



ROTARY WASHER TOURNAMENT
SATURDAY APRIL 14
DETAILS AT LEFT

HIGHLANDS CROSBY

Star  Courier

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IN THE STARS

Newport MUD needs New Bond to solve Aging Infrastructure

Mei Hoffman opens new Art Studio Saturday September 14

Mei Hoffman will open her new Art Studio and Gallery, Saturday Sept. 14 from 12 noon to 6pm at the Silos at Sawyer Yards, Studio #113, 1502 Sawyer Street Between I-10 and Washington Street. Exit Taylor Street exit on I-10. PUBLIC INVITED. ART ON DISPLAY.

Rotary Washer Tournery 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.

Contact Gay Lynn Prescott Millhorn gaylynn@yourtxhome.com to enter or for info.

Crosby Historical Society Opening September 21

CROSBY HISTORICAL: The Crosby Historical Society hosts its official Grand Opening on Sept. 21, 2024, at 10 a.m. 5712 Pecan Street, Crosby, 77532. Additional parking is available in the First Baptist Church parking lot across the street from the museum with handicapped parking on 706 Runneburg Road.

Refreshments will be provided by Sterling-White Funeral Home. The museum will be open until 3 p.m.

For more info, contact Donna Davenport at 281-731-7010.

By David Taylor
Managing Editor

A report from Lockwood, Andrews, and Newnam (LAN) engineers to the Newport Municipal Utility District (MUD) details considerably more damage to the aging water and sewer lines in the Newport subdivision, and the replacement of at least two large ticket items that will need to be addressed sooner than later to meet requirements from the Texas Commission on Environmental Quality standards. The cost of the repairs on the 40-plus year old system is estimated at \$109 million.



This homeowner's sanitary sewer service is exposed and the workers are reconnecting it to the new sanitary sewer line. Work on the lines throughout the district are constant. (Photo by David Taylor)

Margarette Chasteen, president of the board, said that there would be a meeting in the next few weeks with board members and a number of community members who could see for themselves the issues facing the MUD district.

"The new capital improvement plan (CIP) details the increased costs of the repairs that have gone up exponentially since the pandemic," she said. It was unexpected since there was more damage than previously expected.

"The first CIP we had was based on our sewer lines being dug at eight feet," which is typical, she said. Most residential sewer line pipe depths range from as shallow as 18 to 30 inches in depth to 5-6 feet deep.

"Ours are actually buried at 10 feet so that means an increased cost there."

There was also the general assumption made by most contractors that composite materials and the time they have been in the ground could mean up to 30 percent re-

pair and replacement in damaged water and sewer lines.

"That has born out to be more along the lines of closer to 50 percent and those costs added together will be huge," she lamented.

Chasteen said the board had invited an engineering team to look over the entire system and provide for them an assessment or a capital improvement plan (CIP) to sustain the district's infrastructure.

Ultimately, they will go out for a bond authorization to pay for the work. A

Continued. See NEWPORT MDU AGING, Page 5

Crosby ISD Welcomes 7000th Student as Enrollment and Community Engagement Surge

Hello East Harris C. and Crosby ISD families,

Happy Fall, y'all! September is typically the time we start to turn the page from summer to autumn. If you're like me, you're looking forward to refreshing mornings, lower humidity, and the season of pumpkin spice everything.

Let's fall right into district happenings!

On Tuesday, September 3, we welcomed the 7000th student to Crosby ISD! London Elliott and her two brothers, Cannon and Ja'kari, are brand new to the district. I stopped by Newport Elementary School to welcome London to the 4th grade. Principal Price showed London and her younger brother to their classrooms. It was a



Paula Patterson
Crosby Superintendent

delight to meet the entire Elliott family, and thank them for entrusting their children with us. As I reflect on the 7000 milestone, I realize enrollment was 6,294 students when I became Superintendent of Schools on April 8, 2021. That's 706 additional students in the last three years. As we say, Crosby ISD is the place to be! The population boom is exact-

ly why we're expanding Crosby High School and beginning the process of planning a new, second middle school.

In the classroom, our focus on "write a little a lot" is surging into every subject. Teachers ask students to recap their literary lesson for the day or explain how they solve equations. For instance, Ms. Madeline Downs asked her math class at Crosby Middle School to write the following: "How do you convert between fractions, decimals, and percents?" Each student had to start their writing assignment with "To change a fraction to a decimal I have to..." and followed it with explanations in four easy steps. It's exciting to see our instructors put their own creative



Mr. Clarence Howell, owner of Marco's Pizza in Crosby, is the first "Business Partner of the Month" in Crosby ISD. He's pictured with Barrett Elementary School Principal Ornelas and Superintendent Patterson. The district invites local employers and employees to volunteer on our campuses by reading to students, helping at breakfast or lunch, and even handling car rider duty.

stamp on our 24-25 initiative. "Writing a little a lot" is sparking great academic conversations. It also enhances our students' critical thinking skills by putting what they learned that day into their own words.

We are strengthening

our ties with the business communities in Crosby / Barrett Station. The Board of Trustees and I have started a new recognition this year to honor business partners. We invite local

Continued. See CROSBY SUPERINTENDENT, Page 7

STUDIO opening



MEI HOFFMAN & FRIENDS **SEP. 14, 2024**
12-6 PM
The Silos at Sawyer Yards
Studio #113
1502 Sawyer Street
Houston, TX 77007

Arkema to host settlement meetings

By David Taylor
Managing Editor

CROSBY – Just weeks after a Federal District Court for the Southern District of Texas entered the final order establishing the remediation program for cleanup from damage caused during the Hurricane Harvey incident at Arkema, settlement administrators will be hosting several town halls in Crosby.

"It's important to know that the settlement area is within the 7-mile radi-

us of the plant," said settlement administrator Ed Gentle.

Letters and post cards have been sent to the presumed homeowners and businesses within the 7-mile radius and residents are asked to attend a town hall meeting at the David H. McNeerney American Legion Hall Post 658, 14890 FM 2100, where they will describe the property testing and clean-up program.

"We will explain to everyone the settlement, how it works, and assist

them in filling out their paperwork as well," Gentle said. The meetings begin early and last late to give everyone an opportunity to visit before or after work if necessary.

Meetings are planned all next week beginning on Monday, September 16 through Thursday, September 19.

Residents who have already received a letter or postcard are believed to have one or more properties within the affected area and could be eligible for the settlement and

cleanup.

In a letter sent to potential claimants, a claim was attached that must be filled out for that particular property to be entitled to be part of the program and the incentive payment for a real property that qualifies for testing, subject to monies being available, as well as testing of the house, commercial structure, or soil for dioxin.

Any of the claimants

Continued. See Arkema Settlement Meetings, Page 2



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FREE COMMUNITY SHRED DAY AND FOOD DRIVE
SATURDAY, SEPTEMBER 21ST, 2024 | 9:00 A.M. - 1:00 P.M.
HWY 146, 8010 N. HIGHWAY 146 | BAYTOWN, TX 77523
MAXIMUM LIMIT OF 4 LEGAL/LETTER-SIZE BOXES



PLEASE VISIT CRUCU.ORG FOR MORE DETAILS

GOOSE CREEK CISD NEWS



LETTER FROM THE SUPERINTENDENT | DR. RANDAL O'BRIEN

Back in The Saddle and ready to Ride!



Hello, 2024-2025! We did it; we've kicked off the school year in a GIANT way! I want to extend my appreciation to our dedicated teachers and staff at Goose Creek CISD. Your hard work and commitment have, once again, ensured a smooth and successful start to a promising new school year.

This year, we are focused on providing the very best educational opportunities for our families, while also confronting a major concern that affects every district in Texas. A pending lawsuit regarding the release of accountability scores has cast a shadow of doubt over

many districts across Texas, including ours. These scores, which are intended to reflect the quality of education we provide, have been deemed unfair and inequitable, as the way the test is scored has once again been altered, this time using Artificial Intelligence. Numerous people have been closely monitoring the situation and are prepared to advocate for fairness and accuracy. Research has long since proven that letter grades assigned to a campus and or district may not be reflective of the hard work or quality of instruction provided by our teachers, as much as it aligns with a neighborhood's socioeconomic status. Our motto of "developing the whole child" is a way of life that we have fully embraced. The broad array of course selections are student driven through our parent meetings and student surveys. We also invite local businesses to sit on steering committees which provides the lens of future needs for our community.

In addition to this challenge, we are still dealing with the ongoing issue of state funding for public education. Despite the inflationary pressures that have driven costs up some 20% across the nation, our state's basic allotment per pupil funding remains the same at \$6,160 per child, a number that has not changed since 2019. The cost of educating our students has risen significantly, especially in the aftermath of COVID-19, and resulted in a shortfall of the state's constitutional obligation to educate its citizenry, as it was designed to do.

The 88th legislative update on school funding claims to have funded each student at the rate of nearly \$15,000 per pupil. There has been a politician or two who've used this report to claim Texas has increased funding. However, these inflated projections have clearly included federal monies – such as temporary ESSER funds, federal free lunch funds, prison system funds and the like, which have nothing to do with teacher pay, classroom instruction, program support or state funding. Most legislative mandates are either unfunded or grossly underfunded. This shortfall places an additional burden on our district, making it even more challenging to provide the quality education our students need and deserve. Speaking on behalf of our district, I can share that we have tightened our belts and streamlined all of our systems in place, while being mindful of the essential needs of our community throughout the process.

One way that our families and teachers can help with our tightened budget would be through increased attendance. Fewer absences for teachers would not only improve instructional delivery but also reduce the need for substitute teachers, a costly venture. Improved student attendance would increase state funding, as our state is one of only eight in the nation that still does not fund schools by student enrollment, but rather only if the student is present. It is one way the state is able to keep about 5% +/- of funding from all schools in Texas, although we do not send teachers home, or turn off the electricity when students do not attend school. Our budget costs are built around a quality education for all students.

To further clarify, my concerns with vouchers are not based upon competition, but rather academic accountability and financial responsibility. One must take a look at the lack of oversight in place for private, charter and voucher schools. According to their website, "TEA does not have oversight of private schools or vocational schools in Texas. The Texas Private School Accreditation Commission (TEPSAC) and the International Association for Learner Driven Schools (IALDS) provide information for private schools." (TEA, 2024) After taking a closer look into TEPSAC, I found that private schools are not required to provide information or transparency regarding registration, licensing, or approval of any kind. Accreditation is optional in Texas (TEPSAC, 2024). Perhaps if alternative schools of choice were required to follow the same rigid requirements as public schools, it would be a fair and balanced consideration to provide them the same tax dollars our public education funds were purposed for. Or perhaps, to flip that script, we could reduce the intense scrutiny of our public schools through eliminating the use of the almost \$100 million annual cost of the STAAR exam and all the irregularities associated with using it as the end all, be all, measuring stick for public schools over the last decade!

Despite all these challenges, I remain optimistic. Our incredible students and amazing teachers and families who we are blessed to work with, here in Goose Creek America, provide us our purpose! I am always available to meet with any of our citizens, including elected officials, to discuss ways that we may work together to best serve our respective communities in this great state. Here's to another successful school year, filled with learning, growth and accomplishment. Together, we will navigate these difficult times and continue to do our best to grow our Giants into successful, responsible citizens!

Arkema Settlement Meetings Scheduled,

CONTINUED FROM PAGE 1

can attend any day, however, they have suggested particular days by alphabetical order.

To be eligible for the program, all claim forms must be fully completed and submitted with the necessary documentation by Nov. 18, according to the letter.

Gentle said attendance at the town hall meetings is not required and will not affect real property or homeowners claims or eligibility for the program in any fashion.

Here's the list of town hall dates:

TOWN HALL MEETINGS
Monday, September 16, 2024
9:00AM - 12:00PM

2:00PM - 5:00PM
6:00PM - 8:00PM
Last names beginning with letters A – G

Tuesday, September 17, 2024
9:00AM - 12:00PM
2:00PM - 5:00PM
6:00PM - 8:00PM
Last names beginning with letters H – N

Wednesday, September 18, 2024
9:00AM - 12:00PM
2:00PM - 5:00PM
6:00PM - 8:00PM
Last names beginning with letters O – Z

Thursday, September 19, 2024
9:00AM - 12:00PM
2:00PM - 5:00PM
6:00PM - 8:00PM

Make Up Day – Anyone can come to Meeting

Gentle said he would give a brief presentation on the program at the beginning of each town hall meeting.

"After my presentation, my staff and I will help you complete claim forms for your house or property," he said.

For more information, call between 8:30 A.M. and 5 P.M. Central Time at 1-855-711-2079 or visit their website at HYPERLINK "http://www.arkemasettlement.com". They can also be reached by email at settlement@crosbyharveysettlement.com.

Culturally Relevant Books: Discussing Children's Literacy

By: Kenia Peña, Student PR Squad Member



Student Kenia Pena PR squad Member

As the back-to-school season approaches, it is natural for parents to become increasingly anxious about their children's linguistic proficiency. Now more than ever, citizens claim America is in a literacy crisis. U.S. reports show a decline in functional literacy, but as a current Texas high school student, I notice competence and encouragement in the language arts.

According to the National Assessment of Educational Progress, only 36% of fourth-grade students in the United States are proficient in literacy. Similarly, the National Center for Education Statistics reports that only 57% of adults in the United States have proficient reading and writing skills. When addressing these worrying reports, parents and educators tend to blame teaching methods and technology.

Educators in the United States argue that the decrease in linguistic proficiency is a result of the lack of phonics, a scientific teaching method that connects sounds to letters to help individuals learn how to read. In the state of Texas, however, local educational agencies (LEAs) are required to use a phonics curriculum in kindergarten through third grade to ensure all students obtain

grams and services to enhance English skills. This includes the newly launched Beanstack app, which serves as a reading tracker.

Despite their attempts, schools and teachers have very little control over building the habit of reading. A love for literature must be cultivated in the household. The United Nations Children's Fund (UNICEF) states: "Making reading an enjoyable part of your child's life starts with incorporating books into your daily routine." I strongly encourage parents and children to explore the diverse catalog of our local public libraries together.

Students usually do not enjoy assigned books. Children who have a choice of what book they read are more likely to enjoy reading. Though students may appear uninterested in literature, this is likely due to the lack of content variety. For this reason, children should read works of various genres and authors outside of school hours.

Literature is the backbone of our society and fundamental to every scholar, regardless of educational plans. Culturally relevant books are newly published, and classics continue to prove their significance. The American literary crisis can be fought, one book at a time.

the necessary early English skills. Goose Creek CISD is no exception, as its educators utilize scientific reading methods.

Many parents believe that their children's reliance on technology hinders their English abilities. On the contrary, access to technology provides opportunities. GCCISD is a 1:1 district with multiple Apple Distinguished schools, which means the district's students are provided with iPads to enhance learning. These iPads offer unlimited eBooks provided by our local public libraries. With the simple use of your library card, you can access nearly any book digitally. Furthermore, many of the apps found on these devices offer text-to-speech services, allowing children to see text and hear it simultaneously, thus enhancing reading comprehension.

To address declining reading assessment performance rates, GCCISD has implemented several pro-

GCCISD Police Updates: Promotions, New Faces, and a Bright Future Ahead!

The Goose Creek CISD Police and Security Department is celebrating two recent events that highlight the department's dedication to excellence and community service.

Security Officer Mason has been promoted to Security Sergeant. Sgt. Mason has been an integral part of the GCCISD community for over a decade, contributing his extensive knowledge and experience to ensure a safe and secure environment. His promotion was marked by a special ceremony where Interim Chief K. Bonsal presented him with his well-deserved chevrons. Sgt. Mason's commitment and exemplary service make him a deserving recipient of this new role.

In addition to celebrating Sgt. Mason's achievement, the district is excited to welcome Police Officer K. King to the team. Officer King



Bonsal- Interim Chief Bonsal presents Sergeant Mason with his chevrons

was sworn in on August 26, 2024, by Interim Chief K. Bonsal, marking the beginning of a new chapter in his distinguished career. With over 30 years of policing experience, Officer King brings a wealth of expertise and a deep understanding of law enforcement. Notably, his appointment is a unique full-circle moment, as he previously succeeded

Interim Chief Bonsal as Sergeant when Bonsal retired from Pasadena PD in 2006. Now, 18 years later, Officer King is sworn in by his predecessor, highlighting a legacy of excellence and mentorship within the police force.

Congratulations to Sgt. Mason and Officer King on their remarkable achievements.



Bonsal- Interim Chief Bonsal presents Sergeant Mason with his chevrons King- Interim Chief Bonsal swears in Police Office King

You can read the Star-Courier current and back issues on our website: www.starcouriernews.com

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Dayton

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THURSDAY, SEPTEMBER 12, 2024

MONT BELVIEU, TEXAS 77580

ON THE HILL

Mont Belvieu Stay Informed With MBTX Extra



Missing out on the latest City news or events? We've got you covered! Inside your utility bill, you'll find all the community highlights and upcoming events with our MBTX Extra newsletter. If you don't receive a physical bill, no worries - you can still catch the monthly issue online at www.montbelvieu.net/newsletter.

Baytown Unveils 'Project Vector' Sports Facility Plan

Ryan Walsh, CEO of the Harris County Sports and Convention Corporation (HSCC), presented "Project Vector" to the Baytown City Council, a proposed sports facility aiming to enhance the city's appeal and quality of life. The project, still in the preliminary stages, involves an interlocal agreement between Baytown and HSCC to leverage the corporation's expertise. Walsh provided examples of similar facilities across the U.S., emphasizing that Project Vector would bring regional benefits and potentially attract visitors. City Manager Jason Reynolds was asked about where the project Vector Facility might be constructed in Baytown.

"We do not know at this point. We have things lined up," Reynolds said. "We've done roughly two years of due diligence at this point. We are having a feasibility study to show the concept is viable. That will be able to support the vision."

The Project still with further studies and budget planning ongoing. The project is part of a broader vision, supported by funds from a 2022 tax abatement deal with ExxonMobil, though rumors of a professional sports team moving to Baytown were dismissed.

Jefferson County Bar Offers Free Legal Clinic for Veterans on Sept. 14

The Jefferson County Bar Association is hosting a free legal advice clinic for veterans and spouses of deceased veterans.

Date: Saturday, September 14, 2024

Time: 9:00 - 11:30 a.m.

Location: Lumberton Fire and EMS

Volunteer attorneys will be on-site to provide brief, free legal advice to all attending veterans. This is a great opportunity



to get the legal guidance you need at no cost. Appointments are strongly encouraged to ensure consultation.

Walk-ins will be addressed as time and resources allow. To schedule an appointment, contact the JCBA at their number or via email veteran@jcba.org.

The eligibility guidelines allow for veterans to have income up to 200% above the poverty level and qualify.

Questions or concerns? Call the Jefferson County Bar Association at 409-839-2332.

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THOUGHTS FROM HILLSIDE CHURCH

By Dr. Mark Trice



On the Fence

It's not all that uncommon to see a cowboy sitting on a fence. Well, it's less common around here where fences are mostly barbed wire. If something particularly interesting or dangerous is happening in the round pen, though, you may see one seated on the top rail, ready to jump if needed.

That's not the only time you'll see them on a fence. It can even be a place to rest for a bit before moving on to the next thing. For the most part, however, if a cowboy is on the fence he's there for a reason and he won't be there long. After all, it's not the most comfortable place to be.

The fence is never a destination. It's a boundary marker, a sign that whatever is on one side doesn't belong on the other. There's an old expression that good

fences make good neighbors. Again, this is because they provide firm boundaries, clear dividing lines between here and there.

The same holds true in our spiritual lives. Many people are all in with God. Others are all in with the devil. And then there are some who are double-minded. Sometimes, when you ask them about their faith, they'll tell you they're on the fence. Again, around here most of the fences are barbed wire. They're a

great illustration of how dangerous it is to attempt to stay on the fence spiritually. The fact is you can't; you'll get cut every time.

John 4:23 tells us, "But the hour is coming, and now is, when the true worshipers will worship the Father in spirit and truth; for the Father is seeking such to worship Him." Going through the motions isn't worshipping Him in spirit and in truth. "Playing Church" isn't worshipping Him in spirit and in

truth. Worshipping Him in spirit and in truth is a from-the-heart, 24-7 lifestyle that bears godly fruit.

The churches in this nation hold way too many people who don't fit that description, people who appear to live like God on Sunday but live like the devil the rest of the week. Whether they use the words or not, they're attempting to sit on the fence; and sitting on the fence gains no one anything but a one-way ticket to Hell.

The time is short and those would-be fence sitters are in eternal danger. If you are one of them, I strongly encourage you to make a choice. If you want to serve the devil, then be the best sinner you can be and enjoy life now, because you won't enjoy anything about eternity. If you want to serve God, be all in and fulfill His purpose for you in this life as you look to the joys of the next. And if you know someone who is on the fence, who is risking eternity in Hell? Remember, as a Christian who understands Heaven and Hell, you don't want them to go there. Do all you can to help them wake up and enter in to all God desires for them.

The time is short...
www.myhillsidefamily.com
[@myhillsidefamily](https://myhillsidefamily.com)

Public Hearing on Lone Star Coastal Recreation Area Set for September 17

Join us on Monday, September 17th at the Whites Park Community Building at 6:00 p.m. for an important public hearing about the Lone Star Coastal Alliance and the proposed Lone Star Coastal National Recreation Area.

The Lone Star Coastal Alliance is a grassroots coalition that brings together private, public, and



civic organizations—including cities, counties, businesses, and conservation groups—from across Jefferson, Galveston, and Matagorda counties. We're working to establish the Upper Texas Gulf Coast as a premier destination for outdoor recreation, highlighting our region's unique environmental and cultural treasures.

This initiative will attract outdoor enthusiasts, boost tourism, and support rural communities—without requiring participants to give up ownership or control of their land.

We value your input and encourage you to participate! If you have any questions, please call 409-267-2692. We hope to see you there!

Chambers County Household Hazardous Waste Collection Event



Got old batteries, leftover paint, or other hazardous materials lying around? It's time to clear them out safely! Join us for our Household Hazardous Waste Collection event:

Date: Saturday, September 28, 2024

Time: 9 a.m. - 1 p.m.

Location: Chambers County Precinct 3 Annex Building, 10616 Eagle Drive, Mont Belvieu, TX

This event is exclusively for Chambers County residents. To make the process smooth and efficient, pre-registration is requested. Simply sign up at: bit.ly/2024CCHHW

Dispose of your hazardous waste responsibly and help keep our community safe and clean! Feel free to spread the word!

For any questions, contact Samantha Humphrey at shumphrey@chamberstx.gov.

<p>BRING</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> Fertilizer & Pesticides Paint-Related Materials Household Cleaners Fuels & Antifreeze Pool Chemicals Aerosol Cans Thermometers <p>Residential waste only!</p>	<p>DO NOT BRING</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> Business Waste Medical Waste Radioactive Waste Ammunition Explosives Compressed Gas Cylinders Smoke Detectors Appliances Household Trash Electronics 	<p>PRE-REGISTRATION REQUESTED</p> <p>Scan the QR Code or visit https://bit.ly/2024CCHHW to Register.</p>
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No batteries, used oil or oil filters will be accepted. These items are accepted daily at Chambers County Citizen's Collection Stations.

EVENT OPEN TO CHAMBERS COUNTY RESIDENTS ONLY.

Transporting HHW Materials

- Bring products in the original containers. DO NOT mix products!
- Make sure containers are properly sealed and labeled correctly.
- If the container leaks, pack it in a larger container and use absorbents such as cat litter to soak up leaks.
- If you do not know what the item is, mark it as "unknown."
- If possible, place materials in cardboard boxes.
- Place materials in areas away from drivers and passengers.

Questions? Contact the Department of Economic Development at 409-267-2692

★ 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. Its center passed just west of Houston, dragging the hurricane's violent eastern edge directly over the city's core.

The category 1 storm flooded hundreds of homes and knocked out power for millions of people in the muggy 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.

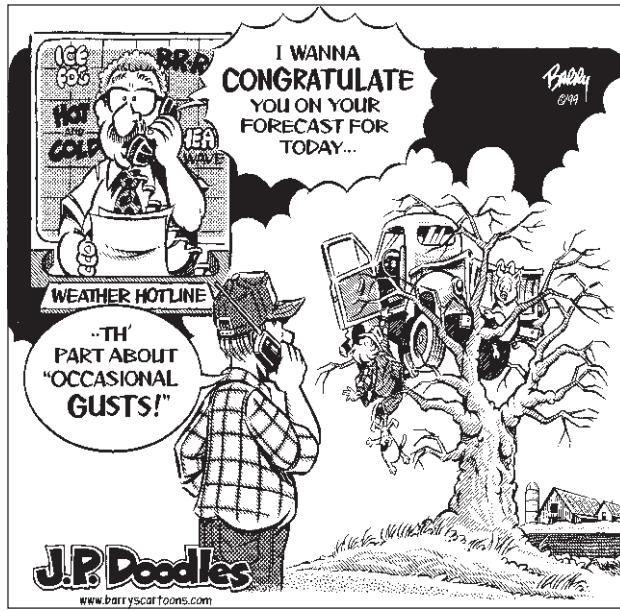
This year's hurricane season has only just begun. Atlantic storms typically grow more powerful through the summer, peaking in September.

"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 "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."



STATE CAPITAL HIGHLIGHTS
By Gary Borders

STATE NEEDS THOUSANDS OF NEW HOMES

A 26-page report from the Texas Comptroller concludes that the state needs 306,000 additional homes, a shortage that has sent housing costs soaring, The Texas Tribune reported. Homebuilding hasn't kept up with the booming economy as millions of new residents have moved here over the past decade, leaving more than half of the state's homeowners and renters struggling to find and keep affordable housing.

"Is it a crisis today? I wouldn't call it a crisis," Comptroller Glenn Hegar told The Tribune. "But if we don't find some more solutions, we're going to be in a crisis."

Gov. Greg Abbott, Lt. Gov. Dan Patrick and House Speaker Dade Phelan have each indicated that addressing the state's housing affordability issues will be on lawmakers' agenda when they return in January for the next legislative session.

One suggestion drawing attention is reducing minimum lot size requirements. A bill to do so passed the Texas Senate last year but died in the Texas House.

Median home prices in Texas rose nearly 40% from 2019 to 2023, the comptroller's report indicated. Nearly 2 out of 5 Texas households are paying more than 30% of their income on housing. Texas is one of the toughest states for extremely low-income renters, with a shortage of nearly 700,000 units, according to the National Low Income Housing Coalition.

RECORD TRANSPORTATION INVESTMENT ANNOUNCED

The state plans to spend a record \$148 billion for transportation infrastructure over the next decade, the Texas Department of Transportation and Abbott announced. That includes more than \$104 billion in a 10-year transportation plan to improve safety, address congestion and connectivity, and maintain roadways. It also includes more than \$43 billion for development and routine maintenance — a \$5.6 billion increase from the previous year.

"With a booming population and economy, TxDOT is meeting the moment with a record investment in our state roadway system to ensure Texas remains the preferred destination for families and businesses," said Texas Transportation Commission Chairman J. Bruce Bugg Jr.

Many of the projects in the 2025 Unified Transportation Program are roadways noted on the state's most congested roadways list. TxDOT is overseeing a record number of active projects this year.

REGULATORS APPROVE \$5.4 BILLION IN GAS PLANT LOANS

The Public Utilities Commission has picked 17 companies to move forward with natural gas power plants financed with low-cost state loans, The Dallas Morning News reported. PUC commissioners approved \$5.4 billion in proposals for plants capable of generating enough electricity to power 2.4 million homes.

The current \$5 billion fund is expected to double to \$10 billion as state leaders seek to address the power blackouts of the 2021 winter storm that killed more than 200 Texans.

PUC Executive Director Connie Corona said regulators favored power plant construction proposals that can be completed quickly, are spread throughout the state, and reduce strain on Texas' electricity transmission network, The News reported.

★ THE POSTSCRIPT
By Carrie Classon

Scary Movies



I have never been able to watch scary movies.

My mother will remind you (if she gets the chance) that I can't even watch embarrassing television programs, which is, frankly, embarrassing. I would watch that terrible moment when Lucy was about to get caught doing something embarrassing by her employer, Mr. Mooney, on "The Lucy Show" reruns, and I would have to leave the room in a hurry—making excuses about how I suddenly needed to help set the table. The truth was, I just couldn't stand to watch Lucy get caught.

Scary movies, of course, are much worse. If getting caught by Mr. Mooney was bad, imagine getting caught by a maniacal murderer or flocks of birds or a shark. As a result, I've never seen the scary movies everyone else has seen. I've seen photos from the movies, and I know the general plotlines, but when it comes to sitting down and watching the shark attack someone, I haven't been able to do it. Until recently.

Recently, I've seen a few scary movies, and it's not because I've become any braver. It's because my husband, Peter, has started signing out DVDs from the library with what is called "optional commentary." The movie plays but, while all the scary stuff is happening, the director—and sometimes an actor who was in the movie, or an historian or a film editor—jabbers away on top of the dialogue and the music, explaining how all the effects in the movie were made.

You might think this would be very annoying—particularly if I hadn't seen the movie without all the jabbering beforehand. Instead, I find it enormously comforting.

I watch the movie, miss some of the dialogue (but not too much), and the scary music is covered up by cheerful folks talking about how they made it so scary. I love hearing how all those terrifying birds were enticed into flying after the children in "The Birds" (they put snacks in the children's hair!) I am delighted to hear the mechanical shark in "Jaws" was named Bruce, purportedly after Steven Spielberg's lawyer, and he broke down all the time and caused so much trouble that Spielberg feared that his career might be over. I even enjoyed hearing how the shower scene in "Psycho" was made and how the film, made in black and white, used chocolate syrup for the blood that circled down the drain after the murder—a murder that is never actually even seen, but seems so real with that terribly scary music playing.

I've been able to sit through all of this, almost like a normal person, just because I am reassured every minute that Janet Leigh was safe, no children were pecked by birds, and that terrible shark was, in fact, a very troublesome mechanical device named for a lawyer.

The whole experience makes me feel like I'm about six, and I wonder why I require so much reassurance. But I suspect I've always felt a little too responsible for the fate of others, even if (especially if) there is nothing I can do to change the outcome.

It's good for me to see, in every case, it's just ordinary people doing an extraordinarily good job of tapping into these primal fears of things that fly down from the sky and swim up from the depths and come after us when we least expect. It helps me to understand that I do the same thing in my own life, artfully fabricating fears of unlikely things, and doing an excellent job of scaring myself.

Till next time,
Carrie

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FOOTBALL SEASON WEEK 2:

Texans host Bears on SNF Football: No. 1 Georgia, No. 4 'Bama face early road tests

The Texans will be in the national spotlight when they host the Chicago Bears on NBC's Sunday Night Football.

NRG Stadium should be rocking as DeMeco Ryan's team makes its home debut against an up and coming Bears team that features the No. 1 overall draft pick in quarterback Caleb Williams.

Williams, 8-1- 215 pounds, appears to be the real deal and folks in the Windy City are excited about the Bears for the first time in a number of years. The Bears front office surrounded Williams with a lot of offensive talent in the offseason, signing former Eagles running back De'Andre Swift, former chargers wide receiver Keenan Allen and drafting Washington Huskie star wide receiver Rome Odunze. The Bears also return big-play wide receiver D.J. Moore. The key to the Bears reaching the playoffs will be how well the offensive line does of protecting Williams, the 2022 Heisman Trophy winner out of USC.

The Texans dynamic defensive end duo of Will Anderson Jr. and Danielle Hunter should give the Bears offensive line a good test on Sunday night. The Texans have a load of talent on offense themselves in QB C.J. Stroud, running back Joe Mixon, and the wideout trio of Nico Collins, Stefon Diggs and Tank Dell. This should be a good one for the hometown fans to watch on Sunday night.

Other key games in Week 2 will feature the Bills paying a visit to the Dolphins in an early-season AFC East showdown on Thursday Night Football on Amazon Prime. The Cowboys open their home schedule with the Saints pay a visit Sunday at noon, while Week 2 concludes on Monday Night Football with the Eagles hosting the Falcons.

In college action, there's a big game in the Big 12 as No. 21-ranked Arizona visits No. 18-ranked Kansas State. No. 1-ranked Georgia and No. 4-ranked Alabama each face tough road tests as the Bulldogs head to Kentucky to take on a dangerous Wildcats team, while the Crimson Tide heads to the Midwest to take on Wisconsin. Both teams will have bye weeks after their respective games this weekend to rest up for their showdown in Tuscaloosa on Sept. 28 in prime time on ABC.

In high school action, Aldine ISD's five varsity teams will play their final non-district games of the season as District 14-6A play begins the weekend of Sept. 26-27.

Before we take a look at this weekend's games, let's review the record after one week of picks. We got off to a solid start to the season with an 8-4 record (66 percent).

Now, onto this weekend's games.

NCAA

Arizona at Kansas State - Arizona and Kansas State meet in a battle of the Wildcats as 'Zona plays its first Big 12 game it travels to Manhattan to face a stout Kansas State team that's tough at home. The KSU defense will be in for a big early-season test against an Arizona team that put up 61 points in their season-opening win over New Mexico. QB Noah Fifta passed for 422 yards and 4 TDs, and his go-to target was talented wide receiver Taitaioa McMillan, who grabbed 10 passes for 304 yards and four TDs. Not a bad start to the season. 'Zona also has a capable running back Jacory Croskey-Merritt (106 yards, 1 TD). KSU opened with a 41-6 spanking of Tennessee-Martin and will rely on second-year QB Avery Johnson (153 passing yards, 2 TDs) and running back DJ Giddens (124 yards). Kansas State is tough to beat at home, which Arizona will learn come Saturday. Welcome to the Big 12, Arizona! My pick, Kansas State 31, Arizona 28

Georgia at Kentucky - Kirby Smart's No. 1-ranked Bulldogs opened the season in fine fashion with a 34-3 throttling of No. 14-ranked Clemson in Atlanta. QB Carson Beck passed for 278 yards and two TDs, while running back Nate Frazier chipped in with 83 yards and a TD. Kentucky won a weather-delayed meeting with



Southern Miss, 31-0 as QB Brock Vandagriff passed for 169 yards and 3 TDs. Look for the Georgia defense to make it a long day for Vandagriff and the Wildcats as the Bulldogs take care of business and then get a week off before their early-season showdown with 'Bama.

Alabama at Wisconsin - Speaking of Alabama, the No. 4-ranked Crimson Tide opened the Kalen DeBoer era in grand fashion with a 63-0 route of Western Kentucky. QB Jalen Milroe accounted for five touchdowns, three passing and two rushing, while sensational freshman wide receiver Ryan Williams had his coming out party with two receptions for 139, both catches went for long-distance TDs. Wisconsin was not very impressive in its 28-14 home win over Western Michigan and the Badgers will need to step up their game if they hope to pull off the upset. Wisconsin will need a big game from QB Tyler Van Dyke (198 passing yards) and running back Chez Mellusi (74 yards, 1 TD) come Saturday. Look for the Badgers to play better against a top five ranked team, but look for Milroe and the 'Bama defense to be the difference makers on Saturday in Madison. My pick, Alabama 33, Wisconsin 16

NFL

Buffalo at Miami - A key early-season meeting between two teams predicted to battle for the AFC East title is set for Thursday Night Football when the Bills head to South Beach to take on the Dolphins. A year ago, Josh Allen and Co. beat the Dolphins twice to win the division and Miami head coach Mike McDaniels knows if his team is to supplant Buffalo atop the division, they will need to beat the Bills, especially at home. Allen lost his top two wide receivers when Diggs was traded to the Texans and Gabe Davis signed with Jacksonville. Look for Allen to rely on second-year tight end Dalton Kincaid in the passing game and count on running back James Cook to make plays on the ground. The Dolphins will air it out with QB Tua Tagovailoa, and wide receivers Tyreek Hill and Jalen Waddle. Look for the Dolphins to send the Bills a message that the AFC East runs through South Beach this year. My pick, Miami 31, Buffalo 23

New Orleans at Dallas - The Cowboys will be coming off a tough road game at Cleveland to open the season and want to give their fans, and owner Jerry Jones, something to smile about when they host the Saints on Sunday. Look for QB Dak Prescott and wide receiver CeeDee Lamb and tight end Jake Ferguson to attack the Saints secondary. Dallas has a suspect running game, so the offense will run through Prescott until either Ezekiel Elliott, Rico Dowdle or newly-signed Dalvin Cooks takes over at running back. The Saints will rely on QB Derek Carr (3,878 yards, 25 TDs), running back Alvin Kamara (694 rushing yards, 5 TDs/75 receptions, 464 yards, 1 TD) and wide receiver Chris Olave (87 receptions, 1,123 yards, 3 TDs). Look for Dallas linebacker Micah Parsons to harass Carr all afternoon as the Cowboys win their home opener. My pick, Dallas 33, New Orleans 17

Chicago at Houston - This should be a fun game to watch as two of the up-and-coming teams in the NFL meet on Sunday Night Football in Houston. Stroud will be out to prove he's the better QB than the rookie Williams and guys like Mixon, Diggs, Collins, Dell and tight end Dalton Schultz will be happy to help out their second-year gunslinger. Look for Williams to make some plays, he too has a load of weapons of which to rely on, but look for the Houston pass rush, especially Anderson and Hunter, to keep Williams in the pocket and shut down his running lanes. Cornerback Derek Stingley Jr. will shut down

his side, which means rookie corner Kamari Lassister could see a lot of action come his way Sunday night. The crowd could also play a big factor as Texans fans are stoked for what lies ahead this season. They won't leave disappointed. My pick, Houston 34, Chicago 20

Atlanta at Philadelphia - The new look Falcons head to the City of Brotherly Love to face an Eagles team that will be out to make up for last year's late season collapse. Optimism is high in Atlanta with the signing of former Vikings QB Kirk Cousins (2,331 yards, 18 TDs in just eight games), who should be a huge upgrade at the most important position in the sport. Cousins has some talent with which to work in second-year running back Bijan Robinson (976 rushing yards, 4 TDs/58 receptions, 487 yards, 4 TDs), wide receiver Drake London (69 receptions, 905 yards, 2 TDs) and tight end Kyle Pitts. London and Pitts should flourish with Cousins under center. The Eagles have a lot of offensive weapons as well with QB Jalen Hurts, running back Saquon Barkley, wide receivers A.J. Brown and DeVonta Smith and tight end Dallas Godert. Look for the Eagles to roll in their home opener. My pick, Philadelphia 36, Atlanta 21



SCORES & SCHEDULES WEEK 2

LAST WEEK'S SCORES

THURSDAY NIGHT
Aldine 14, North Forest 7
Strake Jesuit 32, Aldine Davis 15

FRIDAY NIGHT
Aldine Eisenhower 30, Clear Brook 7
Barbers Hill 21, Manvel 13
Baytown Lee 31, Goose Creek Memorial 14
Baytown Sterling 40, Galena Park 10
C. E. King 28, Dickinson 14
Huffman Hargrave 34, Furr 6
Iowa Colony 24, Crosby 0
Kingwood Park 30, Dayton 10
North Shore 28, Fort Worth Crowley 13

SATURDAY NIGHT
Aldine MacArthur 14, Channelview 13
Aldine Nimitz 54, Cypress Ridge 20

THIS WEEK'S SCHEDULE

Thursday, September 12
C. E. King at Spring DeKaney, 7 p.m., Planet Ford Stadium in Spring
West Fork at Aldine Eisenhower, 7 p.m., W. W. Thorne Stadium in Houston
Madison at Galena Park, 7 p.m., Galena Park ISD Stadium in Houston

Friday, September 13
Aldine at Northbrook, 7 p.m., Tully Stadium in Houston
Aldine MacArthur at West Brook, 7 p.m., Beaumont ISD Memorial Stadium in Beaumont
Barbers Hill at Deer Park, 7 p.m., Abshier Stadium in Deer Park
Baytown Sterling at Baytown Lee, 7 p.m., Stallworth Stadium in Baytown
Clear Creek at Channelview, 7 p.m., Ray Maddy Stadium in Channelview
Cypress Lakes at Aldine Davis, 7 p.m., W. W. Thorne Stadium in Houston
Fort Bend Marshall at Crosby, 7 p.m., Cougar Stadium in Crosby
Goose Creek Memorial at Clear Brook, 7 p.m., Veterans Memorial Stadium in League City
Splendora at Huffman Hargrave, 7:30 p.m., Falcon Stadium in Huffman
Spring Westfield at North Shore, 7 p.m., Galena Park ISD Stadium in Houston



Highlands Rotary Club Annual 3-Hole Washer Board Charity Tournament September 14, 2024

1pm – 5pm
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DEPARTMENT OF AGRICULTURE

Rural Development
GRFIS1L, LLC: Notice of Availability of an Environmental Assessment
AGENCY: Rural Business-Cooperative Service, USDA
ACTION: Notice of Availability of an Environmental Assessment

SUMMARY: Notice is hereby given that the Rural Business-Cooperative Service (RBS), as required by the National Environmental Policy Act, is issuing an environmental assessment (EA) in connection with possible impacts related to a project proposed by GRFIS1L, LLC. The proposal is for construction of the Crosby Park Model RV Park Project in Harris County. GRFIS1L, LLC has submitted an application to RBS for funding of the proposal.

FOR FURTHER INFORMATION: To obtain copies of the EA, or for further information, contact: Michael Self, Business & Cooperative Programs Director, 101 South Main Street, Temple, Texas 76501, at 254-742-9779 or michael.self@usda.gov. The EA is also available for public review at Huntsville Area Office, 2 Financial Plaza, Suite 745, Huntsville, TX 77340

SUPPLEMENTARY INFORMATION: GRFIS1L, LLC proposes to build an RV park facility will consist of 351 fully equipped RV sites and will be completed in two separate phases in Crosby, Harris County, Texas. The project area is located approximately 0.23 miles northwest of the intersection of Ulrich Lane and FM 2100, Crosby, Texas. The purpose of the Crosby Park Model RV Park Project will attract campers to the area, creating tax revenue for the local government and new customers for local businesses.

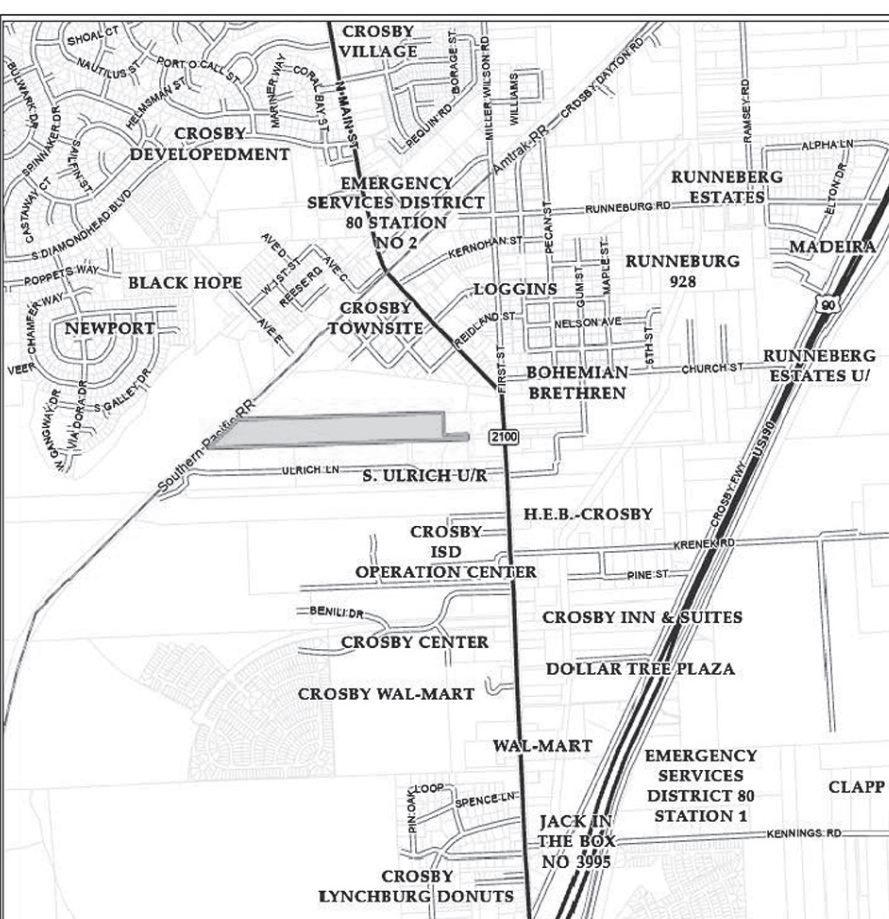
Logic Environmental, Inc., an environmental consultant, prepared an environmental assessment for RBS that describes the project, assesses the proposed project's environmental impacts, and summarizes as applicable any mitigation measures used to minimize environmental effects.

RBS has conducted an independent evaluation of the environmental assessment and believes that it accurately assesses the impacts of the proposed project. No significant impacts are expected as a result of the construction of the project.

Questions and comments should be sent to RBS at the address provided. RBS will accept questions and comments on the environmental assessment for 14 days from the date of publication of this notice.

Any final action by RBS related to the proposed project will be subject to, and contingent upon, compliance with all relevant Federal environmental laws and regulations and completion of environmental review procedures as prescribed by 7 CFR Part 1970, Environmental Policies and Procedures.

A general location map of the proposal is shown below.



Dated: 8/29/2024

Newport MUD Proposes New Bond to Address Aging Infrastructure Concerns,

CONTINUED FROM PAGE 1

bond authorization will specify the amount of bonds the district is authorized to sell. Most often, the bond sales occur over a period of time with the date and amount determined by the MUD district board on an as needed basis. It also allows them to shop the bonds and seek the best possible interest rate when they are ready to sell in preparation for the proposed work.

“What we’ll do as a board, and we’re all businesspeople, is work to even out or spread out the costs of the bond. We won’t be building the surface water treatment plant, the wastewater treatment plant, and redo half of the sewer lines in one year. That would tremendously spike the costs of the tax if we sold that many bonds,” she said.

Instead, she said they might look at the water treatment plant first while they also work on water and sewer lines.

Before selling the bonds, the district is required to specifically identify the problem, get it engineered for cost, then seek approval from TCEQ before they can begin selling the bonds.

Some of the current costs were put off from the 2020 bond and with inflation, will cost the district considerably more.

According to Chasteen, the surface water treatment plant now costs al-



Contractors work on a brand new 8-inch sanitary sewer line located in a backyard easement of a home in Newport Section 6. The sanitary sewer line is at about 9-feet deep and the original line had structural damage that impeded sewage flow so it was pipe bursted from manhole to manhole. This picture shows the contractor reinstalling the homeowner’s connection of sanitary sewer service to the new main line and installing a clean out that indicates where the service connects to the main line. (By David Taylor)

most double from the original amount in the 2020 CIP because of rising construction costs since the pandemic.

“That’s also because we have two wells included that have to be replaced and added filters for the plant,” she said.

The water distribution system once tabbed at \$7.9 million will now cost \$10 million.

The sanitary sewer system which includes the bridge relocation was about \$7 million, and including the bridge is now

approximately \$12 million.

The lift stations and the force mains costs have risen from \$1.1 million to \$1.5 million.

“The biggie is the wastewater treatment plant, which was at \$9.8 million in 2020, without the berm, is now about \$38 million,” she said. Those costs she said are not only construction increases, but also for new regulations since Harvey that they must meet.

“With current regulations from Harris County, they want us to build the



Workers are clamping together the new sanitary line to fully ensure sewage flow will go downstream into the manhole. The clamp is the metal container with blue screws on it. Newport MUD district board members are expected to approve a referendum seeking a bond authorization for \$109 million at their meeting this week. (Photo by David Taylor)

berm up 6- to 8-feet taller than it is right now,” she said. “That would add millions of dollars to the cost. Last year, with the new maps, we were able to show that it was not in the flood plain and hopefully, once it’s approved, we can save that money.”

Chasteen said they still needed the authorization regardless so that they could be prepared to act if necessary.

“We won’t spend the money if we don’t need it, and we can’t spend it if we don’t need it,” she said.

To help offset costs, the district has applied for a grant of \$2 million through Dan Crenshaw’s office, according to Chasteen.

The Texas Water Development Board does offer lower interest rates and will finance and could also save the district a lot of money.

“We were originally turned down on a \$6 million request from the TWDB,” she said, “but we have reapplied and hopeful to get that one as well,” she said.

The board is expected to approve the bond authorization proposal at their meeting this week.

Chasteen said if there’s a bright side to the repairs facing the district, it’s the consistency of the current board to face the issues and resolve them in an appropriate way.

“I’ve been on the board for the last eight years and I have watched as the way business gets done is in a more proactive stance,” she said.

When it comes to valves, motors, or any other critical part that failure might mean a shut down of the system, she said they have begun to inventory those items on the shelf.

“That means we don’t have to worry about ordering it, how long it will take before it arrives, installation timelines and that has kept the district from issuing so many boil water notices,” she explained since repairs can be done much faster.

She also described each of the parts of the system as having a mechanical life.

“We can now look at each moving part, determine its mechanical life and when there’s a repair necessary, we know the life of the part and if it’s time to replace it, we do,” she said.

In previous years, they would just rebuild or repair the part which ended up being more costly in the long run. The newer approach has been more cost effective for the district.

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Crosby ISD Reaches 7000 Students Enrollment Amid Growth,

CONTINUED FROM PAGE 1

employers and employees to volunteer on our campuses by reading to students, helping at lunchtime, and even handling car rider duty! Our first "Business Partner of the Month" was Mr. Clarence Howell from Marco's Pizza in Crosby. Mr. Howell visited Barrett Elementary School where he read to students, engaged them in phonics lessons, and even drew a cartoon in art class. We're excited to welcome local employers and employees into our schools to serve as volunteers. Our students love their time together! One student even nicknamed Mr. Howell "the pizza man!"

This year, the district is also honoring alumni who are doing extraordinary things in their college or career paths. We're starting with Ebony McKee, a Crosby High School Class of 2021 graduate, who will soon complete her bachelor's degree in marine biology at the University of Southern Mississippi. Ebony works at a fish hatchery specializing in tripletail, one of the most popular fish along the Gulf Coast. Ebony says her love of science started with a snorkeling trip to St. Croix and then grew exponentially during biology class with Ms. Cynthia Franks at Crosby High School. Once she graduates, Ebony will be one of the 14% of workers in the field of aquaculture who are women. Way to go, Ebony!

We have new turf at Cougar Stadium, and a new "Voice of the Cougars!" Mr. Mike Soileau is a Crosby ISD father and former coach in the Crosby Youth Football League. His spotter in the announcer booth is former CYFL coach and fellow

Crosby ISD dad, Mr. Matt Murphy. Coach Mike and Coach Matt met while coaching kids as young as four years old. Their young players are now 9th, 10th, and 11th graders playing for CHS now. They are true fans of our high school players, who first found their footing in the CYFL and Barrett Station Dragons peewee football teams. Thank you, Mike and Matt, for your selfless volunteering.

Friday field trips are about to begin for students in the YMCA and 21st Century grant after-school programs. Their first stop on September 20th will be the Houston Zoo. Our students will be guided around the zoo, being taught about each exotic species, how they live, and what they eat. We thank Friendly Ford and the Crawfish Shack for their sponsorships and giving our kids a chance to explore the great academic resources throughout the Houston region.

Finally, we're restarting our monthly employee wellness sessions! One Friday a month, staff members have the option of attending a class taught by a local company. These sessions are designed to help staff exercise, refresh, and relax. For instance, "Energy Up Nutrition" will bring samples of their healthy teas to one campus each month. Realtor Leticia Balderrama and her team will bring snacks for teachers to munch on and barber Nick Arguello from "Fresh Cutz Barbershop" will hold stress release sessions with hot towels and mini-facials. We hope our staff members enjoy their monthly moments of zen!

We are Committed to Excellence! Go Coogs!



"Business Partner of the Month," Mr. Clarence Howell, reads to students in Ms. Munoz's class at Barrett Elementary School. The students then had to answer questions about the plot and characters.



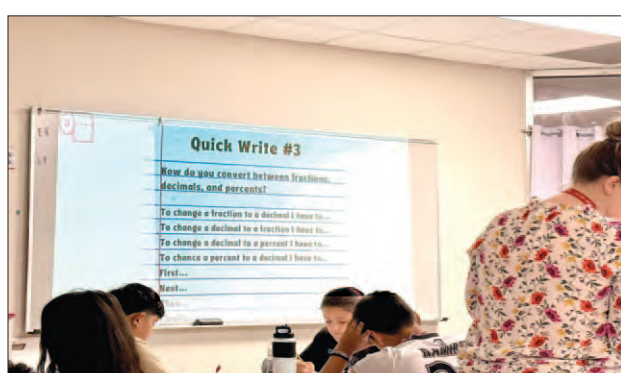
Meet the new Voice of Cougar Stadium. Mr. Mike Soileau (right), also known as "Coach Mike," is the new public address announcer for Crosby High School varsity football games. His spotter is Mr. Matt Murphy, also known as "Coach Matt." Mike and Matt know many of the high school players from their days coaching youth football.



Ebony McKee, a Crosby High School Class of 2021 Graduate, will earn her degree in marine biology from the University of Southern Mississippi in December. She will become one of the few women working in the field of aquaculture. She's currently employed part-time at a hatchery specializing in raising tripletail.



Superintendent Patterson and Principal Price welcomed the 7,000th student to Crosby ISD on September 3rd. London enrolled in the 4th grade at Newport Elementary School. Her two brothers are also new to the district. The district has grown by more than 700 students in the last three years.



Crosby Middle School teacher, Ms. Madeline Downs, asks her math class to "write a little a lot." That includes answering the question: "How do you convert between fractions, decimals, and percents?" "Writing a little a lot" is a 2024-25 initiative that is sparking great academic conversations and enhancing students' critical thinking skills.

ENTERTAINMENT

Amber Waves

OK, CLASS, TODAY WE'RE GOING TO PICK FAMOUS LEADERS TO WRITE ABOUT.

CHOOSE SOMEONE WHO RULED OVER OTHERS WITH GREAT POWER....

AND MADE ALL THE IMPORTANT DECISIONS FOR THEIR PEOPLE TO FOLLOW.

CAN I PICK MY MOM? ACCORDING TO MY DAD SHE "CALLS ALL THE SHOTS."

by Dave T. Phipps

HEY, TIGER...

I DARE YOU TO JUMP OVER THE BROOK.

WELL, I DOUBLE DARE YOU.

I PUNNO.

I TRIPLE DARE YOU.

LEMMIE THINK.

SEE...

WAIT HERE.

HEY, JULIAN, AFTER TRIPLE...

TIGER, I QUADRUPLE DARE YOU TO...

The Spats

by Bud Blake

DID YOU PUT THE CAT OUT?

WOW... I DIDN'T KNOW WE HAD A CAT...

...AND I DIDN'T KNOW IT WAS ON FIRE.

by Jeff Pickering

Weekly SUDOKU

by Linda Thistle

	1			5		3		
5					2			8
	4	7					2	
1		5						8
	6		9	8	1			
		5			6			7
8					3	4		
	9			2			6	
		7	4					5

Place a number in the empty boxes in such a way that each row across, each column down and each small 9-box square contains all of the numbers from one to nine.

DIFFICULTY THIS WEEK: ♦

♦ Moderate ♦♦ Challenging ♦♦♦ HOO BOY!

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HOCUS-FOCUS

BY HENRY BOLTINGOFF

Find at least six differences in details between panels.

Differences: 1. Present is smaller. 2. Sock is higher. 3. Girl is moved. 4. Bush is different. 5. Present is missing. 6. Arm is not showing.

September 9, 2024 Posting Date King Crossword

ACROSS

- Broadway flop
- Foot part
- Urban carrier
- Vivacity, in music
- "Funny!"
- Flamenco cheer
- Rural tourist attractions
- Skier Tommy
- Actress Neuwirth
- Serious
- Wide, fancy necktie
- Jazz singer Laine
- Noggin
- Reeve role
- Einstein's birthplace
- Mini-plateaus
- Green prefix
- Pudding choices
- Firecracker sound
- Grecian vessels
- Embedded spies
- Bas-relief medium
- Reed instrument
- Pirates' quaff
- Duncan Hines products
- "Evita" role
- Pesters
- Fast-food deal
- Balm ingredient
- Tavern order
- Bumped into
- "— the ram-parts ..."
- Border on
- Actress Ward
- College
- Russian space station
- Tax prep pros
- Brief moments
- Can. neighbor
- Dreaded breakout
- Eggy drinks
- Prop for Mr. Peanut
- Apr. address-ee
- Aircraft manufacturer
- May honoree
- Clench
- Franc replacer
- Gumbo need
- Existed
- Have a cold
- Tic-tac-toe loser
- Sch. URL ender
- Filming site

DOWN

- Telly network
- Granada gold
- Russian space station
- Chocolate-coated treat
- Melville captain
- Demolish
- 29
- 31
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- 50
- 53

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Trivia Test Answers

1. Genovia; 2. Mount Kilimanjaro; 3. The Inca civilization; 4. Baltimore, Maryland; 5. Portland, Oregon; 6. March 14 (3.14); 7. The 1979 Iranian Revolution; 8. Mercury; 9. 96.5%; 10. Rick Astley.

Trivia test

by Fifi Rodriguez

1. MOVIES: What is the name of the fictional country in "The Princess Diaries"?
2. GEOGRAPHY: What is the highest mountain in Africa?
3. HISTORY: Which ancient civilization built Machu Picchu in Peru?
4. TELEVISION: Which city is the setting for the TV drama "The Wire"?
5. U.S. CITIES: Which city's nickname is "City of Roses"?
6. MATH: When is Pi Day celebrated each year?
7. LITERATURE: During what historical period is the graphic novel "Persepolis" set?
8. CHEMISTRY: Which element is also known as quicksilver?
9. SCIENCE: How much of the Earth's water is held by oceans?
10. MUSIC: Who performed the hit song "Never Gonna Give You Up" in 1987?

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