Katy Times



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

THURSDAY, SEPTEMBER 10, 2020

Brookshire deliberates construction variances

By R. HANS MILLER

Brookshire City Council examined several items of city policy at its Sept. 3 meeting. Variances were denied and approved for small structures in the city, a road repair bid was rejected and updates on trash and animal control services were provided.

First up was a discussion on whether to allow a mini house to be placed at a property on Seventh Street. Immediately following that was a request for two variances to allow a mobile home park to be built on Gassner Road. The first variance would have allowed the lot size to be 1,950 square feet, while the second would have allowed for back in spaces rather than pull through spaces. Both the request for the back in spaces and the mini home were denied while the variance for the lot size was approved due to what city attorney Justin Pruitt said was confusing terminology in the associated city ordinance.

City Council instructed Pruitt to rewrite the ordinance to add appropriate clarity regarding the lot size issue.

A bid by AAA Asphalt for the repair of Stalknecht Road was declined after Alderman Eric Green said he'd reached out to Waller County Engineer Yancy Scott to discuss utilizing an interlocal agreement with the county that would reduce the cost for repairing the roadway. Stalknecht Road is a split responsibility between the county and city from a maintenance perspective. Council directed Pruitt to review the agreement with Waller County to identify how much of the repair would be the city's responsibility and how much would be under the county's purview.

Council members also discussed the status of the city's animal control department which is currently unstaffed. The city had previously directed Police Chief Brandal Jackson to hire an applicant, but Mayor Darrell Branch said he was not satisfied with that applicant and wished for other options to be explored. With the mayor acting as approval for the hiring of city staff, the situation was tabled until additional information could be examined.

Alderman Lee Jones gave a brief update regarding the rebuilding

See **BROOKSHIRE**, page 5

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September 10, 2020 12 pages | \$1

KISD returns to campuses



R. HANS MILLER

McElwain Principal Euberta Lucas spends time with a first grade student at Katy ISD's most recently opened campus, McElwain Elementary. Lucas said she was proud of the hard work her teachers and staff had put into making certain the brand new campus, located in the Elyson master planned community, was on track to provide students both in person and through the district's Katy Virtual Academy. Jordan High School also opened for the first time this year.

Social distancing, Katy Virtual Academy keep moving along

By R. HANS MILLER

hile scattered showers kept the weather cool and Katy ISD administrators gathered to excitedly cheer young students on at McElwain Elementary School, KISD's newest elementary, students arriving at the school seemed to take everything in stride as they strolled into the campus. Meanwhile, McElwain's staff and KISD administrators were on hand to make certain students transitioned smoothly back into classrooms – an event the district has been working hard to prepare for said KISD Superintendent Ken Gregorski.

"We haven't had in person instruction

since March and we've been planning since then," Gregorski said. "We've been putting a lot of plans in place (and) we feel we have some of the best plans around. We feel very safe to return to school with protocols we put in place and we're just super excited."

Over the last several weeks, KISD has been making it a point to reassure parents that they have been proactive in protecting their student body of about 84,000 students. In mid-August, the district held a press conference to discuss the amount of personal protective equipment the district had stockpiled and made accessible to students, faculty and staff. That PPE included about 135,000 pairs of gloves, more than half a million reusable masks, hundreds

of thermometers and tens of thousands of sanitizing wipes to keep campuses safe and sanitized.

About half of the district's students chose to continue on with the Katy Virtual Academy, the district's online program for parents who choose to take a more cautious approach. At McElwain, about 370 of the campus' 811 student body began attending in-person instruction Tuesday morning.

Those students have extra precautions to take before they even reach campus though. In mid-August, the district also released various safety videos explaining the safety protocols students and parents

See **KATY ISD**, page 5

Kingsland Baptist Church expanding to second campus

By R. HANS MILLER NEWS EDITOR

Kingsland Baptist Church is looking forward to opening a new campus at 24111 Stockdick School Road in Katy, Pastor Ryan Rush said. The new campus will be the second for the church which has its original location at 20555 Kinglsand Blvd. in Katy. Rush said the focus will be on supporting families, especially children.

"Growing up, our house was always like the house in the neighborhood where all the kids came, you know? And it was a safe place and we saw (that) everywhere you turn around here there's houses built up, but there's not a lot of church space to hang out, so we'd love to be the 'house' in the neighborhood where all the kids come," Rush said.

See **CHURCH**, page 5



R. HANS MILLE

The new Kingsland Baptist Church campus is located at the intersection of Stockdick School and Porter roads, just a stones throw away from Paetow High School. The campus features indoor and outdoor playgrounds and will include a Great Harvest Bread Company location. Pastor Ryan Rush hopes to have the facility open most days to provide a safe place for children and their families to spend time.



R. HANS MILLER

Royal ISD has put together a \$38.4 million bond election that will be on the ballot this coming Nov. 3. Included in the bond are a variety of measures to update school buildings and other infrastructure to ensure the district is ready for the upcoming growth it is anticipating in the coming years.

Royal ISD seeks voter OK for \$38.4M bond

By R. HANS MILLER NEWS EDITOR

Royal ISD has announced a bond election will be on the ballot for district residents when they hit the polls this Nov. 3. The three-proposition package comes out to a total of \$38.4 million and is not expected to cause the district's tax rate to increase and is expected to improve student safety, said RISD Superintendent Rick Kershner.

"Obviously, our goal is to always provide a safe environment and an environment that is conducive for all kids to be successful in learning," Kershner said.

The bond package is intended to address two things, Kershner

said. The first is the district's upcoming growth and the second is aging infrastructure across RISD schools, including buildings and outdoor spaces which are in need or repair, replacement or improvement.

Foreseeing growth

Growth comes in the form of new subdivisions coming into RISD such as Freeman Ranch which is currently under construction on FM 529, Kershner said. He knows at least 20 homes are currently under construction in the development now.

RISD Business Manager Glad-

See **ROYAL ISD**, page 5



KCM to hold golf tourney | Cake artist to appear

By R. HANS MILLER

Katy Christian Ministries has announced plans for a socially-distanced golf tournament fundraiser set for Sept. 28 with a goal of raising \$100,000 to support operations at the local nonprofit that includes a food pantry and family crisis counseling, among other services.

"KCM is truly blessed to have such a passionate community behind us," Deysi Crespo, Executive Director of Katy Christian Ministries, said. "Myself and the entire KCM team, thank you for your support of the work we do and of this reformatted tournament."

Tee times will begin at 8 a.m. according to a KCM press release with about 35 teams competing at the 18-hole course at Willow Fork County Club in Katy. In order to enable social distancing, the tournament will feature staggered tee times rather than the traditional shotgun start.



Katy Christian Ministries holds an annual fundraiser each year to bring in funding for its programs that help battered spouses and families dealing with food insecurity. This year's event was delayed due to COVID-19 but is now set for Sept. 28 with social distancing precautions in place.

In addition to changing the way the tournament begins, the event will feature an online silent auction that both golfers and the general public can participate in. Multiple raffles are planned and a Hole in One competition which has a new Chevy

Equinox as a grand prize. A closest to the pin game, raffles and Bubba Drive are also planned.

Registration is still open to participate as a sponsor or as a golfer. Registration can be completed online at www.ktcm.org/golf.

on 'Halloween Wars'

By R. HANS MILLER

The Katy area's own Hemlata Basu will be appearing in this year's season of the "Food Network" series "Halloween Wars" which runs from Sept. 13 to Oct. 11. Basu has been baking cakes for about a decade and specializes in artistic cakes that can verge on the photo-realistic. Basu said she jumped into cake baking head first when she found a need.

"In November 2012 on my son's birthday, he wanted me to bake a cake for him," Basu said. "So I went to the library to see if I could get a book on birthday cakes. I found 'Birthday Cakes for Kids' by Annie Rigg and decided to make a fire truck cake for my baby. I was very excited, and it turned out amazing."

Basu said she is excited for Katy area neighbors to see her performance in "Halloween Wars" where she feels she performed really well. The competition on the show starts out with an intro called "Road to Halloween Wars" which will air Sept. 13 at 7 p.m. and will be followed by the first episode. Each episode consists of two challenges, Basu said. The first involves smaller creations that she and her team assemble while the second involves larger displays.



Local cake artist Hemu Basu is set to appear on this year's season of "Halloween Wars" on "Food Network." Basu began baking cakes in 2012 and applied her artistic talents to make detailed cakes.

Basu's team, "Team Mummies Rejects" includes herself, pumpkin carver Daniel Miller and Steve Weiss, a sugar-spinning pro, according to the "Food Network" website.

See **ARTIST**, page 11



FYOFKATY

AT LARGE Chris Harris

Janet Corte **Dharminder Dargan** Diane R. Walker

Durran Dowdle Sam Pearson **Steve Pierson Rory Robertson**

Denotes Incumbent

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6 5 8 4 6 5 9 4 5 3

Level: Intermediate

Fun By The Numbers

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

Here's How It Works:

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

Answers will be provided in next week's edition.

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CROSSWORD PUZZLE

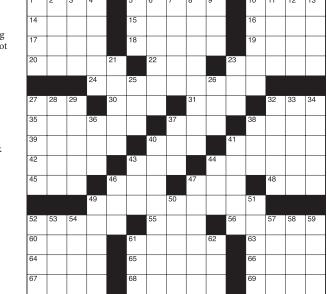
CLUES ACROSS

- 1. Aurochs
- 5. Central Dravidian language
- 10. Split pulses in Indian cooking 14. Tropical starchy tuberous root
- 15. Well known constellation 16 About aviation
- 17. Bowfin genus
- 18. Proper 19. Expression of annoyance
- 20. Cabbies
- 22. Bro or sis
- 23. Spiritual leader 24. Where football coaches work
- 27. Old TV part 30. A way to color
- 31. Touch lightly
- 32. Surround
- 35. Breached 37. Aristocratic young woman
- 38. Dry ravine
- 39. Hebrew measurement units 40. Supporter
- 41. Type of sword
- 42. Influential Irish playwright 43. Witch
- 44. Flower cluster 45. Mark Wahlberg's animal friend 46. Psychedelic amphetamine
- 47. Actors' group 48. Cool!
- 49. Salts 52. Group of SE China
- 55. Illuminated
- 56. Semitic Sun god 60. Water (Spanish)
- 61. Employed 63. Japanese ankle sock
- 64. Fishing fly
- 65. Some pheasants are this 66. Literary name for Ireland
- 67. Must have
- 68. A way to write
- 69. One point east of southeast

- 3. Type of acid

4. Drenches

- 1. American state 2. Hindu model of ideal man
- **CLUES DOWN**



- 5. "The Raven" writer
- 6. Emerged
- 7. Alpha Centauri: Kentaurus 8. Democratic Presidential
- candidate 9. Hostelry
- 10. Fathers
- 11. Any plant with leaves used for flavoring
- 12. Member of a Semitic people 13. Lesotho monetary unit
- 21. Lots 23. Jewish address corresponding
- to "Sir"
- 25. Male parent
- 26. A way to get

- 28. Seam in an organ
- 27. Body part
- 29. Landlocked African country
- 32. Process for producing
- 33. Excessive fluid accumulation in tissues
- 52. Shuttered Air Force base in Germany 53. Phil ___, former CIA
- 54. Japanese seaport 57. Female horse or zebra

34. Bogged down

38. Female grunts

40. Well known

47. Cotton fabric

41. Gurus

44. Tell on

50. Clouds

51. Satisfies

36. Native American tribe

37. Unfashionable person

43. Norse mythological site

__ Farrow, actress

49. Reciter of Scandinavian poems

- 58. First month of ancient Hebrew calendar 59. Trigonometric function
- 61. Fashionable knowledge (Slang) 62. Insecticide
- Answers will be provided in next week's edition.

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Katy Fellowship Church installs new monument



Katy Fellowship Church located at 24102 Kingsland Blvd., Katy had a new monument to its congregation's faith installed the morning of Sept. 8 in the form of this new cross. The 50-foot monument was made by JK Welding out of Cypress, Tex. and required multiple cranes to hoist it into place and hold it while crews finished mounting the Christian symbol to its base.



Waller county's new Precinct 4 Annex cost about \$4.8 million and comes in at about 18,500 square feet. Once opened, the facility will house offices for Precinct 4 Commissioner Justin Beckendorf, precinct 4 justice of the peace, precinct 4 Constable and staff, a Waller County Sheriff's Office annex, Waller County Tax Office annex, Waller County Clerk annex and offices for Department of Public Safety officers, Waller County Construction Manager Danny Rothe said.

Waller County approves tax relief

By R. HANS MILLER **NEWS EDITOR**

In a short meeting on Sept. 2, the Waller County Commissioners Court took action to approve a tax abatement agreement for the Brookshire Drying Company which is developing a \$6.3 million facility in Brookshire to allow it to mill rice. The court praised the project's nod to Waller County's rice farming traditions.

'This is one way that we can support them and support that history, that heritage," said Commissioner Justin Beckendorff who led the meeting in Judge Trey Duhon's absence.

Pam West, the owner of the business, was present and verified that the facility will bring four new jobs to the area with annual salaries of about \$40,000 each. The agreement, which was approved unanimously by the commissioners present - Commissioner Jeron Barnett was also absent - provided a tax abatement of 40% for four years to help the company get developed and establish its footing at the facility which is located at 1019 Bains Street, Brookshire. The company already has a facility there that will be expanded, West said. She added that the products made there would arrive on local grocery store shelves at grocers like HEB and Aldi in the future.

Commissioners also approved the judges and polling locations for elections coming up in October and November. Early voting begins Oct. 13 and Election Day is Nov. 3.

However, Rosa Harris, the county's Democratic Party chairperson expressed concern about voting not being established on campus for Prairie View A&M University students. She said she felt that either the lack of access for voting at the campus was either to disenfranchise Black students or Democrats that attend the university, which she felt was inappropriate and setting the wrong example, especially since the county appeared to have the voting machines to man an on-campus voting site.

"Voting is something that we teach our young people and this is their first step into the adult world,"

Harris was joined by Prairie View City Council Member Kendrick Jones who commented that the county should follow the NBA and other counties throughout the country on both sides of the party line which are expanding access to voting by adding

County Contruction Manager Danny Rothe reported that the county's Precinct 4 Annex located between Katy and Brookshire on Highway 90 was essentially complete. Minor fixes will need to be taken care of over the next few weeks and water will not be turned on for the building for a few more weeks either, Rothe said. However, the remaining work is minor and he expects county staff to be able to move into the building in late October or early November.

Rothe said he was pleased with the site and expected the location to be relatively safe from flooding with nearby facilities having low elevation parking lots that would allow water to drain away from the county's facility if a serious rain event were to occur. Additionally, the facility is intentionally built up in order to have it higher than neighboring Highway 90, he

Other actions

- Commissioners approved standards for addressing that will allow dispatched first responders to easily find locations throughout the county.
- Commissioners approved information technology purchases for the county's new justice center and updated library.
- Commissioners left a burn ban in place due to high risk indexes indicated by the Fire Marshall's Office.

Water District **Notice of Public Hearing** on Tax Rate

The Harris-Waller Counties Municipal Utility District No. 3 will hold a public hearing on a proposed tax rate for the tax year 2020 on September 28, 2020 at 2:30 P.M. by teleconference at (888) 557-8511, Access Code: 1512581. Your individual taxes may increase at a greater or lesser rate, or even decrease, depending on the tax rate that is adopted and on the change in the taxable value of your property in relation to the change in taxable value of all other property. The change in the taxable value of your property in relation to the change in the taxable value of all other property determines the distribution of the tax burden among all property owners.

FOR the proposal: Lonnie Lee, Justin Wagner, David Ward, John Hoag

AGAINST the proposal:

PRESENT and not voting:

ABSENT: Dana Thompson

The following table compares taxes on an average residence homestead in this taxing

unit last year to taxes proposed on the average residence homestead this year.				
	Last Year	This Year		
Total tax rate (per \$100 of value)	\$0.93000/\$100 Adopted	\$0.93000/\$100 Proposed		
Difference in rates per \$100 of value	\$.	00000/\$100		
Percentage increase/decrease in rates (+/-)		0.00%		
Average appraised residence homestead value	\$408,815.00	\$406,328.00		
General homestead exemptions available (excluding senior citizen's or disabled person's exemptions)	\$0.00	\$0.00		
Average residence homestead taxable value	\$408,815.00	\$406,328.00		
Tax on average residence homestead	\$3,801.98	\$3,778.85		
Annual increase/decrease in taxes if proposed tax rate is adopted (+/-) and percentage of increase (+/-)		\$-23.13 -0.61%		

NOTICE OF TAXPAYERS' RIGHT TO ELECTION TO REDUCE TAX RATE

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

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

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

Water District Notice of Public Hearing on Tax Rate

The Harris County Municipal Utility District No. 538 will hold a public hearing on a proposed tax rate for the tax year 2020 on Monday, September 28, 2020 at 11:00 a.m. by teleconference at 866-434-5269, access code 9617275. Your individual taxes may increase at a greater or lesser rate, or even decrease, depending on the tax rate that is adopted and on the change in the taxable value of your property in relation to the change in taxable value of all other property. The change in the taxable value of your property in relation to the change in the taxable value of all other property determines the distribution of the tax burden among all property owners.

FOR the proposal: William R Murphy Jr, Andrew Clark, Jacob Baker,

Cameron Franz, William Jordan

AGAINST the proposal:

PRESENT and not voting:

and percentage of increase (+/-)

ABSENT:

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

Total tax rate (per \$100 of value)	Last Year* \$1.50000 /\$100 Adopted	This Year \$1.50000 /\$100 Proposed
Difference in rates per \$100 of value	\$0.00000	/ \$100
Percentage increase/decrease in rates (+/-)	0	0.00%
Average appraised residence homestead value	\$0.00	\$279,902.00
General homestead exemptions available (excluding 65 years of age or older or disabled person's exemptions)	\$0.00	\$0.00
Average residence homestead taxable value	\$0.00	\$279,902.00
Tax on average residence homestead	\$0.00	\$4,198.53
Annual increase/decrease in taxes if proposed tax rate is adopted (+/-)	N/A	

NOTICE OF TAXPAYERS' RIGHT TO ELECTION TO REDUCE TAX RATE

N/A

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

* There were NO residential homesteads for comparison purposes.

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

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

MiLB is a vanishing American tradition

or millions of amateur and minor league baseball (MiLB) fans, the 2020 season was a bust. Not only did COVID-19 wipe out most all the scheduled games, 2020 may be the end of the line for many teams. Reports abound that more than 40 minor league teams are on the ropes, and in 2021 they may be gone forever. The Chattanooga Lookouts, the Erie Seawolves and the State College (Pennsylvania) Spikes are among the established teams on MLB's endangered list.

"Sports Illustrated" sent a survey to 68 MiLB teams and interviewed 21 front-office executives to evaluate how they view their ball clubs' futures. No one is optimistic. Several Triple A and Double A franchises, MiLB's highest levels, reported that they may need to file for bankruptcy. To the disappointment of the struggling MiLB teams, their MLB affiliates haven't bothered to $telephone\ to\ offer\ encouragement.$ MLB is a \$10.7 billion industry, but is willing to let franchises that lose money sink. That's today's corporate model - get rid of dead wood, and let the chips fall where they may.

But MLB has taken an exceptionally narrow view of MiLB's importance. Erie, Chattanooga, State College and other teams facing the axe provide affordable entertainment to their local smalltown communities. The teams also make jobs available that provide a measure of hope to often-struggling residents. For more than a century, fans have turned out to support their favorite ball clubs and their youthful prospects striving to get to the big show. But for the first time in MiLB history, baseball wasn't played, employment opportunities disappeared, and fans were abandoned.

MiLB's golden era ran from the early 20th century though 1949, when 464 teams in 49 leagues from coast-to-coast drew 42 million fans. Outstanding players dotted minor league rosters: Willie Mays wowed them in Minneapolis for the Millersm Joe DiMaggio played for his hometown San Francisco Seals and Mickey Mantle was the brightest star on the Joplin (Missouri) Miners.

Bands often played pre-game, and families picnicked outside the ballpark before the first pitch. Instead of hiding in the clubhouse, players mingled with fans, signed autographs happily, and after a particularly satisfying win, hoisted some rooters high into the air to share the spontaneous post-game euphoria. But eventually television, and then major league expansion, ended that simpler time.

Sacramento Rivercats' president Jeff Savage, whose team has won three Triple A championships and five Pacific Coast League titles in their 21-year existence, laid off 30 of his team's 65 full-time workers in late April and must find a way to continue paying off the bonds that built a \$46 million, privately



"Savage summed up his plight: 'You can't sleep at night, knowing some of the things you'll have to do to survive. It's sort of unthinkable that we're in this position."

owned stadium in 2000. Instead of kicking off what Savage expected to be another banner Rivercats' year, he slashed salaries and told 500 seasonal employees that they likely wouldn't have jobs this season.

Savage summed up his plight: "You can't sleep at night, knowing some of the things you'll have to do to survive. It's sort of unthinkable that we're in this position."

COVID also KO'd the well-known and beloved Cape Cod Baseball League, a New England fixture since 1865. As Dan Crowley explains in his book, "Baseball on Cape Cod," the warm summer weather and highquality baseball played by skilled college boys has attracted fans in growing numbers since 1880. The league has produced outstanding Hall of Famers that include: Pie Traynor, Pittsburgh Pirates third baseman; Red Rolfe, New York Yankees, an infielder and later Yale University's baseball coach; Carlton Fisk, Boston Red Sox and Chicago White Sox catcher, and Frank Thomas, the White Sox long-time designated hitter.

The last page of Crowley's book shows why fans' devotion to the MiLB is unyielding. Pictured are two oungsters watching a Cape Cod Baseball League game in progress. Their t-shirts read: "Cape League IS Baseball" and "100% Pure Baseball." In recent years, MLB's greedy ownership, its contentious politics, and the overpaid, delicate, injuryprone players have contaminated the big league baseball.

"Pure Baseball," as the t-shirt says, should never be allowed to vanish.



Accurate census count essential

hope we get it right. Data collection for the 2020 U.S. Census ends soon. This census, the 22nd in U.S. history, has faced its share of challenges and controversies.

The goal of the census has remained the same throughout its 230-year history: to count every person living in the United States.

The Constitution requires the federal government to do so every 10 years. The population count determines the number of U.S. House seats each state will have which can become highly

When a state gains or loses seats, the party in power sometimes redraws congressional districts in hopes of making it impossible for the other party to win. That's why census results are so important to politicians.

The census also determines how much federal funding vour neighborhood will receive. The more people counted in a region, the more money that region will receive for roads, bridges and other government programs.

From the start, this census has faced no small number of controversies and challenges.

'From cybersecurity issues to administrative problems to a legal drama over a possible citizenship question, there are plenty of reasons to worry about the decennial head count," noted "The Atlantic" in July 2018.

Cybersecurity certainly is a concern. This is the very first census that allows answering questions online - which may put respondents and their data at risk of cyberattack, particularly amid COVID-19, which has brought thousands of scammers out of the woodwork.



Wired reported in 2019 that "experts fear the (census) bureau is opening itself up to a range of new risks, from basic functionality and connectivity failures to cybersecurity threats and disinformation campaigns."

Disinformation in the era of social media? I'm shocked.

To stay secure, remember that the Čensus Bureau will never ask for your full Social Security number, or your bank account or credit card numbers, or for money or donations - but scammers pretending to be from the bureau will.

Ten questions ask about respondents' name, sex, age, race, telephone number and whether they own or rent. There are no questions about religion, whether one is a legal resident or whether one has a Social Security number.

When the Trump administration proposed

adding a citizenship question, opponents cried foul. They said the question would intimidate noncitizens into not responding, which would result in undercounts in districts with many noncitizens. The administration eventually dropped that idea.

Here's the latest battle, according to "Roll Call": "Under pressure from the Trump administration to end the count early, the (Census) agency will conclude all enumeration efforts on Sept. 30, and then comb through data before wrapping up the whole process by Dec. 31 - half the time the agency originally anticipated after delaying its initial schedule because of the pandemic."

Trump opponents say this could cause undercounting in minority communities. The administration says modern technologies and efficiencies enable an accurate count and meeting its statutory deadline of Dec. 31, 2020.

In an era when everything is hopelessly political and political opponents loathe and distrust each other, one thing really matters.

It's essential that we get our census data right.

Wired reported in 2019 that 'experts fear the (census) bureau is opening itself up to a range of new risks, from basic functionality and connectivity failures to cybersecurity threats and disinformation campaigns."

Katy Times

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CHURCH

from page 1

Walking into the nearly-finished space, messaging about families is everywhere on one level or another. From an air-conditioned indoor playground that is under construction, a Great Harvest Bread Company location for parishioners and their families to get snacks, to messaging on the walls that promotes family values, the church has laid the groundwork for their mission with the new campus, he said. The church is located near Paetow High School in a group of growing subdivisions that had a lack of churches serving their area, he said. An additional outdoor playground is present and there is a lot of outdoor space to develop as the church needs as the new campus grows from an opening capacity of about 400 to a number possibly rivaling the original campuses church body of about 5,000 worshipers.

Rush said the new church was not originally in the card. Kinglsand Baptist had originally looked at what it would take

to expand the existing campus to increase capacity. However, in the long run, it turned out to be more practical to do some less expensive upgrades to that campus and begin looking at a possible expansion of the church. The original campus' gymnasium was remodeled to accommodate an expanded church body and the idea of a second campus in the Katy area was explored.

Church leaders discussed it and eventually decided to identify a place where there weren't a lot of churches serving the area and step in to fill that void.

"Rather than going to the same place (through expanding) we wanted to go to a place where we could impact more households," Rush said.

Having an impact in the community is important for the church, Rush said. The idea is to provide support to single and working parents and show children in the congregation what it means to serve the community. One example is that the church shuts down once a year and has the youth of the church accompany the rest of the church body out to do good works in

the community, whether that be painting fences, picking up trash or helping at one of the community nonprofits.

Once the church saw the ideal area they wanted to serve, Rush said they began looking for land to purchase. In the long run, they located the new site, but realized the property was not for sale. Instead of giving up, Rush reached out to the former owners to see what could happen.

"I wrote a letter to them. I shared the vision that we had and we were able to purchase this property in 2015," Rush said. "And we actually bought 50 acres. ... We did that intentionally so that we could sell off a portion to a developer, so not only do they have to cover the development costs but we have great housing for young families and they handle the drainage side."

The campus remains on 18 acres of land with plenty of room for expansion, Rush said. The campus will start out with a basic capacity of 400, though social distancing protocols the church has set in place will keep that reduced at first. Still, the northern Kingsland Baptist congregation that has been meeting at one of the nearby schools is looking forward to the church's soft opening Sept. 27 for its first service. Eventually, that 400 base number for the congregation is expected to expand to more than 1,000 attendees. And that's the point, Rush said.

A grand opening is expected for early 2021, Rush said. Possibly as soon as January.

The church isn't wrapped around him as a pastor, but around an expanding community of service. At the core of that is the church's vision of building community and serving others through an "all are welcome" approach, Rush said. That includes recognizing the diversity in the Katy area and offering services in languages other than English. That includes services in Mandarin Chinese and Spanish, currently, though other languages are expected

"I hope that this building is a blessing to all the rooftops around us and all these people," Rush said. "More importantly I hope that this building becomes a conduit of blessing to the world."

BROOKSHIRE

from page 1

of the city's animal shelter. While an improved and updated facility had been considered, Jones said. After looking at what the city could afford, the reconstruction of a facility similar to what the city has previously had was examined instead with estimates for the cost of the rebuild coming in at about \$480,000. The facility, if approved, would include an office, air conditioning and heating for the office, kennels and a horse stall.

Other items

- The city is still finalizing details for the upcoming renewal of trash services through Republic Waste Services and for city planning and consulting with Gunda Corporation.
- The council is working with various stakeholders to determine the status of equipment missing off one of the fire trucks the city purchased. Details will be provided to city consultants and the equipment identified for return. It was unclear whether inventory errors or theft were the cause of the missing equipment.
- · City Council approved the minutes for its July 9, July 16 and July 28 meetings.
- · Approval of the city's monthly invoices were
- Jackson gave a report on the city's current COVID-19 case counts. Ten new cases had been identified, all of which were at the local rehab center. The city's total case count is 60 to-date with no fatalities as of the meeting. Jackson did not provide the number of

Brookshire City Council meets twice monthly and dates and agendas for their meetings may be found at: https://www.brookshiretexas.org/meetings.

ROYAL ISD

ys Hein said the developer, LGI Homes, has said the development will have a total of about 840 lots.

With an estimated 1.5 students per household, Freeman Ranch alone is expected to add about 1,260 students to the district's current student body of 2,470 students, Kershner said.

Other developers are also looking at buying land in the district. We're trying to make sure that we're out in front of that and prepared - not only for growth but to maintain the facilities that we have so we get longer use out of the facilities that are currently here," Kershner

While those added residents may put some strain on the school system as it works to accommodate the added students, Hein said it has an added benefit in helping keep the tax rate from increasing despite the debt that would be incurred by the bond package, if it is approved by voters. Because each lot in the new development is improved, it increases the taxable value of the property and the added population to the district will also be paying for the debt, making it so both existing and new homeowners are paying for the improved facilities.

The district's tax rate last year was \$1.427167 per \$100 valuation, Hein said. With reductions this year due to new state laws and increased property values, that rate has gone down to \$1.321817 per \$100 valuation.

Hein added that the district's credit ratings are A+ with Standard and Poor's and AAA with a Permanent School Fund Guarantee, setting the district up to responsibly manage any bond issuances.

Property values have increased and the collection rate has been high, so based on those two situations, if this bond passes, our tax rate for debt service will remain the same," Klein said.

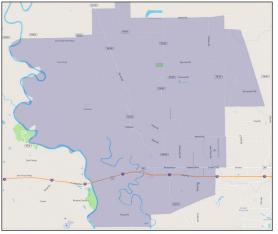
Paying for safety

Kershner said the district worked hard at establishing its list of needs to include in the three bond proposals. The process began with an assessment from a consultant that looked at growth, facility maintenance and other factors. That led to the formation of the district's Citizens' Advisory Committee which reviewed the consultant's findings, looked at feedback from staff, faculty and the community and then came forward with a recommendation.

Some of the bond items are safety related, Kershner said. Examples include the replacement of the roof on the RISD STEM academy which is simply dilapidated due to age.

'It leaks in different places and its basically just worn (out)," Kershner said, "It's at the end of its functioning lifespan for that building. It's a 1984 model so it's been

Additional safety features the district is looking to implement are security cameras that are interchangeable throughout the district, upgrades to the HVAC systems at multiple campuses, adding controlled entry vestibules to multiple buildings and upgrades to playgrounds at the district's ECC, elementary school and STEM Academy.



While much of Royal ISD is currently rural, projections by consultants and inquiries from developers indicate a significant growth in the district's student population over the next several years.

Building improvements are a large part of the bond package, including a prospective new campus under Proposition C and added classrooms at the Early Childhood Center, Kershner said. The eight-classroom addition would be actual classrooms rather than portables which can present a safety hazard, especially for the younger students that attend that campus.

Replacing three buses which are at the end of their lifespan is also important, Kershner said.

Nine buses total are in Proposition A. Six of the buses are intended to meet the needs of the district as the student population increases, Klein said.

The district also needs to add a road between the Royal Early Childhod Center and FM 359 to alleviate traffic in the mornings and reduce the risk of accidents, Kershner said.

"The stacking program has done well for a long time but based on growth there's a need for (a road) now," Kershner said.

Living without

Kershner said that without the bonds, the district would have to struggle through and find a way to make things work. However, without the added classroom space and potential to purchase land for a new campus, things would get tight quickly which could negatively impact students.

"We can't raise taxes," Kershner said. "So, we would have to just limp along and make do with what we have, and I guess find ways to make sure our facilities extend without additional funds."

District Marketing Coordinator Christi Ginn said the lack of bond funding would put the district in a very difficult place and force the administration to piecemeal the projects together as best they could. This would be especially true of added classroom capacity in the form of a new wing to the district's facilities and added kitchen capacity at campuses throughout the district.

"It would be very difficult to accommodate that new growth without that new wing or new facilities," Ginn said.

KATY ISD

would be asked to perform prior to showing up to class.

Some of those precautions included using hand sanitizer getting on and off school buses, prescreening for symptoms of COVID-19 at home and using hand sanitizer and sanitizing desks and other workspaces as often as was practicable. The videos are still available on the district's Smart Restart webpage. The idea behind all of those efforts is to mitigate the risk of students contracting the novel coronavirus, said KISD Emergency Management Coordinator Ruben Martinez at the time.

"While it is not possible to eliminate all risks associated with the virus, by working together we can keep everyone as safe and healthy as possible," Martinez said.

Gregorski said he wished the teachers could see the smiles on kids faces as they returned to school, but with the mask on that was difficult. Still, it was possible to see the happiness in their eyes to be back in school,

"You've got to look at their can see that kind of nonverbal expression with their eyes," Gregorski said. "They're really excited to be here. You can tell and you know they want to be back with their friends."

Gregorski said he has two students in ninth and twelfth grades in the district that are excited to be back in class and see their friends.

The superintendent also praised his staff for the hard work they've done to plan a return to school while virtually instructing, meeting and brainstorming to get the job done. He said some teachers will continue to provide instruction virtually and have worked throughout the summer to master the skills needed to make it happen.

"It feels like seven days a week people are working," Gregorski said. "People have really put a lot of effort into this to be able to provide the kids the safest environment possible during this pandemic that we're in. I'm very appreciative of our staff and the hard work they've done all the way from our district, all the way up from our campuses and all the frontline workers. You've got to remember those who've been out there working all summer."

McElwain Principal Euberta Lucas said the challenge of opening up a brand-new campus added to the strain for her staff as they tried to plan things virtually in Zoom meeting rooms when hands-on simply makes things easier. Teachers and staff put in extra effort to ensure they were ready to get started, she said, and she reiterated that she was proud of what McElwain's faculty and staff had accomplished.

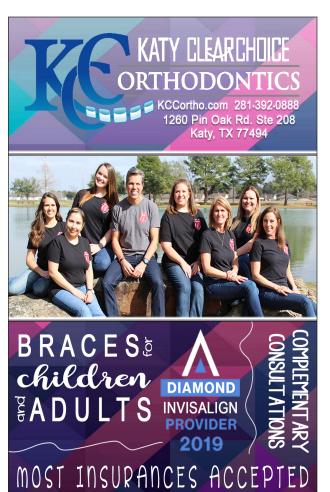
For his part, the school's namesake, Peter Mcelwain, said he was glad students would be able to get back to the business of learning. Even with the masks it would give them a sense of normalcy and he felt that an in-person classroom setting would be more conducive to quality education than a virtual experience, though he understood why parents would be cautious given the pandemic.

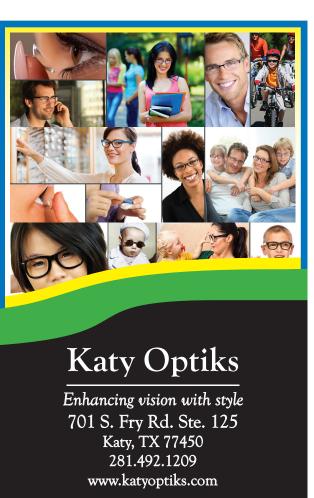
Since his retirement in 2017. McElwain has turned to writing children's books, two of which he has donated to the school, he said. McElwain hopes to one day be able to come to the school and read his books to the students to encourage them to pursue literacy. He said he felt appreciation for the district's move in honoring him by naming the school after him.

"I can't tell you how proud and honored I feel that the school is named that this particular school is named after me," McElwain said.

Gregorski, Lucas and McElwain all expressed empathy for the parents and children of KISD that have faced the challenges the pandemic has put upon them since March.

'Our community's been through a lot and I appreciate their patience and understanding. It's great to see all of our kids in our family here again," Gregorski said.







SPORTS

KATYTIMES.COM

Football returns to Katy area

Katy-area teams open practice for delayed regular seasons

By COLE McNANNA

SPECIAL TO THE KATY TIMES

A month after schools in Classes 4A and below started fall sports practices, the big schools in Classes 5A and 6A of the University Interscholastic League, including Katy and Royal ISD teams, were able to hit the practice fields earlier this week in preparation for the football and volleyball seasons that were delayed due to COVID-19. Sept. 7 also served as the first day cross country and team tennis squads could compete in interscholastic

Football coaches around KISD had been keeping an eye on how things went in the lower classifications and were grateful when their time to hit the practice field finally arrived.

Gary Joseph and the Katy Tigers are coming off district championships every year since the 2008-2009 season, but the bare essentials of the game

'It's just great that the kids get an opportunity to go play," Joseph said. "It's being a part of something, I feel like around here they're a part of something that's good, something they'll have that will help them grow up to be better young

men and that's the basis of what athletics are about just getting the opportunity to share it with their

Although Chad Simmons and the Taylor Mustangs have many key returners coming back from last year's state semifinal run, the head coach said the relationships they've built among the players and coaching staff will help knead out the early

We have an outstanding staff of guys that coach kids hard but also have good relationships with them and don't make things where correcting them is anything personal," Simmons said. "They have really bought into preparation, not only how important that is but it's all those little things that nobody - unless you're behind the scenes - really even knows about going into a ball game because you get in the ball game and if you prepare, that'll show up, and if you didn't, that's going to show up too."

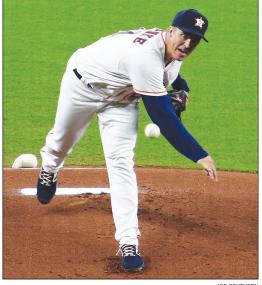
Todd McVey has delivered a similar message to his Falcons squad at Tompkins, emphasizing on focusing on the small picture to create the big picture.

'It's not rocket science: if you go out there and practice hard and you take care of the little things,

See **FOOTBALL**, page 7



Tompkins head football coach Todd McVey looked forward to the 2020 season following an extended offseason due to the coronavirus pandemic. The Falcons were among Class 5A and 6A programs hitting the field for the first time earlier this week to begin practices.



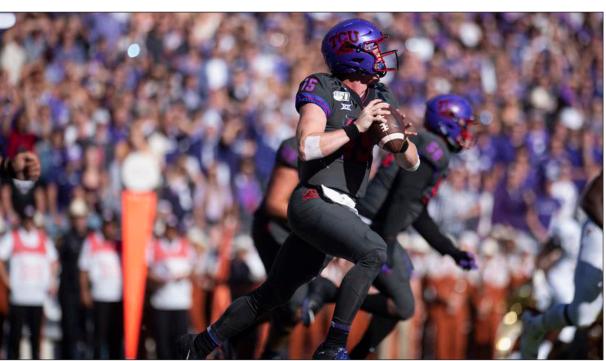
Astros starting pitcher Zack Greinke supplied six innings of work against the Texas Rangers Thursday afternoon and struck out nine batters, allowed only three earned runs to score and yielded one walk to improve his record this year to 4-0.

Astros swept by Angels to start road trip

By COLE McNANNA SPECIAL TO THE KATY TIMES

Following an 8-4 win last Thursday on a getaway day to salvage a series win over the intrastate rival Texas Rangers, the Houston Astros were swept in their four-game series against the Los Angeles Angels to begin a 10-day, 11-game west coast road trip.

See **ASTROS**, page 7



TCU had been scheduled to play its rival SMU on Friday, Sept. 11.

TCU-SMU game postponed

By SAMI SPARBER

Plans to press forward with major college football in Texas have been dealt an early setback after Texas Christian University canceled its first football game originally scheduled for Sept. 4 due to COVID-19.

The game against Southern Methodist University, rescheduled for Sept. 11, was canceled Friday

support staff tested positive for the virus, said Jeremiah Donati, TCU's director of intercollegiate athletics, in a statement. Donati did not indicate how many athletes or staff tested positive but said "no one is currently facing serious health issues."

"In the course of following CDC guidelines and our aggressive testing and contact tracing strategy, we discovered that some student-ath-

after some TCU football athletes and letes and support staff in our football program have tested positive for COVID-19," Donati said. "Those individuals were notified immediately and are currently abiding by CDC

> The Big 12 Conference announced in August its football season would move forward as scheduled, with member schools agreeing to

> > See **POSTPONED**, page 7

Student athletes tested thrice a week for coronavirus



Public health experts say Texas universities should increase testing of all students to prevent community spread of the coronavirus as classes resume.

By SAMI SPARBER THE TEXAS TRIBUNE

Athletics officials at Texas universities spent months planning for a fall football season during a pandemic. As conferences deliberated how teams could safely compete in the age of coronavirus, proponents hoped enhanced coronavirus testing for athletes would ease any lingering doubts.

It worked. Within the month, five major Texas football programs are slated to play. In football and other high contact sports like soccer and volleyball, athletes will be tested three times a week, according to directives from the Big 12 Conference and Southeastern Conference.

For teams competing on a Saturday, that might mean a test Sunday, another Wednesday, and a final, rapid-results test Friday, said Kenny Boyd, a Baylor University senior associate athletic director. Non-conference opponents must also adhere to testing protocols that match conference standards.

Conference and school officials say enhanced testing for sports is necessary to protect athletes, support staff and the teams they compete against. It's an impressive regimen, public health experts agree. But that same level of testing is not available to other Texas college students — even those living

in high-risk settings like dorms. Universities don't follow the same testing methods and report cases differently, so there's no way to compare outcomes since classes began again.

Texas A&M University reported 327 new positive tests the week ending Aug. 29, down slightly from the 371 it reported a week prior. Between Sept. 1 and Sept. 3, The University of Texas at Austin reported 103 new positive cases, more than doubling in three days the amount it reported for all of August. Baylor also reported 101 new cases during that time frame.

Public health experts say schools need to

See **TESTED**, page 7

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SPORTS

FOOTBALL

from page 6

(good things happen)," McVey said. "I just listened to something from Herm Edwards where he talked about, you can't cheat the game. The work (you) do in the dark is going to pay off under the lights on a Friday night."

Veteran coaches like Morton Ranch's Ron Counter managed his way through an unprecedented offseason but was happy to have the hard work behind him.

"I've been doing this for a long time, this is my 32nd or so year coaching, 20 years as a head coach and there's never been anything like this," Counter said. "Every day was a new adventure, (and we) just had to be flexible and kind of roll with it and take things day by day."

Brian Randle, who took over at Mayde Creek this winter, agreed the adversity was a new hurdle but pitched a task to his new team.

"I challenged those kids to say,
'Hey this does not get to be an excuse
for us to be unsuccessful this season,
because it happened for everybody,"
Randle said. "Yes, you're learning a
new offense, yes, you're learning a new
defense, yes, you have new coaches but

relationships are relationships, and the one thing we are good at is building relationships with kids."

Jimmy Hamon said the Seven Lakes Spartans looked forward to getting outside of their comfort zone.

"Some things are going to be uncomfortable for us and we're going to have to try things differently than we've done in the past, but change is not necessarily a bad thing and some of the things that we've done differently might be things we want to keep for the future that we would have never tried had this not happened," Hamon said.

Cinco Ranch's Chris Dudley also wanted his players to embrace the challenges presented with the season and looked forward to it building up the Cougars.

"There's going to be adversity throughout the season just like there is in any season but it's really how you respond to all that," said Dudley. "Keep your eye on what's important and don't get too caught up in some of the other things that can pull a team down."

On the Class 5A stage, only the second senior class of Paetow Panthers hit the field for the first practices of their final high school season and head coach B.J. Gotte looked forward to this group expanding on the progress.

"They really didn't know what it felt

like to have their season end in a single night," Gotte said of the Class of 2020. "Our seniors now have really come out with a sense of urgency, they've worked hard and I'm just excited they're going to get an opportunity to go out and play."

Also hitting the practice fields for the first time was the Brookshire Royal Falcon football team. Despite competing in Class 4A, the school experienced delays in their season due to positive tests and the school's proximity to the Katy and Lamar Consolidated school districts.

Head coach Greg Anderson and his team held their first practice on Wednesday, Sept. 2 and had to trim three games off the schedule to allow time for the team to get into game shape

"They were in good spirits, they were glad to be back out there just as the coaches were after such a long hiatus where we couldn't do anything," Anderson said. "Yeah, I would have rather had the full month of August to practice and be further ahead of where we are right now but they all had really good attitudes (Wednesday). They got here at 3:30, 4 o'clock even though we're not practicing until 6 just because they want to be up here."

TESTED

from page 6

dramatically ramp up testing in order to catch "silent spread" fueled by students who are infected but don't have symptoms.

In Texas, that means colleges should be testing everyone as much as the athletes, said Diana Cervantes, an epidemiologist at the University of North Texas Health Science Center.

"If you really wanted to find out what's going on ... you're going to have to do more intense and more frequent, routine testing," Cervantes said. "Because right now, all of the schools and universities and public schools, they're really relying on symptomatic screening. They're not doing a lot of testing."

Testing for "silent spread"

Many colleges in Texas offer diagnostic testing for students, faculty and staff who have symptoms of the virus. But routine testing for those without symptoms or exposure to a positive case is less prevalent, even as the CDC estimates 40% of COVID-19 infections are asymptomatic.

A. David Paltiel, a professor at the Yale School of Public Health, said frequent testing for asymptomatic spread is crucial to controlling college outbreaks. Given the infectiousness of the coronavirus, schools should be testing everyone every three or four days, he said.

"By far, the most powerful variable that administrators control is testing frequency," Paltiel said. "If you're only springing into action when symptoms emerge ... it's like a fire department that only responds to calls when the house is already known to have been burnt to the ground."

As Texas continues to report thousands of new cases a day, some colleges in states with fewer infections have launched aggressive testing campaigns. The University of Illinois Urbana-Champaign requires students, faculty and staff to be tested twice a week.

Among Texas schools that have rolled out plans to catch silent spread, officials vary on how much testing to offer, who exactly should be tested and whether that testing should be mandatory.

Baylor University stands out as one of the few Texas institutions to mandate participation in testing. The private Christian university is requiring all students, faculty, staff and vendors to test if selected, warning that failure to comply may result in disciplinary action. Unlike other Texas universities, Baylor also required a negative test from all students and employees before they returned to campus.

UT-Austin, Texas Å&M University and Texas Tech University encourage participation in asymptomatic testing but stop short of requiring it. Texas Christian University does not offer routine testing for students without symptoms, according to The Dallas Morning

Cervantes worries a voluntary approach could allow outbreaks to go undetected, especially if some students dodge the invitation to test.

"If it's optional then people could self-select themselves out of that," Cervantes said. "Let's say I think I had a high-risk exposure and I think that testing positive is going to mean something detrimental to me, maybe I'd decide not to get tested."

POSTPONED

from page 6

enhanced testing for athletes. The TCU-SMU game would have been the first involving a Big 12 team this season. Texas Tech University, Baylor University and the University of Texas at Austin all have games scheduled for Sept. 12.

A handful of Texas teams that play outside the Power Five conferences — SMU, Texas State University, Houston Baptist University, the University of North Texas, Stephen F. Austin University and the University of Texas at El Paso — have games scheduled for Saturday.

Donati said TCU will continue following prevention and testing protocols ahead of their conference opener against Iowa State on Sept. 26.

ASTROS

from page 6

A five-game set featuring a Tuesday doubleheader with first-place Oakland began Monday with Houston 3.5 games back in the American League West standings and 20 games remaining on its schedule.

This will be the final meeting between the Astros and Athletics in the regular season, although only two of the 10 scheduled games were played at Houston's Minute Maid Park where the hosts went 2-0. Oakland similarly benefitted from home-field advantage and owned a 3-0 record at The Coliseum over the Astros entering play Monday.

Dating back to 2015, Houston has won the season series each year over the Athletics but will need to manage at least a 3-2 record to split the contests in the shortened season to extend the streak.

Through the first 40 games played, the Astros held a 21-19 record and led the Major Leagues with 39 1st-inning runs scored ahead of Minnesota and Seattle who are tied for second with 30. Houston also led MLB in runs per game (5.4), strikeouts per plate appearances (5.01) and triples (10)

while it sat second in total runs scored (216), third in doubles (79) and fourth in extra-base hits (138).

Kyle Tucker has been on fire over his last 20 games, supplying a .382 average, five triples and seven home runs to help tally 28 RBI. Entering play on Monday, Tucker had driven in 37 runs on the season and ranked fourth in the Majors behind only Jose Abreu (40), Fernando Tatis Jr. (39) and Mike Trout (38). In the extra-base hits category, his 22 ranked third behind Abreu and Anthony Santander, who had 25 each.

Michael Brantley has come through with runners in scoring position to record a .480 average with a baserunner on either second or third base, which also is best in baseball. He's helped the Astros' team average with runners in scoring position climb to .283, which is third-best in MLB.

It has been Martin Maldonado, however, who has emerged as a team MVP candidate by catching 32 of the team's 40 games with a .255 batting average and a team-leading .386 on-base percentage with four home runs and 20 RBI. He ranks first among AL catchers in RBI (20), walks (19) and runs scored (17).



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FOR the proposal: K. Dean, C. Maluski, J. Hundl, R. Patrick & A. Yoder

AGAINST the proposal: (none)

PRESENT and not voting: (none)

ABSENT: (none)

and percentage of increase (+/-)

The following table compares taxes on an average residence homestead in this taxing

unit last year to taxes proposed on the average residence homestead this year.				
Total tax rate (per \$100 of value)	Last Year <u>\$ 0.900</u> /\$100 Adopted	This Year \$ 0.900/\$100 Proposed		
Difference in rates per \$100 of value	<u>\$0.000</u> /\$100			
Percentage increase/decrease in rates (+/-)	0.0000%			
Average appraised residence homestead value	\$549,407	<u>\$566,166</u>		
General homestead exemptions available (excluding 65 years of age or older or disabled person's exemptions)	\$ 0	\$ 0		
Average residence homestead taxable value	<u>\$549,407</u>	<u>\$566,166</u>		
Tax on average residence homestead	<u>\$4,944.66</u>	\$5,095.49		
Annual increase/decrease in taxes if proposed tax rate is adopted (+/-)	<u>\$150.83</u>			

NOTICE OF TAXPAYERS' RIGHT TO ELECTION TO REDUCE TAX RATE

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SATURDAY SEPTEMBER 12, 2020 @ 10:00A.M.

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Notice of Public Hearing

Notice is hereby given that the City of Pattison will hold a Public Hearing on the proposed FY 20-21 Budget. The Public Hearing will be held Tuesday, September 22, 2020

Meeting will be held by videoconference pursuant to Texas Government Code Chapter 551, and in accordance with section 418.016 of the Texas Government Code, Governor Abbott has suspended various provisions that require government officials and members of the public to be physically present at a specified meeting location.

Members of the public will be entitled to participate and address the governmental body during the videoconference meeting by contacting the City Secretary via email at CitySecretary@pattison.texas. gov or call 281-934-3715 to receive information about logging into the videoconference.

The proposed budget is posted on the website: https://pattison.texas.gov/financial-transparency/. Contact the City Secretary at 281-934-3715 or via email at CitySecretary@pattison.texas.gov with any questions.

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AUCTIONS

Public Auction, Wheeler County Show Barns, Wheeler, TX, 10 a.m., Sat., Sept. 12. Guns Collectible Money of Estate: rifles, shotguns, handguns, black powder, collectible silver coins and more. Full listing, pictures and directions at www.loydsauction.com or see Lyndon Loyd Auctioneers on Facebook. 806-334-0407 or 806-662-5796.

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

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

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NOTICE OF ESTABLISHMENT OF ADDITIONAL OUT-OF-DISTRICT MEETING PLACE OF THE BOARD OF **DIRECTORS OF FORT BEND-WALLER COUNTIES MUNICIPAL UTILITY DISTRICT NO. 3**

To the residents and taxpayers of Fort Bend-Waller Counties Municipal Utility District No. 3 (the "District"), and to all the persons interested in the meetings of the Board of Directors of such District:

Notice is hereby given that the Board of Directors of the District, at a meeting held August 26, 2020, established an additional meeting place outside the boundaries of the District at LJA Engineering, Inc., 3600 W. Sam Houston Parkway S., Ste 600, Houston, TX 77042.

Said meeting place is hereby declared to be a public place and open to the public. All residents and taxpayers of the District and all other interested persons are hereby invited to attend any meetings of the Board of Directors at such location and other locations previously established by the Board of Directors as meeting places of the District.

> /s/ Austin Goings Secretary, Board of Directors

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

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

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

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

BY ORDER OF THE BOARD OF DIRECTORS

/s/ Rhonda Patterson President, Board of Directors

/s/ Ruth Delaunay Secretary, Board of Directors

September 3 Puzzle Answers

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KatyTimes.com

FAITH



PATRICIA ANNE GIBSON 1942-2020

The family of Patricia Anne Gibson is saddened to announce her passing on August 30th, 2020 at the age of 78. She is preceded in death by her parents Roy and Hazel Gibson, her 3 siblings Myrna Taylor, Leroy Gibson, and Ernest Gibson, and her husband Vern Simon. She will be dearly missed by her children, grandchildren, and great-grandchildren. We love you.

Let not your heart be troubled: ye believe in God, believe also in me. In my Father's house are many mansions: if it were not so, I would have told you. I go to prepare a place for you. And if I go and prepare a place for you, I will come again, and receive you unto myself; that where I am, there ye may be also. — John 14:1-3

Born September 14, 1926 in Keechi, Leon County, Texas passed away in her sleep Septem-

ber 1, 2020. She was the middle daughter of James Thomas "Jim" Lummus and Myrtle Mable Dolson. She is preceded in death by her parents, her husband, James Francis "Boots" Smith, sisters Jodie Vivian "Jo" Lummus McVey & husband, Bruce of Newton, Kansas and Addie Pauline Lummus Roll &



1926-2020

husband, Al from Houston, Texas. Fay attended Buffalo High School class of 1944 where she played the bass and violin as well as being elected Homecoming Queen. She joined her sister, Jo, in Beaumont where she attended Lamar University for a year then met and married James Francis Smith. They were married 34 years and lived in Beaumont for most of those years before moving to

ton Texas in April 1970. Fay along with then pastor Sharon Watts and some other volunteers began Meals on Wheels in Beaumont. In her later years Fay

Country Lane Estates in Lumber-

worked for 15 years at Beaumont Eye Associates as a Greeter and Records Clerk until she retired

at age 75. She moved to Katy Texas where she spent the past 14

Fay is survived by 3 children: Janie & husband, Rodney Cain, James & wife, Sheila Smith and Iulie Buckner. Her 6 Grandchildren are Eric Neal & wife, Kathryn Schaefer Cain, Brandy C. Craig & husband, Matt Unger, R. Tyler Craig & Crystal L.

Suzuki, Jamie D. Smith, Andrew T. Craig and Ciara N. Smith. She is also survived by 3 Great Grandchildren: Aiden Rory Cain, Saylor Fay Elizabeth Unger and Kai Noe Craig. She also has several nieces, nephews and cousins.

Fay will be cremated and laid to rest in Magnolia Cemetery, 2291 Pine St., Beaumont Texas at the Grand Avenue and Caldwell block. The interment will be Saturday, November 7, 2020 at Noon. In lieu of flowers please make a donation to the Wesley United Methodist Church, 3810 N. Major Dr., Beaumont Texas 77713 or the Parkinson's Research Foundation.

Christ Clinic's Breakfast for a Blessing goes virtual

By R. HANS MILLER NEWS EDITOR

Christ Clinic will be celebrating its twentieth Breakfast for a Blessing event this year - though with a few changes given the COVID-19 pandemic. The local nonprofit, which helps uninsured patients receive affordable medical care, has teamed up with Houston Methodist Hospital and the Fulshear-Katy Chamber of Commerce to present a virtual event.

Fulshear-Katy Chamber President Don McCoy will host the virtual event which will feature GoodRx Chief of Research Thomas Goetz. Goetz is a researcher who is an expert in applying data and design to assist patients in making better health care decisions. Goetz was co-founder of Iodine.com which is now part of the GoodRx family of companies and was previously executive editor at "WIRED."

Meals will be delivered - or may be picked up in-person through Great Harvest Bread Company.

A press release from the



Ordinarily, Christ Clinic's Breakfast for a Blessing event is live and in-person with fun features like photo booths, but due to COVID-19 concerns, the clinic has gone virtual with this year's funding drive.

medical nonprofit which is located a short distance from Katy Mills said this event is one of the oranization's largest fundraisers and usually brings in almost \$100,000 annually. Tickets for meals are \$75 each and the website for the event is https://christclinickaty.org/ breakfast-2020.

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Psalms 94:19

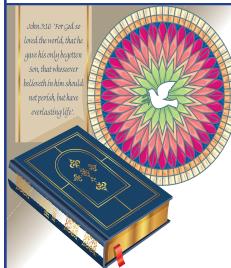
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3 Praise be to the God and Father of our Lord Jesus Christ, the Father of compassion and the God of all comfort,

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

2 Corinthians 1:3-4

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are many, your consolations cheer my soul. **Psalms 94:19**

of my heart

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NEWS

Harris bail reform not leading to new crimes

By JOLIE McCULLOUGH

A new report examining the impact of recent changes to bail practices in Harris County found that releasing more misdemeanor defendants from jail without requiring cash bail did not lead to an increase in arrests for reoffending.

The findings are being cited as a win by criminal justice reform advocates who have long argued that cash-bail requirements unfairly penalize poor defendants who can't afford release from jail before

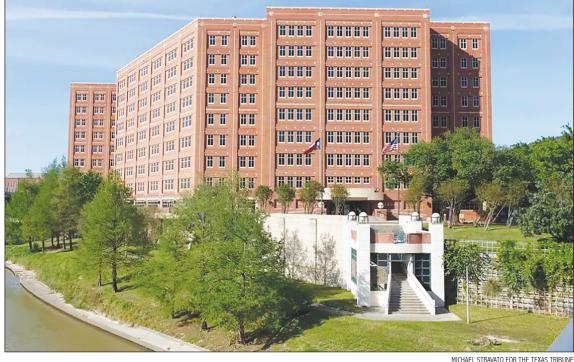
Wednesday's report was the first by independent monitors appointed by a federal judge as part of a settlement order in a lengthy lawsuit that led to changes in the bail system in Texas' most populous county. Civil rights groups have noted the case as the first to put America's cash bail system on trial in federal court.

"This misdemeanor bail reform is working as intended, and there are real results," said Brandon Garrett, a law professor at Duke University and independent monitor of the reforms. "Many more people are released promptly, cash bond amounts are vastly reduced except in cases where there will be public safety concerns ... [and] there has been no change in reoffending."

Changes to the popular cashbail system — in which defendants can pay for their release from jail before trial either by paying the total, reimbursable amount to the court or a nonrefundable percentage to a bail bonds company have long been opposed by some law enforcement officials and conservatives who argue that defendants who are freed on bond before a conviction could commit new crimes while awaiting trial.

The report found the rate of new criminal complaints filed against misdemeanor defendants in Harris County within a year of their initial arrest had not changed since the reforms were implemented in early 2019.

The report also found the gap between white and Black defendants being released before trial



The Harris County Jail in Houston. The county's new bail system only targets misdemeanor crimes, where the longest sentence possible if convicted is a year. Texas' most populous county changed its bail practices for misdemeanor defendants last year after a lengthy lawsuit challenging cash bail.

narrowed under the county's new system. Before the lawsuit, white people were more likely to bond out of jail before trial than Black people. Data on Hispanic defendants is unavailable.

Not included in the report is data on how often the defendants who were released without payment failed to show up at court hearings. Bail reform opponents across the country have used rises in missed court appearances as ammunition against releasing people on no-cash bonds. The report said appearance rates and reasons for missed hearings will be considered in future reports.

As litigation and legislation to change bail systems began to spread across the country as a criminal justice reform staple, Harris County became entrenched in a federal lawsuit over its misdemeanor bail practices for years. In 2016, civil rights groups sued on behalf of several people kept in jail for days because they could not afford to pay the bail amount set for their release. The

first-named plaintiff is a woman kept in jail on suspicion of driving with a suspended license because she could not afford the \$2,500 bail set for her case — likely a \$250 fee if she went through a bail bonds company.

The lawsuit argued that the county's largely cash-based bail system was unconstitutional, since a poor person could be stuck in jail before trial while another defendant facing the same charges with the same criminal history could walk free if they had access to cash. In 2017, a federal judge in Houston agreed, slamming the county for its practices and ordering the release of almost all misdemeanor defendants from jail within 24 hours of arrest, regardless of their ability to pay. The more conservative appeals court later walked back that ruling and called instead for bail hearings within two days of arrest where defendants can argue for lower or no-cash bonds.

Then in 2018, local elections swept out the mostly Republican judges who presided over misde-

meanor cases and had been fighting the lawsuit, and replaced them with Democrats. In January 2019, the new judges drastically changed county policies, allowing the large majority of misdemeanor defendants to qualify for automatic jail release on no-cash bonds - where defendants promise to arrive at court or they could later have to pay. Only those arrested for violating bonds, repeat drunken driving or some family violence offenses would need to first appear before a court official before release deci-

sions could be made. In July, county commissioners agreed to settle the lawsuit and submitted to the judge the already-implemented changes to bail decisions — as well as other changes like reminding people of their court appearances and allowing defendants to reschedule. The judge approved the settlement in November, and independent experts were appointed in March to monitor the system for seven

As other bail reform lawsuits

and legislation target felony cases, some opponents fear the increased releases will free people who would then commit more crimes.

Police officials and union leaders have recently pointed to people released from jail before trial on felony-level charges who then are suspected of committing new violent crimes, including murder. By Sept. 2 afternoon, Houston Police Chief Art Acevedo and Houston Police Officers' Union President Joe Gamaldi did not respond to questions asked the prior day about the report.

Harris County's new bail system only targets misdemeanor crimes, where the longest sentence possible if convicted is a year. Harris County also allows inmates with good conduct to trim two-thirds of their sentence, meaning they could be released in four months on a year sentence. Garrett said the fear of people released committing new crimes is common among changing bail systems but that the data so far doesn't support it.

"Those fears haven't come to pass in other jurisdictions as well," he said. "Sometimes people point to particular anecdotes. ... Anecdotes can be powerful, but they can also be quite misleading."

A spokesperson for the Harris County district attorney's office seemingly took issue with the report's methodology behind the finding that recidivism had not increased, noting it did not look specifically at new crimes committed by people out of jail on bond.

"As they note in their report ... they lack adequate data to examine the effectiveness of supervision of individuals released on bond, and that they intend to return to this in their next report on their ongoing analysis," said spokesperson Dane Schiller.

The monitors said in the report that their data tracked new crimes committed within a year by all people charged with a misdemeanor, including those released from jail because they were not guilty or if they were convicted and had already served their time or were on probation.

Water District Notice of Public Hearing on Tax Rate

The Fort Bend County Municipal Utility District No. 151 will hold a public hearing on a proposed tax rate for the tax year 2020 on Monday, September 28, 2020 at 2:00 p.m., by telephone conference at (1-888-363-4734), Access Code (8706826). Your individual taxes may increase at a greater or lesser rate, or even decrease, depending on the tax rate that is adopted and on the change in the taxable value of your property in relation to the change in taxable value of all other property. The change in the taxable value of your property in relation to the change in the taxable value of all other property determines the distribution of the tax burden among all property owners.

FOR the proposal: K. Gier, K. Jackson, S. Fitzsimmons, L. James

& N. Shipley

AGAINST the proposal: (none) **PRESENT** and not voting: (none) ABSENT: (none)

and percentage of increase (+/-)

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

Total tax rate (per \$100 of value)	Last Year <u>\$ 0.930</u> /\$100 Adopted	This Year \$ 0 .890/\$100 Proposed
Difference in rates per \$100 of value	<u>-\$0.040 /\$100</u>	
Percentage increase/decrease in rates (+/-)	<u>-4.3011%</u>	
Average appraised residence homestead value	<u>\$351,356</u>	\$362,281
General homestead exemptions available (excluding 65 years of age or older or disabled person's exemptions)	\$ 0	\$ 0
Average residence homestead taxable value	<u>\$351,356</u>	<u>\$362,281</u>
Tax on average residence homestead	\$ 3,267.61	\$3,224.30
Annual increase/decrease in taxes if proposed tax rate is adopted (+/-)	-\$43.31	

NOTICE OF TAXPAYERS' RIGHT TO ELECTION TO REDUCE TAX RATE

<u>-1.3254%</u>

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

The 86th Texas Legislature modified the manner in which the voter-approval tax rate

Questions regarding this notice can be directed to the tax office at (281) 499-1223.

is calculated to limit the rate of growth of property taxes in the state.

Water District Notice of Public Hearing on Tax Rate

The Fort Bend County Municipal Utility District No. 161 will hold a public hearing on a proposed tax rate for the tax year 2020 on Tuesday, September 22, 2020 at 12:00 p.m., via teleconference at 888-363-4734, Access Code: 8706826. Your individual taxes may increase at a greater or lesser rate, or even decrease, depending on the tax rate that is adopted and on the change in the taxable value of your property in relation to the change in taxable value of all other property. The change in the taxable value of your property in relation to the change in the taxable value of all other property determines the distribution of the tax burden among all property owners.

FOR the proposal: C. Kight, K. Scully, J. Schubert & J. Kaiser

AGAINST the proposal: **PRESENT** and not voting: (none) ABSENT: M. Harris

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

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Total tax rate (per \$100 of value)	Last Year \$ 0.9000/\$100 Adopted	This Year \$ 0.9000/\$100 Proposed
Difference in rates per \$100 of value	\$0.000 /\$100	
Percentage increase/decrease in rates (+/-)	0.0000%	
Average appraised residence homestead value	<u>\$577,614</u>	\$583,790
General homestead exemptions available (excluding 65 years of age or older or disabled person's exemptions)	\$ 0	\$ 0
Average residence homestead taxable value	<u>\$577,614</u>	\$583,790
Tax on average residence homestead	\$5,198.53	<u>\$5,254.11</u>
Annual increase/decrease in taxes if proposed tax rate is adopted (+/-) and percentage of increase (+/-)	<u>\$55.58</u> 1.0691%	

NOTICE OF TAXPAYERS' RIGHT TO ELECTION TO REDUCE TAX RATE

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

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

ARTIST

from page 2

Basu said she found the large displays to be the most challenging because she focuses her work on putting a lot of detail into each cake, but having a time limit forced her to look at which details were most important to include and set other trimmings aside.

"You have to be really quick and think fast and be imaginative and creative at the same time to create something good," Basu said. "They will give you an (assignment and time limit) of course, so you have to think of like, what you can take off and then create something great."

The first round is 45 minutes long and the larger challenge is five hours long, Basu said.

Her first appearance on "Food Network" was for the show "Wedding Cake Championship" and earned her recognition in the finale, Basu said. It was – quite literally – a long way from where she began.

Basu said she began baking more cakes and kept getting asked who had made the cake or where she'd bought them. People were shocked to find that she'd made them herself and as she kept making them, she was able to turn her artistic talent toward the cakes making everything from the horror scenes baked on the show to peacocks and Disney's "Dumbo." All with no formal training, she said.

In time, Basu started her cake business called The Sweet Sensation while her she and her husband lived in Aberdeen, Scotland where her husband was assigned for work. While there, she attended her first competition in Birmingham, UK in 2014 which she said pulled her that much more into the profession.

"I was planning to compete the following year in (Birmingham) with so much talent, but again life took a U-turn and my husband was transferred to Houston, Texas," Basu said.



PHOTOS COURTESY OF H

Basu doesn't just do sculptural cakes. This example of a more traditional cake and cake decoration is one example of what her business can provide to the community.

Once the family got to the Houston area and settled near Katy, Basu said she reopened her business and kept competing and participating in the professional dessert industry. She has since won or placed high in several regional baking competitions and served as judge for the That Takes the Cake competition in Austin, Tex. and has become a brand ambassador for Sugarin.

Basu said she loves her work on the show and off and hopes that her success in pursuing her passion can help others pursue their own aspirations.

"Don't ever give up. When I started in (2011) I knew nothing. I think, in truth, I knew nothing about baking – how to decorate cakes – nothing at all, so I read a book about cake making and what will make you want to pay me for (baking)."

Basu's business continues to grow and her competition participation continues to increase locally and on television. Those interested in purchasing a cake from Hemu Basu's business, The Sweet Sensation, can email her at hemlata.basumatary@gmail.com, message her through her facebook page at https://www.facebook.com/hemubasu/ or call her at 346-772-8367.



Basu has applied her heritage to her craft with this piece she entitled "Durga the Shakti" which won her the championship on "That Takes the Cake." The cake represents a goddess from Hindu faith that centers around combating evils and demonic forces and being a protective mother figure. The cake is dedicated to women who are victims of domestic violence and other forms of violence against women.



This may look like a purse, but it's actually one of Basu's cakes — inspired by Michael Kors. Basu's is proud of the dedication to detail in her work that leads toward photorealistic cakes such as this one.



Water District Notice of Public Hearing on Tax Rate

The Fort Bend/Waller County Municipal Utility District No. 2 will hold a public hearing on a proposed tax rate for the tax year 2020 on Thursday, September 24, 2020 at 12:00., by teleconference at Telephone Number: 877-810-9415, Access Code: 4987831. Your individual taxes may increase at a greater or lesser rate, or even decrease, depending on the tax rate that is adopted and on the change in the taxable value of your property in relation to the change in taxable value of all other property. The change in the taxable value of your property in relation to the change in the taxable value of all other property determines the distribution of the tax burden among all property owners.

FOR the proposal: S. Corbin, G. Whitt, C. Davis, & D. Montgomery

AGAINST the proposal: (none)

PRESENT and not voting: (none)

ABSENT: S. Wallingford

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

Total tax rate (per \$100 of value)	Last Year* \$ 0.800/\$100 Adopted	This Year* \$ 0.800/\$100 Proposed
Difference in rates per \$100 of value	\$0.000 /\$100	
Percentage increase/decrease in rates (+/-)	0.0000%	
Average appraised residence homestead value	\$ 0	\$ 0
General homestead exemptions available (excluding 65 years of age or older or disabled person's exemptions)	\$ 0	<u>\$</u> 0
Average residence homestead taxable value	<u>\$</u> 0	\$ 0
Tax on average residence homestead	\$ 0	\$ 0
Annual increase/decrease in taxes if proposed tax rate is adopted (+/-) and percentage of increase (+/-)	\$0.00 0.0000%	

NOTICE OF TAXPAYERS' RIGHT TO ELECTION TO REDUCE TAX RATE

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

* There were NO residential homesteads for comparison purposes.

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

Questions regarding this notice can be directed to the tax office at (281) 499-1223.

Water District Notice of Public Hearing on Tax Rate

The Fort Bend County Municipal Utility District No. 199 will hold a public hearing on a proposed tax rate for the tax year 2020 on Tuesday, September 22, 2020 at 11:00 a.m., by teleconference at (888) 278-0296, Access Code: 8166315. Your individual taxes may increase at a greater or lesser rate, or even decrease, depending on the tax rate that is adopted and on the change in the taxable value of your property in relation to the change in taxable value of all other property. The change in the taxable value of your property in relation to the change in the taxable value of all other property determines the distribution of the tax burden among all property owners.

FOR the proposal: M. Wilson, B. Stewart, B. Ashby & P. Huinker

AGAINST the proposal: (none)

PRESENT and not voting: (none)

ABSENT: J. Hammonds

and percentage of increase (+/-)

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

unit last year to taxes proposed on the average residence nomestead this year.				
Total tax rate (per \$100 of value)	Last Year* \$ 0.600/\$100 Adopted		This Year* \$ 0.600/\$100 Proposed	
Difference in rates per \$100 of value		\$0.000 /\$100		
Percentage increase/decrease in rates (+/-)		0.0000%		
Average appraised residence homestead value	\$ 0		\$ 0	
General homestead exemptions available (excluding 65 years of age or older or disabled person's exemptions)	\$ 0		<u>\$</u> 0	
Average residence homestead taxable value	\$ 0		\$ 0	
Tax on average residence homestead	\$ 0		\$ 0	
Annual increase/decrease in taxes if proposed tax rate is adopted (+/-)		\$0.00		

NOTICE OF TAXPAYERS' RIGHT TO ELECTION TO REDUCE TAX RATE

0.0000%

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

* There were NO residential homesteads for comparison purposes.

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

TEXAS

KATYTIMES.COM

Report: Privately built border wall will fail

By JEREMY SCHWARTZ and PERLA TREVIZO

THE TEXAS TRIBUNE AND PROPUBLICA

September 2, 2020 It's not a matter of if a privately built border fence along the shores of the Rio Grande will fail, it's a matter of when, according to a new engineering report on the troubled

The report is one of two new studies set to be filed in federal court this week that found numerous deficiencies in the 3-mile border fence, built this year by North Dakota-based Fisher Sand and Gravel. The reports confirm earlier reporting from ProPublica and The Texas Tribune, which found that segments of the structure were in danger of overturning due to extensive erosion if not fixed and properly maintained. Fisher dismissed the concerns as normal post-construction issues.

Donations that paid for part of the border fence are at the heart of an indictment against members of the We Build the Wall nonprofit, which raised more than \$25 million to help President Donald Trump build a border wall.

Former Trump chief strategist Steve Bannon, We Build the Wall founder Brian Kolfage and two others connected to the organization are accused of siphoning donor money to pay off personal debt and fund lavish lifestyles. All four, who face up to 20 years in prison on each of the two counts they face, have pleaded not guilty, and Bannon has called the charges a plot to stop border wall construction.

We Build the Wall, whose executive board is made up of influential immigration hard-liners like Bannon, Kris Kobach and Tom Tancredo, contributed \$1.5 million of the cost of the \$42 million private border fence project south of Mission, Texas.

Last year, the nonprofit also hired Fisher to build a half-mile fence segment in Sunland Park, New Mexico, outside El Paso.

Company president Tommy Fisher, a frequent guest on Fox News, had called the Rio Grande



Brenda Bazán for the Texas Tribun

The 3-mile border fence along the shore of the Rio Grande will fail during extreme flooding, according to an engineering report that is set to be filed in federal court this week.

fence the "Lamborghini" of border walls and bragged that his company's methods could help Trump reach his Election Day goal of about 500 new miles of barriers along the southern border.

Instead, one engineer who reviewed the two reports on behalf of ProPublica and The Texas Tribune likened Fisher's fence to a used Toyota Yaris.

"It seems like they are cutting corners everywhere," said Alex Mayer, a professor of civil engineering at the University of Texas at El Paso. "It's not a Lamborghini, it's a \$500 used car."

Since Fisher's companies embarked on construction of the Rio Grande fence, the Trump administration has awarded about \$2 billion in federal contracts to the firms to build segments of the border wall in other locations.

Fisher agreed to the inspection as part of ongoing lawsuits against Fisher Sand and Gravel filed last year by the National Butterfly Center and the International Boundary and Water Commission. They unsuccessfully sought

to convince a federal judge to stop the construction of the project until the potential impacts of the wall on the Rio Grande could be determined.

Mark Tompkins, an environmental engineer hired by the wild-life refuge, noted in his report that widespread erosion and scouring occurred after heavy rain events such as Hurricane Hanna in July, but that the fence has yet to experience a flood of the Rio Grande.

"Fisher Industries' private bollard fence will fail during extreme high flow events," concluded Tompkins, who specializes in river management.

"When extreme flow events, laden with sediment and debris, completely undermine the foundation of the fence and create a flow path under the fence or cause a segment of the fence to topple into the river, unpredictable and damaging hydraulics will occur," he added in an affidavit to be filed in court.

Experts have said the fence will face a never-ending battle with erosion given its proximity to the water and the sandy, silty material

of the banks. In the Rio Grande Valley, the federal government usually builds sections of the wall miles inland on top of existing levees, partly due to erosion concerns.

A second report, based on a geotechnical and structural inspection by the Millennium Engineers Group of Pharr, Texas, also hired by the National Butterfly Center, found that the fence was stable for now, but that it faces a host of issues. They include soil erosion on the river side — in some areas gaps up to three feet wide and waist deep, concrete cracking, construction flaws and what the firm concluded was likely substandard construction material below the fence's foundation.

The Millennium engineers called for a clay covering to protect the embankment from erosion, as well as closely monitoring the project.

Its conclusion: "The geography at the wall's construction location in comparison to the river bend is not at a favorable location for long-term performance."

According to a copy of an

Fisher Sand and Gravel plans quarterly inspections of the fence as well as extra checkups after large storms. The company had also said it would plant grasses that better hold in place the sandy riverbank and add a layer of rocks to lessen erosion. New soil will also be "treated and seeded" to help fill ground cover.

operation and maintenance plan,

Tompkins called the maintenance plan "completely inadequate" and a "haphazard and unprofessional approach to longterm maintenance."

Tommy Fisher said Tuesday that he couldn't comment on the reports because he hadn't reviewed them. But he added that his company has fixed all of the erosion, in part by adding a 10-foot-wide road made out of rocks for the Border Patrol to drive over that his crew considered big enough so it wouldn't be as easily displaced. He estimates it will cost up to \$150,000.

"Bottom line, if you want border security on the border you have to think outside the box," he said. "I feel very comfortable with what we've done."

In July, Fisher appeared on a podcast hosted by Bannon, who called Fisher "kind of a mentor" who "taught me really about how you actually have to build a wall."

Asked about the engineering concerns, which Bannon said were part of a "hit piece," Fisher called them "absolutely nonsense."

"I would invite any of these engineers that so-called said this was gonna fall over, I'll meet 'em there next week. ... If you don't know what you're talking about, you probably shouldn't start talking," he said. "It's working unbelievably well. There's a little erosion maintenance we have to maintain."

But to experts, Fisher's planned fixes are inadequate.

"To me, it's almost like putting a Band-Aid on a gaping wound," said Adriana E. Martinez, a Southern Illinois University Edwardsville professor and geomorphologist who reviewed the reports on behalf of ProPublica and The



Water District Notice of Public Hearing on Tax Rate

The Woodcreek Reserve Municipal Utility District will hold a public hearing on a proposed tax rate for the tax year 2020 on Thursday, September 24, 2020 at 4:00 p.m., by teleconference (877) 411-9748, Access Code: 3072281. Your individual taxes may increase at a greater or lesser rate, or even decrease, depending on the tax rate that is adopted and on the change in the taxable value of your property in relation to the change in taxable value of all other property. The change in the taxable value of your property in relation to the change in the taxable value of all other property determines the distribution of the tax burden among all property owners.

FOR the proposal: C. Foster, J. Perkins, D. Beltrami, & C. Caruthers

AGAINST the proposal: (none)

PRESENT and not voting: (none)

ABSENT: (none)

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

 Last Year
 This Year

 Total tax rate (per \$100 of value)
 \$ 0.590/\$100
 \$ 0.585/\$100

 Adopted
 Proposed

Difference in rates per \$100 of value __\$0.005 /\$100

Percentage increase/decrease

Average appraised residence

Average residence homestead

taxable value

in rates (+/-)

-0.8475%

\$432,760

<u>\$411,122</u>

homestead value

General homestead exemptions available

(excluding 65 years of age or older or

disabled person's exemptions) (\$16,635) -\$21,638

\$415,876

\$399<u>,241</u>

Tax on average residence homestead \$2,355.52 \$2,405.06

Annual increase/decrease in taxes if proposed tax rate is adopted (+/-) \$49.54 and percentage of increase (+/-) 2.1031%

NOTICE OF VOTE ON TAX RATE

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

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