

Katy Times



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THURSDAY, SEPTEMBER 3, 2020

UHV begins school year

By R. HANS MILLER
NEWS EDITOR

The University of Houston Victoria began its academic year Aug. 24 with measures in place to fight the spread of the novel coronavirus and ended with a brief shutdown as a precaution in case Hurricane Laura had veered west instead of north, according to press releases from the university. The school has a primary campus in Victoria, southwest of Houston, and a branch campus in the Katy area near Katy Asian Town.

"At UHV, we have taken steps to make sure we are all taking care of each other," said Chance Glenn, provost and vice president for academic affairs. "We are trying to create the highest quality educational experience for our campus community as best we can under the current situation and environment."

As part of the University of Houston system, UHV is offering three modes of instruction to students to keep on-campus populations at both locations socially distanced. Traditional online courses are available, but students are also able to participate in hybrid and real-time online classes. Real-time courses are facilitated through Microsoft Teams and are real-time with the instructor interfacing with all of the students simultaneously while the hybrid courses combine a mix of face-to-face instruction and online instruction to manage the amount of time students must be on campus.

Faculty conducting in-person classes are wearing face shields and students are required to wear face masks, the press releases said. Hand sanitizer stations are available throughout campuses and face masks are required for all students.

The university has also instituted a UHV COVID-19 Operations Center to provide information to students, faculty and staff regarding COVID-19 and to manage contact tracing for any cases identified at UHV campuses.

The university has already seen

See **UHV**, page 5

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Waller adopts a lowered property tax rate, budget

By R. HANS MILLER
NEWS EDITOR

The Waller County Commissioners Court voted Wednesday to approve a property tax rate of \$0.616662 per \$100 valuation. The court also adopted a budget of about \$39.4 million which is an increase in the overall budget from last year's approximately \$34.1 million according to county records.

"What we are passing is what's called a - it used to be called an 'effective rate' budget - but now it's a 'no new revenue' budget," said County Judge Trey Duhon. "We are not raising any additional revenue from previously-existing properties. This budget, in effect, nullifies any increases in appraisals that have occurred over the last year."

Even though the tax rate has been lowered by about 4.5 cents per \$100 value, the county was able to increase revenue overall due to improvements to properties that added to overall base value. Those who have had static property values will receive a lower property tax bill for this year, a press release from the county said.

"The tax rate in Waller County has not been this low since at least 2003 - maybe before that," Duhon said.

The 2021 budget will allow the county to add ten new employees, the press release said. Precinct 4, near Katy will see five staff directly assigned to the area with one staff member for the county clerk's office and a tax office representative both housed at the nearly open Precinct 4 Annex near Brookshire. One new jailer and two bailiffs will also be added for the district court at

the annex under the Waller County Sheriff's purview. County-wide - an investigator will be added to the fire marshal's office, a truck driver to the Road & Bridge department and one environmental staff person. A part-time clerk of court position will be converted to full time as well.

Salary increases in the county are very limited with department heads across the county being asked to curb their budgets to ensure the county is in good financial standing. Only a few maintenance crew members and a court coordinator received pay increases outside of longevity increases under the new budget. County Commissioners, while acknowledging the contributions of all county employees, said that, barring special circumstances, no salary increases were appropriate given the state of the county and nation's economies.

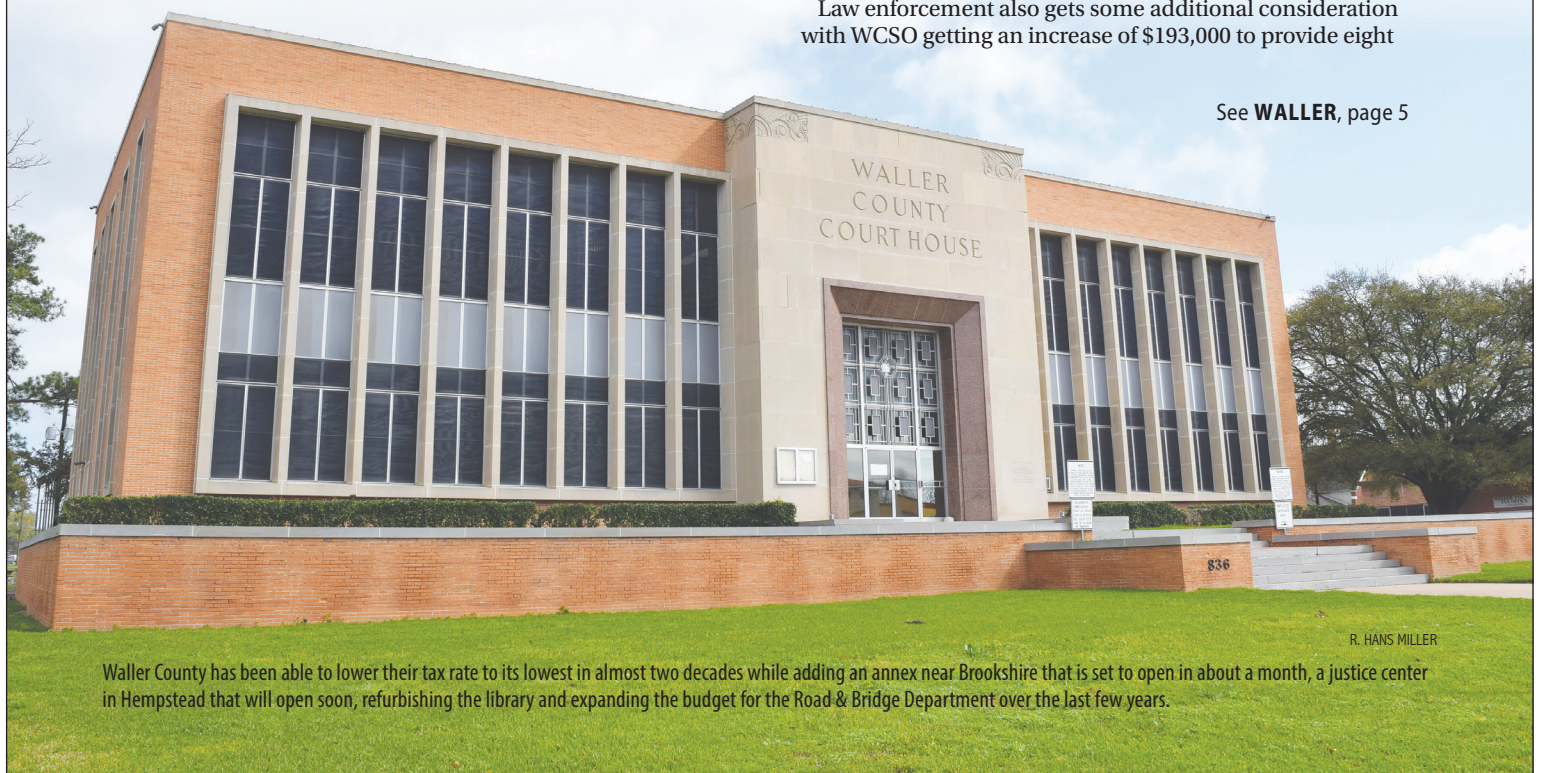
"There's a lot of people that work for the county that are probably worth more than they're making right now," Precinct 4 Commissioner Justin Beckendorff. "(But), we've all made a commitment this year ... to hold the line, not do any new spending and hold all salaries."

Beckendorff and Precinct 2 Commissioner Walter Smith had voted against the court coordinator's pay increase but were outvoted by the other members of the court. Both stated they believed she was worthy of a raise, but it was not necessarily appropriate or fair given that most other county employees were not given an opportunity for pay increases.

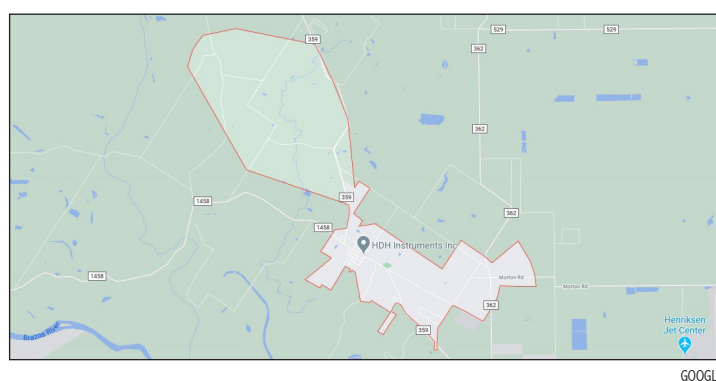
In addition to staffing increases and a lowered tax rate, the budget also allowed the county to add \$500,000 to the Road & Bridge department's budget. With more paved roads per capita than most Texas counties, maintaining roads is a priority for the county as it develops court members said in recent meetings.

Law enforcement also gets some additional consideration with WCSO getting an increase of \$193,000 to provide eight

See **WALLER**, page 5



Waller County has been able to lower their tax rate to its lowest in almost two decades while adding an annex near Brookshire that is set to open in about a month, a justice center in Hempstead that will open soon, refurbishing the library and expanding the budget for the Road & Bridge Department over the last few years.



Pattison is a small but growing town just north of Brookshire and west of Katy. Pattison City Council is working to establish ordinances and development plans prior to growth which has hit the nearby cities of Brookshire, Katy and Fulshear coming in the next several years.

Pattison talks growth measures, budgeting

By R. HANS MILLER
NEWS EDITOR

During its regular meeting Sept. 1 via Zoom, the Pattison City Council met to discuss several items as it moves toward adopting a budget for the next fiscal year and ordinances that may help the small city as it grows.

At the top of the agenda, council members discussed platting with an applicant that is trying to develop land within the city limits. The applicant expressed frustration with the lack of clarity in the city's process which council members and Mayor Joe Garcia worked to resolve. Items of concern were technical needs revolving around the submission of an initial plat application, city staff said. Garcia said he would work with the applicant and city engineer to finalize the last few things needed for the plat to go through and council eventually approved the initial plat on the condition that all shortcomings in the application be corrected prior to the final plat being submitted for approval.

City Attorney Lora Lensch and the council discussed a proposed platting ordinance that may help clarify the process and help future applicants as development begins to move into the city. Lensch said she was in the process of reformatting the document and council members asked that the document be ordered in a way that was both compliant with state law and easily understood by potential developers and land owners in the city as they move through the processes for land maps, preliminary plans

See **PATTISON**, page 5

Katy ISD provides COVID-19 testing, begins name search

By R. HANS MILLER
NEWS EDITOR

After a smooth start to the school year, given the virtual requirements through Sept. 8, Katy ISD is adding more safety monitoring with COVID-19 testing for employees and taking steps to identify a permanent moniker for Junior High No. 17.

Testing Teachers

In a Sept. 1 press release, the district announced that it will be offering COVID-19 testing to its more than 11,000 staff members not only by providing personal protective equipment - or PPE - to its staff and student body, but also offering COVID-19 testing to faculty and staff.

"We want our Katy ISD employees to have a quick and convenient location where they can get tested, whether they have been exposed to a positive case or believe to have had close contact

See **KISD**, page 5



R. HANS MILLER

Construction is well underway on Katy Junior High No. 17. The new facility has a budget of more than \$60 million that was approved by voters in a 2017 bond election. The facility is located in the southeastern corner of the intersection of Katy Hockley Road and Clay Road. District staff have said the new campus is necessary as development continues to push the district's student body growth over the next several years.



SBM helps victims of Hurricane Laura

By R. HANS MILLER
NEWS EDITOR

Hurricane Laura devastated the area surrounding Lake Charles, Tex. Last week with devastating winds that caused immense damage to the area. In the Katy area, residents understand what it's like to suffer through a hurricane and its aftermath, so local nonprofit Supply Bridge Ministries is collecting supplies to help the community out that lies about three hours east and slightly north of Katy.

"(NBD Graphics) has been around since 2007 and the Katy Community really grew us so a couple years prior to starting Supply Bridge and we really were just looking for a way to give back to the community," said Supply Bridge Ministries Founder Nicholas Doherty. "We were going to do a small business resource or something for entrepreneurs - something that would have been helpful when I started NBD, but then (Hurricane) Harvey hit and when Harvey hit, it redirected us."

Doherty, who owns NBD Graphics at 917 Mason Road in Katy, said Supply Bridge was



R. HANS MILLER

Supply Bridge Ministries' truck was stationed outside NBD Graphics off Mason Road Saturday to collect necessities to help fellow Texans recover from Hurricane Laura.

founded in 2017 after Hurricane Harvey devastated the Katy area and he wanted to do something to help the community that had helped him grow his business over the few years prior. Since then, the nonprofit has teamed up with an extensive variety of organizations including Home Depot, Bona Fitness and others to continue helping those who have been affected by natural disasters such as communities along the Gulf Coast that have been hit by hurricanes or communities in Oklahoma and elsewhere that have been hit by tornadoes.

Doherty said he's found sources for commonly needed supplies and worked with nonprofits and local businesses to help out other communities that have been hurt in the same way Harvey struck Katy.

"We've got groups we're working with or working through and in almost every major hurricane we've done things with small business partners," Doherty said.

Currently, Eurmove - a moving company at 3880 Greenhouse Road Ste. W1, Houston in the Katy area - has been helping with the deliv-

ery of supplies once they're collected.

Ben Millican, an employee at NBD Graphics who has been helping with the collection process for relief supplies, said the Katy community has been generous in its donations. During collection efforts Saturday, Millican said the community had donated water, diapers, wet wipes, adult diapers, trash bags, food, toiletries and even a chainsaw to help the coastal communities recover.

Doherty said people have been donating money as well, either in the form of Home Depot gift cards or through the Supply Bridge Ministries donation link on its website. The option to donate items at NBD Graphics and at Bona Fitness - which is collecting items for infants and toddlers - is still available, he said.

A truck left for Lake Charles on Tuesday and another was expected to roll out later in the week, Doherty said.

Katy Responds and Attack Poverty, two other local area nonprofits have been helping as well with gathering supplies and getting the word out, Doherty said.

Katy VFW to host memorial service



CONTRIBUTED PHOTO

Katy VFW Post 9182 will host a memorial service Sept. 11 at 10 a.m. at the Armed Forces Memorial at Freedom Park. The park is located at 18050 Westheimer Parkway in the Katy area and the ceremony honoring the victims and heroes of 9/11 will include commentary from Congressman Pete Olson and Katy Mayor Bill Hastings as well as the placement of a wreath at the monument. Additional traditions honoring the nation's heroes will also be included in the ceremony. Attendees are asked to remain socially distanced for their safety.



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SUDOKU

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

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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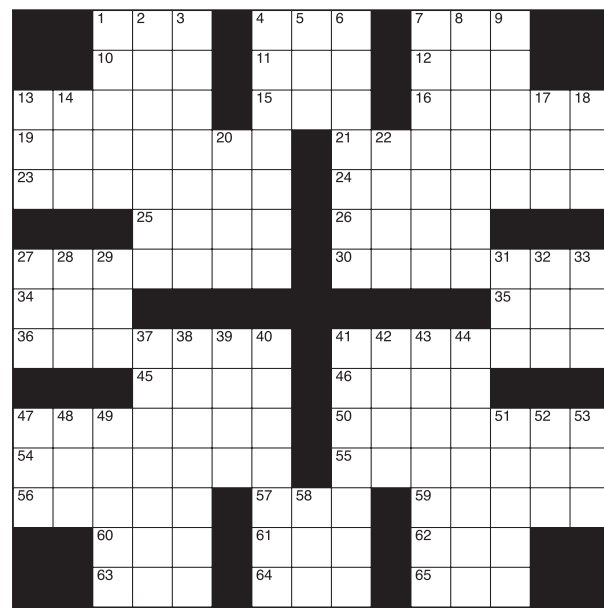
CROSSWORD PUZZLE

CLUES ACROSS

- Chop with an ax
- Where a bachelor lives
- Indicates near
- Doctors' group
- It's just a number
- Type of bread
- Lively ballroom dance
- Charles S. Dutton TV series
- A way to use up
- Singular event
- Home of Disney World
- Minerals
- Most insightful
- Consult
- In addition
- Agents of downfall
- Organizations
- Supervises flying
- Bar bill
- Alfalfa
- Dish soap
- Witnesses
- Ancient Greek City
- Newspaper bigwigs
- Discuss again
- Small group with shared interests
- Support
- Popular sportcoat fabric
- Take hold of
- Pre-Mayan civilization
- Woman (French)
- Wheeled vehicle
- Georgia rockers
- Cold War player (abbr.)
- Pitching stat
- Attempt

CLUES DOWN

- Czech monetary unit
- Arousing intense feeling
- Elks
- Muscular weaknesses
- Before the present
- Figures out
- Infinite
- A low wall
- Silly
- Political organization
- Used of a number or amount not specified
- Divisions of the psyche
- Denial
- Ancient Iranian person
- Count on
- Popular sports league
- Water (French)
- Partner to cheese
- When you hope to get there



- Angry
- One point east of due south
- Respects
- Organize anew
- French wine grape
- Intrinsic nature of something
- Neural structures
- Brews
- Where ships take on cargo
- Holiday season singer
- Shock treatment
- Popular average
- Products
- A type of bear
- Utilize
- Old world, new
- Swiss river

Answers will be provided in next week's edition.

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CenterPoint Energy crews depart for Louisiana

CONTRIBUTED REPORT

CenterPoint Energy deployed nearly 400 linemen, contractors and support personnel from Houston and Evansville, Ind., on Aug. 28 to assist with power restoration efforts in southwest Louisiana due to Hurricane Laura's extensive damage.

"Since the hurricane missed our Houston Electric service territory, we were able to quickly and efficiently deploy critical resources from Houston and Evansville to provide support to our electric utility neighbors to the east," said Kenny Mercado, CenterPoint Energy's Senior Vice President, Electric Operations. "We are fully committed to restoring power to affected customers as safely and quickly as possible."

CenterPoint Energy crews will start working 16-hour shifts after the safety and onboarding process is complete. The company is making plans to send a second wave of resources to support

this effort. In response to COVID-19, CenterPoint Energy will continue to take the necessary steps to protect the safety and well-being of customers, employees, contractors and communities.

The company continued to monitor Hurricane Laura's impact and prepared for potential impact as the storm traveled through or near its service territories of Arkansas, Indiana and Ohio.

CenterPoint Energy is part of electric utility mutual assistance programs that provide access to thousands of linemen and tree trimmers from around the country to lend a hand during widespread power outage emergencies. Coming to the aid of other utilities is nothing new to CenterPoint Energy employees. Over the years, crews have responded and restored power to hundreds of thousands of customers throughout the country who have been left in the dark following hurricanes, ice storms, tornadoes and severe thunderstorms.



COURTESY CENTERPOINT

Line technicians from Centerpoint Energy have been deployed en-mass from the Houston area and other large Centerpoint hubs to assist with restoring power to the hurricane-struck portions of the Texas and Louisiana coastline that was hit hard by Hurricane Laura.

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Water District Notice of Public Hearing on Tax Rate

The Cinco MUD 7 will hold a public hearing on a proposed tax rate for the tax year 2020 on September 17, 2020 via teleconference meeting, call in information as follows: 1-888-557-8511 Access Code: 1512581 at 4:00 p.m. Your individual taxes may increase at a greater or lesser rate, or even decrease, depending on the tax rate that is adopted and on the change in the taxable value of your property in relation to the change in taxable value of all other property. The change in the taxable value of your property in relation to the change in the taxable value of all other property determines the distribution of the tax burden among all property owners.

FOR the proposal: President, David Drake Vice President, Vacant
Secretary, Greg Nunn Assistant Secretary, Megan Perkins

AGAINST the proposal: None

PRESENT and not voting: None

ABSENT: Assistant Vice President/Investment Officer, Scott Drawdy

The following table compares taxes on an average residence homestead in this taxing unit last year to taxes proposed on the average residence homestead this year.

	Last Year	This Year
Total tax rate (per \$100 of value)	0.420000	0.410000
	Adopted	Proposed
Difference in rates per \$100 of value		-0.010000
Percentage increase/decrease in rates (+/-)		-2.38%
Average residence homestead appraised value	\$367,845	\$369,753
General homestead exemptions available (excluding 65 years of age or older or disabled persons exemptions)	\$11,035	\$11,092
Average residence homestead taxable value	\$356,810	\$358,661
Tax on average residence homestead	\$ 1498.60	\$ 1470.51
Annual increase/decrease in taxes if proposed tax rate is adopted (+/-) and percentage of increase (+/-)		\$ -28.09 -1.87%

NOTICE OF VOTE ON TAX RATE

If the district adopts a combined debt service, operation and maintenance and contract tax rate that would result in the taxes on the average residence homestead increasing by more than 3.5 percent, an election must be held to determine whether to approve the operation and maintenance tax rate under Section 49.23602, Water Code.

The 86th Texas Legislature modified the manner in which the voter-approval tax rate is calculated to limit the rate of growth of property taxes in the state.

Water District Notice of Public Hearing on Tax Rate

The Brookshire-Katy Drainage District will hold a public hearing on a proposed tax rate for the tax year 2020-2021 on September 14, 2020 at 6:30 PM at Brookshire-Katy Drainage District Office, 1111 Kenney Street, Brookshire, Texas 77423. Your individual taxes may increase at a greater or lesser rate, or even decrease, depending on the tax rate that is adopted and on the change in the taxable value of your property in relation to the change in taxable value of all other property. The change in the taxable value of your property in relation to the change in the taxable value of all other property determines the distribution of the tax burden among all property owners.

FOR the proposal: David Hunsucker, Ruth Ellis, Pat Keeling, Arnold England

AGAINST the proposal: none

PRESENT and not voting: n/a

ABSENT: J.R. Dollins, III

The following table compares taxes on an average residence homestead in this taxing unit last year to taxes proposed on the average residence homestead this year.

	Last Year	This Year
Total tax rate (per \$100 of value)	0.073200 / \$100	0.073200 / \$100
	Adopted	Proposed
Difference in rates per \$100 of value		\$ 0 / \$100
Percentage increase/decrease in rates (+/-)		0 %
Average appraised residence homestead value	\$ 287,412	\$ 300,590
General homestead exemptions available (excluding 65 years of age or older or disabled person's exemptions)	\$ 0	\$ 0
Average residence homestead taxable value	\$ 287,412	\$ 300,590
Tax on average residence homestead	\$ 210.38	\$ 220.03
Annual increase/decrease in taxes if proposed tax rate is adopted and percentage of decrease		\$ 9.65 4.59 %

NOTICE OF TAXPAYERS' RIGHT TO ELECTION TO REDUCE TAX RATE

If the district adopts a combined debt service, operation and maintenance, and contract tax rate that would result in the taxes on the average residence homestead increasing by more than eight percent, the qualified voters of the district by petition may require that an election be held to determine whether to reduce the operation and maintenance tax rate to the voter-approval tax rate under Section 49.23603, Water Code.

The 86th Texas Legislature modified the manner in which the voter-approval tax rate is calculated to limit the rate of growth of property taxes in the state.

Escape with a movie...again

One of the precious few escapes from the soul-sucking stress of the COVID-19 pandemic has been bonding with our couches and sweat-pants while watching scores of movies.

Whether we're streaming one of Robert De Niro's talented portrayals of characters who enjoy shooting people in the face, or dusting off our fossilized VHS players so that we can see the original, untainted Star Wars trilogy - before George Lucas tried to turn it into a digital effects-laden pile of Ewok manure - movies have a way of transporting us to galaxies and murder scenes far, far away.

I know you are all bubbling with interest about my film-viewing habits, so here are a few of my favorites:



JASE GRAVES
SPECIAL TO THE KATY TIMES

a nerdy kid with glasses who fails at scouting, but still gets the girl, would appeal to me. Sure, as an adolescent, I wore a series of spazoid spectacles, I was in a constant state of hormonal distraction, and the highlight of my brief scouting career was when my fellow Cub Scouts and I convinced our den mother to take us on a tour of the local sewage treatment plant. Other than that, I just don't see the connection.

"Nebraska"

It's also hard to explain why I'm repeatedly drawn to this understated road film. It was produced in black and white, most of the characters are not particularly pleasant, the setting features the desolate landscapes of the American Midwest, and the story focuses on the dysfunctional relationship between an aimless middle-aged son and his confused, elderly father - basically the feel-good movie of 2013. Part of the film's charm is that the "old folks" drive the development (and the humor) of the plot, and they are forces with which to be reckoned and, ultimately, taken seriously by the younger characters, which, as a parent of three teen daughters, gives me a faint bit of hope.

"The Revenant"

Watching this punishing depiction of 19th-century wilderness survival satisfies my deeply embedded (practically smothered) need to experience the great outdoors. No, I don't have to camp, fish, hunt, hike or anything else that lacks central heat and air to appreciate the splendor of God's creation. In the comfort of my own bathrobe (or my wife's), I can witness Leonardo DiCaprio being mauled by a grizzly bear, taking shelter inside a fresh horse carcass, and gagging on a raw bison liver, which pretty much does it for me.

These are only a few of the worthy-of-repeated-viewing films on my list, and I may share more some other time - if you're lucky. In the meantime, grab your favorite soft pants and escape to the world of movies, where you don't need a face mask - but you may want to bring deodorant.

"The Shawshank Redemption"

Anytime I'm tempted to turn to a life of crime, a thorough viewing of "Shawshank" sets me on the straight and narrow path that won't lead to crawling through 500 yards of prison sewage pipe. Even the prospect of becoming best friends with Morgan Freeman and reuniting on the beaches of Zihuatanejo doesn't entice me to risk having to face a firehose shower in "the hole." Even so, the last thirty minutes of "Shawshank" are some of the most inspiring of any film I've ever seen. (I still wonder if Andy Dufresne remembered to pack deodorant.)

"True Grit" — 2010

Yes, my father and most of my male relatives born before 1970 have probably considered disowning me for (among other reasons) suggesting that the Coen Brothers' version of "True Grit" is superior to the 1969 film featuring "The Duke." I've always been a sucker for the savage quirkiness of the Coens' films, and even though I'm about as country and western as Bernie Sanders in a rhinestone-be-spangled Nudie suit, I could watch a paunchy, one-eyed Jeff Bridges face off with Lucky Ned Pepper's gang a thousand times. Seeing that film always inspires me to dust off my only handgun - a trusty .38 Special I have on loan from my dad - if I could remember where I put it.

"Moonrise Kingdom"

Speaking of quirky, Wes Anderson's ochre-tinted films never fail to bring on the whimsy. I'm not certain why a coming-of-age story about



In search of my 9-dollar Heirloom

As the joke has it, nine months from the start of the pandemic - right around January 2021 - we'll experience a baby boom. After all, some activities are better suited to sheltered lifestyles than others.

But while the gestation period has months remaining, pandemic garden propagation is now upon us.

Enforced free time is resulting in a summer season with some of the saddest little fruits and vegetables ever seen on kitchen tables. Many of us have been gardening furiously since April - some folks for the first time in their lives.

Manhattan balconies and suburban backyards are chockablock with edibles, planted and potted where none has ever appeared before. Crops range from the challenging, such as broccoli and eggplant, to the relatively easy to handle garden staples, mint and basil.

A Google search of "recipes with basil" produced 1.2 million results. It also directed me to the more pressing issue: "What to do with too much basil."

I have no data to support this,



PETER FUNT
SPECIAL TO THE KATY TIMES

but I believe that after basil the most prevalent pandemic crop is tomatoes. My wife Amy has watched me nurse three tomato plants since early spring and determined that I'm producing the exotic "nine-dollar variety" - a tomato whose fully amortized unit cost is nearly ten bucks.

Amazon brings daily deliveries of potting soil, compost and mulch - most of it in bags triple the size I require, at double the price I would pay at Home Depot. I've purchased vermiculite, perlite, worm castings and neem oil, along with various potions designed to encourage blossoms to produce fruit.

I've watched hours of YouTube videos about growing tomatoes. Most

of these, designed to be inspiring, are downright depressing.

The hosts casually display row after row of pristine specimens that "you, too, can grow." Except I can't. Maybe it's because I'm using a 4-10-5 fertilizer instead of 6-8-3. Perhaps it's because I don't have a fully-automated drip irrigation system. Or maybe it's just that I don't live in San Diego or Yuma, where the sun always shines.

I've heard that "watching grass grow" is the most tedious horticultural activity. Actually, watching tomatoes grow - or, in my case, not grow - is worse. I'm up before dawn to investigate progress. With little else to do, I check mid-morning, mid-day, mid-afternoon and mid-evening.

I've learned: A watched tomato plant never fails to boil a gardener's patience.

If my pandemic garden does a produce a ripe tomato, I intend to photograph it and, perhaps, give it a name.

However, after all I've been through this summer, I don't know if I'll have the heart to eat it.

Katy Times welcomes new publisher

Susan Rovegno joined the Katy Times team as publisher Aug. 24.

Susan graduated from O'Donnell (Tex.) High School and received her Bachelor of Arts in mass communication from Abilene Christian University and her MA in journalism from The University of Texas at Austin.

She began her long newspaper career at "The Houston Post" where she worked in distribution, audience development and

both retail and classified ad sales.

From there she moved to "USA TODAY" where she spent twelve years, during which she and her family moved to Phoenix. Susan remained with Gannett (parent company of "USA TODAY") for eight more years with assignments in White Plains, N.Y., and Salem, Ore. She returned to Phoenix, working for the "East Valley Tribune," before coming back to Texas - first in Victoria and then



SUSAN ROVEGNO

home to Houston. Susan has worked for Houston Community Newspapers (now a division of the "Houston Chronicle") and "Community Impact Newspaper."

Susan and her husband of forty years, Jack, reside in Katy with two very spoiled cats. Their son Chuck and his family live in Arizona.

"I am delighted to be working at the Katy Times, with its more than a century of service to the Katy community," Rovegno said. "As Katy and Houston continue to expand westward, there is a lot of exciting news on the horizon for our area."

Katy Times

Susan Rovegno | Publisher
R. Hans Miller | News Editor
Dennis Silva II | Sports Editor
Victoria Parker | Designer
Debbie Prejean | Bookkeeper
Tom Hruska | Sales Representative

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KATYTIMES.COM

UHV

from page 1

at least one case of COVID-19 over the summer. The individual was quarantined and had been wearing a mask while on the Victoria campus according to a UHV statement.

"There are three things that will allow us to get through this time, and that is cooperation, communication and flexibility," Glenn said. "If we practice all of those, whether on campus or from our home or room, we will be successful in keeping each other healthy during this time."

The university flexed its schedule last week as Hurricane Laura swept in from the Gulf of Mexico and eventually moved north, making landfall near the Louisiana-Texas border. The university closed its Katy campus to students Wednesday Aug. 26 and Thursday, Aug. 27. The campus had originally been expected to be closed Friday, but after it became apparent the Katy area would not be impacted by Laura, campus reopened Aug. 28.

"We decided to close UHV



R. HANS MILLER

UHV Katy along the Grand Parkway began classes Aug. 24. The campus had a bit of a hiccup during its first week as it temporarily closed campus out of concern that Hurricane Laura might have come closer to Houston. Last fall, the UHV Katy and University of Houston Katy campuses merged into one facility, a UHV spokesman said.

Katy out of an abundance of caution," Glenn said.

UHV students can view any emergency alerts the school issues by visiting www.uhv.edu/alert.

A new student-approved UHV Health and Wellness Center has recently been approved for development as well, but it is currently in the planning stages.

The school is starting this year with limited dorm populations as part of its precautions to deal with the pandemic, but it's new \$22.8

million, 82,000 square foot Don & Mona Smith Hall has helped increase overall dorm capacity at its Victoria campus as the school grows.

"We are excited to welcome students back to our residence halls," said Brandon Lee, director of UHV Residence Life. "Of course, there has been a natural anxiety surrounding the current circumstances, but we implemented social distancing measures to help keep our students, parents and staff safe."

WALLER

from page 1

new fleet vehicles under a lease program with Enterprise and an additional \$100,000 for overtime for WCSO staff.

Adding a \$100,000 line item for park planning and maintenance will allow Waller County to complete its planning process for a formalized County Parks Plan later this calendar year, the press release said.

"This tax rate delivers on the promises we made in 2017 - that when we passed the \$39.5 million jail bond, that with new revenue and growth, that we would work hard to quickly get back to lowering the tax rate, which we did every year from 2015 until 2018. And when coupled with the tax rate reduction in 2019, the tax rate we adopted today gives us a tax rate that is actually lower than what the tax rate was prior to voters approving the jail bond, fulfilling that promise and accomplishing that only two years after incurring the jail bond debt," Duhon said via the press release.

Duhon also pointed out that the county's new justice center and Precinct 4 Annex are both on budget and ahead of schedule.

Duhon said the county was very fortunate to be in the financial position that it is given the economic impacts of COVID-19 and competition with nearby counties for economic opportunities. He had also asked that \$20,000 be allocated to the county's economic development program to keep the county's financial future on good footing.

"We're very fortunate based on where we are financially and the fact that we are not reliant on sales tax that we are probably better situated to hopefully withstand the storm than most - so that we're not in a position like some entities where they're having to let go of people because they can't make budget," Duhon said.

The Waller County Commissioners' Court meets Wednesdays at 9 a.m. at the Waller County Courthouse in Hempstead. Meetings are currently being held virtually, including the public comments portion of the meeting. Login information for the meetings can be found at https://www.co.waller.tx.us/page/Public_Notices.

KISD

from page 1

with someone experiencing symptoms," said Director of Risk Management for KISD Lance Nauman.

Testing will be done through partnerships with RediMD and UTMB-Galveston. An in-district site has been established and will be open only to district staff between the hours of 8:30 a.m. and 4 p.m. according to a district press release. Testing is free of charge to all KISD employees who were potentially exposed to a COVID-19 case whether at work or not and qualifying dependents under the KISD health plan. Uninsured KISD employees may also be tested, but their families are ineligible.

No appointment is necessary for the testing which will be conducted at the Agriculture Sciences Center located at 5825 Katy Hockley Cut-Off road just north of the city of Katy. Staff will be tested on a first-come first-served basis.

"The testing site is located within the District, with a 48-hour turnaround time for results," Nauman said.

Naming Junior

Katy Junior High 17 will need a proper name before it begins operations during the 2021-22 school year and Katy ISD Superintendent Ken Gregorski was given the go ahead at the Aug. meeting to form a committee to decide upon the new campus'

name.

Trustee Dawn Champagne has volunteered to serve on the committee, but a roster of appointees has not been set at this time, a KISD representative said Tuesday. Parents of students who will be zoned to the new school may nominate themselves for the committee and principals may nominate parents whose children will attend the new school as well.

To submit a naming nomination for the new junior high school which is being built in the southeastern corner of the intersection of Katy Hockley and Clay Roads must complete a nomination form which is available on the district's website, provide biographical and historical information for the honoree the school may be named for, describe significant contributions that person has made to the community and an overall statement on why the campus should be named for the nominee.

The \$65.6 million school campus is currently being built by Drymala Construction and was designed by PBK Architects. Funding was approved for the project by voters through a bond package in 2017 according to the district's website.

The deadline for submitting a name proposal is Sept. 10 at 4 p.m. and submissions may be emailed to schoolnaming@katyisd.org or dropped off in-person at the district's Education Support Complex located at 6301 S. Stadium Lane in Katy. Those wishing to mail their submission in may send the nomination to Katy ISD School/Facility Naming, School & Community Engagement, P. O. Box 159, Katy, TX 77492-0159.

PATTISON

from page 1

and final plats. The matter was then tabled so those changes could be moved forward.

"I'd like to work towards having a simple flow of this process so that we can move it along because it's really going to get bogged down if we have something - whether it's in the old part of town or something significant - to require us to break down the subdivision into something that we can manage," Garcia said.

Council did pass an ordinance relating to nuisance properties within the city that have become overgrown with brush or

developed other unsightly or hazardous conditions.

"This ordinance kind of spells it out. This ordinance also serves as a foundation for other uses that maybe we need to evade. We can amend this ordinance and add things as we go," Garcia said.

Council members did note that the ordinance would also require the city to address similar nuisances on city property and rights of way that it does not necessarily have money for right away but would have to address.

A third ordinance relating to the cell towers being built in the city was approved as well. The ordinance would require a \$250 application fee and that the applicant pay for

any other related costs such as engineering. Garcia said no cell companies were planning towers in the city at this time, but inquiries had been made.

Staff from the city secretary's office indicated that about 50% of the town's population had completed the U.S. Census. City staff have repeatedly stated that completing the census is vital for the city because it establishes a basis for a variety of items including eligibility for federal funding in emergencies. Residents have until Sept. 30 to complete the Census.

A public hearing to review the city's proposed budget was set for Sept. 22 with a special city council session scheduled afterward to adopt the budget.

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Taylor's Foster named to SI99

'Mystery man' readies for senior season

By COLE McNANNA
SPECIAL TO THE KATY TIMES

Entering his senior season as a Taylor Mustang, Bryce Foster has high hopes for the 2020 season that will kick off for real at the end of this month. He was recently awarded some high praise on the inaugural "Sports Illustrated" 99 list featuring the top college prospects and checked in as the highest-ranked interior offensive lineman recruit.

"Having it behind me is a pretty cool thing just to say, use it as a title but number one it's going to put a target on my back - a higher target, which I've kind of had throughout all of high school just because I'm a high recruit," Foster said in an Aug. 27 phone interview. "Honestly, I put all that stuff behind me once it goes in between the white lines. It's everybody on everybody, it's not one versus 11, two versus 11; no, it's 11 on 11 on the field."

He has embraced that attention and despite not yet landing on a final college choice out of the top five he established in February (Oklahoma, LSU, Oregon,

Texas A&M, and Texas), the mystery man enters this season focused on the postseason promised land.

"It's definitely a pretty cool thing, you look up 'Sports Illustrated' and I always think of the big magazine like when I was younger," Foster said. "I have that in the back of my mind where I know that if I have a bad practice, I know what I'm really capable of doing so there's no reason really to stress on it. Just keep moving on and as our O-line coach likes to say, Coach (Travis) Sharp, 'What's our most important play? It's the next one.'"

Sharp applauded Foster and teammate Hayden Conner's leadership abilities through an uncertain offseason where the coach said they took advantage of the virtual options at their fingertips.

"We took this offseason, as crazy as it was, and looked at it as an opportunity to study the game. Even though we didn't have spring, we got into video and got to really analyze last season," Sharp said in an Aug. 27 phone interview. "I can't say enough, (Foster and



FILE PHOTO

Taylor's offensive line was a major factor in its historic postseason run last year and returns three from last year's group to lead this year's squad. Pictured in the top row, from left, are recent graduate Michael Tulenko and seniors Bryce Foster and Hayden Conner. Kneeling in front, from left, are senior Abraham Okezie and recent graduate Gunnar Elliott.

See FOOTBALL, page 7



FILE PHOTO BY MARK GOODMAN

Seven Lakes' Ally Batenhorst, voted the most outstanding hitter for District 19-6A last year, recently collected national preseason recognition from MaxPreps and the American Volleyball Coaches Association. Pictured is Batenhorst, 14, delivering a spike past Fort Bend Austin's Sydney Plemons, 17, during a high school volleyball playoff match at the Merrell Center in Katy on Nov. 5, 2019.

Batenhorst collects preseason honors

By COLE McNANNA
SPECIAL TO THE KATY TIMES

Seven Lakes Lady Spartans senior outside hitter and University of Nebraska commit Ally Batenhorst recently landed on MaxPreps' preseason All-America first team as well as the American Volleyball Coaches Association preseason All-America watch list and was joined by some teammates in the latter group.

Batenhorst was last year's District 19-6A outstanding hitter with 274 kills and added 171 digs, 24 blocks and 16 aces to help Seven Lakes take second and clinch a Bi-District Championship. She was honored by MaxPreps as one of 25 student athletes from across the country earning a first-team bid. Batenhorst was joined by eight other Texans on the first team, thrice as many nominations from California and Michigan each.

She was also one of 10 Katy ISD volleyballers named to AVCA's Under Armour All-America watchlist which will recognize 150

See BATENHORST, page 7



FILE PHOTO BY MARK GOODMAN

Katy senior defensive back Hunter Washington announced he would join junior teammate Bobby Taylor in sitting out the team's first scrimmage and regular-season game to protest social injustices. Pictured is Washington, 7, making a tackle on Mayde Creek's L'den Skinner, 22, during a conference game between the Katy Tigers and Mayde Creek Rams at Rhodes Stadium on Nov. 1, 2019.

Top Tiger recruits to protest

By COLE McNANNA
SPECIAL TO THE KATY TIMES

A pair of top defensive back recruits for the Katy Tigers, junior Bobby Taylor and senior Hunter Washington, announced they will sit out the team's first scrimmage and regular-season opener at the end of this month and follow in the footsteps of professional athletes' protests in the wake of the Jacob Blake shooting. They became the first Texas high school football players to announce protest plans.

Taylor, an uncommitted prospect with Texas, Baylor, Texas A&M and Texas Christian in his top 12, made his announcement in an Aug. 28 tweet and Washington, a Florida State commit, said he would join him. Both said they discussed their decision with Katy head football coach Gary Joseph.

"In America, people of skin color, like myself, have been the face of social injustice for hundreds

of years and it will continue if we don't do something about it," Taylor said in his tweet. "As a young Black man, my parents shouldn't have to worry if I'll make it home every day, especially in the hands of a police officer who is supposed to protect me. If we don't do something about it now, it'll never change when we make it. I love my skin color and stand by it."

Washington was named to "Dave Campbell's Texas Football" preseason Super Team and recently landed on the publication's Mr. Texas Football Player of the Year preseason watch list as well. Taylor was honored as a one of DCTF's top 100 recruits for the Class of 2022 and also has Alabama, Oklahoma and Louisiana State in his top colleges.

The Tigers' preseason scrimmage will be Sept. 17 at home against Klein Collins before the season-opening contest Sept. 25 on the road at Challenger Stadium in League City against Clear Springs.

De Jong makes move from Skeeters to Houston Astros

By JOE SOUTHERN
SPECIAL TO THE KATY TIMES

Chase De Jong became the first player in history to play at both Constellation Field and Minute Maid Park in the same season.

De Jong started the year pitching in the pop-up Constellation Energy League in Sugar Land - a four-team league created by the independent baseball team Sugar Land Skeeters - and is now on the 40-man roster for the Houston Astros. Although he isn't the first Skeeters player to reach the Major Leagues, he is the second to make

the leap in a single season and the first to do it locally.

Just prior to De Jong's call-up, Brett Eibner was called up to the Miami Marlins active roster. They are two of seven players in the Constellation Energy League to move up to MLB this season.

"I'm grateful for this opportunity. The last year to 14 months of my career has been such a whirlwind," De Jong said after making his first appearance in relief for the Astros on Aug. 25 against the Los Angeles Angels.

He lasted less than an inning, giving up

a hit, two earned runs, and a base on balls. It wasn't unlike his professional debut, also at Minute Maid Park, on April 5, 2017, when he took the loss by giving up a three-run homer to George Springer in bottom of the 13th inning in the Astros' 5-3 win over the Seattle Mariners.

He was with the Mariners in 2017, traded to the Minnesota Twins in 2018, and then released and signed with the Skeeters in 2019. When the Constellation Energy League was created for a two-month stint, he became the ace for Team Skeeters. De Jong made five starts, going 1-2 with a

3.18 ERA and striking out 27 batters in 17 innings pitched.

In the offseason, De Jong returned home to Southern California where his wife learned to catch for him while he worked on his mechanics, bringing the speed of his pitches from the mid-80s to the lower 90s. That was evident upon his return to Sugar Land.

"It's a great place to play," he said of Constellation Field. "As far as indy ball goes, it's top notch. This season, the

See ASTROS, page 7

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ASTROS

from page 6

Zlotniks, the ownership over there, they put together the Constellation Energy League and I'm eternally grateful for that because I needed somewhere to show that 'hey, I've made adjustments and I'm still a very good pitcher.'

"And I wouldn't have had anywhere to play if they had decided to shut down baseball like the Minor Leagues and everything like that. So, I am grateful for the opportunity to play there at the end of last season and the beginning of this to showcase my ability and to catch notice of the Astros," he said.

The 26-year-old was the second player from the Constellation Energy League to be called-up by the Astros. Fernando Rodney made one appearance for Team Skeeters before the Astros snatched him up. He has been on the taxi squad and has yet to make the active roster.

As of Monday, the Astros were second in the Ameri-



JOE SOUTHERN

Chase De Jong pitches for Team Skeeters in the Constellation Energy League in Sugar Land. He became the first player in history to make the move up Highway 59 to Minute Maid Park to play for the Houston Astros in the same season.

can League West at 19-14, just 2.5 games behind the Oakland Athletics. The Astros are hosting the Texas

Rangers for three games this week before heading to Los Angeles for four games with the Angels.

FOOTBALL

from page 6

Conner are) going into their senior year, for both of them it will be their fourth year starting for us which is really exceptional."

The progression he's shown since his freshman year was something that factored into his high ranking according to John Garcia Jr., director of recruiting for "Sports Illustrated," who saw Foster in person at the 2017 FBU freshman All-American bowl in Florida. After developing his skills at the high school level, Garcia can see Foster's transition to the college level being a smooth one, wherever he decides to make his new home.

"He's a smart and aware prospect so I do think there is some scheme versatility with his game. Now, he probably does fit best in a man-to-man blocking, downhill run-first nature but that's just not something prevalent in today's game," Garcia Jr. said in an Aug. 27 phone interview. "With his zone blocking efficiency, I do think that he could fit in some of these spread, (run-pass option) style offense that really are dominant within the schools that he's looking at."

However, Foster still knows there is a more pressing task at hand and said he hasn't been as excited before a season as he is ahead of the 2020 campaign that starts with a scrimmage against Cy Ranch on Sept. 17 ahead of the regular-season opener against Cy Springs at home on Sept. 24.

"Honestly, I think the lowest expectation is a repeat of last year. We have seven guys returning on both sides of the ball so we have a lot of experience going deep into the playoffs," Foster said. "I think last year, in the third, fourth, fifth round, we had a lot of those jitters; we were really nervous playing in a bigger stadium. Of course, as we go on the teams get better too."

Even with his sights set on the big prize, Foster will continue doing the dirty work in the trenches that can altogether change the course of any given game.

"One of our evaluators said he's Bryce the bully," Garcia Jr. said. "He has a lot of what you want both physically, but I think mentally too. He's got some of that nasty in him where there's not a whole lot of that left in football, unfortunately, but it's definitely still there in the trenches. He can be an attitude tone setter just as much as he could be a physical tone setter as well."

BATENHORST

from page 6

of the top volleyball players in the nation when the teams and honorable mentions are announced in November. This puts her in a list with 168 other Texans who made the All-America watchlist. Another 239 Texans landed on the phenom list reserved for uncommitted non-seniors.

Batenhorst's teammates - setter Kaia Nickel and middle block Mayo Olibale - also cracked the All-America watchlist. Casey Batenhorst, Ally's sister, a 6-foot-tall member of the Class of 2022, also represented Seven Lakes on the phenom list.

Cinco Ranch had four seniors on the watchlist with libero Hayley Byrd, setter Eva Fitzgerald, outside hitter Kayla Griehl and libero Brooke Hirsch, a UTSA commit, earning a spot. In addition, junior setter Catalina Martinez and sophomore outside Courtney O'Brien registered spots on the phenom list.

Katy High had two representatives each on the watchlist and phenom list. Seniors Hannah Hoover, a libero and Navy commit, and Perris Key, an outside hitter committed to Texas Rio Grande Valley, landed on the watchlist and juniors Jordan Gamble and Maddie Waak made the phenom list.

Rounding out the All-America watchlist nominations was Tompkins' Eliana Posada, a 6-foot, 1-inch right side hitter committed to the University of Pittsburg. Five of her Lady Falcons teammates were named to the phenom list in junior outside hitter Paris Herrman, along with sophomore outside hitters Cindy Tchouangwa, Kaitlin Lopez and Tendai Titley, as well as setter Presley Powell.

Also landing on the phenom list were a pair from the Texas Association of Private and Parochial Schools circuit in Faith West Academy's Haley Muse, a sophomore setter, and St. John XXIII's Margot Manning, another sophomore setter, who both play for the same club team.

Jim Baker's Unified Theory Of Everything --- With God's Help

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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.



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Katy Times

WATER DISTRICT NOTICE OF PUBLIC HEARING ON TAX RATE

The FORT BEND COUNTY M.U.D. #34 will hold a public hearing on a proposed tax rate for the tax year 2020 on September 22, 2020 at 12:00 p.m. It is anticipated said meeting will be held via telephone conference pursuant to Texas Government Code, Section 551.125, as amended, and as modified by the Governor of Texas in the Governor's proclamation concerning the Covid-19 pandemic. Meeting access by Teleconference 1-877-304-9269, Access Code: 594747#.

Your individual taxes may increase at a greater or lesser rate, or even decrease, depending on the tax rate that is adopted and on the change in the taxable value of your property in relation to the change in taxable value of all other property. The change in the taxable value of your property in relation to the change in the taxable value of all other property determines the distribution of the tax burden among all property owners.

FOR the proposal: Billy Haehnel, James Marken, Jose Torres, Craig Hajovsky, and Sean Piper
AGAINST the proposal: None
PRESENT and not voting: None
ABSENT: None

The following table compares taxes on an average residence homestead in this taxing unit last year to taxes proposed on the average residence homestead this year.

	Last Year	This Year
Total tax rate (per \$100 of value)	\$.61000/\$100 Adopted	\$.61000/\$100 Proposed
Difference in rates per \$100 of value		\$.00000/\$100
Percentage increase/decrease in rates (+/-)		.00%
Average appraised residence homestead value	\$ 360,109	\$ 365,147
General homestead exemptions available (excluding 65 years of age or older or disabled person's exemptions)	\$ 0	\$ 0
Average residence homestead taxable value	\$ 360,109	\$ 365,147
Tax on average residence homestead	\$2,196.66	\$2,227.39
Annual increase/decrease in taxes if proposed tax rate is adopted (+/-) and percentage of increase (+/-)		\$ 30.73 1.39%

NOTICE OF TAXPAYERS' RIGHT TO ELECTION TO REDUCE TAX RATE

If the district adopts a combined debt service, operation and maintenance, and contract tax rate that would result in the taxes on the average residence homestead increasing by more than eight percent, the qualified voters of the district by petition may require that an election be held to determine whether to reduce the operation and maintenance tax rate to the voter-approval tax rate under Section 49.23603, Water Code.

The 86th Texas Legislature modified the manner in which the voter-approval tax rate is calculated to limit the rate of growth of property taxes in the state.

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August 27

Puzzle Answers

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950 PUBLIC NOTICES

NOTICE OF PUBLIC HEARING FOR THE EXCLUSION OF CERTAIN LANDS FROM HARRIS-WALLER COUNTIES MUNICIPAL UTILITY DISTRICT NO. 4

Notice is hereby given that Harris-Waller Counties Municipal Utility District No. 4 (the "District") will hold a public hearing on Thursday, September 17, 2020, at 2:00 p.m., by teleconference at (888) 204-5984, Access Code: 2868263, with access by telephone available to the public, pursuant to Texas Government Code Section 551.125 and Governor Greg Abbott's emergency disaster declaration dated March 13, 2020, for the following purpose:

CONDUCT HEARING ON EXCLUSION OF CERTAIN LANDS FROM HARRIS-WALLER COUNTIES MUNICIPAL UTILITY DISTRICT NO. 4

All interested property owners have the right to present petitions for exclusion of land or other property and offer evidence in support of the petitions and the right to contest the proposed exclusion based on either a petition or the Board of Director's own conclusion and to offer evidence in support of the contest.

BY ORDER OF THE BOARD OF DIRECTORS
/s/ Rhonda Patterson
President, Board of Directors

/s/ Ruth Delaunay
Secretary, Board of Directors

950 PUBLIC NOTICES

NOTICE

The City Council Of The City Of Katy, Texas, Will Conduct A Public Hearing On The 2020-2021 Proposed Tax Rate At The Special City Council Meeting, Monday, September 28, 2020, 4:00 P.M., Katy City Hall, 901 Avenue C, Katy, Texas. This Budget Will Raise More Total Property Taxes Than Last Year's Budget By \$1,384,080.00 Or 12%, And Of That Amount \$1,367,244.00 Is Tax Revenue To Be Raised From New Property Added To The Tax Roll This Year. The Proposed Budget Is On File With The City Secretary For Public Inspection.

City of Katy, Texas
901 Avenue C
Katy, Texas 77493

PUBLIC NOTICE

NOTICE OF UNCLAIMED PROPERTY THE KATY INDEPENDENT SCHOOL DISTRICT POLICE DEPARTMENT EVIDENCE/PROPERTY ROOM HAS IN ITS POSSESSION THE FOLLOWING UNCLAIMED OR ABANDONED PROPERTY. PROPERTY IS BEING HELD AT THE KATY INDEPENDENT SCHOOL DISTRICT POLICE DEPARTMENT EVIDENCE/PROPERTY ROOM, LOCATED AT 20370 FRANZ RD, KATY, TEXAS 77449. IF THE OWNERS DO NOT PROVE OWNERSHIP AND CLAIM THE SAME WITHIN 90 DAYS FROM THE DATE OF THIS PUBLICATION, SUCH PROPERTY WILL BE DISPOSED OF AND THE PROCEEDS, AFTER DEDUCTING THE REASONABLE EXPENSE OF KEEPING SUCH PROPERTY AND THE COST OF THE DISPOSITION, PLACED IN THE DISTRICT TREASURY.

ITEMS: 1: U.S. CURRENCY.

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Early Notice and Public Review of a Proposed Activity in a 100-Year Floodplain

To: All interested Agencies, Groups and Individuals on 9/3/2020: This is to give notice that Waller County has determined that the following proposed action under the Community Development Block Grant Program contract 20-065-062-C180 is located in a 100-year floodplain, and Waller County will be identifying and evaluating practicable alternatives to locating the action in the floodplain/wetland and the potential impacts on the floodplain from the proposed action, as required by Executive Order 11988, in accordance with HUD regulations at 24 CFR 55.20 Subpart C Procedures for Making Determinations on Floodplain Management and Protection of Wetlands. The County proposes to reroute a section of Diemer Road with the use of excavation, road base and asphalt and shall complete associated appurtenances, creating approximately 4,500 linear feet of new road in Waller Co., Texas. The project shall include activities within approximately 6.2 acres of the 100-year floodplain, Zone A (FIRM panels 48473C0250E, 48473C0325E). There are three primary purposes for this notice: (1) People who may be affected by activities in floodplains/wetlands and those who have an interest in the protection of the natural environment should be given an opportunity to express their concerns and provide information about these areas. Commenters are encouraged to offer alternative sites outside of the floodplain/wetland, alternative methods to serve the same project purpose, and methods to minimize and mitigate impacts; (2) An adequate public notice program can be an important public educational tool. The dissemination of information and request for public comment about floodplains/wetlands can facilitate and enhance Federal efforts to reduce the risks and impacts associated with the occupancy and modification of these special areas; and (3) As a matter of fairness, when the Federal government determines it will participate in actions taking place in floodplains/wetlands, it must inform those who may be put at greater or continued risk. Written comments must be received on or before 9/18/2020 by Waller County at 836 Austin St., Suite 203, Hempstead, TX 77445, (979) 826-7700. Attention: Carbett "Trey" J. Duhon, County Judge, during regular business hours. A full description of the project may also be reviewed during regular business hours at 836 Austin St., Suite 203, Hempstead, TX 77445. Comments may also be submitted via email to ben@grantworks.net.

NOTICE

NOTICE IS HEREBY GIVEN ORDINANCE NO. 2949 BEARING THE FOLLOWING CAPTION WAS ADOPTED BY THE CITY COUNCIL OF THE CITY OF KATY, TEXAS, ON APRIL 13, 2020:

AN ORDINANCE OF THE CITY COUNCIL OF THE CITY OF KATY, TEXAS, ALTERING THE PRIMA FACIE SPEED LIMITS ESTABLISHED FOR VEHICLES UNDER THE PROVISIONS OF §545.356, TEXAS TRANSPORTATION CODE, UPON THE BASIS OF AN ENGINEERING AND TRAFFIC INVESTIGATION, UPON CERTAIN STREETS AND HIGHWAYS (PIN OAK ROAD OVERPASS AT I-10), OF PARTS THEREOF, WITHIN THE CORPORATE LIMITS OF THE CITY OF KATY AS SET OUT IN THIS ORDINANCE; AND PROVIDING A PENALTY OF A FINE NOT TO EXCEED \$200 FOR THE VIOLATION OF THIS ORDINANCE.

Aviso temprano y revisión pública de una actividad propuesta en una llanura aluvial de 100 años

Para: Todas las agencias, grupos e individuos interesados el 9/3/2020: Este es para notificar que el Condado de Waller ha determinado que la siguiente acción propuesta bajo el contrato del Programa de Subvenciones en Bloque para el Desarrollo Comunitario 20-065-062-C180 está ubicada en un Llanura aluvial de 100 años, y el condado de Waller identificará y evaluará alternativas practicable para ubicar la acción en la llanura aluvial / humedal y los impactos potenciales en la llanura aluvial de la acción propuesta, como lo requiere la Orden Ejecutiva 11988, de acuerdo con las regulaciones de HUD en 24 CFR 55.20 Subparte C Procedimientos para tomar determinaciones sobre el manejo de llanuras aluviales y la protección de humedales. El Condado propone desviar una sección de Diemer Road con el uso de excavación, base de la carretera y asfalto y completará los accesorios asociados, creando aproximadamente 4,500 pies lineales de nueva carretera en Waller Co., Texas. El proyecto incluirá actividades dentro de aproximadamente 6.2 acres de la llanura aluvial de 100 años, Zona A (paneles FIRM 48473C0250E, 48473C0325E). Hay tres propósitos principales para este aviso: (1) Las personas que puedan verse afectadas por actividades en llanuras aluviales / humedales y aquellos que tengan interés en la protección del medio ambiente natural deben tener la oportunidad de expresar sus inquietudes y proporcionar información sobre estas áreas. Se anima a los comentaristas a ofrecer sitios alternativos para la llanura aluvial / humedal, métodos alternativos para cumplir el mismo propósito del proyecto y métodos para minimizar y mitigar los impactos; (2) Un programa de aviso público adecuado puede ser una herramienta educativa pública importante. La difusión de información y la solicitud de comentarios públicos sobre las llanuras aluviales / humedales pueden facilitar y mejorar los esfuerzos federales para reducir los riesgos e impactos asociados con la ocupación y modificación de estas áreas especiales; y (3) Como cuestión de justicia, cuando el gobierno federal determina que participará en acciones que se llevan a cabo en llanuras aluviales / humedales, debe informar a aquellos que puedan correr un riesgo mayor o continuo. Los comentarios escritos deben ser recibidos el 18/9/2020 o antes por el condado de Waller en 836 Austin St., Suite 203, Hempstead, TX 77445, (979) 826-7700. Atención: Carbett "Trey" J. Duhon, juez del condado, durante el horario comercial habitual. También se puede revisar una descripción completa del proyecto durante el horario comercial habitual en 836 Austin St., Suite 203, Hempstead, TX 77445. También se pueden enviar comentarios por correo electrónico a ben@grantworks.net.

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Retirement Auction, Wed., Sept. 9, starts @ 9:12 a.m., 665 N. 150 Road, Mounds, OK 74047. Auction will have 2 rings. Tractor, trailers, Yamaha Wolverine side by side, shop tools, farm equip., lawn mower, high-end western furniture, player piano, antiques & collectibles and more. Lots 251-379 are offered online - simulcast bidding begins at 12:37 p.m. For full terms, photos and updates visit chuppsauction.com, 918-630-0495.

V & V Machine Shop Auction, 2915 S. Zaramora St., Bldg. N, San Antonio, TX. Bid live online or in person Sat., Sept. 12, 10 a.m. View: Fri. Sept. 11, 10 a.m.-4 p.m.; sale day 8-10 a.m. 335 Lots - Milling Machines, Lathes, Drill Bits, Welder, & More. Bring folding chair. See website for details: www.siskauction.com, 361-456-7771. 10%/12% Buyers Premium, John Sisk Auctioneers, Inc. Txs #7425

Halliburton Real Estate Auctions - Texas Auctions Oct. 7. Locations include Industrial, Warehouse, Office & Land Properties in Brownfield, Odessa & Sonora. Buildings Open: 11-2 p.m. Fri. Aug. 28 & Sept. 11. All Sell Without Reserve. TX Jeffrey Michael Ashby RE LIC 550021; Thomas E. Barnes III AUC LIC 6457. Call 800-801-8003, williamsauction.com/halliburton.

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How to keep those with dementia calm

By MIKE FINLEY
SPECIAL TO THE KATY TIMES

Hurricane Laura is behind us now – but the memory will not soon be forgotten.

With hurricane season now officially upon us, we need to be aware that people with Alzheimer's or other dementia can unknowingly put themselves and others in dangerous situations.

Here are a few things to remember when disaster strikes and you are moving a person with dementia and trying to keep them calm in evacuation situations.

- Avoid physical force or restraint.
- Be creative rather than rely on reality.
- Provide one-on-one instruction.
- Provide step-by-step instructions using simple language.
- Try to relocate the person to a quiet place.
- Use distraction by giving the person a simple task.
- Ensure the person is watched, at all times, to prevent wandering.

Hopefully there is a caregiver close by. If not, use the TALK tactics:



ANDREA PIACQUADIO

After a natural disaster, recovery and feeling of disorientation from the storm and other concerns are often a challenge for those with Alzheimers.

- Take it slow. Someone living with Alzheimer's moves at their pace, not yours.
- Ask simple questions.
- Limit reality checks. Try not to argue; to someone living with

ALZHEIMERS'S FACTS

Alzheimers Disease is a challenging condition for patients and their families. Here are some basic facts about the disease readers should know:

- 1 in 3 seniors dies with Alzheimer's or another dementia
- Approximately 400,000 Texans have Alzheimer's
- Texas ranks 4th in number of Alzheimer's cases and 2nd in Alzheimer's deaths
- Alzheimer's disease is the 5th leading cause of death in the US
- In the US, someone develops Alzheimer's every 65 seconds

Alzheimer's, their perception is their reality.

- Keep eye contact.

Remember, a person with dementia may be easily agitated or afraid. Gently tell him or her you are there to help.

You can ALWAYS call the Alzheimer's Association 24/7 Helpline at 800.272.3900 for immediate instruction and help.

And just a reminder – you can always get the latest information about the Association's COVID-19 emergency preparedness guidelines for Alzheimer's and dementia caregivers in long-term or com-

munity-based care settings at <https://alz.org/professionals/professional-providers/coronavirus-covid-19-tips-for-dementia-caregivers>.

The Alzheimer's Association leads the way to end Alzheimer's and all other dementia – by accelerating global research, driving risk reduction and early detection, and maximizing quality care and support. Our vision is a world without Alzheimer's and all other dementia. Visit alz.org or call 800-272-3900.

Scott Finley is Media Relations Manager for the Alzheimer's Association* in Texas. He can be reached at scfinley@alz.org.

Devotional Page

This devotional page and directory is made possible by these businesses who encourage all of us to attend worship services. For more information, see our Church Directory Online at www.katytimes.com

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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,

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2 Corinthians 1:3-4

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CONTRIBUTED PHOTOS

The "Justice League Dropout" has changed his shirt and mask each time but has consistently worn gloves and his hat emblazoned with the Superman crest.

Justice League Dropout strikes two more times

By R. HANS MILLER
NEWS EDITOR

A man the FBI has dubbed the "Justice League Dropout" due to his Superman ball cap has struck three times now. The first robbery occurred at a JP Morgan Chase bank on Westheimer Road, near Katy; the second at a First Convenience Bank Aug. 24; and the last at another First Convenience Bank in Stafford Aug. 24.

Witnesses describe the suspect as a Black male in his late 30s or early 40s at about 6 feet 1 inch in height with a medium to heavy physique. He wears eyeglasses and clear gloves in addition to a face mask. At the most robbery, his mask had a skull on it reminiscent of the "Ghost Rider" comic book character.

The most recent robbery occurred at about 2 p.m. Aug. 26 where the man presented a demand note and the First Convenience bank employee complied with his demands for money out of fear for her safety. A similar crime took place at each of the prior instances.

The FBI is investigating the incidents and Crime Stoppers of Houston is assisting with a reward.

Crime Stoppers of Houston is offering up to \$5,000 for information leading to the identification and arrest of this bank robber. If you have any information, please call the Crime Stoppers tip line at 713-222-TIPS (8477) or the FBI Houston Field Office at (713) 693-5000. Text TIP610 plus your tip to CRIMES (274637) or visit www.crime-stoppers.org. Tips may also be submitted to Crime Stoppers through the Crime Stoppers of Houston app, which can be downloaded at the app store for both iPhone and Android devices. All tipsters remain anonymous.



R. HANS MILLER

With more than 5,400 teachers and staff, Katy ISD is one of the largest employers in the Katy area. "Forbes" recently released a listing of the top 25 places to work in the state of Texas, and placed KISD at number two on that list.

KISD rated #2 on 'Forbes' list

By R. HANS MILLER
NEWS EDITOR

"Forbes" announced Aug. 31 that Katy ISD came in at second place on its list of the best places to work in Texas. Last year, the district came in at number 19 and is noted as the only school district in Texas that was recognized on the list.

"The foundation of our District's success is the talent, dedication and hard work of our teachers, staff and school community — all of whom contribute to supporting and educating our nearly 84,000 students, every day of the school year," said KISD Superintendent Ken Gregorski.

"Forbes" reported that it had partnered with Statista, a data research company, to survey businesses with at least 500 employees. The surveys were anonymous in order to allow participants to share their opinions in an open manner. Questions asked included how likely the employee was to recommend their employer, among others.

The district recently approved pay

"The foundation of our District's success is the talent, dedication and hard work of our teachers, staff and school community — all of whom contribute to supporting and educating our nearly 84,000 students, every day of the school year."

— KISD SUPERINTENDENT KEN GREGORSKI

increases for all staff in June of this year with \$660 for each teacher and a 1% increase for all other staff.

This district is comprised of about 84,000 students, according to district statements. The Houston Association of Realtors, which monitors district staffing as part of its evaluation of area neighborhoods,

reports that the district has more than 5,200 teachers and hundreds of administrators that work together to provide education to the district's student body.

"As superintendent of this great school district I am honored to be working alongside such an outstanding team," Gregorski said.

Water District Notice of Public Hearing on Tax Rate

The Fort Bend County Municipal Utility District No 37 will hold a public hearing on a proposed tax rate for the tax year 2020 on Wednesday, September 16, 2020 at 7:00 PM at Teleconference 1-800-366-8028 Conference No. 602, Pin No. 2020. Your individual taxes may increase at a greater or lesser rate, or even decrease, depending on the tax rate that is adopted and on the change in the taxable value of your property in relation to the change in taxable value of all other property. The change in the taxable value of your property in relation to the change in the taxable value of all other property determines the distribution of the tax burden among all property owners.

FOR the proposal: Stephen Berckenhoff, Kenneth L. Comeaux, Rudolph C. Ammer, Larry W. Davis

AGAINST the proposal:

PRESENT and not voting:

ABSENT: Gregory Murray

The following table compares taxes on an average residence homestead in this taxing unit last year to taxes proposed on the average residence homestead this year.

	Last Year Adopted	This Year Proposed
Tax rate	\$0.4900 /\$100	\$0.5000 /\$100
Difference in rates per \$100 of value		\$0.0100 /\$100
Percentage increase/decrease in rates (+/-)		2.04%
Average appraised residence homestead value	\$323,288	\$329,051
General homestead exemptions available (excluding 65 years of age or older or disabled person's exemptions)	\$64,658	\$65,810
Average residence homestead taxable value	\$258,630	\$263,241
Tax on average residence homestead	\$1,267.29	\$1,316.21
Annual increase/decrease in taxes if proposed tax rate is adopted (+/-) and percentage of increase (+/-)		\$48.92 3.86%

NOTICE OF VOTE ON TAX RATE

If the district adopts a combined debt service, operation and maintenance and contract tax rate that would result in the taxes on the average residence homestead increasing by more than eight percent, an election must be held to determine whether to approve the operation and maintenance tax rate under Section 49.23601, Water Code.

The 86th Texas Legislature modified the manner in which the voter-approval tax rate is calculated to limit the rate of growth of property taxes in the state.

Water District Notice of Public Hearing on Tax Rate

The WALLER COUNTY IMPROVEMENT DISTRICT NO. 2 will hold a public hearing on a proposed tax rate for the tax year 2020 on Wednesday, September 16, 2020 at 1:00 pm via teleconference at (866) 390-1828, Access Code: 5623799. Your individual taxes may increase at a greater or lesser rate, or even decrease, depending on the tax rate that is adopted and on the change in the taxable value of your property in relation to the change in taxable value of all other property. The change in the taxable value of your property in relation to the change in the taxable value of all other property determines the distribution of the tax burden among all property owners.

FOR the proposal: George Huntoon III, George Hittner, Neil Williams, Sara Burson, Kay Shepard

AGAINST the proposal: None

PRESENT and not voting: None

ABSENT: None

The following table compares taxes on an average residence homestead in this taxing unit last year to taxes proposed on the average residence homestead this year.

	Last Year Adopted	This Year Proposed
Total tax rate (per \$100 of value)	\$0.80000 /\$100	\$0.80000 /\$100
Difference in rates per \$100 of value		\$0.00000 /\$100
Percentage increase/decrease in rates (+/-)		0.00%
Average appraised residence homestead value	\$0.00	\$0.00
General homestead exemptions available (excluding 65 years of age or older or disabled person's exemptions)	\$0.00	\$0.00
Average residence homestead taxable value	\$0.00	\$0.00
Tax on average residence homestead	\$0.00	\$0.00
Annual increase/decrease in taxes if proposed tax rate is adopted (+/-) and percentage of increase (+/-)		\$N/A N/A%

NOTICE OF TAXPAYERS' RIGHT TO ELECTION TO REDUCE TAX RATE

If the district adopts a combined debt service, operation and maintenance, and contract tax rate that would result in the taxes on the average residence homestead increasing by more than 8 percent, the qualified voters of the district by petition may require that an election be held to determine whether to reduce the operation and maintenance tax rate to the voter-approval tax rate under Section 49.23603, Water Code.

*There were no residential homesteads for comparison purposes.

The 86th Texas Legislature modified the manner in which the voter-approval tax rate is calculated to limit the rate of growth of property taxes in the state.

Should you have any questions concerning this notice, please contact the tax office at 281-482-0216.

Early voting extended for November election

FROM STAFF REPORTS

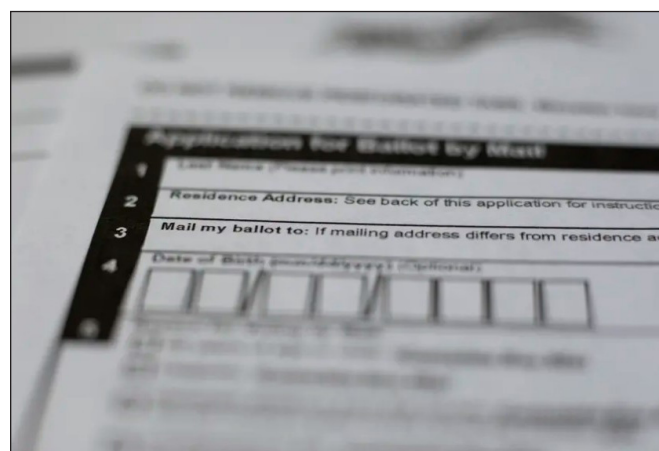
Tex. Gov. Greg Abbott has extended early voting to allow those that are concerned about the COVID-19 pandemic to vote in person. In addition to the presidential election this November, there are several local, state and federal elections that Katy area voters will need to be aware of. Katy Times will be covering those elections regularly leading up to the dates voting booths are open to ensure readers are informed. The chart below indicates dates readers should be aware of as they prepare to vote and incorporate Abbott's extended early voting period.



ELECTION DATES

First day to apply for ballot by mail	Jan. 1, 2020
Last day to file for write-in candidacy in the general election or state elections	Aug. 17, 2020
Last day to file for write-in candidacy in local elections	Aug. 21, 2020
Deadline to register to vote	Oct. 5, 2020
First day of early in-person voting	Oct. 13, 2020
Last day to apply for ballot by mail (received, not postmarked)	Oct. 23, 2020
Last day of early in-person voting	Oct. 30, 2020
Last day to receive ballot by mail (if not postmarked)	Nov. 3, 2020
Election Day	Nov. 3, 2020
Last day to receive ballot by mail (if postmarked)	Nov. 4, 2020

SOURCE: Texas Secretary of State



MIGUEL GUTIERREZ, JR./THE TEXAS TRIBUNE

Harris County previously announced it planned to send applications for mail-in ballots to every registered voter in the county, prompting objections from the Texas secretary of state.

Harris County sued for sending mail-in ballot applications

By ALEXA URA
THE TEXAS TRIBUNE

Acting at the request of the secretary of state, the Texas attorney general sued Harris County on Monday after it refused to drop plans to send applications for mail-in ballots for the November general election to more than 2 million registered voters.

Attorney General Ken Paxton is asking a state district court to bar Harris County Clerk Chris Hollins from proactively providing the applications to every registered voter in the county, alleging Hollins does not have the authority under state law to carry out the plan.

The lawsuit marks the latest development in a growing battle over voting by mail in Texas during the coronavirus pandemic. That fight had focused on which voters are eligible to cast an absentee ballot, but it has now expanded to include a disagreement between the state and its most populous county over who can even receive the application to request a mail-in ballot.

Until now, the local election officials, including county clerks, actually responsible for carrying out elections had mostly been spectators as Texas' Republican leadership fought off efforts by state Democrats and civil rights groups to expand voting by mail during the pandemic. Monday's action marks the most prominent intervention by the state in local election practices.

There is no state law that specifically prohibits election officials from sending out mail-in ballot applications to all voters. Instead, Paxton argues that county clerks are only "expressly empowered" by the Texas Election Code to send out applications to voters who request them, "but there is no statute empowering County Clerks to send applications to vote by mail to voters who have not requested such an application."

"And Hollins's plan to send vote-by-mail applications to every registered voter, regardless of whether the application was requested or whether the recipient is qualified to vote a mail ballot, is not an exercise of power that is necessarily implied to perform his duties," Paxton wrote.

The legal action was sought by the secretary of state's office, which last week demanded the county retract its plan by Monday at noon. The secretary of state's office has advised counties seeking to proactively send out applications to limit those mailings to voters who are 65 and older — the only predetermined

qualification for a mail-in ballot in Texas — to avoid confusion about eligibility.

The secretary of state's office claimed that Harris County's endeavor would amount to "abuse of voters' rights," raising the prospect that sending applications to all voters, including those who do not qualify, may cause confusion among voters and "impede the ability of persons who need to vote by mail to do so" by "clogging up the vote by mail infrastructure" with applications from voters who do not qualify.

But Harris County refused to back down from its plan, with Hollins noting that the county's mailing would also include "detailed guidance to inform voters that they may not qualify to vote by mail." The county has also previously indicated it is planning to purchase more mail-sorting equipment and hire hundreds of temporary workers who will focus on processing voting-by-mail applications and ballots.

"They have taken the position that somehow sending the form that would make it easier for someone to vote is somehow impeding a person's ability to vote," said Douglas Ray, a special assistant county attorney in Harris County. "The lack of logic in that assertion is beyond me."

The county's mailing plan expands efforts made ahead of the July primary runoffs to send applications to all voters 65 and older — which other counties will be doing for the general election. Hollins previously said he was encouraged by the county's return rate for the July runoffs and indicated the county would build on that work for the general election to encourage as many eligible voters as possible to vote by mail during the pandemic. Otherwise, voters must request or find the application online. The secretary of state allows any voter to request an application for a mail-in ballot through its online portal without asking whether the voter meets the eligibility requirements.

In applying for a mail-in ballot, it's up to the voter to check off which of the state's eligibility criteria they meet. Texas is one of just six states that haven't opened up mail-in voting to any voter concerned about getting COVID-19 at a polling place. The state's eligibility requirements remain strict, limiting mail-in ballots to voters who are 65 or older, those who will be out of the county during the election period, voters who cite a disability or illness or voters confined in jail but still eligible to vote.



MARJORIE KAMYS COTERA FOR THE TEXAS TRIBUNE

A federal judge found Texas is "legally obligated" to allow voters to simultaneously register to vote with every driver's license renewal or change-of-address application, and ordered the state to set up a "fully operable" online system by Sept. 23.

Texas violates voter registration law

By ALEXA URA
THE TEXAS TRIBUNE

In a 68-page ruling Friday, U.S. District Judge Orlando Garcia of San Antonio found that Texas continues to violate the federal National Voter Registration Act by not allowing residents to register to vote when they update their driver's license information online.

Garcia found that DPS is "legally obligated" to allow voters to simultaneously register to vote with every license renewal or change-of-address application, and ordered the state to set up a "fully operable" online system by Sept. 23. The Texas attorney general's office did not immediately respond to a request for comment, but the state is likely to appeal the ruling.

It's the second time Garcia has sided with the voter, former English professor Jarrod Stringer. Garcia's first ruling was overturned on appeal on a technicality.

The National Voter Registration Act requires states to let residents complete their voter registration applications when they apply for or renew their driver's licenses. But Texas officials have staunchly opposed any form of online registration.

The Texas Department of Public Safety follows federal law when residents visit a driver's license office in person. But Texans who try to register while using the state's online portal are instead directed to a blank registration form they must fill

out, print and send to their county registrar.

"DPS encourages Texans to use its online services to renew their driver's license and change their address because it is easier and more convenient," Garcia wrote. "It cannot, at the same time, deny simultaneous voter registration applications when those online services are used."

Garcia has said this before. In 2018, he ordered the state to implement what would be its first system for online voter registration. A federal appeals court overturned that order in late 2019 because Stringer and his two co-plaintiffs had ultimately reregistered to vote, and the court decided the case was moot because they were no longer being harmed.

Although the appellate court tossed the case, Judge James Ho of the 5th U.S. Circuit of Appeals lost in the decision that Stringer's lost vote was a right he "will never be able to recover."

"As citizens, we can hope it is a deprivation they will not experience again," Ho said.

But just 10 days after the admonishment, Stringer again was unable to update his voter registration along with his driver's license after a move to Houston. Stringer and other frustrated Texans opened the latest chapter of the online voter registration fight by filing a second lawsuit in January.

On Friday, Garcia found that Texas had "offered no factual or legal argument that would justify denying the simultaneous voter registration to which Mr. Stringer is legally entitled."

"As Defendants have admitted, there are no technological barriers to compliance and corrective measures would not be costly," Garcia wrote. "Uncontested expert testimony shows that a compliant DPS system would very likely lead to great efficiency, less human error, a massive saving in costs, and increased voter registration."

The issue has become an albatross for Texas Republican officials trying to fend off any form of online voter registration.

At least 1.5 million Texans use the state's online driver's license portal a year, according to Stringer's lawyers, though it's unclear how many also attempt to reregister to vote. The coronavirus pandemic, which forced Texans to seek out many DPS services online instead of in person, "further underscores that the state has no plausible rationale that I could even imagine to appeal the case," said Mimi Marziani, president of the Texas Civil Rights Project, which is representing Stringer.

"The court has been incredibly clear now over several years that the state is violating federal law," Marziani said. "And they have no justification for doing so."

Five health experts talk COVID backlog

By SHANNON NAJMABADI
THE TEXAS TRIBUNE

After state officials this month disclosed hundreds of thousands of coronavirus tests had not been previously reported — a backlog that has distorted metrics used to gauge the toll of the pandemic — Gov. Greg Abbott said Sunday that the current data is "far more accurate than what we had last month."

The disclosure of the backlog was the latest in a string of data problems that have plagued the state's public accounting of the pandemic and came as schools and universities prepared to resume instruction for the fall term.

While patients were notified of their test results, the cases were not reported to some local health departments, which meant those departments couldn't assign contact tracers to determine who may have been exposed to the virus.

The problems left some local officials and lawmakers frustrated.

"This pattern of folks at every level pretending like they have everything handled while behind closed doors they're so overwhelmed and behind that the data is meaningless... it's toxic and dishonest," state Rep. Erin Zwiener, D-Driftwood, said on Twitter.

Collin County took the unusual step of stamping its coronavirus dashboard with a warning that officials lack confidence in the data provided by the state.

"The Commissioners Court is 100% certain that the COVID-19 data being reported for Collin County is inaccurate," County Judge Chris Hill wrote on Facebook last week. The state has since assigned a dozen investigators to update the county's data.

Lara Anton, a spokesperson for the Department of State Health Services, said positive tests revealed in the backlog show there might have been more infections in July than state officials previously knew about, but the "additional cases would not have changed the overall trend or the recommendations for the public."

Several issues caused the delay in reporting more than 850,000 test results, some dating back to March. The first logjam of some 350,000 tests accumulated because the state could not process enough test results each day before an Aug. 1 system upgrade expanded its capacity.

In July, the state identified a separate issue with a private lab's data: An errant question mark in one data field prevented about 354,000 test results from transferring to the state's system. Two other laboratories that the state began working with had lengthy onboarding processes and formatting issues that caused delays in uploading their test results, Anton said.

The agency has fast-tracked the onboarding of more than 300 labs to provide testing data as quickly as possible, Anton said. The normal process can take between

BACKLOG

from page 11

six and eight months to work out the bugs with uploading results to the electronic system.

Meanwhile, the state's positivity rate — the rolling average of people who test positive — swung wildly this month as backlogged tests were added, soaring to 24.5% Aug. 11 and plummeting to 10.8% a week later.

Abbott, who frequently cites the metric to explain his decision-making, has said anything above a 10% would raise a "warning flag" while a sustained rate below that could prompt him to loosen restrictions.

The Texas Tribune spoke to epidemiologists and health experts about the backlogged tests. The Tribune also spoke to the same experts about school reopenings.

Question: What's the effect of the backlog — and the later data dump — from a public health standpoint?

Catherine Troisi, infectious disease epidemiologist at UTHealth School of Public Health in Houston: The problem of course is that you're just not sure what's happening in the community... If I had a test two weeks ago and the result came back today and said I was positive, I would be a tick on August 24th instead of when I was tested, and ideally when I had symptoms. So that makes it hard, too. You're dumping all these cases now that are from a while ago so it ... can really skew the information about when cases are occurring.

Dr. Ron Cook, professor at Texas Tech University Health Sciences Center and the city of Lubbock's public health authority: The biggest problem ... is the fact that when we find out a week or two later, several days post facto, in some cases 10 days or so later, that we get a positive test result, then who knows how many thousands of people they've spread that to exponentially, right? Ideally you want to get a positive test as soon as possible, call them as soon as possible and get in contact with them to find out who they've been in contact with closely.



SHELBY TAUBER FOR THE TEXAS TRIBUNE

A health care worker speaks to a patient at a drive-thru coronavirus testing site in Garland. The state disclosed a backlog of more than 850,000 tests this month, which were delayed in part because of coding or formatting errors and a lengthy onboarding process needed to receive reports from laboratories.

Dr. James McDeavitt, dean of clinical affairs at Baylor College of Medicine: I want to start with just a word of sympathy for the people running the state reporting system. This is unprecedented.

Just a couple of facts to put in perspective: In terms of mandatory reporting and public health issues, if a lab has a positive [tuberculosis] test, for example, it must be reported. However, there are relatively few positive TB tests, and there's no expectation that you report negative tests, only the positive ones. Well, with COVID-19, the expectation is you're reporting all the positives, and you are also reporting all the negatives, so that's a huge ramp up of reporting requirements for the state. So that's number one.

Second factor: the poor analysts at the state, they're getting data feeds from I think 600 different laboratories across the state.

Commercial labs, hospital labs, independent labs in all kinds of different electronic formats — and in some cases non electronic formats, there are paper, pencil and fax records that they've all got to reconcile — so it's been a real challenge I think for them to get ramped up.

Hopefully a lesson we'll learn out of this pandemic — locally, regionally and nationally — is we have to have better data and reporting systems in advance of having to deal with something like this.

That note of sympathy aside ... we've seen the hospital numbers come down really sharply and the community cases staying stubbornly flat or maybe drifting down just a little bit but not as quickly as the hospital numbers are declining. This was a disconnect that made no sense to me three weeks ago: that we'd see such a difference in the rate

of decline between these two numbers. Well it turns out, I think what has probably been happening is this backlog of cases is now being loaded into the system and they're appearing to us as new cases; cases that could have been from a week or two weeks or four weeks ago.

I'm not exactly sure how far back the backlog goes. So the impact of that is we lose a major signpost. Until the backlog is resolved, it is hard to interpret the state reporting numbers. Presumably, once they are caught up the data will have more integrity, although there are some additional methodologic issues they need to work through. For example, is a positive test result reported on the day the sample is collected, the day the test is run or the day the data is entered into the system? How is the state accounting for multiple tests of the same individual?

Angela Clendenin, instructional assistant professor of epidemiology and biostatistics at the Texas A&M School of Public Health: I think you have to understand how we got here to be able to understand what it means moving forward. ... Whenever you're faced with a disease like COVID that we've never seen before and we knew little about in the beginning, and early on our ability to test was limited, we went about our process like we do with every other infectious reportable disease. Testing was going to be only at the public health laboratories, and then capacity was quickly exceeded. Then once we got capacity through commercial laboratories, then we're running out of reagents [chemicals required for testing] and then when we have reagents. It was [a shortage of] swabs and then when we had swabs, now it's [a shortage of] people to run the test. So that causes a delay of up to seven days in some cases.

Rajesh Nandy, associate professor of biostatistics and epidemiology at the University of North Texas Health Science Center at Fort Worth: Of course, that skews our perception of where the state of COVID was at that time — a month or two months ago when the backlogs are coming from. Obviously that's not desirable because we need the data to be accurate whenever we are trying to assess the current state of COVID and study the trends, and also when you're trying to see what lies ahead.

But that said, these numbers do not have much impact in studying the current trend.

One thing I always tell people from the media ... the numbers that we see from the county health departments or the state health department ... they're not useless, but they are highly qualified and unreliable in terms of studying the trend. ...

There is also the issue of volatility in the number of new reported cases based on the current level of testing. So, when the testing level is high, the numbers tend to go up for obvious reasons. Whereas when some counties are having some shortage of test kits — at that time what happens is the number of reported new cases is low but the positivity rate is high. So that's another layer of volatility in the data.

Water District Notice of Public Hearing on Tax Rate

The Fort Bend County Municipal Utility District No. 057 will hold a public hearing on a proposed tax rate for the tax year 2020 on Monday, September 28, 2020 at 10 a.m. by teleconference at 1-866-899-4679 access code 133-917-893 or at <https://global.gotomeeting.com/join/133917893>. Your individual taxes may increase at a greater or lesser rate, or even decrease, depending on the tax rate that is adopted and on the change in the taxable value of your property in relation to the change in taxable value of all other property. The change in the taxable value of your property in relation to the change in the taxable value of all other property determines the distribution of the tax burden among all property owners.

FOR the proposal: Bill Lyle, Randy Rodriguez, Gina Babineaux, Chris Tolle, Steve McConnell

AGAINST the proposal: None

PRESENT and not voting: None

ABSENT: None

The following table compares taxes on an average residence homestead in this taxing unit last year to taxes proposed on the average residence homestead this year.

	Last Year	This Year
Total tax rate (per \$100 of value)	\$0.90000 /\$100 Adopted	\$0.90000 /\$100 Proposed
Difference in rates per \$100 of value		\$0.00000 /\$100
Percentage increase/decrease in rates (+/-)		0.00%
Average appraised residence homestead value	\$368,886.83	\$378,121.12
General homestead exemptions available (excluding 65 years of age or older or disabled person's exemptions)	\$0.00	\$0.00
Average residence homestead taxable value	\$368,886.83	\$378,121.12
Tax on average residence homestead	\$3,319.98	\$3,403.09
Annual increase/decrease in taxes if proposed tax rate is adopted (+/-) and percentage of increase (+/-)	\$83.11 2.50%	

NOTICE OF VOTE ON TAX RATE

If the district adopts a combined debt service, operation and maintenance and contract tax rate that would result in the taxes on the average residence homestead increasing by more than 3.5 percent, an election must be held to determine whether to approve the operation and maintenance tax rate under Section 49.23602, Water Code.

The 86th Texas Legislature modified the manner in which the voter-approval tax rate is calculated to limit the rate of growth of property taxes in the state.

Should you have any questions concerning this notice, please contact the tax office at 281-482-0216.

Water District Notice of Public Hearing on Tax Rate

The FORT BEND-WALLER COUNTY MUNICIPAL UTILITY DISTRICT NO. 003 will hold a public hearing on a proposed tax rate for the tax year 2020 on Wednesday, September 23, 2020 at 12:00 p.m. by teleconference at Telephone Number: 866-434-5269, Access Code: 9617275. Your individual taxes may increase at a greater or lesser rate, or even decrease, depending on the tax rate that is adopted and on the change in the taxable value of your property in relation to the change in taxable value of all other property. The change in the taxable value of your property in relation to the change in the taxable value of all other property determines the distribution of the tax burden among all property owners.

FOR the proposal: Charles K Chapline, Geneva Vanzijl, Austin Goings, Martha Blecher, Vivian Shudde

AGAINST the proposal:

PRESENT and not voting:

ABSENT:

The following table compares taxes on an average residence homestead in this taxing unit last year to taxes proposed on the average residence homestead this year.

	Last Year	This Year
Total tax rate (per \$100 of value)	\$0.93000 /\$100 Adopted	\$0.93000 /\$100 Proposed
Difference in rates per \$100 of value		\$0.00000 /\$100
Percentage increase/decrease in rates (+/-)		0.00%
Average appraised residence homestead value	\$308,732.00	\$321,179.00
General homestead exemptions available (excluding 65 years of age or older or disabled person's exemptions)	\$0.00	\$0.00
Average residence homestead taxable value	\$308,732.00	\$321,179.00
Tax on average residence homestead	\$2,871.21	\$2,986.96
Annual increase/decrease in taxes if proposed tax rate is adopted (+/-) and percentage of increase (+/-)	\$115.75 4.03%	

NOTICE OF TAXPAYERS' RIGHT TO ELECTION TO REDUCE TAX RATE

If the district adopts a combined debt service, operation and maintenance, and contract tax rate that would result in the taxes on the average residence homestead increasing by more than 8 percent, the qualified voters of the district by petition may require that an election be held to determine whether to reduce the operation and maintenance tax rate to the voter-approval tax rate under Section 49.23603, Water Code.

The 86th Texas Legislature modified the manner in which the voter-approval tax rate is calculated to limit the rate of growth of property taxes in the state.

Should you have any questions concerning this notice, please contact the tax office at 281-482-0216.