



Highlands Area Community sends Aid to Flood Stricken areas of the Hill County. Story Below.

HIGHLANDS CROSBY
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THURSDAY, JULY 17, 2025

HIGHLANDS, TEXAS 77562

Abbott calls Legislature for Special Session

Agenda Priorities include Flood Warning, Eliminate STAAR Test, THC Ban, Redistricting

Governor Abbott Announces Special Session Agenda
AUSTIN — Governor Greg Abbott today issued a proclamation identifying 18 agenda items for the upcoming Special Session that begins at 12:00 PM on Monday, July 21.

“We delivered on historic legislation in the 89th Regular Legislative Session that will benefit Texans for generations to come,” said Governor Abbott. “There is more work to be done, particularly in the aftermath of the devastating floods in the Texas Hill Country. We must ensure better preparation for such events in the future.”

The Special Session agenda items include:

FLOOD WARNING SYSTEMS: Legislation to improve early warning systems and other preparedness infrastructure in flood-prone areas throughout Texas.

FLOOD EMERGENCY COMMUNICATIONS: Legislation to strengthen emergency communications and other response infrastructure in flood-prone areas throughout Texas.

RELIEF FUNDING FOR HILL COUNTRY FLOODS: Legislation to provide relief funding for response to and recovery from the storms which began in early July 2025, including local match funding for jurisdictions eligible for FEMA public assistance.



NATURAL DISASTER PREPARATION & RECOVERY: Legislation to evaluate and streamline rules and regulations to speed preparedness for and recovery from natural disasters.

ELIMINATE STAAR TEST: Legislation to eliminate the STAAR test and replace it with effective tools to assess student progress and ensure school district accountability.

CUT PROPERTY TAXES: Legislation reducing the property tax burden on Texans and legislation imposing spending limits on entities authorized to impose property taxes.

PROTECT CHILDREN FROM THC: Legislation making it a crime to provide hemp-derived products to children under 21 years of age.

REGULATE HEMP-DERIVED PRODUCTS: Legislation to comprehensively regulate hemp-derived products, including limiting potency, restricting synthetically modified compounds, and establishing enforcement mechanisms, all without banning a lawful agricultural commodity.

PROTECT UNBORN CHILDREN: Legislation further protecting unborn children and their mothers from the harm of abortion.

BAN TAXPAYER-FUNDED LOBBYING: Legislation prohibiting taxpayer-funded lobbying, including the use of tax dollars to hire lobbyists and payment of tax dollars to associations that lobby the Legislature.

PROTECT HUMAN TRAFFICKING VICTIMS: Legislation, similar to Senate Bill No. 1278 from the 89th Legislature, Regular Session, that protects victims of human trafficking from criminal liability for non-violent acts closely tied to their own victimization.

Continued. See ABBOTT CALLS SPECIAL SESSION, Page 5

IN THE STARS

Designer Purse Bingo Friday Aug. 8th

Seniors Helping Seniors High-Town will host a Designer Purse Bingo on Friday, August 8 at 6:00pm at the Baytown Fairgrounds, 7900 N. Main St. in Baytown 77521.

Tickets \$50, inquire at 281-787-4256. Benefitting Seniors Helping Seniors.

Visit our Website for all Star-Courier news and Back Issues: www.STARCOURIERNEWS.com

Rotarian delivers Aid to Flood Areas

On Saturday, July 12 Rotarian Past-President GayLynn Prescott Milliorn, with Ginger Prescott Mashburn and Pam Nabors Zycha took a trailer-load of supplies to the Flood Stricken areas in the Hill Country.

GayLynn said “Mission accomplished. It felt so good to deliver the supplies and gift cards, because once we got here, it’s evident help will be needed for quite a long time. We found an area with memorials and it was a very somber experience. The sound of chainsaws and people still searching below, the destruction left behind, and the heaviness on our hearts knowing of all that was lost just a week ago.

“Thank you Baytown, Dayton, La Porte communities and local and Re-Max businesses, and Rotary Club of Highlands TX for all your generosity and support. The volunteers in Center Point were so kind and grateful for the donations. God Bless Texas.

“It’s the least I could do and wish I could do so much more. Thank you to my fellow Rotarians for your support! There were hugs and tears, a very moving experience.”

Photos by GayLynn Milliorn.



Supplies in a warehouse in Kerr County



GayLynn (center) with Ginger and Pam in Kerr County



Crosses next to the Guadalupe River, in remembrance of victims lost in the Flood



A View of the Flood Damage and washed-out foliage along the Guadalupe River

SPARK Parks Executive Director Kathleen Ownby Retires, Leaving Legacy through Harris County

June 18, 2025 — After 37 years of service, SPARK School Park Program Executive Director Kathleen Ownby announces her retirement, leaving a legacy of art-rich community parks and continuing partnerships, including Channelview ISD.

Ownby, daughter of the late Council Member Eleanor Tinsley, began working with SPARK in 1988 when she volunteered in her mother’s office. Passionate about art and the growth of green spaces, Ownby established herself as a leader and was appointed Executive Director in 1991.

SPARK is a nonprofit organization that turns school playgrounds into community parks in a cost-



effective and land-efficient way. It has constructed over 200 parks in 18 school districts throughout Houston, and Channelview is one of those fortunate districts.

Channelview has three SPARK Parks in three elementary schools: Hamblen, Crenshaw, and

Continued. See SPARK EXECUTIVE RETIRES, Page 5

San Jacinto Girl Scout Troop Completes Community Project at Highlands Stratford Library

The Stratford library had the pleasure partnering with the San Jacinto Girl Scout Troop for a community project. The Brownies have taken action by partnering with their local libraries, Crosby and Highlands Stratford to help those in need. Their goal? To provide at least 30 hygiene kits, twice before the end of the year — a total of 200 toiletry items!

They decided to use water bottles as a creative container- making it easy to carry essentials and stay hydrated, especially in this summer heat. After selecting the smallest items possible to fit in their

Continued. See SAN JACINTO GIRL SCOUTS, Page 5



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Approval Of Federal Disaster Assistance For Five Additional Counties Following Texas Flooding



AUSTIN – Governor Greg Abbott today announced that the federal government has updated President Donald J. Trump’s Major Disaster Declaration following recent catastrophic flooding across Texas to include Burnet, Llano, Mason, McCulloch, and Tom Green counties for the Federal Emergency Management Agency (FEMA) Public Assistance program.

“President Trump’s approval of my request to add more counties to his disaster declaration is another critical step to get Texans the support they need to recover,” said Governor Abbott. “Burnet, Llano, Mason, McCulloch, and Tom Green counties are now eligible for crucial public assistance to rebuild. I thank President Trump for swiftly approving my request to approve these additional counties. Texas continues to work around-the-clock to help every impacted community heal and rebuild.”

With the addition of Burnet, Llano, Mason, McCulloch, and Tom Green counties, the following counties are now approved for FEMA Public Assistance program: Burnet, Kendall, Kerr, Kimble, Llano, Mason, McCulloch, Menard, San Saba, and Tom Green counties. FEMA’s Public Assistance pro-

gram includes assistance for emergency work and the repair or replacement of disaster-damaged facilities. Additional counties may be requested as updated information becomes available.

Qualifying Texans in the following counties remain eligible for FEMA’s Individual Assistance program: Burnet, Kerr, San Saba, Tom Green, Travis, and Williamson. Texans can apply for FEMA disaster assistance online at disasterassistance.gov or by calling 800-621-3362. Additional counties may be added as additional damage assessments are completed in impacted communities.

Governor Abbott continues to take action to provide all necessary resources to local officials as they respond to flooding, including:

- Requesting the addition of five counties to the Presidential Disaster Declaration
- Visiting with impacted Texans alongside President Trump in Kerrville
- Launching the new Texas Flooding Emotional Support Line
- Obtaining approval for federal disaster assistance for additional impacted communities
- Launching the new Texas Flooding Emotional Support Line

- Requesting additional counties for President Trump’s Major Disaster Declaration

- Directing the state’s ongoing flood response and recovery efforts

- Announcing disaster unemployment assistance for flood impacts

- Surveying the flood damage of the affected areas and updating Texas on response efforts

- Providing an update on the state’s ongoing flood response in impacted communities

- Obtaining approval from President Trump for federal disaster assistance as part of a Major Disaster Declaration

- Amending the state’s disaster declaration to include additional impacted counties and providing an update on the state’s emergency response in affected areas

- Providing an update on the state’s response to severe flooding in Kerr County and surrounding communities

- Increasing the readiness level of the State Operations Center and activating additional state emergency response resources as portions of West and Central Texas prepared for heavy rainfall and flash flooding threats

- Deploying state emergency response resources ahead of the rain and flooding threat

Highlands Rotary Club Hosts 4th of July Lunch Celebration for Seniors at San Jacinto Community Center



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THURSDAY, JULY 17, 2025

MONT BELVIEU, TEXAS 77580

ON THE HILL

Summer Activity Guide

Summer is the best time of year in Mont Belvieu. With so many things going on, who can keep up? We're here for you this summer to keep the kids engaged in sports, activities, and events to keep their minds and bodies energized.

City Events

Discover the vibrant pulse of Mont Belvieu's community life, where Parks and Recreation hosts an exciting array of events throughout the year.

From lively concerts to bustling markets and captivating outdoor movie nights, there's something for everyone to enjoy in our picturesque park setting. Join us as we bring the community together for unforgettable experiences and cherished memories.

Whether you're tapping your feet to the rhythm of live music, browsing the stalls at our bustling markets, or cozying up under the stars for a cinematic adventure, City Park is the place to be for summer fun.

Operation 36® Junior Golf Academy

We have brought the Operation 36® Golf Program to Mont Belvieu! Operation 36® is an effective program to teach beginner golfers, ages 7-18 years, to learn to play.

Learn more and register online at www.montbelvieu.net/juniorgolf

Eagle Pointe Summer Membership Special

3-Month Membership
Individual: \$129.00
Family: \$159.99
On sale from May 1, 2025, until July 31, 2025.

Eagle Pointe Wave Pool

Eagle Pointe Wave Pool offers the ultimate summer escape with its pristine beach and thrilling wave experience. From toddlers to the elderly, everyone can enjoy the pool's gradual depth from ground level to six feet. Relax in shaded areas, play sand volleyball, or let the kids enjoy the play area. Grab a snack at the concession stand and enjoy background music as you lounge in paradise.

Hours of Operation

Daily Hours: 11:00 AM - 6:00 PM
Season: May 24th - August 10th
Post-Season Weekends:
August 16th & 17th
August 23rd & 24th
August 30th - September 1st

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Representative Briscoe Cain Files Five Major Conservative Bills for Special Session

AUSTIN, TEXAS - State Representative Briscoe Cain (R-Deer Park) announced today the introduction of five key legislative proposals ahead of the upcoming First Called Special Session of the 89th Texas Legislature. The bills represent top Republican priorities and address unfinished business from the regular session.

"Texans are demanding bold, lasting reforms not half-measures," said Rep-

resentative Cain. "These bills take direct aim at the biggest challenges facing our state: eliminating property taxes, reining in local government spending, ending taxpayer-funded lobbying, and protecting innocent life."

The five bills filed by Representative Cain are:

—**House Bill 61**- Relating to the repeal or limitation of certain state and local taxes, including

school district maintenance and operations (M&O) ad valorem taxes; enactment of state and local value-added taxes; and related school finance reform; imposing taxes.

—**House Bill 62** Relating to reducing school district M&O ad valorem taxes through the use of certain surplus state revenue.

—**House Bill 63** Relating to a limit on municipal

and county expenditures.

—**House Bill 64**-Relating to the use by a political subdivision of public funds for lobbying and certain other activities.

—**House Bill 65**-Relating to abortion, including civil liability for the distribution of abortion-inducing drugs; making conforming and harmonizing changes. This bill would make it illegal to send abortion pills into the

state by allowing lawsuits and tougher criminal penalties, while protecting women seeking abortions and permitting the use of pills in medical emergencies.

"These proposals reflect the priorities of the Republican Party of Texas platform and the will of the people I represent," Cain concluded. "Texans sent us here to get results, and I'm ready to finish the job. Let's get to work!"

THOUGHTS FROM HILLSIDE CHURCH

By Dr. Mark Trice



Storms Don't Mean God Left You

He calmed the storm with three words: "Peace, be still."

In the midst of their fear, the disciples missed the same thing we miss all too often. Jesus was there the whole time.

Jesus' silence wasn't absence, and it wasn't powerlessness. Really, His very presence was why they were safe even if they couldn't see it.

God's silence is not absence. Even when He's

still, He still cares.

The fact is God doesn't always remove the storm, but He is always present in the midst of it. If we turn our backs on the wind and the waves and focus our eyes on Him, we will find peace - not the kind of peace the world gives, but the kind Paul describes in Philippians 4:7:

"The peace of God, which surpasses all understanding, will guard your hearts and minds through

Christ Jesus."

But this does raise another question. Why would God let us go through these storms?

Often it's because that's when we're transformed. Storms refine our faith, deepen our trust, and enhance our revelation of Who God is. When everything is smooth sailing we can drift into self-reliance and complacency. In the storm, we're forced to confront our own limits and

lean on the limitless One.

Corrie ten Boom said, "You may never know that Jesus is all you need, until Jesus is all you have." It's in storms that this happens. When we reach the end of ourselves, we begin to really see God's strength.

If we let them, storms shift our focus. Once we realize Jesus is all we need and stop obsessing over the power of the storm, we start seeing the power of our Savior. When we stop measuring the height of the waves and look up to the One who walks on them - we see that we can walk on them too.

So if you're in a storm today, don't listen to the devil's lie when he says God has left you. Instead, turn to God and ask Him to open your eyes.

Let Him shift your perspective and you'll find that everything changes.

Local Artists Bring Community History to Life Through Precinct 2 Murals

By David Taylor
Managing Editor

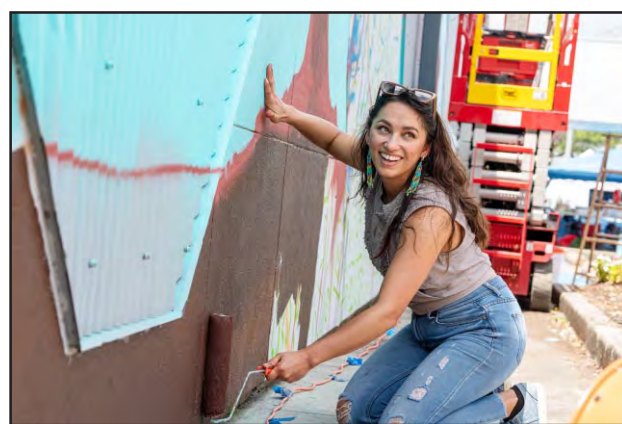
Harris County Precinct 2 is undergoing a vibrant transformation as new murals bloom across its community centers—thanks in large part to the vision and commitment of several Houston-based artists including Jatziri Barron.

Over the past several weeks, Precinct 2 has hosted community meetings, inviting residents to help shape the creative direction of these public art pieces.

Monica Campos, marketing manager for East Aldine District, emphasized the importance of community involvement: "We're bringing more art to the community—and we want your voice to help shape it!" Campos wrote in a letter to residents. "It's an exciting opportunity to create something meaningful and lasting, together. Your input is extremely important and appreciated."

Barron, who has called Houston home for over 13 years, draws deeply from her roots and the communities around her.

"Houston's home now, and it's a community that I really care about," Barron said. "A lot of my work is inspired by the people I meet, and sometimes I even paint portraits of community members right onto the murals. This project has been special



Jatziri Barron is on her knees with a paint roller working on the mural for Precinct 2 at the JD Walker Park. The unveiling is expected in the next month. (Photo by Alonzo Guadarrama)

because I've gotten to know the McNair community—they're so involved and welcoming."

Barron's journey as an artist began in her school days in Cypress, and she honed her craft at the Glassell School of Art, part of the Museum of Fine Arts, Houston. Today, she works out of Silver Street Studios, one of the largest artist campuses in the country.

"If you haven't visited Sawyer Yards before, you really should," Barron said, inviting locals to meet artists during open studio events.

Precinct 2 selected six muralists for this ambitious project, aiming to reflect the area's diversity and ensure broad representation. Barron expressed pride in her selection: "They needed more women on the project, so I'm one of only two female artists involved. I've also worked

with the East End Cultural District, so some people were already familiar with my work."

Barron's mural at JD Walker Park is expected to be completed in the coming weeks, though the official reveal date has not yet been set. The process, while demanding, has been rewarding—especially for Barron, who makes the long drive from Cypress to Baytown regularly.

"The community is really close-knit, which reminds me of Mexico. A lot of the people in the mural are local figures, like Joe Tex's nieces, who visit every day, and Mr. Warren, a community historian who provided invaluable reference materials," she explained. "Some of the stories go back to the rice and strawberry plantations, where both African American and Mexican laborers worked together. I found real connections to



The mural acts as a love letter from residents to their neighborhood, co-created with local artists to celebrate culture, identity, and civic pride. (Photo by Alonzo Guadarrama)

my own heritage through this research."

Barron says the mural strives to honor both African American history and the area's significant Latino population.

"When we held community meetings, everyone wanted to make sure Latino contributions were included. It's really inclusive here, and that's important to me," she said.

Asked if painting people from different backgrounds posed any challenges, Barron replied, "Not at all. My work is all about community. I enjoy diving into history and learning more—it's what makes every project unique."

With the murals nearing completion, anticipation builds for the public unveiling.

"If you love your work, you never work a day in your life," Barron reflected. "It's a gift to share art with others, and I can't wait for

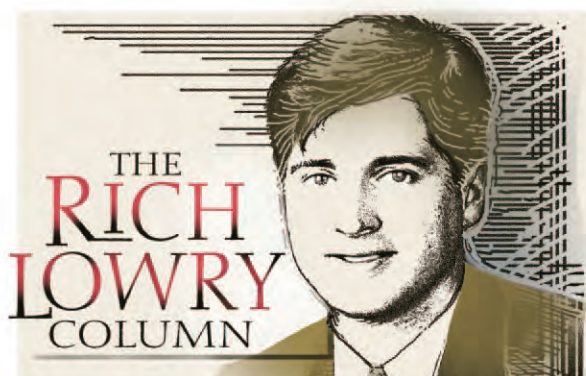


W3R3 ON3 continues his work on the public art campaign turning walls into community-driven murals for Pct. 2. (Photo by Alonzo Guadarrama)

everyone to see what we've created together."

Details for the mural reveal will be announced soon, promising a celebration of art, history, and the vibrant tapestry of Precinct 2.

OPINION PAGE



Blow Up Washington DC's brutalist buildings, and the sooner, the better

There's a reason God created dynamite. The brutalist federal buildings that have blighted Washington, D.C., for decades deserve the same fate as Carthage after the Third Punic War...

The Department of Housing and Urban and Development just announced that it is leaving its god-awful headquarters in Washington for a less hideous space in Northern Virginia.



Meanwhile, the FBI is also departing its HQ, designated by the U.K. building materials retailer Buildworld as the ugliest building in the United States and the second ugliest in the world.

The moves are in keeping with the spirit of President Trump's executive order stipulating that federal buildings should "respect regional, traditional and classical architectural heritage in order to uplift and beautify public spaces and ennoble the United States and our system of self-government."

That EO should be considered common sense, but has several trigger words for defenders of the architectural status quo, including "traditional," "classical" and, perhaps foremost of all, "beautify."

According to The Nation magazine, Trump's initiative is part of an agenda to "make historical architecture on the whole inextricable from Eurocentric white supremacy."

Brutalism, with its blocky, minimalist structures made of poured concrete, was a creation of a post-war Europe that wanted to embrace the fresh and new and to economize on rebuilding.

To be sure, concrete is extremely important to modern life, but no one has ever said, "Oh, it's so elegant and uplifting." The brutalist buildings in Washington were largely built between the late 1960s and mid-1970s...

The seedbed of the trend was a Kennedy administration commission that advocated contemporary designs and said — laughably, in retrospect — that federal architecture should "reflect the dignity, enterprise, vigor and stability of the American national government."

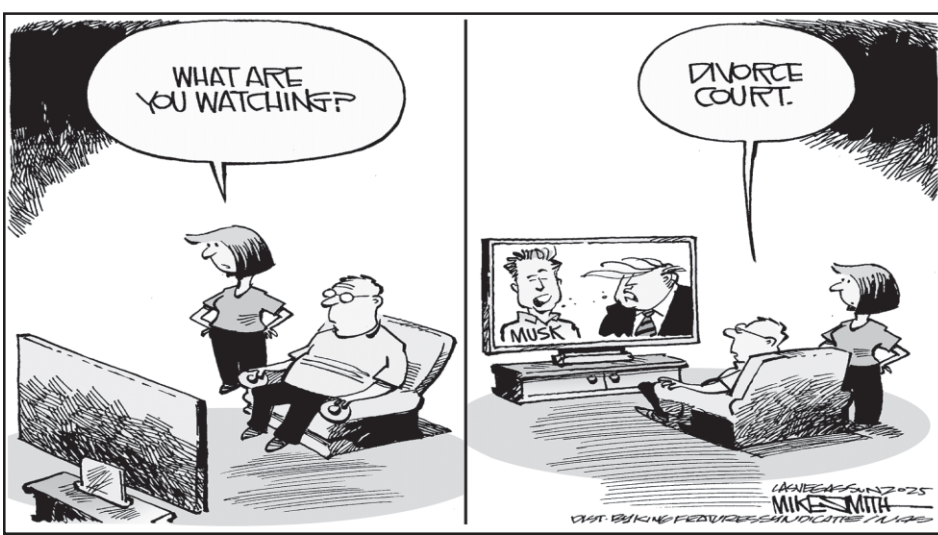
Instead, the brutalist buildings speak of a lumbering bureaucracy with no regard for the sensibilities or priorities of ordinary people. They are about what you'd expect if a DMV were headquartered in a maximum-security prison or in a massive pillbox.

The buildings could easily be used as stage sets for docudramas about East Germany. They are a tribute to soulless monumentality and a gut punch to the human spirit.

The original justifications of brutalism no longer apply. The buildings aren't new anymore, and aren't cheap. They haven't aged well in any sense, not aesthetically or functionally.

Defenders of the brutalist buildings say that they are now part of our heritage and should be preserved as such. That's not fair, though, to the people who have to work in them, or who walk or drive by them every day.

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.



STATE CAPITAL HIGHLIGHTS

By Gary Borders



Death toll climbs in Hill Country flooding: Legislators will investigate response to crisis

Gov. Greg Abbott said Sunday he's likely to instruct the Texas Legislature to investigate early warning systems and other governmental responses to July 4 flash flooding that killed at least 82 people in the Hill Country.

Lawmakers are set to convene in Austin on July 21. Meanwhile, as of late Sunday an additional 41 people were still missing. In addition to local first responders, more than 1,300 state personnel were dispatched to the scene.

Abbott has issued a disaster declaration covering 21 Hill Country counties, where rain continued to fall through the weekend.

"We will be relentless in going after and ensuring that we locate every single person who's been a victim of this flooding event," Abbott said. "We're not going to stop today or tomorrow."

APPEALS COURT: IMMIGRATION LAW UNCONSTITUTIONAL

A three-judge panel of the U.S. Fifth Circuit Court of Appeals has blocked a 2023 Texas immigration law that would have permitted local police to arrest people believed to have illegally crossed the Texas-Mexico border.

"For nearly 150 years, the Supreme Court has recognized that the power to control immigration — the entry, admission, and removal of aliens — is exclusively a federal power," the ruling says.

The Trump administration earlier this year dropped the federal government's opposition to a suit filed by two immigrant rights groups and El Paso County challenging the constitutionality of the Texas state law.

It was not immediately known whether the state will appeal the Fifth Circuit ruling to the U.S. Supreme Court.

INTERFAITH PARENTS SUE TO BLOCK TEN COMMANDMENTS LAW

Two separate lawsuits are challenging a law passed dur-



ing the last legislative session requiring posters of the Ten Commandments be hung in all public-school classrooms.

"Permanently posting the Ten Commandments in every Texas public-school classroom — rendering them unavoidable — is plainly unconstitutional," one of the suits states.

The plaintiffs are parents from Jewish, Christian, Unitarian Universalist and Hindu faiths, plus some who are nonreligious. They are represented by the American Civil Liberties Union and Americans United for Church and Faith.

The new law, which would take effect in September if a court doesn't halt it, would require all publicly funded schools to hang a 16-by-20-inch framed poster of the Ten Commandment in a "conspicuous place" in every classroom.

ADULT EDUCATION PROGRAMS SQUEEZED BY FEDERAL FUNDING FREEZE

A federal hold on funding for adult education programs is affecting Texans enrolled in such programs as GED classes, workforce training, and instruction in English.

Sharon Bonney, CEO of the national Coalition on Adult Basic Education, said people enrolled in adult education programs could have their studies interrupted in the next few weeks.

"Closures will start im-

mediately," Bonney said. "We've already heard from a number of local programs. This is going to be across-the-board mass closures and layoffs."

The funding usually goes to states from the Department of Education as part of the Workforce Innovation and Opportunities Act, passed in 2014.

NORTHEAST TEXAS FARMER PLANS RUN AGAINST ABBOTT

A former firefighter and farmer from Wood County plans to run next year as a Democrat against Abbott, the Houston Chronicle reported.

"Republicans have spent 30 years in office, and working men and women have been having to pay the cost," Cole, 55, said. "It has to stop."

Cole retired as a firefighter in Texarkana and later Plano. He maintains a family farm in Quitman where they raise 300 head of cattle and also chickens.

Abbott has been governor since 2014 and has already announced plans to run for reelection.

FUNDING BOOST FOR SCHOOLS COMES WITH STRINGS ATTACHED

Texas lawmakers are providing public schools with \$8.5 billion in new funding, but some school administrators say the money comes with provisions that limit their independence to a greater degree than previously.

The largest portion of the new money goes for teacher raises, with districts having little discretion on who gets raises. Lawmakers did not significantly raise the base amount school districts receive, leaving some districts struggling to pay for non-teacher items, such as rising operational costs and compensation for support staff.

Some educators say that while they are grateful for the teacher pay raises, they are disappointed in a lack of flexibility in how money is spent.

"I think that that's really, really dangerous when you don't trust leaders in public education to do the best they can for kids," said Megan Simoneau, an educator of 21 years who teaches high school math in the Leander school district.

SUMMER ANTI-DRUNK DRIVING CAMPAIGN LAUNCHED

More than 1,000 deaths were recorded in Texas last year from alcohol-related crashes, and the Texas Department of Transportation is again launching a public awareness campaign to cut down on those fatalities.

The agency's "Drive Sober. No Regrets" campaign is underway, along with increased law enforcement continuing through mid-July.

THE POSTSCRIPT By Carrie Classon

Another Time



"I'm going to take the pontoon out tonight, and you're invited to join me," my parents' neighbor Rod told them.

It was a nice night—not too warm, with very little wind. It was a perfect night for a pontoon ride around the lake.

My parents co-own a pontoon boat with their next-door neighbors, Char and Rod. Even with two families owning it, it doesn't get a lot of use.

"We own the boat, and we might as well use it," he said. "I'm not getting any younger! You should use it, too!"

Rod went on to say that he was making an effort to do things he put off because he always thought he'd have time later. Rod is approaching 90 and has come to the realization that doing things now might be a good idea.

We didn't take a pontoon ride.

My mother was feeling a bit under the weather. We were planning to go to a restaurant that we feared might fill up if we got there too late. Rod nodded, but I could tell he thought we ought to get on that pontoon boat anyway.

"Another time," he said. And I thought how often I assume there will be another time.

The year is half over, and when I think of the things I want most to do, I find that I spend very little time actually doing those things.

I love to read, but I go for days without picking up a book. I love to write, but I will resist starting a new writing project until I have completely finished the previous thing.

I was a somewhat sulky teenager. I don't think, on the sulkiness scale, I was over the top, but I was a teenager, after all. My dad wanted me to go to a talk given by a naturalist. I was not excited.

I had a wonderful time. And I remember—as clear as if it were yesterday—walking back into the house after the talk and realizing how wrong I had been. I still try to remember that feeling.

Tonight, I am invited to a picnic. I won't know a single person there. It's a gathering of writers I have never met. It's being held in a park I've never been to, so I'm not sure how to get there.

Because I think Rod is right. I am never going to regret the rides I take. While I don't need to fill every waking moment with activity, trying something new is how I can make this day memorable, different from the day that came before and after.

The pontoon boat is there, waiting for me, and another time to take this ride simply may not come. It's time for a ride.

Till next time, Carrie

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

Kathleen Ownby retires as SPARK Parks director,

CONTINUED FROM PAGE 1



Harvey Brown. The three locations are open to the public after school hours, which means they can be enjoyed year-round with family and friends in the afternoons, during the weekends and on holidays.

“They are your parks! Your playground, your outdoor lab, they are your greenspace,” said

Channelview ISD Superintendent Dr. Tory Hill. “They are recreational areas where everyone can gather and enjoy, boosting the spirit and appearance of the Channelview community.”

This statement perfectly reflects Ownby’s and the SPARK organization’s mission to create vibrant greenspaces for all to enjoy. The parks offer unique playground designs, shaded areas with trees, walking trails, and distinctive community-inspired artwork, so grab your families and visit one of Channel-



view’s three SPARK Parks. Park Hours: SCHOOL DAYS - 3:40 p.m. to dusk WEEKENDS - Dawn to dusk, unless closed for school events SUMMER - Dawn to dusk With permission from the schools, SPARK Parks can also be used for birthday parties and other events.

San Jacinto Girl Scout Troop completes community project at Stratford Library,

CONTINUED FROM PAGE 1

water bottles, they used their hard-earned cookie money to order items and rallied the troop to assemble the kits.

These photos are from their visit to the Highlands Stratford Library where the girls delivered more than 50 kits to stock up our Little Hygiene Houses. They even got a chance to hand out their first kit to a community member in need.



Abbott Calls Special Session,

CONTINUED FROM PAGE 1

POLICE PERSONNEL RECORDS: Legislation that protects law enforcement officers from public disclosure of unsubstantiated complaints in personnel files.

PROTECT WOMEN’S SPACES: Legislation protecting women’s privacy in sex-segregated spaces.

ATTORNEY GENERAL ELECTION POWERS: Legislation proposing a constitutional amendment allowing the Attorney General to prosecute state election crimes.

REDISTRICTING: Legislation that provides a revised congressional redistricting plan in light of constitutional concerns raised by the U.S. Department of Justice.

TITLE THEFT & DEED FRAUD: Legislation, similar to Senate Bill No. 648 from the 89th Legislature, Regular Session, that provides strengthened protections against title theft and deed fraud.

WATER PROJECT INCENTIVES: Legislation, similar to Senate Bill No. 1253 from the 89th Legislature, Regular Session, that authorizes political subdivisions to reduce impact fees for builders who include water conservation and efficiency measures.

STATE JUDICIAL DEPARTMENT: Legislation, similar to Senate Bill No. 2878 from the 89th Legislature, Regular Session, relating to the operation and administration of the Judicial Department of state government.

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Kraft Heinz recalls turkey bacon over listeria fears



By David Taylor
Managing Editor

Kraft Heinz Foods is recalling over 367,000 pounds of Oscar Mayer turkey bacon because of possible Listeria contamination, according to the U.S. Department of Agriculture.

The recall affects fully cooked turkey bacon products made between April 24 and June 11, 2025. The specific products include:

12-ounce packages of "Oscar Mayer Turkey BACON ORIGINAL" (UPC 071871548601) with "use by" dates from July 18 to August 2, 2025, and lot code RS40.

36-ounce value packs (three 12-ounce pack-

es, UPC 071871548748) with "use by" dates from July 23 to September 4, 2025, and lot codes RS19, RS40, or RS42.

48-ounce family packs (four 12-ounce packages, UPC 071871548793) with "use by" dates from July 18 to September 4, 2025, and lot codes RS19, RS40, or RS42.

The recalled products were sent to stores across the U.S. and also exported to the British Virgin Islands and Hong Kong. Each package has a USDA inspection mark on the front.

The problem was found after company tests suggested possible Listeria bacteria. So far, no illnesses have been reported.

Listeria can be dangerous, especially for older adults, people with weakened immune systems, and pregnant women. Symptoms may include fever, muscle aches, headache, and digestive issues. In pregnant women, it can cause serious pregnancy problems.

If you have any of these turkey bacon products in your fridge or freezer, do not eat them. Throw them away or return them to the store.

For questions, call the Kraft Heinz consumer hotline at 1-800-280-7185 or email consumercare@kraftheinz.com. You can also contact the USDA Meat and Poultry Hotline at 888-674-6854 or MPHotline@usda.gov.

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27-2T					26-2T		26-2T	

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From left, Ayo Edebiri, Juliette Lewis and Murray Bartlett stars in "Opus."

"Opus"

"How to Train Your Dragon" (PG) — The live-action remake of DreamWorks' animated film from 2010 will be available to rent starting July 15! With a budget of \$150 million, the fantasy film pulled in \$519 million at the box office worldwide — an incredible feat for a film with a cast that only includes one big Hollywood name (Gerard Butler). Mason Thames ("The Black Phone") took on the role of the main character, Hiccup, who mysteriously wanders upon a Night Fury dragon and ends up building a precious bond with the creature. The catch is: His father (Butler), the chieftain of Berk, spearheads a no-mercy pursuit of all the dragons that attack his village and will need some serious convincing to stop his fight against them. (Apple TV+)

"Opus" (R) — This thriller film starring "The

Bear's" Ayo Edebiri only grossed \$2.2 million at the box office with a \$10 million budget. (Yikes!) However, amid its meager grosses and mixed reviews, there might still be something worth watching in "Opus." In the film, 1990s pop star Alfred Moretti comes out of retirement and announces a new album, inviting six guests who work in media to a listening party at his Utah compound. One of them is journalist Ariel (Edebiri), who is immediately creeped out by the compound and its occupants. This odd feeling causes her to start investigating Moretti's compound, which is built on a very sinister foundation indeed. If you're a fan of celebrity/celebrity cults, this one is definitely for you! (Max)

"The Phoenician Scheme" (PG-13) — Director Wes Anderson's "Asteroid City" 13th fea-

ture film is out now to rent! If you know Anderson's movies, you know that a huge cast is signed on for the picture, and this time around, it includes Benicio del Toro, Michael Cera, Riz Ahmed, Tom Hanks, Bryan Cranston, Scarlett Johansson, Benedict Cumberbatch, Jeffrey Wright and more. Del Toro leads the film as Zsa-Zsa Korda, an unethical businessman whose close brushes with death drive him to change his ways. Watching in the background is his daughter Sister Liesl (Mia Threapleton), a practicing nun whose only desire is that her father owns up to his mistakes. However, an opportunity to scheme in Phoenicia appears for Korda, which will undoubtedly force him to either retire his old life or have his work end his life. (Amazon Prime Video)

"The Amateur" (PG-13) — Premiering on July 17, this action-thriller film puts Rami Malek ("Oppenheimer") back into a dramatic leading role. He plays CIA cryptographer Charlie, opposite Rachel Brosnahan, who plays his wife, Sarah. After Sarah leaves for a business trip in London, he's devastated to learn through his CIA director that Sarah fell victim to a terrorist attack and was killed. Left with nothing but a powerful motive, Charlie decides to give up his behind-the-scenes desk job to avenge his wife in the field. So, he's sent to train under Colonel Robert Henderson (Laurence Fishburne) and learn the ways of a cold-blooded killer. But will this amateur succeed with his first mission? You'll have to watch to find out! (Hulu)

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Q: Why did Kelly Clarkson cancel her Las Vegas concert? I would be very upset if I had bought tickets and traveled there. — D.D.

A: Kelly Clarkson had to cancel the first two shows of her new Las Vegas residency due to issues with her voice. She stated that she needed to protect her voice from further damage after rehearsals had taken their toll. Caesars Palace, the venue where her concerts will be held, has given ticket buyers a choice of a full refund or waiting for the rescheduled dates.

There have also been rumors that she wants to leave her daytime talk show, but this hasn't been confirmed. She took a leave of absence this past spring to be with her children while her ex-husband was being treated for an undisclosed illness. ***

Q: Is "Murder in a Small Town" coming back for another season? There have been so many cancellations lately; I'm worried this is one of them. — K.I.

A: Fortunately the Fox drama "Murder in a Small Town" has avoided getting the ax after its freshman season and will live to tell the tale of more mysteries this fall. The show is based on a series of novels by L.R. Wright and stars Rossif Sutherland ("The Handmaid's Tale") as Detective Karl Alberg, who relocates to a picturesque town after growing weary of big-city life.

The series earned its renewal by becoming "Fox's fifth most-watched non-sports program of the fall," according to TVLine. While this might not appear very impressive, it performed strongly enough against so much competition (not only on network and cable television but also streaming) to survive and hopefully build a bigger audience its second time around.

Four-time Emmy nominee Marcia Gay Harden ("So Help Me Todd") joins the series this fall as Mayor Christie Holman. The show will air on Fox on Tuesdays at 8 p.m. ET. ***

Q: What ever happened to the actor who starred opposite Julian McMahon in the series "Nip/Tuck"? I haven't seen him in anything for quite a while. I was very



Singer-songwriter/TV personality Kelly Clarkson

sad to learn of McMahon's recent passing. — G.H.

A: Dylan Walsh starred as plastic surgeon Dr. Sean McNamara in creator Ryan Murphy's ("American Horror Story") first hit series, which ran from 2003-2010 on FX. It also made stars out of Walsh and Julian McMahon.

Walsh is still very much actively employed as an actor. His most recent recurring role was playing Mayor Peter Chase on the CBS hit series "Blue Bloods," and before this, it was General Sam Lane on "Superman & Lois."

He has several upcoming projects, including two films that are deemed thrillers — "The Man Across the Street" with Teri Polo ("Meet the Parents") and Jamie-Lynn Sigler ("The Sopranos"), as well as "The Highest Stakes" with Seth Green ("Family Guy") and Charlie Weber ("How to Get Away with Murder").

Sadly, we recently lost McMahon after his private battle with cancer. He left the CBS hit series "FBI: Most Wanted" back in 2022 and was replaced with Dylan McDermott. McMahon most recently appeared in six episodes of "The Residence" on Netflix.

Send me your questions at NewCelebrityExtra@gmail.com.

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HOCUS-FOCUS comic strip by Henry Boltinoff

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Crossword grid with ACROSS and DOWN clues

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Trivia test by Fifi Rodriguez with 10 questions and answers

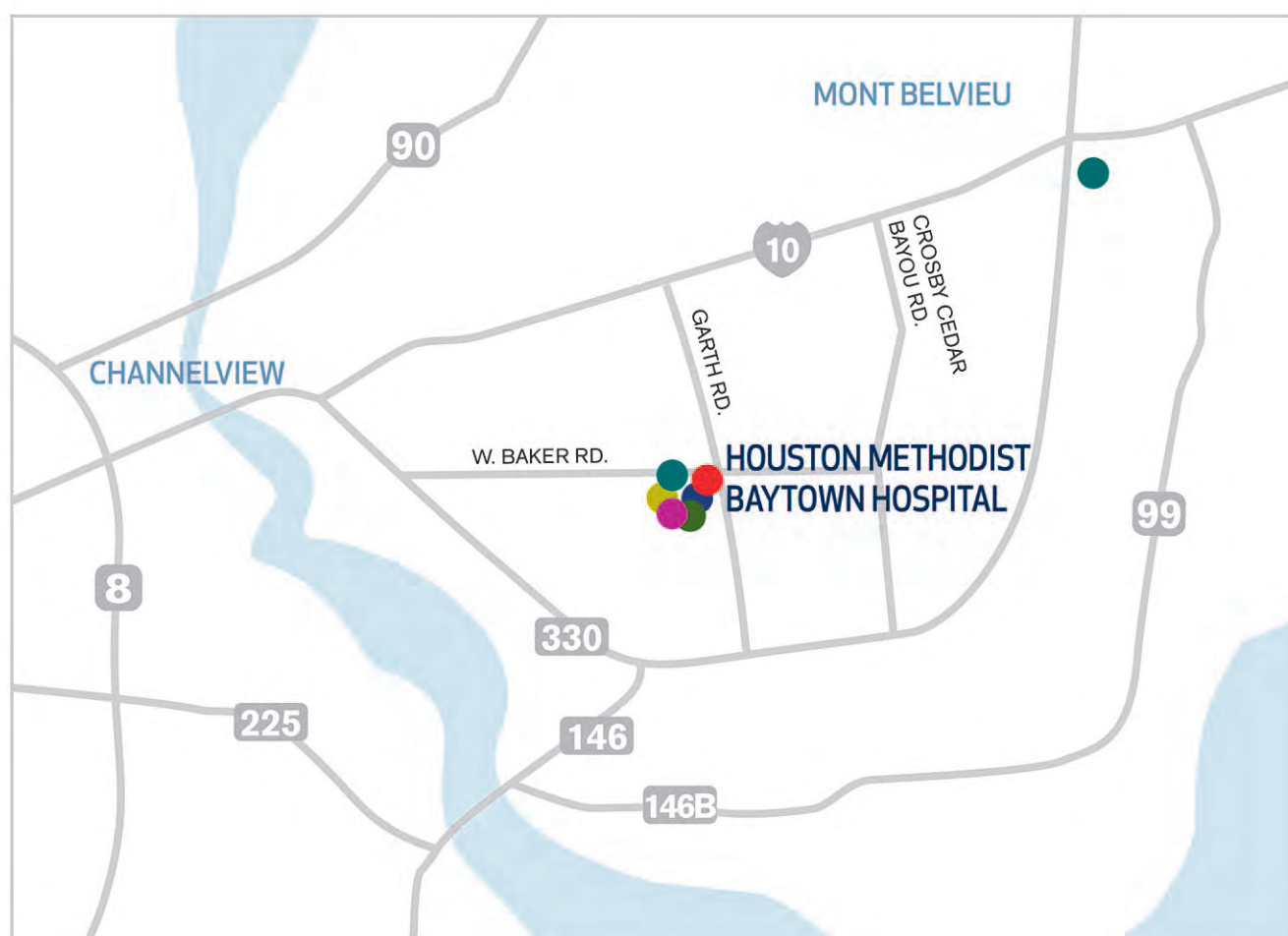


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