

ARISTOI CAPTURES TEXAS CUP FOR SECOND YEAR  
SPORTS | PG 8

# Katy Times



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THE GREATER KATY AREA'S NEWS SOURCE SINCE 1912 ■ katytimes.com

THURSDAY, JULY 24, 2025

## Hwy 36A scoping meetings planned for late August



SHANE PIRTLE  
Highway 36A Coalition  
Chairman

CONTRIBUTED REPORT

Work continues on the ongoing TxDOT study being prepared for the proposed Highway 36A corridor, with a public scoping meeting planned for August, according to a July 10 press release from the Highway 36A Coalition. TxDOT has divided the project into two segments, north and south. An individual Environmental Impact

Statement (EIS) is being developed for each segment, with Jacobs Engineering handling the southern segment. The southern segment is about a year ahead of work on the northern segment. The public scoping meeting in August will discuss work on the southern segment in Fort Bend County. TxDOT anticipates the proposed corridor to be, in total, approximately 65 to 75 miles in length and located in

Fort Bend and Waller counties. Highway 36A Coalition Chairman Shane Pirtle said the group is excited to see the ongoing progress toward identifying preferred roadway alignments for the new segments of the proposed Highway 36A. "It has been a long time coming, so it's very gratifying to see the study phase moving forward with clear steps being taken," Pirtle said.

Greg Parrent, who is the lead engineer on the Jacobs Engineering work on the southern segment, told the coalition in a recent executive committee meeting that they will soon be announcing a date for the public scoping meeting in August. The public scoping meeting follows an agency scoping meeting held earlier

See MEETINGS, page 3



PHOTO COURTESY OF HARRIS COUNTY PRECINCT 4

An abandoned home, damaged by fire and vacant since 2023, is razed by staff from Harris County Public Health on July 11 as part of the Neighborhood Nuisance Program, in cooperation with Harris County Precinct 4.

## Briones, county health officials remove dangerous building in Katy

CONTRIBUTED REPORT

Commissioner Lesley Briones partnered with Harris County Public Health (HCPH) in July to demolish a fire-damaged, abandoned home that posed a serious risk to neighbors.

The house at 403 Pickford Drive, between Kingsland Drive and Provincial near Promenade Drive, had been vacant since 2023, following a fire that officials say was caused by a heating pad. In June 2024, residents concerned with the dangerous condition of the blighted property reported it to the Neighborhood Nuisance Program operated by HCPH, which addresses hazardous and abandoned properties in unincorporated Harris County.

That call initiated the nuisance abatement process in which property owners are given the opportunity to take corrective action. In cases where no action is taken, HCPH takes legal action to address the situation. Once it enters the legal process, it proceeds through the court system, with a timeline that varies on a case-by-case basis.

On July 11, Commissioner Briones and HCPH took action, clearing the lot and restoring safety to the community.

Since 2024, HCPH has addressed 64 nuisance properties in Precinct 4.

Benefits of the Neighborhood Nuisance Program, according to Precinct 4, are:

- Eliminating fire and safety risks that threaten nearby homes,
- Discouraging illegal dumping and criminal activity,
- Removing areas for pests (rats, small animals, etc.) to gather, and
- Signaling that all neighborhoods matter.

See DEMOLITION, page 3

## Local entrepreneur Batson launches staffing agency to serve special needs community

CONTRIBUTED REPORT

With over five years of experience in providing opportunities to the special needs and disabilities community, award-winning entrepreneur Roderick Batson is officially debuting his new staffing agency, Helping Heroes Staffing.

On July 1, City of Houston Controller Chis Hollins hosted a press conference at City Hall in Houston to announce the debut of Helping Heroes alongside Kroger executives and Batson. The agency will teach life skills, marketing, and communications to those with special needs. Batson has had a strong desire to help the special needs community as his cousin had disabilities before passing away during the pandemic.

The inspiration to open "Helping Heroes Staffing" stemmed from Batson's experience with his ice cream store, Howdy Homemade Ice Cream at 20920 Katy Freeway in Katy,

See STAFFING, page 3



COURTESY OF HELPING HEROES

Rod Batson (center) announces the Helping Heroes Staffing initiative at a July 1 press conference hosted by City Controller Chris Collins at City Hall in Houston. Batson will be working with Kroger to help candidates with special needs find jobs.



PHOTO COURTESY OF ROYAL ISD

Left to right: Royal ISD CFO Hector Herrera; Executive Director of Federal, State, and Student Programs Natasha Moses; retiring Superintendent Rick Kershner; and Assistant Superintendent Phylicia Glover pose for a photo at the July 14 meeting of the school board, where Kershner was honored with a special "Investing In Our Tomorrow" award.

## Kershner honored at board meeting

FROM STAFF REPORTS

At the July 14 regular board meeting of Royal ISD's board of trustees, the district honored retiring Superintendent Rick Kershner with a special award.

Over the past five years, at the monthly District Leadership Team (DLT) meeting, Kershner has honored a team member with the "Investing in Our Tomorrow" award — a recognition of those making a meaningful impact on Royal's future. At the board meeting, the tables turned as Kershner himself was honored with the very award he created, in recognition of his extraordinary leadership and unwavering dedication.

He was recognized by Assistant Superintendent Phylicia Glover, CFO Hector Herrera,

See KERSHNER, page 3

## 'GOOD TROUBLE' PROTEST HONORS LEGACY OF JOHN LEWIS



On July 17, about 50 people, including members of Indivisible Katy Huddle, staged a peaceful protest during the evening rush hour at the north side/westbound feeder road of Interstate 10 at Katy Fort Bend Road. The local protest in Katy was part of "Good Trouble Lives On" — a nationwide day of peaceful, nonviolent action rooted in the legacy of the civil rights movement and inspired by the late Representative John Lewis' call to make "good trouble, necessary trouble." The group has previously protested in Katy against other issues, including school vouchers at Representative Mike Schofield's office and against the Trump administration on May Day on May 1 and on "No Kings Day" on June 14.

PHOTO BY SUSAN ROVEGNO

## Council meets briefly, cancels July 28 meeting

BY SUSAN ROVEGNO  
PUBLISHER

In a half-hour meeting on July 14 at City Hall, 901 Avenue C in Katy, Katy's city council moved efficiently through a two-page agenda of routine matters. Among them:

- Council approved payment of three invoices with Weisinger Incorporated for emergency repairs at water plant No. 4, well number 6 at 6850 Franz Road for \$24,580.00; water plant no. 6, well no.8 for \$26,705.00 and well no. 9A for \$42,659.00, both located at 27515 Highway Blvd.
- Council authorized the

issuance of unlimited tax bond series 2025 by Katy West MUD, not to exceed \$15,750,000.00. City officials said that this was specifically for drainage in the MUD, which was formerly known as Fort Bend-Waller Counties MUD No. 2.

Mayor Dusty Thiele began the meeting by asking for a moment of silence to honor those lost in the flooding in the Hill Country in early July. During the "mayor and council member remarks" portion of the meeting, every council member recognized and

See COUNCIL, page 3

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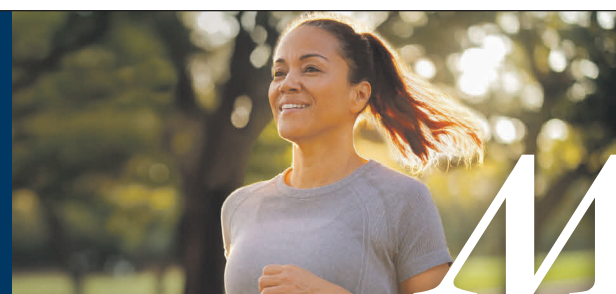


July 24, 2025  
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## Fort Bend County Fair announces entertainment lineup

### CONTRIBUTED REPORT

The 89th Annual Fort Bend County Fair & Rodeo is back and bigger than ever with an electrifying entertainment lineup featuring 15 talented artists across two stages from BBQ Weekend, September 19 and 20, to the fair's run, September 26 - October 5, 2025.

The Brazos and Texas stages will feature a dynamic mix of musical talent, ranging from Texas country and high-energy Tejano to Country soul and rising stars in traditional country music. Notable headliners include returning fan favorite Kevin Fowler, a staple of the Texas country scene, best known for his hit "Beer, Bait & Ammo." Fowler is always a crowd draw with a loyal fan-base. Wade Bowen will be returning to our fair. Bowen is celebrated for heartfelt tracks like "Who I Am" and has been on tour from the East Coast to the Midwest. Country music legend Gene Watson, with over 75 charted singles and a career spanning more than five decades, he will also be taking the stage—his timeless voice continues to captivate fans nationwide.

Two powerhouse groups will be hosted by the Go Tejano committee at the 2025 Fort Bend County Fair. Headlining the evening are Los Igualedos, the dynamic six-member group from the Rio



PHOTO BY NATALIE RHEA, COURTESY OF THE FORT BEND COUNTY FAIR ASSOCIATION

Local favorite Kevin Fowler returns to the Fort Bend County Fair entertainment lineup in September.

Grande Valley, whose unique blend of norteño and romantic cumbia has largely captivated fans and created a tremendous digital audience. Los Igualedos promise a performance full of heart, rhythm, and pure Tejano soul. Opening the festivities will be Los Morales, a tight-knit group of three brothers and a lifelong friend who's infectious "guapachosa" cumbias and Tejano rancheras light up every stage they touch. Their performance is sure to set the perfect tone for a day of unforgettable music and celebration.

Other headliners include Cole Goodwin, a rising 24-year-old singer-songwriter from Georgia. He burst onto the scene with his self-produced EP, "Soon Enough," in 2023, and in 2024, he gained traction with fan-favorite singles like "When You Get Home," which amassed over 400,000 views on social media. This summer, he has been on tour with Luke Bryan. Josh Weathers will also be performing. Weathers' powerful country soul style draws comparisons to legends like Bruce Springsteen and Stevie Wonder. His vocals and

songwriting skills make him a force in the industry.

BBQ weekend will have the vibrant New Orleans-based party band Bag of Donuts kicking off the festivities with their signature mash-ups and festive performances. Siggins, a multi-award-winning Tejano band known for blending traditional sounds with modern flair, will close out the cookoff weekend.

Joining this impressive lineup is John Foster, a finalist on American Idol Season 23, where he gained national attention for his country vibe and strong fan base. He recently made his debut at the Grand Ole Opry, and his storytelling through music has earned him a reputation as one to watch. This will be his first appearance at the Fort Bend County Fair and his first Texas stop on his tour.

Also returning is hometown favorite Maverick Murphy, a young yet seasoned performer who has opened for major acts such as Tracy Byrd, Clay Walker, and Braxton Keith. A torchbearer for traditional country, Maverick proudly continues the legacy of his father, Patrick Murphy, who performed at the fair in the 1990s.

On the Texas Stage at the 2025 Fort Bend County Fair, regional favorites Steel Country, David Glenn, and Horizon will take the spotlight. Adding even more excitement,

Baton Rouge's own Lauren Lee will make her debut, delivering her favorite country hits with a rock-and-roll twist for fairgoers to enjoy.

Alongside the music, fairgoers will enjoy rodeo events, livestock shows, a lively carnival, delicious food, a wine room, shopping, and family-friendly activities, making this annual event a can't-miss experience for over 100,000 visitors.

Tickets will be available for purchase beginning on Friday, July 18, at 10 a.m. Visit [www.fortbend-countyfair.com](http://www.fortbend-countyfair.com) for ticket purchases, schedules, and event details.

### 2025 Fort Bend County Fair Entertainment Lineup

#### BRAZOS STAGE

- September 19 — Bag of Donuts
- September 20 — Siggins
- September 26 — Cole Goodwin
- September 27 — Wade Bowen
- September 28 — Los Igualedos & Los Morales
- October 1 — Maverick Murphy
- October 2 — Josh Weathers
- October 3 — John Foster
- October 4 — Kevin Fowler
- October 5 — Gene Watson

#### TEXAS STAGE

- September 26 — Steel Country
- September 27 — David Glenn
- October 3 — Lauren Lee
- October 4 — Horizon

## COMMUNITY EVENTS

### Fort Bend offers special 'passport fair' on July 26

Beverley McGrew Walker, Fort Bend County District Clerk, is hosting a special Passport Fair on Saturday, July 26 as a community service and in an effort to make it easier and more convenient to apply for a U.S. passport. The fair will take place at Ismaili Jamathkana and Center, 1700 First Colony Blvd. in Sugar Land from 8 a.m. to 12 p.m. A limited number of appointments are being accepted for the passport fair and can be made by visiting [www.fbctx.gov/passports](http://www.fbctx.gov/passports). Please visit the District Clerk's website to obtain information on the cost and requirements.

Note: All applicants must appear in person (including minors). Minors under the age of 16 must appear with both parents. If one parent is not available, a DS-3053 form or a notarized authorization letter from the absent parent and a copy of his/her identification (front and back) is required.

For more information contact Michelle Jochen, Chief Deputy District Clerk at 281-341-4510.



### Friends of Maud Marks Library to hold library book sale on July 26

The Friends of Maud Marks Library (FOMML) will be holding a used book sale at the library, 1815 Westgreen Boulevard, Katy on Saturday, July 26, from 10 a.m. until 4 p.m. Presale viewing and sales (cash or check only) will be available to members of FOMML, on Friday July 25, from 4 until 5:30 p.m. Annual memberships can be purchased at the door for \$10. All funds earned from the sale are used to support library programs offered to the community, such as the Senior Bus Trips and the Summer Reading Program. Books (adult or children's, fiction, nonfiction, reference, foreign language, etc.) that you would like to donate to the sale are now welcomed. Please deposit them during library hours in the bins inside the entrance.

### Join Patsy's Pet Market for a free indoor dog walking clinic on July 27

Is Fido giving you fits? Bring him to a free dog walking clinic at 9 a.m. on July 27 at Lowe's, 19935 Katy Freeway in Houston where he can walk INDOORS in a pro-social pack walk. You and Fido will learn leash handling skills, socialization practice, confidence boosting, and obedience tips and tricks. There is even a prize for the "first pooper." Games, water stations and interactive fun are provided. All walkers also receive a 10 per cent off shopping spree right after the walk. For more information, call Patsy's Pet Market at 832-437-0401.

### Dig World hosts 'Special Needs Night' on July 28

Dig World invites you to a very special "Special Needs Night" on Monday, July 28th from 5 to 8 p.m. This night is all about fun in a relaxed, sensory-friendly environment for individuals and families with special needs, with rides, good vibes, and local vendors with treats, resources, and more. The construction-themed attraction is located at Katy Mills Mall, 5000 Katy Mills Circle in Katy. For more information, go to <https://digworldnation.com>.

### Pat Green to perform at Home Run Dugout on August 1 in support of flood relief

Home Run Dugout presents Pat Green (In support of the Kerr County Flood Relief Fund) in concert on Friday, August 1 at 8 p.m. Green lost family members in the flooding in the Texas Hill Country on July 4. "In times like these, coming together matters," Home Run Dugout said on its site. To stand with those who are grieving and rebuilding, \$5 from every ticket sold and \$1 from every drink purchased at the show will go to the Kerr County Flood Relief Fund. The fund "directly distributes funds to vetted local organizations providing rescue, relief, recovery services and flood assistance. A special concert food and beverage menu will be available. Rideshare is strongly encouraged and a rideshare dropoff is available at the front entrance. Limited parking at Home Run Dugout will be available for \$20 per vehicle. Doors open at 6:30 p.m. Home Run Dugout is a cash-free facility located at 1220 Grand West Blvd. in Katy.

### Students invited to hear Jahkil Jackson at 'Winners Circle' on August 2

The Wise Up to Rise Up Foundation is preparing for one of its most impactful events yet—Winner's Circle 2025, happening Saturday, August 2, from 6 to 9 p.m. at Powerhouse Church, 1818 Katyland Dr., Katy. This half-day experience will welcome 200 at-risk and underserved students from Katy ISD and connect them with dynamic speakers, interactive learning, and actionable mentorship. Students of all ages from across Katy — especially those who've never been celebrated or encouraged to dream big — are invited to attend. If you're a parent, educator, coach, mentor, or faith leader, organizers urge you to bring the students who need this the most.

Featured headliner and Legacy Award recipient is Jahkil Jackson. The event will also feature interactive experiences, hands-on activities, scholarships, raffle prizes and giveaways.

The Wise Up To Rise Up Foundation is a tax-exempt 501(c)(3) nonprofit whose mission is to empower underserved youth by helping them discover their potential, challenge harmful cultural norms, and build a future rooted in knowledge, ethics, and vision. The organization's inspirational mentorship has already helped over 170 mentees—elementary, middle, and high school students—receive Presidential Awards, Congressional honors, and other high-level distinctions. For more information, please contact [KFields@WiseUpToRiseUp.Education](mailto:KFields@WiseUpToRiseUp.Education) or visit [www.WiseUpToRiseUp.Education](http://www.WiseUpToRiseUp.Education).

### Maud Marks Library volunteer fair scheduled for August 3

Are you looking for opportunities to volunteer in your community? Drop in at the Maud Marks Branch Library, 1815 Westgreen in Katy on Saturday, August 3, between 10 a.m. and 2 p.m. to speak with representatives from several organizations seeking to recruit volunteers for their vital work in the community. Non-profits and public service organizations looking to participate can reach out to [mm@hcpl.net](mailto:mm@hcpl.net).



### Katy Business Connection to host mixer at Brass Tap on August 5

Business networking group Katy Business Connection will hold its next after-hours mixer from 5:30 to 7 p.m. on August 5. The free event will be at the Brass Tap at 7108 Katy Gaston Road in Katy, which will offer special food and drink specials during the evening.

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**CROSSWORD THEME: AT THE CIRCUS**

**CLUES ACROSS**

- \*Jumbo The Elephant or Sirius in space
5. "But I heard him exclaim '\_\_\_ he drove out of sight'"
8. Young salmon
12. Blood component
13. What Lizzie Borden did
14. Leather razor sharpener
15. "The Famous Five" author \_\_\_ Blyton
16. Back of the neck
17. Letter-shaped girder
18. \*Feats-of-strength circus performer
20. Indian restaurant bread
21. In need of a muffler
22. Away's partner
23. Backward
26. Same as ruin
30. Greek R
31. Net sales minus cost of goods sold
34. Europe/Asia mountain divide
35. Approximately, as in date
37. Overnight lodging
38. Inflicted a blow
39. Celestial bear
40. Goose egg
42. \_\_\_-AFTRA
43. Frying pan
45. Eating establishment
47. Type of English crs.
48. Traffic accident
50. Wading bird
52. \*Sara Gruen's novel "Water for \_\_\_"
56. \*Lion tamer's tool or counter seat
57. Justice's garb
58. Hit it on the head
59. Run off, as in couple

**CLUES DOWN**

1. Tom Jones' \_\_\_ a Lady"
2. \*Big Top
3. Gulf V.I.P.
4. Remodeled
5. Tests
6. Settle a debt
7. Biblical place of bliss
8. \*"The Greatest Showman" protagonist
9. Equals length times width
10. Multicolored horse
11. Dashboard acronym
13. Type of heart pain
14. Moses' mountain
19. Hollywood legend \_\_\_ Shearer
22. \*Like circus audience's experience, hopefully
23. Bow-like structure
24. Dodge
25. Trunks
26. \*Three-\_\_\_ circus
27. What phoenix did
28. Batu Khan's people
29. JD Vance's "Hillbilly \_\_\_"
32. Civil disorder
33. African grazer
36. \*Sound of circus
38. Money under mattress, e.g.
40. \*Aerialist's bouncy safety device for \_\_\_
41. Piled
44. Twisted cotton thread
46. Give it generously
48. \*Funny one
49. James Dean's famous role
50. It will

60. Was in the hole

61. Japanese zither

62. Something \_\_\_

63. Movie "Saturday Night" subject matter, acr.

64. FedEx, verb

Answers will be provided in next week's edition.

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	5	7					3	6
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Fill in the blank squares in the grid, making sure that every row, column and 3-by-3 box includes all digits 1 through 9.

Answers will be provided in next week's edition.

## LOCAL STUDENTS SET UP LEMONADE STAND TO RAISE FUNDS TO FIGHT CHILDHOOD CANCER



Katy children are working to make a difference in the lives of children fighting childhood cancer. On July 11, students at the Big Blue Marble Academy hosted a lemonade stand fundraiser to support Alex's Lemonade Stand Foundation in the fight against childhood cancer. The event at 25950 Cinco Ranch Boulevard in Katy featured young learners making promotional posters and bracelets to sell. At the event, they also measured ingredients, poured lemonade, scooped ice and counted out customer change. Participants (left to right) included Avery M., Amelia L., Madelynn M., Maddison M. and (in back) Isabella R. starring as the lemon.

PHOTO BY SUSAN ROVEGNO

## Brothers take over Kiddie Academy® of Grand Harbor

### CONTRIBUTED REPORT

Houston natives Gorav and Nehal Jain and Gagan and Katie Jain have assumed ownership of Kiddie Academy® of Grand Harbor in Katy, having acquired the franchise location in October 2024 upon the previous owner's retirement. The brothers and their families will operate the Academy together with plans to reinforce the proprietary Life Essentials® curriculum that surpasses Texas state standards. "Our parents have always emphasized the importance of education," said Gorav Jain. "So we have high standards when it comes to early childhood development. Operationally, we've been working to ensure all our educators are well-versed in the curriculum that sets Kiddie Academy apart." Born and raised in Houston, the



PHOTO COURTESY OF KIDDIE ACADEMY

Kiddie Academy of Grand Harbor in Katy at 24404 Kingsland Boulevard will now be under the direction of two brothers who are native Houstonians.

Jain family is invested in the long-term success of children in the area. With Kiddie Academy, they aim to create local events to foster a sense of community for families in Katy. These include hosting regularly scheduled

block parties that feature local vendors, music and exciting activities for the whole family. As parents themselves, they understand what it's like to search for high quality child care that feels supportive to families.

"When my wife and I began looking for childcare for our daughter, Kiddie Academy really stood out to us for its focus on community and developing children's curiosity, critical thinking, creative expression, confidence, character and connection," added Gorav Jain.

Kiddie Academy of Grand Harbor in Katy, which is located at 24404 Kingsland Boulevard, is licensed to serve 240 children and employs 30 educators. The Academy is equipped with spacious classrooms and a large playground area with a splash pad. For more information, visit [kiddieacademy.com](http://kiddieacademy.com).

## STAFFING

from page 1

where 90% of his employees are special needs. He has not only provided job security for them, but has helped support their passions, talents, knowledge, and skills. Since opening Howdy's, he has consistently had a wait list of individuals who are interested in working with him and his company; therefore Batson decided to expand operations and create an agency where he can partner with small businesses, national brands, and organizations to employ those with special needs.

This summer, Kroger has committed to partnering with Helping Heroes Staffing to employ at least 70 people within six stores. Applications have opened mid-May and the positions will allow employees of Helping Heroes Staffing to promote various brands within Kroger who are in need of a boost of sales. The staff will be trained by Batson and his team to communicate about the brands, display the brands, and ultimately set goals to increase sales.

The Helping Heroes Staffing will host heroes at the following Kroger's in the Houston area:

- Kroger-League City, 2750 E League City Pkwy, League City

### HELPING HEROES STAFFING'S MISSION STATEMENT

Our mission is to empower individuals with special needs by providing tailored employment opportunities that match their unique strengths and abilities.

We are dedicated to fostering inclusive workplaces, advocating for equal access, and supporting each person's journey toward meaningful and fulfilling careers.

Through collaboration with employers and communities, we strive to break down barriers, promote diversity, and create pathways for success for all.

Bryan

- Kroger-Houston: 1352 W 43rd St, Houston
- Kroger-Friendswood, 151 N

Friendswood Dr, Friendswood

- Kroger-Houston, 14710 Woodforest Blvd, Houston

"This summer, Kroger is proud to partner with Helping Heroes Staffing to provide meaningful employment opportunities for at least 70 individuals across seven of our stores," said Michael Marino, Kroger's Division HR Leader. "Through this partnership, team members will be trained to support and promote key brands within our stores—gaining valuable skills in marketing, merchandising, and goal-setting that can serve them well into the future. This initiative directly aligns with Kroger's purpose of feeding the human spirit by empowering individuals, uplifting communities, and driving shared success."

Helping Heroes Staffing has also partnered with City of Houston Controller, Chris Collins to help create additional awareness and partnership in the city of Houston and surrounding areas. Hollins has expressed interest in making sure the special needs community receives the support that is needed to ensure success, according to a press release from Helping Heroes Staffing.

## KERSHNER

from page 1

and Executive Director of Federal, State, and Student Programs Natasha Moses, each of whom shared heartfelt stories about the ways Kershner shaped their lives and the entire Royal community.

In a special surprise, two of Kershner's high school friends showed up to celebrate this milestone.

Capturing Kids' Hearts, Bond 2023, the balanced scorecard, and visionary leadership are just a few of the hallmarks of Kershner's time at Royal ISD, the district

said in a statement on its website. "Under his guidance, these initiatives became more than just strategies — they became part of the district's culture. His unwavering focus on student-centered leadership, data-informed decisions, and relationship building laid a strong foundation for continued growth and success across Royal ISD," the district said. "Words can't fully express our gratitude. Thank you, Mr. Kershner, for everything you've done to 'Invest In Our Tomorrow.'"

## DEMOLITION

from page 1

"This is about more than one house; it's about creating safer, stronger neighborhoods across Precinct 4," said a spokesperson for the precinct in a July 17 press release. "Commissioner Briones and HCPH will continue to work together to deliver progress and protect public health."

If you live in unincorporated Harris County and see a nuisance property, illegal dumping, or standing water, you can call Precinct 4's Community Assistance Department at 832-927-4444. report it through the HCPH website at [publichealth.harriscountytexas.gov/Divisions-Offices/Divisions/Environmental-Public-Health/Neighborhood-Nuisance](http://publichealth.harriscountytexas.gov/Divisions-Offices/Divisions/Environmental-Public-Health/Neighborhood-Nuisance) or call Precinct 4's Community Assistance Department at 832-927-4444.

## COUNCIL

from page 1

thanked members of the local community who stepped up in response to needs for funds and supplies, as well as displaying green ribbons of support in their neighborhoods. "We've been through these disasters and we know how to respond," said Mayor Pro Tem Chris Harris.

The July 28 meeting of city council has been cancelled. The next meeting of Katy's city council will be August 11 at 6:30 p.m. at City Hall, 901 Avenue C in Katy.



## Chamber to host annual 'State of the Schools' update on August 8

### FROM STAFF REPORTS

Join with the Katy Area Chamber of Commerce for the annual 2025 State of the Schools update on August 8 from 11:30 a.m. to 1 p.m. at the Community Rooms at Legacy Stadium, 1830 Katyland Drive in Katy. Hear directly from top leaders from Katy-area school districts:

- Ken Gregorski, Superintendent of Katy ISD
- Roosevelt Nivens, Superintendent of Lamar CISD

• Megan C. Pape, Superintendent of Royal ISD  
The superintendents will share key updates, plans for the year ahead, and how local schools are preparing students to lead in a fast-growing region.

This event brings together business and education leaders to foster collaboration and build a stronger workforce for tomorrow. Reserve your seat: <https://loom.ly/2Ofzc6A>.

## MEETINGS

from page 1

this year, where elected officials, agency heads and other local officials were given information and participated in discussions.

"That went very well. Right now, we are not only preparing the summary of that meeting, but we're also continuing to work on the public scoping meeting materials that will be held or conducted in late August, Parrent said.

"At that time, we will be sharing the same materials that we share with the agencies, the purpose and need report, the projects schedule, the alternatives methodology, and then our coordination plan, along with the eight road alignments. We will be sharing all of that material with the public to take their comments on all that material."

The official announcement and meeting date will be made this month in the Federal Register, along with other notifications in the media, online, and in emails.

After the public scoping meeting, Jacobs and TxDOT will gather the comments from the meeting, review them and take them into consideration as they begin narrowing the eight alignments down to just three potential road alignments. All of that will be presented again to the public next year, and then officials will select a preferred alignment that will be rolled out to the public in late 2027 or 2028.

The timeline for both segments is available on TxDOT's 36A website at <https://www.txdot.gov/projects/projects-studies/houston/36a.html>.

About the Highway 36A Coalition  
The goal of the Highway 36A Coalition is to improve regional mobility by organizing local governments, elected officials, economic development organizations, non-profit organizations, private businesses, and individuals to advocate for the responsible development of a Highway 36 Alternative ("A") regional transportation infrastructure.

The Highway 36A Coalition's mission is to advocate for the development of a regional transportation infrastructure from the Brazosport area to Hempstead and beyond, which will provide for improved hurricane evacuation, more efficient mobility and economic development for the region and the state.



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## Fort Bend County Fair candidates for queen announced

### CONTRIBUTED REPORT

The Fort Bend County Fair Association announced the candidates for the 2025 Fort Bend County Fair Queen Scholarship Contest on July 14, with six outstanding young women representing schools across the county.

This year's candidates include Aylla Goins of Lamar Consolidated High School, Gianna Jarlowe of Clements High School, Aubrey Ostertag of Fulshear High School, Leighton Lara of Foster High School, Kendall Duff of Fulshear High School, and Kaydence Miller of Travis High School. Each candidate will be vying for the crown and several scholarship opportunities.

The candidates gathered for a welcome meeting at the Fairgrounds where they participated

in a mandatory orientation, met with members of the Queen Scholarship Committee, and posed for official photos. The 2024 Fair Queen, Saige Sowa, welcomed the new candidates and shared her experiences from the past year, which included appearances at community events including RodeoHouston and the Fort Bend County Fair's Summer Night Gala.

"The Fair Queen title is more than ceremonial—it represents a yearlong commitment to leadership, service, and community involvement," said a spokesperson for the fair in the July 14 press release. "The Queen will serve as an ambassador during the Fair's BBQ Cookoff and 10-day run, attending livestock shows, auctions, receptions, and other official events."

The 2025 Fort Bend County



PHOTO COURTESY OF THE FORT BEND COUNTY FAIR ASSOCIATION

The Fort Bend County Fair Association has announced this year's candidates for fair queen. Left to right: Front row: Aylla Goins of Lamar Consolidated High School, 2024 Fort Bend County Fair Queen Saige Sowa, and Gianna Jarlowe of Clements High School. Back row: Aubrey Ostertag of Fulshear High School, Leighton Lara of Foster High School, Kendall Duff of Fulshear High School, and Kaydence Miller of Travis High School.

Fair Queen will be crowned on Friday, September 26, 2025, during the opening weekend of the Fair.

For more information about

the Fair Queen Scholarship Contest or other Fair events, please visit [www.fortbendcountyfair.com](http://www.fortbendcountyfair.com) or contact the Fair Office at 281-342-6171.

## La Segarra builders begin home sales in new Brookshire community

### CONTRIBUTED REPORT

Model homes are now open and sales have begun in La Segarra, a new Bold Fox Development community in Brookshire, the company announced in a July 14 press release.

Cyrene Homes, Smith Douglas Homes and Tricoast Homes have each opened a model and have homes under way in the community's first phase of 117 homes. Designs by Smith Douglas Homes start in the \$230,000s, while Cyrene Homes' and Tricoast Homes' pricing is from the \$260,000s.

"With homes priced well below \$300,000, La Segarra is where people who have only dreamed of owning a home can achieve their goal," said Alex Kamkar, Managing Shareholder of Bold Fox Development. "Current builder incentives that lower interest rates and help with closing costs make the dream of homeownership even more attainable."

The community reflects the landscape of the La Segarra region northwest of Barcelona, Spain through using ancient color tones, stone blocks and other natural materials. Flora reminiscent of the region adds to the overall aesthetic.

Planned for an eventual 658 homes, the 215-acre La Segarra features four community lakes surrounded by green space. Residents will also enjoy community trails, a central plaza common area, neighborhood parks, and a 1.8-acre lakeside recreation area.

"La Segarra is intentionally designed to foster a close-knit feel," Kamkar said. "Neighbors will meet on the trails, in the parks and at the central plaza, creating additional bonds and a sense of belonging."

La Segarra is located along Gassner Road and FM 362, less than four miles from Interstate 10. Students attend schools within Royal Independent School District.

Learn more at [www.lasegarratx.com](http://www.lasegarratx.com).

## Royal ISD invites local businesses to connect with RISD employees at Aug. 8 convocation



FILE PHOTO

Royal ISD employees prepare for the start of the school year at the district's annual convocation, shown in this 2024 file photo. This year's event is scheduled for August 8 at Royal High School and local businesses are invited to attend and connect with district employees.

### FROM STAFF REPORTS

Royal ISD is seeking amazing community partners for the 2025 Royal ISD Convocation on August 8—and local businesses are invited to participate.

Dust off those boots and register now to host a table at this high-energy event as the district kicks off the new school year in true Falcon style. Royal ISD is gearing up to welcome approximately 700 employees with an electrifying experience and is asking community partners to help make it unforgettable.

Royal provides the tables—businesses bring the spirit! Decorate your space and share branded items to promote your organization during the breakfast portion of the event. It's a great way to support the district's staff and connect with the Falcon family.

The event will be held at Royal High School, 34499 Royal Road, Brookshire on August 8 from 7:45 a.m. to 12 p.m.

To register, or for more information, please contact Christi Ginn at the district at [cginn@royal-isd.net](mailto:cginn@royal-isd.net).

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## Local student-led nonprofit Empower and Connect leads two global initiatives

FROM STAFF REPORTS

Empower and Connect, a student-founded 501(c)(3) nonprofit based in Katy, is leading two powerful global initiatives as part of their mission to empower underserved groups in both local and global communities through youth-led innovation, education, and sustainable development. This year, teams of high school students from Tompkins High School and international partners have launched two major initiatives driving real-world impact in Kenya and India:

- **Inventor Workshops (Team A - 2025):** Equipping volunteers with advanced training in Autodesk Inventor, a professional-grade 3D design software. These students are now mentoring underserved youth in Kenya, teaching them how to design and simulate engineering models—an opportunity that builds career pathways, fosters innovation, and bridges global equity gaps in STEM education. The team has 30 active student volunteers working with 20 underserved youth in Kenya and is collaborating with COHECF Kenya, a nonprofit providing computer lab access and hardware for the duration of the program. The program is expected to last four months through the summer of 2025. The group's goal is to provide foundational training in Autodesk Inventor to help students explore careers in engineering, design,

and innovation. So far, results have exceeded expectations, organizers say. Students are grasping complex design concepts faster than anticipated and are on track to apply these skills in real-world Kenyan government youth innovation programs.

- **Water Filter Project (Team B - 2025):** This team also has 30 active members who are working with approximately 20 medical students in India. In partnership with the Trans-Nzoia County Government (Kenya) and medical student leaders at Grant Government Medical College (Mumbai), the team is distributing affordable, high-efficiency water filters to families in Kitale and Mumbai. These filters eliminate bacteria, metals, and contaminants, improving public health and promoting long-term access to clean water. The goal is to distribute 50 filters total — 25 in Parel and Dhara (India), and 25 in Kitale (Kenya). Filters are designed by the nonprofit's U.S. team, using 3D modeling and tested with health and safety protocols and are manufactured via CNC machining in China using BPA-free, human-safe materials. Once quality checks are complete, the filters are shipped to Houston for final lab testing, and then distributed on-site in India and Kenya through partner organizations and local governments. Expected outcomes include a measurable reduction in waterborne illness risk and improved

community sanitation.

The nonprofit is also developing research publications examining these initiatives through the lens of health, environmental sustainability, governance, and social equity, said Ishaan Menon, outreach officer for Empower and Connect, in an email to the Katy Times. "These studies reflect our commitment to not just service, but scalable, evidence-driven change. This isn't just about students volunteering—it's about students leading. Empower and Connect operates with the professionalism of a global nonprofit and the passion of youth-driven changemakers."

Empower and Connect was founded January 2023 by high school student Yuvi Parmar after witnessing quality-of-life disparities in Greater Houston. The nonprofit grew when he partnered with peers Elvin Li and Allen Nguyen to form the Board of Directors. What began as a small community effort has evolved into an international, youth-led movement for educational and health equity. The group's current membership is 75+ high school students across Texas and international partners. The organization is funded through a combination of sponsorships from local businesses, individual donations, and grassroots fundraising events. Empower and Connect is fully youth-run. All strategy, execution, and leadership is student-led, with minimal adult oversight.

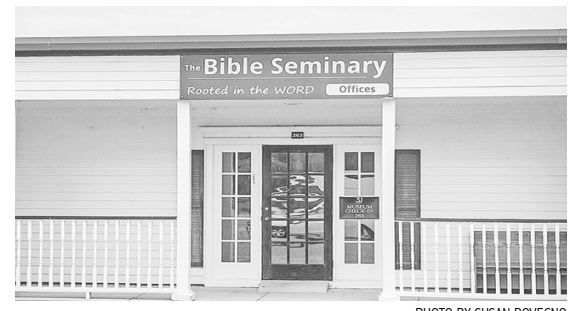


PHOTO BY SUSAN ROVEGNO

The Bible Seminary at 2655 S. Mason Road in Katy is celebrating its fifteenth year, along with a record 100 graduates, in a special commencement ceremony on August 3.

## TBS celebrates 15 years

FROM STAFF REPORTS

Join The Bible Seminary as the local college celebrates 15 years and a major milestone—over 100 graduates commissioned for Kingdom service. The college made the announcement in a July 15 post on its Facebook page.

Commencement celebrating the TBS Class of 2025 is scheduled for Sunday, August 17 at 4 p.m. at The Waters Church, 2210 Katy Fort Bend Road in Katy. The ceremony will also be available online.

If planning on attending the commencement ceremony, please RSVP at [www.facebook.com/thebibleseminary](http://www.facebook.com/thebibleseminary) before Sunday, August 3 and specify if you'll be attending in person or online, along with the total number attending.

The Bible Seminary is located at 2655 S. Mason Road in Katy. The institution is an independent, non-denominational, 501(c)(3) charitable institution of higher education incorporated in Texas in 2010 to offer training for laity and vocational ministry professionals. On-campus and Distance Education programs include a Certificate of Theological Studies non-degree program, as well as Dual Degree Completion, Master of Arts, and Master of Divinity degree programs.

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**NOTICE**

THE MONDAY, JULY 28, 2025, REGULAR CITY COUNCIL MEETING OF THE CITY OF KATY, TEXAS, HAS BEEN CANCELLED DUE TO LACK OF QUORUM.

**By Order of Mayor and City Council  
City of Katy, Texas  
July 15, 2025**

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**July 17 Puzzle Answers**

A	F	A	R		N	B	A		H	A	T			
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1	7	9	3	8	2	6	5	4
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9	2	3	6	1	5	7	4	8
7	3	6	2	5	9	4	8	1
2	9	1	4	3	8	5	7	6
5	8	4	1	6	7	3	9	2

**PUBLISHER'S NOTICE**

All real estate advertising in this newspaper is subject to the Fair Housing Act which makes it illegal to advertise "any preference, limitation or discrimination based on race, color, religion, sex, handicap, familial status or national origin, or an intention to make any such preference, limitation or discrimination." Familial status includes children under the age of 18 living with parents or legal custodians, pregnant women and people securing custody of children under 18.

This newspaper will not knowingly accept any advertising for real estate which is in violation of the law. Our readers are hereby informed that all dwellings advertised in this newspaper are available on an equal opportunity basis. To complain of discrimination call HUD toll-free at 1-800-669-9777. The toll-free telephone number for the hearing impaired is 1-800-927-9275.

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**INVITATION TO BIDDERS**

Sealed **Electronic** Bids addressed to Friendswood Development Company o.b.o. Harris County Municipal Utility District No. 465, Attention Cynthia Hill, President, Board of Directors, will be **electronically** received, until 11:00 a.m. Local Time, Thursday, August 7, 2025, and then publicly opened and read via Teleconference meeting for "Construction of Winward Wastewater Treatment Plant Phase 3, for Harris County Municipal Utility District No. 465, Harris County, Texas." Call-In Information: Phone Number: (469) 965-2602, Phone Conference ID: 516 798 635#. Scope of Work of the Contract Documents includes the following: Site work for Wastewater Treatment Plant expansion. Bids received after the closing time will be returned unopened. A **NON-MANDATORY** pre-bid conference will be held **remotely** on Thursday, July 31, 2025, at 11:00 a.m. Local Time, via teleconference. The conference call number is (469) 965-2602. The access code is 537 746 353#. Each Bid must be accompanied by a Bid bond or a certified or cashier's check, acceptable to the Owner, in an amount not less than two percent (2%) of the total amount Bid, as a guarantee that the successful bidder will enter into the Contract Documents and execute the Bonds on the forms provided and provide the required insurance certificates and Bonds within seven (7) days after the date Contract Documents are received by the successful bidder. If a certified or cashier's check is provided, the successful bidder shall deliver, at the bid opening address, the original certified or cashier's check within one (1) business day of receipt of the bid opening. Copies of the bidding documents may be reviewed and obtained from [www.CivcastUSA.com](http://www.CivcastUSA.com): search "Winward WWTP Ph 3". Bidders must register on this website in order to view and/or download specifications, plans, soils report, and environmental reports for this Project. There is **NO** charge to view or download documents. Bidder must submit its Bid and Bid Securities in compliance with Owner's Order Adopting Section 49.2731

Electronic Bidding Rules and all Bids and Bid Securities must be submitted through [www.CivcastUSA.com](http://www.CivcastUSA.com). Bidder must register on this website to submit a Bid and Bid Security and there is no charge to submit Bids and Bid Securities on this website. By submitting a Bid, bidder acknowledges and agrees that the Contract Documents may be accepted, executed, or agreed to using an Electronic Signature, as defined by and in accordance with Owner's Electronic Signature Rules for Construction Contracts. The Owner reserves the right to reject any or all Bids and to waive all defects and irregularities in bidding or bidding process except the time for submitting a Bid. The successful bidder, if any, will be the responsible bidder, which in the Board's judgment will be most advantageous to the District and result in the best and most economical completion of the Project.

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

**INVITATION TO BIDDERS**

Sealed Bids addressed to Willow Fork Drainage District, Attention: Mr. John Savage, President, Board of Directors, will be received at the office of LJA Engineering, Inc, 1904 West Grand Parkway North, Suite 120, Katy, Texas 77449, until 11:00 a.m. Local Time, Thursday, August 7, 2025, and then publicly opened and read at the office LJA Engineering, Inc., 1904 West Grand Parkway North, Suite 120, Katy, Texas 77449 for "Ditch Va12 Rehabilitation for Willow Fork Drainage District, Fort Bend County, Texas." In addition to the opening of sealed Bids at the address above, you may attend the Bid Opening by telephone by dialing +1 346-202-6170, Phone Conference ID: 797 595 269 #.

Scope of Work of the Contract Documents includes the following: Excavation & rebuilding of approximately 5,100LF of an existing 150' width grass covered drainage ditch including backslope swales and installation of new interceptor structures, rebuilding of existing storm sewer outfalls, construction of new storm sewer structures and slope paving, riprap installation, importation of approximately 15,000CY of fill and excavation, hauling & offsite disposal of approximately 2,500CY of sand and silt.

Bids received after the closing time will be returned unopened. A non-mandatory pre-bid conference will be held in-person on Thursday, July 31, 2025, at 11:00 a.m. Local Time at the office of the Engineer, LJA Engineering, Inc., 1904 West Grand Parkway North, Suite 120, Katy, Texas 77449. To attend the audio format non-mandatory pre-bid conference, dial +1 346-202-6170, Phone Conference ID: 296 730 938#.

Each Bid must be accompanied by a Bid bond or a certified or cashier's check, acceptable to the Owner, in an amount not less than two percent (2%) of the total amount Bid, as a guarantee that the successful bidder will enter into the Contract Documents and execute the Bonds on the forms provided and provide the required insurance certificates and Bonds within seven (7) days after the date Contract Documents are received by the successful bidder. If a certified or cashier's check is provided, the successful bidder shall deliver, at the bid opening address, the original certified or cashier's check within one (1) business day of receipt of the bid opening.

Bidding documents may be examined at LJA Engineering, Inc., 1904 West Grand Parkway North, Suite 120, Katy, Texas 77449, or at [www.CivcastUSA.com](http://www.CivcastUSA.com).

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

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

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

**PUBLIC NOTICE**

Cellco Partnership and Its Controlled Affiliates Doing Business as Verizon Wireless (Verizon Wireless) proposes to collocate wireless communications antennas on a 44.3-foot monopole at the approx. vicinity of 3608 2/3 Fannin Street, Houston, Harris County, TX 77004. Public comments regarding potential effects from this site on historic properties may be submitted within 30 days from the date of this publication to: *Trileaf Corp, Mitra Rahimi, m.rahimi@trileaf.com, 7700 W. Hwy 71, Suite 200, Austin, Texas 78735, 512-519-9388.*

**Katy ISD Provides Evaluations for Students with Suspected Disabilities**

The Katy Independent School District Department of Special Education provides evaluations for students with suspected disabilities to identify every student with a disability living within the district's boundaries. These evaluations are designed to help identify children who may qualify for the district's special education or Section 504 program.

Students with all categories of disabilities between the ages of 3 and 21 can be provided with services to ensure their success in school. These services and supports may be provided through Section 504 of the Rehabilitation Act or through the Individuals with Disabilities Education Act. Special Education services are also available to children who are visually and/or auditory impaired starting at birth.

If you are aware of a child who may be challenged with a disability, please contact the Katy ISD Department of Special Education at 281-396-2066. The Department of Special Education will coordinate efforts to evaluate the student and, if eligible, ensure that the student is provided with supports and services needed to obtain academic and non-academic benefit. Please do not hesitate to call should you have any questions.

Katy Independent School District  
6301 South Stadium Lane  
Katy, TX 77494

Katy Independent School District is an equal opportunity employer. The Board of Trustees, and its agents, officers, and staff members shall not discriminate based on gender, race, disabling condition, age, color, religion, national origin, military status, or any other legally protected status in making decisions regarding staff members or students.

**INVITATION TO BIDDERS**

Sealed Electronic Bids addressed to Harris County Municipal Utility District No. 165, will be electronically received, until **2:00 p.m. Local Time, Wednesday, August 20, 2025**, and then publicly opened and read at the office of SWA Group Landscape Architects, 712 Main St., 6th Floor, Houston, Texas 77002 for Construction of "Avalon at Cypress Section 10 & 12 Landscape" for Harris County Municipal Utility District 165, Harris County, Texas"

Scope of Work of the Contract includes the following: concrete trails plaza, seat walls, furnishings, sprinkler irrigation, grading, planting, grassing, and landscape maintenance.

In addition to the opening of sealed Bids at the address above, you may view the public opening of sealed Bids via Zoom. To join via Zoom call Telephone Number 888-475-4499, Meeting ID: 928 7247 3122 and use Passcode: 569981 or <https://swagroup.zoom.us/j/92872473122?pwd=IcLkXjIIS5TuocFvqgqoUT1glMZloob.B>

Bids received after the closing time will not be considered. A **NON-MANDATORY** pre-bid conference will be held by teleconference on Tuesday, August 5, 2025, at 10:00 a.m. Local Time. To join call Telephone Number 888-475-4499, Meeting ID: 910 1843 8030 and use Passcode: 840077 or <https://swagroup.zoom.us/j/91018438030?pwd=fnG03OaNpl5IZnPlOWJv0BgV7maCqx.1>

Each Bid must be accompanied by a Bid Bond or a certified or cashier's check, acceptable to the Owner, in an amount not less than two percent (2%) of the total amount Bid, as a guarantee that the successful bidder will enter into the Contract and execute the Bonds on the forms provided and provide the required insurance certificates within seven (7) days after the date Contract Documents are received by the Contractor. If a certified or cashier's check is provided, the successful bidder shall deliver, at the bid opening address, the original certified or cashier's check within one (1) business day of receipt of the bid opening.

Copies of the bidding documents may be reviewed and obtained from [www.CivcastUSA.com](http://www.CivcastUSA.com): search SWA project name. Bidders must register on this website in order to view and/or download specifications, plans, and associated documents for this Project. There is **NO** charge to view or download documents.

Bidder submitting electronic Bids through Civcast must submit its Bid and Bid Securities in compliance with Owner's Order Adopting Section 49.2731 Electronic Bidding Rules and all electronic Bids and Bid Securities must be submitted through [www.CivcastUSA.com](http://www.CivcastUSA.com). Bidder must register on this website to submit a Bid and Bid Security and there is no charge to submit Bids and Bid Securities on this website.

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

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

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



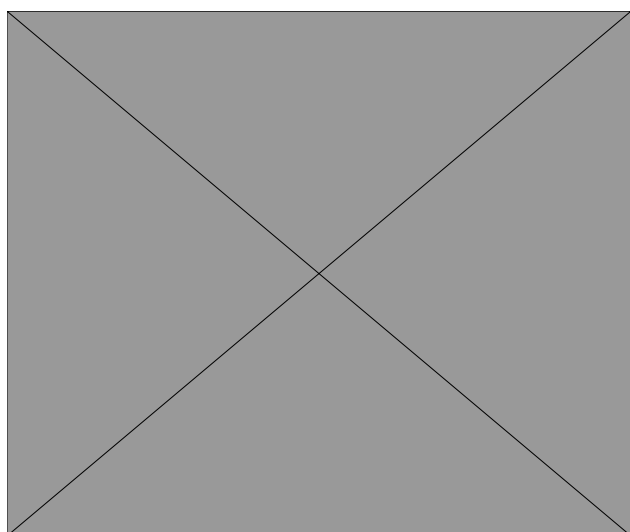
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## Katy ISD safety campaign recognized as one of region's top public outreach efforts

### CONTRIBUTED REPORT

Joining some of the region's largest and most respected organizations, Katy ISD has been named a bronze award winner in the Public Service Campaigns category at the 2025 Excalibur Awards for its comprehensive, ongoing safety messaging initiatives focused on awareness, proactive practices, and community-wide engagement. The campaign reaches more than 96,000 students, as well as educators, families, and community members across the district's more than 100 campuses and support facilities, the district said in its July 3 press release.

Titled "Keeping the Public Informed While Keeping School Safe," the initiative highlights Katy ISD's strong commitment to creating safe and secure learning environments through education, clear communication, and proactive prevention, the press release said. The campaign features a strategic mix of social media outreach, informational videos, press releases, digital news-



Katy ISD Communications Team

PHOTO COURTESY OF KATY ISD

letters, posters, and targeted messaging on the district's website — all aimed at keeping students, staff, and families informed, prepared, and safe.

"We are especially proud of this recognition from the PRSA, as Katy ISD was the only K-12 organization to receive an award," said Andrea Grooms, Katy ISD Chief Communications Officer. "This honor

reflects not only the dedication and creativity of the Communications team in leading the campaign but also the shared commitment across our entire district — from campus leaders and emergency operations personnel to our police department, Board of Trustees, and Superintendent. Their vision and support ensure that safety remains a top priority in

everything we do as a school community."

PRSA Houston leadership echoed Grooms' sentiments, praising the district's campaign for its impact and effectiveness.

"The Excalibur Awards celebrate the highest standards of excellence in communications in the Houston region," said Laci Theriot, president of PRSA Houston. "The Katy ISD's safety campaign exemplifies how thoughtful, strategic public relations can make a meaningful difference in the community. We commend their team for demonstrating how clear, consistent messaging can build trust and promote safety on such a broad scale."

PRSA's Houston Chapter is one of the nation's largest chapters. Founded in 1950, members represent the area's major industries, including health care, oil and gas, advertising, banking and finance and nonprofit work. PRSA is regarded as the leading professional organization for the public relations and communications industry, with chapters across the United States and South America.

## RISD GRAD NAMED HLS&R SCHOLAR



PHOTO COURTESY OF ROYAL ISD

Recent Royal High School graduate Andy Perez was named a 2025 Houston Livestock Show and Rodeo (HLSR) Scholar, Royal ISD announced on July 14. Perez was recognized at a special HLSR ceremony, where his family joined him to celebrate the achievement. "Andy's selection as an HLSR Scholar reflects his exceptional commitment to excellence throughout his time at Royal High School," said a spokesperson for the district in a press release.

## BIS Houston celebrates outstanding IB results, university offers for class of 2025

### CONTRIBUTED REPORT

On July 15 the British International School of Houston announced another year of exceptional academic achievement by the Class of 2025 in both the International Baccalaureate (IB) Diploma Programme (DP) and Career-related Programme (CP). The school is located at 2203 N. Westgreen Blvd. in Katy.

This year's IB results are a testament to the school's unwavering commitment to academic excellence, according to a press release from the school:

- Average IB score of 34 points, significantly above the global average of 30.58.
- 100% pass rate in the IB Career-related Programme (CP) and a 92% pass rate in the IB Diploma Programme (DP), surpassing the global average of 81.26%.
- 71% of students scored at or above the global average.
- 24% of students achieved over 40 points, a distinction earned by only 4% of IBDP candidates worldwide.
- Average subject grade of 5.2, compared to the global average of 4.89.
- 49% of all grades were 6 or 7, equivalent to A\*-A at A Level.
- Five students earned the prestigious bilingual diploma,



PHOTO BY SUSAN ROVEGNO

The British International School of Houston is located at 2203 N. Westgreen in Katy, and serves students from countries around the world.

demonstrating advanced proficiency in two languages.

"These results reflect the resilience, ambition, and hard work of our students, as well as the dedication of our exceptional teaching staff," said Barrie Scrymgeour, Principal at BIS Houston. "We are incredibly proud of what the Class of 2025 has accomplished."

Beyond academic success, BIS Houston students are making their mark on the global stage. The Class of 2025 has received offers from some of the world's most prestigious universities, including:

- Columbia University

- Imperial College London
- University College London (UCL)
- University of Toronto
- McGill University
- Rice University
- University of Edinburgh
- King's College London
- University of Southern California
- Georgetown University
- University of Texas at Austin
- Purdue University
- And many more across the U.S., U.K., Canada, Europe, and Asia.

Key university outcomes include:

- 1 in 2 students received

offers from top 100 global universities

- 1 in 3 students accepted to Top 50 U.S. universities
- Admissions to elite groups such as the Russell Group and the Ivy League
- \$6.3 million USD in total scholarship offers

"At BIS Houston, we don't just prepare students for college — we empower them to access the world's most competitive academic institutions," said Scrymgeour.

For more information about BIS Houston and its academic programs, visit <https://www.nordangliaeducation.com/bis-houston>.

## RISD teacher named 2025 Region 4 'Teacher of the Year' finalist

### CONTRIBUTED REPORT

Royal ISD announced July 14 that Alicia Russo-Murrell has been named a 2025 Region 4 Teacher of the Year Finalist, a prestigious honor that recognizes



ALICIA RUSSO-MURRELL

outstanding educators. The Region 4 Teacher of the Year program celebrates excellence in education and honors teachers who inspire both students and peers.

Russo-Murrell, a dedicated educator at Royal High School, is known for her student-centered approach, innovative teaching strategies, and unwavering commitment to student growth and success, the district said in the press release. Her selection as one of the top finalists in Region 4 is a testament to the powerful impact she makes in her classroom every day, the district said.

"We are thrilled to have Mrs. Russo-Murrell as a Region 4 Finalist for Secondary Teacher of the Year and represent the Royal Falcon family," said RISD Superintendent Megan Pape. "In speaking with so many, Mrs. Russo-Murrell pours her heart and soul into teaching our students, ensuring a high level of learning, and supporting students so they know how to apply math in their everyday lives. We celebrate with her on this amazing accomplishment."

## TWO SHOWS IN ONE

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Katy

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## KISD student-athletes build leadership skills at annual S.A.L.T. conference

### CONTRIBUTED REPORT

On Wednesday, July 16, nearly 350 Katy ISD student-athletes came together for a day of leadership development and personal growth, trading summer break for an opportunity to build skills that will serve them on and off the field.

Every summer, the district holds its annual Student Athlete Leadership Team (S.A.L.T.) conference, which is dedicated to enhancing students' leadership skills and personal growth. The students represent all UIL sports played in Katy ISD and are nominated to

participate by a member of their campus coaching staff for their leadership potential and commitment to excellence.

Special guests in attendance included Ryder Anderson of the New Orleans Saints, Stefan Crichton of the Arizona Diamondbacks and Katy ISD Hall of Honor member Shane Ros.

Katy ISD Superintendent Ken Gregorski emphasized the vital role athletics play in teaching essential life skills, positively impacting students, and strengthening their commitment to academic success.

"This event is about much more than sports – it is about leadership, growth and how student athletes can make a difference both on and off the field," he said. "By taking part in the S.A.L.T. program, our students are setting themselves apart – gaining skills and experiences that will help them succeed in life, not just athletics."

Stephen Mackey, founder and CEO of the 2Words character development program, served as the keynote speaker and main facilitator for the day. Mackey speaks annually to Katy ISD student athletes about ways they can



PHOTO COURTESY OF KATY ISD

Ryder Anderson of the New Orleans Saints was a special guest at Katy ISD's Student Athlete Leadership Team (S.A.L.T.) conference on July 16, which was attended by 350 of the district's student athletes.

become community and business pillars through lessons learned in athletics, imbuing them with the tools to be generational leaders. He encourages students to think about what leadership means to them, and through friendly competition and discussion, they learn

from each other.

Approximately 15,000 students, or 16% of Katy ISD's total student population, participate in a district sport at the junior high and high school level. Visit the Katy ISD Athletic webpage at [ww.katysd.org/athletics/home](http://ww.katysd.org/athletics/home) to learn more.

## Aristoi wins Texas Cup for second straight year



PHOTO BY SUSAN ROVEGNO

Aristoi Classical Academy Katy, home of the Griffins, announced on its Facebook page that the school has once again been named the Texas Cup Winner for the 2024–2025 school year.

### FROM STAFF REPORTS

Aristoi Classical Academy Katy announced July 11 on its Facebook page that the school has once again been named the Texas Cup Winner for the 2024–2025 school year. The school is located at 5610 Morton Road in Katy.

This marks two consecutive years that Aristoi Katy has earned this top honor in the Texas Charter School Academic and Athletic League (TCSAAL), an extraordinary accomplishment that reflects the strength, dedication, and spirit of our scholars, coaches, faculty, Booster Club, families, and administration, the post said.

The Texas Cup is awarded to the #1 varsity school in the state based on cumulative points earned through academic, fine arts, and athletic competitions throughout the year. Competing among over 350 charter schools, Aristoi Katy emerged victorious again with a total of 54 points.

### THE TEXAS CUP

Rank	Campus	Points
1	Aristoi Classical Academy Katy Campus	54
2	Somerset Academy Collegiate	52
1-3	STISD – Health Professionals	45
1-3	STISD – Science Academy	45

### 2024-2025 HIGHLIGHTS BY COMPETITION

- Large Choir – State Champion (10 points)
- Girls Volleyball – State Runner up (8 points)
- Boys Volleyball – State Runner up (8 points)
- Flag Football – State Runner up (8 points)
- Girls Cross Country – Regional Champion (4 points)
- Girls Soccer – Regional Runner up (4 points)
- Boys Cross Country – State Advancement (2 points)
- Boys Track and Field – State Advancement (2 points)
- Chess – State Advancement (2 points)
- Girls Basketball – Co-Division Champion (2 points)
- Girls Singles Tennis – State Runner Up (2 points)
- Boys Singles Tennis – State Semifinalist (1 point)
- Mixed Doubles Tennis – State Semifinalist (1 point)

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