2022. According to the site, Fidelis has been securing the planning documents necessary to move forward and negotiating with potential anchor tenants.

"The problem that Fidelis has is trying to find the right brick and mortar tenants there," Reeves said.

An Image Research Study, Messaging Campaign and Marketing Strategy to Elevate Baytown, Texas was commissioned by council and undertaken by Development Counsellors International (DCI) and recently submitted to the city.

"I paid a consultant to come into Baytown and learn all he can about Baytown. We did focus groups, interviews, events and sessions where people from around the city, around the region, around the state, came in and said, 'Who is Baytown? What



Thomas Reeves, director of public affairs for the city of Baytown, chats with the members of the Highlands-Lynchburg Chamber of Commerce at their August luncheon on new initiatives to promote the city.

does Baytown stand for? What is the history? What do we want to be when we grow up? All those things," he said.

DCI did a research project on the town and produced a report that details directly how Reeves and the city should be spending marketing dollars.

With the report in hand now since April, Reeves says he now has his marching orders when he meets with his team.

"This tells us things like we're the real deal, we speak authentically and prefer to not sugar coat things, we're positively hospitable, our community has something for the whole family, and we're a hard-working bunch. Industry is our backbone, and we take our job seriously. These are some of the things found in the image study," he said.

Reeves also mentioned that the Har-

ris County Sports Authority would make a presentation to the council on Project Vector.

"Project Vector simply is a massive sports complex because we know on this side of the county we need more sports facilities and other facilities that are community related and things to do for folks who visit Baytown," Reeves said.

No specifics were given on the location or cost of the project, only an overall vision. Officials, he said, have been making visits to other similar projects around the country including Rock Hill, South Carolina, The Star in Frisco, Texas where the campus of the Dallas Cowboys is located, and others.

"You will see very soon a public release of all the features of this facility, and we're really excited about it, because we need them in the Baytown area, and of course, everyone will be able to take advantage of that in the region," Reeves said.

The facility would attract additional retail in the area and could also be used by the community and school district for large gatherings including graduations.

Reeves said he can hardly post anything on social media channels without someone commenting about the mall.

"We know it's a big deal and we're working on it, but as most of you know, to a certain extent, it's out of our hands when you've got a private company that owns the whole thing," he told chamber members.

"We're going to push through the noise and we're going to sell (Baytown) anyways because we believe we have a lot to be proud of," he said.

## ONEOK's Mont Belvieu Natural Disaster Response Exercise held to Reinforce Disaster Preparedness



MONT BELVIEU - ONEOK, one of the largest diversified energy infrastructure companies delivering energy products and services vital to an advancing world, re-

cently hosted a full-scale emergency preparedness exercise in Mont Belvieu, Texas. In partnership with the City of Mont Belvieu, the Mont

Belvieu Fire Department, Mont Belvieu Police Department and non-government organizations, ONEOK mobilized its Incident Management

Team, tactical command vehicles and other emergency tools to workshop a response to a natural disaster scenario. Safety and Service are

Core Values at ONEOK, and exercises like this help ensure the company is prepared to support its people and its communities in the event of an emergency.

## Mont Belvieu Eyes Largest Property Tax Hike in Over a Decade to Fund Public Safety and Infrastructure

Mont Belvieu is considering its largest property tax rate increase in over a decade to accommodate the city's growing needs. The City Council proposed a new rate of 47.11 cents per \$100 of appraised property value, up from the current 44.42 cents. This increase is expected to generate \$38.1 million in revenue for the Fiscal Year 2025, covering \$29.4 million in expenditures and allocating \$8.6 million for infrastructure projects, including a major \$40 million wastewater treatment



expansion.

This proposed tax hike, though significant, still keeps Mont Belvieu's rate lower than many neighboring cities. However, it

is the maximum increase allowed without triggering a citizen vote. The impact on homeowners could be substantial; a property valued at

\$400,000 last year would see an approximate \$180 increase in annual taxes due to the combined effects of rising appraisals and the new rate.

The proposed budget, to be finalized after a public hearing on August 26, highlights substantial investments in public safety. The Fire Department's transition from a volunteer to a partially full-time model is projected to increase its budget by \$600,000. Additionally, the Police Department's budget is set to grow by \$1 million, allow-

ing for the hiring of five new employees, including four dispatchers and a detective.

Public safety remains a priority, with 34% of the budget dedicated to it. The city's investment in these services is crucial for maintaining or improving its ISO fire protection rating, which directly affects homeowner insurance rates. The proposed changes reflect Mont Belvieu's commitment to ensuring the safety and quality of life for its rapidly expanding community.

OPINION PAGE

OPINION

By DYLAN BADDOUR Houston Landing

Hurricane Beryl was a Warning Shot for Houston

When Hurricane Beryl entered the Gulf of Mexico, the city of Houston had little reason to believe it was about to take its first direct hit from a tropical cyclone in decades.

Initial forecasts predicted the storm would make landfall in northern Mexico, hundreds of miles away. Instead it veered sharply north and hit an unfortunate bullseye.

The category 1 storm flooded hundreds of homes and knocked out power for millions of people in the muddy former swamplands of the nation's energy capital, throwing the city into days of chaos and highlighting the vulnerability of the fourth-largest U.S. city.

For Matt Lanza, a meteorologist and managing editor of Space City Weather, it raised a disturbing prospect: What if this mild hurricane had been stronger?

"It's really uncomfortable to think about," Lanza said. "That is a scenario that is extremely plausible; it's not far-fetched."

If a category 3 or 4 storm followed the same path as Beryl, Lanza said, it could drastically change the face of Houston. This week's experience suggests the city is ill-prepared to handle such a disaster.

"It could be like New Orleans after [Hurricane] Katrina, where much of the city is uninhabitable for a period of weeks to months," Lanza said. "So what is our plan for that? I don't know that we necessarily have one."

The last category 4 storm to hit Houston was Hurricane Carla in 1961, when less than a million people lived in the city and air conditioning was still novel. The last category 3 was Hurricane Alicia in 1983. Hurricane Ike, a category 2, landed east of Houston in 2008, striking the city with its weaker western flank.

Most damage in recent memory has come from tropical storms bringing much more rain than wind, like Tropical Storm Allison in 2001. Hurricane Harvey hit the middle Texas coast as a category 4 in August 2017 and reached Houston as a stagnant tropical storm with modest wind—but with the heaviest rainfall ever recorded in the United States, inundating the city with over 50 inches of precipitation.

When Beryl hit on Monday, it was wind, rather than rain, that wrecked the city's electrical infrastructure, apparently catching the local power company, CenterPoint Energy, off guard. Four days later, CenterPoint was still working to restore power to hundreds of thousands of customers.

"A cat 1 hurricane shouldn't knock out your power system," said Kerry Emanuel, a veteran hurricane researcher and professor emeritus at the Massachusetts Institute of Technology. "I think you've got a problem with the power company, frankly." Hurricanes are expected to intensify, he said, as greenhouse gas emissions warm the atmosphere and ocean, supercharging evaporation and heat transfer in a warmer atmosphere that already holds more moisture.

"A demonstrable greenhouse gas effect is the proportion of hurricanes that turn out cat 3 or 4," Emanuel said.

When Hurricane Beryl formed in the Atlantic in early July, hundreds of miles from the Texas coast, it reached category 4 status—the earliest category 4 storm on record. Record warm temperatures in the Atlantic Ocean this year have led to predictions of a highly active hurricane season.

Beryl was the second time this summer that storms caused widespread, prolonged power outages in Houston, after a rare inland windstorm in May blasted through the city, blowing out skyscraper windows. The last decade also saw severe, widespread flooding in Houston in 2015, 2016, and 2017, plus a crippling ice storm in 2021 and severe drought in 2023 that ravaged underground plumbing.

This year's hurricane season has only just begun. Atlantic storms typically grow more powerful through the summer, peaking in September.

"Houstonians are understandably exhausted from dealing with such events regularly, but it's crucial that we remain prepared for more," said state Senator Carol Alvarado, a Democrat who represents much of east Houston. "We must focus on increasing state aid for both preventative measures and reactive relief efforts."

These storms harm economic prosperity and social mobility, said Robert Bullard, a professor of urban planning and environmental policy at Texas Southern University in Houston and a member of the White House Environmental Justice Advisory Council.

Less affluent communities typically bear the brunt of storm damage costs, Bullard said, because their infrastructure is lacking compared to wealthier neighborhoods. In the 20th century, he said, racial segregation forced Black families to live in low-lying areas that repeatedly flood.

In America, most middle-income family wealth is embedded in home ownership, Bullard said. When stormwaters swamp a house, the financial damage can last for generations. "This repeated disaster impacts on the communities over decades, it creates a theft of wealth accumulation," said Bullard, who lost his car to Hurricane Alicia in Houston in 1983. "It's stealing their inheritance, and it means that the amount of equity funding for the next generation is diminished."

Houston is taking steps to harden its defenses.

Offshore, federal authorities are advancing plans to build an enormous, \$57 billion system of barriers and gates, which has been called the largest civil engineering project in U.S. history and is expected to take 20 years to construct.

That project is designed to prevent a worst-case scenario—a major hurricane shooting straight into Galveston Bay, sending a storm surge up the Houston Ship Channel and into the massive waterside complexes of refineries and petrochemical plants that constitute the heart of the U.S. energy sector.

In the city, authorities have recently spent hundreds of millions of dollars widening bayous, the natural waterways that flow across Houston, which nonetheless overflowed during Beryl. Authorities also bought out thousands of homes in the flood plains. But many thousands more remain.

Jim Blackburn, co-director of Rice University's Severe Storm Prediction, Education, & Evacuation from Disasters Center, said the city should fundamentally change its development pattern to mitigate recurring storm damage. "We ought to be very slow to rebuild in the same areas that flood over," Blackburn said. "That's not a popular position, but I think it's a very important one."

Blackburn, a veteran environmental lawyer, was surprised at the amount of damage done to Houston's power system by Beryl's 90 mile-per-hour winds and by the length of the ongoing effort to restore electricity. "I cannot imagine what 150-mile-per-hour winds might have done to this community; that's what I'm horrified of. What's a cat 4 or cat 5 going to do to us?" Blackburn said. "They will be coming."

But fundamentally reformatting Houston is easier said than done. It means backtracking, to some extent, on decades of booming development driven by the hubris of the energy age.

Greater Houston started out as a smattering of settlements between swamps and bayous on the edge of a prairie. Until the mid-20th century, there was "more appreciation for the vulnerability of the city" and "greater recognition of the city's ecological and environmental infrastructure," said Jonathan Levy, a professor of U.S. history at the University of Chicago who grew up in Houston's flood-prone Meyerland neighborhood.

But that changed after World War II, when a period of rapid expansion brought an "increasing ignorance of these realities," said Levy, who has written about Houston's environmental struggle. The oil and gas industry was revolutionizing the world, headquartered largely in Houston, where it powered the massive expansion of concrete freeways, whole landscapes of suburban sprawl, and an enormous, low-density city premised on private automobiles. At the same time, the growing global oil industry was increasing the greenhouse gas emissions that intensify tropical storms.

"When it comes to the politics of climate change, if you don't have a plan for Houston, you don't really have a plan," Levy said. "It's hard to imagine an energy transition occurring without the energy industry in Houston participating."

As for the city, the transformation would entail making space for the water, pulling back from the edges of the bayous to create a giant network of wide greenways through the metro area.

"Limiting building, condemning property and compensating homeowners to bring the logic of that ecological infrastructure back to life," Levy said. "If you can't do that, I don't really see there being any answer."

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.



THE POSTSCRIPT By Carrie Classon

Blessed with Cousins



I have been blessed with many cousins.

My two cousins closest in age were both boys, Brian and Dane. We went camping and hiking together and stayed in the cabin up north. We all remember the day we made tea from red sumac berries, and—after we'd drunk about a gallon each—my Uncle Mike told us, "You know that stuff is a laxative, don't you?" (For the record, it is not.)

We are still close, although I marvel at how similar we seemed when we were young, and how serious and reliable they now seem compared to me.

My mother had 10 siblings, and she was the third from the youngest, so most of my cousins are older than me. I remember my older cousins listening to the Beatles behind closed bedroom doors. I stood in the hallway and listened to the music seeping out from under the door and knew I could never be that cool.

I remember my cousin, Jill, ironing her Gunne Sax dress on grandma's ironing board. Jill was beautiful, and she dyed her hair black. She had a marvelous loud laugh and was the only person I knew with long fingernails. I felt lucky to be around her. Then, just to make the whole thing more amazing, Jill's handsome boyfriend (who was a musician, naturally!) would drive up to the farmhouse in his VW Bug. I knew my older cousins were all smarter and funnier and much more sophisticated than I could ever be.

I still feel that way. I just spent a long weekend up in rural Ontario with a number of my first cousins and a few of their children thrown in for good measure. It was a wonderful time, and I was reminded again of how blessed I am with cousins.

Most of the time was spent just sitting and admiring the beautiful scenery and telling stories—lots and lots of stories. And I was amazed how few of these stories I remembered.

I didn't know what my uncles did for a living or who my aunts dated when they were young. I didn't know how late it was when everyone in my family finally got indoor plumbing or how early my aunts were in studying things in college that women at the time rarely did.

I remembered the conservative pastor's wife who changed her name from Alice to Twyla when she discovered her birth mother. But I had no idea, after she became a widow, that she took to making corn wine or that she broke her arm when she fell off a table at the VFW.

I knew about grandpa's once-a-year fishing trip with his brother, Evald, but I didn't know where they stayed or how they drove to the Mille Lacs Reservation in northern Minnesota to buy the northerns they claimed to catch. I didn't remember much about my great-aunts and great-uncles and, honestly, I still don't. But I got a glimpse because of my cousins.

One of my cousins was recently diagnosed with ALS, and died. His sisters came to this cousins' reunion. It was a long trip for all of them. But I'm sure they felt—more acutely than I—how short this time is that we have with family, how precious the opportunities are to remember and share.

"She fell off the table?" one of my cousins said in disbelief. "What was Twyla doing on the table at the VFW?"

Nobody knew. But we all laughed until tears ran down our faces. And I now have something new to remember.

Till next time, Carrie

STATE CAPITAL HIGHLIGHTS

By Gary Borders



Pandemic Relief Funds for Schools About to End

Texas public schools received more than \$19 billion in pandemic relief funds over the last four years, but that pipeline of cash will largely end on Sept. 30, The Texas Tribune reported.

That means many Texas schools already struggling with budget deficits will begin the school year with even more serious deficits, especially since the Texas Legislature has not increased base per-student pay since 2019 — a year before the pandemic began.

Congress passed the Elementary and Secondary School Emergency Relief package in 2020 to help schools deal with the impacts of the COVID-19 pandemic, which caused enrollment declines, teachers exiting the profession and falling test scores. That funding is about to end, with essentially nothing to take its place for many school districts already at the maximum allowed property tax rate.

"It's not about making up ESSER, because we all know that was one-time funding," said La Joya ISD Superintendent Marcey Sorensen. "I just would ask, without getting political whatsoever, that everybody just look in the mirror and say, OK, if we really haven't provided additional funding since 2019, maybe it's time that we just give school districts a little bit more of what they need, knowing that kids have different needs now."

A recent survey conducted by the Texas Association of School Business Officials concluded that out of 313 school districts across the state, nearly 80% reported deficit budgets or a lack of resources as one of their top challenges.

ABBOTT ORDERS HOSPITALS TO REPORT IMMIGRANT CARE DATA

All Texas hospitals enrolled in Medicaid or the Children's Health Insurance Program have been ordered by Gov. Greg Abbott to report costs incurred by treating undocumented immigrants, the Austin American-Statesman reported. In a news release outlining his executive order, Abbott blamed the Biden administration's border security policies for health care



STATE CAPITAL HIGHLIGHTS By Gary Borders

costs related to those immigrants. "Texans should not have to shoulder the burden of financially supporting medical care for illegal immigrants," Abbott said.

Some Democratic lawmakers criticized the order.

State Rep. Gene Wu, D-Austin, posted on X: "Texas has the HIGHEST uninsured healthcare in the nation. Texas has the WORST mental health care in the nation. Texas has one of the worst (mortality) and infant mortality rates in America. But these are the Republicans priorities."

FIVE MORE COUNTIES ADDED TO DISASTER LIST

In the aftermath of Hurricane Beryl, five more Texas counties have been added to the federal disaster list, the governor's office announced.

The counties of Austin, Bowie, Shelby, Trinity and Waller have been added to the list, which already included Brazoria, Chambers, Fort Bend, Galveston, Harris, Jackson, Jasper, Jefferson, Liberty, Montgomery, Matagorda, Nacogdoches, Orange, Polk, Walker, San Jacinto and Wharton counties.

Texans can apply for FEMA disaster assistance at disasterassistance.gov or by calling 800-621-3362.

CARBON MONOXIDE POISONINGS SPIKE IN WAKE OF STORM

Carbon monoxide poisonings rose dramatically in the wake of Hurricane Beryl, with about 400 people ending up in Texas emergency rooms since the storm struck on July 8, The Texas Standard reported. That is the highest number report-

ed since the 2021 winter storm, the Texas Standard reported. Two people died of CO poisoning in Harris County.

CO poisonings caused by widespread power outages are growing more common as climate change causes more extreme weather events, according to scientists.

"Whether you want to blame it on this, that or the other, I don't care. The world is changing. The climate is changing," said Dr. David Perse, Houston's chief medical officer.

SCHOOL ABOUT TO START; WATCH FOR THE KIDDOES

With school about to start, drivers are urged to stay alert and exercise caution in school zones, the Texas Department of Public Transportation advised. School zones can be chaotic, and 748 crashes were reported inside them last year. In addition, 2,523 collisions involving school buses occurred in Texas last year, killing 11 people and injuring 63.

TxDOT has launched its "Be Safe. Drive Smart Back-to-School" campaign in hopes of reducing crashes. The most common causes of crashes are preventable, such as speeding, distracted driving and failure to yield the right of way. Among the tips offered by TxDOT:

- Be aware. Traffic patterns around schools may have changed since last school year.
- Stay alert and put your phone away. Using a handheld electronic device while driving in an active school zone is against the law.
- Stop and yield the right of way to a pedestrian, bicyclist, or other vulnerable road user in a crosswalk. The Lisa Torry Smith Act of 2021 enhanced the penalties for failing to follow the law and protect people in crosswalks. Seriously injuring someone who is lawfully in a crosswalk is now a state jail felony.
- Obey school zone speed limit signs. Remember, traffic fines increase in school zones.
- Know where to go. Drop off and pick up your kids in your school's designated areas, not the middle of the street.
- Be on the lookout. Keep an eye on children gathered at bus stops.
- Watch for children who might dart across the street or between vehicles.

YUP, IT'S HOT IN TEXAS

Exactly how hot is it in the Lone Star State as a heat dome covers much of Texas during these dog days of August? According to the Statesman, our state has the fourth-highest average temperature so far this year, coming in at 65.8 degrees. That might not seem all that hot, but keep in mind it includes temps recorded in January averaged in with that summer heat.

Topping the list of hottest states is Florida, followed by Hawaii and Louisiana, according to data compiled by The Blogler. After Texas comes Georgia, Mississippi and Alabama. Surprisingly, Arizona — even with triple-digit temperatures recorded regularly around Phoenix — is tied for ninth place.

Advertisement for Star Courier newspaper, including contact information for the Barbers Hill, Dayton, and North Channel editions, and details about the publisher and subscription rates.

# FOOTBALL SEASON PREVIEW: Texas, OU move up in class as they enter SEC: Texans hope for 'Super' second season under Ryans

The 2024 college and pro football seasons are right around the corner, and the operative word for both is change.

In the college game, Texas and Oklahoma will begin their first seasons in the SEC after leaving the Big 12 for greener, and I mean greener as in a lot of money, pastures. UT's and OU's arrival brings the SEC to 16 teams. It will be interesting to see how the Longhorns and Sooners fare against the likes of perennial national powers Alabama and Georgia, along with solid programs such as LSU, Tennessee and an up and coming one in Missouri. UT's arrival to the SEC will bring back the annual Texas-Texas A&M rivalry, which is good for the state and good for college football. The last time the 'Horns and Aggies met on the gridiron was in 2011, when Jason Tucker's last-second field goal at Kyle Field produced a 27-25 Texas victory.

The two will meet on Nov. 30 in College Station.

While the SEC has expanded to 16 teams, the Big 12 will also feature a 16-team conference with the addition of Arizona, Arizona State, Colorado and Utah. The Big 10 will be the largest conference in the country with 18 teams as USC, UCLA, Oregon and Washington join the likes of defending national champion Michigan and Ohio State that will form a league that will stretch from the West Coast, the Pacific Northwest to the Midwest and East. Talk about travel headaches!

And while the conference landscapes have taken on a drastic change in three of the four major conferences, so to has the College Football Playoffs. Starting this year, 12 teams will make up the CFP field, with the winners of the ACC, Big 12, Big 10 and SEC earning automatic bids, while the fifth bid will go to the highest ranked Power 5 conference winner. The remaining seven seeds will be determined by the CFP committee. Look for the SEC and Big 10 to have a chance to have as many as three teams make up this year's inaugural 12-team field.

The top four seeds will earn first-round byes. The fifth seed will host the 12th seed on its home field, while the sixth seed hosts the 11th, the seventh seeds hosts the 10th and the eighth seeds hosts the ninth seed.

The first round will be played Dec 20-21. The quarterfinals will be the Fiesta Bowl (Dec. 31), the Peach Bowl (Jan. 1), the Rose Bowl (Jan. 1) and the Sugar Bowl (Jan. 1). The Orange Bowl (Jan. 9) and the Cotton Bowl (Jan. 10) will host the semifinals. The CFP National Title game will be on Monday, Jan. 20 at Mercedes-Benz Stadium in Atlanta.

While the new CFP format and the changes in three of the major conferences will be the big story this year, Alabama fans have a huge void to fill as legendary head coach Nick Saban announced his retirement in January. Saban won six national titles as the Crimson Tide's head coach (he won seven overall by winning it all at LSU). Saban built an amazing program and former Washington head coach Kalen DeBoer has the unenviable task of filling Saban's shoes. DeBoer is a solid coach, as evidenced by the 25-3 record he amassed in two years as the Washington Huskies head coach. Last year, he led the Huskies to the CFP title game, where his team fell to Michigan. Saban left DeBoer plenty of talent, especially quarterback Jalen Milroe (2,834 passing yards, 23 TDs/531 rushing yards, 12 TDs).

Folks in Austin are excited about Steve Sarkisian's fourth year as the Longhorns head coach. Sark led UT to the Big 12 title a year ago, a 12-2 record and a spot in the CFP playoffs, where they fell to Washington. Texas returns eight offensive and five defensive starters (four of the five offensive line starters return). UT will rely heavily on QB Quinn Ewers (3,479 yards, 22 TDs) and wide receivers Isaiah Bond (48 receptions, 668 yards, 4 TDs), a transfer from Alabama, and UH transfer Matthew Golden. The Texas offense suffered a big loss when running back C.J. Baxter sustained a season-ending knee injury in pre-season practice. But UT is high on backup RB Jayden Blue (398 yards, 4 total TDs) who has blazing speed.

Bama returns nine offensive and eight defensive starters, but will field an inexperienced secondary. Milroe will be called on to carry the offensive load while new faces on offense settle in.

Georgia, which enters the season as the No. 1-ranked team in the country, will be looking for its third national title in four years. The Bulldogs return 16 starters,



most notably QB Carson Beck (3,931 yards, 24 TDs). Since 2021, head coach Kirby Smart has led the 'Dawgs to a 42-2 record and you had better believe his team will play with a huge chip on its shoulder after being snubbed for a CFP spot a year ago.

Texas A&M will welcome a new head coach in Mike Elko, who comes over from Duke where he forged a 16-9 record. Elko was former head coach Jimbo Fisher's defensive Coordinator in Aggieland and should be a big asset on that side of the ball. Aggies are hoping QB Conner Weigman stays healthy. The five-star recruit from Bridgeland played just four games a year ago after suffering an ankle injury against Auburn. If he remains healthy, the Ags could be a dark horse in the SEC.

In the Big 12, the University of Houston will welcome a new head coach in Willie Fritz, who comes over from Tulane where he resurrected that program. UH fans hope he will work his magic once again in Htown.

The Big 12 should be a three-team race between Oklahoma State, Kansas State and newcomer Utah. Texas Tech returns a strong core, but must prove it can win on the road, which has been a problem for Joey McGuire's team.

OSU finished 10-4 a year ago and returns QB Alan Bowman (who is playing his seventh season of college football). Bowman passed for 3,460 yards and 15 TDs (with 14 interceptions), but the Cowboys bell cow is running back Ollie Gordon (1,732 yards, 21 TDs/39 receptions, 330 yards, 1 TD).

KSU hopes sophomore QB Avery Johnson (479 passing yards, 5 TDs/296 rushing yards, 7 TDs. Utah gets QB Cameron Rising back, which is bad news for the Big 12. In 2022, Rising passed for 3,034 yards and 26 TDs and ran for another 465 yards and 6 scores. He missed the entire 2023 season with a knee injury and he's back, he could be the best offensive player in his new conference.

The Big 10 should come down to Ohio State and Washington. Michigan lost a load of talent and its head coach Jim Harbaugh, who bolted Ann Arbor for the Los Angeles Chargers.

Look for Notre Dame to land a CFP spot. Third-year head coach Marcus Freeman led the Irish to a 10-3 record last year and welcomed in transfer QB Riley Leonard (1,102 passing yards, 3 TDs/352 rushing yards, 4 TDs in just seven games) from Duke. Freeman has stockpiled a lot of talent in South Bend and it could pay off big time in 2024.

In the NFL, Texans fans are excited for what head coach DeMeco Ryans can accomplish in his second year as the teams head coach. In year 1, Ryans led the Texans to the AFC South title, a Wild Card win over the Browns and an 11-8 record. The Texans went from a three-win team in 2022, to 11 wins a year ago thanks to Ryans and rookie QB sensation C.J. Stroud (4,109 yards, 23 TDs in 15 games). General Manager Nick Caserio brought in more weapons for Stroud by trading for former Cincinnati running back Joe Mixon (1,034 yards, 9 TDs/52 receptions, 376 yards, 3 TDs) and former Buffalo wide receiver Stefon Diggs (107 receptions, 1,183 yards, 8 TDs). The Texans could have the best three wideouts in the NFL with Diggs, Nico Collins (80 receptions, 1,297 yards, 8 TDs) and Tank Dell (47 receptions, 709 yards, 7 TDs in 11 games). Caserio also shored up the defense with the signing of former Minnesota defensive end Danielle Hunter (16.5 sacks). He and Will Anderson (7 sacks), the Defensive Rookie of the Year, should give the Texans' opponents fits off of the edge.

Jacksonville should contend with the Texans in the AFC South. QB Trevor Lawrence (4,016 yards, 21 TDs/14 interceptions) signed a huge contract in the offseason and now must live up to it. We shall see.

The road through the AFC, though, still goes through Kansas City, which won its second straight Super Bowl a year ago and has appeared in four of the last five big games. As long as Patrick Mahomes (4,183 yards, 27 TDs), tight end Travis Kelce (93 receptions, 984 yards, 5 TDs) and head coach Andy Reid are around, the Chiefs are still the team to beat in the AFC.

Look for Cincinnati and QB Joe Burrow (2,309 yards, 15 TDs in 10 games) and wide receiver Ja'Mar Chase (100 receptions, 1,216 yards, 7 TDs) and Baltimore to duke it out in the AFC North, which might be the toughest division in the NFL. Cleveland and Pittsburgh will also be in the hunt. Baltimore QB Lamar Jackson (3,678 passing yards, 24 TDs/821 rushing yards, 5 TDs) must prove he can get his team to the big game, and the addition of running back Derrick Henry from Tennessee (1,167 yards, 12 TDs) should be a big boon to the Jackson and the offense.

The AFC East should be interesting. Buffalo lost its two wide receivers in Diggs and Gabe Davis, but returns star QB Josh Allen (4,306 passing yards, 29 TDs/524 rushing yards, 15 TDs), while the Dolphins should have one of the top offenses in the league led by QB Tua Tagovailoa (4,624 yards, 29 TDs), running back Raheem Mostert (1,012 yards, 21 total TDs) and big-play wide receivers Tyreek Hill (119 receptions, 1,799 yards, 13 TDs) and Jalen Waddle (72 receptions, 1,014 yards, 4 TDs).

The AFC West will look much different now that New England head coach Bill Belichick has parted ways with the Pats. Belichick won six Super Bowls as he teamed with Tom Brady and won 333 games. Maybe he sits out a year and returns, say in Dallas in 2025?

In the NFL, the 49ers are the reigning conference champs and look loaded once again led by QB Brock Purdy (4,280 yards, 31 TDs), running back Christian McCaffrey (1,459 rushing yards, 14 TDs/67 receptions, 564 yards, 7 TDs) and tight end George Kittle (65 receptions, 1,020 yards, 6 TDs). If disgruntled wide receiver Brandon Aiyuk (75 receptions, 1,342 yards, 7 TDs) remains with the team (he's asked for a trade), SF should be the team to beat once again the NFC.

Dallas finished 12-5 a year ago, but were embarrassed at home in the first round of the playoffs by Green Bay. QB Dak Prescott (4,516 yards, 36 TDs) had one of his best seasons, but Dallas lost starting running back Tony Pollard to Tennessee and star wide receiver CeeDee Lamb (135 receptions, 1,749 yards, 12 TDs) wants a new contract and held out of training camp. Cowboy fans hope owner Jerry Jones comes to his senses and pays him what he's worth.

The Eagles lost six of their last seven games a year ago, but shored up the running game with the signing of former Giants running back Saquon Barkley (962 yards, 10 total TDs). He should make a nice one-two punch with QB Jalen Hurts (3,858 yards, 23 TDs/605 rushing yards, 12 TDs), along with big-play wide receivers A.J. Brown (106 receptions, 1,456 yards, 7 TDs) and DeVonta Smith (81 receptions, 1,006 yards, 7 TDs).

Look for Detroit and Green Bay to battle it out for the NFC North title. The Lions finished 12-5 a year ago and are loaded on offense led by QB Jared Goff (4,575 yards, 30 TDs), running backs David Montgomery (1,015 yards, 13 TDs) and Jahmyr Gibbs (945 yards, 10 TDs) and wide receiver Amon-Ra St. Brown (119 yards, 1,515 yards, 10 TDs). The Packers rallied in the second half of the season to earn a playoff spot thanks to QB Jordan Love (4,159 yards, 32 TDs) and improved on offense by signing running back Josh Jacobs (805 yards, 6 TDs).

The AFC South should be interesting. Atlanta improved by signing former Vikings QB Kirk Cousins and they are hoping second-year running back Bijan Robinson (976 rushing yards, 4 TDs/58 receptions, 487 yards, 4 TDs) has a breakout season. TB won the division a year ago behind QB Baker Mayfield (4,044 yards, 28 TDs) and big-play wide receiver Mike Evans (79 receptions, 1,255 yards, 13 TDs).

The 2024 season will feature seven new head coaches as Harbaugh takes over the Chargers, Raheem Morris takes over the Falcons, Dave Canales is the new head coach in Carolina, Jerod Mayo replaces Belichick in New England, Mike McDonald is the new head man in Seattle, Brian Callahan is in charge in Tennessee and Dan Quinn is the new head coach in Washington.

Super Bowl 59 will be played

on Sunday, Feb. 9 in New Orleans at the Caesar's Superdome.

So, here is one man's picks for the upcoming college and pro seasons:

## COLLEGE

**BIG 12**  
OKLAHOMA STATE OVER UTAH

**BIG 10**  
OHIO STATE OVER WASHINGTON

**ACC**  
CLEMSON OVER SMU

**SEC**  
GEORIGIA OVER ALABAMA

**CFP PLAYOFF TEAMS**  
GEORGIA, ALABAMA, NOTRE DAME, CLEMSON, OKLAHOMA STATE, OHIO STATE, LSU, TEXAS, MISSOURI,

WASHINGTON, MISSISSIPPI AND PENN STATE

**CFP TITLE GAME**  
GEORGIA OVER NOTRE DAME

## NFL

**AFC SOUTH**  
HOUSTON

**AFC NORTH**  
CINCINNATI

**AFC EAST**  
MIAMI

**AFC WEST**  
KANSAS CITY

**AFC WILD CARD TEAMS**  
JACKSONVILLE, BALTIMORE, AND NEW YORK JETS

**AFC TITLE GAME**

KANSAS CITY OVER HOUSTON

**NFC EAST**  
PHILADELPHIA

**NFC SOUTH**  
ATLANTA

**NFC NORTH**  
GREEN BAY

**NFC WEST**  
SAN FRANCISCO

**NFC WILD CARD TEAMS**  
DALLAS, LOS ANGELES RAMS AND DETROIT

**NFC TITLE GAME**  
GREEN BAY OVER SAN FRANCISCO

**SUPER BOWL 58**  
KANSAS CITY OVER GREEN BAY

## NOTICE OF PUBLIC HEARING ON TAX INCREASE

A tax rate of \$0.050000 per \$100 valuation has been proposed by the governing body of HARRIS COUNTY EMERGENCY SERVICES DISTRICT NO. 80.

PROPOSED TAX RATE	\$0.050000 per \$100
NO-NEW-REVENUE TAX RATE	\$0.046562 per \$100
VOTER-APPROVAL TAX RATE	\$0.079841 per \$100
DE MINIMIS TAX RATE	\$0.091547 per \$100

The no-new-revenue tax rate is the tax rate for the 2024 tax year that will raise the same amount of property tax revenue for Harris County Emergency Services District No. 80 from the same properties in both the 2023 tax year and the 2024 tax year.

The voter-approval rate is the highest tax rate that Harris County Emergency Services District No. 80 may adopt without holding an election to seek voter approval of the rate.

The de minimis rate is the rate equal to the sum of the no-new-revenue maintenance and operations rate for Harris County Emergency Services District No. 80, the rate that will raise \$500,000, and the current debt rate for Harris County Emergency Services District No. 80.

The proposed tax rate is greater than the no-new-revenue tax rate. This means that Harris County Emergency Services District No. 80 is proposing to increase property taxes for the 2024 tax year.

**A PUBLIC HEARING ON THE PROPOSED TAX RATE WILL BE HELD ON AUGUST 26, 2024, AT 6:30 PM AT 123 S. DIAMONDHEAD BLVD., CROSBY, TX 77532.**

**HARRIS COUNTY EMERGENCY SERVICES DISTRICT NO. 80 SHALL TAKE ACTION ON THE PROPOSED TAX RATE ON AUGUST 26, 2024, AT 6:30 PM., FOLLOWING THE HEARING TO BE HELD.**

The proposed tax rate is not greater than the voter-approval tax rate. As a result, Harris County Emergency Services District No. 80 is not required to hold an election at which voters may accept or reject the proposed tax rate. However, you may express your support for or opposition to the proposed tax rate by contacting Harris County Emergency Services District No. 80 at their offices or by attending the public hearing mentioned above.

**YOUR TAXES OWED UNDER ANY OF THE RATES MENTIONED ABOVE CAN BE CALCULATED AS FOLLOWS:**

Property tax amount=(tax rate) x (taxable value of your property)/100

The members of the governing body voted on the proposal to consider the tax increase as follows:

<b>FOR</b> the proposal:	<b>Raymond St. Julian</b> <b>Randy Foster</b> <b>Chuck Murray</b> <b>Buddy Brewer</b>
<b>AGAINST</b> the proposal:	<b>None</b>
<b>PRESENT</b> and not voting:	<b>None</b>
<b>ABSENT:</b>	<b>Derek Elkins</b>

Visit [Texas.gov/PropertyTaxes](https://www.texas.gov/PropertyTaxes) to find a link to your local property tax database on which you can easily access information regarding your property taxes, including information about proposed tax rates and scheduled public hearings of each entity that taxes your property.

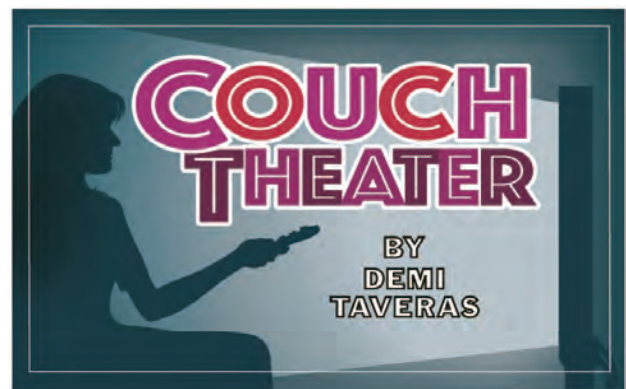
The 86th Texas Legislature modified the manner in which the voter-approval tax rate is calculated to limit the rate of growth of property taxes in the state.

The following table compares the taxes imposed on the average residence homestead by Harris County Emergency Services District No. 80 last year to the taxes proposed to be imposed on the average residence homestead by Harris County Emergency Services District No. 80 this year.

	2023	2024	Change
<b>Total tax rate (per \$100 of value)</b>	\$0.050000	\$0.050000	increase of 0.000000 per \$100, or 0.00%
<b>Average homestead taxable value</b>	\$182,914	\$190,298	increase of 7,384, or 4.04%
<b>Tax on average homestead</b>	\$91.46	\$95.15	increase of 3.69, or 4.03%
<b>Total tax levy on all properties</b>	\$1,539,063	\$1,691,404	increase of 152,341, or 9.90%

For assistance with tax calculations, please contact Coveler & Peeler, district counsel for Harris County Emergency Services District No. 80 at 713-984-8222 or [adkins@coveler.com](mailto:adkins@coveler.com), or visit [www.hcesd80.org](http://www.hcesd80.org) for more information.





Martin Lawrence, left, and Will Smith star in "Bad Boys: Ride or Die."

"Bad Boys: Ride or Die"

"BAD BOYS: RIDE OR DIE" (R) — The fourth installment of the "Bad Boys" franchise is out now to rent on streaming, following its \$398 million gross at the box office, and it seems that Will Smith gets to put an ugly chapter of his career behind him, thanks to the success of the film! Of course, Smith couldn't stage his comeback as Detective Mike Lowrey without Martin Lawrence, who reprises his role as his partner Detective Marcus Burnett. Alexander Ludwig ("The Hunger Games"), Paola Nunez ("Resident Evil"), and Vanessa Hudgens ("Downtown Owl") round out the rest of the cast, whose characters' quips are the strongest elements in a film severely lacking in story and sense. Don't think too hard with this one; just enjoy the ride. (Amazon Prime Video)

and the late Angus Cloud ("Euphoria"). In the film, six criminals are tasked with kidnapping a 12-year-old girl named Abigail in exchange for a \$50 million ransom from her father. To a bunch of seasoned criminals, their mission seems easy enough, but when they suddenly start dropping like flies in the most brutal ways, they're forced to ask the question: "Who did we really kidnap?" The film received mostly positive reviews from critics, who deemed it one of the best horror movies of the year. Out now. (Peacock)

"BAD MONKEY" (TV-MA) — Based on the novel of the same name by Carl Hiaasen, this drama series stars the smart-mouthed Vince Vaughn ("Curb Your Enthusiasm") as former police detective Andrew Yancy. Due to his "reckless, inappropriate and glib" nature, Andrew was moved from detective work to restaurant inspections, but he still desires more out of his work life. So, when his police detective buddy, Rogelio, offers him a chance to drive a deceased man's arm to Miami, Andrew gladly obliges. But upon delivering the arm to the deceased man's widow, Andrew has a hunch that the widow

"ABIGAIL" (R) — Mexican actress Melissa Barrera ("Scream VI") is an established "scream queen," even with her being fired from the "Scream" franchise due to her pro-Palestinian views on the Israel-Hamas war. So, Barrera clearly was the perfect candidate to lead this horror comedy, which also co-stars Dan Stevens ("Beauty and the Beast"), Kathryn Newton ("Lisa Frankenstein"),

isn't exactly grieving as much as she portrays. As every good detective knows, you have to follow the trail while it's hot. The first two episodes are out now, with subsequent episodes releasing every Wednesday. (Apple TV+)

"IMMACULATE" (R) — Sydney Sweeney ("Anyone but You") leads this terrifying horror film available now on streaming. Sweeney plays Sister Cecilia, a young novice who survived a drowning after being pronounced dead. Believing that God saved her to serve a future purpose, she decides to take up an invitation to join a convent in Italy that tends to dying nuns. While she's there, Cecilia takes her final vows to become a nun but is shocked to find out shortly afterward that she is pregnant as a result of an immaculate conception. As those in the convent start treating her like the new Virgin Mary, abnormal occurrences begin to take place. Could this blessing really be a curse in disguise? (Hulu)

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Kids Kicking Cancer,

CONTINUED FROM PAGE 1

ly reaching out, providing help, monetarily, spiritually, and emotionally for us," he said.

He and his wife, Brooke, got to work organizing a fundraiser and created Kids Kicking Cancer. Just novices that first year at fundraising, they were able to hit an incredible \$117,000.

In their third year, they are hoping to continue to grow that amount and reach out to other kids who have cancer in their eyes.

"We were back and forth working with an ocularist to get him fitted with prosthetic eyes," his dad said. The cost was between \$4,000 and \$5,000 each, but he felt lucky to have insurance that helped him pay for them.

"Some insurances do not pay for kids' eyes, and we were just taken back. What happens? They don't get an eye, and they go around with a clear plastic piece in their eye that does not look like an eye. It just looks like a big, old clear contact, and you can see the tissue of the eye where the implant is," he said. "It's not aesthetical-

ly pleasing especially for a kid that has to go to school and look like that."

McCauley said they pivoted to start paying for prosthetic eyes for kids.

"We reached out to our own ocularist, he was excited about it and told us if we were going to do that, he would knock off 40 percent of the bill," McCauley said.

The office began screening patients for financial consideration and their first patient to qualify was a kid from Guatemala.

"He had been fitted for an eye when he was five years old in Guatemala, but at 14, he still had the same eye which didn't fit. Having to go to a public school and be around friends and looking different, it wasn't fun for him, so we helped him out," McCauley said.

They have since discovered that they weren't the only organization helping kids with prosthetic eyes.

"We were the only one in Houston, in Texas, and in the U.S.!" he said.

Now doctors are seeking them out and they have assisted 21 kids in the last

couple of years.

The Crosby Fair and Rodeo grounds will be turned into a fundraising machine for the kids with a light schedule on Friday night, Aug. 23 (no cover charge) with cornhole tournament beginning at 6:30, barbecue Calcutta at 7 p.m. and a concert at 8 p.m.

Aug. 24, Saturday at 10 a.m. is the kids barbecue cookoff, cornhole tournament at 10:30 a.m., a Show-N-Shine Car Show at noon, Mutton bustin' and Hill Country Jane at 4 p.m., an awards presentation at 5 p.m., live auction at 5:30 p.m., and concert at 7 p.m. with Wayne Toups. The cover charge for Saturday events is \$20 for adults, \$10 for kids or free kid admission with new toy (valued at \$10), and kids 5 and under get in for free.

Join Warriors for West and support Kids Kicking Cancer at 800 Church St., Crosby, TX 77532.

For more information on the fundraiser, visit <https://addisfaith.org/kidskickingcancer>.

CUIC Expansion,

CONTINUED FROM PAGE 1

through the next six months.

"Never would I have ever believed that I would find myself in this position," Lockwood said gratefully, "but it is going to be fun working with people whose vision is aligned with my same values."

Lockwood comes by the ministry work from her grandfather and parents.

"My grandfather retired from Exxon," she said, "and he was looking for something to do. He found his niche at CUIC."

When Thomas "TJ" Denson volunteered, Exxon would match his hours with a grant and with it, he was able to get the freezers that helped them start the food pantry.

Her mom Dee Ann, a retired Crosby ISD teacher, is also a regular volunteer at the charity. She oversees the toys that come in through donations.

Lockwood worked in a juvenile detention center following graduation from college, and then a stint at

the Star of Hope, and then KMCO in Crosby until they closed their doors and reorganized.

While she was unemployed, she found what she thought might be her lifetime legacy working at a youth camp in Colorado, but when that didn't work out, she returned home to seek God's will.

"My heart has always been in social work and helping others. I am, exactly where God wants me to be," she said.

She has background working with the homeless ministry at First Baptist Church in Crosby for a season, and now she feels like God has been preparing her for this ministry.

"She walked in one day (to volunteer at CUIC) and I asked her how the job hunt was coming," Ellisor said, and she hadn't found anything, but she ended her conversation with Ellisor by telling her, "My heart is so here."

It was the key that Ellisor and the board want-

ed to hear.

"She has phenomenal skills to help us including working with the computer," Ellisor said.

Lockwood went to school at Crosby and grew up here until 1983 when she moved to Humble and graduated from there. She went to Sam Houston State University and earned a degree in corrections and criminology.

Meeting obligations at home was tough on the juvenile detention center salary as a single mom so she pivoted and went to work for KMCO for 24 years before the reorganization of the company.

While she was laid off, she was encouraged to come down to CUIC and volunteer. The rest is history.

"They had a need. I had a need, and it just happened to be that could help meet their need," she said.

As for now, Lockwood said her first objective is to look for more volunteer help to handle the increas-

ing demand of clothing, toys, and other donations.

"They've been around for a long time, so I don't see changing a lot of procedures. They're a very well-organized machine. I'll be out in the community trying to find more volunteers and organizations to come in and give us a hand," she said.

Next Saturday, August 17, is National Thrift Store Day and Lockwood said they plan on celebrating the event from 10 a.m. to 2 p.m. with plenty of blue light specials throughout the day in all departments.

Want to volunteer? Call Lockwood at the office from Tuesday to Saturday after 9 a.m. at 281-328-3178 or visit their Facebook page at HYPERLINK "https://www.facebook.com/churchesunitedincaring/" <https://www.facebook.com/churchesunitedincaring/>

ENTERTAINMENT

Amber Waves



Weekly SUDOKU by Linda Thistle

HOCUS-FOCUS by Henry Boltinoff

August 19, 2024 Posting Date King Crossword

Crossword grid and clues (ACROSS, DOWN)

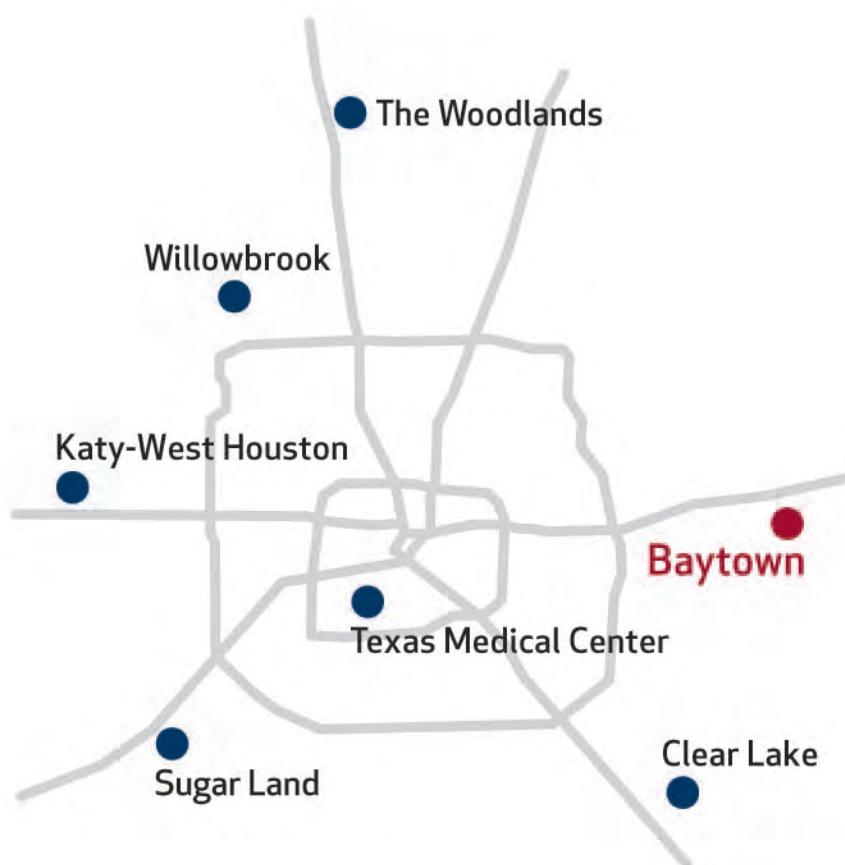
Trivia test by Fifi Rodriguez



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