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THURSDAY, DECEMBER 5, 2024

P.O. DRAWER 446, HIGHLANDS, TEXAS 77562

IN THE STARS

Holiday Events

Highlands Chamber Luncheon Dec. 12

Highlands-Lynchburg Chamber Holiday luncheon, Thursday Dec. 12 at 11:30am. Community Center. Holiday music and Speaker on Bay Area Rehab Center. RSVP 281-426-7227.

Thurs/Fri/Sat, DEC. 5, 6, 7

THEATRE: Crosby High School Theatre presents The Ice Princess Pageant at the Crosby High School Performing Arts Center, 333 Red Summit Drive, in Crosby. Tickets are \$8 and \$10 and the curtain rises at 7 p.m.

Saturday, DEC. 7

SANTA CLAUS: Join Newport Pointe Christmas on Dec. 7th from 2:30 to 5:30 p.m. at 18018 Newport Pointe Drive in Crosby. Enjoy free hot cocoa and popcorn, cornhole, jenga, and a bounce house. There will also be a food truck and raffle prizes. Take free photos with Santa and Olaf. Mr. and Mrs. Claus will be present at 3 p.m.

Tuesday, DEC. 10

CONCERT: The Crosby Elementary School 5th grade will present their

Continued on Page 5

THEA HOLIDAY DINNER MEETING

New Cancer Study by State; EPA report on Waste Pits

By David Taylor
Managing Editor

For years, members of the Texas Health and Environment Alliance (THEA) and community have filled out health surveys turned over to the Texas Department of State Health Services (TDSHS) regarding cancer types and asked them to study the rates of cancer here. Last Tuesday, Jackie Medcalf, founder of THEA, announced that

the state has agreed to do an updated study.

"The last study covered a very large area with the map," she said. "They studied 17 types of cancer back in 2014 that we most commonly saw, and they found that 14 of them were at abnormally high rates."

The organization and community weren't completely happy with the data because it lagged so far behind. The TDSHS agreed to do the study,



Jackie Young Medcalf

but instead of going back to when the cancer registry started, they're sim-

ply doing an addition to the previous study, according to Medcalf.

"It's going to pick up in 2013 where the data from the previous study stopped. "Now we have some new cancer types that you all have reported," she told the crowd gathered for the meeting.

The study was intended to be released in late summer and Medcalf has been sending them emails weekly asking for the results as the tardy

results have now pushed into late fall.

"They're telling me that the study is in executive review," she said. "Last time the original study was in executive review, that state tried to squash it," she said, but the toxicologist who wrote the study insisted that it be published as he wrote it.

Medcalf urged follow-

Continued. See THEA DINNER MEETING, Page 6

Cougar Stadium's New Turf and Track, CHS Expansion, New Website, and Holiday Highlights

Hello East Harris County and Crosby ISD families,

Welcome to December! I want to fast forward by looking at what 2025 has in store for Crosby ISD.

One of the biggest opportunities for our students will be the opening of the expansion of Crosby High School. This time next year, students will be learning in the 32 new classrooms and 8 labs inside what we call "Building A" of the expansion. We'll also see welding and wood-working being taught in the new welding and carpentry labs that are part of "Building B." Buildings A and B comprise the two components of the expan-



Paula Patterson
Crosby Superintendent

sion on the southside of CHS. Building A is the new academic wing that will increase classroom space inside CHS by 50%. Building B is an expansion of the current CTE (Career and Technical Education) Center. I am very happy to report the project remains

on track for a Fall 2025 opening, and the expansion is meeting all budget targets.

The expansion does not only include the new additions, but we were able to find additional classroom space inside the current structure of Crosby High School. During a tour of the facilities last school year, my team and I noticed an unfinished LGI (Large Group Instruction) room on the second floor of CHS that was being used for storage. Now, as part of the overall project for the new high school addition, we are converting that storage space into additional classrooms. We are finding every possible



Construction crews are finalizing the track resurfacing at Cougar Stadium. This is the final phase of the turf and track replacement at the stadium.

space available to enhance the learning experience of the 2000+ students at CHS.

While the high school is expanding, construction crews have finalized the

work on the turf and track replacement at Cougar Stadium. The final phase of the project included re

Continued. See CROSBY SUPERINTENDENT, Page 6


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We will also be serving light refreshments
following the service.

FBI Warns: 'Tis the Season for Scammers

(Houston, TX) - As the 2024 shopping holiday season gets underway, FBI Houston reminds you that there are criminals who care less about giving and more about stealing, so please be vigilant. Shoppers looking for a good deal this holiday season need to be aware of several aggressive and deceptive scams designed by criminals to steal money and personal information.

While the types of scams do not significantly change year to year, the techniques scammers use and the methods of deploying scams do change. Here are a few of the latest:

-- Tech support scams: Commonly target those who lack computer literacy and trick victims into paying for non-existent technical support services, providing their banking information, or believing that their bank account has been compromised and they must empty the ac-



'Tis the season...
for holiday scams.


count and provide it to a person impersonating a government official for safekeeping.

-- Email compromise scams: Scammers trick victims into making wire transfers to bank accounts thought to belong to trusted companies—except the money ends up in accounts controlled by the crimi-

nals.

-- Cryptocurrency investment scams: After a period of building trust and rapport, the scammer will convince the victim to make investments in cryptocurrency to take advantage of potential for high

Continued. See FBI WARNING, Page 5

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New Proposal to Revive Astrodome



Cutaway View showing some of the possible uses for the renovated Astrodome.



Interior View shows multi-use possibilities

HOUSTON – The Houston Astrodome has been in limbo, waiting for its chance at a second life since being shuttered more than 15 years ago.

It was a technological marvel when it opened in 1965. But its heyday has long passed and it hasn't been home to a sports team since the Astros left in 1999 and it was closed to all events a decade later.

Over the years, ideas for its redevelopment and rebirth have been plentiful, everything from turning it into an indoor water park to flooding its sunken floor in order to reenact naval battle scenes. But none of these plans garnered enough public support or financing.

The latest proposal to refurbish the Astrodome was unveiled on Wednesday by a nonprofit focused on saving the beloved domed stadium. The group, the Astrodome Conservancy, proposes redeveloping the inside of the structure to create new areas for restaurants, retail, office and cultural spaces. But like the others before it, this plan could face a similar fate, with a \$1 billion price tag and an initial lack of support from local entities that would need to give their OK for the project to go forward.

Beth Wiedower Jackson, the conservancy's executive director, said that unlike previous proposals, her organization believes theirs is backed by data and would be economically viable in part because there would be enough private investment to support it.

"This is a big, big, bold vision. And those previous plans, even admitted by Harris County officials, were a first step towards a future Astrodome. And this is the full swing of the bat. And this gives people something to be excited about," Jackson said.

The plan, Vision: Astrodome, proposes the construction of four state-of-the-art buildings inside the stadium that would offer spaces for restaurants, stores and offices. Similar spaces for shopping and eating would also be located around the Astrodome and connected to other facilities around the stadium. The Astrodome is at NRG Park, a 350-acre complex that includes NRG Stadium, located right next to the Astrodome and home to the NFL's Houston Texans, as well as an arena and exhibition halls.

"The Astrodome is ready now for its next chapter, redevelopment," said

Phoebe Tudor, the conservancy's chairman. "It is time for all of us in Houston to come together and do something hard, working together to repurpose the Astrodome."

Nicknamed "the Eighth Wonder of the World," the Astrodome ushered in a change in how people attended sporting events. It also hosted various cultural events, including concerts by Elvis and Tejano music star Selena as well as the "Battle of the Sexes" tennis match between Bobby Riggs and Billie Jean King in 1973.

Some people have called for its demolition. But a 2017 designation by the Texas Historical Commission as a state antiquities landmark essentially protects it from wholesale destruction. The stadium also maintains a strong foothold in the memories of many people both in and outside of Houston.

Rafi Kohan, whose 2017 book "The Arena" explores the place sports stadiums hold in American culture, said the Astrodome's construction came at a time of incredible technological innovation in the United States, and it helped transform Houston from what some saw as a "backwoods cow town" into a leader in technology. Houston be-

came the home of the space program with the opening of Johnson Space Center in 1964.

"There was and continues to be a lot of civic pride around the Astrodome, what it represented, the sort of space age feat, you know, in stadium form," Kohan said.

But whether there continues to be enough support in Houston to refurbish and save the Astrodome remains to be seen. It costs between \$100,000 and \$200,000 a year to maintain the stadium.

The Astrodome is owned by Harris County and managed by the Harris County Sports & Conven-

tion Corporation.

The office of Harris County Judge Lina Hidalgo, the county's top elected official, declined to comment on the conservancy's proposal.

James Dixon, the sports and convention corporation's chairman, said in a statement that he respects the conservancy's efforts but "over the last few years, we have seen several concepts that, while thought-provoking, haven't resulted in viable funding and maintenance solutions."

Dixon said his organization and the county are working with other stakeholders on a plan for the future of NRG Park and

"the solution for the Astrodome must be decided within that context."

One of those stakeholders, the Houston Livestock Show and Rodeo, which holds its annual event at NRG Park and would have a say on what to do with the Astrodome, was not on board with the conservancy's proposal.

"The proposed plan by the Astrodome Conservancy does not align with the Houston Livestock Show and Rodeo's strategic vision and operational requirements," Chris Boleman, the group's president and CEO, said in a statement.

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THURSDAY, DECEMBER 5, 2024

MONT BELVIEU, TEXAS 77580

ON THE HILL

Christmas Events in December

Christmas on the Hill Parade

Sunday, December 8, 2024 | Eagle Drive
One of Mont Belvieu's biggest and most beloved events is the Christmas on the Hill Parade. This "can't miss" holiday event occurs on the first Sunday in December. You'll want to bring the entire family to see amazing floats, cool cars, marching bands, and more light up the night as they stream down Eagle Drive. And, you better not pout or cry, because you never know if Santa himself will come to town!

Breakfast with Santa

Saturday, December 14, 2024 Bring the family out and capture a special moment with Santa at our selfie station while we cater a tasty breakfast including a biscuit bar full of goodies. After breakfast, keep the kids engaged with a decorate-it-yourself ornament for your tree.

TICKETS

Purchase your breakfast tickets below! Choose from 3 time allotments: • 8:00 a.m. - 9:00 a.m. • 9:00 a.m. - 10:00 a.m. • 10:00 a.m. - 11:00 a.m.
Tickets will go on sale Fall 2024.

Buy your tickets in advance because this will sell out! Each person in attendance will need a ticket.

Santa in the City

Santa Claus will be riding in style onboard one of the Mont Belvieu Fire Department engines through a neighborhood near you! 2024 Dates TBD.

Pictures with Santa

Friday, December 13, 2023 | 5:00 p.m. - 7:00 p.m.

Santa's last stop is at Eagle Pointe for a photo op where kids can pick up some cookies & milk after their photo with Santa!
This is a free event and no membership necessary. Cookies & milk while supplies last. No tickets or pre-registration needed.



Holiday traditions run deep in the south, and the Christmas on the Hill Parade is one of our most cherished Mont Belvieu traditions. This special event gives the community the opportunity to support our locals and 100% of the parade entry fees brought in from this parade are given directly to the West Chambers County Food Pantry right here in Mont Belvieu. This season, so let's give back in one of the most meaningful ways we know how.

This is your chance to be part of our community's most magical celebration! The Christmas on the Hill parade will be at 6:00 p.m. on December 8, 2024.

Parade Application - Applications are now closed.

Dazzle the streets of Mont Belvieu with holiday cheer! Christmas on the Hill Parade applications will officially open on Monday, October 28 - Monday, November 11. Mark your calendars, gather your creative ideas, and be prepared to secure your spot in this year's parade extravaganza.

Parade Theme
This year's Christmas on the Hill Parade theme



is Holiday Movies!
Get ready to relive the magic of your favorite festive films as our community comes together to bring these beloved classics to life. Whether you're a fan of heartwarming tradi-

tions or hilarious holiday hijinks, this year's parade is sure to be a blockbuster event filled with cinematic wonder!
Parade & Float Guidelines
Click here to review our

parade guidelines for this year's event.
2024 Parade Awards
Best Picture - Awarded to the overall best entry in the parade.
Director's Cut - A special award chosen by the

judges for an entry that stands out in a unique or unexpected way.
Classic Holiday Spirit - Awarded to the float that best embodies the parade's theme.
Cinematic Masterpiece - Given to the entry that showcases the most unique design.
Spirit of the Season - For the entry that best captures the festive spirit of the season.
Blockbuster Performance - For the entry that receives the most applause and excitement from the crowd.
Holiday Harmony - Recognizing the entry that best incorporates music and sound into their float/presentation.
Silver Screen Surprise - A special award for an unexpected or standout moment, much like a plot twist in a movie.
Attention Spectators!
Pick your favorite viewing spot on the Barbers Hill ISD side of Eagle Drive. The parade is best viewed from that side of the road and that's where all of the candy & handouts are given. Please stay off medians and remain behind the barricades for your safety.

Christmas Lights Display in Dayton won't Light up this Year



Hello everyone! We was really hoping to have all the repairs done on the display items to be able to open up this year, but there was so much damage caused by the items sitting for several years unused and from insects and vermits. We have had to completely rebuild several of the large wooded items because of termites. We had really hoped to be able to be back up for ev-

everyone this year and we are so sorry that we are not going to be able to. We hope everyone will forgive us for the disappointment. After the house fire we did not think it would take this much from us and pray that anyone else does not have to go thru what we have because of it.
We would like to wish everyone a happy thanksgiving and a very Merry Christmas to all.

Early Voting for the Dec. 14 Baytown Mayor Runoff Election Begins Monday, Dec. 2

(HOUSTON, TX) — The Harris County Clerk's Office reminds eligible voters that early voting for the December 14 Joint Runoff Election begins on Monday, December 2, and ends on Tuesday, December 10. This election includes two contests:
City of Baytown, Mayor Lone Star College System, Trustee, District 1
Voter Eligibility
Only voters registered within the boundaries of these respective districts are eligible to cast a ballot in these contests. To confirm your eligibility and view a sample ballot, visit HarrisVotes.com.

Early Voting Schedule
Eligible voters can take

advantage of early voting during the following dates and times:
Monday, December 2 - Saturday, December 7: 7:00 a.m. - 7:00 p.m.
Sunday, December 8: 12:00 p.m. - 7:00 p.m.
Monday, December 9 - Tuesday, December 10: 7:00 a.m. - 7:00 p.m.
Election Day Voting
For those unable to vote early, polling locations will be open on Election Day, Saturday, December 14, from 7:00 a.m. - 7:00 p.m.
Voter Resources
Visit HarrisVotes.com to find nearby polling locations, check wait times, and view your sample ballot.
Bring one of the **seven acceptable forms of**

photo ID to the polls. A Reasonable Impediment Declaration with supporting documentation is accepted for voters who cannot reasonably obtain one.
Your Voice, Your Vote Runoff elections play a critical role in shaping local leadership," said **Harris County Clerk Teneshia Hundspeth**. "We encourage all eligible voters to make their voices heard during early voting or on Election Day." For more information about the December 14 Joint Runoff Election, visit www.HarrisVotes.com. For the latest news and updates, follow @HarrisVotes on social media.

LEGAL NOTICE

LEGAL NOTICE

LEGAL NOTICE

NOTICE OF PUBLIC MEETING

TO DISCUSS BARBERS HILL INDEPENDENT SCHOOL DISTRICT'S STATE FINANCIAL ACCOUNTABILITY RATING

Barbers Hill ISD will hold a public meeting at 6:30 p.m., Monday, December 16, 2024 In the J. Justin Jenson Conference Room, 9600 Eagle Drive, Mont Belvieu, TX.

The purpose of this meeting is to discuss Barbers Hill ISD's rating on the State's financial accountability system.

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OPINION PAGE

OPINION
By Michael Regan
Environmental Protection Agency

New Rules for Car Emissions could boost EV sector

Biden announces new rule for gas car emissions that could boost EV sector

Rule, hailed as historic step on climate crisis, will have slashed more than 7bn tons of carbon dioxide emissions by 2055

In a move being hailed as one of the most significant climate rules in US history, the Biden administration announced on Wednesday new regulations on tailpipe emissions. The rule, which calls for a 56% reduction in fleetwide average carbon emissions by 2032, constitutes the strictest-ever limit on pollution from the nation's cars and light trucks.

"Today, we're setting new pollution standards for cars and trucks," Joe Biden said in a statement. "US workers will lead the world on autos making clean cars and trucks, each stamped 'Made in America'. You have my word."

The new standards do not mandate the sale of particular kinds of vehicles, but they all but ensure a dramatic increase in EVs over the next eight years.

EVs made up just 7.6% of new car sales last year. But by 2032, the standards will mean EVs make up 35% to 56% of sales, according to the Environmental Protection Agency (EPA).

The new standards form one of the most significant pieces of the White House's efforts to slash greenhouse gas emissions. Transportation is the largest source of planet-warming emissions in the US, and passenger cars and trucks account for the majority of that pollution.

By the time the rule is fully implemented in 2055, it will have cumulatively slashed more than 7bn tons of carbon dioxide emissions, senior administration officials told reporters on Tuesday. It will also tackle toxic pollution, they said, slashing fine particulate emissions by 95% and emissions of NOx and volatile organic compounds by 75%.

But the regulation has been weakened since it was first proposed last spring.

The final rule would result in the same endpoint — a 56% reduction in fleetwide average carbon emissions by 2032 from 2026 levels — but the year-over-year tightening of the pollution standards between 2027 and 2030 will happen at a more gradual pace.

The change aligns with asks from auto manufacturers and the United Auto Workers. UAW, which has long noted that EV jobs often pay less than traditional autoworker jobs, last year said the EPA should revise its standards to increase stringency "more gradually" in an effort to ensure they do not "disproportionately impact domestic union auto production."

In a Wednesday statement, the union said: "By taking seriously the concerns of workers and communities, the EPA has created a more feasible emissions rule that protects workers building ICE vehicles, while providing a path forward for automakers to implement the full range of automotive technologies to reduce emissions."

Automakers also applauded the changes. "The right pace for something this consequential and transformative ... gives us a chance to secure manufacturing and industrial base needed for long term success," said John Bozell, president of the automaker trade group Alliance for Automotive Innovation, in an EPA press conference on Wednesday.

But critics say the slower cuts will allow automakers to continue selling fossil fuel-powered vehicles longer and will produce more cumulative pollution.

"This rule could've been the biggest single step of any nation on climate, but the EPA caved to pressure from big auto, big oil and car dealers, and riddled the plan with loopholes big enough to drive a Ford F150 through," said Dan Becker, director of the safe climate transport campaign at the environmental advocacy group Center for Biological Diversity.

Last spring, the EPA projected that electric vehicles would need to make up about two-thirds of car and light truck sales by 2032, up from less than one-tenth in 2023, to meet emissions reduction goals.

In a shift from the 2023 proposal, which did not mention plug-in hybrid vehicles, the EPA's final rule suggests manufacturers achieve the same reduction by ensuring 56% of cars sold are fully electric and 13% are plug-in hybrids by 2032. The move comes after automakers criticized the earlier omission.

The EPA says the rule will save the nation \$99bn a year, including \$46bn in reduced fuel costs and nearly \$16bn in auto repair and maintenance. The rule is also expected to prevent 2,500 premature deaths by 2055 thanks to cuts in pollution.

Some environmental groups applauded the new limits.

"Every single day, millions of Americans suffer under the weight of vehicle pollution, unsustainable gas prices and the climate crisis, all fueled by tailpipe emissions spewing from gas cars throughout our communities," said Ben Jealous, executive director of the Sierra Club. "Today, President Biden, in one of the most significant actions his administration can take on climate change, has put forward standards with benefits extending far beyond reducing greenhouse gas emissions."

The new standards, Jealous said, will "save lives and money for families".

Republicans have already launched plans to go after the new regulation. Two GOP lawmakers are preparing a resolution aiming to kill the rule, E&E News reports. On the campaign trail, Donald Trump has said he would repeal Biden's "insane electric vehicle mandate" on his first day in office.

Senator Joe Manchin, the conservative Democrat from West Virginia, has said he would support Republicans' efforts to overturn the rule. In a Wednesday statement, he called it "reckless and ill-informed" and said it "will impose what is effectively an EV mandate without ensuring the security of our supply chains from nations like China and without a realistic transition plan that addresses our domestic infrastructure needs".

EV sales are accelerating. Last year, they were up by 54% compared with 2022, which was a 46% increase from 2021, according to Wards Auto Data.

"From plug-in hybrids to fuel cells to fully electric, drivers have more choices today," said Biden's national climate adviser, Ali Zaidi, in emailed statement. "This growth means jobs, and it means we are moving faster and faster to take on the climate crisis."

Advocates say the rule will benefit communities of color who are more likely to breathe in pollution from roads and highways.

"While there's undoubtedly more work ahead to improve our environment, today marks a positive step forward in protecting communities like mine," Asada Rashidi, environmental justice organizer for the South Ward Environmental Alliance and member of the National Environmental Youth Advisory Council, said at the EPA's Wednesday press conference.

Regan said the rule "marks a historic win for public health, for the environment and for the future of our country".

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.



STATE CAPITAL HIGHLIGHTS
By Gary Borders

Abbott Issue orders Targeting China

Gov. Greg Abbott issued three executive orders last week targeting the Chinese government and the Chinese Communist Party, The Dallas Morning News reported

Abbott said the orders were intended to protect Texans of Chinese descent from "harassment and intimidation" by the Chinese Communist Party and government, and to fight threats to state security.

"Texas will not tolerate the harassment or coercion of the more than 250,000 individuals of Chinese descent who legally call Texas home by the Chinese Communist Party or its heinous proxies," Abbott said.

The orders:

- Instruct the Texas Department of Public Safety to establish a hotline for victims and to "target and arrest" operatives in the state working with the Chinese Communist Party and the Chinese government.
- Direct all state agencies, colleges and universities to "harden" their systems against foreign governments. That includes stronger background checks on employees with access to critical infrastructure and banning state agencies from doing business with companies owned wholly or partially by foreign adversary countries.
- Direct the Texas Department of Emergency Management and the Public Utility Commission to create a task force to study vulnerabilities to potential cyberattacks and run simulations of possible responses.

"China has made it clear that they can — and will — target and attack America's critical infrastructure," Abbott said.



connect 80,000 locations, according to the Texas Broadband Development Office. Federal maps that show where internet connections are needed are being questioned as to their accuracy, The Tribune reported.

"We want to make sure the data being provided to us by the federal government is accurate and up to date," Greg Conte, director of the TBDO, said.

More buoy barriers added in Rio Grande

Despite a dramatic decrease in border crossings in recent months, Abbott has ordered expansion of the 1,000 feet of orange buoys in the Rio Grande near Eagle Pass, theHouston Chronicle reported.

"We're not letting up at all; we're continuing our efforts," Abbott said.

The barriers have prompted lawsuits from the federal government, which are tied up in an appeals court.

Monthly border crossings have dropped steadily since March. U.S. Customs and Border Protection data for October indicate that 27,000 migrants were encountered that month in the five Texas sectors of the border with Mexico — fewer than the 44,000 monthly migrants encountered in the final months of the first Trump presidency.

STATE PLAN FOR \$3 BILLION TO EXPAND BROADBAND APPROVED

The state has won federal approval to move forward with its plan to improve broadband internet access for the estimated 7 million Texas residents who don't have access, The Texas Tribune reported.

The approval came from the National Telecommunications and Information Administration, which means the state now has access to about \$3.3 billion in federal funding included in the 2021 Bipartisan Infrastructure Law.

The state has already awarded more than \$1 billion in state and federal funding for broadband investments. Last week, applicants in 15 counties were awarded \$580 million to

NEWLY PURCHASED RANCH COULD BE DEPORTEE STAGING AREA

A Starr County ranch purchased last month by the state has been offered as a staging area for potential mass deportations promised by President-elect Donald Trump, according to The Washington Post. Texas Land Commissioner Dawn Buckingham sent a letter to Trump on Nov. 14 extending the offer.

Tom Homan, former director of the U.S. Immigration and Customs Enforcement agency and Trump's pick to be "border

czar," said the incoming administration would "absolutely" use the 1,400-acre parcel of land.

"We absolutely will. When we find somebody — it's a targeted enforcement operation. When they get arrested, they'll be detained," Homan said.

"We feel like this is actually very well-located. The land is very flat there. It's adjacent to major airports. It's also adjacent to a bridge over the river," Buckingham said. "So, if it's helpful, then I would love to partner up with the federal government. And if it's not, then we'll continue to look to ways to be helpful to them."

TEXAS STILL LEADS NATION IN JOB GROWTH

The Lone Star State has again led the nation in job creation over the past 12 months — October 2023 to October 2024 — adding nearly 275,000 non-farm jobs during that time period.

"With the best business climate in the nation and a skilled and growing workforce, Texas is where innovative entrepreneurs and businesses find the freedom and tools needed to succeed," Abbott said.

Coming in second in job creation during that same time frame was California, which added 212,000 jobs, according to the Bureau of Labor Statistics, followed by New York, which added 133,600 jobs.

The state's unemployment rate has changed little in the past year, reported at 4.1% last month, up just two-tenths of a percentage point from October 2023.

LAWMAKER SEEKS FUNDS TO PLUG WELLS, CUT EMISSIONS

A West Texas legislator has introduced bills that would provide millions of dollars to the state to seal abandoned oil and gas wells.

The money would come from taxes being collected from oil and gas companies that now go to schools, highways and the state's "rainy day fund," or savings account.

State Rep. Brooks Landgraf, R-Odessa, is seeking to use the money now going to the rainy-day fund that is collected from those companies. The measure would require approval of the Legislature, governor and voters in a November 2025 amendment election.

So-called orphaned wells have proven to be hazardous, with at least eight erupting with briny water since October 2023. For example, a well blew out last December in Imperial that took more than two months and \$2.5 million to clean up, according to The Tribune.

SPECIALTY LICENSE PLATE AUCTION DRAWS BIG BIDS

The bidding is over for the My Plates Great Plate Auction 2024, with winners spending more than \$71,000 on 50 different messages that were offered. The most expensive plate was "ACE," which sold for \$20,500, according to the Chronicle. Coming in a distant second was "006," a play of James Bond's 007. It sold for \$9,000.

"BOSSMAN" sold for \$3,600, while REAL and TEX4S each garnered \$2,700. None of those bids compare to the most expensive license plate ever sold in Texas. That was in 2013, when 12THMAN sold for \$115,000.

Those Aggies...

THE POSTSCRIPT
By Carrie Classon

Waiting for a Friend



My husband, Peter, told me about the unlikely friendship.

When we stay in Mexico, Peter walks the same route up to the environmental preserve every day. It's a steep climb to the park, which is filled with wildlife and rare plants. Because Peter walks the same streets daily, he has gotten to know a lot of the people who have homes on the way up.

The whole thing started with Reacher, an exuberant 75-pound Belgian Malinois, and his American expat owner, Anita. The Belgian Malinois is a dog often trained for search and rescue. You might have seen videos of them scaling walls. Peter never saw Reacher actually climbing any walls, but he never doubted his ability to do so if the need arose.

Reacher is less than two years old, and he is a handful. Peter would stop and talk to Anita while she was trying (with limited success) to curb Reacher's more enthusiastic impulses.

In Anita's neighborhood, there also lived a feral dog who did not have a name or a home. Peter would regularly see him as well. Peter thought he was part lab and part herding dog and probably a lot of something else. The dog stayed in the neighborhood, so Peter figured folks must have left food for him. Most days, he stayed in a shady spot in the dirt under a tree.

The dog was not aggressive, but he was very wary of people. He never made eye contact with Peter and would back off if Peter got too close when he walked by. People who lived in the area said he'd been there, under the tree, quietly staying out of the way, for a couple of years.

But then Reacher met him. Belgian Malinois are apparently known for the strong bond they form with other dogs (presumably that's an asset in the search-and-rescue biz), and Reacher took an interest in this stray dog in his neighborhood.

I wasn't there, and neither was Peter, but according to Anita, Reacher tried to make friends with this dog. It was a slow process, but Reacher was determined and, eventually, the feral dog started cautiously following Reacher. One day, he followed Reacher home and walked right into the outdoor courtyard and stayed for a little while. Anita gave him some food. This continued and, finally, the dog (who Anita started calling Duke) followed Reacher all the way into Anita's house. And he stayed.

Duke was still very shy around people, but he trusted Reacher and soon he started to trust Anita and her husband. Duke started letting them pet him and make eye contact. Anita took him to the vet to be fixed. The vet said he thought Duke was about five years old. Duke was bathed. He had his teeth cleaned. He started sleeping on a couch. And now Duke is Anita's second dog and lives with Reacher.

Peter now sees Reacher and Duke and Anita on their walks together. Duke is very submissive and laid-back. Reacher is as exuberant as ever. "I think I could pet Duke now, if I wanted to," Peter told me.

Duke has bonded with Anita, and he is obviously Reacher's best friend. And none of it would have happened without Reacher.

I love this story so much. It seems to me that everyone made a lot of assumptions about Duke—the kind of assumptions I make every day—and all of those assumptions turned out to be wrong. It took someone like Reacher to see that Duke was just waiting for a friend.

Till next time,
Carrie

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FOOTBALL SEASON WEEK 14:

Ohio State, Oregon meet for Big 10 title: Texans get much-needed week off to regroup

It's conference title weekend across the country and heading into the Thanksgiving Weekend, the only league that has its title game set is the Big 10, which will feature a rematch at No. 1-ranked Oregon will face off against No. 2-ranked Ohio State on Saturday, Dec. 7 at Lucas Oil Fieldhouse in Indianapolis.

These two teams met on Oct. 12 in Oregon, with the Ducks pulling off a 32-31 win over the Buckeyes. Ohio State has not lost a game since that meeting in Eugene, but then again, neither have the Ducks.

That loss seemed to be a wakeup call for Ryan Day's team, especially the defense, which has allowed just 52 points since that game.

Ohio State could very well be the best team playing at this juncture of the season and that could be bad news for the Ducks. No matter what happens in Indy on Saturday, both teams should earn berths in the College Football Playoffs now that it has become a 12-team tournament. The winner of this one could very well earn the No. 1 seed and earn a very important first round bye, while the loser should host a first-round game.

While the Big 10 is settled, that can't be said for the other major conferences, especially the SEC and Big 12. Two weeks ago, a plethora of upsets clouded the picture of who would play in each of those respective conference title games.

Texas appears headed to the SEC title game if they beat Texas A&M on Nov. 30. Their opponent could very well be Georgia, thanks to Alabama's stubbing its toe at Oklahoma (a 24-3 loss). The Aggies hurt their chances to earning their first-ever trip to the SEC title game by being upset by a five-win Auburn team in four overtimes. Mike Elko's team fell behind 21-0, but rallied to tie things up in the fourth quarter, only to lose in the fourth OT and badly hurt their SEC title game and CFP chances.

Colorado was upset at Kansas to slow their roll in the Big 12. Deion Sanders' team could earn a berth in the league title game with a season-ending win against disappointing Oklahoma State.

But with so much still to be decided, the only college game we will pick this week will be the Oregon-Ohio State tilt.

In the NFL, the Texans get a much-needed week off after losing at home to a then two-win Tennessee team. The Houston secondary was torched all afternoon and the offensive line had QB C.J. Stroud running for his life. Things only get tougher in the coming weeks as the Texans have games against a hot Miami team, Kansas City on Dec. 21 and Baltimore on Christmas Day. That's three games in a stretch of 10 days. Wow!

Week 14 kicks off with a good one in the NFC North on Thursday Night Football as the Packers visit the first-place Lions. On Sunday, Atlanta visits Minnesota in a key game for both team's playoff chances, while Seattle visit Arizona in an important NFC West contest. This will be the second time in three weeks these two have met. Two weeks ago, the Seahawks earned a hard-fought 16-6 home win over the Cardinals to force a tie in the division.

Buffalo heads west to take on the Rams, and there's a good one in the AFC West on Sunday Night Football as the Chargers visit the defending Super Bowl champs in Kansas City. Monday Night Football has the Bengals visiting the Cowboys, in a meeting of two disappointing teams this season.

Before we take a look at this weekend's game, let's review last week's record. A 6-6 week brought the season record to 93-39 (68%).

Now, onto this weekend's games.

NCAA



Ohio State vs. Oregon, Big 10 title game - The first game between these two was a barnburner with the Ducks outlasting the Buckeyes, 32-31. The rematch should be just as good. I think playing in a neutral environment will be a big plus for the Buckeyes, who have been here before. Oregon has played in the Pac 12 title games a few times, but the Buckeyes are used to playing in Indy and will be out to revenge that Oct. 12 loss in Eugene. The Buckeyes are playing as well as any team in the country at this time, and that includes the top-ranked Ducks. OSU will look for a big game from QB Will Howard (2,685 yards, 26 TDs), running back Quinshon Judkins (759 yards, 8 TDs) and TreVeyon Henderson (730 yards, 6 TDs) and big-play wideouts Jeremiah Smith (52 receptions, 899 yards, 9 TDS) and Emeka Egbuka (56 receptions, 652 yards, 9 TDs). The Ohio State defense has been a force as of late, but that unit will face a very good offense in Oregon, led by QB Dylan Gabriel (3,066 yards, 22 TDs), running back Jordan James (1,067 yards, 11 TDs) and steady wideouts Tez Johnson (64 receptions, 649 yards, 8 TDs) and former Aggie Evan Stewart (47 receptions, 609 yards, 5 TDs). I think the OSU defense will be the difference maker in this one as the Buckeyes earn the Big 10 title. My pick, Ohio State 24, Oregon 17

NFL

Green Bay at Detroit - A good one to start Week 14 pits the Packers against the division-leading Lions. Two weeks ago, Green Bay dismantled a beat up SF team at home, 38-10, while the Lions won a tough road contest at Indy, 24-6. Detroit is tough to beat at home and QB Jared Goff (2,761 yards, 20 TDs), running back Jahmyr Gibbs (886 yards, 10 TDs) and wide receiver Amon-Ra St. Brown (71 receptions, 747 yards, 9 TDs) will be a handful for a solid GB defense. The Packers have a few offensive weapons of their own in QB Jordan Love (2,244 yards, 18 TDs), running back Josh Jacobs (944 yards, 7 TDs) and wide receiver Jayden Reed (41 receptions, 669 yards, 4 TDs). The Lions want that top seed in the NFC, so don't expect them to slip up against their division rivals on Sunday. My pick, Detroit 26, Green Bay 23

Atlanta at Minnesota - A big game for both teams who are squarely in the playoff hunt. Atlanta has upgraded at QB with Kirk Cousins (2,807 yards, 17 TDs) and they have a dual-threat at running back in Bijan Robinson (783 rushing yards, 6 TDs/45 receptions, 359 yards, 1 TD). They also have a big-play wide receiver in Drake London (61 receptions, 710 yards, 6 TDs) and a go-to guy in Darnell Mooney (48 receptions, 711 yards, 5 TDs). The Vikings have a stout defense that plays well at home. Minnesota has gotten a nice season out of Sam Darnold (2,717 yards, 21 TDs), steady running back Aaron Jones (798 yards, 3 TDs) and two dependable wide receivers in Justin Jefferson (61 receptions, 939 yards, 3 TDs) and Jordan Addison (32 receptions, 521 yards, 4 TDs). Look for the Vikings defense to make things tough on Cousins all afternoon as they pick up a big late-season win. My pick, Minnesota 30, Atlanta 22

Seattle at Arizona - The Cards will look to extract revenge from their loss at Seattle two weeks ago. Tyler Murray and his offensive mates were limited to just six points in that loss, and will look to play much better on Sunday. Seattle will look for QB Geno Smith (3,035 yards, 12 TDs), running back Kenneth Walker III (493 yards, 7 TDs) and wide

receiver Jaxson Smith-Njigba (66 receptions, 755 yards, 4 TDs) to step up in the desert come Sunday. Look for Murray to get the offense back on track as the Cards pick up a big-division win on Sunday. My pick, Arizona 31, Seattle 24

Buffalo at Los Angeles Rams

- The Bills head across the country to take on a Rams team that needs to get back on the winning track if they hope to remain in the NFC West race. Two weeks ago, the Bills enjoyed the weekend off, while the Rams fell at home to the Eagles, 37-20. Buffalo is not scared to play on the road and with QB Josh Allen (2,543 passing yards, 18 TDs/316 rushing yards, 5 TDs), under center, the Bills always have a chance to win at home or on the road. Buffalo also has a strong running game led by James Cook (696 yards, 10 TDs) and dependable receivers in wideouts Khalil Shakir (56 receptions, 599 yards, 2 TDs) and Keon Coleman (22 receptions, 417 yards, 3 TDs) and tight end Dalton Kincaid (34 receptions, 356 yards, 2 TDs). The Rams can put up points as well behind QB Matthew Stafford (2,800 yards, 15 TDs), running back Kyren Williams (822 yards, 9 TDS) and wideouts Cooper Kupp (55 receptions, 548 yards, 5 TDs) and Puka Nacua (37 receptions, 490 yards, 1 TD). Look for Allen to be the difference maker in this one as the Bills get a big road win. My pick, Buffalo 31, Los Angeles Rams 26

Los Angeles Chargers at Kansas City - A big one in the AFC West for the Sunday Night Football crew has the Chargers visiting the Chiefs. LA will need a big game from QB Justin Herbert (2,186 yards, 13 TDs) and running back J.K. Dobbins (726 yards, 8 TDS) against a solid KC defense. Wide receivers Ladd McConkey (43 receptions, 615 yards, 4 TDs) and Quentin Johnson (22 receptions, 365 yards, 6 TDs) will also need to step up as well. Two weeks ago, the KC defense gave up 27 points to the lowly Panthers, but something tells me defensive coordinator Steve Spagnolia will have his troops prepared for this one. The KC offense will once again rely on QB Patrick Mahomes (2,673, 18 TDs), running back Kareem Hunt (577 yards, 5 TDs), tight end Travis Kelce (68 receptions, 569 yards, 2 TDs) and wide receiver Xavier Worthy (28 receptions, 353 yards, 4 TDs) to make plays. KC is tough to beat at home, which the Chargers will discover come Sunday. My pick, Kansas City 30, Los Angeles Chargers, 23

Cincinnati at Dallas - Week 14 concludes with a Monday Night Football meeting between the Bengals and Cowboys. Both teams entered the season with high aspirations, but both have been huge disappointments thus far in the season. The Bengals have one of the best QBs in the league in Joe Burrow (3,028 yards, 27 TDs) and one of the top receivers in Ja'Marr Chase (73 receptions, 1,056 yards, 12 TDs), but their defense has let them down in numerous games this year. Look for running back Chase Brown (607 yards, 5 TDs) to have a big night against a porous Dallas defense. Two weeks ago, the Cowboys did step up with an upset win at Washington, 34-26, as the Pokes returned two kickoffs for touchdowns. Dallas backup QB Cooper Rush (813 yards, 4 TDs) had a nice game throwing for 247 yards and two TDs. He should have another solid game going up against a suspect Cincinnati secondary. Look for wide receiver CeeDee Lamb (77 receptions, 841 yards, 4 TDs) to have a big night on Monday, but I think Burrow will be too much for a bad Cowboys secondary. My pick, Cincinnati 33, Dallas 26



SCORES & SCHEDULES WEEK 14 PLAYOFFS

FBPlayoffsWeek3

LAST WEEK'S SCORE

North Shore 42, Katy 28

THIS WEEK'S SCHEDULE

North Shore vs. Atascocita in the State Regional Finals (quarter-finals) on Saturday, Dec. 7 at 2 p.m. The game will be at Aldine Thorne Stadium. Ticket prices

are \$8 for students pre-sale, \$10 pre-sale for adults and all tickets \$10 at the gate. Tickets can be purchased at the Galena Park ISD Athletic Office at 15025 Wallisville Road from 8 a.m. to 4 p.m. daily. For more information, call the Athletic Office at 832-386-4330.

FBI warns 'tis Season for Scams,

CONTINUED FROM PAGE 1

yield returns. To facilitate the investment and demonstrate the returns on investment, victims are directed to websites that appear authentic but are controlled by the scammer.

Scams specific to the holidays:

In online shopping scams, criminals offer too-good-to-be-true deals via phishing emails, text messages, and fake advertisements on social media. Such schemes may offer brand-name merchandise at extremely low prices or offer gift cards as an incentive. Other sites may offer products at a great price, but the products being sold are not the same as the products advertised. Consumers may pay for an item and give away personal information and credit card details and receive nothing in return except a compromised identity. Bottom line, if a deal looks too good to be true, it probably is!

Charity scams: Charity-related frauds increase during the holidays as individuals look to donate money to those less fortunate and make end-of-year tax deductible gifts. Criminals use phone calls, email campaigns, crowdfunding platforms and fake social media accounts and websites to solicit on behalf of fraudulent charities and end up pocketing all the money for themselves.

Steps to avoid holiday fraud schemes:

- Scan, check, and verify any offers, links, and attachments you see in an email and confirm you are sending or routing your money to legitimate vendors and brokers.
- Routinely check bank and credit card statements, especially after making online purchases and in the weeks following the holiday season.
- Be highly suspicious

of promotions and giveaways that require your personal information.

-- Never give personal information— such as your date of birth, Social Security number, or home address— to anyone you do not know.

-- Before shopping online, secure all your financial accounts with strong passphrases. Additionally, use a different passphrase for each financial account.

-- Prior to donating to any charity, verify they have a valid Taxpayer Identification Number by visiting their website or calling the charity directly.

Reporting fraud: Shoppers who suspect they've been victimized should immediately contact their financial institution, then call their local law enforcement agency. Victims of online scams are also encouraged to file a complaint online with the FBI at www.ic3.gov.

Holiday Calendar

Christmas Performance on Tuesday, Dec. 10 at 5:15 p.m. The performance will be held in the Crosby Elementary School Gym at 14705 FM 2100 in Crosby. The performance is free to the public.

Tuesday, DEC. 10
CONCERT: The Crosby Kindergarten Center Kindergarten presents their Winter Wonderland on Tuesday, Dec. 10 from 5:30 p.m. to 7 p.m. at the Crosby Kindergarten Center - Kinder Building, 805 Runneburg Rd., in Crosby. The event is free for Kinder families.

Thursday, DEC. 12
CONCERT: The Crosby High School Band Winter Concert will be held Thursday, Dec. 12 at the Crosby High School Performing Arts Center, 333 Red Summit Dr., in Crosby. The concert is free and donations are accepted.

Saturday, DEC. 14
CROSBY CHRISTMAS FESTIVAL: The Crosby-Huffman Chamber of Commerce welcomes the public to their 26th Annual Christmas Festival from 1 p.m. to 5 p.m. at Crosby Church, 5725 US-90, in Crosby. The festival is an opportune time for businesses to give back to the community, showcase their wares, and connect with local residents. Enjoy the indoor/outdoor market, with free activities for the family. Free hotdogs, popcorn and cotton candy will be given out. Pictures with Santa and goody bags, balloon artist, petting zoo and so much more. To register for a booth, go to <https://www.surveymonkey.com/r/BH22MH>. For more info, email tiffany@crosbychurch.com or deena@crosbyhuffmancc.org.

Saturday, DEC. 14
CROSBY CHRISTMAS PARADE: After shopping at the chamber of

commerce's festival, drive on over to FM 2100 and watch the annual Christmas Parade with the theme of Favorite Christmas Movie. Trophies will be awarded for 1st, 2nd, and 3rd place. The parade begins at Crosby Middle School and proceed up FM 2100. Trophies will be awarded for 1st, 2nd, and 3rd place. Sponsorships are available. To enter the parade, go to <https://www.surveymonkey.com/r/Y2XFK6M>. For more info, email tiffany@crosbychurch.com or deena@crosbyhuffmancc.org.

Sunday, DEC. 15
MUSIC RECITAL: Enjoy the talented students from the Studio of C. David Taylor for their annual Christmas recital at Church of the Resurrection, 5202 First Street, in Crosby. The recital begins at 2:30 p.m. and the public is invited to a reception for the students in the Parish Hall immediately following the recital.

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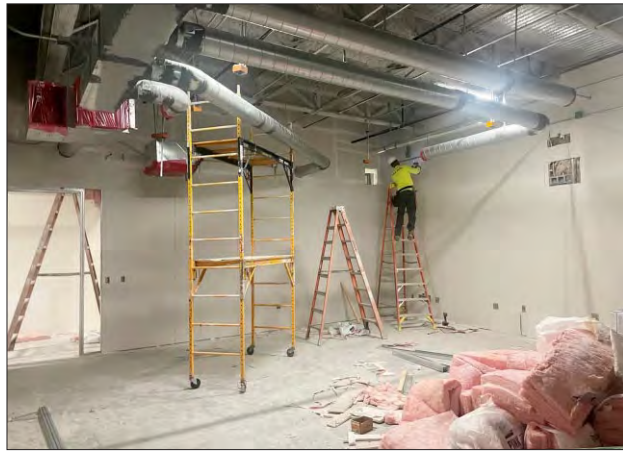
Crosby ISD Expands High School, Upgrades Facilities, and Celebrates the Holiday Season,

CONTINUED FROM PAGE 1

surfacing the areas of the track that needed to be replaced due to wear and tear. We're happy to report the track resurfacing is complete, and all re-striping will be completed in time for the soccer season.

This month, we also launched a redesigned website to enhance convenience for parents and families. Whether you're looking for information on our academic programs, campus extracurricular calendars, lunch menus, or school policies, you'll be able to find it quickly and easily. With our new design, you can quickly navigate anywhere on the site, regardless of which device you're using. The new district and campus web pages feature a streamlined, simplified design intended to improve navigability, decrease load times, and make for a more enjoyable user experience. Check it out at www.crosbyisd.org.

I wanted to share an important reminder as we

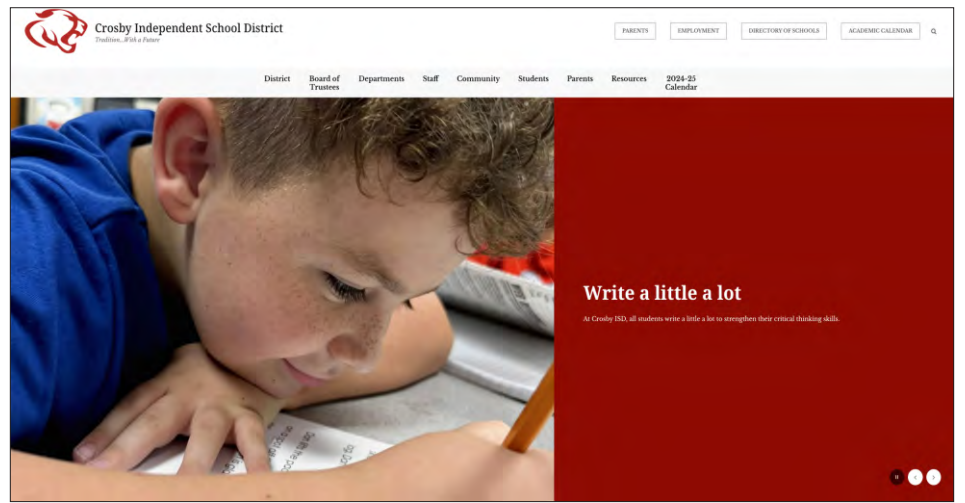


Construction crews are transforming a former storage space in the current structure of Crosby High School. What was originally designated as an LGI (Large Group Instruction) room will now be divided into standard classrooms to provide additional instructional space that is separate from the CHS expansion.

approach the end of the semester. In January, the district's hybrid calendar switches back to class being held on Mondays through Fridays for the entire month of January. The start of the new year coincides with a new semester, and the five-day instructional calendar for January is a good chance for students, staff mem-

bers, and families to reset to a new routine after the holidays.

Looking ahead to Crosby ISD's Winter Break, students will be released early for the break on Friday, December 20. CHS and CMS students will be dismissed at 11:20am, while elementary and Pre-K/kindergarten students will be released at



Screen shot of new www.crosbyisd.org website. The new district and campus web pages feature a streamlined, simplified design intended to improve navigability, decrease load times, and make for a more enjoyable experience for families.

12:10pm. The district's Winter Break runs from Monday, December 23 through Friday, January 3, 2025. Staff returns for a Staff Development Day on Monday, January 6. Students return to class on Tuesday, January 7.

I hope our families enjoy the holiday performances at each of our campuses all month long.

Most of the performances are free and being held in the evening so as many family members as possible can attend. You can check the full list of performance dates and times on our website: <https://www.crosbyisd.org/post/board/district-events/post/holiday-performances-in-crosby-isd>. It is a joy watching kindergarteners

sing their hearts out and listening to band / choir students play holiday classics is sure to put a smile on your face. Some of the best gifts of the holiday season are watching our students share their gifts with all of us.

We are Committed to Excellence! Go Coogs!

THEA Dinner Meeting,

CONTINUED FROM PAGE 1

ers to watch their email inboxes over the coming weeks for an update.

The group also discussed the San Jacinto Waste Pits, a long draw-out process by the government to clean up the Superfund site.

The southern waste pit was remediated as outlined in the Record of Decision down to 10 feet that was completed earlier this year. Now they turn their attention to the northern site.

"Most of you probably know that what they're proposing is outlining the structure with this double

Cofferdam wall, and then excavating the material within it," she explained.

On July 17, the responsible parties submitted a 100 percent design for the cleanup to the EPA.

"We reviewed those documents, thousands of pages of technical writing, and submitted the most intense and lengthy comments and questions ever before to the EPA," she said.

The group received good news that they were being heard.

"Fast forward to October 25 and the EPA submitted their comments to the responsible parties. In those comments, they incorporated many of the things we asked about, and a lot of that was incorporated," Medcalf reported.

Some of the concerns were what happens when a truck leaves the site and it hasn't been cleaned on the inside, and the trucking company hires a third-party company to clean that, does that person know that they should be protected from the dioxins or what they're about to come in contact with?

THEA members had hoped that the entire site would be taken over by the EPA but that didn't occur. Now the responsible parties have until November 25 to address the comments and resubmit a design.

Medcalf said she and her staff found numerous inconsistencies in the responsible parties' comments that the EPA picked up on. The agency submitted 138 comments in total to the 100 percent design. One of those concerned testing at the site. "One of the other items that was really important to us that we saw get picked up by the EPA was the type of test that will be done on the material before it goes to the disposal facility, which will determine if it is going as hazardous or non-hazardous," she said.

As of now, the EPA conceded that it would go as non-hazardous, but there's the caveat that it must be tested before it goes.

"The responsible parties were not even saying that they would test for

dioxin. Well, that's the primary contaminant at this site," she exclaimed.

The EPA reiterated in their comments to the responsible parties that they have to require that dioxins be tested before the waste is disposed of."

TxDOT is finally getting more involved in this process. Medcalf said TxDOT is saying maybe they can use that structure to protect the bridge and their construction.

"TxDOT is saying, either we have to reconfigure what is called the BMP, the wall, the cofferdam wall, either we have to reconfigure it, or consider that in the outer structure, staying there, or being there in part to also protect the bridge construction, which isn't half that idea, if it's designed to work," Medcalf said.

The EPA responded that "the pilons are not designed to absorb the full impact of a drifting barge moving at 3.14 feet per second or two miles per hour."

The report states that a barge moving at that speed would break through the pile barrier, but with substantially dissipated energy.

"The only positive thing I have to say about that is that they're (EPA) listening. They're not getting it done quick enough for any of us, but they are listening."



Highlands Rotary Club

50th Annual Chili Feast, Raffle & Auction

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11 a.m to 3 p.m. Live Auction at 12pm



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Raffle Tickets \$100 Donation (includes 2 Chili dinners)

Meal Tickets at the Door \$10

Raffle Tickets purchased before Jan. 7, 2025 are eligible for the Early Bird Drawing for a \$300 Gift Card.

Winners Need Not Be Present to Win!

Payment of all local, state, & federal taxes will be responsibility of the winner

Tickets Available From Highlands Rotarians



Tickets Available At Many Local Businesses

1st Ticket Drawn: \$200 Gift Card
 50th Ticket Drawn: 32" Smart TV
 100th Ticket Drawn: Portable Ice Maker
 150th Ticket Drawn: \$200 Gift Card
 200th Ticket Drawn: Air Compressor/Battery Charger
 250th Ticket Drawn: Beats Solo 3 Wireless Headphones
 300th Ticket Drawn: \$200 Gift Card
 350th Ticket Drawn: Air Fryer
 400th Ticket Drawn: 65 Qt RTIC Cooler

450th Ticket Drawn: Shotgun
 500th Ticket Drawn: \$200 Gift Card
 550th Ticket Drawn: 28" Black Stone Cooker
 600th Ticket Drawn: Outdoor Propane Fire Pit
 650th Ticket Drawn: 22-250 Rifle
 699th Ticket Drawn: 55" Smart TV
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From left, Diane Keaton, Kathy Bates and Alfre Woodard star in "Summer Camp."

"Summer Camp"

"SUMMER CAMP" (PG-13) -- Nothing keeps Diane Keaton ("Maybe I Do") from a comedy film about a group of older women, as evidenced by her starring in this film from the same producers of her other buddy-comedy franchise "Book Club." In "Summer Camp," Keaton plays Nora, who is best friends with Ginny (Kathy Bates) and Mary (Alfre Woodard), and their trio used to spend every summer as kids at sleepaway camp together. Although they're now much older than your normal camper, when they get the opportunity to attend a summer camp reunion, the women see it as a rare chance to bond and reminisce on their glory days. Eugene Levy, Josh Peck and Nicole Richie co-star in the film, out on Dec. 6. (Hulu)

became the fourth-highest-grossing film of 2024, garnering \$309.7 million against a \$78 million cost. A sequel for the film is already in development following its great commercial success, with critics praising its watercolor animation style and emotional storytelling. Lupita Nyong'o ("A Quiet Place: Day One") lends her voice to portray Roz, a service robot who gets shipwrecked on an island that seems to be the antithesis of her technological makeup. But as Roz befriends the local wildlife in the area, including Fink the fox (Pedro Pascal) and Brightbill the goose (Kit Connor), she not only figures out how to exist on the island -- she also finds her home. Out now to rent. (Amazon Prime Video)

"THE WILD ROBOT" (PG) -- This animated sci-fi film

"CONCLAVE" (PG) -- The magnetic yet terrifying Ralph Fiennes ("The Menu") stars in

this mystery-thriller film based on the 2016 novel by Robert Harris. (Although with a PG rating, how thrilling can it really be?) In the film, Cardinal Thomas Lawrence (Fiennes) is tasked with leading the papal conclave to select the new pope, after the current Pope dies of a heart attack. With four candidates to choose from but none who really strikes a chord with the College of Cardinals, Lawrence must hold vote after vote until the cardinals decide on who will be the most powerful man in the Catholic church. Between these votes, plenty of shady politics and secrets transpire. Stanley Tucci and John Lithgow co-star in "Conclave," out now to rent. (Apple TV+)

"DEAR SANTA" (PG-13) -- Jack Black ("Borderlands") leads this Christmas comedy movie, co-starring Keegan-Michael Key ("Transformers One") and Jason Alexander ("Stealing Pulp Fiction"). "Dear Santa" follows a young boy named Liam, who accidentally makes a crucial spelling error when writing his annual Christmas letter to Santa. Instead of being delivered to the North Pole, the letter gets delivered to literal hell as it is, indeed, addressed to Satan. So, when the horned devil appears to grant him three wishes, rather than the jolly old man he was expecting, he knows he's in for quite an adventure. Out now. (Paramount+)

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HOLLYWOOD

by Tony Rizzo

HOLLYWOOD -- In 2001, Oscar winner Renee Zellweger gave us "Bridget Jones's Diary," which grossed \$334.2 million against a \$25-million cost. Four years later, "Bridget Jones: The Edge of Reason" came and grossed \$265.1 million against a \$50-million cost. In 2016, she made "Bridget Jones's Baby," which grossed \$212 million against a \$35-million cost, and now we'll get "Bridget Jones: Mad About the Boy," with Emma Thompson, Chiwetel Ejiofor, Isla Fisher, Gemma Jones and Jim Broadbent, just in time for Valentine's Day.

Social media's been buzzing about "Blue Bloods," with fans inferring that it'll be renewed for season 15. Official blurbs claim that Tom Selleck is certain CBS will come to their senses and renew it. But even as a producer and an Emmy winner for "Magnum, P.I.," he couldn't get the hit series past eight seasons.

When "Blue Bloods" began in 2010, the actors' contracts had automatic salary bumps yearly. By season 13, actors had to take pay cuts to reduce the high cost of producing the show or face cancellation. Selleck, of course, was the highest-paid at \$200,000 an episode, while Donnie Wahlberg earned \$60,000 in the beginning but was bumped up to \$150,000. Will Estes earned \$100,000, and when you're in all 288 episodes as they were, it becomes a big payday! Add in the escalated costs of shooting in NYC, and CBS had to cancel the show!

Had it remained a top-10 show (it's currently placed 37), it might have swayed CBS Entertainment president Amy Reisenbach, who explained, "It is a function of having a really strong schedule that we have to refresh, and that means in order to refresh, shows have to eventually end."

There were even alleged quotes from Selleck saying that he needs "Blue Bloods" to be renewed in order to maintain his avocado farm, which had to be untrue since his net worth is estimated to be at \$45 million!



Renee Zellweger in "Bridget Jones's Baby" (2016)

Are you ready for "Black Panther 3" starring Denzel Washington? Washington's currently doing Broadway in "Othello," which he plans to make into a film. He's also starring in "Gladiator II," which swashbuckled into theaters on Nov. 22, and he's just completed Spike Lee's Apple TV+ crime thriller "High and Low," with Jeffrey Wright. On Dec. 28, Washington turns 70, and in a recent interview, he confessed, "Especially at this point in my career, I am only interested in working with the best. ... I want to do things I haven't done."

Dwayne Johnson's riding high with "Red One," an exceptional action/thriller Christmas movie co-starring Chris Evans, J.K. Simmons and Lucy Liu. He also has the animated film "Moana 2" coming out on Nov. 27 and the live-action "Moana" due in July 2026. Back in 2002, he informed his agents that he wanted to be bigger than Will Smith or George Clooney. When they expressed skepticism, The Rock delivered a TKO punch and sacked them!

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ENTERTAINMENT

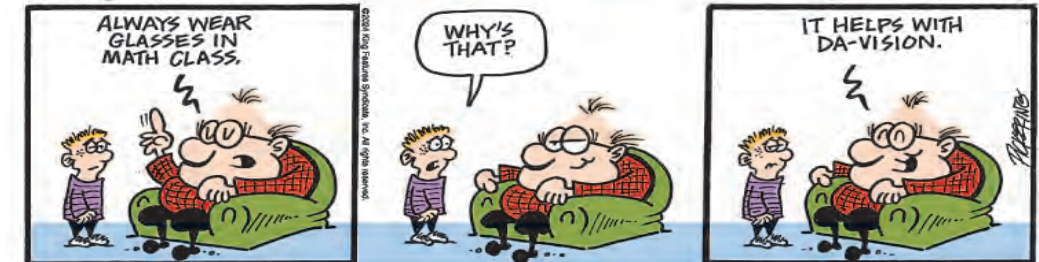
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TIGER



The Spats



Weekly SUDOKU

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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 BOLTINOFF

Find at least six differences in details between panels.

Differences: 1. Suitcase is larger; 2. Backpack is smaller; 3. Moon is larger; 4. Window is added; 5. Mouth is closed; 6. Bush is present.

December 2, 2024 Posting Date

King Crossword

ACROSS

- Winter coaster
- Gear tooth
- Guesser's words
- "Arrivederci!"
- Notre Dame coach
- German refusal
- Well-known
- Body powder
- "Now, where -- ?"
- Novelist Deighton
- One of the Kardashians
- Squeak stopper
- Golfer Trevino
- Lake flock
- Neighbor of Germany
- Penny
- Physique
- Sci-fi race
- Boise native
- Labor group
- Work unit
- Prof's degree
- Presentation aid
- Romance
- "Right you --!"
- Petty of "Tank Girl"
- Working
- "Topaz" author
- Dhabi
- Roman censor
- Ordered
- Prof's helpers
- Strong farm team
- Getting better
- Authentic
- Missile shelter
- Formerly
- Yale students
- "Community" actor Jeong
- Up-and-coming
- Guided
- Biol. or chem.
- Marry
- Santa -- winds
- Mafia boss
- Foreman foe
- Aussie hopper
- Family
- Satchel
- Scrap
- "Oops!"
- VIP on Air
- Force One
- Sandwich type
- Circle dance
- Bone-dry
- Connecticut Sun's org.
- Trojan War hero
- Memory method
- Black, in verse
- Feedbag tidbit
- friendly

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Trivia Test

by Fifi Rodriguez

- ANATOMY: Where is the glabella located in the human body?
- LITERATURE: In children's books, what is the name of the Big Red Dog?
- GEOGRAPHY: In which country would you find the 98-foot-tall Christ the Redeemer figure?
- GAMES: What number is represented by the phrase "two little ducks" in bingo?
- SCIENCE: What percentage of air is nitrogen gas?
- MUSIC: When did Rock the Vote, an organization that encourages young people to vote, come into being?
- TELEVISION: Which 1970s comedy show features the theme song "Come On Get Happy"?
- GENERAL KNOWLEDGE: Which month of the year has the least number of letters?
- U.S. STATES: Which state is first alphabetically?
- MOVIES: Which 1983 movie features a character named Tony Montana?

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King Crossword

Solution time: 23 mins.

Answers

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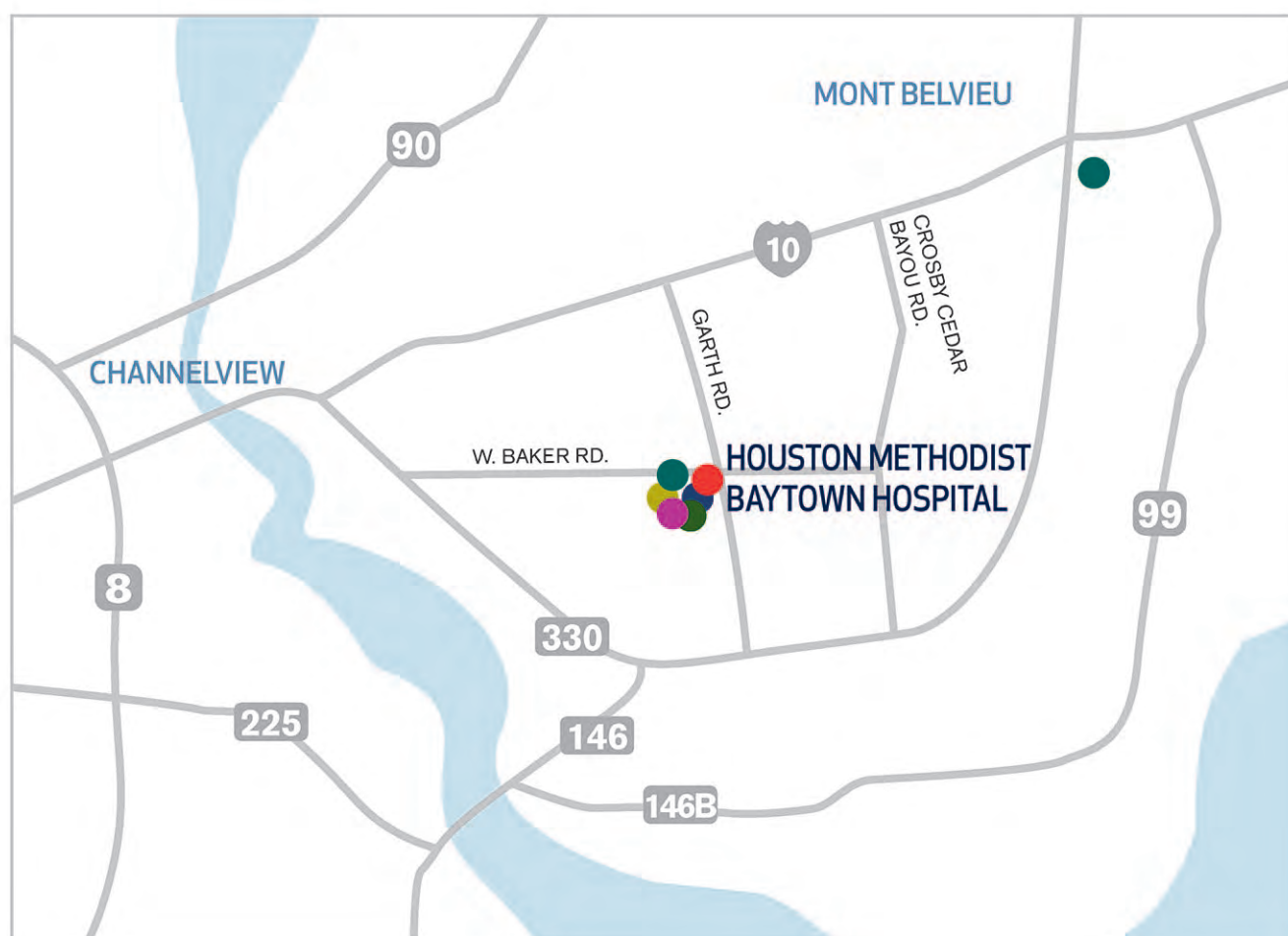


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