

Katy Times



OIL COLLAPSE
WALLOPS STATE
ECONOMY
PAGE 10

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THURSDAY, APRIL 30, 2020



Abbott to start opening Texas

By PATRICK SVITEK
THE TEXAS TRIBUNE

Gov. Greg Abbott said Monday that he will let the state's stay-at-home order expire Thursday as scheduled and allow businesses to begin reopening in phases the next day, the latest ramp-up in his push to restart the Texas economy amid the coronavirus pandemic.

First to open Friday: retail stores, restaurants, movie theaters and malls. But they will only be allowed to operate at 25% capacity. Museums and libraries will also be allowed to open at 25% capacity, but hands-on exhibits must remain closed.

Abbott said a second phase of business reopenings could come as soon as May 18 — as long as the state sees “two weeks of data to confirm no flare-up of COVID-19.” That second phase would allow businesses to expand their occupancy to 50%, according to the governor.

Abbott made the announcement during a news conference at the Texas Capitol, which he began by saying he would let the stay-at-home order expire because it “has done its job to slow the growth of COVID-19.” While the spread of the virus in Texas has slowed down throughout April, the number of cases is still increasing day to day, and it is unclear if the state has yet seen its peak.

“Now it's time to set a new course, a course that responsibly opens up business in Texas,” Abbott said, flanked by Lt. Gov. Dan Patrick and Texas House Speaker

See **OPENING**, page 9

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Katy ISD issues 12K devices



PHOTO COURTESY KATY ISD

Katy ISD police and administrative staff helped with the distribution of iPads and Chromebooks April 22 at the KISD Education Support Complex. The devices were sanitized and prepackaged for contactless delivery to families.

By R. HANS MILLER
SENIOR REPORTER

Katy ISD has distributed 550 devices to students April 22 to facilitate online learning. The issuance of the devices last week brings 11,950 into students' hands and about 2,900 devices to teachers to ensure education can continue into summer, Katy ISD Director of Instructional Technology Darlene Rankin said.

“(We’re) currently issuing iPad devices up to First grade. Second through Twelfth (graders) are using a Chromebook,” Rankin said.

Rankin said the school has not had to spend additional money on the devices for multiple reasons. The district had already ramped up its purchases of devices to meet the needs of its campuses, she said. That created a situation where enough devices were available to meet the day-to-day needs of classroom education. However, once need increased because of COVID-19 forcing the district to move to virtual classrooms, her IT team was able to repair or repurpose devices at campuses so they could be issued to support online education, she said.

“We’ve devoted more of our funds to mobile devices (prior to the new coronavirus issue), be it iPads or Chromebooks,” Rankin said.

See **DEVICES**, page 5

A SECONDARY CRISIS

Law enforcement, nonprofits see spike in abuse calls, demands for service

By R. HANS MILLER
SENIOR REPORTER

With stay home order in effect across the Katy area, law enforcement officials and nonprofits that serve domestic violence victims are seeing a spike in abuse calls and demands for service, they said. Being stuck at home with financial and emotional strains is taking its toll on the community, they said.

“There was a 27% increase of Domestic Violence cases reported compared to the same time last year. The reason appears to be the stress of the COVID-19, where families disagree about going out or staying at home, the loss of jobs and the stress from the lack of income, the fear of those family members having to go out to work and bring the virus back into the home,” said Fort Bend County Sheriff’s Office Sergeant Tim Morris of the department’s Family Violence Division.

A legal process

When a report comes into the sheriff’s office, a patrol deputy is dispatched to the home and provides a “Victim Assistance Information” booklet to the victim which explains the investigation and prosecution process, Morris said. The pamphlet also provides contact information for resources such as the FBCSO Victims’ Services Liaison, Denise Gruwell.

From there, Gruwell assists the victim in explaining the process which may include obtaining emergency protective orders, working with the district attorney’s office and other steps to facilitate the safety of the victim and the investigation process, Morris said.

Victims may also be referred to a variety of services throughout the county including the Fort Bend County Women’s Center, Fort Bend County Women’s Shelter, social services and Katy Christian Ministries, Morris said. Out of county women’s centers, legal aid services and the office of the Attorney General may provide Crime Victim Compensation and child support services, Morton said. Anger

See **CRISIS**, page 5



COURTESY PEXELS

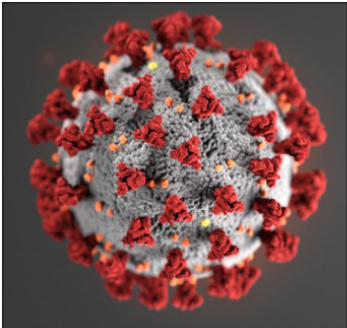
As the COVID-19 pandemic has pushed families into confined quarters in their homes and added stress to Katy area residents’ lives, law enforcement and nonprofit officials have said they are seeing spikes in domestic violence calls that seem to be a direct result of the added stress in the situation.

Counties move forward with COVID-19 fight

By R. HANS MILLER
SENIOR REPORTER

Harris, Waller and Fort Bend County residents can look forward to loosened restrictions after Tex. Gov. Greg Abbott issued executive orders Monday to begin opening the state’s businesses back up. However, challenges are still on the horizon as the state opens in phases and Katy area counties try to balance safety with the need for economic stability.

“The virus is not gone. It is still here and if we give it an opportunity, it will take it,” said Houston Health Authority Dr. David Persse last week.



Harris County

Harris County Judge Lina Hidalgo became the center of some controversy last week as she issued an order

April 22 requiring that Harris County residents wear cloth face coverings while in public. However, she was later forced to rescind the portion of the order requiring up to a \$1,000 fine and up to 180 days of jail time after Abbott issued an order that stated fines and jail time were not permitted and lower governmental authorities could not issue conflicting orders.

AS of April 28, the Harris County Sheriff’s Office had 280 officers diagnosed with COVID-19, 180 of which work at the Harris County Jail an HCSO press release said. Eight HCSO employees were hospitalized

and more than 300 jail inmates were infected, the statement said.

However, Hidalgo is focusing on moving the county forward to safely open up the economy and ensure preparedness if a secondary spike in cases does occur. She established the Harris County COVID-19 Strike Team Monday which identifies areas requiring added testing, and other resources. The team includes epidemiologists, public health experts, social workers and testing staff, a Harris County

See **DATA**, page 9

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Food bank gets 20,000-pound donation

By R. HANS MILLER
SENIOR REPORTER

The Katy Christian Ministries Food Bank in Katy received a 20,000-pound donation of food from The Church of Jesus Christ of Latter-day Saints last week. The Salt Lake City, Utah-based church donated pallets of pasta, beans, tomatoes, sugar, soup and other essentials to fill up shelves in the pantry which have strained to meet increased demand due to the economic impact of COVID-19.

"A couple of weeks ago I had started to panic," said Krissy Shetterly, food pantry director at KCM. "We were extremely low on stock and the number of people coming through each day had doubled. We desperately needed more food. But I've learned that God never lets us down and something always turns up."

Shetterly said the added supplies, in addition to those provided by other food drives, would allow the pantry to continue with its mission to feed those in need for a while longer. Prior to the donation, the pantry



COURTESY ANNETTE STEWART

Volunteers helped place 20,000 pounds of food on the shelves at Katy Christian Ministries' Food Pantry which has seen increased demand due to area residents being out of work during the COVID-19 pandemic.

had completely run out of some essentials like sugar.

KCM also provides social services to the Katy area such as financial assistance and a crisis center that supports victims of domestic violence and sexual assault, said Annette Stewart, a representative for The Church of Jesus Christ of Latter-day Saints. The church, which has about 4,000 members in the Katy area, holds donation drives to support KCM's work in the community.

"We couldn't be more

thrilled that we could arrange this donation from our welfare department," said church representative Julie Smith. "KCM are able to reach so many with their ministry and always go the extra mile in thinking of special ways to bless the lives of the community."

Smith said she was aware of KCM always adding new features to its services like the recently-launched "The Birthday Closet" program which provides birthday gifts for parents who

are short on cash to provide to their children.

Shetterly said she appreciated the boost to the pantry's supplies, there is still a need for donations.

"With so many families at home right now, we're finding that what people really lack are snacks," said Shetterly. "Donations of things like granola bars, juice boxes, and any kid-friendly foods would be a huge blessing. People in Katy also love dry beans – the one-pound bags of black beans, pinto beans, etcetera."

The donation to the pantry is a part of the practice of faith members of The Church of Jesus Christ of Latter-day Saints. The church funds donations such as this by a tradition when members skip two consecutive meals per month and donate the money they would have spent on that food to those in need – like KCM's food pantry.

"You always feel like everything that you donate and the time you spend (at KCM) is going directly to the clients," said Smith. "You get a good feeling working there."

WANT TO HELP?

Katy Christian Ministries has seen an increase in demand for services compared to last year at this time. During April of 2019, KCM received 64 hotline calls at its crisis center and received 86 as of April 28 this year. The average daily number of families provided food assistance has increased by 25 additional households per day.

Those who would like to donate may visit www.ktcm.org and click "Support KCM" in the top-right corner to see how you can help.

The KCM food pantry is in need of donations to continue to keep operations going. Below is a list of their primary needs to help families during the COVID-19 crisis.

- Canned meats (tuna, SPAM, chicken)
- Canned Fruit
- Flavored rice and pasta
- Cereals
- Shampoo
- Deodorant
- Bar Soap
- Diapers and pullups
- Baby wipes
- Laundry Soap

Katy leaders provide community positive encouragement

By R. HANS MILLER
SENIOR REPORTER

Katy's economy and spirit has been tried over the last two months as businesses closed and friends became ill with COVID-19. Katy Times reached out to leaders in the Katy area and asked them to provide encouragement to the community as we continue to face hardships as a community even as restrictions loosen.

Katy ISD Trustee

Bill Lacy: This virus has brought together families, neighbors, friends. We've gotten to know our kids again. We have rebuilt relationships that we have simply taken for granted. Our community is better and stronger because of this virus.

Bill Hastings, Mayor of Katy:

Thank you to our residents for taking COVID-19 seriously. This situation is completely unprecedented, and we are unsure of what we may be facing tomorrow; however, we will get through this and we will get through

it together. I want our residents to know that our city council and all employees stand ready, willing and able to meet this challenge. We are here to provide for your safety, your security and your well-being. We are closely monitoring the COVID-19 situation and are working diligently with our department heads, emergency management team, state, local and federal authorities.

The sacrifices you are making during this difficult time – closing businesses, canceling gatherings and social distancing from those you love – are not in vain. We have smart, creative, resourceful, kind and caring residents who are doing all they can to slow the spread and flatten the curve of this pandemic.

We will only get through this crisis when we all work together. We have been through tough times before and we will rise to this challenge. May God protect you and your families, and it is my fervent prayer that all our residents remain safe and healthy.



BILL HASTINGS



BILL LACY



DEYSI CRESPO

Katy Christian Ministries Executive Director Deysi Crespo:

Be highly encouraged daily with faithfulness and remember that we are in this journey together. We will get through it united in the spirit of love and compassion for one another. Let's not dwell in the unknown. Continue to put your trust in Him, and rejoice in every opportunity and for every day of life the Lord gives us.

Waller County Judge Trey Duhon:

This has been an unprecedented time in our history. But as usual, Texans have responded in a manner indicative of their history - that we will overcome this challenge.

It is frustrating that we are having to deal with this new reality but if we continue to take precautions

and work together as a community, this too will pass – and we can all get back to our daily lives as we all strive to make our community a better place for future generations.

Fort Bend County Constable for Precinct 3 Wayne Thompson:

Well, the word expired usually brings a negative connotation. This week however, the word expired will bring a return to normalcy. As the stay at home orders expire, we will all breathe a collective sigh of relief. Yes, it will

be a gradual return and we will still have challenges, but it is a start. I am proud of the residents of Precinct 3 who have once again weathered another storm. The light at the end of the tunnel is bright. As we move forward, let us never allow the good deeds and our volunteering spirit expire. Because of you, Precinct 3 remains the place to be. I am proud of our community and I look forward to moving forward together, stronger than ever.



WAYNE THOMPSON



TREY DUHON

This Week's Puzzle Sponsored by

Katy Times

SUDOKU

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

Level: Intermediate

Fun By The Numbers

Like puzzles? Then you'll love sudoku. This mind-bending puzzle will have you hooked from the moment you square off, so sharpen your pencil and put your sudoku savvy to the test.

Here's How It Works:

Sudoku puzzles are formatted as a 9x9 grid, broken down into nine 3x3 boxes. To solve a sudoku, the numbers 1 through 9 must fill each row, column and box. Each number can appear only once in each row, column and box. You can figure out the order in which the numbers will appear by using the numeric clues already provided in the boxes. The more numbers you name, the easier it gets to solve the puzzle!

Answers will be provided in next week's edition.

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This Week's Puzzle Sponsored by

Katy Times

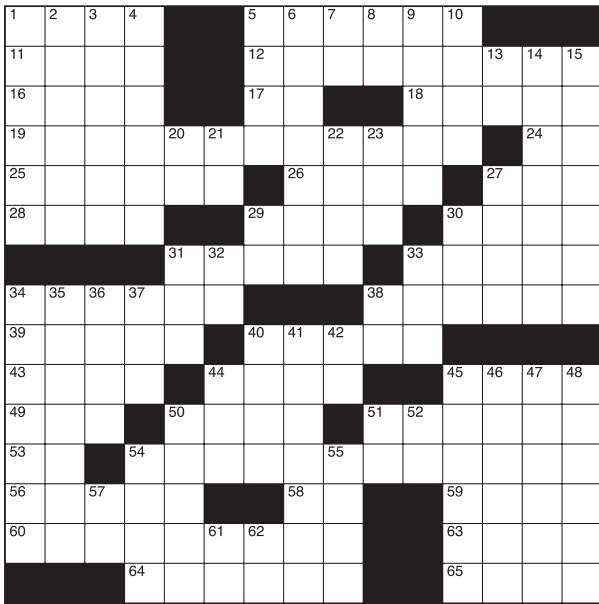
CROSSWORD PUZZLE

CLUES ACROSS

1. Curved symmetrical structure
5. One's partner in marriage
11. Male admirer
12. Spend in a period of dormancy
16. Popular Easter meal
17. Doc
18. Bearing a heavy load
19. Gratitude
24. The Mount Rushmore State
25. Driving
26. Girl
27. British thermal unit
28. Makes a mistake
29. A defined length of time
30. Lions do it
31. Large quantities
33. Become less intense
34. Famed peninsula
38. Emerges
39. Rare Hawaiian geese
40. Dance style
43. Drove
44. Measures speed of an engine (abbr.)
45. Yankee hero Bucky
49. Midway between west and northwest
50. Monetary unit of Samoa
51. Makes clothing
53. Spielberg's alien
54. Agreeable to the taste
56. Injury treatment protocol
58. Cools your house
59. Imaginary line
60. New convert
63. Some do it to their windows
64. Wore away
65. Work units

CLUES DOWN

1. Remove body tissue
2. Harvester
3. Roadside living quarters
4. Excessive self-confidence
5. Lapp



6. Bicycled
7. Entrance to a passage
8. Western U.S. state
9. Grain towers
10. "Westworld" actress — Rachel Wood
13. Commercial
14. One who left a will
15. Makes it through
20. Within (prefix)
21. Sea patrol (abbr.)
22. Cigarettes (slang)
23. A doctrine
27. Constrictor snakes
29. Atomic #73
30. Baseball stat
31. Female sibling
32. A soft gray metal (abbr.)
33. Southern constellation
34. Belgian city
35. Go in again
36. In a different, more positive way
37. A place for sleeping
38. Blood type
40. Syrian news agency (abbr.)
41. A salt or ester of acetic acid
42. Millihenry
44. Populous Israeli city — Aviv
45. Widen
46. Magical potion
47. Acknowledging
48. Private romantic rendezvous
50. Cavalry sword
51. Terabyte
52. Artificial intelligence
54. Bullfighting maneuver
55. Breezed through
57. Santa says it three times
61. — and behold
62. 36 inches (abbr.)

Answers will be provided in next week's edition.

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County looks to complete road in May

By R. HANS MILLER
SENIOR REPORTER

Harris County Precinct 3's Road and Bridge Department is expecting to be finished with a \$4.4 million project to create a four-lane roadway from just north of Clay Road to Grand Ventana Drive. The project was originally scheduled to be completed November 2019, but has seen delays said Pct. 3 Field Engineer Jennifer Almonte.

"We have experienced several delays, these include nearly

100 days of inclement weather, utility delays and some areas where additional design was required to improve drainage and pedestrian accessibility, Almonte said.

The construction contractor working on the project is Unitas Construction out of the Katy area, Almonte said.

Since the project began about \$61,000 has been added to the budget through change orders, Almonte said. The added costs included an increase in the depth of the temporary and

long term asphalt sections in the project to prevent potholes and improved the ride quality for those traveling the roadway. Long term asphalt is being used at the four-lane to two-lane transition and will be removed when the next section of Peek Road begins construction, she said.

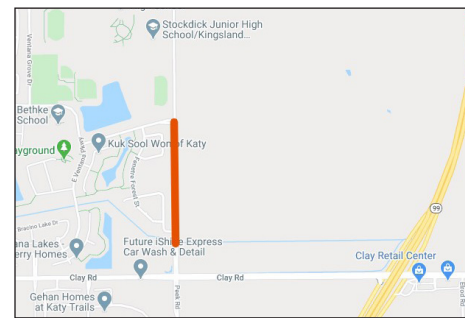
The project is now expected to complete sometime in May, barring additional weather delays.

Almonte said the county does not have an exact traffic count or estimate for daily

use as that number fluctuates almost daily.

Almonte said the COVID-19 pandemic has not impacted the project directly and all contract and county personnel have been practicing social distancing and will be wearing masks when not operating equipment. She does not anticipate further delays at this time.

"The project is on schedule given the delays mentioned above," Almonte said. "We are expecting to be complete in May."



HARRIS COUNTY/GOOGLE

Harris County began widening Peek Road from about 600 feet north of Clay Road to Grand Ventana Drive in May of 2019 and expects to be completed within the next month.



ANN
LALIME



CHRISTOPHER
MORGAN

Katy ISD promotes Lalime, Morgan

By R. HANS MILLER
SENIOR REPORTER

During their Monday evening meeting, the Katy ISD Board of Trustees promoted Ann Lalime to principal of Stockdick Junior High School and Chris Morgan to Assistant Superintendent for Secondary School Leadership and Support. Both were appointed to their new positions, which they will move into at the beginning of the 2020-2021 school year.

Lalime, who holds a Doctorate in Educational Leadership from Sam Houston State University, is a career educator who began working in public education in 1990 with Katy ISD. She has experience teaching third through sixth grades and has been serving as principal of Golbow Elementary in Katy ISD since 2009.

Morgan began his career as an elementary teacher for Irving ISD in 1995. Since then, he has served as principal of Paul Keyes Elementary in Irving ISD, in multiple Fort Bend ISD principal roles and has served as principal for Taylor High School since the 2017-18 academic year. Morgan holds a Bachelor of Science Degree in Kinesiology from Stephen F. Austin State University and a Master of Education in Administration from Texas Women's University.

Katy ISD's Board of Trustees unanimously voted both educators into their new roles.

Students assist with COVID-19 screenings



CONTRIBUTED PHOTO

Students enrolled in Wharton County Junior College's Emergency Medical Services program are currently assisting with COVID-19 screenings at the Fort Bend County Fairgrounds. Outfitted in Personal Protective Equipment (PPE) that includes gowns, face shields and gloves, the students helped collect samples for the screenings, assisting Fort Bend County EMS and the Fort Bend County Health and Human Services. WCJC EMS program Director Gary Bonewald said the screenings provide students with unique insight into dealing with the kinds of drastic changes that can occur in the healthcare field. The training can be applied toward the clinical training students must complete as part of their course curriculum. Pictured, left to right, are Christopher Gilmer of Richmond, Kieran Rosas of Simonton, Bryce Armstrong of Brenham and Dusty Hixson of Sugar Land.



R. HANS MILLER

Construction equipment sits idle over the weekend at the construction site at John Paul Landing Park which lies north of Katy in the northeastern corner of Katy Hockley and West Roads. Construction crews will be putting the equipment to use soon as they work to finish the project which will increase detention capacity at the park.

Harris County expanding lake at John Paul Landing Park

By R. HANS MILLER
SENIOR REPORTER

In order to provide additional detention for the Addicks Reservoir Watershed, Harris County is Spending a little more than \$4 million in a joint project between Harris County Precinct 3 - Commissioner Steve Raddack's precinct which includes the

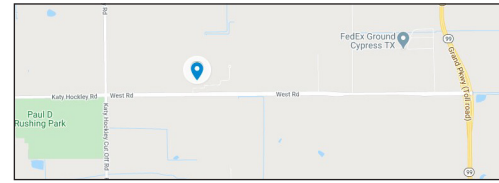
Katy area - and the Harris County Flood control district, said Eric Heppen, the project manager overseeing the construction.

"There are no roads being constructed as part of this project, Heppen said, "The project is being overseen by the road and bridge group."

The project's original budget is funded by both

county entities and is currently on-budget. It is expected to add about 34 acres of surface area to the manmade lake which will add an additional 238 acre feet of detention capacity in the lake.

"The project is currently on-schedule and is anticipated to be completed in June of 2020, (weather permitting)," Heppen said.



GOOGLE

Expansion of the manmade lake at John Paul Landing Park is expected to increase the volume of the wet-bottomed lake which serves as a fishing hole and has elevated banks which add volume for additional detention capacity in the area during rain events.

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Babe Ruth beat the Spanish Flu

In 1918, an influenza panic much like today's COVID-19 struck the nation.

The Spanish flu, as it was often called, killed at least 50 million victims worldwide, and 675,000 in the U.S. Then-Surgeon General Rupert Blue summarized how suddenly the highly contagious, fast-spreading and deadly respiratory disease struck.

"People are stricken on the streets or while at work. First there is a chill, then fever with temperatures from 101 to 103, headache, backache, reddening and running of the eyes, pains and aches all over the body, and general prostration," Blue said. "Persons so attacked should go to their homes at once [self-quarantine], get into bed without delay and immediately call a physician."

Remarkably, the heroic Babe Ruth beat back the deadly flu twice. As Randy Roberts and Johnny Smith wrote in "War Fever: Boston, Baseball in the Shadow of the Great War," on the first warm day in May, Ruth – then a standout Boston Red Sox moundsman – spent the day with his wife Helen swimming at Revere Beach, guzzling beer and eating a picnic basket full of sandwiches.

A few hours later, Ruth's temperature hit 104 degrees. Unbeknownst to him, Ruth had the Spanish flu. Red Sox team doctor Oliver Barney unwittingly administered the wrong remedy, and within hours an ambulance rushed a gravely ill Ruth to Massachusetts General Hospital. Barney had coated Ruth's throat with silver nitrate which caused a violent reaction that left the Bambino, now afflicted with acute edema, in agonizing pain.

Bosox officials feared Ruth was on his death bed. Since the Red Sox had already lost 11 players to World War I service, the team could ill-afford to lose Ruth, too. But not only did Ruth recover and return to the lineup within a few days, but over the following six weeks in late May and June, he blasted 11 home runs, more than five entire American League teams did during the entire 1918 campaign. The cherry on top of the Red Sox sundae: during the World Series, Ruth pitched two complete game victories, including a shutout against the Chicago Cubs.

Ruth had another



round to fight against the Spanish flu. In early October, after the shortened 1918 war-torn season ended, the Bambino's hometown newspaper, the Baltimore Sun, reported, "The great and only Babe Ruth has fallen victim to the Spanish flu."

Once again, Ruth battled back and prevailed. But by the year's end, the flu killed 4,800 Bostonians, and thousands more Americans. By 1919, the flu waning, baseball would face another challenge that discredited the game, the infamous Black Sox scandal. The Chicago White Sox were accused of throwing the World Series to the Cincinnati Reds in exchange for cash payments from known mobsters.

A healthy Ruth, however, racked up eye-popping 1919 statistics. In his last season before he became a New York Yankee, Ruth – splitting his duties between toeing the rubber and patrolling right field – led the league in home runs, runs batted in, runs scored, on base percentage, slugging, on-base plus slugging, and total bases. Without a shred of doubt, Ruth is the greatest baseball player who ever lived.

Sabermetricians Kevin Reavy and Ryan Spaeder, in their book "Incredible Baseball Stats," calculated that if Ruth were to rise from the dead, return to baseball and strike out 3,187 times, he would still have a slugging percentage above .500. Bonus fact the authors uncovered: Ruth stole home plate ten times, more than Rickey Henderson, Lou Brock and Tim Lincecum who, combined, totaled only nine.

The moral of today's baseball tale: America's game, the national pastime, has survived pandemics and scandal. The coronavirus may have stalled the 2020 baseball season, but as the old adage goes, "This too shall pass."

Joe Guzzardi is a Society for American Baseball Research and an Internet Baseball Writers Association member. Contact him at guzzjoe@yahoo.com.



Homeschooling during this time

After careful consideration and prayer, my wife and I decided against homeschooling our three daughters when they reached school age, mainly because we recognize our pedagogical limitations – and we value our mental health.

How ironic, then, that in the face of the COVID-19 pandemic, we have joined scores of other American parents violently thrust into the math-eat-dad world of homeschooling! And we stand about as much chance of survival as the last four-pack of Ultra Soft Charmin on a Sunday afternoon at Walmart.

Because my wife is considered an "essential worker," I've taken on the role of the nerdy homeschool vice-principal nobody takes seriously. Fortunately, my two older daughters are fairly independent in their schoolwork and only require my assistance when they need to place an Amazon Prime order for important educational supplies like pink hair dye or designer AirPods.

My youngest daughter, on the other hand, has the academic enthusiasm of a heavily salted slug. The problem isn't that she lacks



intelligence, creativity, and extreme cuteness. It's just that she'd rather suffer a third-degree sunburn from the glare off her iPad screen than reduce fractions. Not only that, but getting her out of bed in the morning is like getting Ragú stains out of Tupperware.

Through a process of trial and comedy of errors, I've discovered a few strategies to make the homeschooling process no more painful than picking your nose with a hot glue gun.

First, as qualified educators are utilizing video conferencing tools like Zoom and GoToMeeting to communicate with their homebound students, it's important for parents to assist their children by stifling curse words while frantically clicking various links and buttons on the computer in a futile effort to get their children in the correct video class on time.

Because the camera on the laptop will unexpectedly activate during the random button-clicking process, it's also critical that the belt on the supportive parent's bathrobe is tightly secured at all times. (What's the fine for indecent exposure these days, by the way? Asking for a friend.)

Next, amid the grueling schedule of classes, it's important to take breaks and re-energize with refreshments. My youngest daughter's preferred activity during these pauses is dragging out her Easy-Bake Oven for old times' sake and making the kitchen look like she's been cooking Thanksgiving dinner for the Green Bay Packers. I try to stay out of her way during this activity, only interrupting occasionally to demonstrate proper utensil-licking techniques. I then have her practice with fractions and proportions, dividing the finished pastries between the two of us according to body weight.

Speaking of mathematics, I've found it useful to sit in on some of my daughter's lessons. This has allowed me to brush up on the geometry skills I should have learned in sixth-grade

when I was busy deciding whether to break wind or belch in order to attract the attention of the cute girl two desks up from me. (My daughter would tell you that things apparently haven't changed much.)

I must admit that there have been some meltdowns and tears in this homeschooling process – but my daughter can usually calm me down after a few hours. And despite the academic frustrations and belly aches from too many miniature whoopee pies, it has been an opportunity for me to spend some precious time with my children.

More than anything, this experience has increased my appreciation for the incredibly important and difficult work of our public, private and homeschooling educators. So the next time you see a teacher, offer your heartfelt thanks with a four-pack of Ultra Soft Charmin.

Graves is an award-winning humor columnist from East Texas. His columns have been featured in Texas Escapes magazine, The Shreveport Times, The Longview News Journal, and The Kilgore News Herald. Contact Graves at susanjase@sbcglobal.net.

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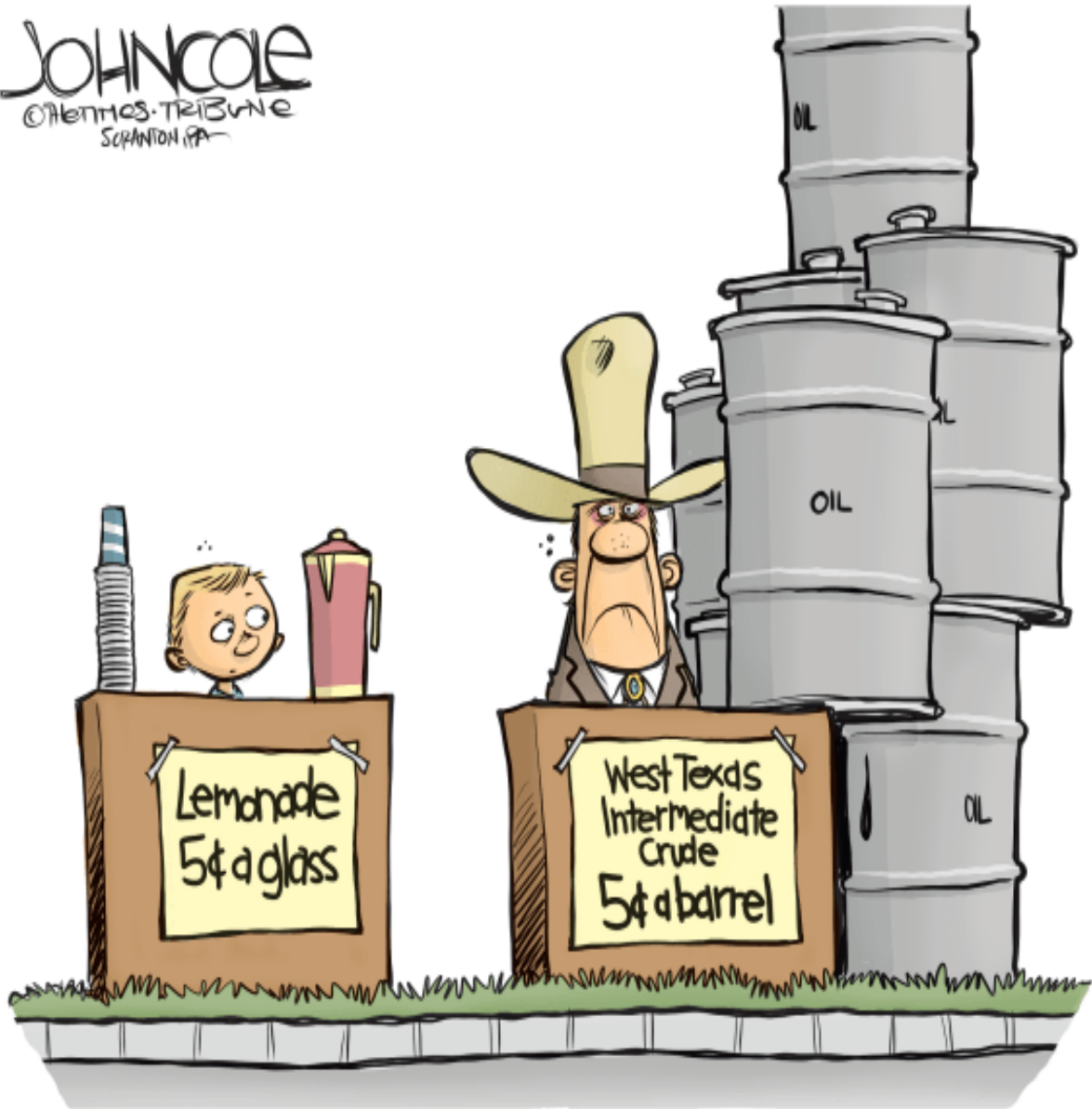
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GET A BYTE OF EDUCATION...

Three vendors are offering free or low-cost internet access to students in the area who need an affordable option during the COVID-19 pandemic.

- **AT&T** is offering its *Access from AT&T* program at \$10 per month to students in households with limited incomes. Those who qualify, including those households participating in the National School Lunch Program and Head Start are eligible.
- **Sprint** is offering 3GB per month of free internet access at home until June 30, 2021 through its ConnectED program. More information is available by calling Sprint Customer Service at 866-414-3225 or by emailing connected@sprint.com. Users may need to purchase a wireless hotspot or turn on the hotspot option on their eligible devices. After the 3GB of data is used, students will still have access but their connection speed may be throttled down.
- **Comcast/Xfinity** is offering free access to its Internet Essentials program as well as WiFi throughout its service areas across the country for 60 days to new customers, including those in the Katy area. After that, costs will be established on a case-by-case basis. Those who qualify for public assistance such as the National School Lunch Program, housing assistance, Medicaid, SNAP and Social Security may apply at <https://apply.internetessentials.com/>.

These services all have limits and restrictions based upon the customer and the company and even those who owe the respective companies may be eligible to receive the free/discounted services.

DEVICES

from page 1

The 550 devices were distributed at the district's Education Support Complex located at 6301 S. Stadium Lane in downtown Katy, according to a Katy ISD press release. Rankin said the devices had been collected from campuses, verified to be in working order by one of the district's IT staff, set up for online learning, sanitized to be certain the devices wouldn't inadvertently cause the spread of COVID-19 and issued to their new users by being placed in the trunks of cars in a drive-thru line.

All of the devices can access MyKatyCloud, the virtual environment for Katy's online classrooms, as well as Canvas, Discovery Education, BrainPop, and the other essential websites and software for students to learn through, Rankin said.

Each device is set up to ensure safety, Rankin said. The devices are set up to establish a sandbox learning environment that limits student access to the rest of the internet, she said. As a result, students using a school-issued device can only look at content and websites prescreened by district officials such as teachers and librarians, Rankin said.

"If the students checked out a Katy ISD device then they're still running through the same content filters that they would if they were on campus," Rankin said.

Rankin said even though the on-campus libraries are closed, students are continuing to check out books digitally since the COVID-19 closure began, so KISD's

"We have classroom technology designers and we have an amazing knowledge base. We knew in the latter half of our spring break – around (March 12 or March 13) – that we were going in this direction so we started putting additional supports in place."

— KATY ISD DIRECTOR OF INSTRUCTIONAL TECHNOLOGY DARLENE RANKIN

administration is pleased to see children continuing to read.

"(Each) library has a lot of online books," Rankin said. "Eighteen-thousand e-books have been checked out with an average of 56 minutes of reading time.

Additional analytics are available to teachers and administrators so they can follow up with students who are not submitting assignments or have not logged into virtual learning, Rankin said. This allows the district to reach out to students and parents to find out what resource is missing.

Rankin said students and parents have support if they need it through the District's website, where a support form allows parents to submit questions and get personalized assistance. To access the online support form, parents can visit www.katyisd.org. Once on the website, they can select "Parent Tech Help" from the "Parents" dropdown menu.

The support form is linked at the bottom of the resulting page. Rankin said additional staff have been allocated to respond to support requests in order to ensure timely assistance.

The form can also be used if parents still need to obtain a device for their child, Rankin said.

"We have classroom technology designers and we have an amazing knowledge base. We knew in the latter half of our spring break – around (March 12 or March 13) – that we were going in this direction so we started putting additional supports in place," Rankin said.

The devices will remain in students' possession through the end of the semester if the student does not need to attend summer school, Rankin said. Students that need to keep their devices to participate in classes over the summer school term will keep their devices, she said.

CRISIS

from page 1

management tools are also provided to the household, he said.

Survivors of domestic violence tend to be at continued and elevated risk of being victimized again, said Susan Hastings, director of Katy Christian Ministries Crisis Center which helps victims of domestic and sexual violence.

Reaching out for recovery

When the Katy Christian Ministries Crisis Center hotline rings, that's the first step for KCM to get involved, Hastings said. She is concerned that calls have risen dramatically in March and April of 2020 compared to the same months the prior year.

"In March & April of 2019 we recorded 159 hotline calls," Hastings said. "In March & April of 2020 so far, we recorded 218 hotline calls."

Hastings said being constrained to stay home by various stay home orders and fear to go out in public where they might catch the virus are contributing factors. But so are several stressors that are the usual contributors to domestic violence but are exacerbated under the social conditions caused by the new coronavirus. These include loss of jobs, financial uncertainty, isolation and health issues.

Child Advocates of Fort Bend, another group helping victims of domestic violence said in an April 27 announcement that it had seen an uptick of child victim interviews by 20% between March 2019 and March 2020.

Once things come to a head and victims reach out to assistance, KCM has been able to provide them with face-to-face advocacy, counseling, crisis intervention, safety planning, shelter placement, legal assistance and other nonprofit partners, Hastings said.

"Katy Christian Ministries addresses the whole person, including their physical, mental and emotion health," Hastings said. "We achieve this by providing four core programs to our clients; Social Services, Food Pantry, Crisis Center and resale stores."

The nonprofit already has a hefty workload, Hastings said and the crisis is increasing that workload.

"Last year in 2019 we assessed and worked with 2,227 victims of domestic violence and sexual assault," Hastings said.

Reaction and recovery

Helping victims recognize and break out of the cycles they are in is important to eliminating the cycle domestic violence

victims go through said KCM Executive Director Deysi Crespo.

"A lot of the times the victim does not even realize the impact it has already had in (his or her) life and -those around them, especially the children who then become secondary victims," Crespo said. "Therefore, psychoeducation is an essential part of the process as we engage with the victims."

Prevention can be difficult because people who are on the pathway toward a breaking point don't always recognize it, especially in stressful times, Crespo said. However, KCM and other community resources such as pastors can provide counseling and help to interceded before things get out of hand, she said.

"I still would like to encourage those who recognize they are losing control during this time to reach out to their place of worship or any other church in our community. Spiritual health and connect-edness are equally important. They can also get plugged-in with many counseling centers in our city or surrounding areas such (as) Martin Counseling in Katy, Houston Center for Christian Counseling, and many more counseling partners that our staff can guide (them) to."

Advocates are important for victims to have access to said CAFB CEO Ruthanne Mefford. The nonprofit offers advocacy through Court Appointed Special Advocates – or CASAs – that help minors navigate domestic violence issues. Providing services during a near-lockdown environment has been difficult she said.

"Fortunately for the children of Fort Bend County, we are better equipped to handle both the challenges of providing services digitally and the spike in the need for services than we were a year ago, Mefford said. "Our renovation included digital upgrades that have allowed our staff to more easily shift to working digitally and we have both the space and the staff to meet the increased need."

Crespo said those looking to find out more about how they can help prevent domestic violence in the community can reach out to KCM at 281-391-4504 or via email at info@ktcm.org.

While the mitigation is important, all sources mentioned said contacting law enforcement by calling 9-1-1 if a domestic violence event is happening in your home or you think it may be happening nearby is important. Though, they would prefer to prevent the issues in the first place and break the generational cycle as children become secondary victims or later, perpetrators or adult victims.

"Change starts with the victim. Let's break the cycle of violence now to reduce the likelihood of children becoming the victims or perpetrators later on in their adult life," Crespo said.

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This new book will contain a credible "unified theory of everything" that can explain the very basics of science. Albert Einstein predicted that someone "off the street" was going to do this someday. After 53 years (at approx. year 2000), I decided to include God at every step of the process of trying to come up with a scientific "Theory of Everything". Prior to this, it was about the "only thing" I felt I had not been successful at inventing or figuring out. --- You see, God had already given me the gift of inventing at age 9-10, in His response to my Second Major Prayer. --- By the year 2014, God had allowed me to assemble sufficient knowledge that I felt 95%, of what I needed to figure out, had been accomplished.

One thing I had always wished for, especially as I was approaching the age of 40, is for God to speak to me. Well, when God did speak to me, I liked my first message from God about as much, I suppose, as Abraham liked his message from God, when he was told to sacrifice his son. But God was testing both of us! God was also making us stronger.

There are still two major topics in life to be addressed, prior to publishing the new book. One is a major release of scientific information of the new theory across the U.S.A. The second is starting an evangelical ministry.

Author of new book is a Chemistry graduate (B.S. 1971/M.S. 1978) of Texas A&M (A&I) in Kingsville, TX. He also attended S.A.C. in San Antonio. He has additional hours at SWTSU, Texas Tech U., Boston College, Westinghouse PWR. He has worked at Texas Uranium Operations as Chief Chemist, at South Texas Nuclear Project as Nuclear Chemist during pre-startup, and retired from City of Houston where he was in charge of Technical Services Section of Bureau of Air Quality Control. Owner of BAKER'S BOOKS is also the author of *God's Amazing Answer To Prayer*, in 2012.

Katy softball recognizes seniors

Coaches organize non-traditional senior night to honor graduates

By COLE McNANNA
SPECIAL TO THE KATY TIMES

If there is a silver lining about the 2020 softball season getting cut short, it's that the Katy Tigers' reign as state champion is extended until someone can challenge them next season, as head coach Kalum Haack said.

"A good thing about it is that we're still state champions," Haack said in a phone interview April 23, of the University Interscholastic League canceling the remainder of the winter and spring activities. "The bad thing is that it's been really tough on not just athletes, but everybody. You know those girls have put in a lot of time – a lot of hard work – just to see their season get cut short (which) was really difficult."

One way he tried to return a smile to his seniors' faces was to carry out a senior night tradition, albeit a little different looking. It was earlier that Thursday that Haack enlisted the help of his assistant coaches to bring all the seniors together while maintaining social distance.

"My assistants and I went to our seniors' houses and gave them a bouquet of flowers just like we do on seniors night, and a balloon," he said. "When we got to the last house, the last person had to do a FaceTime where they could all let the balloons go at the same time, just like they do on senior night."

He said the emotions were certainly flowing but he wanted to be sure they knew they were appreciated. Out of the four seniors, three will continue playing softball at the next level; Allyse Castillo (Mary-Hardin Baylor), Sydney Blakeman (University of Texas-San Antonio), Dominique Crespo (University of Houston-Victoria) and Marley Gilmore will be attending Texas State to major in kinesiology.

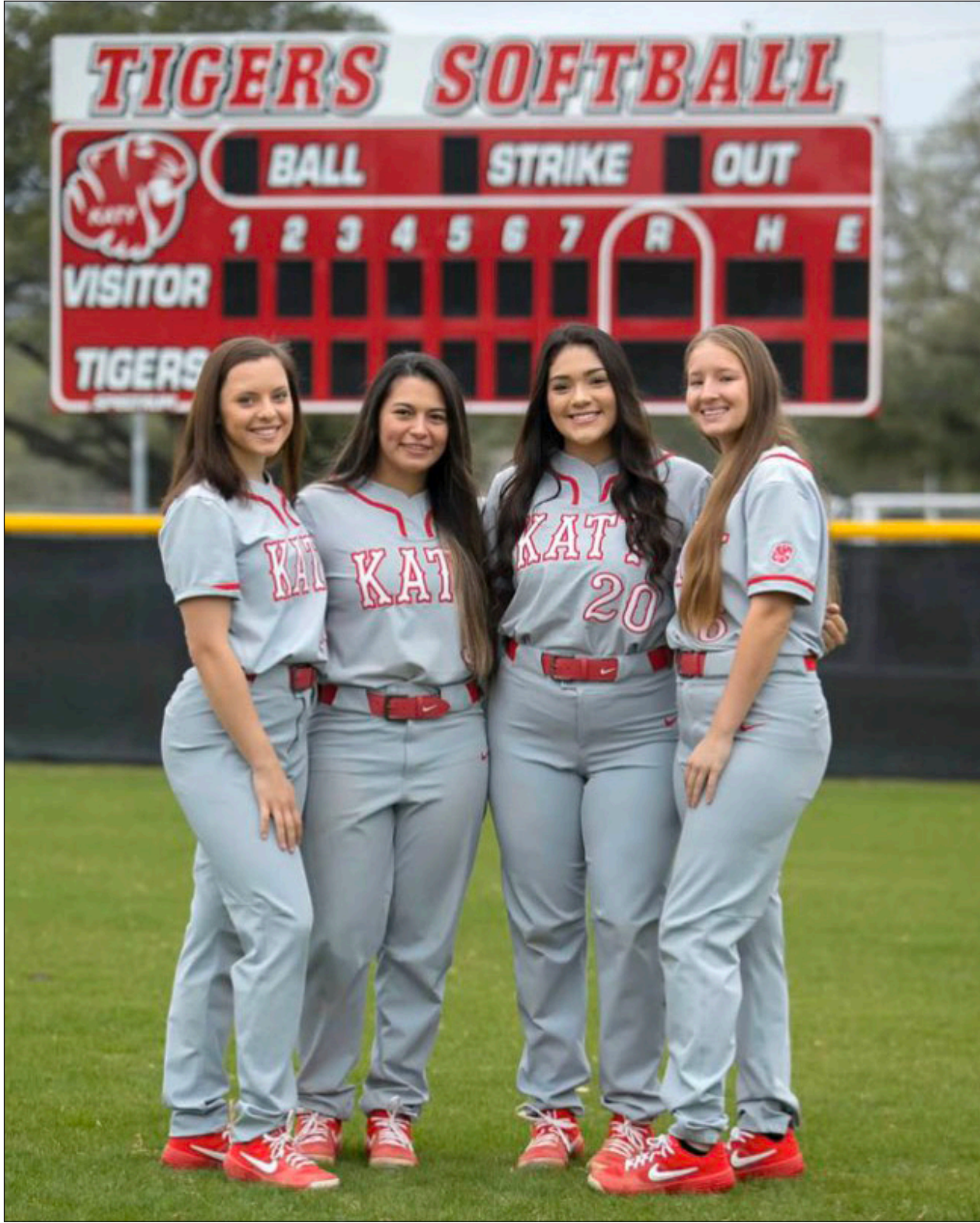
When asked what he came into this season expecting out of this senior class, Haack said, "I didn't really know what to expect because we graduated eight starters from last year and seven of the eight had college scholarships."

Still, he said the team had just started to come together and play some sound softball en route to taking its district-opening contest over Taylor, 13-2. It was that process of gelling that Haack sees as their lasting impression on the next crop of Katy softball players who will have to make up for lost time next season.

"I think a lot of the younger players that we had saw that they never quit believing, they never quit talking about what team needed to do," Haack said of the seniors' resiliency. "And they didn't talk just about the team but they also talked about themselves and what they needed to do. They included themselves when things didn't go right. They were the first ones to shoulder the blame. Hopefully they saw what good leadership is all about and can continue that."

Haack still thinks about what could have been had this team been able to carry the momentum they were starting to build, crediting the seniors with much of the reason why they were doing so well.

"We started coming together because of our senior leadership," he said of finally getting over the .500 bump. "This is the first time they've had to be a leader. They've been backups, except for one, so it took them a while but they never wavered. They kept doing the right thing, kept saying the right thing and it finally just took hold and we started playing really good softball but all of a sudden – season's over. Would have been really interesting to see how we ended up."



CONTRIBUTED PHOTO

The four Katy High School senior softball players might have been just gearing up to find their stride in the season but the coronavirus pandemic forced all spring activities to be shutdown. Still, Katy softball coaches honored their seniors like they normally did, from a social distance. Pictured from the left are Sydney Blakeman, Allyse Castillo, Dominique Crespo and Marley Gilmore.

33 Texas football players selected in NFL Draft

By COLE McNANNA
SPECIAL TO THE KATY TIMES

For the first time since 2016, the first overall pick of the NFL Draft did not play his high school football in the state of Texas as Ohio's Joe Burrow stayed in Cincinnati and will quarterback the Bengals.

It was altogether a different version of the draft, being done completely virtually with all of the players, coaches and the commissioner staying in their own homes and communicating via video conference and checking in with the broadcast channels.

However, the state of Texas ended the draft with the highest number of drafted players overall, with all 33 playing for a public high school in the University Interscholastic League.

Although Katy's lone representative in the draft, Taylor and Southern Methodist alum Rodney Clemons, didn't have his name called in the seven rounds, he signed with the defending Super Bowl champion Kansas City Chiefs as an undrafted free agent on Saturday following the draft's conclusion.

Clemons finished his collegiate career as a team captain and recorded 78 total tackles, led the team with four interceptions and added nine pass breakups.

Despite returning from the brink of quitting football altogether after his freshman season, he returned to the team as a senior and turned in an all-state campaign at defensive back and punter, totaling 111 tackles, six pass breakups and five interceptions.



The Houston Texans picked once in the second and third rounds, twice in the fourth and once again in the fifth, taking three defensive players and two offensive players.

The first two picks were on the defensive side of the ball, the first of which filled a defensive tackle vacancy with the 40th overall pick.

Ross Blalock grew up a stone's throw

away from Houston's NRG Stadium in Missouri City, playing his high school football for Fort Bend Elkins where he eventually made his name known for the Texas Christian University Horned Frogs.

After Blalock was linebacker Jonathan Greenard from the University of Florida with the 90th overall pick. He started his career at Louisville and was named team captain for

the 2018 season but suffered a season-ending wrist injury the first series of the season. He transferred to Florida and was on the first-team all-Southeastern Conference, registering nine and a half sacks and 15.5 tackles for loss.

The first of the Texans' two fourth-round selections was University of North Carolina offensive tackle Charlie Heck, the son of the former Notre Dame All-American and 1989 first-round draft pick at offensive tackle, Andy Heck, who currently serves as the offensive line coach for the Kansas City Chiefs.

The next newest member of the organization was cornerback John Reid out of Penn State with the 141st overall pick and will add to the secondary depth after Tashaun Gipson was cut this offseason although he signed a three-year, \$22.5 million deal in 2019 and will leave a \$4.25 million dead cap hit.

Houston's final draft selection was University of Rhode Island wide receiver Isaiah Coulter with the No. 171 pick in the fifth round. He joins a crowded wide receiver group even after DeAndre Hopkins was swapped for Arizona running David Johnson to begin the offseason.

Still, Coulter shined in his final season at Rhode Island, totaling 1,039 yards receiving and eight touchdowns. He added a nine-catch, 152-yard performance against Virginia Tech in week six of the season after recording a 10-catch game against New Hampshire in week three and registering a season-high 12 catches in a week-five win over Brown.

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JORAE MCCLELLAN DAVENPORT

Jorae McClellan Davenport, 65 years old, of Wharton, Texas, passed away on Saturday, April 18, 2020, after a very long and courageous battle with breast cancer. Her husband, who had lovingly been her primary caretaker, was with her when she was called home to her Savior.

She was preceded in death by her mother, Monnie Rae McClellan, and her father, Warren McClellan. Left to cherish her memories are: her husband, Michael Davenport; her brother, Karl McClellan; her three children, Amber Baumann, Sarah Cullen and Audrey Melnick; her two stepchildren, Tina Braly and Aaron Davenport; her five grandchildren, Savannah, Gabriel, Wren, Abel and Jacob; and a tremendous number of others whom her unbounded heart welcomed openly into her family.

Jorae graduated from South Houston High School in Pasadena and lived in several small Texas towns throughout her life. A wholehearted follower of Jesus Christ, she attended Memorial Lutheran and Crosspoint Community Churches in Katy, Texas, for many years. Her loyalty overflowed into her work, where she was a long-time employee of Bison Building Materials for over 20 years and formed



JORAE MCCLELLAN DAVENPORT
1955-2019

many lasting friendships. Jorae was known for her kindness and compassion, an easy way of making others feel welcome, an adventurous spirit, and an ability to bring fun to any occasion.

Due to the coronavirus, a very small memorial service will be held for immediate family only at 11 AM on Saturday, April 25, 2020, but anyone wishing to view the celebration of her life may watch it live online at: livestream.com/crosspt

Special thanks to Dr. Janet Tu at MD Anderson Sugarland for her many years of compassionate care; and to Leslie Davenport, Michael's sister, for so much care and assistance toward the end.

Due to the small nature of the memorial service, please consider contributing to one of Jorae's favorite causes in lieu of sending flowers:

St. Jude's Children's Research Hospital
<http://giftfunds.stjude.org/jorae>
Compassion Water Wells
<https://www.compassion.com/world-days/world-water-day.htm>

"By His power God raised the Lord from the dead, and He will raise us also." — 1 Corinthians

GORDON EASTMAN

On April 20, 2020, Gordon Eastman, loving husband, father of two, grandparent of five, and great-grandparent of six, went to join his heavenly Father.

Gordon was accompanied in his last moments by his wife, Jan, his two daughters Becky and Ruth and their spouses.

Gordon was born on October 6, 1938 in Laurel, Mississippi to William and Rachel (Maddox) Eastman. After growing up with a military father and moving often, Gordon earned his master's degree in chemistry from Mississippi State University in 1963. Prior to graduation, he married Jan Pulliam in 1962. Upon graduation, Gordon moved to Delaware to start a career with Hercules Inc. In 1964, Jan and Gordon gave birth to their first daughter, Becky. Amongst his work during this time, Gordon was regarded as a distinguished chemist while being granted several patents related to molecular chemistry. The family moved to Houston in 1969 when Gordon transferred to a division dedicated to water management chemicals, which would become his specialty. One year later in 1970, Gordon welcomed his second daughter, Ruth. He would eventually retire after 39 years in the chemical industry.

Gordon, known as "Gaga" to his grand-



GORDON EASTMAN
1938-2019

children, was passionate about history, western movies, the Astros, and his Mississippi State bulldogs. His deep patriotism was apparent by his vast collection of bald eagle figurines and his proudly displayed American flag. Gordon also amassed a robust collection of vintage pellet rifles alongside his constantly growing firearm collection. He utilized eBay to search for vintage yo-yo's, his favorite childhood toy – a collection that quickly grew to cover the walls of his office. He was quick to help when it was needed, and always answered the phone with an enthusiastic "This is Gordy!". His loving spirit will be greatly missed by his friends, his fellow members of First Baptist Church Katy, and his family.

Gordon is preceded in death by his father, William, his mother, Rachel, and his brother, Larry. He is survived by his wife, Jan, his two children, Ruth and Becky, his brother Tony, his five grandchildren, and his six great-grandchildren.

A memorial service will be held at a later date.

Funeral services held under the direction of

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Psalms 94:19

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MATTHIAS DIOCESE OF MID AMERICA 4142 DAYFLOWER • 281-463-2304 GRACE ANGLICAN COMMUNITY 24968 KATY RANCH ROAD, KATY, TEXAS 77494 281-769-5544 WWW.GRACEANGLICANKATY.COM RECTOR: ROBERT HENSON</p> <p>CATHOLIC EPIPHANY OF THE LORD CATHOLIC 1530 NORWALK DR. (NOTTINGHAM) • 281-578-0707 FR. TOM LAM ST. BARTHOLOMEW CHURCH 5356 ELEVENTH ST. • 281-391-4758 FR. CHRISTOPHER PLANT, PASTOR ST. EDITH STEIN CATHOLIC COMMUNITY 3311 N. FRY ROAD • 281-492-7500 REV. RYSZARD KULMA, PASTOR</p> <p>CHRISTIAN FIRST CHRISTIAN CHURCH (Disciples of Christ) 22101 MORTON ROAD • 281-492-2693 REV. HEATHER TOLLESON, MINISTER CURRENT-A CHRISTIAN CHURCH 26600 WESTHEIMER PKWY • 281-395-4722 DARREN WALTER, MINISTER</p>	<p>CHURCH OF CHRIST CHURCH OF CHRIST - KATY 5438 E. 5TH STREET • 281-391-7606 CINCO RANCH CHURCH OF CHRIST 6655 S. MASON ROAD • 281-579-3100 AARON WALLING, MINISTER CHURCH OF CHRIST IN BRIDGEWATER 21650 CRESTBROOK COVE DR. 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Isaiah 40:31
"But those who wait on the LORD shall renew their strength; they shall mount up with wings like eagles, they shall run and not be weary, they shall walk and not faint."

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3 Praise be to the God and Father of our Lord Jesus Christ, the Father of compassion and the God of all comfort,

4 who comforts us in all our troubles, so that we can comfort those in any trouble with the comfort we ourselves receive from God.

2 Corinthians 1:3-4

Sharing the Gospel

When the cares of my heart are many,
your consolations cheer my soul.
Psalms 94:19

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GENERAL MAN-AGER (Katy, TX) sought by Spanish Meadows of Katy (1480 Katy Flewellen Rd, Katy, TX 77494) to review fin'l statements, sales or activity reports, or other performance data to measure productivity or goal achievement or to identify areas needing cost reduction or prgm improvement. Direct & coord activities of businesses or depts concerned w/ the production, pricing, sales, or distribution of svcs. Min. Bach deg in Business Admin is reqd. Strong finance & acctg background, sched organization, & human resources skills are reqd. Resume: Katherine Thurman, Administrator, 1480 Katy Flewellen Rd, Katy, TX 77494

CAREGIVER NEEDED ~ job is for 5 Days a Week – 5 Hours per Day – Salary is \$20 per Hour. For more details about the position, email me Mr Patrick (patdolan18@gmail.com)

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2000 SQ FT, 4 bedroom, 3 bath, fireplace, kitchen island, granite downstairs bar located in quiet neighborhood in Crystal Beach, Tx by School. For more information, call 936-488-1314.

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All real estate advertising in this newspaper is subject to the Fair Housing Act which makes it illegal to advertise "any preference, limitation or discrimination based on race, color, religion, sex, handicap, familial status or national origin, or an intention or discrimination." Familial status includes children under the age of 18 living with parents or legal custodians, pregnant women and people securing custody of children under 18.
This newspaper will not knowingly accept any advertising for real estate which is in violation of the law. Our readers are hereby informed that all dwellings advertised in this newspaper are available on an equal opportunity basis. To complain of discrimination call HUD toll-free at 1-800-669-9777. The toll-free telephone number for the hearing impaired is 1-800-927-9275.

PUPPY TO RE-HOME: Gemma, 6yo lab mix, needs home. For older family, only dog. Unconditional love and protection. 281-608-2368.

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April 23 Puzzle Answers

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INVITATION TO BIDDERS

Sealed Electronic Bids addressed to Harris County Municipal Utility District No. 495, Attention: Mr. Steve Sams, President, Board of Directors, will be **electronically** received, until 3:00 p.m. Local Time, May 12, 2020, and then publicly opened and read at via virtual conference call for "Katy Pointe Section 3 Amenities for Harris County M.U.D. No. 495, Harris County, Texas".

Scope of Work of the Contract includes the following: trail grading, sidewalks/trails, planting, irrigation.

Bids received after the closing time will not be considered. **NO** pre-bid conference will be held.

Each Bid must be accompanied by a Bid Bond or a certified or cashier's check, acceptable to the Owner, in an amount not less than five percent (5%) of the total amount Bid, as a guarantee that the successful bidder will enter into the Contract and execute the Bonds on the forms provided, and provide the required insurance certificates within seven (7) days after the date Contract Documents are received by the Contractor. If a certified or cashier's check is provided, the successful bidder shall deliver, at the bid opening address, the *original* certified or cashier's check within twenty-four (24) hours of receipt of the bid opening.

Copies of the bidding documents may be reviewed and obtained from www.CivcastUSA.com: search "Katy Pointe – Section 3 Amenities" or Bidders must register on this website in order to view and/or download specifications, plans, soils report, and environmental reports for this Project. There is NO charge to view or download documents.

Bidder must submit its Bid and bid securities in compliance with Owner's Order Adopting Section 49.2731 Electronic Bidding Rules and all Bids and bid securities must be submitted through [www.civcastusa.com]. Bidder must register on this website in order to submit a Bid and bid security and there is **no charge** to submit Bids and bid securities on this website.

By submitting a Bid, Bidder acknowledges and agrees that the Contract Documents may be accepted, executed or agreed to through the use of an Electronic Signature, as defined by and in accordance with Owner's Electronic Signature Rules for Construction Contracts.

The Owner reserves the right to reject any or all Bids and to waive all defects and irregularities in bidding or bidding process except time of submitting a Bid. The Successful Bidder, if any, will be the responsible Bidder which in the Board's judgment will be most advantageous to the District and result in the best and most economical completion of the Project.

The requirements of Subchapter J, Chapter 552, Government Code, may apply to this Bid and/or Contract and the Contractor agrees that the Contract can be terminated if the Contractor knowingly or intentionally fails to comply with a requirement of that subchapter.

HARRIS COUNTY M.U.D. No. 495

KATY ISD invites Private Non-Profit Schools

Private non-profit schools serving students who reside in Katy ISD attendance zones have the option to participate in federal grant programs. If the Non-profit school wishes to participate, a consultation meeting can be scheduled to provide an overview of current federal programs (Title I, Title II, Title III, and Title IV) and other services. Non-profit schools interested in participating in these federal grant programs for the 2020-2021 school year should contact Dotty Winski at 281-396-2243 to schedule a consultation meeting to discuss programs and eligibility requirements.

INVITATION TO BIDDERS

Sealed Bids, in duplicate, addressed to Wilbow-Bergamo Vista, LLC on behalf of Harris County Municipal Utility District No. 495, will be received at the office of LJA Engineering, Inc., 2929 Briarpark Drive, Suite 150, Houston, Texas 77042, until 10:00 a.m., Local Time, Thursday, May 14, 2020, and then publicly opened and read for "Construction of the Paving and Appurtenances to Serve Bergamo Vista Section 1 for Wilbow-Bergamo Vista, LLC on behalf of Harris County Municipal Utility District No. 495, Harris County, Texas". Bidders may elect to submit bids electronically via <https://bids.lja.com>.

Scope of Work of the Contract includes the following: paving and appurtenances.

Bids received after the closing time will be returned unopened. A non-mandatory pre-bid conference will be held on Thursday, May 7, 2020, at 10:00 a.m. Local Time, at the office of LJA Engineering, Inc., 2929 Briarpark Drive, Suite 150, Houston, Texas 77042.

Each Bid must be accompanied by a Bid Bond or a certified or cashier's check, acceptable to the Owner, in an amount not less than five percent (5%) of the total amount Bid, as a guarantee that the successful bidder will enter into the Contract and execute the Bonds on the forms provided, and provide the required insurance certificates within seven (7) days after the date Contract Documents are received by the Contractor. If a certified or cashier's check is provided, the successful bidder shall deliver, at the bid opening address, the *original* certified or cashier's check within twenty-four (24) hours of receipt of the bid opening.

Bidding documents may be examined at LJA Engineering, Inc., AGC of Texas, Construct Connect, and Amtek or may be obtained by prospective bidders or suppliers upon payment of one hundred dollars (\$100.00 non-refundable plus cost of delivery) (\$50.00 for electronic copy) for each set of documents at LJA Engineering, Inc., 2929 Briarpark Drive, Suite 150, Houston, Texas 77042 or at <https://bids.lja.com>. Bidders must register on this website to download bidding documents.

A Bidder submitting electronic Bids must submit its Bid and bid securities in compliance with Owner's Order Adopting Section 49.2731 Electronic Bidding Rules and all electronic Bids and bid securities must be submitted through <https://bids.lja.com>. Bidder must register on this website in order to submit a Bid and bid security and there is no charge to submit Bids and bid securities on this website.

By submitting a Bid, Bidder acknowledges and agrees that the Contract Documents may be accepted, executed or agreed to through the use of an Electronic Signature, as defined by and in accordance with Owner's Electronic Signature Rules for Construction Contracts.

The Owner reserves the right to reject any or all Bids and to waive all defects and irregularities in bidding or bidding process except time of submitting a Bid. The Successful Bidder, if any, will be the responsible Bidder which in the Board's judgment will be most advantageous to the District and result in the best and most economical completion of the Project.

The requirements of Subchapter J, Chapter 552, Government Code, may apply to this Bid and/or Contract and the Contractor agrees that the Contract can be terminated if the Contractor knowingly or intentionally fails to comply with a requirement of that subchapter.

Wilbow-Bergamo Vista, LLC on behalf of
Harris County Municipal Utility District No. 495

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CITY OF KATY REQUEST FOR PROPOSALS

SOLID WASTE COLLECTION AND RECYCLING SERVICES

The City of Katy, Texas Is Accepting Proposals For Solid Waste Collection And Recycling Services In The City Of Katy. Proposals Will Be Received By The City Secretary At Katy City Hall, 901 Avenue C, Katy, Texas, Until 2:00 O'Clock P.M. May 20, 2020. The Envelopes Containing The Proposals Must Be Sealed, Addressed To The City Secretary Of The City Of Katy, And Plainly Marked "Proposal For Solid Waste Collection And Recycling Services". A Bid Opening Will Take Place At 2:00 O'Clock P.M. May 21, 2020, By Teleconference At (877)853-5257, Meeting ID: 886 7830 9732. Request For Proposal Packets May Be Obtained By Contacting garbage@cityofkaty.com. The Only Method To Submit Questions Regarding This RFP Is Via Email At garbage@cityofkaty.com. City Council Reserves The Right To Reject Any and All Proposals.

City Of Katy

INVITATION TO BIDDERS

Sealed Bids will be received by Katy Management District No. 1 on CIVCAST until 2:00 P.M. on May 21, 2020 for **Katy Mills Boulevard Streetscape Project**.

All bids will be publicly opened and distributed for construction of improvements including roadway pavers, sidewalks, site furniture, entry signage, street signage, street lighting, irrigation, planting, fine grading and hydromulch.

Bidders shall submit the Bid on exact copies of the Bid Form provided on CIVCAST. A Conflict of Interest Questionnaire (Form CIQ) and Certificate of Interested Parties (HB Form 1295) must be returned with Bid. (Forms are provided with Spec Book)

Bid Documents and May 8, 2020 non-mandatory prebid meeting information are available through CIVCAST.

A Cashier's Check or Bidder's Bond Payable to Katy Management District No. 1 in the amount of not less than five percent (5%) of the bid submitted, outlined in the Contract Documents, must accompany the Bid.

Bidders must have at least five years of confirmed experience on comparable size projects of a similar scope in the Houston Area.

The successful bidder receiving contract award must furnish Performance, Payment, and Maintenance Bonds in the amount of one hundred percent (100%) each of the total Contract price. Each such bond shall be executed by a corporate surety duly authorized to do business in the State of Texas.


The winning bid is decided not by low price but by this standard:

"The responsible person or persons that, in the Board's judgment, will be most advantageous to the District and result in the best and most economical completion of the District's proposed improvements."

The Owner reserves the right to reject any and all bids and to waive bidding informalities.

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OPENING

from page 1

Dennis Bonnen. “Just as we united as one state to slow COVID-19, we must also come together to begin rebuilding the lives and the livelihoods of our fellow Texans.”

Abbott said his new order “supersedes all local orders” saying those businesses must remain closed. He also said his order overrules any local government that wants to impose a fine or penalty for not wearing a mask — something the latest statewide rules encourage but do not mandate.

Speaking shortly after Abbott in Houston, the city’s mayor, Sylvester Turner, told reporters that Abbott’s new order “pretty much will take these measures, the ability to [issue] stay-at-home orders and things of that nature, out of our hands locally.” He said he hoped Abbott’s plan works but offered a “cautionary note,” pointing out that there is still no vaccine and statistics show the “virus is still here,” even as local measures have slowed it down.

Abbott stressed that his order “gives permission to reopen, not a requirement,” and businesses can stay shuttered if they would like.

At the same time, Abbott said he is holding off on reopening certain businesses for the time, including barbershops, hair salons, bars and gyms. He said he hopes those businesses can open “on or no later than mid-May.”

Asked about enforcement of his new rules, Abbott said all his executive orders during the pandemic have carried a potential punishment of up to a \$1,000 fine or 180 days in jail. For the latest



EDDIE GASPAR FOR THE TEXAS TRIBUNE

Gov. Greg Abbott declares a statewide emergency amid new cases of COVID-19 in the state on March 13, 2020 at the state capitol. Abbott released a phased plan Monday to begin opening businesses back up throughout the state.

order, he said, the “more primary enforcement would be either the local level or the regulatory level,” noting a business could lose its license if it does not comply.

In unveiling his new order, Abbott established a different standard aimed at rural counties with little coronavirus presence, saying counties with five or fewer cases can effectively skip to the second phase and reopen businesses at 50% capacity.

Abbott’s new order comes as questions continue to persist about Texas’ low testing level and what is being done to increase capacity. State Rep. Chris Turner of Grand Prairie, chairman of the House Democratic Caucus, said in a statement that Texas is “near last in the nation on per capita testing and Gov. Abbott didn’t present a clear plan how that’s going to

change, even though experts agree that widespread testing is essential to any reopening plan.”

“We don’t know the magnitude of the problem,” U.S. Rep. Veronica Escobar, D-El Paso, said during a Texas Democratic Party conference call after Abbott’s news conference. “Without robust testing, then we continue to remain in the dark.”

Abbott mostly focused Monday on contact tracing, or the practice of tracking down and isolating all the people someone who tested positive for the virus has come into contact with. Abbott said Texas is already in the second phase of its contact tracing plan, adding 1,000 tracers on top of the existing 1,100 and launching a statewide app and call center to improve the process.

Abbott continued to talk of a

“Now it’s time to set a new course, a course that responsibly opens up business in Texas.”

— TEX. GOV. GREG ABBOTT

coming increase in testing and said the state soon would “easily exceed our goal of 25,000 tests per day.” The state has been adding an average about 14,000 tests per day over the past week, according to figures from the Texas Department of State Health Services. Still, the total number of tests done as of Monday — 290,517 — remained about 1% of Texas’ nearly 29 million people.

Abbott’s announcement Monday also came with news for entities that have been allowed to stay open through the pandemic, such as churches. He said his latest rules allow them to “expand their capacity even more” as long as they follow social distancing practices. The details of that expansion were not immediately available.

As for outdoor sports, Abbott said they will be allowed as long as they are limited to four participants — allowing for sports like golf or tennis — and social distancing is also respected. The goal of the second phase would be to permit more participants, Abbott said.

Abbott’s latest announcement also lets all licensed health care professionals return to work, though there are a few restrictions, he said. Hospitals must keep 15% of their capacity for COVID-19 patients.

Abbott’s news conference Monday marked his second announcement about restarting the Texas economy amid the pandemic. He announced initial steps 10 days ago that included the formation of a task force, loosening of restrictions on surgeries, reopening of state parks and allowance of to-go retail sales. That option, which lets stores make deliveries to customers’ cars or homes, went into effect Friday.

Since Abbott’s April 17 announcement, he has had to contend with a small but increasingly vocal faction of his party that wants him to act more aggressively to get the state economy going again. Abbott has also had to be mindful of President Donald Trump, who has agitated for an economic restoration but last week dinged another red-state governor, Georgia’s Brian Kemp, for moving too quickly.

Democrats have continued to argue the state is woefully unprepared to reopen without a long-promised ramp-up in testing, which has not happened yet.

Abbott’s announcement Monday came as the number of coronavirus cases in Texas reached at least 25,297, including 663 deaths, according to the latest figures from the Texas Department of State Health Services. More than 80% of Texas’ 254 counties — 205 — are reporting cases.

Raga Justin contributed reporting.

DATA

from page 1

Offices of Homeland Security and Emergency Management press release said.

“The goal isn’t just to save lives, but to also go on offense against this virus and quickly isolate it where we know it has the potential to spread quickly,” Hidalgo said. “The more we’re able to do this, the better we’re able to choke off the virus, stop it in its tracks, and move forward.”

Testing in Harris County is available to everyone whether they are experiencing symptoms or not. To get tested, residents may call 832-927-7575 or visit www.readyharris.org to be prescreened and obtain an appointment at one of the county’s testing sites.

Fort Bend County

Fort Bend County Judge KP George emphasized that he felt it is important to wear a mask in public to protect the community, but stopped short of issuing an order similar to Hidalgo’s.

“While I am not issuing a specific order, I strongly recommend our residents wear masks in public to stop the spread of the virus, protect the most vulnerable in our community, and reopen the economy. The quickest and easiest way we can prevent more people from getting sick and reopen business is for everyone to wear a cloth mask in public,” George said.

However, Fort Bend County did expand its testing capabilities Monday with the opening of its second county-run testing center. The first testing site has been operational in Rosenberg for some time. The second is open in Sugar Land from 8 a.m.



R. HANS MILLER

Waller County experienced its first opportunity to have COVID-19 testing offered to residents April 26. During that time, 106 tests of the 125 available at the testing center were administered at the drive-thru site located at the Waller County Community Center in Prairie View. Results are not yet available.

to 5 p.m. weekdays and from 10:30 a.m. to 2 p.m. Saturdays. There is no cost but Fort Bend residents must complete a form at this link in order to schedule an appointment: https://uthtmc.az1.qualtrics.com/jfe/form/SV_0ILT5XuVXN8gvhH

“I am pleased that we now have two community testing sites available for county residents. We expect that the increase in testing capabilities will help everyone better protect themselves and their families and flatten the curve here” George said. “I appreciate the partnership with AccessHealth and LabCorp who can help provide this needed protection from the invisible enemy.”

Waller County

Waller County Judge Trey Duhon also said in an online statement that he was not requiring masks, though he did encourage residents to take the necessary precautions to keep themselves and their families safe.

“I do want people to know that I strongly encourage everyone to wear a mask in public. Not necessarily for your own protection, but to protect your

neighbors since it is possible that you can be infected with the virus and be asymptomatic (not showing symptoms) and not even know it. Do it for your neighbors,” Duhon said in a statement.

Duhon said that, as of April 23, Waller County had only spent about \$30,000 on its COVID-19 response, unlike its more densely populated neighbors which have spent tens of millions of dollars in some cases. He expects that the majority of that funding would be repaid by the federal government through disaster relief funding.

All county and city officials in the Katy area continue to encourage social distancing, the use of good hygiene and common courtesy as the COVID-19 pandemic concerns move on.

“Until there is a significant drop in deaths from the virus, when I am out in public, I still intend to wear my cloth mask, which my granddaughter made for me, wear protective goggles and gloves, and use disinfectant wipes and hand cleanser. I will also wash my hands often. I hope you do the same,” said Fort Bend County Commissioner for Precinct 3 Andy Meyers.

CASE COUNT

The three counties that the Katy area falls within have thousands of confirmed cases of the new coronavirus. Statewide, more than 300,000 tests have been administered with slightly more than 26,000 cases reported. Health authorities across the county are saying case numbers may be underreported due to asymptomatic carriers and those who have not been tested or whose tests have not been reported. The information below is based on official case counts through state and county health departments and elected officials.

The data below is accurate as of 8 p.m. April 28.

HARRIS CO. AND HOUSTON
CONFIRMED CASES: 5,986
ACTIVE CASES: 3,898
RECOVERIES: 1,985
DEATHS: 103

FORT BEND COUNTY
CONFIRMED CASES: 973
ACTIVE CASES: 823
RECOVERIES: 126
DEATHS: 24

That brings Waller County official confirmed case count to 30, with estimated 18 recoveries, leaving 12 active cases at this time. Actual active cases inside of Waller County - probably 10-11.

WALLER COUNTY
CONFIRMED CASES: 30
ACTIVE CASES: 12
RECOVERIES: 18
DEATHS: 0

TEXAS
CONFIRMED CASES: 26,171
ACTIVE CASES: 13,695
RECOVERIES: 11,786
DEATHS: 690

UNITED STATES
CONFIRMED CASES: 824,069
ACTIVE CASES: 703,895
RECOVERIES: 75,050
DEATHS: 45,124

KATY TIMES

PET OF THE WEEK

MEET HONEY

Honey is a 15-month-old female. She is currently at the Pets Supplies Plus store on Highland Knolls keeping a lookout for her new family.

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Oil collapse wallops state economy

By CLARE PROCTOR
THE TEXAS TRIBUNE

The number of Texans filing for unemployment went back up last week, after a dip in the number of claims the previous week.

Last week, 280,406 Texans successfully filed unemployment claims. That brings the running total of unemployed Texans to at least 1.3 million since mid-March, when officials began closing businesses or limiting operations to stop the spread of the novel coronavirus. Nationwide, another 4.4 million Americans applied for unemployment relief last week, marking more than 26 million people who are jobless across the country.

The number of claims filed each week rose from mid-March until the week ending April 11, when the number of claims dipped down to 274,257. But that decline didn't carry into last week as Texans continued to file new claims with the Texas Workforce Commission.

The real number of people facing job losses is even higher; the Texas Workforce Commission's website and phone lines have been overwhelmed by millions of queries daily.

State and local orders meant to curb the spread of the new coronavirus have dramatically hurt the economy, as companies have reduced employees' hours, furloughed staffers or laid off workers completely. And the number of people claiming unemployment doesn't.

Unemployment is hitting Texans across the state — all but one county, King County, have at least one person filing for unemployment, according to Texas Workforce Commission data. But some counties in particular are seeing higher rates of claims than others.

Residents from Fort Bend County have been particularly hard hit. There were 195,792 people employed there in September according to federal data, and 26,367 filed unemployment claims from the first week of March through April 11.



JORDAN VONDERHAAR FOR THE TEXAS TRIBUNE

A gas flare in the Eagle Ford oil patch south of San Antonio. The oil industry has been hit hard by COVID-19 and global overproduction in concurrent crises.

Located just on the outskirts of Houston, Fort Bend relies heavily on the oil and gas industry for employment and the economy. On Monday, the price of oil dropped into the negatives as oil producers ran out of space to store the product. Meanwhile, with Gov. Greg Abbott's executive order urging Texans to remain home, the demand for gas is extremely low, said Dietrich Vollrath, chair of the economics department at the University of Houston.

"On top of the people that are [unemployed] coming out of retail and restaurants all over, we've got people coming out of small manufacturing in the area who do specialty oil work," Vollrath said. "Nobody's drilling. Nobody wants more oil... which is just an extra kick in the tail to a place like Houston."

Working in oil and gas safety management, Kevin McBryde wrapped up his contract with a Louisiana-based company on

Friday. His next contract was supposed to start this coming Monday in La Porte, a city east of downtown Houston where McBryde lives.

When his next contract was canceled and pushed back until October, McBryde, a 50-year-old father of four, found himself among the unemployed because of COVID-19.

"We're living off of savings and the generosity of our church," McBryde said.

It'll be another month and a half before McBryde's savings run dry, he said, and he considers himself "more fortunate" than most people finding themselves out of work.

McBryde did successfully file a claim for unemployment benefits. But after filing a claim, people have to log in again on a designated day to request payment every two weeks.

When McBryde logged in on his assigned day, the system directed

him to request payment on Sunday instead. On Sunday, McBryde received yet another message instructing him to request payment Wednesday. As of Wednesday morning, he still hadn't been able to request payment of unemployment benefits.

"I've been working in Texas since 1986, paying into all these benefit programs," McBryde said. "I could always cook at Sonic, but I'd rather stay in my field. I'll give it another month, and then I'll wash dishes. Any paycheck is better than no paycheck."

In Galveston County, just southeast of Houston, 13,541 people have filed unemployment claims since mid-March. In September, there were 110,078 people employed there, per federal data.

Even before Abbott issued his stay-at-home order, spending in restaurants and on retail was "dropping off a cliff," said Vollrath, the University of Houston economist. Many Texans either lived in

urban counties that issued stay-at-home orders before Abbott's statewide directive or opted to limit going out, Vollrath said, creating a "self-induced" facet to the economic shutdown.

The shuttering of many businesses compounded with the collapse of the oil and gas industry help paint a clearer picture of the high unemployment rates seen in counties in West Texas. It's not just restaurant servers, bartenders and hospitality workers who are losing their jobs in oil-rich Texas, but also oil and gas workers.

John Diamond, director of the Center for Public Finance at Rice University's Baker Institute, said in Houston, the weight of the economic downturn isn't confined to a single socio-economic class.

"The difference is a lot of the jobs like restaurants, retail and other jobs are lower- to median-wage jobs, whereas a lot of the jobs that are being lost in the oil industry are high-wage jobs," Diamond said. "It's going to impact a different segment of the Houston population."

Given how low the price of oil is, and how minimally individuals and businesses are consuming oil products, Diamond said he expects some oil wells will stop producing "sooner rather than later." Oil companies are struggling to make a profit, Diamond said, forcing them to cut costs and make layoffs or furlough workers.

Abbott is taking the first steps to reopen the economy, allowing retail store pickups, opening up state parks and loosening restrictions on nonessential surgeries. But if people don't feel comfortable going to restaurants or visiting local businesses, Vollrath said governmental orders won't be what gets the economy up and running again.

"Until people feel safe health-wise going out and being around, that's what will 'reopen' the economy," Vollrath said. "It's less about official guidelines and statements and more people's feelings about the health risks."



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