



Volunteers last year re-enacted Santa Ana's Mexican troops firing at the Texans.

## NEWS NOTES

### Aldine Optimist club meeting Apr. 10

The Aldine Noon Optimist Club will hold a Recognition Ceremony at 10:00 a.m.

### Easter Egg Hunt Apr. 13

Hosted by NHA Little League at Squatty Lyons Park, 1601 Cromwell, Houston, TX 77093. Saturday, April 13, 2019, 11:00 a.m. Teams are invited to egg hunt. After the hunt, the North Houston Association Little League encourages each team to bring food and drinks for a picnic for your team. Please RSVP by April 10th to Elizabeth Dollar, 832-731-4518.

### Teacher Job Fair Apr. 13

Saturday, April 13, 9:00 a.m. at M.O. Campbell Education Center. On-site interview, no pre-registration required. Submit an employment application in advance at AldineISD.org.

### Free CPR training

One day only, free training. Compression only CPR with AED, Saturday, April 27, 9 am - noon, 2800 Aldine Bender Rd., Houston, TX 77032. See ad, page 8 for more details.

### Easter Aldine Spring Clean-up Apr. 27

The East Aldine District, along with the Greens Bayou Coalition, will hold a Community Clean-up on Saturday, April 27 starting at 9:00 a.m.

## State sues KMCO for air pollution

### Deadly Fire At Crosby Chemical Plant Raises Legal And Safety Questions

HARRIS COUNTY – Texas Attorney General Ken Paxton has filed a petition against KMCO alleging violations of the Clean Air Act, but KMCO's legal issues don't end there.

Last Tuesday's explosion at a KMCO chemical plant in Crosby, Texas killed one and injured two.

Separate from Tuesday's explosion and fire, KMCO is currently in violation of the Clean Water Act, and has had a host of other recent offenses, including violations of the Clean Air Act and a hazardous waste statute, the Houston Chronicle reported.

Tracey Hester of the University of Houston Law Center said that a facility's record plays into the potential liability it may face in the wake of a disaster. "Just speaking generally, absolutely — a facility that has



Smoke billows from the KMCO plant fire, as seen by the neighbors and first responders on Ramsey Road in Crosby.

a record of prior violations, particularly the same kind of violations, escalates its legal exposure," Hester said. "At the very least, most statutes provide that repeat violations have bigger potential penalties as-

sociated with them." Facilities with a history of violations have a harder time renewing the permits they need to operate

See STATE SUES, p. 7

## New School to meet increased demands to serve students with behavioral disorders, autism



Harris County Department of Education Officials and community members at the groundbreaking of new Behavior School.

HOUSTON, TX – April 5, 2019 – Harris County Department of Education kicked off construction on a new, 47,970-square-foot school to replace Academic and Behavior School West at a ceremonial

groundbreaking April 3 at 12772 Medfield Drive in southwest Houston. County and city officials, school district leaders, staff and students attended the event backdropped by a bulldozer, shovels and

hardhats. HCDE Superintendent James Colbert said the new school is needed to provide additional oppor-

See New Behavior School, Page 8

## San Jacinto Day cancelled due to ITC Fire

### 2019 Festival originally scheduled for April 13

The March 17 tank farm fire at the ITC facility remains an ongoing situation that has closed the San Jacinto Battleground State Historic Site and the San Jacinto Museum of History since the emergency situation began. At the present time, access to the area surrounding the site is restricted to emergency personnel involved in the cleanup. All preparations needed for a successful Festival & Battle Reenactment by necessity, have been halted.

"While the situation is improving, we do not know when conditions will allow for the public to return to this hallowed ground," said Larry Spasic, San Jacinto Museum President. "Our overriding concern is, of course, the safety of our guests and the participants involved as well as

the animals used in the re-enactment and our educational venues. Because of the ongoing efforts of the cleanup and remediation of the pollution in the waterways and grasslands in and around the San Jacinto Site and continuing uncertainties, we feel it is better to act proactively than reactively to these circumstances."

With an abundance of caution, the difficult decision has been made to cancel the 2019 San Jacinto Festival and Battle Reenactment scheduled for April 13th. All involved are deeply saddened that this important tradition will not occur for only the second time in nearly 35 years.

"Thank you to everyone for their continued support during this tough time.

See San Jacinto Day, Page 8

## LEGISLATIVE REPORT: House, Senate continue to move closer to passing budget

AUSTIN — Last week, with 60 days remaining until the end of the 140-day regular session of the 86th Texas Legislature, the House and Senate vaulted closer toward finalizing a state budget.

On March 27, the House of Representatives voted 149-0 in favor of HB 1, its version of the state budget for fiscal years 2020 and 2021. The lower chamber's bill allocates some \$251 billion to cover the two years and puts \$9 billion more than the current budget into education reform, including a teacher pay increase and pension funding, and property tax reform.

SB 1, the Senate's version of the state budget, is scheduled for more early-April hearings in the Senate Finance Committee before coming to a Senate floor vote. SB 1, like HB 1, presently con-

tains some \$9 billion for education reform and a property tax break. Since mid-January, the committee chaired by Sen. Jane Nelson, R-Flower Mound, heard more than 750 witnesses present public testimony in 25 meetings, helping members craft a bill that totals more than 1,000 pages. Nelson broke down the \$9 billion as follows:

- 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.

SB 1 is expected to pass soon in the Senate, and should it do so, a conference committee of House and Sen-

See Legislation Report, Page 4

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\* LITTLE (PG-13) 7:00 9:30  
\* MISSING LINK (PG) 4:00 7:00 9:40

US (R) -  
12:30pm, 1:00pm, 3:30pm, 4:00pm, 6:30pm, 7:00pm, 9:30pm, 10:00pm  
FIVE FEET APART (PG-13) -  
12:45pm, 3:45pm  
NO MANCHES FRIDA 2 (R) -  
12:00pm, 2:30pm, 5:00pm, 7:30pm, 10:00pm  
WONDER PARK (PG) -  
2:30pm, 7:00pm  
\* WONDER PARK in 3D (PG) -  
12:15pm, 4:45pm, 9:30pm  
CAPTAIN MARVEL (PG-13) -  
12:00pm, 12:45pm, 3:00pm, 3:45pm, 6:00pm, 6:45pm, 9:00pm, 9:45pm  
TYLER PERRY'S A MADEIRA FAMILY FUNERAL (PG-13) -  
6:45pm, 9:45pm  
HOW TO TRAIN YOUR DRAGON: THE HIDDEN WORLD (PG) -  
12:45pm, 7:00pm  
\* HOW TO TRAIN YOUR DRAGON: THE HIDDEN WORLD 3D (PG) -  
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## COMMUNITY / SCHOOL NEWS

## Aldine ISD to introduce two-way dual-language school choice program at 5 campuses this fall

Kindergarten classrooms at several Aldine ISD early childhood/pre-kindergarten/kindergarten (EC/PK/K) schools will be immersed in a new style of learning this August. Five campuses — Garcia-Leza, Vines, Hinojosa, Magrill, and de Santiago — will implement an English/Spanish two-way dual-language immersion program during the 2019-2020 school year.

The program is designed to promote biliteracy, bilingualism, and biculturalism and offers yet another choice for the students of Aldine ISD.

"We are excited about providing more academic offerings and choices for Aldine ISD families," said AISD Superintendent of Schools Dr. LaTonya M. Goffney. "Our families want and deserve strong academic programs that focus on preparing students for the diverse world we live in."

"As we discussed options and ways to meet this goal, it became evident that a dual-language program

was the perfect answer."

Through the two-way dual-language program, Aldine ISD hopes to help young native English and Spanish speakers learn their second language. The program will start in kindergarten and a grade level will be added each year to allow students to continue their studies into high school.

According to Betsy Haisler, executive director of multilingual services, the District reviewed best practices and research. Leaders designed a model where the second language will be formally taught through structured language learning lessons and activities. Vocabulary and other skills will be learned through context, routines, and regular daily activities.

In the Two-Way Dual-Language Immersion program, students have opportunities to learn from each other.

"Each classroom will have a balanced number of students who are proficient

in their native language of English or Spanish," said Haisler. "Teachers will strategically teach daily instruction using both languages."

"This model will allow students to serve as language models for each other. Ultimately they will help their peers become bilingual."

### Program Fosters Student Success in Becoming Bilingual, Biliterate and Bicultural

Incoming kindergarteners who meet Aldine ISD's enrollment requirements for kindergarten and live in the attendance zone for one of the schools offering the program this fall are able to apply for the program. Applications for each campus dual-language program will be available April 1 and families have until April 18 to submit.

The District hosted several parent meetings so that interested families could learn more about the program.

## Mayor announces return of curbside glass recycling



Mayor Turner joins ribbon cutting for new recycling facility.

HOUSTON - During the official grand opening of a state-of-the-art recycling facility, Mayor Sylvester Turner announced the return of curbside recycling of bottles and jars made from clear, green and brown glass.

The resumption of curbside glass recycling after a two-year pause is made possible by the city's new recycling contractor, Fomento de Construcciones y Contratas, Inc. (FCC), which built the recycling facility in northeast Houston.

In 2018, Houston City Council selected FCC after considering several proposals from competing recycling companies. The FCC agreement saves taxpayers millions in recycling costs and expands the type of materials the City's Solid Waste Department can collect curbside.

"I promised residents we would bring glass containers back to curbside recycling bins and I kept that promise," Mayor Sylvester Turner said. "My thanks go to residents for their patience, to City Council for approving the FCC contract in 2018 and to Director Harry Hayes and his team at Solid Waste."

Glass, along with other items accepted in the recycling cart - paper, cardboard, aluminum, tin cans and plastics -- should be clean, dry and empty before recycling.

The FCC facility opened in March and has a 145,000 ton per year capacity, which is more than double the current needs of the City.

"Today we were able to show the world that the

commitment made by FCC to the City of Houston and to the residents of Houston has come to fruition," said Inigo Sanz, FCC Environmental Services USA CEO. "The MRF, a colossal facility at 120,000 SF, is already open and processing residential materials. Thank you to the Mayor and the rest of the Houston that believed in creating a facility fit for the future."

"We are so proud to have officially opened the Houston MRF. This milestone is the first of many to come from our partnership with our home, the City of Houston," said Pablo Colio, FCC Group CEO. "We will continue our commitment to the City, education and the local communities, because a greener future matters to all."

For non-curbside customers, glass continues to be accepted at the City's Recycling Drop-Off Centers listed below.

Neighborhood Depository/Recycling Centers Locations

North - 9003 N Main 77022

Northwest - 14400 Sommermeyer 77041

Northeast - 5565 Kirkpatrick 77028

Southeast - 2240 Central Street 77017

South - 5100 Sunbeam 77033

Southwest - 10785 SW Freeway 77074

Neighborhood Recycling Drop-Off Locations

Westpark - 5900 Westpark

Ellington Airport/Clear Lake - 246 Loop Rd

Kingwood - 3210 West Lake Houston Parkway

The City's partnership with FCC also represents

a reduction in the cost of Houston's recycling program. The new contract shares the financial risk between the City and FCC, so that the City can limit its liability when the value of recyclables declines and share in revenue when it rises.

The entire facility and plant ownership are transferred to the City; however, FCC will be responsible for operations and maintenance and the liability of the entire plant for the duration of the contract.

During the course of negotiations, the city worked hard to come to an agreement for Houston that at no time will the cost per a ton of recycled material exceed the cost per a ton of disposal to the landfill.

Mayor Turner said the City and FCC look forward to working together to grow our recycling program - improving the quality of the material, preserving our valuable landfill space, and protecting Houston's environment for the long term.

### MWSBE Participation

The overall goal for involvement in the plant project by minority-owned businesses, women-owned businesses and small business was 11%. FCC reached 100% for design work and 33% on the construction phase.

### Second Chance employment opportunities

Mayor Turner announced FCC will provide job opportunities for "second chance" and homeless residents. Half of the workers on the sorting staff are in the second chance category.

## Aldine ISD Trustee named to Board of Directors of National School Boards Association

Aldine ISD Trustee Dr. Viola M. Garcia was sworn in as Secretary-Treasurer of the National School Boards Association (NSBA) at its conference in Philadelphia this past weekend.

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.

Garcia's education activism is not limited to Aldine ISD. She is a retired faculty member of the Uni-



Dr. Viola M. Garcia

versity of Houston-Downtown. Dr. Garcia 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 Boards, Mexican American School Board Members Association, Parent Teacher Association, the National Association of Latino Elected and Appointed Officials (NALEO). She served as president of TASB in 2012-2013. Garcia previously served on the NSBA Board of Directors representing the Southern Region.

The NSBA is the umbrella organization for more than 90,000 school board members throughout the United States. The organization advocates for school board interests before Congress, federal government agencies and the courts, in addition to providing information and services to state school boards associations.

## Johnson Elementary School celebrates more than 50 years serving the Aldine community

By J.D. Herman

"Teach the children so it will not be necessary to teach the adults." — Abraham Lincoln

Johnson Elementary, named for Beulah Johnson, an educator and community supporter in the district, has been educating young minds in the East Aldine Management District for 51 years. The school is now in a new home on a new campus, and with that comes a new beginning for a very worthy, old endeavor — teaching our children and supporting our community through education.

After 50 years Johnson Elementary had outgrown the original building and needed better accommodations and larger facilities for its students. The new campus is just a short drive from the original location, but with a half century of educating area families, the move was accompanied by a sense of loss. Some parents and grandparents of current students at-

tended Johnson Elementary and many were very sentimental about the old school house being torn down. This sparked a wonderful idea by Abel Garza, the Assistant Superintendent of Community and Government Relations for Aldine Independent School District. Mr. Garza created a program to distribute commemorative bricks from the old building to Johnson Elementary alumni and other stakeholders within the community.

It is this sense of caring that fuels the school's success. Pamela Riggins-Johnson or, as the students say, "Principal Johnson," has been with the school for 4 years and says it is the remarkable family participation that makes Johnson Elementary so special. "Of all the schools I have been with and worked with, we have the most incredible family support," says Principal Johnson. "Parents are highly involved, coming to eat with their children and participate in campus activities, and I am never at a loss



Students representing Johnson Elementary School

for parent volunteers when needed."

Besides the support from family, students at Johnson Elementary also benefit from incredible community and corporate support. Exxon helped fund a "Day of Caring" beautification project at the old campus and supports the science curriculum with experiments and presentations that encourage interest and curiosity of the students. During the sum-

mer months, the school is able to continue programming through a sponsorship with the YMCA.

Do you have a local business? Johnson Elementary is always looking for partnerships within the East Aldine Management District that support youth education which in turn benefit the entire community.

On an academic note, the student body also

shines bright with 24 students noted as rising stars by Rice University in the areas of math and science. Johnson also has one of city's best youth soccer teams, having won first place in HISD tournaments 2 years in a row.

Looking forward into the spring of 2019 and beyond, Johnson Elementary will be hosting a Family Engagement Night on March 28th. The evening will be an opportunity for parents to come out and play games with their children in a setting that promotes family interaction. Board games can encourage math and critical thinking and stimulate parents and children to work together in a positive stress free environment.

The future's bright at Johnson Elementary. Principal Johnson attributes this to a caring community, and a devoted staff. "Our teachers and school staff are wonderful, committed educators and that commitment helps our continued success."

Here's to the next 50 years!

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COMMUNITY NEWS

Harris County Attorney Ryan files court brief seeking to remove citizenship question from 2020 census

Harris County Attorney Vince Ryan yesterday filed a friend of the court brief with the U.S. Supreme Court in a lawsuit seeking to prevent the U.S. Census Bureau from including a question about citizenship on the 2020 Census.

Ryan is joined in Harris County's brief by Fort Bend County Judge K.P. George and the City of Marfa. The brief asks the Supreme Court to affirm a district court judge's ruling that the citizenship question cannot be included. The ruling came in a lawsuit filed against the Census Bureau by the State of New York.

"We join in the concerns expressed across the country that a question on citizenship will reduce the number of people participating in the 2020 Census," said Ryan. "This question will intimidate our immigrant population. We want everyone to participate—whether they are citizens or not."

The brief states that the addition of the citizenship question to the 2020 Decennial Census will cause in an undercount of each jurisdiction's significant

foreign-born population resulting in disproportionately low representation at the local, state, and federal levels along with corrupt data inadequate for effective governance. An undercount will also hurt the amount of federal dollars coming to these communities in programs based on population.

Harris County's growth has always been driven by immigrants intertwined with new industries creating diverse economic engines for Texas and the country, Ryan points out in the brief. Neighboring suburban Fort Bend County has exploded in growth, diversity and affluence in the last few decades electing its first non-Anglo chief executive since the 1800s, immigrant K.P. George. While the tiny City of Marfa has not seen such explosive growth, it shares a high foreign-born population with Harris and Fort Bend at risk for a net undercount in the Decennial Census.

Ryan says the current intense climate of fear among immigrants makes it all the more likely that the net differential under-

count will be more acute in Texas should the citizenship question be added to the census. In the past, as with the decades-long practice of using "white primaries" to disenfranchise African-American voters, the Supreme Court was the only source of protection to the constitutional rights of people wishing to engage in the civic sphere.

"Now, the Supreme Court's intervention is needed again, to ensure that the integrity of the data for representation and effective governance is protected," Ryan said. "Judge George, the City of Marfa and we agree with the New York district court's finding that the undocumented and Hispanics will be disproportionately undercounted if the citizenship question is left in the Census."

"We believe adding that question will depress responses, undercut the people and harm the representation and safety of the people of Harris and Fort Bend Counties and the City of Marfa," Ryan concludes.

Commissioner Adrian Garcia meets with Federal Officials to address infrastructure and workforce

HOUSTON – Harris County Precinct 2 Commissioner Adrian Garcia met with federal officials in Washington, D.C., this week to advocate for infrastructure resources and enhancing safety and collaboration with the chemical industry after the ITC explosion.

During the visit, which spanned Monday, April 1, through Thursday, April 4, Commissioner Garcia met with EPA officials to address the lack of air monitors available after a fire broke out at Intercontinental Terminals Company in Deer Park March 17 and burned for days. Garcia emphasized the need for more foam on site to be able to combat these blazes, as well as the importance of knowing quickly what is inside the tanks so first-responders can be both safe and effective.

"We need to work together, at all levels of government, to ensure industry leaders and our communities cannot just co-exist, but be good neighbors and look out for each other," Commissioner Garcia said.

ITC continued to be addressed in meetings with Speaker Nancy Pelosi's team, Senator John Cornyn, various members of Congress and the American Chemical Council. Also in those discussions, Commissioner Garcia pushed for infrastructure



Commissioner Garcia with State Officials at Washington, D.C.



Commissioner Garcia, middle, with State Officials at Washington, D.C.

resources in Precinct 2, specifically around the Port of Houston and advocated for more funding for community colleges to help with workforce development.

"I'm working to make sure Precinct 2 is the place where people and companies alike come to thrive,"

Garcia said. "But I can't do it alone. All government stakeholders need be aware of our needs and exactly what needs to be done to address it."

Garcia wrapped up the trip Thursday with meetings with Rep. Lizzie Fletcher and the National Association of Counties.

Rep. Garcia Votes to reauthorize the Violence Against Women Act

WASHINGTON, D.C. – Thursday April 4th, 2019, Rep. Garcia voted to pass H.R. 1585, a bipartisan, robust, and long-term Violence Against Women Act reauthorization. The landmark Violence Against Women Act of 1994 ushered in transformative progress by calling for the protection of all Americans from violence and abuse and working to ensure all victims and survivors have the support they need. This critical reauthorization, which passed the House by a vote of 263-158, will safeguard and further build upon these life-saving protections for women throughout Texas and across the country.

"It is an honor to join my colleagues to reauthorize the Violence Against Women Act and uphold our sacred duty to protect the millions of victims and survivors of domestic violence and sexual assault," said Rep. Garcia. "Too many Americans, including 1 in

3 women, still encounter domestic violence. For the millions of Texan women who are victims and survivors of domestic violence and abuse, this bill will make a real impact."

This reauthorization fulfills Congress's responsibility to protect all Americans by reaffirming protections for every woman, as well as including vital improvements to address gaps in current law that have been identified by victims, survivors and advocates. This bipartisan bill:

- Improves the services available for victims and survivors of domestic violence, dating violence, sexual assault and stalking;
- Expands the housing protections and financial assistance available for victims and survivors;
- Improves protections for Native women by reaffirming tribal criminal jurisdiction over non-Indian perpetrators of domestic

violence, dating violence, sexual assault, and stalking;

- Closes loopholes in current firearm laws in order help prevent "intimate partner" homicides, by prohibiting persons convicted of misdemeanor stalking or dating violence from possessing firearms; and
- Invests in tools and resources for law enforcement and evidence-based prevention programs that make our communities safer.

"There is nothing partisan or political about ridding our communities of the scourge of domestic violence and sexual assault," continued Rep. Garcia. "By passing the Violence Against Women Act reauthorization, Congress is working in a bipartisan way to ensure all women in Texas and throughout the country have the resources they need to seek justice, receive care and rebuild their lives."

North Forest Ribbon Cutting Ceremony on April 5 - POSTPONED

The Houston Community College North Forest Campus ribbon cutting scheduled for April 5 has been postponed until further notice. The school officials apologize for any

inconvenience and ask that you share the update with anyone that you may have invited. They will be updated regarding a rescheduled date as soon as they confirm one. For ribbon cutting updates, please visit [hccs.edu/NFRibbonCutting](http://hccs.edu/NFRibbonCutting).

Man dies in crash on Homestead

Houston police are investigating a fatal crash at 6500 Homestead about 6:05 a.m. on April 4.

Houston Police Officials reported that the driver of a black Honda Civic was traveling northbound on Homestead, failed to yield the right-of-way while making a left turn and was

struck by a silver Audi A8 traveling southbound on Homestead. The driver of the Honda died at the scene. The driver of the Audi remained at the scene and was determined not to be impaired.

The identity of the male victim, 27, is pending verification by the Harris County Institute of Forensic Sciences.

No charges have been filed at this time, as the investigation is continuing.

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OPINION PAGE

**TEXAS SENATE NEWS**  
By Richard Lee

*Senate seeks to expand rural broadband access*

(Austin) Rural Texans have been increasingly left behind in the expansion in broadband coverage, but a bill passed by the Senate Thursday could change that. According to the Federal Communications Commission, at least 30 percent of rural Texans don't have access to high-speed internet. While the service is ubiquitous in urban and sub-urban areas, those living in rural areas could be missing out on the economic opportunities and access to services, such as telemedicine and virtual education programs, that broadband internet speeds make possible. Jacksonville Senator Robert Nichols, whose district spans largely rural areas in East Texas from Henderson to Orange Counties, offered a bill he says provides an innovative solution to this problem that won't cost the state any money nor impose additional regulations. It would allow rural electric co-operative companies to use existing easements to install broadband infrastructure.

Nichols said these member-owned, non-profit co-ops already have 300,000 miles of distribution line in place for electric transmission, but many don't have the statutory authority to lay broadband transmission capacity in existing easements. His SB 14 would give them that ability. Nichols believes this will be a boon to rural economies. "A recent study by the U.S. Chamber of Commerce found that Texas could add as many as 23,000 rural jobs over the next three years and bring almost \$4 billion of increased value if it bridges the digital gap," he said. Nichols said the bill includes protections for property owners, including a right to refuse a co-op to lay new wire on easements to their property. Co-ops would have to provide property owners with notice of their intention to install new infrastructure, and the owners have 60 days to opt out. It would also require the companies to keep a separate set of books for broadband expenditures and revenues, and would prohibit them from including the price of operating broadband services in electric utility rates.

Another of his priority bills, Lt.

Governor Dan Patrick released a statement praising passage. "Senate Bill 14 will make sure that all Texans have access to the internet," it read. "It's key to providing our students with a better education and creating jobs by ensuring a better connection with the rest of Texas, the country and the world."

Also Thursday, the Senate approved a bill that looks to protect children from abuse, neglect or exploitation at state-licensed child care facilities or homes. Citing media reports, Houston Senator Joan Huffman said that eight children died last year at a childcare facility, and in a two year span between 2016 and 2018, five thousand more children were injured. In the last 10 years, facilities have been cited more than 3200 times for violations. "Since these child care facilities are licensed and regulated by the state, we must provide Health and Human Services more tools and resources to address these appalling acts against our most vulnerable population: our children," said Huffman.

Her bill, SB 568, would increase administrative penalties for child care facilities that are cited for abuse, neglect or exploitation of their young charges. Each incident would result in a \$1000 fine. It would require the state health commission to develop safe sleeping standards for children in daycare that facilities must abide by. "Many tragic incidents occur when an infant is not sleeping in an appropriate position or environment," said Huffman. Injuries or sickness that require hospitalization must be reported to the parent or guardian, or the facility could face a \$500 fine. Facilities would also have to maintain liability insurance if affordable and available. Huffman said she knows that the price of child care is unaffordable for many families, so she tried to craft a bill that wouldn't increase that burden. "I do not believe that any provision of this bill will raise the operating cost of any child care facility or home," she said. The bill now heads to the House for consideration.

The Senate will reconvene Monday, April 8 at 2 p.m.



*Ask Rusty – Social Security's "First Year" Rule*

**Dear Rusty:** I've been trying to determine the best way to proceed with retirement and could use some help. I'd like to retire on or about my 62nd birthday this September. Waiting for "full retirement" does not motivate as I have income replacement through my real estate investments. I'll have way over any earnings limits for 2019, but I don't want to have my benefits reduced. Can I apply as SSA suggests three months before my 62nd birthday without running afoul of SSA's arcane benefit reduction rules? Or should I quit first then apply? Please don't refer me to my Financial Advisor or local SSA office, they just confuse. Signed: Anxious to Retire

**Dear Anxious:** Well I'm afraid I can't offer you any obscure methods to avoid Social Security's rules & regulations, but perhaps I can clarify some things which will help you manage the timing of your application for Social Security benefits. From what you've said, I assume you mean you plan to retire from your working career in September, but by that time you will have greatly exceeded Social Security's annual earnings limit (which is \$17,640 for 2019). Again, from what you've said, you wish to claim SS as soon as possible but you don't want to lose any benefits because of exceeding the earnings limit. So, if you wish to claim SS as soon as you turn 62, you'll be happy to know that there is a special rule which applies for your first year of collecting benefits before your full retirement age (66 - in your case).

That "first year rule" essentially says that if you start benefits in mid-year, earnings prior to the month your benefits start don't count; instead you'll be subject to a monthly



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

**Social Security Matters**

earnings test for the remainder of that year, once your benefits have started. So in your case, your first month of eligibility for SS would be the month of October (you must be 62 for the entire month to be eligible for benefits), and your benefit payment for October would be paid the following month (the payment date will be either the 2nd, 3rd, or 4th Wednesday of the month, depending on the day of the month you were born). Then, starting with the month of October, if you do not have earnings from working which exceed \$1,470 in any of the remaining months of 2019, your benefits will not be cut; but if you have earnings from working which exceed that monthly amount in any month for the rest of 2019, then you will not be entitled to SS benefits for that month. Exceeding the monthly limit by any amount (even by \$1) will cause Social Security to take back the full benefit for that month. So, if your plan is to retire from your working career in September and depend upon your savings and investments for income, and if you claim Social Security as soon as you're eligible in October and you have no further earnings from working, you'll not suffer any loss of benefits in 2019.

But just as a caution, after 2019 you'll still be

subject to the annual "earnings test" because you're claiming Social Security before you reach your full retirement age, and the annual earnings test will apply until the month that you reach your full retirement age (after that, there is no longer a limit to what you can earn). As for when you should apply for benefits, Social Security recommends that you apply 3 months before you wish your benefits to begin. When applying, you can specify the month you want your benefits to start, so if you wish that to be at age 62 simply specify October 2019 as your benefit start month. Applying prior to September and specifying October as your benefit start month will not expose you to any extra earnings limitations over those explained above.

*This article is intended for information purposes only and does not represent legal or financial guidance. It presents the opinions and interpretations of the AMAC Foundation's staff, trained and accredited by the National Social Security Association (NSSA). NSSA and the AMAC Foundation and its staff are not affiliated with or endorsed by the Social Security Administration or any other governmental entity. To submit a question, visit our website or email us.*

**Legislative Report,**

CONTINUED FROM PAGE 1

ate members must meet to reconcile differences in the two versions of the state budget. Nelson and four other senators appointed by Lt. Gov. Dan Patrick, along with House Appropriations Committee Chair John Zerwas, R-Richmond, and four House members appointed by Speaker Dennis Bonnen, will make up the conference committee. After the versions are reconciled, both chambers will put the measure to a final vote. If passed, the budget would then be forwarded to Gov. Greg Abbott for final approval.

**Bill would raise exemption**

The Senate Property Tax Committee on March 26 considered legislation to increase the homestead exemption for local school property taxpayers by \$10,000.

SB 5 and Senate Joint Resolution 71, a proposed constitutional amendment by the committee's chair, Sen. Paul Bettencourt, R-Houston, would ask voters in November to approve an increase to the amount of property value that a homeowner can exempt from \$25,000 to \$35,000.

He said the increase would cut the average property tax bill in Texas by about \$125 per year and the state would be able to cover the loss in revenue to school districts by using proceeds from oil and gas production taxes that would otherwise have gone into the Economic Stabilization "Rainy Day" Fund.

Bettencourt said the fund has enough in it to justify the diversion. "I personally view the (Rainy Day Fund) as full because we're looking at values up to \$15.66 billion at the end of the biennium without any withdrawals," he said.

**Lawmakers ask for more**

Texas transportation infrastructure is not keeping up with growth, and to make matters worse, the Lone Star State receives less than any other state compared to what it pays into the federal Highway Trust Fund.

To request a better rate of return, all 38 members of the Texas congressional delegation joined in a March 26 letter to the chairs and ranking members of the Senate Environment and Public Works Committee and House Transportation and Infrastructure Committee.

The delegation's letter notes the 95 cents on the dollar returned to Texas in fiscal 2019 amounts to a loss of up to \$940 million in taxes paid by Texas motorists and taxpayers. In contrast, according to Federal Highway Administration figures, Alaska received \$6.78, New York, \$1.33, and California, \$1.16.

"Texas has been denied a fair return on federal fuel taxes for far too long. It is imperative that an equitable share of these funds be allocated to improving transportation systems right here in Texas," said Gov. Abbott. "I urge Congress to put an end to this funding inequity," he added.

**Senate OKs harassment bill**

Any employee of a public or private university who sees or learns of an incident of sexual harassment, assault, rape, dating violence or stalking would be required to report it to the institution's Title IX coordinator under SB 212, which was unanimously approved by the Texas Senate on March 26.

According to the Senate News Service, the legislation by Sen. Joan Huffman, R-Houston, also would require the coordinator to make regular reports to the university president regarding the number of complaints and the status of investigations.

The president, in turn, would have to make a report to the university board of trustees every semester of the number, disposition and status of complaints and investigations, the findings thereof, and the disciplinary actions taken. This report would be public information but would not identify any person. The legislation still must pass the House and be signed by the governor to become law.

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ENTERTAINMENT PAGE

HOLLYWOOD

by Tony Rizzo

HOLLYWOOD -- We've been hearing about Netflix a lot lately. Many billboards advertising Netflix films -- both on the famed Sunset Strip and across the country -- are now owned by Netflix.

Netflix also is under fire for its TV division. Shows created by and exclusive to its platform -- such as "The Crown," a six-season series, "House of Cards" (six seasons), "Orange Is the New Black" (six seasons), "Grace and Frankie" (five seasons), "Unbreakable Kimmy Schmidt" (four seasons) and "The Ranch" (renewed for a sixth season) -- fare better than revamped shows like "Fuller House" (five seasons), which may end due to the college scandal implicating Lori Loughlin.



LeBron James Photo source: Keith Allison/Flickr

addition to its other giant acquisitions such as Lucasfilm (aka "Star Wars"), the Marvel Universe of superheroes and ABC Television, along with its existing amusement parks, hotels and resorts. Disney is a hungry behemoth, which now will compete with Netflix.

Alexander Skarsgard -- awaiting the May 3 release of "Long Shot," with Seth Rogan and Charlize Theron, and "The Kill Team," due this summer -- will be larger than life on big screens in IMAX and 3D when he headlines "Godzilla vs Kong," with Rebecca Hall and Kyle Chandler, set to escape March 2020. "The Hitman's Bodyguard," with Ryan Reynolds, Samuel L. Jackson, Salma Hayek and

Richard E. Grant, earned \$176 million. That warrants a sequel, which will add Antonio Banderas and Morgan Freeman to the cast.

When "Space Jam" (1996) hit theaters starring Michael Jordan (second billed to Bugs Bunny), nobody expected it would gross a whopping \$230 million (a fortune back then). It's taken 23 years to find another basketball superstar to fill Jordan's sneakers, but now they have. It's LeBron James, considered by many to be the greatest basketball player in the world today. Look for "Space Jam 2" the summer of 2021. No word if Bugs Bunny is too old or too much a has-been to top line this sequel. LOL.

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VETERANS POST

Stand Down Events for Homeless Veterans

By Freddy Groves

As the weather warms up, the 2019 Stand Downs are getting underway.

Stand Downs are events held over one to three days for homeless veterans, usually at Department of Veterans Affairs medical facilities. The list of services provided is long and includes clothing, health and dental screenings, personal care supplies, haircuts, legal assistance, food, information about shelter, as well as VA and Social Security benefits counseling.

In addition, veterans can get referrals to care and treatment for substance use and mental health counseling, as well as employment help, health care and housing

information. Multiple agencies and service groups come together for these Stand Downs.

To see the schedule of Stand Down events for this year, go online to www.va.gov/homeless/events.asp and scroll down. You'll find the dates and locations as well as name, phone number and email for the point of contact. If you don't see your location listed, keep checking back, or call the closest VA regional medical center. Ask early about whether they'll have transportation, and sign up. Be sure to bring your VA medical card and DD-214 if you have them.

If you're a homeless vet, there is another group you should contact: National

Coalition for Homeless Veterans (www.nchv.org). If you're in trouble (about to become homeless) call them 24/7 at 1-877-424-3838 or at 800-VET-HELP for general questions. NCHV also keeps a list of Stand Downs, so keep an eye on its website. It can help with housing, legal, employment and health issues, and more. Explore their website & they do a lot.

If you're a member of a veteran service organization and want to help with a Stand Down, contact them and ask what you can do or bring. Transportation for veterans in rural areas, food and personal care items might be high on the list.

MOMENTS IN TIME

The History Channel--

\* On April 23, 1014, Brian Boru, the high king of Ireland, is assassinated by retreating Norsemen shortly after his Irish forces defeated them. A small group of fleeing Norsemen stumbled on Brian's tent, overcame his bodyguards and murdered the elderly king.

\* On April 25, 1719, Daniel Defoe's "The Life and Strange Adventures of Robinson Crusoe," a fictional work about a shipwrecked sailor who spends 28 years on a deserted island, is published. It's based on the experiences of

Alexander Selkirk, a Scottish sailor who spent four years on a small island off South America.

\* On April 26, 1865, John Wilkes Booth is killed when Union soldiers track him to a Virginia farm 12 days after he assassinated President Abraham Lincoln. Killing Lincoln was part of a conspiracy to simultaneously kill the vice president and secretary of state, neither of which happened.

\* On April 22, 1915, German forces shock Allied soldiers along the Western

Front by firing more than 150 tons of lethal chlorine. The Germans were perhaps as shocked as the Allies by the devastating effects of the poison gas.

\* On April 27, 1956, world heavyweight champion Rocky Marciano retires from boxing at age 31. He ended his career as the only heavyweight champ with a perfect record, 49-0. Marciano had started boxing in the Army to get out of kitchen duty.

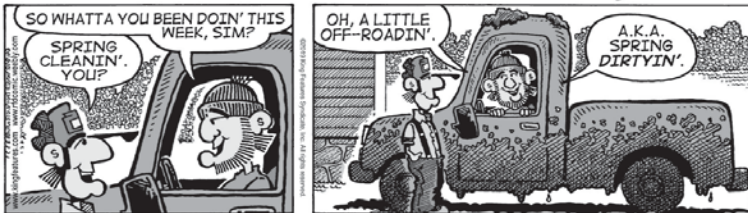
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Amber Waves



by Dave T. Phipps

R.F.D.



by Mike Marland

The Spats



by Jeff Pickering

Weekly SUDOKU by Linda Thistle. A 9x9 grid with numbers and empty cells. Includes difficulty level and copyright info.

HOCUS-FOCUS BY HENRY BOLTINOFF. A two-panel comic strip about a boy and a girl. Includes a list of differences between panels.

King Crossword. A crossword puzzle grid with clues for across and down. Includes the posting date April 8, 2019.

Trivia test by Fifi Rodriguez. A list of 10 trivia questions with a grid for answers. Includes the solution time: 24 mins.

Trivia Test Answers: 1. Wartburg; 2. The pineal gland near the center of the brain; 3. Shere Khan; 4. William Shakespeare; 5. Pan-American Highway, stretching across the North and South American continents; 6. Roasted green wheat; 7. America Online; 8. Carl Sagan; 9. Lara Croft; 10. C major




# CHURCH PAGE

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## Family fish camp, Easter games and more!

**Family Fish Camp:** Saturday, April 27, from 8:30 a.m. to 2 p.m. Spend a day learning basic fishing techniques at the inauguration of Jesse H. Jones Park & Nature Center's Family Fish Camp. Parents and children can visit skills stations to learn how to tie fishing knots, along with proper fish-handling techniques, tackle-box basics, fish identification, and other tips and tricks. The event also covers Texas Parks & Wildlife Department's fishing rules and regulations, angler ethics, water and boat safety, and environmental stewardship. All equipment and bait will be provided, but participants may also bring their own. Participants should bring a sack lunch and wear closed-toe shoes. Ages 8 and up. Individuals ages 17 and older must have a fishing license if they plan on directly

participating. Online registration is required at [www.FishingsFuture.org](http://www.FishingsFuture.org).

**Second Saturday Settlers: Natural Dyes:** Saturday, April 13, from 1 p.m. to 3 p.m. Texans have a colorful history, and this program proves it! Participants will dive into the fascinating chemistry of dyeing fibers with Historical Program Coordinator Katrina Yordy. Learn how subtle differences in dye baths, from the temperature to the type of water used, creates endless possibilities in color.

**Second Sunday Pickers:** Sunday, April 14, from 2 p.m. to 4 p.m. Join this musical group celebrating more than 30 years of concerts! The Second Sunday Pickers entertain with acoustic music, including country-and-western, bluegrass, folk, gospel, Cajun, and blues. Visitors are welcome to listen to free folk

music or bring an instrument to join in the fun.

**Invasives Beware:** Saturday, April 20, from 9 a.m. to 11 a.m. Assist Jones Park staff and the Jesse Jones Park Eradicators with the removal of invasive plant species as well as trail clearing and vital habitat restoration within Jones Park. Closed-toe shoes required; gloves and long pants are recommended. Ages 16 and up or children accompanied by an adult.

**Easter Games:** Saturday, April 20, at 10 a.m. to noon. Spring is in full swing at Jones Park! Enjoy egg-rolling, bunny races, spoon races, and other traditional Easter games in a family-friendly environment. Bring a lunch and blanket for a picnic on the Redbud Hill Homestead's green meadow. Families with children ages

12 and under. Reservations are required and available beginning Wednesday, April 10.

**Nature Hunt:** Sunday, April 21, at 10 a.m. to 2 p.m. Spend Easter Sunday appreciating the splendor of nature at Jones Park! Stop by the Nature Center for a scavenger hunt list full of interesting and unique items to find along the trails. A special surprise awaits at the Nature Center for contestants who find every item on the list. Ages 5 to 13.

Jesse H. Jones Park & Nature Center is located at 20634 Kenswick Drive in Humble. Jesse Jones Park Volunteers (JJPV) welcomes applications from interested participants. For more information about the park or any of the activities and programs offered, please call 281-446-8588 or visit [www.hcp4.net/community/parks/jones](http://www.hcp4.net/community/parks/jones).

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LIFESTYLE

Programs at Jesse Jones Park

**Jesse Jones Park Volunteers:** Monday, April 29, at 7 p.m. Featuring a new program every month, volunteer meetings include information about upcoming volunteer opportunities and projects with the Jesse Jones Park Volunteers (JJPV). Join Education Programmer John Carey for the April program, Planting for Wildlife. This engaging presentation teaches how simple vegetation management techniques can benefit wildlife habitats. Ages 16 and up, or children accompanied by an adult.

**Tadpoles Club:** Wednesdays, May 1, 8, 15, and 22, at 10:30 a.m. or 1 p.m. This interactive program helps introduce preschool-aged children to nature through stories,

crafts, puppets, short walks, and animals. This staff-naturalist-led program provides a great opportunity for parents and children to learn about and enjoy nature together. Reservations are required and available beginning Wednesday, April 3. Ages 3 to 4 only. Parent must accompany children. No younger or older siblings.

**Nature Photo Contest:** Saturday, May 4, at 1 p.m. Share your love of nature with the community by participating in Jones Park's 2019 Nature Photo Contest! With this year's new 'Mobile' category, anyone with a mobile device or tablet can be a nature photographer — no fancy equipment needed. Categories include: Wildlife, Scenic, Plant/Wildflowers,

People in the Park, and Mobile. In addition to last year's divisions, 'Adult' (ages 16 and older) and 'Junior' (ages 15 and younger), this year there will be a People's Choice division chosen by the public. This contest is open to all amateur photographers except Harris County Precinct 4 employees. Please note, photographs must be taken inside Jones Park boundaries between April 30, 2019, and May 1, 2019. For updated rules or more information, call 281-446-8588 or visit [www.hcp4.net/Community/Parks/Jones/Contest](http://www.hcp4.net/Community/Parks/Jones/Contest).

**Homestead Open House:** Wednesdays and Saturdays from 1 p.m. to 4 p.m. Appreciate modern conveniences by taking a step back in time. Enjoy a

look around the park's historically accurate 1830s Redbud Hill Homestead and Akokisa-Ishak Village. Learn about two very different, yet successful ways of life. Self-guided interpretive brochures are available in the Nature Center, so visitors can move at their own pace.

Jesse H. Jones Park & Nature Center is a Harris County Precinct 4 facility located at 20634 Kenswick Drive in Humble. Jesse Jones Park Volunteers (JJPV) welcomes applications from interested participants. For more information about the park or any of the activities and programs offered, please call 281-446-8588 or visit [www.hcp4.net/community/parks/jones](http://www.hcp4.net/community/parks/jones).

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**State sues KMCO,**  
CONTINUED FROM PAGE 1

and must face more inspections from regulators, according to Hester. That history could also play into potential criminal charges against decision-makers at KMCO.

At the end of the day, it is very clearly — on both the federal and state levels — a major factor in deciding whether to bring a criminal action," Hester said.

**Safety concerns**  
Tuesday's explosion also raised questions regarding safety protocols. "Major chemical incidents like this can be prevented by applying process safety management principles," said Rachel Meidl, a fellow in Energy and Environment at Rice's Baker Institute. She said the Occupational Safety and Health Administration is the main entity tasked with protecting workers.

OSHA outlines 14 principles in total. Some of those principles include documented operating procedures, adequate training for both employees and contractors, and process hazard analysis — when engineers predict what might happen during a failure.

KMCO worker Randy Villalobos told ABC13 that he didn't hear any announcements or alarms. Instead, an operator told him to get out. And when he finally got to the fence, he had to crawl underneath. The gate was locked. According to Meidl, that shouldn't happen.

There are elements of the process safety management system that would catch that, so clearly there was a breakdown," Meidl said.

The US Chemical Safety Board is investigating the incident. After an investigation, they issue recommendations for the industry as a whole to help prevent similar disasters.



# COMMUNITY NEWS

## New Behavior School,

CONTINUED FROM PAGE 1

tunities for students who need specialized education services in the districts HCDE serves. Students attending AB West are challenged with behavioral disorders, autism spectrum disorder and other significant physical and emotional needs.

The new school, which will serve up to 150 students ages 5-22 with intellectual, developmental and behavioral needs, borders Dairy Ashford Road and Westpark Tollway.

"With the addition of our new school, we will have the best education facility to educate students who are autistic and emotionally disturbed from local school districts in greater Harris County," said Victor Keys, principal at AB School West.

HCDE operates four special schools in Harris County which serve children from area school districts on a contractual basis. AB West and East educate children with intellectual and emotional disabilities while two other schools provide services for recovering, adjudicated or troubled teens. The goal is for students to return to their home districts and schools, with newly learned behavior tools to successfully continue their education and graduate.

"I'm really looking forward to giving these students a great facility," said HCDE Board of Trustees President Josh Flynn, who introduced guests and gave opening remarks at the groundbreaking. "We will be placing students in this special, unique environment where they feel safe."

The replacement school for AB West provides considerable support for students from Alief



Kids explore machinery at ribbon cutting of new Behavior School.

Independent School District, where it resides.

"I'm grateful for the taxpayers of Harris County, the Board, Superintendent James Colbert and HCDE staff for realizing these students need a voice," said H.D. Chambers, Alief Independent School District superintendent. "If there is a flagship behavior for any kids coming out of AB School West, it's the air of confidence that they probably didn't have before."

Features of the school include a low, student-to-instructor ratio, small classes and individualized learning. A behavior specialist provides support to students to help change or improve behaviors.

The school designed by Houston architectural firm Cre8 Architects will have a heightened security system with ballistic-rated, glass walls in the lobby and restricted passage to classroom areas.

"Our board has been sensitive to school security, so we have fortified this campus externally and internally with added layers of protection inside to en-

sure safety," said Colbert.

AB School West, designed by Houston architectural firm Cre8, will be elevated above the flood plain, and an emergency generator will help to serve highly impaired students in bad weather. Layout of the school provides for 28 classrooms; use of sensory-sensitive color palettes for walls; rounded-corners throughout the school's interior construction to prevent student injury; and a domestic lab for life-skills students. Outdoors there is a gated outdoor walking trail, courtyard and basketball court.

Student Deven Wright, a fourth grader who attends AB School West from Fort Bend Independent School District, said he has high hopes for the new library and computer lab.

"I will be happy to attend this new school," the 10-year-old said.

AB West is scheduled to be completed in early 2020. A special opening ceremony, complete with tours, is planned before the school opens.

## FEATURING COMMUNITY BUSINESS

### Alma Latina

By Jeff Herman

East Aldine Management District has no shortage of Tex-Mex options to choose from but few have the chops and longevity of Alma Latina. Since 1984, the Marquez family has been preparing their soulful, authentic Mexican fare, and Houston is all the better for it. Starting as a small chain of taquerias, the family expanded their vision to eventually include full Mexican restaurants with sister locations in Porter and the Heights.

We walked into the cornerstone location at Aldine Mail Rt and 59 for lunch on a dreary late winter afternoon. Immediately, the scent of barbacoa tacos, carnitas, mole enchiladas and other Tex-Mex favorites greeted us like an old friend. As we got settled, removing our hats and coats, the waitress sat chips and salsa down on the table, along with complimentary bowls of sopa aguada. Sopa aguada is a traditional favorite of light pasta in a tangy Mexican broth. The unexpected arrival of this warm treat was the perfect antidote to the cold and wet day outside.

We also felt absolutely no guilt filling up on two bowls of chips (super light and airy) and salsa (simple

but unexpected lingering, smoky, pepper flavors) before our meal. They were just that good. We had not even placed an order yet we were already satisfied with our lunch.

For our mains, we choose the Mexican Dinner (\$5.99 for two crispy beef tacos, one cheese enchilada, beans and rice) and soft tacos (barbacoa and carne guisada, but there is plenty of seafood to choose from as well, including shrimp enchiladas—a crowd favorite—boiled crab legs, lobster, shrimp, and grilled oysters. Choose between the Cajun, lemon pepper, garlic butter, or the "house sauce" seasonings. If you come for dinner try offerings from the Michelada Bar, served in terracotta mugs and exotic garnishes like spicy shrimp or crawfish. Whiskey, vodka and tequila, of course, are also available.

By the time our order arrived, the restaurant was packed. It was an eclectic mix of young and older couples, small groups of teens, and men in khakis talking business deals. The food was fresh, warm and hearty. Creamy cheese enchiladas were balanced by fluffy rice and lightly



salted beans. We sampled soft and hard tacos, and while we enjoyed the flavors of both varieties, the crispy were edged out by the soft tortillas despite their delicious dollops of sour cream and guacamole. The barbacoa has the authentic flavor and textures you would expect and the carne guisada was an especially hearty choice for the cold day. The Alma Latina barbacoa taco lands on my best of East Aldine Management District and maybe the best of the Houston area as a whole!

Located on Aldine Mail Rt., just off 59, Alma Latina is tucked away in an unassuming small shopping strip. Look for the peach stucco exterior! Go early on your way to school or work for breakfast tacos or traditional eggs and pancakes, they open at 7:00 a.m., or stop by late night (open M-Th, midnight; Fri & Sat, 3:00 a.m.). Parking is limited.

Alma Latina  
4920 Aldine Mail Rd.  
Houston, TX 77039

### San Jacinto Day,

CONTINUED FROM PAGE 1

The staff of the San Jacinto Battleground, San Jacinto Monument and Battleship Texas look forward to the recovery phase of this emergency so we can again serve the people of Texas," said William Ir-

win, Superintendent of the San Jacinto State Historic Site. We all look forward to the reopening of the park and the museum when conditions permit.

For updates on the Mu-

seum & Park reopening, please visit [www.sanjacintomuseum.org/Visit\\_US/](http://www.sanjacintomuseum.org/Visit_US/).

## Mayor's statement on notices of layoffs 60 days from now

HOUSTON - Proposition B came without a funding source as it adds \$80 million to \$100 million a year to the city's bottom line. At the same time, the city is experiencing a \$117 million budget gap, with the cost of Prop B added on top of that.

By law, the city must balance its budget before the start of the next fiscal year, July 1.

The City asked Patrick "Marty" Lancton of the firefighters' association to phase in Prop B over five years to avoid any layoffs of firefighters and municipal workers. He refused and is demanding the immediate implementation of Prop B. The City is doing precisely that, but it will require layoffs to balance the city's budget.

Today the 67 fire cadets

received notice that they will be laid off in 60 days. Next week 47 municipal workers will receive notices. And on April 17, City Council will vote on layoffs of classified (first responder) personnel.

In the absence of a phased-in approach, the City's options are limited when we must balance our budget by the end of June.

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