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VOL. 45, NO. 14 TUESDAY, APRIL 2, 2019 HOUSTON, TEXAS www.nenewsroom.com

NEWS NOTES

Martial Arts Classes

Classes begin April 5, 2019. Call 713-962-6641 or East Aldine District at 713-595-1220. See picture, page 8 for more details.

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Sheriff holds safety forum

Receives East Aldine Partner's award

EAST ALDINE – The Harris County Sheriff, Ed Gonzalez, held a Safety Meeting at the East Aldine offices last Thursday evening, March 21st. The meeting was attended by representatives of various civic clubs, neighborhoods, and the Airline District.

Sheriff Gonzalez told the audience that he was depending upon their help to reduce crime, saying "You are our eyes and ears."

He said that his goal was to have regular monthly meetings with the community leaders and citizens, and urged attendees to bring friends and family to the next meeting.

Gonzalez made reference to his involvement with the Aldine community, noting that his 9-1-1 Call Cen-



SHERIFF ED GONZALEZ holds the Strategic Partner Award, presented to him by East Aldine Chairman Gerald Overturff, as Deputies Klozik, Scholwinski, Gore, and East Aldine Board Members Patti Acosta and Gil Hoffman look on.

ter would be part of the new East Aldine Town Center.

The sheriff and his staff then reviewed crime statistics for the area, and discussed initiatives they planned to reduce the crime. Gonzalez said they need more staffing, but that a class of 63 new cadets was graduating this week. He said he is willing to spend overtime dollars to solve specific crime problems, but the "we want to hear of the problems" from citizens. He said they are adding several motorcycle units to the local force, which are especially effective in traffic enforcement.

Gonzalez said that they are trying to use more technology to make

See Safety Forum, Page 8

Houstonians learn about mortgage assistance programs

HOUSTON - Mayor Sylvester Turner joined NACA's CEO Bruce Marks, a Bank of America executive to announce a commitment of \$100 million of the Best Mortgage in America to Houston homebuyers. This will create unprecedented homeownership opportunities in Houston for low and moderate income buyers by breaking down the barriers that prevent

many working people from buying a home.

The NACA program features no down payment, no closing costs, no PMI, a below market fixed rate, without consideration of one's credit score. With Houston's financial assistance and other funds, homebuyers can buy down the interest rate to virtually zero percent.

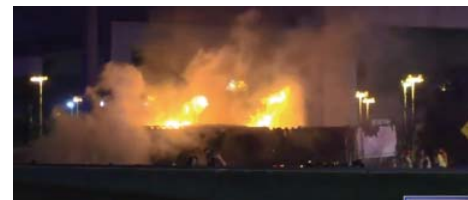
Additionally, grants are available from the City of Houston to permanently

buy down the interest rate on the loan. When combined with the \$30,000 grant available from the City of Houston, a NACA homebuyer with a \$200,000 mortgage can buy down the interest rate on the loan to a fixed rate of virtually zero percent for the life of the loan.

"This is one of my priorities."

See NACA Assistance Programs, Page 8

Fiery truck crash closes Eastex 12 hrs



A Truck Driver was killed when his semi hit a divider at an exit ramp, last Friday morning about 12:45 am on the Eastex Freeway north of Humble. Southbound lanes were closed for the next 12 hours, as TxDOT crews worked to clean up the debris from the fire that consumed the truck and its contents of lawn mowers. TxDOT also had to repair paving where the hot fire damaged it.

OPEN HOUSE

Tuesday, April 2 • 4 – 7 p.m.

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COMMUNITY / SCHOOL NEWS

Success of 2019 March Mart plant sale to help Mercer Botanic Gardens recover, expand

Mercer Botanic Gardens will be able to accelerate and improve its recovery from Hurricane Harvey, thanks to the tremendous success of this year's annual March Mart Plant Sale fundraiser, which raised nearly double the funds of the previous year's event.

The two-day plant sale attracted more than 4,000 shoppers and raised more than \$110,000, up from last year's \$64,000. The sale is sponsored by The Mercer Society, a private nonprofit supporting Mercer's development and expansion.

The Mercer Society will host additional plant sales at Mercer throughout the year in spring, summer, fall, and winter. Stay tuned for pop-up plant sales in the spring and summer.

"We are grateful for The Mercer Society's continued financial support," said Mercer Director Chris Ludwig. "We'll use the pro-

ceeds to help fund Mercer's expansion and master plan development."

March Mart began in 1974 as a fundraiser featuring plants in old coffee cans and milk cartons donated by local garden-club members. Since then, it has grown into one of the largest plant sales in the Gulf Coast region, averaging 3,000 attendees a year.

Anyone interested in supporting Mercer Botanic Gardens can become a member of The Mercer Society or donate online at themercersociety.org.

With leadership from Commissioner R. Jack Cagle, Mercer Botanic Gardens is a Harris County Precinct 4 Parks facility one mile north of FM 1960 at 22306 Aldine Westfield Road in Humble, 77338.

For more information, contact Mercer at 713-274-4160 or visitwww.hcp4.net/community/parks/mercer.

Nimitz High senior Danielle Sullivan receives \$2,500 KPRC Senior Scholarship



Nimitz High School senior soccer player Danielle Sullivan, center, was a recent recipient of a \$2,500 KPRC Senior Scholarship. Channel 2 teams up with Texas Mattress Maker to award scholarships to deserving seniors across the Houston area. Danielle will attend Texas A&M University in the fall and will major in journalism. In addition to playing on the varsity soccer team, Danielle is a member of the National Honor Society, writes for the school newspaper and is in the Nimitz High Band. She is pictured with her soccer teammates and her mother. Channel 2 morning news anchor Owen Conflenti presented Danielle with the big news and she was featured on the morning news on Wednesday, March 27.

Lone Star College-North Harris Open House offers potential students a path to the future

HOUSTON (March 25, 2019) - Everyone begins somewhere, but where and how does one get started on the road to his or her future? Taking the first steps towards a future career is easier with the insights and information available from 4 - 7 p.m. on Tuesday, April 2, at Lone Star College-North Harris' Open House.

Potential students, families, mid-career workers, and community members are invited to attend this campus-wide event at 2700 W.W. Thorne Drive, Houston, TX 77073.

Attendees will be invited to tour the campus, meet faculty members, explore education and training options, and really get

a feel for what college life is all about. Additional activities and presentations include:

- Building Tours
- Financial Aid Information
- Transfer Opportunities
- Campus Life
- Clubs & Organizations
- Intramural Sports
- Help with Admissions
- Free Food
- Prizes

Learn more at www.LoneStar.edu/openhouse.htm, or call 281.618.5400. The path to the future starts at LSC-North Harris.

'Genesis' delivers \$1,000 HCDE check, New York City Dream to Aldine Teen Artist

(Harris County Department of Education is the regional sponsor of The Scholastic Art & Writing Awards. This year HCDE is proud to announce the record 96 teens from Harris County, students who advanced to become national Gold and Silver Medalists. Many will attend ceremonies at Carnegie Hall in New York City June 6.

The idea for "Genesis" popped into the head of a Nimitz High School teen artist as the sun shone on her brother's face. That defining moment led to dreams of a trip and future career in New York City for Evieh'bi Jan Nia Braddy from Aldine Independent School District.

Earlier this semester, the Aldine ISD junior was notified by Harris County Department of Education Scholastic Art & Writing Awards coordinator Andrea Segraves that she had won a regional Gold Key for her reduction print,

along with \$1,000 scholarship check for the HCDE Trustees' Incentive Award.

On March 13, the young artist heard about her Gold Medal for her artwork from the nonprofit Alliance for Young Artists & Writers. As part of the award, she may travel to New York City to get her award at Carnegie Hall.

"I want to know what New York is like," said Braddy, eyes wide with the possibility. She has applied to attend the Pratt Institute pre-college program in New York City and would like to visit other visual art colleges in the Big Apple.

Like many artists who struggle with their piece to get it just right, Genesis became an old friend to the 17 year old.

"Hardships?" she said, referring to her print project. "I had a good amount."

Genesis is a reduction print, which includes several hues of red and black with a pearlescent finish.

In printmaking, artists must carve away or reduce portions of the printing block of linoleum, imprinting one color at a time at intervals through a baby press. Subject matter is sketched and colors are planned well in advance.

Initially Genesis was smaller and got a perfect score at a visual scholarship competition but didn't advance to state.

"I made a lot of corrections," said the wise teen. "I think all these little mistakes added to the charm and makes Genesis more human."

Quick to acknowledge the support she received for Genesis from her art teacher Jorge Vasquez, she said she learned and benefited from her teacher who specializes in printmaking as an artist.

"He challenged me and made suggestions that helped," said the 17 year old.

Aldine ISD Director of Visual Art Michaelann Kelley said she is proud of

all the Aldine students and teachers who commit time to Scholastic and all their artistic endeavors.

"It takes a lot of extra work in class and outside of the regular school day," Kelley said. "Evieh'bi Jan Nia Braddy put in that extra time and creativity to have her voice heard through her artwork."

Braddy's dream is to be able to create art and make a living off of doing what she loves.

She challenges other teens to follow in her footsteps.

"When you have the imagination and drive and ideas, there is nothing that you really can't do," Braddy said, pointing to her print hanging in an HCDE exhibit at Houston's Spring Street Studios.

"This came from nothing--and from nothing came this great thing that is my proudest piece so far.

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Remington College Greenspoint Campus holds 3 Lives Blood Drive to raise awareness for sickle cell disease

Event focuses on need for minority blood donors

HOUSTON (March 26, 2019) - Remington College Greenspoint Campus is supporting local patients with blood disorders with its 3 Lives Blood Drive. The event emphasizes the need for minority blood donors and raises awareness of blood disorders.

The drive will take place from 8:30 a.m. to 11:30 a.m. on Tuesday, April 16, 2019, in partnership with Gulf Coast Regional Blood Center.

Event date: Tuesday, April 16, 2019
 Time: 8:30 a.m. to 11:30 a.m.

Location: Remington College Greenspoint Campus
 Blood partner: Gulf Coast Regional Blood Center

Minority donors - particularly African American donors - are in high demand because they provide blood with unique antigens that are vital for patients with sickle cell disease and other blood disorders.

According to the American Society of Hematology, sickle cell disease affects approximately 70,000 to 100,000 Americans. Approximately 1 in 12 African Americans carry a sickle cell gene, meaning about 8 percent of African Americans are affected by the sickle cell trait.

Nationally, Remington College has collected more than 13,900 pints of blood through its 3 Lives Blood Drives. And since one pint of blood can save three lives, that's enough blood to save more than 41,000 lives.

Even though the focus is on minority blood donors, everyone is encouraged to donate blood at the event. Donors must be 17 years of age or older and weigh a minimum of 110 pounds. All the blood collected will go to local hospitals and medical centers to help people in the area.

Remington College Greenspoint Campus is located at 11310 Greens Crossing, Suite 300, Houston, TX 77067.

Keep East Aldine Clean & Green!

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www.facebook.com/NENewsroom

COMMUNITY NEWS

AISD announces three new Chiefs, one new Assistant Superintendent



Dr. Charlotte Davis, center, pictured with members of Aldine ISD's Board of Trustees, Superintendent Dr. LaTonya M. Goffney, Deputy Superintendent Dr. Selina Chapa, family and friends, was named Assistant Superintendent of Student Support Services at the March 19 Board of Trustee's meeting.

Aldine ISD Superintendent Dr. LaTonya M. Goffney announced three new chiefs and one new assistant superintendent during the March 19 Board of Trustees meeting. The announcement of the new leaders comes after she completes more than six months of her looking and listening tour.

"During my first eight months, I have had the opportunity to visit campuses, speak with Board Members, parents, school leaders, community members and students to understand the needs of Aldine ISD. The information they shared is invaluable and will be used to inform how we move forward," Dr. Goffney said. "In line with audit recommendations and comparisons to districts of our size, we have restructured our leadership team. The head of each division will be called Chief and will make up my Cabinet. Other district leaders will still carry the title of Assistant Superintendent.

"The leaders listed below have been selected to transition into new roles to ensure we continue to increase the academic achievement of all students in our district — something that every person I met mentioned as a priority."

• Dr. Todd Davis will serve as the Chief Academic Officer. Dr. Davis has devoted all of his 28 years in education to Aldine ISD and has served in a variety of capacities. As CAO, he will be responsible for providing leadership in planning, developing, maintaining and evaluating all of the district's curriculum and instruction. With oversight over several departments, he will provide direct supervision of curriculum staff and guide instructional development.

• Katy Roede will provide leadership of school administration and oversight for all School Assistant Superintendents as the Chief of Schools. Roede has 25 years of educational experience including 10 years as a principal in Aldine ISD. She also served as a School Support Officer in Houston ISD



Dawn Rodriguez, third from left, and pictured with members of her family and co-workers, was named Chief of Strategic Initiatives and Accountability for Aldine ISD at the March 19 Board of Trustee's meeting.

where she worked with school leaders to improve academic growth and progress at several schools.

• Dawn Rodriguez was named Chief of Strategic Initiatives and Accountability. Rodriguez, who has worked in Aldine ISD for nearly 16 years, will be responsible for managing special projects and leading key initiatives, including the development and implementation of the district's strategic plan. She will continue to oversee accountability, evaluation and state assessments.

• Dr. Charlotte Davis, who currently serves as the director of guidance, counseling and at-risk students, was selected as Assistant Superintendent of Student Support Services. She has worked in the districts for



Dr. Todd Davis, pictured with his family, was named Chief Academic Officer at Aldine ISD's Board of Trustee's meeting on March 19.



Katy Roede, pictured with her family, was named Chief of Schools for Aldine ISD at the March 19 Board of Trustee's meeting.

25 years in a variety of positions. In her new role, she will provide administrative leadership for the attendance department, guidance and counseling, health services and safe and secure schools.

The appointments will be effective July 1, 2019.

County Attorney Ryan sues ITC over dangerous fire at Deer Park Facility

Harris County Attorney Vince Ryan has sued Intercontinental Terminals Company LLC (ITC) over the dangerous fire that began March 17 at that facility in Deer Park.

Harris County Commissioners today approved the lawsuit which seeks a temporary restraining order and temporary and permanent injunctions in an environmental enforcement action. The County Attorney charges that ITC is responsible for burning and air emissions in violation of the state's Clean Air Act, discharging industrial waste into nearby waters in violation of state law and county regulations, and violation of county floodplain regulations by not having development permits for structures at its facility.

"This company put the health of Harris County residents in danger in many ways for several days," said County Attorney Ryan. "We will hold them responsible for their actions."

Harris County's Pollution Control, Emergency



County Attorney Vince Ryan

Management and Fire Marshall personnel responded to two tanks burning at ITC on March 17. Over the next few days, more tanks caught fire, releasing air contaminants. Firefighting foam sprayed on the burning tanks by ITC and industrial wastewater were discharged into local waters and it continues to this day. A containment dike breached on March 22, allowing the discharge into Tucker Bayou, which then ignited. In addition, benzene leaks from fire-damaged tanks and firefighting foam caused two local shelter-in-place advisories.

The lawsuit seeks a temporary restraining order forbidding ITC to reopen until a third-party expert appointed by the Court finds it is safe to resume operations. The order would also forbid the company from disposing of any wastes by opening tanks where it is stored and venting it into the atmosphere and it would require ITC to maintain all records and water, air and ground samples it has collected.

The lawsuit also asks for civil penalties for violations of state and local regulations and that ITC reimburse the County for its response to the fire and for attorney's fees.

"When we allow companies like ITC to locate in our community, they have a responsibility to operate in a safe manner," said County Attorney Ryan. "That's why we have local and state regulations and laws to ensure that our residents are protected. Violations of those laws are unacceptable and we will work to ensure that they are enforced."

City implementing Prop B

HOUSTON - To avoid layoffs and a reduction of city services, the city asked to phase in over 5 years the 29% firefighter pay raise authorized by Prop B. The Professional Fire Fighters Association refused the request. Now the city is moving forward to implement the voter-approved referendum granting firefighters "pay parity" with police.

Their initial adjusted paychecks will go out in May.

On March 7, Mayor Sylvester Turner and key department directors met in small groups with a total of 13 of the 16 council members and walked them through the necessary timelines and changes to the payroll system to issue paychecks in accordance with Prop B. Attached is the chart that identifies the steps and timelines the various departments must take before checks can be issued.

Once the systems and processes are in place, firefighters will be issued lump sum checks for Jan. 1 through the first part of May, totaling about \$31 million. Because no funding source was included in Prop B, the money will come directly from the city's fund balance, which is used to balance the city's budget, maintain the city's credit rating or for exigent circumstances such as nat-

ural disasters.

Implementing Prop B for the next fiscal year starting July 1 will add another \$80 million to the expected budget gap now projected to be \$197 million.

The city is obligated to adopt a balanced budget for the next fiscal year by the end of this June. As discussed with the council members, the city will draw from the fund balance, make further cuts in departments budgets and draw from any available sources of funds that have not been dedicated to other expenses. If a budget gap remains, and in the absence of new funding sources, the city will have no choice but to lay off personnel.

Based on initial projections, the city anticipates having to lay off 400 to 500 firefighters and municipal employees. Because the city must give employees 60 days' notice, notification letters would go out the first part of April while the city continues to find ways to balance the budget and minimize layoffs.

"Nobody wants to see public employee layoffs, but just like hard-working Houston families, the city must live within its means and reduce expenses to pay its bills when income is limited," Mayor Turner said. "There's no magic

wand we can use to make financial challenges disappear."

A year before Prop B was initiated, the city retained the services of PFM Group, an independent consulting firm, to review the city's finances and departments.

"Our preliminary analysis suggests that the Fire Department can take a number of steps to reduce personnel without having a negative impact on public safety," PFM reported.

The report recommended reducing the firefighter force by up to 845 positions through attrition and pointed out that fighting fires — versus providing emergency medical assistance and other functions — was less than 30 percent of the Fire Department's workload.

Houston had 18.9 firefighters per 10,000 city residents, according to PFM, the highest rate for big cities except for New York City. Meanwhile Houston ranks low in its number of police officers per population and studies have shown the need for more officers.

Nevertheless, voters approved Prop B, and firefighters will be paid in accordance to Prop B, starting the second week in May, but it will not come without consequences to the city as a whole.

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3D - 4:00 7:00 9:55

* PET SEMATARY (R) 7:00 9:30

* DUMBO (PG) - 12:00pm, 5:00pm, 10:00pm Stadium Seating

* DUMBO (PG) - 12:00pm, 5:00pm, 10:00pm

SPA-Spanish Dubbed; Stadium Seating

* DUMBO 3D (PG) - 2:30pm, 7:30pm

SPA-Spanish Dubbed; Stadium Seating

* DUMBO 3D (PG) - 2:30pm, 7:30pm Stadium Seating

* US (R) - 12:15pm, 3:15pm, 6:15pm, 9:15pm

SPA-Spanish Subtitles; Stadium Seating

* US (R) - 12:30pm, 3:30pm, 6:30pm, 9:30pm Stadium Seating

FIVE FEET APART (PG-13) - 12:25pm, 3:15pm, 6:15pm, 9:15pm Stadium Seating

NO MANCHES FRIDA 2 (R) - 12:00pm, 2:30pm, 5:00pm, 7:30pm, 10:00pm Stadium Seating

WONDER PARK (PG) - 2:30pm, 7:00pm Stadium Seating

* WONDER PARK in 3D (PG) - 12:15pm, 4:45pm, 9:30pm Stadium Seating

CAPTAIN MARVEL (PG-13) - 12:00pm, 12:45pm, 3:00pm, 3:45pm, 6:00pm, 6:45pm, 9:00pm, 9:45pm Stadium Seating

Captain Marvel (PG-13) - 3:10pm, 9:10pm

SPA-Spanish Dubbed; Stadium Seating

* **Captain Marvel in Disney Digital 3D (PG-13)** - 12:10pm, 6:10pm

SPA-Spanish Dubbed; 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) - 12:45pm, 7:00pm Stadium Seating

* **HOW TO TRAIN YOUR DRAGON: The Hidden World 3D (PG)** - 4:00pm, 9:30pm Stadium Seating

ALITA: BATTLE ANGEL (PG-13) - 12:45pm, 3:45pm, 6:45pm, 9:45pm Stadium Seating

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

THE PRODIGY (R) - 2:20pm, 7:15pm Stadium Seating

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OPINION PAGE

TEXAS SENATE NEWS
By Richard Lee

Finance Committee approves workgroup recommendations

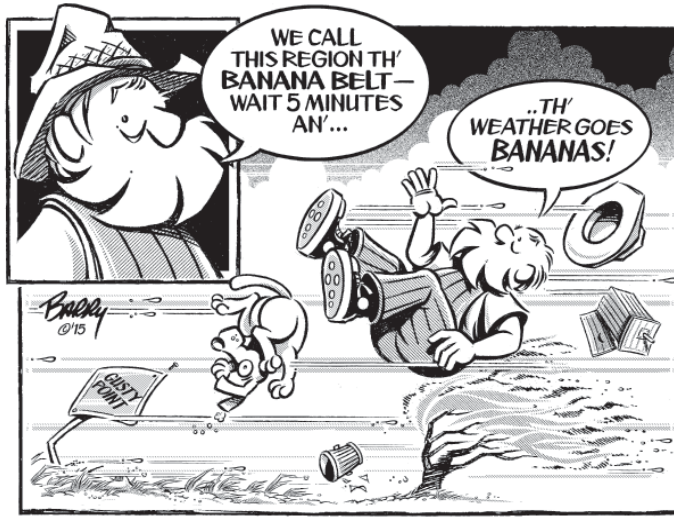
(Austin) Following weeks of workgroup meetings, the Senate Finance Committee approved recommendations for funding the state budget for the 2020-2021 biennium Thursday. Since mid-February, committee members have worked to determine which agency funding requests to adopt and which to set aside or defer to a list of contingency spending. The recommendations adopted for Article III include \$9 billion in additional spending for property tax relief and adds money to public school funding, both identified as this session's top priorities by state leadership. Committee chair and Flower Mound Senator Jane Nelson told members that she plans to hold a vote to send the budget to the full Senate next Wednesday, once all these recommendations are collated into a single document.

The additional money toward property tax relief and public education is divided into almost \$4 billion for an across-the-board teacher pay raise of \$5,000, \$2.3 billion in additional money for non-salary public education reform and \$2.7 billion for property tax relief. Article III workgroup and Education Committee chair Senator Larry Taylor of Friendswood said he thinks that the plan represents significant progress towards the goals laid out at the beginning of session. "At the end of the day I know we are going to take very large steps to improve our education outcomes for our students while providing meaningful tax savings for our businesses and our homeowners, and we're also going to improve the pay of our teachers," he said. The money in the budget is on top of the more than \$900 million in rainy day funding approved by the Senate earlier this month to cover revenue school districts lost due to property value and student population decreases resulting from 2017's Hurricane Harvey. That supplemental budget, passed on March 13, also includes \$100 million for school safety measures.

The non-salary portion of the education spending increase approved Thursday may be determined through the Senate's education reform bill, SB 4, submitted at the bill filing deadline on March 8. That bill included the framework to create new weights and allotments to guide more funding toward students with special needs such as those still mastering English and those with dyslexia, and concentrates the spending toward student populations from lower socioeconomic backgrounds. It does not include, however, the actual numbers for the weights and allotments. The House version of the bill, HB 3, could also serve as the vehicle for the Senate plan once it clears that chamber. It's all part of the process, said Nelson Thursday. "I know people are impatient to know our final product," she said "I would point out to the public that this is a work in progress but right now, what [LBB staff] is getting ready to present to us contains that package that [Taylor] just laid out...9 billion dollars. Not chump change." Also still under consideration is the Senate's proposal to cut property taxes. The House version of the education reform bill would use state funds to compress local property tax rates by at least four cents per \$100 valuation.

Once passed by the Finance committee, the budget will head to the Senate floor for consideration by the full body. If it is approved, it will then start the next phase of the budget process in conference committee. Nelson and four other Senators appointed by the Lt. Governor will work with House Appropriations Chair Representative John Zerwas of Richmond and four House members appointed by the Speaker. This committee will decide, line by line, which chamber's plan the final budget proposal should use to fund government services. Once an agreement is reached, the conference committee will submit a report to each chamber for an up-or-down vote. If approved by both chambers, that report will set state spending levels for the next two years.

The Senate will reconvene Monday, April 1 at 2 p.m.



Air pollution from tank fire sparks lawsuits

AUSTIN — Images of a stream of billowing dark smoke drew the nation's attention last week to a fire that engulfed 11 petrochemical storage tanks at the Intercontinental Terminals Company about 15 miles southeast of Houston in Deer Park.

On March 17, Gov. Greg Abbott ordered that all state resources be made available to local and industry officials and urged residents to heed the warnings of local officials. Governmental bodies in nearby affected areas ordered residents to shelter in place because of concerns about unhealthy air quality. Deer Park Independent School District and other districts canceled classes for several days.

The fire was extinguished on March 20. Texas Attorney General Ken Paxton on March 22 announced that his office, acting on behalf of the Texas Commission on Environmental Quality, had filed a lawsuit naming the tank storage company as the defendant. The lawsuit alleges that the fire caused air pollution from benzene, xylene, toluene and other contaminants, in violation of the Texas Clean Air Act.

In a statement accompanying the lawsuit, Paxton said, "No company can be allowed to disrupt lives and put public health and safety at risk."

The Chemical Safety Board, an independent federal agency charged with investigating industrial chemical accidents, announced March 21 that an investigation into the fire would be opened.

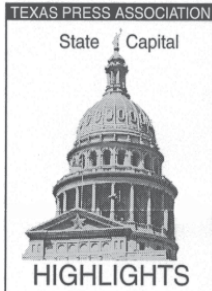
Jobless rate stays low

Texas' seasonally adjusted unemployment rate held at 3.8 percent in February, according to a March 22 news release by the Texas Workforce Commission.

The Midland Metropolitan Statistical Area recorded February's lowest unemployment rate with a non-seasonally adjusted rate of 2.2 percent, followed by the Odessa at 2.7 percent and Amarillo at 2.9 percent.

Growth in the Texas economy continued in February, with 17,700 seasonally adjusted non-farm positions added over the month.

STATE CAPITAL HIGHLIGHTS
By Ed Sterling



TWC Chair and Commissioner Representing Employers Ruth R. Hughes said her agency "is committed to engaging with all employers across Texas to strengthen our economy and to create and expand opportunities for all."

TWC Commissioner Representing Labor Julian Alvarez added, "To ensure positive growth, we must continue to invest in necessary training and education for subsequent generations."

Ticketing system targeted

Photographic traffic signal enforcement systems would be banned under Senate Bill 653 by Sen. Bob Hall, R-Edgewood.

Hall seeks to prohibit municipalities and other local jurisdictions from using red-light cameras as a means of issuing traffic tickets.

In laying out his bill before the Senate Transportation Committee, Hall said that under the red light camera enforcement, "the innocent owner has then the burden of proof and often great expense of proving that they did not commit the alleged violation. This turns our judicial system completely and utterly upside down by requiring the accused to prove their innocence."

More than two dozen people testified for or against the bill in a March 20 Senate Transportation Committee hearing.

Regents to examine policies

Gov. Abbott on March 18

sent a letter to all Texas public university boards of regents following the U.S. Department of Justice's investigation into an alleged college admissions bribery scheme.

In his letter, Abbott called for governing boards of Texas' institutions of higher education "to examine and investigate admissions policies and procedures to ensure that no university employee engages in fraudulent schemes, quid pro quo arrangements or improprieties of any sort." He added that Texas parents and students "must have confidence that the system is not rigged."

Busby joins high court

Brett Busby of Houston on March 20 was confirmed by the Texas Senate and sworn in as the newest member of the Supreme Court of Texas for a term set to expire on Dec. 31, 2020.

Gov. Abbott nominated Busby on Feb. 21 to fill the opening left by Justice Phil Johnson of Amarillo, who retired at the end of December.

Busby is a former justice of the Fourteenth Court of Appeals, having served from June 2012 through December 2018. He previously was a partner at Bracewell & Giuliani LLP, an adjunct professor at The University of Texas School of Law and a U.S. Supreme Court law clerk.

New lawmaker sworn in

State Rep. Christina Morales, D-Houston, was administered the oath of office on March 17.

Morales won a March 5 special election runoff to fill the vacancy created when former longtime Texas House District 145 Rep. Carol Alvarado was elected to the Texas Senate to succeed Sen. Sylvia Garcia, who was elected to the U.S. House of Representatives in November.

New Health Bill to lower health costs, reverse GOP health care sabotage

Rep. Sylvia Garcia (TX-29) Cosponsors the Protecting Pre-Existing Conditions & Making Health Care More Affordable Act

WASHINGTON, D.C. - March 27, 2019 -

Congresswoman Sylvia Garcia cosponsored sweeping new health care legislation that will lower Texans' health insurance premiums, crack down on junk health insurance plans, strengthen protections for people with pre-existing conditions, and reverse the Trump Administration's health care sabotage.

The Protecting Pre-Existing Conditions & Making Health Care Affordable Act was introduced the day after the Trump Administration asked a federal court to strike down not only the Affordable Care Act's protections for people with pre-existing conditions, but every other part of the health law.

"Just yesterday, the Trump Administration filed a brief here in Texas indicating their intent on continuing their war on affordable health care and people with pre-existing conditions," said Rep. Garcia. "Sadly, even after the 2018 election, Republicans have not learned the lesson that Americans want increased access to quality health care and to protect those with pre-existing conditions."

"With the Protecting Pre-Existing Conditions & Making Health Care Affordable Act, Democrats are taking another step forward in delivering our promise to lower health costs for the American people, and I am proud to be an original cosponsor of this bill that will make our families happier and healthier."

The Protecting Pre-Existing Conditions & Making Health Care More Affordable Act of 2019 includes provisions that will:

Lower health insurance premiums with strengthened and expanded affordability assistance

- Strengthening tax credits in the Marketplace to lower Americans' health insurance premiums and allows more middle-class individuals and families to qualify for subsidies;

- Ensuring that families who don't have an offer of affordable coverage from an employer can still qualify for subsidies in the

Marketplace; and,

- Providing funding for reinsurance, to help with high cost claims, improve Marketplace stability, and prevent the Trump Administration's sabotage from raising premiums.

Strengthen protections for people with pre-existing conditions

- Curtailing the Trump Administration's efforts to give states waivers to undermine protections for people with pre-existing conditions and weaken standards for essential health benefits, which would leave consumers with less comprehensive plans that do not cover needed services, such as prescription drugs, maternity care, and substance use disorder treatment.

Stop insurance companies from selling junk health insurance plans

- Stopping the Trump Administration's efforts to push Americans into junk health insurance plans that do not provide coverage for essential medical treatments and drugs, and that are allowed to discriminate against people with pre-existing medical conditions.

Reverse the GOP's health care sabotage that has needlessly driven up premiums and uninsured rates, and empower states to innovate and invest in enrolling more people in affordable health coverage

- Reversing the Trump Administration's sabotage by requiring open enrollment outreach, education, and funding for navigators;
- Investing in state efforts to conduct outreach to increase enrollment, educate consumers of their rights, and help individuals navigate the health insurance system;

- Empowering states to implement new approaches to increasing enrollment and allows states to set up their own Marketplaces; and

- Holding the Administration accountable for its use of federal dollars dedicated to increasing enrollment, outreach and running the federal exchange.

Congresswoman Sylvia R. Garcia was elected to the U.S. House of Representatives in November 2018, becoming the first Latina ever to represent Texas 29th Congressional district.

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ENTERTAINMENT PAGE

HOLLYWOOD

by Tony Rizzo

BBC--HOLLYWOOD-- In 1985, a 59-year-old Rock Hudson was the first major movie star to die from AIDS...



Matt Smith as "Doctor Who" Photo credit:

tell him he had AIDS. I met Rock through his mother, who was a friend of a friend...

Former "Doctor Who" and "The Crown" star Matt Smith will become Charles Manson for the film "Charlie Says"...

Johnny Depp, who allegedly hid his assets to divorce Amber Heard, now is embroiled in two lawsuits...

The two men who allege in the documentary "Leaving Neverland" that they were sexually assaulted as kids by Michael Jackson...

TOP 10 MOVIES

- 1. Us (R) Lupita Nyong'o, Winston Duke
2. Captain Marvel (PG-13) Brie Larson, Samuel L. Jackson

- 3. Wonder Park (PG) animated
4. Five Feet Apart (PG-13) Haley Lu Richardson, Cole Sprouse

- (R) Martha Higareda, Omar Chaparro
8. Gloria Bell (R) Julianne Moore, Alanna Ubach

TOP TEN VIDEO, DVD

Top 10 Video On Demand

- 1. The Green Book (PG-13) Mahershala Ali
2. Fantastic Beasts: The Crimes of Grindelwald (PG-13) Eddie Redmayne

Top 10 DVD, Blu-ray Sales

- 1. Fantastic Beasts: The Crimes of Grindelwald (PG-13) Warner
2. Mortal Engines (PG-13) Universal

TOP TEN Worst States for Online Dating

- 1. Missouri
2. Florida
3. Louisiana

MOMENTS IN TIME

The History Channel--

* On April 15, 1865, President Abraham Lincoln dies from an assassin's bullet. Shot by John Wilkes Booth...

* On April 19, 1876, a Wichita, Kansas, commission votes not to rehire policeman Wyatt Earp after he beats up a candidate for county sheriff...

* On April 20, 1926, inventor Lee de Forest demonstrates Phonofilm (music recorded on motion picture film) to movie studios...

* On April 16, 1943, researcher Albert Hofmann, a Swiss chemist, hallucinates after accidentally consuming LSD-25...

* On April 17, 1970, Apollo 13, the U.S. lunar spacecraft that suffered a severe malfunction on its journey to the moon...

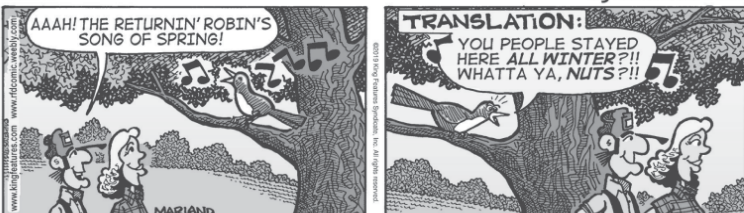
* On April 18, 1983, American runner Joan Benoit wins her second Boston Marathon in the women's division with a time of 2:22:43...

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The Spats



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

HOCUS-FOCUS BY HENRY BOLTIKOFF. Find at least six differences in details between panels.

King Crossword. Includes a crossword grid and a list of clues for Across and Down.

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

Answers King Crossword: 1. Martin Van Buren, 2. Beverly Hills, California, 3. "Home Alone", 4. Kenya...

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- Center of Life Baptist Church, 11250 Bentley St. 281-442-5433
- De Priest Baptist Church, 5609 Mount Houston Rd. 281-449-0774
- Esperanza Baptist Church, 14710 Mill Rd. 281-227-0123
- First Baptist Church Kinwood, 5538 Lauder Rd. 281-442-3823
- First Baptist Church N. Houston, 4422 Lauder Rd. 281-449-7201
- First Unity Baptist Church, 2110 Aldine Bender Rd. 281-445-7379
- Grace Missionary Baptist Church, 1823 Aldine Mail Route. 281-442-7137
- Greater Purelight Missionary, 12330 Vickery St. 281-987-1980
- Harmony Baptist Church, 1325 Lauder Rd. 281-442-3444
- Mt. Sinai Missionary Baptist, 4730 Gaston St. 281-442-2947
- New Beginning Baptist Church, 10921 Foy Ln. 713-696-9249
- New Mt. Olive Baptist Church, 4706 Mount Houston Rd. 281-227-6885
- Parkwood Baptist Church P.O. Box 60143. 281-442-5359

- Sonrise Community Church P.O. Box 111581. 281-449-0994
- South Aldine Baptist Church 2121 Aldine Mail Rt. 281-442-3124

CATHOLIC:

- St. Leo the Great Catholic 2131 Lauder Rd. 281-449-2344

CHRISTIAN

- Faith Christian Center 10118 Tidwell Rd. 281-459-1709

CHURCH OF JESUS CHRIST

- Church of Jesus Christ of Latter-day Saints, 65 Melbourne Street. 281-799-6289.

CHURCH OF THE NAZARENE:

- Woodsdale Church of the Nazarene, 4903 Hollybrook Ln. 281-442-4107

JEHOVAH'S WITNESS:

- Jehovah's Witnesses 4416 Mohawk St. 281-442-1612

LUTHERAN:

- St. Luke's Lutheran Church, 11025 Aldine Westfield Rd. 281-442-2180
- Beautiful Savior Lutheran Church, 215 Rittenhouse. 281-445-2203
- Our Redeemer Lutheran Church, 215 Rittenhouse. 713-694-7433

METHODIST:

- Aldine First United Methodist Church, 4623 Aldine Bender Rd. 281-442-4961.
- El Mesias United Methodist Church, 406 E. Rittenhouse St. 713-699-8990.

PENTACOSTAL:

- Calvary Pentecostal Church of God, 3122 Hopper Rd. 713-694-6112
- Iglesia Pentecostal Unida, 2410 Bertrand St. 281-590-5187
- Temple of Salvation, 4906 Haile St. 281-987-2655

PRESBYTERIAN:

- Westminster Church 14050 Aldine Westfield Rd. 281-442-7210

- El Monte Calvario Church P.O. Box 11726. 281-987-1174
- Iglesia de Dios Santidao 11721 Aldine Westfield Rd. 281-219-0707
- La Iglesia de Dios Santa Sion 2332 Aldine Mail Rt. 281-449-0536
- Manantial de Vida 2810 Lauder Rd. 281-442-7709
- Primera Iglesia Bautista 13380 Korenek St. 281-590-5642

NON-DEMOMINATIONAL/ OTHER

- Aldine Christian Church 2233 Aldine Mail Rt. 281-442-9751
- Apostolic Bible Ctr. P.O. Box 8569. 281-442-5171
- Bethel Community Church 2414 Lauder Rd. 281-449-1473
- Church of the Living God 4422 Hopper Rd. 281-219-3853
- Church of the Lord Jesus Christ 11268 E. Hardy Rd. 281-442-0303
- Church of the Lord Jesus Christ 9407 Crofton St. 713-631-7339.
- Emmanuel Deliverance Temple 4718 Littlecrest Rd. 281-987-9166
- Grace Restoration Church 13223 Aldine Westfield Rd. 281-449-5996
- Houston Restoration Church 1831 Hartwick Rd. 281-227-6260
- Houston Revival Temple 5801 Mary Francis Dr. 281-987-3305
- Jesus Center, 11742 Aldine Westfield Rd. 281-590-3216
- Monument of Faith Church-God 2233 Aldine Mail Rt. 281-442-2002
- New Covenant Missionary Church, 2202 Aldine Bender Rd. 281-987-7170
- New Gate Fellowship, 4234 Mount Houston Rd. 713-166-6684
- North Central Assembly of God, 13703 Aldine Westfield Rd. 281-907-6609
- Pillar of Glory, 14341 Lee Rd. 281-449-6404
- Sabbathay Kingdom, 4034 Linder St. at Kelley and Hirsch Rd., Houston, 77026. 713-635-3025.
- Temple de Poder, 10912 Aldine Westfield Rd. 281-372-1060
- Tomb of Jesus, 1301 Aldine Mail Rt. 281-987-1371
- Word of Deliverance Life Ctr 4001 Darwin St. 281-227-0700
- Phuc Vien Temple, 14101 East-ex Fwy. 281-449-1900

- Gospel Shop 14341 Lee Rd. 281-227-8898
- Jimmie Guillory 13120 Luthie Rd. 281-449-6016
- Dynamic Global Interprises Inc. 2201 Little York Rd. 713-695-9830
- The Shelter Church, 4102 Lauder Rd. 281-846-4538

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EVENTS

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World's Largest Gun Show - April 6 & 7, Tulsa, OK Fairgrounds. Saturday 8-6, Sunday 8-4. Wanenmacher's Tulsa Arms Show. Free appraisals. Bring your guns! www.TulsaArmsShow.com.

Mount Vernon - 15th Annual Tour de Cypress Ride, Sat., April 20. Enjoy a Franklin County weekend of activities: Bike Ride, Music and Barbecue. 10, 20 45, 52 Mile and 100K rides. Beautiful routes past Exotic Animal Farm and Lake Cypress Springs. www.tourdecypress.com

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LIFESTYLE

BIBLE TRIVIA

by Wilson Casey—

1. Is the book of Terebinth in the Old or New Testament or neither?
2. What sprang up and shadowed over Jonah's head delivering him from his grief? Hemlock, Gourd, Flowers, Fig tree
3. From Judges 16, where did Samson tell Delilah that his great strength lies? Deep voice, Mighty arms, Long hair, Kind heart


4. Who married King David after her evil husband, Nabal, died? Tamar, Abigail, Vashti, Sarah
5. Which man's name in the book of Genesis means "hairy"? Seth, Cain, Abel, Esau
6. How many times does the word "Lucifer" appear in the Bible (KJV)? 1, 13, 112, 666

ANSWERS: 1) Neither; 2) Gourd; 3) Long hair; 4) Abigail; 5) Esau; 6) 1 (Isaiah 14:12)

THE ILLUSTRATED BIBLE

"When you reap your harvest in your field, and forget a sheaf in the field, you shall not go back to get it; it shall be for the stranger, the fatherless, and the widow, that the Lord your God may bless you in all the work of your hands."

DEUTERONOMY 24:19



"Ruth Gleaning" by R.F. Babcock (19th century)

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6197 AW19-1034

Karate classes at East Aldine



Jesse and Sue Diaz, in the back row, are teaching this class of young Karate students in the East Aldine offices. Teachers are members of the American Society of Karate. The next class starts Friday, April 5 from 6 pm - 7 pm at East Aldine District Office, 5333 Aldine Mail Route. If interested call 713-962-6641 or East Aldine District at 713-595-1220. The Karate class is open for boys and girls.

NACA Assistance Programs,

CONTINUED FROM PAGE 1



Houston Mayor, Sylvester Turner, middle, talked about NACA and city Assistance Programs at Greenspoint Mall.

ities. I want people to live and work in the City of Houston," Mayor Turner said. "We are the fourth largest, and most diverse city in the country. We need the best and brightest to be able to afford to live in Houston and contribute to the city of the future."

NACA's Achieve the Dream Event took place at Greenspoint Mall the weekend of March 23. All NACA services were free.

NACA provides the same terms for all borrowers, many of whom had previously given up on homeownership. As Forbes magazine observed in their comparison of the best low down payment mortgages, "There is one exception, NACA, that charges the same rate regardless of the credit score". Bank of America has committed \$10 Billion to the NACA mortgage program nationwide.

Bruce Marks explained, "NACA believes homeownership is a right, and we are here to see that Houston's working people have the opportunity they deserve to achieve their piece of the American Dream."

Safety Forum,

CONTINUED FROM PAGE 1

up for the shortage of deputies, and told about how they map "hot spots" regularly to determine where the worst problems are. Then they assign an undercover unit, and other marked unit working together to solve the problems in that area. He said he rotates his Hot Spot team around the five districts that he covers. Gonzalez thought that his office could "become more effective" by coordinating all his resources to work together.

Lt. Klozik the 2nd shift commander in the Aldine area, and Deputy Gore discussed the specific policing they are able to do in Aldine. They said that because of the contract deputies paid for by the East Aldine District, they are able to have as many as 8 deputies and supervisors on patrol during the day shift, with a reduced number at night.

Members of the audience were asked about specific problems in their areas. Representatives from the Castlewood

subdivision presented a long list of problems and asked the Sheriff for help in solving them. These include continual random or recreational gunfire, though to originate on Ladin Drive; the need for a traffic light at Lauder and Green Ranch; speeding, on Lauder Road, Connorvale, and in the Castlewood neighborhood; stop signs being ignored; home break-ins; and cars being stolen or broken into. Sheriff Gonzalez and Lt. Klozik said that they would put more patrols in the area, perhaps some undercover units or just a patrol car sitting on certain streets. They also will employ a technique called "Knock and Talk" to interact with residents in the area to make them aware of the patrols.

Another resident reported racing in the Little York/Bentley area, and cars making "donuts" or circles on streets and parking lots.

In regard to car break-in, Gonzalez said that over 50% of these are unlocked, and urged drivers to lock their car and not to leave valuable in sight. Stolen cars, he said, have the keys left in them in almost 50% of the cases.



SHERIFF ED GONZALEZ

Detective Cerna, an undercover unit, and other marked unit working together to solve the problems in that area. He said that in spite of the perception of high crime rates, the Aldine area stats showed it had the lowest rate of crime of the five Sheriff's precincts.

Cerna's unit is responsible for investigating breaking and entering crimes, auto theft, and other types of theft, including stealing your information from credit cards, and mail records. He demonstrated that it was very easy for a criminal to attain your credit card information with what is known as an RF scanner, which can read your magnetic strip information from a distance. He said there are metal pouches that can be used to protect against this type of theft.

Cerna had a number of locks with him, and said they should be used to lock a shaft on your pick-up truck tailgate assembly, to keep the tailgate from being stolen. He said this is a very common crime, and can be very expensive to the truck owner. Tailgates can cost \$3000 to \$5000 to replace, he said.

Cerna demonstrated a kill switch, which he recommended be installed in every car, to keep someone who breaks in from being able to drive away. This should be hidden, where the owner knows but it is not obvious. A similar remedy is to remove a fuse from the electrical starter circuit, but this is not as convenient.

Teacher Job Fair

April 13 @ 9:00 a.m.
M.O. Campbell Educational Center

Great students!
Great salary!
Great location!

On-site interviews • No pre-registration required
Submit an employment application in advance at AldineISD.org



SHERIFF GONZALEZ, standing at table, and his command staff for the Aldine area, answer questions from the audience at the Community Safety Meeting held at the East Aldine District offices, last Thursday, March 21.

NO RSVP REQUIRED

ONE DAY ONLY!

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Saturday, April 27

9AM-Noon

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