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SPORTS | A8

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THURSDAY, MAY 16, 2024

SEAT's civil rights complaint prompts investigation into Katy ISD policy

FROM STAFF REPORTS

Students Engaged in Advancing Texas (SEAT), a student-led movement demonstrating youth visibility in educational policymaking, announced on May 7 that the U.S. Department of Education officially opened an investigation on Monday into the civil rights complaint filed by SEAT regarding the comprehensive anti-transgender policy passed by the Katy Independent School District's Board of Trustees in August.

The complaint, delivered to the federal department's Office of Civil Rights in November, challenges the policy's adverse impact on transgender students, asserting violation of Title IX rights with Gender Identity discrimination and perpetuating harmful sex stereotypes and heteronormative gender roles.

"The Department of Education opening an investigation marks a significant step forward in holding Katy ISD accountable for its actions and ensuring that transgender students are equally protected under federal civil rights laws," said SEAT Executive Director Cameron Samuels in a press release. "SEAT applauds the Department's response to our complaint and looks forward to cooperating fully with the investigation process."

In accordance with the policy, Katy ISD outed at least 23 students to their parents, as reported by the news website Houston Landing beginning on November 6. "This negligent enforcement raises serious concerns about privacy and well-being of trans students, who should be entitled to a safe and inclusive educational environment equal to that of cisgender peers," Samuels said.

"These policies hurt people. They drive students like myself away from school and make us feel unsafe. I hope at the very least, the investigation will make other districts think twice before putting their students' education and safety in jeopardy like Katy ISD did," former student Kadence Carter said.

In its federal complaint, SEAT seeks a resolution that repeals Katy ISD's discriminatory policy, provides direct resources to students impacted by the district's irresponsibility, establishes professional LGBTQ+ inclusion training for district personnel, and codifies nondiscrimination protections for gender identity.

"The district is committed to offering equal educational opportunities to our entire

See **SEAT**, page A3

Tompkins teacher arrested on child porn possession charges

BY SUSAN ROVEGNO
PUBLISHER

Tompkins High School teacher James Stone was arrested early Monday morning at his Katy area residence on nine counts of possession of child pornography, according to Wesley Wittig, Second district attorney for Fort Bend County.

"I cannot speak to the details of the

investigation as it is ongoing, but we do not believe at this time that Tompkins students are victims. The charges are first-degree felonies, punishable by 5-99 years, or life, in prison," said Wittig in an email to the Katy Times. "He is still being processed into the jail and should be scheduled for [Tuesday] morning's magistration docket. While those are recorded, they are not yet live-streamed.

That is where bond will be set and any bond conditions, etc. He will get a new court date when he bonds, or when he gets an attorney who begins working on his behalf. Once the investigation finishes, law enforcement will turn it over to us for consideration of formal charges (indictment)."

See **TEACHER**, page A3

Katy ISD trustees unanimously approve 3% teacher, staff pay increase for next school year



Board members Rebecca Fox (left) and Dawn Champagne are sworn in by former Katy mayor Skip Connor (right) following their re-election.

Board members Fox and Champagne sworn in following re-election

FROM STAFF REPORTS

During the May 13 Katy ISD Regular Board Meeting, trustees unanimously voted to approve the district's compensation plan for the 2024-25 school year, calling for a 3% pay increase from the midpoint for all teachers and staff.

"As we look at the numbers in this current year, and in looking ahead to the next fiscal year, there is good news -- part of this comes from the underspending in our budget, alongside potential student

See **KISD**, page A3

Smith and Hicks sworn in for new terms

Water conservation plan also updated at city council meeting

BY SUSAN ROVEGNO
PUBLISHER

Council members Dan Smith, who represents Ward A, and Gina Hicks, who

represents Ward B, were sworn for their new terms at Monday night's meeting of the Katy City Council. The pair ran unopposed, resulting in the cancellation of the May 4th election.

"I feel blessed to serve alongside this council and this staff, working to improve the city of Katy while preserving that hometown charm," said Hicks as she reviewed the accomplishments of the past three years and looked ahead to

future projects including mobility in the Ward B area.

An "Above and Beyond" recognition, read by Mayor Pro Tem Chris Harris was presented to the Katy Fire Department and Katy Police Department Dispatch for actions taken to save a life of a patient in cardiac arrest on March 23, 2024.

The water conservation and drought

See **COUNCIL**, page A3

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May 16, 2024
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Briones announces completion of drainage improvements for Westfield Pines and Westfield Village residents



PHOTO COURTESY OF HARRIS COUNTY PRECINCT 4

Commissioner Lesley Briones (center, in white dress) hosted a ribbon cutting ceremony on May 9 to celebrate the completion of the Westfield Pines and Westfield Village drainage improvement project at 5203 Mountain Forest Drive, Katy. The \$6.3 million Recovery and Resiliency Division (RRD) project is a collaborative effort between Harris County and Northwest Harris County MUD 12. Construction began in May 2023 and included upsizing the storm sewer system, reconstructing driveways and street sections, adjusting waterlines, sanitary sewer lines, and constructing a new detention pond off Kieth Harrow Boulevard.

\$6.3 million project will improve flood resilience for communities impacted by Hurricane Harvey

CONTRIBUTED REPORT

Harris County Commissioner Lesley Briones, in partnership with the Harris County Engineering Department (HCED), Harris County Flood Control District (HCFCD), and Northwest Harris County Municipal Utility District (MUD) 12, held a ribbon cutting ceremony on May 9, marking the completion of a drainage improvement project that will reduce flood risk in Westfield Pines and Westfield Village subdivisions, in the northeast Katy area.

The project broke ground in May 2023 and was completed less than a year later in March 2024. It was initiated in response to the impact of Hurricane Harvey, which flooded 33 homes in the

area. This project will lower the flood risk for these homes—and hundreds of others—and will lessen the impact of flooding in adjoining areas during both extreme and smaller, more common rain events, said the commissioner's office in a press release.

"This project demonstrates the power of partnerships to quickly deliver progress before the next big flood event. Together, we are delivering projects, progress, and protection for our families," Commissioner Briones said.

Westfield Village and Westfield Pines -- located near N. Fry Road and Kieth Harrow -- were developed in the early 2000s.

See **DRAINAGE**, page A3

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FRIDAY NIGHT HEIGHTS



Kids await their turn to try the “rock wall” at the City of Katy’s Friday Night Heights event on May 10th at Second Street and C in old town Katy. Left: The inaugural edition of Friday Night Heights featured bounce houses galore at Katy’s historic downtown square on May 10th.

PHOTOS BY SUSAN ROVEGNO



Junior Katytes jumped for joy under parents’ watchful eyes during the city’s first-ever Friday Night Heights event at the historic downtown square on May 10th.

COMMUNITY EVENTS

KISD Transportation job fair gets in gear on May 18th at the Cyndy Self Transportation Center

Roll with Katy Independent School District’s next Transportation Job Fair, scheduled for Saturday, May 18th from 9 to 11 a.m. at the Cyndy Self South Transportation Center, 3151 Falcon Landing, Katy. Learn about available openings for bus drivers with starting pay of \$19.35/hour or attendants starting at \$13.33/hour. For more information or to apply, visit katyisd.org/jobs.

Katy Market Day takes place May 18th

Katy May Market Day will be held on May 18th from 10 a.m. to 4 p.m. in Katy’s historic downtown at Avenue C and Second Street. It will host about 100 local vendors selling a variety of wares. Also enjoy food and live music. Free admission.

Senior Health, Safety & Awareness Day to be held at Fort Bend Fairgrounds on May 22

The Senior Health, Safety, and Awareness Day at the Fort Bend County Fairgrounds is an excellent time for senior adults to fellowship while they learn about subjects that have a direct effect on their lives. The event will take place on May 22 from 9 a.m. to 1 p.m. at 4310 Highway 36 South in Rosenberg.

Topics:

- Disaster Preparedness: Learn strategies to prepare for and respond to emergencies.
- Mental Health: Discover valuable insights and tools to support mental well-being, coping mechanisms, and stress management techniques.
- Fraud Prevention: Gain awareness about common scams targeting Medicare beneficiaries and learn how to safeguard your personal information and detect fraudulent activities.
- Health & Wellness: Learn

how to support your overall health and wellness journey, including preventive care, healthy lifestyle choices, and disease management strategies.

There will be a little bit of BIN-GO fun too! Light refreshments will be served, and please feel free to bring your own lunch. Please pre-register for the conference by May 13th by calling 281-342-3034. For more information contact Amy Ressler, Ph.D., Texas A&M AgriLife Extension Service County Extension Director for Fort Bend County, at 281.342.3034.

Celebrate your dog’s special day on May 25th at Patsy’s Pet Market

Join the team at Patsy’s Pet Market on the last Saturday of every month from 11 a.m. to 2 p.m. and celebrate your pup – whether it’s a birthday or if it’s “Gotcha Day.” Free giveaways and extra fun for everyone are scheduled for May 25th at the store at 1644 S. Mason in Katy. For more information, go to patsypetmarket.com or call 832-437-0401.

City of Katy Animal Control joins with Bel Furniture to host pet adoption event on May 25

Calling all animal lovers! Don’t miss the Pet Adoption Event co-hosted by City of Katy Animal Control and Bel Furniture on Memorial Day Weekend. Swing by on May 25th from 10 a.m. to 2 p.m., enjoy a tasty lunch from a local food truck and help make tails wag with joy as loving homes are found for these furry companions. See you at Bel Furniture’s Showroom at 28480 West Ten Blvd. in Katy! For more information, call Animal Control at 281-391-4740.

Harris County Precinct 4 hosts Memorial Day ceremony at Bear Creek Park on May 27

Honoring the brave on Me-

morial Day! Join Commissioner Lesley Briones and the staff of Harris County Precinct 4 at the War Memorial Pavilion in Bear Creek Pioneers Park, 15015 Clay Road in Houston, at 2 p.m. on Monday, May 27th for a solemn and heartfelt ceremony as we remember and honor those who served our nation with courage and sacrifice.

Memorial Day Car/Truck Show featured at Social Pub & Grill

View rods, muscles and classics on May 27th from 9 a.m. to 3 p.m. at the Social Pub & Grill, 1721 Spring Green Blvd., Katy. Same day registration 9 a.m. to noon, with awards at 3 p.m. Participation \$30.00, veterans \$20.00.

KARE launches ‘Chat and Go’ on May 30th

Katy Area Retired Educators (KARE) is launching a new networking group for retired teachers living in the Katy Area, called “Chat and Go,” with the first meeting to be held May 30th at Buzz & Bites at 23445 Kingsland in Katy, from 10 to 11:30 a.m. The free networking group will begin meeting the third Thursday of each month starting in June. For more information, consult the group’s Facebook page at facebook.com/pages/Katy-Area-Retired-Educators/407327580481/.

Torchy’s Tacos hosts blood drive at LaCenterra on May 30th

It’s always a good day to save lives! Sign up to donate blood on Thursday, May 30th from 2 to 5:30 p.m. at the Gulf Coast Regional Blood Center donor coach bus. Donors will receive a free blood center sling bag and two free Torchy’s Tacos cards. The donor coach will be parked between Kendra Scott and Madison Reed at the LaCenterra Center, 23501 Cinco Ranch Blvd.

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MEMORIAL DAY
REMEMBER AND HONOR

Katy Times
will be closed on
Monday, May 27, 2024
in observance of
Memorial Day

Deadline for advertising and editorial copy for May 30, 2024 publication is Thursday, May 23, Noon.

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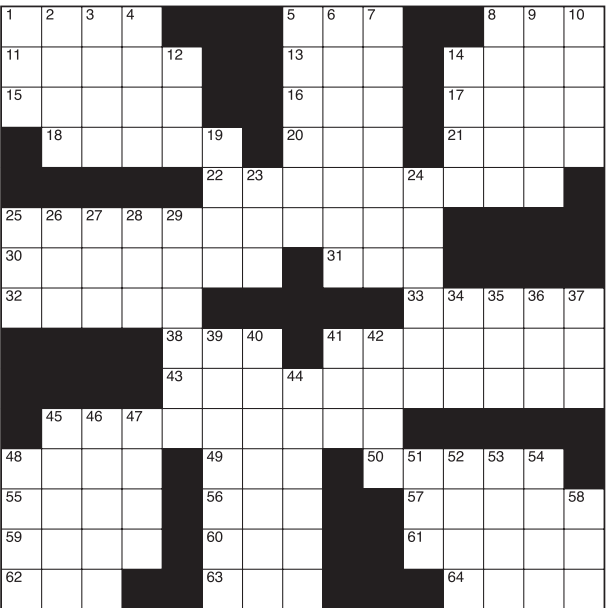
CLUES ACROSS

- Now and __
- Israeli city __ Aviv
- Indicates near
- Minneapolis suburb
- Large Australian flightless bird
- Fine-grained earth
- Plant genus that includes water caltrop
- Peacock network
- TV writer Dunham
- Excessive fluid accumulation in tissues
- They __
- Muslim ruler title
- Position given in respect of
- Explaining further
- Measuring instrument
- Romanian monetary unit
- Council of __, 1545-1563
- Savory jelly made with meat stock
- Journalist Tarbell
- Most suspenseful
- Festivity
- Animal embryos
- Fertility god
- Medical patients’ choice (abbr.)
- Type of sword
- Competition
- Bird of the cuckoo family

- Afflicted in mind or body
- Engineering organization
- Beverage receptacle
- Spiritual leader
- Doctor of Education
- Where golfers begin
- Impudence

CLUES DOWN

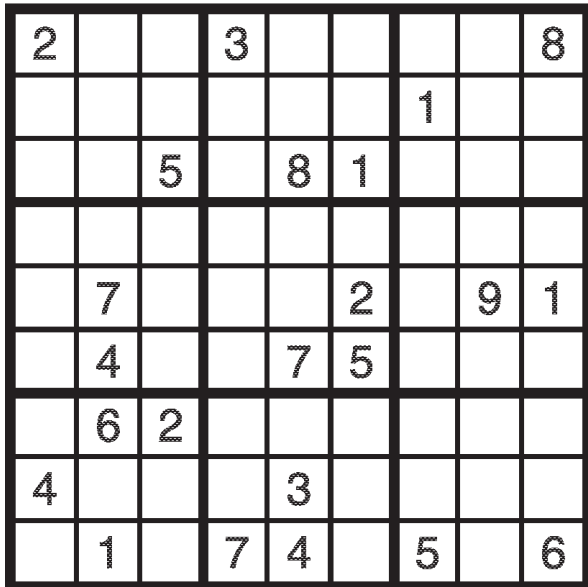
- Vietnamese offensive
- Fast mammal
- Oh goodness!
- The back of one’s neck
- One who lives in another’s property
- Involve deeply
- Alfalfa
- Tropical tree resin
- Sudden fear
- Jewish religious month
- Veterans battleground
- Musical symbol
- German river
- Paddle
- Lizard
- Shock treatment
- The common gibbon
- Brew
- Usually has a lid
- Lenses in optical instruments
- Time zone in Samoa (abbr.)



- Wrinkled dog: Shar __
- Denotes equal
- TV network for children
- Take the value away from
- Female graduates
- Don’t know when yet
- “__ tú”: Spanish song
- “Seinfeld” character
- Bleated
- Entwined
- Away from wind
- Soft creamy white cheese
- Swiss river
- Prejudice
- Actor Idris
- They resist authority (slang)
- Speak ill of

Answers will be provided in next week’s edition.

SUDOKU



Level: Intermediate

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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.

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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.

TEACHER

from page A1

Other media outlets in the Katy area had stated on Monday that Stone had been charged with production of child pornography, but that is incorrect. Wittig said.

The district was notified of the situation by the Fort Bend County Sheriff’s office, KISD officials said in a statement. Nick Petito, director of internal and community relations for Katy ISD issued the following to the Katy Times about the arrest:

“On Monday morning, the Montgomery County Constables Office Precinct 3 arrested James Stone, an educator at Tompkins High School, for possession or promotion of child pornography. The individual has not been on campus since last week and will not return to the school. Due to the ongoing investigation, we are unable to provide additional information at this time. Please be assured, the district takes this type of incident very seriously and is fully cooperating with law enforcement. In Katy ISD, providing a safe and secure learning environment is and will continue to be our top priority and we will always act swiftly when that is compromised.”

The office of Montgomery County Precinct 3 Constable Ryan Gable explained the involvement of their law enforcement agency in a May 13th post on X (formerly Twitter), saying that “the investigation stemmed from the Montgomery Conty Precinct 3 Internet Crimes Against Children Detective’s undercover investigation related to the possession or promotion of child pornography on the dark web.” The post continued that “thousands of images of child pornography were recovered from the residence” and “do include images he [Stone] admitted taking while on school grounds, at beaches and local swimming pools around the Katy area.” Stone was transported to the Fort Bend County jail following the arrest.

Chad Norvell, Fort Bend County Precinct 1 Constable, declined comment on the arrest and referred the Katy Times to Katy ISD for further information.

Parents of students at Tompkins High School, as well as school staff, were notified of the arrest Monday morning via an email from the Katy Independent School District, which read:

“Dear Tompkins High School Parents/Guardians and Staff,

The purpose of this message is to inform you that today, the Fort Bend County Sheriff’s Department notified the district that the agency arrested a Tompkins High School educator, James Stone for possession and production of child

pornography. The individual has not been on campus since last week and will not return to the school.

Because the incident is still being investigated, we are unable to provide additional information at this time, but please be assured the District takes these types of incidents very seriously and is fully cooperating with law enforcement.

In Katy ISD, providing a safe and secure learning environment is and will continue to be our top priority and we will always act swiftly when that is compromised. An update will be provided as information becomes available.

Katy ISD”

Stone is listed in the Katy Independent School district’s directory as a social studies teacher. He is married to Melinda Stone, who is the principal at Taylor High School. Melinda Stone also sent out a “message from the principal” email to the Taylor staff on Monday morning, reading:

“Dear Taylor High School staff,
I am sure that you are aware of the incident involving my husband, James Stone. James was arrested this morning for possession of pornographic materials. His arrest and involvement in this criminal activity was unbeknownst to me or to those closest to him. My family and I are deeply disappointed in his actions and thus we do not have any plans to be involved in James’ criminal proceedings as he navigates the next steps. It is important for me to confirm with you that neither I, nor any other family member, is implicated in James’ criminal activity. Because the incident is still being investigated, law enforcement agencies are unable to provide additional information at this time, but know that the District and I take this incident very seriously and are cooperating with law enforcement. Providing a safe and secure learning environment is and will continue to be the District’s and my top priority. An update will be provided by the District as information becomes available. I greatly appreciate your support and understanding as this matter is addressed by law enforcement. Dr. Melinda Stone, principal.”

An internet search for Stone revealed a “showcase page” for the nestline.com, which identifies itself as the online newspaper of Tompkins High School, said that Stone, who taught AP Government and U.S. history, had previously been employed at Mayde Creek High School, and that he is originally from Iowa. The page is now deleted.

Tompkins High School is located at 4400 Falcon Landing Blvd. in Katy.

COUNCIL

from page A1

contingency plan was updated by unanimous vote, which city staff members said would better match standards with local MUDs and other neighboring communities. Councilmember Smith asked about the communication plan for informing the public of the changes to the plan, particularly the changes to Stage 2 which Smith said was significant. City staff responded that there was nothing specific planned but there is general public education out there. The public education plan includes signage that is deployed first before any stages occur, providing a website for reference. Councilmember Rory Robertson asked for a graphic to be created which could be distributed via social media, to ensure that everyone is fully aware of the changes. The new plan provides for a penalty of up to \$2000.00 for violations.

Council convened in closed session for deliberations with the city attorney regarding potential action regarding security devices or audits.

In council member reports, Harris commended Katy Police Department and Lieutenant John McClure who worked with the offices of State Senator Joan Huffman and State Representative Mike Schofield to secure a STEP grant in the amount of \$67,000.00,

which Harris said was one of the highest amounts given to a city of Katy’s size in the state. STEP (State Trade Expansion Program) is a program that provides financial awards to states and territories to help small businesses export and grow their sales.

The grant will be used for specialized traffic enforcement, including Impaired Driving Mobilization, Operation Slowdown, and Click It or Ticket, Harris said in a subsequent post on Facebook.

Smith reported that the new lanes of Pitts Road would be opening this week and urged drivers to use caution through the area.

A number of other proclamations were also read by the city leaders at the meeting:

- Recognizing May 12 - 18, 2024 at National Police Week, read by Mayor Dusty Thiele
- Recognizing May 19 - 25, 2024 at National EMS Week, read by Councilmember Janet Corte
- Recognizing May 19 - 25, 2024 at National Public Works Week, read by Councilmember Smith
- Recognizing May 2024 as Older Americans Month, read by Councilmember Hicks

The next regular meeting of city council will be June 10th at 6:30 at City Hall, 901 Avenue C, Katy.

SEAT

from page A1

community,” said Nick Petito, director of internal and community relations for Katy ISD in a statement to the Katy Times. “While we have received the OCR filing and deny any wrongdoing, we are committed to remaining fully cooperative and responsive throughout the process.”

“Tides are finally turning,” said Tompkins High School student Jarred Burton. “While this policy has undoubtedly put students in danger, we’ve risen up to become more informed, outspoken, and powerful. We will not sit idle while our school district tries to write us out of existence through policy. We deserve a seat at the table, and we’re one step closer to getting there.”

“SEAT continues to partner with students and families across Texas to ensure stakeholders know their rights and actualize their power to dismantle inequities in education.” Samuels said. “At school board meetings and our recent statewide summit at the capitol in Austin, we have handed out hundreds of SEAT “Know Your Rights” lanyards with our Student Resource Hub.” For more information on SEAT, go to studentsengaged.org.

DRAINAGE

from page A1

Even though the subdivisions were not in a 100-year floodplain, the magnitude of Hurricane Harvey caused significant structural flooding. Stormwater runoff exceeded capacities of both the drainage system and the channel.

HCED led construction of the drainage improvement project. Upgrades include a new detention pond off Kieth Harrow Boulevard, the upsizing of storm sewer systems, and the reconstruction of driveways and street sections. Adjustments to water and sanitary sewer lines were also made to enhance the overall drainage infrastructure.

“Since Harvey, the Recovery and Resiliency Division team has made significant progress toward building a more resilient community. I want to thank Commissioner Briones, her team, and the members of the Commissioners Court for their tremendous support to get projects completed in time for hurricane season,” said Dr. Milton Rahman, HCED Executive Director.

Harris County contributed \$4.6 million for this project, with an additional \$1.7 million provided by Northwest Harris County MUD 12.

KISD

from page A1

gains from enrollment,” said Victor Perez, Katy ISD Board President. “All of which have the potential to wipe the projected deficit and generate a positive income for next year, before raises,” he added.

Perez also noted that in an environment where inflation continues to be extraordinarily high, and where school districts are being forced to make difficult decisions, the ability to recognize and support teachers and staff remain of the utmost importance.

The board room at the Education Support Complex at 6301 S. Stadium Lane was packed with honorees receiving special recognition at the meeting and their families, including the valedictorians and salutatorians from each of the nine KISD high schools, state track and field champion Jayden Keys from Tompkins High School, and new KISD police officers. Many supporters of recently re-elected board



SUSAN ROVEGNO

Naomi Austin, a fifth-grader from Faldyn Elementary, receives a certificate of recognition from Katy ISD school board President Victor Perez after leading the pledges of allegiance.

members Rebecca Fox and Dawn Champagne were also in attendance to witness the duo’s taking of the oath of office, which was administered by former Katy mayor Skip Connor, following the

board’s certification of the election results. Both Fox and Champagne addressed the board and community and thanked their supporters. “The community has spoken,” Champagne said.

The board proceeded to elect officers for the coming year. Both Perez and trustee Lance Redmon were nominated for board president; Perez was re-elected board president on a 4-3 vote. Current board vice president Amy Thieme and Fox were nominated for the role of vice-president; Thieme was re-elected on a 4-3 vote. Board member Mary Ellen Cuzela and Champagne, the current board secretary, were nominated for secretary; Cuzela won on a 4-3 vote.

The board will meet three times during June:

- Board workshop set for June 3
- Board work study meeting on June 17
- Regular board meeting on June 24

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VFW Post 9182 honors presented at annual banquet

CONTRIBUTED REPORT

The Floyd E. Breedlove VFW Post 9182 in Katy held its annual dining out and awards banquet at The Golf Club at Cinco Ranch, 23030 Cinco Ranch Blvd. on May 3. Post Commander Peyton Lumpkin and Post Senior Vice Commander Reuben Arriaga hosted the event. The guest speaker was Retired Brigadier General E.A. “Buddy” Grantham. Grantham served with honor for many years in the U.S.

Army, Texas Army National Guard and Texas State Guard. Since retiring from the military, he has continued to serve both veterans and his community. He talked about how the local Katy VFW post needs to work hard and reach out to younger veterans to get them involved and also get them the help they need. Several annual awards were presented at the banquet.

- First place for the Patriot’s Pen essay contest was presented to Lillian C. M. Edwards.

- First place for the Voice of Democracy essay contest was presented to Nathan P. Olivier.
- First place for the Citizenship Teacher of the year was awarded to Katy M. Sheffield, from Seven Lakes High School.
- Post 9182 Auxiliary Scholarship award was presented to Madeleine Scheele. Madeleine is a Katy High School senior who will be attending Trinity College. Each winner was also presented with a Commander’s Medal from

Post commander Peyton Lumpkin. Past Post Commanders Kenneth Burton and Jack Pearson were presented a plaque, the Commander’s Medal and designated as founding fathers of Post 9182 for their past contributions that have helped Floyd E. Breedlove VFW Post 9182 obtain and maintain a level of excellence for which all VFW Posts strive. Local Katy attorney David Frishman was also given an award for his work with the city of Katy, Fort Bend County and others,

on behalf of the Post. Due to the initiative of Frishman and Kenneth Burton, the Post was able to tie in with Fort Bend County and the Rotary Club to support the building of the mini-San Jacinto Monument in George Bush Park in honor of all military branches. The Post Commander also presented the Commanders Medal to Sherry Anderson, Allison Toth and Kurt Mueller for their continued work with the VFW, Auxiliary and the local community.



PHOTO COURTESY OF PAM SPARKS
Caleb Sparks (left), son of Brad and Pam Sparks and Oude “Paul” Owino (right), son of Vera Ambeva, are 2023 graduates of Katy ISD and were both nominated for appointment to USAFA by Congressman Troy Nehls to support their Academy applications in 2023.

Katy ISD graduates earn appointments to USAFA after prep school year

CONTRIBUTED REPORT

Two young men from Katy will soon be moving from Virginia to Colorado to begin basic cadet training and entering into military service at the United States Air Force Academy (USAFA). Caleb Sparks and Oude “Paul” Owino are 2023 graduates of Katy ISD and were both nominated for appointment to USAFA by Congressman Troy Nehls to support their Academy applications in 2023. Both were awarded prestigious Falcon Foundation Scholarships by USAFA Admissions in March 2023, which means they received scholarships to cover the vast majority of expenses for a “prep school” year at one of five military schools in the country. Only 65 Falcon Foundation Scholarships were awarded in 2023. “To have two students earn Falcon Foundation Scholarships from the same school district with their high schools just three miles apart is almost impossible to imagine,” said Pam Sparks, Caleb’s mother. “Given the rigorous requirements for appointments to a service academy, this accomplishment demonstrates high achievement by students in our area and competitive nature of students in our congressional district.” Sparks, a graduate of Tompkins High School, and Owino, a graduate of Seven Lakes High School, declined

admission and scholarships to traditional universities for the opportunity to continue pursuing appointments to USAFA. “They selected the same military prep school -- Randolph Macon Academy in Front Royal, VA -- and what makes their story so interesting: they did not know each other when this journey began,” said Pam Sparks. Mom Pam Sparks says she could go on and on about the challenges the duo has faced since arriving in Virginia last August -- how they’ve encouraged one another while going through the entire re-appointment process, the accomplishment of earning nominations in 2024 from Senator Ted Cruz (Caleb) and Congressman Troy Nehls (Paul), and the pride that they are both the first in their families to earn appointments to a service academy. “These gentlemen come from very different ethnic backgrounds with varying interests, but they share a common goal - to commission into the United States Air Force as pilots as graduates of USAFA,” said Pam Sparks. “Despite their differences and being competitors for an appointment spot from the same congressional district, Caleb and Paul will go into their military careers as best friends.” To learn more about the Falcon Foundation: <https://www.falconfoundation.org/> About

Retired teachers organization grants eight scholarships to aspiring educators

CONTRIBUTED REPORT

The Katy Area Retired Educators (K.A.R.E.) announced on May 9th the recipients of the 2024 local K.A.R.E. Scholarships. Each year graduating students from all Katy ISD high schools, who are planning to become teachers, are encouraged to submit applications for the awards. This year, a total of \$9600.00 in K.A.R.E. Scholarships were granted to eight members of the Class of 2024 in Katy ISD who will each receive \$1200.00.

- Casarah Bennett – Mayde Creek High School, who plans to attend Houston Community College
- Guillermo Israel Garcia, Jr. – Mayde Creek High School, who plans to attend Sam Houston State University
- Natalie Guske – Seven Lakes High School, who plans to attend Concordia College
- Ryleigh Hunt – Katy High School, who plans to attend Texas State University
- Page Pye – Taylor High School, who plans to attend Texas A&M University
- Tanner ‘Beau’ Rowland – Cinco Ranch High School, who plans to attend the University of Houston
- Peyton Smith – Seven Lakes High School, who plans to attend Sam Houston State University
- Nicholas Wachowicz – Morton Ranch High School, who plans to start at Houston Community College and finish at the University of Houston

The Katy Area Retired Educators (K.A.R.E.) began awarding scholarships in 2001 to graduating Katy



SUSAN ROVEGNO
Eight aspiring educators each received a \$1200.00 scholarship from the Katy Area Retired Educators on Wednesday, May 8th at the Martha Lopez Aki Building, 6361 S. Stadium Lane in Katy. Left to right: Tanner ‘Beau’ Rowland, Cinco Ranch High School; Nicholas Wachowicz, Morton Ranch High School; Peyton Smith, Seven Lakes High School; Page Pye, Taylor High School; Ryleigh Hunt, Katy High School; Guillermo Garcia, Mayde Creek High School; Casarah Bennett, Mayde Creek High School; and Natalie Guske, Seven Lakes High School.

ISD students who pursue becoming school educators. Through the dedicated efforts of the members of K.A.R.E, the number of scholarships and dollar amount of each of the scholarships has increased steadily over the past 22 years. The funding for the scholarships is primarily raised through donations received from the KARE members, special events during the monthly meetings, and in recent years, with help from some supporting local businesses. Over the past seven years, KARE has provided over 52 scholarships totaling more than \$60,000.00. The Katy Area Retired Educators (K.A.R.E.) was formed in the 2000-01 school year with only 16 retired edu-

cators. Since that date it has evolved into an organization of over 375 members, made up of retired teachers, librarians, counselors, administrators, and other former school district employees. It is the local chapter of the Texas Retired Teachers Association. KARE is proud to support present day teachers and public education in Katy ISD and throughout the greater Katy area in the forms of mentoring students, substitute teaching, tutoring, providing books and educational supplies, and volunteering on campuses. The organization itself works diligently and actively to assist retired educators (many on a small, fixed teacher retirement income) in their needs, home, and health.

Fort Bend County Fair scholarships awarded

CONTRIBUTED REPORT

The Fort Bend County Fair Association (FBCFA) has awarded over a quarter of a million dollars in scholarships to deserving youth at their Scholarship Reception according to a May 1 press release. Fifty scholarships, each valued at \$5,000, and three Queen Scholarships were awarded to students representing schools and districts throughout Fort Bend County. “This night is all about the kids and helping them reach their educational goals. It is a great feeling and a rewarding experience not only for the recipients and their families but also for us as an association,” said Fort Bend County Fair President Alicia Casias. Recipients, who are set to be future Longhorns, Aggies, Cougars, Bearcats, Texans, and others, are not just diverse in their college choices, but also in their ambitions. They are charting a wide range of higher educational paths, from agricultural

degrees spanning science to business, to nursing and biochemistry fields of study. Tompkins High School student Mindy Nguyen, who has participated in the Fair’s Art Auction, is University of Texas bound. She says, “With the assistance of the Fort Bend County Fair Scholarship, I will be able to pursue a degree in biochemistry at the University of Texas at Austin this fall with some of the financial burden of attending alleviated. This scholarship

has not only opened up new opportunities for me in college, as I will not have to focus on financing my education as much, but it reminded me of the warm support that I have received from my community up until this point. I intend to actively engage in humanitarian efforts and further my education to give back to my community as a future physician.” The Fair’s scholarships are open to high school seniors or current college

students who have previously received an FBCFA scholarship. This program is a testament to the Fort Bend County Fair Association’s dedication to the students and community, as it reinvests the funds generated during the Fair and other fundraising events back into the community, said organizers. For more information on the Fair’s scholarship program, visit fortbend-countyfair.com or call the Fair Office at 281-342-6171.

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Friends Ice Cream and Coffee Shop opens in Katy with a Special Focus

STAFF REPORTS

Friends Ice Cream and Coffee is ready to bring smiles and special moments to the Katy community following their grand opening on May 11th. Located on the northeast corner of Kingsland Baptist Church's property at their central campus, Friends serves up a tasty variety of coffee and ice cream treats. But what makes Friends truly unique is the warmth and joy brought to every interaction by the employees with special needs known as the Friends Crew, said Operations Pastor JP Pruett.

Fred Shafer, the Special Needs Director at Kingsland Baptist Church, shares, "We want Friends Ice Cream and Coffee and the Friends Community Playground to

be a place where people of all abilities, backgrounds, and cultures can enjoy community together."

The menu showcases items such as specialty coffees and flavorful smoothies and shakes. But the real star of the menu is the decadent ice cream, created by culinary masterminds Allan and Maisa Velasque—award-winning Brazilian ice cream creators who have recently moved to the Katy area and are excited to share their delicious creations with the Katy community. Friends features flavors including Nutella Crunch and Cheesecake Berry. With these fan favorites plus adventurous flavors like Jalapeño Peach Cream, Friends is sure to satisfy any sweet tooth.

Friends Ice Cream and Coffee strives to create a truly inclusive

community space, said Pruett. This purpose is further highlighted in the adjoining Friends Community Playground—a custom-designed playground that is accessible for all children and open to the public. This state-of-the-art playground features play elements specifically designed to enable shared play for kids of all abilities. Surrounding the perimeter of the playground are Friends Community interactive panels that highlight the value and meaning behind all friends playing together. Parents or caregivers with smartphones will enjoy the digitally interactive features of these panels to further explore these play concepts with their kids.

The Friends Grand Opening is the final piece of a two-year renovation and expansion project for



SUSAN ROVEGNO

Friends Ice Cream, a project of Kingsland Baptist Church's special needs ministry, has opened at the northwest corner of the church's central campus at 20553 Kingsland Drive in Katy.

Kingsland Baptist Church's rapidly growing Special Needs Ministry, which serves children, teens, and adults with a variety of special needs so that the whole family can participate in worship gatherings and other special events.

"People with special needs are one of the most underserved people groups in churches today," said Shafer. "Only about 10% of churches have a special needs ministry. More than 60 per cent of

adults with special needs are unemployed. Working at Friends Ice Cream and Coffee gives our adult employees with special needs a sense of purpose and accomplishment. At Kingsland, our ministry embraces and serves people with special needs and their families with the love of Jesus Christ."

The shop, located at 20553 Kingsland Blvd. in Katy, will have regular business hours of 7 a.m. to 7 p.m., Monday through Saturday.



LIONS CLUB FOOD DRIVE

On Saturday, May 11, the Fort Bend West Houston Lions Club conducted a drive-through food drive to benefit Hope Impacts, a Katy-based nonprofit which assists the homeless. Gathering donations at the Chase Bank location at 400 S. Mason are (left to right) Rev. David Greene, president and executive director; Glenda Williams, Service Chair; Chase West, Vice Present Elect; Landon Hall, Texas Global Service Awareness Leo Club President; and Angie Shaver, member chair.

SUSAN ROVEGNO

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Katy ISD announces valedictorians, salutatorians

CONTRIBUTED REPORT

Katy ISD announced May 3rd the top two students from each high school who have ranked highest academically in their respective graduating classes.

- Cinco Ranch High School: Alina Dang – Valedictorian, GPA: 4.8923; Yujin Cha – Salutatorian, GPA: 4.8485
- Jordan High School: Jade Jie Kamoun – Valedictorian, GPA: 4.8594; Sophie Ruqing Zeng – Salutatorian, GPA: 4.8594
- Katy High School: Harraz Bin Hizam – Valedictorian, GPA: 4.8382; Krish V. Parikh – Salutatorian, GPA: 4.8276
- Mayde Creek High School: John Jaeyeon Lee – Valedictorian, GPA: 4.7544; Natalie Ann Baxter – Salutatorian, GPA: 4.6792
- Morton Ranch High School: Rose Judith Villasana – Valedictorian, GPA: 4.7636; Alina Malikian – Salutatorian, GPA: 4.7321
- Paetow High School: Isabella Marie Fresneda-Bolivar – Valedictorian, GPA: 4.7049; Francisco Tezan Howard – Salutatorian, GPA: 4.6833
- Seven Lakes High School: Aidan Zhong Han Lai – Valedictorian, GPA: 4.8676; Aayush Kishor Ishware – Salutatorian, GPA: 4.8676
- Taylor High School: Henry Xiang-Hao Liu – Valedictorian, GPA: 4.8594; Genna Min-Ji Kang – Salutatorian, GPA: 4.8413
- Tompkins High School: Aishah AlBatoool Shahid – Valedictorian, GPA: 4.8649; Sanika Misra – Salutatorian, GPA: 4.8615

Royal ISD announces 2024 top scholars

CONTRIBUTED REPORT

Royal ISD announced May 7th the top 10%, salutatorian, and valedictorian of the Royal High School Class of 2024.

17. Marixa Argueta
16. Kandace Miller
15. Dwain Gregory
14. Isaac Martinez
13. Danahe Alcantar
12. Jenna Johnson
11. Asahn Daniel Antonio
10. Monica Aguinaga
9. Layla Thompson
8. Nancy Cruz
7. Maria Paredes Munoz
6. Elizabeth Ibarra
5. Kaelyn Hein
4. Alexcia Garcia
3. Sandra Montalvo
2. Roberto Montalvo (Salutatorian)

1. Katia Mendoza (Valedictorian)
Salutatorian Roberto Montalvo and third-ranked student Sandra Montalvo are twins.



KATIA MENDOZA



ROBERTO MONTALVO

Beck JHS and Beckendorff JHS teams compete in national Quiz Bowl

FROM STAFF REPORTS

On the weekend of May 11, students from Katy ISD's Rodger and Ellen Beck Junior High School and Beckendorff Junior High joined 159 of the top middle school quiz bowl teams at the Hyatt Regency O'Hare Chicago for the 2024 Middle School National Championship Tournament to determine who was the best.

The two schools were among 20 Texas teams competing at the national championship. The 2024 Middle School National Championship Tournament's field featured 160 teams from 26 states and South Korea.

Quiz bowl is a competitive, academic, interscholastic activity for teams of four students. Quiz bowl teams use buzzers to answer questions about science, math, history, literature, mythology, geography, social science, current events, sports, and popular culture. The matches feature a blend of individual competition and team collaboration, since no individual player is likely to be an expert in all subject areas. Participation in quiz bowl both reinforces lessons from the classroom and encourages players to develop new intellectual interests.

The Beck Junior High team, coached by Kristen Rush, was captained by Adam Crossey, who was joined by Nina Coles, Anna Hughes, Julian Ortega, Matthew Park, and Byron Sood.

Beck finished the preliminary rounds with a 5-3 record, which qualified them for the playoffs.

Rodger and Ellen Beck Junior High School played T. H. Rogers A from near home in round 14, suffering a



PHOTOS COURTESY OF THE NATIONAL ACADEMIC QUIZ TOURNAMENTS

Above: Quiz bowl team from Beckendorff Junior High. Below: Quiz Bowl team from Beck Junior High.



260-115 defeat.

Beck was on the brink of elimination when they defeated Gorzycki B in round 12 to stay alive. Beck's shot at the title ended when they lost to Ocean Grove from Placerville, California in round 15.

Adam Crossey was honored as an All-Star for correctly answering 54 tossup questions -- 16 of them for "power," that is, so early as to earn extra points -- in the preliminary rounds.

Rodger and Ellen Beck Junior High School finished in 49th place.

The Beckendorff team was cap-

tained by Rohan Balan, who was joined by Nicholas Duan, Eric Huang, Andy Li, and James Wang. The team was coached by Sheri Wright.

Beckendorff finished the preliminary rounds with a 5-3 record, which qualified them for the playoffs.

Beckendorff Junior High School played two games against opponents from near home. In round 11, they lost to T. H. Rogers A 440-190. In round 12, they defeated Annunciation Orthodox 370-195. Beckendorff defeated Howard A from Atlanta, Georgia by the narrow margin of 225-210 during round 14 and they then defeated Annunciation Orthodox in round 12 to stay alive. Beckendorff's shot at the title ended when they lost to Academy at Lincoln from Greensboro, North Carolina in round 16.

Beckendorff Junior High School finished in 33rd place.

The tournament champion was the A team from River Trail Middle School of Johns Creek, Georgia.

Cinco Ranch FBLA sweeps state competition

BY VICTORIA DO
SPECIAL TO THE TIMES

Every year, Texas FBLA hosts their annual State Leadership Conference, and for the past three years, it has taken place at the sophisticated Galveston Convention Center, as well as its surrounding hotels: The Hilton and The San Luis Resorts, and the Holiday Inn. This conference, held April 10-12, was no different; the 49-student-strong Cinco FBLA Chapter staked their claim to the luxurious San Luis Resort, and for the next two days, they would be strapped to the business world, attending numerous workshops, conferences, and most importantly, competing in their respective events.

If there was anything worth taking away from this FBLA State trip, it's most certainly the valuable information that students had the opportunity to gather at the various workshops hosted by assorted business professionals. From college advice to finding your true passion, the Texas FBLA State officers had curated a special list of speakers to help these students with certain aspects of their business career.

To accommodate the busy day of the competitors, these optional workshops were sprinkled throughout the schedule and hosted at specific time blocks, meaning students would pick and choose their own itineraries. "There was a lot of freedom," states another student, "I liked the independence of being able to decide my own



PHOTO COURTESY OF VICTORIA DO

Cinco Ranch High School's FBLA Chapter, on the Galveston Convention Center Stage

schedule and where I wanted to go."

While the conference was full of workshops and plenty of fun, the most exhilarating part must have been the competition. Each student that attended the conference had their own competition event, in which they engaged with students of other schools across the state in battles of intellect, creativity, and innovation. For most students, months of thorough preparation culminated in their final performance at this conference. Throughout the day and amongst the workshop time blocks, competition events were hosted in various locations either in the Convention Center or the resorts. At last, by Friday morning at the closing ceremony, all

competition events had reached their conclusions along with the top five rankings of their competitors.

Out of the 49 members in attendance from Cinco, 27 of them had placed in the top five of one or more events, being called to the Convention Center stage to accept their award -- a whopping 55% placement rate.

The next step after a state competition is Nationals which will be held in late June in Orlando, Florida, where students can compete with those from other states across the country and even internationally. Of the 27 students who placed in their events at State this year, 22 of them qualify to compete at the highly regarded National Leadership Conference.





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Royal ISD named 'showcase district' by Capturing Kids' Hearts

BY SUSAN ROVEGNO
PUBLISHER

When Rick Kershner became superintendent of schools at Royal ISD, he knew he had to change the culture of the district, Kershner told attendees at the district's annual "Teacher of the Year" dinner on May 7th.

Together with Diane Holub, RISD Social Emotional Learning (SEL) Coordinator, Kershner worked to implement a district-wide program to do just that, using "Capturing Kids' Hearts", a relationship-building approach to discipline that creates self-managing groups. Through experiential training, expert coaching, a character-based curriculum for students, and personalized support, Capturing Kids' Hearts equips professionals

in K-12 education to implement transformational processes focused on social-emotional wellbeing, relationship-driven campus culture, and student connectedness, according to their website. The organization recognizes outstanding school administrators, teaching staff, and faculty for producing exemplary outcomes with the Capturing Kids' Hearts Process by awarding a "Showcase School" designation.

Of the more than 10,000 campuses served by Capturing Kids' Hearts, only 612 are designated as "showcase schools," Kershner told the Royal ISD school board members at their May 13th meeting. Now, five of those "showcase schools" are in Royal ISD.

And with five out of the district's five campuses all named as



SUSAN ROVEGNO

Making Royal ISD a "showcase district" for the "Capturing Kids' Hearts" program — a vision of RISD Social Emotional Learning (SEL) Coordinator Diane Holub (far left) and Superintendent of Schools Rick Kershner (far right) — became a reality at the district's school board meeting on May 13th, as board members and representatives of all five winning campuses celebrated the achievement.

"showcase schools," Royal ISD is now a "showcase district," Kershner announced to the board.

Board members, principals and campus representatives celebrated the big moment with confetti guns and cake.

Kershner and Holub achieved their complete vision of a "showcase district" this year, just as Holub retires from RISD. Their first success came in May 2023, when Royal ISD announced that Royal Early Childhood Center was

named a Capturing Kids' Hearts (CKH) National Showcase School. On September 12, 2023, the Royal Early Childhood Center team unveiled their National Showcase School banner, which is proudly displayed in the ECC gym.

National Merit Scholarship Program announces winners

CONTRIBUTED REPORT

On May 8, the National Merit Scholarship Corporation (NMSC) announced this year's National Merit \$2500 Scholarship winners. The 2,500 Merit Scholar designees were chosen from a talent pool of more than 15,000 outstanding Finalists in the 2024 National Merit Scholarship Program and included 12 students from the greater Katy area:

- Brooks R. Bryant, Fulshear High School, Fulshear, Probable career field: Computer Science.
- Ananya R. Pasunuri, Jordan High School, Fulshear, Probable career field: Mechanical Engineering.
- Pelin D. Gurmen, Jordan High School, Katy, Probable career field: Biochemical Engineering.
- Antai A. Liu, Seven Lakes High School,

Katy, Probable career field: Computer Science.

- Henry Xiang-Hao Liu, Taylor High School, Katy, Probable career field: Biomedicine
- Sneha A. Mamtota, Cinco Ranch High School, Katy, Probable career field: Aerospace Engineering.
- Duran J. Mohabbat, Harmony School of Innovation, Katy, Probable career field: Computer Science.
- Christine O. Onianwa, Cinco Ranch High School, Katy, Probable career field: Engineering.
- Ojas V. Prabhugaonkar, Seven Lake High School, Katy, Probable career field: Biomedical Engineering.
- Aishah A. Shahid, Tompkins High School, Katy, Probable career field: Electrical Engineering.

- Haochen Wang, Jordan High School, Katy, Probable career field: Science/Research.
- Kathleen C. Yu, Seven Lakes High School, Katy, Probable career field: Undecided.

National Merit \$2500 Scholarship winners are the Finalists in each state judged to have the strongest combination of accomplishments, skills, and potential for success in rigorous college studies. The number of winners named in each state is proportional to the state's percentage of the nation's graduating high school seniors. These Scholars were selected by a committee of college admissions officers and high school counselors, who appraised a substantial amount of information submitted by both the Finalists and their high schools: the academic record, including difficulty level of subjects studied

and grades earned; scores from the Preliminary SAT/National Merit Scholarship Qualifying Test (PSAT/NMSQT); contributions and leadership in school and community activities; an essay written by the Finalist; and a recommendation written by a high school official.

This is the second announcement of winners in the 2024 National Merit Scholarship Program. On April 24, about 770 recipients of corporate-sponsored Merit Scholarship awards were named, and on June 5 and July 15, some 3,600 college-sponsored Merit Scholarship winners will be announced. By the conclusion of this year's competition, more than 6,870 academic champions will have won National Merit Scholarships worth approximately \$26 million. Scholars may use their awards at any regionally accredited U.S. college or university.

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900 BUSINESS OPPORTUNITIES

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950 PUBLIC NOTICES

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950 PUBLIC NOTICES

PUBLIC NOTICE

This notice is regarding the records destruction schedule set by state regulations consistent with the notification requirements set forth in the Code of Federal Regulations (34 CFR 300.624) and state regulations regarding the destruction of confidential records. Katy ISD Special Education records for students withdrawn or graduated on or before June 30, 2013, will be destroyed January 15, 2024. If you have any questions about this process or about student specific records, please contact the Department of Special Education in Katy ISD at 281-396-2630.

KATY ISD Invites Private Non-Profit Schools

Private non-profit schools serving students who reside in Katy ISD attendance zones have the option to participate in federal grant programs. If the non-profit school wishes to participate, a consultation meeting can be scheduled to provide an overview of current federal programs (Title I, Title II, Title III, and Title IV) and other services. Non-profit schools interested in participating in these federal grant programs for the 2024-2025 school year should contact Erin Hyko at 281-396-2243 to schedule a consultation meeting to discuss programs and eligibility requirements.

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Mayde Creek's Jensen promoted to Assistant Athletic Director

BY TYLER TYRE
SPORTS EDITOR

After three years at his alma mater, J. Jensen is moving up at Katy ISD.

Jensen came back Mayde Creek in 2021 to lead the Rams' football program and be the school's athletic coordinator. After helping build up the Creek up for the last three years, he will be transitioning into a new role this summer, as Jensen will be promoted to an assistant athletic director position within the school district. He will replace Pat Dowling, who is retiring at the end of the school year. Jensen will finish out the school year at Mayde Creek to help with the transition before moving into the athletic office July 1.

Over Jensen's three years with the program, Mayde Creek went 7-23 overall and 2-20 in district play. The Rams come off their best season with Jensen at the helm, finishing 3-7 overall and 2-6 in District 19-6A play last year, earning a seventh place finish out of district.

Mayde Creek's two district wins came in a hard-fought contest over Seven Lakes, which they won 31-24 and a big 28-7 win over Paetow.

Jensen, a Mayde Creek graduate, came to the Rams after a stint at Taylor where he was the defensive line coach and defensive coordinator for the Mustangs from 2014-2021. The Mustangs made the playoffs in five of his six seasons at the school, including a state semifinal appearance in 2019.

Before going to Taylor, Jensen served as the co-offensive coordinator and special teams coordinator at Alief Taylor from 2010-2014. Jensen started his coaching career at Morton Ranch

See **JENSEN**, page A10



SCOTT W. COLEMAN

Mayde Creek Rams head coach J. Jensen during a high school football game between Mayde Creek and Seven Lakes on October 29, 2021 in Katy, Texas. Seven Lakes won, 50-10.

WEEK OF MAY 17

SCORES & SCHEDULES

SOFTBALL

REGIONAL QUARTERFINALS

- Katy 8, Cinco Ranch 0

REGIONAL SEMIFINALS

Wednesday

- Game 1: Katy vs. Brazoswood, 6:30 p.m. at Iowa Colony

Thursday

- Game 2: Katy vs. Brazoswood, 6:30 p.m. at Iowa Colony

Saturday

- Game 3: Katy vs. Brazoswood, 1 p.m. at Iowa Colony (if needed)

BASEBALL

AREA

- Cinco Ranch 1, Stratford 2
- Cinco Ranch 8, Stratford 4
- Cinco Ranch 8, Stratford 3
- Katy 5, Jersey Village 3
- Katy 3, Jersey Village 2
- Tompkins 2, Cy-Fair 0
- Cy-Fair 4, Tompkins 2
- Cy-Fair 11, Tompkins 4

REGIONAL QUARTERFINALS

Thursday

- Game 1: Cinco Ranch vs. Memorial, 7 p.m. at Constellation Field
- Game 1: Katy vs. Cy-Fair, 6 p.m. at Langham Creek

Friday

- Game 2: Cinco Ranch vs. Memorial, 2 p.m. at Langham Creek

Saturday

- Game 2: Katy vs. Cy-Fair, 2 p.m. at Langham Creek
- Game 3: Cinco Ranch vs. Memorial, 6 p.m. at Constellation Field (if necessary)
- Game 3: Katy vs. Cy-Fair, 30 minutes after Game 2 at Langham Creek (if necessary)

Katy downs Cinco Ranch, advances to regional semis



Above: Katy players celebrate after a home run during Thursday's game between Katy and Cinco Ranch at the Tompkins softball field. Right: Ashtyn Reichardt hits during Thursday's game between Katy and Cinco Ranch at the Tompkins softball field.

TYLER TYRE



BY TYLER TYRE
SPORTS EDITOR

Katy checked off another box on Thursday.

The Tigers are on a singular mission this year, but to get to where they want to go, Katy knows it has to focus on the the day in front of them.

Katy kept that same approach this week and didn't look ahead. The Tigers knew they couldn't afford to overlook an opponent and Katy took a focused approach that paid off in their regional quarterfinal one-game playoff against Cinco Ranch, beating the Cougars 8-0 to advance to the regional semifinals for the second time in three years.

"We've focused on keeping our energy up and that's something we take really seriously," said sophomore outfielder Ella-Kate Smith. "Energy can win or lose you ballgames so it's just trusting in each other, building each other up and trusting that this team will get runs across no matter who's up. We play together and focus on doing that every day, it's made a big difference."

For the first time in the playoffs Katy didn't run rule their opponent, but the Tigers didn't get frustrated with anything and took their runs where they could get them. It took until the third inning, but Katy got in front when Montgomery Henderson hit a single that drove in a run and added a second two batters later on a Maddie Smith RBI single. The Tigers then added on in the fourth inning. Ashtyn Reichardt drove in a run on a single and Hailey Gore did the same, Cameryn Harrison added an RBI on a sacririce fly and Ella-Kate Smith hit a sin-

See **KATY**, page A10



TYLER TYRE

Cinco Rach players give Lucas Franco a water bath after Saturday's area round game between Cinco Ranch and Stratford at Cy-Lakes.

Franco powers Cinco past Stratford, into second straight regional quarterfinal

BY TYLER TYRE
SPORTS EDITOR

Lucas Franco came into Saturday ready.

The junior didn't know it, but when he walked into the locker room Saturday morning, head coach Brett Wallace told him "you have the ball," as Franco was given the start on the mound for the most important game in Cinco Ranch's season so far.

Franco didn't disappoint. He threw a complete game for the Cougars, allowing two earned runs on five hits while striking out three in Cinco Ranch's 8-3 series cinching win over Stratford in the area round, also driving in three runs to lead the Cougars to their second straight regional quarterfinal appearance.

"I had no idea I was starting coming into today, but Wallace told me and I just said 'let's go,'" Franco said. "I just got hyped up immediately. I knew we would get after it today — we all love to compete and I'm just so happy I was able to do my job out there."

The Cougars scored eight runs in their



TYLER TYRE

See **CINCO**, page A10

Lucas Franco pitches during during Saturday's area round game between Cinco Ranch and Stratford at Cy-Lakes.



Hudson Melaerts pitches during Friday's area round game between Tompkins and Cy-Fair at the Tompkins baseball field.

TYLER TYRE

Tompkins falls to Cy-Fair in three games

BY TYLER TYRE
SPORTS EDITOR

Tompkins has been in this place before. The Falcons are used to having their backs against the wall, having the pressure on and needing to respond to keep their season going.

It happened in the bi-district round and the Falcons reeled off two straight wins to keep their season alive. Now that the Falcons are in the same situation in the area round, the team is confident they will respond in the same way, as Tompkins took game one of their series over Cy-Fair 2-0 before falling 4-0 to the Bobcats on Friday in a game that evened the series.

"We have full confidence because we know we can do this," said senior first baseman Gavin Brewer. "Nothing is going to change — we've been through this before and we've come through it and that's exactly what we plan to do again. That just makes us even more confident going into that third game."

It was a struggle for the Falcons in game two, especially on the offensive end as they managed just one hit and six base runners, with the team's only hit coming in the second inning. Tompkins' defense and pitching kept them in the game though until the final innings.

Cy-Fair took the lead in the first inning on a fielders choice that drove in a run and it stayed 1-0 until the sixth inning. Cy-Fair



TYLER TYRE

Cooper Markle hits during Friday's area round game between Tompkins and Cy-Fair at the Tompkins baseball field.

got things going in the fifth by loading the bases with no outs and getting two runs on two bases loaded walks. Bo Caraway then hit an RBI single that made it a four run game and Tompkins was unable to come back in their final two innings of at bats.

"Their pitcher just filled up the zone and we weren't able to find hits," Brewer said. "I think we only had two base runners in the first six innings and that just can't happen. He filled up the zone on us

and did what he wanted and we just didn't get it done at the plate today."

But Tompkins wasn't able to turn things around in game three of the series, losing 11-4 to end the Falcons season.

"We're just going to have to come out and get hot early," Brewer said. "That's the only choice we have. We need to get the bats going, put barrels on balls and put these guys away early, that's the mindset we have to take going into it."



COURTESY KATY ISD

Katy swept Jersey Village to advance to the regional quarterfinals.

Katy sweeps past Jersey Village in 2 games with clutch hitting

BY TYLER TYRE
SPORTS EDITOR

Katy got two of their clutch hits of the year this week to keep their season alive and sweep past Jersey Village in the area round, beating the Falcons 5-3 and 3-2 in two games that went all the way down to the wire.

Katy had to overcome a two run deficit in game one. Katy got on the board first in the fourth inning, getting a run off an error, but Jersey Village scored two runs in the fifth inning. It stayed that way until the top of the seventh, when Katy loaded the bases and Jon Artis came to the plate as a pinch hitter and hit a grand slam over the center field wall. Katy then closed out Jersey Village with a three up three down bottom of the seventh. Artis led the way offensively with his four RBIs, while Connor Udland pitched 4.1 innings, allowing three runs on two hits while striking out six and walking two and Arvey Huerta pitched the final 2.2 innings, allowing just one hit and

striking out four while walking one.

Game two was even tighter between the two teams and went 10 innings, only ending on a walk off from Katy in extras.

Katy scored on an error on the fourth inning to take the lead and Cade Nelson added another on a single later in the inning. Jersey Village answered back though in the sixth on a two run home run that tied the game. The game continued all the way to the 10th inning, when Sutton Hull drew a walk and Udland came to the plate and hit a double that drove in the game winning run for a walk off win. Nelson and Udland had the two RBIs in the game and Nelson had a strong day on the mound, pitching seven innings and allowing just two runs on six hits, striking out eight and walking three. Aiden Barrientes came in and earned the win by pitching the final three innings, not allowing a hit while striking out six and walking four.

Katy advances to play Cy-Fair in the regional quarterfinals, times and dates to be determined.

Jordan girls finish in 12th place at state golf tournament

BY TYLER TYRE
SPORTS EDITOR

The Jordan girls golf team came in 12th at this week's Class 6A State Tournament, bringing an end to a tremendous season for the Warriors where they broke through to reach state for the first time.

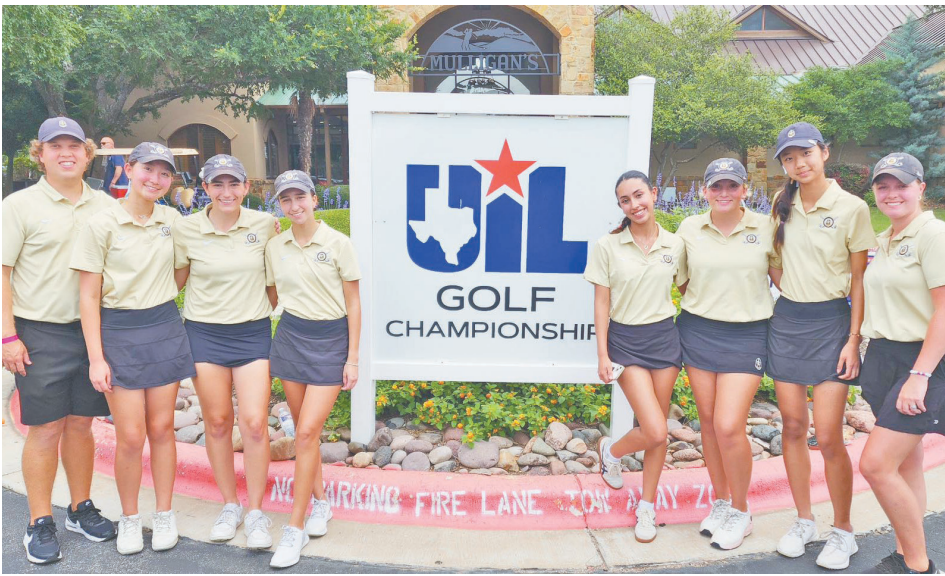
The Warriors were the bottom finisher at state but put together a gritty performance where they battled. Jordan ended the two days with a score of 657, improv-

ing from shooting 329 as a team on day one to 328 day two, as a team of Rumi Kurihara, Abbi Nelson, Jennie Dong, Candelaria Carlevaro and Leia McKenzie competed for Jordan.

Kurihara led the way for the Warriors, shooting 79 both days for a total of 158, while Nelson shot 159, shooting 80 the first day and 79 the next. Mackenzie shot 84 the first day and 83 the second day for a total of 167, Carlevaro had a total of 173 by shooting 86 the first day

and 87 the second and Dong shot 90 the first day and 92 the second to finish with a total of 182.

Vandegrift took the team title in 6A, while San Antonio Reagan finished second and Coppell finished third. Vandegrift players took both first and second, with Swetha Sathish finishing with the gold and Sydney Givens finishing second, while Kingwood's Bella Flores and Westlake's Isabel Emanuels tied for the bronze medal.



COURTESY KATY ISD

The Jordan girls golf team finished 12th overall at the Class 6A Golf Tournament.

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TYLER TYRE
Lucas Franco celebrates after hitting a 3-run double during Saturday's area round game between Cinco Ranch and Stratford at Cy-Lakes.

CINCO
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game two win and kept things going by getting hot early in game three. Cinco got two runners on in the first and both moved into scoring position on a double steal. Zach Franco then hit a double and drove in both to get ahead early.

"It was awesome to get that in the first inning," Lucas Franco said. "I told everyone beforehand that I wanted to pitch with a lead and go after guys, getting those two runs really let me do that and it set the tone for the whole game. That was huge for us."

The game stayed that way through four innings and then Cinco broke the game open in the fifth. The Cougars started the inning with three straight singles and then Franco stepped to the plate and drove in all three with a double of his own before a sixth run came across on a throwing error. Cinco added two more runs in the sixth on bases loaded walks and Stratford scored three in the bottom of the seventh before Franco closed it out with a ground out.

"He's a guy that always gets it done in the clutch and in a big moment like this you want the ball in the hands of your superstar," Wallace said. "That's Lucas. He's come up in every big spot we've asked him to and I knew he would step up

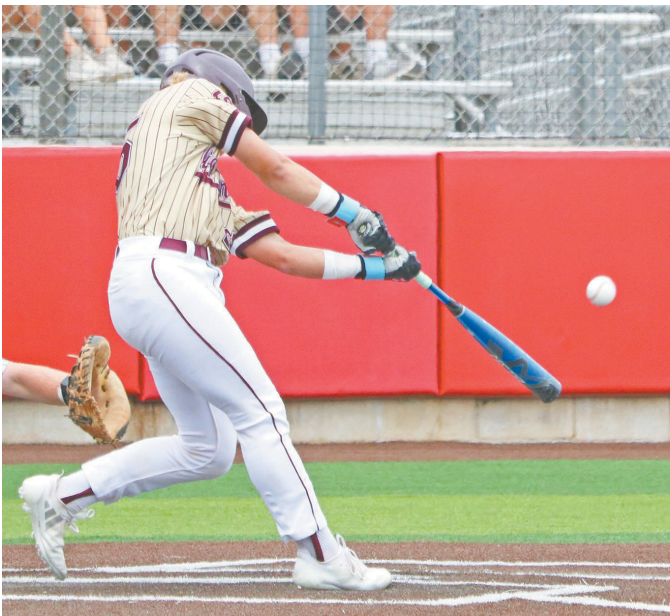


TYLER TYRE
Brock DeYoung makes a throw to first base during Saturday's area round game between Cinco Ranch and Stratford at Cy-Lakes.

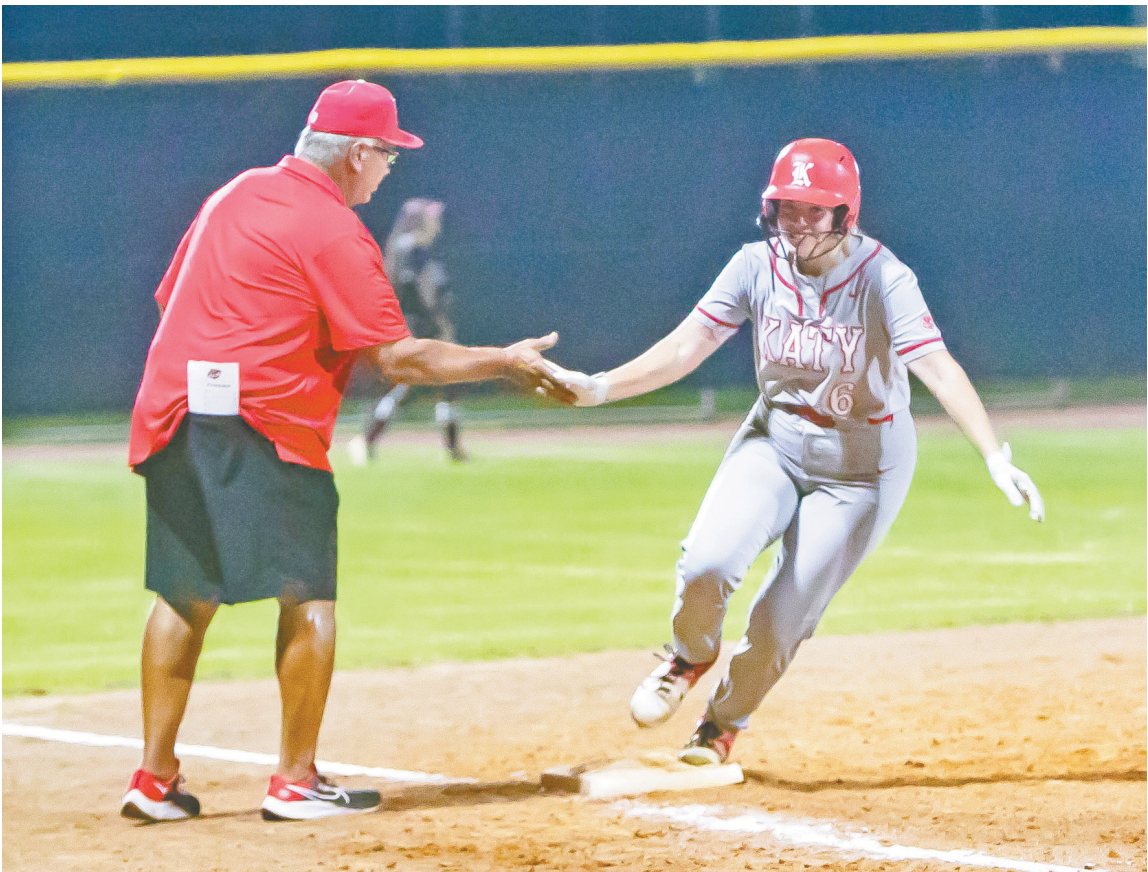
again today."

The Cougars advance to play Memorial in the third round of the playoffs, times and dates to be determined for the series. Cinco played Memorial in last years area round and swept the Mustangs in two games. Cinco will be trying to advance to the regional semifinals for the second straight season.

"The chemistry with these guys is amazing," Franco said. "I've had more fun with than with any team I've been a part of. Last year was amazing going four rounds but this year, winning with these guys is just different and I think we can make another run."



TYLER TYRE
Dylan Muniz hits during Saturday's area round game between Cinco Ranch and Stratford at Cy-Lakes.



TYLER TYRE
Ella-Kate Smith rounds third after hitting a home run during Thursday's game between Katy and Cinco Ranch at the Tompkins softball field.

KATY

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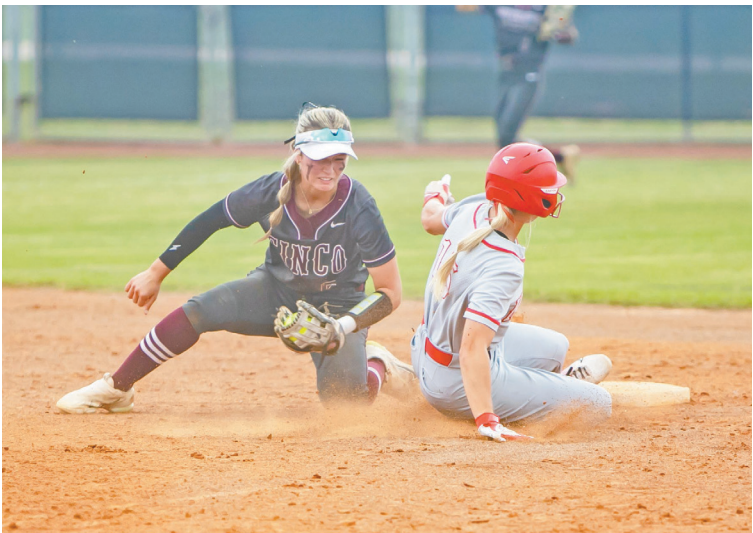
gle to bring home the Tigers' sixth run. Ella-Kate Smith secured the win in the bottom of the sixth when she hit a two-run home run to put the game out of reach.

"E.K. (Ella-Kate) just does a good job and puts a good swing on everything," said Katy head coach Kalum Haack. "She's just really consistent and that's what you need. She isn't trying to swing for the fence but she takes a really good cut and that's how you drive in runs."

Smith had three RBIs on two hits and Katy was led by Cameryn Harrison on the mound, who put on another dominant display by pitching five innings of shutout ball, allowing just two hits while striking out 11 and walking three, before Lauryn Soeken came in and closed out the games for the final two innings, striking out two and allowing just one hit.

"I've thrown to Cinco a bunch of times, so they knew what was coming and stayed patient and I thought did a good job," Harrison said. "I could see they wanted to attack my fast stuff so I started mixing things up and I think that made the difference for me on the mound. It was a good night and I'm glad we were able to advance."

Katy advances to play Brazoswood (31-7), which comes off a sweep of Pearland in the regional quarterfinals. Katy earned an 8-1 win over Brazoswood in tournament play earlier in the year. The games will be played Wednesday and Thursday at 6:30 and Saturday if needed with all games



TYLER TYRE
Faith Piper tries to tag Ashtyn Reichardt as Reichardt slides into second base during Thursday's game between Katy and Cinco Ranch at the Tompkins softball field.

being played at Iowa Colony High School.

"It's all about playing off of each other and I think we keep getting better with that," Smith said. "Sometimes you're not going to get the big swing, but that's ok. Sometimes you can win it with small ball, sometimes you need to just go for that base hit or move a runner over. We just have to keep that energy up and focus on ourselves as a team."

TYLER TYRE
Ashtyn Reichardt laughs after reaching first base during Thursday's game between Katy and Cinco Ranch at the Tompkins softball field.



JENSEN

from page A8

Junior High before going to Mayde Creek and serving as the offensive line coach and strength and conditioning coordinator from 2005-2010.

Jensen was a standout lineman for the Rams as a player and was part of one of the program's best seasons in 1997. He went on to play at Eastern New Mexico University, where he was an all-conference and all-region Guard in 199.

Jensen also helped Eastern New Mexico win two Lone Star South Conference Championships.

People from around the Katy ISD school district congratulated Jensen for the promotion on twitter.

• Cole Jensen, Mayde Creek junior quarterback: "End of an era. Congratulations dad, I'm so proud of you and can't wait to see where this new journey takes you. While

this marks the end, I'm so grateful we got the opportunity to do everything together."

• Lizzie Herring, Mayde Creek principal: "Congratulations! There is no one on the planet more deserving! There are no words to describe the impact you've had on the Creek. Katy ISD Athletic is getting the BEST in the business and I have no doubt your impact will be felt across the district!"

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