

NEWS NOTES

Aldine Community meets the new Lone Star College NH/EA Dean

Nutrition Classes

Harris County Public Health presents Nutrition classes. Learn how to make delicious, healthy, and easy recipes. 4-session course. Some of the topics covered include: myplate, proteins, dairy, whole grains.

Join Harris County Public Health every Thursday starting March 14 - April 4 from 9:30 a.m. to 10:30 a.m. at Harris County Emergency Corps located at 2800 Aldine Bender Rd., Houston, TX 77032.

Each interactive lesson held will be taught by health professionals and nutrition experts.

EAST ALDINE – The Aldine community turned out last Thursday night, to “Meet the Dean” of the new Lone Star College - North Harris/East Aldine campus. The meeting was held at the BakerRipley Reunion Hall at the Town Center.

The East Aldine District sponsored the meeting, one of its quarterly Civic Connections, Community Forums.

Dr. Luis Lucio is the new dean, and one of the first employees of the new Lone Star College East Aldine campus, now under construction and set to open for classes in the fall.



DEAN Luis Lucio

Dr. Lucio gave a very personal and candid talk about his life story, emphasizing that he was a native

of Aldine and was pleased to be returning to his “roots.”

Lucio attended Aldine schools in his youth, and is a graduate of MacArthur High School. He took classes at Lone Star College, and has two degrees from Sam Houston State University. He also holds a Doctorate degree in educational leadership from the University of Houston.

Many in the community remembered him when he taught at Oleson Elementary, his first teaching job, or as principal at Carrol Academy, where the



Dean Lucio's family

See *Meet the Dean*, p.8

North Houston Little League Parade

NHA Little League Opening Day, March 23. Parade & Festival at MacArthur HS, 4400 Aldine Mail Rt. Parade begins at 10 am, Festival at 12 pm. Little League games from 1 pm - 5 pm at Squatty Lyons Park, 1601 Cromwell, 77093. For more information call 281-226-0552. AldineDistrict.org

Congresswoman Garcia holds community meeting

By Allan Jamail

Houston, TX - February 20, 2019, Congresswoman Sylvia Garcia held her first Community Safety Meeting and reported how she's doing in her new role representing the 29th District.

She said one of her first things to do was to go visit the Texas Republicans serving in the House and to let them know she wanted to work in a by-partisan way on issues that'll help

Texas. She said she felt they'll have a good working relationship on many issues such as the Port of Houston, NASA, hurricane surge protection and disaster relief. But on the more hard-line tough issues like immigration and the border wall the Republicans are dug-in and determine to hold their position and not eager or willing to compromise.

See *Community Meeting*, Page 8



Congresswoman Sylvia Garcia provides her account of the state of affairs in Washington, D.C. to attendees at her first Community Meeting since being elected in November.

Photo by Allan Jamail

got goals?

Register now for Summer 2019! Classes begin June 3.

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COMMUNITY / SCHOOL NEWS

Aldine ISD students, staff take part in Go Texan Day

Students at Vardeman EC/Pre-K/K School dressed up as cowboys and cowgirls to celebrate Go Texan Day in Houston on Friday, Feb. 22. The Houston Livestock Show and Rodeo always designates the day before the Rodeo Parade as Go Texan Day. Pictured are members of Jamie Grettenburg's class showing off their Go Texan Day outfits.



Start your summer plans with registration March 4 at Lone Star College-North Harris

HOUSTON (February 22, 2019) - Plan now to maximize your summer! Registration opens March 4 for Lone Star College-North Harris 2019 summer classes. Registration is offered to existing students as well as future students looking to plot a course for a new career.

Summer will be here before you know it. Plan accordingly! May mini-semester classes begin on May 13 and Summer Session classes begin on June 3.

Classes are offered in traditional, online and hybrid formats to cater to the needs of students planning for a busy summer. Fields of study include academic programs that lead to an associate's degree and workforce training programs that build skills highly sought-after by employers.

Academic and financial aid advisors are available and ready to assist. For more information, visit www.LoneStar.edu/registration or contact an advisor at 281-618-5481.

Lone Star College offers high-quality, low-cost academic transfer and career

training education to 99,000 students each semester. LSC is training tomorrow's workforce today and redefining the community college experience to support student success. Stephen C. Head, Ph.D., serves as chancellor of LSC, the largest institution of higher education in the Houston area with an annual economic impact of nearly \$3 billion. LSC consists of six colleges, 10 centers, two university centers, Lone Star Corporate College and LSC-Online. To learn more, visit LoneStar.edu.

HUD Provides \$652 million to Texas in Hurricane Harvey recovery funds

AUSTIN - Last week, Governor Greg Abbott held a joint press conference call with U.S. Department of Housing and Urban Development (HUD) Secretary Ben Carson, in which they announced \$652 million in additional funding for Texans impacted by Hurricane Harvey. The announcement followed a meeting between Governor Abbott and Secretary Carson, where they discussed the progress Texas has made since Harvey rebuilding efforts began.

"With a disaster the size and scope of Hurricane Harvey, collaboration between state, local, and

federal government is critical," said Governor Abbott. "I thank Secretary Carson for his leadership and officials at HUD who have worked closely with the state of Texas for their tremendous partnership throughout the recovery process. Working together, we will continue to rebuild our communities and ensure the Lone Star State is more resilient than ever before."

This announcement marks the third allocation of funding from HUD for Harvey recovery efforts, and will provide additional restoration resources for homes, businesses, and infrastructure impacted by

the storm. These funds, allocated from the Community Development Block Grant for Disaster Recovery (CDBG-DR) Program, will further supplement the \$5 billion in recovery programs approved by HUD in June of 2018.

CDBG-DR grants support a variety of disaster recovery activities including housing redevelopment and rebuilding, business assistance, economic revitalization, and infrastructure repair. Grantees are required to spend the majority of these recovery funds in "most impacted" areas as identified by HUD.

Victory Early College High School senior earns full-tuition Posse Scholarship

The Posse Foundation selected Victory Early College High School (VECHS) senior Arnaldo Sandoval-Guerrero to receive a four-year, full-ride scholarship. He got two offers from partnering institutions — the University of Virginia and Baylor University. He chose to attend UVA on a \$178,896 scholarship.

UVA stood out to Arnaldo. He lauds the school's outstanding computer science program, which he intends to major in. He wants to learn how to program artificial intelligence machines to perform tasks associated with "human-level intelligence that can assist people in everyday tasks."

The soon-to-be grad also plans on taking advantage of UVA's numerous career opportunities in Washington, D.C., New York, and Los Angeles.

Preparing for the Future Arnaldo, who comes from a single parent, low-income household, will be the first in his family to attend college. Currently, Arnaldo ranks 10th in his



Arnaldo Sandoval-Guerrero will head to the University of Virginia in fall 2019. He will major in computer science. As a Posse Scholar, he will be attending on a four-year, full-tuition scholarship.

class of 92 students. He acknowledges that competitive students choose to attend a competitive campus like Victory ECHS. However, he didn't spend his time at Victory comparing himself to others. Instead, he focused more on his personal and academic growth.

Arnaldo admits it has been challenging navigating the process to higher education, but he chose to remain resilient. He sought answers to ques-

tions he had along the way.

Posse Scholarship Process

He heard of the Posse Scholarship opportunity through a past Scholar, Kiel Fernández who is a 2017 Victory ECHS alumnus. Fernández currently attends Wellesley College through the Posse program. Arnaldo's college adviser nominated him for the scholarship. Arnaldo encourages other AISD college-going students to pursue the Posse Scholarship.

Hambrick Middle School joins in the National WATCH D.O.G.S. Program

The month of February saw the launch of a new program at Hambrick Middle School with some very special guests visiting the school. These guests are referred to as WATCH D.O.G.S. and can be seen in the classrooms, hallways, cafeteria, and offices at Hambrick from now until the end of the school year. These volunteers are the fathers, grandfathers, uncles, brothers, even community members and family/friends of staff members who have joined the program. They are all a part of the nation-wide WATCH D.O.G.S. program which was created in 1998 in one school and has grown to now include thousands of schools across the country. The goal of the program is "to provide positive male role models for the students, demonstrating by their presence that education is important." Hambrick Middle School hosted a Pizza with Dads night in January to introduce the program and its potential benefits to the school. On that night several men signed up for a day to visit the school to be a positive, male role model for the students. Since then even more volunteers have signed up and shown up, making connections with the students, visiting the classrooms, and partnering with the teachers to demonstrate the working connection between home and school. The WATCH D.O.G.S. have commented on how middle school has changed so much since



WATCH D.O.G.S. volunteer Curley Thomas greets 7th grade student Jose Hernandez, along with others, as they arrive for another day of learning at Hambrick Middle School. The campus recently launched the WATCH D.O.G.S. program in an effort to provide positive, male role models to the students.

they attended and collectively agree that they want to make an impact with the students at the schools, but also in the community at large. Hambrick students have been proud to have their dads on campus to visit their classes and eat lunch with them and their friends.

Hambrick Principal Dr. Rebecca Sanford stated, "It has been a pleasure working with our WATCH D.O.G.S. To see their ex-

citement and the students' reactions as they've engaged with them throughout the school day has been so heartwarming. Since beginning the program on February 1st, we have had a Watch DOG on campus every day. Having an extra pair of eyes and ears in the hallways, during class changes and in the cafeteria during lunches has been greatly appreciated! We love our WATCH D.O.G.S.!"

Man arrested after exchanging gunfire with two Police Officers

Charges have been filed against an armed suspect arrested after exchanging gunfire with two Houston police officers at 5219 Airline Drive about 12:15 a.m. last Wednesday, February 27.

The male suspect, Carlos Caseres-Martinez, 20, is charged with two counts of aggravated assault against a public servant and one count of burglary of a building.

According to Officials, HPD patrol officers responded to a burglary of a business call at the Cash America Pawn Shop on Airline Drive and found a large hole cut in the back of the business. Officers then saw a light shining and movement inside the business, indicating someone was inside. As officers attempted to set up a perimeter, Officer Martin no-

ticed the suspect's (Caseres-Martinez) hand emerge from the hole in the building. He gave Caseres-Martinez verbal commands to show his hands but instead, the suspect stuck a gun through the hole, pointed it toward Officer Martin and fired several shots. Fearing for his life, Officer Martin discharged his duty weapon. Caseres-Martinez and Officer Martin continued to exchange gunfire and the suspect then exited the building and attempted to flee on foot southbound.

Officer Eskridge rushed to assist Officer Martin and located Caseres-Martinez running westbound on East Rodgers Street. He gave the suspect verbal commands to show his hands but instead, Caseres-Martinez fired his weapon at the officer.

Fearing for his life, Officer Eskridge returned fire. Caseres-Martinez continued to flee and attempted to hide under a nearby vehicle, but was quickly located and taken into custody. Officers recovered a gun in his possession. Caseres-Martinez was transported by HPD paramedics to the hospital for gunshot wounds to his left arm. He was later released from the hospital in stable condition. HPD Officers C. Eskridge and R. Martin, who discharged their duty weapons, were not injured in the incident.



Suspect

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COMMUNITY NEWS

Congresswoman Sylvia Garcia to receive 2019 Latino award for outstanding Public Service

• Garcia will be honored for her contributions to the Latino community at the NALEO Edward R. Roybal Legacy Gala on March 6, 2019 in Washington D.C.

• The Former Texas State Senator and Past NALEO President is one of the first two Latinas to represent Texas in Congress

Washington, D.C. – The National Association of Latino Elected and Appointed Officials (NALEO) announced today that U.S. Rep. and Former NALEO President Sylvia R. Garcia will be presented with the 2019 Edward R. Roybal Award for Outstanding Public Service at the organization's annual NALEO Edward R. Roybal Legacy Gala in Washington, D.C. on March 6, 2019.

U.S. Rep. Van Taylor (R TX-03), who previously served in the Texas State Senate alongside U.S. Rep. Garcia, and other Members of Congress will be in attendance to provide tribute remarks at this year's awards gala.

The Edward R. Roybal Award for Outstanding Public Service is presented annually to individuals who have distinguished themselves as devoted public servants to the nation and the Latino com-

munity. The award pays tribute to the organization's founder and President Emeritus, the late Congressman Edward R. Roybal.

"NALEO is pleased to honor a distinguished Latina public servant who has made invaluable contributions to our organization and to the nation's Latino community throughout her accomplished career," stated Pauline Medrano, NALEO President and Dallas County Treasurer. "Making history as one of the first two Latinas to represent Texas in Congress, Sylvia has paved the way for future Latina leaders and set the bar for what it means to use public office as an avenue to increase opportunities for Latinos and protect the most vulnerable segments of our community. Her ability to break through barriers and tireless dedication to the state of Texas and nation truly exemplifies the spirit of service demonstrated by the late Congressman Roybal."

A native of Palito Blanco, a South Texas farming community, NALEO's 2019 awardee U.S. Rep. Garcia has dedicated her life to her community and to public service. As a social worker and legal aid lawyer early in her professional career, she protected our

community's most vulnerable, old and young, and ensured no one was forgotten. Garcia served an unprecedented five terms under two Mayors as Director and Presiding Judge of the Houston Municipal System before being elected as the first Latino and woman elected to serve on the Harris County Commissioners Court in 2002.

She went on to serve in the Texas State Senate, becoming the seventh woman and the third Latina to serve in the upper chambers when she was sworn-in in 2013. As a three-term Texas State Senator, Garcia fought for her district and advocated for veterans, immigrant rights, women's health and access to healthcare. U.S. Rep. Garcia passed numerous bills during her time in the Texas state legislature including the Truckers Against Trafficking Bill, which requires human trafficking training for commercial drivers, and the School Bus Safety Act, which requires school buses in Texas to have seat belts.

"For more than 20 years, Wells Fargo has worked with NALEO to empower the Latino community, and we're honored to serve as the chair of this year's Gala and to congrat-

ulate Rep. Garcia on this important award," said Ruben Barrales, Senior Vice President for External Relations at Wells Fargo. "Through our support of the NALEO Educational Fund, hundreds of legal permanent residents have been able to apply for U.S. citizenship, and a growing number of Latino elected officials have benefited from financial education resources through the NALEO Policy Institute on Public Finance. We are proud to have been a part of NALEO's accomplishments over the last two decades, and we look forward to collaborating with NALEO for years to come."

Garcia became one of the first two Latinas in history to represent the state of Texas in Congress (D TX-29) when she took the oath of office earlier this year. She joins the 37 other Latino U.S. Representatives and four Latino U.S. Senators in the 116th Congress, forming the largest class of Latino congressional leaders in history.

About NALEO
The National Association of Latino Elected and Appointed Officials is the non-partisan leadership organization of the nation's more than 6,600 Latino elected and appointed officials.



Charlotte Jackson and Sylvia Garcia at the Congresswoman's Open House.



Someone's Child

By Charlotte Jackson

There is much concern about the increasing number of homeless people who are in the North Channel Area. Almost daily there are posts from concerned community members that are upset over the number of people and the amount of items that are piled under the underpasses along Interstate 10 heading east as well as those under the intersections along the Sam Houston Parkway. There are countless individuals who you can find in the wooded area along the Beltway as well as around vacant buildings and quite often behind restaurants in the alleyways.

On social media, you see some people almost developing a vigilante attitude, calling for the underpasses to be washed daily with a high pressure water pump. These people talk about their property value decreasing and the amount of trash as well as human excrement increasing. Often these homeless individuals scare off potential customers as well as potential new residents to the community.

There are numerous community members who will hand cash to those who approach them while others will look into the distance. Sometimes there are individuals or groups who prepare a small plastic bag with basic essentials such as a toothbrush, toothpaste, dental floss, deodorant, shavers, shampoo and other hygiene items. Other groups will sometimes distribute blankets, towels and jackets to the homeless community.

No matter which side of the discussion that you find yourself, take a moment and remember

that the people on the streets and in the woods are someone's child. We do not know what happened in their lifetime to lead them on the path that they are on now. Often the members of the homeless community have a mental disorder and without medication and treatment, their lives are in a constant turmoil. There is a misconception that many of the homeless are military veterans. In reality, thanks to many programs available, veterans are typically moved to the top of lists when trying to get assistance. Many of the homeless are ex-offenders and depending on the crime, there are few options for housing. Even worse is the number of homeless youth. Please remember that not every person on the streets wants to be there or make decisions to be there.

On more than one occasion, I have sat down and talked to those living on the streets. Most often, they just want to know someone cares and they want to find resources for assistance. One of the best things that you can do is visit www.homelesshouston.org and print out the "HELP CARD" and give it with a smile to the next homeless person you see. If you are bold enough, hug them. Research shows three hugs a day improves your life. And if you are brave enough to speak with a homeless person, you might ask them if they would like to use your cell phone and contact a family member just to let them know they are still alive. If you are not quite that brave, you can at least pray for them. Always remember, we do not know the route that led them to the current situation, but they are still someone's child.

New Research: "Clustering" Land Buyouts can improve flood resiliency after hurricane Harvey

In a new study, The Nature Conservancy and Texas A&M University lay out a proactive model that can improve flood-risk reduction, strengthen community protection, and increase environmental gains

Houston, TX – The Nature Conservancy today announced new findings from a joint study produced with Texas A&M University that analyzes flood loss claims and estimates from over 74,000 properties impacted by Hurricane Harvey in Houston's Harris County. The study finds that a strategic land buyout approach that prioritizes the purchase of land parcels in 'clusters,' as well as proximity to existing open space, is just as cost-effective as the traditional, piecemeal approach but with major added ecological and social benefits.

In 2017, Hurricane Harvey dropped 34 trillion gallons of rain over the Gulf Coast, destroying or damaging over 200,000 homes and causing \$125 billion in damages. For areas that suffer from repeated flooding, voluntary property

buyout programs are often a cost-effective approach to flood-risk reduction that offer property owners the opportunity to sell impacted homes at a fair market value.

The report finds that this traditional buyout method is often implemented in an uncoordinated and reactionary 'checkerboard' pattern—after flooding has already done its damage. While well-intentioned, these buyout programs are often less effective at improving flood resilience in their execution.

The report also shows that the more proactive 'clustered' buyout approach can bolster communities and increase flood resiliency by repurposing newly vacant 'clustered' lots as natural spaces. These natural spaces can then be utilized to restore functions of floodplains, absorb and clean storm water, provide space for outdoor recreation, and improve the visual character of urban areas—all while remaining just as cost-effective as the traditional model. "Clustered buyouts provide

an opportunity to merge several parcels into one and put the resulting parcel to work as green infrastructure for soaking up and storing stormwater," said Dr. Christine Shepard, director of science for The Nature Conservancy in the Gulf of Mexico.

"Flooding from Hurricane Harvey was absolutely devastating for the Houston community. While the amount of rain was unprecedented, the flooding was exacerbated by Houston's dense development," said Laura Huffman, The Nature Conservancy's Texas regional director. "This new model can help families in Houston, in Texas, and throughout the country who remain vulnerable to future flooding. It's imperative that we seek out new, nature-based solutions to improve resiliency and protect communities."

In Harris County, there are hundreds of thousands of homes on the list for voluntary buyouts, but there is not adequate funding or capacity to meet that need. Areas like this

have flooded before and are continually at risk of flooding again. Nature-based solutions like this new approach to 'clustered' land buyouts can provide vital protection needed to reduce the impacts of storm damage. Recent polling in areas affected by Harvey indicates that more than 80 percent favor directing federal recovery dollars to natural infrastructure to reduce risk from future storms and increase resiliency.

The study offers a roadmap for municipalities, land trusts, and other community leaders for buyout programs that stack multiple benefits like flood-risk reduction, open space protection, and enhanced resilience—all while increasing safety and conserving funds. The study was done through a partnership between the Texas Chapter of The Nature Conservancy, the Conservancy's Gulf of Mexico Program, and Texas A&M University and was funded with a Grant from the Walton Family Foundation.

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* CAPTAIN MARVEL (PG-13)
2D - 7:00pm, 3D - 7:00pm

* GRETA (R) - 12:15pm, 2:30pm, 5:00pm, 7:30pm, 9:50pm Stadium Seating

* Tyler Perry's A Madea Family Funeral (PG-13) - 12:00pm, 2:30pm, 5:00pm, 7:30pm, 10:00pm Stadium Seating

* How to Train Your Dragon: The Hidden World (PG) - 1:00pm, 7:00pm Stadium Seating

* How to Train Your Dragon: The Hidden World (PG) - 3:30pm, 9:30pm SPANDUB; Stadium Seating

* How to Train Your Dragon: The Hidden World 3D (PG) - 3:45pm, 9:45pm Stadium Seating

* How to Train Your Dragon: The Hidden World 3D (PG) - 12:30pm, 6:30pm SPANDUB; Stadium Seating

ALITA: BATTLE ANGEL (PG-13) - 12:30pm, 3:30pm, 6:30pm, 9:30pm Stadium Seating

* FIGHTING WITH MY FAMILY (PG-13) - 12:30pm, 3:30pm, 6:30pm, 9:15pm Stadium Seating

HAPPY DEATH DAY 2U (PG-13) - 12:00pm, 2:20pm, 4:45pm, 7:15pm, 9:35pm Stadium Seating

ISN'T IT ROMANTIC (PG-13) - 12:20pm, 2:30pm, 4:45pm, 7:00pm, 9:15pm

Stadium Seating

* The LEGO Movie 2: The Second Part in 3D (PG) - 12:30pm, 6:15pm SPANDUB; Stadium Seating

* The LEGO Movie 2: The Second Part in 3D (PG) - 1:00pm, 6:45pm Stadium Seating

The LEGO Movie 2: The Second Part (PG) - 3:20pm, 9:00pm SPANDUB; Stadium Seating

The LEGO Movie 2: The Second Part (PG) - 3:45pm, 9:30pm Stadium Seating

THE PRODIGY (R) - 12:00pm, 2:15pm, 4:35pm, 7:30pm, 9:50pm Stadium Seating

WHAT MEN WANT (R) - 12:45pm, 3:45pm, 6:30pm, 9:15pm Stadium Seating

MISS BALA (PG-13) - 12:30pm, 3:00pm, 5:45pm, 8:30pm Stadium Seating

AQUAMAN (PG-13) - 12:00pm, 6:15pm Stadium Seating

* AQUAMAN 3D (PG-13) - 3:10pm, 9:20pm Stadium Seating

* Spider-Man: Into the Spider-Verse (PG) - 12:35pm, 3:30pm, 6:30pm, 9:30pm Stadium Seating

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OPINION PAGE

TEXAS SENATE NEWS
By Richard Lee

Legislation could end "Surprise Billing" for Most

(Austin) The practice of billing insured patients excessive amounts for non-network care at in-network facilities could end if a measure unveiled Thursday by Senator Kelly Hancock of North Richland Hills becomes law. Known as surprise billing, this happens most commonly in emergency room visits when individuals go to a facility covered by their health plan. Later, they find out that some service providers who saw them, like imaging technicians or emergency room doctors, are contracted employees and not in-network. This can mean much higher out-of-pocket expenses for the consumer. Often, the first indication of these charges comes in the mail in the form of bills for hundreds or even thousands of dollars. Hancock's proposal, SB 1264, could effectively end the practice for most insured Texans.

Hancock passed the first legislation addressing surprise billing practices as a House member in 2009, creating a process by which patients can seek remedies to excessive, unexpected medical bills by requesting mediation through the Texas Department of Insurance. He said that system has so far saved patients more than \$30 million in out-of-pocket medical costs. "Still, thousands of Texans receive unexpected and frankly, unreasonable surprise medical bills every year," said Hancock. "Enough is enough." Since these disputes are actually between the service provider and the insurer, Hancock says there's no reason for the consumer to be involved. "TDI mediation will continue, but without patients being put in the middle," he said. "The fact is that market negotiators in these situations are the providers or facilities and their health plans. This legislation acknowledges that fact." The bill introduced Thursday would leave it up to those parties to seek mediation, and would leave the patient out of it.

The key language in the bill would forbid providers from billing people insured through state-regulated health plans such as preferred provider organizations (PPO), health management organizations (HMO) or the state pension systems for services received at an in-network facility more than their responsibility defined under the plan. Hancock says this is intended to apply to situations where a patient has no option in who is providing their care, like emergency care or out-of-network physician services at in-network hospitals. The patient would still be responsible for co-pays, co-insurance, deductibles, and other out-of-pocket expenses as defined by their plans, but wouldn't be on the hook for costs above that. The bill also includes an opt-in provision for people under federally-regulated, self-funded ERISA health plans, which Hancock says makes up at least 40 percent of the state's health insurance market. "It's our hope that by including these plans in mediation, Texas will send a loud and clear signal to DC: that similar consumer protections need to be passed at the federal level," he said.

Also Thursday, the Senate State Affairs Committee considered a bill that would prohibit local ordinances regulating private businesses. Saying this was solely the responsible of the state, bill author and Conroe Senator Brandon Creighton's SB 15 would pre-empt ordinances like ones in Austin and San Antonio mandating that private businesses offer paid sick-leave to employees. Moreover, he believes such local rules threaten the state's business-friendly environment. "Less government, lower taxes and fair, predictable regulations are why companies are moving here, why companies are expanding once they get here, and why we continue to be the benchmark for job creation in this nation," said Creighton. A state district court ruled last November that Austin's ordinance violated the state's minimum wage law and prohibited implementation of the new rule. The bill remains pending before the committee. The Senate will reconvene in regular Session on Monday, March 4 at 3 p.m.



Caucus names legislative priorities for public education

AUSTIN — The Texas House Democratic Caucus on Feb. 21 announced its "Texas Kids First" education-funding package that would include all-day pre-kindergarten, teacher raises and retirement and property tax reform.

"We hope to work with our colleagues to incorporate some of these ideas into their bills," said Rep. Chris Turner, D-Grand Prairie, caucus chair.

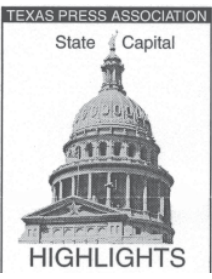
Caucus member Rep. Gina Hinojosa, D-Austin, a former Austin Independent School District board president, said Texas rates 42nd in the nation in per-student funding. She said Texas public school students are funded \$2,300 per year below the national average.

The proposed funding package is embodied in several bills that caucus members have filed or are in the process of filing, and would add some \$14.5 billion more in baseline budget estimates. Items to be covered include:

- Teacher pay and benefits increases;
- Incentives for educating low-income students, children speaking little or no English, and special-needs pupils;
- Funding for the hiring of more counselors;
- Using money from the Rainy Day Fund for retired teachers;
- A monthly state contribution of \$100 toward teachers' health care premiums; and
- A one-time \$500 teacher reimbursement for out-of-pocket school supply purchases.

The caucus also proposes to achieve property tax relief by doubling homeowners' exemptions from \$25,000 to \$50,000, an amount they suggest

STATE CAPITAL HIGHLIGHTS
By Ed Sterling



would give most homeowners a break of up to \$325.

Defendants settle with state

Texas Attorney General Ken Paxton on Feb. 19 announced that Xerox Corporation and several of its former subsidiaries, including Conduent Inc., agreed to a \$235.9 million settlement with the State of Texas.

The settlement resolves a lawsuit brought by Paxton's office under the Texas Medicaid Fraud Prevention Act and other grounds regarding the processing of prior-authorization requests by dentists to deliver orthodontic services to Medicaid patients. Xerox and its companies, Paxton said, were responsible for reviewing and approving or denying requests by Medicaid providers to deliver orthodontic services between January 2004 and March 2012.

Paxton's office determined that employees of Xerox, Conduent and related companies rubber-stamped orthodontic prior-authorization requests without assuring the required review of each request by qualified clinical personnel. As a result, expensive, taxpayer-funded orthodontic work was performed on thousands of children who either didn't meet the Medicaid standard for braces or didn't require treatment. The Medicaid program does not pay for braces for cosmetic purposes. Under Texas law, only those requests that meet strict Medicaid program requirements are allowable.

Oil & gas boom to continue

Commissioners Ryan Sitton, Christi Craddick and Wayne Christian of the Texas Railroad Commission on Feb. 20 told the state Senate Committee on Natural Resources & Economic Development that discoveries of massive energy reserves in West Texas would enhance the state's booming energy industry.

Christian said the reserve found in the Wolfcamp Shale and Bone Spring Formation in West Texas is estimated to contain more than 46 billion barrels of oil and 281 trillion cubic feet of natural gas, enough to support decades of production at current levels.

Craddick told the panel that in 2017, the Legislature set a target for the Railroad Commission to plug 1,900 "orphan" wells in the 2018-2019 biennium. She estimated that the commission would cap more than 3,000 such wells by the end of 2019.

Sitton said the demand for the Railroad Commission to plug non-producing wells is also going to increase as the industry grows, and for that, the agency is requesting \$39.1 million in 2020-2021 to support the well-plugging program.

Governor nominates justice

Gov. Abbott on Feb. 21 nominated Houston attorney Justin B. "Brett" Busby to be Justice of the Supreme Court of Texas, Place 8, for a term to expire Dec. 31, 2020.

Busby, if confirmed by the Texas Senate, would succeed Justice Philip W. "Phil" Johnson of Amarillo, who retired from office effective Dec. 31, 2018.

Busby served as a justice on the Texas 14th Court of Appeals from 2012 to 2018.

House honors former speaker

Former Texas House Speaker James A. "Jimmy" Turman died Feb. 13. He was 91. His body lay in honor in the hall of the Texas House of Representatives on Feb. 22.

Turman represented Fannin County from 1955 through 1963 and served as speaker during the 57th Texas Legislature in 1961-63.

Abbott extends declaration

Gov. Greg Abbott on Feb. 14 extended the State Disaster Declaration for Texas counties affected by Hurricane Harvey.

Because of catastrophic damage caused by Hurricane Harvey, a state of disaster continues to exist in some 60 counties.

The declaration, originally issued in August 2017, authorizes the use of all available resources of state government and of political subdivisions that are reasonably necessary to cope with the disaster.



by AMAC Certified Social Security Advisor Russell Gloor
Association of Mature American Citizens

Social Security Matters

Ask Rusty – Why should a Veteran Pay for Medicare?

Dear Rusty: I am a Veteran and all my Medical needs are covered by the VA. Why should I be paying for Medicare out of my monthly SS check?
Signed: Inquiring Veteran

Dear Inquiring Veteran:

Well, it depends upon how comfortable you are that the VA will be able to provide ALL the medical services you may ever need, emergency or otherwise, for the rest of your life. I, too, am a veteran and receive some of my care – such as wellness exams, blood tests, some prescription drugs, and immunizations - from the VA, but I also have Medicare to cover other services which are not typically available on an immediate basis from the VA. The point is, there will almost surely be times when you won't be able to rely on the VA for needed immediate care or certain specialized services from specific medical experts, and if you don't have Medicare you may find yourself facing some very large medical expenses for which you will be personally responsible. That's where Medicare will help because nearly every medical facility and healthcare service in the country accepts patients with Medicare. And being immediately accepted as a Medicare patient anywhere in the country, anytime of day or night must certainly have some value for you. After all, none of us know what our health future will be.

Since you're now collecting Social Security I assume you're already enrolled in Medicare Parts A & B, and you're questioning why you should continue to pay the Part B premium. Medicare Part B is coverage for doctors and other outpatient services, while Medicare Part A provides hospitalization coverage. There's a premium for Part B (\$135.50/month in 2019), but Part A is free if you also qualify for Social Security. And, by the way, you must have Medicare Part A to collect Social Security after you're 65. For information, VA coverage for drugs is considered "creditable" as an alternative to Medicare Part D prescription drug coverage. But other VA

healthcare coverage is not a "creditable" alternative to Part B by Medicare's standards, so it won't count for avoiding a late enrollment penalty if you drop Part B now and decide afterwards to re-enroll.

Unless you have other "creditable" healthcare coverage from your or your spouse's employer after dropping Part B, re-enrolling later will result in you being assessed a late enrollment penalty of 10% on top of the Part B premium amount, recurring every year, for each full year you go without Part B coverage. That penalty doesn't go away, and it will go up as the Medicare Part B premium increases (which it does from time to time).

Additionally, you will be restricted when you can later re-enroll and when your coverage will start again. For clarity, if you have other "creditable" (not VA) coverage you can drop Part B, save the premium, and re-enroll in Part B again later without penalty (when your other "creditable" coverage ends). But if you don't, you may find your healthcare options limited and you'll incur penalties for re-enrolling in Part B later.

Obviously the choice is yours to make, but I suggest you consider the above points carefully when making your decision about whether to drop Medicare Part B and rely only on the VA only for your healthcare coverage. That's not to take anything away from the excellent healthcare services offered by the VA, but only to make sure you're aware of the risks associated with dropping Medicare Part B.

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CARS & ENTERTAINMENT

Be Car Care Aware

Defensive Driving Tips

Time is money when it comes to car maintenance

(NAPSI)—Whether changing the oil, replacing the wiper blades or checking the tires, finding the time to perform simple preventative vehicle maintenance is money in the bank.

According to research conducted by automotive market research firm IMR Inc., one out of three consumers who put off routine vehicle maintenance do so because they cannot find a convenient time. In addition, millennials and those who own older vehicles are more likely to delay routine maintenance.

Expert Advice "There is an old adage that if you take care of your car, your car will take care of you," said Rich White, executive director of the nonprofit Car Care Council. "Making time to perform routine auto care not only ensures a safer, more dependable vehicle, but car owners can preserve the trade-in value and save money by addressing small issues before they become more complicated, expensive repairs."

What You Should Do The most common maintenance procedures to keep a car operating safely and reliably while maintaining its long-term value involve checking the oil, filters and fluids, the belts and hoses, brakes, tires



Investing a little time and effort now in keeping your car in top shape can save you a lot of trouble and money down the road.

and air-conditioning. An annual tune-up and wheel alignment are also good ideas.

Where To Get Help To make it easier for car owners to remember to include auto care in their busy schedules, the Car Care Council offers a free custom service schedule and e-mail reminder service. This simple-to-use online resource can be personalized to help make auto care more convenient and economical.

In addition, the council's popular "Car Care Guide" for motorists is available at no charge, electronically or by printed copy, in English and Spanish. The

guide covers major services, component groups within the vehicle, service interval recommendations and much more.

The council is the source of information for the "Be Car Care Aware" consumer education campaign promoting the benefits of regular vehicle care, maintenance and repair to consumers.

Learn More For the latest car care news, visit the council's online media room at http://media.carcare.org. To order a free copy of the popular "Car Care Guide," visit the consumer education website at www.carcare.org.

(NAPSI)—These five tips can help you be prepared for the perils of the road.

1. Know Your Car. Like people, each car has a unique personality. Some features work better than others, and conditions can cause a vehicle to react a certain way. Knowing your car's limits and behavior patterns can help you predict how it will respond in certain situations. How long does it take you to stop and how much pressure is required on the brake pedal? What's your turn radius? Does your vehicle lean when you round a corner? Does it quake when you hit a certain speed? Knowing the answers can help you avoid accidents.

2. Use Extreme Caution During a Lane Change. The National Highway Traffic Safety Administration estimates that one of the most common causes of two-lane auto accidents is unsafe lane changes.

3. Know Your Blind Spots. Most cars have at least one line of vision that's not clearly evident in



You can stay on the road to safety if you take proper precautions.

the rearview or side mirrors. Even carefully placed mirrors often cannot cover every possible angle. Move the side mirrors far outward so that the angle of view barely overlaps the view of the rearview mirror.

4. Keep Your Hands on the Wheel. The National Highway Traffic Safety Administration now advocates keeping your hands at the 9 and 3 o'clock positions instead of 10 and 2 because of air bags.

5. Keep Up on Maintenance. Routine work on your auto, like oil changes, fluid refills and tire rotations, can make all the difference in your car's drivability.

Learn More For further facts and tips about good driving from the experts at Driving-Tests, founded on the universal belief that everyone can be a safe driver, go to https://driving-tests.org. There, budding drivers can also learn how to pass the written test the first time.

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Posting Date March 4, 2019

Amber Waves

by Dave T. Phipps



R.F.D.

by Mike Marland



The Spats

by Jeff Pickering



Weekly SUDOKU by Linda Thistle. Includes a 9x9 grid and difficulty level: Moderate Challenging HOO BOY!

HOCUS-FOCUS BY HENRY BOLTINOFF. Includes a two-panel comic strip and a list of differences.

King Crossword. Includes a crossword grid and a list of clues for across and down words.

Trivia test by Fifi Rodriguez. Includes a list of 10 trivia questions and their answers.

1. Whitehorse; 2. "...to Rome"; 3. Japan; 4. Penzance; 5. Alfred Pennyworth; 6. Alfred Pennyworth; 7. Capt. Jack Sparrow; 8. Mount Sinai; 9. Minnesota; 10. Hillary Clinton

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 • Houston Restoration Church 1831 Hartwick Rd. 281-227-6260
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LIFESTYLE

Planning for Spring planting

It's time for you sodbusters to have your ground busted up for planting your spring crop. The garden spot in the back yard here is like a crawdad farm. You call that "too wet to plow" and it surely is too wet to plow.

Yours truly has retired from farming but will still play in the dirt a tad just enough to get the finger nails nice and dirty. Got three bushes back there that provide a little shade, not enough to get under mind you but maybe enough to shade a pepper plant or three underneath. That will be the extent of planting here on the Creek.

Ah had a nice piper pepper plant going last year and the yard guy broke it at the base with the deck of the riding mower. That bush had been nursed till it was loaded with hot pods of pep-

TWO CENTS WORTH
By Charlie A. Farrar



per to make pepper sauce. Got so mad and aggravated that I almost blew a gasket. There was a chili pequin plant coming up beside the broke plant which the yard man enjoyed but by knocking over the big bush the pequin plant didn't produce.

Potatoes should be in the ground by February 14 but Joe V's has a nice crop of potatoes: white, red, russet and sweet and a lot easier on the back bones. Previous bought laundry baskets and bags of dirt to plant potatoes in but that

was a waste of money and labor. It only produced small and little potatoes not worth cooking. Like I said Joe V's is much better.

PJ's Feed Lot @ Four Corners has some plants available and is preferred over the Bonnie plants that are expensive by my calculations. Besides the threat of another frost could really make one cry if it got in your garden. So wait till your ground is dry and break out your shovel and turn your spot of dirt over. That shovel will build your character.

My gardening guru from Highlands bought some baby Guinea chicks keeping them penned up in order to get them used to him being around. Guinea's are very noisy and make a lot of racket at strange people and predators. After a month or so he turned them out to scratch and clean the yard of grub and cut worms. He had a wonderful garden plot that year which would win an Academy Award if there was such a thing. Anyway I go up there one morning to admire his spot and noticed the Guineas were not in the pen and not in the yard. Asked about them and he buffed up a tad saying he gave them away to a relative who lives up the country. Said they got in the tater patch and dug up every one of his potatoes.

Ah thought that was funny.

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COMMUNITY NEWS

League of United Latin American Citizens honors Aldine ISD Board Trustee Dr. Viola M. García

Dr. Viola M. García, Aldine ISD Board Trustee, was the Lifetime Achievement in Education Honoree. The League of United Latin American Citizens (LULAC) Council 402 honored García during its 90th National LULAC Week Anniversary on Thursday, February 21, at Union Station in Minute Maid Park.

García was recognized as an education champion. She has served on the Aldine Board since 1992. During her 26 years of service, the Board has received numerous accolades including Region 4 Outstanding School Board, Texas Award for Performance Excellence from the Quality Texas Foundation, Magna Award from the American School Board Journal and Outstanding School Board Award from Texas Association of School Administrators. These awards celebrate public school professionals for their leadership and dedication as advocates for children.

García's education activism is not limited to Aldine ISD. She is a retired faculty member of the University of Houston-Downtown. Dr. García has chaired and served on numerous committees at UH-Downtown. She has provided her expertise on a wide variety of topics ranging from academic policy to leadership. She also serves local community entities to develop partnerships with the AISD.

She is active in many organizations. Within these associations, she has taken on responsibilities and chaired numerous committees. Currently, she is a member of Kappa Delta Pi-Omega Chapter, the Texas Association of School Boards (TASB), Gulf Coast Association of School



Dr. García, left, was one of four education and community champions recognized for their efforts and leadership.



Dr. Viola García poses with Aldine ISD Trustees, Congresswoman Sylvia García, Gene Green and Mrs. Green.

Boards, Mexican American School Board Members Association, Parent Teacher Association, the National Association of Latino Elected and Appointed Officials (NALEO) and the National School Boards Association (NSBA). She served as president of TASB in 2012-2013. Dr. García currently serves on the NSBA Board of Directors representing the Southern Region. She is director of the Bylaws Committee.

The convention honored other education and community advocates, too. The Honorable Gene Green received the Public Service Award, Carlos Salazar from Sam Houston MS&T Center was the Educator of

the Year Honoree, and the Houston Hispanic Chamber of Commerce Emerging Leaders was the Partner in Education Honoree.

Superintendent of Schools Dr. LaTonya M. Goffney, Deputy Superintendent Selina Chapa, Board Members Rose Avalos, Paul Shanklin, Steve Mead, and Connie Esperanza attended the gala to support García. Also present were Able Garza, assistant superintendent of community and governmental relations, and Christina Gómez, assistant superintendent of elementary schools Region 3. Senator Sylvia García also was present.

Congratulations!

Judge Stephens holds Boys Rock 2 Life Skills Camp



On Sat, Feb. 9, 2019 Judge Joe Stephens of Justice of the Peace Court 3-1 hosted his free Boys Rock 2 Life Skills Camp at North Forrest HS. The event welcomed all young men between the grade levels of 7th-12th. Boys Rock 2 is a camp designed to promote positive life skills and community cohesiveness. The young men listen to brief presentations at each organizations station and received information to help them navigate through their future endeavors. Some of the highlights of the events included a visit from Mayor Sylvester Turner as well as a congresswoman Shelia Jackson Lee. Several decelerated community speakers helped to motive and inspire the young men throughout the day's events. Judge Stephens ended the day by encouraging the kids to shot for the moon and even if the miss they will still hit the stars.



Community Meeting,

CONTINUED FROM PAGE 1

The Congresswoman expressed dissatisfaction that President Trump's immigration policy at the border is separating very young immigrant children from their parents and in one place 140 kids are kept confined in a small room using bunk-beds. García said the recent President's government shut-down hurt everyone and she was working with legislatures to try to get legislation approved which would prevent a shut-down from any future President just because they didn't get their way on issues that Congress wouldn't approve for them.

Lt. Adrian Rodriguez gave the January 2019 Crime Statistics report for HPD's Northeast Command Station, District 9. He said District 9 covers Clinton Park community, Pleasantville community, Denver Harbor community, IH 610 West to McCarty

Drive and the IH 10 East Freeway Corridor along the feeder (both north and south side) to Uvalde Road.

"Overall crime is down compared to 2018 but there's an increase in vehicles being stolen and broken into" he said.

Officer Rodriquez warned of the WHITE VAN SCAM where scam artist drive through strip centers or shopping centers offering shoppers great bargains on electronics like new televisions, stereos, home theaters, woofers and boom box speakers. The scammers put very cheap low grade merchandise in name brand boxes and the victim buyer doesn't discover they've been ripped off until they try to use the equipment. He said, "if you're offered a deal that sounds too good to be true, then it probably isn't true."

Maria Pilar Aponte an engineer with the Texas Department of Transportation

said progress is being made on the new sidewalk project north of IH 10 East Freeway from Normandy street going west along the feeder to Maxey Road (FM 526) and then going north up past Woodforest Blvd. to Nola Court.

Lisa Kasianowitz, Outreach Manager for the Houston Parks Board said the Bayou Greenways 2020 project is making good progress with the planned 150 miles of new hike and bike trails with new parks many in the North Channel area.

Participants present was Joaquin Martinez, Director of Constituent Services for District I Houston Councilman Robert Gallegos, Linda Jamail, Community Liaison of State Rep. Ana Hernandez office, Northeast Houston Advisory Council, North East Partners In Power, Inc, North Channel Network/Houston Responds and Greens Bayou Coalition.

Meet the Dean,

CONTINUED FROM PAGE 1

school under Lucio's leadership won notice as Best in State for Scholastic Reading, and Distinctions in Mathematics from the TEA.

Lucio's specialty is bilingual education, both for teachers and students. He has held a number of positions where this was a positive influence. These include a position as Adjunct Professor at the University of St. Thomas, and a senior recruiter for the Houston ISD school district.

Lucio's goals for the new college in East Aldine are student excellence, proficiency in bilingual education, and student retention.

A part of Dr. Lucio's presentation was a candid review of his own life story, and credit to his mother, a single parent, for guidance in his life decisions, and to the Aldine Grown Your Own Scholarship program for opening his eyes to the opportunity to go on to a college education. He explained all of this in a revealing and heartwarming narrative, to show other families and students that they have the potential to succeed from their start in life in Aldine. He also mentioned that his family was originally from the Rio Grand Valley, and Mexico.

Lucio also spoke about his experiences growing up in Aldine, including a tragic car accident. After working at several local fast food establishments, Lucio had saved enough money for his first car, and was driving his friends home from an event in West Houston when he had an accident on Aldine Westfield. He lost control of the car making a turn, and his a utility pole, destroying the car and injuring three of his friends in the car and seriously hurting himself. He suffered a broken collar bone, internal bleeding, and head injuries that put



NEW DEAN DR. LUIS LUCIO receives a welcome basket and gifts from Veronica Sanchez of the East Aldine District after his talk.

him in Ben Taub hospital for two months, in a coma.

Eventually he recovered, but had to graduate from high school in a wheelchair.

Considering his accomplishments in education, and his background of growing up in Aldine, he summarized "You did not make a bad choice when you chose me to head your new campus."

Dr. Lucio then went on to show slides of the new Lone Star College - East Aldine Center building under construction, and pointed out that besides the facilities in the new two story building, it also has substantial parking, its own bus stop on Aldine Mail Route, an adjacent water feature and walking trail, and proximity to Keith Wiess Park with a new entrance from the Town Center.

Dr. Lucio said that the 2 story section of the building would house the academic functions, bookstore, offices, student lounge, and other support functions. The one story section of the building will house the workforce training classes,

including building trades and welding. In fact, he said the whole welding department of the main campus is moving to the new East Aldine building.

Dr. Lucio delivered his talk in a folksy, friendly manner, indicating the atmosphere that will prevail at the educational facility set in the Aldine neighborhood.

The program included a demonstration by karate students of the American Society of Karate, who hold classes in the East Aldine offices, and plan to have a program at BakerRipley.

After Dr. Lucio's talk, he posed for pictures with many members of the community, and his family, who he had emphasized in his talk were responsible for his success. He specifically thanked the "four women in my life," his mother, grandmother, sister, and wife.

The program finished with East Aldine District director Richard Cantu speaking about some of the development to come on the Town Center site, including a new supermarket, kid's playground, and an office building for the District and the community.

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