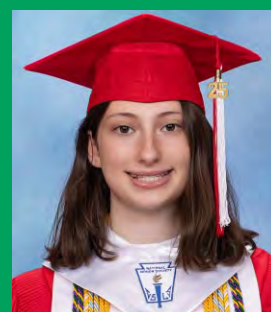




Trinity-Cook Thompson Valedictorian



Meredith Randall Salutatorian

Graduation ceremony is Friday, May 30 at 7pm at Cougar Stadium

HIGHLANDS

CROSBY

Star Courier

Serving Highlands, Crosby, Huffman and Surrounding Communities since 1955 ■ www.starcouriernews.com

VOL. 72, NO. 18 - \$1.00 © Copyright 2025

THURSDAY, MAY 8, 2025

P.O. DRAWER 446, HIGHLANDS, TEXAS 77562

IN THE STARS

Crosby Rodeo announces 2025 schedule

Crosby Fair and Rodeo will kick off starting Friday May 30 and 31st with the Cook-off, and then Monday June 2nd - June 4th the Fair begins with youth exhibits each day/evening. On Thursday June 5th there will be an auction dinner for Buyers from 4-6 p.m. followed by the live auction at 6:00 p.m. Friday June 6th and Saturday the 7th we will have a CPRA Rodeo followed by live entertainment.

In 2024 alone, thanks to your support, Crosby Fair and Rodeo gave away \$47,500.00 in scholarships to our local youth.

You can purchase a membership badge at the CF&R office. Membership is \$60.00 per badge and gets you admission to both nights of Cook-Off & Rodeo as well as the annual Membership Feed.

If you have any questions, please reach out to us through one of the contacts below.

Office 281.328.2113 info@crosbyrodeo.com https://www.crosbyrodeo.com/

May 3 Election Results

Harris County Clerk reports the following results:

LEE COLLEGE

-Pos. 4 Pam Warford 1359 votes (100%)

-Pos. 5 Heron Thomas 902 votes (50.5%)

-Pos. 6 Daryl Fontenot 1,248 votes (72.98%)

HC ESD #5

-Tax Rate Election For 90 votes (32.37%)

Against 188 votes (67.63%)

SAN JACINTO COLLEGE

-Pos. 3 -Salvador Serrano Jr. 3,774 votes (41.36%)

-Judy Harrison 3,752 votes (41.12%)

-Pos. 4 Larry Wilson 5,489 votes (60.77%)

HC FWSD#1A

-Elect 3 Directors -Teresa Lanphier 84 votes (18.96%)

-Anita Gonzales-Evans 81 votes (18.28%)

-Sherman Gray III 76 votes (17.16%)

For additional info: www.harrisvotes.com.

Highlands-Lynchburg Chamber Luncheon May 8

May Luncheon, May 8 at 12pm, Highlands Community Center. Program: Lisa Blackwell, Librarian. Reservations: allabouthighlands.org

Crosby-Huffman Chamber Luncheon May 15

May Luncheon, May 15 at 11:30am, Crosby Community Center, 409 Hare Road, Crosby. Program: TBA Visiting Angels Baytown, sponsor. Caterer: Teapot Depot. www.crosbyhuffmancc.org.

Packed Crosby Meeting hears about Cancer Clusters

By David Taylor Managing Editor

They came from everywhere: Baytown, Highlands, North Shore, Atascocita, Kingwood and all corners of Crosby seeking answers concerning the new designation of the area as a cancer cluster. A recent report from the Texas Department of State Health Services (DSHS) designated a 250-square mile area of east Harris County as a cancer cluster and residents want answers.

Texas Health and Environment Alliance last Monday night, April 21, hosted the second of two public meetings at a packed Crosby Community Center to present information they had learned from requesting the study conducted by the Texas DSHS.



THEA DIRECTOR JACKIE MEDCALF EXPLAINS LATEST TESTS FROM THE TEXAS HEALTH DEPARTMENT, WHAT THEY INCLUDE AND WHAT THEY DON'T INCLUDE. RED BALLOONS MARK CHAIRS WHERE THE STATE DIDN'T SHOW UP ALTHOUGH THEY WERE INVITED TO ATTEND.

There were representatives from Harris County Pollution Control and Pct. 3 Commissioner Tom Ramsey's office, but no others

showed up including the DSHS who was invited.

"We (THEA) requested that study, and for the year that we worked with the

state agency, they told us that they would come to the communities and do outreach with us," said Jackie Medcalf, executive

director and founder of THEA.

"When we scheduled the meetings a couple of months ago for this month, we invited them, and they blanket declined to come to either of the two community meetings." To represent the absent agency, a table at the front with red balloons were tied to their chairs.

"Why did we request this study? We've been a 501(c)(3) nonprofit organization now for 10 years and we strive to protect public health and the environment from the harmful effects of toxic waste," Medcalf told everyone.

"We are not the government. We are not a law firm. We are apolitical. My background is in environmental science and envi-

Continued. See CANCER CLUSTER MEETING, Page 5

CROSBY SUPERINTENDENT'S MESSAGE

Crosby ISD to Open New Sixth Grade Campus, Prepares for Graduation and Summer Hiring

Hello East Harris County and Crosby ISD families,

Happy May! We're in the homestretch of the 2024-25 School Year! We're three weeks away from our last day of school. On May 30, our graduating seniors will instantly become Crosby High School alumni as they walk across the stage at Cougar Stadium. It's a magical moment for everyone.

We are excited to move forward with construction of a new Sixth Grade Campus in Crosby ISD. The Board of Trustees approved building the new campus at the April 21 meeting. The Sixth Grade



Dr. Paula Patterson Crosby Superintendent

Campus will be located between the current Crosby Middle School and Crosby High School campuses. Once the Sixth Grade Campus opens, Crosby Middle School will then become home to seventh and eighth graders only.

All sixth-grade students in the district would attend the standalone Sixth Grade Campus. The current Crosby High School expansion gives us room for the student growth we've seen at that particular campus. Overcrowding at the middle school is something we believe a Sixth Grade Campus can relieve within two years. The site of the campus makes financial sense, since the district already owns the land. We can begin the design phase almost immediately with construction to follow. The new campus will likely open in time for the 2027-28 Academic Year.



Crosby High School health science teachers, Ms. Kristi Thompson and Ms. Candace McMahon, hosted the largest Health Sciences Certification Ceremony in CHS history. 38 students earned certification as EKG, phlebotomy, or patient care technicians. They performed more than 1300 venous punctures and 300 EKG's this year to achieve their certifications.

Continued. See CROSBY SUPERINTENDENT, Page 6

Embattled Huffman Superintendent No Longer Heads Huffman ISD

By David Taylor Managing Editor

Following an intense four-hour executive session at their latest specially-called school board meeting, Huffman superintendent Dr. Benny Soileau will no longer be leading the district, according to a cryptic message sent out to the public and school personnel.

At the April 14, 2025, board meeting, only one item was on the agenda and that was an executive session to discuss the superintendent's evaluation and contract per Texas Government Code 551.071 and 551.074.

The meeting was opened at 6:03 p.m. by Board President Jared Dagley, and attended by board members Ray Burt, Layla Karasek, Julie Sullivan, Dean Warren, Patrick Terry, and Sam Pier with Soileau also present. A small contingent of additional members from the public also attended. Board members didn't reappear until 10:17 p.m. to close the session and adjourn the meeting until 10:17 p.m. and Soileau was notably missing.

"I move that the board authorize the



Dr. Benny Soileau

board president to proceed with related actions regarding the superintendent's evaluation as discussed in closed session," read Board Secretary Layla Karasek and seconded by Julie Sullivan, assistant secretary. The vote was unanimous.

Shortly after the meeting, a note was posted that read, "As we transition into the future and prepare for a new chapter of leadership in Huffman ISD, we remain firmly committed to our mission of fostering a culture where students and staff are empow

Continued. See HUFFMAN SUPERINTENDENT, Page 5

HELPING HIGHLANDS LITTLE LEAGUE



After the theft of over \$10,000 in Lawn equipment, the Highlands Community got together and raised money to replace all. ABOVE, Highlands Rotary, Sampson Lodge, and Seniors Helping Seniors present a check to HLL representatives. LEFT, Eva Russell and her mother Casie Russell with HLL and Lodge representatives. Eva was top seller at the Sampson Lodge Fish Fry Fundraiser for HLL.

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SCHOOL NEWS PAGE

Cedar Bayou Junior School Honors U.S. & Texas Flags with Replacement Ceremony

Story by: Nancy Bonds, GCCISD Director of Communications

Cedar Bayou Junior School recently held a meaningful flag replacement ceremony, emphasizing respect, patriotism, and student education. In partnership with the Spindletop VFW Post 1806, the event reinforced the importance of proper flag etiquette and national pride.

The ceremony, led by Post Commander Marvin Cash and Post Chaplain Jorge Gonzalez, demonstrated how to respectfully retire or replace American and Texas flags when their edges become frayed or faded. While this event was considered more of a replacement than a full retirement, it upheld the solemnity and dignity of the process.



CBJ students assist Post Chaplain Jorge Gonzalez with replacing the Texas Flag.

Students learned the symbolic significance of the 13 ceremonial folds in the American flag, each with its own meaning, and the importance of reciting the Pledge of Allegiance when raising the flag. The

proper retirement of flags typically involves burial or ceremonial destruction, which was also discussed during the event.

Cedar Bayou Principal Dr. Rogelio Cardona remarked, "It is an honor to have a local VFW to help educate our students on the U.S. flag code. We are blessed to



CBJ students assist Post Chaplain Jorge Gonzalez with replacing the U.S. Flag.

have these heroes positively influence our future."

Sixth grader Grady Lockett was instrumental in the ceremony, helped lower the worn flags, and raised the new ones alongside Jorge Gonzalez. Several students also participated in folding the flags with care and precision. These students included seventh graders Jax Husband and Nagwa Abdelghany and eighth graders Alizay Jaime, Adilyn Jaime, Samantha Santibanez, and Camila Avalos.

Special thanks to orchestra teacher Kerry Rice for coordinating student participation in this event. Cedar Bayou Junior School is proud to promote honor, leadership, and civic responsibility among its students through experiences like these.

San Jacinto Community Center's Cinco de Mayo Celebration Unites Harris County Precinct 3 in Joy and Unity

By Tonya Kostka, Director - San Jacinto Community Center

The San Jacinto Community Center hosted a spectacular Cinco de Mayo celebration today, bringing together members from across Harris County Precinct 3. Despite the unpredictable weather, the event was a resounding success, with attendees enjoying a variety of delicious foods, exciting door prizes, and countless photo opportunities. The lively atmosphere was filled with music, dancing, laughter, and the creation of cherished memories.

The community center extended a warm welcome to all participating PCT 3 community centers, making for a truly inclusive and enjoyable gathering.



7 different community centers came together from all over PCT3 to join us in celebrating Cinco de Mayo - over 200 in attendance

Special recognition goes to the committed staff and volunteers who ensured the event ran smoothly and successfully.

The celebration would not have been possible without the generous support of its sponsors, including El Toro Bayway, H-E-B, Visiting Angels Baytown, Clear Sky, Next Level Home Care, Cheri Melcher, Ben E. Keith Food Distribution, Seniors Helping Seniors High-Town, Judge Lucia Bates, and Tom Ramsey Harris County Commissioner PCT 3.

This joyful event not only commemorated Cinco de Mayo but also highlighted the vibrant spirit and collaboration within the community, promising more such gatherings in the future.



Cindy Rial, Sue McDonal, Terry Gandy, & Terri Cook



PCT3 Community Center Directors & Assistant Directors from all over Harris County



Tonya Kostka, Shirley Hausberger, & Brittany White



Kathy and Mark Taylor

Current and Back Issues are available on our website: www.starcouriernews.com

Barbers Hill Press

Dayton

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

VOL. 30, NO. 18

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THURSDAY, MAY 8, 2025

MONT BELVIEU, TEXAS 77580

ON THE HILL

Baytown Rotary: Fish For A Cause

Event: Shrimp & Catfish Festival
Host: Rotary Club of Baytown, Texas
What it Benefits: Local and International projects and nonprofits
Date: Saturday, May 10
Seafood lovers can chow down at this annual festival at the baytown Community Center, where a \$15 ticket buys a meal that includes boiled shrimp, fried catfish, and french fries.

The event features entertainment, live and silent auctions, and a raffle drawing that gives entrants the chance to win a 2025 Honda SUV or pick-up truck.

Rock The Park Concerts

Get Ready to Rock: Mont Belvieu's 2025 "Rock The Park" Lineup is Here!

We hope you're ready to turn up the volume because the City of Mont Belvieu's **Rock The Park is back for 2025!** Our free concert series is bringing an electric lineup to **Mont Belvieu City Park** (10900 Eagle Dr.) that'll have you singing, dancing, and making the most of those perfect Texas nights.

This year, we've got something for everyone:

May 9 – Blank Space: A Taylor Swift Tribute (8:00 p.m.)

June 13 – The Chee-Weez (80's Tribute Band) (8:00 p.m.)

July 4 Celebration Braedon Barnhill – 4:00 p.m.

John Morgan – 5:30 p.m.

Stoney LaRue – 7:30 p.m.

"We are excited to bring Rock The Park back this year," said **Dustin Schubert, MontBelvieu Parks and Recreation Director.** "Great music, delicious food, and an amazing crowd—what's not to love? It's always a fantastic time for the whole family, and we're looking forward to some truly unforgettable concerts."

So, grab your lawn chairs, round up your crew, and meet us at the park! For full details on the bands, food vendors, and all the fun extras happening on concert nights, visit www.montbelvieu.net/concerts.

Visit our New Website for Chambers County News:
www.BHDPRESS.com

Baytown Mayor Honored by Harris County

BAYTOWN - Baytown Mayor Charles Johnson was honored by the Harris County Commissioners Court recently with a proclamation. The proclamation stated that Baytown electing "the city's first Black mayor, in a sign of progress across the county."

"I've loved Baytown all my life," Johnson said, being quoted in the proclamation. "Since I was eight, I knew I wanted to represent my neighbors without regard to race or color."

Johnson was first elected to the Baytown City Council in 2016 as its first Black council



Harris County Commissioners Court honored Baytown Mayor Charles Johnson, with a proclamation celebrating his achievements Thursday, Harris County Pct. 2 Commissioner Adrian Garcia congratulates him. (Photo courtesy of the Harris County Commissioners Court)

member. He served six years in consecutive terms council and was mayor pro-tem, and served on the city's finance committee.

In addition, he also worked and volunteered with various organizations and boards, such as the YMCA Board, the Fred Aguilar Promise Center and Communities in Schools. He has also been involved with the Baytown Chamber of Commerce, Goose Creek ISD Education Foundation and the Highlands Sports Association.

ARTICLE courtesy of Harris County Commissioners Court.

Houston's Historic San Jacinto Monument Getting a \$142M Transformation

HOUSTON - The San Jacinto Monument site is currently planning a significant upgrade that will enhance the historic location for generations of Texans to come. While only in the design phase, the overall plan is already funded thanks to an appropriation from the Texas Legislature.

"This expansion marks a transformative moment for the San Jacinto Museum and Battlefield," Amy Rogers, executive director of the San Jacinto Battlefield State Historic Site and Museum, said in a press release. "With this investment, we are not only preserving Texas history but also enhancing how we share the story of the Battle of San Jacinto with future Texans."

The project will cost \$142 million of taxpayer money. Projected completion date is currently unknown, but updates will be added at the museum's official website.

Current plans include a re-imagined visitor center, expanded display spaces for artifacts from Texas history, classrooms, and



immersive technology segments. Construction is being handled by the San Antonio firm Lake Flato Architects, best known for building the AT&T Center in San Antonio and the World Birding Center Headquarters in Mission. They specialize in public spaces and plan to modernize the museum to make it more welcoming.

"Our design approach will honor the history and

significance of the site while incorporating modern museum best practices," said David Lake, lead architect at Lake Flato. "We are committed to creating a space that seamlessly blends with the existing Monument and enhances the visitor experience."

The award-winning Lord Aeck Sargent firm will handle the historic preservation aspects of the

upgrade. The Atlanta-based company oversaw the preservation of Georgia buildings at Emory University Oxford, the Georgia Institute of Technology, and Georgia College & State University.

The San Jacinto Museum and Battlefield Association has already been undergoing an extensive historical landscaping renovation handled by the artists at TBG. Started with a generous donation of \$1 million from TxDOT, it aims to restore the battlefield to its historic state by removing invasive and non-native trees that would not have been present at the time. Additional upgrades will include new trails designed in a way to guide the visitor through the battle.

"This project represents a bold step forward in how we engage the public with the incredible history of Texas independence," said Mike Lamb, San Jacinto Museum and Battlefield Association board chair. "Our goal is to create an experience that is both educational and deeply meaningful, ensuring that

the legacy of San Jacinto remains alive for generations to come."

The San Jacinto Monument commemorates the final battle of the Texas Revolution, which took place on April 21, 1836. The Texian Army, led by General Sam Houston, surprised the Mexican army at rest, winning the fight in just 18 minutes. General Antonio López de Santa Anna, the president of Mexico, escaped the battle but was captured the next day. He signed a treaty withdrawing Mexican forces from the area and paving the way for the establishment of the Republic of Texas.

The San Jacinto Monument is known for its towering stone obelisk. Standing 567.31 feet high (172.92-meters) and topped with a star, it is the tallest war memorial on Earth and even larger than the Washington Monument in Washington, D.C. For many years, the Battleship Texas was anchored nearby and open for historic tours until it was moved to Galveston for restoration in 2022.

Chicken Salad Chick – Celebrates Grand Opening with Ribbon Cutting Ceremony

BAYTOWN - Chicken Salad Chick celebrated their newest location with a Baytown Chamber of Commerce Ribbon Cutting Ceremony. The Grand Opening was held on Wednesday, April 16th and the first 100 guests were treated to a year of chicken salad! This is the fourth location for owners Kim and Clarke Hayes, who also have stores in Pearland, Pasadena and Lake Jackson. Attendees included Baytown Chamber Ambassadors, Board Members and staff, Baytown Mayor Charles Johnson, Council Members Laura Alvarado and Jacob Powell, as well as Economic Development Manager, Brian Moran.

During their grand opening week, guests experienced the true Southern hospitality that Chicken



Chicken Salad Chick owners Kim and Clarke Hayes, CSC staff, Mayor Johnson, COB Council Members Laura Alvarado and Jacob Powell, City of Baytown Economic Development Manager, Brian Moran along with the Baytown Chamber of Commerce Ambassadors and staff.

Salad Chick is known for, with specials that included:

Free chicken salad for a year, free Quick Chick's, free Chick coolers, and free Chick tote bag's. With more than a dozen original chicken salad flavors as well as side salads, soups, sandwiches and delicious desserts, Chicken Salad Chick's menu has something for everyone!

Chicken Salad Chick Baytown hours of operation are: Monday-Saturday 10:30 am - 8:00 pm. You can find their Baytown location at 4531 Garth Road, Suite 100 in Baytown, visit their Facebook page at <https://www.facebook.com/ChickenSaladChickBaytownTX> or give them a call at (832) 695-1988 for more information.

OPINION PAGE



It's All About the Seniors!

As I wrap up another busy district work period, I wanted to share what we've been up to in the community. From protecting Social Security to expanding access to Medicaid and defending hard-earned benefits for seniors, my team hit the ground running to make sure every Texan gets the dignity and care they deserve.



Senior Tour | Social Security Day of Action

We kicked off the week with our Senior Tour in honor of Social Security Day of Action—visiting senior centers across the district to hear directly from my constituents about the challenges they're facing.

They've earned their Social Security benefits, and I'm fighting to keep offices open, services timely and accessible, and protections in place.



Partnering with County Judge Lina Hidalgo | Medicaid Day of Action

For our Medicaid Day of Action, I joined forces with Harris County Judge Lina Hidalgo to bring awareness to the critical county programs that would be affected by federal cuts to Medicaid.

Together, we visited groups around the district to talk about the importance of having access to healthcare and how we must keep pushing to ensure no Texan is left behind.

From Ben Taub to L.B.J hospital, millions of families, children, seniors, and people with disabilities rely on Medicaid for the care they need. I'm fighting to protect this lifeline.



Town Hall with Congressman Joaquin Castro | Affordability Week of Action

For Affordability Week of Action, I was proud to welcome Congressman Joaquin Castro for a Town Hall. We heard directly from seniors about the fight to protect their benefits.

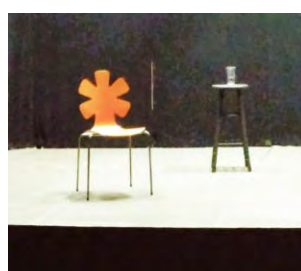
People rely on Social Security, Medicare, and SNAP for food, medicine, and basic need, and rising costs are impacting their everyday lives. These programs are lifelines built on a lifetime of work. Our promise: we're fighting to make life more affordable—especially for those who paved the way for us.

EDITOR'S NOTE: Opinions expressed here are not necessarily that of this newspaper or its staff. YOUR OPINION is welcome. Send a letter for possible publication to Grafikpress Newspapers, 5906 Star Lane, Houston TX 77057 or an email to GRAFIKSTAR@aol.com. Please limit your words to about 200. Letters will be subject to editing. Thank you.



THE POSTSCRIPT By Carrie Classon

An Empty Space



This week was spent with the familiar sensation that I have no idea what I am doing.

I just started rehearsals for a show about my column and the origin story for my first novel, Loon Point, that comes out next February. There is a lot of work to do before the show will be performed anywhere, but this week we took the first step.

My director, Cheryl, and I are meeting in an old church that has been converted into a community center. The room we are in doubles as a dining hall for funerals and the kitchen for the food shelf. The floors are linoleum tile, and there is the familiar smell of cooking.

We started, as all plays start, by looking at an empty space and imagining how to fill it.

"I don't think we need a chair," Cheryl said.

We had talked about having a chair, and now we had a folding chair sitting in the middle of the stage. The chair looked as if it was about to do something very important and, since I wrote the script, I knew that it was not.

"I say we get rid of the chair," Cheryl said, with more conviction.

I folded up the chair and hustled it offstage. The chair, formerly the star of the show, had been officially fired.

But Cheryl liked the hat stands I had brought and agreed we needed two of them. She liked the stool, and we added a small table—except we didn't have a small table. So we used the same old folding chair, now conscripted into playing the role of a table. (Don't worry if you are confused. I'm sure the chair was, too.)

Then we silently looked at what had suddenly turned from a dining hall into a stage. "I'd like you to read the script and move around," Cheryl told me.

This is the part I hate.

I have no natural instincts when it comes to movement. I have vivid recollections of every dance class I took as a young person. I was flexible, and classes always began with floor exercises. I would see the face of the dance teacher light up as they assumed I was a dancer, and I would dread what was coming. I would stand up and start to move, and the teacher would immediately realize they had made a mistake—I was absolutely not a dancer. In fact, I had enormous difficulty following the simplest instructions. The notion of "body memory" was alien to me. I had a bad case of body amnesia.

But I did as Cheryl asked. I read the script aloud, and I moved when I felt I should move. Cheryl took notes with a very serious look on her face (even during the parts that I hoped were funny), and when I finished, I knew a show had started.

I came home surprisingly tired. "How did it go?" my husband, Peter, asked.

I wanted to say that I felt as if the linoleum floor of the old dining hall had ceased to exist, and we'd entered a new world—yet I had returned to my old home. I felt as if I was doing the thing that was always hardest for me, a thing that could never be done perfectly, and—when it was done best—only lasted for a moment. I wanted to say I felt as if I'd taken part in a small miracle. And I had no idea what I was doing.

"It went well," I told him. Because it had.

Till next time, Carrie

STATE CAPITAL HIGHLIGHTS By Gary Borders



TEA Releases 2023 A-F accountability ratings

After a prolonged delay because of a lawsuit filed by about 100 school districts, the Texas Education Agency has released the 2023 A-F accountability ratings, indicating the share of campuses that received a passing ranking dropped by 14% from 2022.

"For far too long, families, educators and communities have been denied access to information about the performance of their schools, thanks to frivolous lawsuits paid for by tax dollars filed by those who disagreed with the statutory goal of raising career readiness expectations to help students," said Texas Education Commissioner Mike Morath.

A separate, ongoing lawsuit has delayed the release of more recent ratings from the 2023-2024 school year. School performance ratings from the 2024-2025 school year are set to be issued in August.

For the 2023 school year, about half of Texas schools earned an A or B, while roughly 14% scored a D, and 7% received Fs, The Dallas Morning News reported.

To view 2023 A-F ratings for all Texas public school districts or campuses, go to Txschools.gov.

STATE INSURANCE CRISIS IS NOW HITTING PUBLIC SCHOOLS

Severe weather from hurricanes and other weather events has not spared the state's public schools, resulting in skyrocketing property insurance costs, the Houston Chronicle reported. Insurance costs for districts have increased by 44% statewide in the past five years, according to TEA.

The problem is particularly acute in coastal areas hit by hurricanes and severe storms. Part of the major school finance package passed by the House in April would reimburse school districts in 14 coastal counties for insurance increases above the state average.

Another bill, filed by state Rep. Todd Hunter, R-Corpus Christi, would give districts in coastal counties a credit against recapture payments for wind and hail coverage.

"You don't want education to suffer because you're worried about getting money to cover buildings for the



kids," Hunter said.

ABBOTT SIGNS TEXAS VERSION OF DOGE INTO LAW

The Texas Regulatory Efficiency Office is now set to become law after Gov. Greg Abbott signed the measure into law last week. The state office aims to eliminate waste, fraud and corruption in state government and is patterned after the federal Department of Government Efficiency (DOGE).

The office will launch in 2026 with a \$10-million, two-year operating budget.

"We in Texas will now have our own DOGE, known as the Texas Regulatory Efficiency Office," Abbott said. "This law will slash regulations, put stricter standards on new regulations that could be costly to businesses, and put a check on the growth of the administrative state."

The new office will also work to reduce state regulations that it considers outdated or unnecessary.

SBA ASSISTANCE GRANTED FOR NORTHEAST TEXAS COUNTIES HIT BY TWISTERS

The U.S. Small Business Administration has approved Abbott's request for a disaster declaration for Northeast Texas communities hit by tornadoes and severe weather earlier this month. The declaration includes Bowie, Camp, Cass, Marion, Morris, Red River, Titus, and Upshur counties.

The approval gives homeowners, renters and businesses access to a number of low-interest loans in affected communities.

Applicants can apply online at sba.gov/disaster or by calling 800-659-2955. A Disaster Loan Outreach Center has opened in

Daingerfield to assist with completing applications and answering questions.

BILL CLARIFYING ABORTION LAWS CLEARS SENATE PANEL

A bill to clarify the state's abortion laws has passed out of a Senate committee, the Texas Standard reported. Some amendments have been added to address criticism from the left and right, the report said. Senate Bill 31 is intended to clarify when doctors can legally intervene and "aligns language" between the state's three bans on abortion. It would also remove the requirement that a medical crisis be imminent before a doctor can act.

The bill, which now goes to the Senate floor for debate, specifically says a woman who has an abortion can't be criminalized "as a party, principal, perpetrator, or accomplice" to the prohibited abortion.

A companion bill in the House is still in committee.

TEXAS REPUBLICANS TRY TO REIN IN HOUSING COSTS

A poll last year indicates 90% of Texans view the state's high housing costs as a problem, one that GOP leaders hope to fix, The Texas Tribune reported.

"Young people have been boxed out of the housing market," Lt. Gov. Dan Patrick said earlier this month.

While buying or renting a home in Texas is still cheaper than California and New York, rising costs could affect the state's competitive advantage. In addition, the state needs about 320,000 more homes than it has, according to an estimate from one housing advocacy group.

One approach GOP legislators are trying is to force cities to reduce lot sizes and allow homes to be built in more places, though the proposals would only apply to the state's 18 largest cities.

"The bottom line is there's no new land coming online," state Sen. Bryan Hughes, R-Mineola, who is behind some of the Senate's efforts, said during floor debate on one of the bills. "It's supply and demand. If there's land ripe for development, for homes, for families, no government should stand in the way."

NUCLEAR POWER IN MIDST OF A RESURGENCE

A research lab at Abilene Christian University is building the nation's first nuclear research reactor in more than four decades, The News reported. The goal is to prove that small modular reactors can be a clean, reliable source of energy.

"Our goal is to take this technology and bless the world with it," said Rusty Towell, an engineering professor at ACU who leads the university's effort to build a small nuclear reactor.

The state has signed off on supporting nuclear technology with a \$5 billion development fund. Nuclear power is seen as a way to provide stable energy while slowing climate change. Texas now has nuclear reactors at Comanche Peak, southwest of Fort Worth, and the South Texas Project, about 100 miles northeast of Corpus Christi.

Advertisement for Star Courier newspaper, including contact information and subscription rates.

Huffman ISD begins leadership transition after board meeting,

CONTINUED FROM PAGE 1



ered to develop and achieve both personal and professional success. During this time of transition, Dr. Angeles Perez will serve as the acting administrator in charge. We are confident in her leadership and the strength of our team as we move forward. Together, we will continue striving for excellence in all that we do." It was signed "Huffman ISD Board of Trustees."

Soileau had, in the last year, found himself in the crosshairs of state leadership as he spoke out

against the school voucher program that Gov. Greg Abbott was forcing on the state. He and the board were sued by Attorney General Ken Paxton for electioneering charges last year before the election. In a meeting, Soileau was alleged to have committed electioneering. An agreement was reached in late August.

The superintendent began his administrative career at Nederland ISD as a high school principal four years before his appointment as assistant superin-

tendent of curriculum and student services in Splendor ISD in August of 2010. Soileau was voted as superintendent of schools in June of 2012 and has served almost 13 years in the district. He has also been an adjunct professor part-time at Lamar University teaching school finance for 6.5 years.

Dagley had no comment following the board's decision and Soileau was unavailable for comment. Presumably the board is engaged in a search for the superintendent's office.

Packed Crosby Meeting hears about Cancer Cluster,

CONTINUED FROM PAGE 1



More than 100 residents packed the Crosby Community Center to hear details about the cancer cluster designation.

ronmental geology. We're funded by private donations and grants," she said.

Medcalf told her personal story of founding the organization out of necessity. "I learned that my family lived in between four superfund sites, and my health at the time, was failing horribly," she said.

She studied her own water and her body for heavy metals and discovered "crazy" thing on their property and in her body.

"I discovered that I had 21 out of 21 heavy metals often associated with industrial processes in my body," she said. When she asked how many family members or a loved one were impacted by cancer, it was shocking. Nearly the entire room raised their hands in affirmation.

It was then that she and her family teamed up with residents in Highlands to work together to see the remediation of the San Jacinto River Waste Pits.

"So, a cancer cluster is a greater than expected number of cancer cases in a group of people in a specific time period in a specific geographic area. A couple of things are important to know about the bones of this study. When someone is diagnosed with cancer, their diagnosis is put in the Texas cancer registry at the place where they reside at the time of their diagnosis," she explained.

If that person moves away, their diagnosis will not go into the registry in this area.

To combat that, THEA has been collecting health surveys for years with the purpose of finding out about things that are not tracked in a registry like lupus, endometriosis, and other types of cancer that might be concerning to the public.

In February 2024, THEA requested the DSHS to conduct a cancer assessment that would look at 29 types of cancer.

"We requested 22 types of cancer in all ages and seven types of childhood cancer, all based on what we were hearing from the local community," she said.

Most of the surveys came from the Highlands, McNair, Baytown, and Lynchburg areas. The area



Ron Burnett and his wife live in Lake Shores and had questions about the newly designated cancer cluster that includes Crosby.

was a repeat of an original study conducted and chosen by DSHS. The area is broken into 65 census tracts or smaller geographic zones.

The study determined that the area had unusually high rates of four specific types of cancer for that study period: leukemia, lymphoma, cervix, and lung and bronchus cancers.

Medcalf said the study did not seek to understand the cause of the cancers.

"We knew that going into the study," she said.

But now she had a huge area to consider and find resources to get the word out to the public about the designation.

The area is home to 330,000 people and its in one of the fastest growing parts of Harris County. Its also the source of most of the regions drinking water.

The area has five designated superfund sites.

"It is ridiculous that our government and the polluters have not cleaned them up, and that's really what we focus on, the sites, the old sites that are impacting our communities today," she said.

"We know that many people have fished and swam in the water where the San Jacinto River Waste Pits are and there's been a fish consumption advisory on the local waterways for over 30 years, and the advisory only began in 1990 because that's when they started testing," she explained.

Some elected officials were not notified by the DSHS about the cancer cluster designation and

have since drafted letters to the state health department.

Medcalf said her disappointment with the study was a lack of breaking down the numbers to individual census tracts which would give much more detail and tell the story of cancer rates.

In Highlands alone, they discovered that the rate of childhood retinoblastoma was 16.4 times the state average.

Now the organization is asking for the data on a community-by-community basis in hopes of helping the community find answers.

Ron Burnett and his wife just moved to Crosby in March of last year from Fort Worth.

"This is a nightmare," he said. "We thought this home in Lake Shores would be our forever home and now this."

Burnett said his builder said nothing to them about superfund sites or waste pits in the area.

"We're wondering if it's affecting our drinking water and do we need to get a whole new water filtration system," he said.

"These were things we weren't planning on," he said.

The entire meeting was recorded and can be found on their website at txhea.org.

"We're going to stay and fight. We listened to the man who lost his son to cancer and is now fighting cancer himself and I'm thinking those responsible should be in a class-action lawsuit," Burnett said.

CHAMBER NEWS

Highlands Chamber holds Ribbon Cutting at Celine



Celine Beauty Salon

Brenda Moore, Celine Perez, Isaac Perez, Sara C. Perez, Giovanna Figueroa, Xiomara Andrade, Jaylin Duran and Sally Lopez

Republished due to an Editing Error last week.

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New campus to ease overcrowding, teacher and driver recruitment underway

CONTINUED FROM PAGE 1

This is the time of year we start planning for the new school year in detail. One of our major jobs this summer will be to recruit teachers in specialized high-need areas. As part of our recruiting process, the district is offering \$1,000 referral stipends to current employees who help us recruit teachers in the following specialties: Bilingual, ESL, Special Education, Secondary English, Secondary Math, and Secondary Science. We are also recruiting bus drivers! For both referral stipends for teachers and bus drivers, the new employee must be new to Crosby ISD. Share our job listings now at www.crosbyisd.org/jobs.

Verification is now open for students who are returning to Crosby ISD this fall. We're hoping parents can verify students for the 25-26 School Year, before summer begins. Our goal is to have every student verified by July 24, in order for students to be routed for transportation on the first day of school and for families to learn their child's teacher by Meet the Teacher Nights. If you know of families that are new to Crosby ISD, let them know that registration for new students will open on June 1. Verification and registration are done online, and all families are required to upload a proof of residency. You can start the process now at www.crosbyisd.org/registration.



The Cougar Stars were among the student groups celebrated by the Crosby ISD Board of Trustees at the annual Spring Salute on April 29.

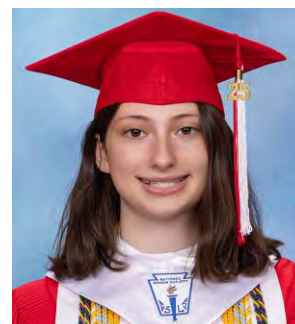


The Crosby ISD Board of Trustees held the annual Spring Salute at Crosby High School on April 29. The Board honored hundreds of students for their achievements this semester. Congratulations to all the student-scholars, student-athletes, and student-artists. The biggest turnout of the night featured dozens of students who volunteered and mentored LifeSkills students during the annual Coleen Walker Relays. There were so many student-volunteers, they could not fit on the stage for the photo. It was a great night for students and parents.

Kudos to the Crosby ISD Technology Services team. For the second year in a row, they delivered a seamless STAAR testing season. If you didn't know, state assessment tests are entirely digital. Our technicians are truly the unsung heroes, working diligently each day to ensure thousands of our students succeed on their exams.



Trinity-Cook Thompson is the Crosby High School Class of 2025 Valedictorian. She is headed to Harvard University to major in biology. The Crosby High School Class of 2025 graduation ceremony is scheduled for Friday, May 30 at 7pm at Cougar Stadium.



Meredith Randall is the Crosby High School Class of 2025 Salutatorian. She will major in psychology at Texas State University. The Crosby Education Foundation will honor the top 5% of the Class of 2025 at the annual Distinguished Scholars banquet at Crosby High School on May 9.

The Crosby ISD Athletics Department is looking ahead to summer camps. Coaches will be offering camps in five different sports throughout the summer. These camps are geared toward elementary and middle school students, as we build a bench of student-athletes who push themselves on the field and in the classroom. Here are dates for the summer camps: Boys Basketball (June 9 through 12); Softball (June 11); Girls Basketball (June 23 through 26); Football (June 30 through July 2); Volleyball (July 28 through 31). We'll share registration information soon.

Our last day of school will be Thursday, May 29, and it's an early release day. Crosby High School and Crosby Middle School will dismiss students at 11:20am. Elementary campuses will dismiss students at 12:10pm. I can't believe we are almost at the finish line. I feel so blessed that I am about to attend my fifth Crosby High School graduation as Superintendent of Schools. I look forward to shaking the hand of each of the nearly 500 graduates in the Class of 2025. They are about to go out in the world with their thirteen years in Crosby ISD as a strong foundation for their future. I really do think of each graduate as one of my kids, and this Superintendent couldn't be prouder.

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Jacob Elordi stars in 'The Narrow Road to the Deep North.'

'Death of a Unicorn.'

'DEATH OF A UNICORN' (R) — Jenna Ortega ('Beetlejuice Beetlejuice') and Paul Rudd ('Only Murders in the Building') team up to play a father-daughter duo in this fantastical horror-comedy film.

with. Out now to rent. (Amazon Prime Video) 'COMPANION' (R) — This sci-fi thriller is a mind-bending one led by scream queen Sophie Thatcher ('Heretic') and Jack Quaid ('Novocaine').

phone. Who knows what this revelation will lead Iris to do ... (Max) 'THE FOUR SEASONS' (TV-MA) — This eight-episode miniseries out now to binge is comprised of a stacked cast that is sure to make this your new favorite series.

'LOVE HURTS' (R) — Following the success of a 2023 award season campaign that landed him a Golden Globe and an Oscar for his work in 'Everything Everywhere All at Once,' Ke Huy Quan was signed to utilize his action skills to lead a classic action-comedy film for Universal Pictures.

HOLLYWOOD by Tony Rizzo

HOLLYWOOD — Oscar winner Jessica Chastain is headed back to movie theaters in a big way! Her most recent film 'Dreams,' opposite Rupert Friend, received high praise at the Berlin Film Festival in February, but it still needs a distributor in the United States.

She's also preparing for Rob Savage's horror film 'Incidents Around the House.' The story involves a haunting from the perspective of a young girl, whose family is targeted by an entity she calls 'Other Mommy.'



Jessica Chastain (Upcoming in 'Dreams')

Recent 'Maestro' Oscar nominee Bradley Cooper has chosen his next film: a comedy co-starring Will Arnett, Laura Dern and Sean Hayes, called 'Is This Thing On?'

Also missing for a while was former 'Entourage' series star Jeremy Piven. He was last seen in 'Sweetwater' (2023), a biographical sports film about basketball great Nat Clifton.

Obviously concerned about his thinning hair, he sought help from the HairClub for Men. He must have been very pleased with the results because he's now the spokesman in their TV ads!

I can't even count how many times I watched 'Jumanji' (1995). Robin Williams was superb in it. Apparently, the sequels have crushed its \$262.8 mil-

lion grosses. 'Jumanji: Welcome to the Jungle' (2017), which starred Dwayne Johnson, Jack Black, Kevin Hart, Karen Gillan and Nick Jonas, pulled in \$962.5 million.

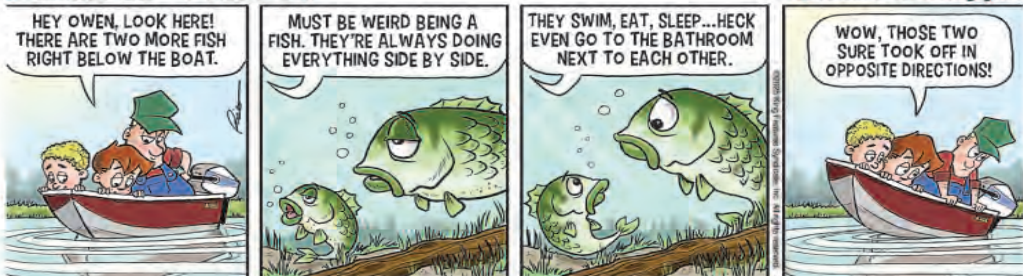
Surprise, surprise, there is another sequel in the wings! 'Jumanji 4' is scheduled to be released on Dec. 11, 2026. At this time, the principal actors are negotiating their (higher?) salaries, but no one's been signed as of yet.

No doubt 'Jumanji 4' will be finalized soon, especially after the success of 'A Minecraft Movie,' a film based on the sandbox game Minecraft that allows players to explore a vast open world, build, and dig for treasure.

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ENTERTAINMENT

Amber Waves



Weekly SUDOKU puzzle grid and instructions. Difficulty: Moderate to Challenging.

HOCUS-FOCUS puzzle instructions: Find at least six differences in details between panels.

May 5, 2025 Posting Date King Crossword

King Crossword grid with ACROSS and DOWN clues.

Answers for King Crossword: 1. Completely, 4. Playwright Levin, 7. Done with, 11. Secular, 13. Collection, 14. Water carrier, 15. Airline to Tel Aviv, 16. ET's craft, 17. Dutch cheese, 18. Ersatz chocolate, 20. One-named supermodel, 22. Tree fluid, 24. Trombone parts, 28. Grassy tract, 32. January, to Juan, 33. Grassy area, 34. Shade provider, 36. FBI guy, 37. Alpha's opposite, 39. 'The Hunger Games' heroine, 41. Dance clubs, 43. Prefix with athlete, 44. Tom Joad, for one, 46. Urged (on), 50. Hive population, 53. Schlep, 55. Luau dance, 56. Vegetarian's no-no, 57. Mine material, 58. Russian ruler, 59. Saturates, 60. Scale member, 61. Blasting stick, 7. Exciting Broadway event, 8. YouTube clip, for short, 9. Clean air org., 10. 'The One I Love' band, 12. Loan application fees, 19. 'Cheers' setting, 21. Pub order, 23. Bakery purchase, 25. Singer Lovato again, for short, 26. Historic periods, 27. Male children, 28. Trudge, 29. Actor Malek, 30. Dazzles, 31. Caribou kin, 35. Yoga pad, 38. Fine, to NASA, 40. Italian 'three', 42. Farm towers, 45. Franc replacement, 47. Sudden wind, 48. Flair, 49. Scurry, 50. German auto, 51. Shoe width, 52. Have breakfast, 54. Solidify.

Trivia test by Fifi Rodriguez with 10 questions about U.S. states, movies, literature, games, television, business, general knowledge, U.S. presidents, astronomy, and animal kingdom.

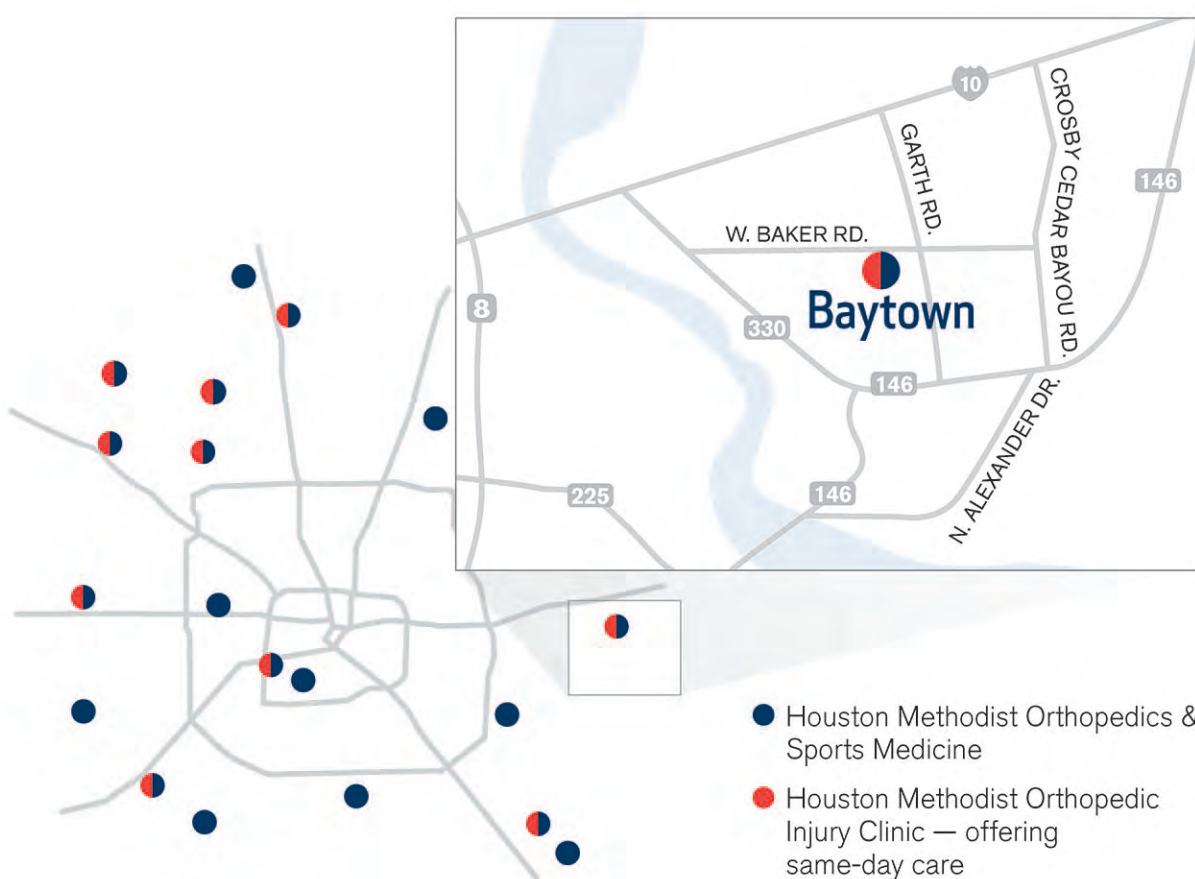
Answers for Trivia test: 1. Wyoming, 2. Strategic Homeland Intervention, Enforcement and Logistics Division, 3. James Thurber, 4. 52, 5. 'Cheers', 6. 1952 in Salt Lake City, Utah, 7. Six, 8. James Madison, 9. Valentina Tereshkova, 10. A platypus or pugle.



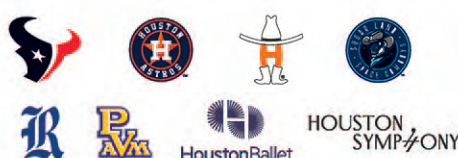
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